CHAPTER II
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HISTORIOGRAPHY AND SOURCE MATERIALS

The chapter summarizes the available source materials for our present study along with the history of research on the same. It is quite difficult to incorporate the vast historiography on the Kushāṇa period of Mathurā with reference to the primary and secondary sources in forms of texts/literatures (indigenous and foreign accounts) along with archaeological data. Here, we have tried to give a brief note on the same as it is a desideratum for evaluating our knowledge not only about the history of Mathurā, but also about the power structure and its impact on the contemporary society under the rule of the Kushāṇas.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF RESEARCH:

For more than a century, the region received special attraction by several historians and archaeologists for the re-construction of historical identity and its association with the development of mainstream history of the Indian sub-continent as a whole. The historiography helps us to understand the evolution of North Indian urban settlement patterns at a crucial time and the growth of Mathurā in different spheres of life. Our source materials are a dialogue in this direction and must have fulfilled the reconstruction of a complete history during the time of the Kushāṇas. According to modern historiography the Kushāṇa period witnessed the formative stage of Mathurā as a prominent centre of activities in terms of geo-political identity, trade and commerce, religion and culture.

There are several numbers of works on the historical background as well as the socio-economic and religious life during the Śaka-Kushāṇa
or Kushāṇa period. In his “The Rise and Fall of the Kushāṇa Empire”, B.N. Mukherjee covers a vast span of the Kushāṇa history including its origin, growth, movement and decline. Mukherjee has also worked on the genealogy, the economic factors in Kushāṇa history and the relations of the Kushāṇas with the Deccan. In his “The Economic factors in Kushāṇa History”, Mukherjee tries to determine the importance of economic factors in the growth of Kushāṇa power in two particular areas— the lower Indus Country and Eastern Malwa. The above study also highlights the significance of Indo-Roman trading networks during this period. In his recent work on “Kushāṇa Studies- New Perspectives”, Mukherjee (by using the references of new epigraphic discoveries) presents a new dimension of the political, administrative, religious and socio-economic life of the Kushāṇa period, particularly in the Mathurā region. In a recent seminar paper Mukherjee, talks about Mathurā’s growth as a major trade centre. Heterogeneous groups from the outside became established as a ruling class and were responsible for the growth of language, religion, and art without violating the local cultural norms. They also extended Mathurā’s growth in such a position from where its neighbouring regions were incorporated in its cultural milieu. In his work on “India under the Kushāṇas”, B.N. Puri covers all aspects of life of the Kushāṇa period including the origin, society, economy, education, monetary system and others. Some aspects of socio-economic and religious conditions in the Kushāṇa Period are also noticed in some of B.N. Puri’s papers. Among them mention may be made of “Some aspects of Social life in Kuṣāṇa Period”, “Some aspects of economic life in the Kuṣāṇa Period”, “The State of Brāhmanism in the Kuṣāṇa Period”, “Jain religious orders in the Kuṣāṇa period”, “Nāga Worship in the Kuṣāṇa Period” etc. In a recent work on the Kushāṇas (History of Civilization of Central Asia), Puri highlights Kushāṇa history, polity, administration and its relationship with Iran, China, Rome and North-Eastern India.
“Kushāṇa State and Indian Society”, Bhaskar Chattopadhyay critically deals with the relation of Kushāṇa Polity to Dharma and Society. Several papers (papers of A.H.Dani, R.C.Majumdar, A.K.Narain) presented in the conference on “The Date of Kaśīkṣa” held also throw enough light on the history, society, and economy of this period. The proceedings of the conference, held at Dushanbe in 1968, titled “Central Asia in the Kushāṇ period” deal with various aspects of the Kushāṇa history. The first volume comprises papers on Kushāṇa ethnic history, chronology, language and writing and the second volume contains papers on the history, socio-political system, cultural relations, ideology and religion of the Kushāṇa period. In recent seminar papers contributed to the volume of “Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage” various scholars focussed on the historical background, society, economy and religious beliefs and practises of the Mathurā region. Regarding the historical background, several approaches were presented by Roshan Dalal, Romila Thapar and B.D. Chattopadhyaya and they put forward the basic parameters in their works. The important role of rivers in formation of settlements and Mathurā’s nodal position in communication network are highlighted by Dalal. However, our source materials have limited scope regarding the period of the Kushāṇas. B.D.Chattopadhyaya talks about the history of Mathurā from the Śuṅga to the Kushāṇa period. Regarding the society and economy, R.S.Sharma, Siva.G.Bajpai, J.E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw and Richard Saloman presented different opinions about the social mobilization under a political power, particularly during the Śaka-Kushāṇa phase or Kushāṇa period. R.S. Sharma discusses about the commercial importance of Mathurā during the Śaka-Kushāṇa phase. Siva.G.Bajpai analyses the importance of Mathurā in the trans-regional and trans-continental trading activities of the Kushāṇa period. While explaining the source materials Bajpai interprets the changing contexts from a recipient
to a dispenser of technologies, crafts, merchandise, art and ideologies and focuses on the development of Mathura and its surroundings and the proliferation of settlement network. Leeuw examines the transmission of culture from the Scythians to the Saka-Kushāṇas and introduction of elements reflecting their tastes, ideologies, language, coinage, administration and calendrical systemizations. Saloman's work reflects the blending of materialistic and spiritualistic life of ancient Mathurā. In the context of culture and society of Mathurā, any religious order or belief and practice created an important role in the consolidation of the cultural matrix of this region as a whole rather than Mathurā itself. There are several number of works on religious sects and cults of the Mathurā region. The papers of Hiltebeitel, Huntington, Folkert incorporated in the volume of D.M.Srinivasan highlight the participation of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religion through the ages. However, it is very difficult to trace the specific form of religious participation during the Kushāṇa period. Besides, among the other scholars from India who have dealt with the history, society, economy and religious life of the Kushāṇa period mention may be made of Sudhakar Chattopadhyay, Ramaprasad Chanda and others. Recent contributions in "History of Civilizations of Central Asia, Vol II" by some foreign scholars namely K.Enoki, G.A.Koshelenko, Z.Haidary, A.R.Mukhamedijanov, J.Harmatta, L.Lelekov and S.Humayun have discussed various aspects of the history, society, economy and religion of the Kushāṇa period in Central Asia.

So far as the historiography of epigraphic sources is concerned, most remarkable work was carried out by H.Lüders. In his "List of Brāhmi Inscriptions", Lüders recorded all reported Brāhmi inscriptions of the Kushāṇa period from Mathurā along with other inscriptions of northern and southern India. In her work on "Early Inscriptions of
Mathurā", Kalyani Das Bajpayee critically used available epigraphical records for the reconstruction of political, socio-cultural, economic and religious history of ancient Mathurā. Besides, the work also includes a summary of inscriptions recorded from the Mathurā region commencing from Mauryan to the Gupta period. In respective volumes of EI, ARIE, and JRAS-GBI, JUPHS, and books on epigraphy, scholars like G.Bühler, R.D.Banerji, D.R.Sahni, V.S.Agrawala, J.Ph.Vogel, D.C.Sircar, Teodar Bloch, J.F.Fleet, Sten Know and others contributed several papers on Kushāṇa epigraphic records of the region under consideration. There are different opinions about the date of the earliest inscriptions available from Mathurā. G.Bühler and Lüders opined that the earliest inscriptions of Mathurā dated to the 2nd century B.C., while A.H.Dani and T.P.Verma preferred to place the earliest inscription of this region to the first half of the 1st century A.D. In recent years, scholars like D.C.Sircar, T.P.Verma, Ajay Mitra Shastri, R.C.Sharma and Damsteegt have raised different issues on languages and scripts of the Mathurā inscriptions. According to T.P.Verma, writing activities started comparatively later at Mathurā, and stone inscriptions commenced under the local rulers. During the time of Śaka-Kṣatrapas and Kushāṇas such activities became more intensified. Ajay Mitra Shastri has mentioned that the epigraphic sources of Mathurā help us to demonstrate all stages in the development of the Brāhmī script and invariably its association with the modification came either or because of foreign invasions. According to Damsteegt, the phenomenon of Sanskritization as found from the Mathurā inscriptions began with the arrival of the Kṣatrapas. In a recent issue of Silk Road Art and Archaeology, N. Sims-Williams and J.Cribb published a detail study of the Rabatak Inscription. The Rabatak Inscription describes events of the first year of Kaṇiṣka and it was found at a site named Rabatak, not far from Surkh-Kotal.
There are two categories of numismatic sources available from Mathurā for the reconstruction of the Kushāṇa coinage in relationship with money economy. The primary sources like different catalogues based on collection of museums discuss about the history of Kushāṇa coinage as a whole rather than the representation of Mathurā itself. The secondary sources, though one could find clarity not in a very particular form, explain the significance of the coinage of the Greater and Later Kushāṇas for the consolidation of political power and economy. The research on the Kushāṇa coinage started in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Masson’s publications on the coins from Begrām may be marked as the beginning of a systematic study of the Kushāṇa coinage. The first comprehensive works on Kushāṇa coinage are in Alexander Cunningham’s works including “Coins of Indo-Scythians” and “Coins of later Indo-Scythians” in 1892 and 1895 respectively. Besides, J.Allan, P.Gardner, C.J. Rodger, R.B.Whitehead, V.A.Smith and Bidyabinod published catalogues of the Kushāṇa coins kept in different museums. Later, A.S.Altekar, A. K. Narain, A.D.H.Bivar and R.Gōbl elaborated the status of money economy during the Kushāṇa period. In his “Kusana Coins and History”, P.L.Gupta throws fresh light on the history of the Kushāṇas in the Yamuno-Gangetic region with special reference to Mathurā, besides their expansion in Eastern India. He highlights on the history of the Later Kushāṇa and post-Kushāṇa rulers in Mathurā, Punjab and Haryana region. In his paper on a Kushāṇa copper coin from Sonkh, Gupta critically assesses the lineage of the Kushāṇa rulers in the Mathurā region and has postulated the existence of a Huvishka even before Kāṇiṣka I in this region. In a recent seminar paper, Gupta discusses about the chronological distribution of coins in Mathurā region starting from Punch-marked coins to the coinage of the Kushāṇas and raises a debate on the ‘Mathurā Symbol’ or
coinage specifically associated with Mathura itself. He has suggested that even before the rise of the Mauryas, some punch-marked coins were issued in Mathura for the kingdom of Surasenas.  

In his work on "The Age of the Kushan - A Numismatic Study", Bhaskar Chattopadhyay compiles varied evidences of the Kushana coinage with regard to types, scripts, symbols, metrology, iconography and its impact on the socio-economic, cultural and political life of the period. In his several books and articles B.N. Mukherjee also deals with different aspects of the Kushana coinage. Unfortunately the works of Chattopadhyay and Mukherjee meagrely highlighted the Kushana coinage of the Mathura region. A. Cunningham, A. Stein and D.R. Bhandarkar have dealt with the socio-religious and mythics-religious aspects of the Kushana coin types. In several papers published in the volume of "Mathura: The Cultural Heritage", scholars like A.K. Srivastava, D.W. MacDowell, S.C. Ray discussed various issues related to the Kushana coinage of the Mathura region. A.K. Srivastava's paper on treasure trove finds from Mathura is an important contribution towards the numismatic researches in this region. The study not only corroborates the information about the wealth of Mathura's inhabitants during the time of the Kushanas, but also throws some light on the shaded history of the Later Kushanas in this region. In his paper, MacDowall discusses the significance of coin hoards and copper coins of the Kushanas in reconstructing the history of Mathura. On the basis of weight and distribution of Kushana copper coins he has argued that Kushanas ruled over Mathura for a longer time than their counterparts in the Gangetic valley and Eastern India. S.C. Ray studies the stratigraphic evidence of coins from excavations at Sonkh and Mathura and tried to correlate the stratified and unstratified materials in establishing the chronological sequences of this region.
The historiography on art and iconography of Mathurā is so vast. Various scholars from different nations have worked on it. The icono-plastic art reported from Mathurā, particularly in the Kushāṇa period have been discussed by several scholars either in forms of museum and exhibition catalogues or in forms of books, monographs and articles. There are several works highlighting on various aspects of the Mathurā art including its foundation, influence on other contemporary schools, foreign influence besides descriptions of Buddhist, Jain and Brāhmaṇical images. Among the earlier scholars who have studied the Helleno-Romanic influence on Mathurā art mention may be made of Sir Alexander Cunningham, Prinsep, Foucher, Vogel, Rosenfield, Benjamin Rowland and others. According to Cunningham there was a small body of Bactrian artists who found employment among the wealthy Buddhists at Mathurā. Prinsep describes the so-called ‘Silenus’ as a piece of sculpture associated with the Greek mythology. According to Foucher, the Mathurā school instead of direct and earlier expression of Greek influences received its classical inspiration indirectly from Gandhāra. Growse and other modern Indian scholars opined that Mathurā art was based on indigenous tradition. According to Growse, the export of artists from Mathurā could have been possible if the centre itself was outstanding with a tradition of its own. The Mathurā art under the Kushans was a direct continuation of the old Indian art of Bharhut and Sanchi. J.M.Rosenfield has made a study of Kushāṇa and Iranian Royal portraits and also the stylistic and iconographic aspects of the Mathura Imperial portraits. Benjamin Rowland also highlights on the Kushāṇa art of Mathurā. He proposes that foreign influences behind the installation of portrait statues in Mathurā was due to the Kushāṇa’s knowledge of the Roman practice of erecting the defied Caesars or the Parthian practice of commemorating their sovereigns. In his “Mathurā sculptures” N.P.Joshi analyses the continuous development of Buddhist,
Jain and Brähmaṇical sculptures of Mathurā from the early times to the
Gupta period.89 Besides there are respective sections/chapters on
Mathurā art (with particular reference to the Kushāṇa period) in several
monograph on Indian art. These include V.S.Agrawala’s *Indian Art: A
history of Indian art from the earliest times up to the third century A.D.*90
(The chapter deals with the origin of Buddha besides descriptions of
Tirthankara, Nāga, Yaksha, and Brähmaṇical images of Mathurā) and
*Studies in Indian Art*91 (Besides Buddhist, Jain and Brähmaṇical images
the respective chapter also contains discussion on Mathurā railing pillars
and Mathurā āyāgapāṭas); P.K.Agrawala’s *Early Indian bronzes*92
(respective chapter on Kushāṇa bronzes highlighting on bronze images
from Sonkh) and *Mathurā Railing Pillars*93; A.K.Coomaraswamy’s *History
of Indian and Indonesian Art*94; J.C.Harle’s *The art and architecture of the
Indian sub continent*95; Susan.L.Huntington’s *The art of ancient India*96;
J.E. van Lohuizen-De-Leeuw’s *The Scythian Period*97 etc. There are also a
number of articles highlighting on different aspects of the Kushāṇa art of
Mathurā. Among them mention may be made of “*The Kushāṇa art of
Mathurā*” (Shasi Asthana)98; “*Mathurā school of sculptures*” (Ramaprasad
Chanda)99; “*Kushāṇa art and the historic effigies of Māt (India) and Surkh
Kotal (Afghanistan)*” (C.M.Keiffer)100; “*Gandhāra and Mathurā: Their
cultural relationship*” (J.E. van Lohuizen-De-Leeuw)101; “*Mathurā school of
sculptures*” (J.Ph.Vogel)102; “*Interaction between Mathurā and Gandhāra*
(R.C.Sharma)103 etc. Apart from the above various scholars individually
dealt with Buddhist, Jain and Brähmaṇical art of Mathurā. The
important books and articles highlighting on Buddhist art of Mathurā are-
V.S.Agrawala’s “*Dhāynī Buddha and Bodhisattvas*”104; A.K.Coomaraswamy’s “*The Indian Origin of the Buddha Image*”105; R.C.Sharma’s
*Buddhist art of Mathurā*106, “Buddha as appears in Mathurā art”107, “Early phase of Buddhist icons at Mathurā108 etc. In
this context we should mention that, there are controversies regarding
the origin of the Buddha image. Many of the Western scholars believed that the credit goes to the Gandhāra art of the Kushāna period. Some of the Indian scholars like Vogel, A.K.Coomaraswamy, J.E. van Lohuizen-De-Leeuw and others opined that the first Buddha image was carved by the Mathurā artists of the Kushāna age. According to Vogel, the Buddha-Bodhisattva figures cannot be derived from any known class of images in Gandhāra. It is a product of the native school and is related to the indigenous tradition.109 Lohuizen-De-Leeuw presumes several stages in the development of Buddhist art in Mathurā on the basis of stylistic development of the Buddha-Bodhisattva images. She also states that the Mathurā sculptures as a whole have a very small fraction of Hellenistic influence.110 Mathurā was an important centre of Jainism. V.A.Smith first dealt with the Jaina art and architectural remains of Mathurā. His work was mainly based on the findings of the Jaina antiquities from Kankālī Tīlā.111 Besides, there are few important articles dealing with the Jaina sculptures of Mathurā.112 In a recent paper contributed to the volume of “Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage”, N.P.Joshi makes a detail survey of Jaina icons from Mathurā highlighting its religious, artistic and sociological significance. Here he has discussed an evolution of Jaina sculptures with a detailed description of āyāgapattas, different postures of Jaina Tirthankaras and Jaina male and female divinities. He states that at least 93-seated and 26 standing Tirthankara images have been recovered from Mathurā and its adjoining areas.113 The significant books and articles dealing with Brāhmanical sculptures from Mathurā include- Maratha.L.Carter’s “The Bacchanta of Mathura: New evidence of Dionysiac Yaksha imagery from Kushan Mathura”114; N.P.Joshi’s Mātrkās (mothers) in Kushāna art115, “Images of Vishnu in the Kuṣāṇa art from Mathurā”116; P.K.Agrawala’s Skanda-Kartikeya: A study in the origin and development117; B.N.Sharma’s “Kuṣāṇa Śiva-Liṅgas from Mathurā”118 etc. In a recent paper, D.M.Srinivasan discusses on the Vaisnava art and
iconography of the Mathurā region. According to Srinivasan, Mathurā prior to the Kushāṇa period was neither a centre nor an innovator of Vaisnava art. This situation dramatically changes in the Kushāṇa period when a number of four armed Vasudeva-Kṛṣṇa images and eight armed Vaisnava images were found from Mathurā.119 Finally, we should mention different museum and exhibition catalogues comprising lists and descriptions of Buddhist, Jaina and Brāhmaṇical images and architectural pieces of Mathurā. V.S.Agrawala120, John Anderson121, A.K.Commaraswamy122, M.K.Dhavalikar123, D.R.Sahni124, J.Ph.Vogel125 and N.P.Joshi126 have published catalogues of Mathurā sculptures in the collections of Mathura Museum, Indian Museum, Baroda Museum, Lucknow Museum and Boston Museum. Besides, in their monographs, R.C.Sharma127, Sashi Asthana128 and Stainslaw. J. Czuma129 give detailed catalogues of Mathurā sculptures housed in the Mathura Museum, National Museum, New Delhi and in the Cleveland Museum of Art, U.S.A. respectively. In recent years Sonya Rhie Quintanilla highlights various issues related to the āyāgapattas of the Kushāṇa period.130

We have meagre knowledge about the researches in archaeology of the Mathurā region or of Mathurā itself. No comprehensive work has yet done on the archaeological importance of this region. Alexander Cunningham’s A.S.I. Reports may be taken as the first attempt towards the archaeological research in this region.131 Besides, the respective volumes of the Annual Progress Reports of the A.S.I.132 and IAR133 have corroborated valuable information regarding the archaeological discoveries at Mathurā. Prof. Herbert Härtel’s comprehensive report on excavations at Sonkh is also treated as a landmark in this field.134 In a recent seminar paper contributed in the volume of “Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage”, Härtel gives a detailed period wise distribution of the ceramic
industry as reported from Sonkh. In recent years, M.C.Joshi, C.Margabandhu, A.K.Sinha, R.C.Gaur, Jim.J.Shaffer, G.Fussman and others have studied and analysed archaeological sources for the reconstruction of the society, culture and economy of the Mathurā region particularly during the Kushāṇa period. In a recent seminar paper, on the basis of material remains of the latest excavations at Mathurā, Joshi tries to reconstruct the beginning and then the continuous growth of settlements at Mathurā, which culminates in complexity and prosperity between circa 2nd century B.C. and 3rd century A.D. In his paper contributed in the volume of “Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage”, C.Margabandhu discusses the patterns and distributions of etched beads available from Mathurā and argued that since we have no references to the bead making industry at Mathurā, these beads must have been brought from elsewhere. Occurrences of similar types of beads in other towns of north, central, eastern and south India possibly indicate that trade in these involved Mathurā. In another paper, on the basis of sculptural findings, Margabandhu tries to locate the major provenances of Buddhist centres at Mathurā. In their paper on terracotta objects, Joshi and Margabandhu give a period wise distribution of terracotta figurines reported from excavations at Mathurā. They classified the entire collection into two broad categories- ritualistic and secular. In this context we should mention that the works of V.S.Agrawala, P.L.Guta, M.K.Dhavalikar also incorporate valuable information regarding terracotta art objects of this region. In his work on archaeological remains of Mathurā, R.C.Gaur (with the help of archaeological and literary sources), tries to reconstruct the political and religious history of this region. A.K.Sharma's study on faunal remains of Mathurā gives a vivid picture of man-animal relationship as well as the food habits of the people of this region during 6th century B.C to 3rd century A.D. Besides, M.C.Joshi, A.K.Sinha and B.B.Lal have
also dealt with the problems related to the chronological sequence of Mathurā. According to Jim G. Shaffer, there is no gap between protohistoric and early historic periods at Mathurā and the initial occupation at the site seems to represent an indigenous cultural development, which underwent changes in the subsequent phases.\textsuperscript{148} In his recent paper G. Fussman presents a new approach of research on Mat devakula. On the basis of comparative study between Surkh Kotal temple in North Afghanistan and Māṭ devakula he has suggested that the Māṭ devakula is a shrine housing the deities to which Kushana royalty paid their reverence.\textsuperscript{149}

Apart from the above, A. Ghosh\textsuperscript{150}, Dilip K. Chakrabarti\textsuperscript{151}, B. R. Mani\textsuperscript{152} have highlighted the archaeological significance of Mathurā in the context of urban developments during the Kushāṇa period. In recent years excavation at the site of Kanishkapura or Kanispura in the Baramulla district of Kashmir, by B. R. Mani unfolded the evidence of a city complex possibly established by Kaṇiṣṭha in his own name. Rājatarangini of Kalhana also mentions the city and its association with Kaṇiṣṭha.\textsuperscript{153}

As the modern historiography is concerned, the work of Dr Vijaya Laxmi Sing deserves special mention. Dr Singh discusses various issues about the socio-political, cultural and economic aspects of the Mathurā region in the Early Historical period. She also formulated various opinions about the growth of Mathurā with its changing contexts for a much larger period. Though her major database is essentially epigraphic and numismatic sources, archaeological sources are sparsely highlighted.\textsuperscript{154}
There are numerous literary and archaeological sources highlighting the political, cultural and socio-economic aspects of the Mathurā region.

**Literary Sources:**

Regarding the literary sources, they may be divided into - Brāhmaṇical, Buddhist, Jaina texts and the accounts of the foreign travellers.

**Brāhmaṇical Texts:**

The Brāhmaṇical texts include the Early Vedic literatures, the Epics, the Purāṇas, the Later Vedic literatures including the Brāhmaṇas and the Sanskrit literary sources from the 5th-4th centuries B.C. onwards.

The city is variously mentioned in the Brāhmaṇical texts as Madhurā, Mahurā, Madhupuri, Madhusika, Madhupghanā and Mathula. It is also frequently known as Śurasena and Braja.

The early Vedic literature makes no direct mention of Mathurā nor of its variants such as Madhura, but on the basis of indirect references, scholars have attempted to speculate on the history of the Mathurā region. The Rgveda often refers to “Paṇcajana” or the five races or people or tribes such as Anus, Druhyus, Yadus, Thurvasu and Purus. Yadu as a clan or Yādavas is mentioned at least seventeen times in the passages of the Rgveda. After the defeat of the Yādavas in the ‘Battle of Ten Kings’, they or one of their septs (Sātavatas or Satvats) moved from the Sravasti region to Mathurā. They are also said to be involved in the raids across the Sarayū, which could place them to the north of
Mathurā. However, Śūrasena, associated with Mathurā is not mentioned in the Vedic literature, but in some occasions the word ‘Sura’ has been explained in the sense of a warrior or a hero\textsuperscript{167}.

The Dharmasūtras of Baudhāyana are an important source regarding the geographical conditions of the Mathurā or the Śūrasena region as it divides India into three distinct ethnic or cultural zones, of which the Āryavarta zone comprised of Kurukṣetra, Matsya, Pañcāla and Śūrasena\textsuperscript{168}.

The two great epics- Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa are also very important sources for the reconstruction of the history of Mathurā and its surrounding regions. These two epics narrate almost similar versions about the foundation of the city of Mathurā.

Mathurā is described in the Mahābhārata as the city of the Yādavas\textsuperscript{169} and is supposed to be the birthplace of Kṛṣṇa\textsuperscript{170}, who became the chief of the Saṅgha formed by the Aiḍhakas and Vṛṣṇis\textsuperscript{171}. Mahābhārata mentions the Śūrasena as among those who escaped from Jarāsandha, Sura being the father of Vāsudeva and Kunti\textsuperscript{172} and therefore an elder kinsman of Kaṁsa and Kṛṣṇa. Sahadeva is said to have conquered the Śūrasena country during his digvijaya to the southern regions\textsuperscript{173}. Elsewhere, the epic also mentions that the Janapada of Śūrasena situated close to the Kuru-Pañcāla and Matsya region and was visited by the Pāṇḍavas\textsuperscript{174}. Mahābhārata, as narrated by Harivaṁśa Purāṇa mentions that through Kaṁsa’s matrimonial relationship with Jarāsandha’s daughters Asti and Prapti, Mathurā is allied with Girivraja, the future Rājagṛha in Magadha\textsuperscript{175}. Later, Jarāsandha defeated Kṛṣṇa and the Bhojas of Mathurā. The Bhojas resisted him for some time and afterwards migrated to Gujrat and established at Dvārakā\textsuperscript{176}. The adherents of Kaṁsa at Mathurā became known as Dānavas\textsuperscript{177}. In another version of Mahābhārata, it is mentioned that Vāsudeva’s father was Śūrasena, who belonged to Yadu dynasty and he gave his daughter
Pritha to his cousin who did not have any issue\textsuperscript{178}. According to another version, Yudhishthira sent a messenger to Lord Kṛṣṇa at Mathurā and the latter came to Indraprastha accompanied by Indrasena and was consulted by Yudhishthira\textsuperscript{179}. While narrating the story of Mahābhārata, the Harivaṁśa Purāṇa also states that Mathurā is located at the heart of Madhyadēśa\textsuperscript{180}.

According to one tradition of the Rāmāyaṇa, the city was under the control of non-Aryan (asura) chief Lāvana during the days of Rāma. During Rāma’s reign at Ayodhya, his younger brother Śatrughna defeated Lavana and captured the city of Mathurā\textsuperscript{181}. The Rāmāyaṇa also states that the country of Śūrasena was named after its founder Śūrasena, son of Śatrughna\textsuperscript{182}. The epic also mentions that this city gradually became a celebrated centre of trade and commerce\textsuperscript{183}.

The Purāṇas are full of references to this region, highlighting on the historical as well as the religious importance of this region. Among them the Viśū Purāṇa, Harivaṁśa Purāṇa, Padma Purāṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Varāha Purāṇa are important.

Many of the Purāṇas associated Mathura with the Yādavas. While narrating the foundation of the city of Mathurā, Viśū and Bhāgavata Purāṇa states that after killing the asura Lāvana, Śatrughna cleared the forest Madhu and celebrated his victory by founding the city of Mathurā\textsuperscript{184}.

The Viśū Purāṇa links Śūrasena with the Yādava lineage as one among the hundred sons of Kartavirya\textsuperscript{185}. Another version of Viśū Purāṇa mentions that the Sātvatas sept of the Yādavas was sub-divided in to seven branches like the Daivāvyddhas, Aśdhakas, Mahābhjojas and Viśnis etc.\textsuperscript{186}

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa states the story of Kṛṣṇa in detail starting from the episode of his birth to the migration from Mathurā. The story
correlates the topography of the region and Kṛṣṇa-Kaṃsa episode simultaneously. Harivaṁśa Purāṇa also mentions about Kṛṣṇa’s association with Mathurā. It describes Kṛṣṇa’s three entries into Mathurā - when he reaches Mathurā along with Balarāma to kill Kaṃsa and when prior to his final departure for Dvāraka he returns to Mathurā twice after indecisive victories over Jarāsandha, he is welcomed as a God. Elsewhere, Harivaṁśa refers to the crescent shaped, well-established, well-demarcated, prosperous and cosmopolitan city of Mathurā on the bank of Yamuna.

According to Mārkandeya Purāṇa, while river Chambal flowed in its south, Matsya, Kuru and Pañcāla Janapadas formed the boundary of the Śūrasena Janapada on its west, north and east respectively.

The Skanda Purāṇa tells that after the Mahābhārata War, Arjuna tried to restore the power of the Yādavas to some extent. He got them settled down near Indraprastha and just before their great departure (Mahaprasthana) Yudhiṣṭhira installed Vajranābha on the throne of Mathurā.

One version of Varāha Purāṇ states that there is no place equal to Mathurā in this World or in the Upper World and people living there certainly get salvation. Another version of the same Purāṇa cites that there was a bathing place called Viśrānti ghat in the city of Mathura, where Kṛṣṇa took rest after his victory over Kaṃsa.

The Yuga Purāṇ section of the Gārgi Saṃhitā confirms that extensive attacks of the Yavanas affected Mathurā along with Sāketa and the Pañcāla regions before the offensive was launched against the Magadhan empire. In a significant note on the Yuga Purāṇ, D.C.Sircar opined that the raids were undertaken as early as the period of Demetrius I.
Vāyu Purāṇa refers to several Nāga kings, who probably reigned here during the beginning of the Gupta Empire\(^\text{195}\).

According to other Purānic sources that after defeating asura Lavana, Śatrughna reigned in this city with his two sons-Suvāhu and Śūrasena\(^\text{196}\). Different versions of the Purāṇas also state that Mathurā, the home of the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis was attacked by the demons\(^\text{197}\). Being afraid of the demons the Vṛṣnis and Aṇḍhakas left Mathurā and established their capital at Dvārvatī\(^\text{198}\).

The two Brāhmaṇas - Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and Šatapatha Brāhmaṇa mention the geographical position of the city of Mathurā.

The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa\(^\text{199}\) locates a habitat of the Sātavatas (one of the septs of the Yādavas) beyond (i.e. to the east or south-east) of the Kuru-Paṇcāla area\(^\text{200}\). The territory of the Kūrus included the Delhi area\(^\text{201}\) and the Paṇcālas included Rohilkhand and a part of the Central Doab\(^\text{202}\). So, this habitat of Sātavatas could be placed in the Mathurā region.

We learn from the Šatapatha Brāhmaṇa that the Sātavats were defeated by Bharata and the horse, which they had prepared for an Aśvamedha sacrifice was taken away by him. It also states that Bharat’s kingdom included the territory from where he can make offerings to the Saraswati, the Ganges and the Yamuna. So, the Sātavats must have occupied the surrounding regions\(^\text{203}\). The Epic and the Purānic traditions, which place the Sātavats in the Mathurā region is thus, confirmed by the Šatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

Mathurā also find its place in the earlier Sanskrit works including Mahābhāṣya of Patāñjali, Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini, Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya and subsequently in Manu Smṛiti and Raghuvaiṣṭa of Kālidāsa.

Mathurā attracted the notice of Patāñjali apparently as an important city\(^\text{204}\). Mahābhāṣya records that the residents of Mathurā became known as ‘more cultured’ than those of Saṅkāṣya and
Pātaliputra\textsuperscript{205}. Garments used by the people of Mathurā attracted attention of even outsiders. Patanjali\textsuperscript{206} mentions a particular type of garment (śātaka) used in Mathurā. His reference to the currency of Kārṣāpāṇa of Mathurā is the evidence of trading activities in the city\textsuperscript{207}. Patanjali’s reference to the Yavana raids (corroborated with the reference of the Yuga Purāṇa) does not relate directly to Mathurā, only Sāketa and Madhyādeśa in southern Rajasthan are mentioned in the text\textsuperscript{208}.

Pāṇini mentions the term Māthura denoting a person residing in (or owing loyalty to) a place called Mathurā\textsuperscript{209}. Āstādhāyī of Pāṇini states that the conditions of the city were good, the people were happy and good-looking and probably better than the residents of Śaṅkāsya and Pātaliputra.’ Pāṇini’s reference to Māthura, Aśadhaka-Vṛṣṇi Saigha, Vāsudeva-Vargya (i.e. a member of the society or the party of Vāsudeva) and Vāsudevaka (i.e. a worshipper or a follower of Vāsudeva) may also be interpreted in the perspective of the Epic and Purāṇic traditions\textsuperscript{210}.

The Arthasastra of Kautilya is a highly non-religious source dealing with the socio-political and economic history from 4\textsuperscript{th} century B.C. to 2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D. The Arthasastra refers to Māthura (i.e. belonging or produced in Mathurā) as the name of one of the seven best varieties of cotton\textsuperscript{211}.

Manu - Smīti (200B.C. – A.D. 200) denotes that the Brāhmaṇs of the Śūrasena country and the well-built warriors of that area continued to be held in high esteem\textsuperscript{212}.

The legend of Śatrughna as the founder of the city of Mathurā is also mentioned in the Rāghuvaiśa of Kālidāsa\textsuperscript{213}.

**Buddhist Texts:**

The Buddhist texts also throw enough light on various social, cultural and religious aspects of the Mathurā region. Among them mention may
be made of Anguttaranikāya, Majjhimanikāya, Vinānavatthu-Atīhakathā, Jātakas, Vinayapiṭaka, Milindapañha, Cūlavānisa, Dīpavānisa, Mahāvattu, Lalitavistara, Divyāvadāna, Aśokavadāna, Avadānakalpalata, Vinayavatthu, Dīghanikāya and others.

The Pāli canonical texts are the oldest available Buddhist sources which provide us the description of Mathurā.

The suttas of the Anguttaranikāya do not mention that Buddha ever visited the city itself, although one passage states that he journeyed along the highway between Madhurā (Mathurā) and Veraņjā. Veraņjā was probably in the neighbourhood of Mathurā and the conditions prevailing in Veraņjā were also present in Mathurā as well. A certain tree, called Naḷerunimba was depicted as a sacred spot on this highway.

Another sutta of the Anguttaranikāya mentions that once upon a time Mahākaccāna (Mahākaccāyana) lived at Mathurā in the groove called Gundā (Gunāvana). A Brahmin named Kandarāyana met him there and had a talk with him about the respect to be shown to the Brāhmaṇs and elders.

Another sutta of the same text states that a large number of householders were also present on the Madhurā-Veraņjā highway when the Buddha was travelling there with 500 monks. This statement indicates that during the time of Buddha a large mercantile community was active in and around the Mathurā region.

Besides this, the Anguttaranikāya provides very little information about the conditions in and around Mathurā. The Buddha seems to have viewed the city with distinct disfavour. In one sutta, he mentions about five disadvantages of the city- the grounds were uneven (visama), they were full of dust (bahurajā), there were ferocious dogs (caṇḍasunakkha), wild animals and bestial yaksas (vājāyakkha) and the alms were not easily procurable (dullabhapiṇḍa).
The *Madhurasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya* records that Avantiputta, a king of Mathurā once went to Elder Mahā Kaccāna and discussed with him about the pride and superiority of the Brāhmaṇas. After listening to the sermon of the Elder, the king was greatly upset to hear that the Buddha has passed away\(^{220}\). The *Atthakathā* of this *sutta* states that this Avantiputta was the son of the daughter of the king Avanti\(^{221}\).

The *Vimāṇavatthu-Atthakathā* tells the story of a woman of Uttara Madhurā who was at the end of her life and was about to fall into hell. The Buddha took pity on her and came to save her. The woman invited the Buddha to have his daily meal at her house. She fed him with her own hands with the result that she was reborn in heaven\(^ {222}\).

The Pāli commentaries including the *Jātakāthakathā* know only Madhurā and often refer it as Uttara Madhurā\(^ {223}\). The *Ghaṭajātaka* mentions that after the death of Mahāsāgara (the king of Uttara Madhurā), the two sons quarrelled with each other and the younger son Upasāgara went to *Uttarāpatha* in the Kaṃsa district and to the city of Astaṇjana ruled over by king Mahakaṃsa, who had two sons, Kaṃsa and Upakaṃsa and one daughter Devagabbha. Upasāgara married Devagabbha (Devakī). Devagabbha (Devakī) gave birth to ten sons of whom Vāsudeva and Baladeva were the two eldest. Ultimately, Vāsudeva and Baladeva killed Muṭṭhika and Cāṇūra, the two wrestlers of that city as well as the kings, Kaṃsa and Upakaṃsa. The *Jātaka* story ends with the accession of Vāsudeva to the throne of Mathurā. They then desired to conquer the whole of India and after capturing Ayojjhā proceeded to Dvāravatā (Dvārakā)\(^ {224}\).

The *Vinayapiṭaka*\(^ {225}\) gives a full account of a famine in Veraṇjā during the Buddha’s visit to that place. While narrating the story it states that, during this time some horse dealers of *Uttarāpatha* arrived at Veraṇjā with 500 horses and in the horse rings they prepared *pattha-*
measures of steamed grains for the monks. This *sutta* indirectly informs us about the economic conditions of the Mathurā region. The fact that 500 horses were brought there, which indicates that Mathurā was a prominent market place and must be situated between the *Uttarāpatha* and Madhyadeśa. According to the commentaries the food (*pulaka*) served during the famine, was unhusked, steamed barley and rice. The *patthā* seems to have been the smallest measure of grain equal to a small bamboo piece. According to the *Vinaya* commentary four such pieces made one *āhaka*²²⁶. The *Vinaya* texts also informs us that Jīvaka, the great physician and a contemporary of Buddha, proceeding from *Takṣaśilā* (Taxila) passed *Bhadramkara* (Sialkot), *Udumbara* (Pathankot) and *Rohitaka* (Rohtak) to Mathurā. From Mathurā this route proceeded to *Veraṇī, Soreyya, Sankisa, Kannakujja* and finally reached *Payagatittha* (Prayāga tirtha). Here crossing the Ganga it reached *Varānasī*²²⁷.

The *Milinda Pañha* mentioned Mathurā as one of the most famous place in India²²⁸.

The *Cūlavāṁsa* narrates the story of a king called Mahāśena of Pāṭaliputra who went to Uttara Madhurā in disguise as a labourer and gave alms to monks with the wages earned there²²⁹.

According to the *Dīpavaṁsa*, Sādhīna and his twenty-two descendents ruled the great kingdom of Madhurā or Mathurā²³⁰.

The *Mahāvatthu* mentions a rich banker at Mathurā having an unlucky daughter, who was brought up by an ascetic at the banker’s expense and was given religious instruction. She distinguished herself by her knowledge and cleverness in the discussion. She discussed the *śāstras* with the ascetics. At this time a learned Brāhmin came to Mathurā from the Deccan. The girl had a discussion with him for seven days, but she was defeated²³¹.
The *Lalitavistara* mentions Mathurā as a rich, flourishing and prosperous city. It was the metropolis of king Suvāhu\textsuperscript{232}. Elsewhere, the *Lalitavistara* also refers to the city of Mathurā, "Which is prosperous and large and beneficial and (a place where) alms are easily obtainable and which is abounding in men" \textsuperscript{233}.

The *Divyāvadāna* narrates the story of the Emperor Asoka's conversion to Buddhism with a description about his teacher, *sthavira* Upagupta. It mentions that the Buddha just before attaining his death arrived in the city of Mathurā. He then forecasted that two merchant brothers from Mathurā named Nāṭa and Bhāṭa would establish a *vihāra* on the Urumuṇḍa hill, which would be known as *Nāṭabhaṭavihāra*. There the Elder Śaṇakavāsī would ordain Upagupta.\textsuperscript{234} The *avadāna* tells that Upagupta received instructions from Śaṇakavāsī to cultivate only wholesome thoughts and to always conduct his business lawfully. A rich courtesan of Mathurā, Vāsavadattā falls in love with Upagupata, but he refuses her. Later, Upagupta met Vāsavadattā and preached the law to her. She took shelter in the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha just before dying and was reborn in a heaven.\textsuperscript{235} Upagupta was appointed as a monk and preached the doctrine of the Buddha. He became renowned and the Emperor Aśoka wanted to meet him. On hearing this Upagupta himself wished to meet the king at Pāṭaliputra. The king arranged boats for his journey from Mathurā to Pāṭaliputra.\textsuperscript{236} The later part of the *avadāna* describes the career of Upagupta as a preacher of the Law. The ending part of the *avadāna* states that Upagupta instructed all his disciples who had attained arhatship to place a four-inch stick (*kaṭikā*) in the cave of Urumuṇḍa hill.\textsuperscript{237} According to other version Upagupta's body was cremated with these sticks.\textsuperscript{238} The *Divyāvadāna* also highlights the trading activities of this region. It states that horses of fine breed were being imported from Uttarāpatha to Mathurā, Vārānasi and other places.\textsuperscript{239}
The *Avadāna-kalpalata* of Kṣemendra (circa 12th century) repeats the same legends mentioned in the *Divyavadāna*.240

The *Aṣokāvadāna* records that one Padmaka became a hermit, as he felt disgusted with the World after seeing a dead body. While at Mathurā he entered the house of a prostitute for alms. She became charmed with the hermit’s appearance and sought his love.241

The *Vinayavatthu* of the Mūla-Sarvāstivādins is probably the last canonical source on Mathurā. In addition to repeating the *avadāna* accounts about the *Naṭabhaṭāvihāra* and Upagupta’s activity, it also refers to some incidents, which took place during the Buddha’s alleged visit to Mathurā. *Vinayavatthu* places Mathurā between Bhadrāśva and Otalā, all within the territory of the Śūrasena kingdom. According to the text, Śūrasena with Mathurā as its capital was the ādirājya or the first kingdom because the people elected the king having the title of Mahāsaṃmata, ‘the Great Elected’.242 The story states that on hearing of the Buddha’s arrival in Mathurā, the Brāhmaṇas of Mathurā feared that if he entered Mathurā and preached his doctrine of salvation for all varṇas, their social status would be lost.243 During his journey the Buddha noticed five troubles in the city of Mathurā. The ground was uneven, it was covered with stones and brickbats, it abounded in prickly shrubs, the people took solitary meals and there were too many women.244 The *Vinayavatthu* also records that during his visit at Mathurā the Buddha converted a large number of yakṣas and yakṣis including Gardabha yakṣa, Śara yakṣa, Vana yakṣa, Yakṣīpi Alikavenda Maghā and Yakṣīpi Timisika. The text also mentions that the Buddha subdued altogether 2500 yakṣas in and around the city of Mathurā and the same numbers of vihāras were built by the devotees in the name of those yakṣas.245
The Jaina chronicles including *Niśithasūtra-cūrṇi*, *Āvaśyaka-cūrṇi*, *Ācāraṇīga-cūrṇi*, *Yaśastilaka-campu*, *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, *Bṛhatkathākośa*, are the most important ones demonstrating socio-cultural as well as economic history of the Mathurā region.

We learn from the Jaina literatures that Mathurā, also known as *Uttaramahurā* was the capital city of *Śūrasena*, a country described as ‘Āriya’, that is acceptable for sojourn by Jaina monks. 

According to the *Niśithasūtra-cūrṇi*, Mathurā was one of the ten capital cities where kings could be crowned. The other cities were Campā, Vārānasi, Hastināpura, Śrāvastī, Sāketa, Kampīlya, Kauśāmbi, Mithilā and Rājagṛha.

The *Āvaśyaka-cūrṇi* refers to *Indapura* (Indapura) as another name for Mathurā. It also records that Mathurā was a great commercial centre and from there merchants would go to conduct business in *Dakkhipa Mathurā* identified as modern Madurai.

The *Ācāraṇīga-cūrṇi* identifies Mathurā as a *thalapattana* (sthalapattana) where goods for trade were carried overland.

The *Bṛhatkalpabhaṣya* records it as a cloth manufacturing centre and a business centre whose inhabitants lived on trade and not on the cultivation of land.

Somadevasūri mentions Mathurā in his *Yaśastilaka-campu* of the 10th century A.D. He narrates the legend, according to which a Jaina *stupā* erected to Vajrakumāra, son of Somadatta during the reign of King Pūtikavahana. He also refers to Urvilā, queen of Mathurā who on the occasion of the Aṣṭāhikamahotsava would send out the rathayātra of the Jina.

Mathurā also finds its place in the Digambara accounts. Gaṇabhadra in his *Uttarapurāṇa*, (sarga 74) refers to Mahāvīr’s previous
birth as Vissanandi (Viśvanandi), son of Vissabhūi (Viśvabhūti) of Rājagrha, in connection with Mathurā.\(^{253}\)

Harīṣena in his *Brhatkathākośa*, story 2, depicts Mathurā as adorned with lofty Jaina temples and abounding in cows and in story 12, he refers to the rathayātri of Mathurā and the erection of the five Jaina *stūpas* after the defeat of the Buddhists.\(^{254}\)

Jinaprabhasūri in his *Vividhatīrthakalpa*\(^{255}\) mentions two Jaina monks visiting Mathurāpurī and staying in a park with the name ‘Bhūtarmaṇaudhāna’ during the era of the Jina, Supārśvanātha. They converted the presiding deity of this park, Kubera to the Jaina faith, who erected a *stūpa* at Mathurā for the Jaina Saṅgha’s worship. The story further proceeds to describe the *stūpa*. The central image of the *stūpa* was that of Supārśvanātha. This *stūpa* remained open to the air until the age of the Jina, Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third Jina. During this time a local king, attempting to seize its treasures, was killed by the goddess Kubera, who instructed the Jaina Saṅgha to brick over the *stūpa* and place a stone image of Pārśvanātha on the outside. In V.S. 826 (769 A.D.) in accordance with the council of Bappumaṭjisūri, King Ama repaired the *stūpa* and installed an image of Mahāvīra. Jinaprabhasūri also mentions the Mathurā Council, convened by Ācārya Khaḍḍila. So, it would appear that the *stūpa* still survived during the time of Jinaprabhasūri.

Besides, there are numerous references like *Uttarādhyayana sūta*, *Jñātādhammakathā*, *Vipākasūta*, *Āvaśyakasūtra-nirṇyukti*, *Viśeṣavaśyakabhāṣya*, *Kalpasūtra-vṛtti*, *Niśīthasūtra-bhāṣya*, *Uttarādhyayana-vṛtti*, *Uttarādhyayana-nirṇyukti*, *Uttarādhyayana cūrṇī* etc. throw much light on the history of this region.

*Uttarādhyayana sūta* mentions that Vāsudeva’s son Keśava married Rājimātī, daughter of Ugrasena. After that Rājimātī entered in the Jaina order. Rathanemi wanted to have her love, but maintaining the
honour of her family she refused Rathanemi and later on both of them practised severe austerities and reached the highest perfection. Other sources record a park at Mathurā known by the name of Bhāmpārava-devāṁśīa (Bhaṃḍāravatāṁśaka) visited by Pāsa (Pārśvanātha). Here too, was the shrine of the Yakṣa, Sudaṁśaṇa (Sudarśana), to which people made pilgrimage. This indicates that perhaps a thriving Yakṣa cult prevailed in this region.

It is also recorded that Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth and last titthayara (tīrthaṅkara) came to Mathurā during the reign of King Sirīdāma (Śīrīdāman). According to a legend, that Mahāvīra in a former birth, as Vissabhū (Viśvabhūti) had met his death on the horns of a cow and having prior to that he made a resolution to kill in a later existence his cousin, Viśāhaṇaṇī (Viśākhanandi), the son of the king of Rāyagīha (Rājagrha).

Elsewhere it is also recorded that, in the Jauṇāvāṁka-garden (Yavunāvakra), the Jauna (Yavuna) king of Mathurā murdered the monk Daṅḍa, and later, the king also became a monk.

Another name connected with Mathurā is that of the learned Ācārya Maṅgu, whose greed for food resulted in his rebirth as a jakkha (Yakṣa), as compared with the skilled Goṭhāmāhila (Goṭhāmāhila), a disciple of the Rakkhiya (Rākṣita) renowned for his victory in debate over heretics.

While recalling the legends of the Brāhmaṇical tradition, some Jaina texts mention that, in fear of Jarāsaṁśha, Daśāraśiṇha Vāsudeva Kaṇha (Daśārhaśiṇha Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa) fled from his birthplace at Mathurā to Bāravaī (Dvāravaṭī), capital of Suraṭṭha (Saurāṣṭra). King Dhara went from Mathurā to compete in the suvamvara of Dovāi (Draupadī), where she chose the five Pāṇḍavas as fruit of her nidāna of a previous birth.
Other Jaina accounts record that, prince Kālavaiśīka, who later became a monk, was born in Mathurā.267 Other natives of Mathurā were the princess Nīvūi (Nīrvṛti) 268 daughter of King Jīyasattu, King Saṁkha,269 who undertook the life of an ascetic and the purohīta Iṁdadatta, who enjoyed the questionable distinction of having had one of his legs severed by a merchant of the town.270

The Jaina suttas refer the city of Mathurā as Saurāapura or Śūryapura.271 According to a Jaina account, there was a powerful king named Vāsudeva in the town of Śauryapura (Mathurā). He had two wives, Rohiṇī and Devakī. Each of them had a beloved son named Rāma and Keśava.272

In his work, J.C. Jain refers to Mathurā as an important centre of Nāga-worship from where a number of Nāga images have been recovered.273

**Accounts of Foreign Travellers:**

Foreign travellers, who visited India in the ancient times, provided graphic descriptions of their visits to this city. Mathurā finds its place in the accounts of the Greek and Latin writers, i.e. Arrian and Megasthenes in the Mauryan period, Pliny and Ptolemy in 1st-2nd centuries A.D., Fa-hsien in the 4th century A.D., Hsuan-tsang in the 7th century A.D. and Bernier, Manucci, Travernier in the Mughal period.

Megasthenes, the Seleucid ambassador in the court of Chandragupta Maurya, was the first foreigner who wrote about Mathurā in his *Indīka*. One of the passages of his *Indīka*, quoted by Arrian states that 'Herakles is held in his special honour by the Sourasenoī, an Indian tribe' which possesses two large cities, Methora (Mathurā) and Kleisobera and through whose territory flows navigable river called...
Iobares' (Yamunā). Megasthenes also stated interesting legends about this Herakles, perhaps identified with Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa.

Pliny writes that the river Jomanes flows through the Palibothri (Pātaliputra) in the Ganges between the towns of Methora (Mathurā) and Chrysobara. It is not clear from Pliny's account, whether both the towns are situated on the same side or at some distance from each other. A town on each side of the river would mean a crossing point, possibly linking Mathurā to towns in the Doab such as Kāmpilya and Hastināpura with routes going further. Pliny also traced a highway from the Caspian to the mouth of the Ganges via Alexandria of the Arii (in Herat), Prophthasia of the Drangae (in the Seistan area), the city of Arachosii (Alexandria in Kandahār), Hartospana (Kabul), Paucolatis (Puṣkalavatī), Takṣaśilā (Taxila), a place on the river Inomania (Mathurā), a place on the confluence of the Lomania (Mathurā) and Ganges (Prayāga) and Palibothra (Pātaliputra). Lassen transcribes Chrysobara as Krisnapura and locates it at Agra.

Ptolemy refers to a city of Modoura, as the 'City of Gods'. This Modoura should be identified as southern Mathurā (Maduari), but the context of Pliny's writing suggests that it might be the northern Mathurā. Ptolemy states that it was not only a place where various cults flourished, but it was also a centre, where faith and ideas spread out to different distant areas. On the basis of information received from traders, he confirmed the hypothesis that in the process of gathering wealth in the hands of at least a class of people in Mathurā, Indo-Roman trade might have played an important role.

The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea alludes to transit of articles of commerce from China and through Bactria, north India (apparently passing through Mathurā), Ozene (Ujjain) to Barygaza, a port in Western India.
The Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien, who visited India around 400 A.D. called Mathurā as Ma-t’aou-lo or the Peacock city.\textsuperscript{283} He mentions that he visited Mathurā on his way from the Punjab to Saṅkāsa. Although his visit at Mathurā was short, but from his account we know that there were some 20 monasteries with 3000 monks on both banks of the Yamuna River. He also states that, near the vihāras/ monasteries, there were pagodas in honour of Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana and Ānanda. There were also pagodas in honour of the Sūtras, the Vinaya and the Abhidharma. It is also mentioned that the Mahāyāna followers made offerings to Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara and Prajñāparamita.\textsuperscript{284}

Another Chinese pilgrim Hsuan-tsang, who visited India around 630 A.D. referred to Mathurā as Mo or (Mei)-t’u-lo.\textsuperscript{285} We learn from his account that it was above 5000 li in circuit and the capital was about 20 li in circuit. The soil was very fertile and agriculture was the chief industry. The country also produced a fine-striped cotton cloth and gold. The climate was hot. There were 20 monasteries with only 2000 monks of both vehicles. There were also five deva temples of non-Buddhist sects. In addition to confirming Fa-hsien’s account of the pagodas, Hsuan-tsang narrates that ‘there are three topes all built by Aśoka; very numerous traces left by the Four Past Buddhas............’\textsuperscript{286} Hsūan-tsang also possibly visited the Nāṭabhaṭavīhāra and the cave of Upagupta and described its architectural features (‘going east from the capital five or six li one comes to a “hill monastery”........................kept........... ‘to the south-east of the cave and 24-25 li from it was a large dried up pond beside which was a tope...........’\textsuperscript{287} Doubts have risen on the reliability of Hsūan-tsang’s descriptions of Mathurā. Watters opines that he did not travel to the capital but only made a hurried journey across a part of the Śūrasena country. However, in absence of any other eyewitness accounts
of Mathurā, Hsūan-tsang’s report can be used to locate the *Naṭabhaṭavihāra* and cave monastery of Upagupta.\(^{289}\)

In this context we should mention that some Chinese and Tibetan sources have mentioned that Aśvaghoṣa, the great poet and author of the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda* was the spiritual counsellor of king Kaniśka.\(^{290}\) Scholars have opined that Kaniśka was ruling in Mathurā around 1st century A.D. and Aśvaghoṣa may have lived in that city, however this fact has not been mentioned in any of his works.\(^{291}\)

European travellers like Bernier\(^{292}\), Manucci\(^{293}\) and Travernier\(^{294}\), who visited India during the Mughal period, were extremely impressed by the beauty of the city of Mathurā.

**Archaeological Sources:**

The archaeological sources are the basic database for the present study. Therefore, they have elaborately discussed to show how the site of Mathurā and its adjacent areas has been archaeologically defined for a valid reconstruction of the history, culture, economy and society of Mathurā. Early explorations/trial excavations and excavations from 1954-55\(^{295}\) and 1973-76\(^{296}\) at Mathurā and during 1966-73 at Sonkh\(^{297}\) provide valuable archaeological materials to reconstruct the history of settlement patterns as well as the socio-economic transformations of this region. But the archaeological sources have some limitations. The main constraint lies in the absence of publications of detailed reports of excavations at Mathurā. Except the excavation report of Sonkh by Prof. Herbert Hārtel, we have no comprehensive excavation report for reconstructing the settlement history of this region. So, we have to depend on the unpublished materials housed in the Reserved Collections of Purana Quila, New Delhi besides other published records related to the archaeological significance of this region.
**Epigraphic Sources:**

A large number of epigraphic records of great palaeographical, linguistic and historical interest have been recovered from Mathurā region. These inscriptions throw enough light on the socio-political, cultural as well as the economic history of this region. There are different opinions about the date of the earliest inscription (or inscriptions) available from Mathurā. Epigraphists like G.Bühler and H.Lüders were of the opinion that the earliest inscription (or inscriptions) from Mathurā dated to the 2nd century B.C., whereas, writers like A.H.Dani and T.P.Verma opined that the earliest epigraphs of this region could be ascribable to the first half of the 1st century A.D. So, Mathurā inscriptions available from various Periods can be divided into - pre-Kṣatrapa, Kṣtarapa, Kushāṇa and post-Kushāṇa inscriptions. The epigraphs discovered from this region are mostly small, fragmentary private records of dedicatory nature engraved on statues, pillars, arches, votive tablets etc. Some of them are dated and others are undated. Except the lion-capital inscriptions of Rañjuvula and Šoḍāsa, which are in Kharosthi, all the inscriptions are written in the Brāhmī characters. Besides, there is another spurious inscription discovered from Rawal, which is also written in Kharosthi. The largest concentration of epigraphs containing the names of the Kushāṇa rulers was found from this region. At least hundred dated and hundred and thirty-eight undated Kushāṇa inscriptions were recovered from Mathurā and its surrounding areas.

The highlighting points/ information derived from the epigraphical records of this region are:

1. Succession or chronological order of the rulers in the Mathurā region.
2. List of territorial and administrative units of the region.
3. List of various official designations.
4. List of Jaina monastic orders.
5. List of Jaina monks and nuns.
7. List of Buddhist Viharas.
8. List of Buddhist male and female donors.
9. List of professional and non-professional groups.

**Numismatic Sources:**

Numismatic evidence is another important archaeological source, which helps us to throw enough light on the chronology as well as the monetary transactions of this region. The punch-marked coins constituted the earliest series of coins found from this region. But there are some controversies regarding the time of circulation of these coins in this region. Few punch-marked coins in the Mathura Museum\(^{306}\) and from the hoard of Sonkh\(^{307}\) revealed that these coins were probably in circulation between 7\(^{th}\) and 6\(^{th}\) centuries B.C., when the area was under the control of Śūrasena Mahājanapadas. P.L. Gupta has argued that even before the rise of the Maurays some punch-marked coins were issued from Mathurā for the kingdom of Śūrasena.\(^{308}\) However, during excavations at Mathurā and Sonkh no punch-marked coins have been reported prior to the N.B.P. levels. During excavations at both the sites punch-marked coins were found from the period ranging between the last half of the 4\(^{th}\) century B.C. and the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. In this context we should mention that at both the sites punch-marked coins were found in association with cast copper coins and die-struck coins. At Sonkh, silver punch-marked coins and uninscribed cast copper coins with crescent-on-hill motif have been unearthed from Levels 34-33.\(^{309}\) In Levels 32 and 31 besides silver punch-marked coins, few copper punch-marked coins were unearthed.\(^{310}\) In Levels 30-29, both
copper and silver punch marked coins have been found. Besides, Level 29 has yielded a die-struck coin with a standing human-figure before a bull and Ujjain symbols on the reverse. Excavations at Mathurā during 1973-76 have yielded a few square copper punch-marked coins from Period II (4th-2nd centuries B.C.). In the next phase (circa 2nd-1st centuries B.C.) the coinage in this region was represented by local coins of the so-called ‘Mathurā rulers’ as well as the coins of the Kṣatrapas. The local coins constituted the coins of the Mitras and Dattas. The earliest inscribed coins of Mathurā were issued by a local ruler Gomitra, whose coins have been reported from Level 28 at Sonkh. At Sonkh Gomitra was succeeded by at least three Mitra rulers namely Sūryamitra, Brahmanittra and Viśnumitra, whose coins have been unearthed from Levels 28-25. Gomitra issued coins in both silver and copper and the “Tree in Railing” motif is common on the reverse of all these coins. Mathura Museum also possesses coins of Gomitra and Sūryamitra. After the Mitras, Dattas ruler over Mathurā for about three quarters of a century. Allan mentioned about coins of at least six Datta rulers, namely Puruṣadatta, Uttamadatta, Rāmadatta, Kāmadatta, Bhavadatta and Śeṣadatta who ruler here for a considerable period of time. Two coins of Kṣatrapa ruler Hagāmaṣa and one coin of Rāmadatta have been found in Level 24 and twenty Kṣatrapa coins mainly of Rañjuvula and Śoḍāsa along with few coins of Rāmadatta have been unearthed from Level 23 at Sonkh. The finding of coins of Rāmadatta along with coins of the Kṣatrapa rulers reveals that they must have ruled concurrently over this region. Excavations at Mathurā during 1973-77 also yielded inscribed and uninscribed copper coins including those of the local rulers from Period III. Mathura Museum also possesses coins of Puruṣadatta, Uttamadatta, Rāmadatta and Kṣatrapas of Mathurā. The next phase was entirely represented by the coinage of the Kushāṇas, who ruled here from 1st to the 3rd centuries A.D. Excavations at Sonkh have yielded
coins of Wima Kadphises, Kañśka, Huviśka, Vāsudeva, and coins of Vāsudeva’s successors. All the coins are made of copper and shapes vary from circular to rectangular.\textsuperscript{320} Copper coins of Kushāṇa and imitation Kushāṇa coins have also been reported from excavations at Mathurā.\textsuperscript{321} Copper and gold coins of Wima Kadphises, Kañśka, Huviśka and Vāsudeva are also kept in the collections of the Mathura Museum.\textsuperscript{322} Besides, at least five hoards/treasure troves consisting coins of Imperial Kushāṇa and Later Kushāṇa rulers have been discovered from the Mathurā district.\textsuperscript{323} We have meagre knowledge about the coin types of the post-Kushāṇa period at Mathurā. Wheras, four coins of Sher Shah Suri have been reported from Level 8 at Sonkh.\textsuperscript{324}

**Sculptural and Architectural Sources:**

The sculptural and architectural sources throw enough light on the socio-religious life of this region. The art activities started in Mathurā around the later part of the 3rd century B.C., when several Yakṣa and Yakṣi images were carved.\textsuperscript{325} During the 2nd century B.C. Mathurā became a great commercial as well as religious centre of different faiths. This religious background was responsible for the art activities on a large scale during the time of the pre-Kushāṇas. During the 2nd – 1st centuries B.C., with the expansion of large-scale art activities at Bharhut and Sānchi, Mathurā artists also carved different sculptures in flat and low reliefs of the typical Śuṅga style. The sculptural representations of this period were reflected in the Yakṣa/Yakṣi images, Nāgī images, Jaina Ayāgapaṭṭas, Brāhmaṇical images including Balarāma, Surya, Gaja-Lakṣmi, Vasudhārā and Śiva liṅgas. Buddha was represented by symbols like Bodhi-tree or Jātaka representations in the railing pillars.\textsuperscript{326} In the early centuries of the Christian era, the Kushāṇas emerged as a central power with their vast empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan, India and
Rome. In continuation of the earlier styles, the Mathurā artists developed their own style and workmanship under the patronage of the Kushāṇa rulers. The continuity of the old tradition is reflected mainly in the low narrative reliefs and *Yaksha-Yakṣi* images, while the new styles are seen in the representation of gods and goddesses.327 The sculptures of Mathurā are mainly carved from the mottled red sandstone of Sikri, Rupbas and Karauli, located between Agra and Mathurā. The flatness and low relief of the Śuṅga sculptures of the 2nd-1st centuries B.C. was completely replaced by sculptures in bold relief and three-dimensional effects.328 During the Kushāṇa period Mathurā became an independent school of art and it contributed to other schools (Gandhāra, Amaravati and Sārṇath) of art that flourished during the same period.329 During this period Mathurā was an art producing centre and its sculptures have been found from different and widely spaced locations including Ahichchhatra, Sārṇath, Kauśāmbī, Śrāvasti, Kasiā, Sānchi, Bodhgayā, Rājgir, Sanghol, Vadnagar , Taxila etc.330 Recently N.P. Joshi has mentioned some new sites like Palwal, Bharatpur, Taîdwa, Bajidpur, Tusaram, Laharpur, Etah and Bhita, which have yielded Mathurā sculptures.331 A number of Buddhist figures have been found from Mathurā. At least 12 inscribed Buddha and Bodhisattva images dated to the Kushāṇa period are housed in the Mathura Museum332. Jain Tirthaṅkaras are found in two postures – seated in *padmāsana* and standing erect in *khādgāsana* or *kāyotsarga* mudras. We also find them in the centre of the numerous square and rectangular tablets of homage, called *aṭṭāgapatṭas*.333 Besides these Tīrthaṅkara images, there are some subordinate gods and goddesses like Naigameśa, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (Vāsudeva and Baladeva), Āryavatī, Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī found from the Mathurā region in the Kushāṇa period.334 Among the Brāhmaṇical images of the Kushāṇa period mention may be made of Surya, Ganapati, Śiva, Śakti, Vishṇu, Brahmā, Indra, Kārttikeya etc.335 Mathurā has also
yielded portrait statues of Kañiska, Wima Kadphises and other royal figures.336 Apart from the stone sculptures two bronze images have been unearthed from Kushāna period at Sonkh.337 The art activities also continued in the Gupta period. During the Gupta period Mathurā art was greatly influenced by the Sārnāth School of Sculptures. Besides Buddhist and Jain sculptures a few new Brahmanical deities such as Kṛṣṇa, Gaṇeśa, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Daṇḍa, Piṅgala, Hari-Hara were found. The figures of Yakshas and Nāgas were prominent during this time.338 In the medieval period the sculptural art of Mathurā did not entirely disappeared, but lost its original glory. During this time, the red sandstone was replaced by a buff coloured sand stone. The sculptures became more ornamented and deities were accompanied with vehicles and attendant figures.339

The structural / architectural remains of this region could be classified into secular and religious structures. During 1954-55 excavations at Katra, remnants of bamboo-and-reed huts with scanty backed bricks have been found from the upper levels of the N.B.P. period (4th-3rd centuries B.C.) and building activity in backed bricks have been noticed in the last phase of N.B.P. period (2nd century B.C.).340 Archaeological excavations at Mathurā and Sonkh unearthed mud floors, reed impressions and post-holes from Period I (circa 6th-4th centuries B.C.)341 In the next phase (circa 4th-2nd centuries B.C.) the tiny village settlement of Mathurā turned into an extensive urban settlement fortified by a massive mud wall (Dhulkot). The houses were generally built on compact mud platforms and the use of baked bricks was confined to a few structures in MTR-9 (Katra).342 The structural activity of Sonkh is almost similar to that of Mathurā. But the structural patterns of Sonkh do not indicate any kind of fortification during this time.343 During Period III (2nd-1st centuries B.C.) the settlement at Mathurā continued to flourish within the mud fortification, but the fortification wall probably
lost its utility. Towards the end of this period baked bricks were popularly used in construction. The excavated structural remains at Sonkh give an imaginative method of construction. The residential complex was clearly separated from the court complex. The court complex has two stages: 1) outer and 2) inner. The major structural significant of the Kushāṇa period at Mathurā (1st-3rd centuries A.D.) was the revival and enlargement of the mud fortification around the city. In addition an inner fortification with possibly semi-circular bastions and moat was also built. At Kaśkālī Tilā a tank complex with four phases of construction has been exposed. Evidence of baked bricks; brickbats, tiles etc have been unearthed. During this period the population of Sonkh further increased. The essential features of the buildings are the residential houses with bathrooms. The buildings were constructed on proper ground plans and systematic lay outs. We may assume that the structural remains of period V show a general decline of the township in the Mathurā region. The most impressive religious structure of the Kushāṇa period was the royal sanctuary at Māṭ, situated 9 miles north of Mathurā city. Rai Bahadur Pandit Radhakrishna, long time Curator of the Mathura Museum, excavated the site in 1911-12. Three more or less complete portrait statues, two images probably of deities, two inscriptions and the ruins of a brick temple were unearthed during excavations. Two Apsidal Temples (No.1 and 2) belonging to the Kushāṇa period have been unearthed from excavations at Sonkh. The Apsidal Temple No. 1 was situated in the centre of the successive settlement of the city. Seven occupational levels (Level 22- level 16) of the Kushāṇa period have been ascribed to this building. Hārtel describes it as the "First Hinduistic Kushāṇa brick temple" in the Mathurā district. During 1971-72, remains of a second Apsidal brick temple (Apsidal Temple No.2), situated 400 m north of the main excavation area have been exposed. The lower phase (Level-27) of the temple is datable to the
1st century B.C and the upper phase belonged to the Kushāṇa period. On the basis of accumulation of Nāga figures, it is clear that the upper structure of the Apsidal Temple No. 2 was dedicated to the Nāga cult.350 Besides these, the scattered and mutilated architectural remnants in form of railing pillars, pillar bases, doorjambs, lintels, brackets, capitals, votive stupas, etc. now preserved in the Mathura Museum, Lucknow Museum and Calcutta Museum give an idea about the religious architectural features of the Mathurā region.351

Ceramics:

Pottery is the most important archaeological material recovered from the Mathurā region. The PGW, BRW and its contemporary associated wares seemed to be the earliest (6th – 4th century B.C.) pottery of this region.352 In the next phase (4th – 3rd centuries B.C.) PGW and BRW terminated completely, while NBPW and its associated potteries including plain grey ware and red ware became more frequent.353 In the succeeding period (2nd– 1st centuries B.C.) the style of Mathurā pottery did not undergo sudden changes. This period witnessed the last phase of NBPW and prolific use of utilitarian red ware with simple designs. The black slipped grey wares survived only in the form of some typical bowls. During the end of the 1st century B.C., some of the pots were found stamped with nandyāvarta, rosette and other symbols.354 The ceramic tradition, which generally identified as ‘Kushāṇa Pottery’ apparently continued in the long time span ranging between 1st and 3rd centuries A.D. The ceramic industry of this period was entirely represented by utilitarian red wares with different shapes. During this time a number of shapes of the preceding period show further development and in addition quite a number of new shapes appeared. Another striking feature of this period was the stamping of storage vessels, jars with various designs and
auspicious symbols like fish, śrīvatsa, svastikā, hamsa, samkha, 
nandyāvarta/nandipada/triratna, purnaghata, cakra, vajra, 
pāṇīchāṅguli/palm, anthropomorphic figure etc.355 In the succeeding 
periods some cruder varieties of red slipped ware, thin grey ware, black-
on - red ware and moulded pottery have been reported from this 
region.356

**Terracotta, Metal, Stone and Miscellaneous Objects:**

Other archaeological objects (in forms of terracotta, metal, stone, bone, 
ivory, shell and glass) provide enough scope to explore the idea about the 
genesis of art activity as well as the technological status experienced by 
the people of Mathurā.

The terracotta objects reported from the Mathurā region could be 
divided into different morphological character. Some are diagnostically 
household objects, such as dabbers, terracotta wheels, reels, toy carts, 
discs, spindle whorls, skin rubbers, stopper, rattles, terracotta balls, 
gamesmen; ornamental objects like terracotta bangles, pendants and 
beads, whereas there are a few specimens, which belong to a 
miscellaneous category like votive tanks, potters stamps, potters moulds, 
jewellery moulds, coin moulds, seals & sealings etc. Besides, there are 
large numbers of terracotta sculptures of religious and non-religious 
categories reported from this region.357

Metal objects recovered from this region are mainly represented by 
various iron and copper object. Besides some brass, bronze, lead and 
gold objects have also been reported from Sonkh. Iron objects included 
arow heads, spear heads, nails, knives, chains, clamps, ladles, sickles, 
rattle bells, rods, hooks, chisels, slags, daggers etc. Copper objects 
comprised antimony rods, bangles, rings, wire, beads, bracelets, 
pendants, nail parers, plates etc. Brass and lead were mainly used for
making ornamental objects such as bangles, bracelets, rings etc. Besides, two bronze images and few minute gold objects have been reported from this region. All these metal objects were mainly used for hunting, households, and ornamental purposes. These objects indicate the procurement and consumption of metals in this region.358

Stone objects are also a part of the assemblages found from the Mathurā region. The main purpose of these objects/ artefacts would be significantly associated with households and the possibility of their use in daily life, wherever and whenever needed. These stone objects include-milling tools like querns, pestles, dabbers, mortars, ring stones; stone balls, discs, stone plaques and trays, caskets and lids and beads of various semiprecious stones. The presence of huge varieties of semiprecious beads in this region may suggest that trading routes between Uttarāpatha and Dakṣināpatha, possibly passed through Mathurā.359

Apart from the above-mentioned objects, miscellaneous artefacts like styli, hairpins, anthropomorphic figures of bone; shell bangles and beads, combs and stands of ivory and glass beads have been reported from this region.360

Excavations and Explorations:

In 1853, Sir Alexander Cunningham first visited this region and collected some railing posts and an inscription near the Katra mound.361

In 1860, Growse discovered a large number of sculptural-architectural fragments and few inscriptions mentioning a monastic establishment in the city from the mound of Jāmalpur.362

During 1862-63 Cunningham resumed his exploration at Mathurā. In 1862 he obtained an architrave with Buddhist scenes including a standing Buddha image and other architectural members
from Katra. In 1863, he discovered a large stone slab inscribed with the name of Kunda-suka vihāra from the Jail mound.

In 1869, Bhagwanlal Indraji visited Mathurā and collected a female statue and a famous lion sculpture with eighteen Kharosthi inscriptions from Saptarshi Tīlā.

In 1871-72, Cunningham revisited Mathurā and explored four important sites/mounds including Kaṅkālī Tīlā, Chaubārā, Chaurāsī and Bhūteśvara. The important discoveries made during this season were- inscribed images of Jaina Tirthankaras from Kaṅkālī Tīlā; remains of a stūpa, Buddha image from Chaubārā mounds; five railing pillars and other architectural members from Bhūteśvara. Unfortunately Cunningham failed to collect any stone images from Chaurāsī Tīlā.

In 1873-74, Growse visited the site of Pālikherā and obtained the so-called Bacchanalian group of sculpture and three bell shaped pillar bases from the site. In 1874, he also explored a very large mound near Jāmalpur and collected large sized bricks and massive stone slabs.

During his last expedition at Mathurā in 1882-83, Cunnigham explored the site of Parkham, Mahwan, Mahāban, Lohban, Pālikherā, Morā, Anyor, Koṭa and Chaumuha along with some isolated sites/mounds in Mathurā city and discovered a number of sculptural-architectural fragments, epigraphical records and bricks.

During 1888-91, Dr A. Führer excavated the site of Kaṅkālī Tīlā and unearthed the evidence of a prosperous Jaina establishment at the site.

In 1896, Dr. A. Führer conducted excavation at Katra and unearthed remains of a Buddhist stūpa along with a short dedicatory inscription and other sculptural-architectural fragments.

In 1910, Pandit Radha Krishna discovered sacrificial railing posts from the site of Isāpur.
During 1911-12, Pandit Radha Krishna conducted excavations at Katra and Māt and explorations/trial diggings at the site of Morā, Gaṅeshrā, Naugavā and Jaisinghpura. The noteworthy discoveries were: remains of a brick stūpa of 6th century A.D and few sculptures of later periods from Katra; remnants of a Royal Sanctuary along with some inscriptions and royal portraits from Māt; an inscription of Šoḍāsa from Morā; a seated Bodhisattva, an inscription mentioning the construction of a stūpa and twenty four bricks and brickbats of the 3rd–2nd centuries B.C. from Gaṅeshrā; inscribed pedestal of a seated Buddha image from Naugavā; and fragments of Buddha image, some lion figures and fragments of stone pillars from Jaisinghpura.

In the years 1914-15, hundreds of sculptures were discovered from a number of wells (Keshavadeva well, Kaṅkāḷī-Ṭilā well, Salempur well, Gaṅesh Ṭilā well, Jaisinghpura well, Pālikherā well II, Rāniwalā well, Mansāwalā well etc.) in and around Mathurā.

In 1915-16, trials excavations at Pālikherā by Pandit Radha Krishna resulted in the discoveries of an inscribed stone bowl, an inscribed Bodhisattva image and detached head of an Indo-Scythian prince.

In 1918, a trial excavation was conducted at Bajna and it yielded few sculptural and architectural fragments from the site.

In 1922-23 partial diggings at the village Naroli have yielded some Buddhist sculptures.

In 1940, a small-scale excavation was carried out at the site of Maholī under the supervision of Hilary Waddington. The excavation has yielded a large number of materials of the Kushāṇa period including typical Kushāṇa bowls ("open bowls"), Kushāṇa glazed pottery and architectural fragments.
In 1945, Stuart Piggott produced a plan of the mud fortification around the site of Mathurā and recovered PGW and NBPW from the sections.395

In the Post-Independence period, for the first time a small scale excavation was conducted under the supervision of M.Venkataramyya and B.Saran of the A.S.I. in 1954-55 near Sri Krishna Janamsthan or Katra and unfolded a cultural sequence ranging from circa 6th century B.C. to circa 6th century A.D.396 The summary of the excavation is as follows-

**Period I:** was marked by plain grey wares and polished black wares. The other finds were terracotta discs, balls, beads etc.

**Period II:** was divided into three sub-periods IIA, IIB and IIC.

  * **Sub-period IIA**—yielded remnants of bamboo-and-reed huts with scanty baked bricks, bone styli, carnelian beads, terracotta Mother-Goddess and animal figurines, three terracotta ring wells etc.

  * **Sub-period IIB**—yielded square copper coins, terracotta beads, carnelian beads, copper antimony rods, terracotta Mother-Goddess and animal figurines etc.

  * **Sub-period IIC**—yielded baked brick structures, coppersmith’s furnace and workshop, copper coins, beads of shell, glass and crystal, terracotta human and animal figurines etc.

**Period III:** was notable for various types of beads in crystal, agate, carnelian, lapis lazuli, faience, jasper and shell, bone dice, copper coins of the Kushanas, stone caskets and turquoise blue glazed finial etc.

**Period IV:** was distinguished by the presence of double moulded terracotta figurines of dwarfs and grotesque figures.

**Period V:** was marked by the existence of terracotta sealings and coins of the early and late Gupta periods, terracotta human and animal figurines etc.
Extensive excavations were carried out at the mound of Sonkh, some 30 kms to the southwest of Mathurā city under the supervision of Prof. Herbert Härtel during 1966-73. As a result of these excavations the following sequences were obtained:

Period I [PGW & BRW – Levels 40-37]: was marked by the presence of PGW, BRW and its associate wares, post holes and reed impressions, terracotta animal figures, discs, balls, bangles of terracotta, iron arrowheads, beads of carnelian, agate, copper etc.

Period II (Pre & Early Maurya, Maurya and Śuṅga – Levels 36-29): This period was marked by the use of NBPW, coarse grey wares, black-slipped grey wares and ordinary red wares. Other important findings were mud brick structures, silver and copper punch-marked, uninscribed and die-struck coins, arrow heads and nails of iron, copper bracelet, terracotta human and animal figurines, votive tanks, wheels, discs, spindle whorls, skin rubbers, reels, game pieces, balls, jewellery mould of terracotta, quern tables and balls made of stone, anthropomorphic bone figure, beads of all materials except lapis lazuli, faience, glass and gold-foil.

Period III (Mitra- Levels 28-25): was marked by the presence of plain and stamped red wares, introduction of baked brick structures, ring wells, plaques, animal figurines, votive tanks, toy-carts, dabbers, rattles, amulet, pendant, inscribed seals and other terracotta objects of period II, quern plates, pestles, dabbers, discs, balls, caskets of stone, bone styli, shell bangles, beads of all materials except lapis lazuli etc.

Period IV (Ksatrapa & Rāmadatta – Levels 24-23): The important findings of this period were plain and stamped red ware vessels, various structural activities like houses, streets, bathrooms, coins of Hagāmaṣa, Rañjuvula, Śoḍāsa, Rāmadatta, arrowheads, spear heads, knives, chains, rods, clamps, spoons, ladle of iron, copper goblet, terracotta human and animal figurines, terracotta objects as also found from Period II and III,
inscribed seals, mortars, ring stones, dabbers, pestles, caskets of stone, bone styli, shell bangles, beads of all materials except lapis lazuli.

**Period V (Kushāna – Levels 22-16):** was marked by the presence of plain as well as stamped red wares, seven levels of structural activities and constructional activities of Apsidal Temple No.1, coins of Wima Kadphises, Kaṇiṣka I, Huviṣka, Vāsudeva and his successors, Bronze figures of Skanda and a couple deity, arrow heads, spear heads, knives, sickles, clamps, rattle bell of iron, antimony rods, bangles, rings of copper, terracotta human and animal figurines, votive tanks and other terracotta objects as mentioned earlier, stone sculptures, tray, caskets, and other stone objects mentioned in Period II, III and IV, bone styli, shell bangles, beads of all materials etc.

**Period VI (Gupta to Early Medieval- Levels 15-12):** was distinguished by the use of red slipped wares, moulded pottery, arrowheads, rods, chisel, nails, hooks, chains, dish, bottles of iron, wire of copper and brass, terracotta human and animal figurines, wheels, discs, spindle-whorls, dabbers, game pieces, balls of terracotta, plaques and rotary querns of stone, beads of usual materials except copper.

**Period VII (Medieval – Levels 11-8):** was marked by a restricted use of red wares and appearance of thin grey wares. Other noteworthy findings were - four coins of Sher Shah Suri, rods, nails, chain of iron, copper plate, ring of brass, terracotta female and animal figures, discs, spindle-whorls, game pieces, balls of terracotta, plaques, pestle, hammer stone of stone, beads as in period VI etc.

**Period VIII (Mughals to Jāts – Levels 7-1):** The important findings of this period were black-on-red pottery, moulded grey wares, structural activities including fortresses, mud fortifications and moat, arrow heads, clamps, cannon balls of iron, rings of copper, terracotta human and animal figurines, terracotta spindle whorls, balls, toy guns, stone reliefs, beads of shell etc.

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Excavations at Mathura from 1973 -1977\textsuperscript{398} were conducted by the A.S.I. under the supervision of Shri M.C.Joshi. Joshi excavated around fourteen sites inside the modern Mathura city. The principal objectives of the above excavations were to examine the antiquity and character of the historical Mathura. Due to the presence of constructions and urban encroachments in the ancient occupational areas, the excavators failed to get a complete picture of the ancient settlement. As a result of these excavations a cultural sequence comprising of the following five periods came to light-

Period I (circa 6\textsuperscript{th} to 4\textsuperscript{th} century B.C.): was marked by the presence of PGW and other associated wares and divisible in to two sub-periods-IA and IB.

Sub-Period IA - was marked by the occurrence of PGW, plain grey ware, BSW besides red wares. Other notable finds comprised mud floors with postholes, gamesmen, discs, ghata shaped beads of terracotta, stone pestles, bone arrowheads etc.

Sub Period IB - this sub-period did not show ant major change in pottery types except for the appearance of 17 sherds of NBPW. Other important finds were mud floors with post holes, terracotta animal figurines, gamesmen, discs, ghata shaped beads of terracotta, bone arrowheads of bone, antimony rods of copper, arrowheads, spear heads, slags of iron, beads of semi-precious stones etc.

Period II (circa 4\textsuperscript{th} to 2\textsuperscript{nd} century B.C.): was distinguished by the use of NBPW and associated pottery including plain grey ware and red ware. Structural activities were represented by mud floors without postholes, U-shaped ovens, limited use of brunt bricks and construction of mud fortification. Important antiquities of the period comprised a few punch-marked coins of copper, terracotta human and animal figurines, gamesmen, toy cart wheels, discs, ghata shaped beads and bangles of terracotta, stone querns and beads of semi-precious stones, arrow heads,
awls, kohl sticks, antimony rods of bone, wire of copper, arrowheads, spear heads, knives, nails, chisel, slags of iron etc.

**Period III (circa 2nd to 1st century B.C.):** was marked by the last phase of NBPW and prolific use of utilitarian red ware. The early levels of this period showed structural activities in mud and brunt bricks were used towards later half of the period. Notable findings of the period were inscribed and uninscribed copper coins, inscribed seals, terracotta human and animal figurines, gamesmen, toy carts, toy cart wheels, areca nut shaped beads, bangles of terracotta, stone sculptures, stone querns, beads of semiprecious stones, borers and arrowheads of bone, shell bangles, antimony rods and pendants of copper, arrow heads, spear heads, daggers, nails of iron etc.

**Period IV (circa 1st to 3rd century A.D.):** This period dated to the Śaka-Kushāṇa times, witnessed major structural activities as indicated by i) use of burnt bricks in the construction of drains, walls, pavements and house floors, ii) construction of a burnt brick tank complex at Kaṅkālī Tīlā, iii) revival and enlargement of mud fortification. The ceramic industry of this period was entirely represented by utilitarian red ware. Main shapes were bowls, basins, vases, lids, storage jars, sprinklers, spouted vessels etc. Red Polished ware sherds were found in limited quantity. An interesting feature of the ceramic industry was stamping of vessels with different stamp motifs and auspicious symbols. Other important findings were Kushāṇa copper coins, seals and sealings, stone inscriptions, terracotta human and animal figurines, human shaped pendant, toy cart wheels, arecanut shaped beads, bangles of terracotta, stone sculptures comprised a life sized flaming Buddha, querns, caskets and lids of stone, semiprecious stone beads, arrowheads, kohl sticks, beads of bone, shell and ivory bangles, antimony rods, pins, nail parers and beads of copper, arrowheads, spear heads, knives, nails, clamps of iron etc.
Period V (circa 4th to 6th century A.D.): was characterized by the presence of mud platforms with traces of structures on the top. The pottery of this period consisted of basins, vases and sprinklers of a cruder variety. Important antiquities included Buddha heads in the Mathurā art tradition, a head less image of Vishnu and terracotta figurines in the Gupta style.

Besides, after the independence, a few sites of this region have been explored by different authorities from time to time.399

In the recent years, Dr Dilip.K.Chakrabarti and his associates also carried out extensive fieldworks in this region. Their work is a significant addition to the researches in cultural history as well as settlement patterns of this region, which flourished during the Kushāna period.400

Both literary and archaeological sources have significance in reconstructing the history of the Mathurā region. In one hand, the literary sources help us to know about the geography, socio-economic, political and religious conditions of this region; on the other hand, the archaeological sources help us to know about the settlement history and material culture of the region under purview. Here we have given emphasis on the archaeological sources and made an attempt to correlate the literary and archaeological sources, wherever and whenever possible. While correlating the literary and archaeological sources, we may put forward some tentative observations-

1. The earlier city of Śūrasena Mahājanapada was referred in the Aṅguttaranikāya as dusty, with uneven grounds, infested with fierce dogs and even for dearth of alms. This situation can be compared to the stage of small settlement of the PGW period.

2. In the next periods (4th – 1st century B.C.), this region became a flourishing settlement with house planning and mud fortification. This changing condition can be appreciated from a passage in the
Mahābhāṣya of Patanjali. The text mentions that, the people of Mathurā were more cultured than the citizens of Saṅkṣya and Pāṭaliputra.

3. Harivamsa Purāṇa refers to the crescent shaped, well-established, well-demarcated, prosperous and cosmopolitan city of Mathurā on the bank of Yamuna with its high defences and moates. This reference can be confirmed to a considerable extent by the archaeological evidence of Period IV at Mathurā. Apart from the enlargement of the mud fortification, an inner fortification with semi-circular bastions and a moat have been unearthed during this Period.

4. The Vinaya texts, Divyāvadāna, Āvaśyaka-cūrṇi, Acāraṅga-cūrṇi, foreign travellers like Pliny and Ptolemy mention various internal and external trade routes which connecting Mathurā with other regions. These texts also refer Mathurā as a great commercial centre. The trading activities of Mathurā could be substantiated by the findings of archaeological materials (sculptures, semi-precious beads, terracotta objects and others) of Mathurā in other sites or vis-à-vis. Besides, the epigraphs of Mathurā mention different professional groups, mercantile guilds, financial and organizational institutes for long distance trade like Śreṣṭhin (bankers or the foreman of the guild), Sārthavāha (caravan merchants) etc.

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