

#### MERI MITTI KEY LOG

*Suhail Zaheer Lari's portfolio of photographs stands testimony to the endeavour of the people of this country to survive against many odds, managing to celebrate life despite the shadow of death which stalks those who live on the edge of a world marked and often scarred by so many conflicts. A pictorial memoir, an imagined landscape, and a visual history: all of these describe the rich collection of images which bring Pakistan into our blunted conscience. It is imperative that Lari's work be preserved, shared, and celebrated as much as he has celebrated the lives of his timeless subjects.*

**FERYAL ALI GAUHAR**

#### AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SINDH

*Suhail Zaheer Lari has done a good job by unfolding details about Sindh which were not hitherto commonly known to people. It is indeed a very profound study.*

**COL. (RETD) GHULAM SARWAR**

*But what is more remarkable is that he has brought to his narration of events a more balanced interpretive angle. This gives the story a heretical slant and makes it exciting to read. Lari has a historian's natural bent as you can see in the linear record that his brief book tries to maintain. It is his penchant for neglected facts that adds excitement to what otherwise would have declined into ideological routine.*

**KHALED AHMED**

#### NEITHER ISLAMIC NOR PERSIAN: A HISTORY OF MUSLIM PAINTING

*The questions Lari has raised ought to be discussed in art schools to educate the minds of the students rather than send them out in the world as glib technicians.*

**DR. AKBAR NAQVI**

*A systematic and very comprehensive account of Muslim art, beginning with the birth of Islam, winding down to the Timurid period, the Ottoman empire, and ending with the Mughals and Emperor Aurangzeb. Lari is extremely thorough, meticulously recording an amazing number of manuscripts and paintings, their dates, the rulers they were created under, and often why they were painted. After reading the book, it is almost guaranteed that one will drop the established western compartmentalisation and adopt Lari's view instead.*

**ZEHRHA HAMDANI**



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## MAKLI UNDER THE Sammās



SUHAIL ZAHEER LARI



**S**UHAIL ZAHEER LARI's pictorial homage to the Samma rulers and their magnificent edifices is significant for the insight it provides into the unique assemblage of sepulchers at Makli, the largest necropolis in the world, and a World Heritage Site. As the author of the most comprehensive history of Sindh, he provides the background of the monuments and relates the folklore that brings the dead monuments to life, along with images that he has taken over the last several decades.

Lari's engagement with Makli began in the mid-1980s, when he began to photograph systematically each and every tomb and tombstone. Throughout several decades his efforts have yielded a rich collection which records the state of Makli monuments from one decade to another. Where the collection helps provide a thorough grasp of the state of monuments for heritage managers taking up conservation works, it provides the lay reader with an extraordinary depth of understanding of the edifices that show a remarkable continuity over 4 centuries.

The present volume is the first in a series of publications based on the writings and photography of Suhail Zaheer Lari that will provide an in depth understanding of Makli, including the tangible heritage of Shahr-i-Khamoshan, the City of the Dead. While this volume is dedicated to the earliest local rulers of Sindh, who ruled from AH 734/1333 AD to AH 930/1524 AD, the other volumes focus on the Arghun, Tarkhan and Timurid periods, as well as the shrine culture, in an attempt to present Makli necropolis in its entirety.



MAKLI UNDER THE  
*Sammās*

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*Sammās*

SUHAIL ZAHEER LARI

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Heritage Foundation of Pakistan is a non-profit, non-government trust established to promote the conservation of cultural heritage in Pakistan. It is engaged in research and documentation of Pakistan's cultural property including historic monuments and urban historic architecture.

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Introduction



**M**akli is the largest Muslim necropolis in the world, 96 km East of Karachi. It was inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1981.

Mir Ali Sher Qani Thattavi wrote in AH 1174/ 1760 AD that Makli had so many saints' tombs that it was impossible to count them. Later, in AH 1181/1767 AD, he wrote that the local tradition stated that Makli was the burial ground of *sawa lakh* (one hundred and twenty five thousand) *aulia* (saints).

Seventy years later, RH Kennedy, a traveller from Great Britain who visited Makli in 1838, described it as a vast cemetery of six square miles containing not less than one million tombs.

However, the documentation by the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan in 2012 led them to state that Makli is spread over an area of 12 square km, and consists of 75 identified structures, over 400 platforms and innumerable single graves. Thatta used to be the port of embarkation for pilgrims going to Mecca by sea, but there were many who could not get a ship for the journey to Mecca. According to one tradition one such person dreamed that God appeared to him, saying that, "this is Mecca for you", and he woke up crying, "*Haza Makali* (This is Mecca for me)." Hence the name Makli.

Makli is considered a sacred place containing shrines, tombs and graves, mostly built of stone blocks. Therefore, despite the action of natural elements like wind and water, the stone structures at Makli have held their own. Even where they collapsed, their stone parts have been left undisturbed.

This is not the case with structures built of bricks and tiles that could easily be carted away. The problem still persists, and now with the invention of more efficient means of transportation, even the carved stone elements are not safe. Greed continues to play its part as treasure hunters continue to dig the floors of monuments in Makli, because of their belief that treasures were to be found

buried under them. Makli is being ravaged repeatedly but the stone elements of many of its tombs are still there, and if there exists both the will and the necessary resources, it can still be restored.

This neglect from official quarters has turned Makli into a large expanse of parched, barren land, strewn with decaying monuments. In the past—up to the Mughal period—it was actually a vast park comprising innumerable wells, lakes, shrubs, flowers, trees and greenery of every kind, where the people of Thatta regularly came with their families for picnics in the beautiful gardens around the water tanks and wells that surrounded the splendid monuments.





Makli During Samma Rule







**M**ir Muhammad Masum Bhakkari writes in *Tarikh-e-Masumi* in AH 1001/1592 AD that the Sammas came from Kutch and settled in Sindh (Bhakkari, 1592; 84). While Mir Ali Sher Qani Thattavi states in *Tuhfat-al-Kiram* in AH 1181/1767 AD that the Sammas were once owners of land throughout Sindh, and formed the majority of its population (Thattavi, 1767; 100). When the Soomras came to power in Sindh, they oppressed and ill-treated the Sammas, who left and took refuge in Kutch. The ruler of Kutch treated them kindly and at their request gave them land for cultivation, but the Sammas tricked their benefactors, seized their castle, and became masters of Kutch (Beg, 1902; 39). Their offspring are still settled in Kutch and Kathiawar, and are known as the *Jareja* or Twin Brothers of the Sammas. Meanwhile, the main body of the Sammas grew strong enough in Kutch to make a come-back in Sindh, and gradually extended their rule over the whole of it. They ruled in Lar (Lower Sindh) until 1524, when the last Samma king fled before the victorious army of the Arghuns. Thattavi writes in 1767 that the inhabitants of that area up to Gujarat are mostly the descendants of Sammas and that the population of Sindh generally belongs to them. According to the 1901 Census, the Sammas constituted 30% of the Muslim population of Sindh and 23% of its total population, but had less than 6% representation in the Sindh Assembly in the 1937 elections.

Many theories have been put forward regarding their origins. According to Thattavi, some genealogists consider the Sammas to be children of Sam, the son of Umar, son of Hashim, son of Abu Lahab, a paternal uncle of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Others believe that Sam was the son of Umar, son of Akrama, son of Abu Jahal, leader of Quresh. And, according to yet others, Sam was the son of Akrama, son of Asam, another son of Abu Jahal. According to Thattavi it is also possible that they derive their name from, and are offspring of, Sam (Shem), the eldest of the three surviving sons from the flood at the time of the Prophet Nuh (Noah). The famous fourteenth-century North African

traveller, Ibn Battuta, wrote that their ancestors came with the army of Muhammad bin Qasim. Due to this some people have suggested that the name 'Samma' is a corruption of the word 'Shami' (Syrian), who formed the elite corps of Ummayyad army which invaded Sindh in 711. However, in Thattavi's opinion, since as rulers they used the title of Jam, it would be more correct to say that they are the descendants of Jamshid, the legendary King Jam (the termination—shid was frequently dropped) of Persia who could see in his wine cup—the magical Jam—events happening in the remote corners of his kingdom, and is credited with the building of Persepolis—known as *Takht-i-Jamshid* or The Throne of Jamshid.

Those who search for the roots of the people of Sindh in Indian soil consider the Sammas to be Rajputs of the Yadava stock. Others consider them to be the progeny of Krishna, the Hindu God who was born in Mathura in India, and was called Shyam by his *gopis* (devotees) because of his dark complexion. Thattavi reproduces a genealogy which makes the Sammas the descendants of Hindu God Rama.

Like almost everyone else who now inhabits Sindh, the Sammas also do not claim to be its original inhabitants. According to information collected by the British in the last century, almost all the Muslims living in Sindh trace their origin to some place outside Sindh. This is possible because as we all know that there have been many mass migrations and movement of races and tribes in history, as well as mass exterminations of entire peoples, and the exodus of man from his birthplace goes on even today. Homo Sapiens (the Latin term for wise humans), the modern humans of the anthropologists and therefore our ancestors, did not begin their life in Sindh. The evidence unearthed so far suggests that Homo Sapiens as well as our more ancient ancestors, Homo Erectus



by scientists, began their life in Africa which makes us all immigrants in Sindh.

Sambus, mentioned by the historians of Alexander the Great, is believed to be a Samma. His capital Sindhimana is thought to be the present Sehwan and the Kafir Qila (Fort) there is considered a reminder of Alexander's visit to Sindh. Sambus sought the favour of Alexander the Great while he was still busy pacifying Punjab, and Alexander was pleased to confirm him in the territories he governed in Central Sindh. The great conqueror's invasion of Sindh by land and river was conducted with such speed that Musicanus, who ruled over northern Sindh, had no option but to submit to him. Sambus fled on learning that Musicanus, who was his rival, had been received well by Alexander, but Alexander was incensed by this fickle behaviour. He invaded his country, plundered and destroyed the cities, and enslaved or put the people to sword. King Sambus escaped into the desert country beyond the Indus.

The Sammas were next mentioned in *Chachnama*, which recorded the conquest of Sindh by the Muslim army led by the young Muhammad bin Qasim in AH 94/712 AD. The Sammas received the Muslim army by ringing bells, beating drums and dancing. And when Muhammad bin Qasim asked, 'What noise is this?' He was told that it was customary for them to rejoice and welcome a new king with frolic and merriment (*Chachnama*, 1216; 312). Muhammad bin Qasim ordered them to continue with their show of happiness, and Hazam ibn al-Amr, whom he had appointed governor over them, gave them twenty gold dinars (Beg, 1900; 175).

Jam Unar, the founder of the Samma dynasty in Lar (Lower Sindh), is first mentioned by Ibn Battuta, the famous traveller from North Africa. He dictated his travels in 1355 AD stating that Malik Rattan, a Hindu who excelled in math-

ematics and the art of calligraphy, gained the favour of the learned Sultan of Delhi who cherished men of accomplishment. The sultan bestowed on him the charge of Sehwan and the title of *Raja-i-Sindh*. Jam Unar and Amir Qaiser Rumi found subservience to an upstart academic irksome. The antagonism between them persists to this day. Unar plotted with Rumi to capture Sehwan from the representative of the Sultan of Delhi. They invited Rattan out of the citadel and successfully engineered an incident to kill him in the camp. They then returned to the fort, took possession of the Imperial Treasury, and declared Unar ruler with the title of Malik Firoze in AH 734/1333 AD. When the news of the rebellion reached Multan, its governor, Sartej Imad al-Mulk, collected his army and navy and advanced on Sehwan. Unar, hearing of the movement of the Imperial Army, promptly deserted Rumi and escaped to the safety of the desert country—much like his ancient predecessor Sambus sixteen centuries earlier.

Thatta, the capital of the Sammas, first figured in history when Taghi, a Turkish slave who had risen to an important position in the service of Sultan Muhammad Shah Tughlaq, rebelled against his master and took shelter at Thatta in AH 750/1350 AD. However, Thatta is much older than this and was already a well-known town in the thirteenth century when Amir Khusrau composed his now oft-quoted verse:

*A cypress like you is not in Uch nor in Thatta,  
A rose like your pretty face is certainly not existent.*

## Map of Makli with Samma Monuments

**M**akli Site Map, prepared by the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, showcases the location of the monuments that come under the World Heritage Site.

It includes 75 identified structures, over 400 platforms and innumerable single graves, belonging to the Sammas, the earliest local rulers of Sindh, along with the Arghun, Tarkhan and Timurid periods.

While this map shows Makli necropolis in its entirety, to its right is an enlarged area, marking one of the primary clusters belonging to the Samma Monuments.









## Grave of Mai Makli

According to the historians of the Tughlaq dynasty, Sultan Muhammad Shah Tughlaq, one of the greatest and the most learned kings of Delhi, invaded Thatta in AH 750/1350 AD. The learned sultan composed verses while he lay dying in his boat on the Indus at Sonda, about twenty-eight miles along the river from Thatta (Barani, 1358; 742) and twenty-two miles by road, on the 21 Muharram, AH 752/20 March, 1351 AD (Sirhindi, 1433; 203). The last couplet that he composed was:

*I commanded all the pleasures that I wished  
In the end I am bent like the new moon*  
(Farishta, 1611; 452).

He was succeeded by his cousin Feroze Shah, the pious King of Delhi, who invaded Thatta in Safar, AH 769/October, 1367 AD, but he could not make any headway as it was protected on all sides by the waters of the Indus. A contemporary poet (Mutanhar Shah Kari) has described Thatta's position in the following verse:

*Thatta is an island, country full of caves  
On its one side is a river (darya) and on the other five waters (the Indus).*

The revered saint Makhdum Jalal al-Din Jahaniyan Jahangusht of Uchch declared before the Tughlaq Imperial Army that he had been praying daily for its victory but that there was a pious woman in Thatta whose prayers had prevented its conquest. However, since she had been dead for three days, the submission of Thatta was imminent.

One of the miracles performed by this virtuous lady was that she collected milk in Thatta in the morning, sold it during the day in holy Mecca and returned home in the evening to her family in Thatta.

She is known as Mai Makli and is buried next to the west wall of the ruined Jamia Mosque on Makli Hill.









## Jamali Khanqah

The credit for establishing Makli as a holy place for worship and burial goes to Shaykh Hammad Jamali and his royal devotee, Jam Tamachi. They provided it with a spiritual and architectural magnificence not known to any other place in Sindh. Before the victory of the alliance between Shaykh Hammad Jamali, the immigrant saint, poet and scholar, and Jam Tamachi, the legendary native ruler, the people of Thatta used to bury their dead in the cemetery of Pir Patho who belonged to the Sufi *Silsila* of Pirs of Multan and Uchch, who acted as the main power brokers of the Sultans of Delhi in Sindh.

The story as it is told, is that the wicked uncle Jam Juna had secretly arranged to send Jam Tamachi as a captive to Delhi in AH 772/1372 AD. After his deportation the desperate queen mother visited the Khanqah of Shaykh Hammad Jamali every morning, and swept the floor, which forced the Shaykh to notice her. The queen mother began to cry and related the story of the captivity and exile of her son, Jam Tamachi, and grandson Jam Salah al-Din pleading with the Shaykh for their release. He was so moved by her heart rending entreaties that verses started to flow from him regarding exiles coming home in freedom and wresting their patrimony from the usurper.

That night an old man resembling the Shaykh appeared before Jam Tamachi and his son in their prison cell, hundreds of miles away in Delhi, and removed their shackles. He took them out of prison and provided them with horses as swift as angels, so that the guards could not catch them. The guards, by another miracle of the Shaykh, were made to lose their way and were forced to abandon the chase.

Meanwhile Jam Juna who had heard the verses that Shaykh Hammad Jamali



had recited in answer to the pleas of the queen mother, called on him to request him not to interfere in the affairs of state. He was displeased, and in a voice full of awesome divinity told Jam Juna that the Almighty had made him the shepherd of that land and that he would carry out the divine will.

When Jam Tamachi reached the other side of the river he sent his son to pay his respects and receive guidance from the Shaykh, who gave the prince a piece of cloth and asked him to unfurl it as his flag and march boldly forward under it. As soon as the prince did that, it is believed that an army of angels assembled under the flag. When Jam Juna heard of this miracle, he chose not to face divine wrath in battle and quietly made his exit, leaving the country and its wealth to Jam Tamachi.

The emergence of Makli as a revered place of worship and the main graveyard of Thatta, heralded a change in the power structure in Sindh. Shaykh Hammad Jamali acquired a large following in Lar (Lower Sindh). He successfully challenged the spiritual





authority of Multan and Uchch, which was in any case in decline without the powerful political and financial support of Delhi. Thatta became independent of influences from the north and was firmly established as the capital of Lar (Lower Sindh), then gradually of the whole of Sindh.

The Khanqah of Shaykh Hammad Jamali is on the west of the Jamia Mosque. It is the first stone pavilion to be built on Makli circa AH 790/AD 1388.

The Khanqah of the great Shaykh, who in his lifetime was the arbiter of the fate of kings, is now in ruins and waiting for a patron to save it from total extinction. The collapsed material which has luckily not been removed or stolen, may yet be sufficient to reconstruct the Khanqah of the great Shaykh Hammad Jamali which was at one time the centre of power in Lar (Lower Sindh).



The Khanqah was built entirely of stone, the walls being of plain, smooth, dressed rectangular stone blocks except for the screens at each corner of the room for light and air. It was square in plan with a plinth area of approximately 25' by 25', and twelve stone pillars, one in each of the corners and two on each side. The columns are also of plain, smooth, dressed stone on the outside but are carved in relief on the inside. The lintels are also plain from the outside and carved on the inside. Only the entrance columns are carved on the outside with the symbolic *mihrab* (prayer niche) and calligraphy.



The left entrance column of the Khanqah of Shaykh Hammad Jamali contains the inscription:

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*  
 1. *Proclaim! He is God, the One and Unique!*  
 2. *The Eternal and Absolute.*  
 3. *He begets none, nor was He begotten;*  
 4. *And there is no one comparable to Him!*  
 (Surah Al-Ikhlās 112.1-4 Pure).

The right entrance columns is inscribed with:

*Allah is the best guardian and He is the most merciful of those who show mercy*  
 (Surah Yusuf 12.64 Joseph).







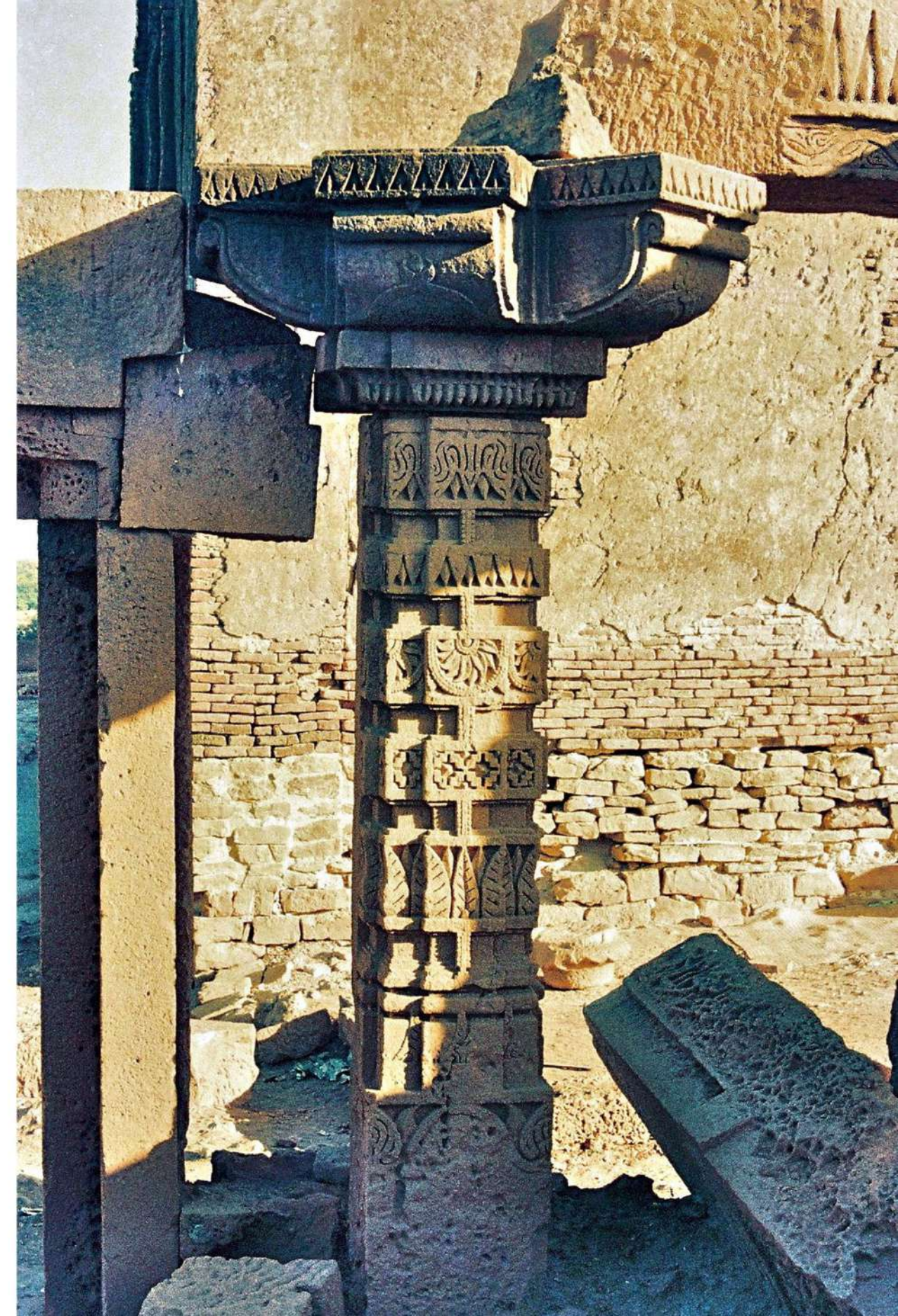
The lintels inside contain the following inscriptions:

1. *Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth, declares the glory of Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Mighty, the Wise.*
  2. *He it is Who raised up among the unlettered an apostle, one of themselves, to recite to them His signs, and purify them, and to teach them the scripture and the law, for formerly they have been in error.*
  3. *And others of them, who have not yet joined them - He is the Mighty, the Wise.*
  4. *This is the bounty of Allah; He gives it to whomsoever he pleases. Allah is master of great bounty.*
  5. *Those who were charged with (the law of) the Torah which they did not observe, may be compared to a donkey who carries a load of books ignorant of what they contain). How wretched is the semblance of the people who deny words of Allah! Allah will not guide an unjust people.*
  6. *Say: "O you Jews, if you claim that you are favourites of Allah to the exclusion of other men, then wish for death if you speak the truth.*
  7. *But they will never wish for death because of what they have done in the past. Allah knows the sinners well.*
  8. *Tell them: "The death from which you run, will surely come to you.*
- (Surah Al-Jumuah 62.1-8 Assembly)

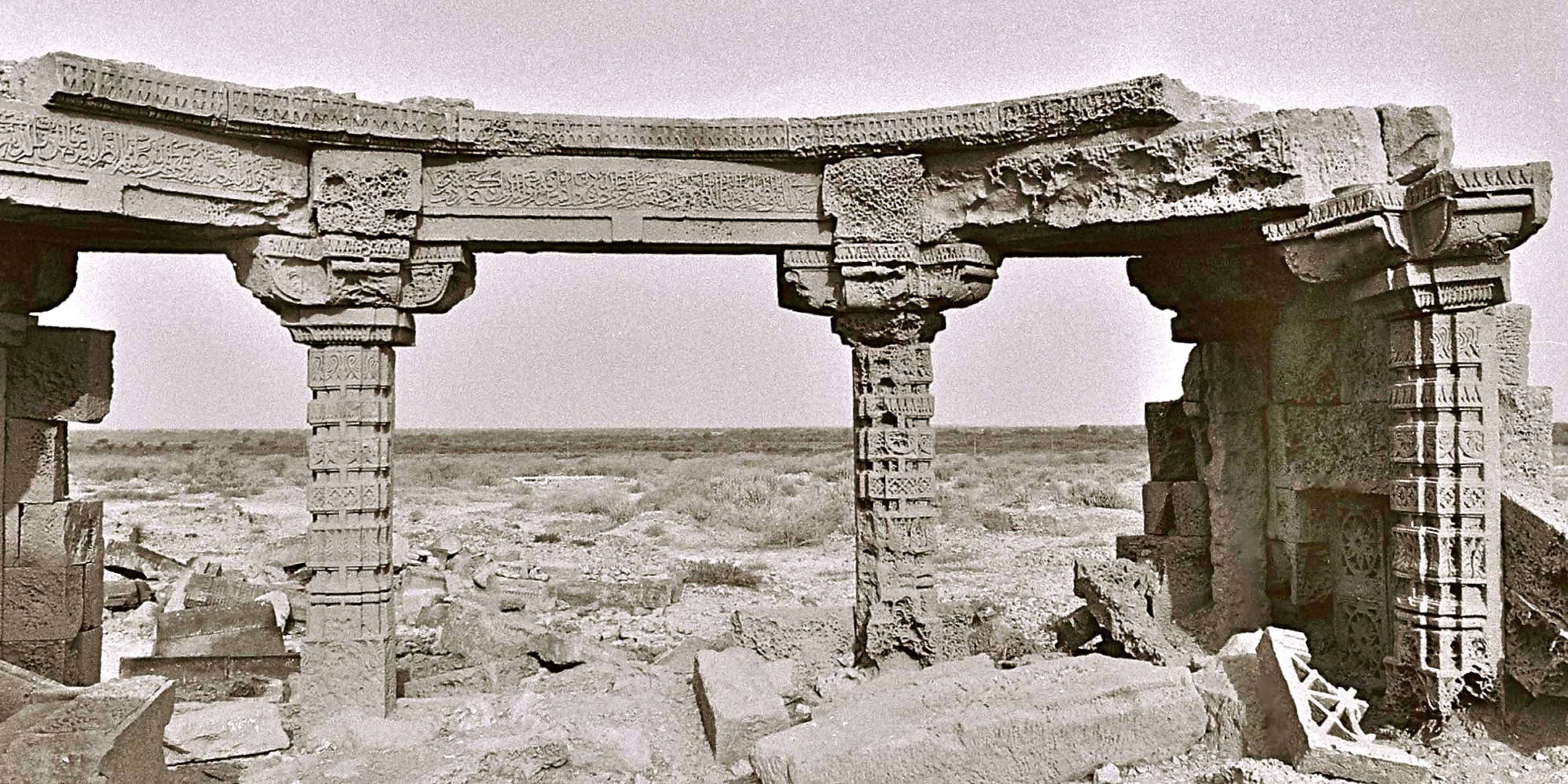
It is the earliest building in Sindh to have such a high quality of carvings and calligraphic inscriptions, which confirms that it was executed under royal patronage, and is clearly a precursor of the rich stone carving and ornamentation that we later on see on the tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din II.













## Tomb of Shaykh Hammad Jamali

The ruined tomb of Shaykh Hammad Jamali is to the east of the Jamia Mosque in its courtyard. It has been thoroughly despoiled, perhaps because it was richly decorated with glazed coloured tiles.

Although a powerful religious and political figure of his time, Shaykh Hammad Jamali led a life of poverty that found expression in these Persian verses by him:

*Two loaves, a mat, a piece of coarse cloth  
And a heart filled with love  
Are sufficient for Jamali,  
Lover and carefree libertine that he is.*









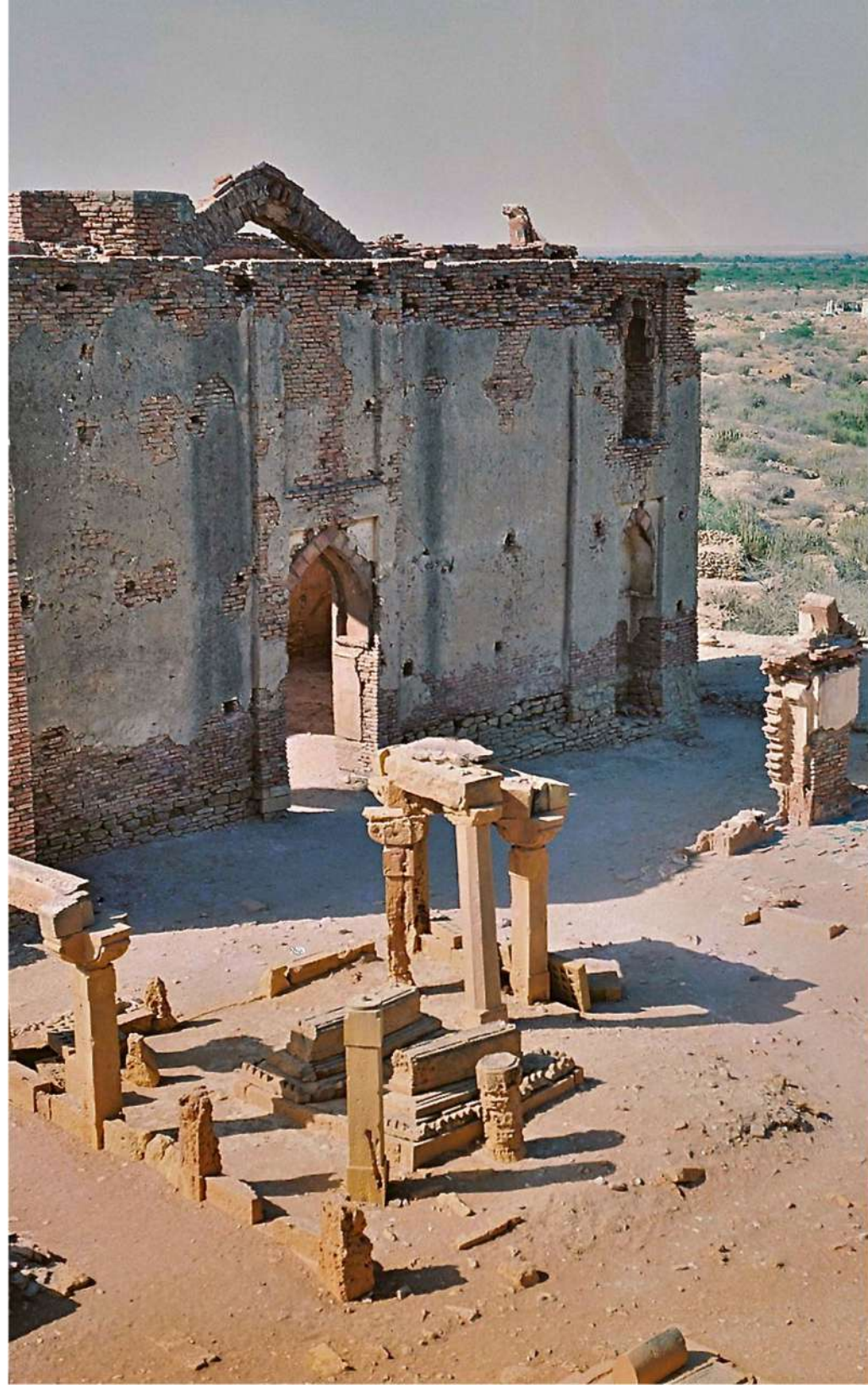
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## Tomb of the Disciples

There are graves of disciples of Shaykh Hammad Jamali under a ruined stone tomb pavilion next to his grave, to the south-east of Jamia Mosque.









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## Jamia Mosque

To show his gratitude to Shaykh Hammad Jamali for restoring him to the throne of Thatta, Jam Tamachi presented a large purse to him. But the Shaykh spurned the money, asking Jam Tamachi instead to build a mosque on Makli Hill. This large brick mosque, with soaring brick lancet arches and massive walls built circa AH 791/1389 AD, still exists in a ruined state, propped up by RSJ girders.

It is the earliest extant mosque and was probably the first Jamia mosque to be built on Makli Hill, being the largest in Thatta till the building of the Shah Jahan Mosque. It is a rectangular brick structure approximately 63' by 29', with arched openings on the north, east and south and arched recess for *mihrab* on the west. The roof has entirely collapsed. There are squinches on all four corners of the bays in preparation for carrying domes, and it appears that at some stage wooden beams were also placed so as to hold the walls together and provide stability to the dome.

Another interesting feature, or rather lack of it, is that as with the first mosques of the Arabs including the Arab mosque excavated at Banbhore, it had no minaret. Instead it has stairs on the south-east corner leading to the roof for the call to prayer (*azan*).



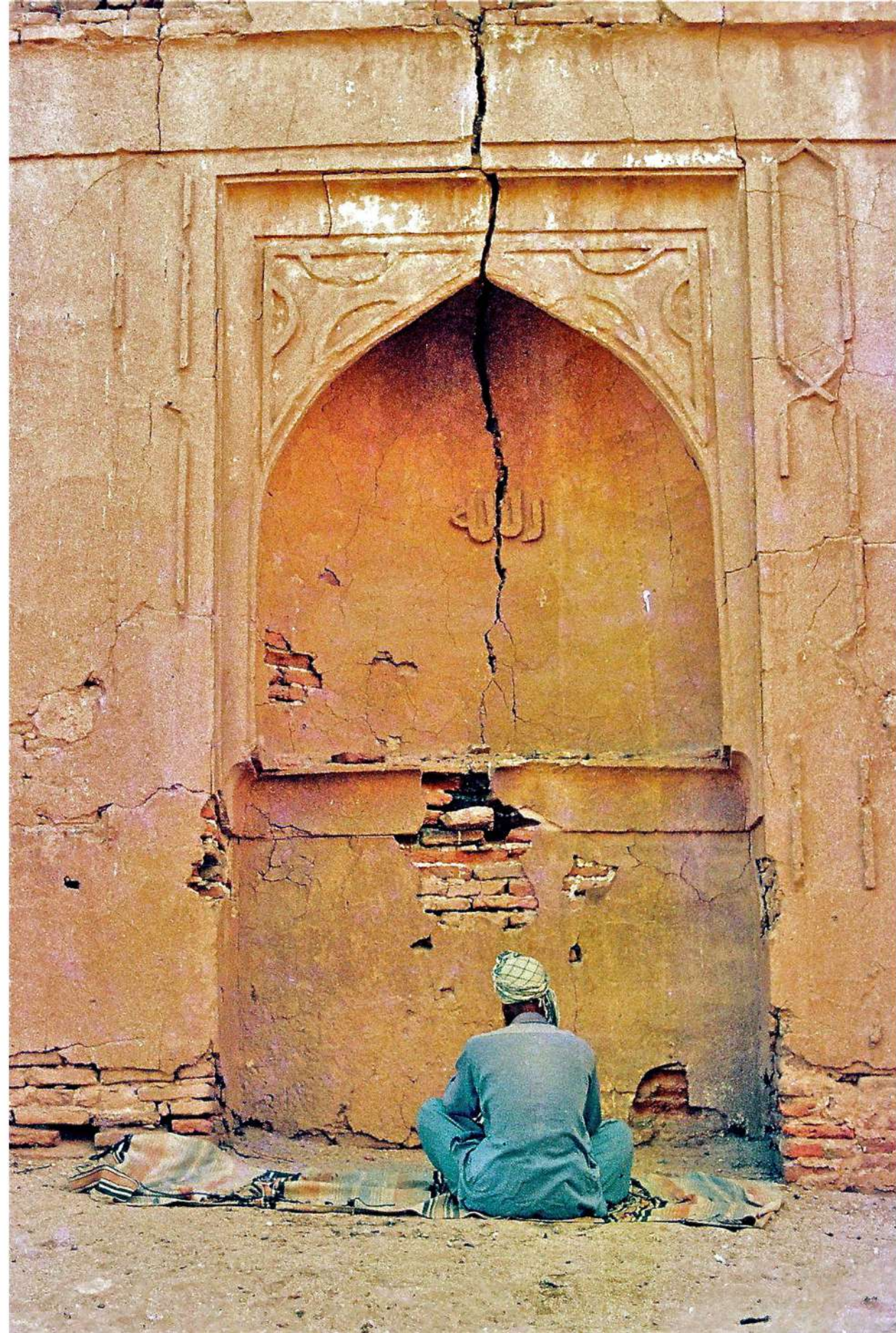


















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## Tomb of Jam Tamachi

Jam Tamachi ruled Thatta from AH 769/1368 AD to AH 772/1370 AD, when he accompanied Makhdum Jahaniyan to exile in Delhi. He took over the government at Thatta for the second time, and reigned from AH 791/1389 AD to AH 795/1392 AD. Jam Tamachi is a romantic figure in the history and literature of Sindh. He is a folk hero whose exploits are sung by village bards. The great poet-saint of Sindh, Shah Abdul Latif, has rendered the story of Tamachi's love for a simple fisher-woman of Keenjhar Lake named *Gandri* (of the dirt), whom he made his queen and named *Nuri* (light), in a long poem in *Sur Kamod*, translated by Elsa Kazi:

*You noble are, I humble am  
the seat of demerits am I –  
Seeing your queens, O king, your eye  
Turn not away from fisher-folk.*

*You noble are, I humble am  
Scores of defects abide with me –  
When heaps of smelling fish you see,  
Turn not away from fisher-folk.*

*You are king, master of the land  
And I sell fish, poor fisher-maid,  
Do not forsake me, for 't is said  
That I, oh king, belong to thee.*

*Those who do feed on smelling fish,  
And fish is all their property –  
The king, the noble king, O see!*





with them relationship has made –  
 The basket full of smelling fish,  
 And all the loaded herring-trays –  
 Fishers, whose touch avoided is  
 and such unpleasantness conveys  
 The king stands in their thatch always  
 and gently holds converse with them!

Now she no longer catches fish,  
 nor cuts, cooks, cures as formerly;  
 She neither holds the scales and weight,  
 not fish-net in her hands we see –  
 Now to the court-modes cleaveth she,  
 such as befits a kingly house!

Her hands and feet, her face and form  
 no more of fisher-maid remind –  
 As their's a chief-string in the lute  
 she's queen of all the queens combined;  
 From the beginning all her ways  
 were queenly, noble and refined,  
 The king perceived it and did bind  
 the regal bracelet on her wrist!

Fie upon maids of princely caste  
 who walk stiff-necked, so haughtily –  
 Praise to the daughter of the lake,  
 her true love to the king gave she..  
 Out of royal ladies, he,  
 the pearl bestowed on fisher-maid.

Court-ladies now adorn themselves,



to win king back with beauty  
 spells –  
 But king midst fisher people  
 dwells,  
 Within his hand the fishing-  
 net!

The fishing-net in hands of  
 king,  
 and fisher-maid did rudder  
 sway!  
 Upon the lake all yesterday  
 fish-hunting gay was going  
 on! –

"On deep, clear waters of the  
 lake,  
 with my beloved now I sail,  
 Of my desires none did fail,  
 all are fulfilled, none went  
 astray."

Upon the waters transparent,  
 along the banks float lotus-  
 flowers,  
 And all the lake rich fragrance  
 showers  
 as sweet as musk when  
 spring-winds blow.

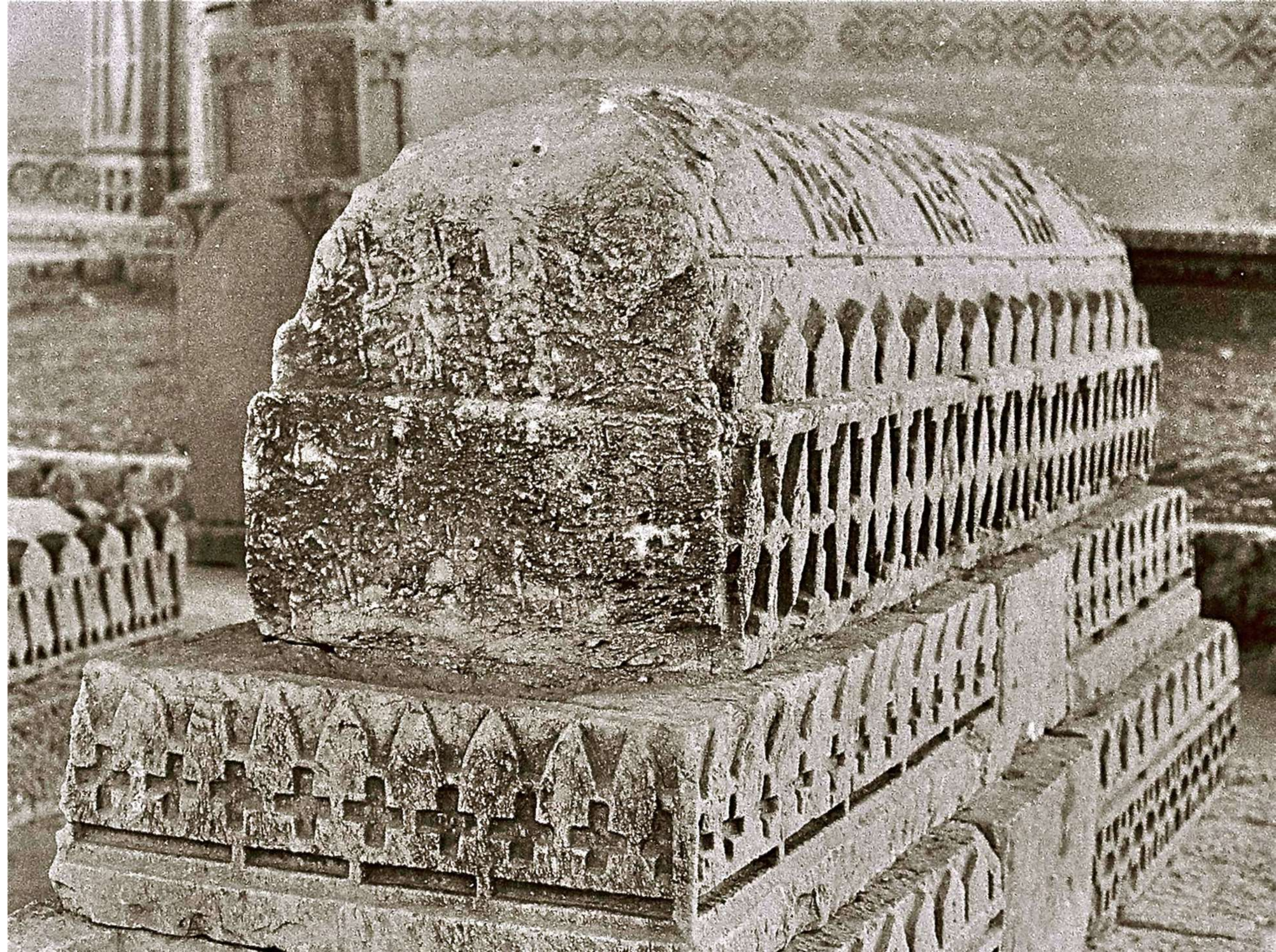
Credit of raising fisher-maid  
 Belongs to Tamachi,



*He took her in his carriage, and  
a human-being he  
Made out of her, . . . in Kienjhur, see!  
All say this is the truth.  
Of those before the 'Jam' was born  
the fish-maid nothing knows,  
They don't attend ceremonies,  
go not to weddings, nor to shows,  
What hath lake-life to do with those?  
they only know the head, the king.*

*. . None gave king birth, to no one birth  
gave He – He's generous, . . . alone –  
The fisher women old and young,  
as His relations He doth own;  
He is not born, "He gives no birth" –  
balance unique, to change unknown  
Tamachi's high eternal throne,  
so great and oh, so glorious is!*

One reason for the immense popularity of the saint-poet is his use of the folk tales and folk music for his poetry—the foundations of which had been laid down during the Arghun and Tarkhan periods. He went round from place to place collecting them and wrote in a language that was a mixture of Punjabi, Balochi, Saraiki, Kutchi, Lari, Tharaili, Brahui, Rajasthani and Hindavi, which befits a Sufi poet belonging to an immigrant family. There are seven popular folk romances from Balochistan, Gujarat, Punjab and Sindh in the *Risalo of Shah*, namely Momal Rano (Sindh), Umar Marui (Sindh), Sohni Mahiwal (Punjab), Sassi Punhun (Sindh & Balochistan), Lilan Chanesar (Sindh), Nuri Jam Tamachi (Sindh), and Sorath Rai Diyach (Gujarat).





Shah Abdul Latif immortalized Nuri as the model of *nafs mutma'inna*, the soul at peace, in Sufi parlance, who won the heart of God by perfect obedience:

*The fisher-maid had in her nei-  
ther conceit nor ego  
With downcast eyes she en-  
trapped the king  
This was all her art.*



The eight-pillared *chatri* (pavilion) on the graves of Jam Tamachi, his queen and a child, is south-east of the courtyard of the Jamia Mosque, and north of the tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din II (Qani, 1767; 163). The tomb is in a perilous condition and its *chatri* close to collapse and may hurtle down into the deep dry river bed, which lies 35 feet below the ridge on which his tomb was built. It consists of highly ornate columns, topped by cross brackets, *chajjas* (eaves), parapets, battlements and rain water spouts. The corbelled dome with the traditional stupa and *kalsa* (finial) is still intact. The graves are simply decorated and are probably the only decorated graves of such an early period in existence in Makli. It is interesting that the circular floral decoration and the symbolic lotus of the Hindu tradition, which are common features in the decoration of later graves are missing here. However the popular belief is that the grave of Nuri is at Keenjhar, and is maintained by the Irrigation Department in the middle of Keenjhar Lake, but appears to belong to a later period.





