

Gābandī, I found remains of a modest settlement of medieval times, which, as fragments of Chinese porcelain showed, had its share in the maritime traffic then extending from the Persian Gulf to the Far East.

The small village of Shīū, situated at the mouth of a little valley, was reached after a long and trying march. It serves trade with the extensive valley of Gābandī, which lies behind a low sandstone range running parallel to the coast, and affords more chance for cultivation than the rest of the long maritime tract known as Shibkōh. But it is only some four miles farther up the coast that good shelter for ships can be found in a shallow bay near the fishing hamlet of Ziārat. It was near this that we found old remains such as I had been told of before. Beyond a low but conspicuous ridge at the eastern extremity of the bay and known as Qalātu there stretches, between the steep foot of the ridge and the beach, for some 300 yards a debris area marking an old village site. The fragments of glazed blue and green pottery seemed to point to occupation in early Muhammadan times. No porcelain was to be found here. It was the same also at the far more extensive site of Borogla, which stretches along both sides of a small flood-bed holding brackish water, which reaches the sea about half a mile to the west of the hamlet of Ziārat. Here foundations of walls and stone heaps marking completely decayed dwellings cover an area about 800 yards long with a width of some 250 yards. Amidst plenty of coarse red or black pottery there were numerous pieces of glazed ware, blue or dark green, all without decoration in relief or paint. I could not find a single piece of porcelain. This negative evidence seemed to point to early occupation, possibly in pre-Islamic times. But nowhere along the coast were any indications of prehistoric settlement to be traced.

Local information could tell of no old remains to be found between this and the large bay of Naiband, some 40 miles up the coast, nor of any place where fresh transport might be hoped for. This induced me to take to an as yet un-surveyed route which would bring us into the valley of Gābandī and down this less arid tract again to the sea near Naiband. The valley was reached across a low but troublesome pass (Fig. 79) approached over exceedingly broken ground. The view obtained from above of the open plain at the bottom of the valley, green with scrub and fields freshly sown since the long-delayed rain, offered a delightful contrast to the desolate barrenness of the reddish-grey shore strip.

The fairly large village of Gābandī, which was reached on January 7th, proved well supplied with such goods as tea and sugar, smuggled from across the Gulf and very welcome to our party. But in spite of the help of a local Shaikh, recently released from detention at the capital, the usual difficulties about trans-