CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The study of the material remains explored in the district, has helped to understand the personality of the Banaskantha district. Needless to say that in the development of the material culture belonging to various periods of human history, its geographical position has played a very significant role. Banaskantha district forms part of the North Gujarat—the ancient Anarta. The Aravalli ranges are found in the north-western, northern and north-eastern borders of the district and thus parts of it are separated from Rajasthan. The open borders in the plains were conducive to good cultural contacts between Southern Rajasthan, Marwar and the Northern Gujarat—particularly the Banaskantha district. Even today we find good deal of mutual influences in these areas. Southern Rajasthan and Northern Gujarat, had common cultural traditions in the fields of art and architecture. These common cultural traditions, particularly in the fields of art and architecture, culminated in the 9th and the 10th centuries A.D. and gave rise to what we call the ‘Maru-Gujara’ style in the fields of art and architecture.

The western end of the district is bordered by the small desert of Kutch, which forms frontier with Pakistan, and thus the district has the unique honour of having the international boundary. In the western region of the district, little beyond Deesa, particularly in the Tharad and the Vav talukas, influence from Sind is particularly marked. One of the main roads joining Sind and the main land of Gujarat, passed through the Banaskantha
district. On this road were situated important commercial centres like Vav, Tharad—ancient Thirupur, Juna Deesa and perhaps Vadaval. Tharad and Vadaval were not only busy commercial centres but played significant role in the development of the artistic activities in the region. In the proto-historic times also, the trunk road joining Sind and the mainland of Gujarat, might have played an important role. It is quite probable that the Harappans in their further march towards south-east might have followed this very route. Part of the area along the western border seems to have been highly influenced by the Kutch culture, as Kutch is situated across the small desert of Kutch on the other side. Harappans in their march towards south-east, might have entered the Banaskantha district via Kutch. On the east, the Banaskantha district is bounded by the Sabarkantha district of the Gujarat State. Geographically this is very important because it helped the district in developing its own personality with regard to the sculptural art.

'School of Ancient West' or the 'Western School of Indian Art', started by Sringadhara and referred by Taranath, did not confine itself to centres like Samalaji, Devanimor in Gujarat and Dungarpur area in Southern Rajasthan only but also spread towards the west in the Banaskantha district, and reached up to Arasana (Ambaji-Koteshwar) and Vadaval, in the Deesa taluka of the district and perhaps little beyond also.

The presence of varied and rich geological deposits in the district have also contributed quite significantly in the development of cultures in the district. Availability of the
raw material needed for manufacturing the late stone age tools, perhaps made easy the daily life of the Late Stone Age man. That might be one of the reasons why the late stone age man selected the Rock Shelter at Amirgadh, for his habitation.

Marble found in the Ambaji region of the district, contributed in enriching the historical and cultural personality of the district. Marble found near Zarivav in the Danta taluka, is pure white saccaroidal marble. Marble is an excellent material for building purposes. Magnificent Jain temple complex at Kumbharia (taluka Danta), Bavan Dhavaja temple at Sarotra (taluka Palanpur), well known step well at Rcho (taluka Palanpur) monuments at Bhiladi, Mudetha and Khemana and numerous other monuments which once adorned the district, were erected out of the raw material obtained, perhaps from these mines. Hundreds of sculptures carved out of marble slabs, have been found from the Banaskantha district. The Banaskantha district, perhaps, gets the honour of introducing for the first time, marble, as the raw material for carving out sculptures (Vadval sculptures of matrikas).

The climate of the district is conducive for cattle breeding. The breed available in the district is sturdy, healthy and usual as the draught animal. Although the district has variety of animals, but it is mainly well known, all over the world, for its bulls of Kankarej, Vav and Tharad. They are strong and well built. The Kankarej cow is considered as the best milk-yielding animal in the country and has won the award of 'Gopalratna'. A look at the Kankarej bulls would immediately
remind us of the figures of the sturdy bulls which we find on the seals of the Harappan culture and also the terracotta bull figurines excavated from various Harappan sites.

The people of the district have a very forceful personality. They are strong, well built and hard working. This quality of the people, perhaps, has contributed very significantly in building up the personality of the district.

The climate of the district, at present, is of continental type. In summer season the heat is fierce and the temperature goes up, particularly in the western regions of the district, up to 120°F. Winter is also fairly cold and the minimum temperature goes down to 3°C. It may be noted that in the areas nearing the desert, the climate is still severe. But it might have been more conducive for human habitation in the past. In the mediaeval period II, looking to the discovery of habitation sites the area seems to have been thickly populated and the salt-charged land of today might have been certainly more fertile.

It seems that deforestation of the area has very rapidly taken place and perhaps that was one of the reasons why there is an apparent change in the climate and less of rainfall. Very often scientists are warning us that, if the deforestation of areas nearing the desert would continue for some more time, north Gujarat would turn into desert. During various visits to the western regions of the district, the author has come across severe wind activity which, the author was told, was a daily phenomenon. This wind activity brings with it small and big particles of sand, brought from the desert side, and covers up
the fertile land and makes the land useless for cultivation purposes. It is, therefore, felt that severity in the climate in the Banaskantha district, is a recent phenomenon, otherwise it was certainly conducive for the growth of human culture through the ages.

Although all efforts were made in order to find out the evidences throwing light on the Early Stone Age period, but they did not yield any result. Not a single artifact belonging to the Early Stone Age has been found in the district. It could, therefore, be said that the Early Stone Age Man, perhaps, had not occupied the area. Although further work is necessary in the field.

All the river systems in the Banaskantha district were explored in order to find out the presence of the Middle Stone Age man. As a result of these efforts only one tool, scraper on core on chert, lying in the river bed near the dam site at Dantiwada, in the Dhanera taluka, has been found. Since the tool is discovered from the loose river gravels, we do not know its correct stratigraphy. Unless we find evidences from the stratified deposits we cannot conclusively say about the existence of the Middle Stone Age man. It may be mentioned that further work in the river Banas might throw light on this phase of human history.

Evidences belonging to the Late Stone Age in the Banaskantha district, are fairly clear. The man of the Late Stone Age seems to have preferred the reverine area as his tools are discovered from the top surfaces on both the banks of the river
Banas. They are, however, not found from the sand dunes in the interior. Probably non-availability of water in the interior seems to have prevented the Late Stone Age man from occupying the areas in the interior. It may be noted that no tool has been found from the river section. We find the total absence of tools having geometric shapes. Also we do not find any associations of pottery with the tools.

Evidences of the presence of the Late Stone Age man have been found practically from all parts of Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch. Late stone age tools have been found from the Dang area of South Gujarat, from the Narmada and the Tapti estuaries, from the Visvamitri, Orsang, Mahi, Karjan, Vatrak, Sabarmati in Gujarat and from Bhadra and other river systems in Saurashtra. They have also been found at Langhnaj which may be considered as a type site for the study of the Late Stone Age culture in India. A series of excavations have been carried out and good data with regard to that particular culture of human history is collected. Microlithic culture at Langhanaj basically, is geometric microlithic culture. Pottery in one form or the other was associated right from the beginning. The culture has been dated by c.14 to 2040 ± 110 B.C.

Late Stone Age tools discovered from the Banas Valley are basically non-geometric in nature. They are made on the semi-precious raw material such as chert, chalcedony, agate, jasper and quartz obtained from the vicinity. The tool types consist of flakes, cores and fluted cores. Blades have also been found but they are few in number. The tools have been collected from
the top of the river sections from the loose sandy loessic deposits. No evidences show that they were buried deep into the soil. It was a period of aridity in the late quaternary.

The tools which have been discovered from the Banas Valley are non-geometric in nature and, therefore, are typologically earlier than the geometric microlithic industry found in Gujarat. The similar type of non-geometric microlithic stone tools, have been found from the Bhadar Valley at Rangpur, from the gravel lens found below the natural soil, on which the protohistoric Harappan culture started. At Akota in the Baroda district, microliths have been found underlying a sterile layer, on which evidences of Early Historic period have been found. Microlithic culture found in the Banas Valley, has much in common, typologically, with the material found in the Bhadar Valley in Saurashtra. It may, therefore, be said that microlithic culture discovered in the Banas Valley, is earlier than the Chalcolithic culture. It is difficult to give any date to the lower limit of the culture, may be of the same date as that found at Akota.

The microlithic stone tools discovered from the Banas Valley have close affinity with the similar material found on the other side of the Aravallis, in the rocky plain of Mewar and in the valleys of the Banas and its tributaries. One of the most important sites which have been discovered is Bajor, situated on the Kothari river, in the Bhilwara district. The first phase of the late stone age period is dated by C14 to 4480$^\pm$200 B.C.$^2$ whereas the lower limit is 2500 B.C. Could we date the late stone age culture discovered in the Banas Valley, to this period?
The discovery of the rock shelter at Amirdagh (taluka Palanpur) is very important, as it throws good deal of light on the late stone age culture. Late stone age tools, collected from underneath the rock shelter and around it, are typologically similar to that found from the top of the river sections in the Banas Valley. The rock shelter at Amirdagh is second in a series found in Gujarat. This rock shelter provides an important data with regard to the life history of the late stone age man. It is hoped that more work will be carried out on the other side of the Aravallis, as more rock shelters are likely to be discovered from there.

Chalcolithic period seems to have followed the late stone age period in the Banaskantha district. Extremely important and thought-provoking evidences have been found from across the small desert of Kutch, from the border areas of the Banaskantha district. Discovery of the Harappan site at Zekada, in the Santalpur taluka of the Banaskantha district, has supported the view expressed by J.P. Joshi that Harappans might have migrated into the Kutch area and from there in Saurashtra, by a land route. The discovery of the Harappan site at Zekada, without doubt, has established the fact that the Harappans entered the northern Gujarat area also. How did they enter the north-Gujarat area? There are two possible routes of their entering the Banaskantha district. The Harappans might have first migrated to Kutch from the Indus Valley by a land route. They might have settled down in the Kutch area. It is quite possible that some people of the group might have thought of
marching forward in search of perhaps better land for habitation and, therefore, might have crossed the small desert of Kutch and might have entered the Banaskantha district reaching Zekada. It is also likely that some of them might have still proceeded into the interior, as we find a Harappan site in the Mehasana district of the Gujarat State.

With regard to another possibility, it may be mentioned that the Harappans could have reached Zekada directly from the Indus Valley, after crossing the Tharparkar area of the lower Sind and the small desert of Kutch. From there, they might have spread themselves further into the interior. To determine their route of migration into the interior, areas around Radhanpur, Deesa and Patan may be very critically surveyed.

Whole western border along the small desert of Kutch was very carefully explored, but no more site belonging to the Harappan culture could be located. This has led us to believe that not many Harappans thought it more advantageous to move towards the south-east i.e. towards north-Gujarat. Instead they might have found Saurashtra to be more fertile and convenient region for setting down.

The site at Zekada has yielded almost all pottery types and other cultural equipments of the Harappan culture. The site has also yielded the painted Cream Slipped ware and the Reserved Slipped ware, which doubtless, pushes the antiquity of the site to a considerable extent.

As indicated elsewhere in this work, the presence of white painted black-and-red ware at Zekada is also very significant.
The black-and-red ware encountered at Zekada has much in common with similar ware found at Ahar in the South-Eastern Rajasthan, from the earliest level. There it has been dated by C\textsubscript{14} to c. 2100 B.C. This ware has again been discovered at Surkotada in Kutch. It is, therefore, possible that the influence of the black-and-red ware culture could have reached Surkotada via Zekada. The black-and-red ware has been found at Lothal from the earliest level (Lothal A). It has again been found from Rangpur in IIA, IIB and IIC and III. Lustrous Red Ware culture has also been found at Zekada. Now it is possible that the black-and-red ware culture could have reached Zekada along with the lustrous red ware culture. All the same, the presence of three different cultural elements at Zekada is very significant. Needless to say that it was a meeting place of three cultures: namely the Harappan, the Lustrous red ware and the Black-and-red ware, which might have come from Sind via Kutch, from Saurashtra and from Saurashtra or from South-Eastern Rajasthan respectively. Digging at the site would be taken up in near future. It is hoped that the above conjectures would be proved to a considerable extent.

What happened to these lustrous red ware using people? Whether they still moved in the interior and merged with the local community residing in the eastern neighbouring areas of Mehsana district or whether they continue to stay there only and lost their identity in due course of time. We do not know. This could be determined only if we carry out excavations at a site yielding the evidences of the Early Historic period and
Chalcolithic elements of the earlier period.

Banaskantha district has yielded the evidences which could be dated to the Early Historic period. In all, sixteen sites belonging to the Early Historic period have been discovered in the Radhanpur and the Santalpur talukas, while two sites have been discovered in the Tharad taluka and of two of these each in the Deesa and Vav talukas. It could, therefore, be seen that Early Historic sites in the Banaskantha district, were confined to the western open plains of the district. Possibly, heavily forested eastern regions of the district (areas situated to the west of Deesa), were not still open for the Early Historic people to move in.

Considering the evidences brought to light it seems that, Early Historic culture in the Banaskantha district, was not a very rich culture, but was very widely spread as its evidences are encountered in the Vav, Tharad, Deodar, Deesa, Radhanpur and Santalpur talukas of the district. Sites like Benap (taluka Vav) and Juna Deesa (taluka Deesa), looking to the cultural deposits, had occupied considerably vast areas and might have been thickly populated too. While other sites were small habitations. The painted black-on-red ware having vertical lines and horizontal bands and coarse fabric, found from the early historic sites in the Banaskantha district, is identical to the Vasai ware which in turn is a variant of the Rangamahal ware, belonging to the Early Historic period in Rajasthan. The painted black-on-red ware has also been found from Lakhabawal II and Amra II in Saurashtra and Vadnagar I in North Gujarat. This pottery has been found
again from many sites in Kutch by Joshi and from many sites in north-eastern and western Rajasthan. Therefore, the early historic culture found in the Banaskantha district could be very conveniently linked up with those of Rajasthan, Kutch, Saurashtra and North Gujarat.

Discovery of 101 silver punch-marked coins at Vadia in the Deodar taluka of the Banaskantha district, is also very significant. This discovery throws good deal of light on the economy of the Early Historic community in the Banaskantha district, and links again the area with the Early Historic sites found in Saurashtra, Kutch, Rajasthan and North-Gujarat.

It seems that the early historic community was moving towards the eastern hilly region of the district and was gradually occupying it. Although, the eastern hilly region of the district has not yielded any evidences of the habitation belonging to the early historic period, but the region has contributed significant evidences of the classical Gupta sculptural art. The earliest sculptures found in the district are from the eastern hilly region of the area. These sculptures belong to the closing years of the Early Historic period and depict the best classical art of the Gupta period. These sculptures, like other sculptures of the same period found from Rajasthan and the Sabarkantha district of North Gujarat, are carved out from green schist, popular raw material of the period. Sculptures depicting the Gupta art style may be compared with this sculptures found on the Gupta temple at Deogarh in Madhya Pradesh and with the sculpture of Padmapani originally found from the garden area.
at Mandore and now preserved in the Sardar Museum at Jodhpur. The Gupta art idiom, may again be compared with the sculptures carved on the temple at Bhumara, and with many sculptures found in the other regions of the country.

The eastern hilly regions of the Banaskantha district, were gradually attracting the attention of the people and considering the evidences explored, it seems that a good deal of architectural and artistic activities were taking place. Towns like Juna Deesa and Vadaval, situated on the ancient highways, were gradually becoming busy business centres. Because of this, prosperity of the region was increasing. Unfortunately we do not get many evidences of habitations in question but looking to the wide spread art activities, we are led to believe that the area was moderately well populated.

The period which followed the Early Historic period in the Banaskantha district, has been designed as the Mediaeval period and the date which has been allotted to it, is from 600 A.D. to 1000 A.D. i.e. the period broadly covering the disappearance of the Gupta power from Gujarat and the arrival of the Solankis to the political scene of Gujarat. This period witnessed the rule of the Valabhis, the mighty Gurjara-pratiharas, occasionally of the Rastrakutas and subsequently the rise of the great Solankis. This was very important period from the viewpoint of art history in the Banaskantha district. This period witnessed the growth, and culmination of two important art traditions namely the 'School of Ancient West' and 'Maru Gurjara style'. The
'School of Ancient West' prevailed in the district from 6th century A.D. (Koteswar sculptures) up to 9th century A.D. (Sculpture of matrika Vaishnavi found at Tharad). While, from 9th century onward sculptures depicting the Western idiom more prominently in northern Gujarat and Marwar (most probably because of Gurjara-pratihara’s political overlordship) are found. Therefore, the sculptural art followed from 9th century A.D. up to the beginning of the 11th century A.D., has been recently designed by the scholars (U.P. Shah may be considered foremost) working in the field as 'Maru Gurjara Style'. It would be worthwhile if U.P. Shah is quoted again. He observes, "Regional Variation apart, a common culture heritage binds together all parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat."6

The district of Banaskantha has yielded some good examples of this 'Maru-Gurjara' art.

It may be pointed out that, although we get important sculptures belonging to the period from 6th to 9th century A.D., we do not get any monument in the district once adorned by the sculptures of the 'School of Ancient West'. It is certain that these sculptures were not brought from outside as some scholars thought (K.V. Sounderarajan) but seem to have been produced at the sites of their discovery or at some nearby active centre in the district, where they were carved and later on transferred. It may be mentioned that the dilapidated structure in which the sculptures were housed stands on an artificial mound at Vadaval, where bricks are found. Similar situation at Dasarath, Karvan, Devnimori and other sites indicates
the existence of brick temples.

The period from 6th century A.D. up to 9th century A.D. has yielded remarkable sculptures of Indian art. Besides good number of sculptures, three sets of saptamatrikas have been discovered in the district. Of the three sets, one is discovered from Koteshwar (taluka Danta) (figs. ), while the other two are discovered from Badaval (taluka Deesa) (figs. ) and Vedencha (taluka Falanpur) (fig. ). Saptamatrikas and other sculptures discovered from Koteshwar are carved out of green schist, very popular raw material used in the making of sculptures in the period and stylistically belong to the 6th century A.D. While that of Vadaval and Vedencha matrika sculptures are carved out of white marble, (perhaps then recently tried material) and stylistically belong to the late 7th century or the beginning of the 8th century A.D. The art style of all the sculptures discovered in the Banaskantha district and belonging to this period indicates that, they belong to one art tradition that prevailed in the period, namely the 'School of Ancient West' or the 'Western School of Indian Art' started by Sringadhara of Maru Desa and referred to by Taranath, the Tibetan historian of the 16th century A.D.

As no evidences of the spread of the 'School of Ancient West' were forthcoming from the areas adjoining Rajasthan and the Sabarkantha district of the Gujarat State, it was thought that, the 'School of Ancient West' was confined only to some parts of Rajasthan and the Sabarkantha district. It was so because nearby areas of the Banaskantha district, were 'Terra-incognito' from the archaeological point of view. As a result
of the recent field work carried out in the Banaskantha district and with the discovery of sculptures betraying the art influence of the 'School of Ancient West', it could be said that the 'School' had under its command much wider area.

It was the strong belief among the scholars working in the field of the study of sculptural art that 'master artists' belonging to the 'School of Ancient West', were carving out the pieces of art in the Dungarpur areas of Rajasthan and then these art pieces were distributed to the areas where they were needed. Probably the scholars (led by R.C. Agrawal) had come to this conclusion because the green schist, the raw material out of which the sculptures were carved out, was available in plenty in the Dungarpur area only. But after the discovery of number of sculptures belonging to the 'School' and carved out of green schist, in the Sabarkantha district, the scholars (led by U.P. Shah) refuted the theory of 'production' and 'distribution' of the art pieces. They further advocated the idea that, besides Dungarpur and other centres in Rajasthan, Idar and Samalaji areas of the Sabarkantha district, have also contributed very significantly in enhancing the personality of the 'School of Ancient West'. These areas were also busy in producing the art pieces under the instructions of the seasoned artists.

As a result of the discovery of number of art pieces stylistically belonging to the 'School of Ancient West' in the Western regions of North Gujarat and in the hilly regions of Danta-Ambaji, it could be said that the 'School of Ancient West' had covered up still further areas, under its influence.
As has been said earlier, with the discovery of sculptures at Vadaval and Vedencha, it could be said that this area seems to have played significant role in art activities in this region. From all points of view, Vadaval seems to be the principal centre of the 'School of Ancient West' in the Western zone of North Gujarat. The artists of the 'School of Ancient West' in the eastern north Gujarat and Rajasthan had a lust for green schist for making the sculptures. But artists working at Vadaval, because of variety of reasons, seem to have preferred white marble for carving out the pieces of art. Perhaps, they might have tried marble in the field of architecture too. That only future researches would say. Indeed, artists practicing at Vadaval, were men of great vision, because marble was used in abundance in the field of art and architecture in the following centuries.

Entire areas of Marwar and North-Gujarat had come under one political overlordship of the Gurjara-pratiharas. This common political bond brought the areas of Marwar and North Gujarat culturally closer. Because of this, good co-ordination in the field of art has been found in these regions. This could happen because there was an easy flow of artists practicing in both these regions. The Westerly idiom was becoming clearer and stronger. The common political overlordship gave birth to the common art traditions also. This common sculptural art tradition has been referred to as the 'Maru-Gurjara' style.

Excellent specimens of sculptural art belonging to the 'Maru-Gurjara' style, that prevailed between the 9th century A.D. and the beginning of the 11th century A.D., have been found
during the explorations in the Banaskantha district. Besides the sculptures of Astabhuja Siva found on the mandovara walls of the Mulesvara Mahadeva temple at Padan (taluka Vav), belonging to the closing years of the 10th century A.D., and sculpture of standing Ganesa found in the compound wall of the same temple, one mutilated but excellent sculpture of Vishnu has been found at Hathidera in the Palanpur taluka of the district. Stylistic features of this sculpture show much similarity with the sculptures found in Rajasthan and other parts of north-Gujarat. The sculpture of a lady thickly covered with lime, has been discovered at the village Samarda (taluka Palanpur). This is an excellent specimen of the 10th century A.D.

Although Chavada kings like Jayasikhar and Vanaraj have become legendary figures in the history of Gujarat and parts of the Banaskantha district might have been ruled by them, but from the archaeological point of view the period is very insignificant. We do not get any material evidence throwing light on the personality of the Chavadas.

Rastrakuta king Indra III led an expedition in c.963 A.D. and gave a shattering blow to the Gurjara-pratihara empire. But the winning final blow was given to the Gurjara-pratiharas by the Chandela king Dhanga. Thus a power vacuum was created. To fill up this power vacuum and in the absence of strong central regime, provincial powers started becoming significant. Among these provincial powers the principal ones were the Chaulukyas of Gujarat, the Parmarás of Malwa and the Kalchuries of Central India.
The district of Banaskantha has yielded a maximum number of mediaeval period II habitation sites in Gujarat. These sites are uniformly distributed in all the talukas of the district. Enlightened rulers of the Solanki dynasty gave all encouragement to various activities to grow in the district. Mediaeval period in the Banaskantha district, was a period of peace and prosperity and that is why it seems people started transmigrating to this land. The Solanki kings led many expeditions in Rajasthan and the Madhya Pradesh and not only brought many parts under their control but invited scholars, artists, architects and painters to reside in the Saraswatamandala. All these factors played significant role in the development of the area.

Dhandha, in the Vadgam taluka of the Banaskantha district, was one of the principal administrative centres in the Saraswatamandala. Probably in the western region of the Banaskantha district, there might be some centre near Radhanpur or Tharad, which might have enjoyed the honour of having worked as an important administrative centre.

Gradually the business transactions were also increasing between Northern India and the Western India and as said elsewhere the trunk road joining Delhi and Ajmer with Bragukachha and Cambay on the Western Coast, were becoming still busier. Important towns of the Banaskantha district, situated on these road such as Tharad and Juna Deesa, were becoming still more prosperous towns. Tharad was not only important business centre but was also very important centre of Jainism. Such a strategic position of the Banaskantha district, in trade and commerce, gave unique opportunity to the district to grow.
Because of the availability of wider opportunity to the people, the stable political conditions, the enlightened policy of the contemporary rulers, the strategic geographical position, the increasing trade and commerce, the patronage from all classes of society to the artistic and architectural activities, tempted many people from the near and distant areas to make Banaskantha their home. Because of this, many areas which were not hitherto occupied were captured by the people. Villages and towns grew in these areas. Zalor-no-Ghod, Amirgadh, Ghodiyal, Samarda, Kurchawada, Dhandha, Prehladanpur (Palanpur) and many others grew larger in areas and developed as big commercial centres. Looking to the nature of the sites they were heavily populated too. We also come across many smaller habitations with limited population.

The Medieval period II sites in the Banaskantha district have yielded the similar types of ceramic industries e.g. the coarse red ware, the coarse black ware and the coarse grey ware—which we find in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and sites excavated in North and South Gujarat and Saurashtra. We can, therefore, very confidently and conveniently link up the mediaeval habitations in the Banaskantha district, with the contemporary cultures found in the neighbouring areas of Rajasthan, North Gujarat, Saurashtra and South Gujarat. Significantly enough mediaeval painted ware, which we find in Vadnagar II, Nagara IV and Baroda V is totally absent here.

With the downfall of the Solankis, the Muslims took over the administrative reins in the Banaskantha district. Gradually the
district was being influenced by the Muslim culture. The mediaeval glazed ware starts appearing. Mediaeval glazed ware has been found from many sites in the Banaskantha district. It is found in different colours and seems to be the 'deluxe' ware of the period. This ware has a very wide distribution in the country and thus the culture found in the Banaskantha district may be linked up with Rajasthan, U.P., Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Southern Gujarat and Saurashtra. Probably during this period GhodiyaL, Samarda, Amirgadh and such other towns in the district played a very significant role.

The monuments situated in the Banaskantha district have thrown significant light on the mediaeval Indian temple architecture of the region. As many as eleven monuments have been reported from the district. Of the eleven monuments, seven are still in situ, while no trace of three monuments—the Triple shrine at Kasara and the Bawandhavaja temple at Sarotra and the Step Well at Roha, is available. Their existence is not found either because of natural calamities or of human vandalism.

The field work carried out in the district has not brought to light any monument belonging to the pre-Solanki period. All the monuments found in the district belong to the Solanki architecture of Gujarat. It may be pointed out that, although, a good number of temples in the district both Hindu and Jain, have been found, we do not get sufficient evidence throwing light on the origin of the Solanki style. But the temple architecture studied in the district throws light on the evolution of the Solanki style.
The discovery of many monuments in the district, has proved beyond doubt that, temple building activity in this part of Gujarat, was going on in full swing like that of other parts of the country, such as in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa etc.

The oldest monument in the district, stylistically datable to the last decade of the 10th century A.D., is found at Padan, in the Vav taluka of the district. Architecturally the temple is different from other temples in the district. It is having a latina sikhara, while all other temples in the district are having pyramidal type of sikharas. Architecturally, the monument at Padan may be compared with the temple of Harischandrakichori at Samalaji, the Muni Bawa temple at Than and Khokhara Dera temple at Kanthakot in Kutch.

Burgess and Cousens, Percy Brown, Sankalia and S.K. Saraswati have given very early date to the Triple shrine at Kasara (first quarter of the 11th century A.D.) but subsequent studies (made by Dhanki) have indicated that it cannot be that old and should belong to the Siddharaj Period (1094-1144 A.D.).

Kapalesvara Mahadeva temple at Vav had escaped the notice of Burgess and Cousens and brought to light during the present field work, is an important monument belonging to the early 11th century A.D. Presently, the monument is not in a good state of preservation, but is adorned with magnificent sculptural art giving the fragrance of the early 11th century artistic activities. The temple has preserved on it beautiful images of Brahma, Lakulisa, (the only found in the district) and Vishnu. The discovery of the temple has filled up the gap in temple
architecture (Chamunda-Durlabhaj period) which once existed in the district.

The perfection of Solanki style of temple architecture was being felt in the Banaskantha district. The plinth mouldings started becoming elaborate, bold and beautiful and we find introduction of two new mouldings, the Gajathara and the Narathara. The jangha becomes more elaborate than the earlier examples. The sikhara has now more number of urushringas and the roof of the mandapa is now covered with śāvarna.

Very important temple complex is situated at Kumbharia in the Danta taluka of the district. The temple complex consists of six temples. Of the six, five are the Jain temples, while one is a Hindu temple. The Jain temples were erected within a period of almost two centuries. It was once believed that all the temples of the Jain group, belonged to one period and were built by Vimal Shah, who also built the famous temple of Vimala Vasahi at Mt. Abu. But the study of each temple architecture and inscriptions found in them, have shown that each monument was erected during different times.

Of the Jain group of temples at Kumbharia, Mahavira temple is the earliest one and in plan has much in common with the Vimal Vasahi temple at Mt. Abu. Mahavira temple at Kumbharia is not only important from the viewpoint of architecture but also from the viewpoint of the sculptural art. One of the ceilings of the Nayashokari of the temple, has resemblance with the Chatuski of the Nalkantha Mahadeva temple at Sunak, another jewel of the temple architecture in Gujarat.
Many magnificent monuments were erected during the rule of Siddharaja Solanki (1094 A.D. to 1144 A.D.). The temples erected during this period not only exceeded in number but many of them were huge also. The architectural style followed during this period was more or less like the preceding one. The architectural canons were more strictly and religiously followed. The artists did not take any liberty with the accepted principles of Vastusastras. The jalka work on the Sikara becomes complicated and monotonous. Parsvanatha temple at Kumbharia was erected during this period. The temple is magnificent one. Here, unlike other temples at Kumbharia the Nalamaandapa is above the stairway.

Neminath temple at Kumbharia was also erected during the period of Siddharaja Solanki. The Navachowki of the temple has great resemblance with the Navachowki of the Vimal Vasahi temple at Mt. Abu. The Rangamandapa of the temple is two-storeyed and imposing.

The Triple shrine at Kasara is a good example of Tripurusha Prasad. The pillars of the temple, which were richly carved, had great resemblance with the Nilkantha Mahadeva temple at Sunak. Samvarna on the rangamandapa had resemblance with the temple at Viramgam and small shrines situated behind Rudra Mahalaya at Siddhapur. Stylistically, the temple belonged to the 12th century A.D. and not to the early 11th century A.D. as believed earlier. Field work has not brought to light any monument belonging to the period of Kumarapala, Ajayapala, Mulraj II and in the district.
Two temples were erected in the following period. One was the Sambhavanatha temple at Kumbharia and another was the Bavan Dhavaja temple at Sarotra. The architectural style followed in the period becomes more complicated and vastusastras were followed more rigorously. Introduction of the serpentine torana is an important feature of this period.

The minute lattice work on the Sikhara of the Sambhavanatha temple resembles much to the Tejapala temple at Mt. Abu. Architecturally, the Sarotra temple has close affinity with Luna Vasavi temple at Mt. Abu.

Field work in the district has brought to light numerous examples of sculptural art. This sculptural art has been noticed in the form of loose sculptures lying uncared for and unnoticed in many parts of the district. Sculptural art has also been noticed in many temples of the district.

Study of the sculptural art in the district belonging to the period has shown that, sculptures belonging to the 11th century have preserved the flavour of the earlier forms and rhythm. The facial expressions have still maintained charm. But gradually, as has happened in other parts of the country, such as Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan regional peculiarities started coming more prominently into picture and earlier qualities started gradually disappearing. The sculptural art was becoming more of mechanical and monotonous. Artists, it seems, were not allowed to use his own hand in the manner he liked but was asked to follow the commandments given in the Silpasastras, more rigorously and faithfully. As time
passed on, earlier charm on sculptures was slowly disappearing, bodily proportions were not maintained properly, hands and legs started becoming longer and longer, heavy ornamentation on sculptures started taking place and more attributes in hands were gradually coming in. A glance at the sculpture indicates that it was produced for something else rather than for the art's sake.

The Mahavir temple at Kumbharia contains marvellous sculptural art. Carvings in the Mahavir temple surpasses the carvings in the Vimala Vasahi temple at Mt. Abu. Similarly the Santinatha temple at Kumbharia also contains magnificent examples of sculptural art. The navachowki of the temple has an exquisitely carved ceilings with variety of motifs and sometimes they are divided into square boxes containing detailed carvings.

The sculptural art found in the temples belonging to the Siddharaja period deteriorates further. Figures become stiffer and more angular. It is marked that during the period importance was given to the human figures and naturalistic and geometric designs were pushed back.

Besides the above, sculptures of Surya and Vishnu belonging stylistically to the 11th and 13th century A.D. respectively and sculptures found at Hathidhera, variety of sculptures on the and sculptures discovered at jangha walls of the Kapasia Mahadeva at Vav, Kumbhavan, Sarotra, Vedencha, Balaram, Palanpur, Mokhesvara, Baiwada, Bhiladi, Ganchhera, Kumbharia, Rampura, Korda, Bhoral, Dhanera and many other sites, are simply magnificent.
Banaskantha’s contribution in the field of metal sculpture i.e. bronzes, is also very significant. Bronzes have been found from Tharad—ancient Thirmpur, Bhoral—anoter centre of Jainism in the district, Asara and Khimat. At Tharad, about one hundred and fifty inscribed bronzes have been discovered. Looking to the number of bronzes discovered, it seems that Tharad was one of the important centres of bronze casting and like Akota—ancient Ankottaka, might have played important role in the development of art in Western India.

Besides the two magnificent images of tirthankaras and seated image of Parsvanatha, Tharad has yielded one of the most important images found in Western India and that is the image of Parsvanatha in solid silver. The image is clearly inscribed and is dated to Samvat 1220 i.e. A.D.1163. Very significant information which this inscription provides is that the installation ceremony of the image was performed by Munisri Hemchandrasuri, the greatest grammarian and scholiast of the age and friend, philosopher and guide to Kumarpala, the successor of Siddharaj Jayasimha.

Another very important bronze which has been found is the bronze lotus. The bronze in the form of lotus is not common in the Jain pantheon and the present specimen is the only one of its kind, found in the country. It seems that the whole idea of making the bronze in the form of lotus and enclosing the principal deity with lotus surrounded by other tirthankaras, has been adopted from the Buddhism. The bronze lotus found at Tharad may be compared with similar type of bronzes lying in the two leading museums in the country, one the Indian Museum, Calcutta and the
other in the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery.

Besides the above mentioned, the bronzes have been found also from Bhoral, Khimat, and Asara. It could, therefore, be said that centres like Tharad and Bhoral might be fulfilling the needs of the Jain community of northern Gujarat and Southern Rajasthan with regard to their requirements of metal images, required for worshiping. Tharad has thus emerged as an important centre of bronze casting in north Gujarat.

Several Saivite, Vaishnavite and Sakta icons, important from the point of iconography have been brought to light in the Banaskantha district. These images indicate that both Saivism and Vaishnavism were popular among the people of the district. The Surya and Vishnu images discovered from Vadaval are good examples of mediaeval iconography. The Surya image from Nesa also has iconographic value. The matrika worship seems to have continued, even in the mediaeval period which has been aptly proved by the discovery of matrika icons at Nagarpara in the Vadgam taluka.

Several icons of Jain tirthankaras both in stone and metal have been found in the Banaskantha district. The discovery of these icons undoubtedly prove the spread of Jainism in the district. The presence of number of Jain temples also supports the belief. Iconographically important images of this pantheon have been found at Bhoral, Khimat, Dhanera, and at many other places in the Banaskantha district. It could, therefore, be said that Banaskantha has contributed quite significantly in the study of the mediaeval iconography in the country.
The Chowhans seem to have held the area till about the middle of the 14th century A.D. Later on they were driven out by the southern movement of the Muslims. The people who occupied the area were Jahlories, a family originally of the Lohano Afghan stock. They were under the command of the district for some time. The Jahlories worked as the vessels of the Taghalaque dynasty. But, after Taimur's invasion, the Delhi sovereigns were unable to control their distant provinces and the Jahlories for some time became independent. But after the establishment of the Sultante dynasty in the year 1412 A.D. the Jahlories accepted their suzerainty and became their vessels.

This is the archaeological personality of the Banaskantha district, right from the down of the civilization upto 1500 A.D. The evidences point out that in the Late Stone Age man was wandering over larger areas, but from Chalcolithic period stable habitations as villages and towns begin developing. With the passage of time their number goes on increasing till in the mediaeval period Banaskantha takes almost the present form of distribution of habitates.

The evidences explored have proved that upto about first half of the third millenium B.C. the area was occupied by the late stone age man, who was leading a nomadic life and was, perhaps, in a food gathering stage. He might have developed contacts with the neighbouring areas or might have led an isolated life. More intensive work in the field of the study of tool typology is needed in order to throw light on the contacts with the nearby regions.
In the first half of the third millennium B.C., the district came into contact with the most magnificent urban chalcolithic culture namely the Harappan culture. The Chalcolithic culture noticed at Zekada, is a very rich culture yielding the basic elements of the Harappan culture. In addition to it, the site has yielded the Reserved slip ware and the Cream Slipped ware. On the basis of the evidences available, the district might have developed relations with the neighbouring areas of Sindh, Saurashtra and Kutch.

The habitation continued on the site in the late-Harappan and post-Harappan periods also. Many late-Harappan pottery types have been found at the site. The late Harappan people in the district might have maintained relations with the neighbouring areas of Kutch and Saurashtra. The post-Harappan people residing at Zekada might have developed relationships with contemporary post-Harappan cultures in Saurashtra and Kutch. Looking to the evidences, Banaskantha district was under the occupation of the Chalcolithic people upto 1000 B.C.

Early historic period in the district has been strengthened by the discovery of the punch-marked coins and pottery. Discovery of the Vasai ware co-relates the district with Rajasthan, Saurashtra and Kutch and other parts of North Gujarat. The punch-marked coins also correlate the district with Saurashtra, Kutch, Rajasthan and Northern Gujarat. In the closing decades of the period, the district enjoyed the influence of the Gupta art. Classical Gupta art influence may be co-related with the Gupta art idiom found in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Saurashtra.
The material culture found in the district has thrown light on the Westward spread of the 'School of Ancient West' and thus widened the horizon of the 'Early Mediaeval Art School'. During the Mediaeval period I, the district maintained very close cultural relationships with Southern Rajasthan and other parts of North-Gujarat. The School was functioning in the area up to 900 A.D. After 900 A.D. Western idiom becomes more prominent and Marwar and Gujarat evolved a common cultural tradition in the field of sculptural art, and gave birth to what we identify as the 'Maru-Gurjara' style. From 10th century onwards we find the emergence of a very powerful dynasty, which gave the region a distinct personality in the fields of sculptural art and architecture. From the closing years of the 13th century onwards with the arrival of Muslims on the scene, all the cultural activities seem to have ceased and the district lost its identity like other regions of the country.