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Faisalabad: A Land of Six Millennium Years' Heritage

Prof. Dr. Rizwan Ullah Kokab¹, Dr. Unsa Jamshaid², Bazla Manzoor³, Hamid Yaseen Ahmed (Corresponding Author)⁴

1.Chairman – Department of History, Government College University Faisalabad (rizwankokab@hotmail.com)

2.Assistant Professor – Department of History and Pakistan Studies, Government College for Women University Faisalabad (dr.unsajamshaed@gcwuf.edu.pk)

3.Incharge Lyallpur Heritage Foundation Faisalabad/ PhD Scholar – School of Architecture and Planning, University of Management and Technology, Lahore (s2021228004@umt.edu.pk)

4.President, D Faisalabad Union of Journalists / PhD Scholar – Department of History, Government College University Faisalabad (aiouhmd@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The current study is to explore the archaeological significance of Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. Spanning the Early Harappan era (3500 BC) to the 18th century AD, these sites offer insights into the six millennium years' cultural heritage of Faisalabad. Despite their historical significance, they remain largely unexcavated, concealing valuable information about ancient civilizations and cultural transformations. This study highlights the importance of preserving and excavating these sites to reconstruct Punjab's cultural heritage and contribute to a deeper understanding of Pakistan's history. The findings underscore the need for conservation efforts, further research, and community engagement to protect and promote the region's archaeological heritage. By shedding light on the region's hidden history, this study aims to inform policy decisions, promote cultural tourism, and foster a sense of ownership among local communities to preserve their cultural heritage.

Keywords:Millennium Years, Heritage, Archaeological Significance, Cultural Transformations, Hidden History, Tourism

Introduction of the Study

Faisalabad, known as the Textile City or Manchester of Pakistan, was often perceived as a relatively modern city with a history spanning only 150 years. This perception was rooted in the conventional narrative that the city's history began with British colonial rule in the mid-19th century (Ashari, 2012). According to this narrative, Faisalabad was founded in 1892 as a canal colony (Ibn-e-Shaher, 2009), and its development was attributed to the British administrators and entrepreneurs who shaped its economy and infrastructure (Dobson, 1915). Some historians often linked city's early history to Sandal

Bhatti, Farid Bhatti and Dulla Bhatti (Ghazali, 1996), who fought against the Delhi Sultanate and Mughals considering them foreigner rulers (Soofi, 2014), and Rai Ahmed Khan Kharal, a local leader who ruled the region in the mid-19th century (Pasha & Shad, 1996). However, historical accounts rarely ventured beyond the colonial era, leaving the impression that Faisalabad's history was relatively short and shallow.

The conventional narrative of Faisalabad's history did acknowledge its transformation from a small town to a thriving industrial center (Islam, 1997). The city's textile industry, which earned it the nickname "Manchester of Pakistan," was a testament to its economic significance (Rasool, 2017). However, this narrative barely scratched the surface of the city's rich history, and there was more to Faisalabad's story than its modern industrialization.

This limited perspective overlooked the rich and complex history of the region, which stretched far beyond the confines of colonial rule and modern industrialization. In reality, the region around Faisalabad had a long and storied past, with archaeological evidence suggesting human habitation dating back thousands of years. The city's location in the Punjab province, a region known for its fertile soil and ancient civilizations, hinted at a deeper history that warranted exploration. By examining the city's past beyond the colonial era, historians and researchers gained a more nuanced understanding of Faisalabad's evolution over time and appreciated the complexities of its cultural identity.

This study embarked on an in-depth exploration of Faisalabad's ancient past, meticulously examining archaeological evidence within the district and division to uncover the hidden layers of history. By delving into the region's rich cultural heritage, our investigation revealed a captivating narrative that spanned an astonishing six millennia, tracing the city's evolution through the rise and fall of various civilizations and empires. The findings not only pushed back the known timeline of Faisalabad's history but also provided a nuanced understanding of the city's development, showcasing a complex and intriguing story that extends far beyond the commonly cited 150-year timeline. Through this research, valuable insights into the city's transformation over time was gained, shedding light on the diverse cultural influences that have shaped Faisalabad's identity and its people, and ultimately offering more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the city's storied past.

Background of Study

Major ancient cities, including Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Taxila, Rakhigarhi, and Ganeriwala were significantly known for inter-cities trading and traveling(Agrawal, 2020). The strategic location of Faisalabad, formerly known as Lyallpur, Chenab Colony, and Sandal Bar, is a testament to its significance in the ancient era. Situated at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, Faisalabad connected major cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, including Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Taxila, Rakhigarhi, and Ganeriwala. These trade routes facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures between the cities, showcasing Faisalabad's importance as a hub of commercial and cultural activity. The ancient cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, renowned for their sophisticated urban planning, architecture, and water management systems, were interconnected through a network of routes that traversed the region(Joshi, 2020). Faisalabad's location along these routes suggests that it may have played a crucial role in the region's trade and commerce. The city's proximity to Taxila, a major center of trade and learning, further emphasizes its significance.

The Indus Valley Civilization's trade network extended beyond the Indian subcontinent, with connections to ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia, Persia, and Egypt(Agrawal, 2020). Faisalabad's position along these trade routes would have enabled the city to participate in this broader network, exchanging goods and ideas with other civilizations. Given its strategic location, it is likely that Faisalabad was an established settlement during the Indus Valley Civilization era or prior to that as well. The city's history, therefore, may stretch back thousands of years, with its significance as a commercial and cultural hub evolving over time. Further archaeological research and excavations in the region could provide valuable insights into Faisalabad's ancient past, shedding light on its role in the Indus Valley Civilization and its contribution to the region's rich cultural heritage.

The archaeological exploration of mounds dating back to the early and mature Harappan eras in the region(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996)has provided significant insights into the existence of ancient settlements in Faisalabad. These mounds, which are remnants of long-abandoned cities, have yielded a wealth of information about the lives of the people who inhabited this region thousands of years ago. The early Harappan era, also known as the Regionalization Era, marked the beginning of urbanization in the Indus Valley Civilization. During this period, small settlements began

to emerge, and the foundations of urban planning, architecture, and trade were laid. The mature Harappan era, on the other hand, saw the bloom of urban centers, with sophisticated cities like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa showcasing advanced water management systems, well-planned streets, and a thriving economy.

The situation suggested for exploration of mounds in the region that would reveal evidence of similar urban planning, architecture, and trade networks that established townships existed in this area during the early and mature Harappan period to Mughal era. There is huge amount of pottery available at the sites and excavation would enhance its amount. The expected discovery of artifacts, such as pottery, jewelry, and other archaeological finds, would further strengthen this likelihood. These findings would have significant implications for understanding of the region's history and cultural heritage. They suggest that the region was an integral part of the Indus Valley Civilization, with its own unique characteristics and contributions to the broader cultural landscape. Further archaeological research and excavations in the region can provide even more valuable insights into the lives of the people who lived here thousands of years ago, shedding light on their culture, traditions, and achievements

Archeological Sites in Faisalabad

Faisalabad Division is home to an astonishing array of archaeological sites, with over 100 mounds identified within the metropolitan urban area of District Faisalabad and its surrounding districts. This region stands out as one of the richest archaeological landscapes in Pakistan, boasting a staggering number of recorded sites that provide a unique glimpse into the region's storied past. The sheer density of these sites underscores the significance of Faisalabad Division as a hub of human activity and cultural evolution over thousands of years.

Faisalabad has a treasure trove of archaeological riches, featuring settlements that date back to diverse time periods (Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996). From the Early Harappan era to the Mughal period, these sites offer a fascinating glimpse into the lives of the people who inhabited this region, their cultural practices, and their achievements. But Faisalabad district including metropolitan urban area also has the unexcavated mounds dated back to Early and Mature Harappan era to the Mughal period (Lyallpur Museum, 2012). The presence of so many archaeological sites in Faisalabad Division highlights the

complexity and diversity of the region's history, making it an exciting area of study for archaeologists and historians.

The discovery of these archaeological sites also underscores the importance of preserving cultural heritage. Efforts to document, protect and conserve these sites will not only help to safeguard the region's history but also promote cultural tourism and education. By exploring and understanding the past, we can gain valuable insights into the present and future, ultimately enriching our appreciation of the region's rich cultural landscape. As research continues to uncover the secrets of these sites, we can expect to learn more about the people who lived here and their contributions to the storied past of region.

Tibba Noor Shah Wali

The Tibba Noor Shah Wali was centrally located in the city, and a shrine dedicated to the Sufi mystic Baba Noor Shah Wali stood atop the mound. According to the Lyallpur Museum (2012), this mound dates back to ancient times(Lyallpur Museum, 2012). It is believed that during the 10th century, Sufi mystic Noor Shah Wali visited the area and chose this mound as his residence(Pasha & Shad, 1996). Prior to the establishment of Lyallpur, the area was known as Pakki Mari(Ashfaq, 1998). Although a significant portion of the mound (247 Kanals) was destroyed during the construction of the General Bus Stand in Faisalabad during the Pervez Musharraf era in 2002 and declared B Class General Bus Stand in 2014 (Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad, 2021), the shrine and a graveyard remained intact. Unfortunately, the mound was left unexcavated, resulting in the loss of a valuable opportunity to uncover the area's history. Excavation, if the modern developments on the mound allow, may reveal more.

TibbaKhichian

The TibbaKhichian is located on the eastern side of the main city. According to records, this mound dates back to the Early Harappan period and contains a treasure trove of pottery and other artifacts that offer valuable insights into the area's cultural heritage. Although the mound was explored in the early 1990s and listed in the Archaeology of Pakistan's 1992-1996 inventory(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), it remains unexcavated. Excavation of the mound could significantly enhance the understanding of the area's cultural heritage and potentially establish linkage to the civilization dating back to around 3500 BC or earlier.

Tibba Kacha Pind

The Tibba Kacha Pind, situated on the eastern side of Faisalabad's main city, holds significant archaeological importance. This site dates back to both, the Early and Mature Harappan periods, yielding pottery and other artifacts that provide valuable insights into the region's ancient past. Although explored in the 1990s and included in the Archaeology of Pakistan's list from 1992-1996(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), Tibba Kacha Pind remains unexcavated, leaving its secrets untapped. Potential excavation of this site could establish links to a civilization dating back to around 3500 BC or earlier, offering a unique glimpse into the lives of the people who inhabited this region thousands of years ago. Moreover, it may shed light on the transformation from the Early to Mature Harappan civilization, providing crucial details about the evolution of this ancient cultural transformation and development.

Tibba Rajanpur

The Tibba Rajanpur, located on the south-eastern side of Faisalabad's main city, is a significant archaeological site dating back to the Early Harappan period. The site has yielded pottery and other artifacts that offer valuable insights into the lives of the people who inhabited this region thousands of years ago. Although explored in the early 1990s and included in the Archaeology of Pakistan's list from 1992-1996(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), Tibba Rajanpur remains unexcavated, leaving many questions unanswered. Potential excavation of this site could establish links to a civilization dating back to around 3500 BC or earlier, providing crucial details about the Early Harappan civilization. Moreover, it may shed light on the circumstances surrounding the decline and eventual destruction of this ancient society, offering a unique glimpse into a pivotal moment in human history.

Tibba Narwan

Tibba Narwan, located on the eastern side of Faisalabad's main city, is an archaeological site of significant importance, dating back to the 4th to 6th century AD. Explored artifacts, including pottery and warfare equipment, hint at a complex and potentially tumultuous past. Although initially explored in the early 1990s and listed in the Archaeology of Pakistan's inventory 1992-1996 (Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), TibbaNarwan remains unexcavated, concealing valuable historical secrets. The site's potential excavation could unveil the area's history preceding Muslim expeditions in

India, shedding light on the pre-Muslim era of Punjab. Furthermore, it may reveal the untold story of the region's civilization, including its culture, conflicts, and eventual decline, providing a more comprehensive understanding of this pivotal period in the region's history.

Tibba Wahniwala

The TibbaWahniwala, also known as TibbaDullaykiWahni, situated on the southern side of Faisalabad's main city, holds significant archaeological promise. Dating back to the 4th to 8th century AD, the site has yielded an array of artifacts, including pottery, worship items, warfare equipment, agricultural tools, and other relics. Although explored in the early 1990s and listed in the Archaeology of Pakistan's inventory 1992-1996(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), TibbaWahniwala remains unexcavated, concealing valuable historicalinsights. Potential excavation could unveil the region's history prior to Muslim influence in India, shedding light on the pre-Muslim era of Punjab. Moreover, it may reveal the untold story of the region's civilization, including its culture, conflicts, and eventual transformation during the transition from pre-Muslim to early Muslim periods, providing a unique glimpse into a pivotal moment in the region's history.

Tibba Pattoma

The Tibba Pattoma, located on the south-eastern side of Faisalabad's main city, is a significant archaeological site spanning the 8th to 15th century AD. The site has yielded a diverse range of artifacts, including pottery, worship items, kitchen pottery, agricultural equipment, and other relics, offering a glimpse into the lives of its ancient inhabitants. Although explored in the early 1990s and listed in the Archaeology of Pakistan's inventory 1992-1996(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), TibbaPattoma remains unexcavated, holding secrets of the region's past. Potential excavation could unveil the region's history during this period, shedding light on the untold story of Punjab's civilization, its cultural transformations, and the factors that led to its decline. Moreover, it may reveal the dynamics of change and continuity in the region, providing valuable insights into a pivotal period in Punjab's history.

Tibba Talwandi

The Tibba Talwandi, situated on the south-eastern side of Faisalabad's main city, holds significant historical value, dating back to the 12th century and beyond. The site has yielded a range of artifacts, including pottery, worship items, kitchen pottery, agricultural

equipment, and other relics, providing a glimpse into the lives of its medieval inhabitants. Although explored in the early 1990s and itemized in the Archaeology of Pakistan List 1992-1996(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), Tibba Talwandi remains unexcavated, concealing valuable insights into the region's past. Potential excavation could reveal the region's history during this period, shedding light on the untold story of Punjab's civilization, its cultural dynamics, and the transformations that shaped the region. Moreover, it may uncover the factors that contributed to the decline of this civilization, offering a nuanced understanding of Punjab's rich heritage.

TibbaNigaranwala

The TibbaNigaranwala, located on the south-eastern side of Faisalabad's main city, is an archaeological site of significant importance, spanning the 12th to 16th century AD period. The site has yielded a diverse array of artifacts, including pottery, worship items, kitchen pottery, agricultural equipment, and other relics. Although explored in the early 1990s and enumerated in the Archaeology of Pakistan List 1992-96(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), TibbaNigaranwala remains unexcavated, holding valuable historical secrets. Potential excavation could unveil the region's history during this period, shedding light on the untold story of Punjab's civilization, its cultural evolution, and the transformations that occurred. Moreover, it may reveal the factors that shaped the region's history, providing a deeper understanding of Punjab's rich cultural heritage and the dynamics that influenced its development.

Naseer da Tibba

The Naseer da Tibba, situated on the south-eastern side of Faisalabad's main city, is a significant archaeological site dating back to the 14th to 18th century AD period. The site has yielded a range of artifacts, including pottery, worship items, kitchen pottery, agricultural equipment, and other relics, offering insights into the lives of its inhabitants. Although explored in the early 1990s and itemized in the Archaeology of Pakistan List 1992-96(Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), Naseer da Tibba remains unexcavated, concealing valuable historical information. Potential excavation could reveal the region's history during this period, shedding light on the untold story of Punjab's civilization, its cultural dynamics, and the transformations that shaped the region. Moreover, it may uncover the factors that influenced the region's development and decline, providing a deeper understanding of Punjab's rich historical heritage.

Mounds around Faisalabad District

Beyond Faisalabad district, a vast array of archaeological mounds - 93 in total - dot the surrounding districts (Toba Taik Singh, Jhang and Chiniot), forming a rich cultural landscape. These mounds, scattered on all sides of Faisalabad, date back to various periods, ranging from the Early Harappan era to the 18th century AD. Explored artifacts, including pottery, worship items, kitchen pottery, coins, agricultural equipment, and other relics, hint at a complex and fascinating past. Although explored in the early 1990s (Mughal, Iqbal, Khan, & Hassan, 1996), these mounds remain largely unexcavated, concealing valuable historical secrets. Potential excavation could unveil the region's history, shedding light on the untold story of Punjab's civilization, its cultural evolution, and the transformations that shaped the region, providing a deeper understanding of the area's rich historical heritage.

Conclusion

The archaeological sites in Faisalabad, including Tibba Kacha Pind, Tibba Rajanpur, Tibba Narwan, Tibba Wahniwala, Tibba Pattoma, Tibba Talwandi, Tibba Nigaranwala, Naseer da Tibba, and numerous other mounds in surrounding districts, collectively form a rich and diverse cultural heritage of the region. These sites span various periods, ranging from the Early Harappan era, which dates back to around 3500 BC, to the 18th century AD, encompassing a vast timeline of human history.

The significance of these sites lies in their potential to provide valuable insights into the lives of ancient civilizations that once flourished in the region. The artifacts unearthed at these sites, including pottery, worship items, kitchen pottery, coins, agricultural equipment, and other relics, offer a glimpse into the cultural practices, traditions, and ways of life of the people who inhabited this region. Despite being explored in the early 1990s and listed in the Archaeology of Pakistan's inventory, these sites remain largely unexcavated, concealing valuable historical information. The lack of excavation and research has resulted in a significant gap in our understanding of the region's past, leaving many questions unanswered.

Potential excavation and research at these sites could unveil the region's history, shedding light on the untold story of Punjab's civilization, its cultural evolution, and the factors that influenced its development and decline. By uncovering the secrets of these sites, researchers can reconstruct the lives of ancient communities, their cultural practices,

and the dynamics that shaped the region's history. The study of these archaeological sites has far-reaching implications for our understanding of Pakistan's and Punjab's historical heritage. It can provide valuable insights into the region's past, promoting cultural heritage conservation and historical research. By preserving and excavating these sites, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the region's history, ultimately contributing to a richer understanding of the cultural and historical context of the region.

Furthermore, the excavation of these sites can also provide opportunities for tourism, education, and community engagement, promoting the importance of cultural heritage conservation and historical preservation. By sharing the findings with the public, researchers can raise awareness about the significance of these sites and the importance of preserving our cultural heritage for future generations. The archaeological sites in Faisalabad division hold significant historical value, offering insights into the lives of ancient civilizations and the cultural practices of the region. Potential excavation and research at these sites can unveil the region's history, promoting cultural heritage conservation and historical research, and contributing to a richer understanding of Pakistan's and Punjab's historical heritage.

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