

RESEARCH PAPER

Explorations at Mohra in Trans-salt Range Zone, Northern Punjab, Pakistan: The Evolution of Early Harappan Phase

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The archaeological inquiries in Trans-Salt Range Zone of northern Punjab, Pakistan have unveiled the multifaceted data for the cultural development of the Early Harappan-Kot Diji phase of Indus Civilization during third millennium BC. Up until now, the urbanism of Indus Civilization is missing in the area while absolute dating at Sarai Khola, Jhang-Bahater & Hathial, has shown that Kot Diji phase has evolved in the Trans-Salt Range Zone parallel to Harappan phase of Indus Plains. The latterly found Kot Diji phase Mohra site in the area further strengthens this cultural phenomenon. This article will propose the data for the late development of Kot Diji phase at Mohra and its connection to other adjacent sites in a more wide spread context.

1. Introduction

Archaeological pursuits are continuing in the Trans-Salt Range zone since the discovery of Buddhist vestiges during the 1860s in the Taxila valley (Cunningham 1864). During this long archaeological endeavor, excavators and researchers have had the option to find Buddhist and Stone Age remains for the most part. There are barely a few remains, related to Indus Civilization or comprehensively depicting Indus Tradition (Shaffer 1991; Kenoyer 1991 a) in Trans-Salt Range area (See **Table 1**).

The Directorate of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM-former Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums) had the chance to discover Sarai Khola in 1968, identified with Regionalization Era of Indus Tradition in Taxila valley at which four different phases identified as a result of the vertical excavations conducted for the four consecutive years from 1968–72 (Khan 1968; Halim 1972: 23–89).

Table 1: Indus Tradition Sites in Trans-Salt Range Zone.

Sr.#	Site Name	Province	District
01	Sarai-Khola	Punjab	Rawalpindi (Khan 1968).
02	Jhang-Bahatar	Punjab	Attock (Mughal 1971).
03	Khanda	Punjab	Attock (Mughal 1971).
04	Pindi-Nausher	Punjab	Attock (Mughal 1971).
05	Hathial	Punjab	Rawalpindi (Khan 1983).
06	Mohra	Punjab	Rawalpindi (Khan et al 2012).

Phase II at Sarai Khola is related to the Early Harappan-Kot Diji Phase while the Harappan phase is missing at the site. Besides, a transitional Phase IA is also reported, blending phase I, the late Neolithic with phase II, the Kot Dijian occupation. As indicated by the Rafique Mughal, the transitional Phase IA shows the earliest levels of Phase II because a large portion of the pottery types of Phase II showed up in the transitional phase (Mughal 1972: 35). Following this inquiry, DOAM led a far-reaching study in the encompassing territories around Sarai Khola and three new sites identified with Early Harappan-Kot Diji phase were found such as Jhang-Bahatar, Pindi-Nausher and Khanda (Mughal 1972: 131–132). Rafique Mughal likewise has directed small level excavations at Jhang Bahatar with the unpublished results. The DOAM additionally carried out excavations in 1980 at another site such as Hathial in Taxila valley. The excavation uncovered three different phases, already known at Sarai Khola with Phase II related to Early Harappan Kot Dijian occupation (Khan 1983: 35–44). Harappan phase remained undiscovered as a result of the above explorations and excavations in the area.

Later on, in 1983 British Archaeological Mission conducted a thorough investigation in the areas where Harappans were specifically missing like Trans-Salt Range Zone of Pothohar Plateau, Gommal Valley (specific site-Rehman Dheri) and Bannu Basin. They collected charcoal samples for absolute dating from different levels, specifically belonging to Kot Diji phase occupations at Sarai Khola, Hathial and Jhang-Bahater in Trans-Salt Range area, Islam Chowki & Taraqi Qila in Bannu Basin and Rehman Dheri in Gommal Valley. As per the report, the Kot Diji occupation has early and late phase at the sites, developed between 2700 BCE to 2200 BCE (Thomas & Allchin 1986: 37–43).

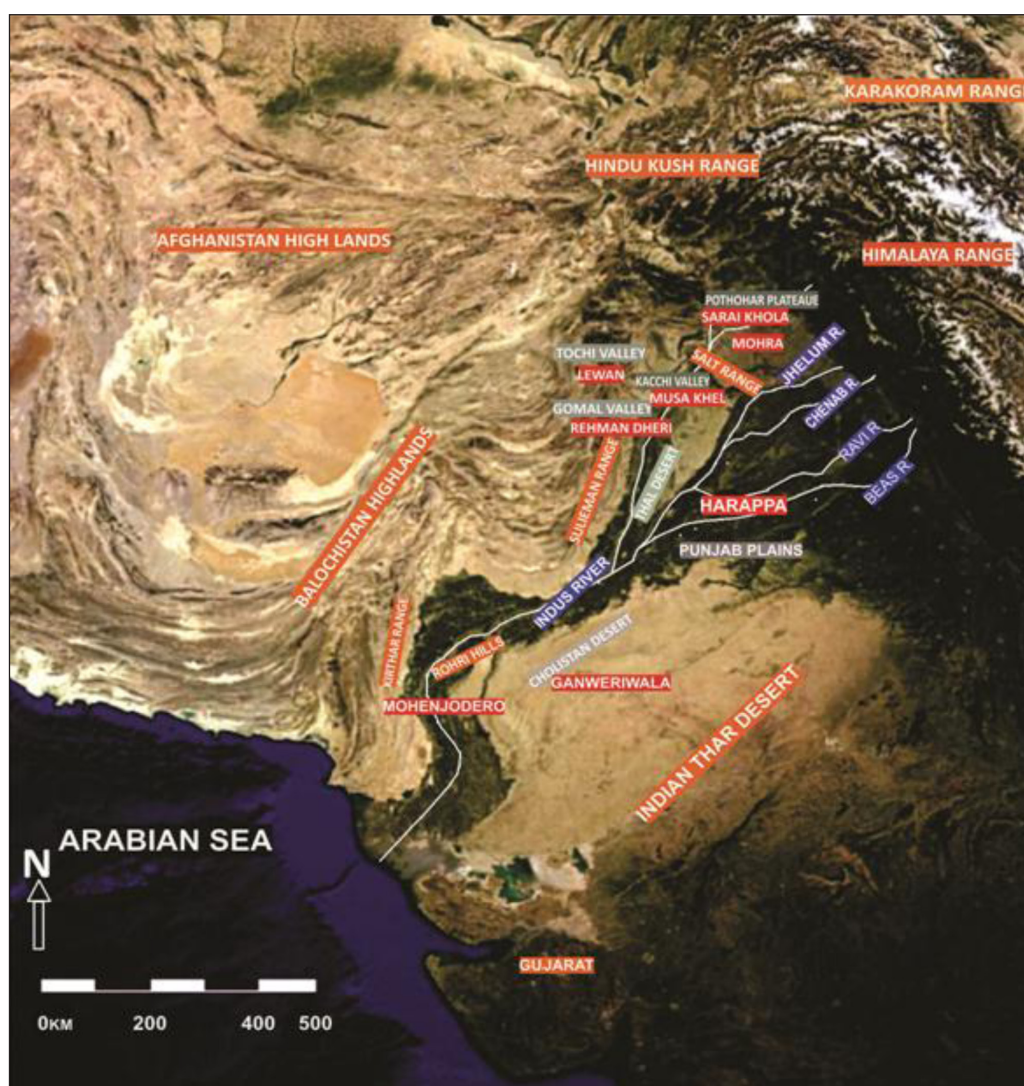
The work of uncovering the remains of Indus tradition in the territory halted for about forty years until the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, who had the chance to find another significant site such as Mohra in the Rawalpindi Region (Pl. 1) & (Pl. 2). The site is situated 2 km west of Mohra village along the Chakbeli Khan Road. A small level trial excavation conducted at the site in 2015. As per the report, structural remains and stratigraphy were missing at the site, hence declared as a temporary or campsite because of the absence of regular mounds and stratigraphy. Based on material culture, the Mohra assigned to the Kot Diji phase (Butt 2017). Likewise, Harappans still remain missing at the site.

Following previous inquiries, the present study is aimed to classify the pottery recovered from Mohra during a survey in 2011, 2015 and also during trial excavations during 2015 and compare it with Sarai Khola IA-II pottery types to probe the cultural development at the site during Early Harappan-Kot Diji phase, because Sarai Khola is the only site in Trans-Salt Range zone, has just appropriately excavated with a well-dated chronological sequence, relative as well as absolute.

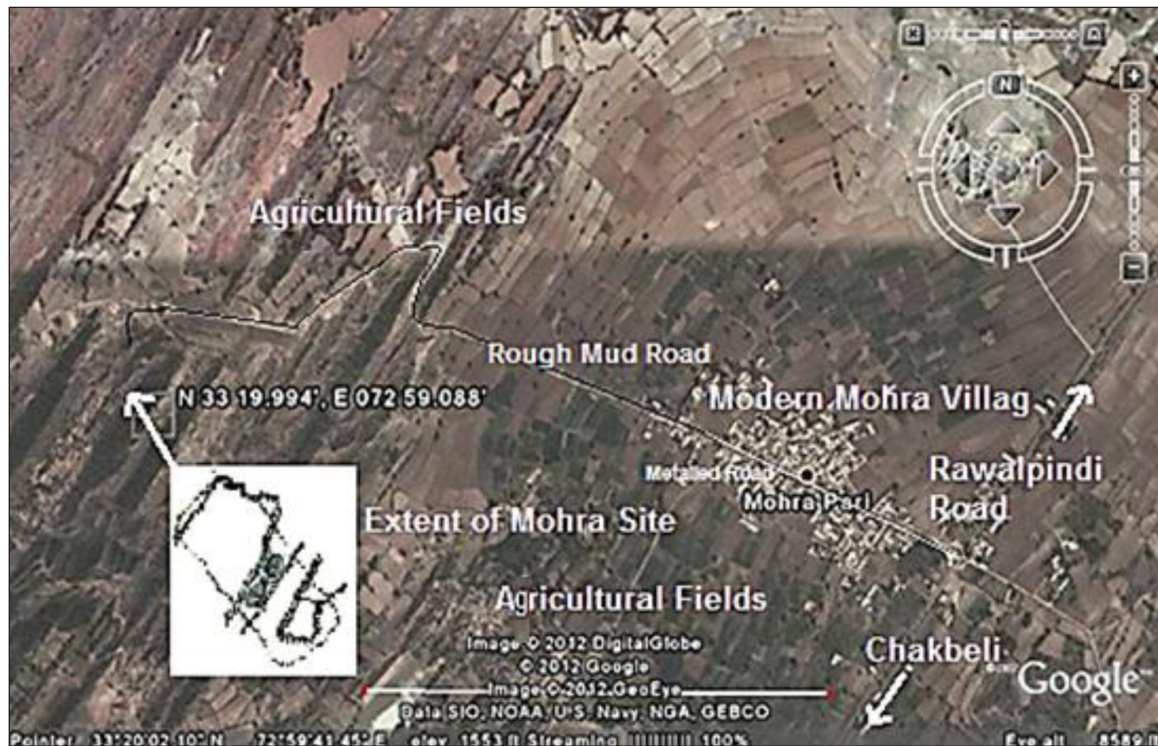
2. Pottery Classification & Typology: A Review

Anthropologists and archaeologists address classification in two directions, such as, devised and ethno-taxonomic/folk classification. According to the former, selecting various kinds of pottery attributes leads to different pottery types, for example, morphological, historical, functional, and cultural (Rice 1987: 275) whereas folk classification group and term the vessels according to native, as contrasting to scientific categories. Pots are named principally for their general functions such as cooking, storage, or serving (Ibid: 279). By and large, pottery classification is considering into account the recognition of similitude and connections, in the shape and decoration of vessels (Thuesen 1989: 273).

Groups, classes, and types remain from time to time distinguished at different phases of classification. A group contains concrete objects, for instance, potsherds, and occurs in the phenomenological or else practical realm. Classes and types, though, characterize verbal models or descriptions of vessels and are ideational. A class is a general term indicating to some partition of materials into groupings constructed on similitude and differences,



Map 1: Map showing the location of Mohra across the Salt Range in Upper Indus Valley and few other important sites of Indus Tradition along with their surrounded physiological features.



Pl. 1: Aerial view of Mohra site in District Rawalpindi across the Salt Range, showing access and environment around the site such as gullies, depressions, agricultural fields, metallated road and modern houses.



Pl. 2: A general view of Mohra, shows scattered potsherds, dense vegetation and gullies, depressions.

based on a single attribute, unlike type is a conventional, conceptual or abstract unit based on a consistent patterning of attributes of the materials (Hills and Evans 1972: 233) and is hypothetically oriented that is applied to address a solution of a particular archaeological issue (Rice 1987: 276), such as addressing chronological

developments on the basis cultural pottery types in the present case of Mohra.

The pottery assemblage that comprised specific chronological phase exhibits a particular combination of decorative, morphological and technological attributes (Petrie et al 2008: 1). Likewise, the Kot Diji phase pottery

has specific such type of attributes, with a level of general homogeneity and regional variations throughout its extent across the Indus Valley and into Gomul and Bannu Basin, which may be analyzed to address the cultural development at individual sites like Mohra. For instance, Early Harappan Kot Diji phase Flanged jars found throughout the Indus Valley and Balochistan (Kondo et al 2006: 4).

3. Previous Studies in the Area

The trend of pottery classification scheme in the area under consideration is devised one such as morphological-Inferred use related “Type-variety” concept such as Sarai Khola (Mughal 1972). The type-variety concept is based on a set of attributes distinctive to each class of pottery, initially put forward by Smith et al. (1960) for the classification of Maya pottery. The type-variety system, like other systems, is governed by the attributes of pottery. When different attributes are studied together, they form a definable entity called ‘variety’. When varieties of like character observed at a time, they design a ‘type’ (Smith et al 1960).

Remaining studies in the area have no such mention of any classification series or criteria for establishing classes, for example, Hathial. The Hathial pottery assemblage is divided into general red and grey ware pottery groups (Khan 1983).

4. Typology of Mohra Pottery

Following previous studies, the Mohra pottery collection is classified into several types following morphological-Inferred use related “Type-variety concept” (Smith et al 1960). Typology is broadly based on vessel morphology because ‘form’ is the basic standard for pottery classification and morphology of the vessel indicates its purpose of use (Frankfort 1924: 12) and suggestive of their possible function (Halim 1972: 101). Subsequent classification is based on surface treatments such as painted decoration and structural enhancement. There are additionally a few pottery types at Mohra, which seems to be unique and rare. The Mohra pottery types are given below in detail.

Basic functional vessel morphology, defined by Dales and Kenoyer 1986 for the classification of Mohenjo Dero pottery (Dales and Kenoyer 1986), is adopted for Mohra pottery types and arranged in sequence from Jar, Pot, Bowl, and Dish. Each pottery type has given a title containing distinguishing features in contrast to previous studies in the area.

4.1. General Features

The pottery of Mohra has a predominantly very smooth texture, mainly comprised of a variety of buff ware while red-ware is scarce and varied from light brown to brown and yellowish color. Overall, the clay used for pottery production is alluvial and well levigated. Thick sectioned and handmade vessels exhibited the bearing of tiny white and black sand temper. A variety of slip recognized in monochrome, for example, red and polychrome, for example, brown, dark brown and cream and seldom it is not possible to differentiate between paint and slip. The painted decoration is consists of monochrome to polychrome style, mostly representing horizontal bands, found on rim,

neck, shoulder, and body. Few vessels also have decorative motifs. Particular pottery types are polished such as bowls, while the remaining types are hand smoothed and scraped. Overall finishing of the pottery vessels is eminent. Most of the pottery vessels are fast wheel made with the apparent wheel turning and hand smoothing patterns. Very few types are handmade and sparse in number. The use of mixed modelling techniques is noticeable in few specimens such as wheel manufacturing along with anvil and paddle use. Overall pottery is well-fired, barring very few pieces that have endured reduction and charring, presumably due to the nature of fuel and inconstancy in kiln temperature. The pottery vessels produced with refined clay reveals signs of complete oxidation besides reduction in the pottery vessels made with tempered clay. Furthermore, the number of pottery wasters amongst the collection from the Mohra indicates its local production.

4.2. Class A: Jars

4.2.1. Pottery Type I: Globular-Oval, Simple Painted Jars with Vertical to Everted Rim (Figure 1.1–5)

This type has typical Kot Diji ware shape with short necks and with or without sharp ledge between the neck and main body. The current pottery type has sharp to thick

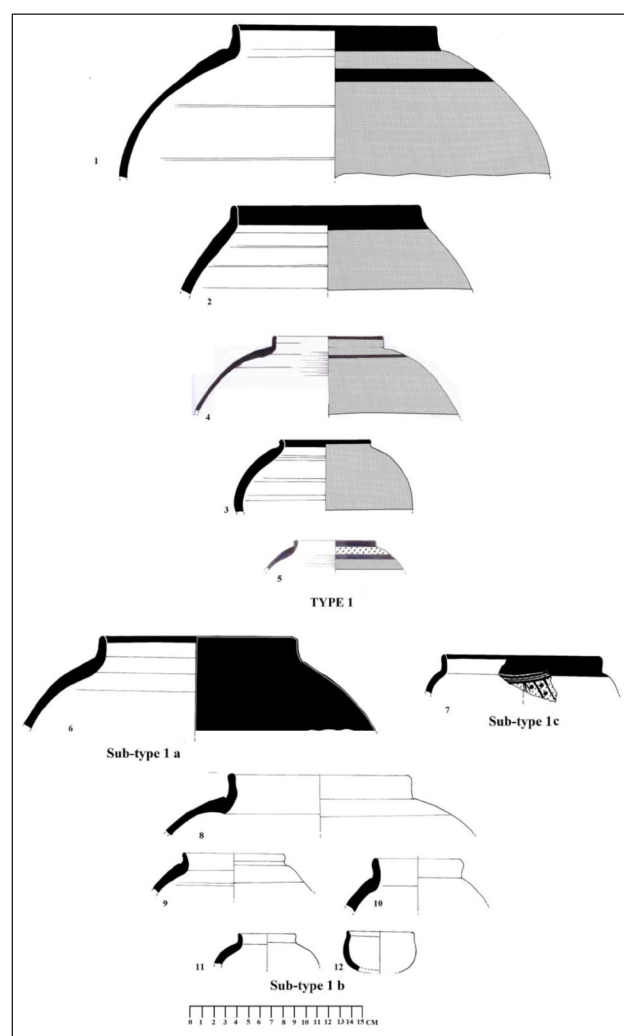


Figure 1: Mohra Pottery Type 1, Sub-type 1a, Sub-type 1b, Sub-type 1c.

painted bands on the rim, shoulder, and neck in mainly dark brown color with and without white/creamy, red to light brownish slipped background. It is found in small to large size and section varies from thin to thick. The large size vessels of current type appear to be used as storage vessels.

4.2.1.1. Sub-Type IA: Globular, Monochrome Jar (Figure 1.6)

The current type is comparable with its parent type in morphology and size. The distinguishing feature of this type is the application of dark brown paint on the complete preserved specimen with light brown slip at its interior. The current category also shows the signs of polish treatment on exterior surface.

4.2.1.2. Sub-type IB: Plain and Globular Jars (Figure 1.8–12)

This type like Sub-type I A is similar to its parent type and found mainly in miniature to medium size vessel plain surface on both sides with an occasional red slip. Few of the vessels have been scrapped horizontally on both sides as well.

4.2.1.3. Subtype IC: Painted Jar with Variegated Design (Figure 1.7)

This type is well decorated with horizontal band on simple vertical rim; horizontal strip bands on the shoulder and perpendicular strip bands on the main body with small dots in between them in dark brown color with white/creamy color slip in the background and found in medium size.

4.2.2 Pottery Type II: Globular, Painted and Straight Grooved Jars (Figure 2.1–4)

The diagnostic feature of this type is the presence of horizontal and parallel straight sharp to wide grooving on the exterior of the main vessel with the typical short-necked body and rim morphology is like pottery type I along with the presence of occasional sharp ledge between the neck and main body (**Figure 2.2**). The decoration consists of painted bands, such as dark brown bands on rim down to shoulder at the exterior side with brown to red slip in the background. The motifs are observable on one of the pottery specimens, for example, horns or leaves.

4.2.2.1. Sub-type II-A: Globular, Painted and Wavy Grooved Jars (Figure 2.5–6)

This type has narrow to wide wavy and horizontal grooving on the main body and decorated with a dark brown band on the rim with mainly red slip in background. Morphology is similar to Type II while the typical sharp Kot Dijian ledge is missing.

4.2.3. Pottery Type III: Globular, Painted and Flanged Jars (Figure 3.1–5)

The diagnostic feature of the current pottery type is the presence of a perforated flange just below the junction of the neck and main body. The body and rim morphology are typical Kot Dijian such as short-necked and simple vertical to slightly everted. The size varies from small to large and section varies from thin to thick and heavy as well. Few of the vessels are slipped in red to light brown

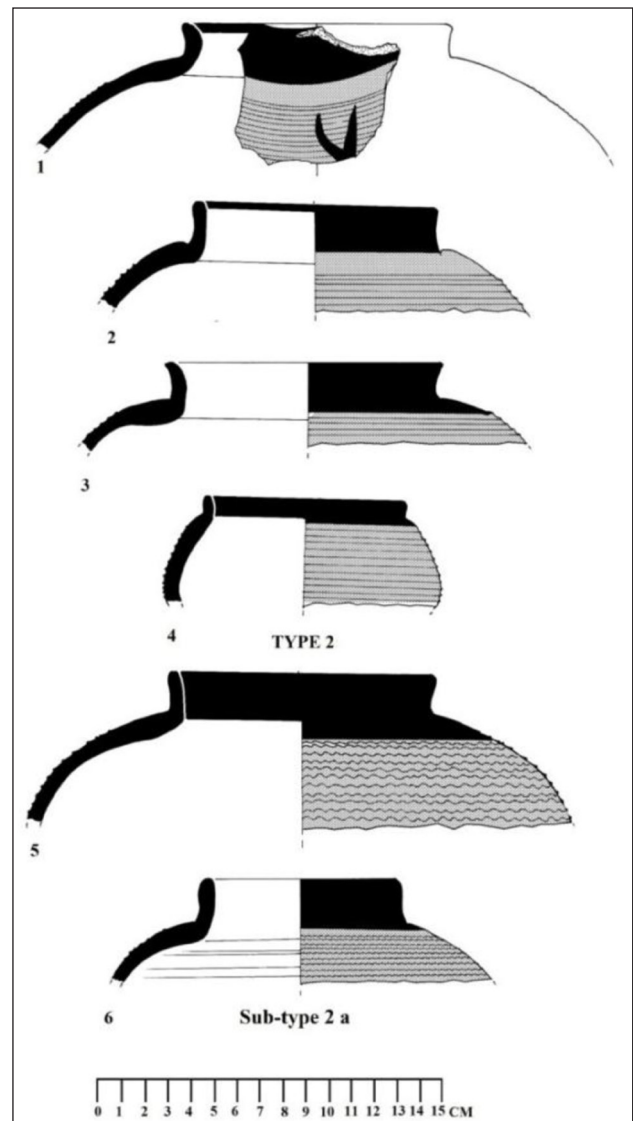


Figure 2: Mohra Pottery Type 2 and Sub-type 2a.

color on their exterior sides. The main decorative variation are as follows:-

Mono-chrome

Black color bands on the rim and main body with red slip in background (**Figure 3.2–3**).

Bi-chrome

Black color bands on the rim and lower portion of the flange with white slip or paint in between remaining is red slipped. The interior of the vessel is plain. The light brown color band above, dark brown on, while white or creamy paint below the perforated flange. The perforations might have produced for air tightening purpose with the thread (**Figure 3.4–5**).

4.2.3.1. Sub-Type III-A: Globular and Flanged Jars with Painted Design (Figure 3.6)

The current type is similar to its parent type III, having the decorative design on the main body as a diagnostic feature. The decorative designs comprised of bands on the rim as well as flange and also intersecting circles and

hatched body below the flange in dark brown color with a cream slip.

4.2.3.2. Sub-Type III B: Globular, Plain Flanged Jars (Figure 3.7)
The morphology of the current type is the same as type III. The diagnostic feature is its plain surface without any decoration and found mainly in large size.

4.3. Class B: Pots

4.3.1. Pottery Type IV: Carinated Pots with Flaring Sides and Decorative Designs (Figure 4.1–2)

The diagnostic feature of the current type is the presence of sharp carination at a lower portion near the base and parallel-sided flaring rims with round lips and decorated

with designs that vary from dark brown inclined wavy and horizontal, sharp thin to broad bands with white/creamy slip in the background. The size is mainly small to medium.

4.3.1.1. Sub-Type IVA: Convex sided and Painted Pots (Figure 4.3–4)

The current sub-type has general convex vessel shape. The decoration consists of single bands to multiple bands in dark brown to black color in a horizontal and inclined manner with brown and buff slips in the background with a polished surface.

4.4. Class C: Bowls

4.4.1. Pottery Type V: Open Mouthed, Shallow, Painted Bowls with Convex Sides (Figure 5.1–8)

The distinguishing feature of the current type is its open-mouthed morphology and convex sides with everted to vertical rims. The decoration consists of broad black to dark brown horizontal bands on rim exterior with red to buff slip in the background on the external surface while multiple thin to thick and parallel sharp dark brown to black bands at the internal surface with red to brownish red, brown, and white/creamy slip in background. Occasionally interior and exterior are plain and polished as well. They have thin section while vessel size is in a range from miniature to medium.

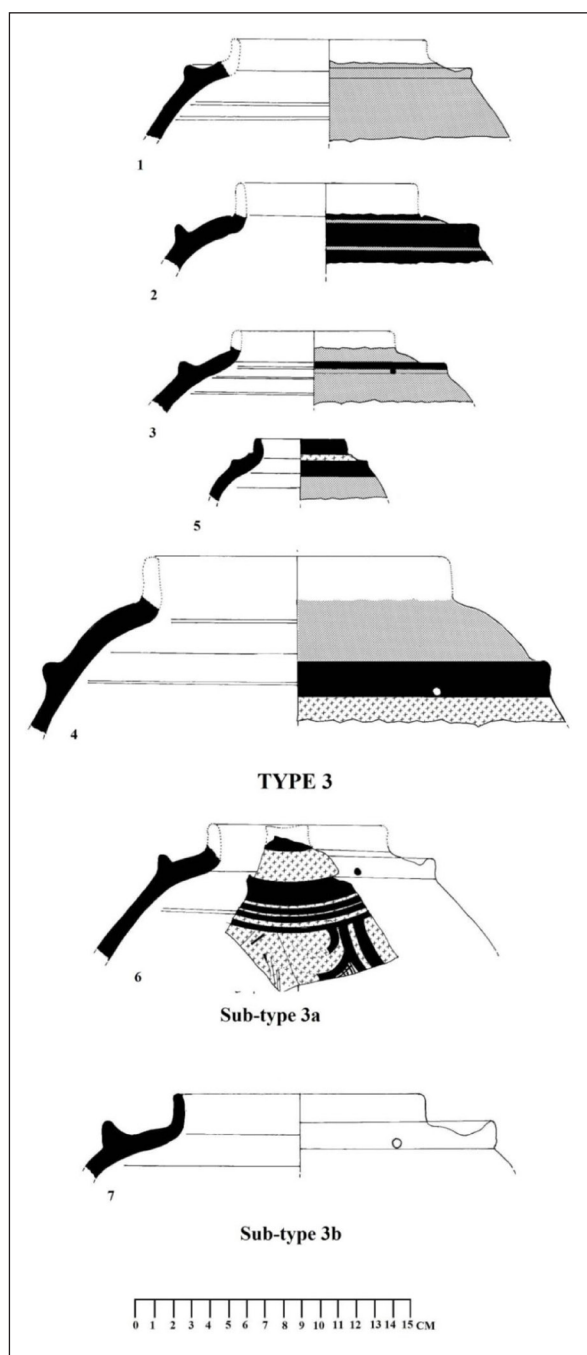


Figure 3: Mohra Pottery Type 3, Sub-type 3a and Sub-type 3b.

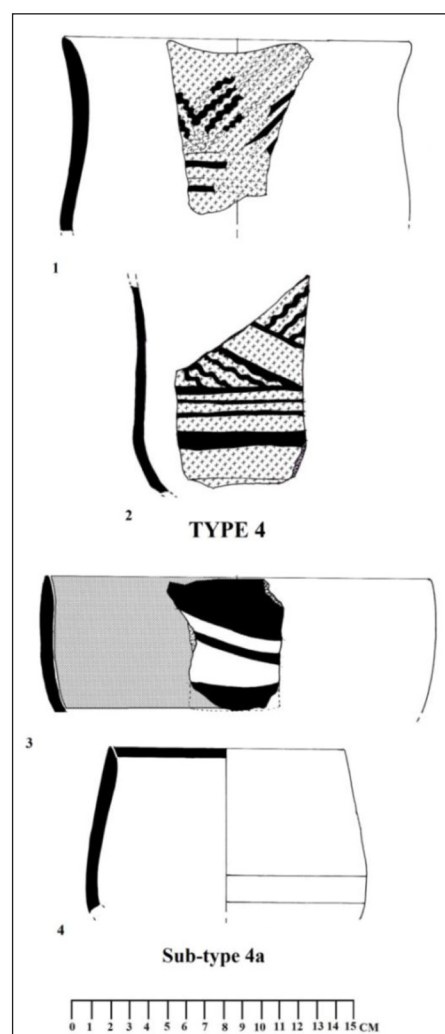


Figure 4: Mohra Pottery Type 4 and Sub-type 4.

4.4.2. Pottery Type VI: Wide, Open Mouthed, Shallow and Plain Bowls with Convex Sides (Figure 6.1–3)

The current type is similar to type V in morphology. The size, texture, and rim morphology are quite different. These vessels are without any decoration and having mainly large vessel size while rim morphology is slightly

different such as lips are flat and square in shape in few of the specimens. There are also a few small-sized examples that fall in the current type, whose texture is entirely different from type V. The comparable is reported from Rehman Dheri III-B. Rehman Dheri specimen has decoration while morphology is similar to current pottery type at Mohra (Durrani 1988: 193).

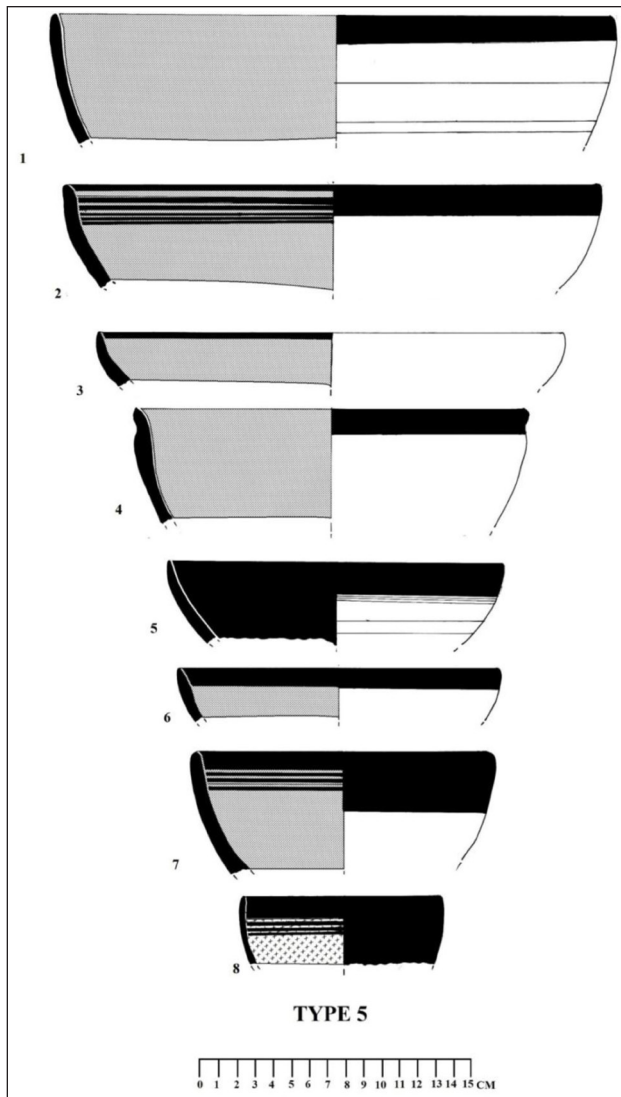


Figure 5: Mohra Pottery Type 5.

4.5. Class D: Dishes/Plates

4.5.1. Pottery Type VII: Painted Dishes with Everted to Concave Sides (Figure 7.1)

The current type has everted to slightly concave sides with direct rim and flat square lips. They are shallow and decorated with dark brown sharp to thick horizontal bands on the rim with or without buff and red slip in background. Dark brown to white painted surfaces on the complete interior with plain to dark brown painted exterior also has been observed. They are medium to large in size and fine-textured.

4.5.1.2. Sub-type VII A: Plain Dishes with Everted to Concave Sides (Figure 7.2)

The morphology of the current type is the same as of parent type. The pottery type has a smooth texture, mainly in light to pinkish buff and without any decoration except few tiny dentition marks on the interior and exterior of vessels. The vessel size is large.

4.5.2. Pottery Type VIII: Painted Lids (Figure 8.1–2)

The current type has a flat roof with everted to vertical straight short walls. No specimen is found with preserved knobs although few bell-shaped, plain knobs were collected from the site and associated with Sub-type IX A. At Sarai Khola, vessels comparable to current type have found with preserved knobs. Their size is in the range from medium to large. There are traces of dark brown band on the lower side of the vessel base with light brown slip in background. The exterior of the vessel has the remains of dark brown bands on the body-base junction while the remaining pottery vessel is plain.

4.5.2.1. Sub-type VIII A: Plain Lids (Figure 8.3–4)

The current type is similar to parent type IX in all aspects and found without any decoration.

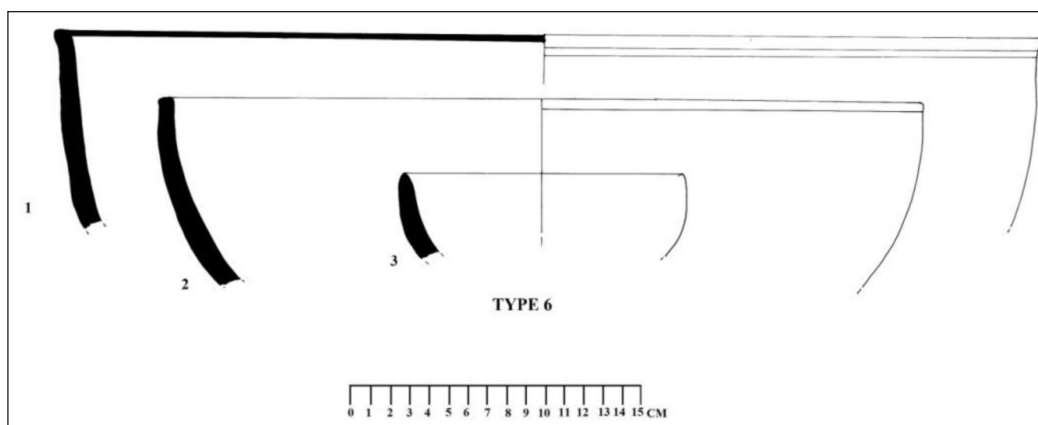


Figure 6: Mohra Pottery Type 6.

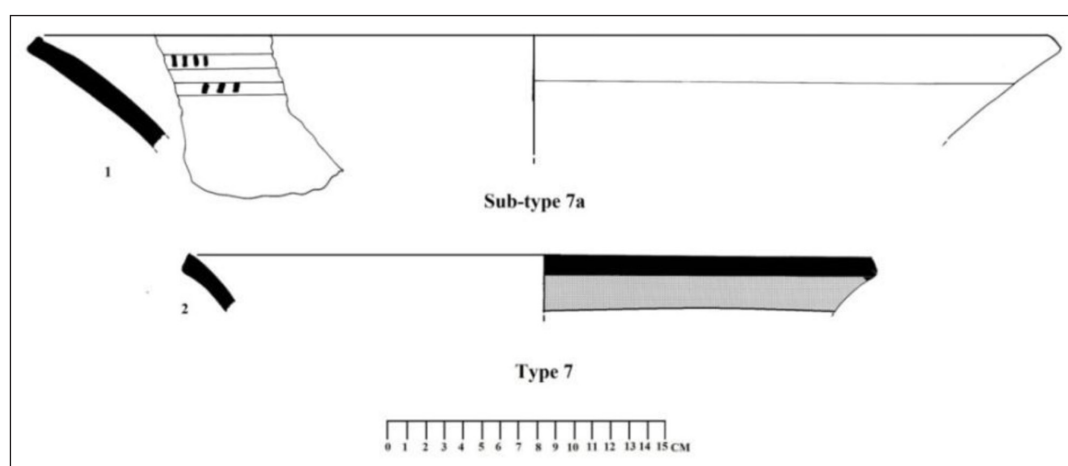


Figure 7: Mohra Pottery Type 7.

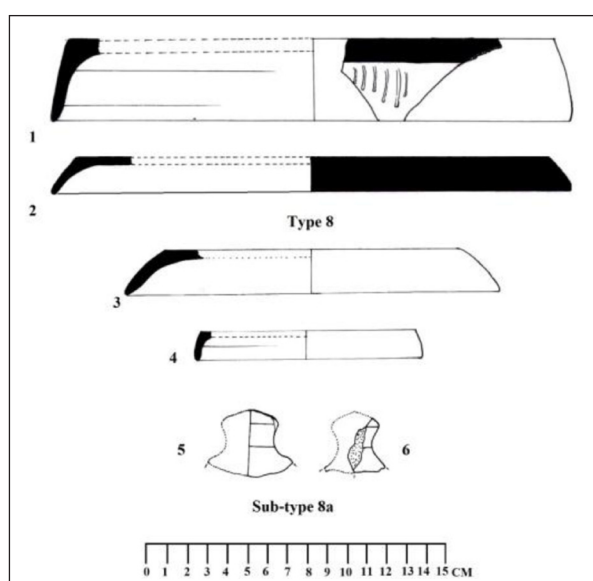


Figure 8: Mohra Pottery Type 8, Sub-type 8a.

4.5.3. Pottery Type IX: Painted Dish on Stand, High (Figure 9.1–2)

The distinguishing feature of the current type is the presence of a dish with a high painted pedestal. The bottom of the pottery type is slightly concave while the rim is external projected and round in shape. The main decoration consists of a black band on the rim with a red slip in background. The interior of the current pottery type is also red slipped. The vessels are large in size and pedestal is hollow and high.

4.5.3.1. Sub-type IX-A: Plain Dish on Stand, Low (Figure 9.3–5)
The current pottery type is plain while occasionally red slipped. The pedestal is hollow and low and overall small in size. The stands are seldom carinated; ware color is buff to light pink and brown. Comparable specimens are reported from several levels of Kot Diji phase occupation at type-site Kot Diji, Khairpur, Sindh (Khan 1965: 52, 71).

4.5.3.2. Sub-type IX B: Plain Dish on Stand, Low-Heavy (Figure 9.6)
The current type is plain and red slip decoration. The ped-

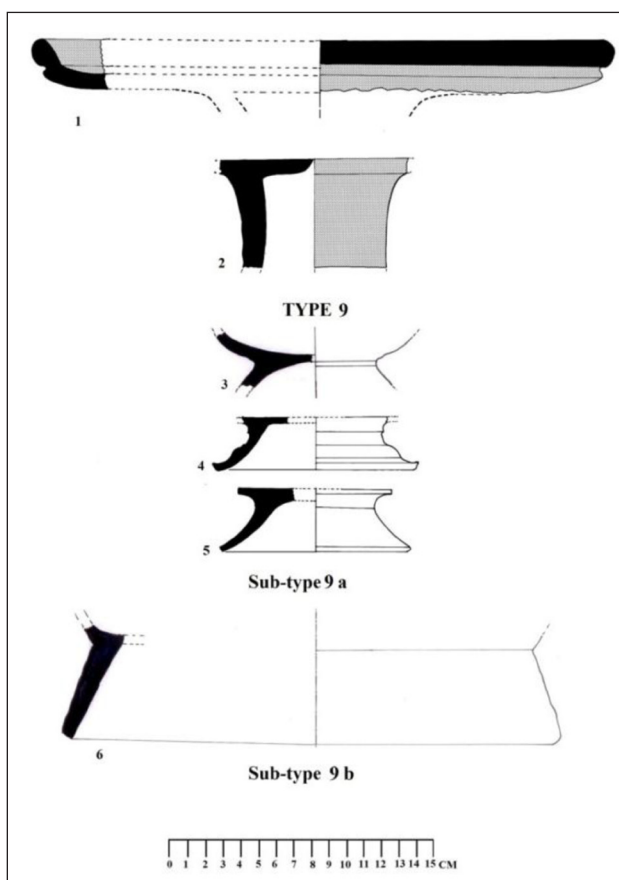


Figure 9: Mohra. Type 9, Sub-type 9 a, Sub-type 9 b.

estal has a coarse texture, large size, hollow and low in shape, while section size is thick to heavy.

4.6. Miscellaneous Pottery Types

4.6.1. Pottery Type X: Bottle/Flask with Painted Design (Figure 10.1)

The current type has a globular body and narrows to constricted opening. Decoration comprised of the broad horizontal dark brown band on rim and neck, light brown horizontal strip bands on the neck, vertical bands on the body having round figures dark brown color in between

them with white/creamy slip in the background at its exterior.

4.6.2. Pottery Type XI: Painted and Carinated Bowl with Flaring Rim (Figure 10.3)

The current type is similar in morphology with that of type 4 and is squat in appearance, metrically categorized as a bowl. The exterior of the pottery type has multiple dark brown thin and thick bands with white/creamy slip in background.

4.6.3. Pottery Type XII: Deep and Small Conical Bowl (Figure 10.2)

The current type has a deep and conical shape with vertical rims and has traces of white/creamy slip on both sides. The morphology of the pottery type also suggests its the association with lid or vessel covers. The texture of the pottery pastes is very smooth while the section size is thin.

4.6.4. Pottery Type XIII: Dish/Plate with Concave Base and Decorative Design (Figure 10.4)

The distinguishing feature of the current type is the presence of a convex base and short everted walls. The exterior of the pottery type has the dark brown band on all over the wall while the interior has dark brown color triangles pointing downwards on the wall with three concentric bands in the form of marginal circles above the vessel floor with white/creamy slip in background. The exterior surface of the vessel is polished as well. The comparable

is also reported from Early Harappan-Tochi Gomal phase (Pre-Kot Diji phase) from Gomal valley such as RHD-I, Tochi Gomal phase at Rehman Dheri (Durrani 1988: Fig. XXXV, nos.1, 1a, p.105).

4.7. Bases

4.7.1. Ring Bases (Figure 11.1–3)

All the bases are plain, small, and occasionally red slip is applied at their interior, having a prominent ring on the lower bottom of the vessel.

4.7.2. Disc Bases (Figure 11.4)

These bases are plain, small with non-contiguous walls

4.7.3. Flat Bases (Figure 11.5–6)

These bases are small in size and plain to decorated, occasionally found decorated with dark brown bands and brown to red slip in the background

Grooved Jars, Painted Globular Jars and Pots; Flanged Jars, Open-mouthed vessels, so on, have flat bases while carinated Pots have disc and ring bases at Sarai Khola (Mughal 1972).

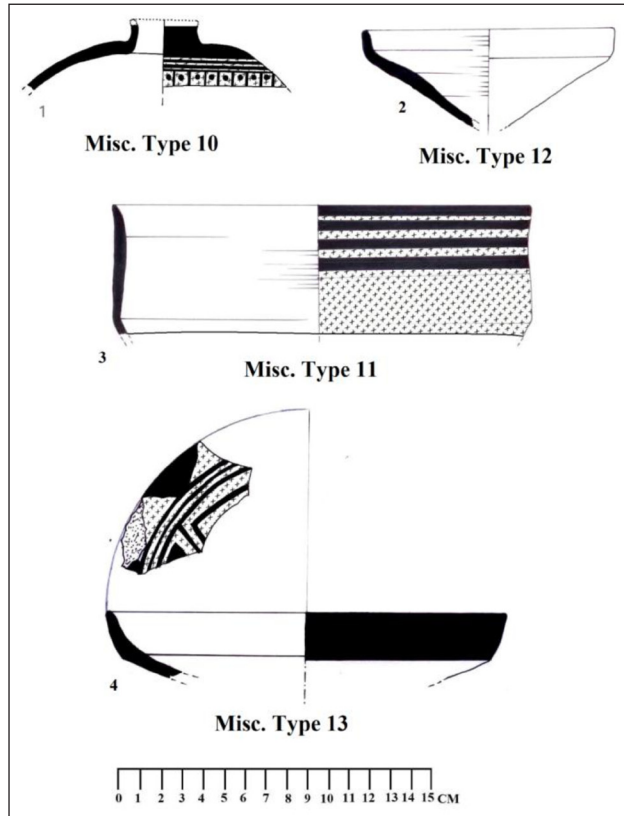


Figure 10: Miscellaneous Pottery Types 10, 11, 12, 13 at Mohra.

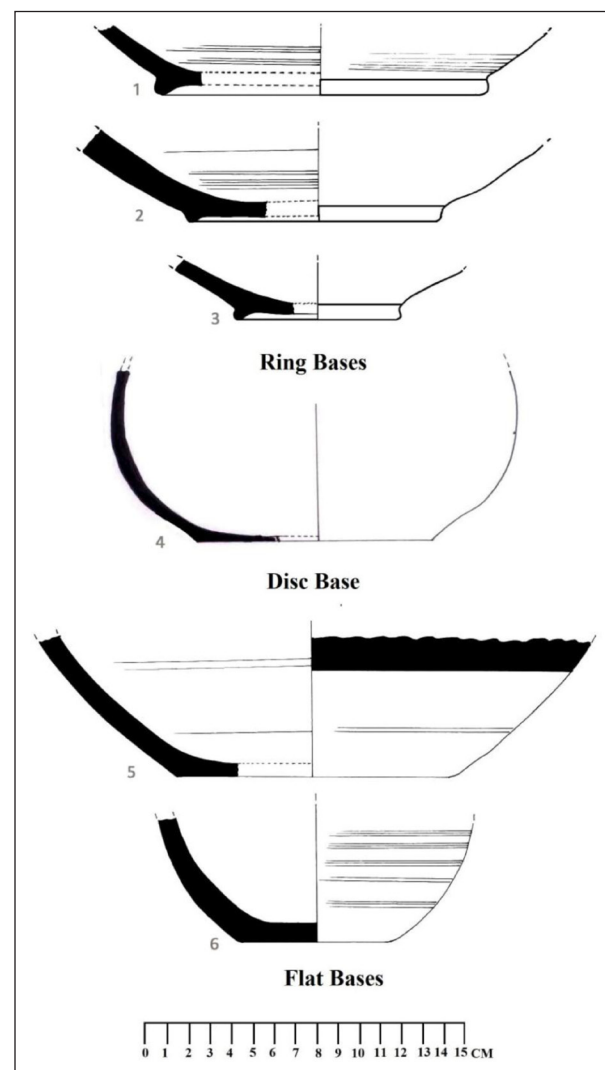


Figure 11: Mohra Different types of bases.

4.8. Comparison between Mohra and Sara Khola Pottery Types

Type #	Mohra Pottery Types	Sarai Khola Pottery Types	Chronology at Sara Khola	Reference
01	Type I	Type IX	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 48).
	Sub-type I A	Sub-type IX C	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 49).
	Sub-type I B	Sub-type IX B	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 49)
	Subtype I C	Sub-type IX E	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 50).
02	Type II	Type VII	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 45–46)
	Sub-type II A	Sub-type VII A	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 46)
03	Type III	Type VIII	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 47)
	Sub-type III A	Sub-type VIII A	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 47)
	Sub-type III B	Type VIII	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 47)
04	Type IV	Type-XI, Sub-type XI A	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 51)
	Sub-type IV A	Sub-type XI A	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 51)
05	Type V	Type X	I A, II	(Mughal 1971: 50–51).
06	Type VI	–	–	–
07	Type VII	Type XII	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 51).
	Sub-type VII A	–	–	–
08	Type VIII	Sub-type XIII A,	II	(Mughal 1971: 52).
	Sub-type VIII A	Type XIII	II	(Mughal 1971: 52).
09	Type IX	Type VIII Sub-type VIII A	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 47–48).
	Sub-type IX-A	–	–	–
	Sub-type IX B.	–	–	–
10	Miscellaneous Type X:	Type XVI	II	(Mughal 1971: 76).
11	Miscellaneous Type XI	Type XI	IA, II	(Mughal 1971: 51).

(Contd.)

Type #	Mohra Pottery Types	Sarai Khola Pottery Types	Chronology at Sara Khola	Reference
12	Miscellaneous Type XII	Type XV	II	(Mughal 1971: 76).
13	Miscellaneous Type XIII	–	–	–

4.9. Analysis and Conclusion

The exploration at Mohra during the 2011 and 2015 yielded pottery collections belonging to Early Harappan-Kot Diji phase. The Mohra pottery types are mainly utilitarian and depict basic functional categories like jars, pots, bowls, and dishes/plates. The typology scheme adopted for Mohra pottery collection is based on vessel morphology, the primary indicator of vessel functions. As a result of recent reconsideration, the whole pottery collection is classified into 13 main types and 11 subtypes based on their morphology and subsequent surface treatments. The Mohra pottery types compare very well with the already known Early to Late Kot Diji phase pottery types from Sarai Khola I-A, II in Trans-Salt Range Zone as shown in comparison table. The other parallels are Rehman Dheri II–III and Gumla III–IV in Gomul Valley, Lewan and Islam Chowki in Bannu Basin in Trans-Indus Zone.

The presence of variety of pottery types at Mohra show that the pottery tradition was evolved and well established during the Regionalization Era in this zone. In the truanacy of regular mounds and occupational sequence at Mohra, the identified and culturally comparable pottery types with sites of other regions such as Sarai Khola, Jhang Bahater in Taxila Valley across the Salt Range (Mughal 1972), Gumla (Dani 1971), Rehman Dheri (Durrani 1988), Jhandi Baber (Rehman 1997; Ali & Khan 2001) in Gomul Valley and Lewan (Khan et al 2000) in Bannu Valley suggest that the site was not temporary in nature, as was previously stated (Butt 2017), rather it was a small Early Harappan occupation, which must have been remain an important connecting link between the Sarai Khola in the north and Gomul-Bannu sites in the north-west of Indus Valley via mountain passes through Salt Range (See **Map 1**). It is further strengthened by the presence of few contemporary sites in the immediate vicinity of Salt Range such as Kallu Wala Dher (Dar 2002) & Nari (2003) across the Salt Range while Musa Khel (Dani 1971) & Nammal Lake Cave (Salim 1983) on the south of Salt Range. Based on the presence of gullies and depressions within the site, it is quite possible that the structures and stratigraphy has been washed away due to erosion. It still may be verified through large scale survey and excavations.

The structural remains regarding the production of pottery such as kilns and pottery accessories like terracotta cakes are not recovered from Mohra. Although the few specimen of melted pottery have been found from the surface, that suggest its local production. The provenance of the Mohra pottery types will further provide information regarding the nature of the occupation developed at Mohra. Therefore a petrographic and chemical analysis

of the Mohra pottery types is recommended for further studies.

Few of the Mohra pottery types have broad cultural extent beyond the Salt Range such as towards Harappa in Sahiwal (Dales & Kenoyer 1991), Jalilpur (Mughal 1972) in Multan, several sites in Thal desert (Ghauri 2018) and Cholistan desert (Mughal 1974, 1990, 1997) along the dry bed of river Hakra such as typical, short-necked Kot Dijian jar with plain and grooved surface, flanged jars, offering stands, so on. The presence of such similar morphological and stylistic elements suggests the cultural interaction among these interconnected areas. There are also few potsherds correlated to the historic period in the form *Storage Jars* recovered from the surface of Mohra that suggests the site was temporarily occupied during the historic period as well.

Furthermore, the presence of a well-established pottery tradition at Mohra broadens the horizon of Late Kot Diji phase cultural phenomena in the area. It is evident in Gomal Valley that Harappan phase found in co-existence with Early Harappan-Late Kot Diji phase within the same site like Gumla (Dani 1971); or it is found at the top of chronological sequence with a preceding Early Kot Diji phase like at Gandhi Umar Khan (Ali & Jan 2009) or it is absent throughout the chronological sequence like at Rehman Dheri (Durrani 1988). It is quite possible that likewise, Harappans are present across the Salt Range and their absence till date is might be due to lack of large scale surveys in the area or the due development of infrastructure in the capital territory and adjacent Rawalpindi District, resulted in the further deposition of Harappans beneath modern buildings if any were there. There is a need to reconsider the area for the quest of Harappans through organized and large scale survey, so that the ambiguity may further be reduced.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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How to cite this article: Butt, A. 2020. Explorations at Mohra in Trans-Salt Range Zone, Northern Punjab, Pakistan: The Evolution of Early Harappan Phase. *Ancient Asia*, 11: 9, pp.1–12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/aa.203>

Published: 03 November 2020

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