

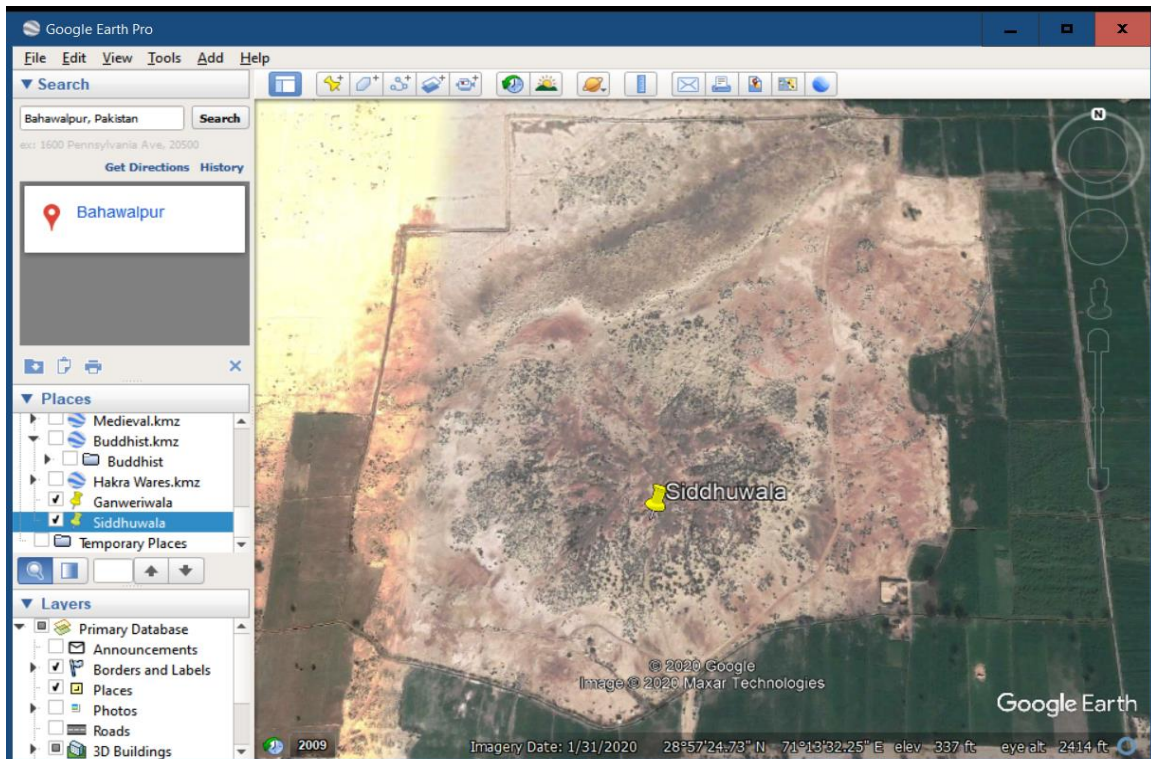
## SIDDHUWALA THER<sup>1</sup> - A LATE HARAPPAN SITE IN CHOLISTAN

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This note is prompted by the description of Siddhuwala Ther by Amna Tofique and Shaw Bano (2012 – 2013: 89 – 99). Since I had re-examined the site on December 2, 1975, following the foot-prints of Sir Aurel Stein, some information on the site is added. It is also necessary to correct certain statements attributed to the present writer in the publication of the two authors.

According to the manuscript copy of report written by Sir Aurel Stein (1943), he visited the site on March 7, 1941. He said:

‘Siddhuwala – Ther’ located about one miles to the north of Garakwali 1, is larger, measuring about 550 yards in diameter with a height of 27 feet. It is largely covered by drifts sand, caught by scrubby hummocks. Apart from fragments of



Siddhuwala Ther. Image by Google Earth

relief-decorated were whole is typical of Cemetery “H” culture at Harappa, there were found sherds decorated on the rims with incised patterns of scallops or dots. The large quantity of green faience bangles of different sizes and often neatly decorated with incised hachuring, deserves mention. Numerous small pieces of copper ore suggest that this was used for the manufacture of the green colour of the faience bangles. Several fragments of bored bracelets of a whitish paste ware also picked up. The place may have served for the production of such ornaments. Also found was a part of a larger clay “hanger” perhaps used in weaving”. (1943:171).

The site is located 28° 57’ 22.16” North Latitude and 71° 13’ 30.70” East Longitude<sup>2</sup>. The main mound measures 644 x 680 feet with the maximum height of 29 feet. Stein recorded its overall size as 550 yards in diameter with a height of 27 feet. Tofique and Bano (2012 – 2013) probably gave measurements of an overall area covered by the main site and adjacent kilns areas. According to them, it was 448.66m north to south and 553.51m east to west including the areas marked by them as SDW I, II, III, IV and V.

In 1975, re-examination of the site by the author and his team revealed evidence of lot of industrial activities marked by kilns on the western and eastern margins of the main mound. In addition, two kiln areas on the southern and northeastern sides but detached from the main mound were distinctly visible. Pottery was scattered around the mound for a distance more than 200 feet on the northeastern and southern sides. A kilns area on the northeast measured 370 x 410 feet respectively in North-South and East-West directions with a height of at least 7 ½ feet. The surface showed signs of 7 kilns, oval and rectangular in shape, one of which measured 9 ½ x 4 feet.

A pile of pottery was seen near the kilns. The other area marked exclusively by the kilns on the southern edge of the mound measured 197 feet from north to south and 263 feet from east to west and showed a height of 5 feet and 6 inches. The signs of at least 6 kilns were seen showing oblong, rectangular and circular shapes, some lined with brick tiles containing green coloured slags (of copper?). Stein picked up several pieces of faience bangles (1943: 171). Attached to the main mound were seen two areas; one on its northeast which measured 790 feet North- South and 284 feet East- West with a height of 10 feet, and the other mound on the east was 8 ½ feet high and measured 673 feet North-South and 315 feet East-West. In addition to the spread of potsherds on the northeastern and southern sides as mentioned above, surface litter of pottery extended to more than 150 feet on the eastern side of the main mound while on its western side, potsherds could be seen up to 260 feet from the edge of principal mound of Siddhuwala Ther.

An overall size of the site is 3.6 ha (Mughal 1997: 52) and is associated with the late Harappan period contemporary with Stratum II (extended burials) of Cemetery – H at Harappa, not to be confused with pot burials of Stratum I. The distinction is not always made clear in most writings on the “Late Harappa Cemetery – H” period. A complete

offering stand of tall variety and other pottery were found on the southwestern limits of the mound (Mughal 1997: Pl. 78; Fig. 19, No. 87 reproduced below).

Further comments on the description of pottery by the Two writers (2012 -2013) referred to one category of pottery called “appliqué”. It seems that they are referring to what was defined as ‘ ‘ Harappan Wet Ware’ ’ (Mughal 1997: 84) in the following words:

“Harappan Wet” ware, a name given to a group of pottery the outer surface of which is distinguished by regular patterns of raised designs made with an instrument on a coating of mud while it was wet. The surface shows a variety of designs in relief and the flexibility of treatment rules out moulding technique. Only the lower part below the shoulder is treated with the wet technique. The upper part of vessels is separated from the lower half by a sharp carination. The shoulder is either plain or contains stamped or incised designs. The neck is generally decorated with sharply incised designs. In a sense, such vessels combine both the techniques of surface treatment namely, wet and incised.

“The label “Harappan Wet” ware is proposed for two reasons. (1) The patterns made on wet clay differ on this type of vessel forms and surface treatment from the known wet wares, namely “Periano Wet” and “Quetta Wet”. Therefore, those from Cholistan constitute a separate group. (2) It is associated only with the Late Harappan pottery in Cholistan as well as at Harappa. At Harappa, it was first discovered in association with Cemetery H pottery. It is very extensively distributed in Cholistan and occurs only with the Late Harappan pottery .....” A selection of the Harappan Wet Wares found at the Late Harappan sites in Cholistan is illustrated.

The published list of sites in Cholistan contains three Late Harappan sites named Siddhuwala Ther, Siddhuwala-E and Siddhuwala- F; two Mature Harappan called Siddhuwala-B and Siddhuwala-E (also called Lumrywala) and one Early Harappan site listed as Siddhuwala (Mughal 1997:147).

This note is neither a review nor criticism of the publication of two authors. However, even if certain incomplete bibliographical references and editorial errors are overlooked, at least one mistake or oversight must be pointed out. The two authors have misquoted me on page 90 when they wrote:

“Late Harappan pottery assemblage from Cholistan consists of three main groups: (a) pottery which in form, surface treatment and painted designs is identical to that of Cemetery H and surface material from Harappa, (b) wet wares and new wares in terms of vessel shape, fabric and decorated techniques; and (c) a very little number of mature Harappan pottery.”(Tofique and Bano 2012-13: 90).

My actual text reads:

*‘ ‘The Late Harappan pottery assemblage from Cholistan consists of three main groups: (a) pottery which in form, surface treatment and painted designs is identical to that of Cemetery ‘H’ and*

*surface materials from Harappa; (b) new wares in terms of vessels shapes, fabric and decorative technique; and (c) Mature Harappan pottery from those sites where Mature Harappan occupation does not seem to exist'' (Mughal 1997: 80-81).*

Stein picked up a crescent shaped terracotta object which he called a 'hanger' (1943: 171). During the survey of Cholistan, several identical objects were recorded from several sites (Mughal 1997: Pl. 80, p. 86). Such objects are also identified as horns of animals.

## NOTES

1. Information on the surface features of Siddhuwala Ther is based on the manuscript of book by the author entitled, *In the Footsteps of Sir Aurel Stein: Explorations in Cholistan*, Bahawalpur, 2010: Boston.
2. Slight difference of a few seconds only was found between the coordinates calculated from the topographical maps and those of Google maps today. In 1974, the archaeological team was officially forbidden to use GPS devices during the surveys of Cholistan.

## REFERENCES

- Mughal, Mohammad Rafique. (1997). *Ancient Cholistan: Archaeology and Architecture*. Rawalpindi-Lahore-Karachi: Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd.
- Stein, Sir Aurel (1943). *An Archaeological Tour Along the Ghaggar-Hakra River, 1940-42*. Microfilm ADI-181. Washington: Library of Congress.
- Tofique, Amina & Shaw Bano (2012-2013) Cemetery H Household Pottery at Siddhuwala: A General Overview, *Ancient Sindh*, 12. Khairpur: Shah Abdul Latif University: 89-99.