

Archaeological Survey in Jhalawan (Khuzdar) Balochistan: A Preliminary Note

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Abstract: The significance of this article is to elaborate the archaeological and historical sites of District Khuzdar where a survey was conducted by the team of Balochistan Study Centre, University of Balochistan, Quetta. The purpose and objective of this work is to express and show the information in relation to Khuzdar and to bring out the present condition of these historic sites to be documented. The research paper will focus on the major archaeological and historical sites of the Khuzdar District and will discuss the present critical condition of this cultural heritage. Khuzdar is one of the most popular archaeological areas of Balochistan. The most important feature of this part of Balochistan is that, it has always been occupied and ruled by invaders from the inception. The present paper discusses the cultural importance of the area of Khuzdar. The study is descriptive in nature and both primary and secondary sources were consulted in this regard; the field survey is also included in this work.

Keywords: Anthropology, Antique Mafia, Archaeology, Balochistan, Bronze Age, Khuzdar, Persia, Indus Valley Civilization

Introduction and Historical Background

The present District of Khuzdar is situated in the south of Balochistan, which was raised to this position in March 1974, previously part Kalat District (Govt. Record 1997: 1). Khuzdar is divided into 8 Tehsils, with a total area of 43261 sq. km; and 5, 80,000 population (Ibid., 7- 8). It has many names in history, like, *Tooran*, *Koh-yar*, *Qazdar*, *Qasdar* and very famous name of *Jhalawan*. It has a prosperous Archaeological and Historical background. The area is full of Pre-historic and historic period sites. Many ethnic groups subjugated and ruled Khuzdar at different times. It has been a very important trade and military route and a spot for every assailant. It had a significance for the Achaemenid and Sassanid of Persia dynasties, Tooranians of Central Asia, Mauryan of India and the Brahmans of Sindh before the advent of Islam. Islam came in the 7th century CE, when the Arab troops conquered it in 664 CE, during the regime of Ameer Muawiya the Caliph (Langer 1968: 9-10).

After the end of Umayyad family of Arab rulers in 750 CE, the Abbasid Arabs came to power in the Islamic dynasty of Africa and Asia. Khuzdar

was a very important area in the beginning of Abbasid rule. It was a hub for Middle East, Central Asia and Sindh. After the Abbasid dynasty, the Al-Bovid, Safari, Samani, Ghaznavid and Ghorids (Tate 1979: 1-54) conquered a huge area of Siestan, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Balochistan, Khorasan, Sindh and including Punjab. Some of them like Ghaznavids and Ghorids, reached India and established their rule over there. In CE 1410, the Mongol rule ended and Qambrani Baloch family became the rulers in Baloch territory with the help of other tribes of the area. During the Khanate period, Khuzdar was a province of the state and was named Jhalawan, meaning lower area or Lowland. The area and the tribes of the Jhalawan were the strength of the Khanate who played a vital role for the establishment of the Khanate of Kalat Balochistan. The Jhalawan *Lashkar* (Brigade) called *Dasta-e-Jhalawan*, included all the Baloch tribes of the area of Jhalawan, like Zarakzai, Mosiani, Mengal, Muhammad Hassani, Bezinjo, Khidrani and many other tribes (Naseer 2000: 54-55) with a strength of 6100 armed tribesmen. After a long

journey, the Baloch rule ended and Balochistan became a part of Pakistan in 27th March 1948 (Dehwar 1994: 70-71).

Khuzdar in the eyes of Arab Geographers and Travelers

Khuzdar was the capital of *Tooran*. The name of Khuzdar is also mentioned as Tooran in the texts during the early conquest of Mehmood of Ghazna (Strange 1986: 499). According to Ibn-e-Hauqal, the city was located near the bank of a river. The fort was in the middle of the city, and the surrounding areas were beautified with gardens, orchards and other agricultural locations (Ibid., 499).

Archaeological sites of Khuzdar

Balochistan is known as one of the world's ancient cultural region, served as a corridor between east and west. Balochistan has many places which are famous for their archaeological and historical sites. Khuzdar is the second biggest city of Balochistan which is quite renowned for its Pre/Proto-Historic sites. Merely a few of the archaeological sites have been discovered but large number of sites are yet to be discovered. Some of the important ones are mentioned below.

Mounds of Naal

Naal more often Nal, is a Tehsil of Khuzdar District, which is famous for politics, mineral resources, agriculture and cultural heritage site at national as well as international level. It is situated 35 km west of Khuzdar city surrounded by several small cultural mounds. One of the popular villages is called as '*Damb*' meaning 'mound'. However, Naal is the second richest archaeological site, in which big discoveries have been made. Also known as 'Sohr Damb', Naal is for the first time excavated by Harold Hargreaves in 1924-25. Its cultural profile goes back to 4300-3700 BCE and can be compared with the pottery of Kili Gul Muhammad and Togau A (Hargreaves

1929; Franke 2015). In addition, a new ware called as Naal after the site also appeared here, belonging to Early Chalcolithic and Bronze Age. Mud and stone structures of various house units, weapons, jewellerys, pottery, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines have been unearthed from here in a large amount. (Hassan 2002: 70) The pottery of Naal is very sophisticatedly manufactured with various designs such as wild animals, pet animals, birds, fish and other geometrical friezes (Plate 3). This is a monochrome ware but- red, black, green, blue, brown and yellow colours are also applied which gives a polychrome effect. These executions are unique with stunning symbols which signify a highly skilled craftsmanship. These are not only depictions but have broad and subtle meaningful functionalism, informing about social, political, economic and religious cults of ancient natives of the area. Still few mounds have been discovered and excavated by archaeologists; however, on the other hand, many mounds and other types ancient places around Naal are still unexplored and intact that needs proper preservation and attention. Beatrice De Cardi and M.R. Sahni, an Indian Anthropologist, have contributed here (De Cardi 1951; 1965).

Londo Mound & Persian Inscription (Baghbana)

Londo mound is situated at Baghbana union council 10 km in the north of Khuzdar city on National Highway. In fact, these are the remains of a big city of ancient time located near the ancient trade route. Baghbana is a potential area for cultivation. The remains and formation of the mound suggest like ruins of an ancient fort. Different kinds of pottery, bricks, animal figurines, jewellerys and other cultural objects have been recovered at Londo. The pottery and figurines are painted in red and black colours with some in green shade. The main scenes painted on the pottery are bulls, fish, and birds, as well as

geometrical lines. According to de Cardi, the objects of Londo mound have very close proximity to the Iranian culture (de Cardi 1983). She compared the Londo assemblage with the ruins of Huddith Shar in Lasbela District. The cultural commodities of both mounds are quite homogenous to Bampur culture of the Iranian Balochistan. Londo mound has a big and long boundary wall, which can be seen in the south of the mound connected with a hillock. This wall indicates that Londo was a fort or a castle. It is possible that behind the fort, which is now a cultivated zone, the city was located. The boundary wall is interconnected with a small mountain and on the top of this rocky mountain an inscription has been found, which belongs to Mughal Ruler of India Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Akbar (CE 1560-1605). It is written in Persian language and attributed to Meer Masoom, an officer (Mansabdar), of Akbar the Great (Plate 1). The texts of the inscription are as under:

شب تیره و راه دور و من لنگ
 دژ من تا تو هزار فرسنگ
 بر سالت نزد عالم شاه عباس
 در وقتی که علی حضرت اکبر بادشاه از هند آمد بود ثبت قایلہ نواب امیر
 محمد معصوم الحسینی النامی تخلصاً والکمری مسکناً سنہ 1013 ہزار و سیزدہ

(By principal author)

Translation:

“The night is dark; the road is long and I am lame. And between you and me are a thousand furlongs. He had come from India on a mission to the world’s refuge King ‘Abbas’ in reign of his master King Akbar”. The inscription was completed by Nawab Amir Muhammad Masum Al-Hussaini Al-Nami by pen-name and Bakkari by domicile in the year 1013, one

thousand and thirteen (1604) (Hassan, 2006: 7).

Londo mound is vandalized by the local-residents. After a small-scale excavation, the archaeologists left it without any preservation. They did not provide any specific boundary line which could protect the site. Due to this, the local-residents seamlessly started excavation which caused the major deliberate destruction.

Sites in Sasol Valley

The beautiful valley of Sasol is located 25 km to the east of Khuzdar city. *Saraap* is known as the first village of Sasol. It has fascinating historical places; at the height, some remains of ancient construction and ruins of an ancient mosque can be found. Antique Mafia is a serious threat where they illegally excavated the sites in the search of treasure. The sites have little protection from them. The remnants of Sasol’s large mound are 2km beyond Saraap. The remnants of structures can be seen on the surface of the site, in which the large walls, small and large rooms, lane and streets and some other construction works are included (Plate 2). Huge number of painted pottery is scattered on the surface of mound. This is a big discovery which needs not only protection from Antique Mafia, but also needs painstaking excavation. Many more mounds are also situated in the valley of Sasol.

The Mound of Turundain (Tootak)

30 km west of Tootak, a village named Turundain is situated in Khuzdar, which is covered with mountain chains. Tootak is situated 32 km in the north of Khuzdar. Many archaeological sites are lying in Tootak, and Turundian is one of them. The mound is situated on an open ground and at the centre of the valley and is totally protected and unexcavated. The surface of the mound is covered with potsherds. Several types of pottery have been found complete at the site. Some bronze made vessels are also found from this site.

At this site near the mountain, some structures can be found on the top of a rock such as foundation of a hall. This is a new discovery and an important cultural site for Archaeologists. Some discovered objects from Turaindain are preserved in the museum of Balochistan Study Centre.

Chimri Bhutt

Chimri Bhutt is the ancient name of a union council in Khattan of Khuzdar District, which holds archaeological remains of an ancient civilization. Unfortunately, the mound is highly disguised due to modern construction but some parts of the land is still unoccupied at the time of our visit. The natives of the area have found large number of objects and many of them are still lying scattered on the surface. The Khattan is situated near the bank of Khattan River; undoubtedly it was the ancient settlement of Khuzdar. In recent times, the two sides of Khattan River have converted into commercial, official and residential areas. Chimri Bhatt is a new discovery, which is neither mentioned in literature nor visited by any archaeologists.

Meeri Bhutt & the Tomb of Rabia Khuzdari

Meeri Bhutt is a small mound situated in the south of Khuzdar city. The ruins of a fort are found at the summit of the mountain. It looks like a military fortress. It is possible that it belonged to Arab or Ghaznavid period, or may be earlier than the mentioned period. *Meer* is a Balochi word which has a similar meaning of Arab word *Ameer*. Both words are used for the head of tribe, army or the area. And Meeri means that place where Meer or Ameer resides. Indeed, there are two separate mounds, which have ancient cultural debris. From the entrance once can obviously notice these ancient ruins lying scattered. Geographically, the Meeri Bhutt could have been a good military point for the security reasons. The

famous Persian poetess 'Dukhtar-e-Khuzdar, Rabia Khuzdari,' ca. CE 9th & 10th, century (4th century A.H.), is known to be buried here just away from a Muslim cemetery (Shahwani 2006). Presently, this tomb is terribly encroached perhaps due to lack of preservation. It has no wall no roof and no protection at all. Rabia Khuzdari is the one of those women who has brought the name of Khuzdar on the pages of history. She was a great literary woman and an eminent poetess of Persia. Literarily, her poetry has a pre-eminent state in the history of Baloch and Balochistan. A phrase of her poetry is as under:

عشق او با ز آوردم بہ بند
کوشش بسیار نامد سو مند
تو سنی کردم ندا ستم ہے
کز کشیدن سخت تر گرو دکنند
عشق دریا نئے کراندا پدید
کے تو ان کردن ثنا اے ہوش مند

(Ibid., 67)

According to authors, she was the daughter of the ruler (Ameer) of Khuzdar, named Kaab. She completed her all rudimentary education and was living in the fort (palace) (Ibid., 56). When she was young she fell in love with a slave named Bakhtas or Bakhtshoo. When her brother Hasil Khan heard about her love, he killed both, Rabia and Bakhtshoo. Professor Nadir Qambrani (Late) Published a book on this love story, with the title of *Bulbul-e-Khuzdar* (Qambrani n.d.) Nevertheless, the book of Sultan Ahmed Shahwani, *Kanna Khuzdar* also highlights this sad and beautiful love story. Furthermore, there is another mound located in the north of Meeri Bhutt, which is presently, being inhabited by several families. These are very important discoveries which need proper scientific excavations and protection.

Sonijee

Sonijee is a residential area near western bank of koshk River. It is on the crossroad which passes towards Naal. Large number of potsherds have been discovered from the area which are preserved with local resident. The shapes are admirable in which three numbers of pots and couple of beautiful painted cups are treated with black colour. One marked jar with delicate features have been discovered too. Although this is a new discovery, nonetheless, there is more scope for further work and eye-catching findings.

Mound of Oar Nach

This is a large mound situated in the valley of Oar Nach district Khuzdar. Oar Nach is in the south of Khuzdar. The distance between Khuzdar and the mound of Oar Nach is nearly 150 kms. It is very famous for the archaeological sites. There are many mounds and other kinds of ancient ruins, but the major mound of Oar Nach is called *Nandu* or *Nandowani* Dumb or *Nandwani* Mound. The French archaeologist Jean-Marie Casal, discovered here two big religious buildings, which highlighted the religious beliefs of ancient people (Jarrige 2011). This mound has been excavated by French experts from 1962-65. The total measurement of the mound is about 1100×915×22 m. In fact, there are two mounds; both have structures with foundation walls, stairs, basements and other kinds of architectural elements. More than one ton of stone boulders (about 1×2m) used in the constructional works (Casal 1966: 12). The other findings recovered during the 3-season excavations were: pottery, human and animal figurines in bulk, weapons, jewellerys, and stone ornaments. Moreover, a cemetery and many bone fragments have also been found from here. After excavating the sites, the objects were shifted to Karachi, Explorations Branch and some to Museums in France. This giant Early Harappan mound needs proper preservation and further scientific research

works. Nevertheless, some of the cultural findings, like pottery have been preserved in the museum of Balochistan Study Centre.

Moola Pass

Moola is an ancient trade and military route between Khuzdar, Kachhi and Gandawah Plains. Many invaders crossed this pass in the past. Many authors discussed it in their texts that, it was the shortest way of Moola. A commander of Alexander the Great crossed the Moola Pass in 326 B.C with a huge armed force (Smith 2001: 123). According to A.W, Huges (the compiler of Balochistan Gazetteers), the length of Moola is 102 km from *Pash Tikan Baint* towards Kachhi Plains (Huges 1986: 134-36). From *Manyalov Baint* which is the first village of Moola form Khuzdar, the pass is 110 km long. The pass is also famous for its agricultural production, like rice, wheat, cotton, mango, dates, and with mineral resources of granite, barite, manganese, natural gas, and chromite. It is rich in cultural sites. It has 38 villages, which are collectively called *Baint* and 77 small villages called *Mozaa*. Every Baint and Moozaa is full of archaeological sites. The details of the sites could not be discussed due to its long history, but the brief introduction is very necessary for information and for more research and excavation. There are many remains and big mounds, one is in Manyalov Baint, and called, Damb-e-Jhakkra (Mound of Jhakkra). It is the first Baint of Moola from Khuzdar side. The second mound is called Mishri Bhutt, situated at Khirzan, the head quarter of Moola Tehsil, and the third high mound near Pani Wand Baint is called Mound of Aali Doda which is intact. It could be a source of archaeological excavations. Another large mound is in Atachi Baint, called Chimni Bhutt and the other is Pattham Baint, Recently, these mounds have been identified. A very prominent religious scholar, author of dozens of religious books in various languages and the first translator of Holy Quran in Brahui

language, Hazrat Maulana Mohammad Umar Deen Puri, is buried in the Baint Narr, which is the entrance of Moola Pass from Khuzdar. The Mosque which was built by Maulana Mohammad Umar Deen Puri, is still functional for prayers. An officer of Ameer Masoom is also buried in the Baint of Pir Lakha. His tomb is in the west of the village. He died in Moola when Ameer Masoom was returning from Iran to India. Similarly, an inscription has been found from here, which was located near the Londo mound on the top of a rock. The Text of this inscription is as under:

وقت و وقت از میان رفت
 رخسار جاو ککاران رفت

“Moment and time have gone between us, now get up
 that the caravan has gone”

(Courtesy: principal author)

The *Kafri kasar* or the path of Idol worshippers is one of the various wonders of Moola. This is an amazing trail. No one precisely knows about its history, from where it starts, and where it ends. But in many locations of Moola, it can be seen from archaeological sites. Some local sources suggest that; they have seen this track near the mountains of Jhal Magsi in the eastern most Balochistan. In Moola Pass the width of track is nearly 3.3 m on the ground; in the mountains, this is in the shape of stairs with a width of 2 m. It is built with stone blocks. These are in various sizes but, sophisticatedly dressed and fixed sequentially. Some extra stones are fixed in the corners of this track as pillars or the shoulders, but many are undressed (Plate 5). The track has been encroached and destroyed everywhere and is falling. It can be seen easily between *Pani Wand* and *Zibr Baints*. The track gives birth to many questions like, who constructed it? What was the purpose of? What is the actual length? However, without a thorough research the mystery of Kafri Kasar may not be remedied.

The place Chuttok, is not less than a piece of paradise, located inside another pass of Moola. Undoubtedly, it is a symbol of natural world and one of the most beautiful places in Pakistan. It is a place like a lane, and goes to Zehri, (Tehsil of Khuzdar District). Chuttok is situated in the beginning of this lane with all the beauty of nature. Above 800 various sizes of streams and fountains flowing out from colourful rocks like a rain (Plate 4). The pieces of stone look like gems under the transparent flowing water. There is no plant, tree or grass in Chuttok but the rocks are in multiple colours, which amplify the beauty of Chuttok. The water is warm and tasteless because it is filled with geological minerals. There are no species in the water. Pakistan Tele-Vision (PTV) Bolan Quetta Centre, televised a program about Chuttok and Moola Pass in January 2008 (PTV Bolan Quetta Centre, Dec January: 2007-08). Simply, the beauty of Chuttok cannot be explained in words.

Another place is also called *Chunka Chuttok* or (Small Chuttok). This is also a beautiful and a cold place. There are some water channels on the top of the hills of *Mishk* (Zehri), *Gazg* (Kalat) and *Rakel* (Baghbana), (Plate 6). These are also other areas of Moola. The history of these water channels is still in dark. *Chanjal* is a famous folk lore of Brahvi language. This song is very popular in Brahvi tribes, but the writer or singer of this song was unknown.

The authors have found the singer of Chanjal in the village *Atachi* at Moola Pass during field work. He was alive until November 2007, when he was interviewed in detail. His name was Mohammad Zaman Khan, where he belonged to Daya cast of Zehri tribes, and lived in Baint Atachi at Moola pass. According to him, that he has verbally explored 360 phrases for his lost camel which was named as Chanjal. Mohammad Zaman Khan Daya (late) is a big discovery for the growth and progress of Brahvi language and literature, because this poet was anonymous

before; in Brahvi tribes his position was not more than a myth. Moreover, Moola has many more wonderful and amazing mysteries but due to the dearth of communication Moola is still unexplored.

There are many more places in Khuzdar district like Hazar Ganji, Gresha, Lakroian, Baghbana, Band-e-Chakki, Karkh, Zeedi, Khorri, Gaaj, Chakoo, Wadh, Oar Nach and Khuzdar City, etc. These are full of archaeological sites. These sites are undiscovered and unexplored except a small number of them, but these sites are now being destroyed by the Antique Mafia.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, Balochistan is the birth land and home of several ancient civilizations. If one counts the ancient mounds and cultural sites of Balochistan, then they will not be less than the modern remote villages. They seem to be very civilized and cultured from the remains they have left for the modern researchers. Their trade and cultural roots related to the Indus civilization in the east and central Asian civilization of Turkmenistan and Mesopotamian in the west

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(Jarriage & Jarriage 1986: 33).

The earliest roots of civilization in Balochistan originated nearly 8000 BCE at the type-sites of Mehrgarh near Bolan Pass and Kili Gul Muhammad in the Quetta Valley. Mehrgarh gave birth to many more settlements in the surrounding areas of present Balochistan and the surrounding countries. Unfortunately, when we take a long, hard look at our archaeological sites, then we do not see any serious consideration for our cultural heritage. These excavations and explorations conducted so far in the region by the foreigners just fulfil the need of their museums.

Presently, in various cities of Balochistan, particularly in District Khuzdar, the activities of Antique Mafia are on their peak. Thus, a lot of mounds and other places have been disappeared and many of them are left badly endangered. Nevertheless, the natural consequences are also accountable for the destruction of these unique and priceless cultural heritage of our past. If proper archaeological considerations were not paid to these sites, sooner or later, we may lose this tangible cultural heritage forever.

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Plate 1. An inscription attributed to Amir Masoom. Baghbana



Plate 2. Stone construction of Sasol Mound



Plate 3. Naal canister discovered from Sonijee village



Plate 4. The stunning and glazing scene of Chuttok



Plate 5. The leading stairs of Kafari Kasar (the path of idol worshipers)



Plate 6. The gushing waterfalls and streams of Chuttok