III. ARCHITECTURE

A. RELIGIOUS

The Vishnukundin contribution to art especially architecture has hardly won the recognition it deserves at the hands of the scholars who devoted themselves to the study of Indian art and architecture. The Vishnukundins inherited the artistic traditions of both the Ikshvakus whom they succeeded and the Vakatakas with whom they came into contact, enriched them by their own contribution and transmitted it to posterity.

1) The Cave temples of Vijayawada:

There is a group of interesting Brahmanical cave temples in and around Vijayawada, situated on the northern bank of the river Krishna in Andhra Pradesh. There are two caves in Vijayawada, five in Mogalrajapuram and five more in the village of Undavalli, situated three Kms. away on the opposite bank of the river.

There is a long lozenge shaped hill at western end of Vijayawada near the barrage recently constructed. There are two sets of caves in the western slope of this hill. Of these, one is excavated at the foot of a projection of the hill and the other is 90 metres higher up and reached by a flight of steps.

Cave I:

This cave is rectangular on plan and consists of an open portico with eight pillars in the front with 'ankana' or
inter-columnal space covered by a low parapet ornamented with sculptures. Behind this there is a mahamantana and an ardhamantapa, constituted by two rows of pillars. The back wall of the ardhamantapa is in the shape of concave curve and in the curved portion are excavated three cells at varying distances in the interior. These three shrines are separated from each other by two short walls projecting from the back wall of the ardhamantapa. The rock itself forms two walls at the southern and northern extremities.

There are four openings in the front part of the cave, two before the first shrine, one before the central shrine and one before the third shrine in the south. The low parapet which is in between these openings is in two sections. The outer side of this wall is sculptured all over. It seems to contain the figures of lions and standing deities. Further identification is not possible because the wall is much worn out.

Beyond the parapet is a row of seven pillars with corresponding pilasters in the northern and southern walls. Only the lower part of these pillars is visible. It is probable that like the pillars of the row beyond, these pillars are also cubical pillars without base or capital. The roof above these pillars is gone and there is open space now above these pillars. Beyond these pillars there is another row constituting the intervening space into the mahamantana. In the northern wall of this mantapa are four niches, three of them empty and one containing the figure of Ganapati. This deity has four hands and holds modaka in the lower right hand on which rests the tip
of the trunk. In the next row are one pilaster in the southern wall and three pillars. The space between these pillars and the back wall constitutes the ardhamantapa, of the first shrine. There is a short projecting wall at right angles to the back wall. The rock wall to the south which is at right angles to the back wall contains a kosta or niche with the figure of a dvarapalaka inside it. This dvarapalaka wears a turban-like head dress with a horn protruding on either side of it. He stands in tribhanga leaning to the left. There is a big mace between his legs and on its handle rest his two hands. Above him are three individuals seated in padmasana. The short projecting wall on the north also contains a niche with a dvarapalaka, standing in vyavyastapada leaning to the right with his right hand resting on gada and the left in katihasta. There are four sitting individuals above him.

The back wall contains the entrance of the shrine in the centre and a makaratorana niche on either side of it. The portion beyond these niches is empty. Both the niches contain standing figures inside which are too worn out to be identified. Above these niches is a row of geese and above it the Kapota or cornice. There are three rafter ends above the Kapota. The wall beyond the makaratorana niches also contains the row of geese and the Kapota. The shrine entrance contain two pilasters, one on each side. The upper beam is decorated with a row of geese. Above this row is the moulded kapota. There is a row of lions above the kapota of both the entrance
and the side niches, four above each niche and six above the entrance, supporting the roof above.

The cell beyond the entrance contains a narrow antarala and the garbhārāghra. There is a square hole in the centre of the garbhārāghra intended for locating a linga or an image.

The second shrine is separated by two short walls projecting from the back wall, from shrines Nos. 1 and 2. Each of these short walls has a niche containing a dvara-palaka. The dvara-palaka in the niche in the wall to the south stands leaning to the left, wears a horned head dress and rests both his hands on a gada. The dvara-palaka in the niche in the northern wall stands in vyatvastapada leaning to the right and rests his right hand on a gada and presses his left hand against his stomach. The back wall contains the shrine entrance in the centre and a makarotorana niche on either side of it. The niche to the south contains the figure of a deity standing in dvibhanga leaning to the left with his left hand resting on the kati. The niche on the opposite side contains the figure of a deity standing in dvibhanga leaning to the left with his left hand resting on the kati. The niche on the opposite side contains the figure of a deity standing in vyatvastapada leaning to the right with his right hand resting on a gada and the left pressed against the stomach. The entrance of the shrine is similar to that of shrine No. 1. The cell beyond contains an antarala and garbhārāghra with a hole in the centre of the garbhārāghra. There are traces of nasikas or gables on the kapota of the shrine entrance.
The third shrine which is the north is mostly ruined. It is farther in the interior. The entire rock above this shrine has fallen and disappeared. The shrine entrance is closed by a brick wall.

Annexe Cell: There is a small single-celled shrine to the south of this cave temple reached by a short flight of steps. This is a plain cell with nothing worthy of notice.

Cave II:

This cave, locally known as the Akkanna-Madanna cave, is situated about 275 metres higher up and reached by a flight of steps. It is 14.75 Mts long and 8.95 Mts broad and consists of an adhistana, a flight of steps in its centre, three rows of six pillars each with corresponding pilasters forming an open verandah, mahamantapa and ardhamantapa and and the back wall with three cells excavated into it.

The cave stands on an adhistana which consists of upana, gala, jagati or moulding, patta, another gala and a plain kapota. The flight of steps in its centre has a chandrasila before it.

Among the pillars above the adhistana the stumps of three pillars to the right of the steps and three to the left are seen. They seem to have been cubical pillars without base or capital. Like the pilasters at either end, they too must have had an octagonal shaft in between two massive rectangular portions. The pillars of the next two rows are octagonal throughout and have no base or capital.

The back wall contains three shrines with entrances projecting forward. The wall beyond these entrances is empty.
The entrance of each of three shrines is on a low vedā and flanked by an empty niche on either side. The entrance is surmounted by a kapota, plain and undecorated. Above this kapota are four beam heads and over them a patta supporting the roof.

There is a fine animal frieze on the beam between the last octagonal pillar in the north and the pilaster next to it in the first row. This frieze contains the figures of a lion running and an elephant walking with the trunk hanging.

**THE CAVES OF MOGALARAJAPURAM**

The village of Mogalarajapuram is now almost a part of the growing town of Vijayawada. There are several hills and these hills contain five caves which are of great architectural value.

**Cave I:**

This cave is the nearest to the town of Vijayawada and excavated in the eastern face of a hill and faces the east. It is 6.50 metres broad and 2.45 mts. high.

It consists of two rock walls in the north and south with open space between them. These walls do not have any kostas or niches. Beyond this open space there is a mantapa of three rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters in the northern and southern walls. It has a plain adhistana below. The back wall of the mantapa has a projecting part containing an entrance in the centre with a kosta on each side. Beyond the entrance is a shrine 1.83 mts. long and 91.5 broad.
The facade of the cave consists of a broad flat 
patta 
or band above the pillars in the front row. Above this 
band is a row of dwarfs in various poses. There is no kapota 
or cornice above this row of dwarfs.

The pilasters and pillars are cubical with an octagonal 
shaft in the centre and a curved bracket capital above. The 
pilaster in the front on the southern side contains at its 
base a Purnakumbha adorned with a cross ribbon. There is a 
horizontal beam above the pillars of the front row. On the 
northern part of this beam between the pillar and pilaster is 
a row of dwarfs in various poses and also a row of geese.

The back wall of the mantapa contains empty space at the 
extremities and a projecting portion in the centre. There is 
an entrance in its centre flanked by two kostas, one on 
each side. Each kosta has two pilasters containing in the 
upper half the kalasa, tadi, padma, idai and phalaka, and 
capital with the taranaa or roll ornament on the underside. 
The northern kosta contains a peculiar dvarapalaka figure. 
This dvarapalaka stands leaning to the left holding a long 
sword or spear in his right hand and resting the left hand on 
a shield. He is in the vyatyaastapada pose.

The entrance in between the kostas is reached by a short 
flight of steps with a chandrasila before it. The upper beam 
is decorated with a row of lotus petals. There is a kapota 
surmounting the entrance and both the kostas on its sides. 
It contains one nasika or gable over each kosta and two above 
the entrance. All the nasikas contain human heads inside.
Above the kapota are three rafter ends. The garbhagriha contains part of a vedi.

**Cave II:**

This is the largest and most beautiful of all the caves in this place. It is excavated on the northern side of a hill and faces the north.

This cave consists of open space in the front enclosed by rock walls in the east and west with two kostas or niches in the west wall. Beyond is a mantapa 9.55 mts. long, 4.65 mts. broad and 2.45 mts. high. It contains, in the front, two pillars and two short projections of the rock on either side dividing the front into three openings. Beyond these pillars is another row of four pillars with corresponding pilasters in the north and south walls. Beyond is the back wall into which three shrines, each about 1.83 mts. have been excavated.

The adhistana of the cave contains upana, gala, tripatta, another gala divided into compartments by short pilasters and a moulded kapota or cornice. Of the four niches in the east wall enclosing the open space, one contains the figure of Ganapati. This deity is seated with his left leg folded and resting on the seat and the right bent at the knee and hand rests on the right knee and the trunk rests on it. The left hand holds danta.

The facade of the cave is beautiful. The two rock walls, one on each side of the pillars in the front row, contain figures of dvarapalakas in the niches or kostas. The dvarapalaka on the eastern wall stands leaning to the left with his left hand resting on the tip of a gada and the right
resting on the kati or waist. He wears a horned headdress. A long snake starts on his right hand, and stretches across the chest and its hood emerges out of the left shoulder. The dvarapala on the western wall stands leaning to the right with his right hand resting on a gada and the left resting on on the waist. At the end of each of these two short walls there are pilasters. Between these pilasters are two massive pillars with octagonal shafts in the centre and curved bracket capitals above whose underside is adorned with the taranga or roll ornament with a plain band or patta in the centre. Above the pillars the prastara is plain. Above the prastara is a moulded kapota adorned with three nasikas or gables surmounted by simhalalatas. Each of these gables has a lotus scroll on either side at the bottom. These gables has a lotus scroll on either side at the bottom. These gables are located above the openings below. The nasika on the east contains three heads, representing Brahma; the central and western nasikas contain two heads each representing Siva and Vishnu with their consorts. Above the kapota there is a broad band containing a row of animals, five lions with tails curled above, one elephant and one bull all in vigorous poses. Above this animal frieze is a fine figure of Siva as Nataraja with the portion below the waist broken. This deity is represented as dancing on the prostrate body of the apasmara-puruṣa. He has eight hands.

There are a few sculptures on the pillars and pilasters of this cave temple. There is fine representation of Siva dancing
on the pilaster adjacent to the rock wall on the east. Standing with his legs apart, this deity has two hands, the right stretched to the right side in kasthaka and the left bent at the elbow and placed on the left side of the chest adjacent to the arm pit. Jatas emanate from the head around. There is a representation of Gejendramokea on the first pillar in the front row to the east. To the left is the elephant yelling out, with its trunk upraised and the makara catching its right hind leg. To the right is Vishnu flying on Garuda, with two hands, one resting on the head of the elephant and the other upraised in vismaya. On the south face of the second pillar of the front row there is a sculpture showing Putana suckling Krishna. There is a wronout female figure on the west wall at right angles to the back wall of the mantapa to the west.

In the back wall of the mantapa are excavated three shrines each with a projecting entrance. Each entrance is on a raised base on which are two pilasters with the entrance between them. The entrance of the central shrine and the vedi below project a foot further. All the three entrances are surmounted by kapota, or cornices which are plain. There are two rafter ends above the kapotas of the side shrines and four above the kapota of the central shrine.

Cave III

This is a simple and plain cave temple situated about a hundred metres higher than the road level and reached by a flight of rude steps cut on the side of the hill.
This cave consists of two crude pillars without base or capital in the front with short walls on either side. The mantapa beyond is 5.56 mts. long and 6.00 mts. broad. There is a single cell in the back wall of the mantapa 2.31 mts. long and 2.23 mts. broad.

The facade of the cave consists of a narrow flat patta or band above the two pillars. There is no kapota above.

Cave IV:

This is a small single celled cave facing the south and dedicated to Durga. It consists of two rock walls in the east and west in the front and two pillars beyond with corresponding pilasters. The mantapa beyond is 4.6 mts. long and 3.9 mts. broad. There is a cell 1.8 mts. square in the wall.

The pillars are plain and cubical with octagonal shafts in the centre and with no base or capital. Above these pillars are two plain pattas or bands. These are surmounted by a moulded kapota or cornice and adorned with three empty nasikas or gables with spade-head tops. Above the kapota are two bands with four rafter ends between them.

The entrance of the cell is reached by a short flight of steps with a chandrasila before it. The wall on either side of the entrance is plain. The back wall of the cell contains a shallow niche in which there is a half relief figure of Durga sculptured. This deity stands facing the right with her right foot resting on a small stool and the left stiff and resting on the ground. She has four hands, the upper right
holding trisula, the lower right resting on the bent knee and the lower left in katihasta. The upper left hand is wrout. There is a low rectangular platform below this niche.

There are two niches to the west of this cave of which one is empty and the other contains the standing figure of Vishnu with four arms. There are five niches in the east wall. These contain the sculptured figures of Siva with four hands dancing on the prostrate body of the apasmara-purusa. Brahma with three heads and four hands holding kamandalu, aksamala and rystaka; another standing figure, a representation of Vishnu standing with samkhe and chakra in the two upper hands, gada in one lower hand and the other lower hand in katihasta and a figure of Ganapati with the head of a real elephant.

Cave VI.

This is a triple celled cave facing the north. It has two short projecting walls on the east and west, and two cubical pillars without bases or capitals with short projection rock walls on the sides forming three openings. The mantapa beyond 8 metres long and 1.67 mts. broad. There are three cells in the back wall each 2.25 square. The entrances of these shrines are level with the wall and do not project. The facade above the pillars has a low kapota or cornice without any decoration. Above it is a row of swans.

THE CAVES OF UDBAVALLI

There is a big four storeyed cave in this village and four more smaller cave temples.
Cave I:

This is the main, four storeyed cave popularly known as the temple of Anantasayi.

The ground floor of the cave is irregularly excavated and incomplete. Its ground level is varying and not uniform. It has a mantapa of three rows of six pillars each and one pilaster at either end. There are seven openings between these pillars which are all cubical and without base or capital. The facade has a low flat kapota or cornice containing an inscription in Telugu characters of the ninth century.

The first storey is in four sections from south to north and reached by a short flight of steps cut in the rock at the right end of the ground floor. At the top of this flight of steps to the left there is a rectangular niche in the rock wall and above it the railing ornament in three sections. Above is a frieze of two lions and one elephant in vigorous poses. The first section is opposite the flight of steps. It has in the front an open space between two rock walls on the north and south. There is a niche in the north wall adorned with the railing ornament. On the south wall opposite there are two long inscriptions. Beyond the open space is a low adhistana with a flight of steps in the centre. Beyond these steps is a mantapa of two rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters. These are cubical pillars with an octagonal shaft in the middle. They have simple curved bracket capitals. The back wall of the mantapa contains the entrance of a cell with a Kosta or niche on either side. Each niche has two pilasters
and a makaratorana above. There is a distended makaratorana above the entrance. The beam above the pillars of the front row contains a row of swans with their wings open. Above is the moulded kapota decorated with threenasikas or gables with a spade head top. Above the kapota are seven figures which are too wornout to be identified. Above these figures is an ornament in three sections containing three horizontal rows of rafter ends with two beam-heads between them.

The second section is to the north of section I and reached through an opening in the north wall. It consists of a mantapa with four rows of four pillars each with the corresponding pilasters in the northern and southern walls. All the pillars are cubical and contain the taranga or roll ornament on the underside. At the base of the second pilaster to the south there is the figure of a woman standing with the right leg bent and the right hand resting on the right thigh and the left hand held up in vismaya. Five pillars and two pilasters in this section contain the full lotus medallion on the rectangular block at the top.

The third section is to the further north and reached from section II through an opening in the northern wall. It contains a mantapa of two rows of two pillars each with four corresponding pilasters in the walls. All these pillars and pilasters have on their underside the taranga or roll ornament with a patta or fillet in the centre. Two pillars contain the lotus medallions.

The fourth section is in the extreme north and at a lower level. It consists of a mantapa of two rows of two pillars
each and two corresponding pilasters in the walls. These pillars and pilasters are like those in section III. There is an empty cell excavated in the back wall of this mantapa. There is an empty niche in the back wall of this cell with a low vedi before it. One pilaster contains the lotus medallion and two contain the figures of swans. There is a niche in the south wall at right angles to the back wall of the mantapa with a sculpture representing a male being seated with the right leg bent and resting on the seat and the left hand hanging. The left hand is on the left thigh and the right is bent at the elbow and upraised. There is a woman to the right and two to the left. A boy stands below before a Purnakalesa. On the rock wall to the south there is a fine miniature temple of the Nagara order.

The second storey consists of a pillared mantapa and an open portico before it. This mantapa contains six pillars and a pilaster in the south wall in the front row, a short rock wall projecting behind the first pillar in this row, six pillars and a pilaster in the north wall in the second and third rows and five pillars and a pilaster in the north wall in the fourth row. To the north of these rows of pillars there is a huge figure of Vishnu Anantassyi. There are three niches in the south wall. The outer or eastern side of the short projecting wall behind the first pillar of the first row contains the figure of a dvarapalaka standing, leaning to the left hand in katibasta and the left resting on a gada. A snake starts on his right hand, runs across the chest and emerges
above the left shoulder. At the end of the south wall there is a fine niche of two pilasters with a flat kapota above them and a solid nasika or gable surmounting all with a lotus scroll on either side at the bottom. On the beams above the front and second rows of pillars towards the northern end there are two rows of dwarfs opposite each other. The pillars in the front row are surmounted by a kapota decorated with ten Nasikas each with a spade-head top and a human head inside. Above the kapota is the series kuta, sala, kuta, sala, kuta, sala, and kuta. All the pillars of the mantapa are cubical and contain on the underside the terange or roll ornament with a patta or fillet in the middle. They are adorned with many sculptures viz., a bearded sage, man playing udanta, chauri bearers, Gajendramoksa, lion, elephants, Vishnu with Prithvi, Narasimha, Vaman and Bali, Trivikrama and Sita under the asoka tree. The open portico before the mantapa contains on its eastern edge the figures of three bearded sages and two lions. The image of Anantasayi found at the northern extremity of the mantapa is hewn out of the rock. It represents Vishnu as lying on the seven coiled body of Sesa with the hoods spread above his head. The deity keeps the right hand folded at the elbow under the head and holds up the left hand also bent at the elbow in vismaya. There is a man at the feet of the god sitting on his knees and keeping his hands in anjali. Beyond the feet of the God are the two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha. On the wall are to be found the figures of Brahma with four hands seated in padmasana on a lotus and
of four other flying gods keeping their right hands in vismaya. On the back wall of the mandapa are the figures of the Vaisnava deities and a fine figure of Vishnu seated in padmasana on Sesha. He holds samkha and chakra in the two upper hands and keeps the lower hands in abhaya and varada.

The third storey contains a narrow open space and a wall to its west decorated with ten pilasters. Two simple plain cells are excavated into this wall.

**Cave II:**

This cave temple is to the south of the main cave. It contains two plain empty cells and a frieze of two lions and two elephants above it. There are two niches above this frieze, and one of them contains the figure of Vishnu holding samkha and chakra in the two upper hands, gada in one lower hand and keeping the other in katihasta.

**Cave III:**

This cave is to the south of cave No. II. It contains a single celled shrine. There is open space in the front, enclosed by two rock walls on the two sides a mandapa on a low adhistana containing two rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters in the walls and two niches in the walls between the pilasters. The back wall of the mandapa contains a central entrance with a kośa on either side. There is a moulded kapota above the pillars in the façade decorated with three nasikas, one containing three heads, and another containing two. The heads in the third are worn-out. The pillars are cubical and without the base or capital.
The kostas in the back wall are adorned with a makara-torana with dwarfs seated on the necks of the makaras. There is a lotus bud above the torana in the centre. Inside the kosta are the figures of dvarapalakas standing in samabhanga with the right hand resting on the right hip and the left resting on a gada. The pilasters of the kosta are fully developed and contain the kalasa, tadi, padma, idai and palaka. There is a makaratorana above the entrance also and two human heads, one on either side of its central projection.

Cave IV:

This cave is situated to the north of the main cave and reached by a narrow pathway cut in the hill side. It consists of open space in the front enclosed by rock walls on the sides, a low adhistana, a mantana with two rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters in the walls and the back wall containing a shrine entrance with a kosta on either side.

All the four pillars are cubical and have curved bracket capitals. The two pillars and pilasters in the front contain sculptures which are much wornout. There is the lotus medallion on two pilasters in the interior.

The kostas in the back wall have distended makaratoranas above them extending to the sides and not hanging below. The kosta on the south contains the figure of a woman standing with her right hand upraised and the left kept in katihasta. To her left is another woman carrying a basket on her head.
Cave V:

This cave is also on the same hill but just behind the village. Its front has fallen.

This cave has in the front a wide open space enclosed by rock walls on the sides each with an empty niche. Beyond is a low adhistana, on which there is a mantapa containing two rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters in the walls. Beyond is the back wall with three shrines excavated into it. The pillars are cubical and have curved bracket capitals.

In the northern part of the back wall there is a fine shrine with its entrance spanned by a mukaratorana whose plume-like part hangs below. The upper beam is decorated with row of geese. The architrave above the mukaratorana is adorned with lotus petals. The moulded kapota above contains at the ends nasikas with human heads inside. There is an elephant at each end above the kapota supporting the roof. The shrine to the south has a kaota on either side of the entrance containing the figures of ayrapalakas, with a snake emerging above the left shoulder. Above the kaota of this shrine there is a row of two lions and two elephants supporting the roof.

Miniature shrines:

These shrines are carved on the rock to the farther north of cave No.III. Two of them contain a linga on a yedi inside. One is on an adhistana having upana, trippatta another patta, gala cut into compartments by short pilasters, and a flat kapota above all. One shrine has a single pilaster on the sides of the entrance while the others have double pilasters.
Above the pilasters there is a moulded kapota without any decorations. Above this is a narrow patta or band with four rafter ends above. Then there is a wide patta and two narrow bands above. Above these bands there is the gala cut into compartments by four pilasters. One shrine has a plain Nagarasikhara and stone kalasa above. The sikhara of the other shrines are decorated with a nasika or gable with spade-head top. Inside the nasika are two pilasters with a beam head between them.

Dr. G. J. Dubreuil has shown that the cave temples at Undavalli and Mogalrajapuram on the banks of the Krishna are Vishnukundin excavations, that the Pallava king Mahendra-varman I, was inspired by a study of these to excavate similar shrines in several places in his dominions in the south. After a careful comparative study of the caves at Undavalli with those excavated by the Pallava king Mahendra-varman I at Mandagapattu, Namandur, Pallavaram and other places in the south had come to the conclusion that the latter bear close resemblance to the former in design and style, and that Mahendra who admired the Vishnukundin caves had similar ones cut on the rock around his capital Kanchipuram and other places in his dominions.

It is apparent that the Vishnukundin dynasty, having been contemporary to Vakatakas should have had opportunity of knowing the great achievements of these in the realms of architecture and sculpture. A southward flow of Vakataka architectural traditions from Ajanta to the lower Krishna
valley due mostly to the intimate dynastic relationship between the Vakatakas and the Vishnukundins is quite possible. The intense devotion to Brahmanism of the Vishnukundins is also vouched by many of the kings like Madhavavarman I and III having performed Aswamedhas and thousand Agnishtomas and also by the entire family having been dedicated to the worship of the God Sriparvathaswami and this would make it appropriate that they be credited with the cave temples of Mogalrajapuram and Undavalli.

It has been suggested by early writers like Longhurst that the nature of the pillar, corbel, the cornice and the panel work in the cells, including the ground plan, and the dedication of the caves jointly to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva although establishing the primacy of the last mentioned in the Mogalrajapuran would imply that the work has the stamp of Pallava rock-cut architecture modes. Longhurst's view was proved to be untenable by some scholars.

According to several writers the Vijayawada group of temples are of Vishnukundin origin and the main argument in favour of this theory rests on the following facts.

i) a number of copper coins found in the coastal districts containing the lion on one side and a vase on the other are attributed to the Vishnukundins.

ii) There is the figure of a vase or punnakalasa in one of the caves of Mogalrajapuram and of a lion in the Anantasayi cave of Undavalli.
iii) The seal of Ipur-I plates contains, in the upper half and above a horizontal line, the figure of Lakshmi seated on a pedestal flanked by a lamp stand by the Sun and the crescent Moon. The seal of the Ramathirtham plates contains the figure of a lion with mouth open, tail looped above the body and the left fore-paw raised. The lion found on the obverse side of the Vishnukundin coins is similar. This lion also resembles the animal found sculptured at the bottom of two pillars in the second storey of the main cave temple at Undavalli.

A fine purnachata is found at the base of one of the pillars in a cave at Mogalrajapuram. It is then clear that the copper plate grants containing the figure of the lion on the seal, the coins containing the figures of the lion and kalasa and the caves containing the figures of the lion and the purnachata belong to one and the same family of rulers.

iv) The Vishnunikunda grant of the Eastern Chalukyan king, Vishnuvardhana III, records the gift of the village of that name to a Jaina temple at Vijayawada by Aryamahadevi, the queen of Vishnuvardhana-I (624-642 A.D.). The grant was executed by the queen herself and the seal bears the well known epithet, Vishnusidhi, borne by Vishnuvardhana. This is a copy of an earlier grant made in the time of Vishnuvardhana-I. Among the boundaries of the village gifted, mention is made of Layanamora cave which obviously refers to one of the cave temples in Mogalrajapuram. This shows beyond doubt that the caves were in existence for sometime before the foundation of Eastern Chalukyan rule and that they were familiarly known by
that time. The Vishnukundins preceded the Eastern Chalukyas as rulers in this region.

(v) On the top of the triple celled cave at Mogalraja-puram is a figure of Nataraja with eight hands, tampering Apsmarapurusha. It is a unique one and such a figure is found nowhere else including the Pallava cave temples at places like Mandagappattu, Mamandur, Davalanur etc. These caves must therefore be ascribed to the Vishnukundins.9

Most of the architectural features found in these cave temples can be traced to the architecture of the Satavahana period, or its representations in the sculptures of the period. Massive cubical pillars without base or capital and with octagonal shafts in the middle are to be found in Buddhist caves of Guntupalli in coastal Andhradesa. Many lime stone pillars of this type have been found at Amaravati, Bhattiprolu etc. Animal friezes are found on the anda or dome of the mahachaitya of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda and at the base of the half lotus medallions on pillars. The purnakalasa as a decorative device was widely employed by the architects of the Satavahana period.10

The frieze of dwarfs found on the beams of some of these cave temples, sometimes carrying a garland, is found on the mahachaitya of Amaravati.11

The Vijayawada group of cave temples influenced considerably the architecture of the Pallavas and the Eastern Chalukyas.
Influence on Pallava architecture:

i) Ornamentation of the cave facade with the Kapota containing nasikas found at Vijayawada, Mogalrajapuram and Undavalli are also found in cave temples of the Pallavas.

ii) Most of the southern caves of this period contain pillars and pilasters decorated with the lotus medallion and this feature is found in one cave at Mogalrajapuram and two caves at Undavalli.

iii) The Kapota adorned with makaratorana is found in the Dalavanur cave and many caves of the Vijayawada group.

iv) The Durga temple of the Kotikal-mentapam is suggestive of the Durga temple of Mogalrajapuram.

Influence on Early Chalukyas:

Some architectural features of this group of cave temples are seen in the temples of the Eastern Chalukyan period found at Bikkavolu and Chebrolu. The makaratorana niches and entrances adorned with the kapota above are an instance to the point. The row of geese and dwarfs is also common.\(^{12}\)

The front towers of the temples like the Huchimaligudi at Aihole and the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples at Pattadakal built by the Chalukyas have representations of Natesa with many arms with a bull behind\(^{13}\) and reminds us of the figure of Nataraja (i.e.) dancing Siva, with eight hands, in the Urdhvajanu pose and tampering Apasmaramraaha, found on the top of the triple-celled cave at Mogalrajapuram.

\(^{****}\)
REFERENCES

1. Dubreuil, G.J.; 1917; The Pallavas, Pondicherry
2. ibid, pages 27-35.
7. ibid para 21.
11. ibid pl. xiv, a.
The origin of image worship and the construction of temples may be assigned to pre-Buddhist period or pre-Christian era in the absence of any clear evidence. The next phase in constructions goes to the Buddhist period up to 3rd or 4th century A.D. In both these types of constructions, brick was the main material which could be conveniently fabricated into the desired structure being cemented either with mud or mortar. Further, brick architecture was also an inextricable companion of stucco workmanship which was a clear precursor to stone sculpture.

The Satavahanas and their successors like Ikshvakus adopted the brick medium for the Buddhist Stupas, Chaityas, and Viharas from their very inception, as at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Goli, Ghantasala, etc. The spurt that was given to brick architecture spread far and wide and became the common pool of Buddhist as well as Hindu Brahmanical architecture. The continued use of brick medium in the lower Deccan by early Hindu architectural pioneers, even with the admitted availability of stone as raw material of the requisite quality shows the influence of age long and customary use of brick by their Buddhistic fore-runners in the same region. Thus the very earliest examples of Brahmic structural architecture are mostly of brick medium.
Brick is the most ancient material for a sacred building. Bricks of large size and of strong texture were made in Andhra Desa from quite early times; the size of the bricks found in the excavations at Yeleswaram on the banks of river Krishna at the Satavahana and Ikshvaku levels was 56 x 30.5 x 7.5 cms. During the period of extending from the first to the 3rd century B.C. or still going farther back, the use of bricks for walls seems to have been quite common in Andhra Desa for both religious and secular buildings.

The Matsyapurana describes the possible forms of the Hindu temple and says that they may be built either of wood or brick or stone. Bricks had formed "the body of sacrifice". Detailed prescriptions are given as to how to make good baked bricks and this practical knowledge gained by experience accompanies a "Sarati", a tradition by which the acquired technical skill became perfected. The act itself of offering had gone into the making of the brick. It is a rite of identification. The substance of the brick is its carrier, earth and fire are the elements which take part in it and help the sacrificer to build his sacrificial body.

Bricks and stone are frequently combined in one and the same building.

Essentially the acts and rites in building the temple are sacrificial. One of the main sacrifices being the vastu-homa.

"Let him who wishes to enter the worlds that are reached by sacrificial offerings and the performance of religious obligations build a temple to the Gods, by doing which he attains both the results of sacrifice and the
The body of architectural knowledge behind the short compilation of the Brihat Samhita is supported by the traditional science of architecture, *vastusastra* listed in the Matsya purana.

The structure of a temple is a work of art and science. Their knowledge and practice are conducive towards the same end, the making of a perfect instrument whose sight and ritual use procure release.

The Hindu temple is built with the fervour of devotion as a work of offering and pious liberality, in order to secure for the builder, a place in heaven, which means a high level of inward realisation and to increase the religious merit of his near relatives. The temple is built as a work of supererogation, with the utmost effort in material means and the striving of the spirit so that the *prasada* attains and leads to the Highest point. He who builds a temple of Siva leads his ancestors of 21 generations to the world of *Sambhu.*

To the pilgrim and devotee who goes to the temples, it is a tirtha made by art, as others are by nature and often it is both in one. It is the seat, abode and body of divinity. In addition to being an offering and work of pious liberality, the temple has not only its proportionate measurement but also the carvings on its walls, and the total effect of its form.

The temple consists of thick walls and a roof forming a dark square chamber entered through a door with a more or less elaborate frame.
The Brihat Samhita and the Matsyapurana describe twenty types of temples. Amongst them Meru, Mandara and Kailasa are the first three names, all three are the names of the Mountains. Some inscriptions extoll the temple as the Mountain. In the geography of the puranas, the Mandara is the mountain to the east of Meru. Kailasa, the abode of Siva, is situated to the north of Mountain Meru, or it is said to be one of its three peaks; so that either of these peaks, Mandara and Kailasa, is a part of Meru.

Sculptural representation:

The sculptures from Amaravati, Jaggayapeta, Nagarjunakonda and Goli include a number of bas-reliefs where a variety of examples of architecture, both religious and secular occur. The types of religious shrines amongst them may be taken to give us clues to the fact that there actually existed then shrines of similar types in the open air. In certain cases secular buildings, shown in the bas-reliefs, such as palaces may also be seen to possess some of the details of a religious edifice, a fact which shows that during the early period there was comparatively greater freedom in the practice of the art of building.

The 'Punyasala' from Jaggayapeta, the harmikas surmounting the stupas and the Budhagharas from Amaravati are examples of shrines built on square plan and there are shrines built on square plan and there are shrines built on circular plans. A number of structural chaitya-grihas have been found amongst the ruins of buildings at Nagarjunakonda.
excavations carried out at Nagarjunakonda brought to light remains of a large apsidal structural shrine devoted to Siva who is called as Pushpabhadraswami in the inscription occurring on its dhvajastambha.

A peculiar brick structure of elongated beehive outline and with a Gavakaa, carved on its lower part, is represented in a relief from Amaravati. The Gavakaa is surmounted by a very tall finial of several components probably Amalaka etc., 17

A lead coin belonging to Satavahana king Yagna Sri of the last quarter of the second century A.D. shows on the reverse a beautiful design of a bow and arrow and on the obverse a three-stepped pedestal on which is placed a figure resembling a human head. It carries a three-pronged design. To the proper left of this head there is a tall-pillar. The the proper right there is a square, with a small opening at its bottom, suggesting an enclosure; within the enclosure is depicted a tiny little but beautiful bull standing facing proper right. This bull is of the type which occurs in early sculptures from Amaravati etc., as well as the type met with in the seals of copper-plate grants of Salankayanas. All these figures as well as their arrangement appear to us to suggest clearly that what is meant here is a shrine. The trident head and the bull on the left show that here the deity represented is Siva. It leaves no doubt of the fact that during and earlier than the second century A.D., there existed Siva shrines of this type. 18 In fact references to Siva shrines are met within the 'Saptasati' of Hala who is a ruler of Satavahana dynasty in the first century A.D. 19
Examples of rock-cut shrines date from about 5th to the 7th century A.D. and the non-availability of material proving the existence of structural temples of this period does not suggest that no such temples were built then. Probably quite a number of them of brick and mortar, were built then. Of these at least one or two examples have survived. The famous apsidal temple at Chezara is one of them.

**Brick Temples:**

I. Kesargutta:

An early Saivite temple of brick is situated just opposite to the western gate-way of the fort. The temple is square in plan with a square brick pedestal in the middle to insert possibly a square based linga. There is a covered drain on the north-east corner for conducting out the water of ablution. The floor inside the temple is paved with bricks. The superstructure is in ruins. There are many brick temples scattered all over the area. The transition from brick to stone is clearly discernible here.

In the early phase, all the temples were constructed of brick. There is a Jaina temple with a brick square garbhagriha to which was later adjoined a Mukhamandapa. About a hundred metres away from the Jaina temple and on the bank of the tank is another small temple dedicated to a Linga constructed entirely of granite but for the brick yoni. This may belong to the last phase.

About four hundred metres away from the present excavation site towards west, one square brick structure with a hole
and a Linga was brought to light. The Linga has a square at Brahmabhaga, octagonal shaft at the Vishnubhaga and Rudrabhaga. The shrine is in east-west orientation. This structure is unique because there is no panavatta and also in view of the fact that the plan of this Saivite structure is similar to that of Saivite open shrines noticed at Yeleswaram on the banks of the river Krishna. Now let us study each shrine in greater detail.

1) Square Brick shrine:

This is a single celled square shrine constructed in West-East orientation. The main cell was constructed with brick including walls and flooring. The outer length of the cell is 7.50 mts. x 7.50 mts., the inner length of it being 6 mts. x 6 mts. The walls of the cell are of 0.75 mt. thickness.

There is a square pedestal in the centre of the shrine. The distance from the inner side of the wall to the pedestal is 2 mts. It is 40 cm. high from the floor, outer and inner lengths being 2.10 x 2.10 mts. and 52 cm x 52 cm. respectively. There is a cavity in the centre for installing the Linga, which is missing. There are five courses of brick from floor level.

A covered drain of 22 cm. width was provided from inside on the north-east corner of the shrine. The total length of this drain from inside the shrine to the other end which opens on the other side of the outer wall is 4.80 mts. The water with which Linga or image is bathed in the daily rites
passes from the image to the drain which is also known as Brannala, on the floor which traverses the middle of the north wall of the Garbha griha and leaves through a spout. The water in which the Linga or image has been bathed is sanctified and therefore is made to flow to the north. 21

Outside the Garbha griha there are twenty stone slabs with hollow round cuttings in the middle probably for holding the wooden pillars. These base stones are of various sizes and their shape also is irregular. The distance end in all there are 20 stones. This might be an open mandapa or pradakshenapatha. The floor level of the cell is 60 cm. below the pillared mandapa outside the cell. Leaving a space of 4.40 metres on all sides, a wall of 0.95 mts. was constructed around the shrine. The length of this enclosure wall from outside is 17.70 mts. and the inner length is 15.80 mts. Superstructure is completely ruined and only the ground plan of the structure is visible. The size of the brick used in the construction of the shrine is 50 cm. x 25 cm. x 8 cm.

The square plan, being associated with the divine beings in the Vedic rituals, became sacred and shrines built on this plan and on the plans derived from it began to assume a special sanctity. Hence such shrines in Buddhist context are seen to enclose Bodhi-tree 22 (eg. the Bodhigara from Amaravati) and Buddha-pada 23 (eg. the punyasala from Jagayya peta). More important than these are the square harmikas
which surmount the stupas. Although they are fences, yet from the way they are shown on top of the stupas and from their function of enclosing sacred objects like the Chatradanda, their distinctly sacred character is evident. An objection to the singling out a harmika from its context and attributing to it a significance that should strictly go to an independent shrine may be anticipated. The reply to this objection is that during that period, the temple complex was only in its beginnings and its various parts are therefore not met with in one and the same context but are found scattered in a variety of contexts. There is, therefore, no illogicality in recognising in the harmika, a shrine, the suffix ka being used to denote, diminutive harmya. A harmya means a structure with terraces and is used to denote shrines also. Thus a diminutive square shrine on top of a funerary monument naturally gets special significance.

ii) Shrine No.2:

This can be called a Jaina shrine, as, at present, there is a seated Jaina idol in the open Garbhagriha, which is carved of black basalt; the height of the image is 85 cm.

It is rectangular in plan facing towards east. Eleven courses of bricks are visible from the ground level to the basement, over which rectangular stone slabs were placed for giving support to the super-structure. The Jaina idol is placed in the centre of a pillared hall on a rectangular stone slab.
The central cell of the shrine is 2.50 mts in length. There are in all nine granite pillars supporting the ceiling slabs. There is another cell to the north of the present 
garbhagriha which must be the sanctum-sanctorum of a Saivite shrine belonging to earlier period. The length and width of this cell is 1.80 mts x 2.00 mts. Ruins of brick platform in front of the shrine to the East are traceable. The length of this platform is 6.35 mts. and its width is 2.25 mts. This platform was given offset projection to a width of 2.30 mts. and a length of 5.70 mts. The thickness of the wall is 75 cms. The total length of the shrine on the northern side including the projection on the east is 6.50 mts.

Three lion figures are carved on a granite slab measuring 78 cm. x 70 cm. x 40 cm. one lion in the centre in a sitting position looking front and the other two on proper right and left turning sideways and looking front with mouths open. At present this panel is lying in the ante-chamber i.e. proper left to Jaina idol.

Dr. C. Sivaramamurthy observes that "the basement of stupa does not show any mouldings. It, however, shows an interesting detail which has a significant bearing on the development of the mouldings of the basement in the later day temples. It is the continuous series of friezes showing a variety of animals usually the Buddhist quartet namely lion, elephant, horse and bull in different postures". This shrine is the best example for showing the transition from brick to stone. The mandapa-shrines etc. the punyasala from Jaggayyapet, show
that in early times the shrines were unwalled and open.

iii) Structure No. 5:

Remains of another brick structure was traced on the southern side of the western gate (fortification). There is a square enclosure wall constructed with stone slabs, arranged in two rows leaving hollow space in the middle for filling with rubble etc. The length of the side of the enclosure wall is 45.6 mts. There is a 1.35 mts. wide entrance to this structure on the eastern side and provided with four steps; stone slabs are used for steps. Inside the square enclosure there is a mound of 19x2 x 19.2 mts. Two trial trenches taken on the mound revealed four skeletons of infants with associated pottery in four corners of the mound. These skeletons were found in north-south orientation with head placed towards north.

A porch like brick structure facing towards the entrance of the enclosure wall is also traced. On the southern side of the mound, at a distance of 6 metres, a dolmenoid cist like structure is found. Three vertical slabs are placed over it, capstone is fallen and displaced from its original position.

While the primeval shape of the dolmen is, architecturally, the prototype of the sanctuary enshrined in the Hindu temple, other closed types of sacred buildings also have preceded the Hindu temple. The porch type of these shrines is the dolmen with its one large flat slab of stone, supported by three upright slabs set on edge so as to form a small chamber with side open to serve as an entrance.
Dolmens have actually been used as Saivite temples. Old dolmens are set up as Siva shrines for example at Kamboduru, Kalyanadurg, Anantapur district. The Siva temple at Kamboduru is a dolmen converted for this purpose by a careful dressing and fitting of the stone slabs. They are not planted in the ground but are raised on a moulded plinth.

iv) Structure No. 4

About 400 metres towards west from the site where the present excavations are carried out, one square brick structure with a Linga fixed in a hole was exposed. The Linga has a square base at Brahma Jhaga, octagonal shaft at the Vishnu and Rudra Bhagas. It is in east-west orientation facing east. The structure is unique because there is no panavatta here and since this Saivite structure is similar to that of Saivite open shrines found during the excavations at Yeleswaram on the banks of the river Krishna.

Plenty of such square brick pedestals with or without Lingas are found scattered on Keesaragutta.

II. Yeleswaram:

Stumps of columns of a mandapa were noticed, and an enclosure wall was also brought to light. A brick structure appeared to have been intended for some ritualistic import as sockets were made at regular intervals around a raised pedestal for the creation of wooden columns to support a canopy. A brick structure something like a chamber was discovered, which functioned probably as votive shrine for installing Bana Linga. Another brick structure of the nature of votive shrine installed with a Banalinga connected
by an *abhisekha* drain was found.\(^\text{32}\)

iii) **Gollathagudi**

The plans of two brick temples facing east were brought to view. The walls over the plinth were built in brick with a system of bonding to which has added another layer to give veneering effect. Temple I being constructed in brick must have given ample scope to the builders for greater constructional possibilities, which are almost lost now due to its total collapse. The floor paved with burnt bricks was found disturbed at several places.

Gollathagudi temple complex contain a *garbhagriha*, accessory cellars, Mukhamandapa, Mahamandapa and porch, which are all contemporary. The earlier ones at Gollathagudi were constructed in brick. A notable feature of these temples is the treatment of brick with excellent stucco work. The remains of a Saivite shrine are noticed to the south west of Padalagadda. Large and small size boulders were raised to a height of 60 cms. at the foundation level. Each stone slab is of 20 cms. in thickness. Superstructure was constructed in brick bonded with mud and mortar. Flooring is covered with rubble and brick.

The structure under study is rectangular in plan facing east with a square *garbhagriha* on the west. The main entrance of the temple has three steps 1st, 2nd and 3rd steps are 0.60 mts. 0.05 m. and 0.25 m. in length respectively. The entrance is 1.30 m. in length and width. The height of the steps is 20 cm. 16 cm. and 0.13 cms. respectively. There is a square cell adjoining the steps to the proper right, raised over a
rubble foundation. The length of the cell is 2.10 mts. and its width is 2.20 mts. Main temple was constructed with granite raised over rubble foundation. Its total length is 16 mts. and width is 11 mts. There is an antarala of 4.35 mts. length and 4.50 mts. width. The thickness of the wall is 0.85 mts. Mukhamandapa is 4.00 mts. in length and 6.45 mts. in width. Brick measuring 41 cm. x 21 cm. x 7 cm. is used in the construction. Parallel to Mukhamandapa on the left there is a platform constructed with five courses of bricks. The length and width of the platform is 3.75 mts. and 4.00 mts. respectively. There is another platform parallel to antarala measuring 3.60 mts. in length and 4.90 mts. in width. In between the antarala and Garbhagriha there is a eastern like structure 1.50 mts. in length and 1.55 mts. in width and 1.00 mts. deep; fourteen courses of bricks are visible.

The Garbhagriha is square in plan measuring 2.20 mts. on each side. There is a square stone pedestal measuring 0.35 cm. x 35 cm. with a hole in the centre for installing the deity. But the idol is missing. A Nandi carved in granite with mutilated head, and decorated with band of beads and hanging bell was found in Mukhamandapa.

ii) B. Structural Temples:

Lovers of temple architecture are hard put in visualising structural forms of temple in very early times prior to the first known monuments, like the cave art of the Vishnukundins in Andhra Desa. It is, however, clear by both direct evidence as well as indirect stylistic evidence that before temples of
durable materials were erected, brick, mortar, and timber were the media. One might also presume that no complicated character in layout or elevation could have been feasible then although some variety in presentation was quite likely. The most popular aspect of such a structure might be its open character, by which the major part of the layout of the interior even including the deity fixed in a central spot might be visible to the onlooker. Early northern textual evidence reveals that there were five basic shapes which were exploited for raising of structures and those were square, rectangle, ellipse and circle and octagon. Architectural evidence of the latter day fully corroborates the application of these shapes on plan and elevation, which ultimately got reduced to three, square, octagon, and circle and were at the root of the ternary division of styles in the south into respective Nagara, Dravida and Vesara orders.\textsuperscript{33}

It is generally believed that the Brahmanical temple builders borrowed this style from the chaityas of the Buddhists.\textsuperscript{34} But some scholars\textsuperscript{35} believe that the stupa, the most important religious foundation of the Buddhist, was itself pre-Buddhist in origin and that it was a common form of tomb, nothing more or less than a regularly built dome-shaped pile of masonry, which was undoubtedly the oldest form of funeral monuments.\textsuperscript{36} The Chaitya like the stupa was also a pre-Buddhist institution adopted by the Buddhists to secure the loyalty of the masses to their own faith. The Arthasastra of Kautilya teems with allusions to the chaityas. Certain interesting details
regarding the chaitya are given in the Arthasastra. On full and new moon days, the worship of the chaityas may be performed by placing on a verandah, offerings such as an umbrella, hasta flag and a chhaga (he-goat). The first point which deserves notice in this context is that the chaitya is a building with a verandah. It appears that in the time of the Mauryas, the chaitya was still a Hindu religious institution. It is argued that the Buddhists borrowed good many things from the Hindus in giving a definite shape to their religion, and asserted with confidence that the chaitya type of temples such as those at Chejarla, Ten and other places were not Buddhist temples in their original condition, but Brahmanical structures built by the Hindu architects, in accordance with the architectural traditions which they inherited from their ancestors.

No specimen of the temple structure of the Vishnukundin period is known to exist at present. The copper plate grants of Vishnukundin rulers such as Tummalagudem inscription of Govindavarman I and the Chikkulla plates of Vikramendra Varman-II tell us that a number of temples, monasteries etc., were built and the old ones were kept in good repairs. The Velpuru stone inscription of Madhavavarman II gives us indication that the temple of Vinayaka was constructed. It is also likely that the temple of Somagireswaranatha of the Chikkulla plates owed its origin to the workmen of the Vishnukundin period.

Some writers assert with confidence that there is reason to believe that the temples of Ramalingesvara and Bhimalingeswara at Satyavolu in Giddalur taluk of Kurnool district go back to
the age of Vishnukundin monarchs. The two temples in the village dedicated respectively to Ramalingesvara and Bhimalingesvara are built of stone from basement to sikhara. The vimanas of both the shrines rise in tiers, eleven in the Bhimalingesvara and fourteen in Ramalingesvara, they are surmounted by circular sikhara capped over by fluted kalasa. The shrines consist of a square garbhagriha and a wagon roof mantapa attached to it. In front of the garbhagriha on either side of the gateway, stand two horned dvarapalas very closely resembling their counterparts in the early Pallava temples of Mahendravarman-I time.

1) Satyavolu Temples:

The horned dvarapalas guarding the entrance of the sanctum are peculiar to the Vishnukundin and the Pallava temples. The observations of one writer who examined the dvarapalas from the Vishnukundin, Pallava, Chalukyan and Rashtrakuta temples are noted here. "While the tradition of the horned dvarapalas from the Vishnukundin caves is found transported to the Pallava area through Bhairavanikonda further south to Tiruchirapalli caves, it is absent in these Eastern Chalukya figures that follow the traditions of the home land. Even with the lapse of time and the interplay of influences we find the horned dvarapalakas as one of a pair just as in Pallava temple, fails to occur in the Chalukyan temples, and normal type continues as in the Mallesvara temple at Vijayawada or the temples at Biccavolu. The significance of the presence of the horns in these dvarapalakas appears
to have been due to the continuance of the motif of Nagarajas known from Nagarjunakonda and Goli. If the middle three hoods out of the five snake-hoods from these Nagarajas are removed they will look exactly like the horned dvaramalaksas of later times. If the horned dvaramala is characteristic of the Vishnukundin and the Pallava temples, and not found in the Chalukyan temples either of Badami or of Vengi, as stated by the above writer, Satyavolu temples could not have been built by the Chalukyas. As all the Pallava temples were built only in the Dravidian style, and no specimen of a Pallava shrine in the Indo-Aryan style is found anywhere, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Satyavolu temples were built by the Vishnukundins. The Satyavolu group of shrines contains an apsidal or gajaprishta structure, a feature datable to pre-Chalukyan period.

Alampur Temples:

The Alampur temples are among the most important ancient monuments in Andhra Pradesh. They are the largest temple complex in the State distinguished by the style of their architecture. Temples built in the same style are found in several other places in the State.

There is a fine temple of this type dedicated to Siva at Kadamalakalva in the Nandyala taluk of Kurnool district. Another shrine of the same style is at Mahanandi in the same taluk.

Opinion differs regarding the origin and the age of these temples at Alampur. Some draw attention to their resemblance to the Orissan temples and assign them to the 12th century A.D.
whereas others assign them to the western Chalukya kings
of Badami who ruled over this part of the country in the
7th-8th centuries of the Christian era. Basing on the
epigraphical evidences some writers have asserted that
these temples are some of the earliest in existence in Andhra Pradesh. Labels in archaic characters found on the
walls of other temples in this complex show that they
belong to an even earlier period.

These temples constitute a veritable treasure house
of architecture, sculpture and iconography and throw valuable
light on the evolution of art and architecture in eastern
Deccan during the post-Satavahana period.

The existing Vimanas of these Alampur temples are exactly
like those of the Bhimalingeswara and Ramalingeswara temples
of Satyavolu and the Mahanandiswara temple of Mahanandi. These temples in Andhra Desa must be studied together for
a correct understanding of this style and the temples of the
so called Indo-Aryan style, particularly those belonging to
the Mukhalingam and Bhuveswara groups on the other.

Speaking of the Ramalingeswara and Bhimalingeswara temples
at Satyavolu, one writer states that they approach very
nearly what is designated as Orissan style. Another writer asserts that the spires of the temple of Alampur are so
ingeniously overlaid with decorative detail that they appear
to be almost replicas of the Lingaraja temple at Bhuveswara
in Orissa. At Alampur one notices a marked change in the
shape of the spire, which is more akin to the towers in the
temples of Orissa than to those in south India.
Percy Brown also noticed the resemblance. "A comparison may be instituted between this (Parasurameswara) temple (at Bhuvanesvar) and the somewhat earlier temples of the Chalukyans at Aihole. It will be seen that of the Parasurameswara example, although inclined to be heavy and crude, is an improvement of the Indo-Aryan type of Sikharas subsequently added to the Aihole building. Moreover the incipient form of clerestory introduced into the Orissan temple is also an advance on the double roof of the Durga and Ruchchimalligudi temples of Chalukyan group from which, however it may have been derived. The resemblences between the two groups of temples noticed by the writers cited pertains only to the Sikha or spire. In this connection the views of one of the modern writers in worth considering.

The Andhra-Karnataka group differs from the Orissan in one important respect; whereas the spire of the former is built on the roof of the square Chambered garbha grha or sanctum, the spire of the latter starts straight away from the ground a cell inside at the ground level forming the garbha grha. Notwithstanding this difference, the close resemblance between the two calls for explanation. The Orissan architect seems to have derived inspiration from his Andhra-Karnataka compeer. This is not unlikely, for the Orissan style had its origin in the temples of Mukhalingam in Andhra or that part of Andhra which in ancient times had gone by the name of Kalinga. Although the Kalingas, formed a distinct group by themselves from the Andhras, they were racially, linguistically, and
culturally one and the same with the Andhras. Apart from this, Kalinga which was at first conquered by the Vishnukundins in the 5th century and subsequently by the Chalukyas in the beginning of 7th century A.D. remained an integral part of the kingdom of Vengi for several centuries when the peoples of the two countries mingled freely and lived together as common citizens of a single state. The Kalingas must have imbibed during this period, the artistic traditions of their western neighbours and gave a concrete shape to them by erecting the temples at Mukhalingam. The observations of Percy Brown deserve notice in this connection. "There is reason to believe that this (Orissan) style of temple architecture approached the eastern region from its southern extremity, spreading northwards to form the development in Orissa. Although the series at Mukhalingam may not comprise of the earliest examples, that the beginning was made in this locality is not unlikely. It has already been shown that a type of temple in a primitive Indo-Aryan style had begun to appear as far south as in the territory of the Chalukyas as early as the sixth century A.D. implying that they may have originated in that quarter. That the style of the Mukhalingam temples and of those of Orissa of a later date originated in the south (south-west) may be readily admitted. Whether it had come from the Chalukyas is more than doubtful. It is true that Pulakesin II had conquered Kalinga and together with it Vengi in 616-17 A.D. but he conferred the sovereignty of the countries on his younger brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana and
recognised his right to bequeath them as a hereditary dominion to his descendants with the appointment of Kubja Vishnuvardhana as the ruler of Vengi, Pulakesin II's connection with the east coast came to an end; and his successors at Badami had nothing to do with it. The style of Mukhalingam temples were popular. The Eastern Chalukyas, as the descendants of Kubja Vishnuvardha or the E.Chalukyas as they are called, ruled over their Kalinga subjects. They did not however favour the Indo-Aryan style, they built all their temples in the pyramidal or the Dravidian style. The builders of the Mukhalingam temples could not have adopted the style of their architecture from the Eastern Chalukyas. The recent discoveries of inscriptions in the 6th-7th century Telugu characters and the existence of horned śvarapalas in the Mukhalingam temple show that this temple goes back to the Vishnukundin period. It may be remembered that the Vishnukundins, who ruled over Kalinga before the Chalukyas made their appearance on the east coast, favoured the Indo-Aryan type. If the Kalinga architects of Mukhalingam and their predecessors acquired their fondness for the Indo-Aryan style from the south, as it is obvious, it must have been from their Vishnukundin masters of Vengi. The eastern Gangas who were the feudatories at first of the Vishnukundins and subsequently of their Eastern Chalukya successors carried it later into Orissa in the east when they conquered that country in the 12th century A.D.
The resemblance between the Andhra-Karnataka and the Orissan temples noticed above seems to be due to the inheritance of the same type from a common source rather than to conscious adoption. The Chalukyas in the west and the Kalinga Gangas in the east adopted the practice of building temples in the Indo-Aryan style from their Vishnukundin overlords who appear to have been the first among the South Indian dynasties to introduce it in the South.
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Keesaragutta has an extensive fortification wall around the hills encompassing an approximate area of 3 to 4 square kilometres. Presently there are traces of three metres broad, dressed rubble stone foundation of a very extensive fortification wall. The bricks measuring 50 x 25 x 8 cm., used for raising the superstructure, is still visible all along the fortification wall in fragments and at some places in tact. In most of the places the rubble wall was divested of the brick superstructure but the fallen brick is visible along the entire length of the wall. The fort was provided with four main gates on the east, west, north and south. Prefaced by strategic secondary walls in the shape of crescentic bulge possibly to stop direct onslaught of the enemy forces. The natural precipices of the hill were utilised as natural barriers and vulnerable points were plugged by constructing the ramparts.

Besides these main gates some water gates were also provided near the water ponds for fetching water into the fort. As there were no perennial sources of water such as rivers or streams in the vicinity, the natural depressions at the gradients were cross-bunded. Such numerous ponds are visible even today.

There is a huge tank at the foot of the fort on the west which must have served as a source of drinking water as well
as a deep water hurdle for the protection of the fort. Similarly there is a big tank on the eastern side below the fortification.

Traces of guard rooms were found near the main gates and the entire fort is studded with brick structures.

i) Antiquity of the fort:-

Before taking up a detailed study of the fortification at Keesaragutta it is necessary to examine the antiquity of the world Fort and its importance.

The term fort denotes defence, defence from the hazards of nature like rain and sun and attacks from outside.

"Forts are built in times of peace, designed to protect political, industrial, transportation and communication centres".¹

Their importance is chiefly strategic, erected for the purpose of strengthening a place or position. According to G.T. Date "in times of yore, the fortress, was a capital means of defence".²

Defence is the predominant characteristic feature of the fort.

The growth of the fort as a defensive structure depended to a large extent upon the contemporary trends of warfare i.e. the methods of attack and defence, the weapons used and the military organisation of the various kingdoms in different periods.

According to B.P.Sinha³ fort grew as a corollary to the existing trends of warfare which is one of the oldest aspects of human existence. He remarks that the art of warfare evolved from the earliest times with attention paid to both offensive
and defensive weapons and it continued to be the most dominant and persistent features of Indian History.

According to S.D. Singh⁴ kingship grew out of warfare which it may be said in turn, gave birth to the system of defences in the form of forts and fortifications. Hence the nature and character of a fort depend to a large extent upon the contemporary trends of warfare. Kautilya⁵ assigned a place of importance and honour to forts in the body politic as a politico-military institution, and included it among the seven constituent elements of sovereignty of the State or the sapthanga viz. 1. King (Raja); 2. Minister (Mantri); 3. Country (Desa); 4. Fort (Durga); 5. Treasury (Kosa); 6. Army (Bala) and 7. Friend (Mitra) and it became the guiding principle in later times for almost all the kings to follow:

According to Kautilya it is only in a fort, that the army and treasury are secure and it is a powerful defensive instrument to the king in times of danger.⁶ He therefore enjoins upon a king to erect forts not only around his capital but also on all the frontiers of the kingdom, in the four quarters.

The Arthasastra of Kautilya was followed by a number of other works of polity, as Dharma Sastras, puranas, and Nitisara of Kamandaka, Sukranitisara, and the Nitisvakyamrita of Somadeva Suri. The Manusmrithi and the puranas like Matsya, Vayu, Brahmanda, Agni, and Vishnudharmottara, all of which ascribe a place of importance to the institution of fort, and insist upon its possession by a king. For instance,
Manu Smriti, says that a king should have a fort, equipped with a spacious palace, habitable in every season and well supplied with water, weapons, money, grains and Brahmanas, artisans, and engines, fodder etc. It considers that a bow man placed on a rampart is a match for 100 foes and 100 bowmen for 10,000 foes.

The idea or concept of a fort as a military structure appears to have undergone several changes from time to time in its size, methods of construction, disposition of various structures, additional defensive equipment, etc., depending on the contemporary trends of warfare, methods of attack and defence, and weapons and implements of warfare.

The first criterion that governs the construction of a fort is the selection of the site. The suitability or strength of a site is often determined by its strategical importance and the availability of building materials in close proximity and the availability of water resources in plenty.

The second criterion is the availability of strong building material locally or in close proximity.

The third and the most important criterion is the strategical importance of a site, both from political and military aspects.

The last criterion is the availability of natural potentialities offered by the hills, like water resources in plenty, insurmountable cliffs, and difficult pathways etc.

The principles of fortification enunciated by Kautilya guided the builders and architects of the following ages.
Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra, the style and contents of which presuppose its antiquity and which cannot be later than 1st century B.C. says that defensive fortifications against an enemy in war shall be constructed on grounds best fitted for the purpose; a water fortification, a mountaneous fortification such as a rocky tract or a cave; a desert or a forest fortifications. He further stresses that water and mountain fortifications are best suited to defend populous centres. The king may have a fortified capital as the seat of his sovereignty in the centre of his kingdom in a locality naturally best fitted for the purpose.

Fort planning in India dates back to the Vedic period. Vedic literature mentions forts made of stone and iron.

The importance of the forts is stated in the Mahābhārata also.

The importance of the forts and ramparts increased enormously long before the Christian era as the Indian civilization progressed and prospered considerably. The importance of forts was appreciated by Manu. For planning formed an essential part of military engineering of the Indo-Aryans from ancient times. All exponents of the Silpaśāstras have stressed the importance of the forts. It was necessary to have the fortress amidst villages and towns for the efficiency of administration and Government. Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra emphasises the distribution of forts throughout the kingdom for the purpose of administration, jurisdiction and supervision.
ii) Classification of forts:

There are two broad classifications of forts - the natural and artificial. The natural forts are divided into six categories i.e. water fort, mudfort, forest fort, desert fort, mountain fort and cave fort. That is, a natural fort is one which is rendered inaccessible to hostile encroachments by its advantageous situation secured by natural defences, like mountains, rivers, marshy lands, deserts, and forests. The use of the natural forts is evidence of the skill of the ancient town planners in utilising local natural barriers and in turning them into best fortification by slight manipulations and modifications.

When a town is planned, with all its accompaniments such as health residences, devotional places, public halls, common pools and wells as reservoirs of water, public parks, garden belts etc., it becomes the supreme consideration of the master town planner to have security considerations. Kautilya gives his preference to hill forts and considers them as the most unassailable. A fort on a mountain is of a self-defensive nature, and not easy to besiege or to ascend. A fortified capital might be of any shape, circular, rectangular or square, in consonance with the requirement of the ground.

The ruins of fortification wall on the top of Keesara-gutta encompassing the huge brick structures of religious as well secular buildings clearly show that it was a hill fort constructed in the post-Satavahana period by the Vishnukundin kings following the cannons of Hindu Hindu.
Science of architecture as enunciated by the ancient writers.

Detailed study of the Fort:-

A. Moat:

The first place in the technique of construction of fortification goes to the formation of the mound or the rampart i.e. the vapra. The process of the formation of the rampart is a joint operation with that of the moats the parikhes, as termed in sanskrit literature.

According to Kautilya¹⁵ a fort should have 3 ditches with an intermediary distance of 1 danda or 6 feet from each other and 14, 12, and 10 dandas i.e. 84, 72 and 60 feet in width, with a depth not less than by one quarter i.e. 21 ft. 18 ft. and 15 ft. or by one half of their width and square at bottom, and 1/3 wide as at their top, with sides built of stones or bricks filled with water from perennial sources and contain crocodiles and lotus plants.

The main idea behind moat is to make the approach of the enemy difficult. Kautilya therefore prescribes not less than 3 moats one behind the other. The moats are of two kinds viz., a dry moat and wet moat. The dry moat is also known as ditch, which is filled up with stocks of hay, wild thorns, and creepers, concealing underneath, poisonous weapons. The wet moat is filled up with deep pools of water upto the mouth and contain crocodiles and other poisonous creatures.

So far as Keesaragutta is concerned, the huge tanks at the foot of the hill on the west and east must have served as a moat for the protection of the fort.
Traces of moat on the other side of the fort are not clearly visible now. Nevertheless it is quite probable that the natural formation of steep and slopy rock on all the other sides might have served as natural barriers for protection of the fortification wall.

B. Prakara:

Prakara forms the most important part without which a fort cannot be truly called a fort. Kautilya prescribes it to be created at a distance of 4 dandas i.e. 24 feet from the inner most ditch, about 6 dandas height, 36 feet, and twice as much broad i.e. 72 feet by heaping up mud upwards and by making it square at the bottom and oval at the centre pressed by trampling of elephants and bulls. It should be of sufficient thickness and height, which vary according to the contours of the ground.

The prakara wall is to be made strong by filling it up with the massive stones to make it look a grand gigantic structure.

The main material for building ramparts are mud, brick and stone. In ancient period we find largely the mud and brick fortification. The strength of a fort is determined by the number of ramparts it possesses and their height and width.

Forts in ancient Andhra are mainly built of perishable materials like mud and brick as against stone which became the chief material in later times.
As has been stated earlier, the fortification wall at Keesaragutta had a base of stone work supporting a superstructure of burnt bricks, as evidenced from the ruins of the fortification. On the base rock surface, a masonry wall was built with brick and mud to a height of about one metre with a width of three and half metres and the brick work was bound into a solid fabric by means of stones so interpersed that the more brittle material nested upon the harder, while moist clay had been used for mortar.

Four courses of rubble structure are still visible on the southern side of the fort. The prakara from the base must have been originally 5 to 6 metres.

From the fact that whenever the height of prakara is reached to 5 to 6 metres the walls are invariably finished off with a course of small stones. As there are no fallen blocks of stone lying near, we may assume that this was the original height of the prakara.

The perimeter of the fortification wall is about seven kilometres, which runs along the steep and slopy rocks at some places and on plain natural soil at some places over the hill.

C. Towers or Turrets:

Another important element in the fortification is the raising of the towers on the parapets in all the four directions. These parapets were interpersed at regular intervals (100 hastas i.e. 150 feet or 45 metres) with towers and they were provided with moveable stair-cases, and doors so
constructed as to provide the comfortable ascent and descent. Panini and Kautilya call this carika-devapatha. Bastions or towers are mainly meant to reinforce the strength of the fort wall which run for long distances continuously, spaced at regular intervals of distance and at corners.

According to Kautilya, the wide road on the top of the parapet built along with the line of battlements (Indrakosas) was called Devapatha. The height of the brick fort wall (prakara) above the mud-rampart (vapra) there is stated to be thirty six feet rising from the ground level and the battlements were built above it. The Devapatha extending along the city wall should be understood with reference to its great height resembling the celestial passage (Devapatha) in the heavens, justifying the comparison with the later.

One conspicuous point that attracts one's attention is that there are no evidences of the existence of bastions for this historical hill-fort at Keesaragutta. In the absence of any such material evidence it may be safely concluded that there was no need for the construction of bastions in those days. The importance of bastions was much less in early years of the Christian era, as the wars were generally fought on the plains in those days rather than attacking the fortified cities or towns as can be seen from the contemporary history of Andhra Desa in the post-Satavahana period.

The utility as well as the purpose of the bastions of a fortress increased in the later period, that is, just before
and after the early Chalukyans rose to power in the beginning of the 7th century A.D.

Thus it may be inferred that the Vishnukundins dispensed with the bastions probably keeping in view of the military needs of their times.

There is a semi-circular projection at a distance of about 160 metres east of northern gate. At this point the fortification wall takes a curve towards East. Thick layer of morrum and brick is noticed over the natural rock. The width of the fortification wall here is 4.60 metres. Traces of superstructure are missing. On the south-east corner of the fortification, displaced stone boulders numbering about five are lying scattered near the basement formed by natural rock. The rectangular stone slabs might have been used as superstructure.

From this place four to five kms. distance is clearly visible in day light on account of its high altitude. The distance between the two boulders is nearly ten metres and width is about five metres. This is about 150 metres from the southern gate. There is every possibility to believe that the above two structures might have been used as watch towers.

D. Gateways:

Gateways (Dvarah) form an important obstacle in the structure of the fort, next to the rampart. According to Kautilya an entrance gate to the fort should be 1/6th as broad as the width of the street (Kavata).
Gateways were in the form of pyramidal towers of imposing aspect. They were called Gopurama literally the defensive structure of the town and thus fittingly adding to the fortification of the town. They formed a characteristic feature of the Indo-Aryan architecture. The Arthasastra of Kautilya mentions four principal gates on the four principal quarters and designates them as Brahma, Indra, Yama, and Sainapatiya according as they are laid on the North, East, South and West respectively.¹⁹

The gateways are to be provided with pratoli a gateway sometimes provided with flight of steps, a small turret, the main road of town.

As stated earlier, the Keesaragutta fort was provided with four main gates on the east-west South and north.

Huge dressed rectangular stone slabs were used in the construction of the gateways. Such boulders are found even today as representatives of the glorious past.

i) Northern gates:

Topographically, Northern side of the fortification wall appears to have been given importance and the main gate is located here. Nearly 15 to 20 stone slabs, of different sizes are lying scattered near this gateway. One of the biggest slabs measure 4.35 mts. in length 0.90 mts. in width and 0.30 mts. thickness. Another slab is the size of 3.30 mts. x 0.60 mts. x 0.25 mts.

The width of the gateway is about four metres. Topography of the hillock indicates that this gateway is the lowest point from the (ground) sea-level.
There are traces of curtain walls in semi-circular shape as a protection to the gate from the direct onslaught of the enemy. In all probability this must be the main gate of this fortification.

ii) Eastern Gate:

The eastern gate way is slopy. Stone pavement is visible but no stone slabs are traceable. The width of the gate is about six metres.

There is a big tank just by the side of this gate down below the fortification wall which might have served as a moat. The natural rock boulders and sloppy sheets of rock served as side walls for the gateway.

The gateway leads to the villages Parvathapuram, Rangapuram etc.

iii) Southern Gate:

The width of the gate is nearly six metres. No stone boulders are visible. Probably natural rock boulders must have served as a gateway. The gate faces towards Bhogaram, Madhavaram, Kondapur, Ghatakeswaram etc.

Innumerable natural rock boulders protect this gate way.

A platform like brick structure is seen at the entrance of the gateway but no superstructure is existing.

iv) Western Gate:

The Western gate faces towards the village Keesara. This gate is about seven metres in width. Stone slabs of the size
of 2.70 mts. x 0.70 mts. x 0.35 mts. are lying near the gate. Two big slabs probably used as door jambs are also found at this place. About 150 metres from this gate inside the fort there is a square brick shrine probably of Saivite shrine.

The northern gate is exactly at a distance of 1265 metres from the western gate. The distance between northern and eastern gates is about 1750 metres. Eastern and southern gates are at a distance of 2,360 metres. Western gate is situated at a distance of 1250 metres from southern gate.

The Kautilya Arthasastra, one of the oldest treatises on politics and sociology, gives the names of the four principal gates of the Aryan's town or village.

The eastern gate, the starting point of the circumambulatory rite, was dedicated to Brahma, the creator represented by the rising Sun. The southern gate, which symbolises the Sun at noon was dedicated to Indra the vedic god who ruled the firmament during the day. The western gate was dedicated to the setting Sun, or to Yama, the Lord of Death, and the northern gate to Senajati or Kartikeya the war-God. The nature symbolism of the Vedas was changed into philosophic concept of the upanishads. Vishnu-Surya took the place of Indra at the zenith, Lord Siva was substituted for Yama and Vishnu Narayana replaced Kartikeya.21

E. Inner fortification:

Inner fortification wall is provided surrounding the entire palace complex, the traces of which are very much disturbed.
The starting point is taken from the water tank which is about 200 metres from the western gate of the main fortification wall. The secondary wall starting from the above point runs towards north and then towards east. The wall then runs towards south and finally joins the western side of the water tank. The tank remains outside this secondary wall, and it virtually separates the palace complex and the tank.

The circumference of the wall is about 920 metres.

Brick, and stones are used for construction of this wall. The method of construction also appears to be similar to that of main fortification.

Traces of only one gate on the western side near the tank are visible. One more gate might have existed on the eastern side and another gate connecting the palace complex to the tank.

Early years of the Christian era witnessed an increased tendency to construct hill forts. This was in consonance with the teachings of Kautilya and other writers on military affairs. The typical site preferred for a hill fortress was a precipitous cliff sloping to a river on one, two or even three sides and with steep slopes falling away on the other side. At the highest point was built a fort serving as a citadel.

The account of Hiuen Tsang goes to show that towns, even of a small size, were enclosed by walls. The Chinese pilgrim says "The towns and villages have inner gates the
walls are wide and high. The earth being soft and muddy
the walls of the town are mostly built of brick or tiles.23

IMPACT OF WARFARE ON CONSTRUCTION OF FORTS:

A study of the military organisation of various kingdoms
and the representation of arms and weapons in the sculptural
carvings of various periods help us to understand the system
of warfare.

An Amaravati rail pillar24 shows vividly the art of
warfare and military organisation of these times. Cities
were well defended with high walls, ramparts and gates,
walls and gateways were surmounted by toranas as at Sanchi.25

Warfare in ancient Andhra appears to have been based on
the conventional form of "Chaduranga bala" i.e. four fold
division of army into infantry, cavalry, elephants and
chariots. During this period, infantry played a major role
forming the front line of attack. Hence the wide prevalence
of field warfare, or land battles, fought at a chosen site
or terrain, between the two warring factions, far away from
their capital cities, the idea behind which was not to disturb
or cause hindrance to the civilian population. The main
weapons of warfare, as seen from the sculptural carvings at
Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, are stones, sticks, clubs, mace
which are called as "Crushing or stunning weapons".26

Archaeological evidences of fortifications in early Andhra Desa:

The excavations carried out at Nagarjunakonda, revealed
a citadel, with its grand fortification wall, ditches, gates
and barracks, which throw light on the town planning and
flourishing condition of the capital of Ikshvaku kings during
the 3rd century A.D. Enclosing a trapezoidal area about 900 mts. x 600 mts. the citidal wall ran along the right bank of the Krishna on the west at an average distance of 105 mts. from it, while on the south it overlay the summit of the 51 mts. high Peddakundellagutta hill, it's maximum extant height on the plains being about 4.80 mts. above the outside ground level. Trenches laid across the wall, both on the east and west, showed that it had been built in two phases the first or lower phase was represented by a rampart of morrum or mud above 24 mts. wide at the base, resting on the natural soil, except on the western (river) side, where it overlay an earlier occupational deposit represented by a floor and a few hearths; the second phase was represented by a burnt brick wall 2.75 to 4.27 mts. thick, generally built either directly on the existing rampart or on a secondary filling over it, but on naturally high grounds directly on the bare rock surface. The fortification wall was surrounded by a ditch on all the three sides, 3.65 mts. in depth and varying 22.20 to 39.60 mts. in width. Two main gate-ways, one each on the eastern and western sides, and a narrow postern gate, on the northern side, possibly serving as an emergency exit were exposed; close to the eastern gateway were barracks including stables and a nicely plastered masonry cistern. The western gateway, with a minimum width of 5.10 mts. lay near the 'asvamedha' site excavated.

It is noteworthy that the shape of the fortification at Keesaragutta is almost similar to that of the brick fortification wall unearthed in Nagarjunakonda.
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B. ARCHITECTURE (SECULAR)

Palace complex:

The excavations at Keesaragutta have brought to light several brick structures which may be broadly classified as secular and religious. The religious structures have been dealt with in detail under "Brick temples". The remaining structures that have been exposed during the three field seasons of excavations may be grouped under secular.

There are six structures within a square enclosure wall measuring 54.30 metres each side. The total area inside the main enclosure wall is about 2948.50 square metres. The enclosure wall has one main entrance on the northern side and one on the eastern side.

Another structure is just outside the above enclosure wall at a distance of 3 1/2 metres from the northern main entrance; one more structure has been noticed in juxta-position and contiguous to the above structure outside the enclosure wall, which has not been exposed completely during the current field season.

For the purpose of detailed study the structures inside the enclosure wall are numbered as structures I to VI and the other which is outside the enclosure wall as structure VII.

ENCLOSURE WALL:

The wall around the square constructed with brick, mud and mortar has been exposed. The wall is 1.05 metres wide and runs 54.30 metres each side. Only to a height of about one metre has been exposed completely on the northern and
eastern sides. The other two sides could be exposed partly only as the permanent structure like Guest House have come up preventing further excavations in that direction. However the alignment of the wall has been traced completely.

1) **Northern main entrance:**

The total length of this entrance from the first step inside the enclosure wall to the first step outside the entrance is 8.75 metres and 5 metres from inside upto the wall and 3.75 metres outside the entrance. There is a raised platform of 2.90 mts. in breadth connected with a flight of steps from inside and outside. Two steps are there at present from outside and two steps are missing. Stone slabs used for steps measure 2.20 mt. x 0.55 mt. in length, and width respectively. A railing was constructed with brick, mud and mortar on both the sides of the steps and stone slabs of the size 1.60 mt. x 0.42 mt. x 0.09 mts. were placed over it on either side. The width of the entrance is 2.20 metres.

A stone slab of 2.40 metres long and 0.50 mts. wide placed horizontally in the centre of the raised platform contains two holes on either side probably for fixing pillars of the superstructure. Each hole is of the size of 8 cm. x 6 cm. which was drilled in the middle of the rectangular base cut to a depth of about two centi metres, extending 35 cm x 25 cm. in length and breadth, probably for raising the door jambs on both the sides.

There are eight steps leading to the court yard from the main entrance. The flight of steps is provided with side
railing 1.20 metres high from the ground level. After eight steps, one half chandrasila is placed as the first step, the diameter of which is 95 centimetres. The stone slabs used as steps are almost of the same size as those used for the steps outside the entrance.

ii) Eastern entrance:

The entrance has been brought to light during the present excavations. The width of the entrance is 1.14 metres and its breadth is 0.58 centimetres. Flight of steps could not be exposed during the current field season.

It is quite likely that one more entrance existed on the western side also leading to the water gate of the secondary fortification wall contiguous to the water tank.

The square plan of the enclosure wall is in accordance with the ancient Indian Silpa Sastras. According to 'Manasara' when a site is selected for constructing a building the ground is divided into different number of square. The square Vastu-Purushamandala symbolises the celestial world. It is rigid and cannot be moved, thus representing a perfect and absolute form.

Structure I:

This structure mainly consists of five cells and a rectangular hall with a porch of 4.10 metres long and 3.00 mts. wide from outside followed by flight of steps. The first step from below is a stone slab 1.70 metres in length and 0.56 metres in breadth with a thickness of 10 centimetres. The second step is Chandrasila with a diameter of 1.15 metres. There are five more steps raised on the basement constructed
with brick mud and mortar. The steps are provided with railing on the sides but the stone slabs over the railing are missing.

The flooring of the porch is 0.75 metre high from the ground level. Nine courses of bricks are traceable. From inside the porch to the first step below the length is 4 metres. Further steps leading into the porch are missing.

The porch is rectangular with a length of 1.90 mts. and width of 2.10 metres. The thickness of the wall is 1.10 mts. Immediately after passing through the porch, we enter the big rectangular hall with 19.35 metres x 4 mts. length and breadth respectively including outer walls. The inner measurements of the hall are 15.85 mts. x 2.65 mts. The height from the ground level to floor level of the hall is 2 metres.

Contiguous the hall there are five cells separated by a brick wall having a thickness of 1.20 mts. The individual measurements showing the length and breadth of the five cells from west to east are as follows:

- Ist cell = 2.65 x 2.40 mts.
- IIInd cell = 2.53 x 2.30 mts.
- IIIrd cell = 2.60 x 2.25 mts.
- IVth cell = 2.60 x 2.30 mts.
- Vth Cell = 2.60 x 2.40 mts.

The cells are separated by the walls with a thickness of 0.85 mts. The first and third cells are filled with sand while the other cells are filled with rubble and morrum.
The back wall with a thickness of 1.80 mts. on the south runs from west to east.

Lime plastering of nearly 5 centimetres thickness is visible on the outer wall of the hall just below the porch. Projections in the corners outside the hall are noticed. Outer and inner basements are provided with a projection of about 20 centimetres.

The structure No.I is quite opposite to the main northern entrance at a distance of 20.60 metres facing north.

Structure No.II:

Structure No.II is similar to that of structure No.I in plan but there are only three cells here followed by a rectangular hall and a porch with a flight of steps. This structure is 5 1/2 metres away from the north east corner of the structure I and faces east.

The first step is a rectangular stone slab and the second one is a semi-circular stone. Above this there are two more steps leading to the porch. The first step is 1.70 metres in length and 0.50 metres in width and the second one is a chandrasila measuring 1.00 metre x 0.50 mts. Traces of railing are noticed on both sides but the stone slabs over the railing are missing. The distance from the first step to the last step including the missing steps is 2 metres.

The porch is 5 metres in length and 3 metres in breadth from outside, and 2.5 mts. x 2.00 mts. inside. The hall is 9.50 metres in length and 2.20 metres in breadth excluding the outerwalls. From outside, its length and breadth are 12.60 metres and 6.10 metres.
The size of the three cells from north to south are given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Breadth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st cell</td>
<td>2.70 mts.</td>
<td>2.10 mts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd cell</td>
<td>2.70 mts.</td>
<td>1.10 mts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd cell</td>
<td>2.70 mts.</td>
<td>2.10 mts.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The three cells are backed by thick brick wall. The outer walls are of a thickness of 1.60 mts. and the walls between the cells are 0.80 mts. in thickness.

Fine lime plastering is noticed on the front side of the walls near the porch.

**Structure No. III:**

Structure III is about 2.20 metres on the proper north to structure II, containing a single cell and a hall with an entrance provided with steps facing towards East. The first step is a rectangular stone slab of the size of 1.60 x 0.50 x 0.10 mts. in length, breadth and thickness respectively.

Second one is a semi-circular stone with a diameter of 1.10 metres. The breadth of the entrance is 1.50 mts.

The hall is 3.50 mts. in length and 2.50 metres in breadth inside and 4.50 mts. x 3.50 mts. from outside i.e. including walls.

The inner length and breadth of the cell is 2.80 mts. and 2.00 metres respectively, while the outer measurements of it being 5.50 metres x 5.50 mts. Inside the cell lime plastering is noticed on the flooring and also on the walls,. The lime plastering is intact. There are three niches in the middle of the back wall of the cell. The measurements of the three niches are as follows:
A globular earthen pot with a lid decorated with serpents, and other figurines was recovered in the north-west corner of the hall. A human skeleton in an inverted position was also found under the debris of a fallen wall just outside this structure III. This structure is in east-west orientation facing east.

Structure No. IV:

Exactly opposite the structure III there is another structure nearly 23 metres away towards east. This structure IV, facing west, contains a hall and a cell. This is very much disturbed. The wall separating the hall and the cell is not traced.

The hall is 3.70 mts. in length and 3.50 mts. in breadth. The size of the cell is 3.20 metres x 2.60 mts.

The outer walls are of a thickness of 1.20 metres. Steps are missing. The whole structure is 10.50 mts. in length and 6.40 mts. in breadth.
Structure No. V:

About one metre to the proper south of structure IV there is another structure with two rectangular halls on the back and the front separated by three cells in the middle contiguous to the front hall. The structure also faces west, and is just opposite structure II. Steps are not traced. The entire structure is 16.50 mts. in length and 13 metres in breadth.

The inner length of the front hall is 13 metres and it is 2 metres in breadth.

The central hall is divided into three cells with the following measurements.

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<tr>
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<th>Length</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st cell</td>
<td>2.50 mts.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd cell</td>
<td>3.50 mts.</td>
<td>2.50 mts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd cell</td>
<td>2.50 mts.</td>
<td>2.50 mts.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The length of the back hall is 10 metres and breadth is 3.20 mts.

Beautiful stuccos, pot sherds, beads, coins, etc., were found associated with the structure, V, one redware storage jar was recovered in the north west corner of the front hall.

A fragment of panel of about 28 centimetres long and 15 centimetres wide and 7 centimetres thick has been found outside this structure. The panel is plastered with lime and a green coating is applied over it with a thickness of 1 1/2 centimetres.
Structure No. VII

To the proper south of structure V at a distance of about 12.50 mts. another structure has been exposed. A rectangular hall measuring 12 metres in length and 6.70 mts. in breadth with the walls having a thickness of 1.10 metres have been noticed. The inner length and breadth of the hall is 10 metres and 4.60 metres respectively. Two courses of bricks only are visible all along the structure.

A wall contiguous to this structure running south-wards took a semi-circular curve and turned towards west. This wall constructed with rubble projects exactly at the south-east corner of the enclosure wall and runs towards west taking a semi-circular curve. As in the case of other structures at the site, the superstructure is completely destroyed. Only rubble is visible. In continuation of this rubble wall a few slabs planted vertically have been noticed almost in the middle way. The other part of the wall could not be exposed as the entire site is under heaps of debris. It is likely that this wall continued and joined the other corner viz., south-west corner of the main enclosure wall thus forming a complete semi-circular or half-moon shape. Probably this must be a retaining wall for the main enclosure wall on the south. This reminds us of the apsidal (chapa-like) plan. If the apsidal plan is analysed it is seen to be composed of a semi-circular and an oblong parts. In other words it is a combination of elements of both circular and the square forms.
A trough made of stone slabs measuring 2 metres in length and 0.75 mts. in width has been brought to light inside the brick enclosure wall, five metres from the main entrance on the north. Small heaps of lime mortar, lime mixed kankar are seen piled up in a row along the enclosure wall. The length of the tub on the top is 2.25 mts. and 1.78 mts. at the bottom, the width at the top and the bottom being 75 cms. and 25 cms. respectively. The depth of the tub is 43 cms. Thus it is wider at the top and narrower at the bottom; the sides are slanting. It is quite likely that this trough was used for mixing lime for plastering of the various structures in the building complex mentioned above.

The Silpa Ratna describes different kinds of lime plaster; mainly powdered. Vajralepa, according to the Silpa Ratna is a high grade lime plaster with two percent resin in its composition and other binding and adhesive substances. Preparation of Vajralepa is described in Brihat Samhita and Vishnu Sharmottara. The term Vajralepa denotes a special kind of plaster particularly described in the Silparatna, the Manasollasa and the Isana Gurudeva Paddhati.

The walls to which lime plaster (suddha) has been applied should then be coated with a paste of hide-glue mixed with white earth in three layers, and above it another final coat of the same paste mixed with powdered conch etc. From the above literary evidences it appears that the tub was used for mixing the lime plaster glue, or Vajralepa for fine
plastering of the walls, panels, stuccos, pillars etc., of the building complex. Number of stuccos, terracottas, fragments of plastered bricks probably used for the pillars of the superstructure for decorative purpose recovered in the course of excavations inside the enclosure wall strengthens the above view.

Some of the stuccos are beautifully painted in red ochre yellow and green, some of the bricks are lime plastered and painted in red ochre, green and yellow. Fine lime plastering is noticed on the walls at the basement level. At some places plastering was done with mud and over this mud plastering lime plastering was applied. As has already been mentioned, a panel plastered with lime and green coating over that lime plastering is found near the structure No.V. The thickness of the plaster is about 1½ centimetres. All the above facts go to prove that the plastering material was prepared within the building complex itself in a most scientific method with technical skill and aptitude.

Structures outside the enclosure wall

Structure No.VII

Structure VII is outside the enclosure wall at a distance of 3½ metres from the main northern entrance of the enclosure wall towards north-east. The structure is facing east. The total length of it is 14 metres and the breadth is 13 metres. It is also constructed with bricks upto basement. Huge stone slabs are placed over the brick wall. There are four rooms in four corners measuring 2 x 2 metres each. A flight of
of steps is provided to a length of 4½ metres with a breadth of 2 metres, constructed in bricks on the eastern side. The main entrance to this structure appears to be on the northern side since a flight of steps and a porch are noticed here. The plan of the structure appears like a "chatuh-sala" mentioned in the ancient Indian Silpa Sastras.\(^\text{10}\)

The frequent mention of chatuh-sala houses in sanskrit literature makes it quite clear that they were quite characteristic of the buildings in ancient India.\(^\text{11}\) Chatuh-sala occupies all four sides of the house with a central open court. This class of sala house was most common in ancient India. According to the texts, houses of the Brahmins should be square like temples. If the houses of Brahmins are not square, they should nearly resemble a square i.e. the length may exceed by 1/10th only.

Another brick structure has been brought to light during the current field season, in juxtaposition to the existing modern road.

About ten metres east of structure VII at a depth of 0.75 metres from the ground level, a brick wall, 19 metres long running in north-south direction connected to a square porch at the northern end has been brought to light during the course of recent excavations. The breadth of the wall is the same as that of the main enclosure wall of the palace complex, viz., 1.05 metres. After running for 19 metres towards south, the wall turned to the east at right angle,
parallel to the main enclosure wall with an intervening space of 12 metres. This wall could not be exposed completely as there is a modern road over the structure on the eastern side. Coming to the porch, it is 5½ mts. x 2 mts. inside the 7½ mts. long outside. The total length of the porch from west to east is 8 metres. Flight of steps to the west are noticed. A brick wall is traced to the north of the porch in alignment to the nineteen metre wall on the south; here also the wall could be traced only upto about 2 metres as the wall is leading towards the modern road, which prevented further excavations.

Leaving a space of about 3 metres from the porch to the west another brick wall running towards west parallel to the structure No. VII with a square porch just facing the Northern entrance of the structure VII has been traced. This porch is similar to the northern entrance of the palace complex. Only two courses of bricks are noticed in this wall. The wall is 14 metres long from the eastern side of the porch. The complete alignment of the above two structures could not be exposed due to the construction of pucca roads on the east as well as on the north of the site where the archaeological excavations have been taken up.

It is quite likely that these two walls described above must be the enclosure walls, consisting of number of mansions inside, similar to the palace complex described in the preceding paras.
The alignment of these structures that have been brought to light during the course of the excavations are shown in the plan.

Dr. V.V. Krishna Sastry, is certain that the structure with five rooms prefaced by a rectangular hall, a square porch and flight of steps must be a multistoried building. The flat roof made up of rectangular terracotta tiles and plastered with lime was laid over horizontal rafters supported by wooden pillars raised outside the walls. (The superstructure is completely destroyed). The massive style of architecture of the multistoried secular buildings at Keesara and decorative features may indicate that it may be the palace complex of Vishnukundin period, protected by a secondary fortification wall of rubble which encompasses an approximate area of one kilometre.\(^{12}\)

The following literary evidences also support the above view, right the selection of the site to the completion of the building.

Exponents of the Silpa-sastras have laid great stress on the selection of a proper site for founding a new village or town. According to Manasara\(^{13}\), the site is to be examined and its fitness determined from its smell, colour, taste, shape, direction, sound and touch. The ground should be smooth and level and inclined towards the east. It should produce a hard sound. The odour of the site should be agreeable. It should have good quality soil. The site should
produce water when dug to the depth of a man with his arms raised above his head. The temperature of the site should be moderate. The site which does not possess such qualities is not fit for habitation.

According to Mayamata, the site should be fertile enough for all kinds of seeds. The earth of the site should either have a uniform colour or of all colours, white, red, yellow and black. It should also have all the varieties of taste and should have a mixture of a small proportion of sand.

After the study of general site conditions such as geology, topography, drainage, vegetation, wild life and climate a detailed study of the ground and its soil conditions is to be carried out. Manasara divides the soils into four kinds and lays down the order of priority with reference to seven traits such as colour, smell, taste, form, direction, sound and touch. The best soil is classified as "Brahmin" the other types being 'Kshatriya', 'Vaishya', and 'Sudra'.

It is important to note that the qualities of the ground and soil mentioned do not necessarily mean that they were inhabited exclusively by the respective varnas. In Silpa sastras the term 'Brahmin' does not denote the caste but the quality. Thus "Brahmin" means the best.

The Matsya purana describes a mystic method of determining the best building sites for the four classes.

After the selection of the site, the next important step was to determine the cardinal directions by means of a gnomon which is expounded in detail in the sixth chapter of Manasara.
The square Vastupurushamandala, as we noticed in the building complex at Keesaragutta, symbolises the celestial world. It is rigid and cannot be moved, thus representing a perfect and absolute form.

The site planning principles expounded by Kautilya and Sukracharya are not based on the principles of Vastupurushamandala but on sound common sense and logic. Kautilya lays down that the demarcation of the ground inside the fort shall be made by opening three royal roads from west to east and three from south to north.

Kautilya further describes the various cardinal directions towards which the quarters of various classes were to be situated. The king's quarters were situated in the centre of the city slightly towards north and occupied one-ninth of the total site inside the fort. The palace faced east or north.

Kautilya further states that in the centre of the city and in every other quarter shrines of the guardian deities of the communities residing in them are to be built. At a distance of 100 dhanus (1 dhamu = 6 feet or 1.85 mts, approximately) from the ditch of moat outside the fort in open country places of worship and pilgrimage, groves and buildings shall be constructed. Vatsayana recommended the building of a house close to a pond with an 'udayana' garden outside.

Ancient Silpa sastras divided buildings into four categories namely houses for the common people, palaces and
gorgeous mansions for the princes and nobles, temples, and lastly the public buildings such as public rest houses, etc. The architectural treatment of these four classes of buildings has been distinct in nature and definite in its contribution. Ancient Indian Silpa Sastras lay comparatively less stress on the secular architecture. This does not mean that such housing is not given due importance. The older treatises like Manasara and Mayamata deal mainly with palace and temple architecture. Secular architecture acquired prominence during the early mediaeval period, but this was in conformity with the house architecture followed during ancient times.

With slight variations all Silpa sastra-s agree that palaces should be located in the centre of the town. Kautilya states that the palace should occupy one-ninth of the total area inside the fortifications of the town and shall be located slightly towards north.

Manasara divides palaces into nine categories with regard to their size and also according to the nine classes of the kings for whom they are meant. The palace complex generally comprised of various buildings which were essential because of the manifold needs of the princely class. Manasara makes out a list of 42 palace establishments.

Manasara divides royal palaces into two main categories. The first one is known as Antah-sala (interior palace with courts) and the other Bahis-Sala (exterior palaces and courts). The interior salas with their courts are obviously meant for
the residences of the king and his family, while the outer salas are for the administrative establishments such as sabha halls and so on. Another important feature of ancient Indian palaces is the effective use of water reservoirs in various salas. The use of water bodies was provided for both ritualistic purposes as well as for pleasure. The various water bodies expounded in the Silpa-sastras are Kupa (well), Vapi (stepped well), Kunda (deep pond), pushkarini (shallow pond), Tadaga (lake) and so on.26

According to the building-by-laws enforced in the ancient India, from the plinth to the ground level, a flight of steps shall be provided. A 'Vedika' or a raised seat shall be provided on both the sides of the entrance door to the house. This rule is laid down by Brihat Samhita, Visvakarma Vidyapakasa and Visvakarmaprakasa27 and Mayamata28, which indicate that this rule was widely observed.

Now coming to the shape of the building complex, this resembles the "Maulika" mansion described in Manasara.29 The storied mansions consist of rows of buildings varying in number of storeys upto twelve are artistically joined up. They are classified under six main groups called dandakas, svastika, maulika, chatur-mukha, sarvatobhadra, and vardhamana. The 'maulika' mansion is shaped like a winnowing basket and consists of three rows of buildings.

The contents of the chapter XI in the Manasara describe in detail the measurements of length, breadth, and height.
of buildings of one to twelve storeys, assigned to persons of different ranks. A palace of five to twelve storeys is stated to suit the emperor or the universal monarch, highest in rank among the nine classes of kings. Residence of one to three storeys are assigned to the heir-apparent and the chief feudatories, and so on.

In the light of the foregoing facts, it may be safely concluded that the structures i to iv inside the enclosure wall were the royal mansions consisting number of storeys. The open space in the centre of the buildings must be the court yard. The main entrance must have had a tower or gopura like superstructure with a square porch below it. Structure III and V appears to be single celled shrine where the guardian deities were set up but unfortunately no such images have been brought to light in course of archaeological excavations except a decorated earthern pot, and a human skeleton near the structure III.

Structure VII which is outside the main enclosure wall, identified as Chatusala according to silpa sastras appear to have been occupied by the Brahmins - royal teachers or priests. Kautilya says that the Brahmins shall reside to the north. The structure VII is exactly on the northern side of the main palace complex.

The six brick structures inside the main enclosure wall consisting of cells, with rectangular halls in front, and a spacious open court yard within the compound may be mistaken
as monasteries of the Jainas. The Jaina temple in the vicinity may give support to the above argument. A monastery has a big open court yard in the centre with monks' cells arranged along the walls of the enclosure.

In architecture both Buddhist and Jain structures are more closely connected with the Hindu ones. The Jain style was 'essentially Hindu', declares Fergusson, and was doubtless largely common to all Hindu sects, but in its evolution it became modified by Jain taste and requirements. The religion of the Buddhists and that of the Jains were so similar to one another, both in their origin and their development of doctrines that either architecture must also at first have been nearly the same. A strong presumption that the architecture of the two sects was similar arises from the fact of their principal sculptures being so nearly identical that it is not always easy for the casual observer to distinguish what belongs to the one and what to the other. There is, however, a marked difference of the Jain architecture of the South. The first peculiarity that strikes one as is the division of the temples into two classes, Bastis (Besadi, Vasati, monastery or temple) and Bettas (Vasahika, buildings, including monastery and temple. The former are temples, in the usual acceptance of the word, and always containing an image of one of the twenty four 'Tirthankaras', which is the object there worshipped.

But the brick structures both, secular and religious brought to light during the excavations at Keesaragutta
definitely belong to Brahmanical Architecture. Further there is no need for such a huge and massive fortification, secondary walls and masonry enclosure walls just for the sake of protecting a Jaina monastery. Moreover, not even a single image of Tirthankaras has been noticed associated with the structures inside or outside the enclosure wall.

The availability of Siva Lingas in alignment, square brick shrines of Saivites with brick pedestals in the centre and the massive style of architecture of the multistoried secular buildings, the decorative features, and other concomitant evidences such as Vishnukundin coins, pottery, beads, terracottas, stuccos etc., go to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the building complex under discussion was a palace complex belonging to early kings of the Vishnukundin dynasty.
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Architecture as a fine art must possess certain aesthetic features and must also indicate creative effort in the shaping of human actions towards the attainment of intellectual progress and elevation of life in its various aspects.

The Vishnukundin period witnessed allround progress in the field of fine arts.

i) **Miniature temples:**

Adjacent to Yeleswaraswamy temple at Yeleswaram, Devakulas or votive shrines were found constructed in different orientation. Inside these shrines Banalingas were installed with or without yoni-pithas.

They might have been a part of the custom that developed here which enjoined the devotees to take vow to instal a Siva linga and build a small shrine and love it thereafter dedication to the Lord.

Five miniature votive shrines about more than 0.90 mts. in height were found near the temple complex in Yeleswaram. These shrines have a low adhisthana, flat kapota by a semi-circular sikhara incised with an inscription, the characters of which resemble to some of the inscriptions of the Vishnu-kundin period. It has a Linga on vedi inside. Such votive shrines bearing the same architectural features except some of them represented with kudu arches on the vimana are also found in Mahanandi and Kadamalakalva. The other miniature shrines found at Yeleswaram have the same architectural features as described above, but they contain sculptures of
Siva, as Ardhanarishvara, Harihara, Umasaheswara and also a
Linga on vedi. There is a row of six miniature stone-cut
shrines to the south of the Mandapa, and two more rows of
twelve shrines behind the Mahanandiswara temple, which the
following are important.

1. Shrine with low adhistana, flat kapota and Vimanas of two
   steps with a Nagara sikhara above and a linga on vedi inside.
2. Shrine with a solid Nagara Vima and a linga on vedi inside.
3. Shrine with flat kapota, vimana of four moulded steps, an
   amalaka sikhara above and a linga on vedi inside.
4. Apsidal shrine on an adhistana with plain wall, moulded
   kapota, prave and apsidal sikhara. The front part of the
   sikhara contains nasika or gable with a smaller nasika
   inside it with a human figure.

There are four smaller shrines behind the Mahanandiswara
temple. One of these has a vimana of four steps crowned by
an amalaka sikhara. Another is also of same type and of the
vesara order but has a nasika on the face of each of the three
steps. The third is a stepped vimana of the Nagara order.
The fourth has a vimana of seven steps crowned by an
amalaka sikhara.

There are sixteen miniature stone-cut shrines within the
compound of the Bhimalingeswara and the Ramalingeswara temples
at Satyavolu. They all have linga on vedi inside, are of
varying sizes.

ii) Sculptures:

The sculptures of Siva as Ardhanarishvara, Harihara and
Uma Maheswara elegantly and exquisitely carved in deep niches of the miniature shrines found at Yeleswaram are described below.

(a) **Siva as Ardhanarishvara:**

Lord Siva is shown in half-male and half-female form in Tribhanga posture. In his right upper hand he is holding a Trisula and in his lower right hand which is raised carries probably a Damaruka. The Devi in her left upper hand carries some indistinct object probably Nilotphala or a mirror and her left hand is in akimbo patrakundala worn by woman is shown in the left ear of Lord Siva and right ear has a Makarakundala. This sculpture is adorned with Graivayaka, Katisutra, keyura and bracelets. The jata is beautifully bundled up to form a ushnisha over his head bedecked with flower.

(b) **Haribara:**

Both the figures are shown in Samabhanga posture and their stance is indeed graceful. Both of them are represented with four hands. The right upper hand of Siva carried a Trisula, the outer counter of which is almost circular. The lower right hand which is raised carries Damaruka, upper left hand is in akimbo and the lower left hand which is also raised carries an indistinct object. He is also adorned with Uderabanda round his waist, keyura and kankana on his arms. The third eye is present and his jata is arranged in the form of Makuta bedecked with flowers. Vishnu carries a Gada in his right upper hand, conch in the raised lower right hand and the
upper left hand in katvavalambita posture and the lower right
carries the chakra. So far as the ornaments are concerned they
are same as worn by Siva except that he is wearing a tapering
kirita.

(c) Unmahaeswara:–

This panel depicts Siva with Parvati, Skanda and Ganesha.
Siva and Parvati are sitting on a high pedestal in Lalithasana
posture having Ganesha on the right of Siva and Skanda clinging
to her breast. Ganesha has only single pair of arms and has
no crown over his head. Siva is represented with four hands
and Parvati with two. The right leg of Siva is hanging down
and resting on the footrest while the left leg is bent and
resting on the seat. Below in front is a couchant Nandi.
His right upper hand is resting on the thigh and the lower hand
which is raised carries, probably, Damaruka. The left upper
hand passes round the back of Parvati and the lower left hand
carries some object over his left shoulder. Here he is wearing
yajnopavita probably of Mukuta, udarabanda of three bands
round his attenuated waist, elaborate Kundalas beautify her
ears. Particularly the post of Parvati is very graceful, in
a caressing attitude she has placed her right hand on the thigh
of her Lord and holds Kartikeya in her left arm clinging to
her breast like a devout mother. She is also wearing armlets
and bracelets, Mekhala of two bands round her waist, a beautiful
necklace and her braid is artistically adorned and decked with
pearls.
(d) Early Vishnu sculpture:

A beautiful sculpture of Vishnu whose head and feet were mutilated was found at Yeleswaram. The modelling of torso and body was chaste and beautiful. This appears to be an early form of Vishnu holding a sakti or staff in his right hand and a conch in the left. On stylistic grounds this may be assigned to 4th and 5th century A.D.

(e) An early sculpture of Narasimha:-

This sculptured panel was discovered over a hillock inside a square shrine which is now in dilapidated condition, at Kondamotu, located on the outskirts of Piduguralla village nearly 65 kilometres from Guntur on the road to Warangal.

It is an oblong panel of limestone measuring 1.5 x 0.61 metres carved with six standing figures in bas-relief.

The figure on the extreme left is standing in abhanga posture, his right hand resting on the Ikshuchana (sugar cane bow) and in his left hand he holds a makaraadhva. The figure next to him stands in Sanabhanga posture. His right hand is shown in abhaya pose. He carries a conch shell in his left hand which is in katyavalembite pose. The third is a very peculiar figure of a couchant lion with legs taut and tense and the face is devoid of teeth but in centre of the chest is prominently shorn the Vaishnavite Lanchana 'Srivatsa'. To this couchant lion at the level of the neck two hands are added, shown in uplifted position holding the attributes of Vishnu, gada and chakra in his right and left hands.

Flanking the left side of this icon is a standing image shown in tribhanga holding a flute and a bow in his right and
left hands. His right hand is shown in **katyavalamitta** pose.
Next to this figure there is another shown in standing position holding a tyron or a wine goblet in his right hand and the left in akimbo. The last figure carries in his right hand a sword which resembles the incurved blade and a shield in his hand. There might be another figure by the side of the first figure mentioned above as it can be seen clearly that the demarcating plaster which is shown on the right side is conspicuous by its absence on the left side where the slab is broken. This has disturbed the symmetry of the entire composition but in its original state it appears that the sculptor had maintained perfect symmetry and balance by carving a group of three figures on either side of the central figure Narasimha.

The central figure has two arms bearing a **gada** and a chakra and tries to emphasize more the animal aspect i.e. the entire lion is shown in couchant form while its anthromorphic form is suggested by its two hands which are added at the neck level.

Normal representation of Narasimha shows a human body or torso with a lion's head. Literature refers only to seated and standing forms of Narasimha having a human body with lion's head. Considering the strange nature of the representation of this icon, it is quite possible to assume that in the early period i.e. early 4th century A.D. the anthromorphic representation is an exception rather than a rule.

The first figure from left, which carries **Ikshu-chapa** (sugarcane bow) in his right hand and a **Makaradhveja** in his...
left, apparently, looks like Manmatha, Pradyumna the eldest son of Krishna through Rukmini.

The next figure may be indentified with two armed Vishnu, the right hand is in abhava pose, the left one carries a conch shell.\(^2\)

The third figure is of Narasimha in its kevala form.

Some difficulty arises in identifying the fourth figure. Vasudeva is not generally shown holding a bow or dhanus like Rama. The flute that he carried in his right hand helps us in identifying it as Krishna. But the image of Krishna should hold akridayasti or a flute in his right hand and the left hand has to be raised to the level of the elbow and shoulder and the remaining features should be as in case of Rama.\(^3\) Hence this is an indication that Krishna can also be represented holding a dhanus or bow.

The fifth figure standing on the left hand side of Vasudeva who carries a wine goblet in his left hand might be Sankarshana as sometimes he is shown holding a drinking vessel emphasizing his inebriety.

The last figure next to Sankarshana who carries a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left might be Aniruddha the grandson of Vasudeva who usually carries khadga in his right hand and a khetaka or shield in his left.\(^4\)

The sixth figure is completely missing now might have been Samba, another son of Krishna by Jambavati.

It is clear by the perusal of the above description that Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha were worshipped as 'Panchaviras' in such early date in Andhra Desa.
The importance of this sculptured panel has to be assessed from its provenance and the period to which it belongs. Its discovery in the coastal Andhra is significant and the coastal Andhra in the beginning was fervantly devoted to the Buddhism, perhaps upto the fall of Ikshvakus. With the rise of the Pallavas Brihatphalayanas and Anandagotrin and Vishnukundins under whose aegis Buddhism received a set back and Hinduism with its sects like Saivism and Vaishnavism received encouragement, there must have been a school of reformists which aimed at the establishment of the glory of Hindu Dharma and the sculpture of early Narasimha may be manifestation of the spirit of the age when people conceived numerous forms for their pet gods and goddesses and Vishnu along with Siva was shown in all hybrid forms. We find the tendency in early sculptures to represent gods and goddesses in usual human forms.

The Vishnu of this panel who holds conch in one hand is shown in no way superior to the other members of Panchayuha depicted in the panel. The other important thing which one can notice in this panel is that symbolism still continued and persisted as Lakshmi is not shown in human form but is suggested as in the early Buddhist sculptures by the symbol like Drivatsa on the chest of the image of Narasimha.

The importance of this sculptured slab can be gauged from the fact that no sculpture of Vishnu ascribable to such an early date was discovered in the Andhra area. This Sculptured panel showing Vishnu in anthropomorphic form and also in animal form is perhaps the earliest extant. As such it is a rare and unique discovery.
iii) Stone Plaque:

A stone plaque, which is square in shape, each side measuring 12 cm. with a thickness of 1.5 cm. has been recovered from Keesaragutta excavations.

Mother goddess in sitting posture, legs bent and wide open, both hands raised holding a Siva linga in right hand and head of a lion in the left hand is depicted on the plaque, Nandi(bull) looking upwards towards Siva linga on the right side and a human figure sitting and facing towards mother goddess are also engraved. This human like figure appears to be of a worshipper or an attendant holding a fan or Vinjamara in one hand. Just above the central figure and in between the Siva Linga and the lion's head there is a semi-circular and globular two tier structure resembling an inverted Lotus. There are criss-cross lines on this lotus. Waist and genitals of the mother goddess are covered with a sari which goes around the waist and the other end hanging down.

Some believe that she is popularly known as Yellamma or Renuka, the female counterpart of Jamadagni and the mother of Parasurama.

Mother goddess appears under various names and forms giving raise to diverse myths. Indian traditions represent the great Mother-Goddess (Adi Sakti) with a large number of names; but it has been suggested that they are not merely names of same goddess; but that they originally indicated
different goddesses worshipped by different tribes in different parts of the country and that they were afterwards identified with the Mother Goddess. It is also believed that the aboriginal elements have largely contributed not only to the conception of Siva, but also to that of his wife. Siva's relation with hill tribes is indicated by his name Girisa, 'one who is Lord of the mountain'. As regards the significance of the lion, it is almost constantly associated with the Goddess. The Indian earth goddess is also called a lioness in a passage in the yajurveda and Satapatha Brahmana, and later on the lion is a favourite animal of Parvathi just as the bull is of Siva.

The symbolism of the lotus flower is especially applied to the rising or setting Sun, which is likened to a lotus flower floating on the cosmic waters - hence the poetic expression of the Vishnu's or Siva's lotus feet.

The name of lotus dome was given to it by Indian craftsmen who worshiped the rising Sun as the mystic world-lotus.

The cult of the Mother Goddess besides the Linga worship has been depicted in this small plaque datable to circa 4th century A.D.

iv) Decorated Globular pot:

The potters' craft was also fairly well developed in the Vishnukundin period and the globular pot with a lid richly decorated with serpents and terracotta figurines recovered from Keesaragutta is the best example for such craftsman-ship. The importance of the pot has been described in greater detail separately in the chapter on pottery.
v) Terracottas and stuccos:

Keasaragutta:

In the course of the excavations, beautifully modelled human and animal stucco figurines used for decorating the walls of the building were exhumed. Terracotta spools about 5 cms. in diameter have been recovered.

A spool is beautifully designed with incised rays emanating from a common centre. The other spool of black grey ware is incised with a lotus design inside a circle. The third one has punched star pattern around the periphery and in the middle are seven stars encircling a single star.

Beads made of terracotta are also met with. The shapes among terracotta beads are pear spherical, amalaka, and tabloid. Terracotta plaques immensely decorated semi-circular in shape have been recovered.

A terracotta figure depicting a mother holding a child in her left hand has been found, the head of the figure is broken. The tradition of figuring Mother Goddess was a prominent feature in Indian art in historical times. Most conspicuous iconographic features of these terracottas are the nudity, enormous breasts and hips, position of arms to hold a child and the figures showing child suckling the breast of the Goddess. All these suggest that iconographically they are the representation of the fertility goddess.

vi) Stucos:

The collection of stuccos include a) a stucco with a diameter of 12 cm. containing floral designs, b) a stucco
head of a lion - mouth and nose distinctly visible eyes and ears broken; c) stucco of a bird probably a swan; head and beak only visible; d) stucco of animal face with wide circular eyes probably a yala figure 3) a beautifully moulded stucco of a tiger head with nose, mouth and two incisorteeth prominent.

Some of the stuccos are painted in red ochre, yellow and green.

vii) Bricks:-

Chistled or carved bricks - semi-circular rectangular in shape, have also been found. Some bricks are plastered with lime and painted in red ochre, yellow and green.

Another type is a round and perforated brick with a hole in the centre.

Viii) Another interesting specimen is a rubber like square clay object probably (for rubbing the skin during bath) used as flesh rubbers during bath.

Yeluswaram:

The excavations yielded a large number of terracottas comprising of male and female figurines, animals, birds, toy-carts; etc., which revealed the folk art of the remote past. Majority of the female terracotta figurines, represent female devinities with very elaborate coiffure, dressed in a tunic or nude to the waist and with a dhoti or skirt. Despite the garment, special care is taken to reveal the mound of venus in apparent nudity. They may be auspicious representation of the Mother Goddess Aditi
bestowers of fertility and proto types of Mayadevi and Lakshmi.

Gollathagudi:-

The excavations at Gollathagudi temple complex also yielded a large number of terracotta figurines made in stucco which included human and mythical animals. Some types contain floral designs.

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(a) It is rightly said that the age of the Vishnukundins is a transitional period in the religious history of the country. Buddhism which was dominant during the time of the Satavahanas began to show signs of decay under the Ikshvakus, and it continued to lose ground steadily until it became practically extinct by the end of the Vishnukundin period.

Several Ikshvaku kings were staunch Saivas, and they erected several temples in their capital Vijayapuri dedicated to the God Siva and his attendant deities. The existence of several temples dedicated to Kartikeya, brought to light by the spade of the archaeologist at Nagarjunakonda shows that the worship of War God Kumara Swamy was also popular under the Ikshvakus.

Though the early kings of the Vishnukundin monarchy, like Govindavarman I and Vikramendrabhattaraka I, adored the Buddha, built stupas and the Viharas, the subsequent rulers of the family were all staunch followers of Brahmanic Hindu dharma.

Govindavarman I, the founder of the Vishnukundin dynasty, and his queen paramabhattarika Mahadevi, were Buddhists in faith. He is said to have built in all provinces of Dakshinapatha, viharas adorned with sculptures of various kinds by which he acquired brahma-punya. He accepted Buddhism after a study of shad-abhijna pratibharya darsana. Though he embraced Buddhism, he was tolerant: He built temples for the Hindu Gods. He believed that his wealth was for the
enjoyment of the bhikshus etc., and gave away all his possessions in charity. Paramabhattarika Mahadevi, his queen, was also a devout follower of the Buddha, and she built a spacious vihara at Sakrapura for the use of the bhikshus.

Madhavavarman II was a devoted follower of vedic Brahmanism. Madhavavarman II and IV are credited with the performance of several vedic sacrifices. The performance of vedic sacrifices appears to have become popular, for most of the ruling kings of this age claim to have performed 'asvamedha' and a number of other sacrifices. The worship of the gods of the puranic pantheon, specially Siva and his attendant deities, was very much in vogue.

The Vishnukundins described themselves as parama-brahmanas and granted to the brahmins agraharas, or land free from the payment of the taxes. Agraharas were granted to brahmins by the rulers for a definite purpose to enable them to devote themselves exclusively to the study and the teaching of the vedas, and perform sacrifices, which were believed to bring prosperity to the country and its people. The agraharas became centres of learning, and spread light and knowledge in the country. Both Indrabhattaraka and his son Vikramendra II actually styled themselves as "paramamaheswaras".

The following names of the deities figure in the Vishnukundin pendants records.

1. "Sriparvathaswamin" in
   Tummalagudem set II, Line 2,
   Polambur - Line 1
   Chikkulla - Lines 1-2
Tundi - Line 1
Ipur-I — Line 6
Ipur II - Line 1
Samathirtham — Line 1

II. i) Somagirisvaranatha - Chikkulla plates - Line 23
   ii) Sriymbaka

III. "Vinayaka" - in Velpur inscription line—16
   i. 'Sriparvataswami' was their family deity. Some writers identified Sriparvataswami with the God Mallikarjuna (Siva of the modern Srisailam)³

Another scholar viewed that it is doubtful whether Sriparvataswami' in the title Sriparvatha-svami-pad-anudhyata refers to the God Mallikarjuna of Srisailam in the Kurnool District, for the first place, there is no evidence to show that there existed at Srisailam a shrine dedicated to Mallikarjuna or as to that matter any other deity at such an early date, and that as such Sriparvataswami to whose worship the Vishnukundins were devoted was to God Siva or what is more probable Kartikeya of Vijayapuri (Nagarjunakonda)⁴

It has already been mentioned that Sriparvatswami, the family deity of the Vishnukundins might be the Ramalingeswara swamy of Keesaragutta.⁵

ii. 'Somagirisvaranatha' that figures in Chikkulla plates indicated the worship of Siva with his consort parvathi. It may also denote Siva as the lord of the Moon (Soma) and Parvati.

Vikramendra Varman II issued this charter from his victorious camp at Lendulura which records the royal gift of the
village 'Regonram' to the Three eyed God (Triy ambaka) named Somagirisvaranatha (Siva).

iii. 'Vinayaka' the elephant faced God was also worshipped according to Velpur inscription during the period of Vishnukundins.

In one of the Vijayanada cave temples there is a figure of Ganapati in a niche. This deity has four hands and holds modaka in the lower right hand on which rests the tip of the trunk. Another figure of Ganapati is seen in one of the niches in cave No. 2. This deity is seated with his left leg folded and resting on the seat and the right bent at the knee and upraised. In one of the niches in the east wall of cave IV of Mogalrajapuram there is a figure of Ganapati with the head of real elephant.

The popularity of the worship of that deity in much earlier times is known. The elephant headed God Vinayaka is a non-Aryan divinity adopted into the Brahmanical pantheon not much earlier than the third or fourth century A.D. Ganapati is the lord of Ganas. He is popularly known as Ganesa. Ganapati is also named Brahmanaspati or Lord of Magnitude. The elephant's head of Vinayaka was made the symbol of the inflated ego or the conscious "I", the first principle which emanated from the unmanifest Prajapati, for the simple reason that the elephant is of the most huge size amongst all creatures.

Ganapati who is accepted by the Hindus as the son of Siva and Parvati was, as his name signified, placed in command of
the Ganas by his father. He is also called Vinayaka from his being associated with the Vinayakas reckoned among the Gods, and who are said to observe all the actions of men and remove evils. Another name under which he is worshipped is Vighneswara, as Siva is supposed to have charged him with the task of hindering wicked people from performing sacrifices and other various acts and of rendering assistance of good men in their endeavours to perform such acts by removing difficulties when he is Vighnahara.

His worship appears to have been introduced just at the point when he became the God of the sect known as Ganapatyas and gained popularity under the patronage of the Vishnukundins.

iv. Nataraja from Vijayawada:

Cave II, which is the largest and most beautiful of all the caves in Mogulrajapuram is adorned with a fine figure of Siva as Nataraja with the portion below the waist broken. This deity is represented as dancing on the prostrate body of the apasmara purusha. He has eight hands.

There is another sculptured figure of Siva with four hands dancing on the prostrate body of the apasmara purusha.

In his character as Nataraja, Siva is shown dancing in ecstasy to the accompaniment of sweet music and dancing the Tandava dance. Siva is said to perform this dance in the evening in the presence of Parvati seated on a diamond throne in order to relieve the sufferings on the devas. The dance of Nataraja is believed to symbolise the action of cosmic energy in creating, preserving, and destroying the visible universe.
v. Durga:
The back wall of the cell of cave IV in Mogalrajapuram contains a shallow niche in which there is a half relief figure of Durga sculptured. This deity stands facing the right with her right foot resting on a small stool and the left stiff and resting on the ground. She has four hands, the upper right holding trisula, the lower right resting on the bent knee and the lower left in katihasta. The upper left hand is worn out.

Durga is one who is "Beyond the reach". She is one, who destroys difficulty and affliction and also removes the terror. She has been described as assuming many forms out of one, besides the emanatory forms, which comes forth out of the Adisakti Mahalakshmi. The theory of incarnations has influenced in the course of development of Sakti pantheon.

(b) Saivism:
In the two varied kinds of phenomena which nature presents, the early habitants saw the power of the Omnipotent, but that which appeared to them to be terrible and dispiriting and wrought destruction they named Rudra. They also believed that the same power of the Almighty, which brought about ruin and destruction, was turned into a benignant deity if appealed and appeared by prayer, and so they named it Siva - the auspicious. In the Atharvanaveda, Siva is called Pasu-pati, meaning Lord of animals, thus forming a link between the Vedic Siva and Siva worship of later times. His worship suffused with feelings of intense love advocated under the impulse of
the teaching of Bhakti, which was then stimulating men's minds in carrying everything before it in matters of religion. Here he is the supreme lord to be worshipped with complete self-surrender, his devotee undertaking the observance of the Pasupata vow consisting in giving up anger and agreed, practising forgiveness and insisting upon the use of ashes signifying the transitoriness of all mundane things. In this may be discerned the germ of the Pasupata sect, which came into being in the early times, about 150 B.C. 16

Just about the time, when the Pasupata sect was reorganised, a new school of thought in Siva worship became enshrined in books called the Agamas. The followers of the school were known as Maheswaras worshipping Siva under the name of Maheswara not differing much from the ancient Pasupata sect.

The earliest worshippers of Siva of whom mention is made in the Epics are the Pasupatas - followers of the Pasupata doctrine. Pasupata is formed from Pasupati - Lord of folks. Pati is the Lord, and man is the pasu, bound by the fetters of the world and requires to be released by the Lord. The doctrine was supposed to have been taught in the beginning by God Siva himself, namely, that Siva himself was the source of the whole creation and that final union with him should be the desired aim of his worshippers. The Pasupatas worshipped Siva in the form of the Linga, conceiving him as a deity of wild aspect as Bhairava, and they admitted even the gobins, ganas and others in their worship with him. They admitted all classes within their fold which accounts for a large following for the sect.

The doctrine of a new school of thought already in existence began to influence men's minds which subsequently became
enshrined in books called Agamas numbering about twenty-eight. The followers of these Agamas worshipped Siva mostly as Maheswara. The Agamas mark the appearance of Sakti ideas among the Saivites and contains rules regarding temple-building, image-making, and religious practices such as the wearing of the sect mark, the Trijumandra, and the belief generated in the efficacy of the use of mystic rites and charms. These hold that Siva possesses or develops in himself a Sakti or power consisting of the rudiments of the individual soul and the material world, and from this sakti, the world is developed. Man is by nature fettered by Ignorance, and kama - the material cause of the world. Man can, therefore, only be liberated by the grace of the Lord, which is also a product of Siva's sakti.

About the fourth century A.D. the doctrine of the Pasupata sect adumbrated in the Epics, made its appearance in the Vayupurana composed at that time, parts of which contain panegyrics and hymns in honour of the God under his names Maheswara and Milakanta. From this time onwards, Sivism became the next dominant creed in the land, and counted all classes from princes and chiefs to ordinary individuals as its votaries, and the invocation addressed by the poets and men of letters of the times to God Siva at the beginning of their literary compositions. This has greatly influenced the south Indian rulers of that period. Everywhere elaborate temples in honour of Siva were erected. Thus, the Pasupata sect, which has its beginning in the early epics, was reorganised about the second century A.D. and had gained popularity among the ruling classes as well as masses.
Another doctrine called "Panchayatana" came into vogue in the early years of Christian era. They observe the worship of five Gods, namely the Sun, Ganesh, Siva, Vishnu, Devi, but give preference to Siva.

The Kapalikas, not sufficiently distinguished from the Kalamukha, appear to be an old sect, almost coeval with the Pasupata sect. They indulged in rites and ceremonies of a very revolting nature, and they worshipped Siva in his fierce aspect as Bhairava. The Kalamukhas, maintained that for the attainment of desires in this world and the next, the ascetics of Siva in his Bhairava aspect, should eat his food in a skull, besmear the body with ashes of a dead body, eat the ashes, hold a club, keep a pot of wine and worship the God. From their habit of eating their food in a skull and holding the club, they were easily and closely identified sometimes with the Pasupatas and sometimes with the Kapalikas. 17

We have seen that some of the Vishnukundin monarchs were styled themselves as 'Parama-maheswaras' and that the family deity of the Vishnukundins was Sriparvataswamin. We have also seen that they worshipped Ganapati, Siva, Vishnu, Devi(Surja) as evidenced from the carvings of Vijayawada group of cave temples, with special preference to Siva, and that they built a number of temples throughout their kingdom, in honour of Siva which include innumerable miniature votive shrines found at Yeleswaram etc., and row of lingas at Keesaragutta. Though there are no direct evidences to show that the Vishnukundins worshipped 'Sun God' also it can be asserted with confidence that the worship of 'Sun' was also prevalent with the
in that period. Chitira Rathaswami the Sun God, was the 
tutelary deity of Salankayanas. There was a temple by that 
name at Vengi.

The foregoing evidences prove beyond any reasonable doubt 
that the Vishnuwadin kings were the staunch followers of 
Pasupata sect - influenced by Agamas, and also patronised the 
doctrine of "Panchayatana".

(c) Siva Lingas on Keessaragutta:--

There is a live temple by name Ramalingeswara temple on 
the top of the hill and just opposite this temple, more than 
70 lingas arranged in 4 rows with an intervening space of 3.5 
metres are found. These Lingas were carved in black basalt 
with smoothly rounded top, octagonal shaft and square base 
installed into brick courses measuring 50 x 25 x 8 cms. 
Bramasutras were incised over the Lingas in a typical shape. 
In the earlier phase, no stone panavatta were noticed. Besides 
the brick used for panavattas, a terracotta Linga recovered 
during excavations with a similar conical shaped Brahmasutras, 
is a clue to date the Lingas and the bricks used for pedestals 
to the early historical period.

Almost every pond of water over the hill had a Linga on 
one of its bank. Most of the Lingas were provided with brick 
pedestals and introduction of stone panavattas in the later 
period are noticed.

Brick is the most ancient material for a sacred building, 
Istikanyasa( the installation of the bricks) is performed as 
a part of the main foundation rite of the temple. Later on 
with the introduction of stone as building material the
Istikanyasa was substituted for Silanyasa in both secular and religious buildings.

The Samaranganasutradhara mentions about half a dozen substances of which the temples are made. On earth temples can be built, of any of these substances, stone, burnt brick, wood, cloth, bamboo and mud. "Mahanirvanatantara" says that it is 100 times more meritorious to give a brick temple than a thatched temple (i.e. wooden temples), 10,000 times more meritorious to give a stone temple than a brick temple.

Manasaras' classification of Lingas is the most scientific and it takes all the bases in its account. Samaranganasutradhara has devoted a separate chapter, a big one of more than three hundred lines to it (chapter 70).

Manusha lingas or man made lingas form the largest group of the Shitira-Lingas and are made up of three parts known as Brahmabhaga, Vishnubhaga and Rudrabhaga. The first in the square lowest section, the second the octagonal middle one, while the third or the top most one is generally cylindrical. Rudrabhaga is known also by the name of Rijabhaga, for the offerings of water, flower and other objects are usually put on its top; the two other sections are inserted inside the pedestal (pithika) and the ground.

Rudrabhaga of all the Manusha Lingas are carved certain lines called Brahma-sutras and the tops of the lingas technically known as Sirovartana are fashioned in a number of forms. As regards the brahma sutras, it is the tracing of certain lines in the Linga. These lines are also called lakshana-dharana, manirekha, parsva-sutra etc.
Asthavara lingas or Achalalingas are broadly classified into four types viz., Svayambhuvas, Daivika, Ganapa and Arsa. 1. The Svayambhu Lingas are those that rose up and came into existence by themselves and had existed from times immemorial.

2. The Daivika Lingas are recognised, according to Hairstaga, by their characteristic shapes. The Daivika Lingas do not possess the brahma or parsva sutras.

3. The Ganapa Lingas are those that are believed to have been set up by Ganas. They are of the shape of the fruits of cucumber, citron, wood apple, or palm.

4. The Arsa Lingas are those that are set up and worshipped by ascetics, they are spheriodal in shape, with the top portion less broad than the lower portion, in other words they are like an unhusked coconut fruit. The Ganapa Lingas and the Arsa Lingas like the Daivika Lingas are without Brahmasutras.

From the foregoing facts it can be deduced that the scattered and unsheltered Lingas over Keesaragutta are Janusha or man made Lingas carved by the artisans possessing full knowledge of Silpa sastra.

No Deva-puja is so old and so famous in India as that of Siva. Historically it is as old as the Indus valley civilisation. Siva - puja from the point of view of iconographical interest is of two kinds, one is symbolic - the phallus as an emblem i.e. the Linga puja and the other is anthropomorphic as of others.
The great Siva devotee Bana, it is said, founded as many as fourteen crores of Siva-lingas which later became famous as Bana-lingas.\(^\text{22}\)

Kurma Purana has an elaborate account of Linga-\textit{puja}, its origin and development. The Varaha Purana has given the glorious descriptions of the famous ancient sites where the Siva-lingas were founded.\(^\text{23}\)

Some times the worshipper himself was an image-maker. The temporary lingas made of clay, sand, rice curd, etc., used to be shaped there; hence such productions were a part of daily routine in Indian life.

Worship as an institution is as old as the civilisation of mankind itself and it was a life-companion throughout the ages. The objects of worship or the symbols of worship have been different in different periods of human civilisation. Many a mountain has been our object of worship from times immemorial. It is mountains from where we have derived the worship of Salagramas and Bana Lingas, later on, deemed representatives of Vishnu and Siva respectively. This symbolism in worship is the fundamental fact of being grateful to an object which some way or the other has been conducive to the well being of human life and its primary necessities.

The Gods are installed not only in \textit{Tirthas}, on banks of rivers, lakes and the sea-shores, at the confluence of rivers and estuaries, but also on hill-tops and mountains slopes etc.,\(^\text{23}\)!

The Vishnudharmottara (Part III, chapter XC III-25-31) speaks of an installation of consecrated images (\textit{Arca}),
"Installations should be made in forts, in auspicious cities, at river sides, in forests, gardens at the side of ponds, on hill-tops, in beautiful valleys and particularly in caves".

According to Mayamata stone is allowed to be used for temples by Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and hermits but one should not use it for Vaisyas and Sudras.

Stone when quarried and cut is an enduring and noble material, fit for gods, priests and the ruling classes. 

It is seen from the Vishnudharmottara and other texts that the science of selecting and testing the stone is most developed where the stone has to be chosen for "Linga". Stone indeed is the aboriginal substance of the Linga. Gold, the purest of all substances is not considered in this respect, loses its value and is only given second consideration when a Linga is to be made.

The Linga Purana (chapter XLVII.5) speaks of a Linga made of gold and jewels, or of silver or copper, as alternatives only for the Linga made of stone, and which is the embodiment of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Stone as menhir is specially connected with the Linga and also with the Adharasila.

Siva is preferred as Brahman or Truth in the Vedas and Upanishads and His form of Linga is worshiped.

There is only one God. Although he is one, people, have various notions about Him.

(d) Origin of Linga worship

The earliest references to Linga worship are to be found in the Rigveda, where the phallus is called "Sisnadeva", in the later or puranic period the references are more explicit.
"Markandeya Purana" says that Rudra and Vishnu are the creators of the universe and they form the Ardhanarishvara aspect of the former deity. The allusion is to the Maryardhva form of Siva, in which the female generative principle is identified with Vishnu. That the male and the female principles are inseparable and are ever found together in cosmic evolution is the real import of the Ardhanarishvara or Maryardhva forms of Siva, the same idea is also conveyed in a brief way by the symbols "the linga" and the "Yoni".

The Linga-purana states that pradhana (nature) is called the Linga and Paramesvara is called the lingam (the sustainer of the Linga) and that the pedestal of the Linga is Mahadevi (Uma) and the Linga is the visible Mahesvara. A more express allusion to the generative power of the Sakti and the Yoni, the emblems of the Saiva cult, is found in the Vishnu-Purana, wherein we are told that Brahma asked Rudra, born of his anger, to divide himself; thereupon Rudra, divided himself into two, a male and a female portion.

We learn from the "Siddhanta Saravali" that the bringing about the union of the 'pitha' which is the symbol of Sakti and the Linga, that of Siva, in accordance with the rules laid down in Saiva Sastras is called pratishtha.

According to T.A. Gopinatha Rao the most ancient Linga in Andhra Desa is the one at Gudimallam situated at a distance of about 20 kilometres from Tirupati. The Linga is known from ancient times by the name of Parasurameswara. The Linga is composed of two parts, the nut and the shaft of the
membrum virile, each of them shaped exactly like the original model, in a state of erection. The sculptor has modelled this Linga in imitation of the human phallus.

"There is very close resemblance of the figure of Siva on this Linga to that of a Taksha in the Sanchi Stupa, figured on page 36 of Grunwedel's "Buddhist Art in India" (translated by Gibson and Burgess). The date of the sculpture has been presumed to be the second century B.C. but some scholars have disputed the date.

The two great generative principles of the universe, Siva and Sakti, or Purusha and Prakriti, the father and mother of all creations, the energy and matter of the physical scientists is symbolised briefly in the form of the linga and the Yoni. For the past two thousand years if not more the Hindus, males and females have been offering worship to this symbol of the Great Architect of the universe.

The worship of Linga and the Yoni is absolutely and thoroughly free from any kind of immorality or indecency.

This shows the significance and the place of Linga worship in the day to day life of the people as well as the rulers of early Andhra Desa particularly Vishnukundins.

(e) Vaishnavism:

we have seen that the Vishnukundin kings were staunch followers of vedic religion. In Tuamalagudem copper plate III the names of Vaishnava deity like Vishnu28, Govinda29 are mentioned. Moreover the names of the Vishnukundin kings are
of Vaishnava gods, viz., Govindavarman, Madhavavarma, and the first part of their dynastic name 'Vishnukundin' refers to the Vaishnava god.

The royal emblem of the rulers was lion which is also a symbol of Narasimha, a man-lion avatar of Lord Vishnu. The Vishnukundin coins contain a lion inside a circle on the obverse. The head of a lion is depicted on the stone-plaque of mother-goddess found at Kesaramgutta.

The Undavalli cave temples contain a huge figure of Vishnu Anantasya. The pillars of the mandapa are adorned with sculptures vis., Gajendramoksa, lions, Vishnu, Varaha with Prithvi, Narasimha, Varana and Bali, Trivikrama etc. The open portico before the mandapa contains on its eastern edge the figures of two lions, on the back wall of the mandapa are the figures of the devotees and fine figure of Vishnu seated on Sesha.

The nasika on the east in cave No.II at Megalrajapuram contains three heads, representing Brahma, the central and western nasikas contain two heads each representing Siva and Vishnu with their consorts. There is a representation of Gajendra moksa on the first pillar in the front row to the east. To the right is Vishnu flying on Garada, with two hands resting on the head of the elephant and the other upraised. There is also sculpture showing Putana suckling Krishna.

There are two niches to the west of Cave IV of which one is empty and the other contains the standing figure of Vishnu, with four arms. The Central chaitya mandow of the Megalrajapuram
cave, contains the figure of Lakshmi-Narayana. We have already seen in the previous chapter that the early sculpture of Vishnu found at Yeleswaram and early-Narasimha sculpture of Kondamotu belong to Vishnukundin period. The man-lion incarnation of Vishnu became popular in the early centuries of the Christian era. The fact that the 'Avatara' is often mentioned in early records as Simha instead of Narasimha may suggest that the deity was once conceived by some as having the form of a lion (not a combined form of man and lion).

But about the 4th century A.D. Vaishnavism and worship of Vishnu seems to have taken certain set forms due to the increasing influence of the bhakti cult.

One of the caves of Mogulrajapuram was dedicated to the Hindu Trinity i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

These evidences indicate that the worship of Vishnu was popular during the Vishnukundin period.

(f) Saktism:

A mention has been made in the previous chapter about the stone plaque of mother goddess found at Keesaragutta. This plaque of mother-goddess gives us to understand the religious beliefs of the people during the Vishnukundin period.

Cult of Mother Goddess:

Man's link with his mother is patent. Mother, who bears the child, nurses and rears it up, leaves a deep impress on its mind. It is but natural for the child to magnify her glory and power and to think of her as the representative of creative and sustaining forces of Nature. Perhaps since the child-hood of mankind similar psychological process prompted
man to deify mother. To a child, mother appears in different moods and forms. She loves and chastises the child as the occasion would demand. The attributes of the human mother are naturally ascribed to the Divine Mother and the Goddess too is conceived of in multifarious forms and moods.

The worship of Mother-Goddess is one of the earliest characteristics of human behaviour. The Mother Goddess holds high antiquity; it seems that She is the earliest manifestation of the divine principle to be represented in a visual form in bone, ivory, stone and bas relief with the maternal organs grossly exaggerated with pendulous breasts, broad hips, round buttocks and excessive corpulence suggestive of pregnancy. Thus, her iconographic forms were fixed and individualised and she got the status of an ultimate Goddess or Universal Mother, responsible for giving life, vitality and prosperity. Some scholars believe that the Indian nude goddess was a Goddess of Fertility and popular as a household goddess among the non-Aryan communities but later she became absorbed in the Brahmanical and Buddhist pantheons as Sakti and ultimately became identical with the Great Mother, the supreme Devi of the Tantras.

The worship of Mother Goddess received Brahmanical sanction by interpreting them as manifestations of Sakti personified in the aspect of the consort. At a level Sakti was interpreted as the eternal reproductive principle (Prakriti) united with the eternal male principle (Purusa) in the generation of Gods and the universe.
The nudity aspect of the Mother-Goddess was an universal feature of the Mother-Goddess cult. This aspect is specially noticeable in the forms of Sabari, Parnasabari, Nagna-sabari, Aparna etc.,

It seems that the fusion of pre-historic Mother-Goddess tradition with the vedic goddess tradition relating to Vak and Sarasvati is greatly responsible for the prominence of Sakti cult in the post-vedic times. The identification of Rudra and Agni, the two Vedic Gods, inaugurated the process of fusion of Sakti and Siva (Rudra) cults, The seven fierce goddesses such as Kali, Karala, Bhima, Chand, Chamunda, etc. identified with the seven tongues of Agni, became associated with Siva as the result of this fusion. All these Goddesses represented the destructive, terrible, fierce and wrathful aspects of the energetic female (Sakti). The peaceful and benevolent aspect of the goddess was promoted through the identification of Vedic Vak and Sarasvati with the Mother-Goddess.

The exclusive worship of the female principle, as distinct from the Divinity seems to have had its germ in the idea that when the one personal God wills to put forth Energy for the purpose of creation, he is held to possess double nature partly male and partly female. The idea of the union of desire with God is exemplified by the concept of Heaven and Earth joining together and creating the Universe. We find this duality more clearly explained in the Brahmanas and Upanishads, for we find mention of the condition of the one Being unhappy without a second. He divided himself into two. Thus we have here a
distinct personality given to the power of God, which was
named as Sakti. 42

Another set of notions of some antiquity, which contributed
to form the notion of Sakti were derived from the teaching of
the Sankhya system, which taught the separate existence of two
principles Purusha and Prakriti, both coeval and co-existing
independent principles, the play of which was deemed to be
necessary for creation to take place. 43

Saktism in the bare acceptation of the term is worship
offered to the supreme deity exclusively as a Female principle.

(g) Jainism

On the top of the hill at Keesaragutta, there is a Jaina
temple with a brick, square Garbhagriha, later adjoined with a
mukhamandapa of granite pillars and roof slabs.

An early temple of Mahaveera with a sanctum, antarala and
mukhamandapa, and the foundations of two more temples were
cleared of debris at Gollathagudi, which revealed the complete
plan of the sanctum with its lime plastered brick walls and
the mukhamandapa. The excavations also yielded large number of
Jaina sculptures. The excavations of Gollathagudi shed much
light on the building activities of ancient Jains who preferred
brick as their constructional medium to stone even while the
contemporary Hindu temples were constructed purely in stone
round about the region.

An inscription 44 of the Eastern Chalukyan king dated Saka
684 indicate that there was a Jaina establishment at Vijayawada

even before the Eastern Chalukyas entered the region i.e., during the time of Vishnukundins. Jainism effected reforms by refusing to accept the divine authority of the Vedas, in presenting a common opposition to certain unreasonable practices of the Brahmins, in preaching that salvation was possible to all irrespective of caste and creed and in introducing the use of the vernacular in the addresses to the people in preference to the classical Sanskrit, which few could understand. Jainism is considered to be a reform movement against the unreasonable practices and teachings of the Brahmins, but it accepted the view then held on the theory of transmigration of the soul of man, that he is fettered to its mundane life by the laws of karma and that release from rebirth is obtained by man by means of the acquisition of right knowledge. For the attainment of this knowledge, it advocated the 'Sanyasa marga' on which much stress was already laid by the Upanishads, laying much emphasis on “asceticism consisting in subduing senses, withdrawing from worldly things, from communion with people, begging for alms, living in forests, observing cleanliness, internal and external, abstinence from injury to living beings, and sincerity, purity, freedom from envy, kindness and patience. There is no wonder, a section of the people, though not all, became the followers of Jainism during the Vishnukundin period, who were known for their religious tolerance.
(h). Buddhism.

As has already been stated there are ample evidences to show that Buddhism flourished along with other religions during the Vishnuvardin period. Hsuen Tsang who visited the Andhra Desa after the disappearance of the Vishnuvardin mentioned the existence of about twenty Buddhist monasteries.47

Govindavarman, the donor of the Tummalagudem grant I, is stated to be the builder of Viharas, assembly halls and was the possessor of wealth enjoyed by the bhikshus. He made a gift of the village Ponakapara for a monastery built by his chief queen Paralama Mahadevi.

The words "Mahabodhichittena" and 'Bhagavato Dasa Balabalinah chatur-yaairsaredyasytadasa - avenika Buddha-dharmma Samalankruta" . . . . . mentioned in the lines 12, 13-15 of the grant refers to Buddhism. Bodhi-chitt-otpada" is the mental disposition of one whose chief aim is enlightenment. Dasa-balas or the ten-fold forces of a Tathagatha, like Sthana-sathana-Janana-balam indicate the force of knowing possibilities and impossibilities.48

The expression "uttapadita-mahabodhichitta" is based on the doctrine of Bodhisatva which is the keynote of the Mahayana teachings.49 The inscription seems to suggest that the monks should have firm faith in the Buddha and in his teachings and should study the scriptures and practise meditation.50

In Tummalagudem plate II, it is said that Govindavarman embraced Buddhism after studying the doctrines propounded
by the Buddha. Vikramendrabhattarakavarman made a gift of
the village of Irrenderu to the chaturdasa-arya-vara-bhikshu
samgha residing in the mahavihara built by Parama-bhattarika.
Vikramendrarvarman was a parama-sauzata (devoted Buddhist).
It is also stated in the above inscription that paramabhattarika
married Govindaraja who built in every vishaya in the Dakshina-
patha wonderful stupas and Viharas adorned with several
kinds of sculptural work by which he acquired brahma-punya.
Govindavarman I accepted Buddhism after a study of shad-abhijna
pratiharya darsana. Paramabhattarika Mahadevi, his queen,
was a devout follower of the Buddha.

Under the Vishnukundins Buddhism continued to lose ground
steadily until it became practically extinct by the end of the
Vishnukundin rule.

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E. MATERIAL CULTURE

(1) POTTERY

The art of pottery making is interspersed with the social life of the man so much, as a result of which every age witnessed the silent and steady evolution of the pottery with its distinction. The archaeologists of today have recognised the importance of pottery in constructing the archaeological sequence of a site and have rightly termed it as "Alphabet of Archaeology". 

The pottery evidence from Keesaragutta is very significant. The excavations yielded pottery associated with the structures in the palace complex consisting of red ware, dull red ware, and black grey ware. Some fragments of blotchy red ware also have been recovered. The entire pottery is wheel-made. The paste, as a rule, is medium, sometimes coarser, tempered with sand which often contains larger particles of grit. Usually no surface wash is met with and, wherever available, it approximates to the colour of the paste. A pleasing effect is produced on some of the vessels by mixing powdered mica in the paste or dusting it on the pots before firing. Vases are usually more absorbent. The firing is good, but instances of deformed pots due to unequal or bad firing are also noticed.

The fabric ranges from coarse to medium; some sherds of fine fabric have also been recovered.

The red-ware, both slipped and unslipped, is generally wheel-turned and has many shapes. These include vases, bowls,
The vases, mostly unslipped, are with flared rims, convex bottoms and outer surfaces corrugated; conical bowls and lid-cum-bowls are with featureless rims, and some are with flaring body. Handi type of globular miniature pots with featureless rim and with conical base, spouted miniature pots with a sharp out-curved rim, recurring type of pots with concave neck, and sharp everted flat rim, are also found. Storage jars are with a prominent straight sided neck and with grooved rims devoid of any surface treatment. Lids are cupola shaped with carinated bottom and with a knob at the crest. Some lids are circular hat shaped and some are bell shaped with bottom like knob and carinated base.

Decorations are also met with. They comprise applied, incised and stamped patterns. The incised designs, usually confined to the external surface of the pots, consist of ropy bands, chevrons, floral and creeper patterns. The designs are mostly geometric and linear, consisting of parallel bands on the shoulder.

All the pots are grouped according to their utility for the better understanding of the culture trait of the people. The pottery can be further classified into utilitarian and ritualistic.

A. Storage jars:

Jars are available in red ware, and coarse dull red ware. Among the red ware storage jars, the first type has a prominent straight sided neck with grooved rims, fine fabric devoid of
any surface treatment. This was probably used as "Ghata" to
carry and also to store water. The second type is of a
coarse dull red ware with incised triangular motif below the
ridged neck portion, incisions probably stamped, inside the
motifs are linear incisions stamped at regular intervals.

The third type is a huge storage pot with a narrow
out-turned and constricted rim, top portion of the rim is
grooved below which are obliquely incised patterns. There
are three reliefs just below the rim. First relief contains
thin lined groovings below which are crescent shaped nail
impressions a few inches below it is another relief curvilinear
triangles with similar technique. The red slip is visible
outside and partly inside.

The fourth type has a thick out-curved rim. The edge of
the rim is incised with oblique ropy pattern(bands). There
are also grooved linear parallel bands all along the neck
portion. Below this are incised inverted triangle with linear
incisions within them. These triangles are arranged in a
panel like form.

The fifth type has two bands of rope designs with
oblique incisions.

The sixth type is of blotchy red ware and has a flared
rim and the rim top contains circular motifs of rosettes rim
tappering, below the ridged neck portion are incised chevron-
shaped designs and nail head section.

The seventh type is a red ware pot with a petal shaped
design.
The eighth type has a flaring rim with applied protruding circlets over the rim surface. This is illfired.

The ninth type is without curved rim. Its neck portion is decorated within two reliefs with nail incisions, linear patterns.

The tenth type has constricted flat rim of coarse grained fabric. There is a grooved line all along the outer edge of the rim. No surface treatment is given.

These jars were probably used for storing grains and other food stuffs for daily consumption as well as to keep sufficient stocks in reserve for use during the times of war or any such emergency as is evident from the place these fragments were found.

B. Ornamental Jars:-

These are the jars available in red-ware; fabric ranging from coarse to medium. The first type has a outcurved rim. The designs are divided into two compartments separated by a ridge just below the outer rim and there are incised wavy designs extended all along. Just below the ridge there are applied and stamped uniform motifs. They must have been used for keeping valuables and rare articles by the members of the royal family who lived in palaces as this type of jars are profusely and attractively designed.

The second type is of a red-plished ware. It has designs incised with chevrons, floral and creeper patterns.
The third type is a coarse red-ware pot with a floral design probably stamped.

The fourth type has relief showing incised chevron shaped motifs with dotted lines. Outside surface is given slipped treatment.

The above three jars appear to be of aesthetic type and predominantly used for beauty sake by the women-folk of the royal families.

Vessels:

Vessels are available in red ware, dull ware and pinkish red ware. The fabric varies from fine to medium. Some are red-slipped.

The first type is a carinated handi with a curved rim with soot marks at the bottom portion. No surface treatment was given.

The second type is similar to the first type but smaller in size with a flared rim. There is incised decoration just above the carination in the form of wavy triangular patterns.

The third type is a small handi. Soot marks are present all along the base. The red-slip is visible outside. Section is in the shape of inverted 'S'.

These appear mainly, to be cooking pots. The first type may have been used for storage of cooked food, as the rim is broad; the second type for storing sweetmeats or delicious food stuff and the third type for storing cooked food or heating it.
D. Conical Bowls

Three types of conical bowls have been found and they are also available in red-ware and pinkish redware. The first type has a featureless rim with flat base. The second type is similar to the first type but slightly irregular in shape. Its fabric also is finer. The third type has a flaring body with a flat bottom.

These bowls were probably used for holding gruel or semiliquid substances.

E. Miniature Pots

Handi type globular miniature pots are available in dull redware only. The pots have small featureless rim and conical base devoid of any surface treatment. Another pot has a round base with a faint surface treatment in the form of grooved bands. The shape and the size of these pots indicate that they were used for holding liquids etc., for ritualistic purposes.

F. Spouted Miniature Pots

A spouted miniature pot with a sharp outcurved rim, globular in shape has been found. Its fabric is coarse and the surface treatment is very faint. This type of pots could have been used to pour milk or ghee for ablutionary purposes.

G. Small Jars

Small jars are available in black and red-ware with fine fabric and also in red-ware. The first has a deep and flat body with wide bottom slightly carinated in the middle.
The rim is everted. Grooves are present on the top and at the neck portion of the rim. It is slightly polished and burnished. Another type is a concave necked handi type of pot with sharp everted flat rim-nail shaped in section. Bands on the concave portion of the neck are present. The fabric is coarse. It is a slightly self-slipped red-ware which is ill-burnt.

These jars appear to have been used for domestic as well as ritualistic purpose to store grain or liquid or any hot preparations.

II. Vases:

Vases have been found in red-ware only; one type has flared rims and hollow bottom. Outer surface is corrugated. The bottom is convex and there is a provision for a stand which is apparently missing. This deep vase could have been used as pitcher, liquid container, or for incense burning.

III. Lid-cum-bowl:

Only two specimens of this type are found. They are available in coarse red-ware and dull red-ware. The first has featureless rim with carination at the neck portion. No surface treatment is given. The diameter of the lid-cum-bowl is 15 cms.

The second one is a small hollow lid of fine fabric devoid of any surface treatment.

Bowls appear as common variety of the period and probably were used as dining sets.
J. Beaker:—

One pinkish grey ware beaker type of pot of medium fabric has been found in the temple complex. It has everted sharp rim and flat base, slightly bulging in the middle. There are grooves at the shoulder region. The height of the beaker is 11 centimetres. This type of beakers were used to pour ablutions for the ritualistic purposes or for drinking purpose.

K. Dish on Stand:—

Stand bases are available in coarse fabric. The first type has a very flat topped concave stand base. Inside is hollow. No surface treatment is seen.

The second type is also similar in fabric with no surface treatment. The top is flat with a perforation.

These stand bases must have been used for holding big pots, images, etc.,

L. Lids:—

The lids are available in red ware only. The first type is a cupola shaped hollow lid with carinated bottom. There is a knob at the crest.

The second type is a circular hat shaped lid with button shaped knob. It has a hollow bottom with notched edge.

The third one is a bell shaped lid with a worn out button like knob and carinated base; body slightly wobbling. These types of lids could have been used as finials.
The fourth type is similar to that of the other types but with a better treatment in fabric and finishing. Carination at the bottom is pronounced. The lid has a nipple shaped knob (Washed red ware). This must have been used as a cover on a small pot.

M. Sprinklers:-

Three types of sprinklers have been recovered during the excavations.

The first type is a bottle-necked sprinkler with a flanged rim top, and a conical knobbed opening with a perforation at the top running through the neck. Of consistently fine fabric, it is treated externally with a bright-red slip. This is similar to samain ware. This type is fairly widespread and occurs at Arikamedu², Brahmagiri³, Chandravalli⁴, Yeleswaram⁵, Hastinapura⁶, Kausambi⁷, etc.

The second type has a flanged rim top without any knob, body tapering, fine fabric with red slip probably intrusive ware.

The third type is similar to type two but with wide rim top, washed red ware of medium fabric.

The first type of sprinkler must have used for attaching it to "poornaghata" or any such auspicious pot either for aesthetic or for religious purposes. The other two types appear to be of purely decorative pieces.

N. Spouts:-

The spouts are available in two types all in red-ware. (1) simple and tubular and the other (2) truncated type.
The first one is a polished red-ware with a fine fabric. It has wide bulbous body resembling the trunk of a sphinx. This is a unique spout unlike other ordinary spouts both in technique and finishing. Similar spouts were also found in Yeleswaram.  

The second type has a projecting conical hind part, and perforations at the proximal end with a wide cup-shaped opening at the distal end. Probably mould made; fabric well levigated, highly red polished. 

It is quite probable that the above two types might be imported one. 

The third one is a spout of inferior fabric and illfired with a wide tubular channel. There are decorations of white dotted patterns of doubtful import. 

The fourth type has tapering body and smaller than the other types. Medium fabric. 

The fifth one is also a small spout with a lipped distal end and a wide trunk. The occurrence of the spouted vessels is noticed at Luristan, Mal, Jahanjhem, Brahmagiri, Nagarjunakonda, Tekkalkota, and Piklihal. 

These spouts might have served for regulating the flow of liquids. Spouts are luted on vessels, basins and bowls. All these spouts are hand made and have been luted with the vessels. After the spout has been luted, a hole has been punched at the joint in order to pour liquid from the vessels. 

R.G. Prasad Singh mentions the usage of spouted vessel for religious function. "A sanskrit text - kriya kanda Varidni" written in Bengali script refers to Vardhani, vessel
The vessel is used in the *chatus easti\textipa{\textasciitilde{p}ada vastu yakna*. According to the text, vardhani is tied around the neck of the pitcher used as kalasa. Another reference from the same text suggests that water should be poured into specially dug ditch in order to check the auspiciousness of the land under construction. Tying of vardhani around the neck of the pitcher and pouring of water through them suggest religious function. The word 'pranali' standing for spouted vessel, occurs in the Srauta-sutra and through these pranalis soma used to be offered to the gods in the Vedic sacrifices.

Vessels must have been used by the royal families of the Vishnukundin dynasty for some such religious functions following the Vedic traditions.

0. Decorated Pottery:

R.C. Agarwal rightly observed that the early centuries of the Christian era in India are marked by the appearance of embossed or decorated pottery in sufficient quantity.

An interesting specimen of a dull red ware globular pot with a lid profusely decorated with snakes and human-like figures, has been recovered outside the Garbhagriha of the temple structure at the north-west corner of the antarala during the recent excavations at Keesaragutta. This is very significant since this type of pot has not been found in any other excavations so far carried out by this Department.

It is a globular vase with flat out curved rim and narrow neck. The circumference of the vase is about 80 cm, and its height including lid is 37 cms. Five terracotta human-like
figurines encircled by serpents are placed on the belly of the pot at equal distances in a sitting posture resting their hands on the knees. The lid is also decorated with a figurine surrounded by a snake; the hood of the snake is broken. The size of each figurine is 8 cm. The head of one of the figurines is broken. The belly of the pot is decorated with seven serpents in their full length beautifully moulded exhibiting artistic skill. All the figurines appear to be of females with demonical features.

Its purpose and usage is shrouded in mystery. Nevertheless, it is not very difficult to unravel the mystery from the available literary evidences.

The snake is accepted by many scholars as being intimately connected with fertility cult since times immemorial. Vogel says that in the whole of western and southern India the cobra is worshipped until the present day by women, who are desirous of offspring. According to Hendrik Kern, the Nagas are essentially water spirits and they are to be regarded as personified forces of nature; in the first instance the snake like coiling rain-clouds emitting flashes of lightning the serpents of the sky—which are transported to the lakes and pools on earth and finally are "confounded" with real poisonous snakes. Kern's view emphasizes at any rate a very important aspect of Naga worship, viz., the close relationship between the Nagas and the elements which in a hot country like India is of such vital significance for human and animal existence.
We often find a snake encircling a linga on the yoni-patta, or otherwise lying in it at the narrower end of the yoni-patta. The cult of earth goddess is associated with snake symbols.

J. Mackenzie says "that in Gawripuja, women of all Hindu classes and creeds" adore the serpent, as it is supposed to remove their barrenness.

The Goddess is to be invoked, according to some Tantrik text, as Gauri, Gandhari, Matangi, etc. in connection with snake bites, when some paste of the leaves of certain medical herbs mixed with the juice of Kumari plant is to be smeared in the Uda-Kumbha vidhana ceremony. The serpent is always the Agathodaemon, the bringer of health and good fortune.

The practice of adoration of the serpent is very primitive in India and it has some Vedic association also. In Grihyasutras 'Sarpabali' is one of the many household rites and its performance an annual rite—prolonged for no less a period than the four months of the rains, is reminiscent of the popular naga-worship in many parts of India.

Naga cult in Buddhism during Satavahana period is also noteworthy. Serpents are represented as entwining stupas. Both at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, the Buddha is represented as seated on Nagas with their hoods just above his head. The snake cult was so widely prevalent in these parts of Andhradesa.

The exact usage of this pot is not known but it proves beyond any reasonable doubt that the pot maker or his masters who wanted him to make such a pot were inspired by the Naga-cult.
YELESWARAM

Yeleswaram pottery is not only striking and significant but also very much variegated, drawing parallels from many important early historical sites excavated in India. The entire collection of pottery appears to be of wheel made with the fabric ranging from fine to coarse. Red ware pottery is mostly slipped. During the early part of this period, say upto 4th century A.D. dull red ware of Ikshvaku period continued by the Grey ware emerged and predominated this pottery. Red polished ware and black and red ware were conspicuous by their absence after the termination of Ikshvaku period.

The following are some of the specimens of pottery that were recovered from layer IV assigned to Wishnukundin period.

1. A small vase of red ware with a rounded body having a thicked rim externally grooved. It had deep grooves in the neck and on the shoulder.

2. A big red ware water-pot with a globular body and grooved flat undercut rim. In the neck also it was decorated with horizontal grooves.

3. A red ware pot with a hole for a spout

4. A carinated lid of dull red ware with a closing and slightly everted rim having a sharp flange in the waist. It had deep grooves in the neck. Two types have featureless rims whereas one type was devoid of grooves. Similar types were recorded at Arikamedu, Brahmagiri and Maski.

5. A grey ware spouted vessel with a rounded body having saggar base.
6. A grey ware vessel with an externally thickened rim.
7. A dull red ware lid with closing featureless rim, flanged waist and a solid knob. It contained a hoard of 49 Vishnukundin coins. Similar types were recovered in later periods as well, treated with lime or yellow colour.
8. A grey ware lid with a hollow stand (must be finial).
9. A small grey ware bowl with grooves.
10. A grey ware miniature lid cum bowl with flanged rim.
11. A red ware conical bowl with a flat base irregular shape.
12. A dull red ware lower part of dish on a stand with curved edge at the bottom coarse fabric.
13. A dull red ware fragment of dish on stand with soot marks in the disc-coarse fabric.
14. A polished red ware fragment of carinated handi with an out turned rectangular rim having sharp carination in the waist, polished red ware.

A fragment of a redware storage jar is met with in the recent excavations at Keesaragutta. There is applique design probably of an animal leg. The fabric is coarse and may be classified under decorated pottery.

**Nelakondapallì**

Fragments of red polished ware and red slipped ware of coarse to fine fabric have been met with during the excavations at Nelakondapallì. First type of storage jar has a usual rim, the lower portion of the rim is decorated with roppy design. Second type has a plain flat out-turned rim, below the rim is decorated with horizontal grooves. Third type has a splayed
rim with horizontal grooves on the body. The first type must have used as a jar for storing grains etc., and the other two types for storing water.

Fourth type is a large storage jar with oval shaped body probably with a rounded base without turned rim, horizontal grooves on the edges of the rim and below the rim of the jar. The neck portion of the jar contains ropy design.

Another type is a thick fragment of a vessel with flat out turned rim and a loop design on the rim. The fabric is coarse and it is red slipped. Similar pottery is found at Keesaragutta, Yeleswaram etc.

3) Iron objects:

Nails, knives, arrow heads, sickles are some of the iron objects that have been recovered from the excavations at Keesaragutta.

A flat iron piece with rivet measuring about eleven centimetres length and three centimetres breadth has been found. This piece might have been used as hinges for the door.

An iron spear head or of a similar weapon has also been met with. It is 12.5 centimetres in length including one centimetre long pointed part at the tail end, and one centimetre width in the middle.

Another iron object 5½ centimetres long, slightly bulging in the middle and pointed at both ends has been met with.

4) Beads:

For an archaeologist, beads are valuable because they serve as a valuable source of information in tracing the influence of one culture on the other particularly in ancient times.
A number of beads have been recovered from the excavations at Keesaragutta. The beads are made of terracotta and precious stone. The shapes of terracotta beads are pear, spherical, amalaka, and tabloid. But for a cylindrical amethyst bead, beads of precious stone are rare.

Similarly, a good variety of beads of terracotta and semi-precious stones have been brought to light at Yeleswaram. Terracotta was most popularly used in manufacturing beads. A variety of shapes such as barrel shaped, globular, discoid and faceted were noticed and all of them had as usual transversed holes. The favourite type appeared to be long barrel cylinder.

Bangles:

A few Bangle pieces have also been found at Keesaragutta. Some of the bangles made of shell are beautifully incised with concentric grooves and others are plain.

Stone objects:

The stone objects found at Keesaragutta include a polished linga about 8½ centimetres long with a diameter of 3 centimetres. The top is round and the base is flat so as to insert into a pedestal.

Another object found associated with the Linga is a conical bowl with perforation at the tip and the two perforations at the rim. It was probably suspended in the inverted position for letting down drops of water over the Linga.

A head of a miniature female sculpture was found with bulbous eyes, her hair tied with a wavy fillet in the middle are made into a top knot. The sculpture was made of black
There is also a small stone boat about 13 centimetres long possibly used for grinding spices or ingredients of tilak etc. A part of the boat is broken and missing.

A stone-plaque of Mother-Goddess is described separately (Part II c. Arts).

The large number of Siva-lingas carved out of stone beautifully and artistically go to show that "Keesaragutta" was a manufacturing centre of Siva Lingas for exporting them to various places in the country during the Vishnukundin period. The Siva Lingas on Keesaragutta and their significance has, however, been dealt in detail elsewhere. 

v) Idols etc.

About ten idols which are detailed below were discovered at Nelakondapalle in the course of digging for pati earth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Buddha (standing)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Hands &amp; legs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. a)</td>
<td>Legs and hands broken</td>
<td>1'9&quot; x 10&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Head</td>
<td>8&quot; x 7&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a)</td>
<td>Broken hands &amp; legs</td>
<td>2'8&quot; x 1'3&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Head</td>
<td>11&quot; x 9&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. a)</td>
<td>Hand broken</td>
<td>2'4&quot; x 10&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Head</td>
<td>7&quot; x 6&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. a)</td>
<td>2'2&quot; x 10&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Head</td>
<td>10&quot; x 9/2&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>2'9&quot; x 1'3&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>10&quot; x 9/2&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Buddha (standing)  
   Head  
   1'8" x 9"

7. Buddha (standing)  
   Head  
   2'8" x 1'4½"

8. Buddha (standing)  
   Complete shape except broken hands  
   2'4" x 9"

9. Buddha (standing)  
   without legs  
   2'11" x 1'2"

10. Broken pieces of Padma pedestals  
    9 Nos.

   All the idols are decorated with Tila mark on the forehead and on stylistic grounds are datable to third century A.D.

   The pit where the idols were discovered was extended and tub like brick structures three in alignment separated by a drain where brought to light. Number of broken fragments essential for moulding the broken idols, and a very interesting brick structure relating to the manufacture and preservation of the marble Buddhist idols were traced out. The trough measuring 4.45 metres x 1.96 metres x .30 metre appears to have been intended for preserving the idols under lime plaster and that they were given high polish later.

   On the basis of the availability of lime-stone and marble deposits in the vicinity, number of brick tubs and fragments of Buddhist idols traced during the course of archaeological operations at Nalakondapallé, it may be concluded, that it was a manufacturing centre of Buddhist idols of different sizes and that the idols were exported to various other places in the country.
A collection of 868 Vishnukundin coins preserved in the A.P. State Museum at Hyderabad have been examined by Dr. M. Rama Rao and he has described some of them in the catalogue. All the coins are of copper and round in shape. These coins were obtained from Tangutur in Bhongir taluk of Nalgonda district and from Telkunta in the Sultanabad taluk of Karimnagar district. These coins contain a lion inside a circle on the obverse and a vase or kalasa flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse. Elliot described two coins of the above type. Dr. M. Rama Rao has divided the coins into twelve varieties basing on the symbols on the obverse of the coins.

1. Well decorated lion facing left with the double ya symbol and crescent above and with the left fore-paw raised.
2. Animal as above with mouth open.
3. Animal as above sparsely decorated.
4. Animal as in No. 2 with symbols before the mouth.
5. Animal facing left with mouth open, tail curled above, left forepaw raised and double ya symbol above.
6. Animal facing left with mouth open, tail uplifted and left forepaw raised.
7. Animal as above with crescent above and double ya symbol before the mouth.
8. Animal facing left with open mouth, tail uplifted, left fore-paw raised and double ya symbol before the mouth.
9. Animal as above with a symbol before the legs.
10. Big bold animal facing left with mouth open, double ya symbol before the mouth, tail uplifted, left forepaw raised and symbols before the legs.

11. Animal as above with crescent above.

12. Animal as above with symbols before and between the legs. On the reverse a vase or vase like symbol in one pellet with two straight horizontal lines and a pellet above etc., are noticed. The most curious feature of the symbol on the reverse side is that starting as a vase or kalasa on two slender legs with two lines and a pellet above and with a lamp stand on either side, all inside a rayed circle, it culminates in a well formed sankha passing through several intermediate forms.

This type of coins were attributed to Pallavas, which was proved to be untenable and wrong. The Vishnukundins issued a variety of coins. The round double die struck copper coins are generally found in coastal Andhra, Telangana, Vidarbha and Maharashtra. Two coins have been published with the following description.

"A well decorated lion facing right with gaping mouth, curled up tail, left fore-paw raised are found on the obverse, the sacred kalasa on a stand flanked by lamp stands on either side are seen on the reverse of the coins. The lion with all its vigour portrayed on the obverse invariably found on the coins, leads one to think that they have made it a dynastic crest, the lion symbolising the power. The reverse of the coins has a spiritual content. The flaming lights whose rays spread all over the world, meaning the diffusion of knowledge. The sacred kalasa standing on a pedestal in the centre contains the
water of life, purity and fertility which is a symbol of prosperity of Vishnukundin rule. But they bear no legend on them.\textsuperscript{29}

It is further reported that two unique coins with legends bearing the names of Indravarma and his son Vikramendravarma whose inscriptions were found near Tummalagudem, a place 20 miles away from Bhongir, were collected in the neighbourhood of Bhongir. The tiny coin of Indravarma measuring 7 cm. dia. is stated to contain all the features of the commonly found coins described above, and that the letters of the legend are so artistic and commendable of the engravers art on such a mini coin. It is further described that the other coin of Vikramendravarma contained the legend in Brahmi script(?). The size of the coin is given as 1.5 cms.\textsuperscript{30}

There is no dispute in accepting that the above two coins are of Vishnukundins but the legend part of it is doubtful, in view of the fact that not even a single coin containing clear legend out of thousands of Vishnukundin coins discovered so far, has been met with. Further there is no reason to believe why the weak Indravarma and Vikramendravarma alone should issue coins in their name while the powerful monarchs like Madhavavarma, Indrabhattaraksavarma did not do so.

A coin within a circle with pellets round, lion and tail downward to right on the obverse, and "within broad circle of radiating lines was" on a stand between two tripod lamp stands or standards" was found in Prakash excavations\textsuperscript{31}, on the banks of river Tapati. This coin is attributed to the Vishnukundins.\textsuperscript{32}

An exceptionally large number of Vishnukundin coins has been reported from several ancient sites in Maharashtra. At
first glance they give an appearance of being copper coins and look rather heavy in proportion to their size. But a recent metallurgical analysis has revealed a peculiarity of their composition in as much as they comprise an iron core with the coating of a thin sheet of copper on the surface. Kautilya's Arthaśāstra says that copper coins made up of four parts of an alloy shall be a mashaka, half a mashaka, kakani, and half a kakani. This alloy shall be made up of four parts of silver, eleven parts of copper, and part of tikshana or any other metal.

A solitary coin was recovered in the course of archaeological excavations at Brahmapuri. It bears a lion to the right on one side and jar flanked by a trident on either side within the rayed circle on the other. A couple of coins recovered in the excavations at Nevasa in the Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra, bear a lion standing facing right, in its front, a vertical linear staff with a thick dot capping it, all in a circle on the obverse, and a vase on a stand between two posts on each side, the entire motif in a circle with radiating lines on the reverse. Following Gaten Elliot, Vincent A. Smith and other earlier numismatists, these coins were assigned by the excavators to the Pallavas. But these coins are now commonly accepted to have been issued by the Vishnukundina.37

The new varieties were unearthed at Paumar in the Wardha district, their obverse has the figure of a well-decorated lion to the right with gaping mouth, curled up tail and left forepaw raised within a circle inside a dotted border or in a rayed circle, while the reverse show either the axle of a wheel and
a crescent with a dot placed on it in each of the four corners or a conch-shell decorated with some fillet-like objects within a radiated circle. Another Vishnukundin coin of the common type with lion on the obverse and a vase-on-stand flanked by the figures of a trisula on either side, on the reverse, was reported from a place near Nagpur.

The biggest hoard of over three hundred Vishnukundin coins was discovered at Paunar in the Wardha district. They bear a lion on the obverse and an axe in relief, or a conch-shell or a vase-on-stand, all in a circle with radiating strokes, on the reverse.

In the recent years a hoard of Vishnukundin coins have been reported from Ramathirtham of Vizianagaram district in Andhra Pradesh. A coin has been recovered in course of archaeological excavations at Nelakondapalli of Khammam district. A hoard of 273 Vishnukundin coins have been recovered from near the Sri Ramalingeswaram temple at Kesaramgutta while digging a trench for extension works of the temple. All these coins are of copper and round in shape. The coins bear a squatting lion with a spiralled tail and raised forepaw on the obverse, a paurnagha flanked by two lampstands all enclosed in a rayed circle on the reverse. None of these coins bear any legend.

It is not known as to why the Vishnukundins did not like to issue their coins with legend though they were learned monarchs and were praised with long epithets in their inscriptions. In the absence of any archaeological or
epigraphical evidences, it may not be proper to come to any conclusion why the Vishnukundins dispensed with the minting of coins with the legends unlike their predecessors and contemporary dynasties like Satavahanas, Pallavas, etc., But it may not be unreasonable to think that the Vishnukundins were confident that the conspicuous and significant symbol adopted in their coinage viz., the lion on the obverse and a kelasa flanked by two lamp stands, all enclosed in a rayed circle on the reverse, itself would stand for their dynastic appellation so far as their coinage was concerned.

*****
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37. Ajaya Mitra Shastri; 1973; op.cit; p.98.
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The Vishnukundin polity conformed to the rule laid down in the Sastras; its keynote was the sovereign. Monarchy was hereditary. "Except in times of danger, sovereignty falls to the lot of the eldest (son) is always respected. Sovereignty may (some times) be the property of the clan, for the corporation of clans is invincible in its nature and being free from the calamities of anarchy, can have a permanent existence on earth," says Kautilya.¹ The king was the commander in war and led his armies personally to the battle field. Indrabhattaraka is said to be the victor in innumerable chaturdanta battles.² The kings of the dynasty were engaged almost constantly in wars both defensive and offensive. As the guardian of the social and religious order, the king's "fearless hand" was to be wet by "the water poured out to impart fearlessness". He was to prevent "the contamination of the four castes". The true father of his people, he should sympathise with the weal and woes of his citizens" and "never employ taxes except in conformity with justice". He was to be the "furtherer of the homesteads of the low as well as of the twice-born. He should properly "devise time and place for the triple object of human activity". A king educated in these precepts among a moralising people would have been more than human if he had escaped the obsession of this conception of his duties.³

Social Conditions:
The fourfold division of society - the caste system - prevailed in the Andhra Desa during the Vishnukundin period.
We hear Govinda-varman's charities and gifts to numerous Brahmins. He protected the varnas and asramas and patronised the brahmins. Their love for brahmins may have been due to the fact that they were themselves Brahma-ksatras. The Brahmins of the south in the early centuries of the Christian era had converted members of the ruling class into kshtriyas, inducing them to perform yagnas and conferring on them the onerous task of protecting dharma. The advent of the land grants in the south, first made fashionable by the Chalukyas, Pallavas and Kadambas, witnessed a new age when the monarch began to lean more heavily on the Brahman settlers for the maintenance of law and order. These monarchs also contributed, inadvertently, to the liquidation of royal power through the alienation of basic functions like those of the enforcement of law and the collection of revenue. The story of land grant system as revealed in epigraphs will supply us an important aspect of social history connected with the role of Brahmin settlements in feudal formations all over India. Agraharas were granted to brahmins by kings to enable them to devote themselves exclusively to the study, and the teaching of the Vedas and perform sacrifices, which were believed to bring prosperity to the country and its people. The agraharas became centres of learning and spread light and learning in the country.

With their long historical prefaces and elaborate instructions for maintenance, the epigraphs supply many hints about political organisation and economic arrangements. Inscriptions of post-Mauryan period are connected by and large, with
Brahmanical or Jain-Buddhist settlements or political commercial centres and reflect their elitist culture. Therefore the direct information which they supply is limited to royal and ecclesiastical sectors of life. Vast areas of social activity lying outside them are naturally precluded from appearing in our epigraphic records except in terms of indirect and casual reference.

Women occupied a prominent position in Society. The idea of woman being the chattel of her lord with no rights and privileges which make life worth living, was quite alien to the Vishnu Kundra period. Paramabhattarika Mahadevi, daughter of Prithvimula, and the Chief Queen of Govindavarman was a worthy spouse of her husband. She built a spacious Vihara at Sakrapura for the use of the bikshus of Chaturdasarya-varasangha and persuaded her husband to grant the village renukapara for the repairs and white-washing of the monastery and for providing the comforts such as food, drink, couch, lamps, incense perfume and medicine of the resident monks.

A miniature stone sculpture of a lady with head and bulbous eyes, hairs tied with a wavy fillet in the middle and made into a topknot found at Keesaragutta, indicates the hair dress of the women folk during that period. Men and woman wore ornaments. Ear spools of various sizes made of terracotta found at Keesaragutta and Yeleswaram at the early historical levels show that the women were fond of ear ornaments. Strings of beads were also worn by them. The beads found at Keesaragutta are made of terracotta and precious stone. The shapes among the terracotta beads are pear, spherical, amalaka and tabloid.
Similar variety of beads of terracotta and semiprecious stones were brought to light at Yeleswaram also.

Names:

Almost all the names of the Vishnukundin rulers end with the suffix "Varma" viz., Govindavarma, Madhavavarma, Vikramendravarma, Indrabhattarakavarman. Like Pallava kings and the Sambhuphalayana king Jayavarman, and Salankayanas, the Vishnukundins have their name ending in 'Varma' and does not bear a metronymic. 8 "Bhattaraka" is a title applied to priests. 9 Fleet has pointed out that in the Gupta and Vallabhi records 'Bhattaraka' and Paramabhattaraka are titles applied to paramount sovereigns. 10

K. Gopala Chari observes that the expression 'Bhattaraka' is a title applied to kings is evident from the fact that in Pallava grants it is applied to Maharajas. 11

The copper plate grants of this dynasty show some names of brahmins - Agnisarma, Indrasarma, Sivasarma, Dasasarma, Rudrasarma, etc., and a few names ending with suffix "Swami" e.g., Bolaswami, Kesavaswami. So the common name ending are Sarma, Varma, Swami, etc. Some names are also known by ladies and men e.g., Paramabhattarika Mahadevi, Prithvimula. The practice of naming the grandsons after their grand-fathers was very common. As has been mentioned elsewhere 12, names of places are found in the inscriptions of the Vishnukundins and other contemporary dynasties of the Andhra Desa in the post-Satavahana and pre-Chalukyan period.

Trade: If the state of trade can be judged by the coinage i.e., by the variety and number of coins used or issued, it would...
appear that trade and industry flourished during the period of Vishnukundins. The vast trade of the period is also indicated by the charities of the rulers of this period. Govindavarman-I was munificent bestower of gifts of villages, fields, gold, elephants, horses, cows, bulls, couches, seats, vehicles, drinks, foods, vessels, houses, dresses, ornaments, virgins, and male and female slaves. The large number of Vishnukundin coins from Ramathirtham, Yeleswaram, Bhongir taluk, and some places in Maharashtra such as Paunar in Wardha district, also attest to a busy trade in these parts of the kingdom.

**Industries and Commerce:**

Workers connected with buildings, polishers, iron workers, potters, artisans, writers (lekhakas), goldsmiths, stone-polishers, stone-masons, carpenters appear to have been in the service of the kings. Most of these craftsmen were well to do and their artistic taste was something noteworthy. The dave temples of Vijayawada, the secular and religious building complex at Keesaragutta and other places brought to light in the course of archaeological excavations, the copper plate grants and rings with circular seals, coins, etc., of these monarchs, the stone plaque of mother Goddess, and decorated globular earthen pot from Keesaragutta are the best examples of their craftsmanship and artistic taste.

In the Vishnukundin kingdom, as in India at all times, agriculture was the main industry. Their inscriptions record gifts of villages to monastic institutions and agraharas to brahmins.
The land grants of Vishnukundins do not show the division of administrative system. Incidentally the inscriptions of the Salankayanas whom the Vishnukundins subjugated and occupied Vengi Desa, throw some light. The kingdom of Salankayanas was divided into Visayas. The territory around the capital was not included in the Kudrâharâvishaya. Ahara, rattha, and Vishaya denote the same territorial division. Below the Vishaya was grama and below that pallika or pallika grama (a hamlet). No division between Vishaya and grama is mentioned. Under the Eastern Chalukyas ‘Desa’ denoted a kingdom of which ‘Vishaya’ were divisions. Therefore it may be safely concluded that the Vishnukundin dominion was also divided into number of Vishayas each consisting of number of villages, administered either directly by the kings or through the feudatories. Indrabhattarakavarma was stated to be the master of the entire Chakravarti-Kshetra probably meaning the emperors territory or domain.

The Vishnukundin monarchs must have evidently followed the Arthasastra of Kautilya in the administration of their kingdom though their copper plate grants are silent, in this regard. According to Kautilya, the king shall employ as ministers such as are born of high family and possessed of wisdom, purity of purpose, bravery and loyal feelings in as much as ministerial appointments shall purely depend on qualifications. Having divided the spheres of their powers and having definitely taken into consideration the place and time where and when they have to work, such persons shall be employed as ministerial
officers (amatyah). Villages consisting each of not less than a hundred families and of not more than five hundred and families of agricultural people of 'Suāra' caste, with boundaries extending as far as a 'Krosa' (2250 yards) or two, and capable of protecting each other shall be formed. Those who perform sacrifices, spiritual guides, priests, and those learned in the Vedas shall be granted Brahmadeya lands yielding sufficient produce and exempted from taxes and fines. Lands prepared for cultivation shall be given to tax-payers only for life, unprepared lands shall not be taken away from those who are preparing them for cultivation. If cultivators pay their taxes easily, they may be favourably supplied with grains, cattle and money. The king shall bestow on cultivators only such favour and remission as will tend to swell the treasury, and shall avoid such as will deplete it.

A king with depleted treasury will eat into the very vitality of both citizens and country people. The king shall not only keep in good repair timber and elephant forests, buildings, and mines created in the past but also set up new ones. 

A wise king can make even the poor and miserable elements of his sovereignty happy and prosperous.

The Vishnukundin kings were constantly engaged in wars and as such the duties concerning administration must have been carried by the ministerial officers (amatyas) assisted by other officials like headmen of the village, etc., mentioned as 'Vishayamahattara' in Polumburi plates of the Eastern Chalukyan king Jayasimha Vallabha, or "Gram.Vriddha" mentioned in Godavari plates (set II) of Prithvimula.
The Vishnukundin administration was keen in collecting different taxes. The Vishnukundin charters usually exempt the gift villages from the payment of the 'Kara' alone and other exemptions are met with only in the Tummalagudem plates. The word 'Kara' occurs in the Ramathirtham plates of Indravarman and Polamburu plates of Madhavavarman IV, which denotes tax in general to be collected from the cultivators of land and people of other professions.

Substantial part of the exchequer appears to have been spent for construction of temples, monasteries, assembly halls, irrigation tanks, wells, and for keeping old ones in good repair. Their military administration also must have received a good part of the royal treasury. Madhavavarman II appears to have been a powerful war-lord, who had at his command an enormous army, consisting 8000 elephants, 10 crores of horses, and countless foot soldiers.

The military strength is no doubt grossly exaggerated. Nevertheless, he must have had a large army in his service, to vanquish the kings of other dynasties and appropriate their royalty and bring under his sway vast territories. Kautilya says that a large number of effete persons is better in as much as they can be employed to do other kinds of works in the camp to serve the soldiers fighting in battle fields, and to terrify the enemy by its number.

Vikramendrabhattaraka-II is said to be the victor in innumerable chaturdanda battles. Hastikosa, Virakosa, mentioned in Pulomburu plates of Madhavavarman IV, Vallabha
figuring in Tummalagudem grant I, indicate the designations of the military officials. Hastikosa, Virakosa, and Vallabha may be the designations of the officers respectively, in charge of the elephant, infantry and cavalry forces of the king. 'Skandhavara' at Kudavada, and Velpur, which figures in the Vishnukundin inscriptions indicate army headquarters or military encampments during war times. The skandhavara is a military encampment inhabited by the common people along with soldiers. In olden times the king used to be followed by a part of his civilian population too in order to ensure security. This encampment was generally situated near the prospective battle field.

The expenditure must have been equally more on performing several Vedic sacrifices such as agnishtoma, vajapeya, bahusuvarna, paundarika, asvamedha, kratusehasra, sarvamedha, rajasuya, purushamedha, etc., by the Vishnukundin monarchs like Madhavavarman II and also for maintaining Ghatikas. The monarchs must have collected money for all the above mentioned activities by demanding from the subjects or by seeking subscriptions (Bhikshetra, beg benovolences) from citizens and country people alike under false pretences of carrying this or that kind of business. Persons taken in concert shall publicly pay handsome donations and with this example, the king may demand of others among his subjects as laid down by Kautilya.
People enjoyed "right to religion" during the period of Vishnukundins, as we have seen all the important religions, viz., Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism, Vaishnavism, and other cults such as cult of Mother Goddess etc., flourished on account of religious tolerance of the kings. The performance of Vedic sacrifices appear to have become popular, for most of the ruling kings of this age claim to have performed the asvamedha and a number of other sacrifices. The very fact that they have taken credit for performing them shows that sacrifices and the Vedic religion of which they form an adjunct was very popular at the time. Besides the hieratic cult of sacrifices, the worship of the gods of the puranic pantheon, specially Siva and his attendant deities, was very much in vogue.
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