

## **TOWN FORMATION IN PUNJAB: A STUDY OF PUNJAB UNDER SULTANATE RULE**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

The sultans of Delhi left a huge mark as far as the development of architecture and fine arts is concerned. Besides this, Sultans also contributed a lot in the field of building and construction. They laid the foundation of so many towns as well as cities. Apart from this they contributed a great deal in the construction of buildings, sarais, mosques, shrines, tombs, palaces, canals, etc. The noteworthy towns built under the sultans in region of Punjab have been discussed below.

### **Hazara**

Beginning from the North-West, Hazara is a beautiful small town, located in the center of the fertile Chhach-Valley. It lied between the river Indus and the desolate sand hills at distance of 13 miles from Campbellpur. The mosques and spires of the city, interspersed with palm trees, may be seen from a significant distance. The village is the location where Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni achieved victory over the combined troops of the Hindu Rajas in the year 1008 A.D. At this location, a total of twenty thousand Panjabis were slain by the invading forces. (Attock Gazetteer, Lahore, 270) Subsequently, some of the Afghan followers of that leader decided to establish their settlement here. Venka, Deva and Kala are prominent Hindu temples that served as significant centers of devotion in the Attock District during the early Sultanate period. The temples of Amb and Kafirkot, located three miles below Jhrik on a small hill, are adorned with ancient remains. Additionally, there is a fort believed to have been built by Raja Majhira, which holds significant religious importance during this era. Despite being an oppressed group, the magnificence of the architecture of these buildings is evident among the Hindus. (Nijjar, 1968, 188)

### **Rawalpindi**

Rawalpindi has been an important historical town right from ancient times. The coins belonging to ancient Greeks as well as Muslims were found here. Ghazni, a small village called Ghazini is about three miles away from Rawalpindi. The city of Rawalpindi in the

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14th was also called as Fatehpur Baori however the old name was restored soon. Rawalpindi as it exists today was established and granted by Mahmud of Ghazni to the Gakhars. Due to its vulnerable location along the usual route of enemy forces in the Panjab, the city could not be repopulated. It remained abandoned until Jhanda Khan, a Gakhar chief, revived its former grandeur by renaming it Pindi or Rawalpindi. The name was derived from the village of Rawal, which used to be a prosperous place located a few miles north of the town on the current road to Muree. (Rawalpindi District Gazetteer, 245-252)

### **Pharwala**

The town of Pharwala was the center of power of Gakhars in the Sultanate era. This town had a big fort below which was a gushing stream which emerged from the hills. In the year 1524, when Babur marched towards Punjab, Hati Khan Gakhar came in the way of Babar and showed a good resistance but was captured and defeated by Babar. (Rawalpindi District Gazetteer, 41-42, 245-252)

### **Gujrat**

According to a belief, the Gujarat was originally known as Udanagari. Generally, it is said that the old town of Gujarat was restored by a Gujar King, Ali Khan who was later defeated by Sangkara Verma somewhere between 863-901 A.D. Gujrat got destroyed in the year 1303 A.D, the year is which is more famous for the Mongol invasion during the rule of Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji. During the rule of Sultan Bahlol Lodi (1450-1486 A.D), it seems that a specific area on the eastern side of the Chenab River, which included a portion of this very district, was detached from the dominion of Sialkot and established as a separate administrative division called Zila Bahlol. (Nijjar, 1968, 189).

### **Dhaunkal**

The town of Dhaunkal was established during the time of Mahmud of Ghazna by Raja Dhorekhal. It was at Dhaunkal that the revered Muslim Saint Saldi Ahmad, also known as Sakhi Sarwar Sultan, or as Lakhdatta (the giver of lakhs) who was laid to rest at Nagaha, had taken his abode in this town of Dhunkal somewhere in the twelfth century. It is believed that the saint miraculously procured a stream of water. The water of the stream is believed to have been useful for treating leprosy and this very village is haunted by lepers even today. Sakhi Sultan's house was more decorated and transformed into a mosque during the reign of Shah Jahan, the Mughal emperor. (Sarkar, Tr, 1901, 84).

### **Baddoke Gosain**

It was a huge village found by the Lodhi sultans. It is approximately 8 miles away from Gujranwala. This large village turned into a pilgrimage center for having the shrine of Ramananada, who was a revered Hindu saint.

## **Sodhra**

Sodhra, an ancient town located on the banks of Chenab in the Gujranwala district approximately five miles east of Wazirabad, held significant importance during the Ghaznavid era. It was established by Ayaz, who was the favorite of Mahumud Ghazni. Its name, derived from the existence of a hundred gates present in the town, highlights its historical prominence. However, following the decline of the Ghaznavids, the town went into disrepair until it was revitalized by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. (Sarkar, Tr, 1901, 84).

## **Lahore**

During the period of the Delhi Sultanate, spanning from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, Lahore exhibited some of the most distinctive architectural features of the era. These included the use of overlapping arches, steeply sloped structures, and exceptionally thick walls. Following notable architectural relics from Lahore of this period exemplify these characteristics.

**1. Mandir of Lava:** The foremost structure warranting attention among these is the 'Mandir of Lava,' located in the north-west corner of the fort. This temple, situated in a deep hollow surrounded by the walls on all sides, is notable for being constructed on ground level with the exterior surface of the fort. This suggests that the mandir was either built concurrently with the fort or was encompassed within the fort's boundaries during Akbar's expansion.

**2. Tibbi wala Shiwala:** The subsequent notable Hindu temple is in Tibbi-Bazar, known as the Tibbiwala-Shiwala. The main structure of the temple lies one and a half storey's below the surface level, accessible via a flight of stairs. The temple remains perpetually dark, illuminated continuously by artificial light. According to Kanhaya Lal's 'History of Lahore', the temple's dome was originally in level with the outer ground until Raja Dina-Nath elevated it during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The building features a central quadrangle shaded by a large Banyan tree, with a veranda on its south containing a gate that leads to the stairs descending into the temple. (Nijjar, 1968, 190).

There are other temples that people generally believe were constructed when Lahore was founded, but there is no record or remaining evidence to support this. Even if these temples were built in ancient times, they have been renovated so extensively that no traces of Sultanate period architecture remain.

**1. Tomb of Daata Ganj-Bakhsh :** One of the earlier as well as notable mausoleums is the tomb of Daata Ganj-Bakhsh, located just outside the Bhate Gate of the city. This renowned saint, whose real name is Ali Makhdoom, arrived in Lahore with Masud, the son of Mahmud, and settled there in 1039. He passed away in 1072. The mausoleum housed a significant collection of Quranic manuscripts. Architecturally, the building itself is not particularly

remarkable. (Baqir, Lahore Past & Present, 1952, 307-308)

**2. Tomb of Qutub-ud Din-Aibak:** The subsequent tomb is in the famous Anarkali Bazar and is believed to be the resting place of the one who laid the foundation of the Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent. However, there is no distinctive feature of this tomb that confirms it as the grave of Aibak. The only historical reference comes from the 'Taj-ul-Ma'asir', which states that, Qutub-ud-din-Aibak was interred in Lahore 'like a treasure in the bowels of the earth.' This modest grave is thus associated with Aibak's final resting place. (Baqir, Lahore Past & Present, 1952, 303)

**3. The Dogran Street Mosque:** Next in significance is the mosque located on Dogran Street, commonly known as, Niwin Masjid. This mosque is unique in its architectural design. Notably, it is situated about two stories below the ground level. The mosque was constructed on the orders of Zulfiqar Khan, who was the governor of Lahore, during the reign of Lodhis. In an era when most mosques were built above ground level, the founder sought to distinguish this mosque by excavating the ground to a depth of two storeys before laying its foundation. A flight of stairs descends into the courtyard, which is itself one-storey below the ground level. Standing in the courtyard, one cannot help but admire the sophisticated drainage system, a testament to the ingenuity of its engineer. The mosque's design is characterized by the simplicity of style, the lofty walls, and its pointed arches, all hallmarks of fifteenth-century architecture. These attributes are prominently displayed in this small yet remarkable mosque, making it a true model of fifteenth and sixteenth-century architectural principles. (Baqir, Lahore Past & Present, 1952, 331 & Nijjar 1968, 191)

**4. The Mausoleum of Siraj-ud-Din:** The respected mausoleum of Pir Siraj-ud-din is situated in the Jaura Mari quarters of the city of Lahore. This tomb is one of the most antique buildings of Lahore. The saint was originally the native of Bokhara and had later settled in Lahore in 1323 A.D during the reign of Muhammad Bin Tughluq.

#### **Dera Ismail Khan**

Dera Ismail Khan was established at the conclusion of the fifteenth century by a Baloch adventurer namely Malik Suhrab, who gave it the name of Dera Ismail Khan in the honor of one of his sons, Ismail Khan. The town's original location was devastated by the Indus River in 1823, necessitating the construction of a new settlement. This new town was meticulously planned and laid out on the hard, abrasive and uncultivated clay soil by nawab Sher Muhammad Khan. (Dera Ismail Khan District Gazetteer, 1883-84, 199) The relocation and rebuilding of Dera Ismail Khan reflects the resilience and strategic foresight of its founders, ensuring the town's continued prominence and development in the region.

### **PakPattan**

Pakpattan is known as Ajodhan in earlier times, held significant historical and geographical importance as the primary ferry point on the Satluj river for centuries. This location served as a convergence point for two major western roads-one from Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan, passing through Mankera, Shorkot, and Harappa, and another from Multan. Notably, this crossing point was traversed by renowned historical figures such as Mahmud of Ghazni, Timur, and the esteemed traveler Ibn Battuta.

The Ajodhan Fort an age-old stronghold, gained historical prominence when it was held by Sabuktigin during his plundering invasion in the Panjab in 977-978 A.D. In the thirteenth century, the revered Sufi saint Baba Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar renamed Ajodhanas Pakpattan, meaning 'ferry of the pure.' (Montgomery District Gazetteer, 321, 65-67) This renaming signifies the spiritual significance and sanctity attributed to the area by Baba Farid, further enhancing its historical and cultural legacy.

### **Malkhans**

Malkhans located in Pakpattan tehsil, was established in 1295 A.D by Malik Muhammad, also known as Malka, who belonged to the Hans tribe. Of the most particular, historical and archaeological interest in Malkhans are Waras Shah's Mosque, constructed by the Hans in 1340 A.D. and the Parnami temple. (Montgomery District Gazetteer, 78). Amb, situated five miles to the south of Sakesar in the district Shahpur, holds significant historical remnants. Perched on a hill and protected by steep cliffs from the direction of Attock, the site features the well-preserved remains of a massive fort along with the remains of the three Hindu temples, both large and small, all exhibiting the distinctive Kashmiri style (Archaeological Survey Report, 33). These structures are believed to date from approximately 800 A.D. to 950 A.D. during the period of the Hindu-Shahis of Kabul. Moreover, the ruins at Amb represent the southernmost example of ancient Kashmiri architecture, notable for its unique and intricate design elements. These sites collectively offer valuable insights into the architectural and cultural developments of their respective periods, underscoring the rich historical tapestry of the region.

### **Chitta**

This town located at the base of the Sakesar hills, was established during the Sultanate period and gained prominence as a strategic station during the reign of Sultan Balban. Recognizing the need to control the unruly Gakhar tribe in the Salt-Range, Balban constructed a military cantonment in Chitta. This site not only served as a key military outpost but also played a significant role in maintaining the stability and security of the region during Balban's rule. The historical importance of Chitta was further underscored in

1888 A.D, (Archaeological Survey Report, 33) when the coins from Sultan Balban's era were discovered there, providing tangible evidence of its significance during the Sultanate period. These findings highlight Chitta's role as a crucial military and administrative center in the efforts to manage the frontier challenges posed by the Gakhar tribe.

### **Batala**

The town of Batala, located twenty-six miles northeast of Amritsar, was founded in 1466 A.D. (David Ross, 232) in the reign of Bahlol Khan Lodi by Rai Ram Deo, who was a Bhatti Rajput from Kapurthala and was also the chieftain of his clan. At the time, the region between the Sutlej and Chenab rivers was largely desolate, suffering from the effects of devastating floods and the destruction caused by Jasrat Gakhar. In recognition of his services, the governor of Punjab granted the revenues of the province to Ram Deo for a sum of nine-lakh Tankas. Rai Ram Deo Bhatti later became a devotee of Shaikh Muhammad Qadiri of Lahore and thus converted to Islam, taking the name Tatar Ram Deo Bhatti. Initially, the site chosen for the town was deemed inauspicious by astrologers, prompting its relocation to the current site. This relocation inspired the name 'Batala,' derived from the Punjabi word 'Batai,' meaning exchange. The tomb of Ram Deo still stands to the south-east of the town. (India of Aurangzeb, 83-84) This structure, made of bricks laid in mud, features a sloping dome supported by exceptionally thick walls, a testament to the architectural practices of the period. Batala's founding and subsequent development illustrate the interplay of political, social, and religious dynamics in the region during the late fifteenth century, reflecting the broader historical context of the Punjab under the Lodi dynasty.

### **Haripur**

Haripur, was founded in the thirteenth century by Hari Chand, the Raja of Kangra in around 1405 A.D. Haripur is located on the left verge of the river Banganga, which is a tributary of the river Beas. The town's establishment is intertwined with a dramatic episode in the Raja's life. During a hunting expedition, Hari Chand fell into a dry well and was presumed dead. Upon his rescue, he learned that his brother had ascended the throne of Kangra in his absence. Choosing to forgo his claim to the throne, Hari Chand established both the town and fort of Haripur, directly opposite to Guler, and designated it as the center of a separate principality.

The Haripur fort is noted for its picturesque location, occupying one of the most scenic sites in the Kangra District. This strategic and aesthetically pleasing setting underscores the town's historical significance and its role as a prominent administrative and military center. The foundation of Haripur not only marks a significant event in the region's history but also reflects the political and familial dynamics that shaped the

development of new settlements during the medieval period in northern India. (Kangra District Gazetteer, 254) & (Vogel, 1354-35).

### **Ludhiana**

Ludhiana, founded during the era of the Lodhi Sultans on the site of a village known as Mirhata, traces its establishment to 898 Hijri. (1481 A.D.) The town was founded by Yusuf Khan and Nihang Khan Lodis, with its name deriving from "Lodi-ana," indicating its association with the Lodi Sultans. Under their rule, Ludhiana became the administrative seat for this region of the Delhi Sultanate, a status marked by the construction of a significant fort by the grandson of Nihang Khan, namely Jalal Khan, who is considered the true founder of the town.

The location chosen for Ludhiana was strategically significant, situated on a slight altitude on the south-bank of the Sutlej River. This position allowed the town to command the river crossing on the main route from Central Asia towards the Punjab. (Ludhiana District Gazetteer, 232-236). The construction of Ludhiana extensively utilized prehistoric bricks sourced from the ruins of Sunet, reflecting the practical reuse of materials from earlier civilizations. This practice not only underscores the town's historical depth but also highlights the continuity and adaptation of architectural practices over time. The establishment and development of Ludhiana under the Lodi Sultans illustrate the strategic, administrative, and architectural advancements during this period of the Delhi Sultanate.

### **Machhiwara**

Located fourteen miles east of Ludhiana, is mentioned as a significant city in the Mahabharata. The Sujan Shah-Wali Mosque near Machhiwara got constructed during Muhammad Shah's era by Sayyid Qasim Ali's ancestors. Another notable mosque, the Mehar Ali Shah Masjid or Qazi Masjid, was built with stone in 923Hijri(1505 A.D.) during Sikander Lodi's reign. (Ludhiana District Gazetteer, 237)

### **Malerkotla**

This town was established by Sadar-ud-din in 1466 A.D. He initially settled in Bhumsi village which is located on a tributary of the Sutlej River and associated with Kotli family. As Bhumsi's population grew rapidly, Sadar-ud-din founded a new town, which soon expanded to include the old Bhumsi within its borders. Maler served as the headquarters of the State of Malerkotla until 1656 A.D. when Bayazid Khan, the fifth descendant of Sadar-ud-din, founded Kotla. (Malerkotla State Gazetteer, 44)

### **Hoshiarpur**

The founding of Hoshiarpur is attributed to two accounts. One credits Hargobind and

Ram Chand, who served as Diwans of Muhammad Bin Tughluq. The other credits Hoshiar Khan, who was a native of Bajwara, who lived around the same era and the town was named Hoshiarpur on his name. Thirty miles north-east of Jalandhar and five miles from the foothills of the Shivalik hills, Hoshiarpur is situated on the banks of a mountain stream, offering a picturesque setting with abundant forest cover and the Himalayas in the background. (Hoshiarpur District Gazetteer, 221)

### **Bajwara**

A diminutive township situated two miles southwest of Hoshiarpur, traces its origins to the three immigrants from Ghazni. Among them one was Bajju Baora, whose fame as a singer bestowed his name upon this town. Historical accounts suggest that Bajwara once spanned a considerably larger area, with tradition claiming its circumference to be eighteen miles. This prosperity, however, faced a dramatic shift during the reign of Akbar. Todar Mal, one of Akbar's esteemed ministers, fractured the town into smaller divisions. This punitive measure was in response to the inhabitants' failure to extend due respect to him as he advanced towards the Kangra fort. Thus, the town's current modest expanse stands as a testament to this historical episode of royal reprimand. (Hoshiarpur District Gazetteer, 215)

### **Ferozepur**

Situated about fourteen miles to the south of Kasur on the left shore of the Sutlej River, boasts a rich historical tapestry dating back to its founding in the era of Feroze Shah around 1360. This city, now a shadow of its former grandeur, bears witness to its significant past through the extensive ruins that dot the landscape. Once a prominent and sizable settlement, the old fort of Ferozepur stood as a testament to its erstwhile strength and strategic importance.

The fort, though now largely vanished, was once a formidable structure. It stretched approximately one-hundred yards in length and about forty yards in breadth, encircled by a defensive ditch having ten feet width and is equally deep. This fortification underscores the military and administrative significance of Ferozepur in its heyday. The remnants of the fort evoke a sense of its past might even as they have succumbed to the ravages of time. (Ferozpur District Gazetteer, 260-263)

Within the old city, near the Bansanwala Gate, stands the Ganga Mandir, a Hindu temple dating back to the Sultanate period. This temple serves as a cultural and religious landmark, highlighting the city's diverse historical fabric. Although the old fort has largely disappeared, traces of its existence persist. The tomb of Nur Shah Wali, a revered Muslim saint, sits on an elevated site opposite the old tehsil building, marking the location of the



original fort. This tomb, a site of religious significance, further enriches the historical narrative of Ferozpur, blending elements of spiritual and martial heritage. (Ferozpur District Gazetteer, 260-263)

In sum, Ferozpur's historical landscape, characterized by its ancient fortifications, religious edifices, and enduring ruins, offers a poignant glimpse into a bygone era of strength, spirituality, and cultural confluence.

## **CONCLUSION**

Fine arts stand as a testament to the advancement and sophistication of a civilization, offering a glimpse into its ethos and way of life. In the context of Punjab, the confluence of Muslim austerity with the beauty as well as the feminine grace of Hindu art gave rise to a unique artistic expression previously unseen in the region. This fusion of styles and influences resulted in the creation of an art form that was distinctive and novel.

The Sultans of the period recognized the talent and skill of Hindu craftsmen and employed them in their artistic endeavors. While these craftsmen worked under the direct supervision of the Muslim masters, they inadvertently contributed to the evolution of a Hindu-Muslim school of Art. This school of art, characterized by its unique blend of Islamic and Hindu artistic elements, reflected the cultural syncretism of the era. Upon their arrival in Punjab, Muslims developed a fondness for the indigenous style and spirit of decorations found in the region's buildings. This appreciation led to the incorporation of local artistic traditions into Muslim architectural and decorative practices, resulting in a distinct regional aesthetic.

The Sultans and nobles of the period were particularly fond of establishing new cities, a practice that not only reflected their penchant for urban planning and development but also served as a means of showcasing their power and authority. These new cities often became centers of artistic and architectural innovation, embodying the cultural and artistic spirit of the era.

In essence, the artistic developments of the period were emblematic of the cultural, social, and political dynamics of Punjab during the Sultanate period. The mingling of diverse artistic traditions and influences resulted in the creation of a unique artistic expression that continues to be celebrated for its beauty and cultural significance.

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