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A General Study of Indus Valley Civilization Trending Relations with Comparative Asian Countries

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Abstract: One of the earliest urban civilizations, the Indus Valley Civilization was born on the banks of Sutlej, Ravi, and Indus River basins around 2300 BC. Numerous traces of the Harappan culture and Indus Valley trade were discovered when archaeologists began exploring this area. The issue of commercial ties with other places has generated a lot of debate ever since the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization. Based on my comparative examination of beads from the Indus Valley, I revisit some of the evidence supporting and have also given some fresh data in this article that the Indus valley civilization had some external trade links. We are all aware that the Indus Valley civilization was a significant civilization during its time, and examples of its trade relationships with modern civilization continue to appear occasionally even today. Foreign trade with Afghanistan, Iran, and other neighbouring nations was part of the Harappan culture. People from the Indus Valley traded with Mesopotamia. A Mesopotamian seal has been found which was used as a translator of the Meluhhan language, indicating that there was a direct trade relationship between the two cultures in the later third millennium. Ships from Meluhha docked in Mesopotamian ports, and some Meluhhans settled in Sumer. So, the trade between the two civilizations was managed by the Harappans. This research paper mentioned that trade, which was particularly popular with the Indus valley culture, was incorporated into the trading of the Harappan civilization. Jewelry and accessories composed of beads, seashells, and pearls that were traded have been mentioned in this paper. Even painted Terracotta pots were created and traded by the Harappan people. They also offered colored gemstones including turquoise, lapis, and lapis lazuli. The primary goods exchanged were metals and flint-stone implements. The Harappan people once traveled across the seas to trade with other countries. According to the seaports discovered in the Harappan civilization, they were not restricted to

Keywords: Indus valley civilization, Harappan, Trade, Mesopotamian, Afghanistan, Iran etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Indus and nearby river basins witnessed the golden age of the Harappan culture in the second part of the third millennium BCE. Numerous scholars, including Cunningham (1875:105–108), Marshall (1930), Mackay (1938), Wheeler (1968), Joshi (1993), Lal (1978:65–97), Thapar (1973:85–104),

Bisht (1987; 1991:71–82), Possehl (1999), and Kessler (1999), have conducted research in this field for nearly a century and have gathered a vast amount of data that has helped understand the formative stages through maturity, The number of Harappan sites has increased steadily since the 1920s when the idea of the "Indus Civilization" first became clear. Currently, there are 477 early Harappan sites, 1,022 mature Harappan sites, and 1,281 post-urban Harappan sites (Possehl 1999: 1-33). Recent excavations at locations such as Harappa (Kenoyer et al. 1991: 331–75), Dholavira (Bisht 1976: 16–22; 1987; 1991: 71–82; 1993: 35–38; 1994: 23–31), Rakhigarhi (Nath 1997–98: 39–45), etc., have made it possible for us to comprehend the dynamism in the development, maturity, and eventual decline of this civilization.

The middle of the third millennium BCE is a turning point in Indian trade history since it marks the beginning of transatlantic trade with the Mediterranean region via the Persian Gulf and Iran (Lamberg-Karlevsky 1972: 222-229; Possehl 2002: 325-342). From the excavations at the historical sites, both in India and the Mediterranean region, trade-related artefacts have been found. These findings strongly suggest that a trading network existed between the Indus valley civilizations and Sumerian civilization in the Mediterranean region at the beginning of about the middle of the third millennium BCE. The locations where products were being shipped to the Sumerian civilization by sea, Dilmun, Magan, and Meluhha, are mentioned in the cuneiform records. The location of the sea route and the portrayal of a ship on the Indus pottery offer hints that Meluhha could only have been one of the commercial hubs of the Indus civilization. The beads were among the items exported from Indu's industrial hubs to the Sumerian markets of the time.

Under the urban framework of the Indus civilization, the intra-regional and inter-regional networks of acquiring raw materials and the distribution of finished goods from the Neolithic/Chalcolithic and pre-Indus periods in the northwestern region expanded into a wider distribution network of the finished goods at an international level. At Susa and Jalalabad in Iran, long carnelian beads of the Indus type were found and collected from the surface. The Jalalabad collection consists of four Susa and Marlikm beads, one of which is a long carnelian bead of the Indus type. According to Chakrabarti and Moghadam (1977: 168), those were originally widely trafficked along the land route based on the locations of their find areas in Susa, Jalalabad, and Marlikm. Along with the long, cylindrical carnelian beads, Mesopotamia also traded with the Indus engraved carnelian beads. The export of etched beads from the Indus is suggested by the discovery of carnelian beads with Indus-style etching in Mesopotamian sites. Etched beads similar to those discovered at Mohenjodaro and Chanhudaro were discovered in Ur and Kish excavations. The carved carnelian beads with identical Indus patterns were reported from Nippur in addition to Ur and Kish (During Caspers 1972:86), Tell Asmar Assur, and Tell Brak (Mackay 1925: 697-701). These carnelian beads have etched designs that mimic those on beads from Lothal, Chanhudaro, Mohenjodaro, Harappa, and Kalibangan. The similarity of the motifs suggests yet another exchange route between the Sumerian and Indus civilizations (During Caspers 1972: 87).

According to Asthana, who cited previously published studies, specific faience, gold, and lapis lazuli bead shapes have been discovered in the excavations of the Indus and Mediterranean civilizations. That suggested a common point of genesis for them (Asthana 1993:271-285). The Indus artisans experimented with the raw materials at hand, driven by the needs and desires of their consumers and the market. Thus, they were able to inject expertise and vigor into the Indus bead manufacturing business in addition to introducing creative concepts to make unique and novel beads of all shapes and sizes. One of the elements necessary for the Indus people to continue long-distance economic activity may have been the distribution of resources and finished goods. According to a recent study on the

exploitation of semiprecious stone resources, the Indus artisans of Chanhudaro, Harappa, Dholavira, Lothal, Harappa, Mohenjodaro, and other manufacturing centers obtained the raw materials from remote locations both within their domain and the resource-rich peripheral areas. For distribution within the trade network inside the Indus domain and on international markets, manufacturing facilities at those locations manufactured beads that complied with the requirements set by certain elites or traders. According to Kenoyer, locations, such as Chanhudaro and Harappa, were known for having the highest level of competence and control in the production of long, cylindrical carnelian beads. These beads were distributed to other significant cities, including Mohenjo-Daro, and foreign locations in the Mediterranean region (Kenoyer et al. 1994: 281-306).

The wide alluvial plains of the Indus River and its tributaries are home to all of the Indus Valley's major urban centers, therefore the majority of the raw materials used to make metal products and luxuries would have been traded from nearby resource areas. It is impossible to ascertain the type of territorial control exercised by towns or regional political bodies without the use of recorded materials. As a result, experts believe that the distribution of sites containing Harappan architecture, pottery, seals, and other diagnostic artifacts reflects the degree of Indus community dominance over the economy and politics. According to the evidence available, the major alluvial plains, the western piedmont regions of Baluchistan, the regions of Kutch and Saurashtra, and a large portion of contemporary Gujarat would be included in the Indus' internal commerce or contact sphere. As far north as Shortugai in Afghanistan, lone Harappan sites have been discovered (Frankfort 1984), but this does not imply that the entire area between Sarai Khola and the Oxus River was included in the Indus interaction system. Less is known about the situation in Baluchistan to the south, where Indus towns and kindred Kulli culture sites have been discovered (Dales 1976; Possehl 1986). SutkagenDor (Dales 1962; Dales &Lipo 1992) was most likely a significant seaport and trading station, while Miri Kalat (Besenval 1994) was most likely the center of the upland trade. The Salt Range and the piedmont region of Kohistan have numerous Harappan sites (Mughal 1974; Dani 1970-71; Durrani 1988; Durrani, Ali & Erdosy 1991), where passages connect lowland grazing areas to the highlands. We can conclude that the sites in Baluchistan were indeed a part of the internal commerce networks, supplying the Indus towns with rocks, minerals, and processed metals like copper, bronze, lead, and tin because they are frequently just a few days' travels from the Indus alluvium. The considerable amounts of materials from the resource areas that were being transported to the major urban centers are the strongest indicators of this internal commerce. Chert, various types of grinding stones and pestles, different varieties of agate, carnelian, and jasper, as well as numerous other minerals, are among the materials that have been kept the best. From these nearby regions, processed metals including copper, bronze, silver, gold, and lead were also transported to the cities. Other maritime resources, including as dried fish and raw and semi-processed marine shells, were also transported inland to locations in the Indus plain and even as far north as Shortugai. The widespread use of standardized weights and seals, which denote elements of economic and political authority, further reflects internal trade and exchange. It is possible to link particular artifacts to locations or areas through the examination of raw materials, manufacturing processes, and the identification of actual production facilities.

The organization of production and trade, as well as the patterns of internal trade networks, have all been studied using shell bangles created from various marine species (Kenoyer 1983; 1984). Although occasionally thin and twisted bangles were manufactured from the spiny Murex, Chicoreus ramosus, they were mainly exclusively made from the enormous snail Turbinella Hyrum. The use of the bivalve Tivela damages to create jewelry that closely resembles the more circular bangles made from gastropods is another variation in bangle production. It has been feasible to reconstruct

the actual internal trade networks and the types of items being moved thanks to the manufacture of bangles from different species in various regions. For instance, the production of Tivela damages at the Balakot site (Dales & Kenoyer 1977) and other locations in this coastal region has been observed (Kenoyer 1983). Some of these bangles were being worn or traded to far-off sites within the Indus valley, according to an analysis of shell fragments at Lothal and more recently at Harappa (Kenoyer 1997). The site of Nageshwar was producing other shell products, including half-finished bangles and ladles manufactured from the Murex shell (Chicoreus ramosus) that were likely exported to Harappa and Mohenjodaro (Bhan & Kenoyer 1980-81). Large columella of Turbinella Hyrum may have been formed into cylinders and exported to Indus sites for use in making beads or inlay, but they may also have been prepared for external trade to Mesopotamia, where there is proof that Turbinella Hyrumbased shell cylinder seals were used there (Gensheimer 1984). While various Indus sites used identical processes to create agate and carnelian beads, the raw materials could only be found in a few places. The lengthy carnelian nodules that are used to create similarly long biconical carnelian beads are of particular importance in the context of this article. Although there may be indications of manufacturing at Mohenjodaro and Harappa, Chanhudaro is the only location where such lengthy beads have been produced (Mackay 1943). Nevertheless, there may be proof of manufacture at Mohenjodaro and Harappa.

Although their specific origin is still unknown, massive carnelian nodules have been found in the agate-bearing gravels of Ratanpur, and they would have been present throughout much of Kutch, Saurashtra, and Gujarat wherever this enormous geological deposit is reachable (Kenoyer, Vidale & Bhan 1991). Studies are currently being conducted to determine whether the PIXE analysis, which has been successful elsewhere (Theunissen, Grave, & Bailey 2000), will be effective for the characterization of the Indus carnelian. While the origin of the carnelian can generally be identified, it is less obvious where the special material utilized to make the stone drills necessary to penetrate these hard stones comes from. In honor of Ernest J. H. Mackay, who initially discovered the drilling at Chanhudaro, this substance has been given the name "Ernestite" (Kenoyer & Vidale 1992) drill raw material x-ray examination by electron microprobe.

The prehistoric era has been the subject of several theories for commerce and exchange networks (Lamberg- Karlovsky 1975; Clark 1968), but most of these models cannot be fully tested in the absence of written records from the Indus Valley. Internal commerce networks had a high degree of stratification, according to the scant archaeological data from Indus digs (Kenoyer 1989). The inter-regional networks between larger cities and their surrounding areas appear to have been more direct. With intra-regional networks, these cities were connected to smaller towns and villages in turn. Subsistence supplies and locally manufactured goods would have been distributed locally without the use of broader networks.

There appear to have been at least three major systems of exchange during the latter half of the Early Harappan period and throughout the Harappan period in addition to the stratification of networks (Kenoyer 1998). A centralized authority or a group of business partners who maintained control over the trading of commodities can be seen in the adoption of uniform weights. These weights were employed to determine tax rates or to levy actual taxes on traders who brought a wide range of other items into the cities, rather than for regular market trading. Recent Harappa excavations have revealed that most of the standardized weights are found close to the fortified mounds' gateways, a position where products could be tracked and taxed as they entered or left the city (Kenoyer 1991).

The other two trading networks are somewhat speculative and without any concrete archaeological evidence. One was presumably a barter system where things were traded for grains or other necessities

of life. This kind of trading may be reflected in graffiti on pottery and written tablets with numbers or names of goods. The use of seals on containers such as jars or bales of merchandise also suggests some type of verification of the items and contents (Parpola 1994). There are currently no identifiable markets, but it's possible that commerce and barter took place in the huge open spaces seen in some Mohenjo-Daro neighborhoods and Harappa gateways.

The third method of commerce is the reciprocal exchange of goods for services, which is also not at all reflected in archaeological evidence. This kind of exchange is typical in South Asia and many other regions of the world, and it was probably prevalent in both rural and perhaps urban settings (Kenoyer 1989).

The fact that the trading patterns were sustained over such broad areas and for such extended periods is another crucial aspect that must be considered. According to research on traditional shell and agate commerce within South Asia and between South Asia and other regions, enterprising families, rather than governmental economic policies, are responsible for most of the long-distance trade (Kenoyer 1989).

There is still a lack of clarity regarding the establishment, management, and control of internal trade on the part of elites and governmental authorities. The walls and entranceways of each city were undoubtedly built and maintained by the rulers of the Indus cities. Therefore, the taxing of products entering and leaving the city would have been the primary means of indirect economic control (Kenoyer 1998). The excavated Indus sites at Chanhudaro, Harappa, and Lothal frequently contain the beads as well as manufacturing evidence.

Mackay hypothesized that beads of these sorts were produced at Indus locales and exported to Mesopotamia considering the frequent occurrence of those beads in those sites. The Chanhudaro and Mohenjodaro bead manufacturing artifacts show that the Indus bead makers were skilled at creating long, cylindrical beads, and their manufacture was probably maintained and regulated by certain elites (Kenoyer 2005:167–68).

The circumstances in which seals and tablets were used, as well as the evolution of seal and tablet types across time, point to substantial changes in the power of elite communities using these items. These variations may be a result of experimentation with various value-recording techniques or may reflect shifts in the balance of power between the cities' political and economic authorities. It is crucial to remember, that some elites undoubtedly managed to exercise authority and participate in political and economic advancement without the aid of seals or tablets. Although there is no evidence of the usage of weights, seals, or even writing during the Late Harappan period, there is still evidence of economic activity and regional trading (Kenoyer & Meadow 1999).

A Gulf-type round seal of the surface was observed in Lothal in the interior of the Harappan Civilization. At Bet Dwaraka, a seal with a whorl motif was discovered in the context of the 14th century BC. There are a few cylinder seals with Harappan Civilization-inspired designs in Kalibangan, Rakhigarhi, and Mohenjodaro. One must also consider the presence of steatite/chlorite vessel fragments with hut motifs at Mohenjodaro and Dholavira in addition to these discoveries. A section dedicated to the study of diverse themes and patterns is also present, including seals from Mohenjo-Daro that feature a figure that resembles Gilgamesh between two lions or tigers. This demonstrates the existence of more cross-cultural connections between Mesopotamia and the Harappan region.

EXTERNAL TRADE

However, there is unmistakable proof that there was exterior trade during the Harappan era. The Indus Valley developed various levels of direct or indirect communication with Oman, Bahrain, Central Asia,

and even far-off Mesopotamia. There has been much discussion of the evidence supporting contact with Mesopotamia, but it can be challenging to assess the interpretations because most of the data comes from earlier digs in Mesopotamia that did not include extensive stratigraphic documentation. The provenance and chronology of other significant discoveries are uncertain because they were acquired from art merchants or surface contexts (Moorey 1994; Potts 1997). This chronology is far more consistent with the evidence of the manufacture of carnelian beads at the Chanhudaro site in the Indus valley. Based on parallels with the pottery designs and figurines from Harappa, the Harappan habitation of Chanhudaro seems to have lasted from 2450 to 1900 B.C.

We know that Mesopotamia's internal and external trade saw significant variations based on textual evidence as well as a scant quantity of artifact data (Gelb 1970; Stein 1999). Additionally, there is literary proof that people from the Indus Valley (i.e., Melhuua) lived in Mesopotamia during the Akkadian period (about 2350-2200 B.C.) and had assimilated into the local culture (Parpola, Parpola& Brunswig 1977). The evidence for the manufacturing of carnelian beads at the Chanhudaro site in the Indus valley fits considerably better with this chronology. Based on parallels with the pottery designs and figurines from Harappa, the period of Chanhudaro's Harappan habitation appears to range from about 2450 to 1900 B.C.

We know that there were significant variations in Mesopotamia's internal trade and its exterior trade based on textual evidence and a dearth of artifact data (Gelb 1970; Stein 1999). Literary records also show that Melua people from the Indus Valley lived in Mesopotamia during the Akkadian period (c. 2350-2200 B.C.) and had assimilated into the local culture (Parpola, Parpola& Brunswig 1977).

During the excavations in Ur and Kish in Mesopotamia, the long cylindrical carnelian beads and etched carnelian beads made by the Indus craftsman were also unearthed, however, such beads are uncommon in the Mesopotamian sites and "are only to be found in the most significant burials" (Beck 1940:400; Mackay 1929:184). That could represent the unusual value that lengthy carnelian beads held for Sumerian buyers. The discovery of etched beads from Iran and the Persian Gulf region further suggests that Indus beads were traded over important trade routes in a wider geographic area. However, there are hardly any etched beads to be discovered in Iran or the Persian Gulf. However, that suggests exchanging those beads (Waele and Haerinick 2006: 3140).

CONCLUSION

The numerous instances given above show that there is still much to be learned about the connections between the Indus and other Asian civilizations. According to the presented research paper, the Indus Valley Civilization had a lot of relations and trade with other contemporary civilizations of that time, such as Turkey, Gulf countries, Afghanistan, Iran, and Mesopotamia. Various types of beads, minerals, horses, beads, jars and clay toys are obtained from these countries, in these, 8 cm long carnelian beads from Jalalabad and seals from Iran are obtained. Harappan and Harappan-related objects, mostly beads, and seals come from both south and north Iraq.

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