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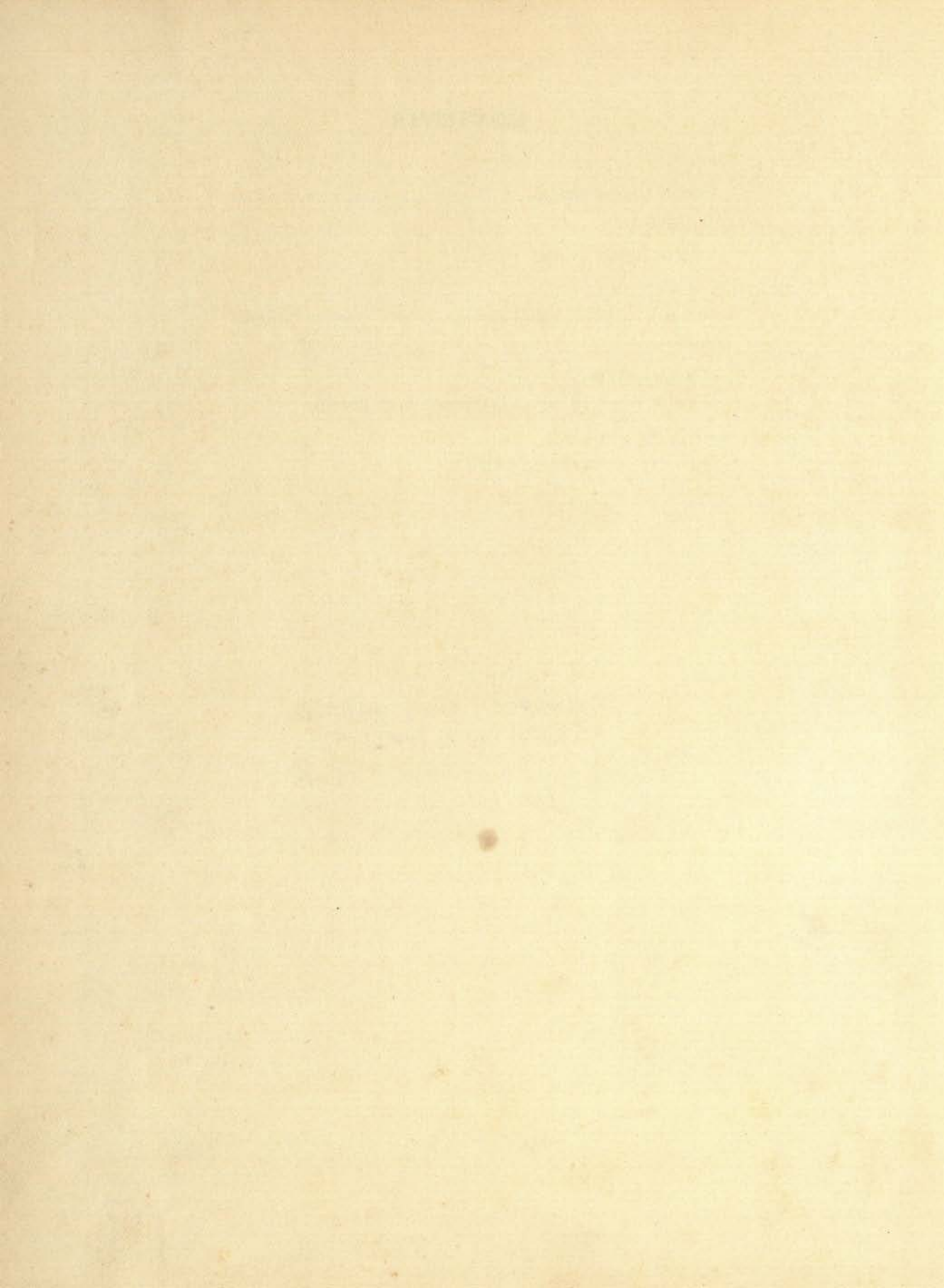
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Bharata requesting Rama to return to Ayodhya. From a Rāmāyaṇa series.  
Popular Mughal School, c. A.D. 1610. Prince of Wales Museum of Western  
India, Bombay.



## SIXTEEN ISLAMIC BLADES

L. A. Mayer

The magnificent collection of Islamic swords in the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay<sup>1</sup> well deserves a detailed study. The best swordsmiths of India and Persia are there represented and some of the specimens are truly royal. It is not the purpose of the present article to do justice to this collection as a whole, but simply to give the proper background to its contents so far as two outstanding Persian masters are concerned. They are Asad Ullah and his son Kalb 'Alī.

### ASAD ULLAH<sup>2</sup>

Asad Ullah Iṣfahānī, by general consent of Eastern and Western opinion, the finest of all Persian swordsmiths, and without any doubt the most famous of them all, is unquestionably also the most elusive. The number of sabres and scimitars bearing his name is legion, so much so that one is sorely tempted to vary a word coined for the French painter Corot, and say that of the three hundred swords which approximately Asad Ullah could have made during his lifetime, at least five hundred found their way to museums and public collections alone. To the best of my knowledge no chronicle mentions him as a contemporary living being, no details of historical value are known about his life or his work, and even the legendary ones are so obviously void of any kernel of fact that reluctantly one is bound to give up any search in this direction. Furthermore, we do not even know what exactly his production consisted of. It seems, for instance, that no public collection possesses either a dagger or a knife signed by him. On the other hand there is a helmet in the St. Meyer collection<sup>3</sup> attributed to him, but neither a photograph nor a drawing of the cartouche with the signature has been published so far.<sup>4</sup> His signature on an axe<sup>5</sup> is so different from the two other inscriptions on this weapon that one can only assume that it was added as an afterthought.

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Moti Chandra, Director of the Prince of Wales Museum, for permission to study the objects and for his kind invitation to contribute an article on the collection to this journal. Shri Pramod Chandra put me under special obligation by his help during my visit to the Museum, by supervising the photography of the weapons, and by calling my attention to several blades which otherwise would have escaped my notice.

<sup>2</sup> Sabres and scimitars with his signature in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, bear the Nos. 22.3608, 22.3611, 22.3613, 22.3615, 22.3616, 22.3739, 22.3744, 22.3865, 22.3867, 22.3932, and 31.71.

<sup>3</sup> St. Meyer: *Inwentaryzacja, Bron i Barwa*, 1935, vol. 2, pp. 277 f.; the helmet as a whole is illustrated on p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> The transcription of the master's name in the form 'Asad (with an 'ayn instead of an alif) makes one wonder whether our Asad Ullah is meant, and not an armourer with a name which in Arabic script looks similar, without being identical, such as e.g. 'Abd Ullah or 'Ubaid Ullah. Arabic scholars will realize at once how easily such a mistake could have occurred.

<sup>5</sup> Wallace Collection, London, No. 1616.



His signatures on the swords do not help either. They vary as much as possible in technique and wording, in style, lettering and emplacement, and seem to allow one solution only, viz. that the vast majority of all weapons bearing Asad Ullah's signature are plain forgeries. Without denying that a good many of them are in fact forgeries, we cannot find this explanation convincing as a solution of the problem as a whole. A forger is a man who manufactures objects with the intention of deceiving the future buyer as to the identity of the maker of that object. Asad Ullah lived — by almost general consent — during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās, although there is no consent as to which of the three Safawid monarchs of that name is meant. Consequently, no forger worthy of his candle would have produced anything but swords with the master's name, dated during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās. But a glance at his signatures shows a very different picture. The dates range from the Muslim equivalent of A.D. 1408/9<sup>6</sup> till A.D. 1808,<sup>7</sup> and in the cartouches the names of practically every king of the Safawid dynasty<sup>8</sup> are mentioned.

A simple explanation of this phenomenon would be to assume that after his death his heirs remained in his workshop, continued to produce swords "made by Asad Ullah" and sign them as the master did. But the fact that — as we shall see presently — two sons of Asad Ullah continued their family calling and signed their weapons with their own names, proves that we have to look somewhere else for the reason of this superabundance of Asad Ullah's weapons.

The only way which would take into account all the facts would be to assume that Asad Ullah, the name of an individual, became a generic term, a kind of trade-mark for outstanding work. Just as in early and mediaeval Arabic literature the appellation "Davidic armour" meant not necessarily one made by King David himself, but armour as good as that attributed to the famous biblical king, so "work of Asad Ullah" became a designation of excellence, instead of remaining the signature of an individual master.

#### KALB 'ALĪ<sup>9</sup>

Of the two sons of Asad Ullah Işfahānī, one called Ismā'il, is practically unknown, since he has fully signed only one sword known to us.<sup>10</sup> But Kalb 'Alī, the other son, is rightly famous. His output must have been quite considerable, since at least twenty sabres and scimitars signed by him have found

<sup>6</sup> In the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, No. 1890 — 314.

<sup>7</sup> In the Wallace Collection, London, No. 1518.

<sup>8</sup> To be more precise: Shāh Ismā'il, Shāh Tahmasp, Shāh 'Abbās, Shāh Šafi, Shāh Husain, Shāh Sulaimān and the Afsharid Nādir Shāh. Only one is missing: so far I have not seen a sabre or a scimitar with Asad Ullah's signature and the cartouche of Shāh Muhammad Khudābanda.

<sup>9</sup> Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, Nos. 22.3606, 22.3609, 22.3746.

<sup>10</sup> In the Royal collection at Windsor Castle, shown at the Exhibition of Persian Art in London, 1931 (of. *Catalogue*, 3rd ed., p. 315, No. 811 F). There are of course several more weapons made by Persian swordsmiths called Ismā'il, but since they are not signed "son of Asad Ullah" it is quite possible that they are the work of other masters called Ismā'il, a name fairly popular during the Safawid period. Consequently we have to leave them outside the scope of this memoir.

their way to public collections. This includes a very rare slightly curved sword for a boy, formerly in the Gaunt collections, now in the Tower of London, as well as a slightly curved sabre of the Dhu-l-Fiqār type, now in the Museum Narodowe in Cracow. One of his weapons bears the date A.H.1092/A.D. 1681<sup>11</sup> and two are dated A.H.1112/A.D. 1700-1,<sup>12</sup> but the cartouches cover the reigns of Shāh Ṭahmasp, Shāh 'Abbās, Shāh Ismā'il, and Shāh Safī. Even assuming that Safī II (1077-79, under the name of Sulaimān, 1079-1105), Ṭahmasp II (1135-1144), 'Abbās III (1144-1163) and Ismā'il III (1163-66) are meant, we have a maximum span of 89 and a minimum span of 84 years, a period far too long for the active life of a single master. We are faced, therefore, with the same problem as in the case of Asad Ullah, only on a much smaller scale.

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<sup>11</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, London, No. D S. 5 d.

<sup>12</sup> Historisches Museum, Bern, No. 13, and the Royal Armoury, Stockholm, No. 22/61.



## ANCIENT INDIAN IVORIES

Moti Chandra

### I

Cheap ivory articles ranging from buttons, paper cutters, cigarette cases and other knick-knacks to badly carved, lifeless figures of Hindu gods and goddesses popular with tourists and the nouveau riche sadly reflect the degeneration of a highly accomplished Indian craft. Apart from its ancient glory reflected in the surviving panels of ivory and bone caskets from Begram, the figures of Śrī-Lakshmi from Pompeii and Ter, figured combs from Taxila datable to the early centuries of the Christian era, the surviving examples of Gupta and medieval ivories typified by the lovely Buddhist images in the Prince of Wales Museum and the artistically carved 13th century throne legs from Orissa in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum, and the Freer Gallery, Washington, show how greatly Indian ivory carvers were alive to the possibilities of ivory as a suitable medium of artistic expression. It is remarkable that this art did not come to an end with the Muslim conquest; the ancient tradition in ivory carving persisted in South India and Orissa till the 18th century, and though the plastic values suffered, the decorative features and minute attention to detail often received an even greater attention. In addition the Muslim period witnessed a frankly utilitarian phase of the art of ivory carving though it still maintained a keen appreciation for ornament and delicacy of finish.

It is, however, rather strange that though India from very ancient times was famous for elephants which served as vehicles and instruments of war and a perpetual source of ivory which was exported in great quantities, archaeological evidences have so far only shown that before the 1st century A.D. ivory was being used mainly in the manufacture of kohl sticks, hair pins, combs, gamesmen and other similar objects. This may be due to insufficient technical knowledge but the merely negative archaeological evidence does not rule out the possibility of a firmly established tradition in ivory carving in the Śuṅga and Maurya periods, as the highly developed craft of ivory carving in the 1st century A.D. must have been preceded by several centuries of experimentation and technical advancement. As a matter of fact evidence, which we shall discuss in this article, is gradually forthcoming to support this view, but much will depend on further systematic excavation of historic sites before a more or less convincing development of this craft is established.

Literary sources, particularly for the early period, yield evidence of a scrappy nature. Vedic literature is well acquainted with elephants, but does not mention ivory anywhere. *Ibha*, from which the word ivory is ultimately



derived, occurs in the *Samhitās*<sup>1</sup> and *nāga* in the *Śatapatha Brā.*, *Bṛihadāranyaka Up.*, and *Aitareya Brā.*<sup>2</sup> Other names for the elephant are *mṛigavāraṇa*<sup>3</sup> and *hastin*.<sup>4</sup> In view of such close acquaintance with the elephant, and also the free use of ivory by the people of the Indus valley whom the Vedic Aryans probably supplanted, it is strange that Vedic literature should not mention ivory or any object made from it. In this connection, however, the following passage from the *Aitareya Brā.*<sup>5</sup> is of some interest:

“They recite the *Śilpas*. These are the works of art of the gods (*deva-śilpānyateshām*); in imitation of these works of art, here is a work of art accomplished; an elephant (*hastin*), a goblet (*kamso*), a garment (*vāsaḥ*), a gold object (*hiranyam*), a mule chariot (*aśvatari rathaḥ*); a work of art is accomplished in him who knows thus.”

It is significant that the passage makes a direct reference to the arts and crafts of the period such as making of bronze pots, weaving, goldsmithy and chariot-making. If this is true *hastiśilpa* here should not mean training of elephants but the art of ivory carving, and we would have thus the earliest reference to this craft. Along with the other arts mentioned it was no ordinary art but an art of the gods, named apparently for its ritualistic connotation.

The epics, however, show that the profession of ivory carvers was well organised and developed. Among a large number of guilds mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, II, 94, 13, appear ivory carvers (*dantakārāḥ*) and ivory dealers (*dantopajivināḥ*). Apparently the profession was organised into two different guilds, one of carvers and the other of dealers or those who hunted elephants for ivory.

The *Mahābhārata* gives more explicit information about ivory carving in ancient India. At the time of the Rājasūya sacrifice the ruler of Assam presented to Yudhishthira swords with handles made of pure ivory (*śuddha-dantatsarūnasīn*).<sup>6</sup> Apparently Assam was a rich source of ivory in the 2nd century B.C. The eastern region of India, which included ancient Magadha, Bengal and Orissa, presented to Yudhishthira very valuable chairs (*āsanāni mahārāṇi*), sedan chairs (*yānāni*) and beds (*śayanāni*) inlaid with precious stones and gold (*maṇikāñchanachitrāṇi*) and made of ivory (*gajadantamayāni*). Here is a clear reference to furniture made of ivory and inlaid with gold and precious stones in fairly early times, the memory of which survives in the 13th century throne legs from Orissa discussed later.

In classical Sanskrit literature references to ivory and ivory carving are scanty. In the 7th century A.D. however, the observing eyes of Bāṇa

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Macdonell and A. B. Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, Varanasi 1958, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 440.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 171-172.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 501-502.

<sup>5</sup> A. B. Keith, *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, Harvard University Press, 1920, VI. 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Mahābhārata*, II. 47. 14.



minutely recorded certain facts about ivory carving. For instance it is said that the Śabarās hunted elephants for ivory.<sup>7</sup> While describing the Devī's temple in the Vindhya the word *danta-kapāṭa* in the compound *vanadviradadanta-kapāṭena parivṛitam* has usually been translated as ivory door.<sup>8</sup> V. S. Agrawala, however, rightly takes it to be a palisade made of elephant tusks put closely together and this should go very well with the Śabarās who were not given to any kind of sophisticated art, but whose profession demanded killing of elephants for ivory which they might have arranged as a palisade in honour of their tutelary goddess.

The *Kādambarī* and also *Harshacharita* refer to the manifold uses of ivory. It was used for decorating architectural elements and for making ornaments and caskets. At one place a gargoyle made of ivory carved in the shape of a *makara* (*dantamayamakaramukhamahāpraṇāla*)<sup>9</sup> is mentioned. The private apartment had columns inlaid with ivory<sup>10</sup> and the *vajramandira* was provided with an ivory toraṇa (*sadanta toraṇavajramandira*) which recalls to mind the lofty ivory toraṇa (*dantidantatoraṇa*) in the house of Vasantasenā mentioned in Act IV of the *Mṛichchhakaṭika* of Śūdraka. Small ivory pavilions (*dantavalabhikā*) were placed in plantain groves,<sup>11</sup> and one of these, placed in the temple of Kāma, was painted red.<sup>12</sup>

Ivory earrings (*dantapatra*) painted blue were usually worn by women of position<sup>13</sup> though they are also said to have been worn by a Chanḍāla girl<sup>14</sup> and royal servants.<sup>15</sup> It was circular in shape.<sup>16</sup> The presents from Assam to Harsha included ivory earrings inlaid with pearls obtained from the forehead of sea-elephants.<sup>17</sup> Apparently, the earrings were inlaid or decorated with amber or walrus ivory imported from Siberia.

Ivory caskets are also mentioned by Bāṇa under the application *dantaśapharuka*. It is said that at the birth ceremonies of Harsha, attendants carried small ivory caskets which contained arecanuts whitened with sandal-paste, and the filaments of catechu perfumed with mango oil.<sup>18</sup> It was a cylindrical box of the same shape as the modern *pharuā* which is made of wood.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>7</sup> V. S. Agarwala, *Kādambarī* (Hindi), Varanasi 1958, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225, fn. 1.

<sup>9</sup> V. S. Agrawala, *Harshacharita* (Hindi), Patna 1953, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>11</sup> Agrawala, *Kādambarī*, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>13</sup> Agrawala, *Harshacharita*, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> Agrawala, *Kādambarī*, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>17</sup> Agrawala, *Harshacharita*, p. 170.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.



In medieval Sanskrit literature only stray references are found to articles made of ivory. In the *Kuṭṭanīmatam*<sup>20</sup> of Dāmodaragupta (8th century A.D.), Chintāmaṇi, the son of an officer, is said to have worn in his pendulous ear an ornament of ivory (*dantapaṅkti*) which had a swordlike (*karpātraka*) end.

Kshemendra in his *Deśopadeśa*<sup>21</sup> makes an interesting reference to ivory figures. In a double entendre he asserts that the wealth of a miser lives in his dirty teeth and the blanket browned with smoke in the same way as the goddess Śrī of the untouchable Chaṇḍāla lives in the figures made of dirty ivory (*danteshu malaṇṇeshu*) which are wrapped in their dirty blankets.

Agrawala has discovered an interesting reference to similar figures in the *Harshacharita* as well. Rājyavardhana, after the death of his father expressed a desire to give up the imperial pomp in these words: "I want to give up Rājyalakṣmī in the same way as the untouchables throw away the *ṭesū* figures decorated with variegated rags obtained from the shrouds, pleasing to people and stuck to the bamboo top." Agrawala has rightly pointed out the similarity to the prevailing custom among the Doms and Bhangis of Delhi and adjacent areas in which they take out a figure stuck to three bamboos in a procession at the Dasahra festival and then submerge it in water.<sup>22</sup>

In Buddhist literature references to ivory carving are both interesting and informative. In the early *Vinaya* texts needle-cases made of bone, ivory and horn are mentioned.<sup>23</sup> Sword handles (*satthakadaṇḍa*)<sup>24</sup> and ear-cleaners (*kaṇṇamalahaṇi*)<sup>25</sup> of ivory, bone and horn are said to be lawful to Buddhist monks. However, no kind of artistic carving is mentioned. It is said in the *Silavanāga Jātaka* (No. 72)<sup>26</sup> that a forester, tempted by the ivory of Silavanāga who had once guided him out of the forest when he had lost his way, visited the ivory workers' bazaar (*dantakāravithi*) at Banaras where ivory was being worked in diverse forms and shapes. On being questioned what they would offer for the tusks of a living elephant, he was informed that they were much more costly than those of a dead one. In the *Chhadanta Jātaka* (514)<sup>27</sup> hunting elephants for ivory is mentioned and it is also said that ivory from living elephants was more costly. Banaras seems to have been the centre of ivory hunters and another Buddhist legend says that in the time of Brahmadata there lived in Banaras a hunter who made a living by killing elephants and marketing their tusks.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Tanh Sukha Rama (editor), *Kuṭṭanīmatam*, Bombay 1923, V. 62.

<sup>21</sup> M. Kaula (editor), *Deśopadeśa*, Poona 1923, II. 30.

<sup>22</sup> Agrawala, *Harshacharita*, p. 117.

<sup>23</sup> *Bhikkhu Patimokkha* V. 86; *Bhikkhu Patimokkha* IV. 12.

<sup>24</sup> *Chullavagga* V. 1. 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 3. 7.

<sup>26</sup> E. B. Cowell (editor), *The Jātakas*, Vol. I, London 1956, pp. 175-176.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, Vol. I, p. 191.



It seems that in most of the big cities of ancient India working in ivory was a recognised profession. Thus it is said that the city of Sākala had many ivory carvers (*dantakāra*).<sup>29</sup>

In Buddhist Sanskrit literature, however, there are some even more interesting references to ivory carving. The *Mahāvastu*, in its list of the guilds in Kapilavastu, mentions conchshell cutters (*śāṅkhika*) and ivory carvers (*dantakāra*).<sup>30</sup> There was apparently a master craftsman working both in conchshell and ivory (*śāṅkhavalayakāramahattarakā*)<sup>31</sup> who made ornaments and other objects from them (*gajadantaśāṅkhamayāni*). He made ivory bangles (*nāgadantavalaya*), collyrium sticks (*añjanīya*), ivory caskets (*dantasamudgaka*), unguent pots affecting fantastic genii forms (*rochana-piśāchikā*), ivory ewers (*dantabhriṅgāraka*), *dantaviheṭhikā* (?) which may be the same as Hindi *bijāyāṭha* (anklet), ivory bed legs (*dantapādamaya*), and lions (*śimhaka*), which word may also denote lion-shaped bed legs. Beds made of gold, silver and ivory are also mentioned.<sup>32</sup> The *Mahāvastu* also refers to a large number of articles made from or inlaid with conchshell such as beds (*śāṅkhaśayyā*), oil pots (*śāṅkhamayān*, *tailabhājanāni*), perfume pots (*gandhabhājanāni*), colour pots (*varṇaka*), lotus stalks (*śāṅkhamṛiṇālaka*), caskets (*samudgaka*), bangles (*valaya*), zones (*mekhalā*), head ornament (*śāṅkhavochaka*, Hindi *buchkī*), palanquins (*śāṅkhaśibikā*), and shields (*śāṅkhacharmaka*).<sup>33</sup>

The *Dīvyāvadāna*<sup>34</sup> mentions ivory seals (*dantamudrā*) which were apparently used in a case of emergency. Tishyarakshitā is said to have sealed the order of Aśoka to get Kuṇāla blinded with the ivory seal. The Buddhist Sanskrit *Vinaya* relates the story of a master ivory carver (*dantakālāchārya*)<sup>35</sup> who went to the land of the Yavanas with a measure of 'ivory rice' (*dantataṇḍula*) and appeared at the house of a master artist. As the latter was away from his house the ivory craftsman asked his wife to cook the 'rice' and departed. She tried hard to boil it but failed. Apparently the story indicates the visit of Indian ivory carvers to Alexandria.

Jaina canonical literature also yields interesting information. At one place, in keeping with the Jaina doctrine of non-killing, traffic in ivory is condemned,<sup>36</sup> but on the other hand the professions of conchshell cutters (*śāṅkhāra*) and ivory carvers (*dantakāra*) are classed among noble professions (*śīlpārya*).<sup>37</sup> The ivory trade is said to have been in the hands of the Ṭaṅkaṇa Mlechchhas from northern India who brought gold and ivory for sale to the Deccan. They followed a curious method in making transactions, for not

<sup>29</sup> *Milindaprasāna* I, 330; II, 208-211.

<sup>30</sup> *Mahāvastu* III, 113. Sl. 6-11.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 473.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 420.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> E. B. Cowell (editor), *Dīvyāvadāna*, Cambridge 1896, p. 410.

<sup>35</sup> *Gilgit Mss.*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 171.

<sup>36</sup> H. A. F. Hoernele, *Uvāsagadasāo*, Calcutta 1885, p. 51.

<sup>37</sup> Bhagwandas Harshachand (translator), *Prajñāpāna Sūtra*, 1934, I, 70.



knowing the language of the country they covered their heaped goods with their hands and refused to uncover it till they were satisfied with the price.<sup>38</sup>

In ivory trade (*dantavāṇijya*) money was advanced to the Pulindas who killed elephants and secured their tusks for sale. Similarly fishermen were advanced money for conchshells.<sup>39</sup> Ivory and conchshell were costly materials and were apparently taxed heavily. In order to escape the heavy duties merchants did not follow recognised routes but took to circuitous ways.<sup>40</sup> That conchshell and ivory were valuable articles is further supported by the fact that they are counted among the twenty-four jewels.<sup>41</sup>

Vessels made of ivory (*danta*), horn (*śṛṅga*) and conchshell (*śaṅkha*) were used extensively but they were prohibited articles to Jaina monks even if ivory or conchshell was used only as inlay (*bandhagāṇi*).<sup>42</sup> Houses having figures of women made of wood, plaster, ivory (*danta*), stone and terracotta or painted figures were unlawful to Jaina monks. In this connection it has been further observed that the Yavanas were great artists in these materials.<sup>43</sup>

One would expect the *Śilpaśāstras* and other technical literature to devote greater attention to carving in ivory and conchshell, but that is not the case, ivory as a medium of artistic expression being dismissed summarily. For instance, the only information which the *Arthaśāstra* gives about ivory is that the Mauryas kept forest reserves for the supply of elephants and if anybody was caught poaching the penalty was death. However, those who brought the tusks of dead elephants were rewarded.<sup>44</sup> Another casual information obtained from the same source is that sword handles were made from ivory.<sup>45</sup>

The *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana, though primarily a technical work on the *ars amoris*, refers occasionally to ivory carvings. Earrings made of ivory and conchshell were so much in demand that Vātsyāyana includes the making of ivory and conchshell earrings (*kaṇapaṭrabhaṅga*) in his list of sixty-four arts. The commentator explains *kaṇapaṭrabhaṅga* as an article of ornament made of ivory, conchshell etc. (*dantaśaṅkhādibhiḥ kaṇapaṭraviśeṣāḥ nepathyārthaḥ*).<sup>46</sup> Dolls (*duhitṛikā*) were made of thread, wood, horn and ivory (*gajadanta*),<sup>47</sup> the same as *pañcālīkā* and *putrikā*, i.e. dolls of the *Amarakośa*, II, 10, 29, made of cloth and ivory (*danta*) etc. Ivory was also used for the less edifying purpose

<sup>38</sup> *Avāśyaka Chūrṇi*, Pūrvabhāga, Ratlam, 1928, p. 120; *Avāśyaka Tīkā*, Bombay 1916, pp. 99-100a.

<sup>39</sup> *Avāśyaka Chūrṇi*, p. 829.

<sup>40</sup> Bechardas (editor), *Rāyapaseṇiya Sūtra*, p. 305.

<sup>41</sup> Amarchandji and Kanhailalji (editors), *Niśītha Sūtram*, Part II, Agra 1957, p. 109, Śloka 1032.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Part III, p. 11, Śloka 4-6.

<sup>43</sup> *Bṛīhat Kalpasūtra Bhāṣya* V. 4915.

<sup>44</sup> R. Shamasastri (translator), *Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra*, Mysore 1923, p. 53.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>46</sup> Damodara Sastri (editor), *Kāmasūtra*, Banaras 1929, I. 3. 16.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 3. 13.



of making dildoes along with gold, silver, copper, iron and buffalo horn.<sup>48</sup> The *Āṅgavijjā* (4th-5th century A.D.), a curious work on prognostication, gives some stereotyped information on ivory, conchshell, etc. It classifies the materials for making ornaments into three classes, namely those obtained from living things (*pāṇajonigatam*), from metals, and from roots, etc. Under the first division are placed ornaments made from conchshell, pearls, ivory (*dantamayam*) buffalo-horn and hair.<sup>49</sup> Implements and objects of art were also made of pearls, conchshell, buffalo horn, ivory, horn, bone (*aṭṭhikamayam*) and hair.<sup>50</sup> The text also mentions in the list of seats (*āsana*) one made of ivory (*dantāsana*).<sup>51</sup> The decorative value of ivory was also realised and the *Āṅgavijjā* speaks of a palace apartment decorated with ivory inlay work (*dantagiha*).<sup>52</sup>

The *Bṛihatsamhitā* of Varāhamihira, datable to the Gupta period, deals with astronomy, astrology and other subjects. It devotes almost two chapters to curious beliefs concerning ivory and to its proper selection from the astrological point of view. It thus says that wooden beds with ornamental ivory inlay work commanded admiration,<sup>53</sup> quite a simple statement in itself but followed by a plethora of details about the right selection of ivory astrologically. For purposes of prognostication ivory was cut from the point to a length which measured twice the circumference at the base. This measurement could be increased or decreased depending on where the elephant came from. For example, if it came from a riverine tract the measurement was increased but if it came from a hilly tract it was decreased. If the cut revealed veins in the shape of a cross or a dish, an umbrella, a flag, a staff and a flywhisk, the ivory was supposed to bring good health and prosperity. Also, the shape of a weapon prognosticated success; a quadrangle thus meant recovery of the lost territory by the king and a cloddy shape meant recovery of the country obtained and then lost. The shape of a woman meant loss of wealth; a golden pitcher meant birth of sons to the king; a pot meant recovery of hidden treasure and the staff foretold the stoppage of an intended journey. The shape of a bloodsucker, a monkey and a snake prognosticated death, disease and the king's capture by the enemy; a vulture, an owl, a crow, a hawk foretold plague. The shape of a rope or a headless trunk meant the king's death or misery to the subjects. If the cut in the ivory brought forth blood, or showed a black or red-black surface, disagreeable in appearance or smelly it prognosticated misery. White, even, glossy and fragmentary cuts were supposed to be signs of prosperity.

Chapter 47 (7-11) continues the subject and deals with prognostications from the dropping down, thinning and loss of colour of the tusks of living elephants. The Devas, the Asuras and the Yakshas are supposed to occupy

<sup>48</sup> Damodardas Sastri (editor), *Kāmasūtra*, Banaras, III. 2. 5.

<sup>49</sup> Punyavijayaji (editor), *Āṅgavijjā*, Bombay 1957, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>53</sup> *Bṛihatsamhitā* II. 32. 19-26.



the root, the middle and the tip of the tusk respectively. The breaking of the right tusk, except in propitious circumstances meant the king's ruination. The breaking of the middle of the left tusk, a giant tree etc., also brought about misery.

The *Mānasāra*<sup>54</sup> enjoins that couches should be decorated with lotus-petal carvings (*padmapatrādichitraścha*) and other ornaments. They should further be provided with low railings (*kshudravedikā*) and floral knobs made of ivory (*dantajam*) or wood.

Some interesting information about ivory used as ornament, furniture decoration etc., can be gleaned from the *Mānasollāsa*, an encyclopaedic work of the 12th century A.D. It is enjoined there that a person who killed an elephant should be awarded capital punishment by the king. If, however, an elephant died a natural death its tusks were to be brought to him.<sup>55</sup> In this regulation the *Mānasollāsa* follows the earlier dictum of the *Arthasāstra*.

Apparently ivory was extensively used in furniture-making and in the decoration of *ḍolīs* etc. A chair called *prishṭhādhārāsana* is described as follows: "It is made of teak wood and decorated with ivory (*dantidantasuchitritam*). It has many shapes and colours and is provided with a back and four legs. It is roomy and one and a half cubit wide and not very high."<sup>56</sup> Among the eight kinds of benches (*mañcha*) one is made of ivory (*dantāṅghri*),<sup>57</sup> and is described thus: "Its four legs are entirely made of ivory (*dvipadantakṛitaiḥ*) and all of its parts are also made of ivory"<sup>58</sup> There seems to be no question of ivory inlay here, for the object was apparently made entirely of ivory. The throne legs from Orissa, described below, seem to belong to the *dantāṅghri* class.

*Dolāyāna* (modern *ḍolī*), described as having one pole only, was made of ivory (*dantidanta-vinirmāṇam*) and inlaid with precious stones and gold.<sup>59</sup> In the pomp and show affected by Indian princes costly umbrellas, an insignia of royalty, played an important part, and according to the *Mānasollāsa* these royal umbrellas had golden covers studded with jewels and ivory handles (*dantidaṇḍa*) which were also inlaid with gold and gems.<sup>60</sup>

In palace architecture an ivory room was of special attraction. It had a balcony (*mattavāraṇa*) made of ivory.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>54</sup> P. K. Acharya, *Mānasāra*, Allahabad, n. d., XLIV. 25-26.

<sup>55</sup> G. K. Shrigondekar (editor), *Mānasollāsa of Someśvara*, Vol. I, Baroda 1921, 3. 180.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. 1939, 1144.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 1672.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 1683-1684.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 1642.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 1669.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.



Among the articles of personal use we learn of ivory *pādukās* (sandals) (*gajadantasamudbhūta*) inlaid with gold (*suvarṇarachanānvite*).<sup>62</sup> Anklets made of well polished ivory are also mentioned.<sup>63</sup>

Literary evidences in support of a flourishing trade in ivory and ivory carving is further strengthened by an inscription of the 1st century B.C. on the Southern Gateway of the great stūpa at Sanchi. This short dedicatory record mentions that the ivory carvers (*dantakārah*) of Vidiśā carved the figures (*rūpa-kammam-kalam*).<sup>64</sup> It could be inferred from this short epigraph that Vidiśā in the 1st century B.C. had a flourishing trade guild of ivory carvers who readily donated their services for carving the stone reliefs of the Sanchi stūpa. How well they fared working in a new medium it is difficult to say, but the attention to minute details found in the stone relief may reveal their skilled hand.

There are evidences to prove that all the ivory which India produced was not consumed internally but a substantial part found its way to foreign markets. Whether Indian ivory was exported to the Middle East in the proto-historic period it is difficult to say but at least by the 10th century B.C. it seems that King Solomon received Indian ivory along with sandalwood, precious stones, monkeys and peacocks.<sup>65</sup> Whatever truth there may be in the above statement, epigraphical evidence from Iran proves that in the 6th century B.C. ivory was being exported from India to Iran. The great Achaemenian emperor Darius I in his inscription from Susa (521 B.C.) mentions that the various subject nations brought different kinds of materials for building the royal palace at Susa. These included "the ivory which was wrought here, was brought from Ethiopia and from Sind and from Arachosia."<sup>66</sup> Sind could not have yielded ivory which must have been taken there from other parts of the country.

There are stray references to Indian ivory in Greek and Latin literature. For instance minor articles of ivory such as earrings,<sup>67</sup> and pricks attached to a leather thong for riding are mentioned.<sup>68</sup> Virgil (Georgic i, 57; Aenis XII) refers to Indian ivory and praises its purity of colour.

With the increasing trade relation between India and the Roman Empire ivory became an important article of export. Indian and African ivory was used for making statues, furniture, book covers, musical instruments and so on. The Indian supply came by land routes and also by sea.<sup>69</sup> In the *Periplus*

<sup>62</sup> G. K. Shrigondekar (editor), *Mānasollāsa of Someśvara*, Vol. 1, Baroda 1921, 956.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 1121.

<sup>64</sup> I. Bühler, "Votive Inscriptions from Sanchi Stupas," *Epigraphia Indica* II (1892), p. 92.

<sup>65</sup> P. T. Srinivas Iyengar, "The Trade of India," *Indian Historical Quarterly* II (1926) p. 40.

<sup>66</sup> R. Ghirshmann, *Iran*, London 1954, p. 166.

<sup>67</sup> J. W. McCrindle (translator), *Indica*, p. 220.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>69</sup> W. H. Schoff (translator), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, London 1912.



time the chief centre of trade in African ivory was Adulis. Indian ivory was exported from Barygaza (modern Broach) (49); Muziris, Bacare and Nelcynda (56) had a flourishing trade in ivory with Rome. Dosarene or Orissa exported the ivory known as Dosarane (62).

The traffic in Indian ivory with Arabia and China continued in medieval times. Abū Zayd (9th century A.D.) giving the reason why the Arab ships returned to India from Jidda instead of proceeding to Egypt by the Red Sea says that this was because Indian trade consisting of pearls, ivory, precious stones, fragrant woods and spices was quite valuable. Ibn Khurdābeh (A.H. 250) in his list of articles exported from India to Iraq also includes ivory.<sup>70</sup> The *Hudūd i 'Ālam*<sup>71</sup> mentions that Orissa exported conchshell and ivory. Chao-ju-kua also throws light on the ivory trade between India and China carried through the Arab intermediaries in the 12th and 13th centuries. For instance, Kambuja,<sup>72</sup> Palembang,<sup>73</sup> the Malaya Peninsula,<sup>74</sup> Lankasuk (Kedah),<sup>75</sup> Borneo,<sup>76</sup> Java<sup>77</sup> and Coromandel<sup>78</sup> all either produced or exported ivory.

## II

Though literary references and foreign notices of ivory and ivory carving prove the antiquity of the craft they hardly add much to our knowledge of old Indian ivories for which archaeological evidences have to be thoroughly sifted. Unfortunately, while literature is eloquent, archaeological evidences from the Indian soil are extremely scanty and are mostly confined to purely utilitarian objects. In the earlier excavations at Mohenjodaro, Mackay noticed the fact that while the elephant was commonly portrayed on the seals, only a few ivory objects were found. After further excavations at Mohenjodaro he came to the conclusion that ample supply of ivory was available to the Indus valley people but he was not sure whether it was imported into Sindh from other parts of India or if local supplies were available. Two elephant tusks found in a group of nine skeletons would seem to reveal trade in ivory. Mackay remarks that though certain objects show the skill of the craftsmen yet "curiously enough no human or original figure has yet been found carved in the round — a rather striking fact in view of the number of other materials used in the making of these figures."<sup>79</sup> He attributes this paucity of artistic ivory objects to the technical shortcomings of the craftsmen, a conclusion to which he was led

<sup>70</sup> Suleyman Nadvi, *Arab aur Bhārat ke Sambandha*, Allahabad 1930, pp. 42-46.

<sup>71</sup> V. Minorsky *Hudud i 'Ālam*, London 1937, pp. 86ff.

<sup>72</sup> Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau-Ju-kua*, p. 53.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>79</sup> E. Mackay, *Further Excavations at Mohenjo Daro*, Vol. I, Calcutta 1930, p. 571.



from an unfinished plaque in which the saw marks are clearly visible in both directions. To him this signified the great difficulty the ivory worker had in cutting the material so that he worked towards the centre from all sides.<sup>80</sup>

The most important ivory object found from the earlier excavation at Mohenjodaro is an ivory plaque (1.8 × 1.05 inches) probably the remaining half of a full plaque with a circular device in the middle and a male figure facing to the left with hands on the hips on the obverse. The figure wears a close-fitting conical cap and a short loin-cloth and carries what may be either a bow or a quiver of arrows. The nose is prominent and the eye elongated. In front of the figure is a device which probably contained an inscription. In some places the ivory shows evidence of being sawn into shape. The carving of the figure is, however, exceedingly rough. The tool used was probably a narrow chisel. The equally scored lines at the back were perhaps made to key it in its place as if it were an inlay.<sup>81</sup> Howsoever rough the carving may be it represents the earliest attempt of man in India to carve a human figure in ivory. Among other ivory objects appear kohl-sticks, two combs one of which is decorated with two concentric circles and well carved handles decorated with meanders in registers.<sup>82</sup> The five inscribed cylinders<sup>83</sup> were at first described as seals, but later on Mackay identified them as tabular dice. Hair pins, awls etc. are rare.

Some other ivory objects,<sup>84</sup> tentatively identified by Mackay as pieces used in a game of chance are rectangular or square in section, in some cases tapering towards one end. They vary in size from 1.65 inches to 3.25 inches in length and show signs of much use. The circular markings on most of them were made with a tubular drill and straight lines made with a saw. Care was taken to make the design as regular as possible.

The exact purpose of the fish-shaped ivory pieces<sup>85</sup> is not known. They might have been game pieces, but not amulets, as they have no string holes. Similar fish, also carved in ivory, have been found in a royal tomb at Nagdeh in Egypt where they may have been placed as food offering. There is no evidence, however, that they were used for the same purpose in Sindh.

Our knowledge of proto-historic ivories from further excavations at Mohenjodaro does not fare better. Mackay did dig up certain ivory objects which, however, are not materially different from those obtained from earlier excavations. The most important is either the basal portion or the top of a vase (2.26 inches dia.; 1.04 inches high) with a stepped vertical hold through it. It has a geometrical design of circular motif in low relief; each circle made of

<sup>80</sup> E. Mackay, *Further Excavations at Mohenjo Daro*, Vol. I, Calcutta 1930, p. 571.

<sup>81</sup> Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo Daro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. II, London 1931, p. 562. Pl. CXXXII. 10.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. CXXXII, 7-8, 11-13, 15, 17, 19-45.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. CXIV, pp. 529-533.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. CXXXII, 19, 20, 22, p. 556.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 557.



three petals on the broader surface and by four petals round the projecting piece. The petals show traces of light red pigment with which they were inlaid and the contrast of this colour with the creamy surface of the ivory must have been pleasing.<sup>86</sup> Among the lesser antiquities are ivory hooks for fastening wooden boxes,<sup>87</sup> ivory batons, attractively shaped and ornamented and probably turned on lathe,<sup>88</sup> ivory roundels, the side cross-hatched with incised lines filled with black,<sup>89</sup> probably used as earrings, cubical and tabular dice,<sup>90</sup> and ivory fish.<sup>91</sup> Three other ivory objects suggest an architectural feature such as a column. These little ivory objects may have formed a part of model shrines.<sup>92</sup>

The finds at Harappa also do not disclose anything spectacular in ivory carving. They are combs, *chauks*, a cup, kohl-sticks, pins, awls, gamesmen, a spatula, and some small balusters.<sup>93</sup> One of the kohl-sticks is duck-headed. The balusters probably formed part of small caskets or miniature furniture.

Even when we come to the historical period, excavations have yielded only a few ivory objects of the centuries before Christ which could be of interest from the artistic viewpoint. For instance Stratum III (600-200 B.C.) at Rupar has yielded combs, hair pins, and collyrium sticks.<sup>94</sup> A beautiful spout-like ivory handle decorated with chequers and hachures shows a definite advancement in the technique of ivory carving.<sup>95</sup> The same stratum also yielded a stopper of ivory decorated with lively figures of elephants and an inscribed ivory seal. The highly stylised figure of the Mother Goddess<sup>96</sup> with a stemmed cup-like head decorated with punched circles, the triangular lower part decorated likewise, is interesting as the same figure appears from the Mauryan levels in other sites in Northern and Western India.

The excavations at Nagda<sup>97</sup> have yielded ivory and bone objects from Period III. They are combs decorated with concentric circles, highly stylised figure of the Mother Goddess decorated with punched circles, kohl-sticks, etc. The Mauryan levels at Prabhaspatan have also yielded ivory hair pins, kohl-sticks and figures of the Mother Goddess with a triangular head exactly like the one found at Nagda.<sup>98</sup> The same figure appears from the excavations at Ujjain.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Mackay, *Further Excavations*, Vol. I, p. 324.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 431-432.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 432-433.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 559-560.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 564.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 564-565.

<sup>93</sup> M. S. Vats, *Excavations at Harappa*, Vol. I, Delhi 1940, pp. 459-461, Pl. CXIX.

<sup>94</sup> Y. D. Sharma, "Past Patterns in Living as Unfolded at Rupar," *Lalit Kalā* Nos. 1-2 (1956), p. 121, Pl. XLVI.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. XLVII, Fig. 16.

<sup>96</sup> See *Ancient India* No. 9 (1953), p. 125.

<sup>97</sup> See *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1955-1956, p. 14, Pl. XXIV B.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 1956-1957, p. 17, Pl. XVIII B.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27, Pl. XXXIII A.



The excavations at Taxila by Sir John Marshall yielded some interesting objects of bone and ivory belonging to different periods.<sup>100</sup> Bone and ivory were used at Taxila for manufacturing small articles of daily use: personal ornaments, toilet and domestic articles, gamesmen, toy furniture and other miscellaneous objects. Some of them were excavated at Bhira mound, others from Sirkap, while others were common to both sites. Those from Bhira mound include earrings, flesh rubbers, spindle whorls, draughtsmen or counters and a doll (*Taxila*, No. 121)<sup>101</sup> or more correctly the figure of the Mother Goddess. Among the finds at Sirkap are combs (*Taxila*, Nos. 18-23), ear-cleaners and tooth picks, handles for mirrors and fans, knife handles, playing dice, knuckle bones, toy furniture and cheek bars for horses' bridles. Articles found at both sites comprise bangles, pendants and amulets, hair pins, anti-mony rods, comb handles, writing styles and arrow heads.<sup>102</sup> In the opinion of Marshall many of these articles are traceable to Greek or Western Asiatic origin. "Such are the haircombs, hair pins with comb or cockheads, ear-cleaners and tooth picks in combination, mirror handles, writing styles, knuckle bones, the tooth amulet (*Taxila*, No. 119) and an ivory pendant or handle with two philosophers' heads (*Taxila*, No. 120). The two last, indeed, were in all probability imported from the west. The cheekbars for horses' bridles (*Taxila*, Nos. 115-18) seem likely to have been imported from Central Asia."<sup>103</sup>

In Group A Marshall includes personal ornaments such as bangles made of ivory and bone,<sup>104</sup> ear-reels, some of which are solid, others pierced with a hole at the centre found from Bhira only, and gadrooned bone beads also only from Bhira.<sup>105</sup> In the pendant and amulet section<sup>106</sup> dagger-shaped amulets (*Taxila*, Nos. 13-14) from Bhira are datable to the 4th or 3rd century B.C. while *Taxila*, Nos. 15-16 from Sirkap, date back to the 2nd century B.C. The most interesting, however, is *Taxila*, No. 12 from Bhira datable to the 5th century B.C. and described by Marshall as a toy. It has a cup-shaped head with the stem representing the neck and the pedestal the shoulders. The rectangular plaque below is marked with a triangle decorated with punched circles representing nudity. Three circles on the head represent the eyes and the mouth, and two on the pedestal the breasts. There should be no doubt that they are very early representations of the Mother Goddess in ivory. Finds of similar figures at other sites described above tend to confirm this identification. *Taxila*, No. 17 represents a tooth amulet bound about the centre with a copper strip.

In Group B Marshall includes articles of dress and toilet of which ivory combs (*Taxila*, Nos. 18-25) form an interesting part. They were found from

<sup>100</sup> The subsequent account is based on Sir John Marshall, *Taxila*, Cambridge 1951.

<sup>101</sup> The numbers refer to *ibid.*, Vol. III, Pls. 179, 200, 203, 204.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 651.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 651-53.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 654.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*



Sirkap and are datable between the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. In the comb only No. 18 is plain; the rest are decorated with incised circles, or more elaborate designs, including a shell, foliate devices, ducks, and a pair of human busts of the kind that are familiar in the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Mathura.<sup>107</sup>

The ivory comb, *Taxila*, No. 21, is decorated with male and female busts on one side and a duck on the other, the bird reminding one of the Begram ivories.<sup>108</sup> *Taxila*, No. 22 is decorated with floral design in beaded borders on one side and a conchshell with floral design in beaded borders on the other.

Hair pins, both of bone and ivory, are datable from the 5th century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. The pins, with ornamental heads, are generally decorated with inverted comb and standard cock design. Some of them (*Taxila*, Nos. 28, 33) have bird or pot capital with incised rings below.<sup>109</sup>

Antimony rods, ear-cleaners and tooth picks are frequently combined together. They measure from three to six inches in length. As an antimony rod it is slightly clubbed; as a tooth pick or nail cleaner it is sharp; as an ear-cleaner it is furnished with a tiny scoop. They date from the 4th century B.C. to the 1st century A.D.<sup>110</sup>

Sirkap has also yielded mirror handles and other articles which could be dated between the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. Bone and ivory handles fall into two classes: a) those decorated with figures carved in relief, and b) those turned on the lathe and decorated with mouldings and incised lines and hatchings. In the first type, *Taxila*, No. 43 (Pl. Ib), the bone handle depicts the figure of a woman in relief wearing ornaments; in *Taxila*, No. 44 her hair is dressed in a plain manner on either side of the head; in *Taxila*, No. 45 she wears a garland on her head after the Parthian manner, and in *Taxila*, No. 47, also of bone, a male and a female figure are shown standing side by side. The male figure is dressed in a garment falling on the left shoulder and his female companion wears ornaments, the hair being done in a double tier.<sup>111</sup>

Draughtsmen and counters from Bhir datable to the 5th century B.C. consist of circular discs, flat on the lower side and with an upraised boss in the centre on the upper side, surrounded by concentric rows of slightly raised excrescences; others are thin squares on hexagonal tablets. The ivory dice from Sirkap and Sirsukh are invariably oblong in shape and not cubical. The numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 are indicated by concentric circles or simple dots.

<sup>107</sup> Marshall, *Taxila*, Vol. II, p. 655.

<sup>108</sup> J. Hackin, *Recherches Archéologiques à Begram*, 1937, Pl. LXXVII, Fig. 237.

<sup>109</sup> Marshall, *Taxila*, Vol. II, pp. 655-656.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 659.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 650-659.



Parts of toy furniture or miniature chests (*Taxila*, Nos. 100-04) were also found. The specimens formed parts of six different pieces, probably diminutive trinket chests, but possibly toy tables or even bedsteads.

Arrow heads of bone and ivory are of four types, viz. (a) roughly shaped and sharpened at both ends; (b) with smooth circular point and well defined tang; (c) a point similar to (b) but with a hollow socket hole behind for shaft-tenon; (d) with a trilateral point and hollow socket-hole behind. Type (a) has been found from Bhir and Sirkap and the rest from Bhir only.<sup>112</sup>

In miscellaneous objects of bone and ivory, mention may be made of a profile head of a ram in low relief (*Taxila*, No. 119), perhaps fixed to a knife handle or pin-head. The fossilised ivory from which this and *Taxila* No. 122, the side piece of a dagger, are made came from Siberia. An ivory handle or pendant (*Taxila*, No. 120) is adorned on either side with the bearded Greek head of the philosopher. More interesting is the crude figure of a man in the round (*Taxila*, No. 121) from Bhir mound wearing a long tunic with a band above the waist and a necklace. There is a hole through the body from shoulder to shoulder for the attachment of moveable arms; and another tiny hole from the back to the front of the shoulder for the same purpose.<sup>113</sup>

Ivory was also being used for making relic caskets at *Taxila*. From Stūpa Sg from the Dharmarājikā group was found an ivory relic casket 4" in diameter which was turned on the lathe and decorated with concentric circles in relief. Inside the casket was another small ivory reliquary decorated with eleven gadrooned bands.<sup>114</sup>

The most interesting piece of ivory which the 1944-45 excavations at Sirkap<sup>115</sup> yielded (Pl. 5b) is an ivory comb now in the National Museum of India and datable to the latter half of the 1st century A.D. It is elliptical in shape with a rectangular section, a slightly raised rim and with 16 projecting teeth (broken). The comb is carved on both sides. On one side appears the figure of a woman reclining. She rests her palms on a denticulated bed-spread, her head on an ovaloid pillow with beaded borders and her right elbow on a small cushion. The upper part of her body is quite bare. The natural folds of the skin are shown in the central part of the body. The hair is tied with a fillet and the knot is coiled loosely. The face is unfortunately damaged but angularity in the representation of the sharp pointed nose and chin is apparent. The elongation of the small fish-shaped right eye suggests a collyrium line. She wears a two-stringed necklace made of rectangular beads and provided with terminals, bracelets in the left forearm and heavy anklets. The *sārī*, worn round the hip, is secured to the waist with a girdle and is decorated with a series of horizontal stripes. It covers the whole of the right leg which is bent back-

<sup>112</sup> Marshall, *Taxila*, Vol. II, p. 664.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 656.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 242; Vol. III, Pls. 49 C and 50 F.

<sup>115</sup> A. Ghosh, "Taxila (Sirkap), 1944-45," *Ancient India*, No. 4 (1947-48), pp. 79-80.



wards and a part of the slightly flexed left leg. One of its ends is looped and tucked below the navel, leaving the free end dangling between the legs. At the head of the reclining lady squats a dwarfish figure with folded legs, wearing a striped loin-cloth and a necklace only a part of which is visible. His right hand is lowered, while he seems to be carrying a wine pot with a lid in the upraised left hand.

The other side of the comb is divided into four zones with three vertical lines. The left zone has the figure of a stylized pouncing lion with uplifted tail. In the second zone is represented the *Indra-yashti* or *vaijayanī* with an axe-shaped frame and foliate supports over which rests a denticulated oblong crossbar holding the flag. In the third zone appears an ambling elephant with a short bushy tail; the notches on its body probably indicate painted decoration (*bhūti*, *bhaktichitra*). There are two rosettes in the foreground. In the fourth compartment appears the auspicious *dakṣiṇāvarta* conchshell.

The lion, the elephant and the *vaijayanī* are auspicious symbols, some of which such as the latter appear in the art of Mathura and as precious possessions of a universal monarch (*chakravartin*). As regards the *dakṣiṇāvarta* or a conchshell with the lip turned right, it has been included in the list of the most precious objects in the *Divyāvadāna*.<sup>116</sup> Apparently, the female figure is a courtesan. But her association with sacred symbols equally raises the probability of her being Śrī. It is worth noting in this connection, that *Śrīśayana* or Śrī's bed was symbolical of royalty.

Regarding the style and provenance of the ivory comb Ghosh's remarks are worth quoting. He observes that "the sensuous pose and features of the lady are foreign to the contemporary art of Gandhāra. On the other hand, the petal-shaped eyes, full busts, attenuated waist and exaggerated hips are conventional features in Indian literature and in the indigenous plastic art of India. Mathura, by nature of its proximity and political and cultural contacts with the northwest, naturally suggests itself as a possible source for the comb, though it must be added that the stone female images there, for example those of the Bhutesar Yakshīs, present only a partial resemblance in the modelling of the female body, even making allowance for the difference of material and technique. A general resemblance to the Amaravati and Nagarjunikonda sculptures is also fairly pronounced, though there are differences in drapery and other details."

Ghosh, however, clearly sees a family likeness between the Sirkap comb and the Begram ivories and suggests their possible origin in the Mathura region. It may, however, be pointed out that so far Mathura itself has not yielded any ivory except for a bone fragment, nor Varanasi, the traditional home of ivory carving. The claim of Vidiśā, which in the 1st century B.C. had a guild of ivory carvers, is equally strong. The possibility of a guild of ivory carvers at Sirkap coming from Mathura and carrying on their own

<sup>116</sup> See Cowell, *Divyāvadāna*, pp. 51, 54.



tradition unaffected by the Gandhāra traditions could not be ignored. That guilds of ivory carvers did exist in the cities of the Panjab is supported by the *Milindaprasna* which mention the guild of ivory carvers at Sākala, the modern Sialkot in Western Pakistan.

Archaeological excavations and explorations in U.P. have yielded only a few ivory objects which hardly add to our knowledge of ivory carving in ancient India. Bhita near Allahabad has yielded ivory seals and seal dice<sup>117</sup> as well as fragments of a miniature ivory casket, a bobbin, an unguent bottle and fragments of a piece of furniture turned on a lathe and decorated with lotus mouldings. An upper flat piece of a casket is carved with *svastikas*, small circles and lines.<sup>118</sup>

The most significant piece of ancient ivory from eastern India comes from Bihar and is assigned by K. P. Jayaswal to the Maurya period.<sup>119</sup> This ivory relief of a soldier with the head and lower part of the legs missing (Patna Museum, No. 991;  $2" \times \frac{3}{4}"$ ) was recovered from a depth of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the *mahallā* Mahendra, Patna city. He holds a sheathed broad-sword in the right hand and a semicircular fringed shield in the left. He wears a tight-fitting coat reaching to a little below the waist. Its flaps are crossed at the chest and pleated below the waist and secured with a simple waistband. The undergarment is also pleated and shows traces of a pointed and pleated *paṭkā*, a common feature of the male costume in the Śuṅga period.

It is difficult to agree with Jayaswal's Mauryan dating but a comparison of the details of the soldier's dress with the costume of a soldier represented in the bas-reliefs of Stūpa II at Sanchi dated to the 2nd century B.C. shows close similarity. There the soldier, who is shown fighting with a lion, wears a half-sleeved coat reaching to the knees, and secured with a *kamarband*.<sup>120</sup>

A fragmentary bone female figure found from the Chaurasi mound in Mathura (Pl. 2a and b) is of great interest. The city is supposed to have been an important centre of ivory and bone carving, but except for this fragment nothing has been found at the city itself to substantiate the claim. The portion below the waist is missing and the top right part is broken. The heavy face shows close affinity with early Mathura terracottas. She wears a circular head ornament and an elaborate coiffure with a veil, traces of which can still be seen on the reverse. A significant point in the coiffure is a horn-like projection which also appears on the Pompeii ivory discussed later on. Spiral earrings, a broad collar with beaded decoration on either side, a chain hanging between the breasts and bangles are additional ornaments. The left hand, as in the Pompeii figure, is touching the earring, and as has been shown later the

<sup>117</sup> *ARASI*, 1911-12, p. 48, Pl. XVIII, figs. 2-3.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>119</sup> K. P. Jayaswal, "An Early Ivory," *JISOA*, IV (June 1936) p. 75.

<sup>120</sup> Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, New York 1955, Pl. 30.



representation appears to be of the goddess Śrī. On stylistic grounds the figure does not appear to be later than the 1st century B.C. and may be even a little earlier.

A very interesting fragmentary ivory comb is in the collection of Victoria and Albert Museum (I.M. 21-1937, Pl. 4 b). The top frame is divided into two panels. In the first panel, in a garden indicated by a plantain tree, is seated a woman with a veiled coiffure, wearing a short *sāri*, with the right leg comfortably stretched. The second panel represents an amorous couple, the somewhat damaged male figure wearing a turban and *dhoti*. His left hand encircles the female figure and in the right he holds what appears to be a cup. The woman has a round, sensuous face, an elaborate coiffure and somewhat heavily modelled haunches. She has put her hand across the shoulders of her lover and holds what appears to be a towel in the other hand. She wears earrings, a short necklace, bracelets and a broad zone. The round cover seems to be made of lotus petals. There is no doubt that the seated couple represents a *mithuna*, a common motif in early Indian art. The figures in the comb bear close stylistic resemblances to figures of similar nature in the Sanchi bas-reliefs and there is every possibility that the comb owes its origin to Malwa.

Surface pickings and archaeological excavations in the Deccan and South India also add to our meagre knowledge of the ivories of the Sātavāhana period. The pierced ivory dagger (length 2½") excavated from Sankaram in Vizagapatam District is probably a pendant ornament. The knobbed end would seem to indicate that it was sheathed. The end of the handle is trefoil.<sup>121</sup>

The excavations at Kondapur, 43 miles west-north-west of Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh) yielded some very fine terracotta figurines of the Sātavāhana period. An interesting piece of ivory work from the same site (Pl. 2c) shows an elephant with a man and woman seated on it and a woman carried in the arms of a man while another man leaning on a rod looks on. The plaque probably represents the abduction of Vāsavadattā by Udayana.<sup>122</sup>

Two figures, one in ivory and the other, apparently of bone found as surface pickings at Ter, the ancient Tagara of the *Periplus*, are of great interest for the history of ivory and bone carving in ancient India. Shri Ramalingam, a prominent citizen, has in his collection the ivory figure of a woman about 5" in height picked up locally (Pl. 3a and b). Douglas Barrett thinks its style to be somewhat dry and having much more in common with the art of Sanchi and the northwest Deccan than with the Early Phase in Andhradeśa.<sup>123</sup>

The ovaloid face, with large sunken eyes, prominent eye-brows, big nose with angular nostrils, large sensual mouth pinched in a smile, and a short chin, is disproportionately large to the rest of the body. Around the forehead runs

<sup>121</sup> *ARASI*, 1907-08, pp. 170-171, Pl. LIX, fig. 24.

<sup>122</sup> P. Sreenivasachar, *Kondapur*, Hyderabad, n.d., pp. 8-9.

<sup>123</sup> Douglas Barrett, *Ter*, Bombay 1960, p. 9.



a twisted band decorated with a rosette in the centre, and a little below it appears the *chūdāmaṇi* in the shape of a Boeotian shield. The hair is arranged in a triple plait decorated with tassels at the ends, the marks of the interplaited ribbons being quite clear. The coiffure is mounted with a floral *veṇī*, its twisted frame having radial ribs and a rosette resting on the chignon from which the plaits are shown hanging down. In the right ear is a rosette-shaped earring with a triangular attachment at the top. She is touching the earring with her right hand in which she wears bangles set off with bracelets, and an armlet, the gesture reminiscent of the Mathura bone figure. In the left ear appears a triangular earring decorated with a rosette. The lowered left hand is also decorated with an armlet and bangles. The torso is flexed, the breasts well developed and the navel cavity represented by a deep hole. The diaphanous *sārī* emphasises her nudity. Its one end is tucked behind, the pleated ends of the *paryastaka* or an overgarment are passed through the rolled up waistband showing one end free and the other hanging loose. A little below the waistband appears the beaded zone. The legs below the knees are broken. The knee caps are treated prominently.

A rather crude bone female figure (Pl. 4a), also from Ter, has not been mentioned by Barrett. I have not examined it personally but owe the information to a photograph in the office of the Director of Archives and Historical Monuments, Maharashtra. The round face is badly chipped; the eyes are big and dilated; the huge nose has prominent nostrils and the large mouth has thick lips. The hair is secured with a twisted band decorated with rosettes. In the right ear is a heavy cylindrical earring and in the left what appears to be a twig shaped ornament (*patrakunḍala*). A double stranded necklace with a central plaque adorns the neck. On both sides there are remnants of parted braids. The heavy breasts with prominent nipples are set close together, the abdomen is marked with two mounds and a deep navel cavity. The hands and legs are broken. The *sārī* is secured with a double belt to which is tucked the pleated end hanging between the legs.

Both the ivory and bone figures raise important problems of date and provenance. Barrett, as pointed out earlier, is inclined to date the ivory piece to the 1st century A.D. on the basis of the late dating of Sanchi. We are unable to agree with his suggestion that the ivory probably originated in the north-west Deccan or Malwa. He does not think that the ivory has stylistic affiliations with the Early Phase (c. 125-150 A.D.) of the art of Amaravati. Without being dogmatic on the origin of the ivory we do not see any reason why Ter or even Dhānyakaṭaka should not be considered as the place of its origin. In this connection attention may be drawn to the figure of a woman (*strīratna*), one of the accompaniments of a *chakravartin* depicted on one of the broken slabs from Jagayyapeta<sup>124</sup> in Madras Museum wearing a wimple, a *sārī* held to the waist with a looped *paṭkā* and a three-stranded zone, characteristic *vaṇṇa-kunḍalas* (square base, the spiral not visible) in both

<sup>124</sup> Ludwig Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, Vol. II, Paris, 1929, Pl. 107.



ears, torque, bangles set off with bracelets, anklets and *pājib*. It is, however, not her decor that matters but her posture that bears the closest resemblance with the Ter ivory though certain details of ornaments in both the figures are also similar. The flexed torso, the straight right and slightly flexed left legs, the right hand touching the earring and the left hand lowered down are almost the same in both figures. While they wear different kinds of earrings the bangles, set off by bracelets, are the same. The *strīratna* again appears in a *chakravartin* panel from Amaravati ascribed to the Middle Phase (c. 150-200 A.D.) by Barrett.<sup>125</sup> Here again the royal lady appears in the company of the Universal Monarch affecting almost the same pose as the Ter ivory figure with the difference that the lady here, while touching the right earring with the right hand, has crossed the left hand over her head perhaps touching the coiffure ornament, her pose reminding us of the similar pose of the female ivory figurine from Pompeii. Moreover the triangular earrings decorated with rosettes are almost the same in both figures. The bangles, set off with bracelets, are also common to both. Unfortunately the head of the lady in the *chakravartin* scene is not visible, but almost the same hairdress and *sīsphūl* worn in the hair parting appear in the fragment of a post depicting a king in his harem from the outer railing of Amaravati.<sup>126</sup> A woman seated on the floor to the left has a rosette ornament attached at the back of the coiffure and the royal lady wears a *sīsphūl* which is also worn by the ladies in another scene depicting women in a bath.<sup>127</sup> The similarity between the women at Amaravati and our ivory figure could be stretched further. For instance the hair worn in three plaits by the ivory figure from Ter is almost of the same type as the triplaited hairdress of at least two women depicted in a scene representing Siddhārtha in his harem, ascribed by Barrett to the Later Phase.<sup>128</sup> Even in the costume there is a close similarity between Amaravati and the ivory.<sup>129</sup> In this *chakravartin* scene (Middle Phase) the *chaurī*-bearer wears a *sārī* secured with a rolled up *kamarband* with its ends hanging free and the pleated ends of the *paṭkā* hanging loose on either side in the same way as in the costume of the ivory figure.

It is remarkable that the *chakravartin* motif had become a common feature in the art of Amaravati. Besides those described above there are others which require attention for the study of the Ter ivory. In one of the dome slabs from Amaravati (Middle Phase)<sup>130</sup> both the registers depict a *chakravartin*. In the upper register the royal lady has changed her stereotyped pose and stands with the right hand around the neck of her attendant and the left akimbo; her legs are crossed. In the lower register, however, she is shown seated to the right of the king with the legs lowered down but even in this posture she is touching the earring in the left ear with one hand, the other being lowered. The *chūḍāmaṇi*

<sup>125</sup> Douglas Barrett, *Sculptures from Amaravati in the British Museum*, London 1954, Pl. XVI.

<sup>126</sup> Bachhofer, *op. cit.*, Pl. 119.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>128</sup> Barrett, *op. cit.*, Pl. XII.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. XVII.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. VI.



is noticeable on the forehead. In another dome slab<sup>131</sup> she stands to the left of the *chakravartin* with the right hand touching the triangular earring while the left hand touches the coiffure at the back.

A careful study of *chakravartin* motif, to summarise, reveals the following points: 1) While at Jagayyapeta the *strīratna* appears alone, in the Amaravati reliefs she appears in most cases with one or more female attendants, perhaps indicative of her royal dignity. 2) The iconographic type set up at Jagayyapeta, viz. the lady touching her ear ornament playfully, is maintained throughout. The lowered hand, caressing the attendant, is also akimbo or taken behind the head. We have not been able to trace 'touching the earring' motif in any other figure except in the spouse of the *chakravartin*. 3) The ornaments of the *strīratna* such as *sīsphūl* and bangles set off by bracelets also become fixed from Jagayyapeta onwards.

We do not know on what stylistic grounds Barrett prefers to relate the Ter ivory to north-west Deccan and Malwa. To us it bears close affinity with the Middle Phase of the art of Amaravati. The attenuation of the lithesome body, the well rounded form emphasising the plastic quality, and deep appreciation for physical charm are characteristics common to both. It is not only in the general physical features and stance that the Ter ivory follows its prototypes from Amaravati but there are certain physical and ornamental details which align it still more closely to Amaravati sculpture. For instance the prominent knee caps in the Ter ivory closely follow similar characteristics in a royal lady from Amaravati.<sup>132</sup> We have failed to find such a close parallel to the Ter ivory in either the bas-reliefs of Karla or Sanchi.

If the close stylistic affinities between the Amaravati sculpture and Ter ivory are accepted, there can be no difficulty in believing that it was either locally made, at Ter itself, or at another important centre such as Dhānyakaṭaka, the secondary capital of the Sātavāhanas. The stylistic affinities between the Ter ivory and Amaravati sculpture is so great that we cannot imagine any ivory carver producing the work without being well acquainted with the style of Amaravati sculpture. The iconographic type of the Royal Lady of the *chakravartin* is also a common motif of Amaravati art but is unknown in Sanchi or Karla sculpture. This is, of course, not to preclude the possibility of the existence of such motif in the north-west Deccan or Malwa, though the present evidence does not support this conjecture.

As regards the date of the ivory Barrett has placed it in the 1st century A.D. in keeping with his view on the late dating of the Great Stūpa at Sanchi in the sculpture of which he sees stylistic affinities with the Ter ivory. Though we do not see any reason to change the date of Sanchi from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. there is such a close affinity with the style of the

<sup>131</sup> Barrett, *op. cit.*, Pl. XV.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. XVI.



Middle Phase of Amaravati and the Ter ivory that there is every possibility of its being dated to the middle of the 2nd century A.D. or perhaps a little earlier.

The date of the bone figure is not easy to determine, but its stiff frontal view, exaggerated eyes, and heavy facial features, closely pressed breasts, and archaic mode of costume show that it is earlier in date than the ivory; possibly it was made in the 1st century A.D. Its crude features, however, do not preclude affinities with the Amaravati style, for the Amaravati reliefs also abound with women with ugly features.

Another ivory of Indian workmanship, almost in the same pose as the Ter ivory and certain figures in the *chakravartin* panels from Amaravati described above, but earlier in date,<sup>133</sup> comes from outside India (Pl. 1a). It is 24 cms high and was dug up by Prof. Maiuri in 1938 from Pompeii where it must have come before A.D. 73 when the city was destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. It was discovered from a large house and was partly splintered, but restored to its original condition. There is a circular hole drilled through the axis of the ivory to a depth about level with the loins, evidently intended to receive a metal pin for holding a mirror or a similar object of practical utility. The *triśūla* (trident)-like mark on the bottom surface resembles the Kharoshthi letter *śi*, suggested by Prof. Maiuri as the abbreviation of *śrī*, but Prof. Vogel thinks that it is just the maker's mark.<sup>134</sup>

The voluptuous lady, her nudity emphasised through the diaphanous robe, is adorned with heavy jewelery and accompanied by two side figures. She is stepping forward with the left leg which is advanced in front of the right leg. The right hand is touching the garland falling at the back and the left hand touches the earring on the same side. The hands are covered almost to the elbows with bangles set off with heavy bracelets, reminding us of similar ornaments in the Ter ivory and the Amaravati reliefs. The earring in the left ear is interesting. It is spiral-shaped and passed through the hole in the earlobe with a rosette shaped pedestal. It is significant that this type of earring, which will be discussed later on, appears only at Bharhut, Jagayyapeta and Sanchi. The hair is parted in the middle and is decorated with a beaded circular *chūdāmaṇi*. The *veṇī* is, however, an elaborate affair. It is made of two long festoons, one consisting of intertwined lotus flowers and the other of palm leaves. After having encircled the forehead they descend over the shoulders down to the waist, forming as it were the twofold borders of a richly fringed hood adorned with a large central rosette and a sheaf of lotus flowers, so as to cover the back of the figure down to the hips and to the flat band of the girdle. A simple necklace made of three beaded strands and a central triangular

<sup>133</sup> Amadeo Maiuri, "Statuetta eburnea di Arte le Indiana a Pompei," *Le Arte, Rassegna Bimestrale dell'Arte Antiga e Moderna a cura della Direzione Generale della Antichità e Belle Arte*, Anno I, fasc. II, pp. 111-115

<sup>134</sup> J. Ph. Vogel, "Note on an Ivory Statuette from Pompei," *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology*, XIII (1940), pp. 1-5.



gem or amulet and lotus-shaped terminals hangs between the breasts, resting on a cloth roll, perhaps indicative of the *uttariya*.

The lower portion is covered with a diaphanous robe held to the waist by a flat belt and a zone made up of three strands of cylindrical and flat beads. On either side hangs the drapery of the shawl. She wears the customary heavy anklets and rows of rings which tightly enclose the ankles and lower legs.

The two female figures flanking the central figure repeat faithfully, but in a more sharpened and rigid form, the features of youth. The artist purposefully flattened and shortened the modelling so as to reduce them to the function of mere caryatids without minimising the massiveness and grandeur of the central figure. The one on the right carries in the left hand, which is raised to the shoulders, a jewel casket or a wine bottle. The other, placed symmetrically on the opposite side, carries two large pendants of spiral shape which likewise must belong to the elaborate ornamentation of the central figure, an interesting feature of which is the horn-like projection on the head which is either an ornament or perhaps the plaited hair which if not represented in this way would have been hidden by the elaborate *venī*. The horn has a ring-shaped ornament beaded and decorated with lanceolate pattern. Another probable explanation would be that it is really a horn (*śṛiṅga*)<sup>135</sup> signifying plenty. Such a horn or rhyton in bronze datable to the 1st or 2nd century A.D. and decorated with similar ornament is in the collection of the Prince of Wales Museum.

Maiuri dates the ivory to the first decade of the 1st century A.D. "In any case", he observes, "it is formally and stylistically a pure product of Indian art without any Hellenistic influence, wholly foreign from a religious point of view, to the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra."<sup>136</sup>

The physiognomy of the lady with her rather heavy, broad and full face, deep sunken eyes, wide fleshy mouth, round chin, and plump throat is marked with a happy, smiling sensuality and triumphant carnal beauty. The breasts are full and almost spherical, the flanks are arched; the legs massive and heavy with fat folds at the knees. One foot is firmly fixed in a mortice of the base.

On the strength of this frank realism Vogel controverts the view of Maiuri and sees in the figure a vigorous influence of Hellenistic art. He also does not agree with the identification of this figure with that of Lakshmi as proposed by Prof. Maiuri. He is of the opinion that the figure either represents a courtesan or a Yakshinī. He has rightly pointed out that through its fullness of form the lascivious nude comes very near to similar figures from the Bhutesar mound, yet there are several particulars for which close parallels cannot be found in Indian art. The ornaments on the arms and legs are very similar to

<sup>135</sup> See *Vishṇudharmottara*, III, 43, 15-16 where the *nidhiśṛiṅga* is enumerated as one of the auspicious symbols.

<sup>136</sup> Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 3.



the figures from the Kankali Tila and also to the caryatid figure from Deokali near Fyzabad, U.P. in the Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Banaras Hindu University. But differences are equally apparent. For instance the expression on the face does not evoke any memory from contemporary Indian sculpture. Mathura sculpture also offers some types of elaborate hairdress, but nowhere the same complicated and curious arrangements as is seen in the Pompeii figure.

The date, provenance and the identification of the Pompeii ivory have not been put beyond doubt by the discussions of Maiuri and Vogel. In connection with the problem of dating, attention may be drawn to the shape of the earrings which reminds us of the same type of earring appearing in the bas-reliefs of Bharhut. In this type the middle portion was formed of a spiral tube; the flanged end was worn outwards, and the square flowered end touched the cheek. Such an earring was placed in position by pushing outwards the flanged end through the long slit in the ear-lobe, and then two complete turns of the spiral would put the ornament in position.<sup>137</sup> The spiral type of earring survives at Sanchi as well, though less conspicuously, the place of the square flowered end being taken by a rosette,<sup>138</sup> almost of the same shape as in the ivory. Spiral-shaped earrings are seen here and there in early Mathura sculpture, but they are much simplified.<sup>139</sup> If our surmise is correct then on stylistic grounds the Pompeii ivory could be placed in the latter half of the 1st century B.C., a date nearer to that suggested by Maiuri.

V. S. Agrawala in an interesting note<sup>140</sup> identified the spiral earring of Bharhut and Sanchi with *prākāra-vapra-kunḍala* or earrings worn by Brīhannalā or Arjuna appearing in a female disguise (MB. *Virāṭa Par.*, 10.1). In his opinion *prākāra-vapra* in relation to *kunḍala* implies a comparison between the abrupt height of the rampart (*prākāra*) and the cubical front portion of the earring the rosette decoration of which simulated a band of four-petalled flowers appearing on the coping of city-walls depicted in sculpture. In the *prākāra-vapra* type, according to Agrawala, *vapra* stands for the spiral attachment and *prākāra* for the square or cubical end.

The provenance and identification of the Pompeii ivory would depend on whether we accept the reading of the Kharoshthī letter *si* appearing on the bottom as proposed by Maiuri or dismiss it as merely the maker's mark. On our part we do not see any reason why Maiuri's reading should not be accepted. That would of course mean that the letter stands in an abbreviated form for the goddess Śrī whose cult as presiding deity of beauty and abundance has been emphasised in Vedic and classical literatures of India. The appearance of Kharoshthī on the ivory would suggest that it was carved in the region where Kharoshthī was well-known, i.e. Gandhāra, though the possibility

<sup>137</sup> A. Cunningham, *Stupa of Bharhut*, London 1879, p. 35; Pl. XLIX, figs. 13, 14.

<sup>138</sup> Bachhofer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Pl. 58.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Pl. 75.

<sup>140</sup> V. S. Agrawala, "Prakāravaprakunḍala," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, XXIII (1952), pp. 19-22.



of an ivory carver knowing Kharoshthī and working in Mathura or Ujjain cannot be ruled out. It is possible that the ivory was manufactured for a foreign market where Kharoshthī was better understood than Brāhmī and hence the use of the Kharoshthī letter. It is significant to note here in this connection that, as pointed out earlier, Indian ivory carvers visited Alexandria, perhaps in search of fresh markets and to study new tastes.

Coming to the problem of the proper identification of the ivory several interesting points have to be considered. As we have pointed out earlier a favourite motif of the sculptors from Jagayyapeta to Amaravati had been the representation of the *chakravartin* or universal monarch together with the 'jewels' which had manifested themselves to him. Of particular interest to us is the *strīratna* or ideal woman whose iconographic type, i.e. touching the earring with one hand and the other hanging or taken back, had crystallised in early Indian art. The figure of *strīratna*, at least iconographically, is very closely related with the figure of Sirimādevatā at Bharhut.<sup>141</sup> The goddess, here richly dressed and ornamented, stands with her right hand almost touching the spiral earring in the right ear while the lowered left hand touches the flank. The head ornament, bracelets and anklets are almost similar to those in the Pompeii ivory.

It would perhaps be interesting to examine here the *chakravartin* motif in Buddhist literature and to establish the identity, if possible, of *strīratna* with the goddess Śrī. The Seven Treasures of a *chakravartin* listed in the *Mahāsudāsana Sutta* and the *Lakkhana Suttanta*<sup>142</sup> are the wheel (*chakka*), elephant (*hatthi*), horse (*assa*), jewel (*maṇi*), a woman (*itthi*), a steward (*gahapati*), and a minister or generalissimo (*pariṇāyaka*). The list is repeated many times in Buddhist Sanskrit literature, but the only useful information which we get about *strīratna* is from the Gilgit Texts.<sup>143</sup> She is described as beautiful, "neither too black nor too fair, neither too tall nor too short, neither too fat nor too thin. Her limbs are warm to touch in winter and cold in summer. They are as soft to the touch as a scarf from Kālīṅga (*kālīṅga-prāvāra*). The roots of her hair emanate the aroma of sandal wood and her mouth the fragrance of lotus." It is clear from the description that *strīratna* is an idealised type of woman known as Padminī in erotic literature. It is, however, not clear from Buddhist literature whether this idealised type represented just a beautiful queen or personified in itself the ancient goddess Śrī-Lakshmī, whose close association with royalty has been emphasised in Vedic and post-Vedic literature.

Some light on the divine character of *strīratna*, however, is available from Jaina literature in which the concept of *chakravartins* is also to be found.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Cunningham, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXIII.

<sup>142</sup> G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, London 1938. The list is repeated in *Mahāvastu*, Vol I, 49; *Divyāvadāna*, pp. 210 ff; *Lalitā Vistara* (Mitra edition), pp. 15 ff.

<sup>143</sup> *Gilgit Texts*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 36.

<sup>144</sup> Muni Dipavijaya (editor), *The Abhidhāna Rājendra*, Vol. III, Ratlam 1914, pp. 1049 ff. cf. *Chakravatti*.



The list contains the names of twelve *chakravartins*. Their jewels are the discus (*chakka*), umbrella (*chhatta*), shield (*chamma*), staff (*daṇḍa*), sword (*asi*), jewel (*maṇi*), *kākaṇṭhi*, commander-in-chief (*seṇāvai*), treasurer (*gahavai*), carpenter or architect (*vaḍḍhai*), priest (*purohita*), queen (*itthi*), horse (*āsa*) and elephant (*hatthi*) (*Thāṇāṅga* 7). In this list also, no further light is thrown on the personality of *itthirayaṇa*, but when we come to the names of the wives of the *chakravartīs* the mystery is clarified. The twelve *chakravartīs* are Bharata, Sagara, Maghavan, Sanat Kumāra, Śāntī, Kunthu, Ara, Subhauma, Mahāpadma, Harisheṇa, Jaya, and Brahmadata. Their wives are Subhadra, Bhadrā, Sunandā, Jayā, Vijayā, Kṛishṇāśrī, Sūryāśrī, Padmaśrī, Vasundharā, Devī, Lakshmīmatī and Kurumatī respectively. It is significant to note here that when Bharata in the course of his universal conquest proceeded to the north of Vaitāḍhya, the Vidyādhara kings offered him the woman jewel Subhadhā, one of the epithets of Śrī.<sup>145</sup> Significantly, the home of the *deva-kumārikā* Śrī according to the Buddhist text *Mahāvastu*, III, 309.9 is also in the northern quarter. The other names of the wives of *chakravartins* are also closely associated with the various appellations of Śrī-Lakshmī.

The concept of Śrī is traceable through earliest Vedic literature where it is interpreted by Sāyaṇa as riches and prosperity (*sampad*), plenty and abundance (*samṛiddhi*), wealth (*vibhūti*) and welfare. Gonda does not agree with the view of those who assume the sense of Śrī as lustre, radiance, beauty and grace.<sup>146</sup> He suggests that the primary sense of Śrī and its derivatives is material prosperity although the sense of 'ostentation of well being could also be thought of'. In some other passage Śrī means 'exhibition or display of welfare, well-being or capability'. In some other passage it suggests the meanings of splendour, beauty, glory, etc. The term also expresses the sense of the adornment of the body, the laying on of ointments, the use of ornaments, etc. which served as amulets to ward off illness and sorcery. In the *Atharvaveda* the term is connected with *bhūti*, prosperity. Śrī is also equated with cattle. It is equated in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* with clouds and with the rain (SB, 12, 4, 1, 11) and water. Śrī in a passage (SB, 8, 6, 2, 1), expresses a distinction either in kingship or chieftainship. She is also associated with seasons. By the execution of a certain rite Śrī is associated with *kshatra*, i.e. ruling power. This in later times results in such terms as *rājaśrī*, *rājyaśrī* in connection with royal position. The cushion of the royal throne is associated with Śrī. The relation between kingship and Śrī is further supported by SB, 2, 4, 4, 6 where a royal person is wedded to Śrī who is here represented as a female being.

It is also significant to note that Śrī is not only connected with Viṣṇu but also Kubera, the god of wealth and material happiness, and of all treasures. He was held to be an immanent king, and doubtless represents a fertility god, united with Riddhi, treasure, success, abundance, with Lakshmī and

<sup>145</sup> J. C. Jain, *Social Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jaina Canons*, Bombay 1947, p. 374.

<sup>146</sup> J. Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, Utrecht 1954, pp. 176, ff.



Bhadrā (the happy, prosperous or fortunate one).<sup>147</sup> He is also believed to be in possession of Śrī or mature prosperity.

The picture of Śrī drawn in the *Purāṇas* and other sources adds to our understanding. According to Mrs. Hartmann, she appears as a distinct female divinity in the *Vājasaneyī Samhitā* for the first time. She was a pre-Aryan goddess of fertility and other phenomena relative to it, whose symbol is the lotus, the plants growing in mud and slime, and whose cult, mythology and iconography show a variety of traits characteristic of the deities concerned with fertility and prosperity in general. In the *Śrīsūkta* the goddess is called 'moist' (*ārdra*) which should imply fresh, green as a plant and living, perceptible though her odour (*gandhavāra*), continuously thriving (*nityapushṭa*) and abounding in dung (*karishin*). She is said to have risen from the lotus and delights in the sound of elephants which signify thunder clouds. She is prayed for cows and food, corn and prosperity, gold and female slaves, offspring and happiness, honour and renown. She is said to dwell in mud, mire and slime. She drives away hunger, thirst, impurity, fear, indigence, misfortune and failure, and ensures life of a hundred years. She shines forth as the sun or gold and she is beautiful. She is also a guardian deity of farmers.<sup>148</sup>

Śrī and Lakshmī who in the beginning were different divinities tended to merge their personalities during the Upanishadic period. In the *Śrī Sūkta* Lakshmī is conceived as the goddess of gold and wealth and her appellation is doubtless connected with *lakshma*, mark, sign, token. After discussing the differences between *lakshmī* and *lakshman*, Gonda is of the view that Lakshmī may originally have been the divinity representing signs, evidence, prognostications (of luck and prosperity).<sup>149</sup> Like Viṣṇu himself, Śrī-Lakshmī maintains a relationship with kingship. According to the *Mahābhārata*, 12, 59, 133 ff. *śrī*, *dharma* and *artha* are said to enter a ruler who is a part of Viṣṇu. She imparts victory. She is not only connected with Viṣṇu which seems to have been at a later stage, but also with Agni Jātavedas who acted as an intermediary between the gods and the earth and heaven, but according to the epic conception was also the father of gold. She is also associated with Kubera in whose palace she stayed (MB. 2, 10, 19) and also with Dharma and Indra with whom she consorted of her own accord.

Buddhist literature, however, does not yield much information about Śrī. The *Milindapaññho*, 191 mentions the cult of Śrī Devatā and her worshippers are called *bhaktas*. In the *Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 11, the invocation of Śrī (*Siri ahvāyam*) is condemned.

A detailed examination of iconographic and literary sources should convince us that the *strīratna* of *chakravartins* embodies the conception of Śrī-Lakshmī whose connection with royalty is obvious. Another point which

<sup>147</sup> Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, p. 195.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.



requires clarification is the voluptuous beauty and rather erotic concept of the ivory figurines. This trait they share with the Yakshiñi figures from Mathura. As pointed out above Śrī-Lakshmi is the goddess of fertility and to a certain extent also of beauty. It should therefore cause no surprise that in keeping with her character as a fertility goddess her nudity should be emphasised. A very pertinent problem in this connection is the iconographic source for such lascivious figures. To our mind the courtesans employed in royal service and noted for their knowledge of *ars amoris* served as models to the artists engaged in carving the figures of the Mother Goddess. In ancient India the word courtesan did not carry the idea of social ostracism as in the present times. On the other hand they had an important place in society. In this connection the dictum of Vātsyāyana<sup>150</sup> is worth remembering: "The courtesan imbued with beauty, manners and virtues who attained fame by the knowledge of arts gave the common word *veśyā* the status of *gaṇikā* in the assembly of the people; honoured for ever by the king and the connoisseurs, she became the goal of attainment for instruction in arts and sexual science."

The few examples of stray ancient ivory pieces from India and the odd piece from Pompeii, while giving glimpses of an accomplished art are hardly sufficient to create an overall picture of the history of Indian ivory. Fortunately, the excavations carried out by J. Hackin and his colleagues from 1937-39 onward at Begram, the ancient Kapiśā, have yielded most interesting examples of Indian ivory which throw important light on the technical and decorative achievements of the ivory carvers' art in India.<sup>151</sup> During the course of the earlier excavation M. Hackin discovered in Chamber 10 plaques and bands of ivory and bone beautifully ornamented and decorated with human figures, which once formed parts of the coffrets placed on the floor of the Chamber. Besides these were also found large ivory panels representing in high relief the figures of Yakshis or river goddesses. All the ivories had suffered from the prolonged humidity of the ground, but some of them, found in the south-east of the Chamber, were remarkably well preserved. The seriously damaged Caskets II, III and IX were examined by J. Carl who reconstructed Casket II. The exterior revetments were composed of plaques and bands in bone and ivory. In certain caskets (I, II) the proportion of ivory is very small. Casket II measured h. 14 cms., l. 43 cms., w. 35 m., cavity 11 × 21 cms. It rested on overflowing rounded legs, the edges of which were secured with a copper revetment. The revetments of the upper part of the cavity was formed of decorative bands of bone of uneven dimensions. On Casket IX rested two big plaques forming the lid (Pl. 5a). The corner pieces represented by narrow and long pieces were finely carved, framing the plaques of smaller dimensions separated by miniature columns. Above the plaques decorative bands in very much deteriorated condition appeared. The bands on the lower part were equally

<sup>150</sup> *Kāmasūtra*, I, 3, 20-21.

<sup>151</sup> See J. Hackin and M. J. Hackin, *Recherches Archeologiques à Begram*, 2 vols. Paris 1939; and J. Hackin and others, *Nouvelles Recherches Archeologiques à Begram*, 2 vols., Paris 1954 for a comprehensive account. The summary given above is substantially based on the researches presented by these scholars.



well engraved and sculptured. Hackin had no doubt about the Indian origin of the casket. Unfortunately he had no ivory pieces from India for comparison and therefore he had to turn again and again to sculpture from Mathura for comparison.<sup>152</sup>

Hackin has also drawn our attention to the technique of the ornamentation of the bands and decorated plaques. The bands are almost of the thickness of two millimeters, but the decorated plaques have a thickness of 10 to 12 mm. On certain bands the decoration has been engraved with a style. The aquatic birds appear in profile holding in their beaks a twig of *asoka*; their feathers are indicated by checks and lozenges and their bellies and tails are hachured lightly. The stylised rosettes above the birds are slightly hollowed. This simple expedient is repeated in a number of plaques. The tendency to scoop leaves and petals is at times accentuated. Certain variants in this method may be seen. In some scenes with human figures the contours of the figures are shown with double lines. The variations in the technique yield the following interesting divergences: a) the undecorated zones are eliminated by scooping with the result that the decorated part comes out in light relief. The transition from simple engraving with a style to flat relief by scooping and hollowing the nondecorated zones is represented in a piece. b) The contour is lightly incised, the zone to be decorated is lightly scooped and on this surface the craftsman did the relief work resulting in 'relief in reverse'. This technique reaches its perfection in the bigger plaques. The deeply incised contour yields a shading which admirably gives the effect of modelling. The anatomical details are rendered with a great virtuosity. The composite motifs on the borders give an excellent example of this technique. In certain plaques the classical formula of a very much accentuated relief as in wood work is followed. The artist was not satisfied by chamfering this undecorated surface: he eliminated it.<sup>153</sup>

The plaques and bands show traces of painting in which red predominates; floral and animal designs on red ground are very effective. Black was used at times to accentuate the contours of the figures; the hair was also painted black and so also the pupils of the eyes. No other colour seems to have been employed.<sup>154</sup>

According to Hackin the bas-reliefs of the Eastern and Southern Gateways of the Great Stūpa at Sanchi furnish us with certain elements for comparison. Here long stalked lotuses appear in meanders. From the principal stalk appear leaves, the pods and flowers, open or closed, associated with drakes appearing singly or in pairs. This is not the case in the Begram ivories in which the meanders are more curved and the repetition of the floral and animal decoration more symmetrical. Flat relief and winged monsters are common to both. The leogryphs represented on two fragments from Casket IV recall similar

<sup>152</sup> Hackin, *Recherches Archaeologiques à Begram*, Vol. I, Paris 1939, pp. 11-12.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.



leogryphs on one of the architraves of the Western Gateway. The grouping of two addorsed monster-like leogryphs are common to both, but at Sanchi they are mounted by riders.<sup>155</sup>

The motifs of the Begram ivories, however, bear very close resemblance to the Kushāṇa art of Mathura. Fully developed sensual types of women are common to both. Like the women in the Kushāṇa art of Mathura the women depicted in the Begram ivories wear a *chūdāmaṇi* — a filletted circular medallion. Their nose is slightly curved, a feature also found at Mathura. The three Yakshīs have *makara* vehicles and are also associated with geese as at Mathura. The treatment of the hair of one of them reminds us of Hellenistic influence. Their tunics are also not Indian. The eel-legged figure of Begram and Mathura with a *makara* or a leogryph on either side is of Western Asiatic origin. Similarly the figures of flying birds or geese at times carrying twigs of the *aśoka* tree are common to both. As regards the winged monsters at Begram, while the points of contact with Sanchi and Mathura are clear, in one particular they differ from Mathura; their foreparts rest and the hind parts are lifted. This is found in one band from Begram. Here the monsters with human, *makara* or griffon faces have their bodies unduly stretched. This mannerism is rarely seen at Mathura, but is frequent at Amaravati. The elongation of zoomorphic figures is also a characteristic of Scythian art.

The *pūrṇaghaṭa* represented on one of the ivory plaques reminds us of a similar *ghaṭa* at Amaravati, showing lotuses, corymbs and leaves of *aśoka*. At Mathura and Begram the treatment of the *aśoka* tree shows a realism tempered with the decorative sense which is in opposition to the dry and schemetic treatment at Amaravati.

Though the Begram ivories are interesting from the technical view-point, the human form is more elegant at Mathura. The deeply incised lines of the contour, cutting out shading, follow the position of the spectator and their sudden variations give an illusion of the bodies being free of the surface.<sup>156</sup>

The physical types are also remarkable; the nose is short and arched, and the eyes are not so elongated. The naked body shows a purely Indian grace. Here the suppleness is not pushed to the point of contortion as at Amaravati. The anatomical details are represented with a sense of realism devoid of vulgarity. The round effect is not bloated but shows all the shades. Women are diversely clad — here in a *sārī*, there in a tunic. Those wearing tunics have their hair dressed in Greek fashion, and in the treatment of their drapery Western influences are apparent.

The borders are equally interesting. The scrolls disposed of in spirals recall a similar Roman motif in the 1st century B.C. and at Amaravati. The composite figures at intervals carrying the scrolls remind us of the Yakshas

<sup>155</sup> Hackin, *Recherches Archéologiques à Begram*, Vol. I, pp. 14-15.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.



and animals which play the same role at Sanchi, Mathura, Amaravati, etc. This was a common motif in the Kushāṇa period. But the fact should be underlined that in Casket IX the curious grylle motif, not found anywhere in India appears. The motif has two or three heads attached to a single head or a horsehead protruding from a human head. In one of the panels the motif is made up of two distinctive elements. The head is substituted by a lion or tiger head; the face to the right is very much Indianised; the elephant and *jalebha* are combined.

Hackin, quoting Blanchet, says that the grylle motif originated in Sardinia in the 3rd century B.C. It became very popular in the 2nd-3rd century A.D. and therefore the Begram ivories could not be later than the 3rd century. This is one of the reasons why Hackin places Casket IX in the 3rd or beginning of the 4th century A.D.<sup>157</sup>

According to Hackin, in spite of the accomplished technique, the style is primitive. Fixed to the surface it refused evasion and did not suggest any relief. The female types are heavy and awkward with large heads and small jambs, which do not conform to the ideal Indian conception of the human body. If, however, the human figures are heavy the bird and animal figures—fighting cocks, flying ducks, lapwings and leogryphs—show a remarkable quality of observation and a firmness of hand. There are, however, certain female figures the contour of whose body is marked by a double line. The physical type here is less massive and more graceful, which shows a departure from the accepted technique of composition.<sup>158</sup>

In the course of his studies of the Begram ivories Hackin has made reference to Mathura sculpture in the Lucknow and Mathura Museums without coming to any certain conclusions regarding their exact place of origin in India. He insisted only on their ornaments being inspired by the School of Mathura. It should, however, be noted that while the art forms represented at Begram followed closely the art tradition of India, the Buddhist art tradition of Gandhāra transported to Mathura some of its innovations. Therefore some traces of Hellenistic tradition in the Begram ivories reveal but marginal influences on purely Indian composition. It seems that in North India profane art showed resistance to foreign influences which had already made a deep impression on Gandhāran art. One may say that the Graeco-Buddhist formula depended on conditions which could not be realised in the far-off territories in India, the home of the original tradition.<sup>159</sup>

In the excavations of 1939 some large plaques (height 35 cms.) were obtained. In a plaque certain details and decoration recall to mind some ancient Indian monuments, particularly the gateways (*torāṇa*) and the elephants appearing in the zone between the bands, bearing comparison with the elephant

<sup>157</sup> Hackin, *Recherches Archéologiques à Begram*, Vol. I, p. 22.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 25.



frieze in the Lomas Rishi Cave in Gaya. The female figures appearing on the capitals are more delicate than those already described and correspond to certain figures from Mathura.

One plaque (34 b.5) reproduces a gateway recalling the gateway of Sanchi and Mathura. However, the ivories of Begram also show human types and costumes which do not appear in Indian art. The cursive trait of the carving, the employment of bright red to enhance the effect, and the strangeness of certain details give the Begram ivories an originality.<sup>160</sup>

Attention may be drawn here to the mixed type of costumes of the women in the Begram ivories. The foreign types are due possibly to the import of female slaves. The *Periplus* (49) mentions the import of singing boys and female slaves for the king's palace. Jaina literature dilates on the point further. The *Antagadasāo*<sup>161</sup> mentions the list of the foreign slaves in which appear North Africans (*Babbara*), the Greeks (*Jonīya*), the Parthians (*Palhaviya*), the Arabs, the Persians, the Scythians, etc. It is further stated that they wore the costumes of their homelands (*videsā-parimaṇḍiyāhi*), which were fashioned according to the styles of their respective countries (*sadesa-nevattha-gahiya-vesāhi*). As they could not speak the language of the country, they could understand others through the sign language only. Apparently the incursions of the foreign types in otherwise Indian scenes prove the truthfulness of the Jaina account.

Stern, after a rigorous stylistic analysis of the Begram ivories, dates them at the earliest to the last quarter of the 1st century A.D. and the latest to the second half of the 2nd century A.D., their date lying somewhere between the two extremes.<sup>162</sup>

The ivories from Begram are not only interesting from the historical viewpoint, but form a veritable treasure house for the study of various facets of Indian life in the early centuries of the Christian era so assiduously studied by Jeannine Auboyer.<sup>163</sup> After the examination of more than six hundred specimens she was struck by the fact that very few male figures appear, being confined to one or two *rājās*, a syce, some horsemen, hunters and a few mythical characters. This absence of male figures according to her is due to the interdiction of men except for the chamberlain into the palace reserved for womenfolk.

The above hypothesis is tenable as the setting of the scenes, the figures of animals and the vegetation are in accord with the descriptions of women's quarters in Sanskrit and Pāli texts. In calm and pleasant surroundings of the royal palace the women of the harem engaged themselves in toilet and adorn-

<sup>160</sup> Hackin, *Nouvelle Recherches Archeologiques à Begram*, Vol. I, pp. 12-13.

<sup>161</sup> L. D. Barnett (translator), *Antagadasāo*, London 1907, pp. 28-29; Also *Nāyādhamma Kahāo*, I, p. 20.

<sup>162</sup> J. Hackin, *Nouvelle Recherches Archeologique à Begram*, Vol. I, p. 54.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61 ff.



ment of their bodies, looking in the mirrors, combing the hair, anointing the body with unguent, applying lac-dye to the soles of their feet, and adorning their bodies with garlands and ornaments.

In Begram ivories the majority of the subjects deal with the various activities in the palace. While the female guards and doorkeepers keep watch, their mistresses are shown adorning themselves with the help of mirrors, reclining on the bed or seated in *śoka* groves. The maidservants help them in their toilet and also bring to them spice-boxes, pots of pomade, jewels, in addition to fanning them. The female musicians perform before them while attendant dwarfs flit in the background. The royal ladies are also shown enjoying delicacies in the company of attendants and their pets such as ducks, parrots and geese. They are also shown plucking at the *śoka* bough or playing at ball or swinging. The young mothers play with their children and suckle them as they walk.

The figures wear varied costumes. A king wears the usual *dhōṭī* and turban, while men of lesser social status wear sewn garments. Thus hunters and horse-men wear close-fitting double-breasted, full-sleeved coats and tight breeches while the equerries wear breeches, coats and bonnets. Women wear long striped *sāris*, jewels, headdresses embellished with pins and *śoka* twigs.

The ivories also give interesting details of architecture. The *torāṇas* have one to three architraves and are provided with door leaves and central catches, handles and knockers and pinbolts. In arched doors, the side columns have sculptured capitals assembled with stylised hoops and connected to the porches with latticed windows. The harem was a vaulted structure provided with two-storeyed pavilions and two arched doors.

The furniture consists of various kinds of stools, beds, cushions, wickerwork, brackets, tables, etc. In the vessels appear bowls, ewers, squat jars, etc.

As already remarked, Auboyer's suggestion that the Begram scenes represent a harem is plausible, though it could be argued that intimate glimpses of the life of women we get here could not be obtained by the artists unless they had access to it, which was not possible. It may thus be that for their models the artists depended on the magnificent establishments of the royal courtesans which was, if contemporary literature is to be believed, in no way inferior in pomp and show to the royal palaces. Emphasis on toilet and adornment, garden life, music and dancing also show that here we are face to face with a life of utmost luxury for which the *veśas* were famous in early centuries of the Christian era.

### III

The Gupta period in Indian art marks the culmination and sublimation of the forces which were moulding the character of sculpture, painting and minor arts in the preceding centuries. The realism and almost the pagan



sensuousness of earlier Indian art were transformed by the spiritual awareness of the Gupta artist. In the wake of this new revolution in the field of ideas the dynamic character and sensuousness of earlier art lost some of its character with the result that the bas-reliefs of the earlier period, which dramatised incidents from the past and present life of Śākyamuni, were replaced by the images of the Lord emanating spiritual glory and deep contemplative meditation. This new conception was not only confined to the figure sculpture of Buddhist hierarchy; it became more accentuated in the images of the Hindu pantheon which were clearly demarcated human realms, and assumed a godly character expressing the deep mysteries of cosmic forces through their iconographic forms and the symbols with which they were associated.

This new concept of art, however, took some time to displace the older tradition. In the wall-paintings of Ajanta and Bagh the older tendency of laying emphasis on the worldly life is apparent, and in the terracotta and stucco figures of the Gupta period one can see the struggle between the old and the new. In U.P., Bihar and Malwa terracotta figures show how a new orientation was being given to decadent Kushāṇa art. In other parts of the country, especially Taxila, Sindh and Kashmir where Gandhāra art was strongly entrenched, the Gupta impact gradually changed the art forms, though at the same time it made allowances for ancient techniques in the rendering of human figures, architecture and draperies. It is also significant that Gupta traditions travelled beyond the confines of India and gave a new impetus to the decadent Graeco-Buddhist art of Afghanistan.

In this new awakening what part the minor arts such as jewelry, wood-work, ivory carving etc. played it is difficult to say, as the material at our disposal is mainly literary which though tantalising lacks the strength of more scientific archaeological evidence. The only ivory piece hitherto known which could be tentatively ascribed to the Gupta period is a figure of Hanuman formerly in the collection of Mr. Nasli M. Heeramaneck and now in the collection of the Seattle Art Museum. The figure (ht. 7½"), half human, half monkey, is armless; the right leg is broken above the knee, the left leg at the ankles. Diagonal markings on the head, body, and legs suggest hair. The figure is nude except for a girdle of lotus leaf palmettes around the hip.<sup>164</sup>

The acquisition of four Gupta ivories by the Museum with the kind help of Mr. N. Boman-Behram of Bombay, is thus of great importance for the history of ivory carving in India. After a cursory examination it became clear that all the four pieces were carved out from the same tusk; the top portion yielded the figure of Lokanātha and the middle and bottom portions the figure of a seated Buddha with attendants. As the bottom of the ivory was not of sufficient width, the side figures of the seated Buddha were carved out of separate pieces. A striking feature of the images is their state of preservation which is almost perfect except for minor breakages and chippings,

<sup>164</sup> *The Art of Greater India*, Los Angeles 1950, p. 45, fig. 43.



most of them of recent origin. They were certainly not buried underground as this would have been apparent in the weakened structure due to the salinity and dampness of the earth. The only sensible explanation would seem to be that the ivory pieces somehow escaped the holocaust of Muslim invasion and like other important Indian Mss and bronzes found their way to a Buddhist monastery either in Nepal or Tibet from where they travelled back to India in recent times.

In the figure of the Buddha with his attendants (carved separately) (Pls. 6-9; Museum No. 58.42) the central piece is roughly rectangular in shape with tapering sides (ht. 10 cms; wdth. 7.5 cms; dpth. 2.1 cms) following the wedge-shaped contour of the tusk. Traces of chisel marks on the reverse show that a piece of the required size was hewn and sawn out from the tusk and then it was further levelled. The delicately carved scene on the obverse is laid in a cave with trefoil arched top and supported by a gadrooned pillar tapering downwards on either side, hewn from rocks that are indicated by roughly carved rectangular pellets. The slightly incurved rectangular throne with beaded frame rests on three visible legs carved as though out of the solid rock, with *pūrṇaḥaṭa*-shaped capitals resting on lotus petals pointing downwards. Under the throne appear figures of an antelope with turned head and a pair of lions also with turned heads, serving as it were as additional supports to the throne, the antelopes symbolising the Lord's sermon in Mṛigadāva (Sarnath) and the lions symbolising the Śākyasiṃha, one of the epithets of Buddha, though it is also possible that in the present context they also represent the animal kingdom assembled to hear the Buddha's sermon.

The figure of the Buddha (Pl. 6) is carved in deep relief, almost in the round, leaving the top and the sides entirely cut out, though the back is left unfinished. His *uṣhṇīṣa* touches the centre of the top arch, and the schematic curls arched on both sides of the forehead, cover the head and reach down to the ears. Originally, the *uṣhṇīṣa* and the curls were lacquered in black, traces of which have remained. The ears have the usual distended lobes. The face is ovaloid with full cheeks, pointed nose, arched eyebrows and *ūrṇā* in the centre of the forehead. The eyes are fish-shaped and half closed. The pupils are painted black; the black streak on the right eyebrow remains. The small mouth has bow-shaped full lips painted red and a fleshy chin. The neck has a triple fold. The expression on the face is of blissful meditation.

The Buddha, seated in *padmāsana* in *dhyānamudrā* wears a *saṅghāṭī* thrown over both the shoulders, the folds of which are disposed in a collar-like manner. One of its ends is held in the right hand and the folds may also be seen spread on the throne. The shoulders are broad and sloping, the chest is well modelled and the flesh of the abdomen is firm. The carving of the hands is full of nervous sensitivity, the longer fingers, and the thumb of the left hand pressing over them being extremely well done. The feet are also treated



with the same sensitiveness and their firm pressure on the thighs is realistically rendered. The pleats, rendered by a series of parallel ridges, show Gandhāran affinities.

On the top, hovering over the Buddha's head on either side is a pair of Siddhas and below them two Yakshas with grinning faces. On the extremes are two Mahārājas,<sup>165</sup> below them appear Yakshas with flower baskets and lower down appear two more Mahārājas, while at the bottom are again two Yakshas.

The gestures and expressions of the various figures are well worth noting (Pls. 8 and 9). The emaciated Siddha on the left wears a beard and moustache and his hair is tied in a top-knot. His mouth, open in amazement, has traces of red colour. In the right hand he holds what seems to be a flower. The grinning face of the Yaksha below the Siddha has broad nostrils, goggle eyes and curly hair encircled with a chaplet. The expression is of astonishment and wonder. The right hand is broken. The Mahārāja is clad in a *dhotī* and *dupaṭṭā*. His earlobes are elongated and the looped hair knot with locks falling on the shoulders is lacquered black. His right hand rests on the head of the grinning Yaksha carrying the flower tray and the left is expressive of wonder. The top knot of the Siddha on the right is barrel-shaped. The Mahārāja has the same hairdress and costume as his counterpart on the left and his right hand expresses amazement. The grinning Yaksha below holding a flower tray has a crop of curly hair.

On the left, again the Mahārāja below the grinning Yaksha wears a *dhotī*, *dupaṭṭā* and a necklace, his hairdress is elaborate and his hands are interlocked in either *dharmachakra* or *añjalimudrā* (gesture of adoration). Below him is seated a grinning Yaksha in the pose of Atlantes with his right hand resting on the ground and the left one raised over his head. The Mahārāja on the right is similar to the Mahārāja on the left except that his hands are broken. The Yaksha on the ground is also in the same position as the Yaksha on the left except that the order of his hands is reversed.

The Bodhisattva on the left (carved separately; mts. 6.4 × 25 × 1 cms) stands with his hands interlocked in *dharmachakra* or *añjalimudrā*. His body is in triple flexion (*tribhaṅga*). The left leg is very delicately raised on the toe and the right leg firmly implanted on the earth (Pl. 7a). The hairlocks, arranged in ringlets, are lacquered black and fall on the shoulders. The ovaloid face with arched eyebrows, aquiline nose and open, slightly distended lips has a noble smile. These together with the carefully modelled chest show the admirable skill of the artist.

<sup>165</sup> The Chatummahārājika, according to the Pāli texts, are inhabitants of the lowest *deva* world which derives its name from the Four Great Kings who dwell there as the guardians of the four quarters; Dhatarattha of the East, Virūhaka of the South, Virūpakkha of the West, and Vessavaṇa of the North. Their retinues consisted of Gandharvas, Kumbhāṇḍas, Nāgas and Yakshas. These kings undertook to protect the Buddha from the moment of his conception. See *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, Vol. I, p. 861.



The Bodhisattva wears a three pointed crown decorated with pearl strings, a circular earring in the left ear and a rosette shaped earring in the right ear, a necklet, the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*), armlets and bracelets. An elaborate *vanamālā* reaches the anklets. To his left, on the ground, kneels an attendant holding a flower tray and to his right stands a *chaurī*-bearer. Near the left shoulder there appears another *chaurī*-bearer. As a matter of fact this figure should have been on the left side but owing to the restricted space of the panel his position was taken higher up.

The Bodhisattva on the right (Pl. 7 b) is almost an exact replica of his counterpart on the left except that the face is fuller and is lighted up by a tight lipped smile and the positions of the *chaurī*-bearer and the tray bearer are reversed.

The artist shows great realism in the treatment of the Siddhas as is obvious from their bony figures, emaciated faces and the expression of open-mouth amazement. Though the attendant figures of Siddhas, Yakshas and Mahārājas are repeated, the artist always takes care to vary the gestures and the expression so that any effect of monotony is avoided, and each figure possesses its own individuality. The great delicacy of the carver's art is nowhere better seen than in the tiny figures of the attendant Bodhisattvas. The space at his disposal was very much restricted but it did not deter him for utilising every tiny bit of it, the minutest detail of both the chief and ancillary figures being shown with painstaking care. Of course carving in stone could never rise to such technical virtuosity combining aesthetic delight, and it is even doubtful if this was achieved in the metal images of the period. A perfect balance has been found between the material and the spiritual, plasticity and ornament. The artist's achievements are more than that of a mere skilled technician for the spirit of the Mahāyāna doctrine which sought to gain *bodhi*-hood and supreme bliss for all sentient beings is equally evident.

The ivories have acquired a deep rich brownish tint through ageing, and were originally painted or lacquered. The hair of almost all the figures was lacquered black and so were the eyebrows and the pupils of the eyes. The lips were tinged red and the draping of the Buddha as well as his throne were painted ochre red, traces of which can still be observed.

There are, however, certain points about the identification, date, and provenance of the ivories which require our attention. Unfortunately there is no comparable ivory to help us in coming to a satisfactory conclusion. The Kushāṇa ivories discussed above belong to another category, essentially mundane and secular while there is no Gupta ivory available for comparison. The only course open to us is to search for parallels in contemporary sculpture, temple architecture, terracottas and stucco figures. In the sculptures of Madhyadeśa proper which includes U.P. and Bihar, and also Malwa there are hardly any parallels, stylistic or subjective, but as soon as the Panjab and Kashmir are reached definite stylistic affinities including similarity of architectural detail begin appearing. This would indicate that the origin of the



ivories is to be sought for in the Panjab or Kashmir. At the same time the artist also shows close acquaintance with classical Gupta traditions, not watered down in the course of the long journey westward, but closely watched and studied in their homeland. Unfortunately, no ancient examples of ivory carving in the Panjab and Kashmir have been preserved and even the Begram and Taxila ivories have been ascribed to Mathura. Be that as it may, as we shall see later on, the ivories under discussion have definite Gandhāra and Kashmir affinities, and there is the lingering possibility that a master ivory carver from Madhyadeśa migrated to Kashmir in the Gupta period and evolved a distinctive style which reflected the glories of the classical and local idioms.

The iconography of the ivory is also puzzling. It is curious that the theme of the Buddha in a cave surrounded by the gods and goblins has, to my knowledge, not been depicted in Buddhist art except in the rendering of the Indasālaguhā episode according to which Indra paid a visit to Buddha while he was living in a cave near Rājagṛiha. This scene is depicted many times in Gandhāra art and in it Indra accompanied by his harpist and hosts of gods pays a visit to the Buddha who is shown seated in a cave. Though the cave is a common factor in the ivory and the stone bas-reliefs the whole composition of the former is quite different, Indra being conspicuously absent. The opening passage of the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka*,<sup>166</sup> however, would appear to identify the scene depicted in the ivory. It is related there that once the Buddha was staying on the Grīdhra-kūṭa peak at Rājagṛiha attended by monks, his eminent disciples, nuns, Bodhisattvas including Mañjuśrī as a royal prince (*kumārabhūta*) and Avalokiteśvara, virtuous men, Śakra with his retinue of gods, the four great rulers of the cardinal points (Virūdhaka, Virūpāksha, Dhṛitarāshṭra and Vaiśravaṇa), Īśvara, Maheśvara, Brahmā-sahāmpati, the Brahmakāyika gods, the Nāgas, the Kinnaras, the Gandharvas, the Asurendras, the Garuḍendras, male and female devotees, Yakshas, evil spirits, etc.

"Now at that time it was that, that the Lord, surrounded, attended, honoured, revered, venerated, worshipped by the four class of hearers, after expounding the Dharmaparyāya called 'the Great Exposition', a text of great development serving to instruct Bodhisattvas and proper to all Buddhas, sat cross-legged on the seat of the law and entered upon the meditation termed 'the station of the exposition of Infinity'; his body was motionless and his mind had reached perfect tranquility. And as soon as the Lord had entered upon this meditation there fell a rain of divine flowers ... covering the Lord and the four class of hearers....

And at that moment there issued a ray from within this circle of hair between the eyebrows of the Lord illumining the eastern quarters and things visible became manifest. The gods, demons, Nāgas, evil spirits and men on seeing the magnificence of the great miracle were struck with amazement and curiosity, and thought: let us enquire why the miracle has been produced by the Lord."

<sup>166</sup> See H. Kern and Buniyo Nanjio (editors), *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka*, St. Petersburg 1912, pp. 1. ff; and H. Kern (translator), *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka*, Oxford 1884, pp. 1-7.



A comparison of the description above with the incident represented in the ivories leaves little doubt that the artist desired to depict the introductory portion of the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka*. The sculptor, with limited space at his disposal, could not depict the entire range of beings and was forced to pick and choose and one must admit his selection was wise. The divine Mahārājas, the Siddhas and the grinning and jubilant Yakshas fill the scene, while the royal side figures can be identified with Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī or Ratnapāṇi, though in the absence of cognizances this is not certain. The introduction of the Siddhas who perform miraculous deeds seems to be an innovation of the artist as they are not mentioned in the lists of beings attending on Buddha in the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka*. The amazement of those present when a ray of light emanated from the *ūrṇā* of the Buddha is also rendered in the expression of the small figures.

There now remains the question of the date and provenance of the ivory. The architectural features, scanty as they are, provide an important and convincing piece of evidence. The trefoil arch resting on gadrooned pillars shows definite Gandhāran affinities. Early evidence for the introduction of this typical arch from Gandhāra to Kashmir is lacking. Percy Brown<sup>167</sup> has, however, drawn our attention to one particular feature which dominates the wall-surfaces of the Kashmir temples of the 8th century and later. It is a device consisting of a trefoil arch under a steep-angled pediment which seems to have been closely associated with the three-lobed niche of Buddha images from Gandhāra. In Kashmir architecture the trefoil arch is based on a corbelled system. The stones are laid in horizontal courses, each projecting beyond the one below, with a final T-shaped 'key' locking the whole at the apex. Such an arch with gadrooned columns appears at Martand,<sup>168</sup> in the temples at Bunyar<sup>169</sup> and Wangat.<sup>170</sup> It is interesting to note that in the Wangat temple the tapering gadrooned columns carry shafts which remind us of similar columns in the ivory. But apart from these architectural resemblances, stylistically the ivories are far removed from the temple sculpture of 8th century Kashmir.

Stylistically and technically the Buddha ivory bears close resemblance to the stucco figures from Jaulian, Taxila, assigned by Sir John Marshall to the 5th century A.D. A. Foucher has noticed that a large number of stucco heads from Jaulian bore unmistakable traces of painting. Often the lips are painted red and the hair black; sometimes the pupils of the eyes, of the Buddha's *ūrṇā*, and in the case of demons the beard are painted black. At times a coat of red was applied for gilding.<sup>171</sup> It is interesting to note that the ivory carving of the Buddha figure adopted the same technique

<sup>167</sup> Percy Brown, "The Architecture of Kashmir," *Marg*, Vol. VIII (March 1955), pp. 40 ff.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45, top figure.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48, bottom figure.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50, top figure.

<sup>171</sup> A. Foucher, *The Stupas and Monasteries at Jaulian*, Calcutta 1921, p. 24.



for painting the hair, the pupils of the eyes and lips. The typical drapery and posture may be compared to that of a Jaulian Buddha seated in *dhyāna-mudrā* whose monastic robe covers both the shoulders upto the neck in a very graceful fashion and which also at times covers the pedestal in graceful folds.<sup>172</sup> Our ivory, however, shows an originality of conception while the latter bears unmistakable traces of being cast in a mechanical mould.

At Jaulian the Yakshas are distinguished by their realistic or caricatural ugliness.<sup>173</sup> To quote Foucher, "All the fancy and humour which still prevailed in the minds and figures of Taxila modellers have evidently found their opportunity in the execution of these miniature figures. By the side of the conventional serenity of the Buddhas and the stereotyped smiles of their gorgeous attendants, the mass of subordinate genii opens a kind of safety valve for all the caprices of artistic imagination. From this point of view we could readily compare these Atlantes to the gargoyles of our cathedrals : they not only share with them their grimaces and contortions, but even (a very exceptional feature on a Buddhist monument) their sly or openly mocking indecency. To be sure, the notion and feeling of the grotesque is not an altogether new departure in this school; from the very beginning, as we know, the artists had found matter for it in the unavoidable representations of the direct prototypes of our Yakshas, viz., the demons of Māra's army. But there they still kept serious while depicting the most fanciful forms of hideousness; here, it is evident they are frankly revelling in the making of caricatures. A small head, a swollen forehead, a frowning brow, round protruding eyes, a flat or crooked nose, pursed lips protruding like a snout, such are their usual processes of disfigurement."<sup>174</sup>

The merry Yakshas in the Buddha ivory share many features with the Jaulian Yakshas, but their merriment is not a caricature of the serene Buddha and his attendants but due to the unfolding of a new vision. The Yakshas in the ivory are of a snub-nosed type. The Atlantes seated on the floor bear resemblance with Pl. XXII of Foucher's work. The snub-nosed, goggle-eyed Yaksha of Jaulian who has lips distorted in a crooked smile as in Pl. XXIII, g, bears close resemblance with other Yakshas of the ivory.

It is remarkable that the mixed Gupta-Gandhāran technique had travelled as far as Afghanistan. The clay modellings excavated from Fondukistan, 117 miles north-west of Kabul, show how the Gupta elements had reached Afghanistan and rescued its degenerate art tradition. For instance a seated divinity<sup>175</sup> by the subtleness of attitude, the grace and elegance of its form, recalls the post-Gupta antecedent. The very large eyes with the pronounced exophthalmy, and the pupils surrounded with black, give the whole work

<sup>172</sup> Foucher, *The Stupas and Monasteries at Jaulian*, p. 26.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls. XXII, XXIII.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>175</sup> J. Hackin, "Buddhist Monastery of Fondukistan," *Journal of the Greater India Society*, VII, 1940, pp. 12-13, figs. 15-16.



a surprising appearance of life. The highly raised and very divergent eyebrows are also black; the nose large and slightly flattened.

It is also remarkable that the Fondukistan figure shares certain physical features with the Buddha ivory. The highly raised eyebrows, the careful modelling of the torso and above all the sensitive and elegant treatment of the fingers and toes show a common heritage.

A distant relationship exists between the Buddha ivory and the terracotta heads from Ushkur in Kashmir proper and Akhnur in Jammu. Dayaram Sahni and Ramchand Kak dated the Ushkur terracotta heads to the late Kushāṇa period, but Charles Fabri is of the opinion that they should be dated to the period of Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa (699-736).<sup>176</sup> After pointing out their relationship with the latest phase of the stucco sculpture from Taxila he suggests that when the demand for such sculpture fell in the plains the artists, hearing the news of the building of a *vihāra* at Ushkur in Lalitāditya's time, migrated there. It is, however, not clear from the statement what the artists were doing for practically two hundred years in the plains before they migrated to Kashmir.

The style had also migrated to Akhnur, 19 miles from Jammu city. In Akhnur terracottas the Graeco-Roman element is largely absent. 'The terracottas show infinite variety, the search for novel effects, the love of the unusual, spectacular inventiveness, coupled with a wealth of ornament and elaboration....'<sup>177</sup> In keeping with Gupta tradition—and we see no reason to place the Ushkur and Akhnur terracottas beyond the first half of the 6th century—the Gupta-Gandhāra complex is evident in the style. From the point of the Buddha ivory a Buddha head from Akhnur<sup>178</sup> has certain similarities. The arrangement of the curly hair, the smiling mouth, the pointed nose and the mouth bear a certain family resemblance, though the head of the Buddha ivory is more elongated, the eyebrows more deeply curved and the modelling of much superior quality. Similarly there is a close family resemblance between the bearded head of a Siddha or a Jaṭila<sup>179</sup> and the figure of an emaciated ascetic from Akhnur<sup>180</sup> with the figures of the Siddhas in the Buddha ivory, but here again the realistic representation of the Siddhas in the ivory is superior.

The costumes and ornaments of the Bodhisattvas in the ivory, however, is typically Indian. Their three-pointed tiaras and the mode of wearing *dhotīs* remind us of similar articles of costume in Gupta sculpture and Ajanta painting.

<sup>176</sup> Charles Fabri, "Akhnur Terracottas," *Marg*, Vol. VII, pp. 53 ff.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55, fig. 11.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61, fig. 12.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62, fig. 17.



The ivory figure of Avalokiteśvara, in his Lokanātha form (Museum No. 58.41; ht. 14.4 cms), carved almost in the round from the tip of the tusk, reveals almost the classical Gupta form (Pl. 10b). The top portion of the tusk was cut and hewn in such a manner that its concavity was maintained. The carver left the reverse polished but unfinished. The ageing has imparted a rich brown tint to the ivory. The figure is in *tribhaṅga* pose. The hair, lacquered black, is arranged in a mitre-shaped crown with stylised locks in ringlets falling over the shoulders. In the centre of the crown appears the seated image of Amitābha with legs crossed in *dhyānamudrā*. The full ovaloid face of the Bodhisattva is unfortunately damaged, but the fish-like eyes, the small bowshaped lips slightly distended in a smile, and the firm, well modelled chin point to the high plastic quality. The eyebrows and other details of eyes were also accentuated with black. Traces of red have also survived on the lips. There were earrings in the distended earlobes which have now chipped off. The neck is marked with the conventional triple line and the broad chest is well-modelled. The left hand with open palm, the fingers of which are damaged, is bent on the chest and holds an open lotus with long sinuous stalk. The right hand is stretched in *varadamudrā*, the long fingers being very sensitively carved. He steps forward with the left leg which is chipped on the thigh, while the right foot is firmly planted on the lunate-shaped pedestal carved in the shape of a double-lotus from which most of the petals have disappeared. A lunateshaped protrusion on the reverse served as a tenon to hold the figure to the stand.

To the left kneels a devotee with folded hands (Pl. 10c), wearing a three-pointed crown, earrings, a necklace, bracelets, *dupaṭṭā* and *dhotī*. The standing figure on the right with folded hands seems to be an acolyte. His hair is arranged at the back in a triangular projection; the earlobes are distended and he wears a *dhotī* with a pleated end in front and a *chādar* passed across the chest. He does not wear ornaments.

Lokanātha wears rich ornaments and dress. The *dhotī*, indicated by a series of transversal lines on the right leg, has a pleated end falling between the legs; its upper end is tucked to the waist and spreads out fan-wise and the lower end touches the pedestal. It is secured to the waist with a beaded girdle and a twisted *kamarband*, the free ends of which are seen flaring out. Two small necklaces, one made of pearls and the other made of a series of triangular plaques and the central tiger-claw indicating the youthfulness of the Bodhisattva adorn the neck. A third pearl necklace starts from the left shoulder and finishes at the right end of the waist; perhaps it could not be continued beyond for technical reasons. An elaborate *vanamālā* almost reaches the ankles. The armlets are made of looped strands of pearls; the bracelets are beaded.

There can be little doubt that the ivory, on stylistic grounds, is the work of the same artist who carved the figure of the Buddha with attendants described above (cf. Pl. 10b and 10e). There is such close affinity of style and expression, so as to leave little doubt about their common origin. Apparently,



some patron commissioned the artist to carve a few scenes from a popular subject which in our opinion was the opening chapter of the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka* in which the assembly of gods, demigods, Bodhisattvas, etc., witnessed the Buddha performing a miracle. In that assembly one of the principal figures was Avalokiteśvara who has been represented separately from the tip of the tusk, while its thickest part was reserved for carving the main scene. There are no means of ascertaining whether other pieces were carved from the same ivory.

It is said that Avalokiteśvara emanated from the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha and his Śakti Pāṇḍarā. He is supposed to rule between the disappearance of Śākyasiṃha and the advent of Maitreya. It is said that he refused salvation until all created beings had obtained spiritual knowledge. He had at least fifteen forms, the number stretching to 108 in Nepal in later times. He wears the image of Amitābha, his spiritual father, on the crown.<sup>181</sup> In the illustrated Mss of the 11th and 12th century A.D. he is always named Lokanātha Lokeśvara.

Avalokiteśvara is said to give protection to his devotees from fire, from strong currents of a river, from shipwreck and the losses incurred in its wake, from capital punishment, from goblins and giants. Manacles, chains and fetters snap if he is invoked. He protects caravans from knaves, enemies and robbers. He frees people from passion, hatred and infatuation and grants progeny to women. He is also said to rescue people from hell, lightning, wild beasts, snakes, etc.<sup>182</sup>

It is remarkable that certain details of the costume and ornaments of Avalokiteśvara tally with similar descriptions in the *Harshacharita*.<sup>183</sup> Dadhīcha is said to have worn a small, green loin-cloth tightly tied to the waist (*nibīdanipīḍita*). In front, a little below the navel, its upper edge was tucked to the waist and the lower end was free (*iśhadadhonābhinihitakakṣa-kamanīya*). When turning the body a part of the right thigh was exposed. The tail end of this garment after being tucked behind had a portion sticking up. In the *Kādambarī* as well the dangling of the free end of the *dhotī* is mentioned (*kakshyābandhātirikta-preṅkhatpallavamadharavāsasā*).<sup>184</sup> Elsewhere Bāṇa mentions two articles in Harsha's costume — *adharavāsa* and *uttariya*. The lower garment was made of very fine material sticking to the posterior. Above it appeared the twisted *kamarband* made of *netra* silk and the zone.<sup>185</sup> The tiger claw set in gold was used as a talisman by children and young people (*hātakabaddha-vikaṭavyāghranakhapaṅktimaṇḍitagrīvake*).<sup>186</sup>

<sup>181</sup> B. Bhattacharya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Calcutta 1958, p. 125.

<sup>182</sup> *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka*, pp. 406-415.

<sup>183</sup> Agrawala, *Harshacharita*, p. 21, fig. 14.

<sup>184</sup> Agrawala, *Kādambarī*, p. 176.

<sup>185</sup> Agrawala, *Harshacharita*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>186</sup> Agrawala, *Kādambarī*, p. 68.



We have suggested above that the Prince of Wales Museum Buddha and Lokanātha probably belonged to Kashmir. That medieval Kashmir seems to have been a centre of ivory carving is further supported by an ivory figure purchased by Tucci from Masi-nan in Western Tibet.<sup>187</sup> The figure is in a slightly *tribhaṅga* pose. The full squarish face is lit up with a noble smile. Large half closed eyes with deeply curved eyebrows, straight prominent nose, short chin and the very squat neck marked with triple line are other features of the face. The well modelled chest is broad, the navel deep and the legs show the curvature of flesh and are in the same position as in the ivory figure of Lokanātha. The hands are unfortunately missing and so also the symbols they held. The diadem which covered the head and probably carried the figure of the Dhyāni Buddha is missing. Traces of colour on the body, the hair and the eyes are quite evident. The Bodhisattva wears rosette shaped earrings, a short beaded necklace, armlets and *vanamālā* reaching below the knees. The *dhotī* does not completely cover the legs, but goes round the chest being longer on the right than on the left. The front is creased and from the waist protrudes a triangular pleated end.

Tucci identifies the figure as that of Avalokiteśvara or probably Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara. In that case his right hand should have been in *abhaya mudrā* and the left should have held a lotus stalk. There is no doubt that the piece is of Indian workmanship though Tucci has not suggested its place of origin, although he has pointed out its close affinity with Pāla bronzes. The figure, however, bears even closer resemblances to Kashmiri sculptures of the 9th century. Moreover stylistically it is related to the Lokanātha figure in the Prince of Wales Museum, though much later in date.

Ivory figures were apparently very rare in Western Tibet. The only other piece seen by Tucci was preserved in the chapel of Rildigang. "The Tibetans must have particularly prized these ivory images on account of the material so uncommon in the country, and in fact, in the biography of Rin C'en bzin po, as I noted elsewhere, it is recorded as a fact worthy of being handed over to posterity that the apostle brought back to his native place an ivory image of the compassionate one, viz., Avalokiteśvara. This example might well have been followed by one of the pupils and the precious image brought from the sacred land into the country of snow was deposited in one of the new temples that the Kings of Guge erected as a token of devotion to Buddhism."

Another ivory figurine (ht.  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", w.  $1\frac{3}{8}$ ", d.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ") which deals with profane matter and which was supposed to have been of Khotanese origin by Sir Aurel Stein<sup>188</sup> has been recently assigned by J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw<sup>189</sup> to Kashmir and dated to the post-Gupta or even the early medieval

<sup>187</sup> G. Tucci, "Indian Paintings in Western Tibetan Temples," *Artibus Asiae*, VII (1937) pp. 202-203, fig. 15.

<sup>188</sup> *Ancient Khotan*, Vol. I, pp. 209, 222, Kh. 008; Vol. II, Pl. XLVIII, Kh. 008.

<sup>189</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 196.



period. This fragment, carved in the round, represents a beardless male figure with short hair. He wears earrings and a necklace and is dressed in a long tunic with long tight sleeves and secured to the waist with a girdle. His left arm is around the shoulders of a small female figure and his right is placed, palm upwards, on her breast. The head is turned slightly to the left facing the beloved who also wears a long tunic and a short cloak at the back which is either furled or embroidered round the edges. Her right hand is placed behind the left shoulder of the man and his hanging left hand carries a small wreath. The lower extremities of the male figure are broken, so also the right leg, head and left arm and shoulders of his companion. Apparently the pair represents a *mithuna*, a common motif in Indian art.

Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw's opinion that the ivory is of post-Gupta age however may be questioned. As far as I am aware the ivory could hardly find a parallel in the sculptured reliefs and terracotta reliefs of the post-Gupta period. If Kashmir is accepted to be the place of its origin then only the sculptured tiles of Harwan and terracottas from Ushkur and Akhnur afford scope for comparison and it has yet to be proved that the material recovered from the above places is far removed from the Gupta culture-complex.

#### IV

How the art of ivory carving fared in medieval India between the 7th and the 13th centuries is known from a number of ivories from different parts of India, mostly in the collections of the foreign museums. It is remarkable that these pieces, while maintaining the glorious tradition of craftsmanship, lapse into the general decorative trend of medieval sculpture, and except for the ivory throne legs from Orissa and a few other objects of really fine workmanship they fail to evoke the aesthetic response of the earlier ivories. This may be due to the general trend of medieval temple-sculpture, which becomes increasingly stereotyped with the result that while iconographical distinctions are strictly adhered to individual expression, except in the hands of master artists, is strictly limited. That the art of ivory carving in medieval India did not receive the same attention as in ancient India is further supported by a lack of references to ivory carving in contemporary literature. It is possible that the art of ivory carving was no longer conceived as an individual means of artistic expression but was relegated to the category of handicrafts. The real position of ivory carving in the medieval period, however, is at best but a surmise and at some future date new discoveries may prove that after all ivory carving was not a neglected art in medieval India.

A group of medieval Indian ivories from Brahmanabad<sup>190</sup> in Sindh attract our attention not so much by their artistic or technical merits, but by their number. In 1854-56 A.F. Bellasis carried out limited excavations among the mounds of Bambhra Ka Thul, 43 miles from Hyderabad, Sind, which

<sup>190</sup> Douglas Barrett, "A Group of Medieval Indian Ivories," *Oriental Art* (New Series), I (1955), pp. 47-51.



is identified with the ancient Hindu town of Brahmanabad, and as proved later on by Cousens, was overlaid by an Islamic settlement identified as Mansura, founded in the second quarter of the 8th century. When Masūdi visited India in A.D. 915-16 Mansura, the capital of one of the two ruling Arab dynasties, governed the territory now occupied by modern Sind in western Pakistan. The Arab rulers were held in check from further expansion by the Gurjara Pratihāras in the 9th and 10th centuries. In A.D. 1025 Mahmūd of Ghazna occupied Mansura. Later on the lower Sind became independent under the Rajput dynasty of the Sumras whose rule continued till the 14th century.

The Islamic capitals in Sind from the 8th to the 11th century became the carriers of Indian commerce to the Arab world. The trade relations with the outside world are indicated by the find of the fragments of Islamic and Chinese pottery from a house in the market. Another house in the same market yielded to Bellasis some ivories which he called chessmen, but which Cousens identified more convincingly as balusters. From the manner in which they were found all close together Cousens concluded that they were portions of a richly carved ivory box, some of which appeared to be injured by fire. Further examination of the ivories by Barrett leaves no doubt that they formed parts of a box or boxes. Several fragments have a dowel at the top or bottom; those with a curved ridge at top and bottom formed the ends of the box.

An analysis of the motifs reveals that the representation of female figures holding mirrors, a lotus, a garland or some indistinguishable objects predominate. Such figures are very common in medieval temple sculpture from Orissa to Rajasthan and also in the Deccan. Male figures are few. Elephant and *gajavirālī* are motifs which again are commonly found in Orissa and Central India.

That the motifs cover a very wide area and also a span of several centuries renders the task of assigning the date and provenance to the ivories not an easy one. Barrett, however, assigns them to the 'artistic' provenance of Central India including Kanauj, Bundelkhand, Madhya Pradesh and eastern Rajasthan. On stylistic grounds such as angular facial type with heavy arching brows, cleft chin and certain details of ornaments he places the ivories in the 10th century.<sup>191</sup> In our opinion, however, the very angularity of the female type shows that the ivories do not belong to the Gurjara Pratihāra tradition, with its predilection for rounder forms but to the Chandela-Paramāra tradition of the 11th century in which angularity becomes a prominent feature.

Another object, important for the history of medieval Indian ivory carving is a Pāla ivory stūpa<sup>192</sup> in the Scattle Museum, U.S.A. It is archi-

<sup>191</sup> Barrett, "A Group of Medieval Indian Ivories," *Oriental Art*, (New Series) I (1955), p. 50.

<sup>192</sup> Sherman Lee, "An Early Pala Ivory," *JISOA*, XVII (1949), pp. 1-5, Pls. I-II.



tecturally conceived, consisting of a three-tiered *stūpa* with a modified cruciform cross-section. The top is flat with a square-cut hole indicating the existence of a missing part. The piece, complete with columns, canopies, thrones and niches, is adorned with fifty-six figures, sixteen of them in animal form, the rest being gods from the Mahāyāna pantheon.

In the first tier or zone appear three Buddha figures, the central figure being distinguished by a rectangular throne and a circular halo. The second zone has three images wearing ornaments on each side. The central male figures are much larger and seated on projecting thrones with fly-whisk bearers. The third zone has three units: the corners supported by pot-bellied Yakshas; the centres with throne bases, lion thrones with two small dwarfs, and lotus thrones with dancing dwarf supports, with two small lions above, the space between the centre and corner being deeply recessed, each containing an elephant head represented frontally. The zones are separated with beaded borders decorated with the characteristic ornament of halo and throne. Of the two columns, one is plain and the other gadrooned. The four principal Bodhisattvas hold a lotus flower in the left hand.<sup>193</sup>

The colour of the ivory varies from a rich deep brown to cream-white. The surface is covered with vertical cracks. The faces are worn out.

Regarding the identification of the small Buddhas, Sherman Lee suggests two possibilities: they either represent the seven Mānushī Buddhas with Maitreya or the Eight Scenes from the life of Śākyamuni, his particular preference being the latter possibility.

In the second zone are represented Viśvapāṇi, Tārā, Avalokiteśvara, Hayagrīva, Sarasvatī, Vajrapāṇi, and Vajradhara or Mañjuśrī.

The lowest zone represents the carnal or the material world supported by Yakshas in grotesque form. "In style as well each of the zones obeys its law of being. In the lowest zone, the dancing figures writhe, the lions snarl; in the middle, the Bodhisattvas bind gracefully and compassionately; while above, the Buddhas display the hieratic and formal images. We have a marvellous parallel to such an edifice in Borobudur in Java. Our ivory is a true microcosm, a world *maṇḍala* in miniature."<sup>194</sup>

Sherman Lee also suggests that the top platform, on the analogy of the Borobudur *stūpa*, was probably occupied by the supreme Buddha Vairocana. As regards the provenance of the ivory he suggests, with justification, Bengal, though the claims of Bihar and Orissa could as well be considered. He suggests the following Pāla features of the ivory and assigns it to the 9th or 10th century A.D.: the elephant heads with lowered trunks are typical of Pāla art; the *padmāsana* posture with the legs not above one another, but side by side are as

<sup>193</sup> Sherman Lee, "An Early Pala Ivory," *JISOA*, XVII (1949), pp. 1-2.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.





in early Pāla bronzes; the square thrones with simply beaded borders avoid the later extravagance of Sena ornamentation.

Another interesting medieval Indian ivory is the so-called Charlemagne chessman in Cabinet des Medailles. Till recently it was taken for granted that the ivory belonged to the collection of Charlemagne and could, therefore, be dated to c. 800 A.D. or earlier. Ajit Ghose<sup>195</sup> and Sherman Lee subscribed to this view. Barrett, however, after examining the oldest inventory of the Treasure of St. Denis has come to the conclusion that in entry 102, obviously the elephant ivory, no mention is made of Charlemagne or of the piece having been a part of a complete chess set, or indeed of its being a chessman. It is presumably due to the confusion of entry 101, which mentions a complete set of ivory chessmen of which sixteen have survived, with entry 102 by some 17th century writers that the misconception has risen.<sup>196</sup>

The Arabic inscription on the base of the ivory is read as *min 'amal Yūsuf al-Bahilī*; Migeon reads and translates it as 'the work of Yūsuf in Nihilī', while the informant of Ajit Ghose read it as *min amal, nu. . . al Ahilī*, Ahili being identified with Aihole in Bijapur District, Mysore State, by him. But as Barrett has correctly observed the *nisba* may be read in several ways, none of them illuminating. As a matter of fact, the purpose of an Arabic inscription on a purely Indian piece is also far from clear. It is difficult to say whether some Arab ivory-carver working in Indian style put his name on the ivory or whether its Arab owner got his name inscribed there. The inscription on stylistic ground has been dated later than the 9th century.

The object shows a king seated on a semi-circular, crenellated howdah, the exterior of which is carved with the figures of eight soldiers under arches carrying straight swords and circular shields. They wear tight-fitting shorts. The king whose face is very realistically carved wears a flat turban of *Dillivāla* type or a scarf and a necklet, armlets, bracelets and anklets. The elephant, which is heavily armoured, has caught a cavalryman in its trunk and the elephant-driver has just fallen off from his perch either by the jolt or has slipped off his seat to rescue the rider from peril. There are two other riders on either side. One of these, on the right side of the king, carries a slightly curved sword and a circular shield, and the other carries a battle-axe and a straight-sheathed sword attached to a strap. The soldiers on the left of the king carry naked swords and circular shields. They wear peaked caps decorated with medallions which may well be helmets. The base is decorated with a double row of beading.

The date assigned to the ivory, c. 800 A.D. or earlier, has been questioned by Barrett on the strength of the four-cornered headdress worn by the soldiers, and their round shields and curved swords which also appear in Western Indian miniatures of the second half of the 15th century. He considers the

<sup>195</sup> Ajit Ghose, "Some Old Indian Ivories," *Rupam*, No. 32 (1927), pp. 123-124, Pls. A-D.

<sup>196</sup> Barrett, "A Group of Medieval Indian Ivories," p. 51.



ivory elephant 'as a unique document of the kingdom of Gujarat during the 15th century A.D.'<sup>197</sup>

There are many difficulties, however, both literary and archaeological, in accepting Barrett's view concerning the date and provenance of the ivory. It should be obvious to those who are well acquainted with the 15th century bronzes and sculptures of Gujarat that the ivory shares no feature in common with them. The squarish face, the angularity of treatment, rather stunted body, the large elongated eyes and indifferent modelling which are characteristics of the plastic art of Gujarat of this period do not appear in the vigorous composition of the ivory which belongs altogether to a different tradition. One of the arguments for Barrett's late dating is the rather superficial resemblance between the caps worn by the Sāhī chiefs of the *kulāh chāhar Turkī* type with the peaked caps of the riders in the ivory, which imitate the *karaṇḍamukūṭa* in South Indian sculpture, and are not rare even in Ajanta paintings. There are ample literary evidences to prove that caps of this kind were worn both in the North and the Deccan. For instance, according to Kshemendra (11th century A.D.) the Niyogī wore a cap made of tiny strips and was peaked (*susūkshmadalavinyāsa-vibhagonnataṭippikam*).<sup>198</sup> Pushpadanta, a versatile Jaina author of the 10th century from the Deccan, speaks of a variegated *ṭopī* which covered both ears.<sup>199</sup> Barrett also says that the circular shields point to the late date of the ivory, but surely this is not correct. Circular shields are found much earlier as for example in the Durgā relief of the Kailāsanāth cave (8th century A.D.), Ellora,<sup>200</sup> and the representation of Mahishāsūramardini in Cave XXI (Rameśvara) at Ellora.<sup>201</sup> In the famous Mahishāsūramardini scene from Mahabalipuram there is more than one representation of the round shield.<sup>202</sup> Similarly, the curved sword which has been taken into consideration for a late dating of the ivory appears much earlier as in a painting in Cave XVII at Ajanta<sup>203</sup> and also at Mahabalipuram. That round shields were popular in the 7th century is also evident from a reference in the *Harshacharita*<sup>204</sup> which says that the feudal chiefs accompanying Harsha carried circular shields (*charamaṇḍala*) made of dappled skin.

It will thus be seen that there is no feature in the ivory which could relegate it to the 15th century, and a date of c. 800 A.D. or a little later cannot be yet ruled out. Stylistically the ivory has certain Deccani features specially in the representation of the caps. It is a well-known fact that the Rāshtrakūṭas patronised the Arabs, and it is possible that one of the Arab visitors to the

<sup>197</sup> Barrett, "A Group of Medieval Indian Ivories," p. 51.

<sup>198</sup> *Narmamālā*, I, 47, *tuppika*, I, 110.

<sup>199</sup> P. L. Vaidya, (editor), *Jasaharachaviu*, Poona 1931, I, 6, 4.

<sup>200</sup> Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, Pl. 210.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 234.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 284.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 172.

<sup>204</sup> Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 156.



Rāshtrakūṭa domain got this ivory in his possession, which might also perhaps explain the presence of the Arabic inscription.

The ivory figure of a danseuse in the Prince of Wales Museum (No. 59.16; ht. approx 10 cms.) is a fine example of 12th century Chālukya work (Pl. 11 b), in which the artist has caught the vigorous movement of the dance. The dancer's head is bending to the right; her right hand, unfortunately broken, was raised in the *gajahasta* pose, and the left hand holds delicately the sling which passed round the left ankle carrying a musical instrument which is now broken. The lean, ovaloid face has arched eyebrows; two lines below each eyebrow indicate a painted decoration. The eyes are fish-shaped, the pointed nose has broad nostrils, the thick lips are dilated and the sharp chin is well moulded. The neck has a conventional triple line. The torso is narrow and the well-developed breasts with straight nipples fit perfectly in the scheme of tenuous plasticity. The well-modelled legs and flexed torso pulsate with the rhythm of the dance.

The hair hanging in curly locks, schematically treated, is secured to the forehead with a jewelled tiara made up of square plaques and pendants surmounted with an open lotus-like projection in two tiers. Two pearl necklaces hang between the breasts. A *vanamālā* made of rosette plaques, hanging down the right knee, passes under the left thigh and then disappears. The *sārī*, almost reaching the ankles, is secured to the waist with a girdle decorated with the central loop of a pearl string tasselled at both ends. From the centre of the girdle falls the *paṭkā* in palmate-shaped folds secured to the base with a cylindrical projection. On her left hand she wears armlets and bracelets and finger rings. Anklets adorn the feet. The stiff folds of the *uttariya* with palmate-shaped ends fall on either side. The rectangular base cut at both ends is in the form of a lotus. The reverse is roughly finished. The deep brown shade of the ivory shows signs of ageing.

The best examples of late medieval ivory, however, come from Orissa. With the advent of Muslim rule in India, ivory carving naturally took a different turn to satisfy a new taste, but in Orissa, old traditions, with certain changes, persisted till the 17th century.

An early Orissan ivory carving of an elephant-faced creature with the body of a rampant lion, probably a throne leg, has been loaned to the Philadelphia Museum by Mrs. John B. Stetson Jr., and published by Stella Kramrisch.<sup>205</sup> A similar leg is in the Freer Gallery, Washington (Pl. 15 b), and has been also published by Kramrisch and J. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw.<sup>206</sup>

The Freer ivory throne-leg is nearly of the same size,  $13\frac{3}{4} \times 6.3/16 \times 5.3/16$  as against the Stetson ivory which measures  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 5.1/8 \times 5.1/8$  inches. The

<sup>205</sup> Stella Kramrisch, "Early Indian Ivory Carving," *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, LIV (No. 261, Spring 1959), pp. 56-66.

<sup>206</sup> J.E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "Indian Ivories with Special Reference to a Medieval Throne Leg from Orissa," *Arts Asiatique*, VI (1959), pp. 195-217, Fig. 3.



theme is the same but the Freer ivory is richer in details. The mountain scenery includes a monkey leaping towards a tree, and teems with animals moving in and outside the caves. Elephants, an heraldic lion, antelopes, rhinoceros(?), a giant lizard and many other wild animals appear. Four hunters can be seen, two of them being bowmen, one of them shooting an arrow from his large bow. He wears a loin cloth, a sash round the chest, a belt, a long bead-necklace and a hairdress with flaps. The second archer, wearing a mushroom-shaped hat is also shooting at an invisible prey. The third hunter, his face surmounted by a hood appears behind the crest and the belly of the Gajaviralī. Lower down in the mountain is a cave in which squats a hermit.

In the Stetson ivory we see the Gajaviralī seizing the left leg of a demon in its trunk while the claws of the forelegs dig deep into his thigh. Suspended upside down the demon brandishes a dagger, while his small round shield is clutched by the right forepaw of the Gajaviralī. The creature rears above foliated mountain crags with vegetation in the crevices. The caves are inhabited by boars, and a horned creature, a man and a horse can also be seen amidst the mountains.

Kramrisch further observes that the physiognomy of the demon is of Orissan descent, fully evolved in the 9th century. His hair curls out to form a kind of nimbus, and the dilated eyes, distended mouth, and grimacing lips show the agonised wrath of the demon caught in such an unhappy situation. A short *dhotī* and sparse ornaments are marked features of the costume while a crescent moon with a dot in the middle of the forehead may mark him as a Śaivite.

The Gajaviralī wears beaded chains with pendants or bells around the neck. The mane is staggered into four tiers of serrated locks falling on the back. Similar flame-like hair appears on the legs and thighs. The curve of the tail resembles an entwining creeper.

Discussing the symbolism of these ivories Kramrisch says that the lion, which is interchangeable with the tiger in Indian art, is the king of the beasts and symbolises the power of the sun and the royal authority. The *śārdūla* with its lion elements symbolises *śakti*, 'the cosmic power of ability to act and to give effect to everything beneath the sun'. The *śārdūla*, besides having the lion body, has the antlers of a stag, the horns of a ram or a goat, the beak of a parrot and the face of a boar or an elephant. These antlers, horns and the bird, according to Kramrisch, are symbolic manifestations of solar energy. The elephant, on the other hand, is not a solar symbol but when combined with the human body as in the case of Gaṇeśa, the elephant head symbolises the microcosm and the human body the macrocosm. In Buddhist literature it is one of the symbols of the universal monarch and stands for spiritual awakening. According to the *Mātāṅgalīlā*, the eight mythical elephants created by Brahmā to fight the demons become the symbolical support of the earth.



On the strength of the symbolical significance attached to various elements in the ivory throne leg Kramrisch is of the opinion that the seat of the throne resting on the head of a mountain with a raging elephant supported by its lion-body signifies active power, rising heroically above a rugged mountain. The figure of the demon dangling from its trunk is identified as the Demon of the Must. 'Just before the Rākṣasa will be implanted in and absorbed as must, by the elephant who will then in his frenzy annihilate all the fiends.'

Making a stylistic comparison between the Stetson and the Freer Gallery ivory throne legs, Kramrisch is of the opinion that the Stetson ivory is sculpturally more consistent and its volume more solid. In the Freer ivory it is less compact but though the greater amount of perforation detracts from the solidity of the sculpture, it adds to the delicacy of the landscape.<sup>207</sup> She is further of the opinion that the ivories could be dated between the 11th century, the date of the Lingaraja and 1264 A.D. when Konarak was built. "This date is the terminus ante quem for the ivory carvings. Orissan sculpture steeply declined afterwards."<sup>208</sup>

Though we may agree that there may be a symbolical background to the various elements of the ivory throne legs, the lion representing the royal authority, the elephant the 'supernal being', the symbol of Universal Monarch etc., it is questionable whether the 'demon' represents the must who possessed the eight elephants created by Brahmā for destroying the Asuras. Shorn of all rhetoric and symbolism the jungle scenes represented in the ivory throne legs would seem to represent a Śabara or Śabaras representing the primitive folk of Orissa as their feather headdresses and simple costume indicate engaged in hunting. The Gajaviralī, a mythical animal catching the Śabara, may either represent the sudden attack of a lion-cum-tiger or an elephant on a tribesman while he is carrying out his vocation or plausibly the mythical animal may symbolise the royal authority subjugating the ever rebellious primitive tribes of Orissa. There is no means to ascertain whether Gajaviralī symbolises the Kesari rulers of Orissa (10th-12th century), upholding their suzerainty over the wild tribes of Orissa.

J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw has also described the Freer ivory throne leg. She has rightly pointed out the closest similarity existing between the *gajasimha* and also an elephant clutching the pot-bellied Śabara warrior as depicted in the 13th century Konarak sculpture and the ivory throne legs from the Freer Gallery and Philadelphia Museum which she assigns to the mid-13th century. She has rightly quoted in this connection the inscription on the Jagannātha temple at Puri recording the gift of eight ivory thrones to the deity by Purushottamadeva (1467-1497) which confirms the existence of an important school of ivory carving in post-medieval Orissa.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>207</sup> Kramrisch, *loc. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>209</sup> de Leeuw, *loc. cit.*, pp. 213-214.



The foliated treatment of the mountain and the rather elaborate composition may lead scholars to date the Freer and Stetson ivories even to the 14th century, when foliated mountains begin appearing in Western Indian miniature paintings. And though it is true that Orissan sculpture declined rapidly after the 13th century, as Kramrisch says, this does not seem to be true with regard to ivory sculpture as witnessed by another lovely ivory throne leg from Orissa in the collection of the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta and assignable to the late 16th century A.D. The general composition is the same though the Gajavirali is replaced by a hunter on horseback killing deer. In spite of this the Gajavirali of the ivory throne legs are so close to their counterpart at Konarak that there is no probability of their being dated later. They both have similar manes with striated locks, similar curled hair edging the thighs and legs and similar neck ornaments though the body of the stone animal is more elongated in order to fill up the area of the decorative frame. The trapped Śabara is also very similar except that instead of being seized by the forepaws of the animal he is being shown trampled under the hind paws. Another Gajavirali from Konarak<sup>210</sup> is even closer to the ivories, the Śabara holding a dagger and a circular shield which is an exact counterpart of the Śabara's weapons in the ivories. The lotus base is another common factor and bearing in mind these close similarities a date of about the middle of the 13th century should be quite acceptable.

The ivory throne leg in the collection of the Asutosh Museum in Calcutta, though datable to the late 16th century or early 17th century carries on the ancient tradition of ivory carving in Orissa even at such a late date, when the ancient craft of ivory carving had changed its face completely in northern India under Mughal influence. Two similar legs, probably forming part of the same throne are known, one in the Indian Museum, Calcutta and another in the collection of Sri Narendra Singh Singhi, also of Calcutta.

The slightly curved leg depicts an animated hunting scene (Pls. 14a-15a). The hunter is mounted on a rearing charger, fully caparisoned, even the minutest details of the harness being carefully depicted. The hunter has narrow forehead, recurved eyebrows, *padol*-shaped eyes, broad pointed nose, thick lipped mouth, moustache and closely cropped pointed beard. He wears a turban with beaded transverse band (*pechi*), a full-sleeved mail-shirt, trousers and riding boots. The rider is equipped with a dagger (*peshqabz*) stuck to the waist, a sword hanging in a sling a bow across the shoulder and a spear in the right and left hands on each of which he has impaled a deer. He wears earrings, a pearl necklace, armlets, bracelets, finger rings and anklets. A sword and a quiver are attached to the sling and a straight sword is attached to the flank of the horse. Below the rearing horseman is depicted a forest scene with a group of hunters engaged in hunting wild animals. The forest is represented by a single stylised tree and the crags of the hill are seen under the belly of the horse. On the tree-top appears a monkey with upraised tail on either side,

<sup>210</sup> Zimmer, *op. cit.*, Pl. 365.



perhaps munching fruit. On the left side of the horseman, behind the right hind leg of the horse, is kneeling a turbaned hunter equipped with a sword and round shield. He has two daggers tucked to the zone and is followed by a dog. In between the raised fore-legs of the horse is represented an animated hunting scene. A hunter wearing a shell-shaped turban and a shirt girded with a strap to which is attached a quiver has pierced the neck of a stag standing on its hind legs; the pained look of the animal has been very realistically shown. The doe is trailing behind pawing its mate out of sympathy and ready to share its troubles. A hunting dog has also attacked the animal and a huntress is ready to give it the final blow with a dagger held in the upraised right hand. Her chignon is secured with a head band the free ends of which are fluttering in the air. She wears a short *sārī* and a *kamarband* to which are attached a sword and a quiver. Under the left hind leg of the horse appear a wild boar and a hunter squatting on the ground.

The circular base is decorated with a floral meander, lotus petals and a reel. The end is left plain.

The artist has faithfully and carefully represented the trappings of the horse. The bridle including the head-stall and the nose-band are beaded and decorated with rosettes. The details of the chain-bit and the rope rein are minutely carved. The cheek pieces, apparently of metal, are granulated. The martingale and girth straps are also beaded and provided with tinklers. In the breast band appears a large rosette, on the head appears an aigrette and on the neck a rosette and chains.

As we have noted above, the Asutosh Museum throne leg very clearly carries on the ancient tradition of ivory carving of the 13th century but it discards the fantasy of the earlier styles, the realistic tendencies being greatly enhanced.

A similar ivory throne leg is in the collection of the Indian Museum, Calcutta<sup>211</sup> (ht. 38.1 cms.). The trapping of the horse and the dress and equipment of the rider are almost the same, except that the latter has no beard and the treatment of the body is somewhat more stiff and formalised. The monkey under the right foreleg of the horse is munching fruit and the one under the left leg is taking a leap. The hunter under the right leg of the horse is wearing a turban, a coat and carrying a sword in his *kamarband*. He has plunged a dagger in the body of a deer which is apparently dead along with its partner. Under the left leg stands another hunter dressed exactly like the hunter killing the deer. He carries a bow, a naked broad sword in the right hand and a dagger in the left which he has plunged in the back of a boar which is attacked from behind and front by conventionally treated dogs. A third hunter is squatting on the ground behind the left hind leg of the horse,

<sup>211</sup> *5000 Jahre Kunst aus Indien*, Villa Hugel 1959, p. 413, Cat. No. 325. It has been ascribed here to Madura and dated to the 18th century A.D.



and is followed by a dog. The base is an exact replica of the Asutosh Museum ivory throne leg.

A comparison of the two ivory throne legs shows that though both belong to the same tradition, and probably the same piece of furniture, the Indian Museum ivory is stiffer in composition and of inferior workmanship.

An ivory throne leg in the collection of Sri Narendra Singh Singhi of Calcutta belongs to the same group as the two legs in the collection of the Asutosh Museum and the Indian Museum, and is very similar to them. The hunter sporting a fierce moustache and wearing a turban, half sleeved shirt and full boots is equipped with a bow, a quiver and swords. He is riding a well caparisoned rearing horse. In both hands is a spear with impaled antelopes. Under the forelegs of the rearing horse is represented a lively hunting scene. Monkeys are shown gambolling on a stylised tree. An antelope has been attacked by a couple of hunting dogs and a hunter. A second hunter is thrusting his spear towards a galloping buck. A couple of wild boar also appear. The pedestal is lotus shaped.

The scholar who thought the Indian Museum ivory throne leg to be of 18th century Madura workmanship perhaps based his conclusions on the hippogriff forms in the hypostyle halls of a thousand pillars at Madura built in the middle of the 17th century. A much better comparison, however, would have been with the rearing horses of the pillars in the famous Court of Horses in the Srirangam temple built in 16th century.<sup>212</sup> Here the horses rear over the figures of the enemies or of wild animals fighting against armed hunters. The modelling of the horses and certain details of ornaments such as the plumes remind us of the Calcutta ivories. Other Vijayanagara features of the ivories are to be found in the Hampi platform reliefs. These include a rider astride a rearing horse, a couple of monkeys plucking fruits from a tree,<sup>213</sup> the floriated treatment of a tree<sup>214</sup> and the plunging of the dagger in the body of an antelope.<sup>215</sup>

The close similarities between the rearing horses in the Vijayanagar pillars and the ivory legs raises the possibility of their being of Vijayanagar rather than Orissan workmanship. The rearing Gajavirali, associated with hunting scenes is no doubt Orissan but no examples of rearing horses, except in the chariots of the sun at Konarak, are available in Orissan sculpture. The truth of the matter seems to be that the rearing horse motif which originated in Vijayanagar migrated to Orissa at the time of close political and cultural contact between Orissa and Vijayanagar in the 15th and 16th centuries. It there replaced the ancient Gajavirali motif, its adoption being facilitated by a demand for realism in the wake of the new art traditions fostered by the

<sup>212</sup> Zimmer, *op. cit.*, Pl. 447.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 442.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 443.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 441.



Muslims. Other reasons for assigning the ivories to the Orissa area are as follows, though a Vijayanagara ascription cannot be entirely ruled out.

1) Though the rearing horses in the ivories are very close to those of the Vijayanagara pillars the hunting scenes and landscape show the continuity of the ancient Orissan tradition.

2) The costume of the horsemen in the ivory with their early type turban, armour and high riding boots does not appear in the Vijayanagara figures. The possibility is that it was introduced in Orissa through Bengal in the Akbar period.

3) The ivory bases with lotus petal decoration are almost of the same shape as the bases of the Vijayanagara rearing horses, but the floral meanders decorating the ivory bases are peculiarly Mughal.

Two more interesting throne legs of ivory in the collection of Sri Narendra Singh Singhi provide a link between the art of ivory carving in Orissa of the 13th and the 16th centuries A.D. One of them is very much like the Stetson and Freer Gajaviralis, though of much inferior workmanship with a leonine body and an elephant head. In its trunk it holds the Śabara. The hill in the foreground has serrated rocks with a hunter with upraised mace with which he is striking at an imaginary animal. Curiously enough at the rear of the Gajaviralī appears a dancing girl giving a vigorous performance.

There is little doubt that this throne leg closely follows the representation of Gajaviralī in the 13th century ivory throne legs from Orissa referred to above. The striated hairlocks, the elongated body and even the details of ornaments remind us of the older pieces. But with the passage of time the treatment has become stylised. The striated locks, rather weak paws and the lack of strength in modelling show a considerable departure from the original tradition. This weakness of modelling and composition is no where better illustrated than in the stiff body of the Śabara held in the trunk of the Gajaviralī. In the earlier pieces the Śabara held by the Gajaviralī is shown in deep agony fighting for his life, while in this piece it is stiff as a doll. The hilly landscape in the piece has also been reduced to the minimum and the appearance of a dancing girl is out of context with the spirit of the composition. But in spite of all its shortcomings as a work of art the ivory throne leg shows that even as late as the late 16th century, which is its probable date, the ivory carvers of Orissa had kept up the tradition of their art very much alive.

The other ivory throne leg shows a beaked rampant lion with striated hair-locks on the head, the neck, the chest and the legs. It is goggle-eyed and the fierce moustache, the long beaked nose and the lolling tongue are in keeping with its grotesqueness. Its body is decorated with beaded chains and other ornaments. In front of the hind legs stands a roaring elephant, apparently being attacked by the beaked lion. Behind the hind legs, however, appears



a pot-bellied male dancer wearing a cap, *dupaṭṭā*, a short *dhoti* and ornaments, clapping his hands over the head. The circular pedestal is in the form of a lotus.

The beaked rampant lion is an ancient motif in Indian art. It appears in the Begram ivories and is depicted frequently as a bracket figure in medieval architecture both in the North and the South.

Certain points regarding this ivory are worth noting. Firstly, the rampant beast takes the same position as the Gajaviralī in other ivory throne legs, with the exception that the Śabara, an object of fury to the Gajaviralī, has been eliminated here, its whole fury being directed towards an elephant. This is in keeping with the literary tradition which treats the elephant as an object on which the lion vents its prowess. Secondly, the hilly landscape has been reduced to a minimum; no other animal except the elephant appears in the scene. Thirdly, as in the Gajaviralī throne leg described above a dancer appears, with the only difference that while in the former the dancer is a female, here it is a male. Fourthly, the modelling betrays a distinct weakness. The supple undulations of the leonine body and the legs lack the muscular strength of the earlier pieces. As a matter of fact Orissan ivory carving in the 16th and 17th centuries loses its individuality and is reduced to a mechanical craft. It does not mean, however, that it has no charm. The greatest contribution of the ivory carvers of Orissa as late as the 17th century is that in spite of the lack of patronage and the changing taste they continued to keep the ancient tradition very much alive.

Another interesting ivory object from 13th century Orissa, fortunate enough to have survived to the present day, is a small figure depicting an amorous couple now in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta (Pl. 11a). They are seated on a high-backed rectangular cot resting on a base decorated with a fringe of lanceote pattern. Though the ivory has suffered much due to weathering, certain details are distinguishable. The male partner, seated in *ardha-paryāṅkāśana*, has a round face, a large nose and a smiling mouth, full cheeks and a fat pointed chin. The hair is tied behind in a knot, and the head is close set on the torso. He wears necklaces and bracelets, traces of which have remained. The female partner, on the right, is seated comfortably with one hand around the neck of her lover, and the other resting in her lap. The lover is shown caressing her breast. Her face is very much damaged, but its roundness is apparent. The well developed breasts, flexed sides and narrow waist are parts of her artistic physiognomy. She wears earrings, a necklace, anklets and a diaphanous *sārī* marked with parallel folds.

The figure bears a close resemblance to the figure of an amorous couple in stone from Orissa reproduced by Stella Kramrisch.<sup>216</sup> The large nose, the squat neck and the general modelling is similar except that the faces of the figures in stone show a well defined angularity, while roundness is characteristic of the faces in the ivory figure.

<sup>216</sup> Stella Kramrisch, "Kalinga Temples," *JISOA* (1934), p. 57, Pl. XX.



## V

The art of ivory carving, in common with other arts, seems to have received considerable patronage in the Vijayanagara empire. Domingo Paes (c. A.D., 1522) who personally visited Vijayanagar has left an interesting reference to an ivory room of the royal palace—the *dantagriha* of ancient times. He describes it as having a pillar of carved stone, the rest being all ivory. "This room is all of ivory, as well as the chamber as the walls, from top to bottom, and the pillars of the cross timbers at the top had roses and flowers of lotuses, all of ivory, and all well executed, so that there could not be better, it is so rich and beautiful that you could hardly find anywhere another such."<sup>217</sup> Fernão Nuniz (1535-37) mentions a bedstead of ivory inlaid with gold<sup>218</sup> which accompanied the king in his expeditions and was used by his son or daughter.

The Prince of Wales Museum has some interesting ivory objects ranging in date from the 16th to the 18th century which throw light on the art of ivory carving in South India under the Vijayanagar empire and its successors. The most interesting of all these pieces is a small ivory casket (Museum No. 59.8; ht. 5.5; wdth. 8.5; dpth. 6.5 cms.) a high landmark in the craft of ivory carving in the south (Pls. 12 and 13). It is carved most meticulously and in minute detail, the artist's work resembling that of a jeweller in its elaborateness and precision.

The bottom of the rectangular casket is painted green and has four stepped legs one of which is broken. The receptacle is divided into arched niches, four in front and at the back and three at the sides with delicate columns decorated with flowers and leaves at the top. Except for the back of the box, each contains female dancers in pairs (Pl. 12a and 13a), separated from one another by a floral motif. They are invariably represented with round faces, pointed nose, large eyes, jutting chin and well developed breasts. One hand is taken over the head while the other is crossed over the chest in *gajahasta mudrā*. The braided plait hangs down the back. The ground is alternately painted red and green. The arched niches at the back contain highly stylised lions, the two in the centre against green ground facing each other frontally, while the two at the sides look back over the shoulders with arched necks and are carved against a red ground (Pl 12b). They have lifted one of their paws and are depicted with raised tail and lolling tongue. Jungle vegetation is suggested by floral sprays. Certain details show faint traces of having been gilded.

The details of costume and ornaments of the dancers are clearly rendered. A fold near the breast perhaps indicates a portion of the *uttariya* or *choli*. The pleated short skirt is worn over tight fitting trousers and the pleated *paṭkā* fans out to the calves. The ornaments consist of bracelets, armlets, a large beaded necklace, a girdle and anklets which bear definite traces of gilding.

<sup>217</sup> Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, London 1924, pp. 285-286.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.



The cusped arches containing the dancers and the lions is framed by a narrow band filled with palmates hanging downward both at the bottom and the top except that the top band of the front portion has a row of stylised peacocks instead (Pl 12a). This band forms part of the lid and not of the receptacle. Green and red paint is used to stain the ground in order to provide relief where palmates are shown and only red for the stylised peacocks.

The top of the lid (Pl. 13b) is bordered on all four sides with rosette bands. The rest of the space is divided into three registers the top register being divided into ten cartouches, the central and bottom register into eight. In the top register, beginning from the left, appear the ten *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, namely the four-handed Matsya, Kachchhapa, Varāha and Nṛisimha; the two-handed Vāmana, Rāma, Paraśurāma, Buddha; the four-handed Kṛishṇa seated in *lalitāsana* and Kalki riding a horse. All of them wear *dupaṭṭā*, *dhotī*, fan-shaped *paṭkā*, crown and the sacred thread except for Kalki who is dressed in turban, tunic and trousers.

In the central register we see Veṇugopāla in the centre, wearing an *uttariya*, *dhotī* with *kamarband*, ornaments and *vanamālā*, playing on a flute. The other cartouches contain figures of standing *gopīs* with hair braided in a single plait and wearing *cholī*, *sāri*, *paṭkā* and ornaments. They hold a piece of cloth in one hand while the other is lowered.

The central cartouche of the bottom register contains figures of Rāma and Sītā seated on a throne with Hanumāna kneeling on the ground with folded hands. In the cartouches to the left appear Bharata, Sugrīva, Lakshmaṇa and Vasishṭha seated on a stool; in the cartouches to the right appear an attendant with a fan, Śatrughna holding an umbrella and two monkey chiefs with hands folded in adoration.

A comparison of the figure reliefs on the casket with the figures of dancing girls on the throne platform from Vijayanagar leaves hardly any doubt that the casket belongs to the same period, i.e., c. middle of the 16th century or a little later. The dancers of both affect the same hand poses and they wear almost the same type of costume in which the fan-like *paṭkā* is a distinguishing feature.<sup>219</sup> The figures of gods are too small to bear comparison with their counterparts in stone, but they show a certain resemblance to the late 16th century bronzes of Vijayanagar origin. Even the peacock motif is common to both.<sup>220</sup>

With the decline and fall of Vijayanagara the art of ivory carving in common with the other arts of South India suffered a great set-back. It seems to have been practised in the 17th and 18th centuries at Madura and elsewhere, but the decline is obvious as can be seen in the carved ivories dealing with Śaivite and Vaishṇavite subjects in the collection of the Srirangam

<sup>219</sup> Zimmer, *op. cit.*, Pl. 440.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 442.



temple. Individuality of expression is lost and a stiffness and lifelessness pervade the images. The Prince of Wales Museum has in its collection some representative ivories of this period. A figure of Gaja-Lakshmi (Museum No. 60.6; ht. 9 cms.) probably of Karnatak origin, and datable to the end of the 17th century is carved almost in the round (Pl. 17b). The goddess wearing a *mukuta*, necklaces, a breast-band and *sārī* with one end tucked behind and secured with a waist-band is seated in *padmāsana* on an expanded lotus the petals of which cover the lunate-shaped base. Her right hand is broken and in the left hand she holds a lotus. On either side stands an elephant pouring water from a pitcher held in its trunk. The cusped arch at the back has a *kīrtimukha* in the centre.

The *makara*-head of grotesque form (Museum No. 60.5; ht. 12.4 cms.) datable to the end of the 17th century probably served as a decoration to a palanquin rod (Pl. 17a). The nose is beaked and the wide open mouth with red lacquered gums, bare fangs and red lolling tongue increase the effect of grotesqueness. The round eyes, lacquered red and black, have serrated eyebrows. The inside of the ear is also lacquered. From the middle of the temple rises a tiered floral ridge, with floriated tufts on either side. The creature sports a fierce serrated moustache, and the neck is decorated with tiered and dented bands of hair indicating the mane.

Mention may also be made of an ivory book cover fragment (Museum No. 60.7; 11 × 10.8 cms. approx.) decorated with beadings and rosette-end-leaf borders carved in relief (Pl. 16a). The plaque is divided into three arched panels with *kīrtimukhas*. To the left stand a bejewelled female figure wearing a *sārī* and breastband and holding a lotus in the left hand; a pine cone is in the foreground. In the middle stands Rāma wearing a *vanamālā* and jewels and holding the bow and arrow in his hands. The figure of Lakshmaṇa is damaged. The reverse (Pl. 16b) is decorated with borders comprising leaves, rosettes, triangles and beads. The patterns are lightly scooped and filled in with green and red paint. In the central panel, within a cartouche, appears a flower vase with parrots.

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## A SERIES OF RĀMĀYAṆA PAINTINGS OF THE POPULAR MUGHAL SCHOOL

Pramod Chandra

In 1956, the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India acquired by purchase two paintings from an incomplete Rāmāyaṇa series of twenty-four paintings of the early Mughal school offered for sale in the local market. Five were bought by the Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Banaras, and the rest by the National Museum of India. All the twenty-four paintings are considerably damaged in their present condition, some of them badly so, while others show signs of having been repaired at a later stage. The portion to the left of Rāma at the hermitage of Bharadvāja (Pl. 19), for example, is a later addition. In Pl. 24b (Sītā offering fruits to Rāma) only the central portion is original, the rest having been added later on. The artist, however, has been able to do the repairs fairly well, being successful in matching the original rather closely. This would seem to suggest that these were done at an early stage in the life of the paintings, when it was still possible for the artist to imitate so closely the original style. In most of the paintings, though, the repairer only got as far as pasting the *waslī* behind the damaged portions, the job of repainting and completing the paintings being left undone.

On the reverse of the paintings is the text of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa together with a Braja Bhāshā caption, both in Devanāgarī characters. The inscriptions seem to be contemporaneous with the paintings, being cut off at the place where the damage occurred, the repairer having omitted to complete the inscription after repair. The Devanāgarī inscription, as distinguished from the Persian characters found in most Akbar period paintings, would seem to indicate that the series was probably prepared for a Hindu nobleman or merchant, and not manufactured in the Imperial atelier, a hypothesis that is borne out, as will be seen later, by the style of the paintings as well.<sup>1</sup>

Together with these Mughal paintings was also offered for sale a curious painting depicting the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa (Pl. 23b), subsequently

<sup>1</sup> In this respect the series is related to other late Akbar and early Jahāngīr period painting such as the Gita Govinda page in the Sir Cowasji Jahangir collection (See Karl Khandalavala, "Akbar Period Mughal Miniature Illustration of Gita Govinda," *Roopa-Lekha* II, 1942, pp. 49-55), the Rasikapriyā folios in the Boston Museum (Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of the Indian Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Part VI, Mughal Painting, Cambridge, Mass., 1930, pp. 19-29 and Pls. VIII-XIX), the Nala-Damayantī pages in the Prince of Wales Museum and some other paintings discussed in the author's "Ustād Sālīvāhana and the Development of a Popular Mughal Art," *Lalit Kalā*, No. 8 (In Press). It is to be noted, however, that all the above paintings once formed parts of Mss, while the paintings under discussion are more in the nature of series of paintings, each of them having an inscription on the back, with which the student of Rajasthani painting is well aware. I know of no other series of paintings belonging to such an early period of the Mughal school with inscriptions placed in similar manner.



acquired by Shri Haridas Swali of Bombay, with whose kind permission it is reproduced here. It is certainly of Rajasthani workmanship of the mid-18th century, but the artist obviously attempts to follow in the matter of colouring and composition the Mughal Rāmāyaṇa series. Its presence can only be explained by the fact that the original Mughal picture was lost or damaged beyond repair and the owner had it replaced by the present example. This must have occurred much after the first damage, there being a great difference between the workmanship of the earlier repairs and the style of the picture, a suggestion that is reinforced by the fact that the inscription on the reverse is in a hand that is quite different from that of the other pictures.

Though the paintings are undoubtedly of the same series, a closer examination reveals that in spite of a general uniformity there are several hands at work, the product of some being quite different from that of others, and not merely in quality. True, all of them work within the framework of the same style, and follow more or less orthodox Mughal conventions, particularly in the treatment of landscape and in composition but it is in the treatment of the human figures, the bears and monkeys of Rāma's army, as well as in the draughtsmanship that some startling differences can be observed. We have thus, on the one hand, naturalistic types, close to the Imperial style, of good as well as inferior workmanship, with closely observed, if sometimes feeble draughtsmanship, and on the other hand types in which the stylization is quite accentuated and the drawing of which is vigorous and diagrammatic, if lacking the refinement and delicacy of the more naturalistic style. This indicates that in spite of the similarities to the refined art of the Imperial atelier we are here really dealing with a work of Popular Mughal art, different from its Imperial counterpart and which had such an important part to play in the development of Rajasthani painting in the 17th century.<sup>2</sup>

We can begin our study of the Rāmāyaṇa paintings by first noting the elements that are common to all of the paintings, elements that are equally characteristic of orthodox Mughal art. There is, thus, a great uniformity in the palette of the artists, much fondness being shown for the kind of rich and vivid colour popular in Ms. illustrations of the Akbar period (Frontispiece). The conventions for depicting mountains, rocks, and water are also the same. The trees are painted in a uniform style in all the paintings, the foliage being

<sup>2</sup> The problem of the existence of a Popular Mughal style as distinguished from the Imperial Mughal style has been dealt with at some length in the author's "Ustād Sālīvāhana and the Development of a Popular Mughal Art" and Karl Khandalavala, Moti Chandra and Pramod Chandra, *Miniature Painting : a catalogue of the exhibition of the Sri Motichand Khajanchi collection held by the Lalit Kalā Akademi*, New Delhi 1960, pp. 14-16, and 26 ff. There it has been attempted to demonstrate that along with the highly refined Imperial Mughal style fostered in the Imperial atelier under the patronage of the Mughal emperor, there grew up alongside a humbler version of the same style, less refined, but not seldom marked with fresh vigour, and patronised by the lesser nobility, the commercial classes and others who could not afford the luxuries of Imperial art but nevertheless desired to enjoy similar paintings. This Mughal style that grew up outside the Imperial atelier began to develop its own characteristics, conditioned by the skill and talent of the artist, the demands of his patron as well as the artistic traditions in which he was trained before he became acquainted with Mughal art particularly as he was not under the strict superintendence of the masters of the Imperial atelier.



shown in varying shades of green against an indigo background, sometimes interspersed with red leaves or coloured fruit. The tree, most commonly shown, has leaves of circular pattern (Pl. 19, Frontispiece, Pl. 25b) while in others the leaves are narrow, serrated or feathery and it is often placed on a raised mound in typical Mughal manner. Trees are sometimes disposed in rows stretching across the picture and are also employed by the artist as compositional devices in order to distinguish planes (Pl. 25b). The gnarled trunks are done realistically and we have trees in which the branches are seen amidst the leaves, and others in which the dense foliage, inhabited by large birds, hides the branches. It must, however, be noted that usually the treatment is quite perfunctory and careless, and in some cases considerably impoverished, the leaves being reduced to mere blobs of paint (Pl. 19). It is only in exceptional cases that we get the clear and refined work seen in the Frontispiece. Clouds are painted a fluffy white against a blue background in the usual Mughal style (Pl. 23a) and *tā'i* clouds of Persian origin are also to be found (Pl. 20). Water is also treated in the typical Mughal manner, consisting of fine swirling lines painted against a blue ground (Pls. 19, 24b). The composition is skilful, the crowded scenes well arranged and full of the same brisk movement that is characteristic of Mughal painting (Frontispiece, Pl. 21). The sense of naturalistic perspective is also fairly strong, some of the paintings suggesting considerable depth. The dress of the women is of the late Akbar period, and they are shown wearing *ghāghrās*, *cholīs*, *paṭkās* and *oḍhnīs*, the usual jewellery, a hair ornament at the side of the head, and black pompons falling over the shoulders, and at the arms, wrists, and sometimes at the waist. Attention is drawn in passing to the interesting *cholī* with ends crossed in the front (Pl. 24a). The male costume consists of *gherdār* and *chākdār jāmahs* reaching to the knees, long narrow *paṭkās* with geometrical designs, and flat turbans (Pl. 23a), as well as *dhotīs* and *dupattās* (Pl. 20).

It is only when we consider the treatment of the human figures, and to a lesser extent, the bears and monkeys of Rāma's army that we notice considerable variation both as regards the physical types and also in draughtsmanship and technique. If one were to take, for example, the various methods of depicting women we get not only a predominantly naturalistic type (Pls. 27a, b, c and Pls. 24a, 18, 19, 24b), close to the women found in products of the Imperial atelier such as paintings of the Jaipur *Razm Nāmah* (Percy Brown, *Indian Painting Under the Mughals*, Oxford 1924, Pl. XXXIII) and the *Akbar Nāmah* of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (W. G. Archer, *Indian Miniatures*, Greenwich, Conn., 1960, Pl. 20), but also another type in which the stylization is considerably advanced (Pl. 27d and Pls. 20, 22).

Studying first the naturalistic types, we find that in spite of the variations to be observed, the technique is still typically Mughal, the drawing soft and delicate if not very accomplished, even a little fussy, and the modelling fairly careful. Pl. 24a (detail Pl. 27a) is closest to those of the Imperial style, the dress being the same as found on the Rajput women of the paintings of the Imperial atelier. The head is squarish in shape, with small eyes and delicate nose and



mouth as in the Jaipur *Razm Nāmāh* and the London *Akbar Nāmāh*. Pls. 18, 19 (detail Pl. 27 b) are most typical of the series and are characterised by a body of considerably elongated proportions, long narrow arms and a small head set on a slender neck. Though different in appearance from Pl. 27a, the technique of both is fairly similar with the same careful line and modelling. Pl. 24b (detail Pl. 27c, reversed in the photograph), is a somewhat heavier version of the type illustrated as Pl. 27b but of the same family. It is the type of female figure illustrated in Pl. 20 (detail Pl. 27d), and Pl. 22 that is the most startling in its variations from the standard Mughal type. The delicacy and naturalism of the previous examples is lost, the stylization is quite emphatic, and the draughtsmanship, instead of being soft and fussy is strong and rhythmical. The face is squarish with large fish-shaped eyes, pointed nose set close to a mouth with somewhat pinched lips and a pronouncedly heavy chin with pointed end. Vigour and resiliency inform the line, and though the type is crude from the viewpoint of the refined and academic art of the Imperial atelier it is nevertheless full of intense life. It is interesting to compare Pl. 27d with Pls. 27a, b and c and the great difference between them, in spite of similarities, is obvious. The line particularly is strikingly different, and is most apparent in the treatment of the costume, the *paṭkā* end jutting out in an angular manner in Pl. 27d, while it is softly and naturalistically done in Pls. 27a, b and c.

The treatment of the male figure parallels that of the female figure. Pl. 24a (detail Pl. 26a), is closest to the orthodox Mughal style, being very similar to the figures of kings on throne found in Mughal paintings of the Imperial atelier and is from the same painting as the female type of Pl. 24a (detail Pl. 27a). He is shown squatting on a throne of the Mughal type wearing *jāmah*, *paṭkā*, and a three-pointed crown commonly used for Hindu deities and kings in Mughal painting. The armpit shading, equally present in the female figures, may be noted. Detail Pl. 26b from Pl. 18 and Pls. 19, 24b, 25a, and 25b depict a male type comparable to the female type of detail Pl. 27b from Pl. 19 and Pl. 18. Here again we notice the same considerable elongation and delicate physical features though once again the line is careful and naturalistic. The majority of the extent paintings employ this type though few show such excellence as that of detail Pl. 26b from Pl. 18. Detail Pl. 26c from Pl. 24b is also essentially the same type, if a little heavier and comparable to female type of Pl. 27c from the same painting. The male type of detail Pl. 26d from Pl. 20 showing Rāma on the throne is again as startlingly different from the previous types as is the female type of detail Pl. 27d from Pl. 20, and Pl. 22 from the other female types. The face with large eyes, pointed nose, pinched lips, and pointed chin has a totally different feeling from that of the refined, if somewhat feeble examples illustrated as details Pls. 26a, b, and 26c. Even the manner of sitting on the throne, with one raised leg pulled tensely over the other and the jutting ends of the *dhotī* and *dupaṭṭā* contrast greatly with the treatment of similar postures in the other paintings.



From a *resumé* of the above discussion it is apparent that in spite of being in the same general style, the Rāmāyaṇa paintings can be roughly divided into two groups, one rather close to the Imperial manner though distinctly inferior in execution, and the other more removed from it. In the first group would fall paintings of the type represented by Pls. 24a, 18, Frontispiece, Pls. 19, 24b, 25b and details Pls. 27a, b, c and 26a, b, c; the second group by Pls. 20, 21, 22, 23a and details Pls. 27d, 26d. Even within these broad groups one can observe differences, Pl. 24a, Pl. 18, Frontispiece, Pl. 19 and Pl. 24b, being a little different from each other, mostly in the treatment of the human figure. The quality of the work is also variable, much work of the first group being a feeble rendering of the work of the Imperial atelier. The Agni Parīkṣhā of Sītā (Pl. 18), however, is a superb example painted with much skill and vitality. The soaring gold and red flames dominate the composition, and the draughtsmanship of the attending figures, notably Rāma and Lakshmaṇa who are seated to the left, is sensitive and rhythmical, and not as lifeless as in Pl. 25a. The Frontispiece is also an excellent example of this group, but in a more conventionally Mughal manner, being closely derived from such pictures as the one depicting courtiers waiting for the news of Akbar's health<sup>3</sup> in the Beatty *Akbar Nāmah*. The colouring is felicitous, and the drawing accomplished. Sītā and Rāma at Bhāradvāja's Āśrama (Pl. 19) is a more typical example of this group, and in spite of the charm of its landscape is of not more than average accomplishment. Pl. 25a, aside from the rather lifeless rendering of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, is an interesting picture illustrating adequately the manner in which the monkeys are treated in the Mughal group. The conception is close to what one perceives in Mughal paintings of animal fables<sup>4</sup> though the execution is inferior.

The second group, represented by four paintings (Pls. 20, 21, 22, 23a) though also related to the orthodox style of the Imperial atelier is far more removed from it than paintings of the first group, particularly in the draughtsmanship and delineation of human and animal figures if not in colouring and composition. Here too we find differences in workmanship, Pls. 20, 21, 22 being infinitely more superior to Pl. 23a which is a particularly crude example. The transformation that the Imperial Mughal painting was undergoing subsequent to its migration to the outside world from the hot-house atmosphere of the Imperial atelier is quite apparent in these paintings and its extent can easily be judged by comparing the Frontispiece with Pl. 23a. In the Frontispiece we have easy movement, well knit composition, and draughtsmanship of a fairly high order, while in Pl. 23a the figures are stiff and congealed, their movements frozen, the drawing crude. The same can hardly be said of Pls. 20, 21, 22 almost certainly the work of the same artist (cf. the male and female type which are identical), where in spite of primitive features we have work that is extremely pleasing and full of easy vigour, inventiveness of composition,

<sup>3</sup> T. W. Arnold and J. V. S. Wilkinson, *Library of A. Chester Beatty*, Vol. II, Oxford 1936, Pl. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Pl. 44.



spirited draughtsmanship, and much greater intensity of expression. Attention has already been drawn to the excellent quality of Pl. 20, showing Rāma and Sītā enthroned, the Divine Pair being rendered with much verve and economy. Other features of interest in this painting are the strange dog-like winged lions supporting the throne, obviously inspired by similar representations in Western Indian painting, right down to the detail of the looped tail. In other features, also, particularly the somewhat angular drawing, in the treatment of the *dupaṭṭā* with pointed ends curved over the shoulders, and the male facial type with large eyes and pointed chin, one can easily detect influences, direct or indirect, of the Western Indian style, so that it is hard to escape the conclusion that the artist who painted this picture was once trained in it. However intimate his acquaintance with Mughal art, the indigenous elements have again come to the surface and lend to his work an unexpected vitality. Pl. 22 depicting the triumphant return of Rāma and Sītā in a chariot driven by Lakshmaṇa and accompanied by the army of monkeys and bears is probably by the same artist as the previous painting, being similar in style, the faces of Sītā and Rāma, particularly, being identical. The composition is excellent, and in the best Mughal manner, though the male and female types are quite removed from the conventions of the Imperial style. The rows of monkeys and bears across the picture are given an irresistible forward movement, as is Hanumāna who is clearing the way as he walks ahead of the chariot. The angular ends of his *dupaṭṭā* are noteworthy. Pl. 21 is also by the same artist who painted the previous picture as is evident from the male facial types as well as the drawing of the bears and animals which are marked by the same vigour. The scene depicts the battle between Rāma's army comprising monkeys and bears and the demon army while Rāvaṇa is shown in court within the golden city of Laṅkā in the background. He is accompanied by his demon chiefs and soldiers, one of whom is apparently giving him news of the battle. The battle scene itself is composed with much ingenuity and skill and is far from being dull and stereotyped as is usually the case. To the left we see a bear preparing to seize with his hand the shield of his adversary while a monkey stands behind with bared sword, ready for the kill. In front of the bear is another monkey clubbing a demon being bitten by two bears. To the right is a monkey grappling with a demon with raised sword while in the foreground are more bears and monkeys engaged in combat. This picture can be favourably compared with Pl. 25a of the first group where we also see a battle scene with monkeys attacking demons, and Rāvaṇa in Laṅkā in the background. This picture is definitely closer to the Imperial Mughal style, the monkeys being smaller in size and more naturalistically conceived, but it is dull and uninspired compared to the acute observation and artistic veracity of the other.

The date of this Rāmāyaṇa series should fall somewhere between the Razm Nāmah of 1605 and the scattered pages of another Razm Nāmah of



1616 to both of which it bears striking resemblance in general composition as well as points of detail. One would not be far off the mark, therefore, in assigning it to a period of c. A.D. 1610 or a little earlier.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For the Razm Nāmah of 1606 see M.A. Chaghtai, "The Illustrated Edition of the Razm Nāmah at Akbar's Court," *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, V (1943-44), pp. 281, 322; and for the 1616 Razm Nāmah, Margaret F. Marcus, "A Page from a Dated Razm Nāmah," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, XXXXVIII (January 1961), pp. 12-15. Also see my "Ustād Sālīvāhana and the Development of a Popular Maghal Art," *Lalit Kalā* No. 8, (In Press).



## RECENTLY ACQUIRED ŚUNGA SCULPTURES FROM BHARHUT

S. N. Chakravarti

Recently, a few sculptures from near Bharhut, a village in Central India, have been acquired for the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. These have been gifted by Shrimati Madhuri Desai of Bombay to whom our grateful thanks are due.

At Bharhut in the 2nd century B.C. stood a Buddhist stūpa encircled by a high massive railing (*vedikā*) of red sandstone with four monumental gates (*torāṇa*) facing each of the cardinal points. The Eastern Gateway, the only one that has survived and is at present displayed in the Bharhut Room of the Indian Museum at Calcutta, bears an inscription which states, "During the reign of the Śuṅgas the gateway has been caused to be made....." Cunningham, who discovered the remains of the Bharhut stūpa in 1873 noticed similar records on two other gateways of the stūpa. The Śuṅgas succeeded the Mauryas about 180 B.C.

There are a large number of votive inscriptions engraved on the railing. It is clear from these inscriptions that individual donors provided funds for the construction of the different parts. Palaeographically, most of these inscriptions belong to a date prior to that of gateway inscriptions. So the gateways appear to have been built after the construction of the railing. Clearly, the stūpa proper existed before the railing and on the analogy of the Great Stūpa at Sāñchī and the representations of stūpas in some of the panels on the existing railing, must have been a massive hemispherical dome (*aṇḍa* or *garbha*), intended as a receptacle for relics. The dome was crowned with a small pavilion (*harmikā*), which was enclosed by a railing and which supported the shaft (*yashṭi*) of a parasol (*chhatra*), which penetrated far into the dome.

The Museum specimens are very fragmentary. These form portions of the railing encompassing the stūpa. In order to understand their exact location on the railing it is necessary to know the components of the railing. As we have said above, the great stone railing, which surrounded the stūpa, had four gateways towards the four cardinal points. It was thus divided into four quadrants. Each quadrant consisted of sixteen pillars (*stambha*), joined by three lenticular cross-bars (*sūchi*) and covered on top by a massive stone coping (*ushnīṣa*). Each of the four gateways was screened from the left side by a part of the railing for two pillar spaces so as to cover the direct approach to the Stūpa. Thus the railing contained in all twenty pillars in each quadrant or eighty in the whole circle. Each gateway, as we know from the existing Eastern Gateway, was composed of two pillars, the shaft of each of which was moulded into four octagonal parts representing a cluster of columns. The shafts were crowned by lotus-shaped bell-capitals and covered on top



by a set of four animals, two lions and two bulls with human face, seated back to back. The capitals supported a superstructure of three curviform architraves with volute ends composed of open-mouthed crocodiles with curled tails. Between the architraves were inserted short uprights, balusters and pillar-statues, to keep them in position. An ornament representing the honey-suckle which is surmounted by the *dharmachakra* or the Wheel of the Law, crowned the gateway.

The coping stone, the total length of which is 330' and which crowned the circle of pillars, is most elaborately and minutely sculptured, both inside and outside. At the end of the coping stone, facing the visitor as he approached each of the four entrances, there was a boldly carved lion with a curly mane and long bushy tail sitting on his haunches. Next to the lion, on both the inner and outer faces of the coping, is a kneeling elephant from whose mouth issues a long undulating stem, which continues to the end of the quadrant. The undulating stem divides the face of the coping into a number of small panels with sculptured representations. On the inner face some panels have flowers and fruits, some necklaces and earrings and other personal ornaments, while the rest have Jātaka and other representations. On the outer face all the faces marked off by the undulations are filled with full-blown lotus flowers. On both faces the broad line of bas-reliefs is finished by two rich borders. The lower one consists of a continuous row of hanging bells. The upper border shows a continuous line of stepped merlons, alternating with lotuses in vertical position.

The pillars are divided into half medallions at the top and bottom and full medallions at the middle. The ornamentation of corner pillars of the entrances is quite different from that of the others. The pillars of the inner corners generally bear figures of Yakshas and Yakshīs, Devatās and Nāga Rājās. The outer corner pillars are divided into three compartments. Each of these panels is filled with sculptural representations of some scenes or legends in the history of the Buddha.

The cross-bars have circular medallions on each side. Full medallions show either a lotus in the centre or human bust within a border of lotus petals.

There are ten fragments in the Museum :

1. Fragment of the coping-stone. Outer face. Above, stepped merlon in the upper border. Below, full-blown lotus.
2. Fragment of the coping-stone. Inner face. Above, stepped merlon. Below, human figure (Pl. 28b).
3. Fragment of the coping-stone. Stepped merlon alternating with a vertical lotus.
4. Fragment of the coping-stone. Outer face. Above, stepped merlon. Below, full-blown lotus.



5. Fragment of the coping-stone. Outer face. Full-blown lotus.
6. Fragment of the pillar. Portion of the full medallion at the middle, showing headless bust of a male figure.
7. Fragment of the cross-bar. Both sides show full-blown lotus.
8. Fragment of the middle medallion of the pillar. Full-blown lotus.
9. Fragment of the coping-stone end or of the capital of the gateway. Paw of the lion seated on its haunches.
10. Fragment of the inner corner pillar. Upper part of a male figure (Pl. 28a).



## BEGINNINGS OF THE TEMPLE PLAN

K. V. Soundara Rajan

The study of the origin and methods of the architectural plan and perspective in ancient India has always been a fascinating as well as an exacting subject. It involves not merely an actual perception of the techniques adopted but also of the more subtle functioning of the mind behind the productions. Western India and the upper Karnataka country afford the greatest scope for such a study due to the innumerable examples of rock excavations to be found there, including some of the earliest attempts at structural architecture and the corresponding imitations of structural principles in the massive rock. The problems are many, but in the following pages we have confined ourselves to the efforts of the early architects of Western India in the direction of the successive refinement or progression of the lay-out plan and how far the series of modifications experimented upon were equated with the ritual requirements of the era, until the final finite form of the abode of god—the temple—was arrived at. Inevitably the examples taken for this study are from well-known examples such as those at Ajanta, Ellora, Aurangabad, Badami and Aihole but relevant facts have also been compiled, not only from the lesser known sites such as Junnar, Kuda, Shelarwadi and Karad, but also from those farther afield, and of an admittedly early date, in other parts of India.

At the outset, it must be emphasised that there is a sharp difference between the abode of man, be he a citizen or a recluse, and the abode of God. It is demonstrable that civil residential architecture had not made any phenomenal headway, particularly in the early eras, the concentration having been on building fitting abodes of God. Indeed it is a tribute to the measure of the greatness and spiritual nobility of the Indian mind that while palaces and mansions (which were undoubtedly built in considerable numbers) have perished and gone out of the ken of the enquiring student of architecture, the temples to God, reared up with a mightier effort, have stood the onslaught of time as well as the changing outlook and faiths of the successive rulers. It would be apparent that the materials used in the construction of human habitations, and even some religious edifices, were more ephemeral than stone. Indeed, it was the very transient nature of building materials like brick and wood<sup>1</sup> that led to a decision in favour of more permanent media such as the living rock or stone. It is thus that the royal artist Mahendra Varma Pallava of Kāñchī in his Mandagappattu inscription rightly repudiates

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted incidentally, that the universal practice of painting the images of temples, particularly those in the sanctum, in an approved colour scheme enjoined in the texts also gave rise to images made of brick and mortar (*sudhā*) with stucco finish, as also those of wood (*dāru*) before icons of stone in the round got established in the cella of temples.



the use of perishable media of construction for temples, adopted till then, and to give substantiation to his *biruda* of *vichitra-chitta*, had started carving out divine abodes in live rock as at Mahendravadi, Mamandur, and the numerous other rock excavations of the Tamil country. Similarly, it is probable that the attempt to erect stone stūpas and chaityas was also prompted by the desire to build them in a more durable medium than they had been previously. It is inherent in this postulate, however, to note that when the builders were familiar with only a brick-and-wood tradition, they would inevitably fumble and falter in the translation of their structural ideas into stone. For decorative carving and for sculpture, wherein only the veneer is involved, no problems would arise, but dealing with the massive rock or heavy stone blocks would seemingly have introduced many imponderables into the assignment. It is obvious that even the monolithic rock excavations had produced in the minds of their authors an assumed play of structural principles for which provision would have to be made, and it is this reasoning that resulted in the insertion of many false 'functional' devices. At the same time, since in rock-excavations, elevation or stature or external profile is totally inoperative, and only two features count, namely the facade and the interior plan and volume, the variations which have been noticed in surviving examples are best represented in the gradual modifications of ground plan and artistic facade or window-dressing more than in any other architectural feature. In the sequel, despite the valid possibility of many missing links in the progressive adaptation of the plan for the temple, a study of ground plans of these alone tends to yield interesting and significant data.

The earliest Buddhist rock excavations in India, in which the chapel form and idea had taken root are the Lomas Rishi and Sudama caves (Fig. 1, Nos. 1 and 2) in the Barabar hills, Bihar. The aspect in which, they differ from the rest of the chaitya shrines of early Buddhism, is in the placing of the entrance to the side of the chapel, i.e., at right angles to its longitudinal axis. The opening chaitya arch also has a unique feature, namely the door jambs are sloping inwards, presumably after the wooden prototype where this would be necessary in order to offset the outward thrust of the superstructure. This feature is also to be noticed in the Bhaja chaitya which is the earliest of the Western India milieu. In the Barabar hills, the interior of the chaitya hall was astylar and the extreme rear end had only a circular chamber divided from the rest of the hall by a narrow opening in the thin curved wall of the chamber from the hall side. It is likely that a miniature, portable stūpa might have been installed and worshipped in the centre of the circular chamber, or a standing rock-cut stūpa was not provided as the cave was for the Ājīvakas. The caves are datable to Aśokan times, namely the 3rd century B.C. We have an almost similar cave at Kondivate near Bombay (Fig. 1, No. 3), except that the entrance is from the front, from the cliff face itself, as in all other cave chaityas of India, and the circular chamber at the rear contains a rock-cut diminutive stūpa with a path for circumambulation. Thus it represents clearly the next stage from the Barabar



hill examples and is the transitional type prior to the regular chaitya halls. However, there is no doubt that generally the very earliest Western Indian rock chaityas had a rectangular rather than apsidal plan,<sup>1</sup> were astylar, and only the rear elevation profile took a curvature behind and above the votive stūpa. Cave No. VI at Kuda (Fig. 1, No. 4), Cave No. XLVIII (Fig. 1, No. 7) and Cave No. IV (Fig. 1, No. 6) respectively at Karad and Shelarwadi bear out this point while Cave V at Karad (Fig. 1, No. 8) is an example of the astylar chamber, only the rear roof of which is curved. It is also interesting to note in this connection that even at Ajanta, of the two oldest chaitya caves, namely IX (Fig. 1, No. 10) and X the smaller one, which is clearly earlier, has a rectangular plan, although it has the row of pillars in an apse around the stūpa. The rear aisle has a flat lower roof, while only above and in front of the miniature stūpa does it take the curvature of the roof. It is only in Cave X that both the (lower) rear aisle roof as also the main chaitya vault have curved profiles. This is generally the case in all other chaitya caves as at Bhaja, Nasik, or Pitalkhora, although both at Karla and Bedsa (vihāra cave arranged in chaitya hall form), we have instances of the rear aisle having a flat roof only.

At Junnar we have even the example, in two instances—one in the Shivneri hill group (Fig. 1, No. 5) and the other in Ganeshlena—of an astylar cave with rectangular plan and a flat roof. Indeed, at Junnar, we seem to have surviving evidences of the different experiments made in chaitya architecture, evidences which owing to their comparative plainness, and lack of ornament and presumably early date are of great importance, in as much as they are indicative of the rock-cut architecture of Buddhism at a stage just before the evolution of the typical chaitya with apsidal plan and elevation and pillars dividing the hall into nave and aisles. In the Tuljalena group at Junnar (Fig. 1, No. 9), we have a circular chaitya wherein the pillars are also disposed in a circle around the diminutive stūpa; the aisles having a curved lower roof while the nave has the domical higher roof. This would, of course, be clearly a variant of the typical chaitya cave mentioned above and might have indeed been a votive chaitya shrine in itself. The Junnar group, owing to the commanding situation near the Nanaghat, would have been the clearing house of many art experiments depending upon the nature of the rock and early ideas and equipment. That these caves are all not much later than the 2nd century A.D. is clear, and many of these, at least the chaitya cave types mentioned, are clearly of the end of the 1st century B.C. if not earlier.<sup>2</sup> Thus, together with the cave excavations at Kuda, Kondivate, Karad, Shelarwadi, Karla, Bedsa and Bhaja, they comprise the earliest group of chaitya specimens and could be placed anywhere in the two centuries before Christ. This is not to discount the possibility that some of them could

<sup>1</sup> An instance, however, of the apsidal and astylar early chaitya (1st century B.C.) is at Thanala, near Pali, Maharashtra State.

<sup>2</sup> A matter of cognate interest is that even most of the vihāras of Ajanta and Nasik of the earlier phase are astylar and without a shrine chamber.



well be more stagnant forms of the chaitya shrine and would belong to the opening centuries of the Christian era. Indeed we have many such examples in the lesser known caves, such as the Panch Pandava group near Shirvel (Bhor), where we get a chaitya hall of severe simplicity. It is in the form of a square chamber with flat roof and a diminutive stūpa in the centre touching the roof with its stepped *harmikā* top.

An interesting development of the succeeding centuries of the Christian era are the rock-cut shrines wherein the main hall is the most central and ornate feature of the complex while the shrine chamber at the rear is the only individualistic tribute to the presiding deity of the creed. Examples can be found in the later Ajanta group, in the Buddhist group at Ellora and the Brahmanical and Jaina group at Badami and Aihole. The vihāra caves at Ajanta (later group, Fig. 2, No. 1), Ellora and the Vaishṇava and Śaiva caves at Badami (Fig. 2, No. 2) are indeed more significant to students of architecture than the co-eval chaitya shrines of Buddhism since the latter have reached the end of their architectural mode and except for the veneer of ornament, the pillar forms, the change from the earlier aniconism to the iconic fixation on the stūpa miniature and the walls and facade, have nothing further to contribute to the fundamental quest of the artisan to evolve a temple plan. A feature of considerable interest, nonetheless, is the ground plan of the miniature stūpa in chaitya Cave XIX at Ajanta which, unlike its predecessors, has a *triratha* (Fig. 1, 11) and not a circular or a sub-circular plan, with a face on each of the cardinal direction and an offset, though hardly regular, in the four corners. This, together with the circumambulatory practice common to Buddhists and Hindus, is evidently a prelude to the regular *pradakṣiṇā-patha* of the square cella which we will deal with below. This cave is roughly datable to the end of the 6th century A.D. The vihāra caves of Mahāyāna Buddhism at Ajanta and the early Brahmanical caves and structural shrines on their model, however, are the more positive developments. The rear shrine chamber, by way of physical proportions, is not comparable to the hypostyle hall that was reared in front of it. A concrete structural version of this state of affairs is the Ladkhan temple at Aihole (mid-6th century A.D.) wherein, despite the unique features of the simple roof shrine which were the direct consequences of the imitation of the structural mode which brought on elevational profile and skyline, the main plan is that of a cavern-like, low-ceilinged, pillared hall with front-side railings, closed side walls carrying a few perforated windows for ventilation and light and the interior rear side shrine on the back wall arranged within the central pillar bay. It is very obvious, on the one hand, that this is a direct derivative from the rock architectural proto-type, namely the vihāra caves, and on the other, that the temple-form has not yet taken full shape. It will be readily conceded that the Brahmanical temple builders at least did not want to imitate the chaitya hall of the Buddhists for their shrines and had definitely wanted to associate a pillared hall with the shrine. But that they had not totally ignored the Buddhist formula for shrines is clear by the deliberate attempt seen in the



Durga temple at Aihole (end of 6th century A.D.)<sup>1</sup>—the next significant step after Ladkhan—in which the apsidal chaitya form has been closely copied, with an outer pillared verandah and the inner aisles and nave through the hypostyle arrangement. The only concession to the change of faith that they made was the *śikhara* form. Aside of that, their clear inability to get at the curvature of the roof above the apse end in stone medium (and not brick), made them provide a simple flat roof for the shrine, over which the present and later *śikhara* arose. The original *śikhara* consisted of a rubble core with stone casing and of *gajapriṣṭha* from as can be deduced from the photograph taken by Meadows T aylor a hundred years ago. It is of no small importance to note that Hindu temple builders gave up this Buddhist formula forthwith as totally unsuitable to their aspirations and requirements, and thus the Durga temple stands out as the solitary landmark of the blind alley of the early attempts at Brahmanical temple architecture. The builders turned once again to the hypostyle hall attached to which is the shrine at the rear, and made the shrine into a separate chamber with a circuit around it. They erected a pillared hall in front of it and an entrance porch, in a longitudinal axis, the whole being enclosed within a walled chamber. This development which represents a first major stage in the fixation of the lay-out plan of the temple was adopted in Huchimalligudi temple at Aihole which is datable to the early 7th century A.D. An easy next stage is as that of Huchchapayya-gudi at Aihole itself (early 7th century, A.D.) wherein the cell is evolving further and is taken as an organic projection of the closed pillared hall, the *pradakṣiṇā-patha* is outside the hall in an outer court, and the *śikhara* is now immediately above the cella, at the very rear of the temple. This is the first truly complete form of the Hindu temple. It is of utmost significance to note that in the Mahāyāna stages of Buddhism, in the areas where Chāḷukyan political hegemony was felt (as at Ellora), the chaitya caves themselves went out of vogue and the main Buddhist types were vihāras with shrine chamber at the rear end, space for circumambulation around the Buddha statue itself being provided in some cases. Correspondingly the shrine caves proper took the form of a rectangular excavation, with a medium-sized pillared hall in front, often with side chapels and with a shrine chamber, which could be circumambulated, in the rear. No doubt this change is the outcome of image worship which had by now become very popular in Buddhism and had ousted the miniature stūpa as the object of veneration in the earlier periods. It is also equally feasible that this is no less due to the impact of the ideas of the Brahmanical temple builders as at

<sup>1</sup> Another example of this kind, not entirely in stone medium but in a mixed brick and stone structural form, is now known from the Pushpabhadraswami temple near the Krishnaghat at Nagarjunakonda (Lower Deccan) datable to the early 4th century A.D. by inscription. This had the apsidal plan, in which the framework was of stone pillars while the intervening spaces were closed by brick work. Presumably it had the rear side curved backed roof as well though we do not know this for certain as only the ground plan was extant. It is clearly the forerunner of the Durga temple and was the earliest Hindu experiment of an apsidal shrine. But it did use, in the main, a more plastic medium of construction, namely brick, which was in vogue for the earlier Buddhist edifices in the valley.



Aihole and elsewhere (signified by the Huchimalligudi temple), not to speak of the simple Hindu temples of the Gupta terrain, the style and artistry of which were by now diffusing into the upper Deccan and Western India. This feature has been noted in Cave VIII of the Buddhist group at Ellora (roughly contemporary with Dumarlena in pillar forms and datable to the end of 7th century A.D.) and the relatively earlier Cave XXI (Ramesvara, Fig. 2, No. 3), Cave XIV (Ravan-ki-Khai, Fig. 2, No. 4) and Caves XVII, XIX, XX and XXVI of the Brahmanical group and those of the Aurangabad Buddhist group (Fig. 2, No. 5). It is very obvious that the progress made in the adaptation of the shrine chamber had been rapid and phenomenal. Coupled with the fact that stūpa chaityas had gone totally out of use after the examples at Ajanta, we have naturally to admit the process of inescapable assimilation of not only the architectural media, but also the iconographical diversification and expansion of the Brahmanical by the Buddhist innovators. It has been held by some scholars that the shift at Ellora and Aurangabad, as distinguished from Ajanta, to the square shrine chamber with the *pradakṣiṇā* around has to be taken as the very end of Buddhist activities at these places, and thus they must be dated to a stage very much later, to the last of the Ajanta caves or the earlier Buddhist groups at Ellora itself. It is reasonable to hold that a clear shift in the architectural plan (wherein Buddhist individuality is all but lacking) has taken place, but at the same time it would not be irrational to premise that in certain stages of art endeavour, a new and useful trend is quickly absorbed by varying creeds both for survival as well as for popularity. It would be an appropriate sequel to the desuetude of stūpa worship itself and to the growing necessity for integrating and combining an assembly hall or a vihāra with the shrine itself instead of having two different structures for these. The model of the vihāras as Caves, I, II, IV, VI (ground floor), XVI and XVII (datable from the end of the 6th century to the second half of the 7th century A.D.) at Ajanta have already paved the way for this both by their shrines and subshrines in the rear wall as also a space for circumambulation around the Buddha figure in the last three cases. Thus the next stage to this organic trend that we see in Cave VIII and others at Ellora is unquestionably without much of a time lag and took place certainly in fifty years or so. Further, in this period of transition, we also have both creeds indulging in a give and take.

A matter of particular significance to be noted here is the fact that the Dasavatara Cave (Fig. 2, No. 6) has many features which speak in favour of its being primarily a Buddhist excavation, continued and completed in its present form by Hindu artisans. The shrine, unlike other caves, is situated at an elevation and is approached by a very long flight of steps in front. The ground floor of the cave does not have any typically Hindu features of lay-out or decoration. There is a plain vihāra-like excavation on the side wall of the hill to the left of the open court and to one side of the central pavilion. The front row of pillars in the first floor has Buddha figures on the bracket capital. The other pillars in the interior are undecorated. The Dvārapāla



figures looking out of the first floor edge are put in and not cut out. As a matter of fact all the sculptured panels are scooped out and do not seem to be the result of a preconceived plan. These features, however, seem to have set a vogue for the same fashionable technique of scooping out into the rock adopted at Dumarlena and also elsewhere. The Dasavatara upper floor again has a shrine in the back wall which is almost the prototype of that in a Buddhist vihāra. Since the cave is datable in its Brahmanical form to the 8th century A.D., one would expect the shrine in the back wall to be a detached one with a *pradakṣiṇā-pāṭha* as was universally the case in the shrines of the Brahmanical faith at Ellora of this and even earlier periods like Ravan-ki-Khai (Fig. 2, No. 4), Ramesvara (Fig. 2, No. 3) etc. In fact, as has been already seen, this *pradakṣiṇā-pāṭha* appealed to the Buddhists so that they adopted it in Cave VIII which is datable to the close of the 7th century A.D. With reference to the Dasavatara, therefore, it seems to be more than probable that the Buddhists, at about the same time the Tin Thāl was being built, roughly excavated the rock chambers both of the ground and first floors, and also the vihāra-like cave on the side flank of the court. They also provided for the rear side shrine chamber, as was their wont (all on the model roughly of Tin Thal), although it is obvious that neither the wall cells nor the shrine facade was completed by them. They only cut out the pillars, the front row also being decorated on the face looking out. At this stage, owing to a great set-back of Buddhism at Ellora, the excavation was given up and completed by Hindu craftsmen a little later in the only way then possible, namely by providing a gallery of sculptured panels on the walls of the hall, putting a *liṅga* in the back shrine and providing the *Dvārapālas*. It is also obvious that the image of Nandi had originally no place but was introduced only during the Hindu phase. Hence, we do not have any real pedestal for the image, except a faint scratching of the floor in order to give it the impression of being a few inches above the surrounding floor. The question arises as to what happened, in this scheme, to the detached pavilion in the front court of the ground floor. This was probably the structure last to be completed and hence during the earlier Buddhist phase it might have been left as an inert mass of rock, to be scooped out later if necessary but only providing for two side entrances into the court. There is even the faint possibility that the original plan of Buddhists was to have excavated a two-storeyed structure here, like the Tin Thal, whereby the considerable elevation of the present Dasavatara cave would have been whittled down further in order to make room for the ground floor which would then be in level with the neighbouring caves. The Dasavatara ground floor also is basically not unlike the ground floor of Tin Thal with its three bays excepting that had the Buddhists continued with it they would have scooped it out on the same pattern, the inner antechamber of six pillars and then the shrine chamber proper. Be this as it may, it is evident that by its outmoded architectural lay-out, and the evidence of the scooped out panels, the Buddha figures, and the vihāra side cave, as also by the nondescript nature of the ground floor, the Dasavatara excavation represents a process of supersession of the initial Buddhist work by sectarian Brahmanical craftsmen—



a transformation achieved without blood and tears, resulting nonetheless, in a retrograde state in respect of the plan. The only positive and forward trend that was achieved is the addition of the detached pavilion in the front court, which is in keeping with the development noted elsewhere. The fact that Dantidurga's inscription, datable to middle of the 8th century A.D., (a little prior to the construction of Kailasa) is engraved on this *maṇḍapa* is significant and it is reasonable to assume that it was carved out in his time and the record affixed to it. The fact that the sculptures of the panels of Dasavatara first floor, with the depiction of elemental and primordial fury and ferocity in the scenes, are different from the sophisticated and sensual appeal of the sculptures carved on the exterior wall of the pavilion in the court (in which we see at least two major sculptures of drinking couples), is enough to vouch for the direction in which the art trends and figure-modelling are moving. These latter sculptures are more in accord, from the point of style, with the sculptures of the Kailasa complex.

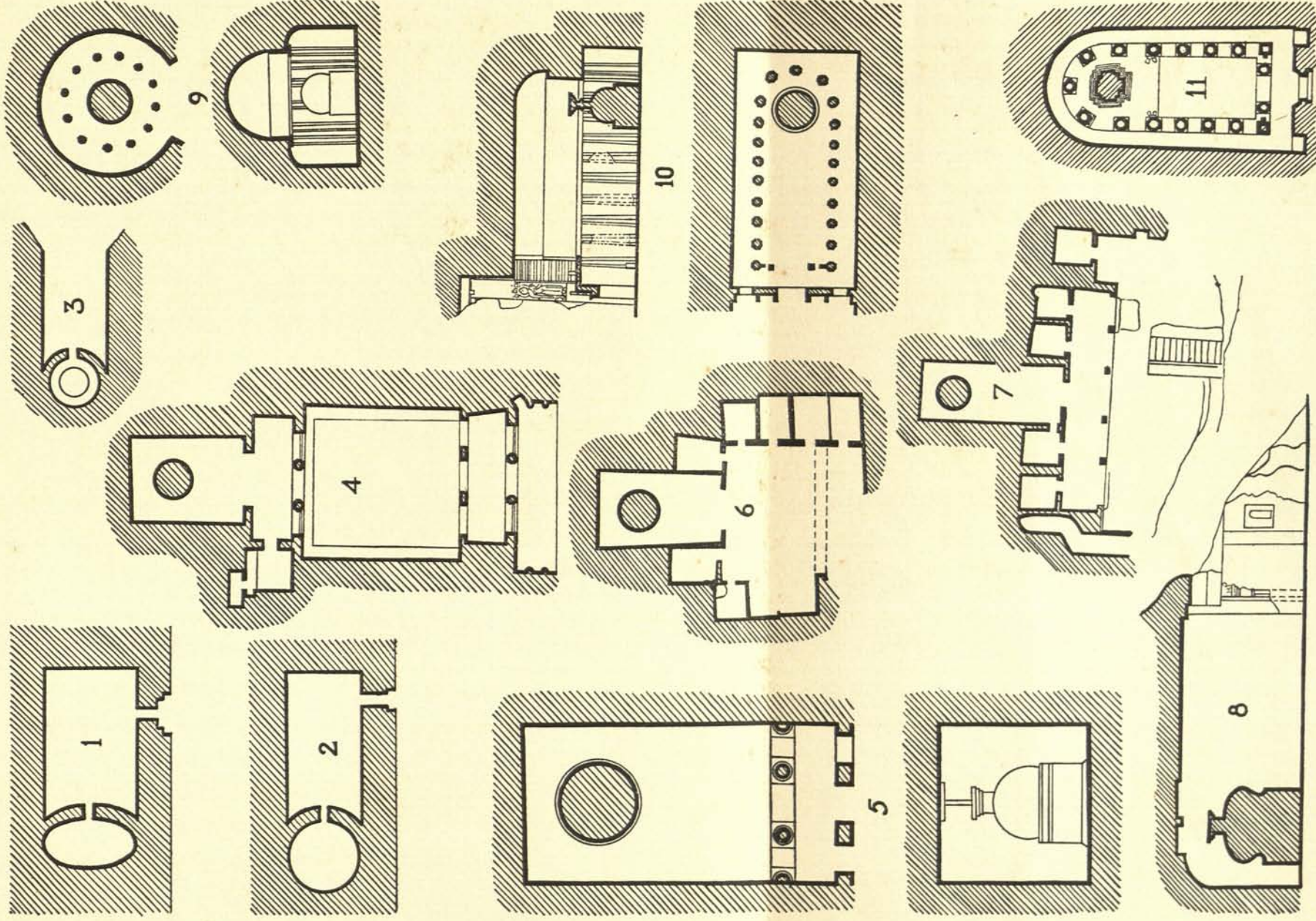
Again, Ramesvara is by far the earliest Brahmanical cave at Ellora and cannot be dated later than the beginning of the 7th century A.D. either on grounds of architecture or sculpture. It clearly precedes the Elephanta cave in its features, and succeeds the Badami cave No. 3 dated to A.D. 579. Thus a brisk pace of development in the lay-out plan as well as art motifs of the two creeds took place, and we see a clear merging of the media and art idioms, Brahmanical art playing a clearly dominant part. The trends are also corroborated by the developments noted elsewhere, as at Aihole and even at far off Mamallapuram.

It is also worth noting that hereafter there is no turning back on the longitudinal ground plan of the temple, on the alignment and juxtaposition of the hypostyle hall to the shrine and the ante-chamber. What is more, the surmounting of a *śikhara* on the shrine, as in the Hindu temple, had also taken its rightful place, and was ready for further fruitful developments. Not only is any further typically Buddhist architectural regulation not seen but when a Buddhist temple was built elsewhere in India, the *śikhara* element was adopted without hesitation as in the case of the Bodh Gaya temple. Indeed it may well be said that the venerated stūpa form of hemispherical shape with its *harmikā* and *chattrā* which died out in the cave architecture of the 7th century A.D. was regenerated in the form of the developed four-cornered stūpa with its pyramidal and conical profile and 'tee' spire as at Bodh Gaya which can perhaps be dated to the end of the 7th or early 8th century A.D. The ground plan that was evolved in the formative stage as at Ellora, Badami, Aihole and Aurangabad was, however, of fundamental and lasting significance for the finite shape of the Hindu temple.









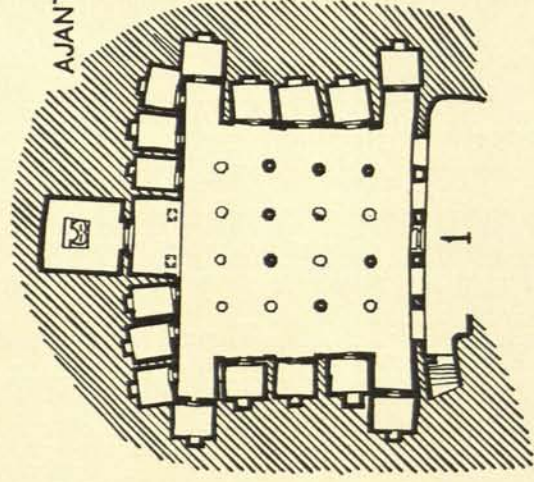
1. LOMAS RISHI CAVE 2. SUDAMA CAVE 3. KONDIVATE CAVE 4. KUDA CAVE 5 & 9. JUNNAR : BUDDHIST CAVES  
 6. SAILARWADI: CAVE 7. KARAD BUDDHIST CAVE 8. KARAD : CAVE V 10. AJANTA: CHAITYA CAVE IX  
 11. AJANTA: CAVE XIX

FIG.1. PLANS & ELEVATIONS OF EARLY CAVE MONUMENTS  
 (NOT TO RELATIVE SCALE)

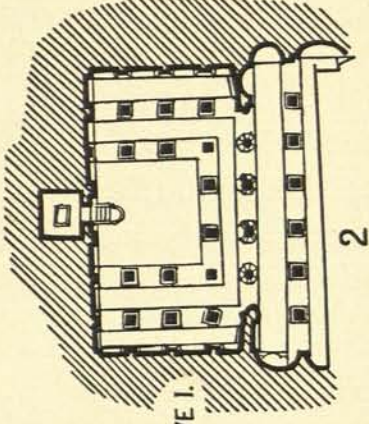




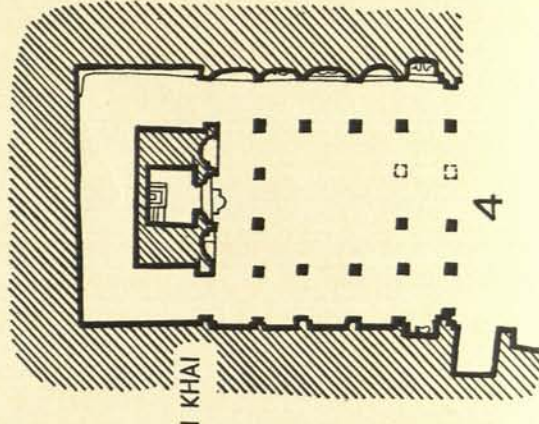




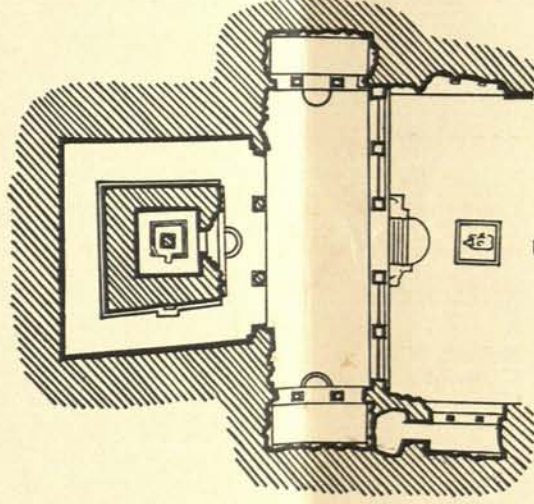
AJANTA: LOWER STORY CAVE VI.



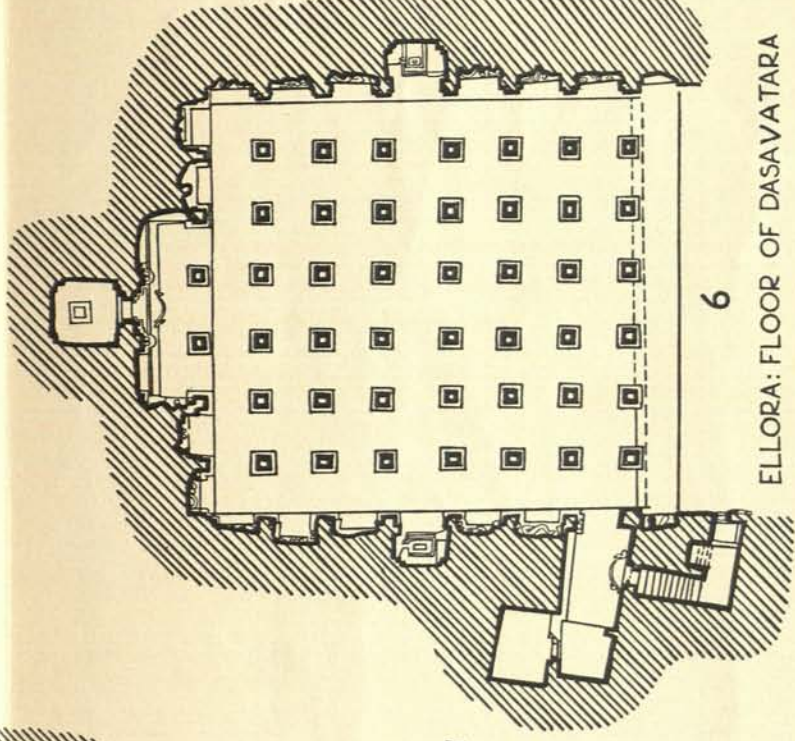
BADAMI: CAVE I.



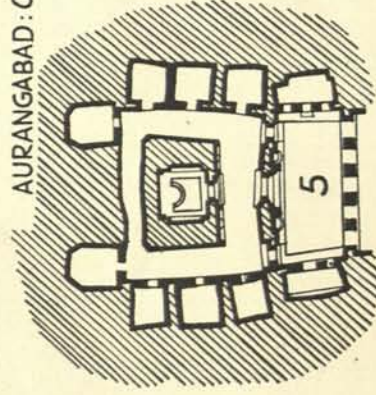
ELLORA: RAVANA KI KHAI



ELLORA: RAMESHWARA CAVE



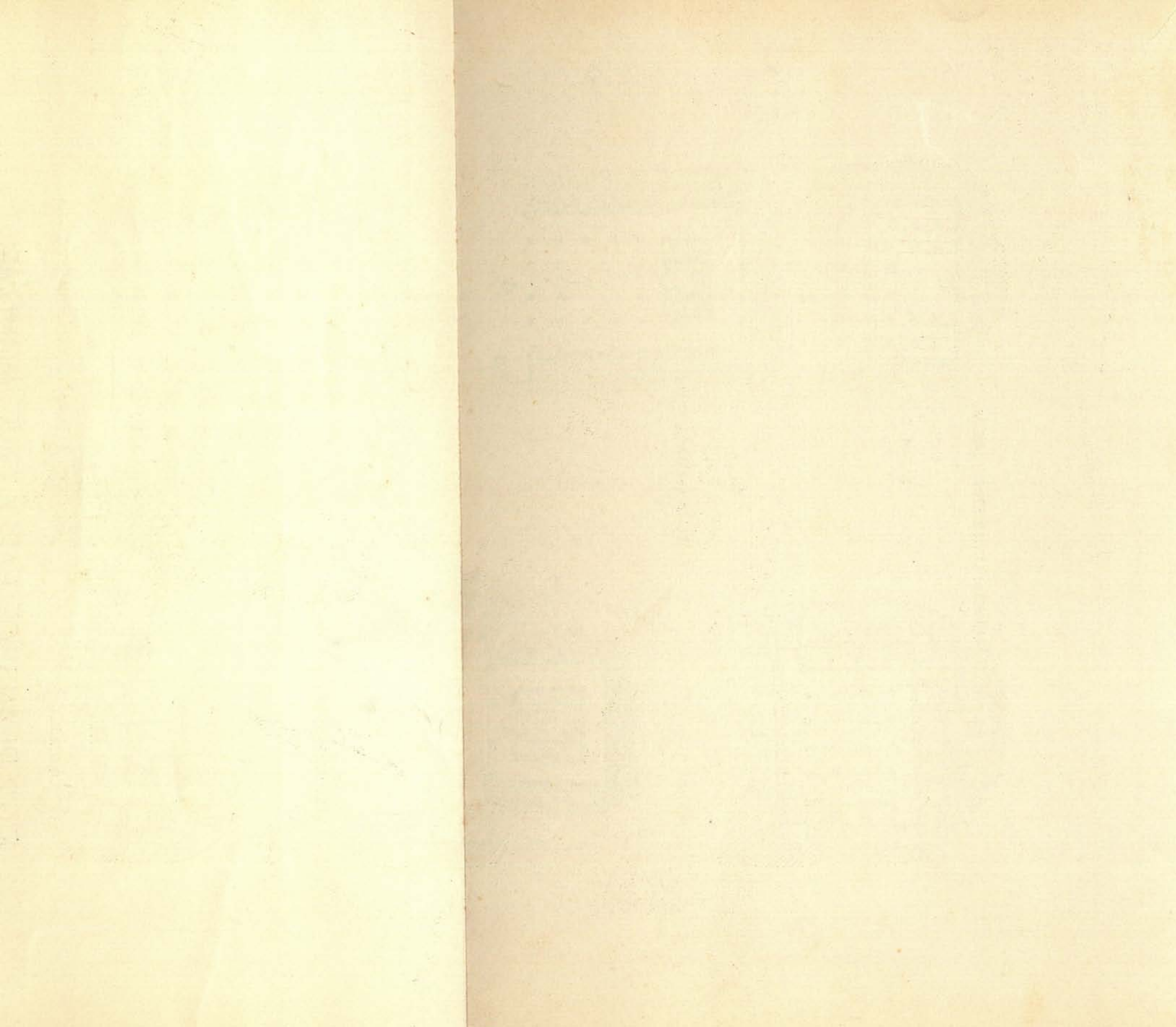
ELLORA: FLOOR OF DASAVATARA



AURANGABAD: CAVE VII

FIG.2. PLANS OF EARLY CAVE MONUMENTS  
(NOT TO RELATIVE SCALE)









**1a.** Ivory figurine of the goddess Śrī. From Pompeii, second half of the 1st century B.C.



**1b.** Hollow bone handle for a mirror. From Taxila; ht. 6.31 ins. *c.* 1st century B.C. — 1st century A.D. National Museum of India.





**4a.** Bone (?) female figurine from Ter. Sātavāhana work, *c.* 1st century A.D.



**4b.** Fragmentary ivory comb. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. *c.* 50 B.C.



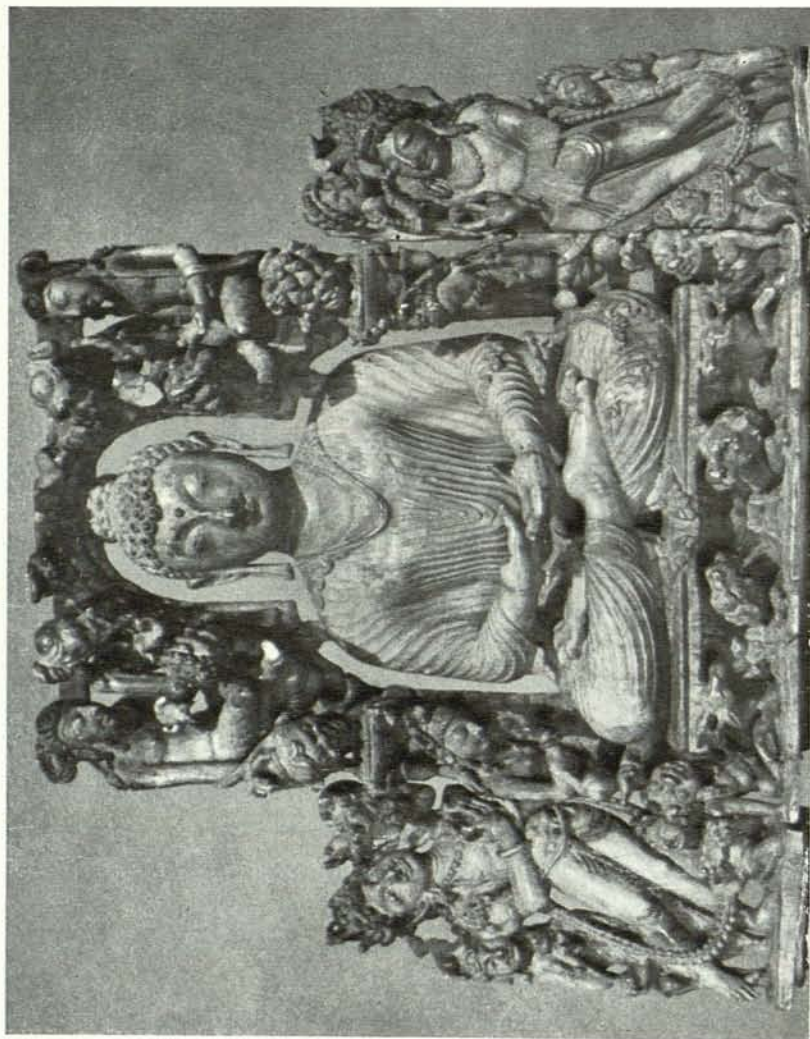


5a. Plaque from Casket IX discovered at Begram. *c.* 2nd century A.D.



5b. Obverse and reverse of an ivory comb from Sirkap, Taxila. *c.* 50-100 A.D.  
National Museum of India.



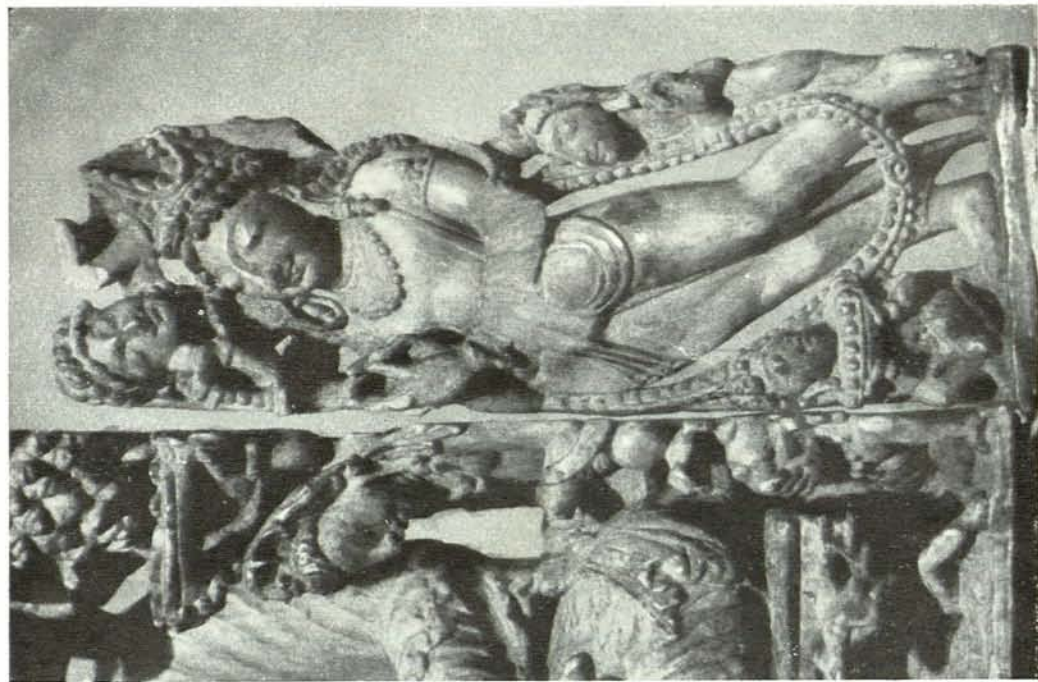


6. Buddha in *dhyanamudrā* seated in a cave. Gupta work, probably from Kashmir, c. 5th century A.D. Same size. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India.





7a. Detail from Pl. 6. Greatly enlarged.



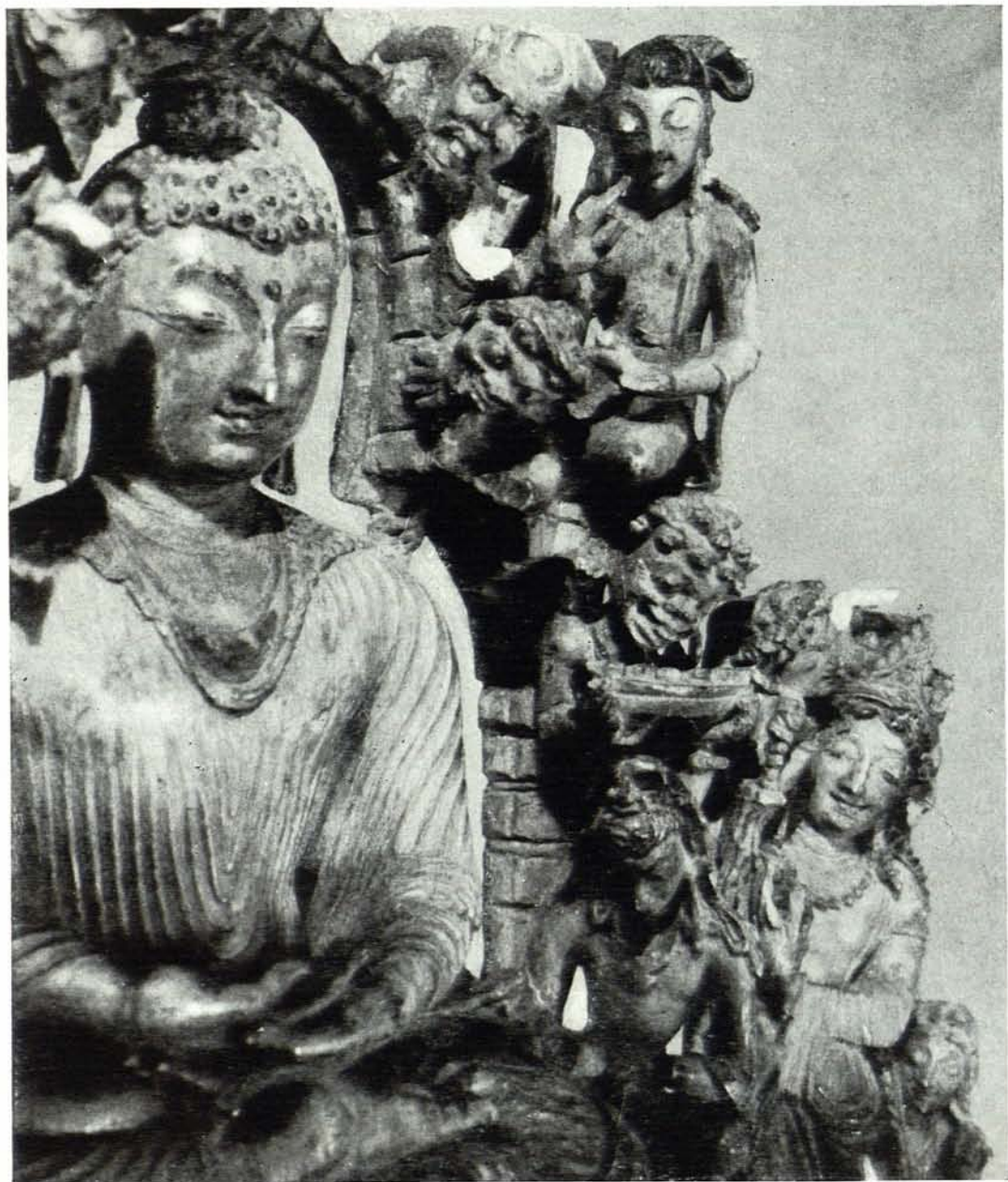
7b. Detail from Pl. 6. Greatly enlarged.





8. Detail from Pl. 6. Greatly enlarged.





9. Detail from Pl. 6. Greatly enlarged.





**10a.** Detail from Pl. 6.



**10c.** Detail from Pl. 10b.



**10b.** Lokeśvara. Gupta work, probably from Kashmir, *c.* 5th century A.D. Same size. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India.



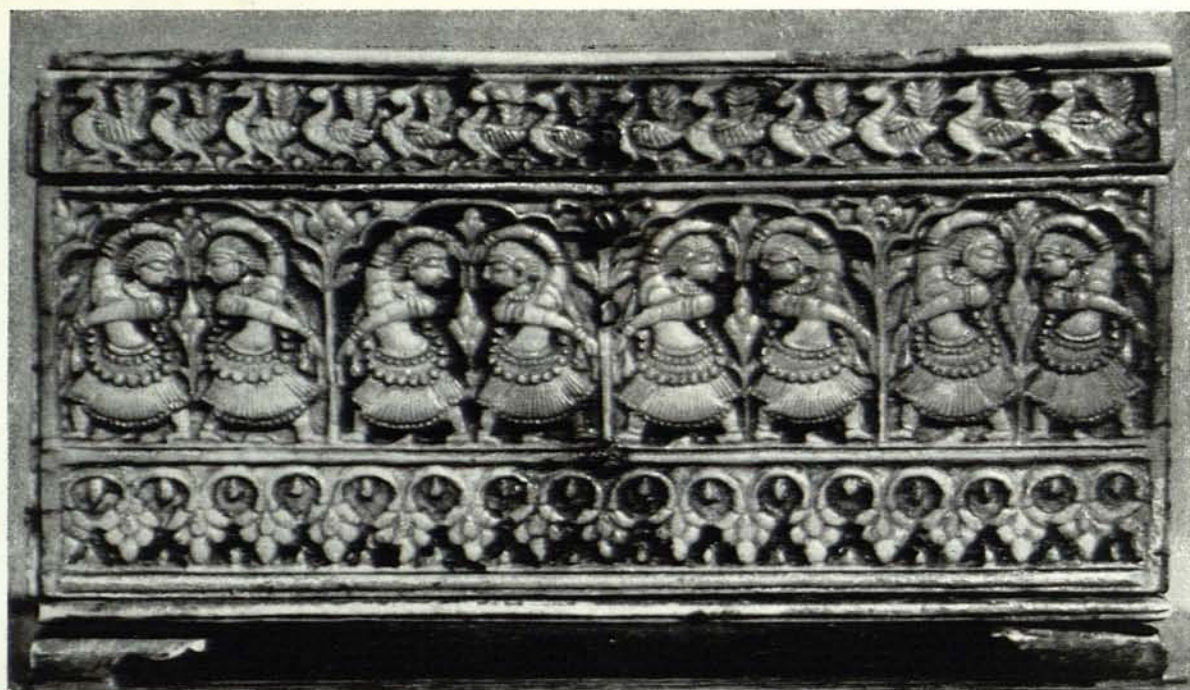


**11a.** Ivory *mithuna* couple. Orissan work, 13th century A.D. Asutosh Museum, University of Calcutta.



**11b.** Ivory figurine of a dancer. Chālukyan work, 12th century A.D. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India.





**12a.** Ivory casket (front panel), Vijayanagar work, c. mid 16th century A.D.  
Prince of Wales Museum of Western India.

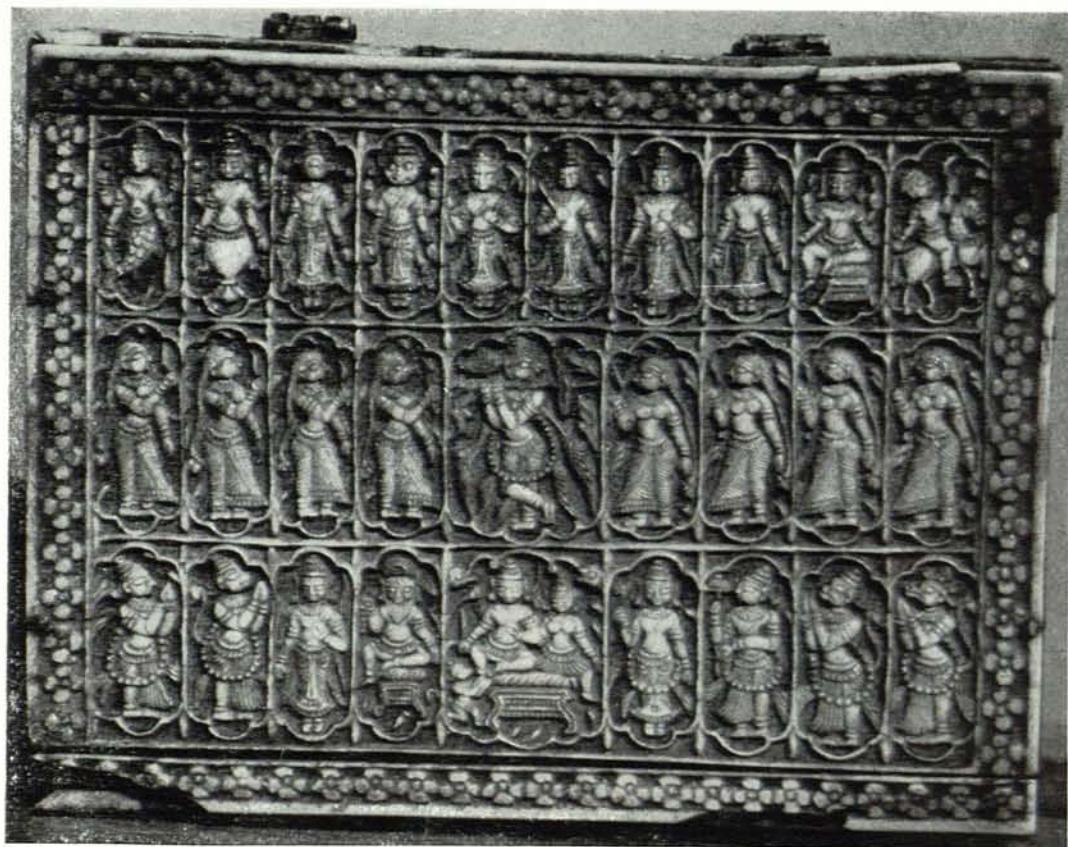


**12b.** Ivory casket, same as 12a, back panel.





**13a.** Ivory casket, same as 12a, side panel.



**13b.** Ivory casket, same as 12b, top panel.





**14a.** Ivory throne-leg. Orissan work, late 16th or early 17th century A.D. Asutosh Museum, University of Calcutta.



**14b.** Front view of Pl. 14a.





**15a.** Side view of Pl. 14a.



**15b.** Ivory throne leg. Orissan work, late 13th century A.D. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.



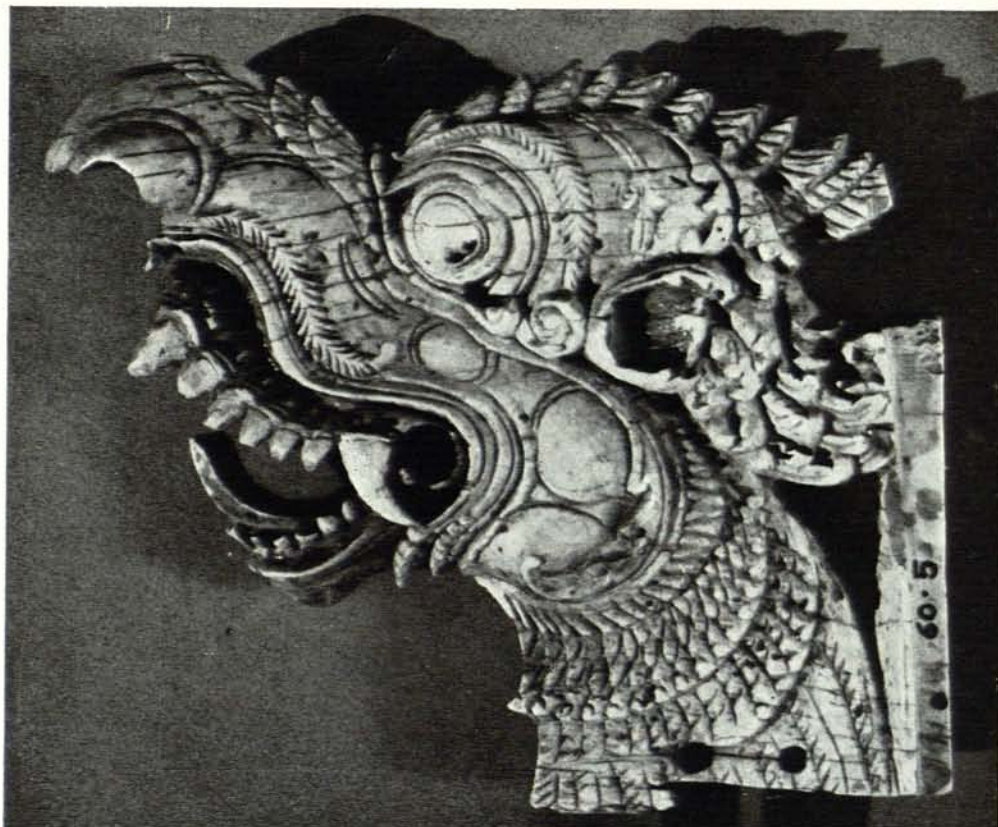
**16a.** Fragment of ivory book cover. South Indian work, late 17th century A.D.



**16b.** Reverse of Pl. 16a.





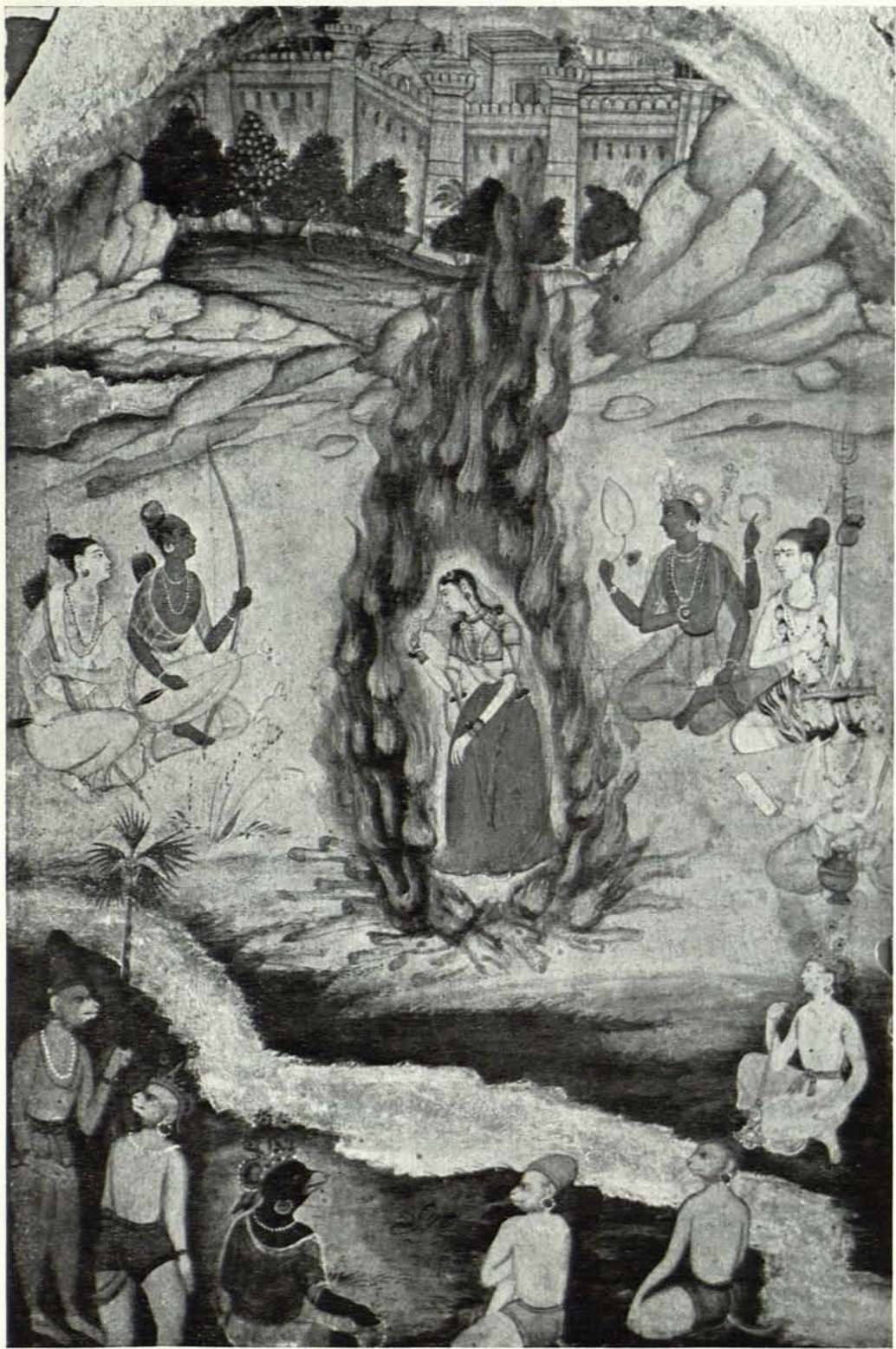


**17a.** Ivory *makara* head. South Indian work, end of the 17th century A.D.  
Prince of Wales Museum of Western India.



**17b.** Ivory image of Gajalakshmi.  
Karnatak work, end of the  
17th century A.D.





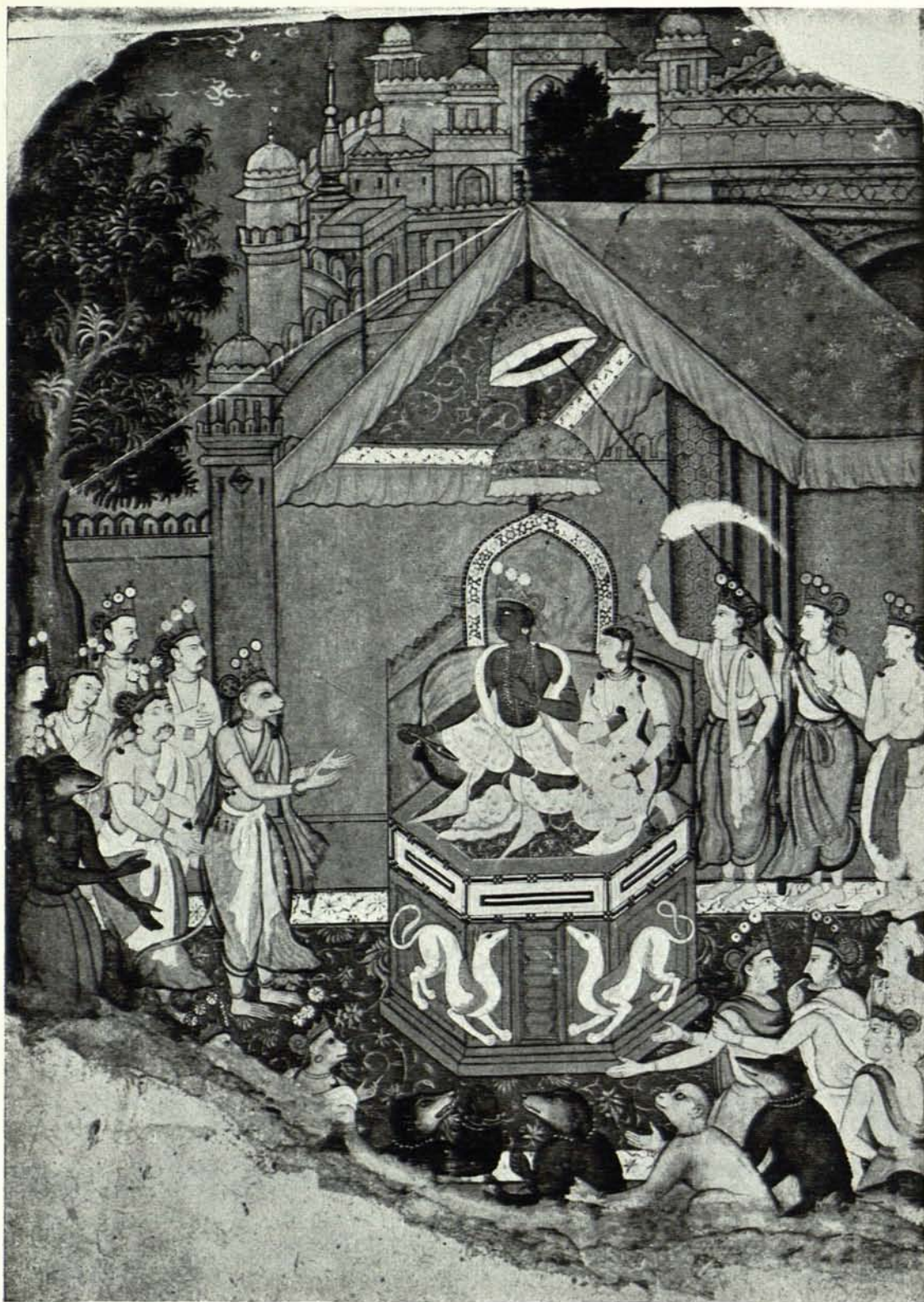
18. The *agni-parikshā* of Sītā. From a Rāmāyaṇa series. Popular Mughal School, c. A.D. 1610. Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Banaras.





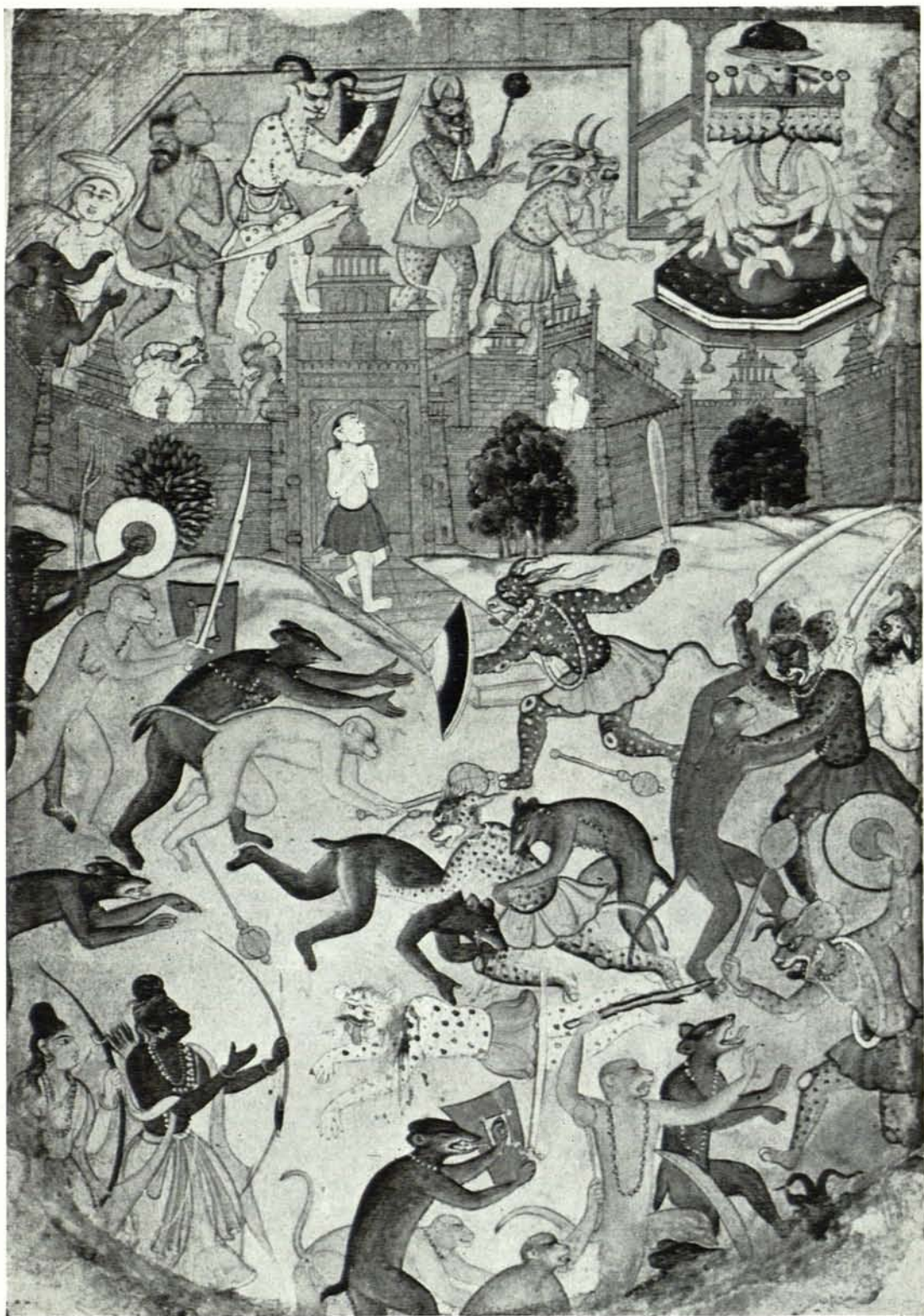
19. Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa at the *āśrama* of Bharadvāja. From a Rāmāyaṇa series. Popular Mughal School, c. A.D. 1610. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India.





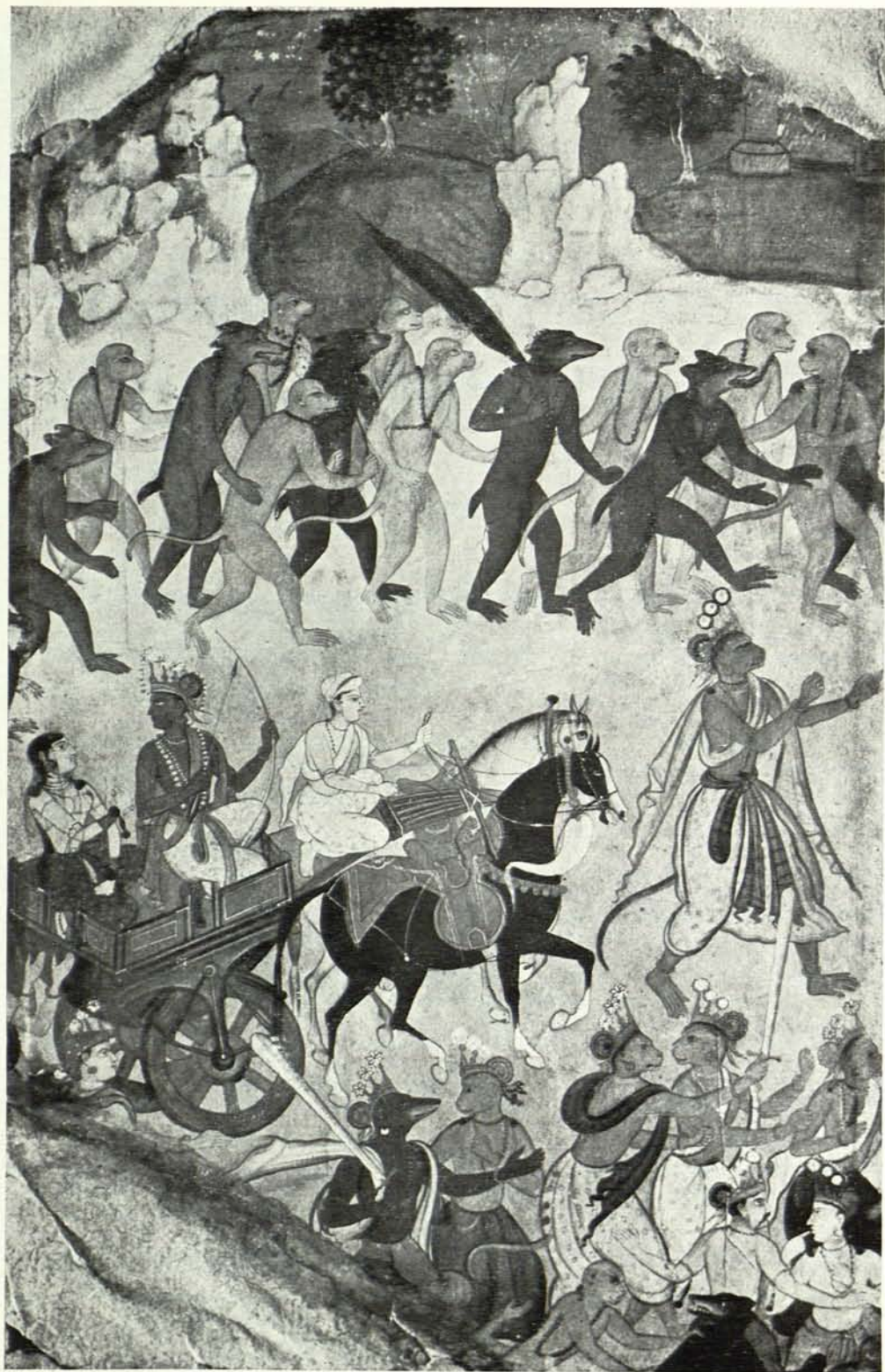
20. Rāma and Sītā enthroned. From a Rāmāyaṇa series. Popular Mughal School, c. A.D. 1610. National Museum of India, New Delhi.





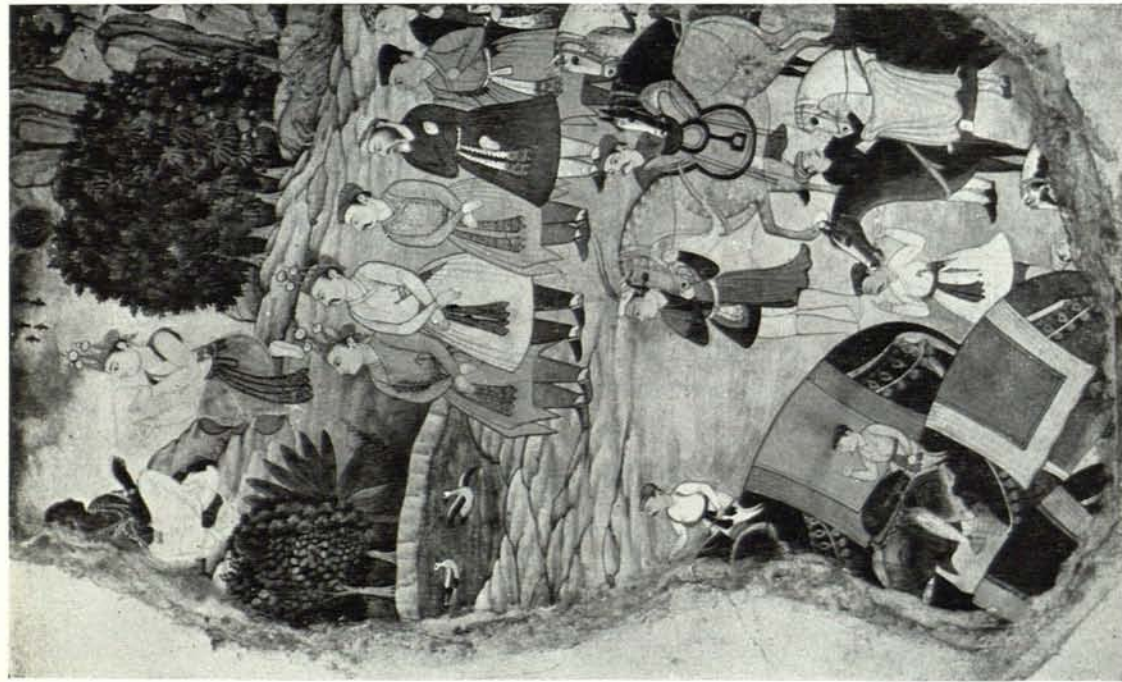
21. Battle scene before Lankā. From a Rāmāyaṇa series. Popular Mughal School, c. A.D. 1610. National Museum of India, New Delhi.



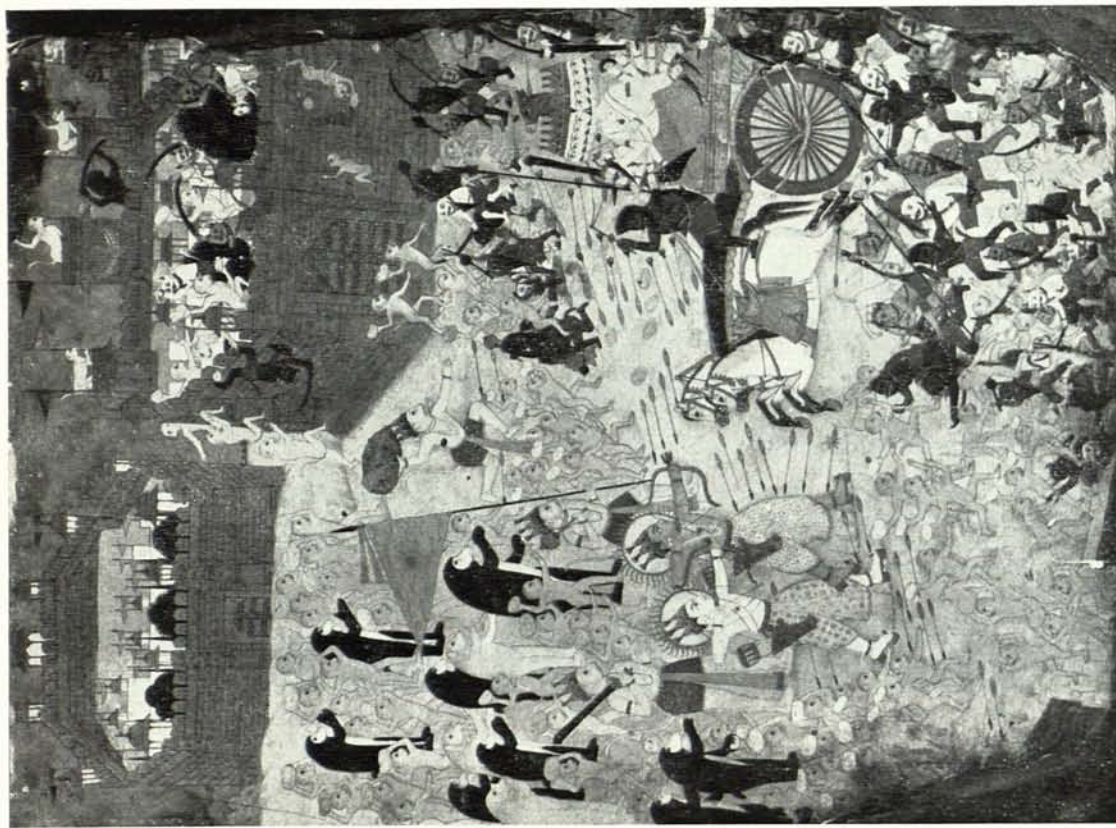


22. The return of Rāma and Sītā to Ayodhyā. From a Rāmāyaṇa series. Popular Mughal School. c. A.D. 1610. Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Banaras.



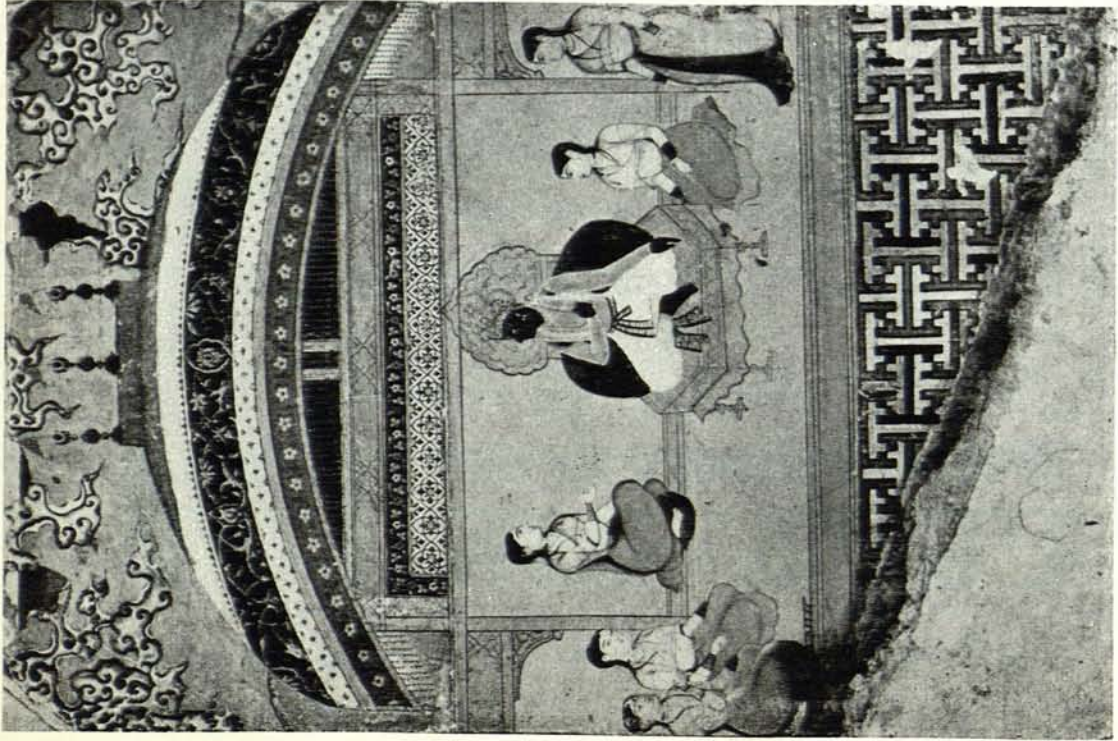


**23a.** Courtiers awaiting the outcome of the meeting between Rāma and Bharata. From a Rāmāyaṇa Series. Popular Mughal School. c. A.D. 1610. National Museum of India, New Delhi.

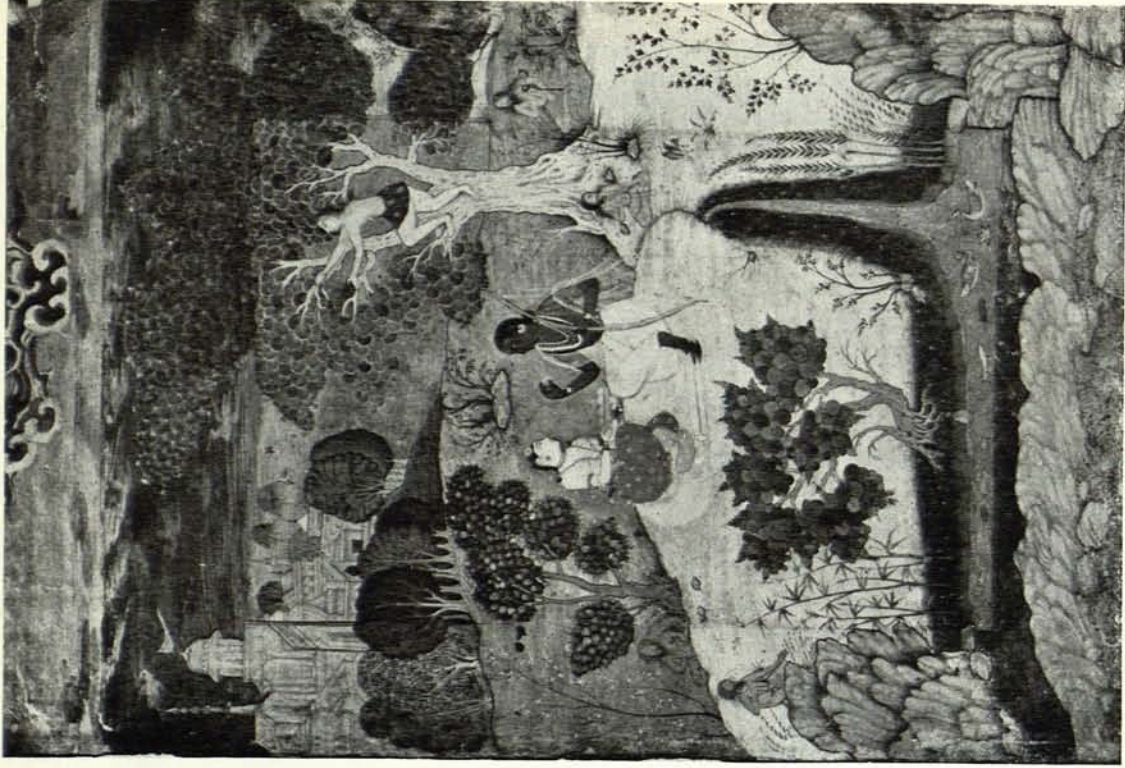


**23b.** Battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Rajasthani style of the mid 18th century imitating the Rāmāyaṇa Series of c. A.D. 1610. Collection of Shri Haridas Swali, Bombay.



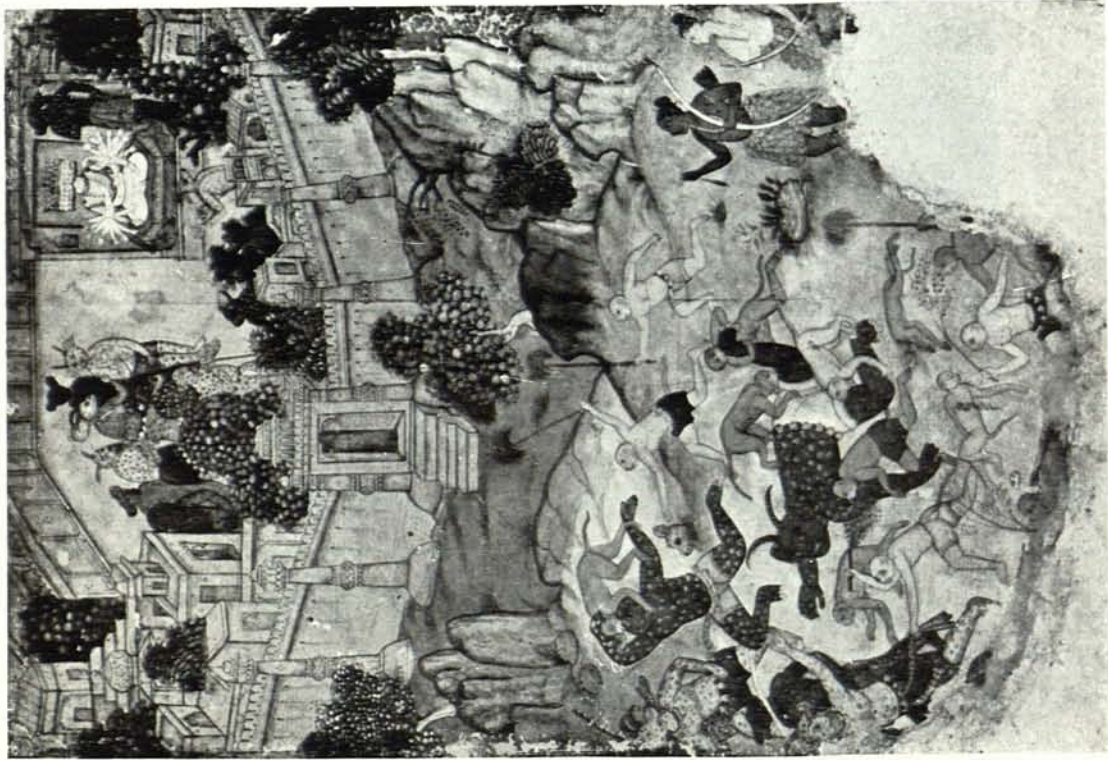


**24a.** Rāma and Sītā seated in a palace with attendants. From a Rāmāyaṇa series. Popular Mughal School. c. A.D. 1610. National Museum of India, New Delhi.

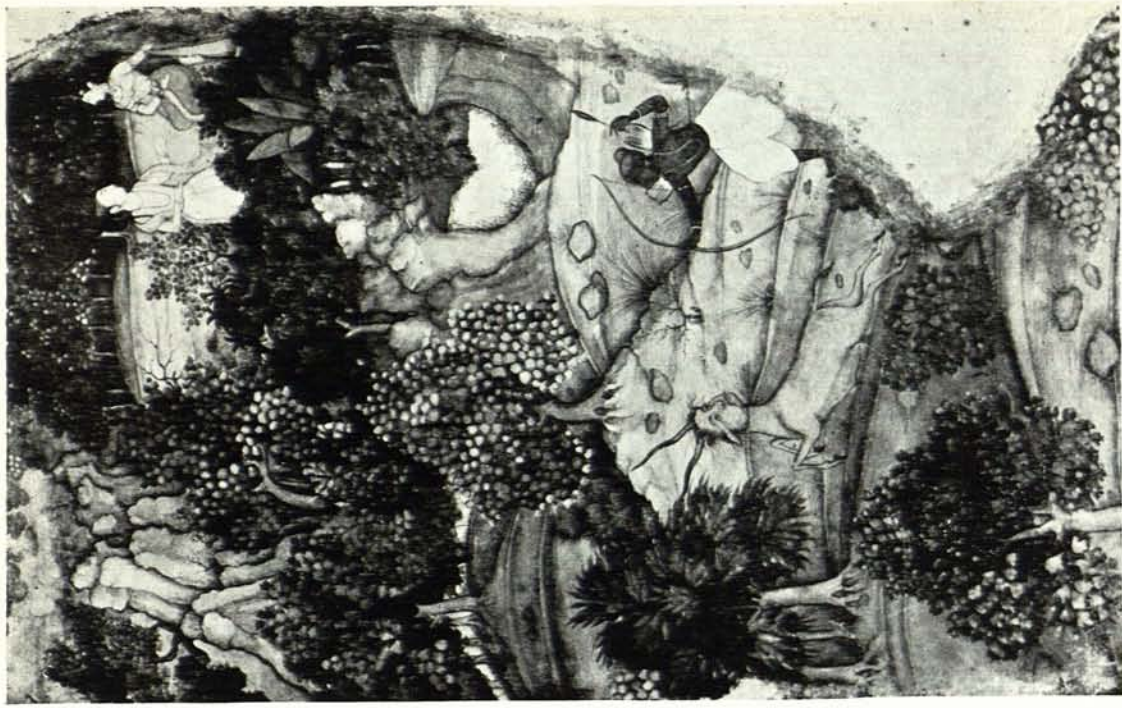


**24b.** Sītā offering food to Rāma in a tray. From a Rāmāyaṇa series. Popular Mughal School. c. A.D. 1610. National Museum of India, New Delhi.



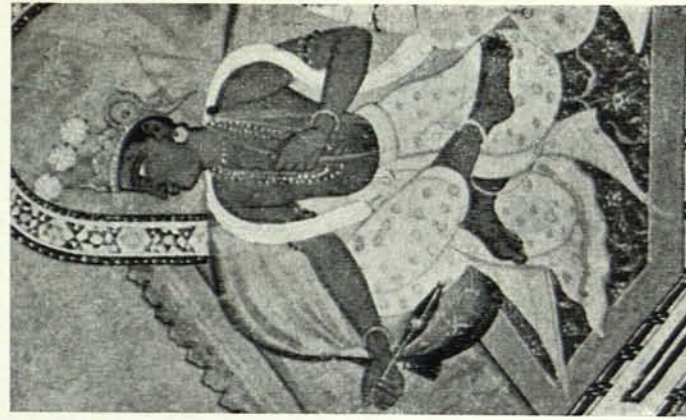
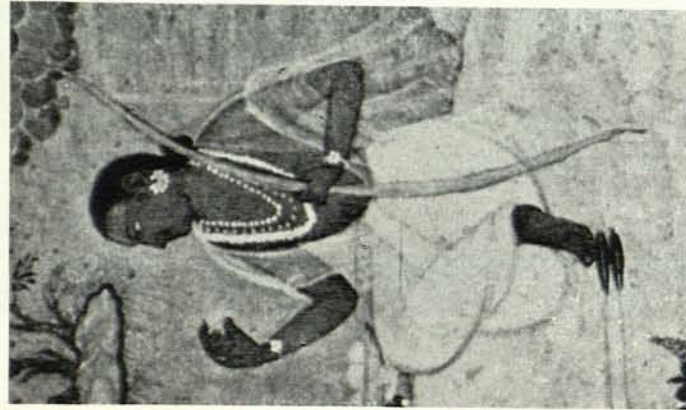
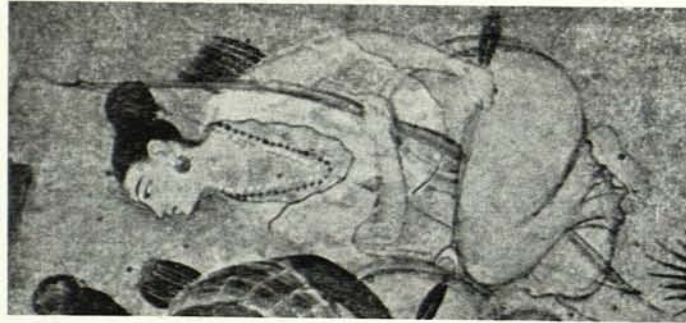
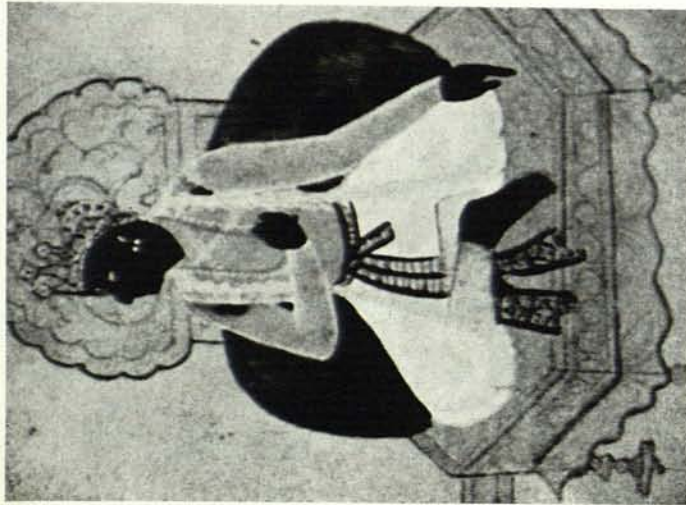


**25a.** The army of monkeys attacking the demons. From a Rāmāyana series. Popular Mughal School. c. A.D. 1610. National Museum of India, New Delhi.



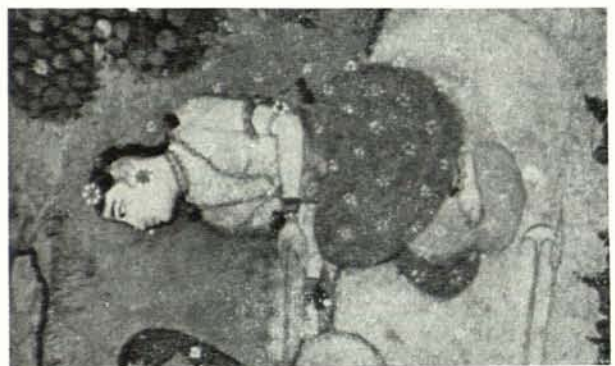
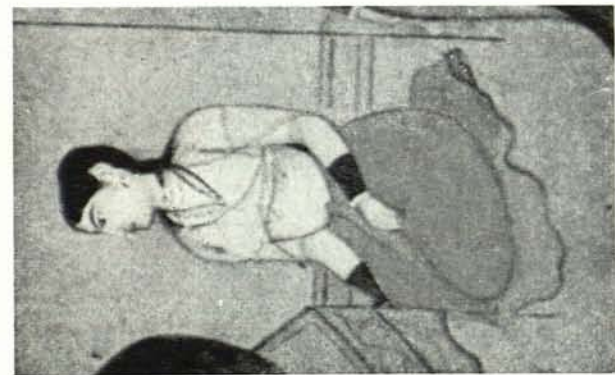
**25b.** Rāma hunting the golden deer. From a Rāmāyana series. Popular Mughal School. c. A.D. 1610. National Museum of India, New Delhi.





**26.** Details of seated male figures from (a) Pl. 24a (Rāma and Sītā seated in a palace with attendants; (b) Pl. 18 (The *agni-parīkṣā* of Sītā); (c) Pl. 24 b (Sītā offering food to Rāma in a tray); and (d) Pl. 20 (Rāma and Sītā enthroned).





**27.** Details of seated female figures from (a) Pl. 24a (Rāma and Sītā seated in a palace with attendants); (b) Pl. 19 (Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa at the *āśrama* of Bharadvāja); (c) Pl. 24b (Sītā offering food to Rāma in a tray); and (d) Pl. 20 (Rāma and Sītā enthroned).





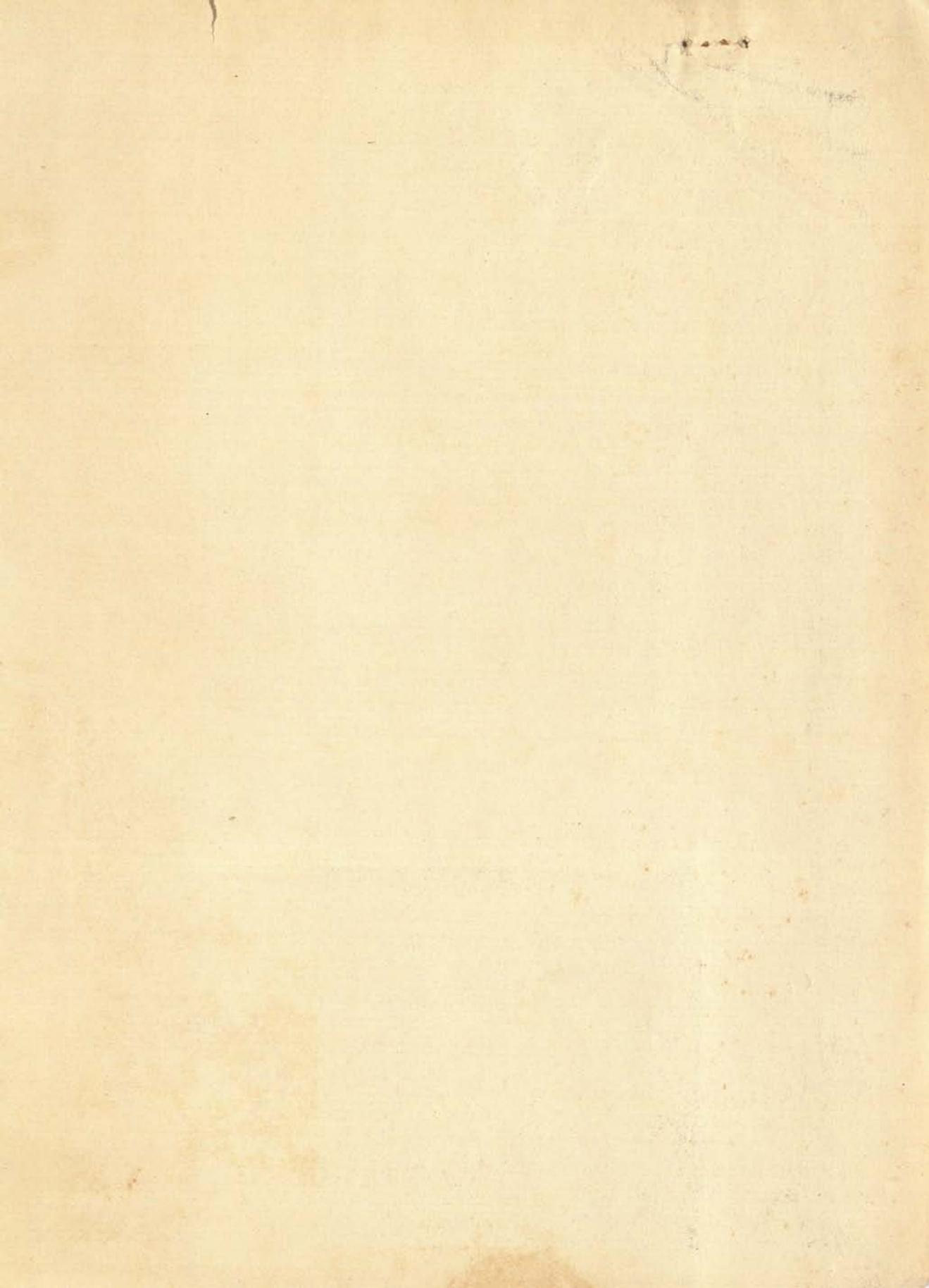
**28a.** Fragment of the inner corner pillar. From Bharhut, now in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. Gift of Shrimati Madhuri Desai, Bombay.



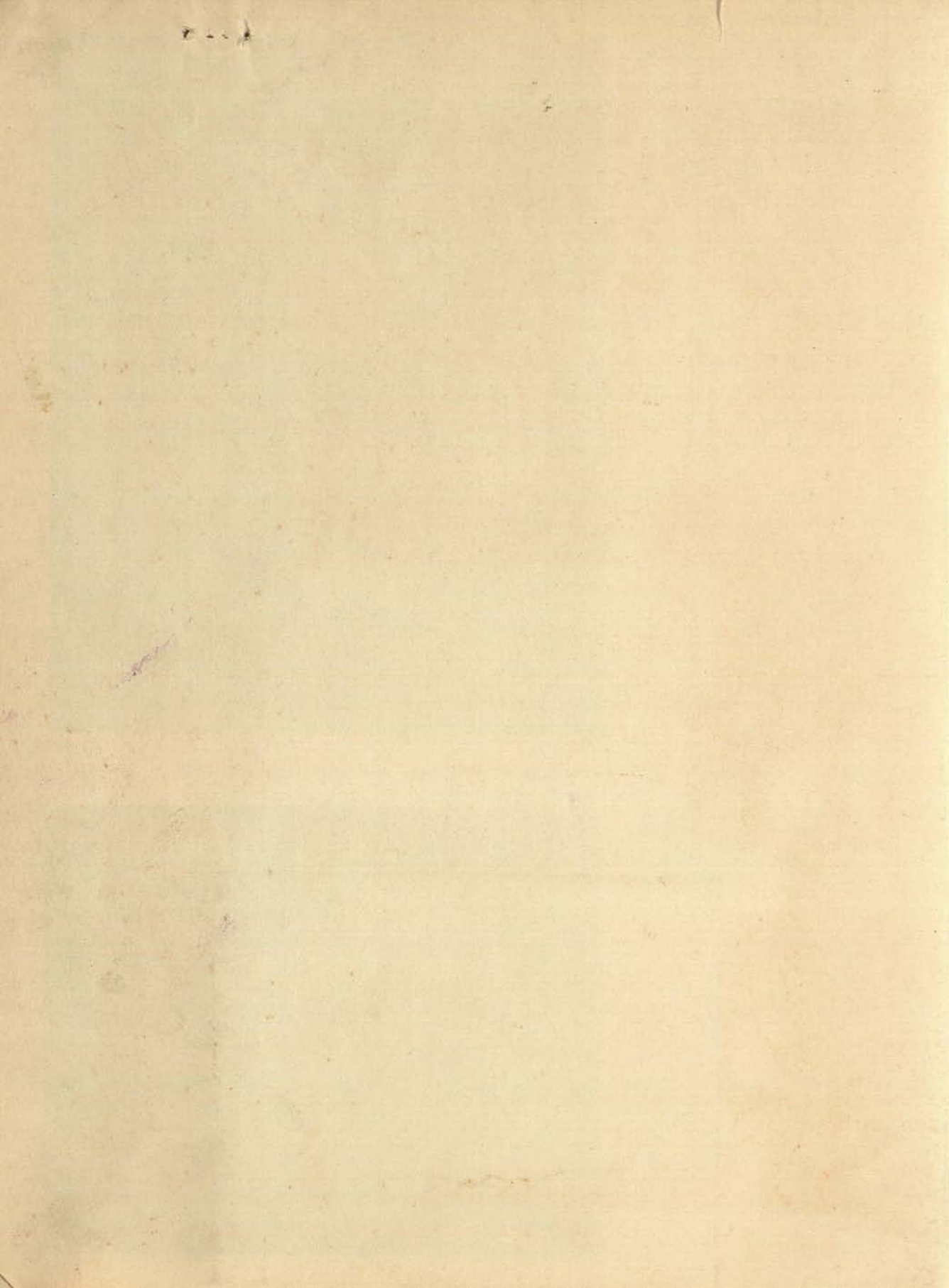
**28b.** Fragment of coping stone from Bharhut, now in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. Gift of Shrimati Madhuri Desai, Bombay.













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