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# Glorious tombs of Balochistan

by Zulfiqar Ali Kalhoro — April 27, 2018

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Canopy of Jam Ghulam Shah's tomb

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Much like other districts of Balochistan, the landscapes of Jhal Magsi and Lasbela districts are dotted with historic tombs. Historically, Jhal Magsi was under the dominion of the Kalhoras of Sindh. It remained part of the Kalhora kingdom from 1700 to 1739 when it was given to the Khan of Kalat by Nader Shah of Iran. There are many historical tombs dating back to the Kalhora period and that of the Magsi tribe – who later on ruled the region and Jhal Magsi became their state. The Kalhora period tombs are located at Khanpur, Fatehpur and Gandava. These monuments lie in a crumbling condition.

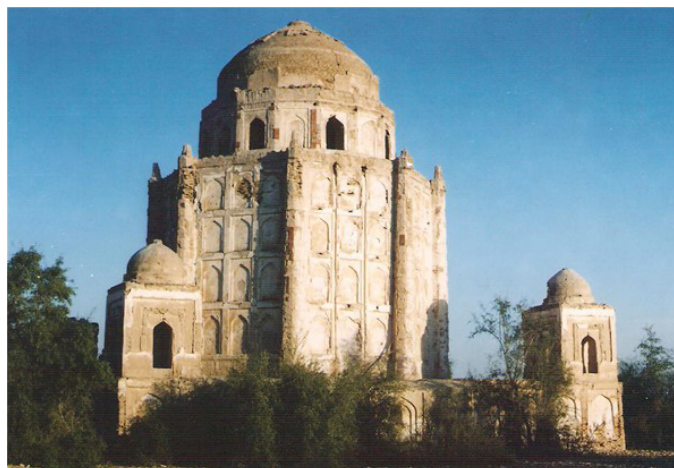
suffered heavy losses. In order to commemorate them, tombs were erected over their graves which lie near Khanpur. The other Kalhora tombs were located in Gandava and belonged to Shah Bohar and Murad Kaleri who was nazim of Sibi and Gandava during the reign of Mian Noor Muhammad Kalhoro. These tombs were later razed to the ground on the orders of the Khan of Kalat when Sibi and Dhaddar, of which Jhal Magsi was part, were given to the Khan of Kalat by Nader Shah.



Chaukhandi tombs at Bara Bagh, Bela Town

Apart from Kalhora tombs, there are some tombs which belong to the Magsi tribe. These are located at Jhal Magsi town, in the graveyard of Moti-Gohram and the cemetery of Ahmed Khan Boro (the Obstinate). Of all these, the most impressive is the tomb of Moti-Gohram. It is an octagonal tomb with tapering towers. Architecturally speaking, this tomb has no parallel in the whole of Balochistan. Even the tombs of the Raisanis at Mithri, Sibi, from where the influence has come, do not match with this imposing tomb of the Magsis. The Nausherwani tombs in the district Kharan also pale in comparison to the tomb of Moti-Gohram.

Besides the tombs of Kalhora soldiers, some tombs of Syeds at Fatehpur and of Magsis and several monuments from the Khanate of Kalat also exist in Gandava. The three domed mosque and tomb of Abdul Qadir Junejo (a soldier of Mir Nasir Khan Noori (1749-1817), Khan of Kalat, are located in Gandava town. The octagonal tomb of Muhammad Shah Alatzai located near the Mula river is a magnificent one – erected probably much before the era of the Kalhoras and the Khan of Kalat. The tombs of Moti-Gohram and Muhammad Shah Alatzai are veritable jewels of Jhal Magsi.



Tomb of Moti Gohram in Jhal Magsi district

such tombs on Pakistani soil is located in Bela town and belongs to Muhammad bin Harun, who was the Arab governor of Makran. Bela is also host to the tombs of the the Koreja Jams who were the former rulers of Lasbela. The cemetery of the Jams is located 8 km away from Bela at Barabagh. There are several Chaukhandi tombs – taking the form of a beautiful stone canopy and the domed structure in this graveyard. The stone carved graves of the Jams of Lasbela are ornately carved and belong to Jam Ghulam Shah Jamote and his two wives; Jam Aali the founder of Jam dynasty of Lasbela; Jam Dagar; Jam Dina or Dinar; and Jam Jangi. The tomb of the legendry Jam Bijar Jokhio, who was chief of the Jokhia tribe of Karachi and Thatta during the reign of Ghulam ShahKalhoro (1757-1772), is also located in this graveyard.

Apart from Bela, there are several other towns and villages where one finds the Chaukundi tombs. Most of these belong to the various sub-castes of the Samma of Sindh who ruled over Lasbela. The tombs of the Jakharas and Jokhias are mainly found in the Hab and Dureji regions of Lasbela. The largest cemetery containing the Chaukhandi tombs is located at Hindan, lying 115 km northwest of Karachi. There are 71 tombstones in the graveyard, which belong to the Jakharas – who are also a sub-caste of the Sammas. According to Vogel's report of 1902-3, all the tombs belong to the Jakhara tribe. This was also confirmed by local people during my frequent visits to the Hindan graveyard of the Jakharas. Some of the graveyards are also associated with the Kalmati tribe which is mostly found at the Bala and Bhavani graveyards near Winder and Hab towns respectively.



Inscription on the grave of Jam Ghulam Shah Jamote, son of Jam Aali

Three ancient pilgrimage centers or *tirthas* – Hinglaj, Lahaut La Makan and Shah Nurani (the patron saint of the Jokhias) – have always attracted pilgrims from many regions of Pakistan and India. This pilgrimage/religious economy played a dominant role in the tribal culture of Balochistan and Sindh. This was one of the reasons that many tribes from Sindh controlled the routes of caravans to get taxes in return for safe passage or security provided to the pilgrims to these *tirthas*. Over a period of time these tribes became so powerful that they began to rule the Lasbela region, leaving behind vast treasures in the form of the Chaukhandi tombs and fortresses which can be found in almost every valley of the district of Lasbela.

Unfortunately though, the majority of these tombs of Sindhi and Baloch tribes have fallen victim to neglect. They are crumbling slab by slab.



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