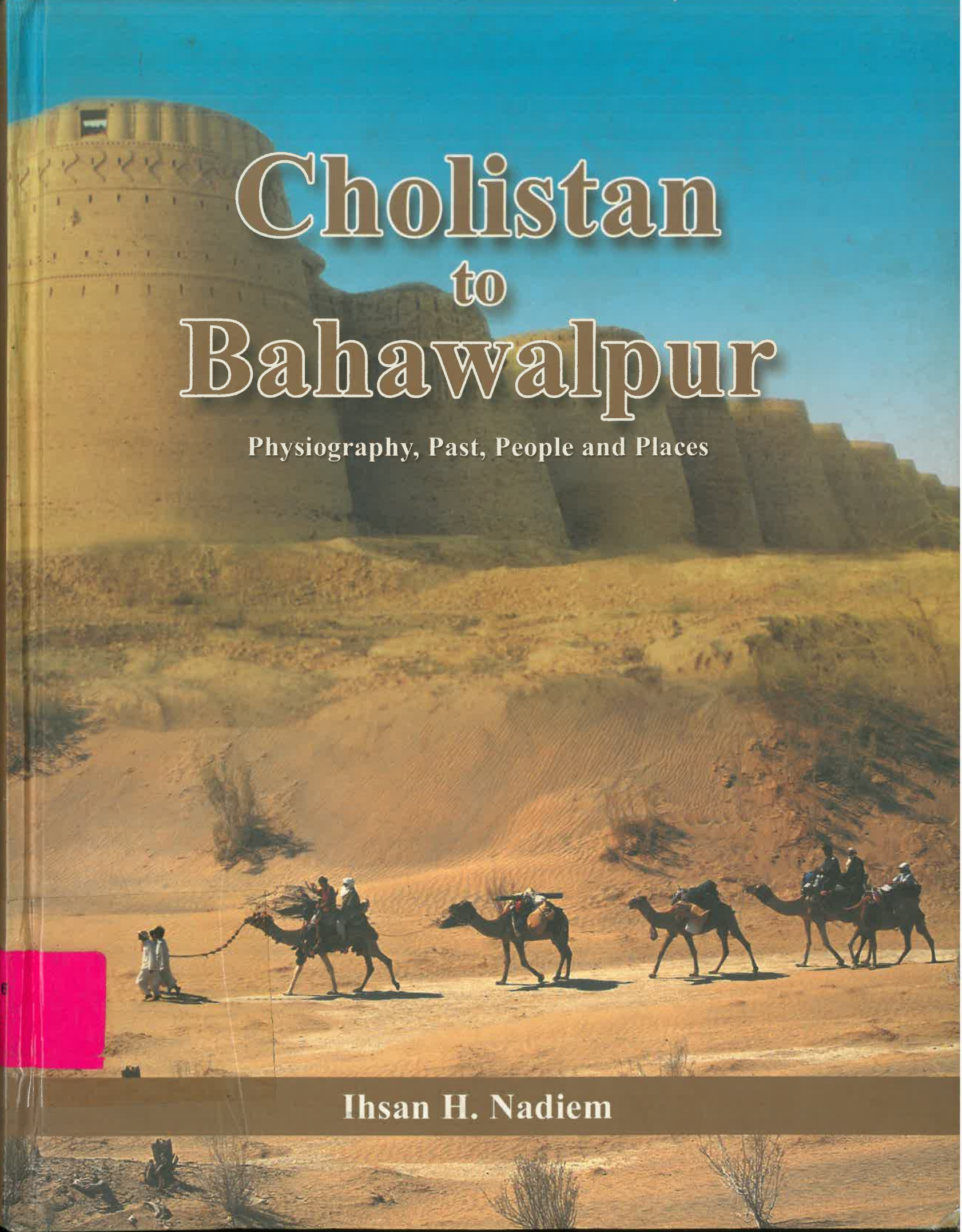




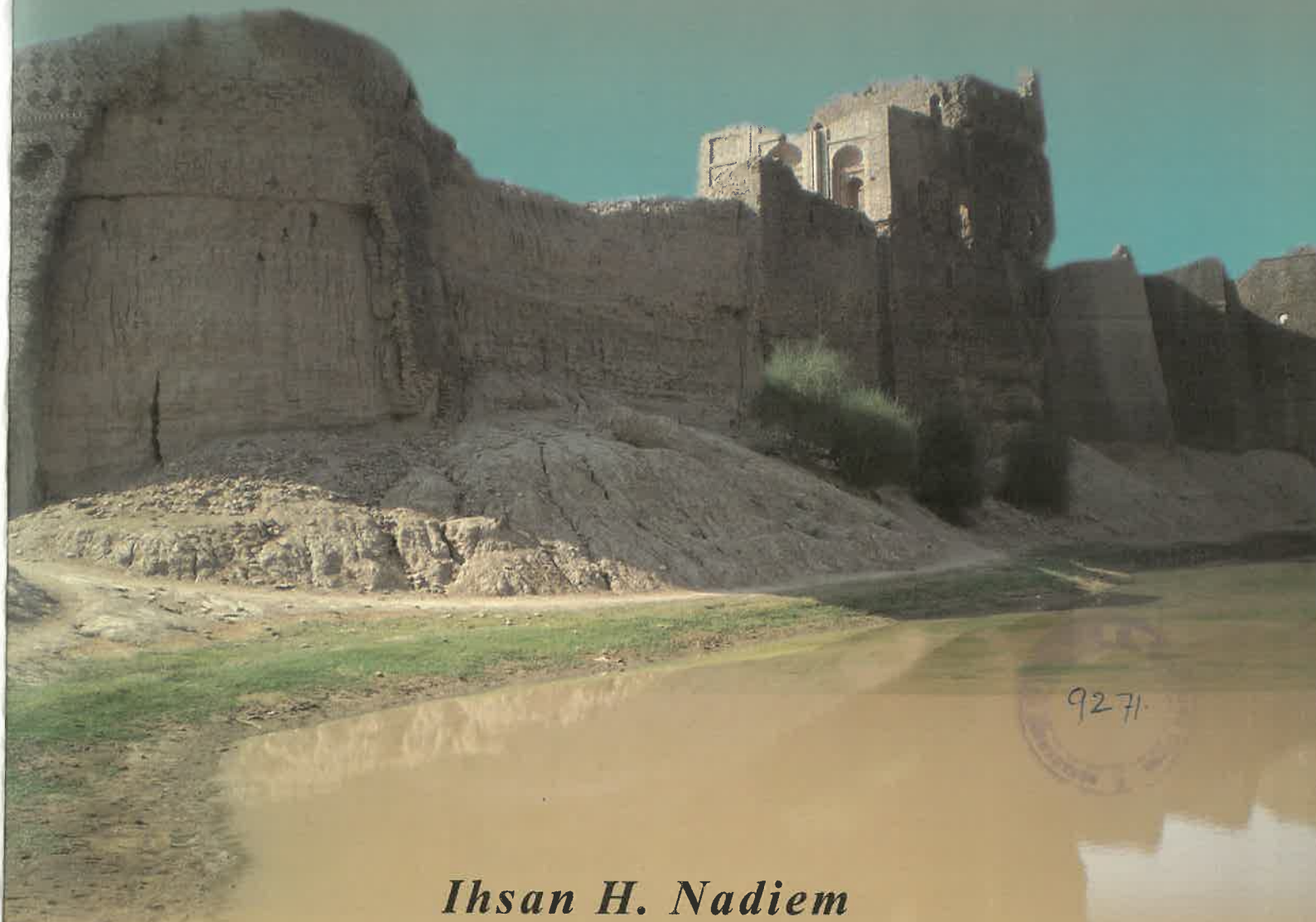
Cholistan to Bahawalpur

Physiography, Past, People and Places

Ihsan H. Nadiem

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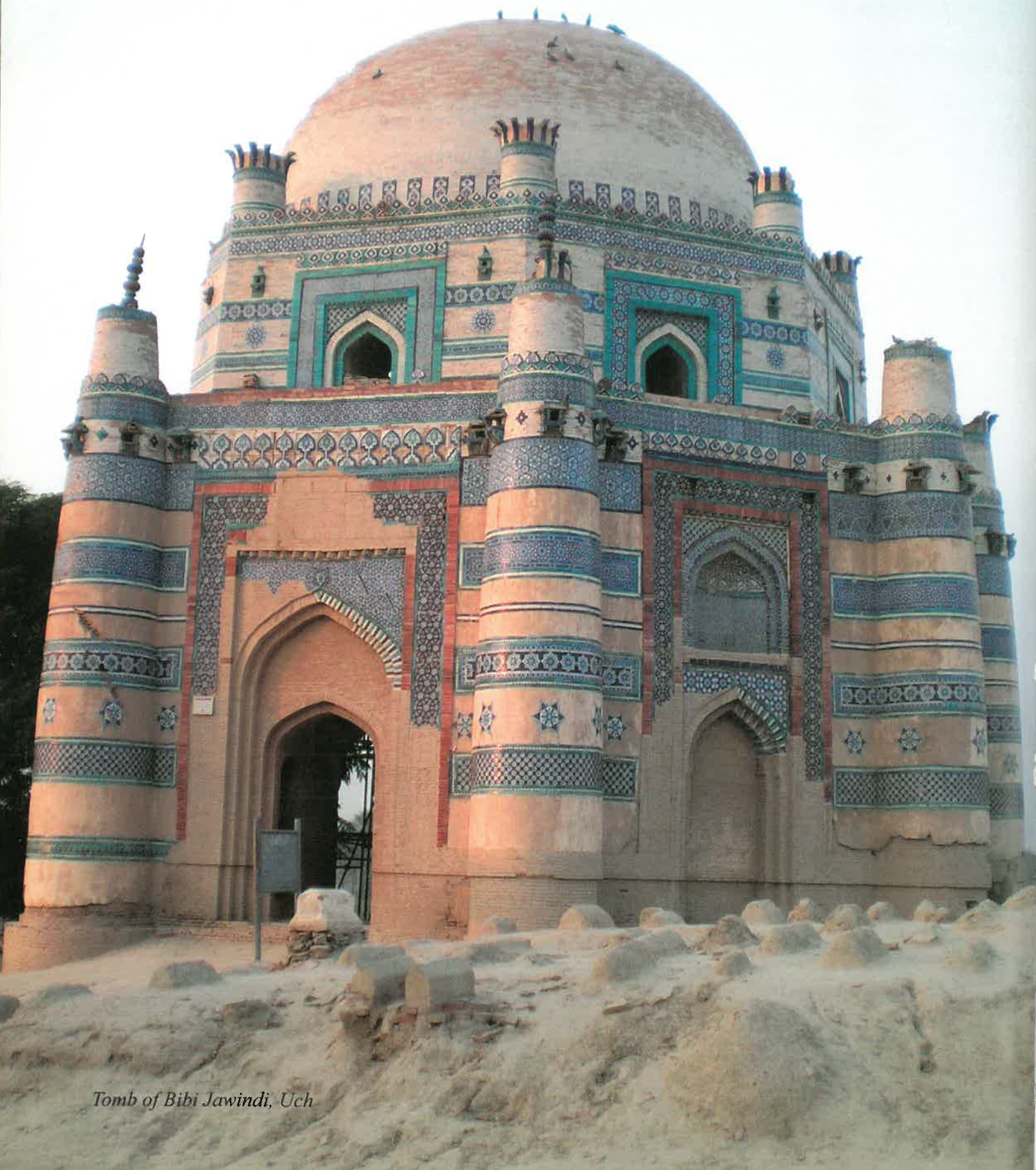
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To
Chaudhry Niaz Ahmad,
Who, even after years,
still cherishes his sojourns of
'Cholistan to Bahawalpur'



Tomb of Bibi Jawindi, Uch



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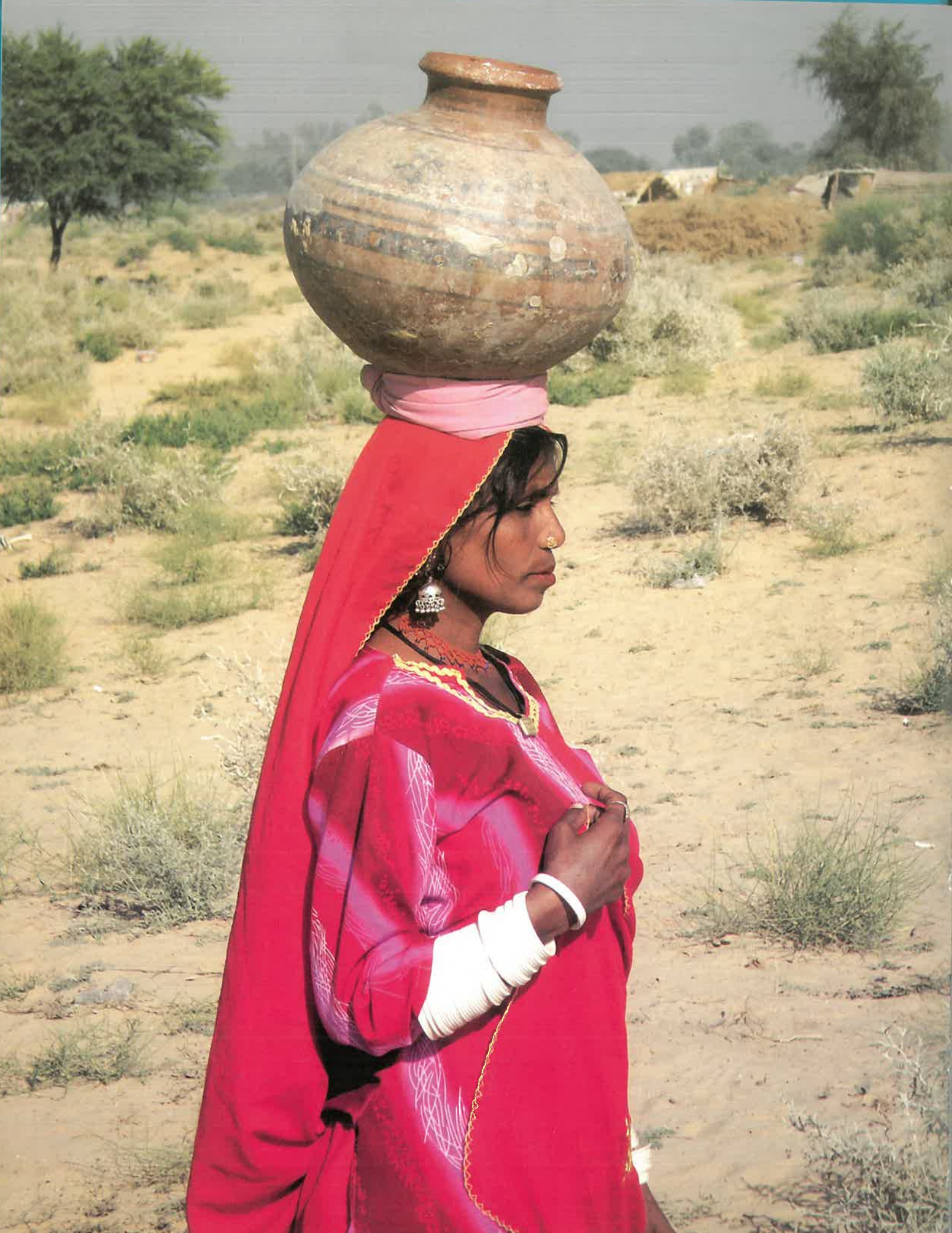
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Preface

Not only that the deserts are fascinating in their landscape, their cool nights well compensate for the hot days and thus attract any nature lover. But when these expanses of wilderness with sand-dunes rising like ocean-waves also abound with cultural sagacity and historical past especially in relation to its inhabitants, they become a very hot topic to write on. During my service career I had tens upon tens of sojourns to the great Pakistani deserts of Thar and then Cholistan. The result of my research-visits to the former – and a halt of over 3 ½ years inside it – is reflected in my book “Thar: the Great Pakistani Desert”, which was published in 2001. My contacts with Cholistan also continued when I got the opportunity to, sort of, comb many of its plain wastelands (called dahr), sand regions and green tracts over and over again so as to familiarise myself with its life and landscape before sitting down to write something on it. The result of this love’s labour is in your hands hoping that it will bring the beautiful colours of diversity that the region presents right at your table.

The very title of the book ‘Cholistan to Bahawalpur’ would betray the format of this tome. It is a journey both in time and space that is covered in it. It tells the story in time as it moves from Cholistan, perhaps well-populated with its rivers and greens in the pre-historic days to a large region of death and interestingly still sustaining human and animal life, and a more vibrant society and modern life in the fertile region of Bahawalpur. In space the description shifts gradually from desert sands of Cholistan to the city of Bahawalpur now living in the age of ‘information explosion’ and nuclear technology like any other modern town.

During all these years many of the senior scholars, researchers, friends and colleagues have been contributing to my effort of acquiring knowledge on this particular subject. However, it was no other than Chaudhry Niaz Ahmad, who along with his very promising son, Chaudhry Afzaal Ahmad, sat with me to plan and decide to document all the information gathered over a considerably long period. My special thanks, therefore, go to them. Ali Kamran is another youngman, who with his foreign qualifications proved himself an asset when the result of all the research and writing started taking shape of a publication. I am thankful to him for his help.

There were so many erudite persons of the Rohi with whom I interacted on topics relating to culture, customs, traits and other areas of active life that it is not possible to mention them all here by name. But I must put on record that their input was of immense value to bring out the true flavour of the times and life there. I sincerely thank them all and pray for their well-being.

However, of special mention is the Irfan family – Dr. Shahid Irfan, Associate Professor of Medicine, his graceful wife Mona (who is like my niece) and three cute children: Umair Zeeshan, Adil Ahsan and Arsalaan Ahmad. While the whole family looked after my comfortable stay thus giving me the time to concentrate on the research job, Irfan – himself a son of the great scholar of the region, the late lamented Mian Nurul Zaman Ahmad Auj – took so much pains as to accompany me to the wilderness to let me have a closer and penetrating look into Cholistan and the Cholistanis. This could be made possible only because of his wide and amicable contacts in the whole region. The return of their love, affection and pains taken in this direction are much beyond some simple words of thanks, but here I do sincerely mean to offer the same with all their meanings and contexts.



I am also thankful to Gulraiz Ghouri, a very versatile professional photographer of Pakistan with high international reputation. He allowed me to use some of his images depicting Cholistan heritage.

Lest I forget, some other good friends from Bahawalpur were also of great help in obtaining material for illustrations of the book. Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmad, Advocate, drove me to Bhong and Uch Sharif for study and preparing images, taking out time from his busy schedule. I gained much from his knowledge of the region, its places and people. Another gentleman, Gulzar Ghouri, was kind in arranging for me the colour photographs depicting almost the whole line of the Abbasid Nawabs while Farooq Ahmad Khan of Cholistan Development Council of Pakistan made elaborate arrangements for me to meet the Cholistanis in their own environment setting while also facilitating in my taking their photographs. I am thankful to them all. I must also take this opportunity to thank Irfan's driver, Nazir, who not only enthusiastically drove the Jeep but also never lost an opportunity of introducing some knowledgeable person to discuss many a point regarding the people and their crafts in the region.

Except for the few images mentioned in general above, all of the rest included in this book were shot by me on different occasions while on personal visits to the region – Bahawalpur to Cholistan.

Saeen Aejaz Bloach of the wasaib.com though could not contribute much in any material shape yet his encouraging words while writing on a part of the Wasaib said enough of his positive wishes for the well-completion of the assignment. My thanks thus are also due to him and his associate Farooq Miana.

It may also be put here as an explanation that the category of long stretches of desert wilderness, mainly with very plain surface, is locally named as Dahr, perhaps not with any vowel sound after 'H' although almost all of the English writers transliterate it as 'Dahar', which perhaps does not convey the true pronunciation and of the sound of the local word. I have, therefore, written it without that additional 'a' – wrongly giving a moving sound to 'h' – to get to the nearest of the original intonation. As would be observed these Dahrs are many, and are named after some inherent quality of the land – Ratta Dahr, Chitta Dahr – or its association with an event or history of the region – Shinghar Dahr, Dilwash Dahr etc.

Before I close let me mention that throughout this book time has been recorded in Gregorian calendar without using any affix or suffix. However, when it comes in relation or in conjunction with Hijra or Bikrami calendars the suffix of AD is used, denoting the latter with AH and last with the full word of Sambat. As to the mention of the pre-Christ Era, it has invariably been denoted by the letters BC following the year.

Lahore.
August 2008.

Ihsan H. Nadiem
Former Director of Archaeology, Pakistan,
& University Professor of Architecture.
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Chapter **1**

Cholistan to Bahawalpur **Physiography**



General

The eastern corner of the Southern Punjab - or what is also a part of the region known as the Seraiki belt - has its own flavour of chequered course of history, a vibrant nature of culture and even an exciting character of physiographic features. Although integrating into the cultures and peoples around it, this desert region of Pakistan - Cholistan - has continued to preserve its unique characteristics over perhaps many a millennium even if a part of it was made populated by the Nawabs of the State of Bahawalpur at a later time. However, with the receding of the limits of the actual desert area of this expansive region, especially with the introduction of the irrigation canal system in its western clayey part in the twentieth century, it still presents one of the largest regions of the barren land in the world. The area of this region in the Pakistani Punjab roughly comprises what used to be the erstwhile Bahawalpur State, which was founded by the Abbasi Daudpotras after immigrating from Shikarpur in Sindh in the 18th century.



*Location of the region,
Cholistan to Bahawalpur, in Punjab*

With the changing land-use patterns in some parts, the region now encompasses in itself not only the vast sandy tract of wilderness but also the huge stretches of green-lands irrigated by modern canal system in addition to important cities and towns, some of which having served as the seats of the governments for well over centuries; Bahawalpur, Derawar and Uch being only a few of them. With the exception of the river Ghagra – also known as Ghaggar or Hakra – now extinct for long time and recognisable by the depression left by its bed, there is no river that runs through this area. However, this region has the signal honour of not only having the Great Indus running along its western borders but also being the place where all the rivers of Punjab converge at the place called Panjnad, and then travel for about 12 kilometres to fall into the Sindh or the Indus.

Cholistan & its name

In effect Cholistan is a vast sandy desert covering an area of 2407 square kilometres, which is also locally known as Rohi – so lovingly immortalised by the great mystic poet, Khwaja Farid. The desert area is predominantly the scene of high sand dunes, sometimes rising to some 12 metres. In between or across the sand dunes there are patches of levelled areas running several kilometres together. The Hakra River – now a clear depression suggesting to its bed – divides the area into smaller and greater Cholistans. The smaller Cholistan lies in the north of Hakra depression and is relatively flat with a few low sand dunes. The greater Cholistan lies in the south and is entirely occupied by large sand dunes. The intrusion of the sand of these dunes from the greater Cholistan is a continuous danger for the local people. This movement of sand has induced many to seek the meanings of Cholistan in it. According to them the name is derived from the word ‘cholna’ – walking or moving – adding the word Stan denoting place like that in Balochistan, or even Pakistan. However, this does not seem plausible as the very pronunciation or the mother word does not match the one as used in the region’s Seraiki. However, the most appealing of the origin of the name seems to have been derived from the Turkish word ÇÖL (pronounced as Choal in English), which literally means desert. Of course, like the practice in vogue, the sthan or stan standing for place, region or area complements the Turkish word to give it a meaningful name.

However, there is another name generally used with affection by the locals as Rohi hence the inhabitants Rohillas. This particularly is the name used in his sublime poetry by the great Mystic Poet, Khwaja Ghulam Farid – mostly known as Khwaja Farid. The word Roh probably bring with it the meanings of highland or wilderness but its musical rendering by Khwaja Farid has made it reverberate in the ears of the Rohillas and even their guests from outside the region.

In the modern administrative set up this whole region – the Greater Cholistan, the Lesser Cholistan and the Alluvial plain with fertile land – consists of the districts of Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalnagar and Bahawalpur. The physiography of this region is very interesting as there are three distinct strips of land running parallel from north to south throughout the length of the region. These strips may broadly be dissimilar from each other as they can be defined as: -

- 1) The Pure desert, the long stretches of sand and sand dunes with only desert type fauna and flora;
- 2) A central tract, mainly consisting of the desert, hardly capable of any cultivation while also considerably higher than the valleys of rivers in its vicinity, thus rendering it incapable of irrigation by this natural source;
- 3) The alluvial plain, which is formed by the action of the rivers hence very fertile and most suited to cultivation.



1) The Pure Desert

The pure desert region is in fact a northward continuation of the great Pakistani Desert, Thar, while also extending beyond the international border into the Rajputana Desert of India, perhaps also spilling itself to the Bikaner region in India. The desert region is bounded on the north and west by a pronounced depression locally known as Hakra, the abandoned bed of the now extinct river variedly known in history by the names of the Hakra, the Ghaggar or the Vedic period Sarasvati. The surface of this region is marked by a succession of sand dunes, which may even majestically rise to a height of more than 150 metres. The natural vegetation here is confined to that which is peculiar to sandy tracts. There is no other soil even to much depth and the wells dug – with much difficulty by applying gypsum to sustain the sides of the sand – may well go down to some 25 metres but invariably resulting in brackish water. In many of the valleys of this sandy tract amorphous sulphate of lime is found overlaying it, usually in a thickness of about 1 to 2 metres.



Desert with Typical Vegetation

2) A Central Tract

The second stripe of the three tracts is virtually sandwiched between the other two as it runs in the middle. Locally known as the Pat or the Bar and is more like the north-southward running of the Sulaiman Range in the Derajat and parts of south-western Punjab. It could also be a northward extension of the Pat region of the Thar Desert. This central tract has a pronounced boundary on the river side where there is a chain of sand hills, which abruptly falls to a lower valley on the north-eastern side of the region. This area also consists of a number of Dahrs – vast tracts of barren plains, which run for many a kilometre while each of this plain is given locally a name like Hakranwala Dahr, Chitta Dahr, Shinghaar Dahr, Dilwash Dahr etc. etc. Although the least favourable as far as availability of water or useful vegetation yet they were always a welcome scene to the caravans crossing over from the high sand dunes region. The retinues of the rulers and governors especially pitched their camps in these Dahrs for preparations before entering the populated areas on the west.

It is interesting to note that in both the tracts mentioned above, the subterranean water is permeated with salts of different kinds leaving it almost unsuitable for human consumption. However, the wells dug in the region continue to supply practically hard water as long as they remain in use. Their water becomes obnoxious and entirely unusable if it is allowed to stagnate by abandoning them for some time. They could be made usable again only by drawing the stagnating water letting it replenished by fresh supply from the bed.

The level of the underground water depends on the distance from the river. Its depth continues to increase while going away from this perennial source of water. According to the Bahawalpur State gazetteer 'in the eastern portion ... the subterranean spring level falls at the rate of 38 inches (96.72 centimetres) per mile (1.609 kilometres), while at its confluence with the Chenab the fall is only 17 ½ inches (44.45 centimetres) per mile'.

As the fall of the country from east to west and from north to south is considerably variable, the rivers have to adjust the bed of their courses accordingly. As such they change their courses resulting in meanders that at certain point of time are once again abandoned with the result that the old beds once again serve as their renewed courses. This action of the rivers, together with the result of extinction of at least a couple of major rivers, has left the region with depressions. One of these depressions, which is also the greatest of all, in fact separates it from Rajputana Desert and the Indian State of Jaisalmer on its south-eastern side. This refers to the old bed of the legendary river Sarasvati, also known as Hakra or Ghaggar during ancient times.



The mythical stories woven around this dried up river, which perhaps continued into the Thar in Sindh as Nara, are extremely interesting as also unveiling some of the mysteries of the past. In tracing its remote mention as Hakra, James Todd refers to a legendary stanza – though fails to give its exact wording – that mentions the Sodha prince Hameer, whom we historically know for having ruled the Desert region from Umerkot. The stanza from the folk-lore says:



Transliteration:

“Hakra phir vi wahsi, nadiyaN chalsan neer,
Na jamma na jamsi laikan Sodha Rao Hameer”.

Translation:

The Hakra will continue to flow with all its tributaries,
But (alas a king like) Sodha Rao Hameer has never been born and will never be born again.

The water once brought to the region by Hakra, and now a scarce commodity, echoes in the folk songs of the Desert repeatedly by remembering the Hakra as in the following pieces from the Rohi folklore:

Transliteration:

“Haq whando Hakro bhajandi bund Arror,
Bhih machhi oN lorch wandi Samme SukRi”.

Translation:

The Hakra will rightly (perennially) flow and dikes of Arror shall burst,
We will carry the Bhih (vegetable from water) and fish to the Samma clan as present.

Transliteration:

“Ucha kot Marot da, tallay wahi darya,
MaiN macchi darya di, tooN bagla ban kay aa”.

Translation:

Towering is the fort of Marot, under it the river (Hakra) flows,
I am a fish of the river (so) you come to me as a heron (and take me away).

There is still another stanza from the local folk wisdom, which talks in the context of the famous love-tale of Punjab – Sohni MahiNwal – invariably attached to the river though its locale is variedly mentioned in different versions.

Transliteration:

“Gurhilo guR wahe jadaN haiN wahe Naro,
SohnioN, MahiN-har ho tadiN he waro”.

Translation:

When Gurhilo (Indus), whose water was as sweet as the lump of brown sugar, and the Nara (Hakra) were flowing,
Sohni too and MahiN-har (MahiNwal) lived then.

There is another, though smaller, depression in the region, which is known by different names – Ghagra, Phat, Gurhila etc. – at different places throughout its length. It is some 5 to nearly 20 kilometres away from the Ghara and the Chenab Rivers from north-east, running almost parallel with them in the south-westerly course. It interestingly is also attached with many legendary stories circulating in the local populace.

The Desert Flora

As is natural, there are many factors that affect a particular type of various kinds of flora in the sand-dominated region of the area. Perhaps the most significant is the climatic factor. As is obvious Cholistan enjoys an arid climate. In summer, maximum temperature may even touch a point beyond 51°C (around 124° F), while in winter the mercury dips down below freezing point. May and June are the hottest months of a year. Average annual rainfall is scanty, hardly measuring 128mm to 178mm - that too pouring mostly during summer though there might as well be winter rains. Due to little rainfall and long spells of drought, sometimes ranging between 2-4 years, water is scarce in Cholistan. The only water source made available is from the wells which may even be as deep as 25 - 90 metres from the surface. Even then the water may be brackish and may not be fit for use. As such, naturally growing grasses, bushes, shrubs and trees are frequently damaged by drought.

The next important factor that counts in determining the type of the vegetation is soil. In Cholistan there are mainly two types of soils: sandy soils and clayey soils. The sandy soils are found on stable and unstable dunes. These soils are coarse in texture. Although the scientists find them lacking in carbonates yet they have been found in other exchangeable bases. The clayey soils are of three types and are locally known as hakran wala dahr, chitta dahr and ratta dahr. Soils of hakran wala dahr are rocky in nature and without any vegetation, whereas chitta dahrs are as patches between the dunes and with heavier texture. Both of these soils are devoid of any vegetation. The ratta dahrs show a coarse texture with a considerable proportion of clay in deeper layers although the soil here supports a good vegetational growth as the surface layers are free of excessive salts containing fair quantity of soluble calcium which balances the effects of excessive sodium.

Another factor that plays an important role in the natural flora of the place is Man himself as also the beasts of the region. The ranges in Cholistan are subjected to heavy grazing. According to the scientific studies the seedlings in this way are destroyed before they get established resulting in a considerable loss of the seeds. The study further tells that there is thus 'a decrease in the forage production. Roots of *Lasiurus hirsutus* are dug out and brushes made for use in the cleaning of earthen wares whereas *Calligonum polygonoides* roots are used for making milk churns. Similarly twigs of *Leptadenia spartium* are used for making brushes and ropes. The destruction by man accompanied by grazing of deer, burrowing of hares and rats add to the already deteriorating situation'.





According to a study of Mirza Hakim Khan, the following species of flora* have been observed in Cholistan:

Acacia arabica.
Aerua tomentosa.
Albizzia lebbeck.
Aihagi camelorum (Javan)
Aristida depressa (Lamb)
Azadirachta indica.(Neem)
Cailiganum polygonoides. (Phog)
Calotropis gigantea
C.procera
Capparis aphylla Roth.
C.decidua. (Karir)
Cenchrus ciliaris.
C.pennisetiformis Hochst.and Steud
C.schoenanthus. (Khawi).
Chrozophora tinctoria.
Cistanche tubulosa.
Citrullus colocynthis.
Cleome brachycarpa
Corchorus depressus.
Crotalaria burhia Ham. (Chag)
Cymbopogon jwarancusa
Sault. (Khawi).
Cyperus rotundus.
Dactyloctenium aegyptium.
Datura alba
Desmostachya bipinnata
Dichanthium annulatum
Digitaria pennata
Dipterygium glaucum Dene. (Thuma).
Eleusine compressa (Chibar or Chimbar)
Eragrostis Japonica (Thunb)
Euphorbia prostrata
Fagania cretica.
Haloxylon recurvum. (Khar)
H.salicornicum (Lana)
Kochia indica Wight.
Lasiurus hirsutus
Leptadenia spartium Wight. (Khip).
Orobanche.
Panicum antidotale Retz. (Mort)
P. turgidum
Peganum harmala.
Polypogon monspeliensis.
Prosopis spicigera. (Jand).
Salsola foetida Del. (Lani).
Salvadora oleoides Dene. (Pilu)



Desert Flora-AK



Desert Flora-Khar

Solanum nigrum
S.xanthacarpum
Suaeda fruticosa. (Lana).
Tamarix aphylla. (Farash)
Tribulus terrestris. (Bhakra)
Withania somnifera.
Zizyphus nummularia (Mallah)

* The botanical names mentioned here are given their local equivalent, where available, in parentheses.

The researches in to the flora of Cholistan also bring to the fore that in different 'zones' of the dunes a different type of vegetation is observed. 'On the top of the dunes (stabilised) *Haloxylon salicornicum* and *Calligonum polygonoides* are the dominant species. These species are good soil binders and do not require much moisture, as their roots can penetrate deeper in search of water. Grasses like *Cymbopogon jwarancusa*, *Panicum antidotale*, *Digitaria pennata*, *Dichanthium annulatum* and *Eragrostis japonica* are found to cover the middle of dunes. These too are good soil binders and have a high fodder value. At the bottom of dunes the dominant species are *Haloxylon recurvum*, *Aerua tomentosa*, *Leptadenia spartium*, *Zizyphus nummularia*, and *Crotalaria burhia*. However, species like *Alhagi camelorum*, *Tribulus terrestris*, *Euphorbia prostrata*, *Calotropis procera* and *gigantea* were observed to grow abundantly in shady habitats of the dunes. These plants are neither soil binders nor have they any fodder value.' Here the professionals suggest of the eradication of these species so that the regeneration of such species, which are useful for the stabilization of the dunes takes place.

'Seeds of *Eleusine compressa* and *Salsola foetida* brought by wind are first to get established on the dahars. With the deposition of more and more sand species like *Suaeda fruticosa*, *Haloxylon ecurvum*, *Cymbopogon jwarancusa*, *Capparis decidua*, *Prosopis spicigera* get established. After September, sand dunes stop moving. If the climatic conditions become favourable and biotic interference is reduced the vegetation starts coming up. *Dipterygium glaucum* comes first as coloniser on sand dunes followed by *Aristida deprassa*. Bushes like *Calligonum polygonoides*, *Haloxylon recurvum salicornicum* and *Lasiurus hirsutus* appear later. Thus the dunes get established. The bushes like *Capparis decidua* and *Prosopis spicigera* grow in sheltered places whereas *Cenchrus ciliaris* is found to grow only on the moist soil where conditions are comparatively better for its growth. We can, therefore, imagine that during the past when the moisture conditions were better and without heavy grazing these species were growing as climax species. Heavy grazing has resulted in the retrogression of vegetation. A sub-climax species *Lasiurus hirsutus* thus, occupies the area.'

Rare Wildlife

The Cholistan desert area houses some of the most rare and interesting wildlife in Pakistan. Some of the rare animals of this region are the Desert Fox (perhaps the rarest), Indian Fox, Rex Fox, Jackal, Small Indian Civet, Mongoose, grey Mongoose, Desert Cat, Jungle Cat, Caracal Cat, Cinkara gazelle, Blackbuck, Nilgai antelope, Houbara bustard, Peregrine falcon, Saker falcon, Black

backed vulture, Cobra, Monitor lizard, Saw-scaled viper and the Russells viper.

Cholistan desert is a favorite hunting ground for deer and Houbara bustard but an alarming species of snake 'Sah-pina' (breath drinking) also thrives in this desert, which crawls on to a sleeping person's breast and poisons his breath. As a precaution people usually sleep with a lamp or strings of garlic and onion tied to their beds to ward them off.



Houbara Bustard



Desert Deer

3) The Alluvial Plain

The Alluvial Plain, as the nomenclature denotes, was formed by the Indus river system. It mainly consists of the central plane of the Indus Basin, which generally is not more than 150 metres from the mean sea level. This is normally the land, which is in the flood-plain of the Sutlej with ancient settlements and most of the present towns and cities lying along the railway line on rather more important railway stations.

During the ancient times this region received natural irrigation from the tributaries of the Indus, particularly the Sutlej and the Chenab, and as such heavily depended on the climatic conditions on yearly basis. The land for agricultural activity was irrigated in this region either with the help of wells, flood-canals or annual floods. The floods in its rivers brought not only the fertile earth to fortify the richness of the soil but also caused rich irrigation for enhanced productivity.

However, as it all depended on the nature to award it with its bounties, which were not always as consistent as the agricultural populace would wish, it was back in 1920-21 that a scheme by the name of Sutlej Valley Project was executed between the then British Punjab and the State of Bahawalpur. Under this Project four Head-works were to be constructed at Sulaimanki, Islam (near Khairpur Tamewali) and Punjnad in Bahawalpur jurisdiction and at Ferozpur in the British Punjab. It was planned to take out from the former two Head-works two each irrigation canals for Bahawalpur State and one each for Punjab. However, two canals from the third Head-works, Panjnad, were to be drawn exclusively for the Bahawalpur State. The work on this project was started in 1922 and completed by 1931-32.

The completion of the Project altogether changed the agricultural pattern to a more consistent and regular crop-system resulting from the regular and assured supply of water throughout the year. From Sulaimanki Head-works located in the Bahawalnagar region were drawn three canals. One of them, named Pakpattan Canal irrigated areas in the Montgomery (now renamed as Sahiwal) district while the other two – Sadiqya and Ford Wah – served Bahawalpur.

The second Head-works of the series is located in Islam near Khairpur Tamewali from where a northern canal – Mailsi Canal – irrigated the Multan area while the other two – named Qaim Canal and Upper Bahawal Canal – were exclusively meant for the Bahawalpur region.

The third of this important Irrigation Canal System originates from the Head-works situated near Uch, some 1 ½ kilometres south of the point where the Sutlej and the Chenab meet each other. The canals from this Head-works – Abbasiya Canal and Punjnad Canal – help sustain the irrigation needs of the areas within Rahim Yar Khan.

The region is famous for its mango farms, the produce of which is not only marketed within the country but also exported, especially for the much needed foreign exchange. Amongst the agricultural produces the region boasts of abundance in cotton, wheat, sugarcane and a variety of other vegetation outputs.



Mango Farm





Sugar Cane



Wheat nearing Harvest



Phutti or Cotton Crop



Chapter 2

Cholistan to Bahawalpur **Past**



Past

It was not long ago that the scholars and the professionals did not tend to believe that the Cholistan, even geologically, was much older. Only in 1943 while addressing the students of Sadiq Egerton College, Bahawalpur, Sir Aurel Stein had opined that the desert of Cholistan was not very old or ancient as the sand dunes here were still moving and not reached any stage of their final formation. The case was not different when they viewed its cultural aspect, which again they never thought to be going very ancient. However, the later studies and archaeological reconnaissance have proved the earlier theories wrong and, perhaps, worthless. Leaving aside the geological studies, which have been touched upon briefly in previous chapter, it would be interesting to know that the region was occupied, and perhaps also flourishing, during that remote period in Stone Age.

An archaeological exploration was conducted in Cholistan under the auspices of the Pakistan Department of Archaeology and Museums during the 1970s, which though left much to be desired, brought very encouraging results by way of preliminary survey. The survey was confined to some 480 kilometres along the dry bed of Hakra and less than 25 kilometres on its sides. The latter area was probably thought to be the maximum flood-plain of the river when it flowed here in the ancient times. It may be interesting to note here that the results by the Survey Team were compiled on the basis of the surface collection and/or an occasional test pit. No serious effort had been made to undertake a more comprehensive excavation at any of the sites to find the complete depiction of the archaeological profile of the region. The failure of the team in this respect might never be compensated as, with the continuously shifting of the sand, many of the sites might have already got 'obliterated' by the time any effort were to be made, which certainly does not seem to be in any foreseeable future, even after more than three decades of the initial survey.

The archaeological surveys during its whole run registered a little over 700 cultural mounds of different dimensions and heights. Most of these cultural spots were recognisable with the presence of potsherds leaving the places red in colour. These spots were thought to be the temporary camps or abodes of the herders moving places in search of greens. On the basis of the pottery types these spots are thought to be belonging to the Mature Harappan period (2500 BC to 1500 BC) or sometimes even to the post or later Harappan Phase (post 1500 BC).

The Hakra Period

The overall picture that emerges from the study of the available material suggests that the earliest period, which has been named after Hakra, perhaps much preceded the Mature Harappan period. In the time scale the Hakra phase could be bracketed between 4000 and 3000 BC and has yielded a distinct pottery consisting of hand-made and mostly of red colour. Some of the pottery types can be compared with that found at Kot Diji. This period also bears the presence of small terracotta figurines of animals, baked-clay bangles etc. From the stone objects consisting of knives, arrow-heads etc. it is also deduced that the Hakra people had not yet come out of the Stone Age. These objects have been found to be easily comparable with the prototypes already found from the excavations in Sarai Khola in Punjab and Rehman Dheri in North West Frontier Province and in this way could be termed as of the Pre-Harappan origin. It is interesting to note that the sites of this period have mostly been recorded around Derawar Fort, on its south-west and eastern sides.





The Cholistan region in overall context

Here the sites found are in fact no match to the expansiveness of Harappa or Moenjodaro. The culture here thus can be deduced in its formative or early stage, which even if with breaks and hiccups reached a mature stage during the Harappan or the Indus Civilisation. It is then but natural that the scanty evidence of town-planning that came to light during this survey puts on record some well-laid small towns or cities. Some archaeologists also take it as the early or initial stage of raising larger cities later during the Mature Harappan or Indus period. This process is thought to have started early in the 3rd millennium BC or may be even earlier.

The Pre-Harappan Period

The Pre-Harappan sites, which are also called as early Harappan by some professionals, recorded during the said archaeological survey outnumbered the ones belonging to the earlier Hakra Period. These settlements were also of larger dimensions when compared to the earlier period Hakra phase. However, these looked like having concentrated between Derawar Fort and Fort Abbas.

The Harappan Period

The Survey also brought to light the antiquities and the architectural remains that betray the presence of the Indus Valley or Harappan Civilisation when at its peak. So the Cholistan Region was not behind the other contemporary regions of the South Asia Subcontinent.

The presence of sites contemporary with Moenjodaro and Harappa prove the high cultural value of the Region. The pottery and other finds, in addition to the structural and town planning evidence, amply boast of their belonging to the period of the Indus Civilisation. However, such sites – recorded in this limited survey – showed their concentration near or around Derawar Fort. One thing that also goes to show their importance even during that age of the yore is their having relatively greater dimensions, both horizontally and vertically. At least of these sites may also match the expansiveness being enjoyed by Harappa and Moenjodaro.

They also meet a major criterion of being important cities as they represent the industrial zones lying away from the main populated areas. In some other smaller sites, however, these zones have also been found in close proximity of, or even amalgamated to some extent with the residential quarters. As in the earlier case, even with the latter arrangement the actual kilns for firing mud-bricks and pottery or melting metal were usually away from the main populated areas. This was especially found in the sites belonging to the Mature Harappan Period.

The Cemetery H or Grave Period

Then, along with the other Indus Valley Civilisation sites, this region also seems to have gone a cultural dip, which might have been the result of degenerating effect of the social set-up, population explosion – which could not be accommodated within the available land-use – decline in other resources, or even a possible invasion from outside. Any of these factors, or all put together, perhaps caused the decline of one of the greatest Civilisations of the world. However, it did not disappear from the face of the earth altogether but certainly continued for some time even if in a less impressive state at some place. Such a phase was discovered in the Cemetery H at Harappa in Punjab and Jhukar in Sindh and comparable sites are now termed after these type-sites.

Some sites in this region have also yielded pottery comparable with H Cemetery clearly indicating that the Cholistan region did not lag behind other contemporary regions in continuing to be an abode of man even in this period. Most of these mounds were located around Derawar, almost in the region where the remains of the Mature Harappan period were also recorded.

Some other sites, yielding grey pottery, thought to be much later than the Harappan period settlements, are thought to be representing a culture altogether cut from its preceding Mature Harappan or even the H Cemetery culture.



The Aryan Era

There does not seem to be any appreciable break in the story of mankind in this region after the Cemetery or Grave Culture but the remains of such a period are as scarce as they could be for obvious reasons. Almost all scholars agree that after moving into the Subcontinent the Aryans settled in the Cholistan region, which had an agreeable climate and abundance of water around the middle of the second millennium BC. Perhaps by nature the Aryans are portrayed as nomadic not settling in the cities as such they might not have founded any awe-inspiring type of permanent settlements in Cholistan, as elsewhere in Sindh or Punjab. However, when they had continued with their stay for longer time they also chose to raise for themselves, may be sort of unpretentious, mud-houses. It is the finds of pottery from the sites of such perishable settlements that the archaeologists somewhat piece together the information on their times and life.

From the study of the remains of this period it transpires that they, even if certainly followed some religion, did not practice the art of sculpting or painting. The art of decorating, especially women, might have been traditionally followed as such sites have yielded ornaments, finger-rings, bracelets etc. From the war material, arrow and swords were the most common weapons. It has also come to light that these people skilfully practised the art of cloth-weaving and, in addition to the cotton thread, perhaps also made use of silver or even gold threads to obtain rather expensive cloth.

The Alexandrian Interregnum

During the campaign of Alexander of Macedonia, perhaps to overrun and conquer the Persian Empire, Punjab gave him the toughest resistance. Most of the historians agree that it was the brave fight put up in this land that disheartened the army of Alexander. While attempting to conquer Multan if he had not been wounded by the poisonous arrow, which ultimately made him to meet his early end some two years later, the history of the world might have been very different.

The Malloi here had put up such a fight that had Alexander not shown the way to his force by that personal example the clash was all but lost to the Multanis. However, 'when Alexander had gained his victory here 'the Oxydrakes' sent heralds to him with tenders of unconditional submission.' The historians agree to the point that these were the people residing in the vicinity of Uch, 'who sent to Alexander 1,000 men, the bravest and noblest of their race, as hostages, besides 500 war chariots with their drivers and horses, fully equipped. Alexander was gratified by this mark of respect shown by the Oxydrakae, and returned their hostages, keeping only the chariots with their horses and drivers. Leaving Philippos in charge of the country round the modern Multan and Uch, Alexander sailed down the Indus towards a place where he laid the foundation of another Alexandria.'



Alexander of Macedonia

From here Alexander himself moved on towards south to the country of Mousikanos. 'It has been held by many authorities that the capital of Mousikanos was Alor (now near Rohri), which subsequently formed the seat of the government of the Rai dynasty and of Chach the Usurper, but it appears more probable that the part of the Bahawalpur territory south-west of Uch' ... 'was at least included in the dominions of Mousikanos.' However, in the opinion of other authorities, the description of the country better fits Bahawalpur than Alor, which is surrounded by the barren Rohri Hill. The country has been reported as 'most opulent in India.' And 'Secretas praises not only the fertility of the country but also the manners and character of its people and the laws and administration of its ruler, a ruler, who had neither come to surrender himself and his country, nor sent envoys to seek his friendship.'

The arrangements to rule the country after Alexander would have left much to be desired and did not last long. He had 'fixed the confluence of the Akesines (Chenab) and Indus as the boundary of the satrapy of Philippos, and he now made Oxyartes and Peithon satraps of the country of the south from the confluence of these rivers to the sea. Hence their jurisdiction must have met in this' district. Philippos was soon assassinated by his band of soldiers, and Peithon appears to have been driven from his satrapy by Poros after Alexander's death.

The Buddhist Period

It was during the sixth century BC that a prince of Kapilvastu, after attaining nirvana, gave a new philosophy to the world. It took the shape of a religion and spread far and wide in whole of Asia after the death of the Master, Gautama Buddha. Its teachings got special boost in propagation throughout the vast regions under the sway of Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka the Great and Kanishka of the Kushan lineage. It was mainly during the period of Asoka that the edicts of Buddhism were inscribed by him on the rocks, pillars etc. for the benefit of common populace. He was also responsible for a large scale activity resulting in the building of viharas (monasteries), stupas and madrasahs and universities. Even with its being much away from the Centre, Cholistan was still no exception. The presence of the remains of viharas in Cholistan clearly betrays that the Buddhism was practised here during that era. It is now well known that during this period the population of the region was living a very satisfied and contented life.

The most important of the Buddhist period remains is perhaps the Sui Vihar, located some twenty kilometres east of Ahmad Pur Sharqia. It must have served as a great educational institution for the monks of the region till the fall of the Kanishka's successors. This vihara appears to have been one in the line of the viharas along the Indus. Amongst the Viharas still retaining the name attached to the sites is also Kukkar Vihar, in Ahmad Pur Sharqia area.



Pattan Minara or site of Stupa



There is still another site about twelve kilometres from Uch, known as Kotla Musa Khan, close to which is located a large mound – Dhamrao Tibba – where the remains clearly show of the presence of a vihara, though now nearing unrecognisable state.

The structural remains known as Pattan Minara are also believed to representing some sort of Stupa, where the remnants of a vihara could easily be traced.

Rai Dynasty

Towards the end of the 5th century AD another phase of history is reported with the Rai dynasty holding the sway over a large area on this side of the South Asia Subcontinent. It is said that they ruled from Alor while their dominion extended to as far away as Kashmir and Kanauj, to Qandhar and Siestan, and to Makran and the port of Debal. Their rule extended to as far as Surat in the south. During their reign Sindh was divided in to the following four provinces:

1. Bahmanabad and Siwistan or Sehwan;
2. The Province in which lay Askalanda or Talwara;
3. Pabiya or Chachpur, which comprised the greater part of Cholistan desert including the present Bahawalpur region; and
4. The fourth one that included Multan and the western part of Punjab.

The unauthenticated history tells that in all five rulers of this dynasty ruled Sindh for 137 years. The second of them, Rai Siharas repulsed an invasion under a Persian king or a governor of Sijistan, but fell in the battle fought at Kich. The last of the lineage, Rai Sihasi II, is said to have remitted taxation on condition that the fortresses of Uch, Sevrai (Sarwahi) and Mau, which were all in this region of Cholistan or the present Bahawalpur territory, as also some other places, were repaired by his subjects. It was he in whose period Chach, a Brahman, gained much influence.

The Bahawalpur State Gazetteer on the authority of Colonel Minchin's manuscript history about this period says:

“According to the Chach-nama which Sir H. Elliot considers is a genuine Arab history, the present Bahawalpur State formed one of the Satrapies of the kingdom of Alor. It was called Askalanda and Pabiya, the former title recording the ancient name of Uch, and the latter I strongly suspect might be translated trans-Beas; as I have shown that the town of Uch is situated on the left bank of an old branch of this river and this fort was evidently situated on the delta formed by the junction of these rivers. These towns were also known as Talwara and Chachpur. The former name may have been given because of the strip of sand running close down to the town of Uch and the latter undoubtedly records the name of the Brahman usurper, who supplanted the Rai dynasty at Alor, and the name is still retained in the town of Chachar opposite Mithankot. Sir H. Elliot identifies Chach with Sassa the Indian, the inventor of Chess, as Sassa is simply the Arabic form of writing the word Chach. His accession took place in AD 631 and shortly afterwards he determined to visit the whole of his empire, and accordingly marched up the left bank of the Indus river to Pabiya to which he laid siege; the governor, however, a great and brave man in the Fort of Askalanda who was in the interests of Chach, and, being promised the governorship of both these forts, killed Chantra, the fugitive governor of Pabiya and sent his



head to Chach. Having completed this expedition, Chach proceeded towards Sikka and Multan, but was delayed for three months at a ford on the Beas which he was unable to cross. This must have been the other branch of the Beas which joined the Chenab 30 miles below Multan. Eighty two years later Muhammad ibn Qasim having accomplished the conquest of lower Sind and Alor followed the course taken by Chach, and according to the old chronicler journeyed till he arrived at the old fort of Ya-biha or Pabiya. It was an old fort and the chief of it was Kaksas. He was a cousin of Dahir, the son of Chach, and was present at the battle where he was slain, and having fled came to this fort in a wretched plight. When the Muhammadan Army arrived, hostages were sent and chiefs and nobles went forth and made submission. Muhammad ibn Qasim having learnt that Kaksas belonged to the family of Alor appointed him Wazir with the title of the Mubarak Mushir. When he had settled the affairs with Kaksas he crossed the Beas and reached the stronghold of Askalanda. The siege lasted for seven days, when the chief who was the nephew of the Chief of Multan, left at night and took refuge in the fort of Sikka, which is a large fort on the south bank of the Ravi. The people, artisans, and merchants then sent a message soliciting the protection of Muhammad ibn Qasim. He granted their request, but put the whole garrison of four thousand men to the sword and sent their families into slavery. He appointed Atba, son of Salma Tamimi, governor, and proceeded towards Sikka and Multan”.

Arab Invasion & Advent of Muslim Rule

It was within the hundred years of the advent of Islam that the rule of its followers spread far and wide. Sindh was no exception though the earlier Arab expeditions met with some hiccups. The Muslim Arab inroads into Sindh had started as early as the reign of the second Caliph, Hazrat Umer Farooq, when in 636 AD Deybal, the famous port of Sindh (probably the present site of Banbhore some 40 kilometres from Karachi) was attacked first time under the command of Mughirah. Chach was then the ruler of the region. Some twenty years later, it was Haris, who invaded Sindh but preferred to retreat after causing great plunder to the country. He, however, was defeated here and killed during his second outing at a place called Kikan only about three years later. But the policy of invading Sindh did not cease there. Just two years later Muhallab bin Sufra not only overran whole of Sindh but also penetrated to Multan, first time by any Arab commander. However, this invasion had no permanent effects as the Arabs once again retired from the region.



During the ensuing years when Raja Dahir was well-established in Sindh and had his rule extended even up to Cholistan, a fresh wave of Arab invasion swept the region. This time it was to reprimand Raja Dahir for his inaction in punishing the pirates, who had plundered eight Arab ships at the port of Deybal and imprisoned even women and children travelling by these ships. Two punitive expeditions having failed, an army was despatched under the command of Muhammad bin Qasim against the kingdom of Raja Dahir. This in fact was the fifteenth expedition undertaken by the Muslim Arabs to this region, which was destined to penetrate considerably deep into the areas to the north. The earlier outings of these Arabs, having started with the one during the Caliphate of Hazrat Umer, either failed or ended in plundering the riches in men and material but never lasted or were meant to entrenched or well-established.

Bin Qasim, joined by another general, Muhammad Harun, at Makran, was able to reduce Deybal in early 712 AD and from there marched on to Nerunkot and Sehwan, which were also humbled in due course. He proceeded further and defeated and slew Raja Dahir at Rawar, also taking possession of Alor, Uch and Multan, with other smaller fortresses in the same month.

The region of Uch, or Askalanda was at this time held by Bajhra Taki, a grandson or nephew of the Bajhra, who had held Multan against Chach. It was here that the Arab forces met a stiff resistance. The raja, after defending against the siege for six days, abandoned the fortress and fled to Sikka. Muhammad bin Qasim spared the lives of traders, craftsmen, peasants, women and children but put the whole garrison to sword. After giving the control of the fort in the charge of Utba Tamimi, bin Qasim marched on and clamped a siege to Sikka, which lasted seventeen days. It finally fell to the Arabs while Bajhra ran from here and took refuge in Multan.



Muttan during the Raj

Muhammad bin Qasim had been in the region only for three years when he was called back and put to death at the orders of the Caliph Sulaiman, for reasons variedly told by chroniclers. He was succeeded by two governors appointed by the Caliph. However, during the next about sixty years there had been many governors and many a strife and skirmish ended in some murders or flights within the Arab ruling elite. In 771 AD Ruh became the governor of Sindh under Caliph Harun-ar-Rashid and ruled the region for a long time. This was perhaps the only period in the history of Sindh that saw prosperity under the Arabs. After some replacements of governors Ali bin Isa was appointed to control Sindh around 836 AD. He is best known for 'his occupation of Kaikan, the country of the Jats, in which he established a military colony, and for his expedition against the Meds, whom he completely subdued, building in their country the 'Sakr-el-Med' or Med's causeway, a name preserved in the town of Sukkar or Sakkar.'

After the decline of the central power of the Caliph after 870 AD, Sindh, perhaps being quite a far away province, was the first to fell out. Caliph Muhammad had conferred the governorship of Balkh and Turkestan on Yaqub bin Lais. But on his death two independent principalities of Mansurah and Multan were formed. While the former consisted of the area from Alor to the sea, the latter must have started from Alor thus, in all probability leaving the Cholistan region – including the present day Bahawalpur – under the seat of Multan. This fact is also borne by the famous traveller Mas'udi, who visited the region of the Indus in 915-16 AD and records it flourishing under Amir of Multan, Abu'l-Talhat-ul-Munabba Quraish. The chronicles also mention that there were 120,000 hamlets around the capital, Multan.

The Karamatians

Two of the Arab travellers, Istakhri and Ibn Haukal, who visited the region some two years later tell that the principality of Multan 'was fertile and its produce cheap, though the fertility was inferior to that of Mansura. It is also noted that at the time the Muslim power was far from an established state in the region.' The Multan principality was, however, to slip from its existing masters and become an abode of the Karmatians, who after their overthrow from Iraq, took refuge in Sindh. The famous historian Frishta records about them as, "on referring to historical works such as the Tarjuma-i-Ma'ani, &c., it appears that Sultan Mahmud wrested Multan from the possession of the Karmatian heretics and that it remained under his splendid dynasty till its decline, when the Karmatians regained its possession and appointed Hamid Khan Lodhi, a man of their own faith, as its governor."

The Ghazanvides

Hamid Khan Lodhi sided with the Raja of Lahore, Jaipal, against the invasion of Sabuktigin, perhaps as he had been main instrument, under the last of the Samani rulers of Khurasan, in suppressing the Karmatians in that country. Under the same prejudice the grandson of Hamid Khan Lodhi, Abul Fateh Daud, also opposed the Muslim invader, Mahmud Ghazanvi, by siding with the Raja of Lahore, Anand Pal. The second outing of Mahmud Ghazanvi to the South Asia was against Bhathindah in 1004 AD, but on the third one in 1005 AD he aimed directly at Multan. On the request of the Karmatian Lodhi, Anad Pal tried to block Ghazanvide incursion but was squarely defeated at Peshawar on which he ran to Sodhra. Mahmud reached Multan and put a siege. The city surrendered after seven days, Abul Fateh becoming his tributary. However, the Ghazanvi had to return to Ghazna because of the invasion of Khorasan by the king of Kashgar.

On his fifth outing 'in 1010 Mahmud again advanced on Multan, which had revolted and having taken Abul Fateh prisoner sent him to the fort of Ghuruk where he remained in confinement till his death. The author of the Mirat-i-Masudi adds that after this event Multan was deserted, its ra'is, or chief, Anan Pal, taking refuge in Uch. Fourteen years later, however, Mahmud again visited Multan, which must have recovered some of its former importance for the conqueror fitted out his army at this place for his expedition to Somnath and marched thence through the Bahawalpur territory, visiting Maujgarh'.

After a successful expedition to Somnath, Mahmud marched back along the Indus River. He took possession of Mansura from possibly a Karmatian and placed a Muslim prince on the throne. He then reduced Bhatia (probably the site of Bhutta Wahan in Sadiqabad). According to chroniclers Mahmud passed through Cholistan facing much misery on his way back to Ghazna. He then crossed through,



probably a branch of Hakra river – with brackish water. ‘And after crossing that stream the army must have proceeded to Uch and crossed the Sutlej at some point towards north-east, the Indus flowing in those days close to Uch in the bed of what is now the Panjnad.’

Elliot’s English translation of Mir’at-i-Mas’udi dilates well on the events of the country during that period. It says that ‘a young noble, Salar Mas’ud, a nephew of Sultan Mahmud, who being unable to remain at Ghazni in consequence of the enmity of Wazir Hasan Maimandi, obtained permission from the Sultan to travel for a year in the Punjab, and leaving the Ghazni Court with a strong body of troops came to Multan, which he found deserted, for since Mahmud had plundered it for the second time, it had never been restored, and the Rais (Chief) Arjun and Anang Pal, the lords of the place, had gone to reside in the province of Uch. Thence they sent ambassadors to Mas’ud to inquire if he thought it right thus to overrun a foreign country, adding, “Perhaps you will have cause to repent it.” Mas’ud replied, “The country is God’s, his slave has no kingdom, but he to whom God gives it will be the possessor.” He then bestowed khil’ats on the ambassadors and dismissed them with a caution to prepare for war. As soon as they had departed, he sent six Amirs.....with several hundred troops to attack Uch. Rai Anang Pal came out of his stronghold to meet him. The combat raged for three hours, and many veterans fell on both sides, and the Rai was at last obliged to yield. The conquerors entered the city and plundered it, carrying off an immense amount of property.’

The great conqueror, Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, died in 1030. This was once again the time when ‘the main urban centres of Sindh were administered by officers whose headquarters were outside Sindh and who were there to protect international trading routes and exact tribute from the chiefs of Sindh. Taking advantage of the situation, the Sumras assembled in 1026 in Thari, away from the main urban centres, and elected Sumar as their leader.

The Ghaurids

In the meanwhile, Ghaznavides had lost to the Ghaurids. The nephew of the founder of the dynasty, Sultan Shahab al-Din Muhammad of Ghor reduced Sindh in 1175 and delivered Multan from the hands of Karmatians. By 1179 he had attacked Deybal and captured the area along the coast of Sindh and Makran.

The Sultan was assassinated at Dhamiak in Jhelum district in 1206. He was succeeded by Sultan Qutb al Din Aibak, a slave of Sultan Mu’izz-ud-Din and the founder of the Slave dynasty in the South Asia Subcontinent. During his reign Malik Nasir-ud-Din-i-Aetamur was feudatory of Uch, but after his death in a campaign the region of Uch was entrusted to Malik Nasir-ud-Din Qabacha, who had married two of Sultan Qutb-ud-Din Aibak’s daughters. In 1210, on Sultan’s death, he proceeded to Uch and possessed himself of Multan, Siwistan and Deybal, to the extent of the sea. Subsequently, he annexed the country to the east as far as the Sasuti and Tabarhinda, probably Bhatinda. In the meanwhile he had also taken possession of Lahore. In 1215 he was ousted from Lahore, Multan and Uch by the army of Sultan Taj-ud-Din Yalduz but was re-instated in their possession as tributary of Iltutmash after the latter had defeated Yalduz and put him to death.

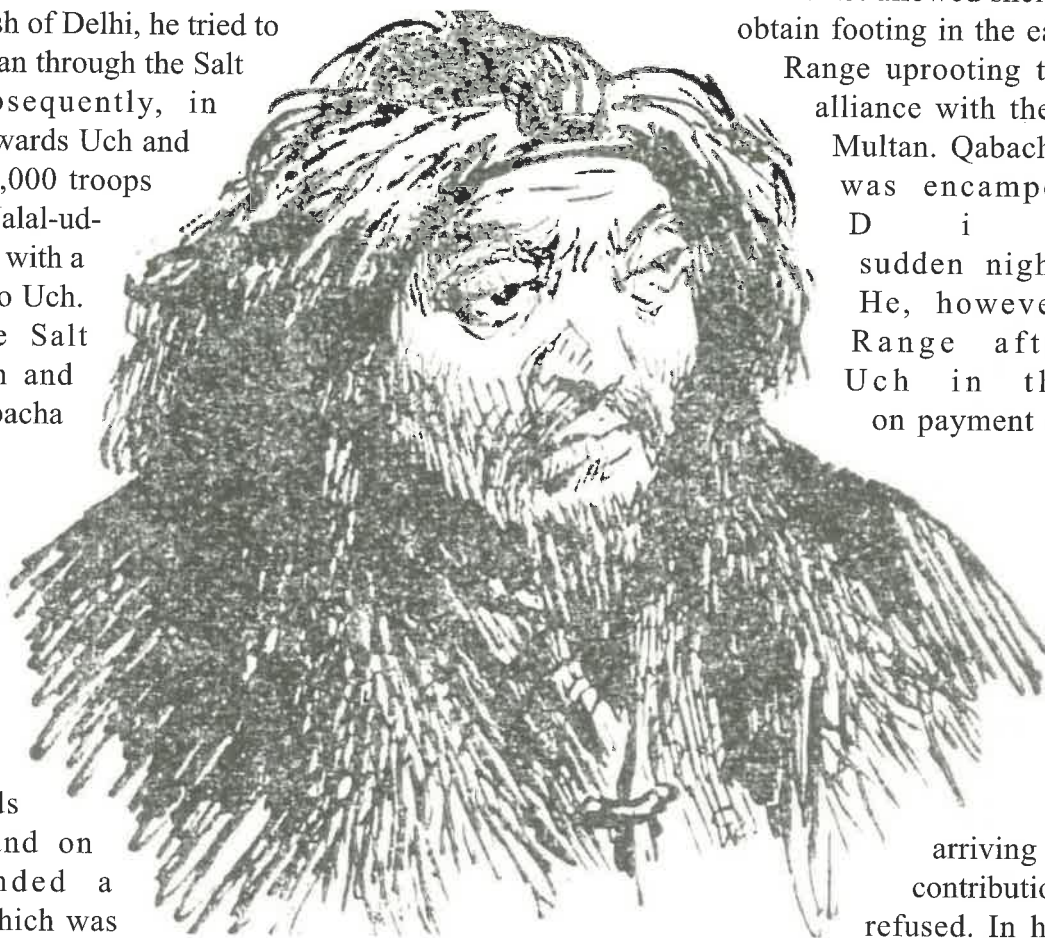
However, Qabacha did not remain a loyal subject of the Sultan for a long time as he failed in paying the tributes. As such Sultan Iltutmash marched from Delhi to Lahore in 1217 to enforce the payment.



The Sultan crossed the Beas, which compelled Qabacha to seek refuge in Uch, where the Sultan was not ready to follow him. In spite of constant hostilities between him and the Sultan, Qabacha was able to consolidate his power in Sindh, where he reduced the Sumras to an insignificant position.

The Mughal incursions & The Era of the Sultans

When the ruler of Ghaur and Ghazni, Sultan Jalal-ud-Din Khwarazmi was defeated by the Mongol Chingiz Khan near Peshawar around 1222 and not allowed shelter by Sultan Iltutmash of Delhi, he tried to obtain footing in the east of the Indus. He ran through the Salt Range uprooting the alliance with them Gakkhars. Subsequently, in Multan. Qabacha, he now turned towards Uch and was encamped although with 20,000 troops near D i n Uch. Sultan Jalal-ud-Din overwhelmed him with a sudden night-attack and came to He, however, Uch in the possession of Qabacha on payment of a huge tribute.



B u t Chingiz Khan had meanwhile organised another army against Jalal-ud-Din, who retreated towards Lower Sindh, and on Multan demanded a contribution from Qabacha, which was refused. In his condition of distress, he was not able to enforce any demand and thus marched on Uch and finding it in utter hostility, burnt it and retired to Siwistan.

In 1224 the Mughal forces advanced on Multan and put it under siege. However, due to intense heat they had to retreat after six weeks blockade. From the presence of some habitats the historians conclude that at this time some part of the region might have been re-occupied by the Khwarazmi forces. Qabacha, however, having defeated the Khalj tribe - which must have come with Jalal-ud-Din Khwarazm Shah - and slaying their leader re-occupied Uch and Multan in 1226.

‘Uch had, it would seem, by this time recovered from its burning by Sultan Jalal-ud-Din for in the next year Minhaj-i-Siraj, the author of the Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, was appointed to the charge of the Firuzi College in that city, but it enjoyed but a brief spell of tranquillity for in 625 H (1228 AD) I-yal-timish (Iltutmash) in alliance with the Khalj and Khwarazmi fugitives marched from Delhi via



Tabarhindah on Uch while the governor of the province of Lahore marched on Multan. Uch was closely invested and appears to have fallen after a siege of nearly three months, but Kabaja (Qabacha), who had fled to Bhakkar was still untaken.' The Sultan sent a force after him but Qabacha drowned in the river Indus on attempting to flee when the fort was besieged by Nizam al-Mulk Junaydi, the minister of the Sultan of Delhi. Malik Nasir-ud-Din Qabacha had ruled, with varying degrees of fortunes, for twenty-two years. It was only after his death that the Sammas regained their power in Sindh.

Malik Saif-ud-Din Ibak-i-Uchchah was feudatory of Uch at the time of the death of Sultan Iltutmash. Soon after, in 1236, Qarlugh Turks under Malik Saif-ud-Din Hasan set on invading Multan. However, Ibak advanced against this force and succeeded in repelling them. But it was not much long after that in 1239 Qarlugh took over Multan, Uch then being held in fief by Malik Muayyid-ud-Din and retained its possession.

'In (1240) the Mughals advanced again on Multan, but finding they were likely to be vigorously opposed turned their faces towards Lahore, which they sacked. In consequence of this inroad Malik Izz-ud-Din Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz, whom the Queen Raziyyah had removed from the fief of Lahore to that of Multan, proclaimed his independence and took possession of Uch and its dependencies. He died however in the following year (1241) and was succeeded by his son Taj-ud-Din Abu-Bakr-i-Ayaz who subjugated Sind(h) and several times attacked and defeated the Qarlughs before Multan.'

In 1245 the grandson of Chingiz Khan, Kyuk Khan, despatched armies to various countries including India where it invaded the Delhi kingdom taking the route of Salt Range and the Sindh Sagar Doab, 'keeping along its western frontier and entering the province of Multan in order to assail that city and Uch, then the frontier strongholds of the kingdom.' The Mongol advance caused Malik Saif-ud-Din Hasan to hastily set for Sehwan after deserting Multan. The Mughals first invested Uch, which put up a vigorous opposition resulting in the loss of one of the chief leaders of the invaders. In the meantime Ghias-ud-Din Balban, later to become a Sultan of the Slave Dynasty, organised the Delhi king's force and marched to Multan taking the route of Lahore with the aim to cut the supply and the retreat line of the Mughals towards the Salt Range. 'This movement compelled the Mughal leader to raise the siege of Uch and dividing his army into three divisions he retired.....to Khurasan.'

In the year 1249 when Malik Saif-ud-Din Hasan, the Qarlugh, advanced from Benian, which country he had held in spite of the Mughal pressure, to attack Multan Balban-i-Kashlu Khan marched from Uch and engaged it effectively. Malik Saif-ud-Din Hasan was slain in this engagement 'but his followers kept his death secret, and though Balban had entered Multan after the battle he was compelled to evacuate it' whereupon Malik Hasan's eldest son took possession of it. It was, however, recovered from him and placed under the charge of Ikhtiyar-ud-Din-i-Kurez. A year later, Balban advancing from Uch tried to wrest it from Ikhtiyar-ud-Din but failed and retired to Uch.

Around 1251 Malik Sher Khan advanced on Uch from Tabarhindah and Lahore by way of Multan. Balban hastening back from Nagaur, went to the camp of Sher Khan where he was made captive till he surrendered Uch. Thus he left for Delhi.



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An attempt to restore Balban over Uch was made by Sultan Mahmud Shah in 1252 when he marched with his army towards it via Lahore. But, without crossing Beas, he retired to Delhi. A year later, once again the Sultan marched on Uch and Multan, when Sher Khan withdrew from his positions in the Indus Valley and fled to Turkistan, leaving Uch, Multan and Tabarhindah in the hands of his retainers. 'Early in 1254 they were conferred on Asalan Khan Sanjar-i-Chast and Mahmud Shah returned to Delhi, but some time in 1255 they were restored to Malik Balban-i-Kashlu Khan, who in the following year tendered his allegiance to Hulaku Khan and by him a body of Mughal troops under Nu-yin Salin was sent to Uch.' Two years later when Balban marched with the army of Uch and Multan against Delhi he utterly failed and, deserted by his troop, fled first to Uch and from there to Iraq in the camp of Halaku. He later returned with some troops from the Mughal.

With some ups and downs the Slave Dynasty ended after the death of Balban, and murder of his son, but the Mughals successfully were kept at bay. Khiljis were now the masters from Delhi. Although the Mughal inroads continued yet with the beginning to embrace Islam around 1290 the Mughals started entering the service of Khilji Jalal-ud-Din Firoz Shah II, who made a new station for them near Delhi, by the name of Mughalpura. Along with this, his son Arkali Khan, who was the governor of Lahore and Multan, made a cantonment for them near the town of Uch, which came to be known by the name of Uch Mughlan.

On the death of Ibrahim Shah his heir-apparent, Arkali Khan, was at Multan and thus lost the throne. He was later ousted even from Multan and subsequently blinded. In the year 1208 when the Mughals put a siege on Sehwan (Siwistan) they were squarely defeated by a Malik of the Delhi Court. However, towards the end of the same year they were able to advance as far as Delhi. Later, in the year 1304 they were defeated by the governor of Punjab when they turned their face towards Multan and under Aibak Khan or Kabak the city was ravaged. Ghazi Beg Tughlaq Khan, governor of Punjab, attacked Multan and evicted the Mughals with heavy losses and much slaughter. This broke the back of the Mughal invading forces for some time but in the year 1327 'the Mughals subdued Lamghan and in the ensuing year Muhammad ibn Tughlaq suppressed the revolt of Kashku Khan at Multan, and 11 years later he had to put down a second revolt under Bahram Abiya.'

Some four years later, in 1342, it was an Afghan chief, who attacked Multan and killed its viceroy, Bahzad Khan. It was only when emperor Muhammad bin Tughlaq personally marched on Multan that he bowed out. The emperor died in Sindh while on march against the Sumras. His cousin, Firoz Shah III, who was accompanying him, declared himself the successor and from thence marched to Uch and onward to Delhi.

In 1394 governor of Dipalpur, Sarang Khan, fought against Amir Khizr Khan Sayyed and dispossessed him of Multan. However, he was defeated by troops from Delhi so he ran towards Multan, moving on to Uch, which place was held for him by Ali Malik.

As an advance force of Timur his grandson, Pir Muhammad, marched on Uch and put it under siege. However, on the advance of an army from Delhi he lifted the siege. He was though able to defeat the Delhi force, under Taj-ud-Din, who was driven back to Multan. The Mughal was able to take possession of Multan too after a siege of six months. 'Timur himself having crossed the Indus besiege Shihab-ud-Din, the ruler of an island in the Jhelum, and drove him towards Uch, where upon Shaikh Nur-ud-Din pursued and defeated him.'

On retiring from the region Timur re-instated Khizr Khan on the governor-ship of Punjab. In due course he attained sufficient power and annexed Dipalpur and Multan acting as a sovereign ruler. After subjugating the Mughal Amirs of the area he also seized the throne of Delhi in 1414 and established the Sayyed Dynasty, which though professed to be mere deputies of the Mughals. However, the Mughal, Mirza Shah Rukh, who then held Kabul, sent his lieutenant Shaikh Ali on invasion of Siwistan and Bhakkar. The successor of Khizr Khan, Mubarak Shah, put the governor of Multan, Malik Mahmud Hasan, to counter the invader, which he did successfully. In 1423 he was replaced with Malik Nadira feudatory at Multan until 1429 when Malik Mahmud Hasan was recalled from Hissar and re-appointed in his place at Multan with the title of Imad-ul-Mulk. Shaikh Ali had continuously been a source of headache in Punjab and Multan till he was completely routed, running to Kabul, by Imad-ul-Mulk with the help of Mubarak Shah II at the final stages. After him Malik Khair-ud-Din Khani became governor of Multan, though its frontiers were harassed almost continuously when Mubarak Shah II himself came in 1433 to annihilate Shaikh Ali from his possessions, latter in the process retreating but taking possession of Shorkot from Mughal Amir, Muzaffar Khan. By this time, in 1438, the province of Multan was in a state of chaos when the Delhi emperor Muhammad Shah IV came to know of the revolt of the Langahs.



It was because of this anarchy, which especially prevailed after the demise of the Tughlaq dynasty that the inhabitants of the region assembled in 1443 and elected Shaikh Yousaf from the Quraish tribe to become the ruler of Multan and Uch. The Shaikh immediately took to reorganising the government and developed friendly relations with the zamindars of adjoining areas to the extent of the ruler of Sibi (Siwi), Rai Sihra, whose daughter he also married. But it was not long after that the Rai treacherously seized Shaikh Yousuf's authority under the title of Qutb-ud-Din. The former was expelled from Multan and sent to Delhi where he was received with respect. Qutb-ud-Din died in 1469 after ruling Multan and large part of Sindh and was succeeded by his son, Hussain.

The new ruler successfully invaded Shiwar (Shorkot), Hot, Kotgirwar and Dhankot. The Delhi force of Sultan Bahlol Khan Lodhi marched on him to recover Multan for the fugitive Yousaf but, though Hussain was able to thwart the attack of Lodhis on Multan, he could not hold Hot against them.

Hussain basically proved to be a Baloch chief, whose court was thronged by people of this tribe. Baloches received parts of Sindh and fiefdoms in Multan region. He conferred Uch on Jam Ibrahim Sahna while Shiwar on Jam Bazid, his brother, who had fled from the court of Jam Nanda, the Samma ruler at Thatta.

In 1488 Hussain effected a treaty of peace with Delhi Sultan, Sikandar Lodhi though himself abdicated in favour of his son, Firoz, who was poisoned by his enemies only to bring back the ageing Hussain to the throne. He died in 1502, when his grandson, Mahmud, succeeded him.

During Mahmud's period his minister Bazid revolted and occupied Shiwar, only to put it in the camp of the Lodhis and thus becoming their feudatory. He conferred Uch as jagir on one Mir Jakar Zand, whose son, Mir Shahida is said to be the first disseminator of Shia tenets in the South Asia Subcontinent. From this some historians opine that the differences between the two rivals were more of religious nature than anything else.



In 1524 the Arghuns from Thatta marched on Multan but it was before they reached here that Mahmud died on which his minor son was declared to succeed him as Hussain Langah II. However, soon after the Arghuns faced no difficulty in wresting Multan and thus ended the Langah dynasty. Simultaneous with the Langahs a rival branch established itself on the other side of the Indus with Sitpur as its headquarters. In history this has come to be known as the Nahars. Under Babar they almost lost their independence and were virtual tributaries of the Mughal emperor Akbar. Although their territory was reduced still they almost held on both sides of the Indus in Ahmadpur Sharqia (East) and Khanpur regions till about 1700.

The Arghuns

In the meanwhile Arghuns, starting with Shah Beg, rose as a power to be reckoned with in Sindh. After having been ousted from Qandhar Shah Beg had marched towards Sindh and conquered its southern part, on way taking Sibi (Siwi) in 1514 and Thatta in 1521. He made Bhakkar his capital after squarely defeating the Sammas. He heavily fortified this town.

On his death in 1525 his son Shah Hussain Arghun took his place and his general Baba Ahmad ransacked Derawar, the country around Bhutta Wahan and the tract that now makes the region of Sadiqabad. This enraged Dahirs, who with the help of Baloches, sacked Sewrai in the Arghun kingdom, which invited the reprisal from the rivals. On this the people of Derawar and Fetchpur with the help of Baloches of Sewrai inflicted the Arghuns on which the Baba pillaged all the three places but was fatally wounded.

In retaliation to this Shah Hussain sent fresh force and destroyed the region up to Mau Mubarak. On Baloch submission, the frontiers of the rule of the Arghuns were extended to Bhutta Wahan. Soon after, by virtue of marrying a daughter of a minister of Baba's, Shah Hussain entered into alliance with that emperor, who was then marching on Punjab. Babar invited Shah Hussain to occupy Multan where upon he marched along the Indus and occupied Sewrai, 'which the Baloches abandoned and took refuge in Uch.' The Arghun continued his successful expedition reducing on way Mau Mubarak and Lar, whose chief Nanda submitted. From there he marched on to Uch where he destroyed the combined force of Langahs and Baloches. 'All the Baloches and Langahs found in Uch were put to sword and the massacre and pillage of the town was only stopped at the intercession of the Sayyids.' He completely razed the fortifications of Uch and thus making it incapable of any offensive use, marched on to Multan.

Multan fell to the Arghun after a long siege. Placing one of his amirs, Khwaja Shams-ud-din, in charge of the fort while nominating Lashkar Khan Langah – a deserter – as deputy he returned to Thatta. However, not long after Lashkar Khan expelled the Khwaja and assumed the title of governor. To ensure the defences of his northern frontier, Shah Hussain rebuilt the fortifications of Uch and left a considerable strength of garrison in the place. Although from here he intended to return to Sindh yet the attraction of acquiring a treasure caused a delay. He learnt that this was concealed in the fort of Derawar, which was being held under Ghazi Khan for the Raja of Jaisalmer. He summoned the Khan but he was not ready to betray the trust put in him by the Raja. On this Shah Hussain marched on Derawar, sending Sambal Khan in advance to 'seek a place for the main army to encamp. The scarcity of water compelled that leader to sink 300 wells in the Hakra, and the army was thereby able to lay siege to the place and destroy the walls by mines, but eventually it was carried by assault, the Arghuns place their shields on their heads and scaling the walls sword in hand. Its defenders were put to the sword and the treasure found in the place divided between the king and his army.'



On the death of the Mughal emperor Babar in 1530 AD, his son Humayun succeeded him on the Delhi throne. His other son Kamran was the governor of Kabul and Qandhar while Humayun also relinquished Punjab and the southern part of the country on the Indus in his favour. The deputies of Kamran governed Multan till his death in 1535.

Mughal Emperor Humayun in the Region

On the other side, in 1540 Humayun lost his capital and other possessions to Sher Shah Suri. He then turned his face towards Arghuns of Sindh, once the tributaries of Delhi emperor, from whom he expected help to regain his empire from the Pathan king after he was totally disillusioned from his brother's Lahore. According to Gul-badan Begum, "when he saw that there was a large following with Mirza Kamran, and that the Mirza was in no way willing for him to go to Kabul, he had no recourse but to move towards Bhakkar and Multan. Having arrived in Multan, he halted one day. A small quantity of corn was obtained in the fort and having divided that little amongst his men, he marched on till he came to the bank of a river which was seven rivers in one (the Indus, perhaps at the point of Panjnad). He stood distracted. There were no boats, and he had a large camp with him. Then there came word that Khawas Khan, (a follower of Sher Shah Suri) with several amirs, was coming up behind.

"There was a Baluchi named Bakhshu (sic, possibly the governor of Uch, Bakhshwi Langah under Multan's Hussain Langah) who had forts and many men. His Majesty sent him a banner and Kettledrums, and a horse, and a head-to-foot suit, and asked for boats and also for corn. After a time Bakhshu Baluchi got together and sent about hundred boats, full of corn too, for the royal service, - a proper attention, which pleased the Emperor very much. He divided the corn amongst his people and crossed the water (from Gara near Uch) safe and sound."



Reaching the fortified town of Bhakkar, he camped on the outskirts and waited in futile for a personal interview with the governor, Sultan Mahmud Bhakkari. The fugitive emperor Humayun remained in Sindh for two and a half years from 1540 to 1542 vainly negotiating with Hussain Arghun, the ruler of Sindh at Thatta, who played off Mirza Yadgar Nasir, Humayun's uncle, against him.

In 1542 he marched back to Uch, and from thence via Derawar and Warsalpur to Phalodi on way to Maldeo entering the Marwar territory, but fearing treachery, turned towards Umerkot. The journey was arduous and found unsafe until his amirs were able to route the Hindu army. As his sister writes in her memoirs, "For three days they found no water. On the fourth, they came to some very deep wells, the water of which was extraordinarily very red. The Emperor halted and alighted near one of the wells;...." Still through desert and its hard terrain, the Emperor reached Umerkot on 22nd August 1542.

At Umerkot, which according to Gul-badan Begam 'is a beautiful place with many tanks' 'the rana gave the Emperor an honourable reception, and took him into the fort, and assigned him excellent quarter. He gave places outside to the amirs' people.' 'The rana made many gifts of kids and so on, and paid such fitting service that what tongue could set it forth?' It was here that the future emperor Akbar was born on 15th October 1542. After having some fighting here and there Humayun eventually fled to Qandhar in 1545. In 1554 Hussain Arghun entered into close alliance with Kamran. However, after the former's death the country was divided into two governors, but with the accession of Mughal



emperor Akbar at Delhi throne his generals Muhib Ali and Mujahid wrested the territory and annexed it to Multan. The regional small time powers had been rising against the Mughals after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 but then put under control with the local tribes.

Abbasi Daudpotras – Nawabs of Bahawalpur

The ruler of Sindh, Mirza Ghazi Beg, was murdered in 1612 and from that time on governors were appointed at the choosing of the Emperor of Delhi. The famous history of Sindh, Tuhfatul-kiram, enumerates as many as 40 governors to have held office in succession during the 127 years that intervened between the death of Mirza Ghazi Beg and the annexation of Sindh by Nadir Shah in 1739.

In the meanwhile, the Daudpotras or the sons of Daud came to power in the upper Sindh. The Kalhoras, a branch of the Daudpotras, claiming half-caste Arab descent, had established themselves over a considerable extent of country on the right bank of the Indus, though had started exerting when the strong rule of the Arghuns and Tarkhans in Sindh ended and the nominal governors were being appointed by the Emperors at Delhi. While the Daudpotras were farmers and weavers, the Kalhoras acquired the reputation for sanctity, indicated by the title of Mian, and strengthened secular with spiritual authority.

The first of the Kalhoras who merit mention was Adam Khan who was martyred in Multan, probably about the middle of the 16th century, and buried in Sukkur where his mausoleum still stands. For four generations his descendants lived about Larkana, multiplying their disciples, acquiring land, increasing their influence and fighting small fights. The fifth in the line, Mian Din Muhammad, became intolerable for the Mughals because of his fights with Panwhars, Daudpotras and even the imperial governor. Prince Muiz-ud-Din marched on him, and though his brother Mian Yar Muhammad, fought fiercely Mian Din Muhammad was carried away by the imperial army as prisoner, never to come back to Sindh. Mian Yar Muhammad took refuge in Kalat and returned only after two years with a band of Balochi allies to start his career afresh. In spite of the fact that the Prince again marched against him, the Mian with his tact won over his favour and was thus installed governor of Siwi (Sibi) which then also included Shikarpur, with the title of Khuda Yar Khan. He died about 1718 and was buried in the mausoleum built by himself at Khudabad, a town also founded by him.

He was succeeded by his son, Mian Nur Muhammad, who was also granted the title of Khuda Yar Khan. It was he, who was able to extend his territory to as far as Thatta and Sukkur. He, however, then met a stronger adversary. The great Persian king Nadir Shah invaded and sacked Delhi in 1739. A treaty between him and the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah allowed the latter to retain whole of the territory west of the Indus. On his return journey through Sindh the Mian put up a disdainful attitude towards the King while his opponent, Sadiq Muhammad the Daudpotra, offered his submission. Mian Nur Muhammad thus had to retreat to Umerkot but the moves of the King were fast enough to hold him from his place of refuge. The Mian then had to accompany King Nadir Shah as prisoner to Larkana where he paid compensation in the shape of ten million rupees and a promise of tribute before he was restored the government of Thatta. His archrivals, Daudpotras were given Shikarpur. The Shah also took two of the sons of Mian Nur Muhammad with him as hostages. Nadir Shah left Larkana for Kandhar, halting at Shikarpur on the way. Later on when the Daudpotras acted against the agent of the Shah, they were defeated all ends up. Those who survived ran across Indus under Bahawal Khan, who later on founded the city of Bahawalpur and a kingdom there, but never to return to power in Sindh.



At the time when the Abbasi Daudpotras came to the helm of the affairs and started their rule in this region – Cholistan to Bahawalpur – it was held by different tribes as given below:-

- a) A large part of Sadiqabad and some areas of Khanpur region were held by the Sindh's Kalhora ruler, Nur Muhammad, also known as Khudayar Khan;
- b) The Cholistan forts – Bijnot, Bhimwar, Derawar, Marot – and some of the areas on the southern side of the regions of Sadiqabad and Khanpur were held by the Raja of Jaisalmer;
- c) Uch was an attachment of Multan though the Bukhari and Gilani Makhdum exercised their secular authority, backed by spiritual sanctity;
- d) A large part of present Bahawalpur region and a part of Ubbha were under the control of the governor of Multan;
- e) The Lakhwera, Farid Khan II ruler the region of Shahr Farid;
- f) Most of the Wattus of the present Minchinabad were tributary to the throne of Delhi, while a few were subject to the ruler of Shahr Farid; and
- g) The Raja of Bikaner, Zorawar Singh, exercised his authority over the forts of Wallhar, Phulra, Anupgarh with the adjacent territories.

On their leaving Shikarpur and Sindh the tribe of Abbasi Daudpotras under **Amir Sadiq Muhammad** bin Mubarak Khan settled in Bet-Dabli (near Dera Ghazi Khan), which was then a fertile island in the Indus. Soon after, on an invitation from the Bukhari and Gilani Makhdums of Uch, the clan moved to Uch where in 1728 Amir Sadiq Muhammad received the jagir of Chaudhari from Nawab Hayat-ullah Khan, Subedar of Multan. Here in addition to great developments the Amir caused to be built a new town of Allahabad, some five kilometres from Chaudhari.

It was the time when Farid Khan Lakhwera was plundering the surrounding country. Amir Sadiq Muhammad Khan attacked and defeated him in 1732, which earned him a sanad from Nawab Hayat-ullah Khan conferring on him the region of Farid Shahr as well. A year later, he routed Rawal Akhi Singh from Derawar and occupied it.

As mentioned earlier in the context of Kalhoras, Nadir Shah invaded Derajat in 1739 when, among others, Amir Sadiq Muhammad Khan was also a beneficiary of his apportioning the region for allegiance to the king. The Amir was granted Shikarpur, pargana Larkana, Siwistan, Chhatar, together with what he was already in possession of i.e. Chaudhari, Derawar etc. Nadir Shah also conferred on him the title of Nawab. Under the Amir was thus a considerably large region stretching over 320 kilometres in length.

However, when Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan was killed in 1746 in the battle while defending Shikarpur, the possessions of the Daudpotras granted in Sindh by Nadir Shah were seized by the Kalhoras.

Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan I was survived by three sons namely Bahawal Khan, Mubarak Khan and Fateh Khan. The tribe of Daudpotras elected Bahawal Khan. Consequently he ascended the throne as the second Nawab of the Abbasi Daudpotras under the title of **Nawab Bahawal Khan I**, some twenty days after the death of his father.





Nawab Bahawal Khan Abassi I (1737 - 1741)



Nawab Mubarak Khan Abassi (1749 - 1772)



Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan II (1752 - 1809)



Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abassi II (1780 - 1825)

Just a year from the time of ascending the throne Rawal Rai Singh retook Derawar but not without the help of the Subedar of Multan, Hayat-ullah Khan, Rais of Sitpur and the Kalhora ruler, Khudayar Khan.

However the reign of Bahawal Khan I was one of the most prosperous ones, which caused jealousy in his contemporaries. A revolt, with the help of the outsiders, by his younger brother Mubarak Khan came to nought when the Sahibzada tendered his submission.

It was when he helped with his force Diwan Kauri Mal, the Subedar of Multan, to extinguish the revolt of the ruler of Dera Ghazi Khan, Janesar Khan, that the Nawab was rewarded with perpetual lease of the taluqa Adam Wahan, in which tract he made the Bahawalpur Wah Canal. He not only founded the city of Bahawalpur – in 1748 – but also built other towns like Qaimpur, Hasilpur, Taranda Ali Murad Khan, Shahbazpur and Muhammadpur Lamma.

Nawab Bahawal Khan I died in 1749. As he left male heir, his younger brother, **Mubarak Khan**, was placed on the throne with the unanimous assent of the Daudpotra tribe. He also founded many forts and towns among them Mubarakpur, Sardar Garh, Phulra, Khairpur and Kot Sabzal being prominent. He also enlarged his kingdom by conquering and including in his rule Pakpattan, Duniyapur, Kahrur and Mailsi in Punjab. He also caused to be dug quite a few irrigation canals in his kingdom and put a better foundation of the irrigation system.

The same year he wrested the Fort of Marot from Jaiselmer when the Rais of Khairpur and some of the locals aided him in the expedition. Some two years later, Nawab Mubarak Khan gathering Daudpotras repulsed the forces of Sardar Jahan Khan, a general of Ahmad Shah Abdali, who had attacked Uch and later Bahawalpur.

The Nawab tried to fortify Tada-Wallhar, which was leased to him by Raja of Bikaner. The Raja opposed the proposal with force but was defeated. Nawab Mubarak Khan then built a fort, named Sardargarh, on the ruins of Wallhar to commemorate his triumph over the Hindu Raja.

The rising Sikh power in Punjab was apprehensive of the Nawab's might so in 1766 Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh and Hari Singh of the Bhangi Sikhs invaded the Nawab's trans-Sutlej territories. However, after an indecisive action Pakpattan was fixed as the boundaries between the two States. After some five years the Sikh force under Ganda Singh and Majja Singh was on the invasion path towards Multan. They invaded this territory and continued their raids into the Daudpotra territories, when it was opposed by the Abbasis under Sahibzada Jafar Khan (subsequently Nawab Bahawal Khan II). Both the forces met near Kahrur; when Majja Singh was killed and the Sikhs ran back.

After ruling his state for 24 years Nawab Mubarak Khan died issueless in 1772. As such he was succeeded by Jafar Khan, the son of his brother Fateh Khan. He ascended the throne as the fourth Nawab, under the title of Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan II. Although the period of his rule is taken as the golden period of the State yet he had to spend almost 34 years in meeting the challenges of the adversaries and quelling the efforts of despondency and revolt. The same year Jhanda Singh Bhangi made another attempt on Multan and in spite of the all out military help of the Nawab was able to wrest it from Haji Sharif. Some five years later, however, when the governor of Shujabad, Shuja Khan, sought



an aid from him for recovering Multan he collected his Daudpotra force, which was able to dislodge the Sikhs.

In 1780 the Mughal king of Delhi, Shah Alam II, sent Syed Kazim Ali Khan Bara to Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan II with a farman, conferring upon him the right to administer the Kachhi, and expensive khil'ats, while also bestowing upon him the title of 'Rukn-ud-Daula, Nusrat-i-Jang, Hafiz-ul-Mulk'.

The Nawab was able to enlarge his territories through matrimonial alliances with Khair Muhammad Khan Pirjani and Muhabbat Khan son of Ahmad Khan Pirjani. Through these new relations he received Khairpur Nauranga and Ahmadpur East along with the canals falling in the areas. Nature also helped him expand the frontiers of his State when the Indus changed its course to the west, which made the southern parts exposed to assaults of the Nawab. In due course he was able to annex to his stage the villages of Alipur, Shahr Sultan, Sitpur and Khairpur from the Makhdums of Sitpur. During the ten year period between 1790 and 1800 he also attacked the areas under the governor of Dera Ghazi Khan and was able to wrest the talukas Arain, Kinjhir, Khoran, Mahra, Seri and Tarand.



Emblem of Bahawalpur State

In 1783 the Nawab caused to repair and enlarge the fort of Winjhrot, while also built a new one named as Khangarh, which was order to replace Maujgarh as halting place for exports.

In 1785 Timur Shah's forces under Madad Khan Durrani marched to invade Sindh but instead, under the influence of Raises of Khairpur and Kalhoras, turned his face towards Bahawalpur, which he razed to ground. However, he was routed by the Nawab when he marched on Derawar and from thence he went on to Sindh.

Braving another invasion of Timur Shah of Kabul, the Nawab was also able to quell revolts and disgruntled attitudes of Gilanis of Uch and some of his own relatives during the closing years of the 18th century.

The Nawab issued coinage from the mint set up at Bahawalpur in 1802 under the blessings of the ruler of Kabul, Shah Mahmud. The gold, silver and copper coin minted here bore "Humayun Shah Mahmud" on their obverse and "Dar-us-Surur Bahawalpur" on the reverse.

It was during the reign of Nawab Bahawal Khan II that the diplomatic understanding and cordial relations with the British were started to be cultivated. When in 1808, the ambassador of the English Court, Elphinston, passed through the State of Bahawalpur on his way to Kabul the Nawab played an amicable host to him. He also seized the opportunity to make the first treaty between Bahawalpur and the British Government. Simultaneously the Nawab also kept his good relations with the Delhi court and entertained many leading families with respect and let them settle in Bahawalpur State.

After his death in 1809 Nawab Bahawal Khan II was succeeded by his son, who ascended the throne under the title of **Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan II**. One of the greatest achievements of the Nawab was the re-organisation of the administrative functions of the State, which streamlined the working on the most modern lines.

The reign of the Nawab though was also full of inter revolts and external aggressions yet he was able to effectively bring all these untoward happenings under control. It was during his period that the ruler of Kabul came to Bahawalpur after he had completely been routed. He requested the Nawab to help him conquer Dera Ghazi Khan. This was done successfully under his military commander, Munshi Muhammad Yaqub.

On the death of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan II in 1825 his eldest son Rahimyar Khan became the next ruler ascending the throne at Derawar under the title of Nawab Bahawal Khan III. On accession, the Nawab sent presents to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who in turn responded with congratulating the Nawab and sending him presents.

One of the most trying times for the Nawab was when the Rohillas in his army mutinied when their demand for raise in pay was not met favourably. Troops had to be sent to Uch to quell the mutiny but the mutineers locked themselves up in the shrine of Syed Jalal Bukhari and fired on the troops of the Nawab. The return attack on the besieged resulted in the destruction of almost half of the shrine but not without surrender of the mutineers.

The Nawab had not paid the lease money to the Sikh ruler on which Maharaja Ranjeet Singh sent a force under general Ventura to expel the Nawab's officials from the (now) district of Dera Ghazi Khan. Ventura was able to give the State a big blow by wresting Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh and Multan from the Nawab. With the hostile attitude of the Sikh State, and other neighbouring regions also not favourable, the Nawab was anxious to execute a treaty with the East India Company more so when Ranjeet Singh sent a force under Sham Singh to reduce Bahawalpur. Lord William Bentinck acceded to his request when the British warn Ranjeet Singh was warned not to cross the Sutlej.

As a result of the negotiations, which were undertaken by Captain Wade, Political Agent at Ludhiana, who visited Bahawalpur with Lieutenant Mackeson, a treaty was signed in 1833 under which the latter became Political at Bahawalpur. Subsequently a supplementary treaty was ratified in 1835 and in 1838. In 1840 and 1848 other treaties were signed, which mainly granted concessions in trade to the British. The Nawab also facilitated the movement of the troops through the State during the Afghan War, when he also constructed a military road through the State.

In 1842, the parganas of Kot Sabzal and Bhung Bhara, lost in 1807, were conquered by the British from the Mirs of Sindh. These areas were then restored to the Bahawalpur State as a very special token of friendship by Sir Chales Napier.

The boundary of the State of Bahawalpur with that of Bikaner was demarcated in 1845 by Lieutenant Cunningham, Assistant Agent to the Governor-General. During the rebellion of Mulraj against the British at Multan broke out, the Nawab sided with the latter and aided them with men and material. In recognition of his services the Nawab of Bahawalpur was granted a purse of Rs.100,000 per year, in addition to the return of the regions of Kot Sabzal and Bhung.





*Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi III
(1797 - 1852)*



*Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi III
(Reign: 1852 - 1853)*



*Nawab Haji Khan alias Fateh Khan Abbasi
(Reign: 1853 - 1858)*



Nawab Rahim Yar Khan Abbasi (1837 - 1866)



Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi IV (1861 - 1899)



Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi V (1883 - 1907)

To quell the territorial disputes of the State of Bahawalpur with Bikaner and Jaisalmer Captain Beecher in 1849 did the demarcation put boundary pillars at Ruknpur, Islamgarh, Bansalpur and other places.

Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan III died of protracted illness on 19th October 1852 at Derawar and was succeeded by his second eldest son, Saadatyar Khan under the title of **Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan III**. However, the deceased Nawab's other son, Sahibzada Haji Khan (elder to Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan III), contended the throne while still at Ahmadpur assuming the title of Nawab Fateh Khan – Fateh Muhammad Khan. He succeeded in his efforts and was formally crowned as **Nawab Fateh Muhammad Khan**, the eighth Nawab in the line, on 23rd February 1853 at Derawar. During the first war of independence starting in 1857, the Nawab of Bahawalpur sided with the British East India Company. Nawab Fateh Muhammad Khan died in 1858, when his son ascended the throne as **Nawab Bahawal Khan IV**. However, his whole reign was one of the most disturbing ones with internal strifes, revolts and machinations.

Nawab Bahawal Khan IV died young in 1866 leaving only one son aged less than 5 years, who succeeded him as Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV. The Nawab, however, was not installed until 1879, when he reached the age of maturity. In the interim period, from 1866 to 1879, Bahawalpur State was superintended by British Officers. The British were, in fact, invited to intervene and help when on the enthronement of the young Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV the rivals had contented the claim and had threatened with use of force. On this the British used their power to recover, first, the Derawar Mosque and then the Fort. Groomed under the British, the Nawab during his reign contributed to the British expeditions in Afghanistan, Egypt, Chitral and Transval. In recognition of such services of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV, he was honoured with G.C.S.I. He died in 1899 when his son Nawab Mubarak Khan became the Nawab with the title of Nawab Bahawal Khan V. He got his education from Chiefs College, Lahore, and was installed as Nawab in 1902.



Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V (1904 - 1966)

The Nawab reigned over the State but only for few years. But in that short period he left his imprints as he further strengthened the administrative setup. He used to take personal interest in all the affairs of the State and would keep himself abreast of all the matters by personally visiting different areas in his domain. He also introduced many reforms in different spheres of the State and established the first orphanage and college in addition to raising hospitals and causing to dig canals. He was also a great philanthropist, who helped many a Muslim institute throughout the length and breadth of the British India.

He died in 1907 in Aden when he was on his way back after performing the Hajj. He was succeeded by his son, **Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan V**, who was still about three years old. A Council of Regency was, therefore, constituted to run the affairs of the State till the Nawab reached the age of maturity. The Nawab even as a child was brilliant and intelligent. He was seven years old when he, as commander, headed the march past of his troops at the Delhi Darbar.

At the age of 20, in 1924 he took over the de-facto authority as the Nawab of Bahawalpur. He was then a Captain in the British army. His experience gained during the World War I, when most of the time he was in England, helped him a lot in acquiring the administrative acumen, which was immensely useful in the later years. He was bestowed the title of KC.S.I. in 1926, apart from which he had also won many laurels for his good work. He was also entertained in the Buckingham Palace in 1931. He rose to the rank of Major in 1933, Lieutenant Colonel in 1940 and Major-General in 1946. During the World War I the Nawab put the Bahawalpur State Army under the control of the British thus his First Infantry fought the Japanese in Singapore while its Camel Corps was sent to Egypt and Iraq.

He was a man of great vision and may well be termed as the architect of the modern Bahawalpur. He enthusiastically took part in social work, practically displaying his interest in after the great Earthquake of Quetta when he would personally attend the special trains when they passed through Bahawalpur and look after the injured. It was to thank him for his personal service rendered to the Earthquake affectees that the Viceroy of India, Lord Willingdon and Lady Willingdon visited Bahawalpur.

In the line of his predecessors he continued, rather on larger scale, the philanthropic activities and greatly contributed to the institutions all over India. In Bahawalpur he was the founder of the Jamia Abbasia, Sadiq Public School and Sadiq Reeding Library, which still thrive and stand tall in the region for their colossal input in the field of education and learning.

One of the greatest contribution to the social uplift of the region and people of the State was the Sutlej Valley Project, which was started in 1921, during the period of the Regency Council but the Nawab acted with great wisdom to pay back the loan taken from the British for the purpose.

Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan V was a great sympathiser of the national movements in the British India and had personal relations with the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. His was the first of the Indian State, which acceded with Pakistan at the time of the partition of the Subcontinent. He proverbially had opened the doors of the State on the refugee Muslims migrating from Bharat to Pakistan.

The Bahawalpur State was merged with Pakistan in 1955 and it earned the status of a Division – Bahawalpur Division – leaving behind its sovereign position. The Nawab himself died in London on 24th May 1966. His dead body was brought to Pakistan and buried in Derawar's Royal Graveyard with full military honours.



Chapter 3

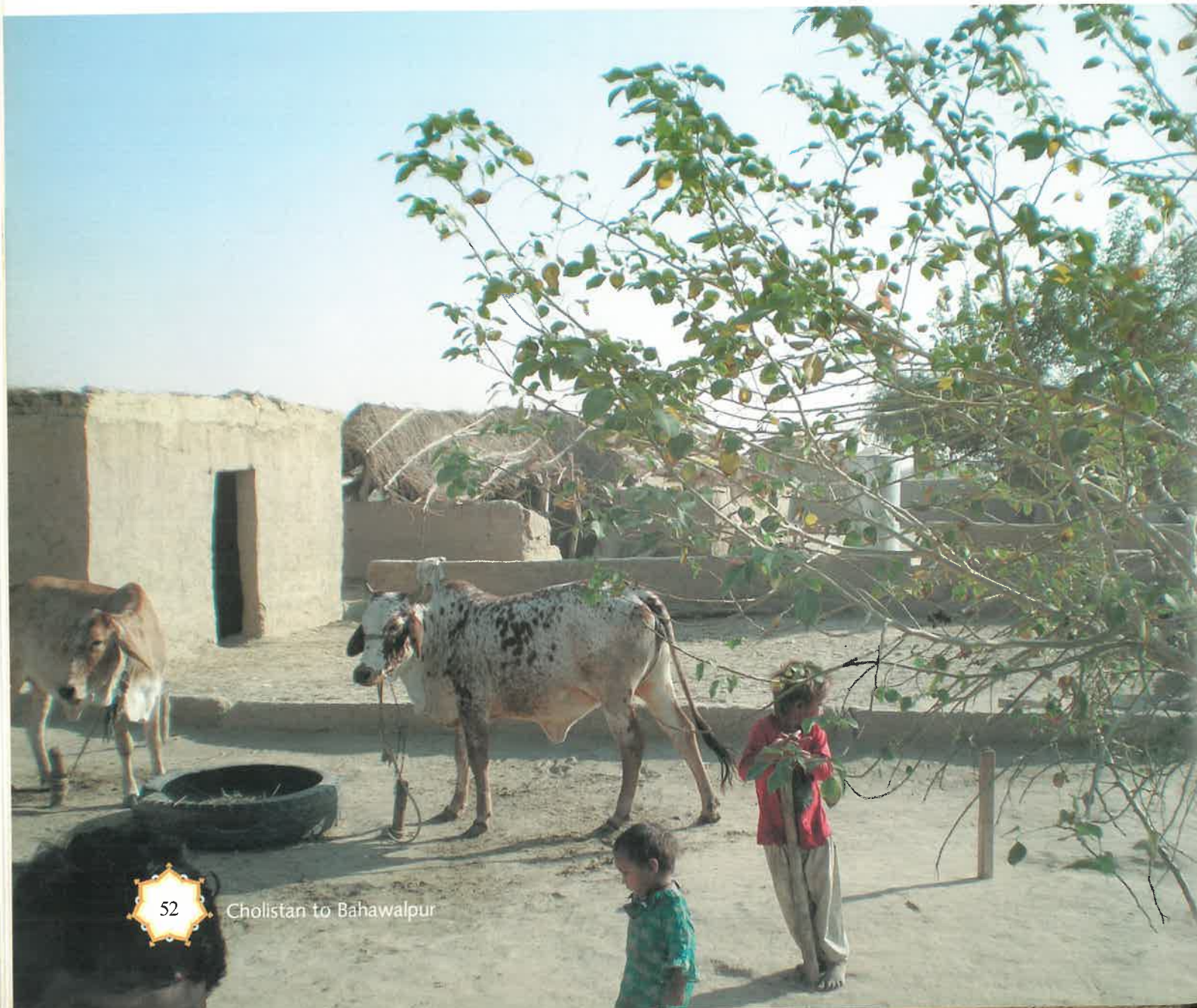
Cholistan to Bahawalpur **People**



Demographic Pattern

The demographic pattern in the region changes with the variation in Physiography. The people of the desert have not changed from their natural living, except with slightly more influence of the modern life where the black-top roads have already been built, while their compatriots in the western part, which comprises of the agricultural lands, are mostly the settlers with wide difference of the life-style. A major reason of the preservation of the old cultural phenomenon and social traits in Cholistan is perhaps its location, lying apart from the great lines of communication between the South Asia Subcontinent and other regions towards the west. It has also been observed by many that its location by the side of the rivers, the Sutlej, the Chenab and the Indus, which are known for their frequently changing courses, might have discouraged the people of Cholistan to Bahawalpur to have made any permanent settlements hence no large city of the yore in the area. The towns or cities of any reckoning for their size are relatively of recent origin, those too coming up in the alluvial plain when the waters of the rivers were considerably harnessed and made to boost the agricultural activities through canal system.

Cholistan Village





Cholistan Village scene



Fetching water from well



Cholistani water carriers



Cholistan to Bahawalpur

Language

Seraiki is the main language spoken in the region although Punjabi is also widely used and understood. The national language, Urdu, serves as Lingua Franca during contacts with visitors from outside the area.

Seraiki, also called Multani or Riyasati – perhaps because of having relation to the region most of which was located within the erstwhile princely state of Bahawalpur (Riyasat) – is an Indo-Aryan language mostly spoken in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh as also by a small minority in Central Punjab, all totalling to about 13.9 million people as recorded in the 1998 census. Outside Pakistan, there are about 56,100 people in India and a small minority in Afghanistan, who also speak Seraiki as their mother tongue.

The origin of the word Seraiki is explained variedly by scholars. Some think that it originates from the local word Ser (meaning head) or Punjabi word Sera or Sindhi Sero (meaning the end part), which might be referring to the direction of its location more probably in relation to Sindh.

Tribes or Clans

The desert area is thinly populated though it covers more than 2/3rd of whole region. The population, which once must have consisted mainly on Buddhists, now comprises of Hindus and Muslims. The Muslim tribes now residing in Cholistan are mainly Samma, Bhatti, Lar, Sheikh, Dahrs, Jats, Baloch, Panwhar Langah etc. Each of the tribes have their own pockets where mainly their members live. Their distribution over the vast land is an interesting subject. Bhattis are mostly found around the fort of Maujgarh, where other tribes like Mughals, Bhutta, Panwhar etc. could also be found. However, not far away from this place, around the fort of Dingarh there is a sort of concentration of the Sheikh, Dindar, Lar, Kumhar and Charrohe. Amongst these the Sheikhs are somewhat wealthy and do the business in selling and purchasing of camels. The Dindars are mainly engaged in weaving shawls – loee and khes – blankets etc. while the Charrohe work as paid herders. The tribes that inhabit the region around fort of Islamgarh are Bhuttas, Awan, Joya and Mehr. Similarly, around the fort of Derawar are settled the tribes of Awan, Dahr and Baloch amongst the Muslims and Menghwals and Rawals from the Hindu tribes.

As a general rule, the Baloch and Rajput tribes do not settle at any fixed place. They are migratory sort of tribes and move, with their herds, where they could find water and better pastures. The Cholistani people are more used to nomadic nature of living for obvious reasons. Their wealth mainly consists of their cattle thus herding being the premier mainstay of their subsistence. The cattle mainly consist of goats, cows, sheep and camels, which are herded by the common Cholistanis themselves while the more affluent among them would hire the herder for him, who would have its return generally in kind though paying in cash is now also not uncommon.

The cattle herds of these Cholistanis roam freely in the desert and eat on the shrubs and grass while their herder is least taxed. They tend to develop an understanding with him and fully understand and following his commands and cautions. At the impending wind-storm, which are quite intense and frequent especially during the summer months, the herder gives out a particular shriek from mouth or his fiddle and in no time the scattered cattle heads gather around the herder. With a second command

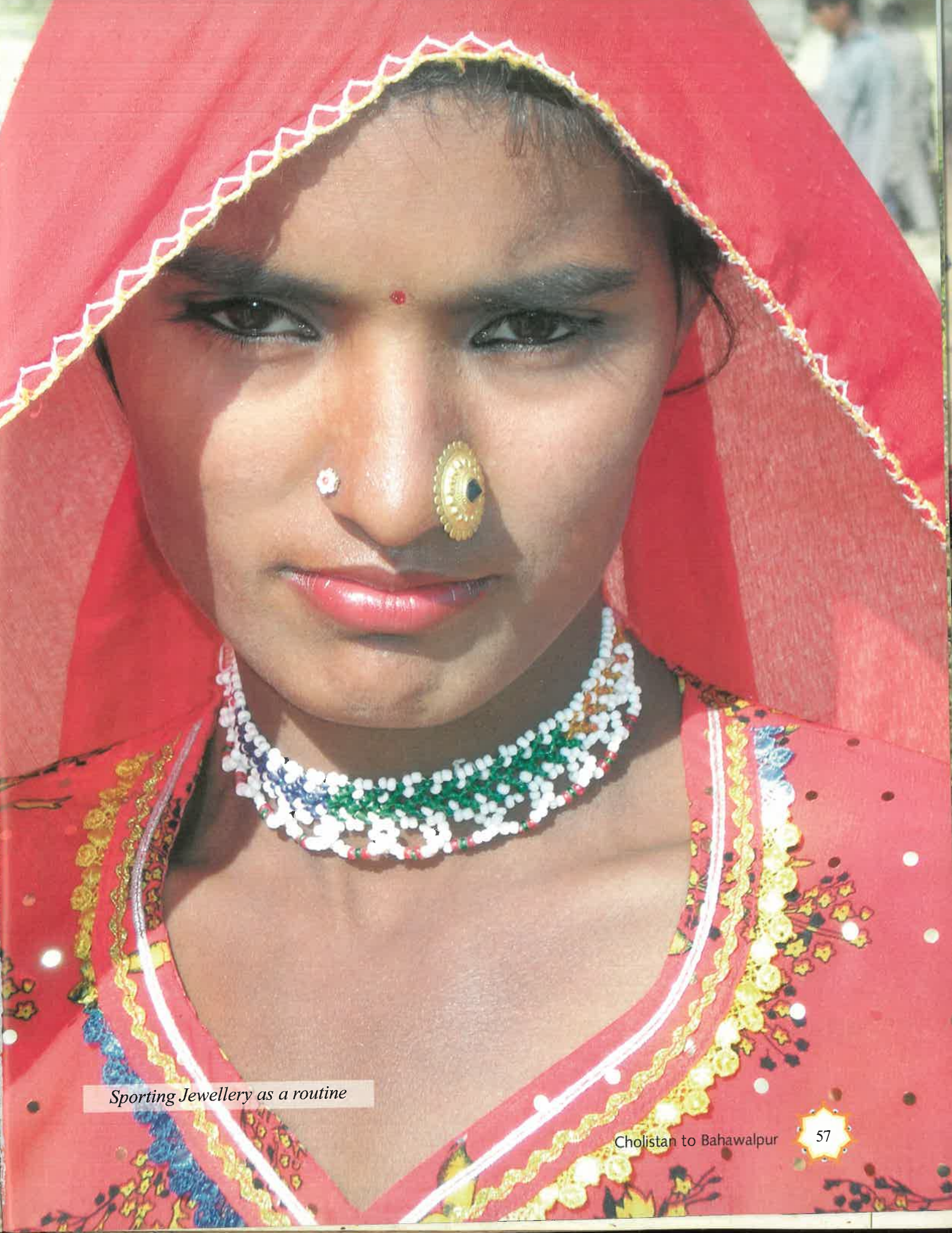




A Hindu in a Cholistani Mandir



Somewhat 'better off' Cholistanis



Sporting Jewellery as a routine

Cholistan to Bahawalpur

57



Cotton Picking





in the same way he will order them to sit down and they would dutifully obey it. The storms usually last for hours and the cattle would remain in their place till the danger is gone and their herder, with another shriek, allow them to resume grazing at will as before.

Cattle for Cholistani

There are many types and kinds of cattle, which are thought to be the result of the invasions of the region by many an expedition from the foreign lands, especially from Central Asia and Arabia. The cattle brought here by each wave of invaders have not only multiplied but also gave birth to new kinds through cross-breeding. The Cholistani get their daily food from their cattle and as such the milk and its products – butter, purified butter (ghee), lassi etc. – are normal objects taken as regular food. During famines or in search of hard cash in return for their cattle on Muslim festival of slaughtering – Eid ul Azha – they travel to the market places of the settled areas on the edge of the desert.





Cholistanis' Animals



The traditional camel cart

A village scene in cholistan





A camel train through Cholistan



Crafts

Apart from the by-products from the cattle as mentioned above, their handicrafts also mainly depend on the same. From the raw wool taken from the sheep and hair shaved from the camel they prepare shawls, blankets – khes – flassi etc., which are not only used by the Cholistanis but sold for money in the towns. The recently established centres for development of the cottage industry are generally helpful in the better marketing of these products made within Cholistan or even in some of the towns. There is another occupation of the Cholistanis, which brings monetary benefit to them. It is the shrub known as khaar, which is fired in a pit and its ash used in medicines and preparation of soap, especially for clean-washing clothes. However, with the development of communication systems it is now not uncommon to see branded soap cakes or bars even in the Cholistan proper. In short, the crafts practised by them are summarised below:

- i) flassi, made of camel hair and cotton yarn usually measuring about 1.2 x 2.1 metres originally used as floor-covering but now taken as decoration item by a modern connoisseur for wall-hanging or spreading on floor;
- ii) gindi – also sometimes called rilli though very specially in Sindhi – made of small pieces of cotton cloth with different colours and needle-work used as bed cover, as a carpet or a blanket. It has also started to be used as a decoration piece – especially in modern houses – when it is hung on the wall;
- iii) Changairies are another genre of craft, which is practiced in the region. It is a sort of plaque woven from palm leaves, in concentric circles, and usually used for holding roties – indigenous loaves of bread – for storing or presenting to the guests at meal time. It is also used as wall-hanging to decorate a room or a corridor;
- iv) Khalti, which is like a purse, which is embroidered on top with many kinds of colourful threads; and
- v) Aar-work, which is still another and special type of embroidery done on the women's apparel usually consisting of long headscarf (dopatta), shirt (kurta), and long sheet of cloth women put on their heads covering usually the whole upper part of the body (chadar).

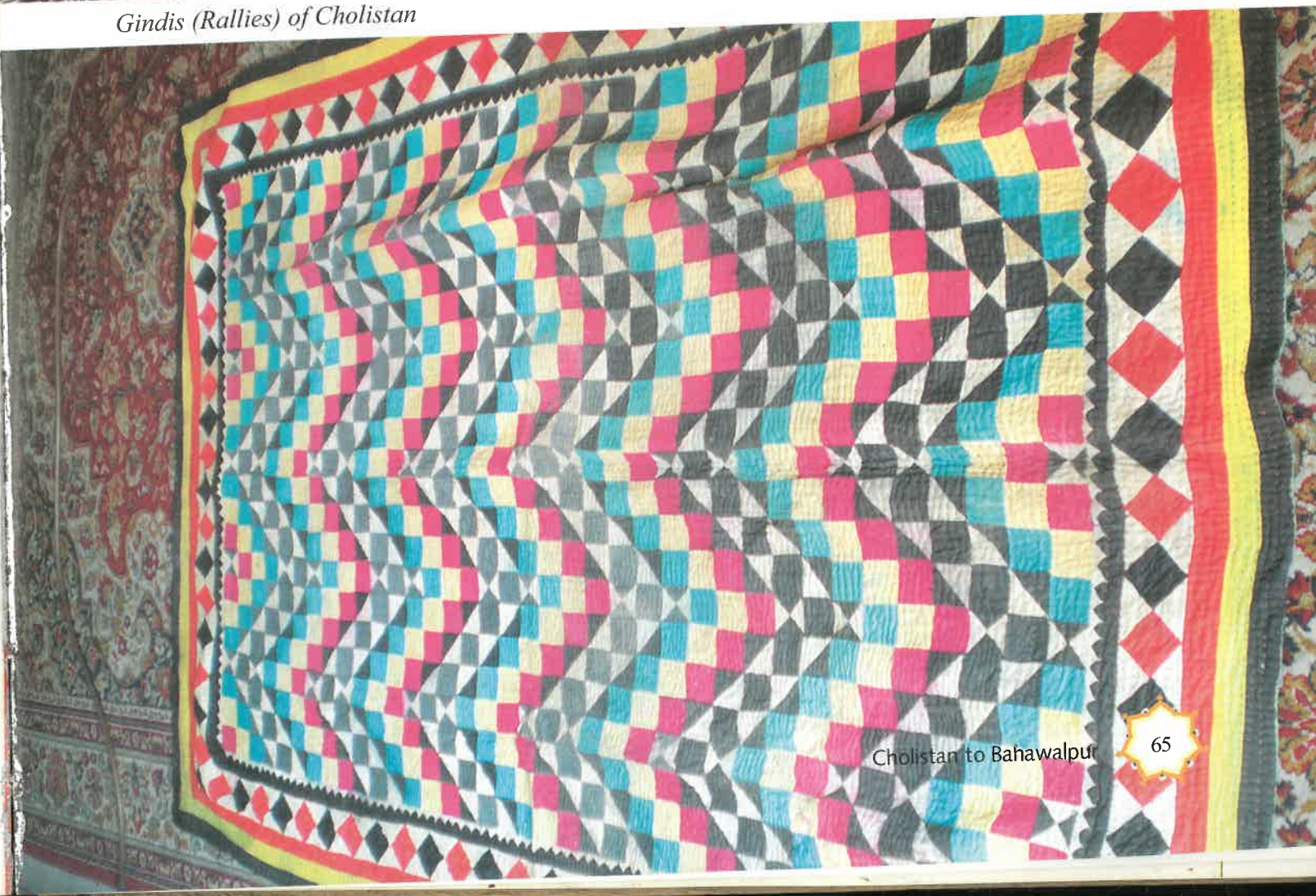
The small time craftsmen live, almost invariably, in a one-roomed accommodation with their wives and six to seven children deep in Cholistan, Yazman, Ahmadpur Sharqia or Khairpur Tahli where the whole family is found busy in doing embroidery and tie-and-die crafts. There is one difference in marketing of products of this region when seen in the context of other regions like Multan of the Seraiki region. Here it is not only the women, who do the marketing on their own but their men-folk also join them in dealing with the shopkeepers or the agents, who sell them. In spite of their awareness of the importance of their products they hardly get much in return for their labour. It is exactly why they prefer working for or selling to the Boutique owners, who are – if not much – a little better in getting them some bargain price.

With the greater exposure of the craftsmen to more lucrative trades or jobs these crafts, which were being practised here for centuries, had been lately facing a threat of extinction by and by. In order to keep them alive, or revive their glory, Punjab Small Industries Corporation has established a Crafts Development Centre in Bahawalpur for the whole region. It is located outside Farid Gate





Gindis (Rallies) of Cholistan





Artisans and their works



Khussas



Camel-skin table lamp

Habitat

The people in the desert live in thatched round-shaped houses called ‘gopi’ – just like the one called chownra in Thar. The gopi has a dome-like top and is usually comfortable to live in during the heat of the summer. However, provision of the mud-houses is on the increase since a few decades probably due to the Cholistanis greater exposure to the outside world. During the winter season these dwellers of the desert usually move to the higher places like top of the sand-dunes perhaps to catch more sun. The inside of the gopi or even mud-room they usually decorate by spreading on the floor the locally made flassies and gindis, which no doubt present a real treat to the eye for the users.

The main problem of the Cholistanis is the availability of water. Generally the water of the wells – which are considerably deep also – is hard and not fit for the consumption of human beings or their animals. To defeat this shortcoming, rain water is stored in the ponds, called toba, from where they fulfil their water requirements. The water in these tobas is used by man and beast without much discrimination. Additionally, it is also used for washing clothes. However, with help of the present development agencies and some philanthropists at some places hand-pumps have been provided, which in itself is really a job keeping in view the depth at which sweet water becomes available. At some tobas the NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) have helped provide burnt-brick stairs for the ease of the women-folk to fill their pitchers, while the rest of it remains as raw as ever and used by the animals as before.

Scarcity of water is evident from the fact that in Cholistan there are numerous graves of the ‘thirsty’, who perished in the desert for want of water to quench their thirst when they strayed from their proper path and would get to nowhere even after best efforts meanwhile consuming the water in the chhagle they carry. When such a situation arises – that he has lost his way in the desert and without any help is dying of thirst – a Cholistani takes off his turban, clothes and foot-wear and put them on any nearby bush or shrub so that it could be noticed from far off place for any one, who might happen to pass by. It is an SOS – save our soul – signal while he himself lies flat after removing some of the sand, thus finding little relief from the coolness of the place he lies on. If he is fortunate, help might come otherwise his corpse, whatever is left of it, would be buried there when someone comes by this place. This burial place would be called the ‘piyasay di qabar’ or the ‘grave of the thirsty’.

Some of the Cholistanis put some ‘qatran’ – a sort of desert grass with sweet smell – in their chhagles- water bottle made of animal skin. While in need, after the water finishes, they keep a bit of this wet grass in their mouths, which is refreshing and prevents mouth going dry. It could be a bonus period for the traveller before he gets some help, if he is lucky that is.

Camel is a multi-purpose beast for the Cholistanis, like those of other desert dwellers. With its capacity to sustain for longer times without getting water, it is taken as the best of the transport means hence called ‘ship of the desert’. A Cholistani travels riding it alone or with the family, carries his goods on it, decorates it beautifully to join a marriage party or makes it dance to entertain folks at mela celebrations or simply at some joyful celebration in the community. Its hair is an excellent raw material to hand-weave flassies or blankets as also ropes and even smaller strings. Its hide is used to make table-lambs or such other decorative material, which sell like hot cakes as souvenirs in modern market places in the region, Cholistan to Bahawalpur.





Two scenes from Cholistani Habitat



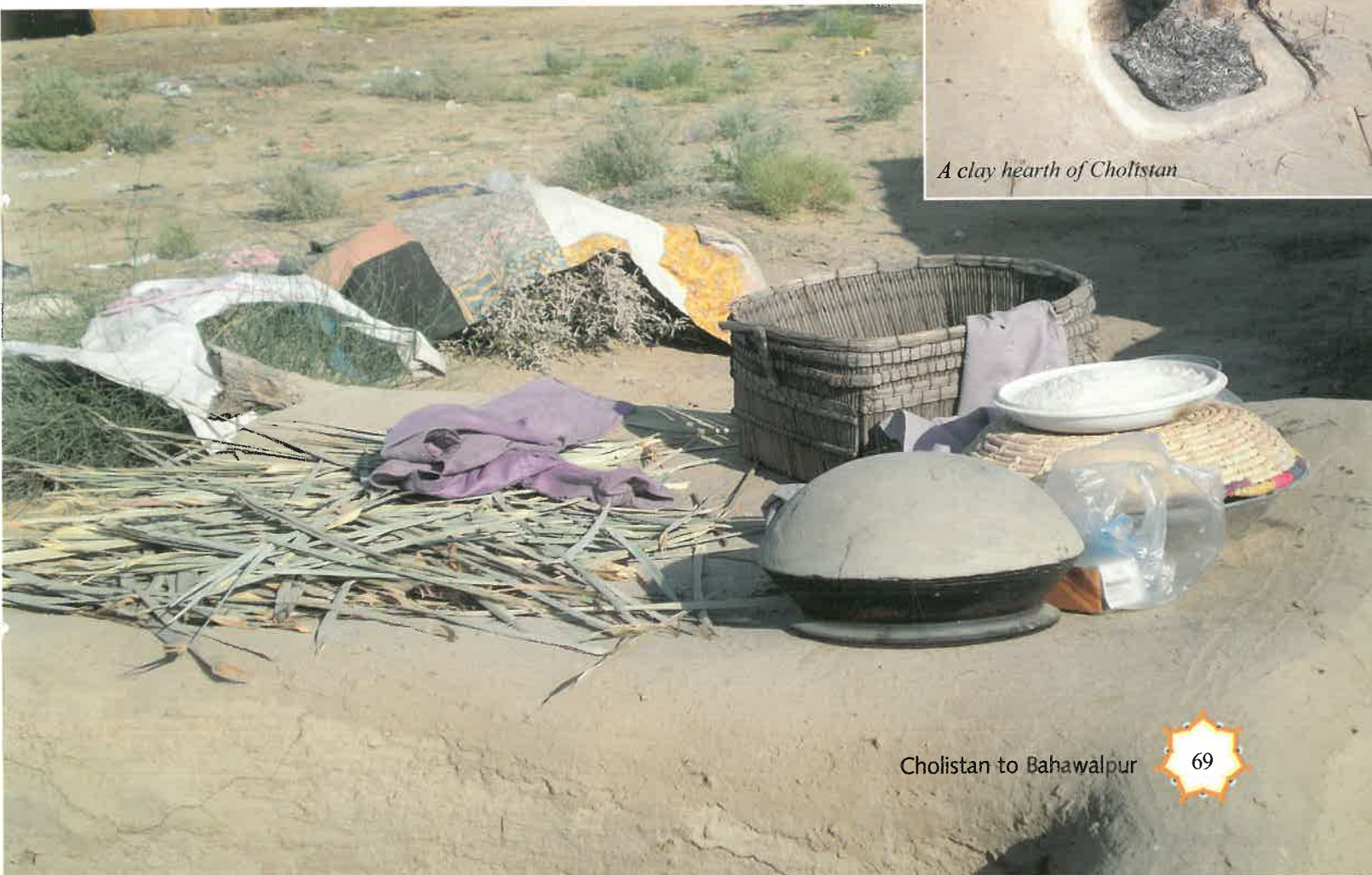


Tandoor for baking flat breads

Miscellaneous items in a house



A clay hearth of Cholistan





Sweet meat shop in Bhong

Snacks shop in Uch



A camel is not always so friendly with the Cholistanis. When it goes wild it could be very dangerous and does not spare even its master of whom it used to be the most responsive associate. It is notorious for revenge syndrome, and would even crush under his feet someone against whom it turns hostile for any reason.

The Cholistanis live a simple life, perhaps like that of their desert environment, which stays so calm, tranquil and peaceful. Their daily chores do not necessarily change with any frequency and go on with the regularity of a clock. They get up early when men-folk go out with their herds of animals for their grazing and tending for the whole day. They usually come back in the evening accompanied by their herds. Some times the herds go on their own and promptly come back to their places in the evening, while straying or stealing of them is highly uncommon phenomenon. The women attend to their household chores, preparing food etc. Towards evening, when it starts to be little bearable outside, they go out and fetch water from the toba in their baked-clay pitchers called ghaRa or ghaRoli. Many romantic stories are woven round such an activity of the girls and the women of the desert.

The pattern of their life is dictated by the Mother Nature and the religion they follow. Their customs, rites, rituals, taboos etc. all stem from these two predominant factors. It is these factors which shape their style of life, their way of dressing, their manner of thinking, their conducting of social life and even their earning the livelihood. They thus have their peculiar dress patterns, living habits, not forgetting their sports and pastimes.

The Cholistanis have a special type of faith and firm belief in the greatness of their desert. They believe that any bleeding injury would heal by applying the hot sand of the Rohi. They would take a pinch of such sand and put it on the bleeding injury. They also use the malai or balai – cream – of the camel-milk for the same purpose. The fruit of the wild tree pilu (*Salvadora oleoides* Dene) is their favourite fruit, whether taken fresh or in dried form. They believe that this fruit is immensely 'health-giving' hence found in every house. It has such a romantic place in their lives that lok geets – folk songs – stand woven around them. Even the great poet of the Rohi, Khwaja Ghulam Farid, has made

A toba with greens





Cholistani woman churning milk to get butter



Heating the chhuchh recipe before serving

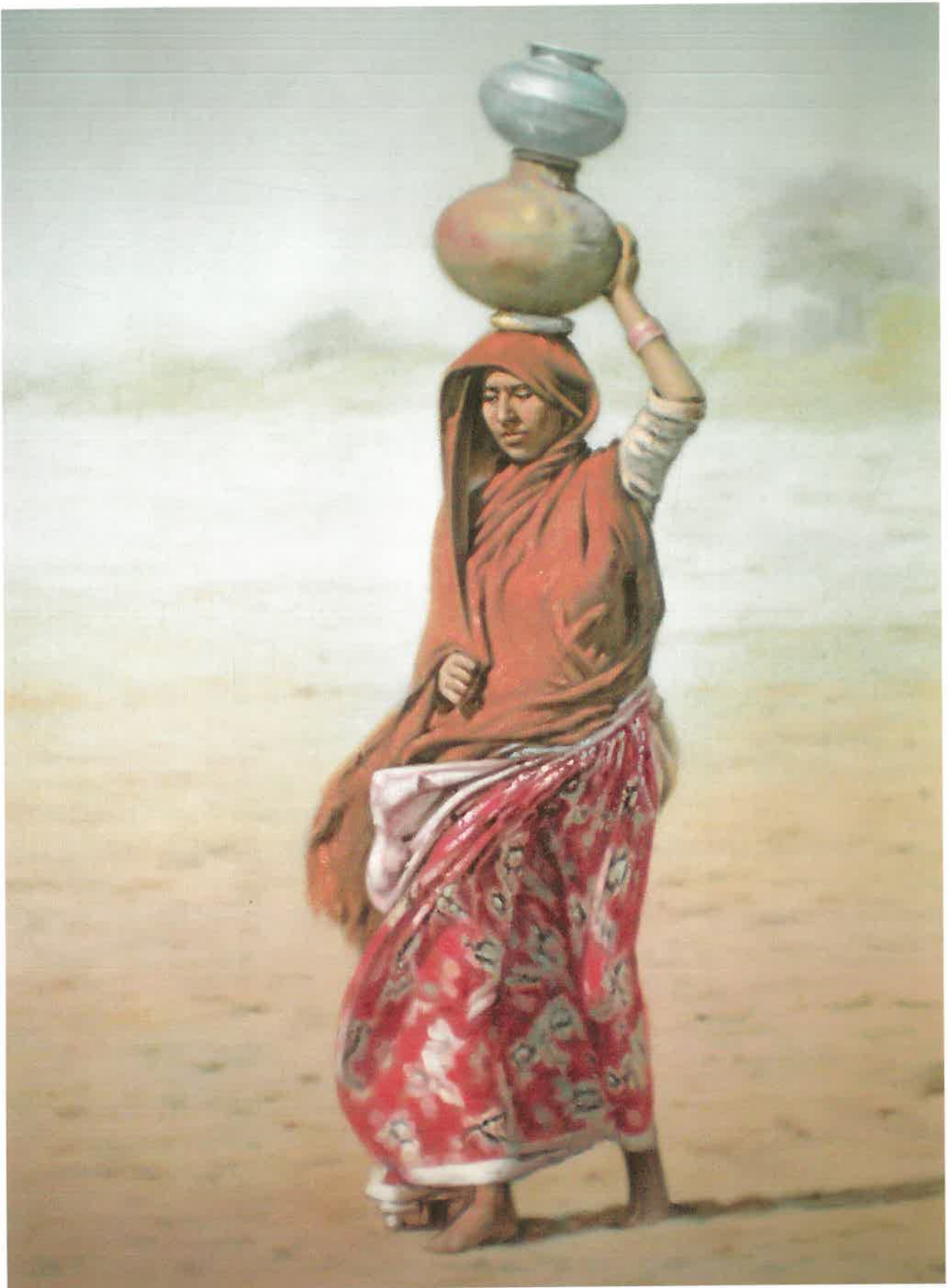
their romance immortal through his kafis perhaps composed in the sands of Cholistan. These are sung with enthusiasm and great love as a Sufiana kalaam – mystic poetry. One such kaafi of the great Khwaja read and sung with devotion is:

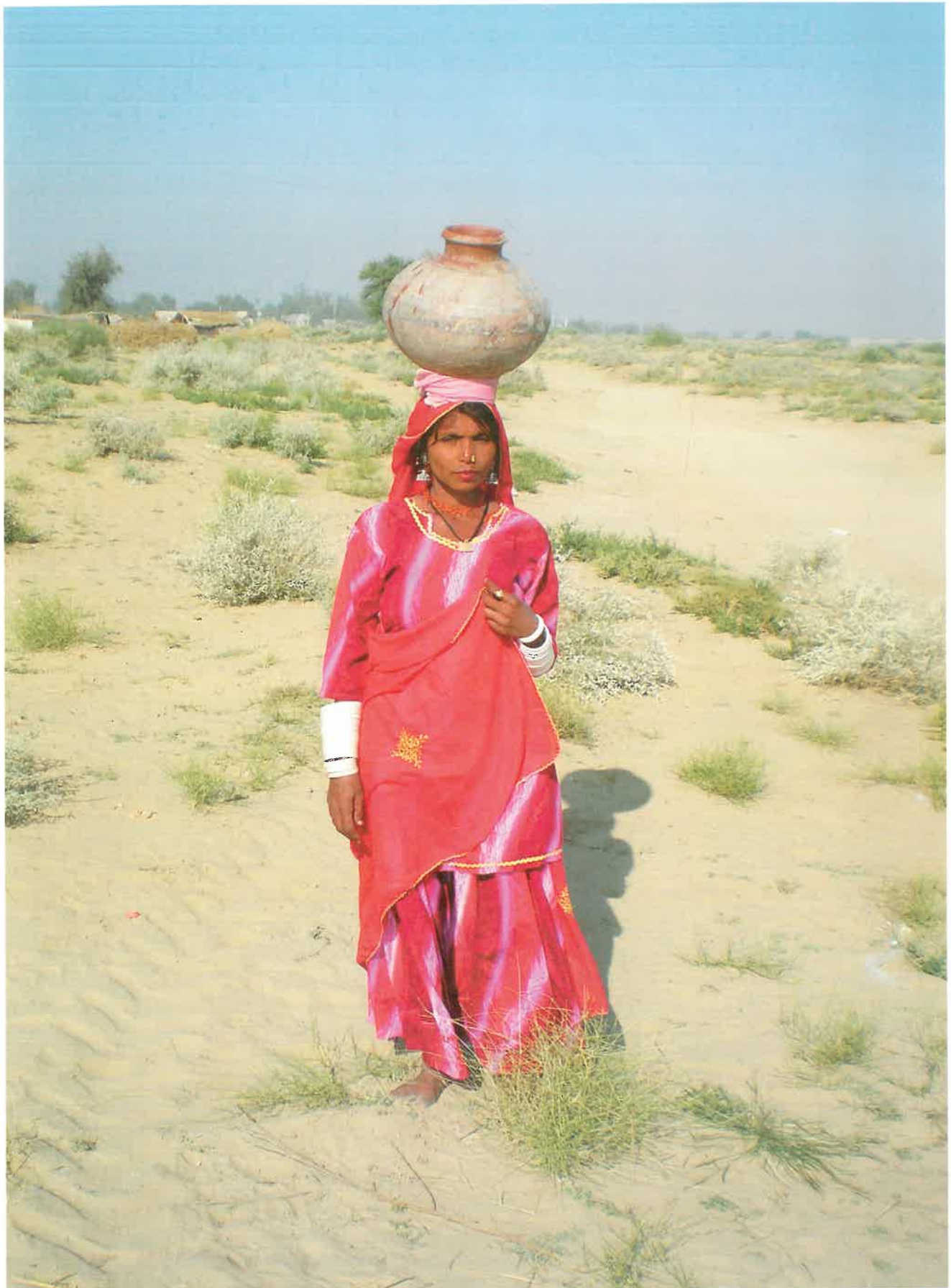
Aa chuNooN rall yaar,
 Pilu pakiyaN way, pakiyaN neeN way aa chuNooN rall yaar.
 (Come on love, let us gather them together. The pilu have ripened o my love (friend), come on, let us collect them together).

Similarly another fruit of the region is ‘bayr’ (or sometimes written as ‘ber’). It is borne on the medium height tree of the same name and bearing lots of sharp thorns. The sweet and reddish fruit of this tree is also taken fresh and dried to be taken during the off season.

Hospitality

These desert people are very generous and hospitable. Their hospitality being proverbial they play nicest and kindest of the hosts even to the people whom they hardly know. This fact is borne out by the British Masson who, while ‘travelling through the (erstwhile) State (of Bahawalpur) in 1826,





Fetching water from toba

with two rupees in his pocket, presented by Rahmat Khan, travelled comfortably a distance of 360 miles (almost 580 kilometres)', thanks to the hospitality of the local Rohillas.

Customs, Traits and Taboos

These simple people make their formal occasions look very colourful and extravagant. These occasions are usually connected with the marriage, birth and even death ceremonies. These are the times when they reach out of their own resources and spend lavishly. The Muslims and the Hindus are bound normally to different sets of customs on different occasion though quite a few are observed by both, though not necessarily under the same name. Although there is much that has changed under the influence of improved means of communication yet in the interior and close-knit villages these customs are adhered to with full enthusiasm and conviction. It would, therefore, be interesting to have a glimpse of some of the more pronounced ones.

Even with quite a bit of exposure, the Hindus are still given to infant marriage while Muslims usually defer it until the girl has attained puberty; and even if a girl is married at an early age, the sirmaal or rukhsati ceremony is held only when she has reached that age.

The Cholistanis, as a normal rule, marry within their families and tribes. The marriage ceremonies are celebrated with great pomp and show by throwing lavish parties in which not only the local village people are invited but these are also attended by other relatives even if living away at some other place.

About eight days before the marriage ceremony the perahin – the drummers with their typical drums – and shernai – those who play shehnai, a sort of flute – reach the house of the bridegroom and evening celebrations start. The women-folk sit to sing happy songs while the men dance their typical jhoomer. A few days before the marriage is also performed the ceremony of chiku, when ubtan – a yellow mixture of herbs – is applied to the bodies of the bride and the groom, separately in their respective homes.

A day before the marriage there is a large camp fire called wada-jaga. On this occasion bhands and mirasees come to the place and entertain the gathering with their antics, jokes and also theatrical presentations. The jhoomer, dance of the region, is performed by the males with much fervour.

On the day of marriage, the bridegroom is made to put on mikna – sehra, a many-stringed garland worn on the forehead, which is decorated with red cloth and silver cords for added beauty. The sisters of the groom tie their pallu (edges of some clothe) with his clothes he then pays some money in cash or gives away a goat or something as a token of love.

At the occasion of the marriage the bridegroom and bride at their respective houses put on special apparel prepared for the occasion, which for the groom is usually white turban with yellow edges and matching white dhoti (sheet of cloth tied round the lower half of the body) and for the bride it consists of red choli (sort of shirt) and red ghagra (sort of weighty single-opening trouser with heavy pleats all round). The pair of such clothes is usually embroidered or otherwise worked at a level matching the status of the parents. The bride also sports the customary ornaments usually consisting of baliāN, jhumkay (for ears), murky (for nose) hassy or hansly (round the neck) and pola for feet.





Cholistanis and their camels

A Cholistani girl











A Cholistani decorating his camel

Cholistani Entertainers



Usually the baraat (marriage procession) of the groom goes to the house of the bride with the bridegroom riding on a tastefully decorated camel. The members of the party either ride camels – if they can afford it – or simply walk with the procession to the house of the bride, where they are received formally by the elders and informally by women, girls and children. The sisters and female friends of the bride, who had been singing the marriage songs for so many nights even continue with some appropriate ones on the arrival of the baraat.

After nikah (Muslim rites solemnising marriage) or phairay round agni (Hindu rites of similar nature, walking in circles round fire) the marriage party is entertained to a sumptuous meal, the lavishness depending on the status of the parents. Generally the baraat is seen off from the brides house after sunset, returning to the groom's house with the doli (a kind of small sedan – carrying the bride) generally carried by kahaars.

The bride's house usually serves valima (feast to celebrate the marriage) one day ahead of the marriage perhaps to avoid trouble of staying longer of the guest to wait for the next day of marriage for it. At this feast the relatives and family friends give naindara and salami, which is in the shape of cash or even pledging of some animal.

In spite of the fact that pregnancy is not as noisily celebrated amongst the Muslims as in the Hindus, it is the parents of the girl, who bring some sweets and clothes for the would-be mother, her hoped-for child and sometimes even for the husband of the girl as well. At the time of delivery the mother is made to lie down on a quilt spread on the floor, keeping her head towards north, feet towards south and her face turned towards west or the Qibla – in a posture that would resemble that of a dead Muslim while put in a grave.

In case a female child is born, the parents give some grams in an old black handi (clay cooking pot) to the midwife otherwise, in case of a male child, she gets cash in return for her services. A woman with impurity or that whose children do not survive is not allowed to see the new-mother for at least eight days.

Like all Muslims of other regions, a religious ritual is performed in the child's ear by the mullah (the Muslim priest). He recites the Muslim call for prayer – called bang – in a loud voice. If the child is a female the mullah gets some wheat-flour and gur (unrefined sugar cake) while for the same service in the ear of a boy he get some cash, depending on the standing of the parents in the society.

The first thing after this is giving the child ghuRhti or ghutti – a sort of first meal. In some tribes it consists of simply a bit of mother's milk sweetened with sugar administered by a respected old female, preferably from the family. Other tribes might give the child a bit of water, in which a knife, sword or any iron implement has been washed. The idea behind this act is perhaps to wish the child to grow up healthy and brave.

Another, perhaps, good custom lies in sending the invigorating foodstuff by the parents of the mother on the 8th, 21st or 40th day after the birth of the child when she bathes formally. The present consisting of pinnies (hand made balls by mixing purified butter – ghee – flour and gur) called generally as weham, together with clothes for her and the child called trewar. The dress for the mother



and her child usually consists of a different set for a male and female issue. If its boy it would be a large head-scarf (dopatta), a cap and a shirt (chola) but in case she has given birth to a baby-girl the set of clothes would include a heavy trouser (ghagri) and a light sheet of cloth to put on the head (chunni). Depending on the status of the mother's parents, additionally she may get a silver bracelet and/or a silver neck-wear called hasli and the child some small gold ornament – like a tiny finger ring.

The shaving of the head of the child – called jhand – is done on the 8th or 21st day during the period of chhilla (forty-days from delivery) by the local nai (barber). Although typically a Hindu custom yet there are also Muslims, who vow (mannat) to shave off the child at a certain shrine. They even keep the child grow a bodi at the head – a handful of hair not shaved and left to grow long till a certain period. Such a vow is usually made when the children of the parents do not survive and either are either stillborn or die very young. Offerings are made at the shrine, which usually consist of atta-ghatta – flour, goat etc.

The Islamic religious ritual of slaughtering two goats on boy's birth while one on a girl's, called aqqa, is performed with enthusiasm and at ceremonial level in some parts of Cholistan while in others it is done in simplicity, perhaps because of the economic reasons. In some parts the raw meat of the animal is distributed amongst the village while some others cook it, usually with rice, and then sends it to others' houses or is consumed at the house where others are invited.

Some well-to-do zamindar families of Bahawalpur and Ahmadpur also observe the doyan ceremony in which some leaves are cooked, dipped in sweet syrup and distributed amongst the relations.

The circumcision of a Muslim child is also another occasion, which is celebrated almost all over Cholistan. There is no age fixed for the operation, usually it is done at the age of 12. The girls of the village sit together and sing songs when sweetmeats called ghunganiaN – boiled wheat mixed with sugar – are distributed amongst the relatives and the neighbours usually attending the ceremony.

As regards the birth of a child, some of the ceremonies are the same with the Hindus as those with the Muslims. However, they start differing from the very beginning. Hindus also observe adh-gabh (the mid-pregnancy) when the mother is almost half-way on the family way. The parents of the girl send home-made sweet-meats, called churi, to their daughter during 4th or 5th month of pregnancy.

Still while she has not yet delivered, during 7th or 9th month of pregnancy, under another ceremony called Kanji, the parents of the girl send the same type of sweetmeats for the girl and clothes for the hoped-for child. If they can afford, they would also send her gold finger rings.

Simultaneously, another ceremony is performed by the father of the husband, which is called dew-dhmi. Under this he lights a lamp and preparing an effigy of lord Ganesh he worships him for all the good things for the would-be-mother and the hoped-for child.

The accouchement is carried out, like the Muslims, on the ground but here there are no rules for positioning her. After the birth of the child the mother is confined to the room and restriction on admission of a woman in the state of impurity or whose children do not survive. As a further precaution



against evil effects, a knife, sword, ploughshare or a piece of iron is dug, or a particular earthenware (kunali) filled with water is placed there. Some of the tribes might hang some henna-leaves (mendi) dipped in water on the outer door.

If the new arrival is a boy, the kith and kin are informed through nai (barber), and a Brahman is immediately called to prepare horoscope. In case it is an auspicious time he greets the parents while for the contrary he does some mantra and suggests some charities to be made to counteract the evil influence of various planets.

On the thirteenth day is performed the chola ceremony – perhaps so named as the child is wrapped in a chola, a sort of shirt. In some parts the ceremony is also called dasothan, perhaps from the word das – ten – as here is performed on the tenth day. As the house in which the child was born is taken as impure up till this ceremony, on this day they break all the earthenware and cleanse the metal utensils with water to make them pure once again. The mother, who had bathed on the sixth day once again, washes herself on the chola day, up to which she is looked after keenly but is not allowed to come out of the house.

It is on the evening of the chola day that the relatives of the child gather and also call the Brahman to ascertain an auspicious moment (lagan). He gives some of the Shastri alphabets with which to start the name of the child. The male elder from the family – and in case there is none, a female elder – then names the first of the children.

Some other ceremonies depending on the region and the tribe are also performed, which generally are based on their beliefs and hopes for a better future of the child.

The ghutti or ghuRti is given to the child almost in the same way as that of a Muslim. In this case, however, the material it would consist of is usually aniseed, sugar etc. Although they take the Muslims as impure yet in the case of the newborn the ghutti rite is usually performed by the Muslim midwife as they do not consider the new-born as Hindu till the rites of chola are performed.

In Hindus of Cholistan, the jhand (hair-shaving rite) of the child is performed from fifteen months to four years on either Dusehra or Baisakhi (both Hindu ceremonial days celebrated as religious rites), at some temple (sometimes even Ganges or a Saint's shrine) the mother would have vowed before his birth. The bodi (lock of hair, usually toward the rear side of the skull's upper) is allowed to grow till a certain age.

Like their customs and traits their taboos also stem from the harsh environment they live in. The desert experiences strong winds with the desert heat. There are, therefore, many whirl-winds, locally known as 'va-varola'. According to a certain taboo the Cholistanis believe that during such whirl-winds young girls should not go out of the house as in that case the bad spirits in the va-varola would pick them and take them away.

Melas

The people of the region – from Cholistan to Bahawalpur – are very fond of melas (fairs), which are usually celebrated on the shrines on the urs of some saint of the area. These fairs are a good venue



of the cultural and social colours of the desert. As these fairs are not just for fun or enjoyment but have with them a sanctity of religious fervour, usually the whole family travels –mostly by camels – to the mela. At the shrines they pay their homage and make offerings in fulfilment of the vows. There among other fun-matters are the dancing of the fully decorated camels. The kafis of Khwaja Ghulam Farid, so familiar with the Cholistanis, are read with a typical rhythm almost round the clock.

Mela Channan Pir

The most popular among the fares (mela) of the region is the one at the Shrine of Channan Pir, the Desert Saint. The Pir was a disciple of Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht whose tomb now lies at Uch Sharif.

The shrine of Channan Pir lies some 45 kilometres from Derawar Fort and although in sandy area of the desert, it has now been provided with black-top metalled road connecting it to various places including Bahawalpur and Derawar.



A devotee playing a bagpipe at shrine of Channan Pir



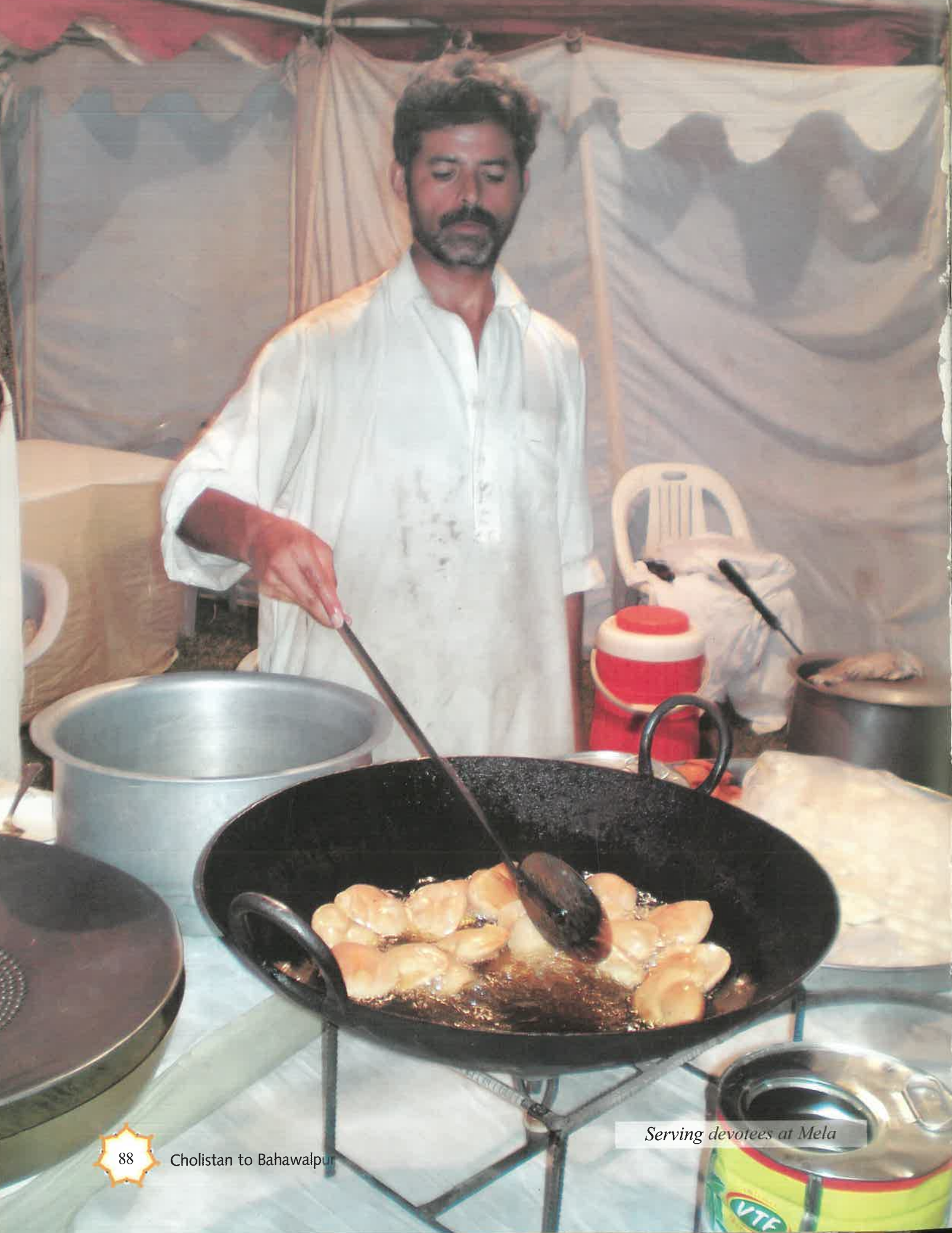
Vow-strings at shrine of Channan Pir

Maqbra Shaheedan near shrine of Channan Pir





Ceremonial Music



Serving devotees at Mela



Fancy objects from Cholistan

The mela is celebrated in the spring season on a Thursday of full moon. The Cholistanis start for the Shrine well in advance in camel caravans, camel carts, donkey carts or even on foot, to visit the Shrine usually with all family members, also bringing with them their food and other necessities. Almost every family, who had vowed for the fulfilment of a wish, brings with it a goat to be slaughtered at the mazar. On reaching the Shrine they offer 'fateha' and celebrate the occasion of their vow-fulfilment in many colourful ways. The large number of vow-strings of various hues and colours tied to the screens or tree within the precincts of the tomb is an unrefutable testimony to the popularity of the Pir.

Curious Customs

In addition to these rituals and traditions there are certain curious customs observed in some parts of Cholistan. Among these is the one reported by Minchin during the 19th century. 'The people, preserve the use of bows and arrows, especially in hunting, but the arrows have no points and the game, partridges, hares and quail, are struck with the side of the arrow and stunned. Another curious use of bows and arrows is retained (and is evidently of Scythic origin) in the ordeal by water, whereby a person accused of any heinous offence may clear himself of the charge by consenting to remain under water holding a pole fixed in the well or stream, while an arrow is shot from the side of the well and brought back by a friend of the accused. If he can remain under water until the arrow is brought back he is innocent or not guilty'.

As Cholistan is the region of heat and strong winds, there are many taboos in this regard as well. During the hot months when there are a large number of whirlwinds – called vawarola – they think them bringing evil spirits with them. They believe that the girls, especially those young and of marriageable age, are highly prone to be abducted and carried away by these evil spirits in the whirlwinds. Such females are thus strongly advised, or even forbidden, to go out during the season of such climatic phenomenon.

Industry

In addition to being a major export centre for mangoes, which abundantly grow in the region of Bahawalpur, it also produces date, wheat, sugarcane and cotton. In industrial sphere it has soap-making and cotton spinning factories. Its produce of silk, cotton textiles, carpets and pottery is of high quality and dominate the markets.

Modern Sports

The fascinating sandy tract of Cholistan provides an ideal ground for holding Camel Rallies and Jeep Rallies, which are not only participated by Pakistan but also foreign sports-persons. These are specially liked as annual celebrations to attract tourists from within the country and abroad. On the occasion it is also not uncommon to hold shows depicting the local life and culture in order to promote its understanding with the outside world.

Poet of Rohi

The great Sufi poet, Khwaja Ghulam Farid, calls Cholistan by the name of Rohi. This is why sometimes the Cholistanis are also known as Rohillas. The Khwaja spent some 16 years in Cholistan and his kafis – a genre of poetry – in the local Seraiki so affectionately narrate about the region. In fact



it is not much beyond the fact that when it is said that to understand Cholistan one has to go through the kalam – the poetic work – of Khwaja Ghulam Farid.

The Khwaja was once travelling through the desert of Cholistan when he became so fascinated with vastness, serenity and the music of the winds that he decided to reside there. His famous kafi, a couple of verses of which are given hereunder, tells of his deep association with this loveable wilderness.

Transliteration:

Meda ishq vi tooN, meda yaar vi tooN,
Meda din vi tooN, Eimaan vi tooN,
Meda mulk Malir tay maroo ThalRa,
Rohi Cholistan vi tooN.

Translation:

You are my love, you are my friend,
You are my religion, you are my faith,
You are my Malir country and the biting Thal desert,
You are my Rohi, my Cholistan.



Khawaja Ghulam Farid



Shrine of Khawaja Ghulam Farid at Mithan Kot

Khawaja Ghulam Farid was born in 1845 at Kot Mithan, in a family of Arab settlers who had come to this country along with the Arab forces perhaps in the eighth century AD. He was one of the two sons of Maulana Khuda Bux. 'It is said that when Khawaja Ghulam Farid was a child, Maulana Muhammad gave him the first lesson of the first alphabet "ALIF" and asked him to say "ALIF". He repeated the same again and again till every-one present there was enveloped by a trance. Some qawali singers were invited and they too recited the same word on their musical instruments. The trance remained in sway for a considerable time.

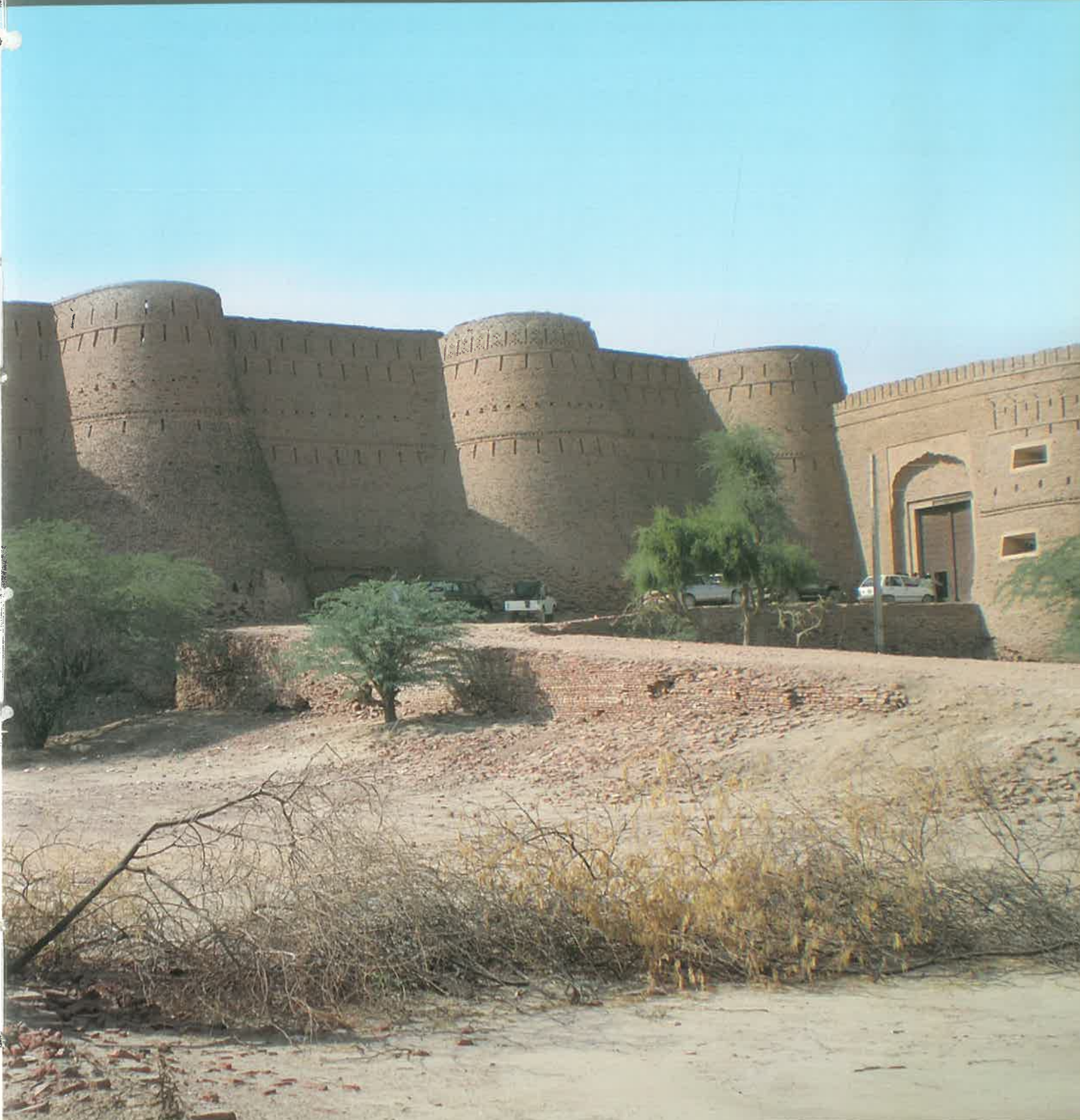
Khawaja Farid's mother died when he was only four years of age. He was looked after by his elder brother. At the age of eight, he had become a Hafiz-e-Quran (one, who commits to memory the whole of the Holy Book. Thereafter Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan took the child to his palace at Ahmad Pur Sharqia for imparting him religious education by some renowned scholar. At the age of thirteen, Khawaja Farid became the disciple of Khawaja Fakhar-ud-Din, his elder brother. When he over 28 years of his age his mentor and elder brother died. Then he left for Ruhi where he remained for about eighteen years. It was a typical wilderness but suitable for a recluse saint. It was very beneficial for connection with Kot Mithan or Chachar, his birth place.

Khawaja Farid was conversant with seven languages Viz, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Multani/Seraiki, Sindhi, Hindi and Sanskrit. He led a life of purity and was utterly devoted to the righteous path of the Holy Prophet of Islam. He died on the 21st May 1901 and was buried at Kot Mithan, where his tomb is still a rendezvous of those seeking spiritual solace.



Chapter 4

Cholistan to Bahawalpur **Places**



As already observed, the history of the region goes far back into the remote antiquity. With its cultural richness it has almost always been centre of human activity where villages, towns and cities grew with time as the need arose. No wonder then it is full of ancient, medieval and modern places which boast some of the outstanding architectural feats consisting of as varied genres as a fort, a palace and a mosque or a tomb. The monuments standing above ground now, however, do not go beyond the Muslim period while there is not a single significant archaeological site exposed through scientific dig within this region. Blame it on the archaeologists, who at the most have so far only carried out some surveys and recorded sites depending on their observations or a few antiquities or pottery shreds found from the surface. Although, as seen earlier elsewhere, the presence of Pre-Harappan period is very evident yet no serious effort seems to have so far been done to corroborate the results of the surveys through actual archaeological excavation on any of the sites. This is the sad part of the state of research into the past of the region. But it can never undermine its importance especially in the backdrop of the fact of the lost river Hakra, which when flew here must have sustained life of abundance and helped develop many a culture, possibly the forerunner of the present society.

Bahawalpur City

The founding of quite a few towns and cities has already been mentioned elsewhere under the chapter of History. While many of these towns and cities have also got their share of development over the years, Bahawalpur perhaps is the only place, which has grown tremendously. It is quite in contrast with its beginning when the Nawab had to build palaces and also big mansions to encourage people to inhabit this place while also inducing his umra to follow him in this activity with the same view of persuading others to migrate to this newly-founded city to take permanent residence.

Bahawalpur is situated at 20° 59' North and 73° 19' East coordinates. Since its founding it served as the Capital of the State of Bahawalpur and became the headquarters of the Division – with the same name – when the State was merged into Pakistan in 1954. The Administrative Division of Bahawalpur still retained the districts of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalnagar as its parts inheriting the area from the old State. However, with the devolution plan of the Federal Government all the districts started enjoying their distinct entities from the early years of the 21st century.

The Bahawalpur city, with its population of 403,408 heads as recorded in 1998 census, is conveniently connected with other parts of the country by rail, road and air links. It lies about 90 kilometres from Multan, 420 from Lahore, about 900 from Karachi towards it south and about 700 kilometres from the Capital Islamabad, lying on its north.

The city, which once was bounded by a strong fortification wall around it, has now grown so much that it has expanded and stretched much beyond the old wall. New colonies, model towns and housing schemes have come up to give it a very modern look.

The wall of the old city was pierced with some six prominently places gates. These gates bear the names: Ahmadpuri, Derawari, Farid (or Bikaneri in its early days), Shikarpuri, Bohr and Multani Gate. Although perhaps none of them now show its past grandeur with its strength to hold enemy armies, or even retain the original structure, yet the left-over openings still betray their significance for its inhabitants. Even the originally graceful circular wall has given way, at most places to commercial activity with shops having come up, a drive on the circular road gives the true flavour of the setting of the city that used to be an important spot not only strategically but also commercially or socially.





Railway Station

Railway Station: Building to serve Nawabs



Cholistan to Bahawalpur

The Bahawalpur railway station is the main point of communication between the region and the country at large. Here a separate building for the exclusive use of the Nawab stands witness to its past glory. The Nawab's special train would steam off here to serve him and his entourage where all the comforts and necessities of the time fit for the ruler of a princely state were available. Bahawalpur in general is also served, among smaller ones, by Baghda-al-Jadeed and Ahmadpur Sharqiya (East) railway stations established within the State.

The main shopping centres of Bahawalpur are Shahi Bazaar, Machli Bazaar and Farid Gate within the precincts of the old city. Away from it are the modern shopping areas at the Circular Road, the Mall, commercial zone in Satellite Town, which has come up fast and is a newly developed centre and some shopping malls, which cater for the general or specific needs of the inhabitants of Bahawalpur.

Bahawalpur has a long tradition of imparting education and knowledge with the khanqahs and madrassahs having started this noble task almost with the advent of the Muslim rule in the region. The Nawabs of this princely State were also not unaware of the importance of education in the development of thoughts and understanding. Especially, Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V undertook and completed many a pioneering educational institutions in the State. In addition to the Islamia University already in place, the other most important educational centres are the Sadiq Public School, Quaid-e-Azam Medical College. There are also some other colleges like Sadiq Egerton College (renamed as Government SE College after nationalisation), Post Graduate College Baghdad Road, Technology College, vocational colleges, four Degree Colleges, Commerce College, Tibbiya Colleges, four Elementary colleges for teachers' training.

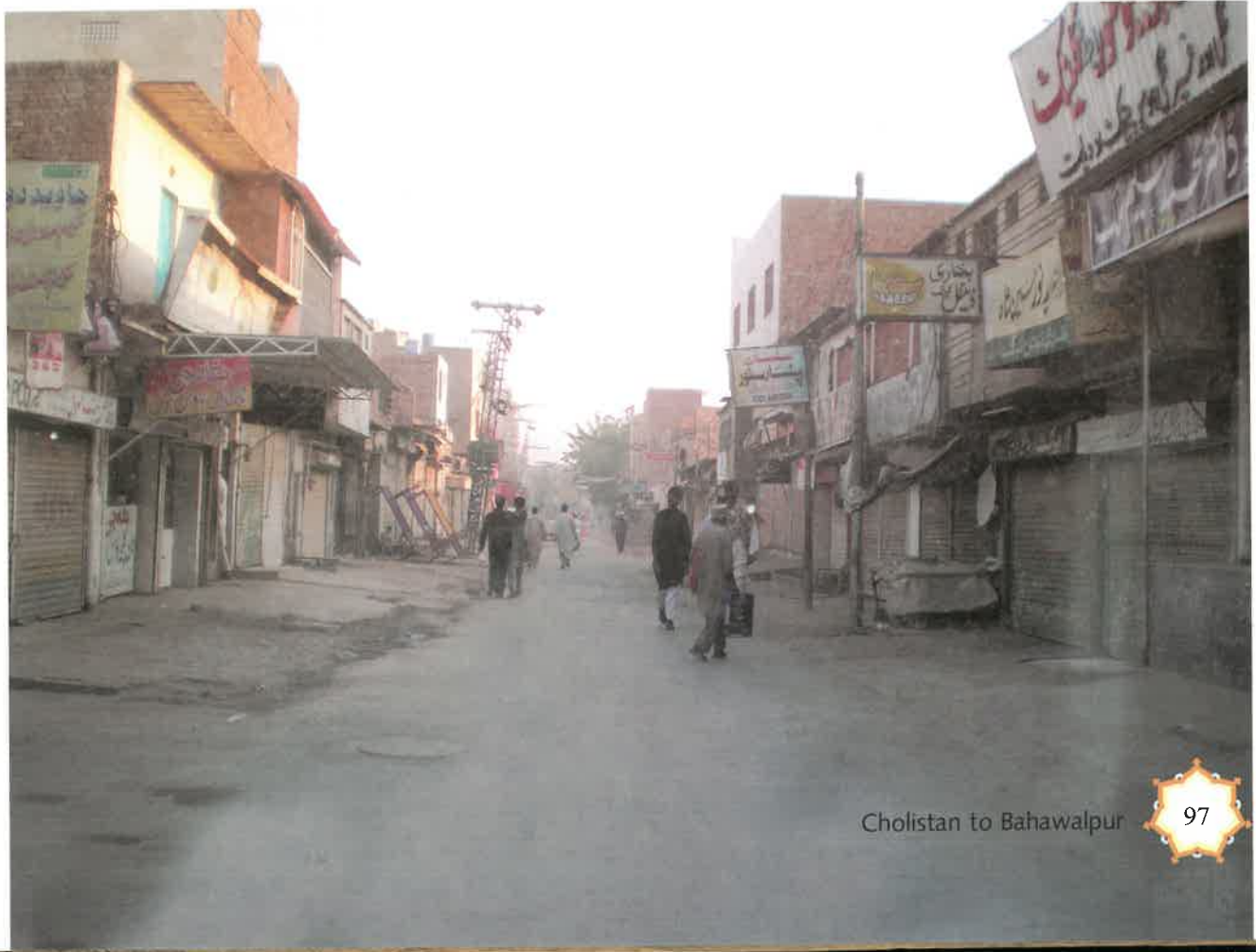
Fawara Chowk





Ahmadpuri Gate

Morning view of a bazaar





Derwari Gate

Farid (Bikaneri) Gate





Shikarpuri Gate

Bohr Gate





Multani Gate

Seraiki Chowk





A typical narrow lane of old city, Bahawalpur



Different scenes in old city



Baghdad Railway Station, Bahawalpur

Eid Gah, Bahawalpur





A modern public park

Gate to the residences of Royal personages

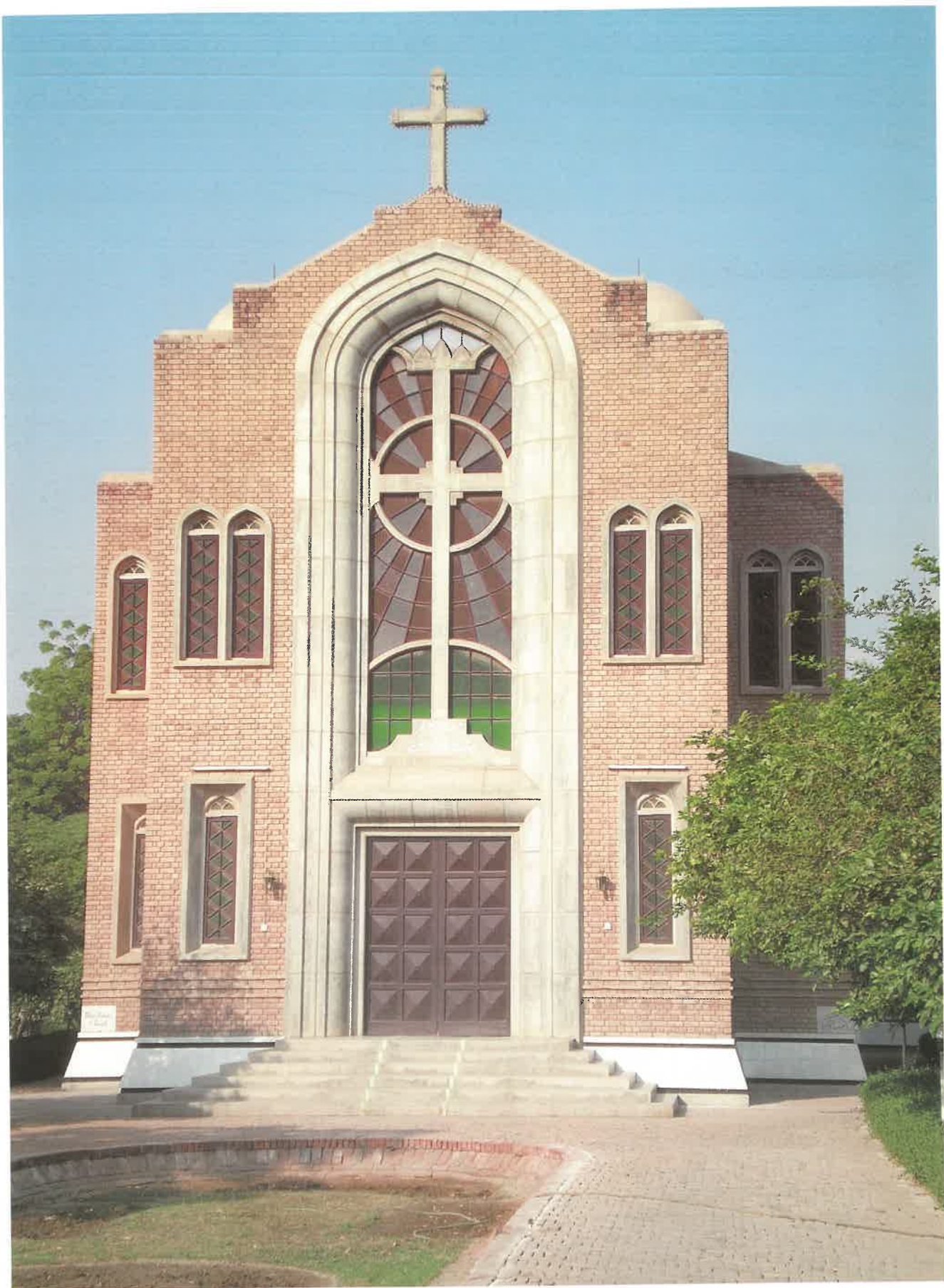




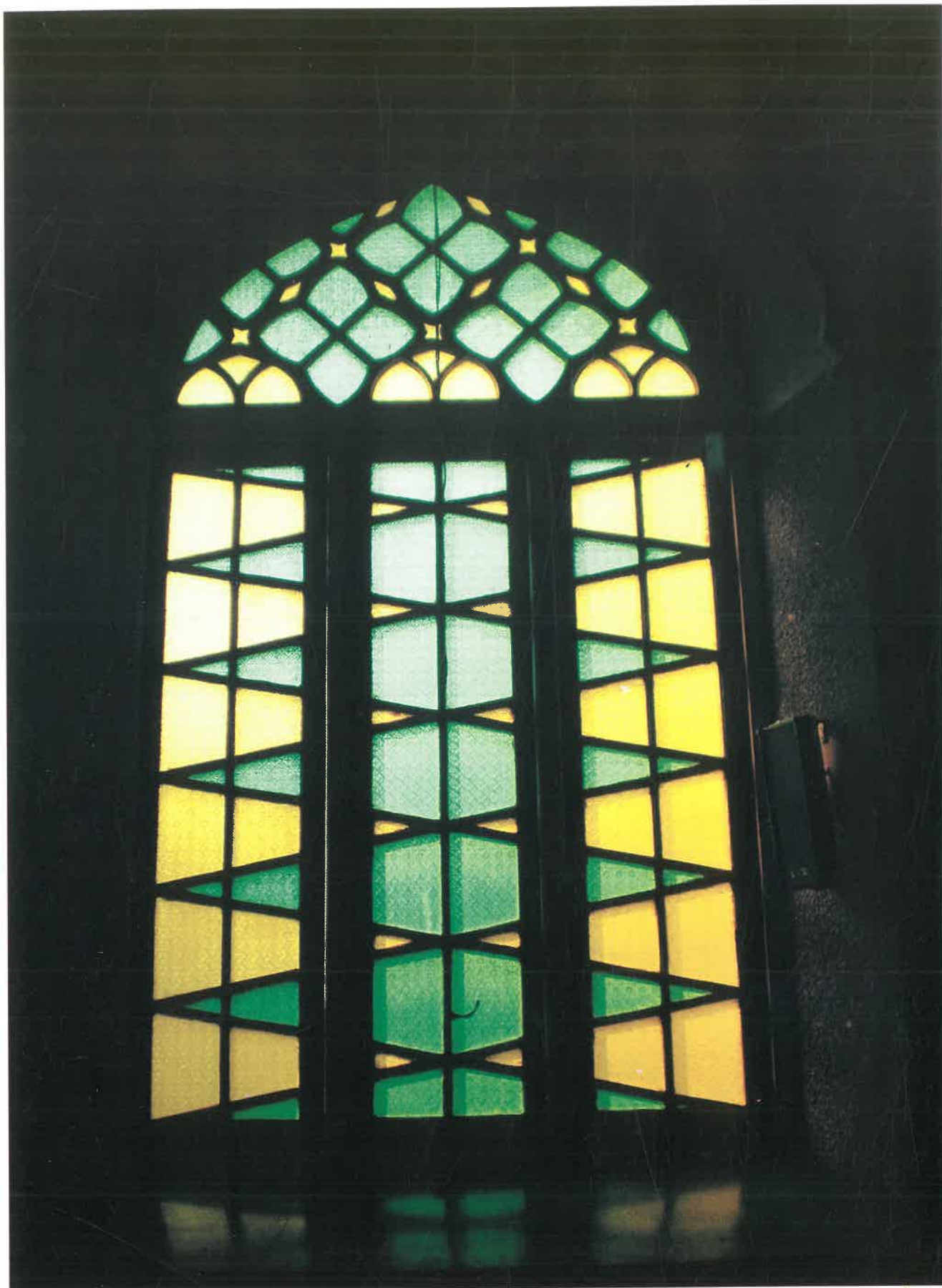
Jinnah Hall

Fire Station





St. Dominic Catholic Church, main facade



St. Dominic Church, traditional window



Sadiq Public School

Sadiq Public School is an elite premier boarding school established on the lines of the English public schools. In addition to boarding facilities it now also has day scholars while it takes students right from the preparatory school.

The Foundation Stone of Sadiq Public School was laid by Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan V himself on the 4th of March 1953. In its aims it spelled that the School would produce 'young men with high moral principles, who should be self-reliant and self-confident, with qualities of initiative, sense of responsibility, selfless devotion to duty, religious outlook and burning desire to serve the cause of Islam and the country.' The project was taken up under the advice and guidance of Makhdumzada Syed Hasan Mahmood, the Chief Minister of Bahawalpur State. The Government of Bahawalpur State allocated a sum of rupees 1.9 million for the construction of the buildings. In addition, 1.8 square kilometres (450Êacres) of land was given by the Nawab at a token price. The project was completed in a record period of nine months. The site was transformed into a spacious campus of lawns and playing fields, in the midst of which rose nine buildings to serve most of its needs. The inaugural ceremony was also chaired by Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan V on 18th January 1954.

Another of the outstanding educational institutions is the Islamia University. It has two campuses; one in the city, named as Abbasia Campus and the other a little beyond the Railway Station of Baghdad-al-Jadid named as Baghdad-al-Jadid Campus. In the former campus are taught two subjects while in the latter all the rest including science and information technology.





Sadiq Public School Mosque





Islamia University

As a sort of continuation of madrassahs of Uch, which had long been imparting religious education, Jamia Abbasia was established in Bahawalpur in 1925, following the lines of studies at the famous Jamia Al-Azhar in Cairo, Egypt. It started spreading knowledge of not only religious curriculum consisting of Tafseer of the Quran, Hadith and Fiqh but also included other contemporary subjects.

In view of the modern day demand for more emphasis on many other subjects, Jamia Abbasia was declared as a general University in 1975, and renamed as The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. Initially, it started functioning at Abbasia and Khawaja Fareed Campuses with ten departments. In order to construct a modern and self-contained campus, 1250 acres of almost waste-land were allotted to the University on Hasilpur Road about 8 kilometers the Bahawalpur city, where the sand dunes have now given gay to modern buildings housing different faculties together with green lawns, hostels, residential colony, farms and orchards. It is known as Baghdad-ul-Jadeed Campus.



The University initially started with ten departments gradually developing with time. At present there are as many as 40 faculties offering 53 disciplines, which include Religious Affairs, Languages, Social and Basic Sciences; Business Administration, Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary Sciences, Computer, Law, Education, Fine Arts, Pharmacy, Life Sciences, Sports Sciences, etc. The University has also established two campuses, one each at Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalnagar in 2005 in an effort to bring higher education in easy access of students of other areas as well.

Quiad-e-Azam Medical College

In the same vein of developing the educational institutions in the region a Medical College was founded in 1970 naming it after the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The well-established Bahawal Victoria Hospital was affiliated with it for clinical training of the students. Since its inception it has brought out medical graduates in thousands while it also helps in post-graduation in different branches of medical sciences.



Central Library

Not only that Bahawalpur is rich in education-imparting institutions but it also can safely boast of a very rich Library very much augmenting the patronising efforts of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Abbasi V in the field of learning. Now known as Central Library, it was established to mark the installation of the Nawab as the ruler of the State. The foundation stone of this building was laid by the governor-general and viceroy of India, Sir Rufus Danial Issacs on 8th March 1924 when he had come here for the aforementioned occasion.

The building started to house the central library in 1947. With its rare collection of manuscripts and newspapers, 24,809 English books, 34,467 books in Urdu, 4,221 Arabic and 3271 Persian books it is one of the best libraries in Pakistan and visited by students and scholars from within the country and abroad.

In addition to these the city also has the following places of learning and sporting activities:-



Central Library, main building



Central Library: Journals & Newspaper section (above) and Children section (below)





Central (Reading) Library Bahawalpur, general view



SADIQ READING LIBRARY

FOUNDATION STONE

LAI D BY HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON'BLE

SIR RUFUS DANIEL ISAACS.

EARL OF READING

P.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O.,

VICEROY & GOVERNOR GENERAL

OF INDIA

ON THE 8TH MARCH 1924.

Bhawalpur Museum

There is a modest museum that portrays to the students and general public the local treasures in the field of culture. It has a fine collection of coins, medals, postage stamps of former Princely State of Bahawalpur, manuscripts, documents, inscriptions, wood carvings, camel skin paintings, historical models, carvings on stone etc. of Islamic and pre-Islamic period. The presentation of the complete collection of medals issued by the Princely State to military officers and civilians from all walks of life is perhaps of signal interest for the visitors interested in this.

Zoological Garden

The zoological garden of Bahawalpur is considered to be one of the best in the country. Spread over an area of 25 acres of land, it has an interesting collection of animals and birds of tropical areas, particularly those found in this region. It also has an aquarium and zoological museum with stuffed rare birds and animals.

Dring Stadium

Bahawalpur has one of the finest stadiums in the country having fine cricket grounds, two football grounds one basket ball court and lawn tennis courts and a covered swimming pool. There is also a hockey stadium, which is considered to be the second best in the country after Karachi Stadium. It can accommodate 13,000 people at any one time.





Jamia Masjid Al-Sadiq

Amongst the religious places is the Jamia Masjid Al-Sadiq, or the Royal (Shahi) Mosque of Bahawalpur, situated in the walled city, and accessed through the Ahmadpuri Gate. It is centrally located by the Chowk Bazar over a basement, which on the outside contains shops etc. and under the main Jamia a smaller mosque. It is built with richly embellished white marble with the main courtyard and the prayer chamber standing at a height of a little over 3.5 metres. The access is through the towering main gate, in itself a monument, after a climb of stately stairs. It was, though, added much later with the financial assistance of the ruler of Abu Dhabi. The main gate and the whole of the mosque looks replication of Badshahi Mosque at Delhi or at Lahore.

As one enters the main courtyard through the main gateway, the stately façade of the grand prayer chamber comes into view only to over-awe with its looks. It shows seven arched openings, with the central one standing rather as the largest as compared to the other flanking it. This face of the building is of moulded base patty of white marble and the matching dassa embellished with floral designs. At the façade have also been used stone carvings of floral designs with shamsa (sun-like) and vegetational creepers carved in relief on the bands that frame the arches. The Quranic calligraphy is superbly done. The wood-work is in the expensive teak.



Ablution Area

The building of the mosque, perhaps the last of the greatest feats of the Nawabs of Bahawalpur, was started under the orders of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan V at the expense of the State, at the site of the palace of a State Minister. It was hardly complete when the State was merged into Pakistan, which fact becomes apparent on a visit to this mosque.

At the ground level, as a sort of basement under the main Mosque, is a beautifully placed mosque with niche and all the complementary features of a complete place of Muslim prayers. It is normally used for the regular five daily sala – prayers – while in the main upper building are offered the Juma and Eid prayers.





Corner minaret



Main prayer chamber's outer facade

Main Gate as seen from courtyard





Views of basement mosque, niche (above) prayer hall (below)





Shrine of Muluk Shah

The shrine of Muluk Shah, a popular saint of his time, dominates the historical graveyard, also known after the name of the saint. Located near the Bahawalpur Cantonment area it is the rendezvous of the devotees of Hazrat Muluk Shah, especially on Thursdays, Ashura day (10th of Moharram of the Muslim calendar) and the Eid days.





The grave of Muluk Shah

Lal Suhanra National Park

The Lal Suhanra National Park, which lies about 36 kilometres east of the Bahawalpur city, is a combination of natural lake and a forest spread over 77480 acres of land, stretched on both sides of the Bahawalpur Canal. On the recommendations of the Wildlife Enquiry Committee this whole area comprising of 31,355 hectares land – 20,932 hectares of desert, 8,488 hectares irrigated forest plantation and 1,934 hectares of reserves forest – was declared as a National Park in 1972. It has within it the now dried-up bed of the Hakra River while on the other hand it also features an important wetland, Patisar Lake.

The blackbuck, which had almost become extinct in the Cholistan Desert, a region that mainly is represented in the Park, the species has been re-introduced in Lal Suhanra within large enclosures, together with Chinkara gazelle, Nilgai antelope, Hog deer and Indian rhinoceros. There is big lake in the centre of the park called Patisar Lake, which is ideal for bird watching. Patisar Lake regularly holds between 10,000 and 30,000 ducks and common coot (dark-coloured duck-like bird) especially during mid-winter season. The presence of waterfowls here is also in thousands while the park at large also boasts of a large population of birds of prey.

The Park is open to public where researchers and general visitors come for knowledge and enjoyment. Amongst the facilities for the visitors it has a watchtower, catching ground, tourist huts, rest houses, camping grounds, TDCP Resort with 6 Air conditioned Bed Rooms and treks for the visitors and nature lovers. As the Park is basically a sanctuary, shooting of the wildlife is not permitted.





Rhinoceros, a gift from Nepal

Peacock



Uch Sharif

About 70 kilometres south-east of Bahawalpur City lies a small town studded with remarkably glittering tombs and mausoleums. On reaching here one is hardly prepared to face such a rich visual treat of the priceless specimens of the Sultanate architecture with exceptionally profuse tile-work and towering domes. The town, known as Uch, is situated on the southern bank of the river Sutlej, close to the place where it meets the Chenab River. The poor state of preservation of its ancient buildings speaks volumes of the neglect it met throughout the centuries. However, in no way their decayed condition diminishes the importance of the place that it played in the cultural development of the area, rather the whole mid-Indus region.

The town is located on a chain of cultural mounds, which, in all probability, should contain material belonging to pre- or proto-historic period. This conclusion seems having a great deal of weight when seen in the light of results of the archaeological reconnaissance in the Bahawalpur district. As no systematic archaeological excavation has yet been done on these mounds nothing can be said of its early antiquity with precise certainty at this stage. However, after the extinction of the Indus Civilisation and the arrival of the Aryans about the middle of the second millennium BC, the history of Uch has been traced on the basis of etymological studies or other records available to researchers.

The name Uch, sometimes spelt as Uchchh, has been taken as a derivation of Ussa or Ushas, a town founded by the Aryans, probably re-using the old site. There are, however, others who simply go by its present name Uch meaning 'high or elevated' in Punjabi. The later records of the Achaemenian period speak of a rich province situated in the Indus Region. This fact tempts the historians to include Uch, though not as important a town at that time, in the same area.

After subjugating Northern Punjab the young Greek invader, Alexander the Great, on his campaign towards Sindh, visited this place and founded a city, which was named as Alexandria after his name. At quite a late stage, by then known as Askalanda - a corrupt form of Alexandria - it formed



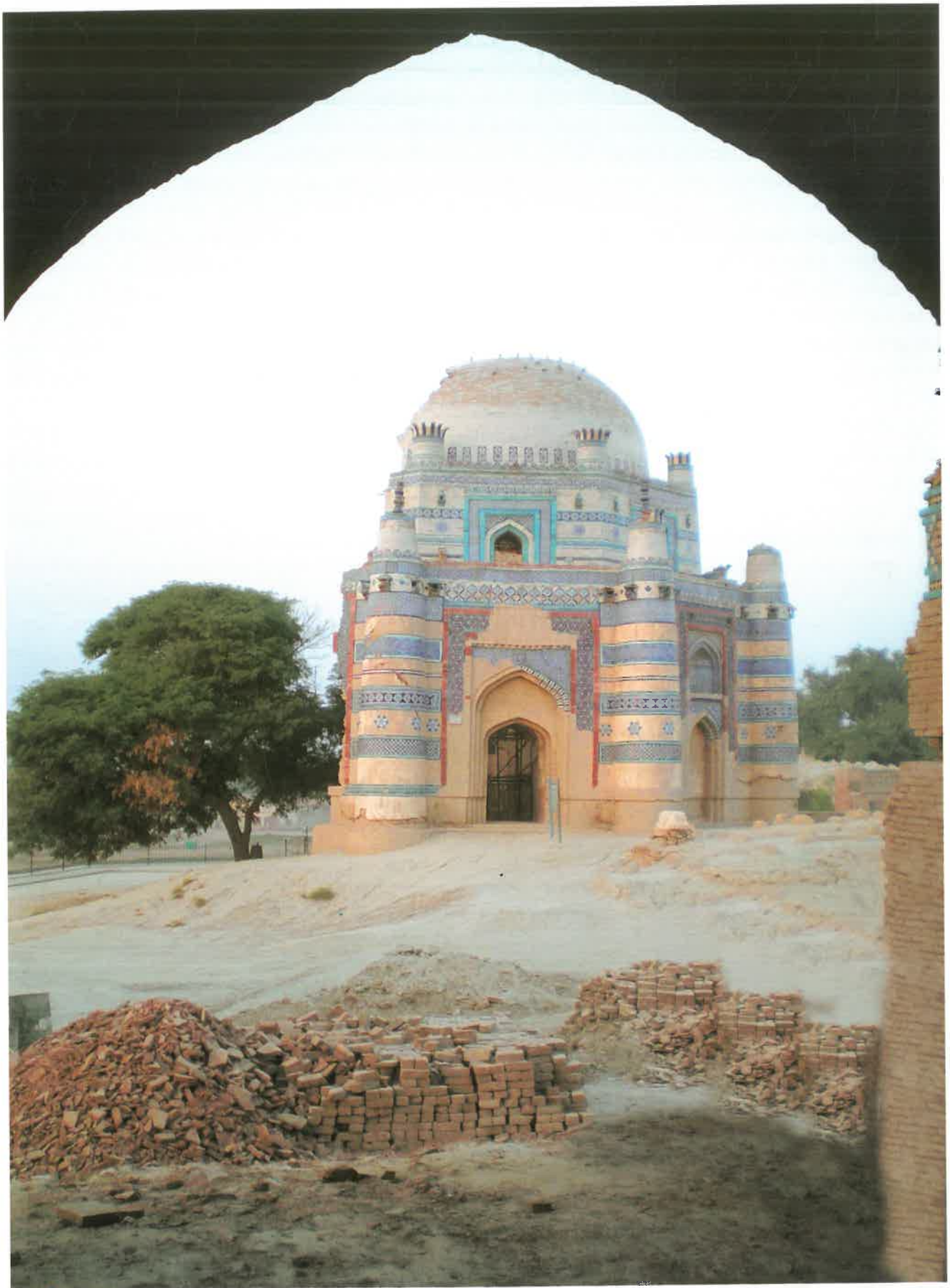
one of the four provinces of Rai dynasty from whom it was passed on to the Arab conqueror, Muhammad bin Qasim. After changing hands between Bhattis and Ghaznavides, the place came under Sultan Shehab ud Din Ghauri in 1175. One of the succeeding governors of the region, Nasir al Din Qubacha, gradually took full control and became an independent ruler of Multan and Uch. The Sultan of Delhi, Eltutmish, ousted him in 1228, almost simultaneously bringing an end to the political importance of the place.

During the twenty-two years of the independent rule of Qubacha, Uch had become a great centre of political, cultural, literary and above all, spiritual activities, vying only with Multan. It was mainly due to the fact that Qubacha himself patronised the religious scholars, saints and other learned people who came to him from far off places in Fars and Afghanistan. The exit of Nasir el Din Qubacha from the scene gave a fatal blow to the material prosperity of the town. However, the momentum provided by him in spiritual field was to continue dominating other aspects for quite some time.

These saints and Sufis engaged in the propagation of the deen-e-Islam, attracted people in thousands. During its heyday, khanqahs, madrasahs and serais were established here. The burial places of the saintly personages were enshrined lovingly with imposing mausoleums by their followers. The place thus survived as a centre of socio-religious activities and even the burial places of these saints remained an attraction long after Uch had lost its importance in the historical sense.



General view of Uch monuments



General view of the Tomb of Bibi Jawindi

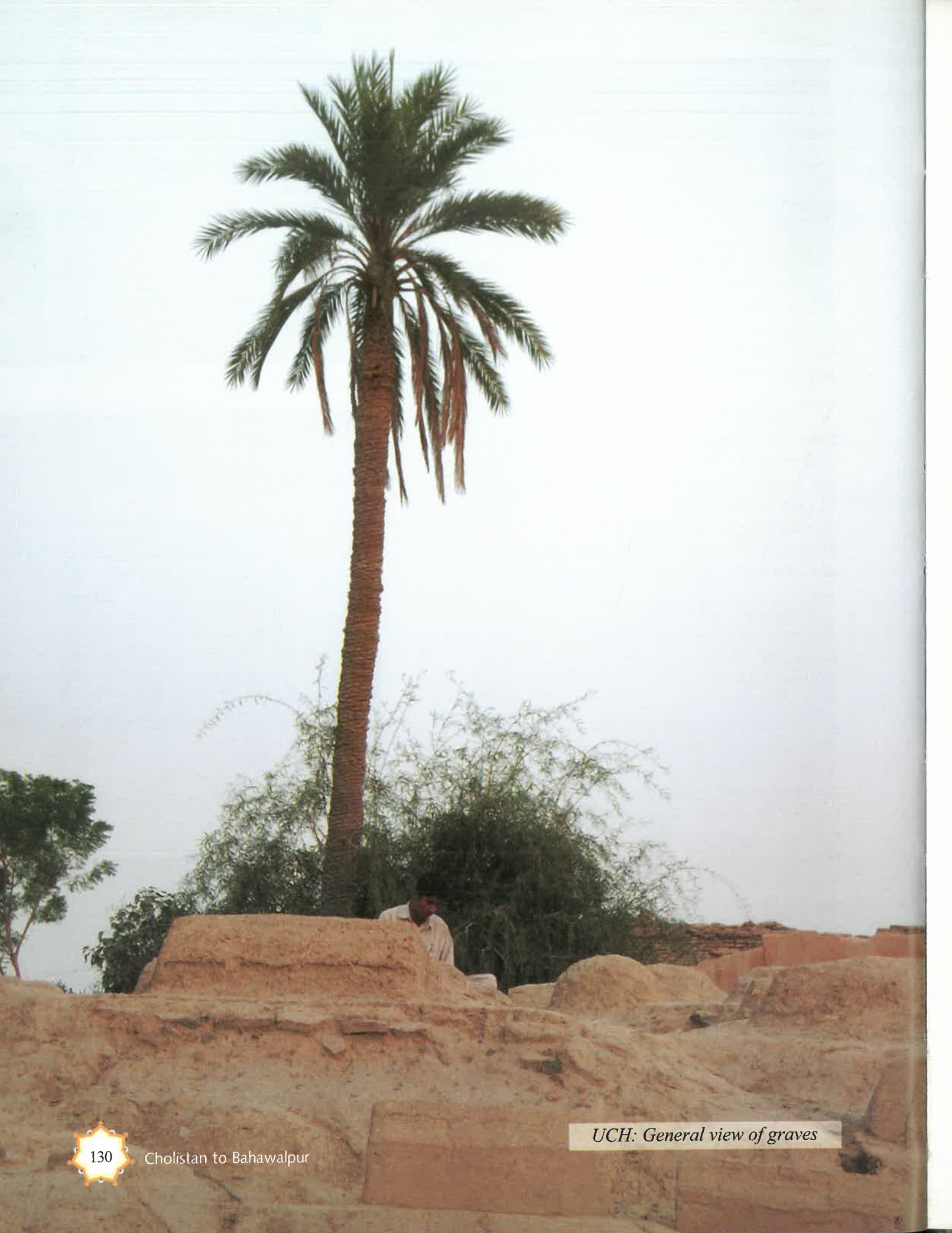
Uch, at the time when its glory was at the pinnacle, had a clear division of its populous parts. There were three quarters, each separately fortified having bastions and gateways and inhabited by followers of a particular saint. One of these parts, known as Uch Gilani, was populated by families and disciples of Bandagi Muhammad Ghaus, popularly known as Gilani Sani. The second distinct part, by far the most extensive one, was the Uch Bukhari where lived Bukhari Makhdums and their followers. The third district, housing the administrative establishment of the provincial headquarter representing the Sultans of Delhi, was known as Uch Mughlan. The residences of official elite and the Mongol migrants were located in this part.

The ancient splendour of Uch is reflected even today in the form of the remnants of exquisite tombs with mosques. The remains of the khanqahs, madrasas and serais are, however, nowhere to be found at present. It is equally surprising that in spite of having served as provincial seat and a town of no mean importance, no buildings of secular nature or tombs of political personalities are traceable in or around Uch.

Uch served as regional capital of political division only for a short span of time during the rule of Nasir al Din Qubacha. As such, it would have not exerted influence on the socio-cultural development in the region. It was, however its religious fervour that gathered in its fold saints, literati, Darvehes and Ulema. It, thus, served as nucleus for thousands of people who flocked round these saintly persons. Their last resting-places, mazaars and tombs, have always remained the places of reverence for their devotees, who throng in millions to seek spiritual solace. These monuments present, in addition to the spiritual glory, a material grandeur and a sober beauty of architectural art.

The ancient buildings at Uch can be divided into two groups on the basis of architectural style. The tombs constructed with high domes on square or octagonal plan form one distinctive group while the tombs having flat roof with wood framing and upright columns come in the other category. The former seems to be an extension of the so-called Multan style in architecture, either preceding or following it. The latter appears to be the clear result of local craftsmanship. The tombs of





UCH: General view of graves



Entrance of Jalal Surkh Bukhari complex

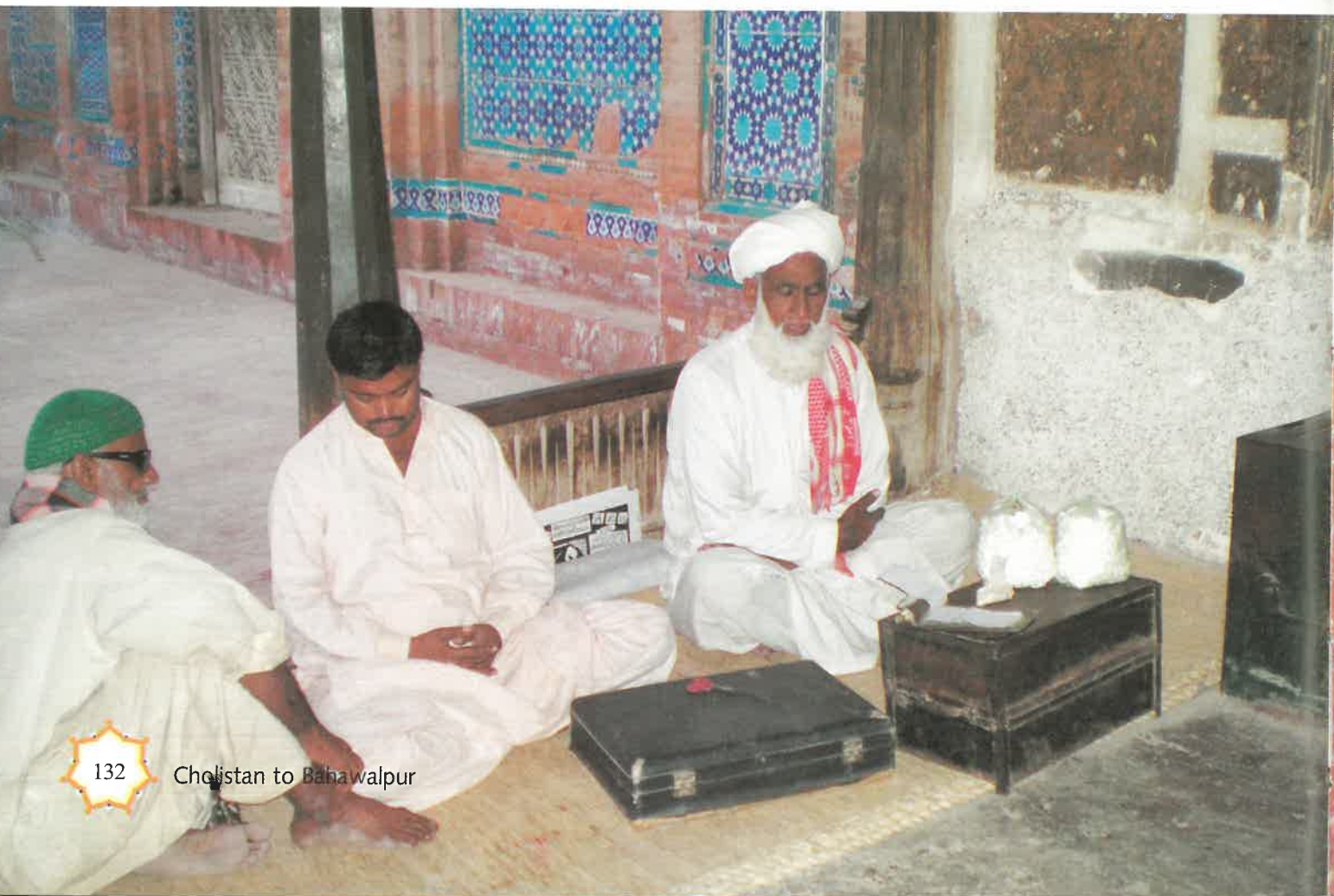
Baha al Halim, Musa Pak Shaheed and Bibi Jawindi belong to the first group while the second group consisting of flat-roofed tombs is represented by those of Jahanian Jahangasht, Rajan Qatal and Abu Hanifa.

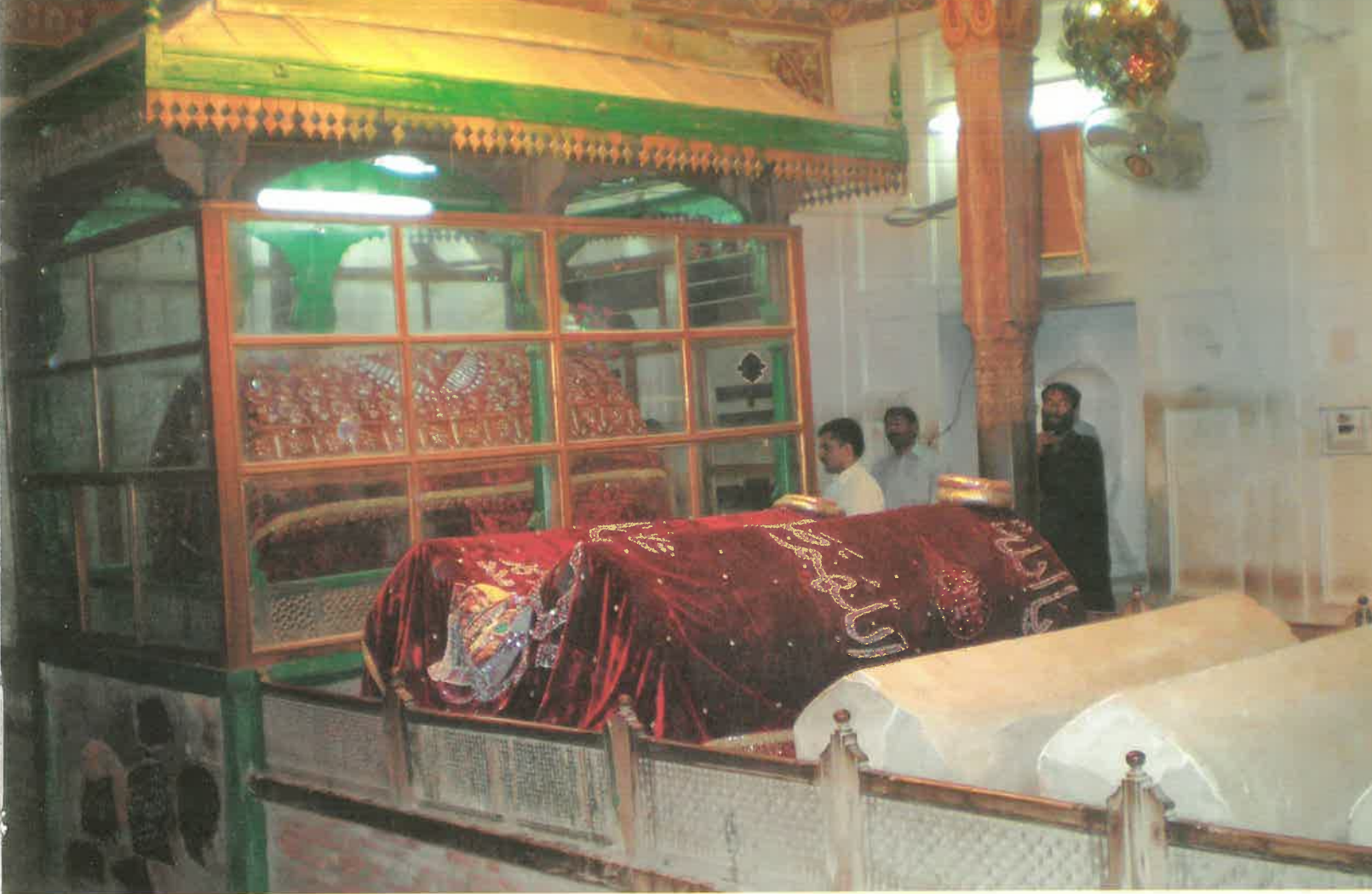
It is unfortunate that their long exposure to natural calamities as well as human neglect has resulted in disintegration of the fabric of most of these specimens of early Muslim architecture in Pakistan. They either stand in a very dilapidated state of preservation hence almost beyond repairs or have disappeared to such an extent that not much could be done at this stage. The timber used in the flat-roofed edifices has mostly given way making the structures crumble. The perennial floods have washed almost half of the various monuments. The Punjab Department of Auqaf had some time back carried out some conservation works, mainly concentrating on strengthening the standing structures and replacing some of the worn-out portions. A more concerted effort with sincere technical know-how is, however, required to be put in to enable our generation hand over this priceless heritage to our posterity.



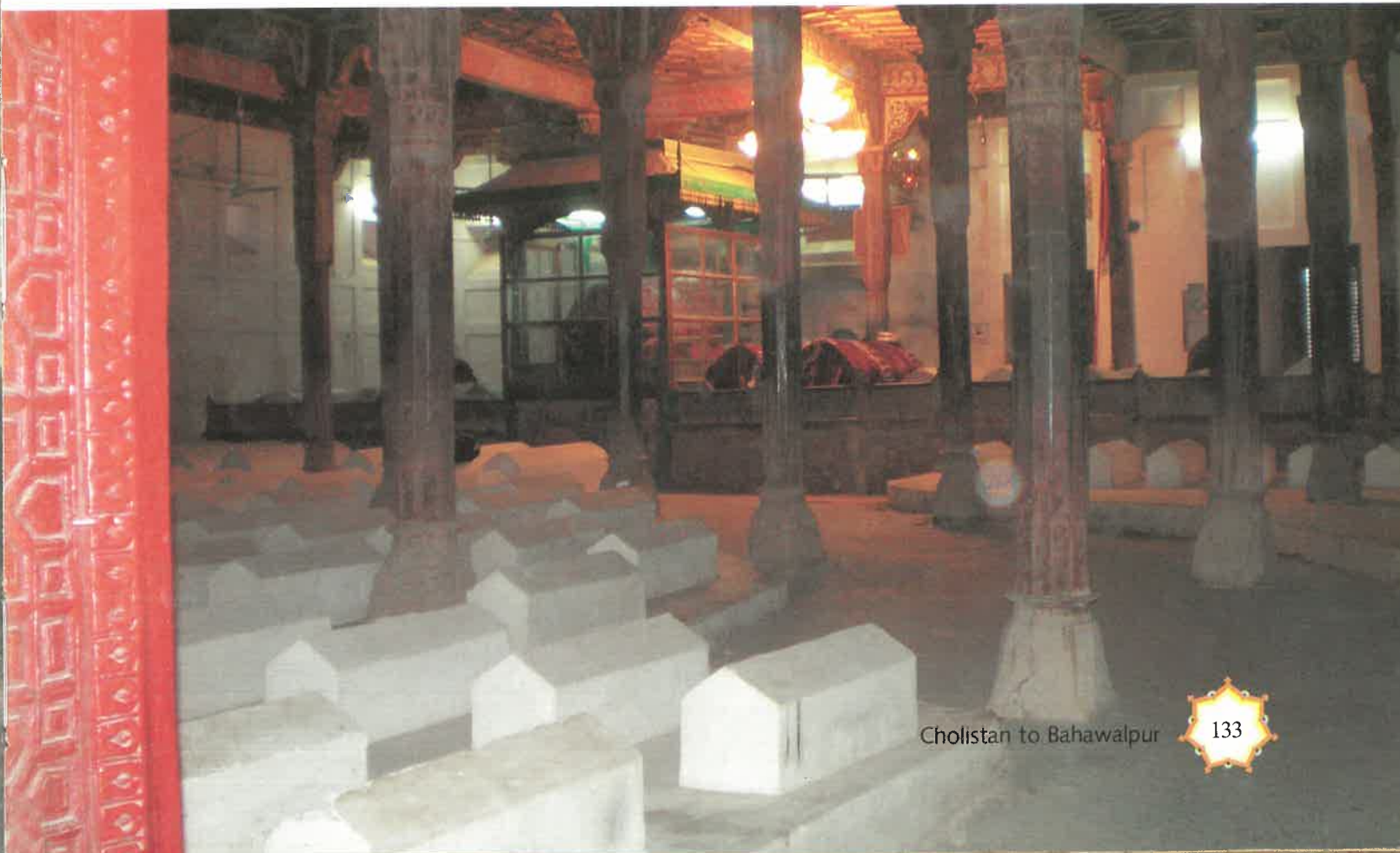
Mosque with Tomb of Jalal Surkh Bukhari

Devotees outside Tomb of Jalal Surkh Bukhari





General views of graves inside Jalal Surkh Bukhari Mausoleum





Well where Hazrat Fariduddin Ganj Shakar did his chillah



An old gate of Uch





Mosque Sadruddin Rajan Qattal

Tomb of Shaikh Abu Hanifa

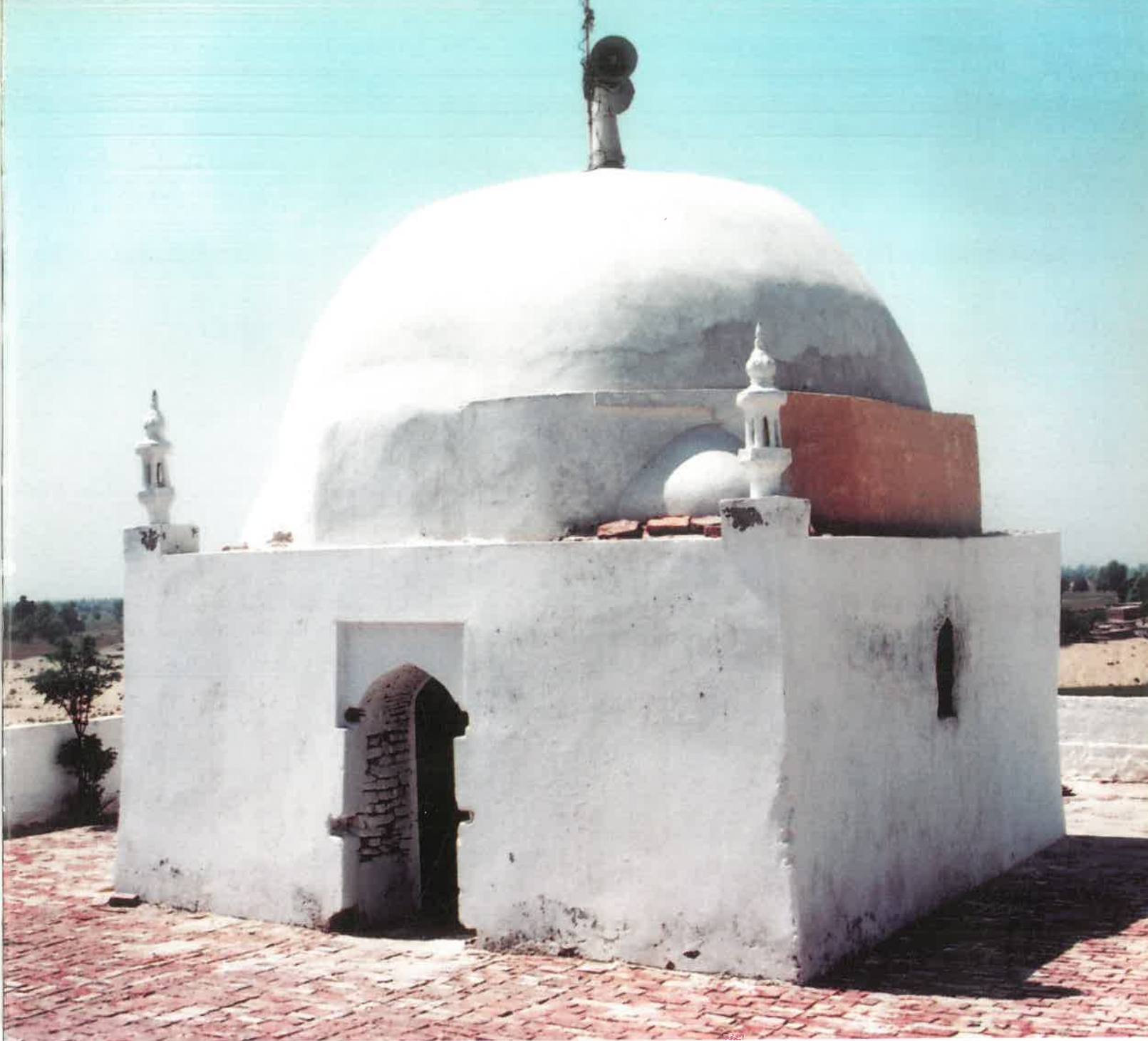


Pattan Minara

An ancient site of Pattan Minara, some 15 kilometres east of Rahim Yar Khan district headquarters, still attracts serious students of history and culture as also the general public. According to some legends the history of Pattan Minara dates back to the BC-era. Alexander the Great is said to have passed through the area during his military expedition to the Subcontinent. As was his practice, he set up a cantonment here under a Greek governor. The Greeks in their time established a university complex here. But with passage of time, as the River Indus changed course and River Ghagra dried up, the place lost its importance and slowly turned into ruins.

Located a few hundred metres from Pattan Minara, very prominently on a mound, is the historical Abu Bakr Mosque, built by a local Muslim ruler, Mohammed Abu Bakr Sanwal Saeen, in 1849 apparently on the earlier period remains.





Historic Mosque near Pattan Minara

Sui Vehar

It is an historical fact that the empire of Ashoka stretched to and encompassed in it the region of Sindh. It was during this period that a Buddhist monastery (vihara) was erected at Sui-Vehar, which now lies at a distance of a little less than 10 kilometres from the city of Bahawalpur. A Pali inscription retrieved from here suggests of its having been built during the reign of Kanishka. At the time of its discovery, in 1867, it rose to quite a height appearing from the cultural mound. Although deteriorated in its present condition there was narrow masonry shaft in the centre of the tower. It led to a small recess in which were found a copper plate with an inscription declaring Kanishka, 'the Great king of kings and son of gods.'



Gateway to Bhong Town

Ghazi Mosque, Bhong

The Bhong Mosque, one of the most outstanding religious architectural feats of the twentieth century, lies in the village of the same name, lying some 15 kilometres from Rahim Yar Khan and about 200 kilometres from Bahawalpur. It merits high in its exquisite design and architectural beauty with gold leaves carved for the intricate geometric designs and work of Quranic calligraphy.

The credit of the construct of the great monument goes to Sardar Rais Ghazi Muhammad, who started on this project in 1932. The complex includes the mosque, a madrassah with boarding facilities for the students and teachers and a large and well-laid garden together with a well that was dug for its exclusive use. It is interesting to note that the Sardar himself conceived the idea of the project and single-handedly carried out the duties of a client, designer, patron, director, financier etc. In order to have a high quality of work specialists in each trade of the project were hired from all over India and Pakistan: Master masons from Rajasthan (India), craftsmen for glazed tiles, mosaic and woodwork from Multan and painters and calligraphers from Karachi. The project was completed in 1982.



The mosque, standing on a high ground, is a part of the complex that consists of a prayer hall, library, a madrassah and a number of cells meant to be used as residential dormitories for the students. It received the coveted Aga Khan International Award for Architecture in 1986 with the citation: "Bhong (Mosque) enshrines and epitomises the popular taste in Pakistan with all its vigour, pride, tension and sentiment. Its use, and misuse, of signs and symbols expresses appropriate growing pains of architecture in transition". Sardar Rais Ghazi Muhammad was also awarded 'Sitara-e-Imtiaz' posthumously in 1984 by the Government of Pakistan in recognition of his contribution to the field of public service (Bhong Mosque).

Main Gate of Bhong Mosque complex





Entrance to the Mosque





Bhong Mosque: Main Gate from inside



Entrance to the Masjid Sehn

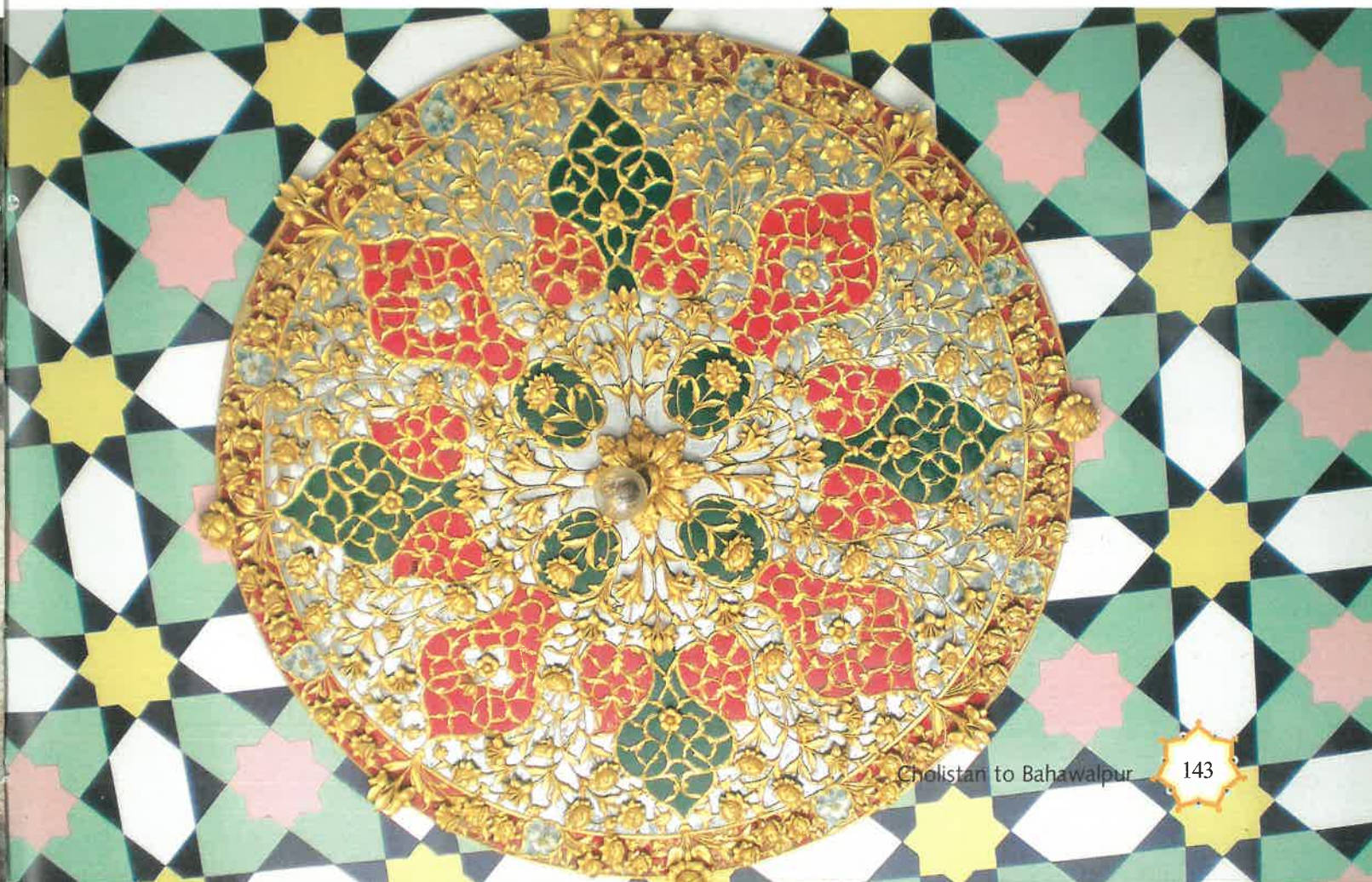
Partial view of the complex

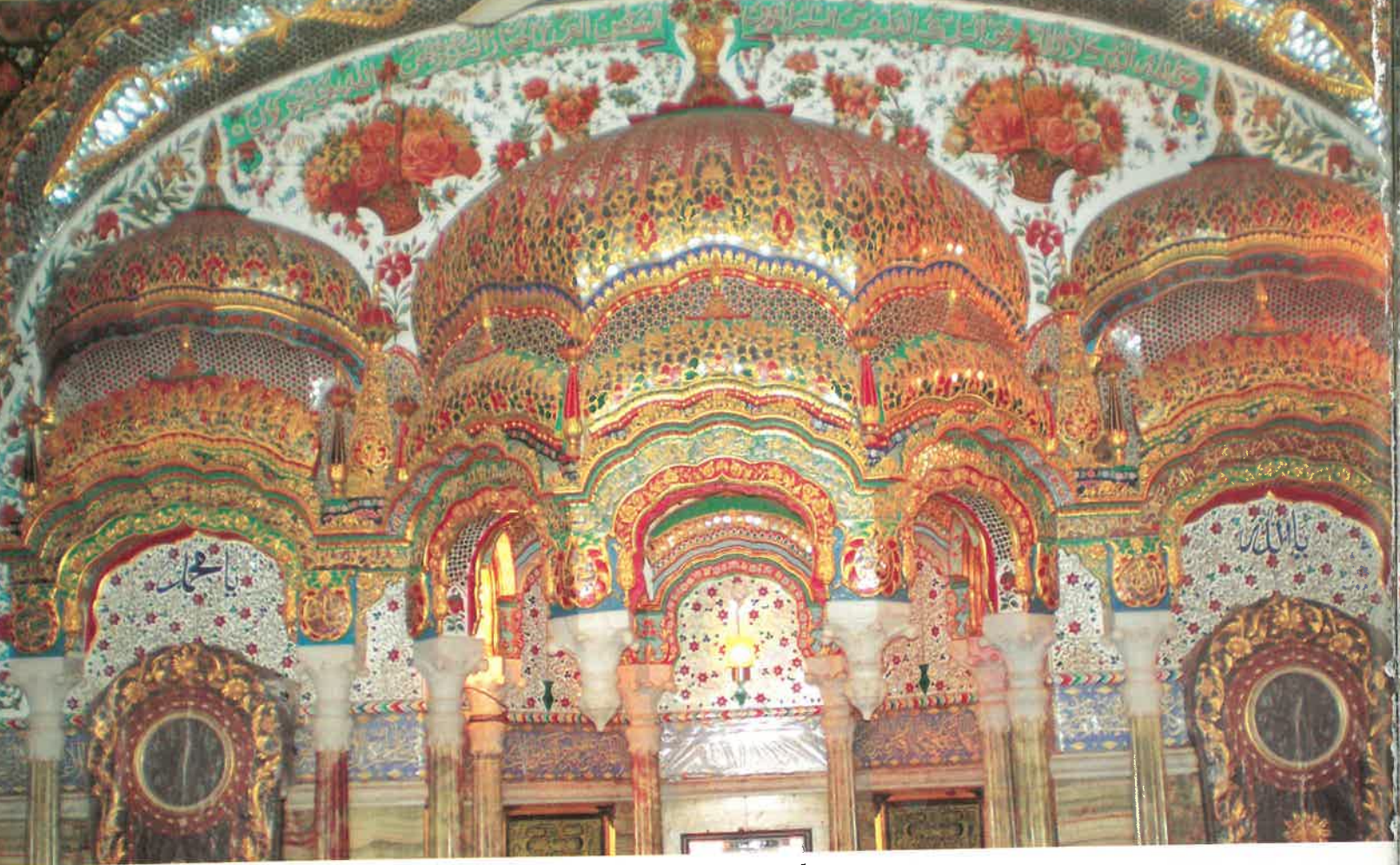




Entrance on Main Gate side

Decoration at ceiling





Two Views of the niche





Decoration on gates









بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Forts of Cholistan

Cholistan, or Rohi as is generally called locally, is a barren desert tract, bounded on the north and west by the Hakra depression rich with cultural mounds along its high banks. Under these high and low mounds lie buried the old settlements. This deep mass of sand is the northward continuation of the 'Marusthali' or 'Maruthali' meaning the 'region of death', as Thar, the Great Pakistani Desert is known. Although the region is rich in ancient sites belonging to the Harappan period yet there have not been found remains of any fort or fortification going that far in proto-history. However, this perhaps is the only single region which is dotted, almost in a single line, with as many as fifty fortresses, most of them of relatively later origin. Some of these fortresses stand built on the earlier period defences. The forts like Marot, Derawar etc. are thought to have existed around the 8th century AC, though in their present shape they do not go beyond two hundred year. It may be of interest to note that most of the other forts are the works accomplished between 17th and 19th centuries AC.



Ruins of Fort Marot



Qaimpur Fort

The forts and fortresses lying in the Cholistan area are mostly sort of watch posts, positioned on the route from Uch to Delhi, or across the desert to the other side of Rajasthan. These defences are also known to have served as caravanserais for the camping of the traders on these routes as, Cholistan being very sparsely inhabited, the habitation stations were hardly to be found in the desert. Most of these forts barely had a thin population or basic requirements needed by such caravans while on the move through this sea of sand. At least two of them, Marot and Derawar, were residential forts for the use of the rulers and their retinues.

The activity of building fortresses in the region of Cholistan took a new turn with the advent of the reign of the Daudpotra Abbasies. As rulers of Sindh when they defied King Nadir Shah and acted against his agent, they were defeated all ends up. Those who survived ran across Indus under Bahawal Khan, who later on founded the city of Bahawalpur and a kingdom in the area but never to return to power in Sindh. They are credited with building of many forts and fortresses mainly to protect their newly acquired territory against the hostilities of the Rajputs in addition, of course, to further facilitate the movement and security of the caravans. These forts and fortresses are all known by the name of Qal'a or fort although most of them are mere outposts or caravanserais. Some of these forts, which may be of higher significance, include the following: -



1. Derawar Fort,
2. Maujgarh Fort,
3. Marot Fort,
4. Mirgarh Fort,
5. Dingarh Fort,
6. Khangarh Fort,
7. Fatehgarh Fort,
8. Islamgarh Fort,
9. Sahibgarh Fort,
10. Mubarakpur Fort,
11. Rukunpur Fort,
12. Ghauspur Fort,
13. Qaimpur Fort,
14. Ahmadpur Lamma Fort,
15. Tajgarh Fort,
16. Phulra Fort,
17. Winjhnot Fort,
18. Moonday Shaheed Fort,
19. Walhar Fort,
20. Bahawalgarh Fort,
21. Fatehgarh Fort,
22. Mirgarh Fort,
23. Dingarh Fort,
24. Jamgarh Fort,
25. Bahawalpur Fort,
26. Sahnwala Fort,
27. Paloli Fort,
28. Thatta Waran Fort,
29. Ramkali Fort,
30. Kotsabzal Fort,
31. Garhi Ikhtian Khan Fort,
32. Kandra Fort,
33. Fazilpur Fort,
34. Khanpur Fort,
35. Fort Abbas,
36. Bhagla Fort,
37. Liyara Fort,
38. Sahibgarh Fort,
39. Muridwala Fort,
40. Mochki Fort,
41. Jajja Fort,
42. Kot Samaba Fort,
43. Nowshera Fort,
44. Sardargarh Fort,
45. Mau Mubarak Fort,
46. Jamgarh Fort etc.



A view of Derawar Fort



Mirgarh Fort

Most of the defences built in the Cholistan region are perched on high, natural or cultural, mounds and command a fine overview of the whole area around each of them. The height of the fortresses at Marot, Bhutta Wahan and Derawar are of special note.

Most of these Forts are built in baked bricks, more often than not, using the sun-dried bricks in the core of the fortification walls. Many of them are in a critical stage of decay mainly because of neglect and lack of any conservation, restoration or even maintenance operations. It is very ironical that except Derawar none of these forts has been protected by the Department of Archaeology, Government of Pakistan, in the terms of Antiquities Act of 1975 thus leaving them at their fate to brave the vagaries of nature and vandalism of man.

Some of these forts, which warrant special mention for their being important historically, architecturally or even strategically are as below:-

Derawar Fort

Derawar, some 40 kilometres from Bahawalpur, is a famous and historically important place in Cholistan. There are a large fort, royal necropolis, a grand white-marble mosque, and ancient water-pond and some smaller historical structures still intact here. Derawar Fort with its forty extremely lofty bastions is a square edifice. With a circumference of 1,500 metres and high walls rising to over 30 metres, the awe-inspiring view of this gigantic fort is visible from a large distance across the low sand-dunes and the desert flora extending across it.

The original fort on the site was built by Deoraj, a prince of . It continued to be ruled by the royal family of Jaisalmer, and as mentioned in the history chapter, till it was conquered by the Nawabs of Bahawalpur, who rebuilt it in 1733. In 1747, the Nawabs lost their footing here as they were busier with the Shikarpur affairs. Nawab Mubarak Khan took the stronghold back in 1804 and had been maintaining it as the first seat of the Bahawalpur State.

In order to have a secure place to administer his State, Nawab Sadiq Muhammad I had selected it for his residence when in its interior was also built palace with zenan khana and other auxiliaries. Apart from the palatial residential area of the Nawab, other buildings to house the offices of the State were also constructed.

The nearby marble mosque, built in 1849 for the Nawab's personal holy man, Pir Ghulam Farid, was modelled after that in the Red Fort Delhi. In addition to the main building of the prayer chamber with a beautiful niche (mehrab), it has an imposing entrance gate, which is a monument in itself. It opens towards the ancient water spot – or toba – while towards north after entering it, is the place for ablution (wudu) where an old source of water – a well – still exists and fulfils the requirements of the prayer goes Muslims.

There is also a royal necropolis of the ruling-royal Abbasi family of the Nawabs of Bahawalpur situated a few hundred metres to the east of the Mosque. The marble and blue tiled tombs of the nawabs and their family-members are superbly designed and crafted specimens of local architecture. There is one oblong tomb building of considerable dimensions, which has the graves of all the Abbasi rulers. The building is exquisitely embellished with blue tile-work while the graves have calligraphic inscriptions, mentioning the name of the interned ruler as also Quranic verses.

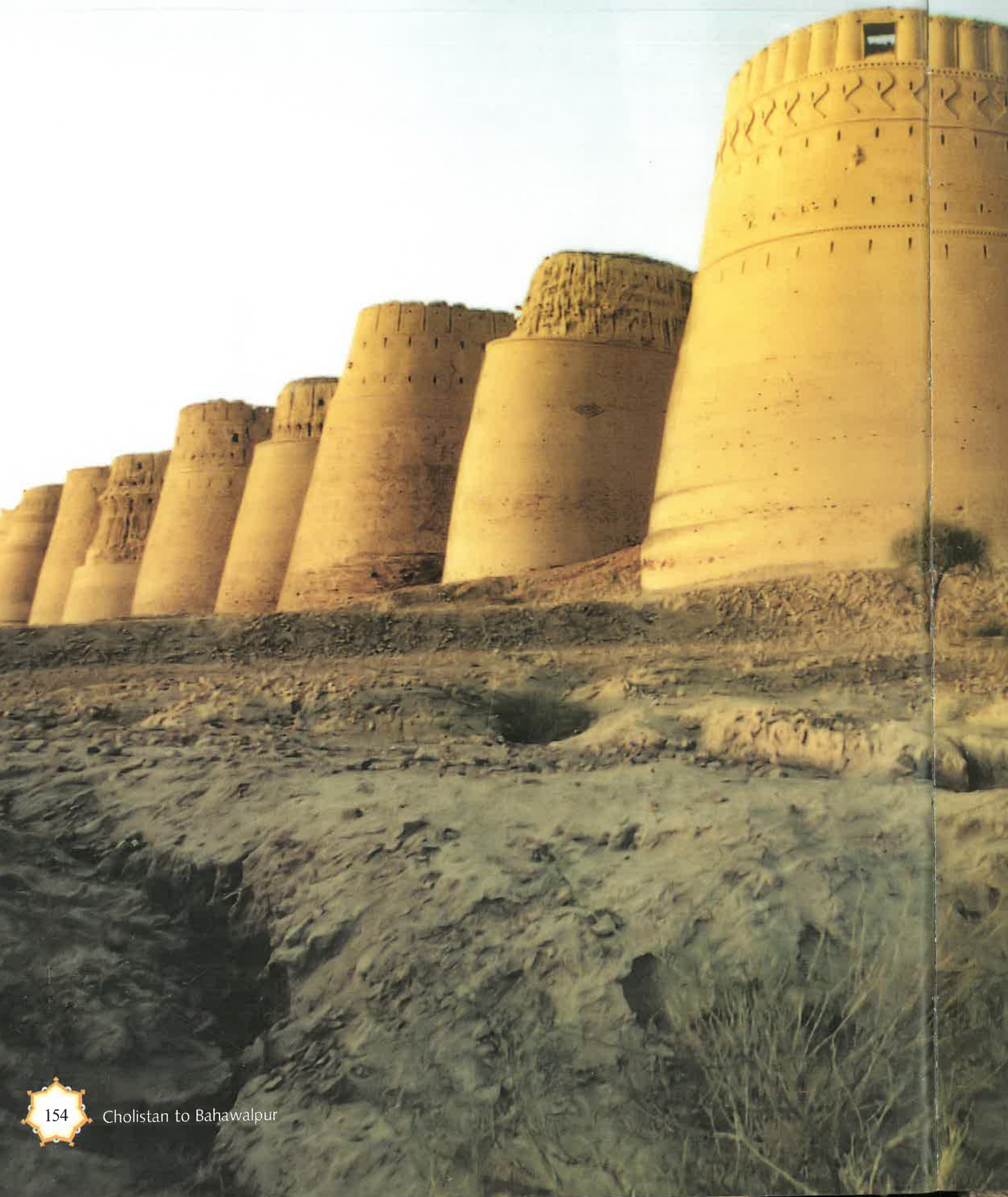




A view of Derawar Fort

An old cannon, Derawar Fort



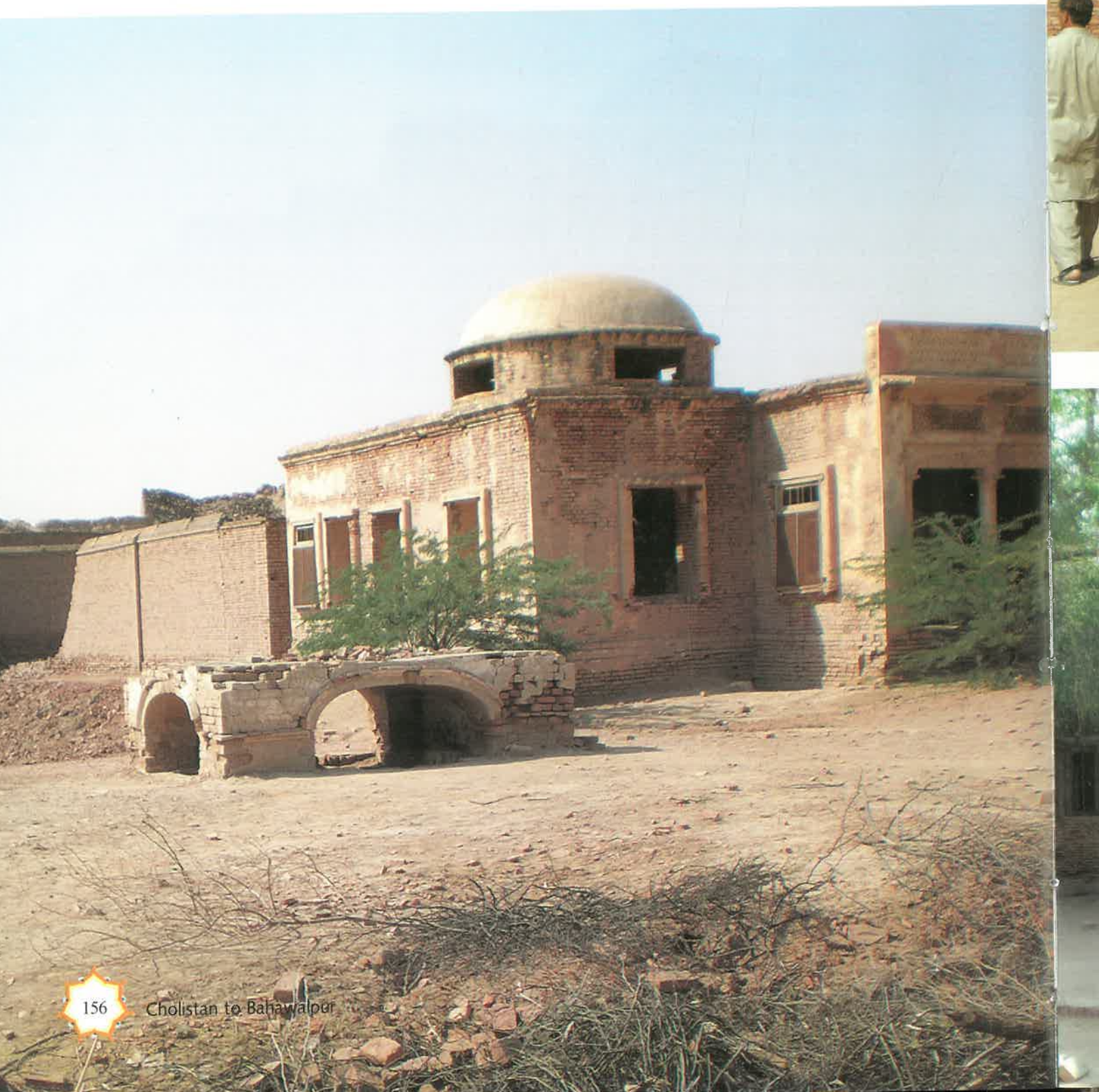




In the compound of the cemetery there are other, almost equally decorated, tombs of family members and wives, including the elegantly domed marble tomb of the last nawab's English wife, which stands alone towards the south of the main tomb. There is an interesting story about its queer location. It is said that the English wife had wished to be buried in the feet of her husband, the Nawab hence this location.

Generally the common tourists are not allowed inside the compound, but can have the view of the elegant monuments from outside the wall unless with permission of the authority of the Nawab.

Civil buildings inside Derawar Fort





Views of Zenan Khana (Harem quarters), Derawar Fort









Entrance to Derawar living quarters

Interior view of harem quarters





Decorated ceilings of Zenan Khana





Main Gate (from inside) of Derawar Mosque

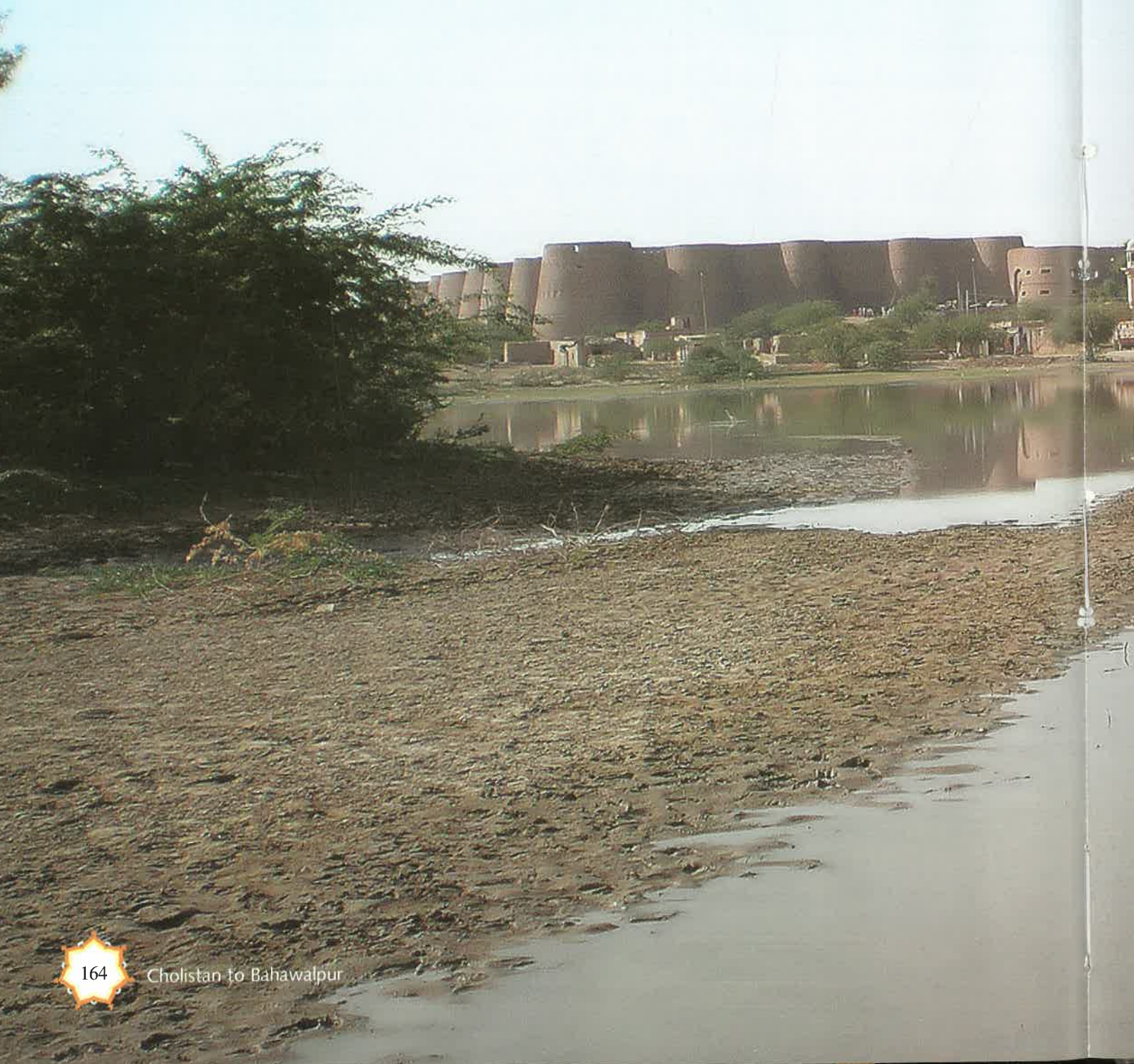
Main building of Derawar Mosque





Derawar Mosque: Niche as seen from central door

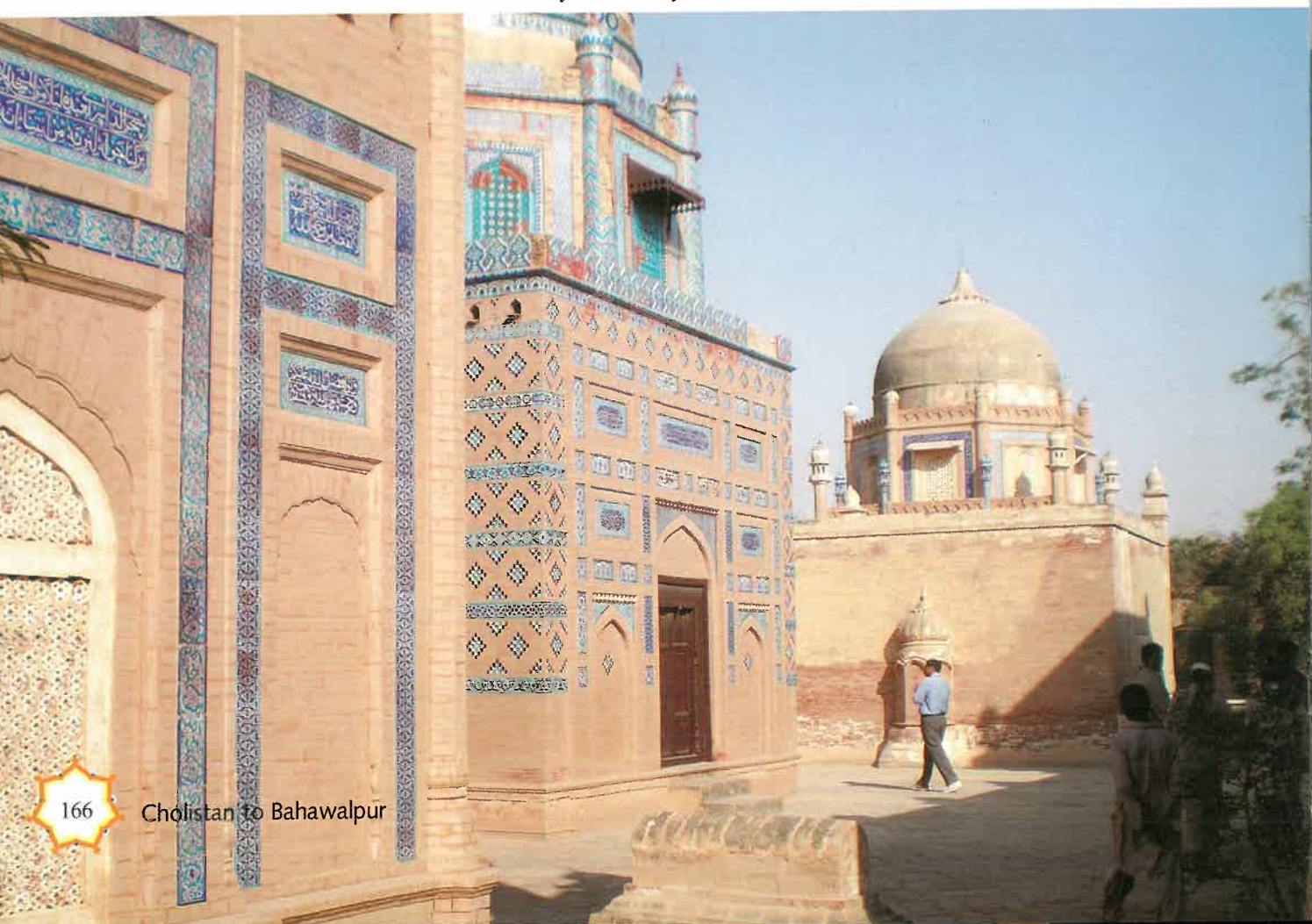
A panoramic view of Derawar Fort & Mosque







Mausoleums in Royal Graveyard, Derawar





Ceiling of the Chamber housing graves of Nawabs

Graves of the Nawabs







Tomb in Royal Graveyard, Derawar

Tomb of British wife of the last Nawab



Islamgarh Fort

The Fort, built by Rawal Bhim Singh of Bikaner as Bhinwar Fort (in Sambat 1615) was conquered and later renamed by the Nawab of Bahawalpur has all but lost its past glory and is in advanced stage of decay. It is situated in the deep desert, some 45 kilometres from the Baghla Fort within the area of the Khanpur tehsil.



Maujgarh Fort

During the reign of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi the construction of the Maujgarh Fort was started by Wadera Maruf Khan in 1743 on the ruins of a small town called Lodhra. However, the Wadera died before its completion when his son and successor, Wadera Jan Muhammad took up the project in his hands and took it to a successful end.

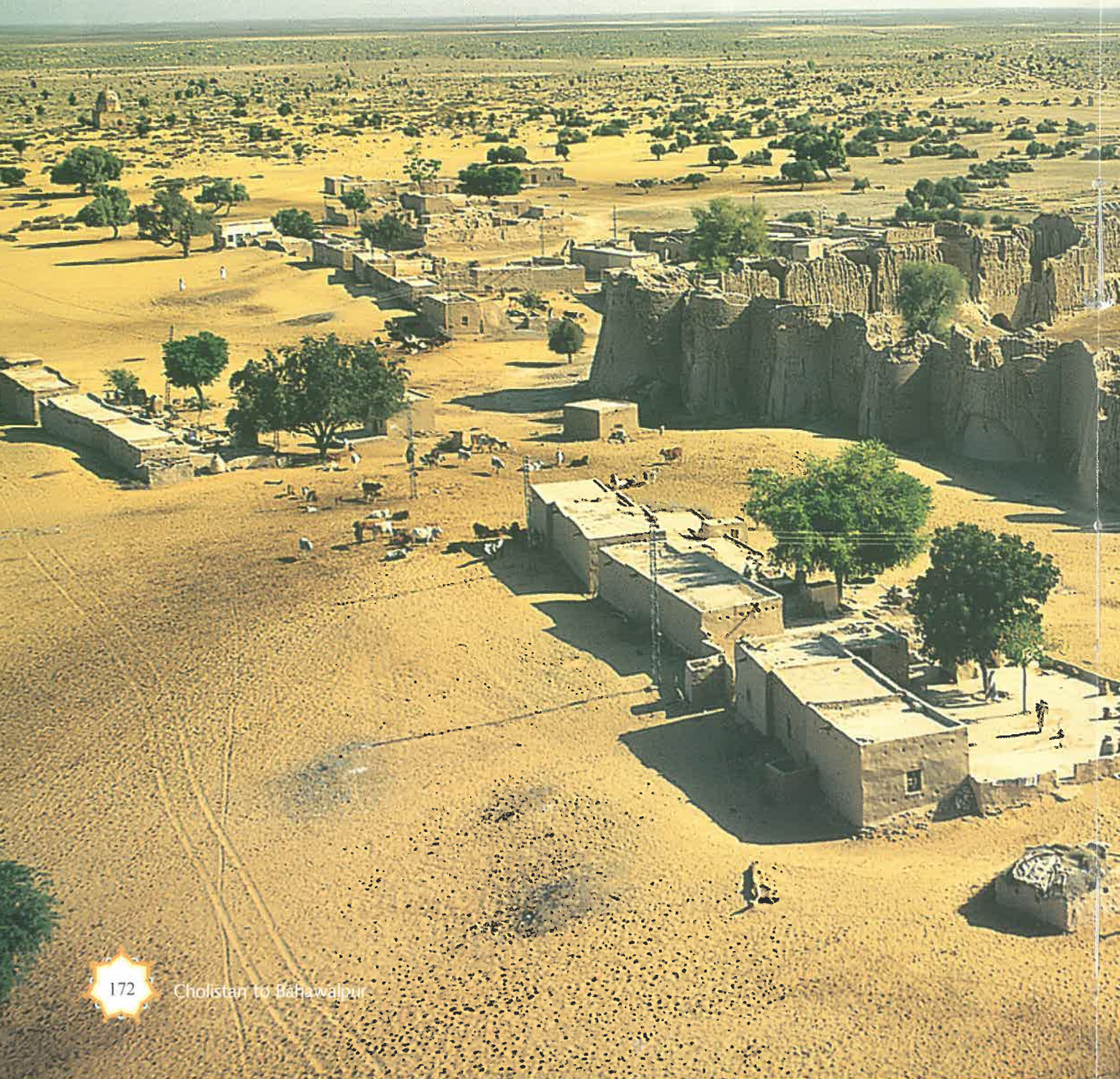
The Fort fortifications of the monument are strengthened by a series of semi-circular bastions, eight of them on the south with equal number on the north in addition to those at the corners. There are also remains of a mosque in the north-eastern part of the Fort with a toba – the great water-source – in the same direction though outside the premises of the elegant structure.

Not far from the Fort also lies the tomb of Wadera Maruf Khan, with addition to the name as ‘Abbasi Daudportra.

Toba and the Maujgarh Fort



Aerial view of Maujgarh Fort







Different views of Maujgarh Fort



Marot Fort

The word 'marot', is believed to have been derived from Sanskrit with the meaning of 'death'. However, as it is said to have been erected by Mahrut, a king of Chittor, its name could easily be the corrupt form of what it might have been Mahrot Fort. It now lies within the tehsil of Fort Abbas, on the southern bank of the now-extinct river Hakra. In its present shape it presents the katcha (sun-dried) bricks on its three sides. The eastern portion of the fortification, which is built with fired-bricks, has a couple of imposing bastions. There are also remains of a palace in its western portion, which is thought to be once belonging to Maharaja Surat Singh of Bikaner.



The Fort was invested from the Raja of Jaisalmer by Nawab Mubarak Khan I in 1740. The mosque in the Fort is said to have been built by Muhammad Tahir on the directions of Syed Nasrullah in during the period of the Mughal Emperor Akbar.

Phulra Fort

Presently situated towards the south-east of Fort Abbas town it is said to be an ancient fort on the ruins of which were repaired and rebuilt sometime after 1759 by Karam Khan Arbani. It had been used by the Nawabs of Bahawalpur while in fights against the Chief of Bikaner and Jaisalmer.

Khairgarh Fort

This fort was constructed by Haji Khan son of Ikhtiar Khan in 1775 at the located now some 20 kilometers south-east of Bhutta Sheikhan in Bahawalpur district.

Khangarh Fort

Now in complete shambles, the Khangarh Fort was built by Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan II in 1783, about 60 kilometres south-west of Derawar Fort.



Mirgarh Fort

Started in 1799 the construction of this fort took three years to complete. The fort, lying nearly 20 kilometres west of Phulra Fort, was built by Nur Muhammad son of Jam Khan. It still survives in some shape. The entrance gate to the fort is in itself a monument while passage following it is flanked by domed rooms, probably for use of the guards.



Mirgarh Fort

Bijnot Fort

Appearing prominently the Bijnot (or Winhot) Fort was constructed by Raja Winjha, or Bija, Bhatia but was razed to ground by Sultan Shahab-ud-din Ghorī in 1167.

Mau Bubarik Fort

As it reported on the authority of Tarikh-e-Murad, a fort was built by Raj Hans Karar in Mau Mubarik as a residence for his mother hence the name Mau refers to mother in local language. The fort was taken by Shah Arghun in 1525. It was one of the six fortresses of Raj Sahasi. It had 20 bastions and Towers. The ramparts were about 550 metres in circumference and the walls built very strongly and thickly. Here the shrine of a saint Sheikh Hakim is of great importance.



Mirgarh Fort

Royal Palaces

The region, Cholistan to Bahawalpur, is very famous for the palaces very tastefully built by the Nawabs of Bahawalpur. Almost all of these palaces are a harmonious blend of local, Mughal and European architectural styles.

In 1747 when foundation of the city of Bahawalpur was laid, the Nawab continued to reside at Derawar for obvious reasons. Nawab Bahawal Khan III built a large fortification about 5 kilometres from Ahmadpur East (sharqiya) on way to Derawar. He also caused to build a grand Haveli in it – now called Mahal-e-Qadeem – which was provided with gardens and other brick-built construction in its vicinity.





Noor Mahal

On shifting the capital to Bahawalpur, the Nawab built many grand buildings for officials and umra mainly to provide incentive for others to take their residence in the newly established city. With this started an era of building activity with the Nawabs constructing many lofty palaces like Noor Mahal, Daulat Khana (also known as Darbar Mahal), Gulzar Mahal and the Sadiqqarh Palace in Dera Nawab Sahib. Among other palaces are the Nishat Mahal and Farrukh Mahal, also in Dera Nawab, which are still in the use of the Nawab family.



Noor Mahal

Built in Italian Style, Noor Mahal is one of the most elegant buildings of the Era of the Nawabs. It was ordered to be built in 1872 near Basti Shah Maluk and completed in three years at a cost of rupees 1,200,000.

However, it was hardly used as residential palace. There are many and diverse stories throwing light on the cause of its limited use. According to one of these, Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV had the palace made for his Begum (wife). But just in the only night she was there, she happened to see the adjoining graveyard (Qabrastan Shah Muluk) from her balcony, and refused to spend another night there. As the story goes, it was thus abandoned and never used for the purpose it was made.

One of the most important functions that were held here was the ceremony of conferring the authority of the State on Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan V on 28th November 1879.

A mosque was later added in 1902 by Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan V about 200 metres from the main building. The mosque carried the design of that already existing in the Chiefs College, Lahore.

After the merger of the Bahawalpur State into Pakistan, the building was not used by anyone, primarily due to feud between heirs of Nawab over his legacy. However some time back Noor Mahal was acquired by Pakistan Army and converted into Army Mess. It is closed to public and can be visited only from outside though it was learnt that the authorities were contemplating on making out rules to open it to general public on payment for a ticket as an historical monument.

Noor Mahal



Daulat Khana or Darbar Mahal

This palace, which was ordered to be build by Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV in 1881, consists of several small buildings used for Nawab's household. The complex was completed at a total cost of rupees 200,000. The Nawab used to hold his darbar here hence the second name Darbar Mahal. It was also used as offices in addition to serving as the venue of holding Provincial Assembly Sessions. This Mahal and its premises are also under the control of the Pakistan Army where visitors and tourists are not permitted.





Darbar Mahal Mosque

Gulzar Mahal

Located adjacent to Daulat Khana it was built in 1904, when Nishat and Farrukh Mahal were also constructed.



Sadiqgarh Palace

Perhaps the most majestic of the Nawabs Palaces and with awe inspiring grandeur Sadiqgarh Palace is situated in Dera Nawab Sahib (Ahmedpur East), a little less than 50 kilometres from Bahawalpur city. It has also served as the headquarters of the State for quite some time.

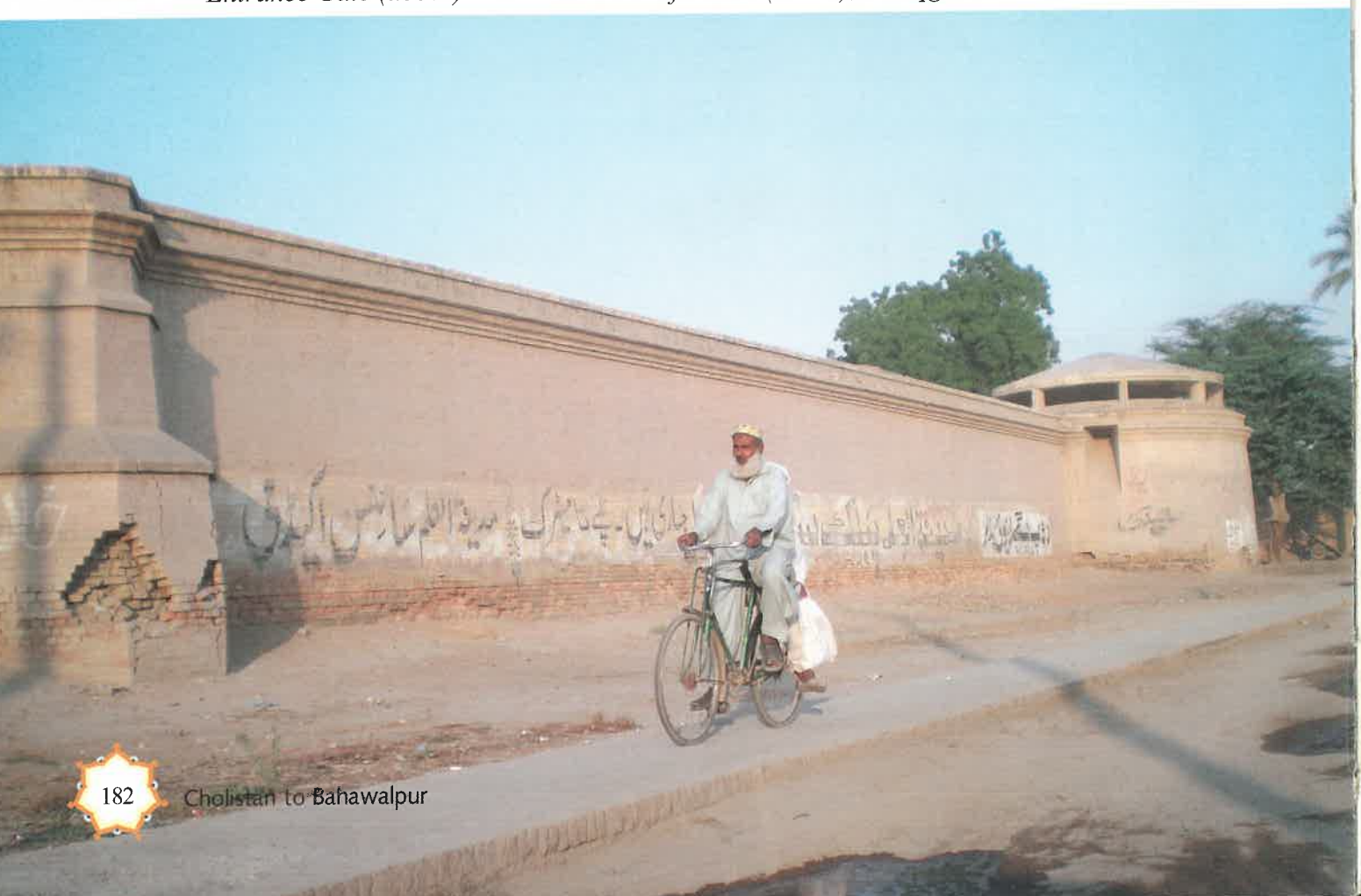
Built in 1882, at a cost of rupees 1,500,000 during the reign of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV it used to be served by more than 1,000 employees for the maintenance and beautification of the Palace and the surrounding lawns and greeneries. Nearly 100 rooms were decorated with crystal chandeliers, drapes, paintings and carpets. After Nawab's death, the Palace was sealed by the government for many decades due to a dispute among his heirs.

As a matter of rule with the Palaces of the Abbasi Daudpotras, a glittering mosque – though perhaps only a remnant of its past grandeur – is situated close-by within the compound towards its west.





Entrance Gate (above) and Eastern Fortification (below), Sadiqgarh Palace





Sadiq Garah Palace Mosque



Views of pavilion in the Garden adjacent Sadiqgarh Palace

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