

7. Dr. F. A. KHAN — *The Indus Valley and Early Iran*.
 Memoir No. 4 of the Department of Archaeology and
 Museums, Pakistan, Karachi, 1964. PP. 104. plates 49.
 Maps 4 and figures 11. Price Rs. 15.00.

Ever since the dawn of human migrations and the advent of international trade and commerce, Iran has been on the crossroads of civilizations. Poverty-stricken communities around the Caspian moved westwards to Anatolia and onwards to Europe. In the days of great urban civilizations of the Indus and Tigris-Euphrates Valley the Iranian plateau served as a bridge between Mesopotamia and the Land of the Indus. The rich and flourishing trade connecting the above-noted civilizations was carried on both through the Persian Gulf and land routes across the Iranian plateau. Very often this commercial intercourse was accomplished through entrepots in the Gulf such as Behrain (Sumerian Dilmun) and several others along the coast and through Northern Iran. It was, therefore, but natural that Sumerian, Iranian and Harappan merchants exchanged not only goods, but also ideas and traditions etc. Thus it was obvious that this commercial pursuit should result in a natural influence of arts and crafts of these regions.

In this book, which is mainly based on Dr. Khan's thesis (submitted to the University of London, 1953) the author has showed most remarkably through specimens of arts and crafts how Iran and West Pakistan were linked to, and influenced by, each other in ceramics, jewellery, cosmetics, stone vessels and terracottas etc.

First Chapter of the book is devoted to the geographical background, and the routes connecting the two regions. Dr. Khan has illustrated here (Map 2) how caravans moved through Diyala region (Mesopotamia) Kirman Shah, Hamadan, Ray, Hissar-Damghan and Seistan into Baluchistan and the Indus Valley across Northern Iran; Diyala-Hamadan-Sialk-Kirman-Bampur; Susa-Tell Bakun and Bampur into Baluchistan and the Indus Valley across Southern Iran.

The second chapter, illustrating cultural relationship between the two regions, shows how Bampur and Baluchistan served as intermediaries between North East and South West Iran on the one hand and the Indus Valley on the other, as evidenced through arts and crafts of these regions. Third chapter deals with the recently excavated sites of Kot-Diji and Amri in Khairpur and Sind areas. Although, hardly a few specimens from these two sites can be compared with Iranian stuff, a brief note on them was perhaps of some significance for the study of the protohistory in the Indus region.

However, for fair and critical angles, one misses certain factors in this book. While several objects in the plates have not been referred to in the text, and some plates are unnecessarily included, a few others should have been there for the convenience of the readers. Map No. 1 shows wrong names for the rivers in Mesopotamia, but that, however, may be a cartographic mistake, although such details require careful attention, while the book is in preparation. The most wanted element for such an accomplished work, however,

would be a good concluding chapter, which is not there. Such a chapter would obviously be dealing mainly with important factors, such as the volume of trade links, its significance and above all dating of the Indus Civilization in the light of fresh discoveries and informations. At the moment, it is a general tendency (as pointed out by Wheeler in his preface) to lower the dating of the Indus Civilization on the bases of C14 tests, the stratigraphy at Kot-Diji and the presence of Kot-Diji Culture pottery in the pre-Harappan levels at other sites in the Indus region.

It is not likely that the Harappan metropolis like Mohenjodaro did not exist at the time when Kot-Dijians flourished (as suggested by Wheeler in his preface) but even if that be so, there is evidence of commercial link between Harappans, Iranians and Sumerians in Early Dynastic period of Mesopotamia (as noted on pages 27, 28, 31, 32, 37, 38, 39 and 41). Moreover strong Indus Valley influence on Mesopotamian stone vessels is evidenced at Khafajah and Tell Agrab in Early Dynastic II and III periods of Mesopotamia¹. This suggests that the Indus Civilization had its links already established with Mesopotamia in the 1st half of the third millennium B.C. As a civilization would usually require a couple of centuries to attain status and position in international trade links, the beginning of Harappan civilization may therefore be proposed at least Early Dynastic I (c. 2900 B.C.) if not earlier. The evidence cited above and the one collected through Dr. George F. Dales boring in 1965 (and the recent boring in 1966) would suggest a much longer life for Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization.

Sir Mortimer Wheeler is therefore quite correct in admitting that his earlier bracket (2500-1500) was "excessively conservative" (Preface XIII) and that the C14 tests so far made for Indus Valley sites are inadequate and the results yielded through them are insecure (Preface XII).

On the whole, however, a book of this kind was needed for a long time, specially in the days when the destiny of Iran and Pakistan are being recognised as Common (R.C.D.), and we are culturally drifting closer to each other, for which Dr. F. A. Khan, deserves full credit.

F. A. Durrani.

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(1) F.A. DURRANI, "Stone Vases as evidence of connection between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley" in *Ancient Pakistan*, Vol. 1, 1964 Pl. V, 1, P. 79-80, and Pl. II, 6a-b, P. 81-82.