
Archaeological Remains of Early Historic and Medieval Period at Tirth Budruk and the Surrounding Area of Osmanabad District in Maharashtra

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Abstract: *The Early Historical period of Deccan is in a way moulded by the thriving international trade between India and Rome. The western coast of the Deccan, i.e. ancient 'Aparanta' or modern Konkan served as the entry point to the Roman merchants, who traversed the western ghats to reach the hinterland where many important urban centers such as Paithan, Ter and, Sannati were situated. This ancient trade reached its zenith during the Satavahana/Kshatrapa period. Due to which many more centers like Kolhapur, Karad, Junnar, Nasik, Bhokardan, Nevase, Bhon, Sannati, Banvasi, Dharnikota, Kotlingal, Satanikota, etc. emerged in this region. These sites have yielded ample archaeological evidence in the form of remains of stupas or overseas ceramic assemblage. This paper discusses the newly discovered archaeological site of Tirth Budruk in the Osmanabad district. The site has Early Historic remains of great importance including stupa remains as well as medieval remains of the temples. There is a strong possibility that these remains are associated with the stupa during the Satavahana time. The vicinity of Ter and other Satavahana sites of this region indicate religious and trade activities during the Early Historic period. These archaeological remains also underscore the influence of Buddhism in Deccan during the Satavahana period. Additionally, there are also remains of medieval temples and other archaeological remains scattered surrounding Tirth Budruk.*

Keywords: Tirth Budruk, Satavahana Period, Sculptural Remains, Stupa, Buddhism, Medieval Temples, Trade Route

Introduction

Tirth Budruk (17°57'06.01"N; 76°08'02.76"E) is a village about 55km away from the famous archaeological site of Ter (ancient Tagara) in Osmanabad district. It is located on the Tuljapur-Naldurg highway and nine km away from the famous shrine of Goddess Tulja Bhavani at Tuljapur (Figure 1). A small river called 'Harana' originates from this site (Kulkarni 2009: 91). Two villages having the same name 'Tirth' are located in the area. One of them is called Tirth Khurd and the other is called Tirth Budruk. 'Khurd' is considered the smaller of the two villages of the same name, while 'Budruk' is considered the larger of the two villages of the same name (Sowani 2011: 87). Tirth Budruk must have been the original old settlement. Later, probably in the

thirteenth century, it may have got divided into two parts. However, the newly reported Early Historic site is located near the Tirth Budruk. Nagnath, a locally famous pilgrimage site is located north-west of the Tirth Budruk. The name 'Tirth' may have been derived from the sacred water tank (*kunda*) at the Nagnath temple. This place is mentioned as 'Nagtirtha' in the *Shri Tuljabhavani Mahatmya* (Shri TuljaBhavani Mahatmya 23). It is located almost in the middle of both the villages (Figure 2).

There are archaeological remains and mounds including two medieval temples of Kal-Bhairavnath and Bhimashankar to the west of Tirth Budruk in lowlands surrounded by Balaghat hills. Several broken bricks, ceramics, and fragments of limestone are found on the surface of the mounds. At present, the site is under the Goat project of the Government of Maharashtra. The site was first noticed when an ascetic was living on the mound. In 2001, while construction was underway on a hill (mound no. two) for a local ascetic, villagers discovered a circular brick structure (these bricks measured 47 x 25 x 7 cm). Mr B. C. Gajbhiye, the then director of the State Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Maharashtra State, identified this structure as an ancient stupa (Gajbhiye 2003-04: 94-95). In the annual report of the Directorate (Maharashtra Puratattva) in 2003-04, he gave only a brief note about the stupa that was exposed (Figure 3). Another brief mention of the site is found in Amol Kulkarni's Ph.D. dissertation in 2009 (Kulkarni 2009: 91-92). He mentioned the site as one of the Early Historic sites and reported the Early Historic pottery and remains of the temples. None of these scholars mentioned the limestone sculptures and other brick structures present on the site. Apart from these two passing references, no other works on Tirth Budruk have been published yet. When the author visited this site in 2013, he found the remains of another stupa as well as several sculptures and slabs of limestones, tiles, and other remains at the site.

The main aim of this article is to give a detailed account of the site along with newly discovered surface findings. The author at an international seminar held in Hyderabad in 2015 presented a research paper jointly with Abhijit Dandekar and Shrikant Pradhan on the same subject. Subsequently, Tirth Budruk and the surrounding area were briefly mentioned in Vijay Sarde's Ph. D. dissertation on the Nath sampradaya (Sarde 2019: 269). After surveying and studying the entire site, the news of the site was published in a local newspaper 'Punya Nagari' on 05 July 2020.

Archaeological Remains of the Early Historic Period

There are three uneven archaeological mounds to the west of the Tirth Budruk village. They are spread between two hills and are surrounded by cultivated fields on the eastern and northern sides. The western side is connected to the natural hills, but the south side is a newly built lake. Archaeological remains are found here in an area of about three hectares. The author has named these mounds respectively mound-I or Kal-Bhairavnath hill, mound-II, or circular brick stupa mound, and mound-III or Bhimashankar hill for the convenience of research. There is a possibility of a fourth mound between mounds-II and III (Figure 4). However, the mound has probably been

wiped out due to years of agricultural activities. Several potsherds of the Satavahana period are found on this agricultural ground.

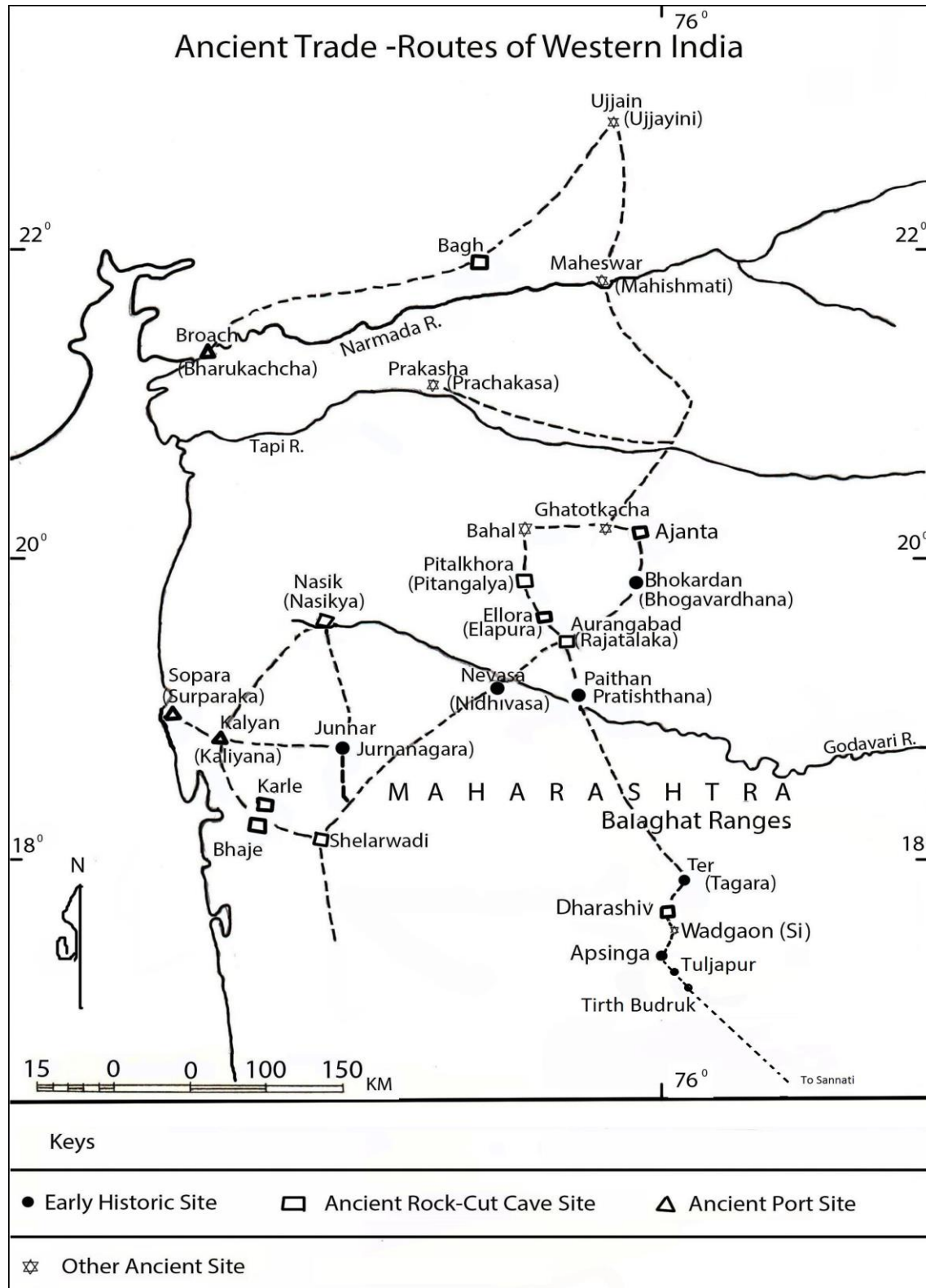


Figure 1: Tirth Budruk is shown in the ancient trade-routes map of western India



Figure 2: Various localities around Tirth Budruk



Figure 3: Remains of brick stupa exposed in 2001, Tirth Budruk (Courtesy: Gajbhiye)

Of these mounds, mound-I with the Kal-Bhairavnath temple seems to be a natural hill; a portion of the natural rock is visible at the top of the hill. It is more than 11m high and located between mound-II and a lake. There is no denying the possibility of a small votive stupa like structure being built on the mound-I before the 14th Cent.CE, as a large monumental stupa activity, exists at the site (Figure 5).

Mound-II is located on a small natural hillock, between mound-I and mound-III. A small circular brick stupa discovered in 2001, was located on this mound. However, Gajbhiye had focused only on this brick stupa located on the mound-II. Apart from the stupa, no other remains can be found on this mound.



Figure 4: Early historic mounds, Tirth Budruk



Figure 5: Kal-Bhairavnath temple on the mound no. 1, Tirth Budruk

Mound-III is comparatively the largest of all. It is situated between mound-II and a natural hill. A 13th Cent CE, temple of Bhimashankar has been built on this mound. It is more than 15m high above the ground level and is spread over an area of about half an acre. It is round in shape, with several brick structures and pieces scattered on the surface (Figure 6). The physiology of the mound also revealed several chunks, chips, boulders, and other architectural members of limestone. It seems that these were collapsed architectural members of a structural stupa. Apart from these, Early Historic pottery, tiles, and stone objects were found during the exploration. This stratum of the mound is disturbed at places by rabbit holes, crevices caused by tree roots, and percolation of rainwater (Figure 7).



Figure 6: Bhimashankar temple on mound no. 3, Tirth Budruk



Figure 7: General view of the mounds, Tirth Budruk



Figure 8: Sculptural remains of a stupa, Kal-Bhairavnath temple (mound no. 1), Tirth Budruk

Below the mound-III, towards east on the agricultural ground, while digging the foundation of the well, several sculptures, and slabs of limestone were recovered. The villagers placed some good specimens in front of the Kal-Bhairavnath temple. A detailed description of the limestone sculptures and other architectural members is given below.

Sculpture Showing Scene of the Birth of Siddhartha

Two pieces of limestone about the one-meter height of a single depiction are kept in front of the Kal-Bhairavnath temple. The panel may have been destroyed due to the collapse of the architectural members of the stupa. This panel shows a man (possibly a king?), a queen (?), and another a couple. The couple behind the king and queen are probably holding a piece of clothing. The King that appears on the right side of the panel is shown with a hairdo with a beaded band and is bare-bodied above the waist (Figure 8). He is shown with heavy *karnakundala*, *kanthamala*, *keyura*, and, *valaya*. There is something wrapped around his waist along with a knife. It also looks like the leg of the child. However, the position of his right hand also indicates that he has to hold something (?).

Next to the main male figure, a female (possibly queen) is standing touching the male. She is shown with *karnkundalas*, *kanthhara*, and *keyuras* with multiple rings. The facial expressions of these figures represent some of the happiest events in their lives. A couple of main figures are also shown with *karnkundalas* and *kanthamalas*. The hairstyle of all the four-characters is remarkable. A pillar with lotus petals designs on the pot is

shown on the left side of the panel. The upper border of the panel is decorated with a row of flying geese (*hamsa-paṭṭkā*) with lotus stalks held in their beaks (Figure 9).



Figure 9: fragmented sculptural slab probably depicting the life scene of Gautam Buddha, Tirth Budruk

Most probably, the panel is showing 'the conception of Mayadevi, the delivery of baby Siddhartha, in which King Shuddhodana is shown with queen Mayadevi, the mother of Buddha. Another possibility is that an unknown *Jataka* story is shown in the panel. The stupas at Kanaganahalli and Amaravati were mainly engraved with *Jataka* stories, Satavahana kings, or events in the life of Gautama Buddha (Poonacha 2011).



Figure 10: An unidentified fragmented sculpture, Tirth Budruk



Figure 11: Lotus medallions, Nagnath temple

Unidentified Sculpture

In addition to the above panel, another broken panel piece has been found here. This piece of limestone is also kept on the premises of the Kal-Bhairavnath temple. The stone depicts the lower garment of an unknown male or female. The person in the panel is shown sitting with his legs folded at the knees. A *haṁsa-paṭṭkā* is shown below the figure (Figure 10). It could be a scene of an unknown *Jataka* story.



Figure 12: Lotus medallion with depictions of a stupa, Ter (Courtesy: Ter Museum)

Lotus Medallions

Two lotus medallions of limestone are fixed on the inner south walls in a medieval *kunda* located in front of the Nagnath temple. These medallions may have been brought here from the actual site in medieval times for decorating the *kunda*. These medallions are depicted with beautiful full-blown lotus petals. The upper portion of one of the medallions has been destroyed. However, it is also beautifully carved (Figure 11). Usually, such types of medallions were placed on the railing of the stupa. Similar types of medallions have been found on the stupas at Ter (Figure 12), Sannati, and Amaravati.

Peacock Figure

A small piece of limestone, depicting a peacock's head with crest and neck was found on the mound no. three (Figure 13).



Figure 13: Depiction of the peacock, Tirth Budruk



Figure 14: Tiles and various types of fragments of geometric designs of stupa remains, Tirth Budruk



Figure 15: Various types of Satavahana pottery and stone pestles, Tirth Budruk



Figure 16: General view of Kal-Bhairavnath temple, Tirth Budruk



Figure 17: *Sabhamandapa* and *antarala* of Kal-Bhairavnath temple, Tirth Budruk



Figure 18: Mahishamardini (Durga), Tirth Budruk



Figure 19: Kal-Bhairavnath, Tirth Budruk



Figure 20: Shiva lingam at Kal-Bhairavnath temple, Tirth Budruk



Figure 21: Hero stones and Naga *shilpa*, Kal-Bhairavnath temple, Tirth Budruk



Figure 22: General view of the Bhimashankar temple (mound no.3), Tirth Budruk



Figure 23: *Sabhamandapa* and *antarala* of the Bhimashankar temple, Tirth Budruk



Figure 24: A stele of Ass curse stone (*Gadhegal*) with *Devanagari* characters, Tirth Budruk



Figure 25: A sacred step-well, Nagnath temple



Figure 26: Bhairavnath temple, Tirth Khurd



Figure 27: Various sculptures: Bhairavnath, Balipitha, Ganesh, and Hero stones, Tirth Khurd

Geometric Patterns and Designs

Several pieces of limestone with different types of geometric patterns and designs have been observed on the mound-III and near the well. One of the fragments of limestone has lotus petals and bead-shaped designs carved on them. In other fragments, crossed lines are shown (Figure 14). All these fragments resemble the remains of a structural stupa. Apart from these stone designs, blocks, geometric designs, chunks, chips, and mutilated fragments of disturbed architectural members of limestone can be seen at Tirth Budruk.

Ceramics

Lots of Early Historic pottery including Coarse Red Ware, Red Slipped Ware, Red Polished Ware, and Black and Red Ware were recovered from the site. It is mainly fragmentary and mostly parts of the basin, bowls, lids, storage vessels and cooking vessels, storage jars, knobs, etc. (Figure 15). Such types of ceramics also are reported from Ter, Sawargaon, Apsinga, and other Satavahana sites of the Osmanabad district (Chapekar 1969; Kulkarni 2009; Ansari *et al.* 2013). Apart from these, several roof tiles are noticed in the surface collection. Shreds of evidence of tiles indicate some building activities at the site such as monastery apart from the structural stupa. Similar roof tiles are also found in several excavations such as at Junnar, Brahmgiri, Ter, etc.



Figure 28: Sculptural remains of Stupa, Ter

Another noticeable artefact is the stone pestle. Two such stone pestles are noticed on the mound-III. Some villagers said that once upon a time several white slabs with some huge *naga* and other figures were seen near the site. Naga figures could be depictions of Muchalinda naga, which are generally seen at the early Buddhist stupa sites. Such a type of depiction of Naga figure with stupa also reported from Ter (Deo 1987:19). Nowadays, there is a shrine of Naga in the area of Tirth Budruk. It seems that there could be some connection of present-day Naga worship with the Naga worship in Buddhism in ancient time.

Archaeological Remains of the Medieval Period at Tirth Budruk

Apart from Early Historic remains several medieval remains are scattered in and around Tirth Budruk including temples, loose fragmented sculptures, five hero stones,

lingams, Sati stone, Nagshilpa, Nandis, and inscription. These remains are generally dated from the 13th -15th Cent CE.



Figure 29: Assumed stupa mound, Wadgaon-Siddheshvar



Figure 30: Exposed bricks wall of the Satavahana period, Apsinga



Figure 31: Early Historic mound, Gad-Devdari

Kal-Bhairavnath Temple

Kal-Bhairavnath temple is located on the mound-I and near the newly constructed lake. Several steps are made around the hill to climb the temple. Kal-Bhairavnath is famous as a healing deity. After being bitten by a snake, many devotees go to the temple for healing. Currently, the temple is in a bad state of preservation and has been repaired enormously with the help of Early Historic bricks from the mounds. Five hero stones, a Sati stone, Naga sculpture, Nandi, Shiva lingams, and fragmented sculptures have been kept in the premises of the temple. A *dipmala* (lamp Pillar) is standing outside the temple (Figure 16). Several architectural members are still intact in the temple.

The Kal-Bhairavnath temple is of *tridala* typed and faces to the east. It seems that the temple had three openings. However, the main entrance to the temple on the east is in a highly dilapidated condition, for this reason, it is closed by using Early Historic bricks and stones, and removed the wall of the small shrine on the north side and made a new entrance. Now, the northern shrine is used as a main entrance of the temple. A Nandi is placed facing the Shiva lingam in the northern shrine. The *sabhamandapa* of the temple consists of four pillars at the four corners with a *rangashila* in the center. The pillars of the *mandapa* contain most of the carvings of the *kirtimukhas* in the central portion. Except for two lion figures, no other sculptures are carved on the

pillars. The capitals of the pillars are simple and devoid of any *bharvahakas*. The *antarala* is flanked by two empty *devkoshtakas* on either side of the outer walls. The walls of the *antarala* are repaired with cement and Early Historic bricks. There are only *stambhashakhas* at the doorways of the *garbhagriha* (Figure 17). There is no deity carved on the *lalatabimba*. The square *Udumbara* of the door has two brackets of geometrical shapes on *mandaraka*. *Chandrashila* is placed in front of the doorways. It appears that most of the portion of *garbhagriha* was repaired later. An image of Mahishamardini (c.13th -14th Cent.) is housed in the middle of the temple. The image of Bhairavnath (c. 13th -14th Cent.) facing to the south is also kept in the same *garbhagriha*. A small broken marble head of a woman is also fixed in the niche of the *garbhagriha*. The *vitana*s of the temple have simple geometrical patterns. Newly constructed *shikhara* is seen above the *garbhagriha*. *Jagati* and *jangha* are portions devoid of any sculptural depictions. However, several floral motifs have been carved on the *jagati*.

The position of the temple indicates that the temple was not dedicated to Kal-Bhairavnath. The image of Bhairavnath may have been originally from the northern shrine of the temple. It probably suggests that the temple was originally dedicated to Mahishasuramardini, who is placed in the center of the *garbhagriha*. Interestingly, hills around Tirth Budruk are known as ‘*Ratnadevicha Dongar*’ (Hills of Ratnadevi) (Gajbhiye 2003-04: 94-95).

Mahishamardini (Durga)

The image of Mahishamardini placed in the *garbhagriha* is about 75cm high. She is shown with eight hands, *kiritmukut*, *kanthmala*, *keyur*, circular *kundalas*, *stanahara*, *mekhala*, and *adhovastra* (lower garments). She holds respectively a sword and shield in her upper right and left hands. The next two hands of the goddess are shown with a spoon and an unknown object, respectively. Next to the lower right hand is an unknown object, however, *shikha* of the demon is shown in the left-hand. A *trishula* is held in both lower hands. Mahishasur lies in front of the Goddess. A lion is also shown near the left foot (Figure 18).

Bhairavanatha

A fourhanded sculpture of nude Bhairava is shown with fangs in the mouth, circular *kundalas*, *kanthamala*, *skandhhara*, *keyur*, *valaya*, *mekhala* with bells, and *narmundamala*. The head of the image is flanked with snakes. He holds a *damaru* and *trishula* in the upper right and left hands respectively; however, the lower right and left hands are shown with dagger and *kapala* (bowl) with *munda* respectively. Two nude attendants with daggers are shown on either side of Bhairava. However, the bowl is shown in the right hand of one of the attendants (Figure 19).

Shiva Lingam

A huge Shiva lingam is placed in the southern shrine of the temple. A *brahmasutra* is carved on the lingam (Figure 20). Apart from this, three more lingams including a *Panchlinga* are seen in the temple premises.

Vishnu

A fragment of Vishnu sculpture is placed in front of the temple. Feet, a mace, and *ayudha purusha* and probably Sridevi are seen in this sculpture.

Hero stones

The five hero stones are placed in a row in the temple premises. They depict various scenes. Three of them depict a battle scene. A warrior is shown with a spear on one of these hero stones. A hero is depicted with a *chhatra*, horse, and a spear in another hero stone. It indicates his prestige in society. However, the other two identical hero stones are associated with cattle protection (Figure 21).

Apart from these remains, two Nandis, Naga stone, *Samadhis*, a broken pillar with *padukas* are placed in temple premises.

Bhimashankar Temple

The ruined temple of Bhimashankar is situated on the mound-III. It is about 100m away from the Kal-Bhairavnath temple, a Shiva temple. The architectural members and structures including *garbhagriha*, *antarala*, and *sabhamandapa* gel with the original temple. The Nandi *mandapa* has been destroyed (currently, the villagers have built a modern cement cell in front of the temple and have placed a modern Shiva-lingam on the eastern side. However, the original Shiv lingam was supposed to be facing west.). Several remains of the temple including pillars, *vitana*, *ardhastambhas* and, broken *yonipitha* are seen in the premises of the temple (Figure 22).

It is noticed that the temple was covered with Early Historic bricks. Now almost all the bricks are separated from the temple. Neither is any deity housed inside the *garbhagriha*, nor is there sculptures noticed near the temple. However, traditionally the villagers know this temple as that of Bhimashankar. The only broken *yonipitha* lying near the temple shows that the temple was originally dedicated to Shiva. Some of the sculptures in the temple are likely to have been moved by villagers to the current premises of the Kal-Bhairavnath temple. The pillars of the *mandapa* are beautifully carved. The capitals of the pillars depict the figures of inverted *Naga* (*nagabandha*). These types of *nagabandha* are shown in most of the 13th Cent. temples (Figure 23). Considering these features, we can safely assign this temple to the 13th Cent. CE. The Bhimashankar temple seems older than the Bhairavnath temple on its architectural style and sculptures.

A medieval inscription on a basalt slab is noticed towards the north of the mound-III. The stone slab fallen into the bushes is irregular and unfinished. It is 97cm long and 47cm in width. It is triangular at the top. It is a *gadhegal* (Ass curse stele). At the top of the inscription is inscribed a Shiva lingam between the sun and the moon. Six lines of Devanagari characters are carved on the stone. The inscription is engraved in Sanskrit. At the bottom of the inscription is carved a donkey with phallus (Figure 24). The inscription was probably carved to protect Bhimashankar's temple.

Archaeological Remains from the Surrounding Area

There are some archaeological remains in the vicinity of Tirth Budruk which are indirectly connected to it. Among them, Nagnath temple and Tirth Khurd are important sites.

Nagnath Temple (Nagtirth)

A medieval temple of god Nagoba or Nagnath is located between Tirth Budruk and Tirth Khurd. The temple was fortified on all sides. Now only the northern rampart and a bastion have remained. Several ruined cells, *samadhis* of ascetics, Ganesha, Naga sculpture, and Shiva lingam are seen. There is a beautiful medieval step-well (*Barava*), which is considered sacred. The annual fair is held on Naga Panchami and Mahashivaratri (Figure 25).

Archaeological Remains at Tirth Khurd

Tirth Khurd is located at a distance of 3km away from Tirth Budruk. A few archaeological remains including late medieval fortresses are there in the village. There is a ruined triple shrine temple of an unknown deity. Remains of *sabhamandapa* and *garbhagriha* of the temple are visible. Three hero stones, Ganesha, and Naga sculpture are also seen in this temple. There is another temple of Bhairavnath, which has been constructed using the remains of another unknown temple of 13th-14th Cent.CE. A *Rashi chakra* (Zodiac wheel), *Ashva pattika* (a row of horse riders), *hasti pattika* (row of elephants), and hero stone are fixed on the walls of Bhairavnath temple (Figure 26).

There is a beautiful image of fourhanded Bhairavnath inside the *garbhagriha*. He is shown in *savyalalitasana*. He has a *damaru* and a trident respectively in the upper right and left hands. The lower right and left hands have a sword and *kapala*, respectively. A human figure with a snake is shown under the Bhairavnath's foot. Two human figures are shown on either side of Bhairavnath's head. He is shown with *Karandamukuta*, *kundalas*, *naramundmalas*, *valaya*, and moustache. Two Shiva lingams, Vishnu (?), a hero stone, and a *Bali pitha* are placed in front of the Bhairavnath temple (Figure 27).

Discussion and Conclusion

A look at the nature of archaeological remains in and around Tirth Budruk reveals that human activities took place mainly in two periods. First, from the 1st CE to the 2nd-3rd Cent. CE or the Satavahana period, and then generally from the 13th -15th Cent. CE to the fifteenth century AD. In the first period, monumental works like structural stupas and related constructions were done, while in the second period, four temples were built in the area.

In the Early Historic period from c. 3rd BCE to 3rd CE, the Satavahanas were ruling over the Deccan including this region (Mirashi 1979). Remains of structural stupas in Maharashtra have been found at Sopara, Pawani, Brahmapuri, Ter, and Bhon. Among them, limestones have been used in the decoration of stupas at Ter and Tirth Budruk. Several important Early Historic sites have been also noticed in the Osmanabad

district. Of these, evidence of Satavahana period constructions has been found from sites such as Ter, Wadgaon-Siddheshwar, Apsinga, and Gad-Devdari.

Ter is one of the most important sites of Early Historic India. It is referred to in 'Periplus of the Erythraean Sea' as one of the important cities of that period. J. F. Fleet established the identity of Ter as Tagara for the first time (Fleet 1901: 539-43). In the same year, Cousins visited Ter to ascertain how far Fleet's identification was correct and presented a detailed report in the year 1902-03 (Cousens 1904: 195-204). The site was excavated and studied by several scholars such as Douglas Barrett (1960), B. N. Chapekar (1969), M. G. Dikshit (1965-68), S. B. Deo and Pathi (1975), Maya Patil Shahapurkar (2015). The remains of a large stupa and a Buddhist *Chaityagriha* with an apsidal surface were found in this excavation carried out by Moreshwar Dikshit in 1968 at Ter. It was proved that Ter was a major centre of Buddhism. The stupa was 26m in diameter and had *ayaka* pillars. The walls and floors of the stupa were decorated with limestone sculptures. A large number of limestone panels are found here. One such limestone sculpture is now seen in a Jain temple at Ter. Such ornate stones and sculptures were used in the construction of the stupa (Figure 28). Limestone with the engraved name of the Satavahana king Vasishthiputra Pulumavi was found at Ter in recent years.

Wadgaon-Siddheshwar is a place famous for the medieval temple of Siddheshwar at a distance of 8km from Osmanabad city. To the east of the temple is the mound of a stupa (Figure 29). To the south-west of the temple are the remains of the brick construction of the Early Historic period. Many well-burnt bricks of the Satavahana period lay scattered on the site.

In 2009, Amol Kulkarni reported several Early Historic sites in Kalamb, Osmanabad, and Tuljapur *tehsils* of Osmanabad District. He excavated an ancient mound at Sawargaon on a small scale and found a cultural sequence from the early history to the medieval period (Kulkarni 2009). Sawargaon is located at a distance about 30km from the Tirth Budruk in the same *tehsil*. The village of Apsinga also has a huge brick structure of the Satavahana period (Figure 30). It is located 16km away from the Osmanabad city, and 10km away from Wadgaon-Siddheshwar (Ansari *et al.* 2013: 238-39). Vilas Wahane, from the state directorate of the archaeology of Maharashtra, has recorded Early Historical brick structure at Gad-Devdari (Figure 31), six km north-west of Osmanabad city (pers. comm. 2016). There are also remnants of the medieval fort 'Ramgad' and the *Dargah* of Baba Farid, a Sufi saint. All these sites around Tirth Budruk show several structural and monumental activities of the Early Historic period in the region.

The remains found at Tirth Budruk are important for several reasons. Early Historical sculptures carved in white limestone at Tirth Budruk are associated with an unknown structural stupa. Limestone is not available locally in the Tirth Budruk area. The nearest source of limestone quarry is Sannati and Shahabad in the Kalburgi district of

the Karnataka state. The limestone blocks for decorating the stupa at Tirth Budruk must have been brought from a quarry near the Sannati area. Like Ter and Tirth Budruk, Sannati is also an important centre on the trade route and is located at a distance of about 200km from the Tirth Budruk. This stone must have reached Tirth Budruk and Ter by trade route.

The sculptures made on limestone at Tirth Budruk look similar to those of Sannati and Amaravati. Several centres associated with Buddhist monasteries and *chaityas* have been reported in the valleys of Krishna and Godavari. They span a period from the 2nd Cent. BCE to the 3rd Cent.CE. Among them, the stupa at Amaravati has yielded large remains of sculptural art. During the Satavahana period, sculptors developed their unique style, came to be known as the Amaravati style. Recently, sculptural limestone remains of the stupa were also found at Kanaganahalli near Sannati (Poonacha 2011). The same type of limestone sculptures has been used for the stupas at Tirth Budruk. Therefore, the sculptures at Tirth Budruk are also associated with the Amaravati style. Moreover, the sculptures at Tirth Budruk also belong to Buddhism.

Limestone sculptures and fragments related to the stupa architecture have also been found at Ter. Some of these remains are preserved in the museum at Ter. These are rare sculptures of the type and style found from this area. These limestone sculptures found at the Tirth Budruk help in determining the northernmost spread or boundary of the Amaravati style. However, it seems that this style of making sculptures in Ter and Tirth Budruk was slightly different from the mainstream style of the Amaravati School. The style of these sculptures, grace, and physiography is a bit different from the mainstream art of Amaravati. Sculptures can have local influences. Even anatomical features, contour, facial expressions, hairstyles, drapery, etc. look a little different from other sites of Amaravati school. The early stupas in the Krishna-Godavari valley belonged to the Hinayana (*Theravada*) sect. Therefore, the stupa at Tirth Budruk was also associated with the Hinayana. Followers, most probably traders, must have built a grand stupa here. It is also possible that the drum of the stupa could be decorated with limestone slabs.

Themes depicted in these sculptural panels could be associated with episodes narrating the events of the life of Gautama Buddha. There is also a possibility of *Jataka* stories being carved in other stones. However, it cannot be said now until and unless further findings or excavations are carried out. On the basis of the present findings, it seems that the brick stupa remains observed by Mr Gajbhiye could be of a votive stupa, which was constructed near the main unknown stupa. There is some pottery of the Early Historic period, which indicates there was a small habitational activity, most probably for the Buddhist monks.

The Rashtrakuta king Dantivarman's grant records the donation of a village to a Buddhist monastery at Kampilya (Bhandarkar 1900-01: 285-294 (Reprint 1981). A. S. Altekar has described this Kampilya as an unknown village in the Tuljapur *tehsil* of

Osmanabad district (Altekar 1934: 308-309). Nevertheless, no such village exists in Tuljapur *tehsil*. So should Tirth Budruk be Kampilya? This requires further research.

During the Satavahana period, many trade routes existed in Deccan; Sopara-Kalyan-Junjar-Nashik-Paithan-Ter-Sannati-Amaravati being a famous one. The antiquities found at Ter and the stupa remains at Tirth Budruk indicate that the Tirth Budruk must also have been an important centre on the trade route, connecting Ter to the north and Sannati to the south. After Ter and Wadgaon-Siddheshwar, the village Tirth Budruk was likely an important stop on the trade route. The stupa remains at Tirth Budruk can provide a direction to mark possible sites and trade routes in Dakshinapath.

In this context, it should also be mentioned here that small ancillary centres such as Gad-Devdari, Wadgaon-Siddheshwar, Apsinga, might have been formed around the main trade route. Most probably, the trade route in Osmanabad district could be Ter-Wadgaon Siddheshwar-Apsinga-Tuljapur (Khurd)-Tirth Budruk. There are several potsherds most probably of the Early Historic period found at Tuljapur Budruk. Another site such as Itkal in Tuljapur *tehsil* is likely to be the next stop after Tirth Budruk, where Early Historic pottery was found (Kulkarni 2009). However, future exploration could reveal more data. Most of the Osmanabad district is dry and hilly. Therefore, the route should pass through the areas where water was available throughout the year.

According to Harihar Thosar, the Indo-Roman trade route was passing through the Latur district after Ter (Maharashtra state Gazetteer 2008: 57). However, from the remains of the stupa at Tirth Budruk, it seems that this trade route must have gone further from Tirth Budruk to Sannati. Apart from a few fragments, many more remains of the stupa will be in the mound. It is not clear why the site and stupa at Tirth Budruk were destroyed. Probably due to reasons like, political instability after the Satavahana rule, a gradual shift of religious beliefs, lack of maintenance, natural calamities, growth of vegetation, aggravated by subsequent agricultural activities.

The temples of Bhimashankar and Kal-Bhairavnatha are most probably built in the 13th-14th centuries CE, respectively, on the mound III and I. The loose sculptures scattered around the temples can also be assigned on their stylistic ground to the 13th-14th centuries CE. The temple of Kal-Bhairavnath has been famous for curing snakebites since medieval times. Two Davari Gosavi families are residing in the village. They are the followers of Nath sampradaya. A place called Gaibi Pir *Dargah* is located near Tirth Budruk. Gaibi Pir is identified as Gahininath, a great disciple of Gorakshanatha. Overall, the impact of Nath sampradaya can be seen in this region in the medieval period (Sarde 2019: 269).

Tirth Khurd also has the remains of a ruined thirteenth-fourteenth century temple of an unknown deity. The presence of *Balipitha* here indicates that there may be a temple of Goddess in this region. Some of the sculptures from both sites may have been

moved from one place to another. It seems that the cult of the goddess was also famous around the 14th Cent.CE in this region. It is also noted that the place is referred to in *Tulja-mahatmya* as one of the important Tirth (Sacred places). The name of Tulja Bhavani is also mentioned in the fourteenth-century inscription of Kati village near Tirth Budruk (Tulpule 1963: 298-301).

Tirth Budruk could be one of the Bhairavas located around Tuljapur. The people of Tirth Budruk also show some connection to Kal-Bhairavnath temple with Tulja Bhavani of Tuljapur. There are some other temples of Bhairavnath around Tuljapur. There is a temple of Bhairavnath at Dharur in Tuljapur *tehsil* (Dandekar & Joge 2018).

All these relics indicate that Tirth Budruk and its environs were once a famous Buddhist site during the Satavahana period and later it is becoming one of the religious centres during the Yadav-Bahamani period. Stupa remains similar to Kanaganahalli in Karnataka, are likely to be found at Tirth Budruk. A future excavation could shed more light on its glorious past.

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