

Of particular interest is the decoration in 91, where a kind of 'fringed fan' is introduced in a way very common in the funerary ware of Khurāb and Dāmīn,⁷ and also found in chalcolithic pottery from Dārāb sites in the Persis. It is significant that this motif was here also, as in the pieces just referred to, used on the inside of an open bowl.

Owing to the small size of most fragments little can be said otherwise as to the shapes of the vessels to which they belonged. But 173 evidently formed part of a thin-walled cup, bulging out towards the bottom, a shape well attested in chalcolithic ceramic ware from Balūchistān sites. The small fragment 124 (Pl. XXIV) is of interest as its outer surface, decorated with a hachured pattern, shows distinct burnishing. Of the fragments of worked alabaster it may suffice to mention that 50 formed part of a fairly large flat-bottomed cup or bowl, as did also a similar piece (69) of a dark-grey stone. Among the numerous worked flints, all small blades or borers, 4, 65, 114 (Pl. XXX); 22 (Pl. XXIV), show finger-holds at one end. It remains to be mentioned that the piece of a whetting-stone with a string hole at its end, 72, and a few small shapeless fragments of copper or bronze were also picked up on the surface.

The fact that the site is definitely proved by plentiful surface finds to have been occupied by a settlement of chalcolithic age, invests the dry river-bed passing close to it on the east with special interest. There can be no doubt on looking at the map, Sheet II, that this bed must represent either a former branch or an earlier course of the Lālehzār river, which debouches from the foot-hills at a point about 4 miles to the south-east. Judging from the width of the bed, the latter assumption seems more likely. With the exception of a couple of glazed fragments referred to above, no potsherds or other debris were to be found to the east of the bed, which suggests that already in ancient times it had marked the limits of the settlement in that direction.

It is impossible to make sure whether the abandonment of the Tal-i-Iblīs area to the desert was caused by a shift of the river course or a general diminution since prehistoric times of the amount of water available in the river for irrigation. But it deserves to be noted that a plot of ground about 300 yards in length extending to the southern edge of the debris-marked area showed signs of having been tilled at a time not very distant, though apparently not within living memory. The water for this cultivation could have been obtained only from occasional rain floods or else from the old canal which Muhammad Ayūb Khān in the course of his previous survey had observed as once carrying water from the Lālehzār river to the abandoned village of Qal'a-i-Nārp some 11 miles to the south-west of Nigār. Local tradition, as heard by the Surveyor,

⁷ See Dmn. B. 112, 121, Pl. XII; Khur. B. ii. 155, 157, Pl. XIV.