

or other evidences that the mounds were built up gradually by people who lived upon them year after year and century after century. The main mass of the mounds consists of mud, which, toward the edges, seems always to have been made into sun-dried bricks which were laid in courses. Here and there these somewhat unstable bricks are strengthened by a layer, or a little group, of burnt bricks, or even by a few large pieces of heavy red pottery. Toward the center of the mounds, and to a less extent in other places, the regularly laid bricks give place to more carelessly laid crude clay, mixed more or less with smaller potsherds. Apparently the idea was that the outer walls and any other portions that required extra strength should be built of sun-dried bricks, strengthened with burnt bricks and large potsherds, while the interior, wherever strength was not required, was filled with looser mud until a smooth-topped platform was obtained. Possibly the mounds were built partially and then inhabited for a time before they were built to their full height. No single mound has been so completely examined that we can say with certainty just how it was built, but the piecing together of the fragmentary evidence from many mounds makes it probable that the above conclusion is correct. Moreover, this seems to be the way in which the mounds and platforms of the citadel at Ghiaur Kala were constructed, and there is good reason for thinking that the builders of that city were the same people as the builders of the kurgans. Whether this style of architecture was indigenous we do not yet know. It is closely similar to that of many of the ancient mounds of Babylonia on the one hand, and to that of the old Buddhist "stupas" and lama-series of Chinese Turkestan, on the other.

PURPOSES OF THE KURGANS.

At first sight the thought presents itself that these platforms were erected for purposes of defense, and probably such was in part the case. The strong outer walls surrounding Guibekli, Ersar, and Kuzi Tepe could hardly be for any other purpose. The absence of massive walls in the majority of cases, however, makes it probable that defense can not have been the chief or only purpose. Gechekran Tepe, better than any other, shows the normal condition of one of the recent kurgans. Although erosion has not yet proceeded far, all trace of houses has been removed. The surface of the top is almost smooth, except that from every side there is a gentle slope inward to a slight depression, where water stands during rain. If a flat-topped kurgan were capped with ordinary mud-walled houses, standing around the edges of the top and facing toward an inner inclosed courtyard, the weathering action of rain and wind would, in course of time, wear away the walls and partly fill the courtyard, producing a surface like that of Gechekran Tepe.

It seems probable that the kurgans were, in the main, erected as sites for the dwellings of princes and their retinues. Such a course would have eminent advantages; it would render the occupants relatively free from hostile attack, and would isolate them from the common crowd of laboring humanity; and it would provide the coolest possible summer dwelling-place. During the rainless period