

## **Iran and India: A Survey on Link Roads and Trade (With Special Reference on Archaeological Evidences)**

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### **Abstract**

Archaeology is growing science that continues to discover the material remains of man; hence, it is the best evidence to understand human relations that too shows close co-operation between the neighboring countries, especially Iran and India (present Pakistan).

Right from Bronze Age when man started building a better social organization, archaeology presents positive evidences for economic and technological cooperation to boost their living standards. In the case of Indian Sub-continent, the earlier rural evidences from Kili Gul Muhammad (Kili=Urdu word, stands for "Fort") , Zhob and Loralai valleys of Baluchistan show a continuous growth pattern until they reach to mature stage of Indus Civilization that presented by the cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. It seems that such urban pattern could not develop without its deep contact with the Bronze Age Culture of Iran, as evidenced from the excavations of Bampur, Tepe Yahya, Tepe Sialk and Tepe Hissar. Hence, according to archaeological evidence, one can say the people of Iranian Plateau and those of its extension into Baluchistan and even in Sindh maintained a close trade and commercial relationship. In the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Millennium B.C., trade spread simultaneously with the art of pottery and the human effort for having agricultural products, and commerce started between the Western and Eastern world. Barley and wheat from Iran were exported to Egypt and Europe, and millet from India was exported to the West via Iran. Plenty of seals and identical ornaments found in Iran and throughout the vast Indus Basin and the areas of Mesopotamia and Central Asia are evidences of the simultaneous expansion of trade in the Great Iranian Plateau.

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**This article tries to discuss and prove that the gradual progress in this vast basin, especially in ancient sites of Iran and Western India could be possible through road links, such as Silk Road, and it strengthens the claim and leads to the point that this link has been solely through growing trade and commerce. The next point, it will express that this trade not only was responsible for the emergence of the stimuli for the development of simple and original settlement in a section of the proposed area but also developed cultural relations especially in the patterns of urbanization, architecture and arts which is highlighted in two ancient cities, Shahr-i Sokhta in Sistan (Iran) and Mohenjo-daro in Sindh (Pakistan), in 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium B.C.**

**Keywords: Archeological Evidences; Indian Sub-continent; Indus Valley; Iranian Civilization; Mohenjo-Daro; Cultural and Commercial relations.**

### **Introduction**

In ancient times, since Iran served as a bridge between the East and the West, it has been a solid witness to great exoduses in that age. Whenever an allusion occurs about the great civilizations of the pre-historic millennia, Iran of course occupies a central place. The political geography of Iran in the first millennium B.C. extended from across the Nile to Trans-Indus. Based on testimony and support of archaeological discoveries from ancient Iran, one can discern irrefutable footprints of great civilizations which simultaneously sprang in this vast expanse. Those excavations have unearthed remains which indicate the significant contribution of Iran in the world civilization as a link between the East and the West from the earliest time to the Middle Ages.

At the same time, Western India (or present Pakistan) is an area that considerably contributed to the world civilization and culture. Unfortunately, the ancient heritage of this area, which is eternally affiliated to the history and geography of the vast territory of

the Sub-continent, has not been properly studied, explored and identified. If the Great Indus basin is excavated and the well-known seals of Mohenjo-daro are duly deciphered, the true significance of the ancient civilization of this land will also come to the light.

The research of the mutual effect of civilizations within the present geographical framework of Iran and the neighboring countries requires years of search and labor. The present article is meant to introduce a project and attempt to pursue the historical development of the subject from the archaeological point of view as well as on the basis of existing evidences and writings.

### **Western India**

Western India (or present Pakistan) is situated on the periphery of the south-eastern boundaries of present Iran, and is divided into two distinct geographical zones:

1- Mountainous zone of Baluchistan in the west and north-west forming one-third of the present Pakistani territory.

2- The vast plain of the Indus basin in the east.

It may therefore be realized that Baluchistan, from geographical point of view, is eastern expansion of the great Iranian Plateau. The eastern rim of Pak-Iran frontiers is covered by the Sulaiman Mountains range, and the well-known valleys of Zhob and Loralai lie in the west of this mountain range which meet the Quetta valley in the middle of the Baluchistan zone. In this area, evidences of human settlement in ancient and present Baluchistan are very much similar to those of Sistan and Baluchistan and the Central Plateau of Iran. It may be recalled that within Iran in the south of Zabol district there lie remains of Shahr-i Sokhta (dating back to the pre-historical millennia) which is considered to be among important centers of Iran.

The central Makran range of southern Baluchistan proceeds parallel to the southern corner of Iran and Pakistan. The Baluchistan zone has a warm and dry climate and some of its areas are quite cold in winter night (Seyed Sajjadi, 1995:135). Its vegetation is identical to that of the Salt Desert rim. Except for the large river Hirmand (Helmand) which runs through the Sistan zone of Iran and irrigates a vast plain, this region has no river worth mentioning. A number of the brooks disappear in the marshy lakes of the area. Since the annual rainfall in these areas is less than 20 cm, agriculture in Baluchistan of Pakistan is confined to the areas

around the mouths of rivers and valleys. However, conditions are better in Iranian Baluchistan.

The acquired archaeological evidences from this area, particularly from Iranian Baluchistan and the dry and barren areas of Salt and Lut Deserts signify the existence of better living conditions there in the past (Tavassoli 1999: 34). It has come to the knowledge that during the pre-historical period there existed large settlements for longer periods of time in the areas which have been significant civic centers in the mid-centuries (Mughal 1974: 34).

The most significant basis for the cultural unity of Iran and Western India have been the road links between the centers of pre-historical civilizations which require scientific study for the clearance of a large number of ambiguities.

The vast territory of Iran lay between the important centers of the East and the West i.e. the Indus on one side and the Mesopotamia on the other. It is for this reason that it could be the significant center of cultural exchange, commercial transactions and the main passage for the historical migrations. In other words, it may be said that due to completely distinct reasons like the existence of the dreadful deserts in the central part of Iran and the sky-high mountain ranges in its north and south, the inevitable link passages of these civilizations were the valleys and the areas around the ridges in whose length and breadth laid pre-historic

settlements.

One of the links was the Great Silk Road, running from China to Iran and touching the European continent. In other words, one of the important communication highways was the one which ran from Northern Iran to Afghanistan. This highway could be split into two in the Tajan area, one of which went to the Turkmenistan plains and the other to the interior of Afghanistan, and from there it flowed to Sistan, Kabul valley, Qandahar and after reaching Quetta valley it finally touched the Great Indus Plain.

#### **Historical and Archaeological Background**

It may be boldly asserted that the cultural relations of Iran and Indian Sub-continent do not belong to the first historical period, or the time when parts of Western India (or present Pakistan) were incorporated to the ancient Iranian empire, rather the roots of the cultural ties of these two date back to the very ancient times (Mughal 1974: 37).

The archaeological excavations in Indus Valley, Baluchistan, Shahr-i Sokhta, southern Iran, particularly Shahdad, Tepe Yahya, Tall-e Iblis and also in Bahrain and Mesopotamia have unearthed a number of evidences that comprise fresh data about the realization of the pre-historic record of these two countries.

An important point which comes to light as a result of excavations in this region dating back

to the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C. was the first models of collective habitation or settlement in the Baluchistan valley, which itself is one of the key factors in connecting the southern parts of Indus with the Western and Northern parts of Baluchistan, i.e. a greater part of the Iran-Afghanistan Plateau and South Iran. These settlements, with a little change in the earthenware patterns, continued for over two thousand years throughout Baluchistan valleys. This little change was meant for the improvement of individual patterns in the earthenware paintings which from archaeological point of view have the sole value of the remains of the registered area (Allchin 1989: 104-106). This aspect guided some of the original writers in explaining distinct cultures on the sole basis of painted pattern on potteries i.e. areas of Zhob and Quetta in the north and areas of Nal and Kulli (Kulli Culture) in the south (Romila Thapar 2008:22; Seyed Sajjadi 1995:198) which had special patterns. It seems that they were important elements perceived being links between the high lands of Indus Valley and adjoining and neighboring alluvial plains of the Indus basin.

The other factor is long branches and sections of trade routes in the area, particularly those leading to wealthy centers. Probably, this trade was responsible for the emergence of the stimuli for the development of simple and original settlement in a section which might be

southern Afghanistan or Sistan, and might have led to the growth of some area like Shahr-i Sokhta in Iran or Mundigak in Afghanistan which later transformed into town or towns (Fairservis 1967:48).

The result of this mutual effect is the abundance of similitude between the material culture of this areas and the Middle East which is substantiated during the examination of the archaeological segments of Namazgah I and II - Turkmenistan (Seyed Sajjadi 1995: 168 and 198).

The link between the Middle East, Iran and Indus Valley may strengthen the claim and lead to the point that this link has been solely through growing trade and commerce.

### The Indus Basin

The first known civilization of the Indus Valley (the present Pakistan) is the Pre-Harappa culture, which has sometimes been contemporary and analogous to the Harappa Civilization. Among eternal and material features of the Pre-Harappan Civilization, one may mention the fortified walls, properly arranged houses and the use of earthenware and decorative materials. From the point of view of political geography, the land occupied by the above people extended prior to Harappa, and it may be **divided into two separate zones:**

- 1- The Indian territories (present Pakistan);
- 2- The territories lying between India and Iran.

In the areas of Baluchistan and present Afghanistan, on the hills and between the valleys close to the Indo-Iran borders, there existed scattered hamlets with various cultures, all of which basically possessed common special features. Some of these hamlets later transformed into urban centers. This view is supported by extant remains of original enclosures of the Pre-Harappan Civilization, particularly in Sindh, Punjab, Gujrat and North Baluchistan (Fig.1).



**Fig.1. Map of pre-Harappan settlements (Allchin 1993:103).**

The alluvial plain extending to the Indus river valley and its tributaries made agricultural development and urbanization possible. The sources which inspired this culture consisted of Western Asia, particularly Iran, borders of Indo-Iranian Baluchistan and Afghanistan which were used for the purpose of communication and migration.

Following enclosures supplied us most of the information about the zone lying between.

### **India and Iran**

"Mundigak" in Afghanistan, "Kili Gul Muhammad", "Damb Sadaat", "Perino-Ghundai", "Rana Ghundai", "Anjira", "Siyah Damb", "Amri", "Kot Diji", "Mohenjo-daro", "Gomal" in Sindh, "Harappa" in Punjab, "Kalibangan" in the north of Indian province of Rajasthan, and Lothal" in Gujrat of India. Undoubtedly, the archeological remains and evidences obtained from these areas are much valuable to study the Pre-Harappan Civilization (Allchin, 1993: 110-112).

Unfortunately, researchers have so far been unable to tabulate the Pre-Harappan cultures in a minute chronological order, although efforts are in progress for determining the dates on the basis of the similitude between Iran, Mesopotamia and the C14 conclusions (Allchin 1976:175-190). Therefore, we may point out very briefly that the inhabitants of the western Indus area on the Iranian border had sheep, goats and cows as pet animals, and according to the archaeological evidence they made use of flint blades, jasper, agate, bone awls and grindstone. However, neither the use of any metal ware has been reported, nor has any kind of earthenware been found. However in the higher strata of enclosures excavated in Baluchistan valleys, growth of earthenware

(hand-made earthenware) has been supported which speaks of the existence of a specific culture, identical to other enclosures like Rana Ghundai, Zhob, Surjanganal and Mundigak. The special feature of later period of this culture is the appearance of wheel-made and painted earthenware.

Mundigak is a museum of cultural remains, where multicoloured and painted utensils as well as utensils with basket pains and those made of marble, stone awls, stone blades, beads of soap stone, lapis lazuli and glass pulp have been found. However, no architectural remains have been reported from other enclosures belonging to Mundigak, which shows that until then people lived in the desert settlement stage. If these remains are compared with those obtained in the areas of Sialk and Hissar-IC and IB in Iran (3300 to 3000 B.C.) the closeness and similitude of these cultures are quite visible. In other words, it is evidence showing strong cultural similitude between desert areas of Iran and the areas of Afghanistan, and northern and central Baluchistan during the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C.(Wheeler 1997: 75).

In the higher layers i.e. Kili Gul Muhammad-1, there appears architectural remains, such as sun dried bricks or clay compressed bricks, while in Mundigak there are fully built houses, and specific and dense residences in comparison with the previous age. In this very period, in Damb Sadaat, progress is

quite visible, but still lumps of compressed clay were used in their buildings. Ovens and baking furnaces were also found. In Amri-Ia, there is no built up structure, but the existence of hand-made vessels deserves attention. In Amri-Ib, two buildings of mud bricks and then in Amri-Id (Allchin 1993:124/chart 1) a four-storey building of mud bricks and stone are an example of the advanced culture of this area. Generally this period concludes with some variety in the structure of houses.

The general specific cultural feature of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C. may be summarized thus: existence of coarse mud house, then better and advanced houses of mud bricks and sometimes mud bricks and stone, cattle rearing and breeding, particularly humped cows and buffaloes, agriculture, making and use of hand made and wheel-made simple and painted earthenware, grind-stone and stone balls (Madha 1981:67-69).

One of the most important areas for cultural affinity of the cultures of Indus Basin with territories lying towards its west is the area of Mundigak in Afghanistan. The special cultural feature as an example of urban settlement consisted of the existence of thick defensive walls and square fortifications of mud bricks. Its obvious special cultural feature was the tendency towards naturalistic decorations with illustration of birds, goats, bullocks, pipal trees on earthenware.

Among the objects obtained from Mundigak includes statue of a man's head made of white lime-stone whose hair are tied with a head-cover and has striking resemblance with the ceremonial statue of a spiritual person found in Mohenjo-daro (Tavassoli 1995:9). Specimens of such decorations may be found in the contemporary cultures of Mundigak in other areas of Indus basin such as Damb Sadaat, Quetta Valley and Anjira, but conditions in south Baluchistan during this period were not still in order.

During the excavations of 1968 A.D. in the areas of Tall-e Iblis, Bampur, Tepe Yahya in South Iran, valuable remains have been obtained which are comparable with the cultures of Indus basin. In view of these remains and comparing them with material cultures of the areas of Amri, Nal and Kulli which date to 4000 to 2900 B.C., it may be said that the cultural elements of Harappa and West Baluchistan have moved towards the Indus Valley. Some of the archaeologists, particularly Dales (Dales 1965:145-150) have asserted that throughout the Harappa period there had been a constant cultural movement from their primitive to advanced civilization.

The findings of a Danish archeological group in the Persian Gulf, particularly in Bahrain, indicate significant commercial transactions between this area and the area of Kulli (Allchin 1993:141), though it may be

boldly asserted that there is an evidence of such trade in other areas as well such as Balakot. Anyhow, it is in this period that under the influence of the neighboring cultures, painted designs in the compound specimens including geometrically masterly patterns enter in abundance in the material culture of the Indus Basin. Similarly, the marginal decoration on the earthenware with pictures of cow, goat and other animals appear in the northern and central Baluchistan. The motifs of shrubs and animals, particularly the Indian Pipal tree and birds are painted well on the earthenware in this area.

The colouring of earthenware, it seems, in the early years of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium might have reached its climax. This culture develops considerably with the use of attractive multicoloured skins of animals and fish of Nal Culture, decorative margins with animals or fig leaves in Mundigak Culture, animal motifs along with sceneries in Kulli Culture, called "scarlet" in the Dayale and Susa Cultures of Iran (Manchanda 1972: 85, and Allchin 1993:141-142). All these advancements indicate the similitudes of the Iranian culture -- most of whose specimens and subjects may generally be similar to the Iranian type through summarizing the subject. In fact, we may say that the pattern of the Baluchi earthenware appears as a regional extension hence; it would not be astonishing to say that these patterns have also been employed in the textiles of this area, and

even today they are repeated mostly in the patterns of the carpets known as "Baluchi carpets".

Here, it must not be supposed that the current study attempts to justify the claim that the cultures of the Indus Basin were influenced by the Iranian culture. The objective of pursuing this historical process is just to show the importance of cultural links in the great Iranian Plateau, particularly the role of the cultures of this great plateau during the passage of thousands of years of habitation on this vast expanse.

There is much importance to study the advances Indus civilization on the one hand due to the fact that it introduces the great and superb cultural achievement, and on the other because it may be looked as a formal framework for most of the forms of the ancient, traditional and even modern civilization of India. Although our present methods of determining dates (absolute and relative) do not let us reach any absolute conclusion relating to the degree of growth of the Harappa Culture even where the modern culture special features appeared for the first time in the Indus Valley, but there is evidence of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in hand which substantiate the general cultural evolution (Dales 1965:145-150). Although the initial excavations of Sir John Marshall (Marshall 1931:78/3) provide no help in the comprehension of the subject, yet the recent excavations, particularly the scientific and reliable excavations of Fairservis (Fairservis



1992: 134) and Allchin (Allchin 1993:110-125) indicate that the towns of Harappa have in grandeur and magnitude been at least exponent of an uninterrupted growth.

In any case, there are still no sufficient evidence and reasons for understanding the absolute causes of the change and transformation of the ancient or primitive form into the advanced form in the Indus Basin (Fig.2), though a group strives to find out the answer to this important question in other places and beyond the Indus Basin. But it should be admitted that it is a commercial idea and a futile attempt. Based on available evidence in the Indian Sub-continent museums such as the National Museum of India (New Delhi), the Indus Valley had been the place where such transformation took place, and particularly when the continuance of the population, technical expertise, discoveries, writings and the administrative and social set-up is analyzed, they do vindicate the idea.



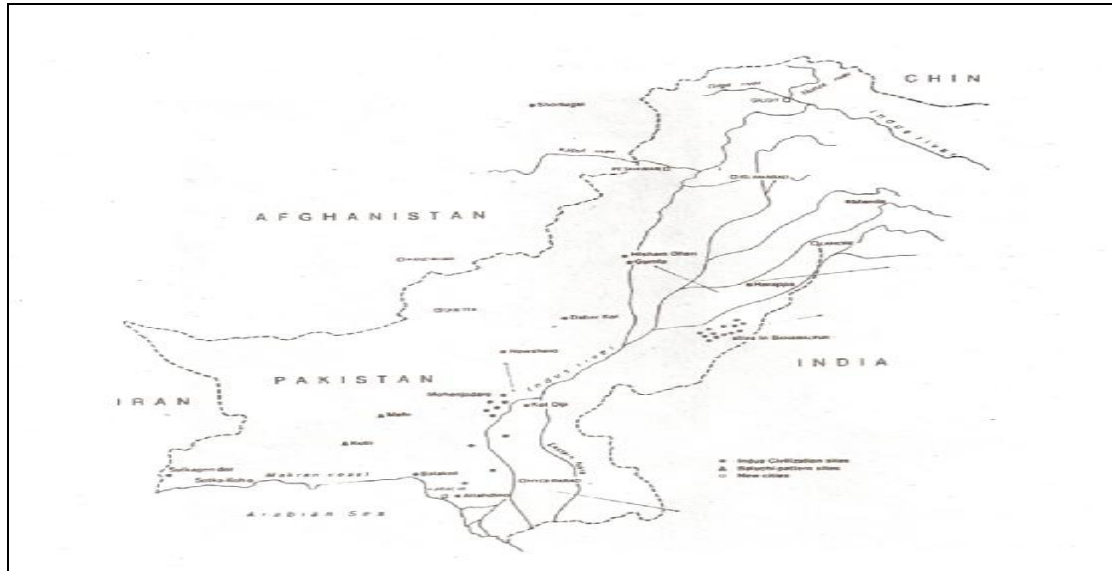
Fig.2. Plan of houses and streets, Mohenjo-daro (Wheeler 1997:48).

Anyhow, it may be said that the change of the form into the advanced civilization was an individual part of the actual requirement of the towns themselves, in the same way as in Iran during the same period a similar process had taken place, and the same progress did appear in the barter exchange of the two neighbouring countries which perforce also incorporated the cultural relations. The point which should be noted here is the vital need of settlement in the Indus plains which compelled to find out some remedy against flood, while in Iran in Sialk, Susa or Tepe Hissar there was no need for seeking such a remedy (Girshman 1968:18-42). So the invention and making of the baked bricks in Indus Basin is considered as a significant factor in the process of reaching an advanced civilization.

The zone which incorporates all the ancient enclosures having the cultural material of the said civilization is about half a million square miles, i.e. more than total area of the present Pakistan (Fig.3). In this zone, more than seventy ancient enclosures have been discovered, a large number of which, are situated in the vast Indus Plain, and around the Punjab Rivers (or five rivers: Indus, Ravi, Sutlej, Chenab, Jhelum) and a number also in the course of present dried up beds of the Hakra and Ghakkar rivers. Beyond the Indus Basin there are a number of such enclosures the remotest of them being close to the present Pak-

Iran border on the Makran coast, Sutkagen Dor. Perhaps it may be said that the latter enclosures might be commercial bases or ports which had

appeared in a separate cultural zone in the highlands of Baluchistan beyond the Harappa zone. In fact, they were considered as the



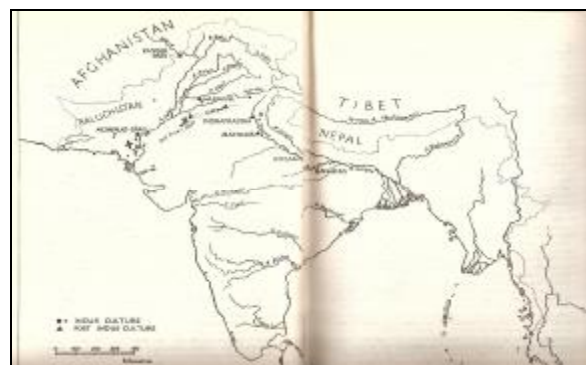
**Fig.3.Indus Civilization sites in Pakistan (Tavassoli 1999:49)**

cultural links between the ancient enclosures of Iran and Indus Basin.

On the eastern side of the Indus, there lay remoter enclosures the remotest of them being the commercial base of Lothal in the Indian territory. From among the recent discoveries, the most important Harappa enclosures are Shortughai in the southern Oxus Plain on the bank of River Oxus in the north eastern Afghanistan which has appeared as the trade

center of lapis lazuli in the neighbouring mines (Fig.4). Perhaps some other commodity like copper was also traded there (Rao 1985:711). From these excavations, generally speaking, a

large amount of information has been obtained which enables a researcher to study the changes taking place in the specimens of the settlement and in connection with understanding the internal links and relations of the zone, and ultimately leads him to a better explanation (Misra 1984:22/12).



**Fig.4.Indus Culture and Post-Indus Culture (Kosambi 1985:56-57)**

### **The Basin of the Iranian Civilization**

The oldest extant sign of the ancient Iranian footprint in the Iranian Plateau leaves bare a panorama of the ancient history and a long story. "Iranvije" is the name given to this land in the oldest Iranian texts, i.e. the *Avesta*, and most probably is the name of the ancient Iranian people whose origin is not definitely known. Indeed, the ancient people of western Iran, the Medes and the Parthian centuries before in the neighborhood the communities of those days, i.e. the Elamites and the Assyrians entered the arena of history, like the Avestan communities of eastern Iran, must have left behind its unseen horizons (Zarinkoob 1994:15).

The Avestan and Assyrian texts are the most important sources which provide valuable information about these communities. It comes out from these texts as well as the works of the later historians, particularly Herodotus, Hippocrates, Ptolemy and others who have written something about the communities who lived before them, that people from the cold lands of northern Asia have migrated in several stages to the Iranian Plateau, and settled down in its western and eastern parts. They must be the ancestors of the Indo-Iranian Aryans, who had separated from each other sometimes (probably in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C.), and each group has traveled to a new territory. Perhaps this is why the new land from Transoxania and Hindukush to the valley of Zhob and the

hillsides of Zagros and from the banks of Indus River and the Persian Gulf to a part of the Caspian Sea is called "Iranshahr". It seems that this idea has been due to the knowledge of these people about their common origin and their relation with each other (Girshman 1968: 10-16).

Anyhow, this common racial root of the immigrants of Iranians and the Indians of the Vedic Age, the early years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. had migrated from Indus or Hindukush area to India (or Bharat) has been confirmed by all historians. The only point which has, in the opinion of the writer, remained entirely in dark and unknown is the original abode of the Aryans as no light has been thrown on their original and actual place from where they had migrated. Although, plenty of suppositions and opinions have been offered by the western and eastern historiographers, but it seems that the reliance on these beliefs shall not be free from bias. From this point of view, before the arrival of the Aryans to this land, the history of western Iran is not supported by any sources except the Assyrian sources. Likewise, as regards to eastern Iran, there is no reliable source in hand except *Avesta*, and inevitably, one has to suffice with what has been obtained through archaeology (Girshman 1968:10-15).

The oldest human habitation in the plains so far known is Tepe Sialk near Kashan in Qum

province, as signs of the first human settlement have been obtained in this artificial hill. In this age known as the Pre-historic Age of Iran, man did not know how to build a house and lived under the hovels made of branches of tree.

In this age, the first human advancement is related to the making of earthenware and painted vessels. At the end of this age, man could know the first metal which he used, and discovered that copper is laminable, though it would have taken years to learn how to melt it. He buried his dead under the floor of his room after wrapping him in some way.

In the second stage i.e. in the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C., the houses became wider and clay walls were replaced by newly-invented mud-bricks which were baked in the sun. Similarly the potter would illustrate some creatures by simple lines indicating a movement for true illustration, and characterized the pattern of this age. Trade spread simultaneously with the art of pottery and the human effort for having agricultural products, and commerce started between the Western and Eastern world. Barley and wheat which are the native products of Iran were exported to Egypt and Europe, and millet originally produced in India was exported to the West via Iran (Nafici 1963:1/11).

The third stage in the evolutionary process of the Iranian civilization is again characterised by Silk, and that is the use of even and

rectangular bricks made of soft clay instead of uneven and oval shaped bricks. Similarly, the invention of the potter's wheel and brick kilns took place. The collection of the painted earthenware of Sialk and collections obtained from Susa, Persepolis and Hissar shed a light on the variety and advancement of art in this age. The metal work through melting copper and the art of foundry also developed, and the manufacture of the toilet goods like mirror and small and big pins also came in vogue. The use of varieties of rock crystals, lapis lazuli, agate and turquoise and the use of shells and green jaspers imported from different places for making ornaments also became in vogue, giving boots to trade exchange. For the security of the big and small commercial packages and determination of their ownership seals were used. The discovery of plenty seals and their prints and identical ornaments in Iran and throughout the vast Indus Basin and the areas of Mesopotamia and Central Asia are an evidence of the expansion of trade in the Great Iranian Plateau in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C.

An important feature of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C. is the invention of script known as the Earlier Elamite Script. The transformation of the pattern in making uniform red and grey vessels instead of the previous painted vessels is another feature of this age. Similarly, the clod seal was replaced by cylindrical seal. The dead were still buried under the floor of the rooms

along with some articles and vessels. The importance of the civilization in this age, known particularly in Susa and penetrating inside the Iranian Plateau lies in the use of script. A large number of plates have been discovered in Susa, Sialk and other ancient sites of Iran. These areas, particularly Sialk are the sole areas in the Iranian Plateau which have yielded written evidence of pre-Achemenian period. Until the end of this age and until before the arrival of Aryans in Iran, vast area of the Iranian Plateau served as a highway for the transfer of art and ideas of various communities and the intermediate between the eastern and the western world of those days.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C., though its history is not minutely determined, a very important incident took place in the history of the Iranian Plateau which changed the face of this land culturally and politically. It was the arrival of a new people, the Aryans, to the Iranian Plateau which led to the entry of a number of new cultural elements into the native culture of the area whose cultural effects became evident later. Large bands of belligerent riders of Aryan communities belonging in fact to a bigger branch known as the Eastern Branch and today known as the Indo-Iranian Aryans, moved towards the south-eastern Iran along the folds of Central Zagros, and mixed with the native communities, the Kassites, and settled down in their land.

The Kassites lived in the Zagros area from time immemorial (Diakonov 1966:160-166), and were neighbours of even perhaps kindred of the Elamites. These people had knowledge about horses, and also knew well the art of pottery and metal-work. The well-known and big world museums are full of bronzes of Kassite, discovered in the enclosures and ancient places of Luristan, known as "Luristan Bronzes" (Minorski 1931:14-25). The name of the Kassite kings is duly registered in history. So the Aryan migrants after arrival in a section of the Iranian Plateau came in contact and mixed with a people who themselves had a valuable and rich culture and tradition.

In the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C., like the previous millennium, emigrants from the north entered Iran again, and put an end to the previous reigns (like Hittites), but the racial composition and roots and origin of the people who became united later in the western part of Iran and founded the Median Kingdom, are not quite clear, but it may be safely said that cattle-rearing was very popular among them; they would breed horses and knew well about metal work with admiralty-metal and pottery had developed very much among them.

It may be recalled that more than fifteen centuries of Iranian history consists of historical age during which the first kingdom was established in Iran and it continued until the death of the last Sassanian, Yezdgerd III (in 651

A.D.). During this long period, each of the dynasties in one way or the other maintained cultural, trade and political relations with the subjugated and neighboring nations, without at least reference to them, this discourse will be incomplete. Undoubtedly, dealing with all the special features of this long period, several books may be written. But here the intention is to cast a glance at the principal subject, i.e., the cultural links between Iran and India from archaeological point of view, and to suffice with providing general information.

As among various communities of the Aryan race, the Indo-Iranian civilization is older than the civilization of other communities. It seems that these two clans must have stepped into civilization earlier than the others. These two clans, according to the evidence of *Avesta* (Darmsteter 1893:33) have originated from the same land, and therefore inevitably their ancient tales and mythology must have been identical to a large extent, and they must be possessing plenty of identical and common vocabulary. This fact indicates that they must have belonged to the same origin (Romila Thapar 2008:31).

Although today, a large number of research books have been written about these two great Aryan clans (Olmstead 1948: chapter 1 onward), yet the Zoroastrian holy book, *Avesta*, particularly part of Hymn Book, i.e., "Gatha" remains the most reliable source. In *Avesta*, the names of sixteen divisions of Iran have been

mentioned (Nafici 1963:6-7), showing the dispersion of Aryan people those days. These sixteen divisions are: 1. Iranvije 2. Sughda 3. Moro (Merve) 4. Bakhzi (Baxter) 5. Nysaya (Nysa town in present Turkmanistan) 6. Harayuva (Heri or Heart in Afghanistan) 7. Vaikarta (present Kabul) 8. Uru (Ghazna) 9. Vahrgan (Gorgan) 10. Harhovati (Raxj or Raxd in south Afghanistan) 11. Itumant (Helman Valley) 12. Raga (Raey) 13. Shaxra or Chaxra (Shahrud area) 14. Varan (Alburz area) 15. Hapta Hindu (Punjab of Pakistan) 16. Vasra (Its exact situation not known).

Therefore, *Avesta* is the oldest source that confirms the link between Iran and the eastern lands, particularly the subjugated communities until the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium. We may better say that the areas of the Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan, or a greater part of present Pakistan, was part of the great Iranian Plateau in the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. and even in A.D. (Khan 1971:xiv-xx), and inevitably enjoyed a high position in the development and evolution of the eastern Iranian culture and civilization, and it would be worthwhile if this contribution is minutely studied by the researchers on some opportune time.

### **The Great Iranian Plateau**

A large part of eastern Iran is the 15<sup>th</sup> division which has been mentioned in the *Avesta* as "Hapta Hindu". This area which comprises the

land around the Indus River incorporates two big provinces of Sindh and Punjab. In fact, Hapta means seven, and Hindu is used for the present Indus. From Iranian point of view, it is the same seven Rivers which today, due to drying up of two of its branches, is called the Punjab. The word Hind is the name given to this land by Iranians, and later Hindustan (Bharat) was also Hind, though at first the word was used for both the river and the country (Nafici 1963:38).

In about 559 B.C., the Achaemenian kingdom was founded. During the Achaemenian rule, Baluchistan and a part of the Sindh region was called the seventeenth province, while Punjab (Gandhara) was the twentieth province (Satrap) of Iran.

These provinces the levying of taxes was managed through persons called Shahrban, Farmandeh-e kol and high ranking officials. For example, one-third of the taxes must have been received from Hind province (Girshman 1968:134). For maintaining link between various centers of the empire and their capitals, a network of secure roads was created, and these highways were in the first place used for administrative purposes. These were the secure roads from where the caravans passed, and trade was carried out easily, and would cause increase in their number. One of these highways was the one which started in the eastern borders of the Achaemenian empire from Pasargad to

Kabul Valley, and from there along with the Kabul River it would terminate in Indus Valley. Unfortunately the scanty of the sources does not permit to give more details. Anyhow it may be believed that the great Achaemenian king (Cyrus) had been able to reach Gandhara or the area of Peshawar. There is likelihood operation of Darius resulted in the merger of the whole area of Gandhara and the entire western India and Indus Valley up to its delta in the Iranian territory. In Susa a tablet has been discovered on which the following words have been inscribed: "These are the countries outside Pars which I have conquered. They are under my domination. Their tribute is paid to me, and whatever command is issued by is carried out, and my decisions are honored by them. Media, Elam, Parthia, Aria (Herat), Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorsmia (Xarazm), Zrangiana, Archosia, Sattagydia, Gandhara, Sindh, Amyrgian, Scythians... provinces were in commotion; no man was smiting the other. The following I brought about by the favour of Ahuramazda, that the one does not smite the other at all, each one I put in his place, and they carry out my decisions, so that the stronger does not smite nor destroy the weak... May Ahuramazda ... protect me, and my royal house, and what has been inscribed by me." (Girshman 1968:145).

It seems that part of the commandment of Darius is the first sparking of the illumination of the element of Iranian culture and moral on

the eastern Iran which is later delineated in the discoveries of the Gandhara culture.

The cultural link of the great Iranian land in this period is such that each of the provinces fulfill the requirements of the country, and play an important role in its internal and external trade relations. Sistan was famous for its tin, and south Caucasus for its silver and iron. Copper and iron were exported from Lebanon and the higher valleys of Tigris and Euphrated. Gold and silver were extracted from Kerman area. Cyprus Island, Asia Minor, Lebanon and India were important centres of wood cutting. Turquoise and agate were extracted from Khorasan mines. Herodotus writes that part of the imperial tribute paid by Egypt was in the form of marine products. Agriculture was the key to the country's industry and was considered the natural labour of a freeman (Girshman 1968:175). Cattle-rearing was common throughout the empire. The steps of Persepolis set in relief indicate the variety of agricultural products and the existence of commercial exchange in the Iranian Plateau.

Since the foundation of the Achaemenian Empire, the ancient world set its foot on the sound economic age. Trade relations developed due to the existence of secure and even roads. The system of coins boosted economic activity. The Iranian coins were current up to Trans-Indus, Baluchistan valleys, Bahrain, Suez Canal, Lydia, Sardinia, and Mesopotamia. The

Greek, Phoenecian and Arab navigators maintained the links between India, the Persian Gulf, Babylonia, Egypt and the East European ports. The world trade was gradually extended to the farthest corners of the world, and spread to Rivers Danube and Rhine. The coins discovered in the collections indicate its expanse. In those days India and Ceylon exported spices, pepper and scented barks. The archaeological discoveries have provided jars in which oil products, medicine and honey were supplied, which testify to the trade relations with the West. Likewise the beads of crimson agates found in the Indus Valley and Summer, evidently produced in Iran (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1979:124), allude to the extensive trade relations of Iran with the neighbouring countries of the eastern and western world of those days. The extension of this culture, the beads of the crimson agate was drawn up to the other section of the lands around Iran, i.e. Kish and Russia. Some specimens of pottery have been discovered in Sindh and Mesopotamia which exactly identical with those found during the excavations in the ancient enclosures of Iran, such as Tepe Hissar, Turang Tepe, Shah Tepe, Tepe Yahya, Bampur and Shahr-i Sokhta, which are evidence, though weak, for the existence of interrelations between Sindh, Iran and Mesopotamia in the ancient times (Mackay 1979:133).

One of the most important sites of ancient



Iran that may provide very useful evidence in connection with the commercial and cultural relations of Iran with her highlands lying in the east and west is Tepe Yahya. This hill is situated in Kerman area whose antiquity, according to archeologist Lamberg-Karlovsky dates back to 4500 B.C. According to what has been obtained from this ancient enclosure, it is proved that Tepe Yahya played important role in the distribution and control of the natural resources of soap rock in the East and West (Mackay 1979:135). In the later age, i.e. during the years 3400 to 3200 B.C. the production of earthenware of the Nal type which existed for a long time in the Harappa civilization was in vogue in this area. During this very period several articles have been obtained which were made by locals and imported material like Absidine, soap rock, crimson agate, turquoise and the shells of the Persian Gulf, etc. (Mackay 1979:135). The existences of these articles in the higher layers of Tepe Yahya testify to the view that area had extensive link with the civilized areas like proto-Elamite tablets, Susa-type cylindric seals. Cylindric seals in the shape of obliquar, edged goblets of a distinct native type of Tepe Yahya and Aruk which are today found in an administrative place vindicate this view. Similarly cups of soap rock in various shapes and motifs discovered in the ancient enclosures of Mesopotamia like Kish, Tall-e Asmar, Khafche, Ur and in Mohenjo-daro and

also over 1500 pieces of soap rock in the form of finished and unfinished articles found in a mine about 1500 kilometers from the Hill (Tepe) strongly indicates this opinion that Tepe Yahya had been a place for the production and export of articles made of soap rock. It must be added that the earthenware found in this area are identical with those found in Bampur, Shahr-i Sokhta and Tall-e Iblis, and are to some extent comparable with the painted earthenware of Baluchistan (Mackay 1979:136).

According to a report (Mackay 1979: 137), Bahrain had been the trade intermediary between the centres of Indus and Mesopotamia civilizations, in the sense that it would link the extensive trade relation of these areas and would transport the required merchandise from one side to another. The existence of weighing stones in Bahrain made in Indus Valley, the Persian Gulf seals in Lothal, etc. supports this view. It is natural that trade relations must have taken place between one city-government with organized administrative system and regular economic, political and social structure.

### **Conclusion**

In a nutshell, it may be asserted that in view of plenty of articles discovered from Tepe Yahya and those found in extensive enclosures lying between Mesopotamia on one side and the Indus Valley on the other, trade relation have been an important factor in linking the ancient

world, and consequently a factor responsible for the spread of the advanced civilizations to the other areas. No doubt, future excavations of this long range from Mesopotamia to south eastern Iran and then to eastern Pakistan will clarify a number of existing ambiguities.

The existence of semi-precious and imported articles and stones found in the most important ancient enclosures of south eastern Iran, i.e. Shahr-i Sokhta, indicate an organized trade system during the Bronz Age with lands far and close to it, particularly Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Mundigak and Amri on one side and Tepe Yahya, Susa and Mesopotamia on the other. Undoubtedly, trade was carried out between Shahr-i Sokhta and the lands lying beyond the geographical limits of Sistan, and merchandise like semi-precious stones, like cobalt, turquoise, marine products such as shells and shark teeth were exchanged. The evident and abundant similitudes between the residential enclosures of eastern Iran and its eastern, northern and north eastern neighbours in the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C. allude to the existence of consistent cultural exchange in this extensive area. What is discovered in Shahr-i Sokhta has been easily discovered in the eastern enclosures. The most important of these articles is cobalt stone which had been excavated from the huge mines of Badakhshan and was brought to Shahr-i Sokhta, and, after preliminary lathing, was exported via

Kerman and Fars to Susa and then to the towns of Mesopotamia.

The archaeological remains indicate that Shahr-i Sokhta was considered one of the important trade and commercial centers of Iranian east. The extant plenty of similitudes between the articles found in the ancient enclosures of Afghanistan and Indus Valley and Shahr-i Sokhta allude to very close cultural and trade relations between them. It is natural that we must not ignore the important economic role of Tepe Yahya in this connection during the First and Second Centuries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C. As already pointed out, Tepe Yahya had been the biggest centre of production and supply of products made of soap rock in the area, and the articles produced by it were supplied hand to hand throughout the world. The scientific archaeological excavations indicate that none of the civilized places of that time from Harappa to Mesopotamia had rich mines of soap rock, and no doubt they imported the rock or articles made of it. The knowledge of four vast places around Tepe Yahya fully strengthen this claim regarding the extraction of this rock that Tepe Yahya was a centre for the production and export of the stone industries throughout the area.

It must, however, be admitted that the similitude of the natural environment of Baluchistan and the eastern highland of Iran has

influenced the geographical situation of the two areas in the development of the region. The present communication lines have been arranged according to the previous old roads. The mountainous ranges, plains and valleys have had an obvious role in the perpetuity of these links, and this is distinguished from the present morphic plan of area.

Iran, due to its very good geographical situation, lying between the western and eastern countries of the Asian region, has always been the cradle of civilization and rich culture among these countries. The history of the beginning of the cultural development of Iran in its own environment and that of the countries under her influence dates back to about 5000 B.C. Since those days up to date Iran and its eastern neighbours have had consistent common interests and cultural and trade relations.

In the end, we should refer to the recent excavations in some ancient sites in Pakistan, such as Mehrgarh and Nowshero. Prof. A.H.Dani (1988:46-48) writes:" At Mehrgarh four sites numbered MR 1,2,3 and 4 were excavated. Period I is yielding Neolithic material. In period II, noted at MR3, hunting and gathering practically disappeared. In their place, came a cultivation of cereal crops and animal husbandry. The excavation yielded more than one hundred bone awls and several of grooved stones used in shaping their points. Flint tools continued to be abundant. Only one

copper ring and one copper bead have been found." He further points out: "Period III, was marked by important developments in the art of pottery making. In this period the wheel-made pottery was mass produced...period IV, the beginning of which is dated to 3500 B.C., was encountered at MR1. Here the plan of a house was uncovered. The two-roomed house with a huge wall has a low door just as at Mundigak." (Dani 1988:46-48)

Regarding to Nowshero, Dani notes: "The Nowshero mound yielded on the surface 80% typical, mature Harappan objects together with a few fragments of human figurines, which correspond in their fabrics and styles to specimens from the uppermost levels of period VII at Mehrgarh. Considering the fact that at Mehrgarh no mature Harappan finds have been noted, except for perforated pots on the surface, Mehrgarh was probably deserted before Harappan colonization. Kot Diji style bands painted around the necks of vases have been found in the uppermost layers." (Dani 1988:51-52)

No doubt, in this brief study, plenty of subjects have perforce been deleted and the authors have not been able to fully expose the importance of all the ancient enclosures of Iran and Indian Sub-continent and their role in this extensive connection. Whatever has been given is only a short analytical rough sketch of the plenty archaeological discoveries, with sole

intention of opening the door for detailed research.

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## ایران و هند: بررسی راههای ارتباطی و داد و ستد (با اشاره ویژه به مدارک باستان شناختی)

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باستان شناسی علمی رو به رشد است که در حال کشف بقایای آثار انسان در طول تاریخ می باشد و بهترین مدرک برای فهم روابط انسانی است که همکاری نزدیک بین کشورهای همسایه، بویژه دو کشور همجوار را نشان می دهد.

درست در عصر مفرغ که انسان سازمان اجتماعی بهتری را تشکیل داده، باستان شناسی مدارک مثبتی برای همکاری اقتصادی و فنی در جهت وضع زندگی بهتر و تامین آسایش بیشتر انسان ارائه نموده است. در شبه قاره هند و پاکستان شواهد قدیمی از نقش و نگارهای سفالینه های یافته شده از قلعه گل محمد و ژوب و دره لورالایی در بلوچستان، که در مرحله بعدی به مواد بزرگتری در مهرگر تبدیل شد، نشان از رشدی مداوم را مجسم می سازد. سپس این منطقه وارد مرحله تمدن سند پیشرفته می شود که شهرهای موهنجودارو و هاراپا نماینده آن هستند. بنظر می رسد چنین نقش و نگاری شهری نمی توانست بدون تماس عمیقی با فرهنگهای عصر مفرغ ایران، که مدارک آن از کاوش های بمپور، تپه یحیی، تپه سیلک و تپه حصار بدست آمده اند، گسترش پیدا کند. بنابراین، با تکیه بر داده های باستان شناختی می توان گفت که مردم فلات ایران و امتداد آن در بلوچستان و حتی در سند، روابط تجاری عمیقی با یکدیگر استوار کرده بودند.

در آغاز هزاره چهارم پ.م. تجارت همزمان با فن کوزه گری و تلاش انسان در تولید فرآورده های

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کشاورزی گسترش یافت و داد و ستد با دنیای غرب و شرق شروع شد. جو و گندم از ایران به مصر و اروپا رفت و ارزن از هند و از طریق ایران به غرب رسید. همچنین مقدار زیادی مهر و زیورآلات مشابه در ایران و سرتاسر حوزه وسیع سند و نواحی بین النهرین و آسیای میانه دلالت بر گستردگی تجاری در حوزه تمدن ایرانی در همین دوره دارد.

این مقاله سعی دارد با استفاده از مدارک باستان‌شناختی بحث و اثبات نماید که پیشرفتهای صورت گرفته در این حوزه وسیع بویژه در مکانهای باستانی ایران و هند غربی (پاکستان امروزی) بخاطر راههای ارتباطی مانند جاده ابریشم و داد و ستد های بازرگانی بوده است. نکته دیگر اثبات این تئوری است که این تجارت نه تنها انگیزه‌هایی را برای توسعه شهرنشینی ساده و ابتدایی در بخش‌های مختلف منطقه مورد بحث بوجود آورده بلکه موجب گسترش مبادلات فرهنگی بویژه در خصوص الگوی شهرسازی، معماری و هنر (بخصوص در موهنجودارو و شهر سوخته) شده است.

واژگان کلیدی: مدارک باستان‌شناختی؛ شبه قاره هند؛ پاکستان؛ دره سند؛ حوزه تمدن ایرانی؛ موهنجودارو؛ روابط تجاری و فرهنگی.