

Art And Architecture Of Badami Chalukyas – An Overview

By

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Abstract:

This paper deals with the art and architecture of Badami Chalukya. Chalukya Dynasty was an important dynasty of South India. Badami Chalukya architecture is a style in Hindu temple architecture that evolved in the 5th – 8th centuries CE in the Malaprabha river basin, in the present-day Bagalkot district. They have built more than hundred temples in and around the empire. They were the founder of the Chalukya art which was a new architecture style. During their period Nagara Style in North and Dravida Style in South are mixed and it was known as Vesara Style of architecture which was a new style of architecture. The important art and architecture centres are Aihole, Badami, Pattadakal and Mahakuta.

Keywords: Art, Architecture, Temple, Style, Dynasty etc.

Introduction:

After the downfall of the Rastrakutas the Chalukyas were came into power in south India. They Chalukyas grew powerful in 6th century in the South India. They had ruled Deccan from 6th century to 8th century A.D. They were divided in three groups in main branches; they were namely, as The Early Western Chalukyas or Chalukyas of Vatapi or Badami, The Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyan and The Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. Among them the Badami Chalukya dynasty of the South India was an important dynasty. The rulers of this dynasty were brave warriors and worthy administrators. They were efficient rulers and accomplished scholars. They not only subdued the prominent rulers of the South and North but also possessed great love for art and architecture. During their period art and architecture flourished rapidly.

Art the architecture was flourished during the reign of the Chalukya rulers several beautiful temples were constructed during this period which clearly indicates that rulers love of art and architecture. The temple architecture was at its zenith. There were about seventy temples in Aihole. Due to this reason Aihole was known as the city of temples. Other famous towns, Badami and Pattadakal also had several temples. These temples are the specimens of the mixed style of the Aryans and the Dravidians. The temples are praised by the art specialists for their architectural qualities. Havell remarks: “the temple combines straight lines of the design of Europe with fervid imagination of Gothic art.”¹

It is estimated that some of the caves of Ajanta and Ellora were built during the Chalukya period as in a cave painting of Ajanta, Pulakeshi II, the Chalukya ruler, has been painted, receiving as ambassador of Persia. It shows that the art of painting was also popular during this period.

Background of art and architecture:

The Badami Chalukya era was a watershed moment in the evolution of South Indian architecture. This dynasty's kings were known as Umapati Varlabdh and they built numerous temples for the Hindu god Shiva. Their architectural style is known as "Chalukyan architecture" or "Karnata Dravida architecture." They built nearly a hundred monuments, both rock-cut (cave) and structural, in the Malabrabha river basin in the modern Bagalkot district of northern Karnataka. The Western Chalukyas art is sometimes referred to as "Gadag style," after the number of ornate temples they built in the Tungabhadra-Krishna river doab region of present day in Gadag district in Karnataka. Aside from temples, the architecture of the dynasty is well known for the ornate stepped wells (Pushkarni) that served as ritual bathing palaces, a few of which are well preserved in Lakkundi.²

Salient features of art and architecture:

- The Badami Chalukyas used local reddish-golden Sandstone for the construction.
- The Cave temples are essentially excavations that have been excavated from the living rock sites that they occupy.
- They were not constructed in the same way as their structural counterparts, but rather through a special technique known as "subtraction" and are essentially sculptural.
- Majority of Chalukyan architecture was concentrated in a relatively small area within the Chalukyan heartland – Aihole, Badami, Pattadakal, and Mahakuta in modern Karnataka state.
- The most notable of which are three elementary cave temples at Aihole are one Vedic, one Jain, and one Buddhist.
- There are four rock cut cave temples at Badami, they are similar as they have a simple exterior but an exceptionally well-finished interior that includes a pillared varandah, a columned hall (mantapa), and a cella (shrine cut deep into rock) that houses the deity of worship.³

Important centres of art and architecture:

Chalukya period considered as a first golden age of architecture. They had important art and architecture centres namely, Vatapi (Badami), Aihole, Pattadakal and Mahakuta. They are the religious centres for Indian architectural students.

Aihole originally it is a study of constructing the temples, Here independent temple construction started in first time and it is a home to a number of temples that reflect the Chalukyan love of art and architecture. And we can see here 70 temples. Among these are the well-known Ladkhan temple, the Durga temple, and the Huchchimalligudi temple. Gradually the style of architecture has been changed in Aihole,

therefore it has awarded as a complex of Indian temples. It is also a well-known centre for temple construction and training.⁴

Pattadkal the temples at Pattadakal, which were built in the 8th century, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, represent the pinnacle and maturity of Badami Chalukyan architecture. It has a total of 10 temples, of which 04 temples are built in the Northern Nagara Style and 06 in Dravidian Style. Some famous temples are Papanatha temple (northern style), Sangameshwara temple, Virupaksha temple (it is like Kailashnath temple of Kanchipuram) it is in Dravidian style Galaganath temple and around 10 temples are existed in Pattadkal.⁵

Badami it's famous for cave temples, which are a complex of Hindu and Jain temples. The caves are important examples of Indian rock-cut architecture, Badami Chalukya architecture and the earliest date from the 6th century. Badami it is a modern name and was previously known as Vatapi. It is situated on the west bank of a manmade lake ringed by an earthen wall with stone steps and it's surrounded on the north and south by forts built in later times. Here we have Bhutanatha temple, four cave temples namely cave no 1 Shiva temple, cave no 2 Vishnava temple, cave no 3 Vishnava temple and cave no 4 Jain temple are beautiful.⁶

Mahakuta it's a group of temples which located in Mahakuta of Bagalkot district of Karnataka. It is an important place of worship for Hindus and the location of a well-known Shaiva monastery. Here we find that Mahakuteshwara temple was constructed during the period of 6th and 8th century A.D. The term "Mahakuta" refers to the great group and the name is given because of its large number of Shiva temples in the same region. The temple is widely known for its two key inscriptions, namely, Pillar and Porch that portray the history of the Chalukya dynasty.⁷

Conclusion:

The Badami Chalukya was famous for their art and architecture. They have built more than hundreds of temples. The temples built by them are very good examples for Vesara style of architecture. It's also known as the Deccan style, Karnataka Dravida style, or Chalukyan style. This mixture of Dravida and Nagara styles. Many of the temples are located in the heartland of Aihole, Badami, Pattadakal, and Mahakuta in Karnataka state of India.

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