

A General Survey of the Art and Architecture of Vijayanagar

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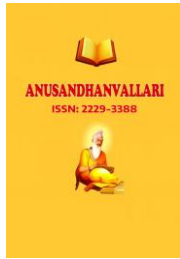
Abstract: The Hindu Vijayanagar Empire was headquartered in South India's Deccan plateau. Established in 1336 by Harihara I (1336–1356 CE), it flourished politically and culturally under Emperor Krishna Deva Raya (1509–1529 CE) until 1646, when the Muslim Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda seized it. Patronage helped the empire's fine arts and literature flourish, and its sculpture, painting, and architecture shaped South Indian arts long after the empire ended. This century saw major breakthroughs in Hindu temple construction, and the Vijayanagar style of architecture, whose best specimens are in Hampi, combined various South Indian temple building traditions and styles. Vijayanagar architecture was religious, courtly, and municipal. It's perfect blend of Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya, and Chola styles from prior centuries evokes the simplicity and calm of the past. As with the Badami Chalukyas, local hard granite was the preferred building material, but soapstone, which was soft and easily carved, was also used for reliefs and cultures. Wall paintings in the Virupaksha Temple at Hampi depict the Dashavatara (the Ten Avatars of Vishnu) and the Girijakalyana (the marriage of Shiva's consort Parvati); the Shivapurana murals (the Tales of Shiva) at the Virabhadra temple at Lepakshi; and those at the Kamaakshi and Varadaraja temples in Kanchi. The 1500-page Sritattvanidhi, commissioned by Mumtaz Ali Krishna Raja Wodeyar, is the most famous Mysore school manuscript. The representations of gods, goddesses, and mythological figures in this graphic compilation provide painters advice on composition, color, personality, and mood. These paintings also portray seasons, eco-happenings, animals, and plants. The Visnudharmottara Purana, Abhilasitarthacintamani, and Sivatatvaratnakara also discuss painting's goals and principles, pigment preparation, brushes, chitrakar qualifications, and technique.

Key words: Vijayanagar, Virupaksha Temple, art, architecture, Hampi

Introduction

Vijayanagara architecture, constructed during the Hindu Vijayanagar Empire, was remarkable. Vijayanagara, on the Tungabhadra River in modern Karnataka, India, was the empire's capital for South India. The empire created temples, monuments, palaces, and other structures across South India, mostly in its capital. Hampi's monuments in Vijayanagara are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

New buildings and improvements to hundreds of South Indian temples were built under the empire. Before Vijayanagara, certain constructions existed. The Western Chalukyas built Mahakuta hill temples. For centuries before the Vijayanagara period, Hampi was a popular centre of worship, first recorded in 689 CE as Pampa Tirtha after the local river God Pampa. The capital city center has hundreds of monuments. These 56 UNESCO-protected monuments, 654 Karnataka-protected monuments, and 300 awaiting protection. Architectural, sculpture, and art styles in Vijayanagara include sacred, courtly, and municipal. The Vijayanagara style, a blend of Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya, and Chola styles, reflects the return to simpler, more calm art from the prior ages. For 400 years, chloritic schist or soapstone was the most popular temple building material in the



Western Chalukya and Hoysalas empires. Since soapstone is soft and carveable, sculpture was too. Although soapstone was utilized for several reliefs and sculptures, the Badami Chalukya style preferred local hard granite throughout the Vijayanagar period. Granite made the temple building stronger but reduced sculpture density. As granite is prone to flaking, individual sculptures did not achieve the great grade observed in prior ages. Artists utilized plaster to smooth the uneven stone used in sculptures and painted it bright colors.

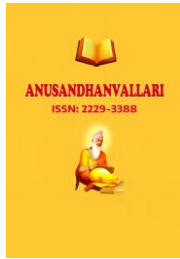
Objective

The goal of this study is to investigate the artistic and architectural developments that occurred during the time of the Vijayanagara empire.

Building design

Vijayanagara temples are generally fortified. Small shrines have a garbhagriha and porch. Garbhagriha, shukanasi, navaranga (antrala), and rangamantapa are seen in medium-sized temples. In Chola style, large temples have tall wood, brick, and stucco Rayagopuram. Raya goespurams were built by Vijayanagar Rayas. Shalashikharas on top of gopurams resemble barrels resting on their sides. Huge figures of men, women, Gods, and Goddesses decorate the gopuram. This Tamil-dravida-influenced architecture, popular during Krishnadevaraya's era, is evident in South Indian temples built during the next 200 years. The Chennakesava Temple at Belur, Srisailem, and Srirangam are Rayagopuram. Medium-sized temples also have a closed circumambulatory (Pradakshinapatha) pathway around the sanctum, an open mahamantapa, a kalyanamantapa, and a temple tank for annual celebrations. Engraved on temple pillars is charging horses or hippogryphs (Yali), horses on hind legs with their fore legs elevated and riders on their backs. The horses on some pillars are 7–8 feet tall. Other side of the pillar has Hindu mythology carvings. Non-hippogryph pillars are rectangular with mythology-themed decoration on all sides. Pillars with a central shaft may have several lesser pillars. The bottom supports of these pillars feature Gods and Goddesses engraved.

Hippogryph carvings demonstrate the skill of its creators. Vijayanagar temples feature large enclosures, ornate pillared kalyanamandapa, Chola-style rayagopurams, and life-sized figures of gods and goddesses. South Indian temples built over the next two centuries use this dravida style, which became popular under Krishnadeva Raya. Carved pillars of charging horses, Hindu mythological characters, and yali are also found in Vijayanagar temples. Some larger temples have a shrine for the female deity and a male deity. The Vijayanagar-style Virupaksha Temple at Hampi and Deva Raya I's Hazara Rama temple are notable examples. Granite for the temple construction, halls, entrances, and enclosure walls is the most essential feature in Vijayanagara temple architecture. However, Vijayanagara architects chose brick and mortar and stucco sculptures for superstructures. Explain the change in architectural materials and style from the geccan, southern Karnataka, and Andhra temple styles. Karnataka and Andhra use granite instead of sandstone, schist, or basalt. According to Dr. A.Sundarara , the terrain of Vijayanagara city is characterized by granite hills. This led to the invitation of granite-working architects from southern Tamil, part of the Vijayanagara empire. After A.D.1268, temple building in the Hoyasala dominions almost stopped. In the late 13th century A.D., temple construction was scarce in the Kakatiya realm. Temple development slowed due to Muslim invasions of Warangal and the Hoyasalas in the first two decades of the 14th century. With the formation of the Vijayanagara monarchy and capital, royal patronage to building activities began, attracting architects and artists from the granite-building South and Andhra. These causes caused a large building material change. The temples and gateways' brick and stucco superstructures demonstrate continuity with the Kakatiyas and Telugu cola era temple construction traditions in Andhra. The Tadapatris temples and gates use schist extensively, contrary to the trend. Built on square or polygonal plinths, Mantapas have four-to five-foot-high carved friezes, stepping entrances with tiny elephants, and Yali balustrades. Ornate pillars support Mantapas. The 1,000-pillared architecture with huge halls was popular. Example: Mudabidri's 1,000-pillared Jain basadi. Female deities have distinct shrines in larger temples. This is seen in Hampi's Hazara Rama, Balakrishna,



and Vitthala temples. Some Vitthalapura shrines in Vijayanagara were dedicated to Tamil Alwar saints and Ramanujacharya, a Vaishnava saint. They differ in architecture because each shrine depicts the saint it worships. Each shrine features a kitchen, pilgrim meal hall, and enclosure. The royal center's "Pushkarni" water storage tank is a new archaeological discovery. Built of finished chlorite schist slabs, the stepped tank features symmetrical stairs and landings down to the water on all four sides. Many sections of Karnataka have Western Chalukya-Hoysala tanks like this. The slab inscriptions show the material came from outside Vijayanagara.

The infinity blueprints

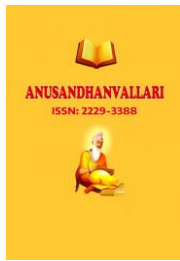
Making a blueprint is the first stage in building any architecture. As per Vastu-Shastra, a temple cannot be built before its blueprint. This blueprint may not be a temple. Vastu-purusha Mandalas depict the universe geometrically. In Hindu architecture, this "blueprint" is produced before the house to predict the ultimate design. Hindu temples resemble computer graphics according to Vastu Shastra's sixth-century architecture principles.

Start with a square. You can use a grid of any size, as long as the basic idea starts with a square. The fixed RAM sizes of 512,1024, 2048—perfect squares—reflect how computers store memories. Squares alone don't build temples. The cosmic egg—a circle—represents the universe. Indian temples' jagged edges come from making this spheroid from squares alone. A deeper look at these edges shows fractals, another temple building influence on computer visuals. In "Hindu Temple: Models of a Fractal Universe," IIT Madras professor Kirti Trivedi writes: Hindu thinking underpins temple art's hallowed, self-similar, recursive geometries. Hindus believe the Cosmos is holonomic and selfsimilar. Each fragment of the galaxy is considered to be whole and contain all its information, like a hologram. The stepping tanks at Hampi and the Shikhara patterns in Virupakshi temple uses fractals. The temple's Vimana, or sanctum sanctorum, has miniature shapes like the main one. The repeated shapes form a Samvarna garland in stacked horizontal tiers. Recursive in computing terminology, starting from the inside and expanding outwards. Queen Loka Mahadevi ordered the temple's construction in the seventh century A.D. The walls are lined with hand-carved friezes of Shaivite and Vasihanvite deities, some depicting Sita's abduction by Ravana.

According to legend, Pampa, the river goddess, and Shiva's incarnation Virupaksha fell in love. Pilgrims still celebrate Virupaksha and Pampa's wedding here. Vijayanagara architects also drew from Bahmani and Islamic sultanates. According to UNESCO, Vijayanagara architecture incorporates Indo Islamic features into secular buildings like the Queen's Bath and Elephant Stables, demonstrating a highly developed multi-religious and multi-ethnic society. South Indian temple architecture is distinctive, and the Vijayanagara architects constructed a towering Gopuram to Virupaksha temple's entrance. Unlike North India, the city has seven defenses. Chariot festivals were popular, and its roadways were large enough for several chariots. Though Vijayanagara is no longer a city, it has long had a bazaar, stores, and hotels as a temple town. In order to preserve the site, the ASI removed the market and its residents, who were part of a rich culture.

Alternative Buildings

Due to the fact that no royal palace constructions have been preserved, the majority of what is currently known about the palaces of Vijayanagara comes from archaeological excavations that took place at Hampi. The majority of palaces are located within their own compound, which is characterized by high walls created from stone or earth that are stacked. It is necessary to make many changes in direction in order to reach palaces because they are approached through a series of courts that contain corridors and doorways. Every palace is oriented toward either the east or the north. The complex is symmetrical in shape because the larger palaces have side expansions that extend from the palaces. Granite was used to construct the high platforms that palaces were erected on. Multiple tiers of mouldings with friezes that are beautifully adorned may be found on the platforms. Flower arrangements, Kirtimukha shapes (which are essentially demonic faces), geese, elephants, and even human figures are sometimes used as decorations. The ash that was found during excavations provided evidence that the pillars,



beams, and rafters that were found inside the palace were built of wood. Brick or lime concrete was used to construct the roof, and copper and ivory were utilized for the production of the finials. Each flight of stairs in a palace was typically ornamented with balustrades on either side, which featured either sculptures of elephants or yalis, which were a type of mythological beast. Palaces typically comprised of numerous stories. Both the mantapas of temples and the entrance steps to palaces were adorned in a similar manner. The water tanks that are located within the palace complex are equipped with ornamental water spouts, such as the carved torso of the Nandi, which has a gaping mouth that allows water to pour into the chamber. Wells and shrines are an additional type of construction that can frequently be discovered within a palace complex. The majority of the information that is known about royal palaces during the Vijayanagar period comes from archaeological excavations that have taken place at Hampi. No royal palace structures from that time period have survived intact. The majority of the palaces were situated within enclosures that were enclosed by high stone and earth walls that tapered inward and faced either east or north. The structures were constructed on raised granite platforms that included many tiers of mouldings that were adorned with carved friezes. Balustrades carved with yali and elephants were typically placed on either side of the towering flights of steps that were normally seen in palaces. Palaces typically encompassed numerous levels. The roofs were constructed out of brick and lime concrete, while the pillars and beams were built of wood. Generally speaking, the courtly architecture of Vijayanagar was constructed out of mortar that was combined with stone rubble. It frequently displays secular designs with arches, domes, and vaults that were influenced by Islamic architecture. In most cases, the courtly architecture is characterized by secular styles that incorporate Islamic influences. There are several examples, such as the watch towers, the Elephant stables, and the Lotus Mahal mansion. Mortar that was mixed with stone debris was used in the construction of domed constructions and elaborately designed buildings. The influence of this architectural style was observed far into the 17th century, when subsequent Nayaka kingdoms continued to encourage the use of pillars with hippogryphs and granite became the primary material used in construction.

Conclusion

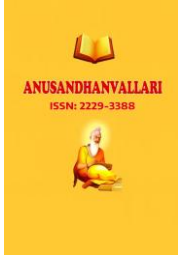
South Indian temple architecture is characterized by the presence of a huge Gopuram, which may be found at the entrance of the Virupaksha temple. In the construction of the temple in Vijayanagara, the architects and builders each added their own unique touches to the overall design. This particular city, in contrast to those located in Northern India, is totally encircled by walls, and it possesses a total of seven defenses. During that historical period, it was common knowledge that chariot festivals were quite popular, and the streets of this city were large enough to host a number of chariots.

Vijayanagara has long been home to the typical assortments that are linked with being a temple town, despite the fact that it is no longer considered to be a city. The assortment of hotels, a few stores, and a bazaar are all included in this category. As a result of the ASI's urgency to protect the location, the bazaar and all of its inhabitants were compelled to evacuate. This atmosphere fostered the growth of a historic culture, which included all of these individuals as members of that culture.

At this point in time, Vijayanagara is the South Indian architectural monument that has been conserved the best during the course of its existence up until the present day. Each and every one of its temples is a depiction of the convergence of the most influential components in India at the time that they were established. This is the case for each and every religious building. Those who are intrigued by fractals will find a lot to be amazed by at these complicated and ancient sites. Fractals are a subject that has its own philosophy on life, and those who are captivated by fractals will find a lot!

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