

HISTORY OF INDIAN ART 1

BAFA (P) - 101



Directorate of Distance Education

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PRE - HISTORIC AGE

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STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Learning Objective
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Paleolithic art in different parts of India
- 1.4 Major Pre-Historic Rock Paintings sites in India
- 1.5 Features of Other Historic Periods
- 1.6 Let Sum up
- 1.7 Check your Progress

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After Reading this unit , you will be able to

- Describe about the prehistoric age arts and painting.
- Describe the developments of pre historic rock art.
- Describe about the techniques used in various pre historic rock cave paintings.
- Illustrate about the cave painting of Bhimbetaka, lakhudiyar and kollagela.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The prehistoric period in the early development of human beings is commonly known as the Old Stone Age or the Palaeolithic Age. Prehistoric paintings have been found in many parts of the world. Subjects of their drawings were human figures, human activities, geometric designs and symbols. In India the earliest paintings have been reported from the Upper Palaeolithic times.

The first discovery of rock paintings was made in India in 1867–68 by an archaeologist, Archibald Carlyle and John Cocksure in Aimer ranges, Madhya Pradesh, found the rock engravings and cave paintings., twelve years before the discovery of Altamira in Spain. Remnants of rock paintings have been found on the walls of the caves situated in several districts of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh,

Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar and in Kumaon hills of Uttarakhand.

The popular image of Prehistoric or Stone Age man still continues to a great extent to be "nasty, brutish and short" as the French thinker, Rousseau, imagined it two centuries ago. This may be true of the earlier stages of man's biological and cultural evolution. But, as early as 50,000 years ago, men, who were indistinguishable from us in physical appearance, brain size and intelligence, had colonised most of the Old World. In the last hundred years Prehistoric Art- mostly paintings and engravings and also sculpture- has been discovered in many areas of the Old as well as New World.

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1.3 PALEOLITHIC ART IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF INDIA

1. Tamil Nadu

In Tamil Nadu, ancient Paleolithic cave paintings are found in Padiyendhal, Alampadi, Kombaikadu, Kilvalai, Settavarai and Nehanurpatti. The paintings have not been dated, but they could be around 30,000 to 10,000 years old, as they use similar art form of Bhimbetka rock shelters in Bhopal.

In the Nilagiri Hills, they are also found in Kumittipathi, Mavadaippu and Karikkiyur. In Theni District they are found in the Andipatti Hills.

2. Karnataka

Cave paintings are found in Hiregudda which is near Badami.

3. Odisha

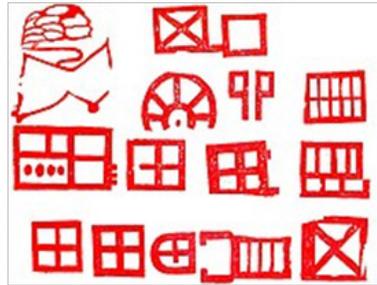
Odisha has the richest repository of rock art in Eastern India. The state has recorded more than a hundred rock shelters with rock paintings and engravings. Numerous geometric symbols, dots and lines are found along with animals, and human paintings and engravings dating from late Pleistocene onwards. Many of the geometric shape and patterns found in rock art of Odisha are enigmatic in nature. Painted figures have been found executed in monochrome, red and white or sometimes in combination with shades of yellow color.

4. Gudahandi

The rock shelter of Gudahandi is located on the summit of the hillock and situated about 20 km from Block headquarters Koksara in Kalahandi district. The rock art shelter exhibits both monochrome and bi-chrome paintings of early historic period. It is the only reported rock art site of Kalahandi district. The rock art panel preserves the specimen of paintings which include a stylized human figure in red, deer and a variety of geometric patterns of squares and rectangles either empty or

in filled with straight and diagonal lines or with dots on the borders grid patterns, wheels with spokes, apsidal patterns, oval shapes with dots executed either in monochrome of red or in polychrome of red, blue and black.

Pre-historic age



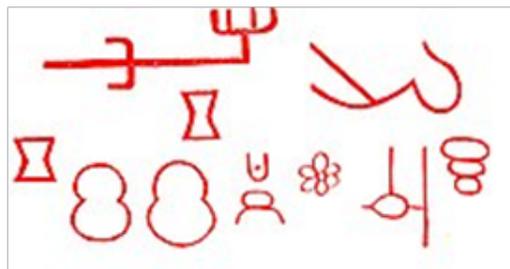
Gudahandi Rock Art of Odisha

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5. Yogimatha

The rock painting of the Yogimatha of Nuapada District of Odisha which was older script of the India. The script 'Ga', and 'o' (tha) was discovered from Yogimatha rock painting, this painting saw a person with four animals and write some alphabet. That painting created a word Like "Gaitha" (very popular Odia word at present 'Gotha' or 'group' in English).. This alphabet has similarity to Dhauli and Jaugada Inscription's script of Ashok. It was the ancient form of Indian script and it is the first glimpse of possible origin of the Odia language and script.

The range of rock art available in India is both wide and varied in terms of style and theme. Its chronology can be traced from the Upper Paleolithic era to historic times and little glimpses of today's tribal communities can be found. In India, remains of rock paintings were found on the walls of caves located in several districts such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Bihar, and Karnataka. Central India is the richest region of rock art, with the highest concentration situated in Kaimur hills, Satpura, and Vindhyas. These hills are formed of sandstone, with the rock shelters situated in the dense forest area. These were occupied in the Stone Age and in the later periods as they were ecologically ideal. Several paintings of Central India resemble the style of Neolithic paintings of Rhodesia, Eastern Spain, South Africa, and Australia. The paintings depict hunting, battles, dancing scenes, and different human and animal figures.



Yogimath Rock Art of Odisha

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In 1867-68 CE, English archaeologist Archibald Carlleyle discovered prehistoric rock paintings in India, twelve years before the recognition of Altamira in Spain. Unfortunately, his discoveries were not published. Carlleyle found paintings on the roof and walls of rock shelters in Sohaghat, in the Mirzapur District.

Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar, an eminent archaeologist and Pitamaha or father of Indian rock art, discovered Bhimbetka (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) in 1957 CE. This discovery changed the destiny of rock art in Madhya Pradesh. Later on, extensive efforts to explore the sites in Raisen, Kharwai, Bhopal, Narwar, Chiklod, Amargarh, Bhimbetka, Adamgarh, Nagori-Sanchi, Kathodia, Firangi, Bori, and other Central Indian regions have brought vivid paintings to light. In between Tamia and Pachmarhi, a new group of painted caves has been discovered, which holds lucid similarities to those found in other rock caves of Madhya Pradesh.

1.4 MAJOR PRE-HISTORIC ROCK PAINTINGS SITES IN INDIA

The prehistoric period in the early development of human beings is commonly known as the Old Stone Age or the Palaeolithic Age.

Prehistoric paintings have been found in many parts of the world. Subjects of their drawings were human figures, human activities, geometric designs and symbols. In India the earliest paintings have been reported from the Upper Palaeolithic times.

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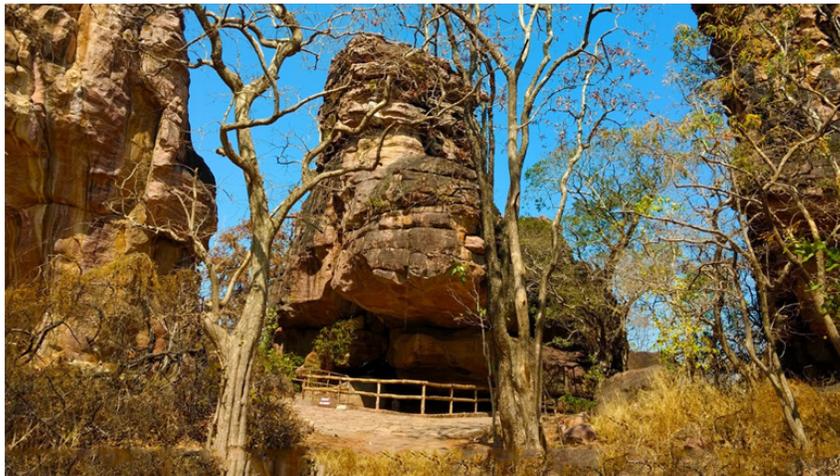
1.4.1. Madhya Pradesh - Bhimbetka

The Bhimbetka rock shelters are an archaeological site in central India that spans the prehistoric Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods, as well as the historic period. It exhibits the earliest traces of human life in India and evidence of Stone Age starting at the site in Acheulian times.

It is located in the Raisen District in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh about 45 kilometres (28 mi) south-east of Bhopal. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that consists of seven hills and over 750 rock shelters distributed over 10 km (6.2 mi). At least some of the shelters were inhabited more than 100,000 years

ago. The rock shelters and caves provide a "rare glimpse" into human settlement and cultural evolution from hunter gatherers, to agriculture, and expressions of prehistoric spirituality.

Pre-historic age



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A. Location

The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka is 45 kilometres south-east of Bhopal and 9 km from Obedullaganj city in the Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh at the southern edge of the Vindhya hills. South of these rock shelters are successive ranges of the Satpura hills. It is inside the Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary, embedded in sandstone rocks, in the foothills of the Vindhya Range. The site consists of seven hills : Vinayaka, Bhonrawali, Bhimbetka, Lakha Juar (east and west), Jhondra and Muni Babaki Pahari.

B. History

The first archaeologist to visit a few caves at the site and discover its prehistoric significance was V. S. Wakankar, who saw these rock formations and thought these were similar to those he had seen in Spain and France. He visited the area with

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a team of archaeologists and reported several prehistoric rock shelters in 1957. It was only in the 1970s that the scale and true significance of the Bhimbetka rock shelters was discovered and reported. Since then, more than 750 rock shelters have been identified. The Bhimbetka group contains 243 of these, while the Lakha Juar group nearby has 178 shelters.

According to Archaeological Survey of India, the evidence suggests that there has been a continuous human settlement here from the Stone Age through the late Acheulian to the late Mesolithic until the 2nd century BCE in these caves. This is based on excavations at the site, the discovered artifacts and wares, pigments in deposits, as well as the rock paintings. The site contains the world's oldest stone walls and floors.

C. Rock art and paintings of different periods

The rock shelters and caves of Bhimbetka have a large number of paintings. The oldest paintings are found to be 10,000 years old, but some of the geometric figures date to as recently as the medieval period. The colours used are vegetable colours which have endured through time because the drawings were generally made deep inside a niche or on inner walls. The drawings and paintings can be classified under seven different periods.

- **Period I** – (Upper Paleolithic): These are linear representations, in green and dark red, of huge figures of animals such as bison, tigers and rhinoceroses.



- **Period II** – (Mesolithic): Comparatively small in size the stylised figures in this group show linear decorations on the body. In addition to animals there are human figures and hunting scenes, giving a clear picture of the weapons they used: barbed spears, pointed sticks, bows and arrows.[14][15][29] Some scenes are interpreted as depicting tribal war between three tribes symbolised by their animal totems.[1][30] The depiction of communal dances, birds, musical instruments, mothers and children, pregnant women, men carrying dead animals, drinking and burials appear in rhythmic movement.[14][15][29]

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- **Period III** – (Chalcolithic) Similar to the paintings of the Mesolithic, these drawings reveal that during this period the cave dwellers of this area were in contact with the agricultural communities of the Malwa plains, exchanging goods with them.
- **Period IV & V** – (Early historic): The figures of this group have a schematic and decorative style and are painted mainly in red, white and yellow. The association is of riders, depiction of religious symbols, tunic-like dresses and the existence of scripts of different periods. The religious beliefs are represented by figures of yakshas, tree gods and magical sky chariots.[citation needed]
- **Period VI & VII** – (Medieval): These paintings are geometric linear and more schematic, but they show degeneration and crudeness in their artistic style. The colors used by the cave dwellers were prepared by combining black manganese oxides, red hematite and charcoal.

One rock, popularly referred to as "Zoo Rock", depicts elephants, barasingha (swamp deer), bison and deer. Paintings on another rock show a peacock, a snake, a deer and the sun. On another rock, two elephants with tusks are painted. Hunting scenes with hunters carrying bows, arrows, swords, and shields also find their place in the community of these pre-historic paintings. In one of the caves, a bison is shown in pursuit of a hunter while his two companions appear to stand helplessly nearby; in another, some horsemen are seen, along with archers. In one painting, a large wild boar is seen.[citation needed]

The paintings are classified largely in two groups, one as depiction of hunters and food gatherers, while other one as fighters, riding on horses and elephant carrying metal weapons. the first group of paintings dates to prehistoric times while second one dates to historic times. Most of the paintings from historic period depicts battles between the rulers carrying swords, spears, bows and arrows.



In one of the desolate rock shelters, the painting of a man holding a trident-like staff and dancing has been named "Nataraj" by archaeologist V. S. Wakankar. It is estimated that paintings in at least 100 rock shelters might have been eroded away.

D. Some Rock Paintings of Bhimbetka

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We get to know how the evolution moved through the different stone ages by seeing the paintings on the walls. These cave paintings are made with natural colors that has survived through time and weather. The colors were obtained from lime stones, iron ore, burnt bones, blood, vegetable juices mixed with animal fat or spit that helped for the color to retain on the rocks. Over years subsequent generations also drew over the figurines again and again that layers of paintings made it thick. The paintings were made using fingers, feathers, hairs, brushes made of horse hair depending upon the era they were from. And guess what the paintings from Paleolithic are cave paintings where as the ones from Mesolithic are rock paintings. Wondering what the difference is? Well mesolithic, the world is warmer, the paintings dry quicker and so done on walls of the rock. Where as paleolithic in order to protect the painting and more importantly since they stayed only inside caves the paintings are seen in caves. The other way to identify the paintings from the mesolithic era is that the humans are more represented in the form of stick figures.

The first painting we see. A man on top of what looks like an elephant. The tool in his hand is crude and not so well defined.



Man on elephants

Rough painting of animals from Paleolithic era – Cattle, deer, peacock (the squares you see on right top)



From the Paleolithic age

Cattle Breeding. Below is a row of not so clear set of paintings that can be noticed in red color. This shows super imposing of paintings from different eras.

Pre-historic age



Cattle Breeding

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A very good representation of the Mesolithic era. The figurines are like stick figures. It is a war or battle or fight scene. It also shows community is more defined, we can see a chief sitting on top of decorated horse.



War scene from Mesolithic

This one could be from Medieval era. Colors like yellow and green are used. Also check how the curves of the horse are beautifully drawn. It is more well defined.



Different Colors

Another area of the cave where we can see paintings from two different era.

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From two eras

The old stone age, the painting has kind of worn out. The weapon on the hand of the man on horse is made of stone.



From the paleolithic era

Hunting scene where men are trying to bringing down a Boar.

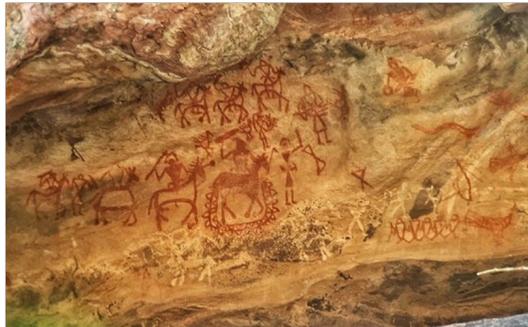


Bringing down a Boar

Community living – on top is a guy playing an instrument. In the middle are group of dancers and in the down again we can see people playing instrument.

NOTES**Community living**

The caves are pretty isolated and it looked like having your own vehicle is the only choice of reaching the place. The content of this blog is based on the information boards placed in the caves and from the guide whom we had hired. If there are more stories to add behind these paintings or if there are any corrections, do add them in the comment section.

**1.4.2. Lakhudiyar Caves-Uttarakhand**

The Lakhudiyar Caves are located in the Barechhina village at the banks of the Suyal River in the Almora district of Uttarakhand. On the walls of the caves are paintings depicting animals, humans and also tectiforms, created with fingers in black, red and white. The caves have become a historically significant site. Lakhudiyar is a rock shelter which were the rescue spot of early man to save them from harsh climate. Lakhudiyar means 'one lakh caves'. These walls depict the life and the surroundings of the early man.

Paintings

The paintings are mostly drawings of people, animals and weapons used by early man. On one side of the wall is the painting of people who have been shown performing a mass dance in a group of 34 people on one side and 28 people on the other. These picture also depicted the clothes and domesticated animals, and are believed to represent life in the prehistoric village. Two painted rock shelters reveal paintings of animals and humans drawn with finger in black, red and white.

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These images have now become a tourist attraction. It is also the site for archaeological rock engraving being studied by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi.

Lakhudiyar has been acknowledged as the richest cave shelter preserving the scenes and activities of the primitive inhabitants of the region, which according to archaeologists belong to the Old Stone Age to the Neo Stone Age.

The prehistoric paintings here can be divided into three categories: man, animal and geometric patterns in white, black and red ochre.



The motifs represented are humans, animals and some other signatures. Human figures are represented in stick-like, stylized as well as in-like forms. Most of the human figures are shown as rows of dancers.

A long-snouted animal, a fox and a multiple legged lizard are the main animal motifs.

NOTES



Wavy lines, rectangle-filled geometric designs, and groups of dots can also be seen here.



One of the interesting scenes depicted here is of hand-linked dancing human figures.



There is some superimposition of paintings. The earliest are in black; over these are Red Ochre Paintings and the last group comprises White Paintings.

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Other remnants of cultural importance of this region are megaliths, menhirs, cup marks (memoirs of dead) burial graves, cists pottery, beads etc.

It has been noticed here that during that period at least three types of burials were in practice, (1) complete burial, (2) fractional burial and (3) post cremation burial. In the first form the whole body was cremated along with certain funerary objects. In the fractional burial, urns containing skulls and fragments of bones along with earthen wares and a variety of small objects for the use of the dead were also placed there.

1.4.3. Rock Cave Paintings in Karnatka and Telangana

In India the first discoveries of rock art were perhaps in the last decades of 19th century. Hubert Knox in Karnataka at Kigali, Archibald Carlyle and John Cocksure in Aimer ranges, Madhya Pradesh, found the rock engravings and cave paintings. Later, in Karnataka, in 1915, Leonard Munn, an English officer was moving about in Hire Benkal (Gangavati taluk., Raichur district, now in Koppal district) forested hill ranges, he happened to discover three caves with paintings. He published a note on them in the annual reports of the archaeological department of the former Nizam's Dominion of Hyderabad. Occasional discoveries were being made and no further studies were carried on as late as 1960s. It was the late Vishnu Wakankar of Ujjain, who found about 700 natural caves, most of them with Prehistoric paintings, in the sand stone belt in Bhimbetka near Bhopal. His Ph. D. thesis on these paintings was the first of its kind on rock art and in view of his service to rock art he was awarded Padmashree by the Government of India. Since then numerous discoveries were made in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Bihar, Bengal. Orissa and eastern part of Punjab, etc.

To have access to the painted rock-shelters and caves, one must be determined

and physically strong. In a single shelter/cave there may be one or two or even 50-100 pictures of animals, humans, geometrical designs and scenes of some significant social performances such as hunting, group dance, burying the dead, etc. which are less frequent. The pictures are executed in mineral colours like red, green, white, the first being the most common. It is said that it was mixed with pig's blood since it would not dry up fast.

Paintings

There are three categories of rock art. bruising caused with a stone, the engraving with a sharp stone or metal tool and then the paintings. Almost all the paintings are monochrome. In southern Karnataka, we find mostly engravings. Very rarely there are paintings in white ochre and red ochre. In eastern part of North Karnataka there are bruising, engravings and paintings dating back to the Neolithic period (4000-2000-800 B.C.) In Badami-Hosa Mahakuta-Pattadakal-Aihole-Kutakankei area there are very interesting painted shelters mostly with animals of wild species and humans drawn in a peculiar way besides some unusual geometrical designs datable to Mesolithic (circa.10,000 B.C.) or even earlier. There are more than a dozen sites in this area. What is more striking is the existence of a painted scene of a seated nobleman approached by his two consorts carrying lotus flowers in hand on a prepared surface in classical style in a deep rock recess dark noticed by me sometime in 1975. Later, Dr. Shilakant Pattar of Badami discovered a similar cave painting in the same area. In the Western-ghat-coastal region there are mostly engravings from Sindhu Durga (Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra) upto mid Kerala. In the border area of Kerala-Udakamandala also cave-paintings are located. Their dating is vague.

The variations in the form of rock art are mainly due to the prevailing rock conditions. Yet another aspect of the rock art to be considered are the contents or the designs. In the Ghat-coastal region, cattle such as bulls, cows and infrequently geometrical designs are strikingly common. Human representation is scarcely in evidence. In Badami area, paintings only of wild animals such as pigs, animals with stripes on the body, to be identified and depictions of stick like humans with an exaggerated trunk with a end, have no parallels in the other parts of Karnataka and the South. In the Eastern part of North Karnataka all three forms of the art i.e. bruising, engravings and paintings and some traditions of society such as group dance, burial hunting ritual etc occur frequently.

Paintings of this sites belong to Neolithic man age. Important site are Kupgallu in Nalgonda District of Telangana, Piklihal of Raichur district in Karnataka and Tekkalkota in Bellary district Karnataka.. Three types of paintings have been reported from here—paintings in white, paintings in red ochre over a white background and paintings in red ochre. These paintings belong to late historical, early historical and Neolithic periods. The subjects depicted are bulls, elephants, Sambhars, gazelles, sheep, goats, horses, stylised humans, tridents, but rarely, vegetal motifs.

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The first site is Kollagela Gundu. The walls of this small cave have beautiful bullocks in ochre colour, with straight horns and humps. Since the oxen look young and energetic, locals call them Kollaagelu.

Features of Lakhudiyar paintings:

- The paintings here can be divided into three categories: man, animal and geometric patterns in white, black and red ochre.
- Humans are represented in stick-like forms. A long-snouted animal, a fox and a multiple legged lizard are the main animal motifs.
- Wavy lines, rectangle-filled geometric designs, and groups of dots can also be seen here.
- One of the interesting scenes depicted here is of hand-linked dancing human figures.
- There is some superimposition of paintings. The earliest are in black; over these are red ochre paintings and the last group comprises white paintings.

Features of paintings from the sites of Karnataka and Telangana

- Three types of paintings have been reported from here—paintings in white, paintings in red ochre over a white background and paintings in red ochre.
- The subjects depicted are bulls, elephants, sambhars, gazelles, sheep, goats, horses, stylised humans, tridents, but rarely, vegetal motifs.
- Forests, wild plants, fruits, streams and creeks in these regions provided a perfect place for Stone Age people to live.

Features of Bhimbetka paintings

- The themes of paintings found here are of great variety, ranging from mundane events of daily life in those times to sacred and royal images.

- Images include hunting, dancing, music, horse and elephant riders, animal fighting, honey collection, decoration of bodies, and other household scenes.

Pre-historic age

The rock art of Bhimbetka has been classified into various groups on the bases of style, technique and superimposition. The drawings and paintings can be categorized into seven historical periods.

- Period I, Upper Palaeolithic;
- Period II, Mesolithic; and
- Period III,
- After Period III there are four successive periods

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1.5 FEATURES OF OTHER HISTORIC PERIODS

1. Upper Palaeolithic Period

- The paintings of the Upper Palaeolithic phase are linear representations, in green and dark red, of huge animal figures, such as bisons, elephants, tigers, rhinos and boars besides stick-like human figures.
- A few are wash paintings but mostly they are filled with geometric patterns.
- The green paintings are of dancers and the red ones of hunters.

2. Mesolithic Period

- The largest number of paintings belong this period.
- During this period the themes multiply but the paintings are smaller in size.
- Hunting scenes predominate. The hunting scenes depict people hunting in groups, armed with barbed spears, pointed sticks, arrows and bows.
- In some paintings these primitive men are shown with traps and snares probably to catch animals. The hunters are shown wearing simple clothes and ornaments. Sometimes, men have been adorned with elaborate head-dresses, and sometimes painted with masks also.
- Elephant, bison, tiger, boar, deer, antelope, leopard, panther, rhinoceros, fish, frog, lizard, squirrel and at times birds are also depicted. The Mesolithic artists loved to paint animals.
- In some pictures, animals are chasing men. In others they are being chased and hunted by men. Some of the animal paintings, especially in the hunting scenes, show a fear of animals, but many others show a feeling of tenderness and love for them.
- Women are painted both in the nude and clothed.
- The young and the old equally find place in these paintings. Children are painted running, jumping and playing.
- Community dances provide a common theme. There are paintings of

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people gathering fruit or honey from trees, and of women grinding and preparing food.

- Some of the pictures of men, women and children seem to depict a sort of family life.
- In many of the rock-shelters we find hand prints, fist prints, and dots made by the fingertips.

3. Chalcolithic Period

- The paintings of this period reveal the association, contact, and mutual exchange of requirements of the cave dwellers of this area with settled agricultural communities of the Malwa plains. Many a time Chalcolithic ceramics and rock paintings bear common motifs, e.g., cross-hatched squares, lattices.
- Pottery and metal tools are also shown. But the vividness and vitality of the earlier periods disappear from these paintings.

Colours

- The artists of Bhimbetka used many colours, including various shades of white, yellow, orange, red ochre, purple, brown, green and black. But white and red were their favourite colours.
- The paints were made by grinding various rocks and minerals. They got red from haematite (known as geru in India). The green came from a green variety of a stone called chalcedony. White might have been made out of limestone.

Other important features

- The artists here made their paintings on the walls and ceilings of the rock shelters. Some of the paintings are reported from the shelters where people lived. But some others were made in places which do not seem to have been living spaces at all. Perhaps these places had some religious importance.
- The men shown in the paintings appear adventurous and rejoicing in their lives.
- The animals are shown more youthful and majestic than perhaps they actually were.
- The primitive artists seem to possess an intrinsic passion for storytelling. These pictures depict, in a dramatic way, both men and animals engaged in the struggle for survival. In one of the scenes, a group of people have been shown hunting a bison. In the process, some injured men are depicted lying scattered on the ground. In another scene, an animal is shown in the agony of death and the men are depicted dancing.
- It is interesting to note that at many rock-art sites often a new painting is painted on top of an older painting.

1.6 LET SUM UP

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The first discovery of rock paintings was made in India in 1867–68 by an archaeologist, Archibald Carlyle and John Cocksure in Aimer ranges, Madhya Pradesh, found the rock engravings and cave paintings., twelve years before the discovery of Altamira in Spain. Remnants of rock paintings have been found on the walls of the caves situated in several districts of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar and in Kumaon hills of Uttarakhand.

The prehistoric period in the early development of human beings is commonly known as the Old Stone Age or the Palaeolithic Age. Prehistoric paintings have been found in many parts of the world. Subjects of their drawings were human figures, human activities, geometric designs and symbols. Remnants of rock paintings have been found on the walls of the caves situated in several districts of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar and in Kumaon hills of Uttarakhand. The rock shelters and caves of Bhimbetka have a large number of paintings. The oldest paintings are found to be 10,000 years old, but some of the geometric figures date to as recently as the medieval period. The colours used are vegetable colours which have endured through time because the drawings were generally made deep inside a niche or on inner walls. The drawings and paintings can be classified under seven different periods.

Lakhudiyar has been acknowledged as the richest cave shelter preserving the scenes and activities of the primitive inhabitants of the region, which according to archaeologists belong to the Old Stone Age to the Neo Stone Age. The prehistoric paintings here can be divided into three categories: man, animal and geometric patterns in white, black and red ochre.

Paintings of Kupgallu belong to Neolithic man age. Important site are Kupgallu in Nalgonda District of Telangana, Piklihal of Raichur district in Karnataka and Tekkalkota in Bellary district Karnataka.. Three types of paintings have been reported from here—paintings in white, paintings in red ochre over a white background and paintings in red ochre. These paintings belong to late historical, early historical and Neolithic periods. The subjects depicted are bulls, elephants, Sambhars, gazelles, sheep, goats, horses, stylised humans, tridents, but rarely, vegetal motifs.

1.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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- Q1. Enlist Features of Lakhudiyar paintings
- Q2. Enlist Features of Bhimbetka paintings ?
- Q3. What kind of colours are used in Bhimbetka paintings ?

2**THE INDUS VALLEY
CIVILISATION****NOTES****STRUCTURE**

- 2.1 Learning objectives
- 2.2 Introduction- The Indus Valley civilization
- 2.3 Discovery of Indus Valley Civilization
- 2.4 Arts of Indus Valley Civilization
- 2.5 Let Sum Up
- 2.6 Check Your Progress

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will

- Describe about the Indus valley civilization,
- Explain about Indus valley architecture,
- Describe Indus valley artworks, painting, sculptures, etc
- Describe Chronological artistic Development of Indus valley civilization,

**2.2 INTRODUCTION- THE INDUS VALLEY
CIVILIZATION**

The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) was a Bronze Age civilization in the northwestern regions of South Asia, lasting from 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE, and in its mature form from 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE. Together with ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, it was one of three early civilizations of the Near East and South Asia, and of the three, the most widespread, its sites spanning an area stretching from northeast Afghanistan, through much of Pakistan, and into western and northwestern India. It flourished in the basins of the Indus River, which flows through the length of Pakistan, and along a system of perennial, mostly monsoon-fed, rivers that once coursed in the vicinity of the seasonal Ghaggar-Hakra river in northwest India and eastern Pakistan.

The civilization's cities were noted for their urban planning, baked brick houses, elaborate drainage systems, water supply systems, clusters of large non-residential buildings, and new techniques in handicraft (carnelian products, seal carving) and metallurgy (copper, bronze, lead, and tin). The large cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa very likely grew to containing between 30,000 and 60,000 individuals, and the civilization itself during its florescence may have contained between one and five million individuals.

The Indus civilization is also known as the Harappan Civilization, after its type site, Harappa, the first of its sites to be excavated early in the 20th century in what was then the Punjab province of British India and now is Pakistan. The discovery of Harappa and soon afterwards Mohenjo-daro was the culmination of work beginning in 1861 with the founding of the Archaeological Survey of India during the British Raj. There were however earlier and later cultures often called Early Harappan and Late Harappan in the same area; for this reason, the Harappan civilization is sometimes called the Mature Harappan to distinguish it from these other cultures.

By 2002, over 1,000 Mature Harappan cities and settlements had been reported, of which just under a hundred had been excavated. However, there are only five major urban sites: Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Dholavira, Ganeriwala in Cholistan, and Rakhigarhi. The early Harappan cultures were preceded by local Neolithic agricultural villages, from which the river plains were populated.

2.3 DISCOVERY OF INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

The first discoveries of this civilization were made in the valley of the Indus river and in the Punjab, but later excavations prove that this civilization had a far greater extension because sites have been found scattered from the North- West Frontier and the foot of the Himalayas down to Gujarat and eastward as far as the Ganges Valley —from the north of Sind to Saurashtra in the south, and from Baluchistan in the west to the Ganga Yamuna Doab in the east.

Many settlements have been discovered, of which the most important remain those first unearthed — the two great cities, Harappa excavated by Madho Sarup Vats in the Punjab and Mohenjo-Daro by Sir John Marshal on the Indus river. In both places several cities lay buried one beneath the other. The other settlements were smaller towns belonging to the central, western, eastern and southern provinces, which were divided in this manner by S. R. Rao for the sake of clarity (Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa belong to the central province).

They are Jhukar, Kot-Diji, Ganhudaro and Surkotda belonging to the central province, Sutkagen-dor and Sotka-koh in the western province, Alamgirpur, Kalibangan and Rupar in the eastern province and Lothal, Rangpur and Surkotda in the southern province.

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Indus Valley seals, beads and other objects found in Mesopotamian towns such as Lagash, Ur, Tel-Asmar and other places indicate some communication and commercial intercourse between the Indus Valley or Harappa civilization and that of Sumeria. Until recent, more scientific methods of dating, scholars attempted a chronology of the Indus Valley civilization by comparing it with the Sumerian. But until further evidence is discovered, the full flowering of the Harappan culture may be placed between 2500 and 1700 B.C.

2.3.1 Architecture

The perfection of town planning constitutes the most striking feature of the excavated cities of Harappa civilization. That some central authority directed the construction of the towns according to a master plan, appears evident from the extraordinary similarity in the arrangement of the various parts of the cities in sites separated from each other by many kilometres. For instance, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro lie 640 km apart, yet the general principles of layout show strict adherence to a pre-conceived arrangement.'

These cities, therefore, did not result from straggling villages growing in size and importance through accretion of buildings and extended areas of habitation; rather they were built up directly as urban centres planned as integrated units. Both at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro an interspace separated two distinct units.

On the west of both cities rose the citadel with fortified walls enclosing big buildings, probably used for some public, royal or religious purposes, assembly halls, granaries, baths and what may have been, some form of temples. These buildings rested on high mud-brick platforms.

The lower city on the east was laid out on the gridiron pattern with main streets nearly ten metres wide, running almost exactly in the north-south and east-west directions and intersecting each other at right angles. These main streets divided the area into regular squares or rectangular blocks, containing dwelling houses, shops and factories, with access, to smaller, less orderly streets and lanes. The houses always opened on these alleys and side streets.

The building materials and methods of construction, like the general layout of the different parts of the city, also show remarkable uniformity. Kiln-burnt bricks went into the construction of defence works, important buildings, and the walls of houses; while they generally employed sun-dried mud bricks to raise platforms and to fill in floor areas and courtyards inside the houses. The bricks, cemented together with mud mortar, were laid in the so-called 'English bond', that is, a course of stretchers alternating with a course of headers.

Mud plaster usually covered the inner walls. No finds have substantiated the use of stucco for outer surfaces. Traces of a decorative bond make it unlikely that a layer of plaster covered it.



Fig. 1 . Ground plan of Mohenjo-daro, showing the gridiron pattern of its layout.

All the excavated remains reveal only ground floors, but the abundance of staircases and drain pipes descending from the top of walls as well as the thickness of the bearing walls themselves, suggest a wide prevalence of upper storeys. Probably constructed of wood, they perished long ago, together with the roofs of which no trace remains. Lintels normally spanned the openings since they had not discovered the principles of the true arch. Wherever they needed a rounded architectural form they used corbelling, as in the main drain of the great bath at Mohenjo-Daro.

The drainage and water supply system show a very great advance for such an early age. For instance, in Mohenjo-Daro most houses had their own private bathrooms and privies, supplied with soakage jars as well as pipe drains to dispose of waste. The bathroom floors, paved with burnt bricks, sloped into one corner, from where the house drain carried the soiled water to the street conduits, which were thirty to sixty centimetres deep, and covered with bricks or stone. At regular intervals they had provided traps for inspection and also manholes for cleaning purposes. The street 'channels opened into bigger corbel-vaulted sewers that emptied into the river.

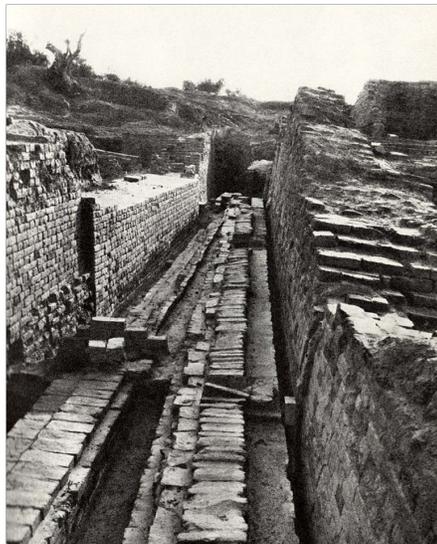


Fig. 2. drain, Mohenjo-daro.

Each house had a tube well, and often there was a public well on the street between two houses.

The high standard of town planning and sanitation, with sufficient water supply and drainage system, makes the Indus Valley or Harappan culture outstanding among all the ancient cultures.

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Fig 3 . A typical well, Mohenjo-daro.

We find it not only in the larger cities, but it reached even the distant outposts of Harappan culture. To a lesser extent the idea of a place of public importance being separated from the residential area had penetrated even into the Harappan villages which far outnumber the cities. At Hasan and Amiliano, in the Mali river area, two such village sites show the remains of a building erected on the highest part of the site, serving perhaps as the focus for the communal life of the surrounding villages.

The dwelling houses were of different sizes. Some, with many spacious apartments, also resembled palaces, while the small ones had only a partition. In general, the houses had an air of comfort, with rooms of good sizes. They ranged around an open courtyard, having doors and windows opening into the court. The rooms of the typical house unit were enclosed by a thick outer wall, and had only one door that opened on the side lane — never onto the main roads. These exterior walls must have looked monotonously plain, for no trace of stucco or painted decoration has been found and windows too, were rare. It can be only assumed that painted or carved superstructures and mat screens on the upper storeys provided at least some decoration. The thickness of the outer walls measured nearly ninety centimetres.

The remains of stairways, water pipes and chutes, as mentioned earlier, indicate that most houses did have an upper storey, probably made of wood and supplemented by reed mats and light screens. Impressions of such reed mats have been found in KotDiji. The houses and courtyards usually had brick floors. The kitchen was in the corner of the courtyard. A small room, usually near the doorway, may, according to Wheeler, have served as the porter's lodge. One of the rooms contains a well to supply water. The regular planning of these private dwellings speaks of a well ordered civic administration. A flourishing upper middle class,

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who could afford to employ servants and whose domestic activity centered around the courtyard — as even now in many parts of Sind and the Punjab, appears to have made their homes in these dwellings.

At present, Harappa is a small village near the old bed of the Ravi, in the Montgomery District of the Punjab. As yet, even after the twelve seasons of excavations, archaeologists have not succeeded in getting an overall picture of the city as it existed in the heyday of the Harappan civilization. Large scales robbing of bricks by railway constructors previous to the excavations have frustrated their work. The excavations conducted so far exposed the citadel and areas of the upper city; but the mound comprising the lower city has still to be systematically excavated. The citadel formed a rough parallelogram 415x193 m, with a north-south axis.



Fig 4 : A typical houses. Mohenjo-daro.

Parts of the fourteen metre thick, battered walls have been discovered, along with a few defensive bastions at intervals. The main entrance faced north, while to the west rose another network of bastions, ramps and terraces approached by gates overlooking guardrooms on the west, in a curved re-entrant on the encircling wall.

To the north of the citadel ran a double line of barrack-like dwellings, on a north-south axis, sixteen furnaces as well as a twin file of granaries and five rows of circular platforms. Wheeler calls the first of these 'coolie-lines' — presumably workmen's quarters. Each line forms an oblong of 18 X 8 m, with each house consisting of two rooms and a courtyard, with partly brick-paved floors. On a higher level nearby, stand a row of sixteen furnaces — probably used for smelting bronze or copper. Hence, those who lived in the barracks may have been coppersmiths as well as labourers connected with the granaries. North of the workmen's quarters lie eighteen round platforms made of brick.

Five concentric rows of bricks were laid on the edge around a hole in the centre, provided for the insertion of a wooden pestle. They served for a large-scale pounding of the grain stores in the nearby granaries, as shown by remaining fragments of charred wheat, barley, straw and husk. The granaries consist of

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twelve units, about 15 X 6m each, laid in two rows, six on each side, with a central passage seven metres wide. They stand on a platform of packed earth edged with baked bricks and walls now in ruins. The floors of the individual units rest on sleeper walls, with air-ducts to keep the grain dry. Since the granaries lie near the river bank, the grain was probably transported by boat.

The granary complex, with its pounding platform as well as the supposed workmen's quarters, reinforced the view that agriculture formed the main occupation of the Indus Valley people, and that they employed some form of forced or paid labour to collect and store the grain. A similar economy based on grain as a source of civic wealth prevailed both at Lower and in Upper Egypt, but nowhere else in the pre-classical world have we found such imposing granaries, specially designed and endowed with monumental dignity.

The chief buildings in the Mohenjo-Daro citadel is the so-called great bath, a complex of verandahs and rooms ranged around the sides of a rectangular pool measuring almost 12 X 7 m with a depth of 2.44 m, all laid on a north-south axis. A flight of steps set into each of the shorter sides of the pool leads to a surrounding platform thirty centimeters high. The steps were furnished with treads fixed with bitumen. To make the floor and walls of this tank waterproof they laid the specially shaped bricks on end and set them in gypsum mortar, further strengthened by a two-centimeter-thick lining of bitumen behind the facing. The floor of the pool sloped towards the drain hole which could be plugged to hold water. On the south-western corner the water outlet linked with an excellent corbelled channel sixty centimeters wide and high enough to walk along.



Fig 5 : Great bath. Mohenjo-daro.

Another remarkable feature was a man-hole, about 60 X 105 cm, accessible both from the tank and the corbelled drain. The water supply came from a double-

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ringed well in a room to the east. A pillared verandah surrounded all four sides of the pool, with rooms beyond except on the west. On the south, two entrances led to a paved vestibule, with a drain at the eastern extremity. At either end this vestibule terminated in two small apartments of unknown function. A series of rooms, perhaps used for dressing, extend on the east. The one which contains the well has an entrance from the street. On the north the original arrangement of rooms is not clear because at a later stage, due to floods, they raised the level by filling in the units.

To the north of the great bath lie two rows of bathrooms on either side of a lane containing a drain. Each bathroom measures about three by two metres (2.9 X 1.8 m), and has brick-paved floors. Each had a staircase presumably leading to a now extinct upper storey. The excavators believe that these may have been reserved for priests who lived upstairs and came down at specific intervals for ritual bathing, while the laymen used the main bathing pool. The doors of these bathrooms were staggered to ensure privacy.

Immediately to the west of the great bath, Sir Mortimer Wheeler's methodical excavations revealed a structure of immense significance, namely the granary. It consists of a high podium of massive proportions (46 X 23 m) with battered walls and a crisscross of passages inside serving as air-ducts. The storage area may have had a superstructure of which no trace remains. An alcove on the northern side of the outer wall, having straight inner sides, probably served for hauling up sheaves of grain. Since its foundation was reinforced by timber, as in parts of the bastions, the granary seems to be contemporary with them and earlier than the great bath.

The discovery of this structure strengthens the view that in a Bronze Age economy, granaries corresponded to state banks or treasuries. Its situation inside the citadel and its design as an essentially single building with formidable battered walls adds to its importance. At Harappa, however, as mentioned earlier, the granary consists of a dozen separate units situated outside the citadel and near the river bank, but the combined storage space of these equaled that of Mohenjo-Daro.

To the north-east of the great bath lie the remains of a building often referred to as the 'college of the priests'. Probably of public importance, but without further excavations, the actual significance of this network of walls, drains, stairways and an open court cannot be ascertained.

On the southern mound of the great citadel stood a great pillared hall about 127 m square and opening to the north. Twenty square pillars divided the floor space into five aisles. At a later date it was paved with strips of brick. Since the general plan resembles an Achaemenian 'apadana' or audience hall, this may have served as a place of assembly also.

The overall picture presented by the great bath, the imposing granary, the so-called college and the assembly hall inside a well-fortified encircling wall

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indicates a stable seat of power. We do not know whether a political ruler or priest king directed the administration, since no palace or building of definite religious importance has been discovered as yet, even though scholars suspect that a temple may lie beneath the stupa.

The lower city at Mohenjo-Daro, protected from floods by bunds, extended over an area of 2.6 square miles. The plan resembled a grid, with a broad main thoroughfare running north-south and smaller streets going in east-west direction, thus dividing it into regular blocks of houses and commercial buildings. Seven such blocks have been excavated. In a room of one of these houses we find a row of conical pits lined with wedge-shaped bricks. Perhaps they supported dying vats, and the dyers may have lived in the two adjoining rooms. A curious oblong structure 16 X 12 m with an imposing gateway approached by a pair of symmetrical stairways on the south stood among the dwelling houses in the HR area. A circular brickwork 1.22 m in diameter lies within the inner courtyard. Did it have some connection with tree worship? Did the building serve some public function?

The singular occurrence of two of the rare Harappan sculptural remains (a bearded man and the fragments of a seated figure) inside this edifice, lends weight to the view that it possessed some public importance or even served as a temple. However we have no evidence as yet either of a cult figure used for worship or an altar, and no congregational hall. In the Mohenjo-Daro area too, a row of barracks-like quarters similar to the 'coolie-lines' at Harappa suggest regimented labour. They consist of sixteen two-roomed units with a paved bathing floor in one room, provided with drainage. Two wells nearby supplied water. Remains of later dwellings show degenerations as well as evidence of floods, havoc and subsequent repairs of inferior quality. In all likelihood the city had begun to decay before it came to a sudden end.

More than eighty-five sites of the late Harappan period have been brought to light after a large scale archaeological survey of Saurashtra and Gujarat. The intermingling of a red and black pottery, the use of ceramic motifs affiliated with Central Indian Chalcolithic types, together with the typical Harappan-ware in Rangpur, Lothal and other Saurashtrian sites, shows that this culture represents a provincial offshoot of the metropolitan mature Harappan culture. During the latter half of third millennium B.C. the Harappans probably migrated southwards, either to enlarge their maritime trade operations or as a result of the coastal uplift of the lower Indus Valley. Whether they took an overland route or went by sea remains a matter of dispute among scholars. Though Rangpur was first to be explored in depth, Lothal discovered by S. R. Rao in 1954, has the most significance. This town situated at the head of the Gulf of Cambay near the estuaries of the Sabarmati and Bhigawo rivers, flourished as a seaport around 2440 B.C. It encompasses six phases of habitation.

Though it follows the traditional scheme of a citadel raised on a higher level and overlooking the township, at Lothal the citadel lies on the south-east corner of a walled enclosure. A mud-brick wall surrounds the whole site, which is roughly

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rectangular with a north-south axis. The excavator believes that a palace of the 'ruler' existed on top of the citadel platform, along with other public buildings — all provided with excellent water supply and drainage facilities. A strange sub-structure on the south-east corner of the acropolis consisted of criss-cross ducts running between sixty-four blocks, and measuring 3.6 sq. m. Sir Mortimer Wheeler took it to be a granary, whereas S.R. Rao asserted that it functioned as a warehouse handling an enormous amount of trade because of its proximity to the dock and its great size—the floor area being 1930 sq. m.

A massive terraced platform which may have supported another public building faces the warehouse on the west. But the so-called dock, a rectangular depression measuring 214 x36 m. Is the most important find at Lothal.

The sides revetted by kiln-burnt bricks are absolutely vertical to facilitate the berthing of ships. The water level at low tide must have been two metres, and three and half metres at high tide. A channel, one metre wide, on the south wall, served as a spillway for excess water. Wooden sluice-gates probably acted as a water-locking device and insured a minimum water level inside the dock. The ships floated into the dock over a gap twelve metres wide on the northern side. Rao based his contention that this served as a dock and not a tank on the following points: the use of fired bricks — not necessary for a tank, the absence of steps, the existence of a loading platform and of post holes in the side of the walls for tying up ships, the discovery of anchor stone in the basin itself, the salinity of the silt which also contains marine deposits, and the worthlessness of salty water either for drinking or irrigation.

However Leon Leshnik refutes these points. If this structure actually functioned as dock-yard it was an astonishing feat of scientific engineering in the ancient world, taking into consideration the direction and force of the current, the water-thrust and other problems, in addition to its unique water-locking device. As such not only was it the largest dockyard built by any Bronze Age community but it surpassed in design and execution those of Phoenicia and Rome. The township of Lothal lies to the north-west of the citadel and occupies three-quarters of the total area of the walled enclosure. It was sub-divided into blocks in the typical Harappan fashion, with main streets running in the cardinal directions. The blocks so far excavated include a bazaar area in the north (block A), industrial quarters to the west (blocks E and F), and the residential sectors on the north-west (block G).

On the main bazaar street the houses of merchants and craftsmen adjoined the shops. Anvils and ovens, crucibles and muffles, the drills and chisels of metal workers and bone carvers came to light in this area as well as a bead factory producing works in carnelian, agate, opal, crystal and other stones. It had a platform or working area for the lapidaries with rooms ranged around it to serve as their living quarters. It was also provided with two store-rooms and a guard-room. It covered a total of 500 sq.m. Another factory at the northern end of the city contained pot-furnaces (presumably used for smelting copper) and sufficient equipment to enable several copper-smiths to work together. The spacious

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comfortable houses in the residential area often had a large verandah in front, a hall and two or three rooms as well as a kitchen, and a bath supplied with a private drain ending in a soakage jar. The remains of a wealthy merchant's house yielded parts of a gold necklace, gemstone beads, seals, bangles and painted pottery. Fragments of Sumerian earthenware suggest that this merchant handled foreign trade.

In the later phases the houses became smaller, while the construction and materials used also show a fall in standards. Thrice Lothal fell prey to heavy floods but citizens made heroic endeavors to rebuild their city and to reconstruct the dock, but a devastating inundation destroyed the city completely around 2000 B.c. In the sphere of religion, the Lothal finds indicate a deviation from the Harappan practices. Lothal seals show no cult objects nor anything corresponding to the Pasupati figures or mother goddess. But there are evidences of fire worship: both private and public altars with brick enclosures containing the ash of triangular terracotta 'cakes' and potsherds have been found.

A large number of protohistoric sites have been discovered in the Bikaner district of Rajasthan. In ancient times the rivers Sarasvati and Drishadvati flowed through it and made it more fertile. These rivers have dried up. Kalibangan, the most important of these sites, lies beside the arid bed of the Sarasvati, now known as the Chaggar river. Ghosh explored it in 1953 and B. B. Lai and Thapur excavated it extensively later on. In plan it conforms to type: a fortified citadel on the west and on the east an open city with a grid pattern with modular blocks of houses and rectilinear streets. Here mud bricks rather than burnt bricks formed the common building material even for the sloping enclosure walls of the citadel. The underground and over ground ovens found in the houses as well as the use of decorative tiles for paving the floor attract special archaeological interest.

On the other hand some of the houses in this place had private baths, drains and soakage jars, and the absence of street drains shows a deterioration in the civic standards. The citadel mound reveals a pre Harappan occupation by a Chalcolithic or Bronze Age folk. Small oval or rectangular blocks made of brick, in which terracotta 'cakes' and ash were found, may indicate possible fire worship. Such traces occurred in Lothal also. A cemetery to the north-west of the mound reveals the Harappan way of burying the dead on a north-south axis with the head to the north.

2.4 ARTS OF INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

A. Metalwork

Harappan craftsmen developed numerous techniques in metalwork (copper, bronze) and jewellery. These are most evident in their goldsmithing and their bronze sculpture.

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1. Jewellery from Mohenjo-daro

Includes long carnelian beads and necklace, fired steatite beads and gold objects, terra cotta bangles and detail in red, white and green, metal bangles and gold and agate ornaments.



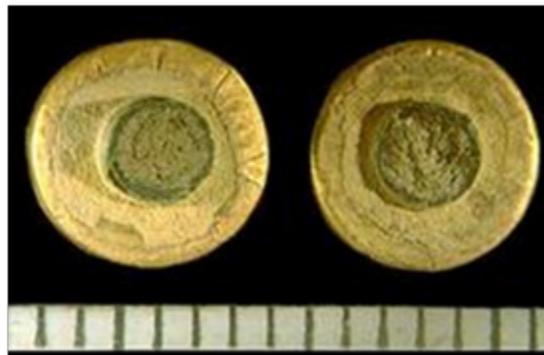
2. An Ancient Indus Plate

Ancient Indus food, drink and cooking vessels would likely not be out of place in South Asia today, so familiar are the designs and materials. A copper/bronze plate from Mohenjo-daro, terra cotta cooking pots from Nausharo (2200-2300 BCE), a stone (fuchsite) drinking vessel from Mohenjo-daro, and a copper/bronze cooking pot from Harappa.



3. Gold Foiled Beads

Two gold beads originally part of the same ornament found in Harappa . Thin gold foil was placed over the outside of a sandy core around a copper tube..



4. Golden Artifacts

A variety of golden artifacts have been discovered. Here, we see a gold bead collection discovered at Harappa. Other artifacts include a Composite Tubular Gold Bead, a pair of Gold Foiled Beads, and Bell Shaped Gold Ornaments.



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B. Sculpture and other terracotta figure

Sculptural remains at Harappan sites, apart from the well-known seals and terracotta figures are confined to Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Since the rendering of the human and animal forms on the seals exhibit advanced artistry and technical proficiency, sculpture on a large scale may have been produced in perishable materials which did not survive the ravages of time. Further excavations may bring to light other sculptural remains, but only eleven pieces have been unearthed so far, all from the upper strata at Mohenjo-Daro. In Mohenjo-Daro whatever sculpture was found, was only in the upper strata.

- **Bearded Man (Priest Man, Priest-King)**

Very few statues have been found, and the biggest of these is only 42 cm high. They are made of steatite, alabaster or limestone. Most of them represent elderly men with beards and wearing loose garments. They seem to be early attempts at portraiture. The most important of the statues from Mohenjo-Daro is the bearded man, a limestone statuette measuring 1.75 cm. his half closed eyes belong to the long type. The tip of the flatfish nose has been broken off. The lips are unusually thick. As in Mesopotamian figures, the upper lip is shaven. The ears, beard and hair are conventionalized or stylized — the ears resembling a two-edged shell with a hole in the centre, while parallel grooves indicate the hair and beard. A narrow ribbon or fillet with a circle in front surrounds his head. He wears a draped cloth decorated with big trefoil patterns like the clover leaf. It covers his left shoulder and passes under the right arm. The so-called ‘temple’ at Harappa has yielded another head of a bearded man 17.5 cm high. It too has wavy hair tied with a fillet, shell-like ears with holes, a beard and a moustache. The eyes have hollows left for the inlay of shells or faience. Here the lips look less grim and the face appears more like an attempted portrait.



Fig.6 Bearded priest. Mohenjo-daro.

Four other pieces of statuary resemble a squatting figure — perhaps a priest. One of these, 40 cm high and made of alabaster, has the right knee slightly raised and the hands resting on the knees. A skirt-like garment covers the lower body. The details of the bearded face have been worn away. As usual a fillet encircles the head and the face is too big for the skull.

- **Men of Harappa B**

Male figurines are sometimes also identified by secondary sex characteristics such as beards. Occasionally, male figurines wear a headdress with two upward and/or outward projections like horns. Similar figures with horned headdresses are found in the iconography of seals, tablets, and pottery. It is possible that these represent composite figures with anthropomorphic and animal attributes or the appropriation of animal attributes in the form of a headdress. In addition to different postures, male figurines also exhibit a variety of hairstyles.



- **Dogs of the Ancient Indus Valley**

A number of dog figurines have been found at Harappa and at other Indus sites. The collars found on dog figurines probably signify domestication, unlike the collars on the rhinoceros or the large feline figurines.



- **Toys of the Indus Valley**

Movable head of a bovine figurine from Harappa. Some movable figurine heads are pierced through the horns on either side of the head. The movable heads of figurines often depict cattle. They are usually pierced laterally through the neck and vertically or sagittally through the head in order to secure them to the bodies and control them with a cord. Also a toy cart from Nausharo, a bird whistle and a complete ox or water buffalo cart with figurine.



- **Deity Strangling Tigers Tablet**



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Planoconvex molded tablet from Harappa showing a deity battling two tigers. "The thick jungles of the Indus Valley were full of tigers and leopards, so it is not surprising that the image of a ferocious feline is a recurring motif in ritual narratives on seals as well as molded tablets... The figure strangling the two tigers may represent a female, as a pronounced breast can be seen in profile.

The most important among the bronze statues is the dancing girl now in the National Museum, New Delhi. She stands in a dancing pose, her right hand on, her hip. Heavy bangles cover her left arm from the shoulder down to the wrist. The fact that the Indus Valley knew how to smelt bronze shows how well advanced they were in metalwork.

- **Dancing Girl**

The dancing girl of Mohenjo-daro in three views, with close-ups of face, choker and bangles, and next to a dancing girl from Jaipur around 1900. Another but more inferior figure was also found as well as a fragmentary foot with anklet. Bronze figures of animals occur quite frequently.



C. Seals and Jewellery

Terracotta sculpture is more numerous than either stone or metal in the Indus Valley and Lothal, and animal figures far outnumber human representations, and show greater realism as well. The torso of a woman from Lothal, similar to the Harappan torso of a dancing figure in stone, shows better modeling. Many terracotta figures, perhaps of a mother goddess, with pinched nose, pellet eyes and elaborate headdress have been unearthed. To make the lips, the ornate neckles and girdles, they pressed strips of clay into the figure before baking. At Lothal the figures of women do not show elaborate jewellery.

Animal figures include cattle, sheep, dogs, pigs, monkeys, elephants, rhinoceros and birds. A terracotta horse at Mohenjo-Daro and two more at Rangpur and Lothal and Surkotda refute the view that horses were unknown to the Harappans. Although no cows are shown either at Mohenjo-Daro or Harappa and only a few were found at Lothal, yet the most common animal representation is the bull. Two fine examples of an ox and buffalo with bold, sweeping lines have been recovered from the remains at Mohenjo-Daro

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Fig. 7 Seals, Mohenjo-daro.

The numerous seals of which more than two thousand have been discovered constitute one of the most interesting finds of this civilization. They form the main body of the soft material like clay or wax, are cut into the surface of the seal, so that when it is pressed upon the plastic substance, the impression stands out in relief. Many of these seal impressions have been found in Lothal along with weights and measures, indicating that the seals were used to stamp export cargo. On the right side, the seals represent one or more animals or human and mythological figures, with short inscriptions on top.

The seals were generally made of steatite, but occasionally also of copper, agate, faience and terracotta. Square or rectangular in shape, the seals have a pierced boss at the back for threading or holding. The seals measure about two or three centimetres in size. A few cylindrical seals also occur.

The tiny animals incised in these seals are exquisite. The artists chose the essential characteristics of the creatures and imbued the figures with an extraordinary vitality. Short-homed and humped bulls, antelopes, elephants, rhinoceros, tigers and crocodiles are depicted in their most typical poses, or at times parts are shown in their most expressive form. For instance zebu or the humped bull, one of the ' most frequently represented animals, appears in side view with the horns in front view, pictorial records of those times, offering tantalizing prospects

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of better knowledge of the Harappan civilization with their intriguing inscriptions. Despite many attempts to decipher the script, no acceptable interpretation has been found until now. The pictographs consist of some four hundred signs in all, of which around two to eight occur on each seal. The ' writing goes from right to left, and if there is a second line it runs from left to right. The vast majority of these seals come from the sites of Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and Lothal.

One or more animals or human and mythological figures are incised under the pictographic inscription. The carving is done in the intaglio technique — all the parts that must stand out in relief when the seal has been pressed upon mythological figures were also represented as mentioned before. Many seals show a curious standard or incense burner in front of the animal depicted. These seals offer a few noteworthy clues to the religious practice of those remote times, but their full significance will be known only when the script has been definitely deciphered. Sir John Marshall found three seals of similar design at Mohenjo-Daro.

The best of these show's a deity sitting on a platform ^perhaps a throne) flanked by wild animals, a rhinoceros and buffalo on the right and an elephant and tiger on the left, and a pair of goats or ante- lopes below. Marshall calls it a prototype of Siva in the aspect of Pasupati or lord of beasts. Bangles cover the deity's arms, and the face is painted. He wears a buffalo-horn head-dress, a V-shaped necklace or collar and a girdle.

Some seals hint at animal and human sacrifice. One of these shows a divinity standing inside the fork of a tree with a kneeling human figure in front and a ram behind him. Below appear seven people wearing clothes and long pigtails. Common in the lower levels of Harappa are many miniature seals without knobs and showing simple motifs like a swastika, crosschecks or circles indicating that they derive from an earlier date.

Beads, Ornaments and Cosmetics

The Harappan men and women decorated themselves with a large variety of ornaments produced from every conceivable materials ranging from precious metals and gemstones to bone and baked clay. White necklaces, fillets, armlets and finger rings were commonly worn by both sexes. Jewellery found at Mohenjo-Daro and Lothal include necklaces of gold and semiprecious metal stones, copper bracelets and beads, gold earrings and head ornaments. A cemetery has been found at Farmona in Harappa where dead bodies were buried with ornaments. Well developed bead industries were present at Chauhudaro and Lothal. Some beads were made of two or more stones cemented together.

Also made models of animals, especially monkeys and squirrels, used as pin head and beads. Spinning of cotton and wool was very common (both rich and poor practiced spinning). Men and women wore two separate pieces of attire similar to dhoti and shawl. Shawl covered the left shoulder passing below right arm. They were conscious of fashion. Different hair styles were in vogue and beard was

popular. Cinnabar was used as a cosmetic and face-paint, lipstick and collyrium (eyeliner) were also known to them.

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Jewellery was found in great abundance and variety: gold, silver and jade necklaces, ear-rings with pendants, belts and bangles. Beads of faience are very common besides others of precious metals and semi-precious stones. These exquisite jewels and beads may have served largely for export trade. Household pottery, some pieces having geometric patterns painted on them, came in a variety of shapes like ceramic rattles, and toy ox-carts with solid wheels. Two of these carts are made of copper, the rest of them are in terracotta. Other terracotta finds include whistles shaped like hollow birds, rattles, spindles, gamesmen and dice.



Fig.8. Jewellery from Mohenjo-daro

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D. Pottery

Indus valley pottery consists of very fine wheel made wares, very few being handmade. Plain pottery is more common than painted ware. Plain pottery is generally red clay, with or without a fine red or grey slip. The black painted ware has a fine coating of red slip on which geometric and animal designs are executed in glossy black paint.

Painted Earthen Jar

Found in Mohenjo-Daro. Made on a potters' wheel with clay. The shape was manipulated by pressure of the crafty fingers of the potter. After baking a clay model, it was painted with black colour. High polishing was done as a finishing touch. Motifs are vegetal and geometric forms. Designs are simple.

Though pottery finds constitute a great help to archaeologists for estimating the dates of ancient cultures — and there is no dearth of these in the Indus Valley sites — as yet no definite chronological sequence has been formulated, and problems of origins and influence still remain unsolved. Face masks with horns were also common as well as grotesque figures. Mythological figures were created such as fighting tigers with horns, three-headed animals, many examples of a unicorn-like animal, or human figures with the horns, ears, hoofs, and tails of bulls. These appear most commonly on seals.



Fig.9. Ancient Pots, Mohenjo-daro.

2.5 LET SUM UP

The Indus civilization is also known as the Harappan Civilization, after its type site, Harappa, the first of its sites to be excavated early in the 20th century in what was then the Punjab province of British India and now is Pakistan. The discovery of Harappa and soon afterwards Mohenjo-daro was the culmination of work beginning in 1861 with the founding of the Archaeological Survey of India during the British Raj. There were however earlier and later cultures often called Early

Harappan and Late Harappan in the same area; for this reason, the Harappan civilization is sometimes called the Mature Harappan to distinguish it from these other cultures.

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The first discoveries of this civilization were made in the valley of the Indus river and in the Punjab, but later excavations prove that this civilization had a far greater extension because sites have been found scattered from the North- West Frontier and the foot of the Himalayas down to Gujarat and eastward as far as the Ganges Valley —from the north of Sind to Saurashtra in the south, and from Baluchistan in the west to the Ganga Yamuna Doab in the east.

The perfection of town planning constitutes the most striking feature of the excavated cities of Harappa civilization. That some central authority directed the construction of the towns according to a master plan, appears evident from the extraordinary similarity in the arrangement of the various parts of the cities in sites separated from each other by many kilometres.

The drainage and water supply system show a very great advance for such an early age. For instance, in Mohenjo-Daro most houses had their own private bathrooms and privies, supplied with soakage jars as well as pipe drains to dispose of waste. The chief buildings in the Mohenjo-Daro citadel is the so-called great bath, a complex of verandahs and rooms ranged around the sides of a rectangular pool measuring almost 12 X 7 m with a depth of 2.44 m, all laid on a north-south axis.

1. Arts of Indus Valley Civilization

The arts of Indus Valley civilisation, one of the earliest civilisations of the world, emerged during the second half of the third millennium (Bronze Age). The forms of art found from various sites of civilisation include sculptures, seals, pottery, gold ornaments, terracotta figures, etc. Their delineation of human and animal figures was highly realistic in nature. Modelling of figures was done in an extremely careful manner. Two major sites of Indus Valley civilization, along the river Indus are: North – cities of Harappa; South – Mohenjo-Daro.

2. Metalwork

Harappan craftsmen developed numerous techniques in metalwork (copper, bronze) and jewellery. These are most evident in their goldsmithing and their bronze sculpture.

3. Sculpture

Sculptural remains at Harappan sites, apart from the well-known seals and terracotta figures are confined to Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Since the rendering of the human and animal forms on the seals exhibit advanced artistry and technical proficiency, sculpture on a large scale may have been produced in perishable

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materials which did not survive the ravages of time. Further excavations may bring to light other sculptural remains, but only eleven pieces have been unearthed so far, all from the upper strata at Mohenjo-Daro. In Mohenjo-Daro whatever sculpture was found, was only in the upper strata.

Terracotta sculpture is more numerous than either stone or metal in the Indus Valley and Lothal, and animal figures far outnumber human representations, and show greater realism as well. The torso of a woman from Lothal, similar to the Harappan torso of a dancing figure in stone, shows better modeling. Many terracotta figures, perhaps of a mother goddess, with pinched nose, pellet eyes and elaborate headdress have been unearthed. To make the lips, the ornate neckles and girdles, they pressed strips of clay into the figure before baking. At Lothal the figures of women do not show elaborate jewellery.

4. Jewellery

Jewellery was found in great abundance and variety: gold, silver and jade necklaces, ear-rings with pendants, belts and bangles. Beads of faience are very common besides others of precious metals and semi-precious stones. These exquisite jewels and beads may have served largely for export trade. Household pottery, some pieces having geometric patterns painted on them, came in a variety of shapes like ceramic rattles, and toy ox-carts with solid wheels. Two of these carts are made of copper, the rest of them are in terracotta. Other terracotta finds include whistles shaped like hollow birds, rattles, spindles, gamesmen and dice.

2.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Q1. Enlist Features of Indus valley paintings.
- Q2. Enlist Features of Indus valley Sculptures and arts.
- Q3. Write a brief note on Indus Valley Civilization. Also explain their architecture.

3**JOGIMARA CAVE****NOTES****STRUCTURE**

- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Jogimara Caves
- 3.4 Location
- 3.5 SITA BENGRA – ANCIENT THEATRE
- 3.6 JOGIMARA CAVE – DRESSING ROOM ?
- 3.7 The Exquisite Jogimara Cave Art of Chattisgarh
- 3.8 Details about Jogimara Cave Paintings
- 3.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.10 Check your Progress

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will

- Describe about the Jogimara Caves,
- Explain about Jogimara architecture,
- Describe Jogimara artworks, painting, etc.
- Describe Chronological artistic Development of Jogimara Caves,

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Jogimara Cave is considered as Chattisgarh's heritage symbol, located in Ambikapur town in Surguja district. This ancient cave, dating back to about 300 BC is adorned with paintings of animals, birds and humans. The cave also has an inscription written in Brahmi script, which is considered as the first documented

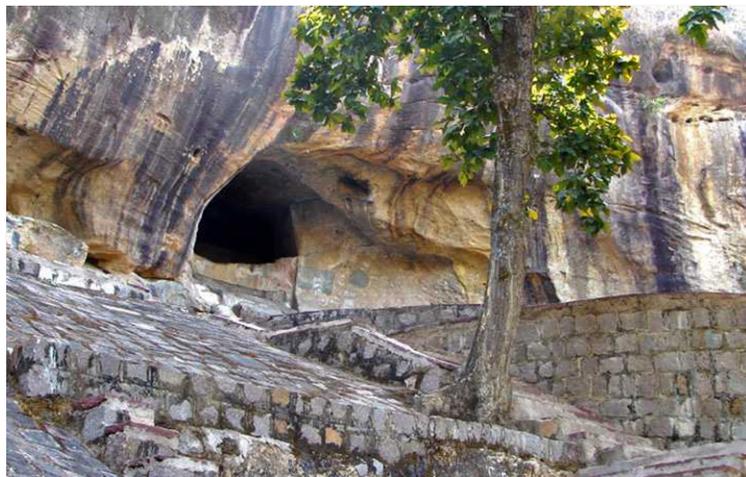
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written messages of love in the world. The paintings depicted in this cave do not have any religious motif, but have natural elements displayed. According to legends during their exile in these caves hid heroes of Ramayana epos –brothers Laxman, Rama and wife of Rama – Sita. Hence comes the name Sita Bengra – "Residence of Sita". Jogimara Caves are situated in Surguja district of Chhattisgarh. It is known for rock paintings of 300 BC.

3.3 JOGIMARA CAVES

Jogimara Caves are located in the Surguja District in the state of Chhattisgarh. These caves are around 10x6x6 feet in dimensions and age back to 300 BC. There are many paintings of animals, human beings, birds and flowers on these caves. Each painting is painted on the white base plaster with a red outline. These caves are located in a beautiful natural setting, mountainous jungle massive. To add to the effect, both caves are reached through a natural tunnel. Even elephants can pass through this 55 m long tunnel – hence the name of this tunnel – Hathipol (Hatipal), “Elephant Cave”.

At the west, after passing this tunnel the hillside forms a steep crescent, rising above a wooded valley. Further to the west, there rises another hill. Both Jogimara and Sita Bengra Caves open to the west – Sita Bengra is located further to the north and Jogimara – to the south. According to legends during their exile in these caves hid heroes of Ramayana epos – brothers Laxman, Rama, and wife of Rama – Sita. Hence comes the name Sita Bengra – “Residence of Sita”.



3.4 LOCATION

Jogimara Caves are situated 50 kms away from Ambikanagar in Surguja district in Ramagiri-Ramgarh hills. Jogimara Cave and Sita Bengra Cave are located in beautiful natural setting, mountainous jungle massive. To add to the effect, both caves are reached through natural tunnel. Even elephant can pass through this

55 m long tunnel – hence the name of this tunnel – Hathipol (Hatipal), "Elephant Cave".

Jogimara Cave

3.5 SITA BENGRA – ANCIENT THEATRE

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This beautiful, secluded site is known to Europeans since 1874 – 1875. Although now it is somewhat remote, most certainly it wasn't a silent place 2,300 years ago. It seems that this secluded, beautiful valley was a well-known site where gathered poets and their spectators. This place seemingly was especially popular during the spring nights with a full moon when the great festival of Kama – a deity of love – took place.

The semi-circular valley with both caves in the background formed a fine amphitheater, similar to ancient Greek theatres. In the front of Sita Bengra cave, there are round rock-cut benches, arranged in terraces in the shape of a crescent, with aisles.

In total, this amphitheater had some 50 seats which partially blocked the entrance in the Sita Bengra Cave and provided a sight over the performance below. The stage was carved out of the cliff as well.



The cave is 14 m long, 5 m wide, and 1.8 m high in forepart. It seems that there was a gallery for some high ranked (royal?) family as well – a stone cut platform in front, located lower than the gallery.

In the floor in front of the cave there are hewn two holes – possibly here were placed poles which held a curtain shielding the visitors from the winds in winter nights. In the right corner, in front of the cave, there are made also human footprints.

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Sita Bengra Cave itself is a natural cave with a rock-cut small hall resembling a stage. Some speculate that even the famous lyric poem “Meghadūta” was written by the great Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa here or nearby. According to some theories, this famous poet lived nearby sometime in the 4th – 6th century AD. The cave contains a faint two-line inscription. It tells about venerable poets who kindled the hearts of local society and that these poets “tie garlands thick with jasmine flowers around their necks”. The inscription refers also to the vernal full moon and some event – perhaps, spring festival abounding in frolics and music.

3.6 JOGIMARA CAVE – DRESSING ROOM?

Jogimara Cave is smaller than Sita Bengra, it is just 3 x 1.8 x 1.8 m large, artificially carved rock chamber. This is a dry cave with a wide entrance, the entrance part creates an intimate, discrete environment. It is considered that it served as a resting place for the girls employed in theatre. This otherwise small cave contains monuments of the art of world importance – paintings and inscriptions.

3.7 THE EXQUISITE JOGIMARA CAVE ART OF CHATTISGARH

The cave is a home to some of the most exquisite paintings of the first century BC. The creations are clear hints toward the first ever, planned attempt to beautify the premises of a land.

There are depictions on the walls and ceilings and they have been created in two layers. Line drawings are very prominent, along with the use of red, black, yellow and white colours. A red outline, in fact, is very typical of these drawings. There are human figures, fishes, elephants, flowers, birds, and chariots painted everywhere. However, they speak nothing about religion.



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3.7.1 JOGIMARA CAVE PAINTINGS (c. 100 B.C.)

The paintings at Jogimara unfortunately have been restored by uncultured hands. So the original pictures are in bad shape. But after careful look it seems that, they were basically designed as wall paintings. Though crude brush work in red and black paint but with well-intentioned efforts, which had almost succeeded in obliterating the old design.

A variety of subjects have been depicted in the scheme of a series of concentric panels such as - houses (architecture), animals and figures. Though, the forms are much defaced but they are like those of plastic arts of the same period. They are in round panels. But on the borders, fishes, makara, man, lions and water monsters were repeated. The unsuitable Indian climate, eating of colours by white ants and dripping of water destroyed the plaster of walls on which the painting was done. In the same way the structural edifices of this period, build undoubtedly of wood and unbaked brick were even less lasting. The surface of these structures were believed to have been finished by means of a roughly prepared plaster ground and as shown in some cases were decorated with paintings. No intact example of the structures bearing the painting of the period has been found at Jogimara by now.

- **Aesthetic Merit:** The foregoing description of these early brush forms conveys the impression that their general character, except for the, one special quality already referred to, is distinctly primitive and that the art was crude and undeveloped in this period. But, it appears unconvincing, as documentary evidences seem to indicate that the painting in India was in a comparatively advanced stage in their aesthetic impression even before the period under reference. Early authentic and literary references dealing with various aspects of painting before the spread of the Buddhist religion supports this. Taking this fact into consideration, it can be presumed that the primitive character of the frescoes at Ramgarh Hill is not consistent with the general testimony and an art of a much more refined nature

The paintings which were created before the Ajanta and Bagh Caves belong to Pre-Buddha caves. The best example of the Pre-Buddha paintings is

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the Jogimara cave, which is situated at Amarnath near the origin of Narmada, in Sarguja in Chhattisgarh. The paintings of these caves have been dated from 300BC to as back as 1000BC. The roof of the cave has some seven paintings which include the human figures, fish and elephants. There are two layers of paintings in it. The Original paintings are of expert artists but the upper layer has been done by incompetent artists. In true sense, the Jogimara Caves seem to be the first human endeavours as expert paintings.



Positioned around the Narmada river, amidst the massive mountains and jungle, lies the enchanting Jogimara cave. It shares its entrance with the Sita Bengra cave. The entrance to this beauty is known as Hathipol – which means Elephant cave. The tunnel is 55 meters long and wide enough for an elephant to pass through.

During the exile of Ram-Sita, the Sita Bengra cave was believed to be the residence of Sita. Jogimara cave, on the other hand, is a small rock chamber filled with ecstatic paintings and inscriptions. Coated with a white base plaster – mainly red, black, white and yellow colours are used.

Each painting is adorned with a red outline. Oldest surviving cave paintings in India, the doorway of Jogimara cave is ornamented with seven paintings primarily picturing a couple in love, singers, dancers, fish and elephant figures. The images of saints, animals, birds and chariot paintings are also mirrored on the walls, few of which have lost clarity and lustre. Inscriptions convey a love story. The story is about Sutnuka who was a performer in the theatre and Devdutta, who admired Sutnuka for her poise and grace.

The exchange of love messages between the two gave way to Brahmi script and the art of calligraphy. Around the 1st century BC, the walls and ceiling of this cave were adorned with exquisite paintings – and this is the oldest known deliberate attempt to beautify premises with previously planned painting.

The paint was laid on white base plaster although in some places the paint had been laid also on the unprepared base.

The painting was done in two layers – the original by an expert artist in the 1st century BC and the latter by another artist, in inferior quality. Drawings were made in lines. Red, black, white, and yellow colors were used. Each painting has a red outline. For the most part, paintings seem to have little in common with religion – what is a difference from other Indian cave paintings of the historical period. At the root of this cave, there are seven paintings of human, fish, and elephant figures. Shown also a dancing couple near a lily flower, doll-like image, singers and dancers with a female dancer. Unclear chariot paintings, birds, animals shown as well. Some saints have been painted here as well.

3.7.2 INSCRIPTIONS OF JOGIMARA

As if paintings were not enough, this small cave contains also the first documented messages of love in the world. This faded inscription tells about the intense love between Sutnuka and Devdutta. It seems that Devdutta (man) used to watch Sutnuka (girl) dancing in the theatre – and this man was obsessed with the actress.

This five-line inscription has been written in Brahmi script and it tells “Sutanuka by name, a devadasi, the excellent among young men, Devadonna by name, the rupadaksha, loved her. There is also another translation for this inscription: “Sutanuka by name, a devadasi, made this testing place for girls (local actresses?). Devadonna by name, skilled in painting/ calligraphy, made the paintings in this cave”.

This is the first time when the term “devadasi” is mentioned. It is even considered that this theatre was one of the cultural centers where Devadasi tradition originated. Initially, devadasi – young and specially selected girls were “married” to deities and served in the temple, living in celibate and performing religious rituals.

These girls were taught classical arts and traditions and initially had a high esteem and social status. They themselves were creating the traditions and artistic and musical styles. Much later this tradition though was hugely degraded.

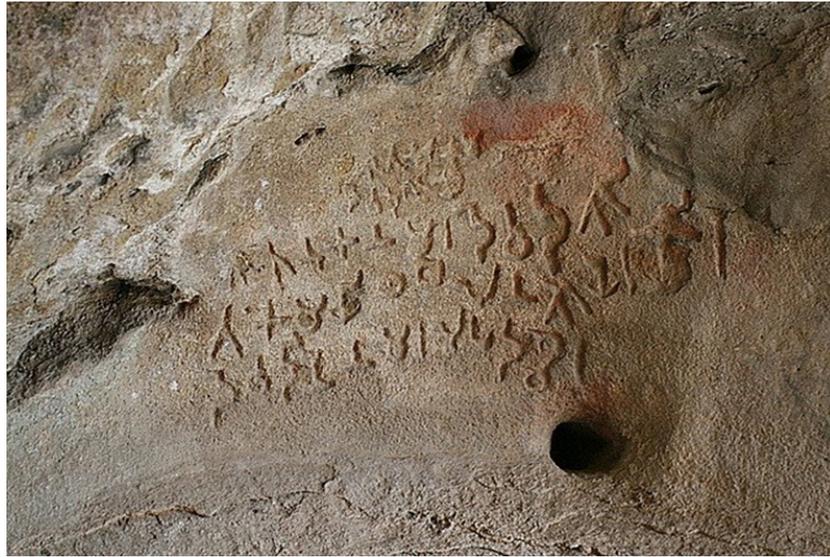
3.7.3 WONDER OF JOGIMARA CAVE

Unique monuments of art not only for India but for the whole world are paintings in Jogimara Cave (Chhattisgarh). These paintings were made around the 1st century BC. Contrary to other ancient Indian cave paintings these drawings are not related to religion: here is adorned a rock-cut cave.

It looks like actresses of the nearby open-air theater used this cave as a dressing room. Paintings show dancing couple, fish and elephant figures, seen also an unclear painting of chariot.

3.8 DETAILS ABOUT JOGIMARA CAVE PAINTINGS

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Location: Chattisgarh

Known for pre-Buddhist era paintings, they outdate the Ajanta caves. These are the first evidence of perfect painting done by humans- an attempt to deliberately beautify the look of the place with paintings; a form of interior decoration. The depictions that cover the roof include men, fish, elephants, etc. Colors like red, black, white and yellow were used. Unclear paintings of chariots, girls and singers adorn the walls of this cave. Each painting has a red outline. They are said to be from 300 BC. To add to its peculiarity, the inscriptions here are messages of love and talk about the deep affection between Devdutta and utnika.

3.9 LET US SUM UP

Jogimara Caves are located in the Surguja District in the state of Chhattisgarh. These caves are around 10x6x6 feet in dimensions and age back to 300 BC. There are many paintings of animals, human beings, birds and flowers on these caves. Each painting is painted on the white base plaster with a red outline. These caves are located in a beautiful natural setting, mountainous jungle massive. To add to the effect, both caves are reached through a natural tunnel. Even elephants can pass through this 55 m long tunnel – hence the name of this tunnel – Hathipol (Hatipal), “Elephant Cave”.

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in obliterating the old design. A variety of subjects have been depicted in the scheme of a series of concentric panels such as - houses (architecture), animals and figures. Though, the forms are much defaced but they are like those of plastic arts of the same period. They are in round panels. But on the borders, fishes, makara, man, lions and water monsters were repeated. The unsuitable Indian climate, eating of colours by white ants and dripping of water destroyed the plaster of walls on which the painting was done. In the same way the structural edifices of this period, build undoubtedly of wood and unbaked brick were even less lasting.

The surface of these structures were believed to have been finished by means of a roughly prepared plaster ground and as shown in some cases were decorated with paintings. No intact example of the structures bearing the painting of the period has been found at Jogimara by now. Aesthetic Merit: The forgoing description of these early brush forms conveys the impression that their general character, except for the, one special quality already referred to, is distinctly primitive and that the art was crude and undeveloped in this period.

3.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Q1. Give brief note on Jogimara Cave.
- Q2. Explain about the cave painting of Jogimara Cave ?

4

GANDHARA SCHOOL

NOTES

STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Gandhara School of Art
- 4.4 Gandhara Civilization
- 4.5 Origin Place and Period of Development
- 4.6 Gandhara art
- 4.7 Characteristics of the Gandhara School of Art
- 4.8 Various Mudras of Buddha in Gandhara Art
- 4.9 Gandhara School of art represents Greek-Roman influence:
- 4.10 Influence of Arts on other Indian Arts
- 4.11 Some arts of Gandhara School
- 4.12 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.13 Check Your Progress

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will

- Describe about the Gandhara School,
- Explain about Gandhara School Origin and Development,
- Describe Gandhara art,
- Describe Characteristics of the Gandhara School of Art,
- Describe Influence of Gandhara Arts on other Indian Arts,

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The Gandhara School of art had also developed in first century AD along with Mathura School during reign of Kushana emperor Kanishka. Both Shakas and

Kushanas were patrons of Gandhara School, which is known for the first sculptural representations of the Buddha in human form. The art of the Gandhara school was primarily Mahayana and shows Greco-Roman influence.

4.3 GANDHARA SCHOOL OF ART

Gandhara School of Art Gandhara school of art was one of the major schools of art in the history of ancient India. Although being an intricate part of Indian history, it is uniquely associated with the GrecoRoman style of art. The combination of these Greco-Roman and Indian ideas along with the influence of other foreign traditions such as from China and Iran resulted in the formation of a distinct style known as the Gandhara School of art. This style of art was closely associated with Mahayana Buddhism and hence the main theme of this art was Lord Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Thus, it can be conjectured that in idea and conception this style was Indian and in execution it was foreign. One example of the Gandhara style of art is the Bamiyan Buddha statues. It mostly flourished in the areas of Afghanistan and present North-Western India.

The prominent locations were Taxila, Peshawar, Begram and Bamiyan. The period around which the Gandhara school of art flourished could be said to be from 1st century BCE to 4th century CE. There was extensive use of black stone and stucco. Stucco was a kind of plaster that was used for many structures including the freestanding ones under this style of art. The free-standing structures included many chaityas, Viharas and stupas.

The Gandhara school developed in the north-western region of the Indian sub-continent. The region came under the political influence of a variety of kingdoms - Greek, Mauryan, Parthian, Kushan, Synthian and this resulted in the emergence of a mixed school of art which borrowed from various traditions. This school contributed to development of Buddha's image which was usually carved out of grey slate stone and was characterised by hellenistic features. These include - wavy hair in a top knot, sometimes a moustache on the face, urna between the eyebrows, garment with thick pleats usually covering both shoulders styled like a roman toga, plain halo behind the head and muscular formation of the body. The expression of calmness in the centre of attraction.

Indian craftsmen came into contact with the Central Asians, Greeks, and Romans, especially in the north-western frontier of India in Gandhara. This gave rise to a new form of art in which images of the Buddha were made in the Graeco-Roman style, and his hair fashioned in the Graeco-Roman style. Greco-Buddhist art is the artistic manifestation of Greco-Buddhism, a cultural syncretism between the Classical Greek culture and Buddhism, which developed over a period of close to thousand years in Central Asia, between the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC, and the Islamic conquests of the 7th century AD.

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A large number of monasteries were also built from first to fourth centuries A.D.

- Ruins of about fifteen monasteries were found in and around Peshawar and Rawalpindi.
- The Buddhist stupas erected during this period had Graeco-Roman architectural impact.
- The height of the stupa was raised and ornamentation was added to the structure of the stupa.

These changes made the stupa more attractive.

The striking feature of Gandhara School of art shows a very realistic and natural depiction of features in perfection. Although it was dominated by the themes of Lord Buddha, however, there were images on other subjects also made such as the images of the Greek God Apollo and certain kings as well.

The Greco-Roman effect on Gandhara art can be traced through:

- Halo around the head of Lord Buddha
- Buddha's wavy hair
- The forehead lines
- Ornaments
- Drape and style of the garments

Thus, Gandhara School of Art can be said as an influence and culmination of both the Indian as well as foreign traditions due to its strategic location.



4.4 GANDHARA CIVILIZATION

Gandhara is the name of an ancient kingdom (Mahajanapada), located in modern day northern Pakistan and parts of eastern Afghanistan. Gandhara was located mainly in the vale of Peshawar, the Potohar plateau and on the Kabul River.

Its main cities were Purushapura (modern Peshawar), literally meaning “City of Man”, Varmayana (modern Bamiyan) and Takshashila (modern Taxila).

NOTES

The Kingdom of Gandhara lasted from the early 1st millennium BC to the 11th century AD. It attained its height from the 1st century to the 5th century under the Buddhist Kushan Kings. The Hindu term Shahi is used by history writer Al-Biruni to refer to the ruling Hindu dynasty that took over from the Turki Shahi and ruled the region during the period prior to Muslim conquests of the 10th and 11th centuries. After it was conquered by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1021 CE, the name Gandhara disappeared.

During the Muslim period the area was administered from Lahore or from Kabul. During Mughal times the area was part of Kabul province. The Gandhāri people were settled since the Vedic times on the banks of Kabul River (river Kubha or Kabol) down to its confluence with the Indus. Later Gandhara included parts of northwest Punjab. Gandhara was located on the northern trunk road (Uttarapatha) and was a centre of international commercial activities. It was an important channel of communication with ancient Iran, India and Central Asia. The boundaries of Gandhara varied throughout history.

Sometimes the Peshawar valley and Taxila were collectively referred to as Gandhara and sometimes the Swat valley was also included. The heart of Gandhara, however, was always the Peshawar valley. The kingdom was ruled from capitals at Pushkalavati (Charsadda), Taxila, Purushapura (Peshawar) and in its final days from Udabhandapura (Hund) on the Indus. According to the Puranas, they were named after Taksha and Pushkara, the two sons of Bharata, a prince of Ayodhya.

Evidence of Stone Age human inhabitants of Gandhara, including stone tools and burnt bones, was discovered at Sanghao near Mardan in area caves. The artifacts are approximately 15,000 years old. More recent excavations point to 30,000 years before present. The region shows an influx of southern Central Asian culture in the Bronze Age with the Gandhara grave culture, likely corresponding to immigration of Indo-Aryan speakers and the nucleus of Vedic civilization. This culture survived till 1000 BC. Its evidence has been discovered in the hilly regions of Swat and Dir, and even at Taxila. The name of the Gandhāris is attested in the Rigveda and in ancient inscriptions dating back to Achaemenid Persia. The Behistun inscription listing the 23 territories of King Darius I (519 BC) includes Gandāra along with Bactria and Thatagush. In the book "Histories" by Herodotus, Gandhara is named as a source of tax collections for King Darius.

Gandhara had played an important role in the epic of Ramayana and Mahabharata. Ambhi Kumar was direct descendant of Bharata (of Ramayana) and Shakuni (of Mahabharata). It is said that Lord Rama consolidated the rule of the Kosala Kingdom over the whole of the Indian peninsula. His brothers and sons ruled most of the Janapadas (16 states) at that time.

The primary cities of Gandhara were Purushapura (now Peshawar), Takshashila (or Taxila) and Pushkalavati. The latter remained the capital of Gandhara down to the 2nd century AD, when the capital was moved to Peshawar.

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An important Buddhist shrine helped to make the city a centre of pilgrimage until the 7th century. Pushkalavati in the Peshawar Valley is situated at the confluence of the Swat and Kabul rivers, where three different branches of the River Kabul meet. That specific place is still called Prang (from Prayaga) and considered sacred and where local people still bring their dead for burial. Similar geographical characteristics are found at site of Prang in Kashmir and at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna, where the sacred city of Prayag is situated west of Benares. Prayaga (Allahabad) one of the ancient pilgrim centres of India as the two rivers are said to be joined here by the underground Sarasvati River, forming a triveni, a confluence of three rivers.

The Gandharan Buddhist texts are both the earliest Buddhist and South Asian manuscripts discovered so far. Most are written on birch bark and were found in labeled clay pots. Panini has mentioned both the Vedic form of Sanskrit as well as what seems to be Gandhari, a later form (bhasa) of Sanskrit, in his *Ashtadhyayi*. Gandhara's language was a Prakrit or "Middle Indo-Aryan" dialect, usually called Gandhari. Texts are written right-to-left in the Kharosthi script, which had been adapted for Indo-Aryan languages from a Semitic alphabet, the Aramaic alphabet.

Gandhara was then controlled by the Achaemenid dynasty of the Persian Empire, which used the Aramaic script to write the Iranian languages of the Empire. Semitic scripts were not used to write South Asian languages again until the arrival of Islam and subsequent adoption of the Persian-style Arabic alphabet for New Indo-Aryan languages like Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Kashmiri. Kharosthi script died out about the 4th century. However, the Hindko and the archaic Dardic and Kohistani dialects, derived from the local Indo-Aryan Prakrits, are still spoken, though the Afghan Pashto language is the most dominant language of the region today.

Gandhara is noted for the distinctive Gandhara style of Buddhist art, which developed out of a merger of Greek, Syrian, Persian, and Indian artistic influence. This development began during the Parthian Period (50 BC – AD 75). Gandharan style flourished and achieved its peak during the Kushan period, from the 1st to the 5th century. It declined and suffered destruction after invasion of the White Huns in the 5th century. Stucco as well as stone was widely used by sculptors in Gandhara for the decoration of monastic and cult buildings. Stucco provided the artist with a medium of great plasticity, enabling a high degree of expressiveness to be given to the sculpture. Sculpting in stucco was popular wherever Buddhism spread from Gandhara – India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and China.

Though the marks and ruins of Gandhara civilization can be found throughout in Northern Pakistan, its heritage has been saved more in true form in Taxila, Peshawar and Swat valley. According to Wikipedia, evidence of Stone Age human inhabitants of Gandhara, including stone tools and burnt bones, was discovered at Sanghao near Mardan in area caves. The artifacts are approximately 15,000 years old. This Civilization is primarily a symbol of human development

in the area of human knowledge, religion, art and history for the world to come to great extent.

4.5 ORIGIN PLACE AND PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT

NOTES

The home of the Gandhara school of art is the territory in and around Peshawar in northwestern India. The origins of Greco-Buddhist art are to be found in the Hellenistic Greco-Bactrian kingdom (250 BC- 130 BO, located in today's Afghanistan, from which Hellenistic culture radiated into the Indian subcontinent with the establishment of the Indo-Greek kingdom. Under the Indo-Greeks and the Kushans, the interaction of Greek and Buddhist culture flourished in the area of Gandhara, in today's northern Pakistan, before spreading further into India, influencing the art of Mathura, and then the Hindu art of the Gupta empire, which was to extend to the rest of South-East Asia. The influence of Greco-Buddhist art also spread northward towards Central Asia, strongly affecting the art of the Tarim Basin, and ultimately the arts of China, Korea, and Japan. The best of the Gandhara sculpture was produced during the first and second centuries AD. It originated during the reign of Indo-Greek rulers but the real patrons of this school of art were the Sakas and the Kushanas, particularly Kanishka. Specimens of Gandhara sculpture have been found in Taxila, Peshawar and in several places of northwest India.

4.6 GANDHARA ART

Gandhara art, style of Buddhist visual art that developed in what is now northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan between the 1st century BCE and the 7th century CE. The style, of Greco-Roman origin, seems to have flourished largely during the Kushan dynasty and was contemporaneous with an important but dissimilar school of Kushan art at Mathura (Uttar Pradesh, India).



Buddha statue

Buddha statue in the Gandhara style, c. 2nd century

NOTES

The Gandhara region had long been a crossroads of cultural influences. During the reign of the Indian emperor Ashoka (3rd century BCE), the region became the scene of intensive Buddhist missionary activity. And in the 1st century CE, rulers of the Kushan empire, which included Gandhara, maintained contacts with Rome. In its interpretation of Buddhist legends, the Gandhara school incorporated many motifs and techniques from Classical Roman art, including vine scrolls, cherubs bearing garlands, tritons, and centaurs. The basic iconography, however, remained Indian.

The materials used for Gandhara sculpture were green phyllite and gray-blue mica schist which in general, belong to an earlier phase, and stucco, which was used increasingly after the 3rd century CE. The sculptures were originally painted and gilded.



bodhisattva Maitreya

Bodhisattva Maitreya, schist sculpture from Gandhara, Pakistan, Kushan dynasty, 2nd-3rd century

Gandhara's role in the evolution of the Buddha image has been a point of considerable disagreement among scholars. It now seems clear that the schools of Gandhara and Mathura each independently evolved its own characteristic depiction of the Buddha about the 1st century CE. The Gandhara school drew upon the anthropomorphic traditions of Roman religion and represented the Buddha with a youthful Apollo-like face, dressed in garments resembling those seen on Roman imperial statues. The Gandhara depiction of the seated Buddha was less successful. The schools of Gandhara and Mathura influenced each other, and the general trend was away from a naturalistic conception and toward a more idealized, abstract image. The Gandhara craftsmen made a lasting contribution to Buddhist art in their composition of the events of the Buddha's life into set scenes.



Maitreya

Bodhisattva Maitreya, schist from Gandhara, Pakistan, Kushan dynasty, 2nd–4th century CE.

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4.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GANDHARA SCHOOL OF ART

Gandhara School was based on Greco-Roman norms encapsulating foreign techniques and an alien spirit. It is also known as Graeco-Buddhist School of art. The foreign influence is evident from the sculptures of Buddha in which they bear resemblance to the Greek sculptures. Grey sandstone (Blue-grey Mica schist to be precise) is used in Gandhara School of Art.

In this school of art the life size statues of Gautama Buddha were carved. Until then, the Buddhist existence was shown in the form of symbols like lotus, umbrella etc. While carving the statues utmost care was given to the symmetry of the body including the muscles and moustaches which were shown in a natural setting. In the specimens of the craftsmanship of this art-the folds and turns of the clothes were exhibited with minute care and skill. In this art the ornaments that were carved on the statues received much attention which added to the physical beauty of the statue. Polishing the statues is an important feature of this art. The specimens were mostly prepared in stone, terracotta and clay. The technique used in making the statues was Greek but, the idea, inspiration and personality all were Indian.

4.7.1 Salient Features

- Gandhara style of art that developed in sculpture was a fusion of Greco-Roman and Indian styles.
- Gandhara school was heavily influenced by Greek methodologies, the figures were more spiritual and sculpted mainly in grey. and great detail was paid to exact depiction of body parts.
- It is also known as Graeco-guddhist School of art

NOTES

- The Gandharan Buddha image was inspired by Hellenistic realism, tempered by Persian, Scythian, and Parthian models.
- The theme of the Gandhara school is mainly Buddhist and it made sculptures of the Buddha in various sizes, shapes and postures.
- The reliefs depict Buddha's birth, his renunciation and his preaching.
- The main theme was the new form of Buddhism — Mahayanism— and the evolution of an image of Buddha.
- Sculptors constructed Buddhist images with anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening
- The images of Buddha resembled Greek God Apollo.
- Moulding human body in a realistic manner with minute attention to physical features like muscles, moustache and curly/ wavy hair.
- Rich carving, elaborate ornamentation and symbolic expressions.
- The Buddha of Gandhar art is sometimes very thin, which is opposite in Mathura art.
- Thick drapery with large and bold fold lines.
- More stress is given to the bodily features and external beauty.
- Gandhara Style has naturalism in body form, drapery, and pictorial scale.
- The male figures are shown with musculature, drapery with sharp flowing folds, wavy curled hair and sharp features. The extended ears are merely due to the downward thrust of the heavy ear-rings worn by a prince or magnate.
- There is a standardization of composition, pose of figures and other incidents from the life of Buddha.
- Bodhisattva icons that portrayed Buddhahood and form one of the most important elements of Mahayana Buddhism was prevalent in this era. These male figures are shown standing or seated and wear a dhoti like lower garment, the torso is bare except for the shawl like length of cloth over the shoulder.
- One of the distinguishing features is the depiction of paradise such as Sukhavati which was part of the Paradise cult within Buddhism prevalent in North West India during the Kushana period.
- There were also female statures, corresponding to city goddesses.



Gandhara Style, Afghanistan, 4th-5th C.

It looks like the Mathura, Gandhara arts cross-fertilized in due course of time, and the bulky Mathura Buddha gradually gave way to the slender elegance of the Gandharan image. The result of this synthesis ennobled, refined, and purified the Buddha image that appeared in the Gupta period. This Gupta style became the model for Southeast Asian Buddha images. Some Greco-Buddhist friezes represent groups of donors or devotees, giving interesting insights into the cultural identity of those who participated in the Buddhist cult.

4.7.2 Material Used

Grey sandstone is used in Gandhara School of Art. They were the example of the Gandhara School. The other materials used were Mud, Lime, Stucco. However, Marble was not used in Gandhara art. Terracotta was used rarely. Stucco provided the artist with a medium of great plasticity, enabling a high degree of expressiveness to be given to the sculpture.

4.7.3 Examples of Gandhara Art

The Bamiyan Buddha of Afghanistan were the example of the Gandhara School. The other materials used were Mud, Lime, Stucco. However, Marble was not used in Gandhara art. Terracotta was used rarely. Bimaran Casket has yielded the earliest specimen of the Gandhara Art.

Major Centres

Jalalabad, Hadda, Bamiaran, Begram & Taxila were the main centers where art pieces of Gandhara School have been found.

4.8 VARIOUS MUDRAS OF BUDDHA IN GANDHARA ART

The Gandharan Buddha image was inspired by Hellenistic realism, influenced by Persian, Scythian, and Parthian models. In contrast with Mathura School, the Gandhara School images are known for their anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening.

In this art, Buddha's curls were altered into wavy hair. The head of the Buddha matched very much with Greek God Apollo.

In all the Buddha depicted in the Gandhara Art is shown making and this is a remarkable feature in this art. The gestures are as follows:

Abhaya mudra : Don't fear

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Dhyanamudra : meditation

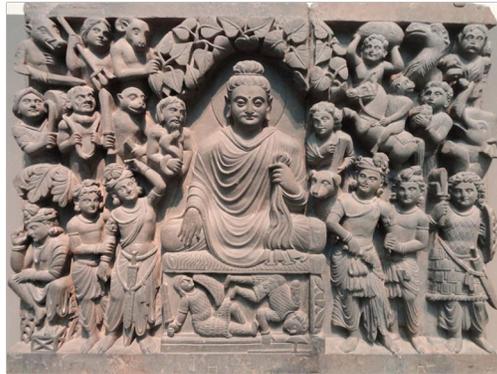


Buddha in Dhyanamudra, Swat Valley, Pakistan (Buddha when meditating under the pipal tree before his Enlightenment).

Dharmachakramudra: a preaching mudra



Seated in dhyanasana with his arms crossed before his chest in the gesture of teaching, Dharmachakra Mudra. This mudra symbolizes one of the most important moments in the life of Buddha, the occasion when he preached to his companions the first sermon after his Enlightenment in the Deer Park at Sarnath.



"The Enlightenment : After meditating for forty days beneath a pipal tree, the Buddha approached the moment of omniscience. Evil demons have failed to distract him, and he calmly touches the earth to witness his attainment of enlightenment.

NOTES

Under Kushana

In India. First time the Gandhara art nourished during the Kushana rule in India. Particularly Kanishka the greatest of the Kushanas was a great patron of art and architecture. It was during that Gandhara School of art flourished. The Kushans, at the centre of the Silk Road enthusiastically gathered works of art from the quarters of the ancient world, as suggested by the hoards found in their northern capital in the archaeological site of Begram, Afghanistan.

The Kushans sponsored Buddhism together with other Iranian and Hindu faith. Particularly under the Kushans, there are also numerous representations of richly adorned Bodhisattvas, all in a very realistic Greco – Buddhist style. The Bodhisattvas, characteristic of the Mahayana form of Buddhism, are represented under the traits of Kushan princes. Their coins, however, suggest a lack of artistic sophistication: the representations of their kings, such as Kanishka tend to be crude (lack of proportion) and the image of the Buddha is an assemblage or Hellenistic Buddha statue with grossly represented and spread apart in the same fashion as the Kushan king.



Kanishka, 1st century A.D. Mathura Region

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An early Mahayana Buddhist triad. From left to right, a Kushan devotee, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Buddha, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, and a Buddhist monk. 2nd-3rd century AD, Gandhara.



The "Kanishka casket", dated to 127 CE, with the Buddha surrounded by Brahma and Indra. Kanishka appears in the lower part among the scrolls.



Maitreya, with Kushan devotees, left and right, 2nd century, Gandhara.



Kushans worshipping the Buddha's bowl. 2nd century, Gandhara.

NOTES

4.9 GANDHARA SCHOOL OF ART REPRESENTS GREEK-ROMAN INFLUENCE:

Gandhara School of art had in post-Maurya period during reign of Kushana emperor Kanishka. Both Shakas and Kushanas were patrons of Gandhara School. Though subject matter is predominantly Buddhist, yet many sculptural motifs shows Greco-Roman influence:

Greek influence

1. The mother of Buddha resembles with Athenian matron.
2. Many early Buddha has Apollonian faces.
3. Greek gods are depicted paying obeisance to Buddha.
4. Other Greek influences:
 - Artistic beauty
 - Halo around Buddha
 - masculine Buddha
 - Natural realism
 - Broad forehead, and long earlobe of Buddha.
 - Curly or wave hair of Buddha and also depiction of very thick hair
 - Mustache and beard of Buddha
 - A heavy forms of body and depiction of muscles

NOTES

Roman influence:

- Dresses of many Buddha's images are arranged in the style Roman Toga.
- Deeply delineated folds of robes of Buddha.
- Artistic interpretations like Roman motifs (triton)
- Anthropomorphic tradition

Gandharan sculptures show strong Greek influences in the depiction of a 'man-god' and of wavy hair, sandals and extensive drapery. The depiction of Buddha as a 'man-god' in Gandharan sculpture is believed to be inspired from Greek mythology. Some examples of Gandharan art depict both Buddha and the Greek god, Hercules. Stucco plaster, which was commonly observed in Greek art, was widely used in Gandharan artwork for the decoration of monastic and cult buildings. The Roman and Greek Influences in Gandhara Buddha are enumerated as follows:

- **Artistic interpretation:** The legendary interpretation of Buddha is sometimes presented through roman motifs like triton.
- **Artistic techniques:** In artistic interpretation; Buddha of Gandhara is sometimes presented through roman art techniques using vine scroll; cherub wearing Garland
- **Anthropomorphic tradition:** The tradition of representation of Buddha in human form is inspired from roman anthropomorphic tradition .
- **Dresses:** The outer robe of Buddha of Gandhara like kaaya; antarvasa resembles to attire of roman gods.

Greek influence

- **Greek god as protector:** In many images of Buddha in Gandhara ; he is seen under the protection of Greek god Hercules.
- **Vajrapani:** Vajrapani found in the right hand of future Buddha is told as transformed symbol of Hercules who is seen as protector of Buddha.
- **Greek architectural influence** Some images of Buddha in Gandhara are presented in Greek architectural environment bearing the affinity of Corinthian.
- **Artistic beauty:** The Apollo like face of Buddha; natural realism; wavy hair as seen in images of Buddha in Gandhara resembles to Hellenistic tradition.
- **Intellectual affinity:** The halo and bun of Gandhara Buddha signifies intellectual imbibitions of Buddha from Greek

However, Gandharan sculpture owes as much to Roman art as it does to Grecian art. Even though the iconography of Gandharan sculpture was Indian in nature, it also incorporated motifs and techniques from Classical Roman art. Some of the features of Classical Roman art observed in Gandharan sculptures are vine scrolls, cherubs with garlands, tritons and centaurs.

Additionally, the Gandharan sculptors drew from the anthropomorphic traditions of Roman religion. The depiction of Buddha in Gandharan art is

reminiscent of sculptures depicting a young Apollo. The draping of the robes on Buddha was also very similar to the drapery on Roman imperial statues.

Gandhara School

Other Greeco-Roman influences:

- Facial features of Buddha reflect Greco-Roman influence like: protruding eyeballs, elongated eyes, half closed eyes, elongated face and sharp nose.
- Many ordinary people shown in various scenes also bear the imprint of distinct Greco-Roman.
- Many ordinary people shown in various scenes also bear the imprint of distinct Greco-Roman style.
- Though many features of Gandhara art were influenced by foreign elements, it also developed unique features with indigenous influence.

NOTES

4.10 INFLUENCE OF ARTS ON OTHER INDIAN ARTS

1. Influence on Mathura Art

- Many Mathura sculptures incorporate many Hellenistic elements, such as the general idealistic realism, and key design elements such as the curly hair, and folded garment.
- Specific Mathuran adaptations tend to reflect warmer climatic conditions, as they consist in a higher fluidity of the clothing, which progressively tend to cover only one shoulder instead of both, Also, facial types also tend to become more Indianized.
- The mixed character of the Mathura School in which we find on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old Indian art of Bharut and Sanchi and on the other hand, the classical influence derived from Gandhara.

2. Influence on Amaravati Art

- The influence of Greek art can be felt beyond Mathura. as far as Amaravati on the East coast of India, as shown by the usage of Greek scrolls in combination with Indian deities. Other motifs such as Greek chariots pulled by four horses can also be found in the same area.

3. Influence on Gupta Art

- The art of Mathura acquired progressively more Indian elements and reached a very high sophistication during the Gupta Empire, between the 4th and the 6th century AD. The art of the Gupta is considered as the pinnacle of Indian Buddhist art.
- Hellenistic elements are still clearly visible in the purity of the statuary and the folds of the clothing but are improved upon with a very delicate rendering of the draping.

4.11 SOME ARTS OF GANDHARA SCHOOL

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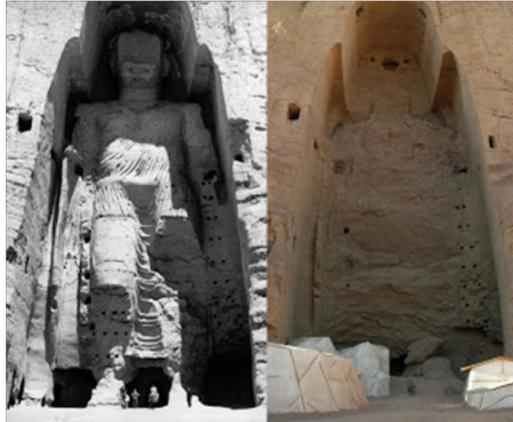


Fig: Bamiyan Buddha [Before and After demolition]



Fig: Triton sculpture from Gandhara school



Fig: Winged Atlas sculpture from Gandhara school

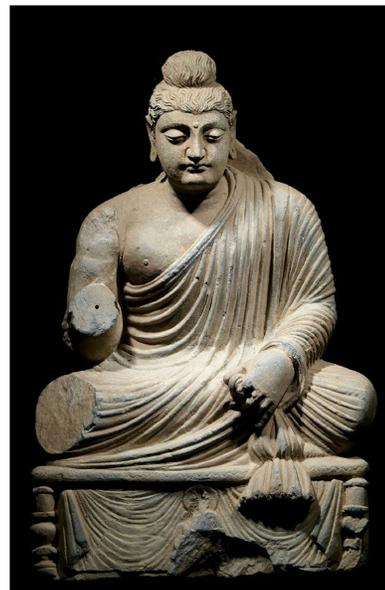
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Pic: Gandhara Buddha with moustach, from National museum for Asian arts - Musee Guimet, Paris



NOTES



4.12 LET US SUM UP

NOTES

Gandhara School of Art Gandhara school of art was one of the major schools of art in the history of ancient India. Although being an intricate part of Indian history, it is uniquely associated with the GrecoRoman style of art. The combination of these Greco-Roman and Indian ideas along with the influence of other foreign traditions such as from China and Iran resulted in the formation of a distinct style known as the Gandhara School of art. This style of art was closely associated with Mahayana Buddhism and hence the main theme of this art was Lord Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Thus, it can be conjectured that in idea and conception this style was Indian and in execution it was foreign. One example of the Gandhara style of art is the Bamiyan Buddha statues. It mostly flourished in the areas of Afghanistan and present North-Western India.

Gandhara School was based on Greco-Roman norms encapsulating foreign techniques and an alien spirit. It is also known as Graeco-Buddhist School of art. The foreign influence is evident from the sculptures of Buddha in which they bear resemblance to the Greek sculptures. Grey sandstone (Blue-grey Mica schist to be precise) is used in Gandhara School of Art.

The Gandharan Buddha image was inspired by Hellenistic realism, influenced by Persian, Scythian, and Parthian models. In contrast with Mathura School, the Gandhara School images are known for their anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening. In this art, Buddha's curls were altered into wavy hair. The head of the Buddha matched very much with Greek God Apollo.

4.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Q1. Give an introduction about Gandhara School.
- Q2. Explain about the art of Gandhara School
- Q3. Explain how Gandhara School of art represents Greek-Roman influence.

AJANTA CAVES

NOTES

STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Ajanta Caves
- 5.4 History
- 5.5 Monasteries and sanctuaries
- 5.6 Paintings of Ajanta Caves
- 5.7 Details about Ajanta Caves
- 5.8 Alavokitesvara
- 5.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.10 Check your Progress

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will

- Describe about the Ajanta Caves ,
- Explain History and other details about Ajanta Caves,
- Describe Ajanta Monasteries and sanctuaries,
- Describe Characteristics of Paintings of Ajanta Caves,
- Describe about the Alavokitesvara,

5.2 INTRODUCTION

The Ajanta Caves are approximately 30 rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments which date from the 2nd century BCE to about 480 CE in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra state of India. The caves include paintings and rock-cut sculptures described as among the finest surviving examples of ancient Indian art, particularly expressive paintings that present emotions through gesture, pose and form.

They are universally regarded as masterpieces of Buddhist religious art. The caves were built in two phases, the first starting around the 2nd century BCE and the second occurring from 400–650 CE, according to older accounts, or in a brief period of 460–480 CE according to later scholarship. The site is a protected monument in the care of the Archaeological Survey of India, and since 1983, the Ajanta Caves have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

5.3 AJANTA CAVES

The style of Ajanta has exerted a considerable influence in India and elsewhere, extending, in particular, to Java. With its two groups of monuments corresponding to two important moments in Indian history, the Ajanta cave ensemble bears exceptional testimony to the evolution of Indian art, as well as to the determining role of the Buddhist community, intellectual and religious foyers, schools and reception centres in the India of the Gupta and their immediate successors.

The caves are situated 100 km north-east of Ellora, 104 km from Aurangabad and 52 km from Jalgaon Railway Station. They are cut into the volcanic lava of the Deccan in the forest ravines of the Sahyadri Hills and are set in beautiful sylvan surroundings. These magnificent caves containing carvings that depict the life of Buddha, and their carvings and sculptures are considered to be the beginning of classical Indian art.

The 29 caves were excavated beginning around 200 BC, but they were abandoned in AD 650 in favour of Ellora. Five of the caves were temples and 24 were monasteries, thought to have been occupied by some 200 monks and artisans. The Ajanta Caves were gradually forgotten until their 'rediscovery' by a British tiger-hunting party in 1819.

The Ajanta Caves constitute ancient monasteries and worship-halls of different Buddhist traditions carved into a 75-metre (246 ft) wall of rock. The caves also present paintings depicting the past lives and rebirths of the Buddha, pictorial tales from Aryasura's Jatakamala, and rock-cut sculptures of Buddhist deities. Textual records suggest that these caves served as a monsoon retreat for monks, as well as a resting site for merchants and pilgrims in ancient India. While vivid colours and mural wall-painting were abundant in Indian history as evidenced by historical records, Caves 16, 17, 1 and 2 of Ajanta form the largest corpus of surviving ancient Indian wall-painting.

The Ajanta Caves are mentioned in the memoirs of several medieval-era Chinese Buddhist travellers to India and by a Mughal-era official of Akbar era in the early 17th century.[14]

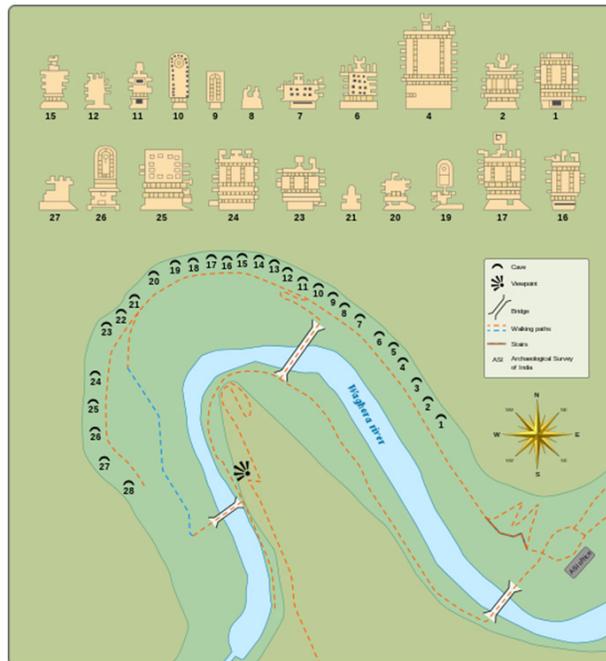
They were covered by jungle until accidentally "discovered" and brought to Western attention in 1819 by a colonial British officer Captain John Smith on a tiger-hunting party. The caves are in the rocky northern wall of the U-shaped

gorge of the river Waghur, in the Deccan plateau. Within the gorge are a number of waterfalls, audible from outside the caves when the river is high.

NOTES

With the Ellora Caves, Ajanta is one of the major tourist attractions of Maharashtra. It is about 6 kilometres (3.7 miles) from Fardapur, 59 kilometres (37 miles) from the city of Jalgaon, Maharashtra, India, 104 kilometres (65 miles) from the city of Aurangabad, and 350 kilometres (220 miles) east-northeast of Mumbai. Ajanta is 100 kilometres (62 miles) from the Ellora Caves, which contain Hindu, Jain and Buddhist caves, the last dating from a period similar to Ajanta. The Ajanta style is also found in the Ellora Caves and other sites such as the Elephanta Caves, Aurangabad Caves, Shivleni Caves and the cave temples of Karnataka.

5.4 HISTORY



Map of Ajanta Caves

The Ajanta Caves are generally agreed to have been made in two distinct phases, the first during the 2nd century BCE to 1st century CE, and a second several centuries later.

The caves consist of 36 identifiable foundations. Some of them discovered after the original numbering of the caves from 1 through 29. The later-identified caves have been suffixed with the letters of the alphabet, such as 15A, identified between originally numbered caves 15 and 16.[25] The cave numbering is a convention of convenience, and does not reflect the chronological order of their construction.



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Cave 9, a first-period Hinayana-style chaitya worship hall with stupa but no idols

The earliest group consists of caves 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15A. The murals in these caves depict stories from the Jatakas. Later caves reflect the artistic influence of the Gupta period, but there are differing opinions on which century in which the early caves were built. According to Walter Spink, they were made during the period 100 BCE to 100 CE, probably under the patronage of the Hindu Satavahana dynasty (230 BCE – c. 220 CE) who ruled the region. Other datings prefer the period of the Maurya Empire (300 BCE to 100 BCE). Of these, caves 9 and 10 are stupa containing worship halls of chaitya-griha form, and caves 12, 13, and 15A are vihāras (see the architecture section below for descriptions of these types). The first Satavahana period caves lacked figurative sculpture, emphasizing the stupa instead.

According to Spink, once the Satavahana period caves were made, the site was not further developed for a considerable period until the mid-5th century. However, the early caves were in use during this dormant period, and Buddhist pilgrims visited the site, according to the records left by Chinese pilgrim Faxian around 400 CE.

5.4.1 Caves of Vākātaka, period

The second phase of construction at the Ajanta Caves site began in the 5th century. For a long time it was thought that the later caves were made over an extended period from the 4th to the 7th centuries CE, but in recent decades a series of studies by the leading expert on the caves, Walter M. Spink, have argued that most of the work took place over the very brief period from 460 to 480 CE, during the reign of Hindu Emperor Harishena of the Vākātaka dynasty. This view has been criticised by some scholars, but is now broadly accepted by most authors of general books on Indian art, for example, Huntington and Harle.

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The second phase is attributed to the theistic Mahāyāna, or Greater Vehicle tradition of Buddhism. Caves of the second period are 1–8, 11, 14–29, some possibly extensions of earlier caves. Caves 19, 26, and 29 are chaitya-grihas, the rest viharas. The most elaborate caves were produced in this period, which included some refurbishing and repainting of the early caves.

Spink states that it is possible to establish dating for this period with a very high level of precision; a fuller account of his chronology is given below. Although debate continues, Spink's ideas are increasingly widely accepted, at least in their broad conclusions. The Archaeological Survey of India website still presents the traditional dating: "The second phase of paintings started around 5th–6th centuries A.D. and continued for the next two centuries".

According to Spink, the construction activity at the incomplete Ajanta Caves was abandoned by wealthy patrons in about 480 CE, a few years after the death of Harishena. However, states Spink, the caves appear to have been in use for a period of time as evidenced by the wear of the pivot holes in caves constructed close to 480 CE. The second phase of constructions and decorations at Ajanta corresponds to the very apogee of Classical India, or India's golden age. However, at that time, the Gupta Empire was already weakening from internal political issues and from the assaults of the Hūnas, so that the Vakatakas were actually one of the most powerful empires in India.

Some of the Hūnas, the Alchon Huns of Toramana, were precisely ruling the neighbouring area of Malwa, at the doorstep of the Western Deccan, at the time the Ajanta caves were made. Through their control of vast areas of northwestern India, the Huns may actually have acted as a cultural bridge between the area of Gandhara and the Western Deccan, at the time when the Ajanta or Pitalkhora caves were being decorated with some designs of Gandharan inspiration, such as Buddhas dressed in robes with abundant folds.

According to Richard Cohen, a description of the caves by 7th-century Chinese traveler Xuanzang and scattered medieval graffiti suggest that the Ajanta Caves were known and probably in use subsequently, but without a stable or steady Buddhist community presence. The Ajanta caves are mentioned in the 17th-century text *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abu al-Fazl, as twenty four rock-cut cave temples each with remarkable idols.

During the colonial era, the Ajanta site was in the territory of the princely state of the Hyderabad and not British India. In the early 1920s, Mir Osman Ali Khan the last Nizam of Hyderabad appointed people to restore the artwork, converted the site into a museum and built a road to bring tourists to the site for a fee. These efforts resulted in early mismanagement, states Richard Cohen, and hastened the deterioration of the site. Post-independence, the state government of Maharashtra built arrival, transport, facilities, and better site management. The modern Visitor Center has good parking facilities and public conveniences and ASI operated buses run at regular intervals from Visitor Center to the caves.

The Nizam's Director of Archaeology obtained the services of two experts from Italy, Professor Lorenzo Cecconi, assisted by Count Orsini, to restore the paintings in the caves. The Director of Archaeology for the Nizam of Hyderabad said of the work of Cecconi and Orsini:

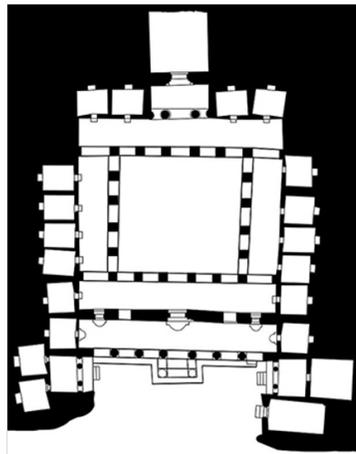
The repairs to the caves and the cleaning and conservation of the frescoes have been carried out on such sound principles and in such a scientific manner that these matchless monuments have found a fresh lease of life for at least a couple of centuries.

Since 1983, Ajanta caves have been listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of India. The Ajanta Caves, along with the Ellora Caves, have become the most popular tourist destination in Maharashtra, and are often crowded at holiday times, increasing the threat to the caves, especially the paintings. In 2012, the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation announced plans to add to the ASI visitor centre at the entrance complete replicas of caves 1, 2, 16 & 17 to reduce crowding in the originals, and enable visitors to receive a better visual idea of the paintings, which are dimly-lit and hard to read in the caves.

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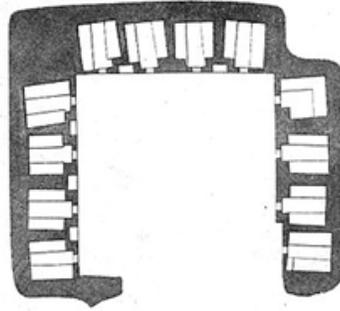
5.5 MONASTERIES AND SANCTUARIES

The caves at Ajanta date from the 2nd century B.C.E. to 650 C.E and were cut into the mountainside in two distinct phases. Discovered by chance in 1819 by British soldiers on a hunt, the Ajanta Caves have become an icon of ancient Indian art, and have influenced subsequent artists and styles. The caves at the site are not numbered chronologically. Instead, their numbering based on location, beginning with cave 1 on the north side of the horseshoe. All of the caves at Ajanta fall into the category of Vihara (monasteries with residence halls), or Chaitya-grihas (sanctuaries/stupa monument halls). Nevertheless, each cave has its own unique characteristics, making it difficult to write about Ajanta as a whole.

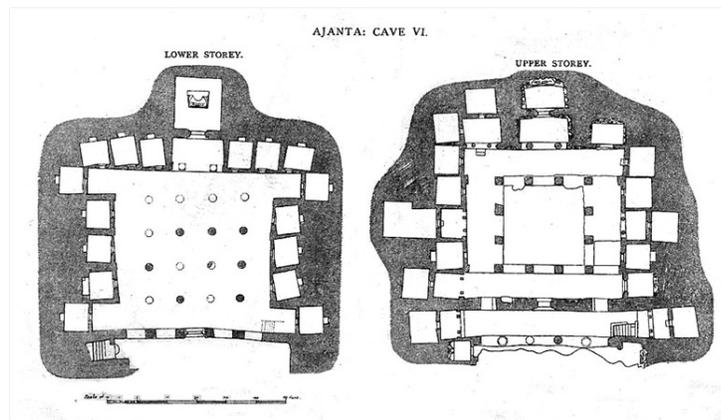


Plan of Cave 1

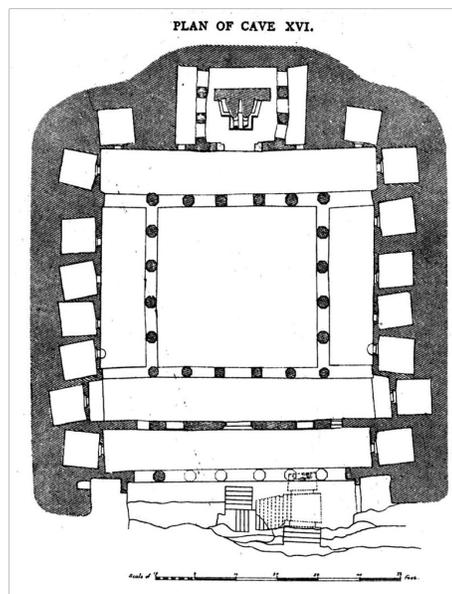
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Cave 12 plan: an early type of vihara (1st century BCE) without internal shrine



Cave 6: a two-storey monastery with "Miracle of Sravasti" and "Temptation of Mara" painted.



Cave 16: a monastery featuring two side aisles

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The Ajanta caves are engulfed in darkness. In fact, this lack of light is crucial to the experience at Ajanta; demanding the viewer's time while intensifying a sense of the mysterious. There may have been dim artificial lighting created by oil lamps in the past. However, even today, the majority of the caves remain almost completely dark and without the help of artificial lighting, the caves remain in their original state.

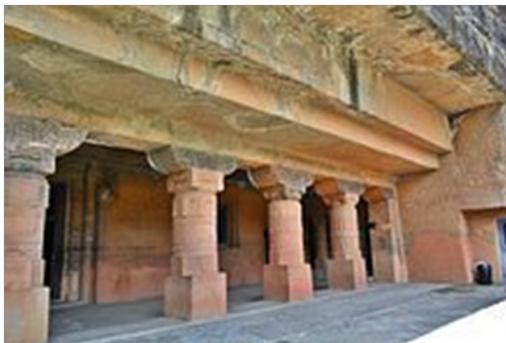
Cave 1 is a magnificently painted Vihara (monastery), filled with wall murals, sculptures, and ceiling paintings, that date back to the 5th century. Originally, Cave 1 also had a porch which led to the main hall, however it has since collapsed.

The main hall of Cave 1 is a square in plan, with aisles along all four sides. Adjacent to these aisles are doorways leading to fourteen small chambers. Cave 1 contains twenty painted and carved pillars. Above the pillars are reliefs depicting tales from the life of Buddha (Jataka tales). Located at the rear of the hall is a large shrine of the Buddha. The walls were originally covered in paintings, but today there are only nine surviving images, the most famous being the Bodhisattva Padmapani (Padmapani in Sanskrit literally translates into "one who holds the lotus").



the rear view of Cave 1 with the Bodhisattva Padmapani to the left of the Buddha Shrine

5.5.1 Site



Cave 24; the Ajanta Caves were carved into a massive rock on the Deccan plateau

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The caves are carved out of flood basalt rock of a cliff, part of the Deccan Traps formed by successive volcanic eruptions at the end of the Cretaceous geological period. The rock is layered horizontally, and somewhat variable in quality. This variation within the rock layers required the artists to amend their carving methods and plans in places. The inhomogeneity in the rock have also led to cracks and collapses in the centuries that followed, as with the lost portico to cave 1. Excavation began by cutting a narrow tunnel at roof level, which was expanded downwards and outwards; as evidenced by some of the incomplete caves such as the partially-built vihara caves 21 through 24 and the abandoned incomplete cave 28.

The sculpture artists likely worked at both excavating the rocks and making the intricate carvings of pillars, roof, and idols; further, the sculpture and painting work inside a cave were integrated parallel tasks. A grand gateway to the site was carved, at the apex of the gorge's horseshoe between caves 15 and 16, as approached from the river, and it is decorated with elephants on either side and a nāga, or protective Naga (snake) deity. Similar methods and application of artist talent is observed in other cave temples of India, such as those from Hinduism and Jainism. These include the Ellora Caves, Ghototkacha Caves, Elephanta Caves, Bagh Caves, Badami Caves, Aurangabad Caves and Shivleni Caves.

The caves from the first period seem to have been paid for by a number of different patrons to gain merit, with several inscriptions recording the donation of particular portions of a single cave. The later caves were each commissioned as a complete unit by a single patron from the local rulers or their court elites, again for merit in Buddhist afterlife beliefs as evidenced by inscriptions such as those in Cave 17. After the death of Harisena, smaller donors motivated by getting merit added small "shrinelets" between the caves or add statues to existing caves, and some two hundred of these "intrusive" additions were made in sculpture, with a further number of intrusive paintings, up to three hundred in cave 10 alone.

5.5.2 Worship halls



Interior of Ajanta chaitya hall, Cave 26, photo by Robert Gill (c. 1868);

The other type of main hall architecture is the narrower rectangular plan with high arched ceiling type chaitya-griha – literally, "the house of stupa". This hall is longitudinally divided into a nave and two narrower side aisles separated

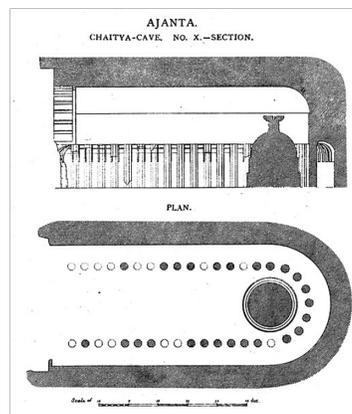
by a symmetrical row of pillars, with a stupa in the apse. The stupa is surrounded by pillars and concentric walking space for circumambulation. Some of the caves have elaborate carved entrances, some with large windows over the door to admit light.

There is often a colonnaded porch or verandah, with another space inside the doors running the width of the cave. The oldest worship halls at Ajanta were built in the 2nd to 1st century BCE, the newest ones in the late 5th century CE, and the architecture of both resembles the architecture of a Christian church, but without the crossing or chapel chevette. The Ajanta Caves follow the Cathedral-style architecture found in still older rock-cut cave carvings of ancient India, such as the Lomas Rishi Cave of the Ajivikas near Gaya in Bihar dated to the 3rd century BCE. These chaitya-griha are called worship or prayer halls.

The four completed chaitya halls are caves 9 and 10 from the early period, and caves 19 and 26 from the later period of construction. All follow the typical form found elsewhere, with high ceilings and a central "nave" leading to the stupa, which is near the back, but allows walking behind it, as walking around stupas was (and remains) a common element of Buddhist worship (pradakshina).

The later two have high ribbed roofs carved into the rock, which reflect timber forms, and the earlier two are thought to have used actual timber ribs and are now smooth, the original wood presumed to have perished. The two later halls have a rather unusual arrangement (also found in Cave 10 at Ellora) where the stupa is fronted by a large relief sculpture of the Buddha, standing in Cave 19 and seated in Cave 26. Cave 29 is a late and very incomplete chaitya hall.

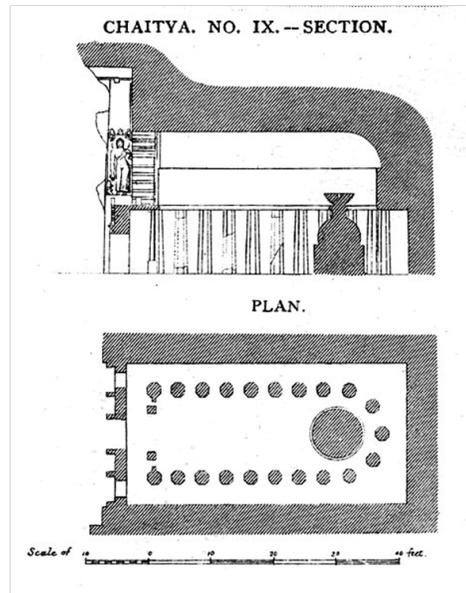
The form of columns in the work of the first period is very plain and unembellished, with both chaitya halls using simple octagonal columns, which were later painted with images of the Buddha, people and monks in robes. In the second period columns were far more varied and inventive, often changing profile over their height, and with elaborate carved capitals, often spreading wide. Many columns are carved over all their surface with floral motifs and Mahayana deities, some fluted and others carved with decoration all over, as in cave 1.



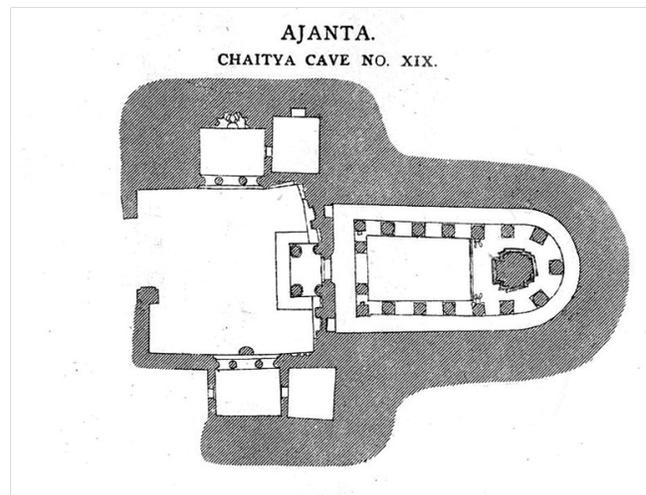
Cave 10: a worship hall with Jataka tales-related art (1st century BCE)

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Cave 9: a worship hall with early paintings and animal friezes (1st century CE)



Cave 19: known for its figures of the Buddha, Kubera and other arts (th century CE)

5.6 PAINTINGS OF AJANTA CAVES

The paintings in the Ajanta caves predominantly narrate the Jataka tales. These are Buddhist legends describing the previous births of the Buddha. These fables embed ancient morals and cultural lores that are also found in the fables and legends of Hindu and Jain texts. The Jataka tales are exemplified through the life example and sacrifices that the Buddha made in hundreds of his past incarnations, where he is depicted as having been reborn as an animal or human.

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Mural paintings survive from both the earlier and later groups of caves. Several fragments of murals preserved from the earlier caves (Caves 10 and 11) are effectively unique survivals of ancient painting in India from this period, and "show that by Sātavāhana times, if not earlier, the Indian painters had mastered an easy and fluent naturalistic style, dealing with large groups of people in a manner comparable to the reliefs of the Sāñcī toraṇa crossbars". Some connections with the art of Gandhara can also be noted, and there is evidence of a shared artistic idiom.

Four of the later caves have large and relatively well-preserved mural paintings which, states James Harle, "have come to represent Indian mural painting to the non-specialist", and represent "the great glories not only of Gupta but of all Indian art". They fall into two stylistic groups, with the most famous in Caves 16 and 17, and apparently later paintings in Caves 1 and 2.

The latter group were thought to be a century or later than the others, but the revised chronology proposed by Spink would place them in the 5th century as well, perhaps contemporary with it in a more progressive style, or one reflecting a team from a different region. The Ajanta frescos are classical paintings and the work of confident artists, without clichés, rich and full.

They are luxurious, sensuous and celebrate physical beauty, aspects that early Western observers felt were shockingly out of place in these caves presumed to be meant for religious worship and ascetic monastic life.^[91]

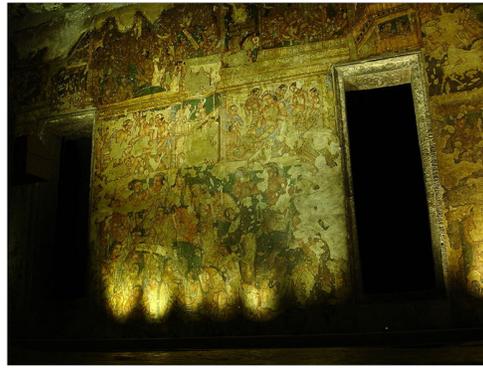
The paintings are in "dry fresco", painted on top of a dry plaster surface rather than into wet plaster. All the paintings appear to be the work of painters supported by discriminating connoisseurship and sophisticated patrons from an urban atmosphere. We know from literary sources that painting was widely practised and appreciated in the Gupta period.

Unlike much Indian mural painting, compositions are not laid out in horizontal bands like a frieze, but show large scenes spreading in all directions from a single figure or group at the centre. The ceilings are also painted with sophisticated and elaborate decorative motifs, many derived from sculpture.

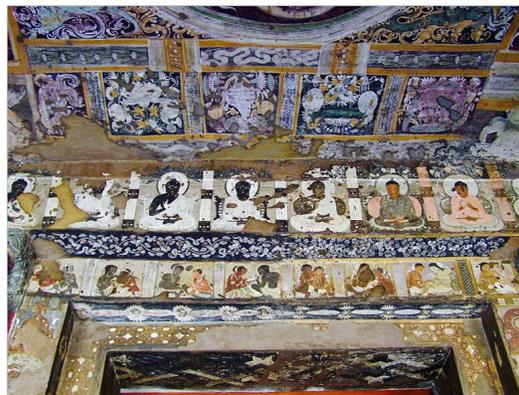
The paintings in cave 1, which according to Spink was commissioned by Harisena himself, concentrate on those Jataka tales which show previous lives of the Buddha as a king, rather than as deer or elephant or another Jataka animal. The scenes depict the Buddha as about to renounce the royal life.

In general the later caves seem to have been painted on finished areas as excavating work continued elsewhere in the cave, as shown in caves 2 and 16 in particular. According to Spink's account of the chronology of the caves, the abandonment of work in 478 after a brief busy period accounts for the absence of painting in places including cave 4 and the shrine of cave 17, the latter being plastered in preparation for paintings that were never done.

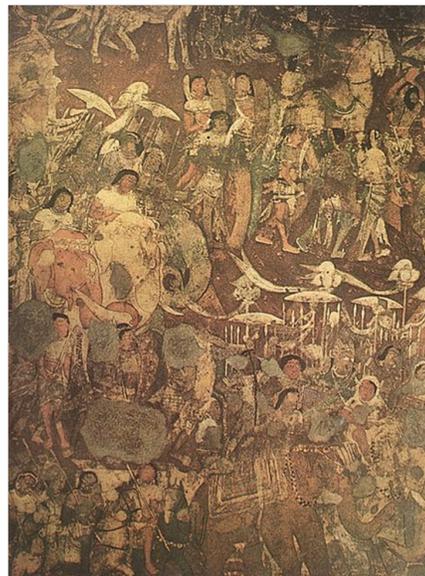
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Cave 2, showing the extensive paint loss of many areas. It was never finished by its artists, and shows Vidhura Jataka



Cave 17 verandah doorway; eight Buddhas above eight couples



Section of the mural in Cave 17, the 'coming of Sinhala'. The prince (Prince Vijaya) is seen in both groups of elephants and riders.

NOTES**Cave 13****A. Ajanta Paintings in Cave No. 1**

This is a heavily painted cave and paintings are relatively well preserved – at least to an extent that you can understand them. Caves are very dark; it is not possible to see the paintings without the help of reflectors that have been placed at the entrance of the cave. Guides also carry some approved lighting that they briefly put on the paintings to show you the details. As you struggle with adjusting your eyes to the darkness inside you wonder how the painters painted such exquisite and detailed mural paintings in darkness. This remains an issue of

This remains an issue of inquiry for art historians. There is no consensus on it – especially now that they have timed the excavation and paintings to about 30-50 years time frame. Reflectors give light inside the caves but only for a couple of hours of the day. Any other lighting technique should have left its mark on the walls but no one has observed anything to that effect till now.

B. What are the Ajanta Paintings?**Jataka Tales paintings at the caves**

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C. Tempera Technique

These paintings are often called Frescos. Technically speaking they are not Frescos as Frescos are paintings that are done when the surface is still wet. Ajanta paintings were made on a dry surface using a technique known as Tempera. Depending upon the surface a base of Mud or Husk was put which was then covered with lime, on which these paintings were then painted.

D. Jataka Tales

Thematically walls of the caves have Jataka Tales that tell the stories of Bodhisattvas painted on them. Bodhisattvas are the earlier Buddhas on the path to becoming a Buddha, not yet Buddha but still carrying some traits of Buddha. There are 550 or so tales and some of them can be seen painted and sculpted at all Buddhist sites. Other than Jataka tales, the Bodhisattvas and Buddha are also painted on the walls. Bodhisattvas can be any species – elephant, monkey, snake, swan or a human being though it is never a female.



Flora & Fauna on ceilings

Ceilings do not have any religious stories or figures. They usually have decorative motifs with animal figures. You would see a lot of geometrical designs on ceilings in the caves. The logic behind this choice of place to paint stories is that stories can be understood while walking around on walls but not on the ceilings. Corners are typically painted with demons in a smoky cloudy way in dark and dull colors. Indicating that demons do not have a fixed shape. And they can take any shape they want and they are also not benign beings.

E. Bodhisattva Padmapani painting

Flanking a door inside the Cave no 1 are two Bodhisattvas – Bodhisattva Padmapani and Bodhisattva Vajrapani. I am going to take the one on the left – the most famous face of Ajanta caves and point out its nuances to you. This would intuitively help you understand the other mural paintings on the walls.



Bodhisattva Padmapani at cave no. 1

This is Bodhisattva Padmapani – literally meaning the one holding the Padma or a lotus flower in his hand. Look at this picture for a minute or so and you can notice.

the details of Bodhisattva Padmapani Painting

- A perfectly painted external form.
- A triangular tiara in perfect proportion on an oval face showing just a thin line of hair on the forehead.
- Downcast lotus shaped eyes that are half closed.
- A full and sensuous lower lip.
- Neat bow shaped eyebrows.
- **Chiseled Nose** – White color has been used to show its shape.
- An expansive chest and a narrow waist.
- Arms are a little awkward and two arms look a little different. This is because as per the canonicals of Indian sculpture or Shilpashastras the Mahapurush or the great men are supposed to have arms that look like elephant trunks. Arms are also supposed to be long enough to reach their knees.
- **Fingers are long and tapering** – making them look very delicate, especially as they hold the lotus.
- An Ekavali or a single pearl string around the neck with a blue sapphire in the middle. The pearls become smaller as they go around – a design that you can still see in practice.

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F. Sensuous & Divine, Materialistic & Spiritual

Now take a look at this picture in totality. It has all the signs of a materialistic being on it like a tiara, jewelry & fine clothing. Having said that, do you see the half-closed eyes full of Karuna or compassion?

At the same time do they not look deeply meditative and dispassionate? This paradox is the beauty of this famous painting of Padmapani. It is sensuous and divine at the same time. It is materialistic and spiritual at the same time.



Bodhisattva Vajrapani at cave no. 1

On the Vajrapani image look at the intricate design of his Kirit or Tiara – complex filigree work is depicted with perfection.

G. Jataka Tales paintings at cave no. 1

On the left side of the Cave No 1, you can see the Mahajanaka Jataka painted which is the story of Mahajanaka. The king of Mithila who was born in exile grows up as a common man and comes to know of his royalty. He travels to Swarnabhoomi or Sri Lanka and marries beautiful Shivali.

One fine day, he renounces everything despite being persuaded by Shivali and others against it. The scenes depict the story of Mahajanaka. On the right walls is Nanda Jataka that relates the story of a half-brother of Buddha who was taken to heaven by Buddha before he renounced the world and joined his order.



Ceiling Roundel

- You see the print of clothes worn by the figures in paintings. You can clearly see the Ikkat prints in stripes and Polka dots that were called Pulakbandh (based on the goosebumps that we get when we are happy). There is a depiction of zardozi or brocaded textiles as well. Flying geese is a pattern used on clothes worn on auspicious occasions.
- Landscapes are not shown in these paintings. Nature has a functional purpose and it is shown through animals like deer or mounds and rocks.
- Various musical instruments depict the evolution of music and it is an integral part of life in the courts of kings.
- The stories are not painted sequentially but they are painted spatially i.e. the scenes that happen in one place are painted together. To understand the story it is important that you know the story otherwise it is very difficult to figure out the sequence. Now, of course, the stories are well documented.



Persians painted at the caves

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You can see a Persian ambassador also in this cave and everything about this part of the painting is Persian. The person is depicted in the white skin while most native people have dark skin. The curtains, the long cloak like clothing, the headgear and the cup he is holding in his hand are all in Persian style indicating not only the trade but also a piece of good knowledge about their culture.

I. MATERIAL AND TECHNIQUES

Although records are naturally scanty regarding the technical details of Indian paintings in the early period, there is a certain amount of material from which some idea may be gained of the process by which the artists of Jogimara caves and Ajanta No. IX & X have obtained their results.

Material

- (i) **Brush** - As regards brushes, there is the following reference in the Upamsads, 'Let a man with firmness separate the spirit, the inner soul, from his own body, as from a painter's brush a fibre.' - 6th Valli. This expresses that the early painters did not employ hair for the manufacture of their brushes, but might have made them of fine vegetable fibre. Although we have no knowledge of the kind of brush, as none of them have survived, but the fairly delicate details in some of the paintings denote a comparatively fine implement like vegetable fibre as also mentioned in Upnisada.
- (ii) **Pigments** - In the Jogimara cave, the artists used three distinct pigments.
 - (i) **Red Colour** - Which is haematite, obtained from red oxide of iron.
 - (ii) **White** - Obtained from the earth, common in that locality.
 - (iii) **Black** - Which is evidently an extract of myrobanlans. This dried fruit has been used as a dye in India from the earliest times, and, in combination with a salt of iron, produces an excellent black.

As regards the pigments at Ajanta, Percy Brown writes that "the true fresco painter is limited in his palette, as the pigments have to be capable of resisting the decomposition action of lime and must consequently be extracted from natural earths. But it is possible that the Indian artist at Ajanta like the Egyptian, was allowed a wider range of colours on account of his particular process pertaining more to the tempera method than that of fresco.

He was, therefore, able to use purples, pinks and greens, which would have been destroyed by fresh lime^{1,3}." He further adds that "the various shades of red at Ajanta are ferruginous in origin, while the green pigments seem to be entirely composed of a finely powdered silicate containing iron. The white is largely sulphate of lime, no zinc, baryta, or lead being detectable. The blue has all the appearance of ultramarine, and the yellow is believed to be orpiment, a natural arsenic sulphide."

5.7 DETAILS ABOUT AJANTA CAVES

The 30 caves at Ajanta lie to the north of Aurangabad in the Indhyadri range of Western Ghats. The caves, famous for their temple architecture and many delicately drawn murals, are located in a 76 m high, horseshoe-shaped escarpment overlooking the Waghora (tiger) River. The Ajanta Caves are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage Site.

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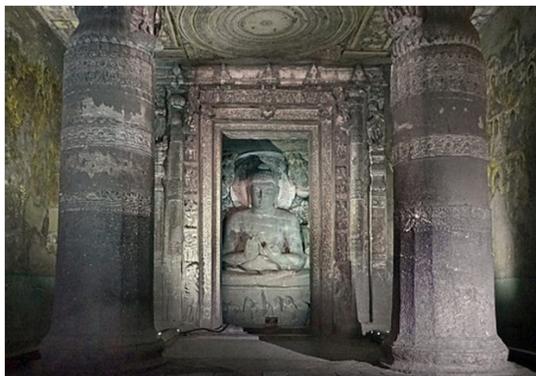


Jataka Image in Ajanta

Cave 1

This is a vihara (monastery), therefore squarish in plan consisting of an open courtyard and verandah with cells on each side, a central hall sided by 14 cells, a vestibule and garbha griha (inner sanctum). Though located at a less than an ideal position of eastern extremity of the ravine its beautifully executed paintings, sculptural and architectural motifs make this cave truly fit for a king; for this is the “regal” cave patronised by Emperor Harisena.

It contains the famed paintings of Bodhisvattas Padmapani and Vajrapani along with a seated figure of Buddha in dharma chakra pravartana mudra in the sanctum. Other notable features include murals that depict Sibi, Samkhapala, Mahajanaka, Mahaummagga, Champeyya Jatakas and temptation of Mara.



Buddha Sculpture in Ajanta

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Cave 2

This vihara consists of a porch with cells on either side, a pillared hall bound by ten cells, an antechamber and garbha griha. Most importantly this cave contains two sub-shrines. Buddha in the main shrine is flanked by two yaksha figures (Sankhanidhi and Padmanidhi) on the left and two others (Hariti & her consort Pancika) on the right. Beautifully decorated cave walls and ceiling portray Vidhurapandita & Ruru Jatakas and miracle of Sravasti, Ashtabhaya Avalokitesvara and the dream of Maya.

Cave 3

This is an incomplete vihara consisting only of a pillared verandah.

Cave 4

The largest vihara in Ajanta has its façade richly ornamented with sculpted figure of Bodhisvatta as a reliever of eight great perils among others. As usual, the construction follows the basic pattern of a pillared verandah with adjoining cells leading to a central hall sided by another group of cells, an antechamber and finally garbha griha. An interesting geological feature here is notable on the ceiling which gives a unique impression of a lava flow.



Buddha with His Disciples

Cave 5

This is an unfinished excavation that proceeded only to carve out a porch and for the most part an incomplete interior hall. By the standards of Ajanta this structure is denuded of any architectural and sculptural motifs save the ornate door frame detailing female figures of makaras.

Cave 6

This two storied structure is referred to as Cave 6 Lower and Cave 6 Upper. Both stories contain an enshrined Buddha. The pillared porch, if there was any, of Cave

6 Lower does not survive today. It is also believed that the upper floor was an afterthought when the excavation of the lower level was well underway. There are some striking examples of murals preserved in the shrine and antechamber of the lower cave. In both the caves, Buddha is seen in various moods.



Nagaraja, Ajanta

Cave 7

This vihara consists of two small porticoes supported by octagonal pillars with eight cells, a central hall rather oblong in shape and the garbha griha with Buddha in preaching pose. Sculptures abound, one of the more notable panels depicts a seated Buddha sheltered by Naga Muchalinda (the many-headed snake king).

Cave 8

Perhaps the earliest monastery, belonging to the Satvahana phase of excavation, this cave is located at the lowest level and a major portion from the front of the structure has been swept away by a landslide. Few architectural details survive but, importantly, the sanctum does not contain an image of Buddha.

Cave 9

Excavated in the 1st century BCE, this is one of the oldest chaitya (prayer halls) in Ajanta. The nave is flanked by aisles on either side separated by a row of 23 pillars with the stupa at the far end. The ceiling of the nave is vaulted but that of the aisles is flat. The stupa stands on a high cylindrical base at the centre of the apse. Signs of wooden rafters and beams on the ceiling, façade and tapered octagonal pillars show an adherence to the contemporary wooden architectural

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style. The paintings here belong to two different eras - the first being at the time of excavation while a repainting of the cave interior was carried out in the later phase of activity, around the 5th century CE.

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Buddha, Ajanta Cave No. 10

Cave 10

This is the earliest chaitya in the cave complex having been built in 2nd century BCE. The nave is separated from the aisles by 39 octagonal pillars with the stupa being located at the apsidal end. Having been repainted in the later phase the cave contains paintings from two different periods. The scenes depict worship of Bodhi tree and stories from Sama and Chhaddanta Jatakas. The heavy begriming of the surface reveal that it was in use together with cave 9 over the centuries, though perhaps not continuously. A Brahmi inscription reads that the façade was a gift of “Vasithiputa Katahadi.”

Cave 11

This is a vihara, datable to the early 5th century CE, typically consisting of a pillared verandah with four cells, a hall with six cells and a long bench and the garbha griha which, besides the image of Buddha in preaching attitude, also contains an unfinished stupa.

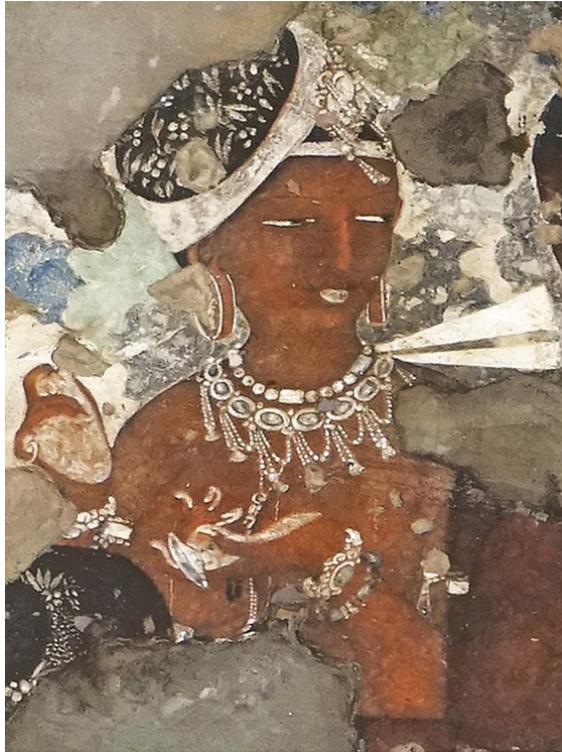
Cave 12

Paleographically datable from the 2nd to 1st century BCE, this vihara was probably excavated slightly after Cave 10. The front of this monastery has collapsed

completely. Only the central hall with four cells in each of its three inner sides remains. Each cell is provided with double beds with raised stone pillows. The cell frontage is ornamented with chaitya window motifs above each door. An inscription records this monastery to be a gift of a merchant named Ghanamadada.

Ajanta Cave

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Mural, Ajanta Caves

Cave 13

This is a rather small vihara from the first phase, possibly 1st century CE, consisting of a central astylar hall with seven adjoining cells distributed on three sides.

Cave 14

Excavated above cave 13, this is an unfinished vihara. Though initially planned on a large scale it hardly progressed beyond the front half. A beautiful depiction of Salabhanjika (a woman breaking a branch of a Shorea tree) on the top corner of the doorway is to be noted.

Cave 15

This vihara was excavated around the middle of the 5th century CE. The plan follows the general vihara format of pillared porch with a cell at each end, an astylar hall accompanied by eight cells, an antechamber and finally a sanctum sanctorum with a sculpture of Buddha.

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Seated Buddha Figure Displaying Dharmachakra Mudra

Cave 15A

This peculiar numbering is due to the fact that this was hidden under the rubble when the caves were being counted. This is the smallest vihara in Ajanta belonging to the early phase of excavation. It consists of a small central astylar hall with one cell on each side. Inside, the hall is relieved following the chaitya window pattern.

Cave 16

It is one of the largest excavations located at the centre of the arc of the ravine. An inscription records it to be a gift of the imperial Prime Minister Varahadeva. The colossal hall is surrounded by 14 cells. The garbha griha contains a sculpted figure of Buddha in pralamba padasana mudra. Some of the finest examples of murals are preserved here. Narratives include various Jataka stories such as Hasti, Maha Ummagga, Maha Sutasoma; other depictions include conversion of Nanda, miracle of Sravasti, dream of Maya and other incidents from the life of Buddha.



Jataka Story in Ajanta

NOTES**Cave 17**

An exemplary collection of paintings and architectural motifs is preserved in this vihara. Excavated under the benefaction of local feudatory Lord Upendragupta, this monastery typically consists of a pillared verandah with cells on either side, a large central hall supported by 20 octagonal pillars and bounded by 17 cells, an antechamber and the garbha griha with an enshrined image of Buddha.

Among the murals the profoundly poignant illustration of Chhaddanta Jataka, exquisite ornamentation of pillars and pilasters, the sublime depiction of graceful beauty of a lady looking at herself in a mirror and the evocative retelling of subjugation of Nalagari by Buddha are some of the highlights. Many Jataka stories are depicted here including Chhaddanta, Mahakapi (in two versions), Hasti, Hamsa, Vessantara, Maha Sutasoma, Sarabha miga, Machchha, Mati Posaka, Sama, Mahisa, Valahass, Sibi, Ruru and Nigrodhamiga.

Cave 18

This was mistakenly counted as a cave. It is a porch with two pillars having moulded bases and octagonal shafts.



Cave 19, Ajanta, Deccan

Cave 19

The façade of this chaitya is splendidly decorated with various carved figures and decorative motifs. Buddha offering his begging bowl to his son Rahul is depicted close to the entry door. Also, two life size yaksha figures are sculpted on either side of the chaitya arch. Inside, the apsidal plan divides the space into a nave separated

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by a colonnade of 17 pillars from aisles with the apse at the terminal end housing the stupa. A standing figure of Buddha is carved at the front of the stupa whose umbrella-like crown almost touches the vaulted roof. The triforium is elaborated with figures of Buddha in different poses. The aisle walls still preserve some very beautiful mural paintings. Interestingly, the courtyard outside is flanked by two side porches.

Cave 20

Possibly donated by Upendragupta, this vihara consists of a verandah with a cell on each side and the interior hall is flanked by two cells on each side. The garbha griha houses Buddha in preaching attitude.

A sculptural panel of note here depicts seven Buddhas accompanied by their attendants. Most interestingly, the central hall is astylar and the antechamber advances into the hall.

Cave 21

This vihara consists of a verandah with restored pillars, a hall with 12 pillars accompanied cells in equal numbers. Out of these 12 cells, four are supplied with pillared porches. Buddha in dharma chakra pravartana mudra is sculpted in the garbha griha and traces of paintings on the wall show Buddha preaching a congregation.

Cave 22

The central hall of this vihara is astylar in form bounded by four unfinished cells. Carved in the back wall of the shrine Buddha is depicted in pralamba padasana mudra. Painted figures of Manushi Buddhas with Maitreya can also be noticed here.

Cave 23

Though unfinished this vihara is renowned for its intricately carved pillars and pilasters and naga (snake) doorkeepers. The whole structure comprises a verandah with cells at each end, an astylar hall with four cells, an antechamber with side cells, and the garbha griha.

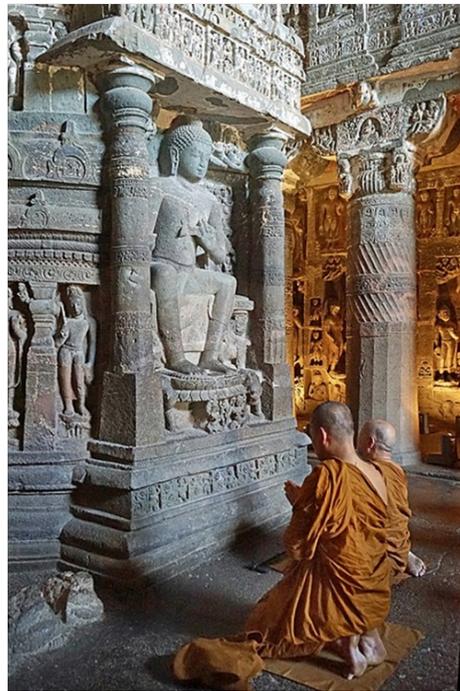
Cave 24

Another incomplete vihara but the second largest excavation after Cave 4. The garbha griha houses a Buddha in pralamba padasana mudra but the cells bounding the central hall are unfinished.

Cave 25

An unfinished excavation at a higher level, the astylar central hall is not bound by any cell, also it is devoid of a garbha griha.

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Stupa in Ajanta

Cave 26

This chaitya is famous for its striking depiction of Mahaparinirvana (demise) of Buddha on the left aisle wall along with the assault of Mara during Buddha's penance. Quite comparable to cave 17 but of grander and more elaborate design, an inscription on the front verandah records it to be a gift of Buddhahadra, a friend of Asmaka minister Bhavviraja. The façade, inner pillars, trifolium, and aisle walls are all skilfully decorated. The stupa has a sculpted figure of Buddha in pralamba padasana mudra.



Façade of an Ajanta Cave

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Cave 27

Possibly a part of Cave 26, this two-storied structure is a vihara. The upper storey is partially collapsed while the lower storey consists of an inner hall with four cells, an antechamber and garbha griha with an enshrined image of Buddha.

Cave 28

This is an unfinished vihara whose pillared verandah was only excavated before being abandoned. The cave is now inaccessible.

Cave 29

An unfinished chaitya, located at the highest level between Cave 20 and 21. This cave too is now unreachable.

Cave 30

This vihara was discovered during debris clearance between Caves 15 and 16. A small structure with a narrow opening, the inside hall is bounded by three cells.



Resting Buddha in Ajanta

Rediscovery & Preservation

After centuries of neglect and desertion, the caves were accidentally discovered by John Smith, a member of a British hunting party in 1819 CE. With growing popularity within a few years of its rediscovery the once nondescript ravine became a soft target for unscrupulous treasure hunters. Before long, however, Indian antiquarian, archaeologist and architectural historian James Fergusson took a keen interest in their study, preservation and categorisation. It was he who commissioned Major Robert Gill to make reproductions of the paintings and together with James Burgess also numbered the caves.

Major Gill worked on 30 large scale canvases from 1844 to 1863 CE. These were displayed at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham, however, most of these paintings were soon destroyed in a fire in 1866 CE. John Griffiths, principal of the Bombay School of Art, was next commissioned to make copies of the paintings from 1872 CE onwards. It took him thirteen years to complete the project, but disaster struck yet again and well over a hundred canvases were incinerated in 1875 CE at the Imperial Institute.



Murals of Ajanta Cave

Over the following decades Lady Christiana Herringham, Kampo Arai and Mukul Dey made noteworthy attempts at copying the paintings.

- Following the initiative of Ananda Coomeraswamy and William Rothenstein, Lady Herringham undertook the project and arrived at the site in 1910 CE. She was assisted by a team of contributors which included contemporary Indian artists Nandalal Bose and Asit Kumar Haldar among others. Lady Herringham worked mainly during the winter of 1910 – 1911 CE. The completed pictures were exhibited in 1915 CE by Indian Societies of Calcutta and London.
- Kampo Arai arrived in Santiniketan in the year 1916 CE; later he too proceeded to study and make copies of the murals of Ajanta. By a curious turn of fate his reproductions too were ruined while in storage at the Tokyo Imperial University following the earthquake of 1923 CE.
- Through an independent initiative noted Indian artist and photographer Mukul Dey visited Ajanta in early 1919 CE where he spent the next nine months making copies of the paintings. The experiences and adventures of this trip are fondly recollected in his book *My Pilgrimages to Ajanta and Bagh*.
- The celebrated Indian archaeologist Ghulam Yazdani worked tirelessly for many years from around 1920's CE for restoration and conservation of the caves and also made a comprehensive photographic survey of Ajanta.

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Two Traders in Discussion, Ajanta

Over a century and a half has passed since comprehensive scholarly studies were first undertaken at Ajanta. Any attempt to list the countless individuals whose unflagging pursuits to record, decipher and understand the many untold mysteries of the site, would be grossly incomplete. Nonetheless, pioneering work of a few individuals do stand out from a background of a teeming multitude. So, the following lines record the names of the historians and archaeologists whose patient work has illuminated many a dark niches and made it available to laity and connoisseurs alike.

- In the field of epigraphy, it was James Prinsep who first reproduced a few of the many inscriptions (over ninety has been recorded) in 1836 CE. Bhau Daji translated and added upon this collection when he visited the caves in 1863 CE. Other significant attempts that followed were by Bhagwan Lal Indraji, Georg Bühler, B Chhabra and Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi.
- Chronological study of Ajanta has become conterminous with Walter M Spink. Over a prolific career spanning five decades or more, he has meticulously reconstructed phase by phase the excavations of the later era under Vakataka Emperor Harisena. His comprehensive research has significantly reduced the arbitrariness of the dates and shed light on the many sociological and political influences that shaped the course of history in Ajanta.
- Dieter Schlingloff is widely recognized for his extensive study of the murals of Ajanta. Identification of the many tales of Jataka, their interpretation, iconographic significance and ties with Buddhist religion has been his life work. In many cases he has also received the able support of Monika Zin.
- Under Manager Rajdeo Singh, chief conservationist of ASI, over the last decade and a half, a painstaking restoration of the paintings of the caves 9 & 10 has been undertaken with marked success. Some of the murals that have lain hidden under grime, dust and misguided restoration efforts of a century ago can now be appreciated in their full beauty.



The Ajanta Caves

Though much has been irreparably damaged, a few debatable and, in all possibility, misplaced inferences have been drawn, it is through the combined efforts of many artists, archaeologists, historians, conservationists, geologists and antiquarians that the caves of Ajanta with all its grandeur and compassionate attitude continue to enthrall and comfort the nameless many.

5.8 ALAVOKITESVARA

This painting can be found to the left on the main shrine. It depicts one of the most beloved bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara. The term "bodhisattva" refers to a person that has been awakened by the Buddhist spirit. According to Mahayana doctrine, Alavokitesvara postponed his ascension into Buddhahood until he assisted every being in achieving Nirvana. Avalokitesvara takes the largest numbers of forms across Asia. Originally, a masculine form, Avalokitesvara is also known as the feminine Guanyin in China, and Kuan Yin in Japan.

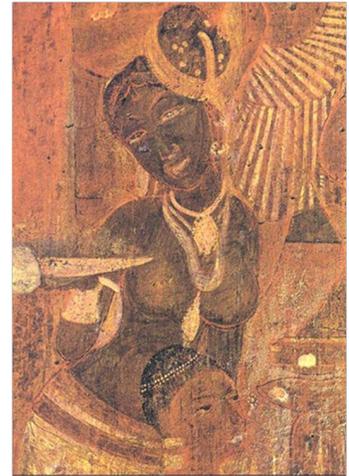


Bodhisattva Padmapani , Cave 1

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In the painting, his tan body, darkened only by the locks of curly hair, is delicate and elegant. He is adorned with pearls, amethyst, and other attributes of traditional Indian jewelry. On his head sits a magnificent crown, which at some point was most likely colored in extreme detail, but over time has faded. His eyes are lowered in a meditative state. His calm, spiritual face sets the tone and mood of the room. In his right hand, he holds a lotus blossom, which may represent his spiritual awakening.



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5.9 LET US SUM UP

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The Ajanta Caves are approximately 30 rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments which date from the 2nd century BCE to about 480 CE in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra state of India. The caves include paintings and rock-cut sculptures described as among the finest surviving examples of ancient Indian art, particularly expressive paintings that present emotions through gesture, pose and form.

They are universally regarded as masterpieces of Buddhist religious art. The caves were built in two phases, the first starting around the 2nd century BCE and the second occurring from 400–650 CE, according to older accounts, or in a brief period of 460–480 CE according to later scholarship. The site is a protected monument in the care of the Archaeological Survey of India, and since 1983, the Ajanta Caves have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The paintings in the Ajanta caves predominantly narrate the Jataka tales. These are Buddhist legends describing the previous births of the Buddha. These fables embed ancient morals and cultural lores that are also found in the fables and legends of Hindu and Jain texts. The Jataka tales are exemplified through the life example and sacrifices that the Buddha made in hundreds of his past incarnations, where he is depicted as having been reborn as an animal or human.

Mural paintings survive from both the earlier and later groups of caves. Several fragments of murals preserved from the earlier caves (Caves 10 and 11) are effectively unique survivals of ancient painting in India from this period, and "show that by Sātavāhana times, if not earlier, the Indian painters had mastered an easy and fluent naturalistic style, dealing with large groups of people in a manner comparable to the reliefs of the Sāñcī toraṇa crossbars". Some connections with the art of Gandhara can also be noted, and there is evidence of a shared artistic idiom.

5.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Give a brief note on art of Ajanta caves

Q2 Explain about the characteristics of cave painting of Ajanta caves ?

BAGH, BADAMI, SITTANVASAL, ELLORA AND ELEPHANTA CAVES

STRUCTURE

- 6.1 Learning Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Bagh Caves
- 6.4 History of Bagh Caves
- 6.5 About the Bagh Caves
- 6.6 Some paintings of Bagh Caves
- 6.7 Badami Caves
- 6.8 Badami History
- 6.9 Details about Badami Caves
- 6.10 Some Painting and Sculptures Badami Cave Temple
- 6.11 Sittanvasal Caves
- 6.12 History
- 6.13 Architectural features
- 6.14 The Arts Of Sittanavasal Cave
- 6.15 Some Paintings of Sittanvasal Cave
- 6.16 Ellora Caves
- 6.17 History of Ellora Caves
- 6.18 Arts and architecture of Ellora Caves
- 6.19 Some paintings and sculptures of Ellora caves
- 6.20 Elephanta Caves
- 6.21 History
- 6.22 Elephanta Caves Art and Architecture
- 6.23 Let us Sum Up
- 6.24 Check your Progress

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will

- Describe about the Badami Caves, Bagh Caves, Sittanvasal Caves, Ellora Caves and Elephanta Caves

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- Explain History and other details about these Caves,
- Describe their Monasteries and sanctuaries,
- Describe Characteristics of Paintings of the Caves,
- Describe about Caves Art and Architecture,

6.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will learn about the Ancient arts of various caves and about their history and art of the ancient era. We will study about various caves architecture, paintings and sculptures of Bagh Caves, Badami Caves, Sittanvasl Caves, Ellora Caves and Elephanta Caves .

6.3 BAGH CAVES

The Bagh Caves are a group of nine rock-cut monuments, situated among the southern slopes of the Vindhya in Bagh town of Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh state in central India. These monuments are located at a distance of 97 km from Dhar town.

Located on the bank of Baghani river in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. These rock cut caves possess the most amazing paintings known to be made by ancient man. Out of the initial 9 caves only 5 have been extant. These are renowned for mural paintings by master painters of ancient India. The use of the word "cave" is a bit of a misnomer, since these are not natural, but instead examples of Indian rock-cut architecture. The Bagh caves, like those at Ajanta, were excavated by master craftsmen on perpendicular sandstone rock face of a hill on the far bank of a seasonal stream, the Baghani. Buddhist in inspiration, of the nine caves, only five have survived.



All of them are 'viharas' or resting places of monks monasteries having quadrangular plan. A small chamber, usually at the back, forms the 'chaitya', the prayer hall. Most significant of these five extant caves is the Cave 4, commonly known as the Rang Mahal (Palace of Colors). The Bagh Caves were quarried in the

5th -6th century AD, in the very late stages of Buddhism in India, and long after most of the Indian Buddhist Caves had been built, many of them since the 2nd or 1st centuries BCE. They are believed to have been built by Satavahana dynasty during the 5-7th century. Archaeological Survey of India has restored the place over 17 years. The legend says that these caves were established by Buddhist monk Dataka. The caves were carved in late 4th century – 6th century AD.

Bagh, Badami,
Sittanvasal,
Ellora and
Elephanta Caves

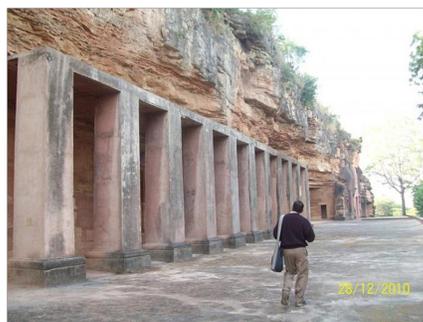
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Bagh Caves are known for Mural Paintings. The walls and ceilings were to be painted were covered with a thick mud plaster in brownish orange color. Over this plaster there was done lime-priming and then paintings were laid. This is also known as tempera technique, which refers to use of permanent fast-drying painting medium consisting of colored pigment mixed with a water-soluble binder media. The sophisticated style of art that is seen in the paintings of Ajanta is also found in surviving wall paintings and in fragments of murals in many parts of India. To the external world, Ajanta Caves are probably the only examples of Indian Murals. However it has been proved that the tradition which was started at Ajanta was actually started way back in ancient times. And it did not end with Ajanta but carried forward by people of different faiths at many parts of India.

At the time of discovery of the Bagh caves, only Cave no. 3 and 4 had endured the ravages of time. Murals of Bagh certainly represent “golden age” of Indian classical art.



Entrance of the Bagh Cave



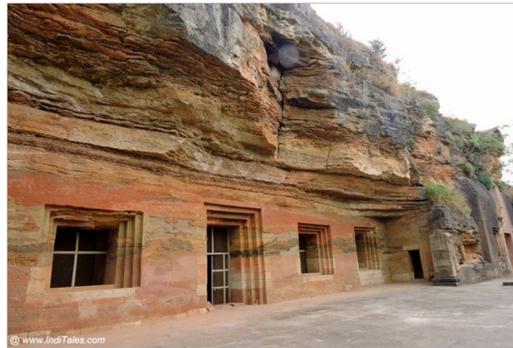
Bagh Caves pillars

6.4 HISTORY OF BAGH CAVES

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The cave paintings here are contemporary of Ajanta Caves. They are about 300 KMs apart but their topography is not very different. These caves are also man-made caves on the banks of the Bhagini river. These caves are a fine example of rock-cut architecture of India that probably began with Barabar caves in Bihar.

They are carved in 5-6th CE that can be called a late Buddhist period in India, making them some of the youngest Buddhist caves. Satvahanas were ruling the region then. A copper plate inscription of 416-17 CE by Maharaja Subandhu of Mahishmati, which is identified as the modern Maheshwar, talks about a grant for this Vihara. It is called Kalyana Vihara in the inscription. It is believed that a Buddhist monk named Dataka established Bagh Caves. The caves were probably abandoned with fall in Buddhism, by 10th CE or so. After this these became the abode of tigers of the region, hence getting the name Bagh.



Rock cut caves

These caves are carved high up on a tall sandstone rock in a neat row. This is the only rock in sandstone in the area while most other rocks are hard basalt rocks.

If we follow the history of 4-5th century, this region was not arid & dry as it seems today. Inscriptions reveals the fact that area has good cultivated land and was more forested too. Inscriptions in Cave-2 given names of 8 villages: Lonakara Pallika, Dagdha Pallika, Devagraharaka, Gavayapaniyaka, Yajnagrahaka, Garjananaka & Pippalajjhara.

Almost all the inscriptions of Bagh caves commence with the term "Valkha" and "Vikha-adishthana" which means powerbase of Chiefdom. If we study only available epigraphs, we will notice Bhamanical influence but caves gives more stress on Buddhist activities.

Their are about 36 epigraphs covering period from AD 358 to 487. Study shows that during that period it was ruled by Guptas. Further study shows that Bagh lost its importance in later years and political center shifted from Bagh to Mahismati (today's Maheshwar town).

6.5 ABOUT THE BAGH CAVES

- **Cave 1:** The first cave known as Griha. It was the dwelling house of the head priest of the cave 2. There is a Shivling and Dwicharan in the cave.
- **Cave 2:** This cave is also famous as Pandavonki Gumpha / Gonsai Gumpha. It was the best preserved and most decorative among the group. The purpose of the cave was purely residential. There is a central figure which is of 3.25 m high Buddha standing above a lotus pedestal with two attending Bodhisattvas.
- **Cave 3:** This cave's name is Hathikhana. Furthermore, it was the residential area for superior members of the society. There are two halls inside, one with a row of cells on each side and another without any cell.
- **Cave 4:** This cave is, Rang-Mahal, because of the paintings admiring its walls. It is the largest one among the group. This hall has cells each on its three sides and a stupa at the rear end. Moreover, the pillars are decorated bracket capitals depicting various kinds of figures mostly animals some with riders and some without. A row of nine seated Buddhas and chaitya windows decorate its T-shaped beam. The purpose of these terminals was to house river Goddesses, during the early Gupta period. The bottom of the doorjambes also has Ganga and Jamuna on either sides. There are many murals on the walls including the paintings of Bodhisattva Padmapani, Mushroom etc.
- **Cave 5:** This cave was used as a discussion room. Two rows of pillars divide the hall into 3 passages..
- **Cave 6:** This cave is connected to cave 5 via a broad passage. The cave has a hall with five cells. Three of these are in the rear end of the hall.
- **Cave 7, 8 and 9:** Since, these caves have collapsed, one cannot visit them now. The restored paintings are now in the Archaeological Museum in Gwalior, and in the on-site museum in Bagh.

Inside Bagh Museum information panels explain the conservation efforts. There are also sections of regained paintings that depict various Jatak (Buddhist tales): Buddha's miracle at Kapilavastu, a horse procession of the Lichhavis at Vaisali, Princess Malini of Benares. In addition to Bodhisattva Padmapani, and a sequence of female musicians and their stories in captions, etc.

6.5.1 ART & ARCHITECTURE

These caves are one of rare specimen of rock cut structure in India, but the most amazing thing in these caves are the murals made in tempera technique, very akin to Ajanta Caves in Aurangabad. Walls had strong mud plaster, and paintings were scribbled through this mud plaster very artistically using a thick plaster in brownish orange color, even the same thing applied over ceiling. The work has done in most similar way like Armamalai Caves in south, Tamil Nadu, Ajanta, Ellora and Karla Caves. Many tourists visit this place in addition to have a look over a beautiful, expressing vivid imagination and talent of artists. There is cave

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number 3 and 4 which is considered best as these paintings are still visible clearly here but one can figure out more in cave number 2, 5 and 7. To prevent further loss of the values of Indian classical art, most paintings were carefully removed in 1982 and today can be seen in Archaeological Museum of Gwalior.



Bagh Caves statues

6.5.2 Paintings of Bagh Caves (6th Century - 7th Century)

The paintings on the wall and ceilings of the viharas of Bagh, the fragments of which are still visible in Cave 3 and Cave 4 (remnants seen also in Caves 2, 5 and 7), were executed in tempera. These paintings are materialistic rather than spiritualistic. Special techniques were used to create the images. The ground prepared was a reddish-brown gritty and thick mud plaster, laid out on the walls and ceilings. Over the plaster, lime-priming was done, on which these paintings were executed. The plaster was polished with lime powder to give the paintings a lasting beautiful look.



Some of the most beautiful paintings were on the walls of the portico of Cave 4. To prevent further loss of the values of Indian classical art, most paintings were carefully removed in 1982 and today can be seen in Archaeological Museum of Gwalior.

The caves, which are nine in number, are situated on the southern slopes of the Vindhya hills in the Amjhera District of the Gwalior State. The cliff side on

which the caves are excavated rises to a height of about 150 feet above the Bagh river and is remarkable as being only the outcrop of sandstone in an otherwise basaltic region. These sandstone caves are surmounted by a deep band of claystone. The interior of these caves was at one time fully decorated with paintings. But the caves have crumbled due to the excessive weight of the superimposed band of claystone.

Moisture percolating through it has also contributed to their destruction. Thus, with the crumbling of the caves many of the paintings have disappeared except a few in caves III and IV. The paintings probably date from the early seventh century A.D. being contemporaneous with the paintings in caves XVI and XVII at Ajanta? The paintings of Bagh and Ajanta form a distinct class by themselves, and belong to the golden age of Indian classical art, which inspired more than half the art of Asia.

In reconstructing the technique of the painting process adopted by the ancient classical artists at Bagh, one has to consider the four principal factors that go to make up the paintings. They will be considered here in order. Samples of three kinds of painted stuccoes that were available were collected from damaged portions of the paintings in cave IV at Bagh, and experiments conducted with them. Two of them had rough plaster of deep red and light red ferruginous earth, while the third had rough plaster of lime. Over them was a layer of fine plaster of some white material, the latter supporting the painted layer.

The walls of the cave temples, and probably also its ceilings, serve as the mechanical supports for the paintings, and function as the carriers. They are of sandstone. The surface of the carrier has been specially left rough so that the rough plaster might hold well. B The sandstone caves were unable to support the excessive weight of the superimposed band of claystone.

Consequently, the walls and ceilings, which are otherwise fairly firm and compact, have crumbled and fallen to pieces, thus destroying the paintings. Moisture has been percolating into the cave from the top, and it has softened and damaged the earth plaster and the paintings attached to them. In several samples, the paintings are covered with white efflorescence caused by the presence of gypsum, sodium sulphate, magnesium sulphate etc. The efflorescence can be traced to salts carried over by the percolating water from outside and deposited over the surface of the paintings, and not to the presence of salts in the plaster.

Technique of painting used: The fresco painting techniques are identical, but the figures, once painted, are not outlined again, which increases the general impression of carefree spontaneity. The subjects treated are presented in a broader, more open fashion than those at Ajanta: a long procession of elephants followed by princes and princesses appear to be on their way to a spring festival. Women, clinging to terraces, watch them pass. The most impressive section is a group of musicians, who surround two long-haired dancers. The twirling, frenzied movement of the ensemble is quite remarkable and portrays a purely pagan joy.

Bagh, Badami,
Sittanvasal,
Ellora and
Elephanta Caves

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This painting is a warm and live expression (though no doubt provincial) of classic Buddhist art.

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The best preserved murals in cave No. 4 we can see that the paintings of Bagh resembled the best works of Ajanta in style. Here too the earth pigments were enriched by the brilliant blue of lapis lazuli. As Bagh lay on a trade route, it may be that this colour was first introduced here and travelled to Ajanta later on. On one of the pilasters of cave No. 4 at Bagh we find an interesting figure of Bodhisatva Padmapani, remarkably akin in pose and ornamentation to the famous Bodhisatva Padmapani at Ajanta. On stylistic grounds, scholars consider it as the forerunner of the great masterpiece in cave No. 1 at Ajanta. On the outer wall of the verandah of cave No. 4 appear many scenes as yet unidentified either from a Jataka or Avadana.

Particularly interesting is the hallisalasya (folk dance) in which women playing musical instruments form a double ring around a pair of male dancers. The pulsating rhythm in the poses and gestures of the figures is complemented by the judicious use of colours. There is also a procession of people riding elephants and horses as magnificent as any such theme found at Ajanta. Birds and flowers too are delineated with exquisite charm.

Details

There is unanimity among scholars that the Buddhist paintings at Bagh are not inferior to those at Ajanta. As paintings at Ajanta are very well known therefore comparison between these two cannot be avoided.

In this regard, Marshall writes that the process and color employed at both the sites seem to be the same, however, at Bagh, less care had been taken over in preparation of the first rough coat (rinfazzo).

Apart from this difference, paintings at both the places exhibit the same broad handling of their subjects, the same poetry of motion, the same wonderful diversity in the poses of their figures, the same feeling of the color and the strong yet subtle line-work.

As the caves were undergoing rapid decay, therefore the conservation of these paintings was a huge task. As the main culprit behind the decay is nature itself therefore the best way to preserve the paintings would be to make their replicas so that the theme and style can survive if originals can no more.

The archaeological department of Gwalior took up the work to reproduce these fast obliterating paintings of Bagh.

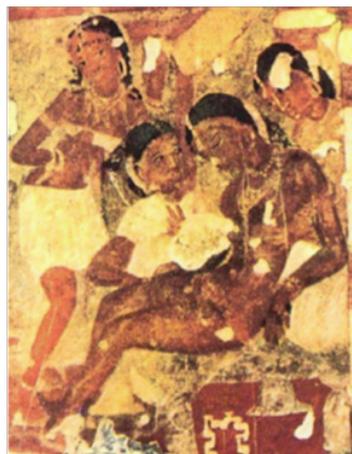
1) Paintings in Cave No 2 – The fact is that the paintings in this cave are no more available to us. The damage from the smoke and soot from the offerings of the sage staying here had already done considerable damage. Traces might still be visible however not many scholars mention it.



PAINTING IN BAGH CAVE 2 Bodhisattva

Walter Spink writes about paintings in this cave and states that a number of attractive paintings are still preserved. He mentions, “here the scrolling flora forms closely to those of in the interior of Ajanta Cave 20. Below one can see trace of figure of a painted Bodhisattva on either side of the door”.

- 2) **Paintings in Cave No 3** – Two separate paintings have survived in this cave and both depict a devotee paying homage to Buddha. The figure which is bending towards a colossal figure of Buddha is identified simply as a monk by various scholars, However Meena Talim identifies him with a lay-devotee, offering lotus flowers to Buddha, probably from Mahayana tradition. The other devotee is shown kneeling down and holding an incense burner in his right hand. He wears no ornaments, keeps a shaven head and his right shoulder is bare. All this led to identify him as Hinayana monk.
- 3) **Paintings in Cave No 4** – This cave, popularly known as Rang Mahal, has the best preserved specimen of paintings. The best out this lot are found on the front wall of the cave, under a modern portico as the original one did not survive.



Scene 1

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Scene 1 – This scene shows two ladies sitting in a pavilion. The lady on the right hand side is seated in grief with her right hand covering her face. The other lady seems to console the former and she rests her left hand on the right shoulder of the other lady. Traces of two pairs of birds are visible on the pavilion roof behind these ladies. Vogel mentions that these birds are apparently blue pigeons.

It is a scene where a queen is grieving on some matter, surrounded by maidens in a palace chamber. This scene from Malinivastu-avadanam. The story is about Malini, a daughter of the king of Varanasi, named Kruki. Malini used to served Buddhist monks with her own hands discarding Brahmin monks. This made Brahmins angry and in protest they sent a message to the king that the Brahmins will only come to his court when Malini is no more there or killed. The king bent to their demand and sent a messenger to bring Malini.

The scene in this painting shows Malini's inner chamber where the news of her banishment was broken to her. The lady on the left hand side, wearing all kinds of ornaments, represents Malini . While the lady on the right hand, who is overwhelmed by hearing this news is a messenger who brought the news to Malini.



Scene 2

Scene 2 – The scene has four seated figures of very dark copper color. They are seated cross-legged, in pairs, on a blue and white cushion, facing each other. They are engaged in some serious discussion as evident from their expressions and positions of hands. The man, second from left, seems to be of some superior rank as he wears an elaborate head-dress and various jewels. He may represent some deity or a king. The person behind him also wears a crown. The remaining two persons are simple in their appearances. There is also a fifth figure in this group, he is a dwarf figure, blue in color, and wears a curious white trefoil shaped on top of his head.

This scene identifies with that of Vidhurapandita Jataka. The painting shows five persons representing the five characters in the above story. The person who is wearing no crown is Vidhurapandita, the Bodhisattva of the Jataka. His right hand is raised upwards and left hand is in his lap. He is in attitude of explaining the virtues. To his left is king Kaurvyakumara who wears a crown smaller than the

other two persons opposite to him. Opposite to them are two people belonging to different worlds. One wearing a long elaborate and square crown would be Shakra, the king of the gods. Besides him is sitting the king of nagas. The small dwarf figure should be identified with the king of Suparna, as the birds are thought to small species therefore his small figure.

Bagh, Badami,
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Scene 3

Scene 3 – This scene shows a group of men and women, placed one above other. The upper part of the painting shows six men. They all are shown emerging from clouds in a way that their body portion below waist is hidden behind clouds, except for the man leading the group whose partial lower body is visible out of clouds. The leader only wears a dhoti while others wear a white or green upper garment which cover their left shoulder leaving the right one bare. The first figure from the left seems to carry a basket or tray, filled with white and blue flowers, in one of his hands.

The five men following a leader are in all same attire and appearance. They have tonsured heads and their attire look like Buddhist monks. The sixth figure is shown without cloths up to his waist. His two hands are forming varada-mudra. He seems to be the leader or the main person to whom others are either following or showing their devotion.

This scene with a story in Santike-nidana (Nidankatha). Monk Kaludayi requested Buddha to visit Kapilavastu and the latter accepted. When Buddha reached Kapilavastu, the elder Shakyas were in dilemma whether to pay homage to prince Siddhartha as the latter was younger to the them. Buddha knowing this doubt in their heads, performed a miracle by rising himself above in the sky and sprinkling foot dust on their heads.

As the divine music would have been played during this miracle, therefore in the painting we have a group is of five female musicians placed below the upper group of men.

The lady in center holds a lute or vina. All of them are shown wearing close fitting bodice, the central one wears a green dotted over white, while the one standing at right wears a blue.

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Scene 4

Scene 4 – This scene shows two groups of women musicians. The first group has seven women standing around an eighth figure. This central figure wears a peculiar dress and therefore is identified with a person of foreign origin, most probably a Persian. He wears a long-sleeve tunic, greenish with white dots and striped trousers. Out of the seven women musicians around him, one holds a drum, three are holding little sticks, two each, and the rest three are holding cymbals. The one with drum is shown without clothes down waist. In front of the group is a bench or couch, blue striped with white cushions of cylindrical form.

The second group is partitioned from the previous one with the help of a green colored wall with a white coping. The second group of musicians consists of six women standing around a seventh man of foreign origin as the previous scene. This central male figure wears a long black tunic and striped trousers and sports long black locks. Out of the six women musicians, one is holding a drum, two with cymbals and the rest three are holding sticks, a pair each.

Beneath the partition of these two groups are found remnants of the solitary inscription, except the copper-plate grants, found at Bagh. The only surviving letter is 'ka' written in Gupta characters. This inscription is the only strong evidence for dating the caves.

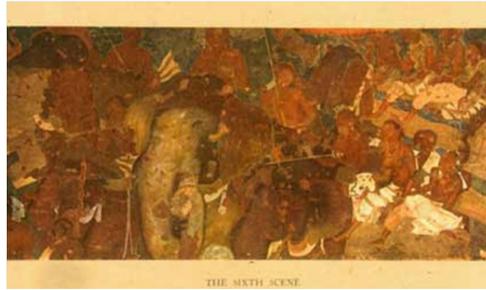
Scene 5 – This scene depicts a cavalcade of horsemen. These horsemen are moving forward in left direction. They are arranged in multiple rows, one above the other. The main person in the group is in the center, clad in a blue dotted yellowish robe. There is a parasol over his head he is mounted on a white horse and has a white umbrella above him. About the rendering of these horses, Vogel writes that the artists had rendered these horses with great feeling for the noble character of these animals which is unparalleled in India and elsewhere.

The entire city of Vaishali was decorated to welcome Buddha. The procession of colorful horses, chariots, and vehicles with a great retinue went out of city to greet Buddha at the banks of Ganga. This procession consists of groups of horses and riders in different colors. There were groups of horses in color blue, bright red, red, white, green and mixed colors. We also find horses in different colors in this

painting. Though not all colors are there, but it has horses in blue, bright red, yellow, green and white.

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Scene 6

Scene 6 – The theme here seems to be a procession where elephants take major role. There are six elephants and three horses while by the time Vogel visited the site, only one horse was traceable. The elephant leading the procession was almost gone except its head slightly visible. The person sitting on top of it is of large size, wearing white cap and blue striped dhoti. His right hand is raised and holds a long stalk of blue flower. The flower to be an open lotus. A person behind him holds a parasol and a chowri. Behind him are two elephants and two baby elephants. Each of these two adult elephants carry four persons, one mahout and three females.



Bodhisattva

The scene with the story of Mahajanaka Jataka. The story goes that one king Mahajanaka expressed his desire to visit the parks of his capital. He mounted on an elephant along with his retinue and arrived at the park. He has two mango trees there, one with laden with fruit and one barren. He plucked on fruit and tasted, it was very sweet and divine. He expressed his desire that he will eat more on his return. His princes and followers also plucked fruits and ate, who did not find fruits devastated the tree. On his return, the king found that the tree which was laden with fruits was all in ruins but the barren one was intact. He asked his minister to explain. The latter explain that the people in search of fruit snatched away the foliage while the barren one was intact as a barren tree does not perish.

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Mahajanaka pondered over the situation and understood the hidden meaning, that a tree laden with fruits is like running a kingdom and one barren is like renunciation. Possession is a danger but not otherwise. Therefore I shall become like a barren tree sacrificing all my wealth and renounce the world. The superior person on the leading elephant represent king Mahajanaka.

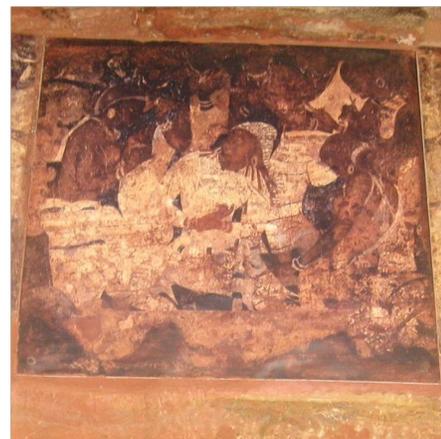


Scene 7

Scene 7 – This scene is separated from the previous one with a gateway. It has four elephants and three horsemen. The scene suggests that the procession of the previous scene has reached to its destination. Below a mango tree is shown a wheel or dharma-chakra. Further under a shade of a plantain three is a figure of Buddha shown seated cross-legged. A disciple of his shown seated beside him.

At present block, printing has become an important part of the Indian painting industry. Today’s artists have adopted this ancient technique and made it much more beautiful through modernization. Lastly, Bagh Cave Painting is one of the historical ‘paintings’ of India. Which gives India an important place in the industry to the whole world.

6.6 SOME PAINTINGS OF BAGH CAVES



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6.7 BADAMI CAVES

Badami or Vatapi as it was earlier known as is one of the most treasured monuments of ancient India. The paintings which are housed in rock-cut cave temples mostly belong to 6th and 8th centuries. The Badami caves were a major source of inspiration to the monuments at Mahabalipuram. The Pallava king was mesmerized by the art and architecture of the Chalukya caves at Badami and took with him the idea of emulating the same concepts back in his kingdom. The remnants of Mahabalipuram are a clear signage to the above fact. Later history also gives clues to Chalukyas taking architectural cues from Pallava temples.

Badami mural paintings are the earliest survivors of the Hindu paintings. Many of them could not stand the effects of time yet some have reasonably survived. The paintings were completed during the period of King Mangalishwara, son of Puleksin I. The caves at Vatapi were fully decorated with murals; many of them were inspired from Puranas. The most surviving murals include the paintings of Shiva and Parvathi as well as some other characters.

The paintings were highly decorated as the remains clearly suggest the grandeur and splendour of the ancient ages of India. The paintings have blurred the religious lines as the art belongs to Hindu, Jain and Buddhist inclinations

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which shows the prevalent secularist thought and tolerance in those times. They also bear a close proximity to the Ajanta art which was a product of the Chitrasutra technique. The Cave number 4 has a mural painting of Adinatha, the Jain tirthankara.

There are 4 caves of which

- Cave 1 is oldest among the four caves. Paintings on the ceiling of the cave are of Lord Shiva as Nataraja, and Shiva and Parvati with a coiled serpent which has high aesthetic value. This is thus dedicated to Nataraja.
- Cave 2 is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his many incarnations.
- Cave 3 is also inspired by Brahmanical forms and thus has giant figures of many avatars of Vishnu like Paravasudeva, Bhuvanaraha, Harihara and Narasimha.
- Cave 4 is based on Jain ideology and it has a huge image of Lord Mahavira. It is said to be built at last at least a 100 years away from the first cave.

There are very little survives of the mural paintings in the caves of Badami in Karnataka. The paintings of Badami are among the earliest surviving in Hindu temples, just as the paintings at Ajanta and Sittannavasal are the earliest Buddhist and Jain murals. The caves at Vatapi were fully decorated with murals; many of them were inspired from Puranas. The most surviving murals include the paintings of Shiva and Parvathi as well as some other characters. The painting style is close with that in Ajanta. The Cave number 4 has a mural painting of Adinatha, the Jain tirthankara.

6.8 BADAMI HISTORY

The early name of Badami is Vatapi. In those days, it was in Bijapur District but now-a-days is relocated as Taluka in Bagalkot District. Badami was the capital of the early Chalukyan dynasty which ruled the region from 543 to 598 CE. With the decline of the Vakataka rule, the Chalukyas established their power in the Deccan. The Chalukya king, Mangalesha, patronised the excavation of the Badami caves. He was the younger son of the Chalukya king, Pulakesi I, and the brother of Kirtivarman I. The inscription in Cave No.4 mentions the date 578–579 CE, describes the beauty of the cave and includes the dedication of the image of Vishnu. Thus it may be presumed that the cave was excavated in the same era and the patron records his Vaishnava affiliation. Therefore, the cave is popularly known as the Vishnu Cave. Only a fragment of the painting has survived on the vaulted roof of the front mandapa. Though Jayasimha and Ranaraga are the earlier kings/ rulers of this dynasty, not sufficient information could be gathered about them.

Many scholars agree the fact that, later in 540 AD, Pulakeshi 1, son of Ranaraga real established Badami Chalukya's dynasty. The inscriptions on rocks make us know that Pulakeshi-1 who took the administration, made Badami his capital and built a powerful fort surrounding to it and also performed Ashwamedha Yaaga. Later, Keertivarma 1st, Mangalesh, Pulakeshi 2nd, Vikramaditya-1,

Vinayaditya, Vijayaditya, Vikramaditya-2 and Keertiverma-2 in total 9 rulers ruled over the dynasty for about 250 years (i.e., from 540 AD to 757 A.D.). Having a vast dynasty and combined with disciplined administration they struggled well for peace, financial upliftment and also cultural activities like art, literature, education, etc.). During their period two sorts of architectures developed. First is temples built of rocks. These temples are built by arranging various rocks one over the other which are called as structural temples. For ex: queen of Vikramaditya 2 viz., LokaMahadevi built Virupaxa Devalaya, Trilokya mahadevi built Mallikarjuna Temple. Similarly Vijayaditya built Vijayeshwara Temple. These temple are 1st sort of temples. Secondly, cave temples are the another sort of temples. A huge rock is carved into a temple and these are called as Cave temples. For ex: In a whole rock of Badami, 1st Shaiva cave temple, 2nd Vaishnava Cave Temple and 3rd Vaishnava Cave Temple and 4th Jain Cave temple, etc. Here the research pertaining to colourful pictures in 3rd cave temple is performed.

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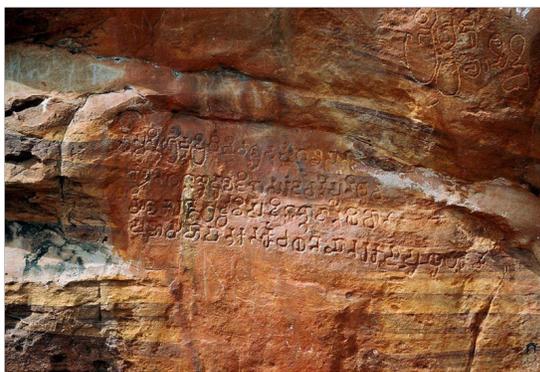
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6.9 DETAILS ABOUT BADAMI CAVES

The four cave temples of Badami were built by the son of Pulakesi I – Kirthivarman (ruled in 567 – 598 AD) and his brother Mangalesha I (ruled in 598 – 610 AD).

One cave is devoted to Shiva, two – to Vishnu. The fourth cave is the Jain temple. Thus Chalukyas, just like several other successful dynasties of Ancient India, demonstrated religious tolerance.

Although in many respects these structures repeat the architecture of similar Indian cave temples created before, there is noticeable also the development of distinct style in architecture and art – Chalukyan style. Art of Badami shows influence both of South Indian styles (Dravidian style) and northern influences (Indo-Aryan Nagara style).



Badami Cave 3, Kannada inscription telling about granting the land by king Mangalesha

Badami Cave Temples have simple exterior but their interiors have very ornate finishing. The entrance leads through a pillared verandah – mukha mandapa, pillars have the square form in section. Three caves are adorned with a lavish

frieze below the columns. The main hall of each temple – maha mandapa – is standing on massive columns. The furthest part of the temple behind the main hall is the shrine – cella or garbhagrha. Most likely caves were covered with exciting murals – only traces of this former beauty remain.

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Important feature of Badami Caves and their surroundings is ancient inscriptions in Kannada writing and in Kannada and Sanskrit languages. In total, in Badami, there have been found 18 cliff inscriptions. The oldest is from 543 AD.

One of the most important inscriptions is made in 700 AD at the northeast end of the reservoir. It consists of ten lines in Kannada writing, both in Kannada and Sanskrit languages. This inscription is not completely clearly translated but it is clear that it goes about Kappe Arahatta, local saint and hero. Under the inscription, there is a nice carving of ten leaved loti in circle.

There exists also the fifth cave in Badami – natural cave used as a Buddhist temple. It can be entered only on all fours. The area contains also many other temples.

Cave 1

This cave most likely is the oldest – built in 575 – 585 AD.



Badami Cave 2, Vishnu as Trivikrama

Entrance portal can be reached by 40 steps and contains four freestanding square columns and two semi-columns. Below the columns there is a frieze with ganas – attendants of Shiva.

Main hall contains pillars and a square shaped shrine at the back wall. Ceiling is adorned with murals of amorous couples miraculously preserved for more than 1,400 years. Cave is adorned with exquisite reliefs, the most impressive ones include a group with Shiva and Parvati with a coiled serpent as well as unique monument of art – 18 armed Nataraja, which, when closely observed, strikes 81 dancing poses.

Cave 2

Created in the late 6th century AD and dedicated to Vishnu who is shown here as

Trivikrama – with one foot on Earth and another – directed to the north. Vishnu in this temple is represented also as Varaha (boar) and Krishna avatars. Cave is reached by climbing 64 steps from the first cave. Entrance is adorned with reliefs of guardians (dvarapalas) with smaller female attendants shown.

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Badami Cave 3, relief of Vishnu

Cave 3

The largest and most renowned cave temple in Badami most likely is created in 578 – 580 AD. The cave contains inscription by later Chalukya king Mangalesa in Kannada – he organized excavation of this Vaishnava temple. The inscription has been made in 578 AD, Mangalesa became a king in 597 and ruled until 609 AD. It is common that Indian cave temples were patronized by influential members of royal families.

Rock-cut temple has a north-south orientation. The main hall together with verandah goes up to 14.5 m deep into the mountain, shrine makes the cave for some 4 m deeper. The height of the main hall is approximately 4.5 m. Cave is reached by climbing 60 steps from the Cave 2. The facade of the temple is approximately 21 m wide and is adorned with a row of six massive columns. Below the columns there is a frieze consisting of 30 smaller reliefs of ganas.

Whole cave is covered with magnificent adornments, including paintings on the ceiling. The centerpiece of these murals is four-armed Brahma on his swan. On the floor below the mural of Brahma, there is a lotus medallion – a place where offerings were laid. Significant monuments of Indian art are the numerous reliefs of Vishnu including standing Vishnu, Vishnu with a serpent, Vishnu as Narasimha (half human – half lion), Varaha, Harihara and Trivikrama avatars. Reliefs are 4 m high. Art in cave 3 provides important information about the culture and clothing in this region in the 6th century.

Cave 4

This is the only Jain temple in complex and the newest cave in complex, made in the late 6th century – 7th century AD. It is located higher than other caves. If compared to the three previous caves, this cave is less elaborate and smaller – but still beautiful and rich with adornment. It contains carving of the Tirthankara Parshavnatha with a serpent at his feet. Here is located also a sculpture of Jain saint Mahavira in seated pose (often mistaken for Buddha) and standing Gomatesvara with creepers twisted around his legs.

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Mahavir Jain Sculptures, Cave Temple 4, Badami Mahavir Jain Sculptures, Cave Temple 4.

6.9.1 Badami Painting (6th Century)

In the 6th century a power grew up in the Deccan which was to rule Southern India for the next two hundred years. These were the first western Chalukyas. They made their capital at Badami, where, as at Pattadakal, Aihole and Mahakuteshvara, they constructed many fine temples. The Badami site is very beautiful: cliffs and imposing monoliths of pink stone tower above a blue lake. In a Badami cave-sanctuary dedicated to Vishnu (second in the Brahman trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva), built in 578, we find our first example of Brahman painting.

Of the frescoes which once covered the walls of this grotto, only a fragment remains; it occupies the concave surface of a heavy cornice which shelters the entrance to the verandah. It is hard to tell what the actual subject of the composition was, but those figures, which are still distinguishable, are exquisitely graceful. The rounded heads in soft relief are sketched in fine, delicate lines. This delicacy probably stems from the Southern Indian technique of applying the colours a fresco secco. The tenderness and suave and almost friendly charm which emanate from this painting are characteristic of all works of the Chalukya period: elegant, restrained, humane. Their sweet faces, half-erased by time, are identical to the beautifully sculptured pairs which decorate the interior of the Malikarjuna temple at Pattadakal.

The splendid caves and temples at Badami in the Deccan were commissioned by King Mangalesa of the Western Chalukya dynasty. On the evidence of an

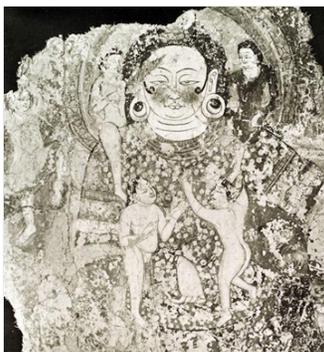
inscription, the Vaisnava cave Mo. 3 at Badami can be assigned to around 578 A.D. The same inscription shows that the court painters of Mangalesa continued the excellent tradition of Ajanta, even though only fragmentary paintings survive on the inside of the cave. The court scene depicts a dark prince, possibly King Kirtivarman, Mangalesa's elder brother.

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Paintings in 3rd cave depict palace scenes. One shows Kirtivarman, the son of Pulakesi I and the elder brother of Mangalesha, seated inside the palace with his wife and feudatories watching a dance scene. Towards the corner of the panel are figures of Indra and his retinue. Stylistically speaking, the painting represents an extension of the tradition of mural painting from Ajanta to Badami in South India. The sinuously drawn lines, fluid forms and compact composition exemplify the proficiency and maturity the artists had achieved in the sixth century CE. The gracefully drawn faces of the king and the queen remind us of the style of modelling in Ajanta. Their eyesockets are large, eyes are half-closed, and lips are protruding. It is noteworthy to observe that the contours of different parts of the face create protruding structures of the face itself. Thus, with simple line treatment artists could create volume.

6.10 SOME PAINTING AND SCULPTURES BADAMI CAVE TEMPLE



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6.11 SITTANVASAL CAVES

Sittanavasal Cave is a 2nd-century Jain complex of caves in Sittanavasal village in Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu, India. The monument is a rock-cut monastery or temple. Created by Jains, it is called the Arivar Koil, and is a rock cut cave temple

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of the Arihants. It contains remnants of notable frescoes from the 7th century. The murals have been painted with vegetable and mineral dyes in black, green, yellow, orange, blue, and white. Paintings have been created by applying colours over a thin wet surface of lime plaster. Ancient structures such as Gol Gumbaz, Talagirisvara temple and this one are claimed to be relatively unappreciated. Archaeological Survey of India has listed Sittanavasal Cave in the list of "Must See" Indian Heritage. Sittanavasal Caves represent one of the best cave paintings of early medieval India. These are example of rock-cut architecture based on Jain thought and ideologies. They have a close form of Ajanta and Bagh caves. The name Sittanavasal has diverse cultural connotations. According to one, it is a morphed version of "chir-ran-nal-vaa-yil" which means "the abode of great saints" in Tamil whereas the other states that this was a suburb of Annalvayil (chiru-annal-vaayil – "smaller Annalvayil").

Eladipattam is the newest joiner of the ancient Jain centre of Sittanavasal. It has served as a Jain shelter since 1st century BC. The cave has seventeen polished stone berths aligned into rows, each with a raised part. The largest of these supposedly ascetic beds contain an important inscription in Brahmi script, from 1st century BC although there are inscriptions from other later centuries too. These inscriptions mention the names of monks like Tolakunrattu Kadavulan, Tirunillan, Tiruppuranan, Tittaicbaranan, etc. it is said that Eladipattam served as a site of very severe penance – kayotsarga andsallekhana).

Most paintings date to the Pandyan period i.e. 9th century AD. The notable drawings include a pond with lotuses. This scene shows Samava-sarana –a unique, chosen and elegant audience hall where Tirthankaras gave sermons after they reached realisation (kevala-gnana). Bulls, elephants, apsaras (angels) and other Gods gathered in this audience hall to witness this grand scene. Top columns have paintings of dancing women with lotuses whereas the southern pillars have the paintings of the king and queen with an umbrella.

6.12 HISTORY

While the Sittanavasal village is dated from 1st century BC to 10th century AD when Jainism flourished here, the Temple-cave was initially dated to Pallava King Mahendravarman I (580–630 AD) prior to his conversion from Jainism to Hinduism as a Shaivite. However, an inscription attributes its renovation to a Pandyan king probably Maran Sendan (654–670 AD) or Arikesari Maravarman (670–700 AD). The Jain beds on the hill top is attributed to the Jain era pilgrimage centre which lasted till the 9th century AD. However, in the Pudukkottai region, where the monuments are located, there are many archaeological finds of the megalithic burial sites from much earlier.

There are two publications in the 20th century which brought to light these monuments in particular: one in 1916, in the book "General History of the

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Pudukkottai State" by S. Radhakrishna Iyer, a historian, but only known regionally; and the other by Jouveau-Dubreuil and Gopinatha Rao, iconographers who worked together and brought out a "Monograph on Sittannaval", in 1920, which brought it to limelight among archaeologists worldwide. The cleaning of the painting was undertaken in 1942 by Dr. S. Paramasivan and K. R. Srinivasan when they observed a patch of old painting of conventional carpet design superimposed by a new layer of painting. The superimposed layer of painting has been surmised as that done Ilan-Gautaman, whose name is also inscribed. The temple is maintained and administered by the Archaeological Survey of India.



Sittanvasal Cave temple

6.13 ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

The architectural features of the Sittanvasal Cave include the painting and sculptures found within its precincts.

The paintings have been painted in fresco-secco technique with many mineral colours. The painting depict beautiful lotus pond with lotus flowers, people collecting lotuses from the pond, two dancing figures, lilies, fish, geese, buffaloes and elephants. Mulk Raj Anand said of the paintings, "Pallava craftsmen used greens and browns and puqiles, with a genuine ability and a lyrical flow of line. Lotuses spring up from imaginary ponds amid variegated greenery, under a bluish sheen." In addition, inscriptions of the 9th and 10th century are also seen. The ceiling of the Ardhamandapam is decorated with murals from the 7th century. The cave temple has simple pillars and sculptures of Jain Tirthankaras. However, most of the frescoes which were covered fully in plaster have been severely defaced or not clearly visible due to inadequate security and maintenance resulting in vandalism in the past five or six decades. Originally, the entire cave temple, including the sculptures, was covered with plaster and painted. The paintings are with theme of Jain Samavasarana, the "most attractive heavenly pavilion" (it means the attainment of nirvana), and Khatika bhumi.

The Ardhamantapam, after the front entrance, is rectangular in plan of 20.5 metres (67 ft) long, 2.28 metres (7 ft 6 in) wide and 2.5 metres (8 ft 2 in) high, and the cubical cell of 2.89 metres (9 ft 6 in) width, (a little higher than

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the garbha-griha) with a facade which has two pillars and two pilasters at both ends. The pillars as well as pilasters are hexagonal in shape in the middle section while the top and bottom sections are square. Rock beam is sculpted above them as if supporting them; provided with large corbels (potikai in Tamil) with ornamentation or fluting, with an intervening plain band. The pillars which support this mandapam are typical of Mahendra-order. The entry into the garbha-griha is flanked by two niches, which also have smaller size pilasters, similar to the pillar design, with bold relief of lotus medallions carved on them. In the southern and northern sides of the ardhmantapam, niches are provided where the 23rd tirthankara Parsvanatha and a Jain acharya (teacher) are respectively carved in bas-relief. Parsvanatha is shown seated in "the dhyana (meditative) pose, cross-legged, with the hands placed one over the other, palms upwards, resting on the folded legs", a five-hooded serpent sheltering his head. An inscription on a pillar to the niche reads kaditan ("ruler of the world"), indicating Parsvanatha's divinity. The acharya is in a similar posture as Parsvanatha but with an umbrella over his head. The inscription below this niche reads Tiruvasiriyam ("great teacher").

A doorway of 5.5 feet (1.7 m) height and 2.5 feet (0.76 m) width from the ardhmantapa leads to the sanctum sanctorum (through a flight of steps), which has three bas-relief sculptures. The entrance has surul-vyalis (balustrades sculptured with the mythical form of vyalis with twisted trunks). The sanctum sanctorum has a square plan of 2.89 feet (0.88 m) wide and height of 7.5 feet (2.3 m), and at the back wall there are three bas-reliefs, two are of Jain Tirthankaras (as evidenced by the triple umbrellas (chatris) over them) and the third relief is of an acharya (teacher). The ceiling of the garbha-griha which is painted shows a carved wheel with hub and axle that denotes the Dharma-chakra ("Wheel-of-the-Law"). Above the three images in Lotus position (seated posture), paintings are also seen which are surmised to represent a canopy which is carved with carpet designs with striped borders and squares and circles of different sizes with lotus flower designs inscribed within the squares. The circles depict crosses with bulbous ends; the horizontal arm of the cross has depictions of human and lion figures. In the other areas, the ceiling has similar paintings as the lotus pond in the ardhmantapam. Plastered walls of the Sittanavasal Cave have varying thickness of 1–8 millimetres (0.039–0.315 in). The pigmentation used for the paintings is over 1000 years old. Echo effect is clearly heard, if "om" is recited, only if inaudibly, in the small shrine.

6.14 THE ARTS OF SITTANAVASAL CAVE

The beauty of Sittanavasal Cave lies in its paintings and structural formation and the way these wall paintings are executed is merely astonishing. With a temple in its compound, Sittanavasal Cave is assuredly a gem when cave temples are taken into consideration and its archaeological features, such as beautiful images on the wall and certain sculptures inside the compound, prove the fact. Apart from exploring its paintings and sculptures, you can also take a look at its wonderful location in the Sittanavasal hill and explore its peaceful surroundings.

A) Monuments – There are two monuments under ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) at Sittanavasal. There are few shrines in the village which are dedicated to village gods.

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Samanar Padukkai (Jaina Beds)

1) Jaina Beds (Eladipattam) – A strenuous path takes you to the top of a low rising hillock where seventeen polished bed are carved out under a low hanging roof. These beds were used by Jaina ascetics who were involved in severe austerities such as kayotsarga and sallekhana. These beds have a raised portion at one end forming a kind of pillow. There are inscriptions on few of the beds which date from third century BCE. There are inscriptions of ninth century CE which suggests that the site was in use at least till that time.



Brahmi Inscription

Inscriptions –

- No 1 of the Inscriptions of the Pudukkottai State – On a stone bed written in Brahmi in 2 lines – dated to beginning of third century BCE – Records that Chirupochil Ilayar made the Atitnam (Adhittana) for Itan who was a kavidi born at Kumuthur in Eomi-nadu.
- No 388 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1914/No 7 of the Inscriptions of the Pudukkottai State – On a stone bed written in Tamil, Brahmi in 7 lines – dated to eighth or ninth century CE – The label gives the names of some persons

(probably Jaina ascetics): Kadavulan Tirunilan of Tolakkunram, Tiruppuranan, Tittaichchanan, Tiruchchattan, Sripurnachandiran, Niyatakarana Pattakkali and Kadavulan.

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2) Arivar Koil – It is not very sure if this place was ever in control of the Pallava-s however a cave temple similar to Pallava style was excavated in seventh-eight century CE, probably, and was dedicated to Jaina tirthankaras. It was an accepted fact that the Pallava king Mahendravarman I (580-630 CE) was a Jaina and later he converted himself to Shaiva under influence of saint Appar. In the similar manner, a Pandya king also got converted from Jaina sect to Shaivism under influence of another saint Sambandar, who was contemporary of Appar. Is this cave excavated by Mahendravarman I when he was Jaina?

In this case, the inscription at Mandagapattu which proposes that it was the first cave by the king does not hold true. If the inscription at Mandagapattu is taken in same manner as suggested by K R Srinivasan that it declares that Mandagapattu was the first such shrine constructed by the Pallava king, then it become evident that Sittanavasal cave was probably a work of the Pandya artists. In that case it could be the work of either the Pandya king Maran Sendan (654- 670 CE) or Arikesari Maravarman (670-700 CE). It is suggested that it was Maravarman who also got converted from Jaina to Shaiva under influence of Sambandar. Extension of the cave in ninth century under a Pandya king suggests that though Pandya kings were Hindus but they supported other religions without any malice.

This west facing rock-cut temple has been excavated on the western face of a rock. Originally it was excavated with a ardha-mandapa and a cubical cell. This ardha-mandapa is supported on two pillars of characteristics Mahendra-order. It measures, with its ardha-mandapa, 20.5 m long, 2.28 m wide and 2.5 m high. The cubical cell measures 2.89 m side. The shrine was extended with a pillared mandapa during the reign of the Pandya king Srivallabha (815-862 CE). However this mandapa was already destroyed when renovation was taken over for this in 1942. On the base of the ruined mandapa, a new mandapa was erected during the renovation at this site with four pillars taken from another ruined mandapa at Kudimiyamalai.



Parshvanatha

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Jaina acharya on northern lateral wall

North and south walls of the ardha-mandapa have an image of Jaina tirthankara. Tirthankara on north side does not carry any cognizance so it's hard to identify him. However there is an inscription on nearby pillar which reads Sri-Tiruvasiriyam, meaning 'revered teacher'. This suggests that he was not someone from the twenty-four tirthankaras but some other revered teacher. Or it is also probable that he represent one of the twenty-four teachers and his cognizance was painted instead of carved on the image. Tirthankara on southern wall is shown seated under a serpent hood suggesting that he is the twenty-third Jaina tirthankara, Parsvanatha. An inscription on nearby pillar face reads [Ulo]kaditan, meaning 'ruler of the world', which aptly appropriates with the image.



Jaina acharyas in sanctum cell

There are three images, seated under umbrellas, of tirthankaras or teachers inside the sanctum, on back wall. Image on northern end and in center has two umbrellas above but image of southern end has only one umbrella. This suggests that the former two might have been images of some tirthankaras while the latter would be of some revered teacher. However as there are no cognizance on any image so it is hard to identify any one of these. There is a possibility that the cognizance were painted on the images, and if it is so, there is no trace of those paintings at present.

Ceiling of the sanctum was once covered with paintings however at present very few traces are left.

There were two layers of painting, one over other, on the ceiling, both the layers were done at the same time however further investigation reports that the first layer was coeval with the cave however the second layer was done probably during the extension carried out in ninth century CE. There is a unique vibration/echo effect observed when you repeat 'Om' sound inside the sanctum.

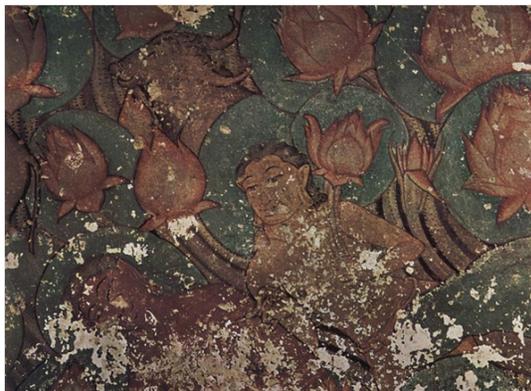
B) Paintings

The ceiling of the cave temple's sanctum and Ardha mandapam still flaunt beautiful paintings after so many centuries. However, many of these paintings are in a state of decay due to vandalism in the past 50-60 years. The Maharaja of Pudukkottai had attempted to have these paintings cleaned and given a preservative coating and the plaster structure restored in 1937-1939.

The original structure was originally plastered and then painted, including the sculptures too. What remains now, however, are just mural paintings on the ceilings, top parts of the pillars, the cornice as well as the beams above the pillars. The paintings on the walls have sadly, perished completely. Though only parts of these painstakingly-made paintings remain now, they are nevertheless things of matchless beauty and ranked among the best frescoes in India.

The painting technique used is Fresco-secco and similar to that used in the Ajanta Caves. The murals are painted on surfaces that have first been covered with lime plaster (2.5mm thickness) before adding a thin layer (0.5mm) of thick lime wash.

The pigments used for painting were permanent mineral colours with white colour being made from lime, black colour from lamp soot or charcoal, red from red ochre, yellow from yellow ochre, green from Terre verre and blue from ultramarine or lapis lazuli.



Painting on the roof of the Sittanvasal Cave

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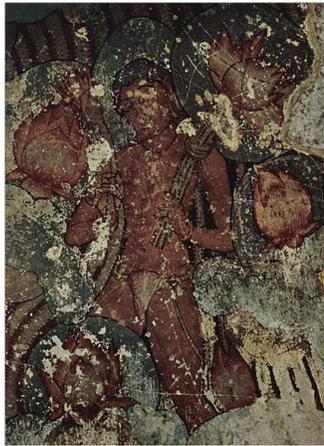
Seventh-century painting in Sittanavasal Cave

Sittanavasal is the earliest example of Jaina paintings. These paintings came into the attention of scholars after an inscription was published in ARE (Annual Report of Epigraphy) 1904. An earliest study was carried out by Venkataranga Raju, the then curator of the Pudukkottai Museum, who made water color reproductions of these murals in 1910. T A Gopinatha Rao reported to his friend Dubreuil in 1919, "These paintings are as old as the shrine and are in fairly good state of preservation and need being copied fully".

Dubreuil later reported that the cave was a work of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I (580-630 CE), probably based upon the style of pillars. He suggested that the 'lotus tank' painting is probably related to some event in Jaina history and the paintings of dancing girls to those of devadasis or dancers of the temple. However we do not have any instance of devadasis in Jaina temples.

The decorative paintings in the ceiling of the sanctum and ardha-mandapam of Aravirkovil though compared to the classical cave painting styles used in the Ajanta Caves but have minor variations in use of the materials for creating the paintings and also reported to provide a link between the Ajanta paintings (4th–6th century AD) and the Chola paintings of 11th century at Thanjavur. The ceilings have depiction of a lotus tank with natural looking images of men, animals, flowers, birds and fishes representing the Samavasarana faith of Jainism. The pillars are also carved with dancing girl and the king and the queen.

Paintings in the roof of the Ardhamnatapa are the mural paintings with Samavasarana theme. The mural exhibits a water tank or khatika-bhumi which is shown with the tank made of tiles filled with lotus flowers and surrounded by bhavyas ("the faithful"), elephants, fishes, one fish shown as jumping out of water, pillars with figurines of Pandya king Srimara Srivallabha (9th century AD) and his queen offering reverence to Ilam Gautaman, an acharya of Madura who created these paintings. While cleaning the paintings, one more layer of Samavasarana themed painting was revealed in the ceiling of the Garbha-griha, but in a carpet-design.



Painting on the roof of the Sittanvasal Cave

The study done by an artist on the depictions of the roof painting panel reveals: 3 birds, a man in loin cloth plucking flowers and the man is shown with a lily on right hand and lotuses on left hand, an elephant and fishes swimming, bird's eye on the top left corner.

Though severely damaged due to vandalism, remaining Frescoes have been preserved on the top parts of columns and ceilings inside the temple. Many of them are typical of the 9th century Pandyan period and include detailed pictures of elephants, buffaloes, fish, geese, Jains gathering lotuses from a pond and dancing girls. These frescoes are considered to be some of the best frescoes of medieval India next to frescoes of Ajanta Caves and Bagh Caves. Not so well planned is the arrangement of panels of the Sittanvassal cave temple; the idea of an ensemble has not been adopted but arranged in a haphazard way.

Painting of the Sittanvasal Caves were analysed to establish the technique and the material used to make the. Analysing a painting of a lotus pond in the ardhmantpam, it has been inferred that they are made with Fresco-secco, techniques made over rough stone using rough plaster of 2.5 millimetres (0.098 in) thickness made of lime mortar and sand with minor impurities, applying 0.5 millimetres (0.020 in) thick lime wash of fine lime water when the rough lime plaster is still rough. The pigments used are composed of white made from lime, black made from wood charcoal or lamp black, yellow from yellow ochre, red from red ochre, blue from ultramarine\lapis lazuli, and green from terre verte. Pigments of permanent mineral colours (not vegetable colours as reported on the display plaque at the site by ASI) were applied over dry plaster surfaces without any adhesive grove; the process involved a chemical reaction of lime water which absorbed oxygen in the air and getting converted by a carbonisation process into insoluble calcium carbonate, which enabled the pigments to adhere to the surface. At the initiative of Pudukkottai State, during 1937–39, the paintings were cleaned, and then given a preservative coating. Also, the damaged portions of the plastering were injected with cementing material and the paintings were also retouched.

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Apsara on northern pillar

There are two dancers painted on western face of the two pillars such as greeting people who enter the cave. These apsaras or celestial maidens are carved very suggestively however the images are much weathered now. Only upper portion of the dancers remain. Apsara on northern pillar is shown in a dance posture known as Talasampohita Karna. In this posture, left hand is stretched across of breasts to reach waist portion on the right while the right hand is bent at elbow and folded upwards near breasts similar to abhaya mudra. A dance posture or karnana as defined in Natyashastra of Bharata is about the position of hands and legs.

As only torso portion remains of this painting hence position of legs is not very clear. Behind her are shown clouds such as she is dancing in sky and probably coming downwards to the earth. Her hair are tied together and is adorned with varieties of flowers. She wears few necklaces around her neck. Though her torso portion only remains however it seems that she is wearing clothes below her waist however her upper portion is bare.



Apsara on southern pillar 2

The Apsara on southern pillar 2 is shown in a dance posture known as Ardharecita Karana. In this posture, the left hand is stretched outside while right hand is folded against breasts. However this posture is very similar to Bhujangatrasita Karana which is very properly depicted in an early Nataraja form at Seeyamangalam. Though leg positions of the apsara are not very clear however it seems that her one leg is raised up while other is rested on platform. This kind of leg position is usually seen in Bhujangatrasita Karana, She wears a tiara and flowers garlands over her shoulders. Clouds are portrayed behind thus suggesting her celestial character.

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Royal Couple

On the same pillar, on north face, is a painting of a royal couple with a monk. This painting identifies with the meeting between Ilan Gautaman and the Pandya King, Srivallabha, accompanied with his queen. Ilan carried out repair and extension of this shrine during the reign of the Pandya king, Srivallabha, hence it is not strange that the king came to pay homage and check out the work. Queen is depicted shorter than the king which is as per the canons where a lady is usually depicted shorter than a man.

King is wearing a long crown and many ornaments on his chest. Only face of the queen is shown as she stands in shadow of her husband. There is a cornice with kudu behind the king and queen, which suggests that they have come to pay tribute to the shrine. Though we do not see any kudu now however the original extended mandapa is destroyed and the present one is only done in 1942 during renovation of this shrine.



Samavasarna

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Most of the ceiling of the mandapa is covered with a mural painting of a lotus tank which has been identified as Khatikabhumi region of Samavasarana of Jaina mythology. This Khatikabhumi represents a region filled with lake. A lake has been painted in this mural depicting a scene of a dawn perhaps. This lake is mostly filled up with lotus flowers. These flowers attract viewer's attention due to their sheer size and bright colors. This bright color fades gradually towards inside of flower. These flowers are depicted in various stages of development, from a bud to a well blown flower. The bright red lotus with green leaves and thin stem presents a very pleasant sight for eyes.

There are many fishes swimming across this lake amidst the lotuses. Thomas suggests that these fishes are mostly of murrel category as evident from their size and colors. He states that murrel fish has been associated with marutam region where their size indicates the prosperity of the town. There is a crocodile as well among fishes who is observing the activities around it. Thomas states that crocodile is associated with neytal (ocean) region in Sangam poetry.

Crocodiles are not considered danger for human beings during the Sangam period. There are many birds shown perched on leaves. Thomas suggests that these resemble with water-hen which are very frequent in Tamilnadu ponds. As these do not have webbed legs so water-hen seems to be appropriate identification. They are shown in a state of anxiety as they feel afraid for their chicks and hence they are whipping their wings so that to be ready for a fly if danger approaches.

There are three buffalos in this lake, one totally submerged and two in state of getting out of the lake as men approach. There are three men in the lake who are shown collecting flowers. Elephants are shown carrying lotus stems and in process of handing those to nearby men. One of them is holding a basket to place flowers into it. These men probably represent Jaina monks who are getting flowers for offerings to their teachers.

Samavasarana is usually depicted in full but not in single regions. Hence identification of this mural with 'khatikabhumi' is based upon very slim evidence. He further suggests that the Tamil Jaina literature composed around the same time associate lotus flower with Arukan, the jina. Arukan is called as Thamaraiippuvin mel sentran meaning 'one who walked on the lotus' and Thandamarai mel nadanthan meaning 'one who walked on the cold petals of the lotus' etc. This suggests that a lotus offering to Jaina teachers was considered very auspicious and hence a depiction of lotus collection in this shrine is most appropriate.

- **Samavasarana** – Samavasarana which means equal opportunities for all. Samavasarana, in Jaina literature, is used for an assembly of a tirthankara. This assembly is in form of an ordered congregation of different beings assembled to behold the thirthankara and hear his discourses. When these different beings, humans, animals and gods, gather together at one place for one purpose, this eliminates differences among them and place them on equal platform thus forming a Samavasarana. A Samavasarana can be taken as a

tirth, revered place, which is made holy with the presence of a tirthankara.

Art of constructing a Samvasarana is detailed in Jaina literature. These scriptures explain what is Samavasarana, how it is created, who creates it, when it is created and how long it is held by a tirthankara. Coming under the aura of a tirthankara is everybody's aim and to accommodate this a Samavasarana is constructed. It is in form of a platform or a pavilion with three concentric circles and their well defined properties. Sometimes this could be a square instead of circular in shape. A Samavasarana is constructed when an ascetic attains keval jnana (ultimate knowledge). Twenty-fourth and the last tirthankar, Lord Mahavira, attained this keval jnana after severe penance of twelve and a half years. A Samavasarana was constructed to commemorate this occasion.

The Mahardhik gods inform the Abhiyoga gods about the place (village, town etc) where a Samavasarana is to be constructed. Then Abhiyoga gods clean an area of one yojana (approximately 12 square km). They sprinkle fragranced water and flowers and make area suitable for holy congregation. Then Vyantar gods construct four gateways with gems having various auspicious figures on these. These gems with inlaid figures are constructed by Bhavanpati gods.

Innermost enclosure and its decoration is constructed by the king of Vaimanik gods while the outermost enclosure is constructed by the king of Jyotishka gods. Ishan gods then plant an Ashok tree which should be twelve times the height of the tirthankara. This tree is planted on a platform, Gandhakuti, constructed with gems and on its center is installed a throne. Over the throne are constructed three canopies. Balindra and Chamar gods stand on either side of the throne with fly-whisks. In the last, Vyantar gods installed the wheel of religion at some distance in front of the throne. This completes the construction of the pavilion.

A more elaborate plan is specified in 'Paintings in Tamilnadu' by I.J Thomas. Enclosure around the central Gandhakuti is called Lakshmivara-mandapa where twelve niches for various people. There are seven different regions around this Gandhakuti, each of which is enclosed by a rampart (vedika). These are Chaityaprasada Bhumi for palaces and temples, Khatika Bhumi for lakes, Valli Bhumi for forests, Upavana Bhumi for gardens, Dhavja Bhumi for flags, Kalpavriksha Bhumi for Kalpavrikshas (wish fulfilling tree of heaven) and last Bavana Bhumi for pavilions. A person has to pass through these seven regions to reach his respective niche to hear sermon of the tirthankara.

The tirthankara enters into it through its eastern gate and take his seat in the innermost circle facing east. Gods create three replicas of the tirthankara and place in other three directions so that he is equally visible to whole assembly. Senior most principle disciples sits near the feet of the tirthankara while senior gandharvas sit near his feet in south-east direction. Other gandharvas sit at his other sides. Then enter omniscient ascetics, Kewal Jnanis, who enter through the eastern gate and circumambulate the tirthankara first finally sitting behind

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gandharvas. Then enter other endowed ascetics like Manahparyav Jnanis, Avadhi Jnanis, Fourteen Purvadhars and other Purvadhars who circumambulate thrice around the tirthankara and take their seats behind Kewal Jnanis.

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Then enter female ascetics and stand behind Vaimanik gods' seats. Then enter other goddesses, from eastern gate come goddesses from Vaimanik dimension and stand behind common ascetics, from southern gate come goddesses from Bhavanpati, Vyantar and Jyotishka dimensions and stand in south-western direction in the said order of entrance. Then enter gods from these three dimensions, Bhavanpati, Vyantar and Jyotishka, from eastern gate and take their seats in north-west direction in same order. Then enter gods from Vaimanik dimensions, from northern gate, with their attendants and families. This is how the first enclosure is occupied. The second enclosure is occupied with animals who have five senses. The third enclosure is used to park vehicles of gods and others who come to attend Samavasarana.

Inscriptions – There are many inscriptions, mostly small label inscriptions, in and around this cave shrine. Few of these are detailed below.

1. No 328 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1960-61 – On the sloping edge of the rock to the south of the cave on the western slope of the central hill – Written in Tamil – dated to seventh century CE – This label reads as :Sri-pirutivi[na]chchan.
2. No 331 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1960-61 – On the sloping edge of the rock to the south of the cave on the western slope of the central hill – Written in Tamil – dated to seventh century CE – This label reads as : Vitivali.
3. No 324 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1960-61 – On the northern side of the base of the verandah of the cave – Written in Tamil – dated to eighth century CE – This label reads as : Sriyankala.
4. No 368 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1904/No 45 of the South Indian Inscriptions vol XIV/No 398 of the South Indian Inscriptions vol XVII – On the rock south of the cave temple – Written in Tamil in 17 lines – damaged – dated to unknown regnal year of the Pandya king Sirivalluvan (Srivallabha), approximately to 815 CE – Records that Ilan-Gautaman (who is referred to as an asiriyar of Madurai) repaired the agamandapa of the temple of Annalvayil and built the mukha-mandapa in front of it on behalf of the Pandya king Sirivalluvan (Srivallabha) who had the title Avanipasekharan. Some gifts of land also appear to have been made to the priests of the temple, the details of which are not clear as the record is damaged. The record is composed of verse.
5. No 369 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1904/No 399 of the South Indian Inscriptions Vol XVII – On the rock south of cave temple – Written in Tamil in 3 lines – fragmentary – dated to eighth-ninth century CE – Details not available
6. No 325 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1960-61 – On the eastern face of the

northern pillar in the verandah of the cave temple – Written in Tamil – dated to ninth century CE – The label reads: Sri-Tiruvasiriyam

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7. No 326 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1960-61 – On the eastern face of the southern pillar of the cave temple – Written in Tamil – dated to ninth century CE – the label reads Sri [Ulo]kadittan
8. No 367 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1960-61 – On the sloping side of the rock to the south of the cave temple – Written in Tamil – fragmentary – dated to ninth century CE – Only Tirukko can be read
9. No 369 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1904/No 399 of the South Indian Inscriptions Vol XVII – On the rock south of the cave temple – Written in Tamil in 3 lines – fragmentary – dated to eighth-ninth century CE – Details not available
10. No 370 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1904/No 400 of the South Indian Inscriptions Vol XVII – On the rock south of the cave temple – Written in Tamil in 5 lines – very damaged – dated to ninth century CE – Appears to record the renovation of a structure
11. No 329 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1960-61 – On the sloping edge of the rock to the south of the cave temple – Written in Tamil – fragmentary – dated to tenth century CE – The label may be read as Sri Tiruvi[ra]ma[n]
12. No 330 of the Annual Report on Epigraphy 1960-61 – On the sloping edge of the rock to the south of the cave temple – Written in Tamil – dated to tenth century CE – The label reads as [Sri]sikayavan

6.15 SOME PAINTINGS OF SITTANVASAL CAVE



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6.16 ELLORA CAVES

Ellora is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra, India. It is one of the largest rock-cut monastery-temple cave complexes in the world, featuring Hindu, Buddhist and Jain monuments, and artwork, dating from the 600–1000 CE period. Cave 16, in particular, features

the largest single monolithic rock excavation in the world, the Kailasha temple, a chariot shaped monument dedicated to Lord Shiva. The Kailasha temple excavation also features sculptures depicting the gods, goddesses and mythologies found in Vaishnavism, Shaktism as well as relief panels summarizing the two major Hindu Epics.

There are over 100 caves at the site, all excavated from the basalt cliffs in the Charanandri Hills, 34 of which are open to public. These consist of 12 Buddhist (caves 1–12), 17 Hindu (caves 13–29) and 5 Jain (caves 30–34) caves, each group representing deities and mythologies prevalent in the 1st millennium CE, as well as monasteries of each respective religion. They were built close to one another and illustrate the religious harmony that existed in ancient India. All of the Ellora monuments were built during the Rashtrakuta dynasty, which constructed part of the Hindu and Buddhist caves, and the Yadava dynasty, which constructed a number of the Jain caves. Funding for the construction of the monuments was provided by royals, traders and the wealthy of the region.

Although the caves served as monasteries, temples and a rest stop for pilgrims, the site's location on an ancient South Asian trade route also made it an important commercial centre in the Deccan region. It is 29 kilometres (18 miles) north-west of Aurangabad, and about 300 kilometres (190 miles) east-northeast of Mumbai. Today, the Ellora Caves, along with the nearby Ajanta Caves, are a major tourist attraction in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra and a protected monument under the Archaeological Survey of India.

All three forms of Art are combined in these caves: Architecture, Sculpture, Paintings unique in terms of stylistic eclecticism, i.e. confluence of many styles at one place Buddhist caves having many images belonging to Vajrayana Buddhism Buddhist caves are big in size and are of single, double and triple story. Ajanta also has the excavated double story caves but at Ellora, the triple story is a unique achievement. Ellora cave temples were carved out on the sloping side of the hill. Hence most of the temples have courtyards Cave no 16 is a rock cut temple, known as Kailash leni - carved out of a single rock – built by Rashtrakutas.

6.17 HISTORY OF ELLORA CAVES

According to archeologists, most of the artwork, monuments, and structures belong between 600 AD and 1000 AD. Although the caves belong to different religions, they were all built during different Hindu dynasties like the Rashtrakuta Dynasty, Yadava Dynasty, and others.

The funding for these caves came from royal families, wealthy merchants, pilgrims, and others. The location of this site is on the ancient trade route of South Asia.

According to archeologists, the caves were built in three different phases, one for each religion. The early Hindu period lasted between 550 AD and 600

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AD. The Buddhist phase lasted between 600 AD and 730 AD and the last period belonged to Jains between 730 AD and 950 AD.

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The caves were active pilgrimage sites in the past and the activity ceased after the 13th century. In the 13th century, the region of Ellora Caves came under the control of Delhi Sultanate and was abandoned. Many sculptures and caves were damaged by Islamic invaders between the 15th and 17th centuries.

Later, during the reign of Aurangzeb, the caves were ordered to be demolished. However, the troops were not able to damage the caves significantly. Later, the caves were left to ruin without any activity.

During the British era, the caves were restored and managed by committees. In 1983, Ellora Caves were recognized as a world heritage site and a legacy to Indian art forms.

6.17.1 Inside Ellora Caves

These caves are formed from basalt cliffs. The caves 1 - 12 are Buddhist Caves, Caves 13 - 29 are Hindu Caves and cave 30-34 are Jain Caves. These caves are built close to one another showing the harmony between the religions in the country.

The Buddhist caves hold viharas or monasteries. The monasteries belong to Gautama Buddha or other saints of the religion. The stones are polished to make it look like wood.

Hindu caves are mostly dedicated to Lord Shiva. You can also find a couple of Lord Vishnu temples. Mahavir and Indra are the top deities of Jainism caves.

Cave 1

This cave is located at the southern end of this group. This cave holds a small Buddhist Vihara. This vihara holds cells for monks. It is assumed that this cave was a residence for the cave workers and later was used by pilgrims and monks.

Cave 2

This cave holds carved compartments, pillars, and a verandah. You can find many carvings on the sides of this cave but, only a few structures remain.

You can find carvings of Buddha, Sakra, Indra, and others. The main shrine of the temple holds a 14 feet tall statue. There is a small structure of Amithabha Buddha with a rosary and lotus in hand. There is a large figure of Maya, Buddha's mother. Almost all the sculptures have lotus in hand.

Cave 3

This cave is lower to the ground and is a monastery. The front wall of the cave is

destroyed along with a major part of a verandah. There is a square hall in the cave, supported by massive columns with octagonal structure.

There are twelve small cells and you can find small sculptures of Buddha in this cave. There is a chapel in the left corner of the cave with a main statue of Buddha in preaching pose. You can also find a Hindu goddess, Kali in this cave.

Cave 4

Most part of this cave has fallen as ruins. You can find a few figures in the cave like Padmapani, Buddha, dwarfs, and others. You can also find bas relief carvings in this cave.

Cave 5

This is one of the unique caves of this group. This cave has many refectory benches and a Buddha statue at the back. Cave 5 is called Mahawara cave. This cave was used by Mahar tribes. This is the largest vihara for the state. The roof of the cave is supported with 24 massive pillars of square shape.

You can find dining areas, resident rooms and even a monastic school in this vihara. The school holds a primitive form of benches, reading desks and others. The columns in the cave are ornately carved. There is a large shrine in the back of the cave with a large Buddha carvings and arched doors.

You can find numerous other figures in the shrine, like Padmapani and others. There is another shrine to the right of the cave, which is not open for tourists as the entrance is damaged.

Cave 6

The main hall of this cave is completely damaged. Only a few pillars stand now. The antechamber and the shrine of this cave are filled with sculptures.

You can find many Buddhist sculptures and a Hindu Goddess, Saraswati, the deity for learning and knowledge. On the north of the cave, you will find a small passage with balconies and cells on either side.

Cave 7

This cave holds a plain structure resembling Vihara with just four columns and a few cells. This cave is assumed to be incomplete.

Cave 8

This cave has a small shrine and dwarapalas. You can find sculptures of Buddha and other eminent figures.

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Cave 9

This cave is famous for carved façade, balcony, portico, octagonal pillars, and Chaitya windows.

Cave 10

Cave 10 is also called as Visvakarma Cave. This is a famous Buddhist prayer hall. This was built during 650 AD and is also called as Carpenter Cave as the rock is given a wood-look. This stupa has a distinct cathedral styled architecture. There is a large Buddha statue (15 feet) in the cave. There are a few cells on either side of the statue and the construction of the caves look similar to Ajanta Caves.

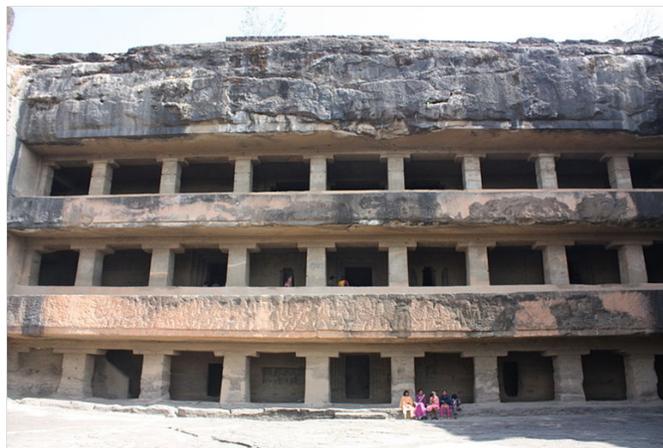
The main hall of this cave holds 28 octagonal columns, plain bracket capital, and a central nave. The statue in this hall is a large Buddha figure with a Bodhi Tree behind him.

You can find naga queens and dancers carved on the pillars. On the entrance of the cave, you can find motifs of dancing ladies and meditating saints. The upper level of this cave has porticos and verandahs with a small shrine.

The other levels of this cave hold different deities like Bhrkuti, Maitreya, Avalokitesvara, Manjusri, Mahamayuri, and others. These were carved in the Pala Dynasty style. You can find a strong influence of South Indian architecture in this cave.

Cave 11

This cave is called Do Taal. This cave holds two floors. You can find shrines for Padmapani, Buddha, Vajrapani, and others. You can find numerous verandahs and cells in this cave. There are numerous sculptures in this cave.



Caves 11 (above) and 12 are three-storey monasteries cut out of a rock, with Vajrayana iconography inside.

Cave 12

This cave is called Teen Taal because it holds three floors. You can find floral ornamentation in this cave. You can find numerous sculptures of varying shapes and sizes here denoting Buddha, Padmapani, Vajrapani, and others.



Numerous tantric Buddhist goddesses are carved in Cave 12.

You can find artwork representing the seven different Buddhas. You can also find some Hindu Goddesses here like Saraswathi, Lakshmi, and others.

Cave 13

In geographical positioning, this is the first Hindu cave. This cave holds some indication of Buddhist art too. This cave is almost plain and is assumed to be rest area for monks and workers.

Cave 14

This cave is called Ravanaki Kai. This is an early cave holding a large shrine and a pillared hall. You can find various Shiva and Parvathi related sculptures here.

The most notables ones are Lord Parvathi killing a demon in buffalo form, Lord Parvathi and Shiva playing dice, Shiva in dancing pose and so on.

You can also find sculptures representing Lord Vishnu and Lakshmi along with avatars of Lord Vishnu.

Cave 15

This cave is called the Dashavatara temple. This is a Hindu cave but, it has many layouts resembling a Buddhist cave.

Thus, it is assumed that the cave was first prepared for a Buddhist temple but,

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turned into a Hindu structure at later stages.

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An early 19th-century painting of Cave 15

There are no major deities in this cave except Nrtya Mandapa and Lord Vishnu is the entrance of the cave. The upper level of this cave has carvings of ten avatars of Lord Vishnu. The reliefs hold Saivism related carvings.

Cave 16

This is the most famous of all caves in the region. This cave holds the world's largest excavation of a single monolithic rock. The temple is called as Kailash Temple. The temple is built in a chariot shape and is dedicated to Hindu deity, Shiva.

This temple also holds sculptures of numerous deities, mythological characters and others belonging to both sectors of Hinduism; Shaktism (Saivism) and Vaishnavism. The relief panels of this cave portraits many stories of Hindu Epics.

This temple is inspired by the pilgrimage spot, Mount Kailasha. You can find structures similar to many Hindu religious sites like assembly hall, shrines around the principle deity, space for performing circumambulation, sanctum sanctorum, and others. The best part is that this entire colossal structure was carved from out of a massive single rock.



Parvati and Dancing Shiva (right) in an Ellora cave

You can also find many mythological characters and deities like Ardhanarishvara, Harihara, Durga, Annapurna, Agni, Surya, Vayu, Usha, and others. You can also find carvings of 12 stories belonging to the childhood of Lord Krishna.

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This multi-level cave covers an area twice of Athen's Parthenon and the removed stone during this construction would weigh 200,000 tons. This construction started in 756 AD and was completed in 773 AD.

This cave is famous for long corridors, carvings along with panels and other sculptures. There is an unfinished cave to the right end of this region. This cave is dedicated to Lord Shiva and you can find many carvings explaining mythological stories related to the deity.

Cave 17

This is a large cave with a large Shiva temple. You can find massive pillars and numerous sculptures in this cave. This cave is built in Dravidian style with floral decorations and heavy columns.

The main deity of the cave is damaged but, it is clearly a Linga. You can find other Hindu deities in the cave, like Mahishasuri, Ganesh, Gandharvas, and others.

Cave 18

This is an unfinished cave with pillars and a few inscriptions on the wall. The inscriptions are in Devanagiri style and a small pedestal for Nandi is erected along with a small trough, which is assumed to be a fire pit. With these structures, it is assumed that this cave should be dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Cave 19

This cave is located lower to the ground and it is a primitive-looking one. You can find pillars with elephant carvings and a small shrine with linga in it. There are a few carvings on the walls of this cave.

Cave 20

This cave holds a small shrine. Most of the structural elements of this cave are deeply damaged. You can find sculptures of other deities in the cave along with square pillars.

Cave 21

This cave is also called Rameshwar Lena. This is one of the early caves of the region, belonging to Kalachuri reign. This cave has carvings describing the story of Parvati's life, her wedding with Lord Shiva, dancing of Shiva, Kartikeyan (Lord

Murugan or Skanda) and others. You can find a large art of Sapta Matrika (seven mother forms of Shakthi).

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Goddess Ganga at the entrance of Cave 21

Apart from these, you can find other mythological characters and deities like Lord Durga, Yamuna, Ganga and others. The cave holds a large square mandapa with geometric pattern design.

The Shiva's linga is located from equal distance from Ganga and Yamuna (equilateral triangle design). This is an indication of gender equality that prevailed in the society during ancient times.

Cave 22

This cave holds a Nandi mandapa, which is almost in ruins. You can find chapel-style court areas, pillars, and sculptures of Hindu deity in this cave. You can find a polished linga in the main shrine, which has blue streaks on it, representing the form, Nilakanta.

Cave 23

This is a low lying cave with double verandah, doors, pedestal and a sculpture of Trimurthi in the back-end wall of the cave.

Cave 24

This is a collection of five small cells and is called Oilman's Mill. No sculptures are found in this cave. Based on the ceased progress of drilling, it is assumed that the sculptors found a flaw in the formation of rocks and decided that it was unfit for carving.

Cave 25

The iconic element of this cave is the large ceiling carving of Surya. This cave is

called Kunbharwada. It holds six columns with sculptures on pedestals.

Cave 27

This is called the Milkmaid cave. If you visit during monsoon season, you will find a small waterfall in this cave, called Sita-ki-nahani. You can find carvings of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Varaha and other Hindu gods in this cave. The back end of the cave holds a verandah.

Cave 28

This is a Vaishnava cave with carvings of Lord Vishnu, Lakshmi, and others. You can find a square-shaped altar, vestibule and a few cells in this cave.

Cave 29

This is one of the earliest caves of this region. This Hindu cave was built during the Kalachuri dynasty. The iconic element of this cave is a rock-cut main deity (linga) and a significant space has been given around the linga for pilgrims to perform circumambulation. This cave is also called Dhumar Lena. This cave holds a natural waterfall.

If you wish to spot this waterfall, you need to be standing from the balcony in the south of this cave. During monsoon season, the waterfall will flow right on to the linga. The carvings of this cave are very large and with disproportionate limbs.

Cave 30

This is quite smaller than other caves and is built with one symmetric mandapa, pillared veranda, worship area, and others. You can find sculptures of 24 Jinas. This cave is called Chotta Kailasha.

The carvings of this temple are quite similar to the Kailash Temple cave. You can find large relief showing Indra. There are theories stating that this cave was originally created as a Hindu cave and then turned into a Jain temple. You can find both Jain structures and Hindu structures in this cave.



Lord Mahavira

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Lord Mahavira

Cave 31

Unfinished cave with a small shrine and four-pillared hall. You can find carvings of Parshvanatha, Gommateshvara, YakshaDharanendra and others. The main idol of this cave is the Vardhamana Mahavir sitting on a lion throne.

Cave 32

Lord Indra is a Hindu god. While excavation, the historians confused the sculptures of Buddhist structures with Indra and named it as Indra Sabha.

However, this cave is predominantly a Jain structure and holds many deities and paintings related to Jain mythology. Many rituals are assumed to be taken place in the upper level of this cave.

Cave 33

This cave is called as Jagannatha Sabha. This is the second-largest cave belonging to Jainism. This cave holds carvings of elephant heads on the pillars.

The entire structure in this cave is built from one single rock. The major deities of this cave are Mahavira and Parshvanatha, two Tirthankaras of Jainism.

Cave 34

This cave has carvings of Sri Nagavarma, Goddess Ambika, Yaksha-Yakshi and others. The iconic element of this structure is a large lotus carving on the ceiling.

6.18 ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE OF ELLORA CAVES

1) Architecture

Ellora Caves present a wonderful exemplar of cave temple architecture. The world

heritage site of Ellora, has detailed fascia in the company of elaborate interiors. The main patrons of Ellora cave temples are assumed to be the Chalukya - Rashtrakuta rulers (7th - 10th century). In those times, many king and merchants contributed huge sum of money for the erection of these temples. The construction of these temples was believed to provide salvation (moksha) to the Kings.

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Ellora Cave temples took around five centuries to seek completion. Wholly carved by Buddhist, Hindu and Jain monks, the temples appear astonishing in the golden light of the Sun. Ellora Caves boast of the outstanding imagination and detail work of art in the shape of their ancient monasteries, temples and chapels. The exquisite carvings have glimpse of Buddhism, Hindu and Jain expressions. Exhibiting the ingenious excellence of the artists, the caves are adored with wooden beams, graceful angles, steps along with divine figures of gods and goddesses.

2) Wall Paintings

Ellora Cave has preserved beautiful wall paintings of the bygone era. Around 5 caves possess such paintings, but the best preserved lies in Kailasa Temple. According to the archeological revelations, the paintings were made in two phases. The paintings that belong to the first phase usually portray Lord Vishnu and Goddess Laxmi. In the later phase, the masterpiece is that of a procession of Shaiva, the holy men. The paintings also illustrate beautiful 'Apsaras' in a graceful flying pose.



The carvings at Ellora were at one time profusely painted. The rock was covered with a lime plaster which was painted. The plaster and the paint has survived in places.

Mural paintings in Ellora are found in 5 caves, but only in the Kailasa temple, they are somewhat preserved. The paintings were done in two series - the first, at the time of carving the caves & the subsequent series was done several centuries later. The earlier paintings show Vishnu & Lakshmi borne through the clouds by Garuda, with clouds in the background.

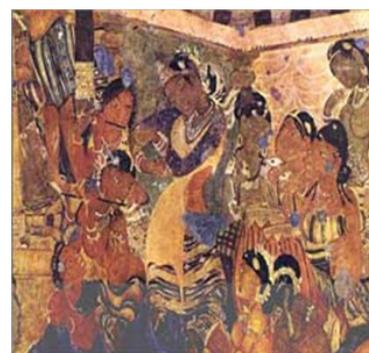
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The sinewy figures have sharp features & pointed noses. The protruding eye typical of the later Gujarathi style appears for the first time in Ellora. In the subsequent series, the main composition is that of a procession of Saiva holy men. The flying Apsaras are graceful . Very few murals in the Jain temples are well preserved.

Remnants of mural paintings at Ellora are found in the Kailasa, Lankesvara, Indra Sabha and Ganesa Lena temples, but only in the Kailasa they are less decayed. The porch ceiling of the second story of the Kailasa temple has the most important of these murals. The first series of paintings were made at the same time as the excavations, while the second series was done several centuries later. The earliest paintings show Visnu and Laksmi borne through the clouds by garudas. Clouds fill the background of the panel. The thin sinewy figures have sharp features and long pointed noses. The protruding eye typical of the later Gujarati style appears for the first time in Ellora. In the later series the main composition shows a procession of Saiva holy men. Though the Jaina rock temples at Ellora were also profusely painted, only few remains survive. The flying apsaras are quite graceful but the repetition of Tirthankaras lacks vitality. In south India wall paintings have been found both in the early rock-cut caves and later structural temples. They were executed under the royal patronage of the Pallavas, Pandyas, Cheras and Cholas during the course of many centuries. Unfortunately, most of the examples are very fragmentary.

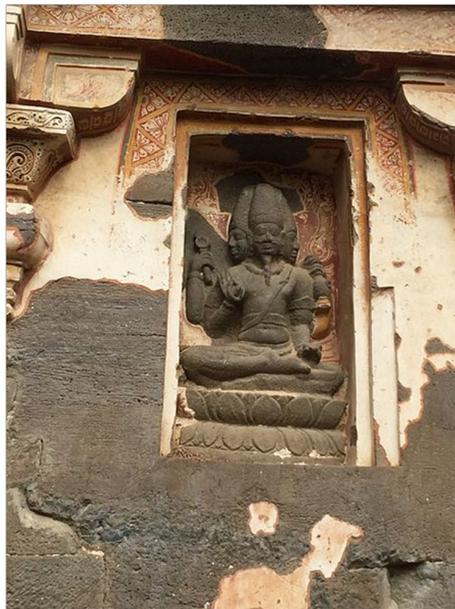
6.19 SOME PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES OF ELLORA CAVES



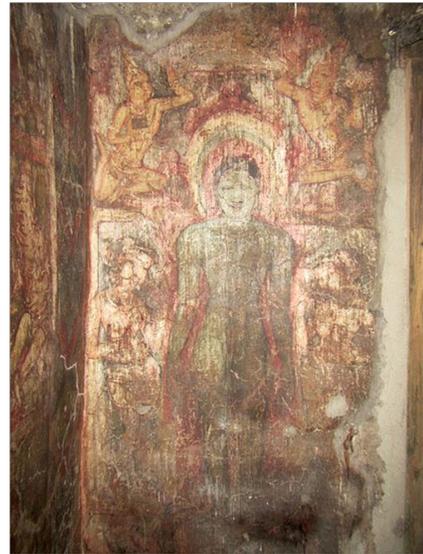


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6.20 ELEPHANTA CAVES

Elephanta Caves are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a collection of cave temples predominantly dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva. They are on Elephanta Island, or Gharapuri (literally "the city of caves"), in Mumbai Harbour, 10 kilometres (6.2 mi) east of Mumbai in the Indian state of Maharashtra. The island, about 2 kilometres (1.2 mi) west of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port, consists of five Hindu caves and a few Buddhist stupa mounds that date back to the 2nd century BCE, as well as a small group of two Buddhist caves with water tanks.

The Elephanta Caves contain rock cut stone sculptures that show syncretism of Hindu and Buddhist ideas and iconography. The caves are hewn from solid basalt

rock. Except for a few exceptions, much of the artwork is defaced and damaged. The main temple's orientation as well as the relative location of other temples are placed in a mandala pattern. The carvings narrate Hindu mythologies, with the large monolithic 20 feet (6.1 m) Trimurti Sadashiva (three-faced Shiva), Nataraja (Lord of dance) and Yogishvara (Lord of Yoga) being the most celebrated.

These date them between 5th and 9th century, and attribute them to various Hindu dynasties. They are more commonly placed between the 5th and 7th centuries. Most scholars consider it to have been completed by about 550 CE.



Elephanta Caves

They were named Elefante – which morphed to Elephanta – by the colonial Portuguese when they found elephant statues on it. They established a base on the island, and its soldiers damaged the sculpture and caves. The main cave (Cave 1, or the Great Cave) was a Hindu place of worship until the Portuguese arrived, whereupon the island ceased to be an active place of worship. The earliest attempts to prevent further damage to the Caves were started by British India officials in 1909. The monuments were restored in the 1970s. In 1987, the restored Elephanta Caves were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is currently maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

6.21 HISTORY

The early history of the Elephanta Caves is unknown, but many historians agree on the point that the temples and reliefs on the site date back to somewhere between the 5th-century and 9th century. The site is located on Elephanta Island or Gharapuri, which means the village of caves in the Marathi language. The caves, as well as the island, were given the name Elephanta by Portuguese invaders after they took control of the place in 1534. It was the discovery of a gigantic rock-cut sculpture of an elephant on the island that prompted them to name the place so. In 1661, the colonial British rulers brought the island under their dominion.

The ancient history of the island is unknown in either Hindu or Buddhist records. Archeological studies have uncovered many remains that suggest the small island had a rich cultural past, with evidence of human settlement by possibly the

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2nd century BC. The Elephanta site was first occupied by Hinayana Buddhists, before the arrival of the Brahmans to the island, to raise a large stupa to the Buddha with seven smaller stupas around it, probably around the 2nd century BCE. Coins of the Kshatrapas (Western Satraps) dating to the 4th century CE were found on the island. The regional history is first recorded in the Gupta Empire era, but these do not explicitly mention these caves. This has made the origins and the century in which Elephanta caves were built a subject of a historic dispute. They have been variously dated, mostly between from late 5th to late 8th century AD, largely based on the dating of other cave temples in the Deccan region. Colonial era historians suggested that the caves were built by the Rashtrakutas in 7th century or after, a hypothesis primarily based on some similarities with the Ellora Caves. This theory has been discredited by later findings.

According to Archaeological Survey of India and UNESCO, the site was settled in ancient times and the cave temples were built between 5th and 6th century. Contemporary scholars generally place the completion of the temples to the second quarter of the 6th century and as a continuation of the period of artistic flowering in the Gupta Empire era. These scholars attribute these Cave temples to king Krishnaraja of the Kalachuri dynasty. The dating to a mid 6th century completion and it being a predominantly Shiva monument built by a Hindu Kalachuri king is based on numismatic evidence, inscriptions, construction style and better dating of other Deccan cave temples including the Ajanta Caves, and the more firm dating of Dandin's Dasakumaracarita.

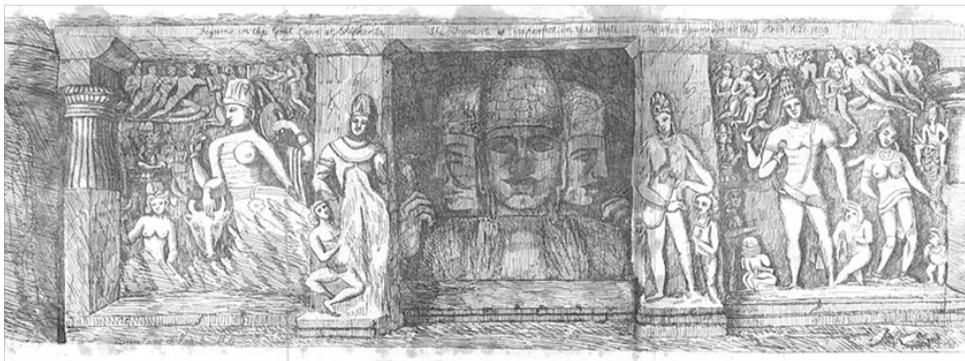
The significance of the Elephanta Caves is better understood by studying them in context of ancient and early medieval Hindu literature, as well as in the context of other Buddhist, Hindu and Jain cave temples on the subcontinent. The historic Elephanta artwork was inspired by the mythology, concepts and spiritual ideas found in the Vedic texts on Rudra and later Shiva, the epics, the Puranas and the Pashupata Shaivism literature corpus of Hinduism composed by the 5th-century. The panels reflect the ideas and stories widely accepted and well known to the artists and cave architects of India by about 525 CE. The mythology varies significantly in these texts and has been much distorted by later interpolations, but the Elephanta Cave panels represent the narrative version most significant in the 6th century. The panels and artwork express through their eclecticism, flux and motion the influence of Vedic and post-Vedic religious thought on Hindu culture in mid 1st millennium CE.

After the caves' completion in the 6th century, Elephanta became popular regionally as Gharapuri (village of caves). The name is still used in the local Marathi language. It became a part of the Gujarat Sultanate rulers, who ceded it to the Portuguese merchants in 1534. The Portuguese named the island "Elephanta Island" for the huge rock-cut stone statue of an elephant, the spot they used for docking their boats and as a landmark to distinguish it from other islands near Mumbai. The elephant statue was damaged in attempts to relocate it to England, was moved to the Victoria Gardens in 1864, was reassembled in 1914 by Cadell

and Hewett, and now sits in the Jijamata Udyaan in Mumbai.

Scholars are divided who most defaced and damaged the Elephanta Caves. According to Macneil, the monuments and caves were already desecrated during the Sultanate rule, basing his findings on the Persian inscription on a door the leads to the grand cave. In contrast, others such as Ovington and Pyke, link the greater damage to be from the Christian Portuguese soldiers and their texts which state they used the caves and statues as a firing range and for target practice.

Over time, these caves suffered significant damage and destruction by Persian invaders, Christian Portuguese soldiers, and Maratha as well as British rulers. In 1909, the British India officials initiated attempts to protect the caves from further damage. Later, the Government of India carried out restoration works at the site in the 1970s and made it a heritage site and a tourist attraction as we see it today.



A sketch and a photo of the Elephanta Caves in 19th century.

In 1903, the Hindus petitioned the government to waive this fee, which the British agreed to on three Shiva festival days if Hindus agreed. The Elephants Caves were, otherwise, left in its ruinous condition.

In the late 1970s, the Government of India restored the main cave in its attempt to make it a tourist and heritage site. The caves were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987 as per the cultural criteria of UNESCO: the caves "represent a masterpiece of human creative genius" and "bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is

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living or which has disappeared".

Over time, these caves suffered significant damage and destruction by Persian invaders, Christian Portuguese soldiers, and Maratha as well as British rulers. In 1909, the British India officials initiated attempts to protect the caves from further damage. Later, the Government of India carried out restoration works at the site in the 1970s and made it a heritage site and a tourist attraction as we see it today.

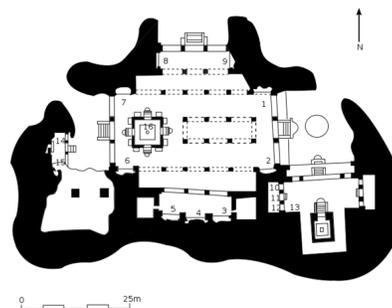
6.22 ELEPHANTA CAVES ART AND ARCHITECTURE

There are two groups of caves on Elephanta Island, each featuring the rock-cut style of architecture. The caves are carved out of solid basalt rock and cover an area of 60,000 sq. ft. The larger one of these two groups has five caves with numerous Hindu sculptures. Two Buddhist caves at the site make up the smaller group along with water tanks and a Stupa.

Each cave has been carved as a rock-cut temple with one main huge chamber, courtyards, two lateral chambers, and minor shrines. Cave 1 aka the Grand Cave is the biggest one among these and spreads across 39 meters from its entrance to the back. This cave temple is mainly dedicated to Lord Shiva and has several structures and carvings celebrating the deity and his different forms.

Cave 1: Main, Great Cave

The main cave, also called Cave 1, Grand Cave or the Great Cave, is 39.63 metres (130.0 ft) square in plan with a hall (mandapa). The basic plan of the cave can be traced back to the plan of the ancient Buddhist viharas, consisting of a square court surrounded by cells, built from about 500 to 600 years before in India. The Cave has several entrances, the main entrance is unassumingly small and hides the grand hall inside. The main entrance faces north, while two side entrances face east and west. The cave's main entrance is aligned with the north-south axis, unusual for a Shiva shrine. However, inside is an integrated square plan Linga shrine that is aligned east-west, opening to the sunrise.



Elephanta main cave plan

1) Sadasiva: Trimurti

The Trimurti is considered a masterpiece and the most important sculpture in the caves. It is carved in relief on the south wall of the cave facing the north entrance, along the north-south axis. It is also known as Sadashiva and Maheshmurti. The image, 6 m (20 ft) in height, depicts a three-headed Shiva, representing Panchamukha Shiva.

The three heads represent three essential aspects of Shiva: creation, protection, and destruction. As per another version, the three heads symbolize compassion and wisdom. The right half-face (west face) shows him holding a lotus bud, depicting the promise of life and creativity. This face is symbolism for Brahma, the creator or Uma or Vamadeva, the feminine side of Shiva and creator. The left half-face (east face) is that of a moustached young man. This is Shiva as the terrifying Aghora or Bhairava, the chaos creator and destroyer. This is also known as Rudra-Shiva, the Destroyer. The central face, benign and meditative Tatpuruṣa, resembles the preserver Vishnu. This is the Shiva form as the "master of positive and negative principles of existence and preserver of their harmony". The three-headed Shiva are his creator, preserver and destroyer aspects in Shaivism. They are equivalently symbolism for Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma, they being equivalent of the three aspects found in Shaivism.



Trimurti Shiva flanked by the dvarapalas

2). Gangadhara

The Trimurti Shiva is flanked on its left by Ardhanarisvara (a half-Shiva, half-Parvati composite) and Gangadhara legend to its right. The Gangadhara image to the right of the Trimurti show Shiva and Parvati standing. Shiva brings the River Ganges down from the heavens to serve man, and her immense power is contained effortlessly in Shiva's hair as she descends from heaven. The artists carved a small three bodied goddess up high, a symbolism for Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati. The mother goddess Parvati stands tall next to Shiva, smiling. The carving is 4 m (13 ft) wide and 5.207 m (17.08 ft) high.

The Gangadhara image is highly damaged, particularly the lower half of Shiva seen seated with Parvati, who is shown with four arms, two of which are

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broken. From the crown, a cup with a triple-headed female figure (with broken arms) to depict the three major rivers in Hindu texts. An alternative interpretation of the three-bodied goddess in Gangadharamurti panel here and elsewhere is that it represents the regenerative powers of rivers in the form of Mandakini, Suradhani and Bhagavati. In this grotto scene, Shiva is sculpted and bedecked with ornaments, while gods gather to watch the cosmic source of earthly abundance. The gods and goddesses shown are identifiable from the vahana (vehicle) and icons, and they include Brahma (left), Indra (left), Vishnu (right), Saraswati, Indrani, Lakshmi, and others.

Wrapped on one of the arms of Shiva is his iconic coiling serpent whose hood is seen near his left shoulder. Another hand (partly broken) gives the semblance of Shiva hugging Parvati, with a head of matted hair. A damaged ornamented drapery covers his lower torso, below the waist. Parvati is carved to the left of Shiva with a coiffured hair dress, fully bedecked with ornaments and jewellery. Between them stands a gana (dwarf jester) expressing confused panic as to whether Shiva will be able to contain the mighty river goddess. In the lower left of the panel is a kneeling devout figure in namaste posture representing the heroic mythical king Bhagiratha who worked hard to bring the river of prosperity to his earthly kingdom, but unaware of the potentially destructive forces that came with it.



Shiva bringing Ganges River to earth.

3) Ardhanarishvara

On the wall to the east of the Trimurti is a damaged four-armed Ardhanarishvara carving. This image, which is 5.11 m (16.8 ft) in height. It represents the ancient Hindu concept of essential interdependence of the feminine and the masculine aspects in the universe, for its creation, its sustenance and its destruction.[50][51] It is represented as half woman shown as half of Parvati in this Elephanta panel on the right side, with breast, waist, feminine hair and items such as a mirror in the upper hand. The second half-man side is Shiva with male characteristics and items iconographically his symbol. In Shaivism, the concept pictorially symbolizes the transcendence of all duality including gender, with the spiritual lacking any distinctions, where energy and power (Shakti, Parvati) is unified and is inseparable

with the soul and awareness (Brahman, Shiva).

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Ardhanarishvara (centre): half female (Parvati) and half male (Shiva), feminine-masculine equivalence.

In the panel, the relief shows a headdress (double-folded) with two pleats draped towards the female head (Parvati) and the right side (Shiva) depicting curled hair and a crescent. The female figure has all the ornamentation (broad armlets and long bracelets, a large ring in the ear, jewelled rings on the fingers) but the right male figure has drooping hair, armlets and wristlets. One of his hands rests on Nandi bull's left horn, Shiva's mount, which is fairly well preserved. The pair of hands at the back is also bejewelled; the right hand of the male side holds a serpent, while the left hand of the female side holds a mirror. The front left hand is broken, while a large part of the lower half of the panel was damaged at some point. Around the Ardhanarishwara are three layers of symbolic characters. The lowest or at the same level as the viewer are human figures oriented reverentially towards the androgyne image. Above them are gods and goddesses such as Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and others who are seated on their vahanas. Above them are flying apsaras approaching the fused divinity with garlands, music, and celebratory offerings.

4) Shiva slaying Andhaka

The panel in the northwest side of the cave, on the wall near west entrance and the Linga shrine (see 7 in plan), is an uncommon sculpture about the Andhakasura-vadha legend. It shows Bhairava, or Virabhadra, a ferocious form of Shiva killing the demon Andhaka (literally, "blind, darkness"). The relief is much ruined below the waist, is 3.5 m (11 ft) high and posed in action. Though a relief, it is carved to give it a three dimensional form, as if the ferocious Shiva is coming out of the rocks and impaling Andhaka with his trident.



Shiva slaying Andhaka

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Bhairava's headgear has a ruff on the back, a skull, and cobra over the forehead, and the crescent high on the right. His facial expression is of anger, conviction of something he must do, and one in the middle of action. The legs and five of the eight arms are broken, attributed to Portuguese vandalism. The smaller broken image Andhaka is seen below Bhairava's image. Also depicted in his right hand is the symbolic weapon that Shaiva mythology states Shiva used to kill the destructive elephant demon. A hand holds a bowl to collect the blood dripping from the slain Andhaka, which Shaiva legend states was necessary because the dripping blood had the power to become new demons if they got nourished by the ground. Furthermore, the artwork shows ruined parts of a male and two female forms, figures of two ascetics, a small figure in front, a female figure, and two dwarfs. The uppermost part shows flying apsaras bringing garlands.



Kalyanasundara: the wedding of Shiva and Parvati.

5) Wedding of Shiva

The niche image carved on the southwest wall, near the Linga shrine is the wedding of Shiva and Parvati. This legend is called the Kalyanasundara in Hindu texts. Parvati is seen standing to Shiva's right, the customary place for a Hindu bride at the wedding. The carvings are substantially damaged, but the ruined remains of the sculpture has been significant to scholarly studies of Hindu literature. In many surviving versions of the Puranas, the wedding takes place in King Parvata's palace. However, in this Elephanta Cave panel, the narrative shows some earlier version. Here King Parvata standing behind Parvati gives away the bride to Shiva while Brahma is the priest in the grotto relief. Gods, goddesses and celestial apsaras are cheering witness to the wedding. Vishnu is witness to the marriage, standing tall behind the sitting Brahma on the right side of the panel. Just above the main images rishi (sages) and a few characters hanging from the ceiling are seen blessing the wedding.

The groom Shiva is shown calm and young, while Parvati is depicted as shy and emotional. Her head is tilted towards him and her eyelids joyfully lowered, while his hand is holding hers. Their dress reflect the Hindu customs. He wears

the sacred thread across his chest, she the customary jewelry. The other characters shown in the wedding carry items or are shown holding items that typically grace a Hindu wedding. Chandra (moon god), for example, holds a traditionally decorated water vessel. Brahma, the priest, is squatting on the floor to the right tending the yajna fire.

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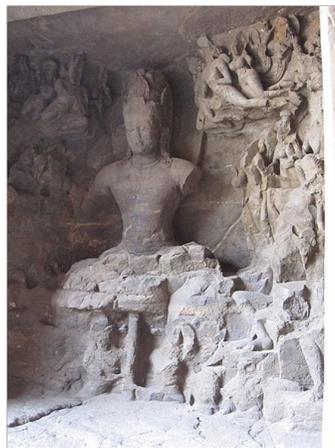
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6) Yogishvara: Lord of Yoga

The panel in the east side of the portico next to the north entrance (see 9 on plan) is Shiva in Yoga. This form of Shiva is called Yogishvara, Mahayogi, Lakulisa.

Shiva, states Stella Kramrisch, is the "primordial yogi" in this panel. He is the master of discipline, the teacher of Yoga arts, the master who shows how yoga and meditation leads to the realization of ultimate reality.

The relief is in a dilapidated condition with most of the arms and legs broken. He is seated in padmasana lost in his meditation. His posture is well formed and suggests that the 6th century artist knew this asana. He sits on a lotus with a stalk shown as if coming out of the earth, his legs are crossed symmetrically. Two Nagas flank the lotus and express their reverence with a namaste posture. The great yogi is being approached by various Vedic and Puranic gods and goddesses, as well as monks and sadhus, yet there is a halo around him that keeps them at bay, as if they admire it but do not wish to disturb his meditation.



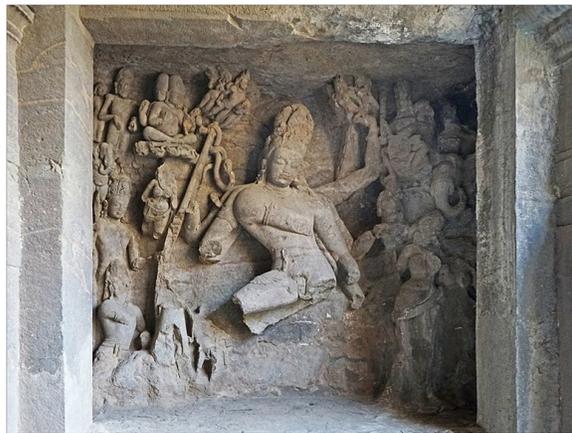
Shiva as Yogishvara, god of Yoga.

In some ways, the yogi artwork shown in this Hindu cave are similar to those found in Buddhist caves, but there are differences. Yogi Shiva, or Lakulisa, wears a crown here, his chest is shown vaulting forward as if in breathing exercises found in Hindu yoga texts, the face and body expresses different energy. This Shiva yogi comes across as the "lord of the caves" or Guhesvara in medieval Indian poetry, states Kramrisch. According to Charles Collins, the depiction of Shiva as Yogi in Elephanta Cave 1 is harmonious with those found in the Puranas dated to early and mid 1st millennium CE.

7) Nataraja: Lord of Dance

The panel facing the Yogishvara, on the west side of the portico next to the north entrance (see 8 on plan) is Shiva as the Nataraja, "cosmic dancer" and "the lord of dancers". It is also called the Nrittamurti.

The badly damaged relief panel is 4 m (13 ft) wide and 3.4 m (11 ft) high and set low on the wall. His body and arms are shown as wildly gyrating in the *lalita mudra*, a symbolism for occupying all of space, soaring energy and full bodied weightlessness. His face here resembles the *Tatpurusha*, or the manifested form of Shiva that preserves and sustains all of creation, all of creative activity. This is an eight-armed depiction of Nataraja. The parts of the panel that have survived suggest that he is holding an axe, a coiled serpent is wrapped around its top. In another he holds a folded cloth, possibly symbolic veil of *maya*.



Shiva as Nataraja, god of dance.

There are fewer gods, goddesses and observers in this panel than others in this cave, with Brahma, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Parvati are visible and have a facial expression of being spellbound. Also present are his sons leaping Ganesha and Kartikeya holding Shiva's staff, as well as an ascetic and a rishi, thus weaving the family life and the ascetic monastic life, the secular and the spiritual tied in through metaphorical symbolism of dance within the same panel. The dancer and destroyer aspects of Shiva are clustered in the northwest part of the cave, in contrast to yoga and creator aspects that are found in the northeast parts. This 6th-century Nataraja shares architectural elements with those found in temples in the western parts of South Asia such as in Gujarat, and in upper Deccan region.

8) Mount Kailash and Ravananugraha

The carvings at the east entrance are battered and blurry. One in the southeast corner of the mandapa (see 2 on plan) depicts Shiva and Parvati in Mount Kailash in the Himalayas, and the shows the Umamaheshvara story. The scene includes rocky terrain and clouds layered horizontally. On top of a rock sit the four-armed

Shiva and Parvati by his side. Nandi stands below her, while celestial apsaras float on the clouds above. There are traces of a crown and a disc behind Shiva, but it is all damaged. The scene is crowded with accessory figures, which may be because the eastern entrance was meant to have a devotional focus.

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Left: Shiva and Parvati on Mount Kailasha. Right: Ravana shaking Mount Kailash.

The panel facing the Mount Kailash panel towards the northeast corner (see 1 on plan) depicts demon king Ravana trying to lift Kailash and bother Shiva, a legend called Ravananugraha. The upper scene is Mount Kailash, where Shiva and Parvati are seated. Shiva is recognizable with a crown, and other characters are badly damaged. A portion of ascetic skeletal devotee Bhringi relief survives and he is seated near Shiva's feet. Near Shiva an outline of what may have been Ganesha and Kartikeya are visible. Below the mountain surface is shown the demon-king Ravana is seen with a few arms, trying to unsuccessfully shake Shiva and Parvati in Mount Kailash. The rest of the details are blurry and speculative.

9) Linga shrine

The central shrine of the Great Cave temple is a free-standing square stone cella, with entrances on each of its sides. Each door is flanked by two dvarapalas (gate guardians), for a total of eight around the shrine. The height of the eight dvarapalas is about 4.6 m (15 ft). All are in a damaged condition except those at the southern door to the shrine. The Shaiva guardians carry weapons and flank the doors.



Shiva Linga shrine inside the cave complex.

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Six steps lead to the inside of the cella from the floor level. In the center is the mulavighraha Linga, is set on a raised platform above the floor of the shrine by 1.8 m. It is the abstract unmanifest symbol of Shiva in union with the Yoni, and the symbol of Parvati together symbolising the creative source and the regenerative nature of existence. The temple and all the pillars are laid out to lead the pilgrim's view towards it, the cella is visible from any point inside the cave and its most significant progression.

10) East wing: Shaktism

On the east side of the main hall is a separate shrine. It is a 17 m wide courtyard with a circular pedestal. It once had a seated Nandi facing the Linga shrine, but its ruins have not been restored. To the south side of this eastern courtyard is the Shaktism shrine, with a lion, each seated with a raised forepaw as guardian. Inside the west face of this small shrine are Sapta Matrikas, or the "seven mothers" along with Parvati, Kartikeya (Skanda) and Ganesha. The smaller shrine's sanctum features a linga and has a circumambulatory path around it. The sanctum door has Shaiva dvarapalas.

The Shakti panel in the east shrine is unusual in that counting Parvati, it features eight mothers (Asta matrikas) in an era when Sapta matrikas were more common such as at Samalaji and Jogeswari caves. Additionally, the mothers are flanked on one side with Ganesha and the other with Skanda (Kartikeya) when typical artwork from mid 1st millennium show the Shakta mothers with Ganesha and Shiva. The Skanda in the east shrine of Elephanta Cave 1 is significant, just like the one found in Deogarh Hindu temple site, because he is depicted with regalia, weapons and icons similar to Shiva and because he is surrounded by gods and goddesses. By portraying Skanda with Matrikas, he is equated with the Krittikas legend and thereby Kartikeya, and by showing him so prominently centered the artists are likely communicating the unity of Skanda-Shiva, that all these divinities are in essence the same spiritual concept, "all emanations of the lingam at the very heart of Elephanta", according to Schastok.

11) West wing: Other traditions

On the west side of the main hall is another attached shrine, though in much more ruined state. The larger cave on the south side of the west shrine is closed, contains ruins and is bigger than the eastern side shrine. Some of the artworks from here were moved to museums and private collections by mid 19th century, including those related Brahma, Vishnu and others. The western face has two panels, one showing another version of Shiva in Yoga and another Nataraja. Between these is a sanctum with a Shiva Linga.

This Yogi Shiva panel is damaged, but unlike the other Yogi depiction, here the leg position in Yoga asana have survived. The Yogishvara is seated on a lotus, and near him are two badly defaced characters, possibly one of Parvati and another ascetic. Above him are ruin remains of celestial gods or goddesses or apsaras. The

Yogi Shiva is wearing a crown, and once again there is a space of isolation around the meditating yogi in which no other character enters. Below him, under the lotus, are Nagas and several badly damaged figures two of whom are in namaste reverence posture. The Nataraja shown in the west shrine is similar in style to one inside the main mandapa. However, states Collins, its depth of carving appears inferior and it seems more eroded being more open to rains and water damage.

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6.22.1 Lost monuments

Many artworks from the Elephanta Caves ruins are now held in major museums around India. These include an almost completely destroyed Durga Mahishasuramardini statue with only the buffalo demon with Durga's legs and some waist surviving. Other scholarly studied museum held Elephanta sculpture include a part of Brahma head, several ruins of Vishnu from different statues, a range of panels and free-standing stone carvings. According to Schastok, some of these are "surely not part of the Great Cave", but it is unclear where they were found when they were moved elsewhere, or when ruins were cleared and restoration process initiated.



An Elephanta artwork now at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

The Vishnu sculptures found among the Elephanta ruins express different styles. One wears a dhoti and has a looped girdle, while holding a conch at an angle near his thigh. The remnants of his sides suggest that this was likely a four arm iconography. Another statue has elements of Shiva and Vishnu. It was identified to be Shiva by Pramod Chandra, as Kartikeya by Moti Chandra, and as Vishnu by others. It shows a chain link near the thigh, has a gada (mace) on side, and someone standing next to him of a damaged upper portion but with small waist and full breasts suggestive of a devi. This statue too is wearing a dhoti.

The island also had a stone horse according to 18th century records, just like the stone elephant that made colonial Portuguese call it "Ilha Elefante". However, this horse was removed to an unknown location before 1764.

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6.23 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we learn about the Ancient arts of various caves and about their history and art of the ancient era. We will study about various caves architecture, paintings and sculptures of Bagh Caves, Badami Caves, Sittanvasl Caves, Ellora Caves and Elephanta Caves .

The cave paintings here are contemporary of Ajanta Caves. They are about 300 KMs apart but their topography is not very different. These caves are also man-made caves on the banks of the Bhagini river. These caves are a fine example of rock-cut architecture of India that probably began with Barabar caves in Bihar. were carved in late 4th century – 6th century AD. Bagh Caves are known for Mural Paintings. The walls and ceilings were to be painted were covered with a thick mud plaster in brownish orange color. Over this plaster there was done lime-priming and then paintings were laid. This is also known as tempera technique, which refers to use of permanent fast-drying painting medium consisting of colored pigment mixed with a water-soluble binder media. The sophisticated style of art that is seen in the paintings of Ajanta is also found in surviving wall paintings and in fragments of murals in many parts of India.

The early name of Badami is Vatapi. In those days, it was in Bijapur District but now-a-days is relocated as Taluka in Bagalkot District. Badami was the capital of the early Chalukyan dynasty which ruled the region from 543 to 598 CE. With the decline of the Vakataka rule, the Chalukyas established their power in the Deccan. The Chalukya king, Mangalesha, patronised the excavation of the Badami caves. Badami mural paintings are the earliest survivors of the Hindu paintings. Many of them could not stand the effects of time yet some have reasonably survived. The paintings were completed during the period of King Mangalishwara, son of Puleksin I. The caves at Vatapi were fully decorated with murals; many of them were inspired from Puranas. The most surviving murals include the paintings of Shiva and Parvathi as well as some other characters.

The architectural features of the Sittanvasal Cave include the painting and sculptures found within its precincts. The beauty of Sittanavasal Cave lies in its paintings and structural formation and the way these wall paintings are executed is merely astonishing. With a temple in its compound, Sittanavasal Cave is assuredly a gem when cave temples are taken into consideration and its archaeological features, such as beautiful images on the wall and certain sculptures inside the compound, prove the fact. Apart from exploring its paintings and sculptures, you can also take a look at its wonderful location in the Sittanavasal hill and explore its peaceful surroundings. The paintings have been painted in

fresco-secco technique with many mineral colours. The painting depict beautiful lotus pond with lotus flowers, people collecting lotuses from the pond, two dancing figures, lilies, fish, geese, buffaloes and elephants. Mulk Raj Anand said of the paintings, "Pallava craftsmen used greens and browns and puciles, with a genuine ability and a lyrical flow of line. Lotuses spring up from imaginary ponds amid variegated greenery, under a bluish sheen.

Ellora Cave has preserved beautiful wall paintings of the bygone era. Around 5 caves possess such paintings, but the best preserved lies in Kailasa Temple. According to the archeological revelations, the paintings were made in two phases. The paintings that belong to the first phase usually portray Lord Vishnu and Goddess Laxmi. In the later phase, the masterpiece is that of a procession of Shaiva, the holy men. The paintings also illustrate beautiful 'Apsaras' in a graceful flying pose. The Elephanta Caves contain rock cut stone sculptures that show syncretism of Hindu and Buddhist ideas and iconography. The caves are hewn from solid basalt rock. Except for a few exceptions, much of the artwork is defaced and damaged. The main temple's orientation as well as the relative location of other temples are placed in a mandala pattern. The carvings narrate Hindu mythologies, with the large monolithic 20 feet (6.1 m) Trimurti Sadashiva (three-faced Shiva), Nataraja (Lord of dance) and Yogishvara (Lord of Yoga) being the most celebrated.

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6.24 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Q1. Enlist Features of Bagh and Badami caves paintings.
- Q2. Enlist Features of Ellora and Elephanta Caves paintings ?
- Q3 Define the art and architectural feature of Sittanvasal cave ?

UNIT

7

CHOLA ART

STRUCTURE

- 7.1 Learning Objectives
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Chola Dynasty (9th-13th Century)
- 7.4 Chola Administration
- 7.5 Chola: Art and Architecture
- 7.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.7 Check Your Progress

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will

- Describe about the Chola Dynasty ,
- Explain History of Chola Dynasty,
- Describe Chola Administration,
- Describe about Chola Art and Architecture,

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will learn about the chola peiod art .The Cholas formed one of three ruling families in Tamil-speaking south India during the first two centuries CE. In the mid-ninth century the family came to dominate the region, building an empire that would last more than four hundred years. Based in the fertile Kaveri River delta in the present-day Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the Chola Dynasty—at its height in the eleventh century—ruled much of south India and as far as Sri Lanka and the Maldiv Islands. Diplomatic missions reached Burma (Myanmar), Malaysia, and China.

The Cholas were formidable warriors, expanding their empire with military power, and savvy politicians, making agreements and exchanging gifts with local

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rulers and asserting authority over new territories without the administrative burdens of direct rule. The family took over new territory using both literal and symbolic measures. The emperor Rajendra (ruled 1012–44), for example, declared dominance over the River Ganga (Ganges)—and by extension, north India—by traveling to the river, filling pots with its water, and then pouring it into a Chola temple tank. The Cholas and their subjects saw such acts as meaningful demonstrations of the family’s authority and connections to other sources of power, both royal and divine.

As avid patrons of the arts, the Cholas also dominated culturally.

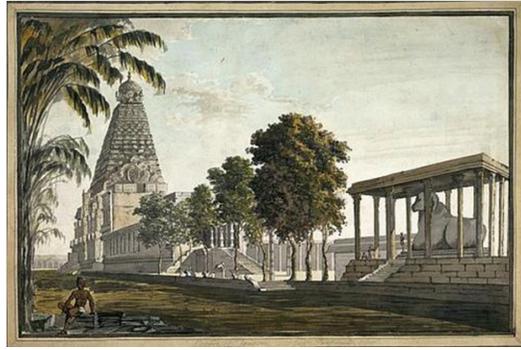
The family’s religious life—interwoven with its political and military aspirations—was evidenced by monumental temples and powerful artwork, some still in existence today. Queen Sembiyan Mahadevi, active during the tenth century, initiated the building of large stone temples, and her grandson, Rajaraja I (985–1016), was responsible for constructing the largest Hindu temple of its age: the Bhrihadishvara temple (commonly known as the Tanjore temple) in Thanjavur, completed in 1013. Expert bronzework proliferated during Queen Sembiyan Mahadevi’s time, such as an image of Shiva’s consort Parvati (known in south India as Uma) that the scholar Vidya Dehejia has since identified as a stylized portrait of the queen herself. It was also during the queen’s reign that Shiva Nataraja, or Shiva as Lord of the Dance, became an iconic religious image and potent political symbol.

7.3 CHOLA DYNASTY (9th-13th CENTURY)

The period of the imperial Cholas (c. 850 CE - 1250 CE) in South India was an age of continuous improvement and refinement of Dravidian art and architecture. They utilised the wealth earned through their extensive conquests in building long-lasting stone temples and exquisite bronze sculptures, in an almost exclusively Hindu cultural setting.

The Cholas built their temples in the traditional way of the Pallava dynasty, who were themselves influenced by the Amaravati school of architecture. The Chola artists and artisans further drew their influences from other contemporary art and architectural schools and elevated the Dravidian temple design to greater heights. The Chola kings built numerous temples throughout their kingdom, which normally comprised the plains, Central and Northern Tamil Nadu and at times the entire state of Tamil Nadu as also adjoining parts of modern Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In the evolution of the Chola temple architecture we can roughly see three major phases, beginning with the early phase, starting with Vijayalaya Chola and continuing till Sundara Chola, the middle phase of Rajaraja Chola and Rajendra Chola when the achievements scaled heights never reached before or since and the final phase during the Chalukya Chola period of Kulottunga Chola I till the demise of the Chola empire.

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The Cholas in addition to their temples, also built many buildings such as hospitals, public utility buildings and palaces. Many such buildings find mention in their inscriptions and in contemporary accounts. The golden palace that Aditya Karikala supposedly built for his father Sundara Chola is an example of such a building. However, such buildings were of perishable materials such as timber and fired bricks and have not survived the ravages of time.

7.3.1 Early Chola Period

Pallavas were the first recognisable South Indian dynasty who indulged in the pursuit of architectural innovations. The first seeds of Dravidian temple architecture in Tamil Nadu were possibly sown during this period. The temple architecture evolved from the early cave temples and monolith temples of Mamallapuram to the Kailasanatha and Vaikuntaperumal temples of Kanchipuram. This architecture style formed the foundation from which the Cholas, who were in close contact with the Pallavas during their periods of decline, took some valuable lessons according to Nilakanta Sastri, in his *A History of South India*.



Vijayalaya Choleswaram

The early Cholas built numerous temples. Aditya I and Parantaka I were prolific builders for their faith. Inscriptions of Aditya I record that he built a number of temples along the banks of the river Kaveri. These temples were much smaller in comparison to the huge monumental structures of the later Cholas and

were probably brick structures rather than stone.

The Vijayalacholeswaram near Pudukkottai in Tamil Nadu is an example of a surviving early Chola building. The style of this structure clearly shows Pallava influences in the design. It has an unusual arrangement of a circular garba griha (where the deity resides) within a square prakara - circumbulatory corridor. Above this rises the vimana or the tower in four diminishing storeys of which the lower three are square and the top circular. Each level is separated from the next by a cornice. The whole structure is surmounted by a dome which in turn is topped with a stone kalasa - a crest. Very faint traces of paintings can be seen inside on the walls. These paintings are dated not earlier than the 17th century. The little temple of Nageswara at Kumbakonam is also of the same period.

The Koranganatha Temple at Srinivasanallur near Hirapalli is an example of the period of Parantaka I. This temple is situated on the banks of the river Kaveri, and is a small temple with beautiful sculptures on every surface. The base of the wall has a row of sculpted mythical animals that were a unique feature of Chola architecture. The first floor is made of bricks which have been plastered.

Muvarkovil Temple in the Pudukkottai area was built by a feudatory of Parantaka Chola II during the second half of the tenth century. As the name suggests, the temple complex has three main shrines standing side by side in a row, along the north-south direction, facing west.

Out of these three, only two, the central and southern vimanam (towers) are now extant. Of the third or the northern shrine, the basement alone remains. The architectural style of these shrines exhibit clear concordance with the later Chola temples.

7.3.2 Medieval Period

Temple building received great impetus from the conquests and the genius of Rajaraja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola I. A number of smaller shrines were built during the early phase of this period. Notable amongst these is the Tiruvalisvaram temple near Tirunelveli. The temple is covered with exquisite well composed sculptures and friezes some containing comic figures. The entire cornice of the temple tower is embellished with designs of creepers and foliage. Other examples of such temples can be seen at the Vaidyanatha Temple at Tirumalavadi and the Uttara Kailasa Temple at Thanjavur.

The maturity and grandeur to which the Chola architecture had evolved found expression in the two magnificent temples of Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram. The magnificent Siva temple of Thanjavur, completed around 1009 is a fitting memorial to the material achievements of the time of Rajaraja. The largest and tallest of all Indian temples, it is a masterpiece constituting the high-water mark of South Indian architecture.

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gangaikonda cholapuram

It is in this temple that one notices for the first time two gopuras (gateway towers, here oriented in the same direction). They are architecturally coeval with the main vimana and are referred to in inscriptions as Rajarajan tiruvasal and Keralantakan tiruvasal. In spite of the massive size of the gopuras, the vimana, rising majestically to a height of 190 feet, continues to dominate and it is only in the subsequent period that a change in the gradation of magnitude takes place.

Epigraphic evidence reveals that Rajaraja started building this temple in his 19th regnal year and it was completed on 275th day of his 25th regnal year (1010), taking only 6 years. Rajaraja named this temple as Rajarajesvaram and the deity Shiva in Linga form as Peruvudaiyar, the temple is also known in the deity's name as Peruvudaiyarkovil. In later period Maratha and Nayaks rulers constructed various shrines and gopurams of the temple. In later period when the Sanskrit language was more popular during the Maratha rule the temple was named in Sanskrit as Brihadisvaram and the deity as Brihadisvara.

This temple carries on its walls the engraved evidence of the elaborate administrative and financial procedures concerning the day-to-day administration of the temple. The inscriptions give, apart from a comprehensive history of the times, a full enumeration of all the metallic images set up in the temple. Numbering about sixty-six, these icons are referred to with a description of the minutest details of size, shape and composition. This alone is a mine of information for the art historian.

The temple stands within a fort at 200 feet in height and is referred to as Dakshina Meru (Southern Mountain). The octagonal Shikharam (crest) rests on a single block of granite weighing 81 tons. It is believed that this block was carried up a specially built ramp built from a site 6 kilometres away from the temple.

Huge Nandis (figures of the sacred bull) dot the corners of the Shikharam, and the Kalasam on top by itself is about 3.8 metres in height. Hundreds of stucco figures bejewel the Vimanam, although it is possible that some of these may have been added on during the Maratha period. The main deity is a lingam and is a huge, set in a two storeyed sanctum, and the walls surrounding the sanctum delight visitors as a storehouse of murals and sculptures. The temple is built entirely of granite in a place where there is no source of granite.

Though the temple of Gangaikonda Cholapuram follows the plan of the great temple of Thanjavur in most details it has characteristics of its own. From the remains it may be seen that it had only one enclosure wall and a gopura while the Thanjavur temple has two gopuras and enclosures. It is larger in plan though not as tall, the vimana being 100 feet square at the base and 186 feet high. The temple, which forms a large rectangle 340 feet long and 110 feet wide occupies the middle of an immense walled enclosure mainly built for defensive purposes. The vimana has the same construction as in Thanjavur, but the number of tiers making up the pyramidal body is only eight as against 13 in Thanjavur. The most important difference lies in the introduction of curves in the place of the strong straight lines of the Thanjavur vimana. The pyramidal body is slightly concave in its outline at its angles while the sides are curved to produce a somewhat convex outline. These curves enhance the beauty of form of the vimana though they distract from its stateliness and power.

7.3.3 Later Period

The Chola style continued to flourish for a century longer and expressed itself in a very large number of temples. Of these two large temples are worthy of comparison to those of Rajaraja and Rajendra.

The Airavateswara temple at Darasuram near Thanjavur built during the reign of Rajaraja Chola II is a magnificent structure typical of the stage of architectural development reached in the 12th century CE. This temple has artistic stone pillars and decorations on its walls, in a style bordering on mannerism, with an emphasis on elongated limbs and polished features.

Best among them are the dark black basalt figures in the temple niches of Dakshinamurti, the image on the southern side of Shiva in a teaching attitude, and to the west, Shiva erupting out of the pillar of light to convince Brahma and Vishnu of his superiority. The front mandapam is in the form of a huge chariot drawn by horses.

The final example of this period is the Kampaheswarar temple at Tribhuvanam near Kumbakonam which has survived in good repair as built by Kulothunga Chola III. The architecture of this temple is similar to the temples at Tanjore, Gangaikondacholapuram and Darasuram.

7.4 CHOLA ADMINISTRATION

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The capital of the Cholas was Tanjore (Thanjavur.). The Chola Empire was divided into three major administrative units called Central Government, Provincial government and local government. Uttaramerur inscriptions throw light on the administration of the Cholas. The administration was headed by the king. The Chola kingship was hereditary in nature. As per the Chola royal family tradition, the eldest son succeeded the king to the Chola throne. The heir apparent was called Yuvaraja. The tiger was the royal emblem of Chola kings. The king was assisted in his work by a council of ministers. The lower officials were called Siruntaram while higher officials were called Peruntaram.

The whole Empire had been divided into nine provinces called mandalams. Each province was headed by a viceroy who received orders from the king. Each Mandalam was divided into number of Kottams or Valanadus which was further sub-divided into Nadu. Each Nadu was further divided into villages called Urs. Chola government depended mainly on the land revenue as the main source of income. 1/6 of the land produce was collected as tax. Besides land revenue, customs and tolls were the other source of income for the empire. Moreover, taxes on ports, forests and mines contributed to the treasure of the king. The Cholas possessed an efficient army and navy.

The army was made of 70 regiments. Chola kings imported highly efficient Arabian horses at a very high price. The Chola king acted as the chief justice, as the trial in major cases were conducted by the king himself. The minor disputes at the village level were heard by the village assembly. One of the most important administrative units of the Cholas was Nadu. Each Nadu was headed by a Nattar while the council of Nadu was named Nattavai. The responsibility of the village administration was entrusted to the village assembly called Grama Sabha, the lowest unit of the Chola administration. It was involved in the maintenance of roads, tanks, temples and public ponds. The village assembly was also in charge of payment of taxes due from the villages to the King's treasure. The village administration was carried on effectively by Variyams who used to be the male members of the society. There were types of Variams. For example the justice was administered by Niyaya Variyam while temples were looked after by the Dharma variyan. The control of the finance was given to the Pon Variyam.

- **King:** was the most important person in the Chola administration. All authority rested in his hands. He often went on tours in order to keep better touch with the administration . The king was aided and advised by a council of ministers who held office at the pleasure of the king. There was a fully developed secretariat to oversee the functioning of Central administration.
- **Military Administration:** The Cholas maintained a large army consisting of infantry, cavalry and elephants which were called the three limbs of the army. The venetian traveler Marco Polo says that all the bodyguards of the king burnt themselves in the funeral pyre of the dead king.

- **Revenue Administration:** The Cholas paid attention to irrigation and used river such as Kaveri for this purpose. Raja Raja I conducted a land survey during his time in order to fix the governments' share of land revenue. In addition to land tax, income was derived from tolls on trade, taxes on professionals and also from plunder of the neighbouring territories.
- **Provincial Administration:** The Chola empire was divided into 9 provinces called mandalam, each under a governor called Mandala mudalis who were paid salary in the form of lands. They were required to maintain an army out of the resources and maintain peace in their respective territories.
- **District Administration:** The provinces were in turn divided into divided districts called Nadus which were about 500 in number and were run by an autonomous assembly called Nattar.
- **Local Administration:** There were two types of villages at the local in the Chola empire. One type of village consisted of people from different caste and the assembly which ran this type of village was called 'ur'. The second type of village was 'agrahara' types of village which were settled by Brahmins in which most of the land was rent-free. The assembly of this agrahara type of village was a gathering of the adult men in brahmana villages called 'Sabha' or 'mahasabha'. These villages enjoyed a large measure of autonomy. The affairs of the village were managed by an executive committees to which educated person owning property were elected by drawing lots or by rotation. These members had to retire every three years. There were other committees for helping in the assessment and collection of land revenue for the maintenance of law and order, justice etc. One of the important Committee was the tank committee which looked after the distribution of water to the fields. The mahasabha could settle new lands and exercise ownership rights over them. It could also raise loans for the village and levy taxes. The self-government enjoyed by the Chola villages was a very fine system. However, the growth of feudalism tended to restrict their autonomy.

7.5 CHOLA: ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The Dravidian style of art and architecture reached its perfection under the Cholas. They built enormous temples. The chief feature of the Chola temple is the vimana. The early Chola temples were found at Narthamalai and Kodumbalur in Pudukottai district and at Srinivasanallur in Tiruchirappalli district. The Big Temple at Tanjore built by Rajaraja I is a master-piece of South Indian art and architecture. It consists of the vimana, ardhmandapa, mahamandapa and a large pavilion in the front known as the Nandimandapa. Another notable contribution made by the Cholas to temple architecture is the Siva temple at Gangaikondacholapuram built by Rajendra I. The Airavathesvara temple at Darasuram in Tanjore District and the Kampaharesvara temple at Tribhuvanam are examples of later Chola temples. The Cholas also made rich contributions to the art of sculpture. The walls of the Chola temples such as the Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram temples

contain numerous icons of large size with fine execution. The bronzes of the Chola period are world-famous. The bronze statues of Nataraja or dancing Siva are masterpieces. The Chola paintings were found on the walls of Narthamalai and Tanjore temples.

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After the fall of the Pallavas, minor dynasties kept up the cultural traditions until the Cholas became the chief power in South India. Under Rajaraja the Great (985-1014) and his son Rajendra I (1012-1044), Chola power reached its zenith and under their patronage temple building attained its peak. Settled political conditions, vast resources and great interest in art resulted in the creation of two magnificent temples, namely the Brihadisvara at Tanjavur built by Rajaraja the Great, and the Brihadisvara at Gangai kondacholapuram erected by his son Rajendra-I. Hard stones of various qualities went into their construction. A number of earlier brick and timber structures were renovated in stone, and new ones built in places visited by the Saiva and Vaisnava saints. Sculptural ornaments became more ornate and bold, advancing from bas-relief to figures almost in the round.

The Sandaresvara at Tirukattalai, built during the reign of Aditya-I in 873 A.D., is a typical example of the early Chola temple. Completely made of stone, it consists of a main square two-storeyed vimana with the ardhha mandapa surrounded by the asthaparivaralaya (eight sub-shrines). A prakara with a gopuram on the eastern side encloses the whole. Another example of the early temple built in the time of the Imperial Cholas is the Vijayalaya Cholesvaram at Narttamalai, named after Vijayalaya, the first great ruler of the dynasty. The shrine has an unusual plan, a circular chamber surrounded by a square circumambulatory passage. Other details however retain typical Pallava and Chalukya elements like the pillared mandapa, the storeyed vimana, the exterior walls of the mandapa relieved by pilasters and recesses, and the mandapa carrying a hara in continuation of the aditala hara.

The Kornganatha at Srinivasanallur, built during the time of Parantaka I, displays a new phase in the development of the South Indian temples and marks a transition from the Pallava to the Chola style. The plan consists of a cella and mandapa like the Pallava examples, but the exterior walls have been greatly simplified and not encumbered with details. Some new features make their appearance in this temple. The yali type of pillars have gone the padmabandham and kalasa, now more ornate, appear in the capital, and the phalaka (abacus) is very much extended. Pilasters divide the exterior of the walls into niches containing some excellent relief sculpture. The adisthana has a row of griffins.

In the Brihadisvara temples at Tanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram the South Indian temple attained its full development. They combine all that is best in South Indian architecture. Rajaraja I conceived the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjavur as a whole complex on a very grand scale and completed the major part during his reign. Constructed out of large blocks of granite from the neighbourhood, this temple has the loftiest known vimana, rising to a height of sixty-six m and standing on a base 30 m². In front of the sanctuary stands the antarala with flights

of steps on its northern and southern side, leading from the maha mandapa to its raised floor. The latter, a large enclosed hall, has an entrance on the east with a central nave and two raised aisles. The whole temple stands on a bold ornate basement, covered all over with inscriptions. The detached nandi mandapa in front for the large monolithic bull on a pedestal—belongs to a later date.

A prominent moulding divides the lower part of the vimana wall into two storeys. Pilasters and niches containing statues decorate the exterior walls of each storey. Between the regular pilasters are decorative pilasters, an early form of the kumbha-panjaras. A two-storeyed pradaksina patha separates the outer wall of the vimana from the inner wall of the garbha griha. The latter, also two-storeyed, encloses a colossal linga standing on a large pedestal. A door in the centre of the north, south and west walls of both storeys of the vimana leads to the pradaksina patha. These, with the larger opening on the east, make it a chaturmukha, i.e. a sanctuary having entrances on all the four sides. In the middle of the exterior face of the inner wall of the garbha griha are life-size statues of the seated Siva on the south, the dancing Siva on the west and Devi on the north. They overlook the lower ambulatory.

7.5.1 TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

The Chola period is a very significant span of time in that the south Indian art and architecture made marvelous achievement. The Chola dynasty was founded by vijayalaya Chola who controlled the vast geographical terrain of TamilNadu region that was earlier ruled by the Pallava kings of kanchipuram. Vjaylaxmi was a great builder of his own time. He made the famous Vijayalaya cholesvara temple, nurta mallai that is the first Brahmanical shrine of his period. This temple resembles like a Pallava structure. It is a impressive complex with eight subsidiary shrines made around the main temple. These subsidiary shrines are called Parivarlayas. All these Parivarlayas contains of images of different gods and goddesses. The whole complex is placed within a boundary wall made of stone. This fortification wall is called prakarabhiti.

The Kuranganath Swami temple Srivasanallur made during the period of parantaka I is a masterpiece of the chola architecture. It marked the beginning of a new style that was distinct from the Pallava temple in aesthetic treatment and architectonic designing. The most powerful ruler of the chola dynasty was Raja Raja I who ruled over a vast kingdom and is credited by leading successful naval expeditions against Malaya, Simhal and kadaram island in the Indian ocean. He was the greatest builder of his time. The most ambitious project of his time was the Raja Rajesvara kovil of thanjamre (tanjor).

This temple is famous all over the world for its large tapering tower, the Vimana that is the loftiest one in the entire south India. This temple is also called the Brihdisvara temple. It has two Gopurams (gateways), viz., the Keralantakam Gopuram and Rajarajeshvaram Gopuram.

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The temple is made of red sand stone. It is situated within a massive fortification wall called the Mahaparakara. The fortification was collonnaded verandah that was used for various activities like Vedic Education and Ayurvedic poetics. The main shrine has a large Mandapam supported by typical columns of the chola period. At both the sides of the vestibule there are two stair cases of stone that make the temple has a large lingan of Lord Shiva made of black colored stone.

The sanetum of the temple is an example of the Sandhar prasad. The upper story of the sanetum sanetoram has a Natyakarran that depicts paintings. These panitings are based on mural technique like Ajanta.

The painting is based on narratives of shivapurana and agamic literature. The facade of the temple is beautiful in artistic treatment. however, the most impressive feature of this temple is the soaring tower of the Vimana with a cohessal stupika on the top.

Around the shrine there have been made a few other temples and mandapas. there is a beautiful shrine dedicated to goddess Durga at the front of the main shrine. This temple is known as Brihanmayaki temple. There is a small mandapa type of Raja Raja.

The subramanyam shrine is a later addition to this temple complex. In perpendicular direction of the sanatum. sanetorym, there has beena Vahana mandapam. it consists of a massive image of Nandi. The exterior wall of this temple has various niches with images of lord Shiva in his different forms like Nataraja, Uma Mahesvara, lingodbhava,etc. The wall has beautiful Bhadrikas with carved design called Panjara pattern.

The Gopurams of the temple are also equally adorned. There have been mythical images of celestial beings, demi-gods and mythical animals on them. Apart from being a great temple of unparallel height and strength, the Raja Rajaeshvara temple was a centre for various cultural and academic activities. There are around one thousand temple functionaries associated with it who were responsible for managing all the administrative, cultural and financial activities.



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The Shiva temple at Gangakondacholapuram made by the son and successor of Raja Raja chola, named Rajendra Chola is another master piece of Chola architecture. It was made in replication to the grand chola temple of Thanjavure, the rajaraja rajesvara. This temple is unfinished except the lofty and mountains vimana and a spalius pillared porch called Mandepam adjoined with the vestibule again made in imitation to the raja raja rajeshvara temple. Gangai kondacholapuram, was a new capital city with large Prakarabhiti. Within the temple complex other small shrines were also made. There is a sacred well in the complex. Its is believed that this well contained of water of holy Ganga that was brought there by Rajendra after his expedition against the Pala kings of Bihar and Bengal. In sculptural art the gangaikondachola. Shvara temple is superior to all of its fore runner temples including the Raja Raja rajeshwara koni; of Thanjanure. The craving work of this temple is delicate. This temple is undoubtedly one of the finest shrines made ever in the history of south india. Airavateshvara temple of Darasuram is another magnificent temple of the chola period. It was made during the period of Rajendra II. It is profusely decorated temple. the balance and rythm in sculptural presentation makes it a splendorous temple of its own time. On the pillars of the mandapas of this temple there is delicate carving. Postures of dance and drama may be seen here as the choicest representation made by artists. The last great patron of the chola architecture was kulotlanga III.

During his period a few shrines were made in the area of Thanjamre and kumbhkonam, a nearby temple town that is famous for Mahamkkam festival. Koranganath temple represents the temple architecture of the lost phase of the chola period. Another temple which has attracted the attention of the art historians is the chidambaram temple. this temple is also dedicated to Lord Shiva. It represents Shiva as the God of space. Therefore, at earlier stage it had no suprestmature Later a Malabari type of roof was added on the sanetum- sanctorum This temple has beautiful Mandapas like chitsabha and kanaka sabha.

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The chitsabha has one hundred eight beautiful columns. The walls of this temple depict the dance postures of Bharat Natyam. It has four Gopurams made in four Cardinal directions. This was the first experiment done in the architecture of Dravidian temple. In fact, Chola temple architecture was a great advancement made in the field of pyramidal Vimanas having Kuta and Sala pattern. The cholas made temples superbly gigantic and artistically more appealing.



- The Chola kings built many temples throughout their kingdoms.
- The temples of early Cholas are found in large number in the former Pudukottai region.
- These Chola temples reveal the gradual evolution of the Chola art and architecture. The Chola kings earlier built brick temples. Later they built stone temples. The first Chola ruler Vijayalaya Chola built temple at This is a stone temple. It is one of the finest examples of the early Chola temple architecture.
- Balasubramaniya temple of Kannanur in Pudukottai region and Thirukkatalai temple were built during the period of Aditya-I.
- Nageswarar temple at Kumbakonam is famous for sculptural work.
- King Parantaka I built Koranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur (Trichy District). Muvarkoil of Kodumbalur. They are good examples of the later Chola architecture and sculpture.
- Besides all these temples of the Chola period, the greatest landmark in the history of south Indian architecture is BrIhadeeswarar temple at Tanjore. This is also called as big temple. It has many architectural significance. It was built by Rajaraja I. This is the largest and tallest temple in Tamil Nadu.
- Rajendra Chola built a temple at GangaiKonda Cholapuram which is also equally famous. King Rajendra added credit to the art and architecture.
- King Kulothunga I built a temple for Sun God at Kumbakonam. This temple is first of its kind in the south Indian architecture.
- Rajaraja II built Airavatheeswarar temple at Dharasuram.

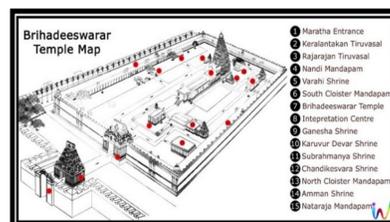
1).Brihadeeswara Temple

- Rajaraja Chola (Arumolivarmar), in the year 1009-10, completed the Brihadeeswara Temple, dedicated to 'the Great Lord Siva' was made to express the king's own power and military might as much as the grandeur of the lord. The Brihadeeswara temple was made to celebrate Rajaraja's achievements (His empire was expanded in all the directions).



Brihadeeswara Temple

- The temple is 5 times the size of previous temples and its 'Vimana' stands 216 feet tall.
- Its stupa, or crowning element, weighs 80 tonnes. According to the inscriptions, 400 dancers were brought from 91 temples from all over the empire, to dance in the temple complex.
- In this temple, Shiva is represented on the walls in many forms such as Bhairava, Ardhanarishvara, Nataraja, Lingodbhava and Harihara.
- The temple walls also depict Saraswati, Gajalakshmi, Durga, Vishnu and Ganesha. What stands out is the Tripurantaka form of Lord Shiva. □ Kunjara Mallan Rajaraja Perumthachan was the architect of this temple.
- The Brihadeeswara temple is part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site among the "Great Living Chola Temples".
- The other two among these temples are the Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Airavatesvara temple). On the walls of the ambulatory path (Pradakshinapatha) around the sanctum is the portrait of King Rajaraja along with his Guru Karuvurar. This is considered to be the earliest surviving royal portrait in painting in India.



brihadeeswarar temple plan

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Dravidian order under Cholas



Some sculptures of the Brihadeswara temple

2). The Airavatesvara temple

The Airavatesvara temple at Tanjavur was built by the Chola king Rajaraja II (1143-1173 CE.); it is much smaller in size as compared to the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram. It differs from them in its highly ornate execution. The temple consists of a sanctum without a circumambulatory path and axial mandapas. The front mandapa known in the inscriptions as Rajagambhiran

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tirumandapam, is unique as it was conceptualized as a chariot with wheels. The pillars of this mandapa are highly ornate. The elevation of all the units is elegant with sculptures dominating the architecture. A number of sculptures from this temple are the masterpieces of Chola art. The labelled miniature friezes extolling the events that happened to the 63 nayanmars (Saiva saints) are noteworthy and reflect the deep roots of Saivism in this region. The construction of a separate temple for Devi, slightly later than the main temple, indicates the emergence of the Amman shrine as an essential component of the South Indian temple complex.



The Airavatesvara temple



Some sculptures of the Airavatesvara temple

7.5.2 NON- RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE:

The imperial Cholas made massive embankments to store surplus water of Kaveri river that was used for irrigational purpose. They made canal from Kaveri basin to

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Thanjavure city. In the Thanjavure city they started a hydel project named Shiva-Ganga. The Shiva-Ganga is a large tank that stored water throughout the year. It was used for supplying water to the whole city. Large water tank was also made by them at Kumbhkonam. Later, this tank was reconstructed we also find reference of streets and residential quarters of the damasl in Thanjavure called Tallicheri.

7.4.3 SCULPTURAL ART

The Chola artists made beautiful images of stone and bronze. The Chola Bronzes are known all over the world. In the same manner the stones sculpture of the chola period are equally important. They show greater degree of advancement than the Pallava art in artistic execution.

STONE IMAGES



Nataraja rajeshvara/ Natesmurti/ Advallan (Tamil word for Nataraja, the dancer lord Shiva).



Lingodabhava pratima (Shiva emerging out from linga).

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Mukha Lingam (face of shiva depicted on Lingam).



Vrishabhavahana Nandi.



Uma Maheshvara Pratihara.

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Bhikshutaka shiva.

Markundeyanugraha murti shiva, etc are some of the finest images of the chola period.

These images have been placed in the Deva Koshthas of the exterior walls of the temple. The Rajarajeshvara temple has a long series of sculpture including large images of Dvarpalas at various gates of the Gopurams and the main shrine. In sculptural art the images of the Gangaikondachapuram show greater degree of sophistication. Especially the image of Nataraja in the Devakosthalka of this temple is a splendid example of sculptural art in India. The dance of Shiva depicted in this music and dance. The body of Shiva is slender and the face shows the contemplated mood of the Lord.

Another image that is unparalleled in artistic treatment is the Chandeshanugrahamurti, in that Lord Shiva has been shown wearing a turban on the head of Chandesh who is supposedly Rajendra Chola himself. The Chola sculptures are more refined than the Pallava and Chalukyan sculptures, but the merits of the antecedent art schools are clearly evident. The sculptures of Darasuram temple and Chidambaram temple are equally significant. The figures in Darasuram temples however lack the sophistication of the art of the Gangaikondacholapuram. At Chidambaram there is depiction of the dance postures of Bharatnatyam, based on injunctions of Bharatmuni. In this way Chidambaram temple is an archive for lovers of the Bharatnatyam dance.

CHOLAS - BRONZES SCULPTURES

The Chola Bronzes are famous for all the world for their artistic merit. They are made by using the lost wax technique. Mainly these images are of religious nature. Among these images the most famous sculpture is that of Nataraja Shiva. The

Chidambaram Nataraja is artistically the best of its kind. Apart from that the the following bronze images have been found.

Chola Art



Shiva, Anand Tandava.

As a symbol, Shiva Nataraja is a brilliant invention. It combines in a single image Shiva's roles as creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe and conveys the Indian conception of the never-ending cycle of time. Although it appeared in sculpture as early as the fifth century, its present, world-famous form evolved under the rule of the Cholas. Shiva's dance is set within a flaming halo. The god holds in his upper right hand the damaru (hand drum that made the first sounds of creation). His upper left hand holds agni (the fire that will destroy the universe). With his lower right hand, he makes abhaya mudra (the gesture that allays fear). The dwarflike figure being trampled by his right foot represents apasmara purusha (illusion, which leads mankind astray). Shiva's front left hand, pointing to his raised left foot, signifies refuge for the troubled soul. The energy of his dance makes his hair fly to the sides. The symbols imply that, through belief in Shiva, his devotees can achieve salvation.



Shiva, Rudra Tandava.

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Shiva, Vrishabh vahana



Uma Maheshvara Murti



Nartak Mardan Krishna

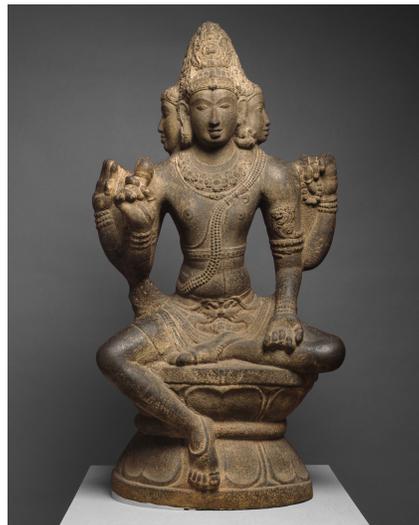
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Somaskandan Krishna



Somaskanda Murti

Shiva Yogisvara



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Shiva Dakshiva Murti

Vrishannayaki (parvati)



Brahma

Subramanyam, etc. All these images remind us the slender bodies and contemplated mood of the stone images of the Chola period. The glory of Chola bronzes remained un surprised in Indian history.

7.5.3 Music and Dance

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Music

- During the period the art of music was developed.
- Twenty three panns were used in music.
- The seven music alphabets sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, da, ni were used.
- The hymns of Alvars and Nayanars were sung in every temple.
- Nambiandar nambi and Nathamuni contributed much for the development of music.
- Several musicians were appointed in Brahadeeswarar temple.
- Drums, udukkai, veena, flute were famous music instruments Sagadakkottigal formed a group of musicians.
- Musicians were honored by the kings.
- Temples and mutts imparted training in vocal and instrumental music.

Dance

- Bharatanatyam acquired its basis from under Chola patronage based on rules of Bharatamuni in Natyasastra, a book on dance.

The Chola kings patronized the art of dance. Bharatha natyam and kathakali were two types of dances performed during the Chola period. Lord Siva was represented as the exponent of Karana dance. Natarajar temple at Chidamparam and Sarangapani temple at Kumbakonam have dancing poses of Lord Nataraja. Rajaraja I appointed 400 dancing girls in the big temple at Tanjore. There were two dance directors to coordinate these dancing girls. Dance dramas were also performed on stages at festival times. Chola kings made endowments to promote the art of dancing.

7.5.4 CHOLA PAINTING

The art of paintings flourished, Figures were painted with realism. The proficiency of the Choia painters are seen on their paintings. Paintings in Big temple are good examples. Scenes of Periyapuram are beautifully depicted Kailasanathar temple at Kanchipuram, Vishnu temple at Malaiyadipatti contain fine specimen of the Chola paintings. Rajaraja-I and Rajendra contributed more for the development of the art of painting during the Chola period.

Painting of Chola period are found in the Natya kuran of the Brihadisvara temple of Thanjavure. These paintings are few examples of Murals or the tempera technique. It shows continuation of the style and methods of the Ajanta style.

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The impact of the Pallava tradition is quite clear. The subject matter is Shaivism. Especially dance of Shiva is vividly narrated. Dance postures that are 108 in number are based on the concept evolved by Bharatnatyam in Natya shastra. King Raja Raja has been also depicted with his teachers and wives in very realistic manner. This painting was restored and repainted in the Nayaka period that has caused considerable loss of the original painting.

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The famous Chola frescoes, a fine gallery with great artistic merit and monographic interest, cover the rest of the walls. Besides sculpture and painting, long and well-inscribed epigraphs provide interesting information about the history of the temple. The upper passage contains a series of a hundred and eight sculptured panels on its inner walls, all finished with relief sculpture except the last twenty-seven. They form an invaluable document in the history of Indian art by depicting Siva in various dance poses in accordance with Bharata's Natyasastra. They are the predecessors of the labelled dance poses on the gopuram at Chidambaram. Corbelling forms the roof of the upper pradaksina patha. Above this rises the pyramidal vimana in sixteen successive storeys, thus attaining the traditional maximum number. This constitutes the greatest achievement of the Cholas. Each storey carries a hara of kutas, salas and panjaras. The topmost storey has nandi at each of the four corners. The griva and sikhara are octagonal. The sikhara stone, weighing eighty tons, is said to have been hoisted to its present position by being dragged up on a ramp which had its beginnings four miles away.

A compound wall surrounds the broad open court. On its eastern side it has a wide but short all-stone gopuram; and inside it is a continuous two-storeyed cloister. In front of the gopuram stands a larger outer one the only remnant of an outer prakara. In addition to the inner gopuram on the east three smaller entrances of the torana variety pierce the compound wall.

The Chandikesvara, a smaller vimana, adjoins the large gargoyle like water spout to the north of the main vimana. Such water spouts became characteristic of post-Pallava temples. The other structures within the court, such as the Amman shrine and the Ganesa and Subramanya temple, belong to later periods. Another magnificent structure is the BrihadUvara temple, built by Rajendra I Chola (1012-44) in his new capital Gangaikondacholapuram, to commemorate the conquest of the northern territories. Like its predecessor, the great Brihadisvara at Tanjavur, this temple was enclosed within an immense prakara of which much has now

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disappeared its stones were used to construct the river dam nearby. The temple stood in the centre of this enclosure, facing east. The entire plan forms a rectangle. The main doorway at the east leads to an assembly hall. A hundred and fifty slender pillars without much ornamentation support the roof of this hall. This hall is the nucleus of the 'thousand-pillared mandapas' an important feature in all large temple complexes of a later date.

The vimana, though smaller and having few storeys, surpasses the great Brihadisvara in the quality, fineness and variety of bold sculpture. However it lacks the other embellishments, namely the paintings and representations of dances. In contrast to the severely straight lines of the Tanjavur vimana, its tapering superstructure assumes a curved outline at the corners.

During the late Chola phase two temples were erected, the Airavatesvara at Darasuram built by Rajaraja II, and the Kampaharesvara at Tirubhuvanam built by Kulottunga III, both in the Tanjavur district. The main vimana of the Airavatesvara, at Darasuram, an all-stone structure, rises no more than five storeys. The pillared porch on the south simulates a wheeled chariot drawn by elephants.

The temple has elaborate and effusive sculptural embellishment in the round and miniature narrative panels in relief. Black polished basalt-like stone, a new medium, was used for the large sculptures.

The Kampaharesvara at Tirubhuvanam closely resembles the Airavatesvara, including its wheeled porch. The temples of this and subsequent periods incorporate a new, significant addition, namely the Amman shrine or tirukkamakottam dedicated to devi, consort of the principal god. The gopuram (entrance gateway) also assumed a dominant role, either singly or in a series, and became a major feature of the southern temples.

Chola Paintings in Brihadeshwara Temple

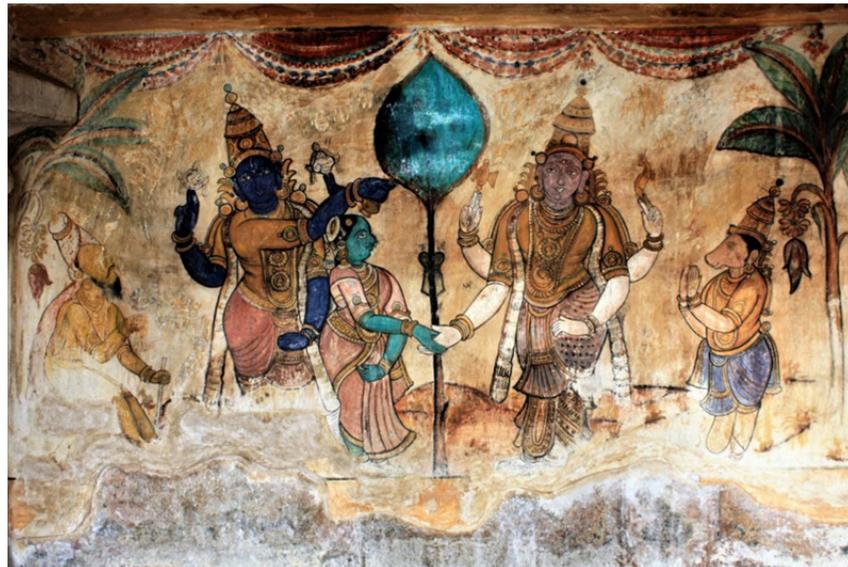


Chola Paintings in Brihadishwara Temple - Goddess Durga.

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Chola Paintings in Brihaeshwara Temple - Lord Ganapati.



Chola Paintings in Brihadeeshwara Temple - Marriage of Lord Vishnu.

Chola Paintings in Brihadeshwara Tanjore

There are 2 sets of Chola paintings that you can see in the Tanjore Big Temple.

One set is open for all and can be seen in the corridors that run along the wall of the temple. All pictures in this post are from there. Another set of Chola paintings that were discovered recently as mentioned above in is inside the temple. They are in the walls of the secret passages of the temple that connects the temple with palace of Raja Raja Chola. Much like what we do in our homes today – lining up corridors and walls of foyers with pictures and paintings.

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Chola Paintings in Brihadishwara Temple - Balaram and Krishna.



Chola Paintings in Tanjore Big Temple - Shiva Ling.



Chola Paintings in Brihadishwara Temple - Goddess Parvati.

Lord Shiva is depicted in various forms, each mural telling a story, even hairdos of queens, their ornaments drawn in detail. The fine proportions in the drawings make them comparable to the frescoes of Ajanta Caves in Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

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Chola Paintings in Brihadeshwara Tanjore Temple - Goddess of fire



Chola Paintings in Tanjavor Big Temple - Lord Shiva.

Chola Paintings in Secret Tunnels of Thanjai Periya Kovil

The paintings in the secret tunnels inside Brihadeeshwara Temple.



Chola Paintings in Brihadeshwara Tanjore Temple - Raja Raja Chola worshipping Lord Shiva.



Chola Paintings in Thanjai Periya Kovil

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Techniques of Chola Murals

Chola Paintings have been brilliantly executed and the colours and modeling used for the paints are awe inspiring. The different sizes of the images that are painted also remark about the judgments of the artists. The walls that bear the paintings are usually eight feet high and fourteen feet wide. The clearance in front is seven to eight feet. The paintings have adopted the complex method of the fresco style. This requires great skills and finesse by the artisans. The artisans first apply a coarse layer on the granite walls which is about 1.8 mm thick. It is evenly spread on the walls. They also used a rough stone to enable the plaster to adhere better. Another fine layer of plaster is later spread over it which is almost 0.7 mm thick. While the second layer is still wet, the artist promptly sketches the outline and puts the colours on the wet plaster. The colors are organic and to derive the perfect shade they are mixed with water.

Lime is used for white, lamp black for black, ultramarine for blue, ochres for yellow, red and brown, terre verte for green and various mixtures for others colours. Pigments that are sensitive to alkalis are avoided since they react with the base. Despite the limited palette the Cholas artists have excelled themselves. The advantage here is that the pigments penetrate the surface as the water and calcium hydroxide in the plaster evaporate, react with the air and create a smooth, glassy protective surface over the murals. The genius of the artist lies in choosing pigments that will not react adversely with the lime and in executing his work swiftly and correctly - mistakes will mean scrubbing out the plaster and starting the painting on the entire wall all over again. The artist must clearly have the final picture in mind and remember that the colour will fade with time. Colours are also used to represent distance. In the Brihadeeswarar Temple, not only did the artist handle the large areas with great ease they also managed tougher pilasters and stone joints just as well. The Chola paintings that one sees today are both of secular and religious themes. The south side of the western world has the most complete and chronologically arranged paintings. The three panels here

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depict the episodes in the life of Saint Sundarar or Sundaramati Nayar an eighth century Nayanmar. The Nayanmars were the saint who played an important role in the Bhakti Movement in the medieval India. There are sixty three prominent leaders around them and Sundarar is regarded as one of the four most prominent Nayanmars.

7.6 LET US SUM UP

The Cholas formed one of three ruling families in Tamil-speaking south India during the first two centuries CE. In the mid-ninth century the family came to dominate the region, building an empire that would last more than four hundred years. Based in the fertile Kaveri River delta in the present-day Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the Chola Dynasty—at its height in the eleventh century—ruled much of south India and as far as Sri Lanka and the Maldives Islands. Diplomatic missions reached Burma (Myanmar), Malaysia, and China. The period of the imperial Cholas (c. 850 CE - 1250 CE) in South India was an age of continuous improvement and refinement of Dravidian art and architecture. They utilised the wealth earned through their extensive conquests in building long-lasting stone temples and exquisite bronze sculptures, in an almost exclusively Hindu cultural setting.

The Chola period is a very significant span of time in that the south Indian art and architecture made marvelous achievement. The Chola dynasty was founded by Vijayalaya Chola who controlled the vast geographical terrain of Tamil Nadu region that was earlier ruled by the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram. Vijayalaya was a great builder of his own time. Rajaraja Chola (Arumolivarman), in the year 1009-10, completed the Brihadeeswara Temple, dedicated to 'the Great Lord Siva' was made to express the king's own power and military might as much as the grandeur of the lord.

The Brihadeeswara temple was made to celebrate Rajaraja's achievements (His empire was expanded in all the directions). The temple is 5 times the size of previous temples and its 'Vimana' stands 216 feet tall. Its stupa, or crowning element, weighs 80 tonnes. According to the inscriptions, 400 dancers were brought from 91 temples from all over the empire, to dance in the temple complex. The Airavatesvara temple at Tanjavur was built by the Chola king Rajaraja II (1143-1173 CE): it is much smaller in size as compared to the Brihadesvara temple at Tanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram. It differs from them in its highly ornate execution. The temple consists of a sanctum without a circumambulatory path and axial mandapas. The front mandapa known in the inscriptions as Rajagambhiran tirumandapam, is unique as it was conceptualized as a chariot with wheels.

The pillars of this mandapa are highly ornate. The elevation of all the units is elegant with sculptures dominating the architecture. The imperial Cholas made massive embankments to store surplus water of Kaveri river that was used for

irrigational purpose. They made canal from Kaveri basin to Thanjavure city. In the Thanjavure city they started a hydel project named Shiva-Ganga.

The Chola artists made beautiful images of stone and bronze. The Chola Bronzes are known all over the world. In the same manner the stones sculpture of the chola period are equally important. They show greater degree of advancement than the Pallava art in artistic execution. The Chola kings patronized the art of dance. Bharatha natyam and kathakali were two types of dances performed during the Chola period. Lord Siva was represented as the exponent of Karana dance. Natarajar temple at Chidamparam and Sarangapani temple at Kumbakonam have dancing poses of Lord Nataraja. Rajaraja I appointed 400 dancing girls in the big temple at Tanjore.

There were two dance directors to coordinate these dancing girls. Dance dramas were also performed on stages at festival times. Chola kings made endowments to promote the art of dancing. The art of paintings flourished, Figures were painted with realism. The proficiency of the Choia painters are seen on their paintings. Paintings in Big temple are good examples. Scenes of Periyapuram are beautifully depicted Kailasanathar temple at Kanchipuram, Vishnu temple at Malaiyadiatti contain fine specimen of the Chola paintings. Rajaraja-I and Rajendra contributed more for the development of the art of painting during the Chola period CHOLA BRONZES The chola Bronzes are famous for all the world for their artistic merit. They made by using the lost wax technique. Mainly these images are religious nature. Among these images the most famous sculpture is that of Nataraja Shiva. The Chidambaram Nataraja is artistically the best of its kind. The glory of Chola bronzes remained un surprised in Indian history.

Painting of Chola period are found in the Natya kuran of the Brihadisvara temple of Thanjavure. These paintings are few examples of Murals or the tempera technique. It shows continuation of the style and methods of the Ajanta style. The impact of the Pallava tradition is quite clear. The subject matter is Shaivism. Especially dance of Shiva is vividly narrated. Dance postures that are 108 in number are based on the concept evolved by Bharatnatyam in Natya shastra. King Raja Raja has been also depicted with his teachers and wives in very realistic manner. This painting was restored and repainted in the Nayaka period that has caused considerable loss of the original painting.

7.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Q1. Describe about the Chola Dynasty.
- Q2. Enlist Features of Describe about Chola Art and Architecture ?
- Q3 What kind of techniques used in Chola Murals paintings ?

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