

The Socio-Cultural Patterns and its Chronology: A Survey of Pre-Indus Archaeological sites in Balochistan

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Jahanzeb Khan ¹

Abstract

Balochistan is archaeologically and culturally one of the richest regions of the world. Here one finds the birth of agriculture and first settlements along with similar developments taking place in Levant and Middle East. The cultural developments in Balochistan were scattered over a large area while culturally being connected with each other. The cultural developments continued over a long period of time, converting into traditions which were practiced in almost all cultural sites simultaneously. The following study focuses on the emergence of such cultural sites, their cultural interactions and conversion into traditions on one hand and their chronological sequence on the other hand. The study will also highlight the chronology of the sites, their phases and cultural patterns. The cultural sites are geographically divided into three regions i.e. Northern, Central and Southern Balochistan and cultural division is based on the sources of archaeological patterns developed in various Eras i.e. Early Food Producing Era and Regional Era. The next cultural developments (Integrational Era and localization Era) emerged on the banks of Indus River, resulting into the shifting of the center of cultural activities from Balochistan to Indus Plain; hence these are not incorporated in present study and thus lay beyond the scope of present paper. Chronologically, the timeline of present study is from 7th millennia BCE to 4th millennia BCE and culturally it covers the pre-Indus period sites, geographically located in present day Balochistan.

Keywords: Early Food producing Era, Regional Era, Balochistan Archaeological Tradition, Pre-Indus culture, Chalcolithic period, Burial Rituals, Quetta Ware, Nal Ware, Togua Ware.

¹ Assistant Professor Area Study Center, University of Balochistan Quetta, Pakistan.

Introduction

The natural landscape of Balochistan accounts for the fact that one finds the nature of scattered and thinly populated cities in present day. The long, barren mountains and lowlands have constrained the population and settlements to a limit. This socio-cultural system of scattered and narrowly inhabited cities of Balochistan has long and deep roots in remote past and this hypothesis (small and scattered settlements) becomes more vibrant if we study the evolution of socio-cultural settlements in Balochistan. Archaeological studies in Balochistan began during British rule but it came to limelight after independence and especially during 1970s. Archeological surveys and excavations revealed that the geographical boundaries of present day Balochistan has been one of the richest landscape of South Asia as it had experienced cultural evolution starting from *Cave Paintings* to Neolithic revolution and from emergence of Indus civilizational sites to protohistoric and historic times and cultures. Balochistan's location at a crossroad of Iranian plateau, Indus valley and Helmand region has been one of the reasons that Balochistan witnessed cultural influence of these regions but archeological and anthropological studies of prehistoric Balochistan clearly depicts that Balochistan had its own cultural tradition which remained intact in its cultural features although having cross-cultural and mutual influences on these regional traditions.

Cultural Tradition

The word tradition has been derived from Latin word *traditio* which means to handover, transfer or give, it refers to the transfer of ideas, beliefs, rituals and skills from one generation to another and these ideas, beliefs, rituals and techniques are practiced by large portion of population living over a particular area for a long period of time (Congar 2004). Traditions are generally considered as conventions and material manifestations of a community including religious or cultural rituals or ceremonies. In a broader perspective we take traditions of a given geography or era as common practices of beliefs, cultures, economic means and modes, patterns of living or architectures and arts. Here the collective ideas and its material manifestations are observed and through these attitudes and symbolisms, the cultural life of a given society is driven. Hence Tradition is defined as “a set of cultural ideas regarded as a coherent unit in which past ideas influences the present patterns of behavior in the group” (Green 1997). This definition clearly mentions that tradition has two perspectives or influences on its followers i.e. it keeps the coherence in the group through providing ground

for the common beliefs and ideas and secondly it influences the behavior of new generation as the new generation finds roots of their cultural patterns in remote past. But it does not mean that this new generation cannot make their own innovations in the existing cultures, rather the previous ideas provide a ground and by making some new innovations cultural growth keeps on moving.

Balochistan Archaeological Tradition

Archaeology is the study of human past through cultural material aspects based on scientific methods and theoretical frameworks. The discipline of archaeology has its roots in 18th century *Enlightenment Period* in Europe when science became dominating factor in the all intellectual groups but the milestone in the development of archaeology came with Industrial revolution and colonization period which gave way to scholars and explorers to find new cultures and nations other than Europeans (Fagan 1991). During this time one after other civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Indus Valley were discovered. This provided a diverse and huge cultural data to anthropologist and archaeologist to study and reconstruct the present and ancient cultures of the world. Indus Valley became a center of attention for scholars of the world as it was much unique and different from Near Eastern cultures. The cultural studies started to widen its horizon with passage of time and progress in the scientific study of archaeology revealed that there were number of cultural sites thriving at the same time over huge geographic area and people of these sites were constantly interacting. These constant interactions were the grounding stones for the similar cultural traditions. But this interaction did not mean that ideas or cultures were being defused from one part of the world to another rather these interactions were widening the cultural relations with mutual influences and adding into the cultural mosaic of ancient world without complete domination of one culture or people over other cultures.

Balochistan is archaeologically very much rich and it has a long list of archaeological sites which are scattered throughout province. The archaeological tradition of Balochistan is culturally connected with Central Asia, Iranian Plateau and Indus Valley. Balochistan Tradition is outcome of a long cultural interaction of within and with regional cultures (Helmand and Iranian cultures) of ancient times. One finds influence of cultures of Indus Valley, Central Asia and Iran on the pottery, figurines and architectures of prehistoric Balochistan along with its unique features. The archaeological traditions of Balochistan can be found in the living patterns, trade materials, figurines and geometric and zoomorphic motives on the Wares. The main features of Balochistan pottery is that it's made with red ware and the designs

here are mostly geometric and there are motives of animals and plants on them especially fish and zebu (buffalo) are depicted but this buffalo is not unicorn like that of Indus Valley.



The map of cultural traditions covering South Asia (courtesy J.M Kenoyer)

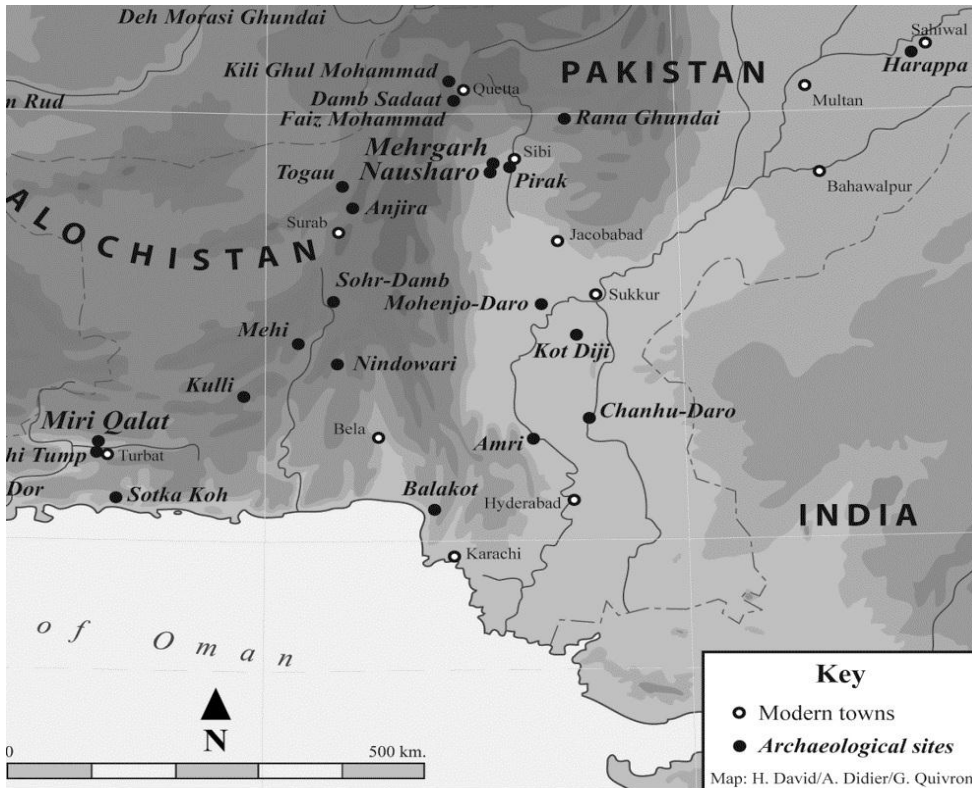
A tradition in cultural or technological perspective can be described as a continuous pattern or method of basic technologies and cultural systems in a given context of spatial and temporal progress or continuity (J. Shaffer 1992). Balochistan Tradition has some common features in its subsistence, habitation, arts and crafts, natural resources and its management patterns. This phase or era can be categorized as Food Producing and Regional Era (J. Shaffer 1992) (Kenoyer 1998). The living patterns in Balochistan were sedentary and pastoral nomadism, the buildings were made with stones and

mud bricks with no specific planning. These houses were rectangular in shape with different sizes and there is no evidence that whether these buildings were used for accommodations or storage purpose. The subsistence was mainly based upon the agriculture and domestication of animals, this subsistence strategy was comprised on wheat and barley mostly and animals included cattle, sheep, goat, water buffalo and at latter stage camel (J. Shaffer 1992). This economic strategy is found throughout Balochistan along with trade of precious and semiprecious stones which were traded from long distances as these stones were not locally found. The stone industry was much common in Balochistan; both semiprecious and common stone tools are found at almost all archeological sites. The most common stone stools included milling stones, ground stone balls, flint blades, scrapers and great numbers of microliths, but stone projectile points, axes celts are not found in abundance (J. Shaffer 1992). Balochistan Tradition also manifests a good number of tools and armaments made up of semiprecious stones i.e. lapis lazuli, turquoise, and alabaster, steatite, marine shells and carnelian. Mostly these semiprecious stones were used for the armaments including beads, pendants and Bangals used by male and female. These precious stones were used as symbol of social status and these were placed in the graves as grave goods demonstrating religious rituals and belief in life hereafter (J. Shaffer 1992) (C.J. Jarrige 1995).

The Balochistan Tradition is also unique because of its pottery and the evolution of pottery industry can be studied from beginning to advance level, in terms of material, design and technology. At early stage, pottery was made in baskets which had no specific shape and basket marks impressions. As time elapsed, there came change in technique of pottery making and it underwent a change from simple, rough and handmade pottery to more complex, well decorated and wheel-turned pottery. Along with change in technique there appeared change in designing of pottery too, zoomorphic and plant motives were made along with geometric designs and monochrome, bichrome and polychrome motives on pottery (J. Shaffer 1992). The Balochistan Tradition has provided ground stone for latter development of Indus Valley Tradition. As one finds Balochistan Tradition placed first stone of Urbanism by adaptation of agriculture, pastoralism, habitation, arts and crafts, religious rituals and beliefs, trade networks and social stratigraphy on the basis of nature of works and labor. The Indus Tradition used these basic sources in all fields at a much more advance level which provided grounds for development of a magnificent civilization which is ranked in world civilizations.

Balochistan: Cultural settlements

Balochistan has a long list of archaeological sites scattered throughout the province. These sites belong to prehistoric, proto-historic and historic periods. It will be beyond the scope of this chapter to even include all prehistoric and proto-historic sites, here a categorization of sites will be made in a regional perspective so that general and common features of all sites could be highlighted. For this purpose, Balochistan is divided into the following regions on the basis of its archaeological assemblages i.e. Northern Balochistan, Southern Balochistan and Central Balochistan. The archaeological sites can be better understood in the following map which depicts sites in a greater regional context and these sites will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.



(Courtesy: H. DAVID, A. DIDIER & G. QUIVRON)

Map of Balochistan Tradition: showing archaeological sites scattered in entire region.

Northern Balochistan

This part of Balochistan has first settlements of South Asia, dated circa 7000 BCE and most of the Neolithic sites are present here. The sites include Kahchi/Bolan sites of Mehrgarh, Nushero, Sibri and Pirak, similarly Quetta valley comprises of Kili Gul Muhammad, Kechi Beg, Damb Sadat, Faiz Muhammad and Baleli Mound. Northern Balochistan is also extended in Zhob and Loralai areas, where archaeological sites such as, Sur Jangal, Peranu Ghundai, Rana Ghundai and other sites located around Suleiman ranges are included. Here long assemblages of pottery, architecture, subsistence sources and figurines are found by archaeologists and this region also provides the evidence that first settlements were made in this area especially at Mehrgarh and Kili Gul Muhammad. In northern Balochistan, the only excavated and well documented site is Mehrgarh which was excavated by French Archaeological Mission. Mehrgarh is the type of site which provides a comprehensive detail of habitation, subsistence and religio-cultural development in Balochistan Tradition. The deposit mound of Mehrgarh is seven meters in height and there are nine occupational levels which cover a timeframe of seven millennia starting from c. 7000 BCE to decline of Indus Civilization (C. J. Jarrige 1995) (Pearsall 2008). This site also gives the developmental evidence of religion, economic development, architecture and dental morphology. The presence of exotic materials like turquoise, lapis lazuli, steatites, marine shell and copper makes it clear that there were professional traders who were bringing all these materials from long distances and these exotic materials were used for ornaments and tools.

The buildings were made with clay and sundried bricks and the houses comprised of two, four and six rooms (Pearsall 2008). The cemetery of the site revealed the ideological belief of people as graves had ornaments, pottery and sacrificed animals along the dead bodies. The bodies were ocher-covered and at latter stage (5500 BCE) the sacrificed animals were missing from grave which can depict a shift in ideology of the people or scarcity of animals made them a cultural wealth which could be used for economic benefit instead of ideological purpose (C. J. Jarrige 1995).

The other important and chronologically site near to Mehrgarh is Kili Gul Muhammad. This site is located in Quetta Valley and this has aceramic and ceramic period along with similar habitation and subsistence strategies with Mehrgarh which suggests that the people were moving between Mehrgarh and Kili Gul Muhammad as seasonal migrations typically occurring in lowland and highland dwellers. Unfortunately, this site has not been systematically excavated and there were only trail trenches made by W. Faireservice in early 1950s that is why very little information is available

about the habitation, subsistence and other cultural activities on the site. The excavations have revealed that there are four cultural occupational levels at Kili Gul Muhammad i.e. KGM I, KGM II, KGM III and KGM IV. The first phase of site shows a semi-nomadic occupation along with small population carrying small herds and agricultural harvest. There was no pottery at this level (KGM I) which suggests it belong to aceramic phase of Neolithic Period (Fairservis 1964). The second phase KGM II was contemporary to Mehrgarh II. The appearance of pottery this time was documented which is handmade, crude and basket-impressed with few colors but the appearance of chalcolithic culture in this site was documented in next phase GKM III. Rectangular buildings with painted pottery were documented and it falls chronologically in the middle of fifth millennium BCE (Fairservis 1964). The next phase KGM IV is considered to be one of the developed phase as wheel-turned pottery with geometric designs on a black on red Ware was documented and Fairservis has associated the presence of this type of pottery at KGM IV with Iranian tradition of Chashmi-Ali which is chronologically categorized in middle of the fourth millennium BCE (Fairservis 1964). With the arrival of French Mission, the new archaeological data, relevant to Balochistan Tradition was obtained showing that all of the phases at KGM had its roots in Balochistan and cultures were developing indigenously at Mehrgarh and Kili Gul Muhammad (C. J. Jarrige 1995) (Kenoyer 1998).

The next important site in Quetta valley is Kechi Beg, at few kilometers distance from Kili Gul Muhammad. It has two phases (KB I and KB II). Kechi Beg I is culturally similar to KGM IV which clearly shows that the people at KB I were either same who came here from KGM IV or they had strong cultural relations. The Kechi Beg culture is famous for its fine, decorated, wide bands carrying motifs of sigmas, hachures and cross-hatchings pottery which was made with black paint or red on buff slip (Fairservis 1964). The architecture of Kechi Beg culture was simple i.e. foundations were made with stone slabs and remaining building was made with mud-brick walls, there are evidences of this culture around on twenty sites throughout Quetta valley (Fairservis 1964). The Kechi Beg site has a particular pottery and this site was occupied in early 4th millennium BCE. Here figurines were also found which are more related with Zhob figurines of *mother goddess*.

Another prehistoric site in Quetta valley is Damb Sadaat (DS) and it has three cultural phases i.e. DS I, DS II, DS III. The archaeological findings on the site show that the DS I had clear evidences of Kechi Beg Culture. There were also some new developments and influences of the other regional cultures on DS II and DS III in terms of its architecture characterized with

mud-bricks houses with small square rooms with fire pits and bangles, human female and bull figurines, seals of clays, model houses, spatulas, bone needles and lots of stone stools, grinding stones were found on the site by archaeologist (Fairservis 1964). The archaeological surveys and excavations in Quetta valley, before the discovery of Mehrgarh, had generated two hypothesis (which were based upon Walter A. Fairservis's hypothesis) i.e. first, there was a complete sequence of cultural evolution starting from primitive to elaborated village system which was noted KGM as there were continuous development from aceramic period (KGM IA) to Neolithic period. Secondly, the Iranian cultural influence was noted on Quetta valley especially in the color combinations, technology and motifs made on pottery (Fairservis 1964) but later research has challenged the second argument as cultural development in Kahchi clearly shows that there existed a strong indigenous tradition which had similarities with Iranian traditions. The uniqueness of this indigenous cultural tradition has invalidated the *defusionist theory* or point of view.

The Zhob Valley is another prominent area where several archaeological sites have been documented i.e. Rana Ghundai, Peranu Ghundai, Sur Jangal and Dabar Kot. The data about prehistoric sites have been collected through several surveys by Piggot and Walter A. Fairservis. Fairservis has suggested a term "Zhob Cult" for the region because of its distinctive archaeological materials. The general features of this area include a distinctive ceramic and figurines style. The ceramics are divided into red-ware and buff-ware by Piggot and Fairservis and this division has been made on the basis of material used and technology (J. G. Shaffer 1978). Stylistically, the ceramics have geometric and zoomorphic motives which have similarity in shape and technology with "Quetta Wares" because of the geographical proximity and temporal synchronization (J. G. Shaffer 1978). The cultural sites in this region have its own uniqueness as one finds a pastoral economy at Sur Jangal (SJ). Evidence shows that herding was principle economic activity in SJ I, SJ II and there appears cattle raising in SJ III but still pastoralism is the principle economic system at site (Fairservis 1964). The next site in Zhob valley is Rana Ghundai (RG) and this site has five cultural phases i.e. RG I, RG II, RG III, RG IV and RG V. The cultural sequence on the site starts from prehistoric to Iron Age times. The site also shows that the people at SJ started to abandon and migrate from site in favor of RG III. There is evidence that the phase RG IV was continuously being occupied during early Harappan mature Harappan and late Harappan phase (Fairservis 1964). The Zhob cult is characterized by female figurines called *mother goddess* which are found in cultural phases of RG III and SJ III along

with “Incinerary Pot Burial” which characterize inarticulate human bones and ashes in the rough vessels (Fairservis 1964). The cultural development here also points out towards an evolutionary process which shows that the people of the area were moving back and forth as the environment was changing. It is clearer during SJ III phase when people migrated to Rana Ghundai where cultural overlap is observed during RG III. Similarly, the RG IV phase shows that it remained throughout the rise and decline of Harappan Phase. Similarly, the cultural evolution in the Kahchi region remained from Neolithic to late Harappan Phase, starting in Mehrgarh and then shifting to Nushero, Sibri (during early & mature Harappan period) and then at Pirak during late Harappan period. This shows that Balochistan Tradition went through an evolutionary process which was dominated by Harappan culture for a while but it regained its identity during localization era (decline of long distance trade and cultural relations and emergence of local trade and culture) this is culturally proved at Pirak phase of Kahchi region and RG V phase of Zhob region of Northern Balochistan.

Southern Balochistan

Southern Balochistan has a large number of archaeological sites comprising of Makran region, Nal and Kulli region and coastal areas and Les Bella. In Makran region, the archaeological sites include Miri Qalat, Sotkag-e-Dor, Sotkag-e-Koh and Shahi Tump. The chronological timeframe in Makran is in late 5th millennium BCE. The interaction among cultural sites seems to be more tilted towards Iranian plateau rather than Northern Balochistan (Pearsall 2008). This region has diversity in cultural activities and archaeological evidence suggests that this region has been a crossroads for traders and merchants who had been travelling between Iranian plateau and Indus Valley. The evidence can be observed in coastal areas as we have two sites such as Sotkag-e-Dor and Sotkag-e-Koh, showing remains of strong walls, sea shells ornament and long variety of sea foods which suggest sites as being port cities.

The next important sites in Makran region are Shahi Tump and Miri Qalat. These sites are located near modern city of Turbat. French Archaeological Mission under the supervision of R. Besenval has worked on these sites. The surface collection and systematic excavations revealed that these sites had been continuously occupied from prehistoric to Islamic period with few times abandonment. Miri Qalat has been excavated and its cultural material suggests that this site was first time occupied in mid-fifth millennium BCE and there are four (I to IV) occupational levels (Besenval 1994). The cultural development at the site has undergone a complete cultural evolution which can be observed in all aspects of socio-cultural life.

The architecture of the site clearly shows that the first settlements (period I) were made by stone blocks and in latter stages (from II to IV) the building material changed with its building technique as now stone blocks were used only for base and remaining building was constructed with sundried and fired mud bricks with triangular buildings (Besenval 1994).

The subsistence system at Miri Qalat was based on plant and animal husbandry. The agro-based subsistence was dependent upon multiple crops including lentil, peas, grapes, dates and coriander but wheat and barley were two main crops. The main subsistence was based on two crop system i.e. barley and wheat, which were harvested together (this system of two crops would reduce the risk of total crop failure since water was available at limited quantity) and with winter harvesting method which means the seeds were sowed in autumn and harvested in spring before the arrival of unbearable summer heat (Tengberg 1999). The irrigation system at Miri Qalat was not much developed as no evidence of *Kariz* system or well developed canals have been found, there was simple system of irrigation as only few small dams were constructed and these dams had very limited capacity of water storage along with small water channels for watering fields and this primitive system of water management had limited the size of population (Tengberg 1999).

The pottery industry has gone through an evolution at Miri Qalat (MQ) and it starts from aceramic period in MQ I as there are evidences of stone tools, stone grinders and microlithics. No pottery is recorded and ceramics appear only in MQ II. There appears diversity in technique and designing of pottery as excavation at Miri Qalat have revealed pottery with basket marks, handmade and wheel-turned. Besides this technological evolution of pottery, the evolution in designing appears too as monochrome, bichrome, polychrome pottery have zoomorphic, geometric and plant motives with different and multiple designing on it (Besenval 1994). The economic life at the site can be studied from available materials and it is clear from availability of sea shells, fish bones and appearance of fish motives on pottery that people were in close link with coastal area as it is only at three days journey from site. The ornaments consist of sea shell bangles, terracotta bangles, pendulums and bracelets made up of exotic materials brought from Iranian or Helmand regions. The cultural influence of Nal culture and Iranian culture is clearly depicted and at latter stage Harappan culture dominates at Miri Qalat and this shows a cultural and economic interaction of the people at Miri Qalat with other regional cultures (Besenval 1994) (J. Shaffer 1992).

Nal tradition is one of the important and distinctive features of Southern Balochistan and its main artifact is its pottery. The pottery of Nal is

unique because of its manufacturing technology and stylistic designs. If the manufacturing technique and designs of Nal tradition is studied, it would be found that the pottery was made from a paste and there were two methods of style i.e. black-on-buff and polychrome Wares (J. G. Shaffer 1978). The Ware patterns comprise of geometric designs which are multiple designs (cross-cross linings, plants shapes, leaf patterns and several mysterious designs) on a black-on-buff with empty spaces which were filled by multiple colors including black, yellow, green, red and blue, similarly the zoomorphic designs on Nal pottery include fish, scorpions, bull and ibex motives (J. G. Shaffer 1978). Another tradition of the area is Kulli and this site was also surveyed by A. Stein in 1929 and a limited excavation was carried out by W. Fairservice in 1967. This limits the analysis of the available data. Ceramics of the Kulli culture is most distinctive artifacts and these ceramics are unique especially in its motives. The pottery generally has a combination of geometric, zoomorphic and plant motives which are executed with a black paint or sometimes red line on a pinkish slip, while manufacturing material is a buff paste (J. G. Shaffer 1978). If a close examination/observation is made on the pottery of Kulli culture, it becomes clear that the motives mostly depict grazing scenery where zoomorphic motives are painted in natural conditions where plants (especially pipel trees) make the background and its stylistic comparison is also made with Harappan Tradition (J. G. Shaffer 1978).

Central Balochistan

Central Balochistan is the third major cultural and geographical area of Balochistan Tradition. The cultural sites in this area are Anjira, Togua, Surab and Khuzdar regions. This area is locally divided into two regions i.e. Jhalawan and Sarawan and all the archaeologists have included sites by the name of Central Balochistan. The terms Jhalawan and Sarawan have been derived from Balochi words *Saar* (head or north) and *Jhaal* (feet or south) respectively and these describe the northern or upper and southern or lower regions of Central Balochistan (Stein 1931). Archaeological sites are much scattered in this region and there are numbers of small mounds in entire region. The mounds have not been properly excavated. That is why the present information about these sites is limited to its chronological sequence and cultural relation with other individual cultural sites in general and Balochistan Tradition in particular. The geographical location of the area is very important as it connects Persian Plateau with Indus Valley through "Mula Pass" (narrow pass which connects Makran with Jhalmagsi, Gandhawah and Sindh via Khuzdar) and rest of Northern Balochistan, Helmand region with coastal lines. This geographical location has been very

important for traders, immigrants and conquerors throughout prehistoric and historical times.

Central Balochistan's cultural sites are as numerous and scattered as other parts of province i.e. northern and southern Balochistan. Its cultural sequence starts from "Ispelinji Valley" which is located about 40 miles south-east of Quetta and 30 miles east from Mustung district. The valley of Ispelinji is covered almost from all sides by towering mountains and there are two mounds in the valley i.e. mound I as being settlement area and mound II as burial place (North Balochistan and Kalat sites 1964). The sites have not been excavated therefore all data, pertinent to the site, comes from surveys and surface collections of artifacts. The pottery here has got cultural resemblances with multiple cultural wares of Balochistan and this show a frequent interaction of the people with all other regional cultures. The potsherds are made up of thin, hard and a fine texture of fabrics along with lots of geometrical motives (stepped and oval motives, chevrons of thick and thin motives, triangles, squares and circles) and other motives/designs consists of fish, pipal leaves and circular line like fish are depicted, the Wares are mostly colored with light pink to greenish-buff (North Balochistan and Kalat sites 1964). Other artifacts on the site include narrow-footed beakers, bowls and globular, narrow-footed vases, shallow dishes and objects includes chert blades, terracotta bangles, semi-precious beads, banded agate, alabaster bowl, cup fragments and few anthropomorphic terracotta figurines were collected (North Balochistan and Kalat sites 1964).

The next important archaeological assemblage in the Central Balochistan is at Anjira and Siah-Damb which located in Surab valley of Khuzdar division. This is considered to be one of the Neolithic sites in Balochistan along with Mehrgarh and Kili Gul Muhammad sites. There are four occupational levels in Anjira I, II, III, and IV. Archaeological evidences suggest that the people at Anjira I came from KG III as there are number of similarities in their cultural materials (Cardi 1964). The different cultural phases at Anjira clearly shows a cultural evolution as there is an aceramic period (Anjira I), followed by ceramic period (Anjira II) where crude basket-marked pottery along with chert scrapers, gouges, flake-blades, short blades and leaf-shaped arrowheads are found (Cardi 1964). The next level (Anjira III) shows a drastic cultural change as new pottery (with multiple colors and motives) and architecture is documented. The cultural change can be observed in ceramic industry and architecture as ceramic industry witnessed introduction of cream-slipped and orange/red slipped ware, which is associated with "Togua Ware" and houses were constructed with square stone foundations along with mud-bricks and rectangular shapes of different

sizes (Cardi 1964). There are strong linkages in Anjira valley with Iranian traditions, Nal culture, Quetta valley and Makran region (which can be traced in pottery and lithic industry) and this shows that Central Balochistan has been a very active and culturally rich area for interaction of different regional cultures. This has played a vital role in the development of Central Balochistan economic, cultural and social sector. As the people of this region would have been in a continuous interaction with other people, who might have crossed this area for trade or any other purpose and this gives new ideas about the cultural development of their areas to the local population. This is the reason that one finds multiple cultural influences on this region which were observed in Ispilnji and Anjira.

Balochistan Tradition: Cultural interaction and Chronology

Mutual human interaction, in individual and social forms, has been a basic social and intellectual requirement throughout history. This interaction has been because of sharing common ideas and issues pertinent to common challenges and their solutions. It was part of the society of hunting-gatherers and it would allow hunter-gatherers to know exactly that from where they could get their games and even this would help them to develop a forecast of knowing possible routes of movement of games in a given area. This interaction also helped early people about archaic pastoralism and first harvestings. With passage of time and experience, early people got the idea about harvestings and pastoralism and this was first step towards replacing of nomadism with sedentary life. There are numbers of theories about the first settlement of human society and giving up of nomadic one but most influential has been considered one presented by *Vere Gordon Childe* (1892-1957) who propagated a theory which says change in natural climate forced human beings and other living organisms to change their subsistence strategy. Men left hunting-gathering culture because games were becoming scarce and by experience man learnt that he can domesticate plants and animal, this decision taken by men in remote past, was first step towards permanent settlement (Neolithic Revolution). The first such settlement of hunter-gatherers found in South Asia is at Mehrgarh. In Zhob Mountains cave paintings have been found by Fazaldad Kakar which show a long cultural sequence starting from Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) to Neolithic settlement in Balochistan. Here the cultural development along with chronological order (Neolithic to Chalcolithic period) at different sites of Balochistan is given.

Early Food producing Era

Beginnings of the long term processes that provide the stable foundation of a state level society can be termed as Early Food Producing Era

(Kenoyer 1998). The early food producing era is considered to be the time frame when for the first time men started to domesticate plants and animals. Plants (wheat and barley) were sowed by plowing and watered by irrigation system to produce food on the one hand and animals (goat, sheep and cattle) were domesticated for dairy, meat and plowing purpose on the other hand (Kenoyer 1998). This period of early food production is divided into two phases i.e. aceramic and ceramic period: aceramic is the period when men had not invented the art of pottery making, while ceramic is the period when archaic pottery making was started. With the elapse of time, pottery making developed into a complete art of crafts and there were skilled people who would make pottery for all kind of people in the society from lower to upper strata. In Balochistan Tradition, this incipient technology and others can be discussed in the following lines.

Balochistan Food Producing Era: Mehrgarh I, II. KGM I, II. Anjira I, II, MQ I

The cultural development in Balochistan got its root in northern Balochistan during c.7000 BCE in Mehrgarh and at a later stage in Kili Gul Muhammad in Quetta valley (C. J. Jarrige 1995) (Kenoyer 1998) (North Balochistan and Kalat sites 1964). This settlement was not rapid but an evolutionary process and spread over a long period of time. The early stage was Mehrgarh I, KGM I and Anjira I (Anjira I is chronologically not contemporary to early two sites), when only microlithic industry was found with grinding stones, cherts, stone axes and there was no pottery. This period is called aceramic period and chronologically it's around c.7000 BCE to 6500 BCE (C. J. Jarrige 1995). The emergence of pottery was a major shift in the cultural development of Neolithic Balochistan as this gave birth to crafts and skilled labor system. This cultural change brought the next stage which is found in Mehrgarh II, KGM II and Anjira II. This cultural period consists of two stages i.e. IIA and II B. In the Mehrgarh IIA and KGM IIA the incipient pottery is found which have basket marks on them and these have been made in rough and crud form. In Mehrgarh IIB and KGM IIB there took place some changes in pottery making as it becomes more sophisticated and the basket marks on pottery disappear; the pottery is still handmade but it is more refined as compared to previous stage (Pearsall 2008). This phase also brought some changes in subsistence as people started to cultivate wheat and barley along with domesticating goat, sheep and cattle and the ideological patterns can also be observed in burial rituals. The rituals objects recovered from graves consisted of pottery and some precious stones, ornaments (beads, pendants of lapis lazuli, turquoise and steatite) and sacrificial animals, which were also buried with dead body. This shows that people of that period

strongly believed in life after death and that is why they would bury goods of daily usage along dead body so that dead person might use these goods in next life (C. J. Jarrige 1995) (Kenoyer 1998) (Pearsall 2008). Chronologically this period starts from 6500 BCE to 5500 BCE.

Regionalization Era

Regionalization is cultural phases in which different cultural components come nearer to each other and this cultural mosaic describes similarities while covering the differences existing within the cultural group. The beginning of short-term changes from individual culture to regional one or integrating scattered cultures into more similar and regional in nature and orientation can be termed as regionalization process while the time duration taken by cultural development for regionalization can be termed as *Regionalization Era*. This process of Regionalization in South Asia emerged in Balochistan and this provided roots for the development of next phase called “Integration Era” (Kenoyer 1998). The timeframe of Regionalization phase is also called *Chalcolithic period* because during this period incipient copper tools were also being used and produced along with stone tools. Since the timeframe of Regionalization is long so here it’s divided into two phases for understating purpose i.e. initial phase and final phase and this division is made on the bases of chronological and cultural development being experienced in entire Balochistan.

Regionalization Era (initial phase): Mehrgarh III, KGM III, Anjira II, Sohr Damb I, MQ I, II and Togau A-C, KB I, II.

The process of regionalization in Balochistan falls, chronologically, between middle sixth millennium to late fourth millennium (5500 to 3300) BCE. This period in Balochistan witnessed some regional interactions and during this period there appeared further cultural changes in entire Balochistan. There appeared multiple sites almost in entire Balochistan which suggest that there was a major increase in the population and settlements as new sites were established in southern and central Balochistan (Pearsall 2008). This demographic change was due to improvement in subsistence strategies which resulted in agricultural surplus, thanks to more sophisticated irrigation and storage system along with major improvement in craft industry. This cultural and economic improvement can be observed in Mehrgarh III beads workshop, where excavations have revealed that an industry of crafts (mainly stones) was in progress which produced large number of beads, ornaments and seals and the crafts were made up of precious and semiprecious stones including jasper, sea shells, turquoise, lapis lazuli, copper, steatite and agate (C. J. Jarrige 1995) (Pearsall 2008). The presence

of such exotic materials show clearly that there was a long distance trade system because all these precious and semiprecious stones were not locally available so these were being traded from long distances either from Helmand region or Indian ocean and Iranian plateau.

The cultural change during this period can be observed in ideology and belief system too. The grave goods further decreased in number and material during this period as there were only few grave goods with limited number of precious items were placed along with dead body and almost no animal sacrifice was made as graves do not have any animal remains. This shows a major change in the basic ideology and belief system of death and life after death. But this belief system was not common practice in entire Balochistan as there were regional variations especially in southern Balochistan at Sohr Damb I; here dead body was buried with precious stones including lapis lazuli, carnelian, agate, steatite beads and pottery vessels (Pearsall 2008) (J. G. Shaffer 1978). Similar variation in the belief system can be observed in Miri Qalat II where dead body was painted with ochre and wrapped in cloth/met and the grave goods included axes, mirrors, spearheads, tools and objects made-up of stones, sea shell, fish bones and copper (Besenval 1994). This shows a regional variation and cultural diversity in Balochistan but the basic tradition remains the same as the pottery used for grave goods were polychrome wares which are categorized as Kechi Beg and Togua Wares. This shows a strong cultural relation in entire Balochistan with regional variations and cultural interactions.

The cultural change can be observed in the pottery industry too as pottery was produced in a large quantity because pottery was being traded over a greater geographical horizon. The pottery during this time were thin-walled, red-slip, black-painted and well fired and these pottery were distributed from northern and central Balochistan to southern Balochistan, Mudigak I, Bannu Basin and Amri I (Pearsall 2008). There appeared polychrome Wares in KB II which are truly amazing for its geometric designs and color combination. This gradual change in technology and aesthetics of pottery makers was equally observed in Togua A-E stages as there appeared a gradual change in motif of caprids made on pottery in Togua A and same motif became a *forepart* in Togua B, shape becomes a *hook* in Togua C-D and at Togua E stage it is reduced only to a *stroke* (Cardi 1964) (Pearsall 2008).

This change in demography, economic activity (long distance trade) pottery designs, technology, and in ideology was evolutionary, gradual and spread over a large area. This shows that people were in constant interaction and these interactions were bringing exchange of ideas which was

responsible for the similar cultural patterns with regional variations. These exchanges of idea are due to trade links, intra-regional migrations or wars? It is unanswered question but it's much clear that people were not living in isolation rather they had a large network of interaction and mutual exchange of ideas pertinent to crafts, raw materials, production technologies and socio-religious beliefs.

Regionalization Era (final phase): Mehrgarh IV, V, VI, KGM IV, Damb Sadaat II, Anjira III, Sohr Damb I-II, MQ III, Nausheru I, II.

The final phase of Regionalization Era in Balochistan brought some new but more integrating cultural changes which were practiced over a wider horizon with similar characteristics. These socio-cultural changes can be observed in almost all walks of life. These changes were mainly brought in settlement patterns, economic activities (trade and crafts industry) and ideological beliefs. The subsistence strategy changed during this phase as communal storage system replaced individual stores and cattle replaced sheep-goat pastoralism. This change in subsistence strategy was due to more well developed irrigation system and extensive cultivation of two crop system (wheat and barley) on one hand and large grazing areas for pastoralists on the other hand (Pearsall 2008). The change in the subsistence strategy was adopted because of demographic shift as surplus food production and its storage was need of the time. This demographic shift also brought changes in the crafts specialization which can be observed in the pottery patterns. The main pottery styles, horizon or wares in Balochistan Tradition have been categorised into Quetta Horizon, Kechi Beg Ware and Nal Pottery (J. Shaffer 1992). "Quetta Wares" (DS II,III, Mehrgarh IV,V,VI, Nausharo IA-C) identified by Piggot and Fairservis comprise buff/red ware, painted in black and geometric motifs with complex black-white contrasts and linear lines, figurative and floral designs are its striking feature (Fairservis 1964) (Pearsall 2008). The second category of pottery style in Balochistan is "Kechi Beg Ware" and this Ware was discovered by Fairservis and de Cardi. The texture of KB Ware is mostly black-on buff slip, KB bichrome (black designs, red-band with painted on buff ware), and white-on-dark slip (North Balochistan and Kalat sites 1964) (Pearsall 2008). These potteries are found almost in entire Balochistan but during late fifth and early fourth millennia BCE these are found in MR IV, V, VI, KGM IV, Togua A-C and Anjira III (Pearsall 2008). The third famous ware of Balochistan Tradition is called "Nal pottery". This group of pottery is comprised of a combination of monochrome and polychrome Wares. The polychrome are painted with yellow, turquoise, black and red colors, along with geometric designs (complex, crossed and simple lining) and figurative motifs of birds,

bulls, hybrid creatures and plant motifs and this pottery is found in Sohr Damb/Nal I, II, MR IV, V, MQ IIIA-B, and Nausharo IA-C (Pearsall 2008)

The ideological belief/concerns during this period underwent further change as there appeared a large number of terracotta figurines which were different from famous “Zhob mother goddess”. The mother goddess figurines (found in Mehrgarh IV, V and Shahi Tump I, II) during this period were more anthropomorphic in shape and the hair style, ornaments and body structure was clearer and enhanced as compared to Zhob mother goddess which were flat in shape with no clear shape (C. J. Jarrige 1995). There was a change in burial traditions too as archaeologists observed further decline in grave goods in northern and central Balochistan but this decline in grave goods was not universal as in cemetery of southern Balochistan, especially in Shahi Tump (ST IIIA), a rich funerary culture was found and the grave had large number of goods including beads (made up of terracotta, shells and carnelian), seals and stone vessels along with Togua bichrome sherds which had white pigments (J. G. Shaffer 1978) (Pearsall 2008).

Conclusion

The emergence of Balochistan tradition was spread over long period of time and space. The cultural tradition saw its peak in the 5th to 4th millennia BCE and it was there too during mature Indus period but was dominated by Indus Tradition. It reemerged during the last phase of Indus too and was the period of localization process. The expansion in the size and number of cultural sites in Balochistan Tradition was based on the reasons but generally its agreed that it was due to the demographic change, change in irrigation and cultivation and emergence of communal storage system of surplus food, crafts specialization and emergence of long trade system suggests that this was great period of economic and cultural development in Balochistan. This economic and technological development in Balochistan was the main reason of mushrooming of settlement sites and long/complex trade system along with a regional cultural interaction which is prominent especially in pottery industry. The main three Wares i.e. Quetta Ware, Kechi Beg/ Togua Ware and Nal Ware, were produced at commercial level not only at its place of origin but everywhere in Balochistan. This clearly indicates that this mass production was not meant for local use rather it was used for commercial purpose over an extended area.

The cultural interaction is much clearly depicted in the trade and technology of goods production as there are striking similarities in the raw materials and technology of making goods. As the source of raw material were located over a long distance from sites of manufacturing, there must be

some people who were completely involved in the business of bringing these materials from such a long distance and this shows that these people had complete information of availability of raw materials and routes for access to the source. The raw materials were mostly at a distance from the sites of goods manufacturing, so the people who were in this business might not be limited to only one site rather they would hover from site to site and develop a business network over a number of sites. This interaction of people belonging from different areas of a same interaction zone would result in the exchanges of goods and information pertinent to raw material sources, cultural values and technological innovations made by both cultural sites and this would help in development of similar cultures.

The emergence of new group of people, who were not engaged in agriculture or pastoralism rather bringing raw materials for crafts, might be the agent of cultural interaction. These people might be the early merchants and they would move from site to site and trade with local people. This trade did not limit to selling of goods or raw materials but exchange of ideas too. These continuous interactions of people within a geographical zone, developed traditions which are based on similar subsistence strategies, crafts production techniques, ideological belief and architecture. The same is true about Balochistan Traditions as its clear from availability of number of artifacts at one site which were produced on another site e.g. Quetta Ware and Nal Ware were found throughout Balochistan and the beads of Mehrgarh were found in southern Balochistan which suggests either these products were produced locally while barrowing idea or finished goods were traded between these sites. The socio-economic interaction of these chalcolithic people developed in a beautiful mosaic of cultural tradition of Balochistan, with collective similarities in external outlook but slight differences in individual cultural sites. The Balochistan Tradition, as like other traditions, has evolved because of these socio-economic interactions. If there would have been no interaction or limited interaction, then there would not have been a beautiful, culturally unified and interconnected Balochistan Tradition during the 5th to 4th millennium BCE.

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