

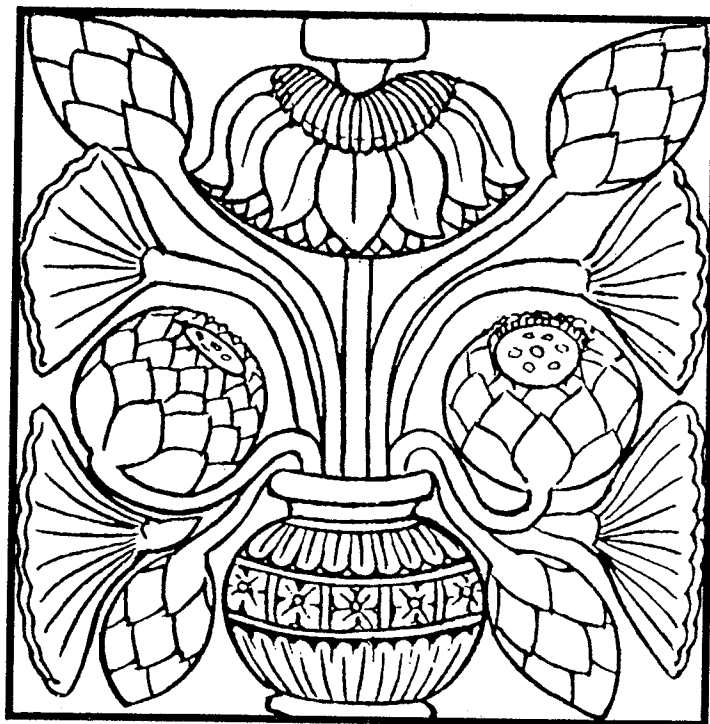
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A Preliminary Review of Archaeological Surveys in Punjab and Sindh: 1993-95

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In 1993, a programme of systematic and comprehensive archaeological surveys in the Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan was launched by the Department of Archaeology and Museums of the Federal Government under my overall supervision and direction. I was also the Project Director of these surveys. Both the field projects were conceived on the lines of previous work carried out some twenty years ago in Cholistan during the period 1974 to 1977. The aim was to document all categories of ancient sites, archaeological remains and standing monuments belonging to any period of Pakistan's history from the Palaeolithic to the end of British rule in 1947. These proposals for field works were generously supported financially by the Federal Government. Two centres, one at Karachi in the main Explorations Branch and the second in Lahore Fort were established respectively for Sindh and Punjab, and the field work started in the winter season of 1993.*

Punjab Province

Intensive field work has produced a staggering amount of information in southern Punjab excluding the three districts of Bahawalpur administrative Division which were surveyed twenty years ago. Out of 32 administrative districts, 17 have so far been surveyed in addition to three districts of Bahawalpur (Fig. 1). So far, 24 sites belonging to the Hakra Ware period near the Sutlej river and one towards the northeast of Harappa on the Ravi river have been recorded. Thirty-four Early Harappan sites have been added to the list of fifty previously known sites, making a total of 84. In addition, about one

dozen contemporary sites have been located in Attock district by a team from Punjab Department of Archaeology, including a reportedly Kot Dijian cemetery site. The Mature Harappan sites so far recorded number 28 and if we add 174 sites in Cholistan, the total would come up to 202. There are only 5 Late Harappan (Cemetery H related) sites in the area under survey which is surprising in view of 50 sites in Cholistan. Six Painted Grey Wares sites have been recorded in the southeastern part of Punjab which are related to those found previously along the Hakra river.

The Potohar Plateau has not yet been taken up for proper survey but as a part of the training of young officers, Dr. Mohammad Salim of the Quaid-e-Azam University has been requested to join the Survey team. They recorded 19 sites of the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods near Rawalpindi most of which were already known. This region is expected to be taken up for survey in 1996. In other areas of Punjab, however, a large number of sites and monuments belonging to what are generally bracketed together as "early historical", "medieval" and the late "Mughal" periods have been recorded (Fig. 2). These sites may otherwise be divided into definite chronological categories. Accordingly, the sites belonging to the 1st-7th centuries A.D. are 131 in number, and those of 8th-11th centuries A.D. are 113. In the same group fall 27 sites recorded previously in Cholistan and making a total of 140 sites. The sites belonging to 1st and 11th centuries A.D. represent the Hindu-Buddhist and later periods in southern Punjab. It seems appropriate to group later sites into meaningful categories of the Sultanate and Mughal periods instead of lumping them all together into the

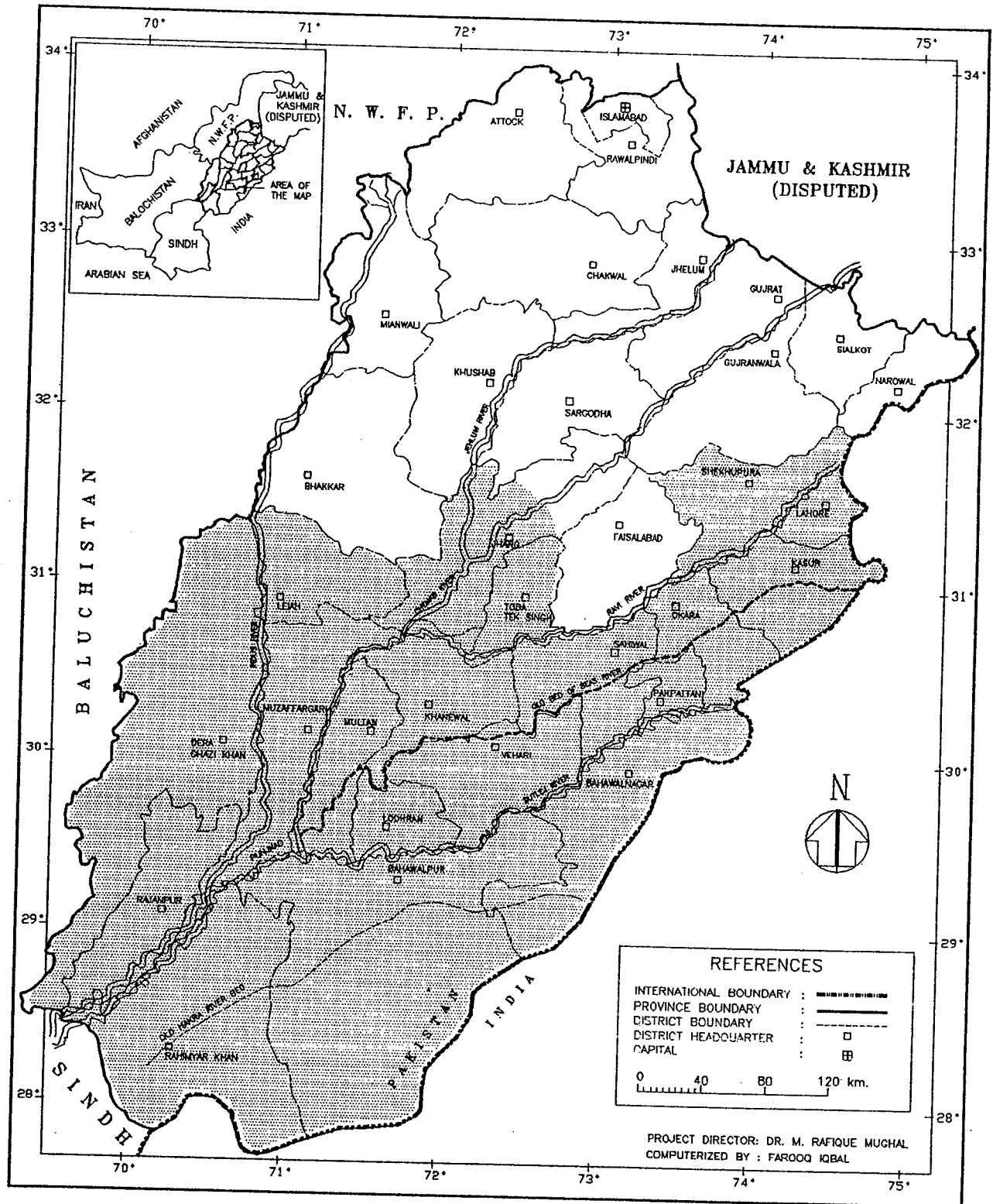


Fig. 1. The areas so far surveyed in the Punjab Province, Pakistan (1995).

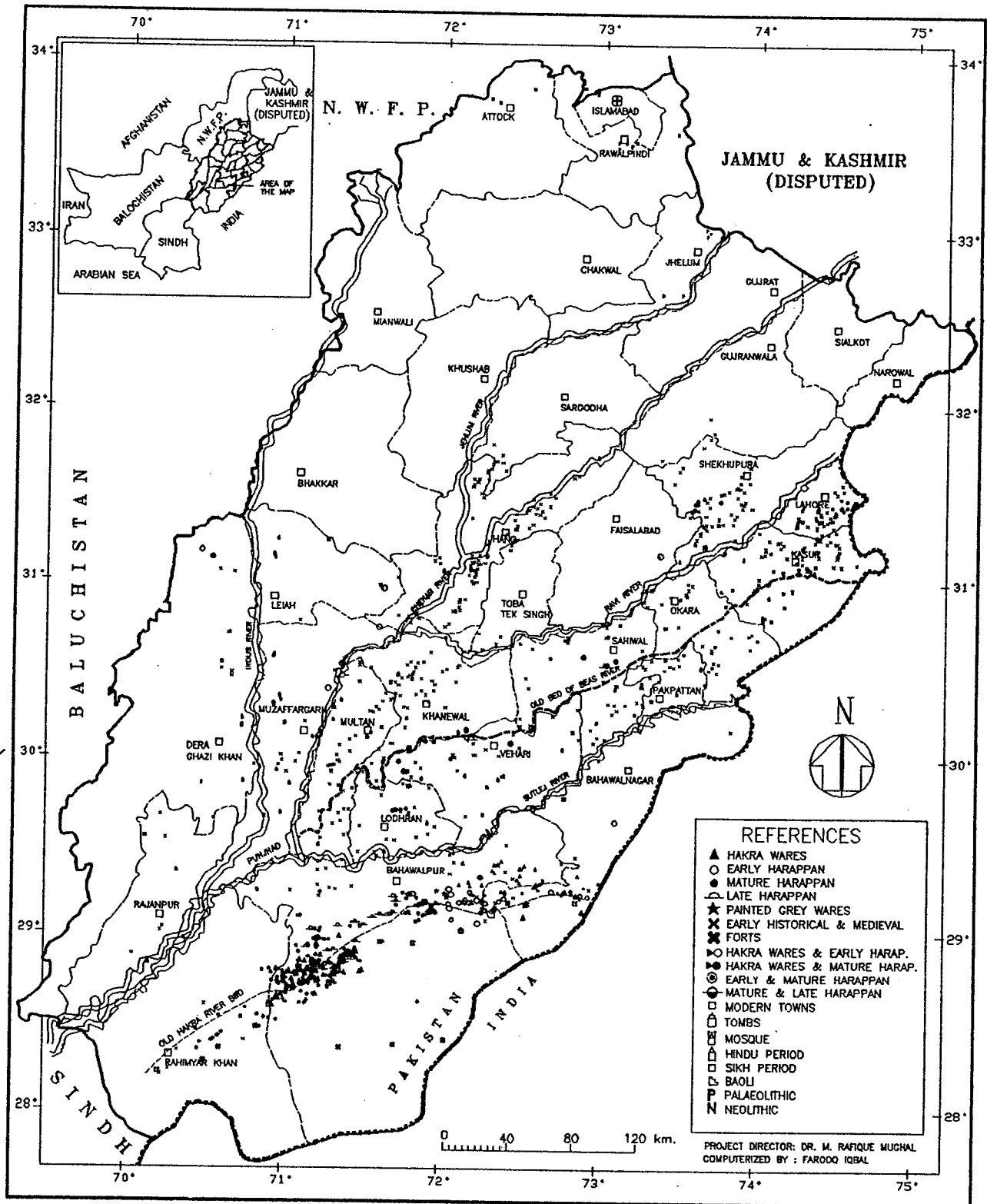


Fig. 2. All categories of sites and monuments so far recorded in Punjab Province (1995).

"Medieval" period. An open ended chronological bracket of 1100–1500 A.D. for the Sultanate period and 1526–1800 A.D. inclusive of the Suri period is proposed for the Mughal period. According to these groupings, 337 sites (194+143) fall in this long period of history. The succeeding period starting around the close of the 18th century covers the Sikh rule in Punjab followed by the British period beginning around the middle of the 19th century and ending with Independence in 1947. The monuments or buildings belonging to the late 19th and early 20th centuries are usually ignored because of being too "recent". In the recent survey, however, 78 monuments of the Sikh and British periods have been recorded. Although there is a clear distinction between the architectural styles and traditions of the Sikh and British, yet both were near contemporary with each other. The number of sites of different periods documented during the current surveys until June 1995 and those of the previous surveys are tabulated below.

The number of sites also includes standing monuments among which 13 belong to the Sultanate or Pre-Mughal period and 52 are of Mughal times. There are 78 buildings associated with the Sikh/British period (Fig. 3).

Sindh Province

The province of Sindh has received considerable attention from archaeologists and explorers especially after the discovery of Mohenjodaro. The results of their discoveries in a particular area or on specific categories of sites and monuments are reported in detail. Since 1947, the Department of Archaeology and Museums has been investigating different areas on a limited scale.

In 1983, however, an attempt was made to extend the Cholistan survey to Sindh along the ancient bed of the Hakra-Wahind-Nara river but it could not be carried through. Following the proposal

Table 1: The number of sites and monuments in Punjab and Sindh.

All sites and monuments

	PUNJAB			SINDH
	Current Surveys	Previous Surveys	Total	Current Surveys
Prehistoric	19	-	19	3
Hakra	1	122	123	-
Early Harappan	34	50	84	5
Mature Harappan	28	174	202	27
Late Harappan	5	50	55	?
Painted Grey Wares	6	14	20	-
1st–7th A.D.	131	-	131	5
8th–11th A.D.	113	27	140	71
Sultanate 1100–1500 A.D.	194	-	194	29
Mughal 1526–1800 A.D.	143	-	143	139
Sikh/British 1801–1947 A.D.	78	-	78	45

Monuments only

	PUNJAB	SINDH
Hindu/Buddhist	1	9
Sultanate 1100–1500 A.D.	13	-
Mughal 1526–1800 A.D.	52	92
Sikh/British 1801–1947 A.D.	78	17
Misc.	21	19.

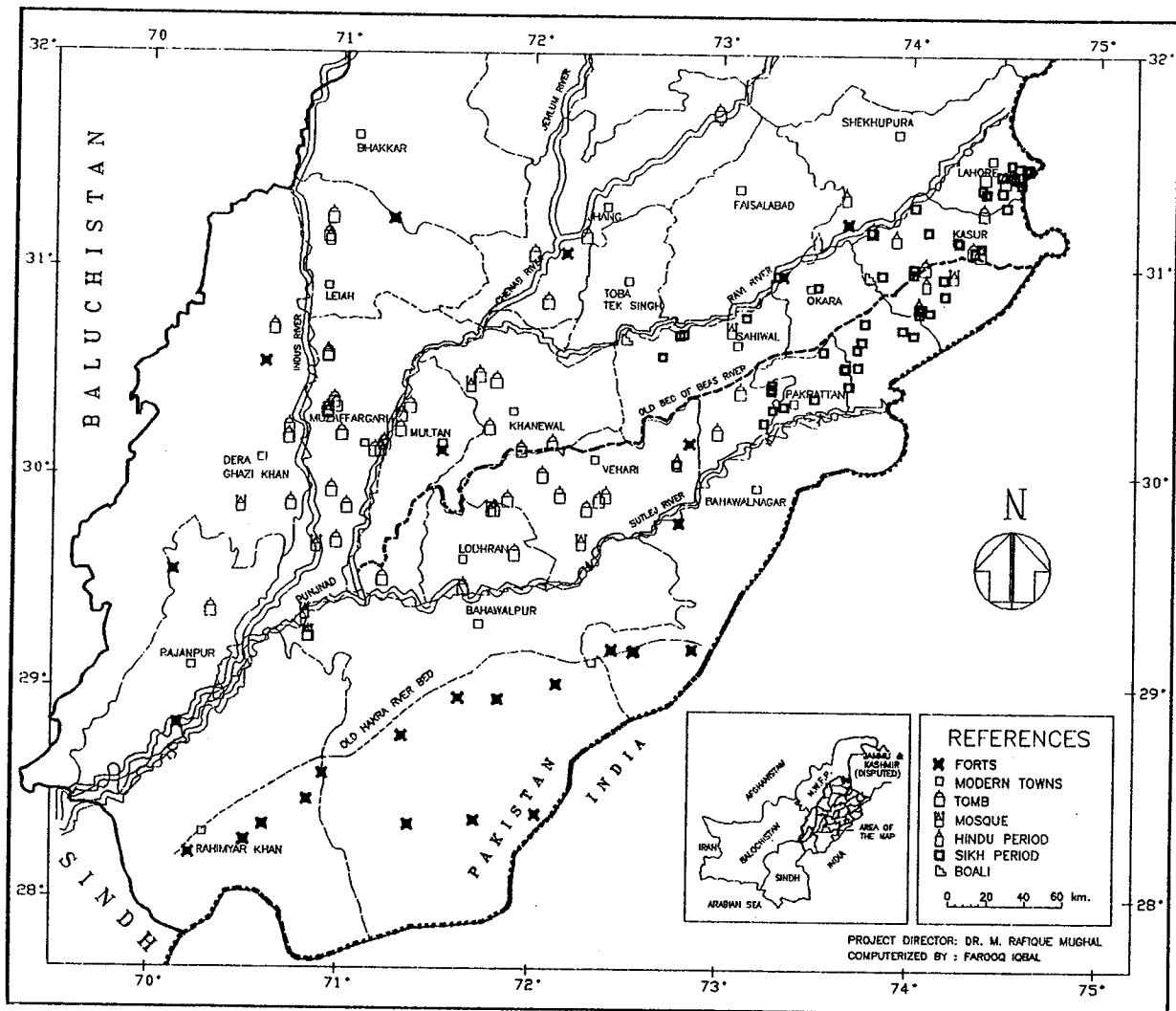


Fig. 3. Standing Monuments: Tombs, Temples, Mosques, Gurdawaras, *Baolies* and Forts in central and southern Punjab (1995).

of the Punjab survey, the present writer prepared a field research programme for Sindh which was approved and supported by the Federal Government. Thus, a comprehensive archaeological survey of sites and monuments in Sindh was launched which started from the Upper Sindh region in Sukkur and Khairpur districts (Fig. 4). It was in Sukkur district that our 1983 survey was suspended. Later on, the faculty and students of Shah Abdul Latif University did some explorations in a limited area. However, to confirm cultural association of the sites and collect more data, most of the sites were re-examined.

A total of 324 sites and monuments have so far been recorded which represent Palaeolithic,

Harappan, and Buddhist sites, and monuments of the Kalhora, Mughal, Talpur and British periods (Fig. 5). The surface features of sites in the desert area indicate that permanent Harappan settlements also existed on the stabilized sand dunes. A scatter of potsherds, indicating temporary occupation, could imply movement of population from the settled areas or the presence of nomadic populations. There are 32 Early and Mature Harappan sites in the area so far surveyed. The identification of the "Late Harappan" as suggested by our predecessors is not convincing since the "late" material was found (by the author) to have no relevance to the Late Harappan Jhukar material of the lower Indus Valley. It is hoped

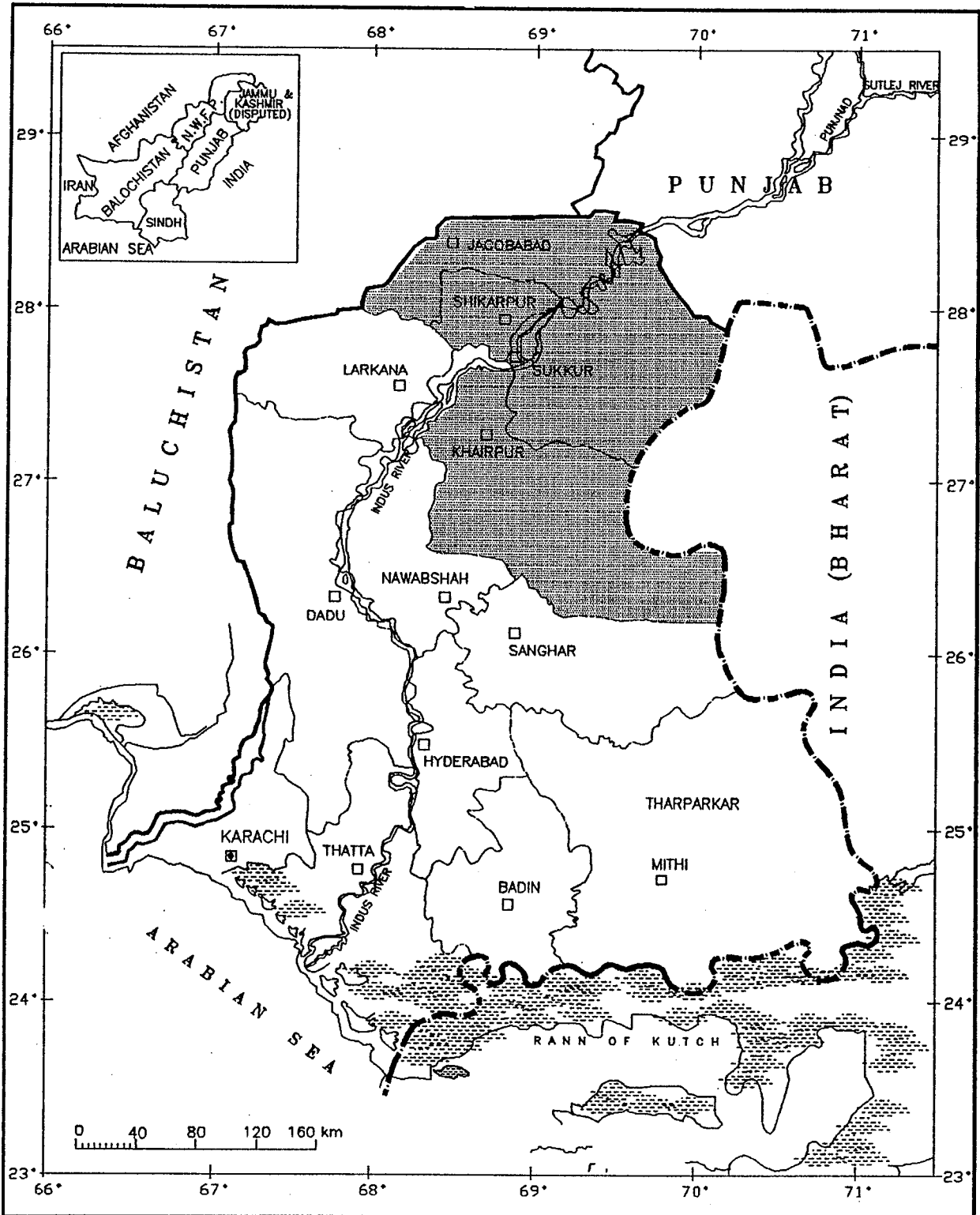


Fig. 4. The areas of Upper Sindh surveyed so far (1995).

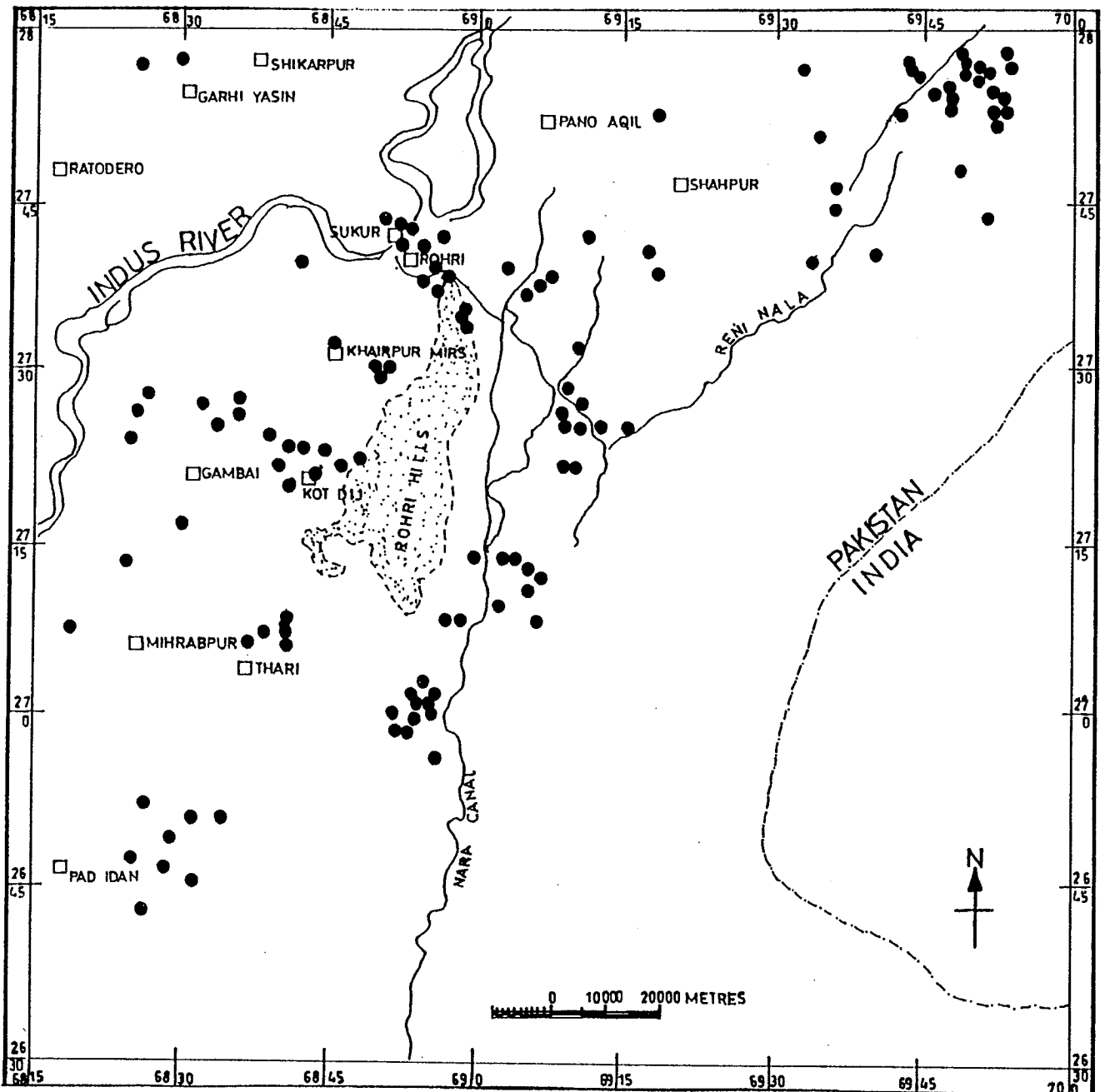


Fig. 5. Ancient sites in Upper Sindh between the Hakra-Reni-Nara and the Indus River.

that a larger sample from the desert of eastern Sindh might help to clarify some chronological and cultural problems of these sites. The field work is being accelerated in eastern Sindh to complete the distribution map of sites all along the Hakra-Nara channel down to the Rann of Kutch.

Some Preliminary Observations

From the evidence so far available in southern Punjab, some preliminary observations can be made on the sites and monuments of all periods.

There seems to be a remarkable similarity between the location of Harappan settlements along

the Hakra river in Cholistan and those concentrated on the Beas river which flowed between the Ravi and Sutlej rivers in the Bari Doab (or Neeli Bar). Although the Bari Doab region is intensively cultivated, still several sites of Early, Mature and even Late Harappan times have survived. Most of the Early Harappan sites in the Doab were in use continuously until the succeeding Mature Harappan period, indicating a long period of stable economic conditions during Harappan times until at least 2000 B.C.

The Early Harappan settlements were generally on the flood plain of the rivers but some sites have been found in the middle of the Doabs where river or other sources of water were available (Fig. 6). In addition to the high density in southern Punjab on the Hakra and Beas rivers, there is a significant group of Early and Mature Harappan sites west of Lahore in Sheikhpura district, and yet another group of early sites in Rawalpindi and Attock districts. Further westwards across the Indus, there are Early Harappan settlements in Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu districts and along the Indus in Dera Ghazi Khan district. The significance lies not merely in the number of Early Harappan sites but in their distribution all over the entire fertile plain of the Punjab which focuses our attention on the entire upper Indus Valley for an early development of the Indus Civilization.

It is becoming evident that the Early Harappan (Kot Dijian-Sothi) ceramic assemblage, marked by wheel-made pottery with sophisticated designs and shapes, did not emerge abruptly but was preceded by an early period now associated with the Hakra Wares. These wares were first recognized at Jalilpur, representing a phase earlier than the Kot Dijian or Early Harappan and constituting an integral part of the early cultural development which may have extended to the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C. The Hakra Wares are tied in very well with the materials found in association with Kot Dijian pottery at Jalilpur-I and continuing into Jalilpur-II. At the site of Sher Khan Tarakai in Bannu Basin, the Hakra Wares were found in those contexts which can be securely dated to the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C., are otherwise known to be concentrated in Cholistan alone. In the recent surveys, another Hakra settlement, Rajanpur, has been discovered in Faisalabad district where the Kot

Dijian assemblage is also found like the early settlement of Jalilpur-I. We are now beginning to understand the geographical extent of the early fourth millennium B.C. cultural phenomenon indicated by the Hakra wares spreading from Bannu to Cholistan.

It is true that the original settlement pattern of the Indus Civilization in Punjab has been greatly disturbed due to the canal system and levelling down of hundreds or thousands of mounds for cultivation. However, the presence of sites like the Hakra and Early Harappan (Kot Dijian) indicates that the entire plain was densely settled at least from the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C.

As regards Sindh, the locational pattern of Harappan sites is similar to that of Cholistan and Bari *Doab* where sites of all periods are essentially concentrated along the flood plains of the rivers. In upper Sindh also, most Harappan sites are located along the abandoned river channels locally known as Reni, Nara, Wahind and Hakra. As in Cholistan, the Harappans in Upper Sindh were utilizing the environments of the flood plain and desert simultaneously which would indicate economically sustainable symbiotic relationships between the settled and nomadic populations.

Around Sukkur and Rohri, there is a concentration of Harappan and early sites, one of which is Lakhianjodaro, now being excavated. The other sites are located along the Rohri hills and the present Nara canal which flows into an ancient bed of the Hakra river. There appears to be a heavy concentration of sites between the Indus and the ancient Hakra river bed which could be the area where a number of overspill channels carried water from the Indus to the Hakra. It may also be pointed out that the same area demonstrates a high density of settlements during the early historical and mediaeval periods and is studded with beautiful monuments such as tombs, temples, stupas, mosques and forts.

It may also be added that the settlements and standing monuments of later periods bracketed into the Hindu-Buddhist, Sultanate and Mughal periods, and even extending to Sikh and British times are scattered all over the Punjab and Sindh plains. Their distributional patterns beyond the flood plains and all over the Doabs differ from those of Harappan times which was essentially confined to the river banks. One may have to look for the reasons of

