

# Revisiting a Near-Extinct Harappan Site of Khambhodhar, Porbandar, Gujarat

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## Abstract

Khambhodhar, a protohistoric site discovered in the late 1950s near Porbandar on the Saurashtra Coast, was described as a Harappan site belonging to Rangpur (RGP IIA and B). The remains also indicated the presence of the Early Historic period. However, the site was subjected to heavy damage (almost extinct) as it was used for a rainwater harvesting pond. In 2011, the site was revisited, and the observations are presented in this short note.

## Introduction

Several archaeological sites have been reported around Porbandar on the Saurashtra Coast, and a few of them, particularly protohistoric period sites, have been investigated, namely Bokhira (Gaur *et al.* 2006), Kindar Kheda (Gaur and Sundaresh 2005), and Antroli (Gaur *et al.* 2012). Also, there are sites of the Early Historic period, such as Srinagar, Mul Dwarka, and Porbandar, and a few are of the Medieval period, such as Navibandar (Gaur *et al.* 2013) and Porbandar. Earlier explorers had recorded a Harappan site in Khambhodhar, situated about 20 km northwest of Porbandar. The study of a topographic sheet (NF 42-11) of Porbandar indicated the presence of a deserted place between Khambhodhar and Temri. It is

likely that this deserted place is a Harappan site discovered at Khambhodhar.

Panio mound of Khambhodhar was reported for the first time in 1957 by P.P. Pandya (IAR 1957-58: 19) and mentioned as a Harappan settlement with Prabhas ware besides an Early Historic settlement. Rao (1963: 205) compared this settlement with Rangpur IIB and IIC, and thereafter, the site has been listed as a Harappan site. In the course of the excavations at Bokhira near Porbandar in the field season of 2005, authors made an attempt to visit archaeological sites located around Porbandar; however, the Harappan site at Khambhodhar could not be located, though historical period remains were noticed.



**Fig. 1:** The location of the archaeological site (at present a pond)

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Fig. 2: Harappan pottery collected from the site



Fig. 3: Lower portion of a jar (probably an amphora)

### Observations

During another field season in 2011, a school teacher from the same village provided a clue to the location of the site. He described that the site had been destroyed to meet the requirements of the villagers for rainwater harvesting in the mid-1970s. Thus, there is no surviving mound. However, he recalls noticing several broken potsherds, shell bangles, and metal objects occasionally. Based on his information, the archaeological site was identified. At present, the site

has been converted into a large, approximately 5 m-deep pond (Fig. 1). Cultivation is carried out when the pond is dry during the late winter and early summer seasons. The archaeological investigations on the bank and within the pond revealed scattered pottery on a large surface. The pottery is thick, sturdy, and well-fired. However, since the pottery has been exposed for the last few decades, the surfaces of the potsherds are eroded. The potsherds include fragments of dish-on-stand, rim portions of bowls, stud portions of stud-handled bowls, and other typical Harappan pottery (Fig. 2). Interestingly, a lower part of a pointed-based jar, which is very similar to an amphora, was observed (Fig. 3). These findings indicate that the site belongs to a village settlement of the Harappan period and probably of the Early Historic period too. The shell remains on the surface indicate that the site was associated with maritime activities in the past. The other closest Harappan site is Kindar Kheda, which perhaps served as a Harappan port (Gaur and Sundaresh 2005).

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