

CLASSICAL SINHALESE SCULPTURE



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# CLASSICAL SINHALESE SCULPTURE

C.300 B.C. to A.D. 1000



D. T. DEVENDRA

*Sometime Assistant Archaeological Commissioner (Publications), Ceylon*

1601

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Alec Tiranti



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D.T.D.





## The background

The island of Ceylon, which lies at the southern tip of India, contains a population of about 9,000,000 within its area of 25,322 square miles. The Sinhalese, who form the subject of our account, number about 7,000,000; nearly all of them follow the Theravada (Early) School of Buddhism. They claim as their progenitor the Prince Vijaya who, tradition asserts, arrived in 543 B.C. with 700 followers, most probably from the region of Gujerat in north-western India.

The earliest annalists of the island made the arrival of the Indian colonizers coincide with the Parinibbana (Death) of the Buddha. The year cannot be fixed definitely and none of those suggested by various scholars will bear scientific scrutiny. Their dates are linked to an island king's synchronism with the Indian Emperor Asoka. Asoka's grandfather, Chandragupta Maurya, was the contemporary of certain Greek kings, one of whom, Seleucus Nikator, had concluded a treaty with him in 304-302 B.C. The dates assigned to this and similar contemporaneous Indo-Greek matters are based on Graeco-Roman chronology. An eminent physicist, an authority on the Calendar, has rejected this system of chronology, as it is based on the unscientific and mystery-shrouded year of the Olympiads, or *ab Urbe Condita*.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional year 544-543 B.C., according to strict reckoning, thus keeps its position still, and the Sinhalese have recently celebrated the two thousand five hundredth anniversary. The festivities were inaugurated on May 23, 1956, and concluded on May 15, 1957.

Of the people who lived in Ceylon before the arrival of Prince Vijaya, little is known except for the mythical Yakkhas and Nagas, or for the disputed survival of a handful of aboriginal folk known as Vedddhas. Some information, nevertheless, can be gleaned from stone implements assigned to the neo-lithic age, one Dolmen, three



cists and some rude rock-shelters with linear and pictorial engravings. Occasionally, too, there are crude drawings in white on the rough cave surfaces, but their authorship is disputed. There are also legends of a lost race of ferocious pigmies in the rock wilderness of the south-east.

A story is sometimes heard—seen to be modern on analysis—of the Rape of Sita from her Indian lord Rama by the demon king of Lanka (Ceylon) whose name was Ravanna. But there is nothing proven to connect Ceylon with this Indian parallel to the Trojan War. Indeed it is the anglicized pronunciation of 'Sita,' lengthening the last vowel, which has strengthened the case for the spurious connection when 'Sita,' correctly pronounced, merely means what it is: a cool place, and the prefix appears in just such a connotation only. In all other countries east of India, as far as Indonesia, may be traced the survival of the Rama-Sita-Ravana legend, which theme is at the back of many of their art-forms. But there is no trace of it in Ceylon.

Furthermore the island was not influenced by certain ideas in regard to the divinity of kings. As a matter of ethnological interest, the Javanese conception of the Celestial Mountain was presumed to be more original than the Indian; this latter was modified by Persian and later Hellenistic influences.<sup>2</sup> Ingenious theses have been presented to show that Ceylon<sup>3</sup> was influenced by the divinity of kings, but the encyclopaedic marshalling of odd bits of information does not convince one that the suggestions have any sustained continuity. There is the point too that the island remained strongly individualistic owing to its geographical isolation from the mainland, and its people evolved its own contribution to culture, including the creation of a distinctive sculpture.

The last of Ceylon's kings was dethroned by the British in 1815. The story of the island is thus a tale of over 2,000 interesting years. The Sinhalese officially became Buddhists under Devanampiya Tissa, to whom Asoka sent his monk-son Mahinda as the bearer of the Good Law of the Sage of the Sakyas. Since that day (either



307 or 247 B.C.) it is with Buddhism that every great activity of the people has been linked. Their architecture and sculpture, except in a lone example such as Sigiriya, were based almost entirely on religious iconography. This has been a happy circumstance indeed, for it has enabled the seeker after Buddhist art to trace here an age-old and unbroken sequence which simply does not exist anywhere else in the same purity. Benjamin Rowland<sup>4</sup> paid a tribute to Ceylon art which 'over a period of more than 1,500 years, reveals great vigour and exquisite taste in architecture and sculpture, and painting, a marvellous integration that can scarcely be matched anywhere in the Buddhist world. The best of the architecture and the best of the sculpture have a truly classic quality of balance and perfection and constitute final models of technical probity.'

There are two main sources for the reconstruction of the island's ancient activities. One is the *Mahavamsa* compiled about the fifth century A.D. from earlier monastic records which were committed to writing in the first century B.C. (the *Dipavamsa* of a century earlier is less helpful). The second is material derived, since 1890, through the activities of the archaeologist. With their help we are able to trace the history of Sinhalese sculpture during an impossibly sustained period of achievement and progress. Of the astonishingly long stretch, we here cover the period of Classical Sinhalese Sculpture. Commencing in the sixth century B.C. it tended, as a whole, to conclude in the thirteenth century with Dambadeniya times. Yet its spirit persisted (even if fitfully) right down to the Kandyan period, evidenced by some remarkable stonework, particularly floral and creeper motifs as seen on a Moonstone at Degaldoruva.

One, exhibiting the charm and elegance of the human theme during the same period, may be seen in the Pancha-Nari-Ghata (Five-Women Vase) on a stele in the front yard of the Palle Devale at Hanguranketa, to which an upper limit of the seventeenth century can be assigned. The period between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries produced examples in the more ancient styles. The



isolated fragments of sculpture in the ancient royal premises at Kurunegala, the magnificent Gampola Lankatilaka which has inspired the University buildings, the stonework at Gadaladeniya and Yapahuva—all of them close to the fourteenth century—the disposition of the stupas and of their relic-chamber at Beddegana, of fifteenth-sixteenth century Kotte, bear full testimony to the fact that their originators were of the art-lineage of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruva.



## The materials

It was in stone that the Sinhalese sculptor excelled and on which we concentrate here. True he had used wood—some weathered bits of about the eighth century are found in a cave at Namal Pokuna in Ritigala and in the North-Western Province—also ivory as long ago as the early fourth century (perhaps even earlier), stucco, bronze, gold and even laterite (kabook), with accomplished skill. The favoured material, however, was stone. And the stone of Ceylon is very ancient by the reckoning of petrologists and geologists and by no means easy to work, in contrast with Indian stone. The courage of the Sinhalese sculptor who worked this material has to be admired. Perhaps the rugged times of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa toughened him to grapple with hard granite and gneiss. This gneiss is comprehensively evident in the work at the great fifth-century rock-bastion of Sigiriya. And the secret? *Steel* was used by the Sinhalese as far back as the third century B.C. when the earliest known caves, with datable inscriptions on them, were prepared for religious purposes. Quantities of iron, nuts, bolts, borers, enormous nails, hinges *ad infinitum* have yielded to the archaeologist. These, too, show that massive timbers have been used in some of the buildings. At Embekke, in the Gampola area, and Ruvangiri-kanda Vihara, in the North-Western Province, the visitor may still see survivals of such work.

It is generally accepted that the earliest type of stone used in the Anuradhapura period (ending with the tenth century when the island was over-run by the Cholas of south India who held sway for half a century) was the variety locally known as limestone (dolomite). It is a whitish crystalline substance which has the semblance of marble. Limestone tends to assume a dark hue upon weathering and certainly its carved detail is soon lost, unless the work is given a protective layer—gold-wash in the case of Buddha images—



applied on a suitable base. On the nails of the Cave Buddha at Gal Vihara, Polonnaruva, the base (in green) is still discernible, although this particular image is of gneiss. Limestone suffers, too, by being friable and brittle. Indeed, one who roams the jungles, where is hid many an ancient shrine in a long-lost city, may often see limestone figures damaged by passing wild elephants. These figures, outwardly black, show the gleam of white at the fractures. Limestone abounds in the areas around Anuradhapura.

In the Polonnaruva times (from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries) the vogue was for gneiss or brick-and-stucco. Colossal efforts were made in this latter medium, the finest being the Buddhas and the decorative work in Polonnaruva, at the Tivanka-ge (Northern Temple) and Lankatilaka. In the succeeding centuries limestone was almost completely excluded and gneiss took its place.

The Sinhalese had a passion for stone. Even at ancient Kantarodai in the arid north of Jaffna peninsula, Ceylon's little bit of south India, they had worked in stone which had had to be transported many miles from the southern Anuradhapura area. For the most part in their activity, however, they used coral-stone which is abundant in this marine region. Evidence of it exists as far as the outermost islet of Delft (Neduntivu) where the remains of an ancient stupa survive.

Gold and ivory were utilized sparingly, the island producing the former in accidental quantities and its elephant not being tusked in contrast with its African cousin. Bronze was more freely used, and very fine works have been found, but the alloy was not very common until after the fifteenth century when, along with brass, it came to be widely utilized for a variety of articles mainly in everyday use. Silver appears to have been used only occasionally, but alloys with pronounced copper patinae were fairly common. Copper tiles have been found in an image house west of Jetavanarama, the gigantic stupa erected by Mahasena towards the close of the third century. An inscribed copper dish of about the thirteenth century was found near Basavakkulam, the ancient Abhaya-veva.



## Anuradhapura, the first phase

In dealing with the earliest activities we have, as mentioned above, to rely largely on the fifth-century *Mahavamsa* and, to a lesser extent, on the *Dipavamsa* which was written a century earlier. Archaeological research has been of little help in elucidating the work of the pre-Christian centuries.

The first work of note was the construction of a stupa by the king in the time of Mahinda who was instrumental in obtaining the collar-bone relic of the Buddha to be enshrined in it. Probably this first historical stupa, Thuparama Dagaba as it is known, was modelled on similar constructions in Mahinda's own home of Vedisa. Whether stone was used on a large scale we are not told, but bricks certainly were. Several stupas were built by the same king and by his successors, and the first stonework in connection with them is recorded in the time of his brother and immediate successor, Uttiya. A few decades later the Tamil usurper Elara was visiting Mihintale when his chariot wheel dislodged 15 stones for which he made amends.

The form of the stupa was fixed early in architectural canons, and was marked by a strong conservatism which left little room for change. As a matter of fact, we note only two important changes: 9, 10 the adoption, for a period, of frontispieces known as vahalkada, one at each cardinal point, and the merging together of the series of crowning parasols into the composite spire.

It is noteworthy that Ceylon does not have the surface-ornamentation of the well-known Amaravati, Sanchi and similar stupas. Neither did the Ceylon stupas have those highly decorative gateways covered with sculptural work. This restraint is the keynote of all forms of embellishment. There was never that florid work which was later derived, in south India, from earlier models.

Devanampiya Tissa set up a stone shaft to mark the place where,



according to a pseudo-prophecy, Ruvanveli stupa was to be built about eighty years later. This shaft, now very weathered, is still standing between the eastern and the northern entrances. Another shaft was found in the south at Tissamaharama, the ancient capital Magama, which was founded by a brother of the king. Whether they followed Asoka when they set up these sthambas, we are unable to say; they are not polished and do not bear any legends inscribed on them; nor are they surmounted by sculptured animals.

Close to Thuparama is a small ruined shrine in the centre of which there are a few stone pillars whose capitals are unique. The shrine was labelled Trident Temple by an Archaeological Commissioner who fancied he saw the design of the *dorje* (Thunderbolt, Trident) on these capitals. He attributed the date of *circa* ninth-tenth century to the shrine, and presumably to these pillars as well. But the pillars bear traces of an extraordinary polish which they share with similar members at the archaic Ransi Maligava in Polonnaruwa, and on an octagonal pillar of the first century A.D. south of Sandagiri stupa in Tissamaharama. 123

The unusual capitals in the Trident Temple, in the author's opinion, have the same theme as the bell-capitals of Asoka's pillars. That is to say, the sculptor strove to represent a gradually opening flower. The main petals are marked by the outer ridges in high relief, and the spear-head central motifs, which are actually carved on a different plane in low relief about three inches shallower, stand for the smaller petals of the inner row. We find the same detail, inverted, in an Asoka pillar-capital from Bhuvanesvar. Also, the semblance of an abacus is not wanting.

This bulbous flower-motif for capital and the high polish on the sides of the shaft are not accidental. The capitals have never been repeated and, on the general analogy with Asoka's, it is not improbable that they are much earlier than the date mentioned above and closer to Asoka's time than is suspected. In that event they may well be the survivals of one of the buildings Devanampiya Tissa built in the vicinity.



118, 119 for types

Caves were prepared for monks both as residences and partly temples, and drip-ledges on their brow were cut and inscribed from the third century B.C. More extended stonework soon followed. Kavan Tissa, the father of Dutthagamani, built three steps to Akasa Cetiya for the convenience of a sick monk; Dutthagamani set up the nine-storeyed Lohapasada on stone pillars; Lanja Tissa (119-109 B.C.) placed three stone flower-altars at Ruvanveli, mantled Thuparama and Khandakathupa with stone and put up a little stupa with the same material, and Kutakanna Tissa (44-22 B.C.) erected a stone stupa on Mihintale, and all in pre-Christian times. Of King Gothabhaya (249-263 A.D.) we are told that at the four corners of the courtyard of the shrine he erected pillars with wheel-symbols. Apparently it was an innovation which, to judge from subsequent events, was not taken up.

We have already indicated that austerity and conservatism are the chief characteristics of Sinhalese art and whether on stupa or in stone details, the trends remained constant. When, with the increasing use of stone, sculpture as such became evident, this restraint is naturally manifest.

12-31 Of the identified and officially dated survivals of plastic art, the earliest are reckoned to be those found in the steles of the vahalkada of Kantaka stupa, Mihintale, the first spot which Mahinda visited. This stupa not improbably dates from the earliest times. Certainly the sculptures give the feeling of archaism. The steles emphasize length and not breadth or thickness. Consequently surface depth has not been emphasized. Unmindful of the dimensional disposition, some critics see a lack of skill in what they call aversion to depth. On the contrary, with the proportionate distribution of surface measurements this 'aversion to depth' disappears.

66, 104, 105

As a matter of fact, in the earliest stages there was no occasion which required high relief to be employed. There were no figures like yakshis or deities to be carved. The Indian mind, used to Vedic and Brahmanical iconic emblems, used these devices. The Sinhalese had no such animistic cults. The Maha Vihara or the

Sinhalese  
are  
animistic



Great Minster upheld the austere Theravada teachings and was, in a sense, *Censor Morum*. If to the brackets for a Buddhist shrine in Sanchi one is lured by lascivious nude figures, one looks in vain for anything even remotely suggestive in the work of the Sinhalese.

Austerity is the keynote of sculpture as of other forms of art, and it set the Sinhalese special standards of balance and proportion, which led to the rejection of non-essentials.

There is a further point to be remembered. The Sinhalese examples of extant sculpture do not show that plaques or slabs with scenes from the Buddha's life were in vogue. Numerous examples are found, it is true, in such places as Gandhara, but hardly in Ceylon. In fact the earliest instance occurs at Ambalantota as a detached piece in the possession of the monk at Girihandu Vihara. It shows the Farewell of Kantaka who licks the feet of his master whom the sculptor has incorrectly shown in monk's habit. Done in low relief, and undoubtedly archaic, it has just claims to be dated to the second rather than the first century B.C. Equally old are two fragments in Colombo Museum sometimes identified as Maya's Dream and Miracle of Sravasti(?) respectively. One expert traces all three to Andhra. 108, 109

In the matter of visual representation the Sinhalese took very seriously and earnestly to the Buddha figure itself and almost wholly excluded extraneous diversionary themes. This is the reason for their pre-occupation with the portrayal of the Teacher and the absence of scenes as such from his life. Besides, plaques find no place in the decorative scheme in the undemonstrative temples of the Sinhalese of the Maha Vihara tutelage, though they obviously had their place in the Indian mainland which was visibly influenced by the heterodoxy of such teachers as Nagarjuna or patrons as Kanishka. Edifying stories came rather to be painted in a subsidiary way and were rarely translated into stone. We must not forget that whenever we come across representations of the latter category which afford variety, as against the seeming monotony of the Buddha figure or of the stupa, we tend to appraise them higher for



several reasons. For that very natural point of view which will distract the worshipper, they were subordinated to the idea underlying the place of worship, namely, the Buddha and his relics (stupa).

The pivotal theme of the sculptor, then, was the Buddha image. The first image was of stone and of grand size. The *Mahavamsa* attributes it to Devānampiya Tissa himself, that is to say to the third century B.C. It was an object which greatly attracted the attention of later kings and queens who, from time to time, showered ornamentation upon it. Its last resting-place on record is the northern Abhayagiri Vihara, rival of the Maha Vihara, where Fa Hien saw and admired it about 412 A.D. To-day, in the seclusion of parkland which shelters a forest of ruined stone structures there is a seated Buddha in the pose of meditation which, more than any other image of its kind, casts a spell upon the beholder with its perfect expression of serene passionless-ness. It was a master's hand that fashioned it. It is this image which Ananda Coomaraswamy described as 'certainly the greatest work of art in Ceylon, and is not surpassed in India.' It seems more than probable that this is the earliest Buddha image anywhere in the Buddhist world.

In size this Buddha is monumental. The robe is merely indicated by its upper edge. Simplicity is of its essence and yet it creates profoundly a sense of power, not as it were by its size, but by the spirit that glows from it. Unfortunately the gift of a new nose by an erstwhile Archaeological Commissioner has marred its noble features.

Dutthagamani, prior to 137 B.C. enshrined a Buddha image of gold in the relic-chamber of Ruvanveli stupa, the mightiest of monuments of the then Buddhist world. It is well to recall that both these images are definitely earlier than any admitted by experts for India.

The *Mahavamsa* mentions a quaint incident in Dutthagamani's march against Elara for the throne. Each of the 32 divisions of his army, says the chronicler, carried with it a likeness in wood of the



king. Now this is an interesting point to which we may apply the following words of an Archaeological Commissioner, A. M. Hocart, in discussing the Buddha image against another background.

‘ Again, we have the substitution of the living king for the dead king; for the Buddha is a spiritual king. It is in this direction and not in the advent of Hellenistic art that we have to seek for the explanation why the Buddha image is absent in primitive works and appears after the Christian era.’

Hocart’s opinion is eminently applicable to Dutthagamani and the image of the Buddha in gold—even if we should not be committed to the stone image attributed to Devanampiya Tissa. King Vasabha (67–111 A.D.) had four beautiful Buddha images and a temple constructed for them in the courtyard of the Bodhi Tree; in the eastern temple attached to the same shrine Voharika Tissa (209–231 A.D.) had two of bronze, Gothabhaya who has been already mentioned, put up three of stone. We may conclude the sequence with Mahasena (275–301 A.D.) who set up two of bronze and further got his son to carve a Bodhisattva in ivory—incidentally the first known instance of the presentation of a Buddhistic deity amongst the Sinhalese. The shrine of an unnamed guardian god of the capital city is mentioned within the precincts of the Maha Vihara in a description of Dutthagamani’s war preparations against Bhalluka, the nephew of the conquered Elara.

When such continuity is appraised we are led to conclude, even against formidable opinion, that the Buddha image of the Sinhalese was the first of its kind in the Buddhist world as we have said above. The conviction is supported by the facts that it was the Sinhalese who built the two largest structures in pre-Christian Buddhist times (Lohapasada and Ruvanveli), who first committed Buddhist scriptures into writing and called an international gathering of unprecedented character, in the same remote period.

There is, however, an important factor to be noted: no regard as such was paid to an image by itself unless it enshrined a Buddha relic. These earliest images, therefore, were rather more tokens than



objects receiving the veneration that they receive in our own times. The spiritual king (Buddha) came to be substituted (had his own image-house) for the dead king (stupa or relic-house) only when the spiritual king came to life, so to say, with a relic encased in a representation of him. The image itself long preceded the cult of the image. The *Manorathapurani* and the *Papancasudani* make it quite clear that an image without an enshrined relic was held in no special regard in the early period. This emphasis on relics is further borne out by the fact that relics were enshrined in the couch which Dutthagamani had placed by the Bodhi Tree within the relic-chamber of Ruvanveli stupa.

By the time the relic came to be sought after by the Sinhalese, their land had become known for its special position in regard to Buddhism. This is clearly reflected in the words addressed by the monk who travelled to Ramagrama in India to seek relics from its Naga king for enshrinement in Ruvanveli. 'Verily, there is no understanding of the truth among you Nagas. It were fitting indeed to bear away the relics to a place where there is the understanding of the truth.'

The Buddha image which the Sinhalese may claim as their creation does not, however, give the fullest scope for a study of their sculpture. We shall, therefore, transfer our attention elsewhere and return to it in due season.



## Early sculpture

The sculptural work at Kantaka stupa and elsewhere is not the result of aniconism. The Sinhalese created the figures of Buddha very willingly, and there is not the slightest evidence that the image evolved from emblems. Consequently at Kantaka stupa and elsewhere we do not find emblems so treated as to show that the Sinhalese elevated them to the status of adoration, although they are found frequently in Indian Buddhist shrines. All we find in Ceylon are decorative motifs in an artistic scheme designed to give chaste relief to plain surfaces. We find scroll-work interspersed with animal representations in the decorative tradition, within the relic-chamber of Ruvanveli where, on the stem of the enshrined Bodhi Tree, were sculptured four-footed beasts, geese and such others as one would find associated with trees and the sites on which trees grow. Similarly on the pillars of the Lohapasada were depicted lions, tigers, in addition to devatas (tree-spirits probably) and none of them conveying any sort of esoteric symbolism, or used for cult purposes. 1-33

Although the Kantaka stupa has the earliest extant stonework as far as we can understand, we know that the art of Ruvanveli was carried out under the direction of Indagutta Thera of Rajagaha. He attended the great ceremony in company with his brother-monks from India north of the Vindhya range and as far west as Afghanistan. Could it be, therefore, that the original inspiration came from Rajagaha? But hardly anything tangible has been identified to show such a link. We have only one obscure suggestion.

When the request for relics went to India the Naga king of Rajagaha is reported as saying 'Nay, but all the jewels in the whole island of Lanka are not of so great a worth as the stone-slab at the foot of the steps.' It may be that he meant to say that he held Lanka's riches as meanly as the doormat on which one wipes one's



shoes. On the other hand, it is also probable that here we have the first hint of the feature known in Ceylon as the Moonstone. If so, we may have to trace the origin of the moonstone not to south but to north or central India.

38 The moonstone is one of the outstanding objects of Sinhalese art. It is a semi-circular slab placed at the foot of a flight of steps to serve the purpose of a door-mat. Examples in relief and simple free-standing ones have been found in Amaravati, Nagarjunikonda and elsewhere. But only in Ceylon has it been treated on such impressive lines. The Sinhalese sculptors worked methodically on measured spaces, manipulating relief, excelling in curvature and finally  
34-37 polishing the finished product.

It is strange that this object put to mean use should thus contain some of the finest examples of Sinhalese sculpture, fit to rank with the best in art. The most decorative of them usually contain a band of animals, some of them naturalistically rendered like those on Asoka's pillars; a creeper, a flight of geese, and the boss as well as the petals of the lotus carved with meticulous lines and proper proportion of parts, one to the other as well as to the whole composition. Some of the best moonstones have been conservatively dated to the eighth century. Some of the earliest examples are plain, but the treatment of the raised central lotus and the petals in them reveal the cunning hand of a sculptor with a long tradition behind him.

In the author's opinion, however, there is no convincing proof that the moonstone took so long to develop. Working with and on stone had been known at a very early date, as we have seen. Floral and animal motifs were employed in the second century B.C. Saddha Tissa the brother and successor of Dutthagamani constructed an elephant wall at Ruvanveli—an early feature surviving not only in the early fourth century Pacina-tissa-pabbata, though not in stone—and Bhatikabhaya is reputed to have caused to be fashioned clay figures resembling those in the relic-chamber in Ruvanveli. Besides these, we have the work at Kantaka stupa. We should also recall



that it was in the second century B.C. that the Sinhalese constructed the two largest Buddhist buildings known: the Lohapasada and Ruvanveli. They were of colossal size so that one should expect a decorative scheme on their surfaces and also on the outlying members and environs, though archaeologists are cautiously non-committal. In Cittala-pabbata in the south we are told of a guard-stone with such an exceedingly beautiful janitor figure that a nun was consumed to death by the vision of its loveliness. A moonstone of much earlier date, with a second century inscription close by though not precisely connected with it, was found in Oggomuva (Matale District). It is an unfinished work of unusual design and has been dated earlier than the better known Anuradhapura examples. The *nandipada* symbol in the centre of the outermost band, and the area of the discovery, support its greater age. It may well belong, therefore, to the period of the inscription.

90-93 for types

Dakkhina stupa, built by a general of Vattagamani in the first century B.C., contains some sculptured steles which may be dated a century later. Human themes had long ceased to be used and the floral designs at least are manifestly old. Here again length predominates. But the curves, which tend to broaden, differ in treatment as if the artist relied rather on free-hand drawing than on an instrument. The effect is naturally flat. The same, at Jetavana stupa of the late third century, shows better development. Incidentally, materials from the buildings of the Maha Vihara were used in the construction of this stupa and its adjuncts, so that it is not impossible for the work found there to be of an earlier date than its foundation. This is borne out by a study of limestone slabs with the representations of humped bulls and addorsed lions. Generally speaking, however, there is a greater degree of sophistication and ease than at Dakkhina, although the symbols and figure representations are archaic.

1-5, 100

2, 32, 33

A motif in which early age can be detected is the vase from which issues a tree-stem or flowers. Often the earliest examples have a thin neck and an irregular lip and, where these are very pronounced, a



date between the first centuries B.C. and A.D. is not improbable. Here again the treatment is flat, just as in the case of the larger vase on the face of guardstones at some of the earliest shrines. Between the second and fourth centuries, the motif is boldly executed, not only filling space almost too prominently but also striving after a three-dimensional effect, as may be illustrated from Toluvila. The lotuses at the mouth retain the archaic feeling although the lotus-stand itself has been finely executed. An exhibit in the Colombo Museum, also a similar subject from Anuradhapura, shows a more uniform correlation of parts as well as a general lack of 'finish' which suggests the first or second century A.D.

In dealing with the structural work and all forms of ancient art amongst the Sinhalese we must bear certain peculiarities in mind. The art was, in a broad sense, a court art, being found in royal capitals and always associated with the works which were initiated by the rulers themselves. In that sense there was no popular art. Secular buildings are not known as such. An equally important fact is that all the knowledge we have gathered is related mainly to religious buildings. In an occasional secular building like a palace, the earliest surviving example of which is dated to the eleventh century, there is none of the sculptural work found on religious structures. Thus even what we may fairly call court art was applied for a single purpose and, oddly enough, on the most lavish scale and at a cost, presumably exceeding that for the royal dwellings themselves.

This is another pointer to the attitude of Sinhalese Buddhists to whom religion was a very real and earnest motive. They took it as their self-imposed mission to guard the religion, according to their lights, against external influences, both as regards doctrinal matters and in art. They were clearly individualistic and, being inherently conservative in their attitude, they were not prone to accept any and every idea from abroad.

Still another circumstance often creates difficulties in establishing dates. This was the invariable practice of restoration or enlargement



of ruined shrines. It is freely recorded in the chronicles as well as inscriptions and is supported by archaeological research. Often, too, instances are mentioned in which building material of a structure was utilized in new foundations. Investigations have thus to proceed on cautious lines, when we deal with different parts of any constructional work. Unlike in India, we do not come across inscribed pieces or dated buildings.

On account of these factors, a survey of Sinhalese art of classical times has posed serious problems which have formed a barrier to its systematic study. The invariable procedure has been to judge from stylistic analogy to India, experts sometimes disagreeing by intervals of several centuries in assessing the age of given examples of sculpture.



## The Buddha image

64, 65, 73, 106, 107 Skill of a high order in delineating the human form is revealed in the Sinhalese Buddha image.<sup>5</sup> Many examples are extant between the second and the eighth centuries A.D. They are invariably herculean and monolithic: they were not fashioned from various blocks—at least in so far as the torso itself is concerned. Head and hands were sometimes fixed by tenons, the latter more often in the case of the standing figures. There are no figures in the recumbent position until we come to about the eleventh century. In preferring colossal dimensions the Sinhalese demonstrated their boldness of idea and sureness with tools. It is remarkable that there is not a single instance where they have failed to complete a project with aesthetic effect. When we remember how extremely few are the Buddha images of large size admissible as works of art, we cannot but recognize the dexterity of the Sinhalese sculptors.

The images are different from the Indian in several ways. The lineaments of the face reveal the distinctive native look. Preference is shown for the seated position. The hands rest on the lap on legs as lightly laid, the right on the left, and never in the inter-locked position so favoured in India. The attitude is of meditation. Except in the Pankuliya image and one of the three at Abhayagiri, which indicate *vitarka* or Discourse, the slightest suggestion of physical movement has never been given to them. In this principle of the portrayal of the spiritual lies the clue to successful achievement. Whereas many of the best Indian Buddhas convey the effect of a trace of a smile, every Sinhalese image has succeeded in interpreting the utter passionless-ness of the subject according to the canons of the Discourse on the Fruit of the Life of a Recluse by which all forms of emotion are stilled and thoughts are turned inward.

In technique there is uniformity in the position of the sitting figure. It is in the form of a perpendicular dropped to the mid-point



of a base line; the two are generally approximate in length, that is to say, the measurement from knee to knee to the height. Neither in these seated images nor in the standing ones is there the slightest deviation from the vertical, and the slight stoop sometimes seen in Indian figures never occurs in Ceylon. The weight of the upper body rests on the heavier base of the lower flexed portion with the seat, revealing a natural equilibrium. The poise of the erect body is such that it does not disturb the harmony by even a semblance of that rigidity which is a characteristic of the Jain statues in *kayotsarga*. In front elevation these latter appear flat, whereas the Sinhalese images create a feeling of solidity and are clearly three-dimensional.

Monotonous though they are on superficial appearance, a close scrutiny of the figures reveals surprising differences in the sculptor's methods of treatment of robe, face, eyes, mouth, sole, toes, hands, fingers and those several details which are, so to say, the special stamp of each worker. In the earliest figures the hands are somewhat cupped and the balls of the fingers and of the toes as well as the heels more prominent. No auspicious symbols are delineated at any time anywhere on the body—another difference from the Indian. The head is invariably joined to the body by a 'bull neck'; it is a canonical requirement, whatever its aesthetics be. Some experts opine that the robe in early images clings to the body without folds and assume the schematic arrangement of folds to indicate a later age. This is not a proper inference, being based on known and dated Gupta styles which are correct as far as that country goes. The Sinhalese early images which show faint folds in front have very pronounced markings on the reverse which cannot be explained away on such an assumption. Then again there are unusual features which are rather inexplicable, such as the smooth heads of some images at Polonnaruva. These would appear to be well before the twelfth century during which most of the work in that city was initiated, and are no doubt survivals of the work of our period.

The seated images which we have discussed so far have such fine distinctions amongst them that their age is by no means easy to



determine. We are on surer grounds with regard to the standing Buddhas. Some of the earliest of them, like those at Ruvanveli, date back to the second century A.D. and yet retain their purity of line through the plastering and the colour-wash of our times. These figures are invariably straight-backed, hieratic and in the *abhaya* pose. The lower edge of the robe has the heavy swag associated with the Andhra type, but whether it originated in Ceylon or India, is a point which needs investigation. The largest of these images is at  
74-76 Avukana and probably dates from the fifth century A.D. It is not exactly in the round, being attached to the rock behind by a narrow vertical ridge. Even so the robe is dressed on the reverse. At Maligavela there is its fellow in size but completely in the round as it had been transported to the site from a distant quarry. Incidentally, no ancient quarries have been investigated to find out the manner of working and no chippings are known from any find-spot, of a statue or a quarry.

Schematic folds are by no means an indication of late age as we note in the Avukana figure. There is great variety in the manner of delineating them and, in fact, it is the swag which is the more uniformly seen feature rather than the other. This is very evident in the three figures found in the same shrine at Medirigiriya which can be dated to the fourth century at least. They differ from one another in a marked way.

Two remarkable images were found in recent years which have been attributed to Andhra styles. The Maha Iluppallama find with its *urna*, which is not found worked into any image of the Sinhalese, is one of the best examples so far and is not only astonishingly close to a Nagarjunikonda Buddha excavated by Mr. A. H. Longhurst but is distinctly a superior work. The other is a headless image  
86 from Kuccaveli in the Amaravati style. The modelling and the general shaping of the body from the armpits downward are superb and create the illusion of warm, soft flesh. This figure has two rosettes between the ankles, a decorative detail known from Ceylon for the first time. The date of first century A.D. would not be too



extravagant for it. Whatever its material, there is no decisive factor by which it could be classed as an Indian work—if it is, it is certainly one of their finest productions.

Besides the above outline it is worthy of note that the value of a study of the Sinhalese Buddha image lies principally in the fact that the image had been fixed into artistic canons from the very commencement. The Maha Vihara, as the home of orthodoxy, no doubt was the final arbiter—which fact militated against such licence as enjoyed by Indians. The latter depicted the Master in such ways as decorating the body with necklaces, crowning the head, showing moving poses, seating him in Western style, and in those other presentations which, though a relief to the eye, certainly obscure the age of style as they do not accord with the strains of archaism. In Ceylon, therefore, it should be possible for one who is inclined to devote time for the purpose, to work back to that original type which Foucher, eminent authority though he was, could not discover. He came on a short tour and it is a great pity that he did not have the time to stay for a longer study.



## Figure sculpture

Free-standing sculptures of quality have been found on widely separated sites, in sufficient number to show that there was no distinctive guild operating in any circumscribed area. This tallies with the Buddha images which have been described in the preceding chapter, that is to say, the Sinhalese sculptor was well able to take his measure of these dimensions when the medium or 'canvas' called for it. As one whose inspiration was derived from religion he rarely turned his chisel towards secular subjects.

Some of our earliest pieces naturally come from Kantaka stupa. They are in terracotta and not stone, and are mentioned for the example they set, so to say, to the stone pieces. They are cherubic in fullness of face, the ease with which the hair has been treated and the charming effect they produce. Gentle and baby-like they reflect the beauty and innocence of a purer, earlier world than ours. They have been dated to the fifth century but could well be at least three centuries earlier.

84 Situlpavuva, once the home of recluses but to-day in the desolation of the southern wilderness, has yielded a magnificent Bodhisattva of rare workmanship. Conforming to truly Asian tastes which are offended by anatomical, though realistic, delineation of muscles and sinews, it shows a relaxed body, warm with coursing blood. The skin of the body almost suggests its texture. The face has a noble dignity enhanced by a broad brow. Two others close to it have been found at Seruvila and Thuparama (Anuradhapura) respectively  
85, 89 —the latter particularly a very fine head. A date of at least the fourth century does justice to them.

Among the full-length figures are a group of much-weathered limestone statues on the bund of Minneriya. The group represents some deities or royal donors—the distinction is never apparent from habiliments which were alike in both cases, as we may note from the



Maitreya statue apparelled royally on the orders of the fifth century King Dhatusena. The best preserved female torso and another in the Anuradhapura Museum have great affinities of style and modelling. On the analogy of the former they may be dated to the close of the third century. It may be noted that the body in general and particularly the breasts have been naturalistically rendered to show maturity and have not been idealized into youth. In discussing them we should refer to the very weathered Bhatiya statue at Ruvanveli. Inscribed, as rarely occurs in Ceylon, it is a valuable datum for estimating the age and style of sculptures—unfortunately a pious hope !

106, 107

As a matter of fact the sculptor had a lively idea of the age of his subject. In fashioning a Buddha or janitor or other figure he particularly marked out the roll of flesh below the navel and gave the strength and maturity of age to the face. Conscious, too, of the dignity of his mission he did not emphasize the anatomy, even in the case of the male figures, so as to offend modesty. We do not thus have the drapery clinging to the body so close as, for instance, to show the outlines of the pubic and allied regions, which peculiarly fascinated mainland artists of certain periods.

64, 65, 72, 87, 93

During this phase, that is to say up to the fifth century or so, the examples which survive, oddly enough, are fully in the round, whether they be large Buddha images or smaller ones of deities. Where the figures were not human but were attached to an architectural scheme, as in the case of elephant heads, it was otherwise. We might conclude from this that the earliest figures were shallow reliefs and that experience had been gained therefrom to render the free-standing figures. Such a supposition would not be justified, for we have seen the creation of the colossal stone and other Buddhas in the earliest stages without deducible evidence of a linking phase. This leads us to suppose that the reliefs and the round figures existed side by side, each serving its own purpose and so fashioned as to fit into a proper context. The reliefs such as in steles were



always subsidiary and merely formed part of a scheme of ornamentation. None of the figures attained the stature of an object of adoration in the earliest stages and, therefore, they called for no prominence in a theme which centred round the Buddha.

Three marble slabs found in 1951 in an excavation at Piduragala are deserving of mention. They were found in the niche on the west wall of the relic chamber of a stupa investigated by the archaeological authority who dated them, on style, to the fourth or fifth century. The variety of marble, it is interesting to note, is that used at Amaravati and Nagarjunikonda, and the material could have been transported from the Andhra country. But the opinion has  
71 been expressed that the figures of the Buddhas and, more particularly of the Bodhisattvas sculptured on two of these slabs, have certain iconographical characteristics peculiar to the island. This supports the important point that the variety of foreign material found is no proof that the work turned out in itself is foreign. Undoubtedly there is a Sinhalese stamp on sculpture and it is the special function of the critic to disengage the features native to it.

The two better preserved Piduragala slabs are not in high relief. The depth of the relief is effected by ingenious devices. The heads, for one, are made to stand out high from the haloed rear-ground. The separation of figures is shown most clearly about half-way horizontally along the heads and by means of the top portion of pillars with floral capitals. The arms and fingers are more prominently displayed than one should expect. The final effect is heightened by well-modelled lotus-pedestals. By this clever manoeuvre the sculptor succeeded in diverting the eye from the comparatively low relief given to the bodies themselves.

Less than a century later we come to one of the best known pieces, a slab in which has been worked, in high relief, the only pair which comes as the closest parallel to the Indian *Mithuna* idea. It is now at Isurumuniya, placed on the outer face of a rubble wall,  
64 and is popularly known as the Lovers. Experts assign it to the sixth century on general stylistic resemblances to the Gupta Age. The



ease of line coupled with the mastery of contours is as easily apparent as the sensuous charm of the mature woman who sits with natural grace on the left knee of the man. The features of the man's face are certainly not refined, but it is possible that the sculptor was determined not to go out of his way to soften them merely to fit into the refinement evoked by those of the woman. If the contrast was deliberate, it gives him credit. The rest of the male has been successfully rendered with considerable realism. Noteworthy is the almost induced modesty of dress in the woman, whose clothes reach down to the very ankles. As for the breasts, they are as always in the full style as has ever been apotheosized in Eastern thinking. The rhythm of the bodies is very marked, so also the arrangement of the woman's ornaments and the lines of the top of her nether dress. Not less skilfully have the counterparts of the stiffer male been shown. The toes and fingers are naturalistic. The legs at a first glance appear to have been slurred over because of the sculptor's characteristic weakness of rendering these members. But before such a judgment is passed it is necessary to remember that the legs, in Indian tradition, must be like those of the gazelle, long and slender. In point of fact the right leg of the man with its impression of fleshiness actually violates the canon. Lest we should be misguided into thinking that the relief here is low, compared to the rest of the bodies, we should question ourselves as to what the effect would have been if they had been done in the same depth. The highlights are the upper bodies *vis-a-vis* the seat. Accordingly the nether portions must fade away as unobtrusively as the hardly visible ornamentation of the lower section of the seat. The manipulation of planes is no less admirable than deflection of the faces—no effect of 'posing for a picture'—and of the quiet angle of the legs. We should note, too, the perspective effect given to the seat.

This sculpture is one of the finest examples of Sinhalese classical art. What it represents is an unsolved puzzle. That the man is a warrior of sorts is apparent from the hilt of a sword behind the right shoulder. Framing it is a part of an arc from which emanates what



is known as *tiruvasi* or sacred flame in Dravidian art. On that account some have been led to identify the couple as Siva and Parvati. If so, it would be one of the earliest representations of Siva wherein the crescent moon is missing. On the other hand, even as late as the twelfth century, when certain Hindu elements fused into Sinhalese art-forms and other cultural aspects, the Sinhalese used a type of *tiruvasi* on objects not necessarily associated with divinity. The bronze Elephant Lamp found as a deposit in the heart of the relic-chamber of Sutighara Cetiya of that century has the same motif.

Were it not for the fact that the face of the male figure is devoid of physical attraction, one might even be tempted to see Prince Siddhartha and Yasodhara in the pair of Lovers. It would further require that such scenes were not unusual amongst the ancient Sinhalese, but we have no evidence of it.

65 Another memorable work at Isurumuniya is the composition of Man and Horse's head sculptured in fairly high relief in a rock cavity scooped out on the side of a boulder. Because of the emphasis on the vertical, the elongation as it were, and fancied analogy with some of the details at Mahabalipuram, it has been superficially assigned to the seventh century A.D. No figure at that south Indian site, however, reaches the excellence of this royal personage—clear from the pose of a Great King—at Isurumuniya. Further, the head of the horse is very naturalistic and almost of pictorial quality so that it sharply contrasts with those found elsewhere.

The face of the man is full of dignity, particularly the upper part from the nose up. The eyebrows and forehead are proportionately higher than in most figures. The rest of the body is so modelled as to bring out the full flesh texture, with never a hint of strain as befits the relaxed pose. The softened angles formed by the folding of legs and of the lines of the hands are particularly noteworthy.

Various identifications have been successively made by experts, the latest being that the two are Parjanya and Agni. But none of them is satisfying. The head-dress, if taken as a Greek helmet,



coupled with the accompanying horse, might possibly show in this composition an early indigenous version of the Great King Alexander and his favourite Bucephalus. The popular cult of Skanda who is, according to one school of thought Alexander deified, adds to the verisimilitude.

It is of this sculpture that Laurence Binyon wrote that once seen it is impossible to forget.

Here, again, we see the avoidance of the fully frontal presentation. The device of the sculptor becomes the more easily understandable when we study his way of treating the conventional stylism and hieratic attitude under the discipline of and according to set canons. The conformity to 'rule of thumb,' so to say, is very evident in Buddha images and reliefs. Where the mind is freer, his individuality expresses itself in more liberal forms. This aspect of contrast has not received due attention in the building up of a chronology. Style has been too frequently emphasized in dating.

Some fragments, miscellaneously displayed at Isurumuniya with provenance unknown, may also be taken as belonging to the period of the two sculptures described above.

59-63, 66, 67

Many works of art have been assigned to the subsequent period up to the tenth century A.D. Yet in architecture it has been regarded as the age of plain ashlar of which the most chaste survivals are found in the Western Monasteries at Anuradhapura and their parallels at Ritigala, Arankele, Sita-kotuva (off Gurulupota), Pagollagama, and in a few other places. Plain-hewn stones, very like great timbers, and the lack of any sort of ornamentation of plinths and adjuncts are features which stand most prominently as the marks of this period.

And yet we have, on the other hand, two landmarks which make the above chronological estimate rather dubious. At Tiriyay and at Nillakgama, which fall between the eighth and the ninth centuries (as epigraphically datable), we have two clear instances which stand in contradistinction to the products of the ashlar age indicated above.

68-70



99, 91 The figures at Tiriya are found on the janitor stones. The janitor is in human form with the polycephalous cobra framing the head. In the opinion of most it represents a *naga*-king, standing protectively on guard, as these serpent denizens of the underworld do, at a place of treasure—the shrine which symbolically treasures the Buddha's body (relics). There are good reasons, on the contrary, for considering that they but continue the symbol for Prosperity denoted in the earlier types of sculptured guardstones. The figures here are distinctly different from those at Anuradhapura, which are attributed approximately to the same date. At Tiriya the figure itself is rectangularly outlined. The relief is elongated and flatter. The face is squarish and angular about the jaws and the features are more sombre and controlled. In these respects it has affinities with the features of the Man with Horse, the Buduruvegala Buddha and deities, and Kushtaraja at Weligama. They are 'archaic' as compared with the freer Anuradhapura janitors which latter, however, are in the ease of the tradition of the Isurumuniya Lovers. Is this 'archaism' a trend towards 'freezing'? It is interesting to speculate.

65, 77, 83

The architectural work at Tiriya has a classical severity comparable with that at Nillakgama. In both places it is plainness which predominates, whether of line or surface, and the economy of exterior decoration is very marked. Just what is needed of ornamentation, so to say, has been applied. In these respects, if generalizing is not too presumptuous, there has been individuality of expression at sites removed from metropolitan influences. As a matter of fact, when we consider the survivals in these outlying districts, and even such examples as from the so-called Trident Temple, we cannot be blind to the possibility that in them lies an important key to a basis of dating.

The Anuradhapura janitors, on the other hand, are in high relief akin to the Isurumuniya Lovers. Even in the several examples which survive there are marked differences. They are best seen in the examples from near Thuparama and the Ratana Pasada. The

92, 93



breadth of shoulders of the former is noticeably greater than in the latter; besides, the ornamentation is more restrained. Generally speaking, they may be taken as earlier productions.

There are many more examples, each a work of art in its own right. The subject is not original but each artist went to work on his piece with his own accumulated experience and trained skill. The results of 'copying' in our times at Peradeniya and Kandy should be a good index to recognising the ancient creative masters.

The colossal Buduruvegala Buddha attended by five male divinities and one female is an impressive group in the jungles off Wellawaya. They are carved in low relief on the face of a rock which they almost wholly occupy. The Buddha is one of the tallest of its kind, being about 43 feet high. In it is seen the discipline which prohibited liberties with the shape and delineation of this supreme figure of the Sinhalese Buddhists. Its form is austere and fixed, almost 'wooden,' recalling Indian Jina sculpture.

78-82

In contrast is the greater freedom given to the attendant figures—Bodhisattvas and the spiritual consort—some of whom have that movement and rhythm which are denied to the central figure. Plastering had originally shown the group to full advantage. This is a fact which we should bear in mind when minutely examining Man with Horse, etc. All the figures are of heroic size and some bear emblems, like the *visva-vajra* or pendent lotus-bud, which are not found except in Ceylon, and even so only at Wellawaya and Galebedda.

There are several characteristic features which are common to the group. The expression is solemn, the face is squarish, the eyebrows raised and the head-dress (or crown) is placed overlapping the brow in such a way as to render the face flat. The tendency to general immobility of pose, in spite of the ease of line of the group on the proper right, is also noteworthy. Even the fingers, which are prominently modelled, have a stereotyped appearance.

We have the same effect to a marked degree with Kushtaraja or Avalokitesvara, another colossal low-relief carved in the niche of a



83 solitary boulder. This boulder is opposed by another, and a short gap separates the two. This figure, however, is more elaborately habited and bejewelled than the others. It is probably somewhat later in date on that account, as also for the reasons that its several Buddhas have been given a prominence so far iconographically likely in later times, and the stiffening of the garment particularly at the sides. In this and at Buduruvegala and Tiriyay the shoulders are markedly square.

The colossal treatment in a rock niche on a much larger scale is found in the standing Buddha at Sesseruva. Its date is undecided but is probably linked with that of the Avukana Buddha which is close by. The technique of the drapery of a recumbent Buddha at Sesseruva, added to the niche of the standing colossus, echoes the 175-foot Buddha of Bamiyan in Afghanistan which is dated to the early Christian eras. Incidentally, it was at Bamiyan that a portion of the Vinaya of the Lokuttaravadin School of Buddhists was found.

It is curious that the figures of the Buddha are most often in large size in our period, while the opposite is the case with other figures. This is a peculiarity which shows not only the especial attention paid to the former but also indicates that the sculptors were confident in the management of material in the mass, and were sure of their tools of trade, of the medium as well as of themselves. It is thus proof of the art tradition and skill of the Sinhalese to an equal degree with the Indian. The difference lies in the conservatism of the former within which lies embedded an archaic talent, contrasted with the greater variety of the Indian, as is natural in an inhabitant of not so much a country as a continent.

104, 105 The figure of a Bahirava, too, stands as janitor sometimes in certain places, temples, or palaces. This is more a symbolic figure, being connected with the *Yaksha* cult and is exaggeratedly delineated. It is especially so in the treatment of eyes, belly and the lower body and the general effect is grotesque. The eyes invariably protrude, the belly appears a drag which the legs can hardly carry. Nevertheless, the relief is bold and skilful.



A pair of Bahiravas, which are at the south entrance of the proper Abhayagiri stupa and officially dated to the tenth century may be taken as typical of the class. It is interesting to see that the face of one of them bears a striking similarity to the man in the Isurumuniya Lovers. The difference of four centuries in date enhances the value of the comparison.

The finest of all Bahirava janitors are a pair now to be seen at a ruined shrine east of Rajagirilena in Mihintale. They are much smaller in dimensions than those in the Abhayagiri and at the Palace in Anuradhapura, but they are in noticeably high relief; the planes of the body and of the frame in which they have been set almost converge. This near-contact is much more evident with this type of janitor than with the cobra-king. Furthermore, the Bahirava virtually fills the frame, whereas it is usual for the body of the cobra-king to be markedly narrower than the width of the frame. This particular pair deserve to be reckoned among the best of figure sculpture. In some respects they are technically and artistically superior to the Isurumuniya Lovers. They should be dated to the sixth century at the latest, but are probably earlier. 104

From the fact that Bahirava janitors are found close to an abandoned tank called Wahalkada, in one of the most desolate regions known as Padaviya the very history of which seems to have halted, it would be reasonable to deduce that the tenth century would be the lower limit of Bahirava janitors. Padaviya is hardly known from records though inscriptional evidence shows activity by the twelfth-century King Parakramabahu I. However, the Bahiravas are not put to this functional purpose in his own capital where we have numerous traces of his work, and we may thus conclude the figures to be surviving from earlier works which he enlarged. Whether the tenth century would be consonant with a symbolic scheme in which cobra-kings play such a free part and so extensively, needs to be elucidated. On the other hand Bahiravas are cruder of execution as they are more primitive in idea. The probability of their being earlier than cobra-kings cannot be discounted in the circumstances.



They have been rendered with a certain amount of freedom, though not to the extent of the other janitors, and are entitled to attention. The two types have been 'inset' properly, the large and squat Bahiravas within a more squarish 'frame,' the long and slender cobra-kings in a more elegant background with the clustering of details to frame the arch from shoulder to shoulder in harmony with the several hoods.

Janitors of normal appearance are known from about the fifth century as found in Runumaha-vehera.

So far our discussion has been mainly confined to male figures. In fact, this is inevitable as the examples of female figures are comparatively few. The explanation is that the art is religious and the people were pre-occupied with cult and allied objects in which women, even female deities, found little place.

In the frieze on the north face of the Lion Bath at Mihintale there is a weathered figure of a danseuse attended by a flute-player and a drummer on either side. It is a solitary example and small in size. It is interesting for that stylization, from which must certainly have originated the conventionalized stone-reliefs of dancing women at Yapahuva and their types in wood at Embekke and Hanguranketa (in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively). It is odd, however, that the figures of women-dancers found at Polonnaruva and Horana, though themselves conventionalized, are freer than the Mihintale example. A bronze figure from Polonnaruva found buried in a pot, along with her jewellery, has been more freely executed than this example from the Lion Bath, which is probably contemporaneous with the Piduragala marble plaques, to judge from the affinity of the pillar-capitals of the two.

The most noteworthy of female figures are not found in stone but in paint. They are the well-known examples from Sigiriya of the late fifth century whose (fragmentary) survivals are found at Vessagiriya, too, in Anuradhapura. Were more female representations found, in whatever medium, it would be possible to work out a satisfactory chronological sequence from this fixed point in time.



As it is, the Anuradhapura Museum torsos and the figures from the bund of Minneriya are seen by comparison with the Sigiriya art—allowing for the difference in media—to be decidedly older works.

The dearth of figure sculpture in other media than stone also emphasizes the skill of the worker in stone. Actually there are probably less than six notable examples of some size of the early period to which we may turn with some degree of attention. Four of the best of them, in bronze or copper alloy, are represented in the Colombo Museum by the Buddhas from Badulla or Pattini, the original of the latter is in the British Museum. In date they range from the third or fourth century to about the eighth century as judged by critics. Ivories of the earliest known phase survive only in one example from Ruvanveli; it is probably a primitive cult object. And yet there is record of ivory work done by the Sinhalese in the period in which work was done at Begraum, Afghanistan.

Stone is thus seen to have been the favourite material of the Sinhalese sculptor and his achievements in this medium have earned him a high place in Asian art.



## Animal and other subjects

The Buddha's injunction in the *Cullavagga* against the depicting of living subjects from the animal world, though not closely followed by Sinhalese artists of later centuries, yet kept them restrained during the earliest phases, to a greater degree than in other Buddhist lands. It is most evident in the dearth of female figures.

The most favourite animal motif seems to have been that of the elephant, and no doubt for the reason that Ceylon elephants were highly prized. History records that a war was waged in the twelfth century in which the price of these huge beasts played a prominent part. In the great annual pageant known as the *Esala Perahera* in Kandy we see that the chief attraction is this pachyderm. We have seen how Saddha Tissa who completed Ruvanveli had a retaining wall of elephants, *hatthipakara*, a fourth-century example of which survives at Pacina-tissa-pabbata. Elephant-head dados are found at Kantaka stupa in Mihintale.

Unlike the lion and the horse, and to some degree the bull, the elephant received naturalistic treatment from the sculptor. A fine example of elephant heads is found in the Bodhi-ghara of Nillak-gama. It can be dated, for a devotee gifted ten of them and left a donative legend in the eighth-ninth-century script by the group. And we could almost count those he contributed.

The features correctly depict the characteristic protuberances and dents, with the folds formed when the trunk is turned or lifted.

Groups of whole elephants and in action are found at Anuradhapura, both in the ancient Royal Park and in a line with it at Isurumuniya. The first are in low relief and are spiritedly portrayed, sporting in a lotus pool. There is no doubt that the sculptor had watched herds of animals at play in their wild haunts, even as we to-day are fond of doing. Only with this first-hand knowledge and keen observation could he have obtained the realistic effect. The



Isurumuniya group is more varied in its representation, the animals being sometimes presented frontally, sometimes from the side and in part or whole. There are two sets which suggest that the work was by two men with different techniques, or more probably done at different times. 53, 54

- Isurumuniya is sited along the same slope of Tisa-veva and below the bund of that reservoir, and the elephants are on the face of a boulder by which is a pond. The Royal Park elephants are similarly sited, but instead of a pond there is an ancient bath-house above the roof of which the group has been sculptured. It seems likely, therefore, that the Isurumuniya pond had itself been once a bath-house. So far as is known it has not been excavated and the yard bordering it has the appearance of being filled up. Further beyond and away from it fairly large ponds have been cleared; these are related to that with the elephant group in much the same way as the 'long ponds' off the Royal Park bath-house. The area intervening between the present confines of the Royal Park and Isurumuniya has also not been investigated. It is most probable that the Isurumuniya pond had originally been a bath-house for the residents of the monastery.

The sculptures we have described would appear to belong to about the eighth century.

To the same period may be assigned two other sculptures. One of them is of a lively forest scene, much weathered by exposure, on a balustrade found in a building near Thuparama. Its interest is heightened by the fact that it is the most complete composition from real life, so to say, which survives from the works of ancient sculptors. There is no stylistic treatment here. The whole has been artlessly rendered, as with our elephant group at the Royal Park, with an eye to faithfulness. 49, 50

- The lion of terrifying aspect on some balustrades is the other example. Here it is significant to note the more or less frontal view of the beast, which has been given a form different from the pug-nosed type usually shown both in moonstones of the period and in 45



other ways in later times. Care has been given to obtain clear and sharp lines which are, in this, seen to better advantage than in most sculptures.

34-37 The horse and the humped bull are two of the animals most frequently seen, specially as moonstone reliefs. Though they are delineated with some spirit, they are not too successful. As far as the bull is concerned this is rather unaccountable. Indeed, it would be justifiable to assume that quadrupeds have not generally found much favour.

The wild Himalayan geese, generally called swans, occur on moonstones as well as in friezes. They are depicted as plump birds and rendered better than the quadrupeds mentioned above, the elephant excepted.

51, 52 The *makara* is the one mythical beast rendered with abandon, for it affords a play for fancy. It has been used liberally as architectural embellishment and even serves as a model for gargoyles and water-spouts. It occurs also in balustrades where the faceted volute which issues from its mouth curls upward into a pretty pattern. Amazing curves, eddies and whorls done accurately with sharp tools  
42-48 characterize it on all sides.

69 The Royal Maned Lion or *Kesara-sinha* is found powerfully sculptured with the natural strength one associates with it. No free-standing worthwhile example of the beast, however, is known.

12, 110-112 The polycephalous cobra, a favourite theme, is almost ubiquitous. There are quite a number in high relief and though the hoods tend to be stylized, the body is realistic and cleverly delineated to bring out the smooth tubular form. They date from about the fourth century. One of the earliest, which is perhaps two or more centuries before this, is found sculptured on the face of a natural rock by a pond at Mihintale.

Vegetal motifs provided opportunity for the display of intricate curves, spirals and a hundred such fanciful twists. Creepers were the most popular and these, too, were in relief. But the selection has been from those commonly known, so that such kinds as the



honeysuckle are absent. The sculptor seems to have revelled in the meanderings of the tendrils and the directions of flower or leaf. The ornate examples of these and of the *makara* may be ascribed to the eighth and ninth centuries. In studying them one recalls the opinion expressed by one authority on the seventeenth and eighteenth century styles: 'The artist's invention is becoming exhausted and he hides the lack of ideas under elaborate flourishes and new shapes.'<sup>6</sup> For, however deft with his implements, he seems to have gone out of his way into contortive and complicated lines in order to attract attention, instead of depending on a few bold strokes. In these twistings and curves one senses a channelled rhythm rather than a free and natural flow. 1, 13, 14, 23, 30

At Nillakgama, however, the spirit is different and the work seems more attuned to classical harmony. Here we see a unique instance of the transference of the motifs on the moonstone to the door-jambs and lintel; the moonstone itself is plain. The creeper follows the Anuradhapura tradition at its best and reveals no strained or mechanical effect. In passing, it is noteworthy that the animal representations, normally found on the moonstone, have been distributed between the doorway and the plinth which stands in the centre of the shrine as the base for the Bodhi tree. 70

The lotus, the flower intimately connected with Buddhist art, occurs so frequently and in such combinations as to defy detailed description. From medallion or relief to flower-altars fashioned out of large single blocks of stone, it is found in a hundred forms. The most arresting examples come from Ruvanveli and Tiriya and date from at least the sixth century to the eighth. Lotus stalks, intertwining with leaves most realistically sculptured, end in an open flower which is the 'table top' of the flower-altar. There are also instances of a vast hemispherical block turned into the same form. On a smaller scale we have large vases surviving at the Twin Ponds, Anuradhapura. These should date back to the eighth century or earlier. 113-122



As we follow Classical Sinhalese Art to the close of the tenth century, we see that the people of the small island had a tradition of their own upon which they could take their stand with other peoples. It does not suggest superiority over others. In point of fact there are gaps—perspective is almost unknown, large spaces are avoided, variety is restricted, and these suggest weakness. The conservatism which was a characteristic of that tradition holds within it the secret of its age for, though forms underwent slow changes with the passing centuries, the essential ideas persisted through changing aspects. In eliminating the externals we should be enabled to discover the central theme of age.

The works fashioned by the sculptor subserved religion. There was no art for art's sake. Beauty was created in honour of the Buddha and his teachings; secular art as such was absent. The highest in the land strove not for themselves but for the cause of the Buddha, in ways they understood. Some would call them monk-ridden; others would say that they were moved by devotion to the faith. It depends on whether one is too sophisticated to get a glimpse of the soul of the past.

There are hardly any dated works of the Sinhalese, still less labelled pieces; in these respects they are at variance with those of other people. The Sinhalese boldly tackled the monumental and in this, too, they diverged similarly. They preferred classical simplicity to the ornate, which has to be conceded by even those who see more of Andhra among the Sinhalese than circumstances justify.

The Sinhalese gave proof of originality as evident from examples of architecture, sculpture and literature. Their language is a separate language with its own form and occupies its special place amongst the speech of men. Similarly their works of art have a right to be classed separately.

Their land came to be known as the Home of Theravada where 'primitive' Buddhism was preserved, and in search of which many came from across the sea. Thus the ideas of art were woven round



this central theme and were expressed with an authoritative—almost authoritarian—form. Herein lies the significance of their works of art.

The tenth century saw Anuradhapura in the hands of a south Indian invader who, seeing the vulnerability of the ancient capital, pitched camp at Polonnaruva in the south-east. But the spirit which had moved the Sinhalese over 1,000 years was not crushed, for the foe was driven out half a century later. The subsequent generations of kings continued to reside in the new capital for about two centuries. Thus in Polonnaruva was continued the next phase of Sinhalese art tradition.

Anuradhapura soon became but a memory, a wistful but glorious one. At Polonnaruva the story of sculpture and other forms of art was taken up again. This, too, is full of interest and has been well told elsewhere.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> M. N. Saha, F.R.S., *Calendar through Ages and its Reform* in the B.C. Law Vol. Pt. II. See also *Concise Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, ed. F. W. Cornish (1898, John Murray, London), pp. 161-2.

<sup>2</sup> W. F. Stutterheim in *Djawa*, Vol. 6, p. 333ff.

<sup>3</sup> S. Paranavitana, *Sigiri, the Abode of a God-King* in the Centenary Volume of the JOURNAL of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch), and *Some Aspects of the Divinity of the King in Ancient India and Ceylon* in the PROCEEDINGS AND TRANSACTIONS of the All-India Oriental Conference, 16th Session, 1951, Vol. II.

<sup>4</sup> *The Art and Architecture of India*.

<sup>5</sup> See D. T. Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, Colombo 1957.

<sup>6</sup> A. M. Hocart, sometime Archaeological Commissioner.



## Chronological Table (Selected)

B.C.	? 307-247	Devanampiya Tissa
	? 306-246	Introduction of Buddhism
	? 267-207	Uttiya
	161	Dutthagamani
	137	Saddha Tissa
	119	Lanja Tissa
	119	Khallatanaga
	103	Vattagamani
	89	Vattagamani (restored)
	77	Mahaculi Mahatissa
	44	Kutakanna Tissa
	22	Bhatikabhaya
A.D.	7	Mahadathika Mahanaga
	19	Amanda Gamani
	29	Kanirajanu Tissa
	32	Culabhaya
	33	Sivali
	33	Ilanaga
	67	Vasabha
	114	Gajabahu-kagamani
	136	Mahallakanaga
	143	Bhatika Tissa
	167	Kanitthatissa
	209	Voharika Tissa
	243	Samghatissa
	247	Sirisamghabodhi
	249	Gothabhaya
	263	Jettha Tissa I
	275-301	Mahasena
	301-328	Sirimeghavanna



328-337	Jettha Tissa II	718-724	Aggabodhi V
337-365	Buddhadasa	724-730	Kassapa III
365-406	Upatissa I	730-733	Mahinda I
406-428	Mahanama	733-772	Aggabodhi VI
455-473	Dhatusena	772-777	Aggabodhi VII
473-491	Kassapa I	777-797	Mahinda II
491-508	Moggallana	797-801	Udaya I (Dappula II)
508-516	Kumaradasa	801-804	Mahinda III
517-518	Upatissa II	804-815	Aggabodhi VIII
518-531	Silakala	815-831	Dappula II (III)
531-551	Moggallana II	831-833	Aggabodhi IX
551-569	Kitti Sirimegha	833-853	Sena I
569-571	Mahanaga	853-887	Sena II
571-604	Aggabodhi I	887-898	Udaya II (I)
604-614	Aggabodhi II	898-914	Kassapa IV
614-619	Moggallana III	914-923	Kassapa V
619-628	Silameghavanna	923-924	Dappula III (IV)
628-639	Aggabodhi III	924-935	Dappula IV (V)
639-650	Dathopatissa I	935-938	Udaya III (II)
650-659	Kassapa II	938-946	Sena III
659-667	Dathopatissa II	946-954	Udaya IV (III)
667-683	Aggabodhi IV	954-956	Sena IV
683-684	Datta	956-972	Mahinda IV
684-718	Manavamma	972-982	Sena V
		982-1029	Mahinda V



## Glossary

**Abhaya** used here to describe a hand gesture (*mudra*). The right palm is turned outwards as if to mean 'fear not' (see Vitarka).

**Bahirava.** Squat ugly figure with heavy belly and short legs. Associated with the underworld.

**Bodhi.** Wisdom, enlightenment, insight, etc. The *figus religiosa* tree under which Buddha-state was reached is familiarly called by this name.

**Bodhi-ghara.** House (i.e., shrine) of this tree, the tree being the central object of veneration.

**Bodhisattva.** One aspiring to Buddha-state; most generally used of a divinity of the Mahayana form of Buddhism.

**Cetiya.** See Dagaba.

**Dagaba.** Sinhalese for stupa, thupa, cetiya. It is a solid dome-shaped brick structure raised on a plinth. At the base of the dome are three ledges, and crowning the dome is a solid cube of masonry from which tapers a spire capped by a finial ornament. Relic-chambers occupy the heart of the dome and often several other positions too.

**Devale.** Shrine of Mahayana (or Hindu) god. (The latter is called Kōvil, too.)

**Dhyana, dhyani.** Meditation, iconographically expressed by figure with legs folded, hands on lap and eyes half-closed.

**Dorje.** Tibetan for vajra (see below).

**Esala Perahera.** Sinhalese month beginning about mid-July and lasting four weeks. Perahera: a pageant in honour of Buddha and deities.

**Guardstone.** Tablet placed vertically on each side of the first step to a shrine. Generally carved.

**Hatthipakara.** Retaining wall (pakara) with elephant (hatthi) figures shown supporting it.



**Janitor.** Human figure carved in guardstone, mostly with cobra-heads framing head.

**Jina.** Used here for the originator of Jainism (Buddhists use it for Buddha).

**Kayotsarga.** In Jain statuary, a stiff position of utter immobility.

**Kesara Sinha.** Hairy lion, the royal maned lion (Kesara — Caesar).

**Kulam.** Tamil word for reservoir, locally styled ' tank.' (Sinhalese —veva.)

**Makara.** Mythical composite beast.

**Mithuna.** ' Friend-pair'; figure of a man and a woman as attendants.

**Naga.** Cobra. Cobras given multiple hoods are royal.

**Nandipada.** Footmark of Nandi (Siva's bull). Buddhists prefer ' Buddha-pada.' It is an auspicious sign given to spiritual teachers and resembles a stalk on base with two slightly curving arms on each side, somewhat like a lampstand.

**Parinibbana.** Death of the Buddha (or of Mahavira of the Jains). Nibbana signifies that the person will not be re-born.

**Pokuna.** Sinhalese for pond, used freely in local archaeology.

**Sage of the Sakyas.** Buddha, being a member of the Sakya tribe.

**Sthamba.** Free-standing pillar (Sanskrit).

**Stupa.** See Dagaba.

**Stupika.** A small stupa-like relief meant to represent a stupa.

**Tara.** The spiritual consort of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva.

**Theravada.** The Word of the Elders, (southern Buddhism as distinguished from Mahayana or the northern).

**Tiruvasi.** Sacred cosmic flame, framing dancing Siva figures.

**Tivanka.** Standing figure with torso at different angle from head and legs.

**Urna.** Auspicious dot on the forehead, symbolical of one long hair.

**Vahalkada.** Ornamental tall screen at each cardinal point of a Dagaba.

**Vihara.** Originally pleasure garden, now a Buddhist temple-cum-monastery.



**Vinaya.** The rules of the order of Buddhist monks.

**Vajra.** Thunderbolt emblem, in appearance like a less elaborate royal crown. Visva-vajra, when two or more occur in the same unit.

**Vitarka.** Discourse, expressed with the right hand (of the Buddha image) open, but the third and fourth fingers bent to the palm; or sometimes with thumb and forefinger of open hand joined to make a circle.

**Yaksha.** Spirit of tree, forest, water, etc. Yakshi is feminine. Originally even Buddha, Mahinda, etc., had been called this. The present use is for a demon.

### Suggestions for further reading

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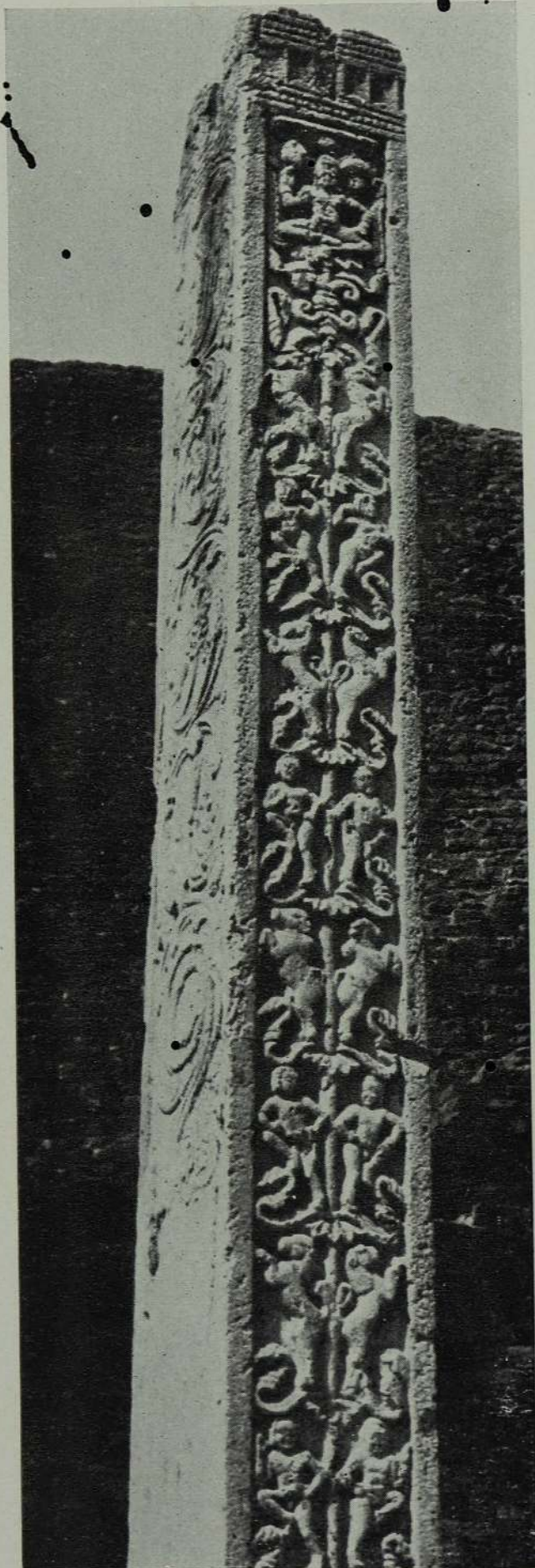
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1, 2. ANURADHAPURA. Stele at Dakkhina Thupa, details on two sides.





3.4. ANURADHAPURA.  
Details of stele in fig. 1.





5. ANURADHAPURA. Detail  
of lower section of stele in fig. 1.





6. ANURADHAPURA.  
Detail of upper section of  
stele at Abhayagiri Dagaba  
(for other face see fig. 99).

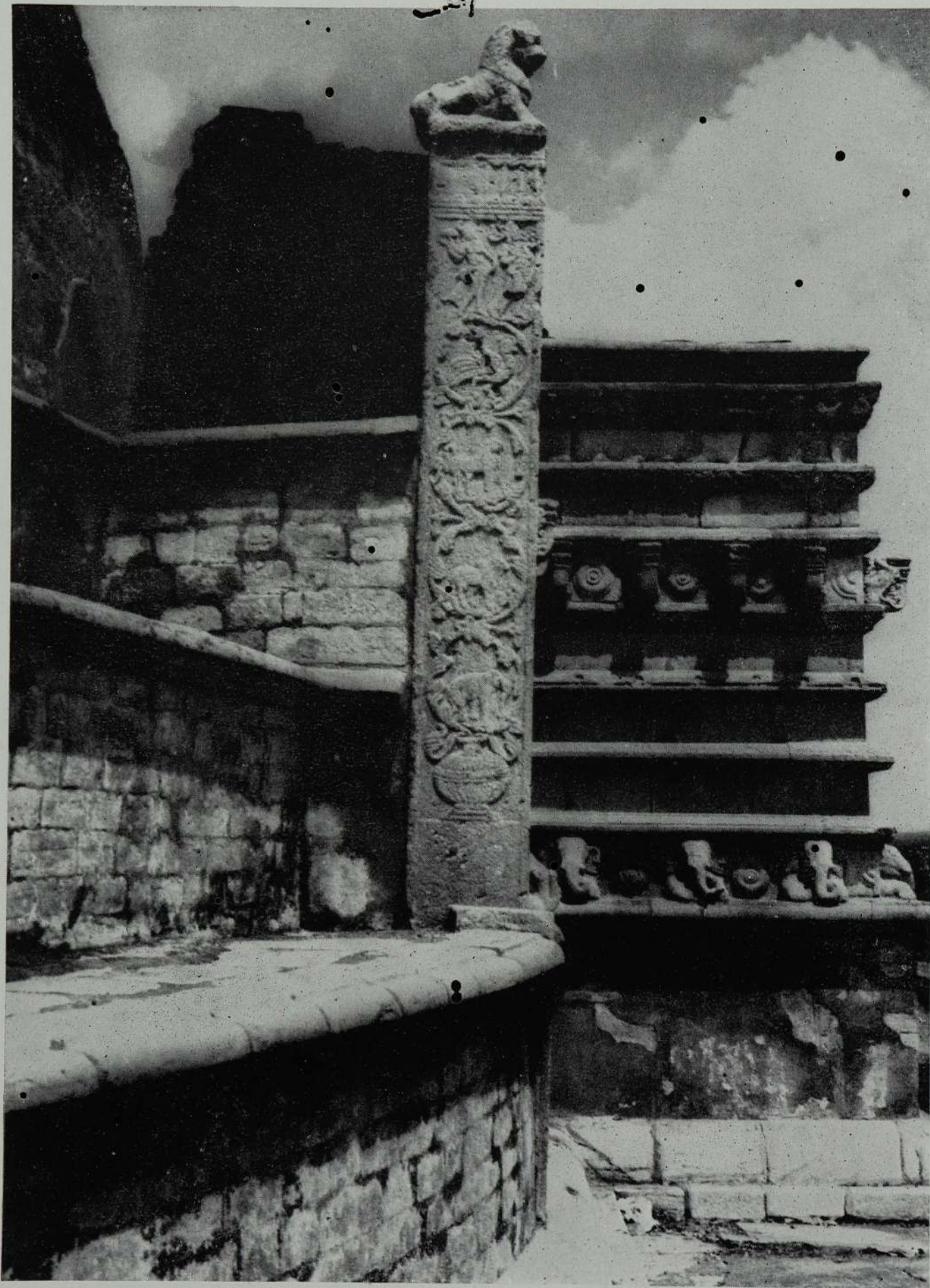


✓  
7. ANURADHAPURA.  
Dwarf (gana) supporting  
auspicious vase-and-sprig  
on stele at Jetavana Dagaba  
(left).

8. ANURADHAPURA.  
Fragment of stele from  
Abhayagiri Dagaba (right).

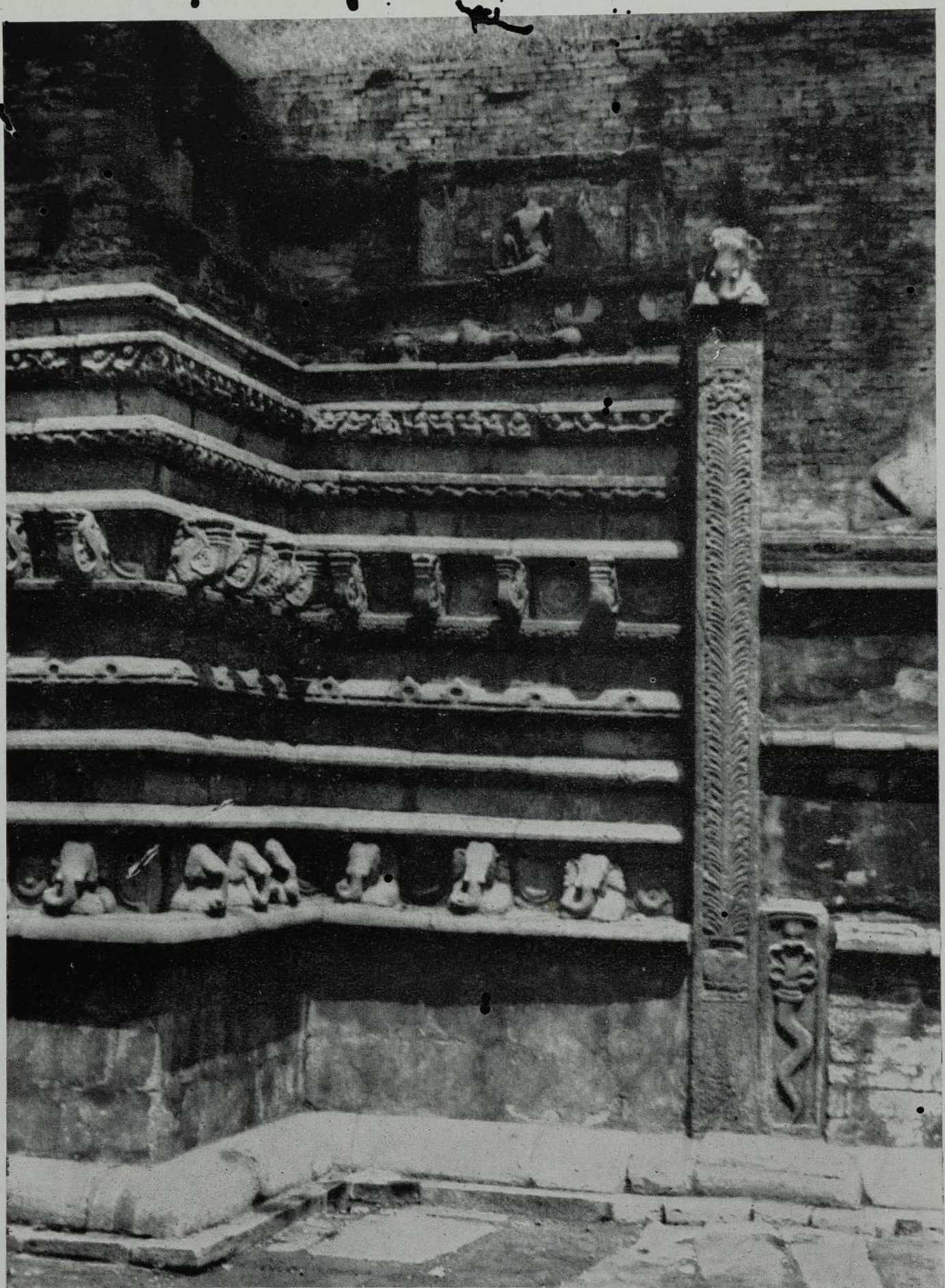






9. MIHINTALE. Stele by the northern Vahalkada at Kantaka Cetiya.





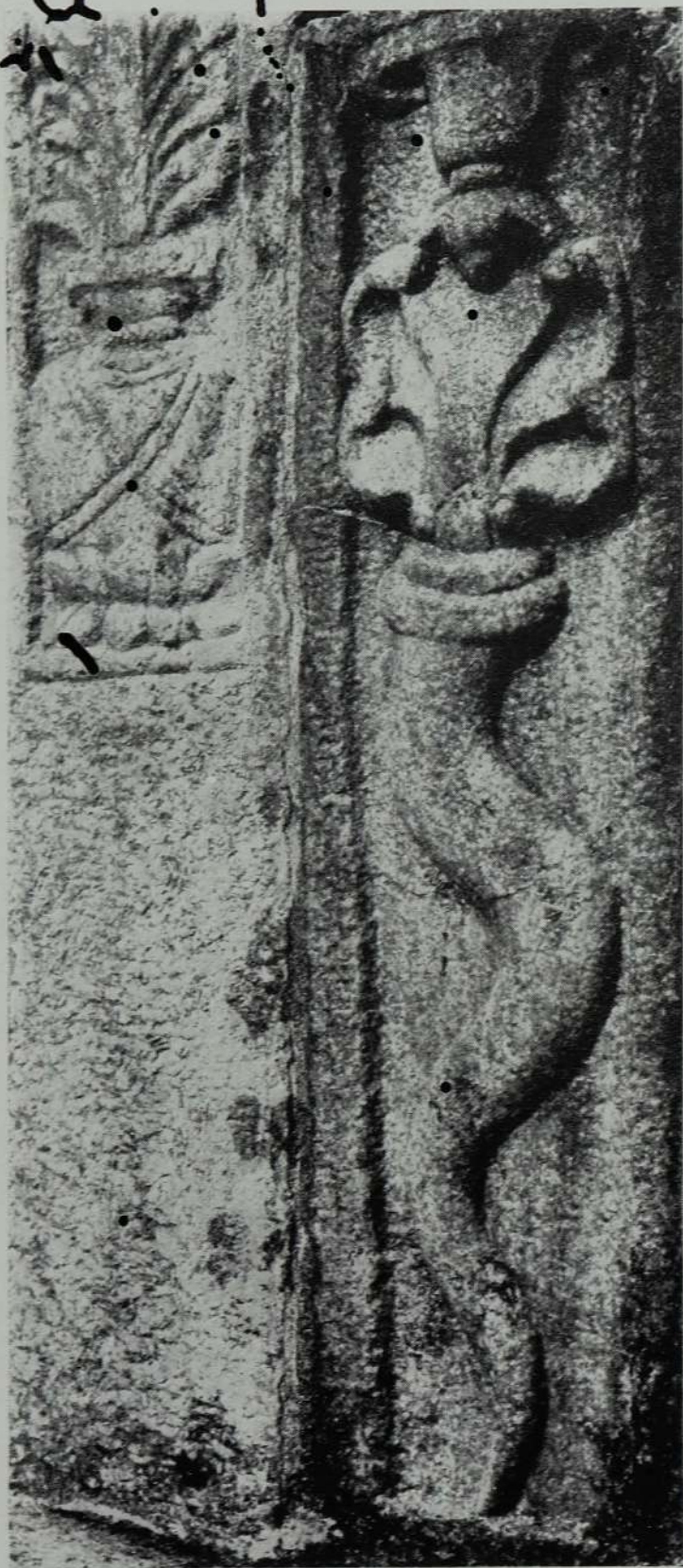
10. MIHINTALE. Stele at Kantaka Cetiya with a section of the eastern Vahalkada.  
(Steles like this are monolithic, often 14 feet high.)





11. MIHINTALE. Frieze of ganas from the eastern Vahalkada at Kantaka Cetiya (detail of upper course from fig. 10).





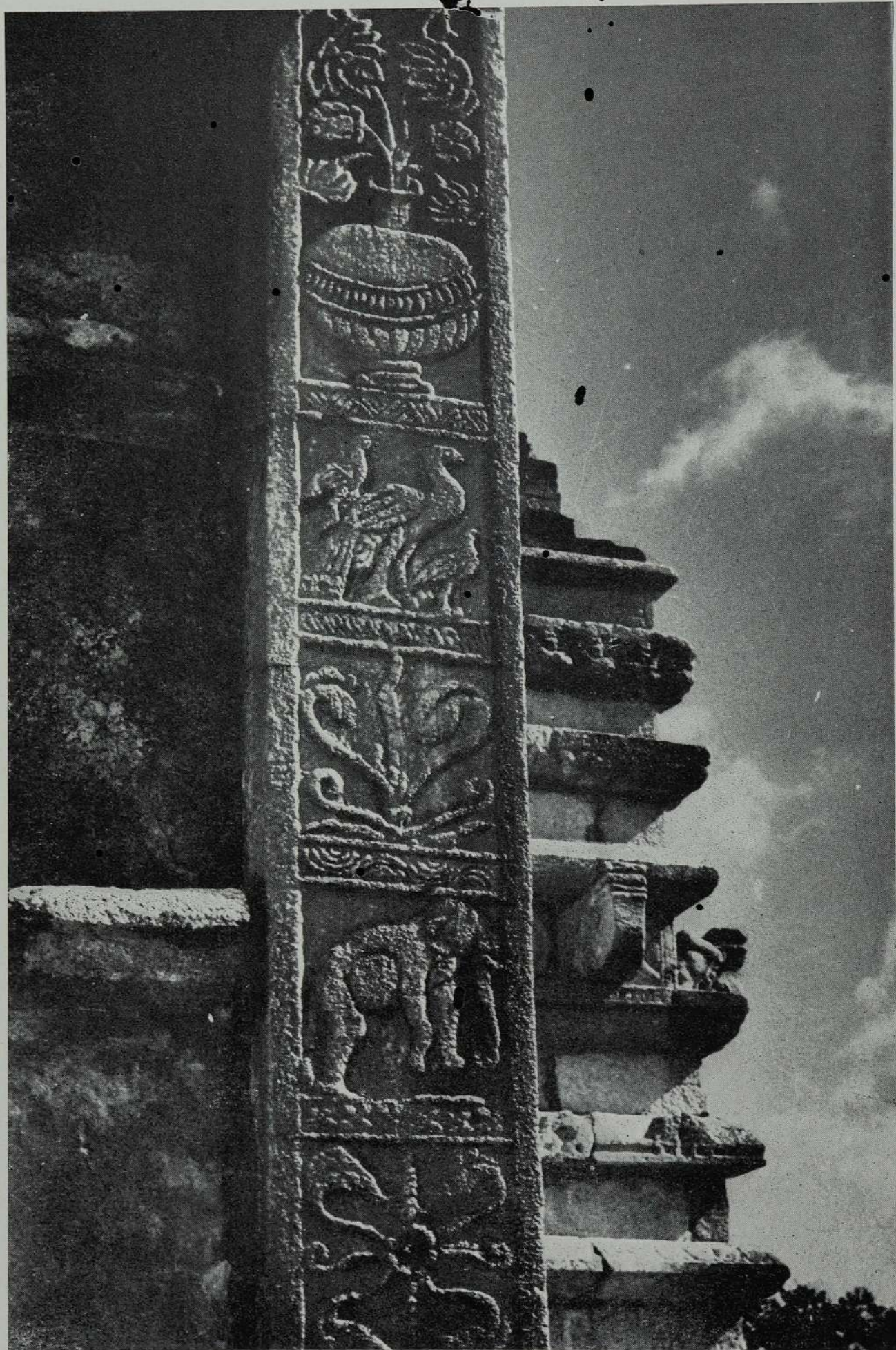
12, 13. MIHINTALE. Stele details from Kantaka Cetiya.





14. MIHINTALE. Stele designs at Kantaka Cetiya.





15. MININTALE.  
Stele at  
Kantaka Cetiya.





16, 17. MIHINTALE. Details of stele (fig. 15) at Kantaka Cetiya.





18, 19. MIHINTALE. Details of stele (fig. 15) at Kantaka Cetiya.





20, 21. MIHINTALE. Stele, and detail, from  
Kantaka Cetiya.





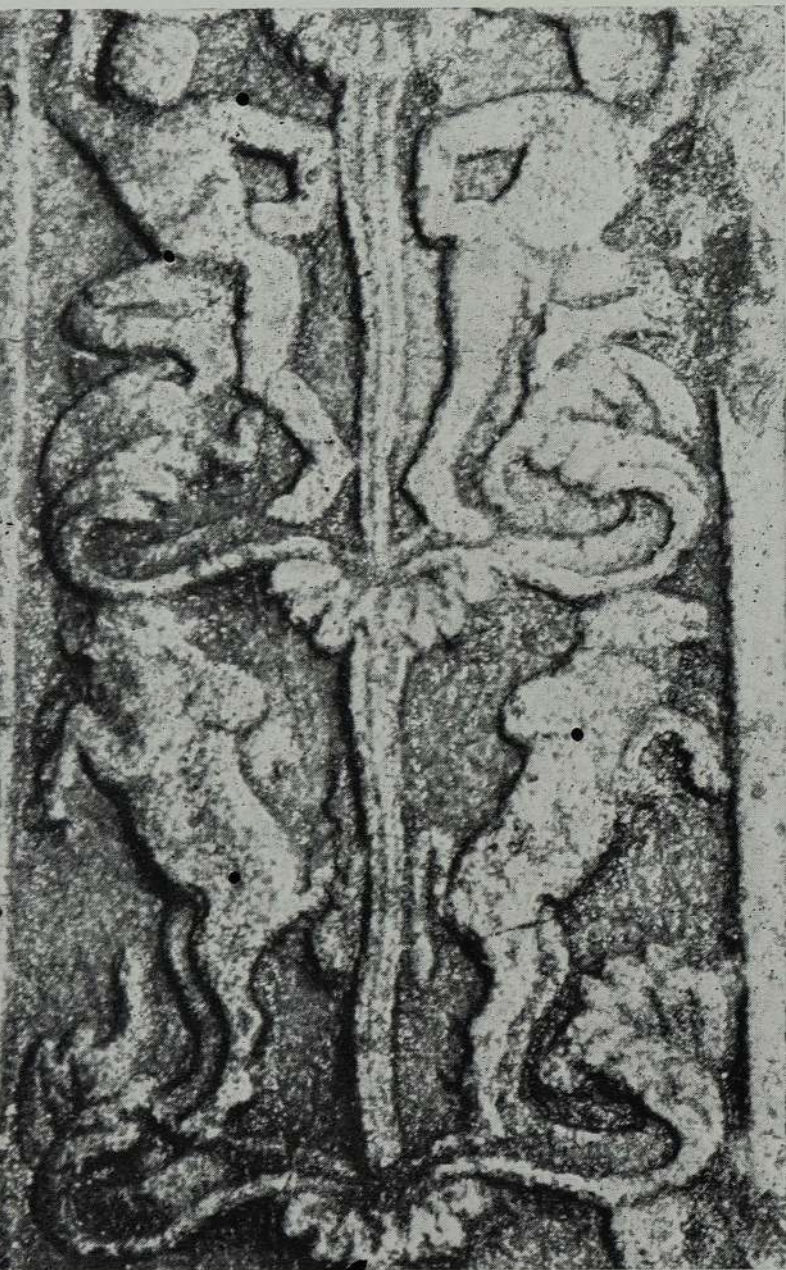
22, 23. MIHINTALE. Details of stele (fig. 20).  
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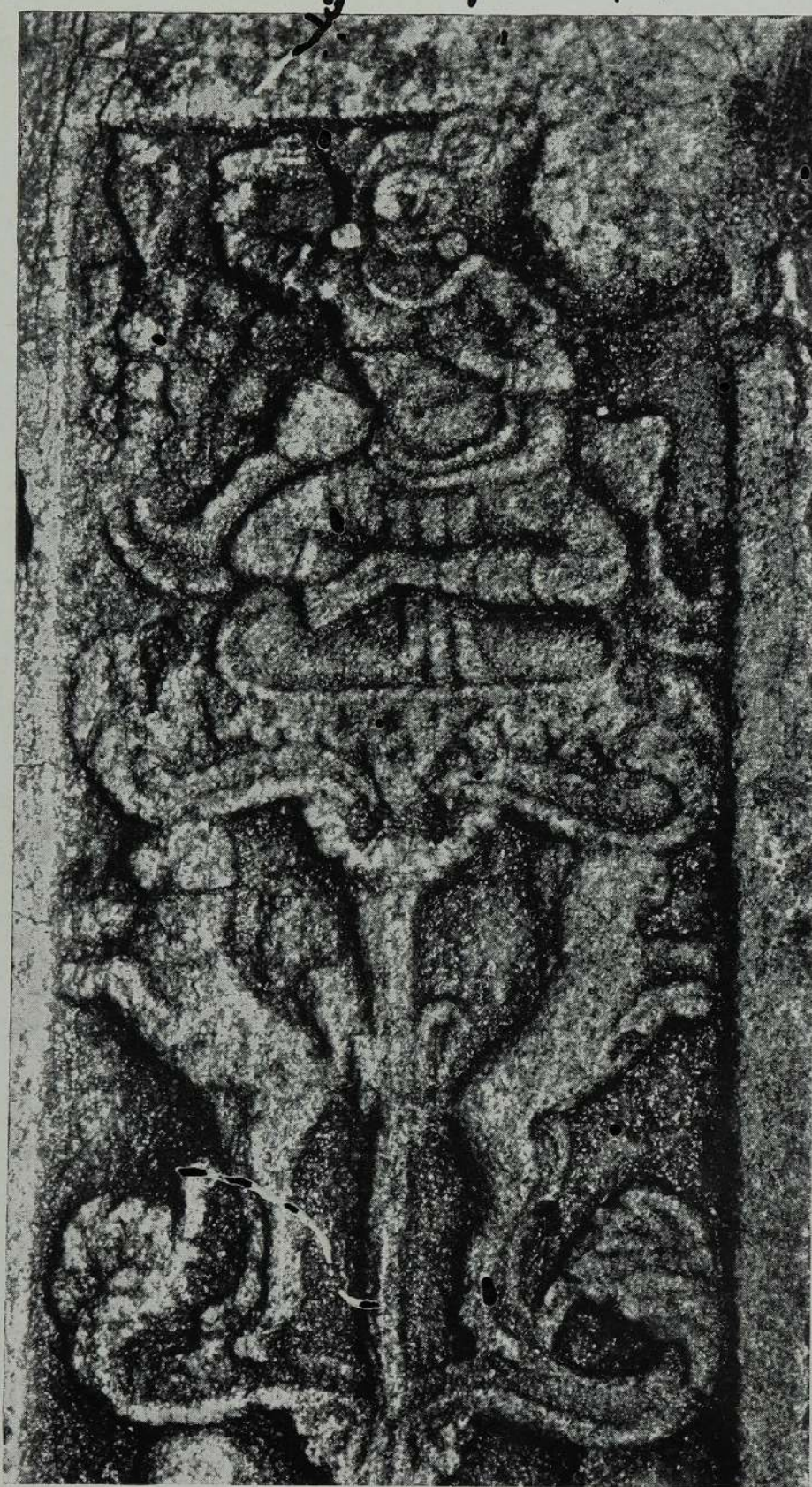
24, 25. MIHINTALE. Stele, and detail, at Kantaka





26, 27. MIHINTALE. Details of fig. 24.





28. MIHINTALE. Detail of upper section of fig. 24.



29. MIKIN-  
TALE. Stele  
detail from  
K a n t a k a  
Cetiya.



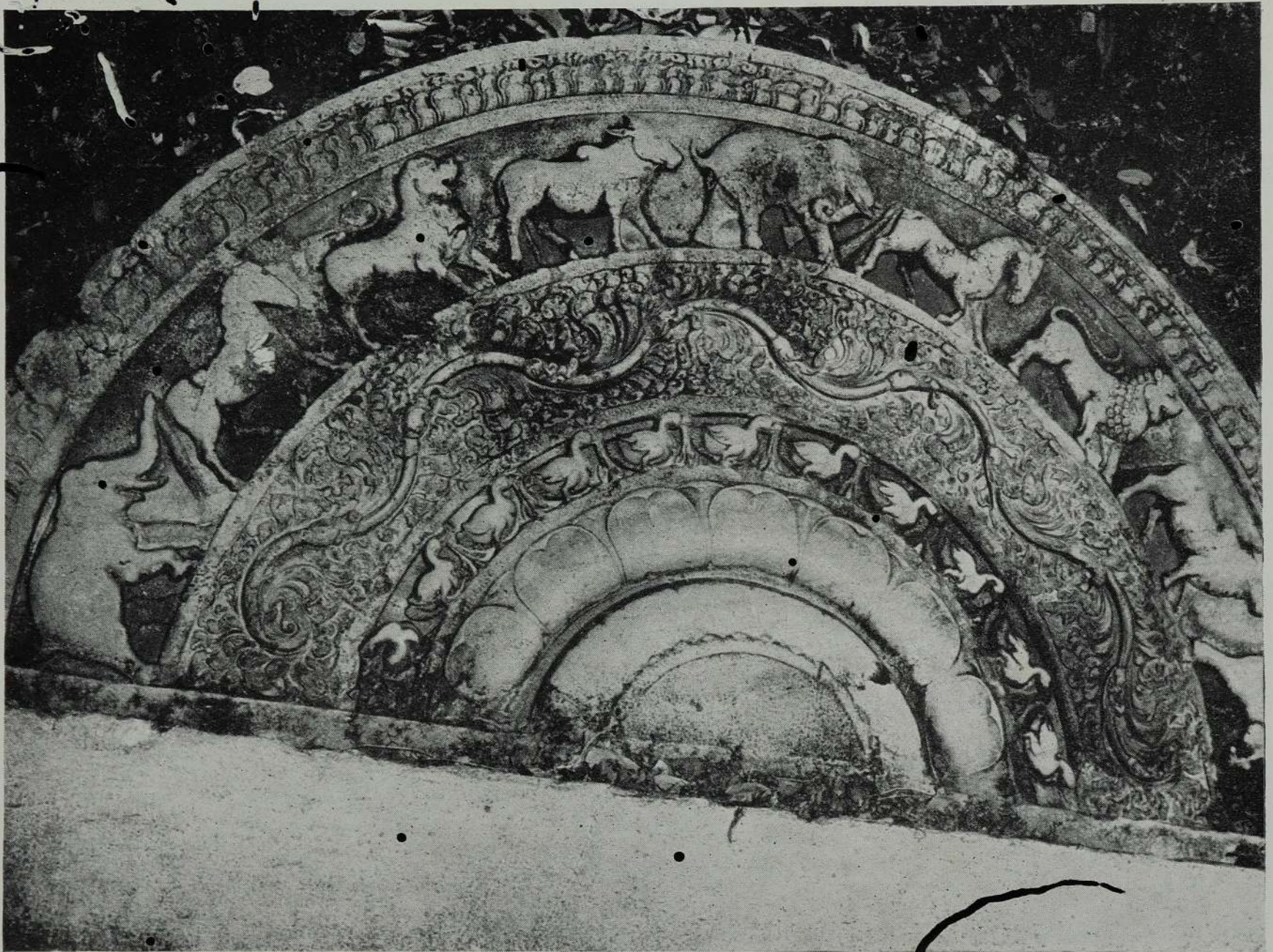




30, 31. MIHINTALE. Details of steles at Kantaka Cetiya.

32, 33. ANURADHAPURA. Stele at Jetavana, and detail of same.





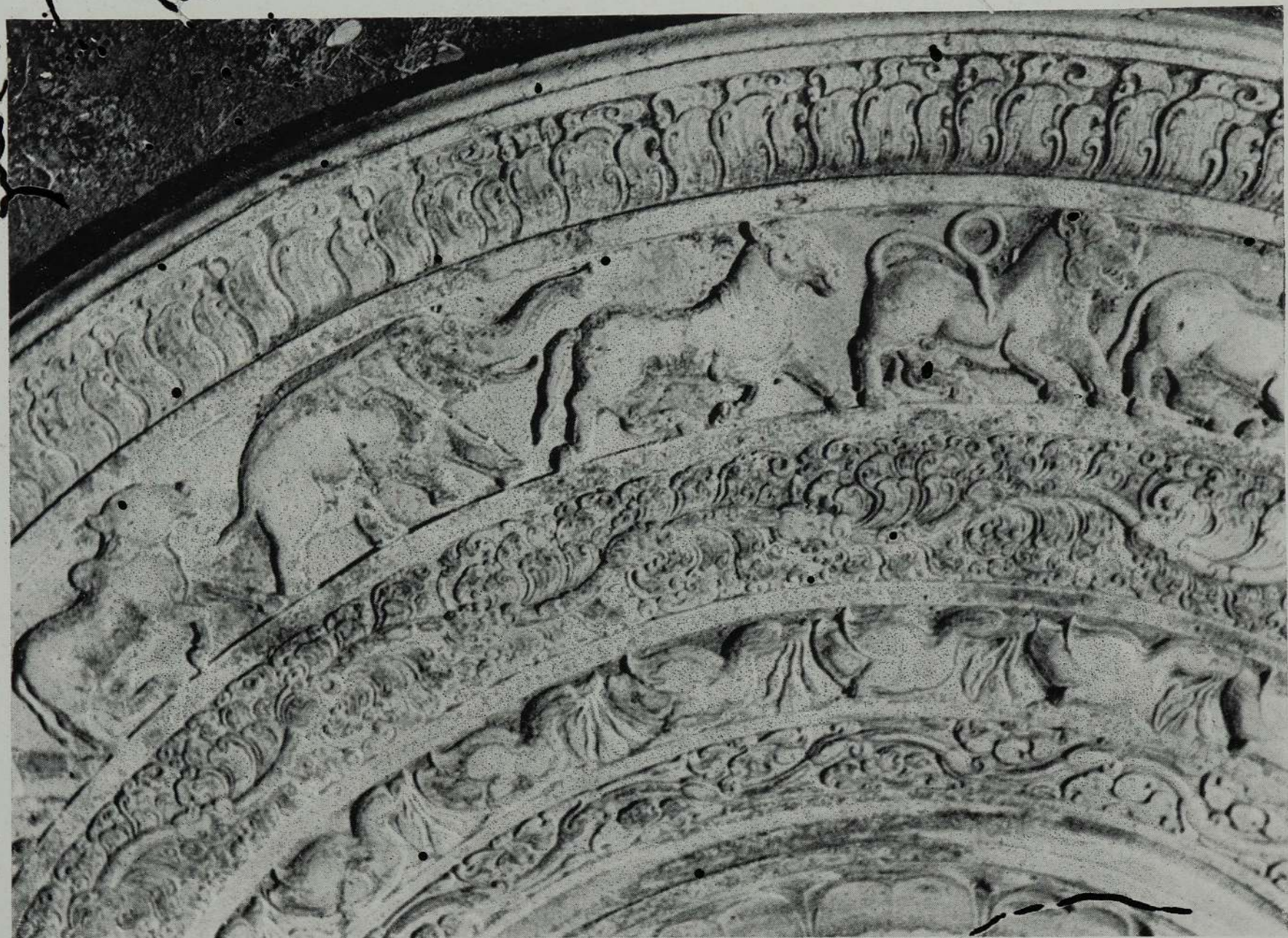
34. ANURADHAPURA. Moonstone from building between Thuparama and Ruvanveliseya.





35. ANURADHAPURA. Detail of lion and bull from a moonstone between Thuparama and Ruvanveliseya.





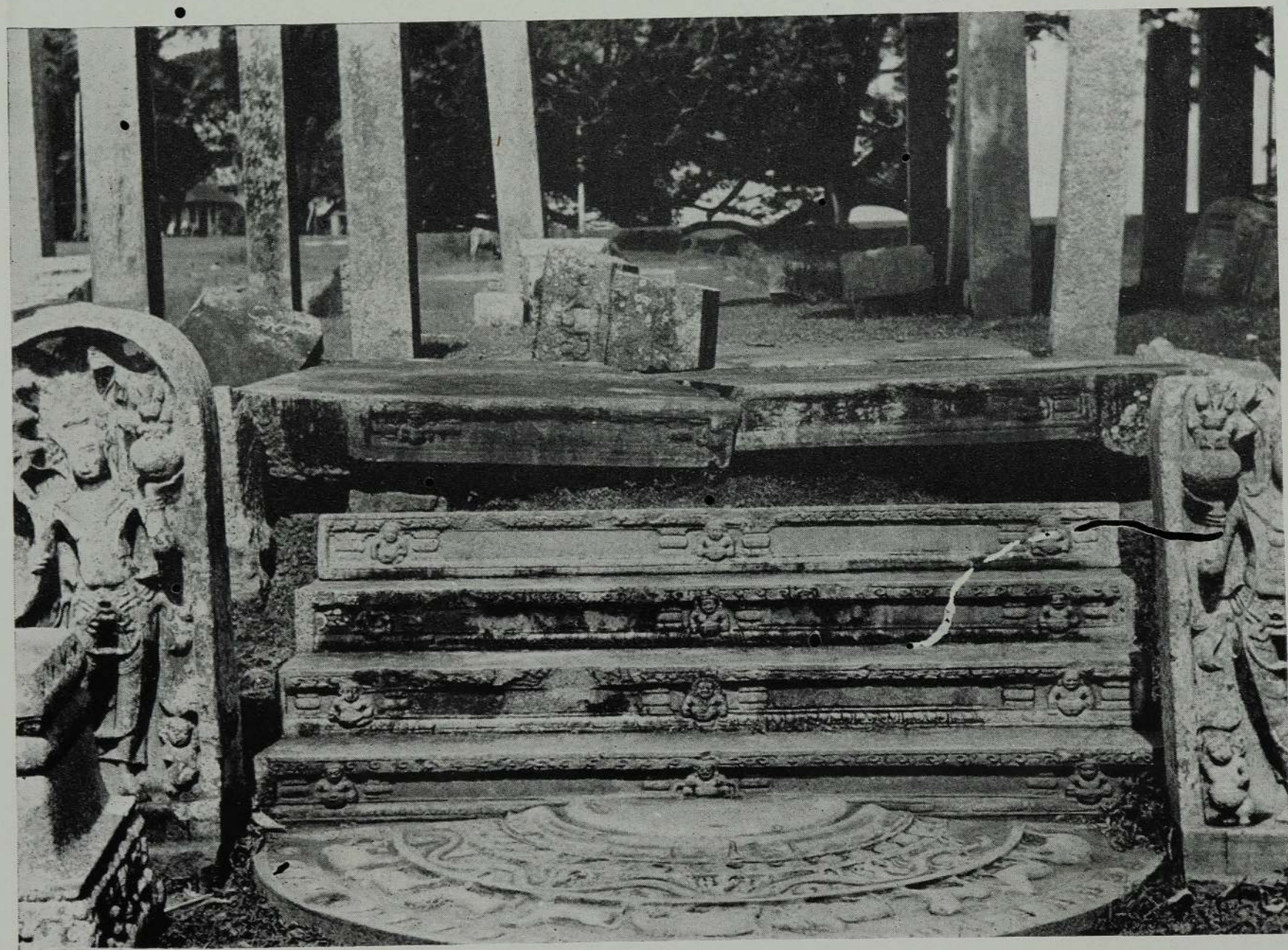
36. ANURADHAPURA. Detail of moonstone from Queen's Pavilion.





37. ANURADHAPURA. Detail of fig. 36.





38. ANURADHAPURA. Entrance to ancient shrine north-west of Ruvanveliseya.





39, 40. ANURADHAPURA. Carvings on the risers of steps at shrine between Ruvanveliseya and Thuparama.





41. ANURADHAPURA. Close-up of subject flanking fig. 40.





42. ANURADHAPURA. Archaic makara in limestone at Abhayagiri Dagaba, probably first century B.C.





43. ANURADHAPURA. Makara and volute on balustrade of shrine near Basavakkulam tank, west of Ruwanveliseya.





44. ANURADHAPURA. Makara and detail of fig. 43.





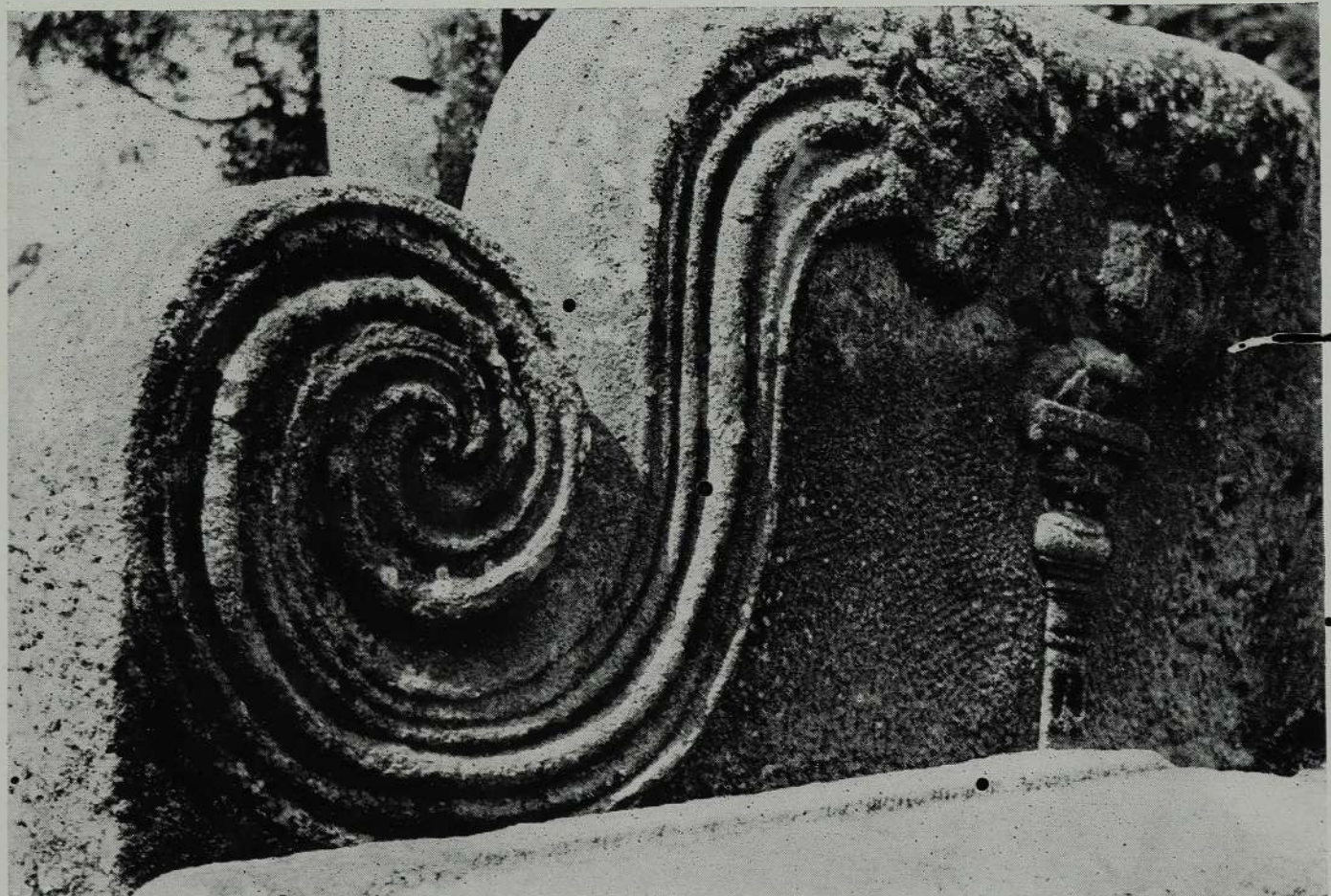
45. ANURADHAPURA. Lion in relief, and volute, in makara balustrade from building near Basavakkulam tank.





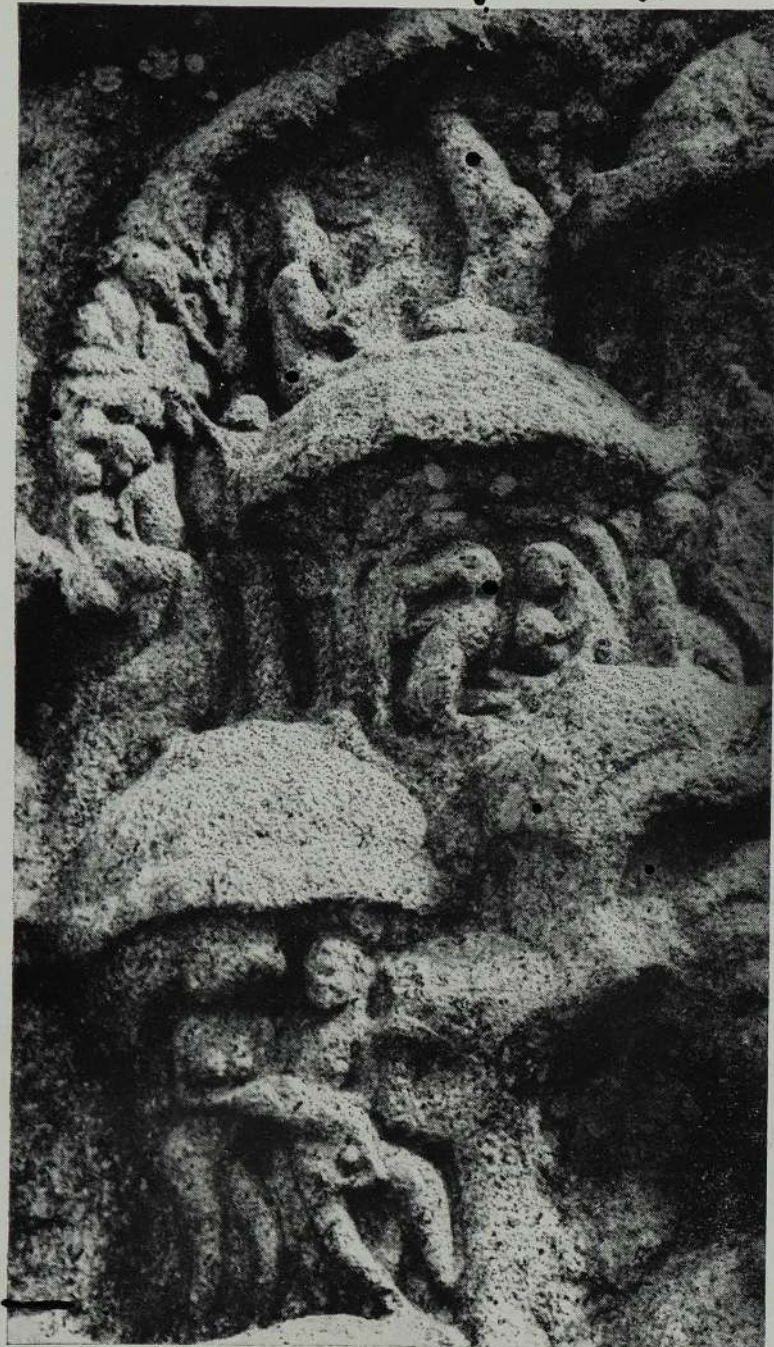
46. COLOMBO MUSEUM. Makara balustrade and volute.





47, 48. ANURADHAPURA. Volute and makara on balustrade from building south of Stone Railing Site.





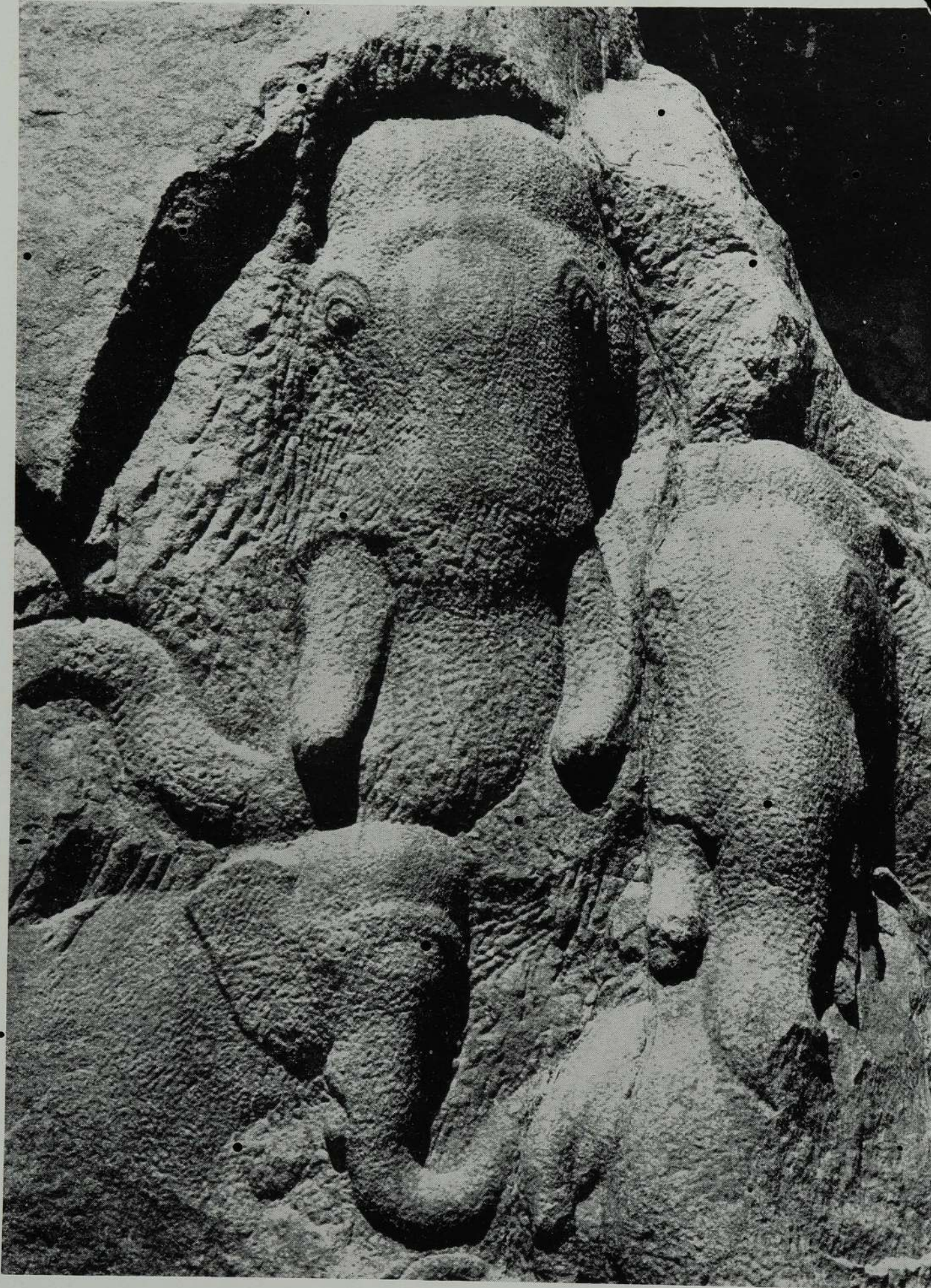
49, 50. ANURADHAPURA. Details of forest scenes from balustrade of building between Ruvanveliseya and Thuparama.





51, 52. ANURADHAPURA.  
Makara water spout at Ruvanveliseya.





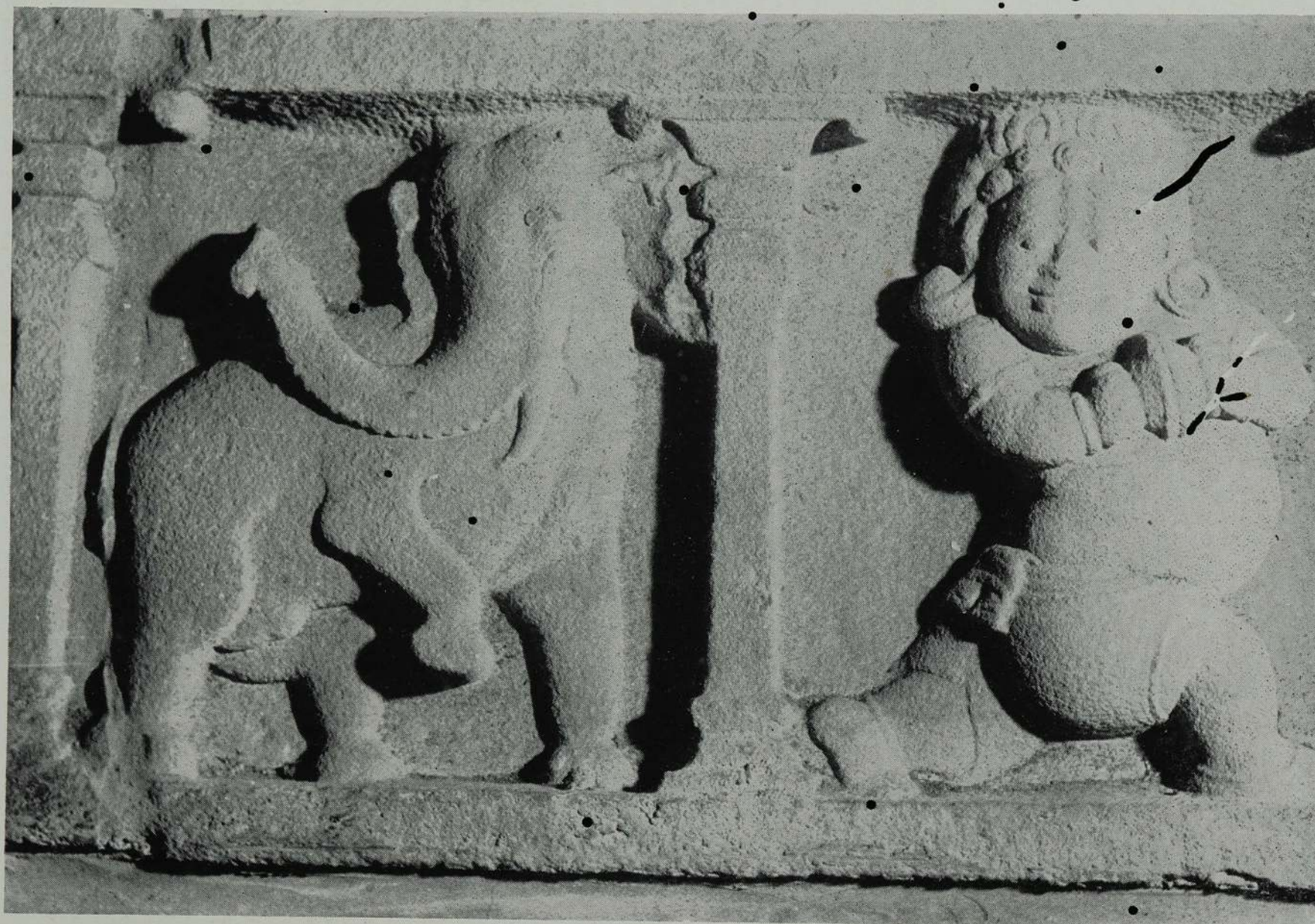




54. ISURUMUNIYA. Elephant relief.

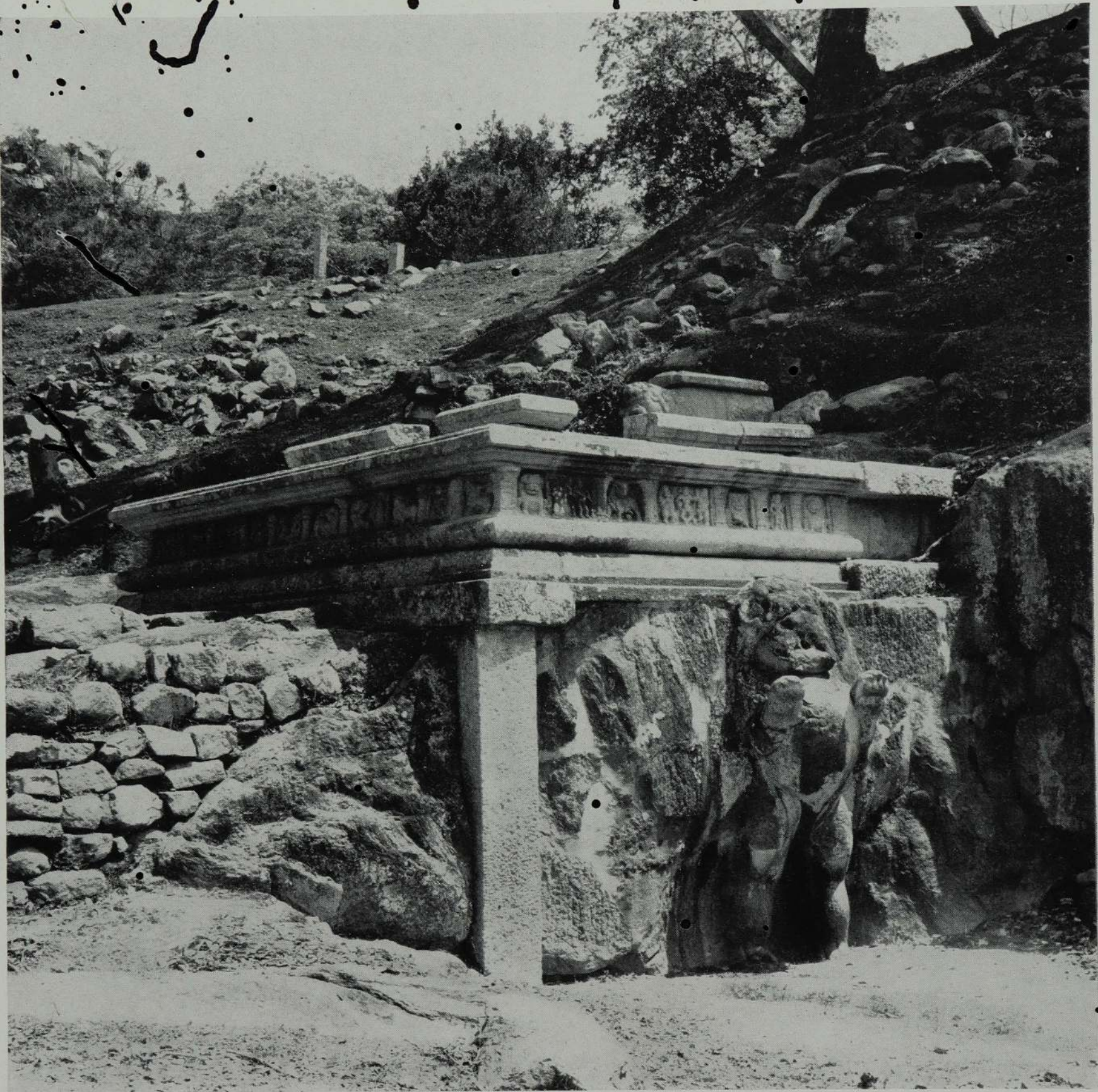
53. ISURUMUNIYA. Elephant relief.





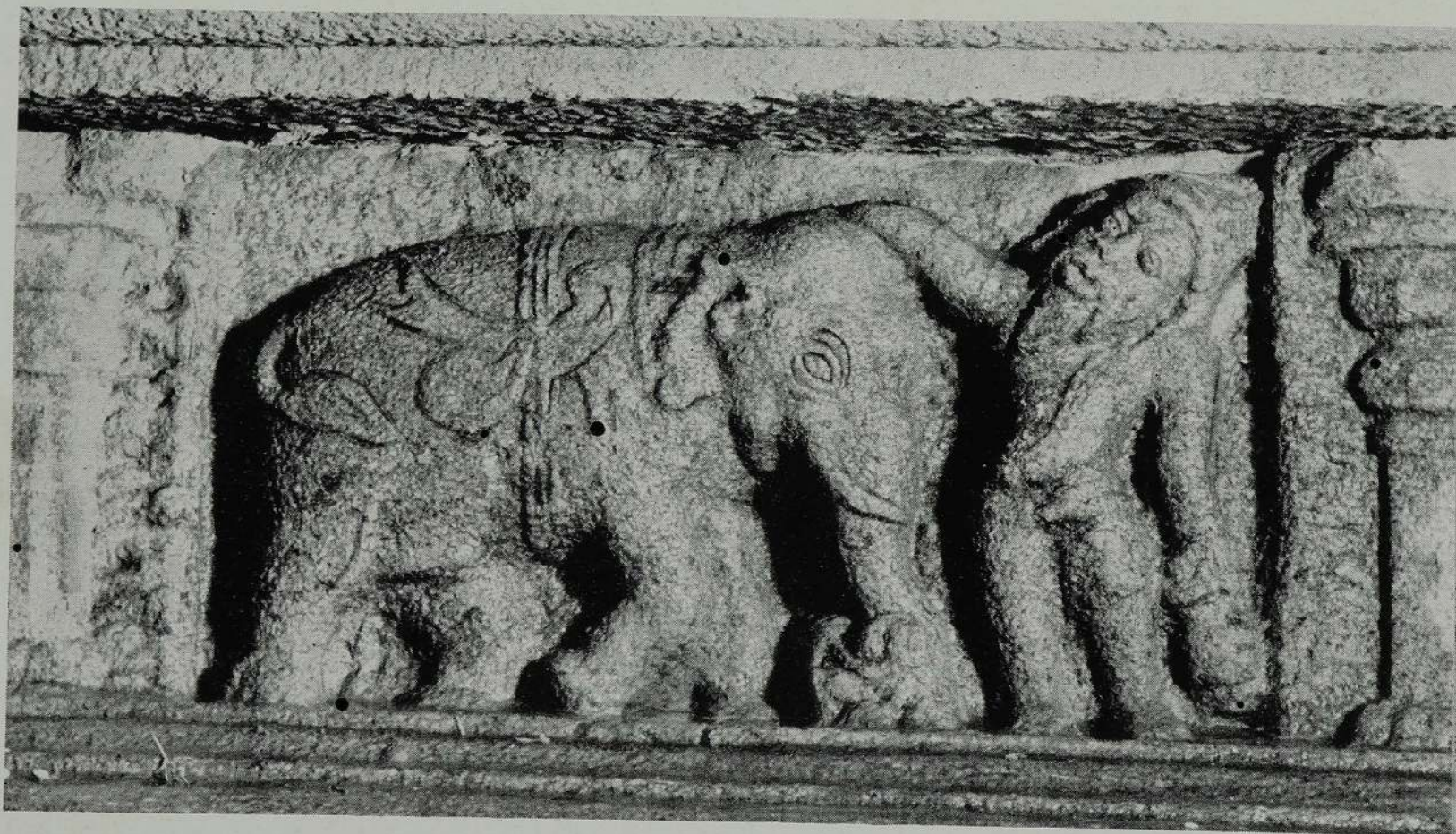
55. ANURADHAPURA. Frieze from Ruvanveliseya, now in Colombo Museum (late phase).





56. MIHINTALE. Lion bath.





57, 58. MIHINTALE. Wrestlers; elephant and man; from lion bath (fig. 56).





59. ISURUMUNIYA. Lively dwarf (gana) from frieze.





60. ISURUMUNIYA. Dwarf (gana) from frieze.

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61. ISURUMUNIYA. Dwarf (gana) from frieze.





62. ANURADHAPURA. Frieze with Bahirava: lion, floral and vegetal motifs from Ruvanveliseya.



63. ISURUMUNIYA. Dwarf (gana) from frieze.





64. ISURUMUNIYA. The Lovers, carved panel 37 ins. × 27 ins.





65. ISURUMUNIYA. Relief of man and horse's head (the cavity measures 45 ins.  $\times$  46 ins.)



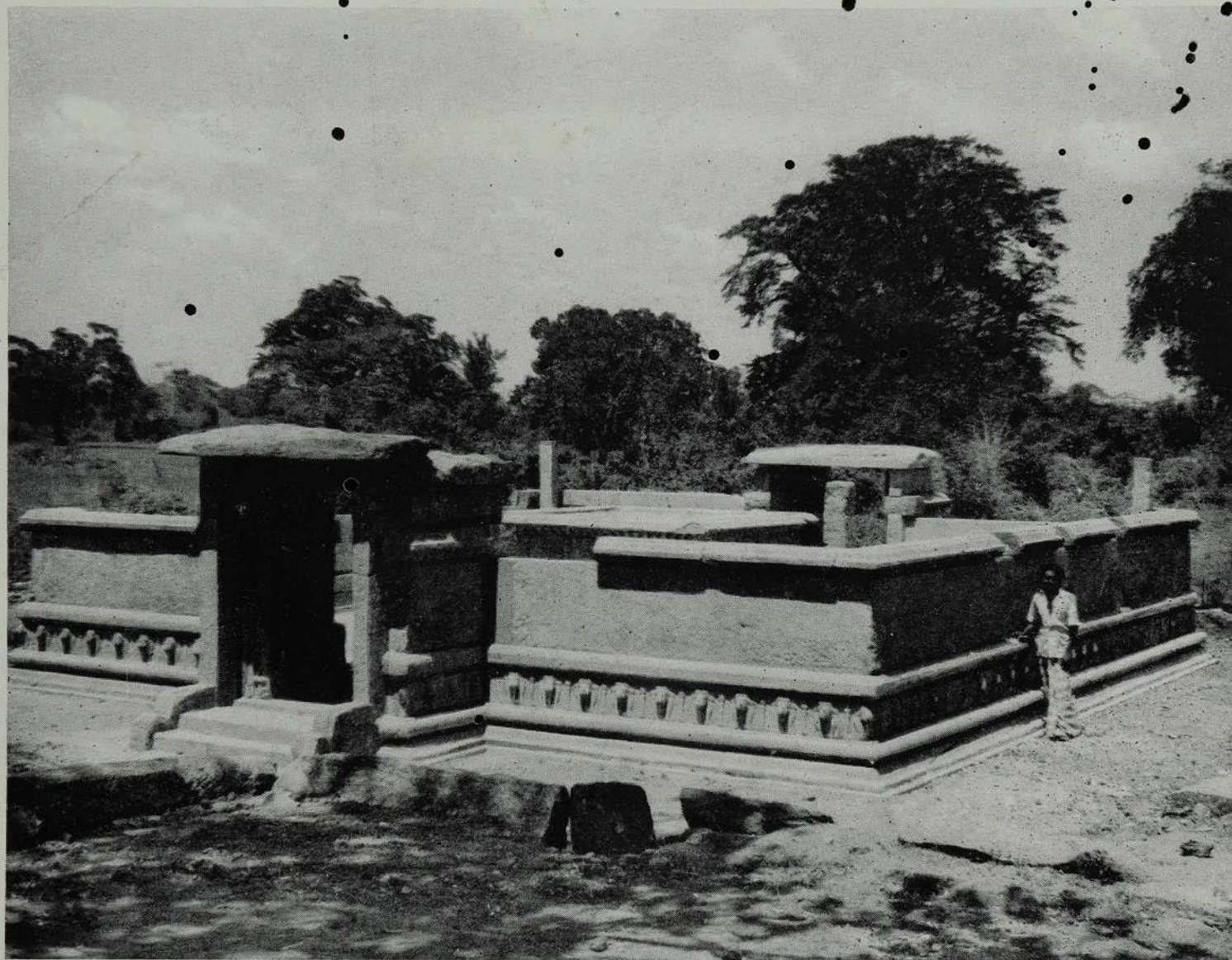


66. ISURUMUNIYA. Relief of palace scene showing a king with his queen.



67. ISURUMUNIYA. Fragments.





68, 69. NILLAKGAMA. Ancient Bodhighara (eighth to ninth century, A.D.): general view;  
Bodhi Tree plinth.





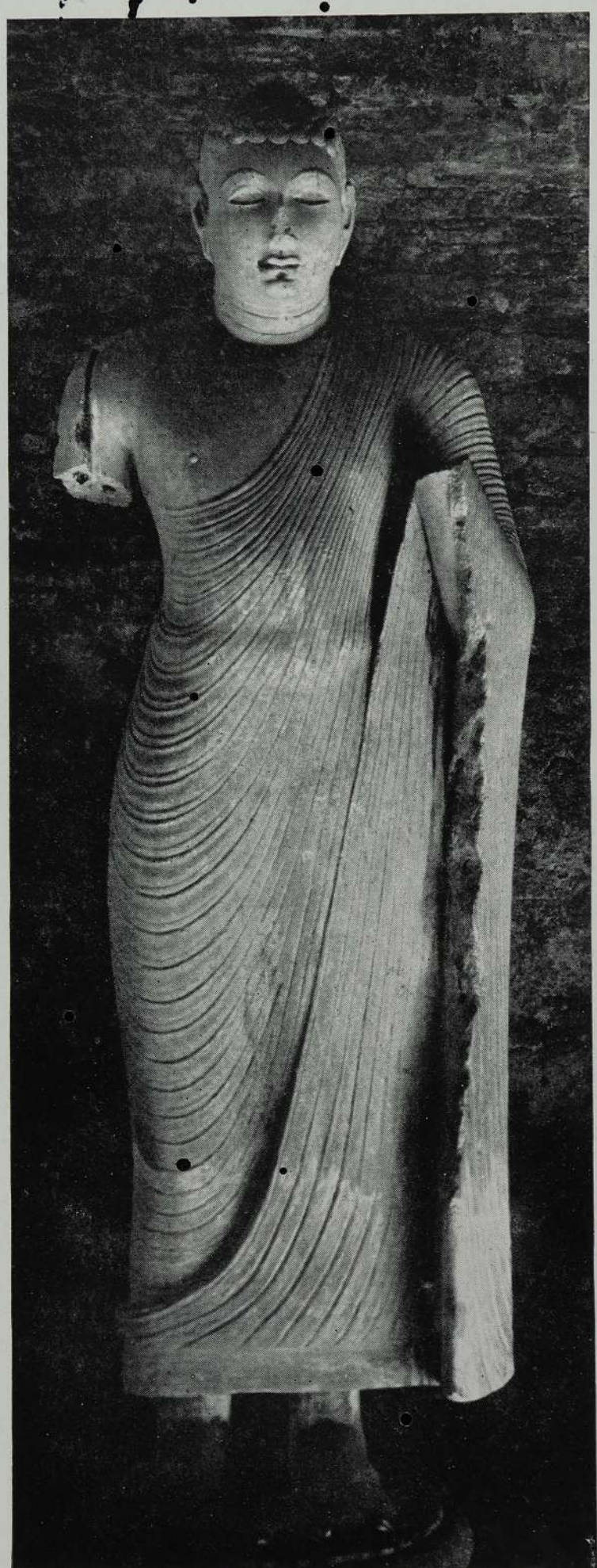
70. NILLAKGAMA. Gateway of Bodhighara (see fig. 69 for centre plinth detail).





71. PIDURAGALA. Buddha marble plaque (12 in. × 11 in.), *circa* fourth-fifth century A.D.





72. BUDDHA of the Anuradhapura period  
in Thuparama at Polonnaruwa (lower portion  
restored).





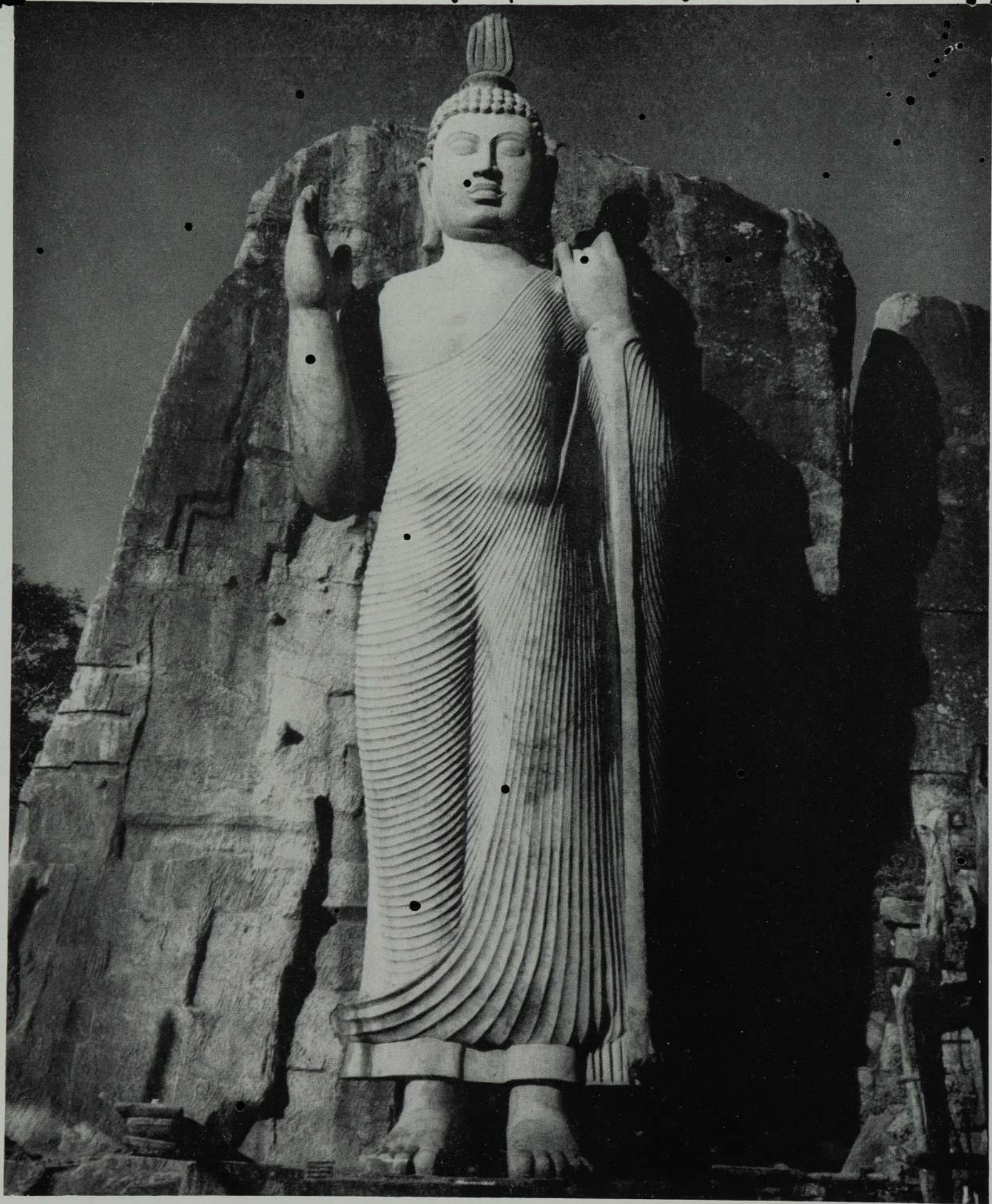
73. ANURADHAPURA. Tolvila, Buddha, now in Colombo Museum (height 5 ft. 9 ins.)





74. AVUKANA. Buddha within ancient ruined shrine.





75. AVUKANA. Colossal stone Buddha (height. 38 ft. 10 ins.).  
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76. AVUKANA. Head of Buddha (figs. 74-75). Disc and above are modern additions.  
(Length of head 6 ft. 6 ins.)





77. BUDURUEGALA. Colossal Buddha in low relief (height 42 ft. 8 ins.).





78. BUDURUEGALA. Reliefs of trio to left of Buddha (heights 20 ft. 7 ins., 23 ft. 6 ins. and 19 ft. 7 ins. respectively).





79. BUDURUVEGALA. Close-up of figures to left of Buddha.





80. BUDURUVEGALA. Trio of figures to right of Buddha. In the centre is Avalokitesvara, with Tara on his left (respective heights 20 ft. 3 ins., 24 ft. and 21 ft. 8 ins.).

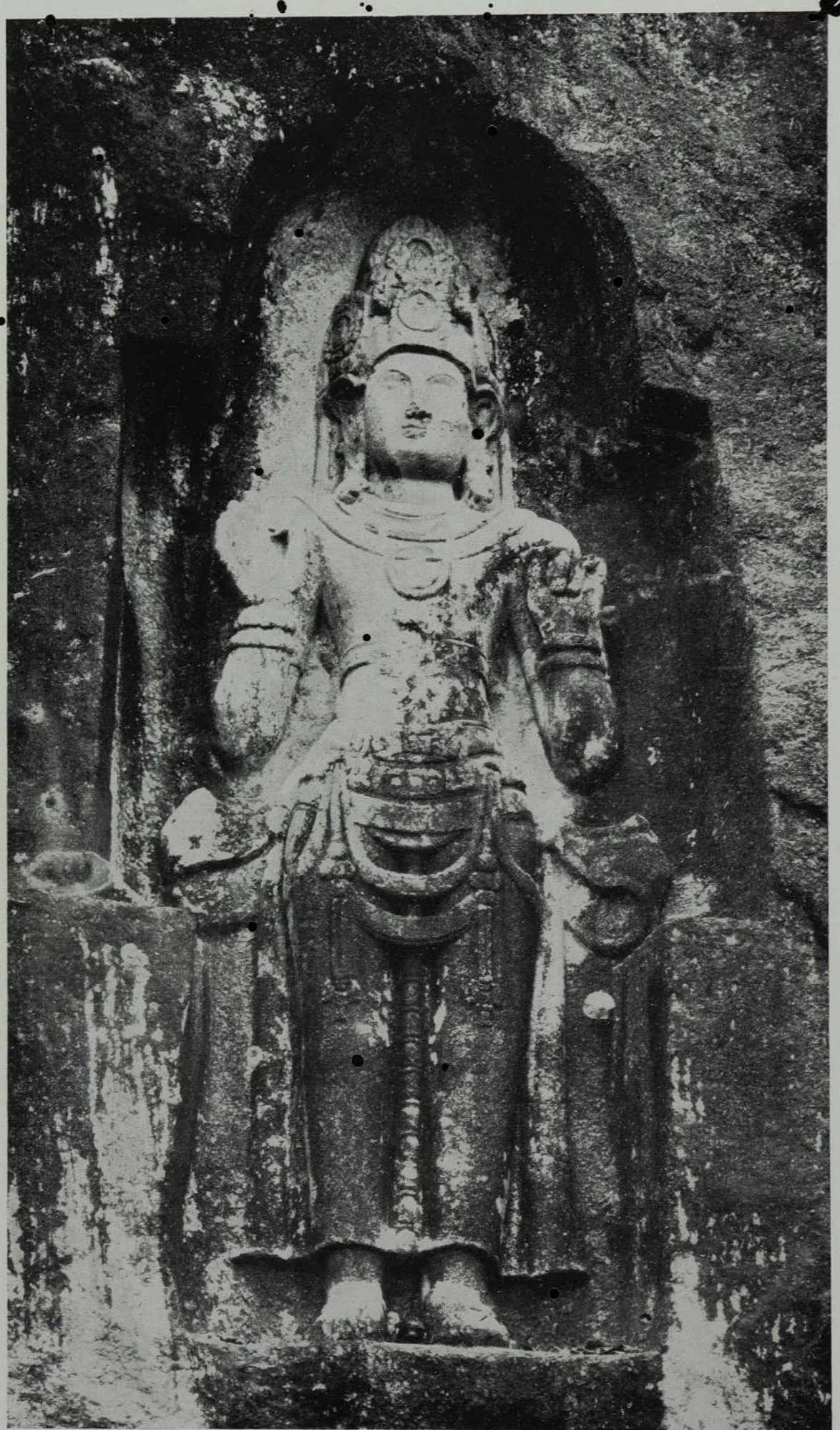




81, 82. BUDURUEGALA. Avalokitesvara and Tara to right of Buddha. See fig. 80.



83. WELIGAMA.  
Kushtaraja (Ava-  
lokitesvara), colossal  
relief.







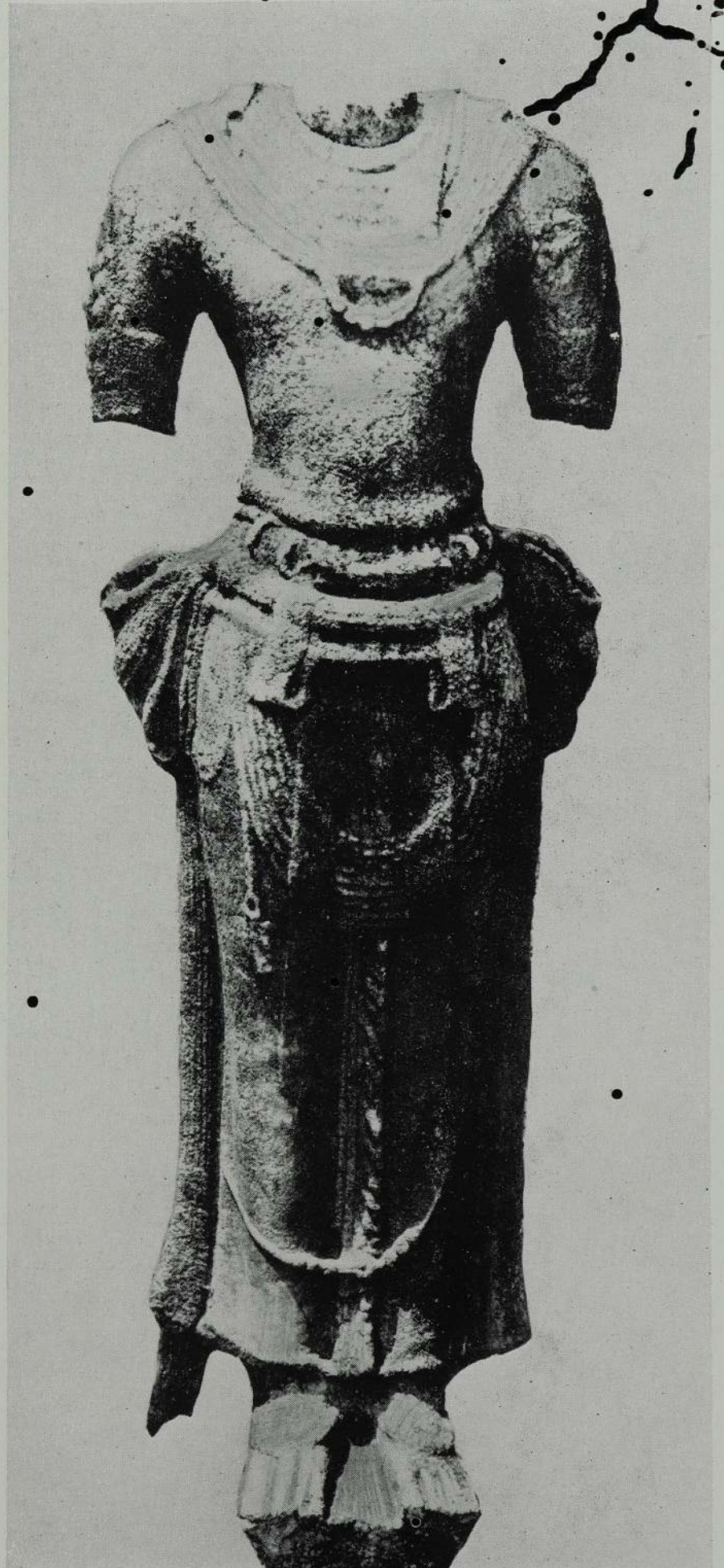
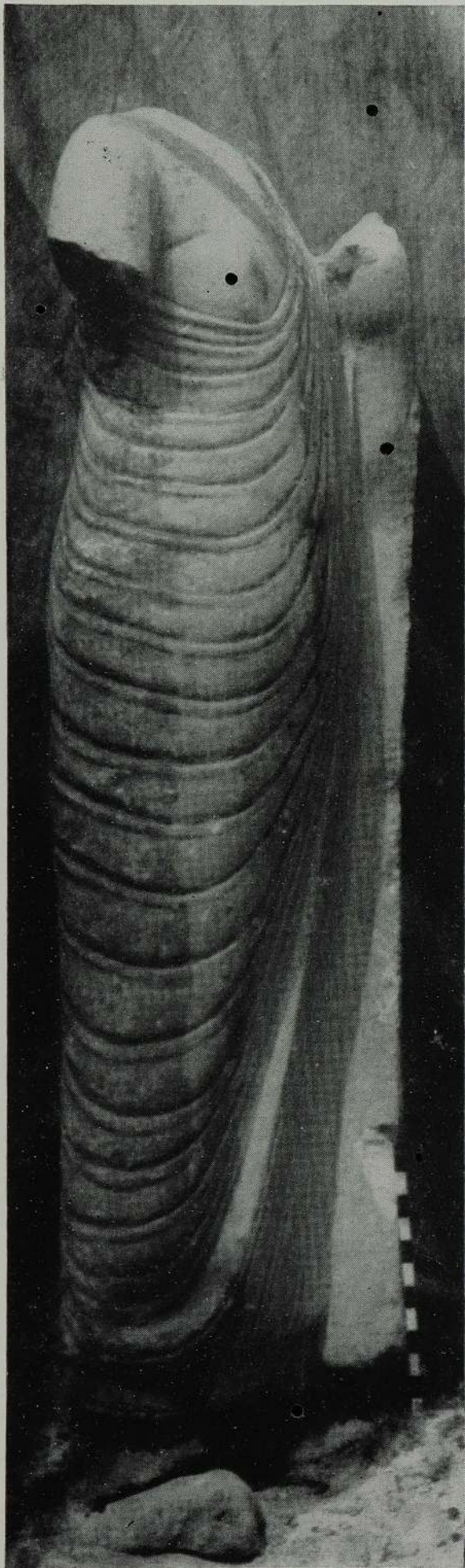
84. SITULPAVUVA. Head of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.





85. SERUVILA. Two views of head of Bodhisattva.







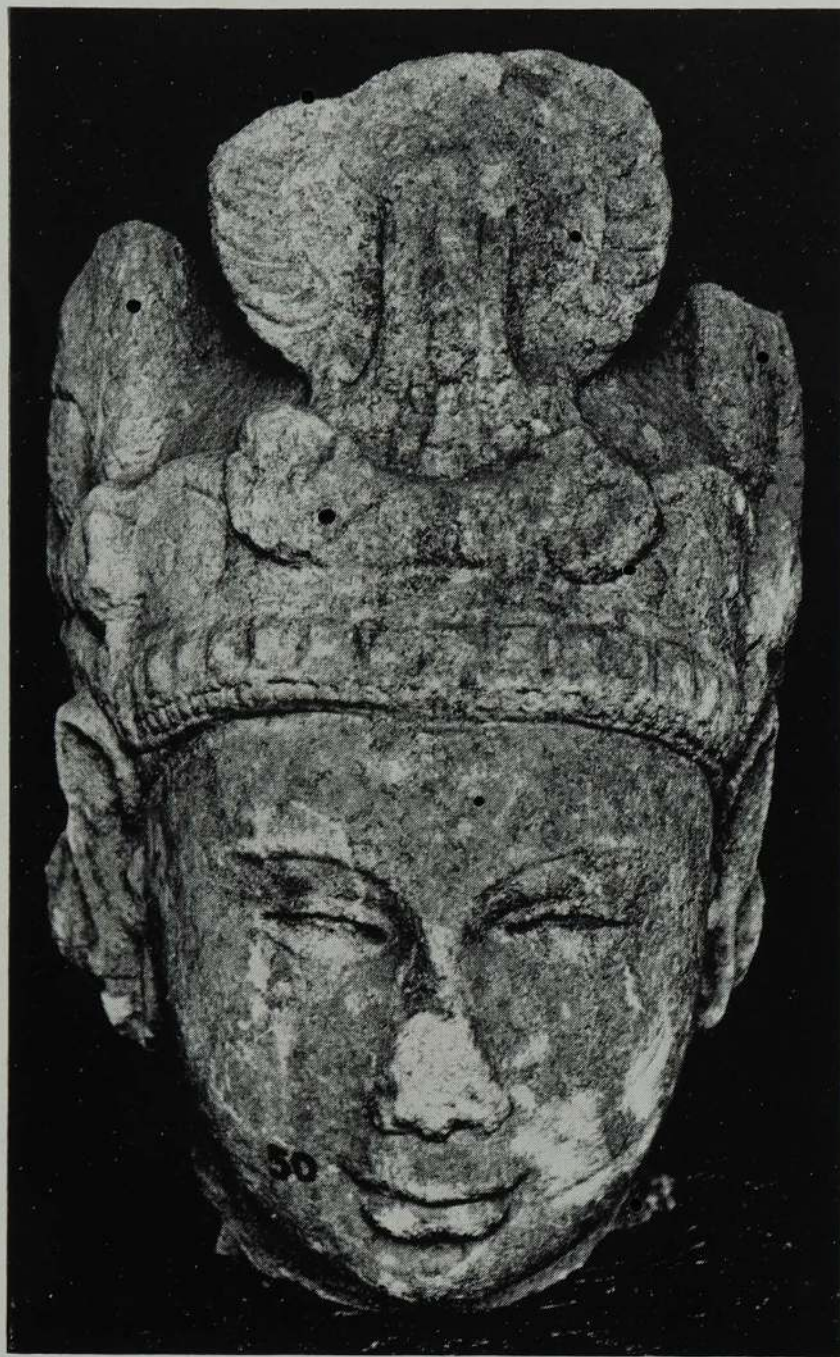
86. KUCCAVELI.  
Buddha, now in  
Anuradhapura  
Museum (*left*).

87. ANURAD-  
HAPURA Museum.  
Torso (*centre*).

88. ANURAD-  
HAPURA. Statue  
at Ruvanveliseya,  
popularly said to be  
of King Duttha-  
gamani. The hands  
have been restored  
and the lower por-  
tions touched up.  
Shelter is modern  
(*right*).







89. ANURADHAPURA. Limestone head of Bodhisattva  
from Thuparama, now in Colombo Museum.





90, 91. TIRIYAY. Cobra-king janitors at the Vatadage.





92. ANURADHAPURA.  
Cobra-king janitor from  
shrine near Thuparama.



93. ANURADHAPURA.  
Cobra-king janitor at  
Ratana Pasada (height of  
figure 45 ins.).

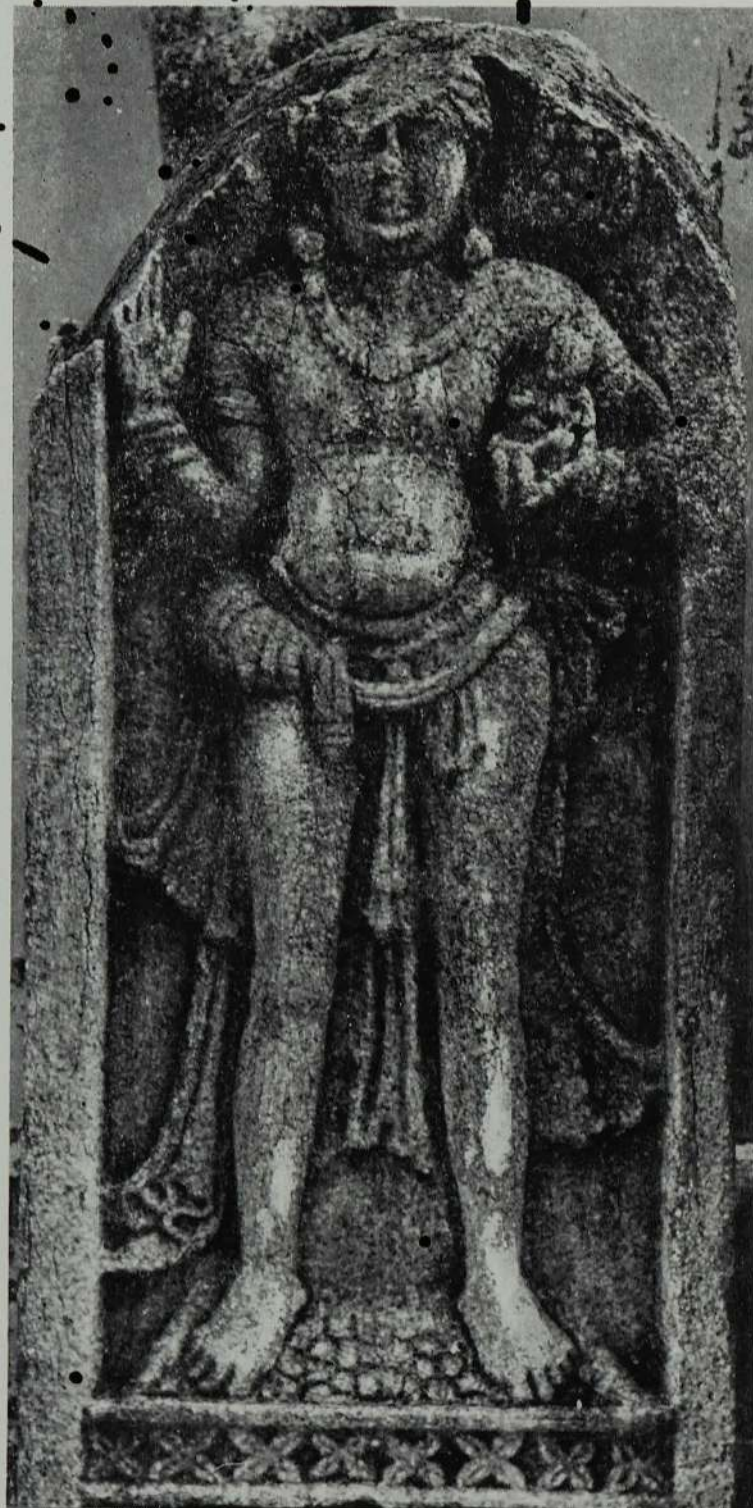






94. ANURADHAPURA. Flower vase from guardstone in Bodhi Tree Temple.





95. ANURADHAPURA. Upper half of stele at Abhayagiri Dagaba, probably Alavaka holding the baby prince (height of figure 38 ins.).



96. ANURADHAPURA. Stele at Jetavana Dagaba showing Cobra-king and queen.





98. ANURADHAPURA. Relief  
lower half of stele at Jetavana Daga  
(see fig. 97).

97. ANURADHAPURA. Cobra-king  
on upper half of stele at Jetavana Dagaba  
(see fig. 98 for lower half).









99. ANURADHAPURA. Figure from stele at Abhayagiri Dagaba (for other face of stele see fig 6).





100. ANURADHAPURA. Detail of northern stele at  
Dakkhina Thupa.





101. ANURADHAPURA.  
Stele at Abhayagiri  
Dagaba. Upper figure is of  
a Chakravarti (wheel-king  
or Universal Monarch),  
the lower probably the  
attendant virgin who is  
depicted touching a boy's  
head (*left*).



102. ANURADHAPURA.  
Stele at Abhayagiri  
Dagaba. Upper figure has  
a head-dress reminiscent of  
that in fig. 89 (*right*).





103. ANURADHAPURA. Detail of topmost section of stele at Jetavana Dagaba, much enlarged to show probably a celestial scene with the Bodhisattva, as evident from the stupikas which surmount the flanking pillars.





104. MIHINTALE. Bahirava janitor from shrine near Rajagirilena Kanda. (Frame measures 36 ins. x 18 ins.)





105. ANURADHAPURA.  
Bahirava janitor at Abhayagiri  
Dagaba (height of figure 50 ins.).





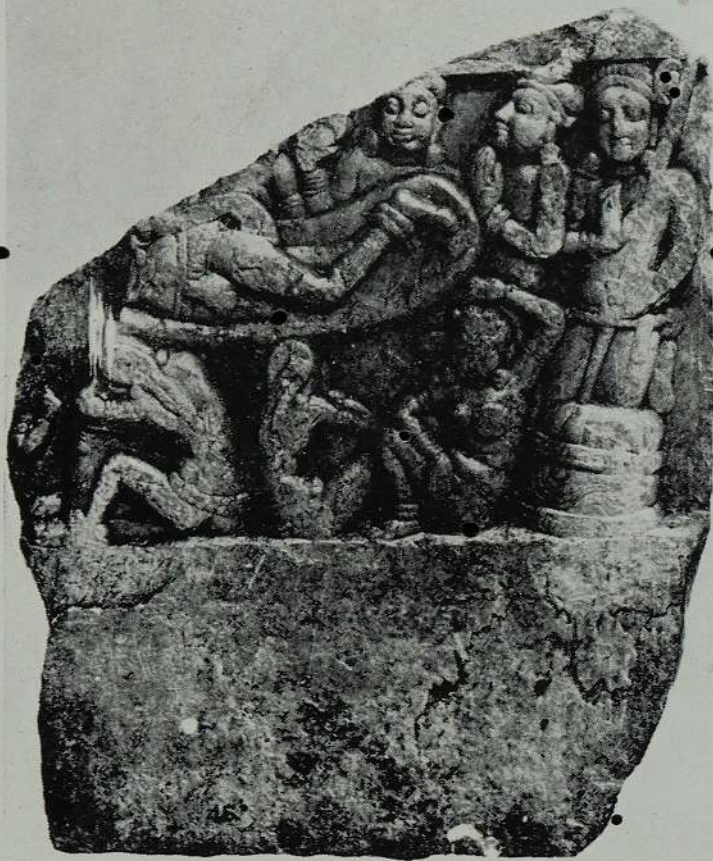
106. ANURADHAPURA  
MUSEUM. Female torso.





107. ANURADHAPURA  
MUSEUM. Female torso.





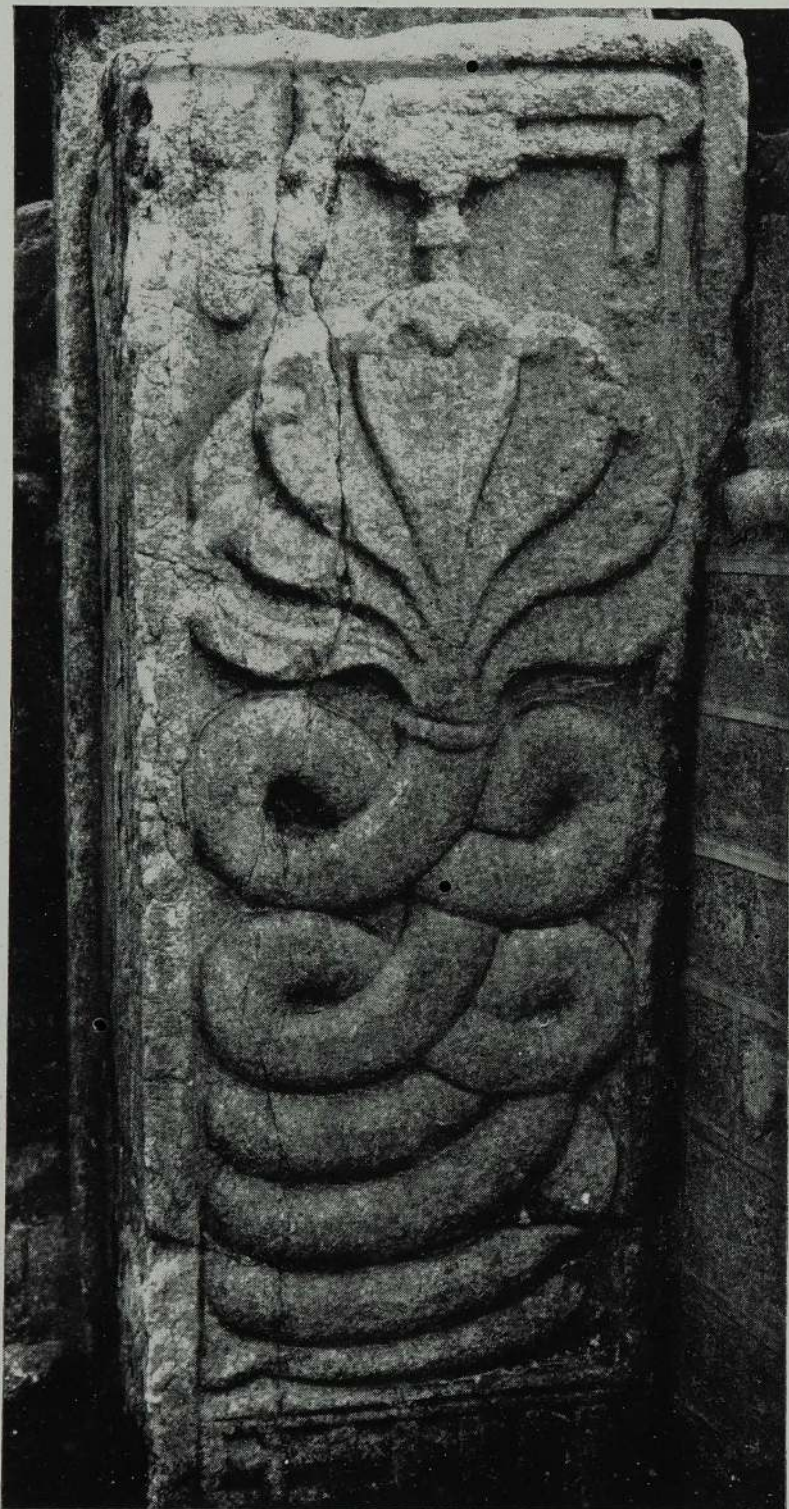
108, 109. ANURADHAPURA. Archaic sculptured slabs found in a shrine on the Kurunegala road (now in the Colombo Museum).



ANURADHAPURA. Polycephalus cobra sheltered  
by umbrella, on steles at:

110. Abhayagiri Dagaba.

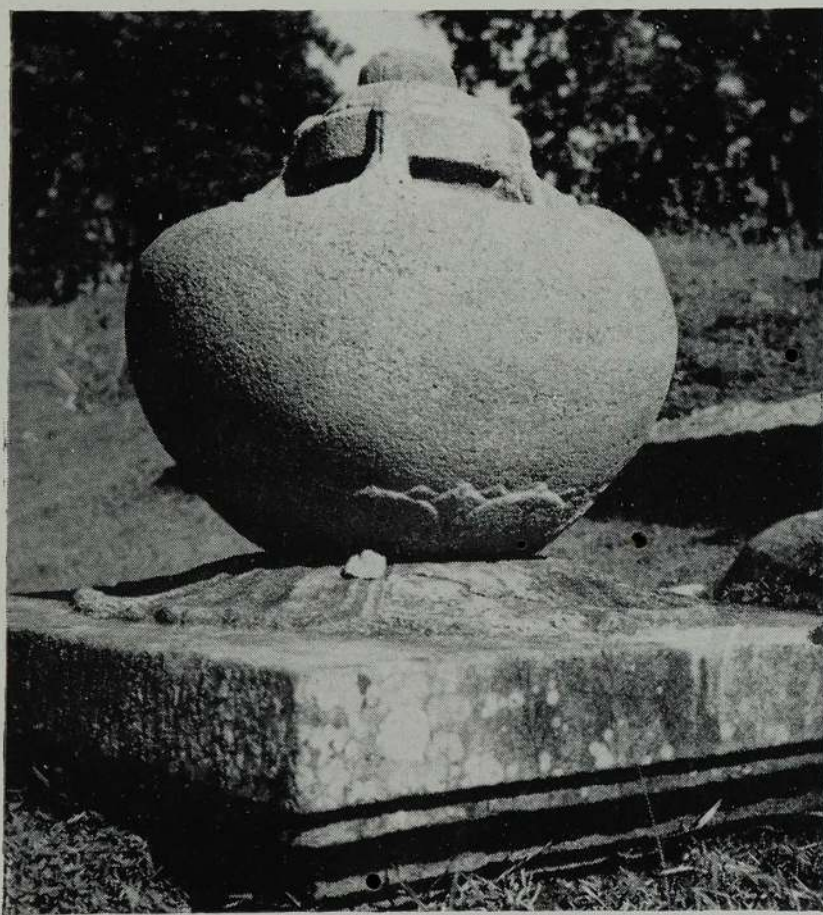
111, 112. Jetavana Dagaba.







113. ANURADHAPURA. Lotiform flower altar, elephant-headed base of plinth, etc., in courtyard at Abhayagiri Dagaba.



114. ANURADHAPURA. Monolithic vase at Ruvanveliseya.



115. ANURADHAPURA. Monolithic vase at Jetavana Dagaba.



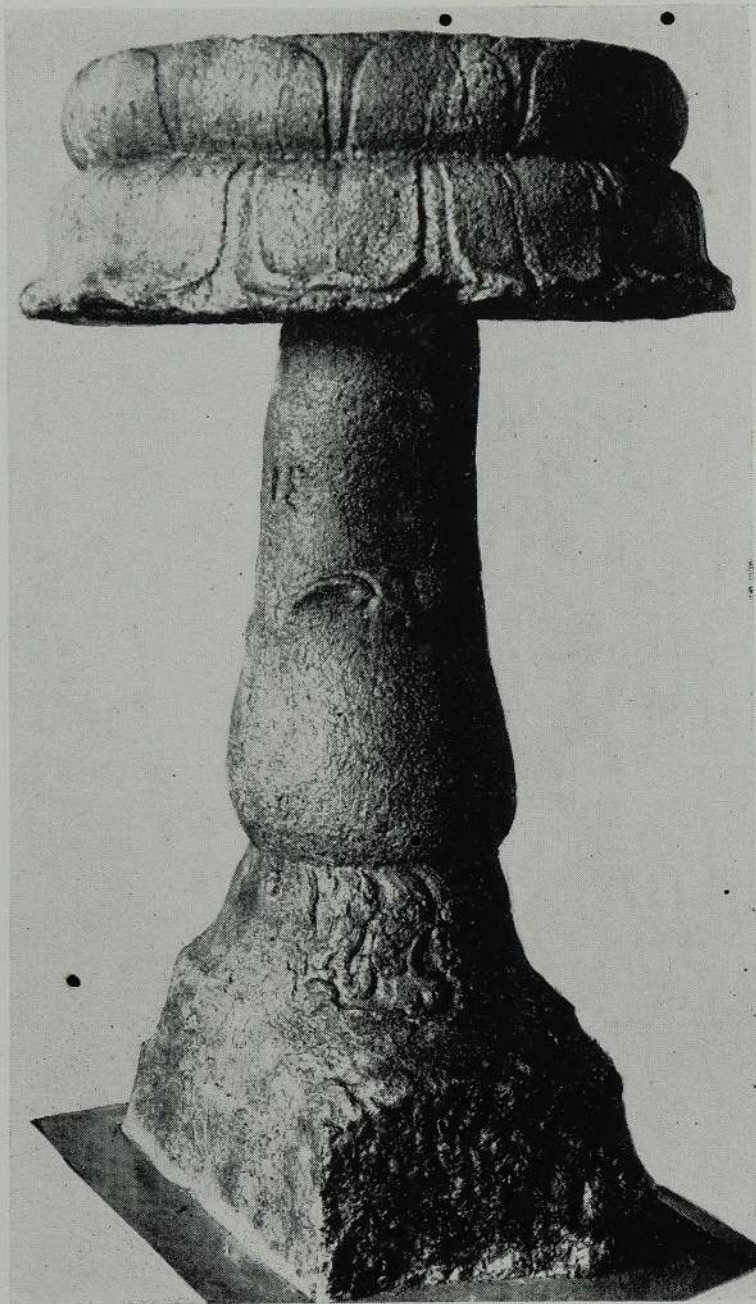


116. ANURADHAPURA. Monolithic vase  
at Jetavana Dagaba.



117. ANURADHAPURA. Vase guardstone of the  
so-called Dhatu Mandiraya near Ruvanveliseya.

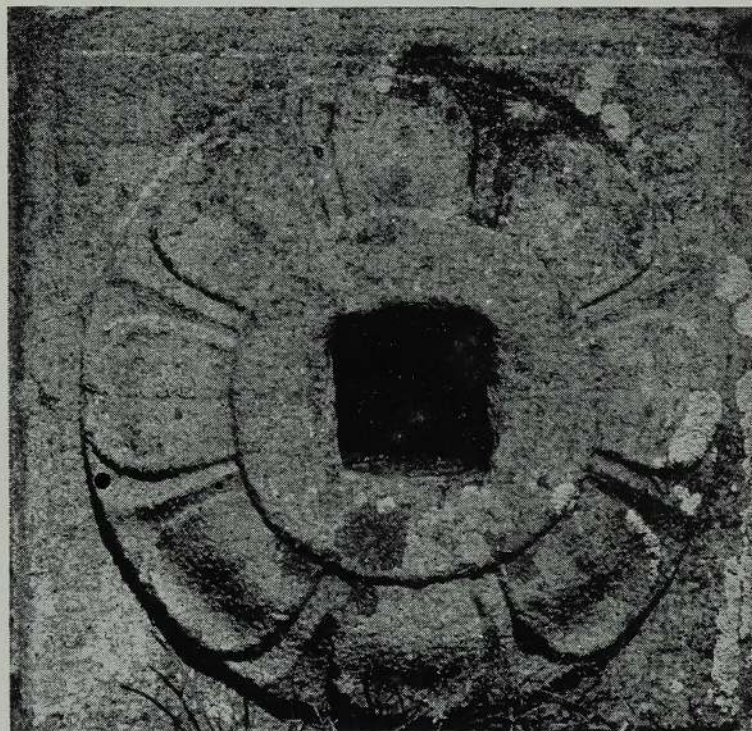




119. ANURADHAPURA. Stone flower altar, now in Colombo Museum.



120. MIHINTALE. Monolithic flower altar at Kantaka Cetiya.



121. ANURADHAPURA. Lotus base. (This type was very popular.)





123. ANURADHAPURA. Capital of unique design from so-called Trident Temple, now in Colombo Museum.



124. ANURADHAPURA. Monolithic capital, now in Colombo Museum.



125. ANURADHAPURA. Lion capital from Lankarama





126. ANURADHAPURA. Dwarf (gana) capital from shrine north-west of Ruvanveliseya.





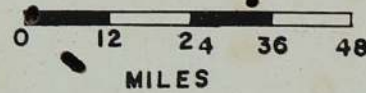
127. ANURADHAPURA. Urinal, complete.



128. ANURADHAPURA. Urinal, squatting plate only.



# CEYLON



1. KAN
2. ...
3. PADAV
4. WAHALK
5. TIRIYAY
6. KUSCAVELI
7. SERUVILA
8. MIHINTALE
9. ANURADHAPURA
10. MAHAILUPPALLAMA
11. RITIGALA
12. MEDIRIGIRIYA
13. MINNERIYA
14. PAGOLLAGAMA
15. SESSERUVA
16. NILLAKGAMA
17. AVUKANA
18. SIGIRIYA
19. PIDURAGALA
20. POLONNARUVA
21. YAPAHUVA
22. ARANKELE
23. OGGOMUVA
24. KANKANODAI
25. KURUNEGALA
26. RUVANGIRIKANDA
27. DAMBADENIYA
28. DEGALDORUVA
29. KANDY
30. PERADENIYA
31. EMBEKKE
32. GADALADENIYA
33. GAMPOLA
34. HANGURANKETA
35. GURULUPOTA
36. RUNUMAHAVEHERA
37. BADULLA
38. COLOMBO
39. BEDDEGANA (KOTTE)
40. WELLAWAYA
41. MALIGAVELA
42. BUDURUVEGALA
43. SITULPAVUVA
44. TISSAMAHARAMA
45. AMBALANTOTA
46. WELIGAMA
47. GALLE
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