



SARAI IN MUGHAL INDIA

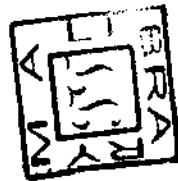
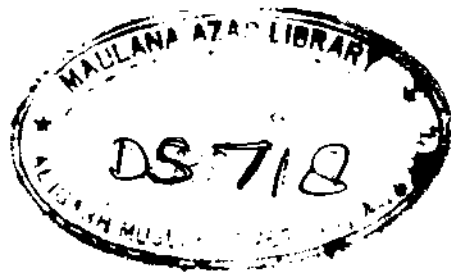
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PREFACE

This study aims at enquiring into the structure and working of the institution of sarais in Mughal period. Some of the aspects on which this is focused are: geographical distribution of sarais, factors promoting this institution, the organizational set up of sarais, categories of people using sarais, and facilities provided in them. In addition to above, the architectural features, namely, the planning and lay-out of the sarais and the utilization of space in it have also been studied. I have presented this study here in two parts; the first part comprises of an analysis of the working of the institution of sarais, while in the second part the planning and lay-out of eight surviving structures of sarais belonging to different periods ranging from the second half of 16th century to the first half of 18th century has been discussed. At the end a short summary of the conclusions is given which relates to both parts of this study.

The description of structures in part II is based on the information collected by a team of the members of the Department of History, A.M.U. Aligarh, including myself in course of a survey of medieval monuments undertaken during May and September 1977. The report of this survey is nearing completion and is expected to be published in one of the forthcoming issues of Medieval India-A Miscellany. Eight plans

appended to part II of this dissertation were prepared in the Department of History with my assistance for inclusion in the report of the survey. The part I of this study is mainly based on the travel accounts of European travellers visiting India during the Mughal period, and the Archaeological sources. The available English translations of Persian chronicles and an interesting treatise from our point of view, written in Hindi during the first quarter of 17th century, namely, Ardhakatha, have also been used. Occasional references cited from the original works in Persian have been very kindly furnished to me by Mr Iqtidar Alam Khan, my supervisor. In this light, it is evident that this study is of a very limited nature. It neither takes into account vast amount of evidence that could be obtained from sources written in Persian and Indian languages other than Hindi, nor it could be possible to survey even all the known structures of Mughal sarais surviving in different parts of the country. Thus the conclusions arrived at on the basis of this study should be treated as strictly tentative.

The nature of the sources used here, is discussed briefly in chapter I, which is conceived as an introduction to this study. The bibliography given at the end is in the form of a book-list under the headings 'Sources' and 'Modern Works' and the titles of the books in both these categories are entered in the alphabetical order of the names of the authors.

The spellings of place names used in this dissertation are in accordance with the spellings used by the Survey of India. In the transliteration of the Persian words, I have followed the principle adopted in Steingass's Persian-English Dictionary. But in the case of titles of the books I have adhered to the spellings as given in the published editions, and in the case of manuscripts as given in standard bibliographies and library catalogues.

I am deeply indebted to Mr Iqtidar Alam Khan, my supervisor, for the kindness and understanding he always showed to me. I can never forget the keenness and care with which he examined my work. He also gave me some very valuable references from the original works in Persian.

I am grateful to Prof. Irfan Habib for his advice and suggestions which enabled me to utilize the information regarding place-names in a very useful way.

It is my pleasant duty to thank Mr Nasir Hussain Zaidi and Mr Zahoor Ali Khan for the preparation of the plans of sarais and a map included here. I am thankful to my young friend, Faiz Habib, for preparing graph and assisting me in finalizing the plans of sarais, for photocopying.

I am also beholden to my friends, Mr Mohd. Afzal Khan, Mr Bhanwar Bhadani, and Mr Ahmad Raza Khan, who helped in different ways in the preparation of this dissertation.

Lastly, I thank Mr M.A. Afridi for typing with great care this dissertation, in a very short period.

Aligarh
March, 1978

Ravindra Kumar
(RAVINDRA KUMAR)

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Sarais: Geographical Distribution

The institution of sarais was an important feature of the Indian society of medieval period. Sarais were generally large enclosures providing board, stable, fodder, entertainment and similar other facilities to the travellers. These were located in large towns and on important routes at reasonable distances in the country-side. All the available evidence about the sarais in India pertains to the period following the Turkish conquest, which might indicate that this institution in its form that is familiar to us through historical evidence was introduced in this country by the Turks. There is definite evidence to show that the construction of sarais as a public welfare measure by state during the Mughal period was not a new phenomenon. Sarais are known to have existed in the vicinity of Delhi as early as in Balban's reign.¹ At least from Firuz Tughluq's time onward the rulers of Delhi Sultanate are definitely known to have established sarais for public use.² The most significant contribution in this direction was, however,

Bayani

1. Bayani, Tarikh-i Firuzshahi, ed. Sh. Abdur Rashid, pp. 65-6.
 2. Shams-i Siraj Afif, Tarikh-i Firuzshahi (tr. Elliot & Dowson), Vol. 3, p. 354.
- Cf. Abdulla, Tarikh-i Daudi (tr. Elliot & Dowson), Vol. 4, p. 447.

made by Sher Shah. According to the author of Tarikh-i Sher Shahi,¹ Sher Shah established sarais for the convenience of travellers on every road, at a distance of two kos. Sarais were built at regular intervals of distance on the road running from Panjab to Bengal. Similarly sarais were established on the roads running between Agra and Burhanpur, Agra and Jodhpur, and Lahore and Multan. He is known to have built nearly 1700 sarais on various roads throughout his kingdom. This tradition was then followed by the Mughals.

Travel in medieval India was undertaken largely by traders, merchants, pilgrims, and state-officials and their troopers. It may be presumed that with the intensification of money economy and resulting expansion of commerce during the 16th and 17th centuries, the movement of trade would become more brisk.²

1. Abbas Khan Sarwani, Tarikh-i Sher Shahi (tr. Elliot & Dowson), Vol. 4, p. 417.

Cf. Niccolao Manucci, Storia do Mogor (tr. William Irvine), Vol. I, p. 115.

2. The introduction of assignment system by the Turkish conquerors seems to have created conditions for the establishment of rural market and promoting money economy. According to Irfan Habib, in Mughal India, with its assignment system (jagir) perfected under Akbar "most of the surplus was put on the market, and therefore, a very large portion of agricultural production would not have been directly 'for use', but would have been commodity production, properly speaking. It not merely introduced money relations into a system of 'natural economy', but also engendered a shift to high-grade crops and cash crops." According to him "the rural monetization was

(...contd.)

The increasing frequency of travel would naturally create greater demand for a larger number of sarais as well as better facilities in them. Ample evidence is available in the form of general statements occurring in the Persian chronicles as well as in the accounts of the European travellers to the effect that Mughal India had a very large number of sarais well placed along the main routes.¹

Usually the sarais were built to provide accommodation to the travellers on their way-side stops during night. In some of these there was provision for food also in addition to other

(Footnote continued)

almost entirely the result of the need to transfer surplus agricultural produce to the towns." (Cf. Irfan Habib, 'Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India', Enquiry, New Series, Vol. III, No. 3, Winter, 1971, pp. 12, 55.)

For a detailed discussion of the intensification of long distance and local commerce in the Mughal Empire, see, Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, Ch. II, 'Trade in Agricultural Produce'.

1. Early Travels in India, ed. W. Foster, p. 325. Edward Terry observes "For their works of charitie many richmen build sarais."

Cf. Abdal Fazl, Ain-i Akbari (tr. H. Blochmann), Vol. I, p. 232.

Niccolao Manucci, op. cit., pp. 115, 159. Indian Travels of Thevenot & Careri, ed. Surendra Nath Sen, p. 48.

Fray Sebastian Manrique, Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique (tr. C.E. Luard), Vol. II, p. 152.

facilities,¹ whereas in others food was cooked by the traveller himself.²

1. Inayatulla, Takmilā-i Akbarnama (tr. Elliot & Dowson), Vol. 4, p. 111, "At this period almshouses were directed to be established throughout the Imperial dominions; also caravan sarai for travellers at every stage, where food was to be prepared and held in readiness at all times for the way-worn traveller, who is usually too fatigued to be equal to the exertion of cooking his own repast."

Cf. J.B. Tavernier, Travels in India, Vol. I, p. 54.
 "..... wherever the word sara occurs, it means that it is a great enclosure of walls or hedges within which are arranged all round 50 or 60 huts covered with thatch. There are some men and women, who sell flour, rice, butter and vegetables, and who take care to prepare bread and cook rice. If by chance any Muhammadan should come there, he goes to the village to seek for a piece of mutton or a fowl, and those who supply the food to the traveller clean out for him the house that he wishes to take and place in it a small bed of girths, upon which he spreads the mattress that he carries on the road."

2. Early Travels in India, ed. W. Foster, p. 311. Edward Terry observes, "Onely in great townes and cities are faire houses built for their receipt (which they call sarray), not inhabited; where any passengers may have rooms freely, but must bring with him his bedding, his cooke, and other necessaries wherein to dresse his meate;"

A major part of the evidence relating to the institution of sarais is available in the accounts of European travellers. There are repeated references to the existence of a large number of sarais in different parts of the Mughal empire in these travel accounts. They make specific mention of a large number of big sarais in urban centres like Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Patna, etc., and also provide information about the general pattern of the distribution of sarais on different routes in the country. The structures of some of these larger sarais have survived, though their number is comparatively small.

Apparently the surviving structures represent only a small fraction of the total number of sarais of different size and nature that actually existed during the Mughal period. In the District Gazetteers of various provinces, sections dealing with the description of 'public buildings' mostly relate to sarais. Occasional mention of persons responsible for establishing these sarais is also found. Many sarais are recorded as 'district board sarais'. It is possible that many of these are the old sarais built under the Mughal and other pre-British regimes which came to be owned by district boards.¹

1. One such specific instance is that of a sarai at Shahjahanpur owned by the District Board. According to the District Gazetteer, it was built by Hakim Mehndi Ali Khan who apparently held the position of a nazim in the kingdom of Awadh around 1804 A.D. A marble tablet

(.....contd.)

Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India also provide interesting information regarding sarais. These reports, as is well-known, relate to the Survey, conservation and preservation operations pertaining mainly to the buildings of the pre-Turkish period. In these reports, the monuments of the so-called Muslim period have rarely been described. Few medieval monuments that attracted the notice of the Archaeological Survey of India are well-known royal buildings. However, occasional and summary mention of the surviving structures of sarais, in these reports are of immense help in so far as it makes the task of locating them easier.

Some idea of the geographical distribution of the large number of sarais that existed during the Mughal period can be had from the location and nomenclature of a large number of villages and other localities that either have the word

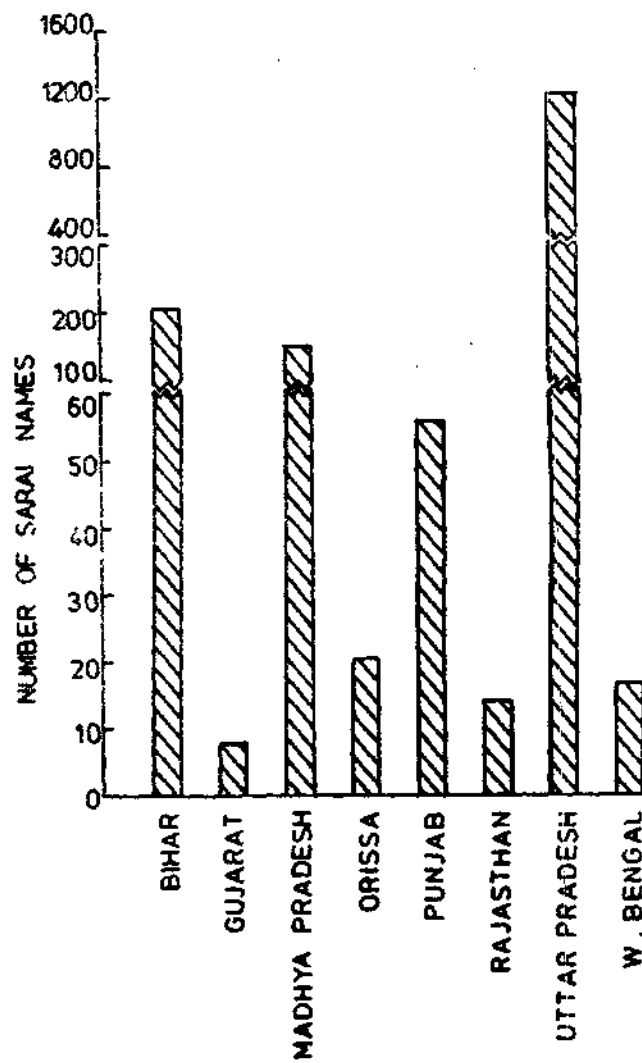
(Footnote continued)

bearing an inscription in English is placed on the right side of the main gate of the sarai. The text of the inscription is given below.

"This sarai and the neighbouring masonry bridge built 50 years ago by Nawab Muntazzimul Dowlah Bahadur Hakim Mehdî Ali Khan have been given by his heir in possession Nawab Mirzai Begum, together with the land opposite the sarai by way of endowment for the maintenance and repair of the sarai and bridge to the municipality of the city of Shahjahanpur as a free gift on the 14th of Jan. 1877 A.D. on the sole condition of the sarai and bridge being kept as such and in good repair in memory of the said Nawab Hakim Mehdî Ali, the gift and conditions being made with the full concurrence of Mr Robert G. Currie, Magistrate and Collector of Shahjahanpur."

Similar inscription in Persian is available on the left side of the main gate.

DISTRIBUTION OF SARAI NAMES
IN
NORTHERN INDIA, BY STATES



Drawn by Fati Habib

sarai in their names or are associated with sarais in any other fashion in popular tradition. In the District Census Handbooks of 1951, names of villages belonging to each Pargana and the names of Muhallas in every town are given. With the help of these Handbooks, it is possible to prepare a list of such villages and localities which carry the designation sarai as part of their names. It is, of course, possible that a number of sarais have disappeared without giving their names to any villages or Muhallas. However, it can be assumed that any area, where a large number of village-names carry the suffix-sarai is likely to have had a correspondingly large number of sarais.¹ In this connection, it is also interesting to note that the largest number of sarai names are available from the Gangetic plains, mainly the region covered by the Mughal provinces of Agra, Allahabad and Awadh which together comprise the present state of Uttar Pradesh. The total number of such names in this region approaches 1300, whereas the corresponding numbers for the Panjab, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan are 56, 17, 205, 21, 154, 8, and 15 respectively.²

This rather sharp contrast between the total number of sarai names occurring in Uttar Pradesh and those

1. Refer my paper 'The Distribution of sarais and Mughal Trade-routes in Uttar Pradesh', Indian History Congress, 1976 (Calicut Session).

2. See the graph appended here.

in the remaining parts of the country is difficult to explain. The factors that we have suggested as promoting the construction of sarais in Mughal India, viz. increasing trade and frequency of travel with the growth of money economy would apply equally to places like Bengal and Gujarat. As a matter of fact the trade factor would comparatively be more pertinent to these two regions.

One possible explanation for this disparity could be that for the institution of sarais outside Uttar Pradesh, particularly in regions like Gujarat, Bengal, and Orissa, there might have existed some other terms. But this does not look plausible as it has not been possible to identify any place names in these regions carrying any local variant as suffix for the term sarai. Moreover, it is worth remembering that a considerable number of place names carrying the term sarai as suffix exist in these regions as well. This goes to show that the term sarai was in use all over the Mughal Empire for inns. Hence the causes for this disparity are to be searched elsewhere.

For the large number of -sarai names in Uttar Pradesh, it may tentatively be suggested that these are sites of small sarais catering to cattle traders moving from place to place in small parties. During a recent survey of sarais along the route taken by Peter Mundy in 1632 A.D. a large number of sites of small sarais located at various places between

1. Cf Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama (tr. H. Beveridge), Vol. I, see pp. 399-400: wherein an allusion is made to the establishment of 'sarais on roads at the distance of every kos' by the rulers of Bengal. This evidence goes to suggest the existence of a large number of sarais in Bengal from the pre-Mughal period.

Mathura and Ghatampur were identified.¹ Local traditions relating to many of these sarais sites suggest that these were meant primarily for the parties of cattle-traders travelling with comparatively smaller number of cattles. Such small parties would be making frequent halts during their journey and unlike those bigger parties driving large herds would find it insecure to camp in the open fields. It may be guessed that in the pre-British period horses would probably be one of the most common categories of cattles taken along this route. Long distance trade in horses imported from Central Asia across this region is fully established.²

Apart from cattle-traders, some of these sarais located at short distances on the main routes would also be catering to the needs of ordinary travellers moving in small groups. Our evidence tends to suggest that while in the Gangetic plains and between Delhi and Lahore, it was possible for persons moving in smaller parties to travel safely, the mode of travel in other regions e.g., between Gujarat and Agra, Burhanpur and Agra, Multan and Lahore, Kabul and Lahore, and Multan and Qandahar

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1. Refer to the Report of a Survey of some of the sarais and other Medieval monuments in the districts of Mathura, Agra, Etawa, Kanpur, and Farrukhabad conducted by a team of the members of the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, consisting of Iqtidar Alam Khan, Jamal Mohd. Siddiqi, Ravindra Kumar, Nasir Zaidi, Taskeen Ahmad and Shareef in May and September 1977 (Typescript).
 2. Simon Digby, War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate, pp. 34-6.

would be in the form of large caravans. 'Thus', as Moreland depicts, 'the roads did not carry a steady stream of traffic' in these regions.¹ Manrique tells us that at one occasion having missed a caravan at Multan, he was placed in a difficult situation, but fortunately for him came a noble's camp with whom he resumed his journey.² Similar evidence for Gujarat can also be cited from Peter Mundy's travels. The 'caphila' (kafila) of Peter Mundy while travelling from Agra to Surat joined the 'laskarre' (lashkar) of 'Bakur Ckaun' (Bakir Khan) at Nibhera.³ On the other hand from Ardha Katha we know that as early as 1600 A.D. its author, Banarasi Das, who was frequently travelling between Agra and Jaunpur, used to move in smaller parties. On one occasion, when he was travelling from Jaunpur to Agra with only 19 persons, the party was swindled by a counterfeiter at Kora near Ghatampur⁴; similarly Surat Singh, the author of Tazkira-i Pir Hasau Teli⁵ writing in 1652 depicts many

1. W.H. Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, p. 205.
2. Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique (tr. C.E. Luard), Vol. II, pp. 252-3. Moreland (India at the Death of Akbar) quoting from Murray's Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Asia and Edward Maclagan's 'Journal of the Panjab Historical Society, 1911', Vol. I, pp. 83, 151, specify the period for which Manrique had to wait for the next caravan as six months.
3. The Travels of Peter Mundy, ed. R.C. Temple, Vol. II, p. 231.
4. Banarasi Das, Ardha Katha (Hindi, ed. Mata Prasad Gupta), pp. 38-9.
5. MS. Department of History, AMU., Aligarh.

of his journeys to different places between Lahore and Agra in which he was usually moving with parties consisting of a few friends and personal attendants. This kind of evidence clearly points at a situation of travel in the Gangetic plains and between Delhi and Lahore which would promote the establishment of a large number of smaller sarais at short distances in this region. Apparently Akbar's order recorded in Takmila-i Akbarnama for the establishment of sarais at every stage and to keep prepared food in readiness at these sarais at all times for the way-worn traveller¹ refers to this kind of sarais.

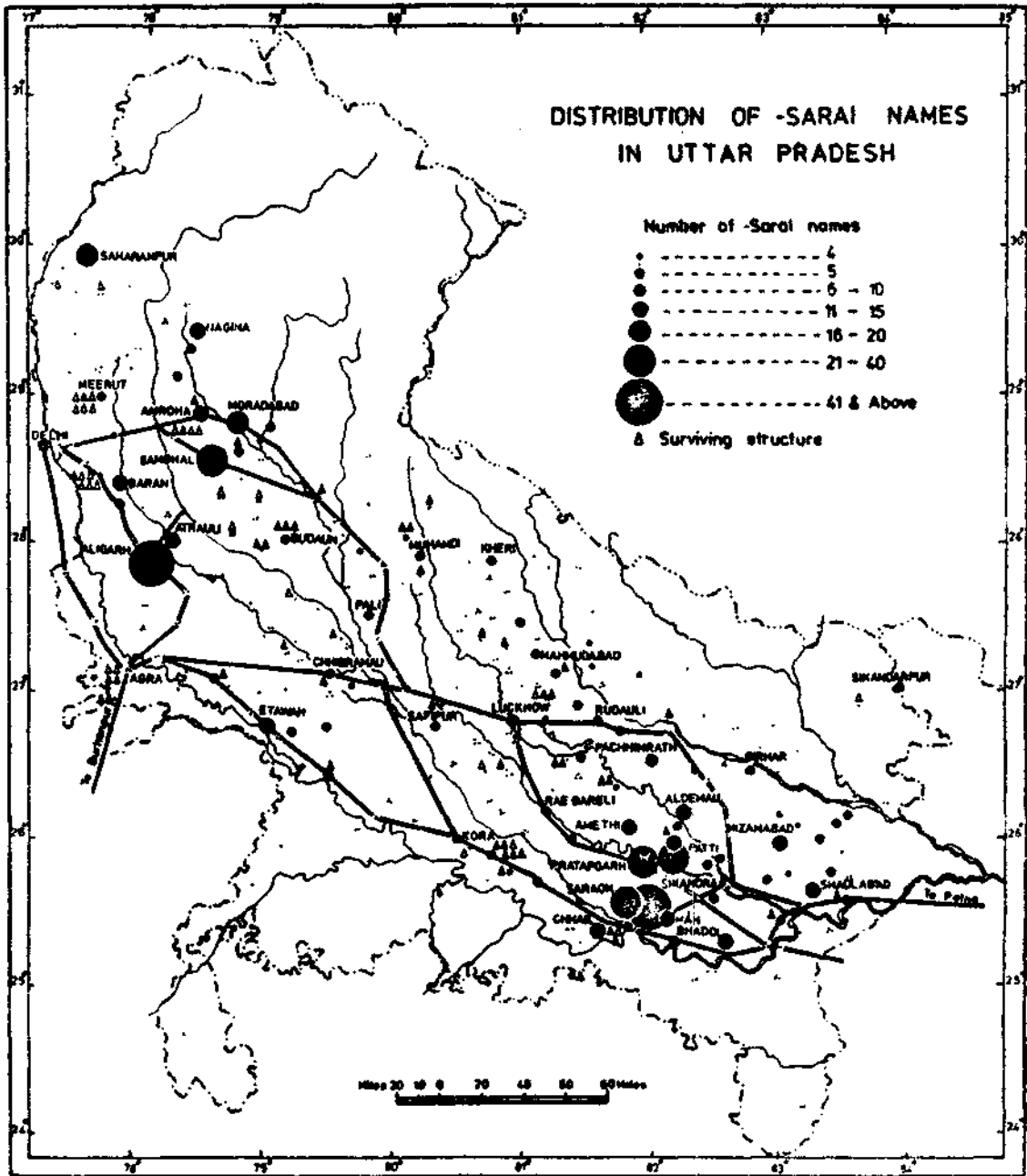
Small as these sarais were, they opened into a small courtyard which contained few mangers on one side and three or four thatched rooms on the other, with some open space in the centre where cattles could be tied. One sarai of this kind located by me at Shikohabad, known as 'Habbo ki sarai' covered roughly an area of one acre. A large number of -sarai names in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh probably refer to this category of sarais.²

In this study an analysis of the distribution of -sarai names is attempted only for the region covered by Uttar Pradesh on account of the availability of detailed information about it. Any conclusions regarding the pattern of this

1. Inayatulla, op. cit.

2. Report of Survey, Department of History, AMU. op. cit.

DISTRIBUTION OF -SARAI NAMES IN UTTAR PRADESH



distribution should also hold good to one or the other degree for the geographical distribution of sarais in other regions.

The geographical distribution of -sarai names in this region as obtained from District Census Handbooks is shown in the map appended here. In this map, the concentration of villages and localities with -sarai names in the individual Parganas is depicted. The method adopted for showing this concentration is as follows: The Parganas having five or more such places are shown by circles of diameters varying in length according to the number of the places; Parganas having less than five such places are shown by dots, the number of dots corresponding with the number of places. For the purposes of comparison of alignment, I have also shown in this map the trade-routes worked out by Irfan Habib for his Atlas as existing in 1595 A.D.¹

A study of the pattern of the distribution of -sarai names as it emerges on the map brings out certain remarkable features. A number of alignments of dots and circles representing -sarai names, in diverse directions clearly suggest the presence of trade-routes along them. These alignments show a great measure of coincidence with the routes worked out by Irfan Habib.² Some additional alignments suggesting the existence of trade-routes along them which have not been noticed by Irfan

1. Irfan Habib, An Atlas of the Mughal Empire, (in Press), Map. No. 8B, 'Economic' Uttar Pradesh, 1595 A.D.

2. Irfan Habib, op. cit.

Habib apparently on account of the absence of a direct evidence, are also discernible from this map. The impressions of trade-routes conveyed by these various patterns may in turn be supported by Irfan Habib's identification of different localities through which they pass as centres of various agricultural and industrial products.¹

Another remarkable feature of the pattern of distribution of individual sarais suggested by our map be noted. On either side of the two main alignments running between Agra and Banaras and between Delhi and Awadh, there are visible at short distances several sites denoting one or two sarais which together do not form any pattern. These sites may be taken as indicating short distance feeder channels connecting the neighbouring localities with the main trunks. A more detailed enquiry to ascertain the position of these isolated sites of sarais as centres of production or market might shed more light on this interesting question.

Surviving larger structures of sarais mostly built by the state and the nobles when plotted on this map² do not show any considerable variation. It is thus evident that larger units also, to a great extent, conformed to the trade-routes in Uttar Pradesh. It may be presumed that the pattern emerging on this map of -sarai names in Uttar Pradesh would hold good for

1. Ibid.

2. Such sarais are shown by triangles, each representing one sarai.

-sarai names in other regions of India as well. Isolated cases of larger sarais that are not located on the established and fully identified trade-routes may be attributed to administrative and other extra-economic factors. For instance, state sarais on the route to Kashmir were built mainly to provide accommodation for the Emperor and his retinue during his occasional visits to Kashmir for change of climate.

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Chapter - 2Categories of Sarais: Factors Promoting the Establishment

As the evidence stands, it is difficult to generalize with any degree of certainty as to what were the factors facilitating the establishment of such a large number of sarais of different categories all over the Mughal empire. Whether the sarais were established largely from philanthropic motives or administrative and economic compulsions also played an important role, is a significant question that can be answered only after a careful analysis of all the available evidence relating to the establishment of sarais by various agencies.

The evidence relating to the establishment of sarais is of varying nature. One may, however, divide the available evidence into two distinct categories - (a) historical evidence derived mainly from literary and archaeological sources, and (b) the sociological information available in the form of place-names and local traditions regarding the sarais. Keeping in view the distinct nature of these two types of evidences, it is convenient to discuss them separately. Incidentally the evidence derived from these two sources relates to two different kind of sarais; while the specific evidence coming from 'a' pertains mainly to sarais of some significance, the information derived from 'b' enables one to

have some idea about the agencies establishing the large number of smaller sarais, now mostly extinct, that apparently were scattered all over the Mughal empire.

From historical sources, mainly travel accounts and English translations of some of the Persian chronicles used in this study, it could be possible to collect references regarding nearly 1100 individual sarais. Out of these 1100 sarais, about 113, it is possible, on the basis of these sources, to ascertain the person or agency responsible for establishing them. A break-up of these 113 sarais into those established by different social categories like king and nobility, the zamindars, petty-officials, and merchants etc. would shed light on the various circumstances and motives stimulating the establishment of sarais during the Mughal period. But before such a break-up is attempted two points need to be clarified. Firstly, whether these 113 sarais represent a random sample that could be used for drawing general conclusions about the larger situation? Secondly, as to what would be the line of distinction between different social categories?

Regarding the first point it may be assumed that the information gleaned from archaeological sources and travellers' accounts would represent by and large a fair sample of the different kind of sarais of some significance established by various categories of people. But in our sample, in addition to the above sources, information derived from Persian histories including a book like Maasir-ul Umra is also included.

About this latter information one cannot be sure of its random nature. Particularly, information furnished by a source like Maaair-ul Umara would tend to disturb the sample by adding disproportionately to the number of the sarais established by the nobles. However, in our sample the number of sarais about which the information is derived exclusively from such sources is only seven. To be on the safer side, in our analysis, we have excluded these seven sarais from the total number, which reduces our sample to 106.

About differentiating between various social categories, problem arises in those cases only where the person or agency establishing the sarai has not been mentioned clearly. A general principle, therefore, has been evolved thus: In deciding whether a person responsible for establishing a sarai was a noble, I have been guided by the assumption that any one having the title of Khan or Bag held some position in the hierarchy of the Mughal officers. Of course, this criterion cannot be regarded as foolproof. Firstly, there is every possibility of individuals not in the service of the king, assuming such titles. Secondly, it is not very helpful in distinguishing an ordinary mansabdar from an officer of the rank that would justify his categorization as an amir (i.e. noble). But in this connection it may be pointed out that the number of individuals not in the service of the king having the titles of bag and khan is unlikely to be large enough to disturb our sample. Till the end of 17th century such titles

had not yet lost their hierarchical meanings and were used only by those in the service of the king.¹ Moreover, the term noble is not used here in the limited connotation of amira i.e. higher mansabdars of 500 and above.² Another criterion used for classifying individuals into social categories is that all those Hindu names which have neither been specified as petty officials nor as merchants have been identified as zamindars, as it is known that apart from the above two categories, zamindars were the only appropriating group who were predominantly Hindus. In this criterion there is one serious drawback. It would be difficult to distinguish between an ordinary Hindu zamindar and the one also having some position in the nobility. But the characterization thus made would not be far inaccurate as it is known that almost 99% of the Hindu nobles were those, who were originally zamindars or chieftains. Finally, the petty-officials and merchants are treated as forming a single category. This may be justified with reference to the considerable evidence that exists suggesting social proximity and inter-professional mobility

1. M. Athar Ali, The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb, p. 140.

2. For the categorization of the mansabdars into two broad groups of ordinary mansabdars and amirs see M. Athar Ali, op. cit., Ch. I. Compare W.H. Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, p. 61.

between these two groups.¹

Out of the 106 sarais that are being considered in this sample, 36 are known to have been built by the Emperor and the members of the royal family, and 23 by nobles. Of the remaining 47 sarais, 9 have been ascribed to the zamindars, 24 to petty officials and merchants and 8 to categories like religious dignitaries and institutions etc. There are 6 sarais which have been established by particular castes or professional groups like Ahira, Saivida and Mahajans etc. This break-up as it obtained during different phases from the beginning of the 16th century onwards down to the end of the 18th century will become clear from the following table.²

1. Cf. Iqtidar Alam Khan, 'The Middle Classes in the Mughal Empire', Presidential Address, Medieval India Section, Indian History Congress, 1975, pp. 20-21. "A quite early example of this kind of mobility can be cited from the family history of Banarsidas, the author of Archa-Kathanak. His grand-father, Muldas, was the modi of a Mughal nobleman of Humayun while his father, Kharagsen, served till 1569 as a fotedar under Sirimal Rai Dhanna, Diwan of Sulaiman Kararani. Similarly, the prominent trading families of Rustamji and Abdul Ghafur of Surat were founded in 17th century by persons of priestly background, while the father of Seth Dayaram, the broker of the Dutch East India Company in 1720's was munshi (letterwriter) at the Dutch warehouse at Surat."

2. The dates of establishment of all these sarais could not be fully ascertained. The evidence in this respect is of two types, (a) where the date is testified through inscriptions or other authentic records, and (b) where the information is based on traditions and therefore the dates are less reliable. In nearly 60% cases one has to rely mainly on traditions.

CLASSIFICATION OF SARAIIS

<u>S.No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>King</u>	<u>Nobles</u>	<u>Zamindar</u>	<u>Petty Officials</u>	<u>Merchant</u>	<u>Saints</u>	<u>Commercial</u>	<u>Religious Institution</u>	<u>Caste Groups</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	Pre-Sher Sah	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
2	Sher Shah	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
3	Akbar	11	3	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	16
4	Jahangir	6	4	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	15
5	Shahjahan	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	8
6	Aurangzeb	12	5	1	-	2	1	1	-	-	21
7	Later Period	2	7	2	10	3	1	1	-	1	26
8	Dates not known	-	-	4	5	2	1	-	2	2	16
9	Percentage	34	21	8	15	8	8	-	3	3	
10	Total	36	23	9	16	8	4	1	3	6	106

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It is evident from the break-up given in the above table that the major contribution in the construction of this kind of sarais is of the king and the nobility. But it comes up to only 55% of the total sarais as compared to 45% ascribed to other sections of society. In the remaining 45%, the major share is claimed by petty-officials and merchants. They together account for nearly 23% of the total as compared to the 22% of the remaining groups other than royalty and nobility. It is also noteworthy that in this sample the share of the zamindars is 8% only. This brings forth a very interesting situation if it is kept in mind that the share of the king and the nobility in the total wealth of the society in the Mughal empire is suggested as 87% while that of other appropriating groups put together as 13% only.¹ From this comparison it emerges that while the share of the royalty and the nobles in the total wealth of the society was very large, their participation in establishing the sarais is comparatively

1. On the testimony of an anonymous chronicle, Muharba-i Muhammad Shah w Nadir Shah, of the period Delhi was occupied by Nadir Shah it is known that "out of the total amount of Rupees 17 crores and 12 lacs collected by Nadir Shah in cash from the nobles and common people of Delhi Rupees 15 crores were realized from the high nobles" Cf. Iqtidar Alam Khan, op.cit., p. 8. This may be taken as a random estimate of the share of different appropriating groups in the total wealth of the society.

small. On the other hand participation of the appropriating groups constituting middle stratum, especially the petty-officials and merchants was much larger as compared to their share in the total wealth of the society.

The above analysis, as already pointed out, pertains to those sarais about which specific information is available from different sources. These sarais would mostly be more significant ones either on account of their location or size to deserve notice in historical sources. But the conclusions based on the analysis of this limited sample may not fully apply to the large number of sarais that are referred to in the travellers' accounts as scattered all over the Mughal empire. Nicholas Withington, a European traveller who came to India in the first quarter of the seventeenth century writes, "Between Adgmere (Ajmere) and Agra, at every ten courses (which is an ordinarye dayes journeye) there is a serralia or place of lodging boethe for man and horse, ..." ¹ Similarly, Manrique tells us that the city of Agra had as many as ninety sarais which were always crowded by the travellers. ² At a later date Thevenot records, "But that which makes the

1. Early Travels in India, op. cit., p. 225.

2. Fray Sebastien Manrique, op. cit., p. 152.

beauty of Agra besides Palaces I have mentioned, are the Quervan seras which are above three score in number;"¹ Peter Mundy, however, notes that the sarais were scarce in Rajasthan whereas the route between Agra & Patna had "faire saraes every foote."² For ascertaining the role of different social groups in establishing these sarais, a different method of analysis has to be adopted.

Some idea of the nature of agencies establishing these ostensibly smaller sarais can be had from an analysis of the village and locality names that carry the word sarai as part of their names. The names of such villages and localities have been listed province-wise as described in the previous chapter. The list of such localities for Uttar Pradesh contains 1284 names which can serve as a good sample for an analysis based on the study of place-names. It may be possible to have some idea of the social categories to which the persons founding these sarais belonged by making a linguistic scrutiny of the names of the localities identified with them.

It is known on the strength of Ain-i Akbari's information about the zamindar castes predominating in individual Darogas in Uttar Pradesh that about 85% of them

1. Indian Travels of Ihevenot & Careri, ed. S.N. Sen, p. 48.

2. Travels of Peter Mundy, op. cit., p. 248.

were non-Muslims. One may, therefore, assume that in our sample ratio of Muslim and non-Muslim place-names falling in rural or semi-rural areas (i.e. outside sarkar headquarters) would roughly correspond to the ratio of the shares of the zamindar and non-zamindar elements in the establishment of comparatively smaller sarais in the countryside. A similar comparison for urban centres i.e. sarkar headquarters, might give a rough idea of the participation of traders (who may be assumed to be mainly Hindus) on the one hand and nobles and holders of revenue grants (who may be assumed to be predominantly non-Muslims) on the other. In both these comparisons some degree of inaccuracy is no doubt possible. For example, the list of non-Muslim names for the rural sector would exclude about 15% names of those zamindars who were Muslims. But this imbalance would be off-set by the inclusion of an appreciable number of non-Muslim names of persons belonging to categories like mahajans, traders, and petty-officials. In the list of sarai names for urban centres also certain degree of inaccuracy is possible as we know that even in the Gangetic plain, Muslim merchants or traders were not altogether absent. But we may assume that unlike the coastal regions, in the Gangetic plains the number of Muslim merchants and traders as compared to the non-Muslim merchants was very small. Thus the possibility of inaccuracy in the analysis of sarai names for urban centres, on

the lines suggested above is rather negligible.

As already stated, the total number of names of villages and localities having the suffix sarai located in Uttar Pradesh, that are listed in District Census Handbooks of 1951 comes up to 1284.¹ Out of these, 16 are named after mythical figures e.g. Sarai August, Sarai Chandi etc; 350 may apparently be identified with original names of the places where sarais were located, e.g. Sarai Rukaspur, Sarai Piparia etc; 60 names relate to the features of the individual structure, e.g. Sarai Kham, Sarai Pukhta, Sarai Khurd, Sarai Kalan, Sarai Chhatardhari, Sarai Chata etc. There are 194 obscure names which, it is difficult to classify as Muslim or non-Muslim. These appear to be sarais known after the names of bhatiyaras who established them.² These place-names are as follows: Mehma Sarai, Sarai Ghariban, Sarai Dhadhumar etc. Another interesting feature of this list is the sarai names indicating association with particular castes and communities, e.g. Sarai Chamaran, Sarai Balharan, Sarai Ahiran, Sarai Shaikh etc. The

1. See Chapter 1, pp. 7-9.

2. During a survey of medieval monuments, many small sarais named as Raja ki Sarai, Mina ki Sarai, Munna ki Sarai were recorded as owned by bhatiyaras. Cf. Report of Survey, A.M.U. Aligarh (Typescript).

number of such sarais is 109.¹ All such names totalling 725 are eliminated from this list to work out our sample consisting of sarai names indicating association with individuals having Muslim and non-Muslim names. This sample consists 559 sarai names. A count of Muslim and non-Muslim sarai names in the rural and urban areas of each sarkar of Akbar located in modern Uttar Pradesh is given in the following chart:

<u>SARKAR H.Q.</u>	<u>URBAN</u>		<u>RURAL</u>	
	<u>Muslim</u>	<u>Non-Muslim</u>	<u>Muslim</u>	<u>Non-Muslim</u>
1. Allahabad	1	1	39	44
2. Ghazipur	-	-	7	10
3. Benaras	-	3	-	12
4. Jaunpur	4	-	7	21
5. Manikpur	1	-	-	-
6. Chunar	-	-	-	3
7. Kora	-	1	-	-
8. Karah	-	-	-	-
9. Oudh (Ayodhya)	-	1	-	-
10. Gorakhpur	-	-	-	-
11. Bahraich	-	-	1	3

1. This tendency towards sarais named after castes and communities is discernible in the first sample as well. Significance of this tendency is discussed in the concluding remarks. See supra.

12. Khairabad	4	1	3	5
13. Lucknow	4	1	2	1
14. Agra	1	-	1	-
15. Kalpi	1	-	-	-
16. Kanauj	3	1	1	7
17. Kol (Aligarh)	14	15	-	1
18. Irij (Erachh)	-	-	-	-
19. Sahar	-	-	-	-
20. Badaun	2	-	1	4
21. Kumaon	-	-	-	-
22. Sambhal	11	3	-	-
23. Saharanpur	9	1	1	-
Total:	55	28	184	287

From the above chart we can see that the ratio between the non-Muslim sarai names and Muslim sarai names in the rural areas is 3:2. Thus the share of the zamindars in the establishment of sarais in the rural areas might be rated as about 60%, which goes to indicate that in the rural areas as compared to the non-zamindar groups like the nobility and holders of revenue grants put together, the contribution of the zamindars to the establishment of sarais is distinctly greater. Again, a comparison between sarai names in the urban and Muslim sarai names in the rural areas put together and non-Muslim sarai names in the rural areas only would give

an idea of the share of the zamindars in the establishment of the sarais in the overall situation. This ratio stands at 1:1, which indicates that the share of the zamindars in the total situation was nearly 50%.

It is a very interesting aspect indicating that the zamindars as a social category were not as great an obstacle in the path of the flow of trade and commerce as they would otherwise appear in the light of the evidence indicating a tendency on their part to collect rahdari and impose other kind of levies frowned upon by the central authority on the travellers passing through their regions. On the other hand they seem to have a strong economic incentive to facilitate trade passing through the territories controlled by them. In fact zamindars appear to be more concerned with the flow of trade and commerce as compared to the nobility.¹ Hope of a larger income through rahdari could have been one factor inducing them to invest money for providing facilities to the travellers passing through their territories.

1. As already discussed the nobility sharing 87% of the total wealth, contributed to the establishment of the sarais to the extent of 55% only, while in the case of the zamindars we find that although their share in the revenues was not more than 10%, their contribution stands at 50%. For an estimate of zamindar's share in the total revenues of, Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, pp. 153-54.

On the basis of this analysis we may conclude that the establishment of sarais on such a large scale was mainly guided by administrative and economic requirements. The sarais built by the kings and the high nobles were generally large structures situated on main land-routes. It seems that these sarais were used by the servants of the state as well as troops quite frequently. These sarais were also converted into fortresses when the need arose. The significance of the economic factor in the establishment of the sarais is borne out by the fact that the groups constituting the middle stratum appear to have contributed to a much larger degree than their share in the total wealth of the society. The larger participation of these groups in the establishment of sarais would go to indicate that even if many of the individuals contributing to this process were motivated by philanthropic sentiments, the overall factor inducing them to spend money on such projects was economic. There also exists some evidence showing that often sarais were planned as profit earning enterprises. For instance, Kishna, a brahman woman and wife of Shaikh Abdur Rahim of Lucknow was known to have built a sarai after her husband's death and entertained travellers there.¹ Similarly Abdus Samad Khan, the amin and faujdar of Jahanabad had established a pura (small township) in the name of his son which

1. Shah Nawaz Khan, Maasir-ul Umra (tr. Bahl Prasad), Vol. I, pp. 49-50.

brought considerable in_come to his descendants down to 1717-18 A.D. This property included orchards, a sarai, and Turkish baths (hammam).¹

It is also noteworthy that the contribution of zamindars in the establishment of sarais in general was much larger than their share in the total revenues, though their share in the establishment of comparatively larger sarais was very small. While it is true that the zamindars would tend to impede trade by imposing rahdari and making other illegal exactions there also appears to have existed considerable incentive for them to try and ensure the passage of trade under their supervision which was apparently a substantial source of income for them.

The tendency discernible in both the samples analysed in this chapter, towards the establishment of an appreciable number of sarais by the entire communities or castes is yet another interesting feature that deserves notice. The number of the sarais associated with the names of castes and communities in the first sample comprising of more significant sarais mentioned in historical sources is 6 out of 106 i.e. 3%, while in the second sample their ratio goes up to

1. Itimad Ali Khan, Biratu-l Haqiq, as cited by Iqtidar Alam Khan, op. cit., p. 7.

9%. This clearly confirms the above tendency. It also suggests that this tendency becomes more marked in the case of smaller sarais mainly located in rural areas. The participation to an appreciable degree, of the entire communities or castes in the establishment of an institution like sarais requiring considerable investment as well as organizational capacity goes to testify to the existence of well organized village, caste or guild organizations during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Thus we can see that though the construction of sarais was primarily a welfare activity the determining factors were administrative and economic. Whereas the state sarais were serving to the administrative requirements, the large number of sarais scattered all over the Mughal empire sprang up to meet the rising need of the growing money economy and long distance trade during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Chapter - 3

Administration of the Sarais

As already noticed the institution of sarais seems to have played an important role in the economic life of Mughal India. For properly assessing the significance of its role in this respect one should also have some idea of the actual working of the institution. This calls for an enquiry into the organizational set up of the sarais. A study of the organizational structure of the sarais would naturally be focused on the management of the endowments attached to them, the establishment staff and rules governing their conduct, and the degree of control exercised by the Mughal state over them. This study together with that of the rates of charges realized from the travellers and facilities offered to them would go a long way in highlighting the economic and administrative significance of the institution of sarais. In this chapter we shall be mainly concerned with the nature of the organization. The other aspects, namely, the facilities offered and the categories of people using the sarais shall be discussed in the ^{following} ~~next~~ chapters.

The bulk of the evidence relating to the administration of the sarais pertains to the sarais mainly established by the kings and the nobles. About the sarais established by other groups, the evidence pertaining to their organization and facilities is scanty. It is difficult to form

an idea about the organizational set-up of these sarais which may be assumed as representing comparatively smaller units. Here an attempt has been made to analyse the available evidence relating to the working of the larger sarais. Any conclusions derived from the analysis should hold true to one or the other degree about all categories of the sarais including smaller units.

The earliest evidence describing the establishment staff of the sarais established by the state becomes available from Waqiat-i Mushtaqi (compiled some time before 1581) and it pertains to the large number of sarais that Sher Shah is reported to have established in northern India. According to Rizqullah Mushtaqi, "From Gaur to the confines of his (i.e. Sher Shah's) dominions, in every direction, he had built sarais and halting places at every kps; At every sarai, a masjid, a khanah-i badshahi, and a well were constructed; and to every mosque a muazzin, an imam, and shikkdar were appointed and lands were allotted at the place for their support."¹ The description of Sher Shah's sarais given by Abbas Khan (1581 AD) corroborates Rizqullah Mushtaqi's evidence. He refers to Sher Shah's sarais in the following words: "In the middle of every sarai was a well and a masjid of burnt brick; and he (i.e. Sher Shah) placed an imam and a muazzin in every masjid,

1. Rizqullah Mushtaqi, Waqiat-i Mushtaqi, Elliot & Dowson, Vol. 4, p. 550.

together with a custodian (ahanna) and several watchmen; and all these were maintained from the land near the sarai."¹

It is apparent from the above descriptions that official administering the sarais was known as ahanna or shiqdar. The section of the building identified by Rizqullah Mushtaqi as khana-i badshahi may be assumed to have served as the office of this official. The use of two different designations for this official by Rizqullah Mushtaqi and Abbas Khan may be explained as resulting from the use of different terms for the officials managing sarais at the capital and other administrative head-quarters on the one hand and those performing same kind of duties in the sarkara and parganas on the other. In the Delhi Sultanate the term shahna was generally used for the officials posted in the urban areas to supervise markets etc. while it is known that the official administering a pargana under Sher Shah was designated as shiqdar. But as this inference is not based on firm evidence it should at best be treated as tentative.

It also appears from the passages quoted above that shahna or shiqdar of sarai did not enjoy the position of an imperial assignment-holder. He was apparently a petty-official who derived his sustenance from the land-grants

1. Abbas Khan Sarwani, Tarikh-i Sher Shahi, op. cit., p. 418.

created for the maintenance of individual sarais. The high designation of shiqdar used by Rizquillah Mushtaqi should not mislead one into imagining that this official was a military commandant of appreciable rank. But one would be quite justified in further conjecturing that the management of the revenue grants attached to the sarais would be the responsibility of the shahnas or shiqdars controlling them.

The chief official of a sarai was apparently assisted by a subordinate staff comprising of two kinds of personnel viz. (a) service staff consisting primarily of cooks, and (b) the watch-men and gate-keepers. Abbas Khan mentions only one category of non-service staff, namely, watchmen. But from a 17th century account¹ we find that for the persons responsible for opening and closing the gates of the sarais the special designation of darbans was used. In addition to the watchmen and darbans perhaps a few persons would also be serving under this official, who would be needed for looking after two dak-chauki horses that were maintained according to Abbas

1. Tazkira-i Pir Hasnu Teli, f. 161 a & b.

Khan¹ in every sarai. About the service staff also we know from the same source that they were divided into two categories: (i) general staff, and (ii) brahmins meant to serve the non-Muslim travellers only.

1. Abbas Khan Sarwani, op. cit., p. 418.

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An interesting account of dak-chaukiya and his men has been given by Surat Singh. From his account, it appears that during Shahjahan's reign the dak-chaukiya or the messenger carrying the royal mail would be moving with a small party (in the specific case there were 30 horsemen) and these people would often seize horses from the persons staying in the sarais for their use. According to Surat Singh, one occasion when he was staying in Sarai Banwali near Thanesar, one of his horses was taken away by the retainers of the royal messenger. The manner in which he refers to this episode it seems that this was considered as an illegal act and there was less likelihood of such forcible seizure inside a sarai. The darban of the sarai, whom he accuses of being in league with the men of dak-chaukiya, was expected to help in preventing such forcible seizures. A summary translation of the relevant verses runs as follows: "At one occasion, Surat Singh was travelling from Agra to Lahore in the company of his brother and one of his friends Shaikh Hamid. When they were at Sarai Banwali near Thanesar, "there arrived the news that a dak-chaukiya carrying the news of victory at Qandahar was coming and was accompanied by thirty horsemen and that in the places through which he was to pass, the horsemen were hiding away (to avoid confiscation of their horses). (On getting this news), Surat Singh and his party decided to spend night inside the sarai. The men of dak-chaukiya's team made an attempt to seize Surat Singh's horse. Pursuing the man who had tried to take away his horse, Surat Singh reached the gate of the sarai. The gate-keeper who was apparently in league with dak-chaukiya's men closed the gate, but Surat Singh forced his exit by threatening the gate-keeper with his sword."

There is yet another category of staff mentioned by Rizqullah Mushtaqi and Abbas Khan, viz. functionaries attached to the mosque in the sarai. But about this category one cannot be very sure if they were placed under the over all supervision of the official incharge of the sarai or they were answerable to an agent of the Department of Sadarat stationed in the respective towns and parganas. In any case, this much is clear that at least during Sher Shah's reign the salaries of muazzin and imam serving in the mosque of a sarai were paid from the revenue grant attached to it. This would imply that the official managing the grant, even if he was a non-Muslim would exercise some degree of control over these functionaries.

Manucci writing about the situation obtaining in Mughal India in the second half of 17th century also refers to an official who would manage a sarai with the help of several subordinates. He writes, "In every (sarai) there is an official whose duty is ~~is~~ to close the gates at the going down of the sun. After he has shut the gates, he calls out that every one must look after his belongings, ~~pick~~ pocket his horses by their fore and hind legs; above all that he must look out for dogs, for the dogs of Hindustan are very cunning and great thieves.

"At six o'clock in the morning, before opening the gates, the watchman gives three warnings to the travellers, crying in a loud voice that every one must look after his own things. After these warnings if any one suspects that any of his property is missing, the doors are not opened until the lost thing is found. By this means they make sure of having the thief, and he is strung up opposite the sarai. Thus the thieves, when they hear a complaint made, drop the goods somewhere, so as not to be discovered."¹ From this evidence it is clear that the official managing a sarai had the same position as the shahna or shiqdar of Sher Shah's period and was in fact the manager of the sarai. He not only regulated the entry and the exit of the travellers but also looked after their safety. It was obviously his responsibility to prevent thefts and other crimes inside the sarai. This official apparently also enjoyed wide ranging powers including those of inflicting punishments for crimes committed within the compound of the sarai. He was also expected to collaborate with the state authorities in tracking criminals and other undesirable elements staying inside the sarais. It was his duty to promptly bring to the notice of the relevant authority about the death of a traveller

1. Manucci, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 67.

during his stay at the sarai so that the goods or belongings left behind by him could be taken into the custody of the state for final disposal.¹ In the towns headed by a kotwal, the latter authority had powers to visit sarais for investigations and making arrests.² The sarai administration was also expected to furnish information to the kotwal about the strangers arriving there. As is quite understandable, in this kind of collaboration, the sarai administration would not prove to be as alert and efficient as desired by the authorities. It was apparently in order to meet this problem that during Akbar's reign the kotwal was empowered to establish a separate sarai in the town for accommodating the newly arriving traveller till such time as was required to check the

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1. At one occasion when Manucci carried the dead body of a fellow European traveller at Hodal Sarai (situated between Agra and Delhi) "the official at the sarai sent notice to the local judicial officer (qazi?) who hastened to the spot and putting his seal on all the baggage laid an embargo upon it." Cf. Manucci, op. cit., p. 69.
 2. Banarsi Das, the author of Ardha-Katha records that while staying in a sarai at Korra, one of his fellow traveller was accused by a sarraf of possessing counterfeit coins. The matter was reported to the kotwal by the sarraf and the latter came to the sarai along with the diwan of the noble acting as the commandant of the area and investigated into the complaint. Cf. Banarsi Das, Ardha-Katha (Hindi) ed. Mata Prasad Gupta, p. 39.

information about them.¹

From references in the travellers' accounts of 17th century it appears that the service staff in a sarai comprised of one particular caste group known as bhatiyaras. There is no evidence suggesting that like Sher Shah's time brahmins were also included in the service staff. In this connection it is noteworthy that at present the entire community of people settled in the sarais and claiming descent from the families who served the travellers in the sarais in the earlier period are Muslims with caste designation bhatiyaras.³ This evidence can be reconciled with that of Abbas Khan if one assumes that during the second half of 16th century most of the people serving in the sarais got converted to Islam and came to be recognized together as a separate caste. This assumption is supported by a tradition recorded in the District Gazetteer of Gujrat to the effect

1. Cf. Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari (tr. H.S. Jarrett), Vol. 2, p. 44. "He (i.e. Kotwal) should establish a separate sarai and cause unknown arrivals to alight therein, and by the aid of divers detectives take account of them."
2. Abbas Khan Sarwani, op. cit., p. 418.
3. Cf. Report of the Survey, A.M.U., Aligarh (typescript).

that the service staff in some of the sarais were converted to Islam by Khwas Khan in A.D. 1545, who gave them the group designation of Salim Shahis.¹ Apparently Ahmad Yadgar (compiled around 1613) has applied the term bhatiyaras² to the service personnel of sarais of Sher Shah's time on the basis of the caste identification which these people had already acquired by his time. Reproducing the tradition that existed in Mughal India about Sher Shah's excellent arrangements in the sarais Manucci makes an interesting addition to our information. According to him, "he (Sher Shah) bought a number of married slaves and appointed them and their wives to look after travellers - to prepare their food, to provide cool water for them to drink, and warm water for washing their bodies, a bedstead to rest upon furnished with mattresses and sheets; and they were to wait on travellers just as if they were their own private servants, and provide food for way-farers on foot at the cost of the king."³ It is very significant that Manucci has avoided the use of the term bhatiyaras in this context.

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1. District Gazetteer, Gujrat (Punjab) 1921, p. 15.
 2. Ahmad Yadgar, Tarikh-i Shahi (Bibliotheca Indica), p. 206.
 3. Manucci, op. cit., p. 115.

During the 17th century, the care of the travellers was usually taken by bhatiyarins and other house-hold works in the sarais were also done by them; while the male members did other jobs or worked in the fields. According to Nicholas Withington, a European traveller who came to India in 1615, "Between Adjmere (Ajmere) and Agra, at every ten courses (which is an ordinarye dayes journeye) there is a serralia or place of lodging boothe for man and horse, and hostesses to dresse our victuals if we please, paying a matter of 3d. both for horse and meate dressinge."¹ Peter Mundy gives us an interesting account of the mode of working of the bhatiyarins in the sarais. He writes, "Metranes or Betearees are certen women in all sarases, that looke to the little roomes there and dresse the servants meate, accomodateinge them with cottas (khat) etts. needfull to bee had; of these some have 2, some 3 or 4 roomes a peece, for which in the morninge wee pay 1 pice or 2 pice each. They live likewise in the said Roomes with their husbands and children. These husbands most commonly are Cahares (kahars), Fowlers or fishers. For the most part abroad."² Writing as

1. Nicholas Withington, Early Travels in India, op. cit., p. 225.

2. The Travels of Peter Mundy, op. cit., p. 121. According to the editor's note: "Mundy's observation is not quite correct. It is the business of the bhathiyari to prepare meals, but no native traveller would touch food prepared by a mihtarani, who belongs to the lowest caste." It seems that Mundy has confused between the two words and has used them as synonyms.

late as in the last quarter of 18th century, Forster records, "The stationary tenants of the serauce (the serauce at this day are usually given in rent), many of them women, and some of them very pretty, approach the traveller on his entrance, and in alluring language describe to him the various excellencies of their several lodgings. When the choice is made a bed is laid out for his repose - a smoking pipe is brought, and the utensils cleaned, for preparing his repast."¹ Thus it is clear that from 17th century onwards the service to the travellers in the sarais was the responsibility of the bhatiyaris. Apparently each family of the bhatiyaras had in its possession few rooms in the sarai, which were maintained by them as they liked. The travellers could possibly stay in any of these rooms according to their choice of facilities provided there. Probably the distribution of the rooms among different families and their behaviour towards the travellers was governed by the conventions and customs evolved by this group.

✓ The available evidence tends to suggest that the larger sarais established by the state as well as private individuals were not run as paying concerns. In most of the cases the bulk of the expenses for maintaining the sarais were

1. G. Forster, Journey from Bengal to England, pp. 86-7, 92.

met either with the revenue grants made by the state or with the endowments created by the individuals. While the evidence about the revenue grants made by Sher Shah for the running of the official sarais is quite unambiguous, we have only stray references to the existence of endowments supporting sarais by private individuals. One such indirect mention of an endowment occurs in Heber's narrative of his journey through northern India. Writing in 1824, he holds that the sarais were "generally noble monuments of individual ^{beaut.} ~~beauty~~" and some in the earlier period were "liberally endowed and furnished supplies of gram, milk and grass gratis to the traveller, as well as shelter."¹ From the records of the civil suit number 47 of 1952 relating to Sarai Miran in Kannauj,² it becomes obvious that Saiyid Abdur Rahman Haji while establishing this large sarai during Aurangzeb's reign, had endowed the proper building of the sarai as well as some property adjoining it as waqf attached to the sarai.

From the above discussion we may conclude that the larger sarais established by the state involved

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1. R. Heber, Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, Vol. I, p. 201.
 2. Civil Suit No. 47 of 1952 in the court of the Civil Judge, Farrukhabad. Sri Suraj Prasad s/o Sri Shankar Ratan Misra plaintiff vs. Rahmat Bux and other Bhatiyaras.

an elaborate organizational set up. Each sarai had one over all incharge, who administered the sarai and was responsible for maintaining order in it. He also managed the grants attached to the sarai. This official was assisted by a large subordinate staff amongst whom the service staff as distinct from watchmen and gate-keepers tended to be represented by a particular Muslim caste, namely bhatiyaras. The work of cooking and cleaning the rooms etc. was mainly performed by the female members of bhatiyara families settled in the sarais. From all standards in the comparatively larger state owned sarais there existed good arrangements for the safety of the travellers against ~~the~~ thefts and unlawful seizures.

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Chapter 4

Categories of People Using Sarais

We have seen that the sarais were essentially a public institution meant to provide rest and security to the travellers on their journeys. The present chapter aims at describing different kind of people staying in the sarais and the facilities provided to them. On this aspect there is available sufficient evidence enabling one to identify the social categories using sarais and also the kind of facilities that were provided to them.

The royalty and the nobility formed the richest and the most influential category of people using sarais. Our evidence tends to suggest that bigger sarais lying on important land-routes were often used by the Emperor or nobles during their journeys. Cunningham on the basis of the local tradition notes that "A royal sarai built at this place (i.e. Chaumuha, 10 miles north of Mathura on Delhi road) was used by Mughal Emperors for their personal accommodation when travelling between Agra and Delhi."¹ Similarly Archibald Constable, translator of

1. A Cunningham, Archaeological Survey of India, Report for the year 1882-83, Vol. XX, p. 52.

Bernier's travels, records on the basis of a tradition that "In the higher part of the town of Bhimbar (situated on the foothills of Kashmir) are the remains of the Sarai, a building about 300 feet square, where the Emperor and his personal staff used to camp" and in the sands and boulders of the Bhimbar river was the camping ground, "where the rest of the camp was pitched."¹ It is understandable that a member of the royal family or a high noble would always be shown preference in the allotment of accommodation in a sarai. At times when a high dignitary would be staying in a sarai his retinue would occupy the entire accommodation causing inconvenience to ordinary travellers like traders and petty-officials who obviously accounted for a great majority of the persons using the sarais.² Banarsi Das says that while passing through Etawa on way to Agra in 1610, he was denied accommodation in the local sarai as two Umra (i.e. nobles) were

1. Archibald Constable, Travels in the Mogul Empire by F. Bernier, p. 390, n. 1.

2. The fact that the widespread establishment of sarais coincides with the growth of money economy and expansion of trade, tends to suggest that persons engaged in trade and commerce were the largest and in the economic sense most important category using sarais. The evidence suggesting an anxiety on the part of Sher Shah to provide maximum facilities to the Hindu travellers is a pointer towards the same tendency. Supra, p. 36.

staying there.¹ Tavernier writing in 1642 about Merta (a large town in Rajasthan) says: "When I arrived there during one of my journeys in India all the caravan sarais were full of people, because the aunt of Shah Jahan, wife of Shaista Khan, was then on her way, taking her daughter to marry her to ~~to~~ Sultan Shuja, second son of Shah Jahan."² Incidentally, these statements of Banarsidas and Tavernier also imply that sarais used by the royalty and the nobles were not reserved exclusively for them and ordinary travellers were allowed to use such sarais provided accommodation was available there. According to the local tradition about the Nur Sarai (16 miles south of Jalandhar) it was meant for the royalty only, but an inscription on the western gateway of this sarai tends to suggest that it was open to ordinary travellers.³

1. Banarsi Das, op. cit., p. 22.

2. Tavernier, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 88.

3. A Cunningham, op. cit., (1878-79), Vol. XIV, p. 62.

Text:

Alhas rahdari abwab
 Mamtiah banujib amar Nawab
 Zakariya Khan bahadur Nazim
 Sabah muff harkas az Fojdaran
 Doabah begirad, bar Zanao.
 talak, talak, talak.

Translation:

"Taking payment from travellers is forbidden, the Nawab Zakariya Khan, Bahadur, Governor of the district, having exempted them. Should any Fojdar of the Doab collect these dues, may his wives be divorced.

✓ The mention by Rizqullah Mushtaqi of khanah-i badshahi in the sarais established by Sher Shah superficially suggests the existence, in each state sarai, of a special apartment for the use of the king. However, this seems unlikely because the space available in such portions reserved in small sarais established by the state at a distance of every kos would^{be} far too small for the accommodation of royal parties. As suggested in the previous chapter the khanah-i badshahi of Sher Shah's sarais were actually meant for housing establishment of the manager of the sarai. It may also be noted that the surviving structures of even comparatively larger sarais were not big enough to provide comfortable lodging required for the royal parties. We know on the authority of Bernier that the total space needed for putting up royal tents in a place would be "a square, each side of which measures more than three hundred ordinary paces."¹ This space would be almost equal to 225 x 225 sq. meters, which shows that the space needed for the king's apartments was larger than the areas of most of the surviving sarais.²

1. F. Bernier, op. cit., pp. 360-63.

2. Compare measurements of eight surviving structures of sarais surveyed by a team of the Department of History, AMU., Aligarh, given in the second part of this dissertation. The total area of the largest of these structures is 17738.74 sq. m.

This would apply to the apartments in Nur Sarai identified by tradition as royal quarters. The total area of this sarai is only "551 feet square" which is much less than the space required for the pitching of imperial camp.¹ One may, therefore, presume that when there is a mention of a king using a sarai, it only means that his camp is pitched in its vicinity and the covered space in the sarai is also incorporated in the camp. It is possible that during rainy season in general or while travelling in hilly tracts the built in space of sarais would be preferred for the private use of the king and the royal tents would be pitched in such a manner that a part of the covered space of the sarai may be made available for the use of the king and his wives.

There is some evidence suggesting that the ambassadors of different kings coming to the courts of the Indian rulers shall often be accommodated on their way as well as after reaching the capital in the sarais. From Mirat-i Sikandari we know that Shah Ismail's ambassador to the court of Muzaffar Shah, the ruler of Gujarat (accession A.H. 916/A.D. 1515) was staying at Muhammadabad (Champaner) in a sarai.² The description given by Sikandar bin Manjhu of an incident involving this envoy, leading to an attack on his residence in the sarai

1. A Cunningham, op. cit., Vol. XIV, p. 56.

2. Sikandar bin Manjhu, Mirat-i Sikandari, pp.140-41.

by the populace of Muhammadabad goes to show that the lay out of this sarai was different from an ordinary kind of sarai surveyed by us in northern India. Apparently, it consisted of an enclosure having a gateway within which were provided separate houses. These houses could be hired by travellers on long term basis. Some idea of the total accommodation provided in this sarai could be had from the fact that along with the Persian envoy and his relations, there was also living in a separate house an old servant of the fugitive prince of Malwa, Sultan Muhammad. According to Maasir-i Alamgiri, in 1661, Budaq Beg, envoy of Shah Abbas II halted at Sarai Badli in the neighbourhood of Delhi before he had an audience with the Emperor.¹ Similarly when in 1701 William Norris, the ambassador of the King of England visited Aurangzeb in Deccan, he encamped at "Seravy Cauzee" (Sarai Kazi) located at a distance of one day's march from Navapur.²

Manucci writing in 1665 says: "They (i.e. Ethiopian Ambassadors) had no money to hire a house, but put up in the public sarai, and walked the streets having no palanquin."³ This statement of Manucci incidentally also

1. Saqi Mustad Khan, Maasir-i Alamgiri, p. 35.

2. Norris Embassy, ed. Harihar Das, p. 236: Navapur is a district in Maharashtra situated 73°46'N, 21°10'E.

3. Manucci, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 113.

indicates that at Delhi unlike Muhammadabad, the sarais did not contain houses fit for the use of ambassadors. An ambassador would be obliged to opt for accommodation in a sarai at Delhi only when he would be financially hard-pressed to the extent of finding it difficult to rent a suitable house.

It is understandable that one very large category of people using sarais would comprise of persons in the employment of the king and the nobles in small positions. Amongst them the ordinary troopers would perhaps be the largest group but for some curious reason according to Manucci they were averse to using the facility of sarais. He simultaneously makes the statement that the sarais were "only intended for travellers", which goes to suggest that the soldiers moving from one place to another were not included in the category of travellers.¹ Incidentally Mirza Kamran, author of Mirza Nama, who was a gentleman trooper, says that a "Mirza" should never stay in a sarai.² Though the intention of the author while advising like this was to forbid one from taking a permanent residence in the sarais, it also reflected

1. Ibid, Vol. I, p. 67.

2. Mirza Kamran, Mirza Nama tr. Maulvi Hidayat Hussain, Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1913, p. Iqtidar Alam Khan has assessed the date of the compilation of this book as A.H. 1014/A.D. 1605.

the general tendency of troopers not staying in the sarais. Apparently what Manucci means to convey is that when troops moved in a body they were not expected to go into the sarais, but would encamp in open fields often located in the vicinity of sarais, identified as paraos.¹

Another category of the people in the service of the state in minor positions, who would be travelling on official as well as private business extensively was that of the petty-officials, particularly those connected with revenue administration. On official business the revenue officials would have to tour with a small party within a pargana for measuring the lands and realizing revenue from individual villages. There exists evidence indicating that the revenue officials used to face the problem of finding proper board and lodge, while visiting villages within their jurisdiction. They had a general tendency to shift the responsibility of providing these facilities to them to cultivators. But still they would be using sarais for boarding wherever such facilities would be available as it would be difficult to find proper resting place and bed cots for them in smaller villages. It was apparently on account of

1. In the District Gazetteers of U.P., many individual sarais are referred to as located near 'encamping grounds'. Cf. District Gazetteer, Shahjahanpur, pp. 182, 195; District Gazetteer, Bareilly, pp. 225, 240.

this difficulty that some times revenue officials visiting places not having a suitable resting place would carry with them their bed-cots resorting to taking bagar from the peasants. There is also discernible a tendency on the part of the petty-officials to move from one part of the country to another in search of suitable employment. In fact there was a great demand for the services of persons trained in some specified professions, e.g. accountancy, record-keeping etc., and also these persons enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom in selecting their jobs. This made them travel over long distances.² Quite understandably, they would generally be

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1. Cf. Durrul Ulum (A.D. 1688-89), f. 53a and b cited by Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, p. 247, n. 36. An official document recording a complaint by the inhabitants of Moradabad (then a Pargana in sarkar Sambhal) that the revenue officials force them to carry their bed-cots.
 2. Cf. Iqtidar Alam Khan, op.cit., pp. 23-4: "He (i.e. Ganga Ram, brother of Surat Singh) was born and brought up at Natesari in the Pargana Patti Haibatpur (now Patti in District Amritsar). The first job taken up by Ganga Ram was that of the waza-i nigar of Lahore. Subsequently he became a Pargana official in Gujarat. After his return from Gujarat he remained unemployed for some time but eventually became the amil of Pargana Jahangirpur, in which position he served for a long time. On leaving Jahangirpur, Ganga Ram accepted a position in the Khalisa establishment of Pargana Batala. Sometime later, he shifted from Batala to Bhatinda to serve as the diwan of a certain noble, Rai Todal Mal. At a still later stage, he went to Agra as the wakil of another noble, Rai Behari Mal. On his return from Agra, he stayed at Lahore for some time and then went to Kabul where he took up service as khan-i saman in the sarkar of Safshikan Khan. But with a few months of accepting employment under Safshikan Khan, he became dissatisfied with him on account of his relying too much on the advice of his Khazinedar and left his service. It would appear that towards the end of his career Ganga Ram was in the service of Aqil

travelling in small parties.¹ In this situation, they would naturally be using sarais on a big scale. In the sources surveyed in connection with this study we have come across occasional references to the use of sarais by petty officials moving in small parties. For example, ^{Singh, a petty-official,} Surat mentions his frequent journeys between Agra and Lahore. During one of these journeys which he had undertaken in the company of his brother and a friend Shaikh Hamid he stayed in Sarai Banwali near Thanesar.²

Merchants and traders formed a numerous category which used sarais while travelling. Banarsi Das, who belonged to the family of a trader in Jaunpur, mentions many of his travels during A.D. 1598-1616 in northern India in which he occasionally stayed in the sarais.³ In most cases, the party with which he travelled consisted wholly of persons belonging to the trading or merchant communities. But on occasions he would also move with a party comprising of traders as well as persons belonging to other professions.⁴ William Finch, while

1. See supra, pp. 10-11.

2. Tazkira-i Pir Hasau Teli, op. cit., p. 161a & b.

3. Banarsi Das, op. cit., pp. 10, 31, 32, 38.

4. Ibid., p. 38. Banarsi Das was accompanied by two brahmans of Mathura during his travel from Jaunpur to Agra.

on his way to Bayana to buy indigo in 1610, mentions a sarai at Mundiapura near Kiraoli where he stayed in the night.¹ Similarly, Surat Singh also mentions a party of Afghans, apparently horse dealers, staying in Sarai Banwali at which occasion their horses were seized by Dak Chaukiya's men.² Haji Ali, a Persian trader is noted by Ali Mohammad Khan, as staying in a sarai at Ahmadabad.³ There also exists evidence to show that certain sarais were reserved exclusively for the use of big merchants and traders. According to Pelsaert, "Nur Jahan erected sarais or halting places for travellers and merchants."⁴ Peter Mundy (1632) describing Saif Khan's sarai in Patna, says: "This place is chiefly for Merchants of strange countries as Mogolls, Persians, Armenians, where they may lodge and keepe their goods the tyme of their stay heere, payeing so much by the moneth."⁵ Similarly Bernier writing in 1663 about the sarai of Jahanara Begum in Delhi

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1. William Finch, Early Travels in India, op. cit., p. 148.
 2. Tazkira-i Pir Hassu Teli, op. cit., p. 161 & supra, p. 36, n.1.
 3. Ali Mohammad Khan, Mirat-i Ahmadi, Vol. I, p. 430.
 4. Jahangir's India, op. cit., p. 50.
 5. The Travels of Peter Mundy, op. cit., p. 159.

observed: "This place is the rendezvous of the rich Persian, Usbek and other foreign merchants, who in general may be accomodated with empty chambers, in which they remain with perfect security, the gate being closed at night."¹ Manucci referring to the same sarai says, "In this sarai there put up none but great Mogul and Persian merchants."² According to traditions about the caravan sarai situated in Fathpur Sikri, between Hiran Minar and Sangin Burj, it was used by rich merchants and traders who would come to offer their goods for sale to the king.³ This evidence incidentally, also reveals that such sarais earmarked for the exclusive use of merchants and traders were small in number and were mainly located in important towns. While a vast majority of ordinary sarais located on different routes and also in the towns were open to all categories of travellers, there did exist a small number of sarais in small towns and in the countryside in general which were apparently established by merchant communities for their own use. The existence of such sarais in small places is suggested by the following place names! Sarai Mahajanan,

1. F. Bernier, op.cit., p. 281.

2. Manucci, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 213. Cf. Thevenot, op.cit., p. 48.

3. Cf. E.W. Smith, Moghal Architecture of Fathpur Sikri, Part III, p. 34.

✓ Sarai Teli, Saraiyan Seth, Sarai Jaina etc. About these sarais, however, it is difficult to say whether they were exclusively for the use of the members of the community running them or they were open to other communities also. In any case this much can be safely assumed that in most cases the persons using these sarais would belong to the same communities.

There is no evidence suggesting the existence of separate sarais for different religious groups. The Muslim and non-Muslim travellers invariably stayed in the same sarais. Abbas Khan, however, mentions that separate lodgings for Hindus and Muslims were reserved in the sarais established by Sher Shah.¹ But this distinction does not seem to have continued in the later period. According to Peter Mundy, "These (sarais) are usuallie in great Citties, but the other sort of Saraes are in all places, servinge for all sorts of Travellers that come att night and away in the morninge."² Similarly Haber, writing as late as in 1825 about a sarai situated at Kim Chowkee (16 miles from river Narmada on way to Surat), says: "We found here a considerable crowd of Bora inhabitants of Surat, who had come out thus far to meet the mollah of their sect. The Mollah did not arrive so

1. Abbas Khan Sarwani, op. cit., pp. 417-18.

2. The Travels of Peter Mundy, op. cit., p. 159.

soon as he was expected, otherwise the serai would have offered the spectacle of a curious mixture of creeds; as it was, we had Mussulmans of three different sects (Omar, Ali, Hussun), Hindoos of almost every caste from Brahmins to sweepers, divers worshipper of fire, several Portuguese Roman Catholics; an English Bishop and Archdeacon with one lay-member of their sect, a Scottish Presbyterian, and two poor Greeks from Trebizond, who were on a begging journey to redeem their families from slavery. The whole number of lodgers in and about the serai, probably did not fall short of five hundred persons. What an admirable scene for Eastern romance would such an inn as this afford."¹ One may thus see that the sarais could be used by any traveller and no distinction was maintained among various religious groups with regard to their stay in the sarais.

From Mirza Nama by Mirza Kamran a gentleman trooper of Jahangir's reign, we come to know about another category of people coming to sarais who deserve notice at this place. It appears that in urban centres people living in the town would visit the sarais during the day time for recreation and gossip. They would apparently sit in the eating-shops adjacent to the gates of the sarais and exchange views on all

1. R. Heber, op. cit., pp. 121-2.

sorts of problems. Occasionally such exchange of views would degenerate into acrimonious discussions on religious issues leading to ugly situations. Referring to one such sarai in Agra, Mirza Kamran observes: "If it be possible a Mirza should not utter anything at the gate of Sarai Sambhal Khan as many quarrelsome persons are always present there."¹

1. Mirza Kamran, op. cit., p.

Chapter 5

Facilities Provided in Sarais

The sarais in Mughal India catered to a large number of travellers belonging to different sections of society. In addition to lodging, the sarais provided various other facilities to the travellers. The extensive scale on which sarais existed in Mughal India and different kind of facilities provided there struck European travellers as an enviable feature. Bernier's remarks about the sarai of Jahanara Begum brings out the fact that even Paris, then one of the premier metropolises of Europe, did not have lodging facilities for travellers on the scale these were available in Delhi. After having visited the sarai of Jahanara Begum at Delhi, Bernier recorded: "If in Paris we had a score of similar structures distributed in different parts of the city, strangers on their first arrival would be less embarrassed than at present to find a safe and reasonable lodging. They might remain in them a few days until they had seen their acquaintance, and looked out at leisure for ~~more~~ convenient apartment."¹

Sher Shah is known to be the first king who paid greater attention to the development of this institution

1. F. Bernier, op. cit., p. 281.

and provided a variety of facilities in the sarais. According to Abbas Khan, "in every sarai he (i.e. Sher Shah) built separate lodgings both for Hindus and Musulmans", ^{and} "settled Brahmins for the entertainment of Hindus, to provide hot and cold water, and beds and food, and grain for their horses; and it was a rule in these sarais that whoever entered them received provision suitable to his rank, and food and litter for his cattle, from Government."¹ Similarly Manucci referring to Sher Shah's sarais writes: "He (i.e. Sher Shah) bought a number of married slaves, and appointed them and their wives to look after travellers - to prepare their food, to provide cool water for them to drink, and warm water for washing their bodies, a bedstead to rest upon furnished with mattresses and sheets;..."² It appears from this description that in state sarais by Sher Shah, meals and fodder etc. were provided to the travellers at the cost of the state.

The employment of brahmins to look after non-Muslim travellers is very significant. It may safely be assumed that merchants and traders in the Gangetic plains undertaking journeys in connection with their business were predominantly non-Muslims. By providing special facility of

1. Abbas Khan Sarwani, op. cit., p. 418.

2. Manucci, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 115.

their food being cooked by brahmana Sher Shah presumably desired to give an impetus to the flow of trade and commerce. Rizqullah Mushtaqi's testimony about Sher Shah making separate arrangements of drinking water for Hindus and Muslims at the gates of the sarais also point at the same motive.¹

There is some evidence to show that efforts were made to revive Sher Shah's practice of providing facility of meals and fodder to the travellers during Akbar's reign. On the authority of Inayatulla we know that Akbar in his later years had ordered for the establishment of sarais at every stage, "where food was to be prepared and held in readiness at all times for the way-worn traveller, who is usually too fatigued to be equal to the exertion of cooking his own repast."² But it seems that this measure of Akbar remained in operation only for a short time. By the time Manucci came to India in 1655 according to him there were "no longer dainty morsels for foot travellers to be eaten at the cost of the king."³ Already by 1615 in many places the sarais were realizing from travellers small payments for the services

1. Rizqullah Mushtaqi, op.cit., p. 550.

2. Inayatulla, op.cit., p. 111.

3. Manucci, op.cit., p. 115.

provided to them including the cooking of their meals by the service staff of the sarais. Nicholas Withington writing in 1615 observed: "..... there is a serralia or place of lodging boothe for men and horse and hostesses to dresse our victuals if we please, paying a matter of 3 d. both for horse and meate dressings."¹ Similarly from Peter Mundy's description as well, it appears that during the time of his visit to India a traveller staying in a sarai had the choice of having his meals prepared by "Betearoes" for which he had to pay something.² From these descriptions it is obvious that the practice of supplying free meals or providing facility of cooking with out payment to the travellers introduced during the last few years of Akbar's reign was discontinued soon after his death and was already a thing of the past by 1615 when Nicholas Withington came to India. During the 17th and 18th centuries the traveller putting up in the sarais were provided the services of cooks, mostly bhatiyaris, on payment. Forster writing in 1782 says: "The necessary sum is delivered into the hands generally of a girl, who procures the materials and dresses his (i.e. traveller's) meal in a most expeditious manner."³

1. Nicholas Withington, Early Travels in India, op.cit., p. 225.

2. The Travels of Peter Mundy, op. cit., p. 121.

3. George Forster, Journey from Bengal to England, Vol. I, pp. 86-7.

But in some of the sarais even the facility of persons cooking the meals of a traveller may not be available. Thomas Twining writing in 1794 about his stay in a sarai situated at a distance of 16 miles from Agra on Delhi road records that his men having procured necessary material for cooking "began preparing their supper, ..." ¹ Similarly Heber (1825) notes that at a sarai in Fatehpur "for a very few pice, grass and water will be furnished to a traveller's beasts, and wood and earthen pots (to cook meals) to himself." ²

From a description of the planning and lay-out of few surviving structure of sarais given in the second part of this dissertation, it appears that considerable residential space was provided to the travellers in big sarais. In addition to a room, there was also a porch in front of the room that could be utilized by the inmate during summers for sleeping purposes. In some of the sarais the space provided in the porch was nearly equal to the space of the room. ³ There were several niches in the walls of the room as well as in the porch where lamps and smaller articles could be placed. For the heavy goods

1. Thomas Twining, op.cite., p. 208.

2. R. Heber, op.cite., p. 201.

3. For example, Sarai Nawalganj where the area of a room is 13.69 sq.m. and the area of porch is 12.95 sq.m.

of the travellers there would be separate store-houses. The corner rooms opening into large bastion like structures noticed in Sarai Chhaparghat, Sarai Ekdil, Sarai Nawalganj and Sarai Miran could have been used for this purpose.¹ While describing Saif Khan's Sarai at Patna Peter Mundy pointedly refers to the existence of warehouses. He remarks: "Heere is also the fairest sarai It hath two faire Courts, each haveinge warehouses round about beneath, and roomes with galleries to lodge in alofte," ² It may be assumed that the management of the sarai would be responsible for the safety of the goods deposited in the warehouse.

In almost every sarai there would also be a mosque where Muslim travellers could offer prayers. The mosque was considered an essential part of a sarai.³ It has been noticed in the case of Sarai Chhaparghat that from its original plan for some reason mosque was excluded, but at a later stage it was added on the southern flank of the eastern gateway, its courtyard opening outside the enclosure of the

1. The Travels of Peter Mundy, op.cit., p. 159.
2. For a detailed description of these structures see, Part II of this dissertation.
3. See, for example, the plans of Damdama, Sarai Ekdil, Sarai Miran & Sarai Khudaganj given in the Part II of this dissertation. In Sarai Khudaganj mosque is an integral part of the main structure.

sarai.¹ The remains of mosques could not be discovered in Sarai Nawalganj and Raja ki Sarai also. But these sarais were situated inside Agra of Mughal period. Presumably, during 17th century there would be present a number of mosques within easy reach of the persons staying in these sarais. This might explain why it was not considered essential to provide separate mosques in Sarai Nawalganj and Raja ki Sarai. However, the absence of mosque from the plan of a sarai like Chhaparghat situated in an isolated place seems meaningful. It is possible that from the plan of this sarai, built during the last few years of Akbar's reign, mosque was purposely excluded on account of Akbar's policy of discouraging the identification of state run institutions with one particular religion.²

Every sarai necessarily contained a well; the bigger sarais had even two wells.³ But curiously enough it

1. Infra.

2. Cf. M. Athar Ali, 'Akbar and Islam', Indian History Congress, 1976 (Calicut Session), wherein he alludes to the "reduction in the flow of financial patronage, which used to sustain a large number of mosques, madrasas, and the khanqahs," because Akbar "apparently saw no reason why the resources of the state should support a class of whom he regarded as narrow minded and hostile to his larger vision."

3. Infra.

could not be possible to locate any remains suggesting the availability of toilet facilities within the courtyard of the sarais surveyed by the Department of History, nor is there any description available of such facilities in the literary sources. One may, however, assume that the toilets were usually built at the four corners of the courtyard of a sarai. This is suggested by the original plan of "Pakki Barrack" a residential enclosure built at Aligarh in the late 19th century, presumably after the model of a sarai. In this building, originally, toilets were located on the corners of central courtyard. These were small but separate structures having a number of partitions containing qadamchas.

Manucci furnishes a ^{detailed} ~~dehited~~ description of various facilities provided in the sarais during his time. He says: "In these sarais travellers are pestered by dealers, who offer for sale different kinds of cloth, not only white, but coloured; also by musicians, dancing boys, women dancers, barbers, tailors, washermen, farriers with horse-shoes, endless cheating physicians, and many sellers of grass and straw for the horses. All these things are cheap; but there are no longer dainty morsels for the foot-travellers to be eaten at the cost of the king, or any supply of bedsteads with mattresses and sheets. Still there is never any dearth of women of pleasure."¹ It appears from

1. Manucci, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 115.

Manucci's remark that during 17th century different kind of facilities were made available to the travellers resting in these sarais, chief among them being the facility of marketing. This is also borne out by Tavernier, who, while giving the description of a sarai at Benares, observes: "In the middle of the court there are two galleries where they sell cottons, silken stuffs, and other kinds of merchandise. The majority of those who vend the goods are the workers who have made the pieces, and in this manner foreigners obtain them at first hand."¹ Similarly, Thomas Twining writing as late as in 1794 mentions that "All (men) procured pots for cooking, earthen plates, and wood, rice, herbs, spices etc. all of which are always for sale in or near a sarai - and began preparing their supper"² It is clear from these statements that the provision of shops inside the sarais to facilitate marketing tended to become a prominent feature which might explain why some sarai structures later came to be identified as ganja or katras.³

1. Tavernier, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 118.

2. Thomas Twining, op.cit., p. 208.

3. For example Sarai Nawalganj in Agra.

The facility of a sort of health-service was also made available to the travellers resting in the sarais. But the physician's service could only be procured on payment. In the passage quoted above Manucci refers to them as "endless cheating physicians." It appears that the sarais were freely visited by many persons claiming to possess medical knowledge, of whom only few were genuine. Apparently in the sarais located in towns persons offering various services and entertainments to the travellers were allowed free entry during the day. They were also free to solicit customers for their services. Amongst them, as Manucci suggests, were also included "musicians, dancing-boys and women dancers". From the manner in which Manucci refers to the presence of "women of pleasure" in the sarais goes to show that although their entry into sarais was not encouraged officially, but these were always present in large numbers.

The situation of sarai facilities in Gujarat was, however, quite different. According to Edward Terry (1618), "In this kingdom (i.e. Gujarat) there are no innes to entertaine strangers. Onely in great townes and cities are faire houses built for their recert (which they call Sarray), not inhabited; where any passangers may have rooms freely, but must bring with him his bedding, his cooke, and other necessaries wherein to dresse his meate; which are usually carried on camels, or else in carts draune with oxen, wherein they have tents to pitch when

they meate with no Sarras."¹ A similar observation has been made by Mandelslo regarding sarais in Gujarat. He writes, "These are the caravan seras which have onely the four walls, and a covering overhead, so that to be accommodated therein, a Man must bring along with him what is not be had there."² Apparently the institution of sarais did not flourish to the same extent outside the heartland of the Mughal empire, Sarais located outside the Gangetic plains provided to the travellers only shelter whereas the remaining arrangements had to be made by the travellers themselves.

In North India, the facilities of beds, mattresses, meals, and fodder etc. continued to be provided in the sarais down to the end of the 18th century, though unlike Sher Shah's time these were not available to the travellers at the expense of the state. But care was taken by the bhatiyaras that the meals of their choice were served to the travellers and comfortable lodgings were provided to them. At one occasion when George Forster (1793) came to "Allum Chand ki Sarai" near Allahabad, he found that the bhatiyaras were busy celebrating a marriage, yet he was given "good supper and a comfortable lodging."³

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1. Edward Ferris, Early Travels in India, op.cit., p.311.
 2. Mandelslo, The Travels of Peter Mundy, op.cit., p.45, n.2
 3. George Forster, op.cit., p. 90.
Also see pp. 92-3.

From the above description, we may conclude that down to Akbar's reign on the whole sarai was an institution established and subsidised by the state. A variety of facilities including that of free meals and fodder were provided in the sarais during the early period at the cost of the state. Apparently, the state incurred expenses on running or subsidising sarais till Akbar's time with an aim to encourage trade and commerce. The situation in this respect changed considerably in the 17th century when the growing needs of the sarais due to expanding trade and commerce, resulted into the establishment of sarais that were run by the agencies other than the state. During the 17th and 18th centuries facilities introduced by Sher Shah and Akbar continued to be provided to the travellers using sarais, but these could be procured only on payment. But even now sarais were not run as profit earning units and the charges made from the travellers were barely enough to meet the expenses of the service staff stationed in the sarais.

PLANNING AND LAY-OUT OF SARAIS

In the first section of this dissertation an attempt has been made to analyse the available evidence relating to the geographical distribution, categories, and organization of the sarais of Mughal period as well as the kind of facilities that were provided in them for the travellers. In this second section it is proposed to study the lay-out, construction plan, and architectural features of eight surviving structures of sarais built during the Mughal period. With the help of this kind of study it is proposed to trace the changes taking place in the pattern of the utilization of space in the sarai structures which in turn would have a bearing on the evolution of this institution in terms of its economic or administrative relevance, facilities, and clientele. Eight sarais chosen for a survey in this connection are those located on the two main routes connecting Mughal capitals of Agra and Delhi with the East; one connecting Delhi and Agra with Jaunpur via Kannauj and the other running along the Jamuna on the right side up to Agra and from Agra onwards up to Ghatampur along the left side. From Ghatampur this route shifts towards Ganges which comes very close to Jamuna at this point. On these routes, the total number of surviving sarai structures is quite large but eight of them chosen for survey are in a better state of preservation and represent the structures built at different

points of time from the middle of 16th century down to the first half of 18th century. In identifying a particular medieval structure as sarai, I have been guided, apart from the information furnished by historical sources and traditions, by the assumption that all those structures which comprise of rectangular enclosures with one or two gateways and a row of almost identical cells fronted by porches running along the four sides in the interior, may safely be identified as sarais. This seems to be, with some variations, the model of the general plan of well-known sarais.¹

In the ensuing pages I am giving a description of the following sarais:

1. Damdama
2. Sarai Chhaparghata
3. Raja ki Sarai
4. Sarai Ekdil
5. Sarai Ajitmal
6. Sarai Nawalganj
7. Sarai Miran

1. For example, Sarai Nurmahal, 16 miles south of Jalandhar, where an inscription over the western gateway confirms its identification as sarai. Sarai Miran in Kanneuj, where too an inscription is available. Sarai Ajitmal in Etawa.

8. Sarai Khudaganj

The description of these sarais are arranged in a chronological sequence. Here first the planning and lay-out of the sarai structures is described and then an attempt is made to trace the changes occurring in this respect.

D A M D A M A

The earliest of the eight surviving structures is Damdama, at present known also as Reserve Police Lines. This is either a Pre-Mughal or possibly a Sur building.¹ It is situated at a distance

1. It appears from the general plan of the structure, the massive battlemented walls and the shape of the arches in the building that it is either an early Mughal or a Sur building. In the general plan (compare, Plate 1) two features which tend to bring it close to that of a fortress are: (a) Single Gate and (b) Solid bastions at the four corners. This is in sharp contrast with the general plan of the sarais built after the establishment of the Mughal authority in northern India on a firm footing, and suggests that this is a structure built at a time when even in the vicinity of an important pargana head-quarter like Mathura a sarai would not be considered secure unless it is fortified. The sarai Chhaparghat which is described next, is a good model of the later day sarais having two gates, from which solid bastions are eliminated (compare Plate 2). The impression gathered from the general plan that Damdama is a pre-Mughal structure is further strengthened by the shape of the arches in the gateway which have a slight drop in the curve towards the crown unlike the developed Tudor arch of the Mughals. Compare Percy Brown, Indian Architecture (Islamic Period), p. 87.

of two kms. from the Mathura cantonment Railway Station on the Agra road. According to Growse (1883) this is one of the five sarai buildings existing at Mathura, which 'are fine fort like buildings, with massive battlemented walls and bastions and high arched gateways.' "The first which is smaller than the others and has been much modernized has for many years past been occupied by the police reserve, and is ordinarily called the Damdama."¹

Damdama is a square enclosure covering an area of 112.50 X 112.50 sqm. with high battlemented walls all around and four bastions of the shape of an irregular pentagon on the corners. There is one gateway which opens on the northern side. Inside the enclosure, row of rooms runs along all the four sides.² On taking measurements of the rooms it was discovered that all the extant rooms with the exception of one big room in the centre of the eastern wing are of equal size. It may suggest that originally there might have existed big rooms of the same size in the centre of the southern and western wings as well. On account of the rooms in the eastern wing which is completely intact, the total number of ordinary rooms was

1. F.S. Growse, Mathura: A District Memoir, p. 29.

2. See Plate I.

calculated to be 110. Including the three bigger rooms, the total number of rooms in the sarai comes to 113. Inside the enclosure are also located two wells and a small mosque of which the well located next to the mosque seems to belong to a much earlier period than the other two structures.¹

An ordinary room of the sarai is a square of 3.30 X 3.30 sqm. and is fronted by an arched opening of 1.75 X 3.30 sqm. which is more or less like a porch. A smaller arch of width 1.00 m. provides entry to the main chamber of the room. At present the rooms have one window each in the rear walls, but these seem to be later additions as no original arch is visible in the walls. The bigger room surviving on the eastern side is a rectangle of 6.90 X 3.30 sqm. It is fronted with a verandah covered with stone slabs supported on iron rails.

The gateway of the sarai as it stands today covers a total plinth area of 13.70 X 16.05 sqm. There are five arches in the gate as it stands at present. But

1. This well is at present covered with a roofed room containing a tubewell. But there are still clearly visible four red sand-stone slabs of equal length fixed in the wall of the well on different sides. Each one of these slabs carry a circular hole. Apparently this arrangement was meant to support some mechanical device for lifting water from the well. Moreover the bricks used in this wall are smaller in size as compared to the modern larger bricks used in the other well up to almost the water level.

one arch at the northern end is clearly a later addition as borne out by the joint gothic pillars sustaining the arch, a typical feature of the British architecture in India. Moreover, it is an absolute arch which is nowhere found in the early buildings of that period. Remaining four arches are of the pointed horse-shoe shape and were part of the original structure. The space on both the sides of the main passage is occupied by a double storey complex consisting of a number of rooms and open spaces.

Bastions on the four corners are solid structures. There is one set of stairs leading up to the roof of the rooms and bastions in the south-western corner. This kind of bastions would not possibly be of any use for providing residential facility to the persons staying in the sarai. It is obviously a feature designed to strengthen the fortification of this building.

SARAI CHHAPARGHAT

This sarai, apparently, built during Akbar's reign is located at Chhaparghat, 8 km. east of Bhognipur on way to Ghatampur.¹ William Finch, who visited India

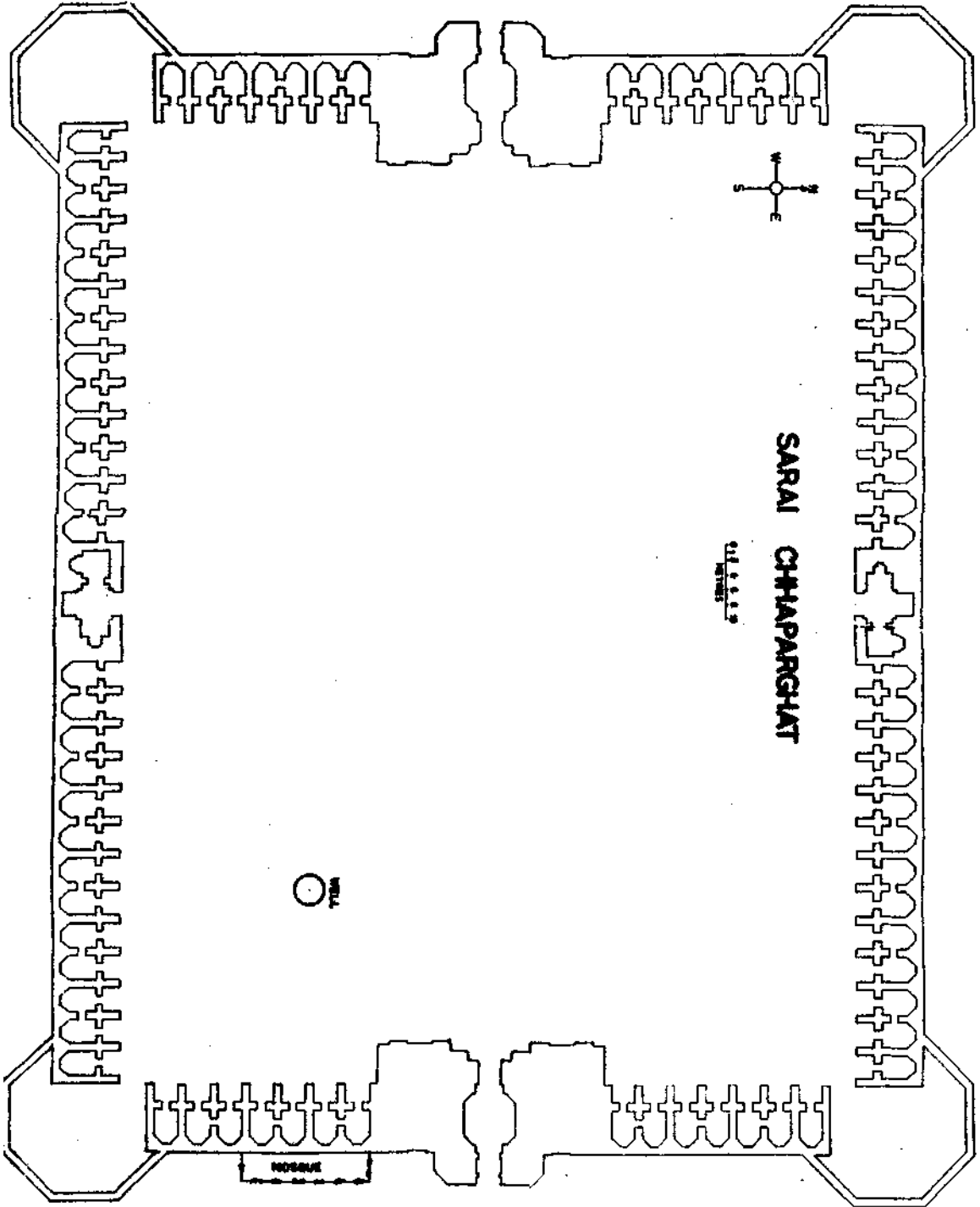
1. William Finch (Early Travels in India, ed. W. Foster p. 179) mentions that he stayed in this sarai when he passed through this place in 1611. He nowhere indicates that it was established only recently; this suggests that it was built several years before he came to this place. From the shape of the arches of the gateways it is obvious that this building was erected some time after the technique of making Tudor arch was already perfected under Akbar.

in 1608-11 has left the following description of this sarai. "Here is one of the fairest sarais in India, like a goodly castle then a inne to lodge strangers; the lodgings very faire of stone, with lockes and keyes, able to lodge a thousand men. A man can scarce shoote from side to side with an arrow;"¹ Peter Mundy also gives a detailed description of this sarai. "Two course before we came to this place (Shankar-ki Sarai), we passed through Chuppergutta (Chaparghata), where is the fairest and formalest saras that I have yett seene, with 4 faire Towers att the 4 Corners, and 2 stately gates att cominge in and going out, with a verie highe wall round about, full of Battlements, as yett all compleat. By it runs a little River with a Stone bridge over it. It runs into Jemina, which was againe in sight not 1/2 a mile off."²

It is a massive structure standing upon a platform just beside the road on the south. In this building bricks of unusually large size are used, which to the best of my knowledge, are not found in other Mughal buildings. From a visual inspection it appeared that the

1. Early Travels in India, ed. W. Foster, p. 179.

2. The Travels of Peter Mundy, op. cit., p. 89.



size of these bricks was more or less the same as those of Kushana~~st~~ period. But inside the sarai as well in its vicinity there were no signs of Kushana remains, from where such a large number of bricks could be obtained for this structure. Moreover the state of weathering of the bricks does not permit their identification with Kushana bricks. The only explanation that one may venture to suggest is that these were especially made for the construction of this building.

Sarai Chhaparghat is a rectangular enclosure¹ covering an area of 168.86 X 105.05 sq. m. with high wall all around. Two meter high platform on which the entire building stands, gives an added effect of height to the walls. There are two gateways in the sarai on the eastern and western sides. There is an old well in the south-eastern corner of the enclosure, but no remains of a mosque are visible anywhere inside. Rooms in the sarai run along all the four sides and are identical in design and dimensions with the exception of two bigger rooms in the centre of northern and southern sides. It appears that originally there were four corner rooms which, opened into the octagonal structures that looked like bastions. These were the structures that are referred to by Peter Mundy as 'Towers'. But all of them are in a state of ruin. According to local tradition the 'bastions' and a section of the eastern wing of the sarai were demolished by the British forces in 1857.

An ordinary room of the sarai is an irregular hexagon covering an area of 14.87 sq. m. It is fronted by a half-domed opening of 2.30 X 3.20 sq. m. Main chamber of the room is entered through an arch of width 1.20 m. Just above this arch is a small opening in the wall apparently, meant for ventilation and light. Every alternate room is connected with the next adjacent room through an arched opening of width 1.20 m. in the common wall. It is interesting to note that even though alternate rooms are interconnected, the half-domed porches outside them are not. This arrangement of two-room suites is unusual and is not found in any other sarai. Larger rooms in the centre of southern and western sides are of the shape of an irregular polygon. A side room also of the shape of an irregular polygon is attached to them on one side.

Both the gateways are similar in design and size. These are double storey structures covering a plinth area of 19.18 X 28.10 sq. m. In each one of them two lofty arches of horseshoe shape, extending up to the total height of the gate stand on the eastern and western ends of the structure. Main entry is, however, formed by a smaller arch of width 3.40 m. which leads us inside the sarai through the central octagonal chamber of the gateway. This chamber is covered with a vaulted dome.

The eastern gate is flanked on the south by domed structures forming four rooms which are in a ruined state. Arched niches in the walls of the first room are clearly visible. As there are no remains of a mosque inside the enclosure it may be presumed that this complex would have served as a mosque. Possibly the mosque was not included in the original plan of the sarai, but was added afterwards.

Flanking the eastern gate on the north is a double-storey structure with half-domed spacings in each storey opening in its facade. This structure would probably have meted the residential requirements of the service staff in the sarai. A staircase opening in the southern wall of the gate from inside leads to the roof of the rooms and the upperstorey of the gate.

It is evident from a comparison of the general plan and structure of this sarai with that of Damdama that certain new features in the sarai building are emerging. Single gate of Damdama is replaced by two gates on both the sides. This was done probably to regulate and facilitate the entry and exit of the travellers. Such a change could be possible, apparently on account of growing political stability. This kind of general plan having two gates is retained in the sarais built subsequently. The above comparison also shows that the ratio between the space covered by a gate and the total area of the sarai diminishes considerably. While in

Damdama this ratio is 1:57, similar figures for Sarai Chhaparghat would be 1:32. If both the gates of the latter structure are taken into account, then this ratio would come down to 1:16. Thus it is obvious that area covered by the gates of the sarai, where the rooms for the stationing of the sarai-staff were generally located, is increasing drastically. Perhaps to a certain extent this change could also have been necessitated because of the tendency to provide larger space for storage within the sarai.

The bastions in this sarai were made hollow unlike the solid bastions of Damdama. These were probably used as rooms though their purpose is not clear. This change, apart from providing extra space for stores etc. is also indicative of a change in the conception of the structure of a sarai. It seems that a sarai is no longer designed after the model of a fortress, and therefore the bastions on the corners that are found in Damdama are now beginning to give way to corner rooms, which tend to become almost an essential feature in the later sarais.

RAJA KI SARAI

This, a sarai of Jahangir's reign, is located near Aram Bagh in Agra. It is locally known as 'Raja ki Sarai' and is situated to the east of Aram Bagh on the river

bank. At present there is an orchard flanking this building on the east which seems to be the site of yet another Mughal garden. This is indicated by a well located on its north-western corner towards the Jamuna which from a distance looked similar in design to the wells on the north-western and south-western corners of Aram Bagh facing the river.

Peter Mundy describes a sarai located on the left bank of the Jamuna in the following words: "I departed from our house in Agra, being in the streete called Pullhuttee (Phal-hatti, fruit and vegetable market), and crossing over the river. I came to Noore mohol ca sara (1 course), which is a very faire one, built by the old Queene Noore mohol (Nur Mahal) for the accommodation of Travellers, in which may stand 500 horse, and there may conveniently lye 2 or 3000 people; All of Stone, not one peice of Timber in it, the roomes all arched, each with a severall Copula.¹ It stands

1. There is probably a mistake in Peter Mundy's description. If 'Copula' (cupola) has been used in its true architectural sense, it seems improbable that a room of 3.25 X 3.15 sq. m. would have possessed several of these. My suspicion is that the word 'Copula' has been used for niches in the room, which are four in each room.

betwene Two gardens built also by her."¹ This description almost exactly fits this building which, as we have noticed above, was originally located between two gardens. No other structure on the left bank of the river and flanked by two gardens is traceable. In this identification there is only one debatable point which needs to be settled. Peter Mundy states that both the gardens flanking Nur mahal's sarai were 'built' by Nur Jahan herself. As noted above, the garden flanking Raja ki Sarai on the west is Aram Bagh. It is possible that the garden on the eastern side of the sarai of was built by Nur Jahan, and this confused Peter Mundy into imagining that the other garden was also established by her.

The sarai is a rectangle of 185.60 X 37.20 sq.m. with two gates on the eastern and western sides respectively.² There are only two rows of identical rooms running along the northern and southern sides. There is no mosque inside the sarai enclosure, nor is there any well inside.

1. The Travels of Peter Mundy, op. cit., pp. 78-9. Cf. Jahangir's India, tr. W.H. Moreland & P. Geyl, p. 4. It seems that the 'Noore mohol ca sara' of Peter Mundy is the same building as the sarai that was established according to Pelsaret, by 'the officers of Nur Jahan Begam', on the left bank of Jamuna in a city named Sikandra, where custom duties were collected by her staff from the traders bringing products of Bengal and other eastern provinces.

2. See Plate 3.

All the rooms in the sarai are of equal size, and each one is a rectangle covering an area of 3.25 X 3.15 sq. m., fronted by a porch of 2.25 X 3.25 sq. m. Entry to the main chamber of the room is through an arched door. The porches are interconnected through openings in the side walls, thus forming a long colonnade. In the centre of the northern side is a pavillion of 3.20 X 3.10 sq. m. opening towards the east. It is possible that this opening connected the sarai enclosure with the garden on the northern side. In the south-western corner a small sub-enclosure containing a number of scattered structures of varying sizes is noticeable, but it does not appear to be a part of the original plan.

The eastern gateway which is now much dilapidated, probably formed the main entrance for traveller coming from east. Only two arches of this structure remain now. Marks of post holes are still visible in this gateway. It was flanked on both sides by smaller entry points, but the structure does not exist now. The western gateway is in still worse state of ruin.

This sarai provides an unusual plan. Unlike the rectangular or square sarais, the length of this sarai is much greater than its breadth and gives its plan rather disproportionate appearance. The gates are much simpler than the gates of Damdama and sarai at Chhaparghat. Probably, the location of the sarai being so close to capital, it did not require strong gates for security. An additional feature

here is the inter-connected porches forming a colonnade in front of the rooms which provides sheltered access to each room. This arrangement has not been noticed in any one of the sarais surveyed till now.¹

SARAI EKDIL

This sarai built during Shahjahan's reign, is located in Ekdil, a small township situated 8 kms. east of Etawa on national highway number 2, one km. north of the main road. The presentday township of Ekdil is situated inside the compound of the sarai. On the top of the western-gate of the sarai, there is a Persian inscription in nastaliq inscribed in red sand-stone² which credits a certain noble Yakdil Khan of having established (karai abadan) 'an attractive locality' (mauza-i dilkash) named yakdilabad during the reign of Shahjahan.³ From this inscription it

1. This arrangement is not seen in the following sarais surveyed by us: Damdama; Sarai Chhaparghat; Sarai Ekdil, Sarai Ajitmal; Sarai Miran, Nawalganj; Khudaganj Sarai.
2. Cf. Y.K. Bukhari, 'Two Persian Inscriptions of the reign of Shah Jahan from Sarai Ekdil, District Etawah', Epigraphia Indica 1953 and 1954, pp. 44-45. The text of the inscription and its English translation as read by Bukhari, are given below:

بہرا [رام] ظن [آ] بادان	کہ [ر] در در عہد بادشاہ [عہد] [عہد]
[ر] شک [بغداد و ضد اصنافان]	کہ بکند آباد موضع دکنشی
خلد تانی است فی الملل بجمان	کہ [باغ و اشجار و سرو گلزار] [ش]
پیش و در نا [ر] ع [ر] [ر] جناح [ر] مان	کہ ہر کہ یکدم [در و با] [ساید]
[آ] مد [آ] ر [آ] سر اسے یکد لمان	کہ [س] [س] [س] [س] [س]

appears that the this place also contained a garden having a number of trees and flower beds. The chronogram given in the same inscription for the year of the construction (sal-i tamirash) of this building reads Sarai Yakdil Khan. It is apparently on the basis of this chronogram that this place came to be popularly identified as 'Sarai Ekdil' instead of 'Yakdilabad' as identified in the second line of the inscription. But there is one serious problem about this chronogram. It yields A.H. 986 and not 1039 as suggested by Y.K. Bukhari. But at the same time there cannot be any doubt that this structure was built either during Jahangir's reign or that of Shahjahan, and that Yakdil Khan who built it was a servant of Shahjahan.⁴ This is partly borne out by the first line of the above inscription itself as well as by another inscription on the entrance of a mosque situated inside the sarai which gives A.H. 1042 as the date of the construction of the latter building. This other inscription is also noted by Bukhari and his reading of the date given in digits agrees with our reading. In this light the date of the construction of the main structure and its gates given by Bukhari viz. A.H. 1039 would appear plausible. But Bukhari's contention that the words preceding the expression Sarai Yakdil Khan are amad awa and not amad awaz and that these words are a part of the chronogram is clearly unacceptable. Thus the formula from which he works

(1-2) During the reign of the Emperor of the world (Shah Jahan), (Yakdil) founded for the (Comfort) of the public a charming place, Yakdilabad, (which is the) envy (of Baghdad and the rival of Isafahan).

(3) (On account of its flourishing gardens and blooming cypress-trees and orchards) it is proverbially the second paradise on earth.

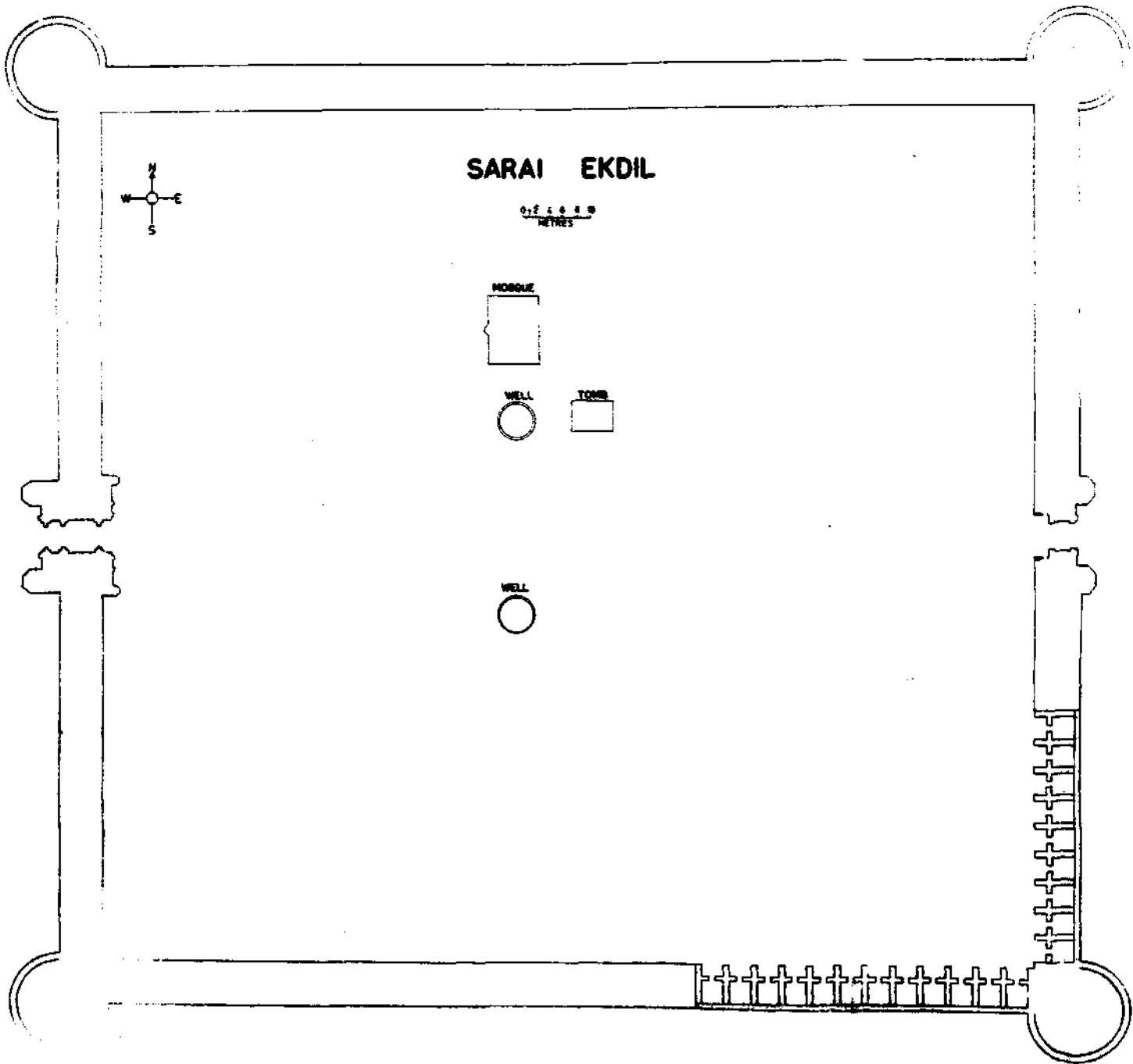
(4) Whosoever rests (therein) for a while feels immune from the terrors of the world.

(5) I sought ----- (the year) of its construction; the voice (came): the inn of Yakdil Khan.

out A.H. 1039 is rather absurd and this date cannot be accepted as authentic. There is also an inscription on the eastern gate which is at present in a mutilated state. It could not be possible to decipher it and know the date given in this inscription. Thus the problem as to why the chronogram given in the inscription on the western gate yields A.H. 986 remains unanswered unless we presume that Bukhari's reading as well as our reading of its wordings is entirely wrong. I am, however, not in a position to hazard any guess about the alternate wordings of the chronogram as I do not have at my disposal an estampage of the original.

According to the local tradition reproduced in District Gazetteer, the place was first settled by Saksena Kayasths and prior to the establishment of Sarai Ekdil this place was known as Sarai Rupa.¹ During our survey of the place, we tried to ascertain the origin of this tradition but no one seemed to have remembered it. The local people did identify a small cluster of houses in the north-eastern part of the enclosure as mohalla Kayasthan where about fourteen families of Saksena Kayasths live today. But even these Kayasths did not show familiarity with the tradition about

1. A.E. Atkinson, District Gazetteer, Etawa, Vol. IV (1876), pp. 470-71.



Sarai Rupa.¹

Sarai Ekdil is a rectangular enclosure covering an area of 133.60 x 146.50 sq. m. with two gateways in the eastern and western sides respectively.² A metalled road now runs across the enclosure through these gates. There were four circular bastions in the corners, but they are demolished now. There is a domed mosque in the northern half of the enclosure and two wells in the centre of the courtyard, one each on the northern and southern sides. Many of the rooms of the sarai have probably vanished. Only a small row running along eastern and southern walls in the south eastern corner, containing 21 rooms has survived. The local population identifies the south-eastern part of the enclosure as the sarai, which implies that the remaining part of the enclosure came to be represented as a township of which sarai was a part. It is interesting to note that all the twenty one rooms running along the interior wall of the enclosure that have survived are located in this part. The inscription on the western gate also indicates that ~~the~~ sarai

1. Cf. Report of the Survey of Medieval Monuments carried out by a team of the members of the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, consisting of Iqtidar Alam Khan, Jamal Mohd. Siddiqi, Ravindra Kumar Srivastava, Nasir Ali Zaidi, Mohd. Taskeen & Mohd. Shareef, in May and September '77. The report is to be published shortly.

2. See Plate 4.

was a part of the locality named Yakdilabad. One may therefore assume that either only the southern half or even south-eastern quarter of the enclosure was meant for use as a sarai, whereas the rest of the place constituted the dwelling houses and garden. Incidentally the area of this enclosure is very large as compared to the area covered by the sarais described so far. It, therefore, seems improbable that the entire enclosure would have possessed rooms for the purpose of a sarai. It is however difficult to guess the actual extent of the part covered by the sarai as the enclosure is at present thickly populated obliterating the original divisions.

Each room of the sarai is a rectangle covering an area of 3.10 X 3.20 sq. m. and is fronted by an arched opening of 3.20 X 1.60 sq. m. Entry to the main chamber of the room is provided through an arch of width 1.00 m. Roof of the rooms is vaulted. There are three niches in the walls of each room and three niches in each porch. Nine rooms of this description are on the eastern side between the gate and the structure at the corner. The number of rooms on the southern side extending from the small complex of rooms on the south-eastern corner is twelve. The complex of rooms on the south-eastern corner comprise of two rooms and the circular structure that looks like a bastion from outside. The rooms of this complex are of the ordinary size (i.e. 3.10 X 3.20 sq. m.) and open through one meter

arches in the hollow 'bastion'. As the bastion was in a completely ruined state, it could not be measured. On the basis of the measurements of the rooms in this garaj, one may point out that the total space provided to a traveller for his use is comparatively smaller.

The plinth area of the entire complex of the western gate is 17 x 8.63 sq. m. which is larger than the eastern gate covering an area of 5.95 x 3.95 sq. m. The western-gate consists of three pointed horse-shoe shaped arches of width 3.25 m. each, in a row. Large spaces of 4.24 x 3.75 sq. m. open on both the sides of the main passage. Stone platforms supported on brackets are provided in these spaces one each on both the sides. There are steps on both the flanks of the gateway from inside, which take us to the platforms and also to the roof of the gateway. Wooden doors are fixed in the gateway, which open inside. Near the parapet of the gateway are drooping eaves supported on brackets. Red sandstone facing relieved with nice geometrical designs gives an elegant look to the gateway. There is an inscription in red sandstone over the entrance arch.

The eastern gate is a smaller structure covering a plinth area of 5.95 x 3.95 sq. m. It consists of three pointed horse-shoe arches. The width of the innermost arch is 4.15 m. and of the other two arches is 3.75 m. each. A wooden door, which opens inside is also fixed in this

gateway. Red sandstone facing is provided to this gateway and there is an inscription also on the facade, but it has peeled off considerably.

This sarai is a typical example where the sarai structure becomes part of a larger locality. Apparently the establishment of this kind of complexes became common during the 17th & 18th centuries. Sarai Miran established at Kannauj by a certain ~~Mirza~~ Saigid Abdur Rahmanduring Aurangzeb's reign was also a part of the same kind of complex though unlike Sarai Ekdil the enclosure of the former sarai was clearly demarcated and the other components of the complex were located outside the enclosure. Itimad Ali Khan writing in 1717-27 mentions a Pura established by Abdus Samad Khan which included orchards, a sarai and hammam.¹ It is obviously a description of basically the same kind of complex as the above two.

1. Itimad Ali Khan, op. cit., p. 7.

SARAI AJITMAL

Sarai Ajitmal is situated 43 Kms. east of Etawa on national highway number 2. According to Atkinson, "Ajitmal was one of the sarais on the old imperial road between Agra and Kalpi."¹ There is an inscription on the western gate of the sarai which gives the date of its construction as A.H. 1049.² The wordings of this inscription are, however, outlandish and do not fully conform to the usual pattern. The small size of the marble tablet on which the inscription is engraved, and also the use of the word muafiq in the last line instead of more correct usage mutabiq creates doubt about the authenticity of the inscription. But it was certainly there in A.D. 1876 when Atkinson compiled the Gazetteer of Etawah District. He has pointedly referred to this inscription though he misreads the date as 1059 in place of 1049. One may assume that this

1. A.E. Atkinson, op. cit., p. 406.

2. The text of the inscription and its English translation are given below:

Text:

شاہ جهان بادشاہ غازی
سرری اجمل کایب درسنہ جلوس مبارک موافق ۱۰۴۹ھ

Translation:

Shahjahan Badshah Ghazi
Sarai Ajit Mal Kayat in the Regnal year
corresponding to A.H. 1049. Samwat 1698.

inscription was put up by the Kayasth zamindars of this place some time before 1868.¹ Apparently the name of the sarai and the date of its construction were given in this inscription on the strength of some surviving tradition or record.

Peter Mundy, writing in 1632, has mentioned "Jannke Sara" as located somewhere near the present site of Sarai Ajitmal.² This makes it plausible that the sarai mentioned by Peter Mundy is the same structure which later on came to be identified as Sarai Ajitmal on account of the inscription put up by Kayasth zamindars of the locality. Present day township of Ajitmal is situated inside the compound of the sarai.

The sarai was probably a rectangular enclosure, the length of which could be measured as 175.30 m. The wall of the enclosure is nearly destroyed. Only a small portion of the wall survives in the south-eastern corner, which is battle-

1. Cf. Report of the Survey, AMU., Aligarh. According to Mr Jai Narain Agarwal (75 years) s/o Lala Ram Swaroop Agarwal, a local resident, the place was once owned by Kayasth Zamindars. But presently only few families of Kayasthas live here, most of them having migrated to other places during the last few decades.

2. The Travels of Peter Mundy, op.cit., p. 88.

mented. Few surviving rooms of the sarai are also located here. Each room is a rectangle and has an arched portico in front of it similar to Sarai Ekdil. It could not be possible to measure the rooms but from a visual inspection it could be guessed that these are of same size as the rooms of Sarai Ekdil. The sarai has two lofty gateways on the eastern and western sides. A mosque is situated in the south-eastern quarter of sarai but it appears to be a recent structure. Few remains of an octagonal "bastion" on the south-western side are still visible. These remains are in an almost straight alignment with the western gateway suggesting that it was one of the corners of the sarai enclosure. Probably similar structures existed on the remaining three corners of the enclosure, but at present these are not traceable.

Western gateway covers a plinth area of 11.50 x 11.70 sq. m. It consists of three arches of width 3.75 m. each in a row. The outermost arch is multi-foliated and the remaining two are of the pointed horse-shoe shape. Rectangular spaces of 2 x 4.10 sq. m. each open on both sides of the main passage. A wooden door which opens inside is fixed in this gateway. Two octagonal turrets (one side being 1.70 m.) surmounted with chhatris flank the main entry on both sides. The parapet of the gateway is battlemented. The facade is treated with red sand stone facing relieved in crude sculpture of flower vases and geometrical designs. There is a

small marble tablet on top of the gateway, containing an inscription in Persian.

The eastern gateway of the sarai is slightly smaller than the one on western side. It covers a total plinth area of 14.80 x 7.90 sq. m. and consists of three arches of pointed horse-shoe shape in a row. The width of the outermost arch is 4.20 m. and of the remaining two arches is 3.80 m. each. This gateway is also flanked by two octagonal turrets (one side being 1.70 m.) surmounted with chhatris. The parapet of the gateway is battlemented. It was once plastered but most of it has given way now.

It appears from the above description that the plan of this sarai resembles closely that of sarai Ekdil. If the length of this sarai is any indication of its size, it was probably bigger than all the other sarais discussed till now. The space provided in the main gate on the western side diminishes slightly in this sarai as compared to Sarai Ekdil. But the space in the rear gate increases considerably. It tends to become as large as the main gateway.

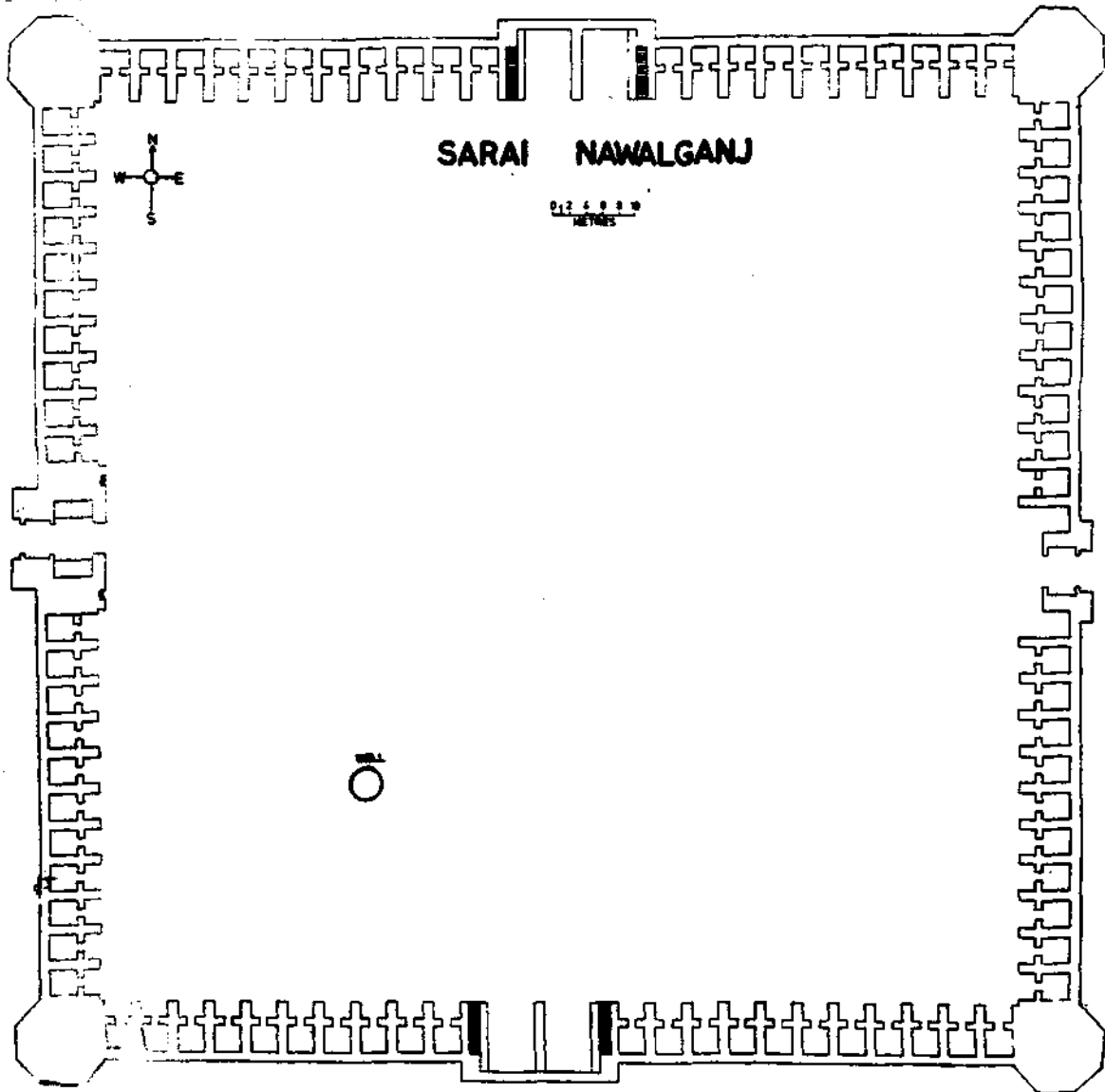
SARAI NAQALGANJ

This sarai is situated nearly 500 m. north east of Itimad-ud Daula's tomb in Agra. At present this building is in the possession of Kunwar Raghunath Singh, a

resident of the village Nunihal, who realizes rent from the people living in the rooms in this building. There does not exist any inscription or other kind of authentic evidence establishing the identity of this building. It seems that the surviving traditions about this structure during the 19th century were of conflicting nature. While Raja Ram writing a few years before mutiny identified this place as a Katra, built by Shaista Khan during Shahjahan's reign for his own residence,¹ Carlleyle on the other hand recorded in 1871-72 that this structure was known to have been built by certain noble of Shahjahan, Salat Khan, as a katra.² According to him the name of the place Nawalganj is a corruption of a longer designation "Katra Nawab Ganj." It is apparently on the basis of the use of term ganj in the name of this structure that Carlleyle hazards the conjecture that it was meant for use as a market place. In any case from the contradictory traditions mentioned by the above two authorities it is obvious that the present identification of the structure is doubtful though from the architectural motifs used in the building such as multifoliated arches in the

1. 'The Gardens of Agra', Journal of U.P. Historical Society, Vol. IV, 1928, Part I, pp. 15-16.

2. A.C.L. Carlleyle, Archaeological Survey of India. Report for the year 1871-72, Vol. IV, pp. 159-62.



Cupola on the western gateway, it seems probable that this structure was built during Shahjahan's reign.

However, as the plan of this building conforms to that of the usual plan of a sarai, we presume it as a sarai building. One can be pretty certain that this kind of quadrangle containing rows of small rooms on all the four sides having two gates opening directly into a courtyard could not have been originally built for the residence of a noble of Shaista Khan's standing and status. The greater likelihood appears to be that originally this structure was planned as a sarai but later on it came to be gradually used entirely as a market place which caused it to be known as a Katra or ganj.

This building comprises a square enclosure covering an area of 115.25 x 115.25 sq. m. with high battlemented walls all around and four octagonal "bastions" at the corners.¹ There are two lofty gateways on the eastern and western sides. Rooms run along all the four sides inside the compound with two larger rooms on the northern and southern sides respectively. The corner rooms open into the "bastions", which are hollow structures. A well is situated to the south of the western gate inside the compound. There is no surviving structure of a mosque inside this building. The total number of rooms is 86 including two larger rooms.

¹ See Plate 5.

Ordinary rooms of the building are identical in size and shape. Each ordinary room is a square of 3.70 x 3.70 sq. m. with an arched opening of 3.70 x 3.50 sq.m. forming the porch. Larger rooms are located almost in the centre of northern and southern sides respectively, and to make them wider than the ordinary rooms, the rear walls are projected outside. It could not be possible to measure these rooms because of the non-cooperative attitude of the present occupants. But Carlleyle has given the measurements of these rooms as 38'3" x 30' sq.ft (i.e. 11.66 x 4.14 sq. m.), which may be safely treated as accurate.¹

The gate on the western side is bigger than the one on the eastern side. It covers a total plinth area of 8.90 x 9.35 sq. m. This gate consists of three arches in a row. Outermost arch is half-domed with a width 4.67 m., while the other two arches are of the width 3.95 m. each. On both sides of the main passage are vaulted spaces of 2.20 x 4.80

1. Carlleyle has also given other measurements of the building. His measurement of the total area of the enclosure as well that of covered space occupied by the rooms and porches nearly corresponds with our measurements. But his measurements of the gates differ with our measurement substantially. While our measurement shows that the eastern gateway is slightly smaller than the western gateway, according to Carlleyle, the plinth area of both the gateways is equal (40'10" x 35'8" sq. fit). For our measurements of the gateways see infra.

sq. m. each. Main passage is also covered with a vaulted roof. Two sets of steps opening on both the flanks of gateway from inside lead up to the roof of the rooms and the gateway. The western gateway was originally surmounted with four cupolas of which only one remain now.

Eastern gateway is in a ruined state. It covers a plinth area of 3.95 x 2.32 sq. m. and consists of only two arches of width 3.95 m. each. The roof of the gateway has fallen. Two staircases open in the flanks of the gateway from inside.

It is evident from the plan of this sarai that total residential space provided in it is larger than all other sarais described so far. But the space provided in the gateways is smaller than other structures.

SARAI MIRAN

This is a sarai located at Kannauj.¹ The locality in which this sarai is situated is known after its name. An inscription in Persian engraved on a marble tablet is placed over the top of the northern gateway of the

1. A subdivisional headquarter in District Farrukhabad, U.P.

the sarai.¹ According to this inscription the building housing the sarai was built in A.H. 1094/A.D. 1682 and it was named Muhammadabad Kabir. The last expression (Muhammadabad Kabir) yields the date of its construction i.e. 1094. About this inscription it is noteworthy that it nowhere indicates that the building to which it is referring was meant for housing a sarai. On the other hand the use of expression abad shuda (was populated) and the name of the place giving the date of construction (Muhammadabad Kabir) go to show that it was visualized as some kind of small township or locality. It may be suggested that the inscription is referring here to a whole complex of which the present sarai was only the most important part. This is borne out by the surviving evidence in the form of original documents referred to in the Civil suit No. 47 of 1952

4. A subdivisional headquarter in District Farrukhabad, U.P.

1. The text of the inscription and its English translation are given below:

Text:

هو
 در دولت اورنگ شہ عالمگیر
 آباد شدہ بقعہ فردوس نظر
 اند سہ ہزار و تیس چہار
 سہ ہزار ہفتا محمد آباد کبیر

Translation:

Huwa (Name of God)

During the reign of the King Alamgir /
 was established a locality resembling paradise /
 in 1094
 which is equal to priceless 'Muhammadabad Kabir /

the sarai.¹ According to this inscription the building housing the sarai was built in A.H. 1094/A.D. 1682 and it was named Muhammadabad Kabir. The last expression (Muhammadabad Kabir) yields the date of its construction i.e. 1094. About this inscription it is noteworthy that it nowhere indicates that the building to which it is referring was meant for housing a sarai. On the other hand the use of expression abad shuda (was populated) and the name of the place giving the date of construction (Muhammadabad Kabir) go to show that it was visualized as some kind of small township or locality. It may be suggested that the inscription is referring here to a whole complex of which the present sarai was only the most important part. This is borne out by the surviving evidence in the form of original documents referred to in the Civil suit No. 47 of 1952

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 اندسہ ہزار و تسعین چہار
 شد بے ہمنا محمد آباد کبیر

Translation:

Humma (Name of God)

During the reign of the King Alangir /
 was established a locality resembling paradise /
 in 1094
 which is equal to priceless 'Muhammadabad Kabir /

which alludes to orchards and other property attached to the sarai.¹

The sarai has a square enclosure covering an area of 126.20 x 126.20 sq.m. with high battlemented walls all around. There are four octagonal bastions on the corners. The sarai has two gateways on the northern and southern sides. There is a mosque in the centre of the enclosure and one well in the courtyard of the mosque. Rooms in the sarai run along all the four sides. There are four corner rooms, but unlike Dandama, Chhaparghat and Nawaiganj there are no big rooms located in the centre of each side. Total number of rooms in the sarai including corner rooms is 96.

All the rooms of the sarai with the exception of corner rooms are identical in design and dimensions. Each room is a square, covering an area of 3.75 x 3.75 sq.m. and is fronted by an arched opening of 2.40 x 3.75 sq.m. The main chamber of the room is entered through a smaller arch of width 1.12 m. There is a small arched support in the rear wall of each room probably providing for a window, but it is filled up now.

Corner rooms of the sarai are polygons entered through arched doors of width 1.20 m. These rooms further open into the hollow octagonal bastions through 1.00 m. arches in the corresponding walls.

1. Cf. Civil Suit No. 47 of 1952, op. cit.

The northern gateway is a double storey structure covering an area of 19.05 x 22.68 sq.m. It consists of five arches - two multifoliated half-domed arches at the ends of the gate and three pointed horse-shoe arches between them. The width of the multifoliated arches is 4.87 m. each and the width of the other arches is 4.07 m. each. Arched spaces covering an area of 3.75 x 4.90 sq.m. each open on both sides of the main passage. Parapet of the gateway is battlemented. On the panels of the gateway are oriel windows. The gate is plastered and red sand-stone facing is provided.

The gateway on the southern side is much simpler, consisting of two pointed horse-shoe arches of width 3.27 m. each and placed at a distance of 6.15 m. from each other forming the main passage. These are flanked on each side by an arch of much smaller width. The gate is in single storey and has been filled up with bricks lately.

The most noticeable change effected in the plan of this sarai is the reduction in size of one of the gates to a considerable extent. Apparently the changing political conditions and growing instability dictated ^{this change.} However, the process of conversion of solid bastions into hollow bastions giving way to corner rooms, that had begun in Sarai Chhaparghat, seems to have reached its culmination in this sarai. The hollow octagonal bastions in this sarai are converted into beautiful corner rooms apparently meant for stores etc. Another interesting feature is the absence of any bigger room in the sarai, apart from corner rooms.

SARAI KHUDAGANJ

A sarai dating back to the first half of the eighteenth century is located at Khudaganj, a township situated 24 kms. south-east of Farrukhabad. Near the western outskirts of the town, the main road passes through this sarai, which is spread on both sides of the road. This sarai is described in the District Gazetteer of Farrukhabad in the following words: "Khudaganj owed its former importance to its position as a halting place at the crossing of the Kali Nadi. Its spacious sarai served the heavy traffic from Cawnpore to Farrukhabad, and through Farrukhabad to Rohilkhand."¹ Fuhrer attributes this sarai to Yaqoot Khan "as is confirmed by an inscription, on one of the demolished portals."² However, an inscription cut in the plaster over the facade of the mosque in the sarai gives the date 1737 A.D.³ It also identifies the

1. E.R. Neave, District Gazetteer, Farrukhabad (1911), p. 234.

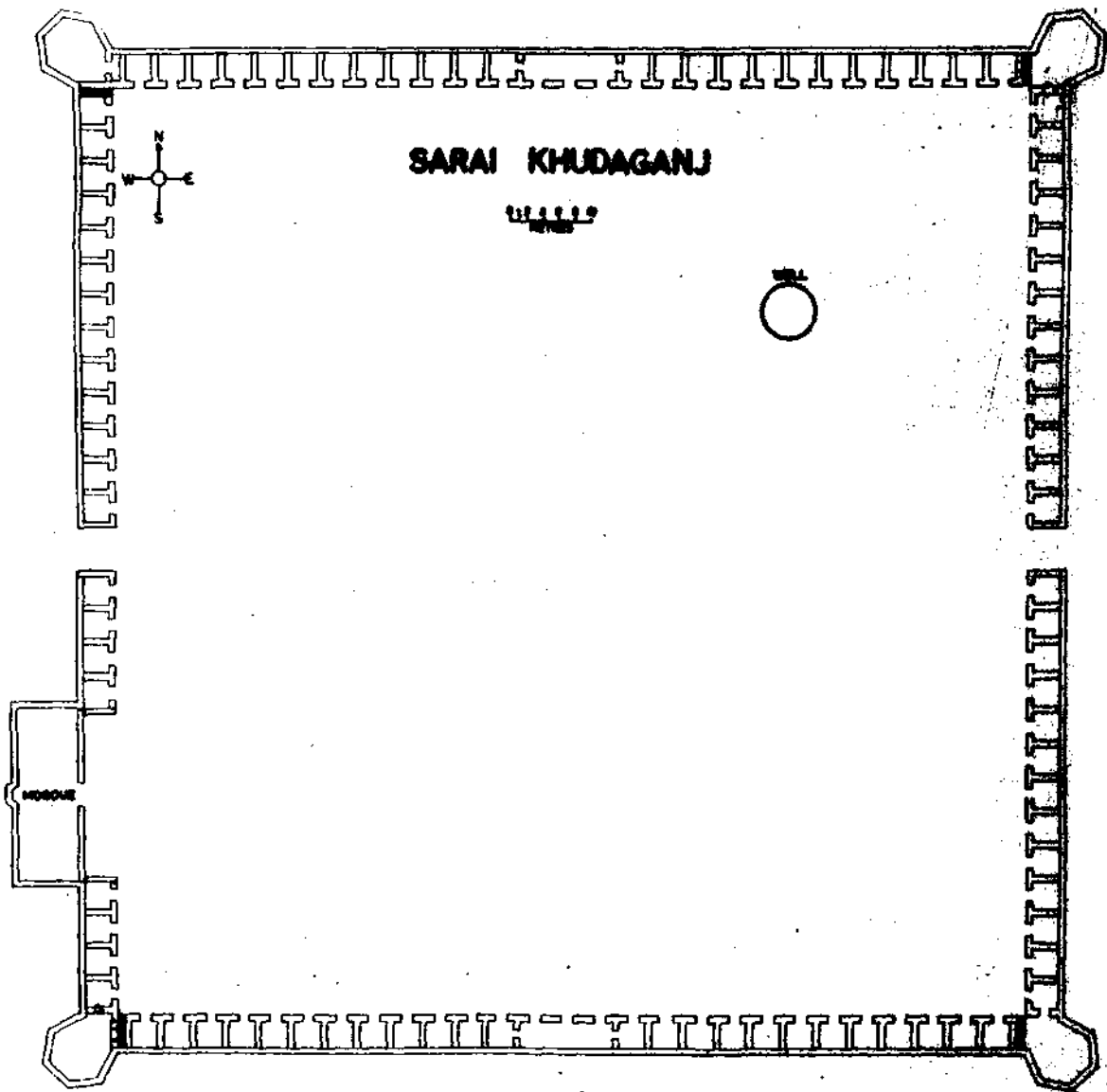
2. A. Fuhrer, Monumental Antiquities & Inscriptions in the N.W.P. & Cash. Vol. II, p. 81. The inscription mentioned by Fuhrer is not traceable now.

3. The text of the inscription ~~and its English translation~~ are given below:

Text:

یک ہزار و یک صد و پنجاہ و شد سنور سجدی یا قوت لوی

Translation:



mosque as Masjid-i Yaqoot indicating that it was built by Yaqoot Khan.

The sarai is a square enclosure covering an area of 113.60 x 113.60 sq.m. The wall of the enclosure is battlemented and contains four octagonal "bastions" at the corners.¹ Probably gates were located on the western and eastern sides at the spots through which the road passes, but these do not exist now. An elaborately built mosque stands in the south-western corner of the sarai attached to the western wall. It was apparently located adjacent to western gateway now extinct. The entire complex of the mosque is projected outside and is not in a straight line with the wall. There is a well in the north-eastern side of the compound, but it is dried up now. Long row of rooms runs along all the four sides in the sarai. There are two bigger rooms in the centre of northern and southern sides, and four corner rooms opening into the bastions. All the ordinary rooms of the sarai with the exception of two bigger rooms and four corner rooms are identical in design and size.

Each ordinary room of the sarai is a square covering an area of 3.32 x 3.32 sq.m. There are no porches or open spaces in front of the rooms which is an unusual feature. The entry to the room is provided through a multifoliated arch of width 1.46 m. The bigger rooms on the southern and northern sides have a front of three multifoliated arches in a row

1. See Plate 7.

giving it the impression of a verandah. These are further flanked on both sides by rooms which ~~instead of having~~ an opening towards the courtyard ^{and} can be entered into through the bigger rooms. There are staircases on all the four corners leading up to the roof of the corner rooms that look like a bastions. The rooms also run along the depression caused by the outward projection of the mosque.

The mosque of the sarai is a three dome structure, which are crowned with inverted lotus motives and finials. It is plastered and possesses an inscription cut in plaster on the top of the facade. Unlike other sarais, the mosque in this sarai has emerged as an integral part of the original structure of the sarai. The total area of the mosque could not be measured. The courtyard of the mosque is flanked on northern and southern sides by two rows of rooms, the size of which is the same as the size of an ordinary room in the sarai.

There are two new and significant features in the plan of this sarai built in 1737: (a) the absence of porches in front of the rooms reducing the total residential space provided in the sarai, (b) incorporation of mosque as an integral part of the sarai structure.

MEASUREMENTS OF SARAI

	AREA OF			AREA OF			TOTAL NUMBER OF ROOMS
	TOTAL AREA sq.m.	ROOM sq.m.	PORCH sq.m.	TOTAL sq.m.	GATE 1 sq.m.	GATE 2 sq.m.	
1. DANDAMA	12656.25	10.89	5.77	16.66	221.17	-	112
2. SARAI CHHA PARGHAT	17738.74	14.87	7.36	22.23	538.96	538.96	86
3. RAJA KI SARAI	6904.32	10.24	7.31	17.55	-	-	-
4. SARAI EK DIL	19572.40	9.92	5.12	15.04	145.01	23.50	-
5. SARAI AJITMAL	-	-	-	-	134.55	116.92	-
6. SARAI NAUWAL GANJ	13282.56	13.69	12.95	26.64	83.21	9.16	86
7. SARAI MIRAN	15926.44	14.06	9.00	23.06	432.05	20.11	98
8. SARAI KHUDDAGANJ	12904.96	11.02	-	11.02	-	-	-

Summary of Conclusions

The institution of sarais in the form in which it is known to us seems to have been introduced in India by the Turks. The construction of sarais on a large scale as a public institution only commenced roughly from the middle of 16th century. Sher Shah is accredited with having established a large number of sarais providing various facilities to the travellers.

In architectural terms generally a sarai building used to comprise of a large rectangular enclosure having one or more gates and a long row of rooms along the four sides in the enclosure. In different regions, this plan would be present with local variations. For example sarais in Gujarat were large enclosures (presumably rectangular) partitioned into many houses accessible from the main gateway. These features of the sarai structure were evolved gradually. In the beginning it was a fortress like structure with single gateway and solid bastions at the corners. The bastions were gradually replaced by hollow structures which though in shape still retained the form of a bastion, actually were corner rooms that could be utilized in many ways. Another change accompanying this was the introduction of one more gateway opposite the main gate facilitating simultaneous entry and exit of the travellers

and their goods without causing any bottlenecks. The total residential space provided to a traveller in the sarais was also increased gradually. By the middle of 17th century the merchants putting up in a sarai were furnished the facility of storing their goods in the warehouses.

In Mughal India, a very large number of sarais were distributed all over the empire. One important factor promoting the construction of sarais on a large scale from the middle of 16th century was presumably the intensification of money economy causing expansion of trade and commerce. Heightened commercial activities during the 17th century increased the frequency of travel consequently creating greater demand for a larger number of sarais and better facilities in them. The distribution pattern of these sarais when indicated on a map shows that the main alignments of their concentrations are in a great measure of coincidence with the trade-routes worked out on the basis of historical evidence. This further confirms the view that the growth of sarais was related to the expansion of trade.

The establishment of sarais on a large scale in Mughal India, was guided in addition to economic factor by administrative requirements as well. The sarais were frequently used by the nobles and other personnel in the service of the state. As has been noticed above, the structures of the early sarais were modelled after those of

fortresses having bastions and battlemented walls. In the time of crisis these could also be converted into fortresses and garrisoned. This was particularly true about the larger sarais established by the king and the nobility. Many of the sarais of this type not located on the established and fully identified trade-routes may be attributed to administrative and other extra-economic factors.

The largest share in the establishment of sarais in Mughal India was that of the royalty and nobility, though in comparison to their share in the total wealth of the society their contribution in this respect was rather small. On the other hand participation of appropriating groups constituting middle stratum, especially that of petty-officials and merchants was much larger as compared to their share in the total wealth, which bears out the significance of the economic factor in the establishment of sarais. The larger participation of middle groups in this respect goes to indicate that even if many of the individuals contributing to the establishment of sarais were motivated by philanthropic sentiments, the overall factor inducing them to spend money on such projects was economic.

The share of the zamindars in the establishment of comparatively smaller sarais mainly located in the rural areas was distinctly greater than that of the non-zamindar groups like the nobility and the holders of revenue grants

put together. This indicates that while zamindars would impede trade by imposing rahdari and making other illegal exactions, there also appear to have considerable incentive for them to try to ensure the passage of trade under their supervision which was also a substantial source of income for them. There is discernible a tendency towards the establishment of sarais by certain communities or castes, which is more marked in the case of smaller sarais mainly located in the country-side. This goes to testify to the existence of well-organized village, caste or guild organizations during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The larger sarais established by the state are known to have possessed an elaborate organization. There was one overall incharge in each sarai appointed by the state, who supervised the working of the sarai as well as maintained law and order there. This official was assisted by a large subordinate staff consisting of two kinds of personnel viz. (a) the watchmen and gate-keepers, and (b) the service staff mainly represented by a particular Muslim caste, namely, bhatiyaras. The job of cooking the meals and cleaning the rooms etc. was mainly performed by the female members of bhatiyara families settled in the sarais. It appears that there existed in the large state sarais good arrangements for the safety of the travellers against thefts etc.

In Mughal India the most influential group using sarais were of course the royalty and nobility. This category of people would be mainly concerned with larger sarais. They would in any case get preferential treatment in the matter of finding accommodation in any sarai. But, sarais would rarely be used by the Emperors for their personal accommodation; it is only in the case of sarais located on the way to Kashmir that the surviving traditions go to testify that accommodation available in these structure, were used for the stay of the king himself. In this connection it is noteworthy that professional soldiers while moving on a military mission were expected not to use sarai accommodation. They also appear to have considered staying in a sarai as something militating against their dignity. This would mean that when a king's camp would be located near a sarai, its accommodation would be utilized only by the civil officials and the military personnel would necessarily be staying in the camp.

The most important and numerous category of people using the sarais was that of merchants, traders and petty-officials. Merchants and traders represented a very large number of persons using sarais on their journeys. Some of the big sarais located in important towns were reserved for the exclusive use of the merchants and traders.

existed

There also/a number of small sarais mainly located in the country-side, which were established by merchant or trading communities for their own use.

The sarais were generally open to diverse groups and no distinction, whatsoever, was maintained between the people belonging to different religious and cultural communities. It seems that at some stage during the 16th century an attempt was made to provide special arrangements for the cooking of meals of Hindu travellers and also to demarcate the residential accommodation to be used by the Hindus and Muslims. These special arrangements in any case did not continue for long and during the 17th and 18th centuries sarais growingly became an institution open to all groups, where people belonging to different nationalities and cultures mixed with each other freely and shared together the available facilities.

Various facilities were provided to the travellers in the sarais. In the state sarais there was provision of free madh for some time during the reigns of Sher Shah and Akbar. But even afterwards good arrangements for the cooking of meals were provided in the sarais. The travellers were generally provided with considerable residential space and stores for keeping their goods in the sarais. At a

later period the sarais were also provided with marketing facilities from where the travellers residing in the sarais could make purchases. There were also available opportunities for different kind of entertainments including those provided by musicians and dancing girls. There are also references to the availability of physicians in the sarais, though not all of them possessed sufficient training in their profession.

*

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