

= Badami cave temples =

The Badami cave temples are a complex of four Hindu , Jain and possibly Buddhist cave temples located in Badami , a town in the Bagalkot district in northern part of Karnataka , India . The caves are considered an example of Indian rock @-@ cut architecture , especially Badami Chalukya architecture , which dates from the 6th century . Badami was previously known as Vataapi Badami , the capital of the early Chalukya dynasty , which ruled much of Karnataka from the 6th to the 8th century . Badami is situated on the west bank of an artificial lake ringed by an earthen wall with stone steps ; it is surrounded on the north and south by forts built in later times .

The Badami cave temples represent some of the earliest known examples of Hindu temples . UNESCO has described the designs of the Badami cave temples , and those in Aihole , as having transformed the Malaprabha River valley into a cradle of temple architecture that defined the components of later Hindu temples elsewhere in India .

Caves 1 to 4 are in the escarpment of the hill in soft Badami sandstone formation , to the south @-@ east of the town . In Cave 1 , among various sculptures of Hindu divinities and themes , a prominent carving is of the Tandava @-@ dancing Shiva as Nataraja . Cave 2 is mostly similar to Cave 1 in terms of its layout and dimensions , featuring Hindu subjects of which the relief of Vishnu as Trivikrama is the largest . The largest cave is Cave 3 , featuring Vishnu @-@ related mythology , and it is also the most intricately carved cave in the complex . Cave 4 is dedicated to revered figures of Jainism . Cave 5 may be a Buddhist cave . Another cave was discovered in 2015 , about 500 metres (1 @,@ 600 ft) from the four main caves , with 27 Hindu carvings .

= = Geography = =

The Badami cave temples are located in the town of Badami in the north @-@ central part of Karnataka , India . The temples are about 70 miles (110 km) north @-@ east of Hubli @-@ Dharwad , the second @-@ largest metropolitan area of the state . The Malaprabha River is 3 miles (4 @.@ 8 km) away . Badami , also referred to as Vatapi , Vatapipuri and Vatapinagari in historical texts , the capital of Chalukya dynasty in the 6th century , is at the exit point of a ravine between two steep mountain cliffs . Four cave temples in the escarpment of the hill to the south @-@ east of the town have been excavated . The escarpment is above an artificial lake called Agastya Lake that is created by an earthen dam faced with stone steps . To the west end of this cliff , at its lowest point , is the first cave temple . The largest cave is Cave 3 , which is further to the east on the northern face of the hill . The fourth cave , Cave 4 , is a short distance away .

= = History = =

The cave temples , numbered 1 to 4 in the order of their creation , in the town of Badami ? the capital city of the Chalukya kingdom (also known as Early Chalukyas) ? are dated from the late 6th century onwards . The exact dating is known only for Cave 3 , which is a temple dedicated to Vishnu . An inscription found here records the creation of the shrine by Mangalesha in Saka 500 (lunar calendar , 578 / 579 CE) . The inscription , written in the Kannada language , has enabled the dating of these rock cave temples to the 6th century .

The Badami caves complex is part of a UNESCO @-@ designated World Heritage Site candidate under the title " Evolution of Temple Architecture ? Aihole @-@ Badami @-@ Pattadakal " in the Malaprabha river valley , considered a cradle of temple architecture that formed the model for later Hindu temples in the region . The artwork in Caves 1 and 2 exhibit the northern Deccan style of the 6th and 7th centuries , while those in Cave 3 simultaneously represent two ancient Indian artistic traditions ; the northern Nagara and the southern Dravida styles . Cave 3 also shows icons and reliefs in the Vesara style , a creative fusion of ideas from the two styles , as well as some of the earliest surviving historical examples in Karnataka of yantra @-@ chakra motifs (geometric symbolism) and colored fresco paintings . The first three caves feature sculptures of Hindu icons and legends focusing on Shiva and Vishnu , while Cave 4 features Jain icons and themes .

= = Temple caves = =

The Badami cave temples are man @-@ made , all carved out of soft Badami sandstone on a hill cliff . The plan of each of the four caves (1 to 4) includes an entrance with a verandah (mukha mandapa) supported by stone columns and brackets , a distinctive feature of these caves , leading to a columned mandapa , or main hall (also maha mandapa) , and then to the small , square shrine (sanctum sanctorum , garbhaghrha) cut deep inside the cave . The cave temples are linked by a stepped path with intermediate terraces overlooking the town and lake . The cave temples are labelled 1 ? 4 in their ascending series ; this numbering does not reflect the sequence of excavation .

The architecture includes structures built in the Nagara and Dravidian styles , which is the first and most persistent architectural idiom to be adopted by the early chalukyas . There is also a fifth natural cave temple in Badami , a Buddhist temple , a natural cave that can only be entered by crouching on all fours .

= = = Cave 1 = = =

Cave 1 is about 59 feet (18 m) above ground level on the north @-@ west part of the hill . Access is through a series of steps that depict carvings of dwarfish ganas (with bovine and equine heads) in different postures . The verandah , with an inner measurement of 70 feet (21 m) by 65 feet (20 m) , has four columns sculpted with reliefs of the god Shiva shown in dancing positions and incarnations . The guardian dwarapalas (door keepers) at the entrance to the cave measure 6 @-@ 166 feet (1 @-@ 879 m) .

The cave portrays the Tandava @-@ dancing Shiva as Nataraja . The image , 5 feet (1 @-@ 5 m) tall , has 18 arms in a form that expresses the dance positions arranged in a geometric pattern , which Alice Boner ? a Swiss art historian and Indologist , says is a time division symbolizing the cosmic wheel . While most of the arms express mudras (symbolic hand gestures) , some of the arms hold objects such as drums , a trident and an axe ; some also have serpents coiled around them . Shiva has his son Ganesha and the bull Nandi by his side . Adjoining the Nataraja , one wall depicts the goddess Durga , who is depicted slaying the buffalo @-@ demon Mahishasura . Elsewhere , the sons of Shiva , Ganesha and Kartikkeya , the god of war and family deity of the Chalukya dynasty , are seen in one of the carved sculptures on the walls of the cave , with Kartikkeya riding a peacock .

The cave also has carved sculptures of the goddesses Lakshmi and Parvati flanking Harihara , a 7 @-@ 75 @-@ foot (2 @-@ 36 m) high sculpture of a fused image that is half @-@ Shiva and half @-@ Vishnu . To the right , toward the end of the wall , is a relief sculpture of Ardhanarishvara , a composite androgynous form of Shiva and his consort Parvati along with a female decorated goddess holding a flat object in her left hand ; Nandi , the bull and Bhiringi , a devotee of Shiva .

All the figures are adorned with carved ornaments and surrounded by borders with reliefs of animals and birds . The lotus design is a common theme . On the ceiling are images of the Vidyadhara couples . Through a cleft in the back wall of the cave is a square sanctuary with more carved images .

The roof of the cave has five carved panels with the central panel depicting the serpent Shesha . The head and bust are well formed and project boldly from the centre of the coil . In another compartment a bas @-@ relief 2 @-@ 5 feet (0 @-@ 76 m) in diameter has carvings of a male and female ; the male is Yaksha carrying a sword and the female is Apsara with a flying veil . The succeeding panel has carvings of two small figures and the panel at the end is carved with lotuses .

= = = Cave 2 = = =

Cave 2 , lying to the west of Cave 3 and facing north , was created in late 6th century . It is almost same as Cave 1 in terms of its layout and dimensions , but it is dedicated primarily to Vishnu . Cave

2 is reached by climbing 64 steps from the first cave . The cave entrance is a verandah divided by four square pillars , which has carvings from its middle section to the top where there are yali brackets with sculptures within them . The cave is adorned with reliefs of guardians . Like Cave 1 , the carved cave art is a pantheon of Hindu divinities .

The largest relief in Cave 2 shows Vishnu as Trivikrama (Vamana) , with one foot on Earth and another directed to the north . Other representations of Vishnu in this cave include Varaha (a boar) shown rescuing Bhudevi (a symbol of the earth) from the depths of the ocean ; and Krishna avatars , legends found in Hindu Puranas texts such as the Bhagavata Purana . Like other major murti (forms) in this and other Badami caves , the Varaha sculpture is set in a circle ; according to Alice Boner , the panel is an upright rectangle whose " height is equal to the octopartite directing circle and sides are aligned to essential geometric ratios , in this case to the second vertical chord of the circle " .

The doorway is framed by pilasters carrying an entablature with three blocks embellished with gavamuksha ornament . The entrance of the cave also has two armed guardians holding flowers rather than weapons . The end walls of the outer verandah are adorned with sculpted panels : to the right , Trivikrama and to the left , Varaha rescuing Bhudevi , with a penitent multi-headed snake (Naga) below . The adjacent side walls and ceiling have traces of colored paint , suggesting the cave used to have fresco paintings . The columns show gods and battle scenes ; the churning of the cosmic ocean (Samudra Manthan) ; Gajalakshmi and figures ; Brahma ; Vishnu asleep on Shesha ; illustrations of the birth of Krishna ; Krishna 's youth ; Krishna with gopis ; and cows .

The ceiling of Cave 2 shows a wheel with sixteen fish spokes in a square frame along with swastikas and flying couples . The end bays have a flying couple and Vishnu on Garuda . The main hall in the cave is 33 @ 33 feet (10 @ 16 m) wide , 23 @ 583 feet (7 @ 188 m) deep , and 11 @ 33 feet (3 @ 45 m) high and is supported by eight square pillars in two rows . The roof of this hall has panels filled with bas-relief carvings . At the upper reaches of the wall , a frieze runs all along the wall with engravings of episodes from the Krishna or Vishnu legends .

The sculptures of Cave 2 , like Cave 1 , are of the northern Deccan style of the 6th and 7th century similar to that found in Ellora caves .

== Cave 3 ==

Cave 3 is dedicated to Vishnu ; it is the largest and most intricately carved cave in the complex . It has well carved , giant figures of Trivikrama , Anantasayana , Paravasudeva , Bhuvanavara (Varaha) , Harihara and Narasimha . Cave 3 's primary theme is Vaishnavite , though it also shows Harihara on its southern wall ? half Vishnu and half Shiva shown fused as one , making the cave important to Shaivism studies .

Cave 3 , also facing north , is 60 steps away from Cave 2 . Cave 3 's temple 's verandah is 70 feet (21 m) in length with an interior width of 65 feet (20 m) ; it has been sculpted 48 feet (15 m) deep into the mountain ; an added square shrine at the end extends the cave 12 feet (3 @ 7 m) further inside . The verandah itself is 7 feet (2 @ 1 m) wide and has four free-standing , carved pillars separating it from the hall . The cave is 15 feet (4 @ 6 m) high ; it is supported by six pillars , each measuring 2 @ 5 square feet (0 @ 23 m²) . Each column and pilaster is carved with wide , deep bases crowned with capitals that are partly hidden by brackets on three sides . Each bracket , except for one , has carvings of human figures standing under foliage in different postures , of male and female mythological characters , and an attendant figure of a dwarf . A moulded cornice in the facade , with a dado of blocks below it (generally 7 feet (2 @ 1 m) long) , has about thirty compartments carved with series of two fat dwarves called ganas . The cave shows a Kama scene on one pillar , where a woman and a man are in maithuna (erotic) embrace beneath a tree .

Cave 3 also shows fresco paintings on the ceiling , some of which are faded , broken and unclear . These are among the earliest known surviving evidence of fresco painting in Indian art . The Hindu god Brahma is seen in one of the murals ; the wedding of Shiva and Parvati , attended by various Hindu deities , is the theme of another . There is a lotus medallion on the floor underneath the mural

of the four @-@ armed Brahma . The sculpture is well preserved , and a large number of Vishnu 's reliefs including standing Vishnu with eight arms ; Vishnu seated on the hooded serpent Shesha on the eastern side of the verandha ; Vishnu as Narasimha (half human , half lion) ; Varaha fully armed in the back wall of the cave ; Harihara (a syncretic sculpture of Vishnu and Shiva) ; and Trivikrama avatars . The back wall also has carvings of Vidhyadharas holding offerings to Varaha ; adjoining this is an inscription dated 579 AD with the name Mangalis inscribed on it .

At one end of the pilaster is a sculpture of Vamana shown with eight arms (Ashtabhuja) ; this is decorated with various types of weapons . A crescent moon is crafted above his face and the crown of Vishnu decorates his head . He is flanked by Varaha and two other figures ; below on his right is his attendant Garuda . The images in front of Vamana are three figures of Bali and his wife with Shukra , his councillor . Reliefs stand 4 metres (13 ft) tall . Some aspects of the culture and clothing in the 6th century is visible in the art sculpted in this cave . The roof of the verandah has seven panels created by cross beams ; each is painted in circular compartments with images of deities including Shiva , Vishnu , Indra , Brahma and Kama , with smaller images of Dikpalas (cardinal guardians) with geometric mosaics filling the gaps at the corners .

The roof of the front aisle has panels with murals in the centre of male and female figurines flying in the clouds ; the male figure is yaksha holding a sword and a shield . Decoration of lotus blooms are also seen on the panels . The roof of the hall is divided into nine panels slightly above the level of the ceiling . The central panel here depicts a deva mounted on a ram ? conjectured to be Agni . Images of Brahma and Varuna are also painted on the central panels ; the floating figures are seen in the remaining panels .

=== Cave 4 ===

Located to the east of Cave 3 , Cave 4 is situated higher than the other caves . It is dedicated to revered figures of Jainism and is the most @-@ recently constructed of the caves . Like the other caves , it features detailed carvings and a diverse range of motifs . The cave has a five @-@ bayed entrance with four square columns ? each with brackets and capitals . To the back of this verandah is a hall with two standalone and two joined pillars . The first aisle is a verandah 31 feet (9 @. @ 4 m) long by 6 @. @ 5 feet (2 @. @ 0 m) wide , extending to 16 feet (4 @. @ 9 m) deep . From the hall , steps lead to the sanctum sanctorum , which is 25 @. @ 5 feet (7 @. @ 8 m) wide extends to a depth of 6 feet (1 @. @ 8 m) .

On the back part of this , Mahavira is represented sitting on a lion throne ; this figure is flanked by bas @-@ reliefs of attendants with chauri (fans) , sardulas and makara 's heads . The end walls have Parshvanath about 7 @. @ 5 feet (2 @. @ 3 m) tall with his head decorated with a multi @-@ headed cobra representing protection and reverence . Carvings include Indrabhuti Gautama covered by four snakes , and Bahubali seen to the left of Gautama with his lower legs surrounded by snakes , together with his daughters Brahmi and Sundari . In the sanctum is an image of Mahavira resting on a pedestal containing a 12th @-@ century Kannada inscription marking the death of one Jakkave . Many Jaina Tirthankara images have been engraved on the inner pillars and walls . In addition there are idols of Yakshas , Yakshis , Padmavati and other Tirthankaras . Most scholars believe Cave 4 was created in the mid @-@ 7th century , but some place its creation in the 8th century .

=== Cave 5 ===

Cave 5 is an as @-@ yet @-@ undated , natural cave of small dimensions that is approached by crawling due to its narrow opening . Inside , there is a carved statue seated over a sculpted throne with reliefs showing people holding chauris (fans) , a tree , elephants , and lions in an attacking pose . The face of this statue was reasonably intact until about 1995 , it is now damaged and missing parts .

There are several theories as to who the statue represents . One theory holds that it is a relief of the Buddha in a sitting posture . According to this theory , those holding the chauris are

Bodhisattvas flanking the Buddha . In the intervening centuries , the cave was converted to a Hindu shrine of Vishnu , as is seen from the white , religious markings painted on the face of the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu . According to B.V. Shetti ? archaeologist and curator of Prince of Wales Museum of Western India , the cave was not converted but from the start represented a tribute to Mayamoha of the Hindu Puranas , or Buddhavatara Vishnu , its style suggesting it was likely carved in or before the 8th century .

A second theory , found in colonial @-@ era texts such as one by John Murray ? a missionary in British India and Jainism scholar , say the main image carved in Cave 5 is that of a Jaina figure . According to a third theory , by Henry Cousens and A. Sundara ? archaeologists , and supported by local legends , the statue is of an ancient king ; in a photograph of the statue taken before its face was damaged , the figure lacked the Ushnisha lump that typically goes with Buddha 's image . The statue has several unusual , non @-@ Buddha ornaments such as rings for fingers , a necklace and a chest @-@ band ; it wears a Hindu Yajnopavita thread and its head is stylistically closer to a Jina head than a Buddha head . These features suggest the statue may be of a king represented with features of various traditions . According to Carol Radcliffe Bolon ? Assistant Curator at the Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art , the date and identity of the main statue in Cave 5 remains enigmatic .

= = = Other caves = = =

In 2013 , Manjunath Sullolli ? Assistant Director of Bagalkot district working for the state government of Karnataka , reported the discovery of another cave with 27 rock carvings , about 500 metres (1 @,@ 600 ft) from the four main caves . Water gushes from this newly discovered cave year round . It depicts Vishnu and other Hindu deities , and features an inscription in the Devanagari script . The dating of these carvings is unknown .