

BRAHMANABAD: UNRAVELLING THE GEOGRAPHICAL ENIGMA OF AN ANCIENT METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

Nestled within the pages of the early medieval history of Sindh lies Brahmanabad, an ancient metropolis that has captivated the curiosity of scholars and enthusiasts alike. In the annals of Sindh, Brahmanabad stands as a prominent capital that thrived during the rule of Hindu dynasties before the Arab conquest of the region. It held sway not only over its immediate surroundings but also governed vast territories, including Nirun, Debal, the lands of the Lohanas, the Lakhas, the Sammas, and the entire southern coast of Sindh. The city's strategic importance is emphasized by its central position between Alor and Debal, which established its role as a political and administrative centre, managing a vast region of cultural and economic significance. The *Ashkal-ul-Bilad* (dated 1193 CE), believed to be a reproduction of Ibn Haukal's work, reinforces the significance of Mansura by explicitly identifying it as one of the twenty countries within the dominion of Islam. Its position, therefore, was one of great importance, but despite the historical eminence of Brahmanabad, the exact location of the city remains uncertain. This research endeavours to unravel the geographical enigmas surrounding Brahmanabad for centuries, a city that holds the whispers of past civilizations and the echoes of forgotten stories.

Keywords: Brahmanabad, Mansura, Chachnama, Naserpur, Hyderabad, Sindh

OBJECTIVES

- The primary objective of this paper is the identification and clarification of the geographical location of Brahmanabad. The paper explores various historical accounts, maps, and modern perspectives to unravel the uncertainties surrounding the city's exact location.
- The paper aims to provide a historical context for Brahmanabad, discussing its prominence in the early Medieval history of Sindh. It delves into the city's political, administrative, and strategic importance, as well as its cultural and economic significance in the region.
- Another objective is the comparative analysis of different historical accounts and manuscripts, such as those of Al-Masudi, Ibn Haukal, and Al Biruni and to arrive at a more accurate understanding of Brahmanabad.
- The research paper discusses modern attempts to rediscover Brahmanabad, examining the findings of archaeological excavations, the identification of potential ruins, and the challenges in decisively linking the discovered site to the city.

METHODOLOGY

The initial phase involved the identification and selection of contemporary historical records related to Brahmanabad, with a primary focus on ancient manuscripts, inscriptions, travel accounts, and other textual sources offering insights into the city's geography. A comprehensive review of these materials was conducted, assessing their authenticity, reliability, and historical context. Key information regarding Brahmanabad's geographical aspects, encompassing its location, topography, and spatial features, was carefully extracted.

To trace the historical trajectory of Brahmanabad, the selected historical texts were organized chronologically. This chronological arrangement facilitated an examination of the city's rise and fall over time,

allowing for the analysis of changes in geographical descriptions, urban layout, and noteworthy reference points mentioned in different historical periods.

Historical maps, illustrations, or diagrams that contribute to the understanding of the geography of Brahmanabad were also searched for and included in the research to supplement the textual analysis.

Modern scholarly perspectives on the historical texts were also taken into account and interpretations were drawn on the analyses provided by various historians and experts in the field. Different viewpoints were evaluated to enrich the understanding of Brahmanabad's geographical context. Subsequently, the information extracted from historical texts and scholarly articles was synthesized to draw conclusions regarding the location of Brahmanabad.

INTRODUCTION

Brahmanabad's earliest documented history dates back to the Rai Dynasty of Sindh during which it constituted one of the four principal regions of the kingdom of Alor (modern Rohri), the other three being Siwistan (Sehwan), Askalanda (Alexandria on the Indus), and Multan. Upon the succession of the Brahmin Dynasty to the throne of Alor in the 7th century CE, Agham Lohana, the ruler of Brahmanabad, refused to accept Chach's suzerainty and declared himself independent. When Chach set out to consolidate his empire, he encountered resistance from Agham Lohana, but eventually seized control of the city following a long siege. Notably, there was also a Vihar (Buddhist monastery) in the vicinity of the city to which the Brahman king Chach also paid homage. The city then passed on to Dahir, son of Chach, who gave it to his brother Daharsiya to govern. After the defeat of Dahir at the hands of Muhammad Bin Qasim, the city was renamed Mansura, and flourished as the capital of the Arab province of Sindh, until its destruction by an earthquake after a century or so. Like much of the history of Brahmanabad prior to and after the Brahman Dynasty and Arabs, its exact location also remains in obscurity. Significant efforts have been attempted by various historians to uncover its past as well as its location, but none of them has been able to answer the question satisfactorily.

LINKING MANSURA WITH BRAHMANABAD

Before we delve into the tedious task of determining the exact location of Brahmanabad, it is first crucial to establish the fact that Mansura and Brahmanabad are the two names given to the same city by various geographers based on their understanding of the region. The "Kitab ul-Hind" of Al Biruni is a very important work in identifying Mansura with Brahmanabad. Al Biruni has used the words Bahmanwa (or Bamhanwa) and Almansura together at many instances. At first, he states that when Muhammad bin Qasim entered Sindh and conquered the cities of "Bahmanwa" and "Mulasthana" (Multan), he used the term "Al-Mansura" for the former and "Al-Mamura" for the latter. He then entered India and penetrated as far as Kannauj. [11] It would imply that the name Mansura was given to the city of Brahmanabad by Muhammad bin Qasim. Moreover, while calculating the latitude of Ujjain, Biruni states that Yaqub ibn Tarikh calls Almansura by the name of "Brahmanavata," i.e., Bamhanwa, and mentions it to be situated at a latitude of 24°1'. [11]

At another instance, Biruni writes, "Marching from Bhati towards the south-west, you come to Aror, 15 farsakh from Bhati, a township between two arms of the Sindh River; Bamhanwa Almansura, 20 farsakh; Loharani, at the mouth of the Sindh River, 30 farsakh" (Sachau, 1910, p. 205). Elliot also includes a similar statement in his translation of "Jami-ut-Tawarikh" by Rashid al-din Hamadani,* although with a slight variation. He mentions that Bhati is situated between the two arms of the Indus, and the distance from there (?) to "Bahmanu Mansura" is twenty parasangs. [5]

In the above-mentioned excerpt from Biruni, it is challenging to ascertain as to which town is situated between the two arms of the river. While it seems reasonable to presume that Aror is the town being referred to, the translation of Hamadani by Elliot suggests otherwise. Nevertheless, without delving into the precise locations of the towns here, we can at least safely deduce that, as the names Bahmanwa and Almansura are used interchangeably by Al Biruni and Rashid al-din Hamadani, they both refer to the same place.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY ACCORDING TO VARIOUS GEOGRAPHERS

* Jami-ut-Tawarikh was completed in 1310 CE. However, the passage from which this statement is drawn is not Rashid al-din's own, but rather the work of Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, as acknowledged by Rashid al-din himself.

Al-Masudi, a renowned historian and geographer of the tenth century, often referred to as the "Herodotus of the Arabs," undertook extensive journeys in search of knowledge. His travels brought him to Sindh sometime after 300 H. In his work "Muruj-ad-Dahab wa-Ma'adin al-Jawhar" (Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems), Al-Masudi notes that during his time, the king of Mansura was Abul-Mundir Umar ibn Abdullah, a Koraisite and a descendant of Habbar bin al-Aswad. According to Al-Masudi, Mansura derives its name from Mansur bin Jamhur, governor of the Umayyads.

He then goes on to describe the geography of the region and says that Mansura exercised authority over three hundred thousand villages. It was located seventy-five Sindhian farsangs away from Multan, with each farsang being equal to eight miles. He further says that the rivers of Punjab, after passing Multan, unite at a place called Dushab, which is situated about three days' journey below Multan and above Mansura. From there, they form a single stream that proceeds to the town of er-Rud or Eldror (Aror or Alor of Chachnama), which lies to the west of the river and is a part of Mansura. There it divides into two branches, and both of these fall at the town of Shakirah, which also belongs to Mansura and is situated about two days' journey from Debal. [12]

Al Biruni states that the river formed by the confluence of five rivers at "Pancanada" (Panjnad), after passing the city of Aror, is known to the Muslims as "Mihran," from there, it extends and becomes broader and broader as it flows south, towards Almansura, a city situated between several branches of Mihran. The river then discharges into the ocean at two locations: the first stream falls near the city of Loharani, and the other falls more eastward in the province of Kacch at a place called Sindhu-Sagar, i.e., the Sindh Sea. [11]

Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Idrisi recorded in his book *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq* (more commonly known as *Tabula Rogeriana*) that the city of Mansura is surrounded by a branch of the Mihran, although situated at a distance from the river itself. It is located on the west side of the main branch of the river. The river (after being joined by five of its tributaries in Punjab) divides at Kalari, a place situated at one day journey from (above) Mansura. From there, the main branch flows towards Mansura, and the other flows northward (sic) until Sharusan or Sadusan, where it turns westward and rejoins the chief stream. This junction occurs twelve miles below Mansura. The Mihran subsequently passes on to Nirun and eventually empties into the sea. He informs us that the city of Mansura was known as "Mirman" in the Indian language. According to Idrisi, the city covered an area of one square mile, a detail consistent with Ibn Haukal's account. However, Idrisi also claims that Mansura is equal to Multan in size. This creates a contradiction between the two authors and either Idrisi is mistaken in his latter statement, or Multan underwent significant expansion from being half the size of Mansura during the time of Ibn Haukal to matching its size in the period of Al Idrisi, who wrote at least a century and a half later.

Al Idrisi tells us that Mansura was built during the reign of the second Caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty, Al Mansur (754-775 CE), who, according to Idrisi, gave his name (translated as "the victorious") to four different cities: Baghdad, Mansura, Mesopotamia, and one Al Masisa on the Mediterranean. Although Al Mansur is credited with the establishment of *Madinat al-Salam* (the Round city of Baghdad), we do not find any evidence for the establishment of the other three by him. It is also important to note that Idrisi does not claim that Al Mansur built these cities but only says that "he gave his name to four different cities as a good augury that they might stand for ever." (Elliot, 1867, p. 78)

He also notes that in order to reach Mansura from Debal, one must cross the Mihran at Nirun (which lies at the west of the river and is halfway between Debal and Mansura) and cover a distance of six days journey.

As we see, there is a huge discrepancy between the accounts of all authorities on this subject. Nevertheless, there is a consensus that the city was positioned between two or more branches of the Indus. By now, it is also clear that the name Mansura was given to it by the Arab conquerors.

Comparative Analysis of the Accounts of Ibn Haukal and Ashkal-ul-Bilad

Abul Qasim Ibn Haukal (tenth century CE), in his *Surat-al-Ard* (The Face of the Earth), writes that the city of Mansura was twice as large as Multan and extended approximately one mile in both length and breadth, with an island-like appearance due to the presence of a stream of the river Mihran (Indus) around it. During his time, the inhabitants of Mansura were the descendants of Hebar ibn Al Aswad, who captured this city, and it remained in the possession of his descendants till the time of Ibn Haukal (i.e., circa 976 CE). The region boasted a warm climate and fertile land, yielding dates, apples, pears, and a peach-like fruit. The local currency consisted of the "Kaheri," each dirham of which was equivalent to (or weighed) fifty dirhams, and a silver coin

called “Tautooi,” with each dirham also valued at fifty dirhams.[†] Gold was also used in commercial transactions. While the attire and customs of the inhabitants bore resemblance to those of the people of Iraq, the kings of Mansura adopted the regal appearance of Indian monarchs, and wore pendants in their ears. [8]

Ibn Haukal exhibits some confusion in his directional descriptions, as evidenced by his assertion that the Persian Sea (likely referring to the Arabian Sea) is situated to the east of Sindh, with Kirman and Sijistan (Sistan) to the west. He locates Hind to the north and the desert of Makran to the south of it. Notably, Ibn Haukal, following in the footsteps of Al-Istakhri, whom he met in the valley of Indus, also designates cities such as Mansura and Debal to be within Sindh, while placing Multan and “Heidour” (Hadrawur in Elliot) within Hind.

An Arabic manuscript titled “Ashkal-ul-Bilad” (Diagrams of the Countries) dated 1193 CE was stumbled upon by Sir Henry Miers Elliot. According to this work, the king of Mansura hailed from the tribe of Kuraish and was a descendant of Hubad ibn Aswad, which is in conformity with the statement of Al-Masudi. Although this manuscript is said to be the verbatim copy of Ibn Haukal by Elliot, both works exhibit significant differences. In Sir William Ouseley’s translation, Mansura is referred to as Sindiah, whereas Elliot’s translation states that the city was called “Bamiwan” in the Sindhi language. Moreover, a stark contradiction arises in their accounts of the city’s produce. Ibn Haukal explicitly mentions the abundance of fruits like dates, apples, and pears, whereas the Ashkal-ul-Bilad contends that Mansura lacked grapes, apples, ripe dates, and walnuts. Instead, it yields sugarcane, Laimun, which is a fruit the size of an apple, and Ambaj, a peach-like fruit. The account in Ashkal-ul-Bilad stands out as more comprehensive and accurate. It acknowledges a crucial detail: the fruit cultivated in the hot region of Mansura was not an apple but rather a fruit resembling one. This distinction gains significance to Ashkal-ul-Bilad as the abundance of fruits like apples, mentioned in Ibn Haukal’s account, appears inconsistent with the hot climate of the region. Therefore, the account of Ashkal-ul-Bilad seems more trustworthy than that of Ibn Haukal.

Idrisi also notes, in line with Ashkal-ul-Bilad, that Mansura has a hot climate, and the region abundantly produces dates and sugarcane. Apart from these, there are hardly any other fruits, except for one known as laimun, which is the size of an apple and very sour, and another resembling a peach in both shape and taste. He further describes that the surroundings of Mansura are fertile, and there is an abundance of fish, meat, and a variety of foreign and native fruits. Buildings of this city are constructed using bricks, tiles, and plaster. It serves as a place of recreation and pleasure. The markets are bustling with people and well-supplied with goods. The lower classes adopt the Persian costume while the princes wear tunics and allow their hair to grow long, akin to the princes of India. The currency in circulation includes silver and copper. The weight of the drachma (dinar) is five times that of the ordinary drachma. Tatariya coins are also used in transactions.

MODERN ATTEMPTS TO REDISCOVER THE CITY

A number of sources have given varying accounts of Brahmanabad’s precise location. According to the Ain-i-Akbari, Brahmanabad was a large city and its citadel had 1400 towers or bastions, and the traces of this fortification were evident during the authors’ time. [6] Although the text does not specify the exact location or even the side of the river on which it was situated, the mention of bastions, according to Elliot may suggest that Kalankot was the fort probably indicated. William Vincent places it within four miles of Thatta and asserts that it corresponded with Pattala, a fortress constructed by Alexander III of Macedon. [13]

James Burnes identifies Brahmanabad with Kullan Kote (Kalan Kot near Makli Necropolis, Thatta) and states that the city was deserted because of Indus altering its course at some point in time, abandoning it to a fate similar to that of Alor. [4] Alexander Burnes also shares the same opinion stating that Kullancote was named Brahminabad and Hyderabad was referred to as Nerancote (Nirun Kot). [3] Thomas Postans notes that the location of Brahmanabad has not been precisely determined but a ruined place known as “Bambura” in the Delta of Indus is supposed to be the site of Brahmanabad. He also acknowledges that the Brahmans of Sindh associated the site of “Khodabad,” located slightly above Hyderabad, with that of Brahmanabad. [9] William Vincent, (the same scholar who places Brahmanabad near Thatta), James Tod, and James Rennell, associate Mansura with Bhakkar, relying on the testimony of Abul Fazl, [6] who in all probability is mistaken.

[†] While it may appear incorrect, such is the statement of Ibn Haukal, according to the translation provided by Ouseley. The translation of Ashkal-ul-Bilad by Elliot simply states that the coin of the country was stamped at Kandahar, with each piece equivalent to five dirhams. Additionally, the Tatari coin was also in circulation, with each unit weighing a dirham and a third. It does not make any reference to the coins named “Kaheri” and “Tautooi” mentioned by Ibn Haukal.

Even though the Chachnama also does not state the exact location of Brahmanabad, there is abundant evidence in it to conclude that it was situated on the eastern side of the Indus. This is enough to refute the claims of Vincent and Burnes identifying Thatta or Kalan Kot with Brahmanabad. Captain James McMurdo shares a similar viewpoint, asserting that Bahmana, also known as Brahmanabad, was situated on the Puran River (the river Falaili or Phuleli according to Elliot) in the Shahdadpur Pargana, east of the Indus. McMurdo adds that Brahmanabad later became known as “Dibal Kangara.” Furthermore, he claims that the modern city of Hyderabad stands on the site of Nerunkot and identifies Bhambor as a city located on a branch of the Indus, which joins the sea between Thatta and Karachi. [7]

Although the location of Nirun is commonly identified with Hyderabad, I believe it remains open for debate, as the Chachnama nowhere mentions that Muhammad bin Qasim had to cross a river on his way from Debal to Nirun. Moreover, after Qasim had settled his affairs in Sisam, he was directed by Hajjaj to return to Nirun, prepare to cross the Indus, and march against Dahir. [10] This could not have been possible unless we believe that the Indus altered its course at some point in time and started flowing to the west of Hyderabad. And if we accept this hypothesis, then we should not hesitate to think of even more speculative theories that the Indus might have flowed to the west of Thatta as well. Nevertheless, without delving further into the position of Nirun here, we may at least dismiss the possibility of Bhambor, Kalan Kot, or Thatta being Brahmanabad, thereby directing our search towards Naserpur or Hyderabad.

Naserpur, situated 25°31'N 68°37'E, was built by Amir Nasr, on the river Sankra under the orders of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. The Ajaib-ul-Makhluqat states that Nasrpur was built upon the site of Mansura. While M. Reinaud also agrees with D'Anville in positioning Mansura at Naserpur, almost all the Medieval geographers mention a branch of the Indus flowing by Mansura, and Naserpur is situated more than twenty km away from the present stream of Indus. Moreover, Ibn Haukal states that one must go along the banks of the Indus as far as Sehwan to reach Budha, which again proves Mansura to be close to the Indus.

Biladuri tells us that Hakim ibn Awana al Kalbi built “Mahfuza” (the secure) on the other side (eastern) of the lake facing India. Later Amru, son of Muhammad ibn Qasim built Mansura on this side (western) of the lake. M. Reinaud says that Mahfuza was built in the vicinity of the capital (Brahmanabad), on the other side of a lake fed by the waters of the Indus, although he does not provide the source for this claim. The available information is limited to the statement that Mahfuza was on the eastern side of the lake and Mansura on the western side. It is also worth noting that the meanings of the two names are nearly identical, both signifying “the protected, the abode of refuge.” Therefore, it seems that Mahfuza, rather than Mansura, corresponds to Nasrpur for the reasons stated above.

LOCATING BRAHMANABAD IN MODERN HYDERABAD

The account of Al Biladuri tells us that old Brahmanabad was situated at a distance of about two parasangs from Mansura, a town which did not exist during the time of Muhammad Kasim, and its (Mansura's) place was occupied by a forest. According to Elliot, because the Indian towns take up more space due to their haphazard growth, it is reasonable to conclude that a significant part of Brahmanabad was encompassed within Mansura, and that the two locations should be regarded as the same. Moreover, the elevated location of Pakka Quila, Hyderabad (25°23'3.98"N 68°22'21.67"E) positioned on a ridge of limestone hills approximately eighty feet high, indicates its suitability as a strategic site for a capital and has witnessed continuous occupation by successive settlements over an extended period. According to him, Brahmanabad, if not located precisely at the same spot as Hyderabad, was at least within the island or peninsula formed by the Falaili (Phuleli) and the main stream of the Indus. [5] Here we should keep in mind that Phuleli diverged from the Indus at a point higher than it does today, therefore the maps showing Mansura near to the point where the two streams merge do not contradict this theory.

Another reason to consider Mansura identical to Hyderabad is the location described by Istakhri and Ibn Haukal, who depict it as “a mile long and a mile broad, and surrounded by a branch of the Indus.” The map in Ashkal-ul-Bilad places Mansura on the main stream of the Indus. Istakhri's map positions it on the branch, while Ibn Haukal's map locates it approximately in the middle of the two. The position of this island, according to Elliot, is the same as the island which is formed by the Falaili and the Indus.

Modern researches have revealed that a stream of Indus once flowed through the course of the Nara Canal, which was originally a delta channel of the Indus, creating an island-like space between the two. If we look at the maps presented to us by Ashkal-ul-Bilad and Ibn Haukal, we can notice that the island shown in these maps also aligns it with the area between the Nara Canal and the present stream of the Indus, and places

Mansura near to the point where they merge, and not near to the point where they diverge. It again proves that the city was likely located somewhere near Hyderabad, if not directly beneath it.

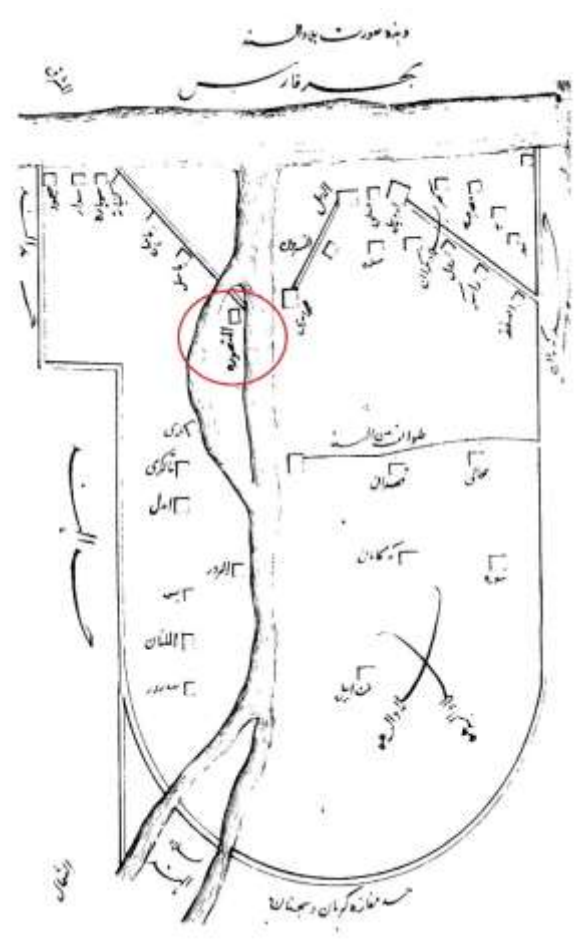
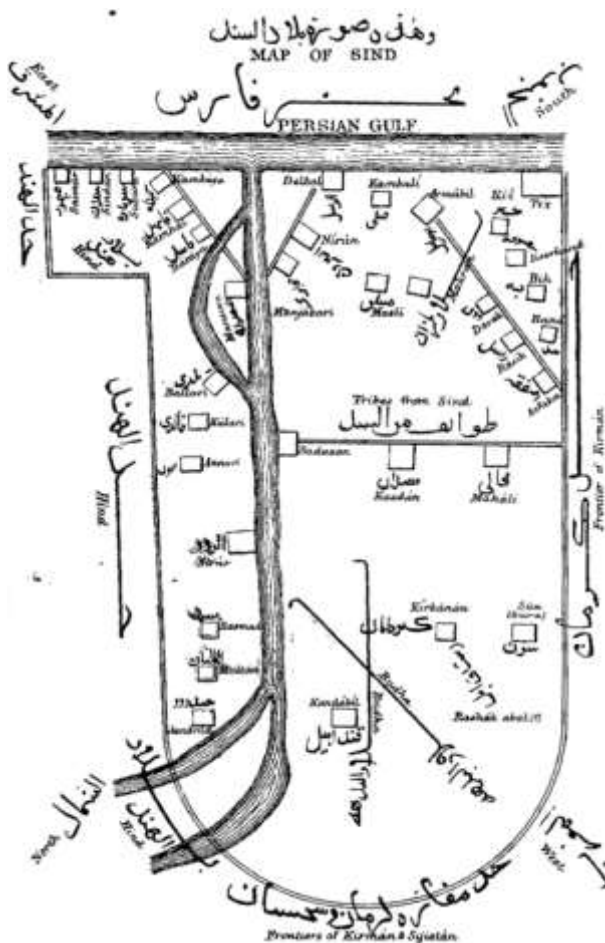


Fig 1: The Map of Ashkal-ul-Bilad published in The History of India as Told by its Own Historians, Vol. I, 1867.

Fig 2: The Map of Ibn Haukal taken from Journal of The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. XXI, Nos. I to VII, 1853.

Another method to identify the early Medieval towns in Sindh is through the distances between them as reported by various geographers. According to Ibn Haukal, the journey from Mansura to Debal takes six days, and from Mansura to Turan, it is fifteen days, aligning well with Hyderabad. The only inconsistency in distances appears between Multan and Mansura, with Ibn Haukal stating it to be only twelve days’ journey, and Al Biruni mentioning it as only fifty parsangs. In reality, the distance is much greater between these two cities, and the only explanation for this inconsistency could be that the frontier is being considered in one instance and the capital in the other. To support this explanation, I shall also mention the statement of Silsilat-ul-Tawarikh which says, “The idol called Multan is situated in the environs of Mansura.” (Elliot, 1867, p. 11) The idea of Multan situated anywhere near Mansura may seem absurd but could make sense if we consider the reference point from the frontier of either of these states. To put an end to this discussion, we have the testimony of Masudi who correctly states the distance between Mansura and Multan to be seventy-five parsangs.

THE RUINS DISCOVERED IN SINDH

In 1854 CE, A. F. Bellasis and C. M. Richardson discovered the ruins of an apparently ancient city approximately sixteen km north-east of Tando Adam in Sindh (25°52’52”N 68°46’37”E). According to Bellasis,

the locals called these ruins “Bumbra ke Thool” with “Bumbra” being a common name for the ruined cities in Sindh, and “Thool” meaning a tower or a bastion. These ruins were situated next to the dry bed of a large river, about twenty miles from the western bank of the Eastern Narra (Nara Canal). The excavations carried out between 1854 and 1856 CE revealed numerous human and animal bones along with various ornamented relics of antiquity, including slabs, chessmen, cornelians, coins, and bangles. Notably, no idols were unearthed during the excavations. Only a tower-like structure survived amidst complete destruction, and Bellasis as well as Richardson attribute the cause of this destruction to an earthquake as there were no signs of fire or inundation on the walls of the discovered houses. Moreover, the posture in which the human skeletons were found further suggests the likelihood of an earthquake. [1] The possibility of an invasion by foreign armies has been ruled out because some coins and recently some door knockers have been found, valuable items that invading armies would typically seize as plunder. Additionally, this seismic event not only led to the destruction of the city and its surroundings but also caused a post-seismic avulsion of the river. [2]

Despite asserting that the ruins in question belong to the lost city of Brahmanabad, the author falls short of presenting a compelling correlation between the two. There is a noticeable absence of efforts to establish a historical or geographical link between these ruins and the city of Brahmanabad. It is also worth noting that Sindh, being a highly fertile region, may harbour numerous buried cities, a fact that Bellasis himself acknowledges. Considering this, any of the yet undiscovered cities in the region could potentially be Brahmanabad.



Fig. 3: Satellite imagery showing the ruins of the city excavated by A. F. Bellasis. The lake seen on the east of the city could be a remnant of the river which then flowed by its walls. (Google Earth, 2023)

Prof. John Dowson adds another layer to the discussion by suggesting that the discovered remains of a buried city in Sindh, while indicative, do not definitively prove them to be the ruins of Brahmanabad. The prevalence of a significant number of Muhammadan coins among the findings raises doubt about it being a Hindu city. The few Hindu coins discovered seem to be casual contributions from other provinces. If it were indeed a Hindu city, as the name Brahmanabad implies, one would expect to find more Hindu coins. [5] However, the absence of Hindu coins is compensated with figurines of dancing females, along with adorned slabs featuring peacocks and snakes. Moreover, the carvings of a lion and a warrior on one of the feet of the discovered slab, and a female playing musical instrument on the other suggest that the site was not entirely occupied by the Arabs.

CONCLUSION

The continuously shifting course of the Indus River has made it nearly impossible to pinpoint the exact channel through which it flowed during the period in which Brahmanabad flourished. The dry beds of one or

other river and oxbow lakes can be found throughout the region making it even harder to precisely locate the ancient metropolis. Al-Biruni himself states that Mansura was situated between several branches of the Indus, but it is now almost certain that Brahmanabad was located somewhere east of the historical as well as current stream of the Indus. Though the arguments in favour of Hyderabad presented by Elliot seem complete and satisfactory, one cannot easily dismiss the possibility of the ruins discovered by Bellasis to be of Brahmanabad on account of lack of evidence. The ruins are spread over a vast area and appear to have been of a great city, and such expansive cities were not common during that era. Use of modern technology like carbon dating of the artifacts unearthed may settle this question for good but until such evidence is available, we may have to content ourselves with the assumption of A. F. Bellasis and place Brahmanabad 15 km east south-east of Shahdadpur.

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