CHAPTER IV

SIND UNDER THE SUMIRAH

No connected and coherent account of the Sumirah rulers is available in the chronicles. The history of their rule in Sind can be reconstructed by piecing together the evidence scattered in different sources. It is all the more surprising as this dynasty ruled over the region for five long centuries. These five centuries under their rule happen to be the most obscure period in the history of Sind. They have left no chronicles or monuments and the remains of any urban settlements have also not been traced so far. Even their ancestry is not certain. Elphinston with whom Elliot agrees, thinks that they were Rajputs of lower Sind and had been converted to Islam sometimes after the conquest of Muhammad bin Qasim. The

1. There seems to be a lot of controversy about the actual duration of their rule. Mir Masum describes their rule to have commenced in 1035 A.D. while Tuhfatul Kiram gives the date of their downfall as 1351 A.D. Thus the duration of their rule in the light of these statements comes roughly to 200 years. This reckoning, however, does not take into account the fact that the Sumirah had ruled over some parts of Sind as the tributaries of other Muslim rulers. But according to the author of Beglar-Namah they ruled over Sind for a period extending well over 500 years. Ain also seems to agree with the assessment of Beglar-Namah as it also gives the total period of their rule to be 500 year. The statement of Tarikh-i-Tahiri that they ruled only for a period of 143 years is blatantly wrong; Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari I, Newal Kishore, Lucknow, 1882, p.167. see also, Idraki Beglari, Beglar-Namah, ed. N.A.Baloch, Hyderabad Sind, 1980, p.8; see also Tarikh-i Tahiri, fol. 20; see also, Mir Sher Ali Qani Thattawi, Tuhfat-ul-Kiram III, ed. Saiyid Husamuddin Rashidi, Hyderabad Sind, 1971, p.67.

2. Elphinstone, History of India, Allahabad, 1966,p.682; See also Elliot, History of India as told by its own historians I, Reprint,Allahabad (n.d.) p.480.
Chach-Namah mentions that the Sammah came to pay homage to Muhammad Qasim but the name of Sumirah is not mentioned anywhere.

Ibn Batuta while describing Janani, a large flourishing town on the bank of Indus, says that its inhabitants are called Sumirah. The people had been inhabiting this region for long, their ancestors having established themselves there at the time of the conquest of Sind by Muhammad bin Qasim. They had certain peculiar habits. For example they do not dine with any one, nor is any one allowed to look at them at the time of eating. They do not intermarry with other people. According to him Sumirah were of Arab origin.

The same traveller further provides some information about the political condition of the Sumirah of Sind. In 1333 A.D. while he was travelling from Siwistan, Ratan, the Hindu governor of the place was assassinated by Wunar-i-Samri and Qaisar-i-Rumi. They seized all the government property and collected a large number of their tribesmen. However, feeling unsafe Wunar fled from there. The army raised Qasar-i-Rumi as its leader but he could not make much headway. Imadul-Mulk, the Governor of Multan, crushed the rebels.

2. Ibn Batuta, pp.396-97. Tahiri (fol.9) declares that most of them were Hindus without giving any detail.
Now it would seem that perhaps this Wunar-i-Samri is the same, Unar, the Sammah chief who was appointed the chief by the Sumirah nobles after killing the last Sumirah prince, Armel.¹

Saiyid Sulaiman Nadavi is also of the view that the sumirahs were of the Arab origin.² On the other hand, Abu Zafar Nadavi maintains that they were of the mixed breed i.e. Arab and Sindhi blood. He also sheds light on their Ismaili beliefs and customs.³ They ruled around the region from lower Sind to Alor and their dominion comprised almost the entire eastern delta of the Indus. Probably, it further extended towards Debal to Makran. Some portion of Cutch too was under their rule. It seems that they first established their rule at Mansura, which they occupied after the fall of Banu Habbar b. Aswad sometime after 985 A.D. Its chief was Khafif, whom Mahmud of Ghazna expelled from this town. The chief failed to defend his territories and fled to an island with his men. Mahmud captured the chief and most of his men were killed or fled to Uchh.⁴

Information about the conditions of Mansura is not available in the chronicles. Some evidence is, however, available

1. Masumi, pp. 61-62.
in some books of history about some towns which flourished under the Sumirahs such as Debal and Demrilah. However, when Sultan Jalaluddin Khwariam Shah reached Debal, it was governed by Chanesar, another Sumirah prince. Sultan captured the town and built a mosque on the side of the temple.\footnote{1}

In 1228 the Governor of Sind (Wali-i-Debal wa Sind) presented himself before Iltutmish at Delhi. There was the time when the entire country of Sind right up to Arabian sea was conquered by his vazir Nizamul Mulk Junaidi.\footnote{2} Masumi holds that in 1053 A.D., during the reign of Sultan Abdur Rashid, son of Sultan Mahmud, a large number of Sumirah assembled in the vicinity of Tharri and elevated a man named Sumira or Sumir as their leader and proclaimed him to be an independent ruler. This new ruler was able to extend his authority to the neighbouring regions. He established his matrimonial relations with the local Zamindar Sad, and married his daughter. He got a son and named him Bhunghar. After the death of Sumirah, Bhunger succeeded him as the chief of his tribe.\footnote{3}

Bhunger was again succeeded by his son, Doda, who extended his control upto Nasrpur. After a long reign he died and left a minor son and a daughter Tari.

\footnotesize{\textbf{References}}

1. Juvaini, II, pp.146-48; See also Minhaj, I, p.447.
As the son was a minor, Tari took the reins of the government. After sometime she was replaced by Doda. The new ruler invaded the neighbouring regions and conquered it near upto Hala Kandi. As he died issueless, his widow, Himu strengthened her position in the fort of Adak. Her brother controlled the regions of Muhammad Tur and Tharri.

Doda was another, Sumirah chief, who was the ruler of Dahlah, marched towards Tharri killed its administrator and brought the territories under his control. Meanwhile, Dadu Phattu of Doda's family, mustered a large force and captured vast territories. After a quiet reign of some years, he died and was succeeded by a chief named Khaira.

Khaira was succeeded by Armel. He was a cruel man and treated his subject with cruelty. Due to his misbehavior, Unar, a Summah revolted and killed him. The head of Armel was hung at the top of the gate of the fort and Unar was proclaimed as the new ruler. In this way the government of Sind passed away from Sumirah to Sammah in 1352 A.D.

1. Másumi, p.61; Qani, III, p.68.
2. Qami, III, p.68;
3. Founder of the Umar Kot, was the last chief. It is situated in the district Thar Parker near Mirpur Khas.
4. See Appendix.
According to **Tuhfat-ul-Kiram**, Sumirah chiefs used to brand the common people including their own relations with a mark to show that they were all inferior to them. They themselves used to wear turbans, while others were permitted only to use a wrap of the web or half woven cloth instead, for the sake of distinction. They were like-wise required to cut the nails of their hands and feet from the root.

According to the author of **Tarikh-i-Tahiri** inspite of these abnormal practices the Sumirah society was not void of pious and learned men like Darwesh Daud, Miyan Hamul and Mir Ismail of Agham who maintained a college for the students of the Quran where free boarding and lodging was provided to the students. It is probable that towards the end of their rule the Sumirah renounced their Ismaili doctrines and became Sunni under the influence of Saiyid Jalaluddin Bukhari of Uchh.

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1. Qani, III, p. 82.
2. Tahiri, fol. 38.