



HAL
open science

EXCAVATIONS AT MEHRGARH (1974-1985 and 1997-2000)

Aurore Didier, David Sarmiento Castillo

► **To cite this version:**

Aurore Didier, David Sarmiento Castillo. EXCAVATIONS AT MEHRGARH (1974-1985 and 1997-2000). International Seminar on "French Contributions to Pakistan Studies", Feb 2014, Islamabad; Karachi; Banbhore, Pakistan. , 2014. halshs-02986833

HAL Id: halshs-02986833

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-02986833v1>

Submitted on 3 Nov 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

MAI Mission, direction: Jean-François Jarrige

Cooperation: Department of Archaeology and Museums of Pakistan

MEHRGARH NEOLITHIC (8th-6th Millennium BC)

The site of Mehrgarh, located in the north-western part of the Kachi-Bolan region (Balochistan), is a vast archaeological area of about 300 ha covered with remains left by a continuous occupation from the 8th to the 3rd millennium BC. The excavation of the Neolithic levels (period I-II, ca. 8th - 6th millennium BC) has provided the so far earliest evidence of farming economy in South Asia involving (among the domesticated species) goats, sheep, cattle, barley and wheat. For period I, 7 meters of aceramic deposits (1700 m²) were unearthed and 77 multi-roomed buildings built in mudbrick were exposed. Alternating with nine building levels, nine levels of graveyards dug in the debris of the abandoned houses were documented (318 graves). The majority of the burials provided a rich funerary material assemblage which included shell headbands, necklaces in shell, in unfired and fired steatite, clay figurines, stone objects, lithics and the first evidences of the use of copper and cotton in South Asia. The study of several human skeletons also provided the earliest evidence of dentistry in the archaeological records. From around 6000 BC (period II), pottery occurred in the Neolithic levels at Mehrgarh and the architectural structures now include large compartmented storehouses used as granaries.



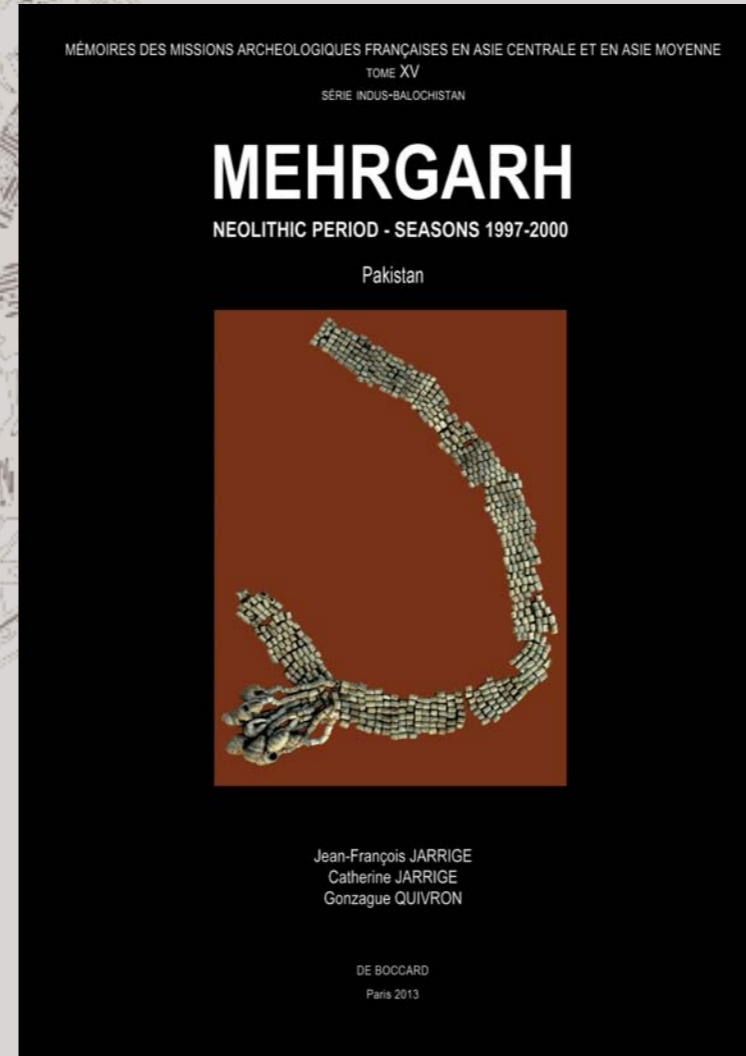
The site of Mehrgarh cut by the Bolan River

Dr. Jean-François Jarrige.

Member of the *Institute de France*. General Curator of Patrimoine. He was director of the Musée Guimet from 1986 to 2008. Research Supervisor at CNRS. Member of the *Mission Archéologique de l'Indus* (MAI) in Pakistan under Jean-Marie Casal's supervision (excavations at Nindowari and Pirak from 1964 to 1975). Then, from 1975, MAI director and excavation director at Mehrgarh and Nausharo. He has recently published, with Catherine Jarrige and Gonzague Quivron, the site of Nindowari (2011) and the site of Mehrgarh (Neolithic Period) (2013). They are now preparing the publication of the site of Nausharo. Jean-François Jarrige was granted in 1987 with the Sitara-e Pakistan.



Architecture and grave from Period I (8000-6500 BC)



Granaries of period IIA (6500-5500 BC).



Mother-of-pearl figurine and funerary goods from period I



MEHRGARH CHALCOLITHIC (5000-2600 BC) AND MEHRGARH VIII (2100-1900 BC)

Period III at Mehrgarh (5th millennium-beginning of the 4th millennium BC) is characterized by the development of various specialized craft techniques, particularly in the pottery, finely manufactured with coil-building and wheel-throwing techniques, and decorated with geometric and (later) naturalistic motifs. During this period, the first metal objects using the lost-wax casting technique and copper alloy with lead were produced while the funerary goods include sometimes necklaces with glazed steatite beads. Periods IV-V (3600-3100 BC) are distinguishable by a profusion of new painted ceramic styles. Periods VI and VII (3100-2600 BC) see the development of architectural complexes, of new ceramic techniques such as the painted grey ware and of very fine and elaborated terracotta human figurines linked to a long tradition starting in the Neolithic. After a gap, the site is reoccupied as a cemetery at the end of the 3rd millennium BC (Mehrgarh VIII, ca. 2100-1900 BC). Evidences of material stylistically linked with the Oxus Civilization in Central Asia were discovered in the Mehrgarh VIII burials.



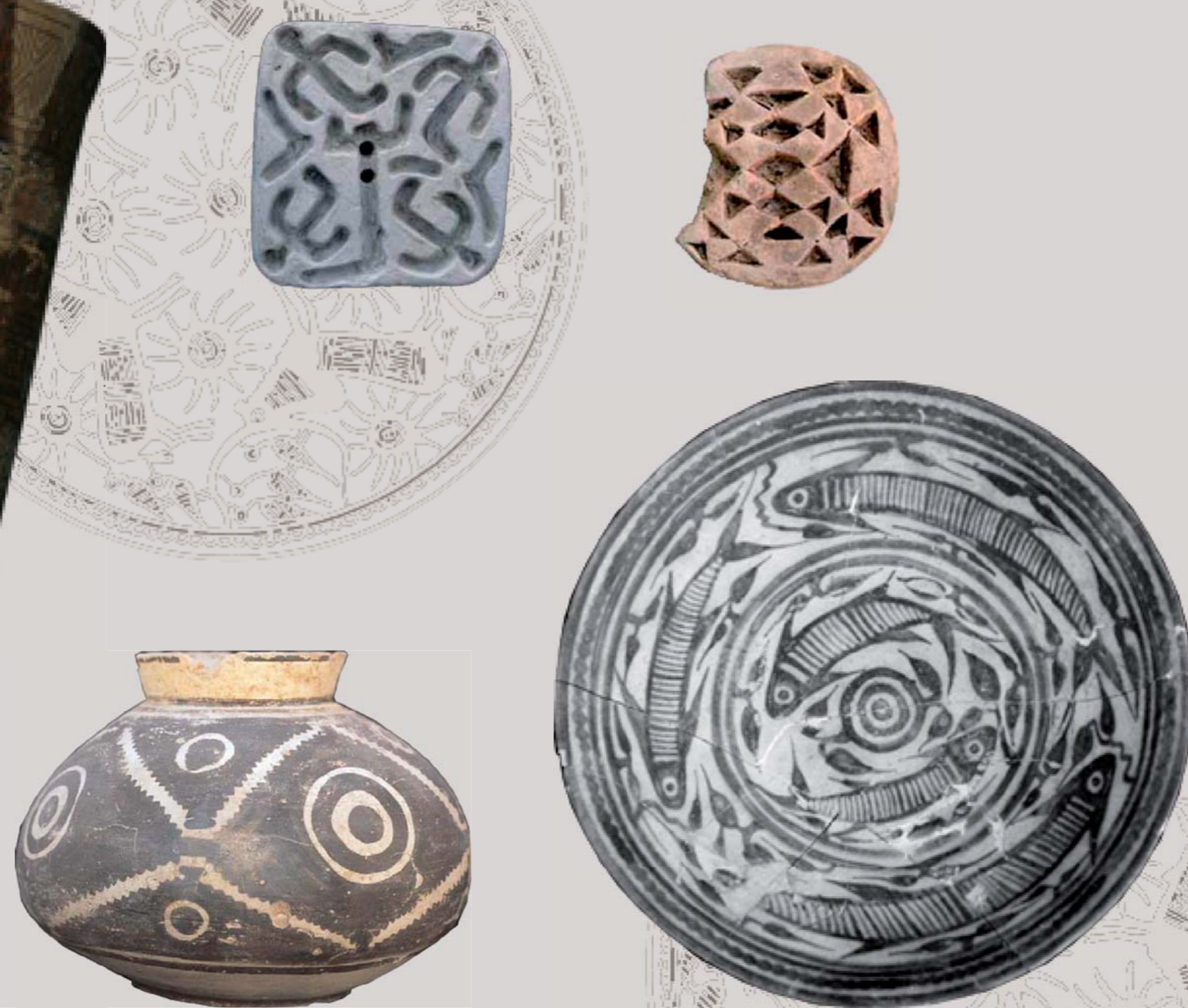
Period VII building with numerous pottery *in situ*.



Evolution of the terracotta figurines at Mehrgarh from Period I (8th-7th millennium BC) to Period VII (2900-2600 BC)



Pottery and seals from periods IV-VII (3600-2600 BC).



A grave from the Mehrgarh VIII cemetery (2100-1900 BC) with material similar to the Oxus Civilization kind.