

Islamic Studies

OCCASIONAL PAPERS 11

EARLY MUSLIM CITIES IN SINDH AND PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mohammad Rafique Mughal

Islamic Research Institute

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

ISLAMABAD (PAKISTAN)

1996

EARLY MUSLIM CITIES IN SINDH AND PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mohammad Rafique Mughal

Islamic Research Institute

**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
ISLAMABAD (PAKISTAN)**

1996

ISLAMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE, ISLAMABAD

Occasional Paper No. 11

© All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

DR. MUHAMMAD HAMIDULLAH LIBRARY ISLAMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Mughal, Mohammad Rafique

Early Muslim cities in Sindh and patterns of international trade.

(Occasional papers; no. 11).

Includes notes and references.

Originally published in *Islamic Studies*, 31: 3 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 267-286.

ISBN 969 - 408 - 174 - 2

1. Cities and towns, Islamic-Pakistan. 2. Cities and towns, Ruined, extinct, etc.- Pakistan. 3. International trade. I. Title II. Series: Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad. Occasional papers; no. 11.

Ist published 1966

307.7609549118 dc 20

Publisher and Printer
Islamic Research Institute, P.O. Box No. 1035,
Islamabad, Pakistan.

Among the cities and towns conquered by the Arab army under Muhammad ibn Qāsim in H 93/CE 711–12, and those founded by the Muslims in Sindh, two settlements namely, Banbhore² and Mansurah³ have been extensively excavated while a small town, Bhīro Bham, has been explored on a limited scale.⁴ The choice of Banbhore, located near the sea on the bank of the Gharo Creek, and Mansurah, in central Sindh, for investigations, was determined by their historical and cultural significance as they represented the earliest urban centres of the Arabs in Pakistan. The information on the material culture of the early Muslims so far gathered from the two major cities and one small town, together with the evidence found during field surveys in Sindh, demonstrates several characteristics which are common as well as unique to the Islamic settlements. Some of their cultural configurations as regards the settlement locations, economic and trade network, city and town planning, defence systems, internal differentiation of the habitation areas, commercial, industrial and religious components of the settlements, and above all, inter-regional and international trade patterns, clearly emerge from the study of archaeological evidence. A great deal of pertinent information has been put together in this paper to highlight some features of the Muslim cities in Sindh in the early Muslim period and their significance in the wider perspective of international trade with the contemporary cities.

BANBHORE

In the eighth century CE, Banbhore was located much closer to the sea than it is at present. The city has been identified with Daybul, the scene of the first victory of the Arabs in Sindh.⁵ The Arabs enlarged the area and founded a new city on the remains of an earlier settlement of the non-Muslims and protected it with a fortification wall which was further strengthened with some semi-circular bastions built at intervals. The sandstone used in the construction of the massive fortification and houses was available locally.

Mud bricks were extensively used to build dwelling houses and in the core of the fortifications.

The main city covered an area of 22.3 hectares (Fig. 1). The excavations have revealed a well planned residential area on the north-eastern side where the major buildings of domestic and public use were located. A Grand Mosque built of dressed stones and timber occupied almost a central place of the city where the main streets converged. Its location differed from that of a Hindu temple found near the western end of the settlement. Of the three gateways, one on the northeast was facing a lake or an inner harbour for the boats. Another gate provided access to the main street running through the houses in the east-west direction. The southern gate on the waterfront served the ships docked at the anchorage and was apparently the focus of commercial activities. Outside the northern city wall, an industrial area associated with cloth dyeing was located. An extensive Muslim graveyard of the city occupied an elevated ground on the eastern side. It seems that in its last period, only the eastern half of the city was inhabited which was also enclosed by a wall running across the settlement.

The Islamic period of Banbhore dates from the beginning of eighth century and covers the Umayyad (until CE 750) and Abbasid (until CE 892) periods. The later occupation continued until the end of the eleventh century CE. The size of the buildings of the early periods which are bracketed under the Hindu-Sassanian and Scytho-Parthian periods are not fully known because of very limited exposure at the lower levels. The exposed buildings represent the Muslim city and are conspicuously marked by the ground plan of the Grand Mosque (Fig. 2).⁶ During, at least, four centuries of its use, it was repaired thrice as is documented also by an Arabic inscription dated H 294/ CE 906 (Figs. 3 and 4). The mosque is provided with two gateways, one each on the east and north. It is built around an open courtyard, supporting a flat roof on rows of wooden columns. Like some contemporary mosques at Kufah (CE 670) and Wasit (CE 702), it has no *mihrab*.

MANSURAH

The capital city of the Muslim kingdom of Mansurah is located in the vast fertile plains of central Sindh on an old course of the Indus River. The city was founded between H 112-114/CE 730-732.⁷ It is the largest city of the early Muslim period spreading over more than 275 hectares and 6.3 kilometres in circumference (Fig. 5). The former great metropolitan centre of the Muslim culture and seat of government is now a vast heap of burnt bricks. It is guarded by a strong defence wall of burnt bricks built with mud and mud brick core. A series of semi-circular bastions were built with the fortification wall in a style reminiscent of Banbhore though the material

used was different. A gateway opened towards the river on the east while an elaborate gateway system, defended by bastions and provided with a ramp of brick-on-edges floor, was built on the western side. It was built in front of an open and unoccupied area or plaza where three wide roads met and a large public building, perhaps a covered market, was located. The commercial character of the building was indicated by the discovery of piles of shell bangles and wasters, a pot full of more than four thousand copper coins and accumulations of other materials. The south-eastern part of the settlement contained workshops or factory areas where waste materials of semi-precious stones, kilns of pottery, glass waste and terracotta coin moulds can be seen scattered on the surface even now. An advanced metallurgical industry catering to the local and foreign needs existed at Mansurah. Besides a variety of iron and bronze materials for diverse use, Dr. Mohammad Sharif discovered four large and heavy "door knockers" in his recent excavations. Their workmanship eloquently attests to the superior skills of the metallurgists of Mansurah in producing complex forms and designs of bronze. The outer circular disc of each "door knocker" is about fifty-six centimetres in diameter, and is inscribed in floriated Kufic, on which head of a grotesque demon-like figure in relief is fitted with six rivets. A six looped circular handle in solid bronze is fixed through the chin of the figure (Figs. 6 and 7).⁸ The texts of the inscriptions consist of *Bismillah*, the *Kalimah* or verses from the Holy Qur'an and/or the name of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar (Fig. 8).⁹

Even without the excavations, the city reveals its general layout marked by wide roads and streets running almost at a right angle, and a long street passing through densely occupied area on the north-western part of the city. At least one Grand Mosque, rectangular in plan and measuring 76.2 x 45.7 metres, was built almost in the middle of the eastern section facing an old channel of the river (Fig. 9). The prayer chamber on the *qiblah* or western side was originally covered with flat roof supported on wooden columns arranged in six rows.

BHIRO BHAM

Bhiro Bham differs from the other two settlements in having a small size and the absence of pre-Muslim remains underneath. It was founded by the Muslims in the eighth century CE and remained inhabited until about thirteenth century even after Mansurah and Banbhore were abandoned for different reasons. It was located on the bank of a channel of the Indus River. It was small in size, covering an area of 9.7 hectares (Fig. 10) with an additional unwallled area of four acres on its north. The settlement was protected by a burnt brick fortification wall with core of mud and mud bricks. The wall was further strengthened with semi-circular bastions built

at intervals among which the remains of twenty-four bastions still survive. The gateway on the eastern side still shows its original plan.

Inside the walled area, the buildings were densely built due to limited space which may account for expansion of settlement outside the fortified area. The layout of the settlement and street plans are not yet available in the absence of excavations. Though a small settlement, it was an important town linking the major cities of Aror or Alor to its northeast with Mansurah on its southeast.¹⁰

PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The available archaeological evidence indicates certain common patterns of the Muslim settlements. It seems that most of the early Muslim cities in Sindh were fortified, irrespective of their size, location and function. The core of the fortifications was raised with mud bricks or mud, and both the sides were lined with either stone or burnt bricks depending upon the availability of material locally. A series of semi-circular bastions were built with the fortification wall to provide additional strength to the defensive system. The gateways of the city, built on either simple or elaborate plan, were protected with flanking bastions. The port city of Banbhore in particular, had a strong revetment at the base of the fortification wall which tapered upwards more than two metres high.

The Muslim cities were planned on an elaborate scale. The size of houses and the use of expensive lime plaster indicate the social and economic stratification of the Muslim society. The central and densely inhabited parts of the cities had a large congregational mosque. An important building such as *madrasah* or *dār al-Imārah* (Government Secretariat) was built near the mosque, as it would be evident from the large multi-roomed rectangular building in front of the northern gateway of the mosque at Banbhore. An efficient drainage system was provided in the cities. Numerous soak wells have been found in the excavated remains of Banbhore and Mansurah. The drains of the mosques were lime-plastered and even covered. Wood was extensively used to support the roof of the buildings including the mosques.

The production centres and commercial areas constituted important components of the cities. In both the cities of Banbhore and Mansurah, separate areas were earmarked for the production of materials of daily use for the local and international markets. There is a clear evidence of local manufacture of ivory, pottery, beads, coins and glass wares at Mansurah and Banbhore.¹¹ Large scale industrial activities were carried out even outside the fortification wall area. For example, at Banbhore a series of rooms

and an open area contain numerous large pottery vessels used for dyeing or leather industry. The discovery of four large "door knockers" of bronze weighing between fifty and fifty-six kilogrammes with differential ratio of tin, lead and copper in the metal used in the outer inscribed ring and in the grotesque cast figures, and the quality of their workmanship attest to an advanced metallurgical technology at Mansurah during the early Muslim period.

International trade played an important role in the economic and cultural growth of the Muslim cities in Sindh until at least the twelfth century CE. This international perspective is an outstanding feature of the Muslim culture which embraced vast territories of Asia and Africa. The port city of Banbhore must have generated considerable wealth to ensure a regular supply of commodities from the hinterland commanded by Mansurah and its contemporary cities in Sindh. It appears that a regular and profitable network of international trade was maintained with the countries on the Indian Ocean, the Gulf and beyond which provided markets. Banbhore flourished as a city with surplus wealth generated by the regional and international trade. The decline of both the cities of Mansurah and Banbhore was not only due to the political upheavals but was directly related to the disruption of maritime routes through which the supply of commodities was maintained.

The eighth century saw the development of several port cities on the Gulf, the Arabian sea coast, Sea of Oman and the East African coast. The significant coastal cities were Banbhore in Pakistan, Siraf on the Iranian coast in the Gulf, Suhar in Oman, Manda in Kenya on the East African coast and Mantai on the northern coast of Sri Lanka. This maritime network extended to Southeast Asia and beyond to Japan and China on the east, and Egypt and Iraq on the west. Taking advantage of the monsoon winds blowing from northeast of the Arabian Sea, the ships could sail off from Banbhore towards Siraf, Suhar and Manda between the months of October and May. The return journey could be made with the changed direction of winds blowing from southwest during summer between June and September. The monsoon winds determined a regular pattern of voyages from and to the port city of Banbhore. Moreover, with expansion of Islam and settling in of the Muslim communities in East Africa, West and South Asia, who were linked by common religion and language, the demand for the luxury items had increased. Banbhore, Siraf and Mantai depended exclusively on trade. Banbhore for instance, imported porcelain and stone wares from China, white or tin glazed pottery from Iraq, white paste decorated wares from Syria and coarse storage jars and the alkaline glazed wares from the Gulf region. There are references to lapis lazuli, musk, indigo and other expensive items which passed through Banbhore.

Suhar on the coast of Oman has been an important sea port since the pre-Islamic times.¹² As a flourishing trade centre, the ships entering or leaving the Gulf called at that port to collect provisions and cargo. The port of Suhar was supported by rich agricultural land and more than 6000 hectares of fruit orchards located outside the city. It also had a strong industrial base and copper smelting was carried out on large scale in addition to the manufacture of glass wares and bricks. The surplus food was also exported to other regions from Suhar. This was in contrast to the economic situation of Banbhore and Siraf, where food had to be imported for the inhabitants and potable water was scarce. Banbhore was supported by a very rich agricultural hinterland of the kingdom of Mansurah just as the port city of Mantai was economically depended upon the hinterland of Anuradhapura.

Siraf, by contrast, flourished between the barren mountains and the sea in an inhospitable landscape and had severe climate and suffered from shortage of water. It had been an important port since the Sasanian times¹³ but attained an international status during the ninth century before it was destroyed by an earthquake in CE 977. However, the wealthy families continued to live there until the end of eleventh century CE.

Archaeological evidence pertaining to the inter-regional and international trade of Sindh during the early Muslim times is of varied kind. At present, only the ceramics as one category of data are chosen here to outline the intensity and wide-ranging contacts through the maritime routes although supportive documentary and material evidence is also available. Focussing on the ceramic evidence, it is pointed out that all the imported Chinese porcelain, celadon and stone wares as discovered at Banbhore and, to a lesser extent, at Mansurah, came through the sea trade. The presence of Chinese pottery of T'ang period (CE 618–906) and of a later date attest to a flourishing trade with Sindh during the ninth and tenth centuries, a time-range confirmed by the numismatic evidence found in association with the imported pottery at Banbhore. It is significant that the blue painted porcelain of the Ming dynasty is absent at Banbhore and Mansurah indicating that these cities had ceased to exist or had lost their importance after twelfth century CE. The Chinese imported pottery in Sindh consists of white porcelain, olive-green glazed stone wares that have slightly grey body, the celadon wares and painted stone wares. Similar types of Chinese pottery occur at other port cities namely, Siraf, Suhar, Mantai and Manda (Fig. 11).¹⁴ Sindh maintained extensive contacts with the countries located to its west in the Gulf region—Iran, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. The closest parallels are the presence at Banbhore and Mansurah of blue-green glazed jars with thick pale-red body and, generally, decoration in relief on the external surface. Such glazed jars were produced during an earlier period under the Sasanian rule. The tradition of making jars of that type continued during the Muslim period.

Similar pottery is widely distributed at several sites in Asia, Africa, Southeast Asia and in eastern China and Japan.

The sgraffiato pottery is found in abundance at Banbhore and, to a lesser extent, at Mansurah. It occurs at other sites belonging to the Medieval period located as far north as Tulumba near Multan, in central Punjab and Baluchistan. This pottery was originally inspired by the Chinese T'ang wares and became so popular that it was produced at a number of places in Egypt, Iraq and Iran, marked by its distinctive features associated with the production centres.¹⁵ In addition, it is reported on the southern coastal region of Iran including Siraf and Bahrain, at Suhar, Manda and Kilwa in Tanzania.

The imitation porcelain pottery, which is distinguished by its pale fabric and opaque glaze surface and is sometimes painted, was also found in Banbhore. This ceramic type was produced in the Middle East and brought to Sindh. Moreover, unglazed, white paste pottery of Syrian origin with incised, moulded, and applied decorations has been also found at Banbhore and is reported from several sites along the Iranian side of the Gulf.¹⁶ The glazed pottery with designs painted on it in gold lustre originating from Iran and Iraq was also reported from Banbhore and Mansurah which provides yet another evidence of the wide-ranging contacts of Sindh with the outside world. Some of the unglazed storage jars with pointed base and coated inside with black bituminous material for the storage of liquids that are thought to have been produced at Siraf, were also brought to Banbhore by sea.

The contacts with the port of Mantai in northern Sri Lanka were also as intense as with other ports.¹⁷ These are attested by the presence at Mantai of a variety of Chinese pottery, blue-green glazed jars, lustre glazed pottery and storage jars coated with bitumen like those found at Banbhore. It seems that the contacts of Banbhore with Sri Lanka date back to the second or first century B.C.E., because the spouted vessels of fine fabric, red burnished surface and with narrow necks, which are dated to the Mauryan period at Taxila,¹⁸ were also discovered in the pre-Islamic settlement at Banbhore¹⁹ and in Sri Lanka.

This brief review restricted to a limited category of archaeological evidence at present, is intended to point out that Sindh with its major sea port at Banbhore was an integral part of the international trade network which was intensified during the eighth to tenth centuries CE through the maritime routes. After the abandonment of Banbhore, the boats calling on the southern coast of Pakistan, as attested by the presence of Chinese blue porcelain of the Ming period, were, in fact, coming home to a familiar land to collect provisions and to exchange cargo.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This is a revised version of the paper on "Cultural Configurations of the Early Muslim Cities in Sindh" which was presented by the author to an International Seminar on "Al-Sindh: Arab Seafaring-Culture, Commerce and Urbanization", held at Karachi on 30 November, 1990.
2. F.A. Khan, *Preliminary Report on Banbhore Excavations* (Karachi: Department of Archaeology, 1960); and *Banbhore: A Preliminary Report on the Recent Excavations at Banbhore* (Karachi: Department of Archaeology and Museums, 1976). The present author was associated with the excavations at Banbhore for six field seasons during 1958-59, 1959-60, 1960-61, 1961-62, 1964, and 1965.
3. The socio-cultural and political history of Mansurah has been commendably discussed by Dr Mumtaz Hussain Pathan, *Arab Kingdom of Al-Mansurah* (Hyderabad: Institute of Sindhology, University of Sindh, 1974). The early accounts of excavations carried out at Mansurah are summarized by Henry Cousens in *The Antiquities of Sindh* (Calcutta: Government of India, 1929), pp. 48-71. The excavations at the site were resumed in 1966 by Dr F.A. Khan with which the present author was associated for three seasons. The first season's work was reported in *Pakistan Archaeology*, no. 10-22 (1986), 3-35. See also Ahmad Nabi Khan, *Al-Mansurah: A Forgotten Arab Metropolis of Pakistan* (Karachi: Department of Archaeology and Museums, 1990) for a review of the old and new information on Mansurah.
4. M. Rafique Mughal, "The Muslim Settlement of Bhiro Bham in Sindh", *Sindhological Studies*, Winter (1989), 17-32. A modified version of this paper was published in *Journal of Central Asia*, vol. XIII, no. 2 (1990), 95-112.
5. Muhammad Abdul Ghafur, "Fourteen Kufic Inscriptions of Banbhore, the Site of Daybul", *Pakistan Archaeology*, no. 3 (1966), 63-90. The photographs of inscriptions are reproduced with courtesy of the Department of Archaeology.
6. F.A. Khan, *Banbhore* (1976), pp. 24-30; and S.M. Ashfaque, "The Grand Mosque of Bhanbhore", *Pakistan Archaeology*, no. 5 (1969), 182-209.
7. Information from Dr N.B. Baloch based on a coin now in the British Museum (personal communications). The present author agrees with that date. Dr Ahmad Nabi Khan, *Al-Mansurah*, p. 1, however, gives a date between π 110 and 120/CE 728-737 of the founding of Mansurah.
8. Ahmad Nabi Khan, *Al-Mansurah*, pp. 42-55. The size and weight of each specimen would suggest that these "door knockers" were intended to be fitted on ships to ward off evil spirits during sea journey, instead of fitting on doors. The identification of the building near the mosque as *Dār al-Imārah* (secretariat or chief's palace) by A.N.Khan is itself questionable. Dr Mohammad Sharif, the Director of Excavations, reports (personal communications) that all these specimens were found stored at one place and there was no evidence of wooden doors etc nearby that spot. The author is grateful to the Department of Archaeology for providing photographs of the "door knockers".
9. The Arabic inscriptions were originally deciphered by Dr Abdullah Warriyah at the site. The texts of Kufic inscriptions on Fig. 8 are shown horizontally by the present writer along with rendering of texts in *Naskh* under each line.
There is no cross-reference of the plates to the figures in A.N. Khan, *Al-Mansurah*. Plates 77, 79, 80, and 78 respectively refer to Figures 17, 18, 19, and 20.
10. M. Rafique Mughal, "The Muslim Settlement" (1990).
11. M. Rafique Mughal "The Islamic Glass Wares from Banbhore", *Pakistan Pictorial*, vol. X, no. 3 (1986), 56-59.
12. J.C. Wilkinson, "Suhar (Sohar) in the Early Islamic Period. The Written Evidence", in M. Taddei (ed.), *South Asian Archaeology 1977* (Naples: 1979), pp. 887-907.

13. D. Whitehouse and A. Willimason, "Sasanian Maritime Trade", *Iran*, XI (1973), 29-49.
14. The occurrence of Chinese Wares at various places has been discussed by many scholars. See D. Whitehouse, "Chinese Stoneware from Siraf. The Earliest Finds", in N. Hammond (ed.), *South Asian Archaeology* (London: 1973), pp. 241-255; W. Wijayapala and M.E. Brickett, *Sri Lanka and International Trade* (Colombo: 1986); J. Carswell, "China and Islam: A Survey of the Coast of India and Ceylon", *Transactions of the Oriental Society*, no. 42 (1977-78), 25-58; and H. Chi-Mei and B. Brownson, "The Ceramics of Changsha, China: Historical and Technological Background", *Archeomaterials*, vol. 2 no. 1 (1987), 73-81. The author wishes to thank Dr John Carswell for showing the Islamic antiquities from Mantai on a short notice to the author in September 1991.
15. M. Rafique Mughal, "The Sgraffiato Pottery in the Lahore Museum", *Lahore Museum Bulletin*, vol. III, no. 1 (1990), 56.
16. Sir Aurel Stein, *Archaeological Reconnaissances in North-Western India and South Eastern Iran*, (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1937), pl. XXII.
17. J. Carswell and M. Prickett, "Mantai 1980: A Preliminary Investigation", *Ancient Ceylon*, no. 5 (1984).
18. Sir John Marshall, *Taxila*, vol. III (Cambridge: University Press, 1951), pl. 123, no. 66.
19. F.A. Khan, *Bhanbhore* (1976), p. 13.

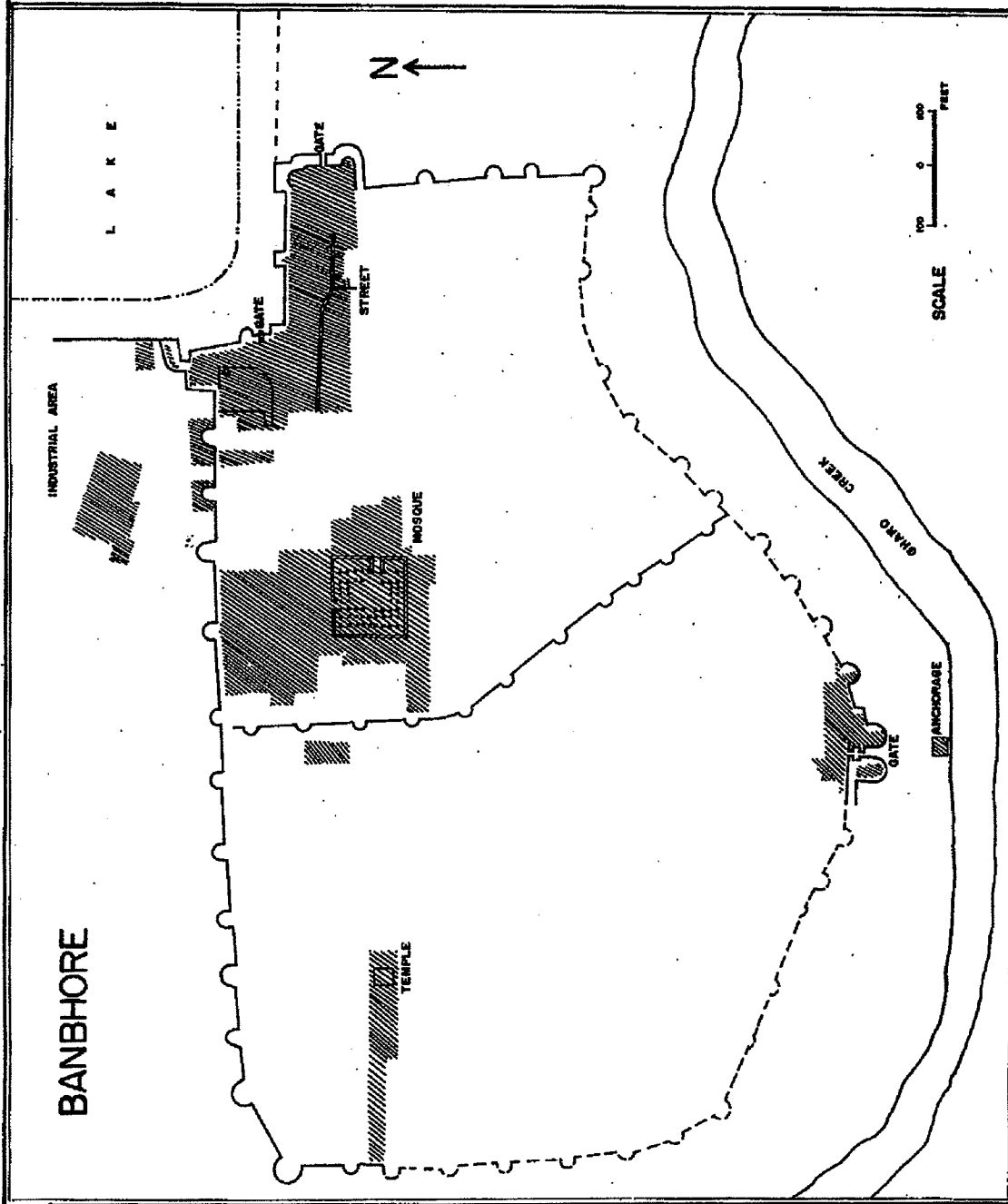


Fig. 1: The plan of Banbhore or Deybul showing the excavated areas (after F. A. Khan, *Banbhore*, 1976).

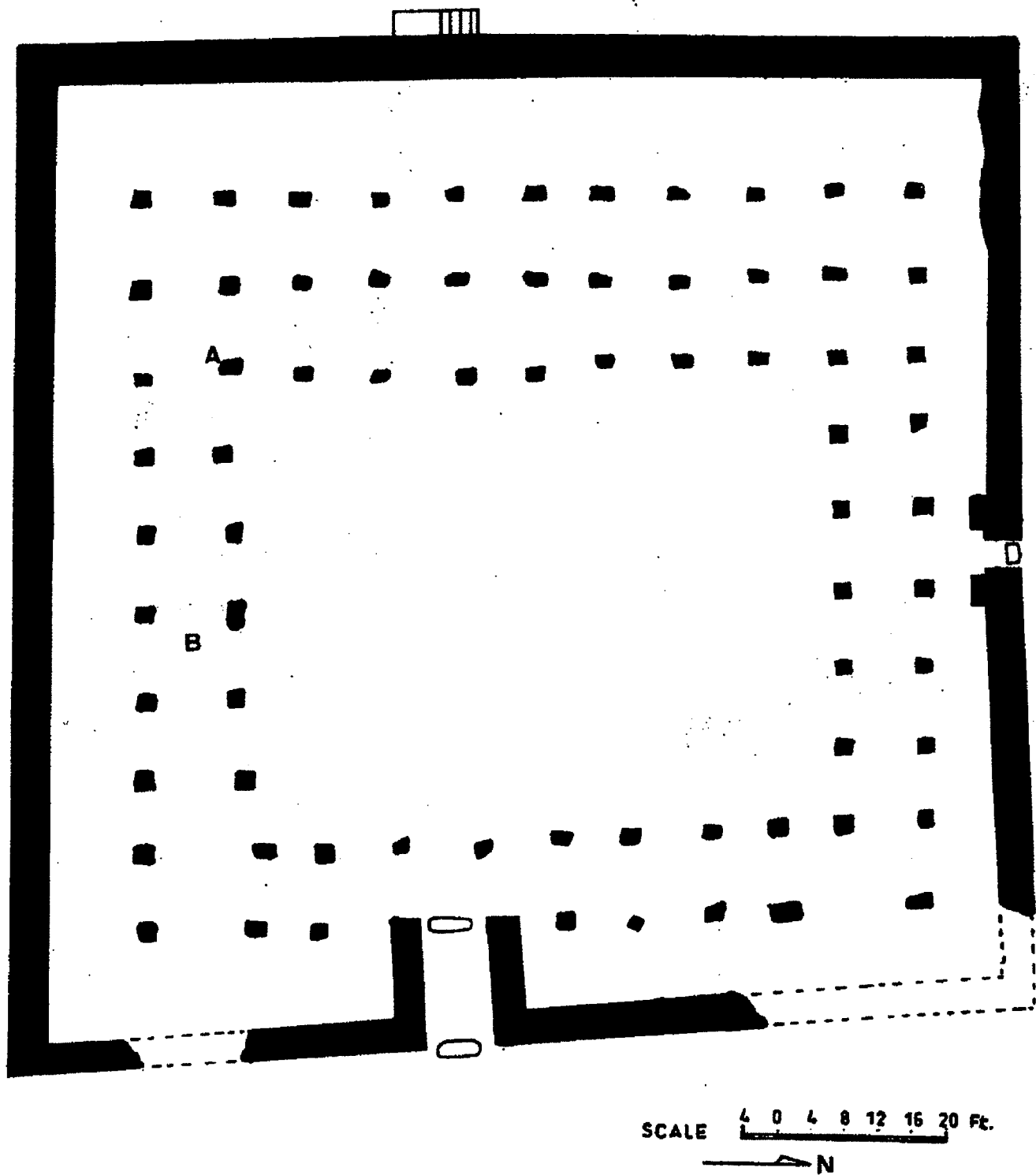
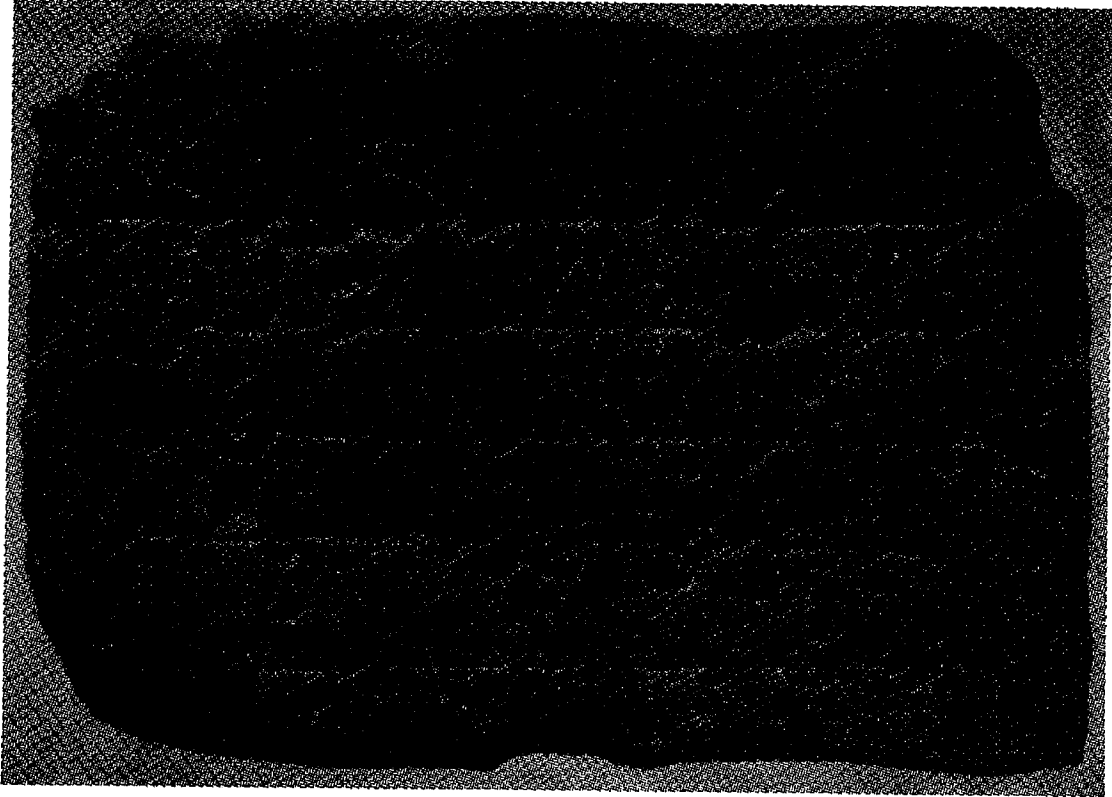


Fig. 2: Plan of the Grand Mosque at Banbhore showing two gateways but without *mihrab*. A and B respectively mark the find-spots of the first inscription dated H 109 and floriated Kufic inscription dated H 294.



- (i) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
(ii) مما امر به الا مير مروان (؟) بن
(iii) محمد مولى امير المؤمنين اعزّه
(iv) الله على يدى بن موسى (؟) مولى امير
(v) المؤمنين اكرمه الله سنته تسع و مائته (؟)

Translation

In the name of Allāh, the Benevolent, the Merciful (2) What Amīr Marwān (?) ibn Muhammad Mawlā Amīr al-Mu'minīn, may Allāh make him glorious, ordered about its (erection) through the agency of 'Alī ibn Mūsā (?) Mawlā Amīr al-Mu'minīn, may Allāh make him illustrious, in the year [H] 109 [i.e. CE 727–28 (?)].

Fig. 3: The earliest dated inscription from the Grand Mosque at Banbhore.



- (i) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لاله الاالله و حدها وان محمد رسوله و عبده
- (ii) انما يعمر مساجد الله من امن بالله و اليوم الاخر و اقام ا لصلوة و اتى الزكاة ولم يخش الاالله فعسا (ا و بتك)
- (iii) ان يكون امن المهتدين هذا ما امر بنصبها لاميير محمد بن عبد الراسفي ذي القعدة (٢) سماربع وتسعين و ما يتين

Translation

In the name of Allāh the most Gracious, the most Merciful. There is no God but Allāh alone and verily Muhammad is His messenger and Servant. He only inhabits the mosques of those who believe in Allāh, who offer prayers and pay *Zakāh* and fear none but Allāh; so it may be that they are the followers of the right path. This is what Amīr Muḥammad ibn ('Abd Allāh) has ordered about its erection in Dhū'l-Qa'dah, in the year 294 [906].

Fig. 4: The floriated Kufic inscription from the Grand Mosque at Banbhore.

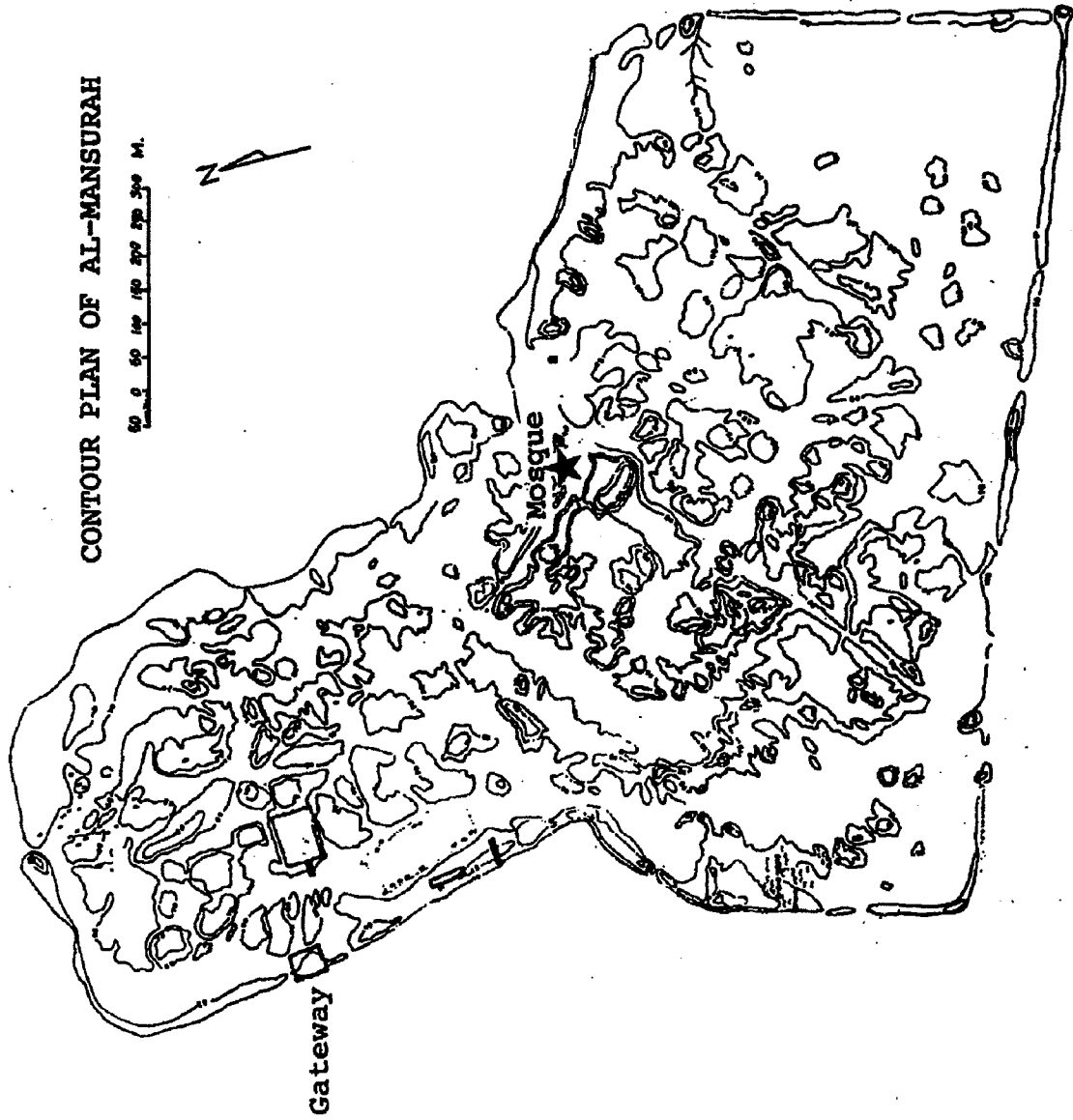


Fig. 5: Contour plan of Mansurah showing the extent of city remains and location of excavated buildings.

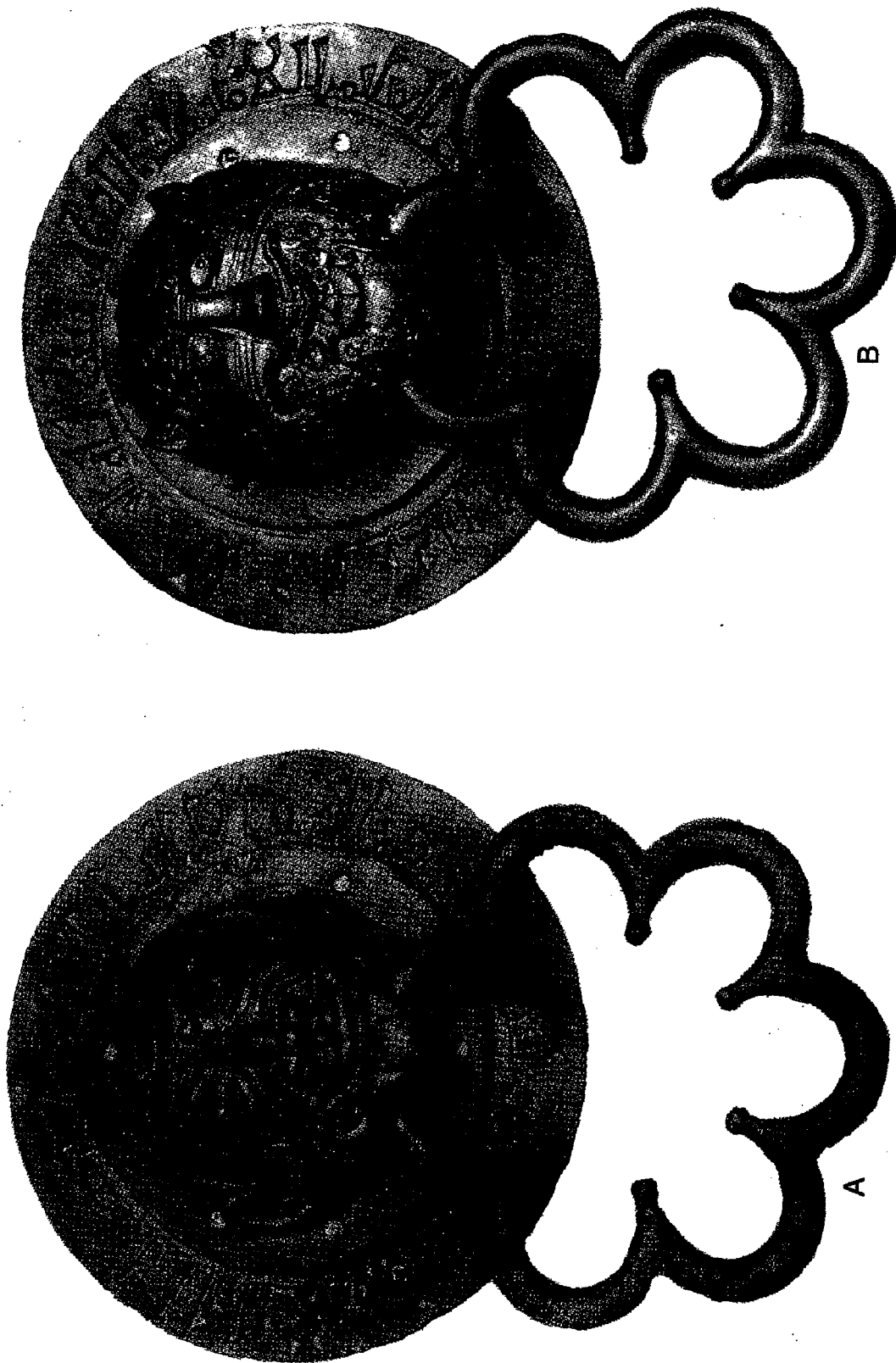


Fig. 6: The so-called bronze "door-knockers" A and B. For inscriptions, refer to Fig. 8, line 1 for A, and Fig. 8, line 2 for B.

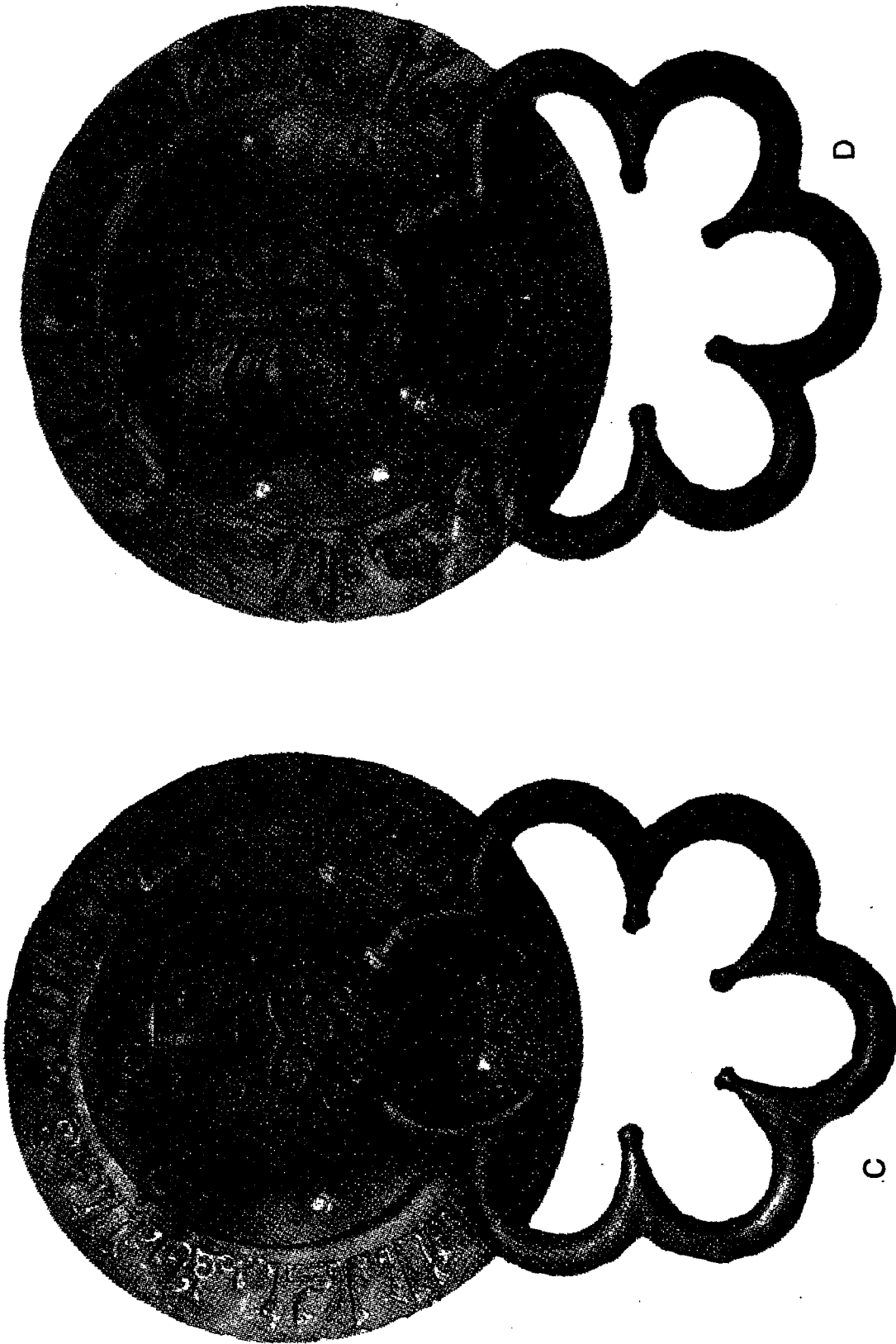


Fig. 7: The so-called "door knocker" C refers to text given on Fig. 8, line 3, and D to Fig. 8, line 4.

1
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله للامير عبد الله بن عمر

2
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - فَكَيْفِيهِمْ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ لِلامير عبد الله بن عمر

3
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - كَلِمَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِلامير عبد الله بن عمر اَطال الله في العزيمه (9)

4
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ فَكَيْفِيهِمْ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ لِلامير عبد الله

Fig. 8: Floriated Kufic inscriptions on the circular rings of so-called "door-knocker" (with their rendering in *Naskh*)

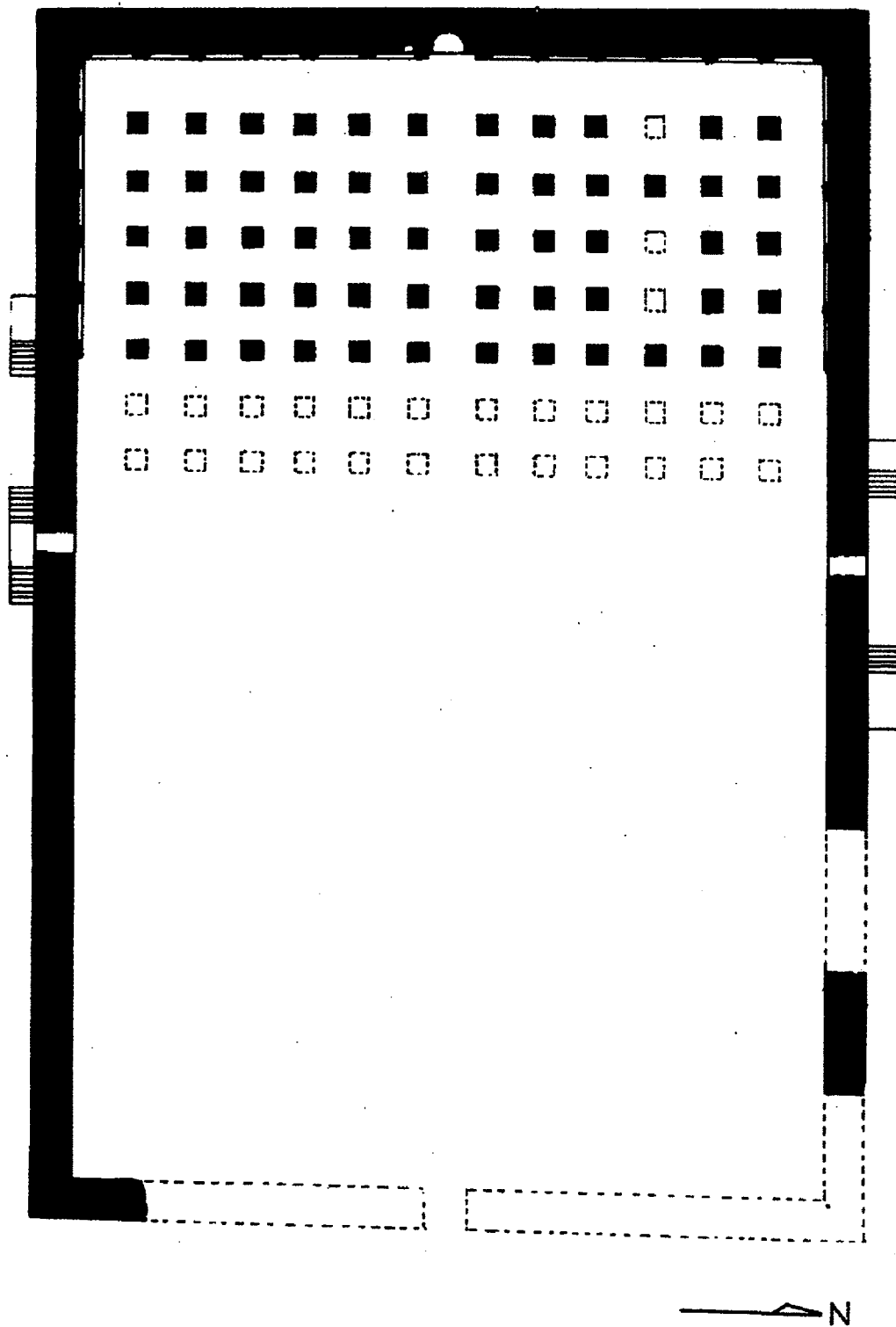


Fig. 9: The plan of the Grand Mosque at Mansurah showing location of gateways (after A.N. Khan, *Al-Mansurah*, 1990).

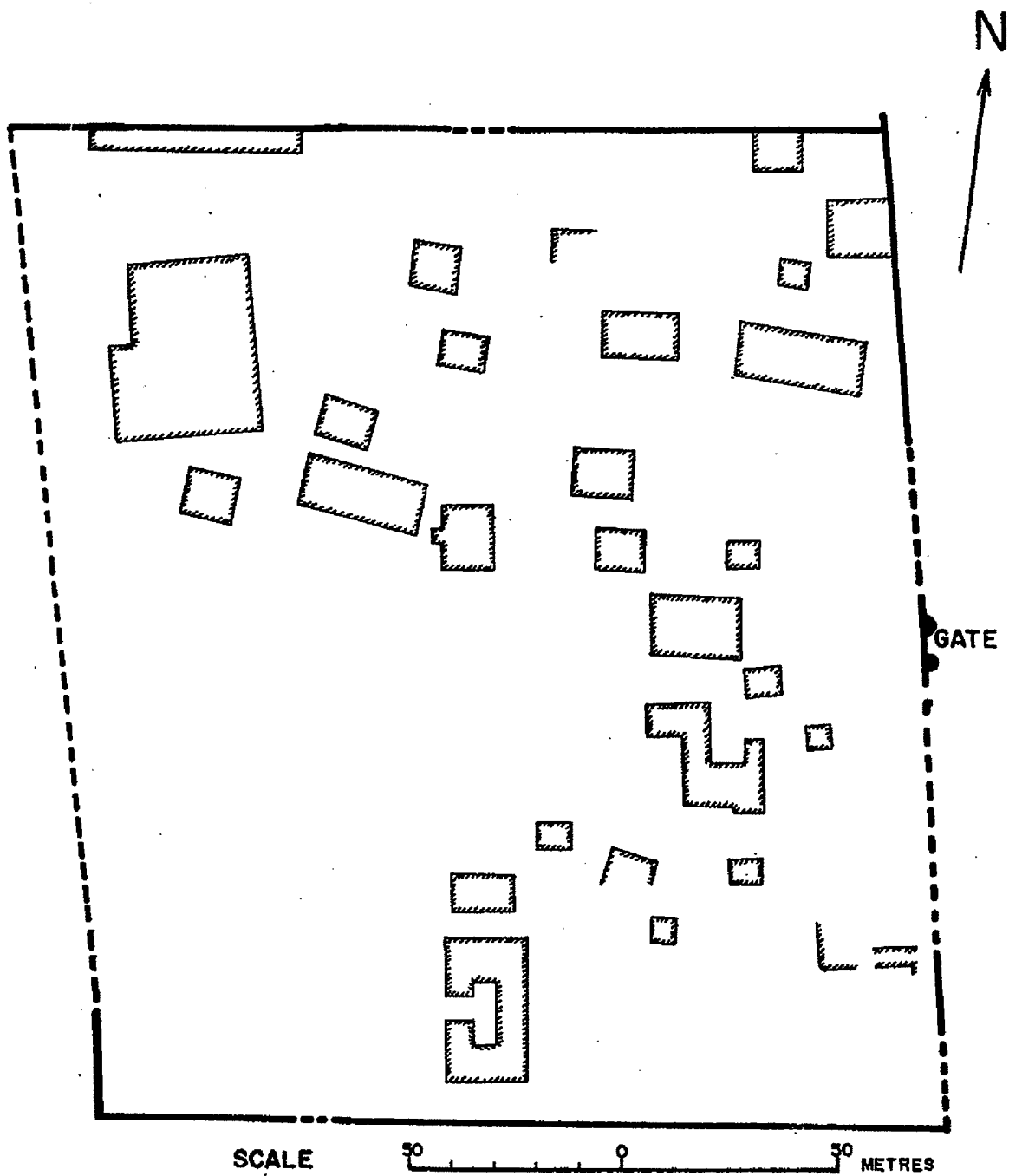


Fig. 10: General layout of the fortified town of Bhiri Bham showing exposed structural remains.

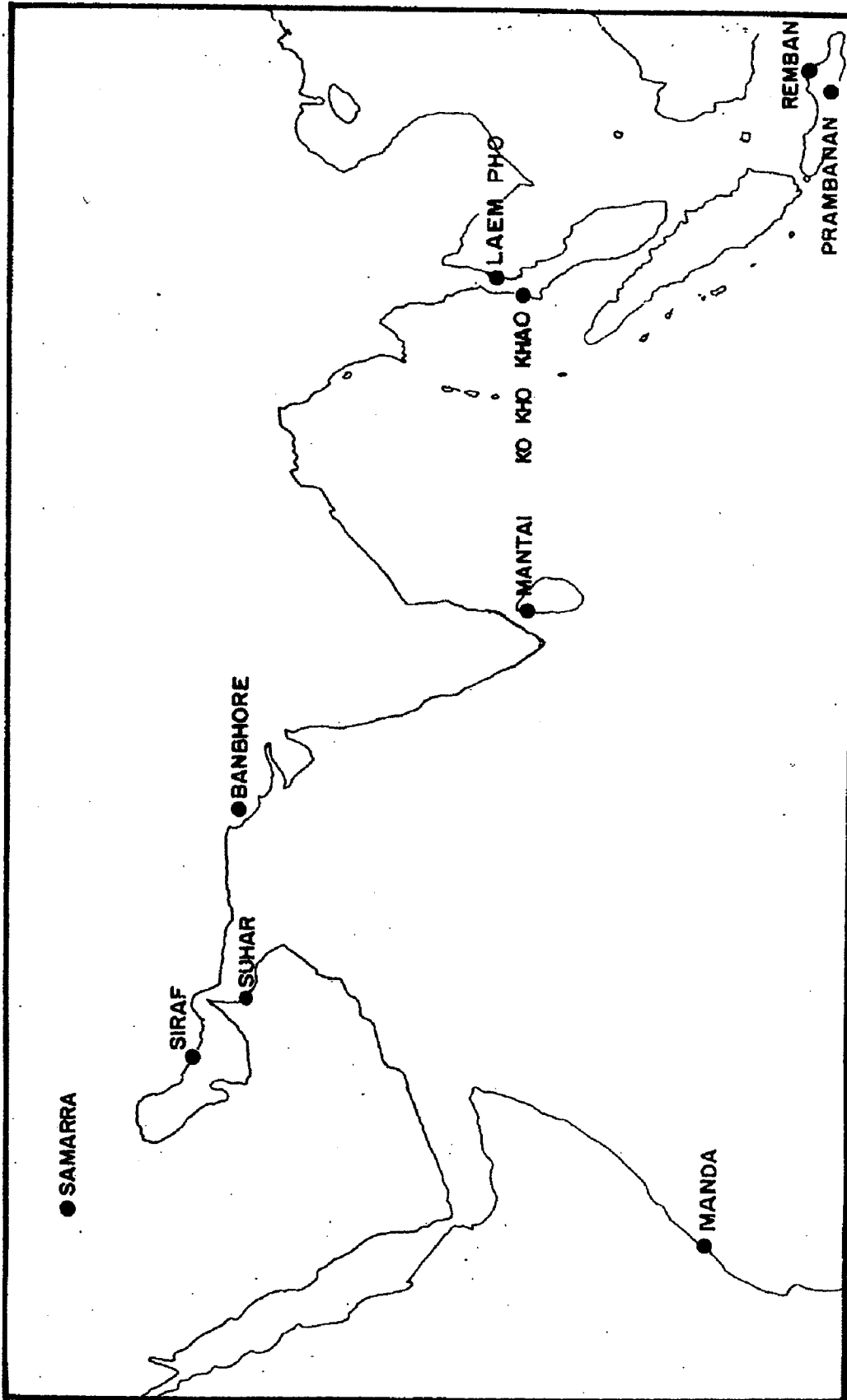


Fig. 11: Some principal cities involved in international trade during the ninth and tenth centuries CE (after Chui Mei and Bronson, "The Ceramics of Changsha", 1987).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Muhammad Rafiq Mughal, Director General, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan, holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He has contributed to the conservation and preservation of archaeological sites in Pakistan as well as participated in archaeological field research. He has also published a considerable number of research papers in reputed journals and contributed several chapters to academic books in the field of archaeology and architecture in addition to publishing a book, *Ancient Cholistan: Archaeology and Architecture*, Lahore, Ferozsons, 1995.