

Following down the ravine which passes across Dōband along the caravan track from Jam, the gorge of Kunārak is entered where it cuts through the outer hill chain. There, at a distance of about half a mile above the north-western extremity of the Sīrāf site, three small rock-cut caves are to be seen on almost perpendicular cliffs to the west, at a height of about 200 feet above the bottom of the gorge. They are now inaccessible owing to a rocky ledge which seems to have run about 8–10 feet below them, having almost completely crumbled away. Their carefully cut entrances, about 3 feet wide and 4 feet high, clearly distinguish them from the grottoes seen in Shilau. The middle one has a porch retaining some white plaster on its sides; the one to the south is adjoined by a small room with a narrow window to admit light. In the third cave a raised platform could be made out along the back wall. There can be no doubt that all three caves were intended to serve as dwelling-places, perhaps for recluses. At the bottom of a rocky gully descending along the cliffs there are a large ruined cistern and a deep well still holding water.

Having now completed my account of the remains I was able to examine at Sīrāf, I may briefly describe the characteristic types represented among the fragments of decorated ceramic ware which were collected in plenty among the ruins of the site. These relics derive distinct archaeological interest from the chronological limits indicated by the fact that the records above quoted prove the once flourishing great emporium to have already entered on its period of decay by the last quarter of the tenth century, while by the beginning of the thirteenth it had become almost completely deserted. Among the glazed ware (Pl. XXVII), pieces coloured in varied shades of bluish-green are by far the most abundant. Relief decoration is particularly frequent among them. It consists mainly of flat ribbing, usually strengthened by the darker shade of the glaze lying thickly in the grooves (Tah. 87, 105, 106) and often combined with some cable ornament incised (14, 15) or raised (64, 107). Imbrication in relief occurs along with sunk geometrical patterns (112); elsewhere the latter appear alone (123, 140, 149). Among relief motifs, wave lines combined with pearl borders (65, 67, 69, 70) are special favourites. Of rosettes applied in relief 72 is a pleasing specimen. Pearls are frequent elements in decorative relief patterns too fragmentary for reconstruction. In all this glazed ware the body is a thick creamy clay, glazed both inside and outside. The same applies to the rare fragments (78, 92) with plain light blue glaze outside and slightly raised flowing design in a stronger blue inside.

Among other glazed pottery of the Sīrāf site interest may be claimed for pieces showing incised floral scrolls or other geometrical patterns under splashed or mottled browns, yellows or light greens (26, 30, 31, 37, 80–2). Their type of decoration is identical with that of the glazed ware found at the site of Gīti