

## **A Brief Survey of the Archaeological Sites of District Lasbela, Balochistan: A Descriptive Approach**

History

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### **Abstract**

*The research study in hand is essentially a brief survey of the archaeological and historical sites of district Lasbela, Balochistan. A team from Balochistan Study Centre University of Balochistan, Quetta visited the archaeological sites of the Lasbela District and recorded the initial archaeological and historical data. The aims and objectives of this study and field work were to explore the archaeological sites of the said district and to define the present condition of these historical places. The area of Lasbela bears a rich and potential background in terms of history and archaeology. From the inception of history till up-to-date, this area is active in every field of life. Besides history, the pre and proto-history is also quite rich in this area, where dozens of significant sites are still far from survey and exploration. Some sites have come under the excavations of archaeologists while a large number of these sites are still waiting to be explored by archaeologists. Many of the explored sites are still mysteries like, Shehr-e-Roghaan, tombs of Hinidan, holy place of Hinglaj and many more. The following study will cover the historical, ethnological, archaeological and anthropological significance of Lasbela. The nature of the study is analytical and descriptive beside the field survey; both resources primary and secondary were consulted in this regard.*

**Key words:** Lasbela, Balochistan, Archaeological sites, Hinglaj, Lahut lamakan, Mahi peer, Mud Volcano, Sheereen Farhad

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## **Introduction**

Lasbela is a district of Balochistan situated in the south of the Province. Lasbela was notified as a distinct district on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1954 (P&D Balochistan 1997: 1). It is bound on the north by the Khuzdar District, on the east by the Kirthar Range which divides it from Sindh, on the south by the Arabian Sea and on the west by the Hala offshoot of the Pub Range. About the name and configuration the Balochistan District Gazetteer Lasbela (1997, 406) and A.W. Hughes (2002, 123-24) gives the following statement that the State derives its name from the word Las which signifies a plain, the greater part of the country being a perfectly flat plain. The whole of the eastern part of the State comprising the Levy tracts and the Konraj Niabat is mountainous; the centre comprising the greater portion of the state is triangular level plain with its base on the sea. There is a tradition amongst the natives that at a remote period the valley was an inlet of the sea and from its extreme flatness, alluvial formation and small elevation above the level of the ocean, this was in all probability the case. Along the sea ward base of the Las Plain, a confused mass of undulating hillocks, eighty or a hundred feet high, covered to some depth with loose sand and thinly overrun with creeping plants, extended about 8 miles in land, and in the small hollows and plains between them, which are so low as to become saturated at high tide by the sea, the land produces nothing but saline shrubs or coarse seeds. The western division consists of a narrow strip of coast stretching past Ormara to Khor Kalamat. Near the coast there is scarcely a tree or a bush to be seen and the country has the most desolate aspect.

According to the P&D department Balochistan (1997: 7) the total area of the District Lasbela is approximately 12,574 sq. km. The prime subsistence patterns are agriculture, fisheries, live-stock, Trade and Industries, which are the major sectors of economic activity followed by mining transport and informal sectors. The major mineral resources are Brimstone, Shale, Marble, Serpentine, Basalt, Barite, Magnesium, Quartzite, Red Ocher, Building Stone and lime stone.

### **The Coast of Bela**

The District along the coast owing to scanty rainfall, the salt nature of the spoil and physical conformation is mostly an unpopulated wasteland, presenting a wilderness of hills and cliffs with swampy or arid clay plains. Water is all over the place bad and hard to get, and supplies are accessible at the villages only in small quantities (Balochistan District Gazetteer Labela, 1997: 10).

## Hills, Rivers

The principle hill ranges are the western slopes of the Kirther Mountains as far north as *Lak Phusi*. The main siege of the Pab Range with part of the Khude or Khudo and the whole of the more offshoot of the Pub Range, and on the west the lower slopes of the Mekran Coast Range including the Taloi and the Batt (Balochistan District Gazetteer Labela, 1997: 408).

According to District Gazetteer (1997, 410) the largest rivers of Lasbela are Hub and Porali while a minor stream includes the Kharari and the Winder. The Hingol and the Phor which rise in the Jhalawan Hills only flow to a short distance in Lasbela. It is also called *Gidar Dhor* in Jhalawan.

The Lasbela territory has a rich historical background. From early epoch until up to date, this area has played a significant role in the fields of politics, military and trade. The first historical book of Herodotus has discussed the inhabitants of this area with the name of *Utians*. (Herodotus, 134) This old map also describes this area with Akin name.

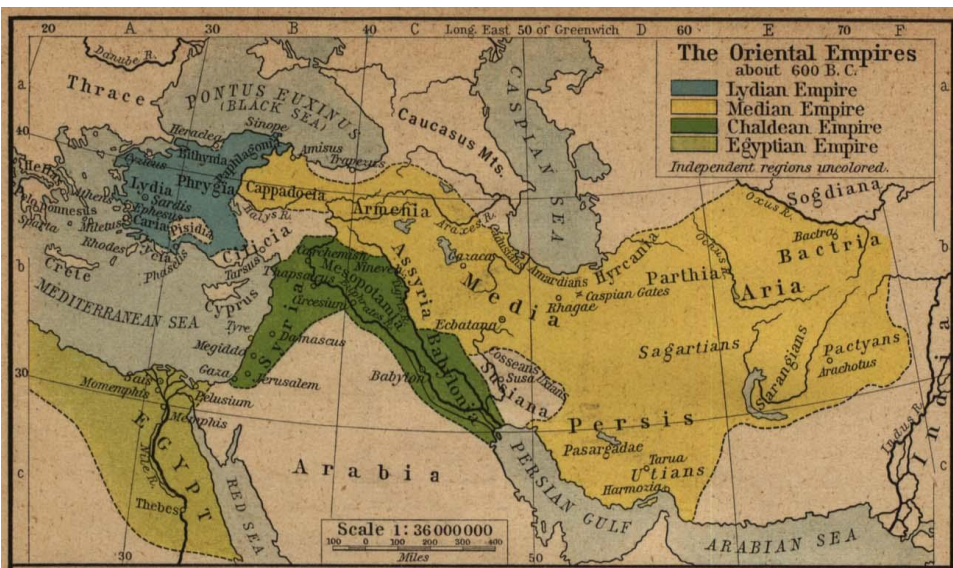


Fig. 1- The map of Oriental Empires with *Utians* in Yellow color. (Courtesy google)

The sea was called the *Erythrean* Sea because of the inhabitants who were also called *Oretai* by the Greek historians (McCrindle 1984: 22-27).



Fig. 2- Erythraean Sea can be seen in this map (Courtesy google)

During all historical periods, from Arian invasion to the dawn of Islam and hitherto, there may not be lacuna in the history of this area. It is just because this area has been persistently under the rules of Achaemenid, Greek, Arab and till Khanate of Kalat, so this area played a key role in the political history of that time. At present, this area is hub of political, social and economic activities in the country. It is connected with Karachi, which is the largest and biggest city of Pakistan. This connection increases the importance of the area of Lasbela in every field. The archaeological and historical sites of the area are being described in the following pages with their present condition.

### **Pre-historic Sites of Lasbela**

Lasbela is rich in archaeological remains lying on the ancient route between the East and the West and was one of the major ancient trade and travel routes of Central Asia which ends at Sonmiani. The country has preserved its ancient ruins in a series of interesting historic monuments of the peoples who had happened to cross its borders. Among the more important vestiges are the shrines of Hinglaj, Shah Bilawal and Lahut-i-Lamakan, the cave dwellings at Gondrani, the tombs at Hindian and the tomb of Muhammad Bin Haroon, the shrine of Sassi and Punnon, Kumb Shrine connected with legend of Shirin and Farhad and other more places are also standing even today. These all sites are scattered throughout the area of district Lasbela.

### **Shehr-e-Roghan**

This pre-historic place was discovered and explored by British Indian Navy Commander T.G Carless in 1838. He gives the following statement about these ruins in Balochistan District Gazetteer, Lasbela (1997, 441-43) Hitu Ram (2009, 348) also describes this statement that About 9 miles to the northward of Bela a range of low hills sweeps in a semi-circle from one side of the valley to the other and forms its head. The Purali River issues from a deep ravine on the western side, and is about 200 yards border. It is be ended on one side by steep chiefs, 40 or 50 feet high, on the summit of which there is an ancient burying ground, and the water seems bubbling along it in two or three small rivulets heaps of stones and patches of tamarisk jungle. Having cross the stream we pursued our way up its bed amongst the bushes until we gained the narrow ravine through which it flows, and then, turning into one of lateral branches entered Shahr-e-Roghan. The scene is singular. On either side of the wild, broken ravine, the rocks rise perpendicularly to the height of four or five hundred feet, and are excavated as for as can be seen, in some places, where there is footing to ascend, up to the summit. These excavations are most numerous along the lower part of the hill and from district houses, most of which are uninjured by time. They consist in general of rooms 15 feet square, forming a kind of open verandah, with an interior chamber of the some dimension, to which you gain admittance by a door. There are niches lamps in many, and a place built up and covered in apparently included to hold green. Most of them had once been plastered with clay, and in a few, when the form of the rock allowed of its being done; the interior apartment is lighted by small windows. The houses at the Summit of the cliffs are now inaccessible, from the narrow precipitous paths by which they were approached having been worn away, and those at the base appear to have been occupied by the poorer class of inhabitants, for many of them are nearly irregular shaped holes with a rudely constructed door. The rock in which those excavations have been made is what I believes is called by geologists conglomerate, being composed of a mass of rounded stones of almost every variety of rock, imbedded in hard clay. It contains a large quantity of salt, which is seen in a thin film on the walls of all the chambers, and at two are three spots in the upper Part of the ravine, where water drops from the overhanging crags.

Among the local inhabitants a story is very famous pertaining to this cave city. T.G Carless explains this mythical story in the following words:

*“It would be singular if such a place as Shahr-e-Roghan existed, amongst a people as superstitious as the Noomrees without a legend of some kind being attached to it and they accordingly relate the following story. In the*

*region (King) Solomon, the excavated city was governed by a king celebrated all over the east for his wisdom and the great beauty of his only daughter, Badi-ul-Jamal. She was beloved by seven young men, who from the great friendship existing among them, were called, by way of distinction, the seven friends; but they perished one after the other in defending the object of their adoration from the designs of half a dozen demons, who, attracted by her surpassing beauty, made repeated attempts to carry her off. At this interesting period of her history, Saif-ul-Malook, son of the King of Egypt, arrived at Shahr-e-Roghan who, being handsomest man of his time, and as brave as he was handsome, had been dispatched by his father on his travels, in the hope that by the way he might conquer a few kingdoms for himself. The princess rewarded him for his gallantry with the hand of his daughter, and the happy couple lived to reign for many years in peace and security, over the excavated city. Such was the tale related to me by attendants which forms the ground-work of a story written in the Persian Language, entitled the "Adventure of Saif-ul-Malook with the fairy Badi-ul-Jamal" (Balochistan District Gazetteer, Lasbela 1997, 443).*

At the end G. T. Carless writes,

*"A short distance above the entrance of the city, the broken precipitous ravine in which it is situated decreases in width to ten or twelve yards, and forms a deep natural channel in the rock. For short half a mile the cliffs are excavated on both sides to a considerable height, and taking the remains of houses into account, I think there cannot be less altogether a row of than 1500. In one place in very good preservation, was pointed out by the guides as the residence of the Seven friends, and further on we came to the grandest of all, the place of Badi-ul-Jamal. At this part, the hill by the abrupt turning of the ravine, just out in a narrow point, and towards the extremity, forms the natural wall of rock, about 300 feet high, and 20 feet thick. Half way, it had been cut through, and a chamber constructed, about 20 feet square, with the two opposite sides open. It is entered through a passage leading through a mass of rock, partly over laughing the ravine, and on the other side of the apartment to doors gives admittance to two spacious rooms, and, whole had once been plastered over and, from its situation, must have formed a safe and commodious retreated. At the summit of the hill near it there is another building, which my attendant said was the mosque where the princess was rescued by Saif-ul-Malook, when the demons attempted to carry her off"* (Balochistan District Gazetteer, Lasbela 1997: 443).

Ased Ahmed Abbasi, author of the book, 'Pakistan Kay Kalay Jadoogar' also visited this site and collected some very astonishing information regarding these caves. According to Abbasi (2013) these caves are still being used for magic and many magicians of Pakistan are involved in this dangerous business. He also describes a true story about some German researchers, which

were busy searching in this area but at one night they amazingly disappeared from the site and still they are missing without any trace left behind.

Further, the principle author of this article describes the detail of this unique site with its present state (Baloch 2012). Pakistan Television Bolan Channel, Quetta Centre also launched on-air a documentary program about this site in December-January, 2007-08.

Shahr-Roghan is really a mysterious place and many amazing and unbelievable stories are concerned with this area. What are the facts of this site? This is a question which needs to be answered. And this is a fact that this place cannot be disclosed only by the archaeologists or anthropologists, but for further investigation some spiritual and religious scholars also be needed.



Fig. 3- Anonymous ancient rock cut caves of Mahi Peer at Lasbela.

### **Hinglaj Devi (Nani Mandher)**

Hinglaj is the top known place of Hindu pilgrimage in Balochistan, situated on the bank of the Hingol River. This is a shrine which is dedicated to a saint woman and a goddess known as Nani Pir by Muslims and Parbati Shakuntla or Kali Devi, by Hindus, lies in a verdant basin with mountains on either sides rising perpendicularly to nearly 1,000 feet in height. It consists of a low castellated mud edifice in a natural cavity. A flight of steps leads to a deeper semi-circular cliff through which pilgrims' creeps on all fours.

Sir Thomas Holdich words are written in district Gazetteer, Lasbela (1997, 444) that amongst the gigantic cliff of Malan which overlooks the deep-set valley of the Hingol River are narrow little gorges and ravines. Each of them is carrying its tribute of fresh water to the blue depths of the main stream. This bounds and converts freshness of the green vegetation which can be found amongst the hills of lesser altitude. The scenery is impressive and grand, as is

usually the case where the rivers of the frontier burst through the barriers of frontier mountains; and the rare splendor of this exclusion to the infertility of Mekran landscape has been recognized through past ages of a people who is ever ready to devote all things beautiful in nature to the direct service of the gods. Near Hinglaj, Hidden away in one of these green byways of the mountains is a shrine (the shrine of Bibi Nani or Nani Pir) which is celebrated from the Euphrates to the Ganges. Here Hindus and Mohammedan (Muslims) pilgrims alike resort, each claiming the divine protection of the presiding goddess or of the departed saint, according to the tenets of their faith; not recognizing that the object of their veneration is probably the same goddess who was known to the Chaldeans under the same old word name (Nana) a thousand years before the Abraham. Nothing testifies so strongly to the unchangeable nature of the geographical link formed by Mekran between East and west than does this remarkable Ziarat hidden away in the deep folds of the Malan Mountains. The Shrine of Hinglaj is very sacred and holy place for Hindus and Muslims . It is about 150 kms from Uthal, and 17 kms from main road (Coastal Highway). Every year from 12 April to 15 April the religious ceremonies are held by a large number of pilgrims who come here for their annual religious prayers.



Fig. 4- the Hinglaj Devi.

### **Tombs of Hinidan**

These tombs are situated near the confluence of the Hinidan creek and the Hab River close to the Hinidan Levy post at a distance of about 50 miles from Karachi. The attention of the Archaeological survey was first drawn to these tombs by Major M. A. Tighes, Political Agent of Southern Balochistan



in 1901, upon which Dr. J. Ph. Vogel visited them and published an interesting account in a paper which appeared in the annual description of the Director General of Archaeology in India for 1902-1903. The graveyard in which these tombs occur contains an extensive number of ordinary Muhammadan graves. These are scattered among 71 highly decorated sepulchers of unidentified origin which afford evidence of a system of super Terrance burial. Their direction is universally from south to north. The material used for the construction of these graves is yellowish sandstone. They may be alienated into two subdivisions; among these twenty seven are small ones consisting of one sarcophagus, and forty-four are large ones having two, and in one instance even three, sarcophagi place one upon the other. The tombs are either single or built in rows numbering from two to eight, sometimes raised on a common plinth. The lower sarcophagus is generally constructed of eight vertical slabs, three on each long and one on each short side. These are enclosed by three slabs on which the second sarcophagus is raised, similar to the lower one, but slightly smaller in its dimensions. On the upper sarcophagus four or five layers of slabs are laid horizontally, gradually diminishing in size so as to give the whole structure the general appearance of a slender pyramid. The topmost slab is set vertically, its northern end carved in the form of cylinder, which projects above it and is terminated in a knob. The slabs are carved and the whole structure bears peculiar designs and ornamentations, a detailed and illustrated description of which will be found in Vogel's paper. The form of over ground burial which most of the tombs exhibit is locally known as Shami i.e., Syrians distinguished from Rumi of all Turkish, which latter indicates underground burial. Besides the Hab Nadi niabat, similar tombs are said to be found in Son Miani, Shah Liari, Welpat and Levy Tract (Balochistan District Gazetteer, Lasbela 1997, 444).

### **Sassi and Punnun**

District Lasbela is also connected with the Baloch legend which extends throughout Balochistan and the Indus valley about the two lovers Sassi and Punnun. The story is told in the Tuhfat-ul-Kiram and has been repeatedly commemorated in Persian, Balochi, Sindhi and Punjabi verses. In short it is one of the most common love stories of the country. It is not necessary here to recapitulate the whole story. It may merely be mentioned in Balochistan District Gazetteer, Lasbela (1997, 444-45) that Sassi was born in a house of a Barhaman at Bahmpur/Bhambura in lower Sindh. After revelation, consequently his father perceived that she would become a Muslim and abandoned her like Mosses, on the river and picked up by a washer man. The foundling grew into a beautiful girl Punnun from Kech Mekran fell violently in love with her, but his father was against the match and sent men to drug him

and carry him off. Sassi started in haste to overtake him, and near Paboni Naka in Lasbela she was overcome with thirst and fell exhausted. It was then that the spring known to this day as Sassi-warro-chodo (Sassi's spring) broke forth to quench her thirst.

### **Lahut-e-Lamakan**

Lahut-e-Lamakan is a very famous Archaeological and mythical site in Lasbela, Balochistan, which is frequented by devotees from India in all seasons. There is a shrine called Lahut-e-Lamakan situated in the east of the Bela. The shrine can be reached after a dark passage which is a huge boulder, and a rope is suspended along the length of the passage by which the devotees trace their way. Just close to the shrine a structure resembles a manger and some upright stones look like pegs which according to the local tradition, were used by Hazrat Ali (RA), the fourth pious caliph of Islam. On the north of the shrine a small mosque stands and to its west a spring of water gushes out which is stored in a pool.

### **Shah Bilawal**

Shah Bilawal is another very important shrine of the area of Lasbela. It is situated near a village with the same name west of the Vira Hab stream. The shrine stands among the Pub hills in a narrow valley watered by a fine perennial spring. The locality is fertile and well wooded, the principal trees being tamarind, mango and jaman or black-plum. There is a mosque close to the shrine with an attached cemetery. Shah Bilawal was a Syed Saint from the dynasty of Sindh dates back to c. 900 A. H. He settled at Lahut whence he moved on to the present site of the shrine which was formerly occupied by a garden belonging to a Hindu, named Gokal. A dome of fired bricks plastered with lime, stands on the squinches of the tomb. The shrine is held in veneration both by Hindus and Mohammadans, but the prime guardians of the shrine are Mohammadans. At this place Hindus perform the practice of the ceremony of the first shaving of children before investing them with the sacred thread (Aqeel 2002: 18-26; Aqeel 1997: 97-114).

### **Shireen and Farhad**

This is a well-known shrine situated on the main route of Bela and Awaran. This (tomb) locally called Shireen Kumb. According to some regional verses, this place is possessed by the popular characters of a famous love story termed as Shireen Farhad. Here one can clearly experience the stream, which was prepared by Farhad. It is very amazing that the tomb of Shireen is available here, but everyone knows that these characters and story are from Persia. This place, shrine or tomb needs more authentic research work for exploring the real

facts which are disguised yet. (Hitu Ram 348; Hassan 1984: 271).

### **Graves of Agor Post Hingol Bridge**

Agor is a security post point situated on the coastal highway near the bank of Hingol River. Here both the sides of the main coastal highway and near the bank of Hingol River graves of the Muslim Period are found in abundance. Just close to the bank of the river these can be observed in a large number from the peak of a rock. Some of these graves are decorated with the Arabic and Islamic inscriptions. This is still not clear, either these graves belong to Mohammad bin Qasim's army or maybe the real story is not yet known.

Moreover, these graves are being encroached by the natural consequences and the flood water of the Hingol river which is the largest river of Balochistan. During the rains of monsoon many hazardous floods flow in this river. The flood water destroys everything which comes against these tides. This is an important and historical site and needs immediate care and preservation on priority basis before it will perish from the land of Lasbela.

### **The Tomb of Mohammad Bin Haroon Bin Zaraa**

Mohammad bin Haroon was an Arab general during Umayyad period (661-750 AD). He was appointed by Hajjaj bin Yousaf as the governor of Makran during the reign of Abdul Malik bin Marwan and then Waleed bin Abdul Malik. In 705 A.D, Abdul Malik bin Marwan became caliph and was sent to Iraq by Hajjaj bin Yousaf as the Governor. Hajjaj was a wise, clever, brave and cruel man, who played a vital role for the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty. Prior to Muhamd bin Haroon he selected a person named Saeed bin Aslam Al-Kallabi, who was killed in Makran by a prominent Arab chief Suffahri bin Laam. Saeed Bin Aslam Al-Kallabi was a cruel man like his master Hajjaj; he added new tariffs to be paid by the people of Mekran and financially destroyed the position of local inhabitants of the area. In this situation the political conditions were disturbed and people started protesting against him. Saeed Bin Aslam Al-Kallabi was murdered in the hands of another Arab tribal chief Haris Al-Allaffi near Gandawah. Haris Al-Allaffi and his family were residing in Balochistan long time ago and, they were the allies of Barhaman ruler of Sindh. After the demise of Saeed bin Aslam al-Kallabi, Hajjaj sent Majaah bin Sammah, but he soon died surprisingly after his appointment. Later on, Mohammad bin Haroon was appointed as the governor and controlled the situation successfully. When Arab troops started attacking the dynasty of Raja Dahir who was the ruler of Sindh, so then Mohammad bin Haroon and his troops participated in every military operation against Sindh. When Hajjaj bin Yousaf decided to carry out military actions against Sindh, so

after some small adventures, he appointed his nephew and son in law, Mohammad bin Qasim as the supreme commander. During 711-12 A.D, he reached Mekran from where Mohammad bin Haroon joined him with his troops (Al-blazari; Maudoodi 2010: 582).

After the battle of Lasbela against the Sindhi troops, Mohammad bin Haroon died after a little sickness, and was buried in Lasbela. His tomb is still present with a rough condition and looks in need of urgent preservation and safeguarding.



Fig. 5- The tomb of Muhammad Bin Haroon (courtesy google).

### **The Tomb of Sir Robert Groves Sandeman (1835-1892)**

Sir Robert Sandeman was the Agent of Governor General of India for Balochistan from 1876 to 1892. He was one of the biggest diplomats of his time. He conquered the whole region of Balochistan without shedding a drop of blood of his troops. He was born on 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1835 in Perth, Scotland. After the completion of his education he joined the British Army and participated in the battle of Burma. He was injured two times in these battles then left the military and joined civilian departments and appointed as a Deputy Commissioner of Eastern Balochistan (Dera Ghazi Khan and Salemanian mountains). He detained the Mastung Darbar and signed the Treaty of Mastung 1876 in which the Khan of Kalat Meer Khudaidad Khan and his anti-tribal chiefs participated and Robert Sandeman was the Judge. After this treaty, the British authorities conquered Balochistan and Robert Sandeman was appointed as Agent to the Governor General of Balochistan by the British Government of India. He died in 1892 during an official tour of Lasbela and was entombed there.



Fig. 6- Mausoleum of Sir Robert Sandeman.

### **Adam Bhuthi.**

Adam Bhuthi is the earliest site discovered in southern Balochistan. It was occupied around the mid-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and abandoned around 3000 BC, well before the height of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. It is a small (0.14 hectares), but high mound (7.5 meters). The section revealed several phases of super-imposed, well-built stone houses terraced along the slope of the mound. Pottery is not very abundant. The vessels are partly handmade, but the slow wheel was also used. The shapes and the shiny red to violet slips resemble Killi Gul Mohammad (Quetta) pottery from northern Balochistan, but in general, the assemblage is a distinctive local production. The surface of the site is covered with several blades and flakes indicating an extensive silex industry. ([www.Harappa. Com/Baloch/e5.htm](http://www.Harappa.Com/Baloch/e5.htm). Accessed on 10.5.2015.).

### **Niai Buthi**

Niai Buthi is the most impressive early 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC site in the plain of Lasbela. It is 13 hectares large and 13 meters high. Two trenches were opened in 1999. Virgin soil was not reached, but the levels exposed at plain level correspond to the last phase of occupation at Adam Bhuthi. In addition to purplish slipped unpainted pottery. Toghau B and Kechi Beg (Quetta) pottery was found. Two trenches were opened in 1999. During the early 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC the site reached its maximum extension well-built stone and mud brick architecture was exposed in the sections and on the surface. In the east, several stone-lined hearths and dump pits containing animal bones and a large number of discarded and broken pots were excavated. A part from the typical buff

“Naal” pottery with black paint, fine orange and coarser household wares, polychrome vessels, partly still complete, were unearthed. A single Faiz Mohammad Grey ware sherd and a Chlorite fragment with an imbricate design are important finds since they provided cultural links to the north and the west. The pottery changes through the levels. Polychrome sherds are outlasted by monochrome Naal wares and in the upper larger of trench II painted bowls with hammer-head rims and reddish-brownish slips foreshadow the later Kulli (Kolwah / Awaran) pottery. A typical motif is the single-bracket design which becomes a hallmark of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC occupation. ([www.Harappa.Com/Baloch/e5.htm](http://www.Harappa.Com/Baloch/e5.htm). Accessed on 10.5.2015.).

### **Balakot**

Balakot is located in the south-eastern Lasbela plain. According to Muhammad Saeed Dehwar (1990. Pp 118-19) it was excavated by George F. Dales on behalf of the University of California Berkley in 1973 to 1976. It is the only site excavated according to scientific methods. Although it is a small size of mound (4.5 Hectors), the site is thus of decisive importance due to its long early Harappan cultural series which is bounded by the Mor and Pub Ranges. The site overlooks the valley from the terrace hill above the Kharari River, near the water shed of the Winder River. It was founded on the alluviums, as early as 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. The site was discovered across the Kharari. Bakkar Buthi comprises of a fortified southern part and a couple of houses and working spaces which are noticeably linked to chart production to the north. Two trenches were dug in 1998 and exposed some buildings phases constructed above a fine grand alluvial sediment deposit. While the mud bricks and stone walls of the earlier phases were well-built, the standards decline in the highest level where pottery and broken stones were also used for buildings. The site is remarkable for its lay-out and the principally harrappan quality of the pottery. Much of the pottery is identical to pottery from urban center such as Mohanjodero and Harapan, nevertheless its of local production. Kulli rudiments are more prominent than at Balakot, but, altogether, the grouping is clearly dissimilar from that found on “classical Kuli sites. A date between c. 2400 and 2000 BC is supported by the radiocarbon samples. About 200 meters to the south, in an old and now dry stroll of the Kharari River in remarkable dam blocked the water of river just before its entrance to the Kanrach valley. The vast dam which is the easternmost in a series of three dams, betrays a well superior point of hydraulic engineering.

### **Bakkar Buthi**

Bakkar buthi is a small Harappan site located in the Kanrach valley, an inaccessible area now dated to between 3000 and 2600 BC. It is the

southernmost find spot of Quetta and Naal pottery, but has also many affinities to Amri in lower Sindh. Although the transition to the Harappan period 2<sup>nd</sup> is strategic graphically not very clear, there appears to be a gap despite some pottery forms which continue into the later third millennium B.C, the classical Harappan pottery appears suddenly and fully fledged at the site of Kulli elements are also present, but not as pronounced as at Nindowari or the many Kulli sites found in the Kunrach, Hub and Saruna valleys (www. Harappa. Com/Baloch/e5.htm Accessed on 10.5.2015.)

### **Murda Sang**

Murda sang is the largest protohistoric site in the Kanrach valley. It was discovered in 1997 and trial trenched in 1998. The nucleus of the settlement consists of houses grouped along lanes and streets. This central portion is about 6 meters large but, scattered occupation and a kiln area cover altogether 35 hectares. The eastern edge is eroded by the Kanrach River. Two dams were found to the north of the site and researchers assume those fields were located there. The site and the whole valley are overlooked by a fortification wall built on top of a terrace hill at the southern edge of the site. The surroundings revealed two main periods of occupation, the lower with three very compact building phases, and the upper one with two. The ground was terraced with grand and pottery before construction. Houses have a stone foundation, but mud bricks were also used, the roof was covered with mud-smearred reed. The pottery from the earlier occupation is very similar to that from the earlier levels of Balakot I. An AMS date through charcoal sample suggests a date to the very early 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. But in 2700/2600 the site was abandoned. The upper most, badly preserved occupation dates to the later Kulli period. Very small parts of the site were reused during the last Islamic period or British period. A very large platform-house site of the historic period was built over scattered houses and possibly fields north of the main settlement. A surrounding revealed a sequence of finely banded sand and mud layers. This evidence and the accumulation of humans above the old gravel surface indicate frequent flooding. Most probably, the river and valleys which have deeply cut their bed into the rock flew at a very different land 5000 years ago. A substantial change in the topography and drainage pattern since 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC appears likely. (www. Harappa. Com/Baloch/e5.htm Accessed on 10.5.2015.)

### **Mud Volcanoes**

This mud volcano is a very amazing mystery of God in Lasbela in south of Liari village and coastal highway. These mud volcanoes which are called Chandara Kops or Chandra Gups in Balochi, are famous by the name of Bathan or Buttam. The Chandara Gups are a feature of special interest along the Bela

coast. In ancient Persia they were called *Daria-e-Cham*, means “the eye of the sea” and also on local basis in Mekran it is same. They are found at different places along the coast at three places between Phor River and Kuchali Bandar in Lasbela and others near Ormarra district Gawadar. They differ in size being sometimes large and sometimes small. They also differ in height, that near Kuchali Bandar rising as much as 400 feet above sea level. They are always of council form with the apex flattened and discolored. Sometimes the slope of the sides is gradual and sometimes steep. They are generally furrowed from the flow of water down and some of them have numerous cavities near the base which reach far into the interior. The basins are full of liquid mud. The circumference varies according to the size of the volcano, being in some cases as much as three hundred feet. The liquid mud is sometimes close to the top of the cone, whilst at others it sinks many feet below the surface, in some cases almost to the level of the surrounding plain. When in action, a few small bubbles first appear on the surface which are repeated at an interval of some 25 seconds flowing the bubbles a part of the mass is heaved up and a jet of liquid mud, about a foot in diameter and a foot high, rises accompanied by a bubbling noise; sometimes several jets rise simultaneously. In some cases the bubbling is so tenacious the mud that coconuts, which Hindus throw on it, do not sink.

The Hindus look at these volcanoes as the habitation of a deity and consult them in the same way as the Delphic oracle was consulted in times of old. They throw coconuts, and bread into the crater and receive their reply in the shape of an answering gurgle. Another story is famous regarding these mud volcanoes is that there are 84 of them and they spring from 84 parts of a ball of ashes thrown to the ground in a paroxysm of anger by Siva. The Muslims have no superstitious reverence for them.

According to Colonel Goldsmith,

*“The sea was the immediate agency causing the bubbles and that may of the shore or white clay hills further inland exhibited resemblances to the Chandra Gups. The influence of the sea being removed, the Chandra Gups become shriveled and furrowed heaps bored through with cavities. It may be noted as a various fact that all along Mekran coast portions of the sea become discolored and smell horribly at different times of the year. This discoloration which looks as if a preparation of thick reddish brown soap and water had been diffused in the sea, occurs in large isolated patches, sometimes in streams and sometimes as far as the eye can reach. No one knows the cause but all fish which enter the discolored water are killed and the discoloration generally travels towards the shore. Near Ormarra volcanoes are nearly always active the hills are full of Sulphur springs. Can it be that the presence of the mud volcanoes on the shore and the proximity of the Sulphur springs have any*



*connection with the discoloration of the water and that irruptions under the sea cause this curious phenomenon”* (Balochistan District Gazetteer, Lasbela: 414-14).



Fig. 7- The Mud volcano in Hingol national park at lasbela.

## **Conclusion**

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan. It is marked by a sagged, highly differentiated environment with many different habitants. A number of successive mountain chain runs from the Arabian Sea to the Hindukash, and from a barrier towards the fertile Indus plain in the east. These mountains enclose interior highland basins and deserts and are intersected by many river valleys. Southern Balochistan is characterized by narrow river valleys which only occasionally provide space for illuminations, and thus agricultural activities. The catchment areas are smaller and, due to the high gradient of the tributaries, the seasonal floods are after destructive and wash away the soil.

The Lasbela plain or the Porali River is a triangular lowland embankment. Several cultural mounds are found in this plain. Sites located on the gravel plains have very shallow cultural deposits. Despite of some fertile environments, the number of sites are unexpectedly low. The most important protohistoric settlements are Balakot, Murda Sang, Adam Buthi, Niai Buthi, Shehr-e-Roghan, etc.

Pioneering the archaeological fieldwork in this region was carried out by the great explorer Sir Aurel Stein, Hargraves, W. Fairservis, Beatrice de

Cardi, Jean Marry Casal, George F. Dales, the department of Archaeology and Museums, Karachi and some other explorers up to date. Here three seasons of explorations were carried out in the plain of Lasbela in the Kunrachi, Hub valley Bahlol, Loi and along the eastern foot of the Kirther Range covering altogether about 1900 square kilometers. As a result of this work, more than 300 archaeological sites were discovered and documented. Many of them were vulnerable by destruction. A large number of pre and protohistoric settlements were brought into light. The size and sophisticated lay-out of some of these came as a surprise; nowadays the area is barren and inhabited by a few people. Interestingly, the sites indicate that the development from village to town, agriculture to migratory pastoralism took place. Apart from one Islamic site, Kohira Kot, which was first discovered by Sir Aurel Stein, goes back to the British period. The Southern central and eastern portions of Lasbela are divided between archaeological sites. During the surveys carried out in 1998 and 1999, 106 sites were discovered. Chronologically and culturally, they belong to the same horizon as the sites in the Kunrachi valley and Lasbela plain. No real mounds were ever found, but in general, the settlements tend to be larger than other areas, and in Sindh Koshistan. In particular this perception is true for the Kulli sites which cluster in large numbers between Dureji and Barag, and at points where tributaries such as the Loi, Bahlol, and Saruna Rivers enter to the Hub valley. Instead of Bela, no such type of nucleated towns were ever found in such a large number. These settlements apparently formed a network controlling the access routes between Sindh and interior Balochistan. Invariably, they are associated with dams, some of which are the true masterpieces of construction. The pottery and objects found at these sites are clearly related to Harappan types, but the fabric is usually coarser, the variety of shapes and motifs is smaller, and a number of local elements are also present.

In Lasbela, such archaeological sites are available and dispersed everywhere in Balochistan, particularly in the regions of Quetta, Kalat, Mastung, Surab, Kharan, Mekran, Zhob, Loralai, Kachhi, Sibi, Pishin and Khuzdar. A small number of them are discovered and excavated, and also documented by experts, but huge numbers of these sites are still far from the spade of archaeologists. In Bolan valley, the Mehrgarh, in Khuzdar, the mound of Naal, in Lasbela, the Mounds of Niani Buthi, Adam Buthi, Hidat Shehr, Balakot, in Surab, the Sia Damb and some other main sites are excavated. They proved that these sites are full of information ranging from the ancient prehistoric times to the modern era.

In short, the region of Balochistan is the centre for the promotion of ancient civilizations and thousands of ancient and prehistoric places are present here, but not satisfactory results of excavations and discoveries were made out

here. Certain excavations and explorations need proper time and mega projects to be installed on priority basis on the archaeological sites of Balochistan. Every site of Balochistan can provide a lot of information about the past and, it can be helpful to write the history on archaeological basis.

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