

Culturally, the material recovered from the sites of Margiana and Bactria includes many precious artefacts and art representations imported from, or parallels with, Mesopotamia and Elam on the one side and Indus civilization on the other side. On the West, the international relations of the Oxus Civilization extended as far as Anatolia and Syria, as we know now. This fits well with the role of intermediary country on long distance relations and exchanges proposed for Markhashi. However, this is not yet sufficient for preferring the Oxus Civilization rather than the Kerman for Markhashi.

The Kerman hypothesis for Markhashi is now weaker since the recent very important discoveries of Jiroft and Halil Rud in Kerman (Iran). These sites have their flourishing and their Mesopotamian connexions at a time earlier than the BMAC. On the other hand, no strong or direct Indus Civilization connexion is attested. Kerman seems definitely better suited for identification with Aratta (Madjidzadeh) or with Simashki (Vallat) for example.

The Oxus Civilization hypothesis finds also a strong support by the location by Moorey of Tukrish in NE Iran. This country is placed by the text called the "Geography of Sargon" "between Markhashi and Elam". The Mesopotamian and Syrian recordings of lapis lazuli and of precious coloured inlaid metalwork as coming from Tukrish may concern the blue stone from Afghanistan (of course) and the precious jewellery with coloured inlays from the Oxus Civilization, well known from the tombs Bactria and Margiana. The technique of the goldsmith is specific and the mineral resources and gems of the Bactrian mountains were controlled by the Oxus Civilization, as we know.

Linguistically, no direct link can be traced from Markhashi to Avestic Mouru or Old Persian Margush. But specialists linguists have proposed that Markhashi was the transcription of an original Warakhshi or Warghushi. More investigations are necessary and only more archaeological material, new texts and fresh interpretations can settle the question.

Therefore no definitive argument concludes the discussion, but the Oxus Civilization hypothesis is at present to be considered seriously, thanks to the Turkmenistan excavations and the discoveries of Professor V.I. Sarianidi and his team.

MARGUSH AND THE INDO-EUROPEANS

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In June 2003, Victor Sarianidi made us the great honour to deliver a conference at the College de France. Facing an audience comprising all the French scholars interested in the past of Iran and Central Asia present in Paris, he detailed the last results of his Gonur excavations, fresh from the dig. They were impressive, indeed astonishing, even for those who were acquainted with his precedent discoveries and who, like me, had be lucky enough to see under his guidance the dig going on.

Less than two years later, I received the superbly edited and illustrated archaeological report of the excavations, now almost entirely completed: *Gonurdepe, City of Kings and Gods*, Asgabat, 2005. All the hypotheses that V.Sarianidi had put forward in Paris about the expected continuation of the excavations had been confirmed: the ramparts, buildings etc. which he told us in 2004 he expected to find the following year had been uncovered just as he had predicted.

The great advantage of a book compared with a lecture is that it gives you time to ponder over the data and weigh the arguments. Looking at the text and at the superb illustrations, I remembered my student years, when we were taught that in the 3rd millennium BC, two great civilizations only existed between the Mediterranean Sea and China, viz. the Mesopotamian and Indus civilizations. In between were only villages whose sole output were beautifully made pots. Still later, in 1969, when Victor Sarianidi and Galina Pugacenkova came in Afghanistan, most of the French archaeologists working there did not know names like Djarkutan or Sapalli-Tepe, and used to pay no attention to the results of the Namazga excavations. We did not attach any importance to the discoveries made by Victor in the Dashly oasis, exactly as we did not understand the importance of the discovery by B. A. Livinskij of bronze age graves in Ai Khanum. A review article of *Drevnjaja Baktirija, Materialy Sovjetsko-Afganskoi Ekspedicii 1969-1973* (Moskva 1976) thus devotes one and half page to Victor's excavations and 28 pages to the Greek and Kushan periods (Bernard-Francfort 1979). No wonder if, when, in the late seventies, pots and bronze artefacts plundered from graves in Afghan Turkmenistan appeared on the Kabul antiquarian market, French archaeologists, although by now fully conscious of the historical importance of the bronze age, could not devote time and resources enough to fully document them. The only French book published on the subject (Pottier 1984) was not even published in the prestigious series *Memoires de la DAFA*. As for classical indologists, from any nation be they, they could not even imagine that results of digs conducted in the far-off Bactrian and Margian oases would force them to look differently at the oldest and most sacred part of Indian literature, the Rig-Veda.

Things have changed since. Western archaeologists, including French ones, are now flocking in Central Asia, looking for bronze age sites. Renowned western indologists and linguists are attending international meetings of archaeologists, trying both to explain the Margian finds with the help of the Rig-Veda or the Avesta, or acknowledging that their perception of that literature has changed now it is known that peoples who spoke languages close or identical with the languages of these texts had at least minimal contacts with a highly developed civilization, about which the above texts do not say anything.

Most of the discoveries responsible for this change of attitude among scholars were made by Victor. The excavations of Togolok and Gonurdepe look as the climax of bronze age excavations made in Southern Uzbekistan, Northern Bactria, and Turkmenistan since the sixties. We have now before our eyes more than isolated temples and palaces: a true "royal" town, complete with its palace, temples, pools and tombs, and hundreds of plundered graves nevertheless still filled with rich assemblages of pottery and artefacts indicative of links with the great civilizations of Elam, Mesopotamia, Syria and India.

It must be acknowledged that the monuments excavated in the Margian delta do not compare neither for number nor for wealth with the Mesopotamian and Harappan finds. The "royal" city of Gonurdepe is sole of its kind in Margiana, when they are many cities-states in Mesopotamia and Syria, and more than five major towns in the Harappan area. The picture may change when excavations resume in Northern Bactria -if contemporary plunderers have not destroyed every data -, but not much : neither the Murgab nor the Amu-Darya can be compared with the Tigris, the Euphrates or the Indus rivers, and it is much more difficult to irrigate the Karakum desert than the banks of these rivers. It is no wonder if, except for the former Soviet archaeologists, the discovery in Togolok and Gonur of temples, palaces, and now a full-fledged town were unexpected. More astonishing still is to recognize at a glance that the Margian civilization is a civilization of its own. Except for a few architectural details and decorative devices, it looks like the product of an independent evolution : nobody would mistake Gonurdepe for an Harappan or Mesopotamian 3rd millenium BC town. The BMAC or Oxus civilization is an almost entirely original development.

I would have expected Victor Sarianidi to stress more than he does the specificity and novelty of the BMAC. But he seems more interested in tracking influences, borrowings and exchanges of goods. Leaving apart his zoroastrian interpretations, to which I shall come back later, he is very successful in his attempts. We may discuss some of his comparisons, but the similarities with Elam, Mesopotamia, Northern Syria and Harappa he is pointing to cannot be denied. And the growing consensus on a "high" chronology supported by 14C datings and Harappan imports (c. 2400-1700 BC \pm 200 years for mature BMAC) give them an added strength. But if we weigh in the balance, on one hand the specific traits of the Bactro-Margian civilization, on the other hand those of its characteristics which can be attributed to extraneous influences and borrowings, there is no doubt on which side the scales will go : the birth and growing of the BMAC cannot be attributed principally to foreign influences nor to foreign settlers. There is a major local component.

It is easy to understand why Victor and so many scholars are so much preoccupied with the contacts BMAC had with neighbouring civilizations. 30 years ago, that was the only way to establish a tentative chronology of the unearthed sites. Now, it is the only way to figure out the network of exchanges linking Margiana with its Iranian and Indian neighbours, and to retrace what appears no more like bilateral contacts, but like a kind (I beg your pardon for the anachronisms) of international market or triangular trade. Moreover, the geographical location of the BMAC as a whole, from Shortughai to Gonurdepe, from Turkmenistan to the borders of Southern Afghanistan, and its 3rd millenium-early 2nd millenium dating make sure that at least some of the wandering Indo-Iranian languages speaking people crossed its territory. As we all know, there is a fascination in Europe for our more or less true Indo-European ancestry ; there is a less understandable fascination in Central Asia for Zoroaster ; and there is now a heated religious and political debate among Hindu Indians about the origin of Vedic language and literature, nationalistic and traditionalist Hindus contending that there was never any Indo-European migration into India, that Vedic sanskrit is the original language of India -indeed of the gods -, and was exported from there to Iran and Europe. There is thus every reason to try to connect, in a way or other, the BMAC with the so-called Indo-European peoples, both for understanding the birth

and growth of the BMAC and for tracing the movements of Indo-European tribes. This is no small question.

As everybody knows, there are five possibilities in this respect, each of which is fought for by respected scholars: Indo-European, Indo-Aryan migrations and no evidence of migration at all, or at least no decisive evidence for any migration. Four of these categories are linguistic, and few true linguists equate them with peoples, less so with definite social formations. Moreover, any attempt is fraught with theoretical difficulties. Let me give only one example, the case for Zoroastrian traits. Even if all the similarities pointed out by Victor Sarianidi with a more or less reconstructed and more or less debatable zoroastrianism were specific to that religion and could not be attributed to any other background, when weighing in a balance these traits with other peculiarities of the reconstructible Oxus civilization religion, we cannot fail to see that many of them, indeed a majority of them, cannot be explained by data from zoroastrianism as we know it, despite all divergences between scholars in this respect. E.g., if some or many graves display so-called zoroastrian practices, many other do not. So we are left with a choice:

— either we recognize the similarities pointed out by Victor Sarianidi as fully and only zoroastrian, but we feel that they are due to borrowings, and we must conclude that the BMAC religion is not zoroastrianism, even in the making.

— or we point out the non-zoroastrian features of the BMAC religion, and we explain them away by telling that this is zoroastrianism in the making. But we should also draw the conclusion that this early zoroastrianism or pre-zoroastrianism did not look at all like zoroastrianism as now reconstructed by scholars, which ever theory they profess, and so that the evidence we were using to point out the existence of zoroastrianism in the BMAC is wrong. That is a vicious circular reasoning.

The scholars who are in favour of an Indo-European, Indo-Aryan presence face exactly the same difficulty : BMAC is too different from the data they draw from either for their theory or for the data they use to be true. As for those who do not see in Margiana, apart from a few scattered Andronovo sherds, any evidence of Indo-European peoples, which ever language they spoke, they have still to explain how that country became Iranian speaking in the first millenium BC or how Indo-Aryans could cross to India without going through Bactria or at least skirting it.

So that we should have either to wait for new discoveries, or to write erudite novels or pleadings. But if we look carefully at some Victor's statements in his last book *Gonurdepe, City of Kings and Gods*, we are bound to ask ourselves whether our starting point or points are the best. Let me only give three short quotations.

— Indeed, a compact group of the monuments belonging to the 3rd-2nd millenia BC is situated only in the former delta of the Murgab, while there are none of them in the middle part of this river... Only one burial ground belonging to that period is known in Tagtabazar oasis... and in spite of the special research works, other monuments of this kind were not found here " (p. 34 b, Russian p. 28 a).

— Some time passed after heavy fire had occurred, kremlin's external walls began to dilapidate little by little, that is why all of them were covered in brick sheath along the external perimeter and additional brick counterfort was constructed on the northern side... " (p. 74 b, Russian p. 58 b).

— When practically the entire palace-temple complex of the Northern Gonur lost its significance, its ruins were built up with houses, shacks and huts of ordinary members of the community and former townsmen... " (p. 197 a, Russian p. 193 a).

These three quotations remind us that we have also to take into consideration space and duration. There can be no doubt about the existence of a BMAC/Oxus culture or civilization whose geographical extent and main traits were listed by many a scholar, e.g. Francfort 2005. But can we assert that inside the geographical limits of that civilization, there was only one polity, or that every polity there was of the same kind, that people spoke the same language and had the same beliefs in Eastern Bactria and Southern Turkmenistan, the more so when we know that even in the Murgab delta, the funerary customs exhibited so many variations ? I feel the answer can only be no : inside the united BMAC/Oxus culture, we must expect differences in language, religion, and even social organization.

If there was a social stratification in Gonur proper, as Victor Sarianidi rightly — so it seems to me — asserts, are we sure that rulers and ruled spoke the same language, partook the same beliefs, indeed followed the same religion? That question cannot be answered, but the possibility of a dual or bilingual society cannot be set aside : such societies existed in many countries, ancient and modern, often as a result of a conquest.

If the so close Tagtabazar oasis was not densely inhabited at that time, can we not expect that not every arable land or pasture in Bactria and Margiana was populated? In other words, were they empty spaces where newcomers could settle for a shorter or longer time, and have no contact with BMAC settlements except for occasional razzias or exchanges of material goods ? I am afraid no archaeologist can think that the BMAC countries were so densely populated that any new settlement would have brought a major perturbation. Less than two hundreds years ago, the Kabul amirs could introduce Pashtun tribes into Southern Bactria without changing very much the demographic pattern and the linguistic map.

How long could clay buildings like the Gonur ones have stayed in use without crumbling down ? I am afraid from experience that one hundred years would be a very long duration, specially in a seismic country. Victor and his team were able to point to destructions and large repairs, but apparently the plans and buildings stayed in the whole unchanged. If I am right, that means that the dating of the Gonur town is not to be equated with the dating of the mature BMAC as a whole : the Gonur buildings were constructed sometimes between c. 2400-1700 BC \pm 200 years, preferably c. 1900 BC (Gonurdepe, p. 197 a), and, if so, are no evidence for what obtained earlier, let us say before c. 2000 BC, nor later, let us say after c. 1700 BC.

That means we have to stop reasoning by scrutinizing a map exhibiting large spots of uniform colour showing the geographical extent of a long duration civilization. If we start from such a map, and we figure out the Indo-whatever-you-want as mass-migrants, i-e as a huge number of connected people travelling together, there is no doubt that these large groups are bound to travel across this spot and meet a BMAC monolingual and united people. But if the map is filled with gaps and holes, if time is not homogeneous and there are periods of decay and renaissance, if we give some duration to the Indo-European etc. movements, and consider that these peoples did not travel like a huge and well-organized army but in small itinerant pastoral groups,

the picture becomes more complex and at the same time closer to the truth or to the vraisemblance.

In the same way as we are prone to make as if there was a long unchanged and unified BMAC country, we are too often prone to talk about Indo-Europeans, Iranians, Indo-Aryans etc. as if they were a united people or at least an ethnos conscious of its specificity. Before going further, I would like to stress that never in their history the Iranian-speaking people were politically or religiously united, and that the Persian-speaking peoples would never agree that they are part of the same ethnos as the Wakhi- or Pashto-speaking peoples, to give only an instance.

Indeed nobody ever spoke Indo-European. Indo-European is a linguistic category covering a number of existing languages. People speaking Hittite, Greek, and Vedic Sanskrit were never aware they were speaking a kindred language and even in the 2nd millennium BC did not understand each other. Indo-European only means that all these languages, for the linguist, and usually for him only, show a number of characteristics whose grouping is better explained by a common origin. But we have almost no linguistic mean to ascertain when they separated nor whether at that time they belonged to the same or to different cultures or polities. Indeed the reconstructed origin of these spoken Indo-European languages, often called Pre-Indo-European (P-I-E), is no language, but a very lacunar sketch usually made from elements common to two or more existing languages, sometimes widely separated in time and space. It has no chronological depth, and the data we can extract from it are extremely meagre (Tremblay 2005, specially 122-150). To give only two instances, we are able to reconstruct a P-I-E word for " wheel ", but there is no such P-I-E word for " chariot ". On the contrary, the P-I-E etymons of " horse ", " sea " and " ship " are reconstructed from a great many important languages, including Iranian and Indian ones, so that, using only the linguistic data, we could point out that the so-called Indo-Europeans were a horse-breeding and seafaring people, and we would add as proof that the sea-god Poseidon is also responsible for the taming of the horse. If it were truly so, I am afraid that we would not search for evidence of Indo-European peoples in the Karakum desert. As for the names of gods, five only can be reconstructed using a great number of I-E languages, viz. the Sun-, Moon- and Dawn-godd(esse)s and, to give them their latin names, Jupiter and Neptunus. But there is no pan-Indo-European name for the god(s) of war. It is thus difficult to reconstruct a pan-P-I-E civilization and religion, and more so to trace its remnants in the Karakum deserts.

Indo-European is also a linguistic category. But here we are on much more solid ground, for it is no reconstruction : Avestan Iranian and Rig-Vedic sanskrit are so close that many scholars consider them being dialects of one and the same language. I am quite sure that Indian and Iranian speakers could still understand each other without interpreter as late as around our era. Things become more complex when you try to ascertain when and where Indian and Iranian languages began to diverge. As every ancient people speaking an Iranian language, except for the Scythians, was also revering an often supreme god called Ahura Mazda, we may assume that the separation began before the earliest Iranian text naming this god, the so-called Older Avesta. But philologists give very different dates to this text. Indeed, the only trustworthy evidence are the Mitanni documents. If they name Indian gods, as most

scholars now believe, the separation is earlier than 1326 BC. If these names are Indo-Iranian, it is later than 1326 BC (Fussman 2005, 210). My esteemed colleagues Prods O. Skaerjvo and Jean Kellens, whom I choose to trust, thus put the final redaction of the Avestan Gatas c. 1000 BC at the end of a long compositional process which started c. 1800 BC. Which would mean that the separation between the Iranian and Indian languages was already in the making in the end of the 3rd millenium BC., probably in the Russian steppe, which would explain why the Scythians were no Mazdeans.

Although the languages of Early Iranians and Indians are very close, although the similarities between the Avesta and the Rig-Veda are such that almost identical groupings of kindred words are found in both texts, we are bound to assert that there was never a more or less united Indo-Iranian, Iranian, or Indian people and religion. We have first to take into account the Scythians, whom nobody would have taken or mistaken for Iranians if linguists had not proved that they bore Iranian names. There is not much in common for instance between the Scythic kurgans, the Mazdean exposure of the corpses and the Vedic burning of the deads.

As for Mazdean Iranians, we know for a long time that the earliest layer of the Avesta, viz. the Gatas and the Yasna Haptahaiti, does not name gods like Mithra or Anahita, whose sacrificial hymns (yast) are preserved in the Young Avesta. The mazdean Kanishka knew Ahura Mazda, but did not revere him as the supreme god, less so the only one. Sogdian Mazdeans, even a king, could bear daiva-names, although the Avesta and the Zoroastrian Achaemenid kings demonize daiva-s ! These differences are one of the reasons to stop using the word zoroastrianism except for the Parsis and their Yazdi coreligionists: zoroastrianism is only the best known variant of mazdeism.

The Indian component of the Indo-Iranian grouping of languages should be divided in two subgroups: one whose descendants are the so-called Kafir or Nuristani languages, with a system of gods close to the Vedic one, but nevertheless different, the other which is represented by the Vedic corpus, mainly by the Rig-Veda. The Rig-Veda bears witness to many dialectical and even religious differences. Some early Indo-Aryan-speaking tribes did not sacrifice to Indra, and my colleague Witzel goes as far as to assert that some hymns have an Iranian origin.

If we take into account that probable fragmentation of the BMAC space and chronology and of the Indo-Iranian-languages speaking groups; if we agree with the following coherent chronology: Mature BMAC 2500 -1700 ± 200 BC; first draft of the Avestan hymns c. 1800; first certain evidence for the presence of Indo-Aryans in India (the Pirak horse) c. 1700 BC, the historical scenario does not present any major difficulty.

Since c. 2500 BC, peoples inhabiting at the foot of the Kopet Dagh and in most, may be all, oases of Margiana and Bactria developed a material culture so similar in many respects that we may call it with H.-P. Francfort a civilization. Indeed, architecture, pots deposited in graves, seals, iconography, exchange links are so similar in the c. 300 sites now known that we should assume that this uniformity is not due only to fashion or intermittent contacts, but that that culture spread from a cultural, or religious, or political, or politico-religious center and that something kept

it united. Nevertheless we should be fully conscious that inside that culture, there were chronological developments, even if we are not yet able to trace them, and discrepancies, the most obvious ones being the different ways to dispose of the corpses. Moreover, we have no reason to suppose that every patch of land usable for agriculture or pasture was fully exploited. There were times when the population shifted to an other environment, as demonstrated by Victor in the Murgab delta, either because the land they tilled was no more fit for cultivation, following a series of droughts or a change of the river course etc., or because more advanced agricultural technics enabled them to use lands which they could not till before, or for any other reason (desasters such as wars or epidemics, earthquakes, whatever you want). That may explain why huge monuments like Djarkutan, Dashly 3, Togolok 21, Gonurdepe had a relatively short life: they were not rebuilt anew and anew when they crumbled down .

Most of the parallels discovered by Victor Sarianidi can be the result of exchanges. If goods travelled far and wide, merchants also, and specialists (architects, potters, weapon-makers etc.) when they knew they would get a better reward in Margiana or Bactria than in their native western land. But we cannot expect only pacific exchanges. The sophisticated fortifications of Gonur or Dashly point to he consciousness of the possibility of razzias or full scale conquest wars, but the expected enemies could have come from outside (e.g. the Iranian plateau) or from inside (e.g. Bactra against Gonur).

There existed also moving groups, whose subsistence depended mainly on herding, and who stayed in tents or carts more often than in long-duration houses. Some leaders could have heard of the wealth of Bactro-Margian cities and wanted to raid them. But we have no evidence of war destructions, except the Gonur fire which can have been provoked by many other causes (accident, upheaval, earthquake etc.). And, as far as I know, no BMAC artefact, till now, was ever found in a raider's kurgan.

Some of these tribes may have wanted to settle in what, at least we believe so, should have looked like rich oases, as later the Medes and Persians did, or may have been brought in by a pretender to the power. We have till now no possibility to prove or disprove these kinds of hypothesis, and we should not be surprised at that : the Mitanni Indo-Aryans (if they were Indo-Aryans) did not leave any archaeological trace nor many later nomadic tribes.

Usually, stock-herding nomads despise a settled life. The most likely scenario is that most of these groups were contented to continue their pastoral life if they found pastures enough. And there was much space to use, even for groups numbering thousands of tribals. The can expect that most of these moving peoples lived side by side with the settled agriculturists, providing them with milk and meat, occasionally raiding or robbing them. If we judge from the many — and in some cases huge — fireplaces excavated by Victor, the settled inhabitants of Gonurdepe made a great use of animal victims and meat, and nomads could have provided them. They could also have provided skins, but the Margus and Bactrian people, if we judge from the few pictures we have, did not wear skins, at least as a ceremonial dress, which may be taken for evidence they were not from stock-herding origin.

Stock-herders would not have taken much in exchange, only may be the so-called prestige goods, which would explain why some are found so far from the BMAC area. They can have borrowed from the locals a number of words, mainly for realia which they did not know before, e.g. lions and bricks, as my colleagues Witzel and Lubotsky suppose, but only if they came from the north, because they could have met lions and brick buildings in Iran. In the same way, they could have borrowed from the Oxus peoples the building of complex geometrical altars, but that is pure speculation. As for the ritual use of the juice of pressed plants — that is the etymological meaning of soma / haoma — whatever they were, the word being Indo-Iranian should have been coined before the separation of the Indian and Iranian groups. Indeed, Scythians also used hallucinogenic plants.

Later historical evidence shows that some of these groups, who — it should be reminded — could very easily understand each other and whose beliefs and ritual practices did not widely diverge — spoke either Early Iranian languages or Early Indian Languages. We have not to suppose that Iranians followed Indians, nor that the ones came from West, the others came from North. They could have travelled together and both may have come from North and West. But in the end, only Iranian peoples stayed in the Iranian plateau, in Margiana, in Bactria, and in the northern valleys of the Hindukush, having pushed to the South, so it seems, the Indo-Aryan-speaking tribes previously moving around Herat and — let us say with great approximation — in Southern Bactria (see below). We have no reason to suppose that the early Iranians were more warlike or more numerous than the early Indo-Aryans. What made the difference, so it seems, is that they were much more united than the Indo-Aryans. As Kellens 2005 demonstrated, Avestic *airia* already means "Iranian". Sanskrit *arya* never meant "Indo-Aryan", less so "Indian". We can speak of an early Iranian religio-political consciousness, or, if you prefer although it is an anachronism, of an early Iranian religio-nationalism. There is no evidence of such an Indo-Aryan consciousness in the Rig-Veda.

That scenario fits in well with the chronology. From the analysis of geographical names, we know that the first draft of some hymns of the Rig-Veda go back to a time when Indo-Aryans were living around Herat and in Seistan. The Pirak horse point to their arrival in Baluchistan c. 1700 BC, hence to their presence in Bactria and probably in Margiana, c. 1800 BC or even earlier. The same dates should obtain for the Iranians who are coeval with the Indians. That means that Indians and Iranians were moving in Bactria and Margiana at the same time as the Gonurdepe palace and temples were constructed. I do not believe they were skilled and cultured enough to build them. Whether they took control of them or contributed to their disappearance is an enigma not yet solved.

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BMAC, AHAR CULTURAL COMPLEX AND THE PROBLEM OF ARAYNS

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The Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) is characterized by remarkable forts, religious structures, unique ceramic assemblage, copper objects, seals and stamps. The discovery of BMAC type material from quite a few Harappan sites indicates some kind of interaction between the two. The Ahar culture, which flourished between mid fourth millennium to mid second millennium BC in the Southern Rajasthan (Western India), is characterized by typical Black-and-Red Ware, mud, mud brick and stone structures and copper bronze artifacts. Over hundred sites of this cultural complex are known, out of which only four namely Ahar, Balathal, Gilund and Ojiana have been excavated. It appears that the Harappans had trade or cultural contacts with Ahar complex as the evidence of Harappan type pottery at Ahar culture sites and Ahar type pottery at some Harappan sites in Gujarat would indicate. Recent studies at Ahar culture sites e.g., Gilund, Balathal have yielded quite interesting evidence of seals similar to BMAC type. Therefore there is strong possibility of interaction between BMAC and Ahar cultural complex through the mighty Harappans. This paper therefore examines the archaeological data and problems of Aryans.