The relationship of sculpture and architecture is an interesting aspect of the study of early Indian Art. How architecture has interacted to the requirements of sculptural decoration and how sculptural decoration has adjusted itself to the architectural needs, would throw some amount of light on the chronological and stylistic affinities of a temple.

If this relationship is to be properly understood, one has to examine the available data to find out if there were at any time temples without sculptural ornamentation or sculpture without architectural background. It should be made clear that here, one is not referring to the busts or icons or statues when using the word 'Sculpture'.

The early Gupta temples are small square ones and are devoid of sculpture. Later at Deogarh the niche is introduced to accommodate the sculpture. The introduction of porches at the niches is a further elaboration of the structure.

In 7th century A.D. the temples in the Chalukyan period further improved the design of the niche by introducing pediment. The examples are the Sangameswar Temple at Mahakut and Temple No.9 and Hucchimalligudi
at Aihole. In these temples the exterior walls are left plain. The Mogutí temple at Aihole has niches in the exterior wall. But the nature of these niches is totally different from the examples quoted above at Aihole which follows the tradition of Gupta period. The introduction of niches in the Mogutí temple does not alter the structure either in its plan or in the elevation. The niches are sunk in to the wall.

Viewed against this background of the traditions prevailing in the early part of 7th Century A.D., the temples at Alampur makes a good study of the growth of these traditions.

The Kumāra Brahmā temple at Alampur has niches sunk in the Garbhagrha wall. The exterior walls are left plain. The nature of these niches has close affinity to the Sengamesvār temple at Mahakut and the Hucchimalligudi temple.

In the Arka Brahmā temple at Alampur the niches are placed in the exterior wall and in the Garbhagrha wall by introducing offsets. Three niches are placed in the 17.90 m length wall at irregular intervals. The niches are also of varying sizes. When we examine the dimensions of the offsets and recesses and the base and the cornice, the adjustment of horizontal and vertical spaces in the wall do not make any effect in the architectural design. In other words, the basic rectangular
plan and the sprawling horizontal elevation is never seriously disturbed. Compared to the Hoyasala temples of the north Indian temples, it is obvious that the architects at Alampur were ready to use sculpture as a means of decorating their handiwork but would not be dictated by sculpture. They still consider the structures they built as a piece of architecture rather than outsized sculptures.

In the Vīra Brahmā temple, due attention is paid to the regular distribution of the niches. The faltering nature of the offsets in the Arka Brahmā temple is rectified here. Here the sculpture is introduced in the upper part of the wall. The flying figures are carved parallel to the niche pediments. But there is no element at the bottom to balance the upper ones in the total scheme.

The artists tried to make amends to this, by introducing mūlākās at the bottom in alignment with the sculptures at the upper portion of the wall in the Svarga Brahmā temple. The base is also made in such a way so as to accommodate the sculpture. The introduction of Jālakas in between the niches in the upper portion of the wall is mainly to fill in spaces but this led to asymmetry in certain cases. The height of the sculptures at the bottom in the niches and on the wall is mostly influenced by the height of
the pilasters of the niche. The blocking course has always dictated the height of the sculpture.

Once having refused to obey the dictates of sculpture the architects have gone in for a long forgotten Gupta device in elaborating and perfecting their temple scheme. This feature is the type of porches found at Deogarh.

In Garuda Brahma temple, the architects changed the character of the niche by introducing pillars. This, in turn, is an imitation of the porches. Thus the elaboration of the Gupta device is at best in this temple.

In the Visva Brahma temple a further attempt is made to change the elevation by introducing pilasters in the exterior wall. It should be noticed that pilasters in the exterior wall by themselves are not a new device. In the Kumara Brahma temple pilasters are introduced only above the base. Here the pilasters project from the base up to the cornice. Due to this change in the elevation heavy amount of sculpture came in and perfect symmetry is maintained.
RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY

An idea of the iconographic scheme can be had in the Svarga Brahma and Visva Brahma temples only. The other temples have empty niches and stray icons here and there. The iconographic scheme of these temples on the plans is appended. Here it is to be made clear that the religious iconography is studied as a piece of sculpture only as the textual study is not undertaken.

The icons of the Svarga Brahma temple are characterised by ovoid faces, tall makutas, broad and heavy shoulders and tubular legs. The modelling is hard. The convex planes and flat planes are joined without any recession of surface.

The physiognomical form in the caves at Badami is heavy and broad, slender and elongated shapes and sensitive modelling with swaying linearism is felt at Badami which is an impact of the Gupta idiom. The sculpture in the structural temples of 7th Century A.D. at Badami and Aihole display slightly thinning down of heavy forms resulting in long legs, slender hips and supple waist which imparts a rhythm to the figures. The influence of Pallava tradition marks the transition in sculpture which is manifest in the Svarga Brahma temple.1

1. See figure No. 10 and pl. vi, Fig. 9.

The sculpture of the Visva Brahma temple shows the transformations in style taking place in Dacca. The slender figures, with swaying rhythmic contours, suppleness of limbs largely dominates the style. Yet the heavy physiognomical form and slender and tubular legs can be seen in the large compositions like Natrāja, Dvārapalas etc. in the Visva Brahma temple.

The eight century sculpture at Pattadakal in the Papanath temple, Virupaksha temple and Mallikarjuna temple show a transition from natural and vigorous forms to stiff and stylized figures. This resulted due to the synthesis of Pallava idiom and the 6th century style of Aihole and Badami.

The influx of certain Gupta traits can be observed in Čangā and Yamuna at doorways. The early practice of portraying these figures at the lintel of the doorway is relegated to the bottom in the Chalukyan architecture in 6th century A.D. The same is continued at Alampur. Attendant figures are also associated with Čangā and Yamuna which is absent in Gupta temples and in cave architecture at Ajanta.

The portrayal of Dvārapālas with horns is the influence of the Pallava tradition which can be seen in Pattadakal.

2. Zimmer, *op. cit.* Pl. 279, 304
in 8th century A.D. At Alampur the Devapālas have horns in the Padma Brahmā temple.

RELIGIOUS NARRATIVES

The religious narrative sculpture forms another facet in the decorative scheme. These themes are always carved on the square blocks at the base, on the square blocks in the pillars and pilasters. Each block depicts an incident of the theme. Thus a continuity of the narrative is maintained. In the Svarga Brahmā temple, the square blocks at the base of the niche on the eastern face depicts the escape of Vāsudev with infant Krishṇa. The first block depicts Vāsudev holding the infant Krishṇa in the walking posture. An attendant holds chatri, standing on left side. The facial expression of Vāsudev shows anxiety. The relief is deep in its carving. The figures are slender. The next block shows Vāsudev standing with legs flexed, holding Krishṇa on to his right. An attendant holding chatri stands on left side. This frame is deeply cut wherein the figures project into the frontal plane. The next block depicts Vāsudev holding the infant Krishṇa, followed by Yasodā, placing her right hand on her ear and left hand hanging down. Both are depicted in thoughtful mood.
The last block shows Yasodā holding the infant Krishna. Vasudev walks in front. The facial expression of both shows cheerful. Thus the incident in Krishna's life is depicted continuously.

At the second niche on the southern face, the Krishna legend is continued. The first block shows Krishna seated cross-legged. The facial expression shows smiling face. The next block shows Yasodā seated and on the left a Gopi standing. The facial expression of Yasodhara shows smiling while Gopi's shows serious mood. In the next block Krishna is shown seated holding a pot in left hand and eating butter with right hand. To the left a Gopi is shown standing amazed. The next block depicts Krishna killing Putanā. Krishna squeezes the breast of Putanā. Putanā is shown in skeletal form showing concavities in the modelling.

These reliefs are deeply undercut projecting forth the figures. The figures are slender and slim. In Visva Brahma temple, Jātayu Vadha is portrayed on the square block of the pillar in the Mukha Mandapa. Rāvana killing Jātayu shows the vigour of the theme. Sītā is shown seated and the facial expression shows sorrow and anxiety. This low relief is in thinner idiom. Figures are slender and characterised by elongated limbs.

The legend of Krishna and Rāmāyaṇa themes are portrayed in caves No.1 at Badami, Malagatti Sivalaya and the Rāmāyaṇa
legend occurs in the Papamath and Virupaksha temples. The uni-local representation gave way to portrayal of the incident showing only the main characters. The continuous narration is adopted. This Gupta tradition is seen at Badami, Aihole and Pattadakal which also made an impact on Alampur.

SECULAR:

In this variety of sculpture, the artists have largely drawn their themes from Panchatantra.

On the square blocks in the base of the Svarga Brahman temple the story of cranes and fish is carved. A lotus pond is shown in wavy lines in the foreground. Two cranes stand opposite to each other. The cranes facing west hold fish in its mouth. The space in between is carved with three lotuses. It is in bold relief.

The same theme is found in the pillars of the Svarga Brahman temple. In the Visva Brahman temple the story of cranes and crab is carved in a half medallion. Here two cranes are carved holding a crab in their noses. The carving is shallow and only outlines are shown and the planes are flat.

On the square blocks at the niches in the Svarga Brahman, Garuda Brahman, Visva Brahman and Padma Brahman temples have

2. Cousens H., The Chalukyan Architecture of the Kanarese Districts, 1923, Pl. XLVII.
the following themes which recur greatly. They are:

a) Elephant walking, holding a man in its uplifted trunk. A man is seated on the elephant. The variations of this is found as elephant with uplifted legs or in running posture.

b) A lady dancing flanked by a drummer and a cymbal player. Variation of this is shown as two ladies dancing.

c) A horse rider.

d) A couple is shown seated. Lady extending a bowl to the male.

All these themes are carved on small square blocks. The reliefs are always shallow and the forms are slender. Modelling is vague.

MITHUNA

The mithuna is carved in the Kumāra Brahma temple in framed reliefs on pillars. These seated couples show heavy physiognomical form, ovoid and round faces, tall head dresses and graceful and rhythmic contours. In Svarga Brahma and Visva Brahma temples, Mithuna becomes a schematic pattern in decorating the exterior walls. Heavy physiognomical form is slightly thinned. Sometimes heavy and broad shoulders and slender waist and tubular legs characterise certain sculptures. This is continued in the Visva Brahma temple. (See pl. VII, Fig. 10; pl. x Fig. 19.)
The mithuna, from the early times, occupied an important position in the Indian Art. In Gupta period the mithunas are a must in the doorways. This is disseminated to Orissa and to Ajanta and Ellora. But in Chalukyan architecture mithunas are relegated to the brackets and on to the shafts of the pillars. When the sculpture is carved on the exterior walls, Mithunas occupied the lower portion of the wall. This is found in Alampur and at Pattadakal. The rhythmic quality of the couples as seen in Gupta style can be observed at Badami panels and at Aihole.\(^1\) The same quality is found in the panels of the Kumāra Brahma temple. The amorous overtones of the later mithunas are absent at Pattadakal and at Alampur. The style of Alampur mithunas in the other temples, show affinity to Pattadakal reliefs.\(^2\)

**GANDHARVAS AND VIDYADHARAS:**

The Gandharvas and Vidyadharas are carved spa in the Vīra Brahma temple. The figures are drawn very close and floating quality is absent. The slender idiom is showed by suppleness of limbs and in elongated form. The movement is totally absent as it is portrayed in horizontal way showing line arism in the figures. The idiom in the Svarga Brahma temple shows a varied and

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broad from slender to moderately heavy forms. The movement and the floating quality of the figures is absent. In the Gāruda Brahmā temple supple and elongated forms occur. Round modelling dominates in all the figures. There is rhythm in the figures but the vital quality of movement is absent. In the Viśva Brahmā temple slender idiom dominates showing poor quality in the forms. Rhythm and movement are totally absent.

The patterns of the flying couples portrayed at Badami and Aihole show a fluent skill. The movement and the rhythmic postures are at best. When the Alampur figures are compared with Aihole and Badami reliefs, Alampur exhibits poor quality. The flying figures at Pattadakal, though followed the tradition of Aihole and Badami, show poor imitation thus resulting in distortions.1

The representation of flying figures are to be seen in Gupta temples. At Ajanta they are portrayed in the brackets. All these show simplicity of the theme. Later at Badami onwards, flying figures are carved against a rich background of foliage especially on the ceiling panels, and on the doorways.2 The same manner of representation is seen at Alampur.

1. Zimmer, op. cit. 279, 304
2. Ibid., 116, 117, 135, 146
Pūrṇa Kumbha and Kīrtimukha

The Pūrṇa Kumbha and Kīrtimukha are employed in a set pattern in pillars and pilasters at niches and door jambs.

In Kumāra Brāhmaṇ temple, the Pūrṇakumbha is carved at the base and at the top of the pilasters. Angular representations with overflowing vegetal and floral waves are shown.

The pattern in the Vīra Brāhmaṇ temple is Pūrṇakumbha, Kīrtimukha, Pūrṇakumbha and Kīrtimukha. Here Pūrṇakumbha is shown in round with overflowing creepers and two lotuses at the top. In the Svarga Brāhmaṇ temple the same pattern continues. (See pl. VII, Fig. 10)

In the Garuḍa Brāhmaṇ, Viṣṇu Brāhmaṇ and Pādana Brāhmaṇ the same pattern continues but the content of the motif shows variation. The Pūrṇakumbha is seen with overflowing vegetal and floral waves and at the top three lotuses having hamsa in the middle. The hamsa is carved in various poses. The body of the vase is carved with zigzag lines. The base is carved sometime like a lotus pedestal and at other plain bands.

The representation of Pūrṇakumbha is common in all art zones from the early times. But the Cupta temples have set the pattern of carving Pūrṇakumbha, Kīrtimukha.
in pillars and pilasters. This has found its way in the cave temples at Ajanta. In śhālukyan architecture the representation of Purnakumbha almost disappeared at Aihole, Badami and at Pattadakal. The vigorous representation of Purnakumbha in a set pattern is definitely a post-Gupta impact.

The Kārtikeya occupies an important position in the decorative scheme in Alampur. The Kārtikeya occurred in the middle block of the pillar in the early temples like Kumāra Brahma, Arka Brahma, Vīra Brahma and Tāraka Brahma temples. Later in the Svarga Brahma temple onwards, it occupied brackets and also at Śukanāśiṅga. The motif at the brackets is not associated with Muktadama and lataapata, due to the limited space. At Śukanāśiṅga all these are present. In Pallava zone, the Kārtikeya occupies as the crowning member of Nāsikā, Kūpas and Sālā. But the Drāvidian type of temples are devoid of this feature at Alampur. However, the Pallava trait found its way in Pattadakal in the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples. The architectural position and the form of Kārtikeya available at Alampur is the heritage of the Gupta tradition which made its impact felt at Ajanta and at Aihole, Badami Mahakuta and Pattadakal in its own way.¹

GEOMETRICAL DESIGNS: (See pl. X/11 Fig. 22 & 23)

The Geometrical design is like Svastikas, Frets, triangles, square having diagonals, rectangle having squares in rows, rectangle having three semi-circles, checks, zigzag patterns are prolific in the recessed portions at the bases; in the square blocks at the niches, architraves and door jambs. The diffusion of post-Gupta tradition is markedly apparent at Alampur.

FLORAL: See pl. XVI Fig. 30, 31; pl. X/6, 7; pl. VIII Fig. 11.

The prolific use of Lata patra, lotus modallions, curling shapes of waves, lotuses, leaf dominates in the decorative pattern of the temples at Alampur. There are many associated forms in Lata patra which are as follows:

a) Elephant  b) fish
   c) Makara  d) Stubby figure
   e) hamsa  f) peacock

The ebbing flame like waves occurs in later temples like Caraça Brahma, Visva Brahma and Padma Brahma temples.

The crisply carved floral themes at doorways in the heritage of Gupta period which became a common factor in the Shālukyan temples. The lotus modallions, and lata patra in Kumāra Brahamā temple is highly reminiscent of Deogarh style and caves at Badami. The associated forms in latapatra also show affinity to the forms in cave temples.

1. Zimmer, op. cit. 126, 127 and 119, 111
at Badami. The emergence of ebbing flame-like design is a common factor in the temples of Pattadakal in 8th century A.D.²

ANIMAL:

The animal sculpture form of elephants, lions, Nāga, peacock, fish, hamsa, horse, vyālas. Most of them are presented in framed reliefs.

The lions at the base of the pillar shows affinity to the cave No.XVII at Ajanta rather than to the Pallava mode of presenting a single roaring lion.³

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³ Ibid., Pl. 176 and 281