



DEH MORĀSĪ ĠONDAY

DEH MORĀSĪ ĠONDAY, a Bronze Age archeological site located at 34° 90' N, 65° 30' E, adjacent to the village of Deh Morāsī, approximately 27 km southwest of Qandahār and 6.5 km east-southeast of Pahjwā'ī in southeastern Afghanistan (Ball and Gardin, I, p. 90 no. 287). It is situated on a plain bounded by the Arġandāb, Tarnak, and Dūrī rivers on the west, east, and south respectively. The mound (Pašto *ġonday*) rises approximately 5.3 m above the surrounding plain and covers an area of 1.12 ha. The excavations at Deh Morāsī Ġonday and at the nearby sites of Sa'īd Qa'la Ġonday (or Tepe; Shaffer, 1978a, pp. 149-65), 13 km to the northeast; Šamsīr Ġār cave (Dupree, 1958), 9.5 km to the northwest; and Mondīgak (Casal), 60 km due north, account for most of what is known about Afghanistan in the Bronze and Early Iron Ages (Shaffer, 1978a; idem, 1992, I, pp. 459-64).

Deh Morāsī Ġonday was discovered in 1951 by the Second Afghan Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History, New York; it was excavated by [Louis Dupree](#) (1963). Four trenches were opened, but only the largest (2 x 6 m) was excavated to sterile soil, at a depth of 6.6 m. The total exposed surface was small, so that it was impossible to define structures or patterns of settlement within the site. As a result, knowledge is limited to a narrowly defined cultural sequence derived from the stratigraphy and artifacts recovered.

Four sequential occupations were identified and designated Morāsī I-IV, but analysis indicates no significant differences among I-III, and they should therefore be considered a single analytical unit. Radiocarbon dates from this and sites with comparable material suggest that Morāsī I-III was occupied



between 2500-2200/2000 B.C.E. The Morāsī IV deposits were disturbed and contained pottery from the South Asian early historic (after 500 B.C.E.) and Islamic periods; combined with intrusive Kushan burials in upper levels of occupation III, they thus suggest a long period of abandonment following Morāsī III.

Present data indicate that Deh Morāsī Ġonday was a small Bronze Age agricultural village, dependent on cultivation of barley and raising of sheep, goats, and cattle. Although complete buildings or rooms were not defined, fragmentary mud-brick walls suggest that this ancient village may have resembled those found in the same region today. The only complete architectural feature was a small trapezoidal mud-brick structure found in Morāsī II. Associated with it were goat remains, a copper tube, a terra-cotta female figurine, a steatite stamp seal, a fragment from an alabaster bowl, and a magnetite nodule that showed signs of use; Dupree interpreted the structure as a small household shrine (1963, p. 81). More important, the painted pottery associated with Morāsī I-III bears strong stylistic similarities to that from Sa'īd Qa'la Ġonday, Mondīgak late Period III-IV, Damb Sakaat (in the Quetta valley of Pakistan), and Šahr-e Sūkta (in Persian Sīstān) Period III. These similarities, as well as parallels with terra-cotta figurines, stone tools, beads, metal artifacts, stamp seals, and other artifacts suggest that Bronze Age social groups throughout this region were closely linked in cultural networks encompassing urban centers like Mondīgak and Šahr-e Sūkta, as well as small villages like Deh Morāsī Ġonday. All these sites were abandoned after 2000 B.C.E., but the causes of the abandonment and the fate of the populations have yet to be determined in the archeological record.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

W. Ball and J.-C. Gardin, *Archaeological Gazetteer of Afghanistan. Catalogue des sites archéologiques d'Afghanistan*, 2 vols., Paris, 1982.

J.-M. Casal, *Fouilles de Mundigak*, 2 vols., Paris, 1961.



L. Dupree, "Shamshir Ghar. Historic Cave Site in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 46/2, 1958, pp. 141-311.

Idem, "Deh Morasi Ghundai. A Chalcolithic Site in South-Central Afghanistan," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 50/2, 1963, pp. 59-135.

J. G. Shaffer, "The Later Prehistoric Periods," in F. R. Allchin and N. Hammond, eds., *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, London, 1978a, pp. 71-186.

Idem, *Prehistoric Baluchistan*, Delhi, 1978b.

Idem, "The Indus Valley, Baluchistan, and Helmand Traditions. Neolithic through Bronze Age," in R. W. Ehrich, ed., *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*, 2nd ed., 2 vols., Chicago, 1992, I, pp. 441-64; II, pp. 425-46.