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Stones of Uraśa: A Review of the Archaeology of Hazara Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Hazara Division in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan, is a frontier region between the Gandhara, Kashmir and Upper Indus valley regions in the mountain areas of Hazara, comprising of the districts of Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Battagram, Torghar and Kohistan. But, despite the prominence of the extensively explored sites of Taxila and Peshawar, Hazara has now a much more substantial archaeological record, from the Mansehra Rock Edicts of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE, through a rich concentration of Buddhist stupa sites, monasteries and settlement sites recorded in the eight districts of the Hazara division. This paper aims to review the archaeology of Hazara from the early historic period of Mauryan through the Buddhist monastic period under the patronage of the Kushans to the medieval period of Uraśa kingdom, based on the excavations reports, epigraphic studies, and recently conducted GIS based heritage survey by the Department of Archaeology, Hazara University, Mansehra. The paper also reflects the history of the region's ancient name Uraśa, and the archaeological context during Alexander the Great's campaign in the region of Amb, as well as the current conservation problems of the site in a still comparatively under-researched region in comparison to its archaeological value.

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1. Introduction

The Hazara Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is often approached primarily as a scenic hill region, home to the hill stations of Abbottabad and the Galyat tract, yet its archaeological record situates it firmly within the broader story of ancient Gandhara and the Buddhist civilizations of the northwestern subcontinent. Hazara has been a corridor and a refuge throughout history; a corridor for armies, pilgrims and traders travelling between the Peshawar Valley, the Upper Indus and Kashmir; a refuge in the more remote mountain tracts of Hazara, Kohistan and Torghar, which were relatively isolated from major political flows on the plains (Stein, 1900).

Although the Mansehra Rock Edicts were rediscovered and studied by the British surveyors and Indians, systematic and sustained efforts to study the wider division did not start in earnest until the establishment of the Department of Archaeology at Hazara University, Mansehra in 2006 (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023). Over the past twenty years, further surveys and excavations, most notably at Zar Dheri (a Buddhist site), have started to build the picture of Hazara as a region characterized by a rich and largely under-published Buddhist archaeological heritage that extends across all eight districts of Hazara today: Haripur, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Battagram, Torghar, Upper Kohistan, Lower Kohistan and Kolai Palas (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023).

This paper aims to synthesize what little scholarship is available on Hazara's archaeology, into the following themes: ancient names of the region and its use during the Mauryan and Alexandrian periods; the epigraphic evidence of the Mansehra Rock Edicts; the archaeology of Buddhist monastic life in Hazara from the 3rd century BC to the 5th century AD; and the current situation of archaeological study and heritage conservation in the division.

This review combines archaeological, historical, epigraphic, spatial, legal and digital heritage research in a single analytical framework, and, unlike previous works which have been based on individual archaeological sites, historical periods or GIS applications, it covers the spectrum of these studies. The study brings together the evidence from these fields, offering the first comprehensive overview of the archaeological situation in Hazara Division and prioritizing the needs of archaeological research and heritage conservation.

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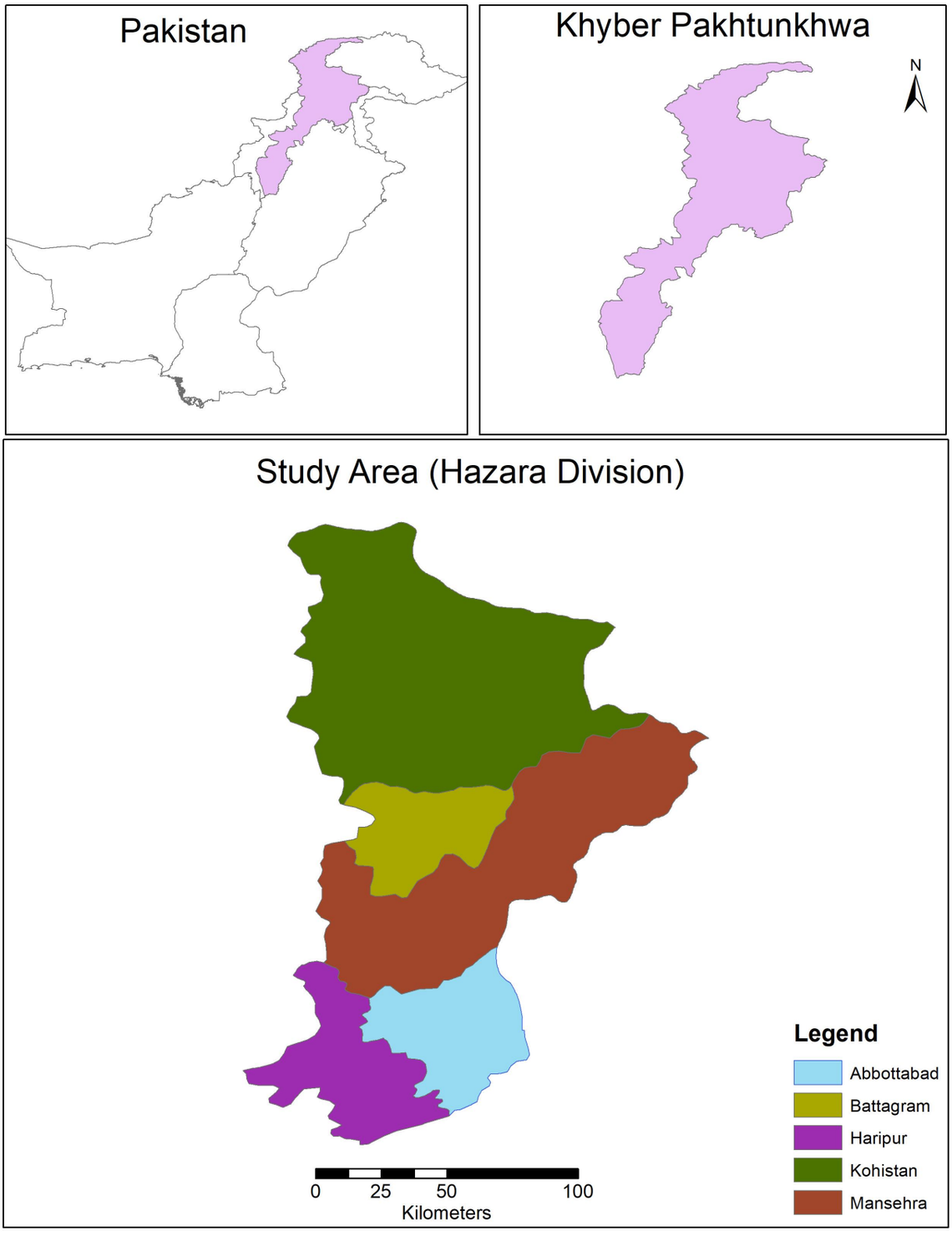

Figure 1. Study Area Map

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Table 1: *Major Archaeological Sites of Hazara Division*

Site	District	Cultural Period	Archaeological Significance	Key Reference
Asoka Rock Edicts	Mansehra	Mauryan (3rd century BCE)	Fourteen Major Rock Edicts of Emperor Ashoka engraved in Kharosthi script; among the earliest inscriptions in South Asia	Dani (1968); UNESCO (2004)
Zar Dheri	Mansehra	Kushan Buddhist	Excavated Buddhist monastery containing stupas, sculptures, inscriptions, ceramics, and architectural remains	Shakirullah et al. (2021)
Pir Manakrai	Haripur	Early Historic Buddhist	Excavated settlement and Buddhist remains providing occupation sequence for Hazara	Dar & Jan (2015)
Machikot Stupa	Abbottabad	Mauryan Buddhist	Traditionally attributed to Emperor Ashoka; important Buddhist monument	Zahoor (2023)
Buddhist Sites of Hazara Division	Abbottabad, Haripur, Battagram, Torghar, Kohistan	Buddhist Period	Numerous stupas, monasteries, settlement sites, and rock carvings documented through GIS surveys	Shakirullah & Zahoor (2023)

2. Methodology

The study utilizes a narrative review methodology to simplify the existing archaeological, historical, epigraphic and geospatial literature related to Hazara Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The review will be used to get a holistic view of the region's archaeological history from the Mauryan period till the Buddhist and medieval era and to discuss recent research and conservation projects using GIS.

Literature relevant to the subject was gathered from peer reviewed journal articles, excavation reports, historical publications, government and institutional reports and from internationally recognised heritage documents such as the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Because they were the most extensive archaeological works done in the area in the last several years, particular attention was given to studies published by the archaeology department of Hazara University. The earlier foundations studies on Gandharan archaeology, on the Buddhist heritage of India, on the Mansehra Rock Edicts and on the historical geography of Uraśa were also consulted in order to provide historical background. Literature was reviewed and themed; the themes included were: (1) Historic development of Hazara (Uraśa) & its ancient identity, (2) Mauryan period & Mansehra Rock Edicts, (3) Buddhist monasteries, Stupas and settlement archaeology, (4) Recent archaeological surveys and spatial analysis using GIS, (5) Heritage conservation challenges, (6) Emerging application of digital technologies, legal frameworks & machine learning in archaeological heritage management.

This study does not involve a statistical meta-analysis of published data from all these fields; instead it aims at a critical synthesis between the different disciplines, with an intent

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to uncover the major patterns of archaeology, the main trends of archaeological research and the gaps in knowledge. The review brings together historical, archaeological, epigraphic and geospatial evidence under one umbrella and outlines investment opportunities towards the future archaeological research and heritage conservation of Hazara.

Table 2: ***Major Studies Reviewed in this Paper***

Author(s)	Year	Research Focus	Major Contribution
Stein	1900	Historical geography	Identified Uraśa as the ancient name of Hazara
Dani	1968	Mansehra Rock Edicts	Historical and epigraphic interpretation of Ashokan inscriptions
Dar & Jan	2015	Pir Manakrai Excavation	Excavation report documenting early historic occupation
Shakirullah et al.	2021	Zar Dheri Excavation	Preliminary excavation report on Buddhist monastery
Zahoor	2023	Buddhist Society	Reconstruction of Buddhist monastic society in Hazara
Shakirullah & Zahoor	2023	GIS Mapping	Spatial documentation of Buddhist archaeological sites
Ahmad et al.	2025	GIS Risk Assessment	Spatial assessment of threats to the Mansehra Rock Edicts
Idrees et al.	2025	Heritage Legislation	Evaluation of legal protection using GIS analysis
Ullah et al.	2026	Machine Learning	Prediction of archaeological site vandalism risk
Ahmad et al.	2026	Digital Archaeology	GIS, photogrammetry, and drone-based heritage documentation

3. Uraśa: The Ancient Name and Early History of Hazara

The name Hazara is actually an old name for the area, Uraśa, which was used in classical and early medieval texts prior to the area's acquisition of this name. The word Uraśa is the classical and early medieval name for the area, and the British archaeologist Aurel Stein traced it back to Sanskrit toponym for the region. The name Hazara itself is comparatively recent as it did not become common usage until the end of the 14th century CE when the Central Asian conqueror Timur gave it to local chieftains called the Hazara-i-Karlugh (Marshall, 1951). Recently, Shakirullah and Zahoor (2023) have carried out a study on the Uraśa state and its capital city to reconstruct the political geography of the previous polity based on textual and archaeological sources.

The first significant encounter of Hazara with a known historical figure was Alexander the Great who invaded the northwest subcontinent in the 4th century B.C. After he conquered the northern part of Punjab Alexander extended his rule over a large part of Hazara; some scholars identify Embolina with Amb which is located in modern Torghar district of Hazara, where Aornos, Alexander's storehouse, was situated, and about which the classical writers Arrian and Ptolemy speak. Arrian also mentions that the local ruler of

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the time of Alexander's campaign was Arsakes, reflecting the fact that Hazara had a political organisation prior to Mauryan annexation.

The Mauryan empire, which would soon make the country the most renowned archaeological heritage of the region, subsequently expanded into Hazara. Ashoka, as a prince, is also said to have ruled this region before taking the throne of Mauryan. Thus Hazara became one of the principal places of his provincial administration, and this region had a centerpiece for the Buddhist era the Mansehra Rock Edicts.

The available historical and textual evidence indicates that Uraśa occupied a strategically important position between Gandhara, Kashmir, and the Upper Indus Valley. Its geographical location facilitated political interaction, military campaigns, and cultural exchange over several centuries. This strategic importance may also explain the concentration of Buddhist monuments and the continued occupation of the region during successive historical periods.

4. The Mansehra Rock Edicts

Fourteen of the major edicts of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka are recorded on three large boulders on a rocky outcrop near the city of Mansehra along the ancient road, later followed by the Karakoram Highway, and are thus the earliest irrefutable evidence of writing in South Asia. They date from the middle of the third century BC, and in the presence of the edicts at Mansehra, it is clear that scribal activity of the Achaemenids continued in Gandhara long after Alexander's campaign (Dani, 1968).

The edicts were unveiled piecemeal in the late 1800's. The inscriptions were first discovered in part by a Captain Leigh and an Indian employee of the Punjab Archaeological Survey in 1889 but Alexander Cunningham is credited by the epigraphist, E. Hultzsch, as the first discoverer of the epigraphical discoveries, Edicts of Ashoka. The edicts are spread among the three boulders: edicts #1-8 are on the first boulder, edicts #9-11 on the north face of the second, edict #12 on the south face of the second, and edict #13-14 on the third. Has been pointed out that edict twelve, which is about religious tolerance, is repeated on a separate rock or rock face at both Mansehra and the Gandharan site of Shahbazgarhi, indicating the special importance of this theme at the northwest frontier of the empire.

The boulders are still of local significance as a site of Hindu devotional assembly during the festival of Durgashtami, which is held nearby at Bareri Hill; also, the edicts are now on the tentative list of Pakistan for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2004).

Beyond their epigraphic significance, the Mansehra Rock Edicts demonstrate the incorporation of Hazara into the administrative and ideological framework of the Mauryan Empire. Their location along an important communication corridor suggests that the inscriptions were strategically positioned to disseminate imperial policies and Buddhist ethical principles to diverse populations travelling through the region.

5. Buddhist Monastic Archaeology in Hazara

Even though the Mansehra edicts provide epigraphic evidence for Buddhist monastic life from the Mauryan era until the fifth century CE, Hazara possesses a fairly large, but not yet fully documented, record of Buddhist monastic activity during this same time frame. Zahoor (2023) attributes the rock edicts to Ashoka, as well as a two-hundred-foot stupa that he is believed to have built at Machikot near Abbottabad which is still standing today. Although there is a lack of a significant body of surviving Buddhist textual evidence in the region that directly describes the religious history of Hazara, Zahoor (2023) also suggests

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that the veneration of relics at stupas in Hazara may have begun in this Ashokan period and remained as a meritorious religious practice during the following centuries.

The department of Archaeology at Hazara University has conducted fieldwork at Zar Dheri near Shinkiari from Mansehra district, the most widely excavated Buddhist site in the division, to yield ceramics, inscriptions, structural remains and stone and stucco sculptural fragments (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023). As part of the ongoing scientific excavations at Zar Dheri, the preliminary report by Shakirullah, Hameed, and Zahoor (2021) published in Pakistan Heritage is significant for the site's stratigraphy and material culture, which has been further enriched by mineralogical analysis of the schist stone utilized in sculptures found at the complex and their placement in the wider context of Gandharan stone carving techniques.

These are supported by accounts from Chinese pilgrims. Monastic institutions in the wider region of Hazara are reflected in the archaeological record and were also documented in the seventh century by the monk Xuanzang, who travelled through this area around 629 CE which was later compiled and translated (Zahoor, 2023). While sites from the Abbottabad and Mansehra districts, combined with the textual sources, suggest that the monastic network was somewhat dense, as Zahoor (2023) notes, the number of Buddhist texts describing Hazara itself is comparatively small, making the reconstruction of this history more challenging than for other centers such as Taxila.

The above picture has added further data points from the excavations elsewhere in Hazara. The three-season excavation carried out by Dar and Jan (2015) in Pir Manakrai, Haripur district, has added occupation sequences relevant to the early historic archaeology of the region and survey by the Department of Archaeology of Hazara University has located additional Buddhist period sites, some of which are still facing hazards of looting and unregulated excavation for relics and gold (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023).

The archaeological evidence from Machikot, Pir Manakrai, Zar Dheri, and other Buddhist sites shows that Hazara supported a well-developed monastic landscape rather than isolated religious establishments. The distribution of these sites suggests strong cultural connections with the broader Gandharan Buddhist tradition while also reflecting local adaptations to the mountainous environment.

6. Recent Research and GIS-Based Heritage Mapping

The most systematic work of consolidation of knowledge of Hazara's Buddhist heritage is GIS mapping project undertaken by Shakirullah and Zahoor (2023) in the Department of Archaeology at Hazara University. The project used Geographic Information Systems technology to map the distribution of Buddhist relics in all eight districts of the present day division, and identified patterns linked to ancient trade routes, religious activity, and cultural diffusion in the area (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023). The authors say, this spatial analysis, when combined with historic data, provides new avenues for research and theory building of Hazara's ancient civilisational dynamics and it is also a practical tool for promoting heritage tourism and site protection in Hazara (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023).

This GIS-based survey work is the most intensive effort so far to document the archaeological landscape of Hazara as a unit as opposed to a collection of discrete sites (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023), and an extension of earlier GIS-based survey work carried out at district level in Mansehra, Haripur, Kohistan Upper, Kohistan Lower and Kolai Palas by the same department since 2021. Since the establishment of the Department of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Management in Hazara University in 2006, the institution has

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demonstrated its commitment to the conservation and promotion of Hazara's heritage as a valuable asset for research and development (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023).

The integration of GIS has significantly transformed archaeological research in Hazara by enabling regional-scale analysis that was previously impossible through conventional field surveys alone. Spatial modelling has improved the understanding of settlement distribution, landscape connectivity, and heritage management, providing a stronger scientific basis for archaeological planning and conservation.

7. Conservation Challenges

Nevertheless, despite this growing body of knowledge, the archaeological sites of Hazara are subject to conservation threats that are largely analogous to those of other sites in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Gandharan heritage zone. Ancient graves and Buddhist period sites in Battagram and other districts are reportedly being disturbed by treasure hunters, who are in search of artefacts and gold; difficult terrain and poor road access throughout the division has also hampered systematic survey efforts (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023). Many of the sites in Hazara have not yet suffered from extensive urban encroachment, because of their relative remoteness, but they have also received less funding, staffing and public interest in their protection and study.

One of the practical solutions to these pressures is the GIS mapping approach followed by the Hazara University's archaeology department, which establishes a long-lasting record of the location of archaeological sites even if the physical features are lost or damaged, and might also provide an incentive for site stewardship through the possibilities of cultural tourism (Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023). However, continued investment in such surveys and documentation, as well as more effective legal protection and community involvement, will likely be the key to the survival of Hazara's remaining, but still largely unexplored, Buddhist and Mauryan cultural heritage for future study.

Further conservation actions need to focus on the creation of legally designated buffer zones, regular GIS monitoring, drone surveys of the documentation, community education programs and improved federal-provincial heritage institution cooperation. These would significantly contribute to the long-term preservation of the archaeological landscape of Hazara.

8. Recent GIS-Based Risk Assessment and Legal Studies on the Mansehra Edicts

The past two years has witnessed a significant amount of quantitative research that has made use of GIS technology with a special focus on the conservation status of the Mansehra Rock Edicts, many of which have been produced by the Department of Archaeology at Hazara University. The first GIS-based spatial assessment of the 3 edict boulders (Rock A, Rock B and Rock C) was done using the buffer analysis technique and DEM-derived slope, elevation and aspect data by Ahmad et al. (2025). Their data indicates that all three rocks are within 50 m of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) or adjacent settlements; that Rock A and Rock B are in overall high terrain risk both because of their steep slopes and because of their aspect orientations; and that Rock C was classified as moderate risk. Further analysis of the multiple rings extended to 100 and 200 meters showed that Rock B and Rock C are increasingly surrounded by dense urban fabric, such as the continuous road networks as well as in the case of Rock C an overlapping water channel. Idrees, Ahmad and Khan (2025) applied the same GIS approach to the Antiquities Act of Pakistan 1975 and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Antiquities Act 2016, along with a doctrinal analysis of the legislation. Their analysis revealed that there is no spatial risk mitigation

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provided in either the Mansehra edicts or the other statute, no environmental monitoring and no buffer zones are required by either, yet the document specifies that both laws protect the sites. The study also revealed that there was a shared federal and provincial jurisdiction, which was identified as another barrier to a coordinated response to conservation, and that the integration of GIS-informed risk assessment should be directly integrated into future heritage legislation.

On the regional level, Ullah et al., (2026) developed a socio-spatial machine learning model to predict the risk of vandalism at 50 archaeological sites throughout ten districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) including Mansehra, Abbottabad and Battagram. The study also found that a field-based Vandalism Observation Index in combination with community survey data and GIS-derived measures of spatial accessibility proved to be a significantly better model of site vandalism than simple linear regression and that spatial accessibility measures, specifically the distance to water features, roads and populated areas, were key predictors of site vandalism, more influential than social factors like community awareness or education level. It shows that physical accessibility is the major factor of vulnerability at the sites, irrespective of the attitude of the locals towards the sites in Hazara and neighbouring districts.

Low-cost digital documentation tools such as GIS mapping, photogrammetry and drone survey were explored by Ahmad, Khan, and Nawaz (2026) as a means of recording vulnerable heritage in Mansehra district in the form of Buddhist stupas and the rock-art complexes. Based on the results of the field observation and interviews with the students and faculty of archaeology at the Hazara university, the study concluded that the adoption of digital technologies for site documentation is indeed improving the spatial accuracy and reproducibility of the documentation, but that the institutional fragmentation, lack of adequate funding for equipment and the inadequate formal training in GIS and photogrammetry are still limiting the use of digital technologies in other institutional settings in Pakistan.

The Mansehra Rock Edicts and Hazara's Buddhist legacy as a whole are starting to be treated with the kind of integrated spatial, legal and technological analysis that sites like Taxila have long enjoyed, while also highlighting the need for much of the material revealed through GIS technologies to be translated into enforceable buffer areas and monitoring requirements, and sustained institutional investments and protection.

The recent GIS, legal and machine learning research is a clear example of the shift from descriptive archaeological documentation to predictive heritage management. It is a multidisciplinary approach that paves the way for evidence-based conservation planning, and this is an important methodological development in the field of archaeology in Pakistan.

Table 3: ***Recent GIS Applications in Archaeological Research of Hazara Division***

Study	GIS Technique	Objective	Major Findings
Shakirullah & Zahoor (2023)	GIS Mapping	Documentation of Buddhist archaeological sites	Identified spatial distribution and relationship with ancient trade routes
Ahmad et al. (2025)	Buffer Analysis, DEM, Slope,	Risk assessment of Mansehra Rock Edicts	Rock A and B identified as high-risk due to terrain and

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Study	GIS Technique	Objective	Major Findings
	Aspect		human activity
Idrees et al. (2025)	GIS Spatial Analysis	Evaluation of heritage legislation	Existing laws lack GIS-based buffer zones and environmental monitoring
Ullah et al. (2026)	Machine Learning + GIS	Prediction of vandalism risk	Accessibility variables were stronger predictors than social variables
Ahmad et al. (2026)	GIS	Digital heritage documentation	Improved documentation accuracy but highlighted institutional limitations

9. Discussion

The results of this review indicate that Hazara Division is a geographically important area in the archaeological heritage of the north-west of Pakistan. The historical, archaeological and epigraphical evidences all uniformly confirm this area as a vital route that linked Gandhara, Kashmir and the Upper Indus Valley. Hazara is not a marginal territory, it was a site of cultural contact and interaction and political administration in the Mauryanian, Kusan and early medieval periods (Stein, 1900; Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023). This is also in accordance with the general regional discussions surrounding the interaction and the landscape archaeology related to South Asia where emphasis has been given to the communication corridors that also influenced landscape pattern and cultural development. Archaeological studies in Hazara area parallel the archaeological methodology of South Asia as a whole. While historical descriptions, epigraphic investigations, and exploratory surveys were of primary importance to the early investigations, archaeological works have been undertaken during recent years at Zar Dheri and Pir Manakrai, along with GIS-based regional surveys, which has greatly enriched the knowledge of the region (Dar & Jan, 2015; Shakirullah et al., 2021; Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023). With the advent of Geographic Information Systems, the study of the archaeological landscape has become possible at a regional level, going beyond the study of individual monuments. Transition from site-based documentation to landscape archaeology reflects the current use of spatial technologies in archaeological research, in which they are now routinely employed in the reconstruction of settlement systems, communication networks and cultural landscapes.

While these advances have been made, there are significant gaps of research that still need to be addressed. The systematic surveys and excavations of many of the archaeological sites in Hazara Division are yet to be undertaken, and many of the sites documented do not have a detailed chronological framework supported by radiocarbon dates, archaeometric information, and palaeoenvironmental studies. In the same way, more sophisticated digital techniques, including LiDAR, high resolution satellite imagery, UAV photogrammetry and the 3-D documentation process are still not widely used here. The resolution of these deficiencies would significantly foster the knowledge of settlement evolution, landscape change, and long-term cultural interaction, as well as improve the archaeological interpretation and heritage management (Coningham & Young, 2015; Ahmad et al., 2026).

It is evident from the review that the current studies conducted in Hazara through the use of GIS have pushed for the shift of archaeological research from documentation to

predicting management of the heritage. In recent years, GIS-based risk assessment, legal analysis, the use of machine learning, and digital documentation have created fresh opportunities for identification of archaeological sites at risk, for the evaluation of environmental and anthropogenic threats, and for supporting evidence-based conservation planning (Ahmad et al., 2025; Idrees et al., 2025; Ullah et al., 2026). However, new technology is not necessarily the answer to the future. The conservation of this rock art must be carried out in a sustainable way, with more stringent legal protection, with well-established buffer zones, with an institutional coordination, with sufficient and adequate financial investment, and involving the local population in the process of conservation entailing the combination of science with practical conservation of the heritage.

Last but not least, this review is a contribution to the existing scholarship, in that it combines archaeological, historical, epigraphic, legal and geospatial data into a single analytical framework. Most of the previous studies have investigated the archaeological sites and specific techniques, while this review offers a detailed overview of the archaeological landscape of Hazara. Such multi-disciplinary approach will not help only in developing the understanding of the historical development of the area, but will also provide a solid basis for future archaeological explorations, digital heritage projects, and conservation policy decisions guided by evidence (Coningham & Young, 2015; Shakirullah & Zahoor, 2023).

10. Conclusion

The archaeological record of Hazara Division, although fairly limited compared to the Taxila or the Peshawar Valley, has an important place in the history of Gandhara and the Buddhist world as a whole. Hazara has tangible evidence of its importance as a Mauryan provincial capital, as a Kushan Buddhist landscape and as an independent political state in the kingdom of Uraśa, as seen in the series of rock edicts from the Mansehra area, the monastic complex at Zar Dheri and the many stupas and settlement sites now being mapped in the eight districts of the division. The Department of Archaeology at Hazara University has recently commenced GIS-based research and documentation of the archaeological resources of this historically under-researched area, as well as legal research and machine-learning analysis, that has started to demonstrate a gradual shift toward a systematic record of the archaeological landscape and a quantitative assessment of the risks the area faces for its preservation, but in order to ensure that the area's archaeological heritage can be preserved for the next generation of researchers and visitors alike, ongoing legal reform and archaeological conservation investment are still needed.

This review shows that Hazara division is one of the most important, but relatively under-researched archaeological landscapes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The interdisciplinary approach required for the research to support both academic knowledge and sustainable management of the archaeological heritage is emphasized by integrating the archaeological, historical, epigraphic and GIS-based evidence. Preservation of the cultural heritage of the region will be contingent on continued archaeological study, documentation via computer, and the implementation of evidence-based protection policies.

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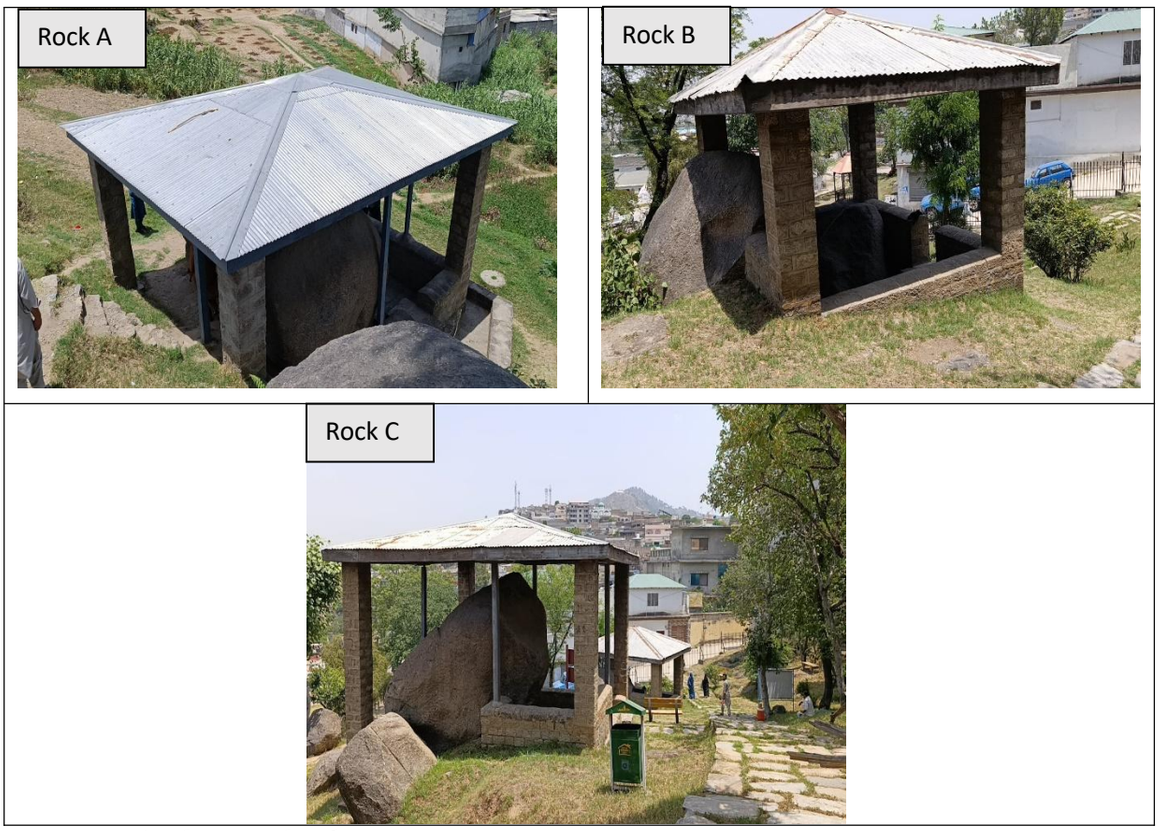

Figure 2. Asokan Rock Edict

Figure 3. Kandar Bedadi

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Figure 4. Gullibagh Monument

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Figure 5. Bhamala Buddhist Complex (Photograph courtesy of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).