

The Religious Legacy of the Harappan Civilization: Critically Reappraising Religious Continuities

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Abstract

This research intends to recognize the influence of Harappan religious inheritance not only in the early strata of Hinduism but also in the religious thought prevalent in the greater Arab world, considering the hypothesis that Harappans might be the parent stock of Mesopotamians. According to the King James version of the Bible, the ancestors of the Hebrews came to the city of Ur from the East; the Bible does not say when Noah and his son Shem with their families arrived in Sumer (Ur), but it does say that they came from the East and according to some scholars the region to the east is either Me Luhha (Indus Valley civilization) or Dilmun (Bahrain). Moreover, Jim Wills has based a theory on more recent archaeological excavation reports from northwest India (present day Pakistan) that Hinduism just might prove to be much older than what scholars initially thought and might have arisen during the Indus Valley civilization era. Therefore, this study has explored possibilities of the fact that this region was not only home to later indigenous religions like Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism that helped to shape the religious beliefs of other regions of South Asia and Southeast Asia but also has a much older religious presence during the Indus Valley civilization, which

seems like to have contributed towards shaping the religious beliefs of the greater Arab world.

Keywords: Harappa, Religion, South Asia, Arab World, Hinduism

Introduction

The Indus Valley civilization is among the three ancient civilizations of the world that expanded over a large area, extending from north-eastern Afghanistan, and including present-day Pakistan and eastern India (see Figure I). Considering the timeline of the excavated material that we have today from these civilizations, Mesopotamian civilization is approximately 1000 years earlier to Indus Valley, while Egyptian civilization is 1000 years later. Yet, the Indus Valley civilization is among all ancient civilizations the least investigated due to limitation of language, translations, and documents, as out of the three it is the only one whose script remains undeciphered.



Figure I - General Map of Ancient Civilizations from www.harappa.com
<https://kearnsmedia.weebly.com/early-civilizations--the-foundations-of-human-culture.html>

Still, despite these limitations archaeologists and scholars are trying to understand many aspects of the Indus Valley people with the help of excavated material along with textual evidence that has been unearthed from this and

contemporary civilizations. One such aspect, that is the religion of the Indus Valley people has been discussed in my book entitled, “*Religious Beliefs of the Indus Valley Civilization*” in which I concluded that the religion of the Indus Valley civilization must be based on concepts of equality and justice, and that they were some of the most important binding forces that allowed its successful continuity for years.¹ As evident from the lifestyle of the individual, I traced the rights that each Indus person gave to his fellow citizen due to which this glorious civilization - geographically double the size of its contemporary civilizations existed for many centuries without the use of visible force and arms,² at a time when its contemporary Mesopotamia and Egypt were busy fighting over territorial gains. The Indus Valley civilization on the other hand shows no evidence of production of weaponry at any of the excavated sites along with no evidence of fatal human conflict that further endorse the fact that the people of this civilization were peaceful. As, fundamental unity in the community was established on the base of equality, liberty, and fraternity. This message of equality among humans has been advocated by various religions of the world.

“Humanity is but a single brotherhood: so, make peace with your brethren.” Quran 49:10

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28

“I look upon all creatures equally; none are less dear to me and none more dear.” Bhagavad Gita 9:29

“Never believe you are above or below anyone. Keep a humble spirit.” Buddha

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Considering the view of later indigenous religions of South Asia and the Near East and keeping the religious values of the Indus Valley people under consideration it can be proposed that the religion of this civilization was at par with the religious beliefs of other religions, according to which all mankind should be considered equal. Therefore, taking this aspect into consideration when we study this civilization, we come across multiple examples that hint towards equality being observed by the masses, whether it be their similar pottery, similar jewelry, similar architecture etc., that is found across the length and breadth of this civilization without any sign of disparity (see Figure 2-3).



Figure 2 - Gateway at Harappa: Indus Valley Civilization
<https://www.crystalinks.com/induscivilization.html>



Figure 3 - Houses of same size
<https://www.crystalinks.com/induscivilization.html>

Unlike what we witness in later Mesopotamian and Egyptian cities, where a certain class was more privileged when compared with the masses, as is evident from their architecture and lifestyle (see Figure 4-5-6).



Figure 4 - The well preserved Temple of Horus at Edfu is an example of Egyptian architecture and architectural sculpture.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egyptian_architecture#/media/File:S_F-E-CAMERON_EGYPT_2006_FEB_00289.JPG



Figure 5 - Ur
<https://www.lugaresconhistoria.com/ur-irak>

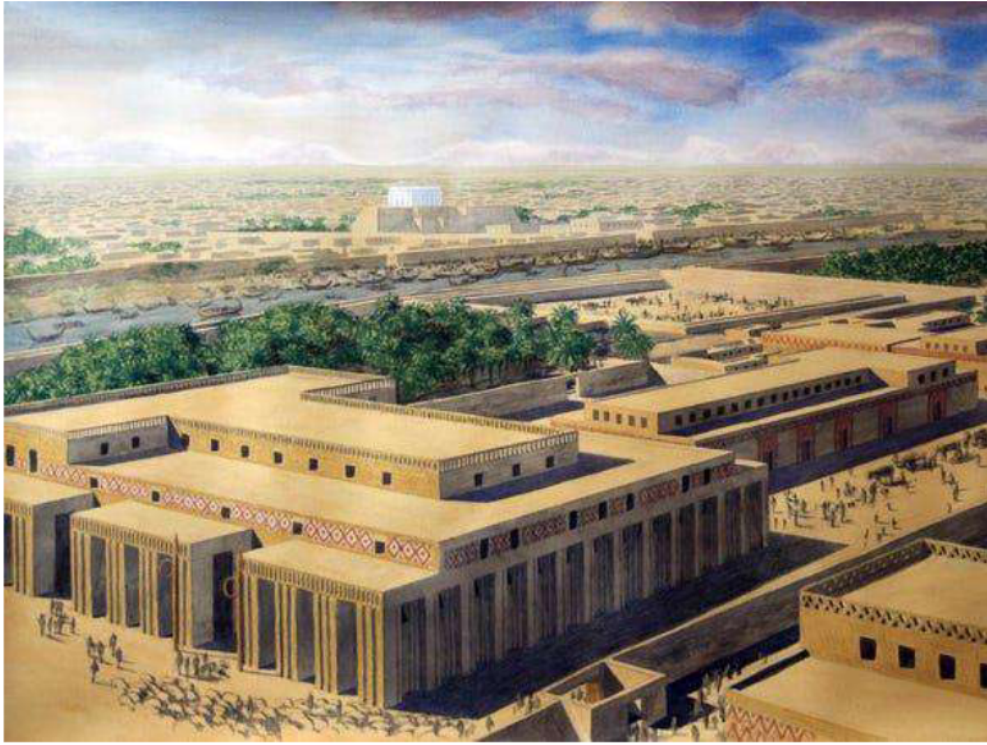


Figure 6 - Uruk as it may have looked

<https://www.businessinsider.com/largest-cities-throughout-history-2013-1?op=I#uruk-took-the-lead-in-3500-bc-with-4000-citizens-2>

Additionally, the excavated material found from the Indus Valley civilization also negates the existence of a polytheistic Indus society, unlike what is witnessed in Mesopotamia and Egypt (see Figure 7-8). So, taking into account these aspects a hypothesis is proposed in this paper, that points towards a course where the Harappans on the one hand might prove to be the parent stock of Mesopotamians, while on the other hand it might help to recognize the influence of Harappan religious inheritance not only in the early strata of Hinduism but also in the religious thought prevalent in the greater Arab world, as hints of monotheism been practiced have been revealed during some periods in both Mesopotamia and Egypt.



Figure 7 - Ur-Nammu standing before the seated Enlil
<https://www.realmofhistory.com/2017/05/09/10-ancient-mesopotamian-gods-goddesses-facts/>

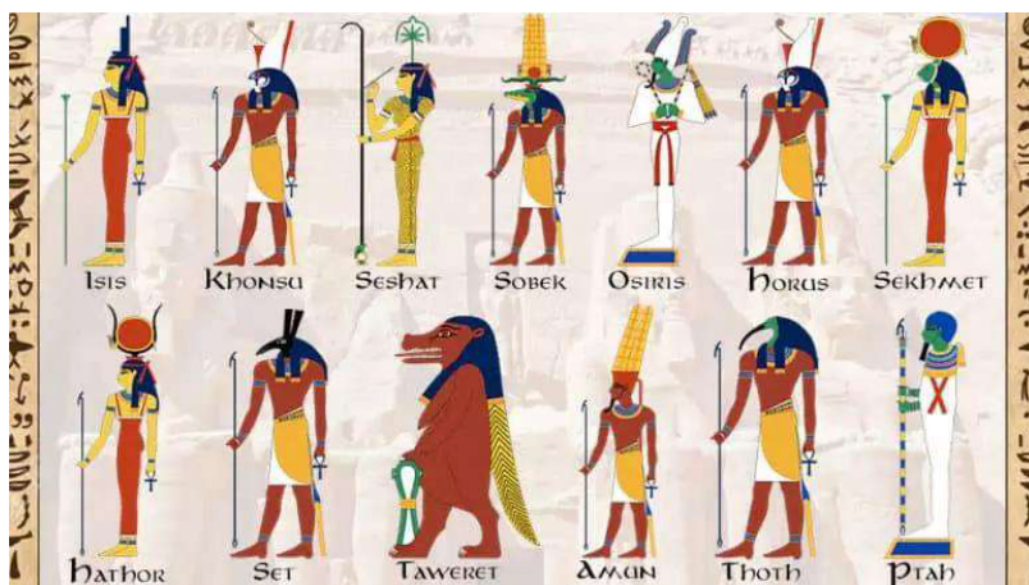


Figure 8 - 20 Major Egyptian Gods, Goddesses, And Their Family Tree
<https://www.realmofhistory.com/2019/10/11/15-ancient-egyptian-gods-goddesses-facts/>

Discussion

Many scholars today see the Harappans as the parent stock of the Mesopotamians. As, ample evidence is present to prove that since pre-historical times man had been travelling from east to west and from west to east, as has

also been proven by the later prehistory and history of both Middle East and Indus Valley (see Figure 9).

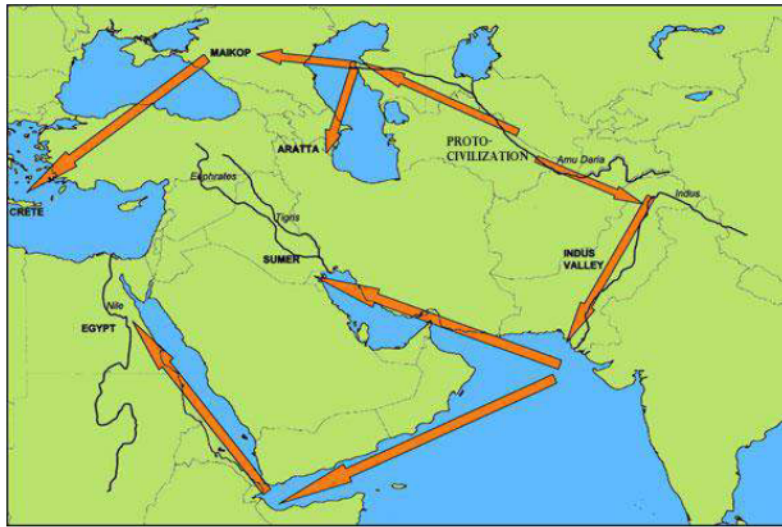


Figure 9 - Ancient Trade Routes

<http://indus-valley-civ.weebly.com/economy-and-trade.html>

During earth's Third Glacier Maximum it became difficult for both man, animals and plants to survive in places that were believed to be occupied by humans (Europe, the Middle East, Persia, Central Asia and North America), by that time. So, humans had to relocate for their survival to more hospitable environments such as the Indus Valley region, the Himalayan steps and Kashmir valleys.³ Extensive studies around the Indus region back this claim with the help of significant archeological data, which matches with forensic anthropological investigations on inhabitants of modern Pakistan. The results show the arrival of few people into the sub-continent from the north-west during the late Pleistocene Period between 12,000 to 17,000 years ago.⁴

Likewise, DNA data harmonizing with archaeological data around the early Holocene Period enlightens us about a "Third Migration" of survivors

of the Last Glacier Maximum, which occurred at this time travelling from east to west, instead of from west to east. This is known as the “Out of Asia” hypothesis.⁵ This would make Indus Valley region and the Persian passage not only a genetic junction but also a cultural junction that saw the beginning of domestication of both animals and plants (see Figure 10).



Figure 10 - Map which shows group occupying and migrating from Indus-Persian region to west between 15,000 and 10,000 BP. Map based on Pr Adam's.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1631068311001199>

This movement only strengthens the verse, mentioned in King James version of the Bible, The First Book of Moses, called Genesis, chapter 11, which says that the ancestors of the Hebrews came to the city of Ur from the East; the Bible does not say when Noah and his son Shem with their families arrived in Sumer (Ur), but it does say that they came from the East and they found and built up landscapes of cities and towers.

It was during Holocene Period, when the foundations of the first human civilizations, were laid in both directions (east and west). Man, for the first time in the total time span of his existence on earth, finally started settled life in different parts of the world between 8000 to 12,000 years ago. Though, archaeology tells us that the first area to be cultivated was in the Middle East, in the area known as the Fertile Crescent around 12,000 years ago (see Figure II), from where it spread to the rest of the Middle East, parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Pakistan, China and Europe (see Figure 12).⁶ But if we keep the “Out of Asia” hypothesis in mind, in future years we can find settlements in South Asia that might predate the settlements of Middle East.



Figure II - Area of the fertile crescent, c. 7500 BCE, with main archaeological sites of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. The area of Mesopotamia proper was not yet settled by humans.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic_Revolution#/media/File:Fertile_crescent_Neolithic_B_circa_7500_BC.jpg



Figure 12 - Diffusive pathway of flat breads. Flat breads substantially followed the same path of cereals (wheat and barley), starting from the Fertile Crescent.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S235261811830009X>

Kinnier Wilson in one of her published articles entitled, “Fish Rations and the Indus Script: Some New Arguments in the Case for Accountancy”, also says,

“We may yet discover sites lying further west than Balakot which could suggest that the two peoples, Harappans and Sumerians, were less remotely separated than appears at the present time.”⁷

In short, she hints towards the probability that initially Harappans and Sumerians were one people, or at least closely related. Therefore, this kinship among both should be sought in the Indus Delta. As, Harappans might be the parent stock and Sumerians being a small branch of the parent stock might have left to explore and develop independently. The unearthing of Mehrgarh (Baluchistan, Pakistan) in 1976 is one such example, which is responsible for revising the historical chronology of South Asia from 3000 to 7000 BCE (see Figure 13).

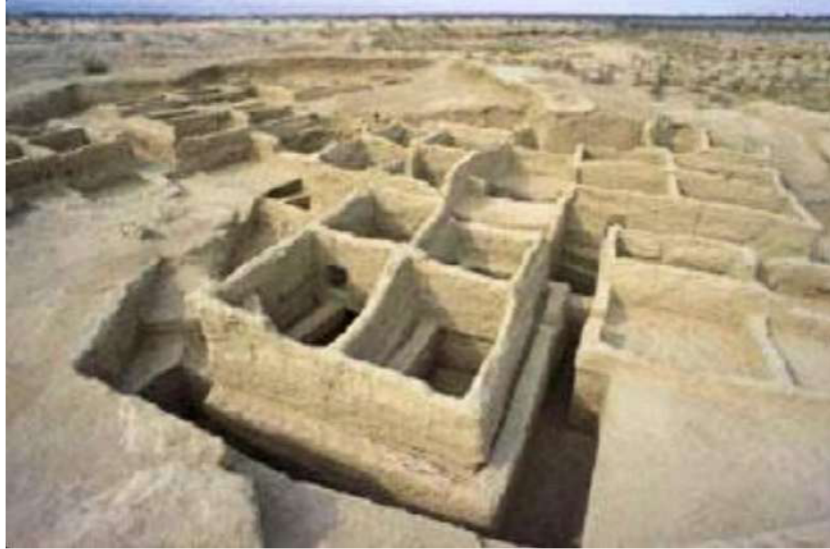


Figure I3 - Ruins of Houses at Mehrgarh
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehrgarh>

Like this, the possibility of many such sites cannot be ignored, when huge landscapes remain unexplored in the vicinity of Baluchistan, which is an extension of the Iranian plateau closely connected and open to receive and transmit cultural influences from and to the other centers of ancient civilizations, especially between northeastern Iran, Seistan and Central Asia on the one hand and the Greater Indus on the other (see Figure I4).



Figure I4 - Indus Valley sites
https://www.reddit.com/r/pakistan/comments/8kpcr3/indus_valley_civilization_oc_3496x1978/

Additionally, archaeological evidence found from Eridu, a southern Mesopotamian city identified in later Mesopotamian myths as the first city, which is also known by archaeologists as Uruk further supports this argument (see Figure 15). Extraordinarily the excavations and excavated material found from this city shows no signs of social inequality or difference in wealth or status like the Indus Valley cities. Likewise, it seems that the role of maintaining social and economic stability was the responsibility of religious institutions, which backs the notion of the author that religion was the main binding force that ensured successful continuity and sustainability of Indus Valley civilization.

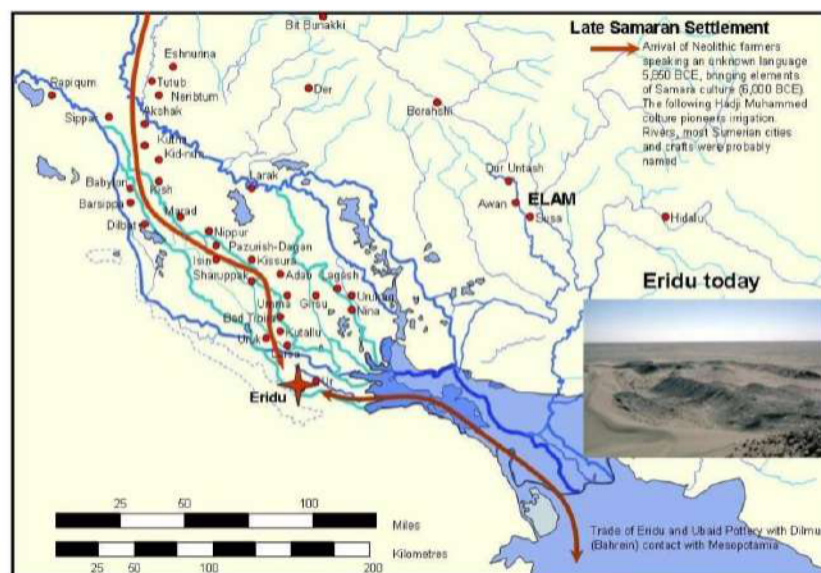


Figure 15 - Map of Eridu, Ur or Uruk

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/f9/b7/1a/f9b71a0fac3d19d19ebf95ac181034bc.jpg>

Still, excavations in the city of Eridu has uncovered a succession of sixteen temples, built one on top of the other (see Figure 16). However, the earliest temple was a simple square building with an altar fitted into a niche in

the back wall, unlike the type of temple structures that were built with the passage of time with additional rooms around the altar room.

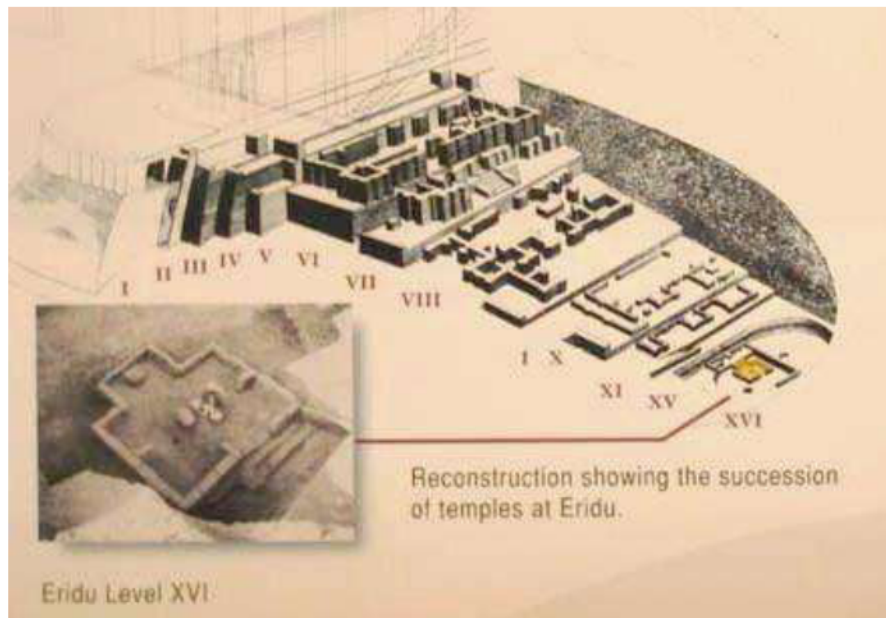


Figure I6 - Reconstruction of succession of Temples

<https://www.oom2.com/t5I260-eridu-the-first-city-on-earth-where-the-sumerian-kings-from-heaven-ruled>

It seems that as Mesopotamian cities grew, temples also not only grew in physical size, but they became stronger and more powerful institutions. There is some evidence that farmers and other workers delivered a portion of their produce, grain, wool, fish, or other goods - to the temple precincts, partially to feed the temples personnel and partially to create a central storage bank from which the temple could distribute commodities to certain people in the community.⁸

There is evidence for this activity of collecting and then distributing these commodities, however, on what bases this distribution was made is still unclear. Either it was accomplished as barter trade or it was done purely for

religious and moral objectives, where the sick, travelers, the elderly or any needy person benefitted from this service. It appears that the communities apparently undertook this responsibility with honesty and dedication. However, a point to ponder upon is that what could be the driving force behind this community service, when still there is no evidence of any other motive beside that these people also believed in equality among people, like those living in the Indus Delta, who there is a strong possibility of been their kin.

Elisabeth Christina Louisa During Caspers, in one of her published articles entitled, "The Indus Valley 'Unicorn': A Near Eastern Connection," mentions five different categories which show cultural dependence among these two civilizations. Briefly, these categories include ornamental and decorative patterns (such as trefoil and kidney design), square stamp seals (a dominating human figure with two tigers), sealing amulets from Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and Kalibangan (shows a male head with indisputably Sumerian features), cylinder seals found from both Sumer and Harappa and finally large types of oval or roundish shape seals (incense-burner and one-horned bovine processional scene is reminiscent of Protoliterate Mesopotamia).⁹

Hence, it seems that these areas were not only geographically linked but were strategically linked too, and in no time in history were they ever disconnected from one another as parallels in painted pottery types have been reported from Turkmenistan, northern Iran and Sialk I-III dating back from the end of the sixth millennium BCE to the fourth millennium BCE.

Additionally, on Sumerian and Akkadian tablets, especially those written during the forty-five years narrate trading contacts between the two

civilizations, there are twelve Mesopotamian texts originating from the city of Ur III Period (2047 – 1750 BCE) that refer to a village named Me Luhha (written with a determinative *ki*), suggesting that the village inhabitants were trading merchants, the Me Luhha living in an Indus region, who had become acculturated.¹⁰ These texts suggest that by the end of this period the inhabitants had become permanent residents.

Some scholars like Geoffrey Bibby, Samuel N. Kramer, Jack Finegan and Nick Wyatt say that when we correlate the Bible, Ebla, and Ugarit texts with archaeology of the region it suggests that the region to the east must either be Me luhha (Indus) or Dilmun (Bahrain) (see Figure I7).¹¹



Figure I7 - Ancient Civilizations

<https://www.interfaith.org/community/threads/I8I87/>

So, the writer strongly believes that a further probe is required to investigate the region Me luhha and Dilmun not only by the study of more Sumerian and Akkadian tablets but by the study of tablets found from multiply cities of the ancient Arab world (see Figure I8), such as at Ebla, Ugarit, Mari,

and Egypt. While simultaneously one needs to study the earliest written material found from South Asia, in the absence of a deciphered Indus script.

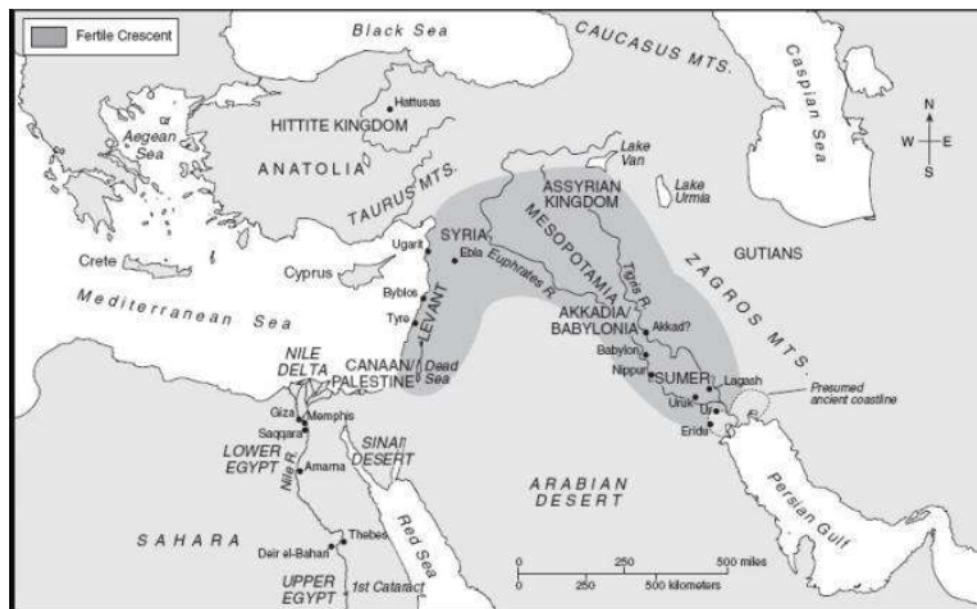


Figure 18 - The Ancient Near East

<https://web.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum213/Maps/Maps2HistoryAncient.htm>

Stephen Hillyer Levitt, in a journal article entitled, “The Dating of the Indian Tradition,” has concluded,

“The Rigveda would date back to the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C., With some of the earliest hymns perhaps even dating to the end of the 4th millennium B. C. The composition of the Rigveda would end at about 1500 B.C., with the end of Indus Valley Civilization and with the first period of doubt and severe crisis of faith in Mesopotamian civilization.”¹²

According to written record and Biblical references that coincide with Mesopotamian archaeological texts, there are indications of abandonments by its city gods in sixteen cities, including Ur, Sumer and Nippur that led to the destruction of these cities, resulting in a general severe religious crisis.¹³ However, preliminary research into the translations of tablets found from the

greater Arab world also indicate a rise of interest in a personal God during the second millennium BCE,¹⁴ while simultaneously the people also believed in several secondary nature gods (Henotheism).¹⁵

When Abraham (2000 – 1800 BCE) migrated from Ur with his companions, he left behind all secondary Gods because they had failed the inhabitants. Yet, during their migration, Abraham's group kept the One God they had worshipped since their birth. This God of their fathers, which according to some scholars only existed in their stories, nonetheless, was one that should be seen as the true essence of being a Sumerian of the time and was taken with them, when they migrated.¹⁶ Moreover, there are other texts, that indicate that the Sumerians believed in a chief personal God beside secondary nature gods at least five hundred years before Abraham,¹⁷ thus, pushing back the belief in one personal God into the third millennium BCE. A timeline that easily coincides not only with the Indus Valley civilization, but which also supports the "Out of Asia" hypothesis, verses of the Bible and claim of various scholars including Wilson that Harappans might be the parent stock of Sumerians (inhabitants of the city of Ur).

Rigveda, the earliest Vedic scripture of this region, also talks about a personal God,¹⁸ while the Muslim geographer Abu Rehn Alberuni in the IIth AC notes strands of monotheism in the Bhagavad-Gita.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the written history of the Indus region that begins with these Vedic scriptures' dates back only to 1500 - 1200 BCE and coincides with the Ugarit dates and Mari tablets, while the Sumerian, Ebla and Egyptian tablets predate these scriptures.²⁰ Nevertheless, Kosambi²¹ argues that the Vedic scriptures are not

written in pure Aryan and sees earlier non-Aryan grammatical structures and forms in both syntax and vocabulary in them, which strength the argument of Stephen that the religious history of Indus region might be much older.

Jim Wills has based a theory on more recent archaeological excavation reports from northwest India (present day Pakistan) that Hinduism just might prove to be much older than scholars initially thought and might have actually arisen completely independent of an Aryan cultural influence.²² According to Warren Matthews that would be before anyone kept contemporary written records and thus must have been transmitted only orally from one generation to the next.²³ Moreover, many scholars today negate the “Arrival of the Aryan Theory”, according to them such a movement never occurred. Upinder Singh in her book talks about the Kenneth Kennedy’s analysis of the skeletal record, which reveals that the first phase of discontinuities in physical types in the north-west occurs between 6000 and 4500 BCE, and the second one after 800 BCE. There is no evidence of any demographic disruption in the north-west during and immediately after the decline of the Harappan civilization. It is obvious that no invasions took place during the period when the Indo-Aryans were supposed to have entered India, nor were there any large-scale migrations, but a series of small-scale inflows is a more likely possibility. Many archaeologists have tried to identify the Indo-Aryan migration with the help of archaeology but have been unsuccessful so far. Mughal further emphasizes the point by stating cultural continuity rather than discontinuity.²⁴ A similar view is also expressed by V. Gordon Childe,

“India confronts Egypt and Babylonia by the 3rd millennium with a thoroughly individual and independent civilization of her own, technically

the peer of the rest. And plainly it is deeply rooted in Indian soil. The Indus civilization represents a very perfect adjustment of human life to a specific environment. And it has endured; it is already specifically Indian and forms the basis of modern Indian culture.”²⁵

In short, Hinduism would predate the Aryans conquests by centuries (i.e., if there ever was a conquest) and could have a historical identity with the Indus Valley civilization: the Aryans did not invent early Hinduism, they simply conquered the lands where it was practiced, as can be concluded on the bases of the “mediating yogi”, the “so-called Shivalinga’s”, the “pipal tree”, the “great bath”, many Indus images and cults that seems to have culturally travelled through generations. Yet, it seems that the context in which they were produced or used definitely must have changed between the demise of Indus Valley civilization (1500 BCE) and birth of Buddhism and Jainism (600 BCE) because had this not been the case than these two reformative religions would not have sprung from the same land to make some of the beliefs of Hinduism counterproductive. For example, the rigid caste system which is against the concept of equality among humans and one that was challenged by individuals like Buddha (founder of Buddhism) and Mahavira (24th Tirthankara of Jainism). As a result, Hindus came up with a book of reforms known as “Upanishads” to re-establish their lost character. These developments suggest that the people of this land believed in equality among humans and that religion was an important element in their lives.

Some scholars also believe that as late as Ashok’s reign (250 BCE) there was no established form for a follower of Hinduism:²⁶ they were referred as either Sramanas or Brahmins.²⁷ While, the creation of Hinduism as a single

religion took place even after the beginning of Buddhism and Jainism, in the 6th century BCE. While iconography of the “One Supreme God” of the Hindus into various personifications also came much later to this land.

Furthermore, in the absence of a deciphered Indus script and with total dependence on archaeology²⁸ it can be suspected that the current excavated evidence negates²⁹ the existence of a polytheistic Indus society that was using small figurines (see Figure 19) as opposed to the very large deities (see Figure 20-21) that adorn the temples of its contemporary civilizations.³⁰ According to Irfan Habib this point differentiates the Indus civilization and its art from the artworks of its contemporary civilizations, where massive sculptures and buildings were made to support the state religion unlike Indus Valley civilization where no religious structures or sculptress have been found.³¹



Figure 19 - Goddess from Indus Valley civilization
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/739857045003968452/>



Figure 20 - Ancient Mesopotamian God

<https://www.grunge.com/162587/messed-up-things-that-happened-in-ancient-mesopotamia/>



Figure 21 - Ancient Egyptian God

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/12/04/fragmented-statues-of-lion-goddess-discovered-in-southern-egypt/>

Wheeler suggests that to link these terracotta figurines (See Figure 22) with the “Mother goddess” notion of western Asia and Europe would be an exaggeration, as it seems that no special effort was put into the making of these sculpture pieces; their features, and general modeling is crude;

“... a lump of clay is added to represent an infant at the breast or on the hip; and the general notion of fertility, whether in thanksgiving or in anticipation, is further indicated by representations of pregnancy, although there is no emphasis of the generative organs such as is normal to Mother Goddess cults.”³²



Figure 22 - Terra Cotta figurines from Indus Valley
http://heritage.gov.pk/html_pages/Indus_terracotta_figurines.htm

Irfan Habib also backs this notion as he also suggests that these numerous in number female figurines found from private houses outnumbered the procreative male godlings (see Figure 23), therefore they might have been used for domestic superstitions and belief purposes to obtain children.³³



Figure - 23 Male Godlings from Indus Valley

http://heritage.gov.pk/html_pages/Indus_terracotta_figurines.htm

Catherine Jarrige also backs this notion as according to her these figurines were frequently found in household trash deposits giving the impression that they were haphazardly discarded.³⁴ However, they might have been used for some kind of domestic cult or for, “magical practices, as is frequently the case in agrarian societies”³⁵ because Jarrige came across some holes running through the figurines with small twigs cutting straight through them several times, while the clay was still soft suggesting a magical attempt to relieve oneself from pain or to harm someone through an image.³⁶ Rita P. Wright on the other hand has suggested that maybe they were like the Barbie and G. I. Joe dolls of the twentieth century, made only for playing purposes that could include puppetry (mask found), thus upon breaking were easily disposed in household trashes.³⁷ So, considering the archeological evidence along with the views of the above-mentioned scholars it seems clear that these female figurines cannot be associated with the “Mother Goddess” cult and negates the existence of a polytheistic Indus Society.

The lack of religious icons in the Indus Valley region since the birth of civilization till as late as Ist century AD advocate the fact that the people of this region were not idol worshippers and may have believed in “One God”, as has been proposed by the author in her book.

Additionally, multiple scholars considering textual and archaeological evidence from Mesopotamia and Egypt not only advocate belief in “One God”, during certain periods but also talk about prohibition of idol worship. Thus, some references are offered to support their argument.

In a journal entitled, “The Life and Thought of the Surrounding Peoples,” L. L. Grabbe talks about a lecture series that was published in the year 2000, which provokes one to rethink about the facile antithesis of polytheism and monotheism and to find how monotheistic tendencies arose from polytheistic societies living in the greater Arab world, especially in regions that include both Mesopotamia and Egypt. In this article he narrates,

“The essays (all in German) are on polytheism and monotheism (B. Gladigow); thought about the One in ancient Egypt (E. Hornung); plurality and unity in the ancient Mesopotamian pantheon (Krebern timer); ‘equation theology’, ‘syncretism’, and ‘deity fissuring’ in polytheistic ancient Anatolia (G. Wilhelm); the unity of a god in the polytheism of Ugarit-on the Levant as the place of origin of biblical monotheism (O. Loretz); monotheism, polytheism, and duality in ancient Iran (M. Stausberg); the one and only god of Israel in dispute 9Van Oorschot); the monotheistic requirement in rabbinic Jewish tradition (J. Maier) religion and cult in ancient South Arabia (W. W. Muller); Gnostic polytheism or Gnostic monotheism? (B. Aland); *Heis Theos?* –monotheism and Christianity (C. Marksches); Islam-from high god belief to monotheism? (T. Seidensticker).³⁸

In short, all these lectures hint towards signs of monotheism in the presence of polytheism. Furthermore, Ephraim Meir in one of his published articles entitled, “Sigmund Freud’s Moses and His Reappearance: the Forgotten and the Unforgettable,” talks about Freud’s findings mentioned in his book entitled *Moses and Monotheism* in which he claims, “that monotheism originated in Egypt during the reign of Amenhotep IV, who called himself Ikhnaton after the sun-god Aton (see Figure 24), whom he considered to be the sole god.”³⁹ It is believed that Ikhnaton reigned from 1350 to 1334 BCE and during this period he distanced himself from any anthropomorphic representation of god, however after his death Pharaohs and Egyptians returned to their older gods till a man called Moses not only saved monotheism from extinction but gave it to the Jews. Although, Freud was not a practicing Jew and believed that religion was an illusion, yet he could not deny Judaism’s commendable contribution towards the genesis of civilization and cultural norms that contributed and played a vital role.



Figure 24 - Sun God Aton with Ikhnaton and his wife
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/257479303669173637/>

Deena E. Grant, in one of her published articles entitled, “Fire and the Body of Yahweh,” says that,

“The Hebrew Bible preserves a strong tradition of aniconism. Worshipping icons is prohibited throughout its books (Exod. 20.4-5; Deut. 5.8-9; Isa. 44; Jer. 10).”⁴⁰

Conclusion

So, considering the above-mentioned arguments, this study has explored possibilities of the fact that the Indus Valley region was not only home to later indigenous religions like Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism that helped to shape the religious beliefs of other regions of South Asia and South East Asia but also has a much older religious presence during the Indus Valley civilization that seems to have contributed towards shaping the religious beliefs of the greater Arab world considering the “Out of Asia” hypothesis given by Dennella, Torresb and Castro and analysis given by Wilson.

So, this paper strengthens the argument that a further probe is required to discover religious affiliations among texts belonging to a larger geographical area, keeping in mind the chronology of not only the texts under consideration but the hypotheses that Harappans were probably the parent stock of all Mesopotamians. As suggested by Simo Parpola, scholars of ancient Mesopotamia need to study the religions of the Indian Sub-Continent to gain better focus on the religion prevalent in ancient Mesopotamia.⁴¹

At this point I want to quote a paragraph from the book *Our Oriental Heritage*, which explains the unique relationship that the people of this land still have and have always had with religion.

“In no other country is religion so powerful, or so important, as in India. If the Hindus have permitted alien governments to be set over them again and again it is partly because they did not care much who ruled or exploited them-natives or foreigners; the crucial matter was religion, not politics; the soul, not the body; endless later lives rather than this passing one. When

Ashoka became a saint, and Akbar almost adopted Hinduism, the power of religion was revealed over even the strongest men. In our century it is a saint, rather than a statesman, who for the first time in history has unified all India."⁴²

Accordingly, in the absence of a deciphered Indus script one must consider all textual probabilities to find and recognize the influence of Harappan religious and literary inheritance not only in the early strata of Hinduism⁴³ but also in the religious thought prevalent in the oral traditions of greater Arab world. One must also look at data from the Islamic historians and their literature. As Bruce Trigger has suggested early civilizations have more in common regarding their ideology and religion.⁴⁴

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