

A Note on the Recent Excavations (2023) at the Hayatabad Site, Peshawar

Gul Rahim Khan* 

Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan.

The Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, just concluded the fourth season of excavations at the early historic period site at Hayatabad Phase-V in Peshawar. The field work lasted for two months, which began in the third week of January and concluded in the third week of March 2023. This field campaign was carried out as a continuation of our previous work conducted at the same site in 2017 (Khan *et al.* 2019), 2018 (Khan *et al.* 2020) and 2019 (Khan *et al.* 2021).

During field work, we opened ten trenches, each of 6x6 metres including baulks, and most of them were properly dug out to the lowest level. These trenches were laid out in continuation to the east of previous diggings and almost touching the eastern limits of the mound. About nine layers including a virgin soil in the deepest level were identified. The second layer composed of a thick mixed deposit was disturbed, which was identified as a filling deposit made over the original strata of the site. Perhaps this deposit came because of the recently constructed drain of the industrial waste deeply cut into the mound in 2007-08. Besides regular layers, a large pit filled with ashes, potsherds and animal bones was also unearthed. Along with this, one strip of a three feet thick deposit of sand and silt combination was also found in east-west orientation, which had cut down three walls in the row. It is difficult to say whether this deposit was caused by a flood in a limited area or water was intentionally stored here.

Three occupational levels of stone buildings have been identified, which obviously belong to the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Kushan periods. The construction of the walls shows that they were made on a grid pattern always intersecting at right angles. Most of the structures

were found superimposed, the late period walls were made on the foundation of the early period structures. These walls were made in three types of masonry i.e., diaper, semi-diaper, and rubble. The fine diaper masonry is usually known in the early period structures dated to the Indo-Greek period (second century BCE). The main occupational series of structures belong to the Indo-Scythian period, usually known from one to four courses of stone walls. Some walls seem fascinating due to the way of their construction as they were made of a mixture of huge stone blocks and normal to small blocks in the same wall. Due to this irregularity sometimes the number of courses (one to three) in the same wall varies from one place to another.

The most significant feature of this site is the workshop activities of blacksmiths known in the form of furnaces, large stone anvils, quenching pots, crucibles, stone sharpeners and grinding stones. Fortunately, four separate chambers bearing workshop indications were unearthed. They belonged to the Indo-Scythians and Kushan periods. One such workshop has a square furnace with a chimney in the centre against stone wall. The chimney was furnished with terracotta pipe as traces of broken pieces were lying there. The excavation only revealed the bases of quenching pots usually reported from upper strata. However, stone anvils and grinding stones are known in handsome quantities.

This year small finds were not found in abundance as we had in previous seasons of our field work. It is because the present location of trenches was lying almost on the outer edge of the mound. In this regard, large size stones in the walls were obviously used at the extreme edge of the site. The available small finds include copper coins, terracotta beads, iron objects, stone pestles

* ✉ graham2006@uop.edu.pk

and grinding stones. Apart from this, large number of potsherds are known from different levels of the mound. These fragmentary pieces represent variety of rims, pedestals, bases, handles, spouts, knobs and other parts of the pots.

In view of the previous stratigraphic results and new finds from the present excavations, the site can be dated to the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Kushan periods, obviously ranging from second century BCE to second century CE. Detailed report of the recent field investigations at the Hayatabad site (2023) is planned to appear in the next volume (i.e., 34/2023) of this journal.

Acknowledgements

The Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, would like to extend its debt of gratitude to Mr. Humphrey Sarfaraz Peters, Bishop of Peshawar, for his continuous support and cooperation and Prof. Sara Safdar for her kind help and keen interest in this excavation. We would like to express our thanks to the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) for its continuous support. The Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, is grateful to Dr. Abdul

Samad, Director, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for the license issued for further excavations at the same site. The Department of Archaeology would also like to extend sincerest thanks to the Vice Chancellor and administration of the University of Peshawar for granting financial and administrative support for the recent field activities.

References

- Khan, G.R., Durrani, M.A. and Samad, A.
2019. Preliminary Report of Archaeological Excavations at Hayatabad, Peshawar: Field Season 2017. *Ancient Pakistan XXX*: 111-197.
- Khan, G.R., Shah, I. and Samad, A.
2020. Preliminary Report of Archaeological Excavations at Hayatabad, Peshawar: Field Season 2018. *Ancient Pakistan XXXI*: 45-188.
- Khan, G.R., Shah, I. and Samad, A.
2021. Preliminary Report of Archaeological Excavations at Hayatabad, Peshawar: Field Season 2019. *Ancient Pakistan XXXII*: 103-268.



Figure 1. A general view of the site before the beginning of excavations



Figure 2a. A storage pot *in situ*



Figure 2b. A terracotta bowl with pot bases *in situ*



Figure 3. Large number of animal bones exposed in pit 3a



Figure 4. A heap of undiagnostic potsherds unearthened from the site



Figure 5. Dumping area with a rim fragment of a storage pot



Figure 6. The undergraduate students of Archaeology participating in the excavations



Figure 7. A view of superimposed stone structures of different phases shown in profile



Figure 8. Excavations in progress at deep levels



Figure 9. Stone structures with stone-pave floor levels exposed in six trenches



Figure 10. An aerial view of the main excavated area showing structures and features



Figure 11. Winding up the excavation, trenches refilled after digging