

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS OF WAZIRISTAN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO OUR UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract

Very less has been written on the archaeology of Waziristan. The aim of this research article is to explore the archaeological sites in Waziristan and draw the attention of government towards the hidden treasures of Waziristan that had been surveyed by Sir Aurel Stein in 1926-1927 and Ahmad Hassan Dani in 1966. Afterwards, no attention has been paid so far to this region by any government department. If government or any foreign archaeological mission starts the initiation, it is sure that the step would bring positive impacts on the area and its inhabitants. These archaeological sites have tremendous potential to attract tourists from abroad that can be an economic drive for creating alternate livelihood opportunity for local people and will contribute in uplifting the social wellbeing of inhabitants. Such positive intervention will positively impact overall law and order situation in the area that can accelerate peace process in the region. If this region gets the opportunity to be explored than it would be a great milestone in the history of Pakistan's Archaeology in particular and Asian in general.

Keywords: Archaeology; Waziristan; Inscription; Civilization; Excavation

1.1. INTRODUCTION

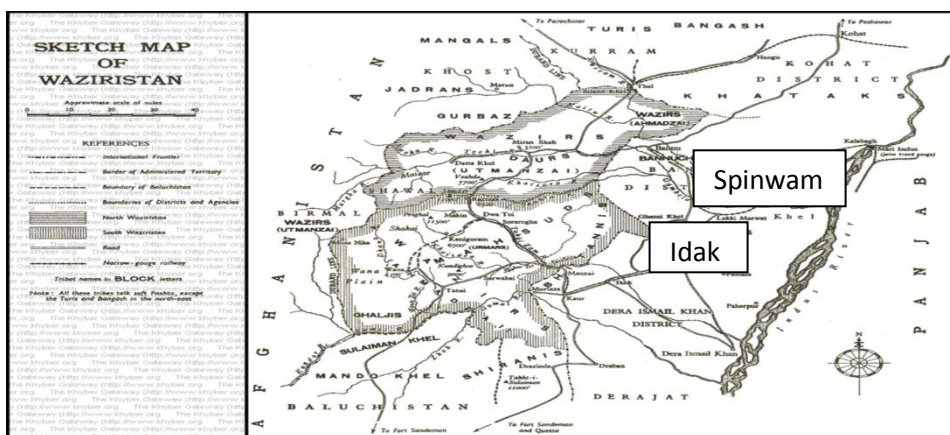
Waziristan is a mountainous terrain that covers some 11,585 km² (4,473 sq. miles), situated in northwestern Pakistan and is bordering Afghanistan on the west. Waziristan is part of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). FATA is considered autonomous region, outside the Pakistan's four provinces and directly controlled by the federal government of Pakistan through a special set of laws known as FCR (Frontier Crimes Regulations).

Waziristan lies on the west and southwest of Peshawar between the Gomal River to the south and the Tochi River to the north. It touches Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) immediately to the east. Until 1893, the region was an independent tribal territory, remaining outside the British Empire. Tribal raiding into British-ruled territory was a constant problem for the British. That is why British had launched frequent military expeditions between 1860 and 1945. The region became part of Pakistan in 1947.

For administrative convenience, Waziristan is divided into two agencies (tribal district), North Waziristan and South Waziristan, with estimated populations of 361,246 and 429,841 respectively (as of 1998 consensus). Both the agencies (tribal districts) have quite distinct characteristics, though both tribes are subgroups of the Wazir Tribe and speak a common Wazirwola language. They have a reputation as powerful warrior, and they are known for their incessant blood fights. Tribal cohesiveness is also kept strong by means of the so-called Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) and the Collective Responsibility Acts in it.

The archaeology of Waziristan has not been explored yet, because of the worse security situation in the region. Attempts have been made several times to excavate the sites but the missions failed due to the fragile and insecure situations in the region. Sir Aural Stein and

Ahmad Hasan Dani discovered Buddhist sites from the area in 1926-27 and 1966 respectively. Previously in the Sheratala plain, coins of the Kusana and Parthian rulers have been found. Some archeological sites were documented by Sir Aurel Stein. He located some remains during his visit to a Buddhist Stupa site near Spinwam area of North Waziristan but no concrete details are known about the early history of this region. The Tochi Valley inscriptions for the first-time attest to the presence of the Shahi rulers here.



Map of Waziristan

1.2. STUDY RATIONALE

Research plays a very important role to rebuild the chronology of ancient civilizations. The archaeology of Waziristan has not been explored yet, due to the turmoil situation prevailing in the region. In 1966 Ahmad Hasan Dani explored Buddhist sites from the area. Coins of the Parthian and Kusana rulers have been found previously in the Sheratala plain. Some archeological findings were reported by Sir Aurel Stein in 1926-27. They also located during

his visit to a Buddhist Stupa site not far from Spinwam. But nothing definitely is known about the early history of this region. The Tochi Valley inscriptions for the first time tell us that Shahi rulers had come to the region. If this region gets the opportunity to be explored than it would be a great milestone in the history of Pakistan's Archaeology in particular and Asian in general.

1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This research study aims to report on the survey of Sir Aurel Stein (1926-27) archeological findings and Ahmad Hasan Dani (1966) exploration of Buddhist sites in Waziristan region of FATA, Pakistan. The study attempts to address three main research questions; how Sir Aurel Stein visited and conducted survey in Waziristan? And what are the findings of the first survey conducted by Sir Aurel Stein? What are the findings in Waziristan by Ahmad Hassan Dani after the creation of Pakistan?

1.4. METHODOLOGY

The current study was based on descriptive analysis of available secondary on archaeological surveys of Sir Aural Stein (1926-27) and Ahmad Hasan Dani (1966). Data was collected from Taxial and Peshawar museum. Taxila Museum is located in Punjab which is home of significant and comprehensive collection of Indus civilization dating from 1st to 7th century CE, while Peshawar museum has the largest and most extensive collection of Gandhara art of Buddhist period. The archives of both museum have been visited several times during the data collection including books and reports on excavation carried out in the area. Online books, research articles and internet surfing was also used to collect maximum archaeological information about Indus civilization in Waziristan.

1.5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides the main findings of two surveys carried out in Waziristan, FATA by Sir Aurel Stein (1926-27) and Ahmad Hasan Dani (1966).

Sir Aurel Stein survey in Waziristan

Sir Aurel Stein was the first man who conducted surveys in Waziristan in 1926-27. He started his archaeological tour along the Waziristan border, which kept him fully occupied until the middle of April 1927. The objective of this tour was a systematic survey, accompanied where advisable by trial excavations of such ancient sites in the border regions between India and Iran as are likely to throw light on the connection between the prehistoric civilization revealed by the excavations at Mohenjo-Daro and elsewhere in the lower Indus valley and corresponding cultures traced westwards in Persia and Mesopotamia. Sir Aurel Stein enabled his survey to both North and South Waziristan. The remains of an ancient stronghold examined at *Idak* were proved by the evidence of coins and of a ruined stupa to date from the Indo-Scythian period. Further North at *Spinwam* there was found a mound formed by culture strata of approximately the same epoch as noted around *Draband* and *Tank*. Remains of forts visited in the Spin plain proved to belong to late historical times.

The whole area now comprised in Waziristan, barren as it is, presents a special interest to the students of the ancient geography of India. The fact of its chief rivers, the Kurram and Gomal, is being mentioned in the famous *Nadistuti* or River Hymn of the Rigveda under their ancient Sanskrit names of *Kruma* and *Gomati*, makes it appear very probable that this region had for some length of time been in the occupation of Aryan tribes before they descended from their hills to the conquest of the Indus Valley and the Punjab plains. The description which Hsiian-

tsang, the great Chinese Buddhist pilgrim of the seventh century A.D, has left us of the territory Chichiang-na corresponding to the present Waziristan, and the Qiqan of early Arab history, clearly shows that in his time, centuries before the advent of Pathan tribes, this territory “under separate local chiefs but without a supreme ruler,” “abounding in sheep and excellent horses” had already a reputation not unlike its present one.

Ahmad Hasan Dani survey in Waziristan

Ahmad Hasan Dani located Buddhist sites from the area during his visit to Waziristan in 1966. He inspected the Sheratala plain and found three trilingual inscriptions which had been brought to Peshawar museum. He also discovered two new inscriptions on the main road leading from Idak to Spinwam. These Prakrit inscriptions were engraved in Kharosthi characters. This was for the first time that a Kharosthi inscription is discovered from so far south in the tribal belt of Pakistan. Same inscriptions were also found some 200 km away from this spot to the west in Wardak, Afghanistan. These inscriptions reveal the command of a Kusana general in the year 39 and tell us about his administrative control of Ksartrapa who bears the name of Pahaka. This date tells us that this region was ruled by the Kusana ruler Huviska, who ruled his dynasty from 33 AD to 60 AD.

Sir Aurel Stein found coins of Parthian and Kusana rulers in Sheratala plain and on further investigation of the remains, he located a Buddhist stupa near Spinwam. Nothing definite can be said about the early history of the region however. The presence of Shahi rulers are nonetheless attested for the first time by Tochi Valley’s inscriptions.

Waziristan Inscriptions

Three inscription son stones from Waziristan are preserved in Peshawar museum. All of them have been found between *Idak* and *Spinwam* region of North Waziristan, situated in the west of Bannu, a region which lay in route the early Arab invasions in the North-West Frontier of Pakistan.

Inscriptions on the first stone

The inscriptions on the first stone are containing Arabic and Sanskrit texts in a tablet measuring 24" X 12". The Arabic text is on the upper half and the Sanskrit on the lower down. The tablet was found in 1907 and was presented to the museum by Mr. Pears. It was first edited by Mr. Muhammad Hamid Quraishi and then re-edited by Dr. Muhammad Shafi. Mr. Quraishi also gave the Sanskrit text as read by Dr. Hiranand Sastri, the Government Epigraphist for India.



Arabic inscriptions on the first stone¹⁴

The Arabic paleography is most interesting. As Quraishi has pointed out, the writing is somewhat crude. It is strange that the inscription doesn't begin with Bismillah. The style of writing has been described as Kufic. The features suggest that the style was influenced by the curved forms of letters. Dots are omitted, and hence the reading creates difficulties.

Translation of the Arabic Inscription on the First Stone

“It was ordered by Hayy, son of ‘Amar’ to construct this tank. May God accept his pious deeds and forgive his sinful deeds. It was recorded on Friday, the 13th day of Jumada I of the year 243 (7th September, 847 A.D.). Blessings of God be upon Muhammad, the chosen, and his descendants.”

Translation of the Sanskrit Inscription on the First Stone

“Om. Salutation. In the year 32nd, in the month of Kartika (Sept-Oct), on the second day of dark fortnight, on this day”.

Inscriptions on the Second Stone

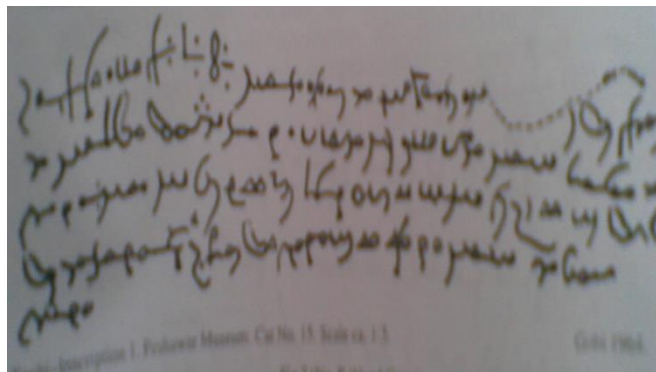
The inscriptions on the second stone are containing Bactrian and Sanskrit texts in the same tablet measuring 25” X 8”. The inscription is divided by a vertical line at 1/3 of its length. The Bactrian writing is on the right portion occupying 2/3rd space and the Sanskrit on the left. The stone was discovered at a place called ‘Khazana’ about four miles from Mir Ali on the Idak-Spinwam road in the Tochi valley. It was received from Captain H. A. Barnes, Indian Political Department on 30th July 1928. Mr. Barnes adds, “There are several remains of ancient forts and buildings at Idak-Spinwam and Shiratala plain. In addition, I have had coins brought to me discovered on three sites. The coins were chiefly of Azes I and those of several Kushana

kings, notably Kanishka I.” The inscription has not been properly edited so far. Dr. HiranandSastri, as noted in the museum file, read a few words like *titme*, *Samvat*, *bhupaandputra*, he also suggested that the date should be referred to the Sastra era.



Bactrian inscriptions on the second stone¹⁵

The Sanskrit text is in five lines. Unfortunately, the stone is broken on the left-hand side resulting in the loss of the first few letters in every line. In consequence, it is difficult to make sense by Sanskrit text alone. But with the knowledge gained from the Bactrian text, the interpretation is not difficult.

Translation of the Bactrian Inscription on the Second Stone**The hand-written copy of the Bactrian text on the second stone¹⁶**

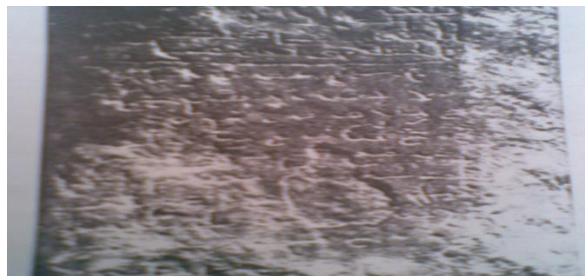
“In the year 632, month six, written by Gomo Sahi, by him, the drinker of liquor, the lord, the shepherd of the cows, the member of the cow family, by him the Kaldo was made at the arrival of the star (refers to a king), by him who is a preserver, a king of the nobleman and a custodian of the inscriptions elevated beyond the stars and a scion-of-Fromo, a member of the cow house, a star.”

“Hail. Salutation. In the year 38, on the 7th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhadra. On this day.....Nai (vi) na-chandraPhruma.....? king of the family of.....the son of Khojana (i.e. The Kushana).”

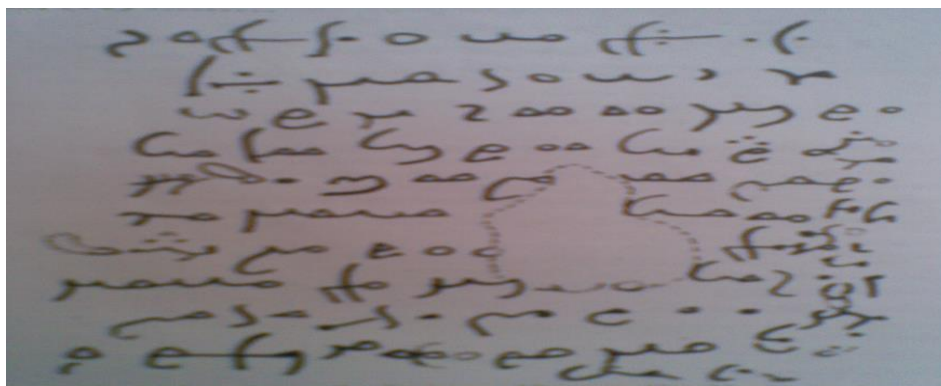
Inscriptions on the Third Stone

The inscriptions on the third stone are in two pieces, the larger one measuring 34” X 11”. Both the pieces were found together at Sherathala and were received from Major Keene. They contain Bactrian text, edited for the first time and two lines of Arabic text on the top, greater

portion of which is now broken or chipped off. Because of the fragmentary nature the Arabic text does not give any sense.



Inscriptions on the third stone



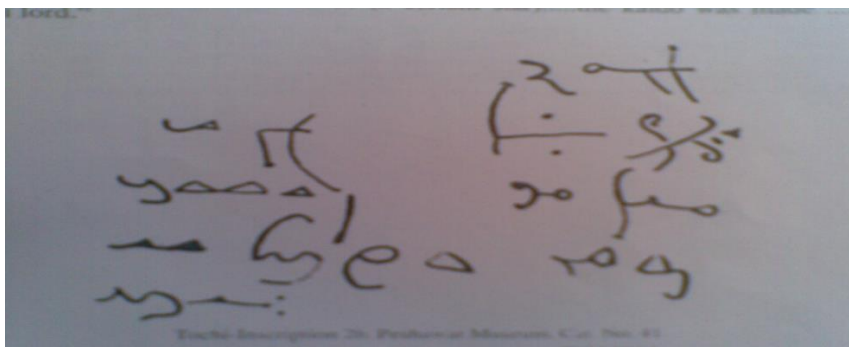
Hand-written copy of the 1st piece on the third stone

Translation of the inscriptions on the Third Stone

Translation of the inscription on the 1st piece

“In the year 635, month one for Ormuzd and Mihr the Kaldo was made by the Kozano by him, the drinker of liquor, the nobleman, the brilliant one, the star, the member of the cow family, the member of the cow house, the king, the lord, the headman, the member of the Khagan-house, the owner of cows, the Kuzula, the increaser of the goods, the leader, the scion-of-Fromo.”

Translation of the inscription on the 2nd piece



Hand-written copy of the 2nd piece of the third stone

“In the year 635, at the arrival of (a certain star)the Kaldō was made.....by the tādī lord.”

The use of three languages in the inscriptions is very significant. Sanskrit decidedly proves that the common local language of the educated people was Sanskrit. Hence this was adopted as one of the media, as it was common among the Hindus of that time in India and Pakistan. Bactrian is connected with the Shahi rulers of this region and it was the language used by these rulers in the Pak-Afghan region. The Arabic is the new language introduced in this part by the Arab conquerors. Its use in two of the inscriptions definitely proves that the Arab conquerors had a firm hold over this region at the time when these inscriptions were written.

Three different systems of dates are given in these inscriptions. The Arabic inscription on ‘First Stone’ is dated Friday the 13th Jumada 1, 243 (A.H), i.e. 7th September 857 A.D, which is also Friday. The Sanskrit text of this inscription is dated 2nd day of KartikaSamvat32 referable to the Laukika or the Sastra era with the hundred-digit omitted, i.e. 3932, which is equal to A.D. 856-57. The inscription ‘B’ is dated on the 7th day of BhadraSamvat38, i.e. Laukikaera 3938=A.D. 862. It also contains *Bactrian* date 632. After calculation, the beginning of the *Bactrian* can be placed in A.D. 230. In inscription ‘C’ only Bactrian date 635, i.e. A.D. 865 has been read. The Laukikaera, as Alberuni informs, was used in this region by Hindus. The Hijra date was decidedly brought by the Arabs, and the Bactrian date can be assigned to the local Kushana rulers, though the reason for its origin is disputed.

1.6. CONCLUSION

The archaeology of Waziristan has not been explored yet, because of the security concerns. Attempts have been made several times to excavate the sites but the missions failed due to the

fragile and insecure situations. Some archeological findings were reported by Sir Aurel Stein in 1926-27. He found coins of Parthian and Kusana rulers in Sheratala plain and on further investigation of the remains, he located a Buddhist stupa near Spinwam. Nothing definite can be said about the early history of the region however. The presence of Shahi rulers are nonetheless attested for the first time by Tochi Valley's inscriptions.

The first archaeological survey of India was conducted by Sir Aurel Stein in 1926-27. Interesting observations were made in regard to the archaeology of this region. The remains of an ancient stronghold examined at Idak were proved by the evidence of coins and a ruined stupa to date from the Indo-Scythian period. A mound was also discovered at Spinwam which lies at the north of Idak. Furthermore, proceeding via Razmak and remote settlement Sarwekai, Sir Stein observed remains of forts in the Spin plain which proved to belong to late historical times.

Three inscriptions on stones from Waziristan have been found between Idak and Spinwam region of North Waziristan. There are three languages used in these inscriptions; Arabic, Sanskrit and Bactrian. It seems that Sanskrit was the local language. Bactrian is connected with the Shahi rulers of this region and it was the language used by these rulers in the Pak-Afghan region. The Arabic is the new language introduced in this part by the Arab conquerors.

In the days to come, attention must be paid to this region because it is rich in past remains, which could be helpful in exploring this region. The most prominent hurdle in the way of exploration is the insecure and unfriendly situations. If the government provides resources to archaeologists and mitigate the security concerns then it will be a milestone for the archaeology of Pakistan.

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