CHAPTER 4

ARCHAEOLOGY OF EARLY HISTORIC GUJARAT

The Physiography and Environment

The state of Gujarat lies on the western flank of the Indian peninsular. It extends over an area of approximately 2,000 sq.kms. and lies between the 20°10'-24°50' north latitudes and 68°40'-74°40' east longitudes. It consists of a variety of landscape formations. There are fertile alluvial plains formed by rivers, namely, Tapi, Narmada, Mahi, Sabarmati and Banas, which have contributed to different phases of early city development. There is also the vast expanse of salt waste of the Rann of Kutch. The Arabian coastline forms its western margin and its north-eastern borders are bounded by the hills of the southern Aravallis, the western rim of the Vindhyas and Satpuras and northern part of Sahyadris. The geographical position of Gujarat along with its easy accessibility from the north, north-west, west and south have been particularly responsible for its archaeological past, that is, Prehistoric, Protohistoric and Historic past (Sankalia 1987). Proximity to the sea front and availability inland routes have served as a gateway for cultural interaction and influence from earliest times by way of commercial activities. The fertile plain and river tracts in the coastal regions have contributed equally towards the same. These geographical factors probably stand as the main reason for its complex culture.

The culture of a region is governed by its environment comprising of factors like nature of the land, soil, forests and rivers. As per Tripathi’s
(1976) opinion, the natural surroundings of the region of habitation, its flora and fauna, soil and available drainage acts upon human society in the same manner as the social environment acts on the human individual. Geographical and ecological factors play a significant role in diffusion and in moulding the cultural adaptation (Agrawal 1982). They however, have to be interpreted in terms of both the physical factors as well as man’s work through the ages (Janaki 1981) and can be considered the action aspect of geography that “combines indigenous resources with a specific cultural inventory of exploitative techniques, making possible a certain distribution of a human population over a particular region” (Fried 1952, c.f. Tripathi 1976).

Hence, to understand the different patterns of cultural development, one has to look at the geographical features of various regions. As Subbarao (1958) opined, “The whole history of India, in a sense, can be described as the conflict between the centripetal and centrifugal forces engendered by geography”.

Physiographically, the region of Gujarat is divided into three distinct units namely, Mainland Gujarat, Saurashtra (Kathiawar) and Kutch. All these geographical units of the state have varying physical and climatic features. Mainland Gujarat comprises of northern and southern parts of Gujarat having different environmental conditions. The semi-arid zone of north Gujarat stretches from below Mount Abu to the Mahi river. It is a flat sandy plain. Rupen, Saraswati and Banas, the major rivers in this part rise from the Aravallis and flow into the Rann of Kutch. The region between Mahi and Damanganga rivers forms the fertile alluvial tract of south Gujarat. The rivers Tapi, Narmada, Mahi and Sabarmati drain the central and southern
parts of the mainland and join the Gulf of Khambhat (Gulf of Cambay) and Arabian Sea. Rivers namely, Par, Purna, Damanganga, Ambika, Auranga drains the southern part of south Gujarat and are comparatively smaller. Satpura and Sahyadri ranges bound south Gujarat.

Of the three sub-divisions, Saurashtra forms the peninsular region, flanked by the Gulf of Cambay on the south eastern side, Arabian sea on the south western sides and the Gulf of Kutch on the northern side. A major portion of Saurashtra is occupied by the Deccan lava flow and forms a rocky land fringed by coastal plains. Various major rivers Bhadar, Kalubhar, Sukhbhadar, Shetrunji and Bhogavo flow in different directions in a radial drainage pattern, dissecting the central highland. The alluvial plains of the rivers Shetrunji and Bhadar form the most fertile part of the peninsula.

Geomorphologically, Kutch is divided into four areas, namely, 1) The Rann, 2) The low-lying Banni plains, 3) The hilly regions and 4) The southern coastal plains (Merh 1995). Kutch is separated from the mainland by the Great Rann in the northwest and the Little Rann in the east. Both the Ranns get waterlogged during the monsoons but remain dry during the rest of the year. The Ranns form a unique salt wasteland rising only a few meters above the sea level. The Banni plains lying between the Great Rann and the rocky mainland, rise only a couple of meters above the surface of the Rann and form a shrubby and grassy land area. The rocky mainland lies to the south of Banni and extends up to the Gulf of Kutch. Large tracts of low ground separate the hill ranges in all these areas. The southern coastal plains border the main land against the Gulf of Kutch in the south and the Arabian Sea in the west. The rivers in this region are Miti, Naira, Kanakamati, Rukmawati, Choke, Vengdi, Bhukhi and Kharod flowing out
from central Kutch. These rivers are ephemeral and carry water only during monsoon.

Gujarat being the transitional zone between the heavy monsoon area of Konkan and arid Rajasthan, its proximity to the sea and altitude (which affects temperature, precipitation and pressure) causes varying climatic conditions. Although the mountains along the eastern border receive high precipitation, a large portion of the state is semiarid. Gujarat receives much of its rainfall from the southwest monsoon. The southern regions of Gujarat receive highest rate of rainfall (2000 mm.) and the least (400 mm.) is in Kutch and Banaskantha. In general, the rainfall in the state is moderate.

Gujarat, being located on the Tropic of Cancer, falls within the sub-tropical climatic zone and a large part of state lies between 35°C-45°C isotherms. The temperature is lowest at the coast of Kutch and Saurashtra due to the proximity of the sea. Generally, areas away from the coast experience uniform summer conditions. Regional variation in temperature reveals that in winter temperature increases steadily as one moves southwards.

Except the coastal areas, relative humidity in all parts of the state is low. In winter the coastal region shows 90% relative humidity while in the inner areas, it varies from 15-25%. In general, Gujarat falls under three climatic divisions viz., arid, semiarid and sub-humid tropic.

Cultural Background

The cultural history of Gujarat begins from the middle Pleistocene when early man lived on the banks of its rivers and their tributaries. The data
available to archaeologists for reconstructing the way of life of the earliest communities, mainly consist of stone tools. This land has been continuously inhabited from the Lower Palaeolithic period (c.200,000 BP) as evidenced by sites located in Saurashtra, Kutch and mainland of Gujarat. (Foote 1898; Sankalia 1946; Subbarao 1952,1958; Zeuner 1950,1963; Sonawane 1979; Marathe and Rajguru 1977; Chakrabarti 1978; Bhan 1983; Ajithprasad 1988; Thomas 1998).

Existence of man in the Middle Palaeolithic (c.45,000-25,000 yrs. BP) is supported by evidences from Kutch (Joshi 1966; Ansari and Pappu 1973); Jamnagar (Bhan 1983); Panchmahals (Sonawane 1979), Hiran valley in Saurashtra (Marathe 1981; Sankalia 1965; Lele 1968; Chakrabarti 1978) and Vapi and Lavacha of Bulsar District. Explorations evidenced existence of Upper Palaeolithic period from Visadi (Allchin et.al. 1978), Panchmahals (Sonawane 1979), Bhamaria, Kantali, Palanpur and Vavri (Thomas 1997).

Mesolithic occupation of Gujarat is well documented from sites such as Langhnaj (Sankalia 1965), Kanewal (Mehta et.al. 1980), Tarsang (Sonawane 1983), Dhansura (Pandya et al. 1990), Loteshwar, Santhli, Datrana, Moti Pipli (Sonawane 1999 personal communication) and Ambakut (Ajithprasad 1999 personal communication). It has been proposed that the mesolithic community at these sites were nomadic hunter-gathers with indications of managing herds of sheep-goat and cattle (Bhan 1994, Mehta et.al. 1980, Sonawane 1983 and Ajithprasad 1999-personal communication). This is well confirmed by parallel evidences from Bagor (Misra 1973) and Adamgargh (Joshi 1978). In Kutch, this cultural phase is
not yet identified, possibly, due to insufficient survey of the region. So far in Gujarat, Neolithic phase has not been identified.

Evidences from Loteshwar (Bhan 1994, Sonawane and Ajithprasad 1994) in north Gujarat, Padri (Shinde 1992) in Saurashtra, Dholavira (Bisht 1997) in Kutch and reanalysis of archaeological data from Prabhas Patan (Dhavalikar and Possehl 1992); Lothal (Sankalia 1974; Rao 1979, Herman and Krishnan 1994) and Surkotada (Possehl 1997) establish that prior to the incoming of the Harappans to Gujarat, this region was already inhabited by regional non-Harappan Chalcolithic communities. The urban phase of the Harappan culture can be seen from sites in Kutch, namely, Surkotada (Joshi 1972), Desalpur (Soundararajan 1984), Pabumath (IAR 1977-78) and Dholavira (Bisht 1997). There is no abrupt end to the Urban phase at most of the Harappan settlements, and they continued in the form of degenerate phase in the post Urban period. Lothal B (Rao 1979), Rangpur IIC and III (Rao 1963), Rojdi C (Possehl and Raval 1989), Kuntasi (Dhavlikar 1996), Vagad I B (Sonawane and Mehta 1985), Surkotada IC (Joshi 1972), Dholavira VI & VII (Bisht 1997) marked the onset of post Urban Harappan phase.

The archaeological data indicates a hiatus between Chalcolithic and Early Historic period in Gujarat. Rao (1966) opines that the hiatus between the aforesaid periods can be filled to some extent with the help of Vedic and Puranic references to the Aryanization of Saurashtra in the Dark Age. There are evidences of occupation prior to 4th century BC from Dwaraka (Ansari 1966; IAR 1979), Nagara (Mehta and Shah 1968) and Prabhas Patan (Nanavati et.al.1971). According to Allchin (1995), “it appears that the period between the Harappan and Early Historic was less of a Dark Age,
but more of a period of gradual stable growth and innovation which culminated in the emergence of the Early Historic world". Only by examining the transition from Chalcolithic village to Early Historic city can we attempt to identify the possible factors involved in the development of a successful city. Until we have a full excavation sequence of an Early Historic city from its Chalcolithic beginning, it would be presumptuous to infer anything from the fragmentary data.

According to both legend and tradition, the Yadavas were the inhabitants of the peninsula of Gujarat prior to the Mauryas. They are said to have ruled Gujarat under the leadership of Lord Krishna. But so far, no archaeological and historical evidences are available to support this (Bhowmik 1980: 17). The Early Historic period in Gujarat is authentically recorded after the conquest of Chandragupta Maurya in 300 BC. The main sources of the early history of Gujarat are traditional literary records of Pandits, Yatis, Bhatas and Caranas, folk-literature, travelogues and archaeological evidences (monumental, epigraphic and numismatic) (Majumdar 1965). The Early Historic material culture of this region is characterised by the presence of Northern Black Polished Ware, dominance of Black-and-Red Ware, slow introduction and later domination of Red Polished Ware, occurrence of Roman Amphorae, Rangmahal Ware, introduction of glass and lead, followed by gradual conquest of Iron, an agro-based economy, shell industry, development of script, rise of urban settlements, brick structural remains, monumental buildings, international trade and development of Jainism, Buddhism, and Vaishnavism.

This region was neither called "Gujarat", nor did it form one geographical/political unit in ancient times. It consisted of three main provinces, namely,
Saurastra (Kathiawar peninsula), Anarta (north Gujarat) and Lata (present central & south Gujarat) in proto-historic times (Cunnigham 1963). The exact boundaries of these provinces were, however, uncertain and they varied greatly during the course of history. The term Gujarat is used in two different senses: (1) to denote the mainland between Mount Abu and the river Damanganga along with Saurashtra and Kaccha, (2) to denote the linguistic boundary touching Sirohi and Marvad including Ther and Parkar in Sindh and also Kaccha. Gujarat generally represents the territories that actually comprised "Gujarat" from the Calukyan period to the period of Maratha regime, as well as the territories known in earlier period under different names such as Anarta, Lata, Aparanta, Saurashtra, Kaccha (Majumdar 1965). The changing boundaries throughout the course of history represent the political and cultural heterogeneity of this region.

Chronology

Eventhough the Early Historic sites mark the beginning of Iron Age in Gujarat, their chronology is far from clear. Most of the excavation reports do not provide details regarding statistical analysis of various artefacts. The data of explored sites is also limited. The material evidence. Synthesised work from the excavated Early Historic sites of different areas of this region to reconstruct the cultural, economical link between them as well as their respective changes has not yet been attempted in Gujarat.

Evidences provided by archaeological excavations and surface explorations in the form of material remains can be best utilised for making an in-depth study of this region. An analysis of material remains from excavated sites
from south Gujarat, central Gujarat, north Gujarat followed by Saurashtra has been attempted here. Unfortunately, no excavated site is reported from the region of Kutch. (Fig: 4.1.)

The following is a summary of Early Historic sites in Gujarat:

**Dhatva (21°18'N; 73°04'E):** Situated on the southern bank of river Tapi in Kamrej Taluka of Surat District, Dhatva is locally known as *Rudhi Mora*. Chronology of the site is based on the comparative data of Red Polished Ware, Roman Amphorae, punch marked and die struck Copper coins and semiprecious stones (Mehta *et al.* 1975). Period I is Chalcolithic, dated to 1500-1000 BC and Period II is Early Historic assigned to 500 BC to 200 AD. Distinguishing features of the site are the occurrence of iron smelting industry, that is, presence of iron objects, lumps of iron, chunks of hematite and limonite and metallurgical tap slag. The metal objects include ear-studs, kohlsticks, wire, hoe, blades and nails amongst which hoes, blades, pipes and nails dominate. The mud brick structures indicate Early Historic settlement.

**Jokha (21°10'N; 73°07'E):** Locally known as *Gabban*, Jokha is situated in the Kamrej Taluka of Surat District. The stratigraphy clearly indicates three periods. Period I is Chalcolithic (1500 -1000 BC), Period II is Early Historic (500BC - 100 AD) and Period III is Medieval (IAR 1966-67; Mehta and Chowdhary 1971). Period I is represented by copper celts, bangles, hammer-stones and polished stone tools. Patches of flooring and burnt wall pieces indicate existence of structures. Period II is represented by Black-and-Red Ware, Plain Red Ware and Burnished Red Ware, stoppers, beads of carnelian, chert, jasper, agate and garnet, ear studs
Fig. 4.1: Excavated Early Historic Sites in Gujarat

1. Jokha
2. Dhatva
3. Kamrej
4. Bharuch
5. Nagal
6. Timbarva
7. Karvan
8. Akota
9. Nagara
10. Vadnagar
11. Shamalaji
12. Devnimori
13. Amreli
14. Vallabhi
15. Prabhas Patan
16. Padri
17. Dwaraka
of lead, black glass, bone points and pendants. Period III is represented by glazed wares.

**Kamrej (21°17'N; 72°52'E):** Kamrej is situated in Kamrej Taluka of Surat District. The Early Historic site yielded Black and Red Ware along with copper punch marked coins (IAR 1958-59, 1964-65; 1966-67).

**Bharuch (22°42'N; 72°50'E):** The ancient Bhrgukaccha is situated on the left bank of Narmada in Bharuch Taluka of Bharuch District (IAR 1958-59; 1959-60). Period I is Chalcolithic and has yielded Black-and-Red Ware, Plain Red Ware and Plain Black Ware. The Period II-NBPW phase (latter half of first millennium BC) revealed a cluster of five ring wells. A mud rampart associated with a moat possibly dates from the 3rd century BC (Allchin 1995: 305). Period III, (Early Historic-RPW phase-1st century BC-5th century AD) is characterised by Red Polished Ware associated with Red and Grey Wares and lead (probably Satavahana) and copper Kshatrap coins of 3rd century AD. Brick structures are attributed to 3rd-7th centuries AD. Period IV, which is assigned to late Historical and Medieval (dated to 7th to 13th century AD) is marked by the presence of glazed pottery.

**Nagal (21°37'N; 72°55'E):** Nagal is located in Bharuch District (IAR-1957-58). In Period I- Black-and-Red Ware occurs along with Northern Black Polished Ware. A silver piece which may be a punch marked coin with one face beaten flat and the other carrying some symbols, has been used for assigning the date of this period along with incised Grey Ware, animal figurines ivory combs and querns. In Period II- the frequency of Black-and-Red Ware remains high, along with the plain wares with profuse incised decoration, mostly of basket and reed pattern. Associated antiquities of this
period are copper ring, ivory, bone and shell bangles. A unique double barbed and tanged arrowhead was an outstanding find. Period III is characterised by slightly coarse Black-and-Red Ware, Grey Ware and Red Wares in association with etched carnelian beads, bone points, stone pestles, legged querns, copper and antimony rods. The NBPW and its associated types are completely absent. The Period I of Nagal is dated to 2nd century BC. Habitation floors are evident in each period.

Timbarva (22°02'N ;73° 14'E): Timbarva is situated in Sinor Taluka of Baroda District. Excavation revealed three periods of Early Historic phases. Absence of any datable antiquities such as coins or C-14 dates, lead the excavator to assign the chronology of the site on the basis of ceramic assemblage and other associated antiquities (Mehta 1955). Period I is dated from 400 BC to 100 AD based on Black- and-Red Ware associated with Northern Black Polished Ware, terracotta mother goddess figurines, legged querns, copper ring, iron arrow head, blade and ploughshare. Period II is dated from 100 AD to 300 AD. This period is represented by Red Polished Ware associated with a seal (lump of circular clay with worn-out impression), beads, skin-rubbers, stoppers, discs, copper bar, nails and globular pendant of gold foil. Period III is dated between 300 AD-600 AD, and is associated with terracotta beads, Red Slipped Ware, Burnished Black Ware, Crude Red Ware, antimony rod, bone points and an iron wire. Remains of wattle and daub walls indicates nature of residence.

Karvan (22° 04’N; 73° 15’E): Karvan is situated in Dabhoi Taluka of Vadodara District (IAR 1975-76: 15; 1976-77: 18 1977-78: 22). The site had been inhabited between the 2nd and 8th century AD. Red Polished Ware showed rare occurrence while sprinklers occurred in large number. Iron
objects, Kshatrapa and Maitraka copper coins, lead coins, tribal coins, gold bead, semi precious stones, terracotta animal and human figurines represent associated occurrence. Inscribed terracotta seal of about seventh century AD is also recovered from here.

Akota (22°17'N; 73°15'E): Akota is situated on the right bank of Vishwamitri river in Vadodara Taluka of Vadodara District. The site has been occupied in two periods, namely Period I, which is Mesolithic associated with microlithic tools and Period II which is Early Historic, represented by the Red Polished Ware. The Early Historic level is represented by terracotta seals, Kshatrap coins, huge brick structures, baked brick structures, Roman bronze vessels and images, Amphorae and Red Polished Ware (Subbarao 1953).

Nagara (22° 41'N; 70° 58'E): Nagara is located in Cambay Taluka of Kheda District. It comprises of three mounds locally known as Hanuman Dhado, Varaimatano Dhado and Ratankhad respectively (Mehta 1968). Period I (700 BC-300 BC.) is represented by Black-and-Red Ware, Plain Red Ware, Burnished Red Ware and an earthen embankment. Period II (300 BC-100 AD) is marked by the advent of NBPW. Arrowhead, points, chisel, punch marked coins, terracotta figurines of mother goddess, beads and iron slag are recovered from this period. Terracotta seals and potsherds bear Brahmi script (IAR 1963-64, p.10). Although, the site was inhabited around fifth century BC, by the early centuries of the Christian era, it became a large town due to commerce (Sharma 1987:72). Excellent objects of chank and ivory have been found (Mehta and Shah 1968). Period III (1st-9th century AD) is distinguished by the emergence of the Red Polished Ware, Roman Amphorae, Burnished Black Ware, Micaceous Ware, crude Black-
and-Red Ware and glass beads. Structural remains comprised of mud floorings, brick buildings and numerous channel hearths. Period IV is Medieval and is represented by Glazed Wares.

The first three periods showed undisturbed succession while in Trench I and II a distinct gap in the ceramic and cultural sequence occurs after Period III. This implies that the site was deserted for few centuries before it was reoccupied. The C-14, date for Early Historic level of this site is 1945 ± 90 and 2030 ±105 BP, that is, 130 AD.

A large number of iron objects have been obtained from Nagara. A majority of them are nails. The rest of the objects include knives, spear heads, arrowheads, dagger, sickle and fishhook. There are few miscellaneous objects whose functions are difficult to ascertain.

Vadnagar (23°48'N; 72°36'E): Vadnagar is located in Kheralu Taluka of Mehsana District. Excavation revealed a continuous sequence of three cultural periods (IAR 1953-54, p.10; Subbarao and Mehta 1955). Period I (100 AD - 200 AD), is characterised by the predominance of a very crude pottery, (also noticed at Timbarva and Amreli), and structures/walls made of well-burnt and sun-dried bricks. In Period II (200 AD - 600 AD), Red Polished Ware is found in large quantities. Other associated antiquities were lead and copper punch-marked coins, terracotta objects (human figurines, toys such as pellets, discs, animal figures, beads, and few tablets), chank bangles and bone objects. A clay seal that was found in the same context bears writing of second-third centuries (IAR 1953-54, p. 10). A structure of a complete house with three rooms and a veranda is reported
from this period. Roman affinity was confirmed by the imitation of intaglio clay depicting a woman with flower in hand.

Period III (600-1200 AD) yielded a distinctive coarse red-slipped ware painted with black designs on a white background. The abundance of fragments of finished chank products, number of rejects and waste products of chank and its even distribution throughout the three periods indicate a well-flourished chank/shell industry at this site.

Shamalaji (23°4'N; 73°26'E): Shamalaji is situated in Shamalaji village of Bhiloda Taluka, Sabarkantha District (Mehta and Patel 1967). Excavation of this site revealed four periods. Period I (Beginning of AD - 50 AD) is associated with tuyeres, crucibles, lump of iron, chisel and mud brick structures. Period II (50 AD – 400 AD) showed the evidence of a brick fort and is associated with Roman Amphorae. Besides these, other objects included votive tanks, terracotta pellets, female head, copper and antimony rods, lead objects, iron knife and nails. Period III (400 AD-1000 AD) is associated with hearths and structures, copper bangles, rings, antimony rods, dice of shell and bone, plaque with lion’s head, glass bangles, terracotta discs and iron sickle. Period IV (1500- 1800 AD) is Medieval period and is represented by Glazed Ware and four structures of brickbats. This period is also associated with glass, iron strips, Burnished Black Ware and Burnished Red Ware.

Devnimori (23°39’N; 73°26’E): Devnimori is situated on the bank of Meshvo river in Bhiloda Taluka of Sabarkantha District. Two periods of occupation is evidenced from the site. Period I is Mesolithic represented by microliths of agate, chert and chalcedony. Period II is represented by
Buddhist settlement assigned to early centuries of Christian era. Further, the absence of Gupta coins and presence of varieties of Vallabhi and Indo-Sassanian coins ascribed the site to Kshatrapa period from about 2\textsuperscript{nd}/4\textsuperscript{th} century AD to 7\textsuperscript{th}/8\textsuperscript{th} century AD (Mehta and Chowdhary 1966). The Buddhist settlement consisted of two viharas, a stupa, four votive stupas, a chaitya hall and a compound wall enclosing the settlement of mudbrick and burned brick of varying lengths and heights. Amphora and Red Polished Ware are found from surface and the brick stupa yielded inscribed casket with ashes of lord Buddha, a globular pot containing eight silver Kshatrap coins, a gold foil, fragment of blue glass and terracotta figures of Buddha. Large number of iron objects is also recovered. The majority of these are nails and the remaining consists of arrow heads, spear head, knives, daggers, rings, sickle, chisel, pick, frying trowel, scissors, door chain, hook and nearly a dozen of miscellaneous objects. The arrowheads were socketted and of either triangular or barbed shape.

Amreli (21°31'N; 71°31'E): The site is locally known as Gohilwad, and is situated in Amreli District of Saurashtra. Excavation of the site revealed two periods of occupation, namely Period I- Chalcolithic and Period II- Early Historic (Rao 1966) The Chalcolithic period yielded microliths and copper objects. This stratum is dated to 7\textsuperscript{th} century BC (Rao 1966). The date for Period II is ascribed from 1\textsuperscript{st} century BC to 7\textsuperscript{th} century AD, based on the occurrence of copper punch marked coins, appearance of Red Polished Ware (which has a wide distribution in India, dated between 1\textsuperscript{st} and 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries AD) along with inscribed potsherds, Kshatrap coins and seals. Inscription evidence of Maitraka copper plate suggests the probable occupation at the site till 7\textsuperscript{th} century AD.
Fourteen iron objects were obtained from this site. They include spearhead, fragment of a knife, sickle, ring, arrowhead and fishhook, curved dagger head and fragmentary spearhead.

**Vallabhi (21°48'N; 71°58'E):** Vallabhi is situated on the bank of Ghelo river in Vallabhipur Taluka of Bhavanagar District. Excavation at Vallabhi has revealed two periods of occupation. Period I showed signs of settlement starting from the first century AD (IAR 1979-80: 24). No traces of structure appear till fourth century AD (period II). However, Roman Amphorae, Red Polished Ware and votive tanks do occur during this period. Amphorae and Red Polished Ware continued till the fourth/fifth centuries AD. Traces of furnaces probably meant for smelting are visible (IAR 1979-80: 24). The gold ring obtained from the site appears to have been imported from outside. The period between fifth and eighth century revealed floors made of re-used bricks.

**Padri (22°22'N; 72°95'E):** Padri is located in Talaja Taluka of Bhavnagar District. The excavation revealed a two-fold cultural sequence, Period I-Harappan and Period II- Early Historic (Shinde 1992: 80). The total habitation deposit is 3.2 m. thick and of which the upper 1.2m. layer is of Early Historic. The Early Historic period is dated to 1st century BC-AD. This period is represented by Red Polished Ware, a clay tablet bearing the Brahmi script and Kshatrap copper coin. Among the associated antiquities tortoise shaped copper lamp, boat shaped terracotta objects, moulded terracotta human figurine are also recovered. [Note: The original preliminary report of Padri by Shinde (1992) states that Period I is Early Historic and Period II Harappan Period]
Dwaraka (22°15'N; 69°0'E): Dwaraka is situated in the Jamnagar District (IAR 1962-63). Period I is labelled as Chalcolithic. This period is represented by 5m. layer of sea sand deposit marked by the presence of copper objects, microliths, terracotta arecanut-shaped beads, stoppers and shell bangles. No structural remains have been found in this phase. It is approximately dated to 1st-2nd century BC. Period II is indicated by the presence of Red Polished Ware and Roman Amphorae. Assigned date of Period II is 1st to 4th centuries AD, based on the common occurrence of Red Polished Ware and Amphorae (Ansari and Mate 1966). The site was re-excavated in 1979-80. This excavation reported two more antecedent periods (IAR-1979-80) to the aforesaid periods. They are, Lustrous Red Ware (1500-1400 BC) and Black-and-Red Ware (900-500B.C).

Under Guptas and post-Guptas, Dwaraka assumed a religious centre status due to popularising of Puranas.

Prabhas Patan/Somnath (24°45'N; 70°28'E): This site is situated on the bank of river Hiranya in Junagadh District of Saurashtra. The site has been excavated twice, that is, in 1956-57 (Nanavati, Mehta and Chowdhary 1971) and re-excavation in 1971-72 by Deccan College Pune and State Department of Archaeology, Government of Gujarat (IAR 1971-72). Five periods of settlement have been identified from the site, namely, Period I (2000-1800 BC- Pre- Prabhas), Period II (1800-1500 BC - Prabhas Ware), Period III (1500-1200 BC -late Prabhas), Period IV (4th - 1st cent. BC - Early Historic), and Period V (1st cent B.C- 6th centuries AD-Late Historic) (IAR 1955-56:7-8; 1956-57:16-17; 1971-72: 12-13; 1975-76: 13; 1976-77: 17-18.).
It appears that the site was deserted by the late Prabhas occupants by 1200BC. The hiatus between the two periods is stratigraphically represented by a 30cm. thick sterile layer. Its historical phase started around 400BC with stone fortification represented by Black-and Red Ware. Inscribed skin rubber, NBPW sherds, ivory objects such as points and hair pins, terracotta games men and gold bead are the associated finds from Period IV. Period V (100 AD-600 AD) is represented by Red Polished Ware, fine moulded terracotta animal and human figurines, carved shell bangles and few sherds of Roman Amphorae. The site is important for the find of two thousand Gupta and Vallabhi coins of silver and copper (IAR 1955-56: 7).

Material Testimony

For the better understanding of Early Historic period of Gujarat, a brief description of the material evidences of this region is necessary.

Ceramics:- The types of ceramics found from different Early Historic sites are fine and coarse Red Ware, Burnished Red Ware, plain and burnished Black Ware, Black-and-Red Ware, Grey Ware, Northern Black Polished Ware, Black on Red Ware (Rangmahal Ware), Red Polished Ware (Fig: 4.2) and Roman Amphorae (Mehta and Patel 1967; Rao 1966; Ansari and Mate 1966; Nanavati, Mehta and Chowdhary 1971; IAR 1959-60; IAR 1966-67; Mehta and Shah 1968; IAR 1961-62; IAR 1971-72). Northern Black Polished Ware has been found from Bharuch, Jokha, Nagar, Nagal, Somnath and Timbarva (IAR 1959-60; IAR 1966-67; Mehta and Shah 1968; IAR 1961-62; IAR 1971-72). The main type of vessel shapes in
Fig: 4.2 Red Polished Ware from Early Historic Gujarat
various wares are jars, bowls, dishes, lids and pots. The Red Polished Ware is made of well-levigated clay. Its highest concentration and varieties and the majority of find spots occur in Gujarat and Maharashtra (Subbarao 1953). The major shapes of Red Polished Ware include sprinklers (ovoid globular jar with long neck and at times showing a spout) and globular jars with beaded interior ledges. Most of this ware is found associated with fine Red Ware. A large number of varieties of Red Polished Ware have been found from Amreli (Rao 1966). Roman Amphorae (Fig: 4.3) have been identified from Prabhas Patan (Nanavati, Mehta and Chowdhary 1971), Vallabhi (IAR 1979) Devnimori (Mehta and Chowdhary 1966), Akota (Subbarao 1953), Nagara (Mehta and Shah 1968), Dhatva (Mehta et.al. 1975), Timbarva (Mehta 1955), Fatehpur, Ajabpura and from a large number of explored sites. The Black on Red Ware obtained from various sites from north western part of Saurashtra and Kutch shows affinity with pottery reported from Rangmahal (Hanna 1957: 89-158), Amreli (Rao 1966) and Vadnagar (Subbarao and Mehta 1955).

Terracotta Objects:- Terracotta objects (Fig: 4.4) include human and animal figurines, toy carts, stoppers, flesh rubber, pellets, tablets, spinning top, disc, dice, games-men, spoked as well as solid wheels, beads, ornaments such as pendants, ear-studs, bangles, seals and sealing, roof tiles, votive tanks and votive stupas. The inscribed potsherds and seals (Fig : 4.5) from Nagara and Shamalaji (Mehta and Shah 1968), inscribed potsherds in Mauryan Brahmi from Beyt (Majumdar 1960), seals of Greeco-Roman style from Akota (Subbarao 1953), inscribed material, seals and sealing from Amreli (Rao 1966), flesh-rubber inscribed with characters of 2nd century BC Brahmi from Prabhas Patan (IAR 1956), two sealing from Vadnagar with faint impression of writing around a conch (IAR 1953-54) are very
Fig: 4.3 Roman Amphorae from Early Historic Gujarat.
Fig : 4.4 Terracotta objects from Nagararam.  

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Fig: 4.5 Inscribed Seals and Potsherds from Nagara.
significant finds in terms of reconstructing the chronology of Early Historic Gujarat.

**Semiprecious stones**: Semiprecious stones were used in Early Historic period for making beads. The commonly used materials are chalcedony, agate, carnelian, microcline, jasper, chert, steatite, garnet, coral, lapiz lazuli, rockcrystal (Fig: 4.9) etc. The ordinary stone objects include querns (flat as well as rotary), mullers (mainly of schist), mortars, vessels, hammer-stones (Fig: 4.6) etc. These are reported from sites such as Nagara, Timbarva, Jokha, Shamalaji, Akota and Devnimori. Stone sculptures are also reported from Early Historic phase of Nagara (Mehta and Shah 1968) and Vadnagar (Subbarao and Mehta 1955).

**Shell Industry**: Akota, Amreli, Karvan, Nagara, Somnath (Prabhas Patan), Vadnagar and Vallabhipur have yielded evidence of extensive shell manufacturing (Subbarao 1953; Rao 1966; IAR 1976-77; Mehta and Shah 1968; IAR 1971-72; IAR 1953-54; IAR 1979-80). Profuse occurrence of shell waste has also been reported from Saurashtra region (Rao 1966; Bhan 1983). In addition to this, shell objects were found from Dwaraka, Dhatva and Bharuch (IAR 58-59; 1959-60 1968; Mehta and Chowdhary 1975). Shell was mainly used for making bangles (Fig: 4.7) and beads. Pendants, gilt objects and inlay pieces were found Amreli (Rao 1966).

**Bone and Ivory objects**: These objects are found from Nagara, Amreli, Jokha and Shamalaji. The bone objects (Figure: 4.8) are mainly points, needles, dice, awls, beads, ear ornaments, pendants, kohl sticks and combs. The ivory objects are mainly pins and awls (Mehta and Shah 1968; Rao 1966; IAR 1956-57; Mehta and Patel 1967).
Fig: 4.6 Stone objects from Shamlaji
Fig: 4.7 Shell Bangles from Nagara

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Fig: 4.8 Bone objects from Nagara.
Fig: 4.9 Semi-precious stone beads from Nagara
Glass: A variety of glass objects have been reported from the Early Historic context of Gujarat. These include beads, bangles and ear studs from Jokha, opaque glass from Amreli and bottles, bangles and beads from Nagara. The glass slag and the fragments of drawn glass obtained from Nagara indicate glass manufacturing at the site (Rao 1966; Mehta and Shah 1968; Nanavati, Mehta and Chowdhary 1971).

Metals: The types of metals found from excavated Early Historic sites are mainly, copper, iron and lead. Bronze, silver, gold and antimony objects also occur, though rarely. Copper objects were found from Amreli, Devnimori, Dhatva, Jokha, Nagara and Timbarva. The main copper objects are coins, bangles, rings, miniature bells, disc, nails, celts, rods, blades etc. Iron artefacts of good quantity are reported from Gujarat. The main Early Historic sites that yielded iron are Akota, Amreli, Devnimori, Dhatva, Dwaraka, Nagal, Nagara, Somnath and Timbarva (Subbarao 1953; Rao 1966; IAR 1966-67; IAR 1962-63; Mehta and Shah 1968; Nanavati, Mehta and Chowdhary 1971). The main types of iron objects/artefacts found are weapons such as spearhead, arrowhead, dagger, and tools, namely, knife, chisel, ladle, nails, pounder, fishhook and sickle. Lead is reported from Amreli and Nagara. The major objects were seals, coins, ear-studs, etc. Among the other rare occurred metals, miniature bells and handle made of bronze reported from Akota and Amreli deserve special mention. Silver coins were reported from Nagara and Amreli. Gold was rare and occurs only in few sites. The reported gold objects are a die from Amreli, a plate from Somnath, a golden ring from Vallabhipur (Mehta 1964), and a gold bead from Karvan (IAR 1975-76).
Relative Chronology

Ceramic varieties, namely, Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW), Red Polished Ware, Roman Amphorae; terracotta objects such as seals and sealings, Punch marked coins, Kshatrap coins, Gupta coins and inscribed objects are used as parameters for reconstructing relative chronology of the Early Historic sites in Gujarat (Table: 4.1).

According to Roy (1986), NBPW occurred in two phases in the subcontinent. In the earlier phase (600-300 BC) the ware was confined to the middle and lower Gangetic plain. In the second phase (300-BC-100AD), this ware was found scattered all over the sub-continent. Amreli, Bharuch, Jokha, Nagara, Nagal, Prabhas Patan and Timbarva are the sites, which have yielded Northern Black Polished Ware in the Gujarat region (Rao 1966; IAR 1959-60; IAR 1966-67; Mehta and Shah 1968; IAR 1961-62; IAR 1971-72). Prabhas Patan Period-III, Nagara Period-II and Bharuch Period-II are suggested as the late stage of NBPW (Roy 1986: 85-87) in Gujarat and represents the early phase of Early Historic at these sites.

The earliest Punch marked coins made of silver were found from Gujarat. Arthasastra of Kautilya has references to Punch marked coins (Kangle 1965: 59-115) and based on this and other evidences (Rajgor 1996), their occurrence is assigned to 4th century BC or earlier. These coins are commonly found in association with the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW). In Gujarat, Dhatva, Nagal and Nagara reported associate occurrence of NBPW and punch marked coins and it indicates the early date of these sites. The other sites such as Jokha, Akota, Vadnagar, Amreli,
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Relative Chronology of Early Historic sites of Gujarat
Prabhas Patan and Dwaraka also reported Punch marked coins. Since the information regarding issuing authority, date of issue etc., are not available from punch marked coins, absolute dating with them pose difficulty.

Hence, the beginning of Early Historic culture in Gujarat can be traced back to 4th century BC based on the evidence of NBPW and Punch marked coins.

Different forms of Roman amphorae have been dated between 2nd century BC to 1st century AD (Sedov 1996:12-25). Gujarat is still lagging behind in identifying the different types of Roman Amphorae yielded from this region and fixing a date to it. More details are yet to be obtained for any accurate suggestion on chronology. However, one can consider the aforesaid chronological time bracket suggested by Sedov as applicable for Roman Amphora in Gujarat.

Black on Red Ware/Rangmahal Ware (Hanna 1957: 89-158) occurs commonly in north-west part of Saurashtra and Kutch and is dated to 1st/2nd century BC at Dwaraka on the basis of its being anterior to the layers containing Red Polished Ware (Ansari et.al.1966: 29). Black on Red Ware is also reported from Vadnagar (Subbarao et.al. 1955:13), Amreli (Rao 1966), and Devnimori (Mehta and Chowdhary 1966: 69). Tentatively, Black on Red Ware in Gujarat can be dated to 1st century AD-5th century AD. Red Polished Ware appears in a stratum dated from 1st century AD to 5th century AD, as supported by the evidence of this ware from Dwaraka, Prabhas Patan, Amreli, Nagara, Shamalaji, Devnimori, Akota and Timbarva. However, Red Polished Ware as a chronological indicator never appeared in any well dated stratified context in Gujarat.
Coins of Indo-Greek kings, Menander I, Appolodotus II are found from Bharuch and many places in Gujarat. The Indo Greek coins can be dated to 100 BC to 100 AD. Throughout Gujarat, Kshatrap coins are also found. Lead and silver Kshatrap coins and Gupta silver coins are reported from Akota and Amreli. The dates for Kshatrap coins are well established between 1st to 5th century AD.

Seals, sealing and other inscribed material, which can be dated on palaeographic basis have also been used as chronological indicators. The inscribed characters on terracotta flesh-rubber from Prabhas Patan dates to 2nd century BC (IAR 1956-57). The inscribed potsherds and seals from Nagara are dated between 1st and 5th century AD (Mehta 1968: 18). The inscribed seal, sealing and potsherds from Amreli are ranged between 3rd and 5th century AD. (Rao 1966: 89-93).

To summarize, on the basis of relative chronology it can be said that the Early Historic Period of Gujarat spanned from 4th century BC to 6th century AD.