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Archaeological Explorations in *Trans*-Yamuna Region of Mathura

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Mathura is situated about 150 km south of Delhi on National Highway No. 2. The important trade routes linking Takshasila and Bharukachchha passed via Mathura. Mathura district lies between Lat. 27°14' and 27°58'N and Long. 77°17' and 78°12'E and covers an area of about 3625 square km (Joshi 1968: 1). The area of the modern Mathura district is 3340 square km with a population of over 2 million people. This area does not include the *pargana* of Sadabad, which was earlier part of Mathura district. The basic data of village-to-village survey in the *trans*-Yamuna region of district Mathura would help in assigning the beginning of culture in the area and the settlement pattern especially during the PGW period and the Kushan period. A basic plan of ancient trade routes can also be worked out. The *trans*-Yamuna area is the more fertile area of the district but somehow the number of ancient sites is lesser in comparison to *cis*-Yamuna area. Here a site wise analysis of the *trans*-Yamuna region is being provided (for the location of the sites in the map, please see Fig. 1).

Hansganj - Isapur: This village site famous for Durvasa temple is located on the opposite bank of

Yamuna, in front of Kans Qila. Location of this site proves that the course of Yamuna has remained same for these years. Yamuna takes turn at Mathura with Isapur situated on the left side. Isapur has provided a number of sculptures belonging to 1st century BC, Kushan and later periods, which are now housed at Mathura and other museums. During the explorations, a deposit of about 3 m along the Yamuna course and of about 6 m at some spots in the village was observed. There is a possibility that some of the deposit of the site would have been washed away by the floods of Yamuna.

Taiyabpur/ Taiyyapur: This site lies ahead of Isapur in front of Lohvan after crossing the railway track to Hathras. The area of the site, almost destroyed, was about 150 x 140 x 2 m. Major part of this site would have formed part of some Buddhist convent as the finding of a Kushan period Hariti image from here by Vogel indicates (Vogel 1906-07: 77). The site appears to have been in use during the early centuries of the Christian era on the basis of red ware pottery found from here.

Daharwa: This site is situated on the road linking

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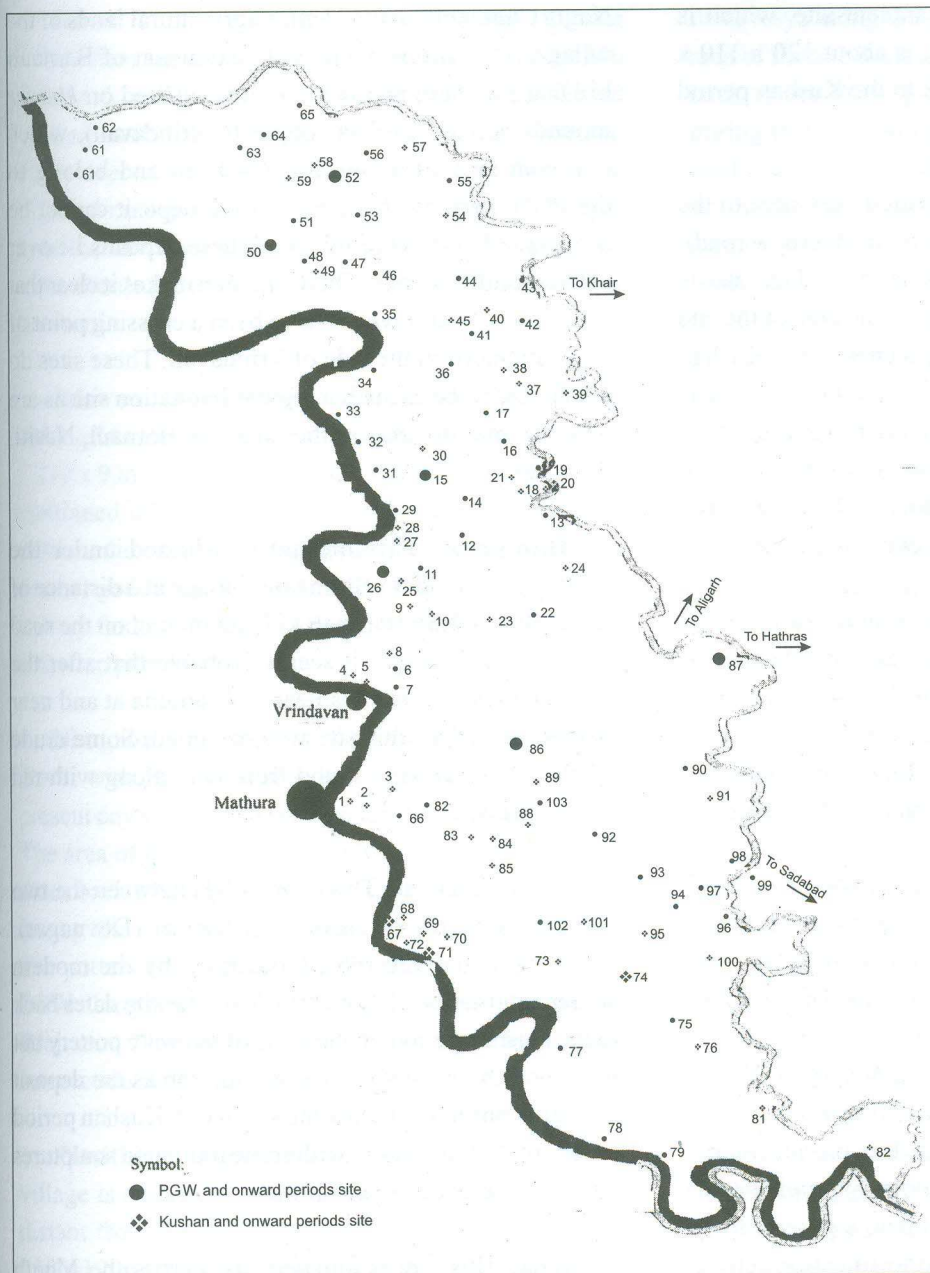


Fig. 1: Map showing archaeological sites in the trans-Yamuna region of district Mathura

List of the Sites

1. Isapur
2. Taiyyapur
3. Daharwa
4. Nagla Khera
5. Saur
6. Barnauli ki Dhari
7. Nagla Chamaran
8. Bhimgaon
9. Jasoli
10. Arua
11. Jawra
12. Jaiswan
13. Nimgaon
14. Nasiti
15. Harnaul
16. Karahri
17. Rajagarhi
18. Kurwara
19. Iroli Junnandar
20. Hardpur
21. Siraila
22. Aiyera Khera
23. Dunaitiya
24. Bibawali
25. Itokari Tila
26. Mat
27. Chhahri
28. Bijhauri
29. Bhadravan
30. Tentigaon
31. Iroli Gujar
32. Auhawa
33. Bidhauni
34. Surir
35. Mirpur
36. Bhadanwara
37. Lohai
38. Badanpur
39. Bhalai
40. Bera
41. Jarara
42. Khaira
43. Ikhu
44. Hasanpur
45. Sikandarpur
46. Palkhera
47. Barauth
48. Bagharra
49. Sher ka Khera
50. Nohjhil
51. Parsauli
52. Bajna
53. Shall
54. Naoli
55. Pachahra
56. Edalgarhi
57. Kaulahar
58. Kataliya
59. Kulana
60. Musamna
61. Managarhi
62. Manigarhi
63. Awakhera
64. Kaneka
65. Sakatpur
66. Lohvan
67. Gokul
68. Pajaya Gokul
69. Mahavan (outer)
70. Sarai Ali Khan
71. Mahavan
72. Raskhan Samadhi
73. Hathaura
74. Baldev/ Dauji
75. Selkhera
76. Barauli
77. Sentkhera
78. Gol khera
79. Akos
80. Midhauli
81. Gukhrauli
82. Gosna
83. Sihora
84. Kakretiya
85. Karab
86. Raya
87. Sonai
88. Itauli
89. Madaim
90. Gudera
91. Ananda
92. Sonkh khera
93. Pachawar
94. Sarkand Khera
95. Avairni
96. Daghainta
97. Jugsana
98. Baltikri
99. Unchagaon
100. Gotha
101. Bandi
102. Jagdishpur
103. Khirari

Taiyabpur with Panigaon. The ancient site, which is occupied by the modern village, is about 120 x 110 x 3 m in dimension and dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of the pottery.

Nagla Khera: This site is situated very near to the road linking Vrindavan with Manth or Mat (new road). The site (*khera*) is situated outside the village and is being used for agricultural purpose. The area of the site is about 180 x 160 x 4 m and dates back to the Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods as indicated by the red ware pottery and a broken sculpture of the Kushan period. Some miniature sculptures of the Rajput period (*circa* 11th-12th century) of black and grey coloured stone were observed at two village shrines.

Saur: This site is situated very near to Nagla Khera site near the disturbed land of the Yamuna. The area of the site is about 200 x 150 x 6 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of red ware pottery. Some broken Kushan sculptural finds were observed near the cart track going to Piprauth from Nagla Khera.

Barnauli ki Dhai: Just after crossing the canal on Raya-Manth road, there is a huge isolated mound on the left side of road about 300 m away from it, measuring about 180 x 160 x 12 m. The deposit of the mound mainly belongs to PGW, BRW and BSW pottery traditions; some pre-Mauryan and Mauryan deposit were also observed at the site. After it the mound seems to have been abandoned. It seems to be a prominent pre-Christian era site. BRW of this site may provide some early dating. During the explorations, a possibility of the presence of some kind of mud fortification activity towards its south was also observed.

This site is coming under express-highway project linking Noida with Agra. Steps must be taken by ASI to protect this mound.

Nagla Chamaran: It lies outside the village of

Nagla Chamaran in the *khadar* agricultural lands of the village. This site is actually an extension of Barnauli ki Dhai i.e. there are about 4 sites situated on *khadar* mounds across Yamuna (opposite Vrindavan), which cover an area of about 500 x 400 m and belong to the PGW period. The height of the deposit cannot be determined in exact terms as all these deposits lie over natural sandy mounds. Their situation makes it clear that somewhere near it would have been a crossing point of the Yamuna from the side of Vrindavan. These sites do not appear to be as such a regular habitation site as are other normal mounds in the area like Harnaul, Nasiti, Raya etc.

Bhimgaon: This mound is situated under the habitation of modern Bhimgaon village at a distance of about 600 m from Barnauli ki Dhai mound on the road to Manth from Raya. It seems probable that after the abandonment of the sites near the Yamuna at and near Barnauli ki Dhai, this site was occupied. Some crude BRW potsherds were found from here along with red ware pottery.

Jasoli – Darbai: This mound lies between the two adjacent villages of Jasoli and Darbai (Devnagar). The area of the site mostly occupied by the modern settlement is about 220 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of red ware pottery but has a possibility of some earlier horizon as the deposit was still continuing below the surface. A Kushan period terracotta figurine along with some mutilated sculptures was observed at an open shrine.

Arua: This site is situated just across the Manth branch of Ganga canal, opposite Darbai. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of red ware pottery found from the site. There is a possibility of the presence of an earlier horizon at the site as some grey ware potsherds (with thick fabric) along with a Sunga period bowl with incurved rim were observed at the site.

Jabra: This site is situated to the north of Arua village near the canal. The area of the site is about 240 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period with a possibility of the presence of an earlier horizon as the deposit was still continuing below surface in the exposed rain-gully at the site. The pottery found from here included red ware pottery along with some grey ware sherds (of thick fabric) and ill fired brown colour potsherds.

Jaiswan: This site lies ahead of Jabra on the road linking Jabra with Gorai. The area of the site is about 250 x 210 x 9 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. A Mauryan grey colour terracotta mother goddess figurine was observed at a shrine. The pottery findings from the site included PGW, BRW and red ware pottery.

Nimgaon: This site lies on the ancient route linking Gorai with Raya, about 4 km away from Gorai. The present day village completely occupies the ancient site. The area of the site is about 260 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The pottery found from here included PGW, BRW and BSW along with grey ware and red ware. The famous Braj saint Nimbarkacharya is believed to have some connection with this place.

Nasithi: This ancient site occupied by the modern village is situated along the Ganga canal about 18 km distant from Raya. The area of the site is about 260 x 230 x 12 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The findings included some broken sculptural pieces belonging to the Kushan and early medieval period. The pottery findings include PGW, BSW and red ware pottery.

Harnaul: This site lies at a distance of about 20 km

from Raya along the canal, 2 km north of Nasithi. The area of the site is about 300 x 280 x 15 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times as confirmed by the finding of PGW, BRW and red ware potsherds along with sculptural pieces of the Kushan and medieval periods. A Gupta period terracotta figurine of reddish brown colour was also observed at a shrine. The local people call the village as Hindol. The ancient site lies underneath the modern village settlement.

Karahari: This site lies 4 km east of Tentigaon near the canal. The area of the site is about 270 x 230 x 11 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued during the succeeding periods as the surface finding of PGW, BSW, BRW, grey and red ware potsherds indicate. A Kushan period broken *Ekamukha Sivalinga* (of about 4 inches) was also observed at a shrine. The modern village completely occupies the ancient site.

Rajagarhi: This site lies about 3 km northwest of Karahari. The mound was situated outside the village and was being destroyed by the villagers possibly for getting soil. The area of the site is about 200 x 170 x 8 m. On the basis of the pottery findings, the site dates back to the PGW period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Kurwara: This site is situated about 2 km east of Nasithi across the canal. The area of the site is about 200 x 210 x 8 m and is occupied by modern village settlement. The site dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of red ware pottery. Two grey ware sherds along with some BRW sherds were also observed at the site indicating a pre-Kushan horizon at the site. Traditionally the site is considered to be the spot of *Jahara vana*.

Iroli Junnardar: This site is situated about 3 km north of Kurwara and is occupied by modern village settlement. The area of the site is about 200 x 170 x 10 m.

The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The pottery found from the site included PGW, BRW, BSW, plain grey ware and red ware pottery.

Hardpur: This site is situated between Iroli and Karahari about 1 km south of the latter. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period as the surface finding of red ware pottery indicates. Some mutilated sculptural pieces of the Kushan and medieval period were also observed at two shrines. The ancient mound is occupied by the modern village settlement.

Aiyera Khera: It is situated about 4 km distant from Raya on the ancient route to Aligarh from Mathura. Size of the mound is about 260 x 220 m with a height of about 11 m. The site dates back to the PGW period. Mauryan and later period potsherds were also observed in the section of the mound. A Kushan period broken Yaksha sculpture is still being worshipped at the site by the name of *Khera Baba*. A Gupta period broken terracotta brick panel with two human heads was also observed at this shrine.

Kharba: This site is situated about 2 km northeast of Raya. The ancient site is partially lying underneath the modern village and partially destroyed. The area of the site is about 100 x 100 x 2 m. The site dates back to the post-Gupta period as the red ware pottery and some sculptural pieces indicate.

Dunaitiya: This site is situated near the road joining Raya with Nimgaon, opposite Aiyera-khera. The modern village is situated on the ancient deposit and some part of it is still visible at the outskirts of the village. The area of the site is about 190 x 170 x 4 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of red ware pottery. Besides the red ware, some degenerated grey ware and BRW sherds were also observed.

Nadaya: This site is situated outside Dunaitiya about 500 m away from the village. It is the spot of some early medieval temple and some architectural fragments of that temple can be observed there. A modern temple has come up at the place. Walls of the old temple, even later than the first temple, built of *lakhori* bricks can be observed underneath the temple. The area of the site is about 50 x 40 x 2 m.

Bibawali: This site is situated about 1 km southwest of Nimgaon near the Raya-Nimgaon road. The area of the site now occupied by the modern village is about 170 x 140 x 4 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times as the finding of red ware pottery and a few broken sculptural pieces of medieval period indicate.

Aira: This site lies at the curve of the modern Aligarh road past the town of Raya. The area of the site is about 120 x 100 x 4 m. The site dates back to the post-Gupta period with a possibility of Kushan horizon in the lower layers as majority of pottery belongs to the early medieval period along with some stamped red ware potsherds belonging to early centuries of the Christian era. The ancient site lies underneath the modern village settlement.

Itokari Tila, Manth (Mat): This world famous mound is situated about 300 m away from the Raya-Manth road on the right side and about 500 m before Manth. This small mound of about 110 x 100 m has provided a number of Kushan royal statues and was the site of Kushan *devakula*. Pt. Radha Krishna excavated it in the year 1918. The mound is roughly circular in shape and has a height of not more than 2.5 m.

Manth (Mat): The town of Manth is situated on the left bank of river Yamuna. The mound at the site was disturbed when it was converted into a fortress during the late medieval period. The area of the site is about 250 x 240 x 8 m. It dates back to the PGW period and

continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods of Maurya, Sunga, Kushan and later periods as the finding of pottery belonging to these periods indicate. A headless image of Surya belonging to the Kushan period was observed to be in worship at an open shrine.

Chhanhri and Bhandir van: Chhanhri village is situated near the Yamuna on the Manth-Tentigaon route. This site is considered to be the place of origin by some north Indian brahmans like Bhardwaj and Tiwaris. The site dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of red ware pottery. The size of this site is about 120 x 100 x 2 m. A little away from Chhanhri towards the Yamuna, there lies an enclosed religious area, known as Bhandir van.

One very interesting point about Bhandira van is that Mahavira is said to have stayed at Bhandira Udyana when he had visited Mathura. This Bhandir van might be identified with Bhandira Udyana.

Bijholi: Along the river some 600 m away from Bhandir van is the site of Bijholi, located near *khadar* land. The area of the site is about 150 x 130 m with a height of about 2-3 metres. The deposit mainly belongs to the medieval period (early to late), but some early pottery in the form of red ware bowls of *circa* 2nd-3rd century AD was also found from the deposit at the site. There is a possibility that it might have worked as a temporary extension for the site of Bhadravan during the Kushan period.

Bhadravan: It is located along the Yamuna about 500 m north of Bijholi. This is a typical archaeological mound where agricultural activity is being done. The size of the mound is about 240 x 210 m with a height of about 10 m. The site dates back to the PGW, NBPW onward periods. Presence of Kushan and Gupta bricks as well as ring-wells was observed at the mound. It is an ideal mound from the point of view of horizontal excavation.

Tentigaon/Akbarpur: This village site is located about a distance of 10 km from Manth. From here, the route bifurcates, one goes towards Nohjhil, Bajna and other towards Aligarh via Khair. Tentigaon is a mound of about 170 x 130 x 5 m dimensions, on which the present village is located. Kushan red ware pottery was found from here.

Eroli Gujar: It is a lofty mound along the Yamuna of about 10 m height, on which modern village is situated. The area of the site is about 190 x 150 m. This site dates back to the PGW period and continued to be in habitation in the successive phases of Maurya, Sunga, Kushan, Gupta and medieval period on the basis of the pottery findings. On the opposite bank of the Yamuna is the important site of Nandghat (belonging to PGW, Maurya, Sunga and Kushan periods), which is almost equidistant from Bhadravana, Eroli and Auhawa.

Auhawa: This is a similar type of mound as Eroli Gujar. The modern village is located over it. It is also situated along the Yamuna. This site dates back to the PGW period and continued to be in habitation during the successive phases of Maurya, Sunga, Kushan, Gupta and medieval periods as the pottery findings and some broken sculptural pieces indicate. The size of the mound is about 230 x 200 x 10 m.

Bidhauni: This lofty mound, on which the modern village is situated, lies between Auhawa and Mirpur along the Yamuna. Some PGW potsherds along with grey and red ware pottery and few bricks were found from here. The height of mound is about 10 m with an area of about 240 x 200 m. It continued in habitation during the succeeding periods.

Surir: This site was an important town till 100 years back, larger than Nohjhil and Manth. The actual name of the town is said to be Sugriva ka Khera. The modern town has engulfed the portions of the mound. The size of the mound is about 340 x 280 m with a height of

about 15 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods till the recent times as the surface findings of PGW, BRW, grey and red ware potsherds indicate.

Bhadanwara: This village site occupying the ancient mound is situated 1 km to the east of Surir. The area of the site is about 240 x 220 x 6 m. Based on the findings of the pottery, this site dates back to the Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Lohi: This village site is situated about 5 km to the east of Surir. The ancient mound has been occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 250 x 230 x 5 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of red ware pottery and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times as indicated by red ware pottery and sculptural fragments.

Badanpur: This village site occupying the ancient mound is situated about 1 km to the north of Lohi. The area of the ancient site is about 200 x 180 x 7 m. The site on the basis of the finding of red ware pottery, including some stamped potsherds, dates back to the Kushan and onward periods. Some thick grey ware potsherds along with BRW were also observed here, indicating possibility of the presence of a pre-Kushan cultural horizon.

Bhalai: This village is situated about 8 km to the east of Surir and about 7 km north of Gorai. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 260 x 240 x 6 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period as some brick bats and red ware potsherds indicate and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Jarara: This village is situated about 4 km to the northeast of Surir. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 220 x 9 m. The

site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods till the recent times which is indicated by the findings of PGW, BRW, BSW and grey and red ware sherds along with some Mauryan and Kushan bricks.

Bera: This site is situated about 1 km to the north of Jarara village. The ancient site is lying underneath the modern village and has an area of about 200 x 180 x 4 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued to be inhabited during the succeeding periods on the basis of the surface finding of red ware pottery belonging to early centuries of the Christian era as well as later periods.

Khaira: Situated on the Tentigaon-Khair road about 7 km to the northeast of Surir, this ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 7 m. PGW, BRW and grey ware potsherds were observed here along with the red ware pottery. There is another ancient but comparatively extensive site of this name in *cis*-Yamuna region near Chhata, which derives its name from Khadir *vana*.

Mirpur: This village site is situated past Surir on Mathura-Nohjhil road. The mound was partly unoccupied on the left side of the road. The area of mound is about 230 x 210 m and with a height about 5 m. The earliest occupation at the site belongs to the PGW period as could be identified by pottery. The site continued to be in habitation during the succeeding periods as the findings of BRW, BSW, plain grey ware and red ware pottery indicates.

Sikandarpur: This village site occupying the ancient deposit is situated about 2.5 km away from Mirpur. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 5 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods on the basis of the red ware pottery found from the site. This deposit was still continuing below the surface level in an exposed section,

so there is the possibility of the presence of some earlier horizon as well.

Hasanpur: This ancient site occupied by the modern village is situated about 5 km to the east of Mirpur. The area of the ancient site is about 250 x 230 x 11 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued to be inhabited during the succeeding periods until medieval period on the basis of the finding of PGW, BSW, NBPW, BRW, plain and thick grey ware and red ware pottery along with some Kushan period bricks.

Ikhu: This village is situated about 8 km to the northeast of Mirpur and about 3 km to the east of Naoli. The ancient site occupied by the modern settlement has an area of about 230 x 210 x 12 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods till the recent times. The pottery observed at the site consisted PGW, BSW, BRW, plain grey ware and red ware along with some Mauryan and Kushan period brickbats.

Palkhera: This village site is situated about 6 km to the east of Nohjhil town. The area of the ancient mound occupied by the modern village is about 250 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of the pottery types observed at the site which include PGW, BSW, NBPW and plain grey ware and red ware. Besides, some broken sculptural pieces of the Kushan and early medieval period were also observed at a shrine.

Barauth: This village site is situated about 3 km to the east of Nohjhil town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 250 x 230 x 14 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods, on the basis of the findings of PGW, BRW, BSW and red ware pottery.

Bagharra: The village of Bagharra is situated over the ancient mound. The area of the mound is about 240 x 200 x 11 m. The site dates back to the PGW and onward periods until medieval times on the basis of the findings of PGW and other associated pottery like BSW and BRW along with red ware pottery.

In between Bagharra and Barauth, there lies another ancient mound called as Sher ka Khera. The size of the abandoned mound is about 240 x 220 x 6 m. The site dates back to the Sunga-Kushan period and continued to be inhabited during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of the presence of red ware pottery of early centuries of the Christian era.

Nohjhil: This is a huge lofty mound, first reported by R.C. Gaur (*IAR* 1982-83: 99). This mound covers an area of about 430 x 330 m, with maximum height about 23 m. This mound was disturbed probably due to some fortification activity, which took place during late medieval period. PGW and later period cultures have been identified at this mound. The area of this mound may be much larger. Some potsherds with incised zig-zag pattern quite similar to the OCP tradition were also observed at the site. There is a huge lake situated by the side of the mound.

Parsauli: This village is situated about 2 km to the southeast of Bajna town. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern settlement. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 6 m. The site dates back to the Sunga-Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods as the findings of grey ware along with red ware indicate. The ancient name of the site might have been Parasrapuri.

Bajna: This mound site is fully occupied by the modern town. The area of the mound is about 380 x 320 m and the height of mound is about 14 m. Bajna is generally a name of sites in the region of Braj where a Kushan period Buddhist monastery had been situated.

This site occupies a very important place as far as various ancient trade routes alignments are concerned. The ancient mound of the town can be located in the Uparkot *mohalla*. The site dates back to the PGW and onward periods on the basis of the findings of PGW, BSW and red ware potsherds.

Shall: Shall is situated about 4 km to the southeast of Bajna town. The area of the ancient mound occupied by the modern settlement is about 250 x 230 x 12 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of the finding of PGW, BSW, BRW and red ware pottery from the site. Local people believe that the name of the village has been derived from the legendary King Salya of the *Mahabharata* fame.

Naoli: This village is situated about 7 km to the southeast of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern habitation is about 240 x 220 x 6 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of the finding of red ware pottery.

Pachahra: This site is situated about 7 km to the east of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the ancient village is about 260 x 240 x 12 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The pottery found from the site includes PGW, BSW and BRW along with grey and red ware potsherds.

Edalgarhi: This site is situated about 3 km to the northeast of Bajna town. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern settlement. The area of the ancient site is about 230 x 210 x 7 m. It dates back to the PGW and onward periods on the basis of the finding of PGW and red ware potsherds.

Kaulahar: This site is situated about 5 km to the east of Bajna town on the road to Khair and is occupied by

the modern village. It is about 230 x 210 x 7 m in size. The red ware pottery found from the site helps in dating it to the Kushan and onward cultural periods.

Katailiya: This site is situated about 2 km west of Bajna. The area of the site presently occupied by the modern settlement is about 230 x 220 x 7 m. The finding of red ware pottery belonging to early centuries of the Christian era helps in dating this site to the Kushan period. The site continued during the succeeding periods as the pottery findings as well as some broken early medieval sculptural findings indicate.

Kulana: This small village site occupying the ancient mound is situated about 2 km west of Bajna on the route to Musamna. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. It dates back to the Kushan and onward periods on the basis of the finding of red ware pottery.

Musamna: This site is the next ancient site lying along river Yamuna past Nohjhil. The area of the site is about 250 x 230 x 10 m. It dates back to the PGW and onward periods as supported by the findings of PGW, BRW and red ware potsherds. It would have been a crossing point of river Yamuna in the ancient time to go towards Majhoi and other *cis*-Yamuna sites.

Awakhera: This site is situated about 4 km to the northwest of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 250 x 230 x 14 m. PGW, BSW, BRW, NBPW, grey ware and red ware potsherds were observed at the site. On the basis of these findings it dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Manigarhi: This site is situated about 11 km to the northwest of Nohjhil near Yamuna *khadar* land. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 260 x 240 x 14 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued to be inhabited during the

succeeding periods until medieval times as suggested by the pottery finding of PGW, BRW, BSW along with grey ware and red ware.

Managarhi: This site is situated about 14 km to the northwest of Nohjhil town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 250 x 230 x 11 m. PGW, BSW, BRW along with grey ware and red ware potsherds were observed here. The site dates back to as early as PGW period and continued to be inhabited during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Kaneka: This site is situated about 5 km to the north of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 200 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to the Kushan and onward periods with possibility of an early horizon as the finding of some BRW, red and grey ware potsherds indicated.

Sakatpur: This site is situated about 6 km to the north of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 230 x 200 x 9 m. The site dates back to PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of the finding of PGW, BSW, BRW and grey and red ware pottery.

Lohvan (Lohban): This site of Puranic association is situated at a distance of about 2.5 km from Mathura. A mound of about 240 x 200 x 6 m dimensions was found during explorations. It dates back to PGW period as few potsherds of PGW tradition along with BRW were observed as surface findings and the site continued to be in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times. Modern village is situated on the ancient mound and around it. Near an ancient pond, a Kushan image was found, though broken with only lower part surviving and having polished surface (possibly because of oil). It is being worshipped as Lohasura, the Puranic demon who was killed by Lord Krishna. A village temple nearby has a beautiful but broken Uma-Mahesvara murti

of about the 8th century AD. From Lohvan the ancient route goes towards Sadabad, one route via Gokul, Mahavan, Baldev while the other route goes via Gosna, Kakretiya/ Raya, Khirari, Bandi, Baldev.

Gokul: Gokul is situated about 8 km to the south of Lohvan. There are many elevations, mostly natural, but some of them might be old settlements. The site of a mound that was explored is situated little outside the main town and is locally known as Pajaya. One mound here is intact while another smaller one might have existed there as appears from the destructed sections. The whole area would range between 180 x 160 m. The maximum height of the intact mound is about 10 m. The archaeological deposit belongs to as early as Kushan and Gupta periods. Near this mound is a 17th-18th century structure with a beautiful garden, which should be protected and developed for tourism.

Mound at the entrance of Mahavan: As one enters the town, there is a mound on the left side of road, which is rapidly being lost. This mound is about 7 m high. Red ware pottery was found from the mound. The size of the mound is about 120 x 80 m. In a nearby temple, some small Kushan and medieval images were kept. Few years back, this mound was totally destroyed for constructing tehsil building of Mahavan by the State Government.

Mound at Sarai Ali Khan: Mound at Sarai Ali khan is situated about 600 m away from the above-mentioned mound, which is situated along the Gokul-Mahavan road. Shape, size and nature of these mounds are same as that of Gokul.

The Protected Site at Mahavan: This mound of Mahavan is a huge one with an area of about 800 x 700 m. The 17th century Assi Khamba Temple is a part of this mound. The average height of the mound is about 6 m. The pottery present at the site appears to be medieval red ware. In the early 11th century, there was the fort of king

Kulachandra whom Mahumud of Ghazni had defeated in 1017 AD. Though one or two Kushan images have been reported from Mahavan area, no Kushan remains were found because of overlying medieval deposit. In a section of the mound near the Assi Khambha Temple pottery belonging to the PGW, Mauryan and Kushan period was observed during a recent visit.

Hathaura: This site is situated about 1.5 km ahead of Baldev on the road linking Mathura with Baldev. The area of the site occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of red ware pottery.

Baldev or Dauji: This is an important ancient town. Some scholars have identified the sculpture, which is being worshipped as the chief deity, as an image of Kushan period Balarama (Vogel 1908-09: 161). Balarama was an important deity during the Kushan period and Baldev (ancient name Reedo Grama) is considered to be his birthplace. The route goes to many important sites like Sadabad, Jalesar and Kampil, Akos, Agra from here.

Selkhera: This site is situated about 7 km to the southeast of Baldev. The modern village has occupied the ancient mound. The area of the site is about 210 x 200 x 8 m and it dates back to the PGW and succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of pottery findings.

Barauli: This site is situated in between Selkhera and Akos. The modern village occupies it and the area is about 200 x 180 x 4 m. Its dates back to the Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until recent times. An image of the Kushan period was found from here that is now housed in the Mathura Museum.

Sent Khera: This site is situated on the bank of

river Yamuna and is an isolated mound away from the nearby village Barha. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 11 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval period. PGW, BRW, BSW along with grey ware and red ware potsherds were observed here.

Akos: This site is situated along a very sharp turn of river Yamuna about 20 km southeast of Baldev. Floods also have largely destroyed the site. Two broken terracottas of NBPW period and some PGW potsherds observed at the site with no substantial deposit of these early periods visible indicate every possibility that the area of the actual site would have been much larger. The site is serving as a crossover point for river Yamuna to go towards Agra at Runkata and Sikandara. The actual site is very small and contains not more than 10 houses atop.

Gol: This site is situated near the *khadar* land along river Yamuna and is about 3 km distant from the site of Akos with no access to the site. It should lie in between the sites of Sent Khera and Akos along the Yamuna. One can reach it only after travelling for about 2 km on foot across the agricultural fields. The site is about 240 x 220 x 9 m and dates back to the PGW period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. PGW, BSW, BRW, NBPW potsherds along with grey and red ware pottery were observed here. It is already destroyed a lot because of the Yamuna floods and is free of modern structures except for some small shrines.

Midhawali: This site is situated about 7 km east of Akos along river Yamuna and partially occupied by the modern village settlement, belongs to the Kushan and onward periods on the basis of the finding of red ware pottery. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 7 m.

Gukhrauli: This ancient village site is situated near river Yamuna close to the border of old Mathura district with Agra. The area of the site is about 240 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period on the basis of

the finding of red ware pottery. From this village site, a mother with child sculpture of the Kushan period was found which is now housed at Mathura Museum.

Shahpur-Gosna: This site situated on the ancient route to Sankisa via Hathras, is about 6 km distant from Mathura across the Yamuna on the Raya Road. This was one of the better-preserved archaeological sites in the Mathura region and is under Government protection. However, according to locals, 62 acres of the land was under Government protection but a lot has been destroyed within that area.

During the explorations, it appeared to be a very promising site for the archaeological studies in Mathura. The earliest culture known from the site is the PGW of early tradition, associated with BRW and BSW but its antiquity will go much early as some potsherds of black-and-red ware found which might belong to the first half of 2nd millennium BC. Mat impression was found on one of such potsherds while another was burnished like Neolithic black-and-red ware. The pre-Mauryan and Mauryan cultures at the site were quite prosperous as is evident from the quantity and quality of grey colour terracotta mother goddess and animal figurines as well as of pottery. This site was under habitation during the Sunga, Kushan, Gupta and post-Gupta periods as evidenced by various potsherds, terracottas and sculptural finds. In the year 2010, a team of the Archaeological Survey of India led by B.R. Mani which included the author collected charcoal samples from the site and Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany (BSIP), Lucknow has provided C-14 dates of two of the samples (seemingly from the PGW horizon) of about 2150 BC.

Malha-Kakretiya: This site is located on a local link route between Gosna and Khirari, about 8 km from Mathura. Here, a Kushan site of about 180 x 160 m dimension was observed with a maximum height of 1 m from the ground. Though the deposit is more than 2 m thick at present, villagers said that the site was quite

loftier earlier but was cut for agricultural purpose. When the mound was being levelled for agricultural purpose, one broken lower part of a Kushan period Hariti red sand stone image was found. Along with it head of a deity (in all probability the Buddha) of Kushan period, made of red sandstone was also found, which was later on stolen. An image of a deity made of black sand stone was also found from here belonging to early medieval period. This site appears to be a monastic establishment of the Kushan period that was used for regular habitation in the succeeding periods. Now, the newly constructed Noida-Agra Expressway is running over this site.

Sihora: This site is situated about 3 km distant from Gosna and about 2 km distant from Kakretiya mound. The area of the site that is presently occupied by the modern village is about 180 x 150 x 4 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of red ware pottery.

Karab: This site is situated about 2 km distant from Sihore on the road linking Raya with Baldev. The modern village is situated over the ancient site. The area of the ancient site is about 200 x 170 x 7 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of red ware pottery. There is a possibility of the presence of an earlier archaeological horizon at this site as the deposit was still continuing below the surface in the exposed section.

Raya: Raya, now an important town of Mathura district, is situated as a link between various routes. It is about 12 km distant from Mathura on Hathras road. The area of the mound is about 380 x 340 m with a maximum height of 12 m. The antiquity of this site goes back to the PGW period and continues during the succeeding periods until recent times. During 1950's some part of this mound was free from habitation but now is fully occupied. This site is said to be the treasure

town of Nanda Raya and might have derived its name from Rayan (possibly used for Lord Krishna) who is said to be the husband of Radha - the goddess of Braj.

Bisawali: This site is situated about 1 km to the right of Raya-Sonai road, past Raya. The ancient site, which is now occupied by the modern village, is about 150 x 130 x 4 m in dimensions. The site dates back to the post-Gupta and medieval periods on the basis of red ware pottery.

Sonai: It is an important site on the ancient route from Mathura to Kampil and Sankisa. It lies almost equidistant from the important sites of Mathura and Hathras. The size of the mound, which is up to an extent occupied by the local population, is about 280 x 240 x 9 m. The antiquity of site goes back to the PGW period as some potsherds were observed in the lowest visible section of the mound behind the town. A broken Mauryan mother goddess figurine of grey colour was observed in the deposit along with the finding of some terracotta moulds belonging to either Sunga or Kushan period. It is from this side of the town that the ancient road goes towards the site of Gudera and further towards the Baldev-Sadabad area.

Itauli: This site is situated about 6 km distant from Raya. A very disturbed mound was observed at the village, some part of which is occupied by the village and the rest by agricultural fields. The size of the site is about 200 x 160 x 4 m. Gupta period onwards evidence was observed during the surface explorations. Kushan deposit was certainly there as Vogel (Vogel 1908-09) observed a Naga sculpture at a village shrine that he dated to the Kushan period. Besides, a Gupta period terracotta head and an image of Jina Adinatha of *circa* 9th century are the important finds from the site in the recent explorations.

Mursainiya: This site is situated between the sites of Khirari and Itauli. Although this site does not appear

to be pre-11th century site, it still seems important for its name derived from the ancient site of Mursan on the Mathura-Hathras road. The name of the village is said to be based on the *gotra* of Mursainiya brahmanas and it indicates that the name of Mursan, Tuksan and Lutsan, all in district Hathras, might be pre-Islamic (actually Scythian) in their origin.

Madaim: This site is situated on the Raya-Sadabad road about 5 km away from Raya. The ancient site, which is occupied by the modern village, is about 180 x 150 x 4 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of red ware pottery finding.

Anaura: This site lies in between Raya and Sadabad on the Raya-Sadabad road. Some part of the site lies outside the village. The area of the site is about 180 x 170 x 4 m and dates back to the Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval period on the basis of the finding of red ware pottery.

Gudera: This extensive mound lies on the route of the important archaeological sites of Sonkh khera and Pachawar from Sonai. It is an abandoned site. The size of the mound is about 280 x 250 x 10 m. It dates back to the PGW period on the basis of the finding of PGW pottery. Other pottery findings included BSW, BRW, NBPW along with grey ware and red ware. Overall view of the mound is very much like Shahpur-Gosna except for any later period fortification evidenced at Gosna. A nearby pond also seems to belong to the ancient habitation.

Sonkh Khera: It lies about 10 km distant from Raya in between the roads linking Raya with Baldev and Sadabad. The villagers have completely occupied this site in recent times. The mound is almost of the same nature as is the famous Sonkh site which was excavated by Hartel. The dimensions of the site are 280 x 250 x 12 m. The antiquity of the site dates back to the PGW

period on the basis of the finding of PGW, BRW and BSW pottery along with grey ware and red ware and the site continued in the later periods as at other sites.

Talgarhi: About 700 m distant from Sonkh, this site is situated, named thus because of a huge pond (*tala*) near the village. No significant deposit was observed except some post-Gupta sculptural pieces at a shrine there. It might have been a temporary site for the agricultural purposes of the settlers of Sonkh khera village in the past as early as Kushan period as some red ware potsherds appeared to be belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era.

Pachawar: This site is also of the same nature as the site of Sonkh khera situated at a distance of about 3 km from the latter site. The present village completely occupies the ancient mound. The size of the mound is about 280 x 240 x 15 m. Mauryan mother goddess terracotta figurines were observed at a religious shrine in the village. Besides, some chance finds of PGW potsherds also prove that the site dates back to at least 10th century BC. Some Kushan stone objects of some strange nature were also observed in a heap of broken sculptures. Grey ware and red ware pottery was also found at the site.

Daghaintha: This site is situated about 4 km away from Pachawar while moving towards Khandoli in district Agra. The area of the site is about 240 x 210 x 11 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during succeeding periods until medieval times as the pottery findings indicate. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village settlement.

Gotha: This site is situated ahead of Daghaintha while moving towards Khandoli from Sonkh khera. The area of the site, presently occupied by the modern village is about 170 x 160 x 4 m. The site dates back to the Kushan period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times as the finding

of red ware pottery indicates.

Avairani: This site lies between Pachawar and Baldev, about 2 km before the latter site. The size of the site is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. Cultural evidence from Kushan period onwards was observed at the site in the form of red ware pottery. Possibility of an earlier stratum at the site cannot be declined as it is fully occupied by the modern settlement. The local pronunciation of the village name is Bainni.

Bandi: This modern village on the ancient mound is situated on Baldev-Raya road, about 8 km distant from Baldev. The area of the mound is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods on the basis of pottery findings. The place is traditionally related with some *bandi* or *dhaya* of Lord Krishna. Presently there is a temple of goddesses Anandi and Bandi, which is quite popular in the region. The images of these deities date back to early medieval period and one of these is of Mahishasuramardini (Growse 1882: 349).

Jagdishpur: This site is situated about 2 km west of village Bandi. The area of the site occupied by a medieval *haveli* and the village is about 200 x 180 x 9 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times on the basis of the finding of PGW, BSW, BRW and plain grey and red ware pottery.

Khirari: This site is situated near Raya-Baldev road. A portion of the mound is free from habitation, while the modern village occupies most of it. The area of mound is about 240 x 220 m with a height of about 8-9 m. Mauryan grey ware as well as fine grey ware of PGW tradition was found from the nearby fields. These finds date back the site to at about 7th century BC. Many bricks of larger size, generally found in Mauryan period, were also observed at the village near a school.

Jugsana: This site is situated near the road linking Raya with Sadabad. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and is about 240 x 220 x 10 m in area. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times on the basis of pottery findings. This is one of the important sites in the *trans*-Yamuna region.

Baltikri: This site is situated between Jugsana and Sarkand Khera. The area of the site occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 210 x 10 m. The site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times. The pottery found from the site includes PGW, BRW, and grey ware along with red ware. Majority of site, which have Tikri/ Tikari in their name, are somehow related with Kushans like the Itokri Tila of Manth and Tikari site in district Hathras.

Sarkand Khera: This site is situated about 3 km to the southwest of Jugsana village. The modern village occupies the ancient mound but still a part of it is visible. The area of the mound is about 260 x 220 x 11 m and it dates back to the PGW period. It has a continuous uninterrupted archaeological sequence until medieval times on the basis of pottery findings.

Unchagaon: This site is situated on the road linking Raya with Sadabad. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 11 m and the site dates back to the PGW period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The pottery found from here consists of PGW, BRW, grey ware and red ware. Another site outside the village under cultivation by some brahmanas is another ancient mound. Earlier it was about 4 m high but now has almost been levelled to ground. This site has an area of about 180 x 150 m. The majority of the pottery found from here belongs to the Kushan period. The site was also in habitation during the medieval period.

Conclusion

A total of about 60 PGW sites and 105 Kushan sites have been observed in this area. The distribution of PGW sites is quite irregular. The majority of the PGW sites are situated along the course of river Yamuna. Other sites are situated in certain pockets where a cluster of PGW sites can be observed like the area near Harnaul and Sarkand Khera. Other sites are situated on important trade routes like the sites of Lohvan, Gosna, Raya and Sonai are situated on the ancient route to Hathras (a major archaeological site), which goes further to the important sites of Ahichchhatra and Atranjikhara in the Ganga basin. The site of Aiyyera Khera is situated along the ancient route to Aligarh which goes via Nimgaon, Gorai, Mahuar and Kaua Khera, the last three sites lying in district Aligarh. Though in the northern half of the map, PGW sites along the Yamuna are found in large number, the number of sites downstream is quite limited. These sites are situated at a far distance from Mathura city near the ancient town of Akosa (possibly ancient Akkosa of Buddhist literature). One of the ancient routes to Sankisa and Kampilya went via Sadabad and Jalesar as a good number of ancient sites on this route suggests. This route would have passed via Gosna, Raya, Khirari, Sonkh Khera, Pachawar, Jugsana, Unchagaon to Sadabad. The ancient site of Manth (Mat) was possibly approached via Vrindavan. From Vrindavan, no pre-Kushan deposit could be obtained because of its dense occupation but the high number of ancient PGW sites opposite Vrindavan along the Yamuna suggests that it should also be a PGW site and the ancient route towards upstream region of the Yamuna passed via Vrindavan, Nagla Chamaran, Barnauli ki Dhari, Manth, Bhadravan, Auhawa, Bhidauni, Surir, Meerpur, Bagharra, Nohjhil and Bajna. The distribution of ancient PGW sites in the area of Surir, Harnaul and Jugsana is quite high and is comparable to the *cis*-Yamuna region of district Mathura up to some extent. Considering this area about 1400 sq. km and the total number of sites at 60, the minimum area

required for the presence of a single PGW site comes out to be about 21 square km. During the Kushan period, there was an increase of about 44 % in the distribution of the sites. The average area required for the presence of a single PGW site as well as Kushan site in the *cis*-Yamuna area is sufficiently lesser than it.

At the site of Nohjhil and Gosna, some potsherds belonging to OCP and related cultural tradition were observed indicating the possibility of the occupation of that area by that time. Besides, the site of Nohjhil situated near the border of district Aligarh is not very far from the excavated site of Lal Qila. A very important factor in the archaeology of this region is the finding of a copper hoard from a village situated near Baldev town. The farmer who had found these implements from his field had sold them to the Government Museum, Mathura in the decade of 1970.

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