

The Ayodhya Evidence Debate – Part II

Dr Koenraad Elst

8. More on the British Concoction Hypothesis

The eminent JNU historians have claimed that “it is in the nineteenth century that the story circulates and enters official records. These records were then cited by others as valid historical evidence on the issue.”^[43] A few years earlier, they were still far more circumspect before making this assertion. In the early days of the Ayodhya dispute, in a letter to the *Times of India*, a group of JNU academics wrote: “It would be worth enquiring whether there is reliable historical evidence of a period prior to nineteenth century for this association of a precise location with the birthplace of Rama.”^[44]

Lawyer A. G. Noorani comments on the letter: “They were absolutely right. The myth is a nineteenth century creation – by the British.”^[45] Note however that in their 1986 letter, the JNU historians had only suggested this in question format, but later many of them, like Noorani in this passage, have asserted it quite affirmatively.

Noorani then quotes a letter by Indrajit Dutta and nine others: “The belief that the disputed place of worship in Ayodhya is a mosque built after destroying a temple consecrating Rama’s birthplace *originates in the first half of the 19th century*. In 1813 John Leyden, a British historian, published his *Memoirs of Zehir-ed-din, Muhammad Babar, Emperor of Hindustan* (A translation of Babar’s memoirs in Persian). In it Leyden had contended that Babar had passed through Ayodhya in March 1528 during his campaign against the Pathans. This ‘historical evidence’ of Babar’s presence in the area was destroyed by later British authorities to propagate the belief that the ‘anti-Hindu’ Babar had destroyed the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple and got a mosque built on the spot – though Leyden’s work makes no mention of it. Sushil Srivastava of the Department of Medieval and Modern History, University of Allahabad, has worked extensively on the history of Awadh. He substantiates his findings to show how the British authorities, specifically Colonel Sleeman, then resident of Lucknow, anxious to justify the annexation of Awadh, exploited this controversy superbly at a time when rumblings of the 1857 mutiny were ominous.”^[46]

Remark the illogical claim that the British “destroyed” the document cited by Leyden to substantiate his hypothesis (and the local tradition) that Babar had passed through the town of Ayodhya, when that very document and that very hypothesis would support the theory that Babar destroyed a Hindu temple in Ayodhya, precisely the theory which the theory which the ten signatories try to “unmask” as a British concoction. The claim that the British deliberately “destroyed” this of any other historical evidence is also unsupported by any evidence.

This is all the more serious considering the fact that the British archives provide a much more complete testimony of the British policies than anything from the earlier periods, and considering the ten signatories’ own contention that their friend Sushil Srivastava has made a detailed study of the British machinations in Avadh. There is little doubt that the British resident was implementing policies designed to bring Avadh under British control. But what

is very much in doubt (at any rate totally unsubstantiated) is the claim that he used temple history concoctions to that end.

There is actually some evidence to the opposite effect. P. Carnegy wrote in 1870 that up to 1855 both Hindus and Muslims worshipped at the mosque, which led to a lot of friction, until the British separated them: “It is said that up to that time [viz. the Hindu-Muslim clashes in the 1850s] the Hindus and Mohammedans alike used to worship in the mosque-temple. Since the British rule a railing has been put up to *prevent dispute*, within which in the mosque the Mohammedans pray, while outside the fence the Hindus have raised a platform on which they make their offerings.”^[47] As Peter Van der Veer comments on Carnegy’s testimony, against the British concoction hypothesis: “The suggestion that the local tradition is entirely invented by the British thus seems disingenuous.”^[48]

To quote Van der Veer in full: “The implication here is that the British found the ‘facts’ that fitted their master narrative of the perpetual hostility between Hindus and Muslims (...) One of the problems with the above argument is that the British were not very interested in the Hindu history of Ayodhya. The most important British archaeologist of India in the nineteenth century was Alexander Cunningham. He did come to Ayodhya, not to dig up evidence of Hindu-Muslim enmity but to look for the Buddhist monuments of Saketa/Ayodhya – monuments that nobody locally was interested in, then or now. Patrick Carnegy, the commissioner, argued that the pillars of the mosque – which are now ascribed to a Hindu temple by [B. B.] Lal and others – strongly resemble Buddhist pillars, although he did not accept the local tradition that Babar built his mosque on the ‘birthplace’ temple. However, he also accepted the local tradition that Hindus and Muslims used to worship together in this mosque-temple until the disturbances of 1855. The suggestion that the local tradition is entirely invented by the British thus seems disingenuous.”^[49]

Many 19th century scholars had a strong pro-Buddhist bias in their Indian studies (setting a trend which continues till today), and the first Ayodhya surveyors display the same intellectual fashion, rather than the politically more useful interest in Hindu-Muslim friction. The dozens of scholars who have floated the British concoction hypothesis are faced with a total absence of 19th century data supporting it.

Patrick Carnegy, the first British commissioner in Faizabad and still very close in time to the episode of communal violence (1852-57) and the British take-over after the Mutiny (1857-58), would have emphasized Hindu-Muslim conflict if the British concoction hypothesis had been true. Instead, he highlights the relative Hindu-Muslim harmony which existed shortly before the time of the British take-over.

This moment of harmony may well have been exceptional and may have to be explained by the Muslim rulers’ need to strengthen their position against British ambitions. But at any rate it was a fact which the British would not have highlighted if they had wanted to base their divide-and-rule on false history of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Moreover, if they had wanted to use historical cases of Hindu-Muslim tension to foment more such tension in their own day, they could have invoked numerous certified instances rather than having to invent any.

9. Archaeological Evidence

The only serious comment on the VHP evidence bundle published in the national press (but still not reporting the outcome of the evidence debate) was a derogatory piece by Bhupendra Yadav in *The Tribune*. In his despair at finding that “proven secularists”, like R. Nath and B.

B. Lal, “are now nodding assent to the argument for Ram Janmabhoomi”, Yadav does try to propose an alternative to the temple destruction scenario. Acknowledging Lal’s archaeological finding of 11th century temple foundations underneath the Babri Masjid, he comes up with the following explanation: “After they occupied Ayodhya in 1194 AD, the Turkish sultans found a vacant mound at Ramkot in which lay buried the burnt pillar bases. The sultans encouraged settlements of Muslims on the mound (...) To help these Muslims pray, officials of the Babar regime built a mosque in 1528 AD.”^[50]

Bhupendra Yadav’s nice little scenario is of course purely hypothetical and unsupported by any document whatsoever, but that doesn’t seem to trouble him. At any rate, after the cream of India’s secularist historians have used all their resources to create a semblance of credibility for the no-temple case, all that Bhupendra Yadav can come up with, is the hypothesis that: 1) The Hindus of Ayodhya had left the geographical place of honor in the middle of their city “vacant”, unlike the people of every other city in the whole world; 2) they had laid the foundations (the pillar bases of burnt brick) for a pillared building which they never constructed, and waited for others to come and put these foundations to proper use. This hypothesis is pretty far-fetched. But at least Mr. Yadav has the merit of explicating what most people who deny the temple destruction scenario only claim by implication.

A similar howler was launched by archaeologist D. Mandal of Allahabad University in his booklet *Ayodhya Archaeology after Demolition* (1993). In the first week of July 1992, a team of eight reputed archaeologists, including former ASI directors Dr. Y. D. Sharma and Dr. K. M. Srivastava, had paid a visit to the Ramkot hill in Ayodhya. They went there to verify and evaluate the findings done by labourers who had been clearing the area around the Babri Masjid on orders of the Uttar Pradesh Department of Tourism. The findings included religious sculptures, among them a statue of Vishnu (of whom Rama is considered an incarnation), and a lot of Masjid structure. Team members said that the inner boundary of the disputed structure rests, at least on one side, on an earlier temple”^[51] They pleaded for a more systematic survey of the entire hill.

However, Mandal dismisses the post-demolition (and pre-demolition)^[52] archaeological evidence for the temple as they “cannot be placed in context since the stratigraphical evidence is destroyed by arbitrary digging or wilful destruction”^[53] By that criterion, much of Egyptian and Harappan history should also be nullified retro-actively. Even a few decades ago, archaeological methods were unscientific by present-day standards, and the older findings were therefore not as transparent in terms of stratigraphy and chronology as desirable, yet the artifacts found were still real and did not allow for certain conclusions even if less compelling or precise.

Moreover, Mandal seems to be trying to over-awe the lay reader with a distinction between strata which is very important in digging at prehistorical sites but becomes far less crucial in more recent sites, where the objects found are known “in context” because a lot of written evidence attests to their use and meaning and chronology. When you find different prehistoric stone tools, proper stratigraphy is essential if you want to know their chronological sequence. But when you find (a) a paleolithic flintstone scraper, (b) a medieval metal saw, and (c) a modern electrical sawing machine, you can safely deduce that (a) precedes (b) which in turn precedes (c), even if the stratigraphy of the site had been messed up. Likewise, it is not difficult to distinguish Hindu art from Muslim art. It would be a Martial who knows neither religion, but not for us who are familiar with both religions and their art histories.

Unlike findings at pre-literate sites from unknown cultures, the objects in Ayodhya were certainly found “in context”. For starters, they were Hindu objects found at a site where, after centuries of Hindu presence, a mosque had been built. Even if stratigraphically less than perfect, the fact of this multifarious evidence’s existence, certified a number of leading archaeologists, is undeniable.

Mandal also tries to impose a contrived explanation on Prof. B. B. Lal’s old pillar bases evidence, claiming that these pillar-bases were “certainly not contemporaneous with one another” nor even “components of a single structure”.^[54] This would mean that every now and then, these inconsistent Hindus or Muslims just made a hole in the ground, arbitrarily planted a pillar-base somewhere, never to build a pillar on it, then forgot about it a few decades later, another joker repeated this meaningless ritual, coincidentally yielding an orderly pattern of pillar-bases. This is secularist archaeology for you.

Another strange line of argument which Mandal uses, is this: he first claims that a demolition must have involved the use of fire, then notes that “neither are there traces of burning, expected when military destruction occurs”.^[55] Now, apart from the fact that fire would mostly affect the overground parts while we are only left with the underground remainder, the point is that no one insists that the temple was destroyed by fire. Numerous mosques stand on Hindu temples which were demolished alright without being burnt down. Indeed, any Kar Sevak would have told Prof. Mandal that there are other ways of demolishing a building. Could it be that Mandal is only refuting his own straw-man hypothesis because he cannot face the real evidence?

For the rest, he repeats the worn-out trick of using the non-mentioning of certain facts in B. B. Lal’s *brief* (i.e., by definition incomplete) report to “contradict” B. B. Lal’s and S. P. Gupta’s recent revelations of findings which would only appear in the full report.^[56] The fact of the matter is that the full report of B. B. Lal’s findings was withheld from publication, and that the brief report which the journalists had seen explicitly refrains from giving details of the medieval findings. It is quite odd to use the brief version of the report to disprove the detailed version of the *same* report’s relevant part which B. B. Lal himself had just made public.^[57]

That the full report is still unpublished, is most likely because the secularist authorities objected to its findings. As Peter Van der Veer reported: “However, in this case the government has not allowed the Department of Archaeology to provide evidence. It has thus fallen to B. B. Lal to do so.”^[58]

The same counts for the inscription found during the demolition, which clearly mentions that the site was considered Rama’s birthplace.^[59] At that time, many academics declared without any examination that the inscription, presented by scholars of no lesser stature than themselves, was a forgery. Thus according to “a group of historians and scholars” including Kapil Kumar, B. D. Chattopadhyaya, K. M. Shrimali, Suvira Jaiswal and S. C. Sharma, the “so-called discoveries of artifacts” during and after the demolition were “a planned fabrication and a fraud perpetrated to further fundamentalist designs”.^[60]

If the secularists had really believe this, they would have requested access to the findings, which would readily have been granted by the minister in charge, the militant secularist Arjun Singh. They would have invited international scholars as witnesses, and curtly demonstrated its falseness for all to see. Instead, just like B. B. Lal’s report, this inscription became a skeleton in their closet, which they have to keep from public view as long as possible.

In fact, the BMAC and secularist tide has frequently opposed archaeological research at the site, while the Hindu side wanted more of it, e.g.: “Nevertheless, in a BBC interview in 1991, [B. B.] Lal argued that there had been a Hindu temple for Rama/Vishnu on the spot now occupied by the mosque and that pillars of that temple had been used in constructing the [Masjid]. Lal suggested that further digging should be carried out in order to come up with more evidence – a suggestion that was denounced in the press by the historian Irfan Habib and others as a ploy to demolish the mosque.”^[61]

The whole anti-temple argumentation has nothing more to offer than such pitiable attempts to wriggle out from under the weight of inconvenient evidence. Only media power has so far saved the “eminent historians” and their ilk from being exposed.

10. “The Shariat does not allow Temple Demolition”

Soft-line Hindu nationalists like K. R. Malkani, along with some secularists and Muslims, have often tried to convince us that Islam itself opposes the demolition of non-Muslim places of worship. They even argue that a mosque built on a demolished Hindu temple would be unlawful under Islamic law. The authority claimed as basis for this offer is the injunction in the *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri* (Aurangzeb’s codex of applied Islamic jurisprudence): “It is not permissible to build a mosque on unlawfully acquired land. There may be many forms of unlawful acquisition. For instance, if some people forcibly take somebody’s house and build a mosque or even a *jama masjid* on it, then *namaz* in such a mosque will be against *shari’at*.”

Without reference to the context, this might be read as a prohibition on forcibly replacing Hindu temples as mosques. Sushil Srivastava has even used this injunction as “proof” that mosques simply *cannot* have been built in forcible replacement of temples. He writes that “the Quran clearly states that prayers offered in a contentious place will not be accepted (...) Thus, the whole purpose of constructing a *masjid* on the site of a *mandir* would be self-defeating (...) it is highly unlikely that even the contentious mosques in Varanasi and Mathura are located on the *exact* sites of temples.”^[62]

The Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi is very certainly located on the exact site of the Vishvanath temple, and visibly includes remains of the old temple walls. Numerous other examples can be cited from inside and outside of India, and more cases keep on being discovered.”^[63] To mention two less-known cases from Iran, the Masjid-I-Birun in Abarquh and the Jami Masjid of Aqda (still a Zoroastrian center of pilgrimage with a shrine in use on a mountain outside the town), “whose origin may be traced back to fire-temples” of the Zoroastrians.^[64] The author reporting on them correctly introduces his finding thus: “In the Islamic world many places of worship belonging to earlier religion have been converted to mosques.”

As is clear from the Islamic law books, as Prof. Harsh Narain has shown, the injunction against building mosques on unlawfully acquired land only applies to inter-Muslim disputes, because it was quite lawful and in fact also quite common to have mosques built on temple sites grabbed from Hindus and other heathens.^[65] Indeed, the forcible takeover of non-Muslim religious places is a practice initiated by Prophet Mohammed himself. The best example of the practice is the Kaaba itself, a Pagan shrine forcibly transformed into the central mosque of Islam.

11. Tampering with the Evidence

In its presentation of evidence in the Government-sponsored scholars' debate in December 1990, the VHP scholars have pointed out 4 cases of attempted fraud by their opponents, attempts by BMAC sympathizers to conceal, obliterate or change evidence: removing old books from libraries, adding words on an old map. Recent editions of Urdu books (by Maulvi Abdul Karim and by Shaikh Md. Azamat Ali Nami) have suppressed chapters or passages relating the temple destruction on Ramkot hill which were present in earlier editions or in the manuscript. In an English translation of a book by Maulana Hakim Saiyid Abdul Hai, the relevant passages present in the Urdu original had been censored out, and an effort was discovered to remove all the copies of the Urdu original from the libraries.

On maps included in the Settlement Record of 1861, which describe the disputed area as *Janamsthan*, "birthplace", someone had added "Babari Masjid"; the interpolation was obvious after comparison with a copy of the document kept in another office. The fact that this official document could be tampered with, may well be related to the fact that the then Revenue Minister of Uttar Pradesh was an office-bearer of the BMAC.

In my opinion, these petty and clumsy attempts to tamper with the corpus of evidence, are child's play compared with the concealment of evidence by professional scholars sympathetic to the Babri Masjid cause. In their publications on this dispute, A. A. Engineer and Prof. S. Gopal have simply kept out all inconvenient (mainly pre-British) testimonies out of the picture and have just acted as if these did not exist. In his reply to *The Political Abuse of History* by 25 historians of JNU, Prof. A. R. Khan shows grounds to accuse *the eminent JNU historians* of "not only concealment but also distortion of evidence."^[66]

It is not unfair to conclude that some of the pro-BMAC authors have committed serious breaches of academic deontology. For me personally, seeing this shameless overruling of historical evidence with a high-handed use of academic and media power, was the immediate reason to involve myself in this controversial question.

When A. K. Chatterjee had presented the testimony by 18th century traveler Father Teiffenthaler as evidence, Syed Shahabuddin revealed in his reply that he possessed a copy of this text (in German translation) and that he was thoroughly familiar with the text.^[67] This seems to imply that while he was challenging his opponents to come up with any pre-British evidence, he was fully aware that such evidence did exist (or at the very least a document which might reasonably be claimed to contain such evidence, even if one were to be persuaded by Shahabuddin's extremely contrived attempt to explain it away), but remained sitting on top of it in the hope that nobody would discover it.

The above are cases where the attempts to suppress evidence have failed. It is quite probable that other attempts have succeeded. There may well be documents containing pertinent information, particularly about the site's history during the Sultanate period (1206 – 1525), which have escaped the notice of Prof. Harsh Narain (the only scholar of Persian and Arabic in the VHP team) because they had been removed in time from the places where they could normally be found. Such documents would mostly be in Persian and available only in the libraries of Muslim institutions. In some of these, Prof. Harsh Narain has effectively been denied access as soon as his involvement in the Ayodhya argument became known. How many pieces of pertinent material have been concealed, removed, destroyed or altered is anybody's guess.

12. Conclusion

The clear-cut result of the Ayodhya evidence debate is still not widely known. Most of the Indian English-language papers, as well as the official electronic media, have all along been on the side of the BMAC, and they have strictly kept the lid on this information. Their reporting on the scholars' debate has been very partial and, from the moment the BMAC's defeat became clear, increasingly vague.

If any proof is needed that the BMAC has been defeated in this debate, it is this: no one sympathetic to the Babri Masjid cause has made any reference to the outcome of this debate all through the subsequent years, even though the Ayodhya issue frequently reappeared in the news. Politicians have made a show of their "secularism" and their opposition to "religious fanaticism" by organizing "fact-finding missions" to Ayodhya and issuing statements on the dispute, but they have not made any reference to the outcome of the scholars' debate at all. When reading about the subsequent course of the Ayodhya controversy, one might get the impression that the scholars' debate never took place.

However, it did not take place, and it has yielded sufficient evidence to consider the matter as practically closed. The Babri Masjid was built in forcible replacement of a Hindu temple. With the historical question decided, that leaves only the political question to be resolved.

That political question has not been the topic of this paper, but for those who care to know, I briefly statement my position. The Rama-Janmabhoomi site has been a Hindu sacred site for many centuries. Even the JNU historians admit that it was a pilgrimage site since the 13th century. It may have been one since much earlier, but alright: Catholic pilgrimage sites like Loudres and Fatima are not even two centuries old and still they are respected. So, seven centuries is quite sufficient to certify its status of sanctity. Today, judges and governments in Australia, New Zealand and the Americas are increasingly conceding the right of indigenous communities to restart worship at their sacred sites. Consider the human right to freedom of religion, it is obvious that communities have a right to their sacred sites, and no modern or humane person would ever countenance thwarting this right for other than the most compelling reasons.

So it is completely evident that Hindus have a right to use and properly adorn their own sacred sites, including Rama Janmabhoomi at Ayodhya. The problem with Ayodhya, the cause of all this rioting and wast of lives and political energy is not that they Hindus want to adorn their own sacred site with proper temple architecture that is the most normal thing in the world. The problem is that another party, the Islamist-Christian- Marxist combine in India, is trying to obstruct this perfectly unobjectionable project of architectural renovation. Against the near-universal consensus that all sacred sites are to be respected, Islam is taking the position that it has the right to occupy and desecrate the sacred sites of other religions. Genuine secularists must oppose and thwart this obscurantist design, and allow the normal process of Hindu architectural renovation to take its course.

[PART I](#)

-
- [43] Romila Thapar, Bipin Chandra et al: "*The Political Abuse of History*", in Asghar Ali Engineer: *Babri Masjid/Ram Janmabhoomi Controversy*, p. 235
- [44] Letter signed by Romila Thapar, Muzaffar Alam, Bipin Chandra, R. Champalakshmi, S. Bhattacharya, Harbans Mukhia, Suvira Jaiswal, Shireen Ratnagar, M. K. Palat, Satish Sabarwal, Sarvapelli Gopal and Mrdula Mukherjee, datelined 21-10-1986, published in *Times of India*, 28-10-1986.
- [45] A. G. Noorani: "The Babri Masjid/Ram Janmabhoomi Question", Asghar Ali Engineer: *Babri Masjid/Ram Janmabhoomi Convtrorsy*, p. 66.
- [46] Letter in *The Statesman*, 22-10-1989, quoted by A. G. Noorani: "*The Babri Masjid/Ram Janmabhoomi Question*", Asghar Ali Engineer: *Babri Masjid?Ram Janmabhoomi Controversy*, p. 66-67
- [47] P. Carnegy: *A Historical Sketch of Tehsil Fyzabad*, Lucknow 1870, quoted by Harsh Narain: *The Ayodhya Temple/ Mosque Dispute*, Penman, Delhi 1993, p. 8-9, and by Peter Van der Veer: *Religious Nationalism*, p. 153; emphasis mine.
- [48] Peter Van der Veer: *Religious Nationalism*, p. 160
- [49] *ibid*, pp. 159-160
- [50] Bhupendra Yadav: "Temple issue built on weak base", in *The Tribune*, 7-3-1992
- [51] *Indian Express*, 4-7-1992
- [52] Presented in Y. D. Sharma et al.: *Ramajanma Bhumi: Ayodhya. New Archaeological Discoveries*, published by Prof. K. S. Lal for the Historians' Forum, Delhi 1992. An earlier smaller find of religious artifacts on 10 March 1992 in diggings by the Uttar Pradesh tourism department was reported in the press, e.g., Anil Rana: "Artifacts found near Babari Masjid", *Statesman*, 11-3-1992. A further discovery was made a month after the demolition, vide: "New Evidence at Temple site found", *Pioneer*, 8-1-1993
- [53] D. Mandal: *Ayodhya Archaeology after Demolition. A Critique of the "New" and 'Fresh' Discoveries*, Orient Longman, Delhi 1993, p. xi.
- [54] *ibid*, p. 63
- [55] *ibid*, p. 65
- [56] E.g.,: "No pillar bases at Ayodhya: ASI Rport", *Times of India*, 7-12-90, and A. G. Noorani: "The Babri Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi Question", in A. A. Engineer: *Babri Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi Controversy*, p. 64
- [57] B. B. Lal explained this matter and restated his long-held positions in his article: "Facts of history cannot be altered", in *The Hindu*, 1-7-1998, in reply to a slanderous editorial, "Tampering with history", *The Hindu*, 12-6-1998. Undaunted, D. N. Jha attempted to restore the confusion: "We were not shown Ayodhya notebook", *The Hindu*, 27-7-1998.
- [58] Peter Van der Veer: *Religious Nationalism*, p. 157. On several occasions, Marxist historians had insinuated that B. B. Lal, one of the greatest living archeologists, has changed his conclusions about pre-existent temple in order to satisfy the "requirements of VHP politics" (thus the JNU historians Romila Thapar, S. Gopal and K. N. Panikkar in *Indian Express* 5-12-1990). Among those who came out in Prof. Lal's defence and certified his statements are K. V. Soundarajan (ASI), I. Mahadevan, R. Nath, K. V. Raman, and K. K. Mohammed (ASI, the only Muslim who participated in the Ayodhya excavations, letter in *Indian Express*, 15-12-1990). In a speech to the Aligarh Historians Group (12+2-1991), published in *Muslim India*, (5/1991), Prof. Irfan Habib has made similar personal attacks on Prof. B. R. Grover. Prof. B. P. Sinha, Prof. K. S. Lal and Dr. S. P. Gupta, who have represented the VHP in the scholars' debate, and on Prof. B. B. Lal.

- [59] Presented by Dina Nath Mishra: "Writing in the debris", *Telegraph*, 1-1-1993
- [60] "Historians pick holes in 'evidence'", *Times of India*, 26-12-1992
- [61] Peter Van der Veer: *Religious Nationalism*, p. 158-159
- [62] Sushil Srivastava: "The Ayodhya controversy", in A. A. Engineer ed.: *Babri Masjid/Ram Janmabhoomi Controversy*, p. 38
- [63] E.g.: "One night during the monsoon of 1991, the rain was so heavy that it washed away the wall that was concealing the frontage of the Bijamandal mosque raised by Aurangzeb in 1682" in Vidisha, and "the broken wall exposed so many Hindu idols that the Archaeological Survey of India had no choice but to excavate", as mentioned by Prfaull Goradia: "Heritage hushed up", *Pioneer*, 12-12-2000.
- [64] M. Shokoohy: "Two fire temples converted to mosques in central Iran", *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1985, p. 546
- [65] Harsh Narain: "Ram Janmabhoomi: Muslim Testimony", in *Lucknow Pioneer* (5-2-90) and *Indian Express* (26-2-90), included in S. R. Goel: *Hindu Temples*, vol. I, 2nd ed. (1998), p. 169-175
- [66] Prof. A. R. Khan: "In the name of 'history'" (originally published in *Indian Express*, 25-2-1990) and the whole subsequent exchange with the JNU historians has been included in *History versus Casuistry*, app. 2, and in S. R. Goel: *Hindu Temples*. Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Voice of India, Delhi 1998), p. 243-263. We have to give the JNU historians credit for trying at least this once to refute criticism, but we cannot commend the secretiveness about this exchange in their later writings. On the other hand, their secretiveness is quite eloquent in its own way.
- [67] The whole debate between A. K. Chatterjee and Syed Shahabuddin is included in S. R. Goel: *Hindu Temples*, vol. 1, and 2nd ed., p. 176-211; Shahabuddin's claim to "have the German text" is on p. 198