CHAPTER - III

Excavations in the Baroda, Broach and Surat Districts.

In the Baroda, Broach and Surat districts the following sites were excavated:

1. Kamrej by Hiranand Sastri.\(^1\)
2. Baroda and Akota by B. Subba Rao.\(^2\)
3. Amrapura by B. Subba Rao.\(^3\)
5. Timbarva by the writer.\(^4\)
6. Variav by the writer.

The excavations revealed the existence of the cultures from the microlithic period to the Maratha period. Here the excavations are described period-wise.

Excavations of the Microlithic Sites.

In all three sites in the Baroda district were excavated. These are Amrapura, Phajalpura and Akota.

The first two were isolated camp sites. The excavation at Amrapura was more important. "A small trench 6' x 8' was dug on the flat top of the subconical mound to see whether the

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1 Sastri, Hiranand, AR. DA. BS. 1936-37, p. 13.
2 Subba Rao, B., Baroda Through the Ages.
4 Mehta, R.N., Excavations at Timbarva (April 1953).
microlithic industry is associated with the fossilized (?) bones (found on the surface) as in North Gujarat. At Amarpura there was no possibility of getting the stratification as in North Gujarat since, these were also wind-blown deposits. So it was excavated by mechanical, horizontal layers of six inches. The record for the finds was kept in each foot of the excavations.

The excavation revealed the following phases:

1. Pottery was discovered in association with the microliths in the first three feet.

2. Between 4' to 5' was the richest microlithic layer yielding more than two hundred flakes of quartz, agate, chert and a large number of fossilized bones.

3. After 6' there were no signs of human habitation.

This industry is typologically similar to that found from North Gujarat. Since the trench was rather small, the definite association of pottery could not be established.

At Phajalpura also the evidence was similar to that obtained at Amrapura.

At Akota in the Baroda area, from the lowest layers

In trench I (Fig. 3.1) the layer 10 yielded a large number of flakes and cores, including a few retouched microlithic tools, of agate, chert and quartz. There were many flakes and few cores. Here there was an overlap of the culture of the early historic period II. The evidence from Trial pit, where this culture was observed in layers 9 and 8 was similar to that from trench I. But in the trench IV (Fig. 3.2) there was clear evidence of a gap between these two cultures. Here layer 13 represented the microlithic period. From this layer flakes, cores, nodules and retouched tools of agate, chert, chalcedony and quartz and a few bones were obtained. No pottery was found from here.

This layer underlay a sterile deposit of about two feet. From this very compact and hard layer no antiquity was recovered. It, therefore, clearly suggested a time gap between the microlithic and the early historic cultures.

Excavations of Early Historic Sites.

The Baroda Area, Timbarva and Variav were the sites from which the material of Early historic cultures was obtained. The early historic culture I was discovered at Timbarva, and the early historic culture II was discovered at all the three sites.
Early Historic Culture I.

Timbarva (Fig. 3.3).

At Timbarva a small trench 12' x 8' was excavated on the undisturbed part of the Borik mound. The trench was dug to a depth of 16' and 8 layers were observed. The archaeological deposit from this trench belongs to the Early historic period I, Early historic period II, and Mediaeval period I.1

The early historic period I is represented by the layers 8, 7, 6 and 5. It is characterized by the presence of Northern-Black-polished-Ware, Red-and-Black-Ware, plain and burnished-red-wares, iron implements, mother goddess (?) figurines of terracotta and stone pestles and querns, beads etc. These overlie the natural soil.

Early Historic Culture II

Timbarva

This period is represented by layers (4) and (3) and it succeeds the early historic period I. It is characterized by the appearance of the crude-red-and-black ware, Polished Red Ware, and plain and burnished Red Wares.

Variav (Fig. 3.4)

Here the trench 12' x 8' was excavated on the mound opposite the Ramji Mandir, and was dug to the depth of 15'. Here seven layers were noted. The seventh layer here, belongs
to the early historic period II, which is the earliest occupation at this site. Polished Red Ware was discovered from this layer in association with the burnished red ware and burnished black ware. The crude red and black ware was absent at this place.

**Baroda Area.**

The richest deposit of early historic period II was however discovered at Akota in the Baroda area.

This culture was revealed from trench I, II, III, IV and Trial pit. ¹

**Trench I (Akota).**

This large trench measuring 40' x 10' (Fig. 3.1) was excavated on the central mound, (Mound I), near the river Visvamitri. It was dug to a depth of 14' and revealed ten layers.

Out of these, layers 9, 8, 7, 6 and 5 belong to early historic period II. From them, crude red and black ware, Red polished ware, burnished red ware and stamped pottery was recovered.

Besides pottery a part of a structure of well-burnt bricks 16½" x 9½" x 3", was observed. It was running in a north-south direction, across the trench. The structure was cut into layers 6a, 7 and 8. On one side, it was sealed by

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layer 5. Near the side of this structure brickbats were spread, suggesting that there was a flowing of this material.

Subsequently the bricks from this structure were robbed by the new comers. They destroyed a major part of the sealing layer. This suggests that there is a gap between the structure and the robbing activity.

Trench II and III (Akota)

Two trenches 27' x 60' and 6' x 60', were excavated on Mound I, to study the history of a structure that was seen in the exposed cutting. These trenches were finally joined by a series of extensions to the southern side. The excavation revealed the history of the structure which is summarised as follows:

The original structure was a large quadrangular one, built of bricks of 16" x 9" to 9½" x 3". This structure was built into a thin debris of occupation. The foundation of the structure was cut in the layers 6, 7 and in the natural earth. The contemporary building level is indicated by the brick earth varying in thickness from one inch to about 6" (Fig. 3.5). Complete bricks were used on both sides and the central core of the wall was filled up by closely packed brickbats set in mud mortar.

The building at a later date was damaged by a heavy flood of the river Visvamitri. The flood is very well represented by
clean yellow silt (layer 4-A). After this event the structure was renovated. The silt was cleared up from most of the walls but at some places a thin film of silt was left between these two walls.\(^1\)

In this second period, the changes in the plan of the structure are visible. This time two new walls were added, as is clear from the disconnected bond.

This structure was also destroyed by the flood which had deposited silt to the thickness of about 2 feet (layer 3). After this destruction, no efforts were made to renovate it.

The last stage of this building is marked by the robbers' pits. These pits were dug to carry away the bricks from them. Gadhaiya coin, glazed ware, terracotta and stucco pieces etc. were recovered. They suggest that this activity took place somewhere after the tenth and before the 13th century A.D.

The walls were mostly ruined, where bricks were removed. In other parts, where the structure was not disturbed, about seventeen courses of bricks were visible. The robbers' pits were sealed by recent material, suggesting that the disturbance was considerably earlier.

**Trench IV (Akota).**

The early historic period II is represented by layers

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11, 10, 9, 8, 7 and 6 (Fig. 3.2). The pottery in this period is of the same type as was found in the trench one. Here a coin of Kṣatrapa period, and crude red-and-black ware, plain-red-wares, burnished-red-ware, fragments of chank and glass bangles, beads, etc. were also found, from this trench. The Kṣatrapa coin helps one to date this deposit to the early historic period II.

**Trial pit**

This trial pit was excavated on a stump, that was existing on the western side of the mound I. This pit was a narrow trench 18' x 3'.

The layers 7, 6, 5 and 4 from this pit, belong to the early historic period II. The antiquities from this trench were similar to those already described. But here, two seals with prancing horses, were obtained. These have strong Greco-Roman affinities.

A brick platform consisting of one course of bricks measuring 16" x 9" x 3" was found resting on layer 6.

**Mediaeval period I**

This period is represented in the excavations in the Baroda area and at Timbarva.

**Timbarva**

At Timbarva, the remains of this period were overlying those of the early historic I. It is represented by layers
1 and 2. From these layers the red-slipped ware with designs in black on white background, the black-burnished ware, plain red ware, and mediaeval red-and-black wares, were discovered. There was no trace of the glazed ware, and this fact suggests that this cultural material belongs to the mediaeval period I.

**Baroda (Medical College area)**

In 1952, a large trench 30' x 12' was excavated in the Medical College area.\(^1\) The total depth reached here was 24' (Fig. 3.6). Twenty layers were exposed. Out of them the layers 20, 19, 18, 17, 16 and 15 belong to the mediaeval period I. From them the red-slipped pottery with designs in black over white background, the black-burnished, the red burnished, and the mediaeval red-and-black ware, were obtained. No structure was discovered from these layers but stray bricks measuring 13" x 9" x 2\(\frac{1}{4}\)" were noted. From layer 15th three Gadhaiya coins of a thick fabric were discovered. Stylistically they may be dated to the 11th century A.D. The lower limit of this culture is supplied by the excavations at Akota. There this material rests with a time-gap on the deposit of the early centuries of Christian era, suggesting therefore that it belongs to a period of about 600 A.D. The excavations at Vadnagar and Rangamahal suggest that the mediaeval painted ware with designs in black over a background of white on red-slipped ware, goes back to the early historic period II. The discovery of a Kshatrapa coin, similar to one discovered at Akota trench IV, point out that this deposit may be of earlier period (about

500 A.D.). This deposit therefore can be dated to a period between 500 A.D. to 1000 A.D. and can be equated with the mediaeval period I.

**Mediaeval Period II**

This period is known from the excavations in the Baroda area.

**Baroda (Medical College)**

The second period is represented here by the layers, 14, 13, 12c, 12b, 12a, 11 and 10 (Fig. 3.6). Here the pottery and other material show no change from those found in earlier layers, but the new pottery type that occurs in this period is the Muslim glazed ware. The ware at this site is found for the first time in the layer 13, and then occurs steadily throughout the period of occupation.

The earliest structure in this trench belongs to this period. It was cut into layers 13 and 14 and is sealed by the layer 12c. Only a corner of a structure with eight courses of bricks was found. All around this structure, brick powder was seen, and it suggests that this was a major occupation layer.

The end of this period is marked by the appearance of a huge dump pit (Fig. 37) in which a large number of sculptures, which were the parts of some Hindu temple were thrown. This is probably the phase of destruction, after the invasion of Alapkhans, the Commander of Allauddin Khilji. Such a phase of
destruction was noted at Akota also.

The upper layers of this excavation belong to the Muslim and Maratha periods, hence they are not of interest in this work.

**Akota Trench I**

This is the last phase of occupation of this mound revealed in layers 4, 3, 2 and 1 (Fig. 3,1). It is characterised by the debris of destruction, probably of some temple. The broken stucco fragments of sculptures, fragments of architectural pieces glazed pottery, brickbats, etc. from it, suggest that this was the same phase of destruction as was seen at the end of this period, discovered in the Medical College trench. This period therefore can be identified as the mediaeval period II.

**Akota Trench IV.**

The mediaeval period II is here represented by the layers 4, 3, 2 and 1. It is marked by the red-slipped ware with designs in black over white background, black burnished ware, glazed pottery, etc.

**Trial Pit (Akota)**

In this pit the mediaeval period II, is represented by layer 3. The distinct break in the ceramic sequence suggests that the deposit of this layer, with square bricks 10" x 10" belongs to the mediaeval period II.
In this period a pit was sealed with square bricks 10" x 10". It has been alleged that this is the find-spot of the Jain bronzes accidentally recovered before the excavation.¹ Ash, bones, pottery and other contents of this pit, however, militate against this view, because of its nature suggesting that it was a dump pit. If the pit had a sealing of bricks, it was an accidental phenomena, because if it was done by those who buried the bronzes, they would not allow the ash and the bones to remain with them, for these would be a sacrilege, as bones, etc. would pollute the images.

Besides the above mentioned systematic excavations, in 1936, Hiranand Sastrī excavated in two spots at Kamrej. One of them was lying in the bed of the river Tapi and the other was on the top of the Kot mound. From the former he recovered some coins, which were washed out of the Kot mound.

The trench on the Kot mound revealed "a jar, some agricultural tools, figurines and remnants of a wall."²

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¹ Ibid., p.25.