

Cunningham's 'Lost' Treasures

Dr. Sanjay Garg

ABSTRACT

SIR ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM (1814-93) is rightly hailed as the 'Father of Indian Archaeology.' As the first Archaeological Surveyor (1861-65), and later as the first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (1871-85), he laid the foundations of a systematic and methodical study of the material remains of India's past. During his chequered career in India Cunningham amassed an impressive collection of coins and other antiquities. While most of his gold and silver coins were sold to the British Museum during his own lifetime, it is generally believed that much of his other collection comprising 'coins, seals, stone implements and other objects including smaller objects and relic caskets,' and more importantly the sculptures from Bharhut, 'unfortunately went down to the bottom of the sea as a result of the shipwreck.' [Abu Imam 1966: 232] In the light of some hitherto unnoticed archival material, the lecture will revisit the episode of the loss of SS Indus - the 'steamer' belonging to the P&O Shipping Company, which was wrecked on Sunday, the 8th November 1885, near Trincomalee in Sri Lanka.

Reference: Abu Imam, 1966. Sir Alexander Cunningham and the Beginnings of Indian Archaeology, (Dacca)

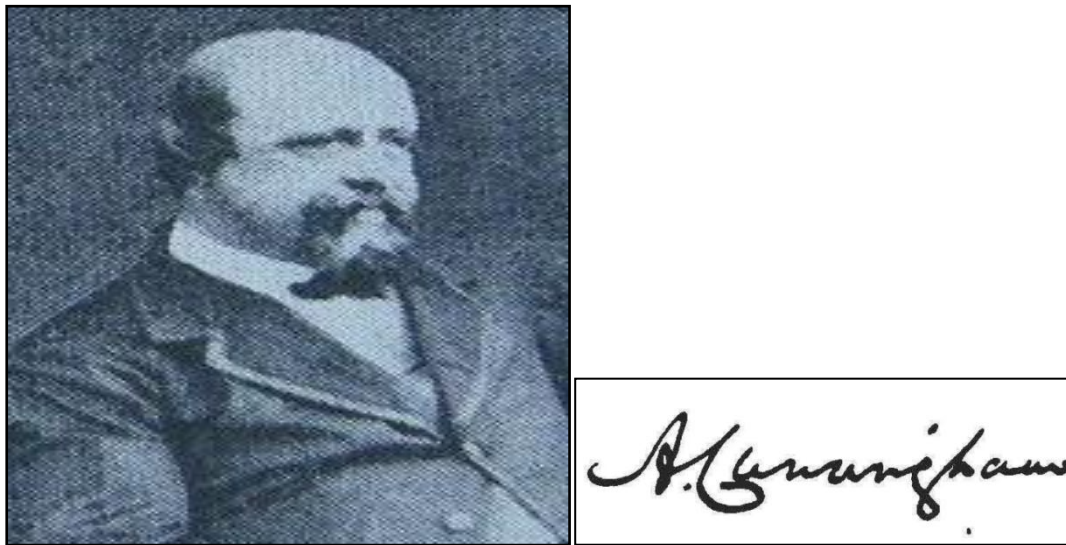
RESEARCH PAPER

SIR ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM (1814-93) is a familiar name in the academia. He is rightly hailed as the 'Father of Indian Archaeology'. As the first Archaeological Surveyor (1861-65), and later as the first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (1871-85), he laid the foundations of a systematic and methodical study of the material remains of India's past.

An important episode of Cunningham's life is the loss of his collection on the ill-fated ship "Indus". The question relating to the fate of his personal collection of antiquities that has engaged the attention of the archaeologists, art historians and common man alike.

II

Alexander Cunningham had an eventful career in India.



[Illus. 1]

He arrived in India on 9 June 1833 at the age of 19, and spent first three years of his military career with the Sappers at Delhi and in other routine duties. However, in July 1836, he was appointed as ADC to Lord Auckland, the new Governor-General of India (1836-42) on which post he served for the next four years (till January 1840). This appointment gave him an opportunity to be based in Calcutta where he came in contact with one of the greatest geniuses of his age – James Prinsep.

Prinsep soon became very fond of this young military officer, and their interaction had a deep impact in shaping the future archaeologist, epigraphist and numismatist, that Cunningham was to become. About his association with Prinsep, Cunningham writes:

During a great part of the years 1836 and 1837, the most active period of his [James Prinsep's] career, I was in almost daily intercourse with him. With our mutual tastes and pursuits this soon ripened into the most intimate friendship. I thus had the privilege of sharing in all his discoveries during their progress.
[Cunningham 1871: xlii]

After Prinsep left the shores of Calcutta in October, 1838, never to return, very soon Cunningham too left Calcutta.

In September 1839, he visited Kashmir, and amassed a huge collection of over 1,000 copper coins of the rulers of Kashmir. [Cunningham 1843: 1]. Shortly after his return from Kashmir

in December 1839, Cunningham got married to Alicia Maria Whish (b. 1820) on 30 March 1840, and then proceeded to take up his new appointment as the Executive Engineer to the King of Oudh.

He remained in this position for the next two years (till 1842) and was responsible for laying out the new road from Lucknow to Kanpur. During this period, in December 1841, his first child, a boy, was born at Lucknow, who unfortunately died within a year [Showell 2009: Appendix – Cunningham Family Tree].

In 1842 Cunningham's second son, Allan was born at Delhi [Showell 2009: Appendix – Cunningham Family Tree]. Soon thereafter he was detailed for his first active military service - to suppress a rebellion in Bundelkhand. He was next appointed to the new military station of Nowgong, in Central India. During this tenure, in December 1843, he fought the battle of Punnar against the rebellious troops of Gwalior.

During the next two years (1844 and 1845) Cunningham was posted as the Executive Engineer at Gwalior, where his third son, Francis Hope (1845) was born, but he too died after 14 days.

His professional assignments from 1846 till 1854 included: occupation of the hill tracts of Kangra and Kullu, and demarcation of the frontier between Ladakh and Tibet; and settlement of a boundary dispute between Bikaner and Bahawalpur. On both these assignments Cunningham published detailed reports in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* [Cunningham 1848b, 1848c and 1848d]. He also took an active part in the Second Anglo-Sikh war (1848-49).

It was during the same period (c. 1848) that Cunningham articulated his plans for institutionalising archaeological investigations in India [Cunningham 1848g]. This was also the time when Cunningham was an active member of the Archaeological Society of Delhi which was established in 1847 by Thomas Metcalfe (1795-1853), British Resident at the Mughal Court, 'to investigate ancient remains in and around Delhi and also communicate any other information especially statistical researches, likely to increase to general stock of knowledge of the country' (Metcalfe 1849-50: 1). About Cunningham's association with this Society, Upinder Singh writes:

Cunningham's connections with the Delhi Archaeological Society may help explain the fact that, when he started his career as archaeological surveyor in 1861, a survey of Delhi's ruins was one of his priorities. (Singh 2004: 27).

Meanwhile, on 7 June 1849, Cunningham was promoted as Brevet Major and between 1850 and 1851 he served as the Executive Engineer of Gwalior State. He was granted the rank of Regimental Captain on 15 January 1851 and in the same month he explored (with Lieut. Maisey) many ancient places in the Bhilsa district [Cunningham 1852]. Meanwhile, in 1852, his youngest son, Alexander Frederick Douglas was born at Gwalior [Showell 2009: Appendix – Cunningham Family Tree].

In 1853 Cunningham was transferred to Multan, where he designed and built a memorial for his friend P.A. Vans Agnew.

On 28 November 1854 he was promoted as Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel. He was then appointed to a higher post – that of Chief Engineer in Burma – which was then freshly annexed and where he served for the next two years. In November 1858, he was appointed Chief Engineer in the North-Western Provinces. At the age of 47, he retired from the army with the rank of Major-General on 30 June 1861, after a continuous service of twenty-eight years.

Next year, vide a Minute dated 22nd January 1862, by Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India (1858-62), Cunningham was appointed as the Archaeological Surveyor with retrospective effect from 31 December 1861, on a salary of ‘Rs. 450 a month, with Rs. 250 when in the field to defray the cost of making surveys and measurements, and of other mechanical assistance.’ [Cunningham 1871: i-iii]. Between 1862 and 1865, Cunningham extensively toured eastern and northern India and produced four reports that were subsequently published in two volumes [Cunningham 1871].

However, in the same year, ‘in a cold fit of parsimony’, Sir John Lawrence, the new Governor-General (1864-69) abolished his department, as a result of which Cunningham left India for England in February 1866. Here he joined as the Director of the Delhi and London Bank in London and continued to hold this post until the beginning of his second inning in India.

On 19 August 1870, Alicia Maria, Cunningham’s wife for 30 years died in London [Showell 2009: Appendix – Cunningham Family Tree].

In the same year, Lord Mayo, the Governor-General of India (1869-72) re-established the Archaeological Survey, and called Cunningham back to India. Cunningham ‘had then almost completed his fifty-seventh year — an age when most men are obliged to leave active service in India’ [Anon. 1894: 174]. But Cunningham saw in this offer, an opportunity to resume

‘those interesting labours which had already occupied so many years of his life.’ [Anon. 1894: 174].

Cunningham sailed for India in December 1870, and reached Bombay in Feb 1871. He assumed his duties, first as the ‘Central Agent for the Archaeological Survey’ – a post that was later re-designated as Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India - retrospectively from 1 January 1871. Though the appointment was initially only for five years, he energetically carried out the duties of his office for the next fifteen years. During this period (1871-85), twenty-four annual reports were published; of which thirteen embody the results of Cunningham’s own personal discoveries, while the remainder were written by his assistants – J.D. Beglar and A.C.L. Carlleyll – under his supervision.

In addition, Cunningham also started an impressive epigraphical series, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*. The first volume of this series, which appeared in 1877, embodied all the inscriptions of Asoka and contained ‘thirty plates... apparently drawn very neatly with his [Cunningham’s] own hand... taken from eye copies [of the inscriptions].’ [Anon. 1894: 175]. In the Preface to this volume, Cunningham had laid down the plan for the next two volumes of this series, viz.:

Vol. II – Inscriptions of the Indo-Scythians, and of the Satraps of Saurashtra

" III – Inscriptions of the Guptas, and of other contemporary dynasties of N.
India [Cunningham 1877: i].

Before he retired, Cunningham got most of the plates for the second volume printed [Anon. 1894: 175]. This volume was, however, not printed until 1929.

Finally, after putting in fifteen years of service as Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Cunningham, who was already 71, and had earlier suffered a fall from the back of an elephant, decided to call it a day. Thus, having served India in various capacities for almost half-a-century, Cunningham retired on 30 September 1885.

III

The Indus Mystery

Soon thereafter, he despatched his belongings to Calcutta, from where these were to be shipped to England on board “SS Indus” – a ship of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O in short), which arrived in Calcutta on 15 October 1885 and left its shores on 2 November



[Illus. 2]

This ship never reached its destination and was wrecked on 8 November 1885, off Mullaithivu near Trincomalee, on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka.

We do not know for sure what all did Cunningham's cargo that was onboard this ill-fated ship contain, though various guesses have been made over a period of time.

Abu Imam, in the Preface of his biographical work on Alexander Cunningham, writes:

In the task of piecing the story of Cunningham's life, for large areas of it, I had to depend almost exclusively on his own published writings. All his private papers along with his extensive collection of coins, except for the more valuable ones, were unfortunately lost in shipwreck. [Abu Imam 1966: vi]

Abu Imam mentions about this shipwreck once again in the last chapter of his book, where he writes:

Moreover, according to the terms of his first appointment, Cunningham himself had shares in all finds. By this means he amassed a unique and unrivalled collection of coins, seals, stone implements and other objects including smaller objects and relic caskets, much of which unfortunately went down to the bottom of the sea as a result of the shipwreck. [Abu Imam 1966: 232]

Abu Imam does not cite any authority for his assertions but apparently sourced his information from an obituary published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, which records:

During his stay in India, having availed of his special opportunities, he [Cunningham] had formed a very large and valuable collection of sculptures, coins, and other objects of antiquarian interest. With the exception of the more valuable coins, he shipped these, together with books, papers, note-books, photographic negatives, etc., for England, and, most unfortunately, the vessel – the P. and O. steamer ‘Indus’ – in which they were, was wrecked on the Mullaittivu coral reef on the N.E. Coast of Ceylon, and the collection perished: the loss to science we shall never know. [Anon 1894: 175]

Considerable information about the loss of a *SS Indus* belonging to the P&O Shipping Company, can, however, be gathered from the contemporary newspapers – the *Times of Ceylon* and the *Ceylon Observer*. [See Table 1].

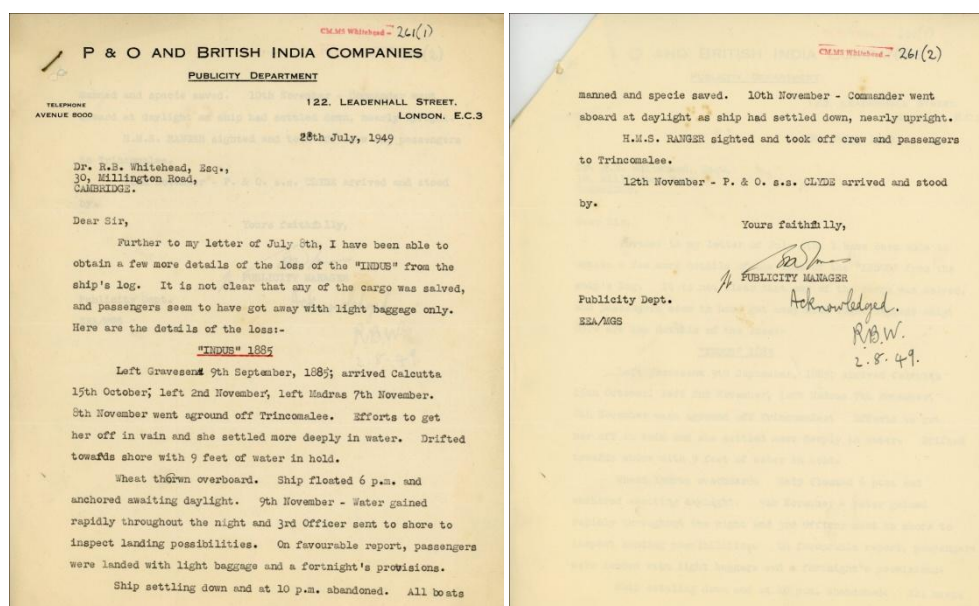
Date/ Day	Newspaper	Report
12 Nov. 1885 (Thursday)	<i>Times of Ceylon</i> (Colombo)	The Wreck of the P&O SS “Indus”: Complete brake up off the vessel
13 Nov. 1885 (Friday)	<i>Times of Ceylon</i> (Colombo)	Wreck of the P&O Steamer “Indus”
14 Nov. 1885 (Saturday)	<i>Ceylon Observer</i> (Colombo)	The Loss of the S.S. Indus (Quoted in <i>The Daily News</i> (Perth), 29 December 1885)
15 Nov. 1885: (Sunday)	<i>Times of Ceylon</i> (Colombo)	The Wreck of the P&O SS “Indus”: Narrative of one of the Passengers
17 Nov. 1885 (Tuesday)	<i>Times of Ceylon</i> (Colombo)	The Wreck of the P. & O. Steamer “Indus”
1 Dec. 1885 (Tuesday)	<i>Times of Ceylon</i> (Colombo)	The Wreck of the “Indus” at Moletivoe: A Passenger’s Narrative (<i>Madras Mail</i>)
Table 1: Newspaper reports about the wreck of S.S. Indus.		

The liner was wrecked on Sunday, the 8th November 1885, on Mullaithivu Shaol, near Trincomalee.

The 'Lost' Treasure

Ever since the wrecking of "Indus" there was some sort of mystery surrounding the fate of Cunningham's baggage. R.B. Whitehead, a member of the Indian Civil Service, who is better known as a numismatist, made some enquires in 1949 and received the following reply from the P&O Company:

It is not clear that any of the cargo was salvaged, and passengers seem to have got away with light baggage only.



[Illus. 3]

An interesting piece of evidence about Cunningham's collection on this ship comes from the pen of the Charles Godakumbura, the Archaeological Commissioner of Ceylon. In the *Administration Report of the Archaeological Commissioner for the Financial year 1962-63*, while reporting the work carried out by his Department in Underwater Archaeology, he writes:

The possibility of doing more undersea archaeology in Ceylon in the near future takes our mind to the invaluable collection of works of art from the Stupa of Bharhut (2nd century BC) lost of 1885 in the wreck of the P & O liner Indus that ship aground on a shoal known as Mulaitivu 50 miles North of Trincomalee. It is known that some salvage operations were attempted at the time, with what results, we do not know. We shall therefore be thankful if anyone with information on this matter would pass on the same to Mr. Arthur C. Clarke or to us.

Sir Arthur C. Clarke, famous science fiction writer, who was also an acclaimed diver, wrote in the same year:

There was no loss of life, but none of the cargo could be saved—and among that cargo was a collection of the finest works of art from the stupa of Bharut (2nd century B.C.). These had been specially selected by the Director of Indian Archaeology, General Cunningham, and today they would be priceless. However, we know that salvage operations were conducted on the wreck at the time and it is possible that these statues were recovered. Until this is cleared up, it is obviously not worth making any plans for investigating the INDUS. [Clarke 1964: 21].

The reference to Bharhut sculptures made by Godakumbura, and Sir Arthur, is indeed interesting. It is for the first time that we hear about the Bharhut sculptures as part of the cargo of *SS Indus*.

Alexander Cunningham visited Bharhut, which lies in the modern Satna district in Madhya Pradesh, in November 1873 and excavated the site in 1874. [Cunningham 1879a: v-vi].

As part of his deal with the Government, during his first appointment as Archaeological Surveyor (1861-65), Cunningham was entitled to keep a part of antiquities discovered by him [Cunningham 1871: iii]. Obviously, during this tenure he would rightfully have selected and claimed the best of pieces for himself. However, in his second appointment as the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (1871-85), he was a regular employee of the Government and was not supposed to retain any of the antiquities discovered by him. Today, no antiquity survives in Bharhut. By Cunningham's own admission, in 1874 he had acquired and despatched 'these valuable sculptures to Calcutta', where they were deposited in the Indian Museum'. When Cunningham visited Bharhut again in 1876, he found that of the antiquities that 'were left behind *every stone that was removable has since been "carted away" by the people* for building purposes.' [Cunningham 1879a: vii].

We do not know about the source of the statement made by Arthur C. Clarke when he says that 'among that cargo [on board *SS Indus*] was a collection of the finest works of art from the stupa of Bharut (2nd century B.C.)'. But somehow this statement caught the fancy of all subsequent explorers, adventurers, archaeologists and historians.

Re-discovering *Indus*

In 2013, a team led by S.M. Nandadasa, Research Officer of the Maritime Archaeology Unit of the Central Cultural Fund (CCF), Sri Lanka, conducted a survey of the area and claimed to have zeroed on the exact wreck site of *SS Indus*. (Nandadasa 2014). Later, in 2014, at the 2nd Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage, Honolulu, Hawaii (12-16 May 2014), Nandadasa presented a paper with misleading title, ‘The Discovery of *SS Indus* (1885) with Cargo of the 3rd Century BC Bharhut Sculptures in Sri Lankan Waters’.

The claim by Sri Lankan archaeologist was highlighted by Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn*. A report filed by Sadia Qasim Shah, and published on 8 July 2014, said:

The latest Sri Lankan maritime exploration and an ongoing search for rare sculptures collected by Sir Alexander Cunningham that got lost in a shipwreck in 1885 have revived the hopes about recovery of some of the antiquities from Jamal Garhi, an archaeological site of Gandhara.

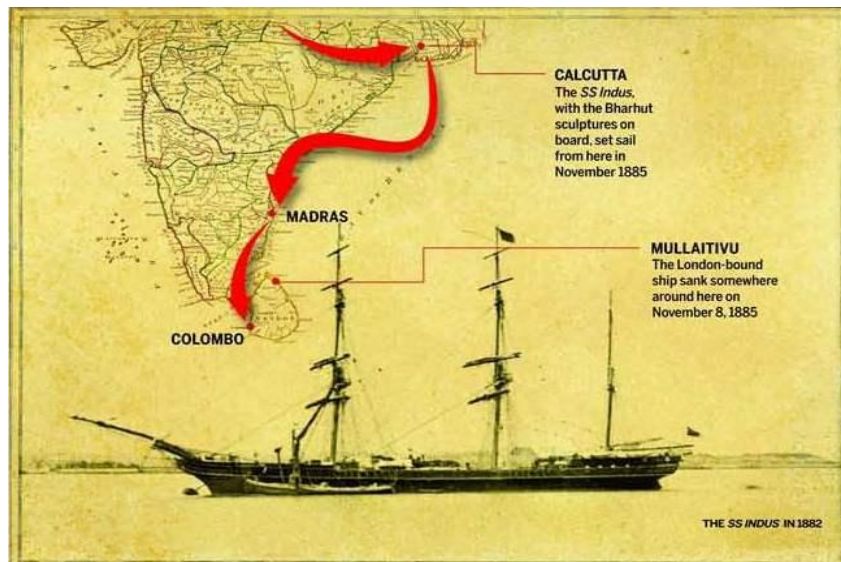
However, it is unfortunate that unlike Sri Lanka and India, Pakistan has not shown any interest in taking part in this search for the lost archaeological treasure so far. (Shah 2014)

Quoting SM Nandadasa, the report further stated:

SS Indus ran aground in 1885 somewhere in the north east coast of Sri Lanka when she was sailing from Calcutta or Kolkata to London via Colombo. At the time she possessed valuable cargo, a fine collection of sculptures from Bharhut, a third century BC Buddhist monastery in India.

They were masterpieces of a collection of Sir Alexander Cunningham, the first Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India and they were being transported for exhibition in the London Museum. For the last one century, Indian and Sri Lankan archaeologists and historians were interested in finding this shipwreck, yet no one knew the exact location of the wreck. (Shah 2014)

Closer home, a report published in the *India Today* in December 2014 echoed Nandadasa’s claim in its subtitle, which read, ‘Rare sculptures may be retrieved with breakthrough in tracing ship that sank in 1885’ (Bishnoi 2014).



[Illus. 4]

The report also claimed that the ASI was mulling to conclude an agreement with Sri Lanka to jointly retrieve these sculptures. Quoting Dr. B.R. Mani, the then Additional Director General of the ASI, the report said:

Sri Lankan authorities wrote to us about having located the SS Indus. We are hopeful that the sculptures may finally be recovered. A MoU is being prepared for a joint underwater excavation and once the Ministry of External Affairs clears it, we hope to go ahead. (Bishnoi, 2014).

My latest enquires at the ASI have revealed that no MoU has been signed as yet. With the conclusive evidence provided in this paper, I think there would not be any need for the one either.

Sources to study Cunningham

The archival sources for studying the personal life of Cunningham are indeed scanty. As Cunningham's sole biographer, Abu Imam laments:

In the task of piecing the story of Cunningham's life, for large areas of it, I had to depend almost exclusively on his own published writings. [1966: Preface, vii]

Cunningham himself was no less responsible for the scarcity of original sources pertaining to his life. After his return to England in December 1885, he himself destroyed a large number of letters received by him. In a letter dated 3 June 1886 he writes:

I have not got set to work on anything. I have had quite enough to occupy me in unpacking and arranging Books & Papers. I have torn up about ten thousand letters!

Source: Cunningham to Gertrude, Cranley Mansion, 96 Gloucester Road, South Kensington, London S.W.: 3 June 1886, 4pp. (with an envelope addressed to “Mrs Murray Thompson, Simla, India”). Private Collection.

Luckily, many letters that he wrote to his friends, acquaintances and relatives, survive. And it is one such letter that helps us in un-shrouding the mystery of the ‘lost’ treasure on board the ill-fated ‘Indus’.

In a letter dated 13 Aug 1886, addressed to Gertrude Murray Thompson¹, Cunningham gives a vivid description of the salvage of his baggage from the wrecked ship.

I have received 18 boxes from the wreck. Three of them contained empty coin cabinets. Some half dozen contained sculptures and old stores. The sculptures are apparently uninjured, and the ancient stone implements are as good as new. I have also got the Japanese jars. But everything else is utterly gone. All the Books were reduced to pulp round the edges. All the Negatives had given up their films of picture to form a stinking mess. The Photographs in some of the Books were recognizable, but all reduced to a pale yellow. As Shakespeare says, but with a difference, there is nothing

But hath suffered a sea-change,

Into something rich and strange.

For rich read vile.

The boxes were broken open at the Custom-House – also the empty cabinets broken to pieces in the search for treasure.

I have had a very good coloured portraiture made of my dear wife, from the one photograph that I had saved. The portrait is double the size of the photograph – and is a very good one – but the expression is not quite the same as that of the photo.

¹Gertrude Murray Thompson (née Hannah) of Ipswich (d. 1929), along with her elder sister Janet Sarah Everett (ne Hannah), took care of Alexander Cunningham’s grandchildren, first in England and later in India (Roorkee). She was married to Dr. Murray Thompson (1834-95) of the Roorkee Engineering College on 4 February 1875.

The Box, No. 13, containing my wife[?]'s portraits was opened by me yesterday. The coloured miniature is utterly destroyed, the colours turning swollen and slipped. I can see the blue eyes and the red lips – the Daguerrottype I believe had escaped – but the Custom house people broke open the case and slid the grass over it – so that there is a curved slanting mark right across the picture which spoils it. I shall keep it however and see whether it fades or not.

Lac seals and sealing wax have escaped – and a few laden impression of coins have come to hand – one of them being the impression of a coin that has been lost.

I now know the worst. The two cases were destroyed by the salt water – quite eaten to pieces by rust - and the rust has stamed [?] many of the things that have been saved.

Granley Hamilton
95-Blomfield Road
South Kensington S.W.
13th August 1886

My dear Herbert -
I was very glad indeed to get the photographs of your dear wife - and I am indeed much obliged to you for the trouble & kindness kindly taken about it - I feel puzzled about what to do with them about the negatives - I might either send them to some of your friends - or you might bring it home with you - I should like to have 3 or 4 more prints from it - and I should also like to have a photo paper of four little pieces, as all my photos come to the business picture gallery - I have no photo of you and I would like to have one - If you would kindly indicate to do all this for me, I am sitting you by going away to Milan, or anybody else on your account, not sending you a cheque

I have received 18 boxes from the break - 1/2 of them contain empty coin cabinets. I have also got the Japanese part - But every thing else is utterly gone - All the boxes were returned to the post office - all the negatives had given up their plates of pictures to form a stinking mass - The photographs in some of the boxes were recognizable, but all reduced to a pale yellow - In the open day, but with redness, there is nothing but a black & buffed sea-change into something rich and strange for the next life
The boxes were all broken open at the Custom House - also the empty cabinets & contents piled in the back of the store.
I should have got your colour portrait & had my dear wife, from the photographs

As to I had said. The portrait is double the size of the photograph - and is every good one - but the expression is not quite the same as that of the photo -
The Box, No. 13, containing my wife's portraits was opened by me yesterday. The coloured miniature is utterly destroyed, the colours turning swollen and slipped. I can see the blue eyes and the red lips - The Daguerrottype I believe had escaped - but the Custom house people broke open the case and slid the grass over it - so that there is a curved slanting mark right across the picture which spoils it - I shall keep it however and see whether it fades or not -
The lac seals and sealing wax have escaped - and a few laden impressions of coins have come to hand - one of them being the impression of a coin that has been lost -
I now know the worst - The two cases were destroyed by the salt water - quite eaten to pieces by rust - and the rust has stamed many of the things that have been saved -
I have seen a good number of people who sent words to you - I hope the picture will be saved

Yesterday I paid a long visit to your old hills - what a return from a trip to the country very thin and bleak - there is no spirit however - his digestion is not good, and he is limited to a little diet - no bread, no anything - only milk -
Your uncle and aunt have great their New house, No 82 Addison Road, as you will see by the enclosed card.
Alan is off to Scotland with a party of young engineers - Fred & Ada are in Scotland. They have been with the baronet at Polony and arrived on their way to look forward, and then flew to Milan - being some 4000 - further establishment with the boy.
Alan is to be back on the 20th - and Arthur on the 21st - I expect to see him and Annie on the 20th - Fred will not return until next month.
Lilly tells me that it was one of the best you - I hope dear Herbert - and with love to your little and Miss to the children - I am always very affectionately yours
Alfred Cunningham

[Illus. 5]

We do not know what ‘sculptures and old stores’ did the ‘half dozen’ boxes salvaged from the ship contain? Whether these were indeed from Bharhut? We do not know either. But one thing is certain. After the discovery of this letter, it would be absolutely futile to search for Cunningham’s ‘lost’ treasure in the Sri Lankan waters.

Last Days

Before I conclude, I would like to add a few words about Cunningham’s last days in England.

In recognition of his sterling service, Cunningham was already awarded the Companion of the Order of the Star of India (CSI) in May 1871 and Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire (CIE) in January 1878.

After his retirement from the Archaeological Survey of India in September 1885, Cunningham was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire (KCIE) in March 1887. Next year, he sold ‘a large part of’ his collection of Bactrian and other Indian coins to the British Museum. It would be worth the effort to rummage through the accession register of the British Museum if any sculptures were also sold by Cunningham after he received the salvaged boxes from the wreck.

Death and Burial

Cunningham outlived all his siblings: elder brother Joseph Davey (1812-51) and younger brothers, Peter (1816-69) and Francis (1820-72), and sister Mary (1824-67). [He also had another two other siblings – brother, John (1824-28) and a sister Mary (1818-20), both of whom died in their infancy] [Showell 2009: Appendix – Cunningham Family Tree].

Cunningham died at the age of 79, on 28 November 1893 at his residence in Cranley Mansions, South Kensington, after a lingering illness and was buried in the family vault in Kensal Green cemetery, united with his wife Alicia Maria, who had predeceased him (on 18 May 1870) and father, Allan Cunningham.



[Illus. 6]



In Memory of
Sir Alexander Cunningham, KCIE
Major Gen. R.E. (Bengal)
2nd son of Allan Cunningham
Born 23 Jan. 1814. Died 28 Nov. 1893
One of the Pioneers of the Study of the
Archaeology of India.
Where he served from 1833 to 1885
(Punniar, Chelianwala, Gujarat)
Also of his wife
Alicia Maria Cunningham
Daughter of Martin Whish, R.E. I.C.S.
Born 15 Sep. 1820. Died 17 Aug. 1870
Also of
Lauretta Frances (Bartrum) Cunningham
Born 31 Oct. 1841. Died 8 Dec. 1900
The beloved wife of
Allan Joseph Champneys Cunningham
Lt Col. R.E. (Bengal)
(Elder son of Sir Alex' Cunningham)
Student of the Theory of Numbers
(Born 20th Cot. 1842. Died 8th Feby. 1928)

[Illus.7]

Cunningham was survived by two sons – Lieut.-Col. Allan Joseph Champneys Cunningham (1842-1928), of the Bengal Engineers and Alexander Frederick Douglas Cunningham (1852-1935), of the Bengal Civil Service. [Two others sons of Alexander Cunningham had died in infancy – Allan Monteath (1841-42) at Lucknow and Francis Hope (1845) at Gwalior].

List (Captions) of Illustrations:

1. Sir Alexander Cunningham (1814-93) (with his signatures). Picture extracted from: Wikimedia Commons. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Cunningham#/media/File:Alexander_Cunningham_of_the_ASI_01.jpg Last accessed 30 Dec 2017], and signatures from Cunningham's personal correspondence in Private Collection.
2. The Ill-fated P&O Liner *S.S. Indus*. Picture courtesy: National Maritime Museum, London. *c. 1882*).
3. Letter dated 28 July 1949: P&O and British India Companies to R.B. Whitehead regarding loss of 'Indus' in 1885. Source: R.B. Whitehead Papers, Fitzwilliam Museum collection, Cambridge, Acc. No.: CM.MS Whitehead 1-313 Box 5: Personal 261, Nos. 1-2.
4. Sketch of the journey of the P&O Liner *S.S. Indus*. Source: *India Today*, 18 December 2014.
5. Cunningham to Gertrude, Cranley Mansion, 96 Gloucester Road, South Kensington, London S.W.: 13 Aug. 1886, 4pp: Page 4 of the letter bears Cunningham's signatures. Private Collection.
6. Alexander Cunningham's tomb at Kensal Green Cemetery, Harrow Road, London. Picture courtesy: Mrs. Nurussaba Garg, New Delhi.
7. Epitaph on Alexander Cunningham's tomb-stone. Picture courtesy: Mrs. Nurussaba Garg, New Delhi.

References:

- Abu Imam, 1963. 'Sir Alexander Cunningham (1814-1893): The First Phase of Indian Archaeology', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Nos. 3-4 (Oct): 194-207.
- , 1966. *Sir Alexander Cunningham and the Beginnings of Indian Archaeology*, (Dacca).
- Allen, Charles, 2003. *The Buddha and the Sahibs: The Men Who Discovered India's Lost Religion*, (London).

- Anon., 1885. 'The Loss of the S.S. INDUS', *The Daily News* (Perth), dated 29 December 1885. [Online edn., <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article76478401>. Last accessed 2 February 2014].
- , 1894. 'Obituary Notices: Major-Gen. Sir Alexander Cunningham', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 26: 166-77.
- Bishnoi, Anubhuti, 2014. 'On a treasure hunt', *India Today*, 18 December 2014. [Online edn., <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/bharhut-sculptures-treasure-hunt-ss-indus-asi/1/407632.html>. Last accessed 8 March 2016].
- Clarke, Arthur C., 1964. 'Ceylon and the Underwater Archaeologist', *Expedition Magazine*, vol. 6.3 (May): 19-21. [Online edn.: <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/ceylon-and-the-underwater-archaeologist/>. Last accessed 31 January 2014].
- Cotton, J.S., 'Cunningham, Sir Alexander (1814–1893)', rev. James Lunt, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, first published 2004, 1293 words. Online edn., <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6916>. Last accessed 29 March 2016].
- Cunningham, Alexander, 1848a. 'Verification of the itinerary of the Chinese pilgrim, Hwan Thsang, through Afghanistan and India, during the first half of the Seventh century of the Christian era', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 17.2: 13-62.
- , 1848b. 'Correspondence of the Commissioners deputed to the Tibetan Frontier, communicated by H.M. Elliot, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 17.1: 89-132.
- , 1848c. 'Journal of a trip through Kulu and Lahul, to the Chu Mureri Lake, in Ladak, during the months of August and September, 1846', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 17.1: 201-30.
- , 1848d. 'Memorandum detailing the Boundary between the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh and British India, as determined by the Commissioners, P.A. Vans Agnew, Esq., and Capt. A. Cunningham', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 17.1: 295-7.
- , 1848e. 'An essay on the Arian Order of Architecture, as exhibited in the Temples of Kashmir', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 17.2: 241-327.

- , 1848f. 'Verification of the itinerary of Hwan Thsang through Ariana and India, with reference to Major Anderson's hypothesis of its modern compilation', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 17.1: 476-88.
- , 1848g. 'Proposed Archaeological Investigation', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 17.1: 535-6.
- Fleet, John F., 1888. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. III: Inscriptions of the early Gupta Kings and their Successors*, (Calcutta).
- Godakumbura, Charles E., 1964. *Administrative Report of the Archaeological Commissioner for the Financial year, 1962-63*, published by the Department of Archaeology, Colombo.
- Hultzsch, E., 1925. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. I*, new edn. (Oxford).
- Karunaratna, Mahinda,
- Karunaratna, Mahinda, W.M. Chandrarathne, Palitha Weerasinghe, Amalka Wijesuriya, Kamal de Soysa, Chamal K. Gamage, Nadeeka Kumari, 'New Maritime Archaeological Research on SS Indus', Presented at the 8th Research Conference organized by The Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka. (27-29 March 2015). Abstracts, p. 33.
- Konow, Sten, 1929. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. II, Pt. I: Kharoshthi inscriptions, with the exception of those of Asoka*, (Calcutta).
- Lüders, H., H.E. Waldschmidt, and M.A. Mehendale, 1969. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum: Vol. II. Pt. II: Bharhut inscriptions*, (Ootacamund).
- Lane Poole, S., 1892. *Catalogue of Indian Coins British Museum: The Moghul Emperors*, (London).
- Metcalf, Thomas, 1849-50. '[Introduction]', *Journal of the Archaeological Society of Delhi*, vol. 1, pp. 1 ff.
- Mitra, Rajendra Lala, A.F.R. Hoernle, and Pramatha N. Bose, 1885. *Centenary Review of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from 1784 to 1883*, (Calcutta).
- Nandadasa, S.M., 2014. 'The discovery of SS Indus (1885) with Cargo of the 3rd century BC Bharhut sculptures in Sri Lankan waters', Presented at the 2nd Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage in Honolulu, Hawaii (12-16 May 2014).

Online edition. <http://www.themua.org/collections/items/show/1647>. Last accessed 13 March 2016.

Narain, A.K. (ed.), 1961. *Complete works of Alexander Cunningham, Vol. I: Inscriptions of Asoka*, (Patna).

Shah, Sadia Qasim, 'In Search of the Lost Antiquities', *Dawn*, 8 July 2014. [Online edn. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1117820>. Last accessed 8 March 2016].

Showell, Fée., 2009. *Another Time!*, (Adellaiide, 2009). [Online edn. <http://www.feeshowell.com/Fee%20Autobiography%20PDF's.htm>. Last accessed 11 February 2014].

Singh, Upinder, 2004. *The Discovery of Ancient India: Early Archaeologists and the Beginnings of Archaeology*, (New Delhi).

Throckmorton, Peter, 1964, 'The Great Basses Wreck', *Expedition Magazine*, col. 6.3 (May): 21-31. [Online edn.: <http://www.penn.museum/documents/publications/expedition/PDFs/6-3/TheGreat.pdf>. Last accessed 3 January 2014].

