

Genesis and Development of the Hakra Ware / Early Harappan People of Eastern Domain: A Case Study of Haryana

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Abstract: The Ghaggar-Saraswati basin was the most growing economic region for the Harappan civilization, particularly in the Eastern domain. The state of Haryana, located in this region, stood out as a developing economic hub and displayed evidence of prosperity. One notable factor contributing to its development was the presence of an effective irrigation system such as Saraswati-Ghaggar river basin, along with a variety of mineral resources that further enhanced its economic potential. The excavation of the earliest sites of Haryana namely Kunal (Khatri and Acharya 1997), Bhirrana (Rao 2006), Farmana (Shinde, 2011), Girawad (Shinde, 2011) Balu, Rakhigarhi etc. throw light on the life style of the earlier phase of this civilization. Archaeological findings of these sites have revealed that people lived in pit dwellings and used semiprecious stones, bone objects, metal objects and wheel-made pottery. The evidences found from these excavations have indicated that the people of earlier Harappan were involved in the export, import trades and copper melting activities. Apart this, the detected evidences have shown the existence of agricultural activities in this region such as cultivation of wheat, barley and rice etc. This paper is concerned only with the Hakra Ware People and Early Harappan period's remains as reported from various excavations carried out in Haryana.

Keywords: Eastern Domain, Haryana, Hakra Ware, Early Harappans, Mehrgarh, Kunal, Bhirrana, Farmana, Girawad.

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Introduction

The Indian Subcontinent witnessed its first urbanization in the middle of the third millennium BC as a result of continued cultural development that started around the beginning of seventh millennium BC at Mehrgarh and Killi Ghul Mohammad in the Quetavally (Jarrigre, 1984, Fairservise, 1956). Extensive research conducted by various scholars revealed the existence of contemporary early farming communities referred to as Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures. The history of mankind began with the Cholistan region on or along the local depressions. During the following stage of human history, the remains of Early Harappan phase were reported from 44 sites in Cholistan region and

291 sites in Haryana. This number is even less than half of the 99 sites of preceding Hakra culture in Cholistan and 4.81 percent of Hakra culture in comparison to Early Harappan settlement in Haryana (Table I&II). However, the centre of these sites is shifted to the little Cholistan area of Northern Bhawalpur from Greater Cholistan of Southern Bhawalpur. Thus, the remains of the Hakra and Early Harappan culture have been recorded from separate geographical sub-zones. This numbers is quite insignificant in comparison to the respective number of settlements of the two cultures. Thus the locations of this areas was such as raw materials and finished goods could easily have been transported to the production and consuming like Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh, Harappa in Wets Punjab, Kalibangan in Rajasthan, Banawali and Rakhigarhi in Haryana, Dohlavira in Gujarat, besides the large scale pastoral activities. Hence, it was within the manageable limits to feed both the agricultural and non-agricultural producers in the given situation. Perhaps, these factors, proved instrumental in converting this zone as a major production center during Mature Harappan times (Thakran, 2001). Mohammad Rafique Mughal originally used the terms "Hakra ware culture" and "Early Harappan culture" following his investigation of the Hakra River bed in the province of Cholistan, because both phases represent the early stages of Indus valley culture. This civilization can be broadly divided into four phases of cultural development:

Table I: Showing the Chronology of Indus Civilization

<i>General Chronology:</i>	<i>Harappan Tradition</i>
Early Food Producing Era	circa + 7000 to 5000 B.C (Mehrgarh Phase)
Regionalization Era	5000 to 2600 B.C. (Hakra & Ravi Phase)
Integration Era	2600 to 1900 B.C. (Classical Phase)
Localization Era	1900 to 1300 B.C. (Late Harappan / Cemetery H Phase)

Conspicuously, this civilization grows in the river bed of Indus-Saraswati in Present India and Pakistan. These cultures exhibited distinctive regional variations in their material culture, leading to their classification into various zones, such as Amri Nal, Queta, and Sothi-Siswal, among others. Within this broad chronological order it is possible to visualize the early beginning of Chalcolithic village farming communities that paved the foundation for the emergence of large urban centers in the urban phase and their subsequent decline and final disappearance of the civilization by the end of Post-Urban phase. These phases do show perceptible difference in the actual practice reflecting the assortment and evolving belief systems of the Harappan society. Frideman and Rowlandspresent an initially linear sequence; it is clear from their discussion of each civilization that they envisage a wide variety of actual sequence.

Table II: Site distribution in Cholistan region and Haryana

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>No. of Site in Cholistan Region</i>	<i>No. of site in Haryana</i>
1	Hakra culture	99	22
2	Early Harappan culture	44	241
3	Mature Harappan culture	174	96
4	Late Harappan Culture	50	840

The emergence of regional styles during the Pre-Harappan phase can be seen as indicative of competing groupings. However, it is important to note that the labels assigned to these styles may be

more influenced by the order of their discovery rather than reflecting their contemporary heterogeneity. W.A. Fairservis proposed that the Early Harappan Culture in the broader Indus-Saraswati region was characterized by a fusion of regional cultural features. Notably, cultural materials unearthed at sites such as Amri, Nal, Kot-Dijian, Kalibangan and Sothi-Siswal, which precedes the Mature Harappan period, should be classified as part of the Early Harappan phase (Fairservis 1971:221). This re-evaluation allows for a more accurate understanding of the developmental trajectory of the Harappan civilization in the Indus-Saraswati region. In order to advance a comprehensive understanding of the expansion and diversity of the Greater Indus region, G.L. Possehl has undertaken a systematic classification of this region into seven distinct domains based on characteristic regional differences in material culture (Possehl, 1997). This classification serves as a valuable framework for analyzing and interpreting the archaeological data pertaining to the Harappan civilization. These domains are- (i) North-Western Domain, (ii) Kulli Domain, (iii) Sindhi Domain (iv) Harappa Domain (v) Cholistan Domain (vi) Sorath Domain (vii) Eastern Domain (Fig. I). The geographical conditions were the major factor for such kind of distinction. On the basis of regional diversity the Early Harappan culture is divided into the four regional divisions. The Baluchistan region within the Greater Indus area holds key insights into the origins of early farming communities during the Harappan age. There are some archaeological sites like Mehargrah, Gumla, and Sarai Khola etc. which provide us ample evidence of human development. As the present paper is confined to the origin and distribution of Hakra ware culture and Early Harappan culture in Haryana which were equally important for their contribution in the origin of Indian civilisation.

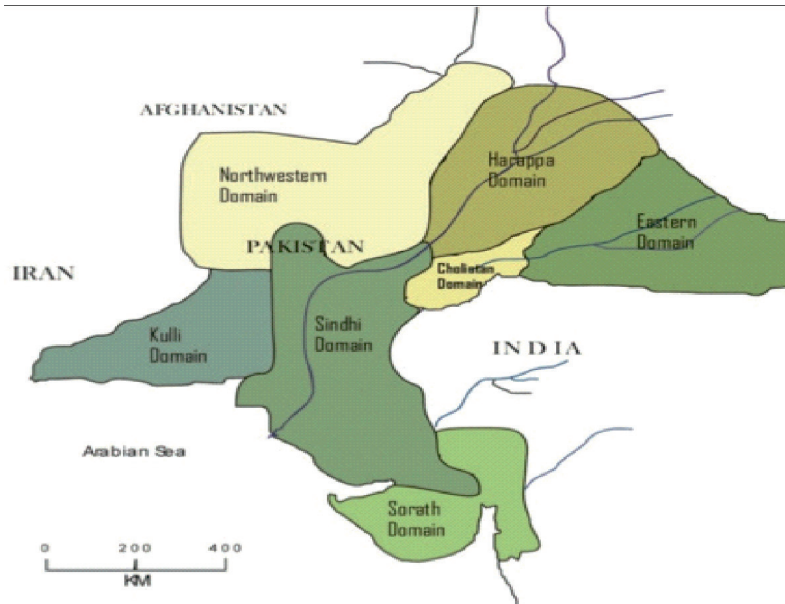


Fig. I: Domain of Harappan Civilisation (courtesy G.L. Possehl, 1997)

Aim and Objective of the study

- (1) To trace out the genesis and distribution of early Harappan sites in this region.
- (2) To get acquainted with the transformation of village culture to urban traits.
- (3) To acquainted characteristics feature of the Early Harappans in the eastern domain.
- (4) To findout the migration of Cholistan people towards Haryana.

Study Area

In this study, the focus was on the Haryana region, an integral part of the Greater Indus region. Haryana is eminent for its diverse geography, natural splendor, seasonal rivers, and rich cultural history. The emergence of the Proto-historic culture in Haryana unfolded along the banks of the Saraswati-Ghaggar River, extending into present-day Rajasthan. Numerous archaeological sites in this area have been unearthed and meticulously examined by scholars. Our research method involved tracing the courses of the Saraswati and Ghaggar Rivers, as most sites are situated along their banks. The distinctive environmental features of Haryana have consistently attracted Prehistoric human settlements. H.A. Phadke emphasizes Haryana's significant role in the synthesis of Indian culture, stemming from the amalgamation of diverse peoples and races. Initial exploration involved an extensive review of literature, including excavated site reports, site-specific data, and relevant research papers. Altogether, the investigation of archaeological sites in Haryana within the context of the Greater Indus region provides profound insights into the cultural history and proto-historic human settlements in South Asia.

Review of Literature

There are some excavation reports and research papers that delve into the archaeological findings of the Hakra and Early Harappan culture in this specific region. These are Surajbhan's "Prehistoric archaeology of the Saraswati and Drishdvti valley (Haryana) unpublished Ph.D. from M.S. University Baroda (Gujarat), Excavations at Mitathal (1968), Excavation at Banawali (1982) by R.S. Bisht, Excavation at Balu, J.S. Khatri and M. Acharya "Kunal:A New Indus-Saraswati site" in Puratattva No. 25, K.N. Dikshit "Origin of Early Harappan culture", R.C. Thakran "A Locational Analysis of Harappan sites (2001), Excavations at Farmana and Girawad by V.S. Sindhe, Arun Kesrwani and Vinay Dangi "Distribution of Hakra sites in Haryana along the Saraswati and Drishadvati river" (2013) and numerous other scholars whose research contributes to understanding the significant archaeological importance of this region.

Site Distribution in Haryana

Patterns in settlement distribution, especially the frequency with which sites appear within a given area or environment, play a useful role in these studies by revealing settings that people favored as prevailing social conditions changed through time.

The early stages of food production were crucial in establishing the subsistence base that sustained urban centers in the ancient Saraswati-Ghaggar River region and its tributaries in Haryana. Excavations carried out in this area have provided insights into the evolving stages of human settlement and agricultural practices. Archaeological evidence shows a gap between the Stone Age and the onset of the Pre-Harappan culture in the Haryana region, highlighted by the absence of Neolithic sites like Domeli in Punjab. The earliest habitation of Hakra ware people have been unearthed at the Kunal and Bhirrana sites, where inhabitants resided in pits. In addition to these sites, namely Farmana, Girawad, Banawali, and Siswal etc. (Table III) there are other important sites in Haryana where people inhabited during the later phases of this civilization. During the early Harappan period, Rakhigarhi emerged as a significant center in this region, with a larger zone of influence compared to other Harappan centers in Haryana (Manmohan Kumar, 2011). Other sites such as Kunal, Bhirrana, Farmana, Mitathal, and Balu also held importance during this time. Kanak-1, situated in the semi-arid zone of Bhiwani district,

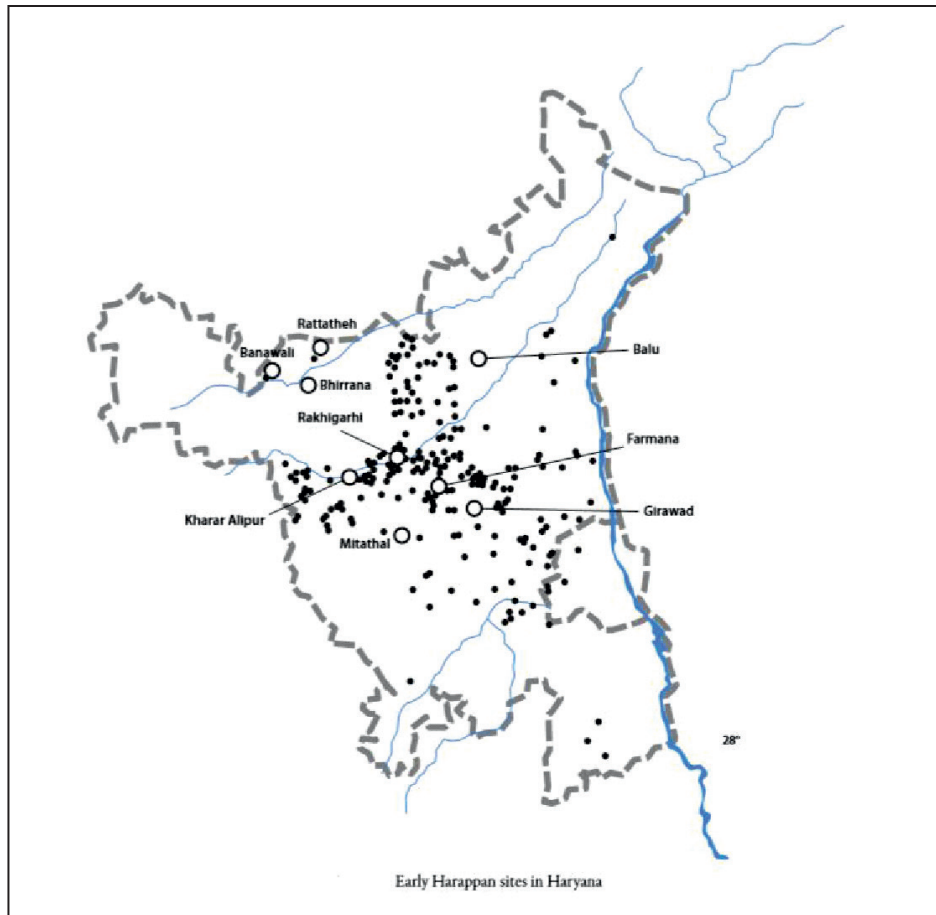
is another notable early Harappan site. Its location is intriguing as it is nestled in the vicinity of the Aravali hills. It is speculated that people from the Eastern Hakra culture may have visited this site in search of metals, stones, and minerals (Narender Parmar et al., 2013). The region encompassing the Saraswati, Drishadwati, and Yamuna rivers exhibits a linear settlement pattern that showcases the presence of early sites. In Haryana, there are a total of 241 Early Harappan sites, which surpasses the number of mature Harappan sites but is less than the late Harappan phase. This distribution of sites in Haryana supports the migration theory proposed by G.L. Possehl. These sites in Haryana offer valuable evidence of the cultural development from the early stage to the urban stage within the state. Archaeological evidence from sites such as Balu, Rakhigarhi, Farmana, and Girawad further confirms the continuity of cultural development in this region. The material culture found at these sites is comparable to the Neolithic levels observed at Mehrgarh (K.N. Dikshit, 2010). Additionally, excavations at Hakra sites in Haryana have revealed a gradual progression, laying the foundation for the Early Harappan Culture in this region. Many traditions of the Hakra culture continued into the Harappan Civilization throughout the Early Harappan to Late Harappan phases. This dispersal of sites in the state of Haryana provides the good climatic condition to mainstay of people during agriculture to self-dependent entities as well. Archaeological evidence at the site of Rakhigarhi, Farmana and Girawad confirmed similar continuation of further cultural development in this area. The data of these sites is similar Neolithic levels at Mehrgarh (K.N. Dikshit, 2010). However, excavation at Hakra sites in Haryana exposed the gradual deployment and it provided the base for early Harappan Culture in this region. Because, Many Hakra cultural traditions were continued in the Harappan Civilization through the Early Harappan to Late Harappan phase.

Table III: List of Hakra Ware sites in Haryana

<i>Bhirrana Excavated</i>	<i>Kheri-Maham-I Explored</i>
Rakhigarhido	Siswal Excavated
Kunaldo	Rajpura-II Explored
Farmana-Ido	Talwarado
Khanpur Kalan Explored	Banawali Excavated
Ghaswa-Ido	Shymalo Kalan-I&II Explored
Girawad-II Excavated	Nidani-III do
Burjdo	Khima Kheri do
Anupgarh-I Explored	Barakhurd do
Bhaganwala-I do	Dhani do
Dhighana-I do	Gatoli do
Igara-Ido	Karela-I do
Kharenti-Ido	Nidana do
Manoharpurdo	Lakhanmajra do

Cultural traits of Hakra ware/ Early Harappan in Haryana

The Hakra Ware people and Early Harappans in Haryana, inhabited in the Ghaggar-Hakra river valley, exhibited distinctive cultural traits indicative of the broader Harappan Civilization. These communities engaged in advanced agricultural practices, harnessing the waters of the Saraswati-Dharasdwati and its tributaries for irrigation and cultivating crops such as wheat, barley, green gram (mung), water-melon, garlic etc. Archaeological evidence in Haryana reveals well-planned urban centers with



Map showing the Early Harappans sites in Haryana (After Manmohan Kumar)

advanced infrastructure, including intricate drainage systems and sophisticated brick construction. The people of this region actively participated in trade networks, connecting with neighboring regions and contributing to the overall economic prosperity of the Harappan Civilization. Social organization was likely hierarchical, with evidence of distinct social classes and the presence of citadels and lower towns in major settlements. The skilled craftsmanship of the Hakra Ware people is evident in artifacts like pottery, seals, and metal objects, reflecting their artistic and technological prowess. While the specifics of their religious practices remain enigmatic, the Hakra Ware culture and early Harappans in Haryana played a crucial role in the overall complexity and advancement of the Harappan Civilization.

Ceramic traditions of Hakra and Early Harappan in Haryana

Hakra ware first time found in Cholistan region watered by the river Hakra which was the transformed name of the Ghaggar/ Saraswati in Pakistan. Generally, Harappan cultures have been identified on the basis of their pottery tradition. For example, in the initial phase of this civilization, they used a different pottery tradition known as the Hakra ware. Hakra ware culture was characterised by the three main types of pottery assemblages viz, Hakra incised, Hakra Mud Applique and Hakra Black Burnished ware. This division was made on the basis of vessel shapes, fabrics, technique of manufacturing and surface treatment. However, this culture spread across the eastern domain with some regional variations. Bhirrana was the first site in Haryana which displays the Hakra ware culture with regional variations namely (Mud Applique, Incised, Tan slipped/Chocolate slipped ware), along

with some Black Burnished ware, Brown/Buff ware, Bi-chrome ware and Black-on-Red ware painted with geometric and some floral motifs (Rao, etl. 2004-05). Ceramic analysis of the Kunalian people reveals that they predominantly used pottery fabric similar to the Kalibangan-1 style. They were used so called Hakra wares, handmade pottery near black and red ware pottery, a dull chocolate coloured burnished ware with paring marks, dull red ware with wavy incised decorations on the outer surface (fig. 4&5) The different type of dull red ware pottery with black outline and white filling also filling also found at Banawali, Kalibangan and Kotdiji, however in Bhirrana, it is associated with Harka ware in the upper level with floral and faunal painted motifs including stylish bull head and decorated horns and a variety of pipal leaf were also noticed in the later phase of early Harappan's (K.N. Dikshit, p.28). Farmana and Girawad provide the unique type of pottery (Incised ware, ResereSliped ware, Grey ware, Grooved or Cordoned ware) in which Periano Reserve Ware is most important because this type of pottery discovered at Periano Ghundai and spreads over a large area upto Kalibangan and now in Eastern domain. (Fig. 9) In the Banawali period 1, the pottery shows similarities to the Sothian pottery, indicating a cultural connection between the two regions. This suggests that the people of the Sothian culture had a long-standing presence in the Banawali region, possibly preceding the Kalibangan culture. At Rakhigarhi, ceramic industry of Early Harappan period 1 present all six fabric types of Kalibangan pottery and were also noticed at Banawali Period I. And some sherds also compare with the Hakra ware. Period 1B at Rakhigarhi marks the emergence of formative urbanism, characterized by planned settlements and the development of other cultural traits such as un-inscribed seals, inscribed pottery, terracotta bull figurines, chert blades, and weights (Rajpal, 2016). In comparison to the Greater Indus region, the pottery in the earlier phases of the Harappan civilization exhibits variations across different sites. The use of Kalibangan-1 fabric is observed in multiple regions, indicating cultural interaction and exchange within the Greater Indus region. These findings contribute to our understanding of the diverse pottery traditions and cultural dynamics during the early phases of the Harappan civilization.

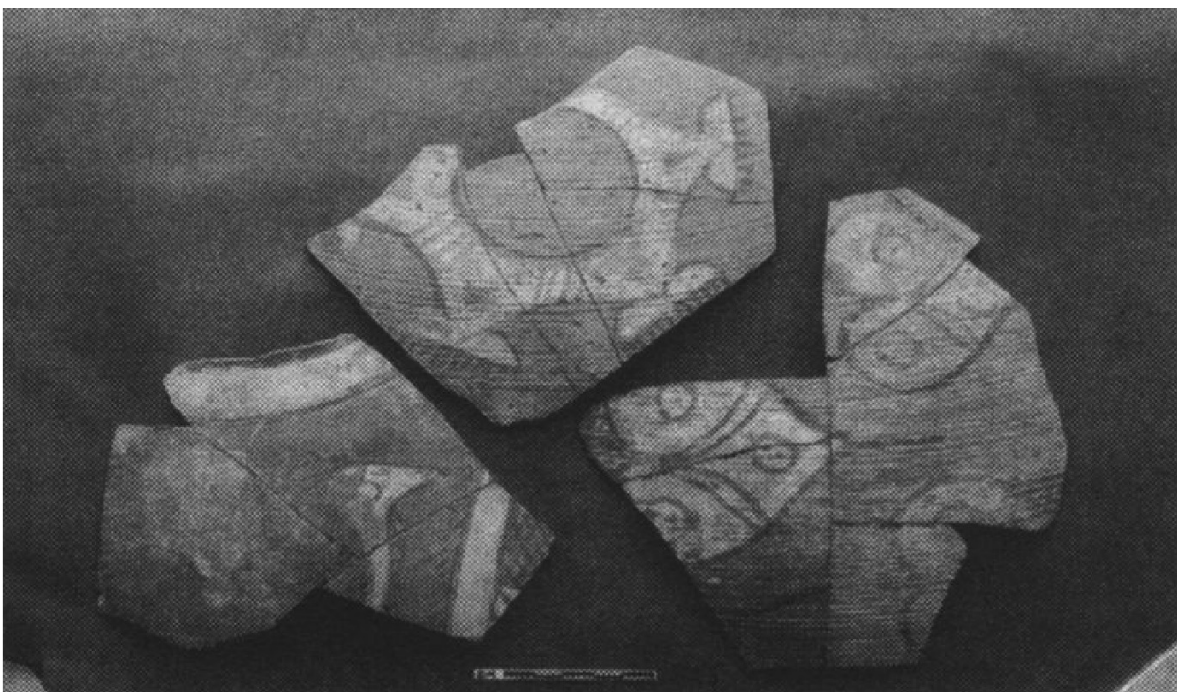


Fig. 4: Early Harappan Pottery, painted with two colours: black outline and white in-filling, Kunal
Fig. 5: Pottery from Kunal (after J.S. Khatri and M. Acharya)

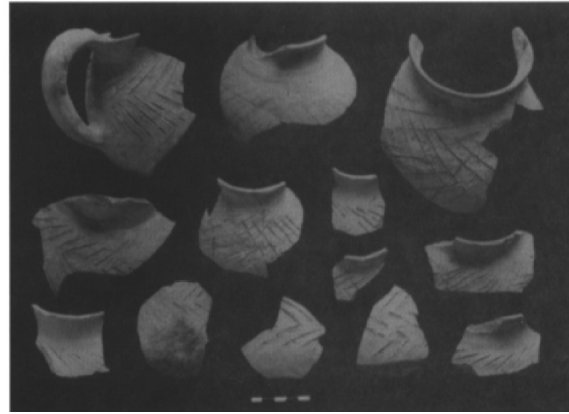
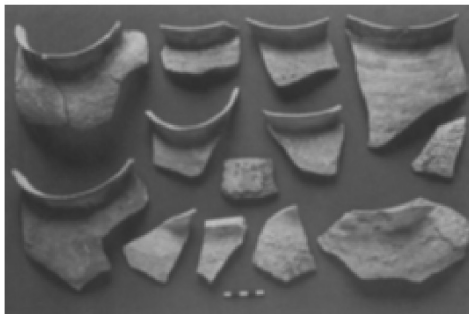


Fig. 6&7: Mud appliquéed ensigns- Hakra ware (dominant fabric in lowest levels of dwelling-pits) (Bhirrana) and Deep incised ware from Bhirrana

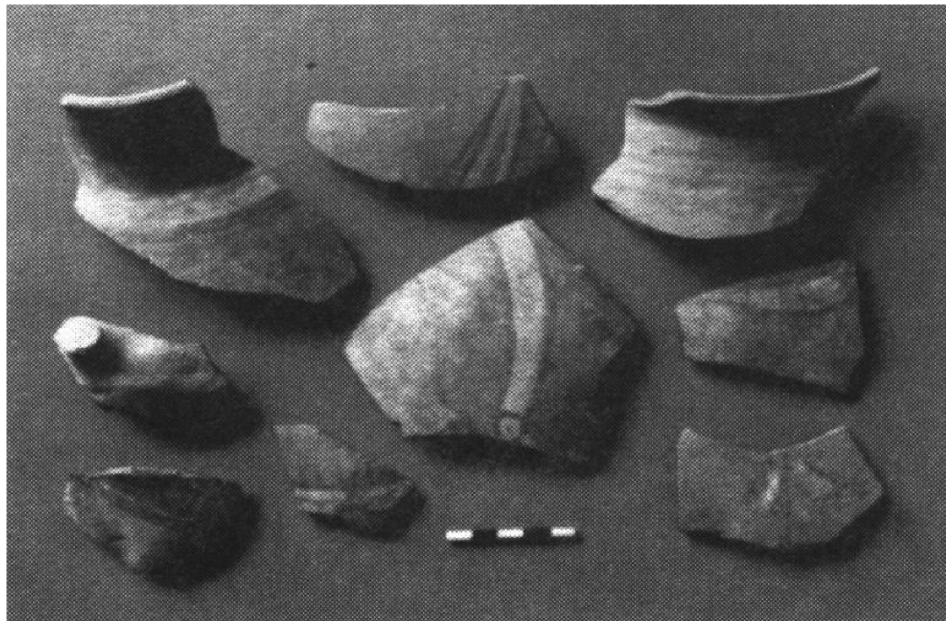


Fig. 8: Bi-chrome ware Bhirrana



Fig. 9: Girawad Periano Reserve ware, from the excavation

Stone and Terracotta objects

The finding of a large number of stone and terracotta artifacts has shown that these artefacts was used in this form the large back and raw materials such sandstone, chert, chalcedony, agate, jasper and faience for the manufacture of tools and ornaments. Excavations at Mitathal, Siswal, Balu, Kunal, Rakhigarhi, Bhirrana, Farmana and other sites yielded several examples of terracotta objects like animal figurine for example bulls with prominent hump and handmade human figurines, terracotta bangles, cakes, cots, wheels, balls, and beads (Lal. *et al.* 2003), gamesman, marbles (Rao. *et al.* 2005), spindle whorls (Parbhakar & Majid 2014) saddle querns, chert blade. The deposit of these objects shows the cultural continuation in a particular landscape. The important finding of Bhirrana period 1B is a button seal made on shell (Rao. *et al.* 2005). At Kunal, eight steatite seals, two shell and two terracotta seals and sealings, have been reported. Among these artifacts, one steatite seal indicates cultural origins preceding Rehman Dheri, suggesting a historical continuation and tracing the cultural roots of the site to earlier periods (Acharya, 2008). During the Mitathal Period IIA, compelling evidence of exceptional stone craftsmanship emerges, reported evidence of cutting of beads and variety of decorative faience beads that reflect the refined aesthetic sensibilities of the people. The unearthing of unfinished semi-precious stone beads such as agate, carnelian, steatite, terracotta, and unworked agate nodules strongly indicates local manufacturing of these beads (SurajBhan, 1975: 7-8). Important antiquities are arrowhead, needle and bangle of metal, chert blade, objects of terracotta like bangles, animal figurines, toy cart frames and hopscotch, saddle querns, beads of steatite and faience etc.

Metal: In addition to the earlier phase of the Harappan civilization in Haryana, evidence of metalworking can be observed, albeit to a limited extent. Excavations at early Harappan sites in Haryana have yielded artifacts made of gold, silver, and copper, highlighting the presence of an emerging metallurgical industry during this period. Copper artifacts, including fish hooks, arrowheads, axes, chisels, copper roads, antimony roads, copper plates, copper bars, copper spearheads, copper needles, bangles, rings, wires and lumps, have been discovered during archaeological investigations (Lal et al., 2003:228-29). A limited accounts of gold and silver ornaments found from earliest sites of Harappan period Kunal (fig.10) and Rakhigarhi, these the evidence are similar to Kalibangan level 1. (Dikshit, 2009). The presence of such metal artifacts indicates the utilization of precious and base metals for various purposes, including tools, ornaments, and possibly for trade or ceremonial activities. These findings shed light on the early metallurgical practices and the emergence of a metalworking industry within the Harappan civilization in Haryana.

Agricultural Practices

The identification of agricultural tools and the recovery of charred plant remains confirm the existence of agricultural activities in the region. Crops such as wheat, barley, and rice were cultivated, contributing to the economic prosperity of the Early Harappan society in Haryana. At the site of Kunal sample of different varieties of crops are collected by excavator from the earliest level of this site. The samples of the different varieties of plants are collected from different cultural levels of site likely hulled barely, lentil are reported from the sub-period IA and sample of dwarf, emmer and bread wheat, club wheat, rice, jowar-millet, lentil, Grass pea (*Lathyrussativu*), Chick pea (*Cicerarietinum*), Horse gram and green gram, sesame and cotton are reported from period IA (Acharya, 2008). The botanical remains from Bhirrana charred grains, barely, wheat, pulses are found in continuity up to its mature Harappan phase. The paleobotanical remains colected from Balu were rice, hulled barely, dwarf wheat, green



Fig. 10: Silver disc shaped beads from Kunal (courtesy of Department of Archaeology and Museum, Haryana)

gram (munga), horse gram (kulthi), muskmelon, watermelon, wild jujbe etc. (Kesarwani, 2001). The presence of watermelon provides the first evidence of its cultivation in the Pre-Harappan phase.

Conclusion

The stratigraphic examination of several early Harappan sites in the state of Haryana, the stages of the cultural development between c. 6000 - 4500 BCE and c. 4500-3500 BCE are not so clear perhaps due to limited technology or climatic environment in which people lived and produced distinctive tools for its own use. This period was followed by a quickening of cultural development which gave rise to the emergence of the urban centers in the beginning of the 3rd millennium BCE. This unbroken cultural sequence which was started from village culture with special significance of Hakra ware, presents its gradual evolution into semi urban to urban cultures. After summing up the above discussion we can say that the evidence from Mehrgarh, Cholistan and Saraswati valley clearly suggest that the region was under the Neolithic-chalcolithic cultural activities between the 7th-4th millennium BCE, with a limited use of copper. All these pre-early Harappan sites point to the beginning of primary urbanization in Indo-Pak sub-continent of a similar developing trajectory as Mesopotamian and Egyptian cultures. That people develop their own social and economic organizational structure for survival and for the continuity of their traditions. These people established and maintained a network of economic exchange with the settled population of the Hakra valley in Cholistan and other cities of GIR. In the context of Haryana L.S. Raodiclered Bhirrana as a “Paradigmatic site” because the Hakra culture deposits of this site show a typical early village settlement, wherein dwelling pits into the natural soil. The present scenario indicates the activeness of these people which probably also served as an older

course of Saraswati river because 22 sites were documented in close proximity to this. Therefore, over all analysis of material culture of Hakra ware and Early Harappan sites in Haryana viz. Mitathal period 1B which represents the transformation of the Late Siswal culture as Harappan, such as Banawali1B (IAR 1987-88:33), Kunal1C (Acharya 2008), Bhirrana 2A (Rao *et al.* 2006), Rakhigarhi 2 (Nath 1999), Balu (IAR 1996-97), Girawad (Shinde *et al.* 2011) also shown the features of transformation phase and gradual development. These findings highlight the significance of Rakhigarhi and other early Harappan sites in Haryana, shedding light on the agricultural practices, trade networks, and resource exploitation strategies of the ancient inhabitants. Further research and excavations in the region continue to contribute to our understanding of the early development and sustenance of urban centers in the Saraswati-Ghaggar River valley.

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