



Written And Archaeological Sources About The --Prevalence Of Bactrian Lazurite To Ancient Cities Of Mesopotamian

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the problem of the prevalence of Bactrian lazurite to cities of Ancient East. It is based on archaeological information and sources which was founded from monuments of Central Asia belongs to The Bronze age as well as that written sources about the rulers of Ur and Uruk – victories of lugal over Eastern countries in illuminating of this problem.

KEYWORDS

Badakhshan lazurite, Bactria, Elam, Culture of Xarappan, the monuments of Shurtukay, Mesopotamian, Ur.

INTRODUCTION

The Lazurite ore was discovered by Central Asians during the Eneolithic period. We can say this with confidence because jewelry made of lazurite was found in the Eneolithic cultural strata of the Oltindepe settlement in the territory of southern Turkmenistan[9,7-9]. Lazurite has been the most popular mineral since the Early Bronze Age, as the discovery of jewels and seals from all the settlements of

ancient Eastern culture, especially the tombs of the rulers, is the basis for such a conclusion.

Lazurite ore has long been called by various names, including laps, laps lazurite, lazurite, lal, badakhshan lali, lojuvard, lasaward. Of course, there are many factors that make it a multi-named mine. Firstly, the lazurite stones differed from each other due to their different luster of color, secondly because of their

hardness and brittleness, and thirdly, under the influence of different languages, the name of this mineral increased. For example, lojuvard means "azul" in Arabic. Fourth, in ancient times, people's lack of knowledge and knowledge about minerals also led to the proliferation of mineral names due to their inability to distinguish minerals from one another.

Abu Rayhan Beruni, one of the medieval scholars of Central Asia, gave detailed information about lazurite, that is, its chemical composition, how it occurs in nature, its location, and methods of mining[7, 70-74].

Lazurite has attracted the attention and attention of people since ancient times because it is one of the minerals that can be used to make precious, soft-textured, sky-blue, unique and beautiful works of art. It is no coincidence that even the oldest cultural ties and trade routes in human history are named after this mine. Of course, we are talking about the lazurite path that connects ancient Bactria and Mesopotamia.

It should be noted that one of the most common minerals in Mesopotamian cities is undoubtedly lazurite. Archaeologist - According to stratigraphic studies, lazurite spread to the cities of the Ancient East, including Ur or Uruk, from the time of the first dynasties and became one of the most common minerals during the second and third dynasties. Of course, the rare finds found in the tomb of the ruler of the city of Ur are also examples of this idea. If we look at the history of the cities of Mesopotamia, we can see that this mineral was constantly going on until the crisis of the representatives of the "first civilization"[8, 54].

THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The natural habitat of Lazurite is in Bactria, that is, in mountainous Badakhshan. Badakhshan lazurite has been known and popular since ancient times. The issue of Bactria's cultural ties with the cultural centers of the Ancient East attracted the attention of scholars not only in Central Asia but also in Europe in the 19th century. The reason for this interest is also clear, of course, that the main habitat of the lazurite was located in the remote and mountainous Badakhshan[21, 87]. The Iranians as well as the ancient Indians played an important role in the spread of Lazurite to the cities of Mesopotamia. According to archeological sources, they were actively involved as intermediaries in the trade in lazurite, depending on the historical geographical location they occupied[26, 383]. This means that a network of roads connecting Bactria with the ancient states of Old Asia, such as Sumer and Elam, passed through Iran[27, 165-190].

Researchers acknowledge that lazurite spread to Mesopotomy through two, land and water routes. The waterway may have developed after the Harappans discovered the sea route, before which the main trade route was carried by land[28, 15-23].

As we have already mentioned, the researchers studied the history of the first relations between Central Asia and Ancient India, Avesta and Rigveda data, Altindepe, Togolok 21, Gonur in southern Turkmenistan, Sapallitepa, Jarkutan, Tillabulak in southern Uzbekistan; Shahdad, Giyan, Hissar in Iran. The results of archeological excavations at monuments such as Harappa and Kalibangan served as the main source. The main source is an archeological artifact found in the monuments - lojuvar. To study the relationship between the Oxus and Harappan civilizations is to study the history of the lojuvard path.

The main landmarks are Tepai Hisar in northern Iran and Shahri Sokhta in Seistan, Iran. Italian archaeologists have conducted research in an unimaginable way at the Tepai Hissar settlement, where they analyzed the soil composition of the top of the monument in a laboratory and found that a very large percentage of the soil content was lazurite powder. Archaeologists continued their research and analyzed the dust stored on the surface of the sharp stones, and found that stone tools were also used in the processing of lazurite(28, 15-17).

When comparing the types of lazurite jewelry found in Mesopotamian and Iranian monuments, ready-made jewelry made from this ore was rare in monuments in the territory of Iran. In particular, 45 types of lazurite jewelry are known in the Ur monument, while only 3 types have been identified in Iranian settlements[23, 56]. From the above data, it can be concluded that Iranian miners supplied these stones as "semi-finished" raw materials to the cities of the Ancient East, while Mesopotamian miners processed and commercialized lazurite ores.

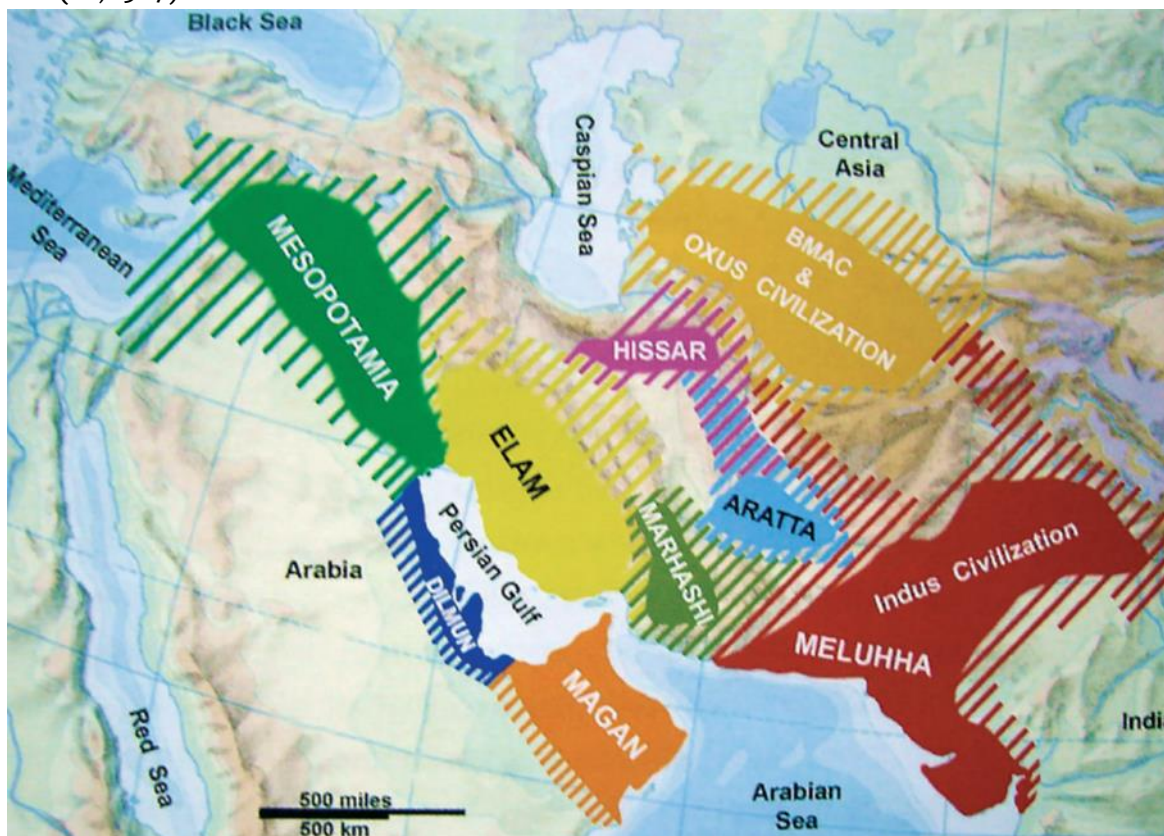


Figure 1. Countries of the ancient Eastern world.

The city is naturally convenient according to the geographical location of the Sokhta monument and is located on the communication roads. Traders from eastern Iran, southern Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Balochistan were forced to cross directly from

here. Italian professor M. Tosi calls this area the "Turan Basin" in his works[28, 50].

Determining the nature of the relations of the peoples of Central Asia with the world of the Ancient East serves to study the historical

processes. In this regard, we turn to the written and archeological sources left by the representatives of the "first civilization".

Written sources have survived on Mesopotamia's relations with its eastern neighbors at the end of the third millennium BC. These sources are intricate inscriptions on ceramic tablets, dating back to the time of the first dynasties. They are about the farm, the heroism of the mythological rulers, the valiant military campaigns of the Lugals, the details of the battle and the victories, and the return of the victorious rulers with riches as a result of the battle[15].

The sources do not contain information about the Central Asian lazurite, Iranian chlorides and serdol identified as a result of archeological research. However, as a result of archeological excavations, there are reports of textiles and food products that are not found in the soil[25, 154]. Researchers comment on the fact that Mesopotamian masters took these precious minerals from a second or third hand[25, 155]. There is no information in the written sources about the most common archeological mines and the craftsmen who made various jewelry from these mines.



Figure 2. Mesopotamia. Eble city ruins. Lazurite ores.

Sources say that the rulers of Mesopotamia fought wars with states such as Elam, Anshan, Marxashi, Tukrish[10, 17-18]. Based on the above data, it can be said that the relations between the countries of the Ancient East were in the nature of trade, migration of peoples and sometimes war, and these relations were interchangeable.

According to the American orientalist and archaeologist K. Lamberg-Korlovsky, in the third millennium, trade was the most characteristic means between nations, in which private entrepreneurs played a major role, and demand and need served as the main means of interaction[20, 365]. According to

another American scholar, F. Kohl, free market relations between the Sumerians and Iran played a decisive role[18; 19].

Some researchers, including D. Potss, take a different view on the issue of relations between Mesopotamia and neighboring peoples. He believes that Lamberg-Korlovsky and P.Kohl did not make an accurate assessment of historical processes. In his view, Mesopotamia was in a state of constant unrest and war with neighboring nations, the main reason for which lies in the domination and control of the mines. D.Potss defined this conflict for the mines as the main relationship between the Eastern states. He completely

denies the idea of peaceful trade relations and trade. He believes that the existence of a long-distance peaceful trade route until the time of

the Achaemenid Empire, that is, the "royal road", is far from the truth[23; 24].



Figure 3. Mesopotamia. Ur. Lazurite seal and images on it.

D. Potts' view is understandable, indeed it is difficult to understand the mechanism of free trade in an era when communities are involved in primitiveness. How to solve this situation on the basis of the material resources of Central Asia, rich in minerals, if we pay attention to the sources in this direction.

Badakhshan lazurite is the bluest, most valuable mineral. B.Lyonnet's research concludes that in the third millennium BC, a unique culture was formed in Eastern Bactria, particularly in the Tulikon oasis, under the influence of Baluchistan[22]. Thus, as a result of the growing demand for lazurite in the cities of the Ancient East, the territory of Badakhshan was first occupied by the Baluchistanis. There is not enough information in our science about the indigenous population of Bactria in the III millennium. The inhabitants of the Sopolli and Dashtli cultures, who became the natives of

Bactria, appeared in this region at the end of the third millennium[1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 11; 12; 13; 14].

It will be recalled that H.P.Frankfort's research revealed that the Shurtokay monument was founded by the Harappans in 2200-2000 BC[16]. This means that this oasis is being "mastered" for the second time by the ancient Orientals, more precisely by the representatives of the ancient Indian civilization.

According to the cultural layers of the Shurtoqay monument, in the early 2nd millennium BC, the inhabitants of the Sopolli and Dashtli cultures not only occupied Bactria, but also saved it from the inhabitants of the culture of the Ancient East, from the miners[16]. This situation was observed on the basis of the stratigraphy of the Shurtokay monument, according to which life was

restored here for the second time after the Shurtokay monument was abandoned by the ruins. As we have seen, this restoration was carried out not by the Harappans, but by the inhabitants of the local, more precisely the Sopolli and Dashtli cultures of Bactria. This period covers the years 2000-1700 BC[17].

This information confirms the struggle of the local Bactrians and the Harappans for the mine, and that the hand of the Bactrians prevailed in this struggle. This stratigraphic data shows that the struggle for mineral deposits with the peoples of the Ancient East did not take place peacefully.

CONCLUSION

Based on the given historical and archeological data, the following conclusions can be drawn about the Bactrian lazurite and its distribution in the ancient Eastern world:

- The Bactrian deposits were first occupied and developed by the Baluchistanis, who came to the Tolikan oasis;
- Bactrian lazurite was continuously transported to Elam, Mesopotamia and the cities of Ancient Indian civilization;
- The stratigraphy of the cultural strata of the Shurtokay monument shows that the Tolikon valley, where the Bactrian lazurite is located, was occupied by the Harappa culture after the Baluchistanis.
- From the beginning of the II millennium BC, the owners of the Sopolli culture became the natives of Bactria and also gained the dominance of the mines in this area.
- Lazurite ores found in the ruins of the city of Eble in Mesopotamia confirm that the Bactrians supplied lazurite to the artisans of the city, which developed in the raw state.
- In the ancient East, separate groups of people were engaged in the processing of

lazurite, the production of various jewelry and seals. They traded in precious stones and became rich, reaching the level of rulers of the first states of Mesopotamia.

- The Bactrians had peaceful trade and cultural ties with the people of the developed ancient Eastern countries. The sale of precious stones from the mines was carried out by exchange.

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