



KAILASA - THE MERIDIAN

Detecting the stylistic development of the sculpture in the Kailāsanātha complex is a simpler task compared to the earlier caves for two obvious reasons. Firstly, being an imperial monument, literary and inscriptional references to it though not adequate enough are available¹, and secondly the regional stylistic currents arriving at this monument are already in an evolved stage and since they are pretty well-defined, they are conspicuously betrayed even in the multitude of sculptural locutions, even to an untrained eye. Due to the prolonged consistent activity, the interactions between the regional styles and their independent and synthetic evolution is a distinct feature of Kailāsa sculpture. This synthesis of different styles also reveals the orthogenetical mysteries of the progression towards a new style and the transpersonal superindividual characteristic elements in it that go beyond personal impulses and individual deliberations.

Scholars attracted by this magnificent monolith naturally felt concerned about its patronage and authorship. The copperplate of Karka Suvarnavarsha and the Kadamba grant of Govinda Prabhutavarsha

attribute it to Krishnaraja Raṣṭrakūṭa². Though the copperplate was found and deciphered, it took sometime for scholars of Indian art to identify this monument with the one mentioned in the copperplate³ and even after this identification, the controversy about the authorship of this temple did not get settled. There is no scope for any scepticism about the Rastrakuta patronage to this monument; the only question is whether it was the mighty Dantidurga⁴ - the founder of the Raṣṭrakūṭa empire-or his able follower, his uncle Krishnaraja, and every evidence available supports the attribution of the Baroda copperplate to the latter. As it is, there is no reason to refute it, since it has been issued by the direct descendant of the emperor who has been given this credit and only a few decades later. Moreover, it has been seconded by an inscription issued by Prabhutavarsha. The grandeur and sheer dimension of the monument seem to have caused this scepticism, which has been categorically expressed by Goetz⁵. He raised a doubt as to whether a monument of such a grand scale could be possible to complete in the reign of a single ruler. Gary Tartakov, in a paper published in *Kusumanjali*⁶, suggested the possibility that Krishnaraja must have been responsible for the inauguration of this ambitious project. With the help of several textual references, Tartakov pleads that the patron who conceives the project and installs the first brick of the construction gets the credit for it, whether he succeeds in completing it or not. So, though there can be various opinions about the completion of the Kailāsa during the lifetime of

Krishnaraja, he is attributed with the authorship of Kailāsa personally because he laid its foundation and Tartakov opines that the inaugural phase is the Paralaṅkā part of the Kailāsa complex. On stylistic grounds, the architecture of Paralaṅkā does not appear to be prior to the monolith proper and in the case of a cave temple the concept of *Prathameṣṭaka* (the first brick) does not seem to be relevant. It sounds logical that Krishnaraja inaugurated this activity and that it continued even after his reign. The stylistic variations in the sculptural wealth of the Kailāsa suggest something analogous to it.

The Dravidian influence on the architectural pattern of this monument is too obvious to plead for⁷. The architecture at least does not conform to the earlier tradition in cave architecture from the Deccan. It is derived from the *vimāna* which evolved in the post-Gupta period and the significant representative examples of this style that are prior to the Kailāsa are the Kailāsanātha temple at Kanchipuram and the Virūpāksha temple at Pattadakal which are considered to be the prototypes for this monolith. The *Rathas* at Mamallapuram too are considered to be an inspiration since they too belong to the same category. Dantidurga and Krishnaraja's conquest of the Southern region very well explains this influence but at the same time it should be noted that the Kailāsa at Ellora is not merely an imitation of these precedents. The difference is noticed right from the *śikhara* portion (Fig. 84). The delineation of the *bhūmis* seen here is seldom seen at the southern sites. The *nasika* is unusually large and the ground plan

too is uncommon in the South. The Pattadakal temples groundplans are divided into a nave and aisles with a colonnade separating them from each other. The nave is a narrow lane leading towards the *maṇḍapa*. In the Kailāsa temple the *maṇḍapa* is of the *Navaraṅga* type which can be divided into nine squares. In the corner square a cluster of four pillars supports the ceiling. The interior creates a different feeling with the different treatment of space. Deccan architects had always treated space more imaginatively and more flexibly. They experimented to make it more expressive; using the amount of light that is permitted inside the structure and the ratio of verticality with horizontality, they could make it look larger than its actual dimension as in the case of Rāmeṣvara. In the present context, the Kailāsa initiates a different mood from its counterparts in the South. This also suggests that the Kailāsa was conceived originally with its unusually high plinth, which is much higher than any of the temples in the South and the North. It may not have been an afterthought as Goetz speculates⁸ but an intelligent manipulation done by an innovative architect, without which the temple would have sunk and would have been dominated by the overlooking cliffs surrounding it. The *pīṭha* boosts up the shrine proper into open air providing it with better breathing space.

Kailāsa represents the heroic age of the Baroque in every respect, where the boldness to challenge the classical norms and a search for new values is discerned⁹. Would it be improper to think that it was

at Ellora that the spirit of Baroque was discovered ? The reasons are quite obvious. At a place where a number of art traditions, fully evolved and ripe - meet and are compelled to interact with each other, they are obliged to give a rethought to the values that have reached saturation. The obligatory eclecticism would suggest the alternatives and the technical competence acquired through generations coupled with an ambition to reach beyond set norms is bound to culminate into an overwhelming grandeur that belittles the onlooker. It is not merely the scale that matters. We do know monuments that are large in size, even from the Hinayana phase of Buddhism and also from the post-Gupta era. The Karla Chaitya Cave 10 at Ajanta or Caves 11, 12 and 15 at Ellora are fairly large monuments but Kailasa inaugurates the 'colossal order' in Indian architecture¹⁰ very interestingly, the pilasters on the outer wall of the *mandapa* follow the specifications of this term (Fig.85). They rise above the height of a single storey. Seldom do we find pilasters or pillars of this kind in pre-Islamic architecture in India.

Considering this eclecticism and experimentalism, the authorship of this monolith should be attributed to the Karnataka regions. The artists of the Pallava lands seem to be more orthodox and respectful of the chastity of tradition. Chālukyan sculpture, in its progression does not divulge a rectilinear evolution, instead at every juncture of tradition it reveals a marked break away from the parole in vogue. Either due to the innovative attitude of the sculptors as seen in

Aihole or due to lineages foreign to the indigenous style as seen at Pattadakal, the Chālukyan idiom is everchanging. This flexibility is revealed in the architecture of Kailāsa too and hence it discloses its affinity towards the lower Deccan and not South India.

The sculpture of the Kailasa displays a diversity of idioms, sometimes as a result of orthogenesis and due to different origins otherwise. To gauge the stylistic developments in this particular monument the fabric woven of these warps and wefts needs to be examined. The major lineages that surface on this fabric are the Chālukya, Pallava and the later version of the indigenous upper Deccan idiom. They coexist independently and in the course of time interact with each other to result into a new synthesis. On one hand the orthogenesis of the individual idioms and on the other hand, the ingredients of the synthetic compound will have to be examined which will automatically lead to the chronology of this prolonged activity though the intention is not to employ the study of stylistic development as a tool to formulate a chronological framework. The prolonged activity mentioned above is not necessarily the activity on the monolith proper. The monolith already indicates that it was finished in a record time of about two and a half decades¹¹. The projects in its vicinity seem to have lingered through several decades thereafter. Except for a few masterpieces, the quality of sculpture in this breath taking monument is not exceptionally and consistently good. It betrays not only the tentativeness but also, sometimes, the clumsiness in execution¹²; however, the magnificence of conception compensates for every shortcoming.

Scholars have employed varied methodologies to define the chronology of the Kailāsa. The simplest and fairly reliable logic to define the chronology is to rely upon the stages of carving¹³. As discussed before, it is not possible to excavate the trenches to separate the central block from the living mountain because the removal of the debris from the trenches of that depth is far from convenient. The only possibility is to loosen the boulders, by drilling deep holes in a row and to roll them down on the slope of the mountain. Soundara Rajan in his 'Ellora Monoliths' tries to find out the stages of carving¹⁴. The drawings furnish a fairly clear and convincing picture of the sequential progress of work but only in stages. There can be several sculptures in a single stage and the sculpture added at a later date to the area carved at an earlier stage - a kind of intrusion, can defy this sequence, and hence to comprehend the sculptural activity, it is imperative to search through the threads of different lineages and the way they intertwine with each other. Some of the relief panels clearly represent an idiom the origin of which is vividly traceable. The sculptural panels of modest size from the upper register on both the sides of the shrine proper should be some of the earliest sculptural embellishments of this monolith. The roaring lions or the images above the *prastāra*, form an integral part of the architecture. They cease to exist as a sculptural entity and hence they are not brought into this discussion. The sculptural panels mentioned above are not only similar to each other but also distinctly represent the Pattadakal idiom. As mentioned before they are of a manageable size

like those on the outer walls of the Pattadakal temples. Unlike the cave sculptures, they are placed in shallow niches. The sculptor perhaps is yet to be aware of the liberties he may enjoy while carving in living rock, and has restricted the carvings to a certain uniform depth. All these sculptures (two panels of Narasimha, Jaṭāyu Vadha, Vāli Vadha, Śiva Lingin and Mahiṣamardini etc. Figs. 87, 86, 89, 91) faithfully follow the Pattadakal physiognomy and stylization. Sometimes the sculpture spreads out of the frame on the wall, surrendering its plasticity and converging itself into a drawing incised in stone.

The space inside the frame is starkly neutral like a backdrop. The narration is synoptic, devoid of narrative details. The movements are arrested or dramatically suspended, a characteristic feature of Pattadakal sculpture which can be seen in every relief of the Virūpākṣa temple (Fig. 88, 90). The so-called Lakulīśa image is an additional similarity between these groups and Pattadakal sculpture. A similar image holding a club, like an axe and standing in *samabhaṅga* is found at Mahakūta and Pattadakal. Considering the scale and the number of these sculptures and the individuality as distinct as a signature, the whole group can be attributed to a single master. Let us name him the 'Master of Pattadakal'.

The figures of the *pratihāras* (Fig. 95) flanking the doors of the *mukha-maṇḍapa* and *ardhamāṇḍapa* are in the same stratum of carving and subscribe to the same sub-school of the Chālukyan style, but these

images are almost treated like round sculptures that are stuck to the walls or pillars. Doris Chatham has rightly traced their origin to the Virūpākṣa temple¹⁵. This difference of delineation is observed in the Virūpākṣa temples too. The roundness of the Narasimha panel from the Daśāvatāra has always posed a problem in tracing the evolutionary sequence of the sculpture of Chālukyan origin at Ellora. The plasticity of this sculpture when compared to the linearity of the sculptural panels from the upper register of Kailāsa had suggested a comparatively later date to the Narasimha panel which implies that the work at the Dasavatara was in progress even after half of the monolith of Kailāsa was excavated. However, the *pratihāras* from Pattadakal evince that both the delineations are contemporaneous to each other. The 'Master of *Pratihāras*' could probably never enjoy the privilege of carving the narrative panels at Pattadakal as that plasticity is impossible to achieve on the walls of a structural temple. Perhaps he could get an opportunity to try his hand on a narrative panel at Ellora and the Narasimha panel came into being at his hand. The co-existence of both these styles at Pattadakal implies that the Narasimha sculpture does not have to be later to the ones from the Kailāsa wall. They evolve independently at their place of origin, and at Ellora too. The presence of Chālukyan sculpture all over the outer wall indicates that till this level the work was carried out strictly by Chālukyan carvers.

At this juncture the Pallava sculptors entered the monolith. While the 'Master of Pattadakal' was busy carving the sculptures on the north and south walls of Kailāsa, the guild of Pallava sculptors cleared off the rear wall of the temple and took over the front wall of the two subshrines on the east of the main shrine (Fig.96). These subshrines are almost replicas of the Dharmarāja ratha at Mamallapuram (Fig.97). The walls are programmed in a similar manner, embedding a slender standing image between two pilasters as on the walls of Dharmaraja ratha at Mamallapuram. The *dikpālas* and the sculptures on the outer facade wall may be seen in continuation with this following the former immediately. The *dikpāla* images (Fig.98) vividly recall the slender grace, the serene elegance and the slightly schematic modelling of Pallava sculptures where the limbs taper uniformly towards their extremities like chalksticks evading the subtleties of anatomical structure.

The distinct stylistic traits seen in this monument furnish a very clear picture of the art activity of these times. Three very large guilds of architects, skilled masons or craftsmen and sculptors appear to be rushing towards the completion of this unique conception and the presence of a fourth guild from Andhradeśa is also discerned at places.

The Chālukyan guild perhaps comprised mainly of architects and skilled masons who concentrated on the excavation of the temple proper, though as suggested before, the architects from Andhradeśa

must have contributed to a great extent to this unique conception. An abortive attempt of a similar concept is seen at Vijaywada¹⁶. The previous chapter gives an account of those efforts and the migration of an artisans' guild to the nearby Rastrakuta site - Bhokardan. It also traces the associations between these artisans and the Pattadakal sculptors. The innovation of the Andhra architect was supplemented with the rational sophistication of Chālukya designers.

The indigenous craftsmen seem to be contributing to this activity in a subservient capacity. After exploiting all the possibilities of the visual vocabulary and its parole formulated through centuries, the sculptors of this region betray signs of exhaustion. The highly contrived efforts to attain bygone splendours fail miserably at Dhumarlena. The indigenous art tradition could not create anything that could be boasted of, till the mid-eighth century. It did keep alive waiting for new inspiration or the Midas touch of a genius. Those artisans still retaining their skills would have been technical experts for the artisans coming from the southern regions, who had no experience of working on this hard rock. Even if no tangible proof can be furnished to prove the participation of the local artisans in this venture, somehow it is felt in the air and is also manifest after a latency of several decades.

The largest guild of sculptors working on this complex is from the land of the Pallavas. They took up massive assignments like the *Gajaśārdūlathara* and the two elephants on the lateral sides of the

nandimaṇḍapa - in the courtyard. As stated before, the sculptures on the facade and the sculptures on the inner side of the enclosure wall disclose their Pallava accent vividly.

Keeping in mind the stages of carving, the *Gajaśārdulathara* should be seen as one of the latest embellishments added to the shrine. Goetz felt that it was not a part of the original programme¹⁷, but an after thought, Dhavalikar¹⁸ has pointed out some portions of these animal figures overlapping the adjoining panels of the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa (Fig.100.), implying that these animals were executed after the narrative panels. On the northern side, the paw of a rearing lion is seen making space for itself in the already carved narrative panel, and on the south wall the narrative panel accommodates the already existing protrusion, of the animal body, which indicates that the Pattadakal guild started with the Mahābhārata panels while the Pallava artisans began their work on the southern part of the *pīṭha*. But the Pallava guild seems to have worked only on the side portions which are more conspicuous to a visitor to this temple. Later, it seems to have handed over this job to the Pattadakal guild because the animation and agility that is seen in the elephants in the front is lost in the rear portion. The latter resemble the more frontal and static representation of this graceful animal in later Chālukyan temples (Fig.101).

The Pallava artisans dress the stone differently than the sculptors from Karnataka or Maharashtra. Normally, a carved sculpture is finally

dressed with a flat chisel which sometimes leaves its fine parallel marks on the surface, or it gives it a smooth finish. However, in Pallava sculpture, the surface is treated almost with a pointer or a busher, which softens the play of shade and light on the sculpture, thus reducing the contrast between the form and its surrounding space. As a result, the protruding forms merge with their background, creating a subtle turbulence which compensates for the lack of dynamism. This merging is not essentially due to the erosion of stone, as even in the best preserved sculptures at Mamallapuram, this surface treatment can be observed. The sculpture from Ellora attributed to the Pallava guild also shows this feature and later carvers from other guilds too adopt it.

By this time, since the artisans from different guilds had been working together for more than two decades, they began to adopt even the formal qualities of other traditions that were analogous to their own. For instance, the *dikpālas* in the Pallava tradition from the facade are accompanied by a Naga couple and the Varāha image (Fig. 102) which belong to the Pattadakal style, but the Narasiṃha on the same wall is difficult to classify categorically under any one of these lineages. It reveals traits of both idioms. Such blending can be observed on the inner surface of the enclosure wall. The Tripurāntaka image (Fig. 76) placed in the inner corner behind the entrance which spreads on both adjoining walls, has all the representative qualities

of Pallava sculpture viz. the tall *Kirīṭamukuta*, the slender torsoes and broad shoulders and the simplification of modelling.

On the other hand, the sculptures from the northern half of the enclosure display a few Chālukyan traits although they reveal a predominantly Pallava stylization. The change in the delineation of anatomy is the most conspicuous of these.

The Mahiṣamardini panel (Fig. 104) on the enclosure wall facing the River Goddesses shrine and the Rati-Manmatha (Fig. 106) can illustrate this observation further. These sculptures are rightly attributed to the Pallava guild. The conception of the Mahiṣamardini itself speaks of its Tamil origin. Like her Mamallapuram counterpart, the Goddess is shown riding a lion and being followed by her army. Unlike the usual representation of this myth, where the Goddess is shown slaying the demon, here she is depicted while engaged in combat with him. The space treatment too corresponds to the Pallava tradition in which the protagonists are provided with an arena which is sunk a little deeper than the rest of the relief which is invariably in low relief. Sometimes the depth of the reliefs varies according to the size of the figure. While faithfully following the iconographic and formal norms of the Pallavas, the sculptor of this relief borrows the physiognomy of its characters from Chālukyan prototypes. The demon in the present relief is depicted in an anthropomorphic form, with only a pair of

horns to indicate his identity as seen in Pattadakal sculpture and its other extensions at Ellora, while at Mamallapuram he had a buffalo head. There is also a marked change in the delineation of the human figure in which one can read a deflection from Pallava norms.

The other Mahiṣamardini image (Fig. 93) just a few yards away from this one explains the fundamental difference between the Pallava and Chālukya idioms. This image is in the passage joining the main entrance and the *prākāra*. The entrance here is flanked by the Goddess and Ganeśa. This sculpture is attributed to the Pallava carvers by Dhavalikar¹⁹ but it is obviously akin to the Mahiṣamardini image from a subshrine in the Mallikārjuna temple from Pattadakal (Fig. 92.). Pattadakal sculpture, as observed before has an inherent theatricality in it. In M.Fried's words²⁰, it maintains a proscenic barrier between the spectator and the image prohibits him from ushering into the act. Pallava sculpture is much more absorbing as compared to Chālukyan sculpture. The sculpture mentioned above is theatrical in every sense of the word. The Goddess as a participant is not engrossed in the act, and hence even if it is an extremely elegant sculpture, in the absence of natural rage and fury, it is reduced to a schema, however skilfully contrived.

The linguistic exchange between the Pallava and Chālukyan paroles at this juncture may not necessarily be a resultant of their prolonged

co-existence, instead it is a conscious attempt to go beyond the intrinsic short-comings of their respective lingual structures which are detected when juxtaposed against each other. The cold serenity of Pallava expression and the synoptic rhetoricism of Pattadakal counter balance each other and these idioms which have already reached their saturation point in their respective regions get revitalized as they complement each other here at Ellora, which proves instrumental in overcoming the heterogeneity caused by the diversity of idioms. The homogeneity of the monument is retained by the thread of orthogenetical development running through it²¹. All these sculptures, initially revealing different lineages, interact with each other and gradually head towards the inevitable destiny of a consistent formal language. The sculptural styles have different origins, but when they came together they were at the same stage of maturity and hence a dialogue and exchange was easily possible. For this very reason, the deterministic process did not have to force them into the culmination of the stylistic cycle; instead with multiplied momentum they impelled towards the meridian.

The particular sculpture which is at the apex has a relation with each of the styles and the relationship is very much like the chromosome structure, the roots of which can be traced back to several preceding generations. This genetical relation links all the different lineages and styles of Kailāsanātha together and gives it a homogenous coherence.

The work which could achieve the pivotal position is the masterpiece, unmatched in the history of Indian sculpture, the great Ravanāgraha Mūrtī on the southern side of the pitha (Fig. 107). Alongwith this, there are three other monumental sculptural panels in this monolith, the Gajalakshmi (Fig. 109) and the Yogīśwara Śiva (Fig. 111) and the Bhairava (Fig. 110) placed below the *nandimaṇḍapa*. The Deccan achievement is distinctly evident in these three reliefs. The Yogīśwara Siva is almost an enlarged version of the one in the *nāśika*, and therefore, still retains some traits of the Pattadakal idiom. The above mentioned Gajalakshmi relief can be compared with the image of Gajalakshmi in Cave 14. Though from the same lineage, it is certainly executed later. It also has an inscription carved on the pillar on its left which on palaeographic grounds is datable to eighth century. The third sculpture has all the salient characteristics of Deccan sculpture. It is a huge panel of Śiva in his ferocious form with dishevelled *jaṭābhāra*, dancing frantically, throwing his arms in different directions. The most noteworthy feature of this sculpture is the group of Saptamātrkāś seated at the feet of the colossus. They are not carved inside the niche but a little distance away, seated on the ground. A stag is also carved in a similar manner in Cave 12 and the best and the most interesting example of this kind of manipulation of space is seen at Aurangabad Cave 3 where the seated devotees are grouped in two corners of the shrine, in front of the huge seated Buddha. In these sculptures the space in between also becomes a part of the sculpture

and the orbit of the sculpture is extended further, sometimes also enveloping the spectator in it²². In a side shrine in the Kailāsa complex - popularity known as the Yajñāśālā, the sculptural forms further grow into the open space and activate the space around them.

The figures in all these reliefs move truly in the space provided to them. Some of them emerge from the deep niche and some appear receding back into it, while some of them also peep out of the relief into open space. Movements and counter-movements in different directions enrich the choreography of these reliefs but all this activity is not aimed towards narrating the event to the spectator. The characters do not communicate with the spectator. They are contemplative, engrossed within themselves and the spectator only remains an unnoticed witness of the episode, stunned by the divine manifestation and the hypnotic power of the images. These figures and characters belong to that space, charged and activated by their presence and dynamism - creating an otherworldly atmosphere inside the niche. Mortals can at the most have the privilege of peeping into it.

All the figures of these panels are tall, slender but heavy and weighty. This weighty volume is also a characteristic feature of Deccan sculpture which is not merely bulky like Kuśāna sculpture. They are slender in comparison with the latter, but whatever volume they have, is very dense. This density of volume adds visual weight to the figures, and a tremendous momentum to the movement of their bodies.

The tall and elegant Rāvaṇa in the upper Pattadakal style panel (Fig. 87) about to bring down his sword on Jaṭāyu is very dynamic, but he is also supple, lyrical. He can move around swiftly - without disturbing the space around him. However, the Rāvaṇa figure in this Rāvaṇagrāha sculpture, kneeling and trying to lift the mountain in *garuḍa sthānaka*, churns the surroundings even with a little movement, just because of the combination of mass and acceleration. The inertia of Śiva's poise as he sits on top of the mountain creates a counter thrust from the top and between these massive thrusts the space gets whirled.

The relief is carved very deep and high, almost from all the four sides but it is not derived - as the Greek high reliefs - from sculpture in round. They are not stuck on the rock surface or installed within the niche, instead the rock and the figures constitute an inseparable whole. They belong to each other as if one is born from the other, giving a primordial feeling to the total composition.

The play of volume and space which is always seen in Deccan sculpture reaches its perfection in these panels and particularly in the Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti. The dramatic element in it conceals its relation with the upper Deccan lineage. Because of its dynamism it looks different from the Buddhist sculpture of Ellora and because of the treatment of space and placement of characters, it differs from the Pallava and Pattadakal idiom, from which it inherits several elements. If the characters of this sculpture are seen independently, they reveal

their origins. Śiva, the protagonist of this myth is no different from the elegantly seated Pallava male figures, but his consort is of indigenous origin. The female figures from the Yajñaśālā and even the female deities from the Jain caves establish a close kinship with the Pārvati from this sculpture. The gesture of Rāvaṇa betrays its affiliation with the southern idioms, but now the sculpture is no more planar like its prototypes, the body planes are not parallel to the plane of the rock. They twist excitedly around the axis. The composition is far more complex than any of the sculptures we have ever seen in this country. The contours get interlaced with each other and do not demarcate any form that can be separated from the total. Except for Śiva, who is as cool and unperturbed as an iceberg, the rest of the characters are agile, restless and the atmosphere is entrancing.

Very characteristically, the different lineages get intertwined together and collectively reach their culmination in this sculpture. The zenith of the parabolic graph of the formal evolution is achieved at this juncture.

It is rather difficult to define the Rāṣṭrakūṭa style of sculpture since we don't have many examples of it except for the few from this monument which could be attributed to this, one of the most powerful dynasties of medieval India, and which could acquire a respectable

niche for its patrons in the history of Indian art. If we are keen on the term 'Rāṣṭrakūṭa Art', it should be attributed to the magnificent eclecticism of the master minds, who were responsible for the creation of the Kailāsa temple of Ellora. Even after this phase, Kailāsa did not cease to welcome the external currents, but the sculptural art of Ellora does not reach this excellence again. It gradually gets decadent, the medievalization gets pronounced. The *Prṣṭhasvastika* Naṭarāja from the Lankeśvara (Fig. 74), the Narasiṃha and also the other images which are more iconic from the same cave, denote the development, which gets more obvious in the River Goddess shrine. The sculptures from this shrine, retain their plasticity and elegance, but become more ornamental (Fig. 75). Dhavalikar attributes this panel to Govinda III, who probably got it carved to commemorate his victory in North India²³. One can notice the Gurjara-Pratihāra influence on this sculptural group and also the *toranas* decorating this shrine are not much different than the ones from the medieval temples in Central and North India. Stylistically this sculpture can be put in the early ninth century, which corresponds with the period of Govinda III²⁴.

This style continues in the Jain caves, where the physiognomy of the female figures and the architectural motifs reappear. Some of the sculptures from the Jain caves are dated as late as 13th century²⁵. It seems that some stray sculptural activities were going on for a few centuries at this place. The Gaṇeśa Leṇā group, the Jogeshvari group

alongwith the newly found caves and the crude Maheśamūrti reliefs carved behind the *linga* in some of the shrines²⁶, are the examples of this lingering activity but those sculptures cannot claim any relationship with the grand tradition of the past, that ceases to continue after the ninth century A.D.

The study of the different lineages and their development at Ellora reveals some fundamental facts regarding stylistic evolution. Styles come to life and they also come an end, sometimes giving birth to another style or styles. The conservation of a style is not possible, either it will deteriorate and become extinct or it will be metamorphosed due to some foreign interactions. Endogamy may restrict cross-breeding but then it will cause a premature death or at least a stagnancy of the style. The Paṭṭadakal style could not develop further at Paṭṭadakal. It came to an end abruptly at its birth place, but an offshoot of the same style travelled towards northern Deccan, interacted with other styles and could contribute to the genesis of a magnificent new style.

WORK ON KAILASA & DASAVATARA : PHASEWISE CONTRIBUTION OF LINEAGES

ANDHRA	CHALUKYA	PALLAVA	VAKATKAS - TRAIKUTAKA - KALACHURI
			ELLORA

A.D. 740

NARASIMHA
TRIVIKRAMA
PRATIHARAS

CAVE 15

NATARAJA
TRIPURANTAKA

CAVE 15

A.D. 750

REMAINING
RELIEFS FROM
CAVE 15

ALL THE RELIEFS
FROM THE UPPER
REGISTER OF MAIN-
SHRINE
PRATIHARAS

CAVE 16

WALL OF THE
S-E SUBSHRINE
GAJASARDULATHARA
DIKPALAS, FACADE

A.D. 760

RAMAYANA-MAHABHARATA
PANELS

REAR PART OF THE
GAJASARDULA THARA
NAGA COUPLES

A.D. 770

SCULPTURES
FROM THE
REAR CORRIDOOR
OF CAVE 16

AVATARA'S - FACADE
MAHISAMARDINI
GANESA-ENTRANCE PASSAGE

TRIPURANTAKA
ENCLOSURE WALL
INNER SIDE S.W.

A.D. 780

RATI-MANMATH
MAHISAMARDINI
(ENCL. WALL INNER
SIDE N.W.)

GACHLAKSMI

NATARAJA
NANDIMANDAPA
NORTH WALL

NARASIMHA
RAVANANUGRAHA
NEAR STAIRCASE

SCULPTURE ON
LOWER
REGISTER

BHAKTAVATSALA SIVA
YAGNASHALA MATRKAS

A.D. 790

RAVANANUGRAHA (SOUTH WALL)

A.D. 800

NATARAJA AND OTHER SCULPTURES
LANKESVARA

RIVER GODDESSES.

KAILASA MONOLITH (STAGES OF CUTTING)

PLAN

(Schematic)

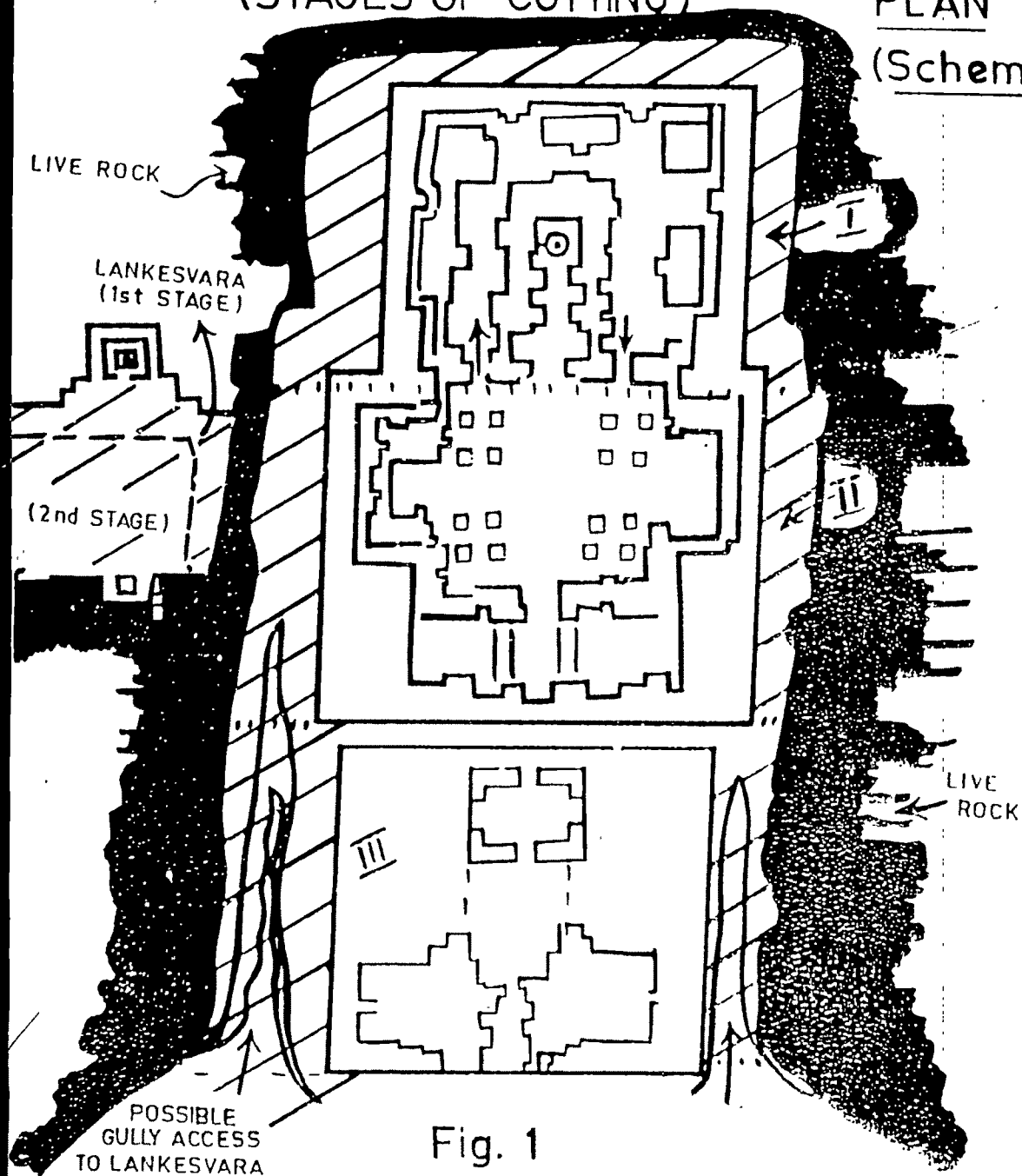
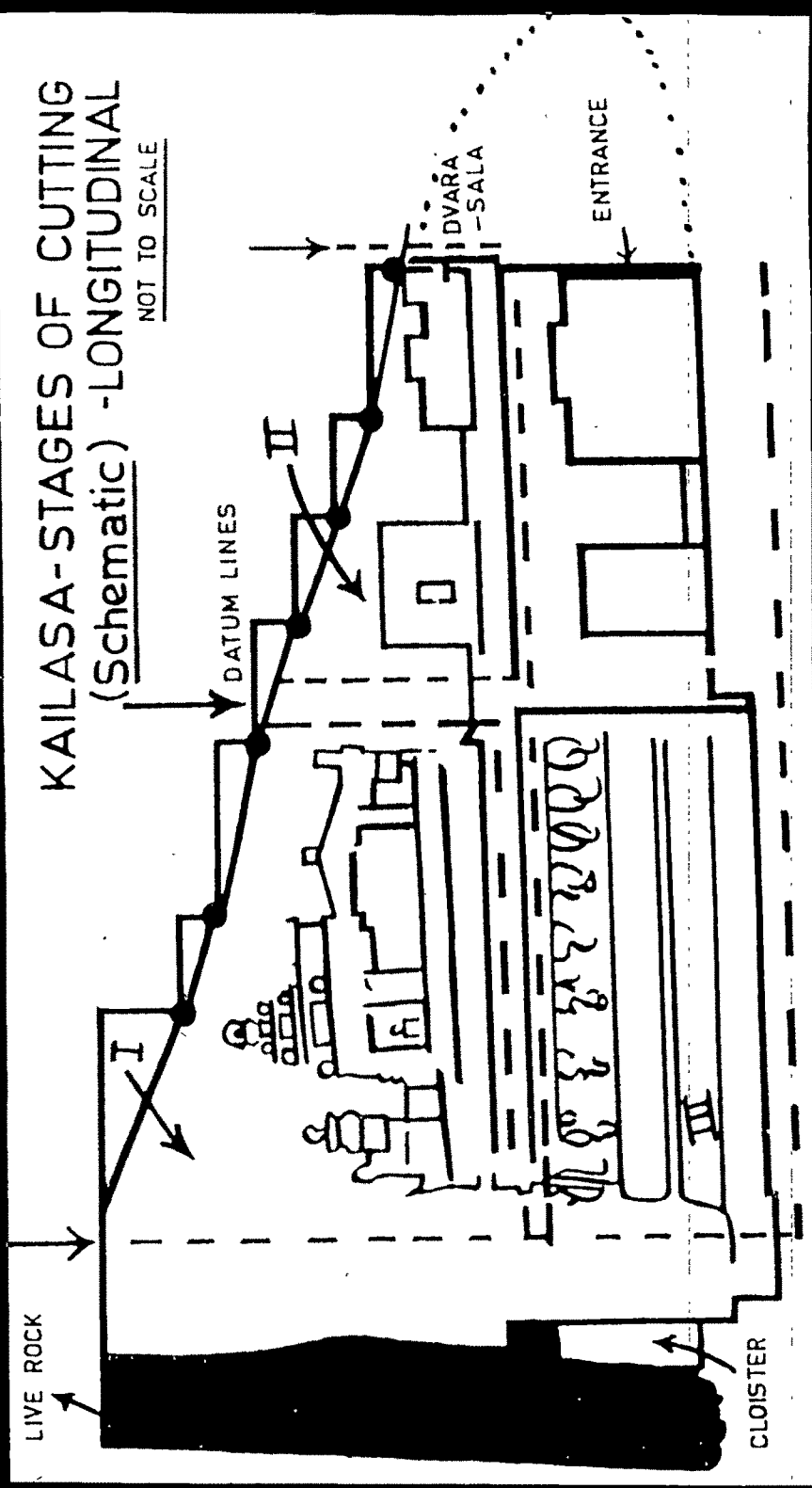


Fig. 1

(Appendix)

KAILASA-STAGES OF CUTTING
(Schematic) -LONGITUDINAL
NOT TO SCALE



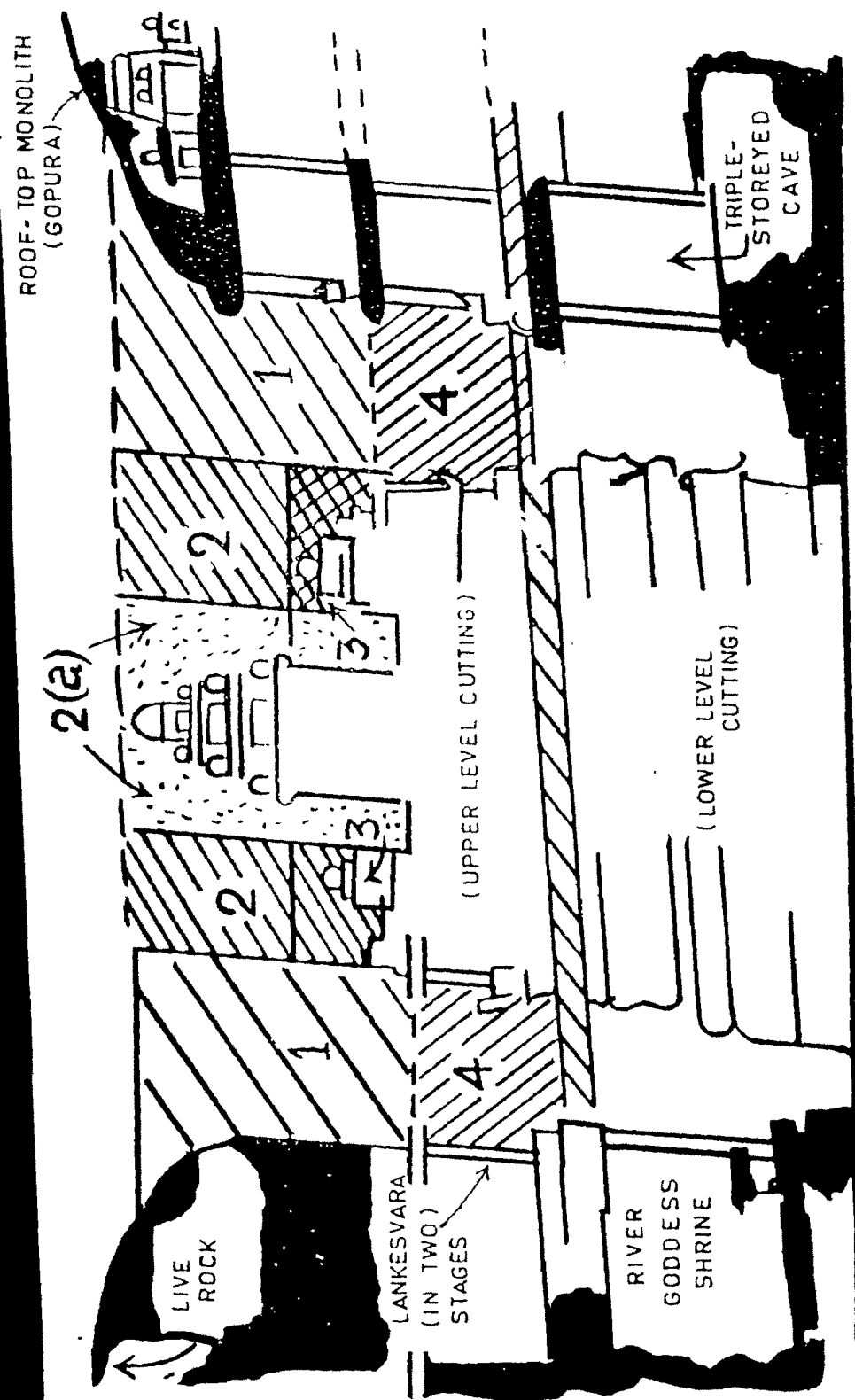


Fig. 3. KAILASA-STAGES OF CUTTING
(TRANSVERSE)
-Schematic-
NOT TO SCALE

REFERENCES

1. These references have already been discussed at length in 'The Critique of the Predecessors'.
2. Refer to note 1 of 'The Critique of the Predecessors' loc.cit. p.30.
3. J.Fleet, Indian Antiquary Vol.XI p.156, identified the place as Yallapura in North Canara, while Buhler identified it as a Śiva temple on some hill fort, in Indian Antiquary Vol.XI p.61. For a detailed reading of this plate refer to R.G.Bhandarkar, Bengal Asiatic Society Journal, Vol.VIII p.292.
4. H.Goetz, 'The Kailāsa of Ellora and the Chronology of Raṣṭrakūṭa Art', *Arbitus Asiae* XV nos.1-2 pp. 84 ff. Ascona - New York 1952, attributes the initiation of this project to Dantidurga and not to Krishnaraja.
5. *ibid*
6. Gary Tartakov, 'The Pratima Pratiṣṭhāpanam in the Kailasa' in 'Kusumānjali' - New Interpretation of Indian Art and Culture, Ed. M.S.Nagaraja Rao.

Tartakov, with the help of several texts on the rituals of temple construction has shown that the person who lays the *Prathameṣṭaka* (the first brick) who gets its benefit. "If Dantidurga or anyone previous to Krishna I had initiated the construction of the Kailāsa as a temple, they would have done so in the way that would

ensure their receiving the fruits of that act, that is by the *Prathameṣṭaka* and *Garbhanyāsa* rites I have mentioned above. Once this was done, however, the temple would be theirs. Completely, it would have been an act for their benefit, not one claimable as one's own, as Krishna apparently claimed the Kailāsa".

On these grounds also the begining of Kailāsa can be attributed to Krishna, not necessarily the completion of it.

7. Though the Draviḍian influence is very obvious, it is yet to be clear whether it reaches Ellora from Tamil Nadu or from Karnataka i.e. Paṭṭadakal. The Kailāsanātha of Kanchipuram is too ornate to influence a robust structure like this one. The Virūpāksha of Paṭṭadakal temperamentally is closer to the Kailāsa of Ellora. However, as discussed later on it is not merely an imitation of the former.
8. The extraordinarily **high** plinth and the chamber above the River Goddess shrine which is not accessible today, alongwith a few other features made Goetz think that the initial plan was to carve a temple with a normal plinth i.e. the upper half of the existing Kailāsa temple Goetz op.cit. Moreover, the four pilasters at the corners of the nandiṃaṇḍapa are exact miniature replicas or even scale models of the dhvajastambhas, which clearly indicates that the dhvajastambhas, in their entire length, were a part of the initial programme. Therefore, it is clear that the architect had

planned to carve a high plinth right at the time when the top of these dhvajastambhas were carved.

9. The spirit of the 'Baroque' suggests a heightened dramatism, exaggeration, restlessness, a fiery intensity and an overwhelming grandeur.
10. See Edward Smith, 'Dictionary of Art Terms', p.136.
11. If attributed to Krishnaraja, this monument should have commenced after A.D. 755 and even the latest embellishments on the shrine proper, like the Rāvaṇānugraha which cannot be seen as a part of the original activity are not later than the eighth century. This means that the temple with pīṭha was complete by A.D.780. An inscription on the pilaster near the Gajalakṣmi panel, is datable to the late eighth century on epigraphical grounds, which can also support this dating.
12. The ardhamandāpas on the lateral sides and the subshrines reveal this clumsiness of execution to a great extent. Some of the sculptures, particularly those on the outer wall on the south have been carved very hurriedly.
13. Most scholars who have written a Kailāsa right from Goetz to Dhavalikar conceive these stages in horizontal bands parallel to the ground. Instead, these stages should be inclined planes having a slope of at least 30 degrees, because only then is it possible for the artisans to carve into living rock.

14. K.V.Soundara Rajan, 'Ellora Monoliths', Delhi 1988. Appendix. "A Conjectural Reconstruction of how Kailāsa was Executed", pp.191-195.
15. Doris Chatham 'Pratihāras from Paṭṭadakal to Ellora - The Early Western Chalukyan basis for the sculptural style of the Kailāsa temple'. Chhavi, Part 2, Benares, 1982.
16. At Vijayawada an attempt to carve a monolith is clearly discernible in the Akkaṇṇa-Madaṇṇa Caves. Surprisingly, none of the scholars who know about the Eastern Chālukyan Caves have pointed out this similarity. Burgess and Fergusson and recently Soundara Rajan did mention the correlation between the Unḍavelli Caves and the multistoreyed caves at Ellora. In a personal conversation, Soundara Rajan seemed to approve of my comparison, but perhaps he does not find it very significant.
17. Goetz op.cit.
18. M.K.Dhavalikar, Masterpieces of Rashtrakuta Art, The Kailāsa, Bombay 1983.
19. ibid.
20. M.Fried, 'Absorption and Theatricality' - Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot, reference taken from Norman Bryson 'Tradition and Desire', Cambridge, 1984.
21. H.Spencer, Reference taken from Ratan Parimoo 'The idea of form and style in Indian Sculpture' in Aspects of Indian Art and Culture. Ed. Jayanta Chakrabarty, D.C.Bhattacharya, Calcutta 1983, pp.108-122.

22. This phenomenon is considered to be a characteristic of 'Environmental Sculpture' which is a 20th century concept introduced by the Futurists. The sculpture, instead of being a passive object, becomes an environment, allowing the spectator to enter into it.
23. M.K.Dhavalikar, op.cit. pp.42. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch Govinda III (794-840 A.D.) had won a decisive victory over the pratiharas over the Ganga valley and it is therefore, likely that the King got the shrine of the River Goddesses carved to commemorate his victory, probably on the Triveni Sangam, the confluence of the rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī.
24. ibid.
25. The inscriptions found in Cave 32 -
 i) *Śrī nāgavarma kṛtā pratimā* and
 ii) *Śrī sohilā, brahmachārīṇa śānti bhakṣāraka pratimeyam*
 are in Devanāgarī and are datable to the 10th century (Ref. taken from M.N.Deshpande, 'Verūḷchi Leṇi' Marathwada Diwali Issue, 1958). A loose sculpture found while cleaning the Chhoṭā Kailāsa in 1877 is inscribed and dated to 1169 of Śaka era corresponding to A.D. 1247.
26. Most of the caves from the Jogeshvari group at Ellora and the newly found caves have this Maheśamūrti in the *garbhagrha*.
 Deshpande op.cit. opines that since the cult of Sadāśiva was popular even in the tenth and eleventh centuries, these caves can

be dated to that period. I find the caves a little earlier than that i.e. in the ninth century and the Maheśamūrti reliefs can be later intrusions dating from the medieval period.