

After the Fieldwork, the Hard Work: Post-Excavation

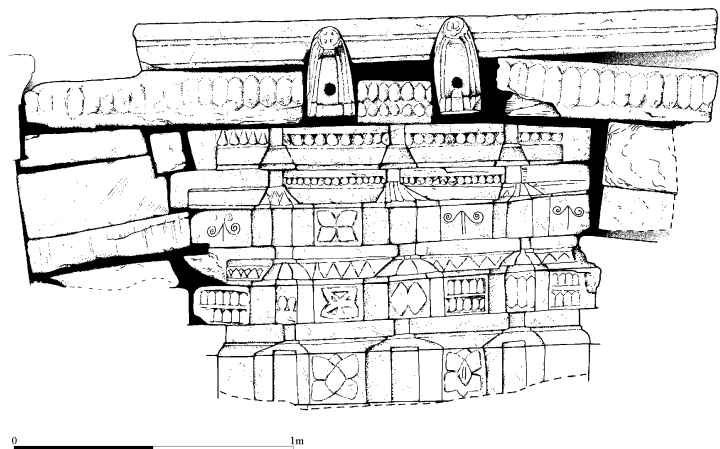
When I signed up to Day of Archaeology I thought I would be out on site, I didn't know where –originally it looked like a big site in London, but that has been delayed, and then it seemed I'd be up the road on a site I evaluated a couple of years ago. As the recent heat wave began I became a bit apprehensive at the idea of digging 3m wide rubble-filled ditches in the baking heat, but that site slipped too...



Temple and *nauli* at *Seeitakura*, Dailekh

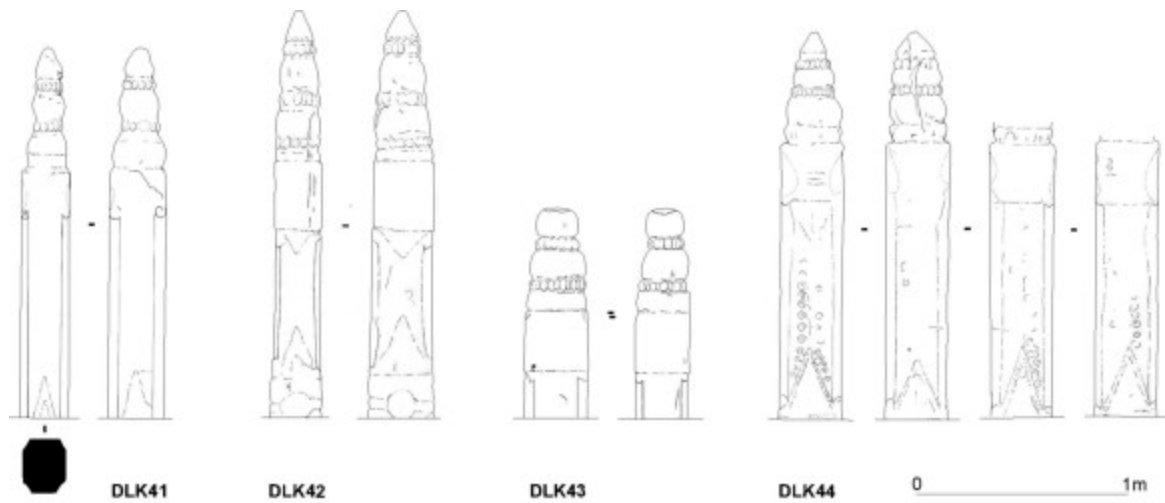
So I am in my office finishing off the report for some recent fieldwork I did in west Nepal for the Central Himalaya Project. The project intended (amongst other aims) to record a sample of medieval stone monuments belonging to the Malla dynasty, evaluate the

suitability of recording techniques including photogrammetry, and try and develop a database for future assessment and analysis. In total we recorded 58 sites, with 32 temples, assorted other sites and monuments, and over 80 architectural fragments. The fieldwork was hard work –up by 6am, lug all the gear to site, work through the day with a short break and back at 7pm for data entry and downloading. But the team was good, the weather was hot, the beer was ice cold and the scenery and locals were fantastic. It didn't exactly feel like a 'jolly' as all my mates called it, but it was quite nice to be sipping single malt looking at the stars and glad there wasn't a CSCS card for thousands of miles.



Nauli or waterpoint

The downside of any expedition is coming home, and with archaeology that doesn't just mean returning to work, but writing up your results. Fieldwork somehow always seems more 'fun' than the grind of office-based Post-Ex, and there has been plenty of checking and cross-referencing of records, data-entry, and form-filling to do. The monument gazetteer seemed endless, the temple terminology impenetrable, and there were seemingly hundreds of drawings to check, 'ink up' in Corel-Draw and work out exactly what each stone fragment might represent.



'Pillar Stones', Dailekh Bazaar

In amongst the grind there are moments when it all comes together, managing to reconstruct a 'lost' temple from fragments of stone, the satisfaction of finding that your thoughts on temple architecture were echoed by published works, the realisation that common motifs and styles were being used across hundreds of miles and on a wide variety of monuments of both Hindu and Buddhist origin.



Temples at *Bhurti Mandir*, Dailekh

The draft report is now complete, its 160 pages, 42,000 words, and nearly 100 illustrations. At times when writing it I wished I hadn't recorded so many monuments, but now, having completed the work I just want to go back and record more!

Source: <http://www.dayofarchaeology.com/after-the-fieldwork-the-hard-work-post-excavation/>