THE ROCK-CUT CAVES OF PITALKHORA IN THE DECCAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE Buddhist caves of Pitalkhora (lat. 20° 20'N., long. 75° 00'E.) are excavated into the rock of the Satamala range, also known as Chandora, on the northern fringe of Aurangabad District, Bombay State, and are approached from a place called Bhamarwadi, 42 miles from Aurangabad, on the road connecting Aurangabad with Chalisgaon in East Khandesh District in the same State. From Bhamarwadi a country-track of 7 miles leads to the caves via the villages Upla, Amba and Tanda. As the crow flies, the caves lie 50 miles to the west-south-west of Ajanta and 23 miles to
the north-west of Ellora. They are located in a wild picturesque ravine in the Deccan trap. From the elevated plateau overlooking the ravine by which they are situated is seen at a distance the formidable triangular hill of Khairama, at the foot of which are the remains of the medieval temples of Patan.

Due to the inaccessibility of Pitalkhora, the caves have not attracted wide attention. The earliest account of them seems to have appeared in 1853, when John Wilson gave a very brief description of the chaitya-cave (Cave 3, below, p. 72) and the adjoining vihāra-cave (Cave 4, below, p. 73), including the paintings in the former and the sculptures in the latter. In their monumental book, Cave Temples of India, Fergusson and Burgess gave a more detailed account of the caves and specially mentioned the same chaitya and the vihāra. In another work Burgess drew particular attention to the capitals on the pilasters of the vihāra and dealt with the inscriptions, two in the chaitya and the five over the cell-doors of the vihāra, recording gifts from the natives of Pratishthāna. The characters of the inscriptions in the chaitya were ascribed by him to the Mauryan period on account of their supposed resemblance with Aśokan characters.

In more recent years M. G. Dikshit gave a short description of the caves, especially emphasizing the development of their architectural forms. He also mentioned the two unnoticed caves (Caves 10 and 11, below, p. 78) lying on the opposite side of the ravine; though he could not do justice to them, as they were full of débris, he pointed out that they belonged to circa first-second centuries A.D. and thus helped in bridging the gap in the development of rock-cut architecture and in providing a continuous history of rock-cut activities at Pitalkhora starting in the second century B.C. and culminating with the re-occupation of the caves in the sixth-seventh centuries A.D.

The caves were taken charge of by the Department of Archaeology, Government of India, in 1953. In the course of the last few years, the two caves noticed by Dikshit have been completely cleared and two more chaitya-caves (Caves 12 and 13, below, p. 79) on the same side of the ravine discovered and cleared. Last year were also revealed, during clearance, some unique features in the chaitya and the vihāra of the previously-known group. This comprehensive all-round clearance has exposed the original architectural features of the caves, as far as they are extant, and has salvaged remarkable sculptures that had fallen with the disintegration of the façade. The prospects were indeed promising, for there were indications that flights of steps had originally existed in both Caves 3 and 4 evidently leading down to a lower forecourt, and the rock-mass of the façade, while falling on the forecourt, must have brought down with it sculptures that perhaps might have existed thereon. Both the superficial observations were amply confirmed, for unique sculptures, both in situ and detached, crystal reliquaries, miniature stūpas and inscriptions were discovered as a result of the all-round clearance.

2. PITALKHORA IN ANCIENT TIMES

The caves of Pitalkhora lay on an ancient caravan-route (sārthavāha-patha) (fig. 1). Caravans from the Govardhana country (Nasik region) and from Śūrpāraka (Sopara,
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District Thana) crossed the Indhyadri hill close to where these caves are situated in order to reach their destination Pratishthāna, the capital of the Śatavāhanas and a great commercial centre a few centuries before and after the Christian epoch. The route almost followed the present-day Chalisgaon-Aurangabad-Paithan road; Ellora, which the later Buddhists chose as the site for their rock-cut monasteries, was also on the route. The Outram Pass is thus only recent attempt to provide an all-weather track connecting the plains of Khandesh with the tableland on which Paithan stands.

In this connexion, a little digression is necessary to point out a similar situation of the Ajanta caves as well. The northern route from Ujjain, after crossing the Narmada and proceeding beside modern Burhanpur, came to the ancient town of Bahal (District East Khandesh), from where the caravans either went south, to Pratishthāna, or west, to Nasik. Those that went to Pratishthāna climbed the Indhyadri range in the vicinity of Ajanta. The road from Bahal to Pratishthāna passed beside Aurangabad, which again has Buddhist caves. The identification of the ancient Bhogavardhana with Bhokardan (District Aurangabad), which lies half-way between Ajanta and Aurangabad and where the author recently discovered an ancient habitation-site of the early historical period, supplies a link in this route.

To come back to Pitalkhora. When news of the discoveries here appeared in the press, Shri Pramod Chandra, Assistant Curator, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, drew the author’s attention to the list of yakshas of different places given in the Buddhist text Mahāmāyūri, wherein is mentioned the yaksha Saṅkārin as residing at Pitaṅgalya:

\[ \text{Pratishthāne cha Khaṇḍakaḥ} \]
\[ \text{Pitaṅgalayeshu Saṅkārin Taranagavatīyāh Sūkhāvahāh} \]
\[ \text{Naśikya Sundaro yaksha Asāngo Bharukachchhake} \]

‘Khāṇḍaka (lives) at Pratishthāna, Saṅkārin at Pitaṅgalya, Sukhāvaha at Taranaṅgavatī, Sundara at Naśikya, Asānga at Bharukachchha’.

While Naśikya is Nasik and Bharukachcha is Broach on the Narmada estuary, Taranaṅgavatī may be Taranga (District Mehsana). What is more important for the present purpose is that Pitaṅgalya has been identified with Ptolemy’s Petrigala and may also be regarded as the ancient name of Pitalkhora. If this is correct, the sequence of place-names in the Mahāmāyūri almost follows the ancient Pratishthāna-Bharukachcha route. Pitaṅgalya-Petrigala was evidently a township, the remains of which exploration may one day bring to light.

3. CHRONOLOGY

There is no doubt that the cave-excavations at Pitalkhora were the outcome of the same architectural activity as was responsible for similar excavations at many other places in the trap-region of the northern Deccan in the centuries just preceding and following

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1 Excavation conducted at this place by the writer in 1952 and 1957 revealed its importance as a flourishing town in the early historical period, with remains of chalcolithic habitation at the lowest levels.
2 Aurangabad may be identified with Rājatalāka (Rājatādāga) mentioned in some inscriptions, Jour. Bombay Br. Roy. As. Soc., VI (1861), p. 3; Lüders, ‘List of Brāhmī Inscriptions’, Epigraphia Indica, X (1909-10), no. 988.
3 Mentioned in many early inscriptions, Lüders, op. cit., nos. 264, 266, 295, 296, 373 and 572.
5 Ibid., p. 41.
Christ. Again, these caves share the characteristic with other caves in the region of a fairly long desertion after the first phase of activity and a re-occupation during a second phase, in the fifth-sixth centuries A.D. It is customary to associate respectively these two phases, politically, with the Śatavāhana-Kshaharaṇa and Vakāṭaka régimes and, in terms of Buddhist sectarianism, with the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna. It should, at the same time, be noted that the second phase did not witness at Pītākhora any fresh excavation or any extensive re-embellishment by way of the decoration of the cave-façades, etc., with carved Buddha-Bodhisattva figures, which is one of the characteristics of the second phase at almost all other caves in the region: in fact, in the whole range of the Pītākhora caves, there is not a single sculpture of Buddha or the Bodhisattvas, practically the only evidence of the re-occupation of the caves during the second phase being furnished by the paintings of Buddha-Bodhisattva figures, sometimes accompanied by painted records, in Cave 3 (below, p. 72). Palaeographically, these records are ascribable to circa sixth century A.D.¹ Within these limits, the internal chronology of the excavation of the Pītākhora caves can be only tentatively worked out on general considerations, aided by the evidence of architectural and sculptural forms and inscriptions where available.

Of the caves in Group I (below, pp. 71-78), only Caves 3 and 4 have inscriptions in situ; on palaeographical grounds they may be assigned to the second century B.C. These two caves may therefore belong to that period. That they are contemporary with each other is also indicated by their sharing a common forecourt, which shows that their excavation was designed simultaneously. Cave 2, which too faces the same forecourt, may also belong to that period.

The remains of Cave 1 are too scanty to be of any use for dating purposes, but its contiguity with those mentioned above may indicate more or less the same date for it.

To the same period, viz. second century B.C., may be ascribed the inscription (below, p. 76 and pl. LII C) on a loose boulder lying in front of Cave 5, from which, evidently, it got detached. Cave 5 may, therefore, claim an equal antiquity.

Caves 6 to 9, including 6A, were the result of the westward extension of the rock-extraction activity. Of them, Caves 6 and 7 have some common features, viz. the astylar hall, vaulted roof with sockets for wooden attachments in some cells and stepped merlons on the architrave and brackets, which may possibly indicate for them a date somewhat later than the preceding ones. Cave 9, with a berm with the vedikā-pattern on the architrave, may be ascribed to the first century B.C.

Caves 10 and 11 of Group II (below, p. 78) may be assigned to the first-second century A.D. on the basis of the developed shape of the stūpas and architectural details therein. Caves 12 and 13, lacking these features, should belong to an earlier period, say the first century B.C.

The sculptures, both in situ and recovered loose from the débris, all belong, as stated above, to this first phase of the occupation of the caves, covering the first two centuries before and after Christ. The setting up of detached (as distinct from rock-engraved) sculptures on the façades of the caves (e.g. Cave 4, p. 73), and Cave 13 (p. 79), to make good the worn-out rock-surfaces, generally took place later than the excavation of the caves themselves.

The series of sculptures starts, stylistically, with those characterized by an archaic naïveté (e.g. Gaja-Lakshmi, p. 80 and pl. LV A, and yakṣas, pp. 81-83 and pls. LVII and LVIII), which form the earliest sculptures in western India, and gradually gathers

¹ Unfortunately, no detailed palaeographical examination of any painted record of the second phase of the western Indian caves, including Ajanta, has as yet been undertaken.
elaboration and sophistication (e.g. seated female figure, p. 76 and pl. LIII A), till it reaches a full development that is almost comparable with that of Amaravati (e.g. royal couple, p. 87 and pl. LXIII A).

The discovery of the sprinkler of the Red Polished Ware, regarded as of Samian origin (below, p. 90), is of an uncertain dating value, first, as the vessels of this type were found in the midst of débris, and, secondly, the type and the Ware were imitated locally and were current at many sites till much later times.

4. THE CAVES

The caves (pl. XLVI) are situated on both sides of a deep ravine cut into the rock by a hill-stream plunging down a precipice. To reach the main group (which was known to Wilson and Ferguson and Burgess, above, p. 67), called here Group I, one has to cross the stream. The newly-discovered caves, constituting Group II, are excavated on the other side of the ravine. The two groups thus face each other, the first cave (Cave 10) of Group II almost facing the last cave (Cave 9) of Group I. The caves have been serially numbered here, Caves 1 to 9 (including 6A) constituting Group I (pl. XLVII A) and Caves 10 to 12 Group II.

A. GROUP I

(i) Cave 1

Cave 1 has undergone much damage and now appears almost like a huge natural opening, but the extant remains of some of the living-cells, mortise-holes for wooden door-jambs and benches to serve as beds indicate that this gaping cavern represents the ruins of two or more rock-cut vihāras. One such vihāra lay in the south-west end and had two cells in the back and three on the right side, each with a rock-cut bench. In the wide portion also there are indications of cells, but it is difficult to determine their number. The rock into which the cave was excavated has, at a height of 4 ft. from the floor-level, a very loose stratum of red bhol, which in course of time weathered, thus causing the disappearance of the thin partition-walls which originally demarcated the caves from one another and otherwise contributing to the decay of the caves.

(ii) Cave 2

The recent clearance of the forecourt revealed a flight of eleven steps leading from it to Cave 2, the forecourt being shared by this cave and the adjoining caves, Caves 3 and 4; the three caves are thus contemporary with one another. The wall dividing caves 2 and 3 has completely disappeared owing to the disintegration of the rock. The extant remains of Cave 2, a vihāra, consist of a series of four cells on the right side, each provided with one or two raised benches, a long bench at the back and the damaged remains of two cells on the left. An important feature is a rock-cut drain with loose covering slabs: it drained out water which would have otherwise flowed into Cave 3 but was very ingeniously diverted through a wide aperture by boring a hole into the ceiling of its vaulted roof. This effective method of dealing with leakages in rock-cut monuments is a good example of ancient conservation.
(iii) Cave 3

Cave 3, a chaitya-cave, though described in the past by Fergusson and Burgess,¹ is again dealt with here, as it has been noticed that their description is not accurate in essential details, probably owing to the fact that the frontage of the cave and the extant stumps of pillars were not previously exposed. The complete clearance of the cave has revealed that it is 35 ft. wide and 86 ft. long with an apsidal end. Originally there were in all thirty-seven octagonal rock-cut pillars separating the aisle from the hall. Of them, the front five of the right side and four of the left are missing, except for their traces on the ground. Of the rest, sixteen were reconstructed in the recent past by the former Hyderabad State as rectangular masonry pillars and the remaining twelve stand almost intact in their original form and even retain remnants of paintings of circa sixth century, as also two early inscriptions contemporaneous with the excavation of the cave.² The inscriptions, on the tenth and eleventh pillars from outside on the right, record that one was a gift of Mitadeva of the Gadhika (perfumers?) family and the other of the sons of Samghaka, both hailing from Patithana (Pratishthana, Paithan).

All the pillars have a slight inward rake and are similar to those of the chaitya at Bhaja and Cave 10 at Ajanta. The aisles are 4 ft. 11 in. wide and have stone ribs on the ceiling, which is like a half-arch. The vault of the nave was once provided with wooden ribs, as in the chaityas of Bhaja and Karla; though all woodwork has now completely perished, their positions can still be marked (pl. XLVIII C). The square spaces between the wooden ribs were once decorated with paintings on plaster, of which a few traces of panels with lotuses exist.

The paintings on the pillars (pl. XLVII) and side-walls call for a special study. It may only be noted here that all the extant pillars bear paintings of Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas. A noticeable fact about the paintings on the walls is that the original wall-surface, which had badly weathered due to the disintegration of the layer of bole (above, p. 71), was repaired with closely-jointed stone slabs and given a coat of plaster when the paintings were executed during the second phase of the cave. This is another example of ancient conservation.

The stūpa, owing to the friable nature of the rock, had to be partly structural and partly rock-cut; in its present state it is bereft of the anda, which was of masonry. Its circumference at the base is 36 ft.

Through sheer luck, crystal reliquaries were discovered within the stūpa (pl. LXIII B, 1, 4 and 5). They were contained in oblong sockets specially chiselled in the back side of the drum of the stūpa and plugged by close-fitting stone slabs after the deposit of the relics inside: one socket, 6 in. x 4 in. x 5 in., was without any plug. The second socket, 2 in. x 2 in. x 2½ in., close to the first and 4½ in. above the base of the drum, yielded a ring-like object (pl. LXIII B, 6). The next socket, 3 in. x 4 in. x 7 in., occurred 2 ft. 6 in. away from the second, at a height of 2 ft., and yielded the largest of the stūpa-shaped reliquaries (pl. LXIII B, 1). The fourth socket, 1 ft. 4 in. above the ground-level and 2 in. x 3 in. x 3½ in. in dimensions, also contained two stūpa-shaped reliquaries (pl. LXIII B, 4 and 5). It was further observed that on the left face of the stūpa there was a socket, 1 ft. 1 in. x 4½ in. x 2½ in., without the plugging slab. Further, on the top of the drum, over which the masonry anda had been placed, was a rock-cut chamber, 1 ft. 10 in. x 1 ft. 3 in. x 1 ft. 4 in., with an interior flange, at a depth of 4 in., to keep in position the covering slab. This chamber might have contained the principal relics over which the stūpa had been raised.

¹Fergusson and Burgess, op. cit.
²Burgess, op. cit., pp. 83-84; Lüders, op. cit., nos. 1187 and 1188.
Cave 3, paintings on pillars. See p. 72
A. Panoramic view of Caves 3 to 9. See p. 71

B. Caves 3 and 4, after clearance of foreshort. See p. 74

C. Cave 3, grooves in ceiling for holding woodwork. See p. 72
A. Cave 3, sculptured panel on southern side of steps. See p. 73

B. Cave 4, part of façade of back cells. See p. 73
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The rock-cut stūpa in the chaitya-cave at Bhaja, it is observed, has similar sockets, which, unfortunately, are bereft of their plugging slabs and consequently of relics. The positions of the sockets are, however, almost identical with those of the Pitalkhora stūpa. It appears, therefore, that the practice of depositing reliquaries in rock-cut stūpas, in the manner described above, was in vogue when the caves were excavated.

Another feature that came to light is a flight of eleven steps, the lower five being on a broader basement. On the rock-surface on each side of the steps is a sculptured panel in low relief depicting a prancing winged horse in the corner of the shorter side of the rhombus and two yakshas with their hands over their head, as if supporting the balustrade (pl. XLIX A). Both are dwarfish and pot-bellied and have wrinkled foreheads, bulging eyes and broad and flat noses; their humorous character is obvious. The larger one, to the right, has his mouth closed and cheeks wrinkled; he wears a karna-vesta on the lobe of the visible right ear, the upper part of which is that of an animal (śaṅku-karna). The smaller yaksha, to the left, has a smiling countenance, his teeth visible through the parted lips; like the first, he too has the śaṅku-karna. The sculptured panel on the left flank of the steps is not well-preserved.

These yakshas appear to precede in time their massive counterparts in front of Cave 3 of Nasik and bear a family-resemblance to the pot-bellied rākshasas in the vihāra-cave of Bhaja.

On the lower basement on each side of the steps there is a small round cavity, 1 ft. 3 in. in diameter and 7 in. in depth, where probably loose images were fixed. The plinth, 6 ft. 7 in. higher than the level of the forecourt, is otherwise plain except for the soft rounded mouldings at the level of the upper flight of steps. The basement projects forward on either side, and there are two pilasters over the broader rock-cut basement: where the rock was poor, the pilasters were made in masonry. On either side of the entrance was probably a low vedikā, as can be seen from the remnants of cross-bars of the vedikā-pattern and from the cavities on the door-jambs of the entrance.

(iv) Cave 4

Cave 4, the great vihāra, was once adorned with a magnificent sculptured façade, which, except for the traces of sculptures and chaitya-window ornamentation at its top, is now damaged owing to the breaking off of huge blocks of rock at vulnerable points in this rather poor quality of trap full of seams and fissures. Of the remnants of the façade a row of six chaitya-windows with the interior decorated with a recessed window-pattern and animal figures between the semicircular rock-cut vedikā-pattern is seen. Below this is the sculpture of a mithuna.

The features of this cave, including the sculptures on the pilasters of the back cells, have been described by Fergusson and Burgess, who have also dealt at length with the winged sphinx- and animal-capitals and decorations on the chaitya-window arches over the doorways of the cells (pl. XLIX B). In this connexion, it may be recalled that sculptures of winged horses also appear by the steps of cave 3 (see above.)

The cave consists of a series of seven cells in the back with a verandah in front, most of the pillars of which have been recently reconstructed in masonry. It appears that there were two more rows of pillars, of masonry, supporting the roof of the vihāra, but they have now perished, leaving square incisions on the floor to indicate their positions.

1 Fergusson and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 244-46.
The collapse of the façade has marred the view of what had at one time been a magnificent entrance, and the consequent accumulation of débris in the forecourt misled people to think that the steps in front belonged to an underground passage leading to the stream. The clearance of the débris (pl. XLVIII B), however, has brought to light a high plinth with a splendid series of elephants carved on its edge and a very ornate entrance on the extreme left, flanked by dvāra-pālas holding javelins and shields in hand. The sculptures of the elephants, half projecting forward with the sculptured mahouts standing in front, and other sculptures recovered from the débris constitute a priceless treasure of early art. The detached sculptures are dealt with below (pp. 80-88); only those which even now form part of the rock-cut vihāra are described here.

A feature which needs special mention is the very ingenious arrangement of diverting water that found its way into the cave through cracks: long tunnel-like openings were bored into the ceiling and the water was allowed to flow fully into the cave, in the floor of which a channel was cut to lead the water outside near the entrance. There are two such openings in the ceiling of this cave, one on the right side of the back cell and the other in the right side cell.

The stepped entrance to the cave, located at the left end of the forecourt, leads to the floor of the vihāra by a flight of eleven steps. The plinth of the vihāra, as stated above, has a series of nine elephants ending with an almost life-size horse in profile with a male figure in front and a chowri-bearer behind (pl. L). The elephants are damaged, their heads and trunks lying in the foreground.

The elephants (pl. L A), with their massive and rather stiff forelegs, are shown as stepping forward out of a shelf cut below the floor of the cave and appear to bear the weight of the cave. Pearl ornaments and pendants hang down from the upper ear-lobes and at the lower ends are suspended bells resting on the trappings. In place of tusks, there are holes, probably to receive detachable decorated ivory or wooden tusks, though in some cases the tusks are carved in stone itself and have floral wreaths attached. On their necks are ornaments like clustered strings.

Between the forelegs and trunk of each elephant is its mahout, with an aṅkuśa, turned half-right, so that the trunk of the respective elephant hides the left shoulder of the mahout. Two such detached sculptures are described below (p. 85).

The elephant-sculptures have their prototype in their Mauryan counterpart at Dhauli in Orissa, and appear to have influenced the later artists; the magnificent series of elephants and vyālas on the plinth of the great Kailāsa (eighth century) and Indrasabhā (ninth-tenth century) at Ellora might owe their inspiration to them. They have also a family-resemblance to the mighty elephants carved in the chaitya-cave at Karla, District Poona (first century A.D.), the only difference being that the mahouts at Karla are shown riding on the elephants. Another typologically and chronologically comparable example comes from Ceylon, where the immense platform of the Ruanweli dagoba at Anuradhapura is made to appear as if it is supported by a row of elephants on all the four sides of the basement. ‘These elephants form the retaining wall; they were modelled in brickwork and placed less than two feet apart; only their heads and fore legs appear; their height is above nine feet’.¹ It is stated that they were coated with durable lime-plaster and the holes in the jaws where the tusks were inserted are still visible. There are also traces of ornamental trappings which were executed in bold relief. This dagoba is attributed to the times of Dutta-Gāmanī (101-77 B.C.).² It will, therefore, appear that the tradition of

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depicting elephants carved on plinths of monuments is of great antiquity and later on resulted in the splendid rows of gaja-tharas met with in medieval temples.

The entrance-doorway (pl. LI A), 5 ft. 4 in. × 2 ft. 6 in., has its jambs ornamented with beautiful designs of half-lotuses and the tri-ratna. Just behind the jambs are circular sockets for fixing wooden door-leaves. On each side in front stands a very dignified dvāra-pāla, clad in a dhōti and a close-fitting tunic and holding a javelin in one hand and a shield in the other. The shields are oblong in shape and their ends are decorated with tassels and small bells; they remind one of their counterparts in the frieze in Cave 1 (Rānṇūr) of Udayagiri in Orissa (first century B.C.). Both the dvāra-pālas hold javelins in their hands, the right one in his right hand and the left one in his left. The right dvāra-pāla has a short dagger in a broad scabbard attached to his belt, which is seen just behind the shield; the left one has a sword tied to his chhanna-vīra, its hilt between his waist and left hand. Both the sculptures are remarkable for their very realistic modelling, the depiction of garments and a smiling expression, which nevertheless bespeaks strength and vigour. Their faces show bulging and fleshy cheeks, thick lips and wide-open eyes. The ponderous chests, the heavy and muscular arms and the firm standing pose give the figures the perfect demeanour of an alert sentinel. Their head-dress, formed by the knot of the turban decorated with pearl-stringed mālās, reminds one of similar head-dresses depicted at Sanchi and later on at Amaravati. Both of them have heavy karna-vesṭhanas, a close-fitting mālā round the neck and a cross-belt over the tunic, which is kept in position by the two broad bends, one just below the other, round the waist. Below the tunic is the undergarment ending in a triangular leaf-shaped frill, reminiscent of similar drapery at Bhaja and Bharhut. The keśūras entwining the arms are simple and round in section, but the wristlets are highly decorated and appear to be studded with beads.

Over the head of each dvāra-pāla is an elephant in profile, the trunk missing. Over the left elephant is the damaged sculpture of a kinnara. Set within these two elephants and above the doorway was an oblong panel of Gaja-Lakshmī (below, p. 80 and pl. LV A), now fallen from its original place.

On the left wall, projecting forward beyond the left end of the courtyard, is a five-hooded cobra in low relief (pl. LI B). In the hoods are bored holes, from which water from the rock-cut channel described above (p. 74) probably oozed out, as can be guessed from the water-marks on the sculpture. Just above the sculpture is a rock-cut socket, filled with a close-fitting block, probably meant to regulate the flow of water through the holes.³

As stated above (p. 74), beyond the elephants on the right side is an almost life-size sculpture of a horse with a figure of a male in front and a chowri-bearer behind (pl. LB). This unique sculpture, with an inscribed record giving the name of the donor over it, was once hidden by a rubble wall, erected to support the overhanging portion of the rock which had disintegrated and was threatening to collapse. It is quite likely that this ugly but compulsory conservation was effected during the second phase of the caves. The horse may perhaps depict the event of the Great Departure, on the analogy of a comparable sculpture (below, p. 80), about the identification of which with that event there is no doubt.

¹The jamb of the entrance-doorway of the Nasik chaitya-cave has a similar decoration. Besides, the entrance of this chaitya is also flanked by yakshas and appears to have copied the earlier model provided by Pitalkhora.

²Fergusson and Burgess, op. cit., pl. I.

³A similar sculpture of a nāga appears close to the water-cistern attached to the vihāra at Kondivte. The depiction of nāga near a water-cistern and its peculiar representation at Pitalkhora are worthy of special attention.
The projection to the right of the horse-sculpture depicts a female figure seated on a raised pedestal (pl. LIII A). The sculpture is broken above the waist. The lower portion clearly shows that she is seated in savya-lalitasana under an umbrella held over her head by an attendant, who stood half concealed behind the seat but is now completely missing except for his left foot with the anklet showing itself by the side of the platform on which the main figure is carved. The very graceful manner in which the right foot, with anklets, of the main figure rests on the pāda-pīṭha makes one feel that this sculpture, when complete, must have been one of great artistic beauty. The sārī is shown with beautiful folds, one of its ends hanging down from below the left foot over the pedestal. From the modelling of the slender waist and the foot and the manner in which the folds of the garment are carved, one feels that the sculpture belongs to the first century B.C.

The cave is also important on account of its inscriptions. The ones previously known are engraved on the opening of each cell. The donors are in all cases members of the family of the royal physician. The ones now discovered are mentioned below.

The indistinct inscription (pl. LII A) above the horse consists of two lines, of which the upper one is badly damaged. It reads as follows:

Line 1 [Dhe]nuk[āka]tasa Samasa-puṭena Ka-
Line 2 ṇhena kata

'Done by Kaṇha (Krīṣṇa), the son of Samasa, of Dhenukākata'.

This Kaṇha may be the same Kaṇha, the hiranyā-kāra, who was responsible for the inscribed image of yaksha at the place (below, p. 81). Dhenukākata of this inscription also finds mention in a number of inscriptions from Karla and one each from Shelawadi and Kanherī, of all of which Pitalkhara is the northernmost. The identification of the town is not yet established, but one may have to search for it in the Māmala country or near Kalyan somewhere on the ancient trade-route connecting the Bor Ghat with Sopara. On palaeographical grounds, the inscription can be ascribed to the second-first century B.C.

The next inscription (pl. LII B), carved on a pilaster in the left wall, reads.... ya bhichhuniyā dāna[m] tha[bho], 'the pillar (is) the gift of the nun....' The inscription may be ascribed to circa second century B.C.

The third inscription is on the adjoining pilaster in the left wall in line with the modern pillars. It is too fragmentary and the few discernible Brāhmī letters do not convey any meaning.

(v) Cave 5

Cave 5 is a vihāra but is so damaged that the prior existence of cells therein can only be guessed by a careful study of the vestiges of the entrance to cells, benches, etc. It appears that the vihāra had five cells on either side, each provided with a bench either at the back or on the side. On the back side there were four cells, the two in the centre being further deepened to provide two additional cells. An interesting feature of the cave is a slightly projecting cell, 13 ft. 10 in. × 7 ft., on the left side with an apsidal, partly

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1Burgess, op. cit., p. 84.
2Lüders, op. cit., nos. 1020, 1090, 1092, 1093, 1096, 1097 and 1121.
3Recently D. D. Kosambi has tried to identify Dhenukākata with Devagad or Devghar situated on the opposite tip of the horseshoe curve of the hills of Karla, Jour. Asiatic Soc. Bombay, XXX, pt. ii (1955), p. 59.
A. Cave 4, row of elephants on plinth. See p. 74

B. Cave 4, sculptured panel in continuation of row of elephants on plinth.
See pp. 74 and 75
A. Cave 4, entrance-dooryway. See p. 75

B. Cave 4, cobra with holes bored through its hoods and dvarapala to left of entrance-dooryway. See p. 75
Brāhmi inscriptions: A and B, in Cave 4, C, on loose boulder in front of Cave 5, and D, on outer right palm of yaksha image recovered from débris in front of Cave 3. Scale \( \frac{1}{2} \). See pp. 76, 77 and 82
A. Cave 4, female figure to right of horse-panel on plinth. See p. 76

B. Cave 6, brackets and pyramidal pattern on rear wall of back cells. See p. 77
A. Cave 9, view of side cells. See p. 78

B. Cave 12, loose harmikä. See p. 79

To face pl. LIII
A. Gaja-Lakshmi panel, from débris near entrance of Cave 4. See pp. 75 and 80

B. Great Departure panel, from débris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 80
structural, end, and one wonders whether the cell was a chaitya with a structural stūpa at the apsidal end. It has near the entrance a short bench on one side and two steps, of which the lower one is semicircular at the left end.

The cave has a small verandah with oblong projecting steps. The sockets carved on the plinth indicate the prior existence of masonry pillars.

In front of the cave is a huge loose boulder on which is carved the inscription... ja aṭhāseniyā (pl. LII C); it seems to record the gift of a guild of bankers and is thus important in throwing light on the economic structure of the contemporary society. The inscription is ascribable on palaeographical grounds to the second century B.C.

(vi) Cave 6

This cave, also a vihāra, had probably fifteen cells, of which those on the left and back sides are slightly better preserved than the rest. The brackets and the pyramidal pattern over the architrave of the rear walls of the back cells are interesting (pl. LIII B), as has already been noted by Dikshit.¹ Each cell has a door-step. At the entrance to the vihāra there appears to have been at a slightly lower level a small verandah, the inner side of which was anciently repaired by burnt bricks, each measuring 16 in. × 8 in. × 2½ in. In some of the walls of cells was cut a small oblong niche.

Patches of old plaster, of cow-dung, husk, etc., with traces of paint on them, are still visible on the walls and ceiling.

(vii) Cave 6A

Cave 6A consists of the damaged remains of eight cells in one row in four groups; it was thus a vihāra. The partition-walls between the cells and the entire roof are altogether missing. In the back wall are oblong niches.

(viii) Cave 7

Cave 7 is a vihāra with fifteen cells, five on each of the sides except the front, and an unpillared hall in the middle. All the cells have entrance-steps. There are brackets supporting the ceiling over the back side-bench in one of the cells in the back wall; the adjoining cell to the left is connected with it by a doorway cut through the middle bench. The pyramidal merlons on the architrave on the back wall above the bracket are similar to those in Cave 6. The ceiling of the cell is vaulted and has grooves for wooden ribs. Traces of old plaster and paint are seen on the ceiling.

Between this and Cave 8 is an unfinished rock-cut cistern.

(ix) Cave 8

Close to the cistern are three cells with benches, constituting Cave 8, a small viharā.

¹ Dikshit, op. cit.
Cave 9, with extensions on both sides, is a large vihāra with some interesting features. Its façade was originally supported on four pillars and two pilasters leading into a verandah, 26 ft. long and 5 ft. 9 in. wide, with a cell at each end. There appears to have been a central doorway, the remnants of the walls of which exist on both sides leading from the verandah to the main hall. Inside the hall, on three sides, are five cells, each with a bench. The partition-walls between the cells are missing. There is a very fine berm with the vedikā-pattern on the architrave running all round the wall-surface above the cell-doors (pl. LIV A). From the usual indications, the cave appears to have been plastered and painted.

At the eastern end of the cave is another small vihāra with three cells, on the western side of which are the remains of a still another vihāra with four or five cells.

B. Group II

(i) Cave 10

Cave 10 has a small forecourt, 12 ft. × 8 ft., with a projecting rock on either side. Looking at the façade, one notices a roughly-hewn doorway, 5 ft. 6 in. × 2 ft. 8 in., in the front wall, which is 3 ft. 10 in. thick. Above the entrance is a semicircular niche, 9 ft. wide at the base, 6 ft. 9 in. high and 2 ft. 8 in. deep, with a window-opening, 3 ft. 4 in. × 1 ft. 6 in. Careful observation reveals that the arch of the niche had stone ribs.

The cave itself is a pillarless apsidal hall, 17 ft. 7 in. deep and 8 ft. 4 in. wide, with a height of 12 ft. 7 in. The height of the stūpa, its harmikā broken, is 6 ft. 6 in. and its circumference at the base is 17 ft. 9 in. It tapers upwards, and at the junction of the drum and the anda there is a 7½ in. broad band of the vedikā. Above it is a short offset of 3 in., and still above is a rather squat anda with a circumference of 11 ft. 8 in. There are two holes on the opposite side-walls, which were probably meant to hold a horizontal bar from which offerings or lamps were hung.

The side-walls of the hall slightly taper upwards, and there is indication that the cave was not finished. The harmikā is damaged but may perhaps have contained some relics.

(ii) Cave 11

Cave 11, with a damaged façade, contains three rock-cut stūpas, probably excavated in different periods. The cave had probably a dwarf-wall, through which there was an entrance-opening, about 4 ft. 10 in. wide. Two of the stūpas stand in a dilapidated condition, but the third and innermost one is fairly intact. The stūpa in the front chamber, measuring 15 ft. 6 in. × 15 ft., has, in spite of its damaged condition, its harmikā still in position over the extant part of the anda.

Behind this cave is a cell, 7 ft. 10 in. deep and 11 ft. 9 in. wide, containing a stūpa with its harmikā and a carved chhattrā on the ceiling. In the back portion of the anda are two holes, excavated in the tapering portion of the anda just behind the harmikā; they might have been the chambers for relics. One of them is oblong and the other circular. The former has a ledge, 1 in. below the top, to receive a cover.
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There is yet another stūpa to the east of the first stūpa in a separate oblong excavation, 9 ft. 11 in. × 7 ft. 3 in. This is also damaged, but the chhattrā, carved on the ceiling, is extant.

(iii) Cave 12

Sharing a common forecourt, the last two caves, Caves 12 and 13, are both chaityas. The forecourt in front of Cave 12 is 11 ft. wide and has three steps, each 4 ft. 7 in. wide, with an easy rise. The cave had originally a narrow entrance, but with the fall of the entire façade it is difficult to say how the door-frame was fixed. To the right side of the entrance are the remains of a sculpture indicated only by the remnant of the figure of a dvāra-pāla in the space marking the existence of a dvāra-pāla figure. Entering inside, one notices a very narrow verandah, 1 ft. 9 in. wide, along the entire width of the cell, formed by an 11 in. wide pilaster-like projection. Careful observation reveals that this pilaster must have supported the chaitya-window over the doorway.

The chaitya-hall is without pillars and is apsidal on plan, with a total depth of 21 ft. 8 in., the width and height being 7 ft. 6 in. and 15 ft. respectively. The stūpa in the apsidal end is damaged; there is an oblong socket over the anda for receiving the stem of the loose harmikā (pl. LIV B), which had originally been there but slipped down with the disintegration of the anda and is now kept in the cave. Starting with the base, it has a box-like chamber covered by the vedikā-pattern in two compartments, over which, in the centre of all the four sides, are carved the heads of a male and a female. In the corners are bracket-figures holding the upper rectangular portion, on each side of which there are two chaitya-windows. Over this is a rectangular block broadening up in four tiers. On the surface of the upper portion is again a sunk vedikā. The mithuna sculpture over the harmikā is unique, nowhere met with in western India.

The vaulted ceiling of the chaitya-hall has rock-cut ribs, intersected by rock-cut rafters, which thus produce eight compartments between each two ribs. The ribs themselves are inverted U-shaped, have their ends slightly incurved and project about 7 in. from the surface of the vault. The five ribs in the apsidal end converge in the centre of the rearmost rib just above the apex of the stūpa.

(iv) Cave 13

Cave 13, very much damaged, was probably entered through an oblong entrance, about 3 ft. wide. The apsidal hall is 27 ft. 10 in. deep, 15 ft. wide and 15 ft. high. There are two rows of pillars in the hall going round the stūpa in the apsidal end, thus dividing the hall into a central nave and side-aisle, respectively 7 ft. and 1 ft. 11 in. wide. There were ten pillars in two rows in the front portion and four more in the apsidal end; all of them are, however, decayed and have only their stems intact. The stems are octagonal in shape; from the stem of one of them, which stands to a height of about 3 ft., it appears that it had a slight rake and was tapering towards the top.

The vaulted roof over the nave and the stūpa has stone ribs and rafters of the same type as in Cave 12. The roof of the side-aisle, however, is bereft of rafters and is like an arc. The stūpa is damaged except for a portion of the drum, which rises to a height of about 3 ft.

Outside the cave is a loose piece of rock bearing the sculpture of a galloping horse with a female rider having a javelin in hand. It appears that the sculpture was carved on the façade, which, like that of Cave 4, was decorated with sculptured friezes.
5. DETACHED SCULPTURES

A. GAJA-LAKSHMI

The sculpture, recovered in a number of pieces from the débris in front of Cave 4, proved, on being joined together, to be one of Gaja-Lakshmi (pl. LV A), which must once have been set over the main entrance to that cave. It consists of the central figure of Lakshmi, seated on a half-lotus with seven petals, with the soles of her feet touching each other, and holding in both hands buds on stalks which issue out of the lotus-seat and, along with the head-dress, encircle the figures, thus adding to the beauty of the composition. The head-dress of the goddess is centrally parted and has a big bun at its middle top and a leaf-ornament at its base. Below the hair and almost framing the head is a wreath of flowers hanging down on the shoulders. The ear-ornaments (karna-veshtana) also dangle down below the shoulders. In addition to a jewelled necklet (gráiveya) on the neck, she has a beaded necklace going over the breasts and reaching farther down. Her wrists have heavy bracelets, three on each, and ankles wear anklets. Her slender waist has a waistband and a broad girdle (mekhalā), holding in position the lower garment, the folds of which are seen near the ankles.

On either side of Lakshmi is an elephant, each with its raised trunk pouring the contents of a water-jar over the goddess. The elephants stand on lotuses with their feet drawn together. They have cloth trappings over them, the decorated end of which is seen on the left elephant.

B. THE GREAT DEPARTURE

A squarish panel (pl. LV B), with its upper right corner broken, depicts in a graphic manner the Great Departure of prince Siddhārtha from his palace and is the only scene from the life of Buddha found at Pitalkhora. In the background is shown a palace-gateway (torana) in front of which stands a richly-caparisoned horse, Kanṭhaka, in a majestic pose, with an attendant standing in the gateway and holding an umbrella over it. The horse is artistically decorated with trappings, horse-bits, etc. The beaded ornamental strings covering its chest with the tassels swinging with its movement bespeak the mastery of the

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**Fig. 2. Torana: 1, Ajanta paintings; 2, Pitalkhora sculpture. Not to scale**
A. Dvārapāla yaksha, Cave 3. See p. 82

B. Female door-keeper, Cave 4. See p. 83

C. Yaksha and chauri-bearer, Cave 4. See p. 83

D. Yakṣī with casket on head, Cave 4. See p. 83
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artist. On its back are richly-decorated trappings. Its manes are artistically shown, while its tail is slightly raised as would normally be when a horse is galloping.

In front of the horse is Chhandaka, acting here as the torch-bearer ready to move forward. He carries in his right hand a scabbard with the hilt resting on the shoulder. He wears a dhoti, the folds of which are nicely arranged and indicate his forward movement. His turban, though slightly damaged, is similar to that worn presently by the people in Maharashtra.

This sculpture is unique on account of the architectural details carved thereon. Under the raised band of the vedikā is carved a toranā, (fig. 2, 2) the vertical jambs of which have a pronounced inward rake. The three arches have rounded and curled-up ends. Between the arches are vertical members dividing the space into eight compartments. Below the lowest arch is a low vedikā. It would be worth while to compare this toranā with the one depicted on an early painting in Cave 10 of Ajanta (second-first century B.C.) (fig. 2, 1); in both the cases the inward rake is quite pronounced.

C. YAKSHAS

1. The first yaksha sculpture to be described here (pl. LVI) is a unique object. It is 3 ft. 6 in. high and is almost intact from the knees upwards except the missing left forearm. The sculpture represents a standing corpulent male yaksha with its hands raised upwards to hold a shallow bowl. The corpulence of the figure is emphasized by two fleshy rolls on the sides, and its dwarfish but bold and robust features give it a distinction of its own.

The front head-dress of the figure consists of two rows of hair twisted into rolls, which are increased on the back side to four with a knotted fillet dividing them into two parts. The expression of the face is full of wild joy resulting in a chuckle which exposes the teeth. The ear-lobes are perforated and are adorned with spiral ear-rings (kundalas), the upper parts of the ears imitating an animal (śānku-karṇa)—a traditional feature of the yakshas. The eyes are wide open with glee and the irises are clearly marked. Round the neck is a graveyā, but the most interesting feature is the string of gadrooned and collared beads (manī-mālā) with a large gadrooned central bead flanked by human-faced amulets, the cord of the string passing through the ears. The string is tied at the back in a knot and hangs down till it ends in another knot. The armlets (keyūra) entwining the short and muscular arm are three-plaited with hook-appendages at the end and, touching the ear-ornaments on the front, reach the back on the rear. The right wrist is adorned with circular three-coiled wristlets.

The sculpture is comparable with the squatting yaksha from Maholi, Mathura, and more so with the yakshas on the western gateway of Sanchi. In western India, similar figures in the round do not exist, though on the lion-pillar in front of the chaitya-cave at Kanheri are carved yaksha sculptures in half-relief. On the plinth of Cave 3 at Nasik yaksha figures, also in half-relief, are shown as atlantes supporting the vihāra. It is also noteworthy that the facial expression of this yaksha bears a striking resemblance with that

2J. Marshall, The Monuments of Sanchi (Calcutta, 1942), II, pls. LVII and LIX
3Percy Brown, Indian Architecture, Hindu and Buddhist (Bombay, 1956), p. 32.
4G. Sivaramamurti, Sanskrit Literature and Art—Mirrors of Indian Culture, Mem. Arch. Surv. Ind., no. 73 (Delhi, 1955), pl. 1 and fig. 3.
on the later dwarf yaksha from Ruanweli and Jetavanārāma dagobas in Ceylon, which are often compared with somewhat similar figures on the capitals of the western gateway of Sanchi. The only sculpture on the left side of the chaitya-cave at Kondane, District Kolaba, can now be identified as a figure of yaksha, which has a śaṅku-karna as the present one. From the size of the head, it is surmised that it was almost twice life-size and when complete must have been a colossal image.

Of all the sculptures recently discovered at Pitalkhora, this sculpture bears an inscription (pl. LII D), which is helpful in dating this and other recovered sculptures. The inscription is carved in two lines on the outer right palm in clearly-engraved letters of the second century B.C., reading Kāndhadāsa hiramakahārena katā, ‘made by Kāndhadāsa (Sanskrit Krishnādūsā), a goldsmith’.

The Mahāmāyūri text which mentions the name of the yaksha Saṅkārī (above, p. 69) may perhaps be referring to this image, which is the most prominent of its kind at Pitalkhora.

As a piece of sculpture it displays a fine sense of modelling, in spite of its heaviness, and thus ranks as one of the finest sculptures of its class in early Indian art.

2. Another important sculpture, a yaksha acting as a dvāra-pāla (pl. LVII A), was originally placed on the left side of the entrance to Cave 3; in fact, it was carved in one piece with the jamb of the doorway. The corresponding figure on the other door-jamb was found very much weather-worn and almost beyond reconstruction. The present sculpture is also damaged, the portion below the thighs being missing. Its height in its present state is 5 ft. 6 in., so that its total height, when complete, must have been about 7 ft. It would rank high among the best specimens of early Indian plastic art.

The figure is adorned with a very elaborate wig-like head-dress, which covers the ears and is fronted on the crest by a circular knot with an oblong protrusion in the centre. On the forehead are two sharp angles formed by the fringe of the wig. Two heavy serpent-ornaments (sarpa-kundala) are attached to the lobes of the ears, the upper parts of which have fan-like folds. Round the neck is a broad graiveya impressed with rosettes. It is tied at the back with a thick string, the end of which hangs down on the back. From over the left shoulder run down the schematic folds of the upper garment (uttariya) crossing the decorated belt (chhanna-vīra), which comes down from the right shoulder. To the channa-vīra is attached the scabbard of the sword, the hilt of which is pressed close to the body by the left arm. On the left arm is a keyūra with three plaits, the central one of which is vertical and the side ones hooked. On the two fingers of the left hand are rings, the one on the ring-finger with an oval pattern and the other on the middle finger round in section. The right arm, bent at the elbow, holds a heavy and long spear. Both the wrists are decorated with heavy wristlets in four circles. The folded dhoti is tied on the waist with a decorated stringed belt, with its end hanging loose in front.

The most important feature of this sculpture is its facial expression. It displays a gentle smile with slightly-parted lips and bulging cheeks. The eyes, with prominent irises, are wide open. The nose is slightly broad, the nostrils indicated by small depressions. The features are boldly cut. The face was once painted in yellow and the lips in red, traces of which are still discernible.

¹ V. A. Smith, History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1930), p. 147 and pl. 101 A and B.
² Fergusson and Burgess, op. cit., p. 221.
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The round modelling of the face contrasts with the flattish treatment of the body—which may indicate the transition from the earlier to the later (Sātavāhana) plastic tradition.

3. This fragment of a sculptured pilaster, measuring 2 ft. x 1 ft. 5 in., depicts a yaksha and a female chauri-bearer (pl. LVII C). The dwarf yaksha has his hands raised up to support on the head the base of an oblong platform, the front of which is decorated with the vedikā-pattern. Over it is a short octagonal shaft surmounted by a moulded base of an object, the upper part of which is missing. The face, with wrinkles on the forehead, open and bulging eyes, fleshy cheeks and the mouth open as a result of unsuppressed laughter, depicts a very jovial expression.

The chauri-bearer stands to the left of the yaksha in a graceful pose. Her beautiful head-dress, tilted to the right, is tied into a conch-shaped knot, which has a subsidiary knot of the same shape on either side. Her ear-lobes are decorated with spiral ornaments, to which are probably attached pendants of pearls. She wears a gravīveya and stana-hāra. Her right hand, flexed at the elbow, holds a chauri and rests against the platform held by the yaksha, and her left hand, slightly bent, rests on her thigh. The upper part of her body is bare. The lower garment (anuttariya) is tied round her waist; the folds of the garment hang down on the left and partly covers the loose mekhalā, which consists of collared beads in three strands.

The face of the female figure has a dignified expression. The eye-brows are well-defined and the nose is set between the slightly fleshy cheeks. The modelling, on the whole, tends to give the figure a robust look.

4. This 3-ft. high sculpture, carved on a pilaster, portrays a yakshi with a karanā (casket) over her head (pl. LVII D). She stands with her legs slightly apart and hands raised up to hold the karanā. She has a beautiful head-dress tied with ornamental bands, the whole forming a cushion for the casket. The face is damaged, but the pressed lips, the chin and the flushed face give her dignity. She has in the right ear-lobe an ornament made of ringlets, and in the left a circular ear-ornament (tāțaika-chakra). Around her neck is a gravīveya and a dangling stana-hāra in three strands. The right wrist wears a heavy double wristlet. The ullahiya, the folds of which are seen on the rear side, comes forward from over the shoulder and appears to have been tucked near the mekhalā below the waist. At the slender waist is tied the anuttariya, the prominent folds of which hang down over the mekhalā, consisting of seven strands of collared beads.

5. The female door-keeper represented in this sculpture holds in her right hand a tall spear, the butt of which rests over her right foot (pl. LVII B). She has a head-dress all decorated with floral wreaths, particularly interesting being the large floral wreath coming down from the forehead and going behind the right shoulder. She wears a hanging spiral ear-ornament and a fairly broad gravīveya of three strands. Her left hand is raised and doubly flexed. Each hand has two heavy wristlets. The mekhalā is of five strands and is worn loosely; to it is tucked a brocaded garment which gracefully hangs down below the knees. On her left hip is a scabbard held in position by a string going over the right shoulder. The right foot is straight, but the left is slightly bent at the knee imparting grace to her pose. She wears round anklets.

Altogether, the figure has a sturdiness worthy of a sentinel.
D. KINNARAS AND GANDHARVAS

1. This is a fragmentary sculpture of a winged kinnara (pl. LVIII A), remarkable on account of the success of the artist in depicting the effortless ease with which this semi-divine being, with incurved wings issuing out of his shoulder, floats in the aerial region below a projection carved with collared beads and balances in his left hand a bowl of flowers. His head is slightly turned to the left, making an angle with the body, which is again bent at the waist. He has a head-dress with a large knot of hair resting over the forehead on the left. His head is beautifully framed by a floral wreath adding greatly to the richness of the coiffure. His ears are decorated with heavy karna-veshtanas, while round the neck is a broad band of graiveya imprinted with the rosette-design. On both the hands he has two heavy wristlets made of pearls. There is a very fine dhoti tied by a belt below the waist, its fluttering depicted by its raised ends on the left. The right thigh is covered with feathers in contrast to the left, which is covered by the tassels of the belt. Below the figure is a lotus in relief. Maybe, the figure had the feet of a bird.

It seems that the piece formed the extreme end of a large composition with a principal figure at the centre and another similar kinnara-figure at the other end.

2. This fragmentary sculpture represents a flying gandharva (pl. LVIII B), holding in his left hand a shield with a protective trefoil projecton on the inner side. Unlike the usual gandharva, who is in the attitude of adoration, the present one is a warrior.

E. MUSICIANS

1. This fragmentary sculpture depicts a woman playing on a musical instrument (pl. LIX A). The face of the woman, absorbed in music, is bent towards the instrument, and the joy she is deriving from the music is reflected on her face. Her long coiffure is bordered by a wreath of flowers which almost frames her head and is tied behind in a knot. She wears a tāṭaṇka-chakra in the right ear, while a karna-veshta adorns the lobe of her left ear. She has the usual graiveya round her neck.

Though the shape of the musical instrument cannot be guessed, enough of it remains to show that, like the following two, it had seven strings.

2. Though this sculpture too is fragmentary (pl. LIX B), the musical instrument has survived almost in its entirety. The instrument, held by a youth against his right shoulder, has seven strings emanating from an elliptical gourd with a curved handle at one end, to which are tied the strings. The youth has a conch-shaped knot of hair on the head.

3. In this sculpture, also fragmentary, is seen the trunk of a male figure, wearing a graiveya and a hāra on the neck and heavy floral wreaths on the wrists (pl. LIX C). Pressed in his left arm is an instrument with seven strings. In his right hand he holds a plectrum, to play the instrument with.

F. MAHOUTS

1. This sculpture (pl. LIX E) represents one of the mahouts carved in front of each of the elephants on the plinth of Cave 4 (above, p. 74). A little over 5 ft. tall, he stands stiffly, with the flexed right hand holding a long-handled ankuśa. The wristlets
A. Winged kinnara, from débris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 84

B. Flying gandharva, from débris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 84
are made of square beads. Round the neck is a graiveya of oblong beads, fastened at the back by a string with a knot. The dhoti is tied at the waist and its folds are clustered in front of the left leg. The modelling of the face is bold and the flushed cheeks, the clinched lips and the open eyes attract attention.

2. Another mahout is represented in this fragmentary sculpture (pl. LIX D), the complete head-dress of which consists of a massive bedecked tuft of hair covering the entire scalp and projecting over the fore-head. Tied vertically by bands, it is divided into several sections. The figure wears a graiveya of four strands tied at the back. There are traces of paint-film, saffron on the face and red on the lips.

G. Mithunas

1. This pilaster (pl. LX A) contains three panels, one above the other, the top and bottom ones each with a standing mithuna and the middle one with horses. In the top panel the face of the male is damaged, while the upper part of the female is completely missing. The male has his dhoti tied by a stringed belt, the end of which hangs down on the left thigh. Heavy wristlets are worn on the right wrist. The female to the left of the male has similar wristlets. Her mekhalā consists of four strands. Above the feet are anklets.

The lower parts of both the figures in the second mithuna-group, on the bottom panel, are missing. The male, this time standing to the left of the female, puts his right arm around the waist of the latter, who, in turn, has her left arm on the right shoulder of the male. Both have broad graiveyas on their necks, the female having a stana-hāra in addition. The hair-style of the female, with a profusion of flowers and garlands, is interesting. The girdles and lower garments are similar to those on the first panel.

In the central panel is a pair of horses sitting back to back. The flowing manes and the anatomical details are remarkable.

2. On the upper panel of this pilaster (pl. LX B) is a kneeling elephant and on the lower is a couple, interesting on account of the peculiar hair-style and the costumes. The curly hairs of both the figures are tied in the middle by a band of cloth, that of the latter falling over her shoulders in locks. Her ear-ornaments appear to be simple almond-shaped pendants, in contrast to those of all other sculptures of Pitalkhora. She holds a cornucopia in the left hand and has a mekhalā of six strands.

The garment of the female figure appears to be a skirt hanging on the ankles in frills. The male figure is draped in a long garment which goes in folds over his right shoulder and hangs down well below the knees. The character of the drapery is definitely un-Indian and has a vague classical affinity. One wonders whether one sees in the sculpture an attempt to depict a Yavana couple who perhaps made donations to the caves. It may be recalled in this connexion that a number of inscriptions in west Indian caves record donations from the Yavanas.

3. This sculpture (pl. LX C), also on a fragmentary pilaster, is divided into two panels, the upper one occupied by an animal with the face of a lion, horns of a ram and the body and hoofs of a bull. What remains of the lower panel shows the standing figure of a male and the arm, probably of a female, on his left. The sculpture was not
completely finished; nevertheless, the head-dress, the broad band around the neck, the heavy wristlets and the dhoti tied with a knot in the centre of the waist are noteworthy.

4. This fragmentary sculpture (pl. LXI A) depicts a female dancer, only the upper part of her body extant, with her hands held over her head, and a male, his head and the part below the waist gone, standing to her right and pressing her lower lip with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand. The coiffure of the female hangs looped at her back. She wears bejewelled heavy wristlets, three in each hand.

5. This mutilated sculpture (pl. LXI B), pertaining to a pilaster, represents a mithuna, over which, in the upper panel, probably existed two animals back to back. In the mithuna-group the entire figure of the female is missing except the hand holding a cup, the contents of which she offers to the male to her right. The body of the male is also damaged, but the expression of pleasure on his face is clear. The knot of his hair falls on his forehead.

6. Both the figures in this fragmentary sculpture (pl. LXI C) appear to be females, the right one holding a globular pot with a cup-shaped lid with flaring rim in her left hand. The hair of the other, to the left of the pot, is tied on one side and is profusely decorated with wreaths.

7. This partly-damaged sculpture (pl. LXII A) shows a mithuna, probably dancing. The male partner, wearing a cross-belt on his chest and a short dhoti, has placed his left hand over the shoulder of his companion, who, in turn, has passed her hand round the waist of the male. She has a short heavy necklace and wears a short dhoti tied by a mekhalā.

8. The subject of this sculpture (pl. LXII B) is a mithuna, the male holding the female by her left hand, as if persuading her to accompany him. He looks sideways at his companion and holds something like a musical instrument in his left hand, which is bent at the elbow and rests on the hip. His hair is done in three plaits on his left side. A heavy garland adorns the chest. The dhoti is tied in a knot below the navel and falls in heavy folds between the legs and on the left side. The uttarīya hangs loose in two loops.

The female also has her head slightly turned towards the male. She stands with her right leg slightly flexed and placed forward, seemingly ready to go in the reverse direction. The anuttarīya and mekhalā are similar to those of the yakṣī described above (p. 83), but the ornaments on the neck are different. The graivēya has a big central bead on the first string, and its other two strings each have three prominent beads in the centre. The stana-hāra almost reaches the waist. The right ear-ornaments are frontally and the left ones laterally disposed. Around and almost framing the face is a floral wreath. The hair is tied in a knot on the right side.

The sculpture reminds one of the panels on the façade of the chaitya-cave at Kondane (second century B.C.).

9. This sculpture (pl. LXII C) is divided into three panels, with addorsed lions at the top and similar humped bulls at the bottom and with a standing mithuna in the central panel. The female stands to the right of the male and touches him caressingly with her left-hand fingers, while the male stands with his right hand flexed at the elbow and holding an object, probably a flower. He has karna-veśṭānas in the lower ear-lobes. The garments of both hang down in folds, that of the male twisting round his legs.
A and B, mithunas, and C, probably female figures, from debris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 86

To face pl. LXII
A. Royal couple with attendants, from débris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 87

B. 1, 4 and 5, stupa-shaped crystal reliquaries, respectively with bone beads, bone-fragments and coral bead, from sockets in the drum of stupa in Cave 3; 2 and 3, stupa-shaped crystal reliquaries from débris in forecourt of Cave 4; 6, crystal ring from socket in the drum of stupa in Cave 3, and 7, head-shaped crystal reliquary, from socket in a boulder in forecourt of Cave 4. See pp. 88-90

To face p. 87
H. Royal couple

In spite of its broken condition, the sculpture (pl. LXIII A) is outstanding by virtue of its balanced composition and richness of details. The main subject is a royal couple, the king seated on a decorated octagonal pitha with a cover, probably of animal-hide, upon it, and the queen sitting beside him. The left portion of the king, together with all that existed to his left, is gone. His right arm holds the queen at the back. He wears a circular pendant ornament on his right ear. His dhoti is tightly worn round the legs but hangs in the centre in a folded loop ending in a tuft. His left leg is flexed and rests on the throne, and his right leg rests on an oblong foot-stool, decorated at the edges in the same way as the throne.

The queen is seated on the right thigh of the king, her left arm seeming to go round the shoulder of the latter. She is richly bedecked with ornaments—a five-stringed graiveya, a two-stringed stana-hāra, a thick double wristlet preceded by five bangles and a seven-stringed mekhala. Her head, turned towards the king, has a flowing head-dress bordered by a garland. Her lower body is covered by a dhoti with schematic folds. Her legs wear anklets, the flexed right one resting on the throne itself and the left one on a foot-stool.

To the right of the queen is a female attendant holding in her right hand an oblong receptacle, out of which the queen takes out with her right hand a handful of objects, possibly flowers. The attendant has the same kind of hair style as the queen, but the bun at the back is more prominent. Her wristlets and mekhala are also of the same kind as those of the queen. Her lower garment hangs on the left leg in vertical folds partly covering the mekhala and on the right leg in oblique folds.

At the back was probably a series of figures, two of the extant ones, both females, standing respectively behind the queen and the attendant and touching the hair of the respective lower figure with the right hand, the left hand of the figure at the extremity being raised, as if holding an object.

The extant fragment of the sculpture is a part of a larger scene which might represent a Jātaka story.

I. Miscellaneous sculptures

1. A miniature stūpa in half-relief (pl. LXIV A, 1) is a piece of great interest. The boulder on which this is carved was excavated out of the débris in front of Cave 4; it may be surmised that this had been fixed somewhere on the façade of this great vihāra. It has three platforms forming the base of the anda, the exterior of which is decorated with a vedikā. Over this rises the almost semicircular anda with a socket for the relics. There was a triangular stone in position blocking the socket. No relics were recovered from the socket, but it may not be wrong to surmise that they might have been one or both of the crystal stūpa-reliquaries found in the débris in front of the vihāra (below, p. 89). Over the top of the anda is a rectangular box-like harmikā with the vedikā-pattern on three sides.

Two detached stone blocks with sockets for relics (pl. XLIV A, 2 and 3) were also recovered, one of them containing a bead-reliquary (below p. 88).

2. This fragment of a sculpture (pl. LXIV B), probably detached from a frieze, represents a stag with long wavy horns, bending forward in the act of grazing. The fine modelling of the body indicates agility.
3. One of the architectural pieces (pl. LXV A) was found close to the row of elephants on the plinth of Cave 4 (above, p. 73) and may have slipped from its original position on the façade of the cave. It is a loose piece, from which one gets a clear idea how some parts of the façade, where the rock was poor and weathered, were covered with detached sculptures. The piece depicts a double-storeyed palace (prāsāda). The lower storey has five small skylights (gavāksha) over a vedikā and four larger ones above. Five yaksha figures in low relief between each of the upper gavākshas support the superstructure with their raised hands. The upper storey has also a moulded base with the vedikā. Above are four windows (vātāyana) separated from each other by pilasters mounted by five gavākshas. Two of the vātāyanas have the vedikā-pattern set across them. Above this, in the lower storey, are four larger gavākshas with five similar intervening yaksha figures. The entire structure is evidently an imitation of the wooden façades of contemporary palaces.

4. Another architectural piece (pl. LXV B) has at its base the vedikā in two tiers, separated from each other by a projecting moulding. On the uppermost extant tier, within a recess, is a projecting gavāksha in the centre, flanked on either side by vedikās; at each extremity is a structure roofed by a semicircular cupola. The top juts forward in corbels.

5. Of the decorative pieces, one (pl. LXVI A) is set within a frame of creepers on one side and rosettes on two other sides, the central part being filled with lotuses issuing in all directions out of calyces. On the top is a fragmentary vedikā.

6. Of the other fragmentary pieces, the following are illustrated (pl. LXVI B): 1, a lotus creeper in a long panel; 2, a central lotus medallion, out of which issue curved bands, two of the extant ones being decorated with pellets and one with lotuses; 3, a row of lotuses framed within bead-and-reel borders; and, 4, a fragment of a door-jamb with an ornamental lotus decorated with leaves and flower-petals.

6. CRYSTAL OBJECTS

In all seven crystal objects, six of them reliquaries and the seventh a ring, were discovered. Five of the reliquaries (1 to 3, 5 and 6 below, pl. LXIII B, 1, 4, 5, 2 and 3) were shaped like the stūpa and the remaining one was a bead (7 below, pl. LXIII B, 7). Three of the stūpa-reliquaries (1 to 3 below, pl. LXIII B, 1, 4 and 5), all containing relics, and a ring (4 below, pl. LXIII B, 6) were recovered from within the sockets cut into the drum of the stūpa of Cave 3 (above, p. 72). The other two stūpa-reliquaries (5 and 6 below, pl. LXIII B, 2 and 3) were found in the midst of débris in front of Cave 4 (above, p. 73) and the bead reliquary (7 below, pl. LXIII B, 7) within a socket in a broken boulder lying amidst the same débris (above, p. 88).

The discovery of so many reliquaries must be regarded as one of the most important results of the operation. Not only do the reliquaries testify to the skill of the craftsman in carving difficult shapes out of the hard material of crystal; they also bring to light the

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1 This type of structure seems to have developed later on into the koshṭha of the Dravidian temple-complex placed over the projecting corners of the sabhā-mandapa or vimāna.
A. 1, miniature stupa, in relief, with socket for relics; and 2 and 3, stone-blocks with sockets for relics, from débris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 87

B. Stag in relief, from débris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 87
Architectural pieces, from débris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 88
Decorative pieces from débris in forecourt of Cave 4. See p. 88
THE ROCK-CUT CAVES OF PITALKHORA

Buddhist practice of depositing relics within rock-cut stūpas inside chaitya-halls and also within other stūpas carved in relief elsewhere.¹

In the description below the objects found in situ (1 to 4) are dealt with first and are followed by those found in the débris.

1. This stūpa-reliquary (ht. 2\(\frac{3}{4}\) in.; dia. at base 2 in.) has a projecting base over which rises the slightly-tapering semicircular anda with a circular hole at the top for holding the relics and receiving the shaft of the stopper which was shaped in such a way that it contained the chhattrā at the top and the square harmikā in the middle (pl. LXIII B, 1). Within the hole were found two beads of bone, one long cylinder circular and the other standard cylinder circular.

2. This stūpa-reliquary (ht. 2 in.; dia. at base 1\(\frac{1}{4}\) in.) has a similar projecting base but a rather squat anda and short chhattrā-shaft (pl. LXIII B, 4). It contained two small pieces of bone. If the shape can be taken to be the criterion of the age of the reliquary, it may be placed in the first-second century A.D., as it resembles in shape the rock-cut stūpas in western India of that age. Its deposition within the stūpa may, therefore, have taken place later than the excavation of the stūpa.

3. With a projecting base and squat anda, this stūpa-reliquary (pl. LXIII B, 5) is the smallest of its class (ht. 1\(\frac{3}{4}\) in.; dia. at base 1 in.). The stopper-cum-chhattrā has the shape of a short moulded knot. From its shape, it would appear to be more or less contemporary with the previous one, both having been deposited in the same socket.

4. This ring (ht. from base to apex 1\(\frac{3}{8}\) in.; dia. of inner circle 3\(\frac{3}{4}\) in.; length of base 1\(\frac{1}{4}\) in.) has a plain biconical bezel and a groove on the inner circle (pl. LXIII B, 6).²

5. This stūpa-reliquary (ht. 2\(\frac{1}{4}\) in.; dia. 1\(\frac{1}{4}\) in.) differs from those described above in that it has no projecting base but has instead a short circular stem at the bottom, so that it could be fitted into a detached base (pl. LXIII B, 2). The shape is almost hemispherical with a truncated top, where there is a circular hole. The broken shaft of the chhattrā consists of three round mouldings, each looking like a broad-mouthed ghātra, with the edge having a conical moulding; the usual harmikā does not form part of it. It is exactly similar to the long shaft of the wooden chhattrā on the rock-cut stūpa in the chaitya-cave at Karla and may, therefore, be ascribed to the first century A.D., when some votary might have deposited it inside the stūpa on the façade of Cave 4 (cf. above, p. 87).

¹ Of the rock-cut stūpas in western India, the one at Karla is even now complete with all the components, including the wooden chhattrā. It will not be a wonder if the socket for holding the chhattrā-shaft contains relics. The sockets noticed on the stūpa at Bhaja must have, as suggested above (p. 73), contained relics. An inscription on a pillar in the chaitya-cave at Karla, Burgess, op. cit., p. 91, shows that relics were deposited inside pillars as well, for it records the gift of a pillar with corporeal relics (sa-sarīvo thabho). It is interesting to note that the pillar on which the inscription is engraven has a hole, no doubt to contain the relics referred to, in the centre of a lotus carved in the front of the pillar just below the inscription.

So far, only one crystal relic-casket has been discovered in western India, at Sopara, Bhagwanlal Indrajit in Jour. Bombay Br. Roy. As. Soc., XV (1881-82), p. 307. It is in two parts, the body and the lid, and has not the unique shapes of the Pitalkhora reliquaries. It may be mentioned that stūpa-shaped crystal reliquaries have recently been discovered at Nagarjunakonda.

6. This stūpa-reliquary is distinctive in shape, as it has a slightly higher projecting base and a proportionately higher ānda than the rest (pl. LXIII B, 3). The ānda, instead of being flat at the top, has the shape of a harmikā, through which is bored a round hole into the ānda. The shaft of the chhattrā is missing. There was a stopper-like cylindrical stone object inside the hole.

7. This distinctive long cylinder square bead (pl. LXIII B, 7) was undoubtedly a reliquary, as its perforation was closed at each end by small stone stoppers, in one case with a knob. The space between the stoppers was utilized for keeping the relics, which, however, are missing.

7. COPPER VESSELS

Two copper vessels were recovered. One of them (fig. 3, 1) has a flared rim, a globular body and an attached base. A small rib at the junction of the body and the neck is the result of the joining of the two pieces manufactured separately. The second vessel (fig. 3, 2) is fragmentary; it has a short outcurved neck and five incised lines on the shoulder. It is not possible to ascribe any date to them beyond that they belonged to a period when the caves were in occupation.

![Fig. 3. Copper vessels](image)

8. THE POTTERY

Amidst the débris on the forecourt of Caves 3 and 4 and within the cistern between Caves 7 and 8 (above, p. 77), a large quantity of pottery was discovered. The collection included the well-known spouted sprinkler (fig. 4, 1), resembling the ‘Roman, Samian and other Red wares of western Asia’,¹ and indigenous imitations thereof in cruder fabric and with crackled red slip (fig. 4, 2 to 4 and 6 to 8). A solitary fragment of a black polished bowl (fig. 4, 20) may be a remote imitation of the Northern Black Polished Ware: its polish is definitely not as bright as that on the genuine specimens of that Ware found even at west Indian sites like Bahal and Nasik.² Other types, including the vases and hāndi with beaded

¹B. Subbarao, Personality of India, 2nd ed. (Baroda, 1958), pp. 46-47.
and undercut rim (fig. 4, 17 and 18), are characteristic of the Šatavahana levels of these two places.¹

Select specimens are described below.

Fig. 4

1. Bottle-necked sprinkler with an outcurved featureless rim forming a flange with a conical knob at the top, a globular body and a short spout having perforations at its junction with the body. Both the neck and the spout are luted to the body. Of fine fabric, it is pink in colour.

2. Spout of a sprinkler. Of a fabric coarser than that of 1, it is treated with a reddish slip.

3. Upper part of a vase with a splayed-out externally-thickened oblique-cut rim, a high vertical neck and a shoulder having grooves. Of coarse fabric, it has a cracked dull-red slip.

4. Fragment of a sprinkler similar to 1, but with an externally oblique-cut rim. Of a fabric coarser than that of 1, it is treated with a pinkish slip.

5. Lower part of a vase with a tall convex body and a projecting discoid base. Of coarse fabric, it is devoid of any slip.

6. Spout, probably of a sprinkler, similar to 2.

7. Upper part, without rim, probably of a bottle-necked sprinkler. Of fine fabric, it is treated with a bright-red slip.

8. Fragment of a sprinkler similar to 1, but coarser in fabric.

9. Upper part, without rim and neck but with a squarish shoulder, of a vase of the Red Polished Ware.

10. Everted featureless rim and part of a seemingly-concave neck of a vessel of the Red Polished Ware.

11. Everted slightly-thickened rim and part of a seemingly-concave shoulder of a vase of the Red Polished Ware.

12. Fragment of a vase with an outcurved externally-drooping oblique-cut rim, a concave neck and a weakly-ribbed shoulder. Of coarse fabric, it is devoid of any slip.

13. Fragment of a vase of red ware with an out-turned and thickened rim and possibly a vertical neck. Of coarse fabric, it is devoid of any slip.

14. Fragment of a vase of dull-red ware with a splayed-out externally-thickened and oval-collared rim. Of medium fabric, it is treated with a red slip.

15. Fragment of a cooking vessel (händi) with an out-turned internally-thickened and externally-ribbed rim. It is treated with a red slip showing a crackled surface.

16. Fragment of a vase of red ware with a flared externally-drooping oblique-cut grooved rim. Of medium fabric, it is treated with a bright-red slip both inside and outside.

17. Fragment of a vase with an outcurved thickened externally-beaked and undercut rim and a concave neck.

18. Fragment of a vase with a splayed-out externally-beaked and undercut rim. Of coarse fabric, it is devoid of any slip.

19. Vase with an out-turned thinning rim, a carinated inconspicuous neck and a globular body. Of coarse fabric and fired indifferently, it is devoid of any slip.

20. Bowl with an incurve internally oblique-cut rim. Of fine fabric, it has a polished black surface.

¹Ibid., pp. 64-65.

22. Bowl of red ware with an incurved internally oblique-cut rim. Of medium fabric, it is treated with a red slip.

23. Miniature bowl with a slightly-inverted featureless rim, narrowing sides and a flat base. Of medium fabric, it is devoid of any slip.

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