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# Archaeological Investigations in Manchar Concession Area (Area of Operation)

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**Abstract:** *The paper presents results of archaeological surveys undertaken in Manchar Concession Area, Dadu District, Sindh Province, Pakistan. The explorations were conducted as a part of feasibility study to evaluate the archaeological remains in the area in the light of E.N.I., an Italian Oil Company deciding to investigate into the potential oil resources in the region. The surveys in the region yielded several archaeological remains ranging from prehistoric workshop sites to medieval tombs and mosques, many of which were previously unreported.*

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**Keywords:** E.N.I, Halcrow Pakistan, Sindh, Feasibility Study, Manchar Lake, Indus, Kai Valley

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## Introduction

E.N.I, an Italian oil company having few projects in Pakistan was working on the potential development of oil exploration in Dadu District of Sindh province, Pakistan. E.N.I, in the course of the project of Manchar Concession Area conducted a feasibility study that evaluated the project development taking into account the many technical, economic, environmental and social factors that influence it, decided to also involve archaeological investigations along the seismic lines in the region. In pursuit of the aforementioned objective, E.N.I. employed Halcrow Pakistan, a leading company for environmental study, who requested the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan, for the services of specialist for archaeological assessment on the seismic lines in the operational area. Sensing the significance of the rich cultural legacy of the region, the Director General of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan, deputed the author of present paper for the same purpose. The paper presents the results of the survey being conducted in the region which brought to light several interesting archaeological features.

The area for Archaeological investigation or Manchar concession area lies at the southern part of the Indus valley between 26° 57' 00" and 26° 13' 00" N and 67° 30' 00" and 67° 55' 50" east, and covers an area of app. 2435 km. The area where seismic survey was conducted is concentrated within two distinct units, situated to the east and to the

south of Manchar Lake. The most extensive explored area is in east – north – east of Manchar lake between the towns of Bhan Saeedabad and Sehwan and the Indus river, within the flood bund system that protect the main cultivated area. The whole area is predominantly rural and is divided into two by the eastern flood bund. The west of the F.P. bund is a well established rural area through which pass a number of major communication routes of small villages and big towns. The east of F.P. bund flowing the stabilization of the river Indus, flood flows by the development of Sukkur Barrage, Land has also become extensively converted from bushes to agriculture. The area is to the south of Manchar Lake, within the limits between the village of Lakki and Jhangara and the Naing Nai. The area is predominantly a stony, flat plain with minor rural development centered on Manchar Lake with a number of isolated settled communities to the south west of Lake Manchar. As the area of study in concern lies between Indus River, Sehwan town, Manchar Lake and Kai valley, it is necessary to shade light on this region before going into detail of archaeological study.

### **Indus River**

The Indus basin covers an area of 207,200 km from Himalayan Mountains to the Mangrove swamp of southern Sindh. Its alluvial plain covers app: 25% of the whole national territory of Pakistan. It has been exploited throughout historical times for irrigated agriculture, the foundation of both ancient and recent civilization in Pakistan. The section of the lower Indus between Dadu – Moro Bridge and Sehwan that occurs within a seismic survey area is a large meandering river with a number of locally branching sections within a large active flood plain.

### **Sehwan Town**

The chief town of the *taluka* of the same name is situated on the eminence at a verge of swamp on the south west bank of the Aral Canal, which flows from Manchar Lake into the Indus. The river a few years ago used to flow close to Sehwan, but it has no quite deserted. A few Kilometers south of Sehwan, the Lakki Mountain terminates abruptly on the river and forms a distinctive feature in the scenery of this part of the town. The town is seated on the main road leading from Karachi to Larkana.

### **Manchar Lake**

The Machar Lake lies amid the generally arid, dreary and sterile character of the scenery of Sindh, and constitutes the most important feature of Dadu District, which is formed by the expansion of the Western Nara and the Aral streams. According to T. Postans (1973) the Manchar Lake is exceptional, being the seat of an old Sindhu civilization, and is the biggest Sweetwater Lake of Asia. During the period of inundation, the Manchar may be estimated at from 30 to 35 Km in length, with a breath of about 16 Km, but when the water is low the area is greatly contracted

### **Kai Valley**

Kai valley is located at the northern end of the Bado range, the foothills of which form

the valley into a niche shape configuration. The northern part of the valley is bordered by the Gamrak hill, which runs parallel to the south western shore of the Manchar Lake. There are several rainy drainage channels, which run south west to north east from the Bado range towards the north east corner of the Kai valley. The major drainage channel of the valley is Kai Nai. A spring issues from the north western part of the Bado range and enters in the Kai valley at the present day village of Kai. The spring is the only source of permanent water in the valley.

## **Cultural Developments in the Area**

Archaeologically it appears that the region lying west of the River Indus has played a vital role in the weaving and tinting the cultural fabric of the country and the western part of south Asia. The two main cultural links, one with Red Ware tradition and the other with Buff Ware comes from north and west, and gave rise to the world famous urbanized culture called the Indus civilization, which is believed to be the utilitarian but sophisticated and the largest among the ancient civilization of the world.

Historically, after the decline of Indus civilization numerous cultural traditions have been entered into this region, through the two main mountains passes i.e. Khyber Pass and Bolan Pass. Sindh has usually not been out of the reach of those rough and rustic waves of the nomads.

In this context, if the architectural aspects of the region are studied it will prove that right from the Neolithic period about 7<sup>th</sup> millennium, B.C., the people living to the west of River Indus must have their own architecture and high perfection during the mature phase of Indus civilization. The region between Mohenjodaro and Amri on the west of River Indus has remained the hub of cultural activities in the past.

Around the Manchar lake and along its north eastern side, there are archaeological sites and monuments been documented during earlier explorations. Before this seismic lines survey, in 1935 N.G Majumdar (1981 Reprint) later in 1980's Louis Flam(1981) from University of Pennsylvania USA and in the 1990's Qasid Mallah from Shah Abdul Latif University conducted explorations in search of buried archaeological sites (Mallah 2009). In the same region Zulfiqar Ali Kalhoro from Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad also conducted surveys in search of rock carvings in Khir Thar region and to document paintings in monuments. During the current explorations in Manchar concession area with the E.N.I company, a few sites and monuments have been documented along the seismic lines. These have been described in the following section.

## **Kot Lashari (Fortress)**

Location: Fortress locally known as Kot Lashari (98° 44' 56" N, 21° 25' 27" E) is situated in the village and Deh Kot Lashari, *Taluka* Sehwan and District Dadu between Khirthar and Indus. In the north of the monument lies Mian Muhammad Essa Village, while in the east is the Deh Shahgarh, The Talti Kot Lashari road is in west of fortress.

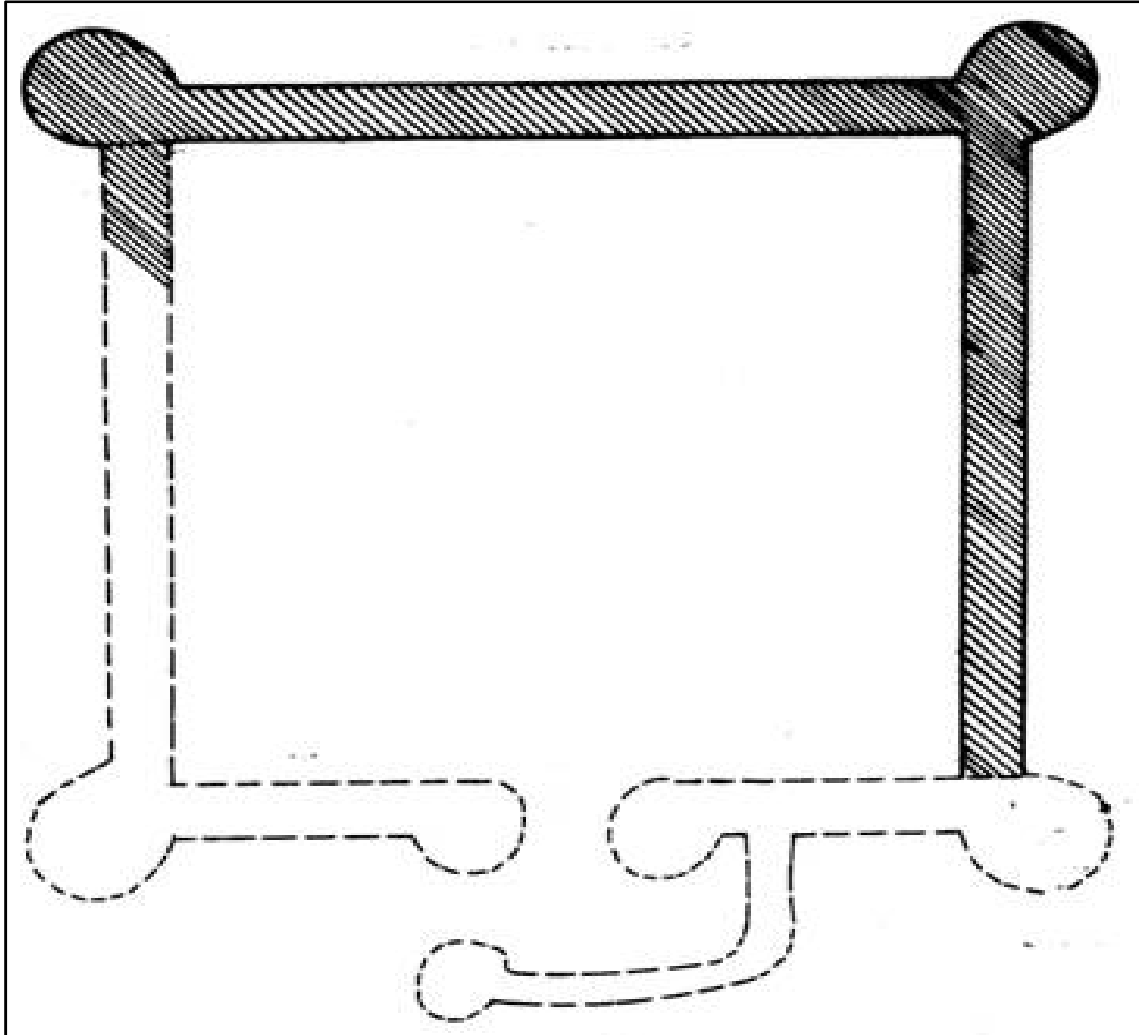


Figure 1: Plan of Kot Loshari (Fort)



Figure 2: General view of Kot Lashari (Fort)

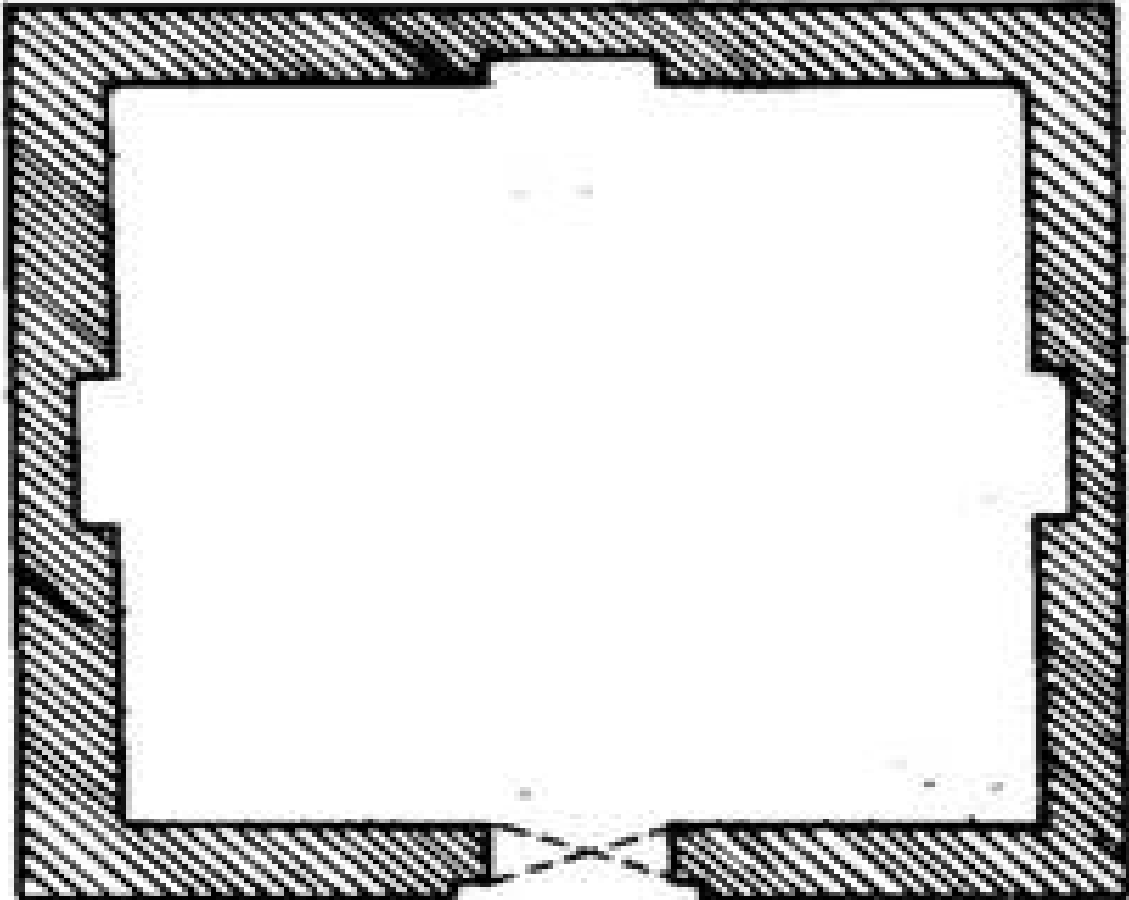


Figure 3: Plan of Hussain Shah Tomb

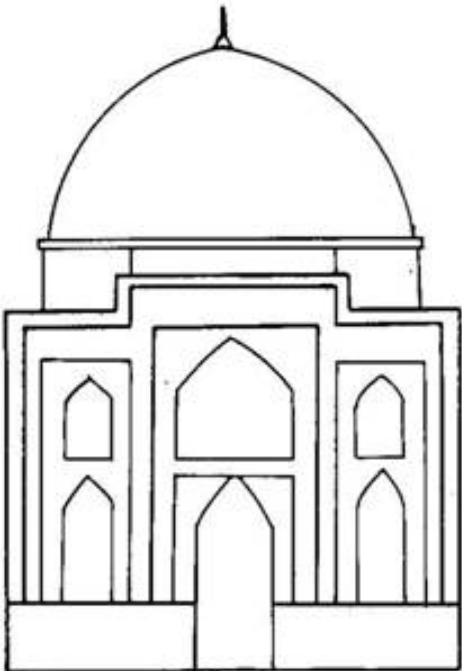


Figure 4: Elevation of Hussain Shah Tomb



**Figure 5: North eastern view of Hussain Shah tomb**



**Figure 6: General view of Kot Lashari mound from east**

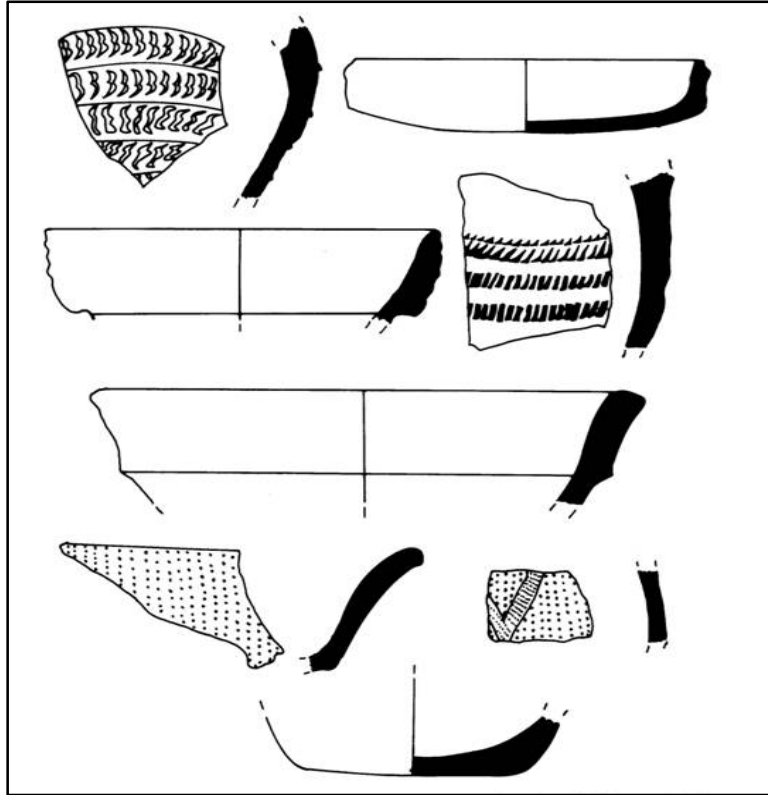


Figure 7: Type of Pottery from Kot Lashari Mound (17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> A.D.)

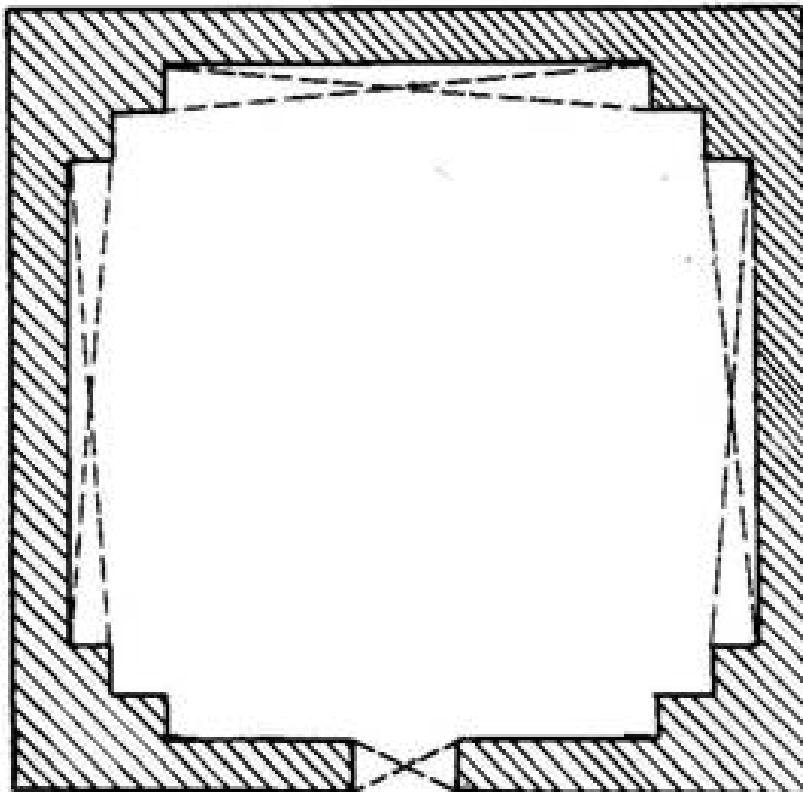
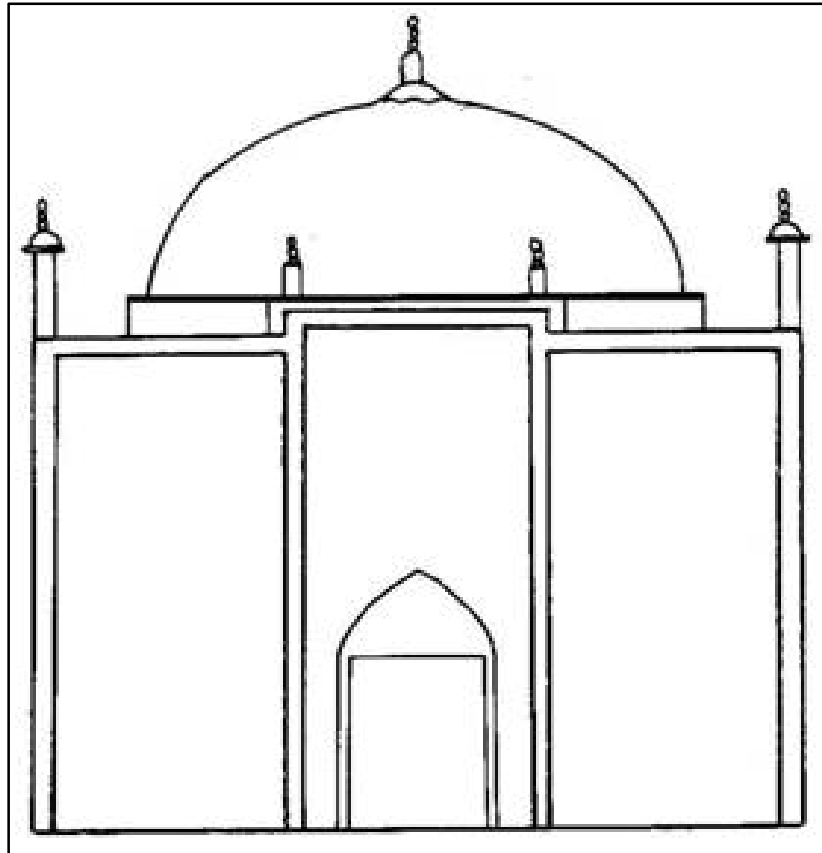


Figure 8: Plan of Qaim Shah Tomb



**Figure 9: Elevation of Qaim Shah Tomb**



**Figure 10: South eastern view of Qaim Shah tomb**





Figure 11: General view of mound, near Imam Bux Khoso Village

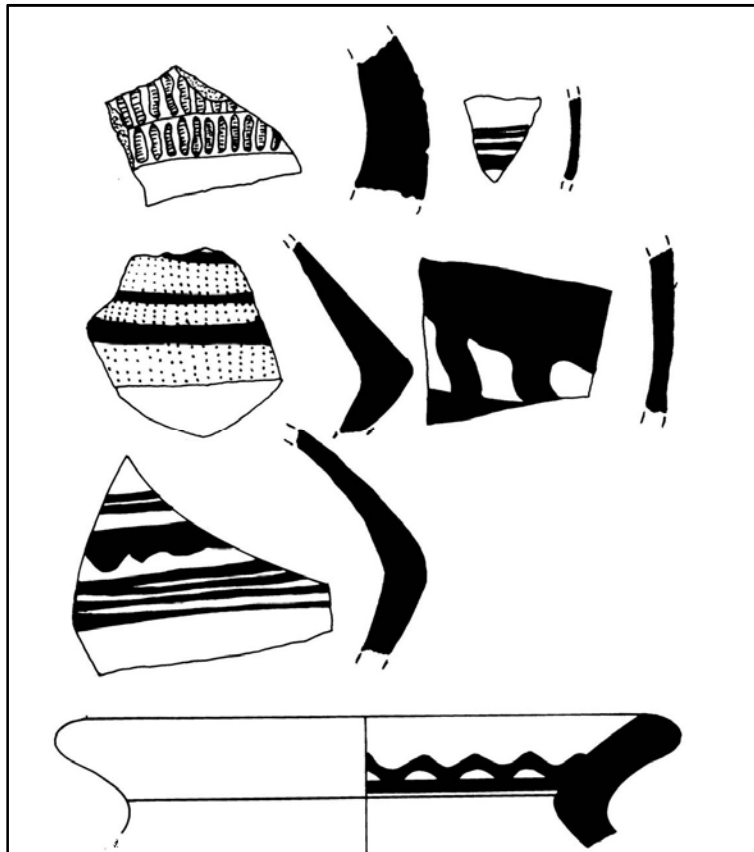


Figure 12: Type of Pottery from Imam Bux Khoso Mound (14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D)

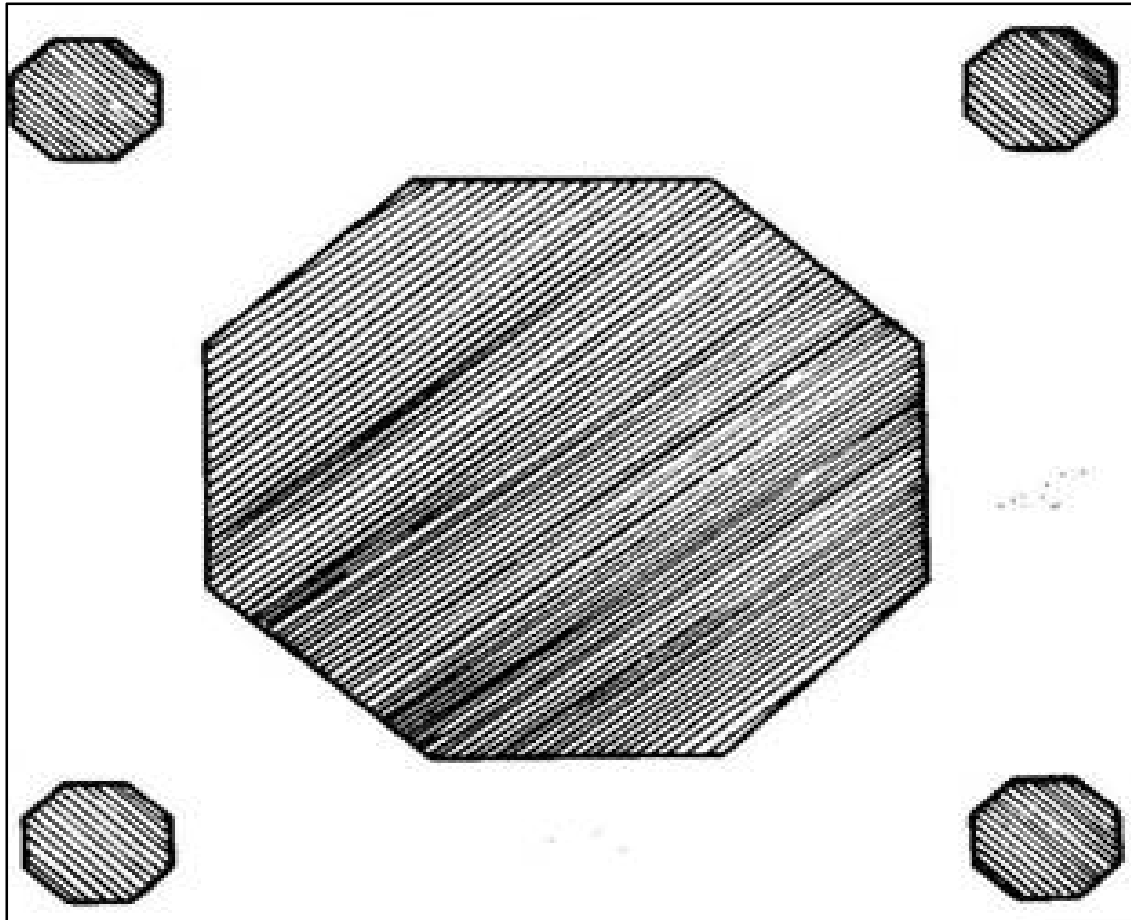


Figure 13: Plan of Qalandar ji Chau Thambi

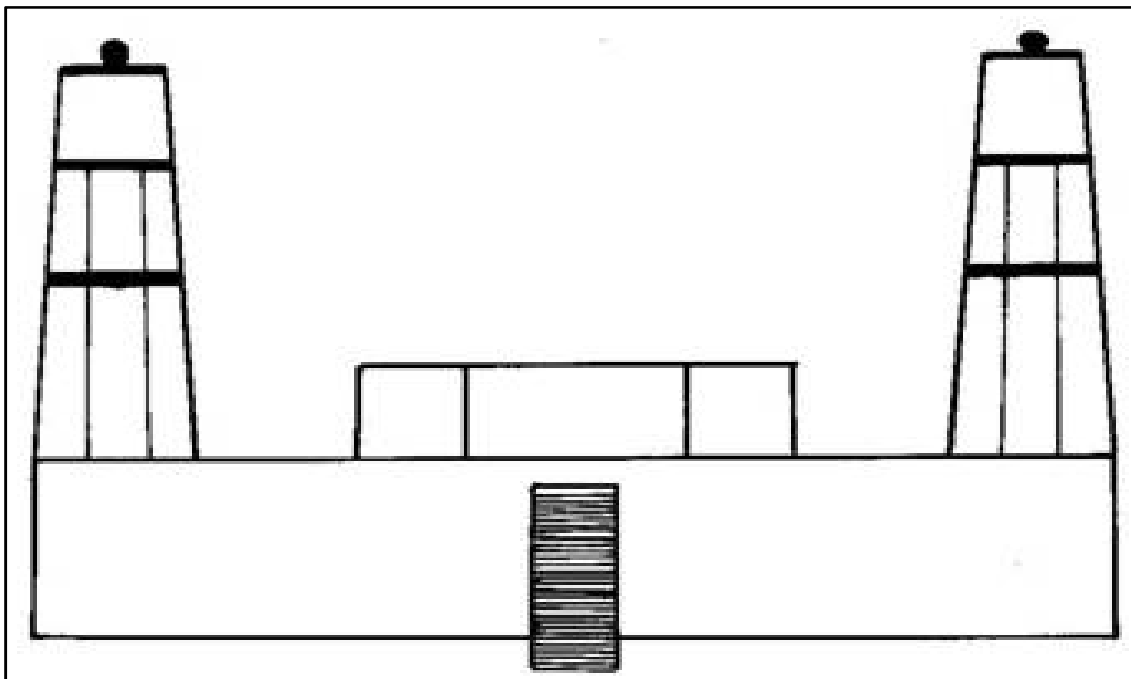


Figure 14: Elevation of Qalandar ji Chau Thambi



**Figure 15: General view of Qalandar ji Chau Thambi**



**Figure 16: General view of Daim jo Daro (Daim ji Miani)**

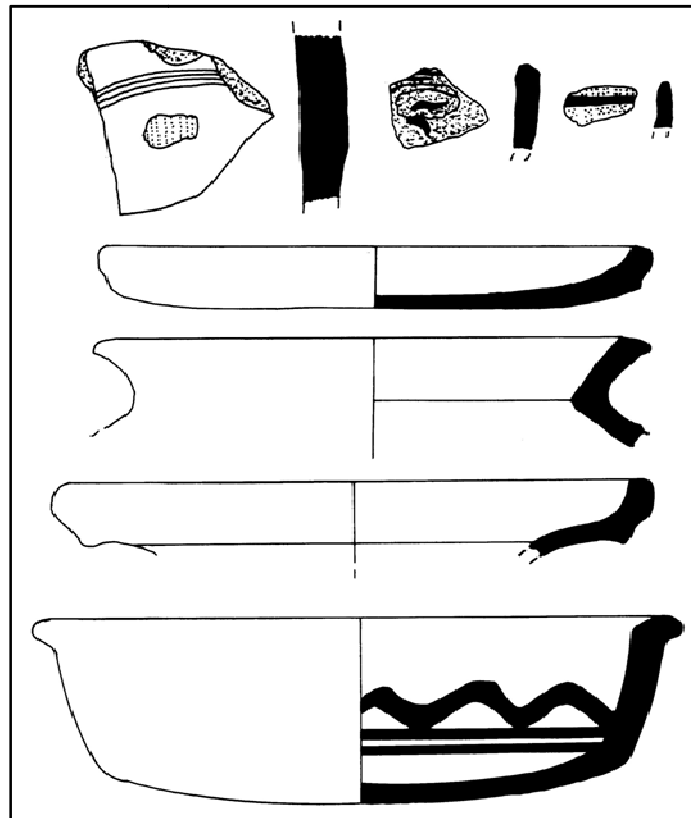


Figure 17: Type of Pottery from Daim jo Daro



Figure 18: General view of Lakhmir Ji Mari / Kotiro

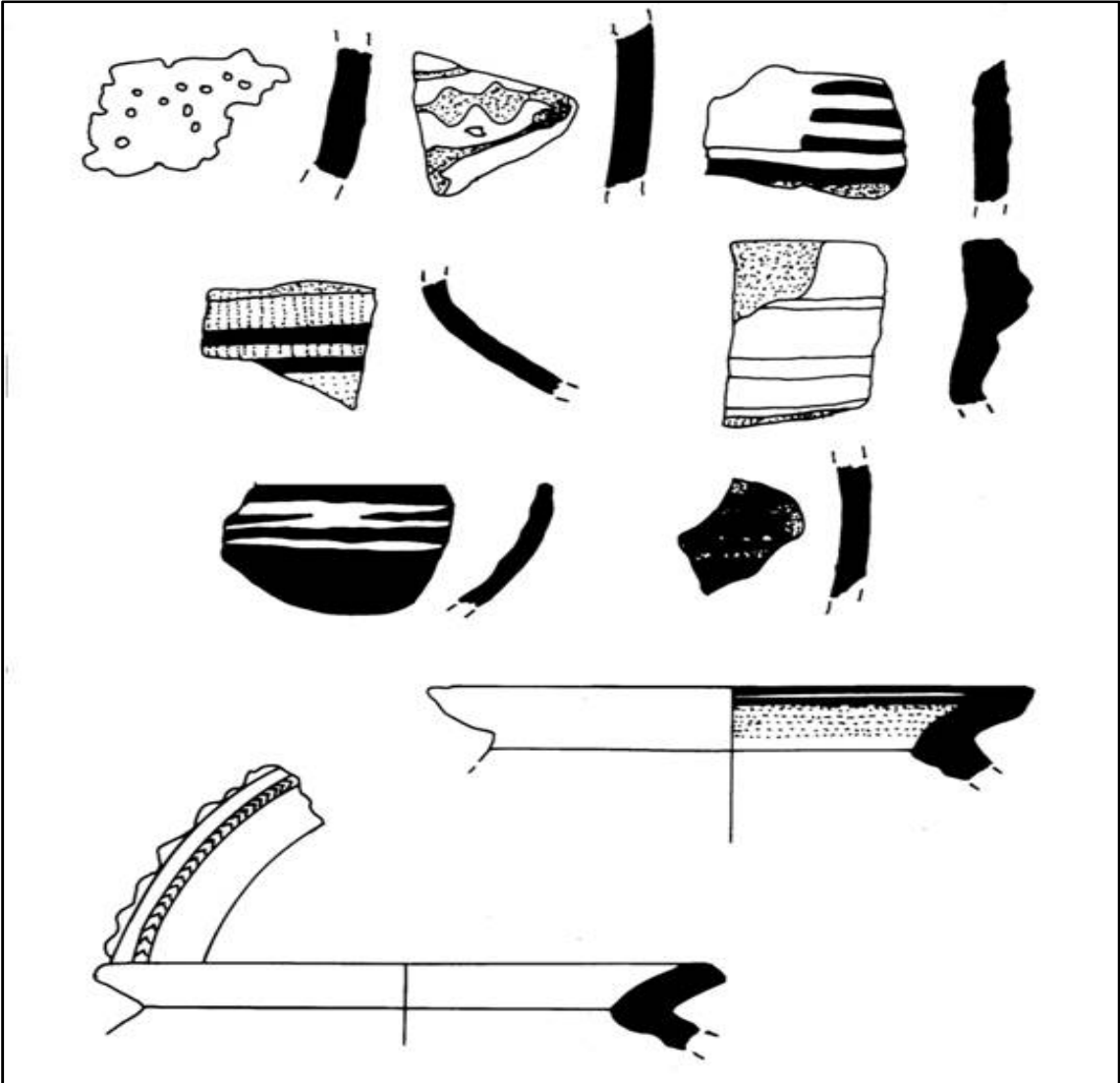


Figure 19: Type of Pottery from Lakhmir Ji Mari / Kotiro (Harappan Period)

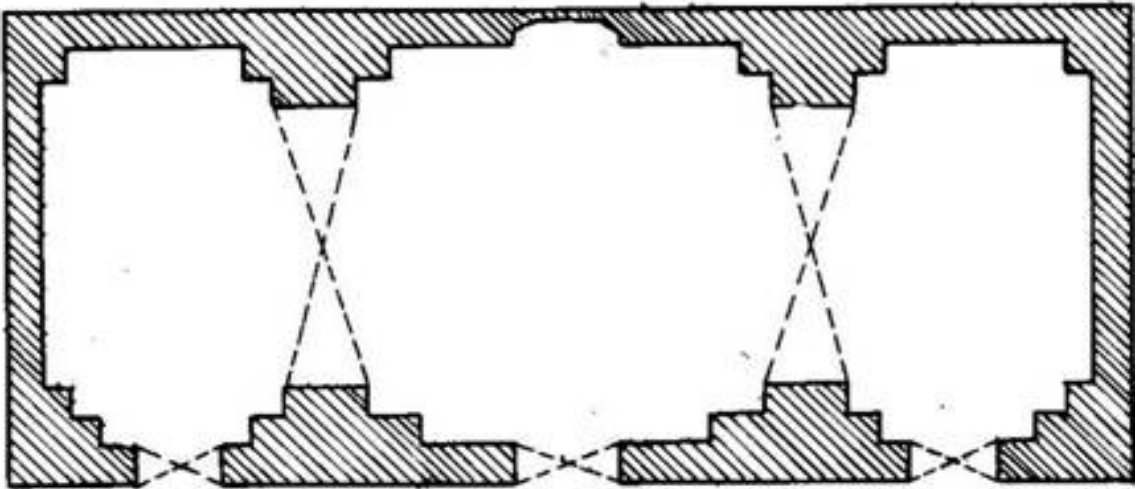


Figure 20: Plan of Traini Village Mosque

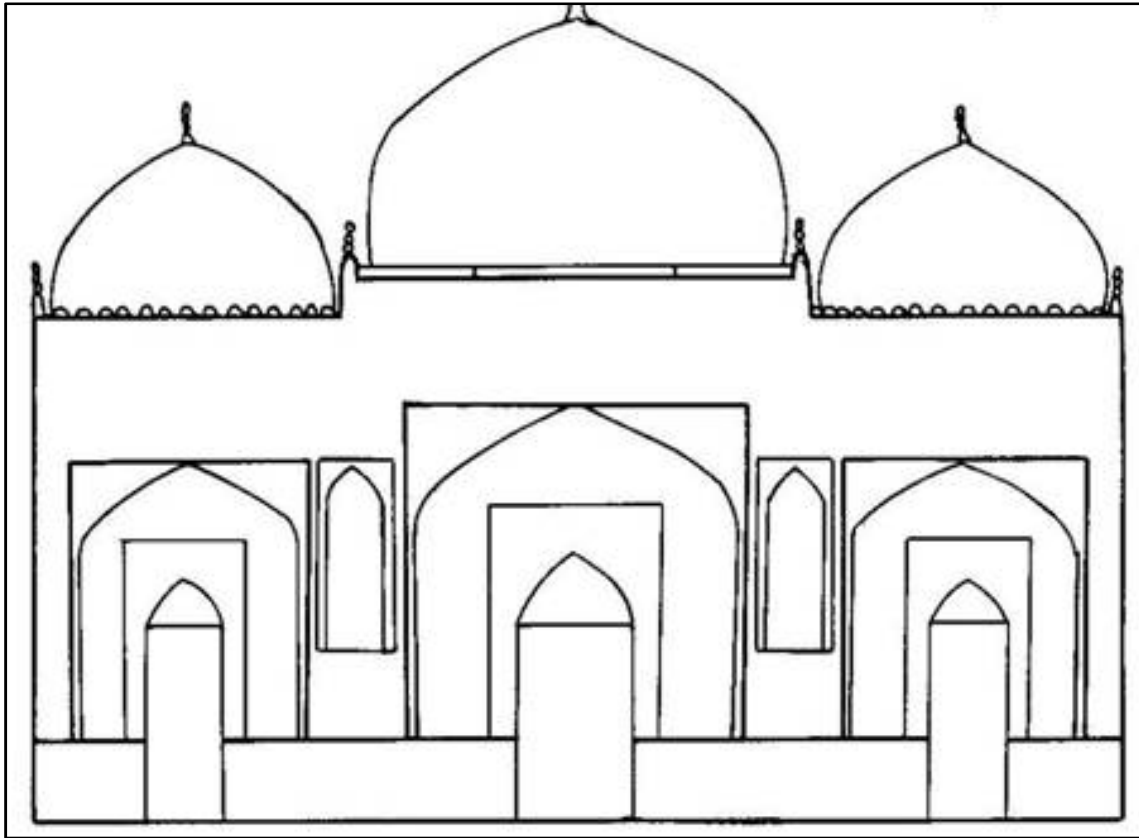


Figure 21: Elevation of Traini Village Mosque



Figure 22: Genral view of Mosque in Traini Village

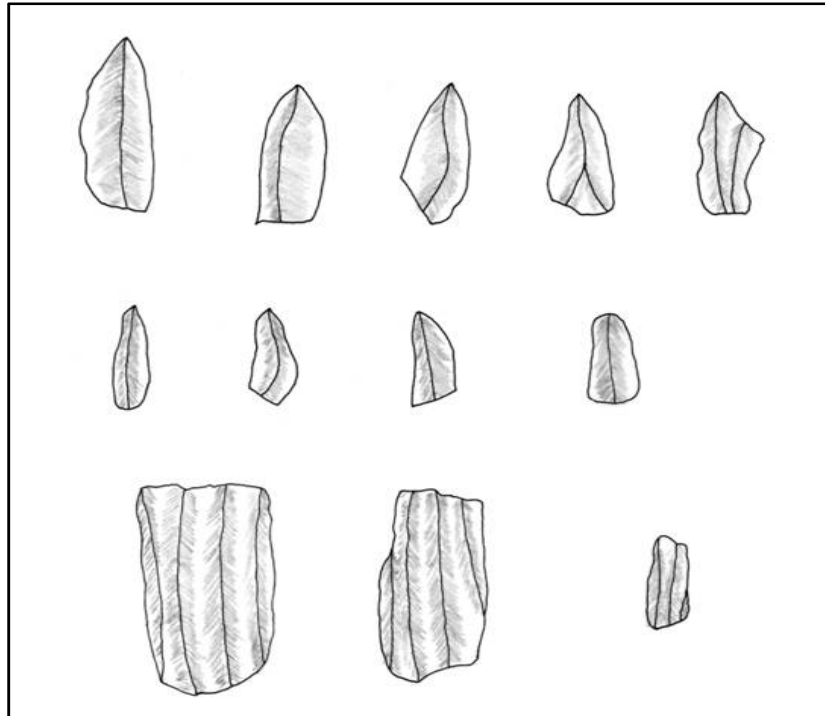


Figure 23: Surface Collection of stone tools from Bado Jabal Site (Prehistoric Period)

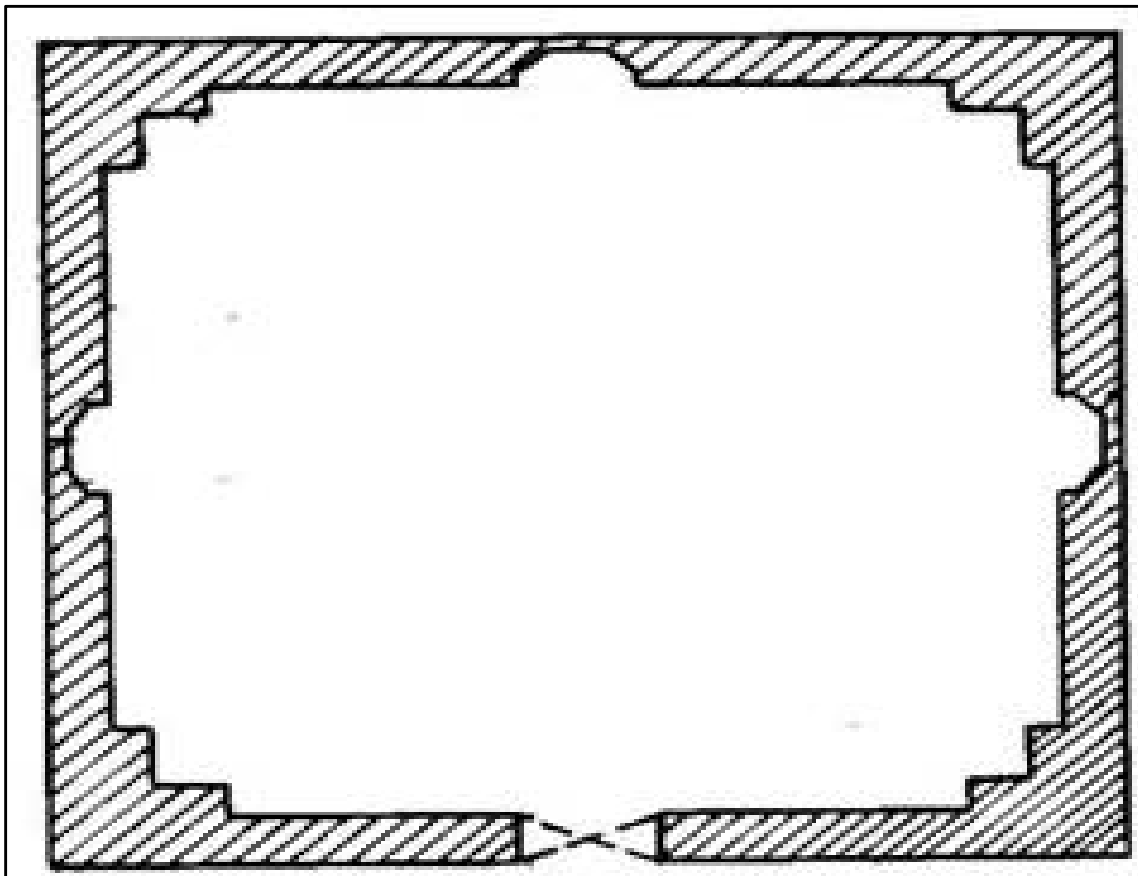
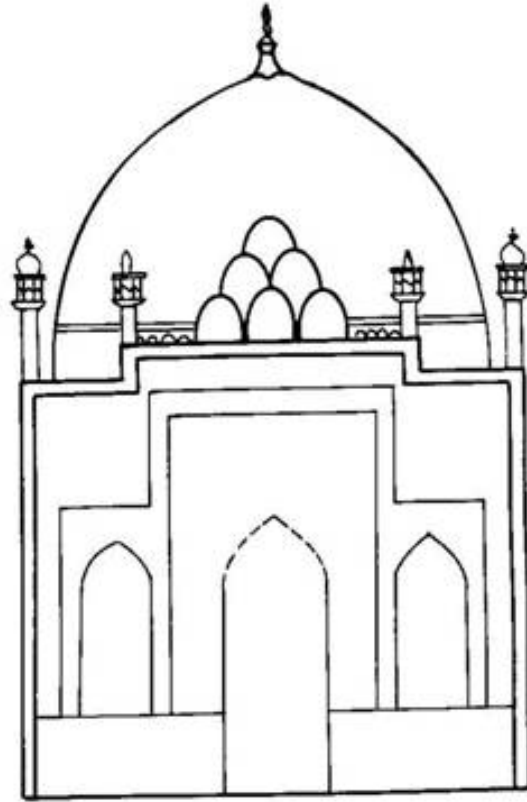


Figure 24: Plan of Shahab Uddin Shah Bukhari Tomb



**Figure 25: Elevation of Shahab Uddin Shah Bukhari Tomb**



**Figure 26: Southern eastern view of Shahab Uddin Shah Bukhari Tomb**



Size	:	70x70x4m
Plan	:	Square in plan
Construction Material	:	Mud bricks, mud mortar, straw

**Internal Description:** Only the remains of the wall made of mud bricks on the western and northern side are surviving. The land in the interior of the monument has been utilized by the locals for agricultural activities. The foundations of the eastern and southern walls are still visible. On the western wall from inside the remains of mud plaster mixed with straw has been applied. Unfortunately due to agricultural activities, it is difficult to state with precision about the number of rooms inside the Kot.

**External description:** Only the ruins of western and northern walls found with two bastions, one in south western corner and the other in north western corner. The bastions are almost round in shape. The foundations of the structures indicate that the Kot had entrance from the eastern side along with two bastions at the corners and two bastions at the entrance. There are remains of a screen in front of entrance. (Figs. 1 & 2).

**Condition Report:** The fortress is in a ruined condition with only two walls that can be preserved.

**Time period:** According to local traditions and the architectural plan of the fortress it was built during Talpur period (19<sup>th</sup> century AD).

## **Tomb of Hussain Shah**

**Location:** The tomb is situated in village and Dah Karampur, (67°51' 03"N 26° 27' 57" E) *Taluka*Sehwan and District Dadu between Khirther and Indus. In the east of tomb lies F.P bund at a distance of about 100 meters, while in north and west is the village of Karampur. Sehwan town is about 7 Km in south east of tomb.

Size in meters	:	4.80x 4.80 x7m
Plan	:	Tomb is square in plan (Fig. 3)
Construction Material	:	Burnt bricks, mud mortar Cement, lime plaster straw.

**External Description:** Entrance of the tomb is from east side through pointed arch, while a wooden frame has also been fixed in entrance. There are two rectangular panels above the entrance, while two rectangular panels and blind arch panels are on both sides of entrance in vertical direction. All around the square structure have plain surface treatment. Low octagonal drum has inverted bowl shape dome, crowned with glaze finial. The tomb has been plastered with lime plaster on the exterior (Figures 4 & 5).

**Internal Description:** Inside the tomb each side wall has a large size niche, while western side has been provided two small niches on both sides in the corner. The zone

of transition has been created with the help of corner squinch to convert its top into an octagon to support the inverted bowl shaped dome. The dome has been decorated with a glaze plated medallion. Mud plaster has been applied from inside after renovation. One grave of a saint is visible inside the tomb.

Time period: The tomb was built in early twentieth century A.D.

Condition report: At present the tomb exists in reasonable state of preservation as the locals take care of it and renovates it as need arises.

### **Kot Lashari Mound**

Location: The archaeological mound is situated on the northern edge of village and deh Kot Lashari (98° 44' 56' N, 21° 25' 27" E.) Taluka Sehwan and District Dadu between Khirther and Indus. In the west of mound is the Shaheed Bachal Shah Shrine at a distance of 500m. The Talti Kot Lashari road is also on west side, while east side has a deserted land of Deh Shahgarh, Talti village is about 22 Km north of mound.

Size in meters : Length 70x50x2m

Description: The major portion of the mound is already occupied by the villagers. On the surface of the mound only potsherd and burnt brick bats are scattered in reasonable quantity. Wild bushes are grown over the mound. Locals have excavated the site area to use soil for construction their houses (Fig. 6).

Finds: Red Ware thick textured pottery found from surface. Mostly sherds are painted in black on red with red slip as background. The design is only floral and geometrical in black colour. The type of sherd collected are with grooves pattern, incised wavy lines, cut marks design on rim and embossed decorated floral pattern are also observed with few glaze sherds. Not a single small antiquity found except pottery (Fig. 7).

Cultural association: The pottery collected from surface suggests that the mound belongs to 17<sup>th</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### **Tomb of Qaim Shah**

Location: The tomb is situated in village and Deh Traini, (26° 22' 53' N 67° 39' 48" E) taluka Sehwan and District Dadu between Manchar lake and Khirther. In the east of tomb Traini village is situated while the area to the north of the tomb is occupied by Manchar Lake. In the west of the tomb Shah Hussain village is at a reasonable distance while to the south of tomb, Jhangara Shah Hassan road is situated. Jhangara village is about 17 Km to the south east of tomb.

Size : 5x5x8m

Plan : Square in plan (Fig. 8)

External description: The entrance has been provided from east side through a

pointed arch, while a new wooden frame has been fixed later at the time of renovation. The facade has been decorated with three rectangular panels while windows have been provided from north and south sides. All along the square structure renovation have been done roughly. Four pinnacles are on parapet wall on facade while two on east side. Low octagonal drum is crowned with inverted bowl shape dome and the same is decorated with *mahapadma* and glaze finial. Lime plaster and cement plaster has been applied from outside (Figs. 9 & 10)

Internal description: Each wall from inside have been provided with deep resses arch, while western side has three niches. Four squinch arches have been provided in each corner to support the dome. There are four blind arch panels in between the squinch arches. Part of drum and dome is newly constructed because the old dome had collapsed due to passage of time. Square structure and squinch arches are lime plastered with sicco painting in floral and geometrical designs.

Cultural association / Time period: Tomb was built during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Condition report: At present tomb is in reasonable condition.

### **Mound near Imam BuxKhoso Village**

Location: Archaeological mound is located near Imam BuxKhoso village, dehGarmchat, (26° 20, 18" N 67° 38, 36" E.) Taluka Sehwan and District Dadu. In the south of remains is the Jhangara Naing road at a distance of 1 Km. The mound is located at a distance of 300 m north of Imam Bux village. Jhangara village is about 13 Km east of the mound.

Size : Length 130x90x 2m

Description: The temporary site in character is located on a barren land with huge quantities of medium size boulders and small gravels on surface. The soil of the site is brownish in colour and only potsherds in good quantity were collected from surface. The structural remains are not visible on the surface (Fig. 11).

Finds: Only pot shreds having a thick texture of Red Ware were collected from surface. The shreds indicate that the pots were made on wheel turned technique. There are very few sherds of thin texture, while few shreds of polychrome variety having black and orange colour paintings on red slip background were also documented. The painted designs are floral and geometrical in character while incised patterns in same technique were also noticed (Fig. 12).

Cultural association: The pottery collected from surface suggests that the site can be dated within the time frame of 14<sup>th</sup>- 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### **Qalandarji Chau Thambi**

Location: The monument is located in south west of Sehwan town on a hillock (26° 25'

50° N 67° 51' 15" E). Lalbagh is about 500 m south, while Hyderabad-Sehwan road is on east of monument at a distance of 300 m. ShahbazQalander shrine is about 1 Km to the north.

Size : 8.20x8.20x3m  
Plan : Square in plan (Fig. 13)

Description: The square structured platform rests on a hillock top, while a cave called Yak Thambi is on the second layer below. The platform is constructed with burnt bricks and *charoli* as mortar has been used. The same is decorated with four pinnacles on top, one on each corner. For easy approach staircases have been provided on the east. Each of the four sides has plains surface treatment of lime plaster, while in the later period cement plaster has also been applied. The sitting throne is octagonal on top of platform. According to the local traditions, it is believed to be a court of justice of Shahbaz Qalander. Another monument associated with Chau Thambi is called Yak Thambi or worship place of saint. There is a cave with entrance on the northern side with pillar in center on second layer of court (Figs. 14 & 15).

Period:Based on the architectural features, the monument can be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE.

Condition report: The monument is in a reasonable state of preservation as the locals are taking care of it.

### **Daimjo Daro (Daimji Miani)**

Location: Ancient remains are located in the village Daimji Miani, dehSupar, (26°, 28, 30" N, 67°, 40', 45" E) Taluka Sehwan and District Dadu. In the south east of tomb app: 1 Km is Nangar Brohi Village, while F. P bund is on the west of the mound. Irrigation bungalow is about 100 m to the south of the ancient remains. Bubak village is about 10 Km to the south east.

Size : 120x70x2m

Description: On top of triangular shaped mound locals have built a mosque, while the northern portion of the mound is also encroached by villagers. Structural remains are not visible from any side. The rain water has made fissures and gullies which exposed remains of small finds in detail (Fig. 16).

Finds: From the surface of the mound, only potsherds are found in good numbers. A Majority of the pot shreds belong to plain Red Ware and medium in texture with red slip coating. The patterns found on the potsherds are incised, cut marks, and grooved patterns. The painted shreds show variety of geometrical designs in black colour on red background. The thick textured shreds were also collected with few shreds of glaze pottery having green and dark blue colour. Among small finds one ring and one copper fragment of coin was also found from the surface (Fig. 17).

Period: Based on the artefactual remains collected from the site, the site can be dated in the time frame of 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### **Lakhmir Ji Mari/Kotiro**

Location: The archaeological mound is located in village and deh Naing, ( 26° 16' 46" N 67° 30' 55" E) *Taluka* Sehwan and District Dadu in between Khirther and Sehwan. The Naing Sharief Jhangara road is on the east at a distance of about 1.5 Km. Kai village is about 9 Km to the north east of the mound. Jhangara village is about 25 Km to the east.

Size : 110x70x17m

Description: The site of Lakhmir Ji Mari at Naing has a two part layout, a conically shaped hill had a lower town. The conically shaped hill is app: 17m in height. On the slope of hill are the remains of a terraced fortification wall. It is evident that the conically shaped hill rests on a natural rock outcrop, but its form had been shaped by the addition of earth. Below the hill or *buthi* are numerous remains of stone structures. The water from a spring flows in a channel past the site. The site is much eroded from all sides (Fig. 18).

Finds: The surface collection of the site included black on red pottery and chert flakes in small numbers. Mostly shreds are of thin texture. Pottery is painted in floral and geometrical design in black on red. The incised and groove pattern on body are observed while a few perforated shreds and one Buff Ware shred was also collected. Buff Ware pottery shows that the site had trade links with sites in Kachi plain area (Fig.19).

Period /Date: On the basis of surface collections, the site can be dated to the mature Indus period or Harappan period.

### **Mosque in Traini Village**

Location: The mosque is located in the southern part of Traini village and deh, (26° 22' 53" N 67° 39' 48" E) *Taluka* Sehwan and District Dadu. In the east of the mosque is the Manchar lake at a distance of about 400 m, while Jhangara Traini road is on north west side of mosque at a distance of 200 m. Shah Hassan village is at considerable distance in North, Jhangara village is about 17 Km to the east.

Size in meters : Length 12.50 m N- S, Width 5.70 m E- W,  
Height 8m  
Construction Material : Burnt bricks, *Charoli*, mud mortar, lime mortar.  
Plan : Rectangular in plan (Fig. 20)

External Description: The prayer chamber of the mosque is rectangular in plan, and has three rectangular wooden door frames from eastern side on façade while the

previous entrances have been provided through pointed arches openings. The central entrance is larger than the others. The portion above the entrance is decorated with two triangular panels with in an arch panel. Rectangular panels have been provided above the entrances while windows have been provided in the northern and southern sides. Except the façade, each of the four sides has plain surface treatment of lime plaster. There is a series of merlons on top of the parapet wall with four turrets on façade and two on western wall. Three onion shaped domes are placed on the octagonal drum. All three domes are decorated with inverted lotus or *mahapadma* and glazed finial. The central dome at prayer chamber is much larger than the ones at the side. The interior of the mosque has been plastered with lime (later addition). A rectangular courtyard is in front of the prayer hall (Fig. 21& 22).

Internal Description: The interior of the prayer hall consists of three rectangular chambers in north and south direction separated by arched bays. The Central chamber is wider than other flanking ones. The western wall has three arch panels with three rectangular panels in it. The eastern wall has three arches above the entrance and the north south side has one. The western wall has a projection to accommodate the *mehrab*. In the central portion of prayer hall there are four arches in corner with four arch panels to provide base for the drum. The central dome has a glaze plate at the medallion. Interior has also been plastered with lime.

Cultural association/ Date: The mosque was built during Kalhora period (1700 – 1783 AD).

### **Bado Jabal Site (Stone Tools Workshop)**

Location: The site is located near Jhangara Bado Jabal road (26° 16' 39" N 67° 34' 28" E) at a milestone mark which shows Bado police post 23 Km to the south west, with a deep rainy *nala* on its east. The site comes in the limits of *Taluka* Sehwan and District Dadu.

Size : 25x8m

Description: The prehistoric workshop site contains evidence of stone tool making lying on surface of Bado Jabal. There is a series of stone tools in east to west direction with round platform of stone boulders. A big amount of raw material of stone tools is scattered on the ground. Only chert blades, retouched and sharp blades, few scrapers and cores stone collected from surface (Fig. 23).

Period: The workshop of stone tools belongs to prehistoric period and may be the supplying center of stone tools to other prehistoric period site located in the surrounding region.

### **Shahab Uddin Shah Bukhari Tomb**

Location: The Tomb is situated near village and dehTalti, (26° 31' 17" N 67° 49' 44" E)

*Taluka* Sehwan and District Dadu, a small village between Indus and Sehwan. In the west of tomb is Talti village at a distance of about 400 m, while F.P. bund is in the east at a distance of about 300 m. Talti Bubak road is also in west of tomb.

Size in meters	:	8.10x8.10x9
Construction material	:	Burnt bricks, lime mortar cement plaster, glazed tile
Plan	:	Square in plan (Fig. 24).

External description: The entrance has been provided from east side through a rectangular wooden frame, while originally the tomb had pointed arch entrance. The façade is decorated in rectangular panels with lavish ornamentation of tile work. Two turrets and two pinnacles with crown in centre have been ornamented on parapet wall. Each of the four sides except façade has plain lime plaster surface treatment. A low octagonal drum is crowned with inverted bowl shaped dome while the dome is decorated with inverted lotus flower and glaze final (Figs. 25 and 26).

Internal description: From the inside, each wall has of arch panels, while *mehrab* sized niches and rectangular panels are present in them. The zone of transition has been created with the help of corner squinch to convert its top in to an octagon to support the dome. The corbelled arch panels and blind arch panels have been provided in between squinch arches. The dome is decorated in multi floral motifs in medallion portion. From *Dado* portion to upward at medallion the newly mirror work (*Aina Kari*) have been applied in floral and geometrical designs. One grave of saint is inside the tombs.

Condition Report: The tomb is well maintained by the locals. It is being renovated from time of time with major tile work and mirror decoration been completed a few years ago.

Period: The tomb can be to late 18<sup>th</sup> century AD.

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