Architectural fragments

Place of origin: Palitana (From the temple complex at Shatrunjaya, next to the town of Palitana, Gujarat, made)

Date: 11th century-12th century (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Buff coloured sandstone

Credit Line: Given by the Architectural Association

Museum number: IM.53 to 55-1916

Gallery location: South Asian Sculpture, Room 47b, case EXP

Public access description

Portion of a temple illika-torana (cusped arch), which came from a now ruined Jain temple complex at Shatrunjaya, next to the town of Palitana, Gujarat. Produced during the reign of the Solanki dynasty between the 11th-12th centuries. This architectural fragment comprises five whole and two broken half cusps of a torana arch. The central bands are carved in high relief with a row of sword-carrying vidyadharas (mythical beings with magical knowledge) in contorted positions. This band is outlined with rope mouldings, which emphasize the curves of the cusps and spring from deeply drilled squared-off foliate motifs on a flat plane. The top and bottom edges have similarly-carved cavetto borders of flame and petal mouldings. There are also fragmentary remains of pierced foliage decoration on the undersides of the cusping, above and in front of which there are fragments of a dependent decorative band. On top, in the interstices between the cusps, there are leonine kirttimukha (face of glory) heads.

Descriptive line

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Physical description

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Dimensions

Height: 51.5 cm, Width: 26.7 cm, Depth: 14 cm

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Object history note

Given by the Architectural Association, to which this and 51 related architectural pieces from ruined temples devastated by Muslim raiders in the 14th and 15th centuries on the twin summits of Mount Shatrunjaya, Palitana in Gujarat, IM 53-112-1916, had been presented by Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere, Ist baronet, G.C.B, C.C.S.I. (1815-1884), former Governor of Bombay, in 1877.

As John Guy writes in The Peaceful Liberators (see reference below) the high degree of stylistic uniformity suggests that these pieces were collected from a single temple, or at least sites that were contemporary to eachother. They are related to known Solanki dynasty temples of the 11th and 12th centuries, and inscriptions record that endowments were made to the Shatrunjaya temples during the reign of Siddharaja Jayasimha (1095-1142), a Solanki ruler renowned for his patronage.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O63712/architectural-fragments-unknown/