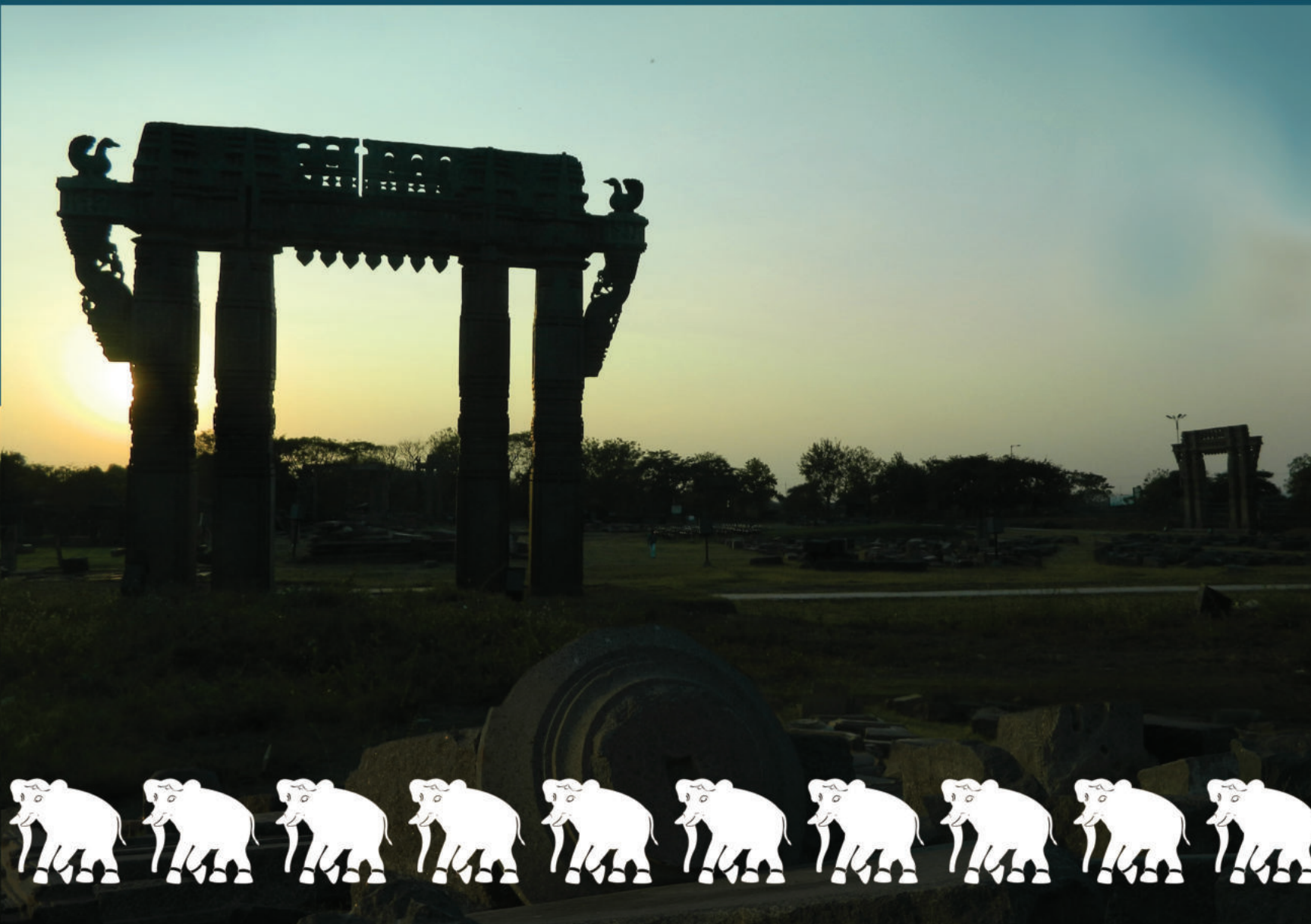


KAKATIYA DYNASTY

ART AND ARCHITECTURE





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ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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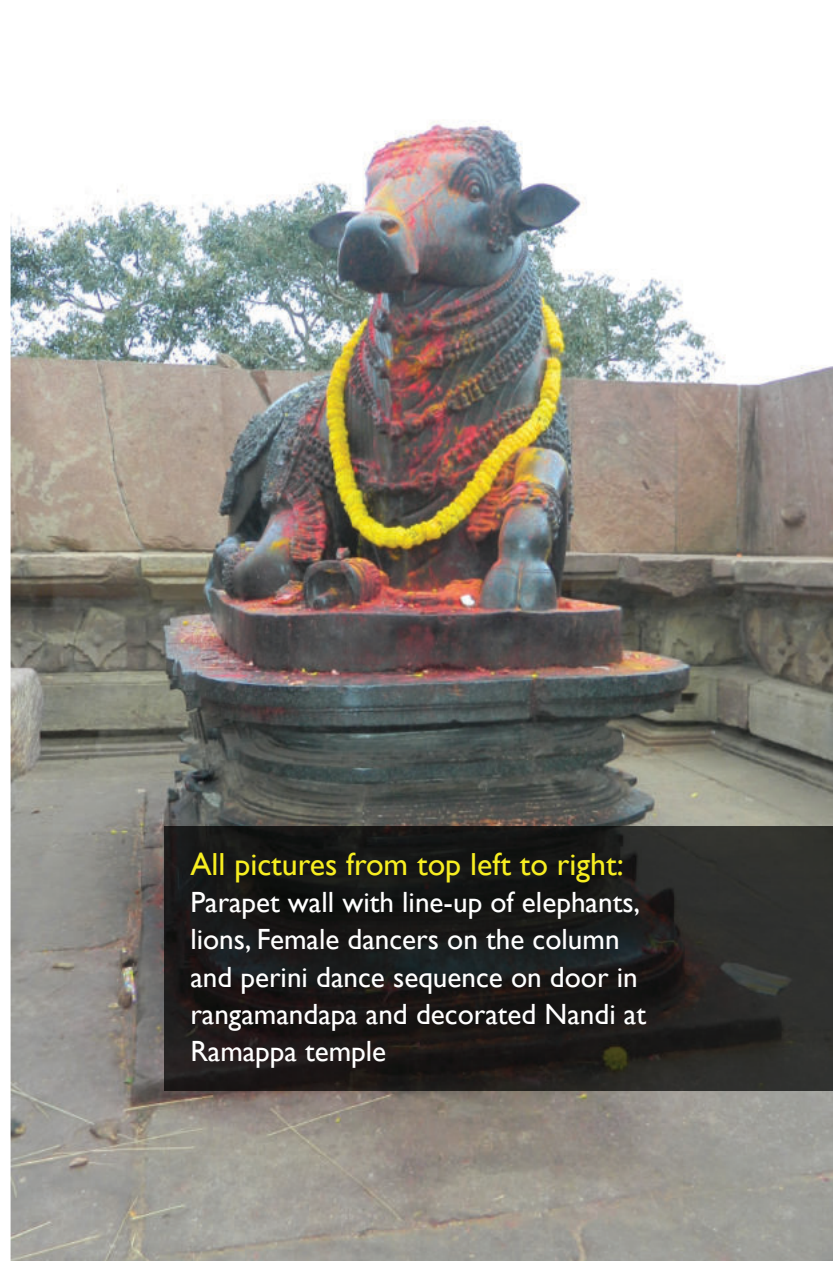
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1. HISTORY OF KAKATIYA



The 12th century witnessed the emergence of a new dynasty “Kakatiyas” with Warangal (Orugallu or Eka Silanagama) as its capital. Prola-2 was the first independent ruler(1116-1157 A.D.) of this dynasty with Hanamakonda as the seat of power. His successor Rudradeva (1158-1195 A.D.) extended the kingdom north wards up to the Godavari delta. He built a fort at Warangal to serve the purpose of a second capital. The next ruler was Mahadeva, who strengthened and expanded the kingdom to the coastal Andhra during his short rule. His son Ganapathideva (1190-1262 A.D.) was the greatest among the Kakatiya rulers who shifted the capital to Orugallu and ruled for more than sixty years with a vast empire annexing the territories of Velanati and Telugu Choda rulers(Nellore) and also Kayastha Kings(Cuddapah and Kurnool). He had maritime trade links with countries of far East and Srilanka.

Ganapatideva was succeeded by his daughter Rudramadevi(1262-1289 A.D.) also called “Rudradeva Maharaja,” by virtue of her valour and able governance of the kingdom, attired in male garb. She assumed the regal title “Raya Gajakesari”. Her grandson Prathapa Rudra succeeded to the throne in 1289 A.D. and ruled till 1323. He was the last ruler of the Kakatiya Dynasty. In the final war he was captured as a prisoner and sent to delhi by Ulugh Khan, the son of Ghiyasu- Din Tughluq. But Pratap Rudra died mid-way. Thus came the end of the Kakatiya Dynasty by 1323 A.D.



All pictures from top left to right:
Parapet wall with line-up of elephants,
lions, Female dancers on the column
and perini dance sequence on door in
rangamandapa and decorated Nandi at
Ramappa temple

2. KAKATIYA ART AND ARCHITECTURE



Architecture

The Kakatiyas derived their architecture from the Chalukyas but added indigenous character to it. The Chalukyan art was itself a blend of northern and southern India. The Kakatiyas simplified it by avoiding clustered decoration and made it look more vigorous and graceful. Locally available granite and sand stone was used for the main structure whereas Vimana was built with lime and bricks. A certain type of floating brick is still a curiosity of our museums. The dolerite (black basalt), a volcanic Deccan trap rock, was used for the pillars, jambs, lintels and its motifs. The polished specimens of this work are a threat to our eyes till now. It shows their religious devotion to this art. Kakatiyas stepped their Vimanas instead of using curvilinear horizontal spires of Chalukayas and vertical structures of the north. The motifs are deeply cut and polished showing a high standard of workmanship and skill than the Karnataka work. No adequate basement was provided for the structure and its weight was transmitted directly to the ground instead of distributing it with arches. Hardly any cementing material was used. This brought an early decay to this construction.

Sculpture

From 8th century onwards the Brahmanic influence returned dislodging the ascetic serenity of Buddhist and Jain art. The earlier trait of the 7th century A.D., fierce and aggressive outlook of Shakti cult, also disappeared.

Now we see Siva in amerry dancing mood with his artists around and his consort Parvati seated leisurely. The artist of the 10 to 13th centuries A.D. did not have to face acrimony towards a rival faith. His love for the beautiful is further developed.

Though not as much attention was paid to symmetry and elegance as the Greeks did but the indigenous artists gave them vigour and movement of the fullness of life, The Palampet bracket nagini dancers in mudra, divibhanga and tribhanga twists of their bodies still look pulsating with life and blood. (The pedampet Vaishnavite temple of karimnagar exhibits the typical thin waist of female figures and exuberance of life I their exaggerated bosoms and hips.) The motifs of these temples in polished black colour give a pleasant touch to the visitor's eye. The decorated pillars, Nandi with bells, the majestic Hamsas and Gajakesaries are marvellous.

This subject will not be complete without adding to it the great achievement of Kakatiyas in their irrigation system. Their engineers appear to have had a deep scientific knowledge in soil dynamics. They constructed the dams and sluices of these reservoirs on rivers. These projects gave a green revolution to this area which brought an age of tranquillity, Peace and prosperity for their people. A Telugu culture sprang with its lovely villages studded with beautiful mandirs, the air filled with music and laughter. So great was the prosperity, a rumour spread that the parasuvedi Linga of svyambhu, Warangal emits gold.



Beautiful carved sculpture include Lion, Soldier and Elephant it is called Raya Gaja kesari, Ramappa temple



Finely sculptured column of the rangamandapa, Ramappa temple

3. WARANGAL FORT

One of the most remarkable Hindu cities of medieval India is Warangal, once the capital of the Kakatiya kings and now a thriving provincial town in the modern state of Andhra Pradesh. While some of Warangal's ruined monuments are familiar to archaeologists, art historians and engineers, the studied. This is somewhat surprising considering that the fortifications defining Warangal's plan are clearly evident on the ground as well as on maps and aerial photos.

At the outset, this article aims at describing the essential characteristics of Warangal's unique layout and providing a basic map for the city. However, the possible

sources for Warangal's urban form are also considered, including the cosmograms and meditational diagrams in widespread use in India. Such diagrams share many formal components with Warangal's plan, suggesting that the city may have been imbued with a cosmic significance. While the precise ideological or symbolic meaning that this urban layout many documents, it is argued here that the plan of the city was intended to situate Warangal's rules and their kingdom within a broadly conceived cosmological framework.



Warangal fort stone wall

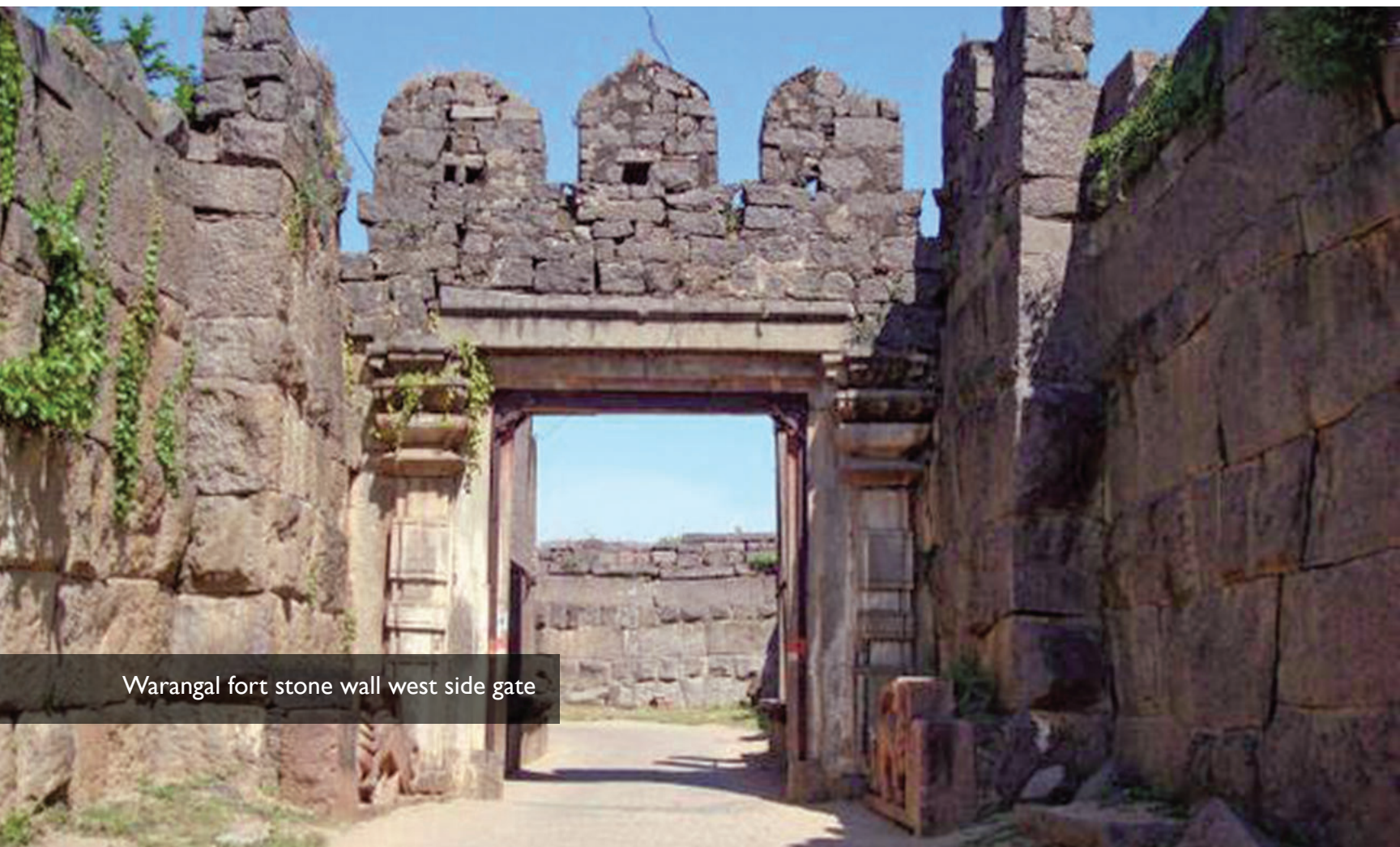


Warangal fort stone wall west side gate, The way goes to Svayambhu temple ruin

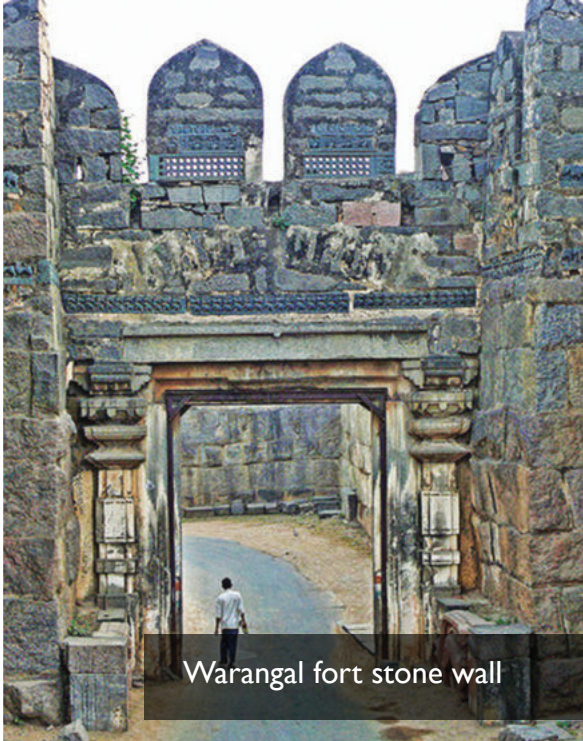
Historical Sketch

From the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries, the Kakatiya were the most powerful Hindu rulers in the eastern part of the Deccan plateau. The first stronghold of the Kakatiyas was Hanamkonda, a fort protected by rugged granite hills and earthen ramparts. In the early part of the thirteenth century the Kakatiyas moved their headquarters to a site laid out on a circular plan some 6 km away to the south-east. The new capital occupied an extensive plain with a distinctive granite boulder known as 'single rock' ('ekashila' in Sanskrit, 'orugalu' in Telugu). This feature was incorporated into the innermost citadel. Giving its name to the city which was then referred to as Orugallu.

Though there is no firm date for the foundation of Warangal, historians generally agree that it was laid out during the reigns of Ganapatideva (ruled 1199-1262) and his daughter, Rudramadevi, who survived for more than thirty years after her father's death. In 1224 Rudramadevi abdicated in favour of her grandson Prataparudradeva. This same king was reigning when the Deccan was invaded by the armies of the Muslim ruler of Delhi. Warangal fell to the Delhi forces in 1323, but Prataparudradeva continued to occupy the Warangal throne, subject to payment of tribute in cash and elephants. After his death there was a rebellion among the Hindu chiefs of the eastern Deccan and in 1336 their leader, Kapaya Nayaka, captured Warangal from the Muslims. Soon after, the



Warangal fort stone wall west side gate



Warangal fort stone wall



Shitab Khan Kush Mahal

Deccan came under the sway of an independent line of Muslim rulers, the Bahmanis, who occupied Warangal in 1366, forcing Kapaya Nayaka to accept a humiliating peace. For the remainder of the fourteenth century and all of the fifteenth century Warangal remained a Bahmari provincial capital.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century a local Hindu chief, Sitapati, known also by his Persian title as Shitab Khan, was governor of Warangal under the Bahmanis. In 1504 he declared his independence and allied himself with Ramachandra, the Hindu ruler of Orissa, the neighbouring region to the north-east. Shitab Khan was soon threatened by the rising prosper of the Tuluva rulers of the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagara which bordered the Warangal territories to the south-west. In 1510 Shitab Khan was vanquished by the Vijayanagara forces who then took control of the city. Some twenty years later, in 1531-32, Warangal was taken by Quli Qutub ul-Mulk and

incorporated into the Muslim Kingdom of Golconda. With the later transformation of the Golconda Kingdom into the state of Hyderabad, Warangal became part of the Nizam's dominions.

Though Warangal passed back and forth between Hindus and Muslims for more than three hundred years, the city never lost its role as an important military outpost. Its fortifications were continually strengthened, falling into disrepair only from the eighteenth century onward. The religious monuments erected by the Kakatiyas, however, did not escape destruction. The great Hindu temple dedicated to the god Shiva in the middle of the city was almost entirely demolished by the Muslims. The shrines that stand today were mostly erected by Hindu occupants in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, often with reused materials from demolished earlier structures. The only courtly building to survive, the Kush Mahal, is attributed to Shitab Khan.

Layout

Warangal's circular plans is characterized by a sequence of three concentric circuits of fortification. The first, innermost ring of walls, which is of stone, defines a circular zone, usually referred to as the fort, approximately 1.2 km in diameter; gateways are positioned at the four cardinal points. The area contained within these fortifications is mostly agricultural, with houses built along the main east-west road, especially near the gateways in the walls. At the core of the fort is an archaeological zone. This coincides with the approximately square enclosure of the demolished Shiva temple of which only the free-standing, entrance portals in the middle of four sides still stand. The Kush Mahal is situated a short distance to the west. Several temples in the vicinity are still in worship. A large lake in the south-east quadrant of the fort, now used for bathing and washing, is overlooked by the ekashila hill which rises abruptly from the water. A small temple and several other structures occupy the top of this granite outcrop. Other temples and reservoirs are scattered throughout the area.

The second, intermediate ring of walls, defining a circle of approximately 2.4 km diameter, is entirely of earth. It, too, has gateways at the cardinal directions; these are aligned with those of the inner fort. The space contained within this circuit of fortifications is mostly given over to fields, with houses flanking the east-west road that continues that of the inner fort.

The third, outermost ring of walls, again of earth, is still plainly visible. It contains a vast, somewhat irregular circle, no less than 12.5 km in diameter. Here is situated the modern town of Warangal, serviced by approach roads and an east-west railway line that runs right across the site, cutting through the earthen walls. The fortification

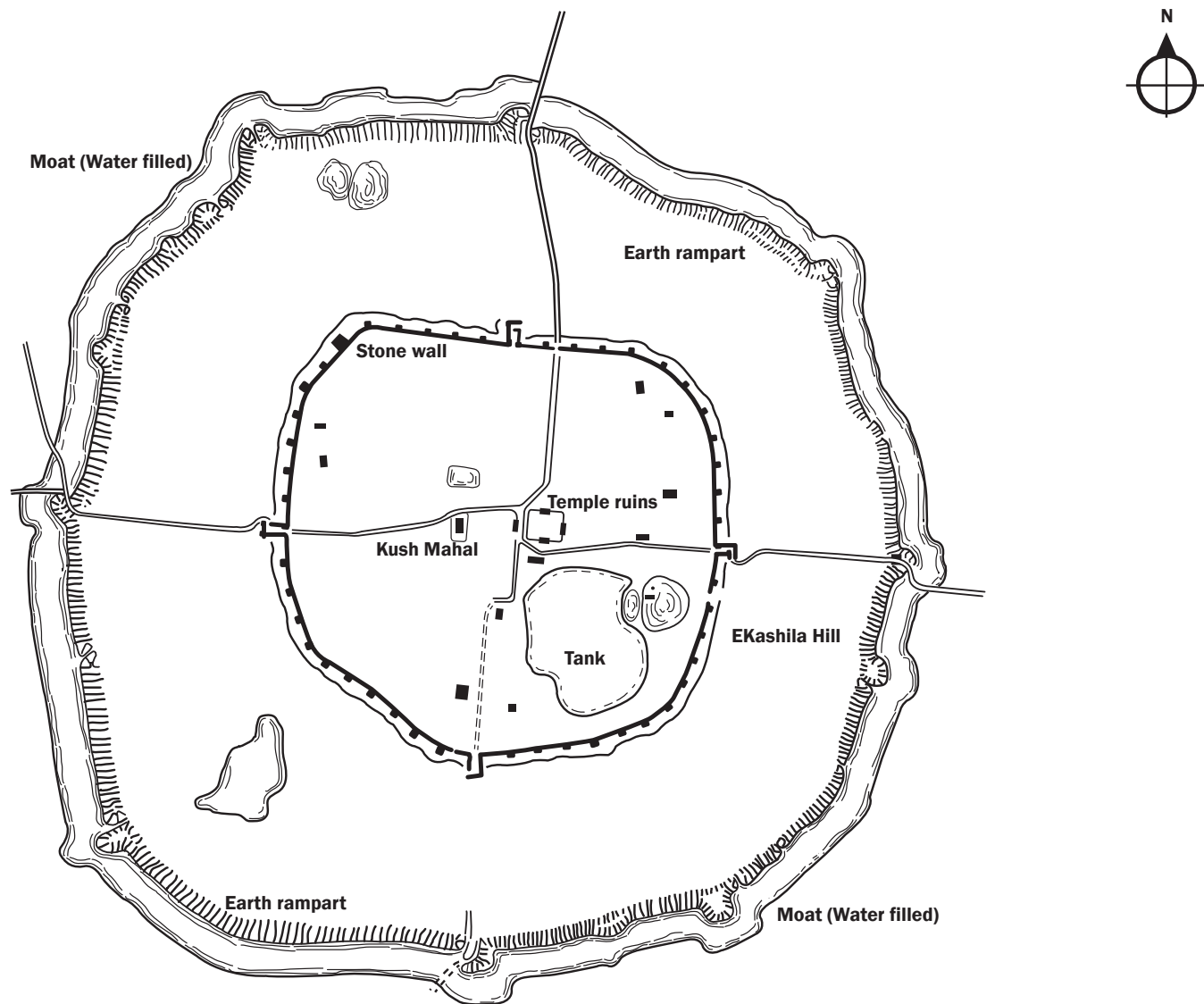
are interrupted at the north-west quadrant by the rocky hills and earthen walls the define the fort of Hanamkonda. The houses of the modern town of Hanamkonda extend northward from this citadel. Elsewhere, there are numerous reservoirs with earthen embankments, some of which may date to the Kakatiya period.⁶ No gateways survive in these outermost walls.

As has been pointed out, the three circuits of fortifications are approximately 1.2 km, 2.4 km and 12.5 km in diameter. Taking the innermost ring as the unit, these diameters are in the ratios of 1, 2 and 10. No doubt, these walls were intended as perfect circles, but the irregularities revealed by the maps of the city may be explained by the immense scale of the city and the undulating landscape over which the walls extend.

Fortifications

Warangal's first circuit of walls is lined with massive granite blocks. On their outer faces, these blocks are finely fitted in irregular fashion, without any mortar, to a height of no less than 6m. Regularly spaced bastions, mostly rectangles of about 12m by 16m, project outward; a double bastion occurs in the north-west quadrant. The north-west and south-east quadrants each have 12 bastions, the others have 10 (south-west) and 11 (north-east), giving a total of 45 bastions. The upper parts of the bastions have crudely fashioned battlements, obvious additions of the later Muslim period. So, too, are the square or polygonal lookouts on top of the bastions, partly built of reused Temple columns, lintels and ceiling panels. A ditch filled with water protects the outside of the fortifications. The inner face of the walls is of rammed earth, held in place by stepped blocks, partly dilapidated and overgrown. These serve as steps ascending to the broad pathway that runs along the top of the walls.

Warangal fort map



The second circuit of walls is only of earth, without any stone facing. In places it is preserved up to a height of about 10 m, but generally it is badly eroded. Buttresses of roughly semi-circular project outward from the wall at the cardinal and midway points. A broad moat, now partly planted with crops, encircles these walls. The third circuit of walls, which is also of earth, is occasionally preserved up to a height of more than 5 m. There are no indications of any buttresses.

Gateways

The four gateways in the innermost ring of walls follow a standard pattern with almost precisely the same dimensions. Each example consists of a rectangular barbican divided into two enclosures that projects 60 m out from the fortifications. Four square bastions protrude from the external corners of the barbican, an additional, fifth bastion projects from the side wall to protect the external doorway located there.

Entry through each gateway from the outside is only possible by making a right turn through the doorway positioned in the left wall of the barbican. This doorway opens on to a long rectangular (outer) enclosure. A turn to the left is necessary in order to pass through the second doorway. This gives access to a larger square (inner) enclosure in the middle of the far side of which is the third doorway. This leads directly into the fort.

The barbican enclosures are constructed with massive walls, similar to those of the fortifications. The upper portions, including the battlements, are later additions with some reused temple materials. The doorways are flanked by flat pilasters with double brackets; the jambs and lintels are ornamented with animals, birds and miniature images of Hindu deities, the latter mostly

damaged pink granite balustrades carved with mythical beasts, doubtless removed from a dismantled temple, are placed at either side of the outermost doorways in the east and west gateways. Curved, free-standing walls were later erected to shield these two entrances.

The intermediating of walls is broken at irregular intervals by passageways cutting through the earthen embankment. These passageways protrude outward at the cardinal points, with exit by way of a bend to the right. The passageways on the east and west are stone-lined. They lead to gateways with pointed arches flanked by double tiers of arched niches. The inner parts of these gateways are roofed with similar pointed arches; raised platforms on either side of the passageways have arcades, now partly collapsed. Ruined walls and collapsing arches are all that remain of what must have been similar, though possibly never completed, gateways on the north and south. The style of these gateways, in particular, of the arches, is typical of Bahmani architecture in the 14th and 15th centuries. Other passageways without any evidence of stone gateways occur approximately midway between the cardinal points. Additional breaks in the earthen walls are probably later insertions.

That passageways or gateways may have been intended for the outermost ring of walls is evident from a gap in the walls near the village of Sadarpeta, north of modern Warangal. Raised mounds with fallen and buried blocks on either side of the opening suggest a formal entrance, now vanished.

Standing Structures

Most of Warangal's standing buildings are located within the fort. As already mentioned, only the entrance portals survive from the great Kakatiya period. Shiva temple at the



Double pillared Keerthi Torana, Warangal Fort



Panoramic view of Svayambhu temple complex and west side Keerti torana, Warangal fort



Panoramic view of East side Keerti torana



The view of North side Keerthi torana and smashed stones of Svayambhu temple



East side view of Svayambhu temple



The view of East side Keerthi torana



core of the city These portals stand freely in the middle of the four sides of an almost square enclosure (130m east-west, 144 m north-south). The portals each have a double pair of posts, with brackets supporting a massive lintel, giving an overall height of 30 m. The treatment of these elements is highly ornamental, with delicately carved lotus buds, looped garlands, mythical beasts and birds with foliated tails. The absence of Hindu figural themes possibly explains why these portals were spared by the Muslims.

Of the temple itself nothing remains except over-turned slabs and smashed columns, brackets and ceiling panels: a more vivid picture of willful destruction can hardly be imagined. Traces of the original foundation slabs exposed by the archaeologists indicate a main shrine to the west and an open columned hall with a stepped plan in the middle. Recent excavations at the south-east corner of the archaeological zone have uncovered the remains of row of sub-shrines, each with a votive linga. Another small temple nearby has an open hall with sharply modeled columns and brackets; the sanctuary is low and plain. The temple is built at a noticeably higher level than the portal of the central monument and is, therefore, clearly later.

West of the ruined Shiva temple is the Kush Mahal. The courtly building consists of a single rectangular chamber. Massive slopping raised on a high plinth support five transverse, pointed arches, probably for a timber roof, now lost. Six vaulted opening are positioned on each of the long sides of the hall with entrances on the north and south.¹³ The southern end of the hall, which is stepped up slightly, may have been where Shitab Khan sat on state occasions. Steps ascend to the roof from which excellent views may be had across the site.

Among the monuments at the summit of Ekashila hill is an octagonal solid keep, with two flights of steps leading

to a circular platform for a gun emplacement. Reused materials in the walls suggest that this structure belongs to the Muslim period. An abandoned temple nearby has a flat-roofed sanctuary with plain walls and an open hall with sharply cut columns.

Other temples inside the fort, some of which are dilapidated and partly buried, appear to be similar in style. One monument of interest consists of a trio of long rectangular chambers built with finely finished stonework at the base and roughly shaped masonry, including much reused materials, above. These halls may have served as granaries. Another structure of uncertain purpose, possibly a stable, consisted of a double row of arcades with vaulted chambers.

Temple and Palace

It has already been observed that the Kakatiya period temple in the middle of Warangal was reduced to a pile of displaced and smashed stones, except for the four portals which define the sacred precinct. The sacred precinct is not located, as perhaps might be predicated, at the geometric centre of the city where the axial roads of the city presumably once intersected. Rather, it is positioned about 80 m east of the north-south axis, and at lesser distance north of the east-west axis. A similar displacement seems also to have been followed in the siting of the Kush Mahal which stands about 80 m west of the north-south axis of the city.

Though the Kush Mahal is the only royal structure to have been preserved at Warangal it post-dates both the Kakatiya and Bahmani periods. It is, however, reasonable to suppose that the capital of the Kakatiyas must have included a royal residence, and that this was built at some prominent location within the city, most likely at or near



The close view of west side Svayambhu temple complex

its geometric centre. It may be further argued that the Kush Mahal marks the site of an original Kakatiya palace which, like the temple itself, was dismantled. Rubble in the vicinity of the Kush Mahal testifies to buried remains that may belong to the Kakatiya period.

If future excavation establishes that the Kush Mahal was erected on the site of the Kakatiya palace then evidence would exist for a coordinated temple-palace complex at the core of the original capital. This means that there would have been a symmetrical disposition of temple and palace about the north-south axis of the city. This spatial relationship may have been imbued with a particular meaning since it could have formed the basis for a conceptual relationship between god and king. Unfortunately, no historical information exists that illuminates the ideology of the Kakatiya builders of Warangal in this regard; there are only the ruins and overgrown mounds of the site itself.

Movement through the City

Gateways aligned with the cardinal directions are situated in both the innermost and intermediate rings of walls, and were probably intended for the outermost ring. They define major north-south and east-west axial roads leading into the heart of the city. Not all these roads exist today and those that are still being used do not always conform to this scheme. The route that proceeds northward, for example, bypasses the gateway in the innermost enclosure through which it originally must have passed. Additional passage ways are observed in the intermediate circuit of walls, implying a radial system of movement with eight roads fanning outward from the inner fort. It is likely that these roads would have passed through the outermost circuit, even though there are no remaining indications of gateways in these walls. The exceptional break in the walls near the village of Sadarpeta, directly to the north, has already been noted. The north-west road would have led directly to the fort of Hanamkonda.

The outermost doorways of the gateways in the stone fortifications are positioned to one side of the barbicans so that a turn to the right is required on leaving the innermost zone. The gateways are identical in this regard, which means that they open in different directions according





Relics of columns in svayambhu temple complex



The close view of west side Svayambhu temple complex

WAY TO TOILETS





The sculptures in middle of Svayambhu temple complex



to rotational symmetry: the east gateway to the south, the south gateway to the west, the west gateway to the north and the north gateway to the east. The same system of rotational symmetry governs the passageways in the earthen fortifications which are also bent. This is clearest on the east and west where the passageways are stone-line, turning south and north, respectively.

The scheme of movement though the city creates a svastika pattern. The outstanding feature of the svastika is the rotational symmetry of its four angles which are conceived as spinning to the right in clockwise motion. The svastika pattern is inscribed within the innermost and intermediate circuits of Warangal's city walls and possibly intended for the outermost circuit. If so, then the underlying structure of movement in the city would have consisted of three superimposed svastikas at different scales, each corresponding to one ring of fortifications.

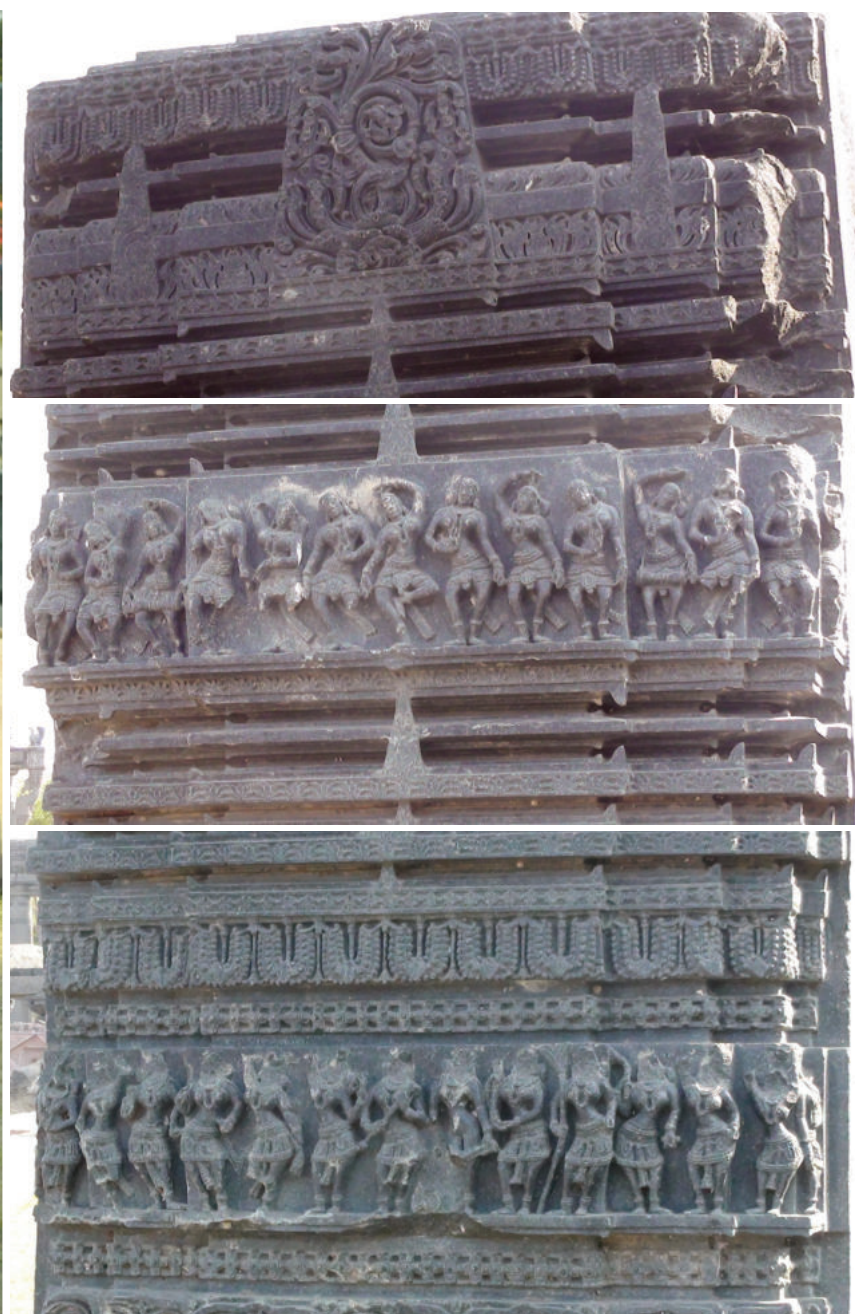
Theoretical Urban Models

The regulating geometry of Warangal's remarkable plan implies a conscious act of planning based on well established tradition. Theoretical models of cities with geometry plans are repeatedly described in shastras as well as in various astrological and mythological texts. These sources invariably list towns of different shapes, among which are those with 'perfectly circular' layouts. The circular town specified in one shastra,¹⁶ for instance, has a perimeter ring wall with four cardinal gateways; inside the fortifications are two additional rings of roads creating two concentric circles. Eight axial roads, positioned at the cardinal and intermediate points, run outward from a temple standing in the middle of the city. Many of these features are found at Warangal.

Another characteristic of Warangal's plan, notable the



Detail view of columns in west side temple complex



svastika pattern, is also familiar in theoretical literature. The svastika town is included in most lists of urban models, and some shastras designate this type as being particularly 'fit for habitation of kings.'¹⁷ Descriptions of svastika towns in the texts generally concentrate on the disposition of building blocks arranged in rotational symmetry in respect to the axial roads. Gateways with bent entrances are not mentioned in these schemes.

According to the shastras, the most important and powerful site within any town, whatever its overall configuration, is the centre. The square or circular plot in the middle of the town is generally occupied by a temple, often dedicated to Brahma, the creator. Royal cities, which are defined by the king's residence that they contain, also situated a temple in the middle. The place is set to one side, usually a short distance to the west, so that it faces east towards the god. Exactly this relationship of place and temple may have once existed at Warangal.

Mandalas and Yantras

The diagram of concentric circles and svastikas that underlies Warangal's plan is identical to that which regulates mandalas and yantras. These cosmograms are common to all the religious traditions of India, used widely in ritual texts, metal altars and hanging cloths. The underlying purpose of the mandala is to reproduce in miniature form the basic geometry of the universe. This is generally expressed in a numerically determined chart, either square or circular in shape. The yantra is a meditational instrument to focus the mind of the devotee so that they may achieve union with the power of the supreme being. Despite these differences in intention, mandalas and yantras employ the same geometric patterns, especially those produced by concentric combinations of circles, squares and triangles. Many mandalas and yantras are

obviously architectural in their layouts, with 'gateways' in the middle of each side of square perimeter 'walls', and circles both inside and outside, almost exactly as in Warangal's plan. That the mandalas and yantras were conceived as celestial diagrams is confirmed by the divinities that are sometimes incorporated into the overall compositions. But even without gods, goddesses, saints or saviours, these cosmograms imply a heavenly vision.

The other basic component of Warangal's plan, the svastika, likewise also serves as a cosmogram. Literally meaning of 'good fortune', the svastika is both an auspicious mark and a solar emblem. It represents the clockwise movement of the sun, in particular the solar wheel, indicating cosmic procession and evolution around a fixed centre. This gives the svastika an astronomical dimension since it embodies the rhythm and harmony of the heavens.

Urban Cosmogram

It can be no accident that the underlying geometry of Warangal's plan shares many characteristic features with mandala and yantra schemes as well as with auspicious svastikas. The considerable skills required to lay out a circular city on such a vast scale means that a conceptual urban model must have been fixed well before the building operations commenced. As already noted, no contemporary documents are available to throw light on the historical circumstances or ideological factors which led to the choice of a circular layout for Warangal and which may have charged this particular plan with cosmic symbolism. Even so, the overall layout and the system of movement imposed by the wall and gateways may be interpreted as arguments to support an interpretation of the city as a cosmogram.



Detail view of columns in west side temple complex





It is tempting to speculate that Warangal's plan was intended to imbue the royal figure with universal power. Cosmic qualities have always been considered an essential aspect of the ideal ruler in India, who is often described as a *chakravartin* or 'universal ruler', the term *chakra* denoting a clockwise turning disc. The *chakra* is considered a motif of heavenly power since it represents the sun; in addition, it is an emblem of the continually expanding realm of the king. The diagram of Warangal may be interpreted as the perfect urban realization of the *chakravartin*, since it represents in planimetric form both the circular shape and clock-wise movement of the royal *chakra*.

If these assumptions are accepted, the Warangal's circular plan may be considered to have supported any claims of the Kakatiya rulers as world sovereigns. The layout of the walls and gateways of the city were physical manifestations of the radiating and pervasive influence of regal power. But, significantly, these urban elements also provided a means by which the Kakatiya capital was charged with a distinctive cosmic symbolism.



Detail view of columns in west side temple complex





Detail view of columns and Kesari in south side temple complex







Detail view of columns in East side temple complex







Detail view of columns and Elephants
in East side temple complex



Detail view of column in West side temple complex



The column detail view



Detail view of sculptures in East side temple complex



line-up of elephants, Lions

4. RAMAPPA TEMPLE



To describe the temple of Ramappa is to demonstrate the inadequacy of the written word. Historians and pundits of architecture have attempted what may be termed a technical exposition of this remarkable structure. But they have failed to conjure up even a faint picture of the temple and its wealth of artistry and breath - taking beauty. What the eye sees, nothing else can fully convey.

From the headquarters of the “Lake district” of Andhra Pradesh viz., Warangal, a road runs, to Mulug and beyond-a predominantly forest area. After traversing about 32 miles from Warangal, you turn left and proceed along a difficult road in the vicinity of the reserve forest. Then you come across a smallish village called Palampet whose present appearance hardly suggests that it was once a flourishing city.

Passing through Palampet, a little to the left you suddenly see the rear view of the huge temple. There is an indescribable quality about this view - like some mythical bird, on its perch, about to fly into the clear sky above. Crossing a six-foot-wide irrigation canal which takes off from the Ramappa lake and runs close to the rear compound wall of the temple, you enter the compound through a low and narrow doorway. This back door entry is obviously of recent origin, the mukhamandapa (nandimandapa) and the main gate being on the opposite side in front of the temple.





Ramappa temple

The shrines at Palampet belong to the period of the Kakatiyas and constitute perhaps the finest examples of medieval Deccan temples. The early Kakatiyas, Beta I and Prola I, Beta II and Prola II, distinguished themselves as vassals under the Western Chalukyan emperors. Rudradeva, son of Prola II, declared his independence, and acquired new territories. Being childless, he was succeeded by his younger brother after whom Ganapati, the greatest of the Kakatiya family, became the monarch. Ganapati was a great conqueror. By his prowess, he enlarged the frontiers of his task he was a great conqueror. By his prowess, he enlarged the frontiers of his kingdom up to the Kaveri in the south and up to the sea in the east. In this task he was helped by a number of able generals and ministers, of whom Rudra of the Recherla family is famous. The temples of Palampet were the pious works of this chief, Rudra. His inscription running to nearly 204 lines engraved on four sides of a polished basalt pillar now erected in a small mandapa within the court yard of the temples, enumerates the glorious achievements of this feudatory family and commemorates the construction of the main temples at Palampet in Saka 1135 by Rudra. It is therefore a very important document not only for dating the temples of Ramappa but also for furnishing much – needed data on the history of this place.

The temple complex consists of the main shrine dedicated to Siva with the nandimandapa in front. This mandapa is now in ruins. The huge nandi, installed here is at the entrance to the temple. A unique feature of the nandi is that from which angle you look at its face, it appears to be looking at you.

The main temple which stands on large Jagati, 6'4" high, supported the sanctum (garbhagriha), the ardhamandapa or antarala and the mahamandapa or "rangamandapa" with seven devakostas or subsidiary shrines arranged along the sides of the mandapa. Originally there should have been eight devakostas, perhaps enshrining ten

parivara devatas. Mahamandapa which is at the end has kakshasanas, running around except at the porches which are added to serve as entrances. There are porticos on the east, north and south.

Above the top of these devakostas there is a hamsamala over which runs the kapota or cornice. The wall top is covered by a projecting chajja which runs all round the temple. The inner surface of the chajja is paneled into a diminishing rectangle with raised sides of rims. All along the rim are arranged lotus buds as pendants or as ornaments for the curved undersides. The outer face of the parapet (or kakshasanas) that run round the mahamandapa is divided into four horizontal sections in which are depicted rows of elephants (mattavarana), vajrabandha-dancers, musicians, gods, rishis, mithunas, etc.

The vimana or superstructure over the cella is built or sponge-like brick which floats on water. This brick was obviously meant for a light-weight vimana. Visitors have been so impressed by the quality of the brick that they have, over the decades, denuded the superstructure of almost every removable brick to see it float on the adjacent canal. Today the chowkidar keeps a sample brick for purpose of demonstration, and visitors are not allowed to dig the superstructure to satisfy their curiosity. The vimana is divided into four bhumis or talas of reducing dimensions over which, on a narrow griva, rises a domical sikhara with prominent nasikas on all the four sides. The superstructure over the antarala (ardhamandapa) has similar decorations and forms an undifferentiated sukanasi. The construction of the main sikhara is what Fergusson calls "a compromise between the styles of the north and south the tigers of pillars rising vertically give the structure an Indo-Aryan appearance while the railings and the bold cornices have horizontal courses characteristic of the Dravidian style."



Parapet wall with line-up of elephants and Kakatiyas victory symbol Kesari (Lions) in both pictures

The temple's sculptural decoration, especially the depiction of human activities, shows fresh charm, elegance and almost a metallic finish. The perforated screen pattern on the ranks of the door jambs, female figures in various dancing poses, besides the chauri-bearers and dvarapalas standing cross-legged, pulsating with life and movement, all display the supreme workmanship accomplished by the sculptor of that age. The dvarasakhas above the doorway are covered with the figures of ornamental vimanas or navagraha panels. There is also a short musical pillar on the right flank of the entrance to the antarala. The presiding deity, Rudresvara, symbolised in the mystic linga, stands on a high pedestal yonipitha, of highly polished black basalt, in the centre of the cella.

The pillars of the mahamandapa divide the ceiling into several compartments, each being superbly carved with decorations ranging from floral geometrical patterns and full-blown lotuses to the highly intricate honeycomb scroll. The ornamentation of the central pillars and the architrave above them is rich, subtle and fine like exquisite filigree work in gold or silver indeed. In the hands of the sculptors, the hard black basalt virtually attained the softness of wax and the polish of clean mirror. The pillars of the central mandapa are highly ornate-cubical at the bottom, octagonal and circular bands covered with processions of musicians and dancers in the middle with a square section above on the face of which are depicted scenes of the Gopi vastrapaharana etc., from the Bhagavata, and a tapering top surmounted with a pitha and the corbel. The pitha is beautifully covered with flowing pearl tassels while the corbels are plain, with rolled or chamfered ends. The beams and the ceiling above are all covered with the figure sculpture, depicting scenes from mythology, the puranas and agamic texts. The general spirit of the sculpture, as suggested by an expert is somewhat sensual and exhibits erotic joy however when

compared with similar sculptures of the contemporary temples of Central India or Orissa – particularly Khajuraho or Bhubaneswar this temple certainly shows the restraint of the artist of the Kakatiyas, though he could not divorce himself from the spirit of the age.

A striking feature of this temple is the figure brackets springing from the shoulders (virakantha) of the outer pillars shown supporting the ponderous chajja slabs. Twelve of them consist of female figures, almost life-size, worked in highly polished black basalt, cut with great precision and accuracy. There is an exuberance of youth with unfettered emotion in these figures. Particularly striking is a nude (study) of a lovely nagini with legs gracefully extended at full length, hands lifted slightly to bring into relief a charmingly youthful bosom. The figure has been given an apt Telugu nickname, viz., Garabala patti meaning the darling damsel. The beauty of this figure is indeed so irresistible that a district collector, in the old Nizam's Government, is said to have removed it to adorn his private residence. It was after a good deal of public agitation that the figure was returned and restored to its old position. The buildings are grandly executed. The high plinth, lofty pillars, spacious halls, ponderous beams, ceiling slabs, majestic sikhara, and figure sculpture speak volumes about the high perfection reached by the sculptor and architect of the age. The Kakatiya sthapati not only mastered the idiom of the earlier Chalukya school but adapted it to the change in taste of the people of his own age, without silpasastrakarins of the period.

This description will remain incomplete without a reference to the big and beautiful Ramappa lake nearby. The lush forest, the lake, the temple complex and the over-all atmosphere present picture of serenity blended with beauty. To every tourist and scholar this specimen of Kakatiya culture serves as a rewarding revelation.





Female dancers on column rangamandapa



Nagini bracket figure of Ramappa temple



Nagini bracket figure of Ramappa temple



All four Bracket figures of Ramappa temple





All four Bracket figures of Ramappa temple







Ramappa temple main entrance to Rangamandapa



Nandi Mandapa





Nandi two profile views sited front of God Shiva in Ramappa temple, its look like any front and side views of Nandi looks our side only



Finely sculptured column of the rangamandapa
detailed view of column picture in right side



Shkerasagaramadanam from Indian mythology



Gopikas, Krishna and there is also a short musical pillar on the right blank of the entrance to antarala







Perini dance sequence on the left and right flank of the entrance to the antarala







Parapet wall with line-up of elephants, vajrabandhas, dancers, musicians, gods, rishis, mithunas etc



5. THOUSAND PILLAR TEMPLE



Indian architecture is religious, aesthetic and symbolic. These three themes operate concurrently. Enshrining the themes, we have a large number of structures still standing for our observation and appreciation.

Whatever the religious pantheon be the places of worship crystalized in the form of a temple, a sputa, etc., underwent many ramifications down the ages. It is also likely that some of the structural evolutions marked the genesis of regional styles.

The temple architecture in particular is extant to us in three broad regional styles. They are more geographical rather than chronological groupings. They are known as the Dravida, the Nagar and the Vesara styles. It is likely that in the same vicinity, one is not surprised to see a variety of Sikhara forms.

Through the pages of history, we observe that certain forms of the temple were cherished and nourished by certain dynasties. With the result that we come across terms like the Pallava architecture, the Chola architecture, the Chalukyan architecture, the Hoyasala architecture, etc. Here, the word architecture is often used as a synonym for style. Against this background the Chalukyan architecture expresses itself in exotic forms of sikhara and arrangement of the ground plans. In particular, the Kakatiya religious architecture shows a variety of ground plain arrangements. One such is the Trikutachala

In temple architecture, the architects adopted different structural forms like ayatasra, chaturasra and gajaprista or apsidal form. Trikutachala temple form dapa thus giving a structural unity on plan as well as in elevation.

Trikutachala or Triple shrine is a popular style of temple architecture which flourished in Telangana and other parts of the Deccan during the period from A.D. 10th century to early A.D. 14th century. The Western Chalukyas patronised this type of structural temples in their. Later the Kakatias and the Hoyasalas followed, favored and popularized this trikutachala form.

‘Trinity’ is the most revered concept of Hindu worship. The three great gods Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara are placed in the highest state of divinity in Hindu mythology. Though, Trikutachala form was not developed along with the worship of the trinity, but certainly the evolutionary stage of this style coincided with the worship of the trinity. Most of the early triple shrines are dedicated to the trinity. Worshipping trinity was popularised the Pallavas and the structural evolution of a temple also took a major turn under the reign of the Pallavas.

The Mandagapattu inscription of Mahendra Varma-I of the Greater Pallavas of Kanchi clearly states the creation of a temple for the Hindu Trinity. In that Mahendra Varma claims “This Trikota was caused to be constructed by him for Brahma, Iswara and Vishnu worship without using



Thousand Pillar Temple Hanumakonda

bricks, timber, metals or morar". From this inscription and the Mandagapattu cave, it can be deduced that the worship of the Hindu Trinity and the concept of Trikutachala was popularly known in the early historic period also.

The Mandagapattu cave shrine which form a triple shrine consists of a rectangular hall 6.7 metres in length, 7.3 mts in width and 2.64 mts in height. In the back or south wall are three large niches 1.2 mts deep and a stone image was housed in each niche.

Apart from Mandagapattu, we can find the evolutionary stage of Trikutachala form in the early rock-cut caves of South India. The cave temples of Andhra Pradesh at Mogalrajapuram, Vijayawada and Undavalli have the formative features of later Trikutachala temple forms. The first cave of Mogalrajapuram is a simple unit of three shrine cells. Akkanna – Madanna cave of Vijayawada and Undavalli cave unit also stood as early examples for excavation of triple cells in a row and are dedicated to the worship of the Trinity. After that, the Trikutachala style opened its wings in the Deccan caves. There are many triple shrines in the Ellora caves, Elephanta, Jogeswari, etc., and we can easily identify the process of adopting cruciform ground plan to Trikutachala in these places.

The first structural Trikuta was found at Badami. The Jambulingeswara temple at Badami was founded in A.D. 699 by the queen mother Vinayavati and this temple is called as "Traipurusha devalaya". It was built in cruciform having three shrines in the north, west and south which are dedicated to the worship of the Trinity.

Kalyani Chalukya's admiration for this unique form is known to us from their Trikutas at Rattapalli, Harahalli in Karnataka and Malleswaram, Raikal, Valigonda, Chilvakonduru and Tandur in Andhra Pradesh.

As subordinates and successors of the Western Chalukyas

of Kalyana, the Kakatiyas cultivated and adopted many of the architectural styles that were more prominent under the former. They added some more structural features like large upapithas, has administhana recesses and projections in wall decoration, etc., all giving a perfect horizontal and vertical distribution of the architectural form. Kakatiya temples are well known for their interior decoration and especially for their lathe turned pillars.

The Kakatiyas and their subordinates left many Trikuta shrines which still remain in Telangana and other regions. These are found at Hanamkonda, panagallu, Pillalamarri, Nagunuru, Kalabagur, kondapaka, Nagulapadu, Garla, Kuchumanchi, Uppalapalli, Katkur, Mutharam, Manthani, Vilasagar, Chittapur, Timmapur in Telangana region and one Trikuta at Pushpagiri in Cuddapah district are the best standing example of this unique architectural form.

Three shrines located on the three faces of a common mukha-mandapa is the most common feature in the temple layout of a Trikuta style of architecture. At some places three shrines are planned in a single line parallel to each other with a common mandapa in front. This form of layout is also described at Trikuta form of a architecture. Amongh the Kakatiya Temples, all the Trikuta temples were built in cruciform ground plan. Except one, temples at Kuchumanchi have a rectangular mandapa with three shrines in a row on one side.

The Trikuata form of temple architecture reached its high watermark in the thousand Pillar temple at Hanumkonda, the early capital of the Kakatiyas. It was built by Rudradeva.

An inscription is found inscribed on four faces of a stone slab now placed near the dwaramandapa in the east. On the upper portion of the stone slab, the figures of Ganapathi, Siva Linga with Nandi in front, Vishnu and the figure of Surya are represented on the four faces.



Nandi in front of Thousand Pillar temple



Curved column in Thousand Pillar temple



Decorated Elephant front of Thousand Pillar temple



Kalyanamandapam Thousand Pillar temple



Reconstruction of Kalyanamandapam

This inscription, dated A.D. 1163, records that mahamandaleswara Kakati Rudradeva Maharaja, the lord of Anama Kondapura consecrated the god Rudresvara after his own name as well as the gods Vasudeva and Suryadeva.

With the building of the Thousand Pillared temple, begins the middle as well as the glorious phase in Kakatiya art (Fig. 7a). This grand edifice is the best example of the art and architecture that flourished during the Kakatiya period. Scholars like M. Radhakrishna Sarma, B. Rajendra Prasad, Y. Gopalreddy, S. Gopalakrishna Murthi etc., studied the art and architectural features of this temple as a part of the survey of art history of Andhra Pradesh. In the present paper, an attempt is made to give a detailed picture of art and architectural features of the Thousand Pillar Temple.

Architectural Features of Thousand Pillar Temple

The Thousand Pillared temple or the Rudresvara temple consists of a triple shrine complex, Nandimandapa and a Kalyanamandapa built one after the other from north to south. The original prakara around this large temple complex is not extant. At present a compound wall built around the temple in recent times serves as the prakara leaving a rectangular courtyard. Apart from the modern entrance gate in the north, there two dvaramandapas in the east and the west. In the North-East of the courtyard,

there is a tank built with finely dressed stone and provided with a flight of steps. This tank is in a rectangular form looking like a large well and maintains good water level due to the presence of natural springs within the tank.

The three shrines of the Rudresvara temple and the central mukhamandapa are erected on a high upapitha. The upapitha or the jagati provides a common platform for

the three shrines. The upapitha is built on a star shape. It also serves as an open pradakhnia patha around the three shrines and has a width of 2.75 meters.

The upapitha raising to height of 1.43 meters has the typical Kakatiya mouldings. The following are its mouldings from bottom upwards – upana, jagati, kantha, patta, padma, galapada decorated with ratna motifs, projecting pattapadma, kantha, tripatta kumuda, kantha padma and patta.

The Triple shrine block consisting of three shrines on the three sides of a central square mukhamandapa is built on a cruciform ground plan (fig). The mukhamandapa has a projection towards the south and is provided with a mukha-chatusuki in front of it.

Sculpture

The Thousand Pillar temple is good example of balanced treatment between architectural members and sculptural art. The central four pillars of mukhamandapa, dwara toranas in front of antarala and garbhagrihas and central ceiling lab of the mukhamandapa are a class by themselves. All these parts were made of dolerite stone. In particular, the central pillars of this temple stand as the best specimens of the Kakatiya column art. The female figures on the four faces of the lower bases of these pillars are shown standing in tribhanga pose within an ornate prabhamandala. Two female figures which are standing in tribhanga pose and offering deepa to god, were sculptured one each on the lower positions of the pillars on either side of the antarala doorway. In addition to these figure sculptures, the pillars were decorated with Padma, lata, patra, mala, etc, on their octagonal sections and its bands, tadi phalaka parts.

The lotus medallions on the bharapattas are very impressive and prominent. The triangular section of ashtakona design of the central ceiling are the representation of Siva-Nataraja and Ashtadikpalakas on their mounts on the central square of this panel is the best example of the plastic art of the Kakatiyas.

The makara toranas carving at the entrance of each antarala are very ornate and one wonders at their minute details and shining plasticity. Each torana depicts two prominent makaras on either side facing each other. The god Varuna with his consort is shown seated on these makaras. The plumes of the makaras and the meandering creeper, latas forming a series of semicircular arches above complete the formation of a torana. Within the torana and in between the makars, the respective dancing deity figures are represented.

The jala vatayana frames arranged on either side of these entrances are excellent examples of Kakatiya craftsmanship.

The doorways of grabhagriha are of saptasaka variety. The entire door frame, including the threshold and the lalatabimbas are highly ornate. The lower sections of the door jambs represent two pairs of dwarapalakas, female figures as chouris and a woman holding kalasa, and a fat male figure in the corner. The woman holding kalasas

represent Ganga and Yamuna. The dwarapalaka figures have four hands and hold similar weapons like their master god. They are all in tribhanga pose and represented with various ornaments on their body. The male figure at the extreme end of these Groups was shown flabby, potbellied and holding a round club-like object, over his head. This may be the figure of Kubera. These panels are surmounted by simhalalata toranas which are arranged in semi-circular fashion. The polished and highly ornate sections of the door jambs remind us of the filigree work. The lalata parts of these door-ways are decorated with the Gajalakshmi motifs, Ganapati, female figures in shrine models, etc.

The sculpture of the temple includes the deity figures represented on the walls, doorways and the central ceiling. Though some of the deity figures are defaced, the iconographic study of those sculptures forms an important aspect for the better understanding of the secular attitude of the Kakatiyas and its impact on the contemporary sculptural art. In addition to these, there are some figures like Jain ascetics, women in dance forms, erotic poses of male and female, etc., depicted on the members of the adhistana of the temple, but they are very limited and small in size and badly mutilated by human vandalism.



KAKATIYA DYNASTY ART AND ARCHITECTURE

