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Archaeological potential of Capital of Pakistan-Islamabad and pioneer Archaeological Excavation in Islamabad (Buddhist Stupa-Ban Faqiran)

Abstract:

Modern city of Islamabad is one of the oldest living inhabitants in the world. Islamabad has the complete sequence and archaeological findings of Stone Age life showing a continuity of man in this region from the early Stone Age. Geographically, Islamabad remained the natural bearer and defensive zone of Rawalpindi against north western borders and invaders. Buddhist site of Ban Faqiran, is the oldest historical monument discovered in Islamabad. Archaeological remains of Ban Faqiran and the oldest mosque in Islamabad are perched atop on Margalla hills. Federal Department of Archaeology and museums carried out a comprehensive and fruitful excavation at the site and exposed the buried cultural heritage of Buddhist era and a mosque of Muslim dynasty. Besides structural remains, rare copper coins, iron arrow heads and pot shreds discovered.¹

Introduction of the Site

Archaeological complex of Ban Faqiran, Islamabad, is at the crossed roads on one of the ancient routes, connecting the Taxila Valley with the Pothohar plateau through natural passage formed by hill torrents of Margalla mighty hills.² The remains of Ban Faqiran Site are situated in the Western edge of Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. The given name, “Ban Faqiran” is derived from local vernacular; “*ban*” (reservoir) and “*faqiran*” (saints). Ban Faqiran stands for a reservoir dedicated to saints. Average height of the site from sea level is 850 meters. Ban Faqiran Archaeological Complex comprises of a Buddhist Stupa and a small mosque along with a large water tank, situated about 200 meters to the west of the stupa.

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Historical Background

Islamabad region is one of the oldest living inhabitants in the world (Dani.1999:102). Islamabad has the complete sequence and archaeological findings of Stone Age life showing a continuity of man in this region from the early Stone Age. Islamabad is one of the largest planned capital cities of the twentieth century. This city located on the [Pothohar Plateau](#) of the Punjab province, is also considered to be one of the earliest sites of human settlement in the region.³ Keeping in view its rich archaeological significance we cannot confine the Archaeological potential of Islamabad within present territory. In 1960, this area was partially open land attractive for the establishment of new capital of country. Geographically, Islamabad remained the natural bearer and defensive zone of Rawalpindi against north western borders and invaders. For the reasons most of the archaeological remains and historical buildings including settlements, forts and colonial buildings are found everywhere in old Rawalpindi city and neighboring historical town of situated Taxila. It includes Islamabad, the capital territory and covers an area of 1,165 Km² of which 906 km² is Islamabad proper. Population of proper Islamabad is 2,151,868 (Federal Territory) and Urban population is 1,529,180 (Census 2012).

Although, Islamabad is a newly established capital city of Pakistan (construction beginning in October 1961), yet it has had a long and enriched history going back to pre historic time. The river Soan (meaning “Golden”) runs through it on its eastern side. On its northern and western sides spread out the mighty hill of Margalla (correctly Mar-i-Qila) the exact translation of Sanskrit word Taxila the oldest capital of the region which the Aryans called Gandhara (Dani.1999:99).⁴ When Taxila on the western side of the hill was the capital, Islamabad on the eastern side of the hill slop was suburb. In 1971, Prof. A.H.Dani, identified Barr-i-Imam as a location of a Buddhist site (ibid).

The Soan River terraces have been produced Palaeolithic material belonging to all the three periods: the lower Palaeolithic, the middle Palaeolithic and later or upper Palaeolithic and sequence continues right up into the microlithic period. The oldest tools of Palaeolithic age has been discovered from the sites of Rawat, Morgah, Sohan and on the bank of the Soan River. All the finds were studied in great detail by De Terra and Paterson and thus the antiquity of Islamabad area has been extended up to the lower Pleistocene period of geology (ibid:102). The famous American anthropologist, Movius classified the tools recovered from the site of Morga near Attock Oil Refinery, as choppers and chopping tools and added them to what De Terra has called pre Soan tools. The earliest stone tools used by man of old age in this region some 2,000,000 years ago, have been discovered along the course of the river Soan near Rawat (John, Elden-1968:6-19). The discovery of fossil remains of jaw belonging to *Sivapithecus punjabicus* by the geological team led by Piblean in the Potwar (Pothohar) Plateau dating back to 14 to 18 million years ago, has provided an opportunity to the researchers for further discoverers of the bones of *Australopithecus*, the earliest human. In 1987-90, four early stone age sites had been reported in the Potwar (Salim.1990,p.59).⁵ It reveals that this region was home to people who settled on the banks of the [Soan River](#) and

developed small communities in the region at around 3000 BC. Evidence of the earliest cultural stage at Sarai Khola (Period-I) seems to be peculiar to the Potwar Plateau (Halim, 1972, :126).

In-depth studies of Paleolithic sites in Soan Valley and adjoining parts of Potwar plateau had already been made during 1930s by Helmut de Terra and Paterson (1939), and Paterson and Drummond (1962) (Ashfaque & Saleem-87:1). The systematic study of the Palaeolithic age of the Potwar (Pothohar) was conducted by De Terra and Peterson on the basis of short season of survey in 1933. Few specific surveys carried out in Soan Valley by British Archaeological Mission in late fifties. Survey was followed by the Italian Mission to Northern Area of Pakistan, led by Paolo Graziosi (1964). American Archaeological mission led by Eldond O. Jonson from Minnesota University also carried out a survey of Palaeolithic sites in Rawalpindi/Islamabad, 1964. In Rawat, near Islamabad research work was focused on several issues, of which the first was the search for further artifacts from the two million years horizon (Allchin & Dennell-1989:5). In 1973, Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums led by Mr. Ahmed Nabi Khan, carried out a survey, with the objectives of documentation of pre historic sites especially, after the discovery of Neolithic sites of Saria Khola in Taxila Valley. Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums also carried out exploration in Margalla Hills in 1986, right from Nicolson monuments to Shah Allah Ditta caves, led by late Gulzar Muhammad Khan, the then curator of Taxila Museum and he reported the remains of a Buddhist stupa complex at Mari and Baoli near Kanthala. In leadership of renowned scholar, Prof. A.H Dani,⁶ in 2003/06 small scale a survey and excavations, carried out in Islamabad, federal territory. This survey was amid to take steps ahead to explore, potential sites of Margalla Hills in order to focus all unidentified potential sites from the extensions of Taxila western appendage to eastern appendages connecting the Murree hills (DOAM-2009).

The historians and archaeologists, traced historical background of the district Rawalpindi and Islamabad, back to the Palaeolithic period, an age whose existence has been estimated to the fabulous period of around two million years before present (Ashraf M, Ghani ur Rehman, 2010:52). Rawalpindi District and Islamabad, a transitional region between the highlands of Swat, Kashmir and Hazara and the alluvial plains of the Punjab, has played a very key and significant role in human history of this region since remote antiquity (Ashraf M. & Ghani ur Rehman, 2009:1).⁷ On the basis of present archaeological discoveries, distinct cultures flourished here on this plateau. The archaeological ruins found on the sites of today Islamabad and Rawalpindi confirms the existence of a Buddhist remains contemporary to Taxila but less notable than its neighbourhood (Ashraf.M. & Ghani ur Rehman, 2010:3).

There were some caves of Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic period, also reported at Jori Rajgan in Islamabad (Kakepoto, 2006:128). Prof. V.A Ranov a well known Paleolithic specialist and head of the Scientific Institute of Archaeology at Dushanbe, Tajikistan visited these caves while visiting Soan Valley and Rohri hills and suggested its affinities with Mousterian tools. Dani referred Tarlai Kalan,

another archaeological site/graveyard to 7th to 10th century AD. This Site/graveyard is located southwest of Islamabad, road towards Chak Shahzad to Taramri Chowk and then westward to Rawalpindi link road (Kakepoto, 2006, :136). On the proposal of Capital Development Authority- Islamabad, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid I Azam University Islamabad, carried out a comprehensive survey of Baithak Baba Farid, located at Zero Point and on the basis of surface study, recommended the site belongs to 10th century CE (Kakepoto, 2006:136). In 2008/09, Prof. Muhammad Ashraf Khan, then then Director, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, carried out a comprehensive survey of selected areas in Islamabad and Rawalpindi (Ashraf. M & Ghani ur Rehman-2009:1). Later the region became an early settlement of the [Aryan](#) community. The region has witnessed the arrival of a number of major powers here(Sharif-1986:36). Worth mentioning among them were Iranians, Greek, Scythian. Parthian, Kushan, Shahis, White Huns and Mughals, used this corridor through various routes of Rawalpindi/Islamabad on their way to invade the rest of the [Indian subcontinent](#). Archaeological excavations revealed a enriched long story of neighboring ancient city of Taxila from mid fourth millennium B.C. to the Islamic period (Halim.1994:6).

It was famous British archaeologist Alexander Cunningham who correctly recognized the ruins as those of the ancient Takshasila or Taxila of the classic writers (Bahadar,2002:24).⁸ Settled life in the Taxila valley started around the fourth millennium BCE. Presence of the earliest agrarian society is well attested at Sarai Khola (Ashraf Khan. 2006:200). The Period-I and Period-II at Sarai Khola (Neolithic and Kot Dijian settlements) yielded an important archaeological material which greatly helped in reconstructing settlement pattern of people from 3100 BCE to 2400 BCE (Gulzar Muhammad Khan.88:278). The remains of the Takshakas of bronze age (6th-2nd millennium B.C) have been found at the bottom of the Hathial mound on the bank of Tamranala, at the edge of Hathial spur about half a mile to the northeast of Taxila museum(Dani,2000:2). Hathial period II bridged the gap from 10th -9th century BCE to 8th -7th century BCE and provide new evidence of Gandhara Grave settlement in Taxila valley (Gulzar Muhammad Khan.88:284). Since 1912-13, the large scale scattered remains of the ancient Taxila, once the capital of ancient Gandhara, became the focus of the western archaeologist interested in Greek and Buddhist research and study.

Due to the different reasons archaeologists could not spare much time to explore and investigate the newly established capital of Pakistan in Islamabad.⁹ Islamabad, capital of Pakistan is, still lacking a detailed scientific archaeological survey to identify, to protect cultural heritage of Islamabad and pin point the endangered sites. Recently the Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums protected two archaeological sites, Shah Allah Ditta Caves and Ban Faqiran Stupa and Mosque, under the antiquity act of 1975. Prior to this, Department of Archaeology and Museums also protected two forts, namely Rawat Fort and Pharwala Fort in Islamabad. Hence Federal department of Archaeology and Museums have protected four site/monuments in the capital of Pakistan, besides Saria Khurboza, which has been protected by Punjab Government.

Excavation at the Buddhist site of Ban Faqiran was recently undertaken by the Federal Department of Department of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM), Government of Pakistan, with a clear aim to reveal the principal structures of Buddhist stupa and a Mosque. In this connection field operation, at the archaeological site of Ban Faqiran was started in August 2015. Excavation and Conservation at Ban Faqiran was completed in February 2016. The vertical-cum-Horizontal digging on the site has brought to light remarkable and impressive remains of a Buddhist stupa of well measured flight of steps and a mosque. Renowned scholar and historian, late Prof. Ahmed Hassan Dani, identified Ban Faqiran site as a Buddhist stupa and he presumed the nearby water reservoir, as the location of the Buddhist monastery. He also assigned Gaznavid era to the small mosque, located in the west of water tank. He further suggested that, in old days, the nearby caves of Shah Allah Ditta, located 2 kilometer in north east of the stupa, were inhabited by Buddhist monks. Near the water spring, there is a series of caves, which were artificially brushed up and used by the Buddhist monks in the early centuries of Christian era. Now caves are empty and nothing has remained of old shrine. These caves are very famous among the dwellers of the area because of their beautiful natural environment, shape of rock and centuries old running sacred water spring. Soon after the decline of Buddhist cult, these caves were occupied by Hindu community of Shah Allah Ditta village and consequent upon the partition of India in year 1947, subsequently Muslims occupied the same. Remains water channel and large water tank of Mughal era are scattered up to Shah Allah Ditta Village. Due to ignorance of inhabitants and in search of antiquities, treasure hunters and illegal diggers caused considerable damages to the archaeological evidences in these caves. The water tank of famous Shah Allah Ditta caves, has undergone inappropriate kind of conservation and repairs in past which has damaged the authenticity of this historical monument. Now a days, the major threat to these caves and water channels is rapid modern urban development in the area which mushroomed in recent years. Shah Allah Ditta caves in the suburbs of Islamabad are one of such places and according to recent studies there may be more such sites in the area. Some brick monuments belonging to colonial era still exist in the Shah Allah Ditta village. Therefore this village needs urgent documentation of the historical monuments to protect and preserve the rich hidden and surviving cultural heritage of Islamabad.

In year 2015, consequent upon the reports of vandalism by the treasure hunters, in the form of illegal diggings in search of priceless objects of Buddhist site at Ban Faqiran Islamabad Department of Archaeology and Museums decided to carry out archaeological excavation. National Fund for Cultural heritage provided sufficient funds for the expedition.

Physical Features.

Ban Faqiran occupies one of the ideal and picturesque locations of archaeological sites in area. The Buddhist monasteries in the region are not without reasons; indeed the ancient settlers and Buddhist monks felt greatly attracted by the enchanting environment, most suitable for meditation to which they were so

staunchly devoted. The site of Ban Faqiran is situated at, one of the hill tops of mighty Margalla range (Kakepoto, 2006:137).¹⁰

Physically we can divide Archaeological remains of Ban Faqiran into two complexes (Figure-I). Upper complex consisting of a stupa is falling between the coordinates Lat. 33° 43' 22" N and Log. 72° 53' 51" E. Upper complex is situated in the jurisdiction of the Islamabad territory. Geographically the lower complex falls within the lat. 33°43' 25" N and Long. 72° 53' 42" East. The lower complex, located about 200 meters in the west of upper complex. Lower complex is consisting of the ruins of an old mosque and a large water tank. Lower complex falls in the jurisdiction of Punjab province. The remains of upper complex are dated back to the 2nd century C.E. and lower complex can be safely assigned the date of late Mughal era.

Remains of upper complex extend from South to North, covering an area of 80x40 meters and rises to an average height of four meter above from narrow gorge in south, which links it with lower complex in west. Upper complex was completely covered with wild growth, bushes and small trees.¹¹ Archaeological remains of upper complex lie among the lush green hills, on the top of a comparatively lower hill. Inspection of the site reveals that in past, the site has been badly plundered and disturbed by the illegal diggers as well as treasure hunters. A narrow gorge links, once the ancient capital of Gandhara, Taxila and modern capital of Pakistan, Islamabad. Large scale wild growth along the track is also a hurdle in the smooth movement. Wild animal especially poisonous insects and snakes are frequently found in the area. We can say it is a stony and thorny track, especially in summer season. Present excavations, though limited both in time and space, have yielded remarkable and fruitful results in determining the chronology on the site. However, as whole site appears to have added very little to the findings except the discovery of some rare coins. The results of present excavations although confirming that there is a mosque, still lack much in cultural material to prove its being the earliest mosque or Gaznavid's era. Keeping in view the preliminary excavation at Ban Faqiran Site, Mosque has been protected by DOAM, in 2016, under Antiquities Act of 1975. Architecture and masonry of Ban Faqiran Stupa can be compared with the contemporary monastic complexes of Dharmarajika, Bhamala, Bhallar, Giri, Mora Muradu, Pipplan and Julian, in the Taxila valley as well as Takht-e-Bhai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Swat Valley (Pakistan Archaeology.2015, p.145). Significant features of Ban Faqiran stupa, are helpful to determine its chronology. Base of the stupa is constructed with large boulders of limestone, in semi-ashlar and diaper masonry. Limestone masonry of Ban Faqiran stupa is contemporary to the stupas in Taxila valley (Figure-II).¹² Surviving patches of lime plaster confirm that entire stupa was plastered with thick layer of lime coating. Pavement of vertical chips of limestone, to fill the space between stones slabs and boulders, on the top of the base of stupa, were closely resembles to the floor masonry of contemporary monasteries of Badal pur in Taxila, Takht-e-Bhai in Mardan (KPK) and Bari Kot in Swat. Bhallar stupa in Taxila is also erected, after partial leveling of a natural rock. It was observed that the architectural style of the base of Bhallar stupa and Ban Faqiran stupa is

contemporary. Broadly speaking, results of this excavation are very encouraging and fruitful, besides the discovery of rare coins from the stupa complex and other minor antiquities (Figure-III).

Mosque and Water Tank

Location. Lower complex is situated about 200 meters in the west of upper complex of Ban Faqiran Stupa. Towards the northwest, a narrow natural track is leading towards the Taxila Valley. Remains of the world heritage site Giri are located In the North West of lower complex at the distance of about 2 kilometers.

A small square mosque and a large water tank is situated in a rectangular plain piece of land, extending east to west. Numerous tiny pot shreds were scattered around the structures of mosque and water tank. Some pot shreds were thick in size and similar pot shreds were frequently recovered from northern zone, upper complex. Lower complex, after gridding and pegging, divided into nine grids. The western axis was marked by the alphabetical numbers from A to C and northern axis by numerical numbers 1 to 3, in the following order A/1, A/2, A/3, B/1, B/2, B/3, C/1, C/2, C/3. Squares, A1, C/1 and C/2 were completely excavated. Three trial trenches, measuring 10x10 meters has been managed to expose the mosque and western corner of water tank, adjacent to mosque. All the three trenches laid in the South West (C/1 and C/2) and North West (A/1) of water tank. The mosque is situated in the extreme Western edge of water tank above the parameter wall. The alignment of the Northern wall of mosque and Western wall of water tank, was not symmetrical. This reveals that the mosque and water tank were not constructed simultaneously. It evidenced that water tank was constructed in earlier than the mosque. Mosque has been constructed with the combination of lime stones and *kanjure* stones. Mortar used in the walls, is mixture of lime, granular lime stones and tiny pieces of terra cotta. Mosque is almost square in shape. Slight difference of measurements of walls is noticeable. Length of the eastern wall from outside is 4.40 meter and from inside its length is 3.10 meter. Thickness of the eastern wall is maximum 1.30 meter. There is an arched entrance, in the eastern wall of mosque; measuring 190x77 cm. Apex of the arch has been collapsed. Arch is made of red terra cotta tiles. Length of western wall from outside is 4.32 meter and inside its length is 3.20 meter. Thickness of the western wall is 1.12 meter. An alcove, measuring 175x35x10 cm. is surviving in the center of western wall. Length of the southern wall from outside is 4.15 meter. and its length from inside is 2.96 meter. Thickness of the southern wall is 1.19 meter. The length of northern wall, from outside is 4.27 meter and from inside its length is 3.00 meter. Maximum thickness of the northern wall is 1.27 meter. From floor level existing, height of all four exposed walls is ranging from 1.70 m to 2 m. Northern wall from outside is 2.10 meter high which is the maximum height of any wall from outside. Zone of transition has been created by providing squinches on four corners, even though depilated condition. Squinches are constructed with burnt bricks and

coated with thin layer of lime plaster. Super structure above the squinches, comprising drum and dome has been collapsed.

Water Reservoir: It is almost square and made of lime stones. lime mortar used for the construction of walls. It is also reported by senior natives that in past, a lime floor was existing in the water tank and people utilized it for bathing as well as water storage. During the excavations there were some evidences of such floor but could not exposed in selective trenches in presentable condition. Inside, measurements of the walls of the water tank, were found to some extent different. Length of eastern wall is 23.90 meter. Length of western wall is 26.50 meter. Southern wall is 26.51 meter long and length of northern wall is 27.00 meter. Average thickness, of the walls of water tank, is 60 cm and before excavation average depth of water tank was 10 cm to 1.64 meter. Top courses of lime stone were restored time to time. South western corner of water tank was filled with the debris fallen from mosque. In C/1 square which was partially extended in water tank, up to the depth of 70 cm. debris were removed and the bed of natural rock was exposed. Levels of debris and soil deposits not found uniform. This water tanks needs complete investigation and restoration for future activities in the area. It is the only water reservoir available here to save rainy water. It is necessary to remove all the fallen debris and clean soil deposits from the water tank for the preservation and restoration.

Minor Antiquities: Incised terracotta potsherds, of thick texture and few painted with black motives on red slip, were found from these trenches. A copper coin of Government of Pakistan dated 1963 found at the depth of 30 cm, in south east (outside) of the entrance of mosque.

Periodization and Stratigraphy of Ban Faqiran.

In order to establish a complete chronology of the site, on the basis of well documented cultural profile maintained during the present excavations. An area of 5x5 meters from east to west and north to south was selected (Upper Complex) for in-depth digging, located close to the base wall of stupa in south east. This trench was designated as I/7. This section exposed up to the depth of about 3.30 meters from surface level upto the bottom, touching the natural rock. In this square at least two occupation layers representing two periods, from top to bottom, were identified. Maximum care was observed to carry out digging. It was ensured at all stages of the excavations that no evidence even of the minor nature is missed from the course of recording. Stratigraphy of the square was maintained with great concern and every evidence of past was recorded and placed in proper context and cultural perspective. It revealed some important and useful information in the form of two observable occupational levels representing two different periods from top to natural rock.

The trench I/7 selected for deep digging was the highest for vertical excavation but limited in bottom, as the length and breadth of trench continued to decrease while going deep due to the sharp descent in east. Top layer was partially vanished. According to the initial surface study and information provided by local labours, the upper layer of mound at some places, about 1 meters has been removed by the

treasure hunters. It is also learnt that there were, ruins of stone walls, in the central zone and northern zone, which were also removed by illegal diggers. The top of stupa, including dome has been completely removed by natural disaster and as well as illegal diggers. Hence the complete evidence of detail stratigraphy is lacking, so we mainly relayed on the floor level and the evidence of structural remains exposed in selected trench. A large area of the site is still to be investigated but keeping in view the scarcity of funds, team mainly focused on stupa which was since long, under the great threat of illegal diggers.

Layer.I. Bottom to upwards. Layer-I is the lowest one. It is varying from 20 to 100 centimeter in thickness. It comprised of light brown soil in colour and mixed with dominant lime, small river pebbles. However, no structural remains found in this layer. Layer no. I, is compact, mixed lime layer extended against the walls and foundation of stupa. On the basis of stone masonry of stupa and antiquities discovered we can assume that this layer was probably belonged to 2nd century C.E.

Layer. II. The maximum thickness of layer-II, was found about 80 cm. This layer is almost compact and light brown in colour. Blocks of lime and *kanjore* stones, large stone boulders and pot shreds have been noticed. Some rare finds including copper coins and arrow heads made of iron also discovered from the layer-I. This layer belongs to 2nd -5th century C.E. The most attention-grabbing feature of this layer is fragments of stucco plaster.

Maximum thickness of surface/top layer is 150 cm. The layer in question comprises of light brown colour, loose soil, mixed with pot shreds and small river pebbles. Few loose lime boulders and dressed stones were also recovered from this layer. Largely this layer emerged because of the natural decay, collapse of the structures of stupa and activities of illegal diggers. The structural remains and associated material consisting; mostly a small number of pot shreds, iron arrow heads and copper coins provided the ample evidences of different periods.

Period-I (2nd-5th century AD)

The first occupation of period-I, topped the natural rock and was represented by thick accumulation of layer-I and layer-II, starting from the bottom of the section at the depth of 3.3 meters, below the surface level. The total thickness of the deposit associated with this period was 180 cm. The material discovered from this layer including very few terra cotta pot shreds mixed in lime, probably pottery used during the construction and damaged. Some rare copper coins and iron arrow heads also discovered from the same period. This level indicates the earliest occupational level of site from to 2nd - 5th century A.D.

Period-II (17th -18th century AD)

The second period of the site is very interesting. According to available material, at the stupa area, belongs to 17th- 18th-century C.E. It was observed that during the period, after a long interval, upper complex was re-occupied by new inhabitants, probably Muslims, who also established a mosque in lower complex. They re-used the stupa and built some rough structures in the northern zone. Structures of rough

lime stone masonry represent this phase of occupation. The total thickness, of the deposit associated with this period, was 150 cm, in which layer- III was identified. Small number of pot shreds bearing with different shapes and features were also discovered. Due to human vandalism, the most of evidence of period-II has been disturbed or almost disappeared. Irregular structures of this period were identified in northern zone. It appears that these structures were constructed on the site at much late period, perhaps about late Mughal era. The terracotta pot shreds, a fragment of a glass bead and a rare copper coin of Mughal era also recovered from the period II.

Antiquities

During excavation at Buddhist site of Ban Faqiran, a reasonable quantity of antiquities have been discovered which included fragments of terra cotta pottery, glass bead, stone pivot, arrow heads, copper and silver coins (Figure-IV). These antiquities belong to different occupational levels, which were marked during excavation. Rare coins belonged to Muarya, Greek, Kushan and late Mughal dynasties. All antiquities discovered at Ban Faqiran Site are presently displayed in Islamabad Museum.

Notes & References

- ¹. After the partition of India in 1947, “Archaeological Survey of Indian” reorganized. In Pakistan Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums Islamabad emerged but authorities in India, retained the same identity; Archaeological Survey of India. In 2015, archaeological excavation at Ban Faqiran in Islamabad, was the pioneer field activity of Federal department of Archaeology and Museums, in Islamabad territory since its establishment.
- ². The Pothohar Plateau (**Punjabi**: پوٹھوہار, **Urdu**: مرتفع پوٹھوہار; alternatively spelled Potohar or Pothwar, is a **plateau** in north-eastern **Pakistan**, forming the northern part of **Punjab**.
- ³ The British departure from the Indian subcontinent on 15 August 1947 created two independent countries: India, with its existing imperial capital in New Delhi designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1911; and Pakistan, opting for the port city of Karachi as its national capital. Due to the demographic distribution of Muslims - the basis for the creation of the two countries - Pakistan consisted of two halves, East and West, a thousand miles apart. In 1971, the two parts separated to create a third independent country of Bangladesh with Dhaka as its Capital city. Shortly after their independence and within a few years of each other, the three countries set about building a new capital city - Islamabad and Dhaka as the national capitals of West and East Pakistan. Pakistan decided to replace Karachi with a new purpose-built national capital in Islamabad. Islamabad is the first planned city of its kind in Pakistan and also very different from the existing cities. Constantin Doxiadis, whose master plan for the city was approved in 1960, based it on his idea of dynapolis - a city endlessly expanding in a linear fan shape from an initial fixed point. Because of its gridiron geometric layout, the plan of the city was considered to be in accordance with the Islamic principles of design (Quaiyoom O. (1997) ‘Islamabad – the first planned city’, *Book of Abstracts**:15). * DES 9: Post Colonial Capitals of South Asia: A critical analysis of Chandigarh, Dhaka and Islamabad. *ICDES and University of Liverpool Workshop, (1997), Book of Abstracts (out of print)*
- ⁴. Correctly Takashasila, meaning “hill capital of the Serpent king Taksha
- ⁵. The then Assistant Director, Centre for the study of the Civilizations of Central Asia, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad,
- ⁶. Former head of the department of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-i-Azam University-Islamabad
- ⁷. The Master Plan for Islamabad was prepared in 1960 by considering Islamabad as a part of a large metropolitan area by integrating the city of Rawalpindi as a twin city. These two cities were considered highly dependent on each other in overall urban development. However, the original Master Plan covering the city of Rawalpindi was not put into practice.
- ⁸. Bhir Mound: The first city of Taxila (Excavation report 1998-2002) DOAM& NFCH, p.24
- ⁹. Remains of Buddhist heritage in ancient Taxila valley are scattered into two provinces, i.e Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Now we can say Buddhists ruins of Taxila are also extended towards Islamabad (ICT).
- ¹⁰. The name Marikila (Margalla) is found in the accounts of his book kitab-ul-Hind (Alberuni’s India). Presently the hills are commonly known as Margalla which is extension of the lesser **Himalayas** located north of **Islamabad, Pakistan**. Margalla hills are also possessed sacred position in the time ancient serpent worshippers of this area. There are different legends describe the origin of the word 'Margalla'. According to the one of such legends, these hills have always been known as an abode of snakes. *Mar* means 'snake' in **Persian** *galla* means 'herd', therefore Margalla means a place with presence of a lot of snakes. According to the second legend, the word 'Margalla' was derived from *Mar Galla*, meaning 'to strangulate'. *Mar* means 'hit' and *Galla* means 'neck'. It is believed that there were lots of Bandits and highway robbers who used these hills as a sanctuary and would strangle travellers in order to rob them. It has also been suggested that the name derived from Marikala, the Persian equivalent of Takshasila (Taxila).
- ¹¹. The plant species on Margalla hills belong to various families of trees, shrubs, herbs, climbers, grasses and fodder crops. The vegetation of the southern slopes is deciduous and evergreen trees

with most of flowering trees like [Bauhinia variegata](#), [Ficus carica](#), and trees like [Pinus roxburghii](#), [Quercus leucotrichophora](#). In the north stand pines, [Eucalyptus](#), [Peepal trees](#) (*Ficus religiosa*), [Paper Mulberry](#) and groves of [oak](#) e.g silver oaks. Over the years, however, the hills have suffered considerably from illegal logging and wood collection used for cooking and heating. There are around 250 to 300 species of plants on the Margalla hills. As many as two third of them are used by the people for their medicinal effects to treat or cure various diseases. The Margalla Hills are home to various species of wildlife, including [monkeys](#), exotic birds and [carnivores](#) such as the rare and presently endangered Margalla [leopard](#).

¹² . Dharmarajika, Bhamala, Bhallar, Giri, Mora Muradu, Pipplan and Julian