

## **Urban Centers in Ancient Punjab: An Archaeological Study of the Kuṣāṇa Period**

**ASHWANI KUMAR**

Assistant Professor

Centre for South and Central Asian Studies (Including Historical Studies)  
Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (Punjab) India

### **ABSTRACT**

Urbanization in India in a temporal context is an almost uninterrupted phenomenon for over 5000 years. Tracing the genesis of urban development in India remains a great puzzle. The seeds of the so-called planned urbanization appear to have germinated first in the Indus Plains somewhere around c. 2500 BCE. Since then the Indian subcontinent has been experiencing urban settlements at regular intervals. The Kuṣāṇa period, which stands out as one of the most flourishing and prosperous periods of Indian history witnessed an unprecedented growth of the urban centers, particularly in northern India. The present paper attempts to study the growth and development of urban centers in ancient Punjab in the heydays of the mighty Kuṣāṇas as the region formed an integral part of their vast Empire.

**Key Words :** Yüeh-Chih, Kuṣāṇa, Arthaśāstra, Divyāvadāna, Mahāvastu, Milindapañho

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Kuṣāṇa Empire was a syncretic Empire formed by Yüeh-Chih in the Greco-Bactrian regions in early centuries of the Common Era. It, at its zenith, comprised the regions of Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan in Central Asia, much of Afghanistan, today's Peshawar (Puruṣapura), Taxila (Takṣaśilā) in modern Pakistan, the northern parts of India at least as far as (Ayodhya) (Sāketa), Sarnath (Sārnāth), Kaushambi *i.e.* modern Kosam (Kauśambī) and Benares (Vārāṇasī) and the lower Indus regions at least up to Sanchi and Ujjain (Ujjayinī) in the Deccan and South.

The Kuṣāṇas were not the original habitants of India rather were outsiders who settled here. Their original home or nationality has been one of the most controversial subjects for a long time. Various theories regarding their nationalities such as the Turkey theory, the Śaka-Iranian theory, and the Chinese origin theory, etc. have been put forward by different scholars. None of the proposed theories except the Chinese origin theory appear convincing due to lack of strong and reliable evidence. The theory of their Chinese origin holds the support of scholars on the basis of the references regarding their origin in certain Chinese texts where they have been mentioned as a different ethnic group who were in Chou court. Most of the scholars now agree on the place of their origin somewhere between Tun-huang and Nan-shan in the Kan-su Province of China.

They are known as the Yüeh-Chih in the Chinese sources. From their original home, they migrated as a result of the defeat at the hands of Hiung-nu, the other tribe in the region. They kept on migrating until they reached Ta-hsia region where they settled down and established their royal court and capital somewhere near Kuei River as has been referred to by Chang Ch'ien. It was here that they got themselves divided into five branches, which later were subjugated by Kujula Kadphises. This subjugation laid the foundation of a small principality that matured as a mighty Kuṣāṇa empire with the passage of time.

The Kuṣāṇas played a significant role in the social, economic and political life of the northern and western India during early centuries of the Common Era. The period along with noteworthy growth and development in socio-economic, political and cultural fields also witnessed a spurt in urbanization throughout the regions under the Kuṣāṇa hegemony. The urbanization, however, was not a new phenomenon during the period under study it rather has a very long history before the advent of the Kuṣāṇas in India.

The towns and cities have variously been defined in literature as *pura*, *purī*, *nagarī*, *pattana*, *pūtabhedana*, *sthānīya* and *nigama* etc.<sup>1</sup> The term *pura* is used in the early Vedic literature and *nagara* finds mention in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*<sup>2</sup>. The Epics and the Purāṇas too refer to such terms<sup>3</sup>.

We have found the archaeological evidences of the Harappan towns and cities, built in a planned manner. The period of the sixteen *mahājanapadas*, i.e., the sixth century BCE is a magnificent phase in Indian history, which witnessed sixteen big states such as Anga, Magadha, Kāśī, Kośala, Vṛiṣṭi, Malla, Cedi, Vatsa, Kuru, Pañcāla, Matsya, Śūrasena, Aśvaka, Avantī, Gandhāra, Kamboja etc.<sup>4</sup>

The towns and cities further progressed during the Mauryan and more specifically the Kuṣāṇa period. The *Arthaśāstra* contains the reference to the city superintendents in the second book.<sup>5</sup> Various other literary sources pertaining to the Kuṣāṇa period, have mentioned different terms such as the *Divyāvadāna* speaks of *grāma*, *nagara*, *nigama*, *kharvata*, *rājadhānī* etc.<sup>6</sup> Vātsyāyana mentions *nagara*, *pattana* and *kharvata* as places where *nāgaraka* resided.<sup>7</sup> Kautilya mentions *sthānīya*, *dronamukha*, *kārvatika* and *samgrahaṇa* in the *Arthaśāstra*.<sup>8</sup> The *Mahāvastu* gives a long list of cities which were due to commercial activities such as Kauśāmbī, Kapilavastu, Ujjenī (Ujjain), Benāras, Śrāvastī, Gayā, Mithilā, Hastināpura, Vaiśālī, Rājgrha, Kannakubja (Kānyakubja, Kanauj) etc.<sup>9</sup> The *Milindapañho* too has listed numerous places and around seventy five professions such as makers of consumption of goods such as clothes and utensils, makers of luxury goods; such as perfumes, jewellery etc. or musicians, artists and various kinds of entertainers etc.<sup>10</sup>

Patañjali has given an account of some significant cities during his time such as Taksāsilā, Hastināpura, Ahicchatra, Kānyakubja, Mathurā, Kauśāmbī, Ayodhyā, Kāśī, Pātaliputra, Ujjayini, Mahiṣamati, Nāsikiya, Kāñchipura etc.<sup>11</sup> Various Jain literary sources, falling in the Kuṣāṇa period, too contain a huge list of states and cities.<sup>12</sup>

The growth and development of the towns and cities during the imperial Kuṣāṇas was due to the political integrity and stability which provided a conducive environment for the growth of trade which in turn gave rise to the cities and towns spread all over the Western Deccan and northern India, modern Pakistan, Afghanistan and southern Central Asia. Ancient Punjab, comprising the regions of modern Pakistan, Indian Punjab and Haryana formed an integral part of the Kuṣāṇa Empire. This part of the Indian subcontinent witnessed rise and development of urban centers during the period under study. Many sites excavated in different parts of ancient Punjab (comprising modern Pakistan, Punjab and Haryana mainly) flourished as urban centers during the Kuṣāṇa

period.

Punjab, being the region under the direct control of the mighty Kuṣāṇa empire, witnessed unmatched growth in almost every sphere of life. It became the center of political power as one of the capital cities of the imperial Kuṣāṇas *i.e.*, Puruṣapura (modern Peshawar in Pakistan) was situated in Punjab. A major trade route *i.e.* Uttarāpatha passed through the region and the region witnessed the emergence of a magnificent school of art popularly known as the Gandharan School of Art during the Kuṣāṇa rule. The rise and growth of the urban centers in such a conducive situation becomes obvious. Punjab, hence, too witnessed the emergence of new towns viz a viz expansion of the already existing towns and cities during the period under study.

The present work is an attempt to examine the towns and cities referred to in the literary sources with the help of the data provided by the archaeological excavations of the sites, which were under the occupation or control of the Kuṣāṇas. We shall be starting with the northwestern region and proceed towards the modern day Punjab and Haryana regions which will enable us to know the rise, development, continuity and decline of the towns and cities during the Kuṣāṇa period.

### **Charsada :**

In 1863, Alexander Cunningham, identified the site as that of Puṣkalāvatī, an ancient capital of Gandhāra.<sup>13</sup> Puṣkalāvatī, “the city of lotuses” or Pukkalaotī in Prākṛt is the same place which has been described as Peukelaietics, Peukelaotis by Arrian.<sup>14</sup> It has been identified with modern Charsada located in the centre of the Peshawar valley on the east bank of Swat river.<sup>15</sup> It was an important commercial centre as it was easily accessible by land and river routes. The Greeks have referred to this city in their accounts.<sup>16</sup> During the excavations at Charsada, a number of copper coins, pots and some epigraphic evidences have been found which belong to the Kuṣāṇa period and indicate its occupation by the Kuṣāṇas and a flourishing town under them.<sup>17</sup>

A place called Shaikhan Dheri, near Charsada was the main habitational area during the Kuṣāṇa period. This has been excavated by A.H. Dani. Dani came across three phases belonging to the Kuṣāṇa, Scytho-Parthian and Greek periods. The Kuṣāṇa phase is further divided in three sub-phases; phase I (late Kuṣāṇa) belonging to the time of Vāsudeva, phase II (middle Kuṣāṇa), time of Kaniṣka- I and Huviṣka, phase III (early Kuṣāṇas), to the time of Vima Kadphises. A large number of Kuṣāṇa coins have been found here. The site has yielded 219 Kuṣāṇa coins out of which 5 belonging to Kujula Kadphises, 66 to Vima Kadphises, 38 to Soter Megas, 77 of Kaniṣka- 1, 31 of Huviṣka and 8 of Vāsudeva.<sup>18</sup>

Burnt bricks, pottery, terracotta figurines, sculptural pieces, beads of semi precious stones, iron objects, various items of toilets and as many as 37 Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions belonging almost all to the Kuṣāṇa period have been found apart from the coins at Charsada.<sup>19</sup> Charsada appears to be a city since the Mahājanapada period which further flourished during the Kuṣāṇa period.

### **Peshawar :**

Peshawar identified by scholars like Cunningham and Nundo Lal Dey with ancient Puruṣapura, in Pakistan was another important Kuṣāṇa town in the Gandhāra region.<sup>20</sup> It, according to Dey, was the capital of Kaniṣka. Fa-hian calls it Fo-lu-shā and associates it with the Kuṣāṇas when he says that Kaniṣka brought alms bowl of Buddha here from Pāṭaliputra.<sup>21</sup> Yüan-Chwang refers to the place as Pu-lu-sha-pu-lo and mentions it as the capital of Gandhāra. While talking about the dimensions of the Gandhāra country he states that the Gandhāra country was above 1000 *li* or

about 166 miles from east to west and above 800 *li* or about 133 miles north to south. The measurements according to Cunningham are almost correct as the extreme length, whether taken from the source of the Bara river to Torbela, or from the Kunar river to Torbela, is 120 miles, measured on the map direct, or about 150 miles by road. The extreme breadth measured in the same way, from Bāzār, on the border of the Bunir hills, to the southern boundary of Kohat, is 100 miles direct or about 125 miles by road. The boundaries of Gandhāra, as deduced from these measurements, may be described as Lamghan and Jalalabad on the west, the hills of Swat and Bunir on the north, the Indus on the east and the hills of Kalabagh on the south.

Yüan- Chwang too acknowledges the Kuṣāṇa dominance over this town. He states that exactly 400 years after the death of Buddha, Kaniska became sovereign of all Jambudvīpa and is said to have built a relic tower (Tope) which was 400 feet high with a superstructure of gilt-copper disks. The base of it was in five stages and was 150 feet high. Apart from this superstructure hundreds of other small structures (Topes) were built on the either sides of the Great Tope. To the west of the Great Tope was an old monastery built by Kaniska and was known as “*Kaniṣka-mahā-vihāra*”.<sup>22</sup> It has not yet been excavated systematically so the archaeological material is still lacking but it definitely should be a prosperous town as it was the capital city of the Kuṣāṇas.

### **Taxila:**

Taxila (Takṣaśilā) in the district of Rawalpindi, now in Pakistan was one of the most prominent cities of ancient India. Pāṇini has mentioned it.<sup>23</sup> The Jātakas mention it as an important centre of learning.<sup>24</sup> Various Jain sources also refer to Takṣaśilā as an important city.<sup>25</sup> The *Mahāvastu* mentions it as an important trading centre.<sup>26</sup> The strategic location, particularly from the economic point of view made Taxila such an important city that every writer like Arrian, Megasthenes, Strabo, Fa-hian, Yüan- Chwang etc. have given it a great importance in their writings. It was in such a location that from here trade routes proceeded towards India, Central Asia and western world.

A. Ghosh<sup>27</sup> and John Marshall<sup>28</sup> have carried out excavations at Taxila. Marshall states that within 3½ miles of distance there are three separate city sites with several strata of remains in each. Each site has a distinctive character of its own. The oldest of them stands on a small plateau, locally known as the Bhir Mound. The local tradition says that Bhir Mound was the most ancient of all the sites at Taxila which was thrice destroyed and thrice rebuilt. It was inhabited centuries before the Bactrian Greeks arrived here who transferred it to another area known as Sirkap on the eastern sides of *Tamrā nālā*.<sup>29</sup>

Sirkap was built by the Bactrian Greeks in the beginning of second century BCE.<sup>30</sup> This city was destroyed and rebuilt several times too. There is another city known as Sirsukh. It is situated further to the north east on the side of *Lundi nālā*.<sup>31</sup> Ghosh states that it was built under the early Kuṣāṇas.<sup>32</sup> It, according to Marshall dates from early Kuṣāṇa times and is laid out in the manner of Central Asian cities.<sup>33</sup> Some monuments, mainly Buddhists stūpas and monasteries, belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period such as the Dharma-rājika stūpa, the Sangrahārāma at Kalāwan (ancient Caḍśila), the monasteries and stūpas in Giri, the Kuṣāla and Ghai stūpas, the Sanghārāmas of Mehrā, Morādu, Pippala and Jauliān, the Sanghārāma of Bhahiāla, the small Buddhist monastery and stūpa at lalchak, outside the north-east corner of Sirsukh, and the much imposing stūpa at Bādalpur, the Ionic temple at Jāṇḍial and the stūpas at Bādalpur and Bhallar etc. have been found.<sup>34</sup>

The Kuṣāṇa sway over the town of Taxila is supported by the fact that a large number of Kuṣāṇa coins have been discovered at Sirkap. The excavations conducted by Ghosh and Marshall

show that the coins of Kujula Kadphises were found here which indicates his hold over the territory. More than 2500 coins of Kuṣānas have been found here which definitely indicates their dominance over the region.<sup>35</sup> The other antiquities, particularly, the wares, beads, pendants, terracotta figurines of humans and animals, metal objects, ornaments etc., belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period are indications of the Kuṣāṇa control over the town.<sup>36</sup>

The principal area excavated in Sirkap is in the lower city, north of the Hathial Spur. In this area seven successive stratas out of which the top stratum belonged to the Kuṣānas following their conquest of Taxila.<sup>37</sup> As far as the coins are concerned, the coins of Kujula Kadphises are largest in number (more than 2500). 37 coins of Vima Kadphises, 12 more belonging to the Soter Megas series, 39 of Kuṣāṇa- I, 4 of Huviṣka, and 27 of Vāsudeva have been found.<sup>38</sup>

After Sirkap, Kuṣāṇas shifted to Sirsukh as mentioned earlier which according to Marshall was a slightly irregular rectangle, measuring 1500 yards along its northern and southern sides and 1,100 along its eastern and western. The city in his opinion was found during the time of Vima Kadphises. Pottery, stone and metal objects, beads and copper coins were found from the fortifications of the city. Almost forty specimens of coins, all of copper were found out of which 3 belonged to Kujula Kadphises, 3 to Vima Kadphises, 12 of Kanīṣka- I, 11 to Vāsudeva and 6 to later Kuṣāṇas.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from these evidences, we have found several epigraphic evidences such as the Taxila Silver Scroll inscription of the year 11, the Manikiala stone inscription of Kanīṣka-I of the year 18, Ara stone inscription of year 41, the Sui Vihar inscription of year 11 of Kanīṣka- I etc. which provide a valuable data to believe that the region was a socio-economically and politically a significant urban center during under the Kuṣāṇas.

### **Sanghol :**

Punjab and Haryana regions were under the Kuṣāṇas. Some sites excavated in these regions show Kuṣāṇa influence over these areas. Sanghol is one of these sites. It is in Ludhiana district of Punjab. The excavation here has revealed eight stratas of which five belongs to the Kuṣāṇa period. Several structures of mud bricks and baked bricks, drains, water jars and ovens were exposed in various levels of the period. Some of the important finds included the coins of the Indo-Parthian, Kuṣāṇas and some tribal states, terracotta moulds of Gondophares three sealings, two of which bears legends in Gupta Brāhmī terracotta figurines and votive tanks. A Buddha figure of Mathurā school belonging to Kuṣāṇa period was also found. Coins of Gondophares and Vima Kadphises including the Soter Megas series were obtained. A stūpa there belonged to the Kuṣāṇa times. The findings from the Sanghol suggest that the site was under continuous occupation long before the advent of the Kuṣāṇas and remained under occupation even after them. It appears that during the Kuṣāṇa time Sanghol was a thriving town.<sup>40</sup>

### **Sunet:**

The excavations at Sunet in Punjab have revealed six cultural periods. The site was under occupation since late Harrapan period and continued under occupation till early medieval period. Period IV is assigned to the Kuṣāṇa period. This strata has revealed extensive habitational activities. Various houses of mud bricks and burnt bricks have been found. It appears to be the under the Kuṣāṇas as a large number of Kuṣāṇa coins of Vāsudeva and Huviṣka here have been found. The other finds from here include sprinklers, beads and bangles of terracotta, bone, dice, ivory bangles, inscribed terracotta seals and sealings belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period.<sup>41</sup> the data suggests prosperity

in the urban center during the Kuṣāṇa period.

#### **Bara :**

Bara in Rupnagar district of Punjab also contains the deposits belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period<sup>42</sup>. The structural remains are however poor yet are enough to suggest its urban nature though probably in decline which might have revived with the passage of time as it remained under occupation atleast up to medieval period.

#### **Singh Bhagwantpur :**

Singh Bhagwantpur in Rupnagar district has revealed the Archaeological material belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period. The finds from here comprise red ware in different shapes, terracotta skin rubbers, a terracotta mould for turning out fluted beads, a small perforated bronze bell, two pieces of pottery stamps and Indo-Greek and Kuṣāṇa coins etc. all this indicates an urban touch to the site.<sup>43</sup> The site after Kuṣāṇa period appears to have been abandoned till c. 900 CE as no data till c. 900 CE has been found. It was reoccupied from c. 900 CE onwards.

#### **Bras:**

Bras in district Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab has revealed five phases of a mud structure belonging to the Kuṣāṇas period. Some Kuṣāṇa structures were unearthed. Burnt bricks (32 x 23 x 5 cm) have been used in these structures. Cluster of rooms with common walls, twin *chullahas* and furnaces of big size, burnt bricks made in circular form were revealed. Kuṣāṇa houses having twin floors of mud, lime and *surkhi*, those of burnt bricks were noticed. Some portions of a well underneath a Kuṣāṇa structure were also noticed. Wedge-shaped bricks measuring 42 x 23.5 x 19 x 5 cm have been used in this well. Typical Kuṣāṇa pottery comprising incurved bowls of different sizes, storage jars, basins, vases, dishes etc. has been unearthed in a large number. Other finds included terracotta beads, balls, animal and human figurines, gamesmen, ear studs, skin rubber, dabbers, bangles, shell bangles, copper coins, copper and iron objects, beads of semiprecious stone, ivory discs, bone objects, votive tanks, Kuṣāṇa pottery marked by stamp designer showing *nandipada*, Pipal leaf, *triratna*, sun symbol etc. The site was under occupation since Harappan Period and continued up to Kuṣāṇa period. After the Kuṣāṇa period the site appears to have been abandoned and reoccupied during medieval period.<sup>44</sup> The Kuṣāṇa period witnesses very rich variety of material which is not noticed in the preceding years. This is an indication of the prosperity of the town during the Kuṣāṇa period.

#### **Sunam:**

Sunam in Sangrur district in Punjab has revealed Śunga-Kuṣāṇa pottery, coins of silver of Huviṣka and Vāsudeva etc.<sup>45</sup> The site was under occupation since pre-Harappan to the medieval period. Though the site appears to have some urban traits but as compared to other sites it appears to be a relatively smaller urban or semi-urban center during the period under study.

#### **Sugh:**

Sugh in Yamunanagar district in Haryana has yielded four cultural phases. The first phase was characterized by the Painted Grey Ware (c. 800-500 BCE). The second phase contains the Northern Black Polished Ware (c. 500-100 BCE). The third phase belonged to the Śunga- Kuṣāṇa period (c. 100 BCE-300 CE) and the last phase belongs to the early medieval period (c. 700-1100 CE). The

Śunga-Kuṣāṇa period is well known for the collection of fascinating and beautiful terracotta art. We come across the houses of mud bricks and burnt bricks measuring 36 x 23 x 8 cm. The terracotta which comprised human figurines both mould made and handmade, female figurines, figurines of animals which included elephant, bull, horse etc., terracotta disc, cart wheel, balls, marbles, beads of jasper, carnelian, agate, terracotta and glass, a few un inscribed copper coins indicate the elements of urbanism during the Kusāna period.<sup>46</sup>

Apart from the archaeological evidences we have some literary evidences regarding the site. During ancient times the city was known as Srughna. The *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa* mentions it as Turghna. During the time of the *Mahābhārata*, the city was mentioned along with the famous cities of Ahicchatra and Hastināpura. The road from Mathura to this town has been mentioned by Varāhamihira and the Buddhists texts like the *Mahāmayuri* and the *Divyāvadāna*. The Chinese pilgrim Yüan- Chwang found an Aœokan pillar and a monastery here in the seventh century CE. Thereafter till about the 12<sup>th</sup> century it remained an important place probably because of its ideal location on east west trade route.<sup>47</sup>

### **Agroha:**

Agroha in Hissar district seems to have developed as an urban center between c.100 BCE-400 CE. It traditionally is believed to represent the site of Āgreya Republic referred to in the *Mahābhārata* and said to have been founded by Mahārāja Agrasena of the Agrawala community. The excavations here have revealed five phases of brick structures belonging to the late Kuṣāṇa and early Gupta period. The structures of baked and unbaked bricks belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period have been found here. The other finds of the Kuṣāṇa period are bowls, sprinklers, *carinated hāndī* in red ware, iron and copper objects, copper coins etc. The site was under occupation since third- fourth century BCE to thirteen century CE. The excavations have revealed five periods. Period II and period III belonged to the Kuṣāṇa time which clearly indicates its urban nature.<sup>48</sup>

### **Khokhrakot:**

Khokhrakot is in Rohtak district in Haryana. The excavation here has revealed four periods. Period I was characterized by the occurrence of the Painted Grey Ware. Period II was characterized by the introduction of Northern Black Polished Ware and the associated Wares. The third period is sub divided into three phases *i.e.*, pre-Kuṣāṇa, Kuṣāṇa and post-Kuṣāṇa periods. The fourth period belonged to the Gupta period. The site has yielded copper coins of the Kusāṇas, Kuṣāṇa pottery comprising jars of various types, lids, spouted vessels, basins, storage jars, bowls, iron ring, nails, fishhooks, terracotta, shell, ivory, quartz, beads, terracotta spindle whorls, bangle pieces, discs etc.<sup>49</sup> Thus it may be said that the site was under occupation long before the Kuṣāṇas and remained as an urban centre under the Kuṣāṇas and continued after them.

### **Harnol and Muhammad Nagar:**

Harnol and Muhammad Nagar are in district Gurgaon in Haryana. The excavations at Harnol have revealed the cultural material of six different periods. Period I is characterized by the Black Slipped Ware. Period II is characterized by Painted Grey Ware. Northern Black Polished Ware along with associated wares represent period III. Period IV belongs to the Śunga period. Period V represents the Kuṣāṇa period. It has been divided in two sub-periods *i.e.*, V (A) and V (B). V (A) belongs to the Kuṣāṇa phase and V (B) to the late Kuṣāṇa phase. V (A) is represented by four structural phases. The structures contain typical Kuṣāṇa bricks measuring 36 x 22 to 25 x 5 to 6

cm. iron arrow heads, shell bangles and red wares have been found from this phase. From period V (B) we have got bone points, terracotta human figurines, beads, decorated tile with floral designs, skin rubber and grey soapstone lid etc. The Kuṣāṇa Red Ware contains basins, miniature pots, plain spouts, plain and painted vases, *handis*, centrally placed knobbed lids, thick lids with inverted disc top, lids with cup-shaped depressions and hopscotches etc. Period VI belongs to the late medieval time.<sup>50</sup> The available material shows that the site was under occupation before the Kuṣāṇas but after them, we do not find the site under occupation till late medieval period when it appears to have been reoccupied.

The excavations at Muhammad Nagar too have revealed six periods. Period I shows sturdy Red Ware. Period II is represented by Painted Grey Ware. The Northern Black Polished Ware belongs to Period III. The Śunga period is represented by period IV. Period V, subdivided into two phases V (A) and V (B) belongs to the Kuṣāṇa period. These sub-periods have distinct structural phases and evidence of additions and alterations. Kuṣāṇa structures in the form of house complexes with various size of atleast five rooms were noticed here on either side of a narrow lane running from east to west having average width of 80 cm and paved with brickbats. The size of the rooms were found 1.70 x 1.90 m, 1.75 x 1.84 m and 1.27 x 1.22 m. Typical Kuṣāṇa bricks measuring 42 x 26 x 6 cm and 36 x 22 to 24 x 5 to 6 cm were found to be used in the construction of rooms. Evidence of a floor paved with mud bricks was also found in one of the rooms. The width of the walls varies from 42 cm to 75 cm. Terracotta human and animal figurines, bangles, beads, Kuṣāṇa copper coins, Red Ware comprising bowls, basins vases, lids and lamps were found. Period VI belongs to late medieval period.

The material from the sites thus shows that these were urban centers before the coming of the Kuṣāṇas and flourished under the Kuṣāṇas but was abandoned after them till late medieval period when it was re occupied.<sup>51</sup>

### **Kurukshetra:**

Kurukshetra, the land enclosed by the Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī rivers is now represented by a series of mounds at Amin, Thanesar, Pehoa (ancient Pr̥thudaka) and Raja Karaṇa- Ka Qila at the distance of two miles from the town of Thanesar.<sup>52</sup> At Amin two inscribed stone pillars have been found. They are carved on all four sides and have no sockets for cross bars. The inscription bears the characters of Kuṣāṇa period.<sup>53</sup> Raja Karaṇa- Ka-Qila is another significant site of our interest. The excavation has revealed a nine meter thick occupational deposit belonging to two cultural periods, ranging in date from c. 400 BCE to 300 CE.

Period I was characterized by the use of the plain grey ware usually associated with the Northern Black polished ware and a few pieces of painted grey ware were also found.

Period II is more significant from our point of view. It is divided into two sub-periods: II (A) and II (B). II (A) is marked by red ware of the early centuries of the Common Era and II (B) by the occurrence of the red polished ware. At upper levels, mud bricks of the same size are found. The red ware of the period was stamped with designs, such as *cakra*, *nandipada* and other floral motifs. The other findings of the period included copper coins, beads of semi-precious stones, shell and terracotta bangles, terracotta objects like animal figurines, toy cart wheels and dabbers, copper rod and blade pieces and a variety of household objects of iron and stone.<sup>54</sup> The outstanding finds are three clay sealings bearing legends in Brāhmī script of the early centuries of Common Era.<sup>55</sup> After the Kuṣāṇa period, the place was reoccupied during the late medieval period till then it appears to has been abandoned.

Harsh-ka Tila in Thanesar is also very significant from the viewpoint of our study. Mud rampart of the Kuṣāna period on the southern slope of the mound are found. Inside the fortification were found many house walls and other associated features of a township. The finds include sprinklers, small vases, spouted vessels, incurved bowls, jars, basins, *hāndis*, knobbed lids, storage jars, and sherds of red polished ware. Pieces of decorated spouts, some having the shape of *makara*-head, terracotta human and animal figurines, lion head with incised mouth and eyes, ear studs, beads of terracotta and semiprecious stones, copper rod and bangles of bone, ivory and shell were of the items belonging to the Kuṣāna period. Stratigraphically, the Painted Grey Ware level antedates the Kuṣāna period. It appears that the site matured as an urban centre during the Kuṣāna period. The Kuṣāna period was followed by the Gupta period without any break.<sup>56</sup> Thus the data from the Kurukshetra make us to conclude that it was an important urban site during the Kuṣāna period.

Thus the archaeological material discovered from the different sites till now such as well-planned large baked brick structures, roads, streets and drains and the existence of money economy etc. certainly prove them to represent the sites of ancient towns or cities or even semi- urban centers in the Kuṣāna period. We have seen that there were numerous flourishing urban centers in Punjab during the period of our study. The nature of these urban centers varied often site wise. Most of the sites, however, were not exclusively Kuṣāna in character rather came to be inhibited long before the Kuṣānas but almost all of them have revealed flourishing Kuṣāna layers having the traits of urbanization.

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