

The Discovery of new Archaeological Sites at the Bank of Kech River in Balochistan

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Abstract:

Throughout the Indo-subcontinent the territory of Balochistan has been the hub of cultures. In the ancient age. This land has been a passage of different nations. Who entered in Indian different time. This land has a lot of archaeological sites. Some of them have been explored by the foreign archaeologists and some sites are yet to be explored.

This paper illustrates the new archaeological sites of the bank of the Kechriver. It is also mentioned that how many places have been excavated at the bank of the Kech river, how the sites of that are so significant.

The land of Balochistan has produced a number of ancient cultures. These cultures have diffused together and give the oldest and first settlement in the shape of Mehrgarh civilization at Sub-continent. This region has been the cradle of civilizations for thousands of years. The archaeological sites could be found everywhere in Balochistan. Balochistan remained the gateway between the civilizations of West and East and this continued till the arrival of Arab in Sub-continent. The present culture of Balochistan is same as it was before thousands of years, except few cities. The harsh and rough land of Balochistan still has same village type culture and these cultures are unique in the World. As the geographical condition of Balochistan is very rough and harsh, but despite this characteristic, this land witnessed the rise and fall different civilizations throughout the World. This is the reason that every time new archaeological material of Balochistan compels the scholars to give new theories or previous one revised.

However, the French Archaeological led by Dr. Jean-Francois Jarrige carried out eleventh season excavation in Mehrgarh Balochistan to

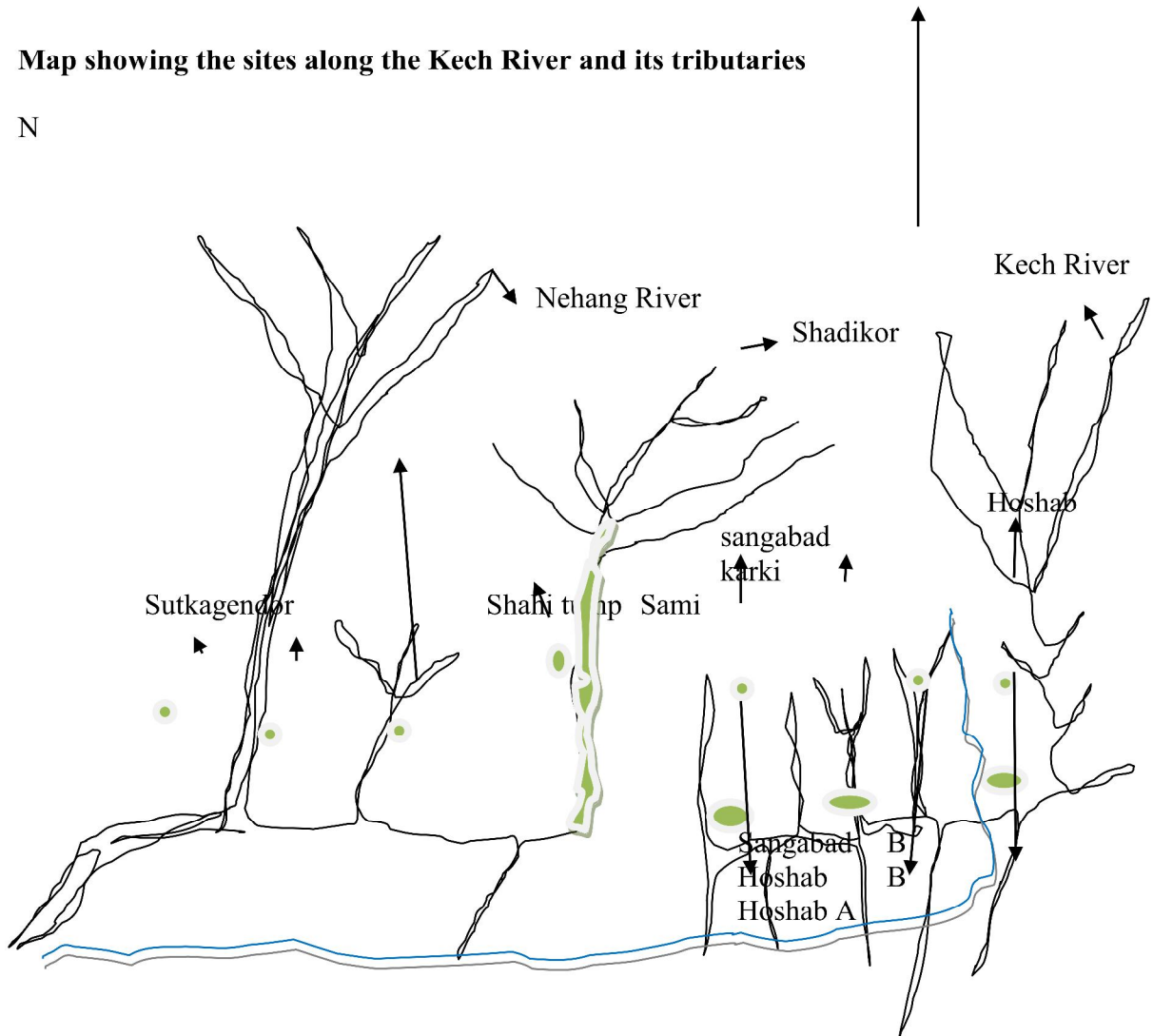
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established sequence from Neolithic time to the immediate aftermath of Harappa culture.

After Carbon dating Mehrgarh became one of the oldest civilizations of the world with both domestication of animal and plants. The excavation of Mehrgarh established the chronology of South Asia. Different missions from abroad and Pakistan carried out excavation, survey and field work in Balochistan but there are number of sites waiting for survey and excavation.

Map showing the sites along the Kech River and its tributaries

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Pl. 1.

Kech River:

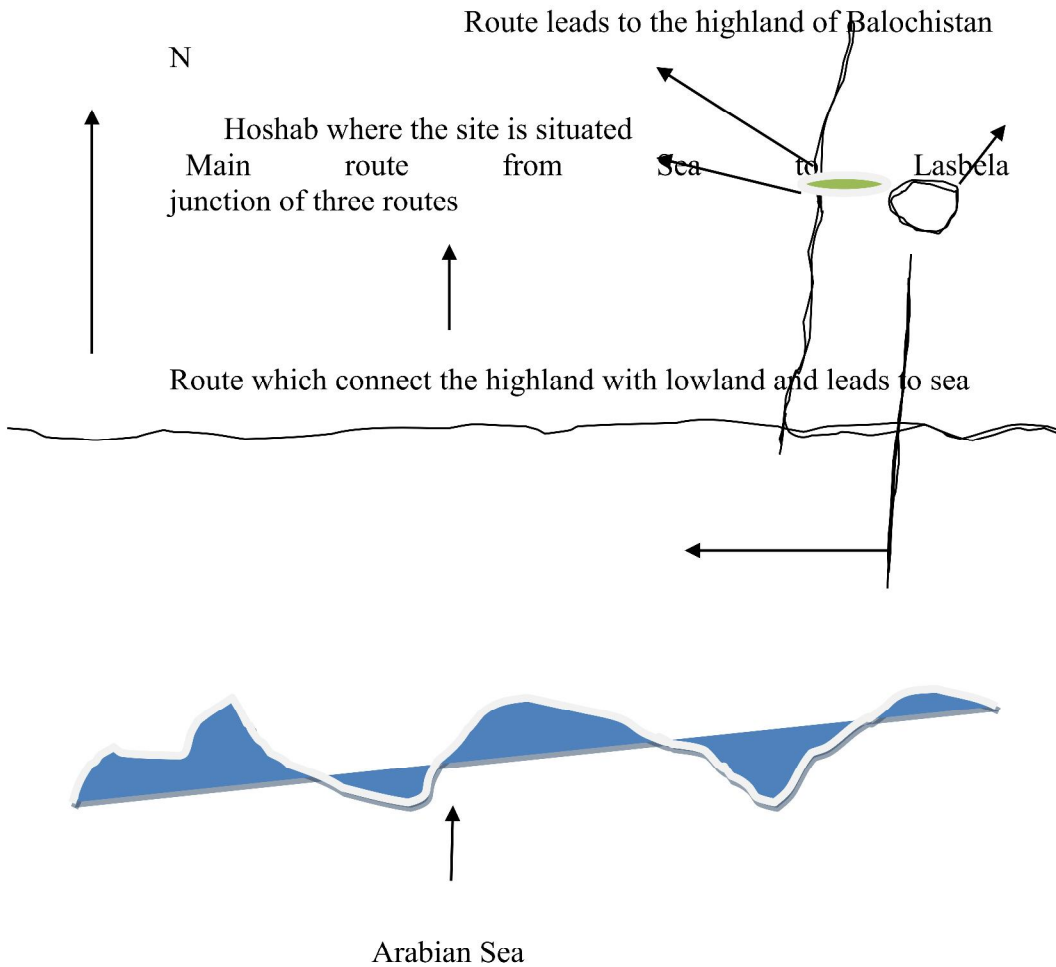
Rivers played significant role for the rise and fall of great civilization. As it was observed that all the Ancient Civilization of the world were settled at bank of rivers. The civilization such like Mesopotamia (the land between two river means the rivers Tigris and Euphrates), Greek (this civilization was established on the island of Crete), Egyptian (the gift of river Nile) and Indus (bless of the Indus river) whole were settled at the banks of rivers (Abrar and Kamran 2003: 6,28,86,144). Similarly, the Kech River originates from the highland of Balochistan and it passes through Makran mountain range and terminates at Arabian Sea (pl.1). Along the bank of Kech River a large number of archaeological sites could be seen. Moreover, some archaeological sites have been excavated and documented but there are a number of sites which are not discovered yet at the bank of Kech River. In the ancient times it runs throughout the years but slowly and gradually this process changed and suddenly the rainfall in region became very low (Hameed 2009: 51). As we see in the geographic changes at coastal area of Makran especially in ancient cities such as Sutkagendor and Sutkagenkoh. Sutkagendor is away 50km from the present coast and Sutkagenkho is ten miles away from the coast (Naeem 2008: 88). Moreover, now Kech River flow very gently in dry season but it becomes violent during monsoon. When it becomes violent then it takes each and everything along with his wave. Sir Aural Stein mentioned in his memories of *An Archaeological tour of Gedrosia* in which he elaborates the situation of monsoon. He stated that “I was cut from Kech only one kilometer when the Kech River flooded. It took each and everything and I slept on stones with empty stomach” (Jeannette 1977: 447). Nevertheless, from ancient times till now this river is only remaining source for the survival of the people. All the excellent quality of date could be grown at the bank of Kech River. Kech River has a virtual role for communication of ancient cultures flourished long the river. People in ancient times used the land and river routes for trading and marketing purposes. The water routes are much easier and it does not consume much time.

Surface Collection at Hoshab:

Hoshab is situated one hundred kilometer east to the Turbat (Kech) in the plains of Balochistan and lies southern side of the road from Turbat

to Quetta and Karachi. It occupies a strategic location and this place is gateway for interior Balochistan. In ancient times this site was connected to the sea directly crossing the coastal mountain range. People still use the ancient routes to reach the coastal areas (pl.2).

Map showing the routes junction at Hoshab pl.2:



Site A:

Site A (Hoshab Damb), the first site visited, stands in the fertile alluvial plain itself, five kilometer south of Hoshab. This site is situated at south of Kech River along the longitude of 26° and latitude 46° on south east to the main road, on the west of Hoshab to Pasni road. It is a low mound, about 30 x 40 meters in size. Its highest point is only 10 m above the level of the plain (pl.3). There is a small settlement area adjacent to the mound. The surface collection of the mound and adjoining area plain is covered by large number of pots herds, pottery and shells (pl.4).

The majority of the potteries collected at surface were black, greyish and whitish ware, often decorated with zoomorphic design (pl.5). Most of these potteries are wheel turned and from the surface collection it is noticed that even a single handmade pottery was not collected, as from the site only one kilometer away from this site a large number of handmade potteries were collected. The potteries are mostly decorated with fish and geometric designs. The whitish potters are decorated with grey and black color. While the sherds and base of black pottery were mostly decorated with geometric design (pi.6). The pottery of this design was collected by the great explorer Sir Aural Stein in 1926. In his memories he mentioned about this kind of pottery especially at Shahi Tump, Nal, Kulwa, Meri Kalat, Sutkagendor and Sutkagenkoh. This kind of pottery is also reported from Mohenjodaro, Mehrgarh, Pirak, Pathani damb, Damb Saddat, Anjira, Sain damb, Nindowari, Balakot (Lasbela), Derabughti, Hoshab site B, Kili Gul Muhammad, Zhob, Loralai and Shari-sutka (Stein 1931: 78). This mean the site is contemporary to the mature Indus valley civilization. This site is located on a strategic point, next to the Kech River. It is also the junction of three different routes to interior Balochistan. One route leads to the highland of Balochistan and next connects the other archaeological sites and third one connects the lowland with the Arabian Sea (pl.1,7).

Current Status of the Site:

The debris of the mound, right now ten meter above the ground. The structure of a building is clearly visible. The exposed wall is 12feet width and the mound is circular in shape. It is 10m above the ground right now. It shows that it was a double story building. They used stones for the constructions. On the top of the mound it shows the ruin of two walls separated at the distance of 24inches and connected with inside wall and it shows that these are small arch, which may be use for defensive purposes. There are fifty arches and each one is 24/24 inches. Inner portion of building shows that this could be a hall as there is no remain of wall. The

size of the hall is 15/15 meters. A large number of broken potteries is scattered at the east corner of mound (pl.9). Along the east side of mound base one can see the large quality of ashes. Moreover, to the northeast of mound some structure of houses could be seen. However, hypothetical one can say that further excavation at mound and adjoining area may exposes the settlement area. Currently, the encroachment has already begun at the site (pl.9). The Karaz channel of water is already taken one portion of the mound and soil erosion at the west of the mound has begun. For the protection of date field a large quality of debris have been taken away and protective wall is erected.

Site B:

Site B (Hoshab), the second site visited, stands in the plains of lowland of Balochistan itself, three kilometers east of Site A. it is a low mound divided in large number of small rooms. This mound is eight meters above the ground and the size is 20m x 18m. On the surface of mound the structure is clearly visible. The surface collection on the mound consists of microlithic tools and Sea shell (pl.10). There is no pottery on the surface and the sides of the mound. A large number of stone tools have been collected from the site. So the sign of Neolithic revolution could easily see on the surface of mound. So the tools of Neolithic period have been distinguished this site from the Mound A. The exposed structure of the mound shows that this mound is divided into a large number of small rooms comparatively larger than Site A, made of stones. Moreover, further excavation of the site could easily establish the chronology of Human past.

Settlement Area of the Mound:

A large settlement area encircles the mound B. The settlement area begins half kilometer west to the mound and scattered one kilometer to the South of the mound and it goes five kilometers ahead toward east of the mound. While on the north of the mound Kech river is flowing. The houses in the settlement area are constructed with the stones and large and wide spread exposed structures could easily support this argument. The exposed structure shows that the excellent skill of the people, which means the people of this settlement, led a highly advance town life. The ruins of settlement revealed that they had a well-planned town layout. This town was protected by high walls (pl.11) as the cities of Indus valley (Abrar and Kamran 2003: 145). Protected wall is visible from each and every corner of this area. This settlement also had a citadel on the northern side. Citadel was a platform made up bricks and stones generally as we had seen from Indus Cities, but citadel at the bank of Kech River was

made up stones and the space between the stones were filled by clay (Pl.12). This citadel is now exposed by the river and the natural drainage also exposed some part of the citadel. As the site is not excavated and it's difficult to say something about the streets but however, from the surface the streets ran in the straight line.....either from east to west or north to south. The structures show that inside the protective wall, people made their house by erecting another wall, than inside that wall they built their houses and they left a space of 20meter length and 15meters width (pl.13). The width of wall is 2feet and each room is 30feet long and 15feet of width. Moreover, after the excavation the drainage system of this settlement can be define.

This settlement is illegally dug by the people in search of wealth and the nearby villagers took away most of stones to build their house. This picture pl.14 shows a ruin of a house where people taken away the stones. Moreover, the illegal diggers dug one part of the settlement area and from their different kind of potteries have been collected (pl.15). The surface collection from this consists of handmade and crude potters to very fine and beautiful potters. The pottery from this site can be divided into three periods. First, this category consists mostly of jars or big vessels and the continuity of this kind in the other layers could only be exposed though systematic excavation above the virgin soil throughout all subsequent occupations, up to the end of the site. These jars or vessels are handmade and crude with width of three centimeters (pl.16). Second, this category consists of a large number of potsherds belongs to a grey ware, very often decorated in black (pl.17). This type of fine-grained, thin with a firing reduced hardness and when it struck, gives a metallic sound. Technically this ware is identical to Faiz Muhammad greyware (Fairservis 1950:263). The shapes are mostly shallow bowls, or dishes on ring foot often have concave tempering rim. Cap-shaped bowl is also collected. Third, this category consists a group of sherds is in buff ware with geometric, zoomorphic and circular design. Fish motifs are very common (pl. 18). This type of potsherds were reported at Kulwa, Shahi Tump, Pathani damb and Kirta and have great resemblance with the other sites by the archaeologists like Stein, Fairservis and Jarrige (J.F Enault and J.F. Jarrige 1973: 193).

This site witnesses different periods from the development of aceramic Neolithic from mound B, followed by heavily tempered chaff pottery with vessels often decorated and then leading eventually to a fine red, white, grey and black pottery. Picture 19 shows the ceramic

revolution at the site. This depicts that how human being step by step moves toward the development. This clearly describes the Neolithic revolution at Makran. The diversity in the ceramics indicates a much longer time period for the spread by adjoining regions. Prof. Dr J.F. Jarrige rightly summarized the ceramic of Balochistan; he stated “the presence of a homogenous material change across the region, indigenously generated by a local process of neolithisation” (Jarrige 1995: XII). Moreover, by excavating this site may help the historians and archaeologists to revise the old theories about Balochistan archaeology.

The other surface collected materials consist of some rock tools, clay objects, beads and skilled zoomorphic artifacts. The rock tools are included with a sleeper (pl.20). This depicts the left foot of human being. This sleeper is made by rocks and skillful people of this area applied their craftsmanship and produced unique piece of sleeper artifacts. From Peesh, they developed Sadh (similar to thread) and with the help of sadh they had tighten it. The folklore of ancient’s time also discusses about this kind of sleeper. (Interviewed of 103years old man of present population). This kind of sculpture has not discovered from the world so far. The other artifacts included with pieces of zoo-morphic (pl.21). They made these kinds of objects with grey Iron and placed them on the clay. They made the objects then exposes to the sunlight and slowly it becomes hard and then they put these object on fire heat. They used different kind of clay for making such objects. As shown in the object (pl. 22). The other sites in Balochistan especially in kolwa, and Pirak people knew how to use the Iron and it was beginning passage from Bronze Age to Iron Age (J.F Enault and J.F. Jarrige 1973: 175). Mostly these zoomorphic figurines are broken tails of fish and other animals. Moreover, the exact morphology of these animals can only distinguish when a systematic excavation carried out at this site as these pieces are collected from the debris of illegal diggers. On the surface, two clays made artifacts were also collected. These depict the hand of human being (pl.23).

Graves at the Site B:

The graves are situated east to the settlement area. Most of the graves have been disappeared and their level became equal to the surface of earth and it is not easy to distinguish the graves from upper layer of earth. However, there are still some graves which are distinguishable (pl.24). It is interesting to note that there are three different kinds of graves.

1. This kind of grave can easily distinguish from the direction of their burial. They buried their dead bodies to east and west direction (pl.25).
2. The other kind of burial is same as today, means they buried their dead bodies to north and south direction (pl.26).
3. This type of burial is called fractional or pit burial. In this method the bones and skeleton of dead body were put in pit and then they buried it. This is also called encroachment burial which means they put the dead body under a deep trench about 10meters down to ground and one long five meters long stone erected on the ground and only a small portion could be seen from the ground (pl.27). This type of burial can be found in China, Gandhara, Nal and Mehrgarh(11)

The Religious remains at the Site B:

Religion played a significant role in human life. From the beginning to this time religion became a major tool to determine human behavior. On the settlement area one can easily see the remains of a Mosque and a Zikir Khana. It is interesting that both Zikri and Suni communities are still living near to the site. As we know from the history that Islam entered the sub-continent through Makran. This remains of Mosque open a new venue for further research in this region whether the ancient Mosque was built in Sindh or Balochistan. However, the Zikri community also claims that they are the first Muslim population in this region (pl.28).

Water Channels:

Agriculture is the backbone of every civilization in the world. The remains of water channels are still visible near to the site. Most of the civilizations in the world made excellent irrigation channels for their fields. However, the case in this area is totally different because the water coming from the Kech River is very violent and it can take everything along with its waves especially in the monsoon seasons. The water is directly coming from the highland and it becomes very fast when it enters the lowland. Therefore, people in this area developed a new system of water flowing which is called kahn or well channel. In this way people mostly dug a number of wells from the low area to the up and then they connect each well with an underground channel so that water easily flows down and irrigates the lowland. From this site the

remains of seven kahn are still visible. This kind of water channels also discovered at Iran.(12)

The initial process is time consuming but whenever it completes than throughout a year it needs only one time cleaning. While on the other side the water channel along with bank of river needs always repairing after every rain. The kahn system is still working in Makran (pl.29).

Conclusion

This survey and surface collection of potteries and artifacts from two sites located at the bank of Kech River shows the importance of Neolithic revolution followed by Bronze Age to Iron Age. In this case, this site witnessed the development of different stages as from pottery, Neolithic tools, graves of different period and dynamic system of irrigation. The periodization on the bases of surface collection is as follows,

1. Primary Neolithic approximately 7500 to 4000BC
2. Chalcolithic approximately 4000 to 3600BC, during this period further development of agriculture took place, the domestication of animal intensified, wheat was replaced by barley, and flood irrigation system came into being. The use of wheel, the development of vessel and ceramic production dominate in this site.
3. Mature Indus period can also see form the pottery
4. The remains of Iron Age also reflect from the surface collection.
5. Mosque approximately shows the arrival Islamic period.

The further detail of human remains at this site only established the chronology of the site and excavation can only reveal the position of the site.



pl.3



Pl.4



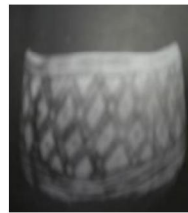
pl.4



pl.4



pl.5



pl.6

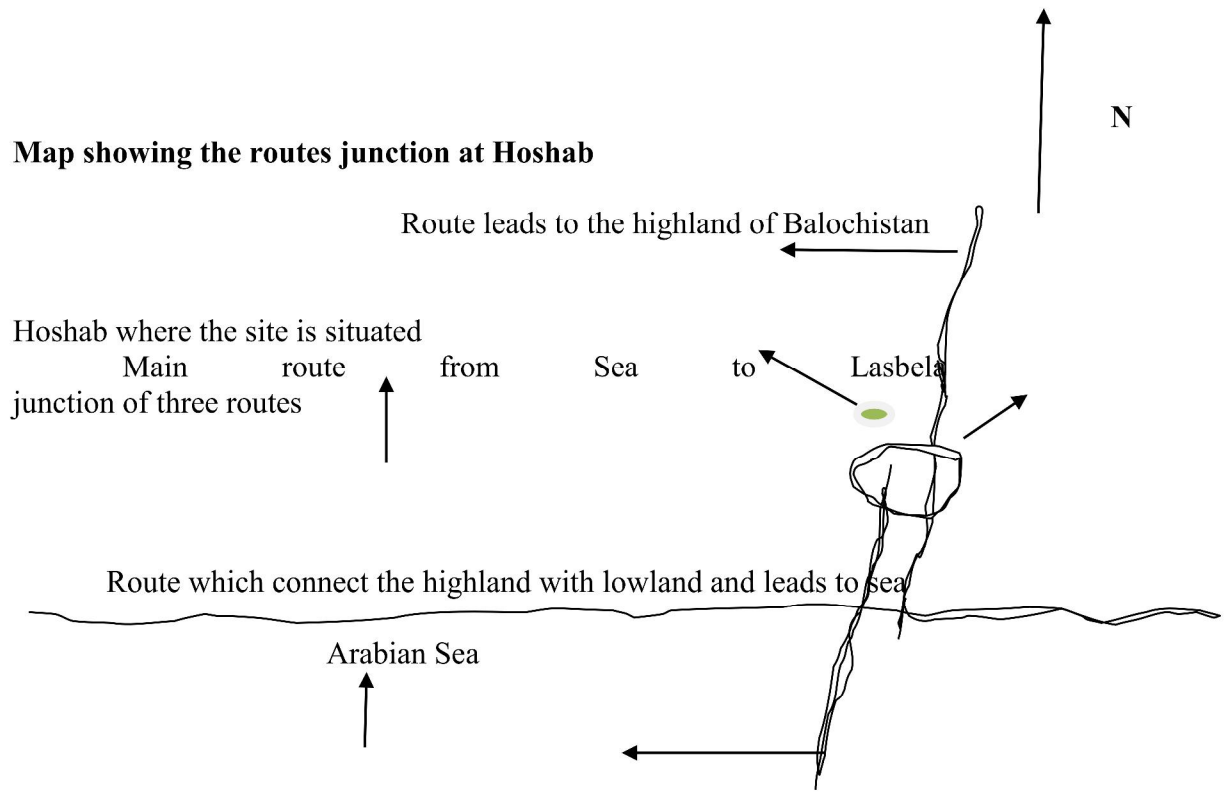


Pl. 6



Pl. 6

Map showing the routes junction at Hoshab



Pl. 7





pl.8



pl. 9



Pl.9



Pl.9



pl. 10



pl. 10



Pl. 10



Pl.11



Pl. 12



Pl.13



Pl.14



Pl.15



Pl.16



Pl.17



pl. 18



pl.19



Pl. 20



Pl. 21



Pl. 22



Pl. 23



Pl.24



Pl.25



Pl. 26



Pl.27



P1.27



P1.28



P1.29

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