

# Chalukya's Contribution of Art and Architecture to Badami: A Study

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## Abstract:

Badami, along with several other sites in and around the Malaprabha River Valley in Aihole, Pattadakal, and Bagalkot District of Karnataka, is one of the earliest sites in South India, beginning with the construction of the early Chalkian dynasty, which ruled in the 6th century some of the stone temples from Badami (ancient Vatapi) to the 8th century AD. However, the history of steel construction goes back further, as evidenced by the numerous megalithic monuments that dot several locations in the Malaprabha Valley Continuing previous work that argued that the Chalukya and their successors inherited the tradition of commemoration, represented by the megaliths of later monumental architecture, from temples to miniature temples and other forms of commemoration. However, this article examines and interprets the immediate landscape around the Butnath Temple in Badami as a memorial landscape with monumental buildings of various shapes.

**Keywords:** *Badami, Chalukyas, Megaliths, Early Temple Architecture, Bhutnath Temple.*

## 1. Introduction.

The Chalukya family of Vatapi (Badami) held political power in the northern Deccan for about two centuries from the mid-6th century. Over 100 temples were built in various locations in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh under the patronage of the Chalukya rulers. The most important places are Badami, Aihole, Mahakut, Pattadakal, Aranpur etc. Modern scholars have made a great deal of research into the art and architecture of these ancient monuments, but few attempts have been made to learn more about the architects and sculptors who built the enormous and elaborate temples of various plans and styles. In ancient times, the art of sculpture and the science of architecture were passed down from father to son. There are numerous inscriptions from Charkiye that attest to this fact. This art was therefore practiced by members of the same family or caste. These gaffes and sculptors believe themselves to be descendant of God Vishwakarma architect of heaven.

However, the history of human occupation of the area goes back even further, dating back to the Palaeolithic period, showing human activity, such as the stone tools and painted rock shelters of Sidirefadi and the rock paintings of Ranganatha Gudda near Badami. A lot of evidence remains. Prehistory (Padigal, 2016). There are also many megalithic sites in the area, the Meguti Hills megaliths being the best known, but other sites such as Bachinnagudda near Pattadakal and Gajendragad, Akkaragarh and Kodekar (Sundara, 1975). A large megalithic complex at Caddy Guerre near Megti Hill was destroyed in 2008 (Menon, 2012).

## 2. The Memorial Landscapes of the Malaprabha Valley.

The entire landscape along the Malaprabha Valley bears traces of a memorial tradition dating back to the Iron Age or earlier. The Meghti Hirat Aihole megaliths and rock-cut Jain caves in the immediate vicinity of the Meghti Jain Temple are well known (Kadambi 2011; Menon, 2012; Morrison, 2009; Sundara, 1975). The top of Megti Hill is littered with rubble and large boulders believed to have come from the collapsed dolmens used as raw materials for the megalithic construction.

Apart from Meguti Hill megaliths, Aihole, Kyadigele (now destroyed), east of Meguti Hill, and Ramalingeshwara hilltop, Ramalingeshwara, southwest of Meguti Hill There are also megaliths in the Galaganatha temple complex near. Menon (2015) suggests that the early Chalukya may have been conscious of choosing the sites of existing megaliths to locate the Galaganatha temple complex, and that some, if not all, of the temple complexes provide evidence that some shrines in the area may have continued the tradition of commemorating megaliths in later times.

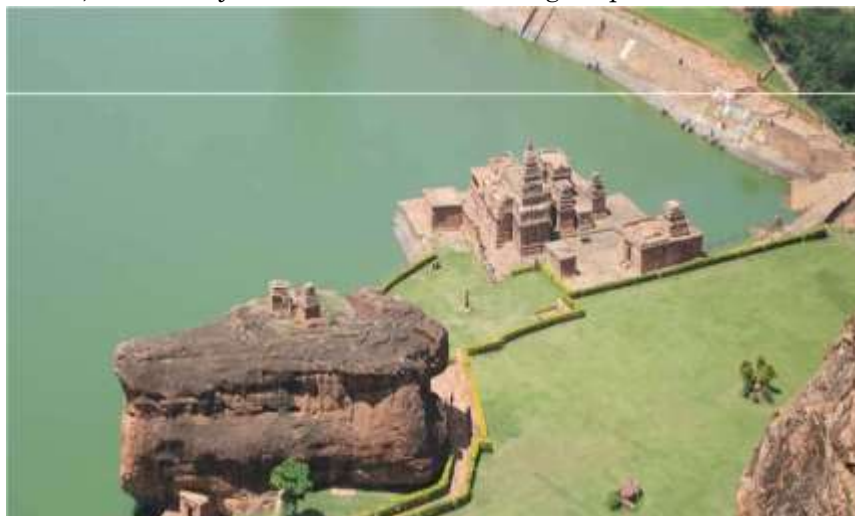
Apart from Aihole, megalithic complexes exist near Siddhanakola near Aihole (Padigarh 2004), as well as at Pattadakal, Gajendragad, Vachinnagudda and Accaragar near Badami and Kodekal (Sundara, 1975). I have observed numerous previously unreported stone ring megaliths west of the early Chalukya sand quarry at Motala Maradi in the hills north of Pattadakal (Singh, 2009). All these evidences strongly indicate the existence of an established memorial tradition in this valley. This tradition of commemoration seems to have been preserved in later times. The existence of a memorial temple at Hrijjemmana Chora near Pattadakal is well documented (Ramesh, 1984; Menon, 2015). Thus, in the landscape of the Malaprabha Valley, which was dominated by megalithic monuments of a funerary or memorial character, other forms of monumental structures were constructed in the early and even late Chalkian period.

### 3. The Bhutnath Temple Complex and Panchalinganaphadi.

The Butnath Temples of Badami are a group of shrines that stand admirably on a protruding plateau on the north-eastern bank of the Agastya Tirta Basin (Figs 1a and 1b). The core of the various complexes is the west-facing Early Chalukyan structure consisting of the Garbha Griha, Antalala, an enclosed Mandapa and a small porch. This was extended at a later stage to add a larger open verandah (Michell, 2014). Adjacent to this main shrine are several later built shrines and several independent shrines built nearby. The main temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is named Bhutheshwara in an inscription. There are interesting paintings on the walls behind his two shrines (see Fig. 2) adjacent to the northern wall of Butnath Temple. In one of these shrines, a west-facing shrine with a Famusana tower and a small porch, one of the blocks on the back wall is carved with a depiction of Shiva Linga with a Nandi worshiped by a man and possibly his wife. The shrine is somewhat reminiscent of hero stone depictions. The shrine no longer has an icon. In the neighbouring shrine facing north, in the center of the large stone block forming the rear wall is carved an image of Vishnu, standing upright with four arms and worshipers at his feet. A pita is inserted at the bottom of the image, probably indicating that this is the main image of the shrine. Continuing past the Butnath temple complex to the south of the complex, you encounter a large boulder, locally known as Pancharinganapadi, on the eastern bank of the Agastya Thirta River. This rock is famous for having two small temples dramatically placed on it. At the south-eastern base of Pancharinganapadi is a large statue of Sheshashai Vishnu, surrounded by small shrines on the rocks. Another small excavation site near the base faces Cardinal East and is expected to receive daily morning sun. Numerous reliefs, mini-shrines and icons of varying heights are carved on the northeast side of the megalith and on the northeast side of the eastern fissure. Mini-shrines contain lingams, some with Nandi as attendant, some without, while others show a statue of Lord Vishnu standing in a niche. (Figure 7). Several unfinished mini-shrines can also be seen on the north-eastern side of the rift valley. There is also a large panel of the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, flanked by Ganesha and Bhuvараha on one side and Mahishasura Mardini Durga and Narasimha on the other, with a statue of Narasimha on the northwest side. To the right of the is placed one of him in the mingling shrine part of the crack. Beneath this panel are elongated bands of taut deities, but they are small compared to the image above. This large slab of Hindu deities is likely a later intervention than the mini-temples, as the inscriptions previously on the rock face have been partially erased.



**Figure 1 a:** Against the background of the sandstone cliffs east of Badami, the Butnath temple complex of Badami, flanked by a rock called Pancharinganapadi and two shrines above it.



**Figure 1b:** A rock called Pancharinganapadi next to the Butnath temple complex with Agastya Tirtha in the background.

#### 4. Evidence for a Zone of Commemoration.

The nature of the monuments surrounding the Butnath Temple suggests that this temple may have been the core of the memorial zone. Several smaller shrines erected next to or very close to the main hall, especially his two above with carved images on the back walls, may be memorial shrines for the dead. Also, his two shrines at the summit of Pancharinganapadi are most likely memorial shrines, considering that his sanctuary in one of them has a stone slab with several lingas. . The close resemblance of the rock-top structures and rock-cut lingas to the famous memorial landscape of Hemakuta Hill in Hampi lends further credence to this statement. Against this background, temple relief models and Vishnu statues are considered to be monuments erected for the dead. These may represent a kind of monument similar to the Slavanabelagola stele described below.

In addition, the city of Badami and its surroundings are home to a number of monuments with distinct memorial significance for later times. Continuing up the road from the Kappellabata inscription, you will reach the flat top of the northern fort. There, to the east of the modern Dargah, where the tombs of Muslim saints are located, there is a body of water in a depression formed by quarrying the eastern end of this body of water are several padukas (carved with footprints usually associated with memorials), carved into two blocks of loose stone and bedrock. There are several relief carvings on the side walls of the body of water, including an image of Shivalinga accompanied by a goddess and Nandi, Shivalinga with pendants. The presence of these features in the body of water, which clearly resembles the structures of the Agastya Tirta and Butnas areas, suggests that a monument was erected next to the body of water for ceremonial purposes. Along the road leading from Tatukote to the Northern Fort, there are loose carvings of padukas, votive images of devotees. It is usually kept in temples and other sacred places to commemorate devotees (Sundara, personal communication, 2013). A hero stone near the sculpture of Tatukot Hanuman also emphasizes that this landscape is one of death and memory.

East of Badami, on a sandstone cliff east of Butnath Temple, lies the site of Ararithirta. This is a natural cave formed by weathering around a natural pond fed by a spring. Numerous Hindu deities are carved into the sides of this natural rock shelter. Immediately to the west is a rock refuge with a monument to a Jain monk. The floor of this rock shelter has padukas carved in square depressions with drainage channels for offerings, and the back wall of the shelter behind the padukas has a relief of a seated Jain monk, whose above is Trichatra and his 16th century inscription. A century-old Kannada script commemorating the salvation of a Jain monk named Vardhamaanadeva (Translated by Padigar, personal communication, 2013). All this demonstrates the permanence of the celebrations in the Malaprabha Valley, whose origins date back to antiquity, arguably to the Iron Age or earlier, at least to the 16th century.

#### 5. Conclusion.

Continuing on from previous research that investigated the nature of the numerous monuments and religious landscapes of the Malaprabha Valley, this article will focus on the Butnath temple complex of Badami and its surroundings. An early Chalukyan temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva as Bhutheshwara, is a varied structure, with smaller adjoining shrines and several independent shrines nearby, as well as many relief carvings in nearby rocks called Pancharinganapadi. forms the nucleus of Given the evidence from similar landscapes and structures in the Malaprabha Valley and elsewhere, these structures probably date from the early Chalukian rule of the area to later periods, probably deceased individuals of varying can be considered a monument to importance.

Given the widespread occurrence of megalithic monuments at several sites in the greater context of the valley, sometimes sharing monumental space with temples and heroic stones, heroic stones, Temples of various sizes, "votive shrines" may have been located nearby. Temple relief models and rock-carved statues are merely the product of the evolution of cultural representations of the dead in the same way that stone carving techniques evolved with contributions from other cultural influences.

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