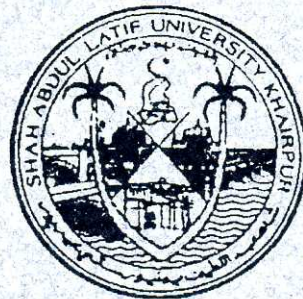


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A MESOLITHIC SITE NEAR THARI IN THE THAR DESERT (SINDH-PAKISTAN)

SUMMARY - *A Mesolithic site near Thari in the Thar Desert (Sindh-Pakistan).* The Authors describe the flint assemblage from a Late Mesolithic site recently discovered in the sand dunes which extend east of the town of Thari. The flint industry is characterized by small bladelet cores and microlithic instruments mainly obtained from bladelets, among which are five isosceles trapezes. Some comparisons with the industries so far recovered from the Mesolithic sites of the Indian Subcontinent conclude the article.

PREFACE

The site of LS1 was discovered during a preliminary survey carried out in March 1995 east of the town of Thari, in the Thar Desert; the site itself was later revisited in March 1996. It is located close to the top of a sand ridge which is part of the westernmost sand dune system of the Thar Desert; an area characterized by the presence of a large number of lake basins and old river-courses depressions which separate the sand dune formations. The exact location of the site is 27°04'50" Lat. N and 68°40'08" Long. E (fig. 1).

The flint assemblage was recovered from the surface of an oval-shaped spot, some 50 metres long (N-S) and 40 metres wide (E-W) (fig. 2). Apart from the Mesolithic artefacts the area also yielded very few, typical, heavily weathered Harappan potsherds which were collected, sparsely distributed, from the surface of the sand dune.

THE FLINT ASSEMBLAGE

It consists of 462 artefacts, including 199 complete, unretouched pieces which were measured to develop the diagrams of fig. 3, 1 core and 22 instruments. The flint employed can be distinguished in five varieties, the outcrops of which are to be found in the Rohri Hills region, namely: 1) dark greyish brown-dark brown (10YR 4/2-4/3) to light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) with visible nummulites, 2) variegated light brown-light yellowish brown (10YR 6/3-10YR 6/4), 3) uniform brown (10YR 5/3) to light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4), 4) rough-surfaced yellowish brown (10YR 5/4), 5) very dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/2) to dark brown (10YR 4/3).

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