

An overview of Salient features of Vijayanagara Temple Architecture

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Abstract: *The ground level of the interior of a large number of temples is uniform and largely this level corresponds to the topmost moulding of their adhisthanas." In several temples, the ground level of the garbhagrhas including that of the antarālas and mukhamantapas is raised by one or two steps above the level of the rangamantapas. The ground level of the Jaina temples at Hampi is uniform. The ground level and the bottom moulding of their adhisthanas are of the same level. The ground level of the sanctum of Virabhadra temple at Nagamangala is lower by one metre than the level of the antarala and rangamantapa. But the adhisthana mouldings on the exterior run uniformly around the temple including the garbhagrha. This is the only temple having such a feature in the entire range of the Vijayanagara temples in Karnataka.*

Interior architectural features of the various components of the Vijayanagara temples such as Garbhagrha, Antarala and Mukhamantapa, Rangamantapa, Maharangamantapa etc are examined in this article. The other tectonic members like doorways, columns, and their variants are discussed in detail.

1. GARBHAGRHAS :

Garbhagrhas are small square or rectangular cells. No circular or apsidal garbhagrhas can be seen in the Vijayanagara temples. Garbhagrhas invariably have only one doorway.' No window or opening (of this sort) can be found anywhere else in this structure. Garbhagrhas normally possess on their sides thick masonry walls. The walls are built completely out of dressed stone slabs or brick and mortar covered by dressed stone slabs. Sometimes engaged columns are provided as an additional support to the superstructures of the garbhagrhas.

The interior of the garbhagrhas of the Hindu temple is austere plain in contrast to the rich decoration of their exterior. The Vijayanagara temples are no exception to this practice. Some temples of this period have plain walls and engaged columns. This is a pronounced feature of the temples which were built at the beginning of the rule of the empire. In some other temples the aforesaid features repeat but the corner columns are decorated with a series of horizontal mouldings resembling the Hoysala columns. Thus, the Hoysala influence is noticed on these corner columns in temples constructed at the commencement of the rule of the empire and in the very centre of the erstwhile Hoysala kingdom. Several temples of this period have angled brackets over the corner columns of the garbhagrhas. The garbhagrhas are also provided with a shelf like projection in the west wall. Sometimes the shelf appears in the side walls instead of the west wall.

The garbhagrhas of some temples of the period have severely plain walls even without corner columns. A few temples possess a series of engaged columns in their walls. However, the cornice of a few temples is

decorated with a horizontal frieze of lotus petals on all sides. In some temples," the cornice is round and carved with a row of garlands; in some other temples' both walls and cornice are plain.

The ceilings of the garbhagrhas of the Vijayanagara temples have generally, raised medallions on two diagonally set diminishing squares. This feature is widely and commonly found in the ceilings of the Vijayanagara temples. Sometimes, a pendant bud is introduced in the centre of the ceiling. Some larger temples of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have plain ceilings of dressed stone slabs." In some other temples, the ceiling slabs have disappeared and the interior of the hollow spire could be seen. The ceiling of the Anantapadmanabha temple at Anantashayanagudi is also hollow. It is a very broad and high vaulted roof made of brick and mortar exhibiting marvellous engineering skill.

The ground level of the interior of a large number of temples is uniform and largely this level corresponds to the topmost moulding of their adhisthanas." In several temples, the ground level of the garbhagrhas including that of the antarālas and mukhamantapas is raised by one or two steps above the level of the rangamantapas. The ground level of the Jaina temples at Hampi is uniform. The ground level and the bottom moulding of their adhisthanas are of the same level. The ground level of the sanctum of Virabhadra temple at Nagamangala is lower by one metre than the level of the antarala and rangamantapa. But the adhisthana mouldings on the exterior run uniformly around the temple including the garbhagrha. This is the only temple having such a feature in the entire range of the Vijayanagara temples in Karnataka.

2. ANTARĀLA AND MUKHAMANTAPA :

The antaralas and mukhamantapas are intermediary cellas between the garbhagrhas and the rangamantapas of the temples. In the Vijayanagara temples, the antarālas are generally found and the mukhamantapas became an optional members members. Several temples have only antaralas without mukhamantapas and such temples are found in large numbers throughout Karnataka. Smaller temples do not possess even these members also. antaralas and the mukhamantapas. Construction of both the members occur in Several other temples have both the the early as well as later periods of the empire. Nonetheless, the temples having both the antaralas and mukhamantapas are noticed in large numbers in later period of the empire. In larger temples of the sixteenth century, the mukhamantapas became an essential component.

Like the garbhagrhas, the antaralas also have plain walls with corner columns. In some temples, these corner columns are decorated with horizontal moulding resembling the Hoysala columns. In some other temples the corner columns carry angled brackets in addition to plain walls. Several temples have plain walls without corner columns. The walls of the antaralas of a few temples possess perforated windows.

The antarala of Prasanna Virupakṣa temple at Virupakshi is different from all other temples of the period. It is rectangular in plan facing east. It has two small doorways in the south and north side walls leading to closed chambers which, in turn, have small underground chambers, They were probably used as treasuries of the temple. It can be ascertained from inscriptions that several temples of the period had their own treasuries.

The ceilings of the antaralas of most of the temples of the period are plain. A few temples²³ have lotus medallions over the rotated squares in the ceiling.

One of the functions of the antaralas was to keep the devotees at a distance from the garbhagrhas and to maintain sanctity. They were also used to keep the images of Nandi as observed in some temples.

The walls of the mukhamantapas are generally plain with two frontal engaged columns. They have two or three access steps leading to the antarālas. The rear walls of the mukhamantapas of several temples (that is, the front walls of the antarālas) are decorated with kumbhapanjaras, pilasters, adhisthana mouldings and shallow niches. The side walls possess doorways leading to the closed pradakṣinapathas. Some temples have kakṣāsanas in the walls of the mukhamantapas. These kakṣāsanas are the continuation of similar seating arrangements set up in the rangamantapas. The ceilings of all the mukhamantapas are plain with horizontal stone slabs.

Generally, the floor level of these two components together with the garbhagrhas is higher than that of the rangamantapas, sometimes having a flight of two or three steps.

3. RANGAMANTAPAS :

The rangamantapas are another important adjunct of the Vijayanagara temples joined either directly to the antarālas or through the mukhamantapas. Normally, they are square in plan having four columns in the centre on a slightly raised square floor area. They have one to three doorways, one in each of the side walls. The engaged columns are shown against the walls in alignment with the central four columns. This is the general composition of the rangamantapas of the Vijayanagara temples. Rectangular rangamantapas are rarely observed. Larger temples have sixteen columns in their rangamantapas. Normally, the ground level of the rangamantapas is lower by two or three steps than that of the mukhamantapas, antarālas, garbhagrhas and is a little higher than the level of the maharigamantapas, if they are joined to them.

The rangamantapa with four columns on a slightly raised square floor area is the most popular variety which could be seen in large number of temples. Even in this form, there are some variations like seating arrangements in side walls between the engaged or peripheral columns. This system of seating arrangements are noticed only in the early temples built in and around Hampi area. This method is the continuation of the pre-Vijayanagara temples on the Hemakūta hill at Hampi of the Later Calukyan period suggesting the impact of the Calukyan architecture in the inceptive period of the Vijayanagara empire. In the later period, some of the features of the Calukyan style were discontinued. Instead of kakṣāsanas, a shelf like projection is created in the walls of a few temples.³¹ In later temples, even this system was also completely omitted.

The rangamantapas of the early temples exhibit the impact of the local and preceding art traditions. The columns of Male Mallikarjuna temple at Arasikere are the lathe-truned granite columns resembling those of the Hoysala temples. It was in this place that the Hoysala influence was more pronounced on the early Vijayanagara temples, as it was the very centre of their kingdom. In the temples of Kōlar district, the eastern part of Mysore district and other areas, the influence of the Cola style is largely noticed. The columns with three blocks and the brackets of pendant buds show a marked advancement over the columns of the temples of pre-Vijayanagara period built in the Cola style of art as can be noticed in Sômésvara temple at Kurudumale etc.

One to three sets of garbhagrhas and antarālas are joined to a common rangamantapa. In Candrasekhara temple at Hampi, two sets of garbhagrhas and antarālas together with mukhamantapas are added to a common rangamantapa. In case of Siva temple at Timmalapura, three sets of garbhagrhas, antarālas and mukhamantapas are joined to a rangamantapa. Here, the general scheme of the rangamantapas remains the

same. They contain four columns in the centre on a slightly raised square floor area. This feature is a very rare construction and the plans of these temples are influenced by the later Calukyan or the Hoysala temples. Construction of such temples was discontinued as the erection of separate devi and other adjuncts came into vogue in the fifteen and sixteenth centuries.

Open rangamantapas are employed in a few temples. One such example could be seen in Candramauliśvara temple on the bank of the river Tungabhadra at Hampi. This has four ornate central columns on a slightly raised square area. Instead of side walls, columns are set up at regular intervals.

Triyambakeśvara temple at Triyambakapura (c. 1400 A.D.) has an enlarged rangamantapa having sixteen columns creating a nave and four aisles. Here, the central columns are not placed on a square platform, a feature commonly found in the Vijayanagara temples. This hall contains different forms of columns and twelve engaged columns set against the south, east and north (four in each wall) walls, and four corner columns. This form of the rangamantapa appears in several temples.

Fully developed and standardised rangamantapas could be noticed in several temples of the period under review. Here, are found both smaller and larger rangamantapas. The smaller is a four-columned structure while the larger is a sixteen-columned one. All these temples belong to the early part of the sixteenth century. The smaller rangamantapas³⁵ are linked to the entrance of the mukhamantapas of the temples. This has four free-standing columns in the centre on a slightly raised square platform. There are no engaged columns set against the walls. This hall contains one to three doorways in the side walls. The doorway, set up in the axis of the temple, provides access to the maharangamantapa and those fixed in the side walls lead to the parśvamantapas.

Larger rangamantapas are set up in Vitthala temple at Hampi and Raghunatha temple at Kamalapura etc. The overall composition of the larger rangamantapas is similar to the rangamantapas discussed above except for the fact that they have sixteen columns. The rangamantapas of these temples have four rows of columns each having the four columns and the central four columns are placed on a little raised square floor area. There are six or sixteen engaged columns in the sidewalls.

There are some stray forms of the rangamantapas. The rangamantapa of Madhava temple at Hampi is 4x4 columned hall and it is open on three sides. There is no central platform. rangamantapa.

The interior walls of the rangamantapas of all the temples are plain and simple. But a few rangamantapas have decorated walls in the rear side (i.e., the walls of the mukhamantapas or antaralas). Such temples are found in Hampi and the adjoining areas. The rear walls are decorated with plinth mouldings resembling those on the exterior walls. Above, the walls are divided vertically by pilasters and kumbhapanjaras. Niches are also positioned in the middle of the walls, defined by split pilasters. As the decoration of the exterior of the mukhamantapas and the antaralas continues to be on the interior rear walls of the rangamantapas (i.e., the front walls of the mukhamantapas), the construction of the rangamantapas appears as an afterthought. When the total erection of the temples is taken into consideration, it can be concluded that the rangamantapas A few earlier were constructed in entirety as an original idea of the temples. temples have perforated windows in the side walls of this mantapa. But in the temples of later period, the use of perforated windows were discontinued.

The ceilings of the rangamantapas are also plain having dressed stone slabs. The beams which support the ceilings are either plain or decorated with a frieze of lotus petals. The central ceiling over the central columns of the temples is composed of two diminishing rotated squares with a lotus medallion in the centre. In several temples, the central ceiling has a circular asthadikpalaka panel around the rotated squares." In some other temples,⁴⁰ instead of the rotated squares, a square asthadikpālaka panel with a relief of the principal god of the temple in the centre is carved. A pendant bud is shown in a few temples in the middle of the rotated squares. In the larger temples of the sixteenth century at Hampi and other places, the central ceiling of this mantapa possesses an enlarged medallion in a square. In a few temples, the central ceiling over the columns is elevated and is in hemispherical form. This has a series of diminishing circular friezes having the depiction of vyalas, foliation, dancing ganas, lotus petals, and finally capped by a pendant bud. In all these temples, the remaining areas of the ceilings of the rangamantapas are plain.

4. MAHARANGAMANTAPA :

The maharangamantapas" or the grand stage-pavilions are primarily, columned halls attached to the rangamantapas in front of the temples. They are open on other sides. The halls are called by various names such as gandhagodi-mantapa, (gandhakuti gandhagodi),⁴⁴ ghalimantapa, bhogamantapa, etc. They consist of several beautiful columns which divide the halls into a wide central nave and several aisles. They are the original contributions of the Vijayanagara artists. Arrangement of beautiful columns in several rows is the main feature of the maharangamantapas. They are set up on ornate adhisthānas. The peripheral columns are of a composite type. At the top of the halls is a double-flexed cornice which is surmounted by a parapet consisting of a series of salakōsthas and kutakōsthas. Five types of the maharangamantapas are noticed in the Vijayanagara temples depending upon the alignment of columns, shapes and plans of the halls.

Type-1: This type represents simple maharagantapas. They began to appear in the mid-fifteenth century A.D., and their construction continued till the end of the empire. They are mostly rectangular in plan consisting of 3x6 columns with two more columns in the rear corners of the halls, creating a nave and four aisles. These columns are simple having three blocks of diminishing sizes interspersed by octagonal sections. These blocks are either plain or carved with figures of divinities. The columns have angled brackets at the top and they are surmounted by beams which are either plain or decorated with a frieze of lotus petals. The ceiling over the nave is a little elevated by a kapota with kudas and a medallion is shown in the centre of this portion. Sometimes, two holes are made in the middle of the ceiling of the nave to suspend a swing. This is meant for dolotsava (the swing festival). The remaining portion of the ceiling is plain with horizontal stone slabs. On the exterior, these halls are set up on simple adhisthānas. At the top is an angled eave in several temples; in later temples, a double-flexed eave could be found. Above the eave, is a stucco parapet consisting of salakosthas and kutakōsthas.

Type-2: This type represents ornate maharangamantapas. These ornate pavilions came to be set up early in the sixteenth century A.D., when king Kṛṣṇadevaraya ascended the throne. It was he who erected the beautifully carved columned maharangamantapa of Virupaksa temple at Hampi to commemorate his coronation in the capital." It is a unique contribution of the Vijayanagara artists, and is composed of composite columns and columns of standard type of wondrous beauty. Abutting the front wall of the

rangamantapa in the west, this pavilion has a projection with four columns on the east. Four rows of columns are arranged so as to create a rectangular bay within this mantapa. The middle columns on three sides (i.e., north, south and east) of the outer rows, above the access steps, and at the corners of the inner rows are decorated with rearing gajayalis. The other columns have fluted colonnettes around the central shaft. In the rear side, are two large dvarapalas, flanking the doorway of the rangamantapa. The ceiling of the central rectangular bay is elevated and is decorated with paintings of later date. On the exterior, the pavilion is set up on the ornate adhisthana. At the top of the mantapa is a double-flexed cornice. Above, there is a brick and mortar parapet consisting of a series of devakoṣṭhas and salakōsthas.

The most brilliant Vitthala temple at Hampi . This is perhaps the most spectacular part of the temple complex having fiftysix composite columns. The columns are composed so as to create a large central rectangular bay and three square bays of equal dimension around the central one. These columns possess are different from one another but "wholly rhythmic." clusters of colonnettes, mythical animals, divine sculptures around the main shaft of the columns, finally producing an effect of "bewildering intricacy". The beams over these columns are profusely decorated with reliefs depicting the scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata. The ceilings of the bays of the pavilion have heavy and broad slabs decorated with enlarged lotus medallions.

Type-3: This type of maharangamantapas is found in the larger temples. The standardisation of the mantapas could be seen here. They are mostly square in plan, but the rectangular ones can also be noticed in some temples. They consist of 5x6 or 7x8 columns with two more columns in the rear corners. These columns are arranged so as to create east-west as well as north-south central naves and several aisles. The rear side of these halls is combined All the peripheral with the front walls of the rangamantapas of the temples. All the peripheral columns are of composite type, and the two middle columns on other three sides have gajayalis. The interior columns have three blocks of diminishing sizes. All these columns (including the composite ones) are relieved by Vaiṣṇava or Saiva figures. The beams and entablatures are either plain or decorated with lotus petals. The ceilings are also plain with stone slabs but those of the central naves along the axis of the temples, are a little elevated by kapota which are dotted with kuduś at regular intervals. The centre of the ceilings has an enlarged lotus medallion in a square. They are built invariably on highly decorated adhiṣṭhānas. In the middle of the three open sides, are flights of steps flanked by elephant balustrades which are missing in several temples. The top of the pavilion is sheltered by an overhanging double-flexed cornice, capped by a brick and mortar parapet.

Type-4: This type of the maharangamantapas is closed on three sides and opened on the front. They are also columned halls. They consist of several rows of columns creating aisles. The ceiling is plain with horizontal stone slabs. In the centre of the ceiling, an enlarged lotus medallion or rotated squares with a pendant bud could be noticed. Instead of peripheral columns, side walls are erected and they are also plain.

On the exterior, the mantapas are set up either on ornate or simple plinths. At the top is a double-flexed or angled cornice which is surmounted by stucco parapet.

Type-5: In this type, some stray forms of the maharangamahtapa could be seen in Someśvara temple at Kōlār , Bhōganandi temple at Nandi etc. Locally, they are called the patalankanas. The maharangamantapa of the

Sömesvara temple at Kōlar is unique and excellent. It is square in plan and is at the ground level with a east-west passageway along the axis of the temple. On the peripheral sides of the pavilion, is a platform of two metres wide ending on the east with the passageway, and on the west, this is attached to the north and south walls of the rangamantapa of the temple in 'U' shape. The platforms of both interior and exterior sides consist of ornate adhisthana mouldings. It is composed of 7x8 columns with four more columns in the rear. the floor area are higher than those on the peripheral platform, so that the ceiling is at a uniform height. The columns flanking the central passageway and the peripheral columns on the platform are of the composite type. The ceiling is flat and plain composed of stone slabs and that of the central passageway is elevated by a broad band of 0.75 metre in height which is decorated with a frieze of elephants, hamsas etc. On the exterior, at the top is a double-flexed cornice. This possesses a mukhamantapa of four columns of composite type. This is perhaps the only temple where the maharangamantapa has a mukhamantapa.

5. PĀRSVAMANTAPA :

The parsvamantapas are generally added to the side walls of the rangamantapas, very rarely to the maharangamantapas, to shelter the entrances of the temples. If such a mantapa is established in front of the temple, then it is called a mukhamantapa. This component could be seen in the temples of the Vijayanagara period in various forms. In front of the doorways of the rangamantapa, two or more columns are set up either on raised platforms or on the ground floor. In any case, they are not closed by walls and they are open on three sides. The ceilings of these mantapas are lower than that of the entire temples. As they are at entrances to the temples proper, they may normally possess flights of steps. largely on the front side, and rarely on other sides. The parśvamantapas can be classified into three types based on the arrangement of columns and other related features.

Type-1: This type of parśvamantapas consist of raised platforms which are set up to the level of the doorways of the rangamantapas having the plinth mouldings resembling those of the temples or their own. Two or more columns are erected on the front corners. Here, the composite columns are not used. They may or may not have kakṣāsanas. Early temples possess kakṣāsanas in their pārsvamantapas. In front of the mantapas, flights of two or three steps are setup. This is a very common parśva- or mukhamantapas to be found in most of the Vijayanagara temples.

Type-2: This type characterizes a little enlarged mukhamantapas. These are occasionally found in the temples like Triyambakésvara at Triyambakapura. Here, the mantapa consists of two rows of four free-standing columns and another row of four engaged columns. The peripheral columns are of composite type. On three sides of this component are access steps. This type appears to be a maharangamantapa in miniature.

Type-3: This is a very rare type of mukhamantapas found only in the Sōmēsvara temple at Kōlār. Having no platform, this mantapa is composed of four composite columns placed directly on floor in front of the temple. Its ceiling is at the level of the temple. At the top of the columns is a double-flexed cornice which is the continuation of that of the maharangamantapa.

6. DOORWAYS :

Generally, doorways are found at the entrances to the garbhagr̥has, antarālas and rangamantapas of the temples under consideration. The doorways consist of two vertical jambs surmounted by a lintel having

lalāṭabimba in the middle. The lower horizontal member is a threshold or sill. The doorframes (sill, jamb and lintel) are relieved by decorative friezes of lotus petals, flower and creeper designs, chain-motifs, etc. Dvarapalas are depicted on the lower parts of the jambs and their iconographic features suggest the religious dedication of the temples. Instead of dvarapalas, purnakumbhas are sometimes depicted. On the lower part of the innersides of the jambs, alaskanyās are carved as holding branches. Agnipurāṇa⁵⁶ insists that the depiction of mithuna or Rati-Manmatha figures over the doorways is an auspicious symbols. This is not followed as a rule in the Vijayanagara temples as exceptions occur in a few temples. Malyavanta Raghunatha temple has the depiction of mithuna figures on the doorframe of the rangamantapa. Depiction of Manmatha and Rati is commonly found in the Hoysala temples.⁵⁷ The width and height of the doorways of the Vijayanagara temples are in the ratio of 1:2 or 2:3. Now, let us examine doorways of different parts of the temples.

(a) Doorways of the Garbhagrhas: The doorways of the garbhagrhas fall broadly into two varieties, namely, plain and ornate. The plain doorways do not indicate any evolutionary process. Both the varieties existed throughout the period of the empire. Several temples⁵⁸ of the early Vijayanagara period and the larger temples of the sixteenth century⁵⁹ have plain doorways. These doorways do not possess jambs, sills and lintels.

Among the ornate doorways of the garbhagrhas, some are less ornate and others more. The doorways have three to six shallow friezes of lotus petals and scroll works around the frame. This form is found in several temples. Their doorways have very shallow friezes of lotus petals and flowery designs.

The ornate doorways are noticed in several variations. In several temples, ^{59a} the doorframes of the garbhagrhas have shallow bands of foliation and lotus petals. Lotus medallions are carved in the middle of the lintels and also on the underside of the same; on the base of the jambs are the depiction of purnakumbhas which possess foliations issuing from the mouth of makaras. temples of the capital (Hampi) are equally decorated with several bands of The doorframes of Jaina lotus petals and scrollworks. In the middle of the lintel, a Jaina figure is shown seated within a niche. The thresholds have miniature tripartite basements. The doorways of several other temples have bands of lotus petals, scroll-works and jewelled motifs around the doorframes. In the middle of lintels, Laksmi or Gajalaksmi or lotus medallions are chiselled out. On the lower part of the jambs, dvarapalas (Saiva dvarapalas in Saiva temples or that of Vaisnava in Vaisnava temples as case may be) are depicted. These varieties of doorways appear in all the Vijayanagara temples. Generally, the doorways of the garbhagrhas are less ornate compared to those of the antarālas and rangamantapas.

(b) Doorways of the Antarālas: The antarala doorways are categorised into two forms: (1) with dvarapalas and (2) without dvarapalas.

(1) In several temples of the period, the doorways of the antarāla do not possess dvarapalas on their jambs. Some temples have plain bands around the doorways and uncarved lalāṭabimbas in the middle of the lintels, on the lower parts of the jambs, floral and creeper decorations are made. The doorways of the antarālas of Jaina temples at Hampi and other places consist of several bands of lotus petals around the doorframes. In the middle of the lintel is a seated Jaina figure with fly-whisks behind. The doorways of this component in some other temples have shallow bands of lotus petals and creepers, and lotus medallions are depicted in the centre

of the lintels. The lintels are often decorated with Gajalakṣmi or Lakṣmi reliefs in a large number of temples. 'Linga and Nandi' are rarely sculpted on the lalatabimba, (lintels) of a few temples.

(2) The second category of the doorways of the antarālas, generally, have the depiction of lotus petals and creeper decorations. Dvarapalas are depicted on the lower part of the jambs.

The doorways of this part of the temples have bands of lotus petals, foliage, scroll-works on their frames; Gajalakṣmi or medallions are depicted in the middle of the frames are dvarapalas. The thresholds have tripartite mouldings with medallions in the centre. The lalatabimbās of some Saiva temples bear the images of Nandī and sometimes, the Nandī figure is depicted in another form as its fore-leg is placed on a human head.

(C) Doorways of the Rangamantapas: The doorways are one of the important decorative aspects of the rangamantapas of the Vijayanagara temples. The rangamantapas possess a doorway in the centre of the front side leading to the maharangamantapas and sometimes one or two doorways in the middle of the side walls leading to the parśvamantapas. The doorways of this component can be classified into three categories:

1. Doorways resembling the previous art traditions.
2. Simple and plain doorways.
3. Ornate doorways.

1. The doorways of the rangamantapas show the impact of the previous art traditions in their regions. A series of bold and broad śakhas (friezes) of various motifs and designs characterize the doorways of the pre-Vijayanagara temples on the Hemakūta hill at Hampi and also of the Later Calukyan temples. The best examples of the doorways can be found in several Vijayanagara temples. The doorways consist of broad śakhas such as plain, foliage, lotus petals etc. In the middle of the lintels are the reliefs of Gajalakṣmi. Dvarapalas are depicted on the lower parts of the śakhas. The doorframes are set deep into the walls. In Southern Karnataka, the Hoysala influence could be noticed in the treatment of the doorways of the early Vijayanagara temples. Here, the doorjambs possess several bold decorative śakhas with Gajalakṣmi reliefs in the middle of the lintels. Above the lintels are architraves displaying the decorations of the doorways of the Hoysala temples. The architraves have a string of seven miniature śikharas. This category of the doorways is not to be found in a large number of temples.

2. Besides the above form of the doorways, most of the temples⁶⁵ of both early and later periods have simple and plain śakhas on their doorframes. The doorways of this component of several temples⁶⁶ have bands of lotus petals and scroll-works all round the doorframes and reliefs of Gajalakṣmi or medallions, on the lalatabimbās. Dvarapalas are carved on the lower parts of the doorjambs. In a few Saiva temples, crouching Nandī reliefs are delineated on the lalatabimbās of the doorframes.

3. Ornate doorways are set up in the larger temples. A few temples of the early fifteenth century possess ornate doorways in their rangamantapas. These doorways possess bands of rosettes, foliage, lotus petals on the frames. Lalata blocks on the lintels have reliefs of Lakṣmi or Gajalakṣmi. The doorjambs are flanked by the bands of the yakṣas. Several Jaina temples of Hampi and the adjoining areas too, have ornate doorways. Elaborately decorated bands of petals, scroll-works surround these doorways. On the lower part of the

doorjambs, makaras with foliage are depicted. In the middle of the lintels are seated Jaina figures under an arch which emerges out from the mouths of makaras. Plaster decorations are also made to them.

Highly embellished doorways began to appear in the larger temples of the sixteenth century A.D.. The doorways have two parts. The first part, set into the walls, has bands of petals, foliage with a medallion or Gajalakshmi relief in the centre of the lintel. On the base of the doorjambs are dvarapalas and the threshold has a tripartite basement with a central projection.. lower part of the inner side of the doorjambs are the images of alaskanya holding foliage in bold reliefs. On the second part of the doorframe are the bands of the scroll-works issuing from a swan and a makara on the base. The lintel of this part has a medallion and sometimes, it is decorated with a frieze of dancers and mithuna figures." Above the lintel of the second part is an architrave in the form of prastara which is decorated with a frieze of hamsas and kudus. The prastara supports a sala with pot-like finials. This is the typical doorway of the larger temples of the Vijayanagara period.

7. COLUMNS:

Columns (stambhas) are the most common feature of the interior of the South Indian temples. They are not only the essential parts of the structural frame work, but sometimes, the most attractive parts of the temples also. Vijayanagara temples, some of them are used so skillfully that the visitor does not look upon them as a part of an architectural unit but as a skillfully conceived piece of art. The Vijayanagara columns are placed either on pedestals or without them. They have shafts carved in several ways. The columns are decorated with divine personages and symbols, scenes depicting the contemporary social life, creepers and flowers, geometrical designs, musicians and dancers, amorous figures and soon.

The columns of the Vijayanagara temples may be classified into various types depending upon their forms and designs. The forms of the columns were designed with the influence of the art styles of the preceding period at the beginning of the rule of the empire. In the northern portion of the empire, local art traditions as noticed in the temples of the Hemakūta hill at Hampi, and the Later Calukya and the Kakatiya temple styles made their impact on the Vijayanagara temples of the early period. In the southern part of Karnataka, the Hoysala influence could be seen in the temples built during the early period of the empire. As time passed by, all the different features assimilated into a proper form of the temples and evolved into a typical Vijayanagara style. This tendency could be noticed in the designs of the columns of the temples. The columns of the Vijayanagara temples can be classified into five types depending upon their forms and designs as under:

1. Early Type
2. Common Type
3. Standard Type
4. Composite Type
5. Decorative Type

Type-1 Early Types :

Type-1A: As discussed above, the Later Calukya and the Kakatiya influence could be seen in the temples of northern area of the empire with Hampi as their centre. Such temples are plenty in pre-Vijayanagara period on

the Hemakūta hill at Hampi. The columns of these temples with their temple styles persisted in several temples of the early period. These columns possess the following parts in a fixed order from bottom to top:

1. a tripartite pedestal, square in section.
2. a rectangular block.
3. an octagonal and sixteen-sided recessed portions.
4. a cubical block.
5. lasuna, a recessed segment, round in section.
6. kumbha, a round unit, generally, with a lentoid profile.
7. pali, a round lotus shaped unit having a square abacus (phalaka).
8. angled brackets.

This type of columns continued to be erected in the Vijayanagara temples⁷⁴ for a century even after the establishment of the empire (Pl. 39). This type of columns are depicted slenderly as well as very heavily. In the later period, the erection of this type of columns was discontinued. In the sixteenth century, this type of columns appeared rarely again in the devī However, in the middle of shrine of Tiruvengalanatha temple at Hampi and they are really fine works of art.

Type-1B: This is a little different form of the above discussed variety. This type of columns have the following distinctive parts from bottom to top.

1. a rectangular block at the bottom.
2. a sixteen sided slightly tapering long shaft.
3. lasuna, kumbha, pali and phalaka.
4. kumbhas.
5. angled brackets.

These columns are devoid of pedestals. Jain temples of Hampi and in several temples of Karnataka. They are the This type of columns appear in miniature form of the long manastambhas set up in front of Gaṇagitti jinālaya at Kamalapura. These columns resemble the porch columns of the Ganga monuments like Cavundaraya basadi at Sravanabelguḷa. This shows the Ganga- Rāṣṭrakūta influence. Such columns were also erected in several temples built during the period of the Hoysalas, A little embellished version of this type could be seen in Prasanna Virupakṣa (the Underground) temple at Hampi. This type of columns were introduced in several temples⁷⁶ scattered throughout Karnataka. These columns possess heavy angled brackets.

Type-1C: The columns of Male Mallikarjuna temple at Arasikere exhibit another variety showing the strong influence of the Hoysala art (Pl. 41). Though the temple was constructed by the officers of the Vijayanagara empire with the brick and mortar superstructure, its columns are of lathe-turned type of the Hoysala. These columns have the following parts;

1. a tripartite square pedestal.
2. a long shaft which has a rectangular block on the lower part and above, are a series of horizontal lathe-turned circular mouldings of various sizes.

3. pali and phalaka.

4. angled brackets.

This type of columns are noticed in the early Vijayanagara temples⁷⁷ which were built in the erstwhile Hoysala kingdom. This clearly illustrates the impact of the Hoysala art on the Vijayanagara columns.

Type-2 Common Type :

This refers to a type of columns found commonly in the Vijayanagara temples throughout Karnataka. These columns are placed on square pedestals, having three blocks of diminishing size separated by octagonal and sixteen sided portions. They are surmounted by angled brackets, the four sides which are cut obliquely showing the Ganga and the Cōla influence. The blocks of these columns are either plain or carved with shallow reliefs. This type of columns are found in a large number of temples. These columns were used in building the smaller and ordinary temples also.

Type-3 Standard Type :

This is a widely found typical form of the Vijayanagara columns. These columns have three blocks of diminishing size interspersed by recessed segments which have 8-16-8 sided sections. These columns are generally placed on pedestals and sometimes without pedestals. They are surmounted by brackets of pendant buds. Each and every face of the blocks of the columns is necessarily carved with reliefs of gods and goddesses, divine symbols, flowery designs, celestial beings, amorous figures, etc. These are the typical Vijayanagara columns which began to appear from the middle of the fifteenth century A.D. onwards.⁸⁰ characteristic features of the columns is the pendant brackets in the form of banana flowers which were developed by the artists of Vijayanagara from the angled brackets of the Cola columns as opined by Jouveau-Dubreuils and endorsed by C. Sivaramamurti. & T.V. Mahalingam opines that pre-form of the lotus corbels or pendant buds appeared in the late Cola period. This type of lotus corbel was not restricted to Tamil country alone but such a decorative element is to be The proto-form of the Vijayanagara seen in the temples of Karnataka also. pendant corbels (like banana flowers) could be seen in Siva temple at Kuruḍumale (Kōlār Dt.) which was erected in Dravidian style of architecture in the late thirteenth or early years of the fourteenth century. Vijayanagara artists developed this form and made it a distinguishing feature of the Vijayanagara style. With the advent of the sixteenth century, this pendant bracket was further elaborated. This type of brackets and columns with profusely carved blocks became a standard feature in a large number of Vijayanagara temples.

Type-4 Composite Types :

The composite columns are distinguished by their enormous richness and organic quality of their sculptural decoration. They are the original contributions of the Vijayanagara artists. In this type of columns, colonnettes or mythological beasts are shown projected from main shafts which are divided into three blocks of diminishing size interspersed by 8-16-8 recessed sections. All these blocks are relieved by divine personages and symbols. These columns are always monolithic. These composite columns are placed usually in the exterior rows of the maharangamantapas of the temples facing the courtyard. In some cases, when they are

placed inside the maharangamantapas or kalyanamantapas, they are to face interior portions of the halls. There are several variants of the composite columns.

TYPE-5 Decorative Columns :

This type of columns are slender and square in section, and they have slightly tapering shafts. They are thickly decorated with miniature vimanas or shrine models in friezes both horizontally and vertically on the four sides of the columns (Pl. 45). The vimana models with the depiction of the plinths, walls, niches and superstructures are shown profusely on these columns. They are placed on pedestals and are surmounted by brackets of pendant buds. Examples of this type are very rarely found in a few temples.⁸⁷

8. BEAMS :

Horizontal and cross beams (architraves) appear mostly in the rangamantapas maharangamantapas and accessory structures of the temples. Resting on columns and walls of the temples, they are either plain or decorated with upturned petal bands and they support ceilings. Decorated beams could be seen in the larger temples. ⁸⁸ The ceilings of the naves along the axis of temples are elevated by providing beams which are adorned with lotus petal friezes and reliefs of dancers, musicians etc. The architraves of the Vitthala temple at Hampi are unique and they are decorated with figures depicting the scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata.

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