

CHRONOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHĀLUKYA CAVE TEMPLES¹

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INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EARLY WESTERN Chālukya rock-cut temples can hardly be overestimated. Not only are they among the best known and most often cited examples of Indian art, but they are among the key surviving examples of the Hindu Temple from the period in which that form was evolving out of dependence on Gupta Buddhist forms. Understood in their correct chronological sequence, the Chālukya temples are valuable examples of Indian architectural and sculptural form in development. Seen from broader perspective, however, as a coherent unit in the architectural development of the Northern Deccan, these works are a useful guide to the understanding of related works in Mahārāshṭra and the Koṅkaṇ. Basic similarities exist between the forms of the Chālukya monuments and those of the Kalachuris at Ellora. When these are taken with the similar relationship that both sets of monuments bear to the earlier Buddhist rock-cut shrines at Ajaṅṭā, there is a strong argument in support of the shortened chronology recently advanced for the Ajaṅṭā

temples and also for the early dates attached to the subsequent Hindu temples at Elephanta and Jogeśwari.²

Nine Chālukya rock-cut temples exist at two sites, Bādāmi and Aihole. At Aihole the caves are in two locations. To the north of the site, outside of the village walls, is the well-known Rāvaṇa Phadi and another small Śiva Cave. Around the Meguti Hill in the center of the site are spaced three Jaina monuments: a fully developed temple comparable to the Rāvaṇa Phadi in both scope and decoration, a two-storied cave with a structural façade and a small shrine that consists of a single, hollowed-out boulder. At Bādāmi there are three Hindu caves and one Jaina cave, all in the wall of the south fort.

The rock-cut shrines of the Chālukyas form a distinct stylistic unit. This is not to deny their significant place within the more elaborate and extensive development of the Chālukya temple as a whole, since they are also an important and integral part of that development. Still, they do represent a subset within the larger set and are distinguished both by their unique mode of creation and by stylistic details and organizations from their structural counterparts. Within the development of Indian architecture they fall without question into the development of Chālukyan architecture, bearing equally intimate ties with no other monuments. Within the Chālukya devel-

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¹ My work on this problem began with a visit to the sites and subsequent seminars under J. LeRoy Davidson, at the University of California at Los Angeles, in 1963 and 1964. This article is in part adapted from my doctoral dissertation, *Architecture of the Early Western Chalukyas*, U.C.L.A., 1969.

² See Walter Spink, *Ajanta to Ellora*, Bombay, 1967.

opment, however, they form a related and coherent unit of their own. Because of this unity of conception that is shared among the caves, it is convenient to treat them separately.

In discussing the caves it must be remembered that they are excavations, cut out of the living rock of the sites they occupy. They are not *built* as their structural counterparts but are created by a technique of subtraction; that is, for all their use of an architectural grammar of forms and their semi-architectural function, they are basically sculptural. If one looks for any extended length of time at both structural and excavated temples, it becomes apparent that, although the excavations mimic the forms of their structural counterparts and were certainly developed as more permanent versions of them, they are different in more than technique alone. Many aspects of the Hindu cave-temple, and this is particularly clear among the Chālukya examples, have no equivalent among the structural temples otherwise closely related to them. The layouts of the caves under consideration have only general resemblances to those of the structural temples of the same period, while several similar pillar types are found in both. In any case, since the caves are excavated on architectural models and serve architectural functions, they are best discussed in those terms.

Though the cave-temples at Bādāmi and Aihole have been known to Western scholarship for nearly a century, there has been no critical discussion of their historical significance since James Burgess's pioneering works of the 1870's and 80's. In his original *Report*, after visiting the site, Burgess found the caves relatively similar in style and dated them all to the sixth

century.³ In his section on the Hindu caves in *The Cave Temples of India*, six years later, Burgess found the relative development of Bādāmi to run in the order that the temples rise along the path leading from the village below: I, II, and then III, Cave IV following within a century. He then placed the Aihole Śiva cave in the half century just before all of these: about A.D. 500–550.⁴ As time went on however, he changed his mind and after 30 years, in his edition of Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Burgess reversed himself, placing the dated Cave III (A.D. 578) first and the smaller caves later. He still feels Cave IV to be the latest, and he places it within twenty years of A.D. 650.⁵ It is this last view that has predominated in the literature since that time.⁶ One exception to this has been the study of Bādāmi by R.D. Banerji, the second major scholar to have studied this site. In his monumental survey of the iconography of the caves, he places Cave III later than Caves I and II.⁷ This same view has been

³ James Burgess, "Report on the First Season's Operations in the Belgām and Kaladgi Districts," *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, vol. 1, London, 1874, p. 15.

⁴ James Fergusson and James Burgess, *The Cave Temples of India*, London, 1880, p. 403.

⁵ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Revised Edition (Edited by James Burgess), London, 1910, vol. 1, p. 121. There is some confusion about the Jaina cave, which is dated ca. A.D. 600 (vol. 2, p. 73) and within 20 years of A.D. 650 (vol. 2, p. 18).

⁶ Two typical examples are: Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Periods)*, Bombay, 1959, p. 54, and K.R. Srinivasan, "Rock-cut Monuments in Archaeological Remains, Monuments and Museums," *Archaeological Survey of India*, 1964, vol. 1, p. 132.

⁷ R. D. Banerji, "Basreliefs of Badami," *Ar-*

proposed by Walter Spink in his work on the monuments of Mahārāshṭra and the Konkan.⁸ However, neither of these scholars has elaborated on the issue.

After extended and intimate study of these cave-temples in the context of the Chālukya temple tradition, and also in the context of cave-temples in the Deccan and beyond, I have found Burgess's original hypothesis most reasonable. It is clear from a detailed study of the relative chronological development of the Chālukya cave-temples that the style begins with the excavations at Aihole, in the middle of the sixth century, and that it develops to its culmination in Cave III at Bādāmi, which is finished in A. D. 578. Taking the four Bādāmi caves together, there is both a basic homogeneity and a distinct division into two pairs. Caves I and II stand together exhibiting features and stylistic preferences that separate them from the equally close relationships shared by Caves III and IV. The Aihole caves begin earlier and then continue on into the period of work at Bādāmi. In formulating this position today, we have the advantage of a great body of historical and art historical material that was unavailable to Burgess, and therefore we can be more definite about our conclusions.

BĀDĀMI

The four caves at Bādāmi are ranged along a path that climbs from the level of the village slowly higher along the face of the boulders that compose the "fort" south of the village. They are numbered from I,

the lowest and closest to the village, to IV. There is a natural grotto between Caves II and III which contains a defaced Buddhist sculpture and a small Gaṇapati. Both of these sculptures are cut into the grotto with no consideration of architectural embellishment. Calling this the third cave, R. D. Banerji has called the larger Vaishṇava cave number IV,⁹ but he was inconsistent in this and all others have counted the Vaishṇava cave as III and the last cave, the Jaina Cave, as IV. Each of the caves is sunk into a discrete outcropping of stone, just as each of the structural temples of the site's north fort stands on a separate boulder.

In its formal arrangements, the Bādāmi cave-temple stands between the Buddhist *vihāra* of Ajaṅṭā and the Brahmanical temples of Ellora. All four of the Bādāmi caves are similar in having some sort of courtyard before them, on the side of the cliff. And in each, the temple proper is divided into veranda (*mukhā maṇḍapa*), pillared hall (*mahā maṇḍapa*) and sanctum (*garbhagrha*)—the last, sunk into the back wall, without an ambulatory (figs. 3–6). Reminiscent of the Buddhist tradition, as opposed to the Brahmanical tradition of Ellora, is the stressed division between the veranda and the hall proper. This is effected by retaining a blind bay of stone between the pillars closest to the wall, in the second rank of columns, and the wall itself. This not only sets off the veranda area from the hall proper but has the same effect, on a lesser scale, as closing off the whole front of a *vihāra* by a wall; it limits the amount of the light that is allowed to penetrate to the shrine of the

Chaeological Survey of India, Memoirs, no. 25 (1928), p. 2.

⁸ Spink, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6.

⁹ Banerji, *op. cit.*, pp. 29 ff.

temple. Another feature common to all four caves is the slightly wider displacement of the central pair of columns in each rank: a feature common to Hindu temples since the period of the Guptas,¹⁰ which introduces a longitudinal orientation into the temple's interior.

Caves III and IV, the great Vaishṇava cave and the Jaina cave, carry this conscious deviation from simple regularity of spacing a step further than Caves I and II. In III and IV the transverse aisle of the veranda is larger than the succeeding ones and exactly the width of the central longitudinal aisle. As the wider central axis emphasizes the location of the *garbhagr̥ha* to which it leads, so the equally wide veranda indicates the location of the major sculptural panels that occupy its walls at either end.¹¹

Cave II, the small Vaishṇava cave (*fig. 4*), can be taken as the purest statement of the Bādāmi layout, as it displays the basic form from which the others seem to deviate. Like Cave I, it has a façade of five bays opening into the veranda. The veranda, through the device of the blind bays at either end of the second rank, reduces to three the number of bays opening into the *mandapa*. The *mandapa* is filled with pillars in two ranks of four each that echo the façade. The *garbhagr̥ha* is raised above the level of the *mandapa* by stairs and sunk in a wall which is decor-

¹⁰ The Temples of Udayagiri (Vidiśā), Eran, etc.

¹¹ A similar distinctively marked arrangement of pillars can be seen in the Das Avatār Temple at Ellora. And this is one of the devices that marks the plan of the Dhumar Leṇā at Ellora as more consistently worked out and established than the Elephanta Cave, the plan of which it was adapting.

ated with pilasters to carry out the architecture of the *mandapa*.

In Cave I, the Śiva cave (*fig. 3*), the overall symmetry of the façade is broken by the addition of a large shrine niche and a sculptural panel outside the cave on the west, at a right angle to the façade. There is no major deviation from symmetry in the façade of II except for a single *gana* (dwarf), the only four-armed one of the series, who is turned out at a right angle on the west in sympathy, however mild, with Cave I (*figs. 8 and 34*).

Cave III is certainly the most significant monument of the group. Burgess called it "by far the finest of the series, and one of the most interesting Brahmanical temples in India."¹² It not only is the largest and the most ornate of the set but contains the one dated inscription that helps us place the entire series chronologically. This inscription, marking the completion of Cave III in the five hundredth year following the coronation of the Śaka king (A.D. 578),¹³ acts as an anchor that firmly holds in place the otherwise relative chronology of the caves. That only other secure date that we have is the *terminus post-quem* of A.D. 543 for the initial Chālukya occupation of the site.¹⁴

Cave III is not only greater in size but in the number of its parts. Its veranda (*fig. 5*) spans 70 feet compared to 36 feet for Cave I and only 28 feet for Cave II. Its

¹² Fergusson and Burgess, *Cave Temples*, p. 406.

¹³ James F. Fleet (translator and editor), *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 6 (1877), p. 364.

¹⁴ "The Bādāmi Inscription of Chalukya Vallabhesvara: A.D. 543," R. S. Panchamukhi (editor and translator), *Epigraphia India*, vol. 27 (1947), pp. 4-9.

front consists of six pillars and two pilasters, which means that its veranda is open to the outside through seven bays. The opening of the *mandapa* is reduced to five bays by the blind bays at the back of the veranda. Proportionately, Cave III is shallower in depth than either I or II.

As in Cave I, there is a slight L-shape to the porch of Cave III outside the façade pillars. In this case, however, the unbalancing feature is not a separate shrine but an extended sculpture panel on the porch's west (*fig. 26*) much greater in size than the one facing it (*fig. 28*). It would have to be agreed that the overall unity of the façade was in this case preserved, as it was not in Cave I, by the manner in which the cave has been set back from the overhang so as to allow the horizontality of the façade to dominate the irregularity of the porch panels. This subordination of its parts to the overall design of the façade can be best seen from outside the temples (*figs. 7 and 9*).

Though the wall of the rock cliff actually curves outward above the panel, the artists have still found it necessary to angle the façade deeper into the cliff in order to create the space necessary for this panel (*figs. 5 and 9*). If they had wanted to keep the façade more regular, the architects could have done so by cutting it 10 feet to the east and by keeping it parallel to the face of the cliff, as they did in Caves I, II and IV. Here, as in the other two Hindu caves, there has been the conscious will to keep the façade alive by avoiding too precise a symmetry.

The other major difference between Cave III and the other two Brahmanical caves, aside from the shallowness of depth, is the unique organization of pillars, within

the *mahā mandapa*, into a double colonnade. Percy Brown suggests that this is an adaptation from the system of pillars found in the Lad Khan, which he believed to be one of the earliest types of structural temple at Aihole.¹⁵ The Lad Khan's ground plan indicates an interior supported by sixteen pillars, set in two concentric squares—four pillars on the inner and twelve pillars on the outer square.¹⁶ But this will hardly explain the differences between Cave III and the other two caves as, in fact, they approach the displacement within the Lad Khan even closer than does Cave III. It must be realized that the lines indicated on the floor plan of the Lad Khan represent no more than ridges, raised a few inches from the floor as a running base for the pillars. These ridges orient the person who enters the *mandapa*, by acting as thresholds; and furthermore they give, to a slight degree, an indication of the transverse nature of one situation as opposed to the longitudinal nature of another. But they do not alter the equidistant spacing of the interior pillars with the slightly wider central aisle that can be found in nearly all temples. Caves I and II are then the same square hall—of equally spaced pillars with a slightly wider axis down the central aisle—as the Lad Khan, with the additional complexity of the blind bays that divide the *mandapa* into *mukha* and *mahā mandapa*. The differing organizations of the ridges connecting the pillars at floor level here are of little consequence.

Cave III is unique in having a large open space before the entrance to its *garbhagrha*. This has been compared to the open area within a *vihāra*. In reference to

¹⁵ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pl. XLIV.

Ellora, it can be seen that a less pronounced variation on this *vahāra* plan is carried out in the Rāvaṇa Ka Khai, Cave 14.¹⁷ The Rāvaṇa Ka Khai differs from its neighbors, precisely as does Bādāmi's Cave III from I and II, in having before its sanctum not a forest of more or less equally spaced pillars but rather a large open space enclosed by systems of pillars. Unlike the arrangement in Cave III, however, the open space in the Rāvaṇa Ka Khai is separated from the *garbhagr̥ha* by the last rank of pillars before the chamber. This isolates the open space as that in the *vihāra* and makes it distinct from the chamber. In Cave III the open area is before the entrance to the *garbhagr̥ha* and so works to unify the space and stress the central focus on the *garbhagr̥ha*.

It is from the *garbhagr̥ha*, looking out, that this arrangement makes its most dramatic sense. From the half-light of the interior the view across the open area defines and organizes the ranks of the colonnades distinctly so that their spatial interrelationships are clearly understood. The outer rows of pillars paralleling the sides within the *mahā maṇḍapa* amplify this rich effect of being surrounded by colonnades. It is by this placing of the sanctum at the center of radiating systems of pillars that an exceptional visual and spatial clarity is achieved and that the great Vaishṇava cave at Bādāmi reaches a distinction nowhere else approached. Standing at the sanctum in the great cave at Elephanta, or in the multipillared halls of Ellora, or more aptly in Caves I and II at Bādāmi, one is surrounded by a forest of pillars that grow in generally equidistant spacing right up to the en-

¹⁷ Fergusson and Burgess, *Cave Temples*, pl. 1xx, fig. 2.

trance to the *garbhagr̥ha*. These then lack the visual ceasura provided at Bādāmi III by the absence of the four pillars that permits the individual to comprehend the organization of the space which he occupies. They lack Bādāmi III's comprehensible interior clarity of organization and, for the most part, they are comprehended in the far less sophisticated terms of equal but undifferentiated massing in ranks and files.

The Jaina cave has a plan directly based on those of the three Brahmanical caves, with one significant difference (fig. 6). The Jaina cave has no *mahā maṇḍapa* at all but rather a pair of *mukha maṇḍapas* one behind the other, the second opening directly into the sanctum. In the manner of Caves I and II, the Jaina cave has a façade of four free-standing pillars and two pilasters, and, like the others, it has the outside pillars of the second rank attached to the side wall by blind bays.

Compared to the three Brahmanical caves, the Jaina cave most resembles Cave III in its relative shallowness, the greatest of the site, and in the spacing of its pillars. As in Cave III, but unlike Caves I and II, the width of the aisle on the central axis of the cave is not only larger than the flanking aisles but exactly equal to the width of the transverse aisle of the veranda.

If we look at the façades of the caves (figs. 7-10) the same (kinds of) relations are apparent. Each of the façades is divided into three parts: basement, colonnade and entablature.

In Caves I and II the basements feature unbroken panels of *gaṇas* running their full width, framed by simple moldings and capped by a simple quarter-round cornice (*kapota*). The dado panels of gamboling dwarfs, that represent the unseen cate-

gories of existence that underlie and support the temple, are a major hallmark of the earliest style.¹⁸ In both caves the motif is used not only as a base for the temple as a whole but as a dado for each of the major sculptural panels as well (figs. 11, 21 and 25). In Cave I this conceptualization reaches its peak in the attached shrine niche of the façade. Here, above the *gaṇa* dado panel that supports the temple, a second panel is used as a dado for the shrine, and a third panel is used as a base for the sculptures of the interior (fig. 22).

In Cave III the *gaṇa* dado motif is subordinated to the architecture of the façade and to some extent superseded and discarded; in Cave IV it is discarded altogether. In Cave III the *gaṇas* are placed within an architectural framework of pilasters that break up and subordinate the *gaṇas* to the façade design (fig. 9). Now there are pairs of dwarfs occupying niches in a basement tied coherently together by pilasters that are coordinated with *kūḍus* (miniature, round window ornaments) in the basement *kapota*. In this way the basement as a whole is shown as a fully elaborated microcosm, i. e., it has its own basement, colonnade (created in the pilasters and inhabited by *gaṇas*) and entablature (in the *kūḍu-kaṇṇa*) which is now pseudo-structurally linked to the basement below by the pilasters.¹⁹ The *kūḍu-kaṇṇa* is further decorated by geese (*haṃ-*

śas) that alternate with the *kūḍus* along its full extent. This *animal-kūḍu-kaṇṇa* is the basic form found in most of the developed Chālukya temples from this time on. A version of it can be seen in the narrative friezes around the attic of Cave I's veranda (fig. 3). Otherwise, in Caves I and II *kaṇṇas* without *kūḍus* or animals are the usual rule (figs. 7, 11 and 25), these devices being treated as a special decoration rather than taken for granted as an integral part of the *kaṇṇa*. Inside Cave III only two of the six major sculptural panels make use of *gaṇa* dados for sculpture basements (the Śeṣāsana Viṣṇu and the Varāha in the veranda's east end), and one of these, the Śeṣāsana (fig. 29), reduces the otherwise standard proportion by half. The remainder of Cave III's sculptures stand flush or nearly flush with the floor of the temple (fig. 27). In Cave IV the unfinished nature of the façade makes its intended state unknowable, but within the cave there is again consonance with the direction seen in III. The major sculptures of the cave all stand flush or nearly flush with the temple's floor (fig. 31). There is no hint of the Cave I/II style dado panel.

In the Cave I/II style, the entablature is a broad lintel overhanging the colonnade. In Cave III this lintel was never finished, but it is clear, from the preliminary blocking out which was begun in the east, that it was going to be an architecturally conceived, fully articulated entablature of three levels to reiterate its basement.²⁰ A more fully worked-out version can be seen

¹⁸ It cannot be doubted that their function here reflects the function of Yakṣas in similar locations on earlier Buddhist temples.

¹⁹ This basement is structural and added to the façade of the cave. It could be argued that it was added after the original conception of the temple, but it is most likely that it was not. Its presence is required by the design.

²⁰ Over the *kaṇṇas* of all of these three façades there were inscriptions done more or less on the raw rock. Only fragments of these remain, and these have not been published or noticed to my knowledge.

in the façade of the Rameśvara at Ellora which is contemporary.²¹ Cave IV is unfinished in its façade, as shown by the large ridges of stone still adhering to its basement.

The simplest, and standard, pillar to be seen among the caves is a square shafted, bracket capiteled pillar of the Cave I façade (figs. 7 and 13). This pillar is used throughout the *maṇḍapas* of all three Hindu caves and, with the addition of a simple and relatively slight *Vyāla* bracket, serves as the façade pillar of Cave II (fig. 14). The decoration of the pillar's shaft is an early form of a motif that continues throughout the Chālukya style. Eventually the roundel in the cube above the necking is reduced to a half round, and the necking itself is reduced to a more subtly integrated octagon. The box below, with its horizontal band and pendant droops of pearl swags coming from the mouths of *kīrtimukhas*, remains constant (fig. 26).

A second type of pillar found in all three Hindu caves carries a "cushion" capital between its shaft and its roll bracket. In Cave I this form occurs in the rank of two pillars and two pilasters that separate the veranda from the hall (fig. 11). These are round cushion capitals in some ways analogous to those found among the Kalachuri monuments around Bombay,²² and in several of the temples at Ellora of the mid-to-later sixth century.²³ The division between the veranda and the hall of Cave II also is marked by pillars with cushion capitals (fig. 15); in this case they are square. Square cushion capitals are also used in the attached shrine niche of Cave I.

²¹ K. R. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pl. xl.

²² Spink, *op. cit.*, figs. 14-17.

²³ *Ibid.*, figs. 3, 18, 19, 24.

Cave III uses very elaborate versions of these cushion capiteled pillars, both the round and the square version, to separate its veranda and hall (fig. 12). In this case the cushion is multiplied into a more complex cushion and a half. This complex and more elaborate version was known to the builders of the Cave I/II style but used only in minor decorative details and less distinctively. The façade of III features the most unusual capital of the Chālukya builder and one of the most admired creations of the Chālukya artist, the well-known figure-bracket capital (fig. 35). These figure-brackets again relate to the creations of the Ellora sculptors responsible for the Rameśvara.²⁴ In Cave III they are attached to cushion capitals of the complex cushioned variety. In Cave IV, as in III, both the inner and outer pillars of the veranda are of the cushion-capiteled variety (figs. 10 and 33). In this aspect, as in others, IV forms a bridge between the I/II style and III: the cushion capitals are of the simple type.

In the organization of its *garbhagrha* door frame, Cave I is the simplest of the series (fig. 17). As in the other three caves the door, reached by a simple stairway, is raised a few feet above the level of the *maṇḍapa* and surrounded by moldings in a pseudo-architectural framework of pilasters and engaged lintels. It has a plain entablature. The only iconic sculptures related to the composition are the images of Padma and Śaṅkha Nidhi that occupy the bracket squares of the *maṇḍapa* pilasters flanking the doorway.²⁵

²⁴ Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, New York, 1960, pls. 128-31.

²⁵ The Nidhi pair occurs on the moldings of the *maṇḍapa* entrance as well.

The door to Cave II is basically the same and is flanked by an equivalent pair of Nidhis. The moldings of Cave II's doorway have small male and female figures inset at their bases. Significantly, II also adds an elaborate entablature (*prastara*) composed of three equal miniature shrines separated by single *kūḍus* (fig. 18). The importance of this addition should not be overlooked, as this entablature of linked pavilions is the standard overdoor decoration in the succeeding development of the Chālukya temple. That the three miniature shrines (*kūṭas*) of the *prastara* are more or less equal is important for establishing this as an early attempt at the motif. Later versions are usually hierarchical and complex. They take several differing types of *kūṭa* in their organization. This is true of the miniature shrines that decorate the lintels of Caves III and IV.

In III, there is a tentative step toward what is eventually the standard overdoor type found among the structural temples (fig. 19): five *kūṭas* are arranged symmetrically. The central one is a barrel vaulted structure seen from the side (*śālā-kūṭa*), and the flanking pairs are square pavilions with domed towers analogous to the Draupadi Ratha at Mahabalipuram (*karna-kūṭas*). The outermost of these pairs is further distinguished from the inner pair by a second elaboration of its outer profile indicating that the full *prastara* represents a series of linked pavilions. These miniature shrines are inhabited by Vishṇu on

Garuḍa in the central *śālā-kūṭa*, female figures in the flanking *karna-kūṭas*, and auspicious couples (*maithunas*) in the outer *karna-kūṭas*.²⁶ This doorway further continues the elaboration of Cave II by adding figures of door guardians (*dvārapālas*) flanking the stairs and *maithunas* in boxes flanking the door base. The Nidhis here are placed as those in the other caves, and each is shown with a consort. Cave IV has an overdoor of three pavilions separated by indistinct figures, probably Nidhis (fig. 20). The outer pair carry seated Jinas; the central one is filled by a large empty *kūḍu*. Small *dvārapālas*, similar to those found in III but in much lower relief, flank the door's base. Rather significantly, none of these decorations carries the Garuḍa and Nāgarāja motif so common in later temples.

The major sculptures of Caves I and II occur in contained panels at either end of their porches and at either end of their verandas. In Cave I there is a large *dvārapāla* on the east and the sculpture niche with its dancing Śiva on the south. Within the temple are complex iconic representations of Harihara and Śiva Ardhanārī (figs. 11 and 21). Each of these sculptures is placed securely within a frame over a dado panel. In every panel except the *dvārapāla* the dado panels contain frolicking *gaṇas*. The *dvārapāla* stands over a dado containing a buffalo and an elephant sharing a single head, a *vṛṣabha-kuñjara*.²⁷ In Cave II the format is the same but, as we would

²⁶ This combination of *kūṭas* is the form that occurs in the later, structural temples in association with the temples having Southern-styled *śikhāras*. The *prastara kūṭas* of Cave II (though they lack the usual *āmalaka* finials) are of a kind found in association with Temple towers of the

Northern Style (composed of *kūḍus*), which may indicate that at this date the difference was already recognized, and that both temple styles were being used by the Chālukyas.

²⁷ See Banerji, *op. cit.*, pl. II, fig. c.

expect in accordance with its overall more regular form, the *dvārapālas* at either end of the porch are a matched pair. In the veranda are two major icons of Vishṇu facing each other, Varāha (*fig. 44*) on the east and Trivikrama (*fig. 25*) on the west. Again the figures stand within definite architectural frames and over dado panels. In this case all of the dados contain lively *gaṇas*.

In Cave III the number and scope of the large icons were expanded. Icons in III stand not only at either end of the porch and of the veranda but also in the blind bays that are left blank in the I/II style. Only two of these icons are placed over dado panels of *gaṇas* (*figs. 29* and *45*); the others all stand flush or nearly flush with the floor of the cave and with the worshipper himself (*figs. 26–28*). Distinct frames have disappeared, and the icons stand within the architecture of the temple.

In IV it is difficult to discern the original intention, but what remains is clearly closer to III than to the other two caves. The original work of the sixth century was abandoned before the façade was finished, though not before the inner architecture was finished. The image of Mahāvīra in the shrine and those of Gomateśvara and Suparśvānatha (*fig. 31*) on the outer veranda ends are all of the sixth century. On the other hand the large Jina panels at either end of the inner veranda and on the blind bays of the veranda appear to be additions of several centuries later. The porch is blank on the east and contains only insignificant and unintegrated sculpture that cannot be compared to the panels of the other caves on the west.

There is one more important difference between the Cave III/IV style and the I/II style. In the III/IV style figures transcend

their architectural frames in several cases and by a variety of means. As I have already mentioned, most of these icons are not situated over decorative dado panels but stand flush with the viewer's space. The clearest examples of how else they transcend the enclosing frames of the surrounding architecture can be seen in the Trivikrama panel of Cave III (*figs. 26* and *27*), where Vishṇu's attendants turn a curving upper edge and move onto the ceiling of the cave itself, and where the figure of Rāhu runs around the corner of the wall and faces in toward the façade at an angle of eighty degrees. Another example can be found in the two sculptures of the veranda's east. The Śeṣāsana Vishṇu and the Varāha on the adjoining (blind) veranda bay are linked by a *naginī* who sits in such a way as to be in both panels at the same time (*fig. 29*), obliterating the distinction between the two areas. The distinction would otherwise be implicit in the architectural column that forms a frame separating each from the other and thus isolating them from the space of the viewer. In Cave IV, also, the sculptures are placed in a manner that breaks down the separation between them and the viewer; they stand on the floor of the cave and are only incompletely caught within the surrounding architecture (*fig. 31*).

If we compare the Trivikrama panels that occur in both Vaishṇava caves, we can see how this device of breaking down enframement in the Cave III/IV style is only part of an overall tendency to bring the icon into closer psychological contact with the worshipper. The triple stepping Vishṇu of the Vāmana Avatāra in Cave II (*fig. 25*) stands within a square panel framed by the pilasters of the veranda on the sides,

a dado panel of six dancing *gaṇas* below and a decorated *kapota* carrying a complementary image of Śiva Nataraja above. The composition of the scene emphasizes both the square limits of the panel and the flat ground from which the relief of the figures project. The major motif of the embattled yet resplendent Trivikrama rises in a cartwheel of limbs and weapons that jostle the frame but still firmly anchor him within it. The Vāmana (Dwarf) Viṣṇu beneath his parasol lines up statically with the assorted demons of the *Asura* king Bali. The relief is characterized by forms that rise from the basic flatness of the wall and return to it. The flat, contained and static qualities dominate.

The Trivikrama of Cave III (figs. 26 and 27) is quite another conception. Though it is twice the height and over four times the size of the panel in Cave II, it contains fewer figures. It is neither placed above a decorative dado panel nor caught within an enclosing architectural frame. It stands on the same floor as the worshipper and reaches out from the pilaster, that marks its connection with the porch, to overlap both the overhanging lip of the eave and the ceiling above. Perhaps its most remarkable feature is that it cannot be seen easily from any convenient location, but curving across the side wall of the porch and up into the ceiling it demands that the worshipper approach it in order to fully comprehend it.

The composition in Cave II stresses half and low relief, though several of its parts are nearly three-quarters free of the wall. In Cave III it is the three-quarters relief and the deep undercut that are stressed. Where the flat ground of the panel is stressed in II, it is the curving, rather con-

cave movement of the figures that predominate in III. The background of the panel is not stressed but rather obscured by the curving paths of the figures raised from it. It acts more like a neutral space from which the action emerges. None of the figures in the Trivikrama panel of Cave III are full front, with the single exception of Brahma who measures the height of Viṣṇu's stride as the God's foot approaches the severed head of Rāhu. The effect is overwhelming. This is analogous to the change of position that takes the Buddha from his frame on the face of the *stūpa* in Ajaṅṭā's Cave XXVI and projects him 18 feet out and onto the floor in front of the *stūpa* in the Viśvakarmā at Ellora. From his place remotely visualized as a removed icon, the God has been brought out palpably into the actual space of the worshipper.

This comparison is an extreme yet valid one. Cave II's sculpture is the most conservative at the site, as the Trivikrama panel of Cave III is the site's most dramatic and advanced. The panels of Cave I (figs. 11 and 21) are deeper cut than II's, but their basically static and removed quality is primary. Cave IV is difficult to compare in this respect; Jaina art is of its very nature static and conservative. Yet in terms of style, the work in Cave IV is close to that found in III. Study of the *nāga* hooded image of the Jina Suparśvānatha (fig. 31) in Cave IV makes this clear. Both in its full blown forms and in its filling of the architectural setting with a plastic continuum of form that runs from the figures back to a concave surface without a flat background panel, the Suparśvānatha approaches the style of Cave III.

Each of the caves has a rich and varied encrustation of architectural or pseudo-

architectural decorations. The Hindu caves carry narrative panels around their veranda lintels and a full complement of pillar and lintel decorations throughout. They also carry a series of important decorations on their veranda ceilings.

All but the central ceiling of Cave I contain motifs isolated in the center of large rectangular panels. There are lotuses in the outer pair and *Gandharva-apsara* couples flanking the central bay. The central bay is fully filled by a coiling Nāgarāja with five segmented hoods. The ceilings of the second cave are filled with overall patterns in most cases. There is a wheel of fishes (*matsyacakra*) in the central bay and complex *nandyāvartta* frets of swastikas in the flanking bays. The outer ceilings have raised isolated images: a *Gandharva-apsara* pair in the east and Vishṇu on Garuḍa (*fig. 23*) in the west. The Vishṇu-Garuḍa ceiling is divided up by a painted overall design consisting of a central circle with equal circles in each of the four diagonal corners. From this we might suppose that all of the ceilings once contained overall designs in which the raised central portion was surrounded by either sculptured or painted decoration.²⁸

The seven ceilings of Cave III are divided geometrically into overall patterns with raised central panels featuring gods. This is true in each case excepting that of the western-most panel, which is blank except for traces of paint in a similar design. Of the remaining ceilings, that on the east differs from the rest in containing an unidentified god in the center of a design of nine unequal rectangles formed by four in-

tersecting tangents of the central medallion.²⁹

The five central ceilings are organized on the basis of the *Aṣṭadikpālas*, the Eight Regents. This is another example of the more sophisticated and more complex type of planning which characterizes Cave III and which stands in contrast with the planning in the two smaller Hindu caves. The difference is not one that should be traced to the necessities of greater size or to the benefit of richer patronage. It can best be understood as the result of the architect's more elaborate and evolved conception of this temple's organization as compared to the simplified nature of the other Hindu caves.

The five central ceilings from west to east run:

(w) VARUṆA BRAHMA VISHṆU ŚIVA INDRA (e)

Indra, the guardian of the east, in the east; Varuṇa, the guardian of the west, in the west; between them the major trinity centers on Vishṇu, the god to whom the temple is primarily dedicated. The use of this system is neither accidental nor whimsical. This *dikpāla* system is also taken to organize both the Brahma and the Vishṇu ceilings within the veranda, and to organize the nine-square *maṇḍala* ceiling of the *maṇḍapa* (before the *garbhagrha*) on the interior.

The Brahma ceiling is composed of a central Brahma, seated on his *Haṃsa vahana*, surrounded by eight smaller medallions containing Indra, Yama, Varuṇa and a male figure seated on a lion, respectively on the east, south, west and north. The

²⁸ There are many fragments of painting left on both the sculpture and on the decorative carvings in all of the Chālukya caves.

²⁹ Banerji calls the figure *Varuṇa*, *op. cit.*, p. 56 and pl. XXVI, fig. b.

intervening medallions contain *maithunas*. Only the lion accompanied figure³⁰ appearing here in place of Kubera (on the north) distinguishes this from the usual Purāṇic set.³¹

The Vishṇu ceiling, over the square intersection of the veranda with the main axis of the temple leading to the shrine, has the only fully enumerated series at the site (*fig. 24*). In the eight medallions surrounding the central rondel of Vishṇu is a fully worked-out set of the eight celestial regents. This again is a device to elevate the primary God of the temple and distinguish the central axis of the temple by more elaborate and ornate designs than those given to subsidiary parts. Around Vishṇu are placed Indra, Yama, Varuṇa and the figure seated with a lion in the east, south, west and north, and in between these Agni, Vāyu, Īśāna and Brahma define the intermediate "quarters." This is the earliest known set of the *Aṣṭadikpālas* in a dated monument, and though this is not the standard *Aṣṭadikpālas* of Purāṇic tradition eventually codified and regularized in the North,³¹ it is quite close.

The *maṇḍapa* itself has a ceiling organized by the quarter guardians. It centers on Brahma and is made up of Indra, Yama, Varuṇa and in this case Kārttikeya (the special patron of the Chālukyas).

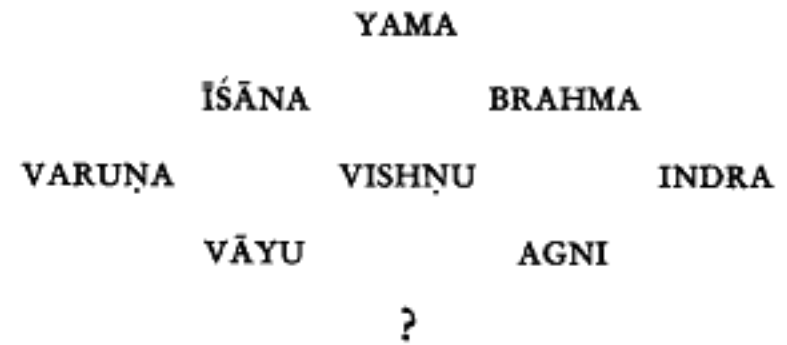
As these designs are on the ceilings of the temples they can only be seen by looking up, and so the following diagrams are oriented on the pattern of:

	south	
	west	east
	north	

³⁰ Banerji calls this figure "*Budha*," *ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

³¹ See J. N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 1956, pp. 519-29.

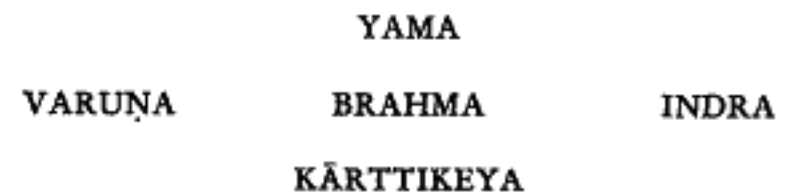
Vishṇu panel Cave III:



The standard *Aṣṭadikpālas*:



Mahā maṇḍapa Cave III:



The Jaina cave has only a single ceiling panel, a flying *Gandharva-apsara* couple in the bay before its shrine. It also contains a sculpture, on the overhanging eave above its entrance, that relates to one in Cave III, a crouching pot-bellied figure that is certainly a wealth deity (*fig. 33*). In Cave III this position (left undecorated in both Caves I and II) is occupied by a pot-bellied figure of Garuḍa accompanied by *Gandharva-apsara* couples (*fig. 32*). Elsewhere in III this eave is used: at the west for the Rāhu that is part of the Trivikrama scene; and on the east for a number of flying celestials who are apparently witnessing the expansion of Vishṇu to his full cosmic form of Virāṭa-Puruṣa.

On the overhanging eave in Cave III there are also located figure paintings, which are the only ones to survive intact within the Chālukya region. These exist in two bay-width sections, with a few heads next to the Garuḍa. In the bay west of the Garuḍa is a scene of a *rāja* being entertained by dancers and musicians. In the next bay there is a *rāja* seated in his court.³² These paintings are in the same generalized, naturalistic style as seen at Ajaṅṭā and Śiṭṭaṅṅavāsāl. They are undoubtedly of the same period as the cave's creation, but beyond this they cannot be said to add significantly to our understanding of it. Fragments of decorative painting are scattered throughout the caves and the structural temples of the Chālukyas as well.

A last element of the decorative schemes that might be considered is the use of narrative panels found on the inner lintels of the verandas in the Hindu caves. In Cave I, seven of the twelve surrounding lintels are decorated. The three over the entrance to the *maṇḍapa* have non-narrative miniature temple *prastaras*, which include small images of Gaṇeśa on the west, Śiva on the south bay, and over the central bay-leading to the *garbhagrha* a simple *liṅga*. The three bays facing these carry decorative combinations of *gaṇas* and *maithunas*, and the western panel adjoining these carries a narrative panel of the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī.

In Cave II, all five of the panels facing out from the veranda's interior side carry narrative scenes of the Churning of the Great Sea of Milk, a legend that centers

mainly on the role of Viṣṇu. The western panel of the outer lintel, facing into the veranda, carries *miathuna* couples; the remaining four inward facing lintels carry narrative scenes of the Kṛishṇa Charitra.

Only Cave III makes full use of all the lintels facing into its veranda. In this case there are fourteen lintels. The inner seven are devoted to the Churning of the Sea of Milk, the outer seven to the Kṛishṇa Charitra. The end lintels also carry Vaishṇava scenes, including on the west the birth of Brahma from a lotus emerging from Viṣṇu's umbilical, a scene which occurs in Cave II as well.³³ Cave IV has no similarly located scenes.

Before moving to a discussion of the rock-cut temples at Aihole, we can conclude that within the unity of the Bādāmi rock-cut tradition two distinct styles can be distinguished. There is the Cave I/II style that is relatively simple in its organization and tends toward decorative ornamentation, with an emphasis on *gaṇa* panels used as basements for major sculptural and architectural elements. Here, sculptures are static and tightly confined to their architectural niches. The Cave III/IV style tends generally to more complex organizations that emphasize the most significant functions of the temple and include more sophisticated organizational devices such as the *Aṣṭadikpāla* system of Cave III. Sculpture is more dynamically and dramatically conceived and often broken from the isolation and containment of wall and frame. Greater advantage is taken of the area available for decoration, and though

³² C. Sivaramamurti, discusses these paintings at length in "Western Chālukya Paintings at Bādāmi," *Lalit Kalā*, no. 5 (1959), pp. 49-58.

³³ This is the earliest version of the legend in which the lotus is seen growing distinctly from Viṣṇu's umbilical.

it could not be said to be more artistically successful, in general this can be seen to be a more regular, consistent and fully developed style. This is evident in the façades and the plans as well as in the sculptural organizations. Several of the typical aspects of the I/II style are lacking in the later III/IV style, such as the use of *gana* panel basements and, to some extent, the strict enframement for major icons. The far greater sophistication of the III/IV style and the likelihood that such a style would presuppose the simpler style found in I/II and follow rather than precede it lead me to see the III/IV style as being definitely the later one.

Other, less subjective, factors also lean to the conclusion that the third, dated cave and its Jaina cousin are later in conception and execution than Caves I and II. The inscription in Cave III states that the Chālukya prince Mangaleśa "erected a temple, an abode of Viṣṇu, surpassing everything which is celestial or human."³⁴ This is a typical attitude of the time. When we look at the caves and see that the third cave is not only twice as large but also far more spectacularly located (higher up in the cliff) than its two Hindu brothers, we can see the concrete manifestation of Mangaleśa's glory (which he then made over to his brother Kirtivarman I, the reigning monarch). It would seem highly unlikely that in light of such an attitude, Mangaleśa or his successors, who were each increasingly more powerful and wealthy, would support the construction of smaller and less ambitiously placed temples than those already existing at a site. In general the movement throughout the period is from

more modest toward larger and more ornate temples, ending with the Virūpakṣa Temple at Pattadakal, the largest and richest single temple in the Deccan. To go from the spectacular and very ambitious Cave III to the far more modest and more simply organized Caves I and II seems highly unlikely.

In visiting the caves, these implications of size and siting are augmented by the relation in which the caves stand to the village. The caves run as numbered along a single path, from Cave I just above the habitation level of the village, past Cave II to the base of Cave III's platform. Caves I and II have the most convenient locations and those which required the least preparations. They lie on the path that rises from the village to the top of the South Fort. Though no inscription to date the use of the South Fort has been found, it still seems reasonable to suppose that the path's existence, with its strategic defensive implications, would predate the construction of the temples. The path turns south and climbs the fort, just before the base of Cave III's platform. The platform of Cave III, which was demanded by its design, is a large stone faced earthwork that required a great deal of labor to erect. To reach Cave III one must pass by the sites of the two smaller caves. Cave IV, which can now be reached from Cave III, was originally reached by a separate path that rose up from the edge of the tank below. If the excavation of Cave III had not been undertaken after the excavation of Caves I and II, it might reasonably be expected to have had a similar path, rather than the one that links it to I and II.

When we put this together with what we know historically from the grants and

³⁴ See note 13, above.

inscriptions we can have a fairly clear idea of the chronology of the monuments. The Chālukyas are unknown before Pulakeśin I's Vallabeshvara inscription of A.D. 543. Kirtivarman I, the successor of Pulakeśin, is called "Vātāpyah Prathama-Vidhātā"—the first maker of Vātāpi (Bādāmi),³⁵ which is generally interpreted to mean that he was the first to adorn the site with temples³⁶ as it was his father who built the first fortifications. It was probably Kirtivarman who was responsible for the first caves. But even if they were not done under his direct patronage, their closeness to the second pair makes it most likely that they immediately preceded them in time and most reasonably in the preceding decade. Cave III was dedicated in A.D. 578 and could have taken much of the 70s to be accomplished. The two smaller caves were probably of the 60s, the decade preceding Cave III. Cave IV was built mainly in the style of III and still exhibits many of the characteristics of the I/II style. To think of it as being much later than the rest, as many have done in the past, is not acceptable.³⁷ Though some of its decorations are definitely later, most of the work in Cave IV takes rather directly the standard forms of the Cave I/II style and develops them in precisely the same way seen in Cave III, though more modestly. A comparison of their sculpture is particularly relevant. Cave IV's sculpture is very close to that in III. As Sankalia has pointed out,

³⁵ "The Chiplun copper-plate grant," James F. Fleet (translator and editor), *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 3, pp. 50–53.

³⁶ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri in *The Early History of the Deccan* (G. Yazdani, editor), London, 1960, p. 208.

³⁷ See note 6 above.

the Suparśvānatha in Cave IV (fig. 31) could be by the same hand as the Vishṇu Śeṣāsana in Cave III (fig. 29).³⁸ Cave IV was most likely cut out of the rock during the same time as its stylistic complement III, that is during the 70s.

AIHOLE

Aihole is 15 miles east and slightly south of Bādāmi, downstream on the banks of the Malaprabhā, which flows within a mile of Bādāmi. Though Aihole is often considered to be the first capital of the Chālukyas, there is no justification for this view beyond the seemingly earlier state of its architectural remains. I say *seemingly* earlier remains, as my research into the chronology of the Early Western Chālukya structural temples of the site has shown that the usually attributed dates of fifth and sixth century for many of the temples are unfounded.³⁹ The most celebrated example, the Lad Khan, is attributed by Percy Brown to the fifth century,⁴⁰ and has recently been redated to the late sixth century by S.R. Balasubrahmanyam.⁴¹ In both cases the criteria is the cave-like appearance of the temple and supposed similarities that it has with cave temples in gen-

³⁸ H. D. Sankalia, *Jaina Yaksas and Yaksini*, Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Bulletin, vol. 1, no. 2–3 (1940), p. 162.

³⁹ After extended research on these temples I have been able to find only a few structural temples to go along with the Meguti (A.D. 634/5) as earlier than the eighth century. See dissertation note 1.

⁴⁰ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁴¹ S. R. Balasubrahmanyam, "The Date of the Lad Khan (Surya-Narayana) Temple at Aihole," *Lalit Kalā*, no. 10 (1961), pp. 41–44.

eral. These usually accepted early datings have to be put aside since the recent investigations of the Jambunātha or Jambulinga temple at Bādāmi show that temple, which is dated A.D. 699, to make use of precisely the pillar types and other decorations that occur in the Lad Khan.⁴² There is in fact no hard evidence for any structural temple at Aihole earlier than the well-known and inscribed Meguti of A.D. 634. Aside from the inscription in the Meguti, there is no other in the site of Aihole that has been securely dated before the eighth century.⁴³

Though the usual dating of the earliest monuments at Aihole to the fifth century is not supportable, it is still likely in the case of several of the rock-cut shrines that the earliest remaining temples of the Chālukya area are located here.

There are five important rock-cut temples at the site. The best known of these is the Rāvaṇa Phadi, the Śiva cave which is located, along with a second, smaller Śiva shrine, about 150 yards northeast of the Durgā Temple, north of the village. The other excavations are Jaina and located in the sides of Meguti Hill, to the east and overlooking the village.

The Rāvaṇa Phadi is located in a very low boulder,⁴⁴ only a few feet above the level of the surrounding fields. It is set below a natural seam in the stone that runs horizontally across the full length of the boulder (*fig. 36*). In these and several other

ways, the excavation bears striking if superficial resemblance to the earlier Hindu excavations at Udayagiri Vidiśā.⁴⁵ In each case the excavators were careful to choose conservative sites (only a few steps above the ground) in low boulders that rise only slightly above the caves—far less impressive than the sites chosen consistently by the Buddhists. In both instances a more finely grained and harder stone than that which attracted the Buddhists was chosen. At Vidiśā as well, boulders were chosen in which a natural seam in the stone gave either a convenient ceiling break, or at least a psychologically safer and perhaps symbolically distinguished ceiling.

The Rāvaṇa Phadi is smaller than any of the Bādāmi Hindu caves; it is only 13 feet wide at its entrance and only 18 feet wide in its central *maṇḍapa* (*fig. 1*). Its façade (*fig. 37*) is not full temple width but is covered by sculptural decoration, a feature again closer to the earlier excavations at Vidiśā than to those in its immediate neighborhood. The façade here is not so distinctly separate from the rock as at Bādāmi. Around its entrance there is a definite basement and an irregular if distinct elevation. But on the sides and above, the temple is blended into the rock rather than clearly separated from it. It has no cornice or veranda.⁴⁶

The façade here, unlike that at Bādāmi, contains important sculptures. On either

⁴² Tarr, *op. cit.*, Chapter 4.

⁴³ This is a highly controversial matter and I can only refer again to the lengthy discussion in my dissertation, Chapters III–VII.

⁴⁴ This temple is also called the Ravel Phadi. For a plan of the site see Henry Cousens, *Chālukyan Architecture of the Kanarese Districts*, Calcutta, 1926, pl. 1.

⁴⁵ I am not here trying to directly link the dates of these two sites, but merely calling attention to their shared technical and possibly psychological conception. For the Udayagiri Vidiśā material, see R. D. Banerji, *The Age of the Imperial Guptas*, Calcutta, 1931, pls. XIII–XIV.

⁴⁶ The possibility that there may have been a structural façade cannot be ruled out.

side are large dwarfish representations of Śaṅkha and Padma Nidhi, the two wealth figures that occur in miniature at Bādāmi. These are placed within relief niche enframements, each with a paneled basement containing a single *gaṇa* and each with a domical roof. Flanking the door stand a pair of *dvārapālas* partially on the façade and partially in the entrance, in three-quarter relief. Surprisingly both are in Scythian dress.⁴⁷ The entrance itself is formed by a broad horizontal opening containing a pair of supporting pillars. The pillars are severely simple with a very narrow curving bracket above and only a simplified and austere octagonal necking to distinguish its otherwise undecorated square shaft. These pillars (*fig. 37*) are the simplest examples of a type not seen at Bādāmi. It is composed of a square shaft with an octagonal necking hedged on all four sides by half and quarter rounds. It is, however, the simplest form of the pillar type that is most common among the later structural temples here and at Mahākūṭa. It is used here in combination with matching pilasters in a three-bay *maṇḍapa* entrance. (Only the central bay, approached by the stairs, is actually broad enough for use.) This is the most simple version of the standard *maṇḍapa* entrance form, which we have already seen in the Bādāmi caves and which continued to be used among some later structural temples as well.

In the cave's layout, two factors are most important: first is the basic difference from the standard Bādāmi layout; second is the irregularity in which it is worked out. The plan of the Rāvaṇa Phadi (*fig. 1*)

shows it to be related to a series of Hindu monuments found in Mahārāshṭra and the Koṅkaṇ in the early and middle decades of the sixth century.⁴⁸ The type seems to develop out of the interior spaces found in the Buddhist excavations of the Vākāṭakas, where enclosed spaces lead through pillared openings to shrines, niches and cells. It appears in a primitive form at Mandapeśwar⁴⁹ and is developed toward the middle of the sixth century in the east wing of Elephanta⁵⁰ and in the Rameśvara at Ellora.⁵¹ Here at Aihole it takes a rather uniquely concentric aspect with a central hall opening on all four sides through horizontal frames containing a pair of columns. The same form as the entrance, repeated in the rear of the *maṇḍapa*, serves as a preliminary entrance to the shrine (*fig. 39*), and repetitions of it to either side serve as screens for sculpture niches (*fig. 38*). The second factor, the cave's basic irregularity of form in spite of this very regular conception, can be seen easily from the ground plan. Though the cave was very carefully conceived and executed, it still contains a number of features that indicate a definite lack of assurance as to exactly what its final form should be and how its parts should be laid out. There is a lack of right angles in the *maṇḍapa* itself and an attempt, apparently reconsidered, to expand the "sculpture" niche on the right into something else. Just what this might have been is hard to say. There are no parallels

⁴⁸ This is discussed at length in my article, "The Śiva Temple at Dhokeśvara and the Development of the Nidhi Image," *Oriental Art*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1969), pp. 269–80.

⁴⁹ Spink, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴⁷ These are the latest examples that I know in the Deccan.

with which to compare, and it is only very irregularly worked.⁵²

Within the cave, the pillars (*fig. 38*) are of the type found in the entrances to the *mandapas* of the Bādāmi caves and the sculpture niche of Cave I. They are three different types of the simple cushion capitaled pillar. All have very narrow curving or stepped brackets. Those at the rear (*fig. 39*), leading to the shrine, are narrow square cushion capitaled pillars. Those to either side are sixteen-sided pillars with slightly concave faces that spring from square bases and carry cubical shapes just below their neckings (*fig. 38*). In several ways these are reminiscent of the forms seen at the entrance to the *mandapa* of Cave I at Bādāmi (*fig. 11*). One striking similarity can be seen in the decoration of the shaft cube on the pillars fronting the niche containing the Naṭarāja and Mātrikā panels (*fig. 16*). Here is the simplest form of the *kīrtimukhas* and swag motif that is a standard form of pillar decoration in the Bādāmi caves and throughout the early Western Chālukya period. In short, what we see in the details of the Rāvaṇa Phadi is a collection of motifs that are to become standard in later Chālukya temples. They are seen here in their simplest and possibly their earliest usages.

Another significant aspect of the cave's design, and one that has not previously been noticed, is the use within the cave of structural forms. Burgess's plan indicates a large *garbhagrha* containing a *Vedi* and *Linga* at the back of a compartment fronted by the broad entrance just mentioned and containing two large sculptural panels.

The original *garbhagrha* was not so unorthodoxly finished. Originally the sanctum was screened from the *mandapa* by a structural wall that contained only the usual, single doorway. This was preceded by an *antarāla* (forechamber) containing the two icons of Varāha and Mahiṣāsura that have no place in the shrine proper. The proportions of this *antarāla* are marked above by three medallions in the ceiling (a lotus, Viṣṇu on Garuḍa, and Indra mounted on Airāvata and surrounded by his host) and a ridge for the walls' setting. Below, in line with the short extensions on the inner sides of the icon panels (*fig. 39*), is the half lotus threshold that stood before the doorway.

Though this wall is no longer standing, its richly decorated left jamb (*fig. 41*) and its lintel (*fig. 40*) can still be found lying in the *garbhagrha* (*fig. 39*). The bases that supported the jambs are now lying in the temple's unused south shrine. Measurements show that these bases and the jamb added to the lintel would have filled the height of the rear shrine and the space left by the short extensions at the end of the *antarāla*, leaving an entrance space the width of the lotus threshold (*fig. 39*). This use of structurally added parts in a rock-cut temple is another link with the tradition seen at Udayagiri, Vidiśā.⁵³

This shrine door was simpler than any at Bādāmi. It was composed of simple moldings, with a small framed *dvārapāla* at each base and a single vertical row of male figures joined by a row of flying garland bearers focusing on the center of the lintel, where two ascetics worship the *linga*.

⁵² Burgess guessed this to be later than original work, *Report*, p. 38.

⁵³ This can be seen both in Temple I and in the temple at the north of the site.

The lack of architectural detail, not only of entablature but of supporting pilasters as well, is quite conservative. The inner decorative band of rosettes linked by ribbed bands and the forms in the other courses are all derived from forms that can be seen earlier at Ajañṭā and Ellora. This first motif, though common in Maharashtra, does not occur elsewhere among the temples of the Chālukyas.

The sculptural decorations of the temple are placed at the corners of the *maṇḍapa*, in the sculpture shrine (figs. 38 and 42) and in the *antarāla* (fig. 46). The sculpture shrine here bears close ties with several other monuments whose form it shares. It contains images of Śiva as Naṭarāja with Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya and Bhṛṅgī, surrounded by the Saptamātṛkās: Brāhmī, Maheśvari and Kaumārī on the side wall (fig. 42), Vaiṣṇavī on the back wall to the God's right, and Vārāhī, Indranī and Cāmuṇḍā on the side wall to the God's left.⁵⁴ The style here is closest to Bādāmi's Cave I/II style. The figures are isolated from the worshipper and lined up in simplified relief, silhouetted against the wall. Spatial complexities are not approached, as the artist confines himself to superb linear stylizations of the dance. In the frozen grace of their poses and in the patterned textures of their costumes these figures approach the style of the Kārttikeya (fig. 22) in the sculpture niche outside of Bādāmi's Cave I.

A comparison of the Varāha panel within the Rāvaṇa Phadi to other examples in the Chālukya tradition (figs. 44–47) should make the situation of the cave's

sculpture clear. The Varāhas in Caves II and III at Bādāmi show the same basic differences seen in the Trivikrama panels of the two caves. The Varāha in Cave II (fig. 44) stands enframed on the veranda wall. Its controlled relief has caught, within a simplified silhouette, the two-dimensional outlines predominating over the projection of the forms. The boar, in the *pratyālīḍha* (archer's) pose, faces one side with his left leg raised on to a lotus that rests on the coiling Nagaraja representing the seas below. The Earth, Pṛthivī, stands on another lotus held in the God's natural left hand and leans against his snout. The God's natural right hand rests on His hip. His second right hand holds the *cakra* (wheel) and his second left hand holds the *śaṅkha* (conch), besides passing behind and supporting the body of Pṛthivī. Each element is clearly shown in profile or full front.

The Varāha in Cave III's veranda (fig. 45), though it is the most conservative panel in the cave, makes a complex use of space. Its frame is the architecture of the cave (except for the dado panel of *gaṇas*), and it is linked to the Śeṣāsana panel by a figure that leans across from one panel to the next (fig. 29). It is not so consistently a work of silhouette as the work in Cave II but is conceived in terms of a swelling mass that undulates particularly across the bottom of the panel where the demon Hiraṇyakaṣipu is caught in the flowing wash of the Nāgarājas and garlands. The pose of the Varāha is close to that in Cave II, with the exception of the left arms. Here the natural arm curves visibly behind the Goddess to hold the conch shell more explicitly than in the Cave II panel. The second left arm is not shown at all, but rather it is indicated by the hand that appears out of the

⁵⁴ In all of the temples that use this layout the predominant subject matter is the same, though the arrangement is different in each case.

neutral space of the panel to support the Goddess's lotus pedestal. The foreshortening implied here and the plastic use of space are both typical of the great sophistication seen in the Cave III style.

In the Varāha panel of the Rāvaṇa Phadi (*fig. 46*) we can see the motif in a simpler state. The image is framed within a rectangular panel set into the *antarāla* wall, a foot above the floor. Filling the frame and in no way relating to the architecture around it, the Aihole Varāha is closest to the version seen in Cave II. It is an essay in silhouetted forms and simplified volumes. In an unorthodox manner it stands on the floor of its frame while the Nāgarāja and his consort are pushed into the lower corner. There is also a problem here, which we have already recognized in the Bādāmi panels, of how the artist is to show the left arms that must simultaneously support the Earth Goddess and the conch. Here, as in Cave II, one arm extends parallel to the panel to support the Goddess's feet. Here, with far less satisfying effect, the natural arm is bent back at the elbow giving the Goddess a perch to sit on but leaving no support for the conch shell which floats in the panel's upper corner. Of the three panels this is certainly the most timid and the least impressive. A look ahead in time to the Varāha on the Airikeśvara Temple at Mahākūṭa (*fig. 47*) shows the problem as Chālukya artists of nearly two hundred years later were to solve it.⁵⁵

In general, the decorations of the temple are close to the Bādāmi I/II style. There

⁵⁵ A less "satisfactory" solution is seen on the Durgā Temple, Pierre Rambach, and Vitold De Golish, *The Golden Age of Indian Art*, London, 1955, pl. 9.

are no instances of *kūḍu-kaṭotas* in the temple; all of the *kaṭotas* are left plain. There is a consistent use throughout the *maṇḍapa* of *gaṇa* dado panels. And though there is an elaborate wealth of ceiling decoration (*fig. 38*), Aṣṭadīkṣpāla organization is lacking. Though the sculptures within the *maṇḍapa* lack architectural enframing, they are raised away from the viewer by means of these dado panels. There are no narrative panels. Finally, the conception of sculpture within a pillar screened niche is seen only in Cave I at Bādāmi, here, and in the Aihole Jain cave. Therefore, if we are to place the Rāvaṇa Phadi in relation to the monuments at Bādāmi, we must see it as separated from the Cave III/IV style by the I/II style that it most closely approximates.

The Rāvaṇa Phadi is probably the earliest fully developed temple of the series, and it is probably the oldest surviving major temple of both the Chālukya dynasty and of the Chālukya region. A date of the 550's seems most suitable. Certainly with the dynasty establishing itself in about A.D. 543 it could not be much earlier than 550.⁵⁶ No surviving monuments have been convincingly attributed to the Kadambas who preceded the Chālukyas, and no important political force is known to have occupied the Chālukya heartland before their time.⁵⁷ The work is securely datable to the middle of the sixth century, and no power other than the Chālukyas could have been responsible for its creation, in this location.

The smaller Śiva shrine next to the Rāvaṇa Phadi is the simplest rock-cut temple

⁵⁶ See note 14, above.

⁵⁷ For the Kādambas, see George Moreas, *Kadamba Kula*, Bombay, 1931.

in the area and one of the simplest in India (fig. 43). It is an undecorated cell, about a yard and a half square and a yard tall, cut into the same low boulder as the Rāvaṇa Phadi. Its form, though simple, is pertinent. It, too, is cut into the rock near ground level, at a place where a seam in the rock forms a natural ceiling break. It has a *liṅga* and *yoni* that are not rock-cut but added. The *liṅga* reaches to within a few inches of the ceiling. Both the local stone it was cut from and the simplicity of its form would seem to indicate that it is original and of the Early Chālukya period. It seems reasonable, though not certain, that this was a preliminary to the larger and extremely ornate Rāvaṇa Phadi.

It has been suggested, largely on the basis of the tall crowns worn by many of its figures, that the Rāvaṇa Phadi was the work of the Pallavas who conquered Bādāmi in A.D. 642.⁵⁸ This idea, however, carries with it many implicit misconceptions of the basic nature of both the monuments and the kinds of political institutions with which we are dealing. To begin with, there is the assumption of a Pallava occupation of Bādāmi; this is based on the Pallava's known conquest of the site and the subsequent lack of a certain Chālukya monarch for the following thirteen years (642–654/5 A.D.). The earliest version of this hypothesis (that the Pallava presence was more than a punitive raid) was advanced by J. F. Fleet, in 1880, to explain the existence of an early Tamil inscription at Bādāmi. At a time when only a few of the relevant records were known, Fleet proposed that Bādāmi had been originally occupied by the Pallavas who were then

⁵⁸ Herman Goetz, *India, Five Thousand Years of Indian Art*, Baden-Baden, 1960, p. 125.

succeeded by the Chālukyas, when they rose to power in the early sixth century.⁵⁹ This was accepted as late as 1926 by Henry Cousens in his *Chālukyan Architecture of the Kanarese Districts*.⁶⁰ Today, however, and since the discovery of the Vallabesvara inscription of A.D. 543 that proclaims the beginning of Chālukya history and the history of the Bādāmi area,⁶¹ this Pallava inscription is taken as a record of Nara-simhavarman I, who conquered Bādāmi in A.D. 642. It is a short and now much erased record on the side of a boulder at the northeast corner of the Bādāmi tank. Little more of it can be read than the phrase that refers to the "Pallavas, the foremost of kings."⁶²

When this hypothesis is then updated, and the single record is considered to indicate a major and extended occupation of the entire area, after the Pallava conquest and probable pillaging of Bādāmi in 642, the basic military and economic nature of these times is misunderstood. That Nara-simhavarman's raid was a punitive one should be quite clear. He was more likely seeking to protect his own interests in Tamilnad from the Chālukyas (and to acquire a large amount of booty in the bargain) than attempting any territorial acquisition. An exchange of raids and reprisals between the Chālukyas and the Pallavas continued throughout the seventh and eighth centuries. At least one time after 642, the Pallavas claimed a victory at Bādāmi,⁶³ while

⁵⁹ James F. Fleet, "Sanskrit and Old Kanarese Inscriptions" LXXIII, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 9 (1880), pp. 99–100.

⁶⁰ Cousens, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁶¹ See note 14, above.

⁶² See note 59, above.

⁶³ Ernest Hultzsch (ed.), *South Indian Inscriptions*, vol. 1 Madras, 1890, pp. 12–13.

the Chālukyas for their part claimed several conquests of the Pallava capital at Kāñchī. These raids were climaxed in the reign of the Chālukya Emperor Vijayāditya who claimed to have conquered Kāñchī three times.⁶⁴ Yet nowhere, in the many records of these triumphs on both sides, is there any suggestion of territorial acquisition, occupation or extended rule. These were, after all, not monarchs of modern centralized states but highly successful military leaders in a feudal world to which imperialism had quite a different meaning than it might to a 19th-century Englishman.

Other than the single opaque reference to the Pallavas in this fragmentary inscription, no definite trace of the Pallavas is to be found anywhere in Chālukya region. I see no reason, then, to suppose that the Pallavas remained in the area long enough to have created any monuments of this scope. The fact that Vikramāditya I (who re-established the Chālukya dynasty after the defeat at Bādāmi) was never credited in the records of the dynasty with a reconquest of the dynasty's heartland from the Pallavas must show that such a conquest was unnecessary. Furthermore, when the temple itself is studied, the only reference to the art of the Pallavas that can be found is seen in the tall peaked crowns worn by several of the figures. These crowns have only their height to relate them to the Pallava style and nothing to relate them to the Pallavas.

The cave certainly bears no relation to Pallava rock-cut architecture in either its

⁶⁴ Pillar Inscription from the Virūpākṣha Temple at Pattadakal, James F. Fleet (translator and editor), in James Burgess, *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, vol. 3 (1878), p. 125.

plan, its architectural details or its sculpture. These all seem to relate easily to sixth-century works in Western India and Mahārāshṭra, specifically to the Hindu caves at Elephanta, Dhoke and Ellora.⁶⁵ There is no Pallava tradition of rock-cut cave temples before the reign of Mahendravarman I (ca. A. D. 580–630), and the style of the works of his era in no way relates to the work found at Aihole.⁶⁶ There is, therefore, no reason to suppose an existing Pallava style in stone that could influence or create monuments in the Deccan at this time. To suppose the temple to be later, of the middle seventh century, would thus divorce the temple from its apparent architectural context. On the contrary, so many of the Rāvaṇa Phadi's features relate it securely to the developing tradition of Chālukya monuments that to suppose it to be a foreign work is out of the question. To say that any parts of the temples' sculptural decoration are of a later period is to miss the thorough integration of the sculpture and its setting.⁶⁷

Both the Varāha (*fig. 46*) and the Ma-hiṣāsūramardinī Durgā⁶⁸ are distinctly Chālukya types. The dancing Mātṛikās (*fig. 42*) and the Naṭarāja of the sculpture niche and other figures with the tall "Pallava" crowns are not of a style that is clearly Pallava or sufficient to put aside the fact of their connection to a distinctly Western Indian Deccan temple plan. Their

⁶⁵ See above in text and notes 48–51.

⁶⁶ See K. R. Srinivasan, *The Cave-temples of the Pallavas*, Madras, 1964, pp. 37–43.

⁶⁷ It might be added that the tall hats well-known to Pallava sculptors are not used by them before the reign of Rājasiṃha, which is to say not before the eighth century.

⁶⁸ See Louis Frederic, *Indian Temples and Sculpture*, London, 1959, p. 143.

forms are cut in a strong relief that projects plastically from the wall in a way common in Chālukya art, but not seen among the temples at Mahābalipuram. The figures are all frontal, and there are none of the usual Pallava tableau devices of corner figures standing in profile or figures seen from behind. The Pallava artist's tendency toward softly inflated forms is not present either. Rather, one is struck by the robust almost folk quality of the strongly projecting forms and their angular rhythms.

This question of Pallava alteration of Chālukya monuments has also been brought up in connection with the caves at Bādāmi.⁶⁹ In these discussions it has been assumed that major portions of Cave III were altered by the Pallavas in an attempt to demonstrate their triumph over the Chālukyas, in A. D. 642. This proposition, too, seems to assume an extended occupation of the area by the Pallavas. Further more it assumes that the Pallavas would have produced carved images insulting to the Chālukyas and that the Chālukyas would have allowed these images to remain in their own capital. Finally, it ignores the very opposite implication of the Chālukya sovereign Vijayāditya's inscription in the Rājasimhesvara (now the Kailāsanātha) temple in the Pallava capital of Kāñchī. There he states that the beauty of the temple was so wonderful that he had returned to it the spoils he had taken.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Aschwin Lippe, *Unusual Icons at Badami*, Summaries of Papers of the Twenty-sixth International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, 1964, p. 151; "Some Sculptural Motifs on Early Calukya Temples," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 29 (1967), pp. 5-24.

⁷⁰ E. Hultzsch (translator and editor), "The Kanchi Inscription of Vikramaditya," *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 3, pp. 359-60.

The idea that the ruler of one Indian dynasty would have had the temple of another ruler re-cut in order to insult him is without precedent. The implicit correlative of this idea, that the insulted dynasty would allow the pictorial insult to stand in the center of its capital, seems on the face of it improbable.

The recutting hypothesis attempts to explain the Cave III sculpture style by attributing the figures, that stand flush with the cave's floor, to the Pallavas. Thus the Vishṇu Śeṣāsana and the Varāha are left to the Chālukyas, while the Trivikrama, the Virāṭa Puruṣa, the Harihara, and the Narasimha are given to the Pallavas. The full standing Narasimha (supposed in the recutting hypothesis to stand for Narasimhavarman the triumphant Pallava king) is of a type unknown to Pallava sculpture, though it is seen several times in the Chālukya area. The Trivikrama and the Virāṭa Puruṣa are apparently the two most important forms of Vishṇu to the Early Western Chālukyas and occur in specially stressed locations on the Virūpākṣa at Pattadakal, the great eighth-century monument of the dynasty. In fact, the Virāṭa Puruṣa of Cave III (*fig. 28*) occurs in the most important position of any Vaishṇava sculpture on the Virūpākṣa (*fig. 30*). To say, then, that this eight-armed Vishṇu is an Aṣṭabhujaśwami (Eight-Armed Lord) belonging peculiarly to the Pallavas⁷¹ seems out of the question.

The other major cave at Aihole is the less well-known Jaina cave on the southeast of Meguti Hill. Though this is not so

⁷¹ K. V. Soundara Rajan, "A Vishnu Sculpture from the Virupaksha Shrine at Pattadakal," *The Journal of Indian Museums*, vol. 14-16, pp. 26-31.

exciting a temple as the Rāvaṇa Phadi or any of the Hindu caves at Bādāmi, it is finely wrought and represents a connection between the Aihole form seen in the Rāvaṇa Phadi and the later Bādāmi form. In date it probably begins just before in the period of Bādāmi I/II, the features of which it combines with those of the Aihole Śiva cave.

In its plan (*fig. 2*) the fullest extent of this combining of forms can be seen. The Aihole Jaina cave is basically the Aihole form of a central *maṇḍapa* with broad pillar screened openings in each of its sides (*fig. 1*), now fronted with a veranda and a colonnade in the Bādāmi manner (*fig. 3*). The façade (*fig. 48*) of the cave is today fully closed off by a wall of dressed but undecorated stones. Originally, as can be seen on the inside of the veranda (*fig. 49*), it was composed of five bays separated by simple, undecorated square pillars bearing narrow curving brackets much like those seen in the Rāvaṇa Phadi. There was apparently neither basement nor cornice, and there was no façade sculpture. The veranda has an icon at either end as at Bādāmi, with Suparśvānatha on the right (*fig. 49*) and Gomateśvara on the left (the opposite placement of that seen in the Bādāmi Jaina cave). As in the *antarāla* ceiling of the Rāvaṇa Phadi but unlike those at Bādāmi, the bays of the ceiling are distinguished, but not separated, by very elegant decorative reliefs. The interior wall of the veranda is blank and undivided, providing only the small three bay entrance equivalent to that in the Rāvaṇa Phadi, opposite the veranda entrance.

The *maṇḍapa* of the Jaina cave is quite similar to the Rāvaṇa Phadi's. This is seen in both the basic architectural form and in

such details as the decoration of the ceiling.⁷² As in the Śiva cave, only the left sculpture niche is filled, and the design runs around all three walls of the niche. These reliefs show royal or celestial figures including Indra in attendance on the Jina, Mahāvīra (*fig. 51*). The layout overall is far more accurate and regular than that of the Śiva cave. The shrine at the rear (*fig. 50*) is quite small and screened only by the pair of pillars (the Jina not requiring the secrecy of his Hindu counterparts).⁷³ The seated representation here too is Mahāvīra. Outside the shrine, flanking its entrance on each side, are standing lotus-carrying guardians. Each occupies a large frame and with an attendant dwarf. All the sculptures within the cave are raised off the ground, but there are no *gaṇas* or other sculptured dado panels.

This cave is far less-known than the Rāvaṇa Phadi; only its ground plan and a detail from the ceiling have been published.⁷⁴ It is, however, the monument that comes closest to the Pallava traditions that have unfruitfully been sought elsewhere. This closeness is apparent in the guardians of the rear wall (*fig. 50*). That this most "Pallava" looking of all Chālukya designs has not been mentioned elsewhere is an indication of the limited familiarity with the site that has hampered previous studies.⁷⁵

⁷² See Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of India*, London, 1950, pls. 59 and 60.

⁷³ Mahāvīra, here as is common at the site, wears a robe.

⁷⁴ Besides Burgess, it has been mentioned by Kramrisch, note 72, above, and by S.K. Saraswati in the section on Architecture in *The Classical Age*, vol. 3 of the *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bombay, 1962, p. 498.

⁷⁵ This is, of course, the focal problem with all approaches that have been made up to this

The cave is not, however, any more likely to be closely related to the Pallavas than those already discussed. Both the placing of the figures and their general proportions can be easily understood within the framework of Chālukya art. The *dvārapāla*'s dwarf attendants and the rest of the cave's design can be explained in no other way.

There is no trace here (except for the stone slabs added to the façade) of any intended structural addition. Though the façade was wider and had the additional element of the large veranda, there is hardly more interior here than in the Rāvaṇa Phadi. The date of the temple is probably later than the Rāvaṇa Phadi to contemporary with the Bādāmi Cave I/II style of the 560s.

The two-storied Jaina Cave (*fig. 56*) in the north side of Meguti Hill is hardly an excavation at all. It is only partially cut into the hill, and much of its interior is regularized by panels of cut stone. Only its shrines, which are cut into the cliff, take advantage of natural overhang. All of its façade is structural.

The lower story, which is the oldest, has an interior consisting of three cells (side by side) each lined with dressed stone, though standing beneath an overhang and cut back into the hill (*fig. 54*).⁷⁶ The door to the central of these cells, just opposite the entrance (*fig. 52*), is decorated with moldings and simple narrative reliefs. At its base is con-

date in the area of Chālukya Architecture. Studies have been made of less than the full number of monuments available for study.

⁷⁶ There are several other early western Chālukya Temples that make use of this format. They are all structural temples of the early eighth century. In each, as here, the stress is on the central shrine with the others subordinated.

tained a series of figures, including Nidhis. These are, however, too worn or eroded to read with certainty. Its lintel paneling is now missing.

The outer door carries similar decorations and does have an articulated lintel *prastara* which is composed of five *kūṭas* running *śālā-karṇa-śālā-karṇa-śālā*, in low relief (*fig. 53*). At its base were several figures, but here, too, little is now readable. The measurements of these doorway parts show them to be more or less equal to those now only partially preserved in the Rāvaṇa Phadi. The façade of the lower story (*fig. 56*) is composed of four pillars and two pilasters that do not match well with the pilasters of the veranda wall (see *fig. 54*). These pillars are simple and carry a type of bracket and lintel that is typical of a style seen in the later part of Vijayāditya's reign, in the second quarter of the eighth century.

The upper story contains a single rock-cut cell and a veranda that is related to the one below. The door to the shrine (*fig. 55*) is undecorated in courses, but contains a more complex *prastara* than we have met to this point. It is made up of a *śālā-kūṭas*, *karṇa-kūṭas* and *pañjara-kūṭas* (*śālā-kūṭas* seen end-on).⁷⁷ All of these are linked by a continuous corridor that separates them with lower relief *pañjaras* and is itself articulated into basement, wall and cornice. The relief of the whole is low. There is a Jina beneath the triple umbrella on the ceiling above this door. The pillars of the veranda do not match the pilasters of the inner veranda wall (*fig. 54*), nor are they the same sort, though they are as simple as those below. It seems likely that the veranda and

⁷⁷ Essentially this is a *kūḍu* with more than the usual architectural analogy explicit.

pillars below were added at a later date, probably when the upper shrine was being added in the second-quarter of the eighth century. The lower triple-shrined interior and its two decorated doors are of the sixth century and probably some time after the Rāvaṇa Phadi, during the period of the Bādāmi caves. The doors here use some of the features of the Rāvaṇa Phadi and some of those found in Bādāmi II and Bādāmi III.

The last rock-cut monument worth mentioning at Aihole is the very small cave hollowed out of a single boulder on the west side of Meguti Hill, behind Temple 47 (*fig. 57*). This is set in a boulder with a natural seam running horizontally across. It is a two-roomed shrine facing west, with a simply molded outer door leading to a room that is plain except for another simply molded and decorated doorway (*fig. 58*) that leads to the cell. This cell, once held a Jina beneath the triple umbrella flanked by two chauri-bearing attendants (*fig. 59*). The lion throne remains as do the attendants and the umbrellas, but the Jina himself has been removed.⁷⁸ The decoration of the door is meager, but it includes enough elements to show that it is simpler yet related to the two-storied Jaina Cave. This doorway has no *prastara* and less decoration than any of the others that we have considered. The course decorated with a pattern of squares alternating with circles is not the usual one seen elsewhere of diamond and bean shapes. The square rosette at the base occurs prominently in the door frame of the two-storied cave (*fig. 52*).

⁷⁸ It was probably a movable icon of wood, metal or some other substance. A similar figure of Lakuliśa was cut away at Mandapeśwar, however.

This temple's hollowed-out-boulder construction makes it another example of a type that seems related to the earlier Hindu excavations at Udayagiri Vidiśa.⁷⁹ Its date is probably the same as that of the Rāvaṇa Phadi, ca. A.D. 550.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the general tendency within the development of the caves at Bādāmi has been from simple toward complex and in general from simply joined toward more highly organized and thoroughly integrated forms. Looking at the development from the monuments at Aihole to these we can notice another trend. In the first works at Aihole we see a style drawing on a variety of earlier traditions. The Rāvaṇa Phadi, the small rock-cut shrine attached to it and the Jaina cave hollowed out of a single boulder relate to structural tradition prominent at Udayagiri Vidiśa which is definitely earlier, though how much earlier is certainly a question. The Rāvaṇa Phadi also makes use of decorations that reflect earlier post-Vākātaka traditions in Mahārāshṭra to a far greater extent than any other Chālukya monument.

When we pass from this first Aihole style to the first Bādāmi monuments, we see a number of elements develop into their mature and distinctive Chālukya forms. Both pillar decorations and sculptural enframements are a good example of this. The large Jaina Cave at Aihole is a graphic example of the movement away from the *Kalachuri* layout of the Rāvaṇa Phadi to-

⁷⁹ Examples of this can be seen in the Tawa cave and those near by it. See Banerji, *Imperial Guptas*, pl. XIII.

ward the peculiarly *Chālukya* plan seen at Bādāmi.

This evolution of a peculiarly Chālukya style of rock-cut architecture reaches its climax in the triumph of Cave III. Here the earliest Chālukya tradition, the tradition of the Chālukya cave-temple, is seen in its most unique and its least derivative form. This is not to say that there is not a good deal in Cave III that relates to the contemporary Kalachuri art of Mahārāshtra. On the contrary, Cave III makes use of a number of features that are just coming into use at Ellora, e.g., the large figure bracket capital and the carefully distinguished focal aisle. Yet the great success of Cave III is the fully integrated and uniquely Chālukya character of the temple that bases so much of its form on the coherent evolution of forms that are found among the other Chālukya rock-cut monuments. Cave III is a monumental conception carried out on a scale that dwarfs the more modest monuments that neighbor it just as these "modest monuments" considerably surpass the timid works at Aihole. Yet, significantly the uniqueness of Cave III lies in its magnification and in its sophistication of the tradition that began at Aihole and came to fruition at Bādāmi.

The evolution of the Cave III sculptural ideal played little part in the stone icons of the later structural temples. The shift from inside to out and from gigantic to miniature may be responsible for this. (The post-Chālukya cave temples at Ellora continue to develop similar devices for sculptural transcendence of architectural bounds.) On the other hand, the architectural decorations developed in the cave-temples were the basis for much of the later temple decorations. The plain *kapota*

moldings of the Rāvaṇa Phadi that develop eventually into the *animal-kūḍu-kaṇṭhas* of Cave III (developments already accomplished in many areas outside of the Deccan) are the established form in the structural temples. The door frame of Cave III is a model for those that follow, as are its pillar decorations and the ceiling decorations.

It has been suggested by many scholars that the Chālukyas be credited with the creations of monuments at both Ajaṅṭā and Ellora. To support either of these propositions, however, I have found no evidence. In fact I think that the majority of evidence leads to quite the opposite conclusion. Significant Chālukya influence is not to be found at either site before the post-Chālukya work of the Kailāsa, at Ellora, in the second half of the eighth century.

The distinct break in the evolution of the temple form (filled by the early sixth-century excavations at Jogeśwari, Mandapeśhwar and Elephanta) that separates the Kalachuri Hindu temples of Ellora from the Vākāṭaka Buddhist works at Ajaṅṭā and Auranṅabād (Caves I and III) is seen even more clearly between the Chālukya monuments and those at Ajaṅṭā and Auranṅabād. Where distinct relations exist between motifs seen at Aihole or Bādāmi and those at Ajaṅṭā, the distinct characteristic is always that the Chālukya example has evolved from the form seen in Mahārāshtra. No essentially Chālukya device appears in a more developed or even parallel or equivalent state at Ajaṅṭā.

When it is suggested that the Chālukyas were responsible for some of the Hindu works at Ellora, and many of the Buddhist ones, there are several problems. The first of these and the most important is,

again, the lack of any particularly Chālukya forms, such as the Bādāmi plan type, to be seen at Ellora. Another is the lack of any inscription to link the dynasty to the site. With particular reference to the Hindu cave-temples, I see a phase that is contemporaneous with the Chālukya work in the Deccan, at Aihole and Bādāmi.⁸⁰ This work, which can be attributed to the Kalachuri dynasty, was most likely accomplished before the Chālukyas, under Mangalesa, came to control Mahārāshtra in the first years of the seventh century. The later and definitely separate phase of Hindu excavations at Ellora coincides with the rise of the Rāshtrakūṭas to predominance in the Deccan, and with the triumph of the Rāshtrakūṭas over the Chālukyas. This is the phase seen in the Kailāsa and the Das Avatāra.

Finally, in considering the Buddhist monuments of Ellora, it must be remembered that the Chālukyas in none of their inscriptions mention Buddhism. This is important as their support of the major Hindu sects and even the heterodox Jainism was a major subject of most of their inscriptions. Within the Chālukya heartland itself, there are only two notices of the Buddhist faith. One is the distinctly anamalous Padmapāṇi Litany, in Bādāmi's natural grotto,⁸¹ which was ruinously defaced soon after its creation.⁸² The other is the

⁸⁰ This corresponds to Spink's Kalachuri phase, though I would add the Rāvaṇa Ka Khai, Ellora Cave 14, to his list (Spink, *op. cit.*).

⁸¹ Banerji, *Basreliefs of Badami*, pl. XIV, fig. a.

⁸² No other piece at the site has been so accidentally located or so efficiently destroyed. As both of these characteristics suggest that it was the Buddhist nature of the work that was involved, we have to remember that the later in time we

distinct reference to the heterodox faiths that casts Śukrāchārya, the Brahman preceptor of the Asura king Bali, in the form of a Buddha or Bodhisattva in the Trivikrama panels of Bādāmi Caves II and III (figs. 25-27).⁸³ As Jainism was clearly accepted by the Chālukyas, certainly a reference to the role of *misleading*, which the Vaisnavas conventionally attributed to the Buddha, can be seen here. If any monuments were created at Ellora during the period in which the Chālukyas controlled that area, they should certainly be assumed to be the work of a local feudatory dynasty and not of the same house responsible for the creation of the Hindu monuments of Aihole and Bādāmi of the third-quarter of the sixth century.

In a recent article D. S. Settar of the Karnāṭak University has made a likely case for seeing Aihole's "Two-storied Jaina Cave" to be a Buddhist *vihāra*.⁸⁴ Evidence for this lies in the robe covering the left shoulder and in the *vyākhyāna mudrā* of the right hand of the figure on the ceiling of its upper veranda.⁸⁵ No examples of a Jina in *vyākhyāna mudrā* is known,

look (after the early Chālukya contact with Buddhists) the less likely anyone in the area would be to recognize the work as *Buddhist* and the more likely that its worship would have been taken up by individuals who might not have recognized its Buddhist meaning.

⁸³ Though the figure shown pouring water on the Vāmana's hands has been identified as Bali himself (in strict accordance with the versions of the story that have come down to us), the antelope skin robe as well as the simple dhoti should serve to indicate that this is the *Brahman* Śukrāchārya. Bali is the figure behind, who assists and who is accompanied by a female, his queen.

⁸⁴ S. Settar, "A Buddhist Vihāra at Aihole," *East and West*, vol. 19 (1969), pp. 126-138.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, fig. 4.

though this is a common *mudrā* for Buddha images in the south. The problem of the robe is more difficult. Though no example has previously been known to scholars, the unquestionable Tīrthankara in the Jaina Cave at the other end of Meguti Hill (*fig. 50*) does seem to be wearing a robe in this fashion.⁸⁶ Though this would be a deviation from the standard Jaina iconography, it is hardly less a deviation than would be the image's triple umbrella, if the image is to be

⁸⁶ My observations differ from Dr. Settar's in a number of places. Neither at the site nor in the clear pictures I have, was I able to detect an *urna* on the ceiling image. Though the upper "cell" does have a roughed out bench-like projection on its south, none of the other "cells" does; the central lower one is fitted out with the base for an image. There are no seated images in the architrave of the upper door frame; this I also checked at the site.

considered a Buddha.⁸⁷ In any case, the unorthodox and ambiguous portrayal of the deity intended would seem to support the conclusions reached above. If a Buddhist *vihāra* did exist in the Chālukya heartland, it did so by accentuating its resemblance to the equally heterodox (if less rejected) Jaina establishments, both in its location and in the portrayal of its images.⁸⁸ If we are to accept this as a Buddhist *vihāra*, and as I indicate it is not altogether certain that we should, we must reconsider the dedication of the "Single Boulder Jaina Cave" (*figs. 57–59*) in this light as well.

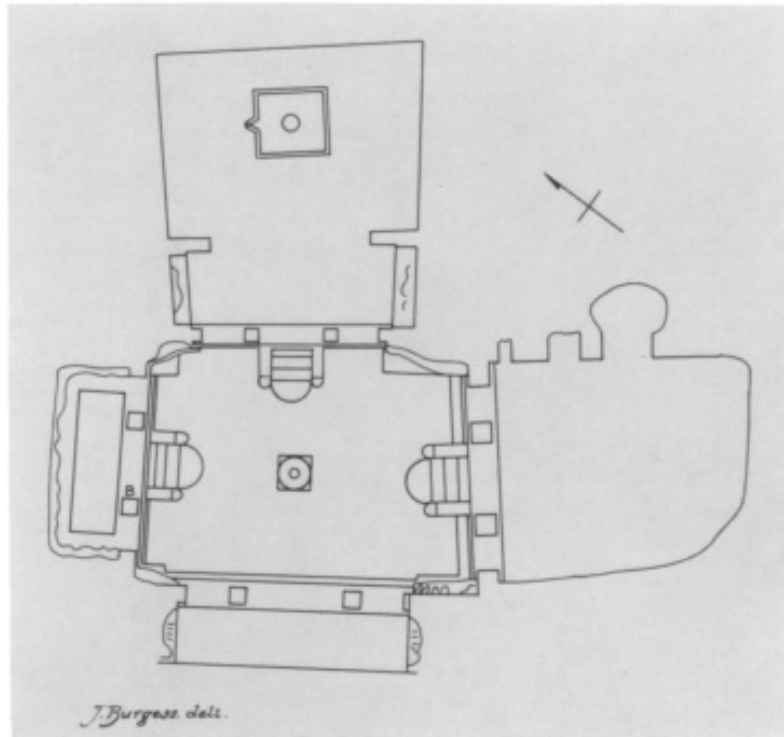
⁸⁷ The only example that Dr. Settar has been able to find is definitely questionable.

⁸⁸ The decorations that can be read as *jātakas*, are not unequivocally Buddhist. On the contrary they can only be inferred to be Buddhist if the shrine as a whole is accepted as such.

CHART

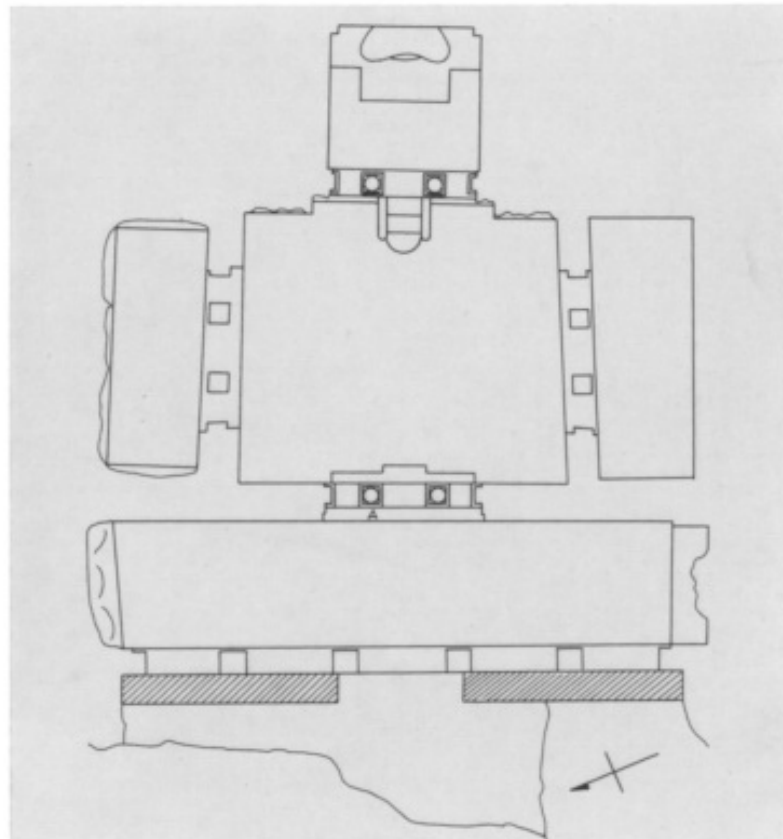
The following chart is intended as a graphic illustration of the relative sequence and likely chronological location of the Early Western Chalukya's rock-cut shrines. It is not an indication of the spans of time during which excavation took place, but of the likely periods during which that excavation probably occurred.

	A.D. 540	550	560	570	580	590	600
	Saka 462	472	482	492	502	512	522
<i>Aihole</i>							
Rāvaṇa Phadi Temple		██████████					
Rāvaṇa Phadi Linga Shrine		████					
Single Boulder Jaina Temple		████					
Jaina Temple			██████████				
Two Story Jaina Temple				██████████			
<i>Bādāmi</i>							
Cave I			██████████				
Cave II			██████████				
Cave III					██████████		
Cave IV					██████████		



Scale ———— 10 feet

FIG. 1.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave. Plan (from James Burgess, "Report on the First Season's Operations in the Belgaum and Kaladgi Districts." *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, vol. 1, pl. XLVIII).



Scale ———— 10 feet

FIG. 2.—Aihole. Jaina Cave. Plan (from Burgess, as above, pl. XLVIII).

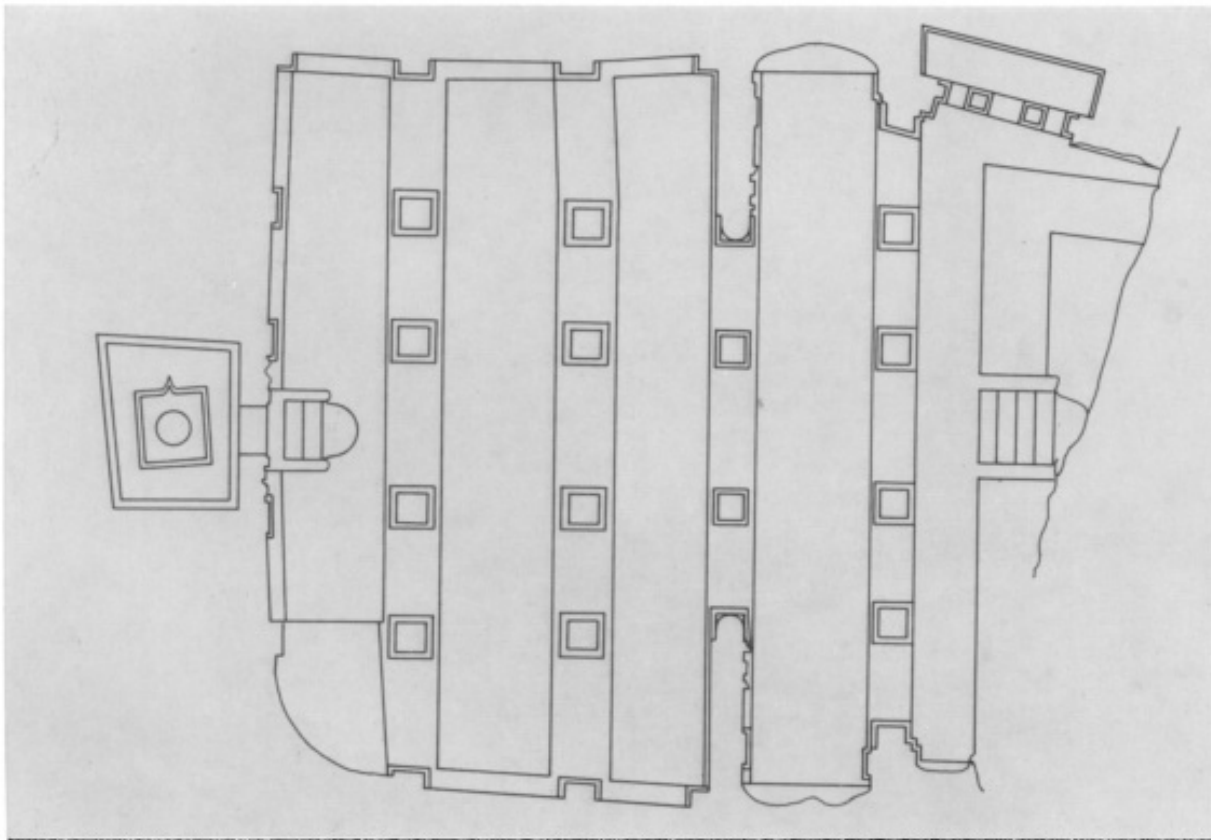


FIG. 3.—Bādāmi. Cave I. Plan (Burgess, pl. XVIII).

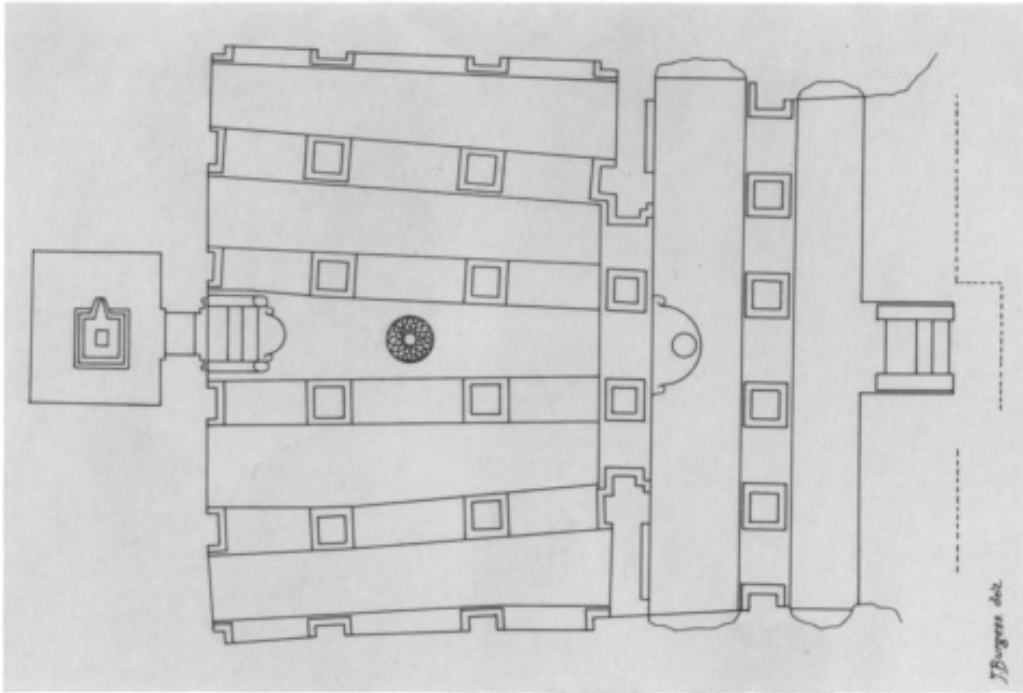
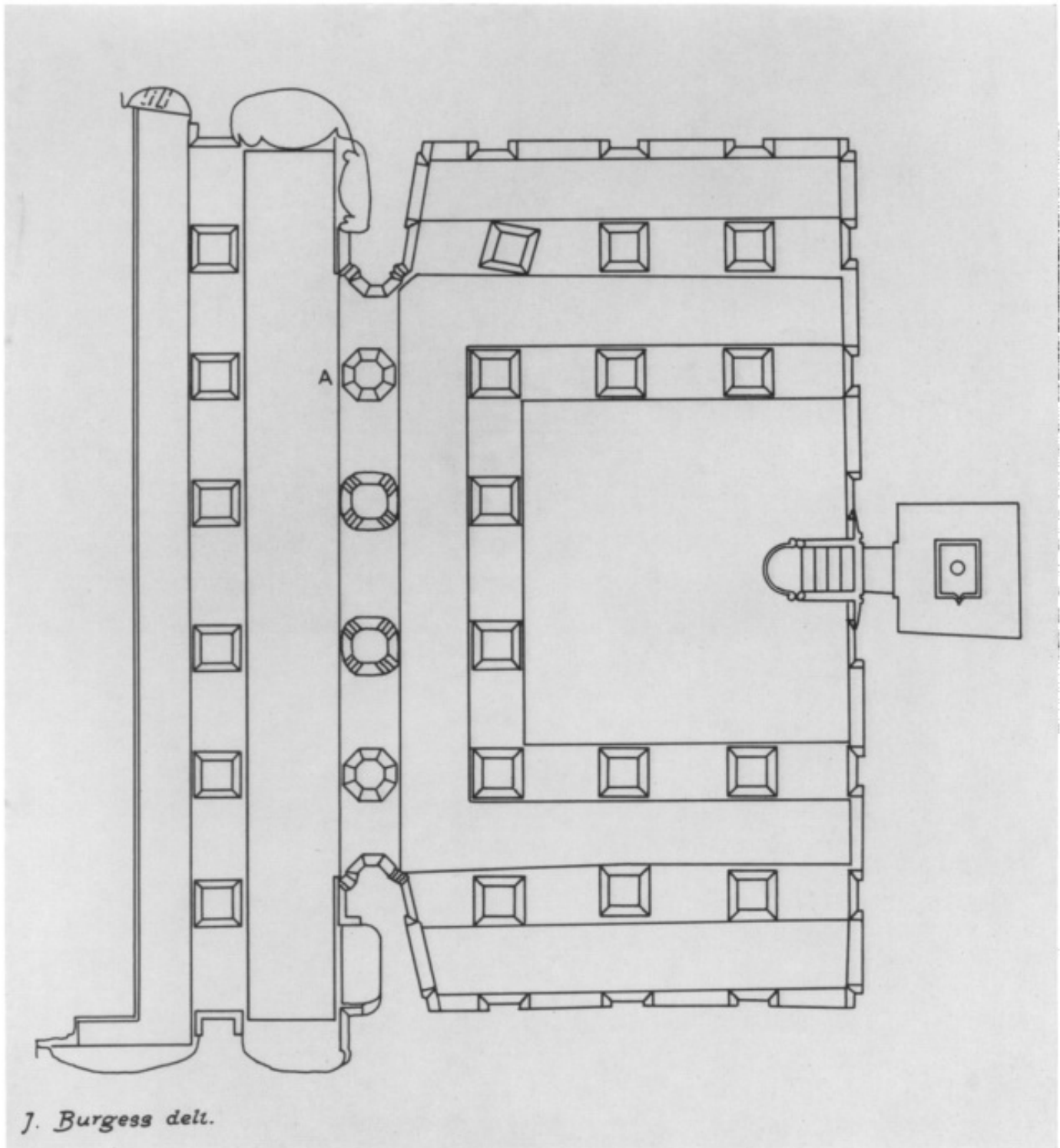


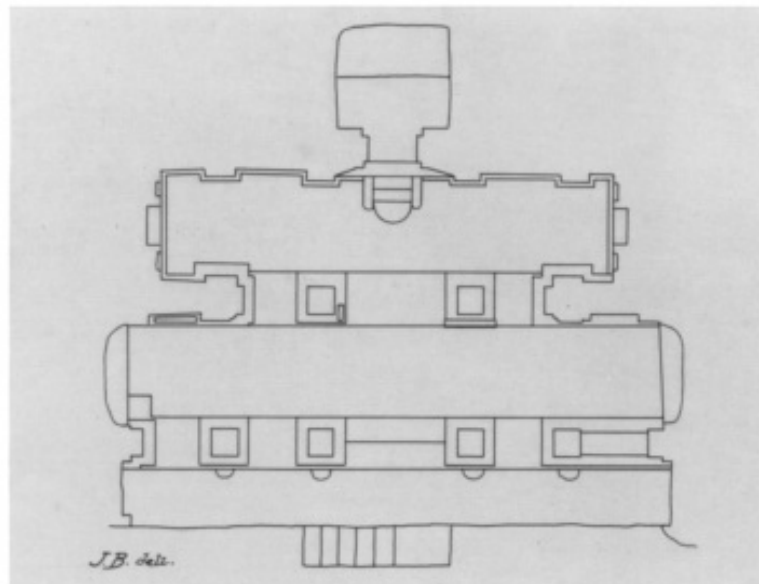
FIG. 4.—Bādāmi. Cave II. Plan (Burgess, pl. XXII).

J. Burgess del.



Scale |—————| 10 feet

FIG. 5.—Bādāmi. Cave III. Plan (Burgess, pl. XXV).

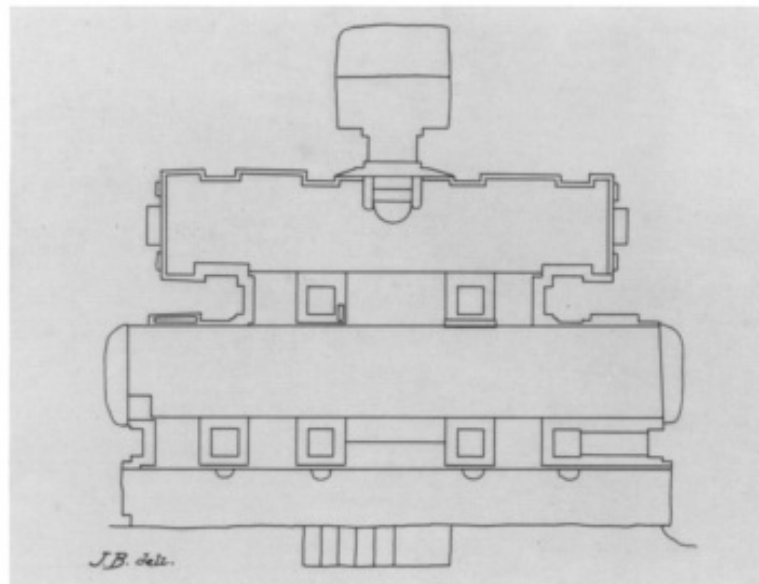


Scale |—————| 10 feet

FIG. 6.—Bādāmi. Cave IV. Plan (Burgess, pl. XXXVI).



FIG. 7.—Bādāmi. Cave I. Façade (photo, Tarr CS).



Scale |—————| 10 feet

FIG. 6.—Bādāmi. Cave IV. Plan (Burgess, pl. XXXVI).



FIG. 7.—Bādāmi. Cave I. Façade (photo, Tarr CS).

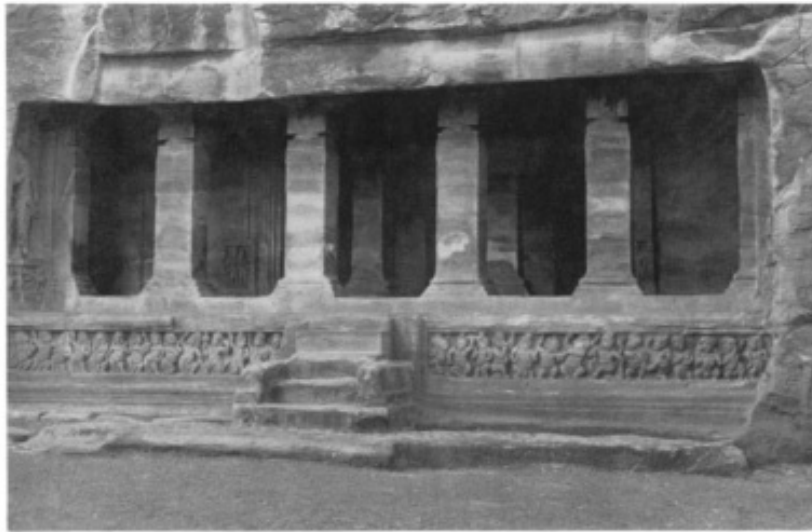


FIG. 8.—Bādāmi. Cave II. Façade (Tarr I 13, 18).

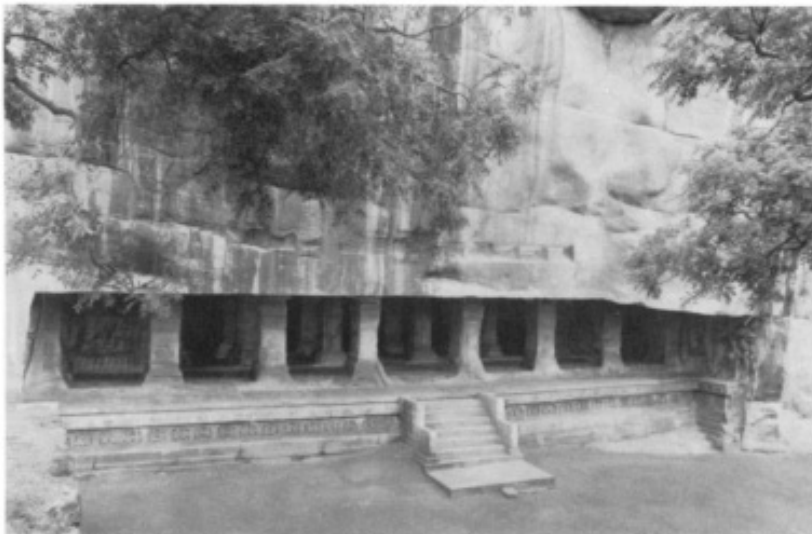


FIG. 9.—Bādāmi. Cave III. Façade (Tarr 186, 15).



FIG. 10.—Bādāmi. Cave IV. Façade (Tarr 101, 37).



FIG. 11.—Bādāmi. Cave I. Veranda, interior (Tarr 39, 28).



FIG. 12.—Bādāmi. Cave III. Veranda, interior (Tarr I 15, 14).



FIG. 13.—Bādāmi. Cave I. Pillar
(Tarr I 13, 29).



FIG. 14.—Bādāmi. Cave II. Pillar
(Tarr I 12, 12).



FIG. 15.—Bādāmi. Cave II. Pillar
(Tarr 44, 29).



FIG. 16.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave. Pillar
(Tarr 54, 19).

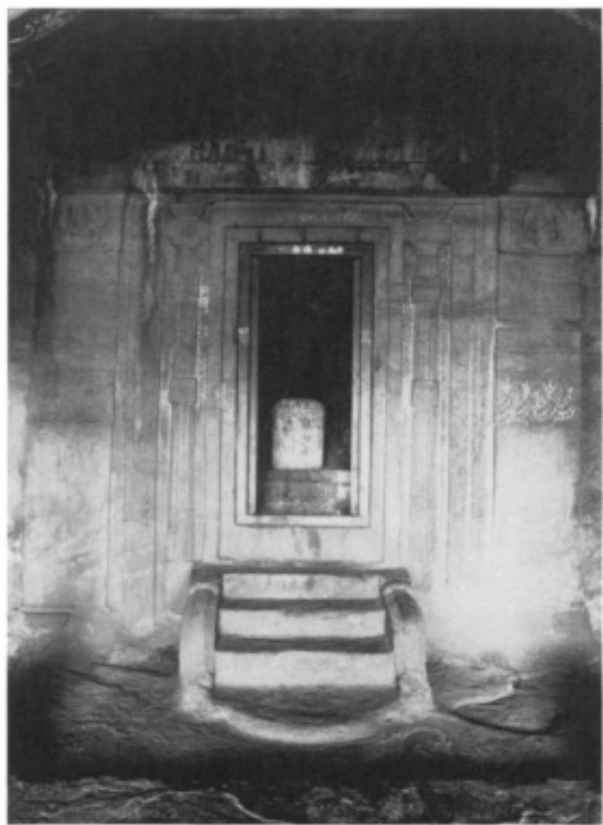


FIG. 17.—Bādāmi. Cave I. Garbhagṛha doorway (Tarr 37, 31).



FIG. 18.—Bādāmi. Cave II. Garbhagṛha doorway (Tarr 44, 17).



FIG. 19.—Bādāmi. Cave III. Garbhagṛha doorway (Tarr 45, 6).



FIG. 20.—Bādāmi. Cave IV. Garbhagṛha doorway (Tarr I 14, 15).



FIG. 21.—Bādāmi. Cave I. Śiva Ardhanārī (Tarr 38, 25).

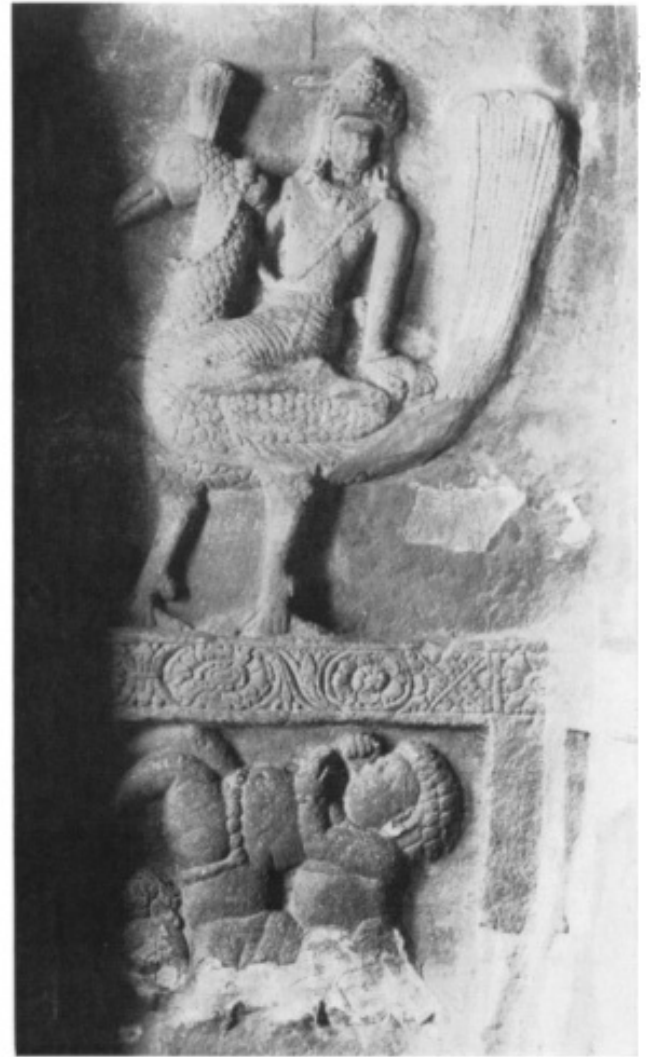


FIG. 22.—Bādāmi. Cave I. Kārttikeya, from attached shrine (Tarr 94, 13).

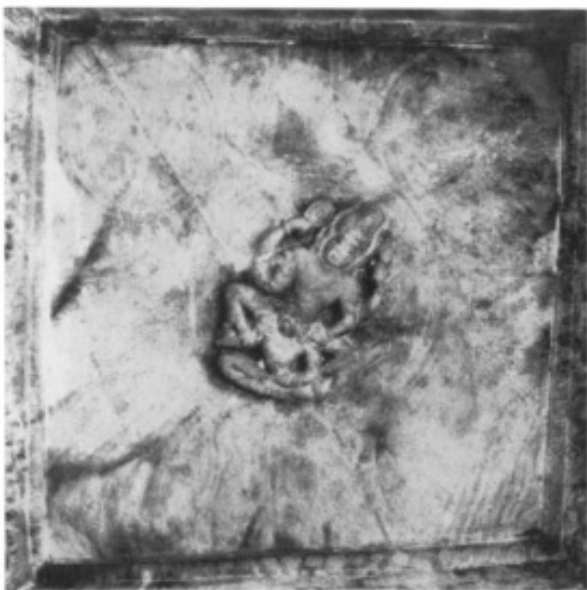


FIG. 23.—Bādāmi. Cave II. Vishṇu ceiling at veranda west (Tarr 96, 24).



FIG. 24.—Bādāmi. Cave III. Vishṇu ceiling in veranda center (Tarr 102, 2).



FIG. 25.—Bādāmi. Cave II. Vishṇu Trivikrama
(Tarr 185, 32).



FIG. 27.—Bādāmi. Cave III. Vishṇu Trivikrama
(Tarr I 14, 6).



FIG. 26.—Bādāmi. Cave III. Vishṇu Trivikrama (Tarr I 15, 8).



FIG. 28.—Bādāmi. Cave III.
Vishṇu Virāṭa Puruṣa
Archaeological Survey of India.



FIG. 29.—Bādāmi. Cave III.
Vishṇu Śeṣāna (Tarr 99, 22).



FIG. 30—Pattadakal. Virūpākṣa Temple.
Vishṇu Virāṭa Puruṣa (Tarr 83, 25).



FIG. 31.—Bādāmi. Cave IV.
Suparśvānatha (Tarr 97, 9).



FIG. 32.—Bādāmi. Cave III. Garuda from overhanging eave of façade (Tarr 100, 36).



FIG. 34.—Bādāmi. Cave II. Four-armed *gaṇa* of façade (Tarr 95, 28).



FIG. 36.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave. Full Rāvaṇa Phadi complex (Tarr CS).



FIG. 33.—Bādāmi. Cave IV.
Wealth figure overhanging eave of façade
(Tarr 44, 23).



FIG. 35.—Bādāmi. Cave III.
Śiva Ardhanārī bracket capital (Tarr 100, 34).



FIG. 37.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave. Façade (Tarr 130, 25).



FIG. 38.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave. Interior, toward Naṭarāja shrine (Tarr 130, 2).



FIG. 39.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave. Interior, toward *garbhagṛha* (Tarr 129, 20).



FIG. 40.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave.
Lintel from original *garbhagrha* door frame
(Tarr 130, 1).



FIG. 41.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave.
Jamb from original *garbhagrha* door frame
(Tarr 129, 36).



FIG. 42.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave.
Brāhmī, Maheśvari, Kaumārī, Bhṛīngī and Vaiṣṇavī,
from the Naṭarāja shrine (Tarr 129, 26).



FIG. 43.—Aihole. Small Cave in Rāvaṇa Phadi Boulder
(Tarr 130, 28).



FIG. 44.—Bādāmi. Cave II.
Vishṇu Varāha (Tarr 95, 31).



FIG. 45.—Bādāmi. Cave III.
Vishṇu Varāha (Tarr 99, 25).



FIG. 46.—Aihole. Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave.
Vishṇu Varāha of *antarāla* (Tarr 53, 30).



FIG. 47.—Mahākūṭa. Airikeśvara Temple.
Vishṇu Varāha (Tarr 53, 30).

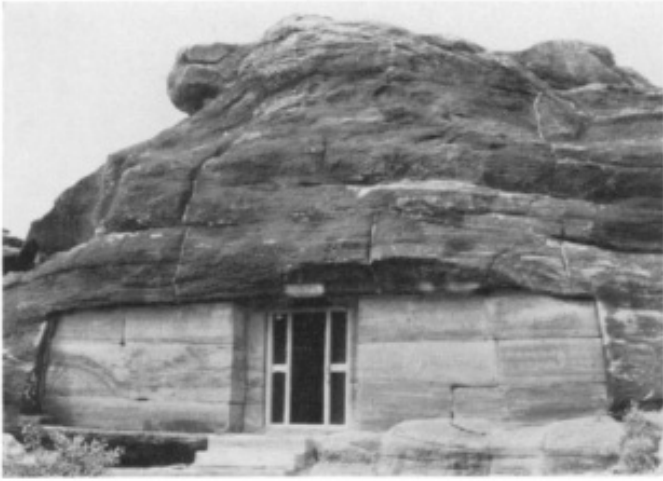


FIG. 48.—Aihole. Jain Cave. Façade (Tarr 171, 11).



FIG. 49.—Aihole. Jain Cave. Veranda (Tarr 171, 17).



FIG. 50.—Aihole. Jain Cave, Interior toward *garbhagriha* (Tarr 172, 4).



FIG. 51.—Aihole. Jaina Cave. Figures attendant on Mahāvīra in sculpture shrine (Tarr 172, 28).



FIG. 52.—Aihole. Two-storied Jaina Cave. Inner door frame of lower story (Tarr 170, 31).



FIG. 53.—Aihole. Two-storied Jaina Cave. Outer door frame of lower story (Tarr 170, 20).

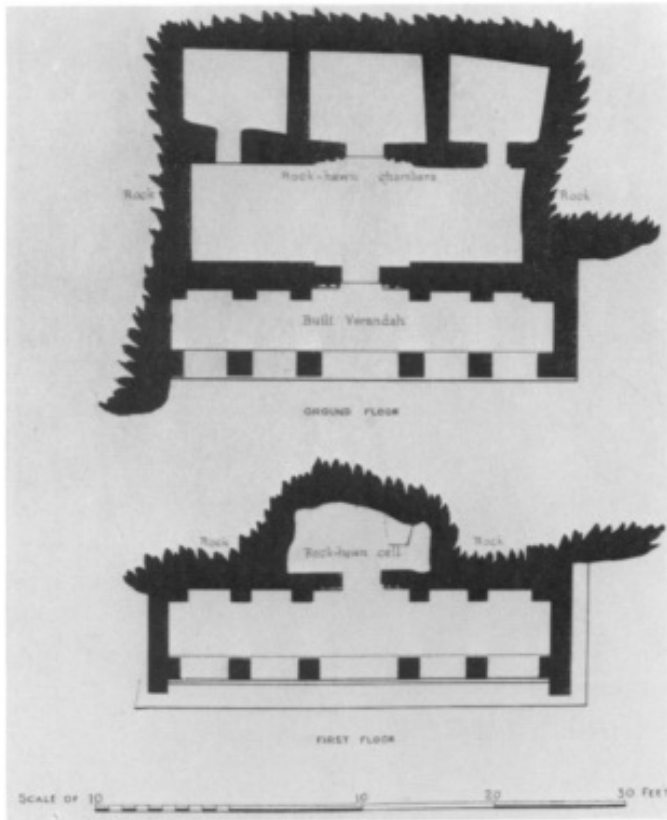


FIG. 54.—Aihole. Two-storied Jain Cave.
Plan (courtesy, *Archaeological Survey of India*).

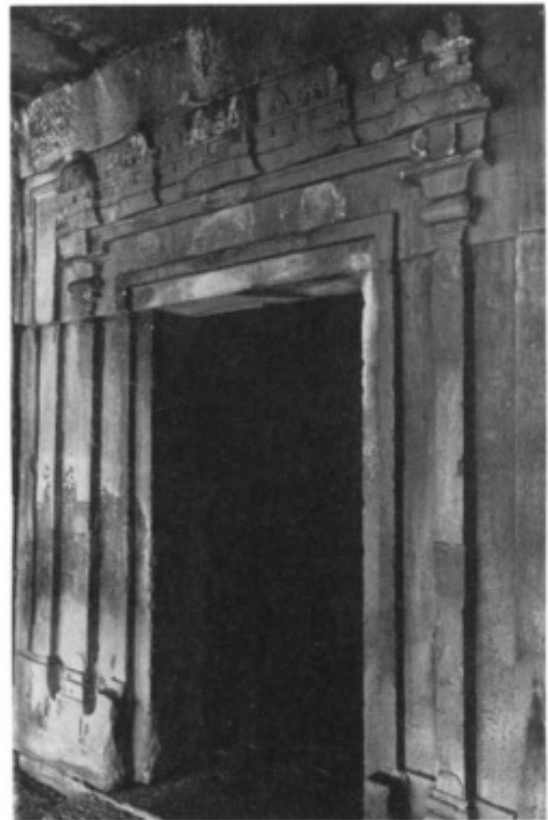


FIG. 55.—Aihole. Two-storied Jain Cave.
Door frame of upper story (Tarr 55, 26).

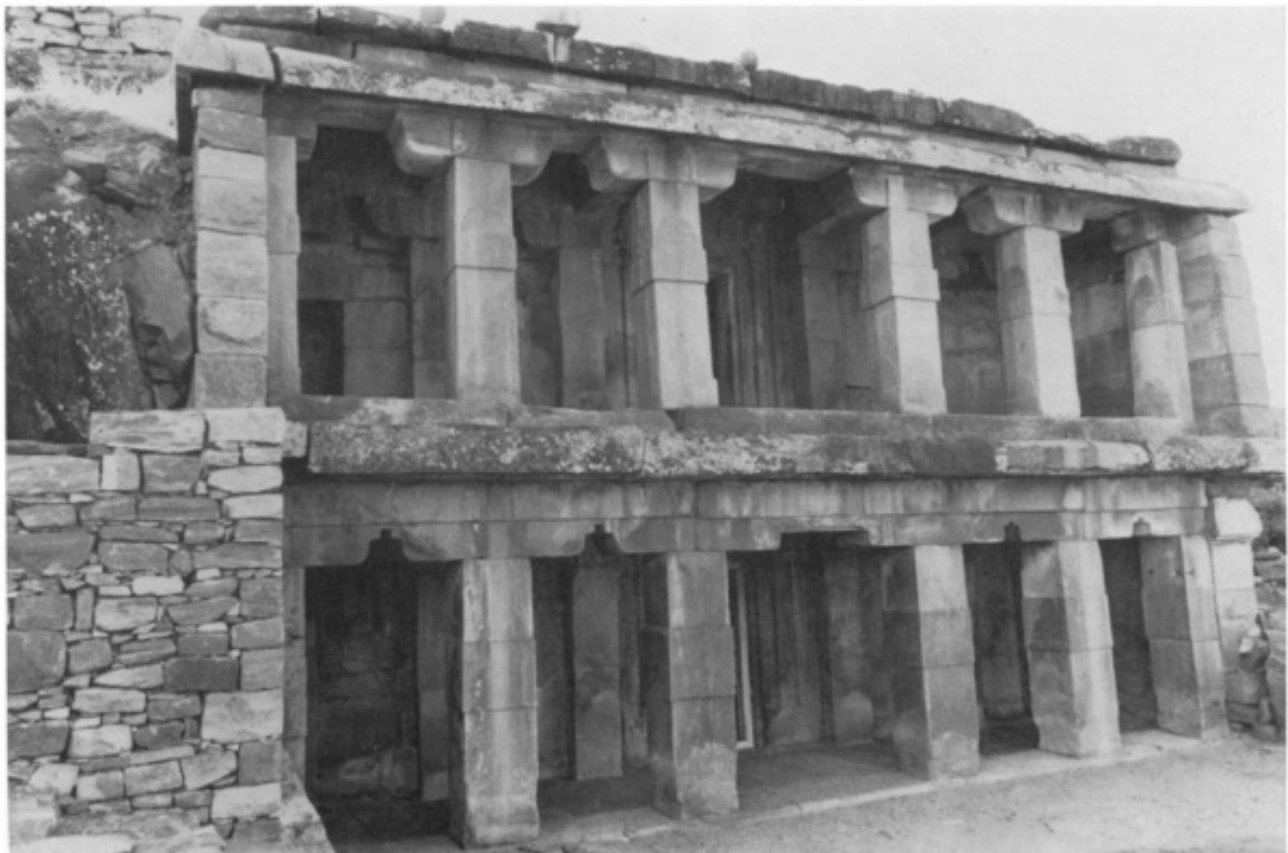


FIG. 56.—Aihole. Two-storied Jain Cave. Façade (Tarr 55, 15).

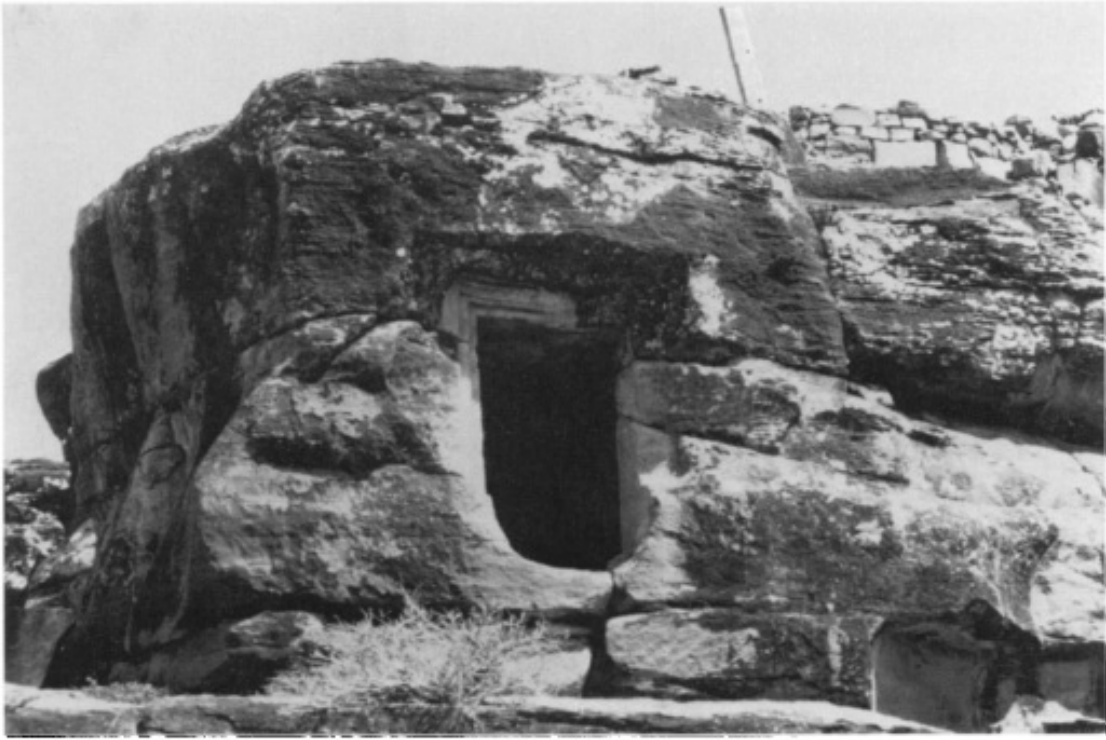


FIG. 57.—Aihole. Single Boulder Jaina Cave (Tarr, CS).



FIG. 58.—Aihole. Single Boulder Jaina Cave.
Interior door frame (Tarr 56, 25)



FIG. 59.—Aihole. Single Boulder Jaina Cave.
Interior (Tarr 56, 27).