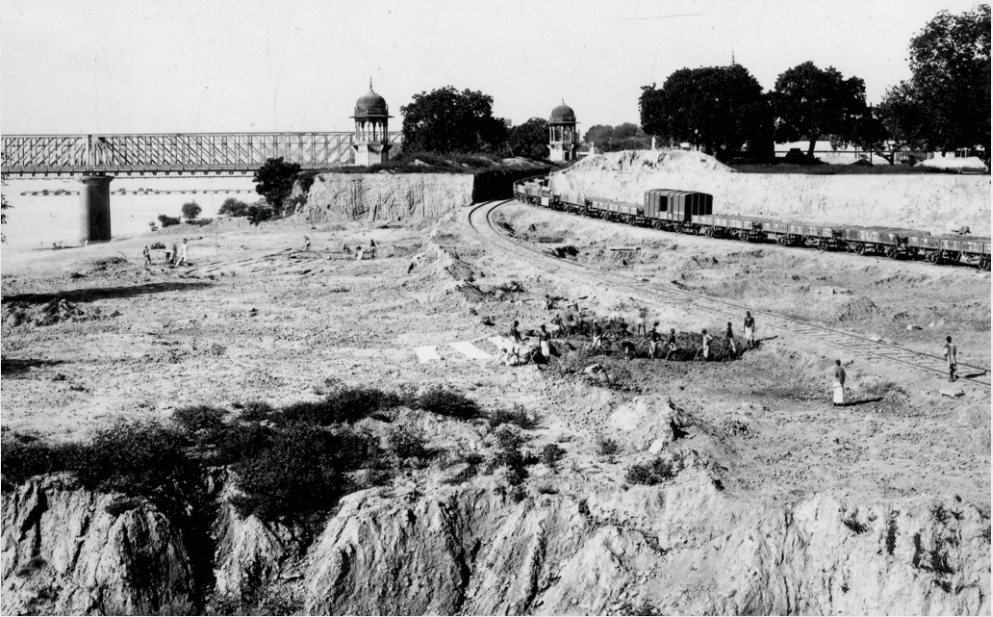


Centrally Protected Monument, Tomb of Lal Khan at Rajghat (Lat. 25° 19' 34.44" N & Long. 83° 02' 07.57" E.) is located on the left bank of River Ganga at a distance of about 6 km. from Varanasi Railway Station, adjacent to Kashi Railway Station and Malviya Bridge, Varanasi. It was built in 1773 A.D. by the rulers of Varanasi. Lal Khan was the minister/army commander of a former king of Kashi. He contributed in extension and development of Kashi by his courage and heroism. In the last days of his life, the king of Kashi promised him to fulfill his last wish, the Lal Khan wished that



he wants to see the gateway of the royal palace even after his death. King of Kashi honoured his wish and buried him at Rajghat after the death of Lal Khan and built a splendid tomb there. This tomb is situated in the centre of a rectangular garden. Each four corners of the garden have an octagonal stone canopy. The main structure of the tomb is constructed on a high square platform. The outer walls of the tomb is decorated with three arched design in which the central arch is comparatively higher. Two entrances are provided from west and south side to enter into the Tomb. The grand dome of the tomb is decorated with coloured tile work. Four smaller canopies are also constructed in four corners of the dome. Brave warrior Lal Khan is buried under the tomb. Two other members of his family are also buried besides the grave of Lal Khan. The influence of Mughal architecture is clearly visible on the

architectural style of this tomb.

In the same premises, archaeological excavation exposed the settlement of ancient Kashi. The strategic position of the site actually attracted the people to settle down here as the location of the site is flanked by the Ganga River on one side and the Varuna River on the other side. Kashi was also one of the Maha Janapadas and Varanasi was its capital during the time of Buddha in 6th Century BCE.

Archaeological potentiality of the site was first noticed in July 1940 in course of earth cutting by the East India Railway in connection with the project of extension and remodeling of the Kashi railway station existing nearby the site. In course of earth cutting some ancient remains came out of surface which insisted an archaeological investigation of the site. In the same year, Shri Krishna Deva of the Archaeological Survey of India took a trial trench excavation to confirm the cultural assemblage of the site. In course of trial excavation, the



remains of a temple hall supported on twelve pillars along with other brick structures have been exposed. Besides, a number of antiquities with ceramic like Northern Black Polished ware, Red Slipped and Red ware found in abundance.

The most important discovery was an inscribed sealing of terracotta, inscribed in Gupta Brahmi character with Legend *Baranasyadhisthanadhikarnasya* i.e. the seal of the city administration of B(v)aranasi was found in this trial excavation suggest that the Rajghat site may represent the ancient settlement of Varanasi.

After discoveries of encouraging evidences in Rajghat excavation, Prof. A. K. Narain of the BHU, Varanasi decided to conduct a large scale



Archaeological Excavation. The excavation work was started at the site in 1957-58 and resumed in 1960-61 and continued till 1969.

Later on Prof. Vidula Jaiswal of Jnana Pravaha, Varanasi and Dr. B. R. Mani, ASI conducted the excavation at Rajghat in 2013-14.

The cultural assemblage of the site can be broadly divided into six periods, characterized by their typical ceramics industries and other objects like coins, seals and sealing, terracotta figurines and metal objects, are as follows.

Period I (800-200 BCE) is divisible into three sub periods
Sub Period I A (800-600) BCE – It was formative period of the settlement characterized by the Black & Red ware, Black Slipped ware and Slipped and Unslipped Red ware. No structural remains of any kind have been noticed.

Sub Period I B (600-400) BCE – This sub period is characterized by the emergence of NBPW and continuation of the Black and Red ware and Black slipped ware. It was at this stage that a massive clay embankment was built as a measure against floods. The embankment was built directly over the natural soil.

Sub Period I C (400-200) BCE – This period show the degeneration of Northern Black Polished ware. Emergence of course grey ware. Mud structure and hand and mould made terracotta figures are the main characteristic of this period.

Period II (200-00) BCE – 3rd century BCE to 1st century CE – The feature of urbanization in which the use of baked bricks are observed for the first time. The earliest specimen of *makara-mukha* occurs in the late levels. Stamped design of *Triratna* and *Dharmachakra* on clay moulds are also traced.



Period III (1st century-300) CE – This was the most prosperous period, Kushan and late Kushan remains were recovered. The township in which houses, wells, market are made of baked brick. Seals-sealings and coins are plentiful. Nearly 400 seals and sealings, both finished and unfinished, palaeographically assignable 1st - 3rd centuries A.D., have been recovered. One of them bearing the designs of a humped bull and inscribed with the word *Pusharana* can be

placed somewhere in the second century. Amongst the other names found on the sealings *Harisena* is the commonest. Die-struck coins are reported for the first time. An Ayodhya coin bearing the legend *Sivadatasa* and a Kausambi coin with the legend *Navasa* also come latter from the late level. The discoveries of seals & sealings and coins in such large numbers proved that the site had a the large volume of trade and commerce due its heydays.

Period IV (300-700) CE – This period is noted for a lesser number of brick- bats of important structures, the noteworthy of them being two square *Kundas* with widening sides and a brick edged platform associated with an apsidal structure. Sealings bearing respectively the inscriptions of *Pakhikula* and *Govindaswami* and four gold coins of Chandra Gupta, Kumar Gupta I and Skanda Gupta and other tiny gold objects have been found in a pot.

Period V (700-1200) CE – Notwithstanding the disturbance caused by extensive pits dug deliberately towards the end of the occupation, several brick walls, foundation pits of building remains of several floorings have been exposed. The discovery of a large number of architectural fragments, *amalakas*, sculptures, a pedestal with *linga*, all lying at the same level points to the destruction of some Brahmanical structure.

Period VI (1200-1700) CE – Apart from the ordinary Red ware which persists throughout the occupation, there are glazed ware confirmed mainly to the middle and late levels. Coins of Akbar & Sher-Shah were also recovered from this period. An East India Company coin has been recorded from the top deposit of this period.

Lastly, on the basis of the archaeological excavations conducted in the premises, it is almost clear that the archaeological remains of this site represent the ancient Varanasi, the capital of Kashi Mahajanpada and remained under continuous occupation upto 18th century CE due to its location and centre of trade and commerce.



Plan of Excavated Remains



Terracotta sealing depicting 'Brihavrachacharan' in Brahmi script of 5th cent. C.E. from Rajghat.



Terracotta sealing depicting 'Avimukteshwar' in Brahmi script of 8th cent. C.E. from Rajghat.

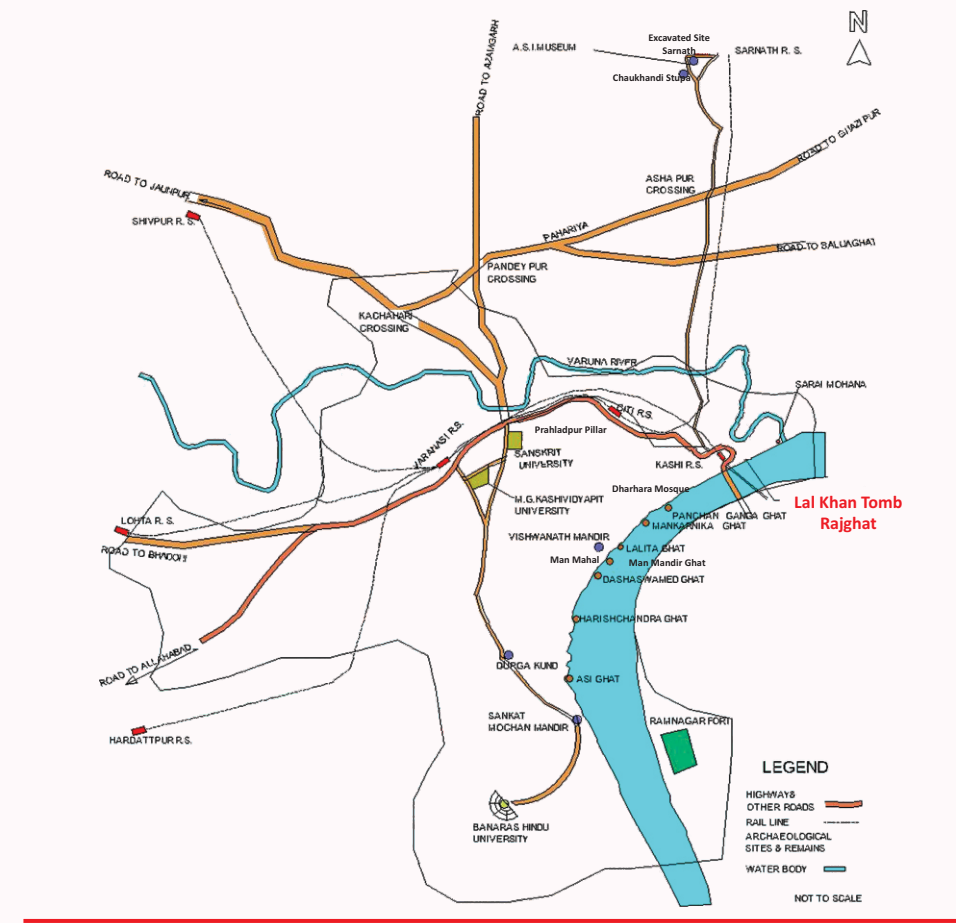


Terracotta sealing depicting 'Shri Sarvatraividhy' in Brahmi script of 5th cent. C.E. from Rajghat.

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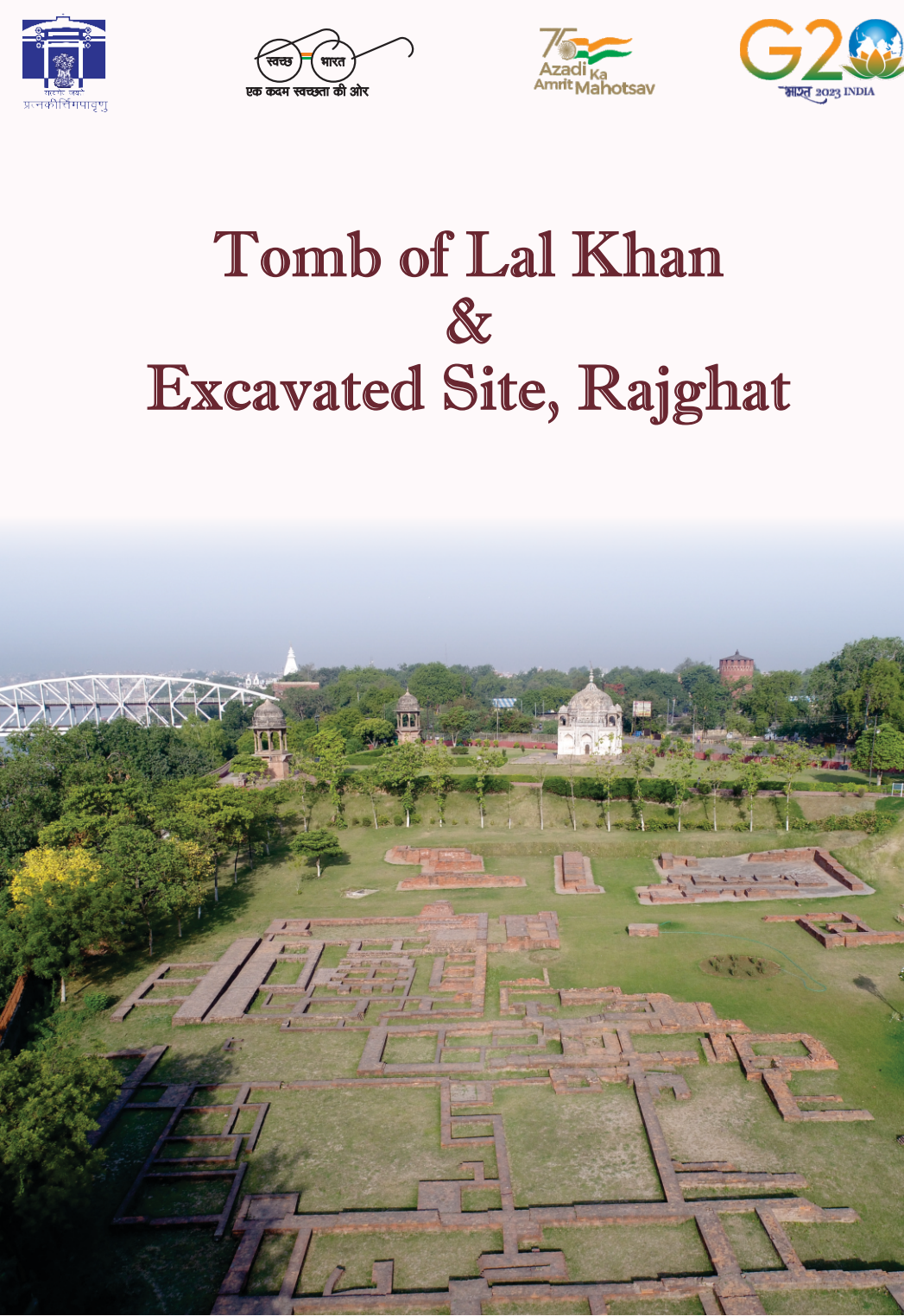
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Tomb of Lal Khan & Excavated Site, Rajghat