



Fortified Cities of Ancient India

A Comparative Study

Dieter Schlingloff

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Description

A comparative exploration of the development of towns and cities in ancient India, based on in-depth textual and archeological research.

Authored by one of the leading scholars of German Indology, *Fortified Cities in Ancient India* offers a comparative exploration of the development of towns and cities in ancient India. Based on in-depth textual and archeological research, Professor Dieter Schlingloff presents, for the first time, the striking outcomes of intertwining data garnered from a wide range of sources. This volume scrutinizes much of the established knowledge on urban fortifications in South Asia, advancing new conceptions based on an authoritative, far-reaching study.

Readership: Archaeologists; Indologists; scholars of South Asian religions; ancient South Asia historians

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CHAPTER 1. THE LAYOUT OF THE CITY: The analysis of the reference to towns in epic, Buddhist and Jain literature shows that such texts contain a variety of stock phrases concerning city architecture (p. 11–14). Specialist statements contained in the Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra elucidate these (p. 14–16). A survey of the results of archaeological research (p. 16–28) verifies these statements and confirms the planning of Old Indian cities (p. 28–29). The investigation of house architecture (p. 30–32) illuminates the question of the population density in the cities, which had the same dimension as contemporary Greek and Roman cities (p. 32). According to Megasthenes, Pāṭaliputra, however, was 10–20 times larger than the usual towns; nearly double the size of imperial Rome, it was the greatest city of the ancient world (p. 32–33). Combining the notes of Megasthenes with statements from Indian literature (p. 33–35) and archaeology (p. 35–37), the boundaries of ancient Pāṭaliputra can be reconstructed (p. 37–40). This proves that the Bhikna Pahadi was on the one hand, in accordance with the prescriptions of the Kauṭīliya, a monument in the centre of the city (p. 39–40); Kumrahar, on the other, never could have been a palatial area, but rather was a pleasure hall outside the city wall (p. 40–43). After investigating the historical development of Pāṭaliputra (p. 43–46), the similarities and differences in the development of Greek and Indian cities are discussed which proves that the different constitutions of the states are conform with the different positions of Greek and Indian cityscapes (p. 46–48). Overview (p. 49). Figures 1–29 (p. 52–56). CHAPTER 2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FORTIFICATION: The chapter on city fortifications in the Arthaśāstra, regarded as the most obscure in Kauṭīliya's work, is elucidated by the results of excavations as well as by building technical and military considerations (p. 57–59). Its prescriptions regarding the size and form of moats, ramparts and walls (p. 59–63) generally correspond with the archaeological finds (p. 63–69). The text continues with the description of the defences, viz. towers, embrasures etc. (p. 69–72). The most elaborate description concerns the city gates, details of which reveal a striking similarity with gates, especially in Sisupalgarh and Śrāvastī (p. 72–82). Lexicographical results (p. 83–84). Figures 1–30 (p. 86–90). CHAPTER 3. THE MODEL OF THE CITY IN NARRATIVE AJANTA PAINTINGS: Some of the narrative Ajanta paintings show the depicted events embedded into an ideal city plan. This plan, divested of the figures acting in them reveals a generalised sketch of the cityscape which may complete the picture of the cities of Ancient India elaborated on in chapters 1 and 2 (p. 91–92). Figures 1–8 (p. 93–96). LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS; INDEX; ABOUT THE AUTHOR

About the Author

Dieter Schlingloff is an honorary professor at University of Leipzig, and is the former head of the Department of Indology and Iranian Studies at the University of Munich. He began his academic career 60 years ago with a series of studies on the Berlin collection of Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts from Central Asia. His research interests are centered on the cultural history of India, especially the development of towns and cities. His more recent studies have been devoted to Buddhist art, in particular the Ajanta paintings.

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