

history on tombstones

sind and baluchistan



ali ahmad brohi

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
TOMBS IN SINDH	
Chowkhundi	7
Mangho Pir	14
Memon-jo-goth	20
Dars Waryo	24
Haji Turab	27
Rajmulk	30
Pir Patho	34
Sondha	37
Lakho Pir	40
Khore	45
Makli	53
Necropolis of Beglars	58
TOMBS IN BALUCHISTAN	
Bhawany	71
Hinidan	74
Gumbads in Kharan	81
INTERPRETATION OF SYMBOLS	93
Instances in history	106
Ornaments	114
Artists and sculpture	117
WARRIOR TRIBES	125
Principal tribes	139
Historical background of tribes	149
Qarmatians in Sindh	159
Caste of tribe	167
CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF TRIBES	176
Jokhia and Waghera States	190
Nikudarin	196
Nausherwanis of Kharan	200

VENERATION OF THE DEAD	206
Spirits, ghosts and demons	217
Spirit and image	227
Magic rituals in Sindh	231
DECORATED SARCOPHAGI	242
KRAJPUTAS TOMBS	248
Stecci tombs	253
Bogomils	257

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Sindh tombs	Between pages 70 and 71
2. Baluchistan tombs	Between pages 91 and 92
3. Interpretation of symbols	Between pages 113 and 114
4. Ornaments	Between pages 124 and 125
5. Warrior tribes	Between pages 175 and 176
6. Cultural background of tribes	Between pages 205 and 206

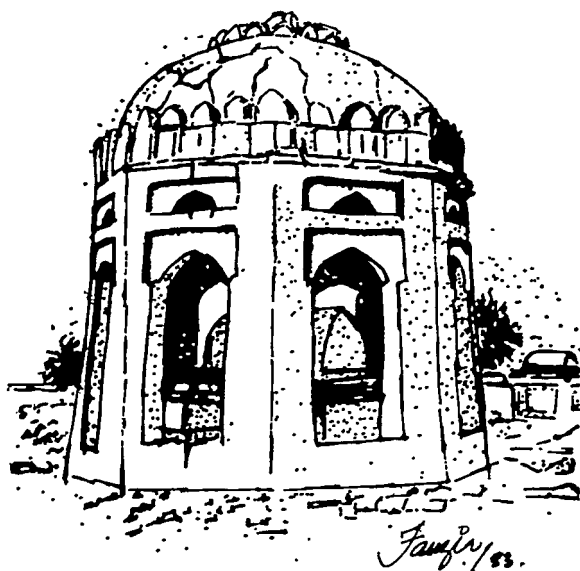
The unwillingness of Scyths to give battle exasperated Darius. He determined to force the issue and challenged Idanthysrus in the following words:

"Thou strange man," shouted his messenger, "why dost thou keep on flying before me, when there are two things thou mightest do so easily? If thou deemest thyself able to resist my arms, cease thy wanderings and come, let us engage in battle. Or if thou art conscious that my strength is greater than thine — even so thou shouldest cease to run away — thou hast but to bring thy lord earth and water, and to come at once to a conference."

But the Scythian king proudly replied:

"This is my way, Persian. I never fear men or fly from them. I have not done so in the past, nor do I fly from thee. There is nothing new or strange in what I do; I only follow my common mode of life in peaceful years. Now I will tell thee why I do not at once join battle with thee. We Scythians have neither towns nor cultivated lands, which might induce us, through fear of their being taken or ravaged, to be in any hurry to fight you. If, however, you must need come to blows with us speedily, look you now, there are our fathers' tombs — seek them out and attempt to meddle with them — then ye shall see whether or not we will fight with you. Till ye do this, be sure we shall not join battle unless it pleases us. This is my answer to the challenge to fight."

Introduction



A shooting star makes a shining furrow across the sky, and then sinks into darkness for ever. Same is the case with man. His sojourn in this world is very brief but even during this short period he strives to achieve all that might make himself happier, with the puerile craze of a child running after a beautiful butterfly. He braves roaring hurricanes of adversity, faces calamities and bears many stings of grief, and remains optimistic, for he knows life is both a thorn and a rose, a pain and a healer. Every dying 'today' adds to the dejection, but every unborn 'tomorrow' brings hope of a rosy prospect. So rolls the wheel of time. Sometimes streaks of light pierce the pervading gloom and sometimes darkness stubbornly persists till death and finally rings down the curtain on the drama of life. But the web of desire, joy and sorrow, woven around the man with golden threads of

Introduction

wordly charm, is so intricate, so strong, that he cannot easily extricate himself from it and see what lies beyond this earthly existence. And when he does, he finds to his dismay the path of life leading to a yawning chasm of oblivion. He is reminded of the great universal truth — death, an eternal farewell to this pretty world any time and a complete effacement of the physical self.

The image is dreadful, like a walking human skeleton and with it melt the trappings of romance. Disillusioned with life, man by and by feels he is drifting away from this glamorous world towards a hushed loneliness which stretches to the rim of the horizon and beyond. But the desire to live at all costs, to defy fate by any means possible, stirs in his bosom. Restless that he is, he finally seeks consolation in the thought that he can at least survive in the memory of people after he ceases to exist physically in this world. A partial victory over death it would be, and it would tend to preserve his individuality, reduced to airy nothingness of name though it may be.

This urge of man to live is widely manifested all over the world in the shape of so many things, ranging from public utility institutions and buildings to tombs and mausoleums, which in some cases were commissioned by the departing during their lifetime, while in other cases they were built as desired by them or, out of sheer love and reverence by people who wanted to preserve the cherished memory of someone with a tinge of pride. This book will, however, deal with tombs of warrior tribesmen found in a large number in various parts of Sindh. These monuments are relics from a remote past and as such present interesting studies to anyone who may wish to look back to the Indus Valley culture.

The tombs of the ancient tribesmen standing in desolate parts of Sindh, or nestling amidst primitive 'bastis' of Baluchistan, display a wide variety of design and vary in size also. Built in various ages with numerous stylistic and thematic differences but with an overtone of the native tradition and

History on Tombstones

ethnic peculiarities, they are valuable relics from our cultural past. The tombs, looking awesome and grim, have withstood nature's onslaught bravely for centuries. They have witnessed the march of history and also so many scenes of battle, love, romance and affliction. What stories they would relate if they had tongues to speak!

A close study of these tombs reveals two different modes of burial, i.e., above the ground and under the ground. Both types of tombs are called Gharaviyun (carved ones) in Sindh and Rumi (Turkish) in Baluchistan. The overhead structures over these tombs are called 'chowkhundis'. The two systems of burial were not practised in one and the same period of time. It appears that originally the super-terrain (above the ground) mode of burial was in vogue. Later on, the tribesmen switched over to underground burial which is the universal practice among the Muslims nowadays.

Except for the difference in methods of interment of the dead the two types of tombs resemble each other in all respects. However, these tombs differ greatly from the common Muslim graves in shape, form, design and decoration style. Above all, the Rumi tombs contain representations of animals and human figures whereas the Muslim graves are totally free from pictorial elements and their entire ornamentation is limited to floral designs and inscriptions, since pictorial representations of all sorts, such as animal and human figures, weapons, jewellery, etc., on Muslim graves is strictly forbidden. The mode of superterrain interment as followed in the districts of Karachi and Thatta is quite different from that observed in Kharan and Mekran districts of Baluchistan. A close examination of the mortal remains found in the middle chamber of the Rumi tombs reveals human bones lying cemented with fine earth. This means that these bones were transferred to the tomb chamber later on. Moreover, the area entombed by stone slabs can hardly accommodate the body of any grown-up person. Furthermore, since the stone slabs of the tombs are never found to

Introduction

be plastered or cemented with mortar, it is but obvious that a dead body could not have been deposited in the middle chamber of the tomb because the dead body on decomposition would have emitted bad smells through the open cavities of the tomb-slabs on all sides. A sample survey carried out in this respect revealed that most of the chambers of the three-tier tombs were empty and only two graves out of twenty contained human bones mixed with fine silt. However, an exceptional instance also came to light in Fakir Kiryo graveyard, near Landhi, where the remains were found lying wrapped in the matting — lengthwise — in the ground chamber of the grave. Most of the Rumi tombs are made of stone-slabs piled one upon another in a stepped pyramidal form having hollow, oblong chambers. All the sides are covered by stone-slabs which are profusely carved on outer sides. On an average each tomb contains two to three chambers one over the other. In some cases the number of chambers is found to be even four, thus raising the total height of the tomb to sixteen feet above the ground level. The structures of tombs are generally imposing in their own primitive fashion. Carvings on tombstones display a wide range of subjects with rustic simplicity and in some cases depict elaborate and fantastic ornamentation — queer but highly impressive.

The burial rites manifested in the tombs bearing figures of men, animals and weapons belong to the very ancient period when the primitive man believed that the dead were not really dead, that they continued to exist in the form of spirit. Hence the belief in the existence of souls or spirits that survived physical death. He also discovered that not only human beings or animals possessed spirit, the trees, springs and fire also had souls. The entire universe was considered to be populated with spirits of all kinds. These spirits could be helpful or harmful to human beings. It became a task for primitive societies how to effectively deal with these spirits, and various methods were devised, through trial and error, to appease an angry spirit or to avoid a malevolent spirit and to

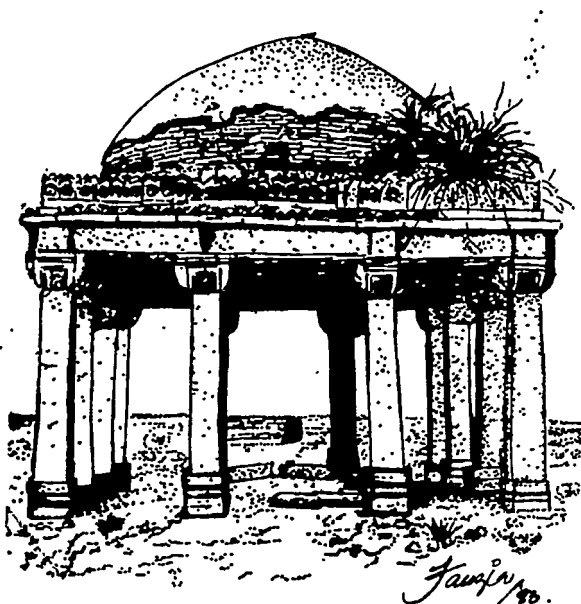
History on Tombstones

win them over through magic, ritual offering of sacrifice, worship, and prayers.

With the passage of time, these tribes became associated with other people through raids and warfare, moving with extreme mobility from one region to another. The myths about spirit gradually faded away and were replaced by practices ushered in by Islam. The tribal traditions continued to be followed even though the original purpose underlying these motifs had been lost sight of and the significance attached to them survived for some time till Islam imposed a ban on graven images.

From pictorial and flamboyant elements to unostentatious forms and designs, the tombs of warrior-tribesmen bear the stamp of cultural environments which exerted great influence on the artisans who, though mostly unlettered, possessed considerable artistic imagination, rich aesthetic sense and skilled hands. The tombs, laden with the dust of antiquity, have proved to be planks on the bridge of knowledge between the cultures of ancient and modern Sindh. Looking like mute spectators, the giant stone structures are, in many cases, sources of history, many aspects of which would, otherwise, never have seen the light of the day.

Tombs in Sindh



CHOWKHUNDI TOMBS

In the immediate vicinity of Malir River, adjacent to the National Highway at kilometre 28, and at a distance of eight kilometres from Landhi railway station, there is a large cemetery dating back to ancient days. Spread over almost two kilometres along a high ridge, the graveyard contains domes of diverse shapes and sizes which are popularly called Chowkhundi Tombs. Most of the tombs are in different stages of decay, though the graves sheltered under domes supported by pillars have been ravaged less by the onslaught of nature than those lying exposed at the mercy of sun and rain.

In the simplest form, these tombs consist of hollow oblong chambers built of yellow Jungshahi stone and entirely enclosed by large slabs or dressed stones elaborately carved

on every visible side. The more ambitious of these graves consist of two such rectangular chambers set one upon the other. The finest of them lie ten to fourteen feet above the ground level. The plinth on which they stand supports, in many cases, three storeys. The tombs may differ in respect of the number of chambers (some are vault-like) but they have a common feature, a dome on the top, invariably slender and rib-shaped, lying on the tomb lengthwise and terminating at the northern end.

The graveyard contains three types of tombs: (1) common Muslim graves which lie scattered all around and do not have any carvings or ornamental designs or figures on them; (2) stone structures with their middle chambers full of human bones, thus indicating over-ground burial; and (3) tombs bearing carved designs and figures of mounted warriors armed with swords and spears, the method of the burial being underground as no bones or skulls are found in the chambers. A sample survey of the last mentioned category revealed that although provision had been made in the chambers for receiving dead bodies they were eventually left empty. Many of the tombs are inscribed but their inscriptions simply bear the name of the person whose mortal remains were consigned to the grave or whose memory was sought to be preserved.

The western part of the graveyard containing tombs in super-terrain burial style is much more ancient than the rest. According to local legend, this part belonged to Kalmati tribesmen who originally buried their dead in this graveyard. At the tail-end of the sixteenth century only two tribes dominated Malir area, the Kalmati and the Burfats. The Jokhia tribe which now owns the cemetery migrated from Kohistan later on. The Jokhia tribesmen soon came into clash with Kalmatis who refused to treat them on equal footing since the Jokhias were not considered a martial race. While Kalmatis had taken Jokhia women in marriage they refused to give their daughters in marriage to Jokhias, as the latter were considered inferior in social status. By the middle of the

History on Tombstones

seventeenth century there was a great increase in the Jokhia population; their kinsmen settled in the Punjab and Bahawalpur migrated to Kohistan in great numbers. Settling down in and around Karachi they utilized the eastern end of the Kalmati graveyard. They also started constructing tombs in Kalmati fashion of ornamentation but did not adopt the super-terrain burial style. In an atmosphere of tribal rivalry there ensued a keen competition in building tombs, each tribe trying its best to outdo the other since these tombs symbolised their tribal prestige. The Jokhias, who were more prosperous, always had an edge over the Kalmatis. For one thing, they could offer better terms of remuneration to the artisans. The result was that the artisans worked harder and engraved ever more beautiful designs on the tombs of Jokhia tribesmen. In the process the Jokhias were the first to get their tombs of women adorned with carvings representing various ornaments. Besides, the Jokhias spent considerable amounts of money on the construction of domed mausolea called Chowkhundis. In fact the term Chowkhundi is used for a domed roof, a kind of 'chhatra' (umbrella) which is supported by four to eight pillars while the sides are left open.

The construction of Chowkhundis raised the Jokhias in the estimation of other tribes and fanned the smouldering fire of envy in the hearts of Kalmatis, who hitherto had a monopoly of tall memorials to their dead. Seething with tribal jealousy and unable to bear what they construed as an affront, they organised a massive attack on the tombs built by the Jokhias and tried to rifle them into ruins. The Jokhias, who had gone to their fields, were informed of this outrage by their womenfolk who were the first to learn of the raid. The Jokhias soon collected a force and gave a stubborn fight to the armed Kalmatis who had come well prepared. The battleground lies in the area below the ridge which contains the Chowkhundi tombs. This tribal battle commenced in the morning and raged till nightfall. Many a Jokhia tribesman lost his life since the Jokhias were neither properly organised nor prepared. Most of them rushed from the fields to the scene of

battle in batches of four or five. By eyening the battle took a serious turn as Jokhia ranks were swelled considerably by men from the adjoining villages and the Kalmatis also lost many lives. Eventually, a few Syeds, carrying the holy book in their hands, and accompanied by small girls, intervened and cried halt to senseless killing. The fighting ceased at nightfall and both sides started carrying their dead and wounded. More than one hundred and fifty people lost their lives on both sides, the Jokhias suffering a heavier toll.

The dead bodies were interred in the Chowkhundi graveyard but the mutilated arms and leg stumps were collected in earthen jars and buried beside the bank of Malir river.

Jam Murid, a Jokhia warrior, exhibited feats of exceptional bravery in this battle. Although his leg had been cut by the sword of a Kalmati, he hopped along on one leg and not only killed the person who had attacked him but killed and wounded six others, before he fell down and breathed his last as a result of loss of blood. His grave can be seen at the foot of the ridge, exactly at the spot where he fell. Four stone pillars mark the spots where he sprang and hopping on one leg attacked his adversaries.

Soon after this battle the Kalmatis left the Malir area and migrated to Mirpur Sakro. Bhamboo Khan Kalmati was the chief of the warring Kalmatis and his name is also borne by an old village in Karachi district — Bhamboo Khan Kalmati village.

In order to honour their fighters who had fallen in the battle the Jokhias decided to raise memorials. A number of artisans from Thatta were engaged to dress the tomb-slabs. When the slabs were ready and were transported to the site a day was fixed to install them. All the tribesmen collected on the spot and under the guidance of expert masons they raised the stone memorials to their heroes. None of these memorials contains dead bodies since they had already been buried in

History on Tombstones

the Muslim fashion.

The tombs sheltered by the Chowkhundis belong to those who died in the natural course of life. All the three Chowkhundis contain the graves of the families of Jokhia Jams, such as Jam Murid, Jam Miran, Jam Haji and Jam Bijar, etc., who died in different periods and were interred in the family Chowkhundis, which also contain the graves of their womenfolk.

Inscriptions

Most of the tombs bear inscriptions identifying the persons buried there: Malik Kamalu bin Kilbu, Kilbu Bin Mamuli, (a Kalmati) Desar Walad Bijar, Bijar Bin Mehar Ali (Jokhia). Only one tomb carries a date — the tomb of Yaqub Ali Khan son of Chakar son of Miran, who died in Hijri 1169 (1755 A.D.).

Most of the names on the graves are of pure Sindhi origin and there is no trace of foreign element in these names. Names such as Makhani (butter), Kauro (bitter), Bhali (good), Dino (given), Maleh (wrestler), Warriyo (bent), Manik (jewel), etc., can be found even today in rural Sindh. The word “bin” is an Arabic word meaning “son of” and there is a different word for daughter, i.e. “bint”. But in Chowkhundi inscriptions “bin” has been used indiscriminately for both son and daughter. Only in one instance the word “walad” (son of) has been used.

The names inscribed on tombs are as follows:-

1. Jam Bijar bin Jam Miran.
2. Jam Murid bin Jam Haji.
3. Bijar bin Radho.
4. Jindan Radho.
5. Miran Khidar.
6. Radho Miran.
7. Khakan bin Kauro.

8. Hassan bin Khakan.
9. Bolan bin Khakan.
10. Dad Khan bin Morio Jokhio.
11. Dino bin Makhan.
12. Haji bin Makhan.
13. Jam Rahwa Jokhio.
14. Sarah bin Ali.
15. Mamuli Qanizak (slave) Mir Doda.
16. Mubarak Radho.
17. Lal bin Sadar.
18. Jamil bin Mandho.
19. Juma bin Bijar.
20. Ishaq bin Bijar.
21. Fatima bin Bijar.
22. Warriya bin Shamba.
23. Allauddin bin Shamba.
24. Bibi Fatima.
25. Sheikh Abu Allauddin.
26. Sheikh Shamba bin Jadah.
27. Maleh Mubarak.
28. Jodho Allahdad.
29. Ustad Inayatullah. (This tomb belongs to a woman because a number of ornaments have been carved on the external slabs. Ustad Inayatullah appears to be the name of the artisan who carved the slabs. The prefix of Ustad means master artisan.)
30. Umer Haji.
31. Haji.
32. Haji Lal Haji.
33. Murid Karam.
34. Doda Murid.
35. Kaloo Murid.
36. Kasim bin Umer.
37. Chakar.
38. Mir bin Mehar Ali.
39. Allah Rakhio bin Mehar Ali.
40. Doda bin Jam Mehar Ali.
41. Wadiri Mehendi bin Mali Doda.

History on Tombstones

42. Bibi Begum bin Jam Bijar.
43. Ajzeh (slave) Saran Jokhio.
44. Bhali bin Rodin.
45. Jam Murid bin Haji Sahib.
46. Bibi Phapan bin Jam Mehar Ali.
47. Bhali bin Mali Haroon.
48. Manik bin Jam Murid.
49. Yar Mohammad bin Wadero Jam.
50. Miran bin Wadero Jam.
51. Masti bin Mehar Ali.
52. Desar Walad Jam Bijar bin Mehar Ali.
53. Yaqub Ali bin Chakar bin Miran (1169 Hijri).

MANGHO PIR

The stone memorials raised by Burfats at Mangho Pir site are perhaps the most informative existing records of how a communal tomb could express, to the fullest possible extent, by its decoration the honours due to the departed, the cult of the deities on whom they and their survivors relied, their need beyond the grave for the familiar objects that had served them in this life, and their hope for prosperity and bliss in the bosom of the earth after the sleep of death.

In interest and quality the tall stone sacrophagi found in the immediate vicinity of Haji Mangho Tomb outstrip by a long way those scattered in Mangho and Malir areas of Karachi district. These tombs are remarkable for their vividly rendered group sculptures of great virtuosity.

Some of the engravings and carving work on the side stone slabs, showing figures of horses, their riders, armaments, floral and geometrical designs, are of much the same kind as seen elsewhere on Chowkhundi tombs. But the principal tomb belonging to the chief of Burfat tribe provides an example of elegant Sindhi craftsmanship that nothing in the other cemetery can equal.

The tombs in this locality are generally constructed of slabs of very hard limestone, delicately and beautifully

History on Tombstones

sculptured in a great variety of designs, and then fitted in the overall structure without any cementing material. The larger of the two is sheltered by a Chowkhundi, i.e., domed roof on stone pillars, and appears to have contained four graves, but the dome is in a dilapidated condition and the graves have fallen in. The other is an open platform with two tombs on it; the figures of ornaments carved over these indicate that they cover the remains of women.

The local story is that the principal tomb contains the remains of one Sardar Khan Burfat, the chief of the Burfati tribe. He is said to have been killed in a battle waged against the Jokhias at Allah Buna, a place about 16 kilometres from Pir Mangho. There is an inscription on this tomb containing passages from the Holy Book but no other information except the plain date 913. This hijri date indicates the year 1506 A.D. At this period of history Sammas were ruling in Sindh. Similar tombs are found in the vicinity having figures of armed mounted warriors as well as several tombs of women bearing carvings of ornaments. Some of those in the immediate neighbourhood of Haji Mangho Pir are mostly in ruins but there are many in good condition. There are no inscriptions excepting, in some cases, only names crudely engraved over the last but one slab on the top. It appears that the name was engraved by a person other than the craftsman who had sculpted the tomb slabs.

The Burfat or Bulfat is a powerful tribe said to be a sub-tribe of Numriyas, the majority tribe in Kohistan of Sindh and Lasbela. There were a number of clashes between this tribe and the Jokhias at the time the latter were settling down in the Malir area.

Two vast cemeteries are located on the eastern side of the Mangho Pir village. Some of the houses of the dead found in the graveyards are indeed lavishly adorned from floor to ceiling and the language that these adornments speak is less about death than life abundant beyond it. But these, carry

Mangho Pir

and convey an other-wordly meaning better than those of mythological groups having images carved on them.

Most of these are common Muslim graves of stone slabs adorned with floral designs, garlands, and paved with black and white marble mosaic. Some of the marble tomb slabs depict lateral reliefs worked in terracotta and present decoration styles hinting at the dead men's professional lives. Such scenes while chiefly designed to commemorate the past could also suggest a happy after-life earned by honest toil. In the brick graves the colour of the bricks employed, now red, now yellow, also provides an element of cheerfulness to the dwellings of the dead. Most of these graves are barrel-vaulted.

Mangho Pir beside being an ancient town also happens to a prehistoric settlement, the traces of which have been discovered on the eastern extremity of the hillock on which the tomb of Pir Mangho is situated.

Mangho Pir is said to have been a hermit who had settled here about the 13th century. The saint, though now erroneously called Mangho Pir, was originally known as Kamaluddin and came from Khorasan. He was a contemporary of Sheikh Bahaul Haq Zakaria of Multan. The saint acquired the popular title of 'crocodile saint'. The folklore states that this barren valley was transformed into a more eligible residence by the miracle caused by Lal Kalandar of Sehwan and Ghous Bahaul Haq by causing hot and cold springs to issue from the rocks. After the death of the saint his grave became a place of pilgrimage for pious Muslims who thronged from all parts of the country.

It is also a religious resort for Hindu devotees who term the deity as Lala Jasraj. This double character of the shrine is most common in Sindh. The shrine of Lal Shahbaz is venerated by Hindus who consider the saint as Raja Bhartari. Uderolal in Hyderabad, Jind Pir in Sukkur and Pir Patho in Thatta are also similarly worshipped by both Hindus and

History on Tombstones

Muslims under different identities.

On the western side of Mangho Pir tomb there is a swamp formed by the superfluous waters of hot springs flowing close by into a hollow ground. This pond, enclosing an area of 150 by 80 yards, is populated by crocodiles of considerable size. The general appearance of the place is weird. With its green coloured stagnant water and littered with uncouth monsters moving sluggishly about, it appears disgusting to the onlooker. The priests of this pond are also the keepers of the crocodiles and they cater to their meat ration by accepting goats or sheep offered to them by the devotees. The animals are normally slaughtered on the edge of the pond and as soon as blood begins to flow into the swamp it comes alive with brutes rushing from different parts towards the slaughtering spot. Meat is often thrown at them which proves to be the signal for a general warfare amongst them.

The leader of the crocodile battalion is called "Mor Sahib" or Peacock. It is of a bigger size than the rest of them. The "Mor Sahib" is considered to be the progenitor of the whole race of alligators in the pond.

As per local tradition, the crocodiles were introduced in the Mangho Pir swamp by a saintly person "Mor Mubarak" who had arranged a pair of very young crocodiles to be shifted here from Waghodar. Thus the crocodile came to be known as "Mor Sain" or "Mor Sahib", after the name of the saint. This event is said have taken place some time in the 9th century Hijri. The tomb of "Mor Mubarak" is at Hinidan graveyard in Kalat district at a distance of 120 kilometres from the Hub Dam site.

A regular fair is held here annually in the holy month of Ramazan in which villagers from all over the adjoining areas participate. Any one desirous of having his wish fulfilled slaughters a goat or a sheep and offers some meat to the head

crocodile, "Mor Sahib". If "Mor Sahib" avails of the meat then the fulfilment of the wish is considered a certainty.

Historically, Mangho Pir, even before the Muslim period, was an old pilgrimage site for the Hindus who still worship the crocodile as a reincarnation of Lala Jasraj. Archaeologists have traced the history of this habitation up to the Bronze Age, or about 2000 — 1700 B.C., a period when the Indus Civilization was in its prime.

Crocodile is a river animal and is mostly found inhabiting swamps or marshes formed in deltas. Hence these animals have been linked with every civilization since there could not be any idea of civilization without the existence of a river. Crocodiles were also venerated and worshipped in Egypt and there, too, these reptiles were reared and domesticated as in the Indus Delta.

Lower Indus Delta country has been quite fertile in crocodile shrines. In Karachi district the area presently covered by Korangi was known as "Wagho Dar", i.e., "Crocodile cave". The cave harbouring crocodiles is still there though its occupants have deserted it. Another crocodile shrine exists near Jharak under the title of Lakho Pir. An aged crocodile called "Moti Faqir" is still seen frequently wandering about. It is a domesticated animal and villagers offering their gifts approach it without any fear. I have myself seen it moving freely among the goat., which are often found grazing there. The cave of "Moti Faqir" is quite spacious and it gets filled up when the river is in spate. The Indus flows near by at a distance of one kilometre.

Crocodile in Sindhi language is known by various names but commonly it is called either as Wagho or Maunger. The ancient courses of rivers inhabited by crocodiles are termed as "Naro" or "Moonger". This animal has been worshipped as deity since ancient times. It is the vehicle of a Hindu deity. In Buddhist and Jain mythology it is venerated as "Makaria".

History on Tombstones

It being the most dominant of water species it was religiously worshipped by Darya Panthi sect (water worshipping sect) in Sindh. It was considered to be the embodiment of a holy spirit known by various titles such as Bakhir, Lal Bakhar, Lakho, Jind Pir, Naro Gharyal and Mor.

Crocodile was worshipped by both Buddhists and Jains besides being the prime deity of holy water as a vital symbol of god since it is the only animal which is without a tongue, like god who has no use for such an anatomical organ because its wish becomes an order which includes instant implementation of the order.

The crocodile has never been known as a symbol of fertility or blessed with healing powers. The healing powers usually attributed to Mangho Pir are linked with hot water springs and not related to crocodiles. Similar hot water springs exist at many places in Sindh such as at Laki in Dadu and Sukkur. Crocodiles have been venerated not because of hot or cold water springs but in spite of them. Hence there is no question of crocodiles being considered as a cultural link between Egypt and the Indus civilization. It is another matter that Misra Brahmans of Sindh and Hindus originally migrated from Egypt and settled over here.

There is a tribe of fishermen and a seafaring community which are known as Waghera or Waghri who have a tradition of crocodile worship. They are also called Wagellas or Bagris. This community of fishermen inhabits Karachi, Indus Delta and Cutch state.

MEMON-JO-GOTH TOMBS

In the Malir Cantonment area, close to the Municipal Water-works, lies the small village of Memon-Jo-Goth. It has a sizeable cemetery of several hundred graves built of carved Jungshahi stone. The gravestones are profusely engraved with floral designs and patterns. These graves are said to be of Burfatis or Bulfatis as they are commonly referred to in Sindhi. The Burfatis are said to have been originally a sub-tribe of 'Nohmardis' or 'Numriyas', who dominated the Kohistan area of Sindh and Baluchistan in the 16th and 17th centuries. Even at present this tribe is found mainly settled in Thana Bula Khan and Kotri subdivision.

These tombs have no animal or human figures carved on them, which suggests that these tombs belong to a later period than Chowkhundi tombs, i.e., 17th or 18th century, when the Islamic burial rites had been adopted and the practice of carving images on tomb-slabs had been abandoned altogether. While there is a great deal of carved ornamentation on the tombs here, one does not find any Quranic verses carved on them. In some cases the graves do bear names, mostly of women, inscribed on the front tomb-slab in a crude manner.

The meandering course of history, like a graph, shows the rise and fall of so many nations and tribes. The mighty

History on Tombstones

Burfatis, who once ruled over a vast area, including parts of Baluchistan and Sindh, fought many sanguinary battles with the Jokhias, another powerful tribe, in order to regain hold on their territory. But in course of time the Jokhias succeeded in pushing them out of Malir and the Indus Delta and establishing themselves firmly in this area.

Kohistan, Lasbela Sea coast and Indus Delta country have always maintained a warlike population often recruited by immigration from northern as well as southern extremities. Since ancient times this vast country has been the abode of three main tribes — Kalmatis, Numriyas and Jokhias. Kalmatis are known in history as daring pirates operating from Gwadur down to delta ports. At present they are settled in Mirpur Sakro and Thatta areas.

The Numriyas who are mostly settled in bordering mountainous ranges known as Kohistan are shepherds and brigands. The Jokhias who originally belonged to southern Sindh were the last to settle in Malir area. These three tribes displayed different characteristics but had one trait in common — all were mercenaries. These tribes have never taken any leading part in the history of Sindh and Baluchistan excepting on the boundary land often contested by Sindh rulers.

The Numriyas are reported by some historians to have migrated from Siestan (Iran) to Sindh. It is said that Numriyas, also called Nohmardis in company with another section of their tribe, i.e. Dehmardis, were originally settled on the border of Siestan. They appear to be an off-shoot of the ancient Scythian race. Their tribal identity is based on their bravery; Nohmardi means that each member of the tribe was equal in strength to nine ordinary persons and each Dehmardi was equal to ten persons.

Being shepherds by profession and nomadic by character, they put up camp at a place only for so long as their

flock of sheep or goat could find sufficient grass in the pastures, and then they moved on. During their brief sojourn at one place or another they were continually at war with their neighbours. The reason for this fighting was the belligerent and restless nature of the Nohmardis. In course of time they left their homeland and trekked down to Sindh to settle down here. Perhaps, it was not a case of voluntary migration; it seems they were driven out of their homeland by some better equipped claimants to the grazing grounds.

The Nohmardis chose to settle in the Kohistan area of Sindh, i.e., Thana Bula Khan, Gadap (outskirts of Karachi), while the Dehmardis made Larkana and Sukkur districts their new homeland. Here their descendants began to be known as Numriya and Dehmriya, corruptions of the original names.

According to another version, the Numriyas (literally nine men) are of Rajput origin. The founder of the family, Esub (Yousuf) Khan, accompanied by his eight brothers, left Rajputana some centuries ago, seeking adventure, and finally settled down in Kohistan area, a barren, rocky and hilly tract fifty kilometres west of Kotri, composed of outlying spurs from the Khirthar Range. Agriculture is unknown and the population is nomadic and migratory, chiefly engaged in pasturing cattle, goat and sheep. The Numriyas are notorious cattle lifters. The system of blood feuds still prevails among these primitive people.

Memon-Jo-Goth tombs are based on the system of underground burial in Muslim fashion. Some tombs do have short stumpy projections from the top, along one edge, indicating that these belong to men, since the top crown manifests a turban. The style of carving upon these tombs and their perforated floral and geometrical design patterns are the same as seen on tombs in Chowkhundi graveyards. It is precisely the same design and workmanship minus the symbolic representations.

History on Tombstones

The tombs in this graveyard do not have any overhead domed structures (chowkhundi). Most of the graves are in a state of ruin, with stone surface carvings like that of Arghun and Tarkhan tombs at Makli graveyards. Though the tombs are totally devoid of images and representations of arms or ornaments, all the other features of such tombs have been maintained, such as pyramidal form of the tomb, frontal surface and side slabs which are coarsely carved in crochet-work patterns and the stepped up tiers of body in rectangular boxes, which depict diminishing size towards the summit. The base of the tomb is boxed up all around with stone slabs and there are no arched or perforated openings such as seen in tombs at Bhawany graveyard.

DARS WARYO GRAVEYARD

Along the western flank of Haleji Lake in Thatta District, which curves sharply and then stretches towards south-east, there lies a vast graveyard over the high land. Hemmed in by the ridge, there stands the beautiful shrine of Dars Waryo Lakhani, a saint of great learning whose memory is revered to this day. A mosque is attached to the shrine and is akin to the latter so far as construction is concerned. Both the structures, though almost a century old, look strangely fresh as if they were built only recently, and in many aspects they resemble the tombs of the Kalhora period.

Around the shrine there are thousands of graves scattered all over, most of them belonging to the period when underground burial had replaced the super-terrain interment system. Going through the cemetery one may find, here and there, on raised platforms, old graves of persons acclaimed as pious and Godly. As twilight is swallowed by darkness there blossom a number of flickering flames in tiny oil lamps placed on top of these graves, creating a scene at once beautiful and weird.

Amidst broken stone shafts and bases there emerge a considerable number of tombs with figures of horsemen, ornaments and floral designs carved on them. Called Rummyon tombs here and Chowkhundis elsewhere, these tombs are also

History on Tombstones

referred to as 'Gharaviyun', a Sindhi word meaning "chiselled ones". Such tombs are about sixty in number. There are, besides them, about fifty tombs which have tumbled down and their stone slabs have been utilised in graves dug recently. Out of them eleven have figures of warriors carved on them. These tombs are believed to be of the "Lohara", a community of Baluchs, as well as of artisans who worked as ironsmiths. In view of the figures of warriors carved on them, the theory of simple ironsmiths being buried here can be safely ruled out. Unfortunately, no one in the neighbourhood can supply any plausible piece of information that may help establish the identity of those buried here.

A very old woman who looks after the shrine, however, told the author that the Loharas whose mortal remains were consigned here had been killed in a battle, fought in the vicinity long, long ago. But she knew nothing about the women on whose tombs various ornaments are found carved.

Of all the tombs, three deserve special attention because of peculiarities of their designs as well as the queer figures carved on them. Close to the shrine of Dars Waryo Haqqani, to the north, there are two small stone graves, which are plain all over but depict horsemen on their upper slabs. The figures have been adroitly carved in the brief space of 3 x 4 inches; whereas on other graves the same pictorial element extends to at least 16 to 18 inches. Another tomb, lying to the south of the shrine, has a crown-like carved globe attached to its upper slab — a novel design.

The older 'Gharaviyun' tombs are in ruins and except for two burial chambers, which show some traces of decayed human bones, the rest are empty. Only one tomb boasts an inscription which gives full information: name, caste and the year of demise.

Beside the crumbled graveyard structures one may find a large quantity of stone shafts lying here and there which are

even now used in fresh graves. The new graves belong to members of many tribes, such as Gadas and Jakhras, who inhabit the surrounding villages.

To the west, about one mile away from this cemetery, there is another graveyard. It contains similar "Gharaviyun" tombs, profusely carved, but without any figures of living beings.

Lying in obscurity since long, this graveyard has almost been forgotten for no one knows its name or the identity of the tribesmen buried there.

The author was informed that the entire area, part of a lowland, had remained submerged under water for years together and it was only recently that this graveyard came to view when the water had dried up. It was, however, gratifying to see that a *bund* had been constructed to check the overflow of water into this area. In this burial place only six tombs are ornamented with floral design and as such merit some attention.

HAJI TURAB GRAVEYARD

A number of chowkhundi sculptures, considerably artistic in character, are found in the Haji Turab Graveyard which is situated midway between Gujo and Gharo villages of Thatta district. The graveyard, quite an old one, covers an area of about eight acres. Subjected to ravages of rain, wind and water-logging, most of the tombs have crumbled to pieces, and vestiges of many graves have been totally obliterated. In the centre of this desolate graveyard there stands the ancient shrine of Haji Turab, one of the Arab Governors, a theologian, scholar and soldier, who is said to have accompanied Mohammad Bin Qasim, the conquerer of Sindh.

Chowkhundi tombs, about 180 in number and standing in scattered groups of seven or eight among hundreds of other Muslim graves, are seen all around Haji Turab's shrine. Amidst the cluster of these sculptures, looking like sombre sentinels seemingly guarding the mortal remains of the unknown dead, one may find slabs engraved with the common motifs — men, horses, footmen and ornaments. But the figures here have been drawn with considerable skill. Though spared mercifully by the forces of nature, these tombs have, unfortunately, received a very unkind treatment at the hands of man.

Top slabs, flamboyant and rich in artistic engravings,

were detached from the main structures by some renegade lovers of arts. They did this to copy the designs adorning the slabs and then left them to sink in the water-logged ground.

The entire graveyard has all along been used by Jokhia tribesmen to bury their dead and even now it is exclusively used by them in the spirit of the old tradition.

Designs and patterns and even the figures of mounted warriors and ornaments depicted on women's tombs are more or less similar to those seen on the tombs of Jokhia and Kalmati tribesmen located elsewhere in lower Sindh.

But one slab has an astoundingly uncommon design carved on it — a mounted warrior and ornaments including a pair of bracelets and a ring. The carving of both male and female symbols on one slab may appear strange but can be understood. On the raised ground over which this tomb stands, there are two graves, presumably of husband and wife. One may guess that the novel design was suggested by the exceptionally strong bonds of love that held the couple together. Perhaps, there was no better way of expressing the theme. Or, perhaps they never got married and the artist was expressing their sudden end in tragedy. Or, maybe, here was a couple whose love triumphed over tribal feuds, duels, and contests and thus gave it legendary dimensions. Who knows? But art survives.

A number of tombs lying on the southern side of the graveyard stand unfinished and their scattered slabs provide a clear demonstration of how the carvers engraved designs and set patterns in stone. It goes without saying that all of these stones were cut for influential and important people.

None of the tombs bears any dates or evidence of the time of their construction. The possibility cannot be ruled out that these tombs were among the earlier tombs of the Jokhia tribe. The tribe has been virtually ruling this area,

History on Tombstones

Which extends upto the Arabian Sea, originally called 'Kakr-allo'.

Whatever the period of their construction and whoever their owners may have been, the chowkhundi tombs of Haji Turab Graveyard and those lying in its vicinity are important for the study of death and burial rites in the lower Indus Delta country. They provide an outstanding example of the local technique and sepulchral tradition and throw light on the people's ideas on after-life and the honours that were showered on warriors.

On the extreme western side of the graveyard there are traces of small brick kilns. Somewhere in the midst of non-descript graves one may see a number of demolished sepulchres, the bricks of which lie strewn all over the ground, and some of them might have been misappropriated by unscrupulous prowlers.

The red burnt bricks used in the cemetery here are of an abnormal size like those seen only in ancient buildings.

The keeper of the Haji Turab shrine told this author that the graves dotting the vast stretch of land contained the mortal remains of holy men of time long past.

The topography of the terrain clearly indicates that this area must have been a seabed once. In its immediate neighbourhood can be seen a ruined fort on a flat hilltop, covering an area of about three square kilometres. The walls of the fort have been reduced to shambles though the foundation walls of internal buildings can be traced through a mass of debris. Red bricks and pottery lie scattered all over. The fort area has the appearance of an island. A little farther, on the eastern side, lies a huge and tall stone boulder looking like an upturned boat. It is called by local people as such, i.e., "Budal Beri", which means a sunken boat. Is it another 'Noah's ark?

RAJMULK GRAVEYARD

The Miranpir Graveyard is situated close to village Rajmulk, about 12 kilometres from Gharo in Thatta district.

The graveyard was originally known as Qadam Waro Muqam, i.e., "sacred footprints". It owes this name to footprints, believed to be those of Hazrat Ali, embossed on a stone slab fixed in the centre of a shrine. The domed structure of the shrine, still intact, attracts a large number of villagers from far and near. A visit to this shrine is considered a pilgrimage. The visitors make offerings and invoke the blessings of Sher-i-Khuda (Lion of God), a popular title of Hazrat Ali. The shrine probably dates back to 10th century Hijri, maybe earlier, when Kalmati influence was at its zenith in Sindh and Multan. The structure of this shrine is quite similar to the one in Hyderabad, adjacent to the Fort Gate, also called "Qadam Mubarak".

In this graveyard, covering an area of about fifty acres, are found the most interesting specimens of Rumi tombs. In terms of the quality of stone carvings, it could be termed as the best graveyard in the whole of Sindh and Baluchistan. The point to be noted, however, is that in this graveyard no signs of superterranean burial are visible anywhere. It is subdivided into seven sections, out of which three sections contain 108 Rumi tombs, in addition to about a hundred or

History on Tombstones

so small graves of children. The rest of the graves are of common type, including those of "Jogis" and snake charmers, who generally follow the Hindu religion but bury their dead.

Judging from the inscriptions on the Rumi tombs, these graves belong to three main tribes, i.e., Kalmatis, Jokhias and Jats. More than sixty per cent of the Rumi graves are those of the Kalmatis. It appears that this graveyard originally belonged to the Kalmatis but later on it was utilised by many other tribes as a common place of burial, after the Kalmatis had migrated or had been forced to leave the area.

The tombs of the Kalmatis which have survived the vicissitudes of time are in a very good shape. On them are carved figures of armed warriors in Mughal attire, seated on horses or camels and invariably preceded by footmen. A slab on each grave depicts a horseman and single footman, but in one instance the tomb-slab shows three armed men, two riding on horses and one on a camel, with two footmen walking in front. (This slab being unique was taken from this graveyard and given by the author to the Archaeology Department, and is preserved in the National Museum, Karachi.) In the case of this graveyard the author's efforts to awaken the authorities' interest bore fruit and it was later on declared a protected area.

Hunting scene

On one of the tombs, the western slab shows armed hunters on horses, chasing deer. Also seen are dogs, a leopard and a strange animal called "Siahgoosh". Captain Hamilton, who visited Thatta in the 16th century, has given an interesting account of the hunting practices in the area and has mentioned this "Siahgoosh". In his famous book, Kingdom of Sind, he says: "Deer, antelopes, hare and foxes are their wild game, which they hunt with dogs, leopards and a small fierce creature called by them "Siahgoosh". It is about the size of a fox with long pricked ears, very much like hare, and

face like a wild cat, a grey back with its belly and breast white. I believe they are rare, for I never saw more than one. When taken out for hunting, a horseman carries it behind him, hoodwinked, and the deer and antelope being pretty familiar, will not start before horses come very near. He who carries the "Siahgoosh" takes off its hood and shows it the game; the animal with large swift strides soon overtakes the game and pouncing on them scratches their eyes out and gives the hunter an easy prey."

Besides pictorial slabs a number of slabs bear geometrical patterns and floral designs. The variety of ornaments carved on stone slabs of women's graves are of the same quality as those on Chowkhundi graves. Besides possessing artistic value, these tombs have a lot to tell the beholder about the old settlers and their ways of life. The carvings are mostly in deep relief, the contours are not very sharp but on the whole they display a fine blend of imagination and realism.

Transportation of stone slabs

The most peculiar aspect of this graveyard is the location and selection of the site. Normally such tombs are found on raised platforms, over ridges or hillocks, which can be seen from a distance. But this graveyard has an altogether different situation. It is the only graveyard of its kind which contains stone tombs in a plain, muddy and low-lying area. There are no signs of rocks in the vicinity; the nearest hills are about thirteen kilometres away. The stone utilised in the tombs here is not available within a thirty-five kilometre radius. It is presumed that most of the stone slabs were transported by camels, as was usually done in the past, but some of the tombs here contain stone slabs so heavy and huge that they could not have possibly been carried by camels.

In the late fifties, the author was told by old men from the neighbouring village that once upon a time a branch of

History on Tombstones

Gharo creek passed alongside the Rajmulk village and these stones were brought here by boats. Some years later (1962), the author again visited this graveyard and found that the overflow from Gharo creek had formed a huge lake bordering the graveyard. This tended to uphold the local story.

The Rumi tombs here belong to the period when the practice of super-terrain burial had been abandoned and the dead were buried in dug-out graves, as at present. The date of this graveyard can safely be fixed in the early 15th century. Some historical evidence is also available to confirm the presence of Kalmati tribes in this area, an area predominantly populated by Jat and Jokhia tribes. In order to guard the troubled frontiers of his realm in Sindh, Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb had employed about three thousand tough Kalmati tribesmen and stationed them at Sakro and Gharo. The main task of the Kalmati force was to curb the criminal activities of the turbulent Machi, Jokhia and Jat tribes who were playing havoc in the Indus Delta country by plundering and extorting money through blackmail from harassed merchants and traders. The Rajmulk graveyard has a halo of spiritual lustre because of the shrine containing the "Sacred Footsteps" ("Qadam Mubarak") and as such it was deemed to be the most suitable area by the Kalmatis to bury their warriors.

It may be mentioned here that the early part of the 18th century was a period of turmoil in the sub-continent. Naturally, conditions in Sindh also were far from peaceful. Life, on the whole, was insecure, and adversity kept people's morale at a very low ebb. Fear and frustration clouded people's life. Local chiefs ventured to go about only when accompanied by armed escorts. In fact each villager carried a 'lathi' (long stick) or an axe, and soldiers of fortune, ready to stake their lives for any amount, went armed with swords or matchlocks.

The village of Rajmulk is still inhabited by Kalmatis who style themselves as Kalmati Baluch.

PIR PATHO GRAVEYARD

Pir Patho, the site of an ancient city, is perched on a limestone rock, 17 miles off Thatta to its south-west. The rock itself is a towering one, standing like a buttress of the Makli range with which it is linked a little farther away towards the north-east. Spread over an area of about four square miles, the ruins are dotted all over the area with shrines, tombs, chowkhundis, graves, mosques and hutments.

This place has been identified by historians as the site of the obliterated city of Debal, the seaport of Sindh during Raja Dahir's reign. Adjacent to the Idgah mosque, attributed to the great Muslim conqueror, Mohammad Bin Qasim, there are ruins heaped up in mounds, starting from the slope far below down near the foot of the jutting mass of rock. Lying in the desolate silence of obscurity, these ruins of ancient structures can reveal many facts of history and further enrich our knowledge of the past. But, strangely enough, no scientific or archaeological expedition has yet visited this place.

In the vicinity of Pir Patho there is an almost dried-up bed of the old Hakra (or the Indus?) now called Puran, i.e., old river. It is easy to visualise that in olden days it must have been a mighty and vigorous river, flowing across the area, and lapping the fringes of the city of Debal.

History on Tombstones

About a furlong away from the shrine of Shah Datar, there is a cemetery containing a few hundred Chowkhundi-type graves. Out of the six pavilions or pillared domes which once stood like a shelter over the graves, only two have withstood the ravages of time; the rest have crumbled to the ground.

The Rumi tombs in this graveyard display a high level of excellence in design and the figures with which these are decorated. When the author first visited this place in 1958 he found 85 such tombs in a very good condition. By 1964 their number had fallen to 60 or so. Inquiries on the spot revealed that the local people regarded these tombs as those of infidels, because of figures of men or animals carved on them. As such these people thought it proper to remove the stone-slabs and use them on fresh graves. This, without any doubt, amounts to plunder of cultural monuments. The author invited the attention of the Archaeological Department to this outrage but, it is painful to note, all pleas for remedial measures went unheeded.

On a recent visit to the graveyard the author was stunned to see that almost all the tombs had been disturbed and dislocated. The most horrifying aspect of the rampage was that most of the stone slabs bearing figures of warriors, weapons, animals and ornaments had disappeared. Subsequently, it was learnt that these stones had been whisked away by an unscrupulous retired Government employee.

Pilferage of such relics of the past cannot be condemned too strongly. A man who steals objects of historical importance and confines them to the four walls of his house deprives the present and the coming generations of a cultural heritage which in fact belongs to all. The irony of the situation is that it is mostly the educated ones who stoop so low as to rob the dead of their tomb-slabs.

The tombstones of Pir Patho mostly depict mounted

and armed horsemen preceded by footmen. Stone carving shows a fairly high order of skill and is very similar to that seen on Rajmulk graveyard tombstones. Also in respect of ornamentation and the variety of geometrical and floral designs Pir Patho tombs are unrivalled, except perhaps by Rajmulk tombs.

The first domed mausoleum (chowkhundi), under which graves are no more visible, bears the following words inscribed on one of its stone pillars:

‘Shamba, son of Malik. caste Brahmani’

Brahmani is an off-shoot caste of the Jats, mostly related to the Kalmatis. Brahmani caste is the same as Bahrami, the members of which are mostly pastoral and breeders of camels. Even today they inhabit Temreen, Dhamoch and Thana Arub Khan areas in Kohistan.

The second domed mausoleum has a miniature mosque coupled with it and both the structures appear to be about three hundred years old. Unfortunately, no one in the Pir Patho hamlet could tell anything about the people who built them.

The Pir Patho tombs, rare specimen of stone engraving on the one hand and relics of our cultural tradition on the other, may some day totally disappear if no positive steps are taken to check the process of decay which has already set in, casting an ominous shadow on them.

SONDHA TOMBS

In a separate class are the tombs in a rural cemetery situated in the immediate vicinity of the ancient village of Sondha, which lies midway between Thatta and Jherruk on the National Highway. The village acquired a place in history books because of the sudden death there of Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq. The Sultan had camped there while on his way to attack the Samma ruler of Thatta who had given shelter to "Taghi" in direct defiance of the Sultan's orders.

The village has a population of three hundred souls and covers an area of fifty acres while its cemetery is spread well over two hundred and fifty acres of undulating land. It is flanked by a high hill and the village habitation on the south-western side and is bounded by the National Highway on the northern extremity. The cemetery is littered with graves in different shapes and designs. The number of graves may well exceed a million. They are grouped in enclosures separated by narrow passages.

One wonders at the vast number of graves, specially because there are no sizeable human habitations around Sondha village which could account for the density of the graves here. No tribal war has ever been fought in its neighbourhood either, which could have provided the raw material for its expansion. It is, however, accepted that bodies were brought here for burial from distant areas as it happened to

be the ancestral burial ground of many tribal communities. This fact is supported by a cluster of ancient graves sheltered by a domed structure in the western corner. These graves bear Kufic inscriptions on their tombstones, most of them dating from the fourth century Hijri.

Close to the hillock and alongside the village footpath are a number of stone sepulchres which are described by local people as Kafir tombs. In fact these graves are similar to Chowkhundi or Rumi graves bearing representations of mounted warriors holding swords and spears and shields in their hands. As usual there are foot soldiers walking ahead of the warriors, a sure sign of the latter's status. The graves of women are adorned with beautifully carved ornaments. The geometrical patterns, floral designs, the shapes of ornaments as well as representations of horse and horsemen hardly differ from those seen on similar tombs at Landhi, Rajmulk, Dars Waryo and Lakho Pir graveyards. However, there is a solitary case of departure from the common style of tomb structure — a grave which has no tomb structure whatsoever. Instead, it has a tall stone slab erected in the ground bearing the representation of a mounted warrior on a galloping horse. It is the best specimen of a horseman and a charger seen on a Chowkhundi tomb. It is also possible that this pillar was erected here just as a signpost to indicate the existence of a Chowkhundi enclosure.

On another tomb-slab bearing the representation of a horseman preceded by two foot soldiers, a dancing woman is seen following the warrior. In her right hand the courtesan is holding a money bag. The most plausible explanation of the scene is that after the victory of the warrior had been celebrated, the money bag was given to the dancer as her reward. The expression of joy is manifested through the ritual of dance. In most of the human figures the headgear is missing rendering them quite grotesque. The inscriptions on these tombs have worn out and the scratches which remain on the top of the tomb-slabs have become illegible. Most of the

History on Tombstones

carved slabs have been taken off and carried away though a village guard has been posted there by the Department of Archaeology. But, as usual, he came a bit too late.

Local accounts do not provide any clue to the identity of the tribe which owns these tombs. There has been no fresh addition to this group in the recent past. With the exception of this group of tombs the rest of the numerous graves in the graveyard are in the normal Muslim style of 'turbats' and are without any human or animal drawings, though some of these are profusely adorned with Quranic verses and floral designs.

LAKHO PIR GRAVEYARD

At a distance of about ten kilometres from Jherruk, on Hyderabad-Thatta Road, towards south-west, there is a large graveyard spread over four square kilometres. Although the graveyard is situated close to the highway, it is not visible from the road, as it is located in the low ground and is sheltered by a high ridge. This graveyard is one of a chain of graveyards which are situated throughout the table-land running parallel to the westward loop of the Indus.

The graveyard is known as Lakho Pir Muqam and is dotted with thousands of graves. Across the entire area, up to the forest and the river bed, one can see, besides erect tombstones, heaps of displaced tombstones and burial chambers. The graveyard comprises several sectors and each sector has some peculiar characteristics in respect of shape and design of graves. Towards the north-east there stands a domed shrine said to be that of a saint called Lakho Pir. In style and appearance it resembles the tombs of Kalhoras and Talpurs in Hyderabad. Decorated with Hala tiles, it has a wooden door the carving on which is very similar to that on the doors of Mirs' tombs. In the panel above the carved door there is a profession of Islamic faith in Persian. Adjacent to this shrine is an old mosque, presumably built at the same time as the Lakho Pir tomb.

History on Tombstones

The Lakho Pir shrine has been properly maintained and at present it is looked after by a 'mujawar' (shrine-keeper) named Khalifa Mohammad. According to him, Lakho Pir was related to the family of Makhdoom Potras, i.e., grandchildren of the Makhdoom.

Close to this shrine there is a group of pillared pavilions, like chowkhundis, built long long ago and under them lie a number of graves. These are mostly in ruins. The carvings on pavilions and graves are similar to those on Mirza Isa Khan Tarkhan's tomb at Makli in Thatta. The similarity in design suggests that these pavilions were built around the same time when the Isa Khan tomb was constructed. Local accounts hold these graves to be of Paliya and Jakhra tribesmen. The chowkhundis are 16 in number, out of which seven are in a fairly good condition, whereas the remaining ones can be traced down only by their plinth marks and scattered stone pillars. These pavilions are called "Rumyon" by the local inhabitants.

At a short distance, further south, there is another shrine built of red brick and stone. It contains two graves, of Sheikh Jakhro and Lal Chatto. Sheikh Jakhro is regarded as the patronsaint of the Sheikh community and to this day the shrine is revered by the Sheikhs of the adjoining areas.

Around the tomb of Sheikh Jakhro there are hundreds of old graves where once the dead were buried over-ground. Most of the upper chambers of the graves, supposed to contain the dead bodies of warrior tribesmen, are now empty. In addition to these super-terrain type graves, there are a number of stone pillars standing as silent sentinels over those laid to eternal rest there. Some of these pillars have geometrical or floral designs carved on them, which have worn out considerably due to ravages of time. Most of the tombs have the sunflower pattern on outside stone panels. Five of the tombs have a very peculiar stone engraving, the design of which resembles either a missile or a bell, linked to

a chain. It is a queer design, found at no other grave in Sindh or Baluchistan. The rest of the ancient tombs are built like pyramidal piles. The front slabs of these tombs are carved in crochet-work patterns, of course, in a coarse manner.

In most cases the tombs are boxed up with slabs all around. But there are some the lower sides and slabs of which are perforated with big, arched openings. Through them one may see the ground below. Carvings are there on the tombs and some of them display a horseman with sword, shield and bow; and wearing a signet ring. The graves are obviously of warriors who won laurels in battle-fields for their tribe. Generally, men's tombs have a characteristic feature — a short stumpy pillar protruding from the top at one end.

The pillars are topped by an architectural design of orb which may have been added to represent a turban, a common headgear. Women's tombs are distinguishable by designs of bracelets, at some places neatly and at others crudely carved. Further, women's tombs have two horizontal stone projections near the top jutting out at the end with a rove at each end. Men's tombs have similar projecting stones but they are adorned with a rosette and look almost like the poles of a bier.

A little further down the slope up the ridge there is yet another section of the graveyard containing ancient graves. The figures carved on the tombs here are again different from those seen in other sections. However, two tombs specially deserve mention. One of them has the figures of a horse, three peacocks and a shield carved on the western slab. The grave itself is bigger in size than those in the surrounding area and follows the superterranean burial system. The rest of stone slabs of this tomb also have geometrical and floral patterns carved on them. The most important tomb in the graveyard lies in the extreme western direction. On its upper slab are carved a peacock with a snake in its bill and alongside it, in

History on Tombstones

sharp outline, is a sunflower. Because of this beautifully carved, unique design, this slab has no parallel in any Sindh graveyard. Only the slabs of Gallugha tombs in Kharan district, exceptionally rich in design and ornamentation, can stand comparison with it. The peacock theme is repeated on Jam Ali tombs in Johi Taluka, district Dadu, with the difference that the images are painted and not carved.

In the rest of the sections of this graveyard the stone tombs are of identical character with nothing extraordinary about them. As elsewhere, they bear drawings of various weapons, ornaments and flowers.

One of the nearby caves serves as the abode of an aged crocodile which is wholly docile such as one finds in Mangho Pir near Karachi. Strangely enough it has a human name, Moti Faqir. When someone goes over to the mouth of the cave and shouts its name, Moti creeps out sluggishly and devours the offering, usually a lump of meat, and then quietly retires. The cave, which is the home of the recluse crocodile, is a long one and ends in a pond near the tomb of Sheikh Jakhro. The fact that the crocodile knows its name, and readily responds to the call of the friendly visitors, has given rise to the legend that it is a spirit in the form of a crocodile.

Making of offerings to the crocodile forms part of superstitious rites prevalent among the unlettered folk. According to popular belief, the acceptance of a person's offering by Moti Faqir is an indication that his or her wish will be fulfilled. One may recall that in Bangladesh there are places where offerings in the form of fowl are made to crocodiles.

Curious to know about Moti Faqir, this writer once went over to the mouth of the said cave and called it by name. Soon the friendly crocodile appeared, drenched in water, with its huge toothy mouth wide open. True to its name, Moti Faqir is a thoroughly gentle creature and people

say it has never hurt any human being or animal except on one occasion when a foolish person tried to cut down the tree in the shade of which the crocodile was often found taking rest during hot summer days.

It is only in winter that Moti quits its secluded home and wanders about in the wider expanse of the Indus River, which is only a furlong away. The change of abode is perhaps due to fall in water level in the cave as water level in the Indus itself subsides during the winter.

The tribes which inhabit the adjoining villages are Kandhara, Mirbahar, Paliya, Jakhra, Pallari, Khashkheli and Sheikhs. On the eastern side of this graveyard there stand two hillocks of historical interest, called Manjira Buthis. Buthi in Sindhi either means a grave or a raised platform. On the top of one of the hillocks there is a dry well and heaps of red bricks scattered all over. Manjira, as referred to by people living nearby, is probably the corruption of Manjhi Rai, the name of a local tribal chief, whose beautiful daughter was kidnapped by a notorious thief, Khapro Khatōri.

KHORE TOMBS

In mountainous regions, deserts and the coastal areas of Sindh lived people, nomadic or semi-nomadic, in peaceful co-existence with the settled populations, but always maintaining their own distinct ways of life. Much of the history of these people is a mystery to us. Most of them left no written record, and for knowledge of their history we must rely on the accounts of the more civilized people, who might not have understood the people they were writing about. Some accounts were perhaps based on mere hearsay. Though independent, these people did not live in isolation. Constant contacts and exchanges among these fringe tribes themselves can be seen in their art. For instance, the Jokhias, Kalhoras and Kalmatis copied motifs and styles from one another and from many other sources. All these tribes eventually succumbed to invaders. But while their leaders or chiefs might have been killed by the conquerors, the ordinary people often continued to live in much the same way as before. They were absorbed by new settlers but in some cases the old tribal traditions survived.

Very little is known about the history, religion and organisation of the people who called themselves Kalhora. They were originally called "Lattas" or "Letties" and one of their branches, popularly known as Abbasi, became the ruling

family of Bahawalpur and the other is known as "Daud-potra". Their chiefs were addressed as Mian and Serai and commanded respect as religious heads. Their followers humbly described themselves as "Faqirs". They were basically agriculturists but were followed by people belonging to warrior tribes, such as the Baluch, Khosas and Brahuis.

The Kalhoras were great builders and are reputed to have built a number of towns in Sindh as their capitals. Khudabad, Muradabad, Allahabad, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Shahabad are some of the names they gave to the newly founded capitals besides establishing new ports, such as Shah Bunder, Vikker and Karachi. More than three huge cemeteries containing numerous Kalhora tomb structures survive in Dadu, Hyderabad and Nawabshah districts of Sindh.

The most famous necropolis attributed to them is "Khore Tombs" which lies in the Nai Ganj plains in the Johi tehsil of Dadu district. Spread over an area of twenty acres the graveyard is dotted with house-tombs. Impressive even in their ruined state, the tomb structures are the best among the other surviving monuments to the power and achievements of the Kalhora chiefs of Sindh. Stone was sparingly used, except for columns and doorways, and the main walls were built of burnt and mud bricks. Since the unfired bricks of the outer walls have been washed away the foundations of many structures have developed cracks. Still, some of the tombs are well-preserved. While most of the tombs reflect the common, simple burial style of the Muslims, three have been fashioned differently and their interior decorated with figures and representations of animals, birds, happy processions, dancing troupes and floral designs. The interior decoration of the tomb number one depicts a procession of soldiers, courtiers, servants and dancing women — apparently Rajput women in Mughal attire. The figures are life-like and bear important details of the costumes, ornaments and weapons popular in the period. The lower wall paintings depict some jars along with lamps symbolizing some sacred objects of

History on Tombstones

religious significance.

In tomb number two there is a peculiar painting of two lions facing each other. Some of the monuments display features of construction not seen before. Most of the domed tombs have a square building plan and the normal style of circular, rectangular or polygonal plan is almost missing, with the exception of a tomb which has a conical tower instead of a domed top. The interior of this tomb was sealed off on all sides. Conical towers constructed on tombs elsewhere are normally in two storeys, a reminder of the burial ritual of the nomads of Central Asia, who used to carry out the ceremony in two stages. The Huns as well as Seljuks are known to have built such tomb-towers. The tombtower corresponded to a funeral tent and its lower part was utilised for the burial of the body. The tomb invariably appears like the tent of a nomad from Central Asia. No tomb in this cemetery has glazed bricks or tiles inside or outside. This type of funeral monument, crowned with a conical tower, is frequently seen in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Egypt.

The strangest feature of the tombs here is the wall paintings in the two front-row tombs, because these tombs were constructed in a period when the tribes had abandoned the un-Islamic practices of decorating tombs with human and animal figures. Besides, nowhere else have such paintings been found on Kalhora tombs.

The Khore wall paintings depict dancing girls, wrestling bouts, processions and colourful boats sailing in the sea. As regards the quality of painting the following remarks by a celebrated art critic should suffice:

“The painters were giants in execution. Even on the walls some of the lines, drawn with one sweep of brush, strike one as wonderful. Delicate curves have been traced with equal precision on the horizontal surface of the ceiling. The skill (of the painters) appears

to the onlooker as nothing less than miraculous. No better examples could be placed before a student of Sindhi art. The art lives. Faces laugh and weep, limbs move with freedom and grace, flowers bloom, birds soar, and the beasts spring, fight or bear burden."

This is strange since no great school of painting appears to have flourished in Sindh in this period. And no picture of worth has come down to us. The Arghuns and the Tarkhan rulers of Sindh, no doubt, took keen interest in the arts but that was limited to ornamentation of stone slabs and tiles which were utilized in funeral monuments. It is a fact that the Mughal kings encouraged the arts and under their liberal patronage grew up what is known as the Mughal school. The Muslims very naturally introduced Persian forms into Indian paintings. Some of the miniatures painted by artists of the Mughal school are valued all over the world. They have also produced charming works of harmony between colour and line.

But in Sindh there was no trace of the art of painting which flourished during the Mughal period at Delhi, Agra and Lahore. No painting of any fame is known to have come from Sindh though there were a number of calligraphists and sculptors who were in the employment of the rulers at Thatta, Bhakkar and Sehwan.

Royal patronage of painting, which commenced with Akbar and continued under Jehangir and Shah Jehan, declined during the reign of Aurangzeb, who was hostile to the arts. The painters disappeared from the Mughal court and most of them were reduced to starvation. Many of them, however, found their way to the courts of Hindu princes of Rajputana where they received a ready welcome. Under the patronage of these princes the painters developed what is now known as the Rajput school of painting. The themes of the painters of the Rajput school were drawn largely either from Hindu epics or the court scenes of the Mughals. Following the Mughal

tradition they also painted the portraits of kings and queens. The best works of Rajput painting have come mainly from Jaipur.

The paintings seen on the walls of Muslim tombs at Khore clearly belong to the Rajput school. But how and why could such paintings be used for interior decoration of the Muslim tombs, especially when the tombs were known to be those of Kalhoras, who were deeply religious and had a large following as religious leaders?

The only possible explanation could be that the two tombs containing wall paintings do not belong to Muslim who had been killed there in the battle between the Mughal forces and the Kalhora chief, Mian Yar Mohammad, but to Rajput generals Udhey Singh and Sooraj Mal, who were also killed at the site and were buried in Muslim fashion. Later on, when peace had been declared on both sides, it appears that by mutual arrangement or under a royal directive, tomb monuments were raised to commemorate the heroism of the Rajput warriors, and a number of artists of the Rajput school were sent here to decorate the interior of the tombs. Even otherwise, some of the conical structures constructed here could not have been the work of local masons since the layout, design and type of structure raised here definitely do not resemble any building style existing in Sindh.

The rest of the tomb-structures bear no paintings.

Local people have no knowledge about the tombs excepting that they belong to Mirs (rulers) of Sindh. However, the history of Sindh contains some relevant references here and there which throw considerable light on facts relating to these tombs. The common version is as follows:

After the death of Mian Nasir Mohammad Kalhora, Mian Deen Mohammad became the head of Kalhora Faqirs who were on a warpath against the tribal chief of Panhwars as

well as the governors of Bhakkar and Sibi. Mian Deen Mohammad captured Fatehpur and put the Panhwars on the run, who carried their complaints to the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb Alamgir. A royal decree was issued against the Kalhora Faqirs, and Mirza Pani, the Governor of Sibi, received orders to collect the troops of Bhakkar and annihilate the Kalhora rebels, but he failed to achieve the objective. Then Mir Sheikh Jehan was sent from Delhi along with Pir Panhwar and selected troops. The Kalhora Faqirs, who had already been alerted, organised a night attack on the Mughal camp and killed Mir Sheikh Jehan, and the Bhakkar troops fled. These victories gave the Faqirs some respite from constant wars. The Panhwar tribes thereafter remained subdued and finally were obliged to submit, and became subject to the Faqirs who had now only to fight with the Afghans of Sibi and Shikarpur.

The news of the death of Sheikh Jehan and the flight of Allahyar Khan, Governor of Bhakkar, forced Shahzada Moizuddin to march from Lahore to Sindh. Mian Deen Mohammad sent his younger brother, Mian Mir Mohammad, with Kassim, Vakil of Bhakkar, to welcome the prince en-route and explain the circumstances under which a surprise night attack had been led by a section of the Faqirs. Mian Mir Mohammad, after meeting the prince, fully apprised him of the facts and the prince being satisfied returned to Mathella. Maqsooda Faqir, one of the Kalhora warriors, was not happy with the peace terms arrived at between Mian Mir Mohammad and Prince Moizuddin and he was of the view that a tough line should have been adopted with the Mughal rulers. Without consulting anybody or taking leave for his intended action, he took a body of men and plundered Mathella and its suburbs, and after murdering a few persons in the process returned to his abode. On hearing this, Prince Moizuddin was enraged and marched back to Sindh. Mian Deen Mohammad, who did not have the means to face the mighty army of the prince, retired towards the desert. The prince on reaching Johi destroyed Garhie, the headquarter town of Kalhoras,

and asked Mian Deen Mohammad to surrender. Otherwise, he threatened to wipe out the Kalhoras and their followers altogether. Mian Deen Mohammad, on the guarantee of pardon given to him by the prince, surrendered and he was taken prisoner. The prince in the meantime detached a strong force to capture the family members of Mian Deen Mohammad. Mian Yar Mohammad collected his followers and a bloody battle was fought at Khore near Nai Ganj, a torrential river in Johi tehsil of Dadu district. The army of the prince was led by Rajput and Khatri warriors of repute. Both sides fought bravely to the point of madness. The exact number of casualties may probably never be known but a large number of well-known warriors on both sides were killed. The army of the prince was ultimately defeated and only a few soldiers survived to convey the tale of the calamity to the prince at Sehwan. The prince, when told of the result of the battle, became panicky and hurriedly retired to Multan along with his caged prisoner, Mian Deen Mohammad, who died there after some time.

The Rajput generals who lost their lives in this battle were Raja Surajmal Udhepuri, Rai Udhey Singh Khatri and Raja Gaj Singh Bhatti, the most notable warriors of the Mughal army. On the Kalhora side also some most noted warriors were killed, such as Tajo Faqir, Jado Faqir, Bakhtiar Faqir, Othwal Faqir, and many others.

The Mughal army having suffered defeat hurriedly retreated to Sehwan without even caring to bury or carry the dead bodies of their warriors. In fact the Mughal army was hardly prepared for such a tragic result. It was expecting the brother of the Kalhora chief to surrender himself and hand over the members of Mian Deen Mohammad's family.

Soon after the retreat of the army of Prince Moizuddin, the Kalhora chief ordered that all those who had been slain in the battle be given a befitting burial like martyrs, that is, burial exactly at the spot where a warrior had fallen. The

Rajputs who had been killed and their bodies were found there were buried in the Muslim fashion regardless of the fact that they were non-Muslims.

Mian Yar Mohammad, who sought refuge at Kalat, at a later period submitted. The decline of the imperial government was now becoming more and more manifest and compromise was the only way left. Yar Mohammad was pardoned, even received into favour and honoured with the governorship of Derajat. He also received the title of Khuda Yar Khan. One of his early acts after thus acquiring a legitimate position of authority was to found the third Kalhora capital of Khudabad, about 25 kilometres north-west of Sehwan. The age of lawlessness in Kalhora history had come to an end. Yar Mohammad now paid attention to the construction of the capital. Along with this project Mian Yar Mohammad engaged a number of artisans for building memorials to the warriors who had fallen in the battle of Khore, the battle which established the power of Kalhoras in Sindh. While he undertook the construction of tombs of Kalhora warriors at Khore he received instruction from the Mughal court to honour the Rajput warriors who had been killed there and for that purpose a number of masons and artisans were despatched by the descendants of the Rajputs lying there. Those who had been buried in Muslim fashion were adorned with paintings of the Rajput school.

MAKLI TOMBS

A great necropolis occupying the northern portion of the Makli hill lies at a distance of about two kilometres from Thatta. The population of this city of the dead has been estimated at one million. The entire five-kilometre stretch of the Makli hill is dotted with an infinite variety of mausolea, sepulchres, vaulted domes, arches, towers, porticos and gateways which rise in a long succession above shapeless heaps and mounds.

It is impossible to guess when the Makli hill first began to be used as a cemetery. The place was evidently invested with a vague sacredness from a very early time. The Samma Jams had their capital "Samui" just below the northern end of the hill. The famous Jam Tamachi's tomb, along with that of Noori, the fisherman's daughter whom he made his queen, lies nearby. With the tomb of Jam Nando Nizamuddin we enter recorded history. This tomb, which represents a distinctly Hindu design and style of architecture, was built in 1508 A.D. The experts are of the opinion that a large part of the material used in this tomb was taken from some old and magnificent Hindu temple, and there is a tradition that such a temple did exist.

In fact the very name 'Makli' suggests the existence of the ancient temple of "Mahakali" from which the present

term seems to have been derived. A number of other theories have been put forward to explain the origin of the name 'Makli', but none of these sounds convincing.

Thatta has been the capital of the lower Sindh since the time of the Sammas, but its architectural glory started with the Tarkhan rulers. The mausoleum of Mirza Isa Tarkhan is built entirely of stone but that of his son, Mohammad Baqi, and all the subsequent tombs of distinction are built of glazed tiles and brick masonry of a very superior order. Many of the edifices, the tombs of Amirs, Jams and Begs, were completed after years and years of patient labour.

The interiors of the tombs are almost wholly covered with carvings which consist largely of texts from the Holy Quran in Arabic or Persian script. The exterior of many tombs is of buffcoloured stone elaborately and exquisitely carved. Some tombs consist of heavy marble canopies supported by light columns and sheltering a parallel line of tomb-stones. Whether carved, stained or glazed, the tombs look as if these are enamelled structures and the inscriptions in large letters upon a dark purple background are most impressive. In their pristine glory these mausolea could have been taken for luxury houses.

The principal tombs are those of Mirza Jani Beg (1599), Mirza Ghazi Beg (1612), Mirza Isa Tarkhan II (1644), Mirza Tughrul Beg, Diwan Shurfu Khan (1638), Amir Khalil Khan (1580), Mirza Isa Tarkhan (1573), Jam Nizamuddin (1508), and Syed Amir Shirazi (1572).

Among thousands of other Nawabs, Syeds, and warriors buried on the Makli hill are Qazi Abdullah, Abdullah Shah Sahafi, Sheikh Himad Jamali, Sultan Samtiya, Mirza Baqi, Sheikh Jiyo, and Sheikh Bhirkayo.

Since these splendid memorials are not covered by the subject of our present inquiry, we revert to the description of

tombs falling within the scope of this work, i.e. tombs bearing drawings of men, horses and ornaments.

Tabrizi Tomb

Tabrizi tomb is an interesting cenotaph on which are carved figures along with an inscription disclosing the date of the death of the person buried there. The cenotaph itself is of yellow Jungshahi sandstone, 16 feet high. Its top portion is divided into two panels of different dimensions with a circular hole in its uppermost surface. The upper part contains a lotus flower in low relief girdled by a chain of pearls. The lower panel, measuring 2x3 feet, bears a conical tree at the base of which are two goats holding some twigs of plants in heraldic fashion. The other animals are poised above the goats. On the upper part of the conical tree are perched a couple of ducks. On the top of the tree are two peacocks facing each other in flying posture while holding a curious object. The upper part of the panel is bordered by a pair of petalled rosette.

The southern extremity of the cenotaph panel contains an inscription in Persian language which reads, 'The sparrow of the garden of paradise, Nur-al-din Mohammad, son of Shah Mansur Hakim Tabrizi, died on 25th of the sacred month of Zilhaj in the year nine hundred and forty eight (April 1542 A.D.)' Tabriz, at present the capital of the Iranian province of Azerbaijan, went through a severe political upheaval in the latter half of the 15th century after the overthrow of the Turkish-Iranian ruling dynasty in 906 A.H./1500 A.D. by the Safavi ruler, Shah Ismail. The change led to sectarian conflict as two-thirds of its population happened to be Sunni. It is probable that many families fled Tabriz to escape the turbulence.

Sindh's rulers, especially the Sammas, Arghuns and Tarhans, were generous in patronising the immigrants; particularly those who were learned and well-versed in arts and warfare. Shah Mansur Hakim Tabrizi may have been living in

Thatta in 1542 during the rule of Shah Hasan Arghun. The memorial left behind by him has much to tell us about the migration of an old Turkish art symbol.

The most interesting feature of the cenotaph is the conical tree flanked by birds and animals. Undoubtedly, the tree represents the tree of life, which is a symbol of immortality and has been presented as such throughout the ages. The palm was selected as a symbol of eternal life of Zoroaster since this tree remains permanently green. This motif was also commonly used on silk cloth from the early Islamic era. Some experts hold that this symbol was borrowed from old sari silk on which it is still used as a decorative design. Whatever its origin the date tree has always been considered an Islamic symbol. We may safely conclude that the choice of the life tree for the tomb is an expression of the yearning for paradise. This is perhaps the reason the motif persistently recurs in Islamic art. For example, the date tree constitutes the main symbol on currency notes and coins in many Muslim countries.

Tarkhan Tomb

Adjacent to the tomb of Mohammad Baqi Tarkhan there is a domed canopy sheltering the grave of one Badi-al-Zaman Tarkhan. The interior of the dome as well as its eight supporting columns bear carved floral and geometrical designs. Its structure, which is completely devoid of arches, shows a strong influence of Hindu architecture which tradition prevails throughout graveyard structures in Sindh.

Set in the north-western column of the tomb is a tablet (measuring a foot and a quarter square) which carries in relief the stylized figure of a peacock holding a snake in its peak. Another tablet of the same size on the opposite column bears in relief two birds facing each other. The same figure is repeated on the stone tablet above the capital of two columns on the eastern side.

The southern extremity of the tombstone has an in-

scription in Persian which reads: "Died the pitied, the forgiven, who attained the protection of the most gracious king, Badi-al-Zaman, son of Shah Rukh Khan, in the year 11 (1011 A.H./1602-03 A.D.).

The bird and snake motif has been a universal symbol since ancient times. It is considered a victory symbol, depicting the triumph of good over evil. This symbol appears on pottery and stones of the earliest civilizations in the Elam and in the Indus Valley. A steatite pendant discovered at Harappa depicts an eagle with two snakes placed symmetrically above its wings.

The bird-serpent struggle in Zoroastrian lore represents a conflict between the forces of light and darkness. Similarly, in the Indian mythology this symbol represents a continuous conflict between the heavenly and worldly forces. The bird here is Garuda which is the vehicle used by Vishnu. In Chinese Turkistan and throughout Central Asia, this symbol has frequently been seen in frescoes and funerary art of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D..

This motif of the bird of prey, whether a falcon, a peacock or a double-headed eagle, holding a snake in its claws, is popularly believed to be a Buddhist symbol. In Turkish paintings the episode of Adam and Eve being tempted by Satan is represented in the form of a serpent watched by an eagle and a peacock.

THE NECROPOLIS OF THE BEGLARS

About 65 kilometres north-east of Hyderabad on the Tando Allahyar — Tando Adam Road, in a small village now called Miyan Wahyun, is located a necropolis where are lying buried the illustrious members of the Beglars. Its ancient name, as recorded by early writers, such as Idraki and Qane, was Turki. The necropolis now has, among others, 12 stray graves with stone cenotaphs having Arabic and Persian inscriptions bearing historical information; three 'chhatris' (umbrellas) now in ruin, and the remains of a tower called "Margh Munara". The inscriptions on at least nine graves, executed in superb calligraphy, record events connected with local history or the persons buried there:

The Beglar family played an important role in the socio-political history of southern Sindh during the rule of the Arghuns, Tarkhans and the early Mughals. Their contribution was not confined to the battlefield, where they displayed fine qualities of gallantry, bravery and swordsmanship, but extended to art and literature. Their courts were a rendezvous for poets, scholars, historians and litterateurs who not only wrote panegyrics to their patrons but also recorded the history of their time. Idraki Beglari, for instance, is one of those whose two works, *Masnavi Chānesar Namah* and the *Beglar Namah*, provide detailed and much needed infor-

mation about the Beglar family.

The Family of the Beglars

Syed Qasim Beglar, the founder of the family, belonged to a respectable Syed house which traced its descent from the fourth pious Caliph, Ali bin Abu Talib.

According to Idraki and Qane, Syed Qasim's forefathers originally lived in Tabriz. One of his ancestors, Syed Nazim al-Din 'Ali, migrated to Samarkand and then to Khiva in the territory of Turkistan. There the Beglars developed intimate relations with the Arghuns. The relationship between the families was universally known, so much so that they have at times been styled Arghuns by various authorities. In fact, in some of the inscriptions on their graves, they have been referred to as Arghun Beglar, or only as Arghun.

Amir Syed Qasim Beglar migrated to Sindh in the reign of Shah Hasan Arghun (some time after 928 A.H./1521 A.D.). Due to close connections between the families of Arghuns and Belgars at Samarkand and because Syed Qasim himself was a well-known general and experienced diplomat, Shah Hasan Arghun received him with great honour and granted him Jahija in jagir. He married the daughter of a Bhatti chieftain, Rana Katra Wairsi. He served the Arghun ruler for more than twentyfive years with devotion and became his most trusted courtier. During the conflict between the Arghuns and the Mughal emperor Humayun, Qasim played an important role and led an Arghun army to check the Mughal forces. According to details recorded by Idraki and Ali Sher Qane, Amir Qasim was killed during this encounter and his body was handed over to Rana Wairsi, ruler of Amarkot, to be buried in the graveyard at Turki.

It was, however, the son of Amir Qasim, Shah Abdul Qasim Khan Zaman, who played a more important role in the socio-political affairs of Sindh during the reign of Shah Hasan Arghun and, later, of the early Tarkhans. According to Idraki

and Mir Ali Sher, Abdul Qasim was born in 947 A.H./1540 A.D. and, after the death of his illustrious father, was brought up under the patronage of Shah Hasan.

Abdul Qasim Khan Zaman was 15 years old when Shah Hasan Arghun died in 962 A.H./1555 A.D. and Mirza Isa succeeded him as the first ruler of the Tarkhan dynasty. Khan Zaman joined the service of the new ruler and soon became one of the most influential men at the Tarkhan court. After the death of Mirza Isa, a war of succession ensued between his two sons, Jan Baba and Baqi Beg, in which Khan Zaman supported the cause of Jan Baba and fought many battles on his behalf. Later on, however, a compromise was arrived at and Mirza Baqi succeeded to the throne. By then, the position of Khan Zaman as a capable general and resourceful administrator had been established. Mirza Baqi Beg, therefore, had to win his favour. He invited Khan Zaman to enter his service and granted him Nasarpur in jagir.

The year 999 A.H./1590 A.D. witnessed the Mughal army invading the Tarkhan territories in southern Sindh under the command of Mirza Abdul Rahim Khan Khanan. During these catastrophic days, which saw the end of the independent rule of the Tarkhans, Khan Zaman played important role in averting the danger and participated in various encounters against the Mughal forces. His resourcefulness impressed Khan Khanan very much and when Khan Zaman visited the imperial court along with Jani Beg, he was received with royal favour. It was on the recommendation of Khan Khanan that Khan Zaman was made responsible for the administration of Thatta and its environs with Amir Khusr Khan Charkas.

Contemporary as well as later authorities on the history of Sindh have recorded the achievements of Khan Zaman not only as a great general and a capable administrator but also as a patron of arts and letters. During the long period of his authority, his main concern was to do as much as possible for

the welfare of his people. It was through his constant endeavour that the ta'alluqa of Nasarpur, the headquarters of the Beglars, became prosperous and one of the most important places in southern Sindh. In 1011 A.H./1602 A.D. he built a fort near Kanbait and rehabilitated an old mosque there, appointed an Inam and established a madressah with arrangements for free education and board and lodging for the students. Among the other notable buildings constructed by him was a minaret erected on the grave of his favourite horse, 'Margha', in his family graveyard. Only its remains exist now. Idraki records the features of this minaret and its adjacent buildings:

"On the grave of that horse has erected a tall minaret at the village of Turki on the bank of 'Sangra'. It has been named "Margh Munara". It is a grand edifice known for its tall column and strong fortress."

Tahir Nisyani has given a detailed account of political events of these years in which the members of the Beglar family played a significant rôle. In fact, the history of southern Sindh during the earlier decades of the 11th century Hijri is replete with the political manoeuvrings of the Beglars who were responsible, to a great extent, for many political developments, especially during the latter days of the rule of the Tarkhans.

It was not, however, only in political or military fields that the contribution of the Beglars was significant. In times of peace also they contributed a great deal to the welfare of the local people. Their court was a haven for men of learning and arts. Their contribution to architectural achievements of their time also was not small. The remains of the ruined fort near Nasarpur and, more significantly, the family graveyard are evidence of their interest in architecture.

The Necropolis

A substantial area, measuring 450 feet by 340 feet, lying

to the east of the main habitation of the village, is covered with historical graves and some other structures of religious nature. The main necropolis contains more than fifty graves of which twelve are of special interest, as they are crowned with stone cenotaphs decorated with Arabic and Persian inscriptions of the usual Thatta type. The cenotaphs are made of rectangular slabs of yellow sandstone and are arranged in three or four tiers, one upon the other. The lower tiers are flat slabs with carved decoration on the exposed side, while the main top tiers have carving on all sides — floral, geometrical as well as inscriptional. The Persian inscriptions mainly record the name of the person buried and the date of his death. The surface has been divided into various registers and crotchets. The style of carving on these cenotaphs, their arrangement, their material, etc., reminds us of the workmanship found on the cenotaphs of graves at Makli hill near Thatta.

A close study of these inscriptions and other decorations carved on these cenotaphs reveals many interesting facts. It appears that, in those days, there was a sort of a guild, probably located at Thatta, where calligraphists and stone-carvers were busy in preparing carved cenotaphs for graves. The system must have been to carve the Quranic verses on the appropriate surface of the cenotaphs and leave blank spaces to be filled in later with the name, the date of death, and other details of the person on whose grave the cenotaph was to be fixed. This is borne out by two facts: first, the Quranic verses carved on these cenotaphs and their arrangement in crotchets and compartments are almost the same in all cases. This is particularly significant on the cenotaphs of the Beglars. Secondly, the poor quality of the writing and carving of the Persian inscriptions suggests that they are later additions in which the same care and precision were not observed as in the case of the Arabic inscriptions, and also that they were executed by a calligraphist other than the one who had carved the Arabic inscriptions.

The following description of the inscriptions and other decorations carved on the cenotaphs of various graves has been arranged choronologically.

Description of the Cenotaphs

Grave No. 1

This is the grave of Syed Qasim Beglar, the founder of the family. In the usual style, it is crowned with a beautiful cenotaph measuring 6 feet 2 inches by one foot 5 inches by one foot 5 inches, constructed in four tiers of yellow sandstone. The second lower tier has a carved facing of interlaced tracery divided into two horizontal bands, the lower being a fret pattern and the upper, floral, pattern consists of a row of eight small but fullblown petalled lotus flowers in high relief, placed within a row of crestings, much of which has been damaged. All the four sides of the main cenotaph and its top carry inscriptions, both Quranic and non-Quranic. The two Persian inscriptions, giving historical details, are carved on the northern and southern sides, while the other sides and the top have Quranic inscriptions. For this purpose, the surface has been divided into six large crotchets and six small compartments, separated by a chain of inter-twined circles, while the broad border all round has rows of alternately sunk chequers, a chain of diamond-shaped quarternaries and mouldings of lotus petals. Similarly, the base has two superimposed rows of lotus petals. The two upper and lower crotchets have the 'Ayat al-Kursi carved in bold 'naskh' characters. The smaller compartments on the corners have twelve-petalled lotus flowers with a boss in the centre. The two smaller compartments, between those having lotuses, record the four attributes of Allah, two in each, on one side, and the name of the calligraphist, Firuz b. Tayyar (?) on the right, and the date: Rajab al-Murajjab 990 (?) on the left. The top of the cenotaph has a similar arrangement in which verses of the Quran have been carved. A crown carved in high relief towards the head takes the shape of a somewhat trefoil arch.

On the south, within a square sunk field with four full-blown twelve-petalled lotuses and the usual decorative margins, the following inscription is executed in two lines in bold 'naskh':

"The death of the deceased and pardoned Mir Syed Qasim Beglar (occurred) in the month of Ramazan 950 A.H."

On the north the surface has been divided into nine compartments of various sizes. The corners have lotuses in bold relief while the other compartments have interlaced tracery of alternately sunk chequers and fret work. The broad margin has a scheme of decoration similar to that on the other sides. The following inscription in the central compartment is carved in six lines in 'nasta'liq' characters:

"The death of the pardoned one, the chosen of the family of Taha and Yasin, the great Amir Syed Qasim Beglar, son of deceased Mir Abuka Beg (who) passed away from this temporary world to that world of everlasting abode in the month of Rabi al-Awwal, 954 A.H.."

Grave No.II

This is the grave of Rafa Bega, daughter of Sultan Muqim Arghun, who was the third son of Abul Qasim Khan Zaman. The stone cenotaph, five feet seven inches by one foot one inch by one foot four inches, has the usual carved inscriptions on all sides arranged in traditional fashion. The northern, eastern and western sides and the top have Quranic verses (Surah al-Tur) in exquisite 'naskh' script. The top has a trefoil arch motif towards the head within which is placed a full-blown lotus. The southern side bears the Persian inscription recording the name of the lady buried there and the date of her demise. The Persian inscription is carved in rough 'nasta'liq' characters in six lines, probably the work of some

History on Tombstones

local calligraphist or stone-carver. No contemporary or later historian, or biographer has recorded information about the lady who died in 1017 A.H./1609 A.D. The text of the inscription is as follows:

“The date of the demise of the pious and sanctified lady, Rafa Bega, daughter of Sultan Muqim Arghun Beglar, on Yakshamba in the month of Zil Hajj 1017 A.H./Saturday, March, 1609, A.D. when she was sixteen years of age. She gave her life to the divine angels according to the decree of God”.

Grave No. III

This is the grave of the second Beglar chief, Amir Shah Qasim Khan. The stone cenotaph of the grave, measuring 6 feet 8 inches by 1 foot 4½ inches by 1 foot 5 inches, has been carved elaborately in the same decorative style as that found on the grave of his father, except that on the north is carved a Tughra of the Kalima within a border made of quaternary diamonds. The Tughra has been carved in exquisite calligraphy by a calligraphist named Mahmud, while the other two sides bear various verses from the Quran. The surface has been divided into twelve crotchets of equal size, arranged in three lines, superimposed on each other and six small compartments, three on each side. Those at the corners have full-blown sixteen-petal lotuses and those at the centre have a fret motif. The crotchets have been divided by a chain made of intertwined circles carved in high relief. The margin has a band containing a diamondshaped chain, while the bottom of the cenotaph possesses foliage of lotus petals.

The Persian inscription, recording historical details, has been carved on the south within the broad border of the decorative scheme, similar to those on the other sides. The inscription, executed in chaste ‘nasta’liq’ in five lines, is rather unusually precise in recording the date, day and time of the sad demise. It reads as under:

“On Monday, the 14th of the month of Ramazan 1019 A.H. in the afternoon, Amir Shah Qasim Khan Arghun Beglar, who was the Hatim of his time and the bravest of his days, passed away from this temporary abode to that everlasting world, (written by) Mahmud.”

The surface at the top has been divided into compartments of varying sizes. The central compartments, six in number, have different verses from the Quran carved in bold ‘naskh’ characters, while the margin and the rectangular spaces at the top and bottom have twelve Persian couplets arranged in crotchets imploring the visitor to pray to God for the salvation of the deceased.

Grave No. IV

This is the grave of Mir Sher Beg, son of Mir Ali Sher Arghun, who, according to the inscription on the cenotaph measuring 5 feet 2 inches by one foot 2½ inches and one foot two inches, was killed in battle on the 11th Ramazan 1020 A.H. The northern side of the cenotaph has an exquisite Tughra of the Kalima carved in bold relief within a broad double margin of flat space and a chain of diamonds placed within those flat lines; while the east and west sides have twelve (six on each side) crotchets and twelve small (three on each side of the crotchets) compartments. The corner compartments have the usual lotuses and the compartments in between have geometric patterns. The margin has a chain of diamonds all round except the bottom which has foliage of lotus petals. The crotchets on the two sides are filled with Quranic verses from the Surah alMulk and the top from Surah al-Nur carved in bold ‘naskh’ characters. The Persian inscription carved on the south side in bold ‘nasta’liq’ reads as under:

“Mir Sher Beg, son of Mir Ali Sher Arghun, died on Monday in the afternoon on the 11th Ramazan, 1020 A.H. He was killed on the battlefield and achieved the exalted place of martyrdom.”

Grave No. V

This is the grave of Mir Abul Qasim, son of Shah Qasim Khan Beglar, who died in 1034 A.H. The east, west and the top of the cenotaph, measuring 5 feet 10½ inches by 1 foot 3½ inches by 1 foot 3½ inches, have the usual arrangement of crotchets in which the Ayat al-Kursi, Surah al-Mulk and a few other Surahs from the Quran have been carved in bold 'naskh' characters within a border of triangles arranged in rows. The crotchets have been divided by means of a chain made of intertwined circles carved in bold relief. The four corner-compartments have the usual twelve-petal lotuses and the compartments in between them bear floral motifs. The Persian inscription on the south is carved in bold 'nasta'liq' in three lines within a border of diamonds arranged in a chain. The text reads:

"The date of the demise of Mir Abul Qasim son of Shah Qasim Khan Beglar 1034 A.H."

Grave No. VI

This is the grave of Amir Shukr Beg, son of Sultan Qasim. The east and west sides of the cenotaph, measuring five feet two inches by one foot two inches by one foot two inches, have the six crotchets and three small compartments on each side. The main crotchets have the Surah al-Mulk and Ayat alKursi while the four corner-compartments have the twelvepetal lotuses and the central ones some attributes of God. The bottom and the side margins have foliage of lotus petals. The northern sides of the squares are superimposed on each other by means of a chain of intertwined circles. The four corner squares have lotus flowers while the other bear Quranic verses. The southern side also has the same plan except for a carved Persian inscription.

The margin has been decorated with broad chevrons. The top of the cenotaph has been divided into various compartments of different sizes. One of the central compartments, towards the head, has a crown consisting of a

trefoil arch with a full-blown lotus in the centre.

Grave No. VII

This is the grave of some unidentified religious personage who, according to the Persian inscription carved in indifferent 'nasta'liq', died in the city of Lahore on Monday, the 22nd Rajab, 1102 A.H./21st April 1691 A.D. It is interesting to note that the person, who must have been an important figure, died at Lahore and was brought all the way to this place to be buried. The monolith of the cenotaph, measuring 5 feet 1½ inches by 1 foot 2 inches by 1 foot 2 inches, bears verses from the Quran carved on the top, east and west sides in bold 'naskh' characters within a broad margin decorated with a tracery of floral pattern. The lower tier, on which the cenotaph is placed, is decorated with lotus foliage. The north side has a Tughra of Bismillah and the Kalima carved in bold but indifferent lettering on a slightly sunk field within a broad flat border. The south side has two Persian inscriptions carved in 'nasta'liq'. The square central space has the following inscription in four lines:

"The date of the death of who passed away from this world to the eternal abode in the city of Lahore on Monday the 22nd Rajab 1102 A.H. at the middle hours between the sunrise and the meridian."

Grave No. VIII

This is the grave of Mirza Beg son of Mirza Jan Beg Arghun who died in 1124 A.H./1702 A.D. The monolith of the cenotaph, measuring 5 feet 5 inches by 1 foot 4½ inches by 1 foot 9 inches, now damaged and broken into two pieces, carries an exquisite specimen of Quranic calligraphy. The Surah al-Mulk and some other verses have been carved in elegant 'naskh'. The whole surface on the top, east and west has been divided into crotchets and compartments. There are nine crotchets in three lines superimposed one upon the other on all sides and three small square compartments of

which the corner ones have 15-petal full-blown lotuses while the central one has been filled with a fret-work design. The crotchets and compartments have been divided by a chain made of intertwined circles. The border has broad running lines of foliage and chevrons at the bottom. The outer space of the lower tier on which the monolith is placed has a quadruplex of quadrant diamonds. On the north side is carved a Tughra of the Kalima within a border with a foliage decoration, while the south side has the Persian inscription, in fair 'nasta'liq', in three lines within a broad border of three rows of quadrant diamonds, the right side of which has been left unfinished:

“On Friday the 24th Safar 1124 A.H. Mirza Beg
son of Mirza Jan Beg Arghun died.”

Grave No. IX

This is the grave of the other son of Mirza Jan Beg Arghun, Amir Sultan Beg, whose date of death is indistinct in the inscription. The monolith of the cenotaph, measuring 5 feet 10 inches by 1 foot 2 inches by 1 foot 2 inches, now lies broken into pieces. The top and the east and west sides carry Quranic verses carved in exquisite 'naskh' in one horizontal line within a broad flat margin. The east and west sides have the Ayat alKursi with Bismillah while the north side has a bold Tughra of one of the ninety-nine attributes of Allah, carved in very bold letters. On the south is a Persian inscription carved in two lines of intertwined 'naskh'.

Graves No. X, XI and XII

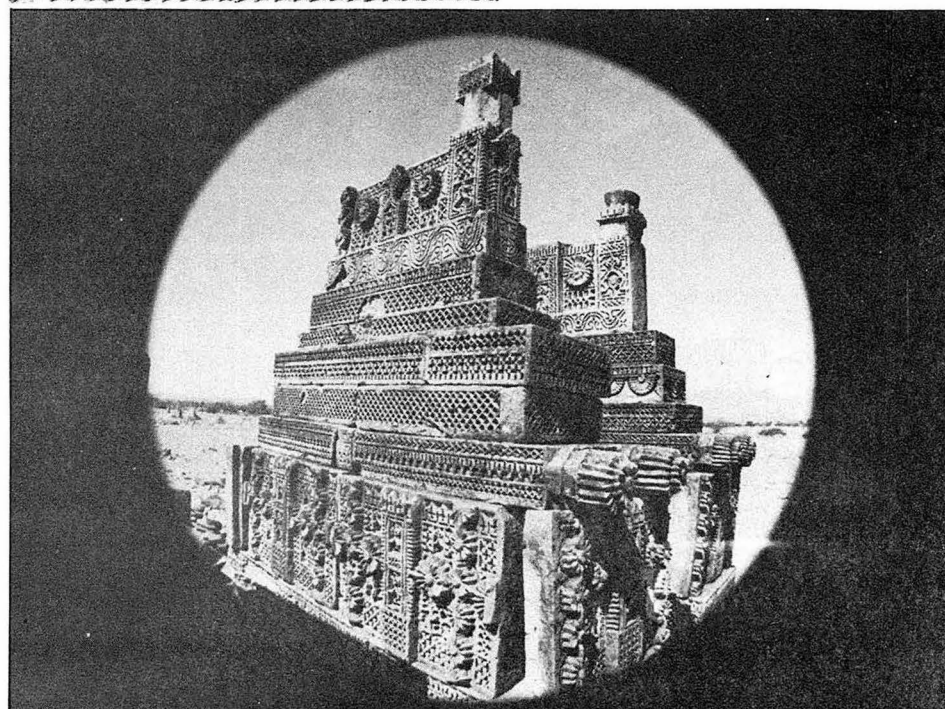
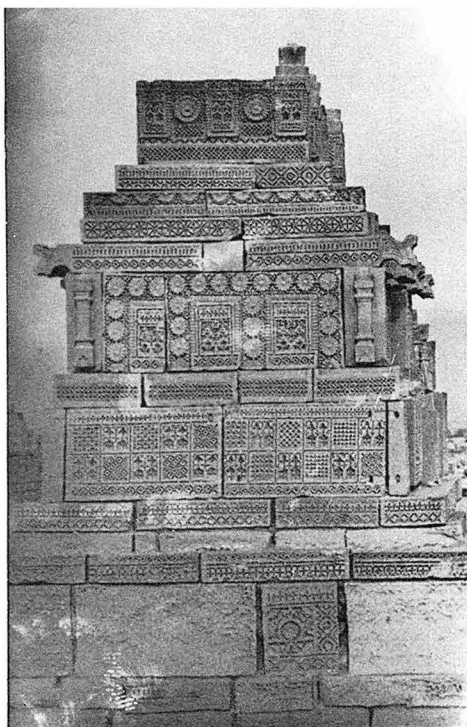
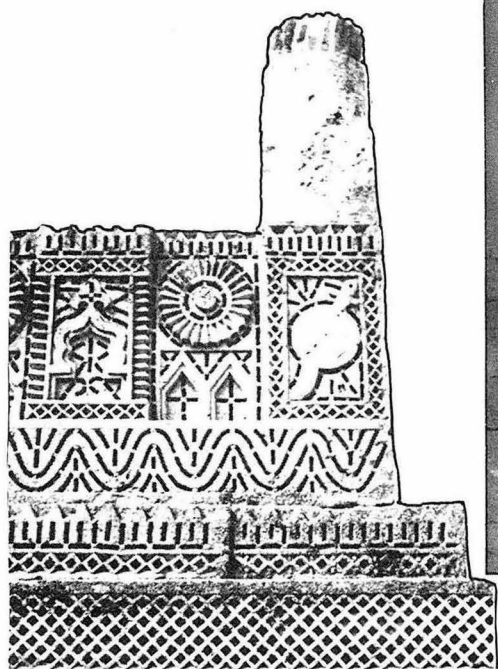
These three graves have beautifully carved cenotaphs with Quranic verses carved in the usual manner. Graves XI and XII are of children as judged from the sizes of the cenotaphs. The north and south sides of these three graves are either left blank or have been filled with lotuses. The sizes of these cenotaphs are as under:

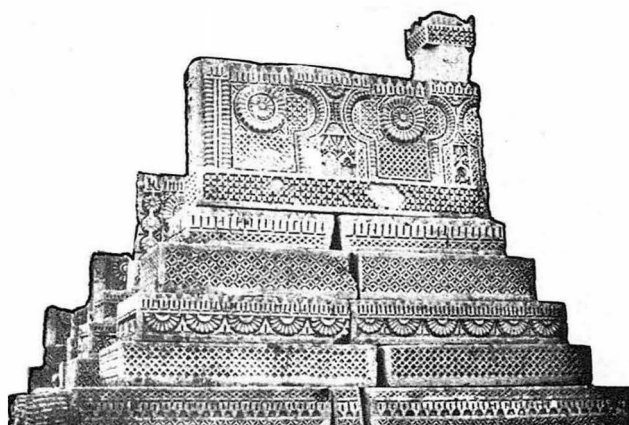
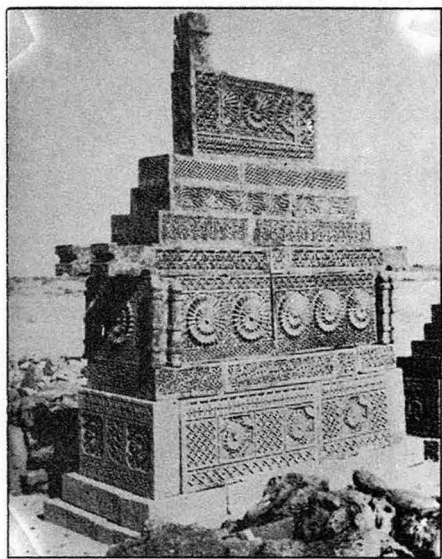
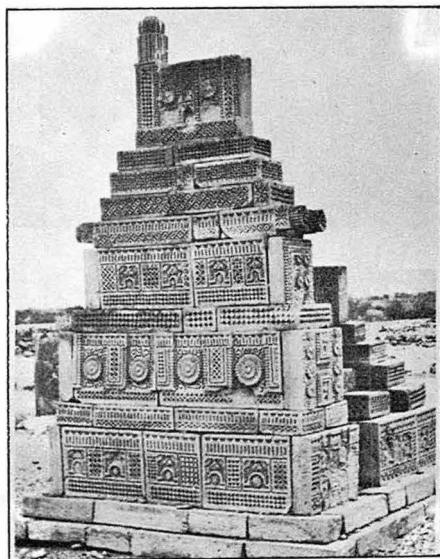
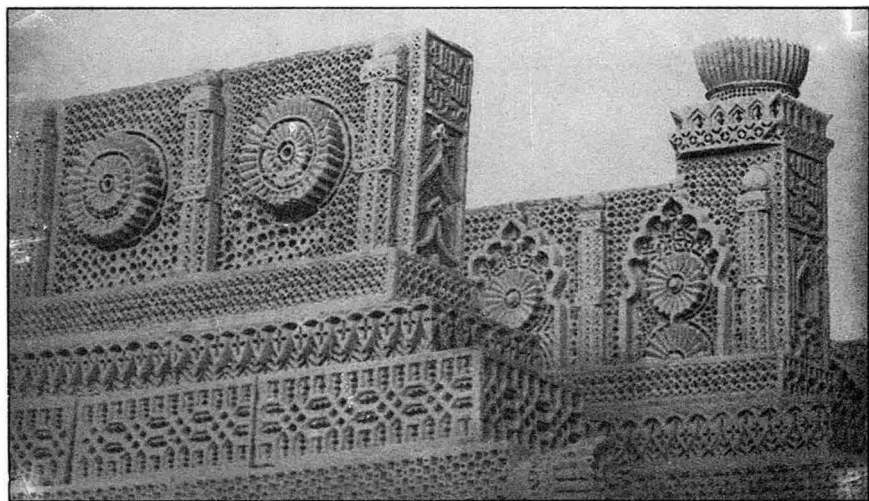
Grave No. X 5 feet 6 inches by 1 foot 3½
 inches by 1 foot 4 inches.

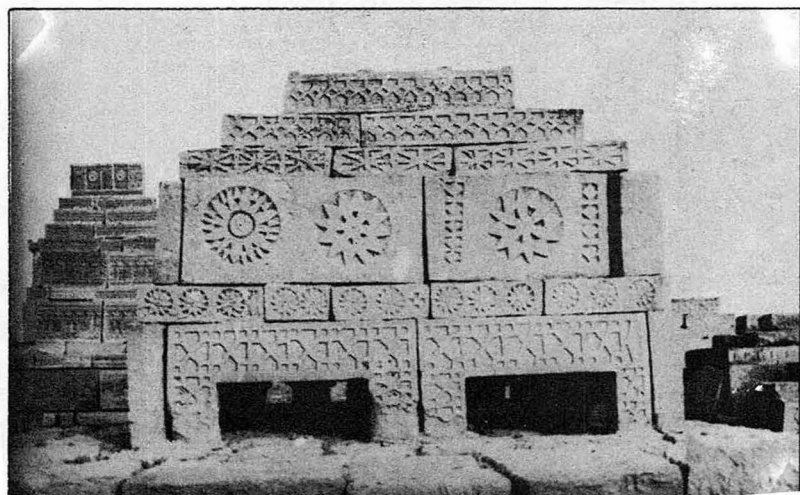
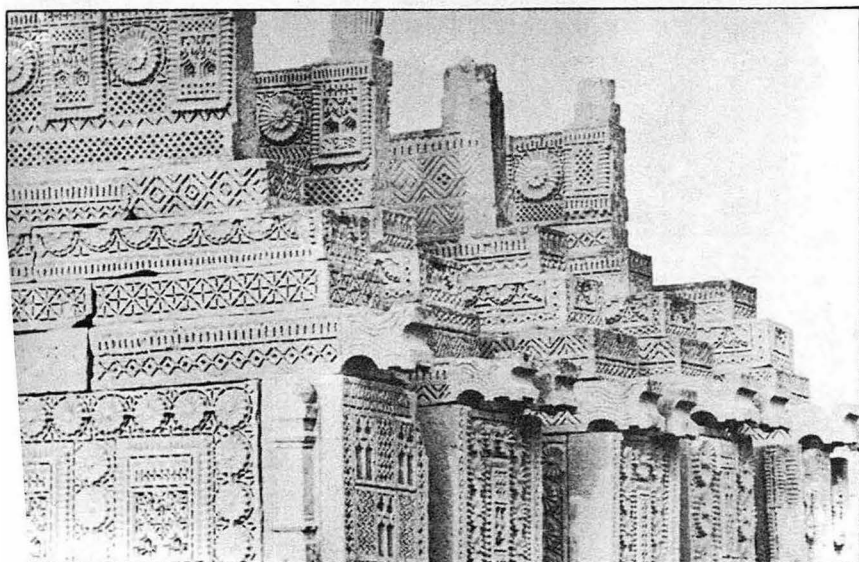
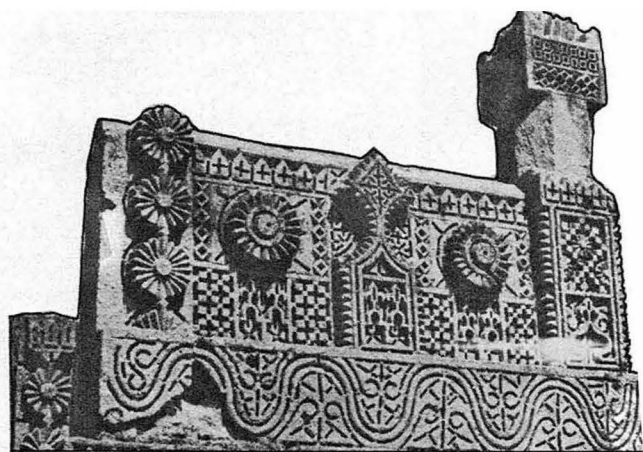
Beglars

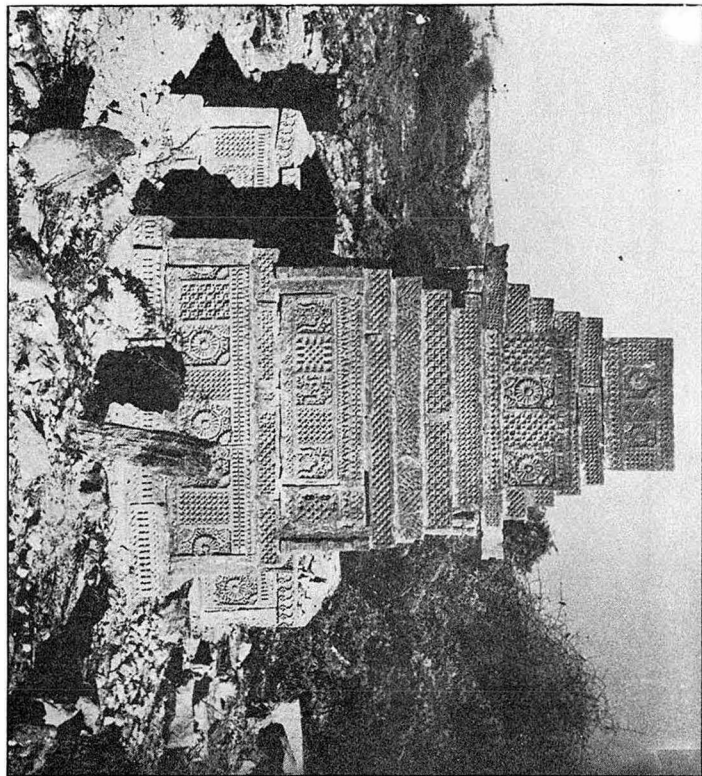
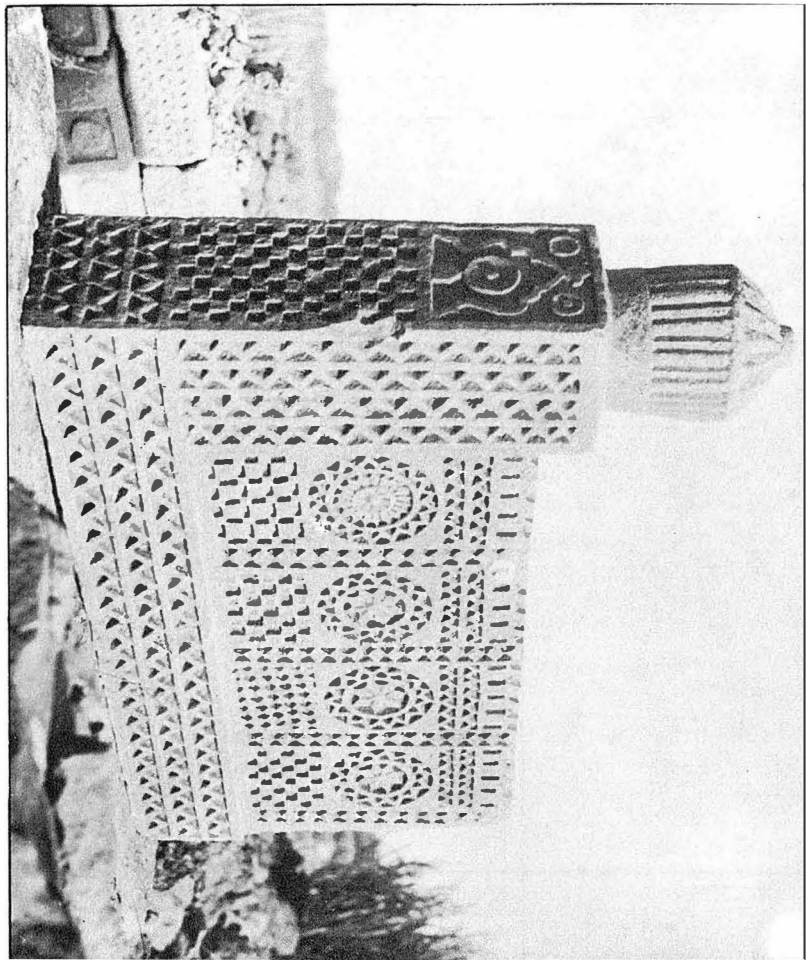
Grave No. XI : 2 feet 3½ inches by 8½ inches by
7½ inches.

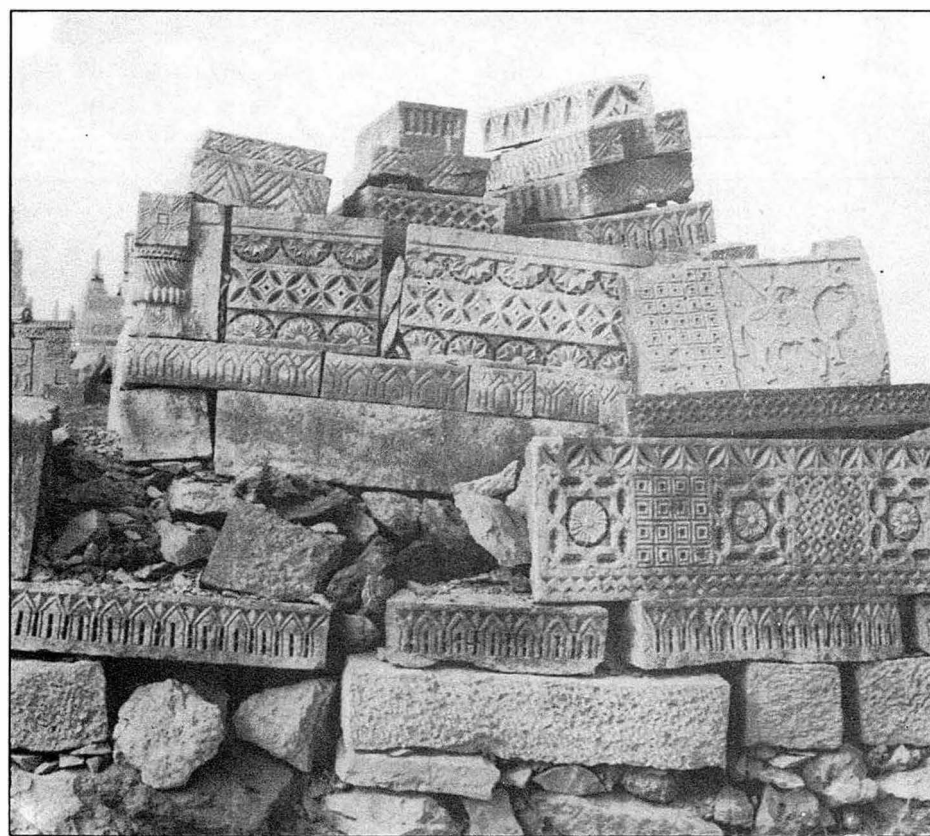
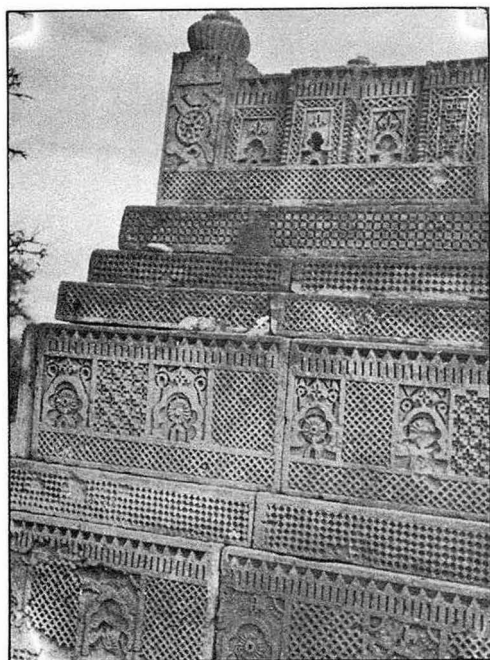
Grave No. XII : 4 feet 2 inches by 9 inches by 1
foot 2 inches.

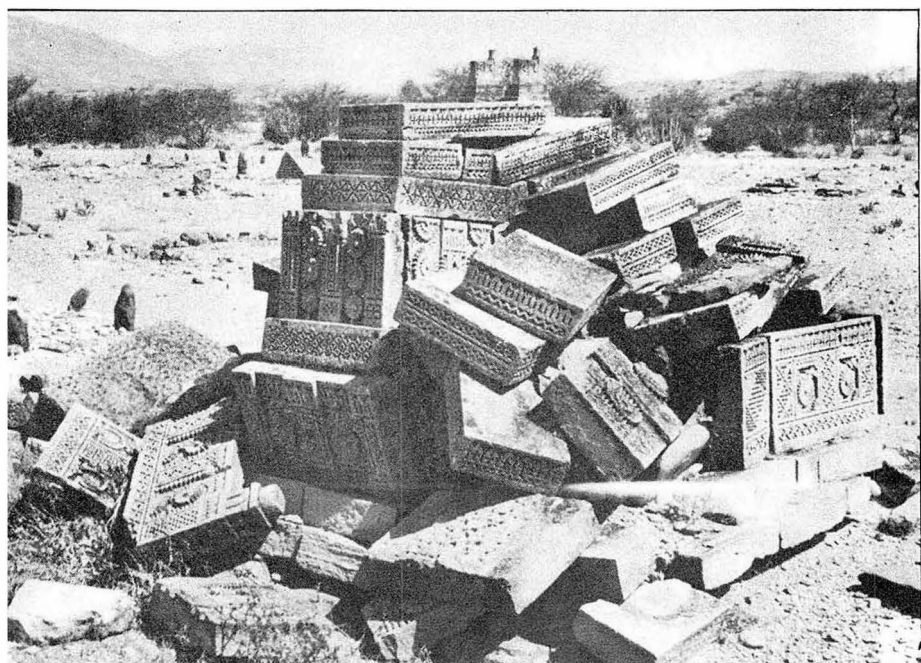
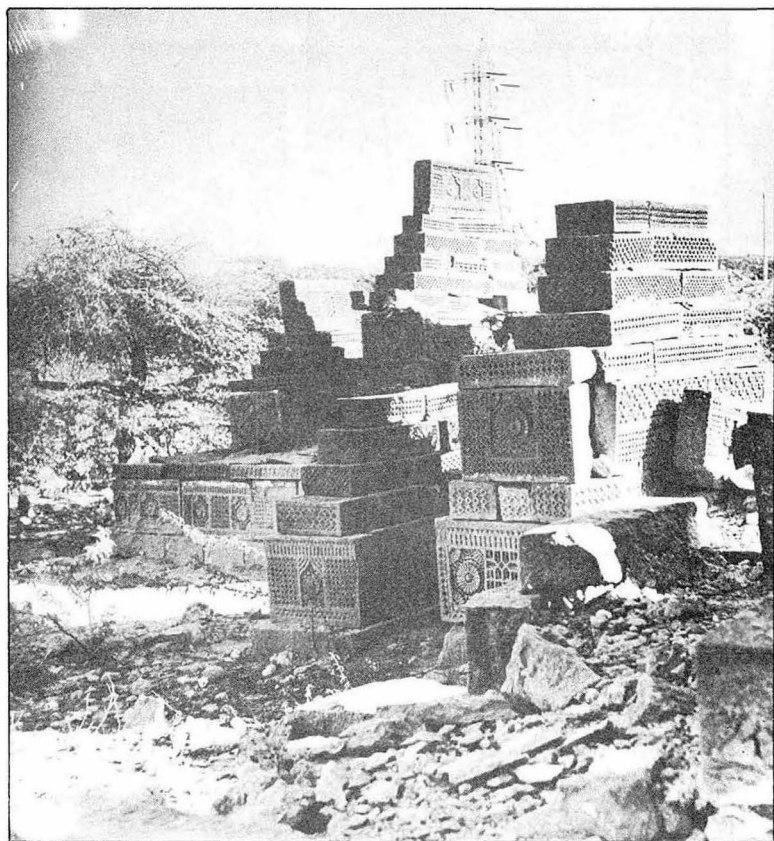




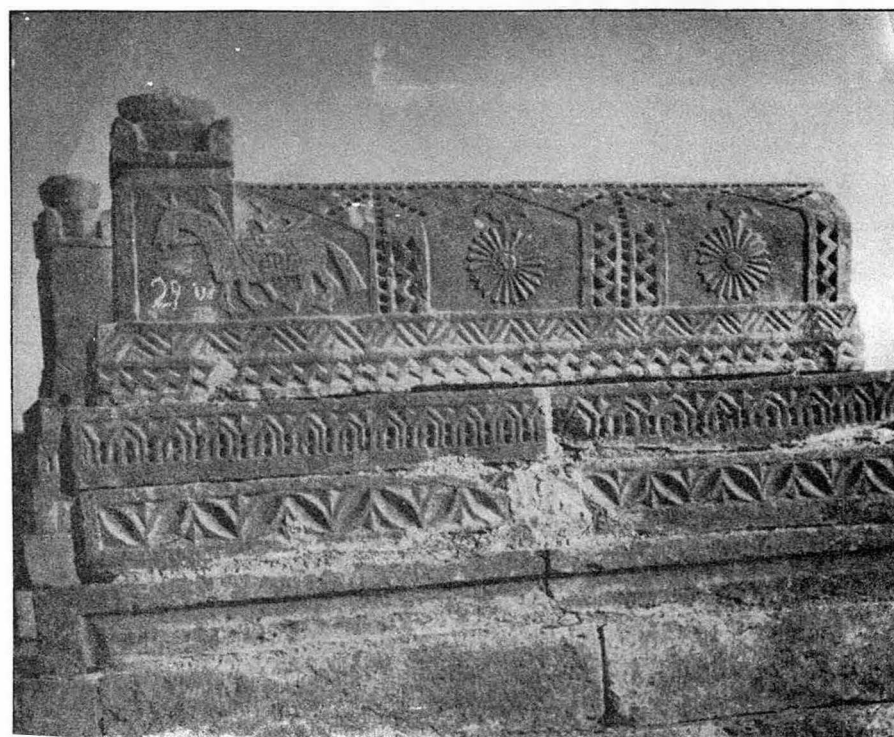
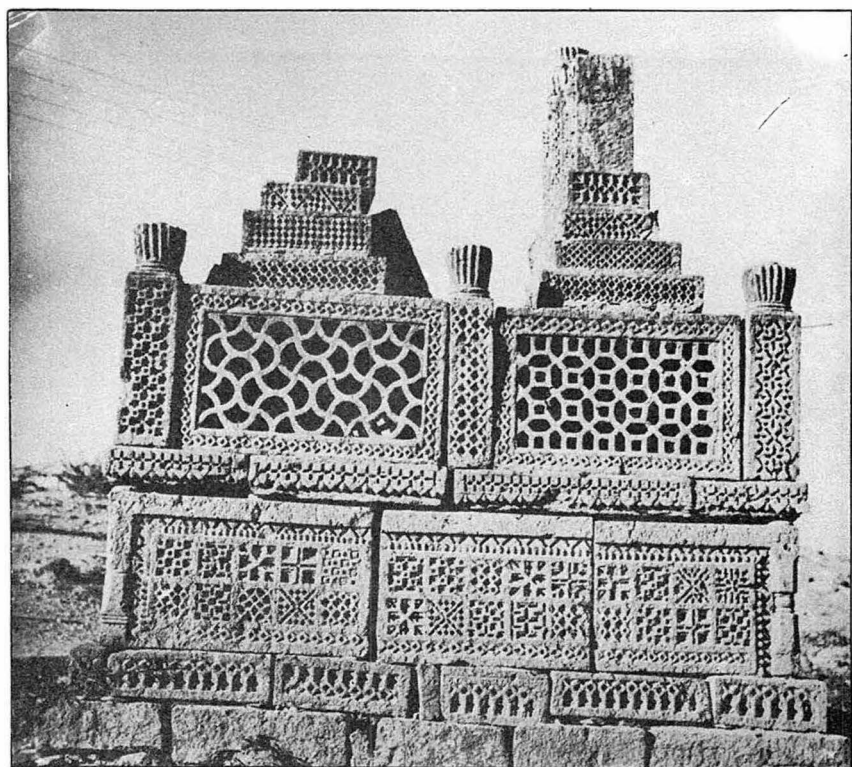


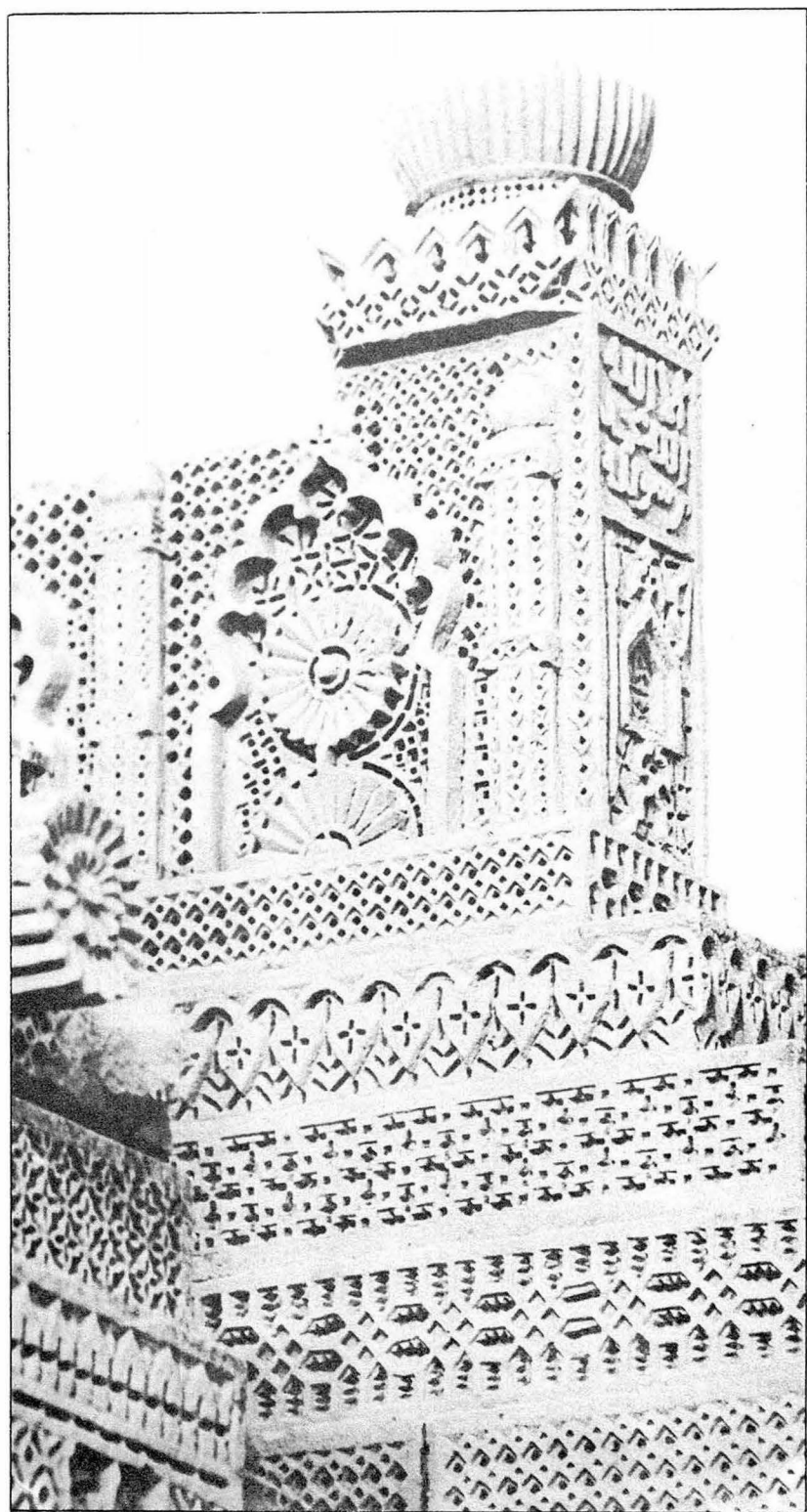


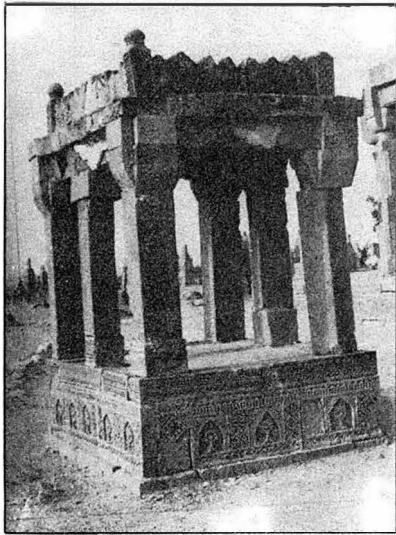




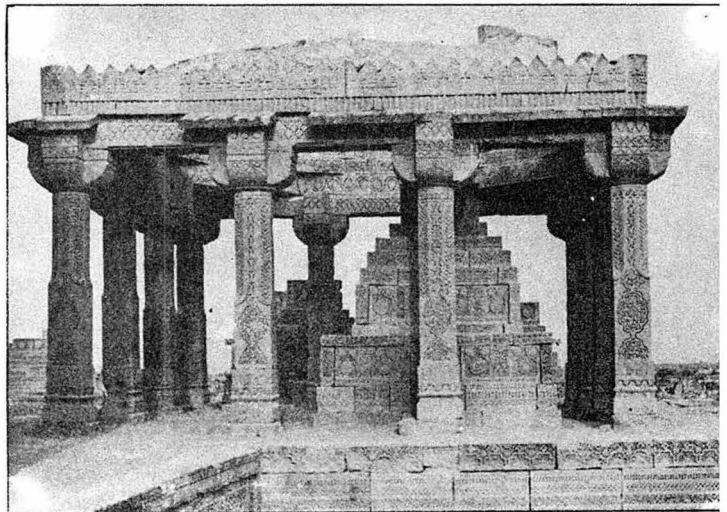
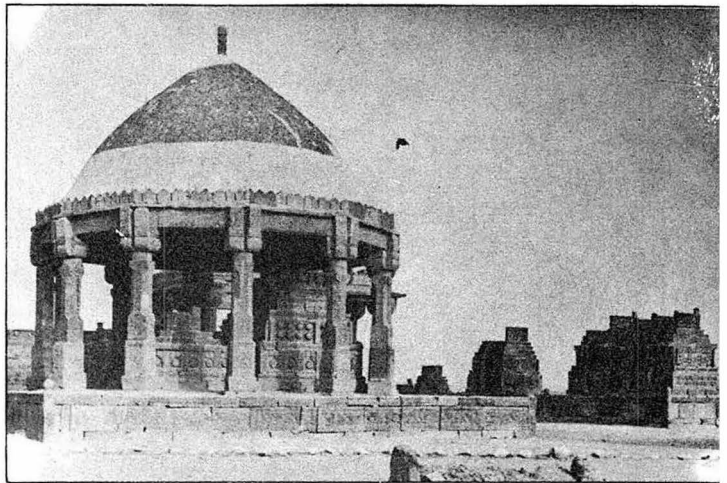




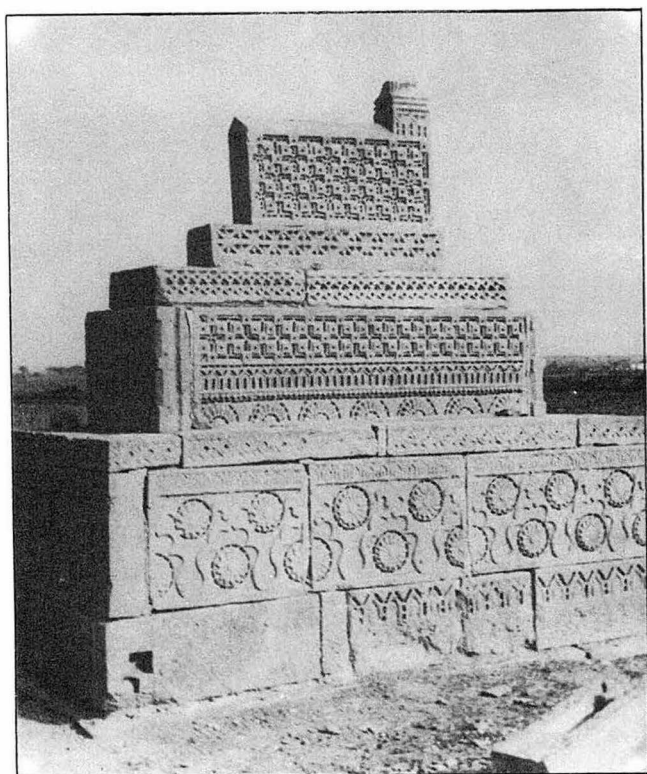
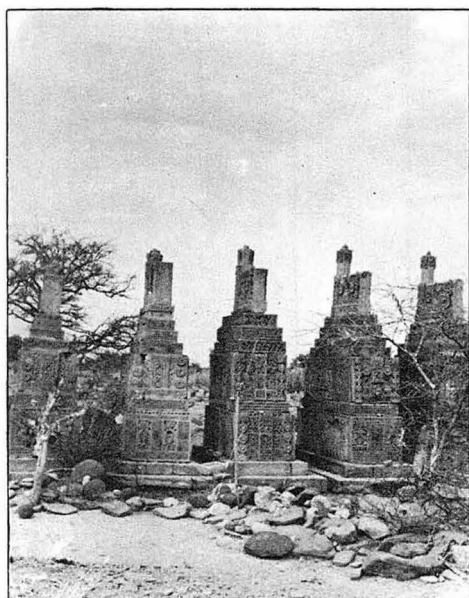
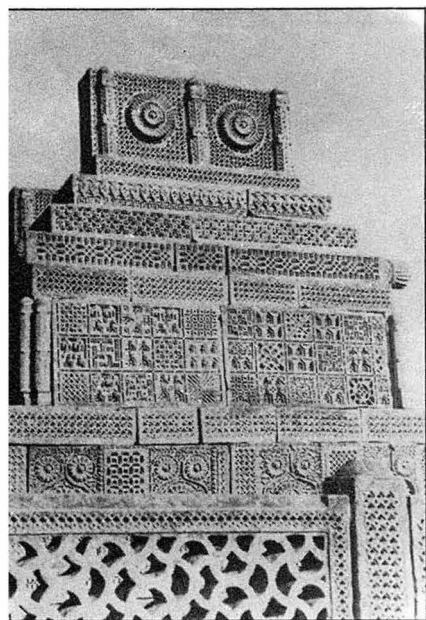


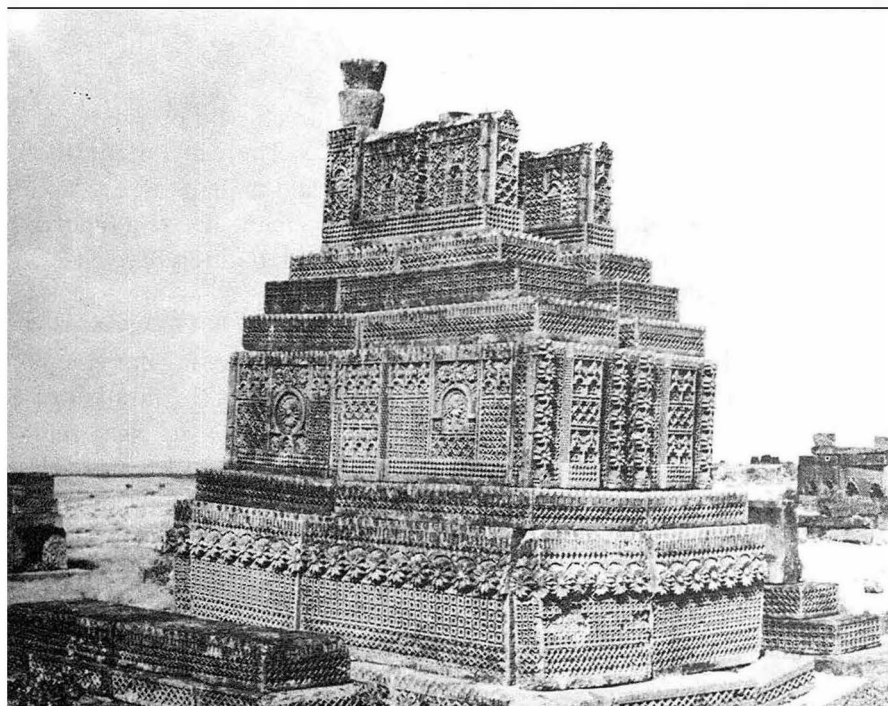
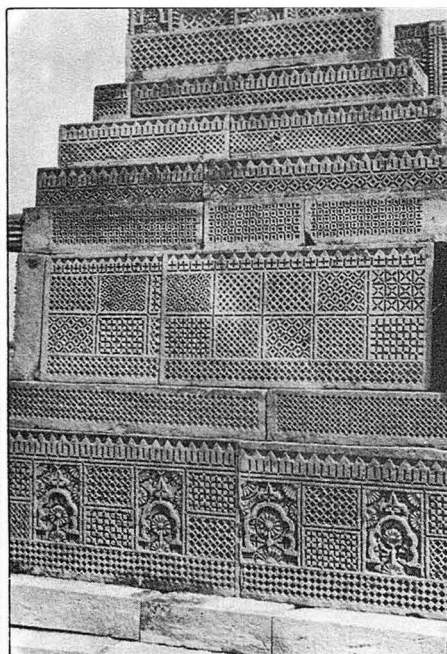
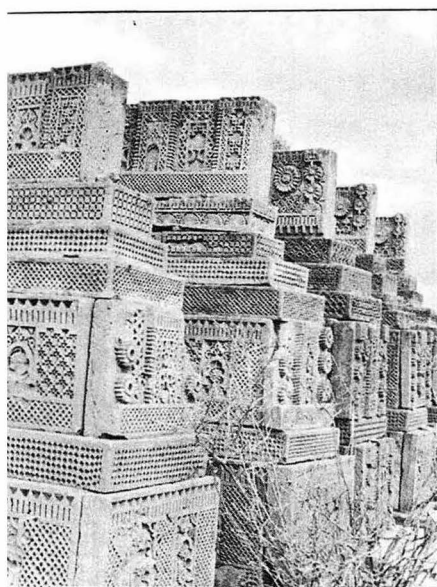


THE
CHOWKHUNDI
TOMBS

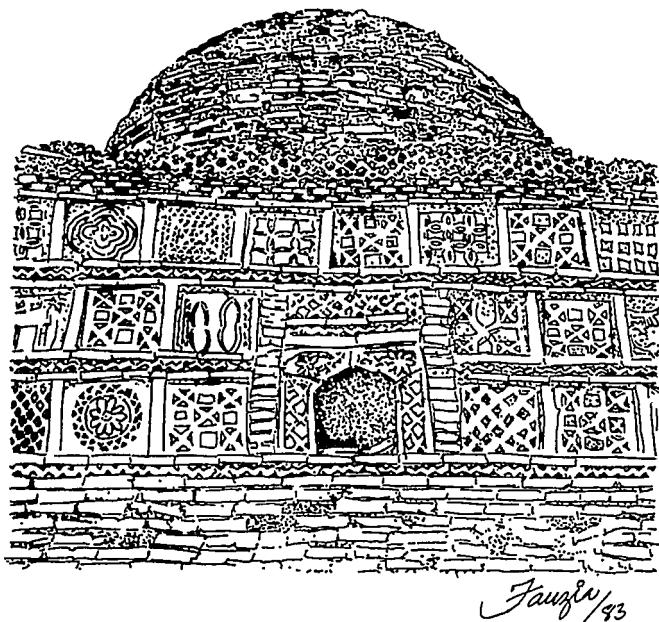








Tombs in Baluchistan



BHAWANY TOMBS

Nearly eight kilometres off the Hub chowki on the Karachi-Lasbela Road lie the Bhawany tombs. There are about 200 tombs spread over an area of two and a half acres. The structure of a tomb consists of an open air, rectangular chamber made of large slabs of stone, elaborately carved on outer sides.

In most cases a tomb consists of two rectangular chambers placed one upon the other. In some cases the number of chambers is three. The tombs usually stand six to eight feet above the ground but in some cases they rise to 14 feet. Each structure has a huge stone at the top, looking like an old-fashioned railway engine.

The tombs are either in singles or built in rows of two to

10. Some are raised on a plinth. The lower platform of a tomb is generally made of eight slabs, three on each side lengthwise and one on each short side. On the upper side, four or five layers of slabs are laid horizontally, gradually diminishing in size so as to give the whole structure the look of a slender pyramid. The outer slabs are profusely ornamented, bearing floral and geometrical designs. On many of the tombs are carved the names of the deceased, but no dates are mentioned.

Some of the tombs have Kalima inscribed above the names of the deceased but usually 'Ya Allah' is carved along with the name, such as 'Ya Allah — Adam Bin Mundu'.

In most cases the graves bear single names i.e., Mammadoo, Haroo, as they are pronounced and not as they ought to be written. Ramzan, Zankoo and Madihar are the common names.

On the eastern side, enclosed by a stone wall, about four feet high and 24' x 12' in area, there are twelve graves. It appears that this portion of the cemetery once had a roof over it, which collapsed later on. The graves here do not bear any names. There is a fairly large number of graves on the other side, small in size, and obviously those of children.

Most of the graves, including those of children or otherwise outside the enclosure, lie opened up and the burial chambers are exposed to view from one side or the other. Strangely, the dead bodies seem to have been coated with a thick plaster of mud. The area enclosed by stone slabs is so small that the body of a normal-sized person could not have been deposited there. This in turn gives rise to speculation that this grave was the second place of burial and that only the bones of the dead were laid there after plastering them with mud — maybe, as a crude contrivance to preserve them for a long time. Each chamber contains the bones of one person only. These tombs are conspicuously without any

carving. They are plain surfaces, having no figures of men, women, or animals, or even floral designs. Only two out of the whole lot have swords carved on them in a crude form.

Invariably, the ground chamber of the tomb is punctured on all four sides except in the case of children's graves. Who the dead were, no one knows. People living nearby could only say that the graves were called Rumi. The design and pattern of the tombs here, however, suggest that they were the eternal abodes of the Kalmatis. The name of the adjoining village, Bhawany, also implies that it had been a settlement of Bhawanis who were actually Kalmatis. A number of persons belonging to this ancient tribe are still living in the vicinity of Doheji and Dureji.

Bhawany tombs and graves closely resemble the graves of Memon-jo-Goth, a cemetery in Malir area.

The similarity in names carved on the graves and the absence of human and animal figures or ornaments and weapons on the Bhawany tombs are enough to prove that they contain the remains of the earlier Kalmatis.

Around the Bhawany village, within a radius of about seven kilometres, one may find isolated clusters of graves, all quite old. They are simple and puritanical in design, without any carving or ornamentation, and do not even bear the names of the persons buried there. In the neighbourhood of Bhawany cemetery can still be seen traces of an ancient settlement obliterated by the hands of time.

HINIDAN TOMBS

These tombs are situated near Hinidan rivulet and the Hub River, close to the Hinidan Levy Post in the district of Lasbela, at a distance of about 15 kilometres from Karachi. In the cemetery where there are a number of ordinary Muslim graves, one would find 71 highly ornamented sepulchres of unknown origin. They are built on super-terrain burial system. Their direction is invariably from south to north. The material used is yellowish sandstone. These sepulchres may be divided into two sub-divisions (1) 27 small ones each consisting of one sarcophagus; and (2) 44 large ones having two or, in one instance, **three** sarcophagi, placed one upon the other.

The tombs are either single or built in rows of two to eight, some of them raised on a common plinth.

The lower sarcophagus is generally made of eight vertical slabs, three on each long and one on each short side. These are covered by slabs on which the second sarcophagus is raised, similar to the lower one, but slightly smaller. On the **upper** sarcophagus four or five layers of slabs are laid horizontally, gradually diminishing in size, giving the whole structure the look of a slender pyramid. The topmost slab is vertical, its northern end is carved in the form of a cylinder which projects above it and ends in a knob. The slabs are all

carved and the tomb as a whole displays peculiar design and ornamentation.

Stones placed vertically display deep-cut squares with a horse-shoe or lotus in high relief in the centre, enclosed by high borders of a plain geometrical or chequered design, to give them a completely decorative effect.

Horizontal slabs have the same characteristics, but not the slabs of the tombs standing on a common plinth, which are plain.

A significant feature of architectural ornamentation, displaying a certain artistic sense, is a pair of square or cylindrical knobs terminating in a lotus and projecting on the northern and southern sides of the slabs which spread over the uppermost sarcophagus.

Baffling Designs

An intriguing feature of the design on 14 tombs here is the vague representation of crucifix in different characters on the vertical side of the top slabs.

Several hypotheses may be advanced to explain the seemingly Christian symbol; but there is a sharp difference between the design on the tombs and the one universally seen. Here the crucifix-like design shows a human figure with arms widely outstretched, seated on a horse or a camel. The crucifix of the universal form, on the other hand, does not include any animal.

The varieties of the cross symbol engraved on tomb slabs resemble not only the cross symbolizing crucifixion but also the swastika of the Aryans. The cross on the slabs here is more like the swastika of the Jains, which represents four grades of the existence of soul in the material universe. The first is the lowest and the base state. When the soul evolves from that state, it comes to the next stage — the plant, and

History on Tombstones

the animal life which is lower than human life is the third stage. Then it evolves into the fourth stage, the "celestial" one, which means life in worlds or planets other than our own. All these gradations are supposed to be combinations of different scales of matter and soul.

It may be mentioned here that there are various kinds of cross symbols which have given rise to different ideas. The Greeks and the Romans had their crosses long before the crucifixion of Jesus. The Rosicrucians also adopted the cross, which is a combination of the male and female principals meeting in the centre. The cross is interpreted as the crucifixion of the outer self.

It is quite possible that instead of having any religious significance, the man with out-stretched arms and seated on a horse may only mean that he is signalling his last and final farewell to this world, and embarking on a journey to eternity.

Mounted Warriors

On the top slab of a tomb situated in the north-eastern section of the cemetery and comprising two sarcophagi, there is a well-defined figure of a horseman with a lance on his shoulder and a sword and shield hanging by the side of the horse. The scene reflects a part of the ancient tradition in the sub-continent and recalls to mind the age when the sword was the deciding factor in battle, and when personal bravery showed by warriors found an echo in both the epic and the lullaby.

A group of three partly ruined, detached sarcophagi, raised on a common plinth, stands in the northern part of the cemetery. The top panel on two of them shows a horseman holding the reins in his right hand and a lance in his left, with a curved sword and a shield hanging by the side of the horse. He is preceded, as a knight is, by a footman with matchlock on his shoulder and a sword and a shield, like the horseman's,

hanging by his side. The scene represents a slice of life in the bygone days, a snapshot of two fighters, one a knight, the other a footman, proceeding with dignity towards the battlefield. It may be a projection of the artist's own idea, inspired by the environment, or a portrayal of the actual life of the men buried there, who might have been killed together in some battle. Or it might depict the social status of a person entitled to have the services of a footman.

On one of the two panels a cross is visible, cut out above the head of a horse; on the other a small cross on the face of the horseman can be seen. The cross here may be the sign of wound received by the horse or the horseman during the battle. On five tombs the top panel is designed like a shield crossed by sword, invariably towards the west; in three out of five cases the figure of the horseman appears on the opposite side. The other tombs bear designs of ornaments carved on their top panels suggesting that persons buried there were women.

The un-Islamic feature of drawings — human figures — on tombs known to be of Muslims is intriguing to some extent. But when we look back dispassionately at the criss-cross of historical events that forged ever new cultural patterns, moulding new sets of religious values, it is not impossible to solve the riddle. The tribe to which the Hinidan tombs are ascribed, Burfat, descended from the Assyrians. Though they embraced Islam, some of the Burfat obviously retained some of the attachment to their heroes and some of their old rituals. The practice of carving human figures on tombs also survived, for some time at least.

Apart from this argument there is evidence in history that during the Umayyad period palaces were decorated with frescoes depicting human beings beside other things. Writing about them in his book *The Arabs*, Arnold Pottinger says:

“The Umayyads administrated their empire from

Damascus but themselves preferred to hold court in the desert. Many of their castles, hunting lodges and baths can still be seen on the edge of the Syrian desert. Their ruins and remains often give a clearer picture of their way of life than the written sources. Most Arabic recording of history took place in the time of the Abbasids, and not the Umayyads.

“The geographical position of their desert palaces is itself surprising. Their ruins stand in the loneliness of the desert, often so isolated that it is only in modern times that travellers have rediscovered them. More surprising than their loneliness are their mural paintings and decorations which contradict all preconceived ideas of Islam being inimical to pictures. They have a pagan Hellenitic air tinged with barbarism. Cheerful frescoes depict animals, hunting scenes and naked women bathing. Hieratic figures of kings in the style of Byzantium can also be seen. Even today the ruins betray that these palaces were once the scene of luxurious and pleasant living.”

The tribesmen who migrated from Syria into Sindh and Baluchistan were undoubtedly Muslims but had in them the same blood that ran through the veins of their chiefs and other Syrian high-ups. Their artistic taste might not have found adequate outlet for expression as in the case of their fore-bears for lack of pelf and power, nevertheless they possessed their traditional love of colour and beauty that was reflected in the lively frescoes of the Umayyad palaces. In spite of adhering to most of Islamic teachings in practical life, they could not curb their liking for things that were in tune with their aesthetic sense. The tombs they built, therefore, had human or animal figures, besides floral designs, as decorations only.

The system of over-ground burial adopted in most of Hinidan tombs runs contrary to Islamic practice and doc-

trine. This mode of burial, generally termed "Rumi" (Turkish), was practised in the sub-continent. The origin of the system may be disputed but one thing is certain — it came from another country along with the tribesmen who trudged all the weary way to the Indus Valley, driven by famine or a cruel king, or spurred by lust for conquest. In course of time, it may be assumed, they embraced Islam, but continued to bury their dead for some time in their ancestral fashion, i.e., over-ground.

The rest of the Hinidan tombs are unquestionably those of the Muslims because they follow the under-ground burial system. Obviously, after some time the tribes found cler-gymen to guide them in the rites of the new faith. Inscriptions on tombs in Sindh and Baluchistan indicate that the system of superterrain interment was practised in these areas between the third and the eleventh centuries Hijri and that the mode of underground burial was adopted in the beginning of the twelfth century Hijri.

Tombs in Ruins

Besides the above mentioned tombs, one finds a number of graves littered on the land between Hinidan and Hub along an uneven stretch of almost 50 kilometres of road. The stone carvings have survived erosion by rain and wind though the animal figures have vanished. Most of the scattered tombs have fallen down and their slabs lie shattered on the ground. There is no obvious explanation for the dilapidated condition of these tombs since many tombs of the same period elsewhere stand in excellent condition. Enquiries made in this regard did not reveal the cause of destruction, until one day the author happened to visit the cemetery when devastation of the tombs was actually in progress. The culprits were the camels who graze freely in the area. The camels have a habit of rubbing their bodies against trees, and when trees are not there anything else would do, such as the rough sides of protruding rocks or the walls of mudhouses. In this graveyard the camels find ready-made stone slabs of appropriate size

History on Tombstones

and many of them would be found rubbing their necks or bodies against the stone structure. This action often dislodges the upper slabs of the tombs and in some cases the entire tomb tumbles down since the slabs of the structure are never cemented but only interlocked. Thus, it is the camel, specially the camel afflicted with a disease of the skin, that is responsible for the destruction of these stone houses of ancient warriors.

GUMBADS IN KHARAN

Domed mausolea, known as 'Gumbads' and generally built of burnt bricks, are found in a large number in the Kharan district. Located in the farflung and deserted areas of Baluchistan, these tombs have not attracted the experts so far. The author was perhaps the first person to have toured Kharan, Kalat and Mekran areas in search of monuments and photographed many of them, about 25 years ago. Due to lack of proper historical reference material and local guides it was rather difficult to gather worthwhile information about the 'gumbads'. Whatever information one can gather from the history books and Gazetteers is as follows:

1. Gumbad-e-Shahri: Gumbads of Maliks Nausherwani, nine in number, located in Gwaching Deh Mashkel or Dehgwari. Mazar-e-Nikudar or Gumbad-e-Nausherwan is one of them.
2. Gumbad-e-Bibi and Gumbad-e-Chandiani, along with three other gumbads of unidentified persons are situated in Washuk. Local authorities attribute the Gumbad-e-Bibi to one Bahram Shah Malik.
3. Eight tombs known as Gumbads of Halla, Tuho, Shahi Shadi, Bibi Basso, Syed Amir, Malik Kalaghani-e-Kalat

History on Tombstones

and two others bearing no identity are seen in Shimshan and Salam Bek. Some of these names are well-known, such as Halla and Tuho, who are mentioned in folk ballads as having taken part in the famous Brahui Jadgal war.

4. Gumbad-e-Talonki, Gumbad-e-Nuruddin, Shah Othmani Gumbad and nine other gumbads are in Hurmagai, out of which two are in Regi.
5. Three gumbads in an advanced stage of decay are located in Gwash area at Hetak, Sarawan and near Malik Shai Chah.
6. There are ten gumbads in Kallag in the close vicinity of Eri Kallag and one known as Gumbad-e-Ganji-e-Malik is situated at Padun Kallag.
7. Gumbad-e-Malik Shaho and five other tombs are located in Sarawan bearing no particular name.

Gallugha Tombs

Brooding over the timeless desolation of Gallugha, a place in Baluchistan, stand nine ancient tombs, stodgy and impressive. All of them are double-storeyed, with entrance on the east. Steps paved with bricks lead to the upper storey which contains one or two burial chambers. The entrance to the lower storey is level with the ground and leads either to a single chamber, large enough to contain several corpses, or to separate small chambers, in each of which ten or more dead bodies could be placed.

In some of the tombs the lower storey contains a passage with four vaults, two on either side, each of which can contain three or four bodies. The domed roofs of the tombs rest on pendentives. The walls of the upper storey are half a foot to two feet thick. They are made of burnt bricks, two inches thick. The monuments are not set exactly north

and south but are inclined north-east and south-west. At each corner, inside, there are alcoves, the bottoms of which are two to three inches from the floor and about eight to ten feet high. They are ten inches to one foot deep. The Gallugha tombs in this respect have striking resemblance with Bahrain tombs of Phoenician origin in the Persian Gulf.

On the outer side, between projecting ledges of curiously fashioned bricks, cut into dimonds or other symmetrical patterns, are large, burnt-clay-slabs, bearing images of peacocks with snakes in their bills, bullocks, leopards, camels with their colts, horses, handmills, imitation of human hands and feet, ornaments, warriors on horseback, and floral and geometrical designs. These ornamental slabs are not universal, but can be seen on most of the mausoleums.

On the floors of main chambers of the tombs, one or more elevated sepulchres are to be seen. The system of making sepulchres, which was followed in the case of double-storeyed mausoleums, however, appears to be different from that practised in the case of single-storeyed ones. In double-storeyed tombs, sepulchres are raised above the floor in two tiers. Corpses were inserted in the lower one. In course of time, some of these sepulchres were opened and one can see heaps of bones and skulls and pieces of shrouds scattered inside.

Local accounts suggest that the corpses appeared well preserved till the early part of the last century, and even as late as 1904 when Mr. Tete, the well-known archaeologist, who visited the site, found a corpse in one of the tombs as having dried skin with a mummy-like appearance. According to his version, uncrushed barley had fallen down from the stomach of the said corpse while it was being moved sideways. This suggests there might have been occasional cases of mummifying of bodies in this part of Pakistan; but here this art did not strike root, as it did in Egypt. In this account, Mr.

History on Tombstones

Tete further says that he found skeletons, clothed in rich brocade and silk, lying scattered on beddings and carpets. Valuable articles, including jewels and ornaments, belonging to the departed and buried along with them, according to the custom once prevalent among some tribes, lured many a marauder to try his luck. One of them was an Afghan faqir who is reported to have taken away a lot of precious things. His example was followed by some local people also. This heartless plunder has caused irreparable damage to the tombs.

The following is an account of the tombs at Gallugha as they existed in 1904:

Malik Nausherwani Gumbad

This is the first gumbad as one approaches the cemetery from the northern side. It is a well-plastered, double-storeyed building measuring twenty-one feet square. There are two mud graves situated side by side in the upper storey. The graves lie north to south. The entrance is on the eastern side and is reached by outer brick stairs having three steps. The first grave adjacent to the entrance contains one skull and two shoulder bones. The second adjoining grave is said to be of Amir Nausherwani. The graves have openings at both ends from which bones are quite visible.

The lower storey consists of three rectangular vaults each four by eight feet. The middle vault has openings on both sides, which constitute entrances on the northern as well as the southern side. Both of the side routes are connected with the middle one through an opening measuring two by three feet. Each vault contains heaps of bones and skulls mixed with pieces of shroud. The bones and skulls in each vault were separated and numbered. The first vault contained ten skulls whereas the second and third had 14 and 20, respectively. The leg and arm bones were found to be proportionate to the skulls. The general condition of the bones of skulls was quite good. Coffin cloth pieces were

found lying in the corners. It resembled white hand-woven, rough cloth. There was absolutely no trace of human hair anywhere inside the vaults. A decorative tile bears the inscription in Persian style, "Mazar-i-Nikudar", the tomb of Nikudar (chieftain).

Since it is an accepted historical fact that Amir Nausherwan was the Nikudari chief who was mortally wounded in a battle by Amir Muzaffar in the district of Yazd, this inscription should provide the clue that his body was carried off, as is said to have been the case, and eventually buried by his followers in the tribal cemetery near Gallugha in Mashkel, and the other tombs were in all likelihood the graves in which his forefathers or other chieftains of his tribe had been interred. (For a detailed account of the Nikudari tribe and their origin see the chapter "Nikudaris").

Gumbad No.2

Number two gumbad resembles Gumbad-i-Nausherwan in every respect except for the upper storey where there is only one burial chamber. The number of tiles on the outer-frontal side is twenty-one. Inside the upper storey tomb there are eight ornamented tiles which bear the figures of camels and floral designs. The lower storey has three rectangular vaults.

Gumbad No. 3.

Gumbad number three contains three skulls and twelve shoulder and long bones. This gumbad is almost in ruins except for its lower storey vaults which are in good condition.

Gumbad-i-Shahri No. 4

The tomb number four in line is known as Gumbad-e-Shahri and is a bit smaller in size as compared to Gumbad-i-Nausherwan. There is only one huge burial chamber in the upper storey and two rectangular vaults in the ground storey.

History on Tombstones

One of the lower vaults is empty and the other full of skulls and bones.

Gumbad No. 5

There are three burial mud-chambers in the upper storey measuring twenty-one feet square. There was a corpse in the second grave with pieces of dried skin sticking to it near the leg and bones.

An interesting account of this corpse, which is said to be of a woman, is given by Mr. Tete who visited these gumbads in 1904. He says:

“It contains a well-preserved corpse of a woman measuring five feet from head to toe. Excepting the nose and parts below the navel, the remainder bears dried skin. A blue thread has been passed through the right ear. The skeleton is quite naked. The local people have moved it from time to time, placing it sometimes upright and sometimes in a recumbent posture. In doing so, a good deal of uncrushed barley is said to have fallen from the stomach. When seen in 1904 it was lying against the tomb in the centre of the building.”

Gumbad No. 6

Two burial mud-chambers lie side by side in the upper storey. The two graves have a common middle wall. The first grave contains skulls of five persons and the other one has a few ribs only. Ground chambers, five in this gumbad, are peculiarly constructed. The central vault has heaps of bones and skulls. There are a number of burial mud-chambers in the vicinity of this gumbad.

Gumbad No. 7

The upper storey contains two burial chambers, the bigger measuring five feet square and the other a rectangular one six by four feet. The rectangular chamber has two decorated tiles set in its outer side. The tiles inside the tomb

are smaller, measuring twelve by nine inches.

Gumbad No. 8

There are three rectangular burial chambers in the upper storey. Each chamber has decorated tiles fixed on its outer mud plaster. The inner walls of this gumbad appear to have been painted red.

Gumbad No. 9

This gumbad is much smaller in size, measuring only twelve feet square. Its dome is in an almost shattered condition.

Apart from the strange method of burial, the most curious feature of the tombs, which are built of baked bricks set with clay mortar, is the outer decoration. Kilnburnt bricks measuring two feet square were set in, with a kind of concrete plaster, covering the outer wall exactly in the manner as kashi tiles are fixed to the structures even nowadays.

These square bricks contain figures of men mounted on camels and horses, armed with bows and swords, evidently representations of warriors. On others there are representations of peacocks with snakes in their bills and of deer with hunters on foot. On some of the tiles, near the entrance to the upper storey floor, are drawings of bangles and human footprints such as would be left on sand by a sandalled foot. The number of footprint impressions appears to correspond to the number of graves inside a chamber. On one of the decorative tiles is the figure of a man ploughing with a yoke of oxen, all in the roughest and crudest possible manner. Although figures of animals — horses, camels with their colts, bullocks and leopards — and mounted warriors are the most frequent, household implements are also represented, with rough imitations of human hands and feet with their fingers spread out.

It is easy to understand that figures were engraved on

History on Tombstones

these tiles while these were fresh and soft. The baking process must have been adopted after drying the tiles as ornamented bricks are prepared these days.

The scenes were taken, as might be expected, from the daily life of a semi-nomadic people who were warriors and hunters, and belonged to a tribe which had adopted the ancestral tradition in matters of burial. Similar figures and representations are often found on tombs in Lasbela and Sindh. The Only difference is that the Chowkhundi tombs in Sindh are adorned with figures carved on stone slabs and not on baked tiles as is the case in Gallugha tombs.

Decorated Tomb Slabs

Similar tombs exist in Panjgur and at Jalk in Mekran. Their general form is that of ordinary Muslim tombs, a square building built of red bricks and surmounted by a dome. Most of them are single storey structures but some consist of two storeys. Those at Gwaching and the Malik-e-Shaho tombs at Sarawan are all double-storeyed. In the Malik-e-Shaho tombs at Naurozabad, the lower storey contains a passage with four vaults, two on either side, each of which might contain three or four bodies.

MEKRAN TOMBS

Numerous vaulted tombs (gumbads) are seen at various

ruined sites of towns and hamlets in Mekran. These tombs belong to Muslim chieftains, tribal sardars and saints, who inhabited the area from the 9th to the 15th century A.D.

These domed tombs, like those of Nikudaris in Kharan district, are built of kiln-burnt bricks set with clay mortar. The outer walls of the square burial chamber are ornamented with burnt-clay slabs showing in low relief very coarsely modelled figures of camels, horses and armed warriors with bows and swords. Some of the clay tiles contain representations of peacocks with snakes in their bills, ornaments, and impressions of human hands and footprints.

The method of manufacture of ornamented clay tiles was the same as resorted to in the preparation of ordinary bricks, only the figures were engraved on soft, moulded clay prior to the drying and baking process. The carved clay tiles were workshops pieces and must have been prepared on a mass scale and kept in stock for the customers to pick and choose. There must have been a brisk trade to satisfy the general demand since the raising of domed tombs along with ornamented panels was then the newly introduced practice. Hitherto plain and simple tombs were erected by the incoming Kharji tribes who had been migrating from Iraq and settling in Seestan and Kirman provinces of Persia.

The practice of erecting ornamented tomb panels was first resorted to by Ghuz tribes (Turkish horde) during the rule of Seljuk monarchs. The westward movement of Ghuz Turks began in early 6th Hijri (11th century A.D.).

The Probable Period of Burials

The local people know nothing definitely about the origin or the builders of these tombs. Most of these tombs belong to Maliks who were probably "Saffavid Maliks" who ruled Seestan from ninth to thirteenth century. One of the gumbads at Washuk is attributed to Bahram Shah, who ruled Seestan from 1215 to 1222 A.D. Five gumbads located at

Hurmagai are ascribed to Shah Othman which is the local pronunciation of Shah Usman. Another Malik mentioned in history, Malik Shah, perhaps is the Malik Shah who was brother of Malik Bahram Shah.

As regards the gumbads in Shimshan and Salam Bek area which bear the names of Halla, Tuho and Bibi Basso, the first two are famous in Brahui ballads, as heroes having taken part in the great Brahui Jadgal war in the Jhallawan country (fifteenth century).

The Mashkel group of gumbads, known as Nikudari or Nausherwani tombs, are believed to have been built in 1383 A.D. the year in which Nikudaris were defeated and most of them killed at Gwaching by Miran Shah, son of Amir Timur.

Inscriptions

To the north of the historic fort which is located in the Jalwar Pass, there are numerous high cliffs, on the east of which are to be seen engravings in Kufic characters. Dr. Denison Ross of Calcutta transcribed the impressions of these engravings which were copied on the spot by Mirza Sher Mohammad in 1904.

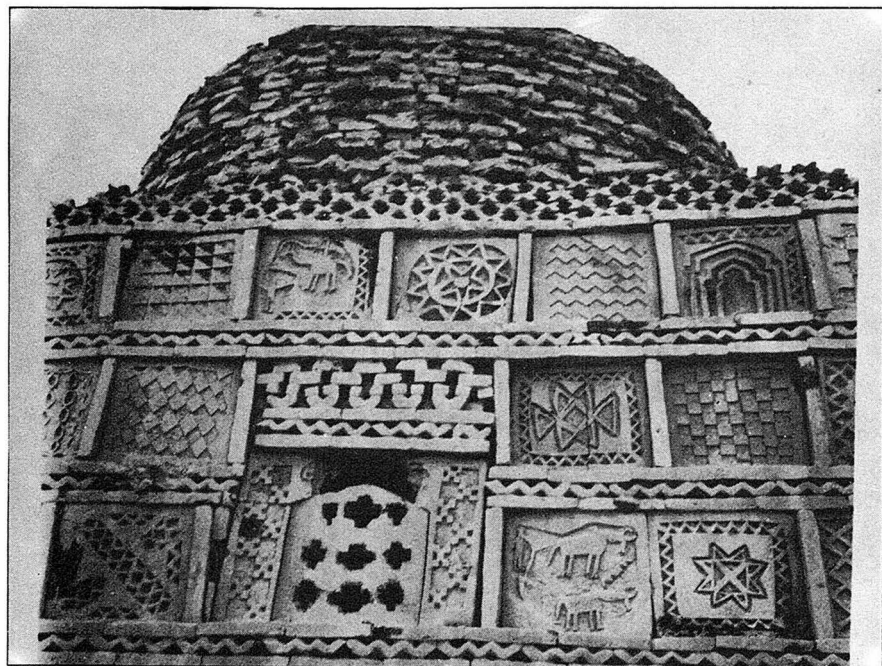
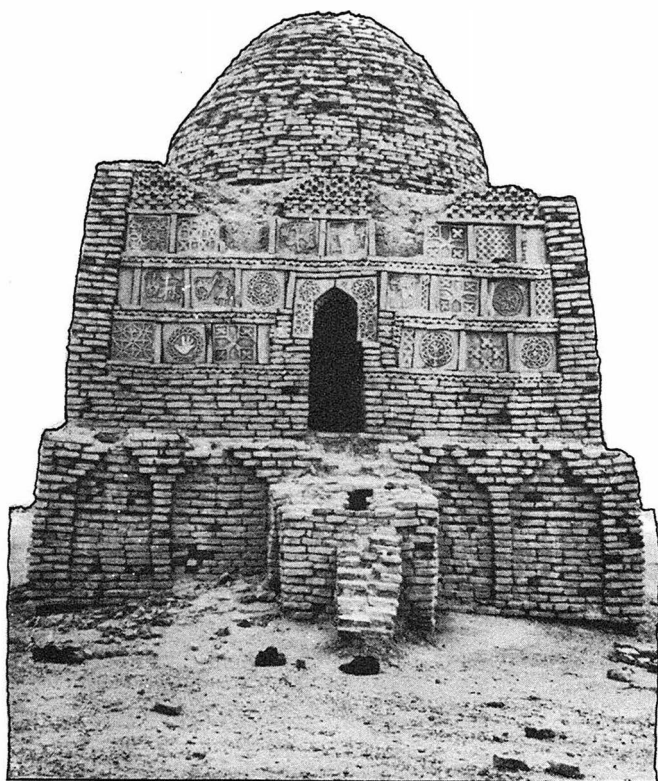
The transcription is as follows:

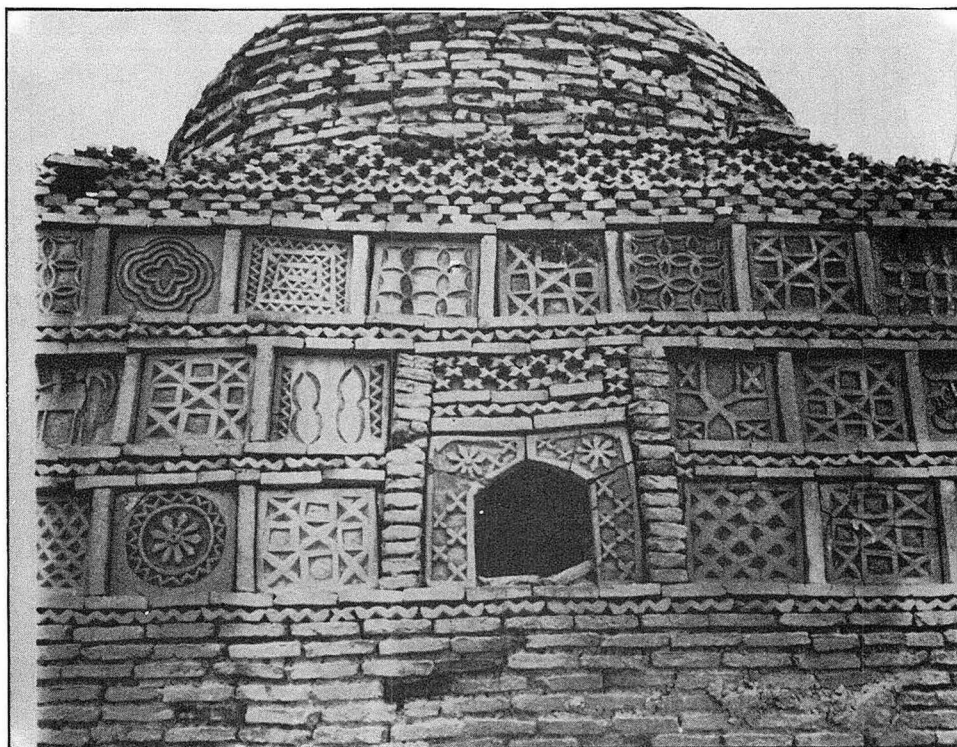
1. O Allah: have mercy on Al-Hassan Ibn Amir Shah Ibn Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz Al-Hassan Ibn Al-Hussain. Written on Sunday when eleven days were remaining of the sacred month of Muharram. And he wrote it in his own hand, in the year 206 Hijri.
2. Built by Abu Musa Ruka Ibn Mohammad Al-Masudi in the year 351 Hijri.
3. Umer Asan, Danku, repeated the Takbir for seventeen years (and died).

4. Abu Shahl Abdul Kasim Amir (and) Ahmed Ibn Amir Ibn Shahl. He wrote in his own hand.

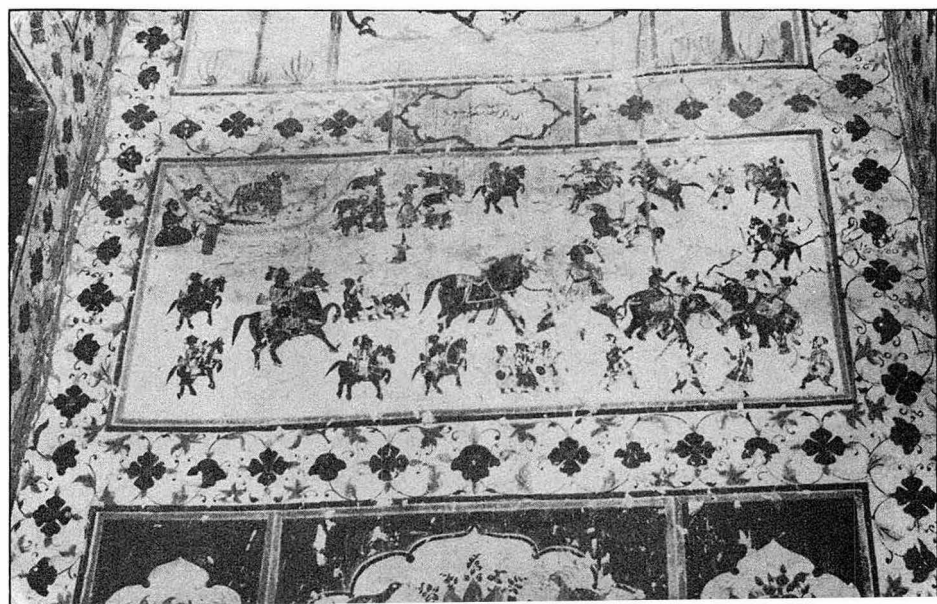
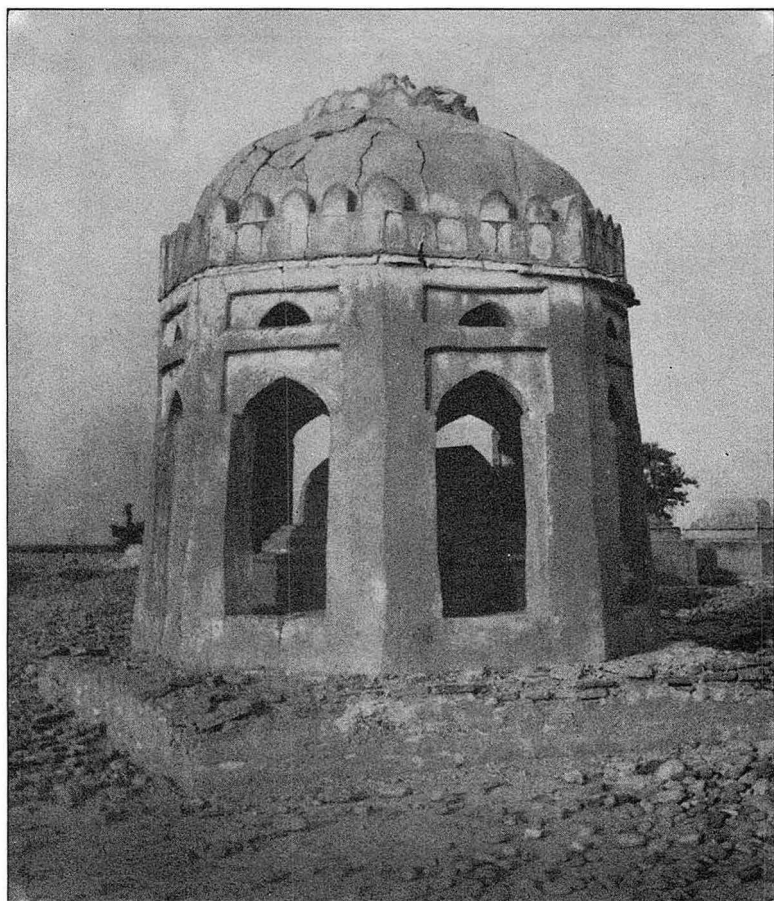
The name 'Danku', appearing in the inscription number three, also reappears at Bhawany graveyard near Hub Chowki. One of the super-terrain tomb bears the name as "Danku bin Turralli". As per opinion of Dr. Ross "Danku" is an Abyssinian name. The reference to repetition of "Takbir" clearly points out to the nature of services of the Muezzin performed by the person concerned.

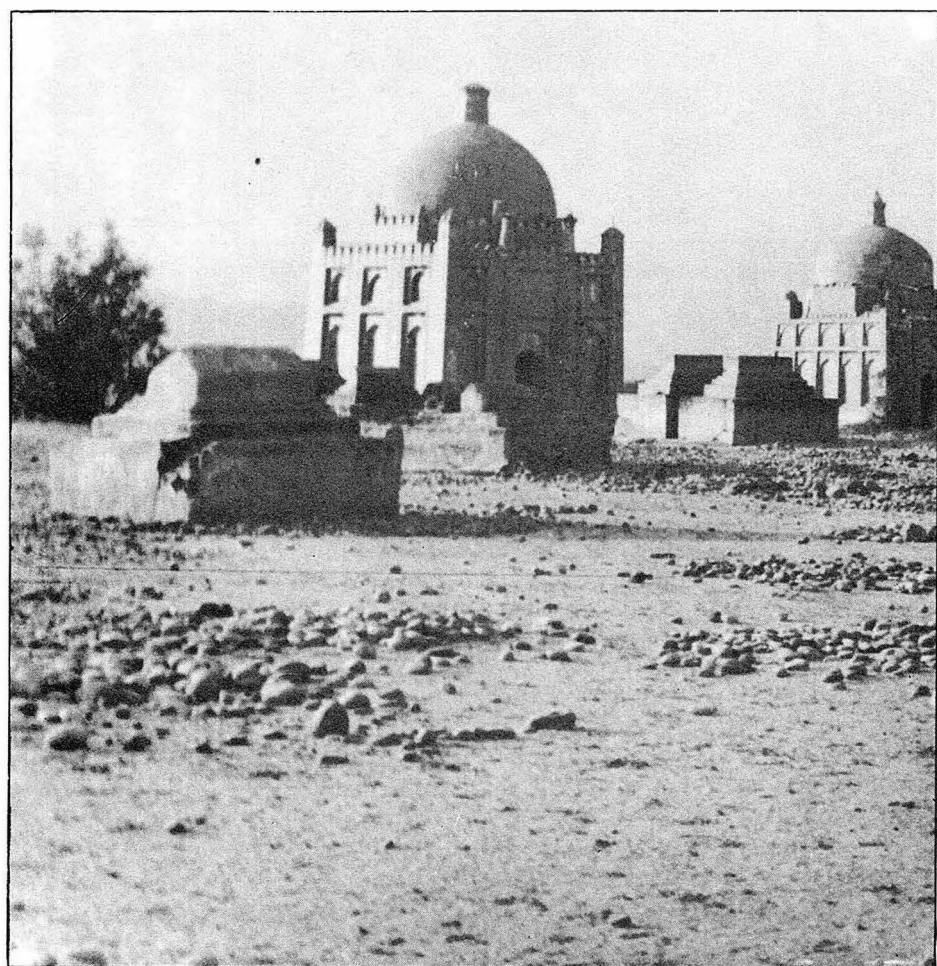
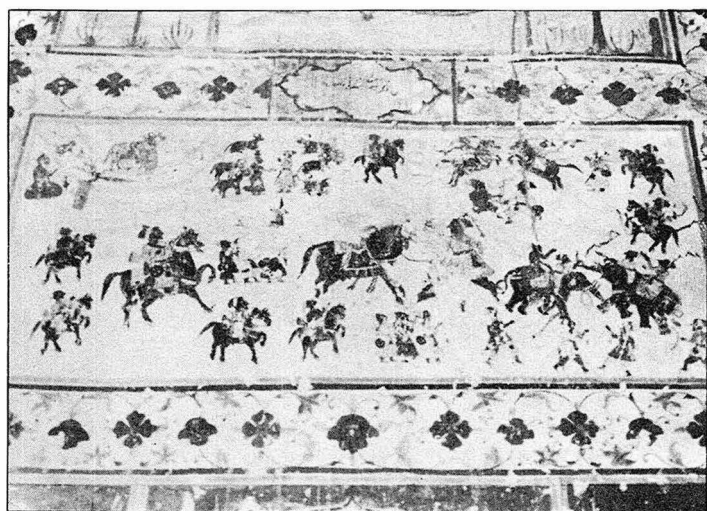
Tombs
in
Baluchistan

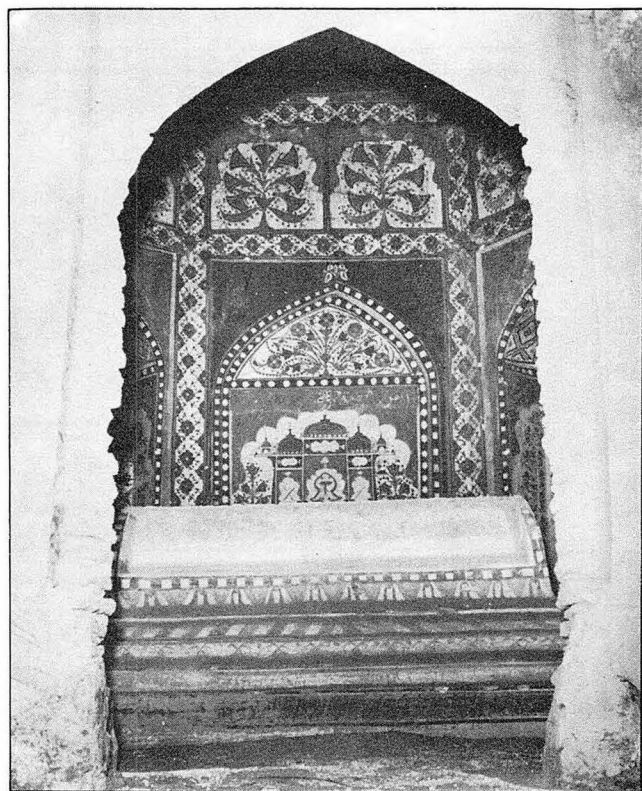


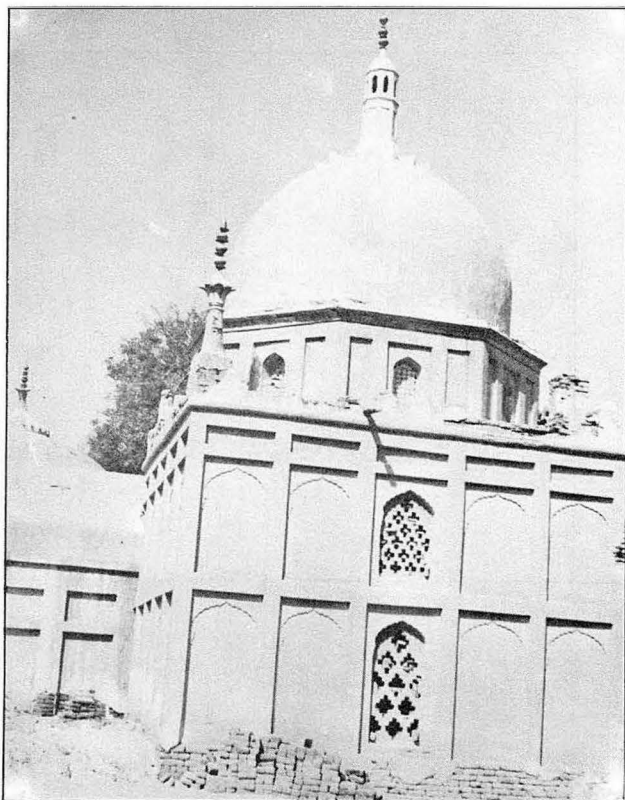
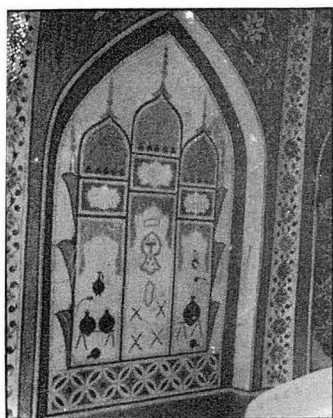


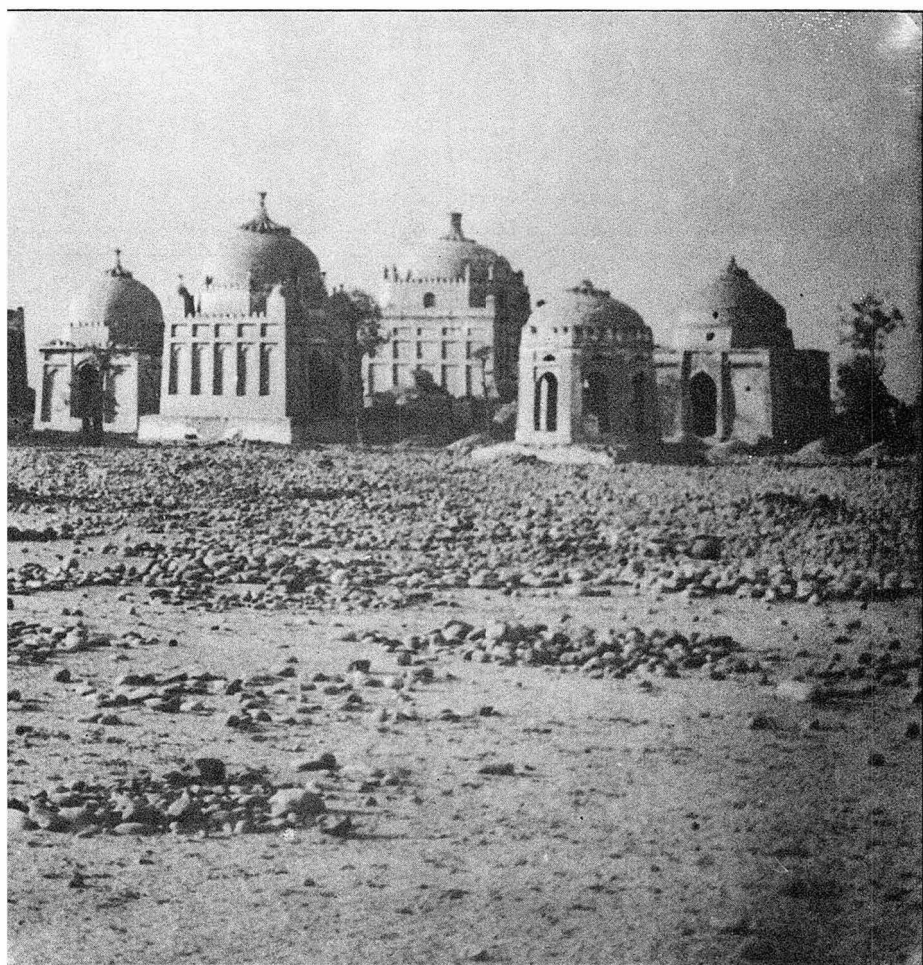
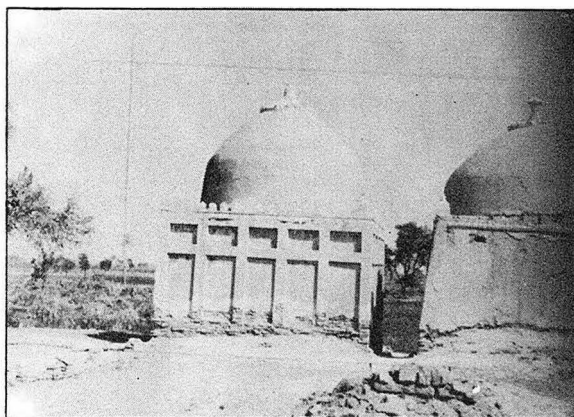


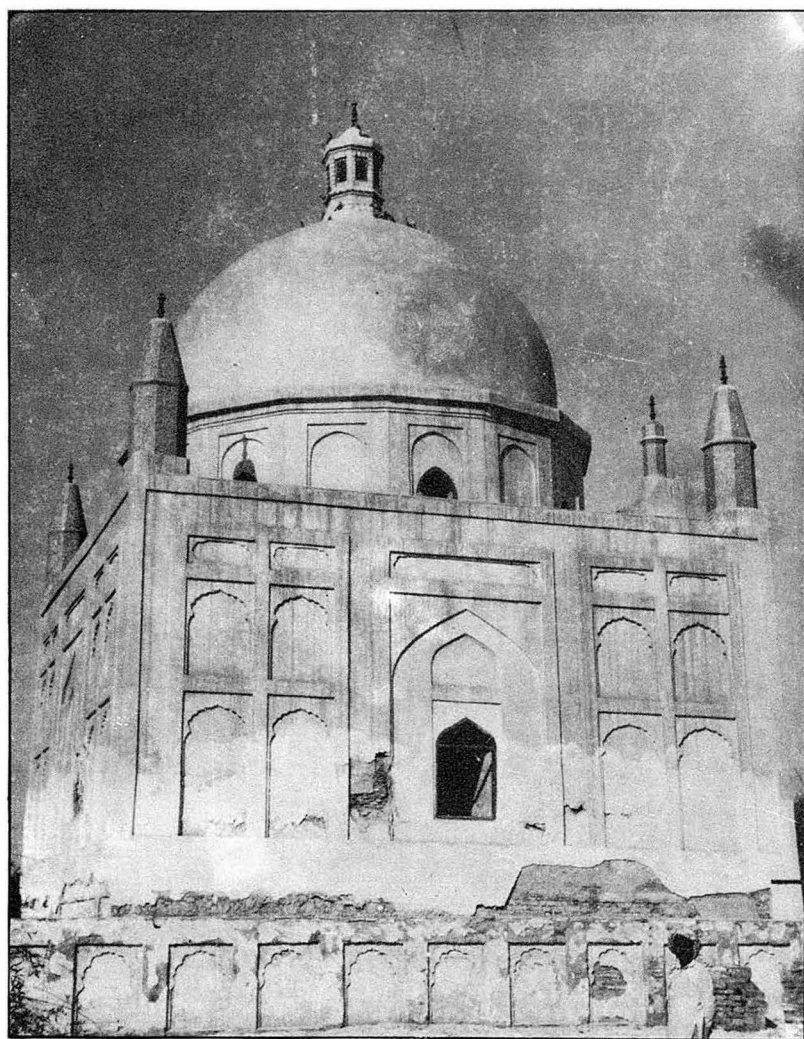




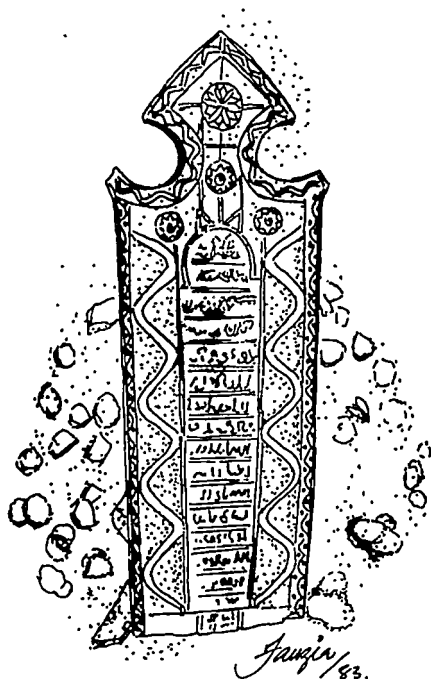








Interpretation of symbols



Several theories have been advanced by historians, writers and scientists to explain the artistic carvings on tomb-structures of the dead. Some others have attributed this remarkable art to the warrior tribes' interest in aesthetic enjoyment. Some have viewed it as symbolism of warrior tribes who raised stone memorials to perpetuate the memory of their dead as a part of their tribal tradition.

While varied interpretations have been put forward no systematic investigation of the facts that lie behind these various interpretations has ever been undertaken. After all, there must be a scientific explanation for the sculptures, engravings and carvings on tomb slabs. This question has baffled many. Perhaps, the secret lies in the laws governing

natural and supernatural forces which require investigation and enquiry for a whole lifetime.

The pity is that the tribesmen themselves have no explanation to offer. They are absolutely unaware of the reasons as to why their ancestors raised such monuments to their dead. "It must have been the tribal custom or a tradition", that is all they have to say in reply to such enquiries. History books are silent and there is hardly any reference except to the existence of such peculiar monuments. Local tradition and folklore do not provide any clue which may throw light on the mystery of the carved tombs.

However, some conclusions and deductions arrived at by scholars and classical authorities deserve notice. They are of the view that this type of grave art is the result of a very complex system of beliefs and practices and it has to do with either religion, metaphysics, myth or magic.

One of the conclusions which have been accepted by all authorities is the basic unity of style and content which is true of all artistic representations so far listed by experts. It is another matter that accurate and detailed data of all representations and their positions have not been recorded so far though some of the interested scholars have done a great deal to remedy the lack of accurate documentation.

In the carved tombstones we find a picture world which is related to the nomadic art and this amounts to a revolutionary deviation within the cultural circle of Islam. It occupies an important part in the funeral art which has strong relationship with the world of symbols of Asia. Its symbolic character is mostly reflected in the graveyard art. Even the construction of the "turbat" (burial mound) is like the burial tent of the nomad. The meaning of the various figures is also strongly related. Specially noticeable tombstone figures are those of horses, bullocks, camels, deer, goats, birds, snakes, peacocks, fish and eagles. The hunting

and war scenes depict hunting animals chasing the game and the eagles having snakes in their bills. Human figures include mounted warriors preceded or followed by foot soldiers, warriors armed with swords, spears, bows, matchlocks, hatchets, shields and daggers. Women also figure on tombstones as dancing girls holding moneybags in their hands. The graves of women mostly carry reproductions of ornaments such as bangles, ear-rings, finger rings, necklaces, nose pins and foot ornaments. These ornaments are still being worn throughout the rural areas of Sindh and Baluchistan. Besides these sketches of human beings and animals, there are a number of other articles carved on stone slabs which have a symbolic meaning, perhaps, reflecting the status of the interred person in life. These are crowns, garlands, 'dolis' (ditters), atrns, turbans, and wooden cots. The strangest symbolic representations are those of footprints, hand impressions, eyes, cups and shoes. The arms and agricultural implements, such as weapons of war and ploughs, are said to represent the vocation of the deceased.

The interpretation of these symbols is very much difficult since these do not relate to the common and ordinary burial rites and customs prevailing at the time in the area. We can, therefore, safely assume that they had something to do with the world of fantasy, magic or mythology. There are no visible indications of defending spirits who accompany the dead as guiding spirits in their march towards heaven. However, one cannot exclude the fact that there are certain pictures which represent astral mythological phenomena, such as peacocks and snakes in their bills, besides some aspects of soul birds.

The basic fact about the carving of animal reliefs and picture designs on tombstones is the deep-rooted burial rites of certain tribes, who continued to follow their ancient traditions in spite of the fact that they had been converted to a religion which strictly negated such burial practices.

The religious practices of these tribes are limited to

ancient rituals and ceremonies. Unlike present-day tribal systems they are without the institutions of the mullah or the mosque. They were Muslims in name only, and they practised their tribal traditions in all important matters of social life such as revenge, blood money and burial rites.

Doli or Litter Sign

Some of the tombs in Chowkhundi, Rajmulk and Haji Mangho graveyards have stone projections on either side of the tombs. These projections resemble stone poles jutting out from the upper tomb box giving it an appearance of litter. This sign is said to be a symbol of social status as the women and men belonging to privileged feudal class normally travelled in 'doli' carried by four or more persons shouldering its wooden poles. This symbol of social superiority was to be manifested through tomb projections reminding the onlooker of the social status of the deceased or, maybe, it was desired by the relatives of the dead so that the latter could attain such a privilege in the next life also.

'Doli', palanquin, which nowadays is only used on ceremonial occasions, has been in use in the past as the main transport for men and women of well-to-do classes. It has also been a symbol of nobility since the 'purdah' observing ladies never moved out of their houses except in palanquins. Four persons were required to shoulder it for short distances and in case of longer routes the number of labourers was doubled or trebled. Locally it was called 'palki' or 'doli' and those who carried it on their shoulders were called 'kahars'.

The 'doli' is still used for transporting 'purdah' observing ladies in many places. In Swat its utility is limited to the marriage ceremony, the bride is brought to her husband's house in the 'palanquin'. The ceremonious utility of 'palanquin' for the bride was prevalent all over the country in the bygone age except for some Hindu families that had a tradition to get the bride transported on horseback seated behind the bridegroom.

During the Mughal period the members of the royalty and persons belonging to higher classes travelled by 'doli'. Later on the 'doli' went out of use as carts drawn by horses and bullocks became common. But in far off places where there were no roads, such as in Swat, Chitral and Hunza, the 'doli' remained in vogue.

'Palki'

It is a 'doli' or palanquin of honour bestowed by kings on nobles according to their status and rank. Besides 'palki' there were seven other insignia of royalty such as (1) "Chhatr" (state umbrella); (2) "Morchhali" or a fan of peacock feathers; (3) "Mahi Maratub", or the order of the fish; (4) "Chhatr tok", and insignia of yak tails (it consists of three tails of yak attached to a crossbar on a longpole); (5) "Khil'at", a robe of honour; (6) a sword with diamonds embedded in its gold handle; and (7) 'naqara', or state kettle drums.

'Palki' is one of three great insignias which the Mughal Emperors of India conferred upon independent princes of the first class and could never be used by any other person upon whom, or upon whose ancestors, they had not been conferred. The other two insignias were the order of the fish and the fan of peacock feathers.

Ritual of Doli — Buddhist

There are a number of collective calendrical rites performed in Buddhist temples all over Southeast Asian countries, specially in Thailand. These Buddhist events are rooted in religious traditions and are collective rites in the sense that an entire village population participates in the celebrations.

The most important ceremony is "Bun Kathin", or the Festival of Doli. It is connected with the spirit cults of the dead. The activities of this celebration cover three days and every household contributes cash as well as presents in kind.

A wooden palanquin is profusely decorated and gifts placed on it along with flowers and coconuts. The first day is spent in feeding the monks who continuously chant 'mantras' to the spirits and decorating the wooden 'doli' ('kathin'). The presentation of the 'doli' to spirits takes place on the following morning when the procession is formed. The wooden palanquin is highly decorated with intricately cut banana stems and paper. It represents a palace. It has projecting terminals. This palace represents the hopes of all participants that in their next life they would be able to live in such an abode. The roof-ends of the palanquin are ornamented to appear as heads of hooded snakes. A number of flags are carried in procession which have pictures of mermaids and crocodiles. The procession is preceded by musicians playing on drums and flutes and followed by villagers, old and young, dancing with joy. The procession is taken around the temple and the village three times. After this robes are presented to the monks and the congregation is blessed in return.

Charpoy

Charpoy (four-legged) is a native bedstead. It literally means four-footed or four-pillared. It rests about one and a half foot above the ground. Poor people have it made from ordinary wood and get its seat area woven with ropes of grass or palm leaves. The well-to-do people get it specially manufactured from shisham-wood. People of rank have the legs of these couches covered with plates of gold or silver, which is handsomely embossed with flowers. A less expensive, but still very pretty, variety is made in Hala and Multan lacquer works, and bears floral designs in various colours.

From the highest to the lowest the shape of the charpoy is the same. The only difference may be in material and workmanship. In some cases the seat of the bed is formed of 'niwar' (broad cotton tape) skilfully interlaced, drawn up tight but perfectly elastic. It is the most luxurious couch imaginable and a person accustomed to the charpoy will

spend many a restless night before he can sleep with comfort on any other type of bed.

In villages as well as in towns the charpoy is also used for carrying the dead to the graveyard. Hence it is also called a bier. In case a sick person is carried on charpoy to hospital, it is normally upturned so as to indicate that the person carried on it is alive. During the mourning month of Muharram people belonging to the Shia sect use it upside down for sleeping purposes.

Charpoy-style Tomb

A charpoy style of tomb generally indicates that the person buried therein is a woman who suffered death in childbirth. Such tombs also depict ornaments carved on the side slabs which merely indicate status, i.e., the person buried underneath happened to be a well-to-do woman. At some time the charpoy type of tomb appears to have been reserved exclusively to honour women who died in childbirth, which was considered an abnormal death. It may be mentioned here that tribesmen considered every abnormal death with great fear because of the conviction that the spirit of the dead in such cases turned malevolent and caused harm to the members of the bereaved family. The only way to satisfy and sober down such a restless spirit was to accord a hero's or heroine's reward of immortality. The ritual of setting up a charpoy style tomb was basically motivated to soothe and satisfy the spirit of the dead of "Show" sarcophagi, made both to gratify the departed and to impress the living beholders, that play an important part in the study of sepulchral furniture.

Charpoys and Nails

The Hindus believe that a woman dying in childbirth or menses enters the order of ghosts variously known as 'churels' or vampires. In order that she may not return from the cremation or the burial ground, mustard seeds are strewn along the road behind her bier, for a belief prevails that she can

only succeed in returning if she can collect all the mustard seeds thus strewn on the way.

In some places loose cotton wool is strewn over the bier so as to be scattered all along the road to the cemetery. It is believed that the 'churel' can return to the house only if she can collect all the cotton scattered behind her in one night. This is considered an impossible task, and no fear is therefore entertained of her return after cotton has been scattered. To prevent the return of the 'churel', some people pass underneath the bier the legs of the cot on which the woman lay in her confinement, while others drive an iron nail in the ground at the end of the street immediately after the corpse has been carried beyond the village boundary. In some places, the nail is driven into the threshold of the house.

Hands and Feet

Representations of human hands and feet have always been regarded as meaningful symbols having a profound religious and magical significance since times immemorial. Such representations have been found painted on rock walls in mountain caves and are quite distinct from the footprints and occasional hand impressions on the clay floors of caves. The hand representations are not frequent but are very characteristic of certain caves and they occur in more than twenty caves discovered in France, Spain and Italy. Hands are often shown as negative prints, i.e. the hand impression is left clear of the paint while the surrounding rock is coloured, probably by stencilling. Then the hand impression is coloured, and exceptionally with only the tips of the fingers represented. All the painted hands are seen most commonly in red or black, but are also known in yellow and white colours.

Sacred Feet (Buddhism)

In the Buddhist tradition footprints or feet are worshipped as symbols of Buddha's feet. In Sri Lanka and Burma stone slabs having engravings of Buddha's feet are widely

worshipped by the Buddhists. Sacred feet figure in the religious lore of many communities.

The historical background of this ritual is as follows:

When Lord Buddha died at Pava and the Mallas of Kusinagara bathed their heads and clad themselves in new garments with the intention of setting on fire the funeral pile of the Blessed One, they were unable to set it alight. Then the Mallas enquired from Anurudda the reason for being unable to set it on fire. "It is because you have one purpose and the spirits have another purpose," he replied, "The funeral pile of the Blessed One shall not catch fire until the sacred feet of the Blessed One are reverently saluted". Then the venerable Maha Kassapa, bowing down with clasped hands, thrice walked reverently round the fire and then uncovering the feet he bowed down at the feet of the Blessed One. After this homage by Kassapa and 500 brethren had ended the funeral pile caught fire by itself.

A number of shrines were established in Sindh over the stone slabs which contained the foot impressions of the Holy Prophet or Hazrat Ali. Even today "Qadam Mubarak" near the fort in Hyderabad City, and "Dargah Qadam Sharif", Rajmulk, in Mirpur Sakro, are thronged by common folk who visit these shrines to pay their homage to the sacred footprints.

Impressions of Hands and Feet

As mentioned earlier, some tribesmen (Hindu) believe that a woman who dies an unnatural death becomes a witch, 'churel' or 'dayin', and troubles her husband, her successor or co-wife, or her children. There are three classes of 'churels': (1) 'Poshi', (2) 'Soshi' and (3) 'Toshi'. Those women who have not enjoyed the pleasures of this world to their satisfaction prior to death enter the order of 'Poshi churels'. They fondle children and render good service to their widower husbands. Those women who in life have been persecuted

beyond endurance by the members of their families become 'Soshi churels' after death. They dry up the blood of men and prove very troublesome to the members of that family. Women who bear a strong attachment to their husbands enter the order of 'Toshi churels', and bring great pleasure and happiness to their husbands in this life. 'Toshi churels' are said to have four feet and the extra two feet are seen protruding from their bellies.

Most high caste people, on the death of a first wife, take out an impression of their feet on gold or silver leaves or leaf-like tablets of gold and cause their second wives to wear them round their necks. These impressions of the feet are called "Shok-pagalans" or mourning footprints. Among the lower castes, the hands or the feet of the second wife are tattooed in the belief that this prevents the deceased wife from causing injury to the surviving one.

Even after the precautions mentioned above have been taken to prevent the return of the 'Churel' or 'Vantri', Shradha are performed, and a number of Brahmin women feted on the twelfth or the thirteenth day after death to propitiate her as the fear of her mischief is very strong.

Turban

In each communal cluster of graves one or two graves have the turban symbol as the crown of the tomb. This symbol clearly indicates that the buried one happened to be the head of the family or the tribe. It is an age-old custom prevailing in most of the tribes that when a head of family passes away, people from adjoining villages or belonging to the community or affiliated to the tribe gather on the third day after the death and put a turban on the head of the person elected, selected or declared to be the new chief. He is then declared a "Pagdar" or the one who is bearing the turban. This symbol of turban is perpetuated in stone. Such a symbol is never seen on the tomb of a female or a child.

Balbal

It is an ancient tradition according to the Chinese chronicles about the burial rites and rituals of the Turkish Tukue that they constructed war plastics on the graves of their heroes whose number of slain were equal to the number of dead persons belonging to the ranks of enemies. They are referred to as Balbal in the Turkish Orkhan inscriptions of the 8th century.

The Chinese records further report about a building which was constructed beside the grave, on the walls of which the figure of the hero and scenes of killings from his life were painted.

It is thus proved beyond doubt that the animal reliefs reflect burial rites of ancient Turkistan and that the animal figures depicted on tombstones are symbolic representations of the triumphs and hunting-expeditions of the deceased, that have been preserved on tombstones, according to the old Turkish custom.

The told Turkish belief that the soul of a dead person has a bird-like appearance was confirmed during Orkhan diggings by the inscription of motifs on tombstone in the form of pairs of birds.

It is said about a dead person that he "flies away". The western Turks continued to use the expression "becomes a falcon", to describe a dead person, even after their conversion to Islam.

WEAPONS

The Vendidad (chap xiv.9) includes the following list of the weapons of a warrior:

1. Spear — (Arshti)
2. Sword — (Kareta)
3. Mace or club — (Vazra or Gurz)

4. Bow (Thanvar)
5. Quiver with belt and thirty iron-pointed arrows.
6. Sling with an arm-string with thirty sling stones.
7. Curiass. (Zaradha)
8. Hauberk (Kuiris)
9. Veil (Paiti-dana)
10. Casque (Sira vara)
11. Girdle or belt (Kamara)
12. Leg-armour (Rana-panna).

Weapons as Spiritual Symbols

The above list of warriors' weapons is given in a chapter of Avesta which treats of the atonement of a particular kind of fault or sin. While narrating the association of a spiritual idea with physical weapons, the Avesta aims at conveying that a wrongful act can, to a certain extent, be atoned by a righteous act or acts.

In fact the Avesta passage implies that the physical weapons are religious symbols for warding off "evil". It is for this reason we find weapons such as mace (gurz) in the hands of Mithra, the Yazata, or Angel of Light and Truth. It is for the same reason that a Zoroastrian invokes the gurz in the Khorshed Yasht. He says, "I invoke (the assistance of) the mace which is aimed well on the heads of the demons".

The above passage clearly indicates that spiritual idea is associated with physical weapons as means to destroy demons, i.e., wicked beings.

In the Meher Yasht we find this spiritual idea more clearly described. There we read, "they (the maces) pass through spiritual spheres and fall over the heads of the demons through spiritual spheres".

In the Pahlavi Minokherad we find a reference to the spiritual side of the use of the different weapons such as,

History on Tombstones

“wear the spirit of contentment on the body like arms and armour and valour, and make the spirit of truth a shield, the spirit of thankfulness a club, and with these weapons we shall be able to quench all the fire and darts of the wicked”.

The symbolic significance of weapons such as mace, sword, club or wooden stick, etc., always implies a battle against evil. Besides Persian monarchs even the Muslim kings, for instance the Mughals in India, employed *Gürz*-bardars (mace-bearers) and *Chobdars* (bearers of sticks) as emblem of authority. Even in English courts and in institutions of justice all over the world weapons are used as symbols of their authority. The university of London has its own mace. The House of Commons also has a mace which is placed, as a symbol of authority, on a table before the Speaker.

In ancient times arms and armour were frequently marked on banners, standards and coins as emblems of authority or to ward off evil in warfare.

INSTANCES IN HISTORY

The study of plastic art, sculpture and architecture, which flourished during the Gupta Age in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., provides us with some clues to the riddle of incised images, bas-reliefs and animal figures which we find on the tombs of warriors in Sindh and Baluchistan. The main motifs related to our subject are armed warriors; mounted warriors bearing arms such as swords, bows and arrows; peacocks; peacocks with snakes in their bills; hunting scenes; animal figures, such as horses, camels and deer; birds, such as geese, eagles and pigeons; ornaments; and impressions of hands and feet. Before we attempt an interpretation of these symbols let us see if we can find some parallels which could throw light on their usage.

A beautiful door-frame discovered by R.B. Bannerji in Parbatia near the town of Tezpur, which happens to be one of the best specimens of its class from the Gupta period, contains five bands of ornaments which depict two serpents, the tails of which are held by a figure of garuda in high relief. Behind the figure of river goddess appear two flying geese pecking at the halo of the goddess. The door-frame of the early Gupta temple at Nachna Kuthura similarly shows a row of flying figures and a large human figure on the door knob. The spiral-work on the volutes of the temple of Siva at

Bhumara depict peacocks with their tails spread fanwise.

Coins of the Gupta dynasties also throw light on the subject of motifs. Various types of gold, silver and copper coins are available in the British Museum (Gupta dynasty) which have been catalogued into Archer, Spearman, Battle-axe, Asvamedhs (Horse), Garuda and Peacock standards. Archer-type coins show the king holding a bow in his left hand while in the right hand he holds an arrow, with the Garuda standard on the left side. The Tiger-type shows the king standing wearing a turban, necklace, ear-rings and armlets, trampling on a tiger which falls backwards as he shoots it with a bow in his right hand. Asvamedha shows a horse standing before a sacrificial post and on the reverse a queen wearing loose robes and jewellery, and a sacrificial spear on the left side. Horseman type of Kumaragupta coin shows the king riding a horse and long sashes of his dress fly behind, and wearing jewellery such as ear-rings, armlets and necklace, etc. On some coins he has a bow in his left hand and in others he has a sword hanging by his left side. Garuda type has garuda standing on an altar with a snake in its mouth and the simple legend, "Chandraguptah".

At some period between 414 and 455 A.D. the Gupta Empire was invaded by hordes after hordes of barbarians who succeeded in destroying it and its culture after three quarters of a century. The earliest invasion was successfully repelled by Crown Prince Skandagupta. The chronology of these wars is not fully known to us. Most of the historical information about Skandagupta and his wars with the Huns is to be derived from his Bhitari pillar inscription. Bhitari is the name of the village about five miles to the north-east of Saiyadpur, a village and headquarters of a tehsil in Ghazipur district. A red sand pillar stands outside the village and bears on it a long inscription in 19 lines, for the most part in a very good state of preservation. It is from this inscription that we learn that Skandagupta spent a whole night on the bare ground during the Huns wars in his father's lifetime in his attempts to

restore the fallen fortunes of his family.

The Bhitari inscription proves that as Crown Prince Skandagupta had saved his father's kingdom from total destruction at the hands of the "Pūsyamitras"; who were probably the first wave of the Hunas to reach the plains of the Punjab. It also proves that after his accession to the throne he faced the second wave of Hunas who were attempting to ravage Northern India.

The Hunas are known to the western historians as the Huns and to the Chinese as the Hiung Nu. We hear of them for the first time in connection with the Yueh Chi or the Kushans in the history of the first Han dynasty. The subsequent history and migrations of these people have been very closely followed by western scholars. Their researches have proved conclusively that the Hunas spread over Southern Asia and Europe like swarms of locust towards the close of the 5th century A.D. While Attila terrified the Roman emperors of the east and west, Khinkhila and Tormana devastated the fairest provinces of Persia and India. The eastern branch of the Hunas is known to European writers as the Epthalites while the Chinese call them Ye-tha. Two successive kings of Persia were killed in battle with the Hunas. Western writers describe them as nomadic people with somewhat Mongolian features.

Destruction Caused by Invaders

We are not aware as to what preparations were made, and by whom, to face this wave of barbarians through the northern passes. The Huns' kings, Tormana and Mihriagul, are accredited with the destruction of the ancient Buddhist temples and establishments of the North-West Frontier Province, the ancient Gandhara and Udyana. Chinese historians have recorded the destruction of the cities of Bactria and Afghanistan. Most probably the minor Kushan chiefs of these two countries were annihilated and the Gupta rulers failed in their duty to assist or protect the people of the

northern areas. It appears that the horrors of a barbarian invasion and a long war in a country far away from the fertile plains of the Indus and the Ganges and full of bleak and arid mountains did not appeal to the sons of Magadha in the fifth century A.D. Consequently, the great passes of the north-west were not defended and the fertile valleys of Kapisa, Nagarahara and Gandhara were ravaged. City after city went up in flames, the male population lay massacred on their door-steps and the women and children dragged away in slavery. Thus perished the last vestiges of the great civilisation of the Asiatic Greeks in India which had absorbed the Saka, the Kushans and other Central Asian invaders. With it perished the noblest monuments of the great Kushan emperors, their temples and monasteries and rich endowments. At the same time perished the great University of Taxila, for centuries the greatest centre of learning in the country.

For three centuries thence onward the areas comprising the present-day Pakistan and states of Rajputana, Kathiawar and Gujerat were plunged into chaos from which, up to the first half of the 9th century A.D., none of the dynasties could emerge or attain a united empire. In the mid 9th century we find Hinduised Gurjara on the scene.

ANCIENT SYMBOLS

In the light of recent archaeological excavations the world over the nature and affinities of the proto-historic inhabitants of the Indus Valley (the proto-Indic people) have been subjected to an exhaustive and critical analysis. ProFOUND studies have been undertaken to determine the structure of society, objects of worship and the funeral customs then prevailing in the Indus Valley through its finds, and compare them with the most ancient cultures of the world civilizations. The conclusions arrived at by the experts reveal that the proto-Indic civilization is predominantly the same Vedic culture as depicted in the Atharvaveda.

Witchcraft and sorcery being the special features of the Atharvaveda, one naturally seeks to trace the influence of the Veda in the domain of magic among the Indus Valley finds. It appears that many of the terracotta figurines and amulets were employed in black magic and sorcery. The figurines have been identified with the *krtyas* of the Atharvaveda, dolls used in a number of magical ceremonies. They were made in human forms for confining the agitated spirits of the dead, and from their description it seems that the process of their manufacture, putting together, ornamentation and smearing was similar to that told in the Atharvaveda. Figurines with prominent bellies may be for those women who suffered death in childbirth. The Atharvaveda invokes Maruts for the cure of swollen bellies. Figurines of pregnant females may have also been employed in charms against embryo-spoiling demons described in the Atharvaveda. Male naked figures with tonsured heads and trimmed beards may have been there to bound the wandering souls of the persons representing the priestly class. The Atharvaveda prescribes nudity in witchcraft and also refers to tonsured male and female figures with springs of flowers or leaves on their heads. These recall to our minds the Atharva amulets of "Simsapa and Saurarca, etc" to secure the blessings, or to appease the wrath, of the dead man or woman who died in the prime of youth. Beads, of which a large number in innumerable varieties have been found, were not merely for ornamentation but were used as amulets as well. The Atharvaveda mentions that various kinds of "Manis" (gold beads) were worn as amulets to secure immunity from evil eye. The bangles and bracelets were considered as charms against the malignant spirits of women who died in childbirth or in the state of pregnancy.

Sindhian Art

In the Indus Valley, the sun-god was not represented in a human form, but the swastika, a circle with radiating signs, the eye, the falcon and the bull were possibly its symbols. The swastika represents movements of the sun, and is the

symbol of eternity according to Indian tradition. Falcon is the sun bird and the eye is connected with the sun, to whom the sense of sight goes back at death. Headdress of figurines includes turbans, horned objects, fan-shaped headdress, conical caps, and pigtails. The headdress compares favourably with the headdress types mentioned in the Atharvaveda which refers to "Kirtin and Kurira" which may mean "horn".

Some seals depict a tiger trampling a man or wrestling or being fed. The Atharvaveda clearly shows fear of wild animals and invokes the earth goddess to drive away wild beasts, tigers, etc. The seal may be an amulet based on the Atharvan tradition. The woman with a tiger's body, human forelegs and spiral horns may be a counterpart of a mother goddess. Various animals portrayed on the seals represent creatures sacrificed to attain particular ends. Composite animals on the seals may illustrate some of the mythical descriptions in Vedic literature.

On some of the Indus seals are found hooded serpents and inter-twined snakes which may be compared to reptiles, such as Vrtra, Abi and Naga, associated with deities. A Moen-jo-Daro pottery figure represents a horned female with four doves on the head and a Harappa figure records a flying dove which may be amuletic.

Nevertheless, forms of art persisted that were genuinely Sindhian. So strong has been the spirit and the thought behind them that in spite of the considerable upheavals in the cultural field resulting in a diversity and creation of different artistic styles, the basic Sindhian art has survived and retained its purity and originality.

The Sindhian art is a pure expression of beauty and simplicity rather than expression of magnificence, grandeur and wealth. It reflects more or less the decorative effect and its core is invariably the common man rather than the sovereign. The most common motifs and images in Sindhian art

are geometrical patterns and floral designs, though the representations of human figure and the animal remained the favourite subject of the ancient artists of the Indus Valley. The chief value of the Sindhian decorative art lies in its novelty of line, taut and lively, flowing instinctively and almost at random.

This spontaneity of line represents the ancient heritage left to the new art forms of modern Sindh. Many peoples, often of uncertain origin, mingled and moved across the Indus Valley and its lower reaches in successive waves of immigration. Among the most curious and interesting objects produced today are the graphic patterns on textiles ('khes', 'ajrak', 'rillies'), tile and wood designs in ceramic and lacquer works, incisions on tombstones, leather, boats and camel backs.

Decline of tradition.

In Sindh and Baluchistan art is understood as craftsmanship, and so it is collective and anonymous. Moreover the artistic designs and carvings were resorted to mainly for attaining magical and religious purposes, i.e., controlling and guiding the souls of the dead by means of sepulchral reliefs and paintings. In India the fundamental problem of art and architecture was the temple whereas in Sindh and Baluchistan it was the tomb which had the function of assuring the dead man of a full and peaceful existence in the next world.

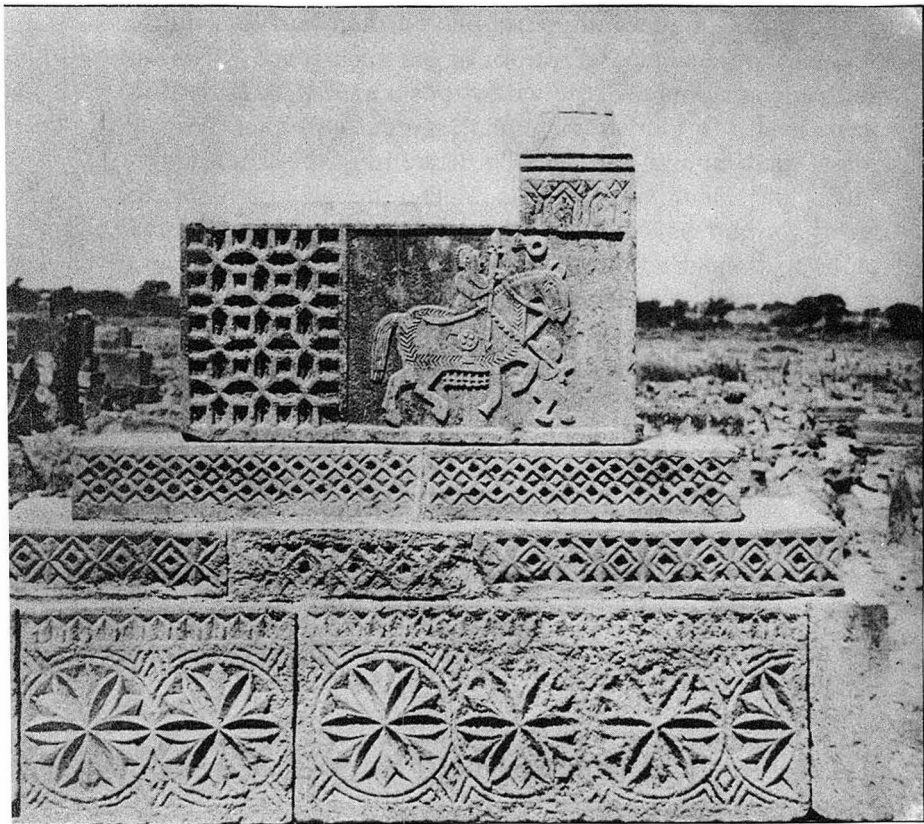
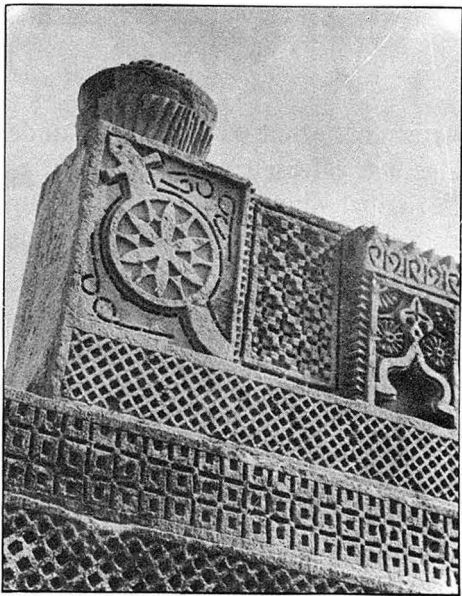
Whatever may have been the original purpose, magical or religious or both, in the ancient past, later on the construction of decorated tombs became a sort of tribute or honour linked with heroic deeds or as a sign of showing one's attachment to the dead. The tombs of the loved ones, men, women or children, were richly decorated with bas-reliefs and paintings, portraying the dead one's life in the next world.

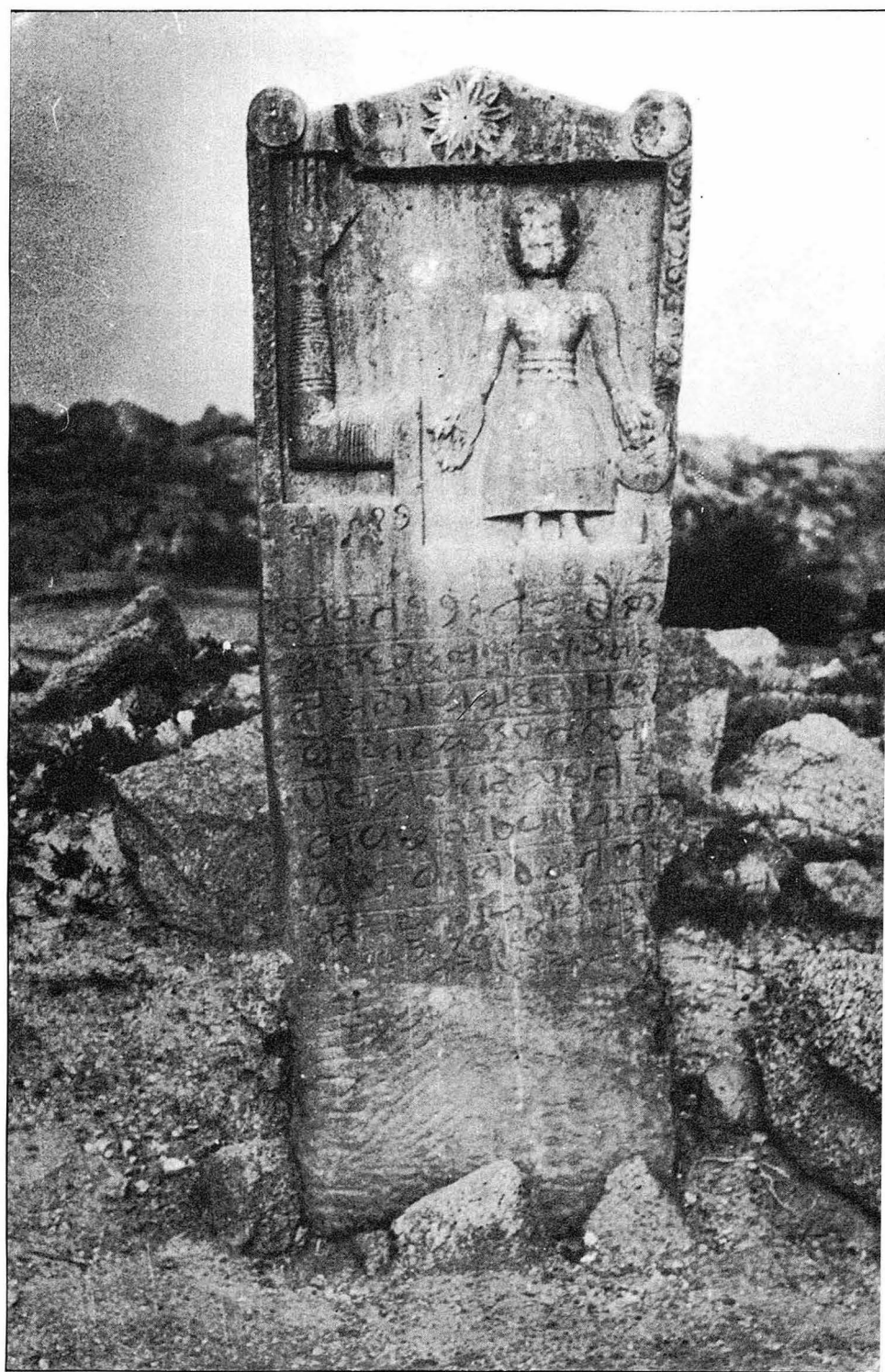
As time passed the domed tomb or chowkhundi or the two-storey gumbad decreased in size and importance. The

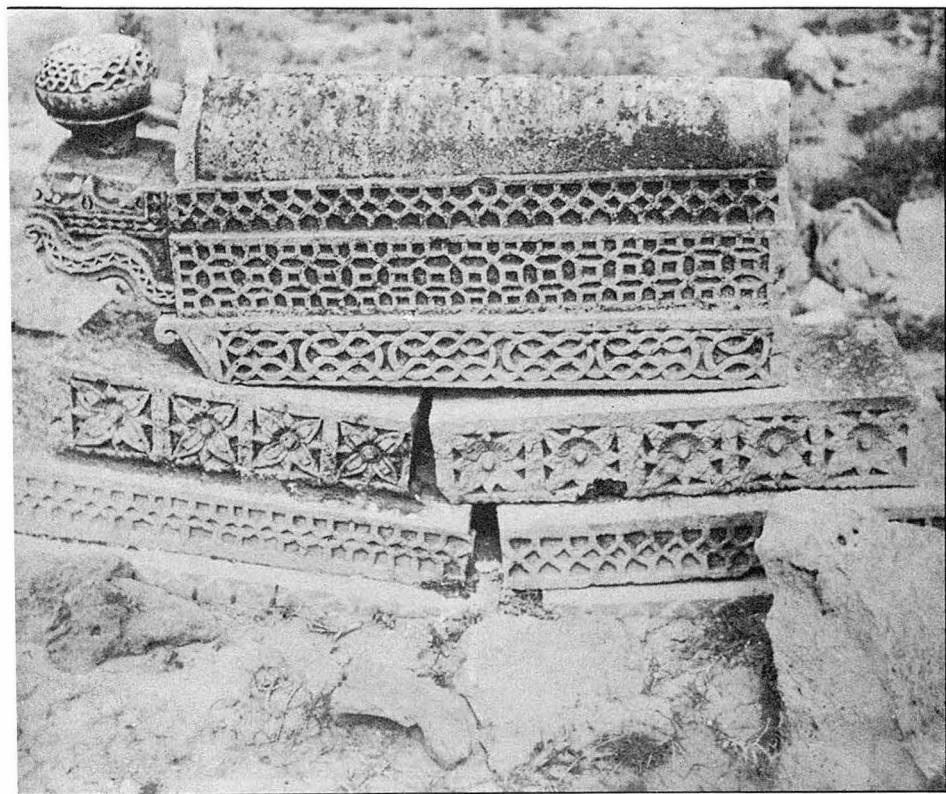
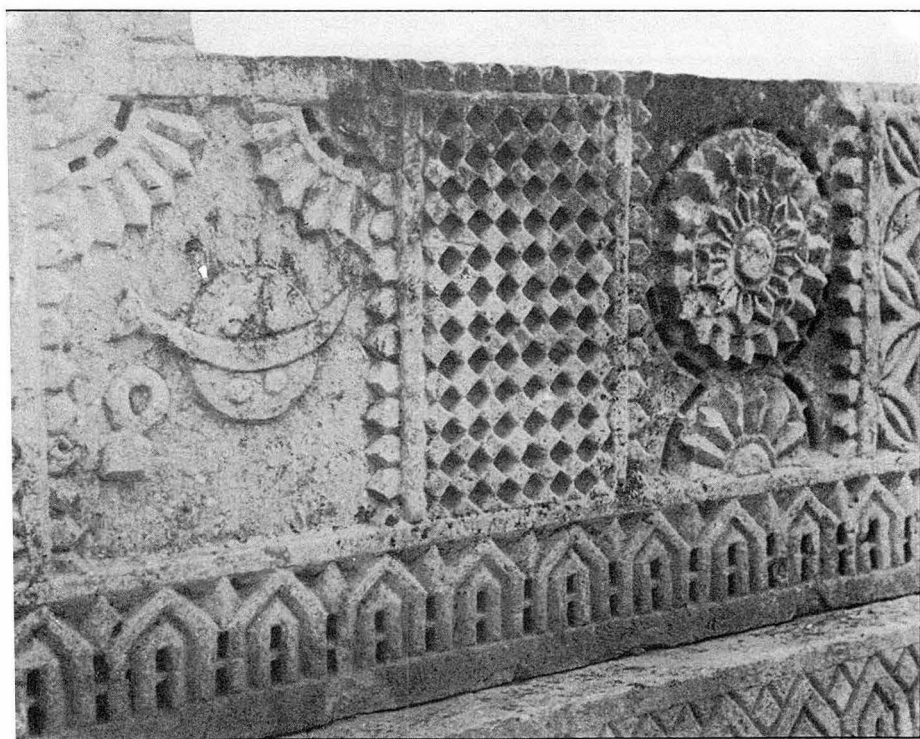
superterranean burial gave way to under-ground one. Such a change was effected because of the fear of tomb riflers who, out of tribal vendetta or jealousy, damaged or destroyed the mansions of the dead. Such depredations were quite frequent. The same motive explained the choice of remote spots and places, difficult of access. The new feature was the large-scale use of tomb-slabs prepared and kept in stock as workshop pieces. These decorated slabs had only the common scene of a mounted warrior armed with a spear and preceded or followed by a footman, and that of females displaying common sets of ornaments.

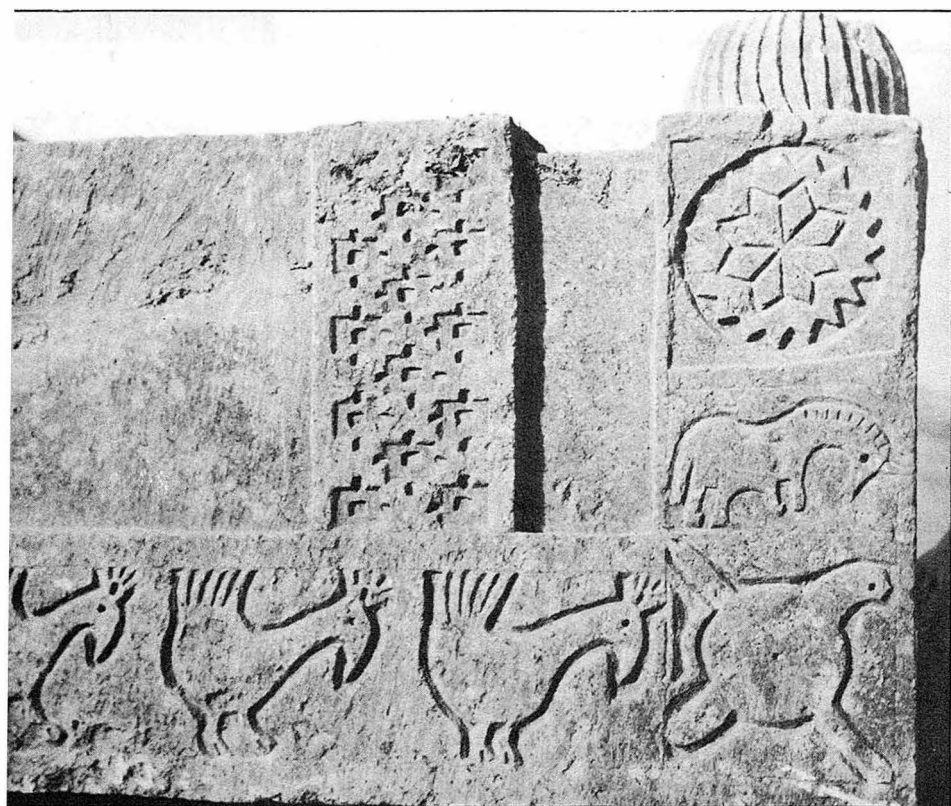
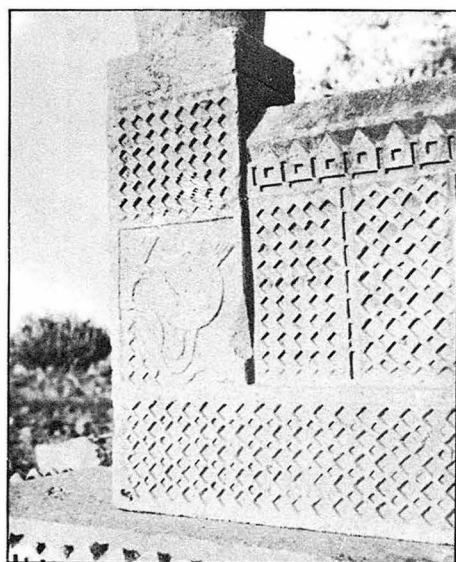
However, with the endeavour of some later theologians to ban from the tomb the human and animal figures and representations of ornaments and armaments, the practice of decorating tomb-slabs gradually waned. In making these views prevail public authorities played their part and police measures were aimed at preventing a recurrence of pagan mourning customs and the workshops which were located in towns were forbidden to manufacture tomb-slabs bearing animal and human figures. Consequently, the later graveyards, like Memon-jo-Goth in Malir, though belonging to Burfat Numeriyas, who had been previously raising decorated tombs to their dead, contain plain, dressed stone tombs and their decoration was limited to floral and geometrical designs. Thus, with the ascendancy of the religious habit of mind the cult of raising decorated tombs for the deceased heroes died out and sacred awe which was inspired by the graves of honoured heroes vanished altogether. It is now at the graves of saints rather than of heroes that one experiences the practice of old rites. With the decline of the cult of raising memorial stones, the mourning practices, such as bewailing of dead, custom of sacrificing animals and shaving off of hair in honour of the dead, rending of garments, strewing the head with dust and beating of face, were done away with as these customs were disapproved by the orthodox.

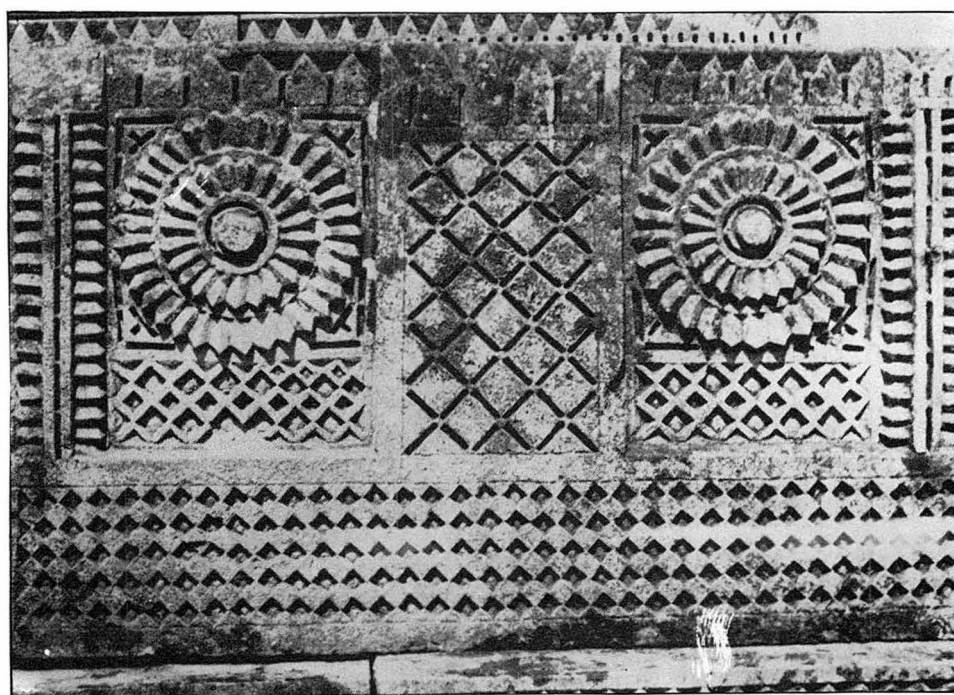
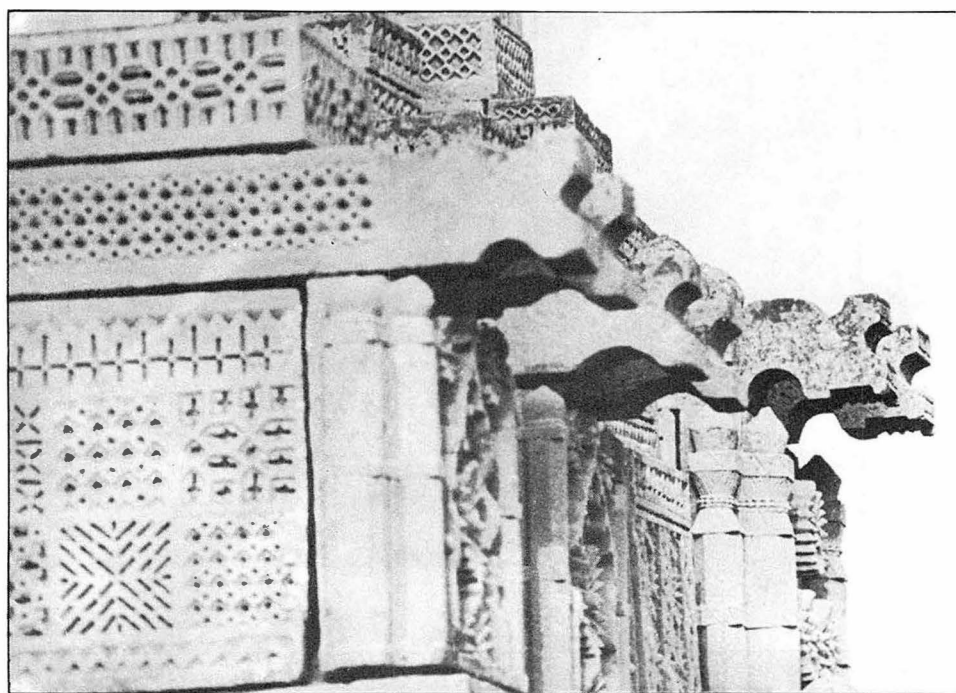
Interpretation
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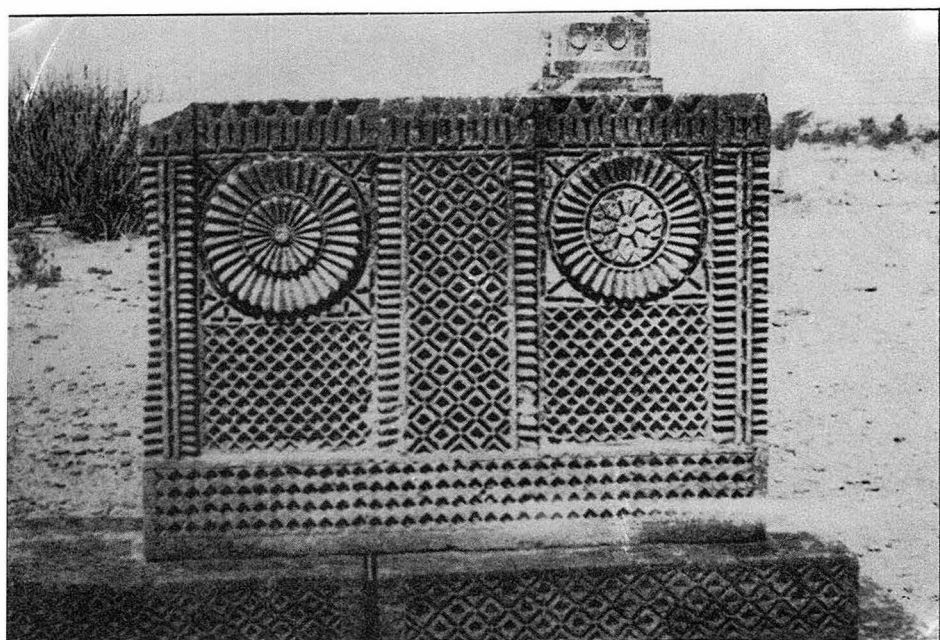


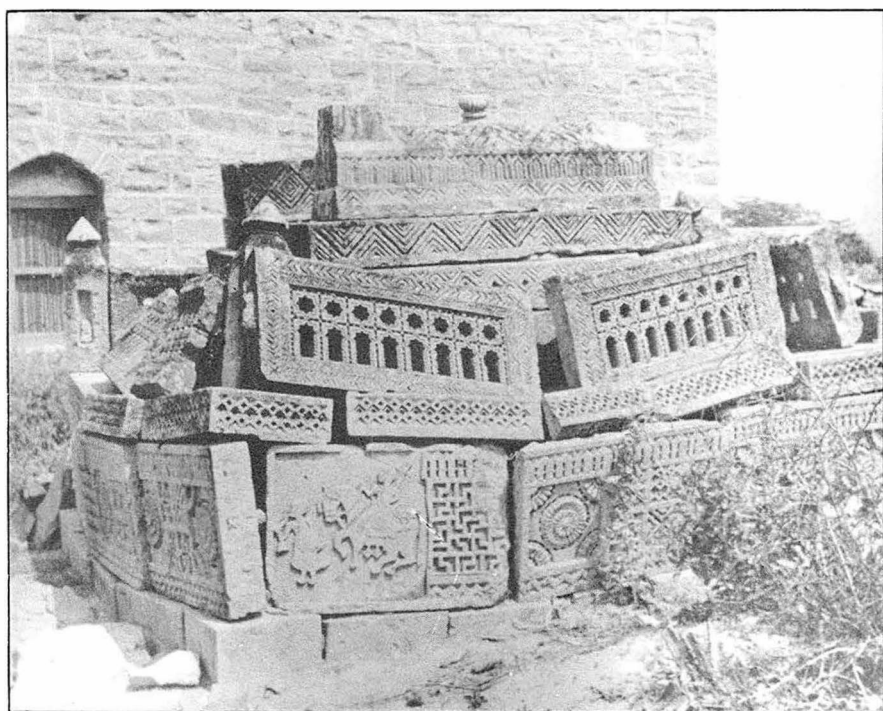


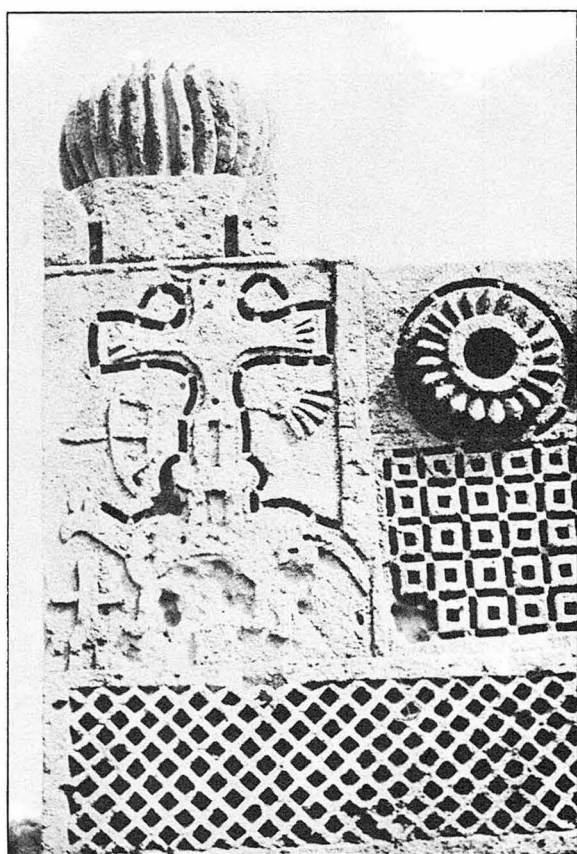


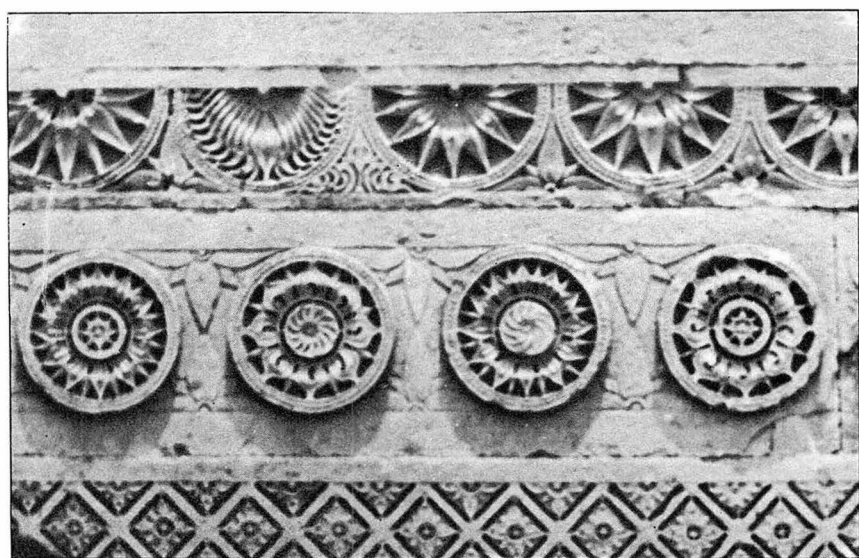


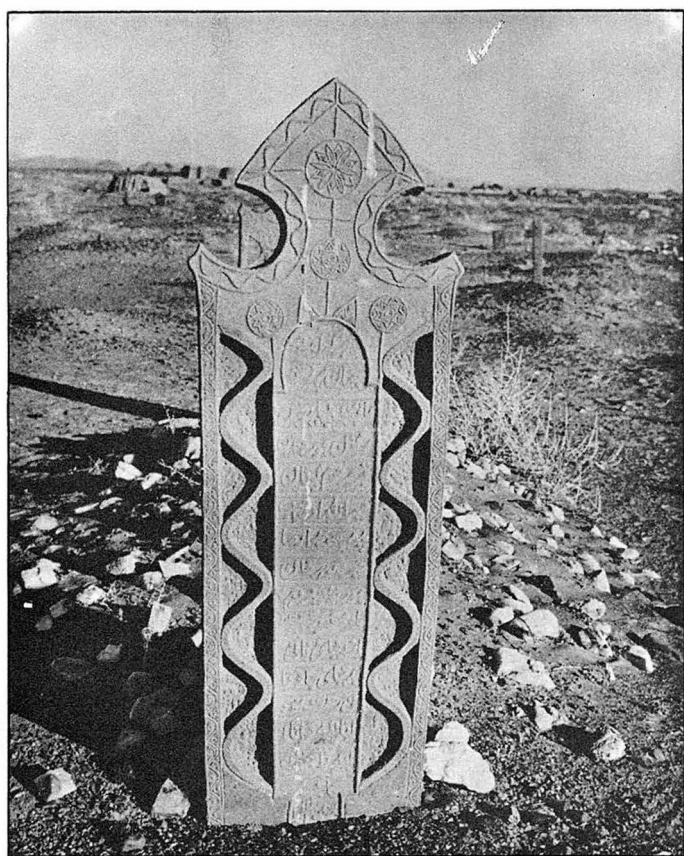






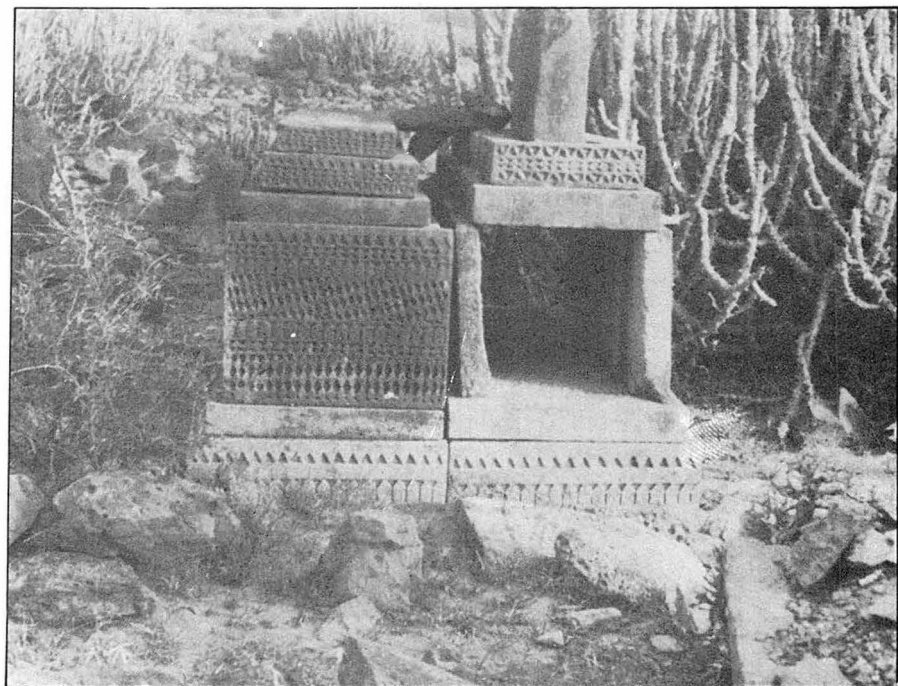


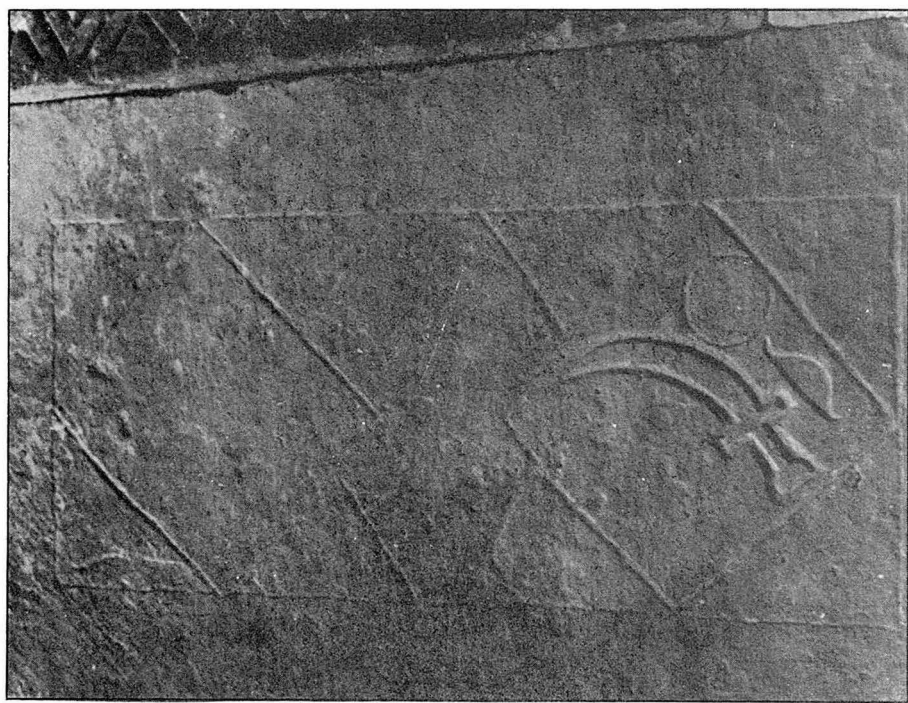


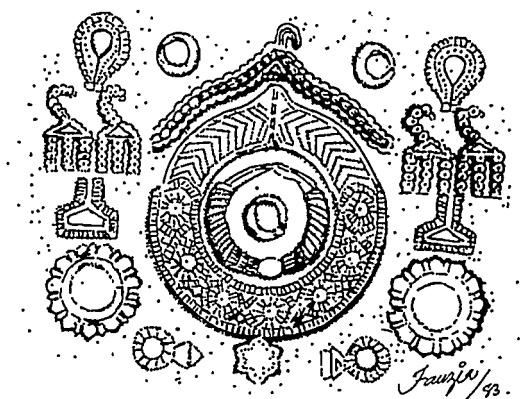












ORNAMENTS

The ornaments found engraved on tomb slabs or moulded on burnt-clay bricks of gumbads in Sindh and Baluchistan are still worn by the tribal women. In the olden times jewellery mainly comprised neck ornaments — such as Hansli, Kanthmal, Duhri, Chandanhar, Champakali —, bracelets, anklets, signet rings, ear rings, nose ring (Nath) and nose plug (Bulo). Almost all the tribal ornaments were made of silver except for the nose ring (Nath) and necklace (Duhri). Goldsmiths were found in almost every town of Sindh and Baluchistan since jewellery was always much in demand. The Indus Valley has been famous in history for the manufacture and export of gold and silver ornaments since ancient times. A great many styles and designs of ornaments can be seen on Jain and Buddhist—Gandhara sculptures, like beautifully carved statues of Budhisattvas. It appears that in ancient times ornaments were worn by men as well as women. Ornaments were also worn by royalty as a sign of status. The Persian monarchs and Budhisattvas are seen wearing ear rings, necklaces and armlets, besides rings. The only ornament which was reserved exclusively for women was the nose ring.

The passion for personal embellishment is common to all societies. Even the primitive tribes show a remarkable taste and fondness for ornaments. Women in rural areas can

History on Tombstones

be seen with eight to ten pounds of metal round their arms and legs. The Chowkhundi sculptures attest fully to this passion for ornaments.

Ornaments are generally worn for decorative purposes but there are some which have, or have had, a magical and protective significance; some are signs of social status and may be termed insignias; and some have religious and social significance. It is difficult to study sculptured ornaments from all these points of view. But an effort in this direction may yield some useful information.

Ornaments found in our sculptures were commonly used by both the rich and the poor alike, the only difference was in the quality of the material used.

Neck ornaments.

Many varieties of neck ornaments are found in bas-reliefs ranging from a simple string of beads to a most elaborate and artistic one consisting of lockets with a collet in the centre encasing a gem. In some cases, the number of strings of pearls or beads varies from three to seven. Similar metallic neck ornaments are still being worn by tribeswomen throughout Sindh. "Duhri" is made of gold whereas the "Kantha" or "Huss" is of silver.

Arm ornaments

Ornaments of the arm include those worn on the wrist, forearm and the biceps. Women in the Indus Valley are very particular in decorating their arms with bangles, bracelets and wristlets. The bangles shown in bas-reliefs are worn on hands as well as feet and paint the type seen in the case of the figurine found at Moen-jo-Daro. The women in the desert area of Thar wear rings of ivory from the wrist to the shoulder, the ring near the shoulder being immoderately large. Armlets ("Karyus") or wristlets ("Kangans") are made of silver and have a clasp so as to get fixed by means of a screw. Some curious kinds of the Karyus are also seen which

are made of long narrow strips of silver rolled springwise in a coil and a half.

Leg ornaments

Anklets or "Karyu" seen in the sculptures were common ornaments worn in the past. At present such leg ornaments are seen only in the rural areas. In some cases the weight of silver anklets exceeds one kilo each, but normally these are of hollow tube, made and bent in a circular shape. Some anklets seen in bas-reliefs appear to consist of a large ring fringed with ovoidal pendants which are perhaps jingling anklets.

Nose ornaments

Two types of nose ornaments are seen in the sculptures, the first being a rounded protuberance, or a "knob", worn on the nostril exactly where modern women wear a stud. Most of "knob"-type nose rings are fitted with screw inserted on the nostril side in a hole bored for the purpose. Ladies wear it on both sides of the nose and usually there is a precious stone embedded in the centre.

The other nose ornaments which has a great significance is a nose peg or "Nath". It is only worn by married women as it symbolizes the "wedlock". This ornament is specifically provided to women on the wedding night. It is made of silver or of gold. Its one side is inserted in the nostril and the other side is supported through a gold string or thread fixed in hair through a small hook. It is only worn on the outer side of the nose.

Ear ornaments

Chowkhundi sculptures show a considerable variety of ear ornaments which are worn by both men and women. But the representations seen in the bas-reliefs only pertain to those worn by females.

ARTISTS & SCULPTURE.

The earliest rituals were linked with the natural topography. The ritual sites, too, were associated with mountains, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, islands, rocks and trees. Since spirit-life was believed to exist in the vicinity of these phenomena offerings were made at or near spots thought to be more sacred. Relics at such sites were either pitched into water such as into wells or pools and rivers, while others were hung on trees. While different kinds of objects have been recovered from these ritual sites, the one class common to most are the replicas in clay and stone. They belong to a replica tradition that goes back to the early tumuli of the fourth century. Majority of replicas pertain to humans, horses and boats. The boats were undoubtedly used to gain favour with the river deity for safe voyage.

In Sindh and Baluchistan the artisan, who dextrously carved figures on tomb-stones with his rustic tools, had no free choice nor had he any social or political themes to express. His artifact was exclusively meant to glorify the dead according to the ancient rituals of the tribesmen.

The representations of human and animal figures as well as other numerous motifs which were carved on tomb slabs can be better understood if we consider the ends for which

the artists were engaged to fashion such designs. It would be wrong to assume that artists had a free hand and could carve any motif. On the contrary they could not add to or change any of the designs which were fashioned centuries earlier and were passed on to them from generation to generation. It was the tribal tradition which was being followed even though the original purpose underlying these motifs had been lost sight of. However, the significance attached to each motif was kept intact and the sculptor as well as the client both were very much familiar with the motif that was to be engraved on the tomb of a particular person. For instance, a woman who died in child-birth would have on her tomb ornaments of a different design than the one who suffered violent death and died issueless.

With the Sindhi tribesmen the survival of the soul after death was an ancient, deep-seated belief. The structure and finishing of tombs make it clear that there persisted and prevailed the conviction that some kind of conscious existence was in store for the soul after death and that the dead and the living could affect one another mutually. Human life was not just an interlude of being between nothingness and nothingness.

The literature and folk tales clearly imply the belief that the spirit of the dead can haunt the dwelling of the living. There is also a notion prevailing in the minds of the people that the lower world is barred to the souls of those who have died before their time. The dead were as a rule regarded as divine and were venerated as holy ancestors. If duly propitiated they were capable of aiding their descendants, but were harmful and spiteful to the living if kinless and neglected.

Closely linked with the belief that the individual dead remember with affection their ties with living friends was the notion that a person's conduct and deeds in this world had some bearing on his or her destiny in the hereafter. Listing of

virtues and achievements both in literature and in inscriptions was, of course, partly intended to ensure that the dead lived on with honour in their survivors' memories, and the same was doubtless partly true of the countless scenes from professional, intellectual or daily life that are met in the funerary art.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the tribesmen, whatever their traditions, did subscribe to the Islamic philosophy in the sense that the survival of the individual implies some kind of moral responsibility on his or her part as regards after-life destiny; and that all men must expect a reckoning and judgement after death, when an earthly life well spent with duties successfully performed and talent made most of would reap its reward. There can be little doubt that art motifs were also meant to state that useful toil and cultural accomplishment can merit a happy immortality. This interpretation of such subjects on sepulchral monuments is not incompatible with the fact that many epitaphs treat work and care as burden from which death brings release.

It appears that in Thatta, Jungshahi, Sehwan and Rohri there were a number of workshops which manufactured readymade sarcophagi as objects of commerce. The tomb slabs were plainly dressed and roughly decorated on outer side in the first instance. The carving was done at the place of destination where the sarcophagi were to be finally installed. Once the tomb slabs had been purchased and transported to the place of erection it was binding on the manufacturer to provide craftsmen to install them.

Some of the most artistically carved stone sarcophagi may well have been specially commissioned by or for the persons whose bodies they were destined to receive. But the vast majority were workshop pieces, kept in ready stock and selected by customers as need arose.

It may be mentioned that the paintings executed on

tomb sides, carved sarcophagi, relief, or decorated tomb slabs belong to an age prior to the ban imposed on graven images. Whatever may have been the original idea in applying the ornamental art to tombs of the dead, later on it was resorted to mainly to be admired and meditated on by passersby if ranged along roadsides or by relatives and friends if placed in communal or family graveyards. Some of these bear inscriptions which were obviously intended to be read.

Sculpture

Pakistani sculpture is as old as the Indus Valley Civilization itself. The earliest specimens of sculpture that have come down to us are works of the sculptures of the Indus Valley Civilization. The torso of a statuette of red stone discovered at Harappa shows remarkable artistic merit and speaks well of the artist's knowledge of human anatomy. The effort has been evidently to copy nature and not to idealize. Another torso of a statuette of grey slate, also discovered at Harappa, suggests a slender figure of a dancer, probably of Shiva, the Dancer, who seems to have been the popular deity of the Indus Valley people. A bronze figurine of a dancing girl discovered at Moen-jo-Daro completes the list of three great art treasures, so far unearthed, which depict the human form as drawn by the Indus Valley craftsmen.

Nor was the human body the only subject that interested the artists of the Indus Valley. Numerous seals and terracotta impressions unearthed at Moen-jo-Daro and Harappa show skilful representations of animal and plant life, and of celestial beings. The plastic art of the Indus Valley, according to one authority, "is mainly conspicuous for its ponderosity and its naturalism, i.e. innervation. Animals chiefly, but also trees, with their sinuous stems suggestive of vegetation, occupy exalted positions. Associated and combined with them, the human figure becomes divine. It also transcends human limits by such devices as multiple heads and limbs, indicative of super-human potentialities. In the case of

animals with multiple heads, super-animalic potentialities are suggested. Nature and the supernatural are experienced as dynamically connected."

Next to Indus Valley Civilization is the art of Indo-Pak Aryans, the Buddhists who were, as in architecture, pioneers in sculpture. The themes that interested them were, naturally, the Buddha and his life. Episodes from Buddha's life and scenes from the Jataka tales were favourite subjects for decorative art, and the lintels of gateways and railings of stupas were profusely adorned with sculptures. But the subject that attracted the artist most was the figure of Buddha himself. As a result of efforts over centuries the Buddhist sculptors succeeded in perfecting the figure of Buddha as conceived by sages. For supreme calmness born of a perfect union of soul and body there is nothing in the world of art to excel some of the images of the seated Buddha.

The Buddhists, though pessimists, were moralists and not ascetics. Hence they did not believe that an emaciated body necessarily enshrined an exalted soul. Yet one sculpture of the Buddha as an ascetic has come down to us. The statue in question depicts Buddha fasting, a phase of his search after truth or finding a solution to the mystery of life through undergoing conventional methods of enlightenment. Some of the statues of Buddha as discovered in Taxila or in the northern-western region of Pakistan show clear traces of Greek influence. The Greeks ruled over this part for quite a long period, and exercised considerable influence on the life of the people even after their departure.

During Gupta period Sindh came to a great extent under the Buddhist influence and a number of stupas were established in the country. The external adornments of some of the stupa structures can still be seen at Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah and Larkana. Similarly the Jainist sculpture, scenes depicting seated Tirathnakras, Apsaras, Parsawa and upward

flight of Jivas towards Nirvana sculptured on the walls, halls and gateways of the Jain temples in Nangarparkar appear to us even today as alive and dynamic. Scenes showing life of the common folk, and carvings of animals and trees are also occasionally met with. The Jataka tales or the stories connected with Jain Nirgranthas deal with the lives of Buddha or Mahavira, mostly in the animal kingdom, and hence the sculptors of animals had to study their subjects as part of their religious duty, and many of the carvings of the beasts show an intimate knowledge of the anatomy of animals and their way of life.

Islamic Art and Figures

During the 10th and 11th centuries, with the rise of Fatimids and Seljuks, new styles were introduced in the various arts of the Islamic world. The artistic development during both centuries is specially interesting because of the introduction of figural art in direct opposition to the tenets of orthodox Islam. The figures of animals, fish and human representations were favoured even in formal patterns. The figural art was not limited to wall paintings but was included in wood carvings, tile decorations, glazed pottery, cut glass with incised decorations and stone and stone sculptures. In most of the instances the figures of a very Hellenistic character were adopted in some of the manifestations of the art. Stone carvings with human figures were common in the churches in the Mosul region but it was very strange that human figures were carved in the stone decorations of 'mihrabs' of mosques. In Baghdad, Egypt, Persia and Turkey the representations of living beings became a fashion in the religious monuments and sculptures belonging to the Muslim period. Similar new styles were encountered in the Islamic art at Lahore, Delhi, Gujerat, Thatta, Kharan and Mekran.

The sculptural representations of mounted warriors, animals, birds, ornaments and arms were seen on numerous tombs of warriors and their family folk in districts of Mekran, Kharan, Kalat, Indus Delta and Kohistan area of Dadu

and Karachi districts. The tombs in Baluchistan were built of burnt bricks and those in the Indus Delta and Kohistan of yellow Jungshahi stone.

These tombs are called Gumbads in Mekran and Kharan districts and Rumi tombs in Kalat and Lasbela districts. Those in Indus Delta and Kohistan are called Gharaviyun (the carved ones) and the overhead Chhatrees or domed mausolea are popularly termed as Chowkhundis. The raised stone slabs in Lasbela are called "Mais". Generally people refer to them as Kafir graves because of the presence of figure representations on the tomb slabs.

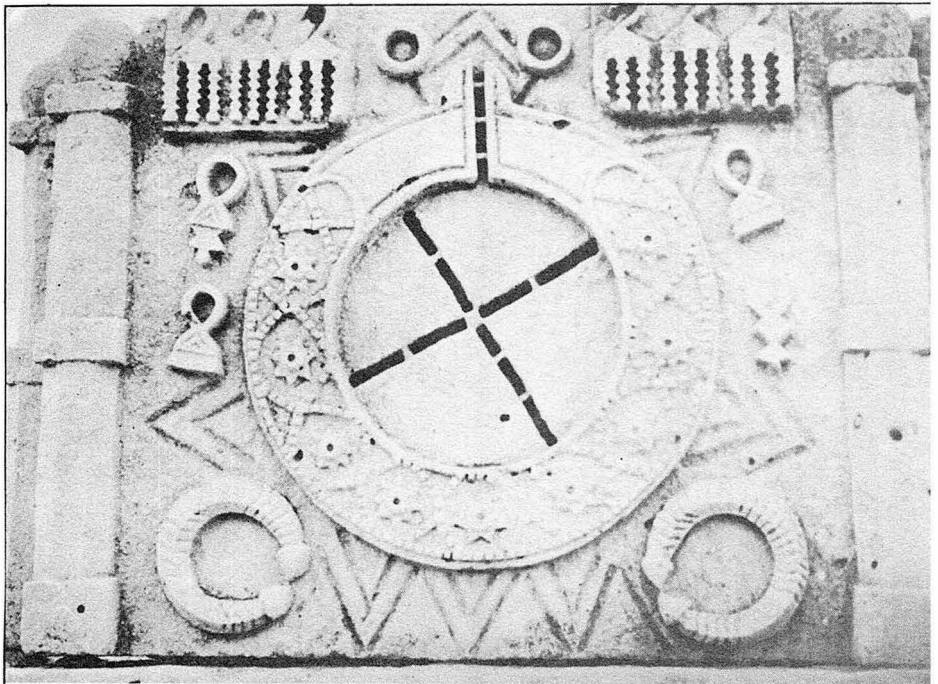
Similar stone slabs bearing figures of men, women, horses, mounted warriors and women with raised hands are seen throughout Kutch, Kathiawar, Gujerat and Nangarparkar. These are called "Palliyas" and are monuments raised either to women who burnt themselves along with the dead bodies of their husbands, or as memorials to the Rajput warriors who died while fighting. These Palliyas are empty stone memorials and do not contain the mortal remains of the dead or their cremated ash.

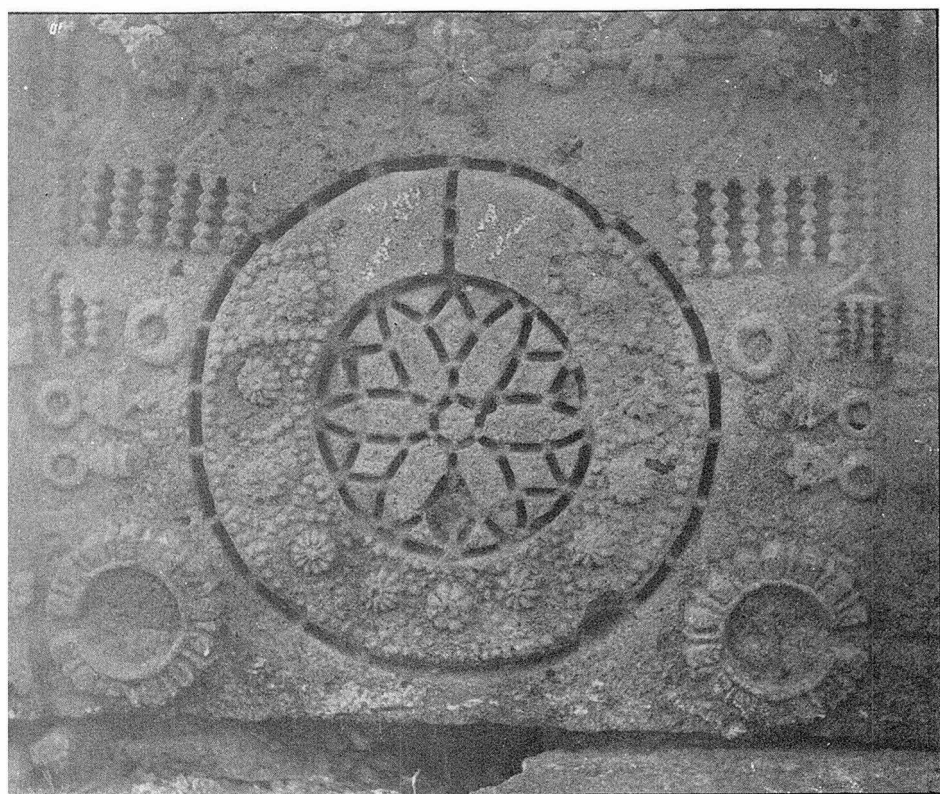
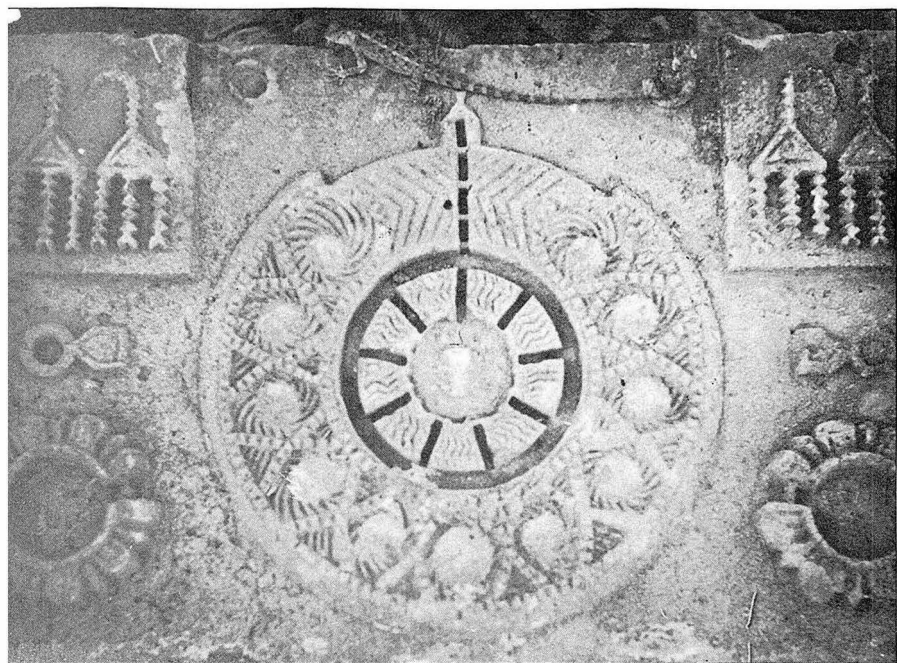
These tombs have been erroneously termed as "Baluch Tombs" whereas none of the Baluch tribes, such as Rind, Lashar, Khosa, Murri or Bugti, have ever owned or constructed such tombs. The people who own gumbads bearing figures of men and animals belong to ancient tribes such as Burfats, Numriyas, Kalmati, Jakhara, Jokhia, Brahmani, Jats, Palejas and Bhawas. In fact these tombs provide us with indications about the origin of the ancient Sindhi tribes because it happened to be an ancient tradition prevailing among them to raise such memorials to their dead.

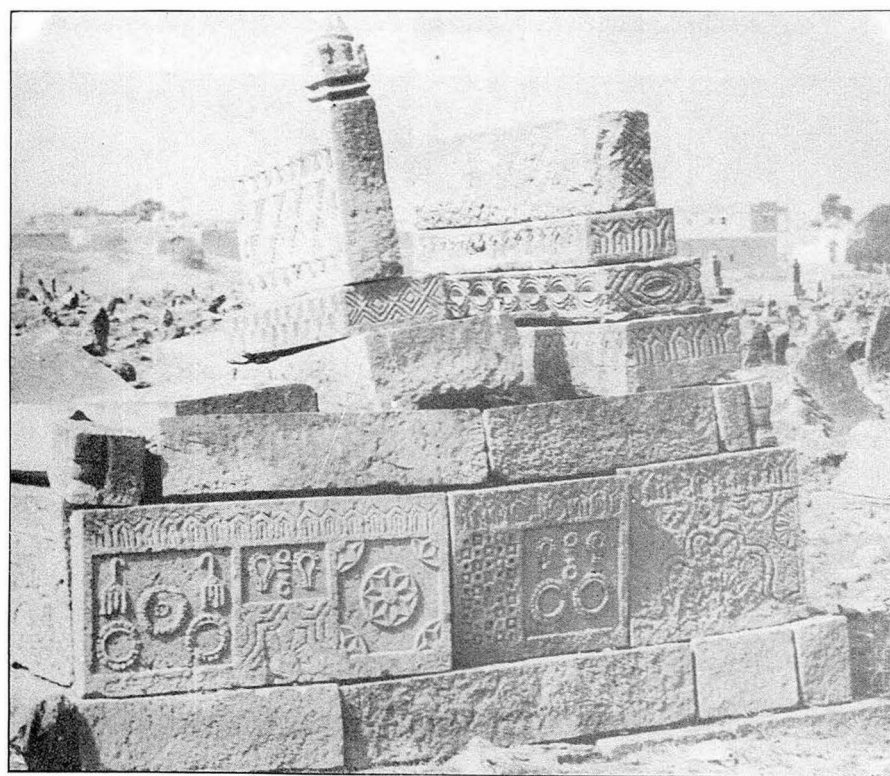
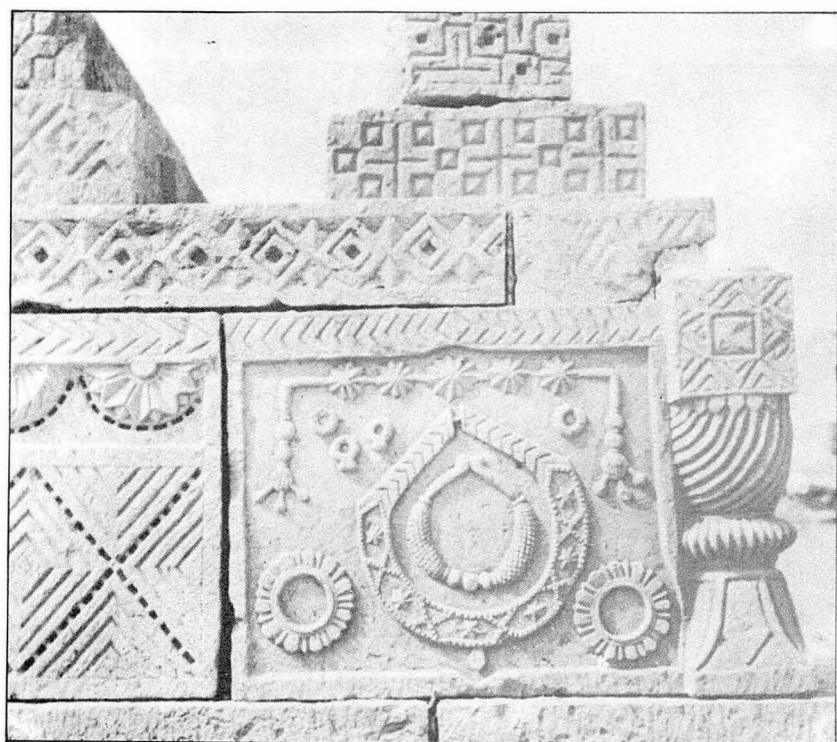
The word Chowkhundi has often been spelt and pronounced erroneously as Chowkundi (four-cornered) whereas the word is Chowkhundi. Mr. Frere has written it as "Jao-khundi" implying thereby that "belonging to Jokhias". There

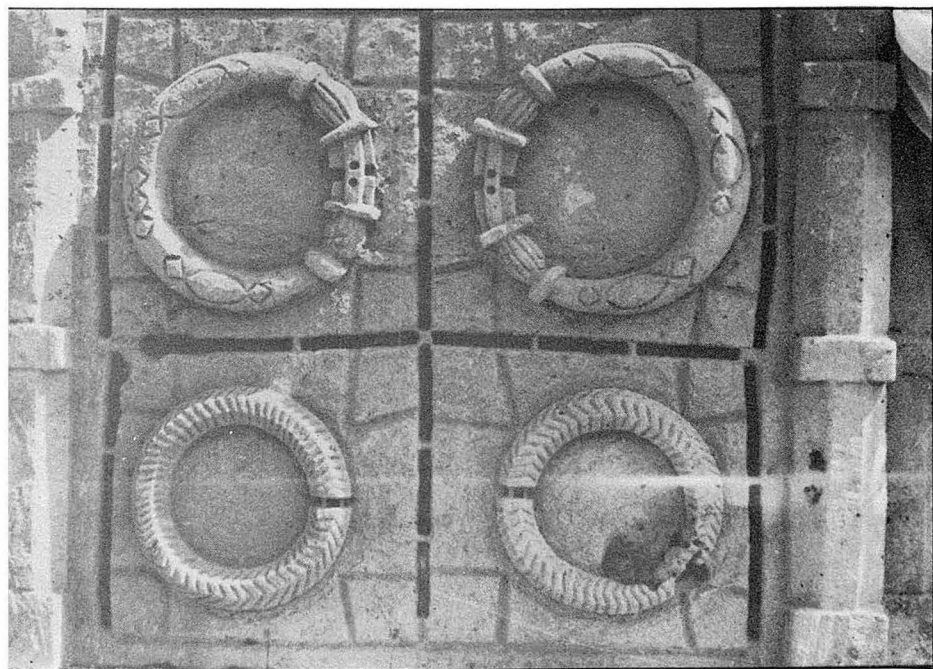
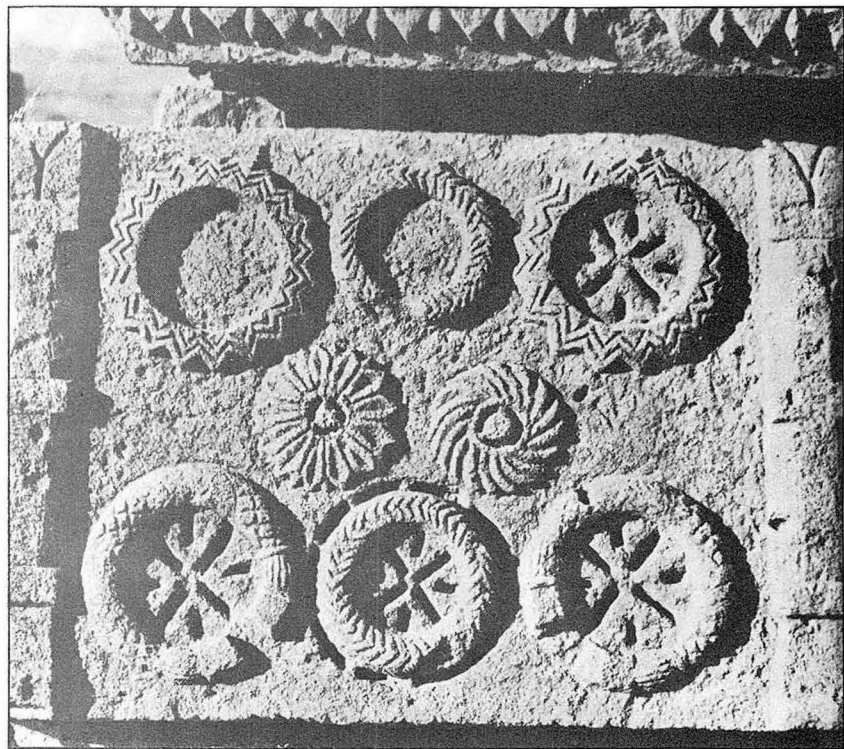
is also a village by the name Chowkhundi near Chashma Link Canal. There is a likelihood of the Jokhias having settled there once upon a time since the Jokhias were originally settled in the Punjab, specially on both banks of Sutlej. In fact the area at present comprising Bahawalpur and some parts of Rajputana was called Johiawar and the Jokhia is the same tribe as Johia. It is just possible that one of their villages was known as Chowkhundi and after their migration towards Karachi-Malir area they might have raised and named their new settlement as Chowkhundi in memory of the old habitation in the Punjab.

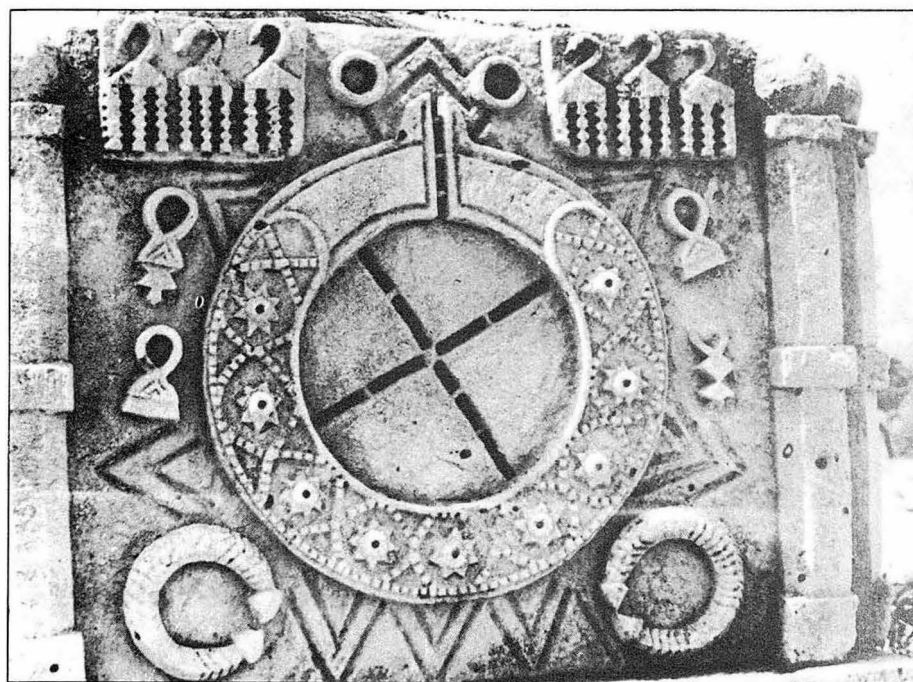
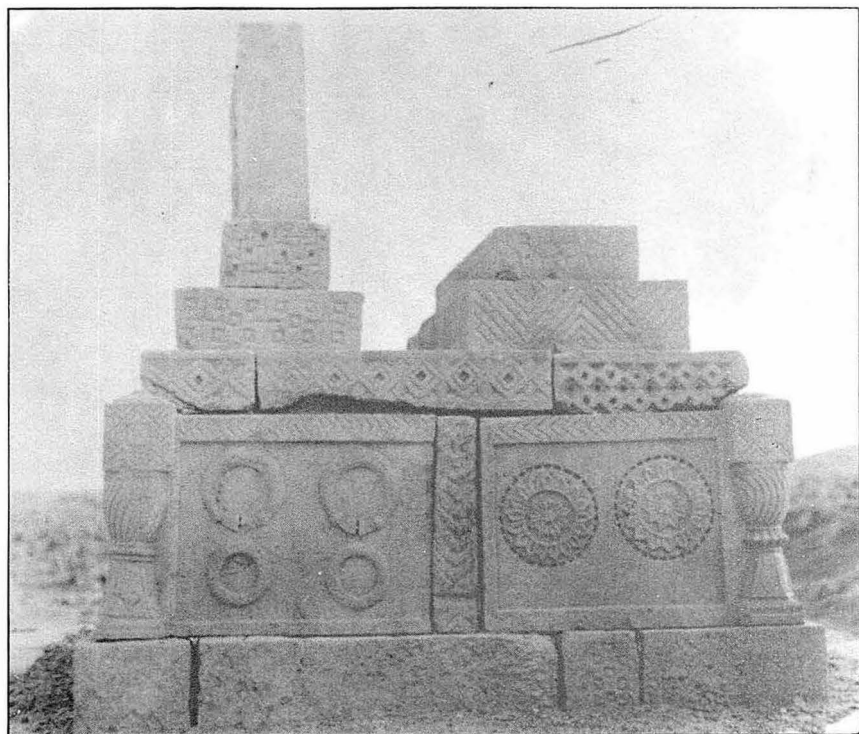
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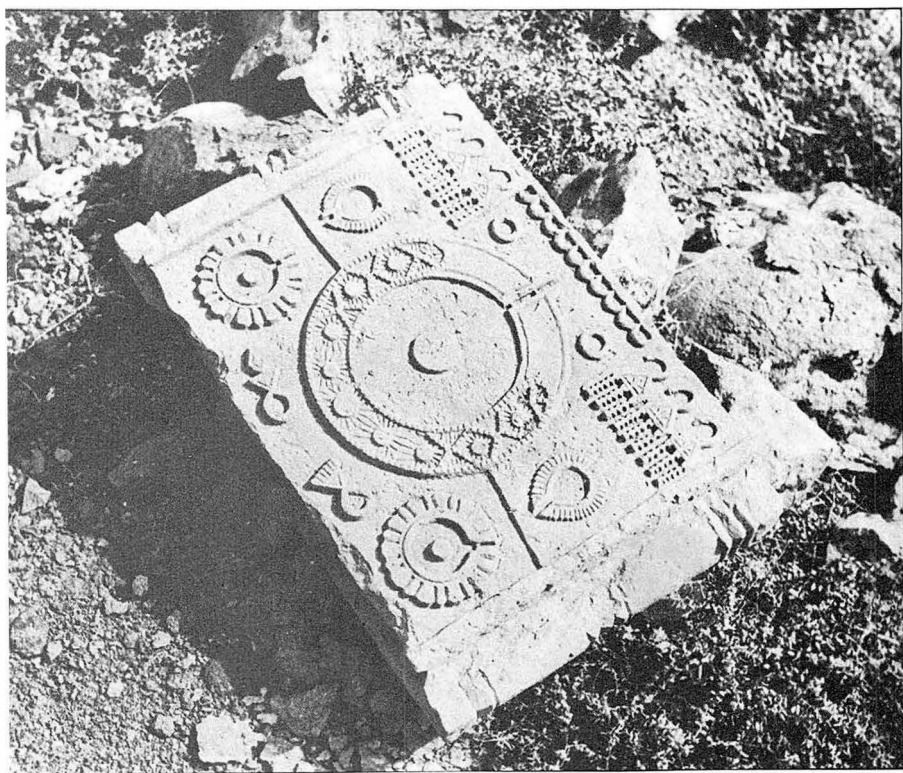
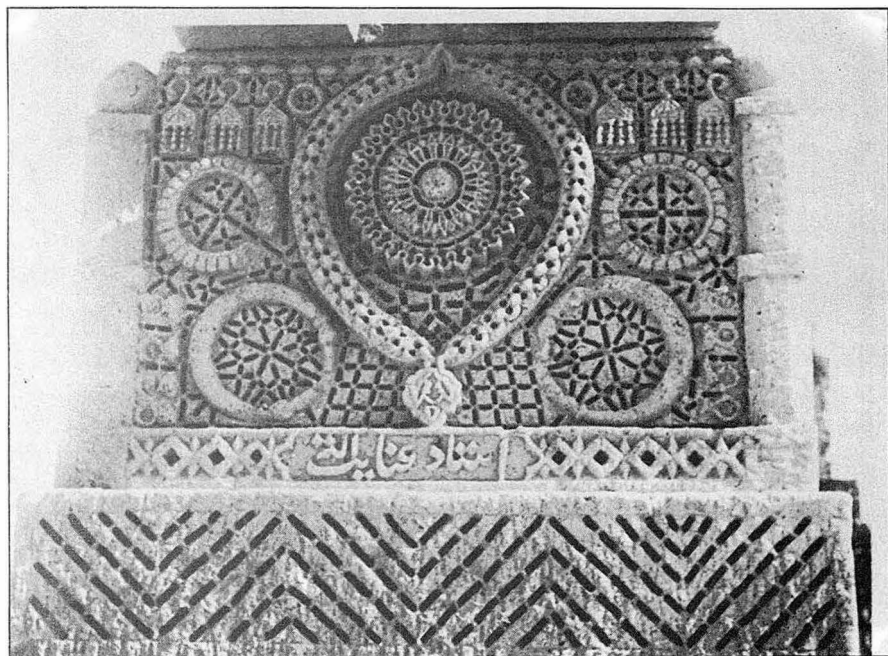


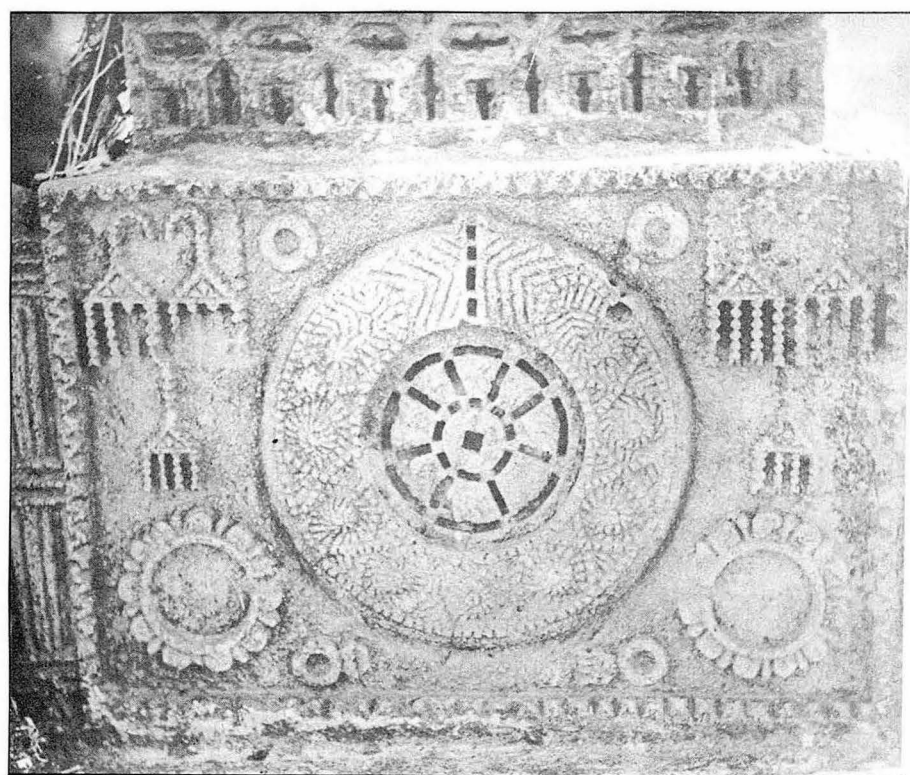


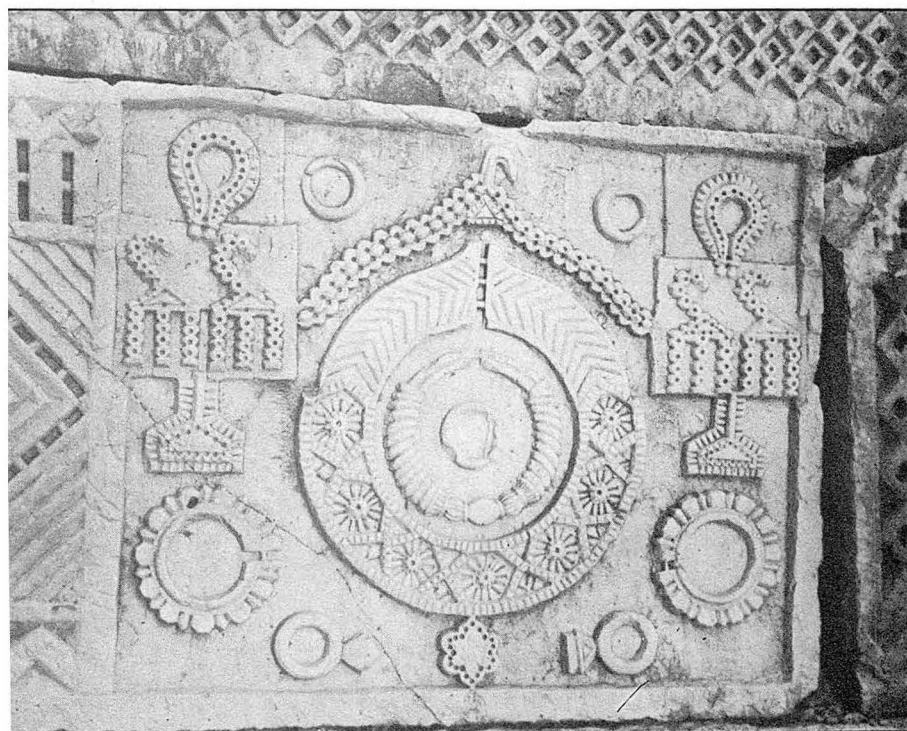
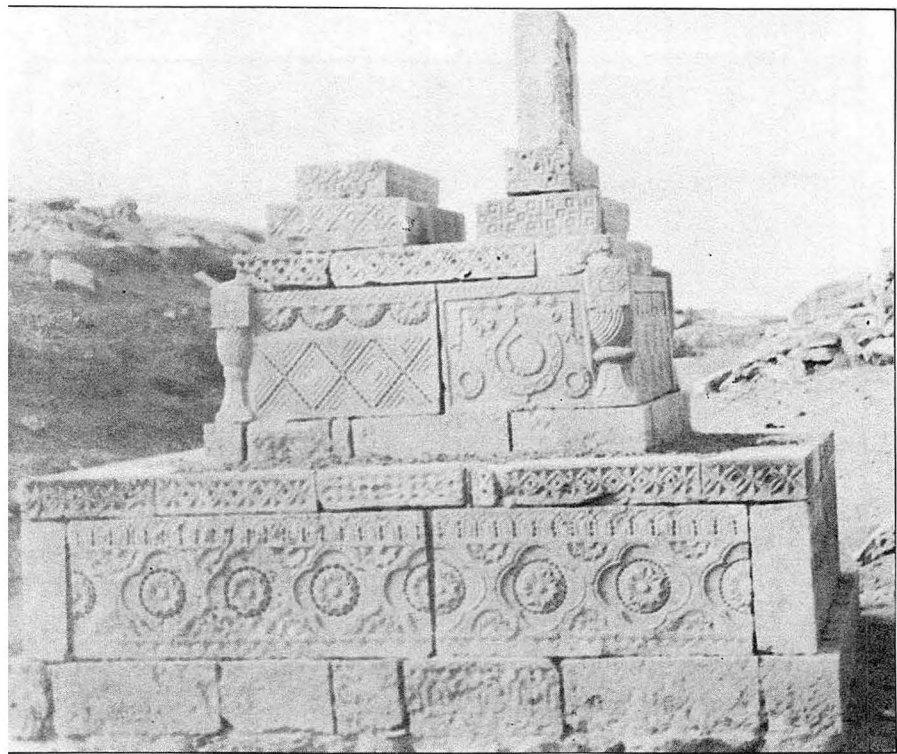


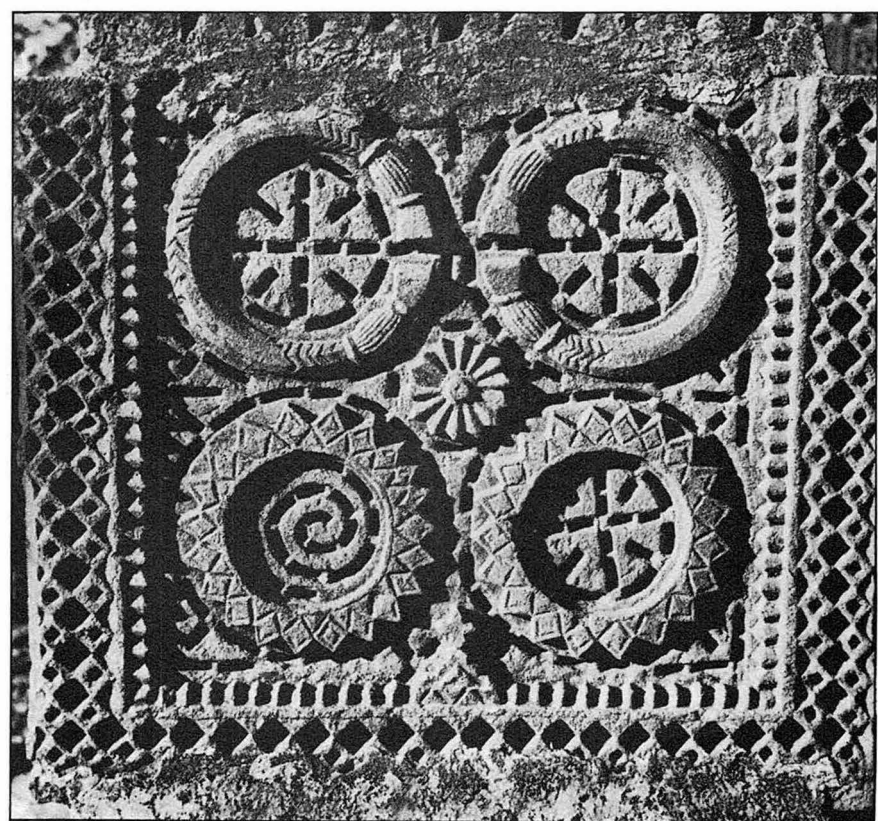
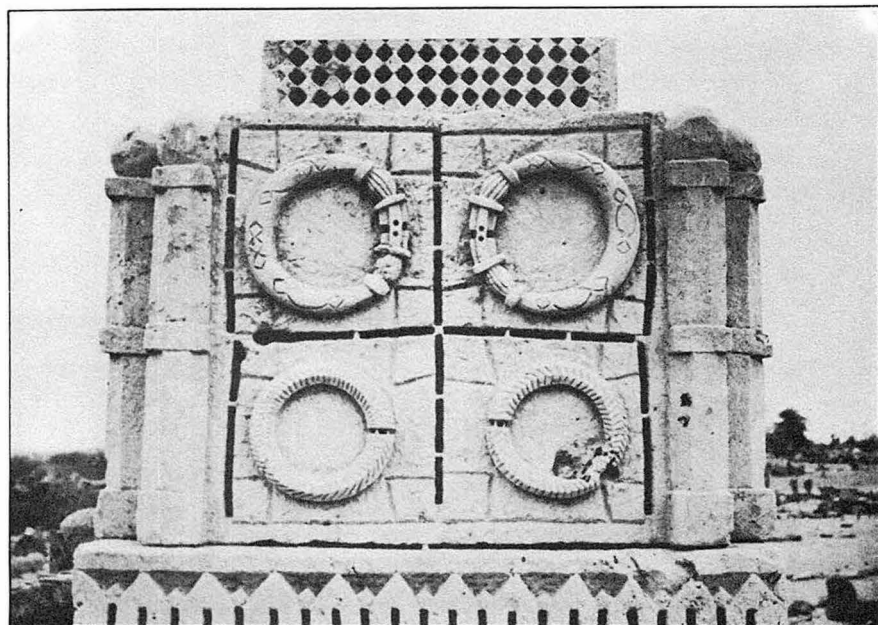


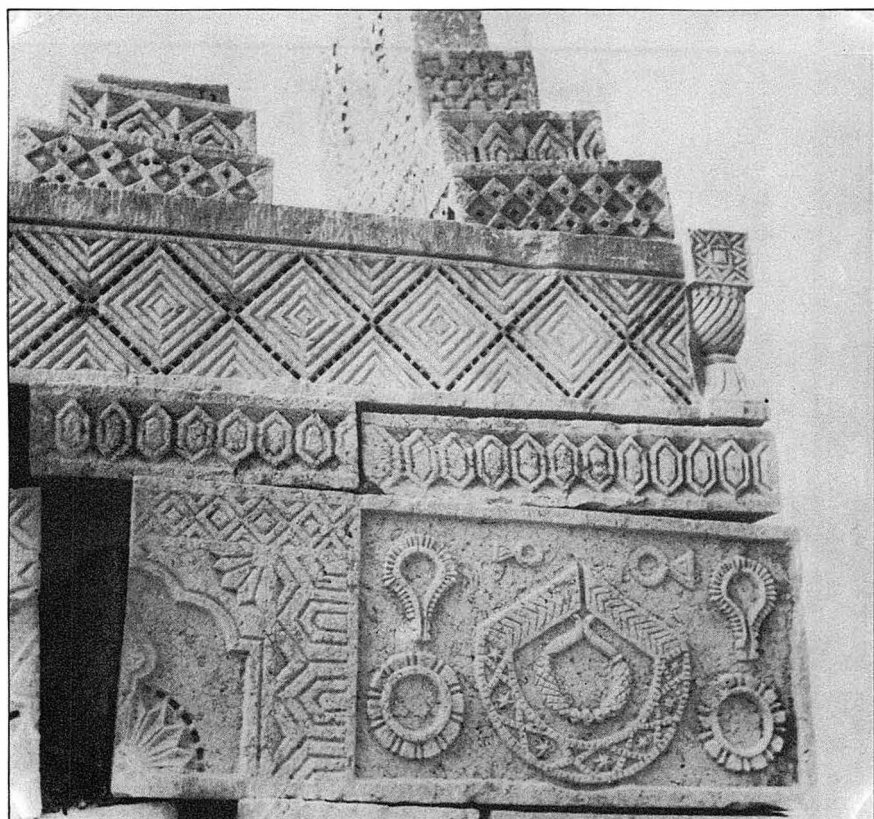




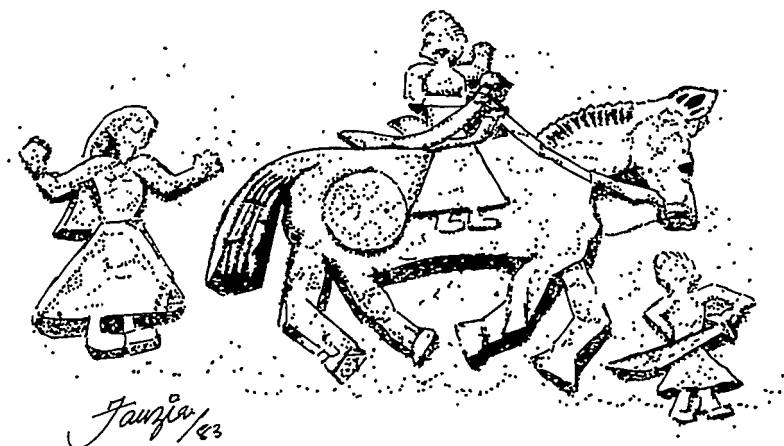








Warrior Tribes



A long procession of nomadic or semi-nomadic migrant people has trickled from Central Asia, passed through Afghanistan en route to the Indo-Pak sub-continent. The Aryas, the fathers of the Hindu civilization that supplanted the Dravidian culture represented in the Indus Valley by the sites of Moen-jo-Daro and Harappa, descended during the half of the second millennium B.C. A swarm of Iranian-speaking nomads invaded Helmund River basin and Punjab in the 7th century B.C. One of the tribes bore the name of "Paktyes", according to the ancient Greek historian Herodotus. Most probably it is this tribe which is identified with the present-day 'Pakhtuns' or 'Pathans'.

A second swarm of Iranian-speaking nomads, the

"Sakas", invaded Afghanistan in the 2nd century B.C. Some of them settled in the delta of Helmand River and gave their name "Seestan" to the country which was previously known as Sarangia. The main flow of Saka pushed on far in the sub-continent. The present-day Marathias may have inherited their spirit or even blood from them. Another Central Asian nomadic people, the Yuechi, following close at the Sakas's heels settled in the country between Oxus and the Hindukush which had previously been known as Bactria. In the 1st century B.C., one of the Yuechi tribes, the Kushans, built up an empire that stretched from Oxus to Jumna.

In the fifth century of the Christian era, one wing of the Huns invaded the sub-continent across Afghanistan while Europe was being invaded by another wing of the same Central Asian nomadic people. The Huns were ferocious and destructive, but they were surpassed by the Mongols, who in the thirteenth century invaded Afghanistan. The Indus Valley escaped this calamity. Finally, in the early sixteenth century, the Uzbeks occupied what is now Northern Afghanistan as well as what is now the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Uzbeks did not succeed in crossing the Hindukush. However, they did change the course of history in the sub-continent, by propelling across the Hindukush the survivors of the Timurids who had been the previous Turkish rulers of the Central Asian region. These fugitive Timurids became the founders of the Mughal Empire in India.

Migrations of people, such as above, that trampled the Indus Valley, changed the course of history. Still greater effects were produced by the spread of civilizations and religions, and the history of Sindh and Baluchistan testifies to this.

The Achaemenid Persian Empire, which expanded into the Indus Valley in and after the sixth century B.C., was followed by Alexander the Great who overthrew the first Persian Empire. The Greek invaders later on planted their

civilization between the Hindukush and Oxus and in Bactria so successfully that its influence lasted for centuries. After the fall of the Maurya dynasty's empire the Bactrian Greeks established their rule in Punjab and Sindh for half a century, which was followed by Kushans whose empire was larger and lasted longer. Greek artistic influences may have played upon Kushan Gandhara from two directions — across the Hindukush from Bactria, and across the Indian ocean from Alexandria in Egypt. By the time the Kushan empire was established in the first century of the Christian era, Greek seamen, sailing in the Indian Ocean from ports on Egypt's Red Sea coast, had learnt how to make use of the monsoons for sailing direct across the Indian Ocean to the delta of the Indus, instead of going via the coasts of Arabia and Baluchistan. This marked reduction of the length of the voyage gave a stimulus to trade between the valleys of the Indus and the Nile. So in Kushan Gandhara, the Greek influence from Bactria across the Hindukush may have been reinforced by a Greek influence from Alexandria via the Indus Valley.

History repeated itself after the overthrow of the Sasanid Persian empire by the Muslim Arabs in the seventh century of the Christian era. Like the Greeks nearly a thousand years earlier, the Arabs planted themselves firmly in the country between the Oxus and the Hindukush and, like their Greek predecessors again, the Muslims eventually forced their way across Central Hindukush and invaded the sub-continent. Afghanistan and Baluchistan were the thoroughfares along which Islam, like Hellenism before it, made its way into the sub-continent.

All the movements of people, empires, civilizations and religions were movements across Afghanistan and Baluchistan into the sub-continent from regions outside India.

Arabs in Persia

The conquest of Persia by Arabs differed from the destructive ravages of succeeding invaders from Central Asia,

who left behind them a broad track of ruin and desolation. The Arab conquest was marked by a breadth of view and a wise tolerance which is remarkable.

With reference to Seestan and Kirman, this policy of tolerance must have interfered very little with the existing state of things in the country, when it was subdued by the Arabs. There was in course of time a continuous influx of Arabs in the country. Political adversaries and religious schismatics who were compelled to take refuge found asylum in Sindh and Mekran where native dynasties for a time maintained their independence. The persecuting zeal of the Centre drove many a descendants of Abbas into Khorasan and peopled Seestan and Kirman with Khariji schismatics.

The religion of Zoroaster no doubt lingered for a considerable time among the people at large. The edict of Caliph Umar admitted the Persian Gabar, the Christians and Jews to the benefits of Islamic rule on payment of poll-tax. These non-Muslims acknowledged the political supremacy of Islam but were determined to follow their own religious observances.

Besides Khariji sectarians who had been embittered by their quarrels with the orthodox party in Islam, a new schism, first of the Alide sect (Ismailian), made inroads and many a tribe in Seestan and Kirman got converted to it.

Thus from 9th to 15th century A.D. the provinces of Seestan, Kirman and Mekran were not only ravaged by the influx of foreigners and invading hordes but functioned as a battle-ground of racial animosities, diverse religious schisms and feudal jealousies. Besides the descendants of ancient ruling dynasties, such as Kayani Maliks of Seestan and Farah, chieftains of Ismaili sect, Mirs of Seestan and Arbabs of Kadah and Helimund always instigated their mutual rivalries and conspired the advent of invading hordes of Central Asia, such as Uzbeks, Ghuz, Tartars and Mongols. Finally the

devastation wrought by the inroads of Chengiz Khan and Timur and subsequent destruction caused by their degenerate successors rendered the entire country an archaeological ruin.

Arab Policy in Sindh

When the Arabs occupied Sindh, the population mainly consisted of Hindus, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jains and a host of other nomadic communities who practised Animism. It is a fact of history that the young Arab General Mohammad bin Qasim did not exercise any pressure upon the population to accept Islam. The succeeding Arab governors also, realizing their numerical inferiority, not only maintained the policy of complete non-interference in the social and religious lives of the non-Muslims but also permitted them to retain the administration of their personal law, religious institutions and control over local and communal affairs. Therefore, the Arab conquest appeared to the people of Sindh merely a change of government — a change welcomed by all.

During the two centuries of Arab rule, Sindh was isolated from the rest of the sub-continent, and the natural consequence of racial inter-mixing greatly undermined the hold of Brahmanism and Bhuddism, two dominant religions in Sindh. Cultural integration was so complete that it was difficult to distinguish between Muslim and non-Muslim. The majority of local population continued to follow its heathen practices.

Ancient Cults

Though tribesmen in Sindh and Baluchistan did adopt the most important elements of Islam, all the while they remained faithful to their ancient popular cults. Worship of mother goddesses was the most popular cult. Nannia (Bibi Nani) at Hinglaj in Baluchistan, Darai Devi at Debal and Kalkan at Makli in Sindh, Kali at Astalo or Satadip (Hapat-talar) in Mekran were the most popular goddesses to whose haunts the pilgrims thronged from all over Sindh, Cutch, Gujerat and Baluchistan. Besides mother goddesses, water worship was the main religion followed in Sindh by the

bulk of people called "Daryapanthis", i.e. water worshippers. Crocodile worship was rampant in lower Indus delta and Kohistan of Sindh where numerous ponds, lakes and caves harboured crocodiles. Waghiodar, Mangho Pir, Nihang, Bhabhar, Laki and Lakhopir were the main centres of crocodile worship which exists to some extent at a few places even today. "Bhabhaknath" or moon volcanoes (Chandergups) were revered and held sacred in Lasbela and Mekran.

Ismaili Influence

The weakening of caliphate coincided with the emergence of a new religious force, i.e., Ismailism. The Arab Amirs governing Multan and Mansoorā declared their independence from the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad and instead affiliated themselves to the Fatimids of Egypt. The "Qarmata", an Ismaili offshoot, became more successful in converting local tribes to their creed in the Persian Gulf, Mekran coast and Sindh.

The Ismailis in the course of time amalgamated with their doctrines many esoteric notions borrowed from the philosophy of Mani — the Persian philosopher of great genius and versatile talents, who flourished in the 3rd century of the Christian era. The influence of his teaching is markedly visible in Christianity as well as Islam, and all the later esoteric sects are traceable to him.

Some of them, particularly Qarmatians, were decidedly Manichean in their views, and considered the hidden meaning in words as of more importance than the positive law, and, differing from the general body of Muslims, believed in "justification by faith" and not by work.

The Qarmata missionaries entered Sindh some time near the end of ninth century. In the following century, Multan and Mansoorā came under the rule of a Qarmata Dai. A new system of dual control rule had been devised, which worked wonderfully well. The internal administration was handled by

the heads of local tribes and the propagation of religion was the monopoly of a "Dai". The Arab Amirs who were converted to the Ismaili faith were kept as titular heads, whereas the government was actually run by local Langah tribe in Multan and Soomra tribe in Sindh. The non-Muslim tribes, such as Langah, Soomra, Med, Wagheras, Lohanas, Jats, Paliya, Jakhara, Burfats, Numeri and Jokhias were brought under the Qarmata fold. Bahrain in the Persian Gulf was declared capital and Qarmatians had occupied almost all the ports on the Mekran coast. Subsequently, they infiltrated into the Indus delta and commanded the entire sea coast from Bahrain to Gujarat ports.

It was in the closing years of the 10th century A.D. that the Ismaili as well as Qarmata sects received a severe setback due to Ghaznavid and Ghorid raids. This process coincided with the Alamut period of their movement and resulted in the "Satpanth" of Pir Nur-al-Din. After the downfall of the Fatimids and the destruction of Alamut by Halaku, the Ismailis lost their organisational unity and became divided. Their main thrust was greatly hampered while their missionary movement continued secret and under-ground. However, the Qarmata section of the Ismaili propagation continued as usual in Sindh and Baluchistan with their headquarters at Bahrain.

During the first half of the 15th century, Pir Sadruddin, the Ismaili Dai for Sindh, effected important changes and introduced Hindu beliefs in the Ismaili sect of "Satpanth", i.e., the religion of truth. He wrote a book called "Das Avātar", (ten incarnations) and co-related Hindu and Muslim religious personalities. In this new religion Ali became Vishnu or the tenth Avatar of Vishnu, with the title of "Kalkan". A huge monastery was raised at Makli in Thatta where a stone idol of Kalkan (Ali) riding on a stone-horse was worshipped publicly. Several Jamaat Khanas and mandirs were established at Sakro, Amirpir, Pirpatho, Jhimpir, Lakhopir, Jhirak, Sehwan, Pat, and Bubarik. His book became the

sacred scripture of Ismaili sect. The followers of these beliefs came to be known as "Khawajā" in Sindh and "Wajās" in Baluchistan. (Khawaja is pronounced as "Khojā" in Sindhi and "Waja" in Baluchi). Thus the Nizari sect of Ismaili order came to be established in lower Sindh and Mekran coast. Sadruddin's mission was carried forward by his sons, among whom Pir Hassan-al-Din Kabir and Pir Tajuddin were conspicuous for their missionary zeal. Tajuddin (1450 A.D.) was followed by Imam Shah Hassan-al-Din Kabir. In the following century a new "Dai", Abu Daud (Dadu), was appointed but with the emergence of powerful orthodox sufi movements coupled with the orthodox local dynasties coming in power in Sindh and Gujerat the "Satpanth" received a severe blow and was limited to a few selected followers while the rest had to be content with an outward form of faith.

The Ismailis (Qarmata) remained in absolute power for three to four centuries in Sindh, Multan and Mekran. Their rise to power without any outside help was probably due to their success in winning over a large number of old Muslim as well as Hindu tribes such as Langahs, Gardezi, Soomra, Lohanas, Kalamatis, Jokhias, Jats, Burfats, Changs and many other backward Hindus and Buddhists who still continued to follow some of their old beliefs and traditions. The main attraction that the Ismaili faith had was the freedom to continue ancient local beliefs and customs without causing any break with the old social order.

In spite of the fact that in the 16th century the Ismailis had lost their dominant position in Sindh as elsewhere, the impact of their mission continued to be felt even after their decline and they survived as a sizeable minority. Immense veneration of holy men, such as Pirs and Sayyeds, is one of the legacies of the Ismaili tradition. A large number of customs, rites and ceremonies which later became part of Muslim society and some of which continue to be in practice till today, mostly seem to owe their origin to Ismaili in-

fluence.

The study of Ismaili movement and its historic role in Sindh and Baluchistan is of great importance to us in the context of our subject of Rumi and Chowkhundi graves. It should be borne in mind that Islam, in its early stages as it entered Sindh, did not make much headway with the common people and it is on record that the people reverted to their heathen practices immediately after the decline of Arab (Hubbaris) rule in Sindh. Islam was an orthodox religion and had no roots in local culture or soil of Sindh and Baluchistan. It came from Arabia and happened to be in direct conflict with the ancient and mythological cults practised by the local inhabitants. Conversion to Islam meant a complete break with the past and the prevalent social order. All other foreign religions which came to this sub-continent were quickly submerged in Hinduism as one or the other incarnation (Avatar) of Vishnu. Islam was the only religion which stood its own ground and went on claiming converts from Hinduism. Thus Islam posed a serious challenge to Hinduism. Hence there has always been a great and constant effort afoot in the sub-continent to drag and absorb Islam in Hinduism via one or the other cult. Din Elahi, Shakti Panth, Nanikshahi, Bhakti Sect, Kabir Panth, Daryapanth, Mahdawi, Zikri, and Satpanth of Ismaili sect are some such creeds, doctrines and movements which came as counter-checks to the supremacy of Islam. Ismaili sect was the only sect which claimed tremendous success in Sindh, Gujerat and Baluchistan from 10th to 15th centuries. A.D. The adoption of the local beliefs, customs and traditions by the Ismaili sect removed the handicap to the spread of the "Dawa" and the converts were allowed to retain their former social patterns without causing any break to their ancient ceremonies, rites and practices.

Anyone who embraced Ismaili "Dawa" was free to practise his traditional cult and even retain his previous name, caste, identity with the additional declaration of faith in

Imam and veneration for Pirs and descendants of Ali. By the adoption of such a liberal attitude a great many powerful tribes, such as Langah, Soomras and Lohanas, were attracted to the Ismaili Satpanth. This phenomenon was claiming converts not only in Sindh but elsewhere, too. Sufism, though basically rooted in Islam, but containing alien influence and philosophies, was blossoming out simultaneously into well defined concepts during the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries in the regions of Iran, Iraq, Khorasan, Oman, Bahrain and gradually drifting towards the sub-continent.

Mahdawi Sect

The influence of Buddhist philosophy and the Ismaili "Dawa" had prepared the ground for the Sufis (mystics). The first sufi order which became established in the regions of Sindh and Multan was that of Suhrawardis. It was mainly this order which was responsible for destroying Ismaili power by winning over powerful tribes which had been won over by Ismaili missionaries earlier. The Suhrawardi 'silsila' was followed by Qadiriya who are said to have counteracted the Ismailis in Sindh region in 15th and 16th centuries A.D. The Naqshbandi sufis followed suit. This order of sufis was generally venerated by the Turks of Central Asia and like the Qadiris it was also noted for its greater emphasis on Shariat and opposition to Ismailia "Dawa".

A serious religious turmoil was created in the Muslim community in the later half of 15th century A.D. by "Mahdavis" who had declared Sayyid Miran Mahdi Jaunpuri as the promised Mahdi who was supposed to establish the supremacy of Islam in the world. The followers of the Mahdi were termed as Nur Bakhshis. Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi, entering Sindh via Nasarpur, came to be styled as Miran or Mir Miran and began to catch popular imagination. However, he was exiled and he left Sindh with 900 followers and went to Qandhar where he died at Farah in 1505 A.D. Kalhora rulers of Sindh not only subscribed to the views of Miran Mahdi but tried to secure a spiritual sanction for their rule by asso-

ciating their ancestors with Miran and his followers. The Kalhora rulers believed in Qadam Sharif (holy footprints) and Christ. Haji Mohaminad Farahi, a Mahdawi who came to Sindh after the death of Miran Mahdi, claimed to be Christ, which boast brought ridicule and discredit to the Mahdawi movement. The brief sojourn of Sayyid Mohammad Miran in Sindh was responsible for the emergence of a new religious group, the Zikris. The Zikri faith was mostly confined to Kukralla in Sindh and Mekran in Baluchistan. Similarly, there sprang a number of other such orders and sects which due to the opposition of the ulema, could only become more secretive and exclusive. The Zikri faith was further strengthened by "Attakis".

Zikri Sect

The Zikri sect claimed majority of followers in the coastal towns of Pasni, Ormara and Gwadur towns of Mekran and Kukralla in Sindh.

The missionary or "Dai", as it is called by the Zikris, who is said to be the spiritual guide of all Zikris in Mekran and Katch in Baluchistan, was a person named Mohammad Attaki. The word Attaki is said to explain his place of original domicile, i.e. "Attock". Attock or Attak, meaning an obstruction, such as a rock is about 45 miles south of Peshawar, and 237 miles from Lahore. It was in Attock that a Pir Roshan by name founded a new Muslim sect in the mid-sixteenth century. The followers of this sect were called Roshanian after the name of their Pir. They ignored most of the tenets of Islam, including the Holy Quran, and only believed in the existence of God. The five prayers which are obligatory for the Muslims were abolished and instead recitation, i.e. "Zikr", of God's name as well as attributes of God were substituted as prayer for the followers of Pir Roshan. Pir Roshan had two sons named Jālaluddin and Kamaluddin, and their names were bestowed on two rocks below the junction of Kabul River with Indus. These rocks are even today called "Jālalīa" and "Kāmālīa". Both of these

rocks, jutting into the river, render the river passage a dangerous one. As both of these rocks and the dangerous whirlpools at their base cause great loss of life, the Muslims named them after the two upholders of the Roshnia heresy, which had caused such a great shipwreck and upheaval of souls.

Zikri faith still continues to flourish and most of the Mekran-based tribes practise it. Their annual pilgrimage is performed at Koh Murad. Zikris are most superstitious people. When a death occurs in a Zikri family the dead body is never taken out by the main gate of the house. Instead the outer wall is broken for the purpose. This precaution is taken so that Death does not become acquainted with the house address. After the dead body is taken out the wall is repaired the same day. They bury their dead by excavating a ditch in the ground and closing it by throwing the earth directly over the dead body rather than covering it with slabs in the first instance.

TRIBAL CULTURE

Wars have been raging in the territory that is now Sindh since times immemorial. Numerous armies have carved paths of destruction across it, frequently sweeping all human achievements away with them. What survived each holocaust was a spirit, passed down from generation to generation, powerful and indestructible — the spirit of creativity. And however grave the disaster, however difficult the conditions of life, a spiritual culture was created which inspired men to bear all hardships and to resist the external pressures that threatened to break the body and the spirit. And there were wars, and man perished.

In Kohistan, Mirpur Sakro, Karachi, Kotri, Johi and adjoining districts of Kalat and Lasbela, the families and friends of the dead erected monuments, such as Chowkhundis or Rumi tombs, for their loved ones in their ancestral graveyards. These tombstones were set in little clearings

History on Tombstones

where the weary traveller, passing by, might notice them and pause a while, remembering the local heroes, who had laid their lives while upholding the traditions of their tribes and repeating the exploits of their valiant forefathers.

In Sindh and some areas of Baluchistan more than thirty thousand such stone-houses have survived. Neither the vandalism of man nor the ravages of time could obliterate them. These may still be seen with their characteristic motif—a hand on a weapon throwing a challenge to all the powers in the universe.

These tombs of warriors are practically the only evidence and source of their history, since recorded history of the tribes and their exploits is simply non-existent. Even their identification, as also of their caste, character and culture, is sometimes possible only through carvings and inscriptions on their tombs.

It is also very difficult to determine the causes of the extensive movements in the course of which the tribesmen made their appearance in Sindh. It may be that feuds with the neighbouring tribes compelled them to leave their settlements and drift towards Sindh. Or, perhaps, they were driven by the need to seek new pastures and grazing grounds. Or, maybe, drought, which brought desolation to the coastal areas of Baluchistan, drove these semi-nomadic and pastoral people to seek relief in the more hospitable areas of Sindh.

As is customary and true of all tribal migrations, whether undertaken in search of food and fodder or shelter, tribesmen were accompanied by their kith and kin, women and children and their flocks. In the initial stages these tribesmen entered into the service of local chieftains. Thus the warriors who had lived by the sword became mercenaries for the time being. In due course they supplanted the very chiefs whom they had served. In this manner the tribal jurisdiction, often no more than one or two grazing grounds, passed into

the hands of newcomers.

With the arrival of these newcomers an important change took place in the method of burial, a change generally considered to be a sign of the radical replacement of an old practice by a new people. Graves were no longer dug in the ground and graveyards were not established, as hitherto, in the heart of human habitations.

Several furlongs away from hamlets and villages, cemeteries of considerable size were laid out on raised grounds, preferably on hillocks. Besides, a new method of superterranean burial was adopted by the new settlers in keeping with their tribal customs and traditions. This custom involved the burial of bodies above the ground instead of depositing them inside the graves. The graves were built with ready-made stone slabs dressed in a past-lander style and cut into specific sizes. In most cases the stone slabs were carved and ornamented with figural and floral designs or geometrical patterns. The stone graves thus constructed consisted of two or three chambers and the dead body was deposited in the middle chamber. In certain cases, when a person died in a far off land or his dead body was not traceable or available, an empty tomb was erected in the communal graveyard to perpetuate his memory.

The location of these graveyards indicates the routes and places which mark the course of migration and temporary settlements of the tribes. For instance, the existence of extensive tribal graveyards at Hinidan and Bhawany points to the migratory route and transitory settlements of Jakhara and Bhawa tribes which are subsections of the Karmati or Kalmati tribe. It is evident that the Jakhara section migrated towards Sindh via Dureji and Thana Bullakhan whereas the Bhawa sub-tribe entered Sindh through Uthal, Sonmiyani and Hub, and finally went on to settle in Mirpur Sakro area via Malir and Wateji areas.

PRINCIPAL TRIBES

Of all the communities in Sindh and Baluchistan that are described as martial races and excellent fighters and warriors, four deserve particular notice. These are Baluch, Nikudaris, Nausherwanis and Rajputs. The origins of these tribes are obscure though they claim otherwise. These communities are brave to a fault and their loyalty to the common cause has never been questioned. But few of their leaders could ever see beyond their own cause and no one appears to have been inspired by the greater interests of the community or the country.

The Baluch, Nikudaris, Nausherwanis as well as the Rajputs are never so happy as when fighting and no pretext is too trivial to pick up a quarrel. Too proud and indolent to undertake menial work, they spend their time quarrelling with their neighbours and raiding their territory. If there are no neighbours to quarrel with and no territories to conquer or plunder they start fighting and quarrelling with one another. Haughty and hypersensitive, they seize upon the most trivial slight as an offence to be wiped out with blood.

The history, recent as well as old, of these communities is replete with instances when terrible bloody battles were triggered by petty and flimsy disagreements and thousands of precious lives were lost as a result. The famous thirty-year

strife between the Rind and the Lashar, both Baluch tribes, was a typical war which was waged merely because of a personal quarrel between two tribal leaders, Chakar Khan Rind and Guhrāmī Lashari over the possession of a Jat camel-breeding woman. Another mighty battle between two factions of a Baluch tribe was sparked by children's quarrel over a mongoose which had taken shelter in the house of another faction. Similarly, among the Rajputs, a sanguinary conflict broke out because a Raja, who was out hawking, had picked up a partridge which had fallen across his neighbour's boundary. All of these tribes considered war as an end in itself.

Baluch

The origin and the stymology of the ethnic name Baluch is obscure. Mr. Dames argues that the word Baluch is a nickname meaning a "cock's comb". Since there is evidence that in the early Middle Ages the Baluch wore helmets decorated with a cock's comb, it is possible that their ethnic name is derived from the totem of the cock. A considerable number of such interesting theories have been ventured forth by the local writers and historians but mostly all this amounts to mere guess work rather than any plausible explanation. However, this much is certain that the term "Baluch" is widely applied to all wild and nomadic tribes of Central Asia. The Baluch tribes are known to have settled in Kirman and in the mountainous valleys around it as early as mid-seventh century. Till the tenth century the Baluch occupied mainly the areas to the west and north of Kirman. They also had some settlements in Seestan and Western Mekran. Live-stock breeding was the main occupation of these Baluch.

Arab conquests in south-eastern Iran led to the gradual spread of Islam among the Baluch. However, the new religion took a long time to permeate the Baluch society, and the pre-Islamic beliefs and practices survived in a large measure among the bulk of the Baluch. The tenth century Muslim authors point out that the Baluch were "Muslims only in name"

The Baluch forays into Seestan and Khorasan invited repression by the Ghaznavids. At the beginning of the eleventh century, the Ghaznavid troops sent to Kirman dealt a very serious blow to the Baluch near Khabis. These events, in addition to the movement of Turkmen-Seljuks into north-eastern Iran in the middle of the eleventh century, speeded up the migration of some of the Baluch tribes from Seestan to northern Kirman farther east into Mekran, in the western areas of which, in present-day Panjgur, Baluch settlements had already been founded. The migration of the Baluch into the territory of present-day Baluchistan was an important milestone in their ethnic history.

The predatory campaigns of the Ghaznavids and Ghoris and, above all, raids by the Mongols, some of whom, the Nikudaris, had settled in the territory of western Afghanistan and eastern Iran in the middle of the thirteenth century, resulted in the devastation of many a beautiful and prosperous town in the territory of Baluchistan. The settled, farming population was considerably reduced and the small states which flourished there declined and disintegrated.

These events contributed to the dispersal of the Baluch tribes from Mekran further north and north-east, up to the frontiers of the Punjab and Sindh. In the central Baluchistan (the Kalat Plateau) the Baluch were repulsed by the Brahui tribe and split into two streams. The southern stream brought the Baluch tribes into lower Sindh in the early fourteenth century. The other stream skirted the Kalat Plateau in the north and moved into the vicinity of present-day Derajat. Around 1470, Shah Husain Langah, the then ruler of Multan (1467-1502), allotted lands on the western bank of the Indus for the settlement of the Baluch. At the close of the fifteenth century, Ismail Khan, Fateh Khan and Ghazi Khan founded there the three cities which bear their names to this day. The principal reason why the Baluch disappeared over the eastern territory between Kirman and Indus was that clan organisation was disintegrating and feudal relations were

taking shape among them as a result of slow but steady development of productive forces. As population grew, there were not enough grazing grounds to meet everybody's requirements and the Baluch were compelled to look for new lands. Inter-tribal wars and clashes became frequent and the defeated tribes either had to submit before the winner or had to abandon their lands and look for new lands. War-craft, which dominated the life of the Baluch as early as the tenth and eleventh centuries, rapidly gained in prestige. The decline of land cultivation, the breakdown of the irrigation systems and a sharp drop in the settled population as a result of the Mongol invasions and the subsequent anarchy, all contributed to a sharp increase in the proportion of nomadic and semi-nomadic stock-breeding in the economy of Baluchistan. As a corollary the political force, power and influence of the aristocracy of the Baluch tribes grew.

From the close of the fifteenth century onwards, the Baluch, whose emergence in the south-western areas of the Punjab dates to this time, also participated in the ethnogenesis of the Punjabis. The Baluch sardars overran Muzaffargarh and the southern part of Derajat and, together with their numerous kith and kin, gained a footing in these areas. Babar referred in his notes to separate settlements of the Baluch in the beginning of the sixteenth century even in the northern regions of the Punjab, in Bhera and Khushab in the Jhelum Valley south of the Salt Range. In the middle of the sixteenth century Humayun settled some of the Baluch clans in East Punjab. He granted them lands in this area for the assistance they had rendered in his struggle against the Suri rulers.

After Nadir Shah's inroads in Sindh and the intense humiliation suffered by Sindh rulers at his hands, the Kalhora princes decided to organise a Sindhian tribal army. The Kalhora rulers being basically agriculturists, they invited Talpur Baluch clans for recruitment. A considerable number of Baluch tribes followed suit. Prior to this advent of new

arrivals, it may be mentioned here that several Baluch clans had already migrated and settled in lower Sindh early in the fourteenth century. Towards the close of the eighteenth century the Talpur Amirs revolted against the Kalhora rulers, their masters and spiritual leaders, and finally took over Sindh from them. The Talpur Amirs continued to rule Sindh till its conquest by the British forces in 1843 A.D.

Rajputs

The Rajputs consider themselves blue-blood Kshatriyas and trace their origin to the lunar and solar dynasties of the epics. Their ancestors were, they believe, born of the sun or the moon and hence they pride themselves on being the most ancient of the royal clans. Modern research, however, seems to indicate that they are mainly the descendants of the Gurjara, Huns and other Central Asian tribes who found their way across the north-west frontier of the sub-continent in the 5th and 6th centuries. The Huns began to penetrate into Sindh in the second half of the 5th century. By the end of the century a Hun chief, Tormana, established himself as the ruler of Malwa and adopted the style and title of an Indian monarch. It is very much doubtful whether Sindh was annexed by, or became tributary to, Tormana or his son, Mihiragul, whose capital was at Sakala, the modern Sialkot in the Punjab. But it is certain that Sindh could not have remained unaffected by the foreign invasion during the chaotic period at the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th century.

Huns and allied tribes who accompanied them on the invasion of the sub-continent laid the foundations of several kingdoms, such as Maitrakas at Valabhi in the east of Kathiawar and Gurjaras (Gujarats) in Western Rajputana. Not only Gujars but Parihar and many other clans, which are well-known today as Rajputs, are the descendants of Huns and other foreign tribes who succeeded in establishing themselves as local aristocracies. It is a proven fact that Rajputs are not indigenous tribes of the sub-continent but foreigners who

came here at the close of the 5th century and were later on admitted into the Hindu fold as Kshatriyas of Surajbansi and Chanderbansi clans.

The origin of the word "Rajput" is from "Krajputas", which is a Slav word meaning Kraj-pūtas — roadside installations — and refers to the ancient practice of constructing stone memorials to the dead by the roadside. In Serbia, a province of Yugoslavia, one can still find thousands of such stone memorials by roadsides and these are called Krajputas.

The Rajputs still construct such memorials in memory of those slain in war or such women who sacrifice their lives by burning themselves along with their departed husbands. But these are now locally called "Paliyas"

Sindh appears to have been occupied by barbarian tribes of a somewhat lower social status. They could, however, impose themselves on Sindh as independent rulers. It is not unlikely that Rai dynasty rulers belonged to Hun tribes who either began their rule as vassals of the then Persian ruler, Nausherwan, or they merely acknowledged the supremacy of Persia and paid a nominal tribute.

The people of Sindh had professed the Buddhist religion throughout this period. The Kushans and Saka satraps, too, were not unfriendly towards Buddhism though they themselves were inclined towards the Brahmanical cult. The Huns worshipped Siva.

The invaders carved out tribal kingdoms for themselves and eventually settled down in the country taking local Hindu wives. The ruling classes had no difficulty in persuading the obsequious Brahmins to admit them into the Hindu fold, and provide them with genealogies going back to heroic times very much as Virgil traced the ancestry of the founders of the Roman Empire back to the heroes of the Trojan Wars.

A confirmation of the theory of the foreign origin of many of these clans is found in the Puranic legend of the creation of the Agnikula or fireborn Rajputs. It is said that when Parasurama destroyed the ancient Kshatriyas, the gods repaired to Mount Abu in Rajputana and there from the sacred firepit produced the four fireborn clans, the Powar, the Parihar, the Chauhan and the Solanki. The Rajputs at present have about 36 clans and their titular head is the Rana of Mewar. The claim do not appear to be based on truth. The very fact that many of them had to undergo various ceremonies of initiation, which alone entitles them to be considered as Kshatriyas, is proof of this.

Jats

The word "Jat" represents two distinct words in the Sindhi language; the first is Jat with the soft Sindhi "t", and the other is "Jaat" spelt with the soft English dental "t". The words are different in meaning, but have become inextricably confused. The Jats as a tribe are Sindhis, most probably of Scythian extraction. The Jats were settled in the earliest time of which a record exists in "Nudha" in modern Karachi, whence they appear to have wandered to the south of Sindh where they are now most numerous. There the geographer, Ibn Haukal, found and described them in the tenth century. They were breeders of camels, for which their country was famous. They have retained the same occupation to this day and given their name to it, so that the term is colloquially equivalent to the term "camel man".

Both Herodotus and Ktesias write of the efforts of Darius the Great about 512 B.C. to make secure the boundaries of his empire. In the course of these operations Darius annexed the Indus Valley and the hill country of Kafiristan and Kashmir, as well as Dabistan on the Indus. From this point he conducted several campaigns against the Sakas or Scythians. He also had the course of the Indus explored by the Carian captain, Skylax of the Cariandā, who navigated the Indian Ocean back to Suez and wrote an account of his

voyage in Greek. It would appear from this, therefore, that the Scythians, if they were not then in the Lower Indus Valley, must have been threatening the country of the Indus with such power as to induce Darius to make these great efforts to subdue them. If, as is commonly believed, the Sindhi Jats are Scythian by origin, it seems that their residence in Sindh region can be pushed much further back than the period of Indo-Scythian dominance, which happened during the time of Kanishka, the Kushan ruler of the northern part of the sub-continent. In the time of the *Periplus* (7-A.D.) the Scythians are described as already settled in the Indus Valley.

There were 77,920 Jats enumerated in the Census of 1901, the number today is not known. Before the Arab conquest the Jat tribes were sternly repressed by the Brahman kings and the Arab governors seemed to have followed the same policy. After the Baluch invasions had begun, Baluch chiefs and Mughal rulers alike in Sindh applied the term "Jat" indiscriminately to all the Sindhi population. The term "Jat" ceased in popular parlance to have any racial significance, and came rather to have an occupational significance as camel man. The reason for this could be that in the armies of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries in Sindh the fighting men were mostly Rajputs from Rajputana and the desert, or Baluchis and Mughals, whilst the local population supplied the transport. Some of these camel men were men of broken Baluchi tribes who had fallen in the social scale, or from clans of the Baluchi tribes whose names they bore, for example, the Lashari. But there were other tribes, in Lower Sindh area at least, commonly known as Jats, and consisting mostly of camel drivers, or camel breeders, who spoke Sindhi and who evidently had lived from the earliest times in Sindh region. The Jats of "Jäti" prefer to be called Malikani, and, if they at all admit classification as Jats, they hastily disclaim any connection with any other Jats. On the other hand, the Khanani Jats of "Guni", though they do not pretend any relationship with the Malikani Jats, say that they

look on the latter as their sardars. According to Sindh's history, the source of the word "Jat" is unknown and that, owing to the opening and extension of railway lines in Sindh, many settlements of Jats have disappeared and the number of camels has decreased. Many Jats have now become ploughmen, and there are no fewer than 92 separate septs of the Jat clan. It may be noted that the Kaheri call themselves Sayeds in some places and in other places they are known to be Jat. Six of the Baluch septs are being known as Jats. Two Brahui septs are called Jat and also there are seven septs of Samma who are called Jat. The cause of these variations is said to be the association of certain septs with septs of other tribes. Their descendants, after some generations, forgot their real tribes or septs and assumed the names of the tribes with which they had been living or of the profession they had been following.

In the 1941 Census it was decided to obtain separate figures for Jats, the tribes associated with camel breeding and camel transport and to leave the Serais and other Jats, namely, those not so connected, out of consideration. The Census Superintendent, Mr. Lambrick, remarked that the term "Jat" had indeed dropped out of use among the tribes to which it was formerly applied, and they and the Serais differed so little in their economic and social life from the Samma and other Sindhi Muslim tribes that there would be no justification for attempting the most difficult task of distinguishing them. On the other hand, a certain interest attaches to the Jats, in view of their association with camel transport which continues to be of immense importance in the rural economy of Sindh, particularly the Barrage area, in spite of the development of rail and motor communication. The Jat tribes in the delta of the Indus have given their name to "Jat" Taluka, and may be considered indigenous and probably amongst the oldest inhabitants of Sindh. The Malikani section wanders about the taluka with herds of camels, remaining in one spot only for so long as there is sufficient grazing in the vicinity. Their encampments are

known as "wandhs" and consist of huts made of grass-matting. These people are exceedingly primitive in their customs. They live almost entirely on their she camel's milk and hardly ever eat bread, or even drink water, incredible as this may seem. They sell the male calves of their camels at fairs but it cannot be said that they really depend for their livelihood on breeding or the sale of them. This tract in the delta of the Indus must be particularly suitable for grazing camels as their favourite "khabar" grows profusely everywhere. The language of these Jats is considered to be "Seraiki", but their dialect is peculiar and merits investigation by philologists. It would hardly be intelligible to the Sindhi-Seraiki speaking people of north-eastern Sindh region. Tribes such as the Lashari, in addition to the Jiskani and many more, are scattered all over Sindh and are ordinarily engaged in camel transport, though some work on the land. They generally have permanent villages, where their families stay, while the men spend most of their time transporting grain from place to place. Almost all Jats speak Seraiki among themselves, though they use Sindhi in dealing with their clients. Many of them also speak Baluchi, having been associated in former days with Baluch tribes as their camel drivers. The women, and occasionally men, of the Jat tribes weave farasis out of camel hair, with which they mix goat-hair and wool. Like the Baluchis, Brahuis and the majority of Sindhi Muslim tribes, the Jats mould the shape of their children's heads in infancy.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TRIBES OWNING TOMBS

From time immemorial the vast plain which stretches from the low-lands of Central Europe to the borders of China constituted the undisputed homeland of a considerable number of nomadic tribes. In the Asian sector; the nomads had taken possession of grazing lands long before the existence of settled communities in the fertile areas bordering the plain's southern edge came to be recorded in history. The various tribes which succeeded one another as occupants of the region followed, even into the present century, much the same pattern of life as was evolved by their predecessors many centuries earlier.

To appreciate the various artistic developments which occurred simultaneously in different parts of Central Asia or which followed one after another in a particular region, it is necessary to distinguish the precise characteristics of each local culture. Over most of the area an animal style was in vogue, practised by the various groups of nomads who were often related, yet always distinct. The style flourished over so wide an area and for so long a period of time that it is often called the art of the steppe peoples.

Generations of nomads traversed the Central Asia plain without, as far as we know, leaving upon its surface any

traces of their passage. Fortunately, by the time their chieftains started taking delight in precious objects and amassed wealth sufficient to enable them to satisfy their possessive instincts, many nomadic communities had come to believe in the existence of a life beyond the grave similar in every respect to that lived upon earth. As a result, they began to provide elaborate tombs for their chieftains, and place therein every necessity of earthly life, but choosing for the purpose the finest, the most sumptuous and intrinsically valuable of the dead man's possessions.

The earliest princely burials as yet known to us in the area are to be found in Transcaucasia, in the vicinity of the great international routes which in ancient times linked the ancient Orient with Asia.

Maikop

The Maikop burials have been assigned to various dates, but the earliest and the most important are now generally regarded as belonging to the end of the third or the start of the second millennium B.C. The objects which have been recovered from the graves are not only intrinsically valuable but are also to be prized for their remarkable artistic and historic importance.

Trialeti

The style of the Maikop animal figurines reappears in a modified, somewhat lighter, form in some graves dating from the Bronze Age discovered in Georgia in the Trialeti burial field. The tombs were all in the form of single burials and many contained objects of marked intrinsic worth and artistic importance. The discovery at Trialeti of a bronze belt decorated with an embossed hunting scene is of particular interest because belts of this type are often regarded as Urartian in origin.

Nothing is as yet known about the people of Trialeti, but they must have been of a peaceful disposition for practically no weapons were found in their tombs. The tombs

also contained nothing to suggest that the Trialeti people had learnt to use the horse. They seem to have relied on bullocks as draught animals and the people depicted on the bronze belt are shown pursuing their game on foot.

Scythians

Until the arrival of the Scythians in the Caucasus in the seventh century B.C., the Caucasians portrayed animals with considerable realism. However, in the course of the first millennium B.C. Scythian stylization was often blended with Greek elegance, even though the synthesis was sometimes clumsily achieved. In the process the Scythian understanding of grace, balance and movement was at times replaced by unintelligent contortions and meaningless ornamentation, whilst Greek clarity of vision was superseded by stiff precision.

Lurs

The dates which different scholars assign to the objects which they ascribe to the Lurs vary as much as do the theories they hold regarding the origin of these people, for their estimates range from about the year 2600 B.C. to A.D. 800. Some objects bear cuneiform inscriptions; many of these have been deciphered in recent years and found in fact to date from between the nineteenth and the twelfth centuries B.C. Often the names of kings or high dignitaries are mentioned in them. These persons were connected with Babylonia and Elam. The inscriptions also show that the objects on which they appear were intended for religious purpose and, though used by the Lurs, may not have been made by them. Indeed they form quite a different group obviously of nomadic origin. They probably date from between the seventh and fourth centuries B.C. and must have belonged to Lurs living, in the manner of some Scythians of southern Russia, in semisettled communities, situated in their case in the central Zagros. Their dwellings appear to have taken the form of houses rather than of felt huts or yurts, and to have been grouped round a sanctuary similar to the

one excavated at Surk Dum in 1937-8. There the dead had been buried outside the settlement and every tomb which the excavators examined was found to contain, lying beneath the dead man's skull, a bit with a rigid centrepiece and elaborate terminals fashioned into either human or animal forms. The human figures are thought to have represented deities and it is assumed that the bits were placed in the tombs to speed up the passage of the dead from the world of the living to that beyond the tomb. Scholars are of the opinion that these bits were made specially for daily use, for none of those examined showed any signs of wear.

Luristan bits bearing animal decorations indicate that the Cimmerians did in fact practise a form of animal art. If so they may have introduced it into both the Transcaucasian and the Zagros areas before the Scythians appeared there with their own more accomplished and vital renderings of similarly conceived animal designs. In that case Cimmerian influence may be responsible for the somewhat coarse and more primitive elements seen in both the Luristan bits and the Georgian belt buckles.

Royal Scyths

The Scythians proper, or Royal Scyths of southern Russia, created an animal art of superb quality. The earliest of their known works date from the seventh century B.C. and come from the Kuban district and from southern Russia. The Scythian art, though essentially decorative in character and primarily animalistic in content, includes astral, geometric, floral and, on occasions, figural motifs. It is complex in its imagery and composition, and achieves great technical subtlety and polish. The finest examples include gold plaques representing stags or other wild animals, such as leopards. Certain scholars now think that some of the best of these, including the plaques of the recumbent gold stags, are of Thracian and not Scythian origin. Should this view prove to be correct the basic conception of these works nevertheless remains essentially Scythian in character.

Altai.

In the Altai, nomads sharing the way of life and outlook of the Scythians practised an art very similar to theirs from, at any rate, the fifth to the second centuries B.C. Whereas the southern Russian climatic conditions were such that articles made of perishable materials could not survive in the tombs of the Royal Scyths and only the indestructible ones remained, in the Altai burials all the objects which had been placed in the graves were recovered in good condition. This was because the tombs had been insulated by a layer of ice which had fortuitously formed above them, transforming each burial into a kind of deep-freeze. The Altaian burial grounds of Pazyryk, Teukt, Shibe and Katanda, to name but a few, were excavated after the Russian Revolution and found to contain, in addition to some metal objects, a great many in wood, felt, wool and silk. The Pazyryk tombs had been particularly lavishly equipped and the objects, with their virtually all over decorations — even the soles of the people's footwear were elaborately worked — are so similar in style and shape to their counterparts from the tombs of the Royal Scyths of southern Russia that it is evident that even if the tribesmen who produced them were not Scythians, they undoubtedly shared the same culture, though they at times expressed themselves with less sophistication.

Pazyryk

The Pazyryk people must have been in regular contact with India, China and Persia, for fine textiles produced in these countries were found among their tomb furnishings. The fabrics included two woven stuffs and the oldest knotted woollen pile carpets known to us. One of these is in almost perfect condition and now hangs in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad. It dates from the fifth century B.C.

Pazyryk objects first appeared on the market in about 1669, when Russian settlers in the Ob and Irtysh districts of Siberia started to burrow into the local burial mounds in the hope of finding valuable articles, which they could either sell

or melt down.

By the end of the century they had broken into so many tombs that the local markets were flooded with ancient metal objects. When Peter the Great was informed of this he instantly took stern measures to put an end to the looting, at the same time giving orders that as many of the stolen objects as possible were to be acquired on his behalf. The collection which he formed is now a treasured exhibition in the Hermitage Museum.

Saka

In Achaemenid times the central section of the Asiatic plain was largely controlled by Saka tribesmen. They are believed to have come there from the easternmost parts of Turkestan, Tibet and the Tien-Shan, and some scholars think of them as forerunners of the Turks. On abandoning their homelands these tribesmen proceeded to move steadily westward, advancing towards what are now Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan by the eighth century B.C.

The Sakas took part in all the wars which were fought in Central Asia throughout the centuries during which they roamed across its grazing lands. They were conquered by Cyrus, who then persuaded them to join him in fighting his arch enemies, the Greeks. Alexander subjugated them and used them in his wars against India. However, in about 159 B.C. they established a home of their own in Ferghana and were on the point of defeating the Parthians when they were themselves conquered by the Huns. Before they had time to recover from the setback the Turks appeared to harass them and drove some into India and Pakistan where, in the course of the first century A.D., they gradually became assimilated with the local population and in the process introduced Scythian characteristics into the Indian art of the region. Those Sakas who remained in Central Asia were in their turn gradually absorbed by their Turkish conquerors.

Huns

In the second half of the fourth century B.C. the Huns attempted to gain control of the Central Asian plain. They had by then established themselves on China's western borders where they had adopted the habit of raiding the Chinese settlers living in the empire's frontier areas. By the second century B.C. they had penetrated into the Ordos — a district situated to the east of Tun-huang, west of Peking and south of Mongolia — where they gradually founded a semi-independent kingdom of their own. A series of bronze objects, more especially of cast plaques displaying animal motifs carried out in a Scytho-Siberian style tempered generally by Chinese elements, are to be associated with the Ordos Huns, more particularly of the Han period. The plaques often display animals in the recumbent or circular positions, characteristic of Scythian art though rendered in the more naturalistic manner which prevailed in western Siberia. This nomadic style even penetrated to China, reaching it both from the Ordos and from Central Asia, to advance as far as the point at which the Yellow River makes its bend. Between the fourth and second century B.C. Chinese artists because so attracted by the art of their nomadic neighbours that they designed hunting scenes and animals bent into a circle in a style somewhat similar to theirs. Near Ulafoo, in the province of Chensu, bronzes of fighting animals rendered in a Scytho-Siberian manner were very popular for a time.

The Huns were not prepared to stay in the Ordos but pushed on into northern Mongolia. In the third century B.C. they gained control of the grass lands to the north-east of the Gobi desert and then headed for the Transbaikal and moved into Mongolia proper. There, from the seventh to the fourth century B.C., it had been the custom for the local inhabitants to be buried in slab graves. In early times pictures of galloping stags had figured prominently in their art but in the course of centuries, that is to say during the Iron Age, they had greatly widened their repertory. The Huns soon gained control over these people and became so powerful that, in

about 50 B.C., the Chinese resorted to another war aimed at containing the Huns. After some fierce fighting they succeeded in forcing the latter to recognize their emperor as their suzerain. The humiliation and loss of their independence created such bitter dissensions among the Huns that, although the southerners decided to abide by their allegiance to China, the northern group proceeded to migrate to the Orkhan valley. In about A.D. 45 a prolonged drought led many of them to revolt against their Orkhan rulers whilst others decided to submit to the Chinese. The latter were resettled in the Ordos and their men-folk drafted to guard the Great Wall and Yellow River. In about A.D. 150 those who had remained in the Orkhan were evicted from it by the Sienpei, ancestors of the Mongols, who had appeared there from Khingau. They moved westward to found a kingdom of their own in what is now Kazakhstan. The numerous mounds which stretch across Mongolia and the district of Baikal are a lasting testimony to their slow but steady advance westward.

The most important Hunnic cemetery known to us is situated near Noin Ula, on the Sehenga, to the north of Ulan Bator. It was noticed as long ago as 1912 by some gold prospector who came across it by chance and set out to examine the burials. The first tomb which he opened was of the frozen variety. Like the remainder of those which he was later able to excavate it too had been looted in antiquity, but some of its contents still lay in their original positions. In contrast to the Pazyryk burials, where the walls of both the human and horse tombs had been hung with textile, at Noin Ula it was the floors and ceilings of the human burial chambers which were covered with fabrics. All the tombs which were examined were so alike that he assigned them to a single period and group of people. Moreover, all proved to be princely burials and, in accordance with the invariable custom of the Scythian and Pazyryk people, all took the form of horse burials. The sixth tomb which was uncovered proved to be the richest as well as the most important from an archaeological point of view, for it not only contained the

famous rug, but also the inscribed and dated lacquer cup which enable the burials to be exactly dated. The inscription on the cup records the names of the three craftsmen who made it for use in the Shahlin Palace on the fifth day of September in the year A.D. 13.

Turks

Some scholars think that the Turks were Hunnu tribesmen who had been evicted from the Ordos by the Huns. According to legend they came from the mythical land of Turan where their chieftains lived in great splendour, wearing golden crowns and sitting in tents of a vast size. They owned immense herds of horses and cattle, branding their animals with their personal crests. They gradually advanced into Kashgaria and then entered Turkestan. According to the story, their ruler Feridun, 'one of the world's greatest kings', then divided his land between his two sons, Ir and Tur, which came to be termed as Iran and Turan. In medieval works of art the Turks are shown wearing close fitting tunics, broad trousers gathered in at the ankles, embroidered high boots and either felt bonnets or fur hats associated with nomadic horsemen, whilst their warriors appear in pointed helmets topped with a pin and ball. As the Turks moved westward replacing the Huns some settled down in Mongolia and the Gobi; others pushed on towards the Sea of Aral and reached Bactria, where many of them settled. They are known to have reached the middle Syr Darya by the first century B.C. They were splendid horsemen and skilful cattle breeders, but like most nomads they were predatory and restless. In about A.D. 78 they did not hesitate to plunder the Hunnic burials in the Orkhan district, a sacrilege which the Huns lost little time in avenging. The Turks, on the other hand, established a kingdom of their own in the Orkhan Valley, with its capital near Karakoram. By 565 they had conquered the Mongolian Hephthalites and extended their rule to the borders of Persia. However, they soon quarrelled among themselves and eventually split into two groups, the eastern retaining the Orkhan and Mongolia, the western ruling on the Issyk Kul.

Chinese and Byzantine writers of the sixth century describe the wealth and strength of the Orkhan Turks. They mention the gilt thrones shaped in the form of rams which their chieftains used in Ferghana. The Khan of Bokhara and the Khan of the Orkhan each had thrones supported by four golden peacocks and other animals made of silver which the Byzantine envoy thought as impressive as anything to be seen in Constantinople. These thrones must surely have been made by Central Asian goldsmiths rather than by Turks.

Both groups of Turks spent much of their time fighting their respective neighbours, the eastern the Chinese, the western the Sassanians. Then, in about A.D. 630 the kagan of the western group was murdered and his kingdom rapidly disintegrated as a result. The eastern survived it for a little more than twenty years, to succumb with the rest of eastern Turkestan to China. But even though the Turks were not destined to remain in Central Asia these setbacks were little more than a momentary eclipse. After the Arab invasion had spent itself the Turkish tribes rallied again and eventually established the great, if comparatively shortlived, dynasties known to us as the Samanid, Ghaznavid and Seljukid, not to mention the Ottoman. In the tenth century those who were still concentrated in the Samarkand region are said to have made life-sized statues in wood of horses, oxen, camels and other animals and to have placed them on the public squares of Samarkand. Unfortunately, none of these has survived to our time, but a building of that period was discovered in Kashgaria, in what is now Uzbekistan, and found to contain a room; the north wall of which was decorated with a painting representing the Emperor of China, the east wall with that of group of Indian Brahmins and Turkish Khans and the west wall with pictures of Persian Kings and Roman emperors.

QARMATIANS IN SINDH

The Qarmati or Karamati tribe owes its origin to the religious-cum-political turmoil that erupted during al-Mamoun's Caliphate. The founder of the Ismaili sect, Abdullah Maimoun of Iran, organized a series of Shia revolts and despatched his missionaries to various places to proclaim the coming of Imam Ismail. Ibn Maimoun, in order to achieve his political ends, fanned Arab-Iranian animosity and announced that the movement he was to launch, by uniting the so-called free thinkers, would dislodge the Abbasids and instead install him and his descendants on the throne. Ibn Maimoun died in 864, but the movement started by him gained momentum and in due course gave rise to other sects and secret societies. Eventually, Ibn Maimoun's followers succeeded in keeping a Shia dynasty on the throne of Egypt for 200 years.

The first of the societies set up by Maimoun's followers was formed by Hamdan Qarmat, one of the most fanatical disciples of Ibn Maimoun and as ambitious as his master. With his headquarters near Kufa, Qarmat set up his own branch of the Ismaili sect and started by making contacts with peasants and bedouins in order to make capital out of their grouse against the government. The principles laid down by Qarmat called for common ownership of all property including wives. It would be interesting to note that it was Qarmat who for the first time in history organized artisans

and workers in guilds according to their trades. Having made a deep impact on the people at large through his personal abilities, he goaded the Arab tribes of Iraq, Syria and Arabia to rise in arms against the Abbasids and their Turkish masters.

The sect spread rapidly. Its founder Hamdan Qarmat assumed the title of Dai-o-Dault and chose a council of twelve as apostles. He enforced most ascetic doctrines and preached that prayers should be said fifty times every day. The governor of the province, finding that many peasants neglected their farming to say the prayers, ordered Qarmat's imprisonment. In 900 the Qarmatians won a major victory over the Caliph's armies at Basra, which gave a broad dimension to Qarmat's activities. From Basra his ardent followers marched into Syria and in the next few years ravaged a great portion of that country until a large Turkish army routed them.

The Qarmatians regrouped themselves and brought the entire southern Iraq, between Basra and Kufa, under their control. This was evidently a big step towards their goal. After the death of Qarmat one of his missionaries, Said-ul-Hassan al-Janabi, was successful in establishing a sovereign Qarmatian State in Bahrain. His son and successor, Abu Tahir Sulayman, became more successful and several times invaded Iraq. The Caliph's army failed to crush the Qarmatians. But the military pressure on them grew gradually and the result was that they had to quit Iraq and withdraw to the south where they resumed hostilities.

Led by Abu Tahir Sulayman the Qarmatians invaded and pillaged Mecca in 903/6. Not content with plunder, they committed the outrage of slaying 30,000 defenders of the holy city, and finally broke and removed Sange-e-Aswad (black stone) of Ka'aba and retained it in their possession for two decades. For the next 100 years they continued to fight the Caliph's armies. Finally the black stone was ransomed at

an enormous amount by the Amir of Iraq and restored to its original place.

Qarmatians in Bahrain

The most notable Qarmatian to guide the movement while its headquarters were in Bahrain was Dai Zakariya Ibn Mehdi. He is considered to be the most effective propagandist of his time and all the mass conversions which took place in tribes inhabiting Muscat, Kirman, Seestan and Mekran were the direct result of his efforts. Zakariya died in 906/294 A.H. but during the six years of his leadership the Qarmatian doctrine had spread far and claimed converts in Baluchistan and Sindh. The leadership in Bahrain sector passed on to Abu Said al-Janabi who became almost a legendary figure on account of his heroic exploits and invasions.

In the time of Mehdi the first mission to North India came under Dai Haitham, a nephew of Ibn-Hawshab of Yemen. In the reign of Caliph Muizz, about 347 A.H., Multan was occupied and the large local population of Buddhists and Zoroastrians was converted to the Ismaili faith. The system of administration during the Ismaili rule under the Fatimids was a peculiar one since the executive and administrative powers remained with the local chiefs while religious and military affairs were controlled and conducted by a Dai who was invariably sent from the capital. The Dai always functioned separately in cantonment and visited the town only on Fridays when he came and joined the Friday congregation.

Dai Haitham was a Qarmati missionary and in close collaboration with local scholars, who were mostly Hindus and Buddhists, he tried to find a compromise half-way between Islam and Hinduism. Hazrat Ali was declared to be the tenth avatar of Vishnu and the image of a mounted warrior with a drawn sword in hand was declared to be his figurative symbol with the new name of Kalkan. This sect soon became very popular and was joined by Hindu and

Muslim masses. Common people were much impressed with a religion in which the injunctions regarding fasting, praying and prohibiting of liquor had been withdrawn altogether. Besides, life was free and almost unbridled, intermarriages among people of different religions were allowed, there were no taxes or tributes to be paid, no prayers, no mosques and no 'khutba'. Dai Haitham, who introduced this system, well understood the inclinations of the ignorant masses of the subcontinent whom he wanted to win over.

The founder of the Ismaili association, Abdullah, who later on proclaimed himself the legitimate descendant and heir of Hazrat Ali and assumed the name of Obaidullah, formed and established lodges similar to those of Free Masons, in which the members were required to pass through seven gradations, each having its own peculiar system of doctrines. Missionaries called "Dais" propagated the secret code which Abdullah taught. It is said that the founder of the Qarmatians was converted to Ismaili faith by one of the Dais. This, however, we regard as doubtful, because the Qarmatian system was not identical with that of the Ismailis, though very similar to it, and also because Qarmatis preached allegiance to Imam Masum and not to Imam Ismail.

Later on Abdullah assumed the title of Al-Mehdi, "The director", an appellation reserved for the last Imam. The western Arabs warmly embraced the cause of Al-Mehdi and rendered him allegiance. He also laid the foundation of a new capital which was called "Mehdia" after his assumed title. Thus was founded (A.D. 910) the dynasty of Fatimid Khalifas. Al-Muizz, the third in succession from Obaidullah, removed the seat of government to Egypt (A.D. 977) after which Mehdia fell rapidly into decay.

In his book, *Ismaili Propaganda and Fatimid rule in Sindh*, Mr. H. Ray, while referring to classical works of standard Arabic and Indian geographers of the period,

provides a missing link in the story of the destruction of the Temple of Sun and its idol by the Qarmatian rulers of Multan. Quoting passages from the *Kitāb Al-Majālis-wal-Musā-yarāt* of Qazi Al-Nūman and *Uyun Al-Akhbār*, Mr. Ray summarizes the data furnished by them as follows:-

“In the time of Al-Muizz there was in charge of the Fatimid Mission of Sindh a Dai stationed at Multan whose views and whose conduct were utterly at variance with the Ismaili orthodoxy taught by the Imam and his close associates. Not only did he adopt a latitudinarian attitude towards those members of his flock who had got converted to Ismailism, whom he also allowed to keep many of the un-Islamic practices of their former religion, but he even relaxed certain statutes of Islam. The said Dai also allowed the infringement of Islamic laws concerning forbidden degrees in marriages. Effort was made by the Fatimid Mission of Sindh in Mansura to bring the downfall of this Dai in Multan who was charged with holding dangerous, heterodox views on points of Islamic doctrine. Al-Muizz is reported to have frankly refused to dismiss the Dai as the latter commanded full cooperation and respect of the people of Multan and he had succeeded in winning a powerful ruler of the province over to Fatimid cause.

“However, after a short period the said heretical Dai died and he was succeeded by a prominent member of Sindh Dowa which kept strictly to the orthodox tenets prescribed by the Imam. The name of this new Dai was Halam (Jalam) bin Shaiban.

“It was but natural that the first concern of the new Dai was to do away with the religious abuses of his predecessor. He not only enforced strict Islamic orthodoxy but also went out of his way and destroyed the Temple Sun god and the idol of Multan. This event can be dated with certainty as *Kitab Al-Majalis wal-Musa-*

yarat was written in 351 A.H. Moreover an epistle of Imam Al-Muizz to Halam bears the date 354 A.H.”

The author of *Uyun-al-Akhbar* introduces the epistle with the following words:

“There arrived a letter from him (viz. Halam) in which he mentioned that he had broken the idol, for the destruction of which he had previously asked the permission of Imam.”

Another extract from the epistle reads:

“God gave you the victory and you exterminated those who attacked you and that you have destroyed their idol and built a mosque on its site. It is great favour. We should be very much pleased if you could send us the head of that idol which will inspire your brethren at our end. Written on Sunday the 19th of Ramazan in the year 354”.

In another passage quoted by *Uyun-al-Akhbar*, Qazi Al-Numan summarizes the Ismaili achievements in Sindh as follows:

“The *dawa* of the ruler of the epoch (Wali-al-Zaman) has emerged victoriously in Sindh, his Dai conquered the ruler who was Zoroastrian, killed him and his men and destroyed the idol which they used to worship and made a mosque of the temple in which the idol used to stand.”

We might compare a passage from al-Beruni (*India*, translation Sachau, 1,116):-

“When the Qaramatians occupied Multan Halam (read Halam) Ibn-e-Shaiban, the usurper, broke the idol into pieces and killed its priests. He converted its

mansion, which was a castle built on an elevated place, into a mosque and ordered the old mosque to be closed down out of the hatred for everything that had been built under the Umayyad caliphs."

Halam bin Shaiban, the new Dai, instituted his dynasty which continued to rule Multan and the surrounding areas of Sindh till 401 A.H., when their State was destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni.

In the period of Caliph Aziz, the Qarmatia mission established another State of their own in Sindh with Mansura as their capital. It extended to Thatta and Debal which also served as their headquarters. This second Qarmati State in the sub-continent was also destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni on his return from the Somnath campaign in about 415 A.H.

A third State of the Qarmati mission under the sovereignty of the Fatimids of Egypt (Mustansir) was established in Sindh by the Sumra dynasty with their headquarters at Samui near Thatta. It survived for many centuries even after the Fatimid empire had vanished. The later Sumras, whose religion became indefinite, were finally replaced by a dynasty of the Sammas of Sindh who subscribed to the Sunni tenets of Islam.

In a letter to the founder of the Sumra dynasty, the latter's name is given as Shaikh Sumar Rajpal. His tomb can, perhaps, be identified at Thatta. For three centuries the Sumras ruled Sindh and preserved its independence of the rulers of Delhi. In this independent State an Arab-Hindu culture flourished as opposed to the Turkish culture of the rest of Muslim India.

When the great split in the Fatimid dynasty came between Nizar and Mustaali and the Qarmatian influence was waning, it apparently became difficult for the Sumra rulers to decide as to which mission they should adhere to. Thus, in

their later history we find them adopting an independent non-conformist type of Ismailism of their own.

The beginning of the 13th century saw the downfall of the Qarmatians in Sindh when Sultan Nasir-ud-Din Qabacha consolidated his power and subjugated them for all times to come. Their descendants in Sindh, perhaps, came to be known as Kalmatis or Karamatis – corruptions of the original nomenclature.

CASTE OF TRIBE

It is very difficult to define caste though of late a number of plausible theories have been advanced to explain this institution. According to some, caste is an institution of the Hindu religion and it consists of a four-fold classification of people in general under the heads of Brahman, Kashatriya, Vaisha and Sudra. Some consider the caste is a social, far more than any religious, institution and it has no necessary connection whatever with Hindu religion, and conversion from Hinduism to Islam has not had the slightest effect on caste. Basically a fact that a generation had descended from ancestors of any given caste creates a presumption, and nothing more, that that generation also is of the same caste, a presumption liable to be defeated by an infinite variety of circumstances.

Among all primitive people we find the race split up into a number of tribal communities held together by the tie of common descent, each tribe being self-contained and self-sufficient, and bound by strict rules of marriage and inheritance, the common object of which is to increase the strength and preserve the unity of the tribe. There is as yet no diversity of occupation. Among more advanced societies, where occupations have become more differentiated, the tribes have almost altogether disappeared; and we find in their place corporate communities or guilds held together by

the tie of common occupation rather than of common blood, each guild being self-contained and self-willed and self-governed and bound by strict rules, the common object of which is to strengthen the guild and confine to it the secrets of the craft which it practises.

The basic fact is that struggle for existence is too severe and the conditions of existence too varied, and the character and capacity of individuals too diverse to permit of this inviolability being long maintained.

Tribes

All the communities of the world are compartmented into two categories, i.e., the community of blood and community of occupation which in other words means the consideration of descent and calling. At present the hereditary nature of blood and occupation having disappeared the people have manufactured political and artificial bases of caste. The process is going on daily around us. It is also certain that what is now taking place is only what has always taken place during the long ages of our history. The ease with which the Syeds are being manufactured is proverbial and the manner in which our local tribes are claiming Arab and Quresh origin is simply astounding. A 'machi' is a 'machi' so long as he catches fish and becomes 'solangi' overnight as soon as he acquires a few acres of land or becomes a clerk in government organisation. This process is more common among artisans and menial tribes. In the past even powerful clans resorted to such practices. It was a profession once upon a time to forge and manipulate the family tree and link it with those of celebrated personalities. The Kalhora rulers, in order to camouflage their local origin, approached a certain reputed family to manage documents of authenticity of their descent from Abbasis of Iraq, and when the link was found to be faulty a number of persons were deputed to go to Baghdad to get the gaps filled by comparing them with those of the Abbasis. When a certain family refused to oblige them on such an issue their abodes were attacked and all

their property was plundered and the copper plates bearing their origin were forcibly carried away and destroyed.

Tribes and Religion

In order to understand the cultural practices of the warrior tribesmen of Sindh and Baluchistan, specially in the context of sculpted tomb representations of humans and animals which are strictly forbidden by Islam, one has to examine the social order of the tribesmen and their attitude towards the teachings of Islam. The social order of various tribes is based on the relationship of the tribes to one another. Membership of a tribe was a bond which united people who felt that they had something in common; but at the same time it also separated them from other groups. The actual or fictitious descent from a common ancestor was the symbol of social morals, the measure by which people were measured. Men who could not boast of ancestors worth mentioning were despised even if they lived in the same territory and spoke the same language, and this loss of esteem forced them to indulge in occupations which lowered them still further. Thus common descent constituted the centre of gravity so far as social consciousness was concerned. Hence the glory of a tribe in reference to another tribe consisted of the glory of its ancestors, upon which the claim to honour and esteem of the individual members as well as the whole group was based. Thus, the famous deeds of the ancestors became signs of esteem or an honourable introductory recognition. Among the causes of self-congratulation, the fame of ancestors became the foremost. Hence, if there were no ancestors of whom one could boast, he strove to connect his lineage to another, even if only by some bold fiction. Personal fame and merit counted for little in such a system. Only inherited fame and links mattered. Since the foundation of each tribe was based on ancient traditions, which were followed from one generation to another, the tribesman as such never got converted to any religion, though he might have agreed to identify himself as a "Muslim" or a "Hindu".

To some extent this tribal spirit is visible even today. A tribesman may follow certain rituals and assume certain norms of a particular religion, in matters of tribal code of conduct, he will definitely observe the tribal traditions even today. The Baluch, Brauhis, or Pathans even though Muslims follow the tribal traditions in respect of revenge, murder, dishonour of women, dealings with other tribes and collective decisions. Even in matters of intermarriages certain tribes like Khosa, Rajputs and Jakhranis do not allow the marriage of their womenfolk outside their own clans though no restrictions are recognised by Islam.

The teachings of Islam are clearly opposed to the social views of tribesmen. Islam makes it mandatory for all Muslims to abolish all social and genealogical distinctions. Islam came to enforce in practice equality and fraternity of all men and unite them in Islam. Islam was designed to do away with all competitions and causes of strife between tribes, their boastings were to cease and there was to be no distinction of rank in Islam. It created a community of brothers and all were one community (Ummat) of the Prophet of Allah who is a blessing for the whole world.

“O men, We have created you from man and woman and made you into peoples and tribes that you may recognise one another. Verily before Allah the noblest is he who fears Allah most.” Thus the Quran lays the basis of equality of all believers before Allah and the thought that the fear of God is the only measure of nobility, to the exclusion of differences arising from mere descent, is clearly expressed. Muslim exegesis is unanimous in respect of this interpretation of the Quranic passage, whose meaning cannot be altered even by any scientific consideration of the text.

A profound change was made by Islam in the ideas of the tribal people about the relationship of the tribes to one another. It is a fact of history that tribesmen have always resisted this teaching of the Islam. On various occasions the

Prophet took deliberate action to further the idea that Islam, rather than tribal affiliation, was to be the unifying factor or principle of social organisation. For example, in Medina the Prophet of Islam inaugurated a brotherhood comprising fortyfive couples each consisting of one Muslim from Medina and one from Mecca and this bond was intended to be so close that "brothers" became heirs to the exclusion of blood relatives. This was intended to prove that religion was a firmer basis for brotherhood than membership of a tribe.

Islam and Hinduism

Islam is a force of the volcanic sort, a burning and integrating force which under favourable conditions has the potential to make a nation. It melts and fuses together a whole series of tribes, and reduces their internal structure to one uniform pattern, in which no survivals of pre-existing usage can be detected. The separate strata disappear; their characteristic fossils are crushed out of recognition; and a solid mass of law and tradition occupies their place.

Hinduism, involved as it is with mysticism and ecstatic devotion, and resting ultimately on the teachings of philosophy, knows nothing of open proselytism or conversion, and attains its end in a different and more subtle fashion; it leaves the existing beliefs, superstitions and rituals very much as they were, and so far from welding them together after the manner of Islam into larger cohesive aggregates, tends rather to create an indefinite number of fresh groups — but every tribe that enters the fold of Hinduism inclines sooner or later to abandon its more primitive usage. The strata remain the same or are multiplied and their relative positions are, on the whole, unaltered, only their fossils are transformed into more advanced forms. One by one the ancient totems drop off, or are converted by a variety of ingenious devices into respectable personages of the standard mythology. A new name is given to the fetish and is thus promoted to the Hindu Pantheon in the guise of a special incarnation of one of the greater gods. Thus, to an outside observer, Hinduism appears

to be a congress of all dead religions. It absorbs and embraces every ideology under the garb of one or the other avatar or incarnation of Vishnu but the fiction is maintained that nothing is changed. For instance, only two centuries back "satilakri" or "burning of women" along with dead husbands was a vital ceremony of Hinduism. A century back infant marriages were a common factor. Widows were forbidden to marry again. Divorce, which plays a useful part in tribal society, was totally abolished. But today all such practices are vanishing fast from Hindu society. Throughout all such changes which strike deep into the domestic life of the people, the fiction is maintained that no real change has taken place, and every one sincerely believes, or affects to believe, that things are with them as they have been since the beginning of time.

Rapidly as these levelling and centralizing forces do their work, a considerable residue of really primitive usage still resists their transforming influence.

Beliefs and Superstitions

The old beliefs or primitive superstitions exercise a subtle influence on family ritual and domestic usage and through these tend insensibly to modify and transform the internal structure of the society. The social gradations of the caste system can best be compared to a series of geological deposits. The successive strata in each series occupy a definite position determined by the manner of their formation, and the varying customs in the one may be said to represent the fossils in the other. The lowest caste preserves the most primitive usages, just as the oldest geological formations contain the simplest form of organic life.

The difficulty in defining the mixed assortment of primitive ideas is illustrated by the fact that there is no name for it in any of the local or provincial languages. There is no particular word for the religious beliefs of the tribes who

professed a particular religion in name only and practised their superstitions and primitive ideas which not only had no relationship with the religion but were in direct conflict with it.

This undetermined character of the beliefs in question has given rise to considerable diversity of nomenclature even among the scientific observers of the West. There are three different terms each dwelling on a different aspect of the subject, which have obtained general acceptance.

Fetish

The word fetish is a variant of the Portuguese “fetico” or “fetisso”, an amulet or talisman, derived from the Latin “factitius” (‘artificial’, ‘unnatural’ and hence ‘magical’). It was employed naturally enough by the Portuguese navigators of the 16th century to the worship of sticks and stones, charms and a variety of queer objects which appeared to them as the chief feature of the religion of Negroes of the Gold Coast.

Fetish is defined as “everything produced by nature or art which receives divine honour, including sun, moon, earth, air, fire, water, mountains, rivers, trees, stones, images and animals, if considered as objects of divine worship”.

Fetish is a general name for all the forms of primitive religions which insensibly pass into polytheism. Pure fetishism has been described as the mental attitude of early man towards religion as characterized by the free and direct exercise of primitive tendency to conceive all external bodies whatsoever, natural or artificial, as animated by a life essentially analogous to our own, with mere differences of intensity. Of late this word has been confined to a particular class of superstitions. In the light of our present knowledge, fetishism may be defined as “the worship of tangible inanimate objects believed to possess in themselves some kind of

mysterious power”

Shamanism

As fetishism came to us from the west coast of Africa, the Shamanism originated in Siberia. “Shaman” is the title of the sorcerer-priest of the tribes inhabiting Eastern Siberia. The essence of Shamanism is the recognition of the Shaman, medicine man, wizard or magician, as the authorised agent by whom unseen powers can be moved to cure diseases, to reveal the future, to influence the weather, to avenge a man on his enemy, and generally to intervene for good or evil in the affairs of the visible world. The concept or character of the powers involved varies with the culture of the people themselves. They may be demons, spirits or ancestral ghosts. **Shaman** lives a life apart, practises various austerities, wears symbolical garments and performs noisy incantations. On occasions he is seen in fits, foaming at his mouth. During these seizures his soul is supposed to quit his body and wander away into space. To some extent there is a general resemblance between the Shaman and the spiritualist medium of the present day.

Animism

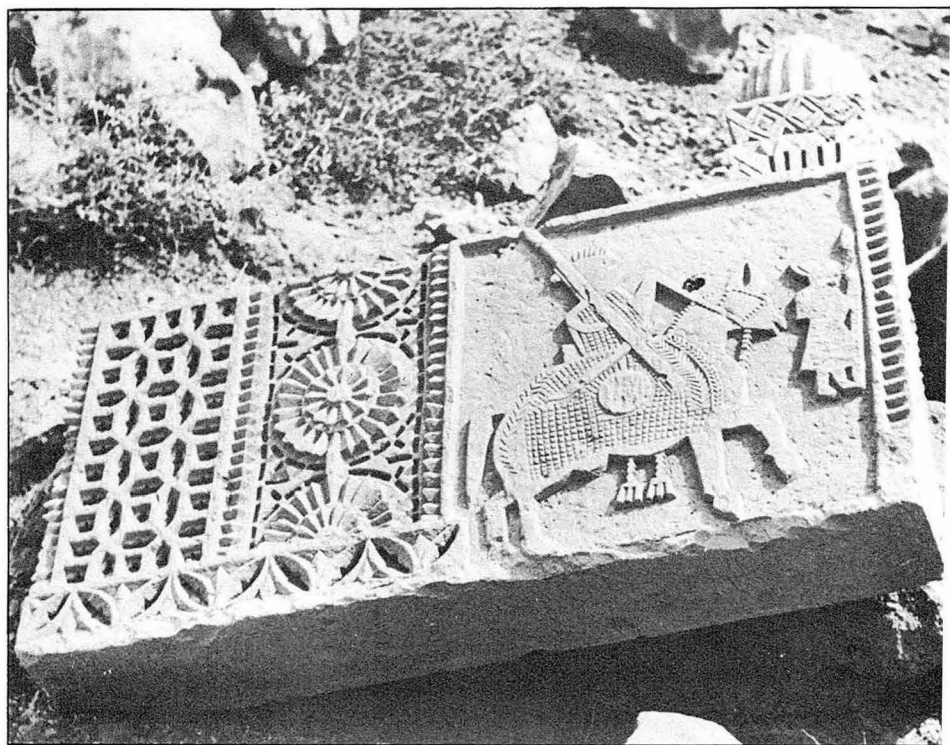
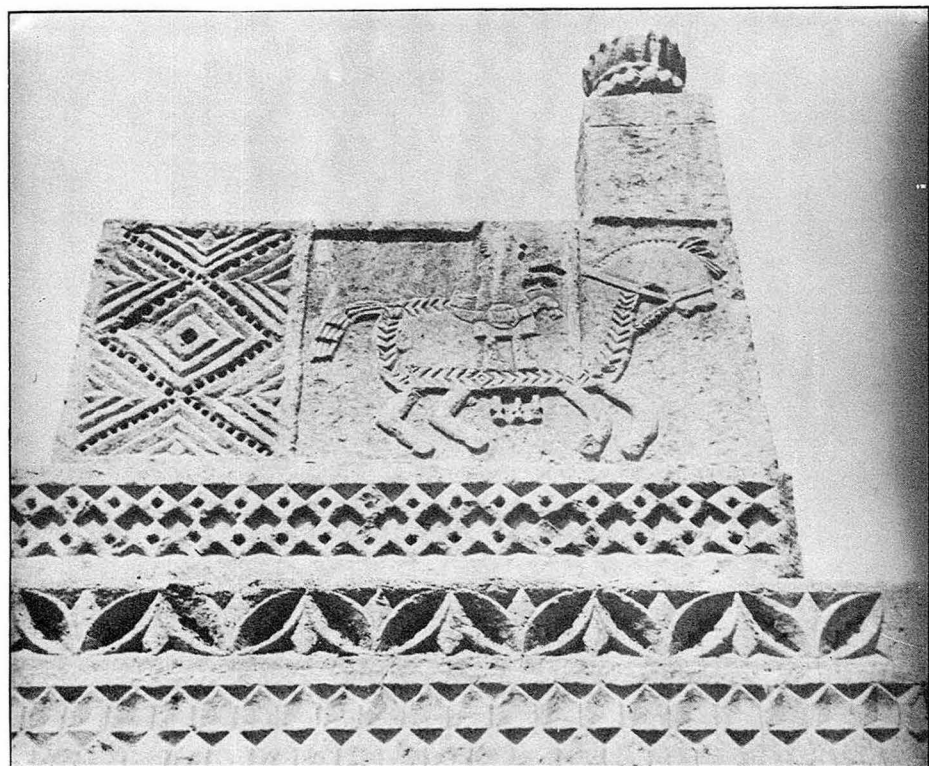
The word Animism was first used to denote the metaphysical system. Later on, this term was transferred from metaphysics to ethnology where it has taken root and conveys the basis of the principles underlying primitive religion.

The theory of Animism consists of two great dogmas of the one and same doctrine, first, concerning souls of individual creatures, capable of continued existence after the death or destruction of the body; second, concerning other spirits upward the rank of powerful deities. Spiritual beings are held to affect or control the events of the material world; and the man's life here and hereafter; and that they have control over and contact with men and receive pleasure or displeasure from human actions. The belief in their existence leads naturally sooner or later to active reverence and pro-

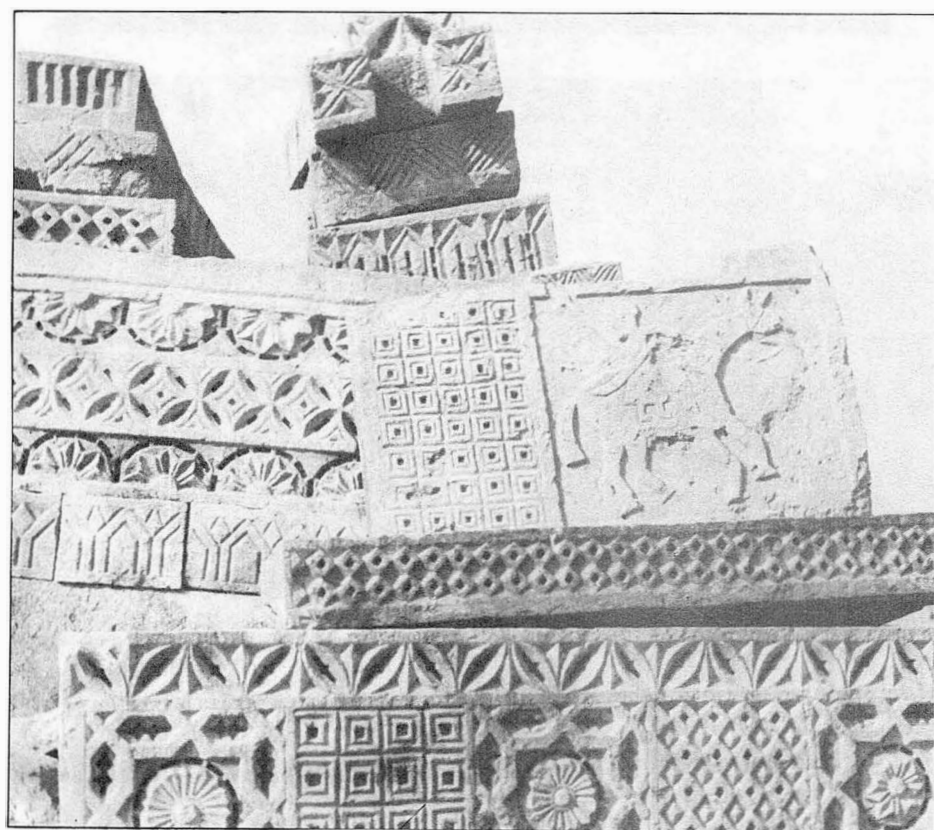
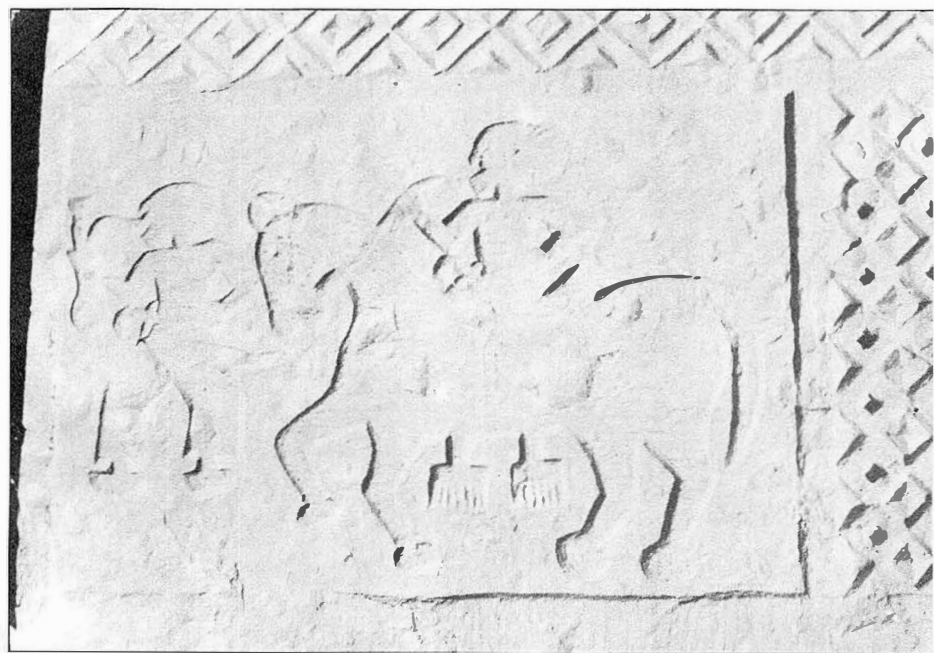
pitiation. Thus, Animism, in its full development, includes the belief in souls and in future state, in controlling deities and spirits, these doctrines practically resulting in some kind of active worship.

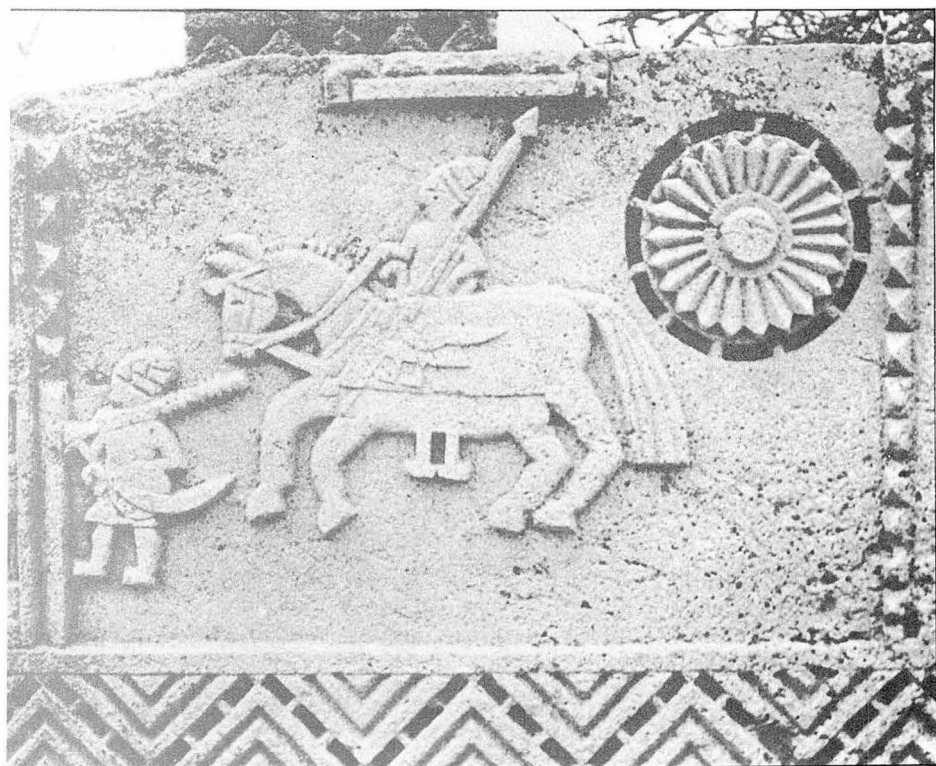
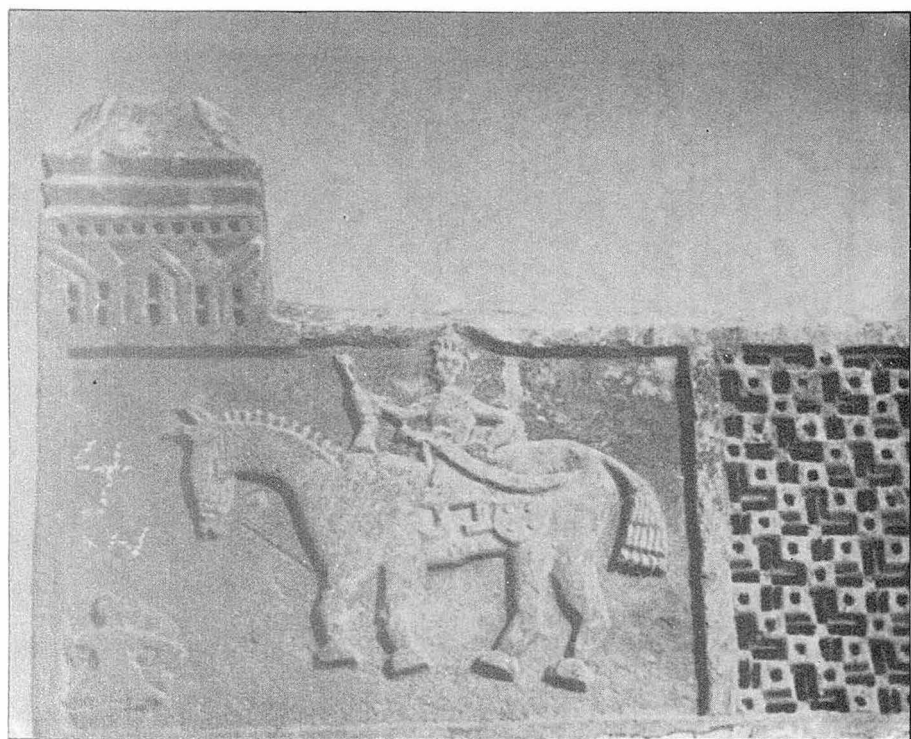
WARRIOR TRIBES

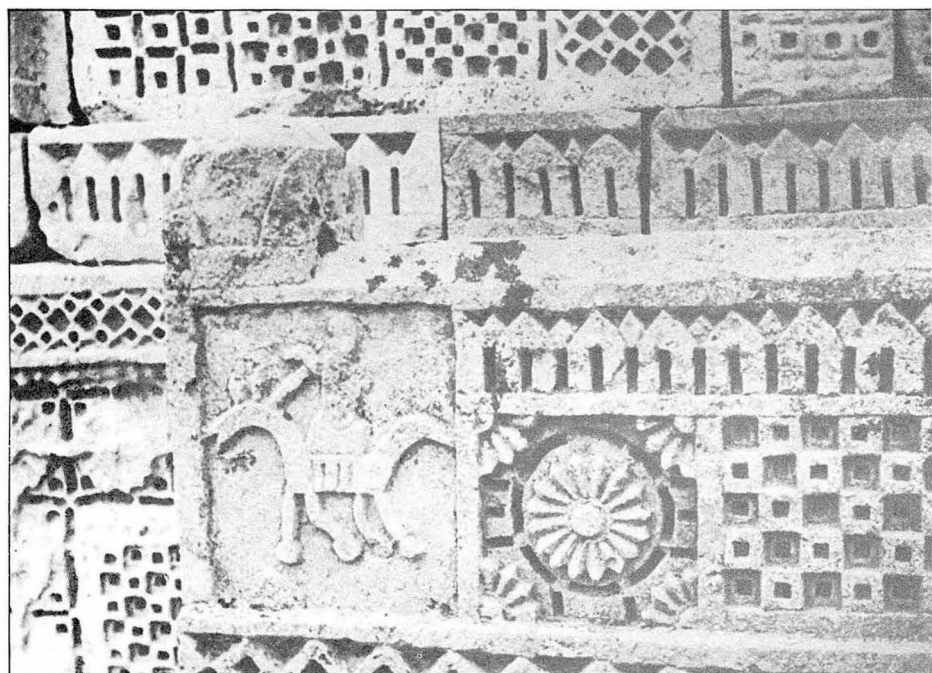


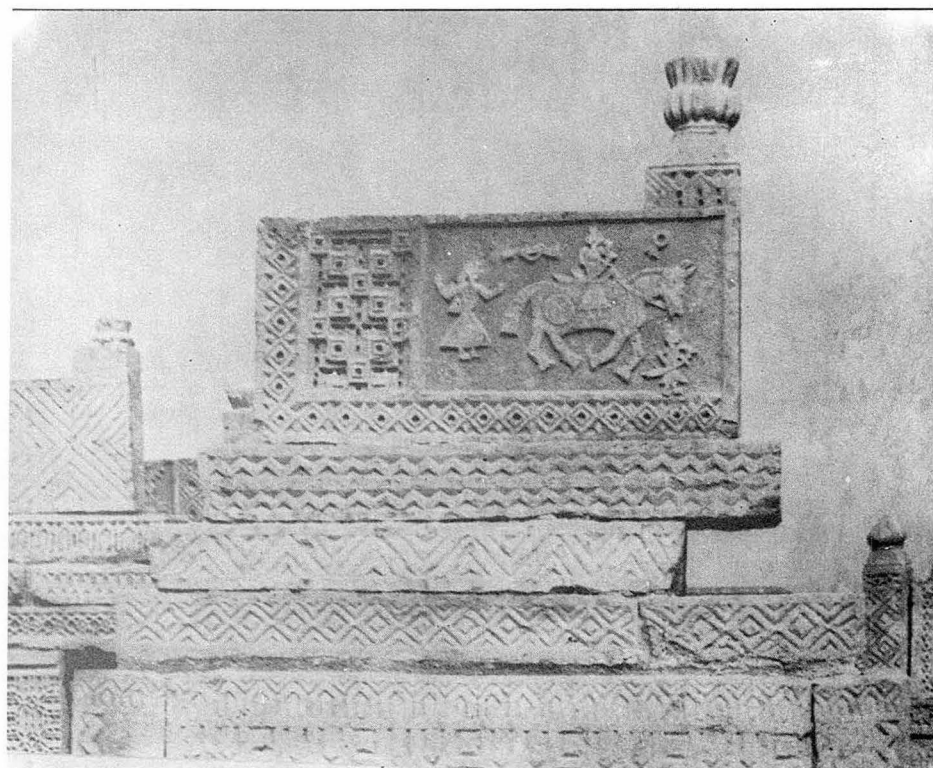
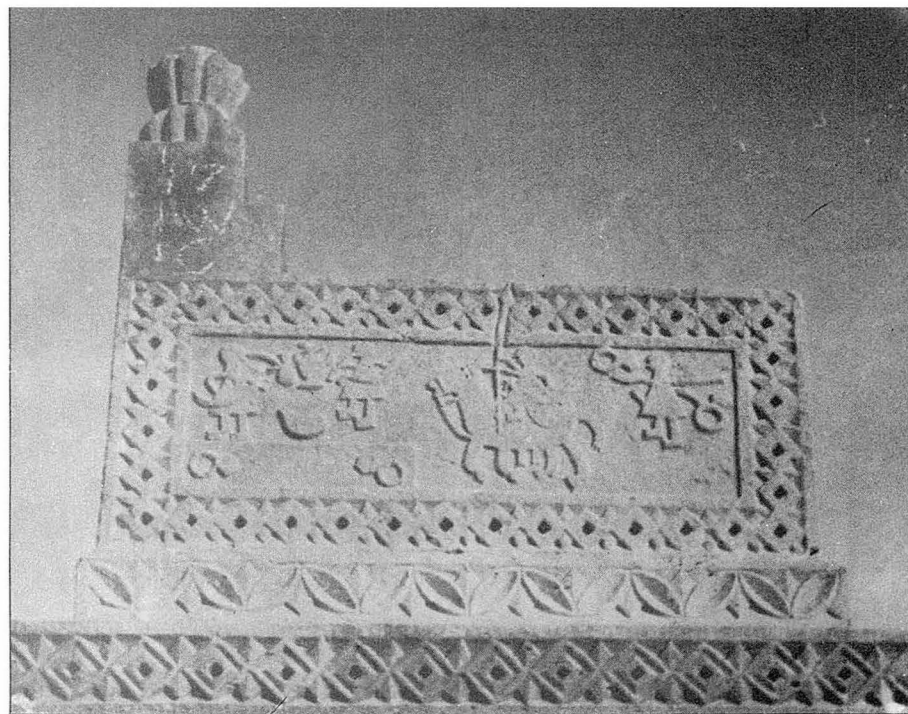


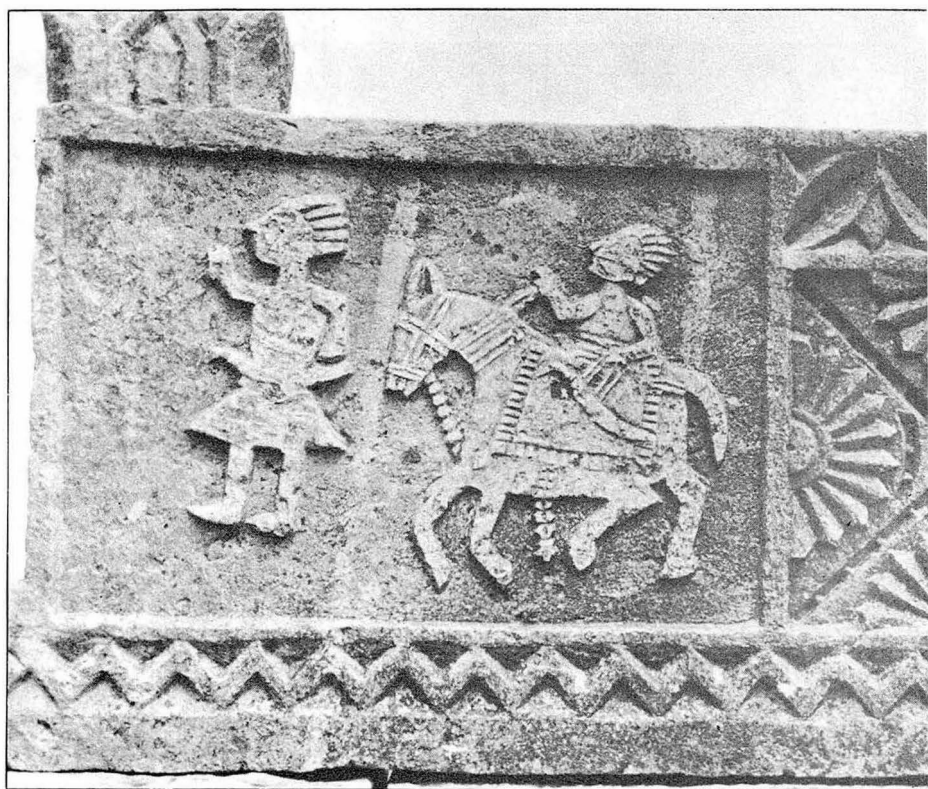


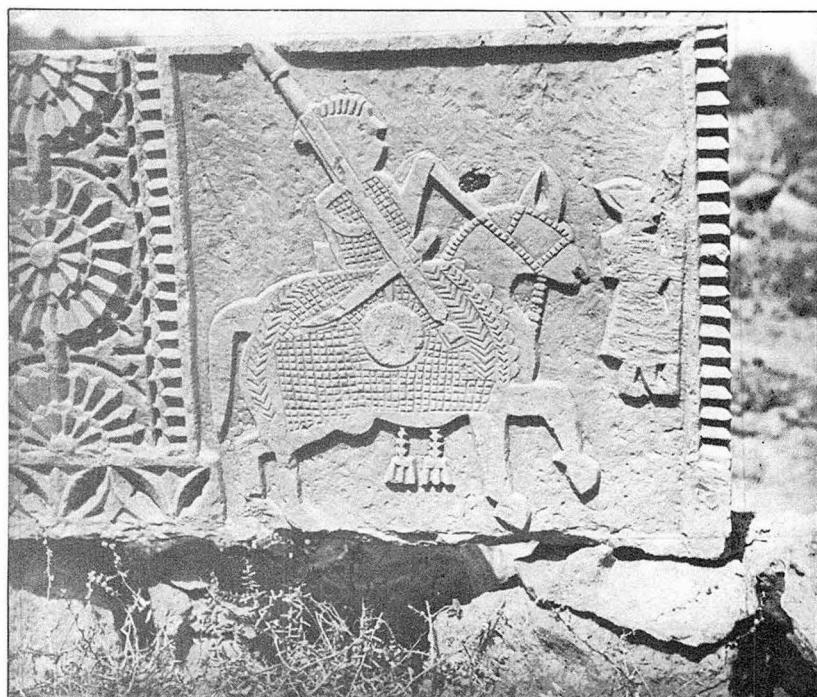




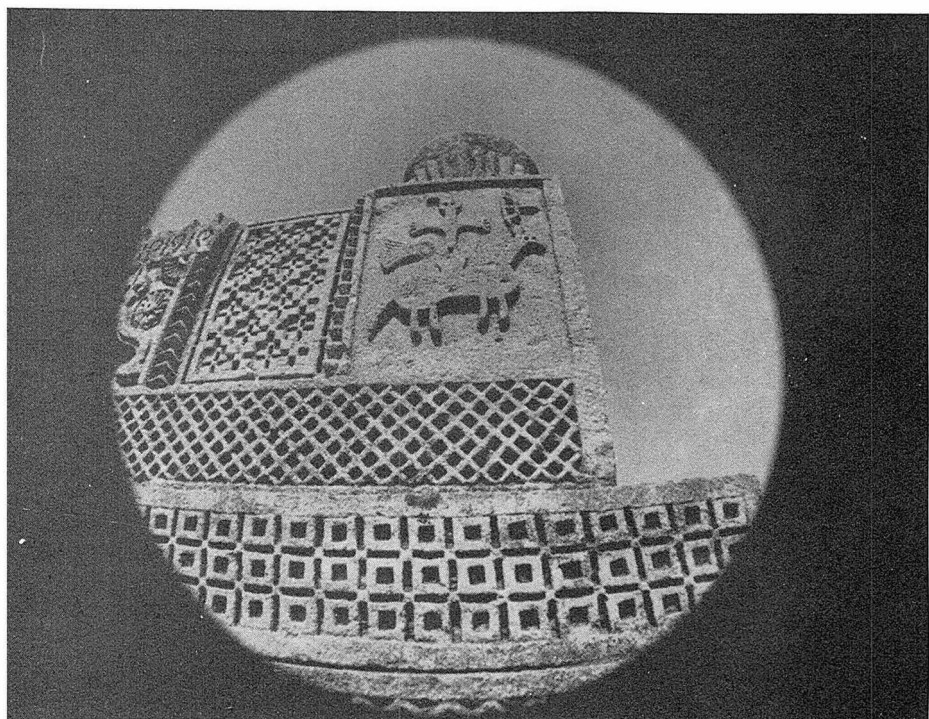


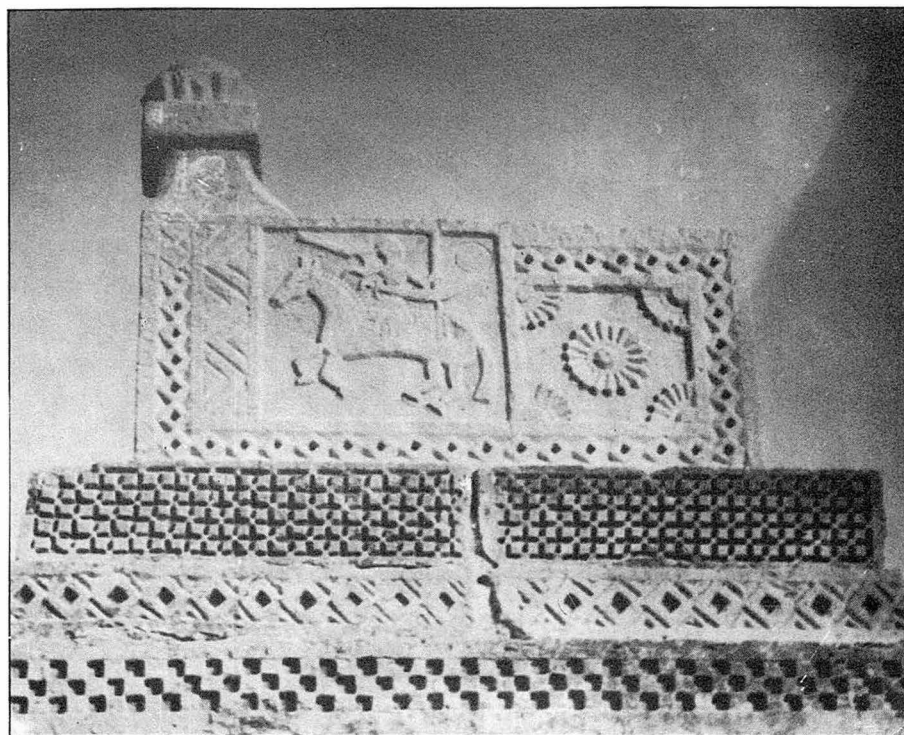
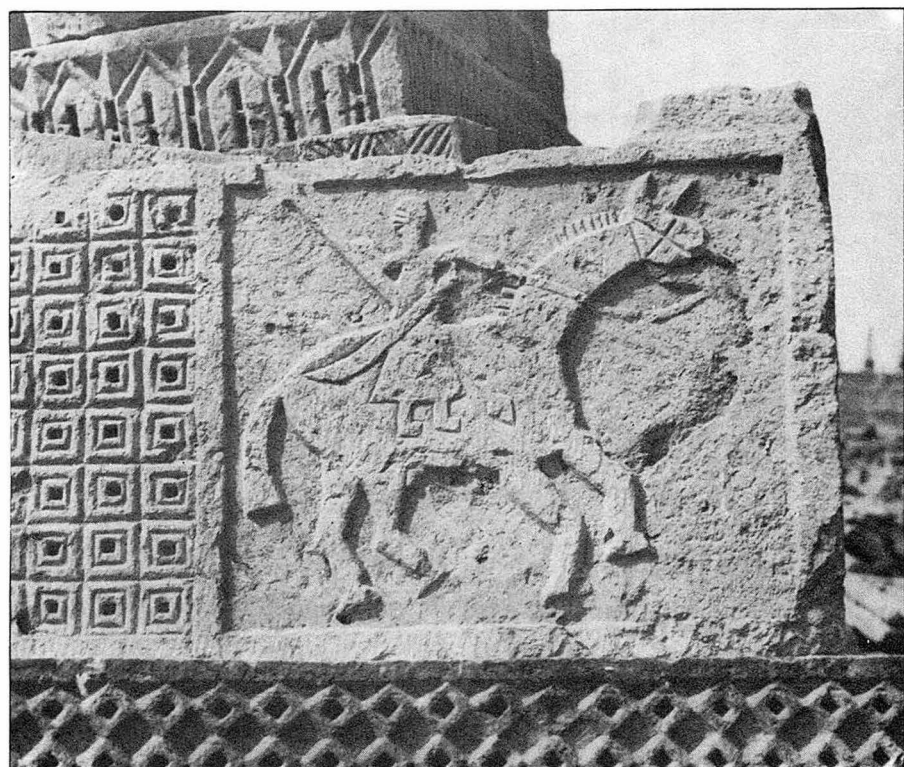


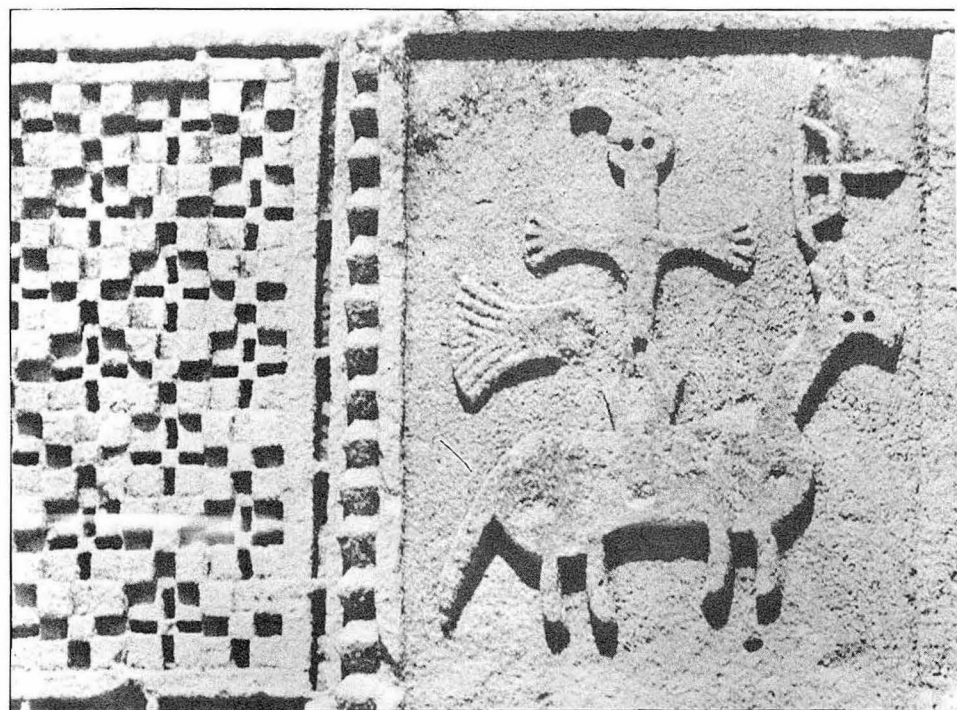




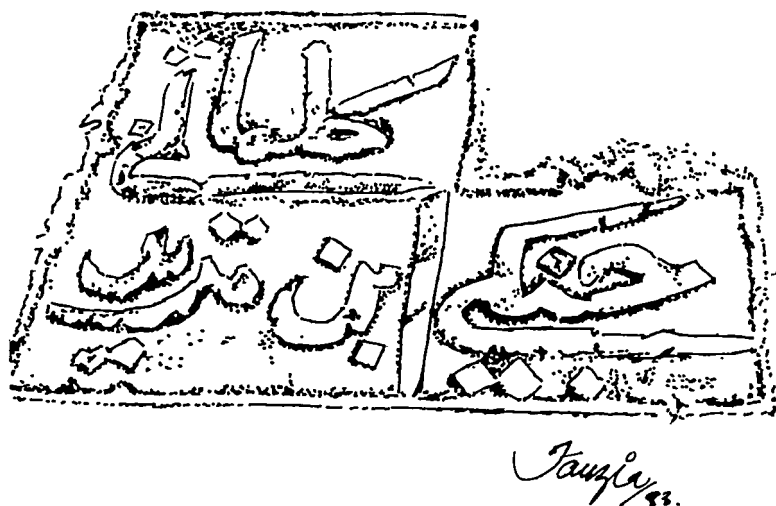








Cultural Background of Tribes



Since very ancient times Sindh was the home of many tribes which had migrated from other countries, bringing with them their own ethnic peculiarities and social systems. The tapestry of their culture, in due course, was woven with strands of different threads. Down the ages till the occupation of Sindh by the English, life remained generally unsettled, punctuated by feuds, wars and tribal bickerings. It was the period when might was right. Reason rarely settled an issue; it was the sword that did.

But within the tribes the individuals were bound by some sort of unwritten law, which had been formulated, much earlier, by some wise patriarch and which was handed down by one generation to another as a part of the tribal

tradition. Born warriors, the tribesmen crossed swords with their rivals with the same passion that had sustained their pagan ancestors in battles. Bravery on the battle-field shown by individuals was adored; it was a standard yardstick to measure man's greatness.

Compelled to lead a harsh and often dangerous existence, their life as a whole had rugged features like that of a rock. Their tempers easily flared up over petty matters and quite often a small spark turned into a conflagration which consumed many lives. These tribesmen seldom died in their beds; if they did not meet their end on the battlefield they fell in personal vendettas.

Some of the tribes, as their environment demanded, led a nomadic life, moving from place to place in search of pastures, while others had a settled life with farming as the main source of living. The social set-up on the whole comprised several classes. The tribal chief was at the top and the lower rungs were occupied by petty zamindars or their henchmen, such as peasants, workers including attendants, and domestic servants. The high-ups enjoyed a life of ease and luxury and before them every one bowed in deep respect. It were they who directed the affairs of a tribe and took decisions on vital issues. Living in spacious houses they had concubines and slave girls waiting on their pleasure. The rest of the tribesmen, on the other hand, had a cheerless existence. Problems of daily life dogged them continuously and obtaining bread was a grim struggle. But whatever their rank, each one of them was essentially a warrior by nature. From a very young age they were made to learn the use of various weapons of offence and defence.

Hunting of deer and leopard was a favourite sport and generally the Sardars and nobles indulged in it. The hunting party consisted of armed horsemen, footmen and dogs. This sport, more than anything else, was in perfect tune with the tribal love of adventure.

History on Tombstones

Horse and camel were important possessions of a tribesman. They provided a means of transport and fetched the essentials of life when bartered away in the market. The camel has an edge over the horse in the range of utility and was therefore prized the most. Besides being an ideal carrier in the desert it yielded milk, and when its days as a beast of burden were over its flesh made wholesome food and its skin could be used to make a tent or trappings.

Like his horse or camel, a tribesman valued his weapons and carried at least one of them when out of doors. Among the weapons sword and spear were most widely used. Later on the matchlock was added to the tribal armoury although for quite some time it was used only by Sardars and other men of high rank.

The tribesmen had great regard for their women, whose world was confined to domestic activities and tending of household cattle. In public life they had no place; they were not expected to participate in battle. But like their warrior menfolk they were also brave and proud. They could brush aside their womanly scruples and turn into untamed tigresses when their personal or tribal prestige happened to be at stake. It is on record that when hostile Kalmatis mobilised to destroy the Chowkhundi tombs near Landhi and a fierce battle ensued, the women of the Jokhia tribe did not allow their husbands to even drink water before they had joined their brethren in the raging fight.

Marriages outside the tribe were possible but only few of the tribes subscribed to this system, the privilege in every case went to the Sardars. There were some tribes which believed in one-way traffic, their members married their sons to girls belonging to other tribes but not vice versa. It was a token of tribal superiority.

Education in its very elementary form was confined to some initial lessons in Arabic and Persian and calligraphy. It

amounted only to a ripple on the surface of water. Children of Sardars and other well-to-do people hardly ever went to the seats of learning.

The tribesmen, though generally unlettered, loved things of beauty and evinced interest in arts and crafts. Highly egoistic, they had a bold streak of tribal pride in their character. Members of each tribe considered themselves superior to others and the maximum satisfaction came from outstripping the latter in any sphere of life. Building of imposing tombs was the final projection of this pride. They sought in the glory of their dead heroes the means to inspire the coming generations to preserve the honour of the tribe.

The effervescence of raw and savage spirit which ran through the entire tribal populace continued to stir the hearts of those sturdy warriors and direct their actions for ages. But as religion, education, law and order, and changes in political set-up went on making encroachments on their lives, they quietened down. Thus, turbulent waves became gentle surf.

Inscriptions on Tombs

Many tombs have inscriptions but most of them do not tell anything more than the names of the occupants. Usually the words "Ya Allah" are found carved along with the names of the deceased. However, tombs in Landhi, Miranpir and Kharan graveyards bear quite informative inscriptions such as:

1. O God Forgive Al-Hasan Ibn Amir Shah ibn Umar - ibn Abdul Aziz Al-Hasan ibn Al-Hussain. Written on Sunday when eleven days of the sacred month of Muharram were left. And he wrote it with his own hand in the year 406 (H).
2. Built by Abu Musa Ruka ibn Muhammad Al-Masudi in the year 351 (H).
3. Umar Asan Danku repeated the 'takbir' for 17 years

History on Tombstones

- (and) died.
4. Abi Sahi Abdul Kasim. Amr (and) Ahmed ibn Amir ibn Sahi. He wrote it with his own hand.
 5. Muhammad Saleh Jokhia died in the month of Ziqad on Doshamba after evening prayer 1178 (H).
 6. Yaqub Ali Khan son of Miran who died in 1169 Hijri.
 7. Jam Murad Ali Khan died 4th September, 1918.
 8. Sabhagi, Kaneezak of Bijar Khan, who was set free so as to get compensation on the day of Judgement.

These inscriptions are in various scripts ranging from Kufi to Sindhi. A sample of names in Sindhi is given below:

Toko Sahitiyo; Hudu Mundu; Ramzan Zanku;
Madi Haroo; Paro vald Haji Kalmati; Wadha vald
Piran Jat; Murid bin Dinar Jokhio.

The word "kaneezak" mentioned in the last tomb inscription means "female slave". As elsewhere in Asia, there prevailed in Sindh and Baluchistan the primitive system of trading human beings. Karachi incidentally was the port of this trade in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries where the Portuguese brought shiploads of slaves, male and female, from Africa. These unfortunate persons were sold and purchased like any other commodity in the market. The female slaves, called 'kaneez', looked after children besides doing household chores. After years of toil and hardship the slaves were sometimes freed by the virtuous in expectation of God's reward on the Day of Resurrection.

Carving on Tombstones

Tombstones with their various themes, figures and designs look like treasures of art in a huge picture-gallery. Long, long ago the artisans who built the tombs, in order to decorate them, laboriously and skilfully carved on them different motifs. The pictorial element of the carvings stems from scenes of everyday life. It embraces many subjects: a warrior riding a horse or a camel; sometimes preceded by a

footman carrying a matchlock, spear, sword or 'hooka'; a party of mounted hunters along with dogs, deer and leopards; a chase hunt in progress; a farmer ploughing with a pair of oxen; girls performing a dance; a man in Mughal attire. These scenes might have been, in one way or the other, related to the deceased and hence the artisans projected them on slabs of their tombs, or the carvings embody just a figment of imagination, which was, as a matter of fact, an echo of what the artisans had actually witnessed in their own days — not beyond that.

Women's tombs are marked by designs of familiar ornaments, ranging from bracelets to ear-rings, but not in every case. Carved in deep relief, they have a decorative effect and a women's tomb could not be given a label more appropriate, for ornaments are so dear to her and, truly speaking, an inseparable part of her personality.

Somewhere one may see only a representation of sword along with a replica of other objects, or without anything else.

Pure ornamentations are of a different category — flowers, plants, geometrical designs, sign of swastika, cross, etc. Also Quranic verses.

Besides the above motifs, a common feature is the figure of peacock with a snake in its bill. It is found engraved on many tombstones in folk tradition. Peacocks and snakes, though often crudely represented, nevertheless approximate to real ones in some instances. The artisans failed to depict them in their true form. The Quranic verses, as one finds engraved, have different styles but in most cases they are fine specimens of calligraphy on stone.

Of all the slabs the pictorial ones are the most interesting. They mirror life as it was in the past; the figures providing concrete evidence. Mostly they are symmetrical, though

lacking in sharpness of detail. A striking feature is the posture of man and animal; each appears very much lifelike, as though the slabs presented snapshots taken by a camera. A mounted warrior brandishing his weapon; horse or camel with its legs in running position; a chase-hunt going on; girls presenting a dance—all rendered with commendable artistry — convey a sense of speed, action and rhythm.

Ornamentations — simple or elaborate — have their own beauties. Flowers, plants, leaves and geometrical designs, etc., all reveal a realistic pattern, highlighted by a graceful touch of harmony in size and design. Even the most fantastic of them, with their intricate loops, bands and chains, are essentially in artistic moulds and nowhere look awkward or ill-conceived.

Conspicuously the tombstones have no female figures carved on them. Probably it was not considered decent to do so — curb imposed by the native tradition.

Methods of Carving

The methods resorted to for dressing and decorating the tombstones were many and varied. The basic method was to chisel the solid slabs which involved great labour. In ordinary course, by this process, one artist could hardly complete the dressing of a single slab in one month. Since the death of a person was not subject to any notice and the carving on stone slabs involved tedious labour of several weeks, tomb slabs were carved in advance and kept in stock for “ready sale”.

On an average every tomb structure needed 40 to 80 stone slabs depending on the height of the grave. Leaving aside the foundation slabs all the other slabs were carved with either floral or geometrical designs or pictures of animals, human beings, ornaments and weapons.

Every tomb structure was completed in three stages, i.e.,

quarrying of huge blocks of stone and dragging them to the workshop of the artist; carving and dressing of stone slabs according to a particular design; and, lastly, the setting of the tomb slabs by masons in their appointed places. The methods of carving were mainly as follows:

a) The design was initially traced on the stone slab with charcoal or chalk and later on with a pointed tool. Finally the design was raised or sunk with a chisel and hammer.

In Pir Patho graveyard a stone slab was found half buried in the ground which had only frame lines etched on it. Obviously, for some reasons, carving on the slab was not completed and it was left as it was after the outlines of the design had been traced on it. This slab indicates the method of carving and provides us with the clue that the dressing of stone slabs was done at the site where the tombs were to be set up.

Such solid stone slabs have survived the onslaught of rain and wind for a long time. It is quite evident that the artisans selected the raw material, i.e. stone, of good quality, very carefully.

b) The second method of carving was a most novel and a peculiar one. Slate-slabs of a particular type of stone were chosen and two or three sides of it were chipped and the remaining were left uneven.

After the outer sides had been chiselled plain and smooth, the slabs were put into fire till they became red hot. Then these were put into a tank of water for a whole night. The following morning the slabs were taken out and carving over traced design was done with a special type of knife. The stone slabs once heated and treated with water became soft and carving on it became an easy affair. Later on the stone slabs were allowed to dry and regain their original property

of hardness.

Graves bearing carved slabs of this type can easily be identified as carvings on them are visibly mild and mellow in character and do not bear chisel marks at all. Besides, the colour of such slabs is red, like that of bricks. However, such slabs having been rendered brittle by being put into fire and water are mostly in a state of decay.

c) The third method involved moulding. Stone slabs were made exactly as cement blocks or bricks are moulded and were finally dried in the sun or burnt in kilns like bricks. It may appear strange as to why 'stone bricks' had to be manufactured when plenty of natural stone was available, for most of the old graveyards are located in rocky zones. Apparently this method was adopted in order to save labour in carving. It may sound very strange but it is a fact that artisans in Sindh knew how to make slabs from stone-powder in any size and of any shape.

These slabs were made of a mixture of red sand, 'bajri' (stone particles) and a substance locally called 'cherolly'. The last named substance is more adhesive than cement. Originally it was used in plastering stone tombs. The wet mixture was put into wooden or stone moulds bearing different designs. Later on the mould was taken out in pieces. Slabs were thus embossed and looked like carved ones. They were then dried in the sun or again hardened in the fire.

Stonework: Origin and Development

Stonework may be termed the most ancient branch of workmanship, used to express man's appreciation of beauty or anything which appealed to his aesthetic sense. The art received a boost and achieved popularity with the spread of religion when devotees began to build palaces to worship their gods and goddesses.

In the South Asia sub-continent stonework first

flourished in the Hindu period. Idols were carved out of stone and huge temples were built. When Buddhism spread from one corner of the sub-continent to another, partially eclipsing Hinduism, stonecraft received a further boost. Numerous stone stupas, temples and monasteries were built. Statues of Buddha began to be carved out of rock to be placed in temples or homes. Some of the specimens from the period preserved in museums indicate that stonework had reached a respectable level of development before the Christian era began.

The world is also indebted to the Jains for their outstanding contribution to the art of stone-engraving and the growth of architecture in the sub-continent. While Europe was raising its great Gothic structures, the Jains were building magnificent temples and rock shrines in the caves of Ellora and Mount Abu as well as in other parts of the sub-continent – monumental works of renunciatory labour. For, the Jains discovered that years upon years of endless carvings and modelling of rocks were nothing in comparison to the years given to disciplining the body and the mind.

Moreover, withdrawing from such professions as agriculture due to the fear of exterminating life, even involuntarily, they found an outlet for their emotions and inspiration in arts and crafts such as stone-carving and rock-cutting.

The revival of Brahmanism expanded the scope for further development and popularity of stonework which imbibed the artistic conceptions of the three 'isms' and found expression in towering temples with intricate carvings on them and in life-like idols in various sizes.

When the Muslims set foot on the Indian soil, they brought with them a new faith and new ideas which gradually embraced all spheres of life, but it was architecture that they influenced the most in the cultural field. Mosques, tombs and

History on Tombstones

forts built in course of time set the pattern for new architectural designs and beauty and heralded a glorious era in stonework. Impressed, the natives also adopted the Islamic way of building.

Then came the fabulous Mughals, great lovers of art and craft and superb builders as well. Changes on the political scene synchronized with shifts in social pattern. Development of arts and crafts went hand in hand with progress in the field of architecture. It was Akbar who set the ball rolling. New conceptions of grace and delicacy began to be transformed into structures of stone. Even massive forts acquired a touch of beauty, to say nothing of mosques and palaces boasting elaborate ornamentation and beautiful carvings, 'mehrabs' and minarets.

Akbar made a bold departure from the existing form for he wanted to give his buildings a local colour combined with the traditional Islamic look. As such, he liberally adopted the indigenous pattern and the fusion of the native and imported styles and forms flowered into a hitherto unprecedented architectural splendour in stone.

Again it was Akbar who introduced the system of encrusting marble with other coloured tiles. He frequently commissioned Hindu artisans also for imperial projects and allowed them a free hand. In this manner they blended the Islamic style with their own traditional ideas. Jahangir followed the pattern laid down by his great father. During the reign of Shahjehan stonework blossomed into the full magnificence of artistry. He had a more refined taste, a keener eye for beauty and, fortunately, he reigned in peaceful times. Forts and mosques were built at a number of places unmatched in their design and stonework.

Then, above the skyline of Agra, rose the slender minarets of the prettiest of all edifices on earth — the Taj Mahal — which in its unique ornamentation and peerless form

symbolises the culmination of the Mughal art of architecture and also the love of the Emperor for his dead consort.

The Mughals created a string of architectural monuments in the sub-continent, each a specimen of splendid stonework. The vital contribution came not only from emperors but also from imperial functionaries and feudal lords.

With the advent of the British rule the art of stonework suffered a serious setback. Political changes caused stagnation in cultural life and deprived this art of the patronage of those to whom it owed its progress. No more majestic palaces and gardens were to be built, no more forts. The days of pomp and grandeur were over. The artisans languished in ignominy and poverty and with them stonework was the co-sufferer. But despite unfavourable conditions their art did not die. It continued to be practised, of course, in a very limited field. Statues, a few temples, tombs or mosques was all the artisans were summoned to build or to decorate. The new Western trends kept the door shut for old values. Buildings of stone were erected on Government level only and then, too, not often.

After independence the skylines of cities are etched with tall modern structures of multifarious designs built of cement blocks or concrete with mosaic and mural paintings. In course of time many more will come up. Tombs and mausoleums built of stone, like forts and palaces, are things of past. No more are likely to be built and if at all they are built, they would only look like freaks of modern trend. The chapter of stonework, glorious indeed in the history of architecture, is almost closed.

Change in Motif

However, in the later period, with the consolidation of Islamic faith in the Indus Valley the complexion of the local culture changed tremendously. The violent, belligerent and

History on Tombstones

almost pagan temperament of the tribal population gradually mellowed down and it acquired the soft gentleness of a buck meandering through a dale. The change in general outlook naturally brought a change in the burial system also. Super-terrain interment of the dead was given up and, instead, underground burial became the universal practice.

In the middle and at the tail-end of the 18th century an abrupt change was affected in the tomb decorations wherein the carving of figures was completely forbidden by law. During the Kalhora rule in Sindh a royal proclamation was issued to all the governors of sarkars under their jurisdiction to ensure compliance with the following instructions:

- a) Muslim women are not to visit graveyards.
- b) Carvings of animals' pictures are forbidden.
- c) Wailing by women and men on the eve of death and holding of 'matam' is prohibited.
- d) During Muharram weeping and wailing and ceremony of 'taboots' in procession is forbidden.
- e) Bowing before idols, offering of 'sajdah' to sea and river is not publicly allowed.
- f) All Hindus are forbidden to sit in their shops or walk in the street with their knees naked.
- g) Gambling, activities of loose character women and third sex are strictly forbidden.
- h) Beard is to be trimmed but not shaved at all under any circumstances.
- j) All items of intoxication are completely forbidden.

This proclamation was issued on 31st March 1799 (2nd Shaaban 1172 Hijri). It is said that this proclamation was the result of the influence of Maulvi Mohammad Hashiim Thathvi on the court.

Similarly we find a proclamation issued by the Khan of Kalat forbidding the un-Islamic burial practices and mourning ceremonies such as:

- a) Engraving of human and animal figures on the tombs of the dead.
- b) Sacrifice of camels, buffaloes, cows and goats on the graves.
- c) Hiring of professional mourners.
- d) Practice of black magic.
- e) Shaving of hair on the eve of death in the family.

It was mainly due to government interference that figures of warriors or animals, once a common feature, now rarely appeared on tombstones. With the passage of time the permissible motifs crystallized into standard patterns which were highlighted by Quranic verses.

JOKHIA AND WAGHERA

TRIBAL STATES

There were a number of small independent tribal states existing since ancient times along the sea coast in the Indus delta belt, which were wiped off the map of Sindh by the end of the 18th century. Dharaja and Kakralla were the most powerful states amongst them. During the Kalhora rule in Sindh an effort was made to reduce these states into submission but Nadir Shah's invasion of Sindh upset all such plans of Noor Mohammad Kalhora. Prior to Nadir's entry in Sindh, Mohammad Murad Yab Khan was appointed governor of Thatta. The Rana of Dharaja and Jam of Kakralla challenged the authority of Mohammad Murad Yab Khan and while transporting their forces by river boats they carried out raids up to Nasarpur and plundered habitations situated on both sides of the Indus. The Thatta army placed their guns on the river banks and thus defeated the combined forces of Dharaja and Kakralla states. Consequently a truce was declared and both the states undertook to remain loyal to Thatta.

When Tehmasp Jalayar attacked Daudpotra chiefs and Noor Mohammad Kalhora recalled his forces from Thatta to prepare to face the invading Abdali forces, the local tribal chiefs who undertook to organise the defence of Thatta included the Rana of Dharaja, Arbab Sajan Rana. It appears

that the Jam of Kakralla again resorted to mischief in violation of the agreement entered into earlier.

In 1157 Hijri (1744), Shaikh Shahrullah, the Subedar of Thatta, attacked the Kakralla forces and was successful in killing the Jam of Kakralla, Jam Hothi by name, and his son, Jam Mehar, was appointed Subedar of Thatta. It was during his tenure that Rana of Dharaja instigated a few hundred tribesmen of Kohistan and attacked Thatta. Masoo Faqir, in company with Shaikh Shahrullah and Bula Khan Numrio, the chief of Numriya tribe, collected forces with a view to checking the raiding parties. Masoo Faqir stationed his forces along the shrine of Shaikh Aali. On the third day a bloody battle took place but the Thatta forces were completely defeated and thousands of soldiers were killed by only a few hundred tribesmen. The defeat was attributed to the wrath of Holy Pir Shaikh Aali, the sanctity of whose shrine was said to have been violated by the Thatta forces who had taken up position for battle in its vicinity. ('Tuhfatul Karam')..

When the news of defeat was conveyed to Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhora, he deputed his son, Mohammad Khudadad Khan, and gave him troops to proceed to Thatta at once in order to avenge himself on the Rana of Dharaja. The prince dismissed Masoo Faqir, the Subedar of Thatta, and appointed Bilawal Naich in his place. Later on he marched his troops towards the Dharaja fort. The Rana of Dharaja, realizing his weak position, entrusted the fort to his chosen warriors and escaped towards the sea in a boat. The Rana's warriors, though few in number, prepared themselves to face the army of Prince Mohammad Khudadad Khan. Through a clever strategem the prince was successful in convincing the fort guardsmen that the Rana had himself surrendered the fort to his care and produced a document bearing a forged impression of the Rana's seal in evidence. The guards were convinced and handed over possession of the fort to the prince. Later on the Rana of Dharaja was killed by a Jokhia, Bijar by name.

History on Tombstones

During the rule of Ghulam Shah Kalhora, Rana Arjan was at the helm of affairs in the state of Dharaja. This independent state consisted of the territories of Sir Bandar, Dharaja Bandar and the area at present occupied by the taluka of Mirpur Sakro. Rana Arjan was the most powerful chief in the delta country and he was reputed to be a noted warrior and well versed in the art of combat. Besides possessing great physical strength he was very influential with most of the tribal chiefs in the neighbouring states. His fort was situated in the marshy area and it was difficult for mounted or foot soldiers to even reach there. For his personal safety and security, the Rana had selected a deserted fort in the sea which is known as Rato Kot. The Rana passed his nights at this place which, besides being difficult of approach, was well fortified with guns installed outside the fort to face the approaching boats.

Rato Kot is now in ruins. It is situated on an island between Phiti and Kodyari creeks and is equidistant from Karachi and Thatta, i.e., fifty miles.

The landmark nearest to Rato Kot is the holy shrine of Balu Shah, which is venerated by fishermen as well as Jats. The fort itself is spread over ten acres. It is built entirely of red bricks and perhaps this is the reason that it is called Rato Kot (Rato in Sindhi means red) and due to flashing sea waves which wash, strike and surround it during high tide, its reddish hue is rendered prominent from a distance. It is also possible that the place was named after one of the Ranas of Dharaja since Rato is a common name in Sindh. The entire fort is now in shambles. Its walls and the buildings inside the fort have crumbled. It had only one gate on the southern side. There are two red brick and mortar platforms alongside the main gate, probably for installing guns, since a great quantity of mortar shells were found stored in the nearby tanks. The fort is built on a ridge fifteen feet higher than the sea level.

Murder of Rana Arjan

In view of the aggressive attitude adopted by Rana Arjan of Dharaja many efforts were made by Ghulam Shah Kalhora and his Subedar at Thatta to subdue him but in vain. Finally, Sheikh Shakrullah decided to get the Rana assassinated by some tribesmen. Several chieftains were contacted but no one could muster courage to undertake such an assignment. Troops could not be utilised for this task since the area was marshy and waterlogged, and most of it consisted of creeks. Boats could not be employed in a night attack on Rato Kot because all the fishermen were loyal subjects of Rana Arjan. Finally, Sheikh Shakrullah was successful in contacting a person who was not only a sworn enemy of the Rana but was a powerful personality in the area of Rana Arjan. He was Bijar Jokhia belonging to the ruling family of Jokhia Jams, and who happened to be the younger brother of Jam Murid, the Jam of Jokhia tribe settled in the Malir area of Karachi district. He had separated from his brother, Jam Murid, and taken up residence at a respectable distance in the vicinity of what is now Landhi industrial area. He also had a considerable following of tribesmen and was on the lookout for a chance for showdown with his brother but was unable to do so because of the close friendship between Rana Arjan and Jam Murid. Rana Arjan was also related to Jokhia Jam as he was married to his sister. It may appear strange that a Hindu Rana was married to the sister of a tribal chief who professed Islam as his religion. But in those days throughout the Thar and delta areas, specially in the tribes of Soomra, Sodha, Waghera, Thakurs and Jokhias, it was customary to have inter-marriages with Hindus and religious practices were simply not there. Even today some Rajput tribes in Cutch and Indus delta continue to celebrate the holidays of both religions.

Bijar Jokhia came to Sheikh Shakrullah who promised to install him as the Jam of Jokhias in place of Jam Murid on the condition that he got Rana Arjan murdered. Bijar agreed to undertake the task and started planning his strategy.

History on Tombstones

Bijar, Jokhia procured four boats which were loaded with wheat and a dozen of his selected men armed with swords were to accompany the boats to ensure the safety of the cargo intended to be transported to Cutch for sale. He arranged this business trip to camouflage his design to reach Rato Kot and kill Rana Arjan. On the evening of the appointed day the boats carrying the cargo and Jam Bijar and his selected warriors started on their journey seawards. The course of the boats was diverted to Phiti creek after some time. Reaching the outskirts of Rato Kot at about midnight, Jam Bijar halted the boats at a mile's distance from the bank of Rato island and swam ashore on inflated goat-skins carried for this purpose. One armed person was left in each boat to keep watch on the boat's crew so that they did not raise any alarm. They took nothing along except swords, they left even their clothes save headgear and loin cloth. On reaching the island the party headed by Bijar, taking advantage of darkness and the noise of the sea waves, entered the fort by scaling the unguarded northern wall. Once they had entered the fort the rest of the job was easy. The four guards found sleeping in front of the Rana's cottage were killed instantly. Rana Arjan was awakened from his sleep and was trying to reach for his arms when Jam Bijar gave him a sword-cut on his leg and rendered him immobile. Further blows given in quick succession resulted in the death of the Rana. The guards who resisted shared the same fate. Thus came the end of Rana Arjan who had been a legend since the death of his father.

Having completed his task Jam Bijar returned to Gharo via Korangi creek and on reaching Thatta conveyed the tidings of the Rana's death to Sheikh Shakrullah, the Subedar of Thatta. As a reward for his services recommendations were made to the Kalhora ruler for the installation of Jam Bijar as the Jam of Jokhias but that meant another battle with Jam Murid which was not an easy job. However, Bijar was asked to stay at Thatta under official protection till a suitable opportunity presented itself.

Cultural Background

Subsequent events did not prove favourable to Kalhora rulers as internal feuds between Ghulam Shah and his two brothers, outside pressures of Ahmed Shah Abdali and his son Taimur Shah, and the revolt of the Baluch Amirs of the Kalhora Court created such a crisis that eventually the Kalhoras had to abdicate to make room for the Talpurs.

Bijar Jokhia never got the promised reward. After hoping against hope and waiting for a favourable opportunity for long he became frustrated and migrated to the Punjab. He was looked down upon and accused all around of having betrayed his own brother and having killed the person who was married to his sister. A number of his tribesmen were on the lookout to kill him. His accomplices in the murder of Rana Arjan were also chased and excommunicated by the tribe for good; even their dead were not allowed to be buried in the Chowkhundi graveyard. For them a separate graveyard had to be found which lies in the immediate vicinity of Kiryo Faqir Muqam.

NIKUDARIN

Between 1218 and 1224, Mongol hordes led by Chengiz Khan attacked in succession Afghanistan, Iran and southern Russia, leaving a trail of havoc and desolation. The invasions by the Mongol armies not only destroyed the fabric of society and politics in Asia but also left the countries devastated by them at the mercy of prowling bands of Turkish and Mongol tribes that supported themselves by rapine. Such were the bands of Nikudaris and Karunas which Marco Polo found infesting the country through which he travelled when he arrived in the subcontinent from Kirman.

The Karunas were a mixed race of Jats and other native wild tribes of Kharan district of Pakistan which was originally called Qaruna or Karuna. Kharan district, which is now to all intents and purposes a desert, was once upon a time a fertile tract with favourable climatic conditions and good rainfall, which could sustain extensive cultivation. A certain standard of civilization had been attained. Nikudaris, or Tikudaris as they were known in Sindh, in all probability, were originally a distinct tribe of Mongols. Named after Ahmed Nikudar, a grandson of Chengiz Khan, who had embraced Islam, they were pushed out of their settlements by rivals who wanted to exterminate them for having adopted Islam. Eventually the Nikudaris came to Seestan after traversing

several countries. Seestan, according to local tradition, had been rendered almost a desert waste by Chengiz Khan in the beginning of the 13th century. This area was totally devoid of agriculture and the Nikudari free-booters were joined by all to whom a life of rapine appealed, and thus these gangs became organised bands of robbers.

The Nikudaris of the latter day probably became a very mongrel race and the name was merely another term for a robber or brigand, exactly as "Kazaq" became the term for predatory warfare carried on by horsemen.

The Nikudaris first appeared in Khorasan in 1298-99 and they soon became notorious. By the middle of the 14th century a band of Nikudaris had taken up their abode within the boundaries of Seestan. They were nomadic in their mode of life and seem to have been in the habit of spending part of the year encamped on the banks of Helmund. Amir Timur, after his first expedition into Seestan, rested in their tents to recover from the wound he had received in his leg and which finally rendered him permanently lame.

In fact the wound had been inflicted on him in an encounter with a band of Nikudaris. From Seestan territory the Nikudari bands extended their raids up to Yazd and Fars and were a terror to the inhabitants of the countries in between. Their aggression received a serious check through successive defeats inflicted on them by the founder of the family known to history as the Muzaffaride, who headed the government of Yazd and in course of time converted it into an independent principality.

Sultan Muzaffar fought many engagements with the Nikudaris and in one of these the chief of the tribe, Amir Nausherwan, received wounds which proved fatal. This reverse was followed, early in 1384, by the slaughter of the Nikudari chief and his followers under orders of Timur.

History on Tombstones

It is said that the Nikudaris came to know of the intentions of Amir Timur who was conspiring to exterminate the whole tribe and thus wreak vengeance on it for having been rendered lame for life. Besides, the Nikudaris were loyal to the Kayani Maliks of Seestan. On the receipt of disturbing news of Amir Timur's designs the Nikudari chief was preparing to move away with his tribe to Kutch Mekran from Kharan. In the meantime, Amir Timur became aware of the movement of Toumen, the veteran chief of Nikudaris. He being ever vigilant to provide for the security of his power, thought it expedient to immediately despatch his son, Miran Shah, accompanied by Amir Keha Mohammad, the son of Sheir-e-Bahraum who became famous after his alliance with Timur, Amir Haji Saifuddin, and other distinguished commanders. Miran Shah was ordered "to crush at once those plans of hostility that might be engendering in that quarter". Before the Nikudari chief could run away to a place of safety, Timur's selected troops reached his camp in a night and a day, travelling rapidly, and fell upon the Nikudaris. The onslaught and the fury of Timur's troops swept off the Nikudaris and hardly a few were left to lament the carnage.

The ambush took place where the hamlet of Gallugha is situated, in fact the word "Gallugh" itself denotes "Ghulghula", a Persian word meaning "commotion". This name was acquired by the village in view of the nature of the surprise night attack on the Nikudaris.

Gallugha is situated in Mashkel tehsil of district Kharan near the village of Ladgasht. A few kilometres from it there stands a sizeable cemetery popularly known as "Tombs of Maliks". The main tomb is still called "Mazar-e-Nikudar", which is linked with the name of the Nikudar chief, Amir Nausherwan.

The assumption is not unreasonable that the Nikudari tribes known to have settled within the borders of Seestan had their headquarters in the present-day Kharan district and

the eponym of the Nausherwani family, who is called Mir Nausherwan, was the famous freebooting chief Amir Nausherwan who died of wounds received in a battle in the district of Yazd and whose descendants may have been Malik Dostan and his son, Malik Dinar, who figure as the heroes of Brahui Jadgal war.

The severe defeats inflicted by Amir Muzaffar near Yazd on the predatory Nikudaris, followed by the death of their chief and the mass slaughter of his followers a short time afterwards by Timur's expeditionary force, in all probability, cut down the family of the chief and leading men among his followers. Later on it was the consolidation of Amir Timur's authority which made it impossible for the rest of the Nikudaris to operate in Kharan. However, later on, one of the Nikudari chiefs, through marriage, became the ruling prince of Kharan since the Pirakzai chief of Kharan had no male issue to succeed him. This event changed the line of Kharan rulers from Kharani Baluch to Nausherwani Baluch which continues to date. Azad Khan Nausherwani, ruler of Kharan, who was known for his restless activities, bravery and chivalry, was the true descendant of the freebooters of an earlier age.

The present-day Nausherwanis of Kharan trace their family line from Kayanian Maliks of Seestan but their traditions do not go beyond their eponymous ancestor, Nausherwan, who is no other than Amir Nausherwan, the famous Nikudari chief. Malik Dostan and his son, Malik Dinar, figure in Baluchi ballads as heroes of the great tribal war between the founders of Brahui power, the Mirwaris and the Jadgals. Dostan is stated to have been present at the fight in Jhalawan country in which the Jadgals were completely defeated and were pursued up to the sea coast. Dostan's son, Malik Dinar, was killed in the fight.

The scattered bands of Nikudaris migrated towards Lasbela, Kalat and Sindh. Some of their noted chiefs aligned themselves with the Arghun and Tarkhan rulers of Sindh who employed them in their armed forces.

NAUSHERWANIS OF KHARAN

The Kharan district at the northern tip of Pakistan is spread over 40,000 square kilometres, rubbing its shoulder with the Iranian plateau. The fort of Kharan with a surrounding village of about 100 huts is 125 kilometres southwest of Nushki. Till some time back it was the headquarters of Sir Nauro Khan, chief of the Nausherwanis, the prominent tribe in Kharan. The minor tribes, Rakhshani and Mashkhel Rakie, paid revenue to him.

The Nausherwanis claim to be descended from an ancient Kayani family of Iran. But they cannot trace their origin more than a few generations before Ibrahim Khan, who was in the employment of Sultan Shah Hussain of Iran in 1697. Ibrahim's grandfather quit his homeland under the pressure of circumstances and travelling eastward came to Germeel and Helmund in Afghanistan. Well received, the tribesmen stayed there for some time, and one may still come across their descendants there. The place, they observed, was not fit for permanent habitation in view of their occupation. With flocks of sheep and goat and herds of cattle to tend, they needed a land dotted with pastures. Thus they trekked to Kharan in the early part of the 13th century and made it their permanent home.

The legendary account of the origin of the Nausherwa-

nis, different from the above, states that their ancestor, Nausherwan, was one of the most daring highwaymen that ever breathed in Iran. As mentioned in the chapter on the Nikudaris, circumstances forced him to migrate to Mekran. Coming down with his followers to the new country, Nausherwan selected a deserted fort, standing on one of the tributaries of Gurruk river, as his headquarters. From this place he operated on routes passing through the Rakhshani Valley to Mekran. The fort is still called Nausherwani Pishi.

Historically the Nausherwanis first came into limelight during the chaotic conditions that prevailed in Afghanistan at the end of the 17th century. Taking advantage of the situation there the Nausherwanis reaped rich political harvests. The foundation of the semi-independent State of Kharan was laid and its rulers, who were also heads of the tribe, made their position secure through alliance with the Gichkis, an influential tribe in the south, and through matrimonial alliance with the ruling family of Kalat.

The Nausherwani chieftains who owed allegiance to the Durrani rulers of Afghanistan were addressed as Baluch Nausherwanis in Sanads awarded to them in the 18th century.

Besides Kharan, the Nausherwanis are found in Kolwa and Panjgur in Mekran and Kubak and Jalk in Iranian Baluchistan. Those living in Jalk are descended from Mir Abbad, father of Azad Khan, through his son Mir Gajian.

Pardil Khan Nausherwani

Pardil Khan was the most powerful and daring Nausherwani ruler of Kharan, whose exploits have not been matched. He subdued all the neighbouring tribes and forced them to pay him tribute. Throwing a gauntlet to Pardil meant inviting destruction. He is said to have captured and killed at Chagai the Afghan Prince, Ashraf, who was fleeing to Kandhar after Nadir Shah had driven the Afghans out of Iran in 1730. It

is alleged that Pardil had taken the famous Kohinoor diamond from the miserable prince, perhaps as the price of his security, but did not care to keep his word. The same year, while leading his army on his Afghani campaign, Nadir Shah sent for Pardil Khan, but the latter had the audacity to turn down his request. Nadir construed the Kharan ruler's action as an affront and resolved to punish him. On his return from Afghanistan in 1734, he despatched a large army under Pir Mohammad Khan, Governor of Kirman, and Limas Khan, Governor of Seestan, to capture Pardil alive and bring him in chains.

Pardil, dauntless as ever, did not bend before the Iranian's fury and show of strength. He was determined to keep his colours at the mast, no matter what price he had to pay. His army gave stiff resistance to the enemy but could not stand for long the onslaught of the invaders. The Kharan ruler suffered heavy loss in men and material, but this was nothing as compared to the damage to his prestige. The victorious army, in a frenzy, sacked villages and massacred the inhabitants indiscriminately. The news of Pardil's defeat was conveyed to Nadir Shah and soon the vanquished ruler was himself taken to Iran as a captive. The fire of vengeance smouldering in Nadir's heart was, however, extinguished when he saw the once-defiant Pardil in chains. The chivalrous monarch pardoned him and reinstated him in his former position.

Desperate to avenge his humiliation and to retrieve his prestige, the unyielding Kharan ruler launched a massive assault on the adjacent Iranian territory in 1736. The advancing army stormed into villages, plundering them recklessly. Resistance by the Iranians was tough at some places only. Pardil lost two sons in the expedition, and a grandson, Abbas, was taken prisoner. But to him it was a great success, for though a petty ruler he had mocked the Iranian might. Besides the psychological gain that helped him regain his prestige, in material terms the fruit of his campaign amount-

ed to 4,000 beautiful women and children who were held captive and brought to Kharan together with plunder.

This episode jolted the Iranian empire and threw Nadir in a fit of rage, but as he was occupied with more important business at home, he could not take any punitive measures against Pardil at once. It was only in 1740 that he sent an army to humble the Kharan ruler once for all. The Iranians were, however, forced to withdraw. In 1744 Nadir despatched a vast army under an able general, which swept Kharan like an avalanche. A number of villages and towns were burnt down, and thousands of people were butchered mercilessly. Pardil suffered a crushing defeat everywhere. There seemed no way out of the great whirlpool of death and destruction in which Kharan was engulfed. Pardil Khan, now a broken reed, was obliged to conclude permanent peace on terms dictated by the Iranian general.

Vanquished decisively, the Kharan ruler soon ingratiated himself with the victorious Nadir Shah and his later years were marked by perfect loyalty to his suzerain, who bestowed on him the jagir of Pidark and Kolwa in Mekran. Pardil is said to have assisted Nadir Shah in his Bokhara campaign.

Shahdad and Latter Nausherwanis

Seven years after Pardil's death in June 1774, Nadir Shah was assassinated. With the latter's passing away the fabric of his vast empire was torn asunder. Afghanistan emerged as an independent power under Ahmed Shah Durani, a noted general. Other territories also drifted out of the Iranian empire and became independent.

In Kharan, Pardil's son, Shahdad, manipulated to seize power and depose his own brother, Abbas XX, who had been nominated successor by his illustrious father. Shahdad soon realised he could not maintain his status as a sovereign ruler in view of the threatening posture of Afghanistan and was, therefore, obliged to swear allegiance to Ahmad Shah Dur-

rani. After Shahdad's death many puppet rulers ascended the 'masnad' of Kharan.

Azad Khan Nausherwani

In 1833 Azad Khan Nausherwani, a capable man, became the ruler of Kharan. His disputes with the Khan of Kalat in later years created a situation which ultimately threw him into the arms of Afghanistan for some time. In the second Afghan War his men fought shoulder to shoulder with their Afghan brethren against the British in the battle of Maiwand. In the following years Azad Khan was constantly at war with the Kalat ruler who maintained his claim on Kharan and had his covetous eyes on it all the time. In 1856 he sided with the Iranians in their war against the British and thenceforth Kharan came closer to Iran so as to become a sister State of that country. This was a master stroke of Azad Khan's statesmanship, for in the face of hostile neighbours he badly needed a dependable ally. His relations with Afghanistan, once a friend, were no more cordial. The British and the Khan of Kalat were his enemies, and all the three powers looked upon the Iran-Kharan axis with a jaundiced eye.

Having failed to crush Azad Khan by force, the Kalat ruler switched over to diplomacy. He married the Kharan ruler's daughter, perhaps to woo his friendship. But the matrimonial alliance could not inject an element of amity and goodwill in the situation that was surcharged with malice, hatred and intrigue. In 1871 when the Brahui chiefs rose in arms against the ruler of Kalat, Azad Khan extended all possible help to the rebels.

In the later years Azad Khan grew impetuous, ambitious and unbridled, and indulged in tyrannical adventures for which he built up an infantry of 3,000 men. With his fully trained soldiers he made incursions all round bringing death and destruction in his wake. Once he stormed Chagai and sacked villages that formed the domain of Kamal Khan

Sanjrani. On other occasions Azad Khan attacked Nushki, Zaghar, Mengals, looted them and razed the buildings to the ground and took some of the tribesmen into slavery. He did not spare the Damanis and the Rakhshanis living along the Iranian border. They at last made common cause against Azad Khan and jointly faced his army that had come as a predatory horde. But luck did not favour them. They were routed, though after putting up a stubborn resistance, and once again their villages were pillaged.

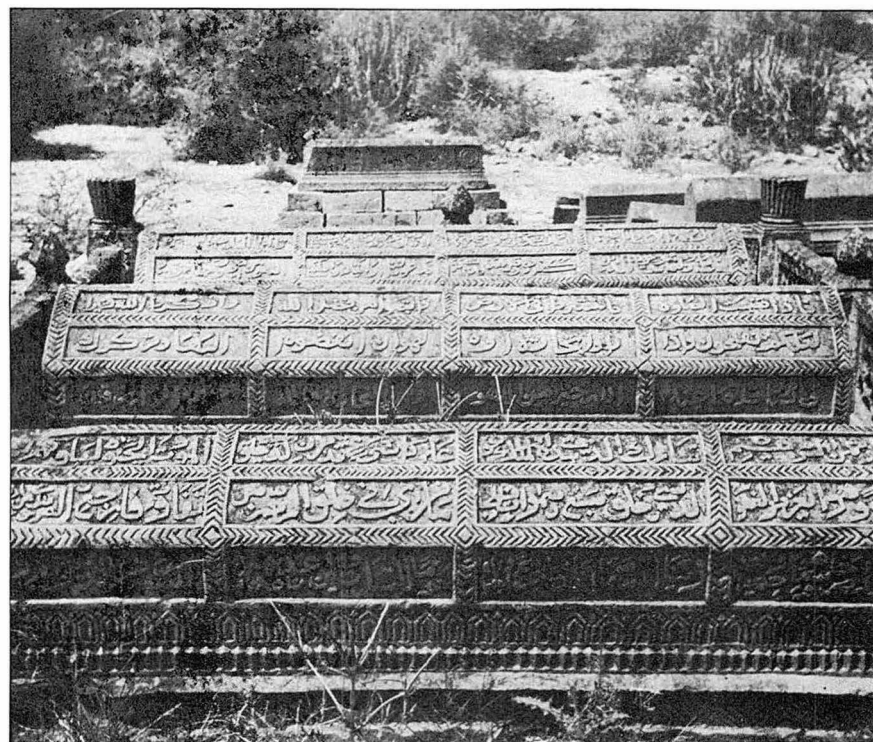
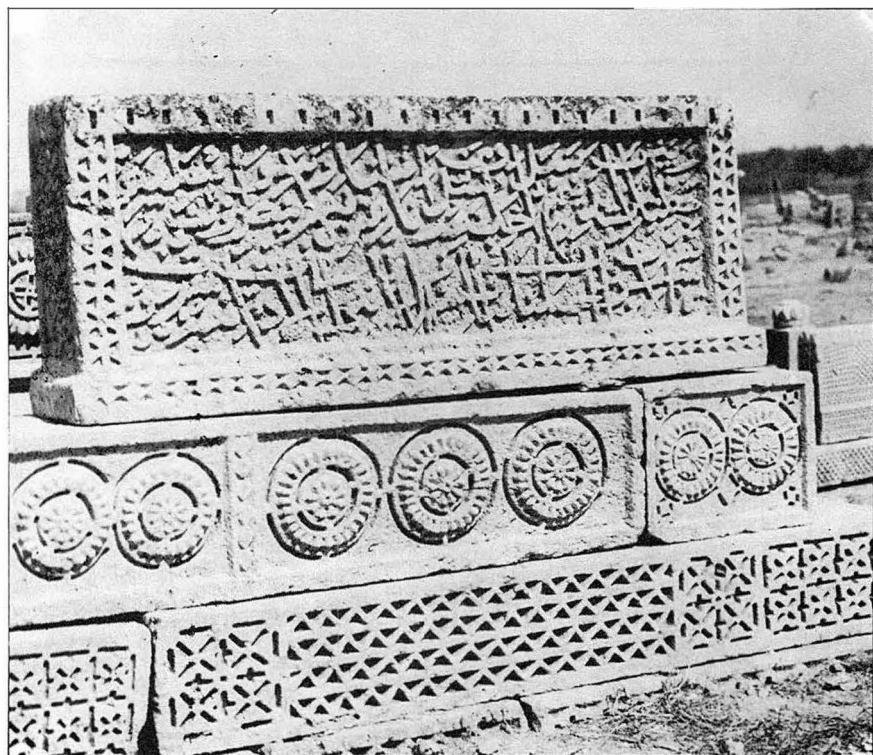
Despite the streak of brutality in his character, Azad Khan Nausherwani had made his position secure by devising adequate defence arrangements so as to be able to meet the forces that had turned hostile due to his own reckless and offensive behaviour. He built a chain of forts at Harmagai, Jalwar, Kharan-e-Kalat and Nauroz Kalat where garrisons were stationed to meet any eventuality. These forts, built of burnt brick, lasted for a pretty long time and their ruins can still be seen. Besides a standing army, Azad Khan could raise an irregular force of 3,000 to 6,000 men in times of emergency. Although rash and heartless, he could be called a good soldier and a shrewd general.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF WARRIOR TRIBES









Veneration of the Dead



One may claim that the heightened veneration of the national past, and its historical and mythical representatives, was a religious factor in the life of pagan Arabs, one of the few deeper religious manifestations of their souls.

It was expressed also in forms which are usually classed with the manifestation of religious life. To mention but a few examples: According to a traditional account, after the end of a pilgrimage the pilgrims used to halt in the valley of Mina in order to celebrate the deeds of their ancestors with songs, much as the ancient Romans sang songs in praise of their ancestors at banquets. The Holy Quran refers to this in Sura 2:196: 'And when you have completed the ceremonies of

pilgrimage think of Allah just as you remember your forefathers, and more.' The Qurayshites of pagan days, and other Arabs, too, used to swear by their ancestors — *Wa-Jiddika*, 'by your forefather'; this type of oath is common in old poems — and the Prophet forbade such oaths, restricting them to Allah's name. Some of these pagan customs survived in Islam, and like many formulae of old Arab thought and life the oath *wa-jiddika*, *wa-abika*, *wa-abihi* could not be eradicated.

The cult of the dead is coupled with the cult of ancestors. There is only a relative difference between these two types of reverence, in that the latter seeks objects of religious veneration in the distant past, whereas the former is dedicated to the memory of more recent generations. The Arabs were more particular about their cult of the dead than about ancestor-worship.

The Holy Quran refers to *ansab* or *nusab* as a cult object of the heathen Arabs. Their veneration is forbidden in the same breath as other things condemned in Islam, like wine, the game of *maysir*, etc., and it is forbidden to eat animals slaughtered near them (or in their honour).

'Do not sacrifice to the raised *nusub* — do not pray to the high places, worship God alone' says al-A'sha in the panegyric on Muhammad (Peace be upon him). *Ansab*, which is etymologically identical with the *massebhā* of the Old Testament, and has the same meaning, means upright stones which were honoured as part of a cult by the pagan Arabs. This name usually refers to the stones placed in the vicinity of the Ka'aba, where the Arabs are said to have made sacrifices.

Memorial Stones

The Arabs considered it important to provide the graves of men whom they had honoured in life with memorial stones. When we consider that such a grave is described with

the same epithet (*jadath raisin*) as that used for mountains (*al-jibāl-al-rawasi*). We may conclude that preference was given to the erection of a memorial of durable and upward rising construction.

Such mausoleums are also called *dyat*. Arabic poetry frequently mentions stones under which the dead are sleeping; they are called *ahjar* or *atbak* and also *safih*, *safaih* or *suffah*. The latter expression occurs at the end of the poem by Burj b. Mushir from the tribe of Tayyi, in which he describes the life of luxury, and concludes that after a life fully enjoyed, rich and poor alike must withdraw into holes the lower parts of which are hollow and over which stones are erected.

To the words used to describe upright grave memorials also belong derivations from the root *nasab* which especially express the idea of erectness, e.g. *nasa'ib* (sing, *nasiba*) which Sulayam b. Rab'i uses in a dirge on his brother.

Our *ansab* is preferably used in this context. A few examples will show the form and significance of such memorial stones. Grateful contemporaries erected *ansab* facing each other by the grave of Hatim from the Tayyi tribe, who was famous for his generosity; these stones looked like wailing women and a legend connected with the grave indicates that the Arabs passing the tomb expected hospitable reception there. The deceased tribal hero was credited with the same attributes and virtues after death as distinguished him while alive, and his grave was believed to benefit people seeking protection and help in the same way as did the tent of the living man. This trait of Arab belief is not confined to antiquity.

But the account of the memorial stones at the tomb of Hatim does not show the cult significance attributed to such memorials. This significance can be observed by the *ansab* of an equally venerated tribal hero, Amir b. al-Tufayl. When

he died the Arabs erected *ansab* in the circumference of one square mile round his grave; these were to designate the grave as a *reḥiṣ* (*hima*). Within the space thus delimited animals were not permitted to graze, and no pedestrian or riding beast was allowed to step on it.

Sanctity of Graves

The sacred awe which was inspired by the graves of honoured heroes is also connected with the belief that the grave was considered as a safe and inviolate sanctuary, a view which was inherited by Islam. The poet Hammad sought refuge by the grave of the father of his enemy and his confidence was not in vain. When the pro-Ali poet al-Kumayt aroused the caliph's anger with an anti-Umayyad satire, so that the caliph outlawed him and he wandered about like hunted game, he eventually took the advice of friends and sought refuge by the grave of a prince of the ruling family. The caliph, implacable at first, succumbed to the urgent entreaty of his grandchildren, who tied their clothes to the poet's clothes and cried: 'He sought protection by the grave of our father, O Commander of the Faithful, do not shame us in the person of him who seeks sanctuary by this dead man; because shaming the dead is blame to the living.' This same means saved the life of the poet Uqaibil b. Shihab, who ridiculed al-Hajjaj; he also erected a tent over the grave where he took refuge. He fled to the grave of Marwan, whose son 'Abd al-Malik had just become caliph. In consequence, the latter had to appeal to his stern governor for a pardon for the poet.

In the cult of saints this attribute is transferred to the graves of saintly persons in general, and this attitude developed to a great extent in western Islam than in the east, just as will be shown that the eastern cult of saints is far less rich than its Maghreb counterpart. While in the east the right of sanctuary (like other privileges and miraculous powers) is the privilege of some specific saints' graves — for example, that of Talha near Basra — this right was given to almost all

graves of Marabouts in the Maghreb. The grave mosque of the 'Alid Idris in Fez is considered an *asylum* to this day, and escaped criminals are secure there from prosecution under temporal justice. The same is true of the mosque containing the graves of the Moroccan princes, of the grave chapel of Sidi Abu'l-Abbas, the patron-saint of Morocco, and generally of most graves of saints in that country. The Marabout to whose grave the persecuted flee even saves, by miraculously feeding, those who are threatened with starvation when surrounded by enemies. These are features which were inherited by Islam from paganism, like many other things which secured the sanction of Islam and were given Muslim form.

Sacrifice for the Dead

In former times, whenever they passed the grave of a man famous for his generosity and nobility, the Arabs used to slaughter a riding animal and feed people with it. In Islamic days the same honour was shown to graves of saints. For many years after the death of a beloved person, relatives used to renew annually the wailing ceremony and the sacrifice of a camel. Neglect of a sacrifice before the grave of an honoured hero required special excuses and was considered abnormal.

More common than this exceptional form of veneration is the sacrifice of one or more animals by the grave of a dead man immediately after burial. In an account from old Arab life, describing the death of a pair of lovers, which occurs in al-Jahiz's book *al-Mahasin waq'l-Addad* we hear how, in honour of a martyr to love, 300 camels were slaughtered by his grave. Even in the second century of Islam it is the old Arabic sacrifice to the dead — not yet reinterpreted in an Islamic sense — which the father of Jafar b. Ulba (died 125) makes after the death of his son. The mourning father slaughtered all his young camels and sheep and threw away the carcasses. 'Weep with me', he is related to have said over Jafar. And the camels howled and the sheep bleated and the

women wailed and wept and the father of the murdered man wept with them.

The sacrifice for the dead is so common a practice among the Arabs that we might expect it to be described frequently in the lively account of the manners and customs of desert Arabs.

One of the pagan survivals in the cult of the dead is the sacrifice of animals on the grave of the deceased, which persisted until modern times. At the funeral of the Egyptian viceroy Muhammad Ali eighty buffaloes were slaughtered. The Islamic interpretation of this sacrifice claims that it is made in order to atone for the smaller sins of the deceased and adds that the meat of the sacrificed animal must be divided amongst the poor, on account of which the name of *al-kaffara* (atonement) is also given to the sacrifice.

Shaving of Hair

Shaving of hair, an ancient Arab practice, was adhered to even more closely than the sacrifice of animals.

On the death of the great warrior Khalid b. Walid none of the women of the clan of the Banu Mughira omitted to place her hair on the grave of the hero. (This immediately brings to mind the Greek custom also.) It is said 'all shaved the hair of their heads and placed it on Khalid's tomb.' A little later, Caliph Abd al-Malik cut the locks of his own head and those of his children on receiving the news of Abd Allah b. al-Zubair's death. In these cases the sacrifice of the hair must presumably be seen first of all as an outward symbol of mourning but placing it on the grave of the deceased looks like a cultic act, survivals of which are still to be found amongst the Bedouins of Jordan, where women place a number of locks of hair on the grave of the eminent dead. As a peculiarity of the burials there, two sticks were often placed beside the grave, with a rope stretched between them, and upon this braided locks of hair were hung as offerings.

The same is told of Arabs near the Serval mountain. These facts also explain the account from the third century, according to which the Kharijites used to shave their hair by the grave of their chief, Salih b. al-Musarrib, who revolted against the rule of the caliphate in the year '86. Shaving of the hair was considered a special sign of the Kharijites even in earlier days and an apocryphal tradition seems to refer to it when the Prophet is asked whether the Kharijites have a special mark. The Prophet replied, "Yes, removal of the hair of the head (*al-tasbid*) is common amongst them."

In this context Herodotus's account (III, ch. 8) which is confirmed by some Biblical passages relates that the Arabs cut part of their beard in honour of the god Orotal. It must also be mentioned that Plutarch, too, refers to the Arab custom of cutting the hair of the forehead.

Two other customs which seem to be connected with the cultic significance of hair sacrifice are known from the traditions of Arab paganism. The first is the old Arab custom that a warrior going to battle shaved the hair of his head as a sign that he dedicated himself to death in honour of the tribe. This must have been more than a mere sign of recognition which some later philologists assume it to have been.

In view of all this it is likely that the sacrifice of hair served not only to express mourning for the dead but also as a cult act in their honour.

Erection of Tent

In the earliest days of Islam it still appears to have been customary — presumably as a legacy of paganism — to erect a tent over the grave of an honoured person and spend some time there after the funeral. This custom is vividly described in respect of the mourning of the poet Artat (who died in the eighth decade of the Hijra) for his son Amr. After the latter's death the father erected his tent by the grave and stayed there for a year. When the tribe to which he belonged wanted

to move on to new pastures, the mourning father cried to the dead man: 'Come with us; O Abu Salmia.' When his fellow tribesmen adjured him by his reason and his religion to give up imaginary intercourse with someone who had been dead for a whole year, he asked for another night's delay. In the early morning he took his sword and slaughtered his riding beast on the grave of the deceased. When al-Hāsan, the grandson of Caliph Ali, died, his wife erected over his grave a tent (*qubba*, which later became the name for grave chapels). She maintained this tent for a year and when she took it away a heavenly voice was heard — so it is said — which cried: "Have they already found what they have lost?" To which another voice replied: "No, but they have acquiesced in their fate and have gone away."

This custom was disapproved by the orthodox from an early date as indicated by the report that Ibn Umar cried to his servant, on seeing a tent (*fustat*) on the grave of Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakr: "Remove the tent because only the pious deeds of the dead will offer him protection and shade." To this context also belongs the last will ascribed to the conqueror Amr b. al-As, "When I die do not weep for me and let no panegyrist (*madih*) or wail (*naih*) follow my bier; only put dust on my grave, since my right side deserves the dust no more than my left. Put neither wooden nor stone sign upon my grave. When you have buried me, sit on the grave for the time that the slaughter of a camel and distribution of its meat would take, so that I may enjoy your company for that time." It is similarly reported in several collections of traditions that Abu Hurayra (died 57) expressed the wish when feeling the approach of death: "Do not erect a tent over me, do not follow me with the censer, but hurry with my body."

Qubba

The tent later became the grave chapel, the mausoleum, and the name *qubba* was retained for this building. When Muslims began to decorate the graves of holy and pious

persons with monumental buildings this was also disapproved by adherents of the Prophet's teaching. Apart from traditions expressing this disapproval, this also finds expression in the frequently recurring legend that such buildings were destroyed soon after their completion by the saints whose graves they were to adorn. Such destruction was the fate, according to the legend, of the mausoleum of Ahmad b. Hambal in Baghdad and of the *qubba* of the Algerian saint, Ahmed al-Kabir, built by the grateful Moriscos at great expense for their protector in the year 900 which became a ruin over night — a destruction which was repeated whenever the builders attempted to re-erect it. The same legend is told of the grave of the founder of the Naqshbandi order, Baha al-Din, in the village of Bawaddin near Bukhara. This grave, too, is in the open and not covered by a cupola, since it was never possible to preserve for long the *qubba* that was built over it. The pious wished in their modesty to be content with a simple grave. These legends serve the old Muslim view, expressed in many traditions, that a grave may not be used as a place for prayer, a danger which was enhanced by the erection of mausolea resembling mosques.

Lamentation for the dead:

Despite all the opposition of the pious, supported by temporal authorities, many survivals of the pagan form of mourning and veneration of the dead continued to exist, though bereft of some barbaric features. The dirges from Abbasid time differ only a little from those of paganism. The absence of wailing women from the funeral of a man who died far away from his relatives was stressed with regret showing that they were considered as an integral part of a decent funeral. Professional wailing women sometimes had poets produce mourning poems to be kept in stock for use at funeral processions. How far people went in for expressing veneration for the eminent dead is seen, for example, in al-Farazdaq's elegy on the death of the Caliph Abd-al-Aziz Marwan, in which he says: "They kiss the dust that covers his remains, as the (black) stone is kissed in the sanctuary

to which pilgrims go."

But Islain objected to none of the survivals of the veneration of the dead more forcefully than the institution of lamentation. In order to emphasize its condemnation latter exegesists found in the Quranic verse 60:12 an interdiction against wailing. The verse reads: "When believing women come to pay you homage, (undertaking) not to associate other beings with Allah, not to steal, not to fornicate or kill their infants, and not to resist you in all that is good, accept their homage." The words 'in all that is good,' etc., are taken as referring to the interdiction against lamentation for the dead, which was usually practised by women.

It is known, however, how little success these interdictions had, and how rarely — despite some isolated attempts — they managed to stop the practice of customs which had obtained from time immemorial in those countries where Islam now prevails, and which were still practised without distinction of creeds — customs of which the mocker of Samosata could rightly say. "All people of the world seem to be pledged to this unreasonable habit of bewailing the dead." Long after the Prophet even down to modern times, we find that except in a few regions, such as Medina, over-faithful to tradition, lamentation for the dead was still customary. In Khayawqn wailing for a dead man was continued until the death of another comparable man, when lamentation for the second followed that for the first. Apart from the *niyah*, executed by wailing women, alternating songs were also customary, in which both wailing women and mawali men participated. But for lamentation for the dead to give way before the laws of Islain is nevertheless an exception, and in most regions where it was practised in pre-Islamic times it managed to survive.

It was in Syria that the custom survived most completely, and least influenced by Islam, and we owe to the men most knowledgeable about this part of the East, a detailed

description of wailing in Syria which shows how powerless were the warnings of tradition and later theology in the face of the primeval institutions of Semitic society. In funeral customs primeval habits were retained elsewhere, too, up to quite recent days. To characterize the tenacity of ancient institutions the following saying has been attributed to the Prophet: "There are four things among the customs of paganism which my community cannot give up: boasting of good deeds, finding fault with one another's descent, the belief that fertility depends on the stars, and lamentation for the dead."

SPIRITS, GHOSTS AND DEMONS

Our world is supposed to be inhabited by human beings, animals, ghosts, demons and spirits. Human beings and animals as forms of life are self-evident and require no commentary at this stage but the others do. All religions of the world recognise the existence of various types of spirits in this pulsating universe. For understanding the origin of ancient burial traditions practised by certain tribes in Sindh and Baluchistan, it would be essential to study the full range of religious beliefs and ritual complexes of three great religions, i.e. Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, which have in turn dominated the area of our study for the last seven thousand years. It must be borne in mind that the influence of certain structures or customs from the past can still be discerned in the rites currently observed by certain tribes or communities.

According to ancient mythology there were innumerable hordes of spirits which dominated all aspects of this dusty planet. The range of Hindu deities is so vast that it includes all elements, all heavenly bodies, all animals inclusive of birds, mammals and reptiles, all trees, bushes and plants, and all visible forms and figures which can possibly be conceived or perceived by the outward and inward eye, intellect and mind. However, we shall only refer to those spirits which are related to our subject, i.e., death and burial rites.

HINDUISM: Rakshasas and Asuras

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, the sacred epics of Hinduism, the Rakshasas and Asuras are mentioned as evil powers who delight in the destruction of humans and drink their blood. They strike terror in the hearts of men and animals. The chief of these monsters was Ravana and his sister, Surpanakha, was also a monster of huge proportions. In fact, the chief concern of Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu, was to rid the world of these monsters. In *Mahabharata* they are mentioned as less powerful but their depredations were serious enough to draw the attention of Pandava princes, the heroes of the epic. These demons were not averse to having sex relations with humans. Ravana's sister fell madly in love with Rama, and Bhima, one of the Pandava princes, married a she-demon named Hidimbi. Some of the demons are said to have become invincible through religious discipline. A different class of imps are the army of uncouth and devilish spirits that follow Shiva in his midnight wanderings across cremation grounds and deserted places. These devils are described as powerful beings of varying form and shape.

Bhoota, Prita & Pishacha

It is, however, not demons of the above category that are most dreaded by the generality of Hindus, but spirits of departed men and women who, for some reason or other, are believed to be wandering in the world and haunting the living. These spirits are mainly classified into three categories: 'Bhoota', 'Prita' and 'Pishacha'. A 'Bhoota' is a spirit emanating from a man who had died a violent death either by accident, suicide or capital punishment and has not had proper funeral ceremonies performed for him. A 'Prita' is the spirit of a deformed or crippled person, or of one having a defective limb or organ, or of a child that died prematurely. 'Prita' is not necessarily wicked or malicious towards living men. A 'Pishacha' is a demon created by a person's vices. It is the ghost of a liar, drunkard, adulterer or criminal of any kind, or one who dies insane. This classification is not, however, very rigid, and the name of one kind of evil spirit is freely

used for another.

In each district and province of India there are devils of indigenous origin with definite characteristics. In Malabar and Gujerat, for instance, women who die in pregnancy are feared to assume an uncouth shape called 'Potti' and 'Churel', respectively, and they trouble children while a lordly devil called 'Thendan' walks about the village lanes with a cudgel in his hand laying low any man who happens to come in his way. Places where men have suffered violent deaths are dreaded and avoided by the Hindus. Evil spirits are believed to be oversexed and young women and men could receive special attention, the former from male spirits and the latter from the female ones. Hence the Hindu mothers take care to adorn their marriageable daughters and sons with locketts and charms. There are peculiar ways by which demons get into human bodies. A yawn may give a spirit the chance to enter the person by the mouth, and sneezing through the nose.

Possession by Spirits

The sexual orifices are also used as entrances. In fact all the nine bodily openings (the nine orifices of the body) are means by which these spirits may enter the body and possess a person, and every Hindu who fears demons takes care to keep them constantly clean. The Yakshas and Yakshis, a kind of imps, are believed to be capable of assuming human forms and having relations with men and women in a more direct way. The Gonds, Bhils and other well-known hill tribes of India have tribal deities which are outside the regular Hindu pantheon. The religion of the lower orders is mainly inspired by fear. Sickness, death, bad crops, adversity to men are supposed to be caused by evil spirits.

Possession by evil spirits is commonly believed in and diseases such as epilepsy, madness, etc., are solely attributed to the activities of evil spirits. Hence when anyone in the family falls sick the Hindu villager first consults the village

spirit-medium or 'Bhōpo'. Similarly, when a villager wishes to harm his neighbour he generally consults a necromancer who, on payment of certain fees, undertakes to let loose some devil on the adversary.

BUDDHISM: Yakshas & Nagas

As per Buddhist cosmology the world system consists of thirty-one planes of existence divided into three major categories: 'Kamaloka', in which there is form and sensual desire; 'Rupaloka', which has only form and has a kind of intellectual enjoyment; and 'Arupaloka', in which there is no perceptible bodily form and no sensation. The spirits in Buddhist mythology are termed as 'Yakshas', 'Nagas', 'Gandharvas' and 'Kumbandas'. These are the guardian spirits who protect the four mansions of the world. 'Dhrita-rashtra' is the king of 'Gandharvas', the musicians who guard the eastern domain of the world and wear white garments and are mounted on white horses and wield swords and shields. The southern mansion is guarded by 'Kumbandas', who are monsters of immense size and ugly form. They wear blue garments, are mounted on blue horses, and their swords and shields are made of sapphire. The 'Nagas' protect the west; they wear red garments, have horses, swords, shields of red colour and carry weapons of coral and flaming torches. The north is ruled by 'Yakshas' who have golden garments and ride shining horses. The 'Nagas' have bodies like serpents and are considered favourable to religion.

The lower worlds in Buddhist and Hindu mythology are dominated by Asuras (Demons) and ghosts ('Prita'). They are considered arch enemies and opponents of 'Devas' inhabiting the heavens. The 'Asuras', the classical opponents of deities, have been given other designations in contemporary South-East Asian societies – 'Devas' versus 'Yakka' in Sri Lanka, versus 'Nats' in Burma and versus 'Phii' in Thailand.

Pritas

While the Asuras are a permanent category of super-

natural beings, the 'Pritas' are of a different status. They are ghosts of human beings who had recently inhabited the earth. They are condemned to live in a kind of hell or may wander about on earth, haunting the places they formerly lived in. Their appearance and attributes are disgusting. They are of gigantic size, they have dried-up limbs, loose skin and enormous bellies. They continually wander about, consumed by hunger and thirst, yet are never able to eat or drink because of their small mouth, constricted throats and the scorching, boiling heat that emanates from their bodies.

The abnormal death has always been viewed by the Buddhists with great fear because the ghost of the dead may become a malevolent spirit. These spirits are said to hover on earth because of their attachment to earthly interests since they are plucked from active life before completing their normal life-cycle.

The Buddhists who normally cremate their dead bury the corpses of persons who have died in accidents or if any type of sudden or violent death takes place, even if such death takes place at midnight. Monks are called upon to chant or officiate at the burial. No coffin is provided and the corpse is simply covered with a mat and buried. The entire burial is completely devoid of ritual.

Cremation is denied to such persons who suffer sudden or violent death because of the fear that the children or family members of the dead may suffer harm at the hands of the spirit of the dead. Sudden death is treated with a ritual divided into two parts, the first phase being the burial and the second, normal mortuary rites of cremation, is performed after three months as one continuing sequence.

MAGIC

In Pakistan and India, as in other parts of the world, a clear distinction is drawn between what are commonly

known as White and Black Magic. The former is a recognised method of promoting the interests of the community, as, for instance, by rain-making and by other devices for the general benefit of all members of the tribe. It is different when any one who has gained this power employs it for his own interest, to bring others under his power, to punish an enemy or a rival. This is Black Magic, or witchcraft, which is naturally regarded as an offence against the community at large. The practitioner of such arts is regarded as a common danger, a public enemy, and is ruthlessly persecuted.

Magic in both these forms depends on two principles; one, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause, producing Homoeopathic or Imitative Magic; secondly, that things which have once been in contact continue to act on each other even after contact has been severed, producing Sympathetic or Contagious Magic. Both these varieties are fully developed in our land.

Imitative Magic

As an example of Imitative Magic we may take the method by which the magician seeks to injure his enemy by operating upon a figure of him, in the belief that as it wastes he dies, as it perishes he perishes. The Tantrik magician makes the figure in wax, and inscribes on every joint of it the meaningless but mystic word 'Hri'. He writes the name of his enemy upon the breast and there fixes the bone of a dead man. He buries the whole in a cremation ground, and covers it with the ashes of the dead. The result will be that the Mana proceeding from the corpse will be communicated to his enemy, who becomes mad, leaves his home in a frenzy, sickens and pines away, and can be restored to health only when the image is removed from its deadly surroundings.

The methods of the Muslim magician are similar. He takes earth from a grave or from a Hindu cremation place; makes a doll a span long and repeats the 105th chapter of the Holy Book or the 111th said backwards over twenty-one

wooden skewers, which he drives into various parts of the image. This is shrouded in the manner of a corpse, and buried in the name of the enemy, who, it is believed, will surely die.

Even jungle tribes, like the Bhils, employ similar means. When they have continuous bad luck in hunting they make an image of a man, or sometimes of a man and a woman, in the sand or dust of a jungle path. Over this they pile straw or grass, set it on fire, and with much abuse and uproar beat the images with sticks. This they call 'killing bad luck'.

One important branch of Imitative Magic is rain-making, and this illustrates two conditions for successful magic; one, that the body of the performer should be nude; the other, that the hair should be loose and flowing. The magician being exposed to taboo, the rule of enforced nudity in magical rites is probably based on the theory that the clothes are likely to convey the Mana of others, a condition which we inadequately express by the terms 'pollution' or 'impurity'. In the most interesting form of the rain-making rite in Northern India, women go at night with a plough into the fields, strip off all their garments, and drag the plough some distance through the soil, with invocations to the rain-god to end the drought and permit the regular ploughing to proceed. The natives regard the removal of the clothing as an extreme act of submission to the deity whom they address. But the analogy of similar instances of ritual nudity in India seems to show that 'pollution' is the root of the matter. This probably explains why Fakirs often went about in a state of nudity.

The women, also, while performing this magical rite, let their hair flow loose over their shoulders. The sanctity of witches, wizards, and the like is supposed to rest in the hair: Hence the careful rules for cutting it after childbirth and on visits to places of pilgrimage. Magic can be worked through hair, and at the bathing fairs an important part of the ritual

is the ceremonial shaving of the bathers. Those who are specially careful consign their locks to the stream which is believed to protect them from evil influence. Others leave it where it falls, supposing that the holy atmosphere which surrounds the holy place will remove the possibility of danger. We see this belief in the 'sacredness' of the hair in the case of many Fakirs who never shave or cut it, and keep it in unkempt masses flowing over their shoulders.

The varieties of Imitative Magic are innumerable. All the domestic rites — birth, marriage, death, etc. — are full of practices of this kind.

Contagious Magic

Passing from Imitative to Contagious Magic, a good example of the latter is to be found in the theory that a man may be injured by placing something upon his foot-marks, which are supposed to be an integral part of his personality. The forest tribes of Central India have many devices of this kind, and allege that they know the special things which, so placed, will cause various kinds of diseases. They look suspiciously on anyone who examines the marks after they have passed along a jungle path. In the plains this method is employed to remove epidemic disease from a sick child. The cross-roads are the places where the charm works best. A few scales from the body of a person attacked by smallpox are placed on a little pile of earth in the middle of the road and decorated with flowers. Any one who touches such things is believed to take the malady with him, and so relieve the patient.

Magic of this kind is used most commonly in the case of disease. The popular theory is that sickness is due to evil spirits, or to the machinations of some wizard. When a person sickens, the first stage of the cure is to ascertain who is responsible for his illness. To discover this, various devices are employed. In Chota Nagpur, when an Ojha, or exorcist, is summoned for this purpose, he either calls in a brother in

the craft, or brings with him one or two disciples who have a smattering of the art. A bell-metal tray is produced and filled with pure water, into which a handful of coarse pulse is thrown. The dish is placed in the sun, and the Ojha, repeats incantations in a whisper. After some time he retires to a short distance, and his place is taken by one of his assistants, who does the like. The Ojha then proceeds to question him as to what he sees. There is, of course, collusion between the parties, and by and by the person whom it is arranged to denounce, generally a widow or childless woman, is named. It is useless for her to protest. In former days she would certainly have been murdered. At present she escapes with a beating, and is forced to agree to remove the spell.

Among the Santhals the method was to take branches of the Sal, the sacred tree of the tribe, and to mark them with the names of all the females in the village, whether married or unmarried, who had attained the age of twelve years, and to fix them in water, where they remained for four and a half hours. The withering of any branch was a proof of witchcraft against the woman whose name it bore. Another plan was to tie up small portions of rice in pieces of cloth marked as before, and to place them in a white ant's nest. The consumption of the grain in any packet was a sign of guilt. Sometimes, again, lamps were lighted at night; water was poured into leaf-cups, and mustard oil let fall drop by drop upon the water, while the name of each woman in the village was pronounced. If the Ojha identified her shadow in the water, the woman was held guilty.

When a Bhil dies, the Bhopa, or witch-finder, is called in, seated on a wooden platform, and near him is placed a large earthen pot with a brass dish covering the mouth. This is beaten by two men of the tribe, who at the same time sing the funeral dirge. The spirit of the deceased is now supposed to enter the Bhopa, and through him to demand what it wants. If the man has died a natural death, his spirit calls for milk, and repeats through the Bhopa words he used

History on Tombstones

just before death. But if he has died through violence or evil magic he calls for his bow, arrows, and the gun to avenge his own death. Then the Bhopa works himself up into a frenzy, going through the motions of firing the gun and shouting the war-cry, by which he indicates to the survivors the person who is responsible, and causes to him the pain which his victim has experienced.

SPIRIT AND IMAGE

With the passage of time, the intellectual faculties of the early man improved through the operation of the law of growth. He began to observe his own nature. He ascertained that there was something which resided within him entirely independent and distinct from the body in which it was contained. He perceived that it was this mind, or soul, or genius, or spirit, which thought, desired and decided. It commanded the body as a chief commands a slave. It was evident that this soul did not grow old/and, therefore, it did not die. The body, it was clear, was only a garment which was in time destroyed. Where did then its inmate go?

The spirit was not a body, nor was it a vacuum. It was "consciousness", "will" or a sort of "current" which, like electricity, must have a medium to be effective or operative, otherwise it was likely to get disintegrated like a rain drop in the ocean. After the death of the body where was the soul or the spirit likely to go? One of the answers runs like this:

The spirit or the ghost of a dead person is on the look out for the body which has decayed and disintegrated. It is suspended — without any moorings — and afraid that it may be dissolved into the radiant energy of the sun or other natural elements. Hence in its search for its body, the spirit hovers around habitations familiar to it in life. At its place

History on Tombstones

of residence the spirit is happy to find the faces resembling its own, such as its own children or others connected by blood having close identity in face and form. It tries to possess the body akin to its own by entering it, which causes commotion and crisis for the spirit of the living.

It was thus the "sameness", "resemblance" or "likeness" which was being sought by the spirit. This secret was discovered by the early man who considered the living body merely a container that imprisoned the spirit, which was set free after the death of a person. When death was sudden, violent or unnatural, the spirit accompanying it became seriously affected and turned malignant towards whosoever came its way. The only way in which a frustrated or affected spirit could be controlled or stabilized was through its likeness. Thus a solution was found in the image reflecting the requisite likeness of the original container of the spirit. Hence the early man resorted to cave art involving paintings, drawings and engravings on stone, which art later on developed into effigies, idols and statues.

Likeness created through carvings, drawings and engravings attracted the wandering spirit which, having lost its body, was frantically searching for moorings, being afraid of disintegration. The likeness thus artificially created in a picture provided a second existence or a prison cell for the frustrated spirit and checked its movements which caused problems for the living.

Magic of Images

It is not known when the early man came to know of the powers of sameness or likeness which is termed as "Sympathetic Magic" in scientific expression. It is also not certain whether the secret was discovered by the ancient man through an accident, or revealed to him according to the plan of nature, or perceived by him through his sixth sense. But it is certain that the caveman knew and understood the behaviourism of spirits and he lived in perfect harmony with

them. He had enough wisdom not to annoy the spirits or incur their displeasure. Through the process of trial and error, he had come to know that spirits were nothing but dark shadows, "the floating will power" or consciousness detached from the person or animal after death. Since his basic problem then was spirits of wild animals, which were hunted or killed by him, he resorted to cave art to subdue the animal spirits which otherwise were a constant source of torment for him. The spirit was attracted by its likeness or it sought its "likeness" and, as soon as it was made available to it, it enveloped itself and got merged or imprisoned in it for ever. It got absorbed or dissolved in stone and that was the end of it.

Evidence for this can be found today in great limestone caves which were converted by the primitive man into shrines. On the walls and ceilings of these caves are paintings of game animals, engraved and coloured with consummate skill and interspersed with symbols suggesting that the inspiration behind these paintings was a mixture of magic and reverence. He sought to meet the need for effectively dealing with the spirits of dead animals through engraving their likeness on stone. The discovery of cave sanctuaries bearing carvings of animals and men clearly indicates that man's capacity for faith was manifest many thousands of years before the advent of great religions. Studies of hunting people show that the struggle for survival in the stone age was in itself an experience which promoted religious belief.

Spirits of the Living

Since the ghost of the dead, men and animals, could be tackled or stabilized through a likeness, painted on or carved in stone, it was believed that the spirit of the living, man or animals, could be dealt with in the same manner, because the living also possessed spirit. But experiments carried out in this regard resulted in failure as the spirit of the living was found immune to any influence brought on it through its likeness, carved in stone or metal. But it was a different

History on Tombstones

story when the likeness of a living person or animal was created in kneaded dust or flour, specially in flour of pulse. Thus, the art of Black Magic or Sympathetic Magic was born. Small-sized statues resembling the living were made from kneaded flour or clay and treated in the desired manner. For instance, if a particular person was to be harmed, then after creating his likeness (Boto) in the form of a small statue of kneaded flour, a number of needles were planted in it. Afterwards it was sealed in an earthen jar or a tin, possibly immersed in oil, and thrown in a well or buried in earth.

The person whose likeness was thus created and deposited in water or earth developed severe, agonising pain in the very anatomical parts where needles had been planted in his likeness. Such black magic was used for only harming the living rather than benefiting them.

In this manner both types of spirits, those of the dead as well as of the living, were dealt with through the creation of their likeness. The method and manner of dealing with both types of spirits was the same, only the material used to create likeness had to be different. Stone and metal and baked clay were utilized for the spirits of the dead, while wet clay, or grain flour was used for affecting the spirits of the living.

Thus idols and statues came to be revered, worshipped and appeased. Even the statues which today we call toys were originally manufactured to be buried along with the dead. The funerary earthen ware such as cups, jugs, plates and urns were deposited in the grave to appease the spirit with the familiar objects to which it was accustomed in life. Later on the size of such articles was reduced and miniature goods were kept instead, because of the discovery that form and size were immaterial to the spirit. Still later, painting of such articles on tomb slabs was considered sufficient.

MAGIC RITUALS IN SINDH

The list of supernatural entities believed in by the people in Sindh is a formidable one. Khwaja Khizar is considered a universal guide and he appears before travellers in different guises. They also believe in invisible creatures like 'jinns', 'bhoots', ghosts or disembodied spirits. Besides these, 'pari', 'fairy', 'dev' (demon) and 'rakas' (powerful fiend), are frequently mentioned in folk tales, and are included in the supernatural population. 'Dayen' is the same as witch, usually an old woman with angry disposition. She is supposed to have the evil power of sucking away the breath of young children. Witchcraft has been practised in Sindh since ages and it has never been considered a punishable crime.

'Bhambh' and 'Mum' are frightful beings, mostly female, who carry away the living to their dens. They live in jungles and mountains where they frequently appear to travellers. They have a hairy skin like bear and have large pendant lips, and live on herbs and fruit.

The practice of magic in Sindh generally consists of talismans and different ceremonies for inspiring love, causing hatred, destroying enemies, escaping mysterious dangers, averting and curing pain, dealing with barrenness and abortion, securing wishes and detecting thefts. The writing of talisman ('taawiz') or indulgence in black magic is a common

practice. 'Jadoo' (black magic) consists of either making a replica of grain flour and puncturing it with needles so as to inflict torture on the person whose statue has been treated as such, or recital of certain words in Hindi and Sindhi over a certain herb or fruit to be given to the person concerned or mixed in his food. Black magic is used for affecting living persons and inspiring their love, hatred or their total destruction.

The Muslims divide magic into two branches — lawful and unlawful. The former is invoked through fasting, prayers and repetition of the attributes of God. Resort to black magic is forbidden by Islam and it is practised mainly by non-Muslims. It is supposed to boomerang sometimes on the person who resorts to it. The system of philtres and amatory talismans has apparently been borrowed by the Muslims from the Hindus, who have known these magic formulas for ages. The contrivances for destroying enemies and foes are numerous and various. Its worst feature is attempt to destroy human life through Sympathetic Magic. A common practice is to make an earthen image, supposed to represent the enemy, dressed in saffron-coloured clothes. An incantation is then recited over a needle with which the joints of the figure are subsequently pricked. A coffin or shroud is then thrown over it, a small charpoy is prepared and prayers for the dead are duly recited. Finally, the figure is buried in the graveyard. As a result of all this the foe should die of disease. The efficacy of this procedure is so devoutly believed that one presumes somebody must have recorded success at some time.

SPIRITS (BALUCHISTAN)

It is a faith with the average Brahui or Baluch that spirits exist unobserved, unperceived, and unnamed. Some of them are described as angels, demons, fairies ('paris'), giants ('devs'), beasts, monsters, and shapeless beings. These beliefs have found expression in their day-to-day ceremonies and

rituals.

Angels

The concept of angels is essentially Persian-cum-Islamic, and the natives of Baluchistan, being Muslims, firmly believe in their existence. It is an important part of their faith. It is believed that every human being constantly carries a guardian angel on each shoulder. The one on the right shoulder writes down his good deeds and the one on the left shoulder his bad deeds. It is the angels, for example, who suddenly stop you on the edge of a precipice. The white cock, which is supposed to be the incarnation of an angel, should never be killed. Similarly, the Prophets and Imams, Pirs and Saints protect human beings. Of the prophets, Khwaja Khizar stays on the sea and Hazrat Ilyas in the desert. They appear in human form and guide persons who have lost their way.

The folklore describes 'devs' as of tall stature, grizzly hair, a snub nose, thick and pendulous lips, long nails, sometimes having wings and horns. It is also said in some old poems that they once infested the world and tormented human beings. Then Hazrat Sulaiman (Solomon) subdued them through some charm. But it is evident that the charm did not completely deprive the 'devs' of their power.

Devs seem to be much less dreaded than 'jinns'. Their function, like that of the 'jinns', is to frighten human beings. That is why they were confined to isolated spots. Men should avoid encountering them for they bear a deep grudge and take revenge for mere trifles. For example, they hide in the bottoms of wells. They keep a carefully plugged flagon which contains their soul. If it is broken they die immediately. In the desert regions especially they are a terror.

Ghouls

Devs are also found in the Valley of the Izrael (Angel of Death) which contains several monsters, the most numerous and the worst types of ghouls. The ghoul seeks to separate

travellers from caravans by assuming the form or voice of a friend or a relative, in order to devour them. It will be noted that the concept of the ghoul is evidently borrowed from Persia. The Brähuis of Helmund Valley believe that an arrow will kill it, but that a second arrow will bring it back to life.

The Mami

The Mami or Pali (licker of feet) attacks a man when he is sleeping in the desert and licks his feet until it has drunk all his blood. The story goes that once it was duped by two muleteers from Pasni (Mekran coastal area) who, when they were caught in the desert at night, slept with their feet side by side and covered with their mantles. The mamis circled around them in vain and finally went away, saying, "We have explored valleys, but also never seen a man with two heads." Pottinger and some other English travellers say that a kind of bear-like monster is commonly found in Baluchistan, which kidnaps human beings after rendering them immobile through licking their feet. It is also recorded that at the time of the advent of the British some soldiers were kidnapped and killed by such monsters.

Paris (fairies)

In contrast to the 'devs', the 'paris' (fairies) are beings of an ideal character, and seem to be benevolent. Although they do not often frequent human habitations they may occasionally play the part of a concubine. They are numerous and obey their own monarch.

White cock is valued as a totem as its cry brings good luck and its presence keeps the 'paris' and 'devs' away from the house. Mohammad Usman of Mahragarli (Manager, Raisani Agricultural Farm), one of my acquaintances, begged me, in all seriousness and with tears in his eyes, to adopt some means of stopping the visits of a 'pari' who came and woke him every night. No one in the town doubted the veracity of his assertions. Even the mullahs admitted that they had exhausted their methods of exorcism, at which the

love-stricken 'pari' only laughed. The women were afraid to speak evil of the fairy for fear of inviting her wrath.

Gwat

"Gwat" is the name given to an evil spirit which attacks young men and women and takes possession of their bodies. The "spirit" is dealt with through Sheikh's rituals of fire and music. The phenomenon is common among people of the Zikri sect and in parts of Melran.

Jinns

The Brahuīs believe that there are good 'jinns', who change a beggar into a rich man, and bad 'jinns', who always harm man. Sir Denys Bray has recorded his conversation with Mirza Sher Mohammad, a Brahui of Kalat, in his famous work, *The Life History of a Brahui*. He writes: "Many a strange disease and many a strange death must be laid at the door of the 'jinns'. For, in the length and breadth of the land you will scarcely find a home where a 'jinn' has not a footing."

'Jinns', like mischievous and malicious crows, are always playing pranks. They love a perch on the top-most bough of some old mulberry tree. So it is well to set a light beneath it to humour them. And they tie knots in a horse's mane, and think it a fine fun to swing themselves to and fro, hanging on to the strands. When there is a wedding among them, they set fire to houses that they may have a cheerful blaze. Night and day they are on the look out to commit some mischief. They eat with people and if ever the latter forget to say 'Bismillah' they lure them on to a will-o-the-wisp. Then they go abroad; they appear even in dreams. From sunset to sunrise, during the whole night, men have to be on their guard. And dusk is the most perilous time of all. Foolhardy is the man that ventures at night to visit a graveyard, or a ruined house or an altar of sacrifice, or some isolated spot that is unclean. The 'jinns' will surely pounce upon him unawares, and do him grievous harm. Pray Heaven, he lives to tell the tale.

History on Tombstones

From early childhood one must be on one's guard against them. Until the first shaving of the head no child should go out after dusk. And if he falls sick all the neighbourhood will chide the mother for her carelessness. "Could she not keep an eye on the poor little brat?" Must she give the "jinns" a chance to work their wicked will? No matter what the mother may say, or what oath she may take, they will not listen.

At first some wise old woman tries her hand to see what she can do to make the 'jinn' loosen his hold. So at sunrise she takes the mother and the child apart, and sits down with her face towards the sun. She stretches out her legs and lays the child along them, face downwards, with its feet towards her. And mumbling some weird word, she lifts it up with her legs and turns it over so that it lies with its face turned to the sky. And again she mumbles a few words and then lays the child out as it was before, and belabours it afresh with the shoe. This she does for three days, at sunrise and sunset, in the hope that the 'jinn' may be frightened by the chastisement and take to heels. This is one of the treatments called Sugun Osat. And here is another treatment of the same kind. If a child tosses itself sleeplessly in its bed or starts screaming in sleep, it is clear that a 'jinn' has scared it out of its wits. So the womenfolk gather round it, and soothe it as best as they may. And when at last it falls off to sleep, they get three lumps of burning charcoal and fill a cup with water. One holds the cup over the child's heart, and another takes up a lump of charcoal with a pair of tongs, and turns it round the child's head, saying; "Tursoi, Turosi". Then she drops the coal into the cup of water. Likewise she takes the other two lumps one by one, and turns them round the child's head, and drops them in the water. The cup is left by the bedside till the child wakes up and is then thrown away. This they do thrice for three nights continuously. "Tursoi" in the Brahui language means fear. The women think that in this way they draw out the fear that is in the child, and pass it on into the live charcoal and so make it die away as the live

charcoal dies when it is thrown into water. But if all this will not do, the poor mother goes to a mullah, to wheedle out of him some charm or amulet.

When somebody is declared to have been possessed by a 'jinn' the relatives sacrifice a lamb or a calf, fill a cup with its blood and set it at a distance from the woman possessed by the devil. The mullah calls upon the 'jinn' to take the blood and be gone and to show some definite sign of his going with terms and conditions. He will visit her but once a month or maybe once a year, but let her eat no beef nor the flesh of fowls. By the Prophet Solomon, he will visit her no more. So he departs, and sure enough, they often find that he had knocked over the cup of blood in token of his going. And the woman falls into a peaceful slumber. But by and by she wakes up, notices with surprise the anxious crowd around her as if unaware of what has passed. She remembers only that some monster caught hold of her all of a sudden, and that she fled homewards more dead than alive. The rest is a blank.

By and by the sheikh returns to the assembly, and speaking like one who speaks in his sleep, he tells how he has wrestled long and manfully with the spirits of darkness. Maybe, he will say that the 'jinn' must be appeased with the sacrifice of a he-goat or a ram of this colour or that. Or he will say there is nothing serious but sacrifice made in a certain way is the remedy. The beast must be slaughtered before the very eyes of the woman seized by the devil. A little wool is soaked in its blood and smeared on her hands, feet and forehead. But the meat is cooked and served to the assembly. And so the devil is driven out for good.

The Shaitan (devil)

The concept of devil is in its origin Quranic, but its functions vary among different religious communities. His main characteristic is to misguide a man from righteous living and doing. Anyone who neglects his morning ablutions, for example, will succumb to some temptations during

the day. Similarly, when you go to bed without washing your hands after the evening meal, the devil will lick them down to the blood during the night. It is best not to sleep on your stomach for this is the posture which the devil prefers. Like the 'dêvs' and 'jînns', he possesses the faculty of metamorphosis. Thus, at night, it is dangerous to reply to the solicitations of beggars, for the devil may have taken this shape to tempt men. He presents himself everywhere. Thus, after reading the Holy Quran you should not leave the book open, for the devil might profane it by reading it. You should never aim a gun at anyone, even if it is empty, for the devil might load it instantly.

The devil particularly likes to introduce himself into the bodies of persons who have been prematurely buried. Since graves are sometimes rather shallow, it has happened that a person supposed to have been dead has come out of the grave all the way home by himself.

The devil has daughters called 'Al' (name of Turkish origin). It is said in a folk tale that once a hunter who was sitting on the bank of a river saw an old woman dressed in red and holding a liver in her hand. It was 'Al'. He hit her on the cheek and forced her to return the liver, which she had taken from a woman in childbirth. Then he stuck a pin in her blouse and thus kept 'Al' in his service for seven years. During this period women gave birth to children without danger.

Jatu

Women by some evil practices become 'Jatu'. It is said that 'Jatu' is an evil being in the disguise of a woman. She is believed to be fond of eating children's liver. A great number of strange stories are on the lips of village folk.

Gowanko

'Gowanko' is a kind of evil spirit supposed to sit down on the chest of a sleeping person and play mischief.

Chukbar

It is a kind of bird, small in size and yellow in colour. It is usually seen in bushes by the roadside. Village boys try to catch it, but it flutters away to a far away place. No one is said to have succeeded in catching this bird. It is believed that 'Chukbar' is possessed by evil spirit. Children are often led astray by it in darkness and are found dead in some bushy place after some time.

Dhat

The 'Dhat' does no evil, and is content merely with causing fear. For example, while riding on horse-back a man saw a lamb by the side of the road. He picked it up and put it across his saddle. A little while later he looked at it and saw to his great fright that it had grown so big that it was dragging on the ground on both sides. He threw it off and fled as fast as he could.

When some poor woman has been possessed by a 'jinn', and the mullah has failed to free her from his spell, a sheikh is called in at the dead of night. But first such men gather together as can play the Siroz and the Dam well. When the sheikh enters the assembly where the woman is laid, the minstrels play lustily. As he listens to the strains the sheikh's limbs tremble beneath his robes; he rocks to and fro, and his face looks that of a man in agony. For the wild music creates a frenzy within him and he becomes like one possessed. He starts to his feet and dances madly, whirling round and round. His long hair floats in the air and sweeps the ground. The music grows more wild and the dance becomes more crazy. When he is so exhausted that sweat falls in great drops, he shouts loud 'Ali Bezat' and calls his numerous saints to help him in his hour of distress.

While he is in a frenzy, men and women gather round him eagerly. The old ladies in the front press and question him touching this or that, bidding him to prophecy: Is it a boy or a girl that the neighbour's wife will bear? Is there rain

in the air? Will father return this month or the next from his travels? Will his business be for good or ill? All their questions he will answer only if the 'jinns' are in good humour. Some old crony will totter forward with a blue thread in her hand, mumbling many prayers so that a son is vouchsafed to her daughter, and will piteously entreat the sheikh to tie a knot in the thread that it may safeguard the child against the 'jinns'. The sheikh will tie the knot, sure enough, but will speak of the sacrifices she must offer and the rich presents she should give him. Someone in the crowd will cry out for sweetmeats; and all the assembly will sing the chorus. With a wild toss of the head, the sheikh calls upon the 'jinns', and at a whisk of his hand sweetmeats pour down tumbling from the air. Or he takes an empty bowl and waves it all brimming with blood. Often he goes apart and talks aloud, as though he were in communion with the spirits of darkness. Those who hear this strange talk at the dead of night are often seized with fear.

Souls of dead

It is generally believed among the Brahuis that the souls of the dead are mischievous and those of the aged are the worst of the lot. If a disease hangs about a house after the death of some old crony, women will ascribe it to her. The best way to get rid of the spirit is to strike four iron pegs at the four corners of the grave when none is looking. The womenfolk and men, too, think it an unlucky business to mention the name of the dead at night. If you have to mention the dead and the living in the same breath, you should add, 'God pardon his sins' or 'The peace of Allah be upon him!' after the name otherwise misfortune will come. The soul haunts one in dreams too. It is said that nothing pleases the soul of some malicious old hag more than to haunt a lad or a lass in dreams. Will he or she not come to his/her old granny that loved him/her so dearly? If the dreamer tells his dream to his mother and asks for interpretation she is highly upset and hurries to slaughter a sheep as sacrifice, thinking that the dead woman does not spare the children even when

she is in the grave. The flesh is cut into pieces and given to kinsfolk and neighbours. Many women will like that one should never mention the dead by name at all, once the seisham, or the third day's meal is over. If need be one should talk in a round about manner of the untimely death or the like. The old granny of the house will rebuke the careless one and say: "Now don't you mention his name again. Heaven pardon his sin! He lived his life, and what more does he want, I should like to know?"

Decorated Stone Sarcophagi



Decorated stone and marble sarcophagi used for the inhumation burials are found in eastern as well as in western countries. The ornamented sarcophagi were perhaps made both to gratify the departed and to impress the living beholders. The style, technique and composition of the designs, figure scenes and portraits carved on slabs of the sarcophagi differ to some extent from one another, according to the funerary practice and afterlife ideas of each country.

The subject matter of these reliefs represents narrative scenes drawn from public or private lives of the deceased, as reminders of the cultural and professional tasks and activities of this world as a form of preparation for the next. The

mythological scenes may have been carved to serve as allegories of death and the life beyond the grave. In order to understand the animal, armament and human figure reliefs sculptured on tombs in Sindh and Baluchistan, it would be worthwhile to have an idea of similar burial rites as reflected through funerary art in other countries, which are briefly described as under:

Turks

The animal figures and representations of armed mounted warriors have been noticed on the graves of Turks. These reliefs are said to be symbolic representations of the triumphs and hunting expeditions of the deceased that have been preserved on the tomb-stones. According to the Chinese chronicles, it is an ancient tradition among the Turkish Tukue to construct war plastics on the graves of their fallen heroes. They are referred to as "Balbal", in the Turkish Orkhan inscriptions of the 8th century. The Chinese records further report about a building which was constructed beside a grave on whose walls the figure of the hero and scenes of killings from his life were painted.

Iranians

The ancient Achaemenian tombs of Darius and three of his immediate successors at "Nakshi Rostam" rock in Persepolis are adorned, with the King standing on a platform, leaning on his bow, a procession of dogs, the sacred animal of Avesta, the sun disc and the hovering emblem of Ahura-Mazda.

Even now in various parts of Iran, particularly in Kurdistan, are seen graves of persons belonging to Shia sect bearing representations of armaments, such as shields, swords and lances, engraved on the tomb-stone. A number of crudely painted figures of warriors on wooden planks are seen erected alongside the humble graves which constitute simple memorials.

History on Tombstones

Romans

In the immediate vicinity of Rome stand a number of rectangular house-tombs dating from the second century A.D. These tombs have underground burial chambers and two storeys above ground containing rooms for funerary cult. The arched recesses are decorated brightly with figure scenes including birds, flowers and baskets of fruit, and the floor mosaic shows an emblem-like scene of birds in a chequered surrounding. The adjoining two tombs have handsome stucco ornaments on vaults of their internal stairs and burial chambers, a peacock carved in a shell, vine scrolls, and so forth.

But the most prolific series of mid-imperial house tombs are those in the Isola Sacra which throw sufficient light upon the cult of the departed. The mausolea of the Isola Sacra cemetery are built of brick masonry. Most of them have only one storey. The lateral reliefs, worked in brick, or terracotta, present scenes from the dead men's professional lives. We are shown the deceased plying his trade — a surgeon, manufacturer of iron implements, boatsman, water carrier, wine merchant, carpenter, and so forth. Such scenes, while chiefly designed to commemorate the past, could also suggest a happy after-life earned by honest labour.

Another most important and the most complex and spectacular tomb that has yet come to light within the circuit of Rome's Aurelian Wall is that of the "Aurelii". The place is chiefly famous for the very elaborate paintings on the walls and vaults of its burial chambers, paintings which appear to be of a mixed Christian and pagan, possibly Gnostic, character. Main designs consist of three circles of which the inner one is a medallion depicting a woman flanked by two bearded persons one of whom holds a rod above her head, perhaps an initiation scene. The panels depict single human figures, standing or reclining, fantastic sea beasts, and frontal peacocks occupy the fields thus formed by the circles and their linking features. The most noteworthy of the

paintings are those in the identical rows of twelve dignified personages, six men and six women, standing on a groundline. Peacocks are shown in profile.

Jews

The Jews had long been accustomed to lay their dead to rest in rock-cut tombs and they maintained this practice whenever the character of the terrain permitted it. The most impressive examples which combine to a remarkable degree Semitic burial custom with sculptural ornament and funerary symbols are those on the outskirts of Jerusalem in the Kedron valley and to the north of the ancient city and at Petra, the Nabataean capital. These tombs are carved in low relief, an elegant floral scroll containing olive branches, grapes, flowers and leaves — all symbols of life and refreshment after death. Most of these tombs have semi-cylindrical lids and are carved with running floral scrolls or with large rosettes. According to the normal Jewish rule only non-figural ornament of this kind was allowed.

The famous tombs, or temple tombs of Petra, carved in the soft sandstone of the locality have true facades sculpted in relief on the rock face. On one of the Petran tombs two lions have been carved in low relief, standing and facing inwards. They keep the door as guardians of the dead or as symbols of death's ravening jaws, both common concepts in funerary art.

Lycians

Lycian rock tombs at Myra pertaining to the late Greek period are seen covered with sculptures referring to the fate of the soul after death, such as winged death goddesses, the harpies, the sacred cow and other animals. A few of the isolated tombs represent a sarcophagus having sculptured lids in the shape of lion heads. Such is the famous tower-shaped monument at Xanthus in Lycia; it rises above the graves, which though rock-hewn, have been cleared by cutting away and removing the blocks immediately surround-

History on Tombstones

ing them. All the four sides of the monument are covered with sculptures referring to the fate of the soul after death.

Africans

A local group of tombs which merit notice are seen at Ghirza in the interior of Tripolitania, 150 miles south-east of Tripoli. Here two cemeteries, about a mile apart, served a large settlement of fortified farms dating from the third and fourth centuries A.D., and situated at the junction of the Wadis Ghirza and Zemzem.

The tombs, built of local limestone, are of two main types — temple tombs are obelisk tombs, the former being sculpturally the richest and most spectacular. The best preserved tombs are seen in the northern cemetery. Each tomb has columns, arches and false doors. The column slabs are carved with hunting scenes and episodes from agricultural life. The burial chamber is below the tomb. The spandrels of arches are carved with rosettes and stylized floral motifs.

Other arcaded temple tombs at Ghirza, some of them in the southern cemetery, have four, three and two columns on each side and are lavishly carved in a crude but vivid style. These reliefs reflect the daily life, funerary practice and afterlife ideas of the settlement's inhabitants. They show us people reaping, winnowing and threshing, ploughing with camels, oxen, and horses, hunting lions, leopards, antelopes and ostriches, and swarming up date palms. There is a dead chieftain surrounded by members of the family and servants; and there is another dead chieftain's ceremonial funerary banquet. There is also a striking slab on which eight large fish, symbols of the dead, encircle, and nibble at, a central rosette, symbol of life beyond grave.

Greek

Some third century western sarcophagi are equipped with lids on which the figures of the dead recline on couches — a feature that is found on a number of Greek tombs. A few

are garland-sarcophagi, some have rows of busts or figures of the dead on their troughs, but most bear scenes or groups of mythological content. All are carved on all four sides. The lid generally represents a couch on which the departed is shown either lying flat on his or her back or reclining with head and shoulders upright.

Arabs

The Arabs considered it important to construct the graves of men whom they had honoured in life with memorial stones. Similarly the Arabs also strove to profane the graves of enemies whom they feared. While raising memorials preference was always given to the erection of a memorial durable and upward rising construction. Characteristic of such memorials is the destruction in the dirge of Durayd bin al-Simma on Muawiya bin Amr.

“Where is the place of visiting (of the dead) O Ibn Bakr?
By erect stones (Iram) and heavy (lying stones) and dark
branches which grow from the stones and funeral build-
ings over which long times pass, month after month.”

Such mausoleums are called “Ayats”. Arabic poetry frequently mentions stones under which the dead are sleeping, they are called “*ahjars*” or “*atbaq*”. The grave is described by Burj bin Mushir as “holes, the lower parts of which are hollow and over which stones are erected”. The decorated stones with “*wusum*” were erected in honour of such men who by protection or other merits deserve the permanent recognition of the tribe. Besides upright stones the grave was built with broad stone plates laid on top of one another. Grateful contemporaries erected “*ansab*” facing each other by the grave of Hatim from the Tayyi tribe, who was famous for his generosity. These stones looked like wailing women. The “*nusb*” or grave memorial is termed as “*ghariyy*” or “*al-ghariyyan*” in Arabic.

Krajputas Tombs



Krajputasi (from 'karajputas'- literally "roadsider") is the name given to the tombstones with characteristic carved decorations and epitaphs which are found scattered along the roads in many parts of Serbia.

Usually the graves are empty. According to traditional Serbian belief, it was a terrible misfortune to die somewhere far away from one's home and family, where there were no kinsfolk to arrange for the burial and light a candle on the grave. Therefore, when someone died or was killed far from home, travelling, at work, or in war, his clothing was buried in the village cemetery with all the usual rites, and, most important of all, a monument to his memory was erected.

In many parts of Serbia, these monuments were located besides the road as a visible sign that the person in question had died somewhere far away. These tombs are an especially common sight in Western Serbia, sometimes standing on their own, sometimes arranged in groups in a semblance of order by the side of the road. Some of these old and almost completely neglected groups of tombstones have the appearance of classical necropolises.

Cultural Influence

For a full explanation of the phenomenon of Krajputasi, we must consider historic-cultural factors in addition to the ethnological ones that have just been outlined. Most of the population of Serbia stems originally from Herzegovina, from whence it brought with it the practice of raising monumental tombstones of the so-called *stecak* type. The similarity between *krajputasi* and *stecci* is obvious. The main part of a *krajputas* is the *stelae*, a tall upright rectangular stone, one side of which bears a life-sized engraved representation of the deceased, usually in colour, and the other some appropriate epitaph, frequently extremely witty, sometimes at the expense of the dead man. The *stecci* of Herzegovina and eastern Bosnia also resemble *stelae*, and frequently incorporate a life-sized human figure and some apt text. Recent research suggests that these tombstones owe a good deal to the cultural influence of the Vlachs, the Romanized Illyrians and Thracians who inhabited the Balkan peninsula before the coming of the Slavs. The Serbian struggle for independence from the Turks in the 19th century reawakened and strengthened the age-old, but frequently concealed, traditional belief in the existence of the soul. In difficult and turbulent times, man feels a special need to communicate with his ancestors, and his kith and kin who have perished. The Serbian *krajputasi* are an eloquent indication of the way in which social events find reflection in national customs and culture.

Figures and Designs

The *krajputasi* are dominated by engraved or, less fre-

History on Tombstones

quently, relief portraits of of deceased, sometimes of the head and arms, sometimes of the whole body, and sometimes in duplicate. Usually it is done with such realism and precision that even the details of the man's dress may be studied. The human figures are accompanied by a number of interesting and symbolic motifs, some very ancient others extremely modern. These include designs composed from plant and animal figures and geometrical forms, tables laid out for funeral feasts with rows of glasses and candlesticks, agricultural implements (axes and wooden ploughs), weapons (knives, pistols, rifles), equipment for making fabrics (distaffs, shuttles, reels, needles), musical instruments (flutes, accordions), and numerous other everyday objects (baskets, umbrellas, walking sticks, ink-wells, books, mirrors, combs, bags, scissors, etc.). The deceased is portrayed exactly as he was in life, complete with allusions to his or her social and economic status and position: village tradesmen, soldiers, peasant elders, school pupils, young men and women, married women, brigands, and so on.

The appearance of modern household items in the designs has more than a historical and ethnographic interest. It also points to the vitality of folk art traditions, and their ability to absorb the newest consumer items (umbrellas and accordions, etc.) into the general scheme of things.

Artists

Most of the figures are realistic portraits of the deceased, which is surprising considering that they could not be executed on the basis of any likeness, but only from memory. The artists must presumably have known their dead subjects. Naturally, when the monuments were raised some time after the death of persons in question, the resemblance was less impressive. The clearest indication that the stone-carvers were concerned with making realistic portraits is afforded by the fact that where two brothers killed in a war have been buried together, their respective portraits have

been carefully individualized. This realistic portrayal creates a unique artistic effect. The deceased's spiritual life on this earth is communicated with an almost palpable force.

Epitaphs

There is one element so frequently encountered in the portraits that it might well be considered an inherent quality of the genre. All of the young girls, shepherdesses, knitters, peasant elders and the rest and, in particular, the soldiers, have an expression of peace and calm, mingled with a certain cheerfulness. They stand before us calm and tranquil, yet gay and even slightly roguish in expression. The impression of resilient optimism they convey seems strange and out of place on a gravestone, in the immediate presence of death. Many of the figures are depicted with sardonic grins; the epitaphs are no less sardonic:

“Here I lie and you look at me:
I wish you were lying here, and
I looking at you:”

Serbia, said the poet, defended itself from death with the laughter of its tombstones, and the gaiety of their epitaphs, whose words were ever poised ready to race out on to the roads.

Humour

The humour of the krajputasi seems curious, indeed almost unique, and seems, moreover, to have a spiritual quality. Laughter is virtually absent from national epic poetry. In so far as one encounters it at all, it is sarcastic, and usually connected with power and dominance. As with the humour of the krajputasi, it seems out of place, psychologically unjustified, and enigmatic. Anthropological studies of religion and folklore have disclosed that unmotivated laughter of this type was thought to have magical properties. A number of examples can be drawn from various parts of the world, including ancient Greece and Rome as well as the

krajputasi, which explain the origins, reflexes and development of this curious phenomenon. The inhabitants of Sardinia killed their parents, who died content and with laughter on their lips. The Phoenicians sacrificed their children to the god kronos. When the flames reached the victims, their limbs contracted and their lips formed a sort of grimace. That this laughter scarcely came from the heart was not important. It was obligatory to display signs of good humour during sacrificial offerings, and so these were artificially induced. In ancient Greece it was the custom each year to select two victims on whom the sins of whole people would be unloaded, after which they would be sacrificed. As they were led to the place of execution, the two men would laugh and generally be in great spirits, as would be the spectators. All this mirth had an essentially religious character. The willing and cheerful death of a man still in his prime, of a man who enjoyed fame and respect within his community, would redound to the advantage of the victim himself, for he would thus be able to retain those qualities in the world beyond. And as a man was to have exactly those qualities hereafter that he had at the moment he left this earth, it was logical that he should laugh as he died, for in that way he could ensure for himself an equally merry time later on. Laughter is more than this-wordly indication of well-being; it is the strongest manifestation of the life-force, and it will therefore have an invaluable effect if one laughs when confronted face to face by death. Laughter is obviously a grievous blow to the demon death, just as cock's crowing is for the devil. Therein lies the explanation of all the compulsory merriment during funerals in many parts of Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

STECCI TOMBS

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in parts of Montenegro and Dalmatia, there appeared during the Middle Ages a large number of monumental sculpted tombstones called *stecci* (sing. *stecak*). For a long time these decorated monuments were unknown to the outside world, and for most art historians their stylistic origins remain a mystery, though many theories have been put forward, both in Yugoslavia and abroad, about the identity of these unknown masters and their artistic aims and affinities. Hypotheses have been advanced attributing the appearance of the *stecci* variously to certain events in the early history of Bosnia, the influence of foreign conquests, penetration by, or conflict between, different religious sects (the Bogomils, especially), primitive religious beliefs, links with the peasant art tradition, and so on.

A distinguished English archaeologist, Sir Arthur Evans, who travelled through Bosnia in the 19th century, was the first to draw the attention of scholars to the *stecci*. The areas where they are to be found are almost all in the highlands, beside mountain streams and old roads. In some cases they are arranged in necropolises by roads or rivers; in others they are hidden away in remote fields, difficult of access. They vary from place to place both in shape and in the type of relief ornamentation that has been employed. In form, they

History on Tombstones

may be tablets, boxes, tall boxes or sarcophagi. Of these, the sarcophagi are the most common; unlike the others, which are flat, they have double-sloped lids.

There are few monuments comparable with the sarcophagi and other types of stecci. Closer to them would be the upright crosses and pillars in Rome. Square sarcophagi and box-tombs were suitable for decorations incorporating motifs from everyday life. Of the 40,000 or so stecci of this type, the bulk of the decorated ones are to be found in Herzegovina, which has the famous big necropolis at Stolac, near Mostar, and in central Bosnia. The Donje Zgoscje necropolis in central Bosnia contains the most lavishly decorated surviving stecek of the sarcophagus type.

Inscriptions

The inscriptions and decorations on the stecci and other factors make it possible to give at least a rough dating. The oldest example discovered so far was erected in 1231. It bears the following inscription: "On the eleventh day of this month of March died Marija, servant of God, known as the Maiden, wife of the priest Dabidziv, in the year of Our Lord, 1231". (Stolac) Most of the inscribed tombstones date from the 13th and 14th centuries. Some bear indications that they were erected in the 12th century, but none has yet been found unequivocally inscribed to that effect. Apart from ordinary inscriptions, many stecci have necrologies or witty epitaphs, and in some cases a few details about the deceased or about the author of the inscription. The following examples are characteristic:

"Here lies Vlatko Vukovic, a good man and a hero"
(Buljeni, 15th century)

"You shall be even as I am, but I shall never be as you are"
(15-16th century)

"Here lies Pavko Rodohni. This stone I carved for my-

self when alive. I beg you, my brethren and my lords,
do not rattle my bones.”

(Hodovo, 15th or 16th century).

“This cross marks the grave of Radojko Mrksic. I stood
praying to God and thinking no ill, and I was struck
down by lightning”.(Djedici, near Trebinje, 15th century)

Structure and Designs

Lavish tombs could naturally be commissioned only by
princes and other wealthy nobles. In such cases, even the
name of the stone-carver is mentioned, as well as that of the
scribe who prepared the text.

The iconography on the stecci, though the work of
many hands, is essentially the same. However, in a number of
areas, numerous stylistic and thematic differences may be
observed. The nature of the motifs and their abundance tell
us a good deal about the spiritual horizons of these artists,
which obviously derive from their own conceptions of life
and their own tradition, rather than from any external in-
fluences.

The carved ornamentation of the earliest sarcophagi
frequently represents rows of arches and columns, covering
the entire surface, so that from a distance they give the
impression of being true “eternal mansions”, and resemble
beautiful Romanesque or Gothic buildings. The stone sur-
faces with their various architectural effects are bordered by
bands and interwoven strands, which in the manner of a
frieze complete the decorative effect.

Stecci with figure compositions are both the most
common and the most interesting from the thematic point
of view. The central preoccupation is man and all that sur-
rounds and interests him, presented in innumerable variants.

The repertoire of figure composition is very broad,

History on Tombstones

ranging from single figures and pairs of men and women to whole scenes. Frequently a single life-sized figure is shown, with one or both arms raised. The monumental, stern figures stand almost square on their shields, lances and other weapons lying beside them. The artists seem to have been pre-occupied with thoughts of the transience of life and the inevitability of death.

Scenes of this kind are an ancient part of local tradition and have not lost their original character to this day, particularly in the mountainous areas of the country.

Many people wished particular objects which had been very dear to them while they were alive to be given permanent form on their tombs. It is possible that sometimes the dead man's relatives would indicate what wishes he had expressed in this respect.

Kolo Dance

A common theme on the stecci is the Kolo (ring dance) with a long chain of dancers bobbing up and down; this is executed with strong rhythm and a primitivist simplicity. In the characteristic Yugoslav Kolo, men and women alternate, forming a long frieze-like line as they perform the complicated steps. This type of rhythm is characteristic of primitive art in general, and was particularly popular among Slav artists.

One of the most common scenes of all is that of knightly duels and tournaments. The superb stecak at Donje Zgosce has a chivalrous vignette against a background of towers. On the front side of the tombstones, a number of towers are depicted in detail. There is also a courtyard, with big open gates, at which some women are standing. A wreath of intertwining plants has been carved in between the women and the tower and the broader field below in which the actual duel is presented. The horses are in every case, like other animals for that matter, engraved in profile, whilst the human

figures are nearly always facing the observer. The scene represents a complete tale about the epoch told with great artistry. All the figures and objects have been skilfully arranged in horizontal zones. On the side and length-wise facades of the same monument, two zones are occupied by processions of armed horsemen, and in the lower part there is a wonderful rendering of the chase. The simple harmony of the relationship between the figures and attitudes of the horsemen recalls monumental classical reliefs. The field above them is decorated with rosettes, and those containing the figures with architectural ornamentation.

Hunting Scenes

The hunters in the vignette of the chase are pursuing deer and wild boars. The scene is very detailed and has a strongly narrative character. The dogs are racing after the animals whilst the hunters lie in wait for them with bows and arrows and lances. The relief is shallower than elsewhere, and in form this comes rather close to painting. Two trees with stylized representations of branches are meant to conjure up the world of dreams and paradise; a mythical animal imparts a fantastic aspect to the dream. The tombstones of noblemen present the theme of the deer-hunt frequently, and in the most diverse variants. The deer flee before the hounds and the falcons, whilst the marksmen wait with their weapons. It seems very likely that this recurring theme symbolizes the fate of man, pursued by so many evils in this life and with death waiting for him at its end.

Animal and Plant Figures

Snakes and various fabulous animals — winged horses, dragons, etc. — are another common motif, which illustrates the point made earlier about the importance of folk traditions and the peasant imagination. The artist's fantasy is given full rein, and provides the basis and the patterns for the carved ornamentation.

Symbols and signs and plant designs are also very fre-

quent. Among symbols, the sun and the moon predominate, accompanied usually by rosettes, circles, swastikas, heraldic emblems and shields, which, together with bows and arrows, are the most frequently depicted weapons. The sun and the moon appear above the portrait of the deceased sketched in the cosmography of the eternal world he is now living in.

Almost all the stecci have plant decoration — rosettes, apples, trees with branches, vines, and lilies. Sometimes the ornamentation is composed solely of plants. On one sarcophagus, an entire side is occupied by three tall lilies with stems rather like pillars. The lids and carved surfaces are bordered by bands and interwoven strands. Other elements of plastic decoration include stylized crosses, spirals (which sometimes describe circular shapes like serpent eyes), birds, weapons, implements, hoops and so on.

Many of these monumental figures striking bold attitudes before their beholders were undoubtedly nobles and other people of higher rank. It is their monoliths and their graveyards which are on the whole the best known, and the most lavishly decorated. The work done for rather poorer clients was less grand and elaborate and tended to be reduced to stylized symbolic signs. The nobles' tombstones are more directly illustrative, whereas those of humbler and unknown folk tend to be rather a mingling of poetic and fantastic elements.

Folk Artists

The form and style of the carving of the stecci indicate that there were many masters involved with the work. They are easier to classify according to areas where the necropolises arose than according to any more detailed schemes, as individuals, and their paths of artistic development are difficult to trace. The carving is in low relief, sometimes with sharp contours, and sometimes with greater plasticity and a greater degree of modulation. Moreover, the artist was often given the monument to portray his face, and one face

would be reproduced on numerous other tombstones. On the smaller box-tombs and sarcophagi, on the other hand, a greater degree of imagination has been shown in the deployment of different compositional elements. Nonetheless, the work done on the monumental sarcophagi shows a greater degree of care and skill. The pictorial and decorative elements are compounded into a firmer unity, which finds a sure and impressive reflection in the architectonics of the facades.

The artists were largely self-taught, apart from what was passed on directly from the experience of one to another. Their slender knowledge and weakness for crude realism notwithstanding, their works display a strong painter's instinct and un-inhibited imagination. The use of archetypes and the frequent application of magical and ritual elements demonstrate the imagination of these artists, who, though untrained and without true aesthetic traditions, convey a flavour of the Romanesque and Gothic at times.

Bogomils

The Manicheanism of the Bogomils and other local religious teachings were influential in these parts, and must have affected the attitudes of the stecci carvers. Many scholars took this as the point of departure for their studies. However, the scenes as a whole, and the deployment of individual elements within them, point to an inspiration derived from the rich traditions of peasant art, in which imagination and ritual also have a religious significance.

Dr. Alojz Benac, the head of a Sarajevo team which conducted extensive research into the origins of stecci, and collected a good deal of material about them, came to the following conclusion: "Insofar as it actually did have a Bogomil character derived from Manichean teachings, the funerary art of the stecci was extremely deft in absorbing these elements and adapting them to its own teachings". Marija Venzel rejects the hypothesis that Bogomilism was the deci-

sive influence in the artistic formation of the stecci, and concludes: "The iconography of the stecci has a genuine religious basis... They are the product of the cultural atmosphere of the Middle Ages, which had a later flowering in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and are totally foreign to the spirit of the Renaissance, which never penetrated to Bosnia".

Bogomilism

The strange religion of Bogomils, bold and mystical in character, may well have been congenial to the indigenous population, who, though intellectually curious, had prior artistic allegiances and was uniformly and unequivocally opposed to anything alien, to any political or religious invasion from without. The native tradition with its own ethnic peculiarities, myths, rituals and beliefs mingled with the elements of magic and cosmogony to be found in every home is far more prominent. The tombstones themselves were intended as a second house built around the dead man.

In realizing these complex themes, according to the importance and requirements of his commissioner, the stecak artist, for all that his knowledge was limited, showed a considerable degree of invention and artistic authenticity.

Today they stand as the cultural monument of a distant epoch in the history of a small, defiant country against whom Popes themselves unleashed crusading wars. Standing in a setting of striking contrasts of thick forest and seas of stones, the archaic monolithic shapes of the stecci have a power worthy of the lofty, brooding spaces in which they are set. Against such a natural and historical background, prettiness and polish would have been out of place. The complex epic inspiration stimulated a rustic aesthetic expression. In the thoughts and symbols of these artists, the dream of eternal life has all the complexity of life on this earth.

BOGOMILS

Very little of artistic value has been preserved from the Bosnian medieval heritage. Its memorials are tombs and these mostly of the Bogomil faith. Unlike the Serbs who remained sullenly hostile to the Turkish domination, the Bosnians embraced Islam, sometimes becoming more devoted Muslims than the Turks themselves.

Who and what were the Bogomils? Everywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, close to and far from the inhabited districts, in the impenetrable silence of the primeval forests, on the boundaries of the towns, in the wasteland of the Karst, tombs are to be found, lying in silence, abandoned, strongly appealing to imagination. The early Bogomils contended that Satan was the first-born son of God, and Christ only his younger brother, that the whole of the Old Testament was the work of the Devil, who hoodwinked the patriarchs — inasmuch as the Devil gave himself out to be God, until Christ came down to free mankind from his evil domination. They said the earth was created not by God, but by Satan, to whom God lent power for seven days.

The creed was founded by an American doctor calling himself Bogomil, who was burnt for his opinions by the orthodox emperor in Constantinople. Whereupon his fol-

lowers retired into the Balkan peninsula, where they took the name of Bogomil, maintaining that religion consisted in spiritual piety and a virtuous life; and, consequently, that external devotional practices and other ceremonies were unnecessary. They said that altars were no better than stones, that it was the Devil's commandment that men should take wives, eat flesh and drink wine. In their undecorated churches nothing was to be found but the Gospel on a white-covered table, guarded against the Devil by a sentry who stood beside it night and day.

Bogomil decreed that when one of his followers was struck a blow he was to turn the other cheek. He also forbade them to bear arms or to go to war. Half-way between Rome and Byzantium, Bosnia was an ideal ground for a faith which held with neither; but it was some time before these two mortal adversaries came together and agreed to stamp it out. As the Bosnian king came more and more under the sway of Catholic Hungary, they were forced to help in the persecution of Bogomils. One result of this was that many Bogomils publicly conformed to the Catholic Church, while privately retaining their own faith; while some others turned to the Turks, whose absence of outward ceremonial seems to have attracted them, so that they became more prepared to embrace Islam than either Eastern or Western Christianity.

A decisive moment came in 1462, when Muhammad II marched into Bosnia. Many of the Bosnian Bogomil magnates had already gone over to the Turkish Sultan; even those who publicly proclaimed themselves to be Catholics were in secret communication with him. The commander of the Bogomil fortress surrendered it without a struggle, and shortly afterwards the last Bosnian king was captured and beheaded. The nobility, almost to a man, embraced Islam, and the only Christians who remained were a few peasants. The last Bogomils are thought to have lived not far from Mostar, and they too finally adopted Islam. If any trace of this curious sect exists today, it is in their tombs and some of the supersti-

tions found among the Herzegovinian Muslims.

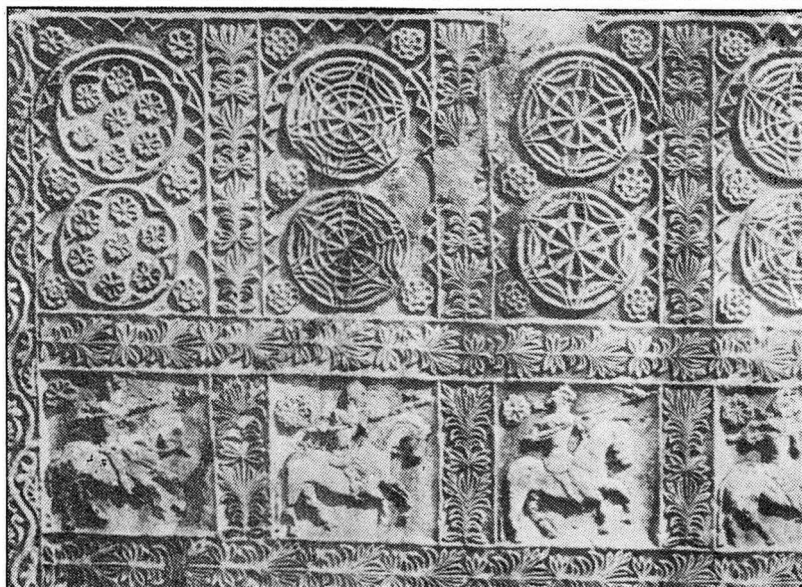
Their gravestones are found single or in groups of as many as a hundred, gigantic stones scattered irregularly over the bleak landscape, some sunk deep in the earth, rolled off their pedestals and broken by rude hands, others closely set in rows. The effort to replace artistic excellence by gigantic proportions is everywhere visible, giving the impression that the Bogomils were a race of giants, recalling, too, the mysterious Megalithic race that built Stonehenge and scattered dolmens all over France. Unlike the dolmens, however, the Bogomil stones have been hewn into rectangular blocks, varying from about six feet long and four feet square to huge masses so heavy that it is a mystery how they were brought from the quarries.

The larger ones are like tall cubes, except that they are narrower at the base than at the top, a feature giving them a form borrowed perhaps from the Romans. The few decorated ones have stars, suns, wreaths, rosettes, spirals and swords carved on them, and some have crudely sculpted human beings in relief. Occasionally they have inscriptions, generally of a military nature. A representative example reads: 'Here I lie, having inclined my head before no man, however strong that man might be. I was an able governor, a friend of the Sultan. I visited a number of foreign countries and died at war'. He then goes on to announce that he is extremely happy to be here, finishing with a brief anathema against the would be disturber of his rest. Another has the following inscription, highly revelatory of the Bogomil faith; 'In the name of the Father and the Holy Ghost, here lies Vlatko Valdevic, who had neither father, mother, son, brother nor any person, only his sin' (i.e. his wife, according to Bogomil humour). Some reflect on the transitory nature of earthly existence: 'I have been what you are now, you will be what I am now'.

In this city, as at Jajce and Travnik, are a number of

History on Tombstones

Turkish graveyards, with their curious top-heavy headstones, in sizes corresponding to the rank of the deceased. The biggest have charming kiosks set over them, arched and domed in Byzantine style. A remarkable feature of Jajce is the number of these Mohammedan graveyards scattered between the houses and lining the streets, uncared for and, it would seem, out of place among the homes of the living. For, the Turk buried his dead wherever there was space — in the garden, between the houses, the streets, between the cinema and the pastry-shop. Wherever there was a little space, the Turk slept his last sleep.





THE AUTHOR

ALI AHMED K. BROHI, was born on November 11, 1920, in Gharhiyasin, in Shikarpur district of Sind. After Completing studies from Sind Madrassah, Karachi he served in the Royal Indian Navy during the 2nd World War. Taking up journalism after demobilisation he served as Editor of dailies 'Qurbani' and 'Sada-e-Sindh' Karachi; and dailies 'Inquilab', 'Manshoor', and 'Manifesto' Sukkur (1952-54). Joined the Information Department of Khairpur State in 1954 and, on the state's merger, was absorbed in the West Pakistan Information Department. Did a course in tourism in the U.K. under Colombo Plan (1960) and another at NIPA (1961). Was posted Director, Public Relations, Sindh in 1970 but was screened out in 1971 by the Bhutto Government. From 1973 to 1978, served as Legal advisor to several industrial chains. Reinstated in 1978 was posted as OSD in the Information Ministry, Islamabad, and appointed Information Secretary, Government of Sindh, in 1979, a post he held till superannuation in 1980. Has been working since 1980 as Deputy Administrator, Sheikh Sultan Trust, Karachi, under the Federal Education Ministry.

His previous works include several books in Sindhi and English. He is a regular contributor to Sindhi and English publications. In 1983 he received the first APNS Award for the best columnist in Sindhi Language.

His special fields of interest are humour, history and archaeology.

Mr. Brohi has travelled extensively. He is happily married and has six children.

HISTORY OF TOMBSTONES

Sind and Baluchistan

Mr. ALI AHMED K. BROHI, has written the first comprehensive book in English on an aspect of Social Life which played a leading part in the thought and activities of tribal people, at a period of history when the speculation about the nature of after life or more lavish expenditure on graves and on the veneration of the dead was the foremost. Chowkhundi, Roomi or Gharravi is the name given to tomb-stones with characteristic carved decoration, which are found scattered in many parts of Sindh and Baluchistan.

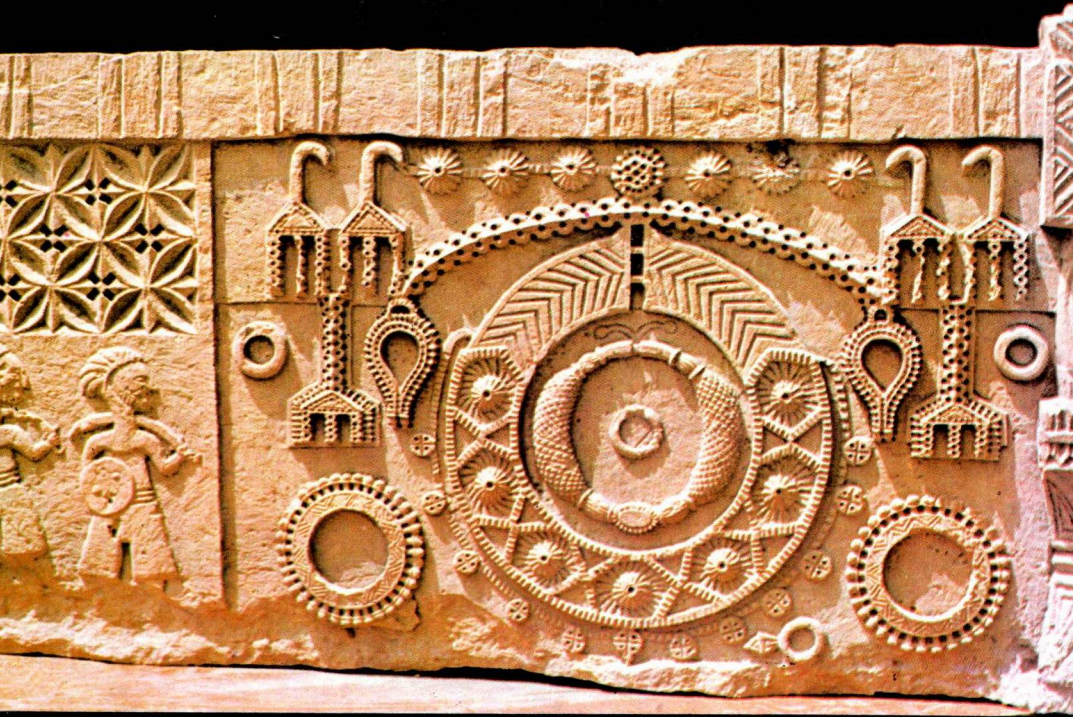
This cult of the departed had double purpose. It provided that the dead survived in the memory of relatives, descendants and friends and it also sought to ensure through the medium of devout attention to their mortal relics in the tomb and perennial renewal of life to their immortal spirits. These memorials are the survival of the ancient formal cults of the dead practiced once upon a time in the cultural atmosphere of the middle ages, which had a late flowering in Sindh. The Author of this book, is a devoted student of the History of Archaeology of Sindh. He has been collecting material and conducting research on these subjects, for several years. "History on Tomb-stones" is the result of his hard labour for more than two decades. It is hoped that the historians of Sind as well as the common readers, will find his work interesting and useful.

Secretary
The Sindhi Adabi Board.



history on tombstones

sind and baluchistan



ali ahmad brohi

Ali Ahmad Brohi
1971-2011

The Reading Generation

1960 جي ڏهاڪي ۾ عبدالله حسين ”اُداس نسلين“ نالي ڪتاب لکيو. 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ وري ماڻِڪَ ”ٿُڙهندڙ نسل“ نالي ڪتاب لکي پنهنجي دورَ جي عڪاسي ڪرڻَ جي ڪوشش ڪئي. امداد حُسينيءَ وري 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ ئي لکيو:

انتي ماء جڙيندي آهي اونڌا سونڌا ٻار
ايندڙ نسل سمورو هوندو گونگا ٻوڙا ٻار

هر دور جي نوجوانن کي اداس، لڙهندڙ، ڪڙهندڙ، ڪڙهندڙ، ٻرندڙ، چُرندڙ، ڪِرندڙ، اوسيئڙو ڪندڙ، پاڙي، ڪاڻو، پاڇوڪڙ، ڪاوڙيل ۽ وڙهندڙ نسلن سان منسوب ڪري سگهجي ٿو، پر اسان انهن سڀني وچان ”پڙهندڙ“ نسل جا ڳولائو آهيون. ڪتابن کي ڪاڳر تان ڪڍي ڪمپيوٽر جي دنيا ۾ آڻڻ، ٻين لفظن ۾ برقي ڪتاب يعني e-books ٺاهي ورهائڻ جي وسيلي پڙهندڙ نسل کي وَڌڻ، ويجهڻ ۽ هِڪَ ٻئي کي ڳولي سَهڪاري تحريڪ جي رستي تي آڻڻ جي آس رکون ٿا.

پڙهندڙ نسل (پڻ) ڪا به تنظيم ناهي. اُن جو ڪو به صدر، عهديدار يا پايو وجهندڙ نه آهي. جيڪڏهن ڪو به شخص اهڙي دعويٰ ڪري ٿو ته پڪڙ جاڻو ته اهو ڪوڙو آهي. نه ئي وري پڻ جي نالي ڪي پئسا گڏ ڪيا ويندا. جيڪڏهن ڪو اهڙي ڪوشش ڪري ٿو ته پڪڙ جاڻو ته اهو به ڪوڙو آهي.

جهڙيءَ طرح وڻن جا پَن ساوا، ڳاڙها، نيرا، پيلا يا ناسي هوندا آهن اهڙيءَ طرح پڙهندڙ سُئل وارا پَن به مختلف آهن ۽ هوندا. اُهي ساڳئي ئي وقت اداس ۽ پڙهندڙ، ٻرندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ، سُست ۽ پڙهندڙ يا وڙهندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ به ٿي سگهن ٿا. ٻين لفظن ۾ پَن ڪا خصوصي ۽ تالي لڳل ڪلب Exclusive Club نه آهي.

ڪوشش اها هوندي ته پَن جا سڀ ڪم ڪار سهڪاري ۽ رضاڪار بنيادن تي ٿين، پر ممڪن آهي ته ڪي ڪم اجرتي بنيادن تي به ٿين. اهڙي حالت ۾ پَن پاڻ هِڪڙيءَ جي مدد ڪرڻ جي اصول هيٺ ڏي وٺ ڪندا ۽ غيرتجارتي non-commercial رهندا. پَن پاران ڪتابن کي ڊجيٽائيز digitize ڪرڻ جي عمل مان ڪو به مالي فائدو يا نفعو حاصل ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش نه ڪئي ويندي.

ڪتابن کي ڊجيٽائيز ڪرڻ کان پوءِ اهم مرحلو ورهائڻ distribution جو ٿيندو. اهو ڪم ڪرڻ وارن مان جيڪڏهن ڪو پيسا ڪمائي سگهي ٿو ته ڀلي ڪمائي، رڳو پَن سان اُن جو ڪو به لاڳاپو نه هوندو.

پَن کي کليل اکرن ۾ صلاح ڏجي ٿي ته هو وَس پٽاندڙ وڌ کان وڌ ڪتاب خريد ڪري ڪتابن جي ليکڪن، ڇپائيندڙن ۽ ڇاپيندڙن کي همٿائين. پر ساڳئي وقت علم حاصل ڪرڻ ۽ ڄاڻ کي ڦهلائڻ جي ڪوشش دوران ڪنهن به رڪاوٽ کي نه مڃن.

شيخ آياز علم، جاڻ، سمجھ ۽ ڏاهپ کي گيت، بيت، سٽ، پُڪارَ سان
تَشْبِيه ڏيندي انهن سڀني کي بَمَن، گولين ۽ بارودَ جي مدِ مقابل بيهاريو
آهي. اياز چوي ٿو ته:

گيت به چڻ گوريلا آهن، جي ويريءَ تي وار ڪرڻ ٿا.

.....

جئن جئن جاڙ وڌي ٿي جڳ ۾، هو ٻوليءَ جي آڙ چُپن ٿا؛
ريٽيءَ تي راتاها ڪن ٿا، موٽي منجهه پهراڻ چُپن ٿا؛

.....

ڪالهه هُيا جي سُرخ ڪُڻن جيئن، اڄڪلهه نيلا پيلا آهن؛
گيت به چڻ گوريلا آهن.....

.....

هي بيت اُتي، هي بَمَ - گولو،

جيڪي به ڪُٽين، جيڪي به ڪُٽين!

مون لاءِ ٻنهي ۾ فَرَقُ نه آ، هي بيتُ به بَمَ جو ساٿي آ،
جنهن رڻ ۾ رات ڪَيا راڙا، تنهن هڏُ ۽ چَمَ جو ساٿي آ -

ان حساب سان اڻڄاڻائي کي پاڻ تي اهو سوچي مڙهڻ ته ”هاڻي ويڙهه ۽
عمل جو دور آهي، اُن ڪري پڙهڻ تي وقت نه وڃايو“ نادانيءَ جي نشاني
آهي.

پڻ جو پڙهڻ عام ڪتابي ڪيڙن وانگر رڳو نصابي ڪتابن تائين
محدود نه هوندو. رڳو نصابي ڪتابن ۾ پاڻ کي قيد ڪري ڇڏڻ سان سماج
۽ سماجي حالتن تان نظر ڪڍي ويندي ۽ نتيجي طور سماجي ۽ حڪومتي
پاليسيون policies اڻڄاڻن ۽ نادانن جي هٿن ۾ رهنديون. پڻ نصابي ڪتابن
سان گڏوگڏ ادبي، تاريخي، سياسي، سماجي، اقتصادي، سائنسي ۽ ٻين

ڪتابن کي پڙهي سماجي حالتن کي بهتر بنائڻ جي ڪوشش ڪندا.

پڙهندڙ سُئل جا پَن سڀني کي چو، چالاءِ ۽ ڪينئن جهڙن سوالن کي هر بيان تي لاڳو ڪرڻ جي ڪوڏ ڏين ٿا ۽ انهن تي ويچار ڪرڻ سان گڏ جواب ڳولڻ کي نه رڳو پنهنجو حق، پر فرض ۽ اٽل گهرج unavoidable necessity سمجهندي ڪتابن کي پاڻ پڙهڻ ۽ وڌ کان وڌ ماڻهن تائين پهچائڻ جي ڪوشش جديد ترين طريقن وسيلي ڪرڻ جو ويچار رکن ٿا.

توهان به پڙهڻ، پڙهائڻ ۽ ڦهلائڻ جي ان سهڪاري تحريڪ ۾ شامل ٿي سگهو ٿا، بس پنهنجي اوسي پاسي ۾ ڏسو، هر قسم جا ڳاڙها توڙي نيرا، ساوا توڙي پيلا پن ضرور نظر اچي ويندا.

وڻ وڻ کي مون پاڪي پائي چيو ته ”منهنجا پاءُ
پهتو منهنجي من ۾ تنهنجي پَن پَن جو پڙلاءُ.“
- اياز (ڪلهي پاتم ڪينرو)