Chapter 1

Introduction

Who really knows?
Who will here declare when this creation occurred?
Whence it is?
The gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe;
Who then knows whence it has arisen?
(Rig Veda, X. 129. 6)

1.1 Introduction to the Problem:

Indian archaeology, since its birth in the early nineteenth century, has undergone numerous crises alternating with periods of normalcy and elation. Almost the entire history of Indian archaeology in India is of direct government control. According to H.D. Sankalia (1979: 3) from 1861 until now, barring a few exceptions, archaeology has remained a government preserve. Most of the areas of interest in the 19th century were located at sites like Sanchi, Sarnath and Ajanta, and in the early 20th century at Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. Intensive excavations were carried out at these sites. Almost no systematic state/province-wise, excavations and surveys of Early Historic sites were carried out. Here two genuine limitations may be considered: (a) India was a vast region with innumerable sites scattered all over, too enormous a spread to be covered in a short definitive period; (b) For all the scientific methods brought to bear, and all the exhaustive surveys carried out,
Archaeological discoveries even today are quite often found by luck and chance.

The extensive archaeological research carried out in the first half of the 20th century was limited, in great measure, to the western and northwestern areas of undivided India and was devoted to the Indus/Harappan Civilization (Mackay 1935, 1938; Marshall 1931, 1951, 1960; Majumdar 1934; Vats 1941; Stein 1942). As a result of the Partition of India into India and Pakistan in 1947 almost all the Harappan sites were left on the 'wrong' side of the border. This inspired Indian archaeologists to conduct investigations, which led to the discovery of a large number of sites not only of the Harappan period but also of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Megalithic and Historical periods. In the 1950s and 60s a huge corpus of data based on explorations and small scale excavations was amassed but unfortunately was published mostly only in the form of brief reports in the Indian Archaeology—A Review (IAR), the annual publication of the Archaeological Survey of India (A.S.I.). This period also saw the rise of government funded/aided departments of archaeology in various universities, e.g., Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, Pune; Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda; Allahabad University, Allahabad; and Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. It seemed as though a new purpose had been discovered, which in turn became the motivating force in attempting to draw up a credible chronology of India. In order to link the Prehistoric, Protohistoric and Early Historic periods continuously, a number of sites like Nasik (Sankalia and Deo 1955), Nevasa (Sankalia et al. 1960), Maheshwar and Navdatoli (Sankalia et al. 1958), Hastinapura (Lal 1955), Kalibangan (Lal & Thapar...
Ujjain (IAR 55-56:19; 56-57:20-28), and others were excavated, and some fully published.

For some peculiar reason Rajasthan seems to have been left out on the fringes of this effort. Apart from a brief period of excavations in the late 1930s by Daya Ram Sahni at Sambhar, Nalliasar (Sahni [n.d.]), by K.N. Puri at Bairat (Sahni 1939) and Rairh (Puri 1940), almost no work was done in Rajasthan. Exceptions to this are R.C. Agrawala's unpublished excavations at Bhinmal (Agrawala 1955) and Ahar (IAR 54-55:14-17; 55-56:11), Ahar (Sankalia et al. 1969) and Gilund (IAR 59-60:41-46); and explorations by the State Department of Archaeology (Chakravarty and Srivastava 1985:147-149, 160) and V.N. Misra (1967) in the Berach basin.

The excavations at Ahar and Gilund and subsequent explorations in the Berach basin led to the discovery of the previously unknown Chalcolithic Ahar/Banas culture. This discovery led to an attempted cultural correlation and spatio-temporal positioning of the same within the known framework of cultural sequences. Incidental to these Chalcolithic discoveries was the discovery of cultural material datable (then) to approximately between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D., at almost all of the excavated and explored sites where it was found as an overlying deposit. As the obsession of the day was Protohistory, these Early Historic deposits were duly mentioned, minimally described and then quickly forgotten, thus leaving an enormous vacuum in the cultural sequence of Rajasthan as well as of other regions. The only sites in southeast Rajasthan systematically excavated and reported were Nagari, excavated in 1912 by D.R. Bhandarkar (1920) and Ahar, excavated by the Deccan College (Sankalia et al. 1969).
The entire period after the decline of the Ahar Culture therefore remained largely unknown until the well-recorded history of the Medieval Period beginning in Rajasthan with the advent of the Rajput kingdoms.

1.2 The Problem

In January 1994 excavations were begun at the Early Historic and Ahar Culture site of Balathal (24°43'N - 73°59'E), Tehsil Vallabhnagar, district Udaipur, by the Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute, Pune and the Institute of Rajasthan Studies, Udaipur under the direction of V.N. Misra. In the first season (1993-94) it was realised that the site had a considerable Early Historic habitation for which the excavated data threw up a number of questions, to which answers did not seem to be immediately forthcoming.

From these questions is born the present research topic. The topic is essentially devoted to reconstructing the lifestyle of the Early Historic people, their reasons for settling here, their adaptations to this ecological zone, and, most importantly, their origins.

The main problem noticed here was that after the decline of the Ahar culture, around 1500 B.C., there seemed to be an absolute dearth of any cultural remains till the sudden spurt of settlements in the 4th/2nd century B.C. Northern India, including northern Rajasthan, seemed to yield a continuous sequence (OCP/B&R/W/PGW/NBPW/Sunga-Kushana/Gupta) but the entire early Iron Age sequence seems to be absent in this quarter. Since the ceramic sequences of northern, central
and western India seem almost uniform in the period under study, it was decided to tackle this problem from a purely artefactual angle to see if any traces of diffusion and differentiation were possible. Thus the topic chosen was 'Early Historical Settlement of Southern Rajasthan (Mewar) with Special Reference to Balathal: An Artefactual Approach'.

1.3 Methodology and Scope

Keeping in mind the needs as well as the limitations of this study a step-by-step methodology was developed to optimally tackle this problem.

The ideal scenario would have been an intensive survey of the region with a view to locating all the sites of the Early Historic period and then selective excavations at a number of them. The excavations would be conducted on the basis of size, location and regional significance; thus developing a problem-oriented model and then satisfying all its necessary requirements. However there were a number of problems in adopting this approach.

1. Explorations would have to be done disregarding all previous exploration reports to remove all bias. Many reports identify B&RW, but whether the ceramic is of the Ahar culture or Early Historic is unknown. Similarly, most site locations are reported at the district level with no further details. This often leads to sites being re-reported or 'lost'. Very few trained observers capable of distinguishing Chalcolithic, Early Historic and Medieval potteries only on the basis of surface explorations have ventured into this field. As a result, almost
all previous reports, with the exception of Hooja (1988), are suspect and must be considered biased. A large corpus of excavated data is unavailable due to the absence of published reports.

2. Excavations were not possible because, firstly, it is difficult for a student archaeologist to obtain permission to excavate. Secondly, as archaeology is not a high priority field in India, funding for such a large enterprise involving a large number of excavations was not feasible.

In the light of the above mentioned facts the following methods were adopted.

1. Examination of all known climatic, floral and faunal settings/resources in the study area.

2. Systematic cataloguing of all the Early Historic artefacts from the site of Balathal.

3. Understanding their contextual positioning.

4. Physically identifying their constituent elements.

5. Tracing the raw material sources for the same and the routes of their acquisition.

6. Comparing the material from Balathal with that recovered from other excavated sites in and around the study area.

7. Comparing the material from Balathal with artefacts excavated from sites dated to the same temporal bracket from northern, central and western India.

8. Mapping the excavated sites vis-à-vis drainage and raw material sources.
9. Reconstructing the day-to-day life of the Early Historic people at Balathal and related sites with the help of archaeological and environmental data.

10. Tracing the possible routes of movement within the study area while trying to identify a series of settlements falling on these routes of migration/trade.

11. Creating on the basis of the above mentioned methods a comparative artefactual typology for this period in the broader perspective of the Early Historic period in India.

1.4 Area of Research

The immediate study area lies in the State of Rajasthan, originally known as Rajputana (Tod 1829). It is located between lat. 23°03’ N to 30°12’ N and long. 69°30’ E and 78°17’ E. Rhomboid on plan, it is bounded to the west and southwest by Pakistan; north and northwest by Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh; southeast by Madhya Pradesh and; and south and southwest by Gujarat. The total area covered by the state is 3,42,274 sq. kilometres.

The actual study area is the south and southeastern portion of the State known as Mewar. This area is roughly square on plan comprising of the Aravalli ranges and that portion of the state falling to their south and east.
1.4.1 Physiography (Fig. 1)

The Aravalli hills derive their name from 'Ada-vala', literally meaning - an obstruction lying in the path. This range is older than the Himalayas and is considered one of the oldest folded mountain ranges in the world (V.C. Misra 1967). They run in a NE-SW direction and divide the state of Rajasthan into two parts. To the north and west of the Aravallis lie the arid plains of the Thar Desert, and the Luni basin. This region comprises 60% of the land area of the state and is arid. To the east of the Aravallis lie the fertile plains of the Banas and Mahi rivers and their tributaries. This region is known as 'Mewar' or 'Mewad' and comprises the remaining 30% of the area of the state. This area is comparatively fertile though in some areas it is semi-arid. The Aravallis were formed during the Dharwar Period and subsequently peneplaned and uplifted in the Palaeozoic, Mesozoic and the Tertiary eras. The parent rocks of the Aravallis are quartzites, granites, and rocks of the Aravalli series. The softer phyllites and limestones have eroded and formed low hills and broad valleys. At present the Aravallis are a worn down remnant of their former selves. They originally extended as far as Delhi, but today they terminate at Jaipur, 200km. away from their original extent. The highest point on the Aravallis is at Guru Shikhar (1,727m), near Mt. Abu.

1.4.2 Geology (Fig. 2)

The geological structure of Rajasthan has been described as "...the most complex structure in solid geology" (V.C. Misra 1967:10). The base of this geological succession is gneissic rock belonging to the Archaen Era. Known as Bundelkhand Gneiss, it has been described as a "... consolidation of the
first Sial crust of the Earth” (V.C. Misra 1967: 11). Over this are the Raialo Series, the Delhi and Vindhyan Systems, the Jurassic, Cretaceous and Deccan Trap, and others spanning a period from the Archaean to the Mesozoic, as well as the limestones, alluvium and sands of the Tertiary
Fig. 2. Geology of Southeast Rajasthan.
and Quaternary Periods (Heron 1922, 1936, 1938, 1953; V.C. Misra 1967; Rode 1960).

1.4.3 Drainage (Fig. 3)

The Aravallis form the main watershed channeling and draining the monsoon waters. The following are the main rivers flowing through the region. The Luni River flows out of the western slopes and drains into the Arabian Sea. The main river flowing through the study area is the Banas along with its tributaries, the Berach and the Kothari. The Banas rises in the Aravallis near Kumbhalgarh and initially flows southwards, where it meets the Gogunda plateau. It then turns east and enters the Mewar plain near Nathdwara. It continues east-northeast up to Mandalgarh where it meets and absorbs the Berach. The Berach rises from the hills to the north of Udaipur where it is known as the Ahar after the village of that name. This village lies close to the ancient site of Ahar. From Ahar the Berach moves eastwards turning northeast near Chittaurgarh and eventually joins the Banas at Bigod. The Banas then encounters the Kothari starting near Dewair and flowing down the Aravallis past Bhilwara. The now enlarged Banas flows in a northeasterly direction to Tonk where it veers east, finally merging into the Chambal, east of Sawai Madhopur. The Khari, Dai, Sodra and the Mahi are some of the northern tributaries of the Banas.

In Dungarpur district the main river is the Mahi with the Som and Jakham as its tributaries.
Fig. 3. Drainage of Southeast Rajasthan.
The Chambal flows into southeast Rajasthan near Chittaurgarh and then proceeds north-northeast past Kota. The Kali Sind starting from Jhalawar meets the Chambal about 100 km southeast of Kota. About 20 km further the Chambal encounters and absorbs the Banas. Here onwards it flows in an easterly direction until it merges into the Yamuna near Etawah.

1.4.4 Soils (Fig. 4)

Soils in the Mewar region vary from Black Cotton Soil to the yellowish soils. The alluvial covering is very thin on the sandstone plateau (Heron 1936:116). Usually it consists of a light loam, sandy in some areas and clayey in others. Limestones are generally bare. Black Cotton Soil occurs in the Deccan Trap areas of Banswara and Jhalawar. The Banas plains chiefly bear alluvium, loam and yellow-brown soils. Though concentrations of sands are rare the beds of all the major rivers in this area, viz. Banas, Kothari and Khari, are usually deep in sand. These beds are often under cultivation in the summer months, crops of melon and cucumber being raised.

1.4.5 Flora.

Most of the forest wealth of Rajasthan has been decimated in the last 50 years, probably adversely affecting the climate and water table. Thus the ecological balance in Rajasthan as probably been radically unhinged. This fact makes the reconstruction of the floral assemblage all the more difficult. At the turn of the century forests occupied 7360 sq. km of the erstwhile territory of Mewar (Imperial Gazetteer 1908). There was an
Fig. 4. Soils of Southeast Rajasthan.

abundance of: Babul (Acacia arabica), Banyan (Ficus bengalensis), Haldu (Adina cordofolia), Ber (Zizyphus jujuba), Palas (Butea frondosa), Gular
(Ficus glomerata), Jambul (Eugenia jambolana), Ker (Acacia catechu), Khejra/Khijdi (Prosopis spicigera), Mahua (Bassia latifolia), Aam/Mango (Mangifera indica), Neem- (Melia azadirachta, Azadirachta indica), Pipal (Ficus religiosa), Salar (Boswellia thurifera), Shisham (Dalbergia sissoo), Siris (Albizia lebbek), Imli/tamarind (Tamarindus indica), Dhao (Anogeissus pendula), Khajur (Phoenix dactylifera), and various other trees in smaller concentrations (Erskine 1908: 10-11).

In the hilly regions abound Mahua, Salar, Karai (Sterculia urens), Ker, Mahua and other trees. In the drier parts abound: Khejra which takes the place of Babul, Ber (different species) (Z. remulasia), Dhao, Jhal/Pilu (Salvadora persica), and Karel (Capparis asphylla). In the open plains are mainly found: Khejra, Babul, Ber, Anwala (Cassia auriculata), Dhao, and Thor (Euphorbia royaleana). Thor also grows on exposed screes and rocks. It is commonly identified as a cactus used for fencing purposes (Agrawal 1979: 16-19; Shetty and Singh 1987: 22-32).

Most of southeast Rajasthan falls under either the Dry Deciduous Forest type or the Edaphic Forest type, only a small portion in Dist. Banswara falls in the Sub-Tropical Evergreen Forest type (Fig. 5). This may not have been the case in the past.

1.4.6 Fauna

A very large portion of the faunal population of Rajasthan has been decimated in the last 100 years. This is mainly due to deforestation coupled with unchecked hunting by the local rulers and their British patrons. At the turn of the 19th century large numbers of: Blackbuck
Fig. 5. Forests of Southeast Rajasthan.
(Antelope cervicapra), Gazelle (Gazella gazella), Sambhar (Cervus unicolor), Chital (Axis axis), Four Horned Antelope (Tetracerus quadricornis), Nilgai (Boselephas tragocamelus), Wild Boar (Sus scrofa), Leopard (Panthera pardus), Tiger (Panthera tigris), Jackal (Canis aureus), Wolf (Canis lupus), Hyena (Hyaena hyeana), Porcupine (Hystrix sp.), Mongoose (Herpestes edwardsii), Hare (Lepus nigricollis), Monitor Lizard (Varanus), Peacock (Pavo cristatus), Quails, Partridges, Rats/Mice (Rattus/Mus sp.), and various birds, fowl, and reptiles were abundantly distributed all over the study area (Agrawal 1979: 19-20; Erskine 1908: 11; Thomas and Joglekar 1996).

Interestingly the archaeological record of the region points to a slowly creeping aridity from the Chalcolithic to the Early Historic. This is evident from the decrease seen in the deer species and a corresponding increase seen in the numbers of the antelope species (Thomas 2000:149-150). The elephant is represented in the Chalcolithic record while the horse appears only in Early Historic times (Thomas & Joglekar 1996).

1.4.7 Palaeoclimate

Studies in the palaeoclimate of pre- and protohistoric Rajasthan have been carried out by Singh et al. (1974), Allchin et al. (1978), Agrawal et al. (1980), Krishnamurthy et al. (1981), Wasson et al. (1983), Misra and Rajaguru (1989) and Deotare et al. (1999).

Most of the work on palaeoclimate in Rajasthan has been undertaken in the western part of the State of Rajasthan. Pollen studies of the Holocene period seem to indicate that western Rajasthan, Sind, and parts
of Gujarat became increasingly arid 3000 years ago. Available information does not indicate much of a climatic change in Rajasthan in the last 5000 years (Deotare et al. 1999).

Here, it must be taken into consideration that no Palaeoclimatic studies have so far been carried out in southeastern Rajasthan or east of the Aravallis.

Recent archaeozoological studies at the site of Balathal by P.K. Thomas (2000:149) indicate that the climate became increasingly drier in the Early Historic period. This is deduced from the visible decrease in the bones of the deer species and an increase in the remains of the antelope species in the Early Historic period. Antelopes thrive in a much drier environment than deer, thus indicating a wet phase in the Chalcolithic (where a higher number of deer remains are found) and a corresponding aridity in the Early Historic Period. Caution must be exercised here as this conclusion is based upon preliminary analysis of only a selected portion of the entire corpus of data from Balathal.

1.4.8 Minerals (Fig. 6)

The Aravallis and their foothills are very rich in mineral wealth, namely in copper, zinc, lead, silver, iron, manganese and beryl. In fact all of 'old Mewar' has considerable mineral wealth (Seshadri 1983). There are large deposits of zinc and lead at Zawar (GSI 1968 [In Hooja 1988]). The entire Zawar-Debari-Dariba belt is one of the most important areas of zinc exploitation in India. Copper is also found over large areas of the
Fig. 6. Distribution of Minerals in Southeast Rajasthan.
Aravallis. Heron (1936:117) noticed copper pyrites and malachite in the Aravalli pyllites at several places, though in small concentrations.

Beryllium is mined at Bari Shikarbari, Selake Gudha and Champa Gudha near Amet; mica is mined near Bhilwara, emeralds near Deogarh. Soapstone, Talc and steatite occur in the Udaipur district (V.C. Misra 1967). Most of the schist beds in the southern portion of southeast Rajasthan contain large numbers of garnet crystals, though rarely of gem quality. Gem quality garnet is mined at some places at Bhilwara.

Iron ore, though not abundant, is present in economically viable quantities in southeast Rajasthan. Iron ore occurs in Udaipur, Sawai Madhopur, Bhilwara and Bundi districts. Old open iron workings are visible even today near the village of Iswal, 15km north of Udaipur City. Large amounts of hematite (an important iron ore) yielding 50-60% iron are seen in the eastern and northeastern portion of the Aravallis (Erskine 1908: 53) and near the village of Thana, Tehsil Sarara, Dist. Udaipur (Agrawal 1979: 165). These ores are low in phosphorus and are economically viable for exploitation. Udaipur is the second largest producer of iron in Rajasthan after Jaipur (Agrawal 1979: 165).

1.5 The Cultural Sequence in the Study Area

The cultural sequence in the study area, both, before and after the period under study is briefly described below.
1.5.1 Palaeolithic

A number of Palaeolithic sites were found in the 1950s and '60s. Many sites yielding Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic tools have been located along the banks of the Chambal, Banas, Berach, Gambhiri and Wagan rivers (V.N. Misra 1961, 1966, 1969; Sankalia 1962).

1.5.2 Mesolithic

A large number of Mesolithic sites are known from the Banas-Berach river system and the rocky plateau of Mewar (V.N. Misra 1961, 1966, 1967, 1977a, 1977b; Sankalia 1962). In all, more than 73 Mesolithic sites are known from Rajasthan, with nine of them to the west of the Aravallis (V.N. Misra 1968:16).

The most well known of these sites is Bagor on the banks of the Kothari, excavated by V.N. Misra for three seasons from 1968-70 (1970a, 1970b, 1971, 1973a, 1973b; Misra and Nagar 1981). It is not only one of the best excavated sites but also the best reported Mesolithic site in India. Three phases were identified at Bagor, Phase I-Mesolithic, Phase II-Chalcolithic (with some copper and pottery) and Phase III-Iron Age (V.N. Misra 1973b: 95-6). The Mesolithic levels of the site have yielded an exceedingly large number of microlithic tools. "No site in India or...outside has yielded microliths in comparable numbers (V.N. Misra 1973b: 96)". Burials are also known from the site, two of which (from Phase II) yielded five well-defined copper objects namely, a needle, three arrowheads and a spearhead. Phase II also yielded a pottery made of gritty, micaceous clay, slipped on one or both sides. It is ill fired and fast
wheel striations are absent. Some sherds bear incised designs (V.N. Misra 1973b: 100-103). The excavations also yielded a number of carnelian, agate, garnet and bone beads.

The early Mesolithic inhabitants of southeastern Rajasthan used geometric microliths and practiced a hunting-gathering economy, raised sheep-goats. At a later stage they came into contact with the copper using Chalcolithic populations, and knew the use of copper tools and pottery (V.N. Misra 1973b).

1.5.3 Chalcolithic

There are essentially two separate Chalcolithic cultures in Rajasthan. The first is the Ahar or Banas culture. It is named after the site of Ahar where it was first discovered (IAR 54-55:14-17; Sankalia et al. 1969). The second is known as the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture and was first isolated at the site of Ganeshwar (Chakravarty and Srivastava 1985:147-49).

1.5.3.1 The Ahar Culture

Sometimes called the Banas Culture, the Ahar Culture is a very rich Chalcolithic culture in southeast Rajasthan. R.C. Agrawala first noticed remains of this culture during excavations at the site of Ahar, now a suburb of Udaipur (IAR 54-55:14-17). Subsequently excavations were carried out by Sankalia et al. (1969) at this site. A fully developed agro-pastoral culture, familiar with the use of copper and using a specific type of pottery known as 'white painted black and red ware' were noticed here.
Interestingly no microliths were found in the Chalcolithic levels (Sankalia et al. 1969). Excavations at Gilund, Udaipur district, Rajasthan, were carried out by B.B. Lal and they yielded very similar results (IAR 59-60:41-46). The excavations yielded a number of structural levels (four in all), where structures were made of sun-dried or burnt bricks on a stone rubble foundation. Only small fragments of copper were found alongside a number of finished microliths and some terracotta animal figurines (IAR 59-60:41-46).

Intensive explorations by officers of the Archaeological Survey of India and the Rajasthan state Archaeological Department, V.N. Misra (1967) and Rima Hooja (1988) have yielded, about 90 Chalcolithic sites (in Mewar) (Misra et al. 1995:57) (Fig. 7).

Horizontal excavations have been carried out at the site of Balathal (Misra et al. 1995; 1997) from 1994 to 2000; these have yielded a considerable deposit of the Ahar culture. Balathal is the most extensively excavated Ahar Culture site today.

Excavations have yielded the remains of an agro-pastoral society of the Chalcolithic period, the authors of which raised structures made of semi-dressed stoned and sun dried mud bricks. These structures were often multi-chambered and were made of thick walls of sun dried bricks erected on a base of semi-dressed stones. The site also bears, at its centre, a massive stone structure built of rubble and sun dried brickbat walls, 5 m. thick, veneered with semi-dressed stones.
Fig. 7. Map showing the Location of Balathal and The Distribution of Ahar Culture Sites in Southeast Rajasthan.

The ceramics represented at the site comprise: white painted BRW, thin red slipped ware, thick coarse RW, coarse GW, tan ware (similar to some
Harappan ceramics), reserve slipped ware and a few sherds of painted buff ware (Mishra 2000).

The Chalcolithic inhabitants of the site used implements of copper as well as microliths. They raised crops of barley and wheat and relied extensively on cattle for meat and other products. They also hunted and consumed the meat of game animals.

The Chalcolithic period at Balathal has been dated to the middle of the third millenium B.C. by C14 dating (PRL-1834: 4350±70 BP, PRL-1844: 4300±80, PRL-1846: 4310±80).

1.5.3.2 The Ganeshwar-Jodhpura Culture

This is a copper using culture whose identifying ceramic is the 'Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP).

This culture was first isolated at the site of Jodhpura (27° 31'N - 76° 56'E), during excavations undertaken by R.C. Agrawala and Vijay Kumar of the State Dept. of Archaeology, Rajasthan in 1972-73 (Chakravarty and Srivastava 1985:147-9).

Subsequently during successive field seasons of exploration, Vijay Kumar located 22 OCP sites (Chakravarty and Srivastava 1985:160).

The C14 date for the late phase of the OCP inhabitation was 740 B.C. (PRL-227) (Chakravarty and Srivastava 1985:184).
The site of Ganeshwar first came to notice in 1977-78 when a hoard of copper implements was found here. The hoard consisted of one arrowhead and 58 celts in association with OCP (Chakravarty and Srivastava 1985:210). Intensive explorations at the site in 1978-79 yielded, "...about 1000 copper objects in association with OCP (Chakravarty and Srivastava 1985:210)".

Excavations were carried out at Ganeshwar in 1981-82 and 1982-83 by the State Dept. of Archaeology, Rajasthan (Sharma and Singh 1997: 127-129, 135-137). They yielded a Chalcolithic deposit of 3.65 m; Structural floors of stone slabs and rammed earth and pebbles. Small finds included microliths, bone tools, stone/bone beads, querns, mullers and pestles. OCP was the main ceramic, associated with which was 'Reserved slip ware' hitherto found only in association with Harappan related ceramics.

On the basis of the 'Harappan' connection the site was dated to the late third millenium B.C.

1.5.4 The Early Historic

The Early Historic period extends from the sixth century B.C., the time of the 16 Mahajanapadas, to the end of the rule of Harshavardhana of Kannauj around the 7th century A.D. (For a complete list of explored and excavated sites belonging to this period in Rajasthan see Appendix). Archaeologically the two principal cultures of this period are the Painted Grey Ware (PGW) and Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW).
1.5.4.1 Painted Grey Ware (PGW)


C14 dates for the PGW levels at Jodhpura range between the late ninth century B.C. and the fourth century B.C. they are:
1. PRL-212 2330+-100
2. PRL-213 2270+-110
3. PRL-270 2750+-150
4. PRL-273 2370+-150
5. PRL-274 2320+-110

1.5.4.2 Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW)

The NBPW Culture is chronologically the cultural successor of the PGW. Though it is mainly restricted to the Ganga valley, it has a distribution much wider than that of the PGW. The NBP ceramic has been identified
as the primary tableware of the Mauryans, their immediate predecessors and successors.

In Rajasthan NBPW bearing levels are reported from the following excavated sites:

3. Sunnari (Phase 2, NBPW associated wares), Dist. Jhunjhunu (Sharma and Singh 1997:120-3)
5. Balathal, Dist. Udaipur (Abhijit Dandekar, pers. comm.)

NBPW is normally found in association with punch-marked silver/copper coins and/or cast copper coins. Associated ceramics include Black Slipped ware, Red ware, Grey ware, Fine Grey ware and Black & Red ware.

Whilst NBPW levels have been dated to the sixth century B.C. at Hastinapura (Lal 1955:23), at Noh and Balathal the presence of cast copper coins allows a date no earlier than the fourth century B.C.

1.5.4.3

Sunga/Kushana Period

Sites belonging to this period are well represented and well catalogued in Rajasthan.
The following table gives the list of excavated sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Cultural Period</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Rangmahal</td>
<td>Kushana</td>
<td>Rydh 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Bairat</td>
<td>Sunga?</td>
<td>Sahni [n.d.]: <em>IAR</em> 1963-64 to 66-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Sambhar</td>
<td>Sunga?</td>
<td>Sahni 1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Rairh</td>
<td>Mauryan</td>
<td>Puri 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Noh</td>
<td>Sunga/Kushana?</td>
<td><em>IAR</em> 1963-64 to 66-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Gilund</td>
<td>Sunga/Kushana?</td>
<td><em>IAR</em> 1959-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Ahar</td>
<td>Kushana</td>
<td>Sankalia <em>et al.</em> 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Nagari</td>
<td>Kshatrapa?</td>
<td><em>IAR</em> 1962-63; Bhandarkar 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Sunnari</td>
<td>Sunga</td>
<td>Sharma and Singh 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bhinmal</td>
<td>Kshatrapa</td>
<td>Agrawala 1955</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These sites have yielded typical archaeological remains of the period, which include ceramics, terracotta figurines, and other associated artefacts. Coins include those of the Indo-Greeks, Kushanas, Kshatrapas, Sibis and Malavas. Of the above mentioned sites, Rangmahal was a Kushana city, Nagari was the capital of the Sibi 'janapada' and has yielded Sibi and Kshatrapa coins, Bhinmal has yielded typical Red Polished Ware (RPW) associated with the Kshatrapas.

Ahar is the first stopping point, after crossing the Aravallis, on the trade route running from Gujarat to northern Rajasthan.
1.5.4.4 The Gupta Period (4th to 6th Century A.D.)

A number of Gupta gold coins found in Mewar along with line 22 of the Prayag Prashasti of Samudragupta, recording tribute from neighbouring kingdoms including Rajasthan (Hooja 1988: 41), firmly establish a 'Gupta' presence in Rajasthan.

Around circa 500 A.D. the Hunas under their paramount chief Mihirakula effected widespread and wanton destruction in Rajasthan. Possible remnants of this wanton destruction are seen amongst the shattered remains of the Asokan columns at Bairat (Sahni [n.d.]). The Bhim Chauri inscription from Kota graphically records this wanton destruction (Hooja 1988:41).

Verse 19 of the Mandsor Inscription, dated to V.S. 589, clearly mentions a 'rajasthaniya' (Governor) of Madhyamika and Mandsor (Hooja 1988:41). The same inscription describes the territories of Abhayadatta, governor of Yashodharman, as existing between the 'Pariyatrd' mountains, the river Narmada and the sea (Hooja 1988: 41).

No uniquely 'Gupta' period sites have been identified in Rajasthan so far.

Around the 6th/7th centuries AD the Moris established their rule in Rajasthan. Soon various Rajput clans became established as the political controllers of the region.
The remaining history of Rajasthan from the 8th century A.D. to the present is too well documented to pursue further at this juncture and has no bearing on the present investigations.

1.6 Literary Evidence

The first mention of Mewar is in the 'Bijapur inscription of Hastikundi' dated to Vikrama Samvat 1053 (A.D. 997). The region 'Medapata' is mentioned in this inscription with its capital at the city of 'Aghata'. The former has been identified as modern Mewar and the latter as the site of Ahar (Karna 1909: 17-24).

With the discovery of coins bearing the legend 'majhimikaya Sibi janapadasya' at the site of Nagari, Bhandarkar (1920) identified the site as ancient Madhyamika. Madhyamika was obviously one of the most important cities in ancient Mewar as it has been repeatedly mentioned in ancient literature. There are various references to it, some of which are mentioned below.

In the Sabha Parva (2.29) of the Mahabharata (Mahabharata 1834), the following description is given about Nakula's 'Paschimadgajyayd, i.e. the western conquest: "... (The splendid Prince) subjugated Sairisakas and the Maheccha, the land of Sibis, Trigartas, Ambasthas, Malavas, five Karpatas and Madhyamikaya and Vatadhana Brahmins. Circling around, the bull of men defeated the Utsavamekata oligarchies who dwell in the Pushkara forest" (Van Buitenen 1975: 85).
It is very clear from this description that the city of Madhyamika was not under the rule of the Sibis at that time. This, in other words, means that the city had gained prominence much before the Sibis dwelt there; and this prominence must have been one of the reasons for the Sibis settling there.

However, the Mahavastu Avadana (1.34), a Buddhist text of the second century A.D., makes a casual reference to the 16 Mahajanapadas of the period. In this reference, the list shows the following groups: Kasi-Kosala, Anga-Magadha, Vajji-Malla, Ceti-Vatsal, Matsya-Surasena, Kuru-Panchala, Sibi-Dasarna and Ashvaka-Avanti (Basak 1963: 40). Firstly, two of the earlier Mahajanapadas, Gandhara and Kamboj, are no longer a part of the Indian territory and secondly, the Sibi Janapada is grouped together with the Dasarna Janapada, or modern Mandsaur in Malwa, implying that the Sibis had definitely occupied the Mewar region by the second century A.D. (Moti Chandra 1954:5).

Another reference to Madhyamika is by Patanjali, the famous grammarian, who wrote a commentary, Mahabhasya, on Panini’s Astadhyayi. He mentions Madhyamika in the context of explaining a rule of the grammar (3.2.111-2) (Abhyankar 1971).

The rule is as follows:

Parokse Ca Lokavijnate Prayoktur-darsana visaye lanvaktavyam
Arunadyavanah Saketam Arunadyavanah Madhyamikam
This means that the past imperfect should be used to signify an action, not witnessed by the speaker; but capable of being noticed by him and known to people in general. (For example) The Yavanas besieged Saketa and the Yavanas besieged Madhyamika.

It is clear from this that the city of Madhyamika being besieged by the Yavanas, was a known incidence.

Now the question, which Yavana was this, has different answers. Some scholars think it was the Indo-Greek king Demetrius (Puri 1957:55). However, according to Tarn (1951: 140), Demetrius, after coming into possession of Taxila, had two lines of advance on either side of the Indian desert; one south-eastward along the great road across Punjab and Delhi to the Ganges and hence to the Mauryan capital Pataliputra, and, the other southward (at first south-westward) down the Indus to its mouth and whatever might lie beyond. So he divided his forces into two, one led by himself, accompanied by his brother/collateral Apollodotus, towards the Indus and the other by his general Menander, taking the great road across Punjab and Delhi to the Ganges. This fact is further strengthened by the mention of a Yavana king in the Sauvira region, with his capital as Dattamitri, in the Mahabharata (Tarn 1951: 142). This Yavana king is identified as Demetrius and the city as Demetrias in the Indus delta. Demetrius himself went back to Taxila, but his expedition was carried on by Apollodotus. He, upon reaching Barygaza, establishing his rule there, turned northwards and took the great road going via Ujjain and Vidisa to Kausambi, and eventually to Pataliputra (Tarn 1951: 150). On this route Apollodotus besieged the city of Madhyamika (Tarn 1951: 150-1). It may be added here that the discovery of a coin of Apollodotus in the
excavations at Ahar supports the view that Apollodotus had some influence or presence in this region (Sankalia et al. 1969: 13-14: Pl. II.4).

Like the political history of Mewar, the mention of the Aravalli mountain range is also very ambiguous. Many scholars have identified it with the ancient mountain range of Pariyatra (Saxena 1995: 412-413). However, Patanjali, while describing the boundaries of Aryavarta (Mahabhasya 2.4.10, 3.6.109) says that the region (Aryavarta) lies to the north of Pariyatra. This means that the mountain range has to run in the east-west direction. Hence it cannot be corroborated with the fact that the Aravallis run in an almost north-south direction. Secondly, the Matsya Purana (114/23) gives a list of rivers that originate from Pariyatra (Sircar 1971). These rivers are Vedasmriti (Besula), Vidisa (Bes), Vetravati (Betwa), Vritraghni (Vatrak), Sindhu (Kali Sind), Parnasha (Banas), Para (Parvati (?) and Charmanvati (Chambal). It is clear that except for the Banas all the other rivers originate from the Vindhyas. Hence Pariyatra cannot be identified as the modern Aravallis. Bhandarkar (1887:5) identifies this Pariyatra as that part of the Vindhyas where the rivers Chambal and Betwa originate. Puri (1957:69) agrees with this explanation and corresponds it to the hills of Malwa.

Another probable identification of the Aravallis is the mention of Adarsha. Agrawala (1943) identifies this Adarsha as Adarshana or Vinasana, a place where the river Sarasvati is believed to have disappeared, in Haryana. However, according to Chitrav (1969:183), it is the Aravalli range, as mentioned in the Mahabhasya of Patanjali. According to the Mahabhasya (2.4.10, 3.6.109) the western boundary of Aryavarta is Adarsha. As other boundaries of the region are defined by
the mountain ranges, this also should be a mountain range and not a pilgrimage point. Secondly, the medieval name of the Aravallis, Adavala, is supposed to have been derived from the ancient name Adarshavali (Chitrav 1969:183).

However, Mt. Abu, the highest peak in the range, is clearly mentioned in ancient literature. It was known as Arbuda, the hill of intelligence. The Mahabharata (Aranyaka Parva 3.80.74-75) mentions that there existed an Ashram of the sage Vasistha on the mountain and that it was an extremely holy place, worth the donation of a thousand cows and that there was also a chasm on the ground here.

Ptolemy (Mujumdar 1927:75-77) calls the Aravallis Apocopa. He gives their area as ranging from longitude 116° to 124° and latitude 28° at their western limit and to 26° at the eastern. Apocopa literally means 'what has been cut off' and therefore was used to denote a cliff, a cleft or a steep hill. Apocopa also occurs in the Periplus (Section 18) where it designates a range of precipitous hills running across Azania i.e. Ajan in Africa. This identification of different hill ranges by the same name may be due to the similarity in their formations and steep rocky cliffs. It is also quite possible that the hill of Abu was separated from the main range due to an earthquake and this fact led to its mention in Mahabharata as a cleft or chasm, its Greek nomenclature as 'punishment of the gods' or 'what has been cut off'; and the reason behind Megasthenes calling it 'Capitalia' or 'the mountain of capital punishment' (Mujumdar 1927:75-77).

The Skanda Purana in its Arbudamahatmya (3.36.61) mentions the area and the height of the mountain as 10 and five yojanas respectively.