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The Dravidians and Sumerians in prehistoric times lived in Saharan Africa. These proto-Dravidians were in contact with the Manding and Sumerian speakers. In this paper I propose to use socio-linguistic data to discuss and outline aspects of the proto-culture of the Dravidians, Manding and the Sumerians. These people who lived in different areas separated by thousands of miles spoke similar languages (Winters 1985).

It has long been recognized that the Dravidians in India, and the Sumerians of Mesopotamia, along with the Manding of West Africa, show similar physical and cultural features. The anthropological evidence and linguistic data suggest that these people are derived from a common ancestor that separated as early as 4000-2800 BC (Winters 1983b:14-15).

The original homeland of the Dravidians, Manding and Sumerians was Middle Africa. Therefore I call the ancestors of these ethnic groups the Proto-Saharans. The homeland of the Proto-Saharans was the Libyan and Sudanese deserts. It was in this region between 9000-6000 BC, that the elements of Proto-Saharan culture were created (map 1).

In the southern Sahara during the Middle Paleolithic, the Proto-Saharans might have domesticated cattle. In Chad and Libya, the remains of cattle are associated with pre-historic hearths, dating between 7,500 and nearly 10,000 years before the present (BP) (Wendorf et al 1985:136-37).

Often wild ass, Barbary sheep, hyena and hare were associated with wild cattle in the Sahara. Bones of domesticated cattle have come from Saharan sites such as Ti-n-Torha and Uan Muhuggiag.

During the same period when cattle were found near hearths of Proto-Saharan settlements, these people were collecting grain. Some of the early Saharan sites show evidence of slab-lined storage pits. Often the houses during the Neolithic, had large stones situated around the perimeter (Fig.2).

Ethnically the Proto-Saharans were round-headed Mediterraneans of the ancient variety. Around 7000 BC, Mediterraneans of a fairly tall stature not devoid of negroid characteristics appear in the Sahara at Capsa (now Cafsa). (Desanges 1981:424-25). These Mediterraneans are called Capsians. This group flourished in

an area extending from the western most borders of north Africa, into the southern Sahara.

The Proto-Saharans lived on hillocks or slopes near water. But some Capsians lived on plains which featured lakes and marshes (Fig.6). Their way of life continued from the neolithic era up to the time of the Garamante (a group of Manding speakers) (Winters 1983a:210; 1983b:15).

Ceramics spread from the central and eastern Sahara into north Africa. These ceramics were of Sudanese inspiration and date back to the seventh millennium BC. This pottery was used from Ennedi, to Hoggar. The makers of this pottery were probably from the Sudan. (Desanges 1981). The Capsian pottery tradition first appeared at Saoura, and later at Fort Flatters. This type of pottery probably originated at Elementeita, Kenya (Ki-Zerbo 1979:42) (map 2).

Skeletons of the Mediterranean type have been found throughout Middle Africa, Southeast Asia, Mesopotamia, the Indo-Pakistan region and even Central Asia. It is no secret that the founders of ancient Egypt, Elam, Sumer and the Indus Valley were all of the Mediterranean type. In the ancient inscriptions many Proto-Saharans were called *KUSHITES*. These Kushites were also called Saka, Kushana, Kutians, Kus and Qus (Lacouperie 1886:28-29; Winters 1982).

The Proto-Saharans used a common black-and-red ware that has been found from the Sudan, across Southwest Asia and the Subcontinent all the way into China (Singh 1982: xxiv). Prof.B.B.Lal (1963), proved conclusively that the Dravidians were genetically related to

the C group of Nubia, given the fact that both groups used (1) a common black-and-red ware, (2) a common burial complex incorporating megaliths and circular rock enclosures, and (3) a common form of rock cut sepulchres. This black-and-red ceramic industry diffused from Nubia, into Rajasthan, and thence to East, Central and South India (Rao 1972). The earliest examples of the black-and-red ware common to the Proto-Saharans, date to the early Amratian period (c.4000-3500 BC).

By 6000 BC, the Proto-Saharans lived in well organized villages. There was little standing water so the Proto-Saharans dug deep large walk-in-wells so people could walk down to the water. At these villages cattle were present. Plus the farmers grew domesticated six-row barley.

Aridity arrived in the Sahara around 5900-5800 BC. In 5800 BC, settled life returned to the Sahara. During this period goat and domesticated emmer wheat is cultivated along with six-row barley.

Due to the richness of the flora and fauna in the Sahara 8000 BP, ethnic groups in Middle Africa were semi-sedentary hunter-fisher gatherers who engaged in the exploitation of their habitat. In the early period the Proto-Saharans may have had a limited interest in the domestication of plants and animals. But it was not until the return of arid climate to the Sahara between 12,000-7000 BC, that the Proto-Saharans were forced to domesticate cattle and goats to ensure a reliable source of food.

Pastoralism and fishing preceded food production in the ancient Sahara. It appears that a hunter-fisher-gatherer group which clearly specialized in the hunting of animals (as evidenced by the abundance of arrowheads) became animal herders, since they were keenly aware of the habits of game and therefore made the shift from hunter-fisher-gatherer to animal husbandry rapidly once climatic conditions in the Sahara made it impossible to collect grains.

Moderate climatic conditions made it possible for the Proto-Saharans to engage in intensive plant domestication. Food surpluses led to the rise of towns and cities, complex political organization, social ranking of individuals in society, and craft specialization as certain clans and ethnic groups became more sedentary (Fig.4).

The linguistic evidence indicates that the Proto-Saharans practised a form of intensive agriculture characterized by the use of the hoe, related water storage and irrigation techniques plus the application of fertilizers to the cultivated land (Fig.2).

The ability to produce surplus food led to an increase in population

changes in social organization and class distinctions (Fig.5). Naturally, population increases forced the ancestors of the Proto-Saharans to spill over into more marginal areas. This population pressure probably forced many Proto-Saharan clans to domesticate plants and animals to preserve traditional levels of food production.

The ancestors of the Dravidians, Manding and Sumerians were organized into a federal system during the neolithic subpluvial. These early

Proto-Saharans made adequate uses of local game and plant life and they established permanent and seasonal settlements around well stocked fishing holes. They lived on plains, punctuated by mountains and numerous points of inundation due to the frequency of rain in the ancient Sahara (Fig.6).

The early ability to find permanent sources of food and shelter during the neolithic by the Proto-Dravidians, and other Proto-Saharans led to increased domestic functioning of the woman, since hunting and the constant search for herds of game, as a source of food was no longer that important. The stability of the hearth maintained by the women led to the development of a matriarchal system. In addition to a matrilineal pattern of inheritance among these people, women had equal rights to the men.

Women created agriculture. Thus, the term *ma*, appears in the languages spoken by the descendants of the Proto-Saharans, e.g., Dravidians and Manding to denote both 'mother', and 'earth, area'.

The Proto-Saharans claimed descent from the Maa or Fish Confederation.

The Maa Confederation includes the Egyptians, Elamites, Dravidians, Manding and Sumerians. In honour of this great ancestor they worshipped a god called: *Amon* or *Amma*. In honour of this great ancestor the descendant Proto-Saharans use the term *Ma*, to denote greatness or highness, e.g., Manding *Maga* and Dravidian *Ma*. Other Proto-Saharan groups claimed direct descent from the great Maa, founder of the Fish Confederation. For example, the Ma

call themselves Ma-nde (the children of Ma) and the Sumerians called themselves Mah-Gar-ri (exalted God's children).

The Proto-Saharans share place-names. Evidence for shared place names has been discovered by Dr. Vamos-Toth Bator (1983). Dr. Vamos-Toth, calls this ancient civilization -- root culture -- *Tamana*. The term *Tamana* can be interpreted in the Manding and Dravidian languages as 'Strongplace', 'Stronghold' or 'Original Settlement'. The term *Tamana* is one of over 1,000,000 place names. Dr. Vamos-Toth has found which link Africa, Asia and Europe. The term *Tamana*, was a popular place name for the Proto-Saharans, as they expanded out of the nuclear Proto-Saharan region, to signify a colonial city or trade center established among hostile alien tribes.

The Proto-Saharans also had their own writing system. This writing system was used by the Dravidians in the Indus Valley, the Manding in the Western Sahara, and the early Egyptians (see Illustration 1).

The ancient Proto-Saharan script was a logo-syllabic system. The words used to write this script were monosyllabic.

This writing was engraved on rocks, or a stylus was used to engrave on wet clay. This view is supported by the fact that the term for writing in Dravidian and Sumerian often has the long *-uu*, attached to various initial consonants usually /l/, /r/ or /d/. For example, writing in Sumerian was *Ru* and *Shu*, Elamite: *Talu*, and Dravidian: *Carru*. These terms agree with the Manding terms for excavate or hollow out: *du*, *do*,

kulu, *tura*, etc. This shows that the Proto-Saharan term for writing denoted the creation of impressions on wet clay or hard rock. The Sumerian term for carving was *du*.

A comparative study of the Proto-Saharan languages (PS), gives us a very clear indication of their cultural traits, at the time of separation. Suzanne Romaine (1982), makes a good case for the inseparability of the linguistic area of research and that of socio-cultural research and the synchronic with the diachronic historical areas. This use of linguistic data to highlight the cultural history of related groups of speakers, was also supported by Labov (1969), who suggested that people having similar socio-cultural traits, would also be linguistically similar. As will soon be illustrated in this paper, this theory is supported by the analogy between the Dravidian, Manding and Sumerian languages.

It is interesting to note that although the Dravidians, Manding and Sumerians live in varying topography and climate, and in self-supporting semi-isolated regions they used the same terms to denote the earliest elements of civilization. Terms which show little phonological divergence. Moreover, these terms are mutually intelligible. This shows that the speakers of these languages came from a common ancestral language: *Bafsudraalam* (Winters 1985).

The early contact between the Dravidians, Manding and Sumerians in the Proto-Sahara led to great resemblances in the area of the cultural lexicon. This is particularly evident in the affinity between culture terms referring to the proto-civilization of the speakers of these languages. These noun categories show

the traditional sedentary culture of the Proto-Sahara. The sedentary lifestyle of the Proto-Saharans emphasises the role of culture as a determinant of linguistic structure and vocabulary.

An examination of the Proto-Saharan languages illustrates that the speakers of these languages lived in cities PS **uru*, and had chiefs PS **sar*. In addition to living in cities the Proto-Saharans had built extensive roads called PS **sila* (Fig.4).

The PS term for people or humanity was PS **oku*. The mother of the family was called PS **amma* or **ma*, and the father was called PS **pa*. The children both boys and girls were usually referred to as PS **de/di/du*. They lived in houses called PS **-u/*lu* (Fig.1).

The Proto-Saharans were both farmers and sheep herders PS **kari* 'sheep'. The word to cultivate was PS **be*. They used the hoe to cultivate their land PS **pari*. In addition the Proto-Saharans kept dogs PS **ur-* (Fig.2).

The Proto-Saharans used the suffix PS **-ta* to indicate a place habitation. Cultivation was called PS **ga(n)*; cultivatable barren land near water was referred to as PS **de/i(n)* (Fig.2).

The Proto-Saharans were great sailors. They used celestial navigation to make long voyages. The Proto-Saharans also used boats called PS **kalam* (Fig.4).

Hunting was an important aspect of Proto-Saharan life. As a result the bow and arrow was a popular weapon, e.g., arrow PS **kaka*.

Many of the long distance voyages made by the Proto-Saharans were made in search of precious metals. The Proto-Dravidians dominated trade in lapis lazuli for hundreds of years. As a result they were familiar with mining. They therefore share the term for digging: Dravidian *tulai*, Manding *du*, *tyolo*, and Sumerian *dul*, *tu*; PS **tul*.

These people probably knew about blacksmithy e.g., Tamil *irumbu*, Telugu *inamu*, Manding *numu*, *umu* 'forge'. These Proto-Saharans were familiar with many metals including copper: Dravidian *uruttiran*, Sumerian *urudu*, and Manding *kura*, *kuta*: PS **urut*; gold: Dravidian *kaani*, *Kaanam*, Sumerian *Gush-kin*, and Manding *saani*: PS **aani*; and steel: Dravidian *alavu*, *urukku*, Elamite *ufat* and Manding *tuufa* PS **ufa*.

Fig.1 Kinship Terms

	Man	Woman	Person	Mother	Father
Dravidian	<i>al</i>	<i>manuci, asa</i>	<i>uk</i>	<i>amma</i>	<i>appan</i>
Sumerian	<i>tin, mu, lu</i>	<i>manus</i>	<i>uku</i>	<i>amma</i>	<i>pap</i>
Manding	<i>tye, moko</i>	<i>musa, musu</i>	<i>moko</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>pa</i>

Fig.2 Agricultural Terms

	grain	cotton	rice	land of cultivation
Dravidian	pani	panchi	arisi, uri, cooru	kalan ga(n)
Sumerian	se			ga
Manding	se	fani, fan-de	maro	
	granery			fertilizer, Manure
Dravidian	kulukkai	para, para		eru, eruvu
Sumerian	kur	buru, bur	to up, root	sara
Manding	Kulu-kulu	para		

Fig.3 Domesticated Animals

	horse	cattle, cow	sheep
Dravidian	ori	haku	kuri, korri
Sumerian	ur	gud	zar, sar
Manding	wuru	gunga, kongo	sara
	pari, iyuli		
	paru, mule		
	bari, wolo		

Fig.4 Terms of Civilizing Elements

	arrow	city	house	writing	road	boat
Dravidian	kakam	ruru	lon	carru	calai	kalam
Sumerian	kak	ur, bar	mu, u	Ru, sar	silu	kalam
Manding	kala	furu	lu, nu	sebe	silu	kulu

Fig.5 Terms denoting Social Class

	chief	high officials	male	lord
Dravidian	Ca, Cira	gasa(n)	kenton	mannan
Sumerian	Sar	gana	gi	manus
Manding	Sa	gana	ke	mansa

Fig.6 Geographical Terms

	mud	mountain	hole, cavity	deluge
Dravidian	tur	kunru	tulai	amaru
Sumerian	titu	kur	dul, tul	maari
Manding	putu	kuru	du, tyolo	mara 'zone of pond'

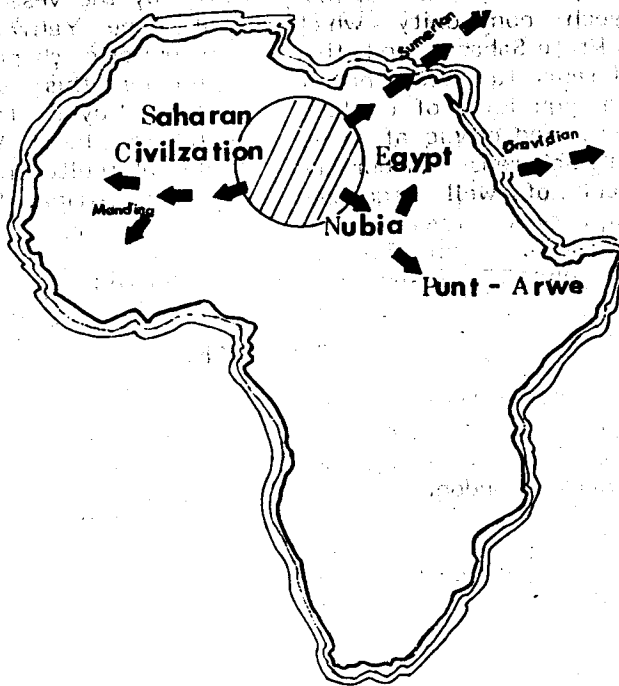
The archaeological and linguistic evidence makes it clear that the Proto-Saharan, Dravidian, Manding and Sumerian languages diverged from a common ancestral speech community which lived in the Proto-Saharan and that at the time of separation these people had achieved a high level of civilization. The cultural and ethnic affinities of the Proto-Saharans encouraged the development of well organized trade relations between these groups in Africa and Asia. From the 4th to the 3rd millennium BC an extensive trade net-work connected the Proto-Saharans from middle Africa to the Indus Valley. This view is supported by the vessels from IVBI workshop at Tepe Yahya. These vessels have a uniform shape and design. Vessels sharing this style are distributed from Egypt to Soviet Uzbekistan and the Indus Valley. The discovery of intercultural style vessels from middle Africa, Sumer and the Indus Valley suggest a shared ideological identity among the people that is supported by the linguistic data found in this paper.

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MAP - 1

African Empires



MAP - 2

ANCIENT AFRICAN WATER COURSES



ILLUSTRATION - 1

Megalithic Pottery	Indus Script	Egyptian Pottery Signs 1st Dynasty	Manding Script
∧	∧	∨	∧
⋈	⋈		⋈ ⋈
∟	∟	∟ ∟	∟ ∟
⋈	⋈	⋈	⋈
∧	↓	↓	↓
M	W		M
X	X	9	X 9
+	+		+
#	0	0	0
⋈	E	⋈	E ⋈
≠	b	≠	b ≠
∟	∟		Z ∟
✱	∟		✱ ∟
U	U	U	U
∟	∟		∟
∟	∟	∟	∟
∟	∟	∟	∟
/	/	/	/
⋈	⋈		⋈
∟	◇ □	□	∟ □ ◇