Diversity of Harappan Civilization
: A Case Study of the Ghaggar Basin (with Special Reference to Seals)

by
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Abstract

This Ph.D. dissertation discusses the diversity of the Harappan Civilization, especially in the Ghaggar Basin, based on the specialised research of Harappan seals.

The Harappan seals can be divided into two types based on their design, namely Type A seal and Type B seal. Specific features of both types are as follows;

Type A seal: the Harappan seal is characterized by a left-facing animal motif, arrangement Pattern I (i.e. a main motif is engraved in the lower part along with Indus scripts which are depicted in the upper part of the surface) and type I boss (i.e. a boss as a typical example is shaped in symmetry by an incised center line on the square- or bullnose square-shaped boss),

Type B seal: the Harappan seal is characterized by a right-facing animal motif, arrangement Pattern II (i.e. a main motif is engraved in the centre part and Indus scripts are depicted in a space of the surface, not restricted to the upper part of the surface) or III (i.e. only a main motif is engraved without any Indus scripts) and type II boss (i.e. a boss has a simple shape in comparison with Type I and has a just square- or bullnose square-shaped boss without an incised center line) mainly.

As far as the distribution pattern is concerned, although some Type B seals are reported from other regions such as Sindh (e.g. Mohenjodaro), Punjab (e.g. Harappa) and Gujarat (e.g. Dholavira), etc., it is clear from the analysis that Type B seals are
concentrated mainly in the Ghaggar Basin. On the other hand, Type A seals are preferentially distributed in other regions, excluding the Ghaggar Basin.

Furthermore, as the analyses through Scanning Electron Microscope (described as SEM in the present discussion) and 3D (PEAKIT) (will be described in the Chapter 6) images, the sections of the animal’s body have a different shape in each seal type, namely Type A seals have a concave section, while on the other hand, Type B seals have a squarish section (some seals have a concave-squarish section). In connection with this point, it can be mentioned that both section types of the animal’s body in both seal types are a result of the different manufacture techniques and tools.

The results of this study lead to an important conclusion- that the Harappan seals having a right-facing animal, namely Type B seals, are very likely to show the regional variation or diversity of Harappan seals.

In the centre of the Harappan Civilization, namely the Sindh region, classical Harappan material is associated with the Harappan culture. Examples of the ceramic assemblage likewise comprise mainly of typical Harappan pottery. This situation of the material culture is different from that of the Ghaggar Basin (such as continuity of the Sothi-Siswal ceramic tradition even in the Harappan phase along with the Harappan pottery). In connection with this study, the difference in the Harappan seals is recognized as one of the representative artifacts of the Harappan culture.

According to the special functions and significance of the Harappan seals, it can be pointed out that the seal is the most important indicator of socio-economical aspect of the Harappan Civilization. For this reason, as a main concluding remark of this Ph.D study, it is emphasized that this regional variation or diversity of the Harappan seals reflects a part of diversity of Harappan Civilization, especially in the Ghaggar Basin.

This study therefore emphasizes that the Ghaggar Basin was a crucial region of this Civilization and had a specific feature as part of the diversity of the Harappan Civilization.