"ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BANASKANTHA DISTRICT (N.G.) UP TO 1500 A.D."

A thesis submitted to the M.S. University of Baroda for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

SYNOPSIS

The district of Banaskantha of North-Gujarat, which formed part of ancient Anarta, was largely "Terra-incognito", from the archaeological point of view. No data, except the discovery and discussion on three temples by Burgess and Cousens, throwing light on cultures that existed in different ages, was collected, although it was well known that the region played significant role in the mediaeval period of Indian history. Scattered references with regard to the history of the area in literature, are also not available. It was, therefore, thought that the Banaskantha district may be taken up for intensive archaeological research work and this may help throw light on the archaeology and cultures of the district.

The field work carried out in the district, was spread over a number of seasons from August 195^ to 1973. It may be mentioned that nearly 1000 villages comprising the district, were explored by the author and material evidences throwing light on cultures belonging to various periods of Indian history, were collected. The efforts resulted in the discovery of 175 new sites.

The present work is the result of the study and interpretation of the material explored in the Banaskantha district of North Gujarat.
The thesis consists of six chapters and two appendixes.

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION:

The chapter deals with the problem which led the author to undertake his field work in the Banaskantha district. This chapter also deals with the aim of study "to prepare the chronology of cultures from the prehistoric period upto 1500 A.D. and to assess the influences and contacts which the different cultures had with the neighbouring areas of the sub-continent, and its role in the progress." Method of work adopted in uncovering the past, has also been discussed in this chapter. The sources of study and the results achieved, are also mentioned in this chapter.

CHAPTER - II

This chapter deals with the Geography, Geology, Soil, Hydrology, Climate, Flora and Fauna, Population, Language, Religion, Housing and Communication. The chapter also deals with the detailed history of the Banaskantha district.

CHAPTER - III

This chapter deals with the detailed description of the sites discovered in the Banaskantha district. Total number of sites belonging to various periods, discovered in each taluka of the Banaskantha district, are noted below:-
This chapter is devoted to the study, interpretation and
discussion of various cultures discovered during the explora­
tions, carried out in the district.

I. The prehistoric cultures in the Banaskantha District:-
(1) Early Stone Age Culture.
(2) Middle Stone Age Culture.
(3) Late Stone Age Culture.

This section deals with the topography of the sites, raw
material used in the manufacture of stone tools, tool typology
and contacts and co-relations.
II. The Chalcolithic Culture in the Banaskantha district:-
This section deals with the nature of the Chalcolithic sites, nature of antiquities, study and interpretation of antiquities, contacts and co-relations.

III. The Early Historic Culture in the Banaskantha district:-
This section deals with the nature of the Early Historic sites, nature of the antiquities, study and interpretation of antiquities, contacts and co-relations.

IV. The Mediaeval period culture in the Banaskantha district:-
This section is concerned with the nature of the Mediaeval period sites, nature of antiquities, study and interpretation of antiquities, contacts and co-relations.

CHAPTER - V

This chapter deals with the study of Temple Architecture, Sculptural Art and Iconography in the district.

I. Temple Architecture:-
This section deals with the introduction, previous work, common features of the temple architecture, description of monuments, influences, contacts and co-relations and discussion on the ruins of temples found in the district.

II. Sculptural Art:-
The section deals with previous work, common features of the sculptural art in the Banaskantha district; classification
of material, detailed description of sculptures discovered in the Banaskantha district. The chapter also includes the discussion on sculptures, influences, contacts and co-relations.

This section also deals with the study and discussion on the bronzes brought to light in the Banaskantha district.

III. **Iconography:**

(1) This section deals with the introduction, classification, description, study and discussion on the images belonging to the Hindu Pantheon.

(2) This section deals with the introduction, classification, description and discussion on the images belonging to the Jain Pantheon.

(3) **Bronzes:**

   This section deals with the introduction, description, study and discussion on the Jain bronzes.

**CHAPTER - VI.**

This is the concluding chapter of the thesis. This chapter deals with the general discussion on different cultures found in the Banaskantha district. It also includes the general conclusions arrived at after the study. It includes general discussion on sculptural art, architecture and **iconography.** It also deals with relations with the neighbouring areas, mutual influences and contacts.
Besides the above, the thesis also contains two Appendixes on the inscriptions found generally on the Jain images, now preserved in the temples. This is added with a view to making the data available in English.

Appendix I contains:

(i) Translations of inscriptions found in the Jain temples at Kumbharia. (Danta taluka).

(ii) Translations of inscriptions found on the Jain images at Bhiladi (Deesa taluka).

(The above translations are based on the work done by Munishri Visalvijayaji and published in "Kumbharia Tirth" and "Bhiladiya Parsvanathji Tirth".)

Appendix II deals with:

Translations of inscriptions found on the images (both metal and stone) preserved in the Jain temples at Radhanpur.

(The translations are based on the work done by Munisri Visalvijayaji in his book "Radhanpur Pratima lekh Sandoh".)
The present work was undertaken with a view to uncovering the archaeological potential of the Banaskantha district and to prepare the chronology of cultures that existed in the district, through the ages. The study of the material remains explored in the Banaskantha district have revealed the following facts:

(1) Before the explorations were undertaken in the Banaskantha district, except three monuments noted by Burgess and Cousens in the late 90s of the last century, no site was known to have existed. As a result of the work undertaken by the writer from August 1958 to 1973, as many as one hundred and seventy five sites belonging to various periods, have been brought to light. These sites are described in detail in the chapter dealing with 'Explorations in the district'.

(2) Explorations in the district has established for the first time, that the area was occupied by the 'Middle Stone Age' man (very scant evidences have been found in the district).

(3) Explorations in the district, has established for the first time, that the 'Late Stone Age' man had occupied the area. Evidences also indicate that the 'Late Stone Age' man, also came into contact with the Chalcolithic people. Cores showing the crested guiding ridge technique, have been found for the first time in the district.
(4) Explorations in the district has brought to light for the first time in North Gujarat, a rock shelter belonging to the late stone age period.

(5) Explorations in the district have for the first time brought to light, sites belonging to the Chalcolithic - protohistoric period, which include the Harappan, the late Harappan and the post Harappan cultures.

(6) Explorations in the district have brought to light for the first time, sculptural art, depicting the classical Gupta art idiom.

(7) Explorations in the district have brought to light for the first time, sculptures stylistically belonging to the 'School of Ancient West' and thus has widened the area of the 'School of Ancient West'.

(8) Explorations in the district have revealed for the first time a number of sculptures, both in metal and stone, throwing light on the Medieval Indian Art.

    The town of Tharad (Tharad taluka) has yielded a unique bronze lotus, belonging to the Jain faith, found for the first time in India.

(9) Material evidences brought to light by explorations have established that the Banaskantha district, did not keep itself aloof from the main currents of the Indian civilization but was moving along with the other neighbouring regions of the area and thus participated in the development of the material culture through the ages in the country.
Statement showing the sources of information, the extent to which this work is based on the work of others and the original portion of the thesis;

I. Sources of information:

It may be stated that published works bearing on the history and archaeology of the district such as 'Bombay Gazetteer Vol. I', 'Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. V, 1880', 'Kumbhariaji Tirth', 'Bhiladiyaji Parswanathji' Tirth and 'Radhanpur Pratima lekh Sandoh' by Munisri Visalvijayaji; "Archaeological Antiquities of North Gujarat" by Burgess and Cousens, were the sources of information. The thesis contains almost all original data collected by way of field work, which was spread over a period from 1956 to 1973. Material thus brought to light, has been studied critically and a rich archaeological 'personality' of the district has been prepared.

II. The extent to which this work is based on the work of others:

The thesis is based on the important studies made by Sankalia and published in his works such as 'Archaeology of Gujarat', 'Studies in the Historical and Cultural Geography of Gujarat', 'Prehistory and protohistory of India and Pakistan'. In addition to this 'Personality of India' by Dr. B. Subbarao was consulted. Further, 'Excavations at Samalaji' by Dr. R. N. Mehta was also used as a good reference.
b book. The above publications were used for the study of Prehistoric material explored in the district.

For the study of Harappan and late Harappan cultures in the district J.P. Joshi's 'Explorations in Kutch and Excavations at Surkotada and new light on Harappan migration' was the principal guide. For the study of the post-Harappan culture in the district, "Excavations at Rangpur and other explorations in Gujarat", by S.R. Rao (Ancient India, No.18-19) was extensively consulted. Besides this reports on the 'Excavations at Ahar' were also utilized to come to some conclusions. In addition to this 'Personality of India' by Dr.B.Subbarao, was also used as a reference book.

For the study of Early Historic Culture in the Banas-kantha district 'Excavations at Nagara' by Dr.R.N.Mehta and Dr.(Mrs) D.R.Shah, 'Excavations at Samalaji' by Dr.R.N.Mehta and A.J.Patel, 'Excavations at Vadnagar' by Dr.B.Subbarao and Dr.R.N.Mehta, 'Baroda through the Ages' by Dr.B.Subbarao, were the main guides, for arriving at conclusions. For the study of Mediaeval culture, also the same publications were consulted.

For the study of Sculptural Art, my main aids were 'Sculptures from Samalaji and Road' and 'Jkota Bronzes', both by Dr.U.P.Shah, numerous articles by Shri R.C.Agrawal, Dr. R.N.Mehta and Dr.M.R.Majmudar and other publications were consulted. For the study of Temple Architecture my principal aids were 'The Chronology of Solanki temples of Gujarat' by
Dhankar and 'Archaeological Antiquities of North Gujarat' by Burgess and Cousins, 'Chronology of Gujarat' by Dr. M.R. Majmudar was very often consulted.

For the study of iconography 'Elements of Hindu Iconography', by T. Gopinath Rao, 'The Indian Buddhist Iconography', by Bhattacharya, 'Studies in Jain Art' by Dr. U.P. Shah, 'Handbook of Collections of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery' were consulted. For building up the history of the Banaskantha district, "Gujaratno Rajkiya and Sanskritic Itihasa" by Parikh R.C. and Sastri H.G., "Chronology of Gujarat", by Dr. M.R. Majmudar, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavans' publications on Indian History and Bombay Gazetteer Vol. I were extensively consulted.

III. Original Portion of the Thesis:

Thesis is mainly the result of the original work done by the author in the field. As many as 175 sites have been discovered and described as an original work by the author. In addition to this, antiquities including architecture, sculptures and iconography of the images, have been described, compared and analysed as the original work. Also original maps, drawings and charts are prepared by the author.

The research work in the Banaskantha district, has established that regional districtwise surveys are very essential in order to strengthen the 'time tables' of cultures evolved by research work in the larger areas. The district situated in one corner of the Gujarat State, which hardly attracted any attention
of the archaeologists has yielded remarkable data throwing light on the human activities through the ages. This data, needlessly to say, would be of great help, for carrying out further researches in Western India.