

## CRITIQUE OF THE PREDECESSORS

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Ellora, unlike Ajanta - the only other cave complex that can rival the former in every respect - was not lost in the collective amnesia. It was always a living monument, known and accessible even to the commoners of that region, and at least the Māṇakeśvara - known as the Kailāsa today - had undergone several renovations in medieval times. No wonder it was mentioned time and again in the literary texts and travelogues of the Indian and foreign visitors to this monument, not only for its religious significance but chiefly for its artistic splendours, and hence it becomes imperative to take note of all of them. Though none of these texts attempts to give an analytical account of Ellora sculpture and architecture, their opinions and reactions are inspired by this conundrum of Indian sculptural art. It incited several legends and poetic fancies which grant a better insight to the reader about this colossal achievement of Indian artists.

The earliest of these references appears hardly a few decades later in the form of the well-known copper-plate issued by Karka

Suvarnavarsna at Siddhanshi in Śaka 734 (812-13 A.D.)<sup>1</sup>. This copper-plate alongwith the other Kadamba grant of Govinda Prabhutavarsha<sup>2</sup>, attribute the patronage of Kailāsa to Krishnaraja Raṣṭrakūṭa and hence is a very important historical document in the present context. But the more fascinating part of this document is the poetic fancy which speaks of the response of an art-lover to this monolith. The poet of this grant says that the celestials were wondering whether it could be a creation of mortals or of Śiva himself who chose to carve out his own abode on earth. The sculptor, on the other hand, after trying unsuccessfully to repeat his feat, was wondering how he had created it<sup>3</sup>.

The incomplete monolith excavation on top of the Paralankā seems to have inspired the poet to think that the śilpi tried to carve out a similar edifice.

This monument seems to have also inspired the well-known Marathi saint, poet Jñāneśvara, who hailed from Nevasa near Paithan. Some of the descriptions and similes from his writings reveal his acquaintance with this monument<sup>4</sup>. However, more authentic information regarding the activities and the state of this monument can be gathered from an account of the journey of a holy man called Chakradhara, the religious leader of the *Mahānubhāva* cult. It is a compilation of his teachings and practical advice made by his disciple Mhaimbhaṭṭa. In

an appendix to this *Līlācharitra* known as *Sthānpothi*, it is said that the *Gosāvi* visited Ellora in 1268 and stayed there for ten months<sup>5</sup>. The account of his stay at Ellora clearly denotes two important facts - that Ellora was an active centre of the *Vāmāchari* esoteric yogic practices during this period, and that many more caves, some of them carved underground, exist in this mountain. It says that the mountain is almost hollowed from inside<sup>6</sup>. The ASI team clearing out some of the newly found caves on top of the mountain is yet to meet anything drastically surprising since the architecture and sculpture unearthed so far is far from exciting, but the description in the *Līlācharitra* should keep their hopes of finding something significant alive.

A very interesting legend appears in a Marathi text *Kathākalpataru*<sup>7</sup>, that reveals the understanding of the technical process of carving a monolith of this kind. In this legend, the queen of Yeluraja - the king of Ellora who was suffering from an incurable disease - vowed to Śiva that she would not accept food till she saw the *Śikhara* of the temple that she had promised to build if her husband was cured. No architect could have built a temple in less than a period of few months, and the queen would have died of starvation when her wish was granted. A *Śilpi* from Paithan named Kokasa accepted the challenge and started carving the temple from the top. The queen could see the *Śikhara* soon and thus survived. The story is

significant for two reasons. The date of the *Kathākalpataru* is 1470 to 1535, which means that even in the 15th-16th centuries, the technique of carving a temple from living rock was commonly known though the tradition had already ceased. The name of the *Śilpi* is another point of significance. We come across this name in many other texts not necessarily from this period and this region or rather the master craftsman has to be Kokasa in all these tales and in most of the cases he is believed to be a *Vādhia* - a carpenter. Since this name is repeated in almost all the texts of Western India, the possibility of it being a family name can be suggested.

Alongwith these indigenous references Ellora appears in the writings of foreign visitors also. The earliest of them is probably Al-Masudi who visited India in 940 A.D. and wrote about 'Alura'. From the 18th century onwards European travellers started coming to India more regularly and many of them were curious to learn about Indian art and culture. Several such enthusiasts visited Ellora and the other cave temples in Maharashtra. Their observations and reactions are extremely interesting. Partha Mitter has painstakingly brought together such material and has traced the history of European reactions to Indian art<sup>8</sup>. The majority of travellers were overwhelmed by the grandeur of this monument though they failed to understand the subject matter of the sculptural reliefs, and as a result they found them even monstrous. But, on the whole they developed a high

opinion of ancient Indian sculpture. Two of their works deserve a very special mention as they could be viewed as the earliest attempts to study the monument. J.B.Seely's "The Wonder of Ellora" dated 1824<sup>9</sup> is mainly an attempt to give an idea of the beauty and grandeur of Ellora to the European reader. Mitter observes that it lacks the objectivity of a scholar, as the writings of Seely get virtually drowned in a rhetorical torrent of hyperboles and expletives like 'wonder' and 'grand'. But he also admits that in a number of places, Seely goes beyond that and gives an aesthetic appreciation of the sculptures and the architecture.

A methodical attempt to study this monument can be traced back to an earlier date i.e. 1801. Sir Charles Malet, one of the top officials of the East India Company was fascinated by this monument and took up the task of exploration and measurement of the caves with the help of James Manley and some other draughtsmen including an Indian named Gungaram. This team prepared the ground plan of Kailāsa and many other drawings, though Malet himself is apologetic about the quality of his work. The work was abandoned due to Malet's ill-health, but the report was published in the 'Asiatic Research' in 1801<sup>10</sup>.

In his report, Malet attributes the authorship of these caves to the indigenous artists and admires their achievements. Mitter brings to our notice that Malet fails to differentiate between the Buddhist, the

Hindu and the Jain sculptures. W.H.Sykes suggested amendments to his observations in one of his papers presented in the meetings of the Bombay Literary Society in 1820<sup>11</sup>. But it is understandable that even his analysis is not flawless. These works were followed by two essays by R.M.Grindlay in 'The Transactions of The Royal Asiatic Society' in 1830<sup>12</sup>. The Ellora sculptures and architecture were meticulously drawn and engraved by European artists in this period. All of them express great regards for the 'Magnificence of design, the justness of proportions and the surpassing richness of ornaments' and conclude that 'Art of sculpture formerly existed in India in a much higher state of perfection than is generally supposed'<sup>13</sup>. But at the same time they earnestly believed that the Indian sculptures did not match the classical purity of Greek art<sup>14</sup>.

Ever since the A.S.I. of Western India started its operations at Ellora in 1877, a number of publications have come to light on this mind-boggling complex, though even the total corpus of their reports have yet to encompass all the details and explore all the aspects of art-historical enquiries of this monument. Except for the A.S.I. reports and some other introductory works, the rest of them concentrate on a single cave or a certain group of caves and no wonder the magnificent monolith Kailāsa attracts the maximum attention. Dr.Hermann Goetz, Dr.Soundara Rajan and Dr.Dhavalikar concentrate on this single monument. The Rāmeśvara and the caves

considered to be contemporaneous to it are also examined carefully by W.Spink and Carmel Berkson, but most of the Buddhist caves are not given their due, and this very dissertation too does not include the Buddhist sculpture in its purview.

The first extensive study of this cave-complex was taken up - as mentioned above - by the team of the A.S.I. of Western India and their reports were published in two consecutive works. The first extensive report 'The Cave Temples of India' by J.Fergusson and J.Burgess came out in 1880<sup>15</sup> and was immediately followed by 'The Elura Cave Temples' of Jas Burgess in 1882<sup>16</sup>. Both these volumes give a detailed description of each cave. Most of the observations from this pioneering work stand valid even today. The identification of the sculptural reliefs seldom goes wrong or the dates attributed prove absurd. If the factual data are the criteria of judgement, even a century later we have not added anything very significant to this report barring a few amendments.

Being an archaeological report, dating remains a prime concern of this discussion and to reach a conclusion the stylistic similarities too are observed by the authors. In the light of such stylistic comparisons, they put all the caves of Ellora as subsequent to Badami. The dates attributed to the Buddhist caves (650 A.D.) and to the Kailāsanātha (commencement in 725 A.D. under the patronage of Dantidurga)- are also acceptable with minor differences.

Some features which have been unanimously accepted today are noticed by these stalwarts for the first time. Their macroscopic vision, awareness of parallelism in the art activity of different regions and also the deterministic aspects that are perceived in the evolutionary process, are revealed through these observations. However, it was the age when many of the Indian monuments were yet to come out of the veil of mystery. The inscriptions were not yet deciphered thoroughly, the genealogies of the different dynasties had several missing links and the historical picture was still quite hazy. With all these handicaps, Burgess and Fergusson grasp the monument just with the help of their visual memory, sensitivity and perception. They not only notice the similarity between the bracket figures from Rāmeśvara and Bādāmi Cave 3, the doorframe of Rāmeśvara and Ajanta Caves 1 and 4, which is quite conspicuous, but they also note down the affinity between the roof of the nandimaṇḍapa of the Daśāvātāra Cave and the Undavalli Cave, which is seldom mentioned even today. They also compare the Narasimha panel with the Mahiṣamardini of 'Mahabalipur' and opine that stylistically they are so similar that they should belong to the same age or that they cannot be distant in date. Today none of us would agree with any of these two statements; the Narasimha does not subscribe to the same style. However, the attempt to analyse and date sculpture on stylistic grounds is pioneering, despite the debatable conclusions.



Sometimes they suggest some extremely impractical possibilities too, perhaps due to their ill-acquaintance with the technicalities of sculpture. The well-known 'trench theory' in the Kailāsa is introduced here in this work<sup>17</sup>. It suggests that three deep trenches were excavated in the living mountain to separate the block of rock from the rest of it, and then the monolithic temple was carved in it. It is practically impossible to do that.

Though Ellora is in Maharashtra and is a very well-known centre of pilgrimage and tourism since decades, it is a matter of surprise that no extensive literature was published on these cave temples in Marathi till 1958, when Shri M.N.Deshpande's long article was published in the Diwali issue of 'Marathwada'<sup>18</sup>. This article is written for a common art-lover, furnishing general information regarding the caves. The author naturally does not enter into the controversial issues in this article but goes on noting down his observations regarding the dating, patronage, inscriptions, iconography and also the symbolism. He classifies the Brahmanical caves into two major groups; he places almost all the caves to the north of Kailāsa except 18, 23, 24 and 28 in the pre-Raṣṭrakūṭa phase alongwith Cave 14 but not much before the advent of Dantidurga. He thinks that almost all of them were excavated in the 7th or 8th century. In a way, he subscribes to the dates attributed by Burgess and Fergusson. The obvious similarity between the Badami sculpture and many of the

sculptural panels from these caves must have prompted him to put these caves at a date later to Badami but even that similarity does not justify the date (late 7th or early 8th century) attributed to these caves. They could have been placed immediately after Badami. The present dissertation subscribes to the dates suggested by W.Spink with some minor differences, both in dating and chronology, which have been discussed at length at appropriate junctures.

Today the Buddhist origin of some of the Brahmanical caves from this site is a commonly known fact. Deshpande seems to be the first scholar to suggest this. Much later in 1976, Krishnakumar published a paper on such caves in 'East and West'<sup>19</sup>. W.Spink also opined on the Buddhist origin of Cave 27<sup>20</sup>. Except in the case of Cave 14, the speculation is based upon the architectural stylization. The observation regarding the annexation of a monument - living or abandoned - will help an art-historian in many ways, particularly in dating and formulating the chronology of the caves.

At the time of the National Seminar at Ellora in 1987, the participants could get an opportunity to visit the Kailasanatha temple with Shri Doshbando. He spoke about the symbolism of the architecture and sculpture of that monument. Some part of the discussion is published in the proceedings of that seminar<sup>21</sup>. The contents are beyond the purview of this dissertation but in the opening paragraphs he has made statements regarding the dating of

the Daśāvatāra cave and the Kailāsa, which more or less conform to the views of most scholars. I personally would differ only on one issue : he is of the view that the monolith in the courtyard of this cave did not exist before Dantidurga appropriated this cave. It is difficult to justify the existence of this monolith in Buddhist architecture. Moreover, an obvious late Chalukyan influence on it indicates its date which is not earlier than the mid-8th century. It appears more logical in a Brahmanical monument and hence I personally would attribute it to the emperor whose inscription - though incomplete - is issued on its walls.

The volume on Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad caves by R.S.Gupte and B.D.Mahajan<sup>22</sup>, in Shivaramamurti's words, from the foreword "is a handy volume ..... a fine book describing the wonderful material at Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad". It is almost an extensive guide-book to these monuments giving a detailed account of the major caves and information regarding the other caves too, supplemented with the historical background, introduction to the religious and iconographical treatises, glossary of technical words etc. which makes it a very useful reference material to the tourists who sincerely wish to learn about these monuments. But it fails to reach beyond that since it does not conform to any art-historical methodology.

Gupte dates most of the caves of Ellora to the 8th century. He opens the description with this attribution which is not substantiated with

any argument or justification. No attempt is made to relate the sculptural panels or even the caves to any dynasty or art-tradition that was prevalent in that period. It is a faithful compilation of information that was available to art-historians and it obviously caters to the requirements of tourists and not scholars. The use of terms like '*chapatadānamudrā*' - to describe the Narasimha panel from Cave 15 - may be a result of it.

K.V.Soundara Rajan is the only scholar to describe all the caves at Ellora in great detail after Burgess and Fergusson. His ambitious volume on the 'Cave Temples of the Deccan',<sup>23</sup> his extensive keynote address to the Ellora Seminar<sup>24</sup> and the recent monograph on 'Ellora Monoliths',<sup>25</sup> together touch several aspects of Ellora.

The 'Cave Temples of the Deccan', though it is not confined to Ellora alone, surveys all the Brahmanical caves from this site meticulously and chronologically. Being an archaeologist Soundara Rajan is descriptive. He furnishes the minutest information regarding the location, orientation, programming and ground plans of the caves. The historical background too is given at length in the beginning. The sculptural panels with their iconographical descriptions are listed down. All this information makes this volume probably the most useful reference for the study of Brahmanical caves in the Deccan. A student concerned with the chronology may choose to differ with him on the issue of dating, since the other factual data are correct to the

last detail barring a very few confusions. But the present dissertation has to say something which is contrary to his methodology. Though dating and chronology is not the central concern of this work, no art-historical work can afford to be ahistorical - hence even while inquiring about the stylistic evolution, it is imperative to keep track of the chronology. It is a common practice to compare and contrast the architectural details, decorative motifs, iconographical features and also the costumes and ornaments. An observant eye backed with visual memory can organize the given material in a fairly convincing order. But this methodology has its intrinsic limitations. The most glaring of them is that it works on a tegumentary level, examining only the cortex of a palpable existence, which can be of great help in broad classification or basic scrutiny, but it cannot be the decisive evidence in dating. These surface details can travel effortlessly through different regions and different times. A motif can be borrowed from another tradition without even the faintest acquaintance with its spirit, and hence an occurrence of a specific motif in two different art traditions may not lead us to any specific conclusion. To elaborate it further - what criteria are to be applied to define the posteriority of a monument to the other, displaying similar decorative motifs or iconographic features ? In the absence of a historical reference or some other evidence, the motif itself would fail to guide us unless the evolution of a particular motif is cognized.

Sometimes we also come across a motif or iconographic feature being repeated after centuries, e.g. the rosette motif on the brackets of the Cave 6 (upper) at Ajanta is not different than the one from Sanchi. In archaeological excavations, the stratigraphy of a trench gets disturbed by a pit dug and filled at a later date. We are likely to meet such pitfalls if we solely rely on such comparisons. The argument is not to condemn a widely accepted methodology but to warn about its limitations. It sounds so scientific that one might tend to accept it as verdictive evidence.

Soundara Rajan's keynote address tries to analyse Ellora as a single monument, unlike the 'Cave Temples of the Deccan' in which these caves have been treated independently without any effort to trace the nexus between all of them. The dating and other opinions remain as they were in the 'Cave Temples of the Deccan' but the keynote due to its nature helps the reader to understand Soundara Rajan's views better.

His 'Ellora Monoliths' does not meet one's expectations. The monolith is the most ambitious phase in the history of cave temples. Even as a concept, it is revolutionary. The Mamallapuram monoliths, should not be bracketed with the others from Deccan, South India and Madhya Pradesh because a monolith carved out of a living mountain is conceptually different than the one carved out of stray boulders.

It would have been worthwhile to trace the evolution of this idea and its execution. It reaches Ellora at a developed stage - presumably introduced at Cave 15. At Ellora itself one can observe this idea reaching its highest possible summit, and then its lesser versions not only at this very site but also in the other parts of the country, far away from this place - at Kalugumalai in Tamil Nadu and Dhamnar in Madhya Pradesh. 'Ellora Monoliths' avoids to gauge this total span of developments and remains confined to the description of the monolithic temples of Ellora.

The drawings showing the stages of carving are convincing and reveal his understanding of the carving process. It is unfortunate that very few Indian art-historians are conversant with the actual art practice and hence when it comes to technicalities of art, they suggest possibilities that sound almost absurd. At the Ellora Seminar the veteran sculptor M.D.Pandya presented a paper on this aspect. The sculptor noted down his observations based on his experience of stone carving of several decades. It provided a very different outlook and could have been extremely revealing if published, but he never cared to write it down.

A fairly long article by Hermann Goetz, first published in *Artibus Asiae* in 1952<sup>26</sup> and then included in a collection of his essays is very significant in the context of the present methodology. By 1952, Ellora had been extensively explored and its thematic content and

historical references were not unknown to scholars. The need to go beyond this basic information was felt probably for the first time by this German scholar. His article on Kailāsa evinces his sensitivity to the discrete heterogeneity in the Kailāsa architecture and sculpture and he tries to view that feature as a result of the phase-wise progression of this monument, the size alone of which, he feels, excludes the possibility of its having been excavated and sculpted within the 15 years of Krishnaraja's reign. His way of deliberating upon his arguments reveals his concern for stylistic analysis and the awareness of the intrinsic aspects of stylistics. His arguments are structured mainly on the basis of parallelism. Noticing a specific pattern in the stylistic disparity in the monolithic temple of Kailāsa, with the help of formal comparison, he tries to attribute different groups of sculptures to different rulers of the Raṣṭrakūṭa dynasty and also of the dynasties like Paramāra consequent to them. As a result he ends up with a long chronology of almost 500 years. While commenting on the co-existence of various styles in a single monument, he rightly observes in a footnote that in the commencing years of an ambitious project such diversity can be justified since artists summoned from different places tend to retain their individuality. In the course of time, these styles surrender their distinct characters and fuse with each other.



If in the Kailāsa temple several different styles are clearly discerned, it would sound anomalous to perceive a prolonged activity for several centuries because in the light of the above logic the activity in total should be considered to be at the beginning stage. It may also imply that before the individual styles, arriving from different regions fuse with each other leaving behind their distinct characteristics, the project reached its completion and hence the total time-span attributable to the art-activity at this place may not be longer than a few decades.

There is enough reason to trace a sequential pattern through the stylistic inconsistency and attribute the different idioms to different phases, if they reveal some kind of intrinsic progression. In the absence of such a reciprocal evolutionary relationship between two different idioms, it is safer to treat them as stylistic variations - contemporaneous to each other, rather than as consecutive phases. Even the variations that seem to be following one another, need not be attributed to different rules. The evolution of an idiom does not necessarily depend on political change. It is an intrinsic, natural growth occurring irrespective of the reigns of successive rulers. Goetz tries to relate every change in the idiom to different rulers of the Raṣṭrakūṭa dynasty and denies the autonomy of stylistic evolution, and ends up with an irrationally long chronology. The parallelism he traces through different monuments of medieval India is also on a

cortical level. His article on the queries of Gupta art compiled in the same collection betrays the limitation of his sensitivity and perception which proves to be a conspicuous handicap of his writings despite the meticulous and methodological approach. But still this article is very important for its methodology although the conclusions are far from probable.

M.K.Dhavalikar, the noted archaeologist, published his long article on the stylistic development and chronology of the Kailāsa in the Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute (Vol.41, 1982) and later on a monograph on the same monument under the title 'Masterpieces of Raṣṭrakūṭa Art - the Kailasa'<sup>27</sup>. In his article, he keeps engaged mainly with the chronology. He refutes the long chronology of five hundred years, suggested by Goltz and suggests a more compact framework. He repeats the pseudo-scientific 'trench theory' of Burgess and Fergusson in support of his shorter chronology. His arguments while defining the chronology speak of his keen observations but not of a sound historical methodology. For e.g. he observes that some portions of the Mahabharata panels are compromised in a manner to accommodate the already existing paw of a rearing lion from the pīṭha of the maṇḍapa, which indicates that the narrative panels are later to the gaja-śārdula thara. Such observations are important to define the sequence of the work but are they adequate to discern the stylistic development ? Dhavalikar

brings in the issue of regional interactions but in that context too the style is seldom cognized as a dynamic development having its own life cycle.

Walter Spink is known to the scholars of Indian art-history for his extensive and penetrative work on Ajanta but his two articles on Ellora - both published in 1967 - are equally significant. Like his other investigations here too the architecture is in the focus but the sculpture from the caves, which he dates to the early phase of Ellora, has been brought into discussion. He gives a subjective comparison of the sculptures from Ajanta, Aurangabad and Ellora in his 'Ajanta to Ellora'<sup>28</sup>. Though he does not normally subscribe to the concept of 'style' and also criticises it vehemently, the major argument in this article is based on formal comparisons. Many of the Indian and also a few Western art-historians consider this kind of comparison as stylistic analysis. Spink differentiates between his own methodology and stylistic analysis. He also brings in the technicalities and many other aspects to reach his own conclusions. Although I personally would not subscribe to many of them, what interests me most is his composite methodology. He blends common place observations with technical data and also supplements them with epigraphical, historical and textual references. He almost revives the monument and tries to analyse it in the light of actual art practice that presumably was in vogue, which leads him to his thought-

provoking hypotheses. His tight chronology makes us give a rethought to the monuments he has been writing about but it should not be forgotten that it is sometimes based on an ahistorical presumptions.

Ellora's place is so significant in the history and evolution of Indian art that every work trying to gauge the development of Indian sculpture is compelled to spare a few pages for it. This chapter is unable to analyse the observations and speculations of each of the scholar who has written on Ellora, though in other chapters, these opinions will be discussed at various junctures. Also, I have chosen to comment only on those works which are confined to Ellora in particular and before summing up this broad analysis, it is obligatory to discuss a paper and the methodology employed in particular as it is the most relevant to this dissertation. This article by Carmel Berkson was published in the commemoration volume for Alice Boner<sup>29</sup>. This methodology, putting stress on the aesthetic aspect of sculpture, I believe, was introduced to Indian art by Bacchoffer<sup>30</sup>. His work on early Indian sculpture gives an extremely sensitive account of the formal aspects of Indian sculpture much before the celebrated 'Indian Sculpture' by Stella Kramrisch<sup>31</sup>. 'Indian Sculpture' was a novel attempt to trace the development of Indian sculpture with the help of changing aesthetic values and as a result the formal qualities, irrespective of the political milieu. Today, some Indian art-historians are sceptical about this work, thinking that it is ahistorical,

however, it should be acknowledged as a pioneering effort to proclaim the autonomy of a young discipline.

The article by Carmel Berkson, mentioned above, to some extent is affiliated to this school. The author felt that it was the proper time to attempt to define certain criteria by which the difference in style could be explained and understood within the context of the Indian experience. She has suggested several factors to be applied as criteria for examining style in cave temples viz. axial orientation, three dimensionally, volume and depth, light, proportion etc. *Rasa* too is included as a criterion. Some of these criteria are derived from the Wolfflinian theory of polarities<sup>32</sup> and the others too seem to be familiar to a student of Western art-history, and therefore, the question that arises is, except for *rasa* - which is not integral to style - which of the given criteria are specifically devised by which the difference in style can be understood and explained within the context of the Indian experience and that too of the cave temples in particular ? This methodology to investigate evolutionary changes was in vogue in Europe since Wincklemann wrote about the phases of Greek sculpture<sup>33</sup> and was improved upon by successive generations. Bacchoffer and Stella Kramrisch have tried to cognize the Indian spirit without caring much for Indian terminology. In recent years, the Indian aesthetic terminology is being grafted on the Western art-historical concepts. Terms like *bindu* ( which eventually means only a

point and not necessarily the centre as is being suggested) are literally employed in abundance, and in the present context, I am afraid that the concept of *rasa* is also being subverted. Still, ignoring the claim to device the criteria to suit the Indian context, the rest of the discussion and the observations do stand valid. An extensive formal analysis is done in the light of the different aspects of sculptural manifestations.

The sculptural reliefs from Cave 21 and Cave 14 are contrasted against each other since there is a parity of subject matter in both these caves, and by applying the proposed criteria the author tries to trace the progression. She considers both these caves as the representative classical expression of Indian art but places Cave 14 a little later to Cave 21, and substantiates it with formal analysis. The only limitation I can perceive in it is that the sculpture in focus is examined in isolation irrespective of its lineages and interactions with no awareness of the possibility that all the sculptures from a single cave may not be of the same date. As an inference, it is reduced only to an attempt to apply a methodology, foreign to some extent to a group of sculptures, leading to no conclusions.

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If the accent of this piece of writing sounds too critical, it is because this is a deliberate attempt to search for the lacunae in the existing studies of the monument. It may not be necessarily a short-

coming of that work but the analysis only implies that though Ellora has been examined from different points of views time and again, the stylistic analysis of Ellora sculpture is yet to be done. All the works referred to above have brought several aspects of this cave complex to light but the possibility of tracing its stylistic framework is not fully exploited. Mine is a modest attempt to trace the changing parole of Indian sculptural art as discussed, from this group of caves, in which there are several dark corners waiting for a streak of light.

## REFERENCES

1. This copperplate was read and deciphered by some scholars including Fleet who published it in Indian Antiquaries Vol.XII p.156; however, the place mentioned in it was correctly identified as the Kailasanatha temple at Ellora by R.G.Bhandarkar whose article was published in the same volume (p.228). It is also included in his collected works (Vol.III, B.O.R.I. Pune 1927, ed. N.B.Utgikar.
2. In this grant too the monument is attributed to Krisnnaraja I. See R.G.Bhandarkar, Epigraphica Indica IV p.337.
3. R.G.Bhandarkar, collected works, op. cit.
4. For details see articles in Marathi by R.C.Dhere  
*i) Prāchīn Marāṭhī Vangmayāt Kailāsa Leṇe,*  
 Pratishtan, Aurangabad, July 1956,  
*ii) Jñānadevāchā Gītārathaprasāda,* Maharashtra Sahitya Patrika,  
 April-September 1975 and by M.V.Dhond *Jñāneśvarītilē*  
*Yogadurga,* Satyakatha, Jan 1962, pp.38-54.
5. The *Līlācharitra* is considered to be the earliest prose in Marathi. See *Mhāimbhat : Līlācharitra* Ed. V.B.Kolte, Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal, Bombay 1982, also Madhavrao Punjabi Ed. *Sthānpothi,* Vishwabharati, Amraoti, 1976.



6. V.B.Kolte op. cit. *Pūrvārdha* , no.188.
7. Kṛṣṇa Yajñavalki : Kathākaloṇṭaru II, 15. 103. For details see article by P.V.Ranade 'Echoes of Ellora in Early Marathi Literature' in "Ellora Caves : Sculptures and Architecture" (Collected papers of the U.G.C.National Seminar) pp.108-118, Ed.Ratan Parimoo and others, New Delhi, 1988.
8. Partha Mitter 'Much Maligned Monsters' Oxford 1977. The next five references (9-13) are taken from this book.
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13. Ibid. p.326.
14. James Forbes 'Oriental Memoirs', Vol. I p.433-434.

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16. J.Burgess 'A Report on the Elura Cave Temples' London 1883.
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