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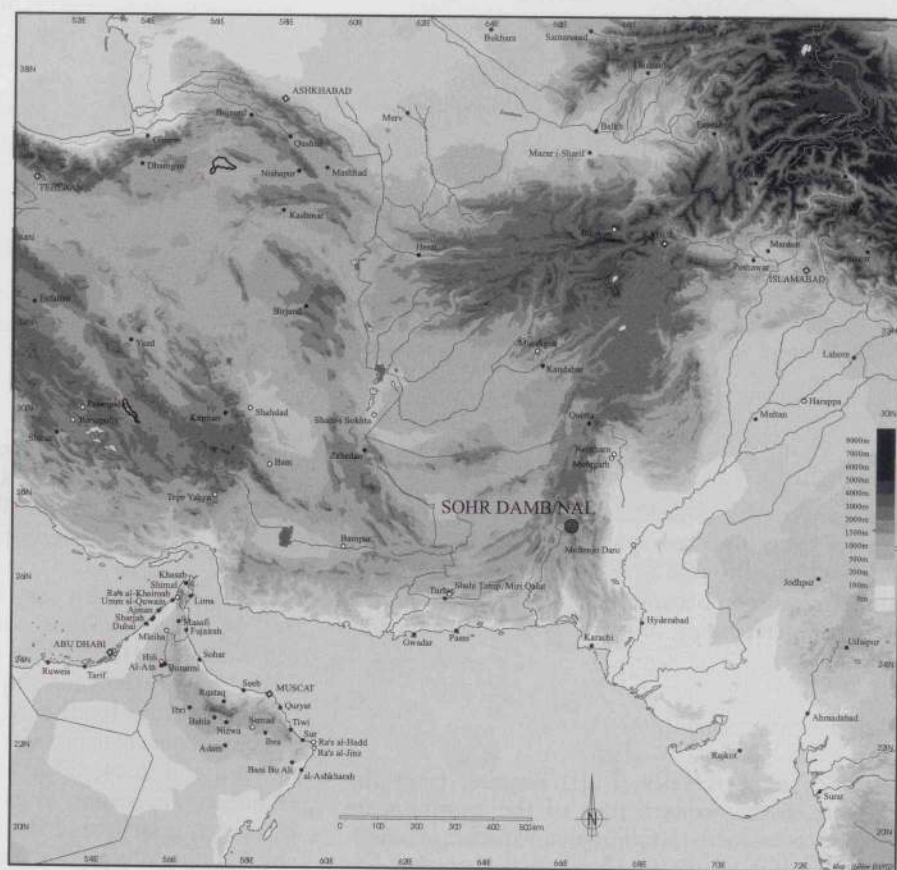
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U. Franke-Vogt

Excavations at Sohr Damb/Nal: Results of the 2002 and 2004 Seasons¹

Fig. 1. Map showing archaeological sites.



INTRODUCTION

Excavations at Sohr Damb were re-opened in 2001 and continued in 2002 and 2004. Most fortunately, and for the first time in this region, a rich and well-stratified cultural assemblage from secure archaeological contexts is being brought to light on a large scale. It allows for detailed typological and technological studies, investigations into architecture, arts, technology, environment and settlement patterns that will lead to a more precise definition of those cultural entities that characterized the cultural de-

velopment in Balochistan for over 2000 years. In association with the information obtained previously in Northern Balochistan (de Cardi 1965; Fairservis 1956; 1959; Stein 1929) and more recently at Mehrgarh/Nausharo (Jarrige et al. 1995) and Miri Qalat/Shahi Tump (Besenval et al., this vol-

¹ This report integrates some of the results from trenches where excavations continued in 2004. More detailed reports on the excavations 2001–2004 have been submitted for publication in *Pakistan Archaeology* and *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan* (Franke-Vogt, in press a and b).

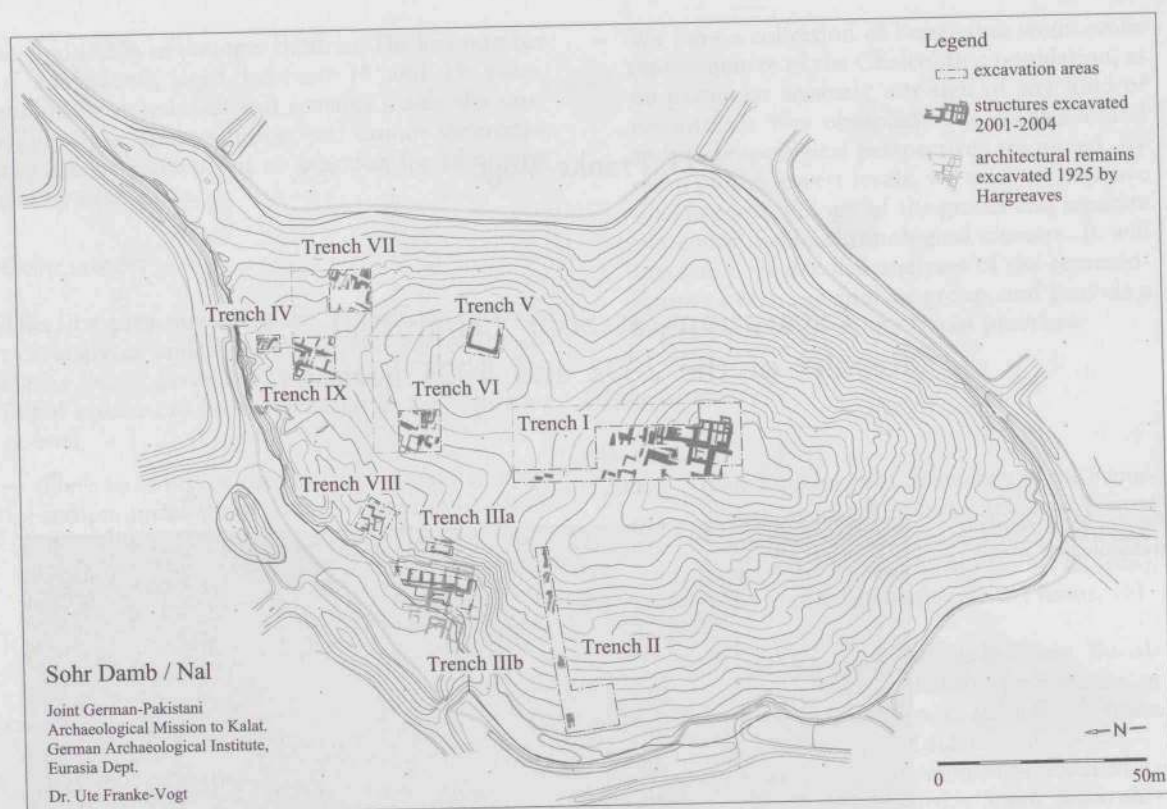


Fig. 2. Plan of Sohr Damb/Nal, trenches with architecture (Hargreaves, Periods I, II and III).

ume), a reliable comparative and absolute chronological regional framework can now be established (fig. 1), which also facilitates a better integration of surface collections into spacial analyses. Apart from development through time, thus contemporary regional variations become more clear, resulting in a better understanding of the overall cultural evolution.

THE EXCAVATIONS

In 2001, two trenches (I, II) running from the summit to the western foot of the mound were opened to define the stratigraphic sequence (Franke-Vogt/Ibrahim, in press). Horizontal exposures began in 2002 and continued in 2004 (fig. 2). The occupation of the mound belongs to four distinct periods (fig. 3). The discovery of a horizon (Period I)

pre-dating the Nal-occupation (Period II) and the isolation of a Late Sadaat/Kulli-Harappan horizon (Period IV) above Period III has extended the time of occupation on the site considerably, from c. 4000/3800 BC to 2000 BC.

The presence of a very large settlement related to the late Quetta/Sadaat culture horizons of Damb Sadaat II and III, with also many similarities to the Zhob and Loralai sites, during Period III provides important clues for the regional development and beyond. This sequence was confirmed and refined in 2002 and 2004, when large-scale exposures of architectural remains, in particular from Period III in Trench I, facilitated the definition of more precise building phases. The excavations are presented subsequently by trenches in chronological order; the levels, however, are described from top to bottom.

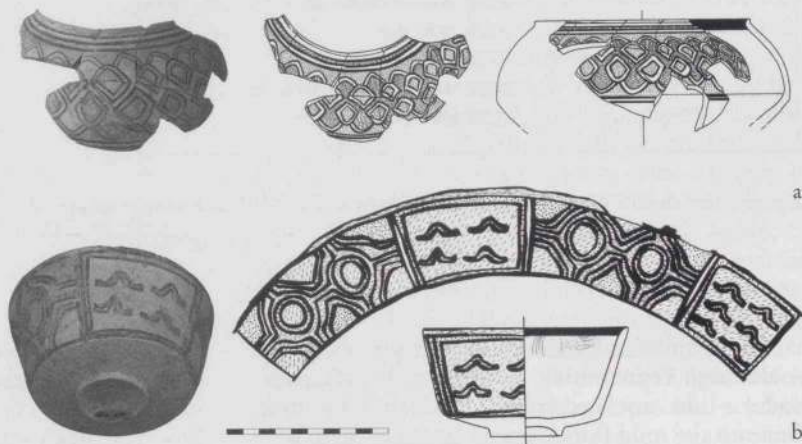
| Period | Trench | I trench | II trench | IIIa soundg | IIIb trench | IV soundg | V surf | VI trench | VII trench | VIII surf | IX trench |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| I: Togau | | | | x | x | x | | | | | |
| II.1-3: Nal | | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | |
| III.1-4: Late Quetta/Sadaat | | x | x | x | | x | x | x | | | x |
| IV: Late Sadaat/Kulli-Harappan | | x | x | | | x | | | | | x? |

Fig. 3. Periods covered by trenches.

Fig. 4. View of Trench IIIb (2004), Period II stone architecture on top of older mudbrick buildings. See burial 718 in the western section (left, covered with soil), excavated by Hargreaves (1929, Pls. VII, X, XII).



Fig. 5. Polychrome pottery from Period II. a. Polychrome vessel, Trench IIIa, Loci 810 and 811. – b. Polychrome beaker, Trench IIIb, Locus 820.



TRENCH IIIb (EXCAVATED BY U. FRANKE-VOGT, SH. ALI, D. VOYAKIN, A. KHAN)

In 2002, Trench IIIb was opened in the centre of Hargreaves' Trench A/E, in an area measuring 6 m × 7 m, just next to our Trench IIIa, where Period II and I remains were found in 2001 (figs. 4; 5 a). Just below the surface, several stonewalls from Period II came to light, allowing us to put Hargreaves' results into context, particularly in connection with the results obtained in Trenches II and IIIa (Hargreaves 1929)². In fact, it was possible to match his plan with the newly exposed structures (fig. 6). Beneath the foundations and gravel floors, further structures came to light that turned out to be tombs dating to the newly defined Period I. Due to the

importance of these findings, the area was extended in 2004 as far as permitted by the topography, it encompassed 120 m² in 2004.

Period II

The stone structures belong to clusters of small, attached rooms. Most of the northern walls have a projection of unknown function. Preserved are gravel layers and stone foundations that are up to 4 layers high, but the upper mudbrick walls, which in Trench IIIa still stood up to 2 m high, were removed by Hargreaves.

² See Franke-Vogt/Ibrahim (in press) for an assessment of Hargreaves' excavations.

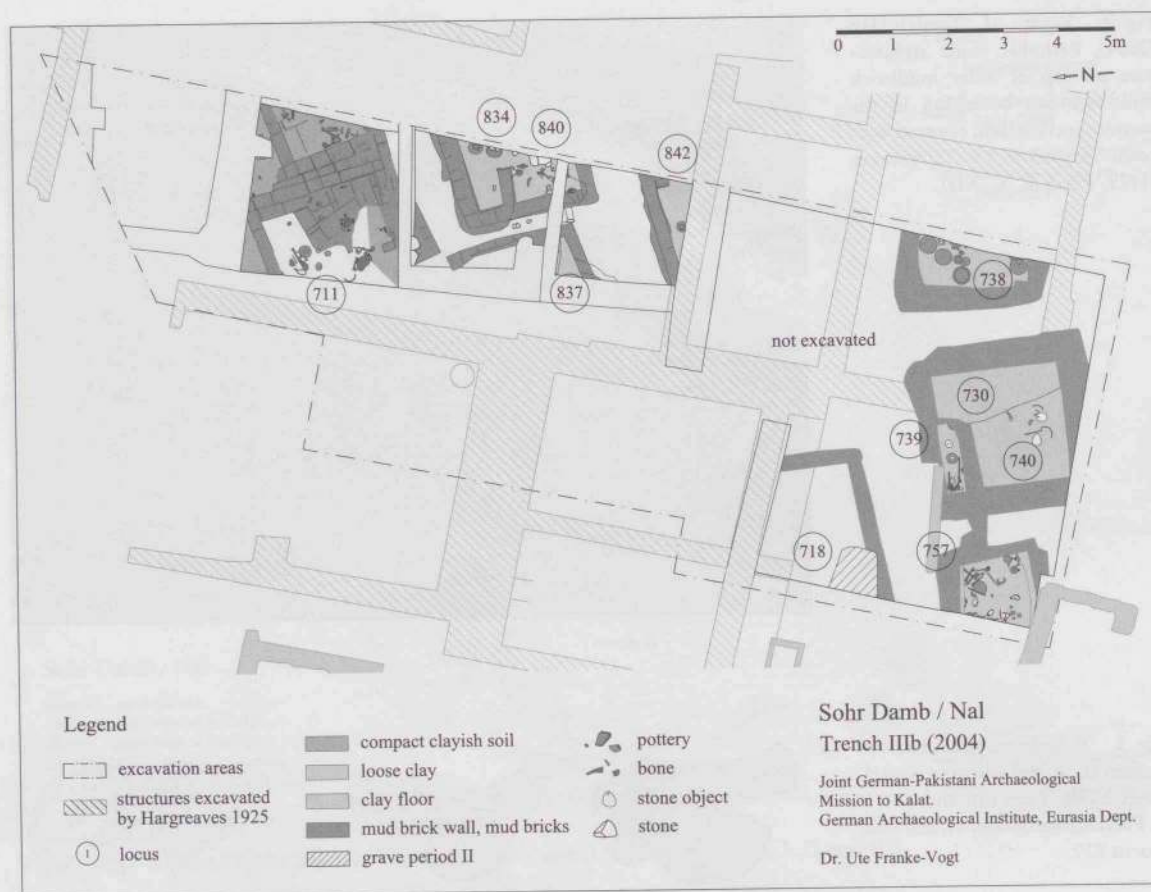


Fig. 6. Trench IIIb: Plan of Period I: burials, with Period II architecture excavated by Hargreaves in light grey.

The architecture belongs to four phases, which – although representing subsequent building episodes – do not necessarily cover a long time. Beneath the mud floors, gravel layers came to light which form the foundations of the walls and floors, and which are clear stratigraphical markers. In these layers, some Nal vessels, mostly miniature pots, were unearthed, apparently foundation deposits. Hargreaves did usually not reach the floors associated with these foundations. The basal limits of his excavations are clearly marked in the sections by thin-bedded aerosol deposits (Unit 820). Therefore, the mud and gravel floors, and the burial groups mentioned by Hargreaves represent a later phase of occupation. Due to various events of rebuilding and repairs, the inventories are not well preserved. They comprise of isolated bones, beads, and vessels or sherds found above, on, and also underneath floors (fig. 5 b).

In the southwestern section of the trench, a burial was uncovered (Tomb 718, see fig. 4) that was previously excavated by Hargreaves (1929, Pl. VII, X). He does not mention any grave goods, but the mode of inhumation implies a Period II date. In 2004, a deposit comprising of three Nal-vessels was

found close-by (Locus 765). This arrangement raises the question whether Hargreaves' "pottery groups" may represent similar contexts. In Trench IIIb, however, this problem cannot be solved since the structures have been removed by Hargreaves. Likewise, the architecture that is visible in the sounding of Trench IIIa, is already eroded just further to the east (Trench VIII). Trench II does also not provide good evidence: the eastern portions are covered by 4 m high deposits from Period III, in the shallow western part no corresponding structures were met upon, in fact, the extensions opened in 2002 did not yield any structures, only gravel, pottery and ashes. This apparent absence of a Nal burial horizon in the trenches close to Hargreaves' excavations has to be emphasized; the only funerary evidence exposed in Trench IIe (568) was one articulated individual burial (Franke-Vogt/Ibrahim, in press).

Period I

Although pottery pre-dating the Nal occupation was discovered already in 2001 in Trench IIIa, the appearance of structures underneath the remains from Period II in Trench IIIb came as a surprise,

Fig. 7. View of tomb 739/740, upper layer, towards southeast (2004).



because Hargreaves had dug a sounding in Trench A/E where he reached virgin soil³. The interpretation of the tombs that were only partly exposed in 2002 was difficult, because they were covered by the stone foundations of Period II and since all of them run into the sections. Therefore, in 2004, the area was extended as far as possible within the limits of the irrigation channels and the high sections of the old excavations, and most of the stone foundations of Period II were removed.

So far, eight tombs have been identified, but only one (Tomb 739/740) is fully located in the trench. It provides a complete plan that confirms our first findings from 2002 (figs. 6–7). The chambers are squarish, they measure approximately 1.5 m × 1.5 m. They are built with large sized (40 cm × 20 cm × 5 cm), upright standing mud bricks, brick batches, and mud patches. Walls are about 30 cm to 40 cm, in a few cases 60 cm high. Floors are also made with mudbricks. After a first phase of use, a small dividing wall was attached to the western interior face. Some tombs comprise of two bone layers, but excavation in this repeatedly flooded area is difficult since all spaces are filled with very hard clay and the surfaces are usually very compact. The water also badly affects the bones. In most tombs, only the upper bone layer has been reached.

The graves contain exclusively multiple fractional burials. Usually, only small portions of the skeleton were found in an articulate position. Many skeletal parts are totally absent or very rare. Infants, children and adults are buried together. Often, bones from infants were deposited in Togau D-bowls. Skulls are often placed in shallow pits lined with pebbles. Their number certainly exceeds that of individuals represented by other parts of the

body. The excavated evidence indicates that fractional burials are customary and that the tombs were in use for a long time⁴.

While in 2002 only a few vessels were found, in 2004 a large number of grave goods, mostly pottery, but also beads, shells with ochre, and small “offering tables” made of stone, came to light, in particular in Tombs 738, 739/740 and 757 (figs. 6–8). Some beakers contained shells with ochre, or only ochre pigment. The vessels are of an amazing variety and include previously unknown shapes and decorations. The association of pottery types from different cultural complexes, in particular Kile Ghul Mohammad, Togau C–D, and Kechi Beg, indicates that stylistic developmental schemes used as chronological markers need to be restudied. All bowls found within the tombs – and they are the most frequent type – carry Togau C–D hooks, while Togau A and B animal freezes were only found in contexts outside defined burials.

Among the objects, large, perforated, conical stones weights (c. 10 kg) have to be mentioned. Three of them were found in Tomb 739/740 (fig. 7). One similar weight was excavated by Hargreaves (1929, 25 Pl. XVb), one is in a private collection, and one was found by laborers in 2002, allegedly in the fields north of the mound. Interestingly enough, the weight published by Hargreaves was found in area A12, along with Group G, that is in the same area where Tomb 739/720 is located.

Possibly, Hargreaves had already reached Period I levels in this area, where – according to his

³ In the northwestern corner of the trench, which is now devoid of structures, due to this sounding.

⁴ The burials will be studied by C. Buquet.



Fig. 8. Pottery from Period I, Trench IIIb, tomb 738 (a: 738.8; b: 738.7, with ochre in attached vessels; c: 738.1). Tomb 738 is located in the SE edge of the area, see plan in fig. 6, upper right.

plan – no Period II buildings covered the older ones. Although the sections reveal that he usually did not dig deep enough, this possibility has to be considered, particularly since a few other objects and even some pottery vessels support this view. These are small stone trays and at least two pots (Hargreaves 1929, Pl. XIVb; XIX.9. 12). They certainly would fit better with Period I than with Period II types.

This area will be fully cleared in 2005. Another trench will be opened in the shallow depression north of Trench IIIb, where surface clearings have already revealed Period II walls (Trench VIII). This excavation will provide information on the extension of the cemetery. Likewise, the ongoing excavations in Trench VII, at the eastern edge of the mound, are expected to shed light on the extension of the Period I occupation that was already detected in the small sounding of Trench IV underneath Period II architecture.

TRENCH IV (SEE figs. 2; 9; EXCAVATED BY U. FRANKE-VOGT, A. IBRAHIM, M. SCHMIDTNER)

This sounding is located near the northern edge of the mound, where the latter is cut by an irrigation channel. It was excavated in 2001 and 2002. Deposits reach a depth of 6 m and cover Periods I to IV. It thus provided, for the first time, evidence for the stratigraphic transition between the periods. In 2004, Trenches VI, IX and VII were opened in the vicinity to follow the well-preserved architecture, to gather more information about the periods and transitional horizons, and to enlarge the exposed plans. The sequence can now be correlated with the levels visible along the northern section of the mound. It also provides a context for radiocarbon samples taken in 1998 and 2004 from this section (Bln 5081; see Görtsdorf, this volume).

Period III

The uppermost period of occupation encompasses two building phases. The youngest one comprises of a 50 cm thick package of thin layers deriving from domestic activities: ash layers, hearth refusal, and cooking pits lined with pebbles. The mud brick walls are very well preserved, but due to the limited size of the trench no complete house plans were excavated. One room contained a basin with 30 cm thick deposits of husks. Further excavations have since shown that such installations are part of the standard inventory of the houses.

This occupation rests on a compact clay floor above a gravel layer; remains of the latter are visible all along the northern and eastern sections of the mound. Today, gravel is the most striking surface feature; it probably originates from these eroded foundations. The pottery belongs to Period III, but shows some characteristics, which indicate that we might deal here with a transitional horizon, comparable to Nausharo ID or Miri Qalat IIIc. The second occupation phase belongs to the classical Period III and yielded many storage jars that find parallels at e. g. Damb Sadaat (see figs. 15; 16).

Wood is comparatively rare in Trench IV, possibly due to the fact that fewer walls were found since rooms are larger than in Trench I. The Period III architecture was built on a terracing level made of erosion materials such as building debris, silts, and pottery. This layer, situated at +5.20 m, separates Period III from Period II.

Period II

The deposits from Period II are 1.7 m to 2.0 m high. Levels comprise two phases, but some of the older walls were re-used later on. The mud brick walls are less wide than in Period III. They rest on boulder foundations at +3.3 m (fig. 9). Rooms meas-

Fig. 9. Trench IV (2002): Period III levels (upper left), stone foundations of Period II (note imprint of removed wall in eastern section, left), and levels of Period I beneath. Towards south.

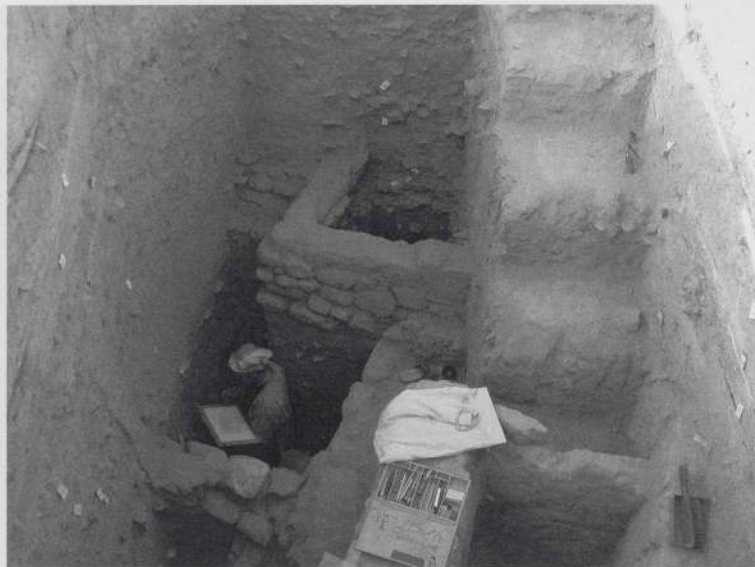


Fig. 10. Spacers for firing bowls and jars. Trench VI, Period III.



ure about 1 m × 2 m; they are too small to live in and are possibly small storage rooms grouped around an open space. Due to the limited space, no complete plans could be uncovered. In one building, a small brick basin (Locus 934) came to light with husks on a lime floor. Finds include grinding stones, beads and bull figurines.

Period I

The deepest levels were retrieved only on a small space. Nevertheless, the opportunity to investigate whether Period I is present at this portion of the mound and to reach virgin soil had to be taken. The nature of the Period I structures remains unknown, but they confirm that the earliest settlement was already of substantial size. The pottery, which includes many Togau A and B designs and coarse ware vessels, indicates a domestic context. Natural ground, comprising of gravel bands devoid of pottery and ashes, was reached at +2.20 m.

TRENCH VI (figs. 2; 10; 11; EXCAVATED BY M. SCHMIDTNER)

In 2004, a new trench measuring 10 m × 10 m was opened close to Trench IV. The location was selected because traces of a kiln, misfired sherds, and slags indicated a pottery firing area. At the same time, it offered the chance to check the stratigraphical sequence excavated in Trench IV, to follow up the architecture, and to investigate the transition between the periods.

Period III

The kilns are located in the western part of the trench (VIa, c). They comprise of two small pear-shaped structures of which nothing but the firing chambers is preserved. The southern kiln is the older one, which was destroyed when the northern one was built. The firing chambers were filled with ashes, but otherwise empty, apart from one beaker



Fig. 11. Trench VI, Period II: View into a room, towards north (2004).

with a bracket design, and a few Period III potsherds. Wasters from different vessel types were scattered in the vicinity, but, in general, the area was devoid of the typical kiln refuse, indicating that it was kept clean until it was abandoned. The number of tools was not significantly higher than elsewhere, apart from spacers that were used to keep stapled vessels apart during firing. The shape and size of the imprints of rims and walls reveal that they were used for the firing of bowls and storage jars (fig. 10). However, the production of other pottery types is also attested to by wasters.

Just next (west of) to the kilns, two buildings dating to Period III were exposed (Area VI d). This architecture is badly preserved, but can be assigned to two phases. Their stratigraphical relation to the kilns has yet to be investigated. From here, an erosion layer of gravel and boulders, soil, and pottery, runs towards west. It indicates a period of decay and erosion, of abandonment and disuse in between Periods II and III, as also observed elsewhere.

These levels can be linked with the general sequence established in Trench I only through pottery typology and building techniques. Already now, differences in the ceramic inventories are clear, but further excavations and a detailed pottery analyses are required to make sure whether this intra-site variability has functional or chronological implications.

Period II

Directly beneath the Period III buildings and this erosion layer, levels dating to Period II came to light, just 20 cm below surface. After the removal

of substantial architectural collapse, small rooms with several installations, like a small paved mud brick platform with grinding stones, mortars, pestles, and a bone scraper in front of it, were found (fig. 11). The walls are still c. 1.6 m high.

The southern section of the trench shows that the levels belong to two phases, but inside the rooms a division was difficult since there were no clear stratigraphic distinctions. The pottery includes typical Nal poly- and monochrome types as well as household wares (fig. 12 a). Among other finds are beads and bull figurines, baked and unbaked, with closed legs that confirm the typological differences between the figurines from Period II and III since the latter so far yielded only specimen with open legs.

Apart from the fact that here, for the first time, well preserved architecture from Period II was found on a larger scale, this trench is important for two reasons: firstly, for the stratigraphical evidence on the transition between Period II and III. Secondly, because the matrix of the deposits is very different from that observed in Trench IV: there, the deposits from Period III are about 1.6 m high, whereas they are very shallow in Trench VI. Recalling that in Trench IV evidence for a transitional horizon was found, this morphological difference is important for the genesis of the mound and for reconstructing its cultural development. Trenches VII and IX were opened with the perspective to follow up this problem and to cross-check the stratigraphical sequence⁵.

⁵ These trenches are described in Franke-Vogt, in press a.

Fig. 12. Nal domestic ware, Period II (a: Trench VI, 1028.1; b: Trench IIIb, 563.2, stratigraphically Per. III).

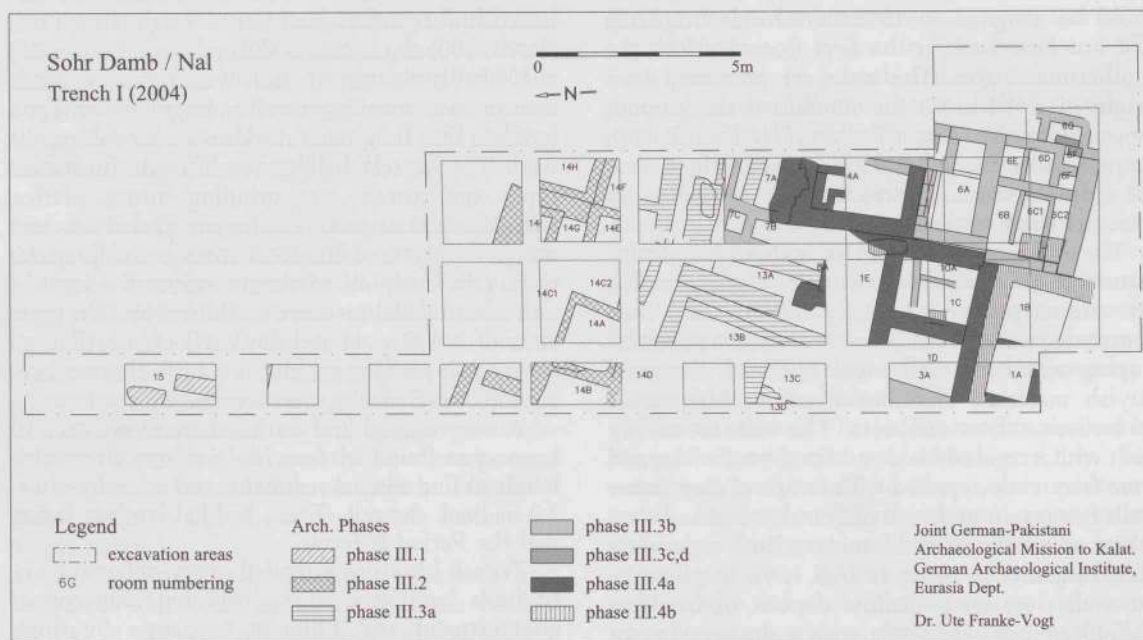
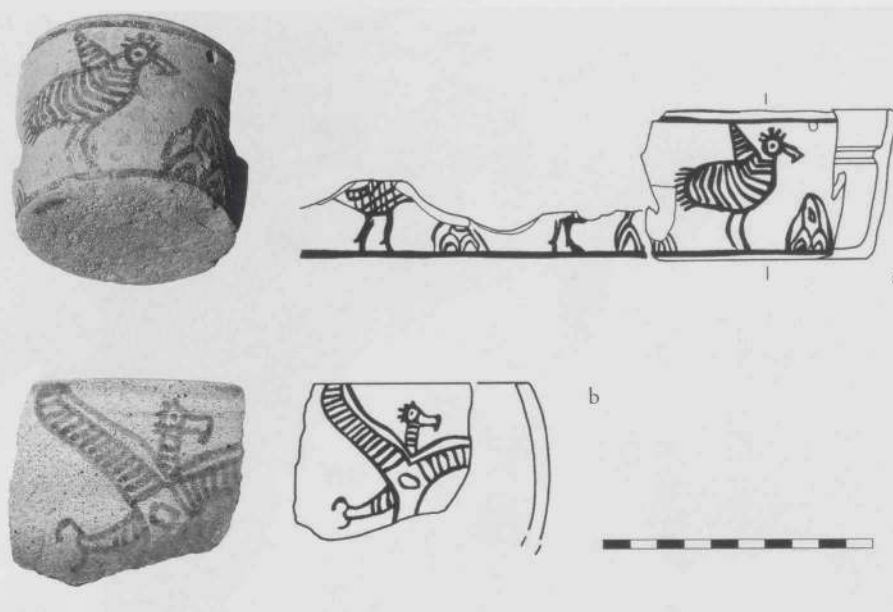


Fig. 13. Trench I, plan of architecture by phases (St. Langer).

TRENCH I (figs. 13–16; EXCAVATED BY ST. LANGER, M. HAAN, A. IBRAHIM, M. KARBERG, A. GROSS)

The 2.5 m wide and 50 m long step trench was opened in 2001. Just below the surface, mud brick walls and well-preserved *in situ* contexts came to light. In 2002 and 2004, the area was enlarged and baulks were removed. It now covers 350 m² (figs. 2; 13) and ranges from +13.50 m to +6.70 m in height.

25 horizons were defined that were divided by St. Langer into four major phases, based on the architectural stratigraphy. All levels belong to Period III. A fifth, uppermost phase is represented by eroded levels and pits only. It is characterized by the appearance of Kulli-Harappan and Late Sadaat pottery types, while previous types continue. Traces of Period II remains were reached only in the lowest layers of Area Ie in 2001.



Fig. 14. View of "Burnt Building" (AK 6, 2004), towards east.

At the end of the 2004 season, the structures could be assigned to 15 architectural complexes that are excavated to the first floor level in the southernmost area. The walls are preserved to a height of c. 1.6 m on the summit of the mound, especially in the "Burnt Building" (AK 6; fig. 14), but are badly eroded along the slope, where they are only a few centimetres high or attested to by traces of the foundations.

The buildings were filled up with massive architectural debris comprising of bricks, clay and wood; excavations proved extremely difficult and time consuming due to hardly visible contours of bricks, sloping and bent walls, and a fill of cemented clayish material. The modes and techniques of construction show variations. The walls are mostly built with irregularly laid and sized mudbricks, and were frequently repaired with lumps of clay. Some walls rest on a foundation of gravel, wood and clay, others on medium-sized boulders. Both techniques occur together in phase 4a (AK 1, 4). In phase 3a, the walls rest on a shallow deposit of boulders (AK 13). Floors are made with a mud paving or bricks, and in one room a gravel-clay floor was excavated. Traces of lime are occasionally found (AK 6 Planum 4). Lime was also used as wall plaster, it is preserved on one of the walls in Room A (loci 123, 124) of the "Burnt Building" (AK 6) as an approximately 2 mm thick layer. Remains of mud plaster found in the debris reveal that wood, branches and reeds and a mud cover were used to build the roofs. Wood, usually from *Acacia* sp., less frequently from poplar (*Populus* sp.) or *tamarix* sp. (Benecke/Neef, this volume) was also used to make the foundations.

Beneath the debris, two well-preserved living horizons came to light in AK 6, each with hun-

dreds of vessels and tools, beads, burnt and unbaked bull figurines, and bones. In the lower one (Locus 100) about 200, in the upper one (Locus 68) c. 100 badly shattered vessels were retrieved. Their amount and position as well as fragments of wood indicate that they once stood in shelves along the wall. The vessels belong to different functional types, but storage jars, grinding stones, pestles, fireplaces and organic remains reveal that this area was certainly used for food storage and preparation. Obviously the contents attracted mice and rats whose skeletons were found nearby. The presence of bone tools and cut marks on cattle and sheep/goat phalanges indicate that leatherworking took place (Benecke, pers. comm.).

A very special and so far unique sequence of layers was found in Area Id-Ie, where alternating bands of fine alluvial sediments and ashes form a c. 1.3 m thick deposit. These bedded laminar layers seal the Period II levels.

Trench I has also provided a very rich inventory of finds beyond pottery, including four copper compartment seals, human terracotta figurines, baked and unbaked bull figurines, beads, and stone, bone, and clay tools.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of three seasons of excavation at Sohr Damb, the settlement history has become much clearer and a wide range of information has been gathered that bears on many problems and questions in Indus archaeology.

The evaluation and interpretation of the findings yield important information on the typological and stylistic diversity of the material assemblage and its change through time, and provide clues on relative



Fig. 15. Pottery from Period III.

sequences and absolute dates. Already now it is clear that pottery types usually assigned to cultural complexes that succeed each in the developmental scheme are associated (figs. 15; 16). The analysis of the data is still in the initial stage and work continues in many areas, but the general chronological and cultural frameworks have been established.

Period I belongs to a time when around 4000 BC the numbers of sites rose and the eastern piedmont of the Kirthar Range and the Indus valley proper were settled. Sohr Damb and at least one further mound, Lukh (N19), located c. 20 km further north, were founded. The former site is situated on a gravel accumulation near a small river. The size of this earliest settlement is still open to investigation; but it certainly covered the northern portion of the present mound. The sections in Trench IV indicate that it did not extend much further towards north.

During Period II, the number of sites in the area increased. The settlement at Sohr Damb reached the size of the present mound. Pits and cavities in the cemetery area were filled with gravel to level the surface for the new buildings. The older tombs were partly destroyed. In Period II, the burial customs changed. Houses were built next to each other, rooms were small, but with sophisticated installations, such as basins with lime floors, hearths, brick platforms, and storage jars. Small finds and pottery reveal changes on different levels, stylistically as well as technically. Togau pottery came to an end, although black and red slipped types often painted with white motifs (Kechi Beg White on Black/Red), continue.

The settlement of Period III covers most of the present mound, but some areas were not occupied

during all four phases. These spaces were used as garbage dumps for pottery, bones, ashes, and building debris, as e. g. evident in Trenches II and VII. Such processes of growth and regression will be more clear after all trenches are linked to the sequence that has been established in Trench I, a target to be approached mainly by means of ceramic typology. Already now it is clear, however, that 1. the ceramic inventories reflect intra-site variability, and that 2. the stratigraphic sequences and layer matrices differ even in neighbouring trenches, as e. g. in Trenches IV, IX, and VI. One possible explanation for this heterogeneous pattern are distinct phases of growth of certain portions of the mound, thus creating a variegated topographic profile.

The transition to Period III is again marked by many changes in style and technology. Only a few ornaments continue as altered copies, in a different form and execution. Polychrome and monochrome Nal wares are not produced anymore, the whole operational chain of the production is different, more simple and plain, but witnessing at the same time the introduction of new tools, such as moulds, techniques, fabrics, shapes, and motifs.

Of particular importance is that – after Late Sadaat/Kulli-Harappan pottery was first identified in the ceramic assemblage in 2001 and assigned to Period IV – it has now been possible to define its stratigraphic context. Although the latter comprises only of pits, disturbed contexts, and erosion layers, the stratigraphical position above Period III is ascertained. The presence of these two cultural horizons in a stratigraphical context is important for the discussion of the settlement history in Balochistan around 2500/2300 BC, the rise and development of the Kulli horizon, and the end of urbanism in the wider region.

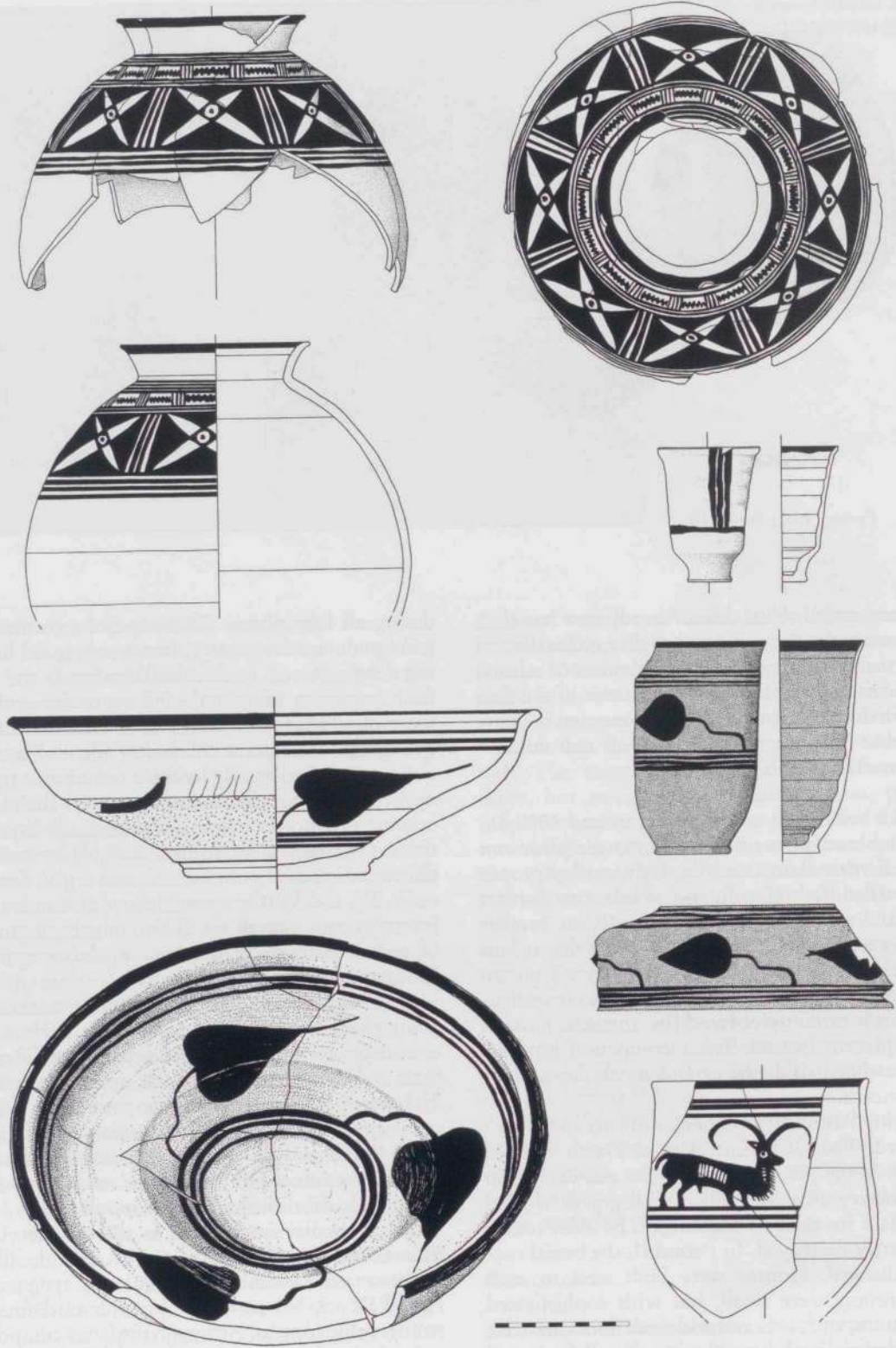


Fig. 16. Pottery from Period III.

Two important questions that are related to these topics have to be addressed. One is linked to continuity within the regional cultural tradition. The second is related to the date and reasons of the end of settled life and urbanism. Certainly, at present a continued cultural evolution from the Neolithic through the Historic Period is favoured. Without doubt, certain patterns, styles and techniques occur through time. However, the question rather is whether they were passed on with their embedded meaning and symbolic content, or whether they were just copied, or used independently, as "empty" forms.

At Sohr Damb, we found several features proposing a hiatus, stratigraphically, stylistically and technologically. Among them are the erosion and debris layers, which indicate a prolonged phase of abandonment prior to the Period III occupation, and the technological and stylistic changes that occur in all periods, but particularly between Period II and III. It is not yet known how long the intervals of time in between the periods were; we look particularly forward to the new radiocarbon dates from Period II, but the general scheme is already clear.

In this connection, and with regard to the second question mentioned above, the absence of a classical Kulli-horizon in Sohr Damb has to be noted. Although some features of the early Kulli style, such as elongated bulls (Quivron 2000) are present in Period III, this style is not attested to at Sohr Damb in its developed form, even though it occurs at several sites in the vicinity. Instead, we have in Period IV a shared Late Sadaat/Kulli occupation. The radiocarbon dates from Sohr Damb (see Görsdorf, this volume) support a date of c. 2400/2300 BC, a dating that corresponds to the information we have from Balakot (Franke-Vogt 2002), Niai Buthi, and Bakkar Buthi⁶. The information at hand now thus indicates the co-existence of two major cultural horizons.

At 2000 BC, settlements were abandoned in the Nal basin and elsewhere, and traces of settled life re-appear only around 400 BC, as in other regions of Balochistan and beyond. Since the data from Sohr Damb do not indicate that river changes and climate played a major role in this process, we yet

have to look for possible explanations. Certainly, the gradual cessation of the Indus civilization as a strong integrative and economic power can be considered an important factor in this development.

However, to propose a model in which the cessation of the Indus Civilization plays a major role in the abandonment of settled life around 2000/1900 BC, also implies, in a way, that the processes that took place in the western highlands around 2500/2300 BC were related to the rise of this power, through its strong economic and possibly political focus. The spheres that carried these processes are yet unknown, but an interplay of various factors is more than likely.

Certainly, we do not expect to solve all these problems at Sohr Damb, but we feel that the information gathered on the various levels provide new and often unexpected perspectives that, in conjunction with the results obtained by other mission in the field, will contribute to a better understanding of the overall cultural processes that took place between 4000 and 2000 BC.

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⁶ Franke-Vogt et al. 2000; Franke-Vogt, in press c; Franke-Vogt/ul-Haq, in press.

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