

Crafts and Craftsmen of Punjab Vol-X

Crafts of Taxila



Directorate Of Creative & Cultural Industries
Punjab Small Industries Corporation Lahore, 2015.



Railway Station Taxila

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A Panoramic View of Margalla Hills at Taxila

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PROLOGUE

The Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) is a spectacular multidimensional organization that is playing a pivotal role in the development and promotion of small, medium and creative & cultural industries since its inception. Initially, the cottage and household segment required hand holding for its growth and sustainability and therefore the PSIC came forward and made miraculous contributions in supporting the micro sector of the industry. Later on the industrial base of Punjab was broadened and henceforth PSIC took a leap forward and played a vibrant role in catering the needs of the growing industrial sector. The irresolute industrial scenario demands much more from the PSIC and PSIC in there with practical solutions to cater the emerging needs of the industrial sector.

The creative & cultural industries had gained significance in the recent past as a positive contributor in the economy. The culture and the post 2015 UN agenda further highlighted the necessity of intervening in this sector for sustainable economic growth. PSIC believe that paying attention to our heritage and culture is essential for our existence; crucial for its importance to our economy, and vital to our future. PSIC Directorate of creative & cultural industries (C&CI) is a harbinger and a beacon light for the creative artisans engaged in multiple disciplines of creative & cultural industries. The PSIC,C&CI is actively supporting the artisans and crafts through research, publications, design development, credit assistance, capacity building, marketing and promotion. The PSIC had launched various initiatives in the cluster of artisans successfully. The gigantic task of research and publication carried out by the PSIC, Directorate of C&CI got recognition by public at large and proved useful in further interventions in the clusters. Under this initiative so far 09 volumes of books on Crafts of Punjab has been published and the present one in your hand “Craft of Punjab- Taxila” is the 10th volume of the series.

The city of Taxila is a significant cultural city that holds the heritage of Gandhara civilization and falls under the UNESCO world heritage sites. PSIC by the support of Government of Punjab intervened in the cluster of artisans at Taxila and undertook a study jointly with Dr. Mohammad Ashraf, Director, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad and his team and further made an endeavor to organize the creative & cultural activities focused on the artisans and the crafts not only for improving the economic conditions of the vulnerable artisans community but to keep alive the legendary arts and crafts of Gandhara civilization. Here I would like to acknowledge the mentorship role of Mr. Ahmad Farooq, Director (C&CI), PSIC who acted as Project Director of the scheme “Stone Crafts Taxila” and contributed with zeal & vigor to accomplish the objectives of the PSIC initiative. The members and associates of the PSIC team also deserve felicitations for their contributions. I hope this book will arouse interest among the readers to learn more about the splendid land and the artisans that are pride of Taxila and come forward to support them as there is a lot to be done further to support and promote the cultural heritage and the crafts of Taxila.

Bilal Ahmad Butt
Managing Director
Punjab Small Industries Corporation

PREFACE

The Taxila valley remained a hub of great human activity right from the Neolithic period in the 4th millennium B.C. down to the early historic period. Taxila in its long history remained the seat of many dynasties with different cultural, social and political backgrounds, and all these dynastic left their indelible impressions on the cultural and social fabric of Taxila. There are a number of world heritage sites present in Pakistan and Taxila is one of them. It is a city situated 31 km to the west of Islamabad and to the 36.40 km to the northwest of Rawalpindi off the Grand Trunk Road. Its other close neighboring cities include Hassanabdal, Khanpur and Wah. Taxila is famous for its cultural significance and crafts which not only reflect the city's culture but the history of the place as well. The stone craft sector of Taxila carries a legendary background and this activity is continuing on and now a small cottage industry for stone crafts works has emerged in the city. The city of Taxila also has an industrial significance. Industrial progress in and around Taxila is gaining newer pace. The neighboring industrial organizations are in the process of rapid expansion. Pakistan ordinance factory, Heavy industry Taxila, cement factories as well as small cottage industry for stoneware, pottery and footwear add to the significance of the city. The industry found in Taxila is important both from the military as well as other commercial reasons. The strategic location of Taxila is paving way for the city to act as gateway to historical "Silk Route".

The presence of Taxila on the world map as a significant city of Gandhara civilization carrying a history of legendary arts and crafts work encourages the Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) to strive for the naissance of Gandhara art by promoting the artisans engaged in crafts. PSIC inherited the culture of intervening in the cluster of artisans since its inception in the year 1973 after dissolution of West Pakistan Small Industries corporation (WPSIC). An initial survey was conducted to assess the needs of artisans jointly with SMEDA (A Federal Government Organization for the support of small and medium enterprises) that resulted in the current initiative, the prime objectives of the scheme "Stone Crafts Taxila" was research, publication, capacity building of the artisans, marketing and promotion to bring this comparatively neglected area into the limelight. Since, it was the first Government intervention in the cluster of artisans at Taxila; therefore, effective communication was inevitable to kick start project activities. However, after making strenuous efforts and consistent engagement with the artisans and other stakeholders the project team was able to build up an effective liaison that made possible smooth takeoff of the scheme.

The creative and cultural industries have emerged as significant contributors towards the economic growth and therefore there is a stringent need to develop and promote this sector for sustainable development and growth. PSIC through its Directorate of Creative & Cultural Industries has been contributing its role for the hand holding of the artisans by energizing all possible means. The PSIC has been engaged in documenting the regions of Punjab with respect to their history, art, culture, life of people, crafts etc.





and publishing a series of coffee table books that has been acknowledged by the researchers, scholars, stakeholders and eminent personalities as a precious work. The research and publication work on Taxila has been carried out by many scholars but this particular work undertaken by Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Director, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad through PSIC, ADP scheme “Stone Crafts Taxila” presents a distinctive dimension of Taxila. The readers will appreciate not only the legendary history of this region but get an opportunity to acquaint themselves about the arts and crafts prevalent in an early period and their status in the present era. This voluminous research book also encompasses the PSIC interventions in the cluster of artisans and its impact there upon. The present book in your hand is 10th volume of the Crafts of Punjab series published by PSIC.

Here I would like to acknowledge the support of P&D department, Government of Punjab, Dr. Shujaat Ali, Former, Secretary, IC&ID, Mr. Irfan Ali, Former Secretary, IC&ID, Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja, Former, Managing Director, PSIC, Mr. Muhammad Akhtar, Former, Managing Director, PSIC, Mr. Ashiq Hussain Aulakh, Former, Dy. Managing Director, PSIC, Mr. Nazir Ahmad (TI), Former, Director (H&D), PSIC, Mr. Khalid Iqbal, Regional Director Rawalpindi, PSIC and Mr. Bilal Ahmad Butt, Managing Director, PSIC, for their support and valuable inputs to make this endeavor end up successfully. The team of Dr. Muhammad Ashraf also deserves admiration specially Mst. Ifqat Shaheen, for her sincere hard work and dedication to accomplish this task. Mr. Rafiq Butt and Syed Hassan Askari Shah of Taxila has always been of a great support to the project team and acted as a mentor to highlight the needs of the artisans and follow up. Last but not the least the contributions of the staff of the scheme “Stone Crafts Taxila” and Directorate of Creative & Cultural Industries namely, Mr. Najam Us Saqib, Mr. Muhammad Imran, Mr. Munir Ahmad, Mr. Hassan Shehzad, Mr. Qamar Mehmood, Mr. Salahuddin Zaffar and Mr. Qasim Ali are commendable as with their whole hearted support the work on this marvelous coffee table book have been accomplished. Mr. Mumtaz Niazi & Mr. Athar Mahmood of Makdoods Printers’ added flair of his own to further glorify the presentation of the book. I am confident that this book will prove as a significant contribution among the series of books on crafts published by PSIC.

Ahmad Farooq
Project Director &
Director (Creative & Cultural Industries)
Punjab Small Industries Corporation

FOREWORD

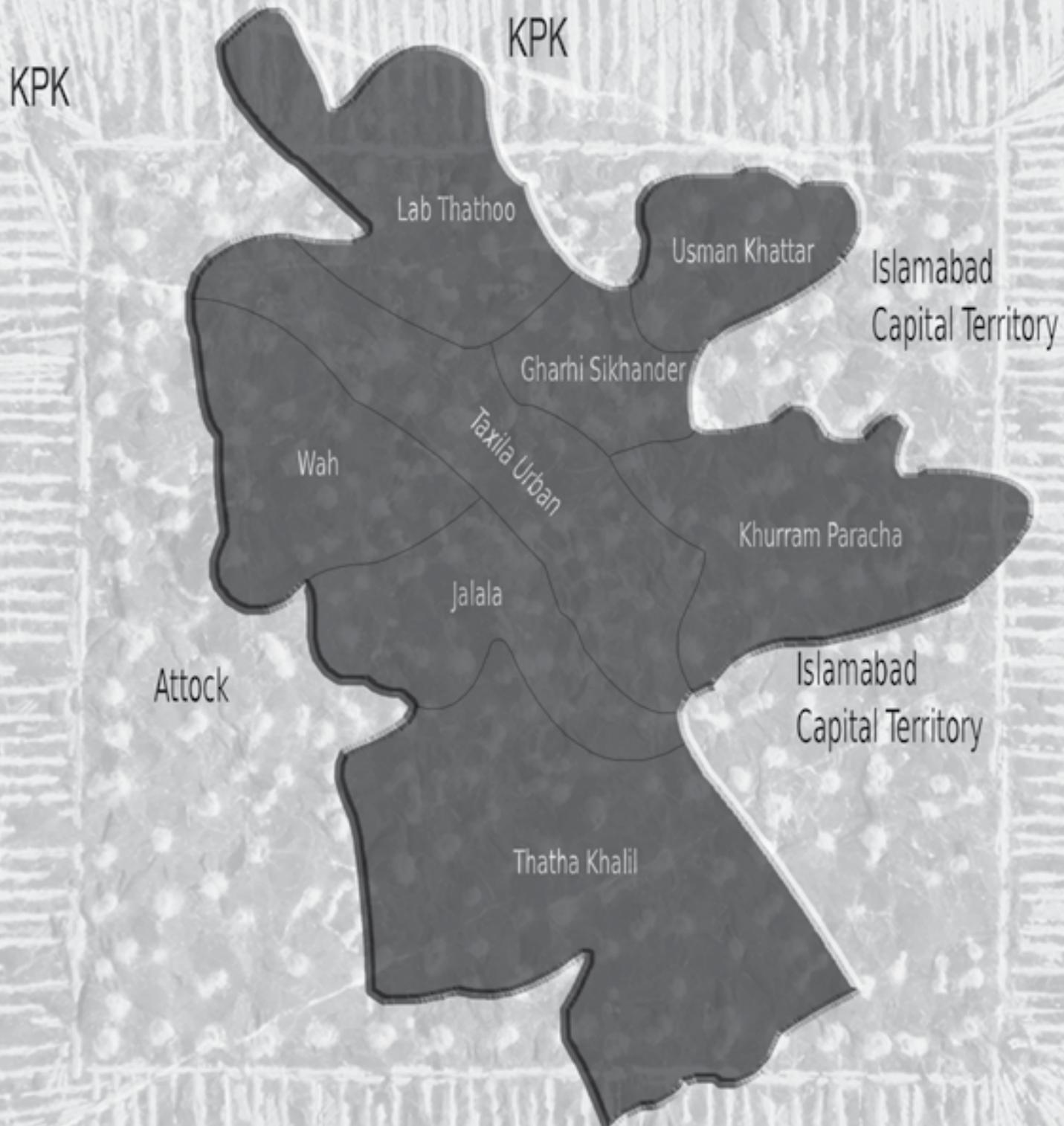
The ancient cultural and political history of Taxila has been subject to continuous investigation since the dawn of the 20th century. It was the well-known British archaeologist, Sir John Marshall, whose keen and expert eye detected the cultural opulence of the valley in terms of tangible cultural heritage which in turn provided valuable data over the decades to scholars and academicians. Consequently, today we have a better understanding of the history of Taxila and its neighboring areas. Above all, we now know that two great thinkers and academicians of this region, Panini and Kautiliya, were intimately associated with Taxila. It demonstrates that, during that period in time, the area was a great center of knowledge and learning. It is not uncommon that where such activity takes place becomes a prominent center of political power as was the case with Taxila. This is also supported by the fact that Asoka once the Governor of the Taxila valley later rises as one of the great rulers of the world and Emperor of Maurian Dynasty during 3rd Century BCE.

This publication titled “Stone craft of Taxila” highlights the magnificent sculptural art and building crafts of Gandhara. Gandhara art adopts both the Greek profile and Hellenistic draperies.

Dr. Ashraf Khan served in Taxila Museum for a number of years as assistant curator, and later as curator and director. His valuable work in excavation and preservation of various archaeological sites and monuments are commendable. This worthy publication written by Dr. Ashraf is the result of a combined venture by Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and Punjab Small Industries Corporation Lahore. It is a valuable addition to the historical and archaeological literature regarding on Taxila and Pakistan at large. I believe that this publication will contribute immensely to enhance awareness and deepen understanding and appreciation of the Gandhara art.

Abdul H.A Hakeem
Officer- In-Charge
UNESCO Islamabad





Map Representing Sub Divisions of Taxila

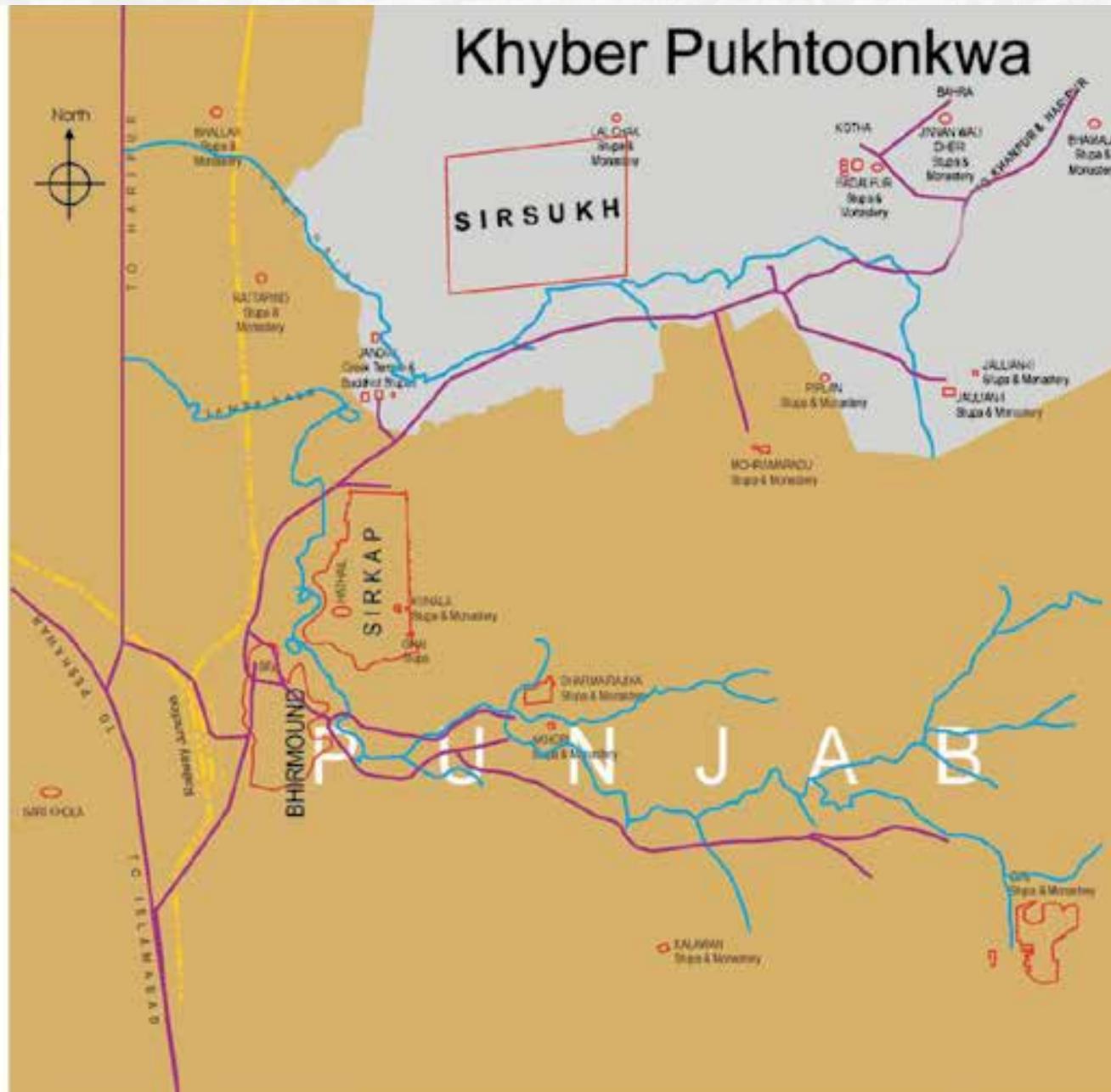
Archaeological Map of Taxila Valley

Legends

Archaeical remains	
Road	
Railway	
Water Canal	
Museum	(M)

Distance from Taxila Museum (in kilometer)

Bhir Mound	0
Hathial	0.5
Sirkap	2.5
Jandial	3
Dharma Rajika	3
Kalawan	4
Sirsukh	5
Sarikholah	5
Piplan	6
Mohra Moradu	6
Julian I & II	7
Giri	8
Jinnan Wali Dheri	11
Bhalar Top	15
Bhamala	22







CHAPTER 1
**THE LAND OF
TAXILA**



Nicholson Monument at G.T. Road, Taxila

THE LAND OF TAXILA

Physical Features

The modern town of Taxila is situated on the main Peshawar-Rawalpindi road about 35 km north-west of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The particular valley in which Taxila stood about is about 11 miles wide at its mouth. Its average elevation above sea-level is between 1,700 and 1,800 ft. At its eastern end it is bounded by the Murree hills, which reach some 8,000 ft. and on its north and south by two spurs from the Murree hills viz. the Sharda on the north and the Margala spur on the south. Between these two spurs is a third and shorter one called Hathial, a rocky precipitous ridge, of hard lime stone formation which divides the valley into two unequal northern and southern parts, the larger and smaller ones respectively.

Taxila served as a crossroads and melting-pot in its long history. One of the various routes, passing through Taxila, proceeded from Pataliputra (modern Patna) and connected the north-west of the Mauryan Empire. Another ancient route was coming from Western Asia through Kapisa, Bactria and Charsadda (Pushkalavati) and reached Taxila across the Indus at Hund (known as Ohind or Udhabhandapura in ancient times). The third route started from Central Asia and China and reached Taxila via Srinagar, Baramula, Mansehra and Haripur. In this perspective, the picture which emerges is that Taxila connected India with Central Asia on one hand and Western Asia and Persian Empire on the other in olden days.

Taxila has been mentioned by Arrian as the flourishing city at the time of Alexander's invasion of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. It was also the greatest of the all the cities laying between Indus and Jehlum (Hydaspes). Strabo also has mentioned the city of Taxila in glowing words. Plutarch praises its richness and Hiuen Tsang speaks about its fertility and vegetation (Marshall 1960: 2-3; Dar 1998: 1, 1986:10).



A View of Khanpur Dam

AREA

The total area of Taxila is 375 square km and it is 1700-1800 ft. above sea level.

MOUNTAINOUS REGION

Taxila is situated in the Potohar plateau. It occupies a beautiful position at the head of Sindh-Sagar Doab between Indus and Jhelum rivers at the slopes of Himalayan mountains. The valley is bounded by a girdle of hills of Margalla, Hazara and Murree. On the east, it is limited by the Murree hills. Its average height is about 8,000 ft. Murree hills separate the valley from the city of Islamabad. A low ridge running east-west divides the Taxila valley into two unequal parts, on the north larger one and on the south smaller one. This ridge also decreases down into the plain on the east bank of Tamara Nullah (Nalla) with well-known Taxila Museum located on the opposite bank. Hills are covered with dark olive trees and snatha shrubs. The wood of olive is used as fuel (Dani 1986: 10; Dar 1998: 1).





A View of Taxila Valley





Mustard Crop, Taxila



LAND

The land of Taxila is no doubt very productive. For its fertile land Taxila remained very important throughout its history. According to ancient writers, the city enjoyed many natural benefits. Strabo states the city was enormously fertile. According to Plutarch the city soil was famous for its fruitfulness. Hiuan Tsang also writes about the fertility of the valley of Taxila (Marshall 1960: 3).





Landscape Taxila





A General View of Khanpur Dam



Rivers

This valley is watered by Haro River, the prime water resource of Taxila. However, a number of smaller rivulets such as Tamra, Lundi, Kala etc. are also found in the area (Dar 1998: 1). Khanpur Dam is a dam located on the Haro River near Potowar Plateau at the village of Khanpur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, about 4 Km from Taxila.

Taxila is situated at a high altitude. It is situated at a handsome distance from Indus river. That is why it is saved from the danger of Indus flood (Dani 1999: 9).





An Aerial View of Bhamala Monastery, Taxila





River Haro Taxila



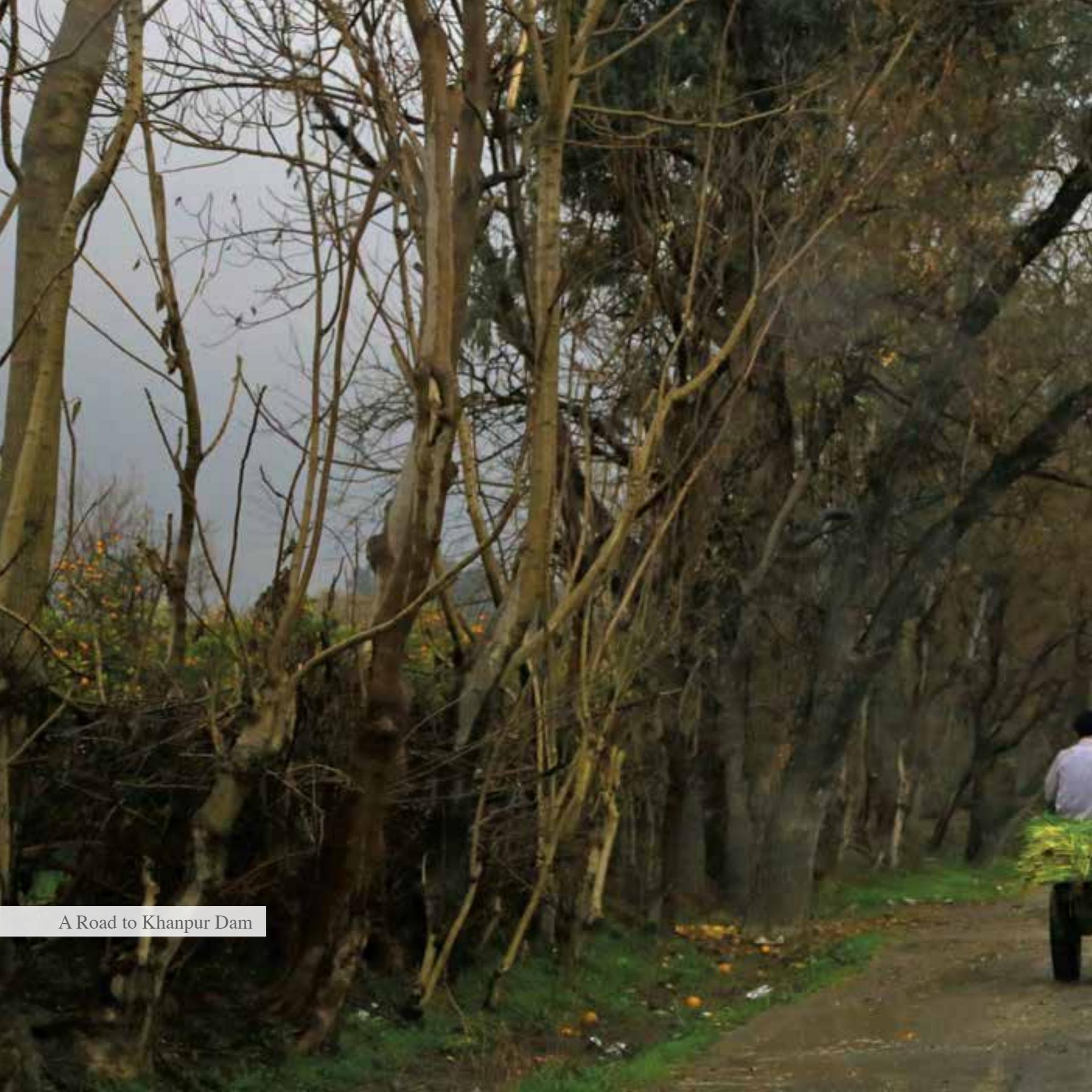


Flora of Taxila Valley

CLIMATE

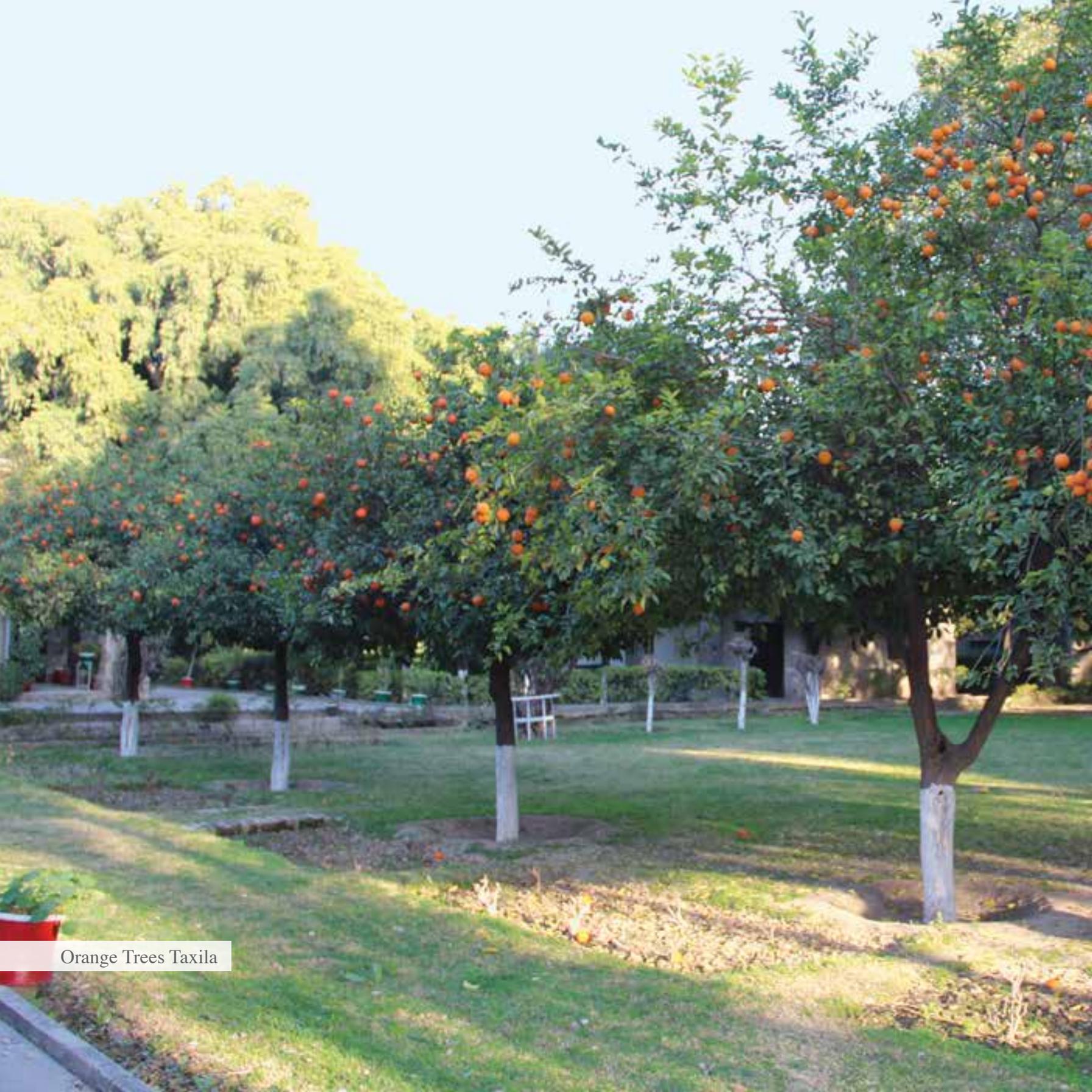
The climate at Taxila is warm and temperate. Here rainfall is plentiful, weather is enjoyable and energizing as it was in ancient times. For its natural climate, Taxila remained the central place in the whole area in the past. Two rainy seasons at Taxila are the summer rain or barsat and the winter rains. But in winter there is much less rainfall in the valley as compared to summer. The average annual temperature here happens as 21.6 °C. The average annual rainfall is 767 mm. January is the coldest month when the maximum temperature occurs 17.7 degree centigrade and minimum 2.6 centigrade. From February to May the temperature rises at the rate of 5.06 degree centigrade per month. The utmost temperature is reached in June when the temperature touches the 45 centigrade (District Census Report of District Rawalpindi 1998: 16).





A Road to Khanpur Dam





Orange Trees Taxila



CROPS AND FRUITS

The area, which is fed by both rain and tube wells produces a high yield of wheat. The total cultivated area of Taxila is 40,697 acres, of which 4,876 acres is irrigated and the remaining is Barani (rain-fed). The area for the production, officially recorded, of wheat is 328,000 acres.

The principal crops of Taxila are wheat, barley, maize, millets, and pulses. Oranges, plum, Guava, locat and lychi are famous fruits of the valley. The whole valley is famous for its fruit gardens. The people of Taxila valley are also preparing honey. It is sticky yellowish brown fluid made by bees and other insects from flowers nectar.



غیاث مالٹا
ہر قسم کا مصالحہ بیچ میں

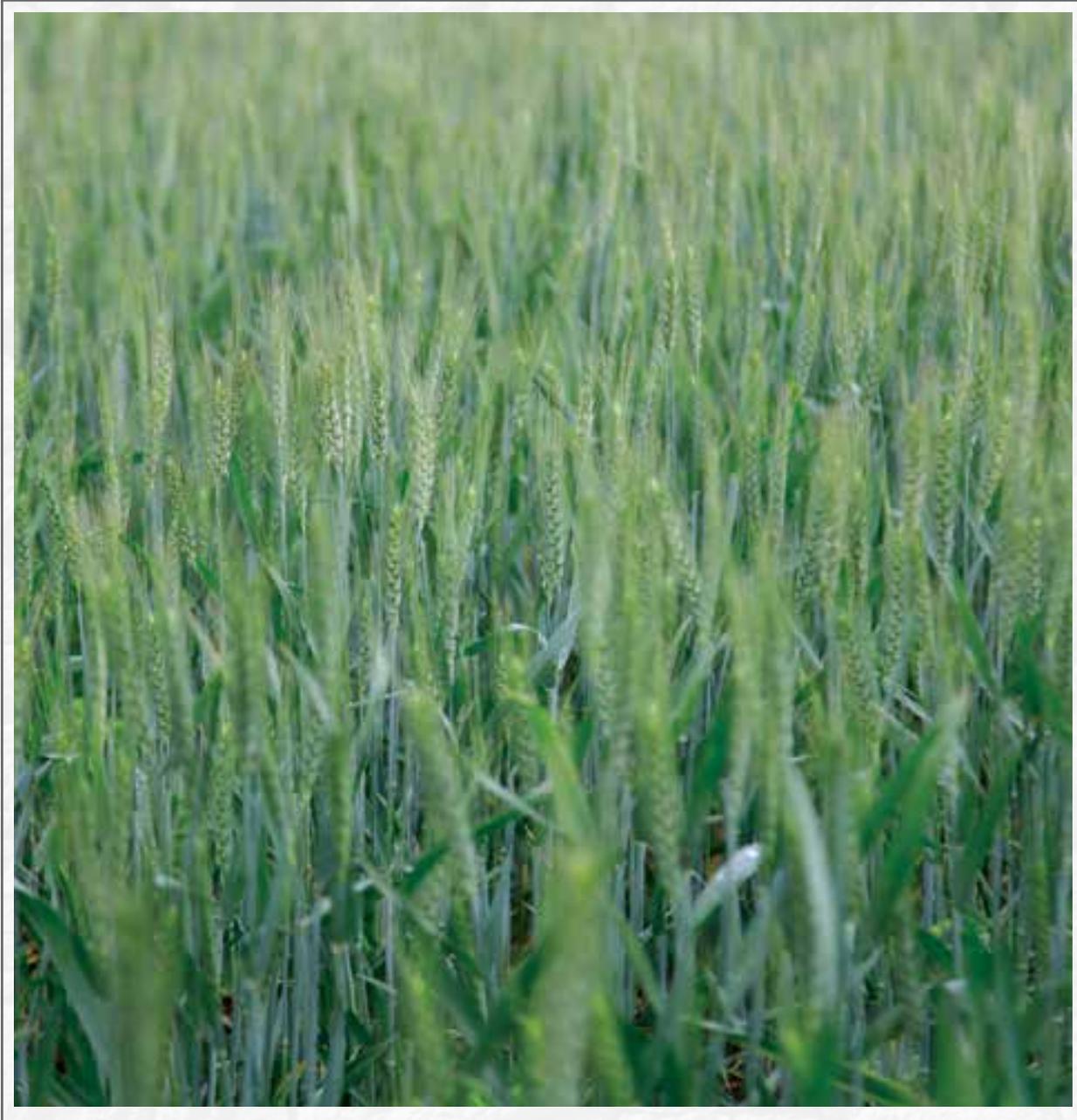


A Road Side Fruit Shop Taxila





Locat Tree



Wheat Fields



Taxila Stone Mountain Range



MINERALS

Taxila valley is rich in minerals. The famous minerals are limestone, coal and marble. Marble is used to make different kinds of house hold objects and other ornamental objects. Limestone is the characteristics of the Margalla range. Limestone is used in buildings construction and other uses. Limestone was used during Buddhist period for the construction of Buddhist stupas, monasteries and cities (Gazetteer of the Rawalpindi District 1893-94: 20; District Census Report of District Rawalpindi 1998: 15).



A photograph of a dirt path winding through a forest of bare trees. The trees are mostly without leaves, with some showing light green buds. The path leads into the distance where a person can be seen walking. The sky is overcast and grey. The text 'FLORA FAUNA' is centered in the middle of the image in a white, serif font.

FLORA
FAUNA

FLORA

The geographical set up and climatic conditions of the area have importance regarding the varying flora of Taxila. There are many kinds of trees, shrubs, herbs, climbers, grasses and fodder crops. Some bamboos are also found on the Mlower hills of the Margalla spur. The most frequent trees found on the Taxila hills are shisham (*Dalbrgia sissou*), Toot (*Morus alba*), Drek (*Molia semper vorens*), Phulai (*Acacia modesta*), Ber (*Zizyphus jujaba*), Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*), Kokar (*Acacia Arabica*) etc. Deodar (*Cedrus deodar*), Biar (*Pinus excels*), Paludar (*Abies smithiana*), Barangi (*Querrcus lassiflora*). Olive and Deodar. The wood of many trees is used for furniture and fuel (Gazetteer of the Rawalpindi district 1893-94: 22-28; District Census Report of District Rawalpindi 1998: 15-16).





Sannatha Bush, Taxila





Jangli Peepal (Ficus Lacor), Taxila





Castor Oil Plant



Lychi Bush



Sheep Flock



FAUNA

Domestic animals

Domestic animals are in abundance at Taxila. The common animals in this area are buffaloes, donkeys and cows. People have goats, dogs and cats in their homes (personal observation).





Shepherds



Cock



Animal Farm Taxila







WILD ANIMALS

The most common animals are jackals. Leopards are found in the hilly parts of the area. Wild pigs commonly exist in most parts of Taxila. Wild sheep are also found in the area but wild goats have been occasionally seen. Chikor, sisi, hares, black and grey partridges are found on all the low hill spurs, but are not often plentiful and seldom easy to get. Of migratory birds the bustard, obara, sand grouse, duck, snipe, geese and quail appear in the district in the specific season. Quail come in very large number in spring and autumn. Fishing is done in the Haro River, in the Soan and its tributaries. The rohu and the mahasir are the commonest fish in the rivers of this area. Khanpur dam is the famous fish point near Taxila (Gazetteer of the Rawalpindi district 1893-94: 28-29; District Census Report of District Rawalpindi 1998: 16).





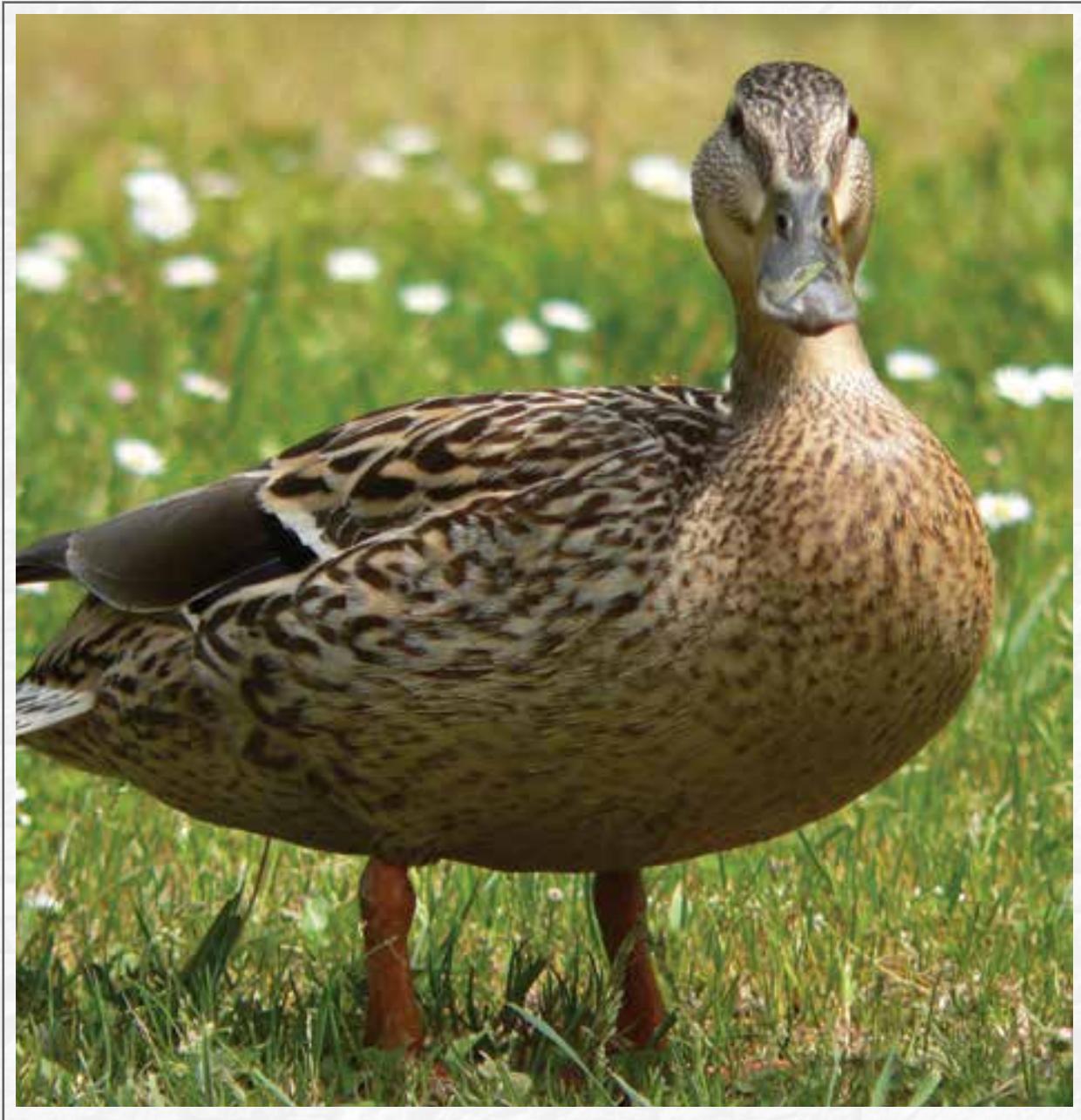
Brown Partridge



Quail



Chukar Partridge



Duck



A View of Taxila Valley from Julian Monastery

DEMOGRAPHY

According to the census report of 1998 the total population of Taxila is 151,000.



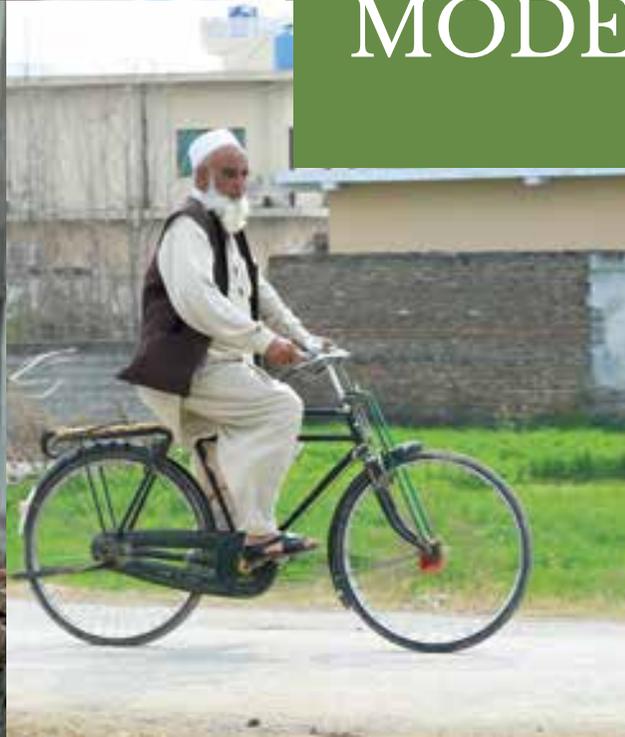


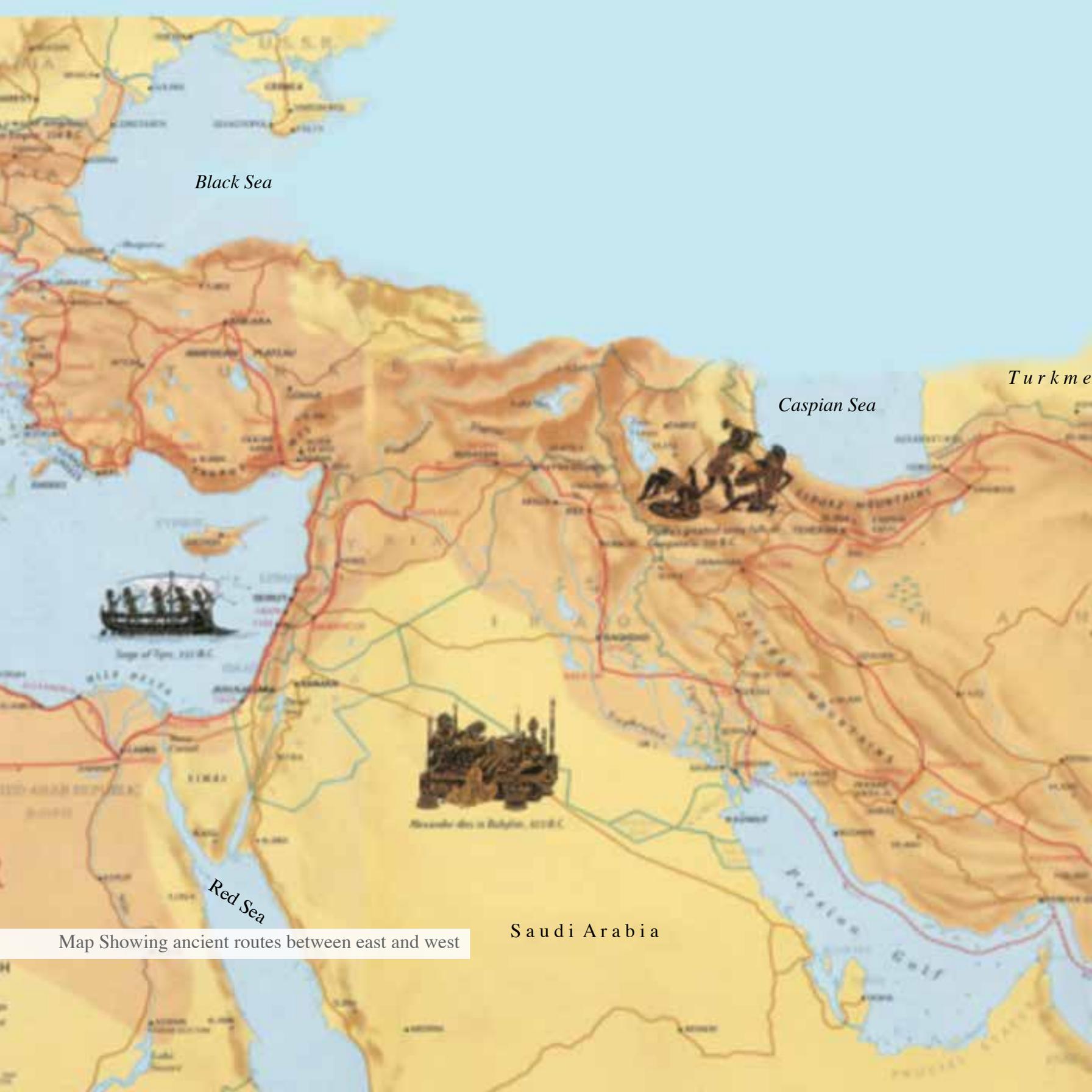


CHAPTER 2

ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY

People and Languages





Black Sea

Caspian Sea

Turkme



Sage of Tyre, 300 B.C.



Alexander dies in Babylon, 323 B.C.

Red Sea

Saudi Arabia

Map Showing ancient routes between east and west

HISTORY

Traces of earlier periods of settlement at Taxila go back to the first millennium B.C. However, its prominent period of history belongs to the second phase of urbanization in the Indo-Gangetic plains which was primarily caused by the introduction of iron technology. One cannot understand the early historic period of Taxila without understanding the history of Gandhara. According to Sir John Marshall, the Ramayana story tells us that Taxila was founded at the same time as Pushkalavati in Gandhara by Bharta, son of Kaikayi and younger brother of Rama, who fixed two of his sons as rulers in the two cities: Taksha in Takshsila and Pushkala in Pushkalavati. The Mahabharata relates that the city was conquered by king Janamejaya of Hastinapura who performed there the great sacrifice. In Buddhist literature and Jatakas, Taxila is considered a center of learning and the home of world famous



teachers. Raychaudhuri quotes another tradition which links the rise of Taxila and Gandhara with Aryan tribes, “The puranas represent the Gandhara princes as the descendants of Druhyu. This king and his people are mentioned several times in Rig-Veda.” He further adds, “Gandhara is a later form of the name of the people called Gandhari in the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda. In the Rig Veda, the good wool of the sheep of these tribesmen is referred to. In the Atharva Veda, Gandharis are mentioned with the Mujavats, apparently a hated people. The Brahmana texts refer to Nagnajit, King of Gandhara, and his son Svarjit. These scanty records of the Aryan princes give a hint of the political rise of Gandhara and the evidence of at least the wool industry shows the way of its industrial development. The significance of Gandhara is further seen in the role played by another ruler. In the words of Raychaudhuri, “In the middle of the sixth century B.C the throne of Gandhara was occupied by Pukkusati (Pushkarasin), who is said to have sent an embassy and a letter to king Bimbisara of Magadha.” This diplomatic and cultural relationship with a Gangetic king of repute speaks of other aspects of the life of Gandhara. Unfortunately, Pukkusati is the last of the old local kings to be mentioned in the Indian literature. Towards the close of the sixth century B.C, the life of Taxila was turned westwards and included in that of the Achaemenians of Iran. This old history of Taxila is buried in the eastern mound of the Hathial (Marshall 1960: 2; Dani 1999: 40-41).

Achaemenian Empire was established by Cyrus the Great in 558 B.C. and the Persians brought Gandhara under their rule in 518 B.C. So Taxila also became a part or satrapy of the Achaemenian Empire as some scholars extend the geographical boundaries of Gandhara to Taxila. It has been mentioned in the Naqsh-i-Rustam and Behistun inscriptions of Darius the Great that people of Gandhara were his loyal subject. The rule of Achaemenian dynasty lasted till the reign of Artaxerxes II (404-359 B.C.). The Achaemenian introduced satrapal system of government later this system became prevalent in the history of Northern and Western India. During Achaemenian period Aramaic was used as the medium of communications. In order to meet the growing needs of the empire and to flourish the trade activities they adopted the coin currency in their

empire. The Achaemenian were followed by the Greeks under the leadership of Alexander the Great for a short period. At the time of Alexander invasion, Ambhi, the king of Taxila, was already engaged in war with the Paurava king, Porus. So he easily surrendered his kingdom to Alexander. Greeks were uprooted by the Mauryan dynasty under Chandragupta Maurya. His grandson, Asoka, converted to Buddhism and he made Taxila (Gandhara) a great centre of Buddhism. Ashoka propagated Buddhism up to Central Asia. The Mauryan introduced highly organized administrative system. People enjoyed economic prosperity during Mauryan Empire. The Mauryan were followed by the Bactrian Greeks, Sakas, Parthians, Kushans and Sassanians for about seven hundred years. Under the Little or Kidara Kushana, Buddhism flourished once again. During this period the artists produced high standard religious art specimens in stone and stucco. Taxila got huge Buddhist establishments under Asoka and Kushana reign. But all these were vandalized by a Central Asian tribe known as White Huns in 5th century A.D. (Wheeler 1992: 41; Marshall 1960: 10-17).

The destruction and subsequent rule of Taxila by the Huns was followed by the reigns of Turki Shahi and Hindu Shahi dynasties. Then the area came under the Muslims and still the majority of the population is the follower of Islam. Taxila made an important part of the Muslim rulers of Delhi Sultanate and Mughal dynasty which were followed by the Sikh rule under Ranjit Singh and his successors and the British rule. It was in 1947 that the area naturally became integral part of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

It ought to be mentioned here that we find the material traces of all these peoples at Taxila the details of which have been provided in a later chapter.





Some Local Faces of Taxila



PEOPLE

People of Taxila valley consist of different ethnic and religious groups. Important tribes and communities are Bhatti, Butt, Rawal, Janjua, Chohan, Awan, Mughal, Quareshi, Syed, Dhunds and Sattis and the Ghakkars. Some minor tribes are Jatt, Malyar, Kashmiris and Pashtun. The people of Taxila have lighter complexion. They are well built and are of medium height. They are strong and rugged looking. A long shirt and shalwar is the general dress for the men. The women wear colored shalwars, long shirts and dopattas. Meat and vegetables are the famous food in Taxila. The main occupation of the people in Taxila is agriculture. But the agricultural holding are very small, people also depend on alternative sources of livelihood especially the industrial ones in recent decades (District Census Report Rawalpindi 1961:16-17; personal communication with students of Taxila).





Different Facets of Daily Life, Taxila





Get-together of local elders, Taxila





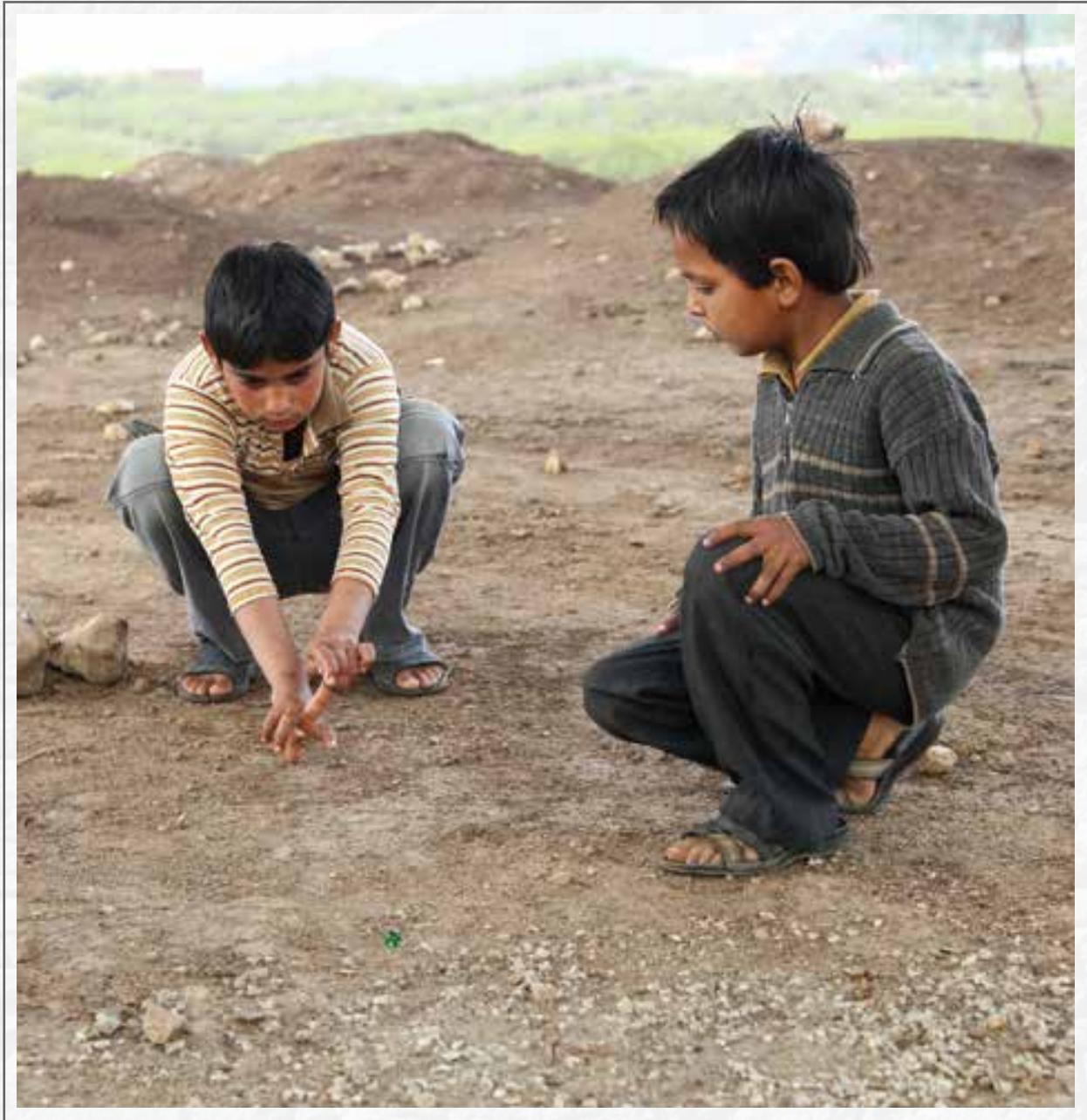
Local Bus, Taxila



Local Rickshaw, Taxila



Entertainment for Visitors at Khanpur Dam



Children Playing Glass Balls Game



Railway Track, Taxila





A View of Taxila Bazar





Local *Dhaba* Taxila





Local Tea Shop, Taxila





Vegetable Shop, Taxila





Shops along Railway Track, Taxila





Elders Gossping, Taxila



LANGUAGES

Urdu, Punjabi, Pothohari and Hindku are the main languages spoken in Taxila. Punjabi is the major language of Taxila. Besides these languages, Pashto is also spoken by limited number of people (District Census Report Rawalpindi 1961: 16).





SPRING ORANGE FESTIVAL AT TAXILA

Taxila is also famous for its outstanding Orange Orchards. These orange Orchards are located on the way to Khanpur that are supposed to be one of the world's best oranges, available in different variety. This fruit is produced in Panj Katha area located between Taxila and Khanpur spreading over 280 hectares. The area is famous for producing world class blend of orange. According to estimates, this area produces around 2,200 to 2,400 tons of fruit per annum which is unique in its juice content and taste. People from Taxila, Wah Cantonment and Rawalpindi and Islamabad daily visit the area to buy red blood oranges during the season. Other blends like shakry, mussamy, hamlin, Washington naval and ruby red are also available at the makeshift kiosks.

Syed Zaheer-ul-Hassan Zaildar s/o Syed Saghir Hussain Shah Zaildar a notable social and political personality is the pioneer to organize Spring Orange Festival in the month of February each year at Taxila where foreign dignitaries and notables are invited to participate. Spring Orange Festival-2015 was held at Zaildar house Taxila in the month of February-2015 where foreign diplomat of 40 countries were present. This event was capitalized to display stone crafts artifacts and the PSIC product catalogue titled "Stone Crafts Taxila" was introduced among the participants for Marketing and Promotion. The participants acknowledged PSIC contribution in the development and promotion of Gandhara art and patronizing of artisans of Taxila.