The present work is a documentation and interpretation of the archaeological materials found from different sites of Murshidabad and assignable to a period ranging from the 6th century to the 13th century CE. The reasons behind selecting such a study on the nature of early medieval archaeological remains of this area are the following i) Plethora of source materials especially in form of sculptural remains, architectural remains, and other habitational debris scattered on innumerable mounds of various sites of the district, besides, ii) the earlier works on the district itself, especially that of S. R. Das in the Rajbadidanga area prompted me to explore the nature of archaeological data on the early medieval Murshidabad. The present work renders an account of my knowledge of the archaeological sources of Murshidabad and its adjoining areas from the 6th century to the 13th century CE. Our debt to the earlier works of scholars and antiquarians will be apparent to all. Many of the interpretations given are based on the works of the previous researchers; in some cases, however, we have ventured to draw attention to the shortcomings in reports or in interpretations and also offer our humble explanations. The present archaeological database has provided guidelines for investigating its past, but by its very nature, archaeology is insufficient, and perhaps does not fully permit in monitoring the range of variables of human settlements and their activities.

The apparent merging or convergence of two enduring interests - an inclination for the archaeological beginnings of Murshidabad and my commitment to the subject and the present database - have come together in
making this study. Much of the present database is either new (collected or recorded through my field work), and hitherto unpublished, or is a synthesis made for the first time as the reports of earlier. One of the basic aims of the present undertaking is to systematically synthesize information gathered through extensive field work and examine them along with already published material to evolve a picture of early medieval remains of the district. It is a monumental task and requires much longer duration of field work than what the present author has been able to do. The conclusions obtained may therefore be considered tentative.

It must be kept in mind that the present day administrative boundary of any area does not confine a culturally homogeneous region. When observed through time even the apparent uniformity seen today may vanish. In spite of this built-in problem it may be proposed that a present district can be chosen for studying an area because any number of other alternatives constructed for the purpose may all suffer from the same defect. Reference to ‘river valley or hill slope cultures’ is archaeologically less defective because the same can imply ecologically homogeneous zones as units. However, prehistory-history does not propose to reconstruct such micro-zone cultures alone. Eventually they need to be synthesized for working out a macro-zone character and status besides elucidating intra-regional variables and relationships. Cross-currents were always there.

A systematic study of the diverse sculptural and architectural evidence has been done. Detailed excavation reports of two major sites in the study area have been published briefly in Indian Archaeology: A Review 2008-09 and 2009-10.
Here, it may be pointed out that the sculptural data have been analyzed from the archaeological viewpoint relevant to the present study rather than from the aspect of iconographic studies. The present study has often faced difficulties in the chronological study of religious expressions especially in issues concerning the nature and time of incorporation of folk elements in the individual strands constituting the cultural matrix as a whole.

Diacritical markings have been used to a minimum. I have assumed that modern names of towns, cities, localities, different caste groups and communities, temples of Murshidabad are in sufficiently current usage and do not, therefore, require any diacritical definition. Diacritical markings have been restricted to the names of the deities, their attributes and ancient Indian texts. It has not been possible in this work to include the diacritical markings in the References and Bibliography.

The chapters have been so arranged as to give an outline of a cultural-historical framework into which the formative stages of the culture of Murshidabad can be placed.

Chapter I of our work delineates the Scope and Method of Study. The geographical setting of the district of Murshidabad is described in Chapter II. The archaeological remains of the Murshidabad district prior to the early medieval period have been discussed in Chapter III. Chapter IV delineates the literary and epigraphic sources of the district of Murshidabad. The Early Medieval Sites and Settlements of Murshidabad have been dealt with in Chapter V. The subsequent chapter i.e Chapter VI analyzes the sculptural remains documented from different sites of the district. The conclusions made regarding different issues of the present study have been given in the last Chapter VII entitled ‘Summary and Observations’.
In this work, an attempt has been made to present a classified form of Bibliography. It should be kept in mind that several primary and secondary works are applicable to more than one section than what has been classified here and the reader should bear possible inadvertent errors in the same.

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