

# Fall of the magan civilization



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The transition of humanity from primitive life which emerged hunting and gathering with agriculture, and living in with small group during the Neolithic to establish city states under administrative authorities in the Chalcolithic , was a tremendous leap in the renaissance of humanity, which have significant impact on civilizations flourished in the Bronze Age.

This transition had a positive impact on the progress of human knowledge in various fields. Menon ( 2010) in his book distinguishes this age by six characteristics '(i) copper and bronze from the age takes its name ; (ii) harnessing of animals power ; (iii) wheeled vehicles ;(iv)the sailboat;(v) the potter's wheel; and (vi) bricks' (p5).

These improvements changed the structure of society. Cities became a center of economy, politic, culture and religions. Societies form depended on a hierarchical system. On top hierarchy was king, priests and armies commanders and in middle farmers, artists and craftspeople and in the bottom slaves. Their economy flourished as result of diversity of occupations as well as religion system which played role to demonstrate people . Finally, Knowledge of writing led kings to record economic transactions and social events(Duiker and Spielovgel, p8).

## **1: 1Emergence of civilizations**

The earliest city states in the world emergence on the banks of rivers in the Nile in Egypt, the Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq, Indus in India and the Yellow river in China. They prospered as result of availability of natural resources, trade activities and an increase of knowledge (Menon , 2010, p6). These led

their neighbors to emergence as result of trade and increased demand on materials which were not available in those civilization.

## **1: 2Emergence of Magan civilization**

Due to development of Mesopotamia and Harappa and Iran states , many other states emergence and grew as result of trade activities such as Magan ( present day in Sultanate of Oman and United Arab Emirates) , Meluhha (India) and Delmon (Bahrain) (. From first half of the third millennium BC, clay tablets from Mesopotamia recoded trade relations between Mesopotamian's estates with these civilizations. Land Oman peninsula one of these states witnessed, from the end of fourth millennium B. C birth of the new civilization called Magan in Sumerian cuneiform and Makan in Akadian cuneiform(Weisgerber 2007, p197, 198). The Magan was a major partner in intra-regional trade with the other civilizations like Mesopotamia, Syria, Iran , Indus civilization, Yemen and Horn of Africa by exporting copper and diorite Magan civilization which marked in the history of trading with (Cleuziou , Tosi, 2007, p213).

Clay tablets which were found in south of Mesopotamia indicated that they obtained copper from Magan in the 3rd millennium BC. Texts from the reign of King Sargon about 2350 BC stated that Magan and Dilmun (Bahrain) and Meluhha (Indus) ships anchored at harbors of his capital Akkad , loaded and purchased goods including copper, silver, oils, beans, textiles and leather products. Copper was the one important goods that was much required by Mesopotamia's states to use it in social and religious purpose. Due to limited availability of this metal, they imported it from their neighbors especially from Magan (Weisgerber 2007, p197, 198).

<https://assignbuster.com/fall-of-the-magan-civilization/>

Extensive investigations in the Oman peninsula have situated many archaeological sites belong to Magan civilization. The sites Archeologists called this phase Hafit which is attributed to the first site that was discovered on the border of Oman and United Arab Emirates by Danish expedition. The archaeological researches presented the first phases of Magan civilization which as follow:

The archaeological studies have shown that the era of Magan civilization which extended from the end of 4th millennium BC to the end of second millennium BC, encountered growth and declined in its economy which reflected to community's remains which they were found whether in settlements or graves. This essay will track the traces of rise and fall of the Magan civilization from two aspects, mining and copper smelting and tombs of the people of this civilization.

## **2. The development of Copper production**

Even though , the chemical analysis for composition of copper samples , found in the Mesopotamia which have proved that their source was Oman peninsula(Berthoud and Clezuiou, 1983, p239, v6, p2), there are some views have tried to link name of Magan to east coast of Iran. The main reason for their orientation is that copper were produced in Iranian side (Clezuiou and Mery, 2002, p275). However, Cannot be denied that the copper had a role in the renaissance of civilization in the peninsula of Oman.

Investigations and archaeological studies in Oman and the United Arab Emirates over last the years, have indicated that the of Oman mountains range contain a large proportion of copper ore which exists in Ophiolites

rocks, extending from Musandam in the north to Masirah island in the south. Therefore, more than 150 copper sites have been found, exploited since the Bronze age until the Medieval ( Hauptmann, Weisgerber and Bachmann, p35). Most of these sites locate in Sumail in interior region, Wadi Andam, Wadi Ibra and Lasail in Sohar (Potts 1978, p35).

Archaeological studies of a number of mining and smelting sites have shown that mining and smelting copper were similar in all the Calcholithic and Bronze Age sites. Moreover, the techniques of extraction and production was advanced since the end of the Chalcolithic period, that means they were influenced from Neighbors in the Near East (Weisgerber, 2006, p: 193, 194). These technique began with digging and extracting cupriferous mineral Malachite and Azurite sources by using stone or metal hammers. After collecting ore, it was crushed on stone pestles to small pieces to be able to smelt them later. Then, they were smelted in pear shaped furnaces made of clay (Weisgerber, 2007, p: 197, 198), with 50 cm diameter and 60-80 cm height and provided by blowpipes, made of leather used for ventilation. At a temperature of more than 1100c fluid copper flowed into hole the ground of furnaces and formed as bun shape ingot or ingot when they become cooled. Thus, the product is ready for exploiting, whether for local use or for exporting (Weisgerber, 2007, p197, 198).

Copper ingots which were prepared for exporting were transferred to number of ports by using donkeys. Umm-an-Nar in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates was one of the important ports of Magan civilization. Merchants from Mesopotamia obtained their copper ingot with 1 to 2 kg weight. It might also, there was a internal network trade , connected internal settlements

with those in coastal line which it has still followed in present time . Serg Cleuziou ( 1996, p161) states to this kind of trade network' fish processed on various ways (salted , smoked , dried) already travelled to the interior and that the coastal settlements moved from a subsistence oriented production to a larger scale export oriented production , thus becoming fully integrated into the exchange system built around the exportation of copper'.

Through surveys and studies of archaeological in many mining of copper sites, made possible to make timeline for the development for this industry from 3200 - 1300 BC.

## **2: 1 Copper production Hafit period (Chalcolithic 3200-2500BC)**

Copper industry in this period began with simple production. A few of mining and smelting sites were found, but often it is difficult to identify them from other sites, belonging to subsequent periods because of continued exploitation of these sites (Weisgerber, v6/2, p270). However, archaeologists were able to follow attacks of this period through the figments of furnaces and waste (slag) of copper production or through artifacts such as needles which found in tomb at Maysar -25 , halberd from Bat site and fish- hocks in Ra's-Al-Hamra site RH-5 Ra's al-Hadd HD-6 (Cleuziou, 1996, p160) .

Extensive studies in mining sites, which were carried out by the German mission from Bochum Museum have indicated that, copper production in this period might be poorly developed and it was fluctuating over the period. In addition, they noticed that copper smelting sites were far from mines. This indicates that copper ore could be transferred to settlements by smelters

and donkeys. For example, At Batin site in the Ibra state, which was dated to 2660 BC, many heaps of slag, furnaces fragments and hammer stones ( used for crushing ore and slag) are spread on surface of settlement , but mines are not exist in same area(Weisgerber, 2006, p192) .

## **2: 2 Copper productions in the Umm-an-Nar period (Early Bronze Age 2500-2000BC)**

Outset of half of the 3rd millennium BC marked to an enormous increase in human activity in copper production. This is indicated by the mining sites which are located in the mountains of the peninsula, stretching from Al-Safawir in the united Arab Emiratis to Masirah Island in Oman ( Hauptmann ). It can be seen also through Mesopotamian clay tablets which began to point out to Megan's copper.

Copper industrial in this age progresed forward by alloying tin factor with copper to produce bronze, which is harder than the copper ( Prang and Hauptman, p75). It also appears that the Magan and Dilmon have played a role in tin and copper trade in the Bronze Age. This was indicated by the analytical studies of copper and bronze assemblages found in Oman and the United Emiratis. This Scientific evidence dissented previous opinion which said that region did not know has this kind of trading( Weeks, 2003, p116). Despite this scientific fact, there some archaeologists such as Michael Prange and Andreas Hauptmann believe that0 tin bronze production started late in central of Oman in the second millennium BC, but it was known in one site in the United Arab Emirates(Yule and Weisgerber, 2001, p75). Although this view based on archaeological excavations in some mining sites in central of Oman, there are many other mining sites which have been not

studied yet and could give a clear image about beginning of tin bronze production in central Oman.

## **2: 3 Copper productions in the Wadi suq period (Middle Bronze Age 2000-1300BC)**

In the second millennium BC, something happened that affected on lifestyle of Magan's society. Oases might be abandoned and replaced by nomadic style (Cleuziou and Tosi 2007, p257). There was a widespread perception this change has had a negative effect on copper production during this period, but the large number of copper assemblages which were found at the site of Qattara and Awasi and Nizwa grave continued with extensive production throughout second millennium BC (Velde, 2001, p109) . In addition an excavations at Bir Kalhar in Almodhbi and Samad al-Shan state have shown that no change apparent in furnace techniques was similar to previous ages (Weisgerber, 2006, p196).

The expository article by Weisgerber in 1997 , successfully demonstrates a clear explanation of fall of Magan in secocond millennium BC the importance. He highlights that the internal political crisis in the Indus civilization , which was one of the important trading partners for the Magan in the tin trade as well as developing copper production technology in Anatolia in Turkey and Alashia in Cyprus which reduced a copper price, were the main reasons for the collapse of the civilization. Thus, Mesopotamia merchants began to import their copper from new countries(p11). In Magan, copper production began to be limited for domestic uses and bronze assemblage was rarely found (Weisgerber , 2007, p287).



### **3. The development of funerary architecture**

Funerary architecture was a major concern by most old civilizations, because of strong belief of the existence of life after death. Thus, they have been one of the important monuments in archaeological studies, especially in social, economic and religious aspects which prevailed in these communities.

Tombs on land Oman peninsula are the most remarkable monuments. They can be seen in many places Oman Peninsula, on foothills mountains ranges and in bottom of valleys (Clouziou and Tosi, 2007, p107). They were the first monuments that attracted many archaeological missions to study history of this civilization. Extensive studies have revealed, there is gradual evolution in funerary architecture from the end of 4th to 3rd millennium BC and abrupt change in this architecture from the second millennium BC.

#### **3: 1 Tombs in Hafit period 3200-2700BC**

They were labeled these tombs as beehive tombs a well known beehive shape in Europe while some others called them cottages. Regarding the architectural design, these tombs were designed in a way that they have two parallel walls surrounding a circle, oval, square or rectangle burial room the floor of which is covered with stony plates. The walls are built using unpolished stones taken from nearby Limestone Mountains without using mortar. The external view of the tombs varies according to the type of stones used in construction; some of them are polished and some are not. The internal wall has soft frontages constructed with a particular type of stones organized systematically with fills of small stones that occurs in between. The width of the external wall is lesser and separated from the

internal wall with a fill of small stones. In some cases, a third wall is added to these temples. The burial room is roofed with stones that lean towards the surface so that it appeared to be flat. In some temples, a supportive wall was noticed to be constructed inside burial rooms. The entrance of burial rooms takes the form of triangle or square towards south, east or west. After burying dead bodies, these entrances are to be blocked using stones.

Mostly, these tombs are mass graves which contain no less than 3 to 30 skeletons of males and females of different ages and some of them are individual. The corpse will be put by its lateral side squatting accompanied by its funereal belongings including daggers, bead necklaces, stony tools and pottery vessels imported from Jimdat Nasr civilization, Mesopotamia. As we know, inhabitants of that period were not aware of pottery industry yet. They just import it or maybe imitate producing this type of clay.

These tombs continued to be used for long periods reaching one or two centuries by family groups each one of which used one tomb or more. At later periods of time, the old skeletons were to be pushed aside and the tomb shall be used for new corpses.

### **3: 2. Tombs in the Umm an Nar period 2700-2000BC**

By the beginning of 2700 B. C, architecture of tombs changed as result of the economic development of Majan civilization. Most of them were built at the plain close to the dwellings of settlements. They become of bigger size and have more rooms to include more corpses; two to four corpses separated by dividing walls. Some temples include two semi-circle rooms divided by central wall one end of which is linked to the wall of the tomb from inside.

Some of them include three rooms divided by two central parallel walls constructed in the middle of the tomb separately and their ends are linked to the internal wall of tomb. Some other temples include four rooms divided by central wall constructed in the middle of the tomb and two small walls branch out from it to form the four rooms. In addition, there is one more type which is a wall dividing the tomb into two halves (picture 15).

These tombs have one or two entrances located at the eastern or western side. They are 50 cm higher than ground surface, 60- 70 cm tall and 60 cm wide at the lower part. These entrances are locked using three stones of particular shapes: two in the lower part and one in the upper. The floor of burial room was tiled used flat limestone. The internal walls were built using unpolished stones strengthened with mortar. The external walls or frontages of tombs of early Umm- an-Nar period (2700- 2400 B. C) were built using brown and white limestone. These stones were removed from nearby quarries, transferred to the site and then polished taking the shape of small tangle or square cubes (picture 16). They are made curved to be in the same line with the circle wall. These tombs look very nice and the polished limestone look like pieces of sugar. The diameter of temples of this period was 7 -8 m.

By the beginning of late period of Umm-an-Nar, the frontage walls of these become greater. Some of them contain two floors the height of which is about 10 - 12m and sometimes 14m. They were built by using huge limestone plates reaching 1m height and they were decorated with prominent sculptures comprising drawings of humans, animals and snakes. These drawings help understanding the nature of lifestyle of inhabitants of

<https://assignbuster.com/fall-of-the-magan-civilization/>

3000 BC. The roofs of Umm-an-Nar temples were flattened using huge stony plates. A roof gutter at the external ends of the tomb surface is provided to drain rainwater.