

PREFACE

The earliest evidence of man from the periphery of the Sirmaur district was found by Mesuier who discovered neolithic tools from the eastern Tons valley (now in Uttar Pradesh) in 1860. About a century later R.P. Das collected handaxes and choppers from a terrace on the Yamuna near Kalsi in the same area. R.V. Joshi, B.C. Verma and J.P. Srivastava subsequently discovered chopper - chopping and middle palaeolithic tools from the terraces in the Saketi area and the Markanda valley. Late Harappan (OCW) and later historical sites had been discovered from northern Haryana and the Saharanpur district of U.P. by the researchers of the Panjab University, Kurukshetra University and the Archaeological Survey of India. But almost nothing was known about the cultural milieu and the settlement pattern of the Sirmaur district, an ecologically distinct region. Many questions emerged in the mind of the author. Was the Sirmaur region a zone of isolation and did not attract the advancing cultures of the plains? If not, what is the history of settled life of the region! What could be the process and stages of agricultural expansion in the area? What was the evidence of growth of urbanisation and how did the region interact with its neighbours in the plains? The author thought of taking up the region for intensive survey to seek

answers to some of the questions arising in his mind. The present dissertation is the result of researches carried out by the author in connection with his Ph.D. thesis.

The scheme of the thesis is as under:

Chapter-I deals with introduction and includes physiological, geographical, cultural and historical background of the district known previously; Chapter-II relates to explorations and describes the discovery of prehistoric, protohistoric and historical sites and the settlements; Chapter-III deals with pottery discovered from the different sites belonging to various cultures; Chapter-IV discusses art and architectural remains discovered in the area; Chapter-V pertains to the study of ancient, early medieval and medieval coins and inscriptions recovered from the district; Chapter-VI attempts the reconstruction of settlement patterns for different periods; Chapter-VII deals with other antiquities found in the region and Chapter-VIII presents the conclusion outlining the contributions made by these researches to the history and culture of District Sirmaur. It also underlines the future line of research for the area.

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A word of apology. Due to certain constraints, diacritical marks have not been marked. It is also regretted that inspite of our best effort some typing errors have crept in. The abbreviations used in this thesis are so well

known that no necessity of giving a separate list of abbreviations has been felt. Last but not the least, we thank all those authors from whose works we have derived any help.

LALMAN

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Department of Ancient Indian History
Culture and Archaeology,
Panjab University,
Chandigarh - 160 014

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