

From Temple to Museum

Colonial Collections and Uma Mahesvara Icons in the Middle Ganga Valley

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1 Creating identities

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1 Creating identities

Science has had her adventurers, and philanthropy her achievements; the shores of India have been invaded by a race of students with no rapacity but for lettered relics; by naturalists, whose cruelty extends not to one human inhabitant; by philosophers, ambitious only for the extirpation of error, and the diffusion of truth. It remains for the artist to claim his part in these guiltless spoliation, and to transport to Europe the picturesque beauties of these favoured regions.¹

Thomas and William Daniell paint a picture of the eighteenth-century India as a land of plenty, inundated with European intellectuals, travellers, artists and adventures each of whom wanted to carry a relic of this exotic land for audiences back home.

The English East India Company, by now the masters of North India, undertook a massive intellectual campaign “to transform a land of incomprehensible spectacle into an empire of knowledge.”² The campaign was dependent on geographers, anthropologists and surveyors who mapped the landscapes, studied the inhabitants, collected geological and botanical specimens and recorded details of economy, society and culture. Like elsewhere in India the British government appointed surveyors and officers to survey, document, identify and list the historical sites of Bihar. These surveys mapped the ancient sites in the region, gave details of archaeological remains and most importantly assigned nomenclatures, thus creating identities. The disciplines of archaeology and art history in India were eventually born out of this tide of survey and documentation.³

The surveys aimed to establish India as divided into numerous petty kingdoms. “It was also meant to show that Brahmanism, instead of being an unchanged and unchangeable religion which had subsisted for ages, was of comparatively modern origin, and had been constantly

receiving additions and alterations; facts which prove that the establishment of the Christian religion in India must ultimately succeed.”⁴ Individual initiatives as well as those undertaken by the official departments had, amongst other motives the objective of recovering and interpreting the true, pristine past of the nation. “Shared also was the agenda for historicising the colonised within colonial constructs and arriving at comparative linear histories of Indian architecture through meticulous documentation, classification, description, and analysis of empirical evidence.”⁵ A look at the eighteenth and nineteenth century European writing on Indian history, art and archaeology often reveals the colonial biases visible beneath the veneer of scholarship.

The nineteenth century became an age of unprecedented archaeological discovery and documentation, sponsored by the colonial government. Numerous sites were discovered, explored and some excavated. Countless ancient antiquities and monuments were described, drawn and photographed. The identification of a large number of place names mentioned in Indian, Chinese and Greek texts created the basis of ancient Indian historical geography.⁶ Simultaneously there was a growing threat to the sites: by road and rail construction, brick robbery, takeover by secular structures, treasure hunters and, more so, amateur archaeologists themselves. Antiquities and architectural elements were dislocated from their original location, to later become items in private collections or objects of display in museums in India and abroad.

It is crucial to understand this “creation of a past” to view its interconnectedness and permeation into present-day studies. The various explorations by European travellers, artists and scholars contributed to influence the works of British archaeologists. Much of these travelogues and writings are accepted as major archaeological documents to date. The “interconnectedness” thus highlights how these perceptions have shaped the archaeological reports and in the long run influenced the understanding of Indian art and architecture.

The chapter thus engages with the formulation of the colonial discourse and traces the “rediscovery” of the “ancient past.” A picture of a “conveniently ruined” past of India was presented to provide a validation to the colonial government to protect, recover and restore.⁷ Through this chapter I endeavour to provide the different strands of narratives which together weave a picture of decay and corruption in religion, ritual praxis and philosophy hence legitimising colonial rule.

I draw out personalities who contributed to this discourse through a particular branch of academic expertise such as cartography, surveying, archaeology and ethnography. There are two parallel processes

which I attempt to chronicle: first, to trace the efforts of the British travellers and surveyors at exploring and identifying the sacred landscape; listing sculptural remains, shrines and other ritual objects. This would indicate the character of the sacred sites and relics at the end of the eighteenth century, before the beginning of any archaeological intervention. The second process I record is as to what happened at the sites, the artefacts and the monuments during these decades of their discovery and exploration.

The various surveys were meant to provide the colonial government with a historical, economic and social understanding of India which would ease their administration. At the end, however, the surveys, each with different focus and objective eventually added layers to defining and reshaping the religious identity of South Bihar.

James Rennell: drawing a picture of the land (1742–1830)

The earliest physical conception of the territories and sites of Bihar probably emerge from the survey and mapping of the region by James Rennell in the middle of the eighteenth century. James Rennell became a midshipman at the age of 14 and received training in surveying in the Royal Navy. In 1763 he joined the English East India Company. Rennell was later appointed Surveyor General of the East India Company's Dominions in Bengal, with a commission in the Bengal Engineers, on 9 April 1764.

Rennell's survey of Bengal commenced in the autumn of the same year. He first surveyed the mouth of the Ganga in Bengal, carefully fixing the points along its course and subsequently extended his survey to cover the region up to Bhutan. In this pursuit he found much support from Robert Clive who "communicated to him all the materials that could be found in the public offices, furnished him with a proper establishment and gave him all the assistance in his power."⁸

Starting from 1767 for the next one decade he carried out the first comprehensive geographical survey of India. He published a magisterial wall map of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1776. Rennell's work is the earliest accurate general map of the region and is considered to be one of the finest technical achievements of cartography made during the eighteenth century. He further extended his survey to map the Mogul Empire and traced the course of the Ganga as far as Delhi thus also completing the first comprehensive map of India.⁹ His *Bengal Atlas* was published as a one volume folio in November 1779, containing twenty-one maps and plans, and the second edition appeared

in 1781. It was accompanied by a *Memoirs* containing a full account of the intellectual framework on which the map was executed.¹⁰ In 1782 his large *Map of Hindoostan* was published which covered most of the Indian peninsula above the Deccan.

Rennell returned to England in 1782 where he continued to write and publish works on geography and history and became an expert in the mapping and study of ocean currents. He continually updated his maps for accuracy and added new geographical information, using indigenous maps and drawings as sources. His cartographic methods included glean- ing information from earlier maps, measuring distances along roads, establishing the coordinates of control points, and then creating a graticule or grid to create his maps.¹¹ Rennell's maps were of such accuracy and quality that they were used well into the nineteenth century.

In methodology, planning and execution, Rennell somewhat fol- lowed the strategy of the French cartographer D'Anville; "to collect all the information that was accessible to him, to discuss all the details with the greatest care, bringing all the acumen of a thoroughly logi- cal mind to bear on the decision of each doubtful point, and to give reasons for his decisions, and a full account of his authorities in the memoir."¹² The basic data was garnered by him and his nine assistants in a course of 500 elaborate surveys for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In addition, he used the Persian map of Sir R Baker for names of places, which were translated to him by assistants. He also studied the routes of the several invaders to India and of the Mughal armies.

Rennell in his survey followed the division of the region into *subahs* originally devised by Akbar for revenue purposes. "*In the division of Hindoostan into subahs I have followed the mode adopted by Emperor Acbar, as it appears to me to be the most permanent one: for the ideas of the boundaries are not only impressed on the minds of the natives by tradition, but are also ascertained in the AYIN ACBAREE; a register of the highest authority.*"¹³ As per Rennell, Akbar divided his empire into eleven *subahs*, listed by him as "*Lahore, Moultan, Agimere, Delhi, Agra, Oude, Allahabd, Bahar, Bengal, Malwa and Guzerat,*"¹⁴ some of these "*were in extent equal to large European kingdoms.*"¹⁵ The *subhas* were further divided into *circars* and *par- gannas*. Apart from convenience, the decision to divide the map into Akbar's *subhas* seems to have had a political logic behind it.

Akbar's reign was exactly contemporaneous with that of our great Queen, overlapping it for a few years at the beginning and at the end. It was highest period of the greatest prosperity and high- est civilization for Muhamaddan India; and the divisions for the

administrative purposes so well described by Akbar's famous minister, Abul Fazl, are of the greatest historical interest."¹⁶

Rennell defined the boundaries of *Hindoostan*, "which the Europeans have traditionally regarded as lying between the rivers Indus and the Ganga with the mountains of Tibet to the north, thereby leaving out the Deccan and South India which were not considered a part of *Hindoostan*."¹⁷ In *Section II* of his *Memoirs* he describes this survey as covering an area about 900 miles long by 360 to 240 wide, from the eastern confines of Bengal to Agra, and from the feet of the Himalayas to Calpee. "The measured distances are said to have accorded minutely with observations for latitude and closely with those for longitude."¹⁸ The region is shown divided into *subhas*, each distinguished in full original wash colours. The map carries detailed labelling of villages, a vast network of roads running throughout the region, innumerable river systems, swamps and mountain ranges.

The top right hand corner of Rennell's *Map of Hindoostan* carries a rather interesting cartouche. It shows Britannia receiving in her protection the sacred books of the *Hindoos* presented to her by the *pundits* or learned Brahmins.¹⁹ The mind-set behind this prejudice is confirmed when one reads the *Introduction* to his *Memoirs*:

The accounts of 22 centuries ago, represent the Indians as people who stood very high in point of civilization: but to judge from their ancient monuments, they had not carried the imitative arts to anything like the degree of perfection attained by the Greeks and Romans, or even by the Egyptians.²⁰

Bihar emerges in Rennell's *Memoirs* while discussing the course of the Ganga. He surveyed the region between the years 1763 and 1777. He records that the East India Company was "*in full sovereignty, of the whole soubah of Bengal and the greatest part of Bahar*."²¹ There were however "*several purgunnahs on the south-west of little Nagpour, that were formerly classed as belonging to Bahar, but are now in the possession of the Mabrattas*."²² This is the region towards the Deccan plateau, south of Chota Nagpur in South Bihar which had disintegrated from the Mughal Empire after its downfall.

Rennell has nothing much to comment about the religions of North India. He points out that

The principal monuments of Hindoo superstition are found in the peninsula. Some have concluded from this, and from other

circumstances, that the original feat of the Hindoo religion, was there. Others, perhaps with more appearance of probability, suppose it to have originated on the banks of the Ganges. Monuments of superstition, apparently anterior to the Hindoo, exist in the caves of Salsette and Elephants, two islands on the western coast of India: these consist of apartments of extensive dimensions, excavated from live rock, and decorated with figures and columns.²³

It is apparent that he based his conclusion on the basis of monumental remains such as temples and caves which survived in the South but had probably not yet been “discovered” in the Ganga Valley.

He gives a detailed description of the city of Patna:

Patna is the chief city of Bahar, and is a very extensive and populous city, built along the southern bank of the Ganges, about 400 miles from Calcutta, and 500 from the mouth of the river. Having been often the seat of war, it is fortified in the Indian manner with a wall and a small citadel. It is a place of very considerable trade. Most of the saltpeter imported by the East India Company is manufactured within the province of Bahar. It is a very ancient city; and probably its modern name may be derived from Pataliputra, or Patelpoot-her; which we have supposed above to be the ancient Palibothra.²⁴

Rennell published his wall “*Map of Bengal, Bahar, Oudes and Allahabad with parts of Agra and Delhi exhibiting the course of the Ganges from Hurdwar to the sea,*” in 1786. The *Memoirs* explains that the area under possession of the East India Company is shown on the map in red.²⁵ Territories which were British allies were shown in yellow as the map depicts the kingdom of Oudh under Azuph Dowlah.²⁶ The map gives details of roads, forts and military outposts. It also depicts the details of geographical topography: showing mountain ranges, hilly terrains, river systems, tributaries, delta and *doab*. Another fine cartouche appears on the top right hand corner of the map, depicting a river god surrounded by rich foliage, a leopard, an alligator and a bison. Four native figures also appear in the map including a *pundit* and a royal lady.

On looking closely, the provinces to the South of the Ganga are *Rohtas, Shawabad, Bahar* and *Monghir*; the area of the present study. The map marks important battle sites with dates such as 1764 at Buxar which was a watershed for territorial occupation by the East

India Company. The map also indicates the Tropic of Cancer running through South Bihar.

Created immediately following the Battle of Plassey, the map filled the need for the survey and delineation of the territory under the East India Company and was of both military and administrative importance. As Clement Markham has pointed out, "Rennell's survey of Bengal was the first, and it is very creditable to British administration that it should have been commenced within six years of the Battle of Plassey and the acquisition of the country."²⁷ Rennell records in the *Preface of his Memoirs*, "*As almost every particular relating to Hindoostan is become an object of popular curiosity, it can hardly be deemed superfluous to lay before the public an improved system of its geography.*"²⁸

The primary function of Rennell's efforts at survey and map making was to demarcate the area occupied by the East India Company once it had secured a stronghold in North India. Rennell himself wrote:

Now that we are engaged either in wars, alliances, or negotiations, with all the principal powers of India, and have displayed the British standard from one end of it to the other, a map of Hindoostan, such as will explain the circumstances of our political connections and the marches of our armies, cannot but be highly interesting to every person whose imagination has been struck by splendor of our victories, or whose attention is roused by the present critical state of our affairs in the quarter of the globe.²⁹

Largely echoing Rennell, Mathew Edney writes, "Imperialism and mapmaking intersect in the most basic manner. Both are fundamentally concerned with territory and knowledge. To govern territories, one must know them."³⁰ Rennell's maps hence quantified and "geographically, socially, administratively, and mathematically" situated the borders of Hindoostan in the imagination of the people.³¹ Peter Robb agrees that while the British at this point concentrated on defending the frontiers "a thorough survey of roads in the province of Behar . . . with all possible dispatch and accuracy was thought of great importance to our security to obtain a perfect knowledge of the routes."³²

Warren Hastings, the then Governor General had intended for the maps to form the basis of his administrative and revenue reforms. The survey created knowledge of districts, its geographical terrain, accessibility and resources, to facilitate administration. Rennell's surveys paved the way for the East India Company's mastery over Bengal; the survey and mapping rationalised land ownership and defined

boundaries so as to facilitate tax collection.³³ Maps were also meant to aid military strategy. Tactical considerations built into the maps are obvious: forts are labelled and important cities, towns, garrisons and battlefields dot the maps. At first glance this appears to be a decorative device but after careful examination it seems clear that the illustrations are strategic for the planning of assaults. The maps were also then sent back to England and formed the basis for Robert Orme's (1728–1801) study titled 'History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Hindoostan from 1745,' which highlighted the military achievements of the English in India and was published in 1763 in three volumes.³⁴ Thus one aspect of Rennell's work was the delineation of the Company's territories in India in order to publicise, back in England, the gains that were being made in the subcontinent. The selection of elements for mapping and their measurements helped establish a new image of the land.³⁵

Rennell's maps were the first to collate data from all the earlier European and native survey and documentation carried out in India. With this compendium of knowledge, he was able to provide a comprehensive historical, economic and social understanding of India, rather than highlighting specific features. The cartographic delineation of territories had a larger cultural rhetoric: to add to the knowledge bank of the colonial rulers detailed information of their colony. James Rennell's mapping of the Empire can be seen as the starting point.

The long-term impact of official mapping was that it fixed places and defined borders for perpetuity. Villages, place names, boundaries and characters of communities were registered on scientific and objective principles hence giving them a monochromatic and unchanging character. Mapping moreover placed social units as points on a grid of latitude and longitude hence 'fixing' what would have once been abstract. The native rulers had some knowledge of the diversity of geographical location and political spaces, fluidity of sacred geography, myths of origins and attachment to villages. Defining such borders for social units on the basis of administrative convenience brought an end to diversity and uniqueness. The "new" places formed on the map were distinct and limited as political and geographical units defined on the basis of a perceived overarching character.

The attempt to map India, motivated by a desire to create a knowledge pool to ease administration, compartmentalised into scientific categories people, places, resources, the physical landscape, religious, caste and other geographical parameters without any scope of interaction between any of these units. Each of these was measured with

the same methods and with the same instruments, so that the surveys would be consistent in quality and content. "This would further ensure that all parts of the region were mapped together, without any inefficient duplication or unrealized omissions."³⁶ Geography and epistemological sciences hence took over culture by creating a uniform archive of knowledge.

This had a direct impact on the way religious categories and religious sites were perceived. Each religion was given a unique symbol on the map to represent a temple, a mosque or a *dargah*. A sacred site could hence be shown on the map as belonging to only one religion. Cultural constituents were "preserved" on the map as static; religious fluidity and the multivocality of sites were submerged. Religion as a category was central to British representations of India and religious establishments were mapped both for administrative convenience and revenue extraction. "This suggests that just as the presumed physical boundaries of the village defined it as an economic and legal entity, so its temples and mosques characterized its social quality."³⁷ This brought about a clear-cut demarcation between borders of a Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim shrine. Religious sites could not be cohabited in the British mind.

Another result of mapping and cartography was to define boundaries around temples and other religious architecture. The sacred and the secular units were contained within imaginary dotted lines. This ended up alienating the communities living around temples whose support was crucial for its maintenance. Living traditions and ritual praxis within the sacred space was limited, leading to abandonment of shrines and their consequent decay. This also brought about the movement of icons. When shrines came to be defined as purely Buddhist or seen as converted into a mosque, any loose architectural fragments or icons were shifted to other locations.

The British made themselves the intellectual masters of the Indian landscape and geography took over culture by creating a single archive of knowledge.³⁸ It would be apt to summarise in Edward Said's words that Europe's comprehensive observation and codification of the non-European world was done "in so thorough and detailed a manner as to leave no item untouched, no culture unstudied, no people or land unclaimed."³⁹ The military and economic triumph of the English East India Company also resulted in a cultural conquest. The British knowledge of the Indian landscape found immediate reaction in Europe. Once landmarks were marked, routes were traced and connectivity was established on paper the subcontinent saw a continuous traffic of European travellers and artists.

Francis Hamilton-Buchanan: travel diaries of Bihar (1762–1829)

Detailed textual descriptions of South Bihar first appear in the journals of Francis Buchanan (who later assumed the title of Hamilton). Francis Buchanan was a Scotsman trained as a surgeon and joined the Bengal medical services.⁴⁰ In 1800, Buchanan was commissioned by Governor General Wellesley to conduct a survey of Mysore. The Court of Directors later appointed Buchanan to also undertake the statistical survey of the Bengal Presidency.

The travelogues of Buchanan meticulously record exploration of over 100 sites in the districts of Bhagalpur, Patna, Gaya and Shahabad between 1810 and 1813 and mark the beginning of systematic documentation and listing of historical sites and archaeological remains in Bihar.⁴¹ Buchanan was not conversant with Indian history; antiquarian enquiry was just one of the subjects he had to cover during the course of his travelling.⁴² Yet he appears to have visited almost every site falling on his route, where he would rigorously examine the ruins and enquire with the local people about popular culture. Buchanan did a variety of things in the course of this survey: he compiled details of the occupational background of the inhabitants of various places, measured the temperatures of hot springs, collected botanical and geological specimens, measured distances and made detailed maps of the areas he traversed and described the antiquities he saw and the sites he visited.⁴³ The survey lasted seven years, and Buchanan submitted his report in 1816.⁴⁴ The statistical reports of Buchanan provide a description of sites as they existed at the time of the surveys, long before they were visited and described by archaeologists. To accompany his report, Buchanan often had drawings made of sacred images which he found unusual, site maps and floor plans of buildings a number of which were included in Montgomery Martin's publication.⁴⁵ Buchanan was one of the first to recognise the importance of detailed plans and measurements of monuments and sites. He was also the first to identify the importance of significantly large sites in Bihar such as Gaya, Rajgir and Bargaon (Nalanda).

Buchanan's travelogues are remarkable at a time when he had practically no works of reference to assist him in identifying the antiquities of South Bihar, such as the travels of the Chinese pilgrims which provided an abstract map to later archaeologists.⁴⁶ Notwithstanding the absence of maps, the distances recorded in his journal are set quite accurate. His usual methodology was to tour extensively in the cold weather during which he and his assistants collected information. He

then spent the following hot weather and rainy seasons compiling and completing his reports having established his headquarters in or near a town in the district concerned.

Buchanan's first journal is of the Bhagalpur district, dated from 1810–1811 and emphasises more on the natural habitat, outlining details of flora, soil type, varieties of rock, flow and bends of small and large rivers and descriptions of hot springs even recording the temperature of the water. In these earliest reports Buchanan engages little with the cultural elements and observations on religion and mythology are rare. In contrast it is evident that during his tour of the districts of Patna and Gaya, Buchanan came across antiquities considerably more extensive than those he had seen in Bhagalpur. He recognised the antiquity of the region and his description of the sites may be regarded as the special feature of the Patna-Gaya report. In this later report he gives detailed accounts of myths, legends and religious traditions which he came across during his interaction with the people in the region.

In his Bhagalpur journal, Buchanan makes passing reference of the temples in the region, limiting himself to merely listing the main deity enshrined in these. When he visited Kahalgaon in the Bhagalpur district which is a significant site for early shrines, he writes

The larger hill of Pathurghat named Kaseli or Modiram, bears north by east. On this is the brick temple of Durga Saha, a Sakti with an image . . . Badeswar bears east by south. On the hill is a Siva Linga and at the bottom is a temple of his sister Rajil Devi.⁴⁷

A similar trend is seen on his visit to the Mandar Hills, Bhagalpur district. This monolithic hillock is dotted with several early shrines and even finds Puranic references. He mentions the image of a female figure called "*Papahurni*," "*image of Modasudnath*," Antikanath temple in which "*is the image of a quadruped standing, the granite is meant to represent a cow*."⁴⁸ It is however the geological character of this granite hill and the mineral deposits there which capture Buchanan's attention. "*The rock is granite of moderate sized grains of reddish white feldspar, glassy quartz and a little mica*."⁴⁹ He merely lists the different temples found on the hill and makes passing reference to the architectural fragments lying around. "*The whole way from the Math to the tank I observed stones lying by the road. They are squared, many of them part of mouldings, or coloumns, or of images, all extremely rude*."⁵⁰

By reading these descriptions one gets a general picture of the sanctity of the two hillocks and the fact they are both cluttered with early

shrines. Buchanan is also able to reflect upon contemporary religious and cultural practices. From Mandar he writes about the Madhusudan temple (an *avatara* of Krishna), “Near it are several ruins and ruinous buildings, on which there is an inscription in Devanagri, is still in use, the image of Modasudnath being brought to it on the Jatra, and there is a small Rath for the purpose.”⁵¹

His descriptions regarding religious sites and sculptures get far more detailed in the case of Patna-Gaya journal dated to 1811–1812. The journals go into several pages of descriptions of temple plans, the enshrined images, ornamentation, inscriptions, state of preservation and also whether the temple was still in active worship or not. Buchanan in fact appeared quite impressed with Gaya, “I went to visit some of the most remarkable places in Gaya.” In the case of the Vishnupad complex in Gaya, which consists of a series of shrines interlinked through the *shraadh* rites, Buchanan goes into details of even the smallest shrine present in the complex: its history, mythological significance, enshrined image and dynamics in the *shraadh* rite.⁵²

At Bodh Gaya he had observed the Bakraur mound and quoted local people to suggest that it was related to the Buddha. Buchanan observed a small hill composed of brick and covered in earth. Local memory remembered a complete temple, to have existed at the site, round and solid and dedicated to the *Mahamuni*. He also got information of archaeological significance where he was informed by the local people that one Mr Bodem dug the mound looting the bricks and in the process found a stone chest containing bones and images. Bodham also uprooted a stone pillar from the mound and reinstalled it in Sahibgunj.⁵³ Buchanan remarks that around the central temple there must have been other smaller temples since several heaps of brick still survived at the site. He was also informed that an image of Bhairav had been found at the site but he was unable to see this image.⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that popular memory had an understanding of Buddhism as a religion with the Buddha as being *Gautama Muni* and a *Bhagwan*. Legends associated the site as the place where Gautam Muni along with other *Munis* came to perform austerities and one of the other *Munis* died and was buried there.⁵⁵

He also writes about meeting the *Mahant* and his “*chelas*”. He comments that in the *Mahant*’s compound the buildings have all been “erected at very different times, each *Mahant* having made various additions so that there is no uniformity or symmetry of parts.”⁵⁶ Buchanan was able to see the collection of images at the *Mahant*’s compound, “The materials have been taken from the ruins, and the *Mahants* have been at particular pain to have rescued the image although all *Nastik*,

and to have placed them where they might be saved from injury.”⁵⁷ He visited all the shrines of the Mahabodhi complex: “a building called Rajasthan or palace of Dharma Asoka” who resided in this “palace” and built the “Temple of Buddh 5000 years ago.”⁵⁸ He was told that the Rajputs were the priests of the temple. Of the Mahabodhi temple Buchanan is able to give a fair dimension and reports that “it seems to have been composed of various courts now mostly reduced to irregular heaps of brick and stones, as immense quantities of materials have been taken away.”⁵⁹ He reports the temple of “Bageswori” and Tara Devi, the images of both having been dug out and in worship. He visited the “Buddh Pada” and “round it are heaped many images and inscriptions.”⁶⁰ He also commented that “the number of these small temples scattered all over the neighbourhood (of Mahabodhi temple) for miles is exceedingly great.”⁶¹ Interestingly when Buchanan visited the site some workmen were “already working and making excavations.”⁶² Buchanan records that “The Mondir is rapidly hastening to decay” hence a repair was undertaken by a Maratah chief recently.”⁶³ He remarked that “Some of the images are best in style that I have seen in India.”⁶⁴

When Buchanan first spotted the ruins of Bargaon, Nalanda he immediately drew parallels with Bodh Gaya, which he had visited earlier. He found a number of Buddhist images which reminded him of those at Bodh Gaya. He refers to the conical heaps of brick towards the South of Bargaon, rightly suspecting them to be the remnants of temples. He observed several neighbouring houses constructed from the bricks from the ruins. As in the case of Bodh Gaya, he reported seeing several heaps of images at Bargaon and many of these having been used in modern temples. He reflected upon contemporary religious practices and records the annual fair which took place around the Suraj Pokhra.

At Rajgir, he goes into great detail in describing the numerous shrines, their icons and their mythologies. He was told that the remains of the fort there belonged to Sher Shah. He, however, disagreed and through his surveys ascertained that the remains were far older. He interacted with the local people to collect as much information on the history of the site. For instance, he narrates the “story of Senok family from Hustinapuri and says that they know nothing of the Buddh.”⁶⁵

He continues with detailed descriptions of temple shrines in his Shahabad journal as well. At Deo Barunark (in erstwhile Shahabad district, now Aurangabad), Buchanan describes in detail the location of a temple in the village “Deo Barun Aruk,” a “Sakadwip Brahman who is Pujari,” a curious column which is “quadrangular at the base and

capital and octagonal in the centre and a good deal ornamented,” the presence of a *nat mandir*, a series of temples in the complex dedicated to different deities of the Puranic pantheon, an image “*which is called the Sun but resembles Vasudeva and has no horse.*”⁶⁶

The same is the case from Deo Markandeya, another significant temple site in Aurangabad district. He described the “*ruin which has been a small mandir with a nat mandir, both built of brick and placed on an elevated terrace of no great size, also constructed of brick.*”⁶⁷ He reports an entire complex of temples here with “three or four *lingas*,” Ganesha and two Gadadhar, and that all the shrines had fallen and the roofs gone missing.

The multi-religious character of sites of South Bihar also finds frequent reference in all of Buchanan’s journals. At Kahalgaon, Bhagalpur, he lists engraved images of “*Vishnu riding on the bird guror, Rama, Sita, Hanuman and a vast number of attendants and partisans of the sect of Vaishnav.*” At the same site he reports an “*idgayi built of brick and as usual ruinous.*”⁶⁸

At Sultanganj, Bhagalpur, Buchanan visits the Fakir’s Rock, a small granite island jutting out in the Ganga and agrees that the name of the island suggests its association with a Muslim saint. He, however, reports the inhabitation of the island by a Shaiva *Mahant* and his *chelas* who had a *matha* there. The face of the rock as he describes was carved with figures of all sects. “*I observed Porusram, Narayon and Lakshmi, Anonta, Krishna and Rada, Narsinga, Ganes, Hanuman, Siv and many others beside one of Jain.*” He also mentions a small building dedicated to the “*Jain tirthankara Porusnath*” located on this island. On the mainland across this island he saw a similar relief of many *lingas* carved on the rock face while on top of the hill he reports seeing a mosque and tombs of saints.⁶⁹ At the same time local legends prevalent at Sultanganj informed Buchanan about the ritual connection of this island with the shrine of Baidyanath (dedicated to Shiva), located in the same district.

At Bodh Gaya he observed a similar trend and mentions the Pancha Pandava images, “*five sons of Pandu, who are claimed by all sects.*”⁷⁰ Similarly at Rajgir in the area of Surajkund he mentions “*located here is Dorga of Surufuddin Behari, built where the great saint passed much time in prayer. Area has a hot spring and ancient monuments. The Hindus are still permitted to bathe in the place and have a small temple of Siva in the side of the pool.*”⁷¹ At Bargaon, Buchanan mentions seeing a Buddha image being worshipped as “*Bathuk Bhairava*” a form of Shiva. He also records the existence of several Jain, Hindu and Buddhist images at the same site.

He similarly describes in considerable detail the ruins of a temple complex at Dapthu in Gaya district.⁷² He mentions a series of five temples, dedicated to various deities and sects: temple of Parashwanath, temple of Kanhaiya and temple of Goddess Jagdamba, all coexisting in the same complex. He also mentions a Pir's *Dargah* at the site a little north of the temples. As per Buchanan, the site indicated considerable evidence of temple renovation and re-use of images:

Both this door and the stonework of the outer temple seem to be of much greater antiquity than the brickwork, which has probably been renewed several times, but there is no appearance of the image or the plan of the building having undergone any alteration.⁷³

Buchanan also found several Buddhist images amongst Hindu ones or within a Hindu temple and he clearly points this out. At a temple of Narasimha, Buchanan mentions a Shiva *linga* in a small apartment. The door of this shrine was, however, made of fine grained black stone, much ornamented with four Buddhas on the lintel.⁷⁴ At Ongari in Gaya, Buchanan mentions a Buddha image being worshipped as "Surjo" or Surya.⁷⁵ Similarly at Pali, Gaya he observed three heaps of bricks all of which were supposed to have been temples of Shiva.

On the summit of the mound is a granite temple. On one end of this is carved a Buddha, the top of this is carved into a Linga; but this obscene object of worship is evidently placed upon it after it had become a heap."⁷⁶

This intermingling of faiths and re-use of sacred sites is probably best reflected at the Vishnupad complex in Gaya. Buchanan reflects that the Vishnupad

represent various deities of the Hindu theogony, but these are common to all the sects of the Hindus and some sects of Buddh admit to their worship although others reject this practice but these images merely seem intended as ornaments and as such would have been admitted even by Gautama. In fact, by far the greater part of these images although evidently representing personages now worshipped by the Orthodox are said by the skilful to be represented with emblems which clearly show them to have been work of heterodox. It is alleged that the Buddhs took these from previous orthodox buildings and placed them in their new temples

associated them with others of their own heterodox invention . . . there are evidently two periods of buildings.⁷⁷

This assimilation and accommodation of religious images in sacred structures was accompanied by the re-use of architectural fragments. At Bihar Sharif Buchanan visited a mosque where pillars from a Hindu temple and Buddhist sculptures had been re-used in a “*Muhammedan place of worship*.”⁷⁸ At Bodh Gaya Buchanan writes that much of the images from the Mahabodhi complex have been taken away. “*It is even alleged by the Rajput convert that all the images now worshipped at Gaya were originally in this temple as ornaments, and have had new names given to them by the Brahmans and suited for their present beliefs.*”⁷⁹

The re-consecration of images at new sites and structures was often accompanied by a change in their identity. Buchanan noticed this at the Kund area in Rajgir: “*I observed five or six of such as is called Vasudeva, but from the enormous distention of the ears these are admitted to belong to the sect of the Buddhists.*” More interesting are his observations from Kesba or modern Kispa in Gaya:

A celebrated image of Tara Devi in a small square temple built recently on a heap of bricks and stone, evidently ruins of former buildings. The image is of a full human size and is standing with a small figure on each side, but the body is entirely covered with a piece of cloth so that it entirely resembles a Hindustani waiting maid.

Buchanan suggests this to be a Boddhisatva figure.⁸⁰ Same is the case at Deo Markandeya from where he reports that a Gadadhar image was worshipped as Surya.⁸¹

This process of re-use of images and architectural fragments was not always a peaceful one. At Kharagpur in Bhagalpur district Buchanan mentions the conversion of Hindu temples into “*Islamic areas*.”⁸² Buchanan at several sites also encounters mutilated images.

Buchanan seemed to have had a fair idea of the contemporary religion. At Koch in Gaya, he writes “*Among them are many of Surja, Vishnu, Devi, Ganesha, Hurgauri, Krishna and Rada etc. and two remarkable groups one representing the avatars of Vishnu among which Buddh is omitted and Rada put in to supply its place.*”⁸³ Yet Buchanan does not seem to have overcome his western biases. He very often mentions the worship of the *lingas* as rather crude and indecent. For instance, at Vishnupad, Gaya he writes: “*At the south side of the temple (VishnuPad) is Sworga Dewari and on it are several Lingas, one of which is exceedingly indecent.*”⁸⁴ At Sultanganj, Bhagalpur he

mentions that even though it is a Shiva temple “*none of the carvings are indecent.*”⁸⁵

Buchanan during his tours through Bhagalpur, Patna, Gaya and Shahabad frequently comes across Uma Mahesvara images and calls them *Hara Gauri* or *Gauri Sangkor*. He comments that the Hara Gauri image is a very common image in the Gaya region⁸⁶ and gives the following description of the Uma Mahesvara sculpture. “*In this temple which is very small and probably not 100 years old are two small images, one of Ganesa the other of a sitting male with a female on his knee, such as is usually called Hargauri.*”⁸⁷ In some instances he mentions the bull and the lion being present, and at times also a human face or a child/devotee.

At the South East corner of the terrace is a small chamber the roof of which has fallen but several images have been placed on it. One resembles Gauri Sangkar but a child is seated at the feet of the female while a bull as usual attends the male.⁸⁸

Buchanan mentions the Uma Mahesvara image mostly in the context of Shaiva temples and in these he mentions the *linga* as the principle image of worship. He frequently comes across Uma Mahesvara sculptures lined up in the temple precincts along with other Hindu and Buddhist images. For instance, in the Kund area in Rajgir, he writes, “*I observed two of the goddess sitting on a lion couchant, which my people had never before seen; also two of Gauri Sankar and three Lingas.*”⁸⁹ Similarly he reports these images from the Shiva temple at Deo Markandya,

About 100 yards north from this temple is another small and more entire building of brick which contains an immense *linga* with a large humanlike but ugly face carved on one side. The ears are very large. This is called Gauri Sankar. Another large square building without a roof and said to be modern. It contains an image called Devi but which represents a male with four arms with a two-armed female seated on his knee as usual in Behar.⁹⁰

There are three instances where he comes across images of Uma Mahesvara enshrined as the principal deity of the shrine. Both these shrines are mentioned from Rajgir.

I ascended the hill to see antiquities. Crossing the Panchanan at the upper end of the great heap, I ascended a very steep precipice to

the small temple called Gauri Sankor, which is situated at the bottom of an immense rock, on the bottom of which is the monument called the Baitaki of Jarasandha.⁹¹

The third reference comes from Dapthu, Gaya district, where he mentions seeing a Uma Mahesvara enshrined in the main shrine but the shrine itself was ruined.

There are several instances where he confuses the Uma Mahesvara as images of Krishna and Radha,⁹² and also as Rama and Sita.⁹³ At Ongari, Gaya he saw several images lined up, mostly of Vasudeva as also several mutilated images including one Gauri Sankar. He also found, "*in an abode of serpent Nāgasthan three pretty entire Gauri Sankar.*" He describes these images as of "*A man sitting with a female on each knee. A bull, but no lion beneath. It is called Gauri Sankar but in there being two females and in wanting the bull, it is entirely different nor have I seen it elsewhere.*"⁹⁴ Clearly these were not Uma Mahesvara images.

One particular Uma Mahesvara image which has been frequently mentioned by almost all travellers is found at Bodh Gaya under a *pipal* tree, north of the Mahabodhi temple. "*On the pedestal of one of the images representing what the orthodox call Hargauri' the messengers of Ava engraved their names and the date of their arrival.*"⁹⁵ At one instance, at Prit Sila in Gaya, Buchanan mentions seeing a Uma Mahesvara image in a temple dedicated to Brahma,

Near the rock and covered with dirt was lying a small image carved on stone, which represented Gauri on the knee of Sankar in the usual manner but was called Preth Bhawani. The other object of worship in the temple is a mark on the rock supposed to have been made by Brahma.⁹⁶

Another interesting Uma Mahesvara is mentioned from Deo Barunark, "*Another similar shrine is placed near the porch of the great Mandir. The image of this seems to be a Gauri Sangkar and is worshipped at marriages but the Pujari gives it no name.*"⁹⁷ The other sites where Buchanan reports seeing Uma Mahesvara images are Deo Barunark where he mentions three Uma Mahesvara images,⁹⁸ Tilautta,⁹⁹ Gurwat,¹⁰⁰ Nagarjuni,¹⁰¹ Narawat¹⁰² and Kispā all in the Gaya district and at Surajkunda Rajgir.¹⁰³

The material collected by Buchanan in the course of his surveys is full of archaeological and historical possibilities; but this potential has not been utilised. He was in fact one of the few surveyors who

was successful in corroborating local narratives against historical chronology and was hence able to give a more comprehensive picture. Unlike his contemporaries he was also less judgmental of Indian ways and customs. Buchanan documents about a hundred sites in the five districts of Bihar, providing significant clues for later explorers like Markham Kittoe and Alexander Cunningham; his rigorous explorations can be matched only by Cunningham's archaeological tours. In many ways, "Buchanan's work fed both official and popular appetites for information on the subcontinent at a time when neither had much to rely upon, and did so with the authority of one who had observed all 'on the spot'."¹⁰⁴

AM Broadley: the making of a collection (1847–1916)

AM Broadley was the District Magistrate of Bihar Sharif in the 1860s and is another noteworthy explorer of Bihar during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Broadley has drawn flak from archaeological quarters for his unscientific excavation of the Temple site 3 of Nalanda. From the rich haul of sculptures and other antiquities which he collected during official tours and his explorations he established a museum at Bihar Sharif in 1878 which was later transferred and kept at the Indian Museum under the Broadley Collection. Once the Patna Museum was established in 1913, a large part of this collection was also transferred there.

Broadley like his contemporaries was on a mission to explore Buddhist sites and add to the existing knowledge of the life of the historical Buddha. During the course of his explorations he followed the writings of the Chinese travellers and tried to establish a one-to-one relationship between the Chinese travelogues and the archaeological landscape. He also had Buchanan's memoirs as a reference map. At several sites he was able to examine the change in the historical landscape since the time Buchanan had visited. Broadley extensively quotes Buchanan who visited these sites in 1812 and saw several pieces in situ which Broadley saw dilapidated or ruined.

Broadley during his tours covered the present-day districts of Patna, Nawadah, Nalanda, Bihar Sharif and parts of Gaya. The first site he listed was Nalanda as he believed that Nalanda and Rajgir were the two most important Buddhist sites.¹⁰⁵ Based on his study of sites and the antiquities he unearthed, Broadley concluded that Rajgir and Dapthu were "most ancient" while Bargaon was relatively new.¹⁰⁶ He explored and excavated several significant sites such as Apshad, Parbati Hill and Ongari in the Gaya district, Telhara, Biswak, Mubarakpur, Rajgir,

Chandimau, Ghosarawan, Soh Serai, Tetrawan, Nalanda and Giryek in the Nalanda district and Bihar Sharif.

Broadley reports extensive remains from several sites. He gives detailed description of Bargaon. He probably visited Temple 12 of the Monastic Complex where he describes the ruins in great detail, and the site seems more intact than at the time Cunningham visited it a few decades later. He extensively describes high conical stupas around the several tanks located in Bargaon and identifies them as remains of temples.¹⁰⁷ In 1871, Broadley began excavations on the main mound with one thousand labourers, and within ten days he laid bare the eastern, western and southern facades of the great temple and published a short note of the excavation.¹⁰⁸

He similarly gives detailed descriptions of the ruins at Rajgir since he believed in the pre-eminence of the site to Buddhist religion based on its antiquity. He even carried out excavations at Rajgir and carried away sculptures to Bihar Sharif.¹⁰⁹ Broadley, however, was not impressed by the sculptures found at Rajgir and commented that the carvings at Rajgir were inferior to those found from Bargaon.¹¹⁰

When Broadley visited Telhara in the Nalanda district he was taken in by the extensive remains at the site. He reports that “*a large number of idols of brass and basalt (are) constantly found here.*”¹¹¹ He talks of it being a very significant site and suggests further explorations.¹¹² He reflects “*few places in India would yield treasures greater than Tilla-labrah mound and a shaft might be very well cut through it, without interfering with or disturbing the tombs on the surface.*”¹¹³

Another significant site Broadley visited was Ghosrawan in the vicinity of Rajgir where he found a series of early temples.¹¹⁴ He first visited the temple of Singhabani (Singhvahini) where the main figure was of Durga with two Buddhist figures on each side. He also located a mound with sculptures and an inscription. His second significant find was a *vihara* located close to the mound where he reports a second temple with a standing Buddha figure. He further reports a temple dedicated to Mahisasuramardini and finally the temple of Asaji.

Broadley gives a picture of the historic landscape from several other sites. At Biswak, Nalanda district he comes across a pile of Hindu and Buddhist figures.¹¹⁵ From Chandimau, in the same district he reports seeing many heaps of sculptures but no ruins. The plateau like top of the Parbati Hill in Patna district, he says was covered with temples and *viharas*. Some of the temple remains were almost 30 to 40 feet high and covered with Buddhist idols. At Tetrawan he reports remains of “*a temple which contains 200 Buddhist sculptures*” and also the remains of a *vihara*.¹¹⁶ Broadley’s intent on identifying all sculptures,

carvings and monuments as Buddhist seems evident as he writes, “*I rarely found a single figure which I can confidently assert to be purely Hindu.*”¹¹⁷

He makes significant discoveries at Mubarakpur, Patna district where he came across a collection of at least 40 sculptures both Hindu and Buddhist. What is interesting is that he notes that some sculptures were unfinished and labels it a sculptor’s studio.¹¹⁸

At Bihar Sharif which he calls Behar, Broadley is able to garner the antiquity of the site based on the Gupta pillar found within the Fort complex bearing an inscription. He reflects on the continuity of the site on the basis of a number of inscribed figures found there bearing names of Pala *rajās* of Bengal. He also reported seeing extensive ruins and heaps of brick and stone.

In the midst of this rubbish, Buddhist carvings are daily turned up. I have seen as many as four chaityās dug out in half an hour. The carvings found here are chiefly chaityās, votive tablets and mouldings containing figures of the Buddha in different positions.¹¹⁹

He also found a figure of Padmapani which he claimed was been “calcinced by fire.”¹²⁰ He claimed the site as having Buddhist linkages since he “*found very few Hindu figures*” here.¹²¹

At Soh Serai in Nalanda district Broadley found the remains of a *stupa* and a monastery, and he mentions huge piles of bricks which give evidence of a flourishing religious centre. He notices a tree shrine under a *pipal* tree where villagers had collected fragments and mouldings.¹²² A portion of a *Padmapani* figure had gotten moulded in the roots of the tree which Broadley had to cut out before carrying the figure away.

When Broadley visited Dapthu he reports seeing a series of temples but most were in a much decayed state. Many temples which Buchanan had seen at Dapthu had now disappeared and Broadley blamed it on the vagaries of season and climate.¹²³ He makes a similar remark from Giriyeek near Rajgir that the buildings had dilapidated since the time Buchanan had visit.¹²⁴

Broadley at several instances mentions how religious images at various sites across the region had acquired new identities and were worshipped by villagers across faith. He noted that votive *stupas* were very often worshipped as *lingas*.¹²⁵ At Rajgir he mentions that a Buddha image was worshipped as *Beni Mahadev*, a *rupa* of Shiva.¹²⁶ At Tetrawan under a tree shrine a colossal seated Buddha was worshipped as *Shri Bullum* or *Bhairau*.¹²⁷ Broadley also mentions that this platform

seemed to have been repaired several times which hinted that the shrine had been in existence for a long time.

The simultaneous co-existence of icons and sculptures of different faiths within the same sacred space as a fairly common trend in the region also finds mention in Broadley's writings. At Rajgir he records the existence of three Muhamaddan tombs at *Jarasandh ki baithak* which is generally associated with events of the *Mahabharata*. At Rajgir, he also mentions a Jain temple made of Buddhist remains.¹²⁸ The Makhdum Kund at Rajgir, Broadley mentions, was held in veneration both by the Hindus and the Muslims.¹²⁹

Similarly, he notes the reuse of architectural fragments from monuments of one faith by another. At the Behar fort, he reports that three kinds of remains existed: Muhamaddan remains, Hindu temples and remains of a *vihara* or college of Buddhist learning. He adds that the Muslim *dargah* was made of Buddhist monumental remains.¹³⁰ He also noted beautiful carvings in the stone of the *masjid* and a basalt panel containing Hindu carvings of at least twenty deities. He also saw remains of granite and basalt pillars and carved doorways. "*In the rainy season when rivulets run through the hill a mela is organized at the bottom of the hill attended by both Hindus and Muslims.*"¹³¹ At Telhara too Broadley recorded a *masjid* made of the remains from a Buddhist temple.

Broadley records Uma Mahesvara images from at least two different sites. The first instance is from Telhara where he noticed a black basalt Uma Mahesvara and he gives a detailed description of the image.¹³² He, however, identifies Uma as Durga seated on Shiva's left thigh.¹³³ From Tetrawan he reports that "*The only Hindu figures I saw there were these of Siva and Durga, commonly called Gauri Shankar.*"¹³⁴

Broadley in his report also records vandalism and destruction of historical sites. At Behar, he records that the wedge-shaped bricks found there, such as those found at Nalanda and Rajgir, were robbed from the monuments and sold. "*The larger ones (bricks) sell for as much as 2 pice a piece.*"¹³⁵ At Telhara in Nalanda district he reports that brass sculptures were melted and made into bangles.¹³⁶ He also mentions how idols were removed because of Muhamaddan invasion and were buried in the open field to be discovered by a *zamindar* who placed these in his garden. The *zamindar* later offered the sculptures and carvings to Broadley.

Amateur archaeologists and collectors like Broadley hence significantly altered the fate of hundreds of sculptures and antiquities from Bihar. At Behar, "*I have removed the pillar from the place in which it lay, half buried in the ground, and set it up on a brick pedestal opposite*

*the Behar court house.*¹³⁷ The Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for the years 1930–34 mentions in context of the conservation work done for the *Chaitya* site number 12 at Nalanda,

About 100 yards to the North of the Stupa Site No. 3 was a large mound concealing the remains of a structure which suffered heavily in the late seventies of the last century when a Sub Divisional Officer of Bihar carried out haphazard excavations at Nalanda and left the ruins to the ravages of the neighbouring villages and treasure seekers.¹³⁸

Cunningham's assistant, JD Beglar, who subsequently excavated Nalanda, also wrote about Broadley's excavation,

I cannot but feel that the excavation of this temple . . . was not a work which Mr Broadley should have taken without professional assistance. From a perusal of his account it is impossible to make out with any degree of certainty or even lucidity, the details of the temple which he had excavated or destroyed . . . his description is good enough for a popular account, and they are next to worthless for all scientific purposes and in the interest of true archaeology. I venture to enter a strong protest against acts which destroy such interesting ruins without preserving the detailed and minute measurements of what it thus destroyed.¹³⁹

Alexander Cunningham: the beginning of the Archaeological Survey of India (1814–1893)

The next significant stage in the history of archaeology of Bihar is marked by the arrival of Alexander Cunningham, when the religious sites of South Bihar became a focal point of the new studies and the fate of these sites were to a large extent shaped by Cunningham's personal vision. Cunningham had the intensity of Buchanan in exploring sites and the added advantage of being able to contextualise and interpret the sites owing to his knowledge of Indology. He was a productive writer and his voluminous writings form an invaluable source of information.¹⁴⁰ These give us insights into the tensions, debates and conflicts over archaeological goals and policies keeping in mind the larger aims of running a colonial empire.

Cunningham's earliest projects were concentrated on uncovering India's Buddhist past and following the itineraries of the Chinese pilgrims Fa Xian and Xuan Zang, who visited North India in the fifth and

seventh centuries CE. Cunningham's explorations were largely "text aided" aiming to establish the identity of sites mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims. "He selected for investigation only those areas or places visited by Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang and described by them as having ancient remains."¹⁴¹

Cunningham's approach to the identification of ancient places was not restricted to matching accounts and descriptions. The deductions were to be tested on the field; the relationship between settlements and landscape was an important part of his method of survey and reporting; along with attempts at corroborating historical geography with physical landscape and ancient routes.¹⁴² His methodology moreover integrated data from a variety of sources, including literary, anthropological and archaeological. This is somewhat summed up in his statement "the discovery and publication of all existing remains of architecture and sculpture with coins and inscriptions, would throw more light on the ancient history of India, both public and domestic, than the printing of all the rubbish contained in the Puranas."¹⁴³ Perhaps he was suggesting a new route to India's ancient past: an archaeological rather than a literary one.

After several visits to Bihar during 1861–1881, he identified and explored about seventy-five sites, presenting the architectural features of the extant structures and describing the ruins accompanied by sketch plans. He evolved a style of careful reporting on sites; describing monuments; and measuring mounds, pillars, temples and sculptures. During the course of his exploration he discovered a number of settlements and sites which were not mentioned in literature; he hurried from one site to the next making his surveys quite haphazard. His search for Buddhist sites nevertheless led him to the recovery of a varied archaeological landscape, including the earliest Hindu temple dated to the "Gupta period". Cunningham even resorted to frequent excavations in the course of his exploratory tours and indulged in what can be described as shaft archaeology, aimed at exposing *stupas* and collecting artefacts. His antiquarian interest and familiarity with Indology helped him decipher inscriptions, coins and other antiquities which he found; a large portion of which he pocketed for his personal collection.

By the end of the nineteenth century we get a picture of rigorous archaeological activity across several sites of South Bihar involving discovery, identification and documentation. Archaeologists were plagued by two larger issues: First, should the focus of archaeological enterprise be contained to architectural description or should they embrace field archaeology? Second, where should the discovered antiquities be

deposited? I explore how the archeologists of the time addressed these questions by tracing the significant archaeological projects undertaken by Cunningham in South Bihar.

The scope of Cunningham's work in South Bihar can be outlined in two stages: (1) his initial focus on survey in the capacity as an official Archaeological Surveyor during 1861–1871; (2) his work carried out as Director General of Archaeological Survey of India in 1871.

As Archaeological Surveyor: The history of sites of South Bihar remain at the centre of Cunningham's reports and give a detailed picture of what important sites in the region were like in the second half of the nineteenth century. His field surveys help in the historical mapping of sites, identify several ancient routes, highlight the importance of topography in shaping history, discover manuscripts, document architectural and antiquarian remains, and record lifestyles and oral histories of people and places he visited.¹⁴⁴ What remain conspicuously absent are details of sculptures – their styles, iconography and placement.

Cunningham began his explorations in South Bihar with Gaya, where he described the caves at the Barabar and Nagarjuni Hills, citing evidence of their successive Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim occupation. His report for 1861–1862 contains some of the earliest descriptions of Bodhi Gaya, and he dated the Mahabodhi Temple to 500 CE, as built by King Amara Simha. Moving east, he identified the *Kukkutpada Vihara* with Kurkihar, and traced the fortification wall of Rajgir, the ancient capital of ancient Magadha. He identified Bargaon with Nalanda on the basis of two inscriptions he found at the site and also the distance of the site from Giryek and Rajgir as provided by Fa Xian. He supplemented his description of Bargaon with a sketch of its ruins, and from the site of Telhara close by, he reported three mounds.

In the course of his 1861–1862 explorations, Cunningham made a number of small excavations at Rajgir where he dug a shaft near the Maniyar Math, which led to the discovery of three small figurines. He mentions a Punjab *sepoy* with a servant making an excavation here at the same time. Excavating at a second spot at Rajgir, Cunningham unearthed the remains of a room, some steps, and a passage. At Bargaon, excavations made at several places revealed various structural remains such as *stupas* and walls of buildings. At Tetrawan, in the same district, he explored two *stupas*, one on each side of a colossal Buddha image. In Ghosrawan, Nalanda, by collecting scattered pillar bases at the site and working out their alignment on the sketch plan, Cunningham projected the floor area and the height of the *vihara* there.

At the end of four seasons' work between 1861 and 1865, Cunningham had made good progress and had located twenty-five sites in the Gaya-Nalanda-Rajgir area alone.¹⁴⁵ He had also effectively utilised epigraphic and numismatic evidence towards the reconstruction of a desired political history.

By 1848, Alexander Cunningham began petitioning the government to establish an official archaeological survey.¹⁴⁶ In 1861 the then Governor-General Lord Canning finally established the Archaeological Survey of India with Cunningham as its first Director General.

As *Director General, ASI*: Cunningham held the post of the Director General of the newly constituted Archaeological Survey of India from 1871 to 1885. During his tenure as the Director General he extended his archaeological explorations over a number of "Buddhist sites", conducting excavations and publishing papers on his finds, including four books. Once he assumed the post of Director General his survey work in Bihar was carried further by his assistants: JD Beglar, ACL Carlleyle and HBW Garrick. Cunningham issued a *Memorandum of Instructions* to his assistants in which he gave a detailed and systematic exposition of his understanding of the scope of archaeological inquiry which now serves as an important document reflecting upon the agenda of the first Director General of the ASI.

He wrote in the *Memorandum* that "archaeology is not only concerned with broken sculptures, old buildings and mound of ruin" and elaborated that the study of architecture was an important part of archaeological exercise which extended to all ancient remains that helped illustrate the manners and customs of ancient times.¹⁴⁷ A field report should include detailed information on the following things: the various names of the place along with origin; the date of its foundation, either historical or traditional or both; the extent of the settlement; a description of the main buildings, whether standing or in ruins; and the history and plan of principle buildings, with a section of at least one typical of each style. He directed particular attention to inscriptions including mason marks as a guide to the age of structures.¹⁴⁸ Cunningham also included various features and details of contemporary village life within the scope of archaeological survey. He recommended noting down the details of caste affiliations of villagers as a way of understanding the larger issue of distribution of races.¹⁴⁹ He also emphasised the significance of sculptural fragments collected under trees and worshipped in older villages. He directed his assistants to record even weights and measures prevalent in a particular area.¹⁵⁰

Cunningham's *Memorandum*, though comprehensive in scope, created certain stereotypes which continue to mar Indian archaeology to

present times. Cunningham classified the archaeological remains of India into four main categories: architecture, sculpture, coins and inscriptions, and all antiquities were fitted into these categories. The *Memorandum* did not include excavation since at this point the main aim of the survey was documentation and not excavation. As Director General of the ASI, Cunningham ventured into the architectural sphere and offered a chronological classification of ancient and medieval Indian styles of architecture. It was based on a classification into two periods – ‘Hindu’ (1000 BCE to 1200 CE) and ‘Muhamaddan’ (1200 to 1750 CE) with no overlaps between the two.¹⁵¹ His nomenclature of the phases of the Hindu period displayed considerable emphasis on foreign influence.

A direct reflection of the *Memorandum* can be seen in the scope of the work of the ASI across some of the significant religious sites of South Bihar, radically transforming their character and lay out on the pretext of conservation and restoration; ‘restoration’ itself being a European imposition on Indian archaeology. When Cunningham visited Bodh Gaya he listed the inscriptions found there and gave a detailed discussion of the temple, including a description of excavations carried out at the site by him and by Major Mead. On the age of the temple, he voiced disagreement with Rajendralal Mitra, who had dated the temple to about 200 BCE, as well as with James Fergusson, who placed it as late as the fourteenth century. According to Cunningham, the temple that stood at Bodh Gaya was essentially the same that Xuan Zang had seen in the seventh century. He believed it had been subsequently repaired but not rebuilt. While clearing the area around the temple, he discovered a raised promenade outside the northern wall. Other important finds included the *Vajrasana*, coins and precious stones inside the temple.¹⁵² Between 1880 and 1884 Beglar was assigned to supervise restoration work at the Bodh Gaya temple. Apart from conducting survey work, the archaeological surveyors were supposed to play the role of professional advisers to local governments and administrations, offering advice on the preservation and repair of historical monuments. The work of repair was to be carried out by the Public Works Departments.

Cunningham’s reports of Bodh Gaya from this period are filled with contempt for the Shaiva Mahant who was in charge of the Mahabodhi Temple at the end of the nineteenth century, by which time both the tree and the temple structure had deteriorated considerably. Cunningham further lamented about how Buddhist art of Bodh Gaya, which could originally be compared to that of Greece, had now degraded to be replaced by the “bestiality” and “obscenity” of Hindu sculptures. He also criticised the ignorance of the locals, who used the site’s stones

as building materials and in this way reiterated the colonial pretext of native apathy and hence a need for conservation. Once again the recurrent narratives of authenticity, origin, the true identity of a structure before Hindu take-over and the recovery of a primary moment of creation were harped upon. Despite this, few efforts were made to preserve the fabric of Bodh Gaya, for at this time the purview of archaeology was limited to collection of artefacts and “restoring” it to its original “Buddhist” character.

The second site where Cunningham intervened was the ancient city of Rajgir. He was determined to settle the question of the identification of the Sattaparni cave, where the First Buddhist Council had been held after the Buddha’s death. He, however, wrongly reiterated his identification of the Son-Bhandar cave with the Sattaparni cave.

The site of Sultanganj near Bhagalpur was perhaps one of the few sites which were systematically excavated by Cunningham. Here he identified and excavated a brick *stupa*, drew attention to a large number of stone seats or stools found at all ancient Buddhist sites and suggested that these may have functioned as primitive chairs for monks.¹⁵³ He noted that they were currently being worshipped by local inhabitants as ‘Goreyas’ or spirits.

Beglar identified ancient remains at Dharawat, north of the Barabar Hills, in Gaya district as Xuan Zang’s Gunamati monastery. Cunningham carried out excavations here to reveal walls and sculptures associated with a monastery. On the hill above the monastery he excavated a *stupa* which yielded a number of clay seals bearing Gupta characters. The discovery of a single punch-marked coin at the site was proof enough for Cunningham of its great antiquity.¹⁵⁴

Cunningham visited several ancient Hindu brick temples in the then Gaya district at Deo Markandeya, Mahadeopur and Deo Barunark. He described Deo Markandeya village as being situated on a mound “which is thickly covered with broken bricks and pottery, the latter being chiefly glazed with a shining black.” This reference suggests it might be a Northern Black Polished Ware site. He described a very curious temple at Mahadeopur which was twelve-sided at the base and square at the top. At Deo Barunark, Cunningham found an inscription on one of the temple pillars and dated it to the latter half of the seventh century, suggesting that the temple itself was two or three centuries older. According to Cunningham, this was very important evidence as it proved the use of the arch in the fourth and fifth centuries prior to the coming in of Muslim builders.¹⁵⁵

From Volume 3 of the Archaeological Survey Reports, there is regular material on inscriptions: lists, facsimiles, translations and discussions.

The report for 1871–1872 lists inscriptions found at Bodh Gaya, Gaya and other places. On the basis of evidence in inscriptions and medieval literary sources, Cunningham constructed a genealogy of the Pala kings of Bihar and Bengal, and a more ambitious genealogical lists relating to the history of Magadha from the Shishunagas to the Palas.¹⁵⁶

Cunningham also recognised the importance of photographic documentation of sites and as the Director General of the Archaeological Survey India he emphasised towards this. The survey reports were accompanied by photographs, many of which were taken by Beglar. Cunningham himself was personally involved in the task of helping the government to acquire photographs and negatives from various individuals.

It is easy to depreciate the work done by Cunningham: the over concentration upon Buddhist distributions and the frequent technical incompetence; yet his contributions cannot be negated.¹⁵⁷ Under Cunningham, archaeology in India for the first time came to be adopted within the purview of a formal state structure. His research and methodology marked a break from the earlier notion of history writing which focused on tracing the geography of the *Puranas* and the Epics. In addition to the archaeology of Buddhism, he and his colleagues established other branches of archaeology such as numismatics and epigraphy. Cunningham succeeded in an extensive yet comprehensive cataloguing and documentation of archaeological data since he made personal visits to a large number of sites, which helped in unfolding the geography of ancient India around which a lot of subsequent research was carried.

The greatest flaw with Cunningham's methodology was the lack of conservation for standing monuments within their local surroundings. In a number of cases the structures were dismembered and removed from their location to be displayed in museums, to be permanently displaced from their original context. Trenches were often left open leading to denudation of the ancient remains. Sculptures, coins, artefacts and all that was portable was carried away as a relic for a personal collection or to museums in Calcutta or Britain.

Rewriting the past

Through the above survey, I have attempted to highlight the different representative perspectives in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century towards religious architecture and iconography for sites of South Bihar. Texts remained crucial to the study of religion and text based archaeology came in vogue. The main thrust was to discover the "Buddhist" sites and monuments as mentioned in textual traditions

and establish a history of Buddhism in India. The finding of monuments and antiquities relating to other faiths remained only incidental to the project. Sites, standing structures and sculptures came to be studied in terms of style, chronology and political patronage. In the pursuit to unravel the 'original', 'pure' variety of Buddhism the inter-connectivity between the different chronological periods was lost and the focus remained on a certain "moment" in history without taking into account its logical connection with the other periods.

Text based archaeological interventions altered the understanding of structures and icons as merely being abodes of gods and objects of artistic appreciation. Colonial understanding of religion followed a Christianised model that strongly emphasised theistic beliefs, exclusivity and a fundamental dualism between the human world and the transcendental world of the divine.¹⁵⁸ It redefined the nature of Indic religions as devoid of social participation and ritual interaction between the deity and the devotee.

The shrine became a monument, static and representative of the religious beliefs of the past; as such their participation in the living faith and traditions were side-lined. The sacred landscape of South Bihar underwent radical transformation altering not just the nature of the site but shifting its location from within religious networks to being fossils from the past and mirrors of an ancient civilization. In the pre-colonial period, religious architecture was an important indicator of the interaction with diverse groups of people: the ritual specialist, devotees, artists and patrons just to name a few. The sacred landscape dotted with a series of shrines formed a part of pilgrimage networks that provided connectivity and mobility both locally and within the region. The crucial element in the Asian landscape was the shrine and it is important to situate it in a social context and to unravel the multiple levels at which sacred sites interacted with a diverse range of communities and negotiated between these.¹⁵⁹

In this project, to view history within pre-defined parameters, sacred sculptures were relegated to a position of being merely objects from the past. Sculptures came to be understood as illustrative of texts, viewed for their aesthetics and placed within cycles of artistic developments. Just as was the case with the shrines, there was an interest only in early sculptures for the later developments were seen as degenerate and corrupt. Even though inscriptions were seen as valuable evidence from the past, the sculptures on which inscriptions were sometimes placed remained in oblivion.

Such studies projected a rather limited understanding of the past and also defined the trajectories for future scholarly research, much

of which persists even today. What happened to the sites, monuments and sculptures once they were ‘discovered’? What are the parameters within which religious sculptures are studied? Is it judicious to continue viewing the structures and sacred sites of Bihar as only belonging to one religion? Can the artistic and cultural feats of Bihar only be viewed through a Buddhist construct of the past?

James Fergusson wrote: “from its very nature it is evident that sculpture can hardly be as important as architecture as an illustration of the progress of the arts, or the affinities of nations.”¹⁶⁰ This is precisely the way in which sculptures are viewed that I hope to correct in the succeeding chapters and offer alternate ways of looking at religious iconography. The next chapter shifts the focus on looking at sculptures within the precincts of early museums in Bihar and how museums through their displays, labelling and cataloguing defined the colonial narratives on religion and religious sites. Sculptures came to be displayed devoid of any architectural context or communities of worshippers; just as the sites from which they came, sculptures became relics of the past.

Notes

- 1 Thomas and William Daniell, in Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India: The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell 1784–1794*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1980, p. 7.
- 2 Matthew H Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, p. 2.
- 3 The Asiatic Society was established in Calcutta in 1784 to encourage antiquarian enquiries in India. *The Journal of the Society* provided a forum for discussing the archaeological achievements throughout the subcontinent where both amateurs and professionals would publish their explorations conducted in Bihar throughout the nineteenth century. Bijoy K Choudhary, ‘History of Archaeology in Bihar,’ in Gautam Sengupta and Kaushik Gangopadhyay (ed.), *Archaeology in India: Individuals, Ideas and Institutions*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 227–243.
- 4 Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. 39.
- 5 Parul Pandya Dhar, ‘Historiography of Indian Temple Architecture (Post-Independence Writings): Some Methodological Concerns,’ in Gautam Sengupta and Kaushik Gangopadhyay (ed.), *Archaeology in India: Individuals, Ideas and Institutions*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 333–350.
- 6 Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. xviii.
- 7 Alan Travithick, ‘British Archaeologists, Hindu Abbots and Burmese Buddhists: The Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, 1811–1877,’ *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 33, 1999, pp. 635–656.
- 8 Clements R Markham, *Major James Rennell and the Rise of Modern English Geography*, Cassel and Co., London- Paris- Melbourne, 1895, p. 50.

52 *The making of museum collections*

- 9 Ibid.
- 10 James Rennell, *Memoirs of a Map of Hindoostan: Or the Mogul Empire: With an Introduction Illustrative of the Geography and Present Division of That Country: And a Map of the Countries Situated between the Head of the Indus and the Caspian Sea*, M Brown, London, 1788.
- 11 Matthew H Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, p. 17.
- 12 Clements R Markham, *Major James Rennell and the Rise of Modern English Geography*, p. 85.
- 13 James Rennell, *Memoirs of a Map of Hindoostan*, Preface.
- 14 Ibid., p. cxi.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Clements R Markham, *Major James Rennell and the Rise of Modern English Geography*, p. 89.
- 17 Matthew H Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, p. 17.
- 18 Clements R Markham, *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys*, Allen and Co., London, 1871, p. 38.
- 19 Himanshu Prabha Ray, *Oceanography in Historical Perspective: Mapping the Past in the Present*, Maritime History Society, Mumbai, 2015.
- 20 James Rennell, *Memoirs of a Map of Hindoostan*, p. xxi.
- 21 Ibid., p. cxiii.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid., p. xxii.
- 24 Ibid., p. 68.
- 25 Ibid., p. xvii.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Clements R Markham, *Major James Rennell and the Rise of Modern English Geography*, p. 45.
- 28 James Rennell, *Memoirs of a Map of Hindoostan*, Preface.
- 29 Clements R Markham, *Major James Rennell and the Rise of Modern English Geography*, p. 86.
- 30 Matthew H Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, p. 1.
- 31 Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science and Empire*, p. 57.
- 32 Peter Robb, 'Completing "Our Stock of Geography", or an Object "Still More Sublime": Colin Mackenzie's Survey of Mysore, 1799-1810,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1998, pp. 181-206.
- 33 Himanshu Prabha Ray, *Oceanography in Historical Perspective*, p. 10.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Matthew H Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, p. 18.
- 37 Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science and Empire*, p. 74.
- 38 Matthew H Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, p. 18.
- 39 Ibid., p. 24.
- 40 Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. 4.
- 41 In the case of some sites there is a discrepancy in ascription of districts since they have been considerably revised post-independence.
- 42 As per Colin Mackenzie's instructions, a comprehensive list of Categories of Data to be collected by Francis Buchanan in Bengal is as follows:

1. Topographical account of each district: extent, soil, plains, mountains, rivers, harbors, towns, and subdivisions; air and weather; plus

“whatever you may discover worthy of remark concerning the history and antiquities of the country.” 2. The condition of the inhabitants”: population, food, clothing, habitations; common diseases and cures; education; poor relief. 3. Religion and customs of each sect or tribe; the emoluments and power enjoyed by priests and chiefs; potential sources of popular discontent. 4. “Natural productions of the country”: animal, vegetable, and mineral, especially: (a) the fisheries: extent, operation, obstacles to improvement and extension; (b) the forests: extent and situation regarding water conveyance, species, value, improvements; (c) the mines and quarries: produce, manner of working, state of employees; 5. Agriculture, especially: (a) “the vegetables cultivated for food, forage, medicine, or intoxication, or as raw materials for the arts”: modes of cultivation, value, extent, improvements; (b) agricultural implements: defects and advantages, potential for improvement; (c) manures and irrigation; (d) flood control and potential improvements; (e) the domestic animals: food, use in labor, value, possible improvements; (f) use of fences and their utility; (g) “the state of farms”: size, expense, rents, wages, condition of laborers, tenures, possible improvements; (h) “the state of the landed property” and tenures. 6. “The progress made by the natives in the fine arts, in the common arts, and the state of the manufactures”: architecture, sculpture, and painting; different processes and machinery used by workmen; relation of manufactures to locally produced raw materials; possible improvements. 7. Commerce: exports and imports, trade; regulation of money, weights, and measures; transportation of goods by land and water; possible improvements. 8. “In addition to the foregoing objects of inquiry, you will take every opportunity of forwarding to the Company’s Botanical garden . . . whatever useful or rare and curious plant and seeds you may be enabled to acquire in the progress of your researches, with such observations as may be necessary for their culture.”

Matthew H Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, p. 46.

- 43 Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. 5.
- 44 A heavily edited and abridged version of the report, which left out a good deal of the information, was published in three volumes many years later, in 1838, by Montgomery Martin. The detailed maps that Buchanan had compiled were never published, and the late publication of his report meant that his notices of important sites were left to others to announce. In fact, while Montgomery Martin’s name was prominently displayed on the title page of the published version of the report, Francis Buchanan’s was conspicuous by its absence. *Ibid.*
- 45 Janice Leoshko, ‘On the Construction of a Buddhist Pilgrimage Site,’ *Art History*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1996, pp. 573–597.
- 46 He perhaps did have the details of the regions from Rennell’s *Bengal Atlas*. But at the ground level, when surveying on foot, the map would not have been able to provide as much information on routes and smaller sites; with the maps scaled to about eleven miles to an inch. Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science and Empire*, p. 162.
- 47 CEAW Oldham (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Bhagalpur in 1810–11*, Superintendent Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, Patna, 1930, p. 3.

54 *The making of museum collections*

- 48 Ibid., p. 19.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., pp. 18–21.
51 Ibid., p. 19.
52 VH Jackson (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Patna and Gaya in 1811–12*, Superintendent Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, Patna, 1926, pp. 40–51.
53 Ibid., p. 55.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., p. 52.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., p. 58.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., p. 59.
64 Ibid., p. 60.
65 Ibid., p. 131.
66 CEAW Oldham (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Shahabad in 1812–13*, Superintendent Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, Patna, 1926, p. 19.
67 Ibid., p. 23.
68 CEAW Oldham (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Bhagalpur*, p. 115.
69 Ibid.
70 VH Jackson (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Patna and Gaya*, p. 58.
71 Ibid., p. 150.
72 Ibid., p. 151.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., p. 47.
75 Ibid., p. 148.
76 Ibid., p. 36.
77 Ibid., p. 42.
78 Ibid., p. 93.
79 Ibid., p. 60.
80 Ibid., p. 155.
81 Ibid., p. 22.
82 CEAW Oldham (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Bhagalpur*, p. 163.
83 VH Jackson (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Patna and Gaya*, p. 22.
84 Ibid., p. 46.
85 CEAW Oldham (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Bhagalpur*, p. 151.
86 VH Jackson (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Patna and Gaya*, p. 111.
87 Ibid., p. 115.

- 88 Ibid., p. 24.
 89 Ibid., p. 119.
 90 Ibid., p. 22.
 91 Ibid., p. 111.
 92 Ibid., p. 115.
 93 CEAW Oldham (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Bhagalpur*, p. 114.
 94 VH Jackson (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan Kept during the Survey of the District of Patna and Gaya*, p. 148.
 95 Ibid., p. 59.
 96 Ibid., p. 34.
 97 Ibid., p. 12.
 98 Ibid., p. 10.
 99 Ibid., p. 84.
 100 Ibid., p. 119.
 101 Buchanan mentions “*Har with Gauri His Spouse Sitting on His Knee,*” Ibid., p. 22.
 102 Ibid., p. 123.
 103 “. . . amongst other images are Buddha and Gauri Sangkor,” Ibid., p. 115.
 104 Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science and Empire*, p. 162.
 105 AM Broadley, ‘The Buddhistic Remains of Bihar,’ *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 1872, pp. 209–312.
 106 Ibid.
 107 Broadley published a separate pamphlet on his exploration of Bargaon, *Ruins of the Nalanda Monasteries at Bargaon, Sub-Division Bihar, Zillah Patna*, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1872.
 108 Dr BP Sinha, *Archaeology in Bihar*, KP Jayaswal Memorial Lecture Series, Volume 5, KP Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1988, p. 35.
 109 AM Broadley, ‘The Buddhistic Remains of Bihar,’ p. 238.
 110 Ibid., p. 239.
 111 Ibid., p. 251.
 112 Recent excavations at Telhara, which started in 2009, have yielded remains of an extensive monastic complex on the scale of the Nalanda and Vikramsila monasteries. The project has yielded over 1,000 artefacts from thirty different trenches including seals and sealings, miniature *stupas*, bronze figurines of the Buddha and sculptures of Hindu and Buddhist deities in sandstone and basalt, copper bells and terracotta objects. Most artefacts have been dated to the Pala period but some also go back to the Gupta times. The most remarkable find came, however, in 2013–2014: a three storied monastic complex, with prayer halls, bases of temples and platforms for monks to sit on. Reported in the *Indian Express*, 23 February 2014, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/a-university-under-a-mound/99/>.
 113 AM Broadley, ‘The Buddhistic Remains of Bihar,’ p. 251.
 114 Ibid., p. 264.
 115 Ibid., p. 253.
 116 Ibid., p. 278.
 117 Ibid.
 118 Ibid., p. 254.

- 119 Ibid., p. 287.
 120 Ibid.
 121 Ibid.
 122 Ibid., p. 296.
 123 Ibid., p. 256.
 124 Ibid., p. 264.
 125 Ibid., p. 228.
 126 Ibid., p. 232.
 127 Ibid., p. 278.
 128 Ibid., p. 241.
 129 Ibid., p. 242.
 130 Ibid., p. 287.
 131 Ibid.
 132 “The next figure is purely Hindu (for in Tillarah as in Nalanda ruins Hindu and Buddhist idols are mixed together). Like the one last described it is unbroken. It is an alto-relievo in black basalt two feet four inches high containing figures of Durga and Shiva. Shiva is four handed, and is elaborately dressed and ornamented. He is seated on a bull. The upper hand on the right grasps a lotus, while the other rests playfully on the chin of the goddess. His lower hand on the opposite passes around her body and supports her left breast. The one above it grasps a trident. His right leg is turned outwards to the right, but the left one is twisted above the bull’s head, so that the right leg of the goddess rests upon it. Her right hand passes around his neck, while the left grasps a mirror. She is seated on a lion. In his right ear is a circular ring and in his left an oblong drop. In her case the arrangement is reversed. His hair is rolled up into a ball first while hers is dressed almost precisely after fashion of George II’s time.” Ibid.
 133 Ibid., p. 253.
 134 Ibid., p. 279.
 135 Ibid., p. 288.
 136 Ibid., p. 287.
 137 Ibid., p. 332.
 138 *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for the Years 1930–34*, Part I, Swati Publications, New Delhi, p. 131.
 139 JD Beglar quoted by Dr BP Sinha, *Archaeology in Bihar*, p. 35.
 140 Upinder Singh, ‘Alexander Cunningham’s Contribution to Indian Archaeology,’ in Gautam Sengupta and Kaushik Gangopadhyay (ed.), *Archaeology in India: Individuals, Ideas and Institutions*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 60–75.
 141 Dilip K Chakrabarti, *A History of Indian Archaeology: From the Beginning to 1947*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 1988, p. 58.
 142 Upinder Singh, ‘Alexander Cunningham’s Contribution to Indian Archaeology.’
 143 Purushottam Singh, ‘Sir Alexander Cunningham’ in RK Sharma and Devendra Handa (ed.), *Revealing India’s Past: Trends in Art and Architecture*, AM Shastri Commemoration Volume, Volume 1, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 88–91.
 144 “The documenting of traditional histories remained one of the constant features of Cunningham’s surveys and reports. This seems to have

- stemmed from a conviction that, whether reliable or not, the traditional histories of a place formed an integral part of its past and therefore must be recorded.” Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. 74.
- 145 Purushottam Singh, ‘Sir Alexander Cunningham.’
- 146 “The remains of architecture and sculpture are daily deteriorating, and inscriptions are broken or defaced; the sooner therefore that steps are taken for their preservation, the more numerous and consequently the more valuable these remains will be,” said Cunningham in Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. 39.
- 147 Purushottam Singh, ‘Sir Alexander Cunningham.’
- 148 Ibid.
- 149 Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. 88.
- 150 “In noting these few examples, I desire chiefly to direct attention to the many curious and old-fashioned things which still exist in several parts of India. Some of these may help to throw light on the scenes sculptured on old monuments; others may serve to illustrate passages in ancient authors; whilst all will be valuable for preserving knowledge of things which in many places are now fast passing away, and will soon become obsolete and forgotten.” Ibid.
- 151 Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. 85.
- 152 He discussed his discoveries rather briefly in the report since he planned to write an exclusive monograph on Bodhi Gaya.
- 153 Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India*, p. 111.
- 154 Ibid.
- 155 Ibid., p. 113.
- 156 Ibid.
- 157 HP Ray, ‘The History of Archaeology in India: Introduction,’ in HP Ray and Carla Sinopoli (ed.), *Archaeology as History in Early South Asia*, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 12–33.
- 158 HP Ray, ‘Archaeology and Empire: Buddhist Monuments in Monsoon Asia,’ *IESHR*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2008, pp. 417–449.
- 159 HP Ray, ‘The History of Archaeology in India.’
- 160 Janice Leoshko, ‘On the Construction of a Buddhist Pilgrimage Site.’