



The Lapis Lazuli Beads In Sapalli Culture And Ancient Near East

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ABSTRACT

Lapis lazuli is one of the most attractive semi-precious stones. Due to its peculiar blue color and its rareness, it has been used since the Neolithic Period for the manufacturing of precious objects and jewels (beads, gems, seals, small decorative artworks, etc.). Scientific analysis of jewelry which was made of the lapis lazuli can help to explore deeper cultural, economic, and political relations between the ancient oases of Central Asia and the Ancient Eastern civilizations.

In this article, it is cited scientific pieces of evidence about the earliest and still existing deposits of lapis lazuli sources and the ancient lapis lazuli jewelry. On top of that, it is given scientific information about the types of the lapis lazuli beads which was found from the monuments of Sapalli culture in the part of the Ancient Eastern Civilization such as Sapallitepa, Djarkutan, Mulali, Bustan VI, and also Central Asia.

KEYWORDS

Lapis lazuli, BMAC, Sapalli culture, Sapallitepa, Djarkutan, Mulali, Bustan VI, the lapis lazuli beads, Zarafshan oasis, Shahr-i Sokhta.

INTRODUCTION

Most researchers have repeatedly emphasized that the lapis lazuli is the main source in determining the historical geography of the

countries of The Ancient East, in the issue of localization of cities, in the determining of the directions of the ancient lazurite.

Today, the scientific and practical study of this gemstone has become a field of research by many researchers. Due to the lapis lazuli is a unique and precious stone, it has been used since the Neolithic Era for the manufacturing of precious objects and jewels. The first jewelry which made out of the lapis lazuli stone was found from the Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments of Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and Iran.

According to researches, The Badakhshan deposits in Afghanistan are commonly considered as the main source of lapis lazuli in ancient times. However, other quarries could have possibly been exploited since antiquity. The analysis of lazurite finds which was found from the monuments of Ancient Eastern civilization (IV millennium BC) and Sopoli culture (III-II millennium BC), helps us to research the ancient cultural relations.

According to the latest information which was identified in the science of mineralogy, the lapis lazuli deposits are located in Afghanistan (Sar-e Sang, Badakhshan), in Lyadzhuar Dara (the Pamir Mountains in present-day Tajikistan), in Swat Valley (present-day Pakistan), Malobistr, Slyudyan (Russia), Lake Harbor (Canada), Karen (Chile), as well as that in Irkutsk (near Lake Baikal, present-day Siberia) and in Mogok (Mandalay Region, present-day Myanmar).

In addition to the monuments of the Bronze Age of Ancient Eastern Civilizations, many types of the lapis lazuli jewelry have been identified in the monuments of Sapoli culture, the researching of them has an important role in the studying of jewelry art and cultural relations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. The Main Sources of the lapis lazuli stone

Lapis lazuli is often described as a contact-altered limestone or calcareous rock having quite variable compositions, formed in very rare geological conditions [37, P. 43], and is one of the most attractive semi-precious stones. Due to its peculiar blue color and its rareness, It has been used since the Neolithic Era for the manufacturing of precious objects and jewels (beads, gems, seals, small decorative artworks, etc.) [28, P. 637-638; 6, B. 290].

The first jewels which were made out of lapis lazuli which belong to the Neolithic Period (VII-VI millennia BC) were found from Mehrgarh (Pakistan, VII-III millennia BC) [25, P. 34; 26, P. 137].

Due to the relative rarity of geological conditions in which it can be formed, only a few sources of lapis lazuli exist in the world [28, P. 637]. In his works, Beruni mentioned that there are the sources of lapis lazuli in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, the Pamirs, Badakhshan, and Shughnan, due to the fact that Shughnan is located in Badakhshan, the lapis lazuli in this place is called "Lali Badakhshan" [6, B. 251]. In many other foreign scientific pieces of research, It was cited that the main deposits of this gemstone are located in Afghanistan (Sar-e Sang, Badakhshan), in Lyadzhuar Dara (the Pamir Mountains in present-day Tajikistan), in Swat Valley (present-day Pakistan), Malobistr, Slyudyan (Russia), Lake Harbor (Canada), Karen (Chile) [18, C. 89], as well as that in Irkutsk (near Lake Baikal, present-day Siberia) and in Mogok (Mandalay Region, present-day Myanmar) [27, P. 2196; 28, P. 638].

The lapis lazuli from Sar-e Sang, Badakhshan appeared as the source of a long-standing, organized trade that immediately branched out in several directions: South, towards the

sea, Dilmun and the Sumerian ports via Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro; South-West, towards the centers of the Helmand Civilization, the margins of the Lut, Tepe Yahya, Anshan, and Susa; westward, towards the northern route of the Iranian Plateau Tepe Hissar, Sialk, northern Mesopotamia and Anatolia); North-West, to the urban center of southern Turkmenia[38, P.19]

2.2. The Main lapis lazuli finds in the world

The earliest lapis lazuli finds in Central Asia were found from the settlement monuments of The Southern Turkmenistan which belongs to the IV millennium BC (Altyndepe) and they consist mainly of seals, beads, and pendants[12, C. 64-65, table. XX, XXI,XXII].

In Iran, the lapis lazuli products were found from the monuments which belong to the second half of the IV millennium BC(Sialk III). At the end of the IV-III millennium BC, the settlement of Sialk was destroyed with the expansion of the Elamite tribes, they “ play an important role in the trade route with the north for the managing of the trade in the lapis lazuli”. The Lapis lazuli artifacts which were found from Elam (Susa) and Mesopotamia (Uruk, Ur, Jemdet Nasr) also belong to this period. However, the lapis lazuli artifacts which belong to the Ubaid culture (6500-3800 BC) cause the assumption that this gemstone was taken to Mesopotamia even earlier. When excavating ancient royal Sumerian tombs of Ur monument which is one of the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, They were found more than 6000 beautifully executed lapis lazuli statuettes of birds, deer, and rodents as well as dishes, beads, and cylinder seals from this tomb. When the components of these items were chemically analyzed, it was discovered that the lapis lazuli which was used in the

manufacture of these items undoubtedly came from material mined in northern Afghanistan[24; 36, P. 214]. As well as that They were found more than 108 items of the lapis lazuli from the Qatna cemetery in Ur. There are cylindrical and barrel-shaped beads in these finds [44, P. 242].

Comparing the types of the lapis lazuli jewelry which were found from the monuments in Mesopotamia and Iran, ready-made jewelry which was made of this gemstone was rare in monuments of Iran. In particular, 45 types of lazurite jewelry are known in the monument of Ur, while only 3 types have been identified in monuments of Iran[39, P. 56].

Many of the oldest lapis lazuli artifacts which belong to the Harappa culture (second half of III millennium BC and the first half of II millennium BC) have also been found in the Indus Valley and Balochistan[14, C.3].

In Ancient Egypt, lapis lazuli has been used for scarabs, pendants, beads, and inlaid jewels since IV millennium BC, in particular, many artifacts were found in Hierakonpolis and Abydos necropolis[28, P. 638].

Similar types of the lapis lazuli beads that were found from the Bronze Age monuments of Ancient Eastern Civilizations have also been found in the monuments of the Sopolli culture. In Central Asian archaeology, Sopolli is one of the best-studied cultures[4, 5, 22, 45]. It is located in Bactria (present-day Southern Uzbekistan) and Tadjikistan. It is similar to the Murgab cultures of southern Turkmenistan and the Dashtli cultures of northern Afghanistan and has been a common historical and cultural unity. In archaeological sciences, these cultures are also called “ Oxus civilization”, “ Turan civilization” and “Bactria-Margiyana archeological complex” (BMAC), and it was

recognized as a new hotbed of ancient Eastern civilization[21, B. 4].

2.3. The lapis lazuli beads of Sapalli culture.

The Sapalli Culture has been studied since the late 1960s, mostly through the efforts of teams from the Institute of Archaeology of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences, headed by Ahmadali Askarov, who directed excavations at the major sites of Sapallitepe and Djarkutan[2, 3, 4, 5]. As a result of the Archaeological excavations in recent years, the following main monuments of Sapalli culture have been discovered and studied: Mulali[4, C. 59; 16, 17], Bustan VI, VII [23], Tilla Bulak[32, 33, 34, 35]. The findings that were found from these monuments confirm that the population of the Sapalli culture is a generalized community that has developed equally all sectors of the economy. They have achieved great results in architecture, agriculture, handicrafts, especially in the field of jewelry[16].

Sapallitepe is situated on the left bank of Ulanbulaksay, Muzrabad district, Surkhandarya region[2, C. 6; 4, C. 13]. Sapallitepe dates to the 20th and 19th centuries BC. As a result of the archeological excavations during 1969-1974 years, a total of 8 necklaces and 15 individual beads were found from the monument of Sapallitepe[2, 4]. They are divided into the following types according to the making of the shape: cylinder, ellipse, rhomb, disk, barrel-shaped, oval, rectangular, biconical, sphere also cross-shaped and shaped (sculpture, image, and figure).

The inhabitants of the Sapalli culture used lapis lazuli for mainly bead making[4, C. 74]. The lapis lazuli beads make up the majority among the numerous beads that were found from Sapallitepe. The most of the beads in the shape of the cylinder, rhomb, disk, barrel-shaped,

oval, rectangular, biconical are made out of the color of light blue lazurite[2, C. 94; 3, C. 20-21; 4, C.76].

There is a special group among the beads and pendants of the Sapalli culture, they were made in the form of two-sided cylindrical, rectangular, cross-shaped.

In particular, 5 round, flat cylindrical, double-faced beads were found from Sapallitepe. They are mainly made out of lapis lazuli, carnelian, turquoise, chalcedony, and stone. One of them is the black stone bead, there are six grooves along the flat cylindrical side, the lapis lazuli eyes are placed on the grooves of the bead. It is painted a wheel image on the front of the surface of the bead and a snake image on the backside of it with using a dot technique[2, C. 96; 22, P.38; 43, P. 45]. As well as, a circular, double-faced, eagle-shaped lazurite amulet was also found at the monument of Dashli III[15, C. 104. ris. 54,4].

In addition, 5 rectangular, embossed, double-faced pendants were found from Sapallitepe, one of them was made out of the lapis lazuli. It is painted a spruce image on the front of the surface of the bead and a weeping willow image on the backside of it with using a dot technique[2, C. 96].

Four samples of the cross-shaped amulets with a staircase flange were found from the monuments of the Bronze Age of Southern Uzbekistan, three of them were made out of ordinary stone and one of them was made from the lapis lazuli stone. It is painted a spruce image on the front of the surface of the amulet and a dotted image of four spruce trees in different directions from a single root on the backside of it[2, C. 96. Ris. 47,9]. These types of amulets were found from the monuments of southern agricultural cultures of the Bronze

Age: Turkmenistan – Oltindepe[11, C. 156, Ris. 7; 12, p. 65. Tabl. 22,4], Parxay II[20, C. 63, Tabl. 94,4], Bukhara – Zamanbaba[9, C. 154, ris. 48, table.VIII, XX], Southern Tajikistan – Farkhor[8, C. 34. Ris. 5,3a].

The monument of Djarkutan is situated on the left-side terrace above the flood plain of the dry Buston-sai River, Sherabad district, and dating 1900-1500 BC. As a result of archaeological excavations in 1975-1993 years, a total of 12 necklaces; 4 beads[4, C. 221.Tabl. LVIII, 3, C. 120. Tabl. LV, 3,4,5], and also 1 lapis lazuli beads with several drilled holes which have no certain shape from room 4 were found from the monument[5, C. 87. Ris. 24, II, 16].

According to the making shape, these types of beads can be divided following types: cylinder, oval, rhomb, biconical, sphere, ellipse. Cylindrical shapes of the beads and small beads, all of the oval beads that were found from Djarkutan are made out of the light blue color of the lapis lazuli[4, C. 20].

Numerous examples of beads were found from the 29th grave that belongs to Djarkutan. There are 2 pendants among them. One of them is made in a shape of rectangular, embossed, double-faced, it made out the lapis lazuli. It is painted a spruce image on the front of the surface of the bead and a mountain goat dotted image on the backside of it[3, C. 20-21; 43, P. 45].

In this article, we do not give information about the lapis lazuli jewelry that were found as a result of archeological excavations of post-1994 international archaeological expeditions[30, 31, 43, 21], because they are not yet fully scientifically circulated.

The most of beads in the Kuzali stage of Djarkutan were made out of the light blue color

of the lapis lazuli. According to making the shape, they can be divided into three types: drop, cylinder, ellipse[3, C. 25. Tabl. XLV, 5-7, 11]. According to the form of production, the beads that belong to the Kuzali stage do not differ from the beads of the early stages of the Sapalli culture, but in this period, large-scale beads had appeared [3, Tabl. XLV. 5, 6, 7].

Mulali monument is situated in the Altinsay district of the Surkhandarya region (9 km north-west from Shurchi district). This monument is considered a part of the cultural monuments of the Mirshodi oasis, 7 graves that belong to the same period as Mulali were first found in 1970 by a member of the archeological expedition of The Art History Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan that led by GA Pugachenkova, archeologist B. Turgunov[4, C. 59; 16, C.75] and all remains here would appear to belong to the 17th -16th centuries BC. Numerous examples of jewelry were found from the monument. One of them is beads.

Numerous examples of gold beads were found from the 2nd grave that belongs to Mulali[4, C. 88]. 7 drops shaped lapis lazuli beads were found from graves of Djarkutan monuments that belong to Mulali stage[4, C. 88. Табл. LXVII], and also a total of 21 drop-shaped lazurite pendants, 12 rhombic, biconical, square biconical and cylindrical beads were found from the graves of the Molali stage of the Boston VI monument(№ 201, 325, 122, 365, 409, 285, 286, 36, 120, 396, 183, 26, 415, 333, 242) and studied[23].

In 2012, as a result of archeological excavations that were carried out Mulali (a joint international expedition of the German Archaeological Institute and The Art History Research Institute of the Republic of

Uzbekistan), about 50 beads and pendants were found, 3 of them were made out the lapis lazuli stone. These beads were made in the shape of a drop and barrel[17, C.25].

The monument of Bustan(Bustan I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII) is situated on the right-side terrace above the flood plain of the dry Buston-sai River, (Sherabad District Surkhandarya Province).

Bustan VI is a funeral and cultic complex consisting of a group of underground graves belonging to the Sapalli culture and dating 1400-1300 BC. The complex, which functioned in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC. The site was explored from 1990 to 2008 as part of a field study carried out by the students of the Historical Faculty of the Samarkand State University supervised by N. Avanesova.

More than 500 different objects in various conditions were examined in the area of 6,176 m² in the course of 14 field seasons[4, C. 57; 23, P.5]. One of the most popular finds is jewelry: necklaces, beads, pendants, pins, amulets, diadems, rings, earrings, and also bracelets.

The Boston VI monument also differs from other monuments of Sopolli culture by its richness in lazurite objects. More than 54 lapis lazuli finds were found from the monument of Bustan VI, 28 of them are pendants, 22 of them are simple beads, 4 of them are disc-shaped altar with lazurite linear. According to the making shape, the beads and pendants that were found from this monument can be divided following types:

Table № 1. The types and amount of the lapis lazuli beads and pendants of Bustan VI

№	Лапис лазуритли мунчоқ маржон ва шокила маржонларнинг шакллари	Сони	Мунчоқ маржон	Шокила маржон
1	cylindr	3	3	
2	Barrel-shaped	8	8	
3	rhomb	5	5	
4	Disk-shaped	1	1	
5	Tetrahedral biconical	2	2	
6	biconical	1	1	
7	drop-shaped	27		27
8	figured	1	1	
9	drop-shaped	1		1
10	ring-shaped	1	1	
Total:		50	22	28

The analogies of Boston VI beads are found from South Turkmenistan - Dashti-Kazi[13, C. 66. Ris. 3.21], Khujayli, Muminabad, Kumsay[13, C. 69] and Early Tulkhar, Early Aruktau, Kangurtut, Makoni -mor, Tigrovaya Balka, Dashti Qazi.

According to the form of production, in the Kuzali, Mulali, Buston stages of the Sopolli culture, in addition to the beads' forms of the early period (Sapallitepe, Djarkutan), large drop-shaped pendants had appeared [3, C. 25. Tabl. XLV, 3,5,6,7,11; 23, P. 48. Plate 19]. In particular, 27 drop-shaped pendants were found from Bustan VI[23] and 8 drop-shaped pendants were found from Mulali[4, P. 88. Tabl. LXVII]. The analogies of these types of pendants were also found from such monuments as Shahdad[29], Hissar III[42, Plate LXIX], Darnaychi[7, C. 77. Ris. 66.2] and Nurek[5, P. 46]

One of the monuments of Sapalli culture, Tilla Bulak is situated in a very favorable niche, commanding good views all the way to the Kugitangtau in the west, but also controlling a small valley eastwards, which is well watered by a perennial spring and constitutes one of the few ways of access (through small trails) from Pashkhurt down into the Surkhandarya plain[21, 32, 33, 35].

The site was discovered in 2006 by Sergej Bolelov, a member of the Tocharistan Expedition, who sounded the place and suggested a Late Bronze Age date. Since April 2007, Tilla Bulak is being investigated by a joint expedition of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich (LMU), the Tocharistan Expedition of the National Institute for the Study of the History of Art (TE) and Termez University (UT)[35, P. 152].

As a result of archaeological excavations at the monument, a variety of artifacts had been found. One of the objects of material culture is considered jewelry. Very few specimens of this type of the handicraft products have been found from the monument, which was mainly found in the cultural layer of the room walls, most of them have been preserved as a fragment. The main part of the jewelry that was found from the monument consists of beads, pins, amulets, and fragments of rings, bracelets[33, P. 134].

One of the popular and unique finds is considered the lapis lazuli beads. 2 lapis lazuli beads were found from Tilla Bulak, their longs are 2 cm. One of them is rhomb – shaped, second is oval-shaped[34, P. 275. Abb. 15. TB10-KF-794; TB10-KF-880].

According to the research, the lapis lazuli beads in the early stages of the Sopolli culture were mainly made in the form of cylinder, ellipse, rhomb, disk, barrel-shaped, oval, rectangular, biconical, sphere also cross-shaped, but large-scale drop-shaped pendants had appeared in the late stages. This is directly explained by the influence of nomadic tribes. The Srubna and Andronovo tribes influenced and transformed considerably the cultural values and general appearance of the Sapalli culture.

2.4. Scientific pieces of evidence about the lapis lazuli beads of Central Asia.

It is important to analyze their analogs and distribution geography in the deeper studying of the lapis lazuli beads of Sapalli culture. First of all, We analyze the lapis lazuli beads that were found from the Dashtli culture of Northern Afghanistan and the Murgab culture of Southern Turkmenistan, which are related to the Sapalli culture.

The Dashli culture is geographically closest to the Sopolli culture, and the finds that were from the graves of Dashli I and Dashli III are very similar to the finds of Sapallitepe[2, C. 103; 4, C. 132]. The main part of the cylinder, rhomb, oval, ellipse, sphere, biconical shaped of the beads, and pendants were made out of the lapis lazuli and carnelian stones, according to bead making, they are the same with beads of Sapallitepe[15, C. 59. табл. III,7].

The New Bronze Age monuments in the south part of Tajikistan has been studied in recent years, mostly through the efforts of teams from the Institute of Archaeology of the Tadjikistan and The German Archaeological Institute, headed by N.M. Vinogradova, Yu.G. Kutimov, Mike Teufer who directed excavations at the major sites of Farkhor, Gelota, Darnaychi, and Kangurtut. As a result of archaeological excavations, the cylinder, barrel-shaped, biconical, and also cross-shaped lapis lazuli beads and pendants were found from the graves of these sites[7, 8].

In particular, 1 cross-shaped lazurite pendants was found from Farkhor[7, P. 34. fig. 5,3a], 3 barrel-shaped lazurite beads with a length of 8 mm, a diameter of 4 mm, a hole diameter of 1 mm were found from the second grave of Gelota that was uncovered in 6 excavations[7, P. 50,62. Fig. 37,2-4], 6 lapis lazuli beads were found from the second grave of Darnaychi that was uncovered in 2 excavations (one of them is hexagonal shaped, its size - 9 mm; three of them are barrel-shaped, length-7 mm, diameter-6 mm; two of them are biconical-shaped, length-5 mm, diameter-3 mm), 2 drop-shaped lapis lazuli pendants were found from the third grave of Darnaychi[7, C. 77. Рис. 65,4; 66,1].

The monuments of Murghab oasis are very closest to the Sopolli culture, and the artifacts that were from the graves of Gonurdepe, Namazgah V, and Namazgah VI are very similar to the artifacts of Sapallitepe. A lot of types of lapis lazuli beads, pendants, amulets, seals, pins were found from these sites[41, P. 118; 10, P. 274]. The lapis lazuli beads were found more from Gonurtepa than in other monuments of BMAC and are divided into the following types in bead making: rhomb, circle, barrel, round, and cylinder[41, P. 115, fig. 207, 209-210; P. 118, fig. 222; P.120, fig. 227; P. 123, fig. 240; P. 151, fig. 29; 40, P. 203. fig. 112]. In the grave № 2900 of Gonur, on the neck of a buried warrior were found two strings of beads out of which 15 were made of carnelian, 31-of lazurite, 11 - of turquoise, and 14 - of gypsum[41, P. 118]. As well as that a total of 200 different forms of lazurite and carnelian beads were found in № 3200 tombs of Northern Gonur[10, C. 274. Рис. 33].

Топилмалар шундан далолат берадики, Гонуртепадан топилган ашёлар Жанубий Туркманистоннинг илк бронза даври ёдгорликлари (Номозгоҳ IV-V) дан топилган топилмаларга жуда ўхшайди. Аммо, уларнинг деярли барчаси Шарқий Эрон, Элам, Шимолий Месопотамия ва Кичик Осиёнинг топилмалари билан таққослаганда улардан тубдан фарқ қилади. БМАК ҳудудидаги топилмаларнинг бир-бирига ўхшашлиги эса, ушбу ҳудудда бронза давридаёқ ўзига хос маданият вужудга келганлигини кўрсатади[41, P. 124].

The findings show that the artifacts that were found from Gonurdepe are very similar to finds that were found from the Early Bronze Age monuments of Southern Turkmenistan (Namazgah IV-V). However, almost all of them are radically different from the findings of Eastern Iran, Elam, Northern Mesopotamia,

and Asia Minor. The similarity of the findings that were found from the BMAC area indicates that a unique culture was formed in this area as early as the Bronze Age[41, P. 124].

A multitude of the lapis lazuli beads that were specific to Sapalli culture was also found from the Bronze age monuments of Zarafshan valley such as Siab, Zarcha Khalifa, Jam, Sazagansay, Aksay, Tusinsay, Tugay[1, P. C. 23-54]. In particular, a lot of samples of the cylinder, barrel, round, disk, rhomb, oval, square-shaped lazurite beads were found from the graves of Sazagansay[1, C. 45, рис. 4:8,10-12,].

Due to the fact that the findings of the Bronze Age monuments of the Zarafshan Valley are very similar to the findings in the territory of the BMAC, that is these monuments are called the monuments of the Zarafshan group of the BMAC[1, C. 49].

2.5. The lapis lazuli beads of Iran.

The lapis lazuli jewelry which was found in the Bronze Age monuments of the Iranian region is an important role in terms of number and type than other regions. The main reason for this is that in the Bronze Age, there had been separate workshop areas for making beads

from lapis lazuli, turquoise, chalcedony, and other precious stones in Tepe Hissar and Shahr-i Sokhta in the territory of Iran[38, P. 86]. In the ancient East, the inhabitants of the Iranian Plateau had played two main roles. The first one is the mediation role played a mediating role in the spread of the Badakhshan lazurite artifacts to Mesopotamia(Shahr-i Sokhta), the second one was an exporter of metal ingots and chlorite products (Tepe Yahya)[19, P. 74; 38, P. 49].

In their works, Massimo Vidale and Alessandra Lazzari[38] have given information about new excavations in Shahr-i Sokhta which Bronze Age monument of the Iranian Plateau, many tombs with lapis lazuli beads and indicators of handicraft in making of beads, the technology of bead making, as well as that technology and typology of the total 765 lapis lazuli beads which was found from Shahr-i Sokhta and is being housed in Centro Scavi e Ricerche archeologiche of IsLAO, on the shelves and in the showcases of the National Museum of Oriental Art (MNAO). According to the form of making, these beads were designed types by researchers A. Lazzari and M. Vidale[38, P. 46]:

Table № 2. The types of lapis lazuli beads in Shahr-i Sokhta and their amount.

№	THE TYPES OF THE LAPIS LAZULI BEADS	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
1	Cylindrical	531	69.2%
2	Barrel-shaped	30	3.9%
3	Lozenge-shaped	18	2.3%
4	Disk-shaped	9	1.3%
5	Rectangular	8	1.1%
6	Biconical	5	0.7%

7	Cross-shaped	3	0.4%
8	Pendants	3	0.4%
9	Crescent-shaped	1	0.1%
10	Shape not described	157	20.5%
Total:		765	99.9%

The researchers are highlighted that the range of bead types produced in Mundigak, similarly limited to disk and cylinder-like shapes, is likewise restricted, and the focus on simple shapes may be considered a trait of the Helmand Civilization[38, P. 184].

Another monument of Iran, Shahdad, also many types of lapis lazuli beads were found. Ali Hakemi explained that the similarity of the artifacts which was found in Shahdad to the artifacts of Bactria and Margiana was not only in terms of trade but also in terms of economic, social, and religious integration[29, P.123]. On top of that The Dashti Lut Valley where the Shahdad is located, is considered a geographical area that connects the western regions and Eastern Iran, Central Asia. That is way, Shahdad was recognized as the main border point of trade between Elam and Balochistan, Margiyana and Bactria, as well as that It was the center of distribution of exported goods to other regions in the developed interregional system [29, P.659-660; 38, P. 49; 19, P. 74].

In his work, M. Casanova gave information about the lapis lazuli beads which were found in Susa and are being kept in the Louvre Museum in Paris. A total of 276 beads and pieces of the pendant which were found from Susa have divided into 21 types depending on the bead making by this author and cited

analogies with Shahr-i Sokhta, Mundigak, Sarazm and Altindepe[26, P. 137-145]

CONCLUSION

The aim of the present work was to determine the types and distribution geography of the lapis lazuli beads. Scientific analysis of the lapis lazuli beads can help to explore deeper cultural, economic, and political relations between the ancient oases of Central Asia and the Ancient Eastern civilizations. The similarity of the beads was found from Bactria, Margiana, Sogdiana with the beads that were found from the Bronze Age monuments of Mesopotamia, India, and Iran indicates that there had been extensive cultural relations between these regions as early as the Bronze Age, indicating the emergence of a unique integration environment. On top of that, the above-mentioned scientific-comparative evidence is the basis for the firm conclusion that Sopoli culture also had its place in the Ancient Eastern civilizations.

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