

Historical Archaeology: Recent Discovery of Some Important Temple Remains in the Yamunapar Region of Allahabad District

Pushpa Tiwari¹

Introduction

Temple architecture is one of the most important markers to map the early medieval history of India in general and that of religion and patronage in particular. Physical geography and the availability of raw material play a crucial role in shaping the architecture of any given region. It is one of the reasons why we find numerous examples of temple architecture down the Vindhya, whereas, Doaba region of Ganga and Yamuna rivers has produced very few evidences and that also of brick architecture. Bhitargaon brick temple (late fifth or early sixth century CE), is one of the earliest surviving examples of brick architecture in the Doaba region of Ganga-Yamuna river system. But now several other sites have been discovered with the evidences of brick temple architecture of c. 700 CE-900 CE such as Nimiyakheda, Thithaura, Kurari, Bahua, Tinduli etc. suggesting the continuity and further development of Bhitargaon idiom both architecturally and sculpturally. Besides, many other sites such as Kaushambi, Bara, Bhita, Unchdih, Jhusi, Malakhar, Soranv all in and around Allahabad District, Uttar Pradesh have yielded several stone architectural members of ruined temples throwing significant light on the prolific art activity in this region. But, still there are many gaps to be bridged with further exploration and excavation.

This article is a small step in that direction. It tries to introduce to the world of academia—for the first time in a systematic manner—the newly discovered sites of Hathigan and Ghoredih from where architectural remains magnificent stone and brick temples have been discovered respectively. They provide archaeological evidence of architectural engineering as practiced in the Yamunapar region in early medieval times.

Hathigan

The site Village Hathigan at 25° 18' 0" N longitude and 81° 52' 30" E latitude is located between Karma and Purva Khas in the Chaka Block of the Karchana tehsil of Allahabad District across river Yamuna on the left side of the metalled arterial road coming from Gohania crossing on Rewa road to Karchana. It may also be approached from Naini from where another metalled arterial road goes to Hathigan and meets the Gohania crossing arterial road just before the village Hthigan. From Allahabad city Hathigan is approximately 24-25 kms in south-east direction. It is a dusty village with the population of about three thousand people of mixed religious communities—all equally impervious to their historical heritage. The ruined temple sits closely on the left bank of the metaled road and one

¹ Department of Ancient History Culture & Archaeology, University of Allahabad, Allahabad, India.