

Contests and virtual prizes:

Today's prize, for figuring out the circumambulation at Karli is a [virtual] Mixmaster counter top mixer!

Newsflash! Libby has won the contest. Her source? The textbook! And I quote, beginning with caves at Bhaja, (which we did not look at in the lecture):

“the central nave served as a site for congregational activities [just hours after I insisted that Indian temples are not congregational]. Pilgrims traveled great distances to reach the remote sanctuary at Bhaja, following the river gorge and climbing the steps to the mouth of the cave. They entered from the left, obeying the convention of clockwise movement around the stupa, going slowly between the octagonal columns and the rock wall of the cave.”

So it is the outer ambulatory in the plan. Congratulations Libby!

Linda hopes the pink Tourister luggage comes back. Keep posted for further contests! And your chance to win!

Rock cut temples:

Elizabeth asks a question about what kind of rock are the rock-cut temples carved from, and Richard asked about what tools were used and how many people worked on the rock cut temples. He adds where else in the world were structures like these? Richard offered the really good example himself of Abu Simbel in Egypt. I would add as well Beni Hasan, and the Valley of the Kings in Thebes, both of which we looked at in Part I. Libby added Lalibela in Ethiopia (which we'll see in Part III) as well as Petra. We'll also see caves in China, in lecture 6, though they are more cave-like and hewn from softer volcanic rock. The site https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_rock-cut_architecture lists various rock cut structures, a huge number of which are in India.

I didn't have any specific stone noted until we get to Tamil Nadu, which suggests to me that none of my sources noted the stone type. From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_rock-cut_architecture:

“The effort expended often astonishes visitors, but seen from one aspect, a rock-cut structure is a decorated rock quarry; most of the stone removed was typically put to economic use elsewhere.”

The Barabar caves, 3rd century, (which we didn't look at), are granite. This wikipedia site doesn't mention stone types either till we get to Ellora, which is volcanic basaltic cliff rock and is noted as taking 100 years to complete. This site doesn't mention tools at all, or numbers of people, or generally length of time, except it says the Kailasanatha Temple at Ellora took a hundred years, which probably compares favorably for a Gothic church.

Noting a bit further from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_research_in_India: “Cave research, encompassing the study of speleology and biospeleology, is still in its infancy in India.” and “The stalagmite formations present in most natural limestone caves resemble Shiva Linga, a representation of Hindu God Shiva, due to which some of the caves in India are considered of religious import.”

Richard, (forgive me if it was someone else) also noted the similarities between Abu Simbel and what we looked at today in India. I think we're looking at the Greeks and whomever else might have traded with Egypt for bringing some of those architectural ideas to Greece, and then on the road to and from Central Asia. It's wonderful when we can see and trace the influences. We will see more of the exchange of these ideas when we look at Buddhism in China and Indian

architectural and religious influence in South East Asia. I'm clearly seriously simplifying here, hopefully the lectures have looked at some of this in a bit more depth.

Buddhism:

Nancy asks: What did the Huns have against Buddhism? According to the site

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alchon_Huns (which is worth looking at just for some of the coins and sculpture images) and beginning around the 5th century, we don't get a whole lot of motivation, but we do learn the following:

“the attitude of the Alchons [Huns] towards Buddhism is reported to have been negative. Mihirakula in particular is remembered by Buddhist sources to have been a "terrible persecutor of their religion" in Gandhara in northern Pakistan. During his reign, over one thousand Buddhist monasteries throughout Gandhara are said to have been destroyed. In particular, the writings of Chinese monk Xuanzang from 630 CE explained that Mihirakula ordered the destruction of Buddhism and the expulsion of monks. Indeed, the Buddhist art of Gandhara, in particular Greco-Buddhist art, becomes essentially extinct around that period. When Xuanzang visited northwestern India in c. 630 CE, he reported that Buddhism had drastically declined, and that most of the monasteries were deserted and left in ruins. Although the Guptas were traditionally a Brahmanical dynasty, around the period of the invasions of the Alchon the Gupta rulers had apparently been favouring Buddhism. According to contemporary writer Paramartha, Mihirakula's supposed nemesis Narasimhagupta Baladityawas brought up under the influence of the Mayayanist philosopher Vasubandhu. He built a sangharama at Nalanda and a 300 ft (91 m) high vihara with a Buddha statue within which, according to Xuanzang, resembled the "great Vihara built under the Bodhi tree". According to the *Manjusbrimulakalpa* (c. 800 CE), king Narasimhsagupta became a Buddhist monk, and left the world through meditation (Dhyana). Xuanzang also noted that Narasimhagupta Baladitya's son Vajra, who also commissioned a sangharama, 'possessed a heart firm in faith'. The 12th century Kashmiri historian Kalhana also painted a dreary picture of Mihirakula's cruelty, as well as his persecution of the Buddhist faith.... The Alchons are generally described as sun worshipers, a traditional cult of steppe nomads. This stems from the appearance of sun symbols on some of their coins, combined with the probable influence they received from the worship of Surya in India. Mihirakula is also said to have been an ardent worshiper of Shiva, although he may have been selectively attracted to the destructive powers of the Indian deity. Mihirakula is said to have been the founder of the Shankaracharya Temple, a shrine dedicated to Shiva in Srinagar, a shrine to Shiva named Mihiresvara in Halada, and a large city called Mihirapura.”

I welcome if anyone wishes to add anything to any of the questions above. As always, let me know if I've missed any questions.