

Aghōra Dakṣiṇāmūrti

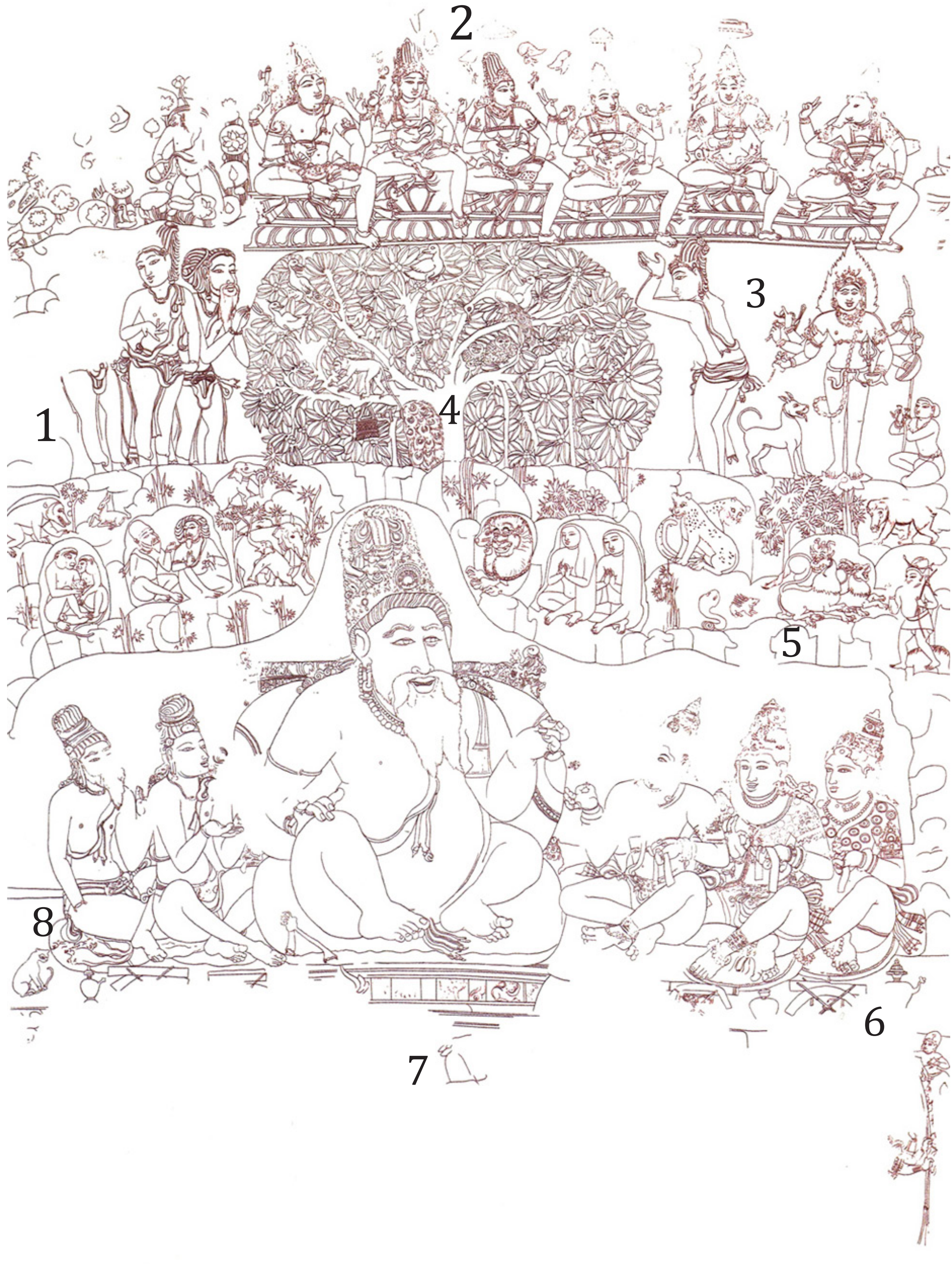
The first Cōla panel one meets with as one goes around in circumambulation is that of Aghōra Śiva. This panel is located on the south wall in bay 5.

The figure in the lower end of the panel and dominating the scene is Aghōra, seated beneath a huge banyan tree and teaching the Śiva dharma to the celestials and sages. This form of Aghōra is unique and not well-known to Tamil Nadu. This form is, in all probability, inspired by East Indian portrayal of Vaṭuka Bhairava.

The central figure of Aghōra, donning a beard, is seated on a *siṃhāsana*. He wears a high *Jaṭamakuṭa*. His right arm is placed on his right knee and the left is in *Kaṭakā* mudrā; as if in *yākyāna* pose. The pose is majestic and he gently faces the three men to his left, who are seated cross legged, bedecked with jewels and holding palm leaf manuscripts in their hands. To his right are seated two sages.

The branches of the banyan tree, under which Aghōra Śiva is seated, spread out, its leaves forming a *maṇḍala*. Enlivening the scene are animals and birds such as monkeys, peacocks, birds, owls, snakes, on the tree.

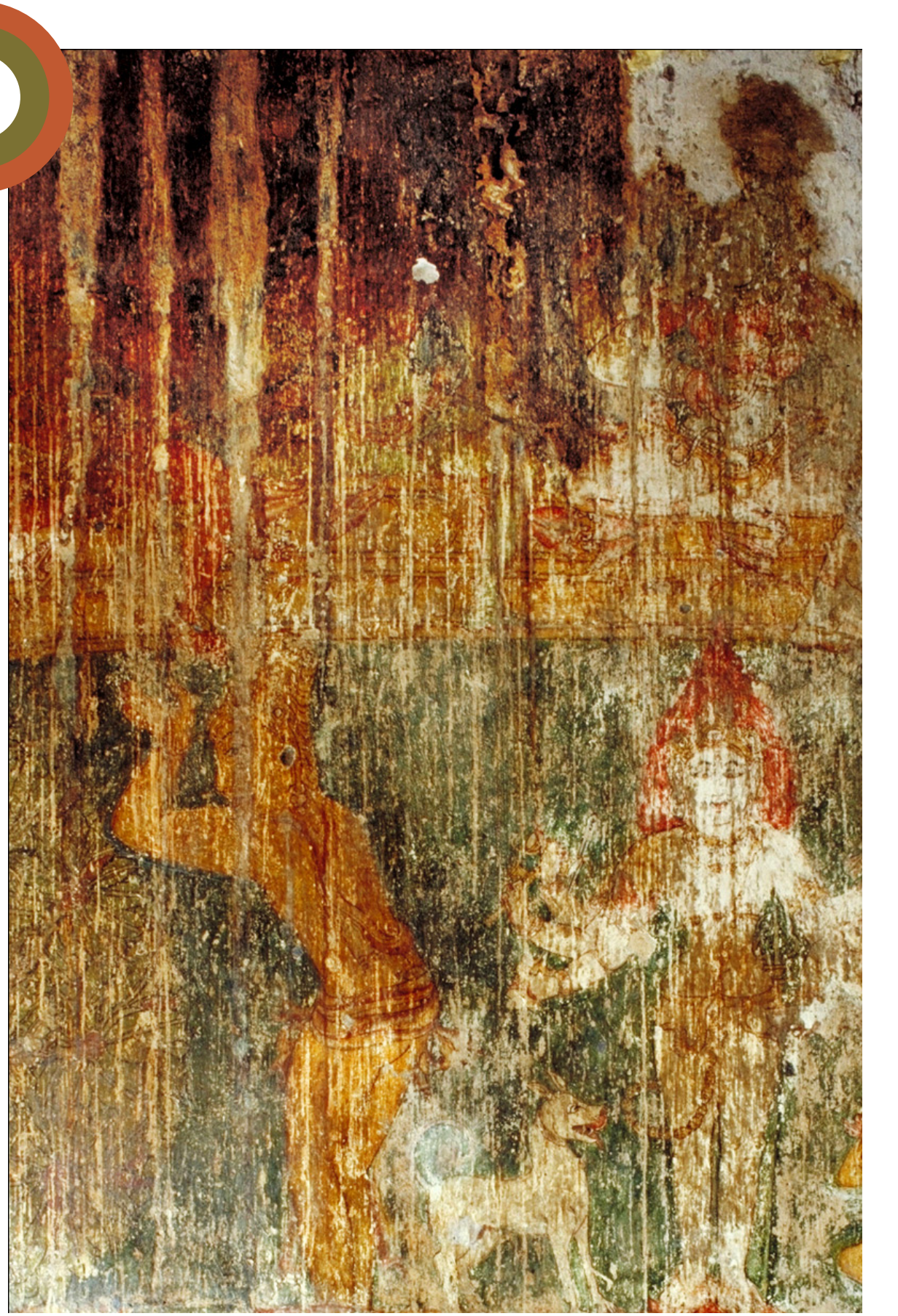
In the top end of the panel, are painted, a row of deities, representing the *Matragaṇas*. The first might possibly represent *Gaṇās*, followed by Śiva as *Gaṇānatha*, *Brāhmī*, *Māhēśvari*, *Kaumārī*, *Vaiṣṇavī* and *Varāhī*. Two figures, of *Indrāṇī* and *Cāmuṇḍā*, are faded.



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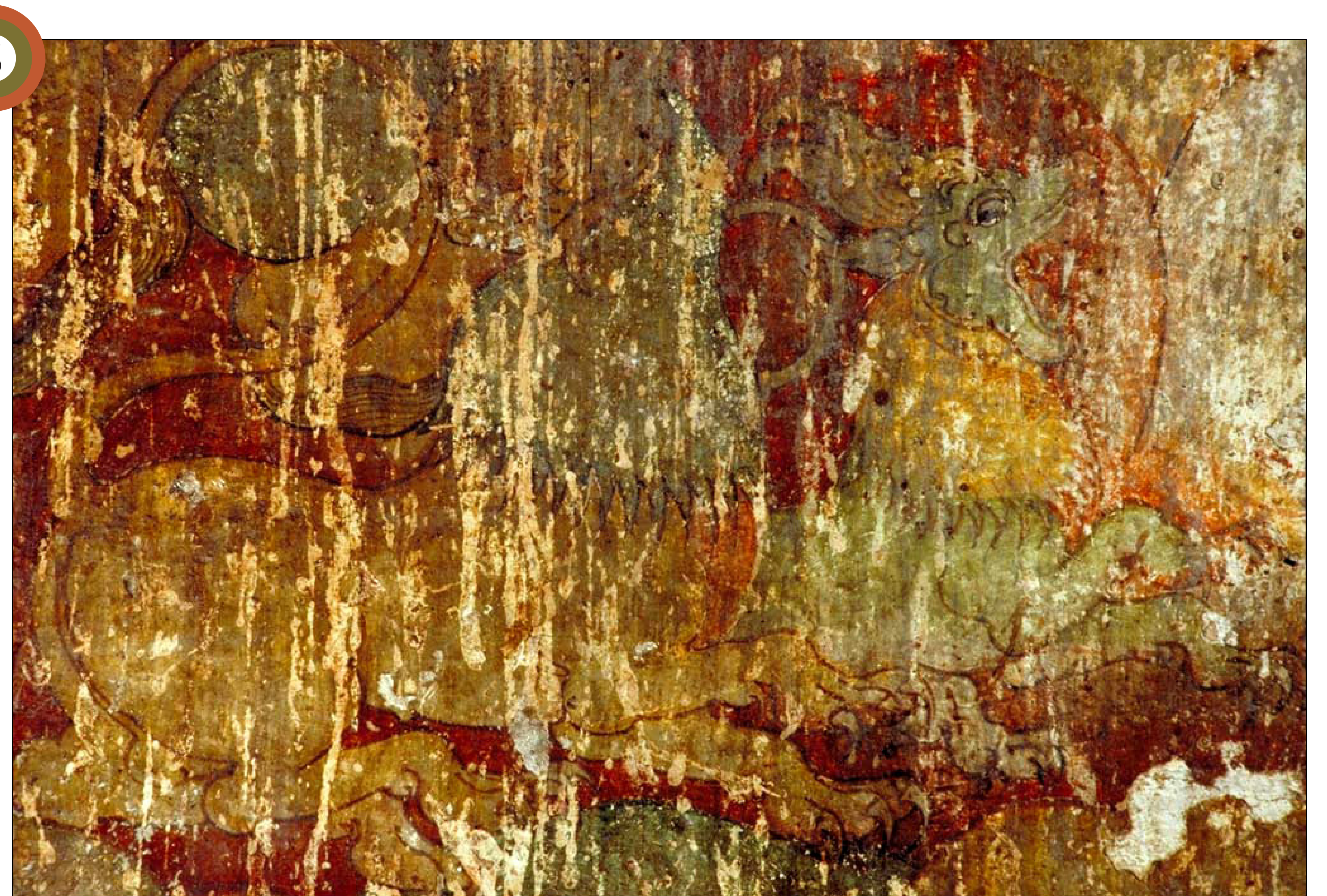
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