

# An Appreciation of the Contributions of Professor Farid Khan to the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage of Pakistan

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**Abstract:** Professor Farid Khan (1934 – 2020) (Fig. 1) made significant and diverse contributions to the archaeology and cultural heritage of Pakistan, particularly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and his native Bannu District. Farid Khan's career in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage is discussed, in particular his contributions to Stone Age Archaeology (Sanghao Cave), his archaeological surveys in Bannu District 1975-76, collaborative archaeological fieldwork between the Universities of Peshawar and Cambridge in Bannu District (1977-1979), and the establishment of the Bannu Archaeological Project (BAP) in 1985, a collaborative research initiative between archaeologists in the University of Peshawar, the British Museum and the Institute of Archaeology (University College London). The research by the BAP (1985-2020) made original contributions to the archaeology, phasing and chronology of early (pre-Harappan) settlement sites in Bannu District and Dera Ismail Khan District (most notably: Sheri Khan Tarakai, Ter Kala Dheri, Islam Chowki, Lewan and Jhandi Babar) and to the Iron Age and Early Historic periods in Bannu District (the sites of Akra and Ter Kala Dheri). Contributions to archaeological method and theory (notably in identifying problems with sequences based on culture history as compared with radiocarbon chronology), to the ethnoarchaeology of Bannu District, and to 'Public Archaeology', are further dimensions of his outstanding career. Farid Khan excelled as a field archaeologist and this review considers what it was like to work alongside him in the field.

**Keywords:** Farid Khan, Sanghao Cave, Bannu Archaeological Project, Sheri Khan Tarakai, Ter Kala Dheri, Tochi-Gomal Phase, Lewan, Kot Dijian, Akra, Radiocarbon Chronology, Public Archaeology.

## Introduction

Born in 1934 in the village of Bazar Ahmad Khan in Bannu District, Professor Farid Khan died in Peshawar on 28th June 2020 at the age of 86. During those 86 years, he was to develop into a highly experienced, multi-faceted and insightful archaeologist. A formal obituary of Farid Khan has been written by Dr Sadeed Arif of the Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad (Arif 2021) and I am grateful to him for showing me an earlier draft of this and for requesting me to contribute to it. The present article is not a biographical obituary but an appreciation of Farid Khan's principal achievements and how they have contributed to the archaeology and cultural heritage of Pakistan.

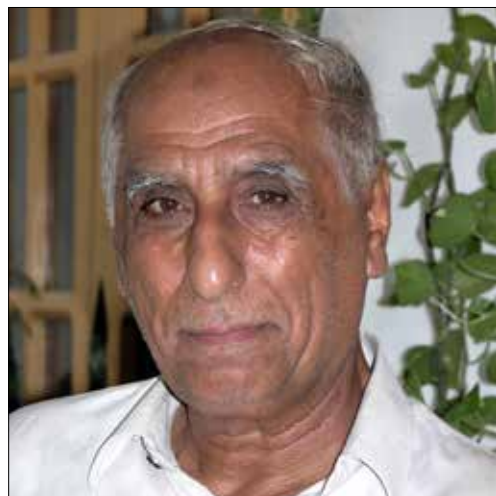


Figure 1. Farid Khan in 2004. (Photograph courtesy of Asko Parpola)

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### **Farid Khan: An Archaeologist in the making**

In 1949, Farid Khan entered the Islamia High School (Government High School No. 2) in Bannu; a keen young student especially interested in Arts subjects. After High School he enrolled in the newly established Government College, Bannu, and then went on to Islamia College, Peshawar, where he read for his BA in History. After graduating, he took a Masters' degree in History in the University of Peshawar (awarded in 1959). The foregoing information is from Mumtaz Ali Khan (2021), a class fellow of Farid Khan over this period.

In 1959, he became a lecturer at Islamia College and shortly after, in 1962, was appointed Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology (University of Peshawar), which was a newly established department with Professor A.H. Dani at its head (Olivieri 2009: 380). In the space of a few years this department was to become renowned for the quality of its archaeological research and teaching. Professor Dani undertook important surveys and excavations in the North-West Frontier Province (Olivieri 2009: 380), aided by younger colleagues including Farid Khan and Farzand Ali Durrani, both of whom were subsequently to become professors in the same Department.

Farid Khan's formal education in Archaeology took a new direction in 1964 when he enrolled as a student in Churchill College (University of Cambridge, U.K.) for the three-year BA (Hons) in Archaeology. He graduated in 1967 and gained his MA from the University of Cambridge in 1971. At Cambridge, he specialized in the archaeology, art and ancient history of South Asia and was mentored by Dr ER. (Raymond) Allchin and Dr (Mrs) Bridget Allchin. He developed a particular interest in stone tool technology in which he was instructed and guided by Bridget Allchin. While at Cambridge, he would have been introduced to many new approaches that were developing in archaeology, especially the emerging archaeological sciences. These include archaeobotany (Professor Jane Renfrew), zooarchaeology (Professor Eric Higgs and Tony Legge), geoarchaeology (Professor Charles MacBurney), radiocarbon dating (at Cambridge's

Godwin Radiocarbon Laboratory) and Quaternary stratigraphy (such as Professor Nick Shackleton's ground-breaking research in stable isotope geochronology). Exposure to such new ideas and approaches led Farid Khan to embrace a diversity of methodologies in his research and a willingness to collaborate with scholars possessing various specialist skills, as exemplified by the Bannu Archaeological Project (see below).

On successfully completing his studies at Cambridge, he returned to Pakistan to resume his teaching and other duties in the University of Peshawar, although he continued to develop his knowledge of archaeological theory and practice through studies at universities in north-western Europe, resulting in the award of M.Sc. (with Distinction) in Quaternary Geology and Geomorphology by the Free University of Brussels in Belgium in December 1980.

### **Farid Khan's career in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage**

Here particular milestones in Farid Khan's journey as an archaeologist will be highlighted and the contributions he made will be assessed.

#### ***Stone Age Archaeology: Sanghao Cave***

An interest in stone tool technology, and of the Palaeolithic period, had developed during Farid Khan's studies at Cambridge. In 1975 he, along with Dr A.J. Ranere (of Temple University, U.S.A.), undertook excavations at the Middle Stone Age (or Middle Palaeolithic) site of Sanghao Cave near Mardan, a site which had first been excavated by Professor A.H. Dani in 1963 (Dani 1964; Ranere 1982). Although the ancient occupation of the cave had been ascribed to the 'Middle Stone Age', this was based upon aspects of the struck stone technology, the specific attributes of which were far from clear because of the difficult flaking qualities of the raw material (quartz) used to make the stone tools. Realizing the need for an 'absolute' chronological framework for the 5 metres-deep stratified deposits at this important site, Farid Khan re-visited Sanghao Cave in 1986 with Dr John Gowlett of the Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory (Oxford University) and a specialist in Palaeolithic archaeology. Twenty-

four samples of charcoals were taken from different stratigraphical levels exposed in some freshly cleaned-back sections and these were taken to Oxford for analysis. The samples were too small for conventional radiocarbon dating but the Oxford laboratory had been established to use the AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) method of analysis, for which the samples were perfectly adequate (Khan and Gowlett 1997: 182). The radiocarbon dates obtained from the ratios of the carbon isotopes in the samples of charcoal provide an absolute chronology for the stratigraphic sequence at the site, which spanned from at least 40,000 years BP (and possibly as early as 60,000 BP) to 20,000 years BP (Khan and Gowlett 1997, 186). The Middle Palaeolithic in South Asia is dated from at least 125,000 years BP to 40,000 years BP (Mishra 1995) while the Upper Palaeolithic dates from approximately 40,000 – 10,000 years BP (Raju and Venkatasubaiah 2002). Although initially ascribed to the Middle Stone Age (or Middle Palaeolithic), the absolute dates for Sanghao Cave suggest an overlap into the later Pleistocene period, with the likelihood that at last part of the occupation is Upper Palaeolithic, which is supported by the presence of blades and burins in the stone tool assemblages.

#### ***Archaeological surveys in Bannu District 1975-76***

Farid Khan had long felt that the history of early human settlement in his home District must surely have a time depth significantly earlier than the Early Historic Period. In 1975-76, Farid Khan embarked on a series of arduous journeys through Bannu District, driving a small Morris motor car over very difficult terrain, visiting the few archaeological sites already known (all being of the Early Historic Period), and finding new sites of various historic periods. More significantly, he discovered numerous early settlement sites that were clearly pre-Harappan in age (Khan 1986). Among the new sites found in this ground-breaking survey were Lewan, Tarakai Qila, Lak Largai, Islam Chowki, and Ter Kala Dheri (which was initially named ‘Dad Kala Kach Kot Dherai’), all of which were to be investigated in greater detail in subsequent years.

#### ***Archaeological fieldwork in Bannu District 1977-1979***

Discussions held in 1976 between Farid Khan and the Allchins, his former mentors at the University of Cambridge, led to the establishment of a collaborative archaeological project focusing on Bannu District. This was co-directed on the Peshawar University side by Farid Khan and Farzand Ali Durrani (then Chairman of the Department of Archaeology) and on the Cambridge side by Dr F.R. Allchin and Dr Bridget Allchin. It was agreed that the first season of fieldwork would be during the winter of 1977-78. The Cambridge team, which the Allchins had styled the ‘Cambridge University Archaeological Mission to Pakistan’ (or CUAMP), included J.R. (Robert) Knox of the British Museum, Helen Rendell, a geomorphologist at the University of Sussex and K.D. (Ken) Thomas, an environmental archaeologist at the Institute of Archaeology, University of London. The work in this first season was focused on the site of Lewan, located in the *doab* between the Baran and Tochi-Gambila rivers, as detailed by Allchin *et al.* (1986). The site had been discovered by Farid Khan during his 1975-1976 surveys of the Bannu area (Khan 1986, 190-191) and he was struck by the abundance and diversity of the surface artefacts. It was apparent to him that Lewan was an exceptionally large and rich site worthy of further investigation and excavation. The results of the short season of work at Lewan by the Peshawar/Cambridge team have been published in full (Allchin *et al.* 1986). The site was interpreted as a series of short-term occupations on a natural raised gravel bar, the most obvious signs of occupation being pits of various sizes containing pottery and other artefacts. The pottery represented two cultural phases: that of Gumla II/Rehman Dheri I and the Kot Dijian. The high density of stones and stone artefacts on the surface led Allchin and Allchin (1986; 1993) to propose Lewan was a ‘factory site’, producing a range of ground and struck stone tools which were exchanged with other sites in the region, possibly for pottery and other commodities.

In the winter of 1978-79 the focus of the collaborative project shifted to Tarakai Qila, a small Kot Dijian period mound on the right bank

of the Tochi River. Excavations were undertaken over a short season, the three excavation trenches being supervised by J.R. Knox, Dr Abdur Rehman, and Dr K.D. Thomas, under the overall direction of Farid Khan (the other directors, F.A. Durrani and the Allchins, having other matters to deal with). The excavation team (Fig. 2) included students of the MA Archaeology, Peshawar University, other staff from Peshawar, and the Government Representative Mr. Said Qamar. Most of the documentation relating to the excavations was deposited by the Allchins at the Ancient India and Iran Trust in Cambridge, but the site has not yet been published in full.

In parallel with their involvement in Bannu, the Allchins were in consultation with Mr Ishtiaq Khan (Director-General of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan) to extend the work of CUAMP across the Indus to northern Punjab Province. Consent was given for them to undertake a project in this region to seek evidence for 'very early' human presence, and in the winter

of 1979-80 a Cambridge team returned to Pakistan to initiate their new project: the Palaeolithic of the Potwar Plateau. The Bannu project had been abandoned, which left Farid Khan feeling rather let down, and Robert Knox and Kenneth Thomas very disappointed that the fascinating work in Bannu had been discontinued.

### *The Bannu Archaeological Project (1985-2020)*

Following preliminary discussions in 1984 between Farid Khan, Robert Knox, and Kenneth Thomas (Fig. 3), the Bannu Archaeological Project (BAP) was established in 1985 as a collaborative research project between the University of Peshawar, the British Museum and University College London (Khan *et al.* 2000a). Its work broadened considerably the range of early settlement sites known in the Bannu Basin (Khan *et al.* 1987, 1988, 1991a, 1991b) and of previously unknown or only poorly understood cultural phases in the Bannu Basin and the Gomal Plain.



Figure 2. The Tarakai Qila excavation team, 1978-79. From left to right: Asad Ali (photographer); the head of a *khassadar*; Kenneth D. Thomas; Muhammad Ashraf Khan\*; Dr Abdur Rehman; Ajmal Shah\*; Farooq Swati\*; Said Qamar (Representative, Government of Pakistan); Zahida\*; Farid Khan; Daud Kamal (draughtsman); Ihsan Ali\*; a *khassadar*. Missing from the photograph is J. Robert Knox, who was on the other side of the camera lens.

\* = Students of MA Archaeology, University of Peshawar, many of whom went on to develop their own illustrious careers. (Photograph courtesy of J. Robert Knox).

Sheri Khan Tarakai is the most important of the new sites discovered by the BAP and it was Farid Khan's determination that this difficult part of the District should be explored that led to its discovery. The site was excavated over several seasons (Khan *et al.* 1986, 1989, 1990, 1991c, 1992) and fully published in a substantial volume (Khan *et al.* 2010). The radiocarbon chronology of Sheri Khan Tarakai spans from the late fifth to early third millennium BCE, making it the earliest known village site in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. Following the discovery of Sheri Khan Tarakai, other sites with identical material culture were found in the Bannu Basin and the Gomal Plain (Khan *et al.* 2010). This cultural episode, known only from the Bannu Basin and the Gomal Plain, has been named by the BAP the 'Sheri

Khan Tarakai Phase', after the nominal 'type site'. A radiocarbon chronology of this phase is given in Table 1.

A group of other sites: Lak Largai, Lewan and other sites in Bannu, along with Gumla II, Jhandi Babar A/II and RHD I in the Gomal, represent another very distinctive and homogeneous cultural phase, later in date than the Sheri Khan Tarakai Phase but with a similar geographical distribution. The homogeneity and specific distribution of this cultural phenomenon was first recognized by Farid Khan who, along with his colleagues in the BAP, named it the 'Tochi-Gomal Phase' (Khan *et al.*, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2001, 2004b). A radiocarbon chronology of the Tochi-Gomal Phase is presented in Table 2.

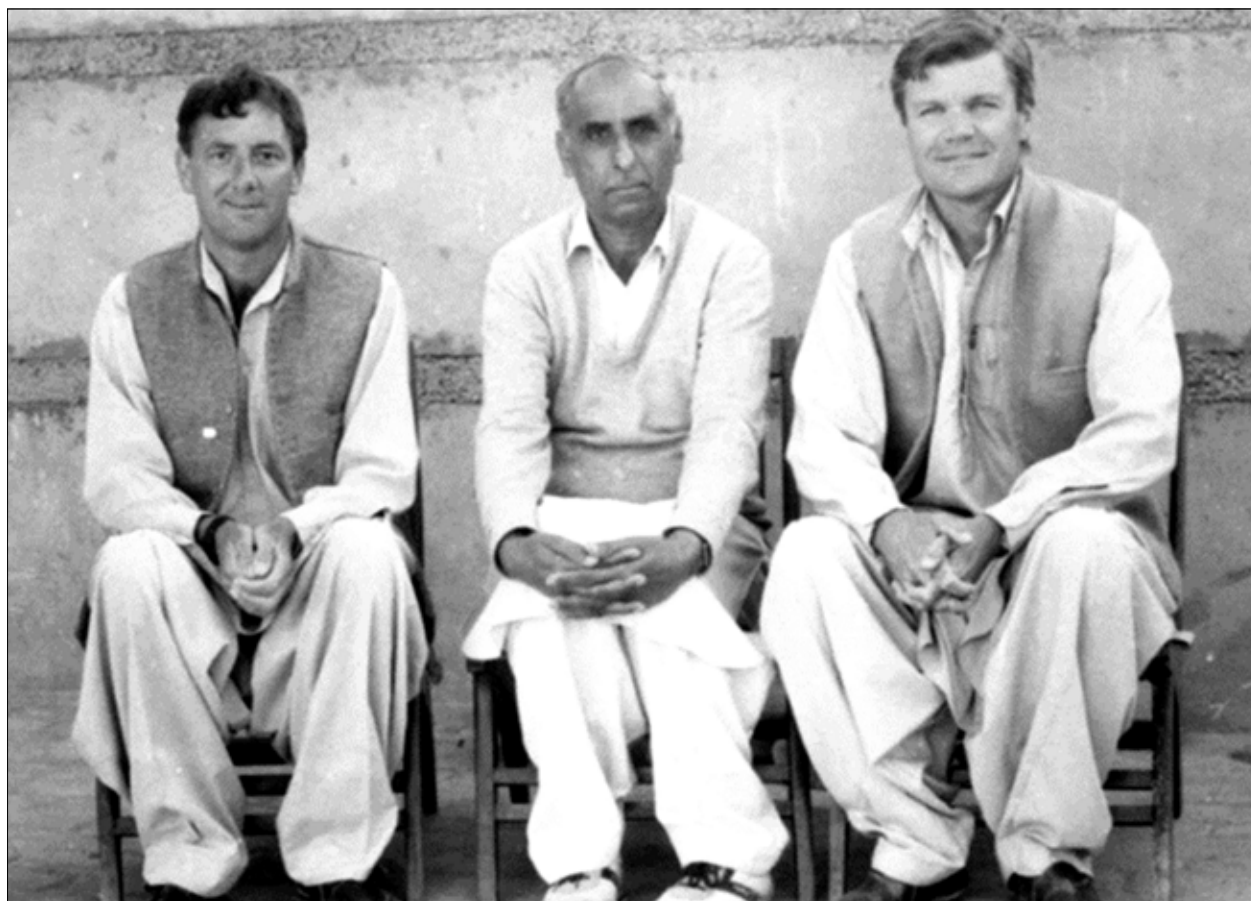


Figure 3. The founders and co-directors of the Bannu Archaeological Project in its inaugural field season of 1985. From right to left: J. Robert ('Bob') Knox of the British Museum, London; Farid Khan of the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar; and Kenneth D. ('Ken') Thomas of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. (Photograph by the late Asad Ali).

Among many important types of finds made by the BAP, the Tochi-Gomal Phase stamped terracotta ‘cakes’ from Jhandi Babar A/II merit specific mention (Khan *et al.* 2004a). These unique objects (Fig. 4), first recognized by the sharp-eyed Farid Khan while making a surface collection of artefacts, have not been found at any other sites of the Tochi-Gomal Phase. Terracotta cakes are, of course, a well-known category of artefact at Harappan sites, but there is nothing remotely ‘Harappan’ about any of the material culture at Jhandi Babar A.

### *The Bannu Archaeological Project re-vitalized by ‘new blood’*

Three new members joined the BAP in 2000. Mr. Justin Morris of the British Museum in London (also a doctoral research student in the Institute of Archaeology, University of London), Mr. Cameron Petrie, a doctoral research student in the University of Sydney and Dr Peter Magee, also from the University of Sydney. These new colleagues were to make invaluable contributions in many ways, as detailed in the following two

Table 1. Radiocarbon chronology of the Sheri Khan Tarakai Phase in the Bannu Basin and the Gomal Plain.

Site & period	Laboratory number	Radiocarbon date, BP	Calibrated date (calBC) <sup>1</sup> (95.4% probability range)
SKT	OxA-0982	5650 ± 200	4988 – 4048
SKT	OxA-1100	5610 ± 130	4786 – 4169
LWN?	NZA-14717	5102 ± 60	4042 – 3713
SKT	OxA-1003	4950 ± 120	4037 – 3384
SKT	BM-2911	4930 ± 220	4239 – 3105
SKT	OxA-1099	4850 ± 90	3931 – 3375
JDB A/I	NZA-13018	4810 ± 65	3709 – 3377
LWN?	NZA-14716	4746 ± 60	3639 – 3374
SKT	BM-2910	4740 ± 100	3767 – 3133
SKT	OxA-1102	4730 ± 100	3753 – 3111
SKT	OxA-1097	4700 ± 90	3651 – 3110
SKT	OxA-1098	4690 ± 100	3651 – 3103
JDB A/I	NZA-13019	4641 ± 60	3629 – 3116
SKT	BM-2951	4610 ± 80	3626 – 3096
SKT	OxA-0968	4590 ± 70	3527 – 3036
JDB A/I	NZA-13020	4521 ± 60	3488 – 3021
SKT	BM-2912	4510 ± 45	3364 – 3033
JDB A/I	NZA-13022	4504 ± 60	3371 – 2938
GRD	NZA-14719	4503 ± 60	3371 – 2938
SKT	BM-2906	4500 ± 50	3364 – 3026
SKT	OxA-1002	4500 ± 100	3501 – 2911
SKT	OxA-1096	4490 ± 80	3371 – 2921
SKT	OxA-1101	4490 ± 80	3371 – 2921
GRD	NZA-14720	4462 ± 65	3345 – 2929
SKT	BM-2907	4460 ± 90	3366 – 2911
SKT	BM-2952	4370 ± 110	3367 – 2696
TKD?	OxA-6237	4360 ± 55	3320 – 2885
JDB A/I	NZA-13021	4351 ± 60	3323 – 2879
SKT	BM-2950	4300 ± 45	3082 – 2780
TKD?	OxA-6238	4230 ± 50	2920 – 2632
SKT	BM-2948	4180 ± 60	2898 – 2582
SKT	OxA-1103	4150 ± 100	3002 – 2465

Sites: SKT = Sheri Khan Tarakai; JDB = Jhandi Babar; GRD = Girdai; LWN? = Lewan, possibly SKT Phase date; TKD? = Ter Kala Dheri, possibly SKT Phase date.

<sup>1</sup> Calibrated with OxCal v. 4.4 and the atmospheric calibration curve ‘IntCal20: Northern Hemisphere’ (Reimer *et al.* 2020).

sections, including the updating of our field methods (such as the use of a total station for rapid and accurate topographical surveying) and recording systems, including introducing the wonders of digital photography. In addition, Cameron Petrie's tireless efforts were pivotal in bringing together the diverse sections of the first BAP Monograph, the 'Sheri Khan Tarakai volume' (Khan *et al.* 2010).

### *Lewan re-visited*

Farid Khan was not satisfied that the work at Lewan in 1977-78 (discussed above) had resolved the true nature of the site and proposed that the BAP undertook further work there. Intensive and systematic surface surveys and excavations were made at Lewan in 2000 and 2001, with Justin Morris and Ken Thomas as principal field investigators. The results have been published by Khan *et al.* (2000e), Morris and Thomas (2002), Morris (2005), and included in a doctoral thesis (Morris 2004). The investigations helped clarify the taphonomic processes that have affected the site. The dense covering of stones on the surface of the site was the principal evidence which led

Allchin and Allchin (1986, 1993) to their 'factory site' hypothesis. However, the lithology of the surface stones differs from those used for making tools. An alternative is that the stones are from the walls of the structures that once existed at the site (see Fig. 5 for a recent example). As erosion and deflation took place, these structures collapsed, leaving the surface of the site strewn with stones. Rather than being a specialized site producing stone tool artefacts to serve a wider settlement network, the range of activities identified by the BAP's work at the site suggests it was an early village settlement whose inhabitants engaged in a range of craft work, including pottery production. Farid Khan's scepticism about the earlier interpretations had been fully justified.

### *Archaeology of the Iron Age, Early Historic, and Later Periods*

Prior to Farid Khan's ground-breaking archaeological surveys (Khan 1986), the best-known ancient sites in Bannu were the huge mounds of the Early Historic Period at Akra. In 2000 and 2001, inspired by Farid Khan and strengthened by the abilities of Cameron Petrie and Peter Magee,

Table 2. Radiocarbon chronology of the Tochi-Gomal Phase in the Bannu Basin and the Gomal Plain.

Site & period	Culture phase <sup>1</sup>	Laboratory number	Radiocarbon date, BP	Calibrated date (calBC) <sup>2</sup> (95.4% probability range)
Lewan	SKT/T-G?	NZA-14717	5102 ± 60	4042 – 3713
Lewan	SKT/T-G	NZA-14716	4746 ± 60	3639 – 3374
Rehman Dheri I	T-G	PRL-676	4520 ± 110	3516 – 2916
Jhandi Babar A/II	T-G	NZA-13022	4504 ± 60	3371 – 2938
Rehman Dheri I	T-G	PRL-675	4400 ± 110	3487 – 2706
Lewan	T-G	NZA-14908	4370 ± 60	3328 – 2887
Ter Kala Dheri	SKT?/T-G	OxA-6237	4360 ± 55	3320 – 2885
Lewan	T-G	NZA-14718	4334 ± 60	3321 – 2782
Rehman Dheri I	T-G	WIS-1697	4300 ± 70	3315 – 2668
Lak Largai	T-G	BM-2799	4280 ± 270	3632 – 2204
Ter Kala Dheri	SKT?/T-G	OxA-6238	4230 ± 50	2920 – 2632
Gumla II	T-G	P-1882	4210 ± 150	3340 – 2456
Rehman Dheri I	T-G	WIS-1698	4190 ± 70	2911 – 2576
Lak Largai	T-G	BM-2402	4170 ± 50	2891 – 2584
Islam Chowki	T-G	OxA-1005	4160 ± 100	3007 – 2467
Gumla II	T-G	P-1812	4080 ± 70	2873 – 2471
Hathala/D	T-G	P-1813	4043 ± 70	2868 – 2458

<sup>1</sup> SKT = Sheri Khan Tarakai Phase; T-G = Tochi-Gomal Phase; ? = uncertainty about the phase and associated date.

<sup>2</sup> Calibrated with OxCal v. 4.4 and the atmospheric calibration curve 'IntCal20: Northern Hemisphere' (Reimer *et al.* 2020).

the BAP undertook a programme of surveys and excavations at Akra (Khan *et al.* 2000f, 2000g, 2008; Knox *et al.* 2002; Magee *et al.* 2005), the results of which have been brought to fruition in a doctoral thesis (Petrie 2002) and in a major book (another BAP Monograph) by Cameron Petrie. This magnificent book on Akra (Petrie 2020), was published a very short while after Farid Khan died and it is sad that the ‘grandfather’ to that volume did not live to see it.

Farid Khan made other important contributions to the archaeology of the historic periods in Pakistan. He made detailed and important iconographic descriptions and interpretations of two Hindu (‘Brahmanical’) sculptures unearthed at Wanda Shahab Khel in Lakki District: a Varāha (Khan 1992) and an *Ekamukhalinga* (Khan 1993). He also reported upon the discovery of Buddhist stupas in Kohat District (Khan 1998) and undertook important work at Buddhist and other sites in Peshawar District, and most notably at Aziz Dheri in Swabi District. In 1990, his NGO (the Pakistan Heritage Society), in collaboration with Professor Michael Meister of Pennsylvania University, USA, initiated a project to document the Hindu temples along the Indus and the Salt Range. The joint project unraveled the chronology of these temples and discovered some new ones (Meister 1996; Meister *et al.* 1998, 2000).

### ***Archaeological Theory: Culture History and Radiocarbon Chronology***

Although he did not engage with theoretical archaeology in any direct way, preferring a more grounded archaeology, Farid Khan was nevertheless concerned about the ‘cultural’ terminology used to categorize sites, phases, or periods and the concepts (and assumptions) which underlay them. The traditional culture historical approach in Archaeology is founded upon the concept of materially or technologically defined periods: Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, etc. These are essentially Eurocentric models, which have been widely applied to the sequence of archaeological cultures in Pakistan and South Asia in general. The BAP used such terminology in their first publications on the site of Sheri Khan Tarakai, by describing it as ‘Neolithic’. Although technically accurate, in terms of the economy of the site, the term ‘Neolithic’ inevitably had quasi-chronological implications, not always acceptable to those colleagues devoted to a more unilinear concept of culture history. There were many fascinating and always congenial after-dinner discussions on such topics between Farid Khan, Robert Knox, and Ken Thomas in the ‘Bannu Archaeological Project HQ’ in Railway Road, Bannu City. Farid Khan was always sure to keep any flights of fancy

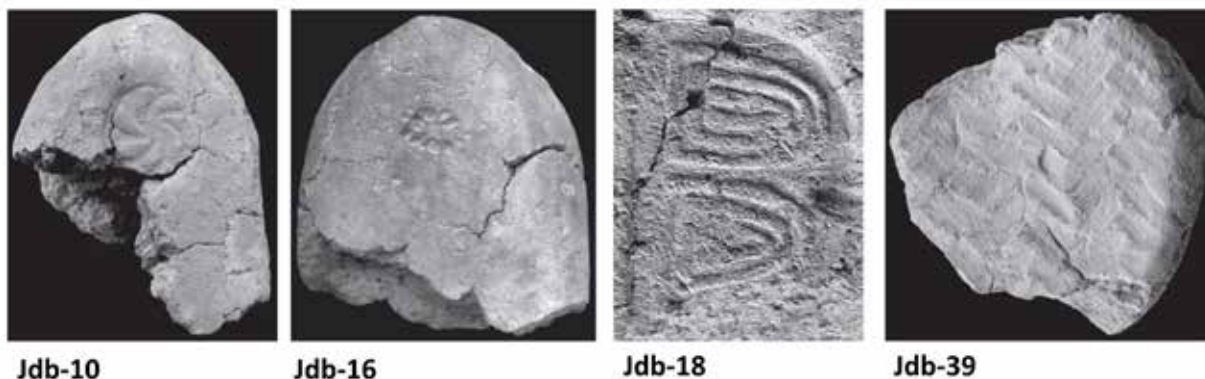


Figure 4. Terracotta cakes from Jhandi Babar A/II (Tochi-Gomal Phase), with impressions of seals or organic materials. From a surface collection at the site by Farid Khan and Kenneth D. Thomas. The terracotta cakes are identified using the CISI (Corpus of Indus Seals and Inscriptions) numbers allocated to them by Parpola and Koskikallio (2021). CISI Jdb-10 has a seal impression 25 mm in diameter; the seal impression on CISI Jdb-16 measures 16 x 10 mm; and the CISI Jdb-18 seal impression measures 20 x 28 mm. CISI Jdb-39 is a large (77 x 79 mm) fragment of a terracotta cake with mat or basket impressions. (All photographs courtesy of Asko Parpola).



as ‘grounded’ as possible and directly focused on the ‘real world’ archaeological issues we were investigating. As a result, we decided to eschew, as far as possible, the use of classic macro-scale and normalizing ‘cultural stage’ labels (such as ‘Neolithic’, ‘Bronze Age’, etc.) and seek to establish a radiocarbon chronology for all of the sites we were investigating. This ‘absolute’ chronology would exist alongside cultural categorizations that were more appropriate to specific material-culture assemblages, the sites and settlement systems in which they were to be found, and the spatial scales of such systems. This would entail the avoidance whenever possible of time-transgressive and culturally homogenizing labels such as, for example, ‘Bronze Age’ (especially for sites with no evidence of bronze in their material culture assemblages), but conserve terms such as Sheri Khan Tarakai Phase, Tochi-Gomal Phase, Kot Dijian Culture, Harappan Civilization, etc. as probably valid and certainly useful cultural concepts.

The BAP took great pains to acquire samples of charred materials for radiocarbon dating from many sites, especially of the early periods. Although he never saw the full data set, Farid Khan would have been delighted to see – and challenged to interpret and re-interpret – the

calibrated radiocarbon chronologies for sites in the Bannu Basin and Gomal Plain as set out in Table 1 for the Sheri Khan Tarakai Phase, in Table 2 for the Tochi-Gomal Phase, and in Table 3 for the Kot Dijian Period, the latter being more than just a ‘Phase’, which would imply a somewhat restricted regional occurrence, but a well-defined (and well-known) cultural horizon found at sites broadly distributed across much of present-day Pakistan. The dates in these tables are ordered according to the (uncalibrated) radiocarbon determinations for each sample, rather than site by site. A chronological difficulty with using even fairly local-scale cultural classifications, such as Tochi-Gomal Phase, is that we cannot know if the sites were occupied at the same time, which would clearly be important for more sophisticated models of settlement patterns and systems. It is clear from the strict chronological ordering of the dates in Tables 1, 2 and 3, that the sites from which the samples were taken (column 1 in each table) are distributed through the column and not separated out, suggesting chronological overlaps between many of the sites both within and between the Bannu and Gomal regions. Some sites have only one or two dates, which restricts their utility, but argues the case that sites should be sampled as extensively as possible for radiocarbon dates.

Table 3. Radiocarbon chronology of the Kot Diji Phase in the Bannu Basin and the Gomal Plain.

Site & period	Laboratory number	Radiocarbon date, BP	Calibrated date (calBC) <sup>1</sup> (95.4% probability range)
Lewan	NZA-13010	4232 ± 65	3011 – 2584
Tarakai Qila	BM-3144	4200 ± 35	2838 – 2639
Rehman Dheri II-III	WIS-1699	4180 ± 70	2907 – 2575
Lewan	NZA-13023	4136 ± 70	2891 – 2496
Lewan	NZA-13009	4117 ± 80	2886 – 2476
Lewan	NZA-13008	4114 ± 60	2880 – 2495
Rehman Dheri II-III	WIS-1700	4070 ± 90	2889 – 2351
Islam Chowki	OxA-1004	4010 ± 120	2882 – 2206
Rehman Dheri II-III	PRL-674	4000 ± 150	2904 – 2060
Islam Chowki	BM-1941R	3910 ± 460	3644 – 1297
Rehman Dheri II-III	PRL-673	3900 ± 130	2860 – 2026
Tarakai Qila	BM-3145	3870 ± 50	2470 – 2200
Rehman Dheri II-III	WIS-1701	3850 ± 70	2557 – 2053
Islam Chowki	BM-2403	3840 ± 110	2579 – 1961
Tarakai Qila	BM-3142	3800 ± 50	2418 – 2046
Tarakai Qila	BM-3167	3690 ± 50	2272 – 1937

<sup>1</sup> Calibrated with OxCal v. 4.4 and the atmospheric calibration curve ‘IntCal20: Northern Hemisphere’ (Reimer *et al.* 2020).

The BAP obtained 21 radiocarbon dates for Sheri Khan Tarakai, which makes it the second best dated early village site in South Asia after Mehrgarh.

### *The 'elusive' Harappan*

Despite Farid Khan's extensive field surveys of Bannu District (Khan 1986) and those subsequently made by the Bannu Archaeological Project, no Harappan sites or Harappan artefacts have been found in the Bannu Basin, although they are known from the Gomal Plain (Table 4). This is difficult to account for because there are no obvious reasons why Bannu should not have 'entered into' the Harappan cultural sphere. There are plenty of Kot Dijian settlement sites in Bannu and the Harappan settlement system is distributed across a large area of north-western South Asia that encompasses much of the range of the preceding Kot Dijian period. It is, of course, not only Bannu but also the Peshawar Valley and the northern Punjab (such as the Taxila Valley) that appear to have remained outside the Harappan settlement system or 'cultural sphere'. The Bannu Basin and the Gomal Plain show many signs of connectivity and interaction over time but following the Kot Dijian period there are clear differences in the cultural trajectories between these regions. This is a puzzle that Farid Khan did not solve, and it remains a fascinating problem awaiting resolution.

### *Ethnoarchaeology*

In addition to his wide-ranging archaeological interests, Farid Khan was keen to make ethnographic records of various traditional practices in Bannu District which are in severe decline in this modern age. He was also aware that knowledge of such practices might provide information of an 'ethnoarchaeological' kind and provide a valuable perspective on the archaeological record (Khan 1994). One interesting problem in interpreting early ancient village sites in Bannu District is the huge numbers of pebbles and cobbles scattered over their surface. Although clearly river-rolled, these cobbles were not deposited by flooding because the levels of the site surfaces are too high. Farid Khan's observations of modern mud walls in

the Jani Khel area revealed the probable answer to this dilemma: where the surface mud plaster had fallen away from these walls, it was clear they were constructed around a core of many thousands of pebbles and cobbles set in courses in mud mortar (Fig. 5). Had the ancient walls of structures been constructed in such a manner, their eventual destruction and decay would have left thousands of stones strewn over the surfaces of sites (as discussed for Lewan, above).

Bannu District has a reputation as a place where the capture of wild migratory cranes and keeping them as pets is an obsession of some of its inhabitants (Fig. 6a). Farid Khan published a specific article on this practice (Khan 1991)

Table 4. Numbers of early settlement sites of various cultural episodes in the Bannu Basin and the Gomal Plain.

Culture Phase/Period	Bannu Basin	Gomal Plain
Harappan	None	14
Kot Dijian	6	10
Tochi-Gomal	4	9
Sheri Khan Tarakai	5	2

Data from Khan *et al.* (2000b), Khan *et al.* (2004b) and Jan *et al.* (2008)



Figure 5. Farid Khan beside an abandoned building in the Jani Khel, Bannu District. The original mud plaster finish has fallen off in places, revealing courses of river-rolled pebbles and cobbles embedded in mud mortar. Observations such as this helped explain why the surfaces of many ancient sites are littered with river-rolled stones (as discussed in the text), (Photograph by the author)

and a detailed account of the techniques used to capture cranes (Khan 1994: 94-97), and was thrilled when small images, probably of cranes, were found painted on bowls from the site of Sheri Khan Tarakai. More dramatically, a small rescue excavation at the site of Lak Largai yielded a beautifully made pot of the Tochi-Gomal Phase upon which had been painted an unmistakable image of a dancing crane (Fig. 6b). Clearly the ancient and modern peoples of Bannu were equally fascinated by these beautiful creatures that appear in large flocks in the skies over Bannu in autumn (migrating from Siberia to overwinter in India) and again spring (migrating back to their Siberian breeding grounds).

The ecological, social and economic contexts of pottery production were also of considerable interest to Farid Khan, who was concerned by the dramatic decline in village-based potters' workshops in Bannu District. In December 1991 Farid Khan and Ken Thomas, ably assisted by Mr. Naeem Bacha, undertook a survey of potters' workshops in some villages to record many aspects of the life and work of these craft specialists. The results of this were published in outline by Thomas and Khan (2011) and more comprehensively by Khan and Thomas (2020), which was the last scholarly work Farid Khan was to produce during his long and highly productive life.

### *Contributions to Management and Presentation of Archaeological Heritage*

In addition to his significant archaeological research, Farid Khan made valuable contributions to teaching, administration, and policy development in each of the major phases of his career: at the University of Peshawar, at the Peshawar Museum, in the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums of the (then) North-West Frontier Province, and as Director of the Pakistan Heritage Society (the NGO which he founded). Much of what he achieved would now be described as 'Public Archaeology', which can be defined as activities which seek to engage the public in archaeology, through heritage education, cultural resource management (CRM), site interpretation, museum studies, ethics, and cultural tourism (S.A.A. 2021). As Director of the Peshawar Museum (1970-1972) he instituted two important new galleries: the 'Islamic Gallery' and an ethnographic gallery known as the 'Hall of Tribes'. In December 1992 he was appointed as the first Director of the newly established Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of the NWFP. During his one-year tenure, he established the Directorate in terms of human and physical resources and undertook fieldwork and excavations of the Buddhist sites of Matkani, Marjani and Gumbat in Swat and Dir Districts, Aziz Dheri in Mardan District, the Adina graves

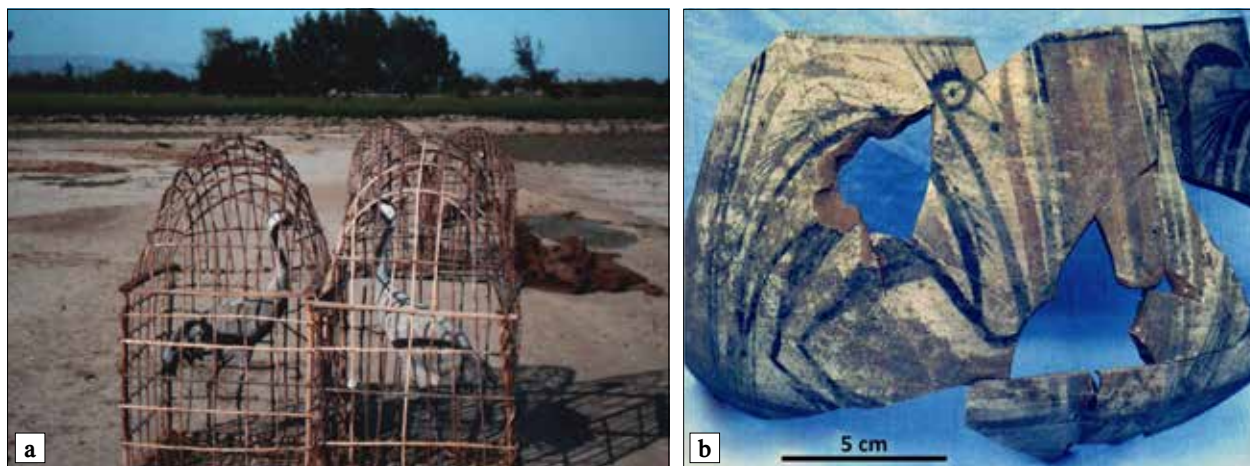


Figure 6. The Bannuchi obsession with cranes, ancient and modern. (a) Cranes being kept in cages, having been captured on the Gambila River, Bannu District. (b) A dancing crane depicted on a bowl of the Tochi-Gomal Phase from the site of Lak Largai (Photograph by the author)

(of the Gandhara Grave Complex, c 1500-1000 BCE) in Swabi District, and the Buddhist site of Shaikhan Dheri in Charsadda District.

Farid Khan was a devoted and loyal 'son of Bannu', proud of Bannu's long and diverse history of human adaptation, cultural achievement, and innovation (much of which is known to us through his work). His great wish was that this rich cultural heritage should be preserved and displayed for the benefit and edification of his fellow citizens. He was the prime mover for the establishment of an archaeological museum in Bannu and was delighted when, after much lobbying and persuasion, this long-held ambition came to fruition (Fig. 7).

### *Archaeology in the field with Farid Khan*

Working with Farid Khan in the field was always exciting (and sometimes exhausting) because he was so full of energy and brimming with ideas. As Robert Knox, my colleague in the BAP, observed recently: 'recall his great character, irrepressible energy, leadership abilities, and capacity to question everything'. Farid Khan also had a delightful sense of humour, which made him a wonderful companion who initiated so much laughter and feelings of goodwill.

However, preparing to undertake fieldwork in Bannu District, especially in the far west, was a serious matter that required considerable

groundwork, and Farid Khan was scrupulously careful to ensure that the relevant authorities were fully aware of our work and supportive of it in many ways. Such support was essential and without it the scope of the Bannu Archaeological Project would have been severely constrained. For example, we would never have discovered the site of Sheri Khan Tarakai, let alone been able to excavate it over numerous field seasons. Successive Deputy Commissioners of the (then) Bannu District and Assistant Political Agents for the (then) Frontier Region, provided valuable support, issued permits, and authorized security arrangements. Superintendents of Police for Bannu District provided security personnel from the ranks of the Frontier Constabulary. The District Administration also arranged daily protection from armed *khasadars* recruited from, and generously provided by, various Wazir families, most notably from the Jani Khel, the Sardi Khel and the Bakka Khel, local to the region in which we were working and through which we were travelling. Without Farid Khan's diplomatic skills and detailed local knowledge, it would have been impossible to have achieved what we did.

When working in the field, especially during excavations, Farid Khan ensured that relations with local people were always cordial, respectful and, very often, good humoured. It was of enormous help that Farid Khan was completely familiar not only with the Bannuchi dialect,



Figure 7. The Bannu Museum (Photo courtesy of Asad Farid Khan, taken September 2010)



Figure 8. Farid Khan (left) and his brother Feroze Khan (right), in the Feroze Boot House, near Lakki Gate, Bannu City. (Photograph by K.D. Thomas, April 1997)

but also with local sensibilities, attitudes, and perspectives on life – and, indeed, the world as they perceived it. People who came to see our excavations were always made welcome. These visitors were always interested in what we were doing, and occasionally offered advice as we were working away. I recall Farid Khan translating one such piece of advice as: ‘where you are digging was my grandmother’s bathroom!’ Some advice Farid Khan would not translate for us, which gave us a notion of the general character of such comments, even though we remained innocently unaware of their exact content.

It was a great privilege for the author, a somewhat scholarly academic archaeologist from the UK, to work at such sites, in such landscapes, with such colleagues, and to meet such welcoming and characterful people. Without Farid Khan this would never have been possible. The late Mr Feroze Khan, brother of Farid Khan and with whom he was very close (Fig. 8), was also a key figure in supporting our work, especially ensuring the arrangements for our long-term accommodation in the ‘excavation HQ’ in Bannu City. Feroze Khan was, like his brother and both their families, generous and hospitable and the members of the BAP enjoyed many wonderful feasts in the *hujra* of the Khans’ lovely old house near the Qasaban Gate (both now demolished) in Bannu City (Fig. 9).

It is appropriate to end these fond recollections with a memorable quote from Farid Khan, made in 2000 while we were looking back over 15 years of happy and highly productive work by the Bannu Archaeological Project: ‘It all seems like a wonderful dream’. And so it was.

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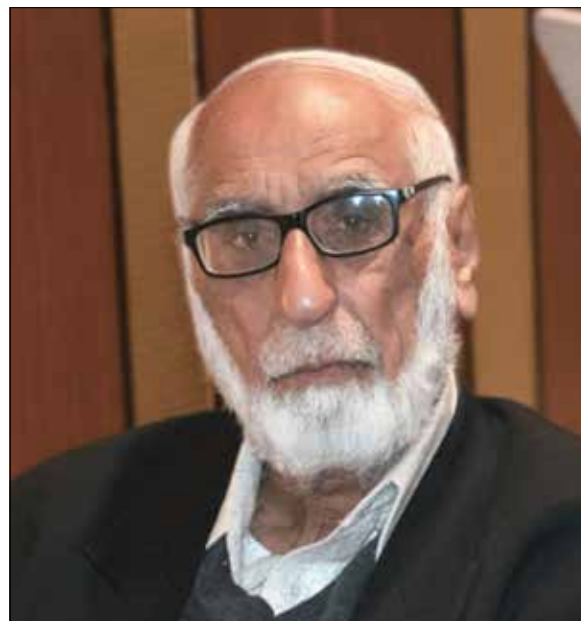


Figure 9. A very distinguished and wise gentleman: Farid Khan in 2017. (Photograph courtesy of Asad Farid Khan; sent by email on 24th July 2017).

of course, my close colleagues and friends in the Bannu Archaeological Project: Mr. J. Robert (‘Bob’) Knox, Dr Cameron Petrie, Dr Justin Morris, and Professor Peter Magee.

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