In his monumental work, "A Study of History," Arnold Toynbee has observed, "Every civilization has a style of its own in the domain of art. Indic civilization as well as the affiliated Hindu Civilization displays a manifest tendency towards an outlook that is predominantly religious."\(^1\) Alike is the opinion of Dr. A. L. Basham\(^2\) about the available art-relics of ancient India. As a matter of fact, religion has been a great force in India ever since the genesis of Indian civilization, and is still accorded the foremost place among the four aims, which an orthodox Hindu is supposed to strive for throughout his life. Spiritualism is rooted in the very soil of India. The line separating secular life from the spiritual has, perhaps, never existed in India, because the sense and significance of the word 'Dharma' is so deep and comprehensive, as to encompass almost all aspects of life from birth to death.

In the present thesis, the word 'religion' has been taken in the sense of a cult which involves the presence of a divine personality as the condition sine qua non. Cult is essentially a system of faith and worship, implying human recognition of a personal god entitled to obedience and its effect on conduct. Drawing a distinction between religion and philosophy, Dr. R.K. Tripathi\(^3\)

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2. Basham, A. L.: The Wonder that was India, P. 346.
II

remarks, "There is no harm if religion believes in God as a person, in His incarnation or in creation out of His fiat or will. But this is not admissible in philosophy which is critical and rational."

Bearing in mind this essential difference between the two, an attempt has been made in the present work to trace the history of all cults - orthodox as well as heterodox - that have existed in Bundelkhand, on the basis of available evidence.

It needs to be pointed out here that the work is mainly based on archaeological evidence. Barring the solitary drama of Śrīkrṣṇa Miśra entitled, 'Prabodha-candrodaya', no other literary work of ancient India may be associated with certainty to Bundelkhand region. Therefore, the supplicant of the present thesis was compelled to depend mainly on archaeological sources. However, the account of Čedi janapada and its people given in different ancient texts has been duly utilized.

Numerous religious symbols have been discovered in ancient pottery and rock-paintings of Bundelkhand. Identical depiction is available from the numismatic evidence which provides us with representations of cult deities also from the Gupta period onwards. The epigraphic records of the area, by and large, were motivated by religious aims and most of them are dedicatory in character. With regard to the sculptural and architectural remains, one can remark, unhesitatingly that the art history of Bundelkhand is verily its spiritual history. Thus there is hardly a branch of historical archaeology, as far as Bundelkhand is concerned, that does not reflect the contemporary religious life and beliefs. Religion imparts, as it were, an inherent unity to the material available to us. Note may be taken here that the use of pottery and rock-paintings as source of religious history of the region has been made for the first time in the present thesis.
III

From times immemorial, Bundelkhand has been a distinct political or administrative unit, possessing linguistic unity and natural boundaries. An attempt has been made in the present work to trace the origin and history of its name with the help of ancient inscriptions and literary references. The geographical and political frontiers of Bundelkhand have found mention in these sources. The Geographical extent of Bundelkhand, therefore, has been defined, for the purposes of present work, with reference to and in agreement with them. Five districts of Uttar Pradesh and six districts of Madhya Pradesh constitute Bundelkhand. They are -

(1) Banda  (2) Hamirpur  (3) Jalaun
(4) Jhansi  and (5) Lalitpur (of U.P.), and
(6) Sagar  (7) Damoh  (8) Chhatarpur
(9) Panna  (10) Tikamgarh  and (11) Datia (of M.P.),

The work is based on the study of evidence available from these districts.¹

II

India being a vast sub-continent, the importance of regional history in our country can hardly be over-estimated. Recently some books have been published bearing upon the history of different regions of India. But they are mostly concerned with political history, in which names of kings and dates of battles matter much. History is not merely a chronicle of events. It should rather represent the evolution of human society. Free and Democratic India expects her scholars to write a history, in which life of the common man of by-gone times is also properly documented. Welcome attempts,
therefore, are now being made at writing the economic and
socio-cultural history of different regions of India. Few have yet
entered the realms of religion - the predominant element in ancient
Indian life. Mine is a modest attempt in this regard, aimed at
reconstructing the religious history of Bundelkhand.

Almost all available books on the history of
Bundelkhand are connected with the Chandella period, and cover a
period of about three centuries. They pertain to its political
history. A few works dealing with the history of different parts of
Bundelkhand are also available. Shri Gorenial Tiwari wrote a complete
history of Bundelkhand about half-a-century ago and much new and
valuable information has come to light since then. The available
information on the history of Bundelkhand being meagre, the supplicant
of the present thesis was required to collect first-hand information.
Extensive exploration and investigation work was undertaken and all
the districts were personally visited, about sixty important
archaeological sites of the area were covered. Monuments standing
there and art-relics lying at and around them were thoroughly studied
and some of them were photographed. Barring four, all the photographs
accompanying the present thesis were personally taken by the author
of the present work. Richly rewarding proved this exploration work
leading to important and startling discoveries that constitute the
solid contribution of the present thesis. Rare icons, unnoticed
sculptures and temples and unnoticed archaeological sites find mention
and description in the present work.

Prominent among the discoveries is the Visnu temple
of Brahmswānā (Dist. Sagar) (Plate No.II.Fig.No.4) one of its outer
niches accommodated a beautiful icon of Gowardhanadbi Kṛṣṇa (Plate
No.II.Fig.No.1). It is noteworthy that Kṛṣṇa's feat of lifting

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1. For detailed description of the temple, see pages - 175-77.
mountain Govardhana does not find representation anywhere else in the art of Bundelkhand. In this respect the icon is unique. The sculptures of Sharchā (Dist. Sagar) are also a new find. An icon of Lakulīśa among them is noteworthy for its iconography (Plate No. VIII. Fig. No. 6) at Mahoba (Dist. Hamirpur) a unique icon of sixty-four-armed Gāmundā (Plate No. XII. Fig. No. 1) is lying in the garden of S.D.M.'s Bungalow. No other icon of the goddess with so many hands has so far been noticed anywhere else. No less important is the find of a Ganapati icon from Dūndhani with representation of Ardhanārīśvara in the upper section of its prabhavali (Plate No. XIII. Fig. No. 4). The icons mentioned above, could easily become the pride of any archaeological museum for being rare, but they are yet to find a brief respite from their ceaseless war with forces of Nature and Time.

The discovery of a solitary Buddha icon from Bāsā Tarkhedā in Damoh district is important for it constitutes the first available evidence of Buddhism from that district. A Śiva temple of post-Gupta period at Bānāvānsā (Dist. Damoh) is also a new discovery. Mahutā in Sagar district is also a new site. Numerous sculptures belonging to Brahmanical temples of late-medieval times lie on this island.

The discovery of rare icons and unnoticed temples mentioned above constitutes a contribution of the present thesis to the study of art and archaeology of Bundelkhand. Extensive explorations undertaken on the other hand indicate that the work is not based on secondary sources.

III

The thesis is divided into ten chapters. Of these the first three relate to the definition of Bundelkhand, its political history and archaeology respectively. In subsequent six chapters the religious history of Bundelkhand has been narrated dividing it into six periods and devoting one chapter to each period. The sources
of information for each of the periods have been indicated at the beginning of each chapter. The last chapter deals with elements of mythology and symbolism in the art of Bundelkhand.

First chapter deals with the origins of the name 'Bundelkhand' and fixes its geographical frontiers giving it a historical basis and tracing its historical boundaries.

The second chapter contains a brief political history of Bundelkhand from the Proto-historic times to the advent of the Muslims. Mention has been made in it of all the kings and dynasties that ruled in Bundelkhand or any of its parts, maintaining their chronological sequence as far as possible. Sufficient light has been thrown on the post-Mauryan and post-Gupta history of Bundelkhand in the light of new evidence. All the controversial questions pertaining to the political history of Bundelkhand have been referred to and discussed. Religious faith of each dynasty has been briefly mentioned.

The third chapter contains a description of all the important archaeological sites. Their location, the account of antiquities that they possess and the nature of evidence that they supply, all this forms the subject of this chapter.

With fourth chapter begins the religious history of Bundelkhand. It covers the prehistoric and proto-historic periods. Origins of religion and earliest manifestation of religious consciousness have been discussed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter covers the Mauryan period (B.C. 320 to 185). A copy of the Minor-rock-Edict of Asoka found in our area has been discussed and information available from rock-paintings and numismatic evidence of the period has been utilised.
The sixth chapter covers the Interim period (C. 185 B.C. to 320 A.D.) between the decline of the Mauryas and the rise of the Guptas. The sources of information for this period are same as those for the preceding period.

The seventh chapter covers the Gupta period (C. 320 A.D. to 550 A.D.). Getting royal patronage, the cult of Vishnu dominates the realms of religion in Bundelkhand, and we possess plenty of evidence testifying to it. All other cults including those of Siva, Sakti, Buddha and the Jina maintained an isolated existence.

The Early-Medieval period (C. 550 to 900 A.D.) has been treated in the eighth chapter. The cults of Siva and Sakti rise to prominence during this period, though that of Vishnu continues to enjoy its former popularity and prestige. The period witnesses the birth of two important logos centers in the area. Buddhism and Jainism manifest themselves at several places during the period.

The ninth chapter concerns the Late-Medieval period (C. 900 to 1200 A.D.) which may be characterised as the golden-period in the religious history of Bundelkhand. The folk cults, no less than principal cults, flourish with full freedom, and scale new peaks of popularity. The coexistence of orthodox as well as heterodox sects at numerous places is indicative of the spirit of tolerance and harmony that characterised the religious life of this period. Smarta-puja and syncretic worship gain solid ground during the period.

The last chapter contains description of myths finding mention in epigraphical records and sculptural art of the period. Symbolic content of the art of Bundelkhand has also been discussed with the help of Sanskrit texts of ancient times. The views of western art-critics have also found place in it. Erotic art
manifesting itself at Khajurāho has found a detailed discussion in
this chapter.

With regard to the description of temples,
particular care has been taken to avoid unnecessary description. But
some of the temples, newly discovered or little known, have found a
detailed treatment. Contemporary iconographic texts have been quoted
at appropriate places to examine how far the artist worked according
to the injunctions contained in them.

IV

The area of study being vast and the period
covered being long, it is possible that the supplicant of the present
thesis may have failed to include all the information on the subject
in this work. To that extent he craves the forgiveness of the reader
as his resources were limited.

In the end comes the pleasant duty of thanking
all those who have directly or indirectly helped me in my work.
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Indian History and Archaeology. Words cannot be do justice in
expressing my thanks to him for the help and guidance I have received
from him in identifying icons, deciphering inscriptions and
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To study the archaeological evidence scattered over the length and breadth of Bundelkhand, I visited a number of sites. Deeply grateful am I to those who gave me generous help during my study tours. Difficult it is to name all of them. Meriting particular mention here are Prof. O.S. Atri, Prof. U.S. Shrivastava (Govt. College, Bina), Shri Y.K. Agnihotri (Dy. Director, Agriculture, Chhatarpur), Shri S.K. Chaurasia (Petrol Pump, Manoba), and Dr. K.C. Jain (Govt. College, Damoh), to whom I am profoundly thankful. Shri C.M. Vyas (Curator, the Gallery of Nation Builders, New Delhi) and Dr. Pandya (Librarian, Shartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay), Pandit Lakshmi Shankar Sharma (Khandwa) facilitated greatly my library work and so I feel immensely obliged to them.

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[Signature]