

**BALOCHI AS INDIGENOUS CULTURE OF BALOCHISTAN:
A CASE STUDY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN BALOCHISTAN**

Archaeology

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ABSTRACT

Archaeologists are discovering new cultures all the time and new finds are challenging long-established views about how civilization developed in both the Old and the New Worlds.

Every normal person have some knowledge of the truth, however, partial truth can be misleading since it engenders contradictions. Take for example the story of the blind men who visited an elephant. They each touched the elephant to comprehend it, one felt the tail, another leg, another side and so on. When they later sit together to discuss the elephant, each one of them had a contradictory perception of the elephant. One thought that the elephant was like a rope, another pillar; another argued that the elephant was like a wall and so on. Each one of them had a portion of the truth but yet they argued and contradicted one another. They would have obtained the true picture if they had pieced their individual parts together and processed them. Thus overcoming the contradictions completes truth and the entire edifice of knowledge is conceived as a process of perception and comprehension, ascending stage by stage into widening ranges of apprehension. The history of inhabitants of Balochistan is quite resemble with above mention story and so Whenever, I go somewhere, I have been always questioned that who am I? Where did I come? What is my identity? After these questions I have been questioned about my nationality and then finally answer of these put in one sentence that "I am invader" and this land do not belong to you but I still on my view that "I am the original inhabitants of this rough and harsh land. All

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the above questions have been raised hypothetical and there is no research based evidence that Baloch do not belong to this land. All the above mention question can only be prove through the archaeological evidence and other discovered cultural material during the excavation.

INTRODUCTION

All the documented history and the prehistoric evidences show that this land was inhabited from Centuries ago and this statement can be prove by archaeological sites of Balochistan. Moreover, different scholars have defined this land with their own observations, when they passed from this land. The most interesting account regarding this, is Alexander the great march toward Gedrosia i-e is ancient name of Makran in 327B.C. The Greek Historian Arrian details about the suffering of Alexander when he was passing through this region. He further discusses about the forbidding nature of the Makran. **(V.Fiorani: 2011: 64-65)** A similar kind of expression was expressed by the Arabs at 7th Century A.D. The first Caliphs envoys *Kutub Futuh Al-Buldan* describes that there is no forage for horse and mules, the only fruits was date, water is limited and large standing army could bear the rough and harshness of this region and small one would definitely massacred by the local inhabitants because these people were very sharp and fighters. **(V.Fiorani: 2011: 64-65)** The other sources started from Ammianus Marcellinus to eighteen-nineteen centuries Britishers all are agreed upon the forbidding and harshness of the region. This is the exact geographical configuration of terrain. **(V.Fiorani: 2011: 66)**

Furthermore, all the above mentioned sources unanimously agreed that this land is welcoming and even hospitable. In their accounts we have clear view that this land is well populated land having perfect system of watering through the local means. **(V.Fiorani: 2011: 67)** As in the map of world Balochistan is introduced as the land of *terra Incognita* which means the unknown land. The system survey at Balochistan was started at 19th Century A.D. So to explore this unknown land a number of geographers, explorers and archaeologists carried out researches over there. These are included with Henry Pottinger, Major Mockler, Capt. A.T Wilson, W.Huges, Major C.F Minchin, G.P Tate, **(V.Fiorani: 2011: 70)** Sir Aurel Stein, H. Hargreaves, T.G Carless, Charless Masson, W.A Fairservice, Henry Field, B. de Cardi, G.F. Dales, R.L. Raikes, M. Casal, J.F Jarrige, V.A Piacentini, Ronald Besenval, F.A Khan, Cuyler and R. Mughal carried extensive research to explore Balochistan. **(Khan: 2002: 154)**

STONE AGE I-E PALEOLITHIC, MESOLITHIC AND NEOLITHIC

Balochistan holds one of the earliest human settlements in the World. In spite of the intrinsic hostility of its landscape and climate, archaeological discoveries have confirmed that it was already inhabited in the Stone Age. The relics of stone tools found in the caves and terraces of the Pleistocene age in Balochistan have been found in Kot Mondai, Marri area and Khokar Kore Lasbela, which belong to the Acheulian and Mousterian cultures of the Paleolithic Period. The paintings and engravings found in the caves and rock shelters in the Sulciman Range and its subsidiary ranges. In Zhob and Musakhel districts actually belong to the upper Paleolithic cultures of Gravettian and Magdalenian and date back to a period ranging from 22,000-18,000 B.C and 18,000- 12,000 B.C respectively.

The earliest stone tools found in the eastern Balochistan at Kot Mondai, Marri area, belong to Acheullian Culture- an ancient primitive stage in human development. Similarly, stone tools (Hand axes) of Mousterian Culture (100,000-40,000 B.C) have been found at Khokar Kore, Lasbela region in the South Eastern Balochistan in the upper Paleolithic period (40,000-12,000 B.C), which is known to us from the wonderful caves and rock-shelter paintings found in the Sulciman Range and its subsidiary ranges in the North-Eastern Balochistan. However, no material culture of the Mesolithic people has so far been discovered in Balochistan, except some engravings in the rock-shelters of Magdalenian Culture in Zhob District. It is, therefore, all the more essential to fill in this gap in the human history of Balochistan.

It was inhabited by Baloch cave-dwellers and fishermen. The history goes back to around 15,000 years ago. Furthermore, to understand that the Baloch Civilization was uninterrupted from 6000BC to the Islamic period which clarified that there was no cultural gap. To understand the whole human past, it is necessary that each period with its unique feature could be explained below:

NEOLITHIC PERIOD (6000B.C TO 5000B.C) OR NEW STONE AGE

The researchers, historians and archaeologists agreed that this land was inhabited by people in 6000B.C at Mehrgarh, Miri Kalat, Hoshap and Shar-e-Sotka. All the discovered materials show that during this period the means of production was well developed in Balochistan. The Skillful worker and

craftsmen of Balochistan made very fine and beautiful artifacts, pottery and other culture materials. All the discovered archaeological materials of this period detail that there is no such contemporary cultural material discovered in Sindh. So this shows the excellencies of skillful worker and craftsmanship of Balochistan which were playing a leading role in the field of art and Architecture. The Italian Archaeologist and Historian Dr. Valeria Fiorani Piacentini beautifully stated that "Green Belt i.e Balochistan was settled and inhabited since at least - the 6th millennium BC, when it was the cradle of a local civilization and culture (Dasht Assemblage - Miri Kalat and Shah-i-Tump's stratigraphic soundings and excavations). **(Piacentini : 72)** So it is interesting to note that Piacentini made it clear that this civilization is local and indigenous and local made pottery was likely exported to the other cultures and civilization such as Bahrain, Kuwait, U.A.E, and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the Miri Kalat was the center for pottery production. During Neolithic period wheel was not discovered due to which people used to make the pottery by hands and some time the handmade pottery give the impression of being rough and rude but we have clear evidence that during this time at Balochistan people made very beautiful pottery by local means. Moreover, Piacentini further explains that Miri Kalat was the richest market of that time where one could find, bargain, buy and sell local goods, vegetables and fruits, all kind of dates and dates products, lac-work, jewels, nicely embroidered cloths, beads and glass. **(Piacentini : 72)** This was the most prosperous region of the world and all the economic activities were controlled at Miri Kalat. Moreover, J.G Shaffer in his book prehistoric Balochistan, mentioned that cultural material discovered from Afghani, Irani and Pakistani Balochistan is same and this development was indigenous. He further expressed that during this time the ceramic was indigenously produced in Balochistan. **(Piacentini : 73)**

Balochistan has a more profile Neolithic Period beginning in the 8th millennium B.C and so far many important archaeological sites of this period have been found in the Kachi Plains, Quetta Valley, the Zhob Valley, Loralai and Khuzdar regions. The important sites of this period included Mehrgarh, Killi Gul Muhammad, Baleli Mound, Musazai, Sur Jangal, Anjira and Rana Ghundai. Not many of the Neolithic period sites in Balochistan except a few in the Quetta Valley and Kachi Plains have been scientifically excavated. The remaining are still awaiting spade of the archaeologists. Mehrgarh has produced the most promising results covering the period from 8000 B.C to 4000 B.C.

CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD OR COPPER AGE (4500B.C TO 3500B.C)

The central and southern region of Balochistan was inhabited by the people at 4000B.C, when people used to settle at river valleys and top of the mountains. Balochistan entered the Chalcolithic Period (5500 B.C to 3500 B.C) of which a number settlement emerged in Quetta Valley, Rana Ghundai, Sur Jangal (Loralai Valley), Mughal Ghundai and Periano Ghundai (Zhob Valley), Anjira and Siah Damb (Khuzdar Region) and Mehrgarh (Kachi Plains), Balochistan entered in the so called advanced Chalcolithic period or Phase around 4000 B.C at Mehrgarh (Periods IV and V). This Advanced Chalcolithic Phase in Balochistan is represented at various sites including Kechi Beg, Killi Gul Muhammad, Periano Ghundai, Damb Saddat, Karez, Baleli, Faiz Muhammad, Mughal Ghundai, Kanozai, Musazai, Musafirpur, Ismailzai, Mazghar, Rana Ghundai, Sur Jangal, Sawarn, Chinjane Dabar Kot, Anjira, Siah Damb, Tougue, Surab Damb, Khokar-Kot, Miri Kalat, Shahi Tump etc.

This can be proved from the Miri Katat i-e at the bank of Kech River and Sami Fort i-e on the top of mountain. This village type culture is the first evidence toward the Urbanization, not only in this region but also in South Asia. And most of these settlement areas were settled around 25acre. The archaeological materials from Central, Northern and Southern Balochistan show great resemblances with each other. This means that all the inhabitant settlement areas had a strong communication with one and other and a batter system of economy was developed among these settlement areas and the cultural material produced by the craftsmen of different areas were reportedly exchange among the different villages of Balochistan. This shows that there was strong relationship among the people of central, northern and southern Balochistan. The Chalcolithic sites at Balochistan included with Mehrgarh Mound MR 2, Nal, Kechi Beg, Damb Sadaat, Faiz Mohammad and Shar-e-Sotka.

BRONZE AGE (3000B.C) THE AGE OF EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL TRADE IN BALOCHISTAN

The trade caravans of Balochistan used both routes i-e Sea routes as well as land routes. The export and import begun during this period with other contemporary civilizations of the world included Iran, Mesopotamia, Afghanistan and Greece. On 2900B.C, the Baloch culture further goes ahead by advancing new technologies in the field of economics. During this period

people were so much developed and prosperous that they were exported their surplus goods. Moreover, the people of Balochistan were not worried about the economic needs. The seals discovered from Mesopotamia clearly indicate that they have carried out trade with people of Balochistan. As it stated by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer that the Sumerian sources have mentioned that they had carried out trade with people of Balochistan. **(Kenoyer: 1988: 51)** Sumerian text stated that "we have carried out trade with the people of Makan", "we have carried out trade with the people of Mullahans". **(Naseem: 2008: 04)** The word "Makan" is used for Makran and "Mullaha" used for the people of Indus valley Civilization. **(Kenoyer: 1988: 51)** So it is interested to note that the people of Sumerian considered Balochistan as a separated identity. This statement is important evidence that Baloch developed indigenous culture and civilization. Kenoyer further stated that the Indus ships may have hopped along the Makran coast and then sailed on up Persian Gulf to the port cities of Mesopotamia at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. **(Kenoyer: 1988: 92)** Moreover, the Indus Valley Civilization was itself have limited resources and many of the raw material was obtained from nearby regions. The people of Indus exploited the resources of Gujarat, Balochistan and Afghanistan. **(Kenoyer: 1988: 51)** The Baloch culture played a significant role for the development of Indus Valley Civilization, because most of the materials and natural resources came from Balochistan, such as marine Shell, carnelian which included with agate, banded agate, jasper etc, steatite, lapis lazuli, sodalite, tin and copper provided by the Baloch culture. **(Kenoyer: 1988: 94)**

The Joint German-Pakistani Archaeological Mission to Kalat was formed in winter 1996 by Ute Franke-Vogt, Seminar fuer Vorderasiatische Altertumskunde, Free University of Berlin, Germany, and the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Karachi, represented by Saleem-ul-Haq. To date, three seasons of exploration were carried out in the plain of Las Bela, in the Kanrach and the Greater Hab (Hab, Saruna, Bahlol, Loi, Talanga) River valleys, and long the eastern foot of the Kirthar Range, covering altogether about 1900 square kilometers. As a result of this work, more than 300 archaeological sites were discovered and documented. **(www.harappa.com)**

The renewed German Archaeologist Ute Franke-Vogt said that "during this period the people of this region were so skilled that they produced new things and antiques on daily basis". **(www.harappa.com)**

It is very strange and surprise that when the development was at its peak and the urbanization was about to begin then people of this area started migration to other places. This is still unknown that why they left their own places, God knows better but may be due to drought they migrated or some menace

happened which forced the people of this area to move somewhere else. Moreover, these people mostly moved toward Sindh and adjacent region because near to the Indus River there was no chance of drought.

Different archaeological missions carried out their reconnaissance at Nal, a very old and historical and archaeological site of Balochistan. The site of Nal was first excavated by H. Hargreaves in 1924 and in 2001; the excavation was resumed by German Mission. The radiocarbon dating of the sites shows that the settlement of the sites was begun at 4th millennium B.C. According to the Frankfurt sites has clear links with Miri Qalat, Mehrgarh, Nausharo, Mundigak and Shahr-e-Sokhta. The unearthed materials included with red and grey buff wares, well decorated pottery, small and big pots, jars, dishes, dishes on stand, bowls, goblet and miniature pots and considerable no of bull figurines. There is no comparison of these culture materials except the other sites of Balochistan. The painting and decoration on these materials are uniqueness in the World. A considerable number of polychrome which was decorated by different animal and plant motifs were collected at Nal. They also discovered spirometer and geometric design pottery with the symbol of "W" at Nal. This shows that decoration and artistic activities begun in Balochistan and later it was moved to Mohenjo-Daro. So artists and craftsmen of Nal left a great influence on the development of Amri Culture at Sindh. The discovered material of Nal shows that this culture was dominated all the other cultures of the region and may at that time Sohr damb was the center for the production of these goods and cultural material.

IRON AGE (2700B.C TO 2400B.C)

This Age in Indo-Pak is also called the pre-Indus period. The Indus Valley Civilization was developing during this period and the big urban center was in the process of maturation. However, the culture flourished during 2400B.C to 2700B.C in Balochistan was not paid attention by the archaeologists and historians. However, in 2002 the archaeologists carried out research mainly focusing this period to developed new chronology of human past. This period was like so called globalized world. The culture materials of this period have great resemblance with cultural material discovered at Iran, Afghanistan and Arabistan. **(Baloch: 1971:65)** This shows that people of Balochistan have good relations with the people of these regions and they had strengthened their mutual relationship. During this time traditional irrigation system was developed and only this system was possible for irrigation. This system of irrigation was called locally Kahn / Kariz and Kâorjo and garband. **(Piacentini : 71)** So this kind of irrigation system was

developed almost everywhere in Balochistan. The cultural material belonging to this period shows a diffused and mixture of different cultures that is Iran, Arab, Afghanistan and Mesopotamia. Moreover, these give rise to a diffused culture (the amalgamations of different foreign cultures).

MATURE INDUS PERIOD (2300-2000B.C)

The Archaeologists and experts assigned the period 2000B.C to 2300B.C as the Mature Indus period. It is interesting to note that the language of Indus Valley Civilization is not deciphered yet and the name of Indus civilization was assigned by the 21st century scholars. Anyhow this is another discussion and the focus should be on the present topic.

It has been prove from above mentions arguments that before this period Balochistan have no any direct connection with Sindh and Hindh. So before 2300B.C to 2000B.C the Baloch culture with the Indian Civilization have only perchance contacts, the relation between the Baloch culture and the Indian Civilization was established exclusively during at this time. The artists and craftsmen of Balochistan were making clay objects during this time while the Mesopotamian artist and craftsmen were also developing such techniques and this was the period where a strong relationship was developed between the people of Balochistan and Mesopotamian. **(Shaffer: 1972:05)** We have clear evidence regarding the connection between the two civilizations. The written inscription discovered from Mesopotamia give a brief introduction about this. The Famous ruler of Mesopotamia Sargon of Akkad (2334-2279B.C) textual references mentioned that the boasts of ships from Dilmun, Makan and Meluhha that were docked at his capital city. Now most of the Scholars agreed that Dilmun refers to the modern island of Bahrain, Makan refers to the modern Makran while meluhha refers to the Indus Valley Civilization. **(Kenoyer: 1988: 98)**

Moreover, the ceramic of this period was unique in the world. They made very beautiful clay figurines such like mother goddesses, animal and plant figurines. They did not make only figurine but also made decorative pottery which are still unique in the world having no similarity with other civilizations of the world but had great resemblance with the material discovered from Balochistan. The only difference between the materials produced by the Artist of Sohr damb Nal and this period is the beauty and uniformity. **(Aurel Stein: 1931:163)** During the period of Sohr damb Nal the artistic activities were only limited to certain number of objects which were later bit decorated but this period witnessed a revolution of artistic activities where the people were busy to produced globalized standard objects for

expert with the contemporary civilizations in one hand, while also paying much attention for beauty and purity of goods on the other hand. Most of the pottery depicted with animal figurine like Ibex, deer, hump bull and terracotta figurine, moreover, plant motifs and geometric design object were also discovered during the excavation. **(Beatrice: 1964: 20-29)** The Archaeologists, Historian and Researcher still not discovered the relationship between the people of Sohr damb and Mohenjo-daro. Some Archeologists and Historians believed that Sindh and Balochistan were two separate and independent entities and there was mutual relationship between two cultures and due to reason that both culture left their influence over each other. **(Hameed: 2009: 32)** It would be difficult to claim that settlement of Balochistan were the colony of Sindh culture, and this same as to say that Afghanistan is part of Sindh because some cultural material were discovered at Afghanistan. The ancient trading like of 21st century carried out among the civilizations and different culture. This is the reason that the similar kind of pottery and other cultural material were discovered in Balochistan and in Sindh.

The Archaeological research in Balochistan is still in its beginning. In 1984 when the French Archaeological mission under the supervision of J.F Jerrige carried out excavation in Balochistan at Mehrgarh then no one expect that Mehrgarh Balochistan became the contemporary of Mesopotamia. **(C. Jerrige, & J.F Jerrige 1985: 5)** So after Mehrgarh excavation the other archaeological sites at Balochistan including the Mound of Dasht valley and Hoshap etc further pave way to the Archaeologists to carried out research over so that the chronology of human past could bitterly developed. **(Piacentini : 76)** Moreover, the excavation and research at Mehrgarh cleared the ambiguities about the culture of Balochistan and the chronology of Baloch history was developed.

Except Mehrgarh, the other archaeological sites which begun to settled at 5000B.C around Balochistan were only investigated through pottery, figurines and dishes etc. So it's the right time to investigate the other sites, their art and Architecture, socio-economic condition and their way of life. The life at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa (2600B.C-1500B.C) was begun at 3000B.C, but during this period the culture of Balochistan was its peak and well developed, advanced and this was much more developed then Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Moreover, we have clear evidence that during this period people of Balochistan migrated to other places and most of them moved toward Sindh and settled there. The people migrated from Balochistan and settled at Sindh included with the artists, skilled people and craftsmen which definitely played a significant role for the development of Indus Culture.

(Piacentini : 76) In this entire research the “Word Baloch Civilization” is being used and a civilization be defined according to the famous Archaeologist Frankforts is: “the individuality of a civilization, its recognizable character, its identity which is maintained through the successive stages of existence..... We recognized in it a certain coherence among its various manifestations, a certain consistency in its orientation, a certain cultural “Style” which shapes its political and its judicial institutions as well as its morals. I propose to call this elusive identity of civilization its “form”.” It is the form which is never destroyed, although it changes in course of time”. **(Henri: 1951 :16)**

CONCLUSION

Despite the harsh and rough environment of Balochistan it give birth the world oldest civilization. Now we can say that Baloch Civilization is uninterrupted civilization which passed from successive stages and became a civilization. This history started from Paleolithic and it remains continued till now. It can be concluded that the Balochistan produced the World oldest civilization. Moreover, the discovered archaeological and cultural material further needs the interpretation. The unexplored archaeological sites of Balochistan are still waiting for the Archaeologists, researchers who want to preserve the common heritage of humanity.

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