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**LAST CRY TO SAVE THE GLORIOUS PAST IN DISTRICT MANDI BHAUDDIN,
PAKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

This article aims at highlighting the important historical sites of the city Mandi Bahauddin and its surrounding towns, which are under its administrative jurisdiction. Astonishingly, the origin and importance of these sites are not only unknown to the laymen but the department of archaeology is ignorant of preserving these. Hence, this article is an attempt to find out the importance of the socio-cultural origin of the people living here. Which is possible if these sites would be preserved with the information they may extend and enhance the treasure of historical evidence locally and also as a part of macro historical writing?

Keywords: Alexander the Great, Archaeology, Communication system (Railways), Extension of British Empire, Historical monuments, History of Sikhs, Mughal History, Partition of India, 1947 trans-border migration, Pre-Partition Architecture in Mandi Bahauddin (Punjab, Pakistan).

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is one of the regions, rich in old age historical remains scattered at various places. These include sites like Moenjodaro and Harappa; that have been recognized as the World Heritage by UNO and preserved internationally (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1992-2015, Archaeological ruins at Moenjodaro, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/138>). However, most of these places are lying unheeded seeking for official notice for preservation. The district Mandi Bahauddin, with lush green planes and the granary of agricultural produce situated amid the Chaj Doab is also one of these places. Lying at 32° 34'60N 73°30'0E, it is 204 meters above sea level and comprises an area of 2673 km. The town is situated in North Punjab, and is bounded on the northwest by the Jhelum River, on the South-East by the Chenab River which separates it from Gujranwala District and Gujrat District and on the southwest by Sargodha District.(Field Appraisal Report, TMA MBDin, 2008:2,3) The climate is very hot in summer and cold in winters. During peak summer the day temperature goes up to 45 degrees, but the winter

months are very pleasant and the minimum temperature may fall below 2 degrees. The average rain fall in the district is 50 mm (*Explore Pakistan*, 2014). It had remained as the part of Shahpur District during British reign adjacent to Jhelum District. (Jhelum District Imperial Gazetteers India, Vol. 14). This was the area with dense forests propelled with wild beasts like lions and pigs too. Scattered villages were inhabited by Jats tribes of Gondals and Ranjha and Lak etc. (Odwyre, 2012: 29). It was endowed with the status of Chak no. 51 in Sir Malcolm Haily's Chak Bandi System. (TMA, MB Din: History).

The British government established the Railway station in 1901 as a part of the North Western Railway System in India that enhanced the importance of District Mandi Baha Uddin not only as the granary but also it got easy approach to the he salt mines and the industrial site of ICI at Khewra so the biggest Railway Junction of the region was also constructed at Malakwal. In 1923 ,a walled city with nine gates including a Sadar Gate before the Railway Station (which was completed in 1933), and housing compartment round the grain market for the purpose of inhabiting the traders and businessmen was planned and accomplished in 1946, that increased its beauty and the importance of this area.

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However, after the creation of Pakistan the Hindu and Sikh population at once migrated to newly established state of India and the Muslims mostly from Eastern Punjab and Northern provinces poured in and settled in the evacuee property in the city. This process was completed from August to October as is proved by the records of the Birth Register maintained by the town committee as there is a blank from August 17-October 16, 1947 and from October 17 entries are almost of the Muslims with few exceptions of Christians who did not opt to leave (Town Committee Birth Record, Register 1947-1950). These refugees have had formative impact on the development of both these post-colonial states as these were the people (non-elites), who had to experience the migration, (Robinson, 2010). Though, mostly they did not only want to leave their places of abode but also obsessed for going back yet the permit policy and then the validation of passport hindered their wishes to be fulfilled. The vacated property allotment policy added to the misery and finally they had to accept the reality of migration and tended to stay. It was manifested by the changes in architecture of the earlier built houses and markets, as well as socio-economic and political activities in the city. The Religious places like Mandirs and Gurdwaras etc. were not allotted to common men yet these places have been neglected at first owing to the insufficiency of administrative resources and also in the wake of the troubles of the migration. Later, the relevant department is a failure in preserving these historical architectural buildings and their importance; consequently these are turning into the sign of misery and deterioration with the passage of time.

A details of a few historical sites with pictures which were taken by the author of this article herself the while visiting the educational institutions for the collection of data for the PhD thesis are given below.

QADIRABAD FORT

The pictures given below are from Qadirabad town¹, situated 44 km away from city Mandi Bahaudin on the western bank of Chenab. It was striking finding such an architectural artefact at a place that is away from commn route. It was found out that some Akbar the Great's Commander Mirza Qadir built this fort, Qadirabad town is also named after this commander. (Qureshi, n.d) It was built in the sixteenth century and now its deteriorating remains lie there on the way to the iron and cement market of Qadirabad waiting for

rehabilitation and preservation. According to local people this part had graves of some pious persons but now razed by the land mafia groups, yet the later could not succeed to occupy this single remains (Personal Communication, 2013, September 12).



Picture 1. This is the inner niches of the remaining part of the fort, picture taken on September 12, 2013.



Picture 2. This is the full view of the remains of the fort about to destroy ultimately on September 16, 2013.

ANGLO-SIKH WAR 1849 MONUMENT, CHILLIANWALA:

The British East India company imposed severe conditions on Sikhs after Anglo-Sikh War of 1846 constraining them politically as well as administratively. According to the treaty which was consequently signed at Bharoval on 16 December 1846, Henry Lawrence was

appointed Resident with "full authority to direct and control all matters in every department of the State ("ANGLO-SIKH WAR," 2014).

Even the Maharani Jind Kaur was restricted to see her courtiers assuming her as the potential effective threat for the British authority. This extended aggressiveness in state affairs dissented the Sikhs generals and the troops. Governor General of the Company Sir Henry Hardinge and his confidante Henry Lawrence and then their succeeding officers, governor general Earl of Dalhousie and Frederick Currie adopted the harsh and humiliating behavior to the Sikh royal family and officers, provoking Sikh's fervor against the Company ("Anglo-Sikh War", 2014). Consequently, the rebel began by the escorts of Mul Raj of Multan in April 1848, that finally ended up in the second Anglo-Sikh war which was fought at scattered place between River Jheluma and Chenab, Chillianwala was one of the places, where the British army was inflicted with heavy casualties and losses on January 13, 1849 Journeys to the Heart of Sikh Dharma: Anglo-Sikh War II," (2014).

A monuments including a minaret and a cross was built later by the British Government, which completed in 1871 as inscribed on the Cross. These monuments were erected at the place of the war and on the ground where the British soldiers gave away their lives and were buried at the same place. Though the British faced more losses yet it followed the complete annexation of Punjab proclaimed finally by Lord Dalhousie on March 29, 1849. Following are the signs of this war in the shape of a lofty Cross and a high Minaret.



Picture 3. A view of the cross outside the main seminary pictures taken on September 16, 2013.



Picture 4. This is the engraved statement on the square base of the Cross constructed by Viceroy Earl of Mayo in 1871.

On the other three sides the British Army soldier's name with battalions/regiments and ranks are inscribed.



Picture 5. The Minaret is in the middle of the graveyard, where remains of a few graves are present.

The minaret is inside the boundary wall, on the main plane, where the battle of Chillianwala was fought as inscribed on the slabs fixed on all the sides of the minaret interestingly in the languages in vogue at that time, i.e., Persian, Urdu, Hindi and English, which states that the battle was fought around this minaret and Cross as is shown below in picture 6 and 7). It also bears the date of battle, name of the commanders of both armies and the feelings of the surviving British army soldiers for those who perished in the war. Only three signs of graves are survived there, two of which are cemented by the local authorities thus destroying the original outer layer of red bricks.



Picture 6. Inscriptions in memories of those fallen in the war are written in English on the front of the Minaret and in Persian on the eastern side.



Picture 7. The people of a dairy farm outside the sanctuary are looking after it instead of the archaeological department.



Picture 8. Of the three remaining graves one has been cemented by the local government, while only one lies intact with original red brick layer.

MONG

Alexander's route south from Taxila, and the site of his decisive battle with Porus, is still the subject of scholarly debates. In the early 1930s, Aurel Stein came up with a persuasive theory, but his ideas have recently come under fire. Susan Whitefield argues, (Iranica, 2005), "Although several scholars have disputed the place of the fight of Hydaspes (Smith, 1914: 78-85; Breloer, 1933: 21-47; Bosworth, 1995: 265-69), as none traveled the ground as extensively as Stein, argued Bosworth (1995: 178) agreeing with most of Stein's identifications, calling his work on identifying Pir-Sar a "classic piece of topographical investigation". More recent work by Wood (1997) suggests that Stein's original identifications, even that of the base camp at Hydaspes, were correct (Iranica,

2005). Alexander did not head along the Grand Trunk road – the medieval Mogul route- but moved directly from Taxila towards Great Salt Range. This was the route used throughout prehistory and right up the Muslim invasions of India in eleventh century. (Wood, 1997: 184) Greek faces may also be observed here roaming around this particular area now called Mong village, 9 miles away from the city and about 5 miles before the Rasul Dam. In addition, the area is full of scattered mounds which are often excavated by the indigenous people and the artefacts relating to the ancient history have been dug out, which are used as decoration in their homes. Tradition is common among the people of this locality that the battle between Alexander and Poro (Porus in Greek) was fought here on the bank of River Jhelum, (Personal Communication), where ancient city of Nicaea (means Victory) was founded by Alexander. Later, Mong was built over its debris after the name of Raja Moga who was the Indo-Parthian ruler. Wood (1997) states, ‘the battle brought personal loss. His beloved horse Bucephalus died after the battle of age or wounds. The old horse was aged about twenty. In his honor Alexander founded a city at the site near the night crossing, (the place from where he crossed the river) that is at the ‘cape’ on the west side of the river. Here, perhaps a Greek hero on (monument dedicated to a hero) was erected in a prominent place to commemorate the warhorse. On the other side of the river, nearer to the site of the battle, he founded another town Nikaia (Victory) (Wood, 1997: 189-190).

The topography, river orientation and natural features including salt cliffs in the vicinity match closely the description given in ancient sources. Sameeni (2009) gives geographical detail and importance of the salt range though in the term of geology and paleontology however, it also manifests the historical significance, too. To further support this claim, the residents of Mong have a traditional claim that Mong is Hellenistic Nicaea. A sanctuary has also been built in Pind Dadan Khan in the memory of Alexander by some expatriates from Greece They have also sought financial help from the Greek embassy. Similarly there is no less scholars cum philosophers are found in the city who are of the view to collect fund locally and utilize this to construct the Poro’s statue at Mong as a local hero who fought bravely with the foreign aggressor. In addition, the village Haillan is said to be named after the Alexander’s wife Halen, which is pronounced now as *hail-laan* in local

Punjabi dialect.



Picture 9. Charming engraving on the main gate of the Bhai Banna Gurdwara.

MANDIBAHAUDDIN CITY

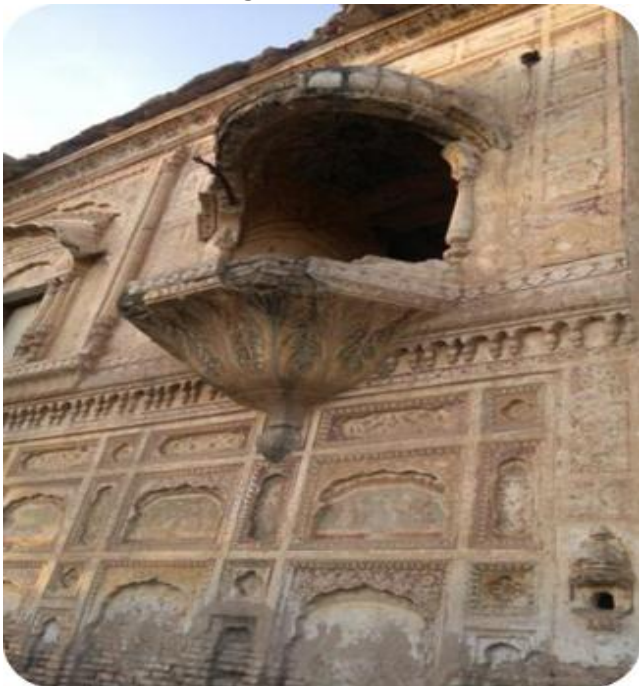
Prior partition, city of Mandi Bahauddin was populated by the Sikh and Hindu Communities mostly, there were a few Muslim families residing here in the main city as is obvious from the birth record of 1945-47 of the town committee (Birth Registers, 1945-47). However, the city was found empty by the incoming Muslim migrants from India (Personal communication, February 05, 2014).

A several sacred buildings of these communities as the Sikh Gurdwaras in Gurrah Mohallah in the city proper and in Mangat and Makhnawali villages of Mandi Bahauddin are the places which are worth seeing and mysterious for the local people. Particularly, Bhai Banna ka Gurdwara in Mangat is still intact with the charming and exciting engraving and writings in Gormukhi on its walls and roofs, manifesting astonishing aesthetic sense of its builders. These include flowers patterns, graphics and even images of the folk busy in cultural activities. Following pictures may be useful in understanding not only the aesthetics but the role of the Gurdwaras in the

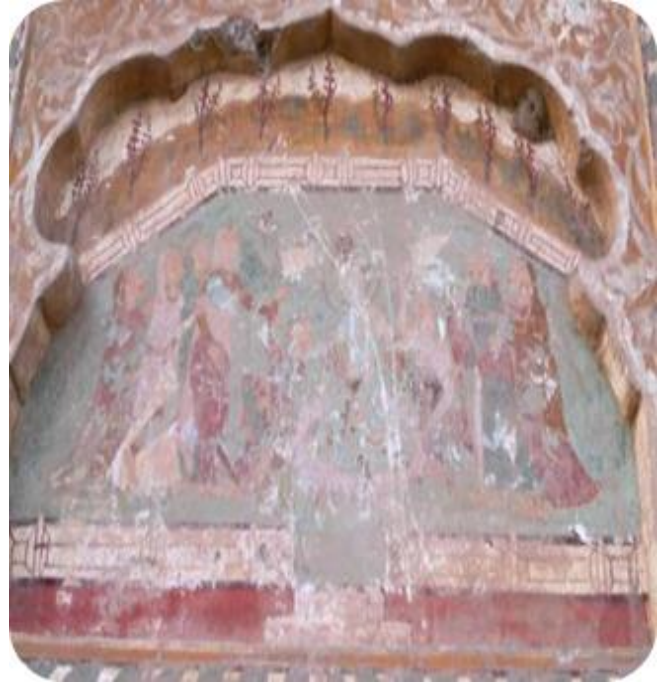
rural life of the Sikhs in Pre-Partition Mangat. There is also a myth of a tunnel in the gurdwara having no end, however that was not either found by the author or also the recent owner of the building. (Personal communication, March 18, 2014)



Picture 10. Gormukhi engraving on a slab surrounded by graphic designs, flower patterns inside the main hall of Bhai Banna Gurdwara, Mangat. Pictures taken on March 18, 2014.



Picture 11. A deteriorating balcony of Bhai Banna Gurdwara, Mangat. March 18, 2014.



Picture 12. Women folks busy in cultural activities, now fading and being peeled off by the ignorant visitors, March 18, 2014.

Another Sikh Gurdwara in 5 ward, Mandi Bahauddin is now inhabited by a Kashmiri family who migrated here in 1947 (Personal communication, September 24, 2014).



Picture No. 13, Sikh Gurdwarain 5 Ward (middle of the city), now Kashmir House. Picture taken on April 19, 2015.

There is a Hindu temple in the middle of once walled city. The balcony of the temple is decorated by attractive designs. Inscription in Hindi is seen clearly over the gate of the temple. Now it is used as a store by the families residing in its neighboring families.



Picture 14. A Hindu Temple in 5 Ward, just outside of the huge Grain Market in the center of the walled city. Picture taken on April 19, 2015.



Picture 15. Flower carving and inscription in Hindi language on the main gate of temple. Picture taken on April 19, 2015.

The plight of these sites were shown to the chairman Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization (TIAC), Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, however, he was dismayed that he could do research only but have no jurisdiction for preserving. The Archaeology Department is responsible for this task, however, these assertions about these places are needed to be published, so that these findings may have wide attention of the public also to make them aware of the precious treasure so that they would not be the catalyst to the destruction.

CONCLUSION:

The people and society of CHAJ DOAB (area between River Jhelum and Chenab), have also long and thriving historical background that may be found in deteriorating remains of buildings or hidden beneath the earth all around Mandi Bahaudin. It has been not only the trodding route of the invaders from north west from time immemorial and also experienced the fulfillment of colonial masters planning of irrigation (Singh, 2005: 86-126) and communication and its manifestation in astoundingly erected architecture like Rasul Barrage built in 1893, Railway Station in main city and a large Railway Junction at Malikwal and above all the walled city dwellings with conspicuously large grain market in the middle. Almost all the facilities like hospitals, a bank named Lakshmi Bank, primary and high schools were also working before Partition (Town Committee Birth Records 1945-1950, the addresses shows the presence of these areas as the entries were adjacent or near to these places).

It was a thriving society there in this small city with almost all the necessities of life even before the Partition but the new-comers also founded another tapestry of cultural, economic and political life here, however, they could not take proper notice of the places that might have acquired importance of being historical places. Though it is not something unusual psychologically as they had to migrate and leave their houses behind yet they remained entrenched with their memories and initially longed for returning. Later, the legislation by both the governments regarding identity and passports etc. forced them to stay wherever they were. These steps were taken to establish the status of international boundaries between India and Pakistan; hence the migrants were cut away from their beloved birth places but not spiritually as they always continued to tell stories to their children and grandchildren blended with exaggeration. This process made them alienated to the

importance of preserving the past remnants here in deliberately.

Ironically, the official attention to this aspect was also lacking and these places, which may be the great revenue generator as the tourist sites along with the source of research works are getting ruined. Therefore, it is essential that the authorities should also take care of the far flung areas of the country and immediate action for safeguarding these reservoirs of scattered history everywhere in Pakistan be undertaken.

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