

New Archaeological Sites in Las Bela A Neolithic Settlement Discovered

Las Bela plain has always occupied very strategic position in connection with peaceful spread and migration of the people and also passage of armies towards the Lower Indus Valley and occasionally in the reverse direction. This plain is the culminating point on seaboard of a natural corridor, running north-south, descending from the heights of Quetta Valley, or even from Afghanistan, to the shores of the Arabian Sea in Las Bela. This structural trough is flanked on either side by high mountains, allowing only a few easy passages to the Indus plain. From the west the most important east-west passage through the Kej Valley descends on Bela across Jhau Lak. To the east of the Las Bela plain the succession of north-south running mountain ranges make the passage to the Indus plain difficult and tortuous. But the continuation to the south of a narrow strip of coastal plain, from Las Bela upto Karachi and thence to the Indus Delta always provided the easiest route to the Lower Indus Valley.

Apart from these locational peculiarities the Las Bela plain, just like Karachi region, has some inherent potentialities to support life and has, therefore, been a centre of ancient cultures. Particularly the apex of this plain near Bela city has always enjoyed many advantages of strategic position, ample and assured water supply, because drainage of large hilly area converges on this point, and lastly the fertile soil free from salinity. Therefore, greatest concentration of ancient sites is found here.

Previous Studies

The area became the focus of attention at different times. Major C. F. Minchia in 1907 pointed out many ancient sites in the

district gazetteer. Some of them are Gondrani Caves or Rughan Shahr, on the Kud River with 1500 cave dwellings, Kalikot near Uthal, Kot-Bala on the Windar and Shordan on the Mobar Dhora.

Sir Aurel Stein surveyed the area in 1943 and pronounced Karia Pir mound as Sassanian site and Buband and Niain Buti as prehistoric. He excavated the latter site, but because of his untimely death the same year, his archaeological report remained unpublished.

More recently Raikes identified the old site, Kot-Bala, first mentioned by Minchin in 1907, as Harappan port-site. Miss de Cardi in 1957 explored the area south of Quetta valley upto Ornach, just north of Las Bela and discovered 55 new sites. She was, however, not given opportunity to continue further south upto Las Bela. Walter A. Fairervis, Jr. who had surveyed Quetta valley and Zhob and Loralai districts in 1949 and 1951, visited Las Bela in 1960. He instead of advancing the archaeological knowledge of this area created much confusion.

He gave a new name 'Edith Shahr' to the Buband mound of Aurel Stein, calling it complex A of this imaginary Shahr. He rightly recognised it as Kulli site with strong Harappan ties. But he confused the rectangular platforms between the mound and the base of hill to the west as part of the mound and hence belonging to Kulli Culture. These structures are totally different from the Buband mound and were built more than a thousand years after the destruction of the Kulli-Harappan site represented at Buband. This mound was used as quarry for stone and rubble for their construction.

Fairervis dramatised the whole thing, and instead of presenting a scientific report produced archaeological fiction. He imagined himself as walking along the streets between buildings of a huge megalopolis of 2000 B. C. extending for full eight miles on either side of the Poruli River. (Natural History, May, 1961, and Illustrated London News 26.8.1961). Reason for this confusion is the presence of not only the early historical pottery, but also sherds of typical Kulli and Harappan ware—even Nal ware, not noticed by Fairervis—in the filling material of Haddiras, obtained

from a Bahand mound. At other Haddiras not a single sherd of prehistoric wares was found. The digging on the mound was carried down to below the level of the ground. In this process apart from mixing up of all the prehistoric horizons, the mound was reduced to a number of isolated hummocks, separated by deep quarry pits, which were later filled by rainwash and wind-blown dust upto the general level of the ground. These depressions appear as white patches on the photograph.

Evidence from Karachi Area

The present writer had described briefly the prehistoric sites in Karachi area. (This article was published in the Dawn on July 21st and 23rd 1968). The prehistory of the area was traced from Palaeolithic through Mesolithic to Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. Since then new sites have been located and more material has been collected from the previously discovered sites. Full development of Mesolithic stone tool industries and their evolution into Neolithic has been found of particular interest.

This study reveals two cultural traits. The first, found at a site near University Campus, Mulri Hill site No. 12, and at a few minor ones, shows clear affinities with sites of the same period in S. W. Iran, Northern Iraq, particularly Shenidar Cave, other parts of Near East and even beyond with Tardenoisian microliths of Europe. On the other hand several other sites have produced tools having parallel in Mesolithic industries at Hargeisa in Somalia, East Africa. Some isolated tools show distinct relationship with Aurignacian of Upper Palaeolithic. One tool picked by Mr. Ishaq Ghaznavi, an officer of Geological Survey, from the slope of Laki range is identical with a tool of Lower Acheulio-Levalloisian culture of Hargeisa illustrated by J.D. Clark in his book 'Prehistoric Cultures of the Horn of Africa'.

Naturally this development in Karachi area could not have taken place in complete isolation. There must be their counterparts in other regions of the country. In Quetta valley search was made during a brief visit in May last. And with the help of Mr. A. H. Kidwai of Geological Survey a pre-pottery microlithic site was discovered at the second terrace on the left bank of the Ghundak Rud, a little below Kachhi dam. But the study of Las Bela plain

proved much more fruitful in providing the upper bracket for the microlithic industries in Karachi area.

SITES IN BELA AREA

On 4th May, 1971, while proceeding to Kanar, 3 new ancient mounds were noticed along the new alignment of the R.C.D. Road beyond Bela city. During later visits for regional survey of the area in June and August to November, some time was spared to study these new sites and also old sites discovered by Stein in 1943.

The most important new site is a mound, rising in the middle of the bed of a seasonal torrent, the Khakhar Kaur, north of the road-bridge, about 10 miles beyond Bela city. It has no name and could be called Khakhar Buthi, after the name of the nallah. Second mound is located on the left bank of the same nallah beyond the bridge and is locally known as Wadda Buthi, i.e. big mound.

A few furlongs further north there is another mound, known as Gaji Buthi, close to a deserted hamlet of the same name marked on the topo-sheet. About three-fourths of a mile north of it and west of the road, there was another low mound without any name. This has been completely bulldozed to use its rubble for raising the level of the road.

Beyond this a little off the road and surrounded by earth embankments and fields was another mound, known again as Gaji Buthi. This mound sometime back was dug out completely and its material tracted with the help of bullocks to raise embankments for a pond which, however, remained dry and another tank had to be dug to the south. This mound is located in the angle of two branches of Gundachu Dhora, a distributary of the Porali. Both of these branches enter the Khakhar Kaur. For convenience of discussion these three mounds have been numbered from south to north as Gaji Buthi-1, Gaji Buthi-2 and Gaji Buthi-3.

Haddiras

Close to the northern edge of the alluvial plain and on the southern tip of conglomerate hill, which separates the new road

from the Porali Valley near Goth Mohar mad Siddique, there are a large number of rectangular platforms and two stone circles. They are 3 to 4 feet high, have massive walls built of large rounded boulders of black limestone, obtained from the adjacent conglomerate hills. They are filled with stone rubble or gravel. They are according to Fairservis 15 to 30 feet wide and 70 to 100 feet long. More than 100 platforms are located here. This is the Complex B of 'Edith Shahr' as described by Fairservis. But they are locally known as Haddira, signifying tomb or graves. Some of these platforms in other parts are actually marked on topo-sheets as grave-yards. The commanding position of Haddira near Goth Mohammad Siddique, overlooking the entire northern plain of the Porali and the Kud rivers, gives an impression of a planned cantonment.

Near the Buband mound one and a half miles from the first is located second Haddira, which is sharply defined from the Kulli mound by the jeepable track going north to Kishari. Only a few platforms and one stone circle lie on the side of the mound, all other structures being to west of the road. Third Haddira, covering a large area, is located 4 miles north of Buband, between Kishari Village and a small tributary of Porali river further north. They are not so well preserved as previous ones and do not show distinctly on the aerial photograph and could not be counted. Two stone circles are however, clearly marked. Three, other smaller ones could be seen only in the field. In the middle, close to the bank of the Porali, there is a complex of residential buildings of the same period as evidenced from its pottery. The traces of large rooms or halls in the middle suggest that it could be some official building or a temple. This Haddira is located on the second terrace above the Porali bed. Present settlements come down to the first terrace and cultivation is carried on in narrow strips of flood plain protected by embankments. Two higher terraces are well marked in this area above the level of these Haddiras.

Fourth and the largest Haddira, lies 6 miles north of Kishari Haddira on either side of the Khundi Thal, a tributary of the Porali joining it from the west. It is well beyond the eight-mile limit of Fairservis. Here more than 200 platforms and 4 well marked stone circles can be counted on aerial photograph. Fifth Haddira lies on

the right bank of the Kud River one mile south of the junction of the Kunari Kaur with the Kud. More than 150 platforms were counted here but stone circles could not be recognised on the aerial photograph. Smaller collections of platforms are present on the Kaniki Nai. On the left bank of the Porali they are seen :- north of Kanar resthouse; near the old Karez; opposite Kishari Village and further south. Their greater concentration on the right bank of the Porali and on the Kud is significant in view of their presence also at Nindowari mound in Ormach area on the Kud which has been excavated by Casal. In Karachi area several stone circles have been noted but no Haddiras have so far been found. Some isolated structures are reported from the hills east of Las Bela plain.

KHAKHAR BUTHI — THE NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT

As stated above Khakhar Buthi stands as an island in the middle of the bed of Khakhar Kaur. This nallah runs north-south between the alluvial fans of the Porali and the Kud rivers. It marks the meeting place of the two cones and as such is the lowest part in the Bela region. Several distributaries from the Porali and also from the Kud flow into it. As no permanent settlement could have been sited in the middle of a natural drain, it clearly indicates a change in the very configuration of the area since its inception. The fans on either side were, after the establishment of this site, gradually raised to a much higher level.

This aggradation is an evidence of change of climate from a rainier to a more arid one. It is also supported by the reduction in the calibre of load carried by the rivers, as indicated by comparison of the material at higher and older terraces with the material transported at present. Similar aggradation and change of climate is found in Quetta Valley, where the base of a contemporary site at Kili Gul Mohammad lies at 4 metres below the general level of the surrounding plain. At Moenjodaro occupation levels go down to a depth of 65 feet below the level of the present flood plain. The Khakhar mound has actually been exhumed, due to uplift of land and intrenchment of river valleys during more recent times. At Moenjodaro, river silt has been observed upto a height of about 29 feet above the present flood plain. M. R. Sahni noticed silt deposits

much above the present level of the plain near Hyderabad. The present writer has noted similar natural silt deposits on the eastern flank of the Makli Hill west of Thatta, marking the upper limit of aggradation of the whole Indus plain. After this the process of degradation of the plain to the present level started.

The Khakhar mound rises about 20 feet above the level of the river bed. The top of the mound is only a few feet higher than the adjacent plain. It has a triangular shape, its apex pointing upstream. The mound along the eastern edge is about 350 feet and 130 feet along southern base. Flood waters have been eroding it from the tip as well as from both the sides. At present the eastern flank is being eroded more rapidly. Rains have been eroding it from top. Much of the material has been carried away by these flowing waters and pottery and chert implements trail far downstream from the mound. The broader southern slope, at its base, has some Muslim graves of recent time.

At the much reduced top area foundations of walls built of rounded river boulders are visible, and the slopes are thickly covered by similar boulders derived from the disintegrating walls on top. Much clay or much, building the mound, has resulted from debris of much-brick or mud-walls above stone foundations. At the northern tip upto a certain height there is no indication of either the boulder-built walls or pottery. But it is full of bone fragments, charcoal, ash and chert implements. This shows clearly that there is considerable thickness of pre-pottery stage at this site. Below the tip the boundary between pre-pottery and pottery stage is concealed by an overburden of material coming from top.

Stone Implements

Along pre-pottery horizon several lunate, one triangle, numerous microblades, backed blades and borers were collected. Due to erosion on top the thickness of horizons representing pottery stage and building levels is much reduced. Stone implements continue right to the top. But no microliths are found there. They are replaced by parallel edged blades and fluted cores. The blades are generally smaller in size compared to those found on chalcolithic sites in Sind. Many of them are serrated and show high degree of silica gloss, providing evidence of their use as sickle-blades.

Apart from above tools a large number of cores, mostly blade-cores, some flake-cores, scrapers of several types, burins of different kinds and some large flake-blades were also found. Stone tools are literally innumerable. The raw material is mostly a red variety of chert, found in Parh limestone of Cretaceous age, exposed to the north and east. It is found in the river beds and conglomerates in the form of small rounded pebbles all around the site. Most of the cores retain a part of this original pebble surface on one side. In the later phase larger blocks were obtained from the outcrop area. Several grinding stones or stone querns and some sling stones were also found.

The assemblage of tools as a whole is much more complex and diversified compared to those found at Anjira mound by Miss de Cardi or at Kili Gul Mohammad by Fairervis. Their parallels are found only in Karachi area.

Pottery

Much pottery is found on top and slopes. It can be divided into two main categories: 1. handmade, and 2. wheelmade.

1. (a) There is much handmade rough pottery with gritty temper. Most of it is plain with tan or pink colour body. But after some search sherds were found which have a red slip on one surface or both. A few sherds show a crude decoration in red, either simple thick lines or cross-hatched pendant triangles on outside and vertical lines pendant from rim inside. They clearly belong to the class of pottery which has been named by Fairervis as Kili Gul Mohammad Red Paint ware in Quetta Valley, confined to period II of Kili Gul Mohammad (K.G.M.) site.

(b) Another handmade pottery type is a thin Basket-marked ware. This is also considered typical of K.G.M. ware assemblage originating again in K.G.M. period II. Only three sherds were found on the site.

(c) Pieces of a crude straw-tempered pottery were also found.

2. The wheelmade pottery is thin and fine textured, well fired and red slipped. The deep red slip on this pottery was prepared by grinding haematite in water. A piece of haematite with ground

and polished faces was found on the site. This ware has a dull appearance and has no other decoration. Later the surface was burnished and the pottery appears to develop into two variants, one with a highly burnished and shining plum-red paint, without further decoration. The other variant developed into Black-on-Red Slip ware, with characteristic designs found on Kili Mohammad ware. The most common decoration is a black band along the rim outside as well as inside, inner band being thinner. Other designs are: vertical columns of thick horizontal zigzags under a broad horizontal band below the rim; vertical straight pendant lines inside the rim; cross-hatched triangles under horizontal band; other diagonally cross-hatched patterns; checker-board; pendant loops and black horizontal band along the pedestal base, in one case extending even on to the base.

Sherds with multiple parallel black bands, horizontal or oblique, on red slip may belong to Togau ware. One sherd with brownish colour has a lacing design under broad horizontal black band, similar to one illustrated from Anjira by de Cardi and assigned by her to Togau B phase. One sherd shows a vertical sigma band between vertical lines. Another sherd depicts part of a multiple rayed rosette. A few sherds with simple decoration of a broad black band on a buff slip appear to belong to early Amri-Keechi Beg class of pottery. A few sherds of wet-ware type were also collected.

Chronology and Correlations

The earlier pottery phase of this site corresponds with the earliest levels of Anjira mound near Khuzdar and Kili Gul Mohammad Period II, near Quetta which are considered to be Neolithic in age. Similar pottery has been found in the early phases of Sur Jangal and Rana Ghundai in Loralai district. Careful C. 14 dating at the Khakhar Butthi will show which way the cultural influences worked - from the coastal area inland or vice versa. The pre-pottery phase, with more archaic stone tool kit and survivals of Mesolithic stone industries may include occupation even older than the K.G.M. period I. For the upper part of K.G.M. I, a C. 14 range of 3500-3100 B.C. has been obtained. Khakhar Butthi may prove to be the oldest stratified site in Pakistan for Neolithic Period.

In the Bela Region Basket-marked ware was found in abundance at Buband as well as at Niain Buthi. But it is found here on surface mixed up with Kulli pottery and it may have a greater range in time here. Actually several sherds of Basket-marked ware from Buband and Niain Buthi are wheel-turned. This Basket-marked ware is different in fabric from that found at Khakhar Buthi. It no longer signifies a technological stage in pottery making, but appears to have assumed some functional aspect. At Niain Buthi typical K. G. M. ware and plum-red burnished ware similar to that found at Khakhar mound has been collected near northern foot of the mound, apparently underlying Nal phase.

Relationship with Karachi Region

The site of Khakhar mound provides an extremely important chronological tie for the pre-historic sites of southern Baluchistan and Karachi Region. The present writer on a recent visit to Tharro Fort near Gujjo, a recognised site of Amri Culture, found material on the newly eroded part, which closely resembles the early pottery phase at Khakhar mound. The coarse grit-tempered hand-made pottery and thin, red-slipped undecorated sherds from Tharro appear identical to this type of pottery at Khakhar Buthi. A number of lunates and some thin serrated blades with high lustre are quite different in raw material and technique from the later backed blades and triangles found at Tharro. They along with handmade and red-slipped ware suggest occupation at the site before Amri Culture, representing Neolithic phase.

Another site in Lower Sind, Kot Raja Manjhera, on the right bank of the Indus, was described in the previous article (Dawn, July 1968) as a fortified site of Amri period. It was revisited on 1.3.73, and the new information gathered is relevant here and is added in this reprint. Apart from Amri ware, a few sherds with dark red slip found here, are similar to the red-slipped ware found at Khakhar and Tharro. A grey ware similar to that at Tharro is interesting. Apart from plain grey, grey or brownish grey ware with simple linear decoration in white, red, reddish brown or black paint shows some affinity with Faiz Mohammad Grey ware of Quetta

Valley. But the sherds are too few and too fragmentary to be quite specific on this point.

Another fine ware, again in small fragments, is a light red or pink ware with buff slip and a broad black band on either side of the rim. In technique it resembles the ware with black band on rim of a red burnished ware of Khakhar and Nalin Buthi, but in colour and form is probably closer to Kot Diji ware. It requires further investigation. Some red sherds with bright red slip and thick white incrustation resemble the pottery of many pre-Harappan sites in Karachi area.

A very unique feature of this site is the find of a large number of tiny arrowheads or dartpoints. The total number of arrowheads, found so far in the whole country, is just a few. They are mostly leaf shaped and without a tang. At this site, out of a total collection of about 1300 chert pieces of all types, 215 are these beautiful tanged arrowheads. They show a highly developed technique in tool making. In size they range from less than half inch to less than one inch, with one exception of a thicker specimen of about 1½ inches.

Most of them are based on a parallel-edged microblade, with triangular cross-section. Their tips and tangs are centred at the mid-rib of the blade. Both the edges are trimmed with nibbling retouch along the whole length even on specimens less than ½ inch in length. They are leaf-shaped or triangular, with a long and perfect tang.

They were collected from a rocky surface almost completely stripped of the thin white silty-clay soil present on other parts of the site. They appear to represent the lowermost horizon of occupation. But their contemporaneity with any type of pottery on the site is uncertain. This find underlines the wide gap in our knowledge of prehistory of this country and the extent of speculation in theorizing about the origins and end of civilizations in this area.

Around Karachi city a good number of sites were found by the writer which produced plum-red burnished ware. They were discussed in the previous article mentioned earlier. Many of them

are located in the Malir basin. Most important of them are: Kara Jahal in Koukar, Kotwari Butthi in Khadeji, several sites along the Mol River, one south of Goth Radho on right bank of the Malir river; along Langheji Nadi, one in Landhi area on Hyderabad road, Mangho Pir, University Campus, and some in the Hab Valley.

Main features of these sites are: the use of this plum-red burnished ware, some handmade pottery, small parallel-edged blades, many of them indented and showing silica gloss, stone axes, at one site in Deh Bile one intact polished axe and two broken fragments, 3 polished axes at one site in deh Mendiari, Hab Valley. Another significant feature of this period is the building of forts on top of isolated hills. They are enclosed by dry stone walls on sides from which ascent is easy, the difficult face towards river or deep valley is left undefended. They generally assume the form of a promontory fort. All this evidence shows fairly dense population, well organised, living in permanent settlements and practising agriculture. The conditions, however, do not appear entirely peaceful. The people were therefore, obliged to build defensive works.

These sites were considered to be Neolithic in the previous study. The evidence from Khakhar mound and also Niain Butthi confirms this conclusion. Another site found recently in Karachi area itself on the right bank of the Langheji, known as *Nioni*, provides similar evidence. Topmost occupation here belongs to Harappan period, which is underlain by a phase which produced some microliths. All this evidence decides once for all that the large number of microlithic sites in Karachi area are in their proper sequence of time as in Near East and other parts of the west and they can safely be classified on the basis of technology of stone implements.

New Light on Previously Discovered Sites

Niain Butthi

This prehistoric site, 3 miles north-east of Bela and west of Kulri Nal, was excavated by Stein in 1943. D.E. McCown prepared a report on the pottery collected by Stein in Las Bela, which remains unpublished. Miss Beatrice de Cardi studied this report with the

permission of Director General of Archaeology in India. Her remarks about this site in *Pakistan Archaeology* No. 2, are the only source of previous information about this site. According to this report Kulli Culture here is underlain by Nal Culture, and Togau Sherds overlap and underlie the Nal phase. B. B. Lal in his book 'Indian Archaeology since Independence', has given C. 14 date of 1900 ± 65 B.C. for Kulli phase at Niain Buti.

Present study revealed that even without excavation the cultural sequence can be worked out at this site. Along the western edge of the mound in a vertical cliff several feet thick strata reveal typical Nal pottery underlying the Kulli Culture. Stone walls appear at a few points extending below the level of the bed of small nallah which has cut this cliff. But no older phase was seen here. But the pre-Nal horizons appear to rise northwards and are exposed at the foot of northern slope near the modern graveyard. A red ware phase antedating Nal is recognised here. One sherd of Togau C phase was picked a little up the slope.

On the low ground numerous sherds with red slip; polished and decorated with black bands along rim, a few diagonally hatched sherds, a fragment of pedestalled open bowl with deep red slip and decorated with dot-tipped rosette in the centre and black band along rim, a characteristic design of Kili Gul Mohammad ware, was found from the debris of Stein's excavations. Plum-red burnished ware, also found at Khakhar Buti, is abundant. A few sherds of hand-made coarse ware were also present.

One sherd with a typical lacing design belonging to Togau B phase, one with double vertical bands of sigmas between parallel lines, and several sherds with multiple parallel lines, probably belonging to Togau B phase, found at Khakhar Buti also were collected. One sherd shows thick radiating lines about 1 cm. long. In the same area some small scrapers, one burin and blades were found, though on the mound itself stone tools are very rare.

Buband

This site is located 10 miles north of Bela, west of the narrow flood plain of the Porali. Fairervis pronounced it as late Kulli

site with strong Harappan ties. The morphology of the site is really much more complex. The entire area between the remnants of the mound and the hills to the west is covered by Haddira platforms with two stone circles, a necessary accompaniment of such structures. The mound is much disturbed and has been used as quarry for stone and rubble for the construction of the Haddira most probably during Achaemenian period. The northern most remnant shows stairways built with large stones and probably formed the high platform of a fire-temple, contemporary to these Haddiras. The original mound is reduced to a number of isolated hummocks composed of piles of rounded boulders, intermingled with pottery and rubble. Apart from late Kulli and Harappan ware, typical Kulli pottery of its mature phase was found on low mound to the north. In the western section between some boulder wall foundations on low ground typical Nal pottery was found in abundance. Some early designs of Nal, common with Amri ware, were present on some sherds.

To the south of the mound in the bed of a torrent descending from the hills to the west, stone walls 4 to 5 feet thick are exposed a little below the level of flat ground on which the mound stands. Two rooms can be recognised west of this wall. Similar wall foundations are visible on the east. It is uncertain whether these walls are part of a defence system or protective works against floods resultant upon the rising level of the river bed. In view of the evidence of aggradation in the whole area, it appears certain that occupation levels go far down the ground level.

Kot Bala

Kot Bala, a mound in Doh Bala of the Windar River delta is located on a buried channel of the Windar, which through Khurkera area entered the Siranda Lake in the past. Some minor channels still pass by it. But agriculture at present is based on well-irrigation. Raikes identified it as a Harappan port site. Present study revealed that this site is also Kulli site, later occupied or peacefully shared by the Harappans. There is possibility of older horizons below the level of the plain at this site also, as considerable thickness of loess-like material has been deposited over river gravel, forming

the aquifer in this area. Low ground southeast of the mound shows occupation during historical times, probably during Buddhist and Muslim periods.

Post-Harappan-Kulli Cultures

All the three sites of Buband, Niain Buti and Kot Bala were destroyed by burning. The conflagration completely baked the upper layers to a depth of several feet. This happened more or less simultaneously. Coarse incised ware at all three sites is found in abundance. At Kot Bala and Wadda Buti pottery with designs similar to those at Shahi Tump cemetery near Turbat and at Nazarabad mound further west is found. This indicates occupation of this area by Jhukar people who are supposed to be responsible for destruction of all Harappan and Kulli sites. At Gaji Buti-1 abundant clay bangles and presence of a buff pottery with designs resembling those of Trihni ware found on sites around Manchhar Lake is interesting. One of the buff sherds from Karia Pir mound is identical with one of Trihni ware illustrated by D.H. Gordon.

At Wadda Buti, Gaji Buti-1 and Gaji Buti-3 Londo ware is present in appreciable quantity. At Kot Bala pottery with obvious affinity to that found in Jiواني cairns was found. D. H. Gordon assigns an age of about 750 B.C. for these wares, though de Cardi considers the Londo ware somewhat older dating it to 1000-1200 B.C.

Haddira platforms are associated in every case with stone circles resembling Paris Tower of Silence. And some small circles and straight avenues marked by lines of stones probably have something to do with Sun-worship. Alexander's historians have recorded that Oreitei i.e. people of Las Bela exposed their dead before disposal. Cyrus had annexed some of the frontier areas before the middle of the 6th century B.C. and during the reign of Darius the entire area upto Indus formed his richest Satrapy before the 6th century B.C. ended. From this we may conclude that these Haddiras belong to Achaemenian Period, and mark their burials. Only excavation can confirm it. The pottery associated with these structures is coarse, gritty, incised or cordon decorated, with rope design or pinched with finger tips. A few sherds with cloth markings on inner surface were also found. Similar pottery is found at Kishari and

Buband Haddiras, Wadda Buthi, the three Gaji Buthis and Kali Kot. Fabric-marked pottery has been found at many sites in Karachi area also.

Karia Pir mound is considered to be Sassanian in age, though it is a high mound and the site may have existed earlier and lasted longer. Trihni ware has been recognised here. Indications of early Muslim period are also found. A piece of ornamental brick found at Kot Bala shows occupation during Buddhist period. At Gondrani caves or Rughan Shehr not much dateable material is found. Only in two caves a few sherds of a bichrome pottery, with red and black parallel bands, were found. This type of pottery has been found by the writer at Aghor on Hingol River, in Kalan Kot on Makli and in lower layers of the mound of Las Bela town itself, exposed in the cutting of the Narag Dhoru east of the town. The caves may belong to Buddhist period. A few sherds of glazed ware indicating Muslim occupation were found at Karia Pir, Gaji Buthi-1, Kot Bala and Kali Kot. Mound of Bela town appears to represent the whole Muslim period. Thus the Bela region appears to span the entire history from Neolithic period to the present time.

Immediate Danger to these Sites

Bela region is virtually an archaeological museum in its natural setting. All these sites located along an international highway, or a few miles off it, would be a great attraction for the tourist. Apart from being valuable cultural heritage of the whole nation, they are a great asset for the tourist trade. The entire area along the R.C.D. Road from Karachi to Quetta apart from its scenic beauty is studded with innumerable archaeological remains. Through proper care and a little development these monuments could become great money earners for the poverty stricken areas in which they lie.

These sites at present are in great danger at the hands of contractors, working for the R.C.D. Road. One mound in this area, Gaji Buthi-2, has been completely erased. Haddiras near Goth Mohammad Siddique, which were the best preserved ones and were visible miles away from the road, have been destroyed to obtain

large sized stones for construction of bridges on the road. The ancient people who had neither the facilities of transport that we now enjoy, nor means of blasting rock from the nearby mountains, left these monuments for our generation. These monuments just a few months back looked as perfect as if they had been completed only a few years back. But on the last visit on 23rd November, 1972, most of them were found dismantled and laid waste.

Similarly fate may have befallen the largest group of Haddiras on either side of the Khundi Jhal further north. Digging of stones from the walls at Khakhar mound 10 miles beyond Bela city has already started. This is the most valuable Neolithic site in the southern part of the country. Its destruction will be the greatest national loss in this field.

North of Lax Bela, all along the length of R.C.D. Road there are hundreds of Gabarbands and a great number of ancient sites in Jhalawan and Sarawan. The same process might be at work throughout the area. It is high time that the Central and Provincial authorities and the Archaeology Department pay some attention to this serious problem of protection and preservation of these monuments. It is urged upon the government to direct the authorities concerned to see this destruction brought to an end. It may be emphasised here that there is no scarcity of building material in this area, as the highway passes through a mountainous terrain all its way to Quetta. Contractors' profit will not be reduced much if these monuments are spared for the future generations and for the pursuit of knowledge and research. This is particularly necessary for the area between Bela and Khuzdar where the road is yet to be completed.

P.S. The Shordan site on the Mobar River was searched and located after the completion of this article. The site proved to be of Harappan culture with some later occupation also. It is very important for its location and also for the evidence it provides for the changes in landforms since the end of the Indus Valley civilization. This site will be discussed separately with its correlation with other Harappan sites in the southern parts of the country.





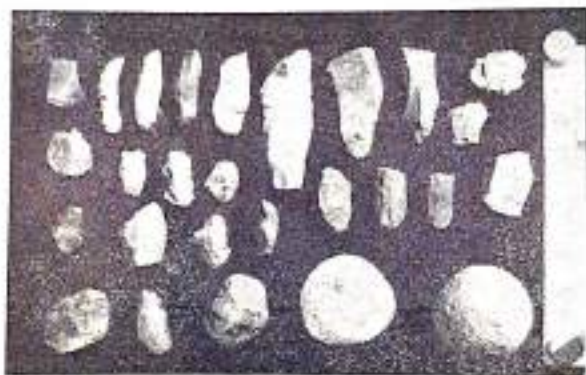
Baband Mound and Haddiras, a panoramic view



Kulli ware from Nizim Buthi



Nal ware from Nizim Buthi



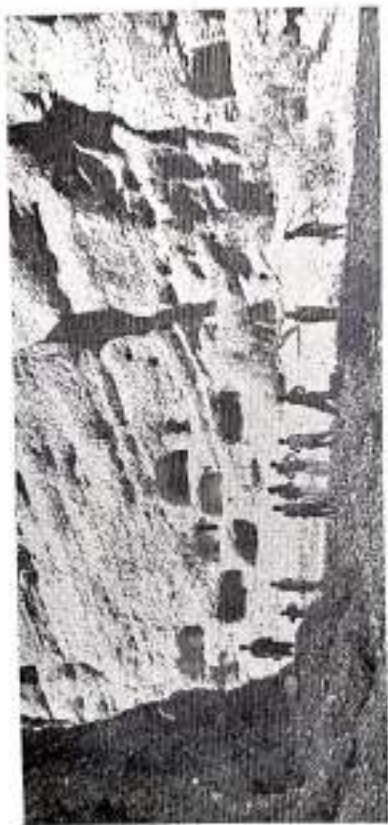
Implements from Khakhar Mound



Implements from Tharri Fort



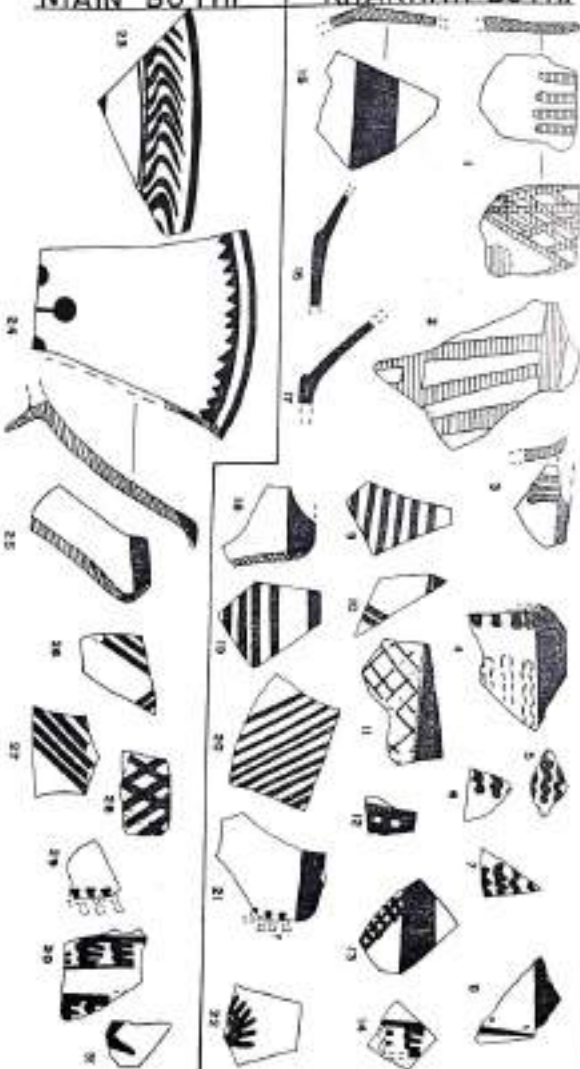
Leaf-shaped and tanged arrowheads from
Kot Raja Manjhera



Entrance to Valley of Caves or Rugham Shahar

NIJIN BUTHI

KHAKHAR BUTHI

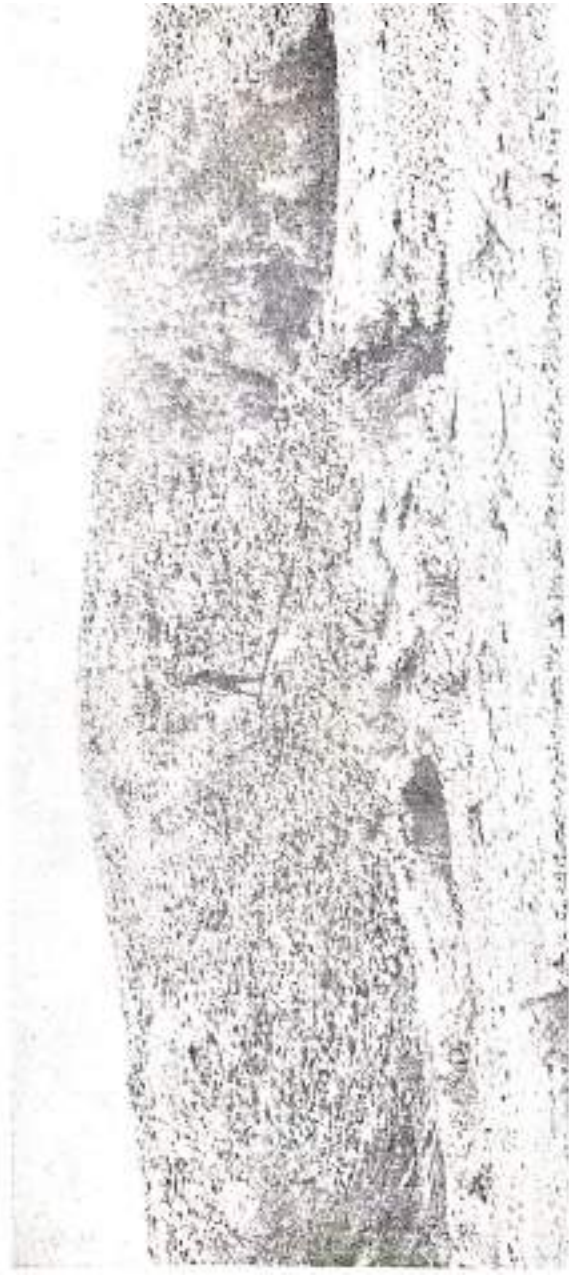


Khakhar Buthi : 1-2. Hardware, girth-tipped ware, decorated in red on plain surface; 3-14 and 16-22 Black-on-Red Slip ware with designs similar to Kili Gul Mohamud ware; 15. Black-on-Buff Slip ware.

PAINTED POTTERY

base; 15. Black-on-Buff Slip ware.

Nijin Buthi : 23. Torus C ware; 24-31. Pre-Med Black-on-Red Slip ware.



Khakhar Mound from East

Bibliography

1. Casal, Jean-Marrie, 1966, "Nindowari - A Chalcolithic Site in South Baluchistan", *Pakistan Archaeology* No. 3, Karachi.
2. Clark, J. D., 1954, *The Prehistoric Cultures of the Horn of Africa*, Cambridge.
3. Dales, George F., 1966, "The Decline of the Harappans", *Scientific American*, Vol. 214, No. 5, May 1966.
4. De Cardi, Beatrice, 1951, "A New Prehistoric Ware from Baluchistan", *Iraq, British School of Archaeology in Iraq*, Vol. 13, Pt. 2.
5. De Cardi, Beatrice, 1965, "Excavations and Reconnaissance in Kalat, West Pakistan", *Pakistan Archaeology* No. 2, Karachi.
6. Fairervis, Walter A. Jr., 1956, "Excavations in the Quetta Valley, West Pakistan", *Anthrop. Papers Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*
7. Fairervis, Walter A. Jr., 1959, "Archaeological Surveys in the Zhob and Loralai Districts, West Pakistan", *Anthrop. Papers Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, Vol. 47, Pt. 2.
8. Gordon, D. H., 1960, *The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture*, Bombay.
9. Khan, A. Rauf, 1968, "Ancient Settlements in Karachi Region", *Dawn, Karachi, Sunday Magazine Section*, July 21 & 28, 1968.
10. "Excavations at Kot Diji", *Pakistan Archaeology* No. 2.
11. Herodotus, *The Histories*, Translated by Aubrey De Selincourt, *The Penguin Classics*, 1954.
12. Hole, Frank and Kent V. Flannery, 1967, "The Prehistory of South-western Iran: A Preliminary Report", *Proc. Prehis. SOC.*, Vol. 33.
13. Minchin, C. F., 1907, *Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series* Vol. VIII Las Bela, Allahabad.
14. Solecki, R. S., 1963, "Prehistory in Shanidar Valley, Northern Iraq", *Science*, Vol. 139, No. 3551.
15. Stein, Sir Aurel, 1943, "On Alexander's Route into Gedrosia: An Archaeological Tour in Las Bela", *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. CII, No. 5, 6.