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Q54

With reference to the art and archaeological history of India, which one among the following was made earliest? (a) Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar (b) Rock-cut Elephant at Dhauli (c) Rock-cut Monuments Mahabalipuram (d) Varaha Image at Udayagiri Official key: B.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2015 · General Studies · 2 marks · Art and Culture

Indian art, architecture, culture - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation

(a)

The **Lingaraja** Temple at Bhubaneswar is a developed Kalinga-style Hindu temple of about the eleventh century CE. It is many centuries later than the Mauryan rock-cut elephant. This option is not the key.

(b) Official key

The rock-cut elephant at Dhauli (near Bhubaneswar) is a Mauryan, third-century BCE, work associated with the Ashokan edict site. Among the four monuments it is the earliest. This option is the official key.

(c)

The rock-cut monuments at **Mahabalipuram** are Pallava works of about the seventh century CE. They post-date both Dhauli and the Udayagiri Varaha. This option is therefore wrong.

(d)

The Varaha image at Udayagiri (Vidisha region) belongs to the Gupta period, early fifth century CE. It is later than the Dhauli elephant though earlier than **Lingaraja** and **Mahabalipuram**. This option is not the key.

Summary

Official key is (b) Rock-cut Elephant at Dhauli. Dhauli is Mauryan (c. 3rd century BCE) and therefore the oldest of the four. Udayagiri's Varaha is Gupta (c. early 5th century CE). **Mahabalipuram**'s rathas and reliefs are Pallava (c. 7th century CE). **Lingaraja** is a medieval Kalinga temple (c. 11th century CE). Chronology therefore runs Dhauli, then Udayagiri, then **Mahabalipuram**, then **Lingaraja**.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Dhuli / Tosali

Ashokan Major Rock Edict site in Odisha with the forequarters of an elephant

Udayagiri caves

Gupta-period Vaishnava reliefs near Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh

Mahabalipuram

UNESCO site of Pallava rock-cut rathas, mandapas and the Descent of the Ganga

Lingaraja

Shaiva temple of the Somavamshi/Ganga phase at Bhubaneswar

Mauryan animal sculpture

Also includes Sarnath lion capital and Rampurva bulls

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