

LAUNCHING OF M.H. PANHWAR'S BOOK "CHRONOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF SINDH"

**BY
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We have gathered here at the Institute of Sindhology to-day for launching ceremony of Mr. M.H. Panhwar's "Chronological Dictionary of Sindh". The writer is well known to many of us present here and has been writing various articles, books and etc., on Sindh. His three books namely "Muslim Aurat" a work in Sindhi about the position of women in various religious and social laws, 1945, "Ground Water in Sindh" 1964, and "Source Material on Sindh" 1977, have been read and referred to for many years. He is also a regular contributor of articles to the journals "Sindhological Studies" of Institute of Sindhology, "Sindh Quarterly" and also "Mehran" of Sindhi Adabi Board. Thus the author needs no introduction as regards his past work on Sindh is concerned.

The present work "Chronological dictionary of Sindh" is not only a unique attempt but the methodology used in it is altogether different and new, than hitherto utilized by any author any-where else. The book gives the year in the Christian era and wherever recorded in original sources the Hijra year. Below this year are given the important events which took place in that year. These form the first column of the book. The second column gives the references and sources, their page numbers and also discussions wherever a particular incident in view of the author either is not correct or needs explanation. The contradictory statements on such events by different authors are also narrated in this column. Finally the author gives his own opinions, whenever such necessity has arisen or elaboration needed. This has enhanced the value of book.

The references for the book have been taken out from more than 700 different sources, mostly English but Persian, Arabic and Sindhi sources have also been referred to, but only if they happen to be original texts. The period covered is from the Geological times i.e., rising of Nagar Parkar hills some 3.5 billion years ago to 1539 AD.

The geological period covers complete history of formation of the hills in the Western Sindh. Next to geology is covered, the Pleistocene period or the Stone Age in Sindh, and here the author takes the history of Sindh back to the Middle Stone Age i.e., 500,000 years ago, when man was making Stone Age flint tools in the hills near present towns of Rohri and Kot-Dijji. The Stone Age tools found at these sites cover the period from 500,000 years ago to the Mohenjo Daro times in a continuous sequence. Incidentally Rohri hill factory occupies an area of 32 acres and is the largest Stone Age factory in Asia. It is threatened with extinction by quarry for cement factory, unless early action is taken to save it.

The author then traces Mesolithic period i.e., domestication of cattle in Sindh, tentatively from 10,000 to 5,500 BC. The author's views on this chronology are confirmed by recent

excavations at Mehrgarh in the Indus drainage system which now dates from 6,000 BC to 3,500 BC preceding Harappa or Mohenjo Daro period.

Author then shifts to Neolithic period i.e., start of agriculture. This covers a period of from Mehrgarh, Amri, Kot-Dijji to Mohenjo Daro times i.e., 8,000 BC to 2,300 BC, although according to him the Chaloolithic period in Sindh had already started with Amrian times i.e., around 3,500 BC. For this whole period Sindh has not been isolated from the rest of North-Western South-Asia, Eastern Afghanistan and Eastern Persia. The various developments in pottery, tools making, housing patterns, sources of food supply, the type of religious beliefs and etc., have been discussed. The period covered is Amri (3,500 BC to 2,800 BC), Kot-Dijji (2,800 BC to 2,300 BC) Mohenjo Daro and Harappa (2,300 BC to 1650 and 1750 BC respectively), cemetery H, Jhukar and Jhangar respectively, 1750-1350, 1200-900 BC. These are considered as Early, Mature and declining Indus Cultural periods.

The myth of Aryans having come to the South-Asia around 5,500 BC and later on shifted to 1750 BC, to have conquered Mohenjo Daro has now been rejected by evidence, collected at Tata Institute's, Radio Carbon Dating Laboratories in India.

Mr. Panhwar has used Radio-Carbon-Dating as a guide for the Chronology and this is considered the latest methodology of dating in scientific world. All dates used in the text up to 825 BC are based on Radio Carbon evidence and sequence derived from it.

With Aryan coming to South-Asia as late as 1,050 BC, composition of Vedas, Brahmins, Upanishads, Mahabharata and Ramayana have become recent work. It has also been shown that the Indus religion of Mohenjo Daro influenced the Aryan religion and the outcome was religions of Upanishads, Sutras and later ideas in Shivaism Buddhist and Tantric religions.

We had only some scanty ideas of the rule of Achaemenians, Bactrian Greeks, Scythians, Parthian and Kushans and that also was brought to light by Lambrick in 1973. This covers the period of 519 BC to 2983 AD. For this period the author has collected complete chronology of various kings, the periods of their rule, extent of their empires and conditions in Sindh during this period. This portion alone is a unique contribution in digging up the past of Sindh. Hitherto believed Sassanian rule of Sindh from the beginning of the third century AD to the 7th century AD has been totally discarded and their rule limited to a period of only 73 years from 283 to 356 AD.

A new dynasty of Vahlikas contemporary of Guptas has been brought to light. The chronology of Rai and Brahman dynasties of Sindh has also been revised on basis of evidence from new sources, hitherto little known. The Arab rule of Sindh has been divided in four chapters. The Arab conquest, Umayyad governors, Abbasid governors and decline of Arab power. The local Habari Arab dynasty of Sindh and beginnings of Soomra rise to power from 854 AD to 1011 AD is a new addition to our knowledge. There are interesting discussions on Soomras, their acceptance of Ismaili faith, their contacts with Fatmids of Egypt, establishment of their dynasty and the fall. Mahmud

Gaznavi, Mahmud Bin Tughlaq and Feroz Tughlaq's expeditions to Sindh have been fully discussed and the chronology these incidents revised, based on many new sources. The rise of Sammas to power and their contribution to the culture is already known but the author has used Kutchi and Gujarati source on Samma feuds and their fall. Two Samma dynasties of Kutch since the days of Habaris and their relations with Sammas and Soomras of Sindh and their help in Sammas struggle to regain Sindh, which are very little known in Sindh history, are discussed.

Another important aspect of this book is the incorporation of 46 historical maps of Sindh and 14 dynastic charts. These maps are produced for the first time and they supersede all the historical maps hitherto produced by any other authority on the subject. The dynastic charts attempt to take Sindh history out from its isolation, and give the names of various contemporary dynasties ruling Sindh and adjoining areas. As an example; in case of Habari rulers of Sindh, the contemporary Abbasids Khalifs, Gujarati rulers, (Rashtarakutas and Chaulukayas) Kutchi Chawaras and Hindu Sammas, Fatmids of Egypt, Sammanids, Tahrids, Gaznavids of Eastern Persia, Paratiharas of Rajputana, Madans of Makran and Hindu Shahis of Eastern Punjab and Afghanistan appear on the same chart covering a period of 157 years. Fourteen such charts help in understanding contemporary history and movements in adjoining areas, which affected Sindh from 519 BC to 1524 AD.

In addition there are 130 photographs cover various periods of Sindh's past. Some of the photographs appear for the first time in Sindh and the South-Asia.

In the end let me assure you that the type of chronology has produced in this work is not only unique but such a work has not been produced for any Province or State in the whole South Asia and we are around to announce that Sindh is the first Province which now can claim a continuous proto-history since 6,000 BC to 519 BC. From then onwards we have a continuous records of our history.

The work ends at 1539 AD. It is hoped that further work is continued either by the present author or by other students of history. According to Mr. Panhwar further work is to be covered in three volumes. Plenty of printed material for this period exists and its writing should not be a difficult task.

- (1) Chronological Dictionary of Arghoons, Tarkhan and Mughal governors, 1524-1700 AD.
- (2) Chronological Dictionary of Kalhoras and early Talpurs, 1700-1799 AD.
- (3) The British design of Sindh and the overthrow of Talpurs 1799 to 1843 AD.

The British period stands well documented. However material on this period is scattered and exists in archives at Karachi, Bombay, New Delhi, India Office Library London and many British institutions. It would take many man-years to write the full chronology of British period, and an early attempt is required. Mr. Panhwar has assured me that he is willing to give such assistance to any one desiring to under-take this work.

The Institute of Sindhology is proud in accounting for its being the first leader, having undertaken publication of this monumental work. We however, acknowledge that this work of author was first time brought to light by Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, who published two chapters from this work in this Sindh Quarterly in 1976 and that lead Institute of Sindhology to take up publication of the full work. Although Sindh Quarterly has serialized the whole work but the author was continuously adding material to it and thus this work has been revised and up to dated. The maps, charts and photographs were new additions. Some new material was also coming to the light, while the book had already gone through some stages of its printing. He therefore published this additional new material in a series of articles listed in the introduction of this work.

Some of those articles are printed in the Journal of this Institute.

We do hope that the present work would motivate new type of research on Sindh's past.

A book of this size and type can not be produced at less than Rs.500.00 per copy, but we have decided to charge only Rs.200.00 per copy to be able to recover printing charges.

I am sincerely pleased and thank you all ladies and gentlemen for honoring us by your presence on this occasion and I do hope that Institute of Sindhology will provide you future opportunities for rejoining us on our forth coming publications.