

## Neolithic Mehargarh

Very recently, only in 1984, French archaeologists discovered a new site in Pakistan at Mehargarh, which is believed to be the earliest civilisation in the world. It pre-dates the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The site was occupied from 7,000 B.C. to 2,000 B.C. and it is the earliest Neolithic site where "we have first evidence of domestication of animals and cereal cultivation - wheat and barely - and also the centre of craftsmanship as early as 7,000 B.C."

Lapis Lazuli and sea-shells were used to make beautiful ornaments as found in large number of graves, he said. The site later became a centre of production of beautifully painted pottery and human and animal figurines and such economical and social development helped to understand the process of formation of the urbanised civilisation of the Indus Valley in the 3rd millennium B.C. The site of Mehargarh which is situated at the foot of the Bolan Pass also shows good evidence of contacts through trade exchanges with Afghanistan, Central Asia and Iran, he added the graves found at the site show that the dead were buried in flex position. Children were buried separately and not mixed with the adults. He added Grave pottery was found in all the graves including ornaments of beads of high quality craftsmanship which showed connections with fishermen of Makran Coast.

There was also evidence of storage facilities each three meters high which shows the social system prevailing at that time.

There was production and use of pottery, ivory work, clay balls, copper pins, baking of jars, male and female figurines, seals, tools etc.

The main striking feature of the site is the age of the settlement goes back to about 8,000 B.C. and even at that early period there were developed villages with agriculture, the beginning of animal domestication and evidence of long distance trade".

Another important thing was the domestication of cattle, sheep and goats. From the evidence formed at Mehargarh, this change took place in South Asia as early as it did in the West. The earliest evidence of the development of breeds of the hump cattle has also been found at this site.

The other aspect which is of interest is the early hunting period of 12 different kinds of large animals, many of which do not exist now in Pakistan - Barasingha, Neelgai, the elephant and the wild water buffalo in the West of the Indus Valley.

The site graves, are evidence of material imported from distant areas, including Afghanistan, the Indian Ocean, the Western part of Balochistan and Iran.

"Twenty separate buildings were discovered - but their functions are not clear Some of them may be for Houses and others for storage of grain", Dr. Meadow said.

Of particular interest at Mehargarh and for the Indus Valley as a whole are the circumstances surrounding the early exploitation of cattle. Cattle bones make up considerably more than half of the total number of specimens identified from the excavations.

In fact, the rise in proportion of cattle remains in the various assemblages is continuous from the earliest levels of the ceramic era where only four percent of the bones are from cattle to the end of the ceramic year with 38 per cent to the middle of the period where 65 per cent of the specimens from around the compartmented buildings come from cattle.

The marked dominance of bones from one species does not continue, however and by midthird millennium levels at Mehargarh and at nearby site of Sibi, the proportion is back down to around 35 percent Even so, this fraction is much higher than that recorded for most sites in the Middle East and particularly for the Iranian Plateau when the remains of sheep and goats overwhelmingly dominate the assemblage of most sites.

The grains at the site include mostly barley which seems to be of local type which was cultivated as early as 8.000 B.C Also present from the earliest period are different types of wheat and from around 5.000 B.C. there is evidence of cotton

Murgha Mehtarzai, 14 miles west of Muslim Bagh on the main road, is a lovely picnic spot where Sanjad and Apricot trees form a tunnel overshadowing a Karez, cool clear water flows by and one can spend a very relaxing day here.

## **Rana Ghundai**

It is an archaeological site. There are mounds from which remains of a culture have been found with affinities to the Hissar culture of north-eastern Iran around 3,500 B C. The red pottery found belongs to a period earlier than the Indus valley's civilization.

## **Hindu Bagh**

Now known as Muslim Bagh, is the centre of chromite mining activity. A visit to the chromite mine will be very interesting and instructive. The journey takes 3 hours drive from Quetta. There is a good rest house here. The town is an oasis of orchards. A road connecting Fort Sandeman with Bostan goes over the famous Kan Mehtarzai Pass, which is said to be the highest railway station (7,290 feet) in Asia.

## **Fort Sandeman**

It has many lovely spots all round it. Sheenghar (green hill) about 10,000 feet high is covered with pine forests and is one of the loveliest spots in the valley and the best area for shooting Chakor.

## **Qilla Saifullah**

The seat of the famous Jomezai family is noted for its apples, pistachio nuts and a beauty spot in itself.

Holiday resorts can be developed at a lot of places in the valley and there is scope for developing winter sports areas at many places. Medicinal herbs which abound in the area can be commercially exploited. During the season a lot of fruit goes waste and fruit canning can also be developed. Since supply of cheap labour is already available, the mining industry can progress rapidly.

## **Gati**

It is 6 miles from Gwadar. There are ancient ruins from where the remains of numerous small bones have been discovered. Different kinds of earthenware, shell ornaments, beads, grinding stones, copper bracelets and coins have been discovered. The coins appear to be of Greek origin.

## **Fort Kharan**

Some 200 miles from Quetta, the capital city of Balochistan. lies the district of Kharan. Situated at an altitude of 2300 feet, Kharan is popular for the production of dates and wool.

In this land of dates, flowers and wool there are the remains of an old fort known as Fort Kharan. Built some 400 years ago this fort was one of the important fort at that time for defence purposes.

It was built by Mir Azad Khan. Its high boundary walls served the purpose of first protection against the enemy. There are holes in its high walls. These were meant as support for cannons and guns during war. Its doors and walls are thick enough to resist the heavy bombardment from cannons of that time.

Small sized bricks are used for its construction and lime and cement is used for plastering the inside walls, but due to the lack of maintenance this plaster is broken from most of the places leaving the bricks uncovered.

The concerned department is not showing any interest in the maintenance of Fort Kharan. If it does so it will be a good touristic sight and can help our tourism industry.

## **Las Bela**

It is 116 miles from Karachi with which it is connected by a metalled road. Situated at the bank of the river Punali, it was originally the headquarter town of Las Beia district which has now been shifted to Uthal. It has been identified with the ancient Armabel. The place was visited by Alexander the Great. Mohammad Bin Haroon, one of the Generals of Mohammad Bin Qasim lies buried here. Sir Robert Sandeman the first Chief Commissioner of Balochistan also lies buried here in a tomb made of granite and white marble in a beautiful garden around Bela in the Kud river area there are numerous sites and caves of prehistoric period. There are boulder hills in the neighbourhood which are supposed to be the remains of ancient settlements.

## Hindian

Situated near the confluence of the Hindian rivulet with the Hub river 50 miles from Karachi are highly ornamental sepulchres of unknown origin which afford evidence of subterranean burial. They face south to north and are built of yellowish sandstone the form of vertical burial which these tombs exhibit is attributed to Syria as opposed to the Rumi practice of underground burial.

## Kumbh Shirin

It is a historic site close to a spring on the western slope of the Halla hills on the route from Makran to Las Bela. It is believed that Farhad cut through the mountains at this spot. The graves of Shirin and Farhad are also supposed to be at this place. There is a grave of an old woman who brought false news to Farhad that Shirin was dead. Travellers throw stones contemptuously at the grave of the old woman

### **This page comes from**

Balochistan Entertainment Network:

<http://www.balochmedia.com>

### **The URL for this page is:**

<http://www.balochmedia.com/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=158>