ART. XII.—*An Ancient Hindu Temple in the Panjāb.*

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SOME twelve miles east of the junction of the Sawān with the Indus, between Makhad and Kālābāgh, and about three miles due south of the village of Shāh Muhammad Wālī in the north-west corner of the Jhelum (Jehlam) district, is an old temple called Kālar or Sassī dā Kallara, which has hitherto escaped notice. It is situated at a height of about 1,100 feet above sea-level, on the edge of a hillock rising steeply from the bank of the Kas Letī, one of the torrents, tributary to the Sawān stream, which descend from the northern face of the Salt Range; it here passes through a rough tract of hillocks and ravines. The temple is in a ruinous condition, due largely to the gradual wearing away of the soft sandstone hillside on the edge of which it stands, and its further decay will probably be rapid.

The plan and elevation reproduced in the Plate show the dimensions of the building, but it will be convenient to note here a few of the principal measurements.

Exterior: extreme length, including portico, $22\frac{1}{4}$ feet; extreme breadth, 16 feet; height, $23\frac{1}{2}$ feet, or, including the pile of bricks on one corner, about $28\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Interior: the temple is a square of $7\frac{1}{4}$ feet, and the portico had apparently almost the same floor measurements. Height from floor of temple to spring of dome, just 10 feet; to top of dome, $14\frac{1}{4}$ feet; to top of upper chamber, $17\frac{3}{4}$ feet, or, including the thickness of the beams above it, $18\frac{1}{4}$ feet.

The temple is built of large bricks, 2 inches thick, varying in length from $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 17 inches or more, and in breadth from 10 to $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches. On the outer walls these bricks are elaborately carved, as shown in Plate.

Within, the temple (which was reached through a portico divided from it by a short passage) has small recesses, $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, in the north and south walls, 4 feet above the floor; and there were corresponding recesses of somewhat smaller size in the walls of the portico also. At a height of 7 feet from the floor is a band of ornamentation, 8 inches deep, repeating part of that on the outer walls. The interior of temple and portico is otherwise plain; it shows signs of having been once plastered.

Ten feet from the floor the corners are filled with six courses of overlapping bricks, which gradually reduce the opening to a circle. Above come thirteen courses, nine laid flat and the last four on their edges; these form a dome ending in a small hole, of which the covering is no longer in place, the dome being otherwise intact.

Above the dome is the roughly laid brick flooring of a small upper chamber, only $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, of the roof of which a few weather-worn beams still remain in place. Everything, practically, above this has disappeared. On one corner stands a rough pile of bricks, about 5 feet high, but this was evidently no part of the original building.

The temple faces due east, commanding a wide view in that direction as well as to the north. Immediately in front is the steep slope of the hill, which has evidently lost much by erosion since the temple was built. One side of the portico has been completely undermined, and has fallen, carrying with it the roof of the porch; the slope below is covered with their débris.

In the graveyard of Shāh Muhammad Wālī stands a block of *kaniat* (tufa) stone, 12 by 8 inches in section; part is buried in the ground, but its length seems to be about 5 feet, and it is only part of the original block. This stone is said to have stood erect in the centre of the portico entrance of the Kālar temple; when the portico collapsed the stone went with it down the hill, and this, one of the pieces into which it was broken, was eventually carried off by a man of Shāh Muhammad Wālī for use in building a house. He fell ill and died soon afterwards, and the villagers, ascribing his fate to the anger

(i) KĀLAR TEMPLE, FROM SOUTH-WEST.

(2) KĀLAR FROM NORTH

of the spirits guarding the temple, disposed of the stone by using it as his gravestone. The block is merely a rough-hewn slab, and can hardly have been used as a pillar, as is stated; it was more probably the sill across the entrance of the portico.

There is now no sign of image or pedestal of any kind in the temple; but the floor is choked with a mass of rubbish, which has not been cleared out. Partial excavation, to ascertain the level of the floor, yielded nothing of interest.

Close to the walls of the building I picked up a coin of Venka Deva, whose reign is placed by Cunningham¹ in the last part of the eighth century A.D.²

The whole of the flat top of the hill on which the temple stands, about an acre in extent, is covered with the ruins of houses, built apparently as village houses are now, of rough blocks of sandstone in mud, without mortar. The nearest existing village is that of Shāh Muhammad Wālī, three miles away; adjoining it is a low mound of some size, covered with broken pottery. This site, called Kalri, is certainly a very old one, and may have had some connection with the Kālar temple, but nothing has been found to show its date.

Of the origin of these places nothing is known locally. In the popular mind the Kālar temple, otherwise Sassī dā Kallara or Sassī dī Dhaur, is connected with the well-known folk-tale of Sassī, the king's daughter, and Punnūñ, the camel-driver of Mekrān; but it may safely be said that the building has nothing to do with this popular story, and that the connection was suggested merely by its name.

Photographs of the temple were sent to Dr. M. A. Stein, who writes as follows:—"In style the temple closely resembles two small shrines standing amidst the ruins of Amb, Shahpur District, but these are of a kind of tuffo stone. I do not think the details visible in the photographs permit a close dating, but seventh to ninth century of our era would

¹ "Coins of Mediæval India," pp. 55-65.

² The coins commonly found in this tract include those of the later Græco-Bactrians, and of the Indo-Scythians, Sassanian coins, those of the Brahman kings of Kabul, etc., etc.

probably be an approximate date. The large size of the bricks points to the earlier limit. . . . It is evident from the general look of the structure that it was a Hindu temple. Closer examination of the cella might show whether it was dedicated to Śiva or Vishnu."

On the materials available no more definite conclusion as to the date of the temple appears to be possible. The small shrines at Amb referred to in Dr. Stein's note appear in the background of the photograph reproduced in Plate (3). In style of ornamentation, as well as in general arrangement, their resemblance to the Kālar temple is striking, and it can hardly be doubted that their date is approximately the same. Of these Amb temples, which lie about fifty miles due south from Kālar, Cunningham writes that they "are all of the Kashmirian style, but almost certainly of late date, as all the arches have cinquefoil instead of trefoil heads, which is the only form in Kashmir. I think, therefore, that their most probable date is from 800 to 950 A.D."¹ (At Kālar there is no arch remaining.)

The temple also much resembles one of those at Kāfir Kot (about sixty miles south-east of Kālar), described in Arch. Reports, xiv, 26-28.

¹ Arch. Reports, xiv, 34.

(3) TEMPLES OF AMB, SHAHPUR DISTRICT.