



Historical Reconstruction of Southern Haryana

Dr. Anil Yadav, Dept.of History

K.L.P. College, Rewari (Hr.)

Email:-anilkprewari@gmail.com

Abstract: Present Haryana has historically been a meeting place of different castes, sects, cultures and faiths. For the last forty years, large parts of Haryana have been explored for archaeological potential. Unfortunately very little work has been done in the southern part of the state. The archaeological importance of this area came to light with the discovery of some monuments of the medieval period by Sir Alexander Cunningham in the 19th century. This aroused scholarly interest in the archaeological study of the area and some stray discoveries were reported by some scholars before further exploration by researchers. An attempt has been made to reconstruct the history of the area, based on all available data. The discovery of Stone Age tools suggests that humans first appeared in the region during the Stone Age, but on a limited scale and began settled life only in the Late Harappan period. Then this area remained uninhabited until the arrival of the Kushans. Apart from the Kushans, the Yaudheyas and the early medieval dynasties of North India. This region was ruled by Pratiharas, Tomaras and Chauhans. Ultimately, towards the end of the 12th century, the area of the present study came into the hands of foreigners who ruled India for a long period.

Keywords: Paleolithic, Harappan, Excavation, Kultajpur, Kushans, Yaudheyas, Kuru, Coins.

Stone Age tools are the earliest evidence confirming humans' presence in the southern part of Haryana. Based on explorations conducted by various researchers the antiquity of the area under present study can be extended to the Lower Paleolithic era, when quartzite and tools made on quartz were used by man. These tools, which include hand axes, flakes, cores, cleavers, scrapers, etc., were reported from places like Bhondsi, Harchandpur, Manesar, Panchgaon, Sarsola, Sikanderpur, etc. in Gurgaon district¹, Kultajpur² in Mahendragarh district, etc. There were many sites from the adjacent area of the Delhiregion³. However, despite his best efforts, the present researcher could not discover Stone Age tools from the area of the present study, but the possibility of such remains cannot be ruled out as these remains have been reported from this area earlier also.



The earliest evidence that researchers could find dates back to the Proto-historic period (post-Harappan). Such evidence has also been recovered from the areas around Sahibi Valley in Gurgaon district. Only two post-Harappan sites have been reported from the area under the present study. These sites are Khatawali and Nandrampur Bas and these are located to the east of the Sahibi River near the border area of Gurgaon district.⁴ The researcher has observed no post-Harappan site to the west of Sahibi. This means that during this period humans did not cross the river towards the west due to various reasons.

Except for Khatawali, no post-Harappan site has been excavated in this area. However, the Khatawali excavation was only a test excavation. Therefore, for a proper understanding of the culture we are forced to depend on the study of material remains recovered from other excavation sites in the Haryana region such as Mitathal⁵, Banawali, Mirzapur, Daulatpur and Bhagwanpura.⁶ The Post-Harappan period is marked by the progressive decline of architecture, ceramics, arts and crafts etc. and the increasing use of mud bricks of earlier times. People of this period lived in mud or mud-brick houses and huts representing the existence of post-holes. Some pottery shapes associated with this culture appear to have evolved from Harappan and other pre-Harappan ceramic traditions. This period is also characterized by the apparent absence of typical Harappan shapes like beakers, cups, perforated jars, etc.

After this comes the Vedic phase. Some of the current streams in the area under present study can be identified with streams mentioned in the early literature. The south-eastern Rasa, a stream mentioned in the Rigveda, has been identified with the Sahibi which passes through the region, and the Dohan has been identified with the Vadhusara mentioned in the Mahabharata. What is quite interesting is that the river still flows through a place called Chyavanashram situated in the Dhosi Hills. In the Mahabharata it is described as a sacred stream with many holy places along its course, proving that it must have been a very important stream in those early days. Similarly, the Kasauti or Krishnavati stream is associated with the Rig Vedic tribe Krishna, who lived in its valley.⁷

These identifications will at least confirm the antiquity of this region and also the Vedic period. However, researchers could not discover any sites belonging to this period. The absence



of material remains from this period can be explained mainly due to geographical conditions like semi-desert, meagre water resources, seasonal character of rivers and low fertility of the soil.⁸ But it is also worth noting that due to these conditions, this region acquired strategic importance during the early medieval and late medieval periods.

Due to a lack of evidence, the subsequent stages of historical development of the area cannot be traced. Probably this area was included in the empires of Maurya, Gupta, Pushpabhuti and Gurjara-Pratiharas. During the sixth century BCE, when tremendous socio-economic and religious changes were taking place, the region was part of one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas mentioned in the Buddhist text Anguttara Nikaya and the Jain text Bhagavata Sutra. They were mostly located north of the Vindhyas and extended from the north-western frontier to Bihar. The area of the present study was essentially a part of the Kuru district. Pali texts mention two Kuru countries, North Kuru and South Kuru. Kauravas are also mentioned in Mahabharata and it is said that these two countries used to compete with each other for their glory, splendour, prosperity and righteousness. The two important cities of Kurude i.e. Thulakkothika and Kammasadhamma were of vital importance in the 6th century BCE. It is said that Buddha had visited these cities many times. The region was of great importance in the 6th century BC. 'Thullakotika' and 'Kammasadhamma' of Buddhist literature are identified with Dhankot in the Gurgaon district of Rajasthan and Kaman in the Bharatpur district respectively. Earlier explorations by researchers have proved Dhankot⁹ to be an important PGW site.

Probably this area was also included in the empire of Nandas and Mauryas. Nandas had succeeded Shishunagas. Nanda proved to be the most powerful ruler of Magadha. His power was so great that Alexander, who invaded Punjab at that time (326 BC), could not dare to go east (across the Beas). The greatest ruler of this time was King Mahapadma Nanda, who was also the founder of the dynasty. He claimed to be 'Ekkrat', the only sovereign who destroyed all other ruling princes. After some time, a Maurya chieftain, with the help of his guru Kautilya, overthrew the last Nanda king, Dhanananda, and laid the foundation of the Maurya dynasty (323 BCE). The whole of Haryana must have been under the Mauryas, as attested by the discovery of the pillar inscriptions of Ashoka at Topra, Hisar, Bairat and stupas at Chaneti and



Thanesar.¹⁰ This period is archaeologically characterized by the use of NBPW and punch-marked coins. Maurya's influence in the region is also confirmed by the discovery of a terracotta seal from Ahranwa (Gurgaon district) inscribed with 'Samanasa' (Shramana) in Brahmi script of the post-Maurya period.

After the disintegration of the Mauryas, Pushyamitra Shunga, who assassinated the last Maurya king, Brihadratha and laid the foundation of the Shunga dynasty, signalled the revival of Brahmanism by celebrating two Ashvamedha sacrifices. Sunga's influence in this region is confirmed by the discovery of Yaksha sculptures from Bhadas, Hathin and Yaksha sculptures from Palwal. Other Auriga remains from the Haryana region include a twin capital and a terracotta seal bearing the Brahmi legend 'Bhadramitra Syadronipal' of Khokhrakot. Shaka's influence in the region is evidenced by the terracotta plaques recovered from Sugh¹¹ and the coins of Hagamsa and Sodas discovered from Ahranwa. Unfortunately, the present researcher did not find any evidence of Maurya, Shaka and Suriga in the area under the present study.

The Indo-Greeks, also known as Bactrian-Greeks, dominated northwestern India during the second century BC. We are told by Tam that the territories of republican tribes like Audumbara, Kuninda, Yaudheya and Arjunayana were under the Indo-Greek king Menander. Indo-Greek coins have been discovered in Jind, Sonipat, Khokhrakot, Sugh, Naurangabad, Jagadhri, Raja Cama Fort, The Polar, Agroha etc. in various parts of North-Western India and Haryana region. However, no evidence has been reported by researchers in the area under the current study.

The discovery of Yaudheya coins from Sanghel, Jasat, Bhagaula (district Gurgaon) and Rewari is clear evidence of Yaudheya's dominance over the Haryana region. A large number of copper coins, coin moulds and baked bricks of size 37 x 27 x 7 cm have been recovered from Khokhrakot, Rohtak. The discovery of Yaudheya coin moulds at Khokhrakot indicates that this place was their capital mint city, and it was here that coins of the 'Yaudheyana Bahudhanke' type were minted in the 2nd -1st century BCE.¹²

After this come Kushans. There was a great tribal movement in Central Asia in the second century BC. In about 165 BC the Yueh Chi people, living on the Western-Mongolia



border, were forced to move westward by the Heungnu king Chi-yu. During his migration westward, Yueh-chi captured the country of the Sakas. Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises were important Kushan kings of the Kadphises group and the new king Kaniska-I, who was a staunch follower of Buddhism and during whose reign the Fourth Buddhist Council took place, ascended the throne in 78 AD. This new king was most responsible for the expansion of the Kushan Empire into Indian territory. During the Kushan period, there was a definite change in political seriousness in North India due to population movement on the north-western frontier. Haryana lay in the path of the eastern movement of the Kushans, who occupied the area up to Varanasi, passing through Haryana. To understand the Kushan phase in Haryana we have to rely on two excavation sites in Punjab. Sanghol and Ropar and their eastern capital Mathura were located near present-day Haryana. The urban phase is best documented at these sites.

Scholars have applied the Shunga-Kusana label to several sites in Haryana, where stamped pottery, bowls with curved edges and carved hands, baked bricks with fingerprints, etc. have been found. Of these, the stamped pottery belongs to the Shunga period while other features belong to the Kushan period.

The eastern expansion of the Kushans led them to come into conflict with the republics of north-western India. At first, he rebuked Yaudheya, but Yaudheya did not lose courage and waited for the opportune moment to attack. During the time of Kanishka and Huviska when the Kushan power was at its peak, the Yaudheyas could not fight the foreigners. In the 2nd century CE, they attempted to do so but were stopped by the powerful Saka ruler Rudradaman-I. According to Altekar, the Yaudheyas tried for independence a second time in the 2nd century AD and succeeded in their venture and were successful in liberating their homeland and driving out the Kushans across the Sutlej. After Huviska he started his offensive by capturing some Kushan strongholds like Khokhrakot, Naurangabad (Bamla) etc. in Haryana. This is evident from the fact that coin molds of Kanishka and Huviska are found along with coins of Yaudheya at these mint sites and no molds of Vasudeva¹³ are available. From these sites, he continued his struggle against Vasudeva and ousted his rule in many parts.¹⁴ That the Yaudheyas were successful in this struggle is proved by a new type of coin, which has the figure of the war-god



Kartikeya, standing with a spear in his right hand and his left hand placed on his hip and on the obverse side a peacock and on the side there is a goddess. By raising the right hand upside down. The success over the Kushans is also attested by their coin-legend 'Yaudheyaganasya Jaya' (Victory to the Yaudheya Republic). Yaudhya coins have been recovered from Raja Karna's fort, Theh Polar (a hoard of 232 copper coins), Assandh, Sirsa, Jajiwanti, Jind, Hisar, Sonipat, Bhagaula and Rewari, besides Rohtak which was the power of their kingdom. . From what has been said above it is clear that foreign rule completely disappeared in Haryana by the beginning of the 3rd century AD. The Yaudheyas, after ousting the Kushans, issued unique copper coins bearing the legend 'Dvi' and 'Tri'. Also discovered in our study area.

In the latter half of the 4th century AD, the Yaudheyas fell under the Gupta emperor Samudragupta (335–375 AD) and lost their independent republican character. Samudragupta probably annexed their territory into his directly administered territory and left them as an autonomous tribute-paying state. The Allahabad pillar inscription also supports this view. Hence it is clear that the Haryana region was directly or indirectly under the influence of the Guptas. This fact is also proved by the discovery of terracotta and sculptures from Sanghel and Firozpur Jhirka and some gold coins of the Guptas from Mitathal. Gupta dominance in the region is further evidenced by the discovery of some terracotta panels from a ruined brick temple and a mold of a terracotta coin of Chandragupta-II from Khokhrakot, Rohtak.

In the 5th century AD, the country once again faced the threat of foreign invaders, now in the form of the Huns. The Gupta emperor Skandagupta successfully defended the country from cruel and barbaric enemies. But after his death, the Huns under the leadership of Toraman and his son Mihirakula successfully subjugated north-western India in the late 5th and early 6th centuries. Mihirkula established his capital at Sialkot and is often called the 'Attila of India' due to his tyrannical and ruthless actions. Hun coins have been found at Sanghol and other sites in Punjab. The discovery by Rogers of Hun coins from Khokhrakot and a stone seal of Torman from Sugh suggests Hun influence in the region.¹⁵

After the decline and disintegration of the Guptas, the unity of the country was threatened due to the disintegrating powers and the idea of empire-building ended. Soon



Pushpabhuti came to power and sidelined all these disruptive forces. He came to power in Thanesar which was known as 'Srikanth Janapada'. According to Banabhatta, the first ruler of the family was a chief named Pushpabhuti, about whom he gives a semi-legendary account. A historical story of the family starts with Prabhakar. The most glorious ruler of the family was Harshavardhana (606-647 AD). He established the small principality of Sthaneshwar as the most powerful empire in North India in the 7th century. Later the seat of power was shifted to Kanauj. The area of our study was probably Sthaneshwar as well as Kannauj under Harshavardhana. According to H.A Phadke, after the death of Harsha, Harsha's maternal uncle's son Bhandi established his rule over the Haryana region and his family continued to rule Haryana till the time of Pratihara king Vatsaraja. It appears that Yashovarman of Kannauj and Lalitaditya Muktapid of Kashmir also had dominance over the Haryana region.

The tripartite struggle between the Gurjara-Pratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas for dominance over North India lasted for almost a century. Ultimately Gurjara-Pratihara were victorious in this conflict. The Pratihara ruler Nagabhata-II conquered Kannauj and became the master of North and Western India and the entire Haryana came under his control. Literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence also supports the dominance of the Pratiharas over the region. From Skandapurana we come to know that Nagabhata ruled over the area between the Saraswati and Drishadwati rivers. Inscriptions related to Mihir Bhojdev have been found in Pehowa,¹⁶ Sirsa and Delhi. Indo Sasanian type (Adivaraha type) coins issued by Mihir Bhoj have been recovered from Indri¹⁷ (Nuh tehsil, Gurgaon) and Kakrala (district Mahendragarh) and other parts of the state. His successors Mahendrapala (890–910 AD) and Mahipala (912–944 AD) continued to rule the region. The Pehowa inscription mentions Mahendrapala which confirms Pratihara's rule in the Haryana region. Statues of many gods and goddesses have also been found. The brick temple of the 9th-10th century AD located at Kalayat (District Kaithal) gives evidence of the construction activities of the Pratiharas in this region.

After the decline and fall of the Pratiharas, the region came under the dominance of the Tomaras of Delhi and the Chauhans of Ajmer. As is clear from the Pehowa inscription, the Tomaras were feudatories of the Pratiharas. A fragmentary Chauhan Prashasti kept in the Ajmer



Museum mentions the Tomar king Arnoraja's campaign in Haritanaka (Haryana) country. The inscriptions at Palam Baoli and Delhi Museum also confirm Tomara's rule over the Haritanka country before its subjugation to the Chauhans. Samantadeva-type coins of the Tomar king Madanpal are found in Mangleshwar (district Rewari) and Namoul in the present study area. Medieval scholars like Ferista and Utbi cite Mahmud of Ghazni's fear of Thanesar, which was then ruled by the Tomar king Jayapala. Delhi was founded by Anarigapal and he built Lalkot to protect the city of Delhi. Traditionally the Bhond temple near Firozpur Jhirka is associated with the construction activities of the Tomars in the area. The Tomaras were defeated by Arnoraja Chauhan (1133-51 AD) but were completely subjugated under his successor Vigraharaja IV. Prithviraj-III was the most glorious king of the Chauhans of Shakambhar. Before them, the Chauhans had destroyed the Bhadanakas, whose territory according to Dashrath Sharma should have included Gurgaon, a part of Alwar State, and Bhiwani.¹⁸ Buddha Prakash believes that Bhadanaka's seat of power was located at Bhadavas, south of Rewari.¹⁹ It is also said that Prithviraj-III had defeated the Bhadanakas and annexed their territory into his kingdom. The expansion of Chauhan's power towards Punjab brought them into conflict with the Ghaznavid rulers of the region. Thus the conflict between the two ambitious rulers, Mohammad Ghori and Prithviraja, was inevitable. The conflict began over rival claims to Tabarhind (Bhatinda). In the battle fought at Tarain in 1191 AD, the Ghori army was completely defeated and the life of Mohammad Ghori was saved by a young Khilji horseman. But Mohammad Ghori did not lose courage, regrouped his forces and made another bid for India the following year. This resulted in the Second Battle of Tarain (1192 AD) in which the Indian forces were badly defeated. The Second Battle of Tarain is considered one of the turning points in Indian history. Prithviraj had appealed to all the kings of North India for help. It is said that many kings sent their troops to help him but Jaichand, the ruler of Kannauj, stayed away. This battle was mainly a battle between cavalry. The superior organization skills and speed of movement of the Turkish cavalry ultimately decided the issue. A large number of Indian soldiers lost their lives. Prithviraj escaped but was captured near Saraswati. Turkish forces captured the forts of Hansi, Saraswati and Samana. Then he attacked and captured Ajmer. Prithviraj was allowed to rule Ajmer for



some time as we have coins from this period bearing the date and legend – Prithviraj Dev on one side and the words 'Shri Muhammad Sam on the other. Soon after, Prithviraj was hanged on charges of conspiracy. "Thus ended the life and career of one of the most brilliant and romantic rulers of Hindu India".²⁰ Now Delhi, present-day Haryana and eastern Rajasthan came under Turkish rule. Mohammad Ghorī appointed Qutbuddin Aibak as his Viceroy of Indian territory. Thus the foundation of Turkish rule in India was laid.

Social-Economic Status

Due to lack of archaeological excavations a comprehensive idea about the socio-economic structure of the people of this region is not possible. Furthermore, we do not find adequate references to this field in the literature. Khatavali is the only site in the present study area at which excavations have been carried out. But on-site test digging has its limitations. Explorations by the present researcher and others have yielded only limited data regarding structural remains, ceramics, coins, inscriptions, sculptures, terracotta and other antiquities. However, despite these constraints the present researcher has reconstructed the cultural and socio-economic history of the Haryana region on the basis of stray literacy references corroborated by the remains of material collected while conducting village-village surveys and physical remains of other excavation sites. Tried to make it from.

Archaeological investigations carried out in the present study area indicate the existence of Stone Age remains, as Stone Age tools have been reported from Kultajpur. Stone Age man was a hunter and food gatherer. He led a nomadic life.

The oldest remains of human habitation known so far in this area date back to the post-Harappan period. But on the basis of the material discovered, it is very difficult to throw light on some aspects of human life of the post-Harappan period. Also, the material obtained from Khatavali excavation does not throw enough light on the life and condition of the people of this period. As we know from material remains recovered from other excavation sites in the Haryana region, post-Harappan people lived in mud or mud-brick houses and huts, which are indicated by post-holes. The houses were covered with mud. The settlements were small in size indicating small population. The settlements appear to have been of agro-pastoralists and there



is no evidence of the urban phase of Harappa. No evidence of drainage has been observed but blotting jars have been used for this purpose. Earthen beads, faience, semi-precious stones, faience bangles and terracotta with decorated designs were used as jewelry by the people. Stone weights, sling balls, hammer stones, saddle querns, mullers and toy carts were items of daily use. This period is also characterized by the apparent absence of iron. Copper was used on a wide scale as copper tools were found from excavations at Mitathal and Mirzapur. Agriculture was the basis of the economy as is evident from the burnt grains found on the mounds of Daulatpur and Mirzapur. Copper fish hooks and bone points suggest that hunting and fishing were other occupations of the people. Answer: Harappa did not have any granary to store its products. For this purpose, he used corn cans. The circular and cylindrical pits found at Mitathal were also used for storage. Therefore, it can be said that in the post-Harappan phase people lived in small settlements and depended on agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting and fishing.

After the Harappan period, the region saw settlements only in the early centuries of the Christian era. Due to various reasons this area remained vacant for a long time. No sites belonging to the Maurya and Auriga periods have been reported by the present researcher.

During the early centuries of the Christian era, the region saw new settlements as a result of the arrival of farmers/communities from outside. The arrival of the Shakas, Kushans and other foreign tribes and their establishment of supremacy must have affected the socio-economic life of the people. These foreigners did not keep themselves in isolation. Soon he integrated himself into the Indian society. The discovery of Kushan and Yaudheya coins in the area reveals the economic prosperity of this period. The discovery of Yaudheya coins inscribed with 'Yaudheynam Bahudhanyakam' is also a sign of a prosperous life. This period is also marked by increased urban activities. The increasing use of coins during this period and the discovery of Kushan and Yaudheya coins from rural sites in almost all parts of Haryana is a clear indication of the circulation of money at the local level. This is an important feature of this period.

The Early Medieval period is marked by a significant increase in the number of settlements. These settlements have shallow deposits because most of the sites were newly



established i.e. 256 out of 269 early medieval sites were established in new locations. The significant increase in the number of settlements during this period indicates an increase in population. Socio-economically, this period is characterized by the feudal system. Landlord aristocracy, self-reliant rural economy, decline in trade, decline in urban activities etc. were the distinctive features of this socio-economic system. The number of small states increased during this period, discouraging trade and encouraging an economy in which villages became largely self-sufficient. The Dharmashastras tell us that the land revenue was as before one-sixth of the produce (1/sixth). Farmers were also forced to pay additional cesses such as grazing tax and had to take forced labour. With the development of feudalism the burden on the common man increased. This was also a decadent era. Similar situations might have existed in our area also. Social values were declining. Furthermore, we can see increased construction activities in the form of Brahmanical temples built under the patronage of kings, feudal lords or merchants. Muslim invasions in the early 11th and late 12th centuries largely devastated the Indian economy.

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