

Kara Manikpur: Anecdotes Vs Historical Facts

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An 'anecdotal account' of a historical event may be interesting, yet it is bound to be discarded in face of empirical investigations. And rightly so. A student of history should try to seek out a true account of past events rather than be charmed by mythical narrations. This paper is an attempt in the direction of presenting facts through archaeology and history of 'a medieval township' of Kara Manikpur and the fort situated therein. The research was conducted for this paper through field visits and survey.

The paper divides the findings into two parts. It attempts to bring out the captivating aspects of the archaeology of Kara Manikpur. The fort and the other buildings there are currently in completely ruinous state having been reduced to a mere shadow of its pristine glory. Second, the paper tries to stitch together the administrative and political history of the township, journeying through the developments during the tenure of successive administrators. And in this process it has been our endeavour to contextualize the rise and fall of the township on one hand and the dwindling fortunes of the region on the other.

In the early medieval times the area abounded with dense forests and wild animals¹ and was having only river borne traffic possibilities. Till that time the region retained its image of being impregnable. Gradually, however the forest were cleared to extend the cultivation. This led to development and adoption of an alternative route through the cleared forests. While during the reorganisation of the empire by emperor Akbar, when he superseded the earlier administrative arrangement of the empire by the Lodi rulers, Jaunpur lost its importance and in its place Allahabad became prominent as the Mughal *suba* and also the provincial headquarter.² This somehow sealed the fate of once prosperous and thriving township of Kara Manikpur. The massive structures and buildings were allowed to morph into ruins. Today they present a pathetic sight to the visitors and would pain the heart of an archaeologist who might have been trying to capture the past glory in his imagination.

I have tried to juxtapose the literary descriptions of the township with the

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