## Description of the Temple Complex

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DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE COMPLEX

The Nārāyanasvāmi temple, the most sacred and important structure in the whole of Malkote, stands roughly at the southern end of the flat area occupied by the present town on the top of the hill. It is right abutting the only broad and long street of the town, appropriately called Rāja-vīdhī. Rather, it is appropriate to mention that the major road of the town has been laid in such a way as to lead directly to the front side of the temple. In fact, this road had been laid in a way to run straight across the hill linking the entry routes to the town from north and south and also passing along the temple's front side. This road serves partly as the path for temple processions.

GENERAL LAYOUT OF THE TEMPLE

The temple proper is rectangular in plan (241' 9" x 139' 6") and faces east. In general plan this consists of a main central unit with a
garbhagriha and an ardhamandapa amidst a narrow pillared corridor that runs on all the three sides and proceeded by a mahamandapa and a small mukhamandapa, all lying axially east-west. In the same axial line, abutting the mukhamandapa, is a duṇḍastambha with a halāpiṭha in its front. This unit is located in a large yard, open on the southern, western and northern sides but covered on the eastern side, surrounded by a huge prākāra wall with a broad pillared cloister (mālikā) on its inner side and a narrow pillared corridor (kaśśśāla) on its outer side.

**THE MAIN UNIT**

**Garbhagriha and Ardhamandapa**

These two form the original core of the temple. The garbhagriha is rectangular in plan and measures 7' 10" x 3' 2". The outer walls of the ardhamandapa is slightly inset from the line of the outer walls of the garbhagriha. On the inner side it measures 13' x 6.9". Inside the garbhagriha the main deity is placed a little behind the exact centre and directly opposite the front doorway.
interior, both the *garbhagriha* and the *ardhamandapa* are 10' in height and have flat ceilings. The ceiling of the *garbhagriha* has a central square panel with a concentric circular *padma* motif. The *ardhamandapa* ceiling does not have any decoration. The doorframe of the *garbhagriha* is now covered with brass sheets and it is difficult to make out the details of the original. At present the doorframe is completely covered with brass sheets. But it appears that the original door frame had five *śakhas* on the jambs and some figures at their base and a *lalajahimba* on the lintel. The details of these cannot be made out now. The present brass covering, however, appears to have been fixed on the doorframe displaying the original *śakha* divisions. The figures at the base of the jambs on the brass sheet are the *Vaishnava Dvārapālakas* and the *lalajahimba* is that of Gajalakshmi. On either side of this doorframe is a life size *dvārapālaka* figure now kept leaning against the front wall of the *ardhamandapa*, but these were not part of the original planning.

In external elevation the *garbhagriha* and
The ardhamandapa have an adhishthana supporting a bhitti. The karota, prastara and hara portions are now embedded in a concrete roof recently constructed. The garbhagriha is crowned by a tower.

The Adhishthana consists of a series of functional mouldings. Upama, the lowermost moulding, projects beyond the vertical norm and is surmounted by the jagati. This is oblong in shape. Over this is the kumuda, which is three faceted (tripatta-kumuda). Next is the kantha which literally means 'neck', and it is a recessed moulding, oblong in elevation and connecting the other mouldings above. The pattika, which is above the kantha is thick.

The topmost member of the plinth is the vadi (also called prati), which is an indication of the ground level of the floor inside the shrine.

Immediately above the adhishthana is the bhitti decorated with karṇastambhas (corner pilasters) kuṇḍvastambhas (wall pilasters) and dēvakāśthas (niches).

The pranāla meant to drain out water from the garbhagriha is visible on the northern side at the
jagati level. This projects out of the wall for about 1' 6" and has a lion's face at the end.

Both on the external walls of the garbhagṛha and the ardhamanḍapa, there is a hindrakōśṭha in the centre with a karṇaṁstantha at each end and two kuḍyaṁstanthas on either side of the bhadrakōṣṭha. The kuḍyaṁstanthas and karṇaṁstanthas are of the Brahmakānta type. They rise straight from the nāḍī without having any distinct base. The shaft is plain and rectangular in cross-section but their upper half is well carved. The first member above the shaft is a rectangular panel (malaśthāna) mostly decorated with pearl strands hanging down. Above this member are the laṣuna, taṇḍa, kumbha, phalaka and pāṭikās. The laṣuna portion is plain. The cushion shaped capitals (kumbha) are roughly square. The padma and phalaka are also rectangular. The brackets are three pronged with grooved frontal sides (ṭaranga-pāṭikā) (Pl. 12).

The bhadrakōṣṭhas are rectangular niches flanked by a pilaster on either side. These pilasters are also of the same type as the kuḍyaṁstanthas but are
shorter and carry a lintel, above which on the wall is a beautifully carved *makaratāraṇa*. But, though originally intended, not all the *makaratāraṇas* have been completely carved.

One of the *bhadrakosha makaratāraṇas* well visible and well carved is on the southern wall of the *garbhagriha*. In this the *makaratāraṇa* is roughly arch shaped. In the centre is the carving of a Dravidian style *śkatāla-vimāna* standing on four pillars. On either side of this is a seated *makara* spewing out a garland which curls up to meet in the central apex where a *grāsa* head (*kirtimukha*) is carved (Pl. 13).

The form of the *kapāla*, *prastara* etc. cannot be made out as these members are completely covered by a modern concrete roof abutting them.

Above the roof, only the *griva* and the *śikhara* part of the *vimāna* superstructure is visible. These are also in very much dilapidated condition, they have also been repaired and covered by cement plaster. The *griva* portion has niches on all the four sides but are empty. There are also figures of seated
lions at each corner. The stūpa is of brass (Pl. 15).

Kattala-Pradakshina

Around the above unit consisting of the garbhagriha and the ardhamandapa, there is a pillared cloister running on the three sides except the front. This is locally known as Kattala-pradakshina (the dark circumambulatory passage). Interestingly, this cloister is built a little away from the above garbhagriha-antarāla unit with a clear cut gap between the two at the roof level and a deep channel-like space between the adhīshṭānas of the two structures. The open space left at the terrace level on all the three sides, is enclosed by horizontal slabs, in order to keep away rain water, etc. The drained out water from the garbhagriha finds its way into a wide stone-cut drain around the sanctuary on three sides. The roof of the corridor rests on the wall on the outer side and a row of stone pillars on the inner side. Now this pillared cloister has been converted as a store room and always remains closed, except for a day
during the Vairamugil festival. The spaces here and there inside have also been converted into small rooms in which old and unused articles of the temple are stored. This pillared corridor is very plain. But the pillars used here are of an interesting type. They have rectangular base and octagonal shaft surmounted by a four pronged obliquely chamfered bracket.

The front part of this pillared corridor on either side of the ardhamandapa has been converted into large rooms by raising walls in recent years. The room on the left side (north) is being used as the shrine of Vishvaksena and the one on the south side as the temple treasury (Srībhāndāra).

Mahāmandapa

Axially in front of the ardhamandapa is a sixteen pillared mahāmandapa (49' 10" x 51' 3"). On the northern and southern sides of this mandapa, at its junction with the preceding unit, there are entrance porches raised on two pillars and having steps leading up to the entrance.
One of the ankapas (squares) amidst four pillars on the south-western corner of this mandapa has now been converted for use as the shrine of the processional deity. It measures 9' 6" x 9' 10″, its entrance opening to the north. Its doorframe at present is covered with brass sheets completely. This displays several plain śākhas on the jambs, embossed dvaraśālas below cusped arch decoration at the base of the jambs, and Gajalakshmi on the lintel.

Mukhamandapa

In front of the mahāmandapa is a small open mukhamandapa, a portico-like structure supported by two pillars and flights of steps on either side. The pillars in the mahāmandapa and mukhamandapa have square base, with lotus petal-like projections at the corners above. The shafts are eight or sixteen sided with fillets having flower decoration at intervals and the capital is heavy and shows obliquely bevelled underside. Some of the pillars display exquisite carving on the fillets. One or two of them have small figures carved on the square base.
Outer Elevation of the Main Unit

The outer wall of the mahā曼ḍapa and the Kattale-pradakṣiṇa has an adhishṭhāna running throughout, except at the places where the staircases have been provided. Above the adhishṭhāna raises the plain bhittī carrying a prastara, kapūṭa and a hūra of stucco niches. The adhishṭhāna consists of upāna, padma, kampa, hṛdayapāṭṭikā, kampa, padma and pāṭṭikā successively. The prastara is plain consisting of simple rectangular cornices as also the uttara and valabhi. The kapūṭa is plain and obliquely slanting. Above this rises a brick and mortar parapet decorated with arched niches, housing stucco images with simple pañjaras at intervals.

Above the shrine of the processional image is a tower of brick and mortar and is square in plan. In elevation it is an ekatalavimāṇa, with bhittī features shown below and over that the prastara, kapūṭa and hūra and having sculptures of seated lions in corners. A circular grīva rises above this with dēvakālīkas crowned by a raised mahānāsī on the four cardinal directions. Over this is the circular dome.
shaped stūpi crowned by a metal kalāsa.

Dhvajastambha and Balipītha

In front of the muchamāṇḍapa a platform extends further maintaining the level of the māṇḍapa. On this extended portion stands a dhvajastambha and a balipītha further. The dhvajastambha is a tall pillar with a square base and circular shaft and is now covered with gold plated brass plates and is decorated with a metal flag at the top. The balipītha has three divisions, viz. a pītha, a padma and a kampikā, the lowest square in shape, the central octagonal and the topmost circular.

THE PĀTĀLANKĀṇA

In front of this unit, covering the whole area up to the mahādvāra in front and the raised pillared corridors on the sides, is a large māṇḍapa (Pātālanākaṇa) raised on tall pillars. The roof of this being almost at the level of the roof of the main unit of the temple. The pillars of the pātālanākāṇa have square base with an octagonal and a sixteen sided
low fillet just about it. From this rises the
tall circular shaft. The capital is stocky, square
in cross section and has rolled mouldings underneath
on each side with a bevelled central fillet on their
front sides.

THE INNER BAYED CORRIDORS AND THE MINOR SHRINES

General Disposition

Beyond the open yard around the central unit
is a broad pillared cloister (mālīka), running along
the prākāra wall. This cloister is on a high base
and consists of four rows of pillars, the last row
touching the prākāra wall, thus providing three long
bays running parallelly all along the outerwall on its
inner side. This bayed corridor, however, has been
broken here and there by a number of subsidiary
structures, many of these formed by raising walls
between the adjacent pillars, as it is in the southern
side. Similarly in all the four corners the bays do
not continue, as those parts have been altered for
use for various purposes.
Thus we have in the north eastern corner the kitchen unit (33' 9" x 35' 9"). Next to this and running along the back bay of the southern wing are a few rooms formed by raising brick walls between the pillars. The first of such, adjacent to the above mentioned kitchen, is a room in which some vehicles of the god (Ine and Śaṁha vāhanas) are kept.

Another room consists of old and unused electrical fittings and appliances. Next to this is another kitchen where special dishes are prepared during the time of festivals. Just in front of this is a well. In the south west corner the Paramapadanāthen shrine and the Chakrattālyār shrine are located. Just in front of these shrines, at a lower level outside the bayed corridor, is an enclosed mandapa-like structure. This measures 27' x 16' 6". In the bays of the western wing, the two rear rows of pillars are converted into rooms. The first of it is the Tirukkachhinambi shrine the second the lumber room the third is the store room for keeping oil and the next to this is another store-room where different kinds of grains are preserved.
The last one is also a store-room where rice is stored.

At the end of this bayed corridor comes the Tayār shrine. Situated in the north-west corner of the temple, this faces east. In front of this is the northern bayed corridor, called Ranga-mandapa.

Beyond this, on a slightly elevated platform is the Gajendravarada shrine facing west. Further is the Kurattēlyār shrine and then the Rāmānuja shrine. Next to this, at the north-east corner is situated the Yāgasāla. The last is the Pillai-Lokāchāryar shrine in the Rājālāṅkā. Abutting the prākāra, inside, between the main entrance and the kitchen, is a shrine in which the images of Kṛishṇa-rajā Woḍeyar III and his queens are kept.

Front Elevation

The whole of the mālīka, i.e. the bayed corridors around, displays a simple adhishtāna towards the insideside. This adhishtāna is composed of upāna, kama, kaptha, kama and a paṭṭikā in succession. The heavy beams running on the pillars...
support the flat roof from which on the front side projects a plain flat sloping kapota. Over this is the parapet (about 4' high) of brick and mortar running all around. This parapet shows intricate tracery designs.

Shrine and Other Structures in the Southern and Western Corridors

Most of the subsidiary structures are not of much architectural merit, but have some interesting features here and there.

The kitchen in the north eastern corner is very much altered but some pillars still standing in position there are interestingly of the type seen in the covered pillared corridor surrounding the garbhagriha and the ardhamandapa.

Further rooms on the southern wing are formed by raising modern brick walls, as also the Paramapadanathan shrine.

The Chakrattalvar shrine in the southwestern
corner again has a few pillars of the type seen in the kitchen. The Tirukachchirambi shrine and all other smaller rooms on the western wing are recently formed by raising brick walls.

The pillars used in the southern and western corridors are of a simple type, square shafts with two octagonal bands. These generally have relief sculptures on all the faces of the square portions. The brackets used above them are broad and show the curling sides and flower-bud motif at the ends. In the western corridor however there are a few pillars which are ornamental displaying very finely carved figure sculptures on the faces of the square blocks.

Tāvār shrine

This is somewhat large and consists of a garbhagriha, an ardhāmāndapa and a mahāmāndapa. Besides, there are also rooms used for different purposes. No pillars are visible inside.

The original front doorway may have been highly
ornamental, as could be guessed from the form of the brass plated doorway now visible. Actually now the brass plated jambs of this display several vertical sākhās and the lintel appears as if of the overhanging type. There is a Gajalakshmi figure embossed in the centre of the lintel. On either side of the doorway is a stone female dvārapālika figure, nearly 4' high.

**The Rangamandapa**

This mandapa, i.e., the northern corridor, is the most ornate part in the whole temple. There are forty-four pillars in this, each one a work of extraordinary artistic merit, each ingeniously designed, most intricately carved and richly sculptured with mythological stories, most pleasing to the eye and instructive to the mind. In general pattern most of these can be described as square shafts but some have cubical blocks divided by polygonal fillets, but each part of it minutely carved. Some are in-cut to display a central core with a number of subsidiary shafts to form its outer body. Some of them show the technique of undercutting. Each one of them
is a type by itself with its individuality marked by ingenuity of craftsmanship. They are best enjoyed visually than through any verbal description.

Other Minor Shrines

The Rāmānuja, the Kuratālyār and Gajendravarada shrines are simple modern brick constructions. The Yāgaśālā (27' 3" sq.) in the north-eastern corner is also plain but has some pillars of the type seen in the Kattale Pradakshipa.

The Pillaiālokačārya shrine is at a lower level adjacent to the pātalėnkọya. This too has a doorway now covered with brass sheets.

Towers on Minor Shrines

There are low brick and mortar towers on the Chakkrattālyār, Tayār and Rāmānuja shrines. All these are alike and similar to the tower on the shrine of the processional deity, above described. (P. 130).
**THE MAHĀDVĀRA—GŪPURA**

The entrance gūpura commands one's attention, this being the tallest structure in the temple. This gūpura is called as Chaturānana.

The lower portion of this is in stone, but most of the exterior of this is covered by later structures and it is difficult to make out its details. However, in a small patch in front the adhisthāna details are visible. It displays upanītha, upāma, jagati, padma, kārpa, pattika, trimāttakamundha, kārpa, pattī, kārpa, padma and ārdha-pattī successively. The outer side of the main entrance is flanked by an elephant on either side. The dvārapālakas are depicted on both the sides of the entrance. On the top of the doorway are carved inverted padmas and above it are seated lions. At the bottom of the doorway is found a sculpture of a king flanked by two queens.

The superstructure is of brick and mortar. It is broad based and rises gradually in three diminishing tiers. The bhāttī portion of every tala is relieved by bhadra-kōshṭhas and pilasters.
Strings of miniature shrines like pañjara, kūṭa and śāla are seen marking the parapet of every tala. At the centre of every tala there is a bhadra doorway in front and back. Two seated lions on each of the four sides above the second tala and a sarada in añjali pose in each of the four corners above the topmost tala have been shown. The digambara sculptures viz. Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are housed in the grivakōshṭhas. The topmost portion is oblong and has simhalalūjas on four sides. The kalaśas have fallen (Pl. 2).

THE KAIŚALÉ

The whole of the outer prākāra wall has a pillared corridor, locally called Kaisāle, running round it. This has been raised in front on two rows of pillars, and on the southern, western and northern sides, on a single row of pillars. Even though there are two rows of pillars in the front side, the back row is almost abutting the wall. So, in all cases the roof is carried by the pillars and the prākāra wall and thus we have a single bay running round the
This kaisāle is slightly raised from the surrounding ground by providing a simple adhisṭhāna displaying upāna, tripāṭṭa, kānta and jagati. The pillars are of the square type with cubical blocks intervened by octagonal waists. The capitals are four-pronged and have bevelled corners on their soffit. The roof rests over large beams running over the head of these pillars. A kapāṭa of plain flat slabs fixed slantingly is provided to run all round.

Above this is the run of the hāra made of brick and mortar. This is a beautiful piece of workmanship and shows a number of miniature towers fronted by niches with foiled arches and housing images of gods and goddesses and intervened by small rectangular panels crowned by pāñjaras.

THE DĪPASTĀMBHA

Right in front of the main entrance, but across the road is another element which should be described as part of the temple itself, though outside the temple proper. It is the Dīpastaṁbha. It
is a tall pillar, about 45' high. It is four sided at the bottom and the shaft is sixteen fluted. The four sides of the base are depicted with a lion to the east, Mājanāya to the south, Garuḍa to the west and swan to the north.

THE AGAMIC BASIS

NATURE, SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE EHYTHY

The Śrīvaishnavaas lay much emphasis on the performance of ritualistic form of worship. As already stated elsewhere (p. 83) Rāmānuja himself brought in a number of reformation in the temple rituals. Possibly it is due to the efforts of various Śrīvaishnava teachers like Viśnupāda, Rāmānuja and Vedanta Desika that the Pāṇcharatā-āgama gained a high status and came to be adopted in many of the Śrīvaishnava temples.

The intimate association of Rāmānuja and the Śrīvaishnavaas with this temple appears to have played a significant role in the development of ritualism connected with this temple. Now, in this
temple, all rituals are conducted mainly according to the prescriptions of the Īśvara Samhitā—one of the texts of the Pañcharatra-āgama.\(^3\)

We felt that it would be a good exercise to find out whether the vāstu prescriptions in the Īśvara Samhitā themselves have formed the basis for the architectural patterning of this temple, in which case there would be a scope to open up a new line of enquiry regarding the relationship between architecture and the ritualistic tradition in the temples. So we have tried here to find out the relationship between the prescriptions of that Samhitā relating to the various parts of the temple and what are actually seen in the present temple complex.

But we should confess here beforehand that our attempt has not been completely successful in establishing any clear cut relationship possibly because the temple as it stands today appears not to be the result of a single planning but a complex that has grown through additions and alterations done in the course of centuries (see below pp. 165). Further, the Īśvara Samhitā itself has some limita-
tions for using it as a standard ṛgamin text for studying the vāstu. Though a long text of about 8200 ślokas divided into twenty-five chapters, it is itself considered to be a reclamation of the Sātvata Samhitā. According to Schrader, much of what is found here is repeated in the Pāramēśvara Samhitā—itsself a derivative of the Paushkara Samhitā—and also at times in the Śrīprāṇa Samhitā. Further, despite the length of the Īśvara Samhitā, the vāstu portion is not very exhaustive, and even with regard to certain rituals which are being followed at Melkote, the Īśvara Samhitā is silent, and hence in such instances the Pārṇama Samhitā is followed locally. This situation possibly indicates that even with reference to the vāstu tradition adopted here it could be the Pāncharātra tradition in general than that of the Īśvara Samhitā in particular.

Inspite of these limitations, however, we felt that still an attempt can be made to have an idea of the possible ṛgamin background of the temple vāstu.
as displayed by the Nārāyanaśvāmi temple at Melkote. For this account we have mainly depended on various Pāncharātra-āgama texts. But wherever the Pāncharātra texts could not help us a few other ālīpa texts have also been consulted.

THE TEMPLE COMPONENTS IN THE ĀGAMAS AND THE NĀRĀYANAŚVĀMI TEMPLE

Garbhagriha: The garbhagriha here is rectangular (7' 10" x 3' 2") i.e. the nālikāgarbha type of the āgamas.

The image of the main deity is placed here not exactly in the centre but slightly behind that, i.e. in the Daivika-ātāna of the āgamic layout. According to the Pādra Saṁhitā, the floor space of the garbhagriha is divided into four zones: the central is Brahmāya; the second, which surrounds it, is Daivikam; the third Manusham and the outermost is Paisāchem. According to the same text, if the temple has in the garbhagriha a dhruva-mūrti (Main deity) alone, then that should occupy the Brahmāya space.
If there is in the garbhagriha a dhruva-mūrti and a kautuka-hāra, these should be installed in the second zone called Daivikam. The Narayanasvāmi temple has both these and hence the placing of the main deity in the Daivika Zone here is in conformity with this prescription.

The allocation of the zone for the main deity is also dependent on the type of vimāna over the garbhagriha. According to the Pādma Samhitā, if the vimāna is of the Sāntika type the deity has to be placed in the central zone, i.e. Brāhmaṇa, if of the Pauṣṭika type in the Daivikam zone and if of the Jayadā type partly on the Daivikam and partly on the Manushakā zone. The vimāna of the present temple comes under the second type, namely the Pauṣṭika and hence due to this reason also the main deity occupies the Daivikam zone.

Antaramandala: The śilpa texts refer to the enclosure formed by the wall which runs on the three sides around the central shrine consisting of a garbhagriha and an ardhamandapa as the prathama-
In the present temple the Kattale-pradaksha answers to this part of the temple.

Pranāla: The āgama texts further mention that the pranāla (sūmasūtra) carrying the sacred water of the abhisheka (tīrtha) outside the garbhagṛihā should have the depiction of the faces of animals depending upon the caste of the person who causes the construction of the temple. It should be of makara if by Śūdra, of gaja if by Vaishya, of lion if by Kṣatriya and of cow if by Brāhmaṇa.

The pranāla of the main shrine in the Narāyana-svāmī temple has the face of a lion depicted.

Mahāmāṇḍapa: According to the Pādma Sāhita, there should be porches opening out on the three sides of the mahāmāṇḍapa and the Melkote temple too has this feature. Similarly this mahāmāṇḍapa follows the āgamic stipulation that it should have either 16 or 32 pillars.

Dhvaja-sthambha: This is also in accordance with the
agamic injunctions that it should be straight in front of the main shrine and to the west of the mahādvāra and is to be covered with copper. (A flag is hoisted and worshipped invariably before the commencement of every festival in this temple in accordance with the agamic injunctions.)

Baliṇīṭha: The balīṇīṭha is an important ritual adjunct mentioned in many agamas. In this temple, it is placed at the termination of the main unit of the temple and on a straight line with the main sanctuary, which very well is approved in the agama texts, as also its form with horizontal mouldings.

Antarhāra: The pillared corridor running all along the inner side of the outer prākāra wall encloses a wide space between it and the central unit. The āgamas call this as antarhāra or the second prākāra of the temple which enables the devotees to take a pradakshinā round the main unit of the temple.

Devi Shrine: Next to the main shrine it is the shrine of the goddess (devi) which is important in
in the Śrīvaishnava temples. But many early āgama texts hardly make any reference to the Dēvī shrines separately, though the nārīvāra-dēvatas are mentioned.

However, the Śrīprāna Śāhītā mentions that it should be located in the north-west corner of the temple. The Īśvara Śāhītā and the Mārkaṇḍeya Śāhītā tells us that it should face east. These have been followed in the context of the Dēvī shrine in this temple.

Dīpāstambha: Of great interest however is the Dīpāstambha in front of the temple which in its form and details (P., I. ) is exactly in the way as advocated by the Īśvara Śāhītā. Its location outside the temple is also approved by another Śāhītā.

CHRONOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

CHRONOLOGICAL DATA FROM TRADITION AND EPITAPHS

The Nārāyaṇasvāmi temple, Melkote, as it stands now is the result of a continuous archi-
tectural activity through centuries from the time of its inception as can be made out from several pieces of evidence.

Traditionally, it is believed that Achārya Rāmanuja was responsible for the construction of this temple. There is also a local belief that the mahādvāra-gopura was caused to be constructed by Van-Saṭhagopa Jīyar (C. 1437-1516 A.D.) the first pontiff of the Ahūbila-maṭha of the Śrīvaiṣhāṇas.

However, it is clear from epigraphical evidence that the Nārāyānasvāmi temple was in existence during the time of Vishṇuvardhana (1106-1142 A.D.). In this temple itself, a large slab now forming part of the stone-paving inside the mahāmandapa bears a Kannada inscription which registers some service to god Nārāyaṇa of Yādavagiri by Mahāpradhāna Hṛggaṇe Surigeya Nāgidevappa (No. 124). This man is known from another record from Tōṇguṟ, wherein he is clearly stated as an officer under Hoysala Vishṇuvardhana (P. 58).
The next record (No. 154) of any utility is of one Kadavva Dangayaka, a general of Hoysala Ballala III (1292-1342 A.D.). This inscription is engraved on one of the pillars of the Patalanaka and records some grant of money.

Another inscription (No. 144) gives the date of construction of the rangamanḍapa (the ornate pillared hall in the northern corridor). This inscription written in Sanskrit language and Grantha script on one of the pillars in the rangamanḍapa itself states that this rangamanḍapa in front of the shrine of the consort of god Narayana was caused to be constructed by Kānganāyaki, wife of Timmappa Dangayaka. This Timmappa Dangayaka is known from another inscription that he was a minister of the Vijayanagara king Imaḍi Devaraya (1446-1485 A.D.). In this inscription he is stated to have made some grants to goddess Lakshmi in the temple of Yādava Narayana of Yadugiri-sikhara, in the year 1458 A.D. So it can be surmised that somewhere around this year this rangamanḍapa in front of the Lakshmi shrine may have also been got constructed.
The earliest of the inscriptions of the basement of the mahāmāndapa in front of the main shrine belongs to 1519 A.D. (No. 135). This is just a donatory inscription but its presence indicates that the mahāmāndapa in its present form must have been in existence by this date.

The only other epigraphical evidence referring to any part of the temple belongs to 1833 A.D. (Nos. 168-159). This informs that the Pillai Lōkāchārya shrine, by the side of the mahāvyāra, was raised in that year by Krishnarāja Wodeyar III (1799-1808 A.D.) of the Mysore Dynasty (P. 68).

It is probably around this date itself that the outer kaisāle, along with the parapet with figure niches above, was constructed, the evidence for this, however, coming from two late manuscripts. The Niyamanappadi, a temple manual datable to about the 18th century A.D., includes only the kaisāle of twenty aṁkana on the eastern side while listing up the different parts of the temple, whereas another manuscript written in 1845 A.D. specifically mentions that the outer kaisāle of four hundred and
twentyfour ankaṇas was there on the southern, western and northern sides. So this outer kaśiṇa may have been constructed between the dates of these two manuscripts.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, CHRONOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

In this situation when clinching evidences for the reconstruction of the chronology and development of the temple complex are not available, we have to depend on stylistic grounds mainly.

Garbhagṛiva and Ardhamaṇḍapa - A Chola Foundation

The garbhagṛiva and the ardhamaṇḍapa form a compact unitary structure, both by way of mode of construction and style. The adhishṭāna and prastara of both these are in a continuous run. The decoration of the bhitti is also identical on the two. Stylistically the adhishṭāna is of the type regularly seen in the Chōla temples, the order and form of the upāna to prati here being almost identical with that seen in the Janardaka temple at Mālinga, Durga temple at Agara (both Mysore district) and
Nārāyaṇa temple at Doddamalur (Bangalore district) - all temples nearer home and constructed by the Cholas in the 11th century A.D.36 These are not different from the style of the adhishṭhānas seen in the Early Chōla temples from the Tamil country.37 The disposition and style of the wall pilasters, bhadrakūśṭas and makaraṭoranas in this temple convincingly prove their Chōla affiliation. These members show a set patterning with wide interspaces. This and the square shaft, the pālāsthāna, lāhana, tāḍī, kumbha and pāṭikas of the pilasters here are identical with those seen in similar members on the above mentioned Chōla temples, as also with those of Chōḷāsvaram temple at Kilaįyur,38 the Chandrasekhara temple at Tiruchchandurai39 etc. The bhadrakūśṭas particularly are typically Chōla. It can be seen that the present bhadrakūśṭas display the same type of pilasters and the decorative makaraṭoranas above, which spreads exactly to the length of the lintel and rises in a semi-circular shape with a small indent a little above. Similar makaraṭoranas are seen with the bhadrakūśṭas in all of the above mentioned Chōla temples.
So, it appears that this unit of the Nārāyaṇaśvāmi temple, i.e. its garbhagriха and the archamandapa, belongs to the Chōla tradition.

In Karnataka the Chōla architectural tradition began to spread only after the occupation of Gangaśūḍi by the Chōlas (1024 A.D.) and ended with their departure from here (1116 A.D.), the post-Chōla period here being marked by the rise of a distinctive Boyāla architectural idiom. So this part of the Nārāyaṇaśvāmi temple has to be dated to the period of Chōla rule in Karnataka, i.e. to the 1st decade of the 11th century A.D. We may note here that several Vaishnava temples had come into existence during the Chōla period in Karnataka, like the Janārdana temple at Mālingi, Nārāyaṇa temple at Doḍḍamalur, Vaisnavi temple at Nāpurpatna and the Nārasimha temple at Mārchalū. This temple also may have come up along with them. This deduction is also in tune with the traditional belief that Rāmānuja when he came to Mālkoṭe renovated an already existing temple. Elsewhere we have discussed the advent of Rāmānuja
to and his activities at Malkota (P. II.3) and have shown there the renovation of the Narayanaswami temple by him could be placed between 1117 and 1123 A.D. If the temple once constructed had also to go into ruins necessitating its renovation, we can consider that the main unit of the temple may have been originally constructed at least in about the middle or the first half of the 11th century A.D.

Expansion in the Kaysala Period

The Kattale-Pradakshina has been laid on the three sides of the garbhagriha - ardhamandapa unit, clearly leaving some space in between both at the base and at the level of the ceiling. Though now the two are joined at the roof level, it can be made out that that joining is recent work. The adhishthana of the garbhagriha - ardhamandapa unit andhaka stand separately facing each other.

The Kattale-pradakshina has very few architectural features yielding to stylistic comparison. Its outer walls are completely plain. Though the
adhishphâna is seen both on the outer and the inner sides, the latter below the level of the raised floor, it is also of a common type (P. 130).

The pillars used in the Kattale-pradakshina, however, is of a significant type. These pillars, though of a simple form, are of a type which was in vogue in Karnataka during a short period in the early part of the 12th century A.D. These consist of a simple rectangular lower part from which raises a tall octagonal shaft. Such pillars are known from a few temples in South Karnataka. A mandapa constructed in front of the Tayur shrine at Tonnur has this type of pillars and an inscription one of them clearly mentions that that mandapa was constructed by one Surgiya Nāgaṇga, at the instance of Hoysala king Vishṇuwardhana. So this Kattale-pradakshina may also be the time of Vishṇuwardhana. It may be noted that this conjecture incidentally goes well with the traditional belief, recorded in the Śrīvaishṇava hagiologies right from the 13th century itself (P. 8), that Rāmānuja renovated the temple with funds obtained from Hoysala.
Vishnuvardhana. We may also recall here that there is a fragmentary inscription (No. 124) of Surigiya Nāgappa in this temple also.

The only part of the central unit of the temple which poses some problem for the reconstruction of chronology is the mahāmandapa in front. This structure has the adhishṭhāna running contiguously with the adhishṭhāna of the kattale-pradakṣṣhaṇa, the features of the two also being identical. But the pillars used in the mahāmandapa are dissimilar to those inside the kattale-pradakṣṣhaṇa. These pillars belong generally to a type seen in the pillars of the Rangamandapa, which is known from epigraphical evidence to have been of the 15th century A.D. (above p. 150). Further, a temple with garbhagriha-mahamandapa surrounded by a kattale-pradakṣṣhaṇa on three sides only is an odd plan, nowhere met within any of the temple complexes. The aesthetic balance in architectural layout and the purpose of the kattale-pradakṣṣhaṇa could be satisfied only with an addition of the mahāmandapa. Temples with such plans are well known, as for
example the Ranganatha Svâmi temple at Srirangapatna and the Champakâdâmasvâmi temple at Bannerghatta to mention a few from this region. So it is likely that originally a mahâmândapa going to the time of the Kattale-pradakshiâ was present, and this was later completely reconstructed, except for the adhishthâna.

There are four more units in the temple which again have the pillars of the type seen in the Kattale-pradakshiâ. They are the present kitchen, Chakkhrattâlvâr shrine, Tâyâr shrine and the Yâgaâsâlâ, located in the south-east, south-west, north-west and the north-east corner of the prâkâra wall respectively. These units may also belong to the time of the Kattale-pradakshiâ, i.e., to the time of Ibysaâla Vishnuvardhana.

This conjectural reconstruction provides a picture of the Narâyaâgsâvâmi temple as it stood in the early part of the 12th century A.D. It had a garbhagriha and ardhâmândapa enclosed by a pillared corridor on three sides and a mahâmândapa in front,
all these located centrally amidst a large open courtyard enclosed by a prakāra wall, at the corners of which stood a structure each. Naturally a main entrance in the prakāra axially in front of the main shrine, and possibly the dhvajastambha and the halapājha inside in the same line completes an acceptable organic structural complex as it stood during the time of Vishṇuvardhana and Rāmānuja.47

The layout of the paṭālandaka, covering the whole open space between the front prakāra wall and the central unit upto the dhvajastambha also supports the above deduction. This paṭālandaka is uniform in its constructional features. It is raised on tall pillars set in three lines of nine each. These pillars have a low rectangular tower portion and with a tall circular shaft above. These support a thick capital. Similar pillars are known from the Lakshminarāyana temple at Dvāpar. In both these places there is clear epigraphical evidence regarding their construction during the time of the Hoysala king Balaḷa III. The epigraph on a pillar of the paṭālandaka of the Narayanaśyāmi temple refers to the
Additions of the Vijayanagara Period

The rangamandapa in front of the Tayyar shrine, i.e. the northern corridor, as already stated (P. 150), was the next to be constructed. It was in C. 1453 A.D. The pillars of the same type are to be seen in the western and southern corridors also and thus we may date the construction of the corridors on the three sides inside the prakāra to this period.

Again pillars of the same type have been utilized in the mahāmandapa of the central unit and hence it can be inferred that the original mahāmandapa (mentioned above) might have gone into ruins and this mandapa, was reconstructed during this time. It is also to this period that the outer wall of the central complex is to be placed; the wall around the mahāmandapa is of course new, and
Possibly the outer facing of the wall of the *kattalag-pada* was also done at this time. The latter fact is indicated by the plain feature of the wall as it is in the *mahamandapa* and also two corner pilasters seen at the back wall. Timmappa Dograma and his wife were devoted to the god of Melkote. Several inscriptions record their various donations to the temple. One of them specifically names Timmappa Dograma as the renovator of Melkote (*Yadavagiri Jirngodhara* - No. 179). It is quite likely that the religious fervour of this man was responsible for a full scale renovation of the temple at Melkote.

Possibly the Mahdvara-gopura was also added somewhere during this time. The style of this gopura, particularly the step-like depiction of the talas, the form of the pilasters and the kutas and also the mahasulas resemble closely the small gopuras on the northern perimeter of the Virapaksha temple at Hampi. Unfortunately, not many gopuras of brick and mortar are well dated in Karnataka. But, it appears, the gopuras began to gain a straight
tapering profile at least from about the early 16th century as to be seen in the gopuras on the mahādvāras of Achyutarāya, Viṭṭhala, Krishna and other temples at Hampi, as well as the large east gopura of the Virūpāksha temple there which was renovated during the time of Krishnadevaraya. The small gopura on the northern gate of Virūpāksha temple, as referred to above, is distinctly of an earlier type. But its basement shows the regular Vijayanagara type of pilasters and hence this gopura may be of possibly the early Vijayanagara period, say of about the 15th century A.D. If so, stylistically the gopura of the Nārāyanasvāmi temple too may be coeval with that, and the traditional belief that this gopura was constructed by Van-Śatagopa Jīyar (C. 1430-1571 A.D.) may be a historical fact.

**Contribution of Mysore Wadeyars**

The outer Kaisale and the parapet figures above them as well as the parapet figures inside the temple are of a style widespread during the time of the Wadeyars as known from several temples.
Like Rāganāthasvāmi at Sīrāngapātā, Sīkantōśvara at Hanjanagud, Parāvāsvudāva at Gundlupet, Venkata-
ramana in Mysore fort and so on.\[52\]

As mentioned above (P. 151), the outer
kaisāle does not figure in the Niyamanappadi list
of the 18th century but finds mention in the temple
manual prepared in 1845. But these additions could
not have been done during the time of Haidar Ali
and Tippu Sultan and hence are to be dated to the
early 19th century A.D., i.e. to the reign of the
Mysore king Krishnārāja Wodeyar III, who was a great
patron of religious activity (See P. 70). It is
during this time he, as a devotee of this temple,
got his and his queens images installed in this
temple (P. 133). The Pillaī Lōkāchārya shrine
is another addition made by him as known from an
inscription (No. 158-159).

Table of Chronology of the temple complex

Thus the development of the Nārāyanasvāmi
temple complex can be chronologically arranged as
follows:
I. The garbhagriha and ardha mandapa 11th Century A.D.

II. The Kattela pradakshina, the mahamandapa (later renovated), the outer prakara with the corner structures presently serving as the Kitchen, the Chakkrajalyar shrine, the Tayyar shrine and the Yaga sala.

III. The pataleshkana Late 13th or early 14th century (Ballala III's time)

IV. a) The pillared corridors inside the prakara C. 1453 A.D.
    b) Mahamandapa renovation and the Mahadvira Gopura 15th century

V. The outer Kaisale and the C. 1828 pillsilokacharya shrine
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 This is popularly called Cheluvarayasvami Temple after the name of the processional deity there.

2 Means 'Royal Street' or main street. This is also known popularly as Angadi-bidi, on account of the rows of shops on both sides of the road.

3 Besides there are roads coming round the temple which are also used for carrying the gods in procession.

4 This vimāna is called the Ānanda-nilaya-vimāna.

5 The pillars used in these corridors are of different types. For the description of these see pages 135 and 136.

6 However, a few squares between the pillars on the eastern wing have been covered by recent brick walls. In the north side of the eastern wing is an enclosure used as the Sanskrit school - the Vēda Vedānta Pāṭhasālā-run by the temple itself. Similarly in the south side of the eastern wing is another which is being used as the temple office.
In the Hindu tradition, there are two different streams of thought and practice viz. the *nigama* and the *śāgama* - the Vedic and the non-Vedic respectively. Every religious school of Hinduism has developed its own *śāgama* tradition and literature. The Vaishānava *śāgama* school has two branches namely the Vaikhānasā and the Pāṇḍūrātra. The Pāṇḍūrātra-śāgama is a vast one with an interesting past. Each of the two śāgamas claim for itself greater antiquity, superiority, and sanctity. The difference between the two, lies only in the details of ritualistic worship in temples. The points of agreement on fundamentals are so many that our Āchāryas have accorded equal recognition to both. In fact, the great Āchārya Vīdānta Deśika in his Pāṇḍūrātreatakṣa tried to reconcile these two differing schools and declared that both these śāgamic ways of worship are in essence equally authentic. It is likely that the Vaikhānasā may have been in vogue before the Pāṇḍūrātra became more popular. The Pāṇḍūrātra-śāgamas had been subjected to doubt regarding their Vedic character from
the 7th century A.D. or even earlier, while the Vaikhānasa system enjoyed wider popularitv and unquestioned authority. Although Vedic characteristics are seen in the āgamas of the Pāñcharātra school, there are in addition certain other elements which to a superficial observer appear non-Vedic.

Yāmūnāchārya, the great predecessor of Rāmānuja, undertook the task of upholding the case that these Pāñcharātra-āgamas were Vedic in theory as well as practice. Yāmu-na's masterly work, however, did not totally dispel the hostility of all critics of this school. But Rāmānuja established this system firmly by converting the followers of the other tradition gradually through his logic and efforts. As such, the adoption of the Pāñcharātra system is prevalent in most of the prominent Śrīvaishnava temples.

It is interesting to note that peculiarly the four foremost Śrīvaishnava centres have their own āgamic tradition. Tirupati continues to follow the Vaikhānasa system. Though
the other three have adopted the Pāncaratra tradition, Kāṇḍí follows the prescriptions of the Pādma Samhitā, Śrīranga the Paushkara Samhitā and Mālakote the Iśvara Samhitā.


A similar attempt has been made in Chapter VI with regard to Sculpture and Iconography also.

Manasāra mentions three types of garbhagrihas. Mālikā-garbhā (rectangular), Sīghikā-garbhā (square) and Harivyā-garbhā (top room).

Chapter 13, 32-49.

The terms Śāntikā, Paunṣṭikā and Jayadā are used to denote vīmaṇas whose height in proportion to the base increases gradually. There are two more types of vīmaṇas namely Adbhutam and Sarvakāmikā.
According to the Agama and Silpa texts the word vimāna connotes the entire elevation of the main unit of a temple, but it is used especially in later South Indian context to refer only to the superstructure over the sanctum, i.e., from the prastara to śikhara.

However, the vimāna grouped under the Śvetala-vimāna type, consisting of six parts, viz. adhishṭhana, pāda, prastara, grīva, śikhara and stūpi. The height of a temple is stated to be measured from the basement to the top of the dome. Then, if the height is equal to the breadth in a vimāna it is called Śāntika or peaceful. This is aesthetically a graceful proportion. The heights of Śāntika, Paushṭika, Jayada, Sarvakāmika or Dhanada and Adbhuta, they are respectively equal to the breadth, 1-1/4, 1-1/2, 1-3/4 and twice of it.

Second one is called paushṭika, which might be rendered as strong, eminent, rich, complete or perfect. In this proportion the height is 1-1/4 of the breadth, and this would give the building a good stability.
14 The Malkote vimāna conforms to breadth and height being 13' 8" x 23' 4".

The third one is called jayada or joy-giving. In this proportion the height is 1-1/2 of the breadth and this gives a pleasant appearance to the building. The fourth one has two names; Sarvakāmika or good in every way, and Dhanada or wealth giving. In this proportion the height is 1-3/4 of the breadth; and according to the literal meaning of the term, Sarvakāmika, this would make the building strong as well as beautiful. The fifth or last one is called adbūta or marvellous. In this proportion the height is twice the breadth and this would give a wonderful loftiness and gorgeous look to the building.

Padmasāhita, Ch. XIII; also Mānasāra, XXXV; 22-26.

15 Ādi-sālam tatha kuryat antar-maṇḍalam-iritam Dvitiyam Duṭṭha-maṇḍala-cha madhyakāra trītiyakām Prākāram tatha cha tathāt turtham cha kathitaṁ tanmyādikam tatha pañcama-sālam cha mahāmārjyādam-iritam .. Mānasāra, Ch. XXXI.
16 Sudra-pratishtitham kuryat samasutresya
padevadman sitayam-cha malert-scheret
vaisyam ka cheda-vedmani cha kuryad-gaja-
mukhakritih
Kshatriyam pattikayam-cha mrigadhipasirakritih
Dvijam pattikayam-cha kuryad-gomukhadvijah
Purushottama Samhita, Ch. IV.

17 Ch. X 19-20; Also Sriprasna Samhita, Ch. X.
Agr-ardhamaundapet-kuryan-nrittamandapama
Nrittamandapa is a pavilion, generally in
front of a temple, where religious music is
performed. Suprabhedagama, Ch. XXXI, 96-98.

18 Tad-agre mandaapam Kuryan-nritt-artham
dvija-sattama
Shay-trimajat-stambha-samyuktam shodasa-
stambham-eva va II
Sriprurusottama Samhita, Ch. IV; 22.

19 Prasad-abhimaunani stambha sthupayate-garuda-
dhvajam .. Paramesvarasamhita, Ch.
XVI; 45.

20 Narayana Samhita, Ch. XXII.

21 Tamreena valayam kritva samoyoja kramaap sudha
Sriprasna Samhita, Ch. 34, 12-13.
The Tantrasamuchchaya divides the height of the balipīṭha into ten parts, viz. pāḍuka, jagati, kumuda, kumuda-pattikā gala, kambu nīdra, karīta, arnapāṭṭi and padma. The same text also stipulates that the height of the balipīṭha from its pāḍuka to the top of its padma should be equal to the height of the pedestal on which the main deity is consecrated in the garbhagṛihā or one sixth
less than this height or it should be as much as the height of the sanctum up to the height of the adhisthāna of the main shrine. But these elaborations are not noticeable in the balīplītha of this temple.

Mānasāra Ch. XXXI.
Ch. V; also Mānasāra Ch. XXXII.
Ch. VIII.
Ch. XI, 11.
Chaturdhva vibhajēt stambham-ekamsanā
chaturasrakam
Tṛyamśam tu ārdhavā shoḍasasrām-śaṭasrām
vyitam-ēva vā
Stambhādhaśtāt pūrvabhāgā sikhām dakshe tu
Mrutam
paśchime Vainatayam ca-apy-uttarā hari samāli-
khēt

.. Isvara Sāmhitā, Ch. XIII.

Pīthāgrā gōpurāgrā va bahir-dvērasya samādhaun!
Brahma Sāmhitā, Ch. X.

Guruparamperei (Vadakalai version).

El., Vol. 6 (1977), Pp. 73.
Ibid., Sr. 93.
A manuscript with miscellaneous information on Malkote in the possession of the main priest of the Nārāyaṇasvāmin temple.


Ibid. We have also shown where these 11th century Chāla temples in Karnataka follow the Chāla architectural tradition of the 10th century A.D.

Soundara Rajan, 1978, Pl. XII, etc.


MAR., 1939, p. 59.

EC., Vol. 6 (1977), Pp. 73.

Guruparampara (Vadakalai version).

MAR., 1935, p. 56.

Ibid., 1947-56, p. 31.

The pillars in these are generally in situ, but several brick walls have been raised here and there to suit to the modern needs (see above p. 132 ff.).

This plan with a central shrine surrounded by prākāra with corner shrines or structures inside was known in the Hoysala period, e.g.
The present usage of the corner structures as kitchen, Chakrattālvār shrine, Tayār shrine and Yāgaśālā is in accordance with the āgama prescriptions. But it is difficult to say whether in early 12th century these corner structures were meant for the purpose. As already stated above it is difficult to date the Tayār sculpture. The Chakrattālvār, however, is datable but only to the Vijayanagara period. Nothing can be said about the utility of the other two in those times. As Rāmānuja was known to have been striving for the popularization of organised āgamic rituals, is it likely that this temple layout was one of the early experiments in Karnataka in this direction?
49 Marg Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, Homage to Hampi, Pl. 65.

50 Ibid., Pl. 3, 12, 65, etc.

51 Possibly also the present brick and mortar work of the towers over the shrines.

52 MAR., 1934, p. 53; 1935, p. 56.