

IN THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT  
ALLAHABAD, LUCKNOW BENCH, LUCKNOW.

O.O.S.NO.4 OF 1989

(R.S.No.12 OF 1961)

The Sunni Central Board of Waqfs, U.P & others. ---- Plaintiffs

Versus

Gopal Singh Visharad and others.

----Defendants.

P.W.27 Prof. Shereen F. Ratnagar

Prof. Dr. Shereen F. Ratnagar, daughter of late Mr. Farshostar R. Ratnagar, aged about 57 years, resident of Empress Court, Churchgate, Reclamation, Mumbai-400 020, occupation-retired professor, stated on oath :-

I hold two postgraduate degrees in Archaeology and a Ph.D in Archaeology. I have been a fellow of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq. I have a postgraduate diploma in Archaeology from London University. After doing my post-graduation I began my P.H.D, was appointed as a lecturer in Jawaharlal University(JNU) in Delhi in the year 1976 and was appointed Reader in the year 1985. Thereafter in 1994 I became Professor of Archaeology in the same University. I taught in

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JNU, five courses in all- two in Archaeology and the remaining three in Ancient History connected with Archaeology. In Archaeology, I taught proto-history and the Utilisation of Archaeological Evidence. I also have the experience of guiding M.Phil. and P.H.D students in Archaeology. I guided about a dozen of research scholars. I have taken voluntary retirement in 2000 from JNU. After my retirement, I have been delivering lectures in academic staff colleges and Universities such as Mahatma Gandhi University at Kottayam, Allahabad University and Chandigarh University. In Mumbai and Delhi Universities also I have given some lectures to the students. After my retirement I have also become a member of Al Hajar Project in Oman doing explorations and excavations in the said country. I am doing that work with Dr. Geoffrey Orchard of Birmingham. During this post-retirement period, I have completed two or three manuscripts for publication. I am author of five books and more than twenty research papers. My first book "The Encounters, the Westerly Trade of the Harappa Civilization", was published in the year 1981. The particulars of other books are as follows:

2. "Enquiries into the Political Organizations of Harappan Society" (published in the year 1981); and

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3. "The End of the Great Harappan Tradition", (published in the year 2000 or so); and
4. "Understanding Harappa" (published in the year 2001); and
5. "Bhartiya Itihas Ke Srot, Pracheen Kaal" (published in the year 2001-2002).

I published my papers more than twenty in number as stated above in different journals like 'Man and Environment (Poona)'; 'Studies in History(Delhi)'; 'Current Anthropology (Chicago)'. I have written papers in archaeological methods and also data retrieval in ancient history.

I was visiting Professor in Paris in 1984. I was conferred an Award by the College de France in January, 2002. This College is located in Paris. I delivered two lectures at the above mentioned College de France, at the University of Harare in Zimbabwe, and at the Institute Kern at Leiden in Holland. I also have delivered the Heras Memorial lectures in Mumbai and the third book, as referred to above, contains my Heras Memorial lectures which were published in book form.

I took my archaeological training from Prof. H.D.Sankalia in Poona and in London, from Prof. S. LLoyd.

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I am aware I am appearing in this case pertaining to the dispute of Ram Janambhoomi / Babri Masjid site. As an archaeologist, I became interested in this issue in the year 1990 approximately, because an important part of that political controversy was the claims made by archaeologists of the discovery of an old temple in the disputed area.

Shown to the witness paper No. 291C1/14 which is entitled as "Archaeological Discovery ?". This article was written by me for Frontline Magazine dated 6th Nov. 1992. In this very magazine, another article under the title "Startling Indeed" (paper No. 291C1/12) was published by my colleague Prof. R.Champaka Lakshmi, then Chairperson of Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Prof. R.Champaka Lakshmi specialises in Art History and the Hindu Temple as a Social and Religious Institution, with emphasis on South India. I have read some books relating to the issue. One of them is "Ramjanambhoomi, Ayodhya New Archaeological Discoveries" Paper No.118 C-1/35. I have never visited Ayodhya. I have read the report submitted by Prof. B.B.Lal pertaining to the disputed site. Some Archaeologists maintained that broken pieces of sculptures and inscriptions were found and also some pillar bases

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at the disputed site. As an Archaeologist, I have field experience with Prof. H.D Sankalia at Tripuri excavations; in Britain I worked with Henry Hurst at Box; in Turkey with David French at Ashvan; in Iraq at Tell al Rimah with David Oates; in Bahrain, at Al Markh with Michael Roaf; in Iraq at Abu Salabih with Prof. N. Postgate and also in Oman recently. During these excavations, I learnt the general principles of stratification and all technical drawings which become interpretation of the strata and their relative dates to one another. Basically, there is no difference between the excavations in India and outside India but the British system is much more rigorous and every Archaeologist has to do all the work himself or herself. The training of excavations outside India taught me principles of data recovery which can be applied anywhere in the world, so that I am able to read and examine critically the excavation reports of any other Archaeologist. Some of my published papers which reflect directly on field Archaeology are as follows :

1. A review Article on the Inamgaon excavations report; and
2. "Does Archaeology holds the Answers ?" (read in America in 1996 and published perhaps in 1998 or 1999 ). and
3. "The End of the Great Harappan Tradition (published in 2000);

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4. 'Back to the Bones' published around 1998 or 1999 etc.

I have also written a paper on weights and the formation process of the archaeological record' (I read it in January 2002 in Paris. It is yet to be published).

To my knowledge, two teams or institutions have conducted excavations at Ayodhya. These are – one, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, and the other is the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. I read the excavation reports of these two institutions published in the journal 'Indian Archaeology- A Review'.

I read a journal titled as "Indian Archaeology 1969-70-A Review" edited by Prof. B.B.Lal published by the Archaeological Survey of India (A.S.I.). Copies of Pages Nos. 40 and 41 of the above journal and the title page of that journal which are on record have been shown to the witness. This is Paper No.291 C-1/4 <sup>to be</sup> and 291 C-1/6. These papers are the true copies of the original which is before me (marked Ex. <sup>Pz</sup> E-1). This excavation report relates to Banaras Hindu University excavations made in three different spots at Ayodhya. Paper No.107 C1/62 and 63 are true copies of the journal, "Indian Archaeology 1976-77 – A. Review" by ASI (marked Ex. <sup>Pz</sup> E-2).

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). Papers No.291 C-1/1, 291C-1/2 and 291C-1/3 are also the true copies of title page and plate No.49 and 50 of the aforesaid journal (marked Ex. <sup>pc</sup> E-2). +

Paper No.291 C-1/16 and 17 are the true copies of page Nos. 76 and 77 and Plate No.XXII of "Indian Archaeology 1979-80 - A Review" (marked Ex. <sup>pc</sup> E-3). +

With reference to Paper No.291 C-1/5, I may submit that the significance of this report is that several cultural periods were found by the excavators and they made reference to some categories of small finds, but there is no mention of any architectural or sculptural material of any temple.

I have studied the two reports of Prof. B.B.Lal published in the journal, "Indian Archaeology-A Review 1976-77" (hereinafter to be referred as IAR) and in IAR 1979-80. Both these reports of Prof. B.B.Lal pertain to different sites at Ayodhya. IAR 1976-77, reports excavations at two different sectors including the disputed area. In IAR 1979-80, it is said that excavation was done in 14 different spots all over Ayodhya, but no specific area is mentioned. Mr. B.B.Lal's excavations uncovered remains of the later iron age and the early historic

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period, both of which are 1000 BC to 3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD. Thereafter, there is a gap in the occupation of Ayodhya and the city was reoccupied in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD. In the disputed area, Mr. B.B.Lal reports finding a large wall which could have been a fortification wall, the remains of brick houses and some ring wells. Amongst the small antiquities, he reports finding coins, seals and a large number of clay figurines including what may be the earliest Jaina sculpture and some potteries of interest. To my mind, significance of this report, IAR 1976-77, is that Mr. B.B.Lal mentions that the pits and brick debris came from levels below the 11<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.i.e. below the medieval reoccupation of Ayodhya- and that he states on page 53 as follows:

“The entire late period was devoid of any special interest.”

In the IAR 1979-80 report, Prof. Lal reports remains of only up to the Gupta period and nothing thereafter. In Prof. B.B.Lal's report, there is no mention of any temple, leave alone one of the medieval period. Except these two reports, to my knowledge, there is no other report of Prof. B.B.Lal on Ayodhya excavations published in IAR.

To my knowledge, there is no other excavation conducted by anyone after Prof. B.B.Lal at Ayodhya in 1979-1980.

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Paper No.118 C1/36 was shown to the witness. I have not seen this photograph in IAR. I saw this trench photograph for the first time in the book No.118 C1/35. IAR is the only authoritative journal being published by the Archaeological Survey of India in respect of excavations and explorations. The relevance of this journal is that it is obligatory for anyone receiving a permit from ASI to excavate or explore, to report his finds in IAR for that year. IAR is like a diary in which all archaeological excavations, explorations, conservation, repairs, treasures and inscriptions found have to be reported, howsoever brief they may be. There is no reference to any so-called pillar base in the two reports of Prof. B.B.Lal as referred to above, nor is there any photograph. I have read about the trench with the so called pillar base in the trench photograph, paper No.118 C1/36 and in some newspapers perhaps.

I have read Prof. Mandal's book, Ext. 63 of O.S.No.4 of 1989, and I have written an Introduction to it and have added some information in my footnotes to that book at page 67 and pages 68 to 69, in which the letters "SR" are mentioned in brackets. My introduction to the book is of course connected

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with the subject-matter, but it is an introduction in general terms, to make the rest of the book easier for the lay reader.

Mandal's approach is, in essence, as to what constitutes scientific evidence in archaeology and how we can draw valid inferences from data. So the approach is that of field archaeology and stratigraphy. The major conclusion is that there is no substance to the claims which have been made about the remains of a temple at the disputed site as mentioned in Paper No. 118 C-1/35 henceforth to be referred as NAD, the caption of the photograph paper No.118C1/36 refers to pillar bases.

Mandal has three major criticisms of this theory: First, he points out that the brick features consist of broken pieces of brick, they do not have straight edges and were not constructed in pits; therefore, he doubts that they could have taken the weight of so-called stone columns of a temple.

The second criticism is on Plate III of Mandal's book, which indicates that on the photo of the trench when he draws a straight line along the faces of two adjacent features, he finds that the so called pillar bases are not even in a row and the second so called row is not parallel to the first so-called row. If at all these were pillars of a temple in a row, they would have had to be very regularly placed in order to carry load.

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The line appearing in the middle of the photograph on Plate III of Mandal's book is a common device that archaeologists often use to check on their finds. This device is frequently used by other archaeologists and in the excavations of Kalibangan, excavated by Prof. B.B.Lal, he has also drawn lines connecting separate stretches of walls to show that they are part of the same fortification. This device has also been used by Prof. B.B.Lal in excavations at Kalibangan as is evident in his reports published at pages 28 to 31 of IAR 1968-69, paper No. 291/C1/7 to 291/C1/11. (Above referred photocopies have been filed by defendant No.5 of O.S No.5 of 1989 and the original book has also been shown to the witness. The witness having compared them, has certified them to be true copies. Marked as Exts. E - 4)

The third conclusion of Mr. Mandal was that the so-called pillar bases do not belong to the same stratum, which he makes very clear in Plate II of his book. One so-called pillar base is sealed by one stratum, but another pillar base is sealed by another stratum. So these five pillar bases, as Mr. Mandal argues, belong to five different strata. It means that the five features or pillar bases were not functional at one and the same time, and therefore, they could not have belonged to the same building.

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I accept Mr. Mandal's arguments and conclusions as referred to above which refute the existence of pillar bases of any temple at the site in dispute. For the arguments in NAD, the so called pillar base in the trench would be a central argument.

I agree with the arguments arrived at by Mr. Mandal mentioned at page 19 of his Book, Ext. 63. In the first four lines, he refers to "At the out set..... stratographic excavations." I fully agree with his finding.

I do not accept the validity of stones, sculptures and other pieces as evidence for a temple as has been argued in the NAD Report because of the circumstances of the so-called recovery. The circumstances of the recovery are that there was ground levelling by the P.W.D of, I think, a large area in and around the disputed site. Ground levelling can never be a substitute for scientific excavations. The difference between the result of scientific excavation and discoveries made after land levelling is that in the former, we recover context. Context is a crucially important component of data; and when there is land levelling, context is destroyed before it can be seen. By context, I am referring to the spatial as well as the vertical position of a find and also the cultural position of the find.

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If we look at the figure 2 page 21 of Ex.63 of book Ex.63, which figure is reproduced from a supplement to the NAD, I mean that there are problems with this pit as context. There is no level that completely seals the pit. Therefore, the pit cannot be stratigraphically dated. And as regards the finds that NAD reported from ground levelling operations, there is also a photograph (paper No.118 C 1/37). This is not a photograph of the process of digging these sculptures. In figure-2, there is no context available. We can contrast this find with finds found in a scientific excavation. If in a regular excavation, we had hit upon something, we would take photographs of it for several days during the actual recovery of the find, whether it was a treasure or a grave, etc. Simultaneously, we would be drawing and measuring the horizontal occurrence of every one of these important finds. We would make a plan of all the finds and we would identify the stratum to which the finds belong and this would be giving the context of the find.

It is true that some objects are found accidentally. They are not archaeological evidence because the context component is missing. The so-called discovery of inscriptions and sculptures when the mosque was being vandalised, is not an archaeological find; but it is the reversal of the entire ethics and

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process of archaeology: for archaeologists, their function in society is to care for old structures. Whatever can be said to have been found at the site in dispute after demolition of the disputed structure cannot be said to be archaeological evidence because the context is totally demolished.

If some inscription is found at a site, it is not necessary that it gives the date or the content of that site. It will depend on the context. There is a famous example in Archaeology. There is a broken pillar edict of Ashok Maurya found at the Sirkap site of Takshila. But the date of Sirkap is not Mauryan. Sirkap is an Indo-Greek and Saka - Parthian town, dating 180 B.C. to A.D. 60 roughly (whereas the Mauryan period is 321 to 187 B.C.). So the Ashokan pillar must have been set up in the Bhir mound of Taxila, but when it ceased to have any meaning, it was reused in a new township that was built near the Bhir mound, namely Sirkap. Therefore, an inscription may be established in one place but it may be removed to play a different function in another place. So, connection of a find or object to a site depends upon the context.

I have not read the book thoroughly, paper No.2891 written by Thakur Prasad Verma and Swarajya Prakash Gupta but I have read a few paragraphs cursorily. This book refers to an alleged

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recovery of alleged long inscription from the debris of the demolished structure. As an Archaeologist, in my opinion, this inscription has no value as evidence. It only comes from the broken remains of a vandalised old structure. There is no context.

I know Prof. Suraj Bhan. As far as I am aware, he is a field Archaeologist. He knows Sanskrit and he has excavated proto-historic and perhaps pre-historic sites but I am not sure about it.

Cross-examination on behalf of Nirmohi Akhara, defendant No.3 by Shri R.L.Verma, Advocate.

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My primary education was in the J.P. Petit High School for Girls, Mumbai (Bombay). I passed Graduation with History. I did my M.A. Postgraduation in Archaeology. In Bombay University, a History Honours Course in those days, comprised papers on Ancient India, Modern India, Modern Europe, perhaps a paper of Mughals and Marathas and all these subjects were papers for my studies in Graduation. From Ancient History, which I studied, I mean the Ancient History of India.

Q. Whether, History is a part of Archaeology or Archaeology has become part of the History – in historical

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period excluding proto-historical period and pre-historical period?

Ans. Both disciplines, History and Archaeology – investigate the ancient past but the sources, their modes of data retrieval and their classification of data differ. For some problems, the two disciplines do go together but for other problems, only historical data will do or only archaeological data will do, which depends on the problem.

We can suggest that students begin the study of Ancient India round about 500 B.C. or so because that is when, we have a number of written sources including, perhaps, the first recension of the 'Rig Veda'. The literature is, of course, of enormous value when we wish to study the ideology of sacrifice, or perhaps some items of political relationships or even study how ideological changes were coming about but the study of Veda, for example, cannot be the key-source for studying a problem like the emergence of the State or kingship in early India. It may be one source, it may be one of the sources but not the chief source.

Certainly, the knowledge of the Puranas is essential for understanding the early first millennium A.D. Perhaps, the same thought would apply to the study of Smritis. I would suggest

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that all materials, if authentic and of the ancient period, has a historical or archaeological value but the relative value will depend upon case to case.

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Statement read and signed

April 8, 2002

Typed by Stenographer in open Court on our dictation.  
Put up tomorrow for further cross-examination.

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In continuation to the statement dated 8.4.2002, P.W.27 Prof.

Shereen F. Ratnagar stated on oath:-

Whereas the study of literature is very important, a lot of Ancient Indian literature is not one text that was written in one period. For example, in the Rig Veda, some of the hymns would have been composed in 1500 B.C. but there were families of poets so some poets of later generations and some poets of earlier generations, both would have written hymns. Now, the Rig Veda as we know it, is arranged in a recension that is dated around 500 B.C. So to use it as the source of 1000 B.C. may create problems; to use it as the source of 500 B.C. is also a problem because it may have older material. It is true that pieces of literature like Rig Veda, Mahabharat, Kalidas, Gitanjali, Vatsayan etc. are sources of history. Besides English, I can read and write Hindi very slowly with the aid of Shabdkosh, French and I can also speak Gujarati. I read the Roman script, Devnagri, Hindi and Gujarati and I can slowly make out the letters of the Arabic script. I would like to add that I studied Brahmi for M.A. but I have forgotten it. I cannot read Pali. I read English translations of Sanskrit although I took Sanskrit tuition for about one year. I have not gone through the entire Vedas. I have from time to time read English translation of Balmiki Ramayan. I have read Mahabharat in English

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translation. I have not read any literature of Kalidas. Nor I have attended any lecture on Kalidas.

Q. Whether you can recognise as old literature of Anc. History reflecting social life of that time of humanity ?

Ans. Although I am not a historian I would like to humbly submit that there are very few pieces of Ancient literature that reflect the society of any one period unless a period is considered to be 1500 years long in duration.

The sources of Ancient History are excavation, exploration, inscriptions, coins, Art, monuments and so on.

Whether a book on History is a source of History or not will depend upon the book itself.

A book on History written by a renowned author is generally taken as a source of History but we always have to view it critically. Sometimes new knowledge comes after that book was written. It is true that some times religious books can also be treated as a basis of knowledge of History. It is also true that accounts of foreign travellers are also one of the bases of knowledge of History. It is true that Epigraphy is one of the

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basis for writing Ancient History and also for knowledge of History. Epigraphy includes inscriptions only and does not include coinage. The study of coinage is another branch of study of Ancient History. It is not correct to say that Archaeology is the last source of knowledge of Ancient History. Archaeology is a separate branch of the social science. "Archaeo" means "old", while "logy" means science so it is a science of old things. Origin of the word Archaeology is either from Greek or Latin, at this moment I do not remember which exactly. Perhaps, the first exercise in systematic Archaeology was conducted in Scandinavia when, after the defeat by Napoleon, the King of Sweden or Denmark ordered the organisation of a grand exhibition of the antiquities of the region by period and place. In Greece and Rome, there was certainly interest in the past but systematic Archaeology in terms of classification and typology of antiquities was not known. It begins with the post-Napoleon era. Man-made materials are studied in Archaeology together with relevant stones, soils, skeletons etc. It is true that Archaeology is a science that deals with particular places and periods. Archaeology began to be practised as an independent subject in the era after Napoleon and it was recognised as an independent subject some time in the nineteenth century. Mortimer Wheeler was not a historian but an Archaeologist first

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and last. The very concept of "fact" today in the Social Sciences is under heavy scrutiny. We may find materials but to translate them into evidence or fact or proof is a second stage. It is true that Archaeology is to be interpreted.

Q. Whether this fact finding discipline by Archaeologist is a complicated question or not ?

Ans. The discipline of fact finding is indeed a complex or complicated question. It is true that it requires tedious, sophisticated and honest work.

Q. Whether a fact finding discipline on a particular fact by one Archaeologist may differ from another Archaeologist or not ?

Ans. What constitutes a fact itself can be disputed. However, if the fact is established, there may be two opinions on the fact by two Archaeologists. One criterion might be whether in its bulletin, "Indian Archaeology : A Review", the Archaeological Survey of India accepts a finding as a fact. In the second instance, there is also the body of scholars who will debate the questions and after sometime may arrive at a consensus. In the event of an article being sent to referees of a reputed journal, if one of whom doubts the very authenticity of the facts, the journal would generally not like to publish it. There is no

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formally or statutorily constituted body to resolve matters if two views are expressed by different Archaeologists on a particular subject. Private Archaeologists are not permitted to explore or excavate without a permit from the Archaeological Survey of India. Normally, the Board of the Archaeological Survey of India has to decide as to who should be given permits to explore, excavate, restore etc.

I agree that in general terms, there is no certainty in Archaeology. I have read only Press Report about the discovery in the gulf of Khambhat made by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (In short, NIOT). This new so-called discovery has been rejected by the Archaeological Survey of India itself as unfounded and a premature declaration that human civilisation is older than 7000 years B.C. I have seen some of the work of Mr. Dilip Chakrabarti, an Archaeologist in Cambridge. If I remember correctly, he wrote an article in The Times London only stating that if these finds can be verified, it is exciting but he does not give any stamp of authority to this fact. I have heard the names of Birbal Sahni Institute of Paleo-botany and of the National Geo-physical Research Institute, Hyderabad. They are recognised institutions. It is true that a piece of wood picked up from the bottom of sea in the Gulf of Khambhat has

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been given a radio-carbon date. It is of 7000 years B.C. It is true that Harappan civilisation reveals human civilisation from 2600 B.C. I may add that the dated piece of wood cannot date the rest of the so-called antiquities also found on the seabed. There was a submerged forest, a pre-historic forest, in the Gulf of Khambhat and, therefore, old wood is not an exceptional discovery from the seabed. I have met Mr. S.P.Gupta who was the president of Indian Archaeological Society. I know the work of Mr. Jagatpati Joshi, Ex Director General of Archaeological Survey of India. The Archaeological Survey of India was established in the 1860s. Then it lapsed on account of paucity of money and was again reconstituted around 1901. Cunningham was the first surveyor appointed by the Archaeological Survey of India; perhaps this body was then under a different name. As far as my knowledge goes, the Archaeological Survey of India was always a government body but it was probably restructured with different duties and powers given to each State branch of the Archaeological Survey of India. The Mortimer Wheeler was Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India for three or four years in the 1940s. Perhaps, he was succeeded by Mr. A. Ghosh as Director General.

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Q. Whether after independence only, the Archaeological Survey of India started excavation work in respect of the religious places situated in different parts of India ?

Ans. It is not entirely correct because Sanchi, a place of great religious importance, was excavated and restored well before Independence. I do not remember when Mr. B.B.Lal joined as Director General of A.S.I.

Q. Whether can you define eras in Archaeology ?

Ans. There are certain stages or eras of the remote past which are as follows :

- (a) The Paleolithic,
- (b) The Neolithic,
- (c) The Chalcolithic,
- (d) The Bronze Age
- (e) Iron age.

It is true that some very elementary knowledge of geology is necessary. For example, for him to recognise a river terrace; but for all complex questions, Archaeologists refer that problem to the Geologists. There are four broad geological eras named Primary, Secondary, Tertiary and Quaternary.

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Q. Whether the first era for timing being can be called Archaeozoic ?

Ans. According to my knowledge, the life for the first time came on earth in this era. I have not heard of Adi Kal in terms of Geology. In my view, Archaeozoic means "old living creatures". I do not know whether this era can be further divided into different ages or not.

Q. Whether there can be any division of segment or not ?

Ans. There are definitely geological ages. It has already been answered earlier. So far as division of segment are concerned, I do not know the details.

In South Asia, the time of the Bronze Age is 2600-1800 BC approximately. Since I took voluntary retirement, I have delivered four lectures at Mahatma Gandhi University on "The Stages of Cultural Development from the Beginning of Village life to the Establishment of the State". In Allahabad University, the topic of my lecture was "Archaeology and History and how these two disciplines converge and diverge". In Chandigarh University, the topic was 'The Current State of our Knowledge on the Harappan Civilisation.' In Allahabad University, so far as

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I remember, the subject of my lecture was "Methods of History and Archaeology". All these lectures were not published in any journal. By methods, I mean, not so much sources, as trying to explain that the problems that history and archaeology set themselves are different.

In Mumbai University, I delivered two lectures on two different occasions. The first was, "How Archaeologists Deal with Traditions" ? The second was "Images of the Past". It was on some sculptures of the Bronze Age and the relationship to the emergence of social elites. Tradition includes culture anywhere in the world. It overlaps.

In Delhi University, I gave a talk on "The Communalization of Indian Archaeology with special reference to the Harappa Civilisation".

The Al Hajar Project in Oman is an independent British Project which gets funds from the National Museum of Scotland and from certain private bodies. In Oman, we were exploring dozens of pre-historic stone tombs and putting them on the map and trying to decide how we shall excavate, and where we shall excavate in the next year, i.e. in 2003. I am a member of this Project, whose Director is Dr. J.Orchard. In that Project, the work of exploration was done by a team of five people together. Exploration is the prior activity and is followed by excavation.

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In the above team, one member was an expert on Global Positioning Systems and the remaining four members were archaeologists. In Oman, we were exploring two dry valleys in the interior of Oman. These are called the valleys of Behala and Bisya. In respect of the above exploration, an annual report was submitted to the authorities in Muscat and a paper was also read in London. In both the reports, my name is mentioned. I am not sure whether it was published somewhere or not but I think it must have been published.

The manuscripts which I have referred to in my Examination in Chief are (1) a paper now published in a journal "Current Anthropology" from Chicago; (2) a book now published from Delhi, entitled 'Understanding Harappa'; and (3) I have just submitted to Oxford University Press, a manuscript for their consideration.

The book written by me 'Bhartiya Itihas Ke Srot', is not on history but on sources. There are several chapters in that book on archaeology. There is one chapter on Rigveda, one chapter on how the Critical Edition of the Mahabharat was made, one chapter on mapping the inscriptions of Ashoka, one on the Arthashastra, a small section on ancient Tamil poetry, one chapter on the Stupa as a source, etc. I did not read the whole Mahabharat, because the point was to explain to school teachers

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how the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute set up the Project on the Critical Edition of the Mahabharat and some outline about how they produced the critical edition of the Mahabharat. I have heard the names of heroes mentioned in Mahabharat. Hastinapur was the capital of Kauravas. The capital of Pandavas was Indraprastha, now Delhi. My fifth book, "Bhartiya Itihas Ke Srot" does not contain any material on Ramayana.

I know the hero of Ramayana. He is Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, sent to destroy evil. He was connected with Ayodhya. I am aware that there is a controversy about the location of ancient Ayodhya, but not being a historian I have no opinion on the matter. Saryu river flows near past Ayodhya. I have heard about river Tamsa but cannot say where does it locate. It is correct that the rivers Tamsa and Ganga are mentioned in Balmiki Ramayana. Chitrakoot and Lanka are mentioned in Balmiki Ramayana but I cannot say whether Nasik is also mentioned in that book or not. Although I am not a historian, I would nevertheless humbly like to state that not all scholars accept the location of ancient Lanka as being the same as that of modern Sri Lanka. Prof. H.D.Sankalia argued that Ancient Lanka was somewhere in Central India. I know the

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S. Ramagan



name Rameshwaram which is located in extreme south India. It is true that Lanka is south of India.

I published one paper in the journal, "Man and Environment", on Harappan Trade, and two on "The Utilisation of Skeletal Evidence and the Conclusions drawn from it by certain American Scholars".

One out of my twenty two published papers, is in a book edited by Romila Thapar and is about Archaeological Evidence but also in some pages there is reference to literary evidence. I have read three volumes by R.P.Kangle which contains the translation and commentary on the Arthashastra by Kautilya. Indirectly, this book gives a few hints about social life, for example, the existence of spices or courtesans or flower-sellers etc. In my paper which was published in Romila Thapar's book, I have referred to the epics, in order to contrast the approaches of B.B.Lal on the one hand and H.D.Sankalia and Gauri Lad on the other. I have referred to the Mahabharat and the Ramayana in that paper. I was a student of Prof. Sankalia during my M.A. studies and I went with him on excavation. Practical training was taken at the trench in Tripuri near Jabalpur.

The method during exploration is, first, to set out the region that has to be studied. It needs to be defined. In the beginning, certain large mounds may be easy to locate and we

B. Singh

S. Ramagan

would reach those mounds, walk across the mounds in many directions picking up pottery which would be a guide to the archaeological period of the mound. We would plot the mound on a map, observe the landscape, for instance, for distance from a river, availability of raw material, etc. From this large mound, we would walk around in several directions looking for other mounds which may be smaller.

Another method of exploration is to follow a river valley or a natural route, pausing regularly to walk out and identify sites.

A third method is to grid the map area and cover on foot every portion of certain squares in the grid.

It is not necessary to have assistance of a professional photographers. What is necessary during archaeological photography, is to have a human figure or to have a ball point pen in the photo to give an idea of scale. The spirit level is necessary when we draw sections after excavations. When I have had a good camera, I have taken some good pictures of Mohenjodaro.

I have experience of field excavations which may be about seven or eight. On my own I have not conducted any excavation. On my own I did walk around many parts of Kutch looking at the sites, in 1986.

Belwigh

S. Rathnagar

In my examination in chief, I have stated that I became interested in the present controversy because of its political importance and the claims made by archaeologists, because communalism today is at the forefront of Indian politics.

I am a believer of God. I believe in certain tenets of my religion, such as generosity, compassion. I am born a Zoroastrian. But I do not participate in the rituals of Zoroastrianism.

I know Romila Thaper, Bipin Chandra, Suvira Jaiswal. They were also associated with JNU. I do not know S.C. Misra nor was he associated with JNU to my knowledge. Prof. D. Mandal was a Professor of the Archaeology Department of Allahabad University. I know him professionally. I do not know whether the above mentioned persons formed any group or not.

It is true that the editorial Preface of Ext. 63 is written by Romila Thapar. Pages 1 to 15 of the introductory note is written by me. In my introductory note, the diagram was prepared by myself and after it was made I took help of an artist to draw the lines more neatly. It is not correct to say that my opinion on this issue, given in the introductory note, is only based on Mandal. It is based on my own understanding of what constitutes valid archaeological testimony. The photographs which are referred to in the book of Mandal were seen by me earlier in NAD i.e.

B. Singh

S. Ratnagar

(O.O.S., No. 5 of 1989) (Paper no. 118C-1/36). One trench does not amount to vertical or horizontal excavation. If I lay out six trenches and go down only a short depth to uncover one period, that will be a horizontal excavation. But If I take a series of trenches down the slope of a mound so that I recover the uppermost and the lowermost strata, that is called vertical excavation.

It is correct that it was part of Prof. B.B. Lal's project "Archaeology of Ramayan Sites". I do not know whether that project was sanctioned by the Central Government during the period that Prof. Nurul Hasan was Union Minister of Education. Nandigram is a place mentioned in Ramayan. Prof. B.B. Lal in his report published in "Indian Archaeology – A review", does not, as far as I recall, mention pillars of Kasauti stone engraved with images. I have also seen report of Mr. A.K. Narayan who was Professor at the Banaras Hindu University (B.H.U), in respect of Ayodhya Site. He was an Archaeologist. I would not like to give him any grade of name and fame. Similarly, Prof. B.B. Lal is also an Archaeologist.

The problem of fixing the age of the Mahabharat period on archaeological evidence is fully spelt out by Dr. Gauri Lad of Deccan College, Poona, who shows that if you go by archaeological evidence, there were three or four stages in the

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S Ramagan

development of the epic between about 800 BC and AD 300; so that, in fact, Dr. Lad states that there was no Mahabharat age. An Epic takes a long time to grow.

The Bronze Age precedes the Iron Age and cover after the Chalcolithic Age. There is, in fact, a book entitled "Copper Bronze Age in India" by D.P. Agarwal. But if we wish to be the theoretically correct, the Bronze Age is different from the Copper Stone Age. The Copper Stone Age comes first and the Bronze Age succeeds it. But what happened in South Asia was that after the end of the Harappa civilisation, there was a decline into the Chalcolithic Age again. The beginning of the Iron Age is generally accepted as around 900 BC.

If I remember right at Bithur, a copper hoard was found. The copper hoard contained many sophisticated tools including arrows. It is not correct to say that those copper arrows belong to son of Ram, Kush, as is claimed by some historians.

The date of Buddha has been debated. However, the traditional safe date is that he died around 483 BC.

The beginning of the Gupta dynasty is third century AD or may be second century AD.

Inscribed stones were found and deciphered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century itself. If I recall correctly, the first inscriptions to be studied and understood were the Brahmi script and written on

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S. Radhagan

the authority of Ashoka. The Brahmi lipi dates to the Ashokan era.

Unless there is carbonaceous material, uncontaminated by human touch, available in the fabric of a pot it cannot be carbon-14 dated.

It is incorrect to say that I have deposed here as a partisan witness supporting only those archaeologists who form a group of Romila Thapar, D. Mandal, S.C. Mishra, Sushil Sriyastava and others. It is incorrect to say that my opinion is prejudiced or fallacious.

*S. Ratnagar*

Statement read and signed.

9.4.2002.

Cross examination of P.W.27, Prof. Shereen F. Ratnagar on behalf of Nirmohi Akhara, defendant No.3 by Shri R.L.Verma, Advocate recorded and concluded.

Typed by Stenographer in open Court on our dictation.

Put up tomorrow for further cross-examination.

*Rec'd* *m* *Dr*  
9.4.2002.

*S. Ratnagar*

10.4.2002

P.W. 27 Prof. Shereen F. Ratnagar stated on oath:

Cross Examination on behalf of Mahant Dharam Das,  
Defendant no.13, by Sri S.D. Singh, Advocate.

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The post graduate degrees which I referred to in my statement includes Post Graduate Diploma in Archaeology of Western Asia from London University. I have not obtained any post graduate degree in Anthropology. The definition of Anthropology that it deals with the origin of development of races, customs and beliefs of mankind may be correct. I have not taken formal training in Anthropology but ever since I became a teacher I have read on certain branches of Anthropology. My paper titled as the "Bronze Age : Unique instance of a world system?" was published in the journal named as "Current Anthropology". "Current Anthropology" is a journal that carries a lot of archaeological papers and specially papers on world systems. In the United States, Archaeology is considered to be a branch of Anthropology. However, in India they are considered to be two different subjects.

I have not seen the disputed site. It is correct that till date I have not visited the disputed site. The statement which I have made before this Court is based on published work of others and

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S. Ratnagar

also the principles of archaeological stratification and data retrieval which I have learned in the field.

Q. You have not applied the principles of stratification in regard to any article i.e. things of antique values found during exploration at Ayodhya ?

Ans. I have studied very carefully the reported stratigraphic contexts of material reportedly discovered from Ayodhya and have found their context to be deficient. As regards objects of antique value I am not a trader.

My concept of a temple is a religious structure often with an idol placed inside of the Garbha Griha and according to period and place with a certain architectural style.

It is not always necessary that a temple must have an Idol. To the best of my knowledge there can be a temple with Shiva Linga or Naga. Since I am not an authority on temples, I cannot give further details.

The statement that I have made in my examination in chief at page 7 about no artefacts found regarding a temple, pertains to the circumstance that up to about 1980, while excavations were going on, the so called discovery of pillar bases of a pillared temple had not been reported.

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S. K. Mahajan



I do not think there is any exact structure necessary for a mosque. One essential component is that one wall or a niche in that wall which is known as the Mehrab should face the Kaaba or Mecca. As regards your question about a roof I have seen an illustration in the Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam of a simple open building without a roof which is very much a mosque. Since I am not an expert on temple or mosque therefore I cannot answer exactly as to whether for temple, roof and walls are necessary, whereas for a mosque, roof is not necessary.

Q. You are not an expert in regard to the site of Ram Janma Bhumi or Babri Masjid ?

Ans. I am not an expert as regards the long controversy over the site but I do consider myself knowledgeable as regards the authenticity of archaeological discoveries said to have been made there.

Q. Your evidence in this case only based on reading of published works of others is not relevant.

Ans. I deny this because published records on archaeological discoveries are always scrutinised for internal coherence, mode of data retrieval, and validity of inference.

B Singh

S. R. Narayan

Cross examination of P.W.27, Prof. Shereen F. Ratnagar on behalf of Mahant Dharam Das, Defendant No.13 by Sri S.D. Singh, Advocate concluded.

Cross examination of P.W.27, Prof. Shereen F. Ratnagar on behalf of Sri Umesh Chandra Pandey, defendant no.22 by Sri Vireshwar Dwivedi, Advocate.

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I have read the two reports of Prof. B.B. Lal which I have referred to in my earlier statement. I read those reports at the time when I was writing an introduction to Prof. Mandal's book (Ext. 63). If I remember correctly I wrote that introduction during summer vacation of 1992. I had already taken some interest in the controversy in question when the Rath Yatra began and when somebody drew my attention to the book "New Archaeological Discoveries" (Paper No.118C-1/35). I do not remember the year when the Rath Yatra took place. The booklet was perhaps published soon before demolition of the disputed structure. It may be a year before the demolition. I began to take interest in the controversy as regards the claims and counter claims made by historians and archaeologists but I was not aware what was going on in this Court or in any other court.

S. Ratnagar

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While I was interested as an Archaeologist I was also deeply disturbed at the communalisation of politics. It is correct to say that my interest in the issue in question as an Archaeologist developed when two sets of historians and Archaeologists gave two versions about the disputed structure. My interest in the issue developed a year or maybe a few months before the demolition of the disputed structure and start of the Rath Yatra. As I remember, Rath Yatra was taken some time in Late 1980's or early 1990's. It is incorrect to say that I have given a wrong statement on this issue.

My statement in chief that I became interested in this issue in the year 1990 approximately, is correct. Mr. Mandal's book Ext. 63, if I remember correctly was given to me in summer 1992 for writing an introduction.

In the first place, it was a so called British system of excavation that was introduced in India by Mortimer Wheeler. Until today this system is followed in India. I state that the British system has developed greater rigour since the time of Mortimer Wheeler, in Western Asia at least. There is no difference of system between Indian and British Archaeology systems but there is greater accuracy nowadays in the British system.

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S. Ramagan

Q. Do you believe in Pita Parmeshwar, Allah Tala or in God.

Ans. Although it is personal question, but I believe in God. I have not been Baptised because I am not a Christian. I am giving my statement by God because I am a believer of God. It is correct to say that I did not personally excavate or explore the disputed site. In my examination in chief I have mentioned three records of excavation at Ayodhya. Since it is mentioned in those reports that it relates to exploration and excavation at the disputed site therefore I believe the report of excavation and exploration of the disputed site. Before the excavation of 1969 at the disputed site there was perhaps couple of explorations at Ayodhya and there are three major excavations between 1969 and 1980. I have seen those reports of exploration referred to but I do not recollect the details. It is correct that right now I do not remember the details and therefore I am not in a position to say as to who did explorations and when, took place at the disputed site. So far as I know, Sri B.B. Lal made the first excavation at the disputed site approximately in 1976-1977.

The second excavation was made at Ayodhya by Prof. B.B. Lal probably in 1979-80 but it is not stated clearly in the report whether there was digging at the disputed site. The third excavation which was chronologically made earlier at Ayodhya

S. Ramnagar

B.B. Lal

was by Banaras Hindu University. But that excavation was not made at the disputed site. That excavation was made under the direction of Mr. L.K. Narayan and perhaps T.N. Roy. This third excavation was at Ayodhya but as far I know, not at the disputed site.

It is incorrect to say that as an Archaeologist I was not interested in the other excavations and explorations made at Ayodhya. I read about the other excavations made at Ayodhya because I wanted to find out whether there was special character to this site. It is incorrect to say that I was not interested in the other excavations made in Ayodhya. My interest in Ayodhya was not confined only to the dispute. I was also interested in what Prof. B.B. Lal was finding at his "Ramayan site" excavations. Of the other sites of the Ramayan Project, there was Nandigram, Shringaverpur, Bharadwaj Ashram and Chitrakoot. I do not agree with the general approach of Prof. B.B. Lal in that he set out to prove the literal truth of the Ramayan. I have not myself made any research on Sri B.B. Lal's finds in respect of sites at Chitrakoot, Bharadwaj Ashram, Shringaverpur and Nandigram. In respect of Shringaverpur, I did read the published excavation report for purposes of teaching. Shringaverpur is the most extensively excavated site so I gave more attention to that site for my teaching purposes than to the other sites. I have not

B.B. Lal

S. Radhagan

done any published research on Nandigram, Chitrakoot and Bharadwaj Ashram. I have referred to Shringaverpur briefly in one of my articles.

It was not any one person who made me interested in the disputed site. There was not even a group of persons who made me interested in the disputed site. There was public discussion, correspondence in newspaper reports, general discussions with many people that aroused my interest. It was in the late eighties or early nineties.

I know R.Champakalakshmi. She was a Professor in Jawahar Lal Nehru University. I know Prof. Romila Thapar. I also know Sri R.S. Sharma professionally and met him in seminars and different symposiums. He was Professor in Delhi University. I know Prof. Suraj Bhan professionally. He was a Professor in Kurukshetra University. I know Prof. Suvira Jaiswal. She was a Professor in Jawahar Lal Nehru University. I do not know Prof. Athar Ali. I know Prof. Irfan Habib professionally. It is wrong to say that all of them who have just now been referred earlier were Marxist. I am not a Marxist. However, I have used Marxist theory in a limited sphere of my research. I have no knowledge whether Prof. D. Mandal is a Marxist or not. I have known Prof. D.Mandal only professionally for the last ten years or so. As far as I remember,

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S. Ramagan

Prof. D.Mandal's Book Ext.-63 was published and compiled in 1993. I am of the view that it is a book. The title of that book is "Ayodhya: Archaeology After Demolition". It is correct to say that Prof. Mandal's Book was published in a series, 'Tracts for the Times'. It is correct that under the same series a book titled as 'Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags' was published. It is incorrect to say that 'Tracks for the Times' is meant only to criticise Bhartiya Janata Party and Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. The same series has also published another book by M.N. Buch, on urban planning; also there is a book, published in the same series, by Rustam Bharucha, the title of which is 'A Question of Faith', which criticises secular Indians for being indifferent to religion. There is also a book by Krishna Kumar on primary education and syllabus which was published in the same series.

I do not agree with the view that my introduction to Mandal's book is a lengthy one. Fifteen pages of introduction, in my opinion, cannot be termed to be a lengthy note. To the best of my knowledge, whatever I have written in my introduction in Mandal's book is correct. At this stage witness was shown Ext. 63 (page 1 of introduction) and learned cross examiner asked as to whether the first sentence was correct or not and the witness answered that it is correct.

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S. Ramagan

My introduction to Prof. Mandal's book presents the general principles of excavation. The manuscript of Mandal's book was certainly with me when I wrote the introduction. I have studied the book written by Mandal. At this stage, the witness was shown paper No. 291/C1/14, filed in O.S.No.5 of 1989. The witness having gone through it, said that it contains an article with the caption 'Archaeological Discovery'? This was published in "Frontline". It is correct to say that this article is critical of the materials found at the disputed site. It is correct to say that one of the reasons of criticism is that this so-called discovery is not the outcome of scientific excavation. According to me, if something is not found in scientific excavation, its value as evidence about the identity of that place is doubtful.

I know about the Ajanta caves. Ajanta caves were cut out in the vertical face of hills. There is no question of excavating from the top to discover the caves. It was a question of clearance. That clearance, as far as I recall, was made by a British soldier. But it is true that it was not a scientific excavation. I do not know as to whether that clearance was made in a scientific manner or not. I know of Altamira; it is a cave site in Spain. I have no knowledge about the discovery of Altamira in Spain. There is no laboratory method of ascertaining

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S. Ramagan



It is correct to say that if there is an ancient inscription on a stone, we will be able to estimate the date of writing on the stone, but not the age of the stone. I have read about claims made that inscribed stones were found at the disputed site. I have not seen those inscriptions and, therefore, there was no occasion for me to determine their age:

Q. Did you try to know about those stones with inscriptions thereon?

Ans. I did not try to know about the stones with inscriptions thereon. Volunteered-Because I did not consider them to have reliable provenance. The ground for this supposition was that the stratigraphic context of these finds was not satisfactorily reported. The report which I read was 'New Archaeological Discoveries'. I read about another inscription by Verma and Gupta in a book on History and Archaeology of Ayodhya. In my opinion, 'discovery' and 'find' are one and the same and I don't differentiate between them. It is not correct to say that I do not recognise this material as a find. I do not recognise it as evidence. I will not accept such a find purported to have come out of an earthquake from under the ground as evidence. It will be a find but it cannot be treated as scientific archaeological evidence. There is no question of belief.

S. Ratnagan

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As far as I know, from the head water of Saraswati system, some tributary was captured by the Jamuna system. So the river course has not shifted. The river has dried up. I have not heard about Saraswati Valley Project. I have heard and read about the explorations and the excavations of Suraj Bhan and Jim Shaffer in Saraswati valley. This Saraswati river is located in parts of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, then flows to Northern Haryana and then North Rajasthan and then goes to Bahawalpur in Pakistan. There are many branches of this river; today one branch is known as Saraswati, another as Drusdwati and so on. It has been claimed that this is the same river as is praised in the Rig Ved. It is correct that this river Saraswati has nothing to do with the river Saraswati at Allahabad. I do not know about any river known as Saraswati ever flowing in the past in Allahabad. It is correct that according to me, there is no Sangam of three rivers at Allahabad but it is a confluence of two major rivers, known as Ganga and Jamuna. There may be smaller rivers flowing into the Sangam, but I do not know their names. As an archaeologist, it never occurred to me to verify about this fact of existence of three rivers at Allahabad. Further added-Because the standard geography books mention Ganga and Jamuna forming the Sangam. These books are High School level geography books and the book by Spate and Learmonth, which I have referred to

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S. Radhagar

now and again. The title of that book is 'India, Pakistan, Ceylon'. I have not read that book from cover to cover but use it for reference. I have read geography books whenever I have made research on a particular ancient culture. While reading about Ancient Indian History and Culture, I do not recall reading about the confluence of the Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati at Allahabad. I have read A.L.Basham's book titled as 'The Wonder that was India'. I have also read Romila Thapar's book entitled as 'History of India, Volume I'. Also I have read D.N.Jha's book entitled as 'Ancient India' and a few more, whose titles I do not recollect now. All these books relate to Indian History and Culture. I have heard the name of Prof. V.S.Pathak but I have not heard anything about Prof. Maheshwari Chaube of B.H.U. I have not read in the three books referred to above anything about the confluence of three rivers namely, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati at Allahabad but as I mentioned earlier, I read in those books that several minor rivers are known as Saraswati.

I have certainly heard about Dr. Ishwari Prasad, a historian but I have not known Prof. Vipin Chandra Pandey. I read Dr. Ishwari Prasad's books in Graduation course. Indeed, he was a renowned historian. I have not heard about the existence of

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S. Ramagan

confluence of three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati at Allahabad. It is incorrect to say that I am not telling the truth on the point.

If I recall correctly, I have written my Article with the caption, "Archaeological Discovery?" in the year 1992 which was published in the issue of 'Frontline', 6<sup>th</sup> November 1992. I have conducted digging at 7 or 8 places in India and Western Asia – one in India at Tripuri, district Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. It was perhaps in the year 1967 when I conducted that digging and at that time, I was a student of M.A. Final. It is correct to say that the said digging was not directly done by me but I attended it with my Professor. I have not written any book on the said digging. The Director of the said digging was Prof. H.D.Sankalia. I do not remember that any book or report was published by Prof. Sankalia on the aforesaid digging. Perhaps, a report was published, the date of which I do not recollect.

I read Prof. B.B.Lal's two reports in full on Ayodhya which was published in I.A.R. I believe that the two reports of Prof. B.B.Lal were completely published as it is expected that all important points are mentioned in the said book – even if some details were omitted. I did not verify as to whether the two

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*S. Ratnagar*

reports of Prof. B.B.Lal were complete or not when published in the I.A.R. nor there was any occasion for me to have done so. Since I treated both the reports of Prof. B.B.Lal to be complete reports published in I.A.R., I published my criticism on the basis of the said material. In other words, it was a critique.

I can say that the two reports of Prof. B.B.Lal were not written as a review but I.A.R. is the annual report/official publication of the A.S.I. A report by an ex. or current Director General of that Survey, would be expected to contain, howsoever briefly, mention of all important finds. In 1992 or 1993 I read Prof. B.B.Lal's two reports. I have looked up them again some twenty days before. That was the last I saw them. Of course, I have seen them again during the course of my statement going on in this Court.

If I remember correctly the Article I wrote in the issue of November 6, 1992 'Frontline' was not based on Prof. D. Mandal's book. As far as I recall, my above Article was published before Prof. Mandal completed his book. I based my critique on the book, "New Archaeological Discoveries". N.A.D. contains certain photographs of the disputed site and the constructions standing thereon. I did not verify the measurements of any construction, site or any other material. The measurements which I mentioned in my Article published in

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S. Ratnagan

Frontline of 6 November, 1992 were approximate, based on my guess work. I have published several critiques based on reading, research, theory and my field experience which sometimes would include a surmise or an estimation.

This is why I have stated clearly in this para 3 of my above referred Article that I based the figures stated on the photograph and not on independent verification.

As I mentioned in the last paragraph of my Article under reference, excavation is not a mysterious process. Exploration is not mysterious either. If an excavation work is in progress, anybody can go and see it but outsiders are not allowed to disturb the process of excavation by either jumping into the trench or touching any material found therein. However, it is not obligatory upon the excavators or upon the authorities of A.S.I. to invite some person or persons to witness the process of excavation.

I have met Dr. S.P.Gupta at Seminars and in the Museum, etc. As far as I know, Dr. S.P.Gupta was perhaps a Director in the Allahabad Museum and also he served in the National Museum, Delhi. I agree that Dr. S.P.Gupta is a renowned Museologist. I have no idea whether Dr. S.P.Gupta visited any museum outside India or whether he had visited any country or not. I do not know whether Dr. S.P. Gupta studied Archaeology

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S. Ratnagar

in lots or not. I have read a two Volume book on the  
Archaeology of Central Asia written by Dr. S.P.Gupta.

Statement read and signed.

*SKatnagar*

April 10, 2002

Typed by Stenographer in open Court on our dictation. Put up  
tomorrow for further cross-examination.

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10.4.2002.

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11.4.2002

In continuation of the statement dated 10.4.2002, P.W.27  
Prof. Shereen F. Ratnagar stated on oath :

I have obtained an M.A. (Master of Arts) degree in Archaeology. The other degree which I acquired, its formal title is "Academic Postgraduate Diploma in the Archaeology of Western Asia". I did my M.A. from Poona University. Prof. H.D.Sankalia was Head of the Department of Archaeology in the Deccan College, Poona, and retired as Director of the College. It is correct that in India I have not done any digging and excavation on my own. If I remember correctly I have been in contact with Prof.D. Mandal since his manuscript was sent to me. Prof. Mandal did not come to me with the manuscript. The publisher, as far as I recall, sent it by messenger to me. The name of the publisher is Orient Longman. I did not verify that it was sent with the consent of Dr. Mandal. This is the only Introduction I have written to a book written by another scholar. Besides this, I have written two introductions to collection of papers of various scholars.

Q. Do you consider it proper to write introduction without the consent or the request of the author of the book ?

S. Ratnagar

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Ans. In this case, it was Orient Longman, the publisher, who was dealing with Prof. Mandal and with me. I assumed, they had the author's consent. On this assumption I wrote the Introduction. In the other two introductions written by me as referred to above, I did not seek the several authors' consents. It was again a matter for the editor of a special number of a journal in the first case, and the publisher of the book in the second case, who told me that an introduction was necessary. My reply was that I agreed with their arguments and, therefore, wrote introductions. One does not have to agree with every detail in a book in order to write the introduction. Had I not agreed with the basic approach or the basic methodology of the author, I would not have written the introduction. It is not correct to say that I magnified the points made in Mandal's book. It is correct to say that my Introduction is of fifteen pages in Mandal's book. It is also correct that at pages 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14 some sketches are given in my Introduction. Those sketches are purely by way of Introduction to the book as they are hypothetical. It is correct that from pages 16 to 69 is the book itself.

The book 'Bhartiya Itihas Ke Srot' written by me is in Hindi. My Hindi in reading and writing is very slow and only

B. S. R.

S. Radhagar

with the aid of a dictionary. The publishers had thought that I should write in English and they would get it translated, but I found, after one trial, that the translator was not getting my meaning exactly. So I decided, howsoever slowly, to write the book in Hindi myself. I speak only a crude Bombay Hindi with which I am not satisfied. It is incorrect to say that I can speak regional Hindi. It is also incorrect to state that I can speak so-called national Hindi. According to me, there is no one National Hindi, but several Hindis. I wrote this book in very basic Hindi which I was told was very regional, but I asked two scholars to correct the language after the chapters were written. I wrote this book for an N.G.O, called "Eklavya", which is in Bhopal and Hoshangabad. I know that Hindi is the official language in Madhya Pradesh but I am not aware that even prior to partition, Hindi was the official language of Madhya Pradesh, then called as Madhya Bharat. It took me approximately two and half to three years to write this book. This book is in two parts and each part of the book is perhaps of sixty pages. This book was written for the rural secondary school teachers of Madhya Pradesh. This book was written by me on the request made by the N.G.O., Eklavya, which is active in Madhya Pradesh and my target audience hailed from the said place. My target audience was primarily the school teachers of secondary school class in

S. Ramgopal

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Madhya Pradesh. It is incorrect to say that I have spoken lies. It is also incorrect to say that I have purposely chosen not to give my statement in Hindi before this Court.

It is incorrect to say that so far as North India is concerned, I am not a field archaeologist. I have no field experience in northern India, but that does not mean that I do not have knowledge of the field. It is correct to say that the excavation critiqued by Prof. Mandal lies in Northern India.

Q. I suggest that so far as the excavation on Ayodhya are concerned, you are not a field archaeologist but only a table archaeologist. Is it correct or not?

Ans. I have written on Ayodhya as a table archaeologist, but only with field training behind me.

I think it is quite normal and proper for a scholar to write about sites that he or she has not visited or excavated. Yesterday I cited S.P.Gupta's book on Central Asian archaeology. It covers many periods from pre-history to the Iron-Age. Nowhere does Dr. Gupta claim, as far as I am aware, that he has seen each and every site in Central Asia. By the same token, Indian

S. Radnagar

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Archaeologists would not be able to write on Harappa civilisation because the chief excavated sites lie in Pakistan.

My book "Enquiries into the Political Organisation of Harappan Society", "The End of the Great Harappan Tradition", and "Understanding Harappa" are on archaeology. In these three books, the evidence of Harappan sites is used to explore different questions. In the first book, political structure is explored, in the second book, the end or decline of the Harappa civilisation and the post-Harappa culture is discussed, and in the third book, there is a general overview of the Harappa civilisation. In that book, I have mentioned cultural, geographic, religious and technological aspects of the Harappa civilisation. All these three books are in respect of archaeological evidence depicting what I have stated earlier.

It is correct to state that I know the term "proto-history". This term is used in Indian archaeology for a period that is transitional between pre-history and history. There is no precise period of pre-history. It is a term that refers to ages before the coming of written evidence. Actually available written evidence in India, as far as I am aware, begins with Mauryan inscriptions. I mean by written inscriptions, inscriptions which are inscribed on stone. Actual inscriptions are available only from the

By

S. Ratnagar

Mauryan period onwards. There were written inscriptions in the Indus Valley civilisation, but we refer to that period as proto-history because those inscriptions cannot be read.

I have heard and have also read about Brahmi, Kharosthi and Pali. Brahmi and Kharosthi are only scripts while Pali is a language. The Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts are both in evidence in the Mauryan period. As far as I know, there are no pre-Mauryan inscriptions except one at Mahasthan, now in Bangladesh. The Pali language, as far as I know, was the language in which the Buddha preached and communicated. Pali language would be of the period of Buddha at least about 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, although I am not an expert on this. It could be older but I do not know. Mauryan period would be late 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC onwards. It would be safe to say that Pali language was coming down from before the Mauryan period. The actual writing of Pali language and manuscripts available to us would be much later than the life of the Buddha. We can assume that Pali is at least as old as the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC because the extant literature has many indications that there was a long period of oral transmission of Buddhist wisdom.

I know the orders of various Avatars of Lord Vishnu. As far as I know, the order is Matsya, Kurma, Vaman, Varah,

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S. Ratnagar

Narsimha, Parashuram, Ram, Krishna, Kalki. Lord Buddha was also an Avtar but I do not know in which order he comes.

I know the word 'stele'. I do not know the word 'stela'. 'Stele' is usually an inscribed monolith with or without sculpture. As I have stated, 'stele' is usually an inscribed object by which I meant, it contains writing and some sculptures. The sculpture may be the depiction in relief of deities or kings or sacred symbols. It includes queens also, but in the ancient period, such depictions are very rare. I do not agree that the word 'stele' is incorrect and it is 'stela'. Whoever has said that 'stele' is in fact 'stela', I don't accept, even if it is said by R.Champakalakshmi. At this stage, the witness was shown paper no. 291C-1/12. After seeing, para 3 in the second column of article written by R.Champakalakshmi, she answered- I think that the correct word is stele and, therefore, I do not agree with what has been written in the aforesaid article about the word 'stela' in this paragraph.

In archaeology, there is no significant difference between the two words, 'discovery' and 'find'. When anything is found by a farmer during ploughing it may be called either a "discovery" or a "find".

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S. Ramagan

Q. May I suggest that for a 'discovery' or a 'find' no scientific excavation is required ?

Ans. The absence of scientific excavation will make that discovery or find just a "discovery" or 'find' but it will not be an evidence. Those things found in scientific excavation whose provenance has been adequately recorded may be considered evidence.

Q. Therefore, all the things found in a scientific excavation will not be an evidence according to you ?

Ans. Not all things derived from regular scientific excavations may have the same value as evidence. Sometimes, it will have lesser value and sometimes it is of greater value. It all depends on stratification and whether we are certain that an object came from a particular grave or floor or pit.

Q. Therefore, according to you, the evidentiary value of a discovery or a find is to be decided by an expert archaeologist ?

Ans. The evidentiary value of a find or discovery will be evaluated in terms of the exact context in which that find has been recorded. I do not agree that it is solely a matter of "views". It is a matter of fully recorded context.

S. Rastogi

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Q. If a stone is found at Ayodhya having inscription about Lord Rama, will it be treated as being out of context ?

Ans. So long as the context has not been officially documented and published in an authoritative publication like "Indian Archaeology – A Review", it cannot be used as evidence. I have seen a photograph of a stone inscription said to have been found at the disputed place. I have not read the inscription or had a chance to get it read for me. It is correct to say that I cannot say what is purported to be written on that stone. I do not know from where that stone slab came from since it has not been adequately established in a scientific archaeological excavation that it comes from any one or other place. Therefore, it may or may not be from the disputed site. Therefore, I have given the view that it was professionally irresponsible to announce to the public that this inscription came from a particular place.

Q. Have you ever heard that one inscribed stone was brought from one place to other place ?

Ans. It is well known that two pillar inscriptions of King Ashoka have been transported to Delhi one from Topra and one from Meerut.

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S. Radhagan



Q. I suggest that it was from the inscriptions thereon that it was brought from Topra to Delhi ?

Ans. The inscription may refer to a place called Topra but it does not establish any evidence about the identity of Topra having been transported to Delhi. It is correct that it is known as Ashokan pillars. It is identified as an Ashokan pillar because the inscription is in Ashokan Brahmi but by the logic of the question, we would be expected to believe that the place called Topra was identified with Delhi.

Q. So you do not ascribe to the view that this pillar was brought from Topra in Ambala to Delhi ?

Ans. It is incorrect to say that I ascribe to such a view.

I may add further that I have already stated that a pillar was brought from Topra to Delhi. However, it is correct that Topra is located in district Ambala of Haryana State.

I am not aware of the precise dates on which the alleged finds were discovered. I do not know as to which article of Dr. S.P. Gupta dated 2 or 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1992 is being referred to me. I am aware that Dr. S.P. Gupta had stated that in July, 1992 that he went to the disputed site. Precisely I do not recollect that I came across an article published in Frontline dated 16.7.1992 by its special correspondent. But I may have read it in the Magazine.

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S. Rathagan

I wrote my article (Paper No. 291 C-1/14) after going through "New Archaeological Discoveries". If I remember right this booklet was sent by the Editor of Frontline perhaps and the Editor asked me to submit my comments, if any. I do not recall that this was the only basis for me to write the above referred article. I am aware that persons are photo conscious, but in Trench photographs of official excavations, people are seen in photographs only to give the scale. It is correct to say that it is on account of the same reason that I have referred to the photograph in para 2 of my Article under consideration. It is rightly recited in paper No. 291-C-1/12 above the heading stating that I was to examine and comment on the claims made in the booklet published by Prof. K.S. Lal etc. I have read Prof. Champaka Lakshmi's views on the said booklet but not in great detail. Perhaps I may have likewise read the views of Dr. K.M. Shrimali, Professor of History. I have no knowledge that the experts visited the disputed site on July, 2nd and 3rd, 1992, as mentioned in para 4 of Dr. Champaka Lakshmi's article entitled "Startling indeed".

Q. Do you agree with the facts given in the first four lines of the Fourth paragraph of the aforesaid Article by Prof. Champaka Lakshmi.

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*S. Radhagan*

Ans. It is difficult to say as to whether I may or I may not agree with the Article by Prof. R. Champaka Lakshmi. It was not a question of agreeing with the dates given by Prof. Champaka Lakshmi; it was a question of remembering the dates given in NAD. I do not remember the dates given in NAD. I did go through the pamphlet but much of it was iconography. What attracted my attention was a particular photograph. It is substantially correct that I wrote my critique on the basis of the said sole photograph. I recall the photograph. It is reprinted on paper No. 291-C 1/13. I wrote my critique as stated earlier mainly on the basis of the photograph which is at the top left. This was the particular photograph and the photograph of the so called pillar bases in a trench which are the two photographs that attracted my attention. I did not write anything about the pillar base trench in my Article at page 291-C 1/40. If objects were found on one day and studies and photographs were done some days later, it was highly misleading to arrange a photograph as if they were coming out of the soil at that time. A man is shown with a pick raised above his head as if he is in the act of digging out those pieces. That is what I was critical about. In the photo of the trench of the so called pillar bases, I was amazed to see squares of

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S. Ratnagar

broken bricks being identified as pillar bases. I did not mention that in my article. I did not mention that because the focus of my Article was to protest the misleading nature of the other photograph which is at paper no. 291 C-1/13 in the top left. It is wrong to say that this article was written by me with a prejudiced mind. I have not mentioned the two sentences of my article out of prejudice but out of protest at the way in which professional archaeologists were claiming to have found truth. It is correct to say that usually I use the phraseology of my above referred sentences whenever I write something with protest. I was angered at the unprofessional approach of the pamphlet which I have referred to in my article. It is not correct to say that it is bias of any hue which arouses anger.

I have seen mosques. There are mosques at least a few of which contain parts of structures that may not have been mosque. In my personal experience I have not seen pillars sculpted with human figures in a mosque. I do not recall having seen any mosque with pillars having sculpture of living beings. I am not sure whether I have seen any mosque with pillars having sculpture of flowers.

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S. Rahagan

I have visited temples in Northern India, Western India and in Southern India. I am sure that there are temples with pillars having sculpted human beings, flowers and other designs but I do not recollect the particular example. Ordinarily such sculptures portraits Gods and Goddesses but they may also be creatures or Godlings like Yakshas, Vriksha Devtas, etc. and they may also be people. I do not know as to what is the identity of the photograph on the right hand side of the paper no. 291-C-1/13 because I am not an expert on this period of history. I am not an expert on epigraphy. I am knowledgeable on the method of archaeology. It is not correct to say that I am not an expert in Archaeology.

Q. Do you know Prof. K.V. Raman of Madras University?

Ans. I think I have met him once. I know Prof. A. Sundara. I have met Prof. S.R. Rao of Goa professionally. I met Prof. R.N. Mehta of Gujarat Vidyapith years before his death. I never met Ajay Mitra Shastri. I heard that he died recently. I do not know Dr. Sudha Malayya. I do not know Prof Sri Ram Goel of Jodhpur University, Prof. Satish Mittal of Kurukshetra University, Prof. B.P. Sinha, Prof. T.P. Verma of Banaras Hindu University. I know Dr. Y.D. Sharma. Perhaps he was Deputy Director of A.S.I. I do not know G.S. Agarwal. I remember that I heard the name of Prof. K.S. Lal but I do not remember the

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context. I have read a book of Dr. K.M. Srivastava, former Director of A.S.I. But I do not remember. I do not know Prof. K.C. Nautiyal.

Q. Who according to you is the best authority of Archaeology in India.

Ans. I do not think we can say that any one person is the best authority on Archaeology in the country. It depends upon the sphere in which they have worked. I do not wish to give any one name who can be said to be the best authority on epigraphy in India. It is not professionally proper. I do not wish to answer as to how many renowned and reliable epigraphists there are in India. Similarly, I would not like to name the so called renowned and reliable numismatists in India. Likewise I would consider it unprofessional to name in the context of this Court hearing the Archaeologists whom I would consider renown and reliable.

It is incorrect to state that I have given my statement against Hindus with a biased and prejudiced mind.

Cross Examination on behalf of Sri Umesh Chandra Pandey, defendant no. 22 by Sri Vireshwar Dwivedi Advocate concluded.

Cross Examination on behalf of Mahant Paramhans Ram Chandra Das, defendant no. 2 by Sri Madan Mohan Pandey, Advocate.

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S. Ramagari

Cross Examination on behalf of Mahant Paramhans Ram Chandra Das, defendant no. 2 by Sri Madan Mohan Pandey, Advocate.

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I am not absolutely certain of the area and extent of the disputed site at Ayodhya. I do not know in which part of Ayodhya the disputed site is located. If I remember correctly, the areas of the disputed site it is less than 5 hectares. One hectare is more than two acres approximately. According to me the disputed site is of less than 5 hectares- it may be one or it may be two. I do not remember the extent of the disputed area, though I read about it.

The introduction which I wrote for Prof. Mandal's Book was written after his manuscript was complete. If I remember correctly, I wrote the introduction to Dr. Mandal's book after the demolition of the mosque, probably in the summer vacation of 1993. If I recall correctly, I sent the manuscript to the publisher before the end of the summer vacation so that would have been in the third week of July, 1993. I am not sure whether I knew about the claim of a twenty line inscription then or some time later allegedly found at the debris of the disputed structure. The book of Mandal contains mention of objects after demolition but I do not recall whether he describes the object said to have been

*Beigh**S. Ratnagar*

found during demolition. Vaguely I remember there was some such thing. I do not remember about the reference on the disputed site made by the President of India to the Supreme Court of India. I do not know whether Supreme Court has issued any direction for <sup>preparation</sup> creation of estampages of inscription on the request of some historians. I have heard the names of historians Prof. B.R. Grover and Dr. S.P. Gupta. I do not know the name of Devendra Swaroop. It is correct that I read some where that an inscription of 20 lines was allegedly recovered from the debris of the disputed structure. I am not aware of the contents of such inscription except that, if I recall correctly, it has been associated with the name of a certain king. I do not know exactly the script of said inscription – perhaps it was Devnagri.

Statement read and signed.

*S. Ratnagar*

11.4.2002

Typed by Stenographer in open Court on our dictation.

Put up tomorrow for further cross-examination.

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11.4.2002

*S Ratnagar*



12.4.2002

In continuation of the statement dated 11.4.2002, P.W.27  
Prof. Shereen F. Ratnagar stated on oath :

It is correct to say that Archaeology is one of the sources of the past. The past means pre-historic period as well as historic period. For knowing the culture of Harappa, Archaeology is the only source. For knowing the history of pre Ashokan period we need to refer to the texts but with the proviso that they were not written in any one period and, therefore, may not be a reflection of any one period. It is correct to say that texts includes Ved as Upanishad, Dharma Shashtra and Dhammapad. I do not know in which script the extant Dhammapad manuscript has been written. It was written in Pali. I know a little bit about the Brahmi script. It would be a fair inference that the early manuscript of Dhammapad is in Brahmi unless that manuscript has been found in some Buddhist sites in Afghanistan and Central Asia. As far as I know, it is correct to state that Brahmi is the mother of all the scripts of this country. It is correct to say that traditions are one of the sources of history, with the proviso that traditions vary from place to place and period to period. It is correct to say that Epigraphy is a source to know history. It is correct to state that for an epigraphist it is necessary to know the

S. Ratnagar

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script and language of that particular period. Palaeography is the study of old scripts. It is correct to say that for Palaeography it is necessary to know the script of the relevant period. It is correct to say that Travellers' accounts are also considered to be sources of history. Similarly, it is correct to state that numismatics is also a source of history. It is correct to state numismatics relates to coins. It is correct to state that coins may be inscribed or uninscribed and on some coins there are marks.

It is correct to state that literature is also a source of history. It is correct to state that literature is of two kinds, oral and written. I know of the Vedas. I know that they are four Vedas in number. In my view a historian must remain aware that the Vedas were transmitted orally for Centuries. However, they are available to us today in written form. As far as I am aware the writing of the Vedas was around 500 B.C. or so.

I know very little, practically nothing about the Shruti literature. I do not know the word Shruti and, therefore, I can not answer about the oral Shruti tradition of that period.

I do not know about the Smritis. But I do know that there are texts like Manusmriti, Yagnvalkyas Smriti, etc. These texts, as far as I know, deal with ritual and beliefs of Hindu religion or what is commonly understood as Hindu religion. Then said Brahminical religion. Brahminical religion refers to religious

S. Ramnagar

B. Singh

practices and teachings in which Brahmins guide the rest of society. They deal with Hindu religion in general. I term it as Brahminical religion because as far as I know, in the course of history of this country, there were non Brahminical movements also, which today have been absorbed into the Hindu fold. What I mean to say is that whatever historical literature I happen to have read, nowadays prefer the term "Brahminical" for the ancient period rather than all the embracing term, "Hindu".

As far as I know, the Smritis were written in the late first Millennium B.C. and the early first millennium AD. I cannot be more specific.

I know a little bit about Puranas. As far as I know there are 18 Mahapuranas. I only know the name of Puranas. I did not go through these Puranas. This is not the period of my specialisation.

I have heard about Balmiki Ramayan. As far as I know, Balmiki Ramayan was written between 500 B.C and about 300 or 200 B.C. I am not certain but it was probably in the pre Ashokan period. Occasionally, I have read English translations or summary of the stories of Ramayan. I cannot read and understand Sanskrit. As far as I know, in the Balmiki Ramayan, there is a reference to Ayodhya and to Ram. I do not know whether this text mentions a Ram temple at Ayodhya. In the

B. Singh

S. Raghavan

Balmiki Ramayan it is written that Ram was born in Ayodhya. Historians do use literature such as Vedas and Ramayan as sources of history.

In the Harappa civilisation, some inscribed objects have been found. They have not been deciphered as yet by any epigraphist or Archaeologist. The Harappan script and language are as yet not identified.

As far as I know the writing of these oral traditions begins around the middle of the first Millennium B.C. and they are used regularly as sources of history by historians.

It is correct to state that Sir Mortimer Wheeler was a field Archaeologist. I do not wish to state whether he is a renowned field Archaeologist at the world level or not. I consider his contribution to Indian Archaeologist as very valuable but I do not wish to go into the question of renown. I know of the Institute of Archaeology in Delhi which is run by the Government. I must confess that I have not heard of the Mortimer Wheeler Prize in Field Archaeology.

It is correct to say that the Archaeological Survey of India prepares a list of protected and unprotected monuments in the country. As far as I can recall, I was informed orally that because of the dispute, this disputed site is not either in the Central or in the State list of protected monuments. I am not sure of my

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S. Ratnagar

memory but it is possible that this site falls under neither of the two lists of ASI. I am not sure whether, if it is unlisted, the Archaeological Survey of India has concern or no concern with the disputed site. Permission is necessary for any excavation or exploration work at any site from ASI. This permission to excavate or explore is given to officers of the ASI, to State Archaeological Survey departments, to Universities and departments of Archaeology, but I do not know about NGOs. I do not know whether permission is given to NGOs for such purposes. As far as I am aware, a Committee of the Archaeological Survey of India or the Advisory Board, decides whether to give permission.

Q. If any person seeks permission for excavation or exploration of any non protected monument or site, is permission granted or not?

Ans. I cannot say as to whether ASI grants permission to individuals or not. I also cannot answer as to how many persons make such requests and how many therefrom are rejected or are granted to all or not. As far as I know there is a bar on carrying out excavations anywhere, and some times the rule is so strict that even if you pick up some ancient pottery from the ground, the ASI's guards will tell you to put it back in the same place.

*Signature*

*S. Raghavan*

What I know about the Treasure Trove Act is that if you accidentally find some thing, you are required to hand it over to a Government authority. It is correct to say that anything of archaeological or historical value found by chance or by accident or by scientific or unscientific excavation becomes the property of the Government and it will be handed over to some local Government authority. I would assume that, if my knowledge of law is correct, that the finds made at the disputed site at the time of the levelling are the property of the Government. In other words the "finds made" means the items said to have been found. I have heard about the Act known as Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act but I do not know the details.

Q. Archaeological Survey of India publishes a list of all archaeological finds artefacts etc. found out of scientific or unscientific excavations of any site and publishes it in its annual Journal Indian Archaeology- a Review.

Ans. It is broadly correct to state that all finds in one year are published in "Indian Archaeology – A Review" but these are under specific heads such as, exploration, excavation, numismatics and treasure trove.

It is correct to state that such finds are kept in Museums. They are used by historians as sources but not when they are

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S. Ramagan

unprovenanced i. e. accidental discoveries without context, their value as sources are highly restricted. For example, when a statute was accidentally found in a village, there has been a long debate about its date. And historians had not chosen to identify the village in which it was found as a <sup>a place</sup> place, or a temple or a sculptors' workshop. It is incorrect to state that any accidental find will not be used by historians, but it will be used for restricted inferences only.

Q. As an archaeologist and scholar do you agree with two reports of Dr. B.B.Lal relating to Ayodhya referred to above by you in your statement?

Ans. I have gone through those reports but I cannot say in terms of whether I agree or disagree with them.

Q. According to you was Dr. B.B., Lal a motivated historian or archaeologist?

Ans. It is not for me to say whether he was motivated or not motivated.

Q. Suppose I say or anybody else says that Dr. Lal, was motivated historian. Would you agree with that.

Ans. Same as above.

At this stage witness was shown page 19 of Ext. 63 of OS 4 of 1989 . The witness having gone through that paragraph- answered that: In the first place, it is not I but Dr. Mandal who

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S. Raviagar

has ventured this opinion in the quoted passage. I have already stated that I do not wish to ascribe motive or lack of motive to any scholar.

I have not gone through the Ram Charit Manas of Tulsi Das.

I have read somewhere that the inscription found after demolition in the debris of the disputed structure relates to a king in respect of construction of temple as claimed. I saw the mention of that inscription in the book by T.P. Verma and S.P. Gupta. The book refers to the contents of the inscription. It is stated in that book that the inscription is about the dynasty of Gaharawal. It is also stated in the book that the period of the inscription is 11<sup>th</sup> or 12th century A.D. It is also stated that the inscription mentions Vishnu Hari Temple. I do not recall whether that book states that the inscription mentions the birth place of Lord Ram.

I do not know 12<sup>th</sup> century Devnagri. My earlier statement that I know Devnagri relates to present day Hindi and Gujarati. Since I am not an epigraphist, I do not know the degree of difference between the 12th century Devnagri script and the present one.

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S. Radnagar



Q. For a scholar or archaeology the contents of inscription, its style, script and language is more valuable piece of evidence than that of the method of its recovery ?

Ans. The truth of this statement depends on what we are trying to establish. If we are trying to establish the identity of a place, then the context and carefully noted horizontal and vertical occurrence of the inscription are important.

Q. Suppose the contents of inscription make it clear that the same relates to some particular place and particular period at a particular date or time the inscription becomes relevant evidence of the Archaeologist or not?

First, I would like to state is that the mention of place in an inscription is not an automatic identification of the place where it has been found in other times. It is known that inscriptions can be carried from one place to another. Second, in my examination in chief I had referred to the Ashokan Pillar inscription at Sirkap, Taksila; Sirkap is not a Mauryan site but it is an Indo Greek and Saka-Parthian town.

Q. In the discipline of archaeology, epigraphical record occupy an important position than stone tools which are clay object because the inscriptions speak of themselves ?

Ans. There may perhaps be some confusion in this question. Stone tools cannot be clay objects. Stone tools and clay

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S. Ramagan

objects are found at pre historic sites as also at historic sites. Inscriptions are not found in pre historic sites.

Q. Plea of illegal discovery of epigraphical records becomes immaterial because it can reasonably be determined from the contents of the inscription regarding its place, period etc. ?

Ans. It is not for me to state what is legal or illegal. My argument is that the alleged recovery of an inscription, howsoever detailed the contents of that inscription may be, without context, without stratigraphic digging and recording of the finds spot, it cannot be treated as proof of the identity of the finds spot, the place where it is said to have been found.

Q. Do you agree with the view that irrespective of stratigraphical context a find is always something intrinsic which speaks for itself ?

Ans. I agree with the statement that all finds have intrinsic properties, but I reiterate that they cannot prove the existence of one or other kind of place where they were found. I have not tried to see the inscription. As I am not an epigraphist, I would not have been able to read the inscription. I have seen the translation of the inscription but I do not remember the details.

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S. Ratnagar

Q. The scope of your study in the subject matter in dispute is limited to the book published by Historian forum known as New Archaeological Discovery, Paper No. 118-C-1/35.

Ans. It is incorrect to state that the scope of my study about this matter is restricted to New Archaeological Discoveries. It is correct to say that my article entitled, "Archaeological Discovery" published in Frontline was in rebuttal of what was published in New Archaeological Discoveries. Other than that article, I wrote an introduction to Prof. D. Mandal's book. I did read B.B. Lal's report in "Indian Archaeology - A Review", on his excavation at Ayodhya. But I have not published anything else on this issue except the one referred to above. I have based my article in Frontline on one photograph published in New Archaeological Discoveries. It is wrong to say that my article published in Frontline was written with a view to support the view of a group of historians, including Romila Thapar, K.M. Shrimali, R. Champakalakshmi and others. I further add that to the best of my knowledge, this controversy is about professional ethics and is not about "one group" against "another group". It is also wrong to say that I have written my article to support the view of historians having leftist view. However, I add that there is no "group" of leftist historians.

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S. Radhagan

Cross-examination on behalf of Mahant Paramhans Ram Chandra Das, defendant no. 2 by Sri M.M. Pandey, Advocate concluded.

Cross-examination on behalf of Hindu Mahasabha, defendant no. 10 and Sri Ramesh Chandra Tripathi, defendant no. 17 by Sri H.S. Jain, Advocate.

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I believe in the deity of my personal convictions which stands for truth and goodness in which I have been guided by the religion of my community which is Zoroastrianism. "Parsi" is the name of my community while Zoroastrianism is the name of my religion. I have visited several countries so far namely, U.S.A., Canada, U.K., Belgium, Holland, France, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Pakistan. It is true that Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Pakistan are Islamic countries. In Turkey, I spent three months each for two years at a training excavation, perhaps in the years 1968-69. I travelled through Syria to see the museum and some important places for about 10 to 15 days. I was in the Lebanon to see sites for about a week or ten days. I was in Iraq for one

S. Ratnagar

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year as Fellow of the British School of Archaeology in 1971, and thereafter I have done field work or museum study there in 1975 and 1981. I was in Kuwait for three days to see one site. I was in Bahrain for two to three months at a British excavation at the site of Al Markh. I was in Oman for about two months in 2000 participating in a field project headed by Dr. Jeffrey Orchard of Birmingham(U.K.). I was in Pakistan in 1998 for about one week to see Mohanjodaro, the Karachi museum, the Lahore museum and Harappa. Mostly, I paid for these visits myself except for the long stay in Iraq where my funds came from London. One trip to Iraq in 1982 was paid for by the J.N.U., New Delhi. For my travel and stay in the Islamic countries, except what I have stated above, I financed my ownself.

It is totally incorrect to state that I was paid by Islamic countries to write in favour of Islam and against Hindus because I have never written anything about Islam. I further add that I have never written any article or book in favour of Islam. I have not written against Hindus. Concerning the question of my views expressed in my Frontline article, I wish to state that I would have written as strongly had it been a Hindu temple that had been destroyed and about which Archaeologists had not followed their professional ethics. I have seen New Archaeological Discoveries. I probably saw the book entitled

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S. Rastnagar

N.A.D. Paper No.118 C-1,35 a few days before I wrote the Article for Frontline. By a few days, I mean perhaps ten to fifteen days.

It is true to say that one may agree with an archaeological report on the basis of logic, giving some reasons. Archaeologists come to the results by establishing the nature of the sites, by recording all the finds that are coming up in their context, by classifying the finds, by sending some for laboratory analysis and so on. To write a complete excavation report after perhaps 6 or 7 years of digging at a site, it may take an archaeologist a year or more to prepare the final report.

Q. How much time is required for another archaeologist to agree or disagree ?

Ans. If it is a complete excavation report, which usually runs into 500 pages or more, it may take a reviewer a month or so to write a review. To disagree with a full fledged Archaeological report, a reviewer must first give close attention to all the published sections of the site because it is these sections that will reveal the accuracy and calibre of the digging. The reviewer will then give attention to the area of the site that has been excavated. He will ask whether the conclusions drawn by that archaeological reports are based on excavation of a reasonable proportion of the site or not. He will then attempt to understand

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S. Ramagan

how the archaeologist has made a classification and typology of his finds and whether he has done cross-reference to similar finds from other sites and so on. I beg to state that N.A.D. cannot be described as an Archaeological report. It is a small booklet which contains some photographs and some short paragraphs about those photographs. I would like to repeat that what I have stated about reviewing archaeological reports does not refer to a book or booklet like N.A.D. I mean thereby that the short N.A.D. booklet provoked some comments from scholars, and my comments were focussed on one photograph published in N.A.D. I have raised a controversy about one photograph only which is paper No.118 C-1/37. It is correct that my Frontline article on paper No.291/C-1/14 does not refer to any NAD report because the editor of that magazine states on page 291C-1/12 that he invited comments on New Archaeological Discoveries from certain scholars in the list in which my name also figured. It is incorrect to say that there is no correlation between my writing the article in Frontline and my name figuring in the list of invitees of the Frontline editor as is recited on paper No.291 C-1/12. It is also wrong to suggest that I did not write my article entitled as Archaeological Discovery for the Frontline magazine. I did not address any letter in particular to the editor of Frontline while sending this article

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S. Radhagan

since, if I recollect exactly some Frontline official came to collect it from me. My point in the above referred article is that this is not the way to prove the existence of any structure at any site. The gist of my article which I have referred to above is that there was no proof regarding existence of an 11<sup>th</sup> century temple as recited in the N.A.D. report. It is correct to say that I do not rule out the possibility of any other structure of any other early period at the disputed site.

Q. From your article, it appears that you have tried to rule out the possibility of existence of any 11<sup>th</sup> century temple but the existence of any temple or structure may be constructed before or after 11 century cannot be ruled out ?

Ans. It is correct.

I have seen a Hindu temple in one of the Islamic countries, namely Muscat. I have not seen any Hindu temple in other Islamic countries.

As an archaeologist, I have not dealt with any excavation pertaining to a mosque of 16th century because it was not the subject or topic of my specialisation. Likewise, I have not dealt with the excavation of any temple of any period because that also was not a matter of my specialisation. I do have a general idea of the characteristics of a temple. What I was protesting was

*S. Radhagan*



the manner in which so-called temple sculpture and architectural pieces were being presented as proof. As an Archaeologist, I cannot describe the characteristics of a temple that might have been constructed in the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. I have not found, as an archaeologist, during field work the remains of a temple. The object of my doing field work has been recovery of as much evidence as is possible about life in the Bronze Age; for example, the diet of the people, the form of the houses, the pottery they used, etc. I have tried to explain again and again that my comments are on the general principles of what constitutes archaeological evidence, be it for a temple, or for a Bronze age house or for any other phenomenon. I can comment on what is being suggested as evidence for a temple at the site from general principles of stratification and data recovery and data contexts that are universal to the practice of archaeology.

In my article in Frontline, I was protesting against the nature of the so-called proof being cited for the existence of a temple at the disputed site. In other words, my protest and concern was not only against the manner in which the conclusions were drawn in the NAD report but also against the conclusions themselves. It is correct to say that some historians and archaeologists believe that there was a temple at the site in dispute and some do not believe in the existence of a temple.

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S. Ramagan

The other view does not necessarily state that there was an open piece of land over which a mosque was constructed because no one knows the strata lying under the mosque.

Q. Whether the dispute is between two views of historians and archaeologists i.e. existence of a temple at the disputed site or existence of any other structure at the disputed site before construction of the disputed structure ?

Ans. As far as I am aware, the dispute is only about whether there is valid evidence for a temple at the site in dispute.

Q. Whether you have tried to know as an archaeologist as to whether there was any construction of any type at the disputed site before the construction of the disputed structure ?

Ans. I have read a book on the history and archaeology on Ayodhya by T.Vermia and S.P.Gupta cursorily and have seen what they say about the pre-Mughal period at the site.

I have not done history at the postgraduate level. I know that Iran in the Sassanian period was Zoroastrian as per the State religion. I do know, after having read the Cambridge History of

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S. Ratnagar

Iran, that so much religious intolerance was exercised by the Sassanian rulers against Christians, against Jews, against a minority known as Mazdakites and the Manichaeans, that many ordinary people in Iran welcomed the Arab invaders. I do not think, the entire country of Iran was converted to Islam, because till today there are many Zoroastrian communities living in Iran and freely worshipping there. It is correct that Iran is an Islamic country. In popular memory, it is believed that most Parsis fled to India because of Islamic persecution in Iran, but many had been coming for other reasons like trade, and it appears that some groups would have fled because they feared reprisals. The last Sassanian King of Iran himself fled to Central Asia and died there.

I deny that I wrote the article under extraneous considerations. It is true that I have not written anything else on this subject after I wrote the Introduction to Prof. Mandal's book and the reason is that I had no occasion to do so. Since I did not have or receive anything new on the subject involving this case, therefore, I have not undertaken to repeat the same exercise.

It is incorrect to say that I visited foreign countries and Islamic countries frequently to receive money in order to write this article.

S. Ramagan

It is incorrect to say that as an archaeologist I had no interest in the subject-matter. It is also wrong to suggest that in present time also I had no interest in the subject in issue as an archaeologist.

My Introduction to Prof. Mandal's book is not in praise of that book, but is an attempt to describe the general principles of data retrieval in archaeology.

In most cases, it may be true that only a Ph.D on a particular subject can be termed as Expert on that subject, but my Professor in London University, Professor Seton Lloyd had no Ph.D. This principle will very much apply in India also. It is true that by merely obtaining a postgraduate degree, the holder cannot be described to be as an Expert of that subject. There may be some experts in the world, who do not possess even postgraduate degrees and yet they are experts.

Cross-examination on behalf of Hindu Mahasabha, defendant No.10 and Sri Ramesh Chandra Tripathi, defendant No. 17 by Sri H.S.Jain, Advocate completed.

Cross-examination of P.W.27 Prof. Dr. Shereen F.Ratnagar on behalf of plaintiff in O.S.No. 1 of 1989 Sri Rajendra Singh,

*S. Ratnagar*

son of late Gopal Singh Visharad by Sri P.L.Misra, Advocate adopted the cross-examination already done on behalf of other defendants.

Further cross-examination is deferred.

Statement read and signed.

*S. Rahagan*

12.4.2002

Typed by Stenographer in open Court on our dictation.

*Beigh M*

12.4.2002

*S. Rahagan*

Dated : 15.5.2002

Before Commissioner Sri Narendra Prasad, Additional  
District Judge/Officer on Special Duty, High Court ,  
Lucknow.

( Commissioner appointed vide order dated 21.3.2002/ 3.5.2002 of Hon'ble Special Full Bench of Allahabad High Court, Lucknow Bench, Lucknow passed in O.O. S.No. 4 /1989 (R.S. No.12/61) Sunni Central Board of Waqf U.P.and others Versus - Gopal Singh Visharad and others.)

P.W.No.27 Prof. Shereen F.Ratnagar stated on oath.

Cross examination of P.W.27 Prof.. Shereen  
F.Ratnagar on behalf of plaintiff's of  
O.O.S.No.5/1989 by Shri Ved Prakash, Advocate.

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I have not had any talk with the officers/officials of the Sunni Central Board of Waqf about the real controversy involved in this case. I do not know Mohd. Hashim, Mohd. Siddiq alias Hafiz, Mohd. Siddiq, Ziauddin, Maulana Mahfuzur Rehman, Mehmood Ahmad and Farooq Ahmad. I had no talk with any of these gentlemen regarding the real

*S Ratnagar*

controversy involved in this case. I had a talk with Mr. Z. Jilani about the testimony I was required to give.

Q. Did you have any talk with Mr. Z. Jilani about the real controversy or the dispute involved in the present suit?

A. I do not understand what "real controversy" means. I did not discuss the issue with Mr. Z. Jilani but I had discussed as what I have to do here. I think it was in March, 2002 that I came to know from Mr. Jilani that I should appear in this Court as a witness. Prior to March, 2002, I think I indicated to one or two persons that if I was called I would agree to be a witness. The name of one of the above persons, was Dr. Shusheel Srivastava whom I met in Allahabad for the first time when I went to give lectures there at the University. It was either 2000 or 2001. I remember that I went to Allahabad in the month of September, but the year was 2000 or 2001. Prior to that date, I may have shown my willingness to someone very close to me like my sister.

In my mind I have appeared here as an Archaeologist and my function is to speak about archaeological controversy. As far as I think and understand politics had become communalised and in that process it was being stated repeatedly that the disputed place was the birth place of Lord Rama. On the other side of the dispute, historians and archaeologists who said there was no such evidence. There was a group of eight archaeologists, the authors of the book 'New Archaeological Discoveries', who had made this claim. I saw this claim in the newspapers also. That claim was that there was a temple at the disputed site. Before the period of 'Rath Yatra' there had been some discussions in the Jawaharlal Nehru University at the Centre for Historical Studies. I attended one or two of these

S. Ratnagar

discussions. There was a claim that a temple had been demolished and the mosque had been built in its place.

Q. Did you have any discussions with any of the Muslims that the Mosque was not built by demolishing a temple?

A. There was no question of my discussing this issue with any person as a Muslim, I did listen to the opinions of scholars, for example medieval history scholars like Prof. Harbans Mukhia. He is alive. What Prof. Mukhia said was that there was no clear evidence for the destruction of a temple. He did not refer to the materials in the mosque. I remember that the main thrust of his argument was that Mrs. Beveridge's statement, about Babar having demolished the temple, was not based on any evidence. He did not say about the actual construction of the mosque at the site.

Q. Did you have any discussion with anyone that the mosque was built at the site by the material which was meant to be used for building a mosque?

A. The only discussion about the actual construction of the mosque that I remember herein is that there were black stone pillars in the mosque. It was not Prof. Mukhia I remember discussing these pillars, but Prof. Champakalakshmi, who I remember saying, that there was nothing particularly Vaishnav about those fifteen or sixteen pillars. As far as I understand, the aim of the book 'New Archaeological Discoveries' is to show that the mosque of Babar stood at the site of a Vaishnav temple.

S. Ratnagar



Q. Do you understand after going through that book that the claim made in that book was that mosque was built on that site over it by completely demolishing the temple.

A. I think this is what they have stated because I do not remember the book saying that this is a converted structure. I do not remember any discussion on the point whether any so called pre existing temple was demolished totally or partially. I did see a few pictures of those black stone pillars, and I recalled one or two things that Prof. Champakalakshmi said about them. Those things that I remember that Prof. Champakalakshmi saying was that all the pillars are not uniform. She said that there were two pillars at the entrance and those too were not identical; and if I remember right she said that the carvings did not necessarily identify them as pillars of a particularly a Vaishnav temple. If I remember right she also asked, by way of suggestion, if these could not have come from any other secular building. I do not remember her speaking of the details of the nature of the carvings. I know Prof. Suraj Bhan, professionally. Concerning Prof. Suraj Bhan's opinion about the carving on the black stone pillars I regret to say that I have not read this opinion and even if I had, I am not qualified to judge.

Q. Did you acquire the knowledge that mosque was built on the spot after completely demolishing the temple or there was no temple or building at all on the spot ?

A. From 'New Archaeological Discoveries' I saw the arguments that a temple was demolished, whether totally or partially I do not recall at the disputed site. However, in Prof. Mandal's book, one

S. Ratnagar

may see the view that the mosque was built in a place where there is no archaeological evidence of a structure that can be identified as a temple.

Q. What was your conclusion after acquiring the knowledge from various sources whether any temple was existing there or not ?

A. I would like to clarify that my opinion concerns only the so called proofs of the existence of a temple that were announced to the public, in books like 'New Archaeological Discoveries'. My conclusion was that these "proofs" were unscientific and inadequate.

Q. Have you based your opinion on the book written by Dr. D. Mandal ( Exhibit -63- Paper no.198 C-2/1-89) only ?

A. My conclusion is based on a reading of the primary sources which consist of reports given in Indian Archaeology a Review, in reading 'New Archaeological Discoveries', in reading short bits of information on Ayodhya given by the archaeologists of B.H.U., and of Prof. Mandal's book. It is an important question that always confronts archaeologists, whether a relatively late mound or building is of significance or not. About thirty to forty years ago, archaeologists would sometimes takes liberty and remove the later strata of a mound because they were interested in pre-historic or ancient levels underneath. However, by the later 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it has become very clear that all remains of an older period must be preserved. Archaeologists no longer give themselves the right to declare what is significant and what is not significant. Therefore, the prevalent ethic of all archaeologists is that all structures or sites or other remains

*S. Ramagan*

that are several centuries old, indeed even one century old, are our duty to protect. The constructions existing on the disputed spot do have an archaeological importance. I think that in 1990 the disputed structure was existing at the disputed site.

Q. Whether it was necessary to visit the spot personally in view of the fact that the allegations made, has been that the temple was partly destroyed, the material used was almost of it taken from the temple including its pillars which were wrought out of 'kasauti' or touch stone with figures of Hindu Gods and Goddesses carved on them which was used in building the mosque?

A. A visit to the mosque when it was standing would not have answered the question about what lay underneath the mosque. Concerning visit to the site, about which I have been asked before, I considered myself on the same footing as the eight authors of the 'New Archaeological Discoveries'. I have seen all reports of exploration and excavations at Ayodhya reported in "Indian Archaeology- A Review". These include the early reports on exploration in I.A.R., 1955-56 and 1961-62. In none of these reports, do the names of the eight authors of "New Archaeological Discoveries" occur. Further, it is claimed in the latter book, that due to land levelling some discoveries were made. The land levelling, according to that book, occurred on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1992, but those archaeologists went to Ayodhya only on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1992, 15 days after the so called discoveries were made. I therefore do not see how the testimony in "New Archaeological Discoveries" can claim to be first hand testimony.

Excavation is not necessary for analysing a standing structure.

S Ramagar

Q. Whether in your opinion, in view of the claim made as mentioned above the visiting of the place and personally inspecting the standing structures and then giving opinion would have been the best evidence?

A. A personal visit to a place by a medieval archaeologist or a historian specialising in medieval architecture, would settle the question whether the structure was a converted temple, nothing more. That would be good evidence provided that a total inventory was taken of the construction the materials, the plan, the section, the elevation and total cross references were made to all existing comparable materials. To my knowledge, no such exhaustive exercise has been completed. My specialisation is in archaeological stratigraphy and related matters and not in medieval architecture. The point that interests me, however, was the claim that the mosque stood under ruins of a temple. Visiting that mosque would not have the answer to that question.

Q. Whether in view of the allegations that material used was almost of it taken from the temple including its pillars and used for building a mosque, in your opinion by visiting the spot the truth could have not come out.

A. Visiting the spot may show that x,y,z material is reused from elsewhere. It could not have proved that the structure was lying on the ruins of a temple. That material could have come as alleged from some ruined temple. Equally, it could have come from some temple already in ruins lying near the mosque or far from the masjid, and if we go by Prof. R. Champaklakshmi's

S. Ratnagar

opinion, the black stone pillars may have come from building that was not a temple.

Q. Whether the visit of the spot was necessary in order to find out that the material used in the temple was used for constructing the mosque?

A. A visit would be necessary, but not adequate. As I have said, a detailed study would have been required and in any case I repeat that in "New Archaeological Discoveries" it is stated that the temple was broken and in its place, a mosque was raised. For that, only scientific excavation by stratigraphic principles would answer the question. I did not visit Ayodhya because I am not qualified to give an opinion about the mosque architecture. My specialisation qualifies me to read critically claims made about the excavation of levels under the disputed building.

I was a signatory to the Pamphlet 'Babri Masjid Ram Janam Bhoomi Dispute- The political abuse of history' published by Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Sarvapalli Gopal, Roomila Thapar, Vipin Chand, Savyasanchi Bhattacharya, Subira Jaiswal, Harbans Mukhia, K.N.Pannikar, R. Champakalakshmi, Satish Sabbarwal, B.D. Chattopadhyaya, R.N.Verma, K.Meenakshi, Muzzafar Alam, Dilbagh Singh, Mridula Mukherjee, Madhavan Palad, Aditya Mukherjee, Niladri Bhattacharya, K.K.Trivedi, Yogesh Sharma, Kunal Chakrovarty, Bhagwan Singh Josh, Rajan Gurukul, Himanshu Prabha Rai, were also signatories to the said pamphlets. The Centre of Historical Studies is one department in the School of Social Sciences of Jawaharlal Nehru University. I do not know if any of the courses in medieval India would have incorporated this subject but in the general course on historical method, it is possible that the teachers referred to the fact that in the modern

*S. Ramnagar*

world, with mass based politics and attention to communal identity, history does become mobilised in political movements. I never taught that course on historical methods so I do not know but it is possible that the relevant teachers referred to this. As I recall, I attended only a few of the discussions and there was talk of four or five people going to Ayodhya to collect evidence. I do not know what happened thereafter, because I was caught up in problems of family in Bombay. There was talk of four or five people going to Ayodhya and collecting evidence there before the above pamphlet was published and the talk was of collecting the evidence of the structure which was existing on the spot. I do not know whether any of the above signatories visited the spot or not.

Q. Did you know that four or five persons as decided earlier, visited the spot or not before you put your signature on the pamphlet?

A. During the discussion, I had heard enough about what the primary historical sources said about Rama, Ayodhya and the location of Ayodhya, for me to realise that a visit to the place was not of critical importance. The major thrust of this pamphlet was to question the attempt to convince the public that Lord Rama's birth at a particular place was historically ascertained. As regards putting my signature, it was at one stage decided by the senior Professors that this pamphlet should not be published by the Centre as Centre, but by us individually. I was asked whether I lent my name to this and having heard those who specialised in the later period discussing the sources and many aspects of the historicity of the 'Ramayan', I decided to give my name to this pamphlet. It is possible that none of the

S. Ratnagan

signatories mentioned above visited the site and it is also possible that they did not submit any report.

Q. Whether Dr. D.Mandal wrote his book based on surmises and probabilities ?

A. Prof. Mandal's book refuted what was claimed to be proof of the existence of an earlier temple. He analysed the procedures whereby that so called proof was constructed. In fact one part of that so called proof itself may be called surmises and conjectures. In other words, Mandal's was a logical exercise saying that X did not follow from Y. Where he is conjectural is in a short portion where he suggests that some brick features were part of a wall. After showing Prof. Mandal's book, Exhibit-63 page 53, 54 paper no.198-C2/73 & C2/74, the following question was put to the witness -

Q. Do you agree with what is said at the above pages i.e. "Howsoever.....may also be fruitful."

A. After seeing the said lines of the above pages, the witness replied : I am not sure that any chemical test of physical examination will settle the issue.

Q. Do you agree with the above observations made by Dr. D. Mandal or not ?

S. Ratnagar

A. I repeat that I do not know whether this will solve the issue.

Q. Do you know that the examination of the physical condition and the series of chemical tests as suggested by Prof. D.Mandal are done or not?

A. I have not read anywhere that they have been done.

Q. Do you know that the tests as suggested by D.Mandal as mentioned above in the said paragraphs are done or not as per archaeological science?

A. One can make an analysis of the material in plaster or the chemical contents of a stone but I do not know if such tests ever give final answers.

I have read about the conduct of such tests. In fact recently I have read a long article in a French Journal on the plasters used in ancient Western Asia and the whole discussion is based on analysis. Such tests are done for plasters and stones. It is incorrect to state at the present state of knowledge that without such tests there can be no final answer.

Q. Do you know that before Hazrat Mohammad, in Macca, there were 360 idols which were worshipped there?

A. I do not know.

*S. Rahagar*



A. Do you know that Hazrat Mohammad was against idol worshipping and against idol worshippers ?

( The learned counsel for the plaintiffs Shri Z. Jilani objected to this question as being totally irrelevant and having no bearing upon the testimony of the witness )

A. To my knowledge, Islam frowns on idol worship. That is all I know.

Q. Do you know that following the preaching of Hazrat Mohammad against idol worshipping, Mohammad Gauri attacked on Somnath Temple, tried to break it and destroy the idols there and looted the same? ( Learned counsel for the plaintiff Shri Z. Jilani raised strong objection to this question as it amounts to scandalising the Prophet of Islam and it is highly indecent, insulting and annoying and should not be allowed. )

A. I am not sure whether it was Mohd. Gauri or Mohd. Ghaznavi who attacked the Somnath Temple but it is just this kind of statement of the learned counsel that spreads communalism.

Q. What do you mean by communalism ?

A. By this I mean that political actions, actions done for gain, are explained as emanating from religious beliefs. By communalism I mean believing that people of one religion were essentially taught in their religion to do this, that or the other whereas the actions of the people of other religions are explained by their religion. Instead, the explanation is military or social, economic or political.

*S. Rahagar*

Q. According to you only Hindus are communal ? ( Learned counsel for the plaintiff Shri Z.Jilani objected to this question as being totally irrelevant and scandalous )?

A. There are communal people in every religion today.

Q. Since in your view Hindus are communal, you have got a prejudiced opinion against Rasthtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bhartiya Janata Party ? ( The learned counsel for the plaintiff Shri Z.Jilani objected to this question on the ground that it is a compound question and is also misleading because the witness has never said that Hindus are communal ).

A. I have not said at any stage that Hindus that Hindus are communal. But the political parties which are referred in this question, may be bringing disgrace on what is a wonderful religion.

It is wrong to say that I have given evidence for extraneous consideration.

**CROSS EXAMINATION ON BEHALF OF PLAINTIFFS OF O.O.S. NO.5 OF 1989 BY SHRI VED PRAKASH, ADVOCATE CONCLUDED.**

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The Counsel for Madan Mohan Gupta ,defendant no.20, Shri S.P.Pandey, Advocate, adopted the cross examination already done on behalf of other defendants.


*S. Ratnagar*

Cross examination by all the contesting parties concluded .  
Witness is discharged.

Statement read and signed

*S. Ratnagar*

Typed by Stenographer on my dictation in open Court.

  
Commissioner

15.5.2002

*S. Ratnagar*