

# Town Planning of *Hissar-i-Firuz*

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### Abstract

Urban centres have always been hubs of economic revival and social amalgam. Their rise and growth assumed speed in India during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the coming of the Turks. The Sultan Firuz Shah (1351-88) exceeds his counterparts by maintaining recognizable planning for constructing high buildings, mausoleums, gardens, mosques, water tanks, canals, and similar facilities. This paper basically comprised a detailed study of the town planning of "*Hissar-i-Firuz*," which was constructed under the supervision of Firuz Shah Tughluq himself, who stayed here for a sufficient time; the establishment of the town was the Sultan's reaction to the challenge of reclaiming this region of the desert. This paper is enriched with some primary sources and secondary sources as well. The present study aims to investigate the town planning of *Hissar-i-Firuz*.

**Keywords:** Town, *Hissar-i-Firuz*, Citadel, plan

*Hissar Firuz* (*Hissar* is an Arabic word that means fort, so it refers to the Firuz fort. With the passage of time. The word 'Firuz' was dropped from the original name. The current city is located at 29° 10' north and 75° 44' east.)<sup>1</sup>, a direct action of Firuz Shah, came into existence between 1354-57 at the site of two small villages Laras Buzurg and Laras Khurd.<sup>2</sup> So far, scholars have dealt with *Hissar Firuz* in terms of its emergence as a shiq headquarters (This country had been recorded in the revenue accounts as belonging to the division (*Shiq*) of Hansi, but now that *Hissar Firuz* had been completed, the Sultan ordered that the division be renamed *Hissar Firuz* and the district (*ikta'at*) of Hansi. Agroha, Fatehabad, and Sarsuti, as far as Sulura'h and Khizrabad are concerned. Malik Daylan was the Shiqdar of *Hissar Firuz*).<sup>3</sup> This paper attempts to comprehend the town planning of *Hissar-i-Firuz*.

The town of *Hissar*, historically known as *Hissar-i-Firuz* situated at latitude 29° 10' N and longitude 75° 44' E<sup>4</sup> at a critical point where the old Delhi-Multan route branched to Khurasan. The town's infrastructure was Firuz Shah's reaction to the counter of bringing this area of the desert into adaptable condition. Firuz Shah Tughluq was also responsible for constructing many other towns such as Firuzabad, Jaunpur, Fatehabad, the Tughluqpur of Kasna, the Tughluqpur of Sapdam, and a third Tughluqpur in the region of Makut<sup>5</sup>. But, unlike the other towns, the site of *Hissar-i-Firuz* was desert surrounded by hostile terrain. The town was founded in A.H 757/AD1356, in the fourth regnal year of Firuz Shah and three years after his successful campaign to Bengal.<sup>6</sup> The Sultan's historian Shams Siraj Afif<sup>7</sup> vividly records the town's construction.

Afif has used the word *Alang* regarding Firuz Shah's method of constructing a fortified town wall.<sup>8</sup> '*Alang*' is a military term that refers to a battalion's garrison or camp and a defensive wall or reinforcement. The term implies that the construction of *Hissar-i-Firuz* was done for military purposes. The town's location

appears to have been divided into distinct camps, each with a nobleman in charge of constructing a distinct area of the fort (A master plan would have been required to construct such a fort. made with detailed drawings and precise measurements to ensure that the construction work completed by various groups fits together and appears as a whole at the end According to Afif, op. cit. pp. 323-33, in both the construction of the town and the canal excavations. Firuz Shah took over operations and served as chief Engineer and Architect. On the occasion of the construction of Firuzabad, Firuz's new capital in Delhi, he designed and had built canals, buildings, transportation, and the re-erection of ancient columns, among other things).<sup>9</sup> A vital aspect of *Hissar-i- Firuza* was the appointment of Malik Dalyan<sup>10</sup> as the first governor. He was well known for his hunting game, particularly *cheetah*, and was considered the main hunting ground.<sup>11</sup> After the death of Firuz Shah, Hissar Firuza became a point of contention among the rival petitioners.

Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq completed the town's construction with felicity and contentment. This township built on the Persian style (The town-plan, as revealed by studies of Alexander Cunningham's report and the Archaeological Survey of India, refers to a citadel (arg) on one side (east) of the town. This type of planning originated in Khurasan and became common in India over time, with strategic implications. Other urban centres built before or after followed the same design principles, for example Hansi). It was completed after persistent work for two years.<sup>12</sup> Stones used for the construction were brought from the hill of Narsai and were used together with quicklime and burnt bricks.<sup>13</sup> By now, the canal construction was completed, which brought the water of the Jamuna and Sutlej rivers to this arid area and significantly contributed to increased agricultural and fruit production.<sup>14</sup> The increase in surplus added to the royal income about 2 lakh tankas per annum.<sup>15</sup> He established many gardens and had various flora planted, with the result that all kinds of fruit were to be found in those gardens: fruit-bearing trees (*sadaphal*); grains (*junahari*); citrus trees; *Sikandar-awl*<sup>16</sup> and all types of flowers together with plenty of sugar cane, both of the black and the red (*Punda*) variety. When Firuz Shah brought an ample water supply from a considerable distance in the canals to *Hissar-i-Firuza*, there were utterly dependable harvests for both seasons.

The old *Hissar-i-Firuza* occupies the eastern side of the modern town, which is rapidly expanding on all sides. Particularly on the northeast and the south, to the south of the Delhi-Sirsa railway. Although the town wall has long been destroyed, and modern streets and highways are constructed within the old town area, much of the outline of the old *Hissar-i- Firuza* can still be seen, showing some of the main features dating back to the time of Firuz Shah. The layout of the old town indicates that *Hissar-i-Firuza* was planned in the manner of a Persian town, with the fort or citadel (*arg*) on one side of the town (*Shahristan* or *sharistan*)-instead of in its centre. This type of planning may have been introduced into India from Khurasan, possibly as early as the Ghurids, who built new towns like Sultankut.<sup>17</sup> The origin of this type of plan dates back to pre-Islamic Iran and can be seen in many Parthian cities in Gurgan.<sup>18</sup> The Partho-Kushanian city of Taxila also had a similar kind of plan.<sup>19</sup> Although other types of town plans existed in the Parthian and Sasanian periods, by the time of the Muslims, the strategic advantage of locating the fort or citadel to one side of the town was well understood and was commonly used.<sup>20</sup> The Ghaznavid and Ghurid cities of Khurasan, such as Nishapur<sup>21</sup> and Bust<sup>22</sup> all had the same type of plan.

The little remains of the original plan of the Ghurid towns can be noticed in India. Still, the ruins of the earlier Tughluq cities, such as Tughluqabad<sup>23</sup> at Delhi, show that they were also planned with the fort on

one side, similarly to *Hissar-i-Firuz*. The other towns built by Firuz Shah, such as Fatehabad and Jaunpur<sup>24</sup> also have a similar layout. This arrangement later became the norm in India. It can be seen in all cities founded by the Muslims, such as Bidar,<sup>25</sup> Ahmadabad<sup>26</sup> Chanderi<sup>27</sup> and Mughal towns, such as Fatehpur Sikri<sup>28</sup> and Delhi (Shahjahanabad).<sup>29</sup>

Many older towns which were later rebuilt or developed by the Muslims also adopted this layout, for instance, Hansi, which was probably reconstructed by ‘Alauddin Khilji half a century earlier than the establishment of *Hissar-i Firuz*.

In Hissar, the fortification’s only surviving part is the citadel’s western wall running on the eastern side of the Talaki Gate Road. At the palace’s northwest corner, the wall turns towards the east, enclosing the North Court of the palace. The northern part of this wall, with two semi-circular towers, are not original and seems to date from the Mughal times. The original wall probably continued northward from the palace’s northeast corner, joining the wall at the Gujari Mahal’s western side. This wall is now in ruins, but its foundations can still be seen on the ground. From the south, the citadel wall runs from the palace, encircling the citadel site as far as the site of the demolished Nagauri Darwaza. Other parts of the fortification wall of the town and the citadel have all disappeared, and it is now sometimes difficult to determine the exact location of the walls. It can still be seen in the plan (plate I). The curved streets that would once have run alongside the walls indicate the site of the walls. The plan for the south of the old town has been disturbed because of the railway and station development.<sup>30</sup>

*Plate 1 Complex of Firuz Shah Tughluq*

The other Firuz Shahi streets in *Hissar-i-Firuz* are more challenging to determine. Much of the remaining old town dates from the Mughal period, and it is not clear to what extent the Mughal period reconstruction was based on the older layout. In other sultanate towns in India, such as Tughluqabad, Bidar, and



Ahmadabad, a central street in the town usually leads to the citadel’s main gate in a reasonably straight



line. An extension to this street sometimes continued in the citadel where the palace buildings were constructed. In Hisar, such a street may be that with a northwest south-east orientation passing by the eastern side of the Bazar Masjid and leading to the citadel, probably through its eastern gateway. Shops mainly flank this street, and Masjid joins another market street near the Bazar. This second street also seems to have preserved its original layout and has an east-west orientation. The rest of the town's old streets have grown organically, mostly not in a straight line. To the north of the railway station, a large part of the old town has been replaced by a modern development with the streets on a grid plan.<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion

Conclusively, the three major Tughluq monarchs concentrated their architectural patronage in Delhi, but each of them also exercised significant patronage in a restricted number of centres outside the capital region. Sultan Firuz Shah (1351-88) surpassed his counterparts by adopting distinct planning to construct high buildings, mosques, mausoleums, water tanks, gardens, canals, and similar facilities. Factors probably contributing to the emergence and development have been commercial utility, strategic location, and entertainment resort. *Hissar-i-Firuz* was planned on a route, which was then known as Suleman road, starting from Delhi and passing through Sarsuti (Sirsa), Bahawalpur, Multan, and finally reaching the borders of Persia.<sup>32</sup> To build a fort of such kind, a master plan would have been necessary. made with detailed drawings and accurate measurements in order to assure that in the end the construction work carried out by different groups, should fit together and appear as a whole Afif has pointed out that in both the construction of the town and the excavations of the canals. Firuz Shah put himself in charge of operations and acted as chief Engineer and Architect. On the occasion of construction of Firuzabad. Firuz's new capital at Delhi, he himself designed and got constructed canals, buildings, transportation, re-erection of ancient column etc.

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> Blochmann, H. "Delmerick's Inscriptions from Hissar Firuz and Hansi" *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal (JASB)*. Calcutta. 1877. p.92. Hissar Firuz was founded in 1356, according to this source.
- <sup>2</sup> According to Raverty. (Vide JASB. Calcutta. 1892. p.266) the translator of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, the Laras Buzurg or the Greater Laras consisted of 50 Kharaks (Sheds) and the Laras Khurd or the Lesser Laras of 40 Kharaks (This also finds testimony in Afif's account. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, ed. Wilayat Hussain. Calcutta 1891. pp. 124-28. Raverty considers Kharak to be the home of the Jats of the Khurd and Sial tribes. Whereas, for Hodivala (S.H.): *Studies in Indo Muslim History*, I. Bombay. 1939. p.313. Kharak had been a grazing field. However, studies show that the site where Hissar Firuz was founded was inhabited by a sizable population.
- <sup>3</sup> Afif, op. cit. pp.124-28 and tr. by Elliot and Dowson: *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*. III. Calcutta. 1867, pp.298-300.
- <sup>4</sup> Map of Hissar Region, Army Map Service, Washington D. C., 1968, map no. NH43-11; *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, New Edition, 1908, XIII, p.155.
- <sup>5</sup> Afif, op.cit. pp.129, 330. Elliot does not mention the Tughluqpur of Sapdam, and gives the name of the region of the third Tughluqpur as Kamut, see Elliot, III, p.354.
- <sup>6</sup> Sirhindi, Yahya bin Ahmad. *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, Calcutta, 1936, pp.125-6. Shams Siraj does not give the date of the foundation of the town.

- <sup>7</sup> Afif, op.cit. pp.124-8. Our translation is from the published Persian text and varies in many points with the abstract of Elliot, III, pp.298-300.
- <sup>8</sup> Shokoohy Mehrdad and Natalie H Shokoohy. *Hiṣār-i-Fīrūza: Sultanate and Early Mughal Architecture in the District of Hisar India*. Monographs on Art Archaeology and Architecture, 1988, p.4, pp.92-9 & 117-24. The town wall was dismantled at a later period with other buildings like impressive Nagauri Darwaza and mausoleum of Chishti Shaikh Muhammed bin Mahmud.
- <sup>9</sup> Afif, op. cit. pp.323-33. The complex of Firuz Shah's palace is depicted in *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi* miniatures. ff. 189. 212: J. A. Page. "A memoir of Kotla Firuz Shah". *Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India*, LII. Delhi. 1937. pl. 6 and colour pl. IVd and Barani, pp. 567-71. Similarly plan for Hissar Firuza might had been prepared, unfortunately we are not having it.
- <sup>10</sup> Malik Dalyan's inscription, discovered in Ladhun's Jami Mosque, refers to it as part of a newly established district. Firuza Hissar. This inscription gives us Malik Dalyan's full name and title as Malik-i-Muluk al-Sharq Jamal Khan Dalyan. Though, not been recorded by Afif. finds place in M. A. Chagthai. "Some inscriptions from Jodhpur State. Rajputana", *Epiqraphica Indo-Moslemica*, 1949-50. pp. 18-19 and M. Shokoohy. *Rajasthan I. Cropus Inscriptionum*. pt. IV. vol. XLIX. London. 1986.
- <sup>11</sup> Afif. op. cit. pp. 318-20. Barni, p. 599. *Ain-i-Akbari I*. New Delhi. 1988. p. 207 and also see Irfan Habib. *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi. 1982. sheet 4b. for the extent of forest and wild animals that frequented this region till a later period.
- <sup>12</sup> Afif. op. cit. p.127.
- <sup>13</sup> Saxena. Adhya Bharti, "Hassar-e-Firuza—A Medieval Town of Haryana (c. 1300-c. 1500)." *proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 56<sup>th</sup> session, 1995, Vol III, p.935.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p. 129. According to Afif, the canal covered approximately 80/90 Kos. The increased irrigation facility along the canal's route appears to have resulted in the cultivation of superior crops, which ultimately increased the state's revenue income. It had many towns and villages, with the Qasbah of Jan 'id benefiting the most (Jind). Dhatrat and the Hansi town.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* The income was derived through two sources - the Sharb (haqq-i Sharb - irrigation tax) and tax on the newly cultivated lands.
- <sup>16</sup> *Awl* may be *arum campanulatum* but so far, we have not established the precise meaning of *sikandar awl*. Elliot does not translate this passage.
- <sup>17</sup> Al-Juzjani, Minhaj-i-Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Vol. I, ed. Abdul Ha'i Habibi, Kabul, 1963, p.421.
- <sup>18</sup> Kiani, M. Y. *A General Study on Urbanization and Urban Planning in Iran*, Tehran, 1986, p.130-5, 150.
- <sup>19</sup> Marshall John. *Taxila: Vol. 1-3*. Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1951, 113-8, III, pl. X; M.Y. Kiani (editor), *A General Study on Urbanization and Urban Planning in Iran*, Tehran, 1986, p.123.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.213.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.229.
- <sup>22</sup> Schulumberger, Daniel. *Lashkari Bazar*, IA, Paris, 1978, pl. II.
- <sup>23</sup> H. Waddington, 'Adilabad, a part of the "forth" Delhi *Ancient India*, I, Delhi, 1946, 63, fig. 2.
- <sup>24</sup> Führer, Alois Anton, Edmund W. Smith, and James Burgess. *The Sharqi Architecture of Jaunpur*. Printed and Pub. by the Superintendent of Government Printing, ASI New Series I, 1889, p.23.
- <sup>25</sup> Yazdānī, Ghulām. *Bidar Its History and Monuments*, Oxford University Press, London, 1947, p. 28-44 and map of Fort.
- <sup>26</sup> Burgess, James. *The Muhammadan Architecture of Ahmadabad*, ASIIS, XXIV (ASWI, VII), 1900, pl. 2.
- <sup>27</sup> *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, II 1871, p.404-5.
- <sup>28</sup> Smith, Edmund William. *The Mughal Architecture of Fatihpur Sikri*, ASIIS, XVIII, 1897, PL. XCIII.

<sup>29</sup> Archaeological Survey, Delhi Province, *List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments of Shahjahanabad (Delhi)*, printed for administrative use only, I, Calcutta, 1915-16, map.

<sup>30</sup> M. Shokoohy and N. H. Shokoohy, *Hisar-i Firuza: Sultanate and early Mughal Architecture in the District of Hisar*, India, op. cit. p.14.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>32</sup> "Map of Hissar Region". Army Map Service. Washington. D. C. 1968. map no. NH 43-11