

## PAKISTAN – HERITAGE @ RISK!

### Some Case Studies:

#### Mohana Boat People on the Lower Indus in Sind

The roots of the Mohanas go back quite far in history, perhaps even as far as to the Indus Civilisation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. At least an amulet found in the Bronze Age city of Moenjodaro shows the same type of flat bottom boat, which even can be seen today being used by the Mohanas. Before the construction of the large barrages across the River Indus like the Sukkur Barrage (1930) the Mohanas used to travel all along the Indus; from the Himalayas down to the sea. Since then their movements have been restricted. Some live on their boats near the city of Sukkur, some near Moenjodaro and several on the lake Manchar, one of the largest sweet water reservoirs of the Indian Subcontinent.

Since the late 1970s many of them have been forced by the Government to leave their boats and to settle along the Indus. Having always been river nomads, living on beautifully carved wooden boats in village communities, they are highly endangered being forced to leave their traditional environment. Only few have been left up to now. Little is known about the Mohanas and with them an important cultural group will disappear forever.



Seal of an Indus boat (3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC, Moenjodaro)



Mohana boat, similar to the boat on the Indus seal



Group of boats forming an amphibic village



Ferry service for a camel caravan across the Indus near Moenjodaro



Group of boats

Mohana boat-people on the lower Indus in Sind



Mohanas on their boats





Moenjodaro, the Buddhist Stupa with Harappan structures in front



Moenjodaro, saltpeter in a burnt brick wall, lower city



Moenjodaro, street and architecture in the lower city

Moenjodaro, aerial photograph of the Great Bath



## Moenjodaro: Bronze Age City in Lower Sind

The city of Moenjodaro is known to the international audience through the UNESCO Campaign *Save Moenjodaro*, which was successfully closed two years ago. In spite of all activities and international support, it seems to be that the Pakistan Government has difficulties to keep up scientifically with the continuation of the conservation / maintenance program. The program suggested by UNESCO, being regular maintenance with control of the salt-endangered surfaces plus mud brick conservation seems not to be able to be executed to the needed standards. According to its significance as probably the largest Bronze Age city of the world, further attention should be given to this again endangered World Heritage Property (see also p. 223).

## Makli Hills, Lower Sind

The Makli Hills are a low ridge along the river Indus, approximately 80 km north east of Karachi, close to the city of Hyderabad, the former capital of Sind. In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century this area became a major burial ground for thousands of Moslems who wanted to be buried close to the graves of some famous saints. One of them was the famous Nizam-ud-din whose grave shows a rare blend of Moslem and local tradition. This tradition of saints in Islam is very rare as it is connected to the mystic Islam, which was (and still is) practiced in the north west Indian Sub-Continent (eg in Sehwan Sharif with the tomb of Lal Shabas Calandar whose tomb is visited both by Moslems and Hindus.). Probably one of the largest cemeteries (more than 500,000 graves), Makli reveals extraordinary grave architecture, which is highly endangered not only by neglect through neo-fundamental Islamic movements, but also through incompetent conservation work by local authorities.

Michael Jansen, ICOMOS Germany





Makli, collapsed pavilion



Makli Hills (Sind), Tomb of Nizamuddin, 15<sup>th</sup> century

Makli, interior of Nizamuddin's tomb ▶

Makli, a tomb in the state of collapse

