CHAPTER - 2

FORTS AND PALACES
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The medieval rulers of India constructed innumerable forts and fortresses to defend their territorial possession from their adversaries and to demonstrate their sovereignty. These structures were built keeping the contemporary war technology and tactics in mind. Thus, they occupied considerable importance in medieval polity and warfare and played a pivotal role in contemporary India. Hence battles were fought between the rulers to establish their supremacy and sovereignty over the region by simply capturing forts and defeating their masters. Hence, capturing of a fort meant victory over the enemy and the establishment of sovereignty over the region. Consequently, the medieval rulers made efforts to build impregnable and inaccessible forts to secure their sovereignty and territorial possessions. In fact, the forts had virtually become the symbol of power, prestige and the royal prepotence.

Kalinjar:

Kalinjar occupies a prominent place in the galaxy of forts in India. It’s strategic location attributed strength and impregnability to it. It witnessed numerous battles and withstood the brunt of the invasions of Mahmud Ghazni, Prithvi Raj Chauhan, Qutub-ud-din Aibak, Humayun, Sher Shah, Akbar and Aurangzeb.

This celebrated hill-fort is located in tahsil BadausA, 56 km south-east of the Banda district of Uttar Pradesh which falls in the region popularly known as Bundelkhand. It is located on an isolated flat-topped hill of the Vindhya range which rises above 800-900 feet high above the plain. It is fortified by rampart nearly four miles in circuit and constructed of large blocks of stones. This fort seems to have grown organically out of harsh rock. From the ground to a top the passage in length cut in a way that becomes difficult as we go up. Cunningham in his report writes, that the “lower part of the ascent is tolerably easy, but the middle portion is very steep, while the upper part is nearly perpendicular and quite inaccessible.” So, the ascent increases gradually as we go up and continue to increase as we proceed further, and with great difficulty one can approach the main entrance gate. The fort runs from east to west. It is rectangular in shape i.e., larger in length than breadth. It is one mile in length and half a mile in breadth.
Cunningham noted two projections—one in the north angle that is nearly a quarter of a square mile while another projection of the same size is on the middle of the southern face. But the latter projection is triangular in shape.  

The height of the Kalinjar fort (Plate No. 2.1) is quite inordinary and its access was always difficult to the adversaries. Cunningham further remarks in his survey report that Kalinjar fort excels the Gwalior fort in height. The former is 800 feet above the plain while the latter is below 400 feet, i.e. almost half in height. But in length the fort of Gwalior is larger than the Kalinjar fort.

Kalinjar Fort (Plate No. 2.1)  

Located on the table-land of the Kalinjar hill it has two entry points or gates, one in the northern direction towards the town while the other is at the south-east angle. The gate facing the route of Panna, is called the Panna Gate. It appears to have been the main or principal entrance and hence it was followed by another six gates. These gates were planned in such a way that at every point the advancing of the enemy’s army could be checked or repulsed. One interesting fact emerges out from these gates is that these entrances were not constructed simultaneously but added at different points of time keeping the necessity of defence and military tactics in mind. The principal gate is called Alam Darwaza, a battlemented edifice added during the time of Aurangzeb.
The date of construction of this gate is determined on the basis of the inscription fixed on the gate.\(^5\)

As we proceed further we encounter the second entry point known as the Ganesh gate located at a steep ascent. Strategically placed, it is the strongest gate, defended by bastions on either side.

It appears that it was the first gate in the original plan of the fort and this can be inferred from its nomenclature. In Hindu mythology the entry point or gate had always been associated with the Lord Ganesha. The third gate is located at a short distance above in the bend of road called the Chandi Darwaza. It is also known as the Chauburji Darwaza because it has a double gate with four towers. The antiquity of the gate is attested by the graffiti and inscriptions left by pilgrims.\(^6\) Cunningham noticed an inscription of the Gupta period\(^7\) that indicates the use of place for some specific purpose.

![Gate of Kalinjar Fort (Plate No.2.2)](image)

The fourth gate is named after the auspicious planet Mars i.e., Budha and therefore, known as the Budha Darwaza. It is interesting to note that because of steep climb it assumed the second name Swarga-Rohan or “Heaven-ascending Gate”. It also contains one pilgrim’s inscription of V.S. 1580/A.D. 1523.\(^8\) Along the incline is the fifth gate known as the Hanuman Darwaza. The figure of the monkey-God is carved on the rock. Near the gate is located Bhairon Kund.
This gate appears to have been named so because the God Hanuman represent qualities of chivalry or courage. It reminds the soldiers about their might or strength to fight with full courage. There are also numerous inscriptions of the pilgrims. The sixth gate is the Lal darwaza which owes its name because of its red colour. This gate is located near the top of the height. We may presume that it was named so because here at this point a fierce or final battle was to be fought before entering into the main gate where the royal palaces were located. Therefore it was named as the Lal drawaza. The location of the statue of Bhairav also confirms this presumption. At a short distance is located the seventh gate which is the main gate to reach inner part of the fort. This gate is called Bada darwaza that is elaborately inscribed and leads on to the flat hilltop. Cunningham opined on the basis of an inscription on the gate that it was constructed in V.S. 1691/A.D. 1634. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether it was the date of its construction or renovation.

**Waterbodies in the Fort:**

The water availability was considered one of the important factors for the site selection of the construction of any fort because it determined the resistance power of the occupants of the fort against the invading army. The planners of the Kalinjar fort might have been satisfied with the water sources on the site. Therefore, they decided to construct such a fort on the spot in question. There are enough water sources in and around the fort. There are natural reservoirs and other man-made water-harvesting structures. Prominent among them are *kunds*, ponds, springs and tanks (*talao*)—seemingly, a perennial source of water. The statement of Abul Fazl attests this fact when he writes that “springs rise within the fort and there are numerous tanks”. His statement proves the wisdom of the planners in selecting this site for the fort which is full of hilly areas around it and provides sufficient water resources. Cunningham notices *Sita kund*, *Patal Ganga* (the underground Ganges) and *Pandu kund*. The *Patal Ganga* name itself indicates its depth. It was carved out by cutting the rock within, therefore no building material was used. Its water supply is perennial. Its antiquity can be judged from the inscriptions found on the water body. There are numerous inscriptions belonging to different periods. The oldest inscription is of the year V.S 1339/A.D. 1282 while others belong to different years such as V.S.1500/A.D.1443, V.S.1540/A.D. 1483, A.H.936/A.D.1529-30 and V.S. 1640/A.D. 1583. The last two belonged to the period of Humayun Akbar respectively.
The *Pandu kund*, named after the Pandavas, is a “shallow circular basin”, about 12 feet in diameter but supplies water without any hindrance. The water constantly trickles from the clefts in the rock. An inscription of Gupta period establishes its antiquity than the Patal Ganga (Plate No. 2.3)

![Patal-Ganga (Plate No. 2.3)](image1)

The Budhi or Burhiya tal was excavated in the bottom of deep depression with steps all around. It is said that its water possesses great healing qualities. It was a source of water for the dwellers of the fort.

![Koti-Tirth Taal (Plate no. 2.4)](image2)
The Bhairav kund is the waterbody located in the fort near the Lal Darwaza (the sixth gate) and is the largest among the kunds in the fort. It is also Known as the Khambor kund.12

The Koti-tirth (Plate No. 2.4) is a holy spot with a quite big reservoir. It is nearly 100 yards in length with a series of steps on all sides. The name of the reservoir itself indicates its pilgrimage status that is also attested by numerous inscriptions left by pilgrims. Cunningham says that it is located on the highest ground in the fort.13 It collects water in the rainy season or it contains underground water source. This waterbody also feeds another small reservoir known as the Mrig-dhara or “Antelope’s spring”. It is located below the Kot-Tirth.14

Extant water structures demonstrate that enough sources of water for the residents including military contingents stationed in the fort was available. This made possible for the occupants to resist the invading army for a longer period.

**Historical Background:**

The territory of Kalinjar located on the Vindhya range is known in history well before the construction of the fort. References of Kalinjar occurs in the Vedas, the Mahabharata, Karam Purana, and Padam Purana15 and these refer exclusively to project Kalinjar as holy place meant for the ascetics. Besides these mythological references, we find innumerable inscriptions that testify the antiquity of the place. The inscriptions and sculptures indicate that this place was quite known before the construction of fort. Its antiquity is regarded as pre-Chandelas dominations.16

Inscriptions of different periods indicate the possession of the area by the Pandavas, the Gurjara-Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas. This place changed hands from the Kalchuris to the Rashtrakutas in the second half of the 10th Century.17 Later on the area was captured by the Chandelas.

The fort is believed to have first erected by Chandra Varma, the founder of the Chandela dynasty.18 By the end of the 10th Century Kalinjar emerged as the capital of the Chandelas.19

**Invasions on Kalinjar:**

The Kalinjar fort appears to have faced first incursion of Mahmud of Ghazni in A.D. 1019 but he returned back with enormous booty without besieging the fort. Again
in A.D. 1022, Mahmud came and besieged the fort but its ruler Nanda surrendered and made a peace with the invader. But Farishta and Al-Beruni had all praise for the strength and impregnability of the fort. The former writes that the fort of Kalinjar had ‘no equal in the whole country of Hindustan for its strength and impregnability’. Al-Beruni also had praise for it. He writes that:

“Marching from Kanoj (Kanyakubja) towards the south-east, on the western side of the Ganges, you come to the realm of Jajahuti (Jejakbhukti), 30 farsakh from Kanoj. The capital of the country is Kajuraha. Between this town and Kanoj there two of the most famous fortresses of India, Gwalior and Kalinjar.”

Then the next attack on Kalinjar was by Qutubuddin Aibak and the fort was again wrested from the Chandelas. The court historian Hasan Nizami gives a detailed description about this attack. He writes as follows:

“In the year 599 AH (AD 1203-03) Qutubuddin Aibek proceeded to the investment of Kalinjar, on which expedition he was accompanied by the Sahib Qiran Shamsud din Altamash (Itutmish). ‘The accursed Parmar’[Paramardi deva(1165-1203)], the Rai of Kalinjar, fled into the fort after a desperate resistance in the field and afterwards surrendered himself, and ‘placed the collar of subjection’ round his neck, and on his promise of allegiance was admitted to the same favours as ancestor had experienced from Maqhmudbin Subuktigin, and engaged to make a payment of tribute and elephants, but he died a natural death before he could execute any of his engagements. His diwan or Mahtea by name Ajai Deo was not disposed to surrender so easily as his master and gave up his enemies much trouble, until he was compelled to capitulate, in consequence of severe drought having dried up all the reservoirs of water in the fort. On Monday, the 20th of Rajab(27th April, 1203) the garrison, in an extreme state of weakness and distraction, came out of the fort and by compulsion left their native place, and the fort of Kalinjar which was celebrated throughout the world for being as strong as the wall of Sikandar [Alexander] was taken.”

But inscription indicates that this fort was again taken by the Chadelas. Again on the instructions of Itutmish, his iqtadar of Sultan kot and Bayana Malik, Nasuruddin Taisi made an attempt on Kalinjar. As the news of his attack reached to the ears of the ruler, he fled from there and the territory was plundered by commander of
Iltutmish. He retreated laden with booty after devastating the countryside, but without entering the fort that remained with the Chandelas.

Next incursion was led by Humayun in 1530 which is attested by an inscription on a rock below the Patal Ganga. This attack was carried out during the last days of Babur. This means that after ascending the throne in 1531 Humayun did not carry out any campaign against Kalinjar.

Next attack on Kalinjar was by the Afghan ruler Sher Shah in AD 1545. It was under Raja Kirat Singh. It is said that the Afghan ruler asked the Raja to handover Bir Singh Deo Bundela who had taken shelter there. His refusal invited the attack. Thus the fort was invested by the Afghan army and the siege lasted for one year. Sher Shah himself was supervising the action. He ascended a high tower and was watching activities and ordered one of the officers to bring supply of loaded shells and rockets. There was firing by rockets and one of the rocket was fired against the gate but it rebounded and ignited a heap of ammunitions. Sher Shah standing nearby was injured and was taken back to his tent. Thereafter, he summoned his military commanders to carry out attack immediately. His orders were followed. Abbas Khan Sherwani remarks the invasion as below.

“Men came and swarmed out instantly on every side like ants and locusts, and by the time of afternoon prayers captured the fort, putting every one to the sword, and sending all the infidels to hell. About the hour of evening prayers the intelligence of the victory reached Sher Shah, and marks of joy and pleasure appeared on his countenance. Raja Kirat Singh, with 70 men, remained in a house. Kutub Khan the whole night a long watched the house in person lest the Raja should escape. Sher Shah ordered his sons that none of his nobles need watch the house, so that the Raja escaped out of the house, and the labor and trouble of this long watching was lost. The next day at sunrise, however, they took the Raja alive.” “On the 10th Rabi-ul-awal, 952 AH.(May 1545), Sher Shah went from the hostel of this world to rest in the mansion of happiness, and ascended peacefully from the abode of this world to the lofty heavens. The date was discovered in the words azdlash murd. He died from fire.”

At last with much difficulty the Afghan army could get success in capturing the fort. Kirat Singh was executed. Sher Shah’s son Islam Shah was crowned at Kalinjar.
Later on, the fort again came under the possession of the Baghela chief, Raja Ram Chand after the death of Islam Shah Sur.\(^{27}\)

After his accession, the Mughal Emperor Akbar attempted to expand his empire. In AD 1569, the Mughal emperor ordered Majnun Khan Qaqshal, the governor of Manikpur to carry out military campaign against Kalinjar. Raja Ram Chander could not dare to face the Mughal army and surrendered the fort without offering any resistance. Akbar then appointed him the first *qiledar* of the Kalinjar fort.\(^{27}\) Cunningham is right in recording that after the occupation of the fort by Akbar it remained under the possession of the Mughals for 120 years. The Bundela chief Chhatrasal captured the fort during the last phase of Augangzeb's rule\(^{28}\) in 1688-89. Since then, the fort remained with the Bundelas and did not face any incursion.

The above description shows that in real terms there was only one attack in military sense and that was by Sher Shah in AD 1545, and in that war the strength of the fort was demonstrated and a long siege is the testimony to it. Though ultimately the fort was captured but its image as a strong fort was proved. Apart this solitary incursion it was having virtually conquered by invaders but its occupant rulers surrendered the fort without any resistance out of fear or being deceived by their trusted men.

**Ajaigarh:**

The Vindhya range stand proud to posses numerous forts of repute such as Kalinjar and Ajaigarh. The latter is located just 35km from the district of Panna and about 33 km. by road to the south west of Kalinjar.\(^{29}\) Further, it is on the south-east of Mahoba and north-east of Khajuraho. The fort crowns on a flat spur of the Vindhya range. It is located in the 24°54' north latitude and 80°18'' east longitude. The river Ken flows about 14 km south-west of the citadel. It derived its name from Ajaipal, a sage who meditated on the hill Kedar Parvat.\(^{30}\)

A physical survey conducted by Cunningham in 1883-84 and his report provides us insight about its design, topography and history. His survey finds its height equal to that the fort of Kalinjar that is, between 700 and 800 feet above the plain. The hill is composed of granite and sandstone. The lower part consists of granite is not steep but the upper part contains a reddish sandstone is extremely high and quite inaccessible. Cunningham makes a comparison of ground plans of both the forts of Kalinjar and Ajaigarh and draws conclusion that the latter is not very small in size than
the former. It is quite near in size to that of the latter. The fort of Ajaigarh is near 1 mile in length from north to south and only a little less from west to east. It is nearly triangular in shape, and the circumference of its walls is just 3 miles. While Kalinjar is oblong form and is nearly a mile in length and half a mile in breadth. At the north angle there is a large projecting spur nearly a quarter of a square mile; and on the middle of the southern face there is another projection of about the same size, but triangular in shape. The distance between the extreme points of these two projections is nearly 1 mile. The whole area is therefore considerably less than 1 square mile, while the parapet walls are nearly 4 miles in length.  

![Ajaigarh Fort (Plate No. 2.5)](image)

The fort is located on the height of 1744 feet from the sea level and 860 feet from the ground (Plate No. 25). The foundation of Ajaigarh is ascribed to one Ajaypal about whom our sources are silent. Moreover, the name of Ajaigarh is not mentioned in the available inscriptions. Instead, we come across the name as the Jayapura durga or the “fortress of Jaipura”. It is said that it was constructed by the Chandela ruler Raja Jaishakti in 830.

The fort was constructed keeping in mind the political conditions of the period. Military campaigns and incursions of the adversaries to expand their territory was a common feature of the polity. Therefore, the builders raised this citadel on a very high hill and built very strong walls to withstand the onslaughts of the enemies and to use it as an important stronghold in the region.
To withstand prolonged sieges, the fort was provided middle bastions and strong corner towers. It has seven gates. The one in the north does not have any nomenclature but is simply styled as Darwaza however, in inscription it is mentioned as Kalinjar Darwaza because it faces the fort of Kalinjar or leads towards it while the other in the south-east is designated as the Tarhaoni Gate. It is named so because the passage directly goes to the village of Tarhowan located at the foot of the hill. Remaining five gates are blocked. To enter into the fort one has to pass through seven gates and zigzag passage. These two gateways are the principal entrances to the fort. Kalijar Darwaza is well defended by four subsidiary gates connected in series by the flight of steps in right angle plan. The construction of these gateways is based on trabeate style having antechambers built on either side to accommodate the guard.

The massive fortification wall as interspersed and strengthened by well equipped sixteen bastions which are located at particular strategic sites. These bastions are drum type in shape with a slight tapering on top just below the merlons. The bastion wall contains loop-holes and crenellation for cannons and also for pouring hot water. The parapet of the fortification is surmounted by merlons resembling mitres.

At the points of strategic importance particularly on the straight walls additional rampart walk-wall at the top has been built and it is approached by flight of steps. The platforms have been erected for fighting.

**Waterbodies in the Fort:**

The planners, designers and engineers of the citadel were conscious about its provisions which could provide strength to sustain the siege for long period in addition to strong and high walls, bastions and other military check-posts. Water harvesting structures formed an essential component of the fort without which the fort could not sustain for a single day. So they excavated large number of waterbodies to harvest rain water which could satisfy the needs of large population including military contingents and other defence purposes for longer period. So the water harvesting structures inside the citadel provided strength to the occupants.

Keeping this point in mind the architects of the fort excavated two tanks named as the Ganga and Yamuna near the northern of Kalinjar gate.
The designation itself indicates that these waterbodies would provide water for a longer period as the two rivers the Ganga and Yamuna. These water monuments hewn in rock and replenished from an underground spring.

An enormous tank known as Ajaypal Ka-Talao (Plate No. 2.6) is located in the middle of the fort that was built by cutting the rock. It is old in appearance but quite big in circumference. Similarly, a tank known as the Parmal Tal or Parmardideva Talao is located in the southern end of the fort. It is believed that this reservoir was excavated by Raja Parmal of the Chandela dynasty. It is said that the latter waterbody was used by women of the royal house.

Ajai Pal Ka Talao (Plate No.2.6)

A stepwell (baoli) was constructed by Raut Sri Vera, the son of Tejla in VS 1237/AD 1180 during the time of famine. Obviously, these three big reservoirs provided sufficient water supply to the residents of the fort. The Ganga and Jamuna tanks appear to have supplied water like perennial rivers of the same name. It means their water was never dried up even in the summer. This implies that these tanks were not depended on the rain water alone but get water from the underground springs.

The Ain-i-Akbari records Ajaygarh as one of the pargana headquarters under the sarkar Kalinjar in suba Allahabad which had a stone fort located on the hill. It clearly demonstrates that it was incorporated into the Mughal empire by the time of the compilation of the Ain by Abul Fazl. But we do not know that how it came under the
jurisdiction of the great Mughal emperor Akbar. We can presume that when Majnun Khan Qagshal, the governor of Manikpur led military campaign against Kalinjar on the orders of the Emperor this citadel was also surrendered to Akbar by Raja Ram Chander. This appears logical because it was then under the possessions of the ruler of Kalinjar. Since the time of Akbar it remained the part of the Mughal empire till the end of Aurangzeb’s reign. In the meantime, Panna emerged as the dominant principality in Bundelkhand, Champat Rai took part in the battle of Samugarh against Dara Shikoh on the side of Aurangzeb.

Later on, the relations between Champat Rai and Aurangzeb were broken down because of the latter’s unbecoming behaviour. The Bundela chief resented against it and decided to block Mughal access to Malwa. He harassed the Mughal army by guerrilla tactics but the insurgency could not continue for a long. Under the pressure of Mughal military campaigns, assisted by Orchha troops he was compelled to commit suicide by stabbing himself to death along with his wife.

After his father’s death, Chhatrasal was offered Mughal service but instead he preferred to search new allies in the Marathas. He met Shivaji and on his advice he came back to Bundelkhand. Then pursuing the policy to expand Mughal influence in his own region of Bundelkhand and he captured Ajaiygarh in 1674, Chhatrasal was confirmed in his possessions by the emperor.

After his victory over the citadel it remained in the possession of the successors of Chhatrasal. His son Jagat Raj inherited it as a part of Jaitpur state. Later on, it came in 1800 in the hands of Ali Bahadur, the Nawab of Banda. Finally, in 1809 the British laid siege of Ajaigah and the fort was conquered from a person known as Lakshaman Daoowa, Pogson gives description of the battle:

“The batteries opened at day break on the 12th of February, 1809 and so heavy and destructive was the fire, that the enemy could not show a man, and fired in the intervals while our guns were cooling. By sunset two of their guns were dismounted and three of the gates, with their defences, laid in ruins. Immense masses of stone and masonry were brought down. Next morning, the batteries played on the upper gate and defences with powerful effect, and at noon the enemy displayed a white flag. At four they evacuated the fort; and at five we occupied it”.

35
The Above description shows the strength of the fort. A fierce attack with guns took a full day to capture it. It came under the possession of the British only after the destruction of major defences of the fort. It shows that the fort of Ajaigarh is one of the forts of India that faced many invasions but did not change hand without battle. This speaks of the impregnability.

**Maniyagarh:**

This fort is located on the left side of the River Ken in the modern city Rajgarh. It is perched on an isolated hill known as the ‘Maniya’ mountain, part of range of hills runs to the south and south-east of the modern place. This was built by the Chandela ruler Yasho Varma (A.D. 925-40). He had established a temple in the fort of his favourable deity Maniya Devi and named it ‘Maniyagarh.’

The fort is in 24°43’ north latitude and 80° east longitude and 1200 above the sea level. The site was first surveyed by Cunningham in 1871-72 but could not conduct extensive and detailed survey because of dense forest. Therefore, he gives rough estimation of its size.

He says that “it is about 1½ mile long, or more, by from ¼ to ½ a mile broad.” Then he again conducted a survey in 1883-84 but could not add much afresh. According to Tripathi the fort is about 15 km in circumference. The wall around is made of square and rectangular stones which are “well and closely set.” Sometimes merely rubbles are used but no mortar in any case.

With these stone slabs the wall is raised 20 feet high and 10 feet broad after levelling the surface of the hill. From the defence point of view a guard or defence post was erected on the western part of the wall which still exists though in dilapidated condition.

According to Cunningham this fort is older than Ajaigarh and Kalinjar. Though it is not as extensive as Ajaiygarh but certainly stronger than it. It is unique in its natural defence. Since it is raised on an isolated hill and not commanded by any other hills. Those which are close or near to it being separated by deep valleys which makes it difficult to approach. This is the reason that it neither went into the hands of an enemy and nor even attacked.
The Chandela rulers by excavating eight tanks all around the fort made the approach more inaccessible. Besides this, the eastern part is protected by the River Ken. Thus deep valleys, tanks and the river Ken made it impregnable.

It appears that the citadel contains one gate in the north which is the main entrance called the Chandorani Darwaza located near the temple of Maniya Devi.

The palaces and stores were erected in the middle of the fort. An enormous tank was excavated in one corner of it. In addition to it, there is a natural spring from which water constantly oozes out from clefts and pores of the overhanging rock and collects into a Kund.

**Bundelas:**

The emergence of the Bundelas marks a new beginning in the field of fortress-palace building. The style developed by the Bundelas in the architecture contains some indigenous elements, therefore it earned an appellation and to be referred to as the 'Bundela Style' The Jahangir Mandir or Mahal at Orchha and the Bir Singh Dev Mahal at Datia are the representative of this style.

**Jahangir Mandir or Palace:**

This fortress palace was constructed under the instructions of Raja Bir Singh Dev in the first and second decade of the seventeenth century. It was purposefully designated as the Jahangir Mandir to demonstrate his loyalty to his patron, the Mughal emperor Jahangir. The suffix of the term “Mandir” (temple) after proper name, Jahangir signifies the status of the God which was accorded to the Mughal emperor by the Bundela chief. Infact, this was a befitting response from him to his patron who has the entire territory of Bundelkhand dethroning Raja Ram Shah, the elder brother of Bir Singh Dev.

Percy Brown calls it as the “castellated residence which means combination of characteristics of a citadel and a royal palace. The magnificence of the architectural style demonstrates the commanding position of the Bundela chief in the region. This multistoried structure was built on a hillock with locally found stone. This magnificent building is square in plan with bastions at the corners, rising in two storeys with projecting balconies which are supported by brackets and surmounted with pillard
kiosks. This appears to have been influenced with the architectural style and design of Gwalior fort.

Eave stones (*chhajjas*) supported by beautiful brackets run all around the building at various heights thus dividing the entire building into several receding storeys. In the middle of each storey is a projecting balcony resting on pillars. The top most storey has four domed pavilions at the four corners and four domed structures at the four sides - which come eight in all. Each domed superstructure is surrounded by four smaller *chhatris*. While the four side pavilions are also flanked by two pillared square kiosks (*chhatis*) with pyramidal roofs. Each done is crowned with *padamkosha* (lotus petal), *amalaka* and *kalasha* finial. The four side pavilion domes are plain while the four corner pavilion domes are ribbed domes which resemble to those of Hampi.

![Front View of Jahangir Palace (Plate No. 2.7)](image)

The main entrance is beautifully designed as it is five storey high structure and each storey is demarcated by *chhaja* resting on carved brackets (Plate No. 2.7). The entrance is a combination of both Hindu (trabeated) and Islamic (arcuate) techniques. The actual entrance is through the beautifully carved lintel and bracket doorway above which is a fringed arch and the whole is enclosed within a rectangular frame. The gateway is flanked by projected pillared square balconies with beautiful brackets supporting the *chhajjas*. 35
The lower balconies contain a pair stone elephants while the upper balconies have openings which are connected in the chambers behind them (Plate No. 2.8). There is also an opening above the gateway in between the actual entrance and the ornamental arch. The entire façade is beautifully decorated with carvings and the remaining upper storeys are covered with perforated stone (jali) screens (Plate No. 2.10).

Main Entrance Gate (Plate No. 2.8)

Inner View of Palace (Plate No. 2.9)

As compared to the exterior, the interior is more interesting. The central courtyard is surrounded by multi-storeyed structures (Plate No. 2.9)
Whereas the exterior is predominantly indigenous while interior is predominated by Islamic or arcuated methods. There are arcaded verandas in all the four sides of which in the center are pointed plains arches and in the sides are foliated arches.

Jalis and Bracket of the Palace (Plate No. 2.10)

Fountain System in Courtyard (Plate No. 2.11)

Seeing these characteristics it may be said that the interior arrangement of buildings with constructional techniques have close resemblance with the structures of Fatehpur Sikri. Exteriorly it bears a close affinity with Rajput structures of Rajasthan.
Percy Brown compares the interior design with that of Jodha Bai house at Fatehpur Sikri. But at the same time he appreciates it’s large size and intricate planning.\(^{46}\) (See Plate No.2.11)

It appears that master mason tried to imbibe all essential elements of medieval architecture in this great building. On this basis the English historian of architecture classifies it as a superb example of the builder’s art.\(^{47}\)

The analysis of the architectural characteristics, design and plan of the Jahangir Mahal demonstrates that it contains varied forms and styles of architecture developed in different regions prior to this building. The styles of Rajput, Hampi, Islamic and Mughal architecture were skillfully employed by the artisans. On this basis one may say that it is an example of composite culture reflected in the architecture developed by the Bundela rulers in their territory. In fact it represents an amalgamation of in the field of building construction.

**Palace of Datia:**

Datia is located 24 km north-west of Jhansi and about 48 km away from Orchha. Now it forms a separate district headquarters of state of Madhya Pradesh. Formerly it was the part of Orchha state. When the reins of the Bundelkhand state came in the hands of Bir Singh Dev in 1605 the constriction of buildings: forts, palaces, temples, dams, wells and stepwells was initiated at large scale.

The constriction of palace at Datia was a part of broad plan of Bir Singh Dev which he is said to have built in 1620.\(^{48}\) This building was known by various names such as Satkhanda Mahal, Narsinsgh Mahal\(^{49}\), Datia Rajmahal\(^{50}\) and Purana Mahal or Birsingh’s Palace.\(^{51}\)

It is built on an outstanding rock and seems to be a compact building within an enclosure. Percy Brown praises its architectural beauty. He gives its measurement as 200 feet in length and the total height to the apex of the central dome is130 feet but at the same time praises to architectural entity which makes it majestic and prominent.\(^{52}\) He further writes that since the entire structure stands on an uneven ridge of granite therefore its height is deceptive. A remarkable feature of this building is that it is not unplanned but based on a solid principle. Percy Brown praises its ‘systems of foundation.’ He notices underground storeys which are not visible. There are as many
underground storeys as are above the ground. According to him there are many large underground or subterranean halls in descending order. It is evident that these underground halls are excavated out of the basement rock. These underground storeys or *tahkhanas* appear to have duplicate of the structure above. This kind of planning of underground storeys is said to have been usual in hot countries and Brown designates them as the ‘cavern-like retreats’ and this appears to have been the motive behind this particular design.53

![Facade of Datia palace (Plate No. 2.12)](image)

Façade of Datia palace (Plate No. 2.12)

It is really a massive structure comprising as many as five stories and square in plan. Every storey is of different height. The storeys are superimposed one over the other in diminishing manner to be finally surmounted by a big ribbed dome on an octagonal drum and surrounded by four small *chhatris*, one each on the four corners of the square terrace of the top storey. The dome as well as the *chhatris* are crowned with *padamkoshas, amalka and Kalash* finials. Each storey of the palace is demarcated by *chhajas* resting on beautiful brackets and these *chhajas* with babustrades are formed into balconies at every stage for the rooms opening out them.
Though both arcuate and trabeate methods have been used, the trabeate and corbelling methods seem to predominate. The outerwalls of the upper storey have ornamental arcaded panels, but these are not made of arches. The shape of arch is achieved by using corbelled brackets resting on pilasters.

Inner View Of Palace (Plate No. 2.13)

Alcove Paintings in Palace (Plate No. 2.14)

The main entrance and the façade of the palace is very beautifully and well designed. (Plate No. 2.15) The main entrance gateway is in the traditional indigenous style i.e. made of pillar lintel (trabeate) style. It is,
however, superimposed by a fine four-centered pointed arch of the Mughal style, and the gap in between the lower trabeated entrance and the arch above is filled with a corbelled projecting window. The entrance gateway is enclosed within a rectangular margin which contain a series of recessed alcoves.

Ceiling Paintings of Main Gate (Plate No. 2.15)

Paintings in Room of Palace (Plate No. 2.16)

At the lower level the gateway is flanked by two side asanas (stone seats) while at the upper level by two pillered kiosks. Above the gateway are open pillared balconies while at the third stage a similar balcony but covered stone jalis.
To decorate the outer façade and paint are used. Brown calls it coloured tiles a public entrance while another entrance on the northern is styled as private.

Eaves, Domes and Canopies of Palace (Plate No. 2.17)

The interior breaks up into separate five stories of apartments. In front of them is an open courtyard in middle of which stands five storied structure. There are royal compartments on these stories. Percy Brown concludes that making of the royal compartment was the central features of the entire composition.\(^54\)

One point of extreme importance related to the water supply system to the residents of this large fortress-palace is escaped the notice of the historians of the architecture. No building of such a magnitude could be designed or even imagined without a proper water supply system. Then how the eight storied structure (five underground) could be thought of by the master masions of the periods?

The location of the building on the bank of a lake provided ample source of water. It was depended on the skill of the civil and hydraulic engineers to tap this water. It appears that they got success in their efforts in taping the rain water collected in lake.
The basement rock on which the entire five storied structure stands was excavated by the builders to make subterranean halls and rooms. Similarly, the rear portion was dug out deeper than the water level of the lake located in that direction. It appears that two wells were excavated to tap under current of gushing water of the jheel. On the mouth of both the wells two minars were raised upto the level of the apex of the palace. The arrangement appears to have been made at every stage to lift water and supply through channels (nails) to every part of the palace. This is evident from the extant systems of channels available at the upper part of the building.

Lake Behind the Palace (Plate No. 2.18)

Fort of Kul Pahar:

Kul Pahar is combination of two villages namely Kuluhua and Paharia. Formerly, both had separate identities but later on merged into one and popularly known as Kulpahar. This place is part of the district of Mahoba located at 25° 19 N latitude and 79°-39 E longitude. This was in the jagir of Kehar Singh son of Raja Jagat Raj of Jaitpur and the grandson of Maharaja Chhatarsal of Panna. He erected a fortress palace on the hill. Though it is a small but beautiful edifice. The outer wall of the fort is quite high and looks like a palace. It is a three storeyed building. On the ground floor there are two rectangle windows.
In middle of the wall of the second floor an arch type full size window with two small size windows covered by overhanging. The third floor contains three full size arched openings. On the roof there is a projected balcony rested on four brackets in the middle. (Plate No 2.20)

Fort of Kul Pahad (Plate No. 2.19)

There are total six structures- four rested chhatris and two open pavilions with semi-circular roof. On the right side of the structure there is an open pavilion with five openings in front and one in side. Above it there is another storey with two openings in
front part is decorated with Kanguras. In left side of the main building there is an octagonal structure with small square/rectangular hole. On top of it there is a statue mounted on horse. It is said that the statue is of some Shah who rule over this area in later period. Apparently this structure is later addition because it has no symmetry with the building.

Wall of the Courtyard (Plate No. 2.21)

The open courtyard on the upper storey possesses an excellent wall. (Plate No. 2.21) There are chhatris on all four corners and middle wall contains arch openings topped by semi-circular roof with three openings. In middle of every two such structures a chhatri is mounted to beautify the outer wall. In one corner of open enclosure an open tibari (sitting place with three cross openings) topped by chhaja and carved roof was erected. It was a sitting place for enjoying summer evenings.

Fort of Prithvipur:

The fort is located in the south of village Prithvipur in district Tikamgarh at 25° 13' N latitude and 78°46'E longitude. It perches on a flat surface of a mound. It was constructed by Maharaj Prithvi Singh (1736-52) and therefore came to be known after his name. Presently its major parts have been destroyed except north-western part. Since its major part is destroyed therefore it is difficult to know about its entrance gate.
It appears that its main gate was in the north. It is said that there are many turns in the fort and it contains two courtyards. (Plate No. 2.22)

Fortified Wall of the Fort (Plate No. 2.22)

Courtyard of the Fort (Plate No. 2.23)

The fortification wall is made of rubbles with mortar. (Plate No.2.22) The wall has loop-holes and embrasures in three tiers. Besides these, there are square holes on the entire body of the wall. Middle part is projected which also contains holes. On both sides of the wall there are *gumbads* or bastions containing embrasures. There is an open space between the *kanguras* and space for soothing.
Both the courtyards are made of bricks and mortar. There are two rooms with multifoliated arch entrances. There is a chhaja rested on stone brackets running over rooms. There is one room on the first floor fronted by a terrace. Above the room there is an open roof. A wall is located in the middle of the courtyard. It appears that it was a royal residence.

Another courtyard is located on the south of the first. This part contains ladies apartment. It’s a double storey building. There are one entrance with small windows for light and ventilation. There are three bastions which were meant for guns.

Water was lifted from well and stored in rectangular overhead tank and supplied through channel (nali) running parallel to the roof wall.

Barauni Fort:

There are two Baronis: Baroni Khurd and Barauni Buzburg in tahsil Datia and located at 25°41' N and 78°24' E. It is about 6.4 km north-east of the headquarters. In the former place there is an old ruined fort which is said to have been constructed by Bir Singh Dev when it was in his jagir. His interest in the construction sector appears to have been developed during the time of jagirdari of Baroni.

Main Gate of Barauni Fort (Plate No. 2.24)

The fort of Baroni contains two entrances. The façade of entrance has two storeys. (P. No. 2.25) The ground floor possesses multifoliated arched gate with two side rooms. Two windows of these chambers are opened on each side of the entrance.
A *chhaja* resting on the brackets runs above them. There is an open chamber fronted by three openings on the first floor. Front sides are having windows of big size. It is sided by two chambers with one window on each opened towards front. The roof contains palanquin and escorted by two *chhatris* on each side. Below the *palki* there are four windows. The façade represents the style of the Bundela architecture.

In the side of the former building there is another complex or may be extension or part of it. The entrance of this part is magnificent. This double arched...
Darwaza of great height gives the impression of the Buland Darwaza of Fatehpur Sikri. Similar kind of gate is in the inner part. Intermediate part is in closed chambers. The arch patterns in niches in stone are carved out in the wall on both sides but square pattern in lower and upper part. There are square and rectangular holes in these patterns probably for ventilation. In both the corners two structures exist which depict the pattern of palki and chhatris. The grandeur and loftiness of the entrance gate encourages us to infer that it was probably constructed by Bir Singh Dev after killing Abul Fazl.

In the inner part there is an open courtyard and in one side there is a double storey building. The part on the ground floor is opened with multifoiliated arched entrance numbering in five. While the upper storey openings are towards the courtyard topped by Kanguras. In front of this there is a place with the jet of sprinklers for enjoying summer evenings.

Similarly, a very beautiful watch tower like small chamber stands on roof. It is made of polished stone with beautiful flower carvings. The roof is designed in semi-circular pattern topped by the gumbad. Entrance is decorated with multifoililated arch. In all the four corners there are decorated circular pillars.

**Badi (Buzurg) Baroni Fort:**

This fort too is situated in Baroni but abandoned. Since it was colonized in early period therefore it came to know as Badi Baroni. This means that to this fort too belongs to early period. It stands on a hill and its height is about 30 metres from the plain area below the foot of the hillock. The structure is irregular in plan and has many turns. It measures about 150 metres along east-west about 200 metres broad in north.

There is only one approach to the fort in the east. But one deceptive space resembles entrance exists between two stone blocks below two turns of the wall. Upper open part is covered with stone slab on which wall was raised. The gap between the two stones was used by the builders to lure the invaders to approach the gate and face attack from above the ramparts.

The battlement wall has much curvature on front side according to the contours of the hill. The wall possesses two and at some places three tiers of loop-holes.
These were designed to provide hidden space for discharging weapons like arrows, spears or cannons. These are in downward position. There are real windows in the fortification wall.

Fort of Buzurg Barauni (Plate No.2.27)

Entrance of Fort (Plate 2.28)

The façade of the top entrance gate possesses space which serves the purpose for pouring hot water and boiled oil over the enemies. Besides, there are loop-holes in the wall for discharging cannons. Thus the entrance gate is well fortified. This fort possesses one unique characteristics that is its four bastions.
Three bastions are located outside the fortification wall but connected through the passage. All are raised on heavy block of stones attached to the parapet wall. If these were not constructed over these stone slabs then they could be used by the enemies to scale the wall. Two are semi-circular while the third is almost circular in shape. All have loop-holes. The third one is bigger in height and contains loop-holes and open gallery on the upper part. The roof provides seating place.

Probably, the bastion was raised to safeguard the entrance gate from the enemy’s attacks. The fourth bastion is located on the back part of the entrance which was meant to cover the onslaughts of the adversaries from the back. The lower part of it big in size while upper portion is small. It contains both loop-holes and embrasures.

Inner Part of Fort (Plate no. 2.29)

There are many palatial buildings in the fort-complex but destroyed now. Some parts are visible. In one corner one room in the upper portion which has one oriel window and two side windows. There are two chhatris on side while one window topped by palki and a gumbad still exists. While another chamber’s projected balcony resting on brackets is seen. Remaining part is destroyed probably in attacks. There is a place probably for sitting inside the entrance gate. But this has passage in both sides therefore it can be presumed that this place was meant for hiding the soldiers in them. There is a strong possibility that these were connected with adjacent side chambers.
Rajgarh Fort:

Presently, the fort is situated in the district Chhatarpur. It perches on high hillock and located at 24°42' N latitude and 80° E longitude. It was built by Raja Hindupat (1758-76) of Panna. It entrance gate is north facing. To approach the main gate long and broad flight of steps are provided.(Plate No. 2.30)

Fortified Wall of Fort (Plate No.2.30)

Façade of Palace (plate No. 2.31)

The façade of the main entrance gate is well ornamented with architectural designs and paintings. It has multifoliated arch entrance.(plate No. 2.31)
The provision for sitting on both sides with arch window is made. Above two projected balconies with semi-circular coverings are raised. There is designed verandah in front of chamber. Above it, another chamber with three arch windows. Both the sides of the entrance gate are decorated with the verandah on the ground and the first floor. The first floor contains screens. Second floor contains three open arch windows.

Public Court of Palace (Plate No.2.32)

Ornamented Balconies and Room Chamber (Plate No. 3.33)

It has one underground hall which was meant for holding court (Plate No. 2.32). It rests on pillars. On its upper part, there are two rooms and one room in each corner.
Every room is topped by the *chhatris*. There are semi-circular open sitting places in the middle of the roof. (Plate No. 2.33) Since the fort palace was constructed in the second half of the 18th century therefore ornamentation is stylish.

We may conclude that the forts not only served the points of defence mechanism but also were the centers of power for the medieval chieftains who resided in the forts with their paraphernalia and military contingents to guard the area under his command or authority. The planning, location and strategical designs of such forts or fortress were made in a way to deter the enemy access to it.

### Forts of Chandelas

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<th>Builders</th>
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### Forts of Bundelas

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<td>Karera</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>1618</td>
<td>Shivpuri</td>
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References


4. Ibid., p.28.


6. Three dates are VS 1199, 1572, 1580 and 1600. Cunningham writes that the VS 1600/AD 1543 is the date of final capture of the fort by Sher Shah. There is an error of two years, ibid., p.39.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.


11. Ibid., pp.30-31.


14. This was noticed by Lieutenant Maisey and recorded by Cunningham in his survey, op.cit., p.32.

15. For its antiquity see, Cunningham, op.cit., pp.21-22.


18. Though Cunningham believes that it was constructed before the Chandelas but his argument is based on the inscriptions of earlier period which do not mention about the fort, see op.cit., pp.22-23.


25. Fuhrer, op.cit., p.152, Nadeem Rezavi gives a description about this expedition, op.cit., p.1243.


28. Cunningham, op.cit., p.27.


30. Ibid, p.46.

31. Ibid, p.21; Rita Sharma and Vijay Sharma, op.cit., pp.143-44.

32. Ibid, p.46.

34. Inscription of VS 1237/AD 1180 which indicates the construction of a *baoli* by Raut Sri Vera see, for the text of the inscription, Cunningham, *ibid*, p.50.


40. Tripathi, *op.cit.*, p.75.

41. Cunningham, *op.cit.*, p.42

42. Ibid., p.44.

43. Ibid. Ibid.


46. Ibid, pp. 120-21


50. *Maasir-ul-Umra*


52. Percy Brown, op.cit, p.121; while Havell offers a different measurement. He writes that it is “over 300 feet square in plan and raised upon a vaulted basement about 40 feet high” ef. p. 202.

53. Percy Brown, op.cit., p.121.

54. Ibid


56. Ibid., pp.59-60.

57. Madhya Pradesh District *Gazetters-Datia* p.301.

58. K.P. Tripathi, pp.77-78.