

## CHAPTER XIX

### PLACES OF INTEREST

#### Introduction

The Hisar district made significant contribution to the Haryana heritage and Banawali, Seeswal and Rakhigarhi were pre-Harappan and Harappan settlements and centres of activity during pre-historic times. The Asokan pillars at Hisar and Fatehabad (originally of Agroha or Hansi), discovery of the Kushana sculptural art and Yaudheya seal from Agroha and coins of Yaudheyas and sculptures of Pratiharas and Tomaras from Hansi and Agroha, establish that Hansi and Agroha dominated the scene during the historical period.

During the medieval period, the district rose into prominence continually. Important monuments like forts, gates, palaces, mosques and mausoleums at Hansi, Hisar and Fatehabad show the importance of the district during Sultanate and Mughal rule.

The following pages describe the places of interest which are known for their antiquity or have acquired importance on account of their economic and industrial development.

#### Banawali (Tahsil Fatehabad)

The ancient mound of Banawali, previously called Vanawali, lies 14 kms, north-west of Fatehabad on the right bank of the Rangoi Nala on  $29^{\circ} 37' 5''$  north latitude and  $75^{\circ} 23' 6''$  east longitude. This proto-historic mound spread over an area of  $\frac{1}{4}$  sq. kms., rose to a height of about 10 metres due to successive settlements on the earlier rubble.

The archaeological excavations done here by the Department of Archaeology, Haryana have revealed a well constructed fort town of the Harappan period overlying an extensive proto-urban settlement of the pre-Harappan culture. If the discovered ancient relics are pieced together, a fairly coherent picture emerges and it can be conjured up that if Kalibangan was a metropolitan town over the lower middle valley of the Saraswati, Banawali was possibly one over the upper middle course of that river.

The culture of the pre-Harappan period (2700 B.C.—2300 c. B.C.) is characterised by the typical pottery, settlement pattern and architecture. A wide range of fabrics, identical to those found at Kalibangan

in Rajasthan, illustrates the developed ceramic art of the settlers here. A rich variety of shapes and designs speaks highly of the level of their socio-economic existence and their aesthetic taste. The houses were built roughly along cardinal directions and points to definite town planning. Constructed usually of mould-made bricks, we find, occasionally, structures made of kiln-baked bricks. The civilization seems to have been conversant with the technology of copper smelting. Among personal ornaments, beads of gold, semi-precious stones, terracotta and steatite and bangles of clay, shell, faience and copper have been recovered during the course of excavation. The overall picture presents a fair degree of advancement achieved by the pre-Harappans by the middle of the 3rd millennia B.C.

While the pre-Harappan culture was still young, a new set of people occupied Banawali. They soon built a well planned and fortified township in the 'classical chessboard pattern'. The broad arterial streets, running from north to south, have been found straight and uninterrupted, whereas those, running from east to west, were usually narrow and staggered. This planning perhaps protected the town from the blistering winds of the west and severe monsoon rains of the south-east. The town seems to be divided into two sub-joined fortified areas, one separated from the other by a six-to-seven-metre thick wall running centrally across the mound from north to south. A narrow opening, provided through the defence wall in the centre of the mound, was, perhaps meant for communication between the two parts of the city blocks, of which the better fortified western side was dominated by the elite, while the commoners and business communities lived in the eastern wing. This postern gate was guarded by a massive square bastion. Planned mud-brick houses, with several rooms, a kitchen, a toilet, etc. are found built on either side of the roads and lanes. Their sanitary arrangements depended on the use of sanitary pottery jars which served as wash-basins, as also for soakage purposes. Except in a few places, which demanded constant use of water, structures were usually made of sun-baked bricks meticulously moulded into various sizes. Numerous household items like ovens, hearths, *tandoors* and blades made of chert and other stones, and sophisticated ceramics known for their fanciful shapes have been excavated. The principal kinds of pottery recovered included vases, fruit stands, chalice cups, handled cups, S-shaped jars, perforated jars, cooking *handis*, beakers, basins, goblets, etc. Among painted motifs, peacocks, *pipal* and banana leaves, trees, deer, stars, fish, flowers, intersecting circles, checker-board patterns and honey-comb patterns are of special interest. It is noteworthy that the pre-Indus ceramic tradition continues here throughout, whereas at Kalibangan, it dies out half-way

through. The Harappan seals recovered here depict a rhinoceros, ibex, wild goat, unicorn, a composite animal with a tiger's body and a bull's horns and the cubical weights and gamesman type of weights made of stones and ivory or bone reveal a great degree of precision and superb craftsmanship of the Harappan artists. Gold, copper and bronze pieces found here indicate that they had a profound knowledge of metallurgy. Among ornaments have been found beads of gold, copper, agate, carnelian, lapis lazula, faience, shell, bone and clay, bangles of copper, faience shell and terracotta, and *pipal* leaf shaped ear rings of faience. Certain figurines of mother Goddess and the like suggest that the Harappans were very fond of decorating their persons with elaborate headgear, ear rings, necklaces, garlands, etc. Copper and bronze were used for weapons and tools as also for ornaments and items included arrows, spearheads, razor blades, chisels, fish hooks, beads, rings, bangles, antimony rods, wires and hair pins. Iron, however, was not known to them. Terracotta figurines of bulls, buffaloes, deers, dogs, rhinoceros and birds are not only the evidence of their folk art tradition, but also throw welcome light on the fauna of those bygone days.

The site has attracted the attention of Indian archaeologists and in importance, it rivals Kotdiji and Chanhudaro (Sind-Pakistan), Kalibangan (Rajasthan), Surkotda and Lothal (Gujarat), Rakhigarhi (Hisar district) and Mitathal (Bhiwani district).

### Seeswal (Tahsil Hisar)

The ancient site lies about 300 metres to the north of Seeswal village. The village is 26 kms. to the west of Hisar and lies on 29° 10' north latitude and 75°30' east longitude.

The site has been excavated to a very limited scale, however, the ceramics and other finds from here attest a contact between the pre-Harappan and Harappan cultures and concomitance of the late Seeswal culture with mature Harappan<sup>1</sup> culture.

The ceramics discovered from the site is divisible into 3 groups. The first is Kalibangan ware, with all the typical fabrics and painting with white pigment in addition to black. The overall pattern of painted designs shows individualistic features but the design elements are common with Kalibangan. The second is marked by evolved Kalibangan and is characterised by austerity in shapes and designs, the absence of the use of white pigment in painting and the sturdy nature and better potting.

1. Suraj Bhan, 'Siswal, A Pre-Harappan site in Drishdavati Valley', *Puratattva*, 1972, pp. 44-46.

The pottery is painted in black or chocolate over red or pinkish surface with linear designs. The third is Harappan type made of medium fabric thrown on fast wheel and treated with bright red slip in case of storage jars and with light red slip in case of other vessels.

The other finds include terracotta bangles painted with black oblique strokes on the exterior, biconical truncated terracotta beads, terracotta sling balls-oblong in shape bearing finger pressed marks on sides in the typical Harappan style, terracotta disc with tapering ends and terracotta triangular cakes.

### **Rakhigarhi (Tahsil Hansi)**

The ancient site lies in the revenue jurisdiction of Rakhi Shahpur and Rakhi Khas, 32 Kms. north-east of Hansi on 29° 16' north latitude and 76° 10' east longitude.

Due to its strategic location dominating the fertile Indo-Ganga divide, the site seems to command a paramount position in the expansion of the Harappan culture in North India. Its location some 350 kms. south east of Harappan, 190 kms. east of Kalibangan and 80 kms. east of Banawali might suggest Rakhigarhi to be the easternmost provincial capital of the Harappans.<sup>1</sup> It was quite likely their metropolitan town and a trading centre.

The site comprises extensive ruins cut up into five parts broadly falling into a twin-mound complex nearly 2 kms. in circumference. As revealed from explorations, the site seems to be a settlement of pre-Harappan and Harappan people.

The pre-Harappan culture at this site is characterised by the ceramic industry and other typical finds. The discovery of a few pre-Harappan sherds below the Harappan platform suggests the existence of pre-Harappan horizon at the site. The ceramic industry comprised vessels painted with black designs over mottled surface. Some of the sherds also bear white designs in addition to black giving a bichrome effect. The main shapes in these wares include vases with short rims, jars, bowls, basins, vases with loop handles and ring footed bowls. The painted designs comprised the broad bands, arcading designs, alternately cross-hatched triangles, concentric arcs, loops with fronds, reserved slip designs, flowing, oblique or horizontal lines, etc. The incised designs occur on the interior as well as the exterior of the vessels and seems to be executed with a sharp-edged multi-toothed tool. The other typical finds include terracotta disc with tapering ends, bangles with single

1. Suraj Bhan, *Excavation at Mitathal (1968) and other Explorations in the Sutlej-Yamuna Divide*, Kurukshetra, 1975 Appendix B. P.

or multiple rings painted in black over matt red surface and biconical truncated terracotta beads.

The Harappan culture is marked by the extensive settlement laid on dichotomous plan typical of a Harappan town plan, the citadel mound on the west and the lower town on the east. The citadel mound is separated by an open space into two parts. The western half of the citadel mound revealed an extensive use of mud bricks suggesting perhaps the existence of platforms. The pottery comprised the typical sturdy and utilitarian red wares painted with designs in characteristic Harappan style. The paintings are executed in black pigment over slipped or plain surface with a variety of motifs like peacock, *pipal* leaf, deer, tree, sun motif, flowers and other geometrical designs. The other finds of the period include triangular cakes, oblong, round or oval sling balls, plumb bob, spindle whorls, bangles and beads of terracotta and chess board design drawn on a brick piece. One of the most important finds is a steatite seal bearing the figure of an animal (rhinoceros) with classical Harappan script.

The place is also connected with legendary *Rishi* Jamadagni (father of Parasurama) who had his *ashram* in its vicinity. He is said to have been killed here. His death was avenged by his son Parasurama who washed his *pharsa* in a nearby tank which later came to be known as Ramahrada. The tank is located at Ramrai (Jind District).<sup>1</sup>

### Agroha (Tahsil Hisar)

Agroha is situated about 24 Kms. north-west of Hisar on the Delhi-Sirsa road. The old mounds indicating the past glory of the place lie to the north-west of the village at 29° 20' north latitude and 75° 38' east longitude. These mounds occupy an area of about 650 acres and the largest of the mounds is 87 feet high.

Agroha, traditionally believed to represent the site of Agreya republic was referred to in the *Mahabharata*. It also finds mention in the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini. It seems to have been one of the capital city at the time of Alexander's invasion of India. It is doubtful whether Alexander ever conquered Agroha as believed by some historians though legends among Aggarwals prevail that Alexander besieged Agroha and fierce fighting ensued.<sup>2</sup> Various known as Agrodaka, Agodaka, Aggalapura, Agara and Agallassoi, it was inhabited by a powerful people mustering an army of 48,000 foot

1. Dr. Vrindaban Sharma, 'Jai Haryana', *Haryana, Sanskrit Digdarshan* (Hindi).

2. Silk Ram, *Archaeology of Rohtak and Hisar District* (Haryana) Ph. D. Dissertation, 1972, MSS, p. 109.

and 3,000 horses.<sup>1</sup> After the fall of the Mauryas and Sungas, the Agras or Agacha (San. Agreya) along with the Yaudheyas, asserted their independence. The former were settled in the region with Agroha as their capital and issued coins in 2nd century B.C.<sup>2</sup> The town is said to have been founded by Maharaja Agrasena and the Aggarwals claim to be the descendants of the original inhabitants of Agroha. Nothing can be said about the authenticity of the claim but it is beyond doubt that Agroha remained throughout an important centre of commerce and political developments till down to the period of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. It was probably attacked and burnt by Mohamad Ghuri in 1194<sup>3</sup> but the town flourished again and formed an important division of Hisar-i-Firuz.<sup>4</sup> It was deserted because of severe famine during Mohamad. Tughlaq's reign and demolition of ancient shrines and other structures by Firuz Tughlaq who used the material in constructing Hisar-i-Firuz.<sup>5</sup> The last settlement on the mound is that of fort which was built by Dewan Nanu Mall, commander of Patiala forces between 1774 and 1777 A.D. The Aggarwals hold the town in great reverence and two huge temples in honour of Maharaja Agrasena and Hindu deities are under construction.

The archaeological excavations undertaken initially by Rodgers and Srivastva and later by the Department of Archaeology, Haryana have broadly confirmed the continuous flourishing periods ranging from the 4th-3rd century B.C. to 13-14th century A.D. The period extending from Saka-Kushana times to the early Guptas was distinguished by structural remains of baked and unbaked bricks (size 31 × 21 × 4.5 cms.) and red wares of medium fabric of such shapes as Kushana bowls, sprinklers, cerinated *handi* and vases. Painting is almost absent from the pottery of this period. The late Kushana to early Gupta period was represented principally by the remains of brick structures showing fine phases of activity. A noteworthy feature was change in the pattern of construction of houses which were constructed of reused bricks of earlier period. The fine rectangular rooms, oriented north-south with entrance on the east as well as on the west, were exposed. A few niches were also found added in the earlier phase. Each constructional phase was distinguished by its associated underfloors with hearths and pit ovens. The associated pottery is represented by red ware of medium fabric but with distinct change in painting. The painted design in black include loops, verticle, horizontal and criss-cross lines. The antiquities unearthed from the period

1. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1953, p. 44.
2. H.L. Srivastava, *Excavations at Agroha, Memories of the Archaeological Survey of India*, Delhi, 1952.  
Silk Ram Phogat, *Archaeology of Hisar and Rohtak Districts*, K.U. Ph.D. Dissertation, 1972, MSS.
3. Wolseley Haig, *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III (Delhi-1958), p. 41.
4. Elliot, *The History of India*, Vol. III, p. 245 and 300.
5. Wolseley Haig, *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III p. 153 and 175.

include, terracotta animal figurine, a moulded human head, copper, coins, ring, antimony rod, bell, bangle pieces; beads and bangle pieces of shells, beads of carnelian shell, copper, lapis-lazuli and iron objects like arrow heads, clamps, chisels and nails. A terracotta sealing with a legend "Sri Narayan Deva Prakrita" in Brahmi characters and Sanskrit language, palaeographically belonging to third-fourth century A.D. was collected from surface.<sup>1</sup> The terracotta seal recovered from here bearing inscriptions mentioning *Maharaja Mahakshatrpa Mahasenapati* and other details throws significant light on the history and administration of the Yaudheyas and, we gather that the leader of the republic used to bear monarchical titles. The excavations have also revealed two ancient shrines with evidence of alterations, renovations and reconstructions in different times. One of the temple is square in plan and made of baked bricks and most probably on the basis of its present structural position it belonged to the Buddhist religion. It was possibly the centre of Buddhism whose early importance may be due to its location on the trade route between Taxila and Mathura.<sup>2</sup> The second temple is a Hindu temple. It has yielded a number of stone sculptures of Hindu deities and carved bricks. According to literary traditions, the Jainism was also propagated at Agroha by Lohacharya sometime between A.D. 14-28.<sup>3</sup> The important sculptures and other finds representing the later period have also been found in plenty. The burnt birch-barked manuscript and a terracotta tablet bearing the seven musical notes viz., *ni, dha, pa, ma, ga, ri, sa* in the 9th century characters, the most interesting of the finds, reveal interest of the people in learning and fine arts.<sup>4</sup>

### Hansi (Tahsil Hansi)

Hansi, the headquarters of the tahsil and sub-division of the same name, lies in 29°6' north latitude and 76°58' east longitude, at a distance of 26 kms. east of Hisar on Hisar-Delhi road.

The old town located on a mound, is a walled settlement, with five gates opening in different directions; Delhi gate to the east, Barsi gate to the south, Umra gate to the south-west, Hisar or Char Qutb gate to the west and the Sisai or Gosian gate to the north. These gates with the exception of Barsi gate are no longer in existence. As recorded in a rectangular sand stone inscription in the north inner wall of the Barsi gate it was built in A.D. 1302. The walled city had two wide streets running through the

1. *Indian Archaeology*, 1978-79, p. 68.

2. *Divyavadana*—Ed. P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1959, p. 67;

*Chullavagga*—XII. 1.9; J.Przyluski, *Ancient People of the Punjab*, (Eng. Tr.) Chitrabhanu Sen, p. 11.

3. J.C. Jain, *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in Jain Canons*, Bombay, 1947, p. 121.

4. S.R. Phogat, *Inscriptions of Haryana*, *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. IX 1977, *JHS Monograph* No. 4, p. 3.

town and crossing one another at right angles. The other streets are narrow and winding. The town expanded beyond the walled limits after the Independence.

It is one of the ancient towns and is identified with Asi or Asika referred in *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini. A Hansi stone inscription dated (Vikrama) Samvat 1224 and belonging to the Chahmana King Prithvi Raja II (now in the Royal Scottish museum at Edinburg also mentions the name of the town as Asika. A beautiful black stone sculpture of Sun-God was recovered from the ancient fort, on a huge mound, to the north of the town. The sculpture is remarkable for its conceptual maturity and subtle delineation. The sculpture is now installed in a local temple and is worshipped as Vishnu. Besides, four more statues were recovered and one of them was that of Varaha, 30" high and 20" broad of grey sandstone, The discovery of these sculptures, all belonging to the early medieval period throw welcome light on the religious history of the place.<sup>1</sup> The fort of Hansi is very old but its history is indeed obscure for want of literacy or epigraphical evidence. The present ruined fort was built by Afgan Kings on the site of the old Hindu fort. The bricks and the stone pillars used in the construction of Muhammedan buildings appear to belong to the 7th century A.D. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the fort may have been founded by Harsha or his father Prabhakarvardhana.<sup>2</sup> The discovery of Yaudheya coins in considerable number indicate the existence of the town in the centuries preceding and following Christian era and it is thought that the Asokan Pillar at Hisar stood here originally and was removed there by Firuz Shah.<sup>3</sup>

Local traditions attribute the foundation of the town to Anangpal, the Tomar king of Delhi. Possibly, the town was destroyed earlier and re-founded by Anangpal. Arnoraja and following him, Vighararaja IV completely subjugated the Tomars of Delhi and captured Hansi. Later Kilhana was appointed the governor of Hansi by Prithviraja II. Prithviraja Chauhan made considerable additions to the fort at Hansi making it an important

1. In 1982, hoard of bronze/copper images of Jain Tirthankaras and other minor gods and goddesses of the same sect along with a few Buddhist and Brahminical gods were found by a chance discovery from the precincts of the old fort. These sculptures were buried in a big copper jar. This is for the first time that such a discovery was made in Haryana. These sculptures belong to early 8th to 10th century A.D. This latest evidence throws further valuable light on the personal religion of Chauhan Kings and their patronage to other religions.

2. Sadhu Ram, 'A varaha sculpture from the Hansi Fort', *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. X, No. 1, 1978.

3. Devindra Handa, Some important Towns of Haryana, A study of their Ancient Past, *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. III, No. 1971, p. 4; B.C. Chhabra, Asokan Pillar at Hisar, Panjab, *Vishveshvarananda Indological Journal*, Vol. II, Part II Sept. 1964) pp. 319-22.



military strong-hold. The Ghaznavid and Ghoriid sultans attached special importance to the conquest of Hansi due to its strategic location. Shihab-ud-din Ghori was defeated by the Rajputs in the first battle of Tarain, but he defeated Rajputs in the second battle of Tarain and conquered Hansi and adjoining territories. During the Sultanate rule, Hansi remained an important administrative unit till the mid of 14th century when Hisar was founded and headquarters were shifted to Hisar.

Hansi was depopulated in the famine of 1783 and lay deserted and in partial ruin for several years. Early in 1798, George Thomas, an Irish adventurer carved out an independent kingdom in the Rohtak and Hisar districts and established himself in the ancient and dilapidated town of Hansi. He remodelled it and strengthened its ruined fort and repaired the defensive wall of the city. The deserted town was soon re-peopled. He established here a mint and coined his own rupees.<sup>1</sup> The fort of Hansi was surrendered to the British in 1801. In 1803, the British established a military cantonment at Hansi. The British employed James Skinner with his troops of Indian cavalry, the nucleus of famous Skinner's Horse, who remained stationed in the cantonment from 1809 to 1814 and received considerable grants of land on which he founded villages and settled cultivators. In 1857, the Indian soldiers revolted and after the British recapture, the Hansi cantonment was not maintained and the fort was almost entirely dismantled.

The fort of Hansi is reputed to be one of the most impregnable fort of ancient India. The fort has seen different regimes and was dismantled in 1857. The curtain walls of the fort to the north can still be seen and at places are 52 feet high and 37 feet thick. George Thomas gate towards the south end of the fort and the guard house are still intact. A close scrutiny of the construction, large size bricks and the material having Hindu carvings assign it to be of Hindu origin. There are two fine sculptured freizes, depicting a row of swans in different poses, now fixed, one each in the gateway complex and the other in the *baradari*. In the centre of the fort mound are ruins of a *baradari*, a long hall supported by pillars and a large closed tank. It is difficult to say precisely when the tank was dug. Originally, the *baradari* might have been a pillared hall of early Muslim architecture in which the building material of old Hindu monuments was freely used. Sometimes during later period, perhaps during Skinner's rule, the *baradari* was converted into horse stable which necessitated the partition walls in the pillared bays. To the north, there is an enclosure, popularly known as Khangah, having a tomb of Sayyad Nimat Ullah and two mosques. The tomb was erected after Sayyad Niamat Ullah who died fighting during the campaign of Muhammad Ghuri and old Hindu material appears to have been

1. J.N. Sarkar, Rule of George Thomas, An Irish Raja over Haryana, 1797-1802, *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. IV, 1-2, 1972, p. 18.

freely used in its construction. A rectangular sand stone inscription of one line, serves as a lintel to the doorway of an enclosure of the tomb. Formerly it belonged to a mosque built in A.D. 1197. The bigger mosque in the enclosure may be medieval while the other seems to be of a later date.

An important medieval monument is the shrine of Char Qutbs colloquially called Chahar Qutbs which is located in an enclosure to the west of the town. The shrine is more than 800 years old and is a resting place of four divines of the Chistia order of Sufism ; Sheikh Jamal-ud-din Ahmad Hanswi, Sheikh Burhan-ud-din Sufi, Sheikh Qutb-ud-din Munawar and Sheikh Noor-ud-din. These divines hold an important place in the annals of Muslim mystics and saints and are considered among the saints of high rank. Jamal-ud-din was the son of Hamid-ud-din and nephew of Niamat Ullah. On his fathers death, he was given the administration of Hansi, but he preferred religious devotion. He became the disciple of Baba Sheikh Farid. Baba Farid came here from Pak Pattan (Pakistan) and lived here for 12 years. The shrine of Char Qutb was expanded from time to time and a number of buildings were added. The domed edifice and pavillions on either side of the tombs were also added later. The most imposing edifice is a mosque in the northern enclosure. It was originally construct.d by Firuz although according to a legend it was built out of money offered by Mohd. Tughlaq to the last Qutb. A square canopied tomb locally called *chhatri* has two graves and four carved sandstone pillars support the enamelled canopy. A little away, ten ornamented red stone pillars carry four canopies giving shade over graves of descendants of Qutb Jamal.

Other tombs and temples which need be mentioned, are Lakhi Banjara tomb near Char Qutb, tomb of Begum Skinner, Smadh of Baba Jagan Nath Puri, Smadh of Hansa Nath, temples of Kayamsar tank, Chowpatta temple, Kali Devi temple, and a Shiv Mandir.

The town is a centre of cotton trade and a HAFED spinning mill has been located here. The new colonies established are Gandhi Nagar, Multan nagar, Roopnagar and Kisan Ghar. There are facilities for stay at P.W.D. and Market Committee rest houses and the town is well provided with schools, college, hospital and other basic amenities.

### Hisar (Tahsil Hisar)

Hisar, the headquarters of the district and the division of the same name, lies in 29° 5' north latitude and 75° 45' east longitude, at a distance of 164 kilometres west of Delhi. It is an important railway junction on Rewari-Bhatinda metre-gauge railway, Ludhiana-Hisar broad-gauge railway and Sadulpur-Hisar metre-gauge railway terminate here. The Delhi-Hisar-Sulemanki road, a national highway passes through the town. Its population was 89,437 in 1971 against the population of 60,222 in 1961.

Hisar can possibly be identified with ancient Esukari or Isukara, a beautiful and prosperous city of Kuru Janapada, referred to by Panini.<sup>1</sup> The Jain literature also mentions a town, Isukara in the Kuru country.<sup>2</sup> The city state of Esukara (Hisar) was possibly founded by the Kurus in later vedic times. With the fall of the Kuru kingdom, Hisar city seems to have come under the Nandas and Mauryas.<sup>3</sup> However, there is no archaeological evidence to prove it. No further reference of the town is available till A.D. 1352 when Sultan Firuz Tughlaq ordered the construction of the fort which was completed in A.D. 1354. He named it 'Hisar-e-Firuz', the fort of Firuz. With the passage of time, the place came to be known only as Hisar. The Hisar town sprang up later around this fort. The original town was a walled settlement inside the fort with four gates, Delhi gate, Mori gate, Nagauri gate and Talaqi gate. These gates are no longer in evidence but the vicinity in which they stood continue to bear their names.

The town developed fast after the formation of Haryana and is now one of most well provided town of the state. The veterinary college was raised to the status of Haryana Agricultural University which is a prestigious university of the country with first rate buildings, well-equipped laboratories and library, lawns and playgrounds and modern residential houses. A mini secretariat -four storeyed imposing office complex, a housing complex toward the south, Vidyoot Nagar, a Haryana State Electricity Board colony, in the east on the Hisar-Delhi road, many urban colonies, modern shopping complexes and a large grain market have altogether changed the complex of the old town. The government live-stock farm, sheep breeding farm, a central tractor training institute and many large and medium industrial units for the manufacture of textile, steel pipes, tubes and strips, ingots and billets, guar gum and oxygen gas have earned it an enviable reputation.

An air strip has been constructed towards the north east of the town and is used for imparting flying training.

The important places of antiquity are the palace and mosque complex and Gajri Mahal. The only remains of the Firuz Shah's palace, located in the fort, are underground apartments which still exist in good state of preservation. These apartments were so arranged that a stranger would not be able to extricate himself from the dark passages and would invariably be drawn to a small dark room in the centre. Nearby there is a mosque of Firuz Shah's time popularly known as Lat Ki Masjid. The pillars supporting the

1. V.S. Agrawala, *Panini Kalina Bharatavarsha*; (Hindi) Banaras, Samvat 2012, p. 86.

2. *Uttaradhyayana Sutra* (14/1); *Sacred Books of the East*, XLV, p. 62.

3. Silk Ram Phogat, Rohtak and Hisar Districts through the Ages, *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol., V Nos. 1-2, 1973, p. 2.

mosque are of an old temple and were probably brought from Agroha or Hansi. There is a standstone pillar or *lat*, about 20 feet high. The *lat* is made of two stones, one is an ancient and is 10 feet high and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet in circumference and the other is of red sandstone. There is an inscription in Sanskrit at the top of the lower stone of the pillar. The letters are cut at the junction of the stones which shows that the ancient stone pillar is from ancient Hindu structure which was re-cut and erected by Firuz Shah.

Gujri Mahal is situated outside the fort and appears to have been built as an outlying portion of the palace as a residence for a Gujri mistress of Firuz Shah. The remains of the Gujri Mahal is only a *baradari*. The walls of *baradari* are thick and sloping, with 12 doorways each with a window over it. There are 4 pillars, appear to have been brought from some old Hindu or Jain structure which support the roof of domes. Below the building, are three underground apartments, one of which is a tank which seems to have served as a bath.

The town is an educational centre and is well-provided with various institutions of higher learning and has a prestigious Haryana Agricultural University. There are facilities for the stay at P.W.D. rest house, Canal rest house, Sainik rest house, Haryana State Electricity Board rest house, Market Committee rest house, Bhakra Management Board rest house and Flamingo motel and restaurant. The Flamingo is run by the Haryana Tourism Corporation. The important places of worship are Arya Samaj Mandir, Bishnoi Mandir, Sanatan Dharam Mandir, Jain Mandir, Devi Bhavan, Gurdwara and a Church. The town is well provided with schools, colleges, hospitals and other basic amenities.

#### Fatehabad (Tahsil Fatehabad)

Fatehabad, the headquarters of the tahsil and the sub-division of the same name, lies in  $29^{\circ} 3'$  north latitude and  $75^{\circ} 30'$  east longitude, at a distance of about 48 kilometres north-west of Hisar on Delhi-Hisar-Sulemanki road. Its population was 22,630 in 1971 against the population of 12,461 in 1961.

The town was founded by the emperor Firuz Shah Tughlaq and named after his son Fateh Khan in A.D. 1352. The site on which the town was founded was a hunting ground. He dug a channel from the Ghaggar in order to supply the town with water. He also built a fort which is now in ruins, the fortification walls can be seen on the east of the town. He also built three forts in the neighbouring villages in the name of his three sons. The old town was surrounded by a wall which has been dismantled to a great extent except near the fort.

Formerly, Fatehabad was an important trade centre for the export of surplus grain but with the construction of Rewari-Bhatinda railway line which runs about 20 kilometres to the west of the town, the trade shifted to Bhattu. But the town assumed greater importance after the Independence when metalled roads provided important link and the earlier importance of the town was revived.

An important monument is a Lat or a stone pillar measuring slightly less than 5 metres in height and 1.90 metres in circumference at the base. It was erected in the centre of an Idgah. The lower portion of the pillar is a mono-block of light buff sandstone and is possibly the remaining part of the pillar that lies in the mosque at Hisar. It is more than likely that both these pillars once made a single monolithic pillar which was possibly erected by Asoka at Agroha or Hansi. Firuz Shah Tughlaq had a craze for taking away such columns and transplanting them among his favourite complexes. The Asokan epigraph that was once engraved on the pillar was systematically chiselled off for writing the Tughlaq inscription recording the genealogy of Firuz Shah in beautiful Tughra Arabic characters carved in high relief.

There are two inscriptions, one on a light coloured rectangular sandstone studded into the left of the screen-wall of Idgah, immediately behind or to the west of *lat*, praising the emperor Hamayun and the other one is on a rectangular sand-stone placed on the outer wall of the mosque enclosure and contains a well-known invocation to Ali in Arabic. The mosque can still be seen in good conditions but lies in disuse.

The other monument is a small and a beautiful mosque known as Humayun Mosque. The legend assigns the association of the mosque to the Mughal Emperor Humayun who on his flight after his defeat at the hands of Sher Shah Suri happened to pass through Fatehabad on Friday and is said to have prayed at this mosque. The inscription praising Emperor Humayun was originally found here and later studded into the screen-wall of the Idgah. The mosque is said to have been repaired by one Nur Rehmat in the early eighties of the last century.

There are facilities for stay at P.W.D. rest house, H.S.E.B. rest house, market committee rest house and dharamsalas. The town is well provided with schools, college, hospital and other basic necessities.

### **Tohana(Tahsil Tohana)**

Tohana, the headquarters of the tahsil of the same name lies in 29°43' north latitude and 75°54' east longitude at a distance of about 70 kms. from Hisar on Bhiwani-Hansi-Barwala-Tohana-Munak road. The population of the town was 16,789 in 1971 against 12394 in 1961.

Tohana can be identified with ancient Taushyana mentioned by Panini.<sup>1</sup> After the fall of Kurus, the town alongwith towns like Indra-prastha, Hisar, Sonapat, Rohtak and Rodi seems to have come under the Nandas and Mauryas.<sup>2</sup> Local traditions attributes the foundation of the town to one Anangpal, and Anangsar tank named after him still exists in the town. There is an old Baoli near tahsil building. It is said that it was connected with Anangsar tank through a tunnel. An old Shiva temple and Gugga Mari exist in the town.

The town was deserted during the famine of 1783 and was repopled in 1801 when Lt. Bourquin, the deputy of General Peron of Scindhia rebuilt it.

After Independence, particularly after the formation of Haryana, the town assumed importance. It was upgraded from a sub-tahsil to tahsil and became an important road junction and a grain market. The town is provided with a Market Committee rest house, a Canal rest house (Baliyala), schools, college, hospital, bus stand and other basic amenities.

#### **Ratia (Tahsil Fatehabad)<sup>3</sup>**

The town is located on the bank of the Ghaggar about 23 kms. north of Fatehabad in 29°41' north latitude and 75°34' east longitude. The population of the town was 7,740 in 1971 as against 5,348 in 1961.

Local traditions attribute the foundation of the town to Rattan Nath, a *sadhu* with extra-ordinary powers who meditated at the site and the town was named after him. The town was deserted during the famine of 1783 but was repopled in 1816 by one Rattan Singh Jat and the Patiala chief erected a fort and an out-post.

It is an up-coming mandi town and is well provided with basic amenities.

#### **Barwala (Tahsil Hisar)**

The town is located on Bhiwani-Hansi-Barwala-Tohana-Munak road about 30 kms. north-east of Hisar in 29°22' north latitude and 75°54' east longitude. The population of the town was 16,917 in 1971 as against 10,723 in 1961.

1. V.S. Agrawala, *Panini Kalina Bharatavarsha*, (Hindi) Banaras, Samvat, 2012, p. 86.

2. Silk Ram Phogat, Rohtak and Hissar Districts through the ages, *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. V, No. 1-2, 1973, P. 2.

3. A sub-tahsil was located here in 1979.

Coins of Agra or Agrratya have been discovered from Barwala indicating that the place had been under the occupation of the people of Agroha.<sup>1</sup> However, local traditions attribute the foundation of the town to one Raja Bal and name corrupted from Balwala to Barwala. During the attack of Mohd. Ghori on Hansi, Sayyad Niamat Ullah and his brother Mir Hassan fought here ; Niamat Ullah was killed and entombed in Hansi fort and Mir Hassan's successors settled at Barwala. A *Shivala* possibly dating back to the early medieval period, is located to the north of the town and it escaped repeated Muslim desecrations.

A tahsil was constituted at Barwala in 1852 but was abolished in 1891 and its areas were merged in adjacent tahsils. The town again began to assume importance after the formation of Haryana in 1966 and it is now an up-coming mandi town well provided with basic amenities.

#### Adampur (Tahsil Hisar)<sup>2</sup>

The town is located on Gohana-Jind-Barwala-Agroha-Adampur-Bhadra road about 38 kms. from Hisar in 29°17' north latitude and 75°29' east longitude . The population of the town was 5,658 in 1971 as against 3,860 in 1961.

It is a flourishing mandi town which has developed very fast after the formation of Haryana. It is a very-well provided town having Market Committee rest house, hospital, schools, college and other basic amenities.

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1. Silk Ram, *Archaeology of Rohtak and Hisar Districts, Haryana*, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1972, MSS.

1. A sub-tahsil was located here in 1979.