CHAPTER - VIII

SCULPTURE AND PAINTING
SCULPTURE & PAINTING

The Hindu temple is a monument whose outer surface consists of sculptures. The mandapā, the various halls, preceding main shrine itself, in which is contained the innermost sanctuary the Garbagriha, art and architecture in the accepted meaning. While going to the temple with speech, body and mind centered on the divinity whose presence is installed in the image or symbol, the devotee becomes part of the architecture of the mandapā whose interior he traverses in which he may also pause and gaze at the images that confront him, images which are carved on the pillars, the capitals guiding him onwards to the main image or symbol in the garbagriha.

In the Vilināthasvāmi temple of Tiruvilimilalai, fine stone sculptures representing different aspects of saivite iconography made at different times in the course of history are seen. Some sculptures are found enshrined, some found in niches and others on pillars and vimānās of the temple. In this chapter an attempt is made to identify the divinities represented and understand the significance of their presence, the artistic and stylistic features with relevance to chronological context.
FIRST PRAKĀRĀ
SANCTUM COMPLEX

Mūlava bhēra - Kalyāṇa sundaramūrti (Plate 31)

Kalyāṇasundaramūrti is one among the twenty five tilamūrtis of Śiva. The image of Kalyāṇasundaramūrti (9’ high) is in a standing tribangā, with the right leg in kuncīta pose.1 Of his two hands the left hand is in varada mudrā, while his right hand is in Abhaṣya hastha. He shows his face in sroncarbhāva. He has jatāmakutā.2 Pārvati (Kāthyāyani) stands on his left (Plate 32) according to Sritatavanidhi and kasyapa silpasāstra.3 She has two arms, her left hand is in katarastha and the right hand holds a flower. She has krita makutā.

The lingā (which means distinctive sign) is in the front part of the garbagrihā. According to Skanda purāṇa, the sky is the shaft and the earth is its pedestal, all Gods dwell in the lingā, since the whole creation finds its origin and rest here it receives the name lingā.4 In a lingā the quadrangular bottom of the shaft is believed to represent Brahma, the octagonal middle Vishnu, and the circular upper portion Śiva. The pradhāna is lingā and Śiva is its substratum. It distinguishes as the centre, the place, where it stands around it, the site is sacred. It is enclosed by square wall and covered with a roof for as the Agni purāṇa says, ‘in the square (catvara) Śiva is present’. The circumference of the lingā in the sanctum; and the āvudaiyār portion is in the square shape (20” x 18”) with a small opening on the northern
side. The height of the lingā is equal to the width of the pithikā and pedestal of the lingā, which forms the central square of the garbagriha. The border space is called pindikā in the Matsyapurāṇa, whereas it is called garbā in the Harasirasapancaratrā and in Agnipurāṇa. In the last mentioned texts pindikā denotes the central square whose widths = the height of the image of lingā. Garbhā and pinda (pindikā) on the one hand pithikā and pindikā on the other are synonyms the first pair signifies the germ the expanding embryo and the second pedestal. The image of Kāsi Visālākshi with folded hands, short in stature is on the northern corner or the garbagriha wall. The image of Indirā with strings in the left hand (now partially mutilated) is on the wall of the anthurālā which signifies the charioting by Indirā the ratha (chariot) carrying Śiva and Pārvati, which looks like the landing of the plane in modern times.

Dwārapālās (Plate 33)

The two large size dwārapālās or gate keepers are assigned to the pilasters flanking the door way. They stand in the usual atibangā pose with two hands, the left rested on the waist and the right hand rested on shoulder. They have the matted hair arranged like a halo behind with a small lingā displayed in front to indicate the saiva character of the dwārapālak. They wear mukta yagnōpavita strings of hāra and large patrakundalās (ear ornaments). They have rudrākshamālās on the necks. Both the images are identical in their feature and they stand on one leg and the other placed on the kanta of the gadhā.
Siddi Vināyakā

In the arthamaṇḍapā on the western wing facing east is the image of Siddhi Vināyakā. The word siddhi denotes help to complete any endeavour successfully. Hence Vināyakā is called so, on account of his power to bless human endeavours with success. The image of Siddhi Vināyakā has ten hands each carrying an ayudhā except the front left hand which is holding his consort siddhi. He wears the anklets, nāgabandhā, yāṅnopavītā and karandamakutā. The idampuri tusk is turned around taking the sweet ball to his mouth. His vāhana, the mouse is carved from a rectangular block of which the pedestal is the lower portion. Musaka rests paw and face on a heap of laddu (ball shaped sweets) in a bowl, the mouse watches over the sweets which pleases its rider. The statue of the mouse, a smooth compact volume held in convex surface is as much a work of medieval type as is the nandi, though it has neither its tension nor incisiveness.

Second Prākāra

Around the sanctum complex is the second prakāra with four veranda on all four sides where number of sculptures are seen. They are described here in the order of which we see and circumambulate the main shrine from left.

Vināyakar

On the eastern veranda there are two images of ganēsa facing west named as Irattai Vināyakar (Irattai means two) These two images have same features. They have karanta makutā,
the two back hands hold the flower the lower right in abhaya, the lower left has the broken tusk (eka danta). The image has beaded strings around the waist, neck, and the ankle, and wears yagnopavita and udarabandha.

Dakshināmūrti (Plate 34)

In the southern veranda of the second prākāra, there is the beautiful image of Dakshināmūrti on a high pedestal in virāsanā. His right leg is placed on a apasmāra - purushā with left leg bent across. His lower right hand is in vyākaranā - mudrā and the left has pustaka (book). The upper right hand has a snake and in the left is agni as in usual chōla sculptures, and the sculpture can be dated to chōla period.

Munna Vināyakar

In an isolated shrine in the southern veranda of the second prākāra there is the image of Ganesa called Munna Vināyakar. The Tamil word munna means elder. Legend says that Vināyakar was the elder brother of Subramanyā, both being the sons of Śiva and Pārvati. The image has its trunk turning to the left (idampuri) and in his hands he holds the ankusa and broken tusk. He wears the nāga udarabandha (snake around his belly).

In the western veranda adjacent to the sthalavriksha is the shrine of Subramaneya with his consorts Valli and Deivānai seen in a square closed room. The image of Subramaneya has four arms, in the right hand at the back there is the Sakti and in the back left hand the vajra, the front right and the left
hands are kept in the abaya and the varada poses, respectively.

A saktiyāyudhā rests upon the right front arm. The figure of Subramanīyā has a yagnopavita a udarabandha and fine hārā, the ears and adorned with two different kinds of kundalās and the head is surmounted with a karandamakutā around which there is a prabha mandala. The description of the Devis of Subramanīyā is thus: Mahāvallī with a smiling face stands with her right leg kept firmly on the ground and the left leg kept somewhat bent and placed on it. She holds in her left hand a padmā (lotus) and her right hand is hanging by her side. Dēvasēna stands firmly on her left leg with right leg slightly bent she carries a nilōtpalā flower in her right hand and the left hand is hanging by her side. She too is seen with a smiling face. The sculptures are datable to the later chōla period i.e., 12th or 13th Century A.D.

Bāla Gaṇapathi (Plate 35)

In the western veranda facing the east is the image of Vināyakā called Bāla Gaṇapathi. The image is small in size with beaded strings around the neck and the ankle. The image shows conventional workmanship.

Phallic symbols (Plate 36, 37)

In the western veranda facing east there are a total number of fifteen lingās, identified in the commentary on Jivalikhyā pranālingal at prāṇā (life) Siddhārta Sīkāmanī a collection of dialogue between Rēṇukā and Agastya give in
detail the various kinds of lingas. The lingas are monolithic and of live rock. The pitha in all cases is also rock cut or monolithic and not a separate installation. There are 2 square linga pithas with a projecting spout on its top to drain off the abhishēka water. Seven round based linga pithas with spout on the left side are seen and a single linga stone without pitha. All these lingas belong to the achala (immovable) type.

Saints

The stone images of Tirunāvukkarasar, Tirugnānasambandar (Plate 38) and Sundaramūrti (Plate 39) are seen in the western veranda next to phallic symbols. The sculpture Tirugnānasambandar is shown as a young lad with cymbals (tālas) with which he sang his musical hymns. Sundaramūrti is also seen with tālas.

Gajalakshmi (Plate 40)

A sculpture of Lakshmi the consort of Vishnu is seen in the western veranda. It is in the form of Gajalakshmi seated on the padma (lotus) flanked by two elephants pouring water on the deity.

Candikēsvarā : (Plate 41)

Candikēsvarā or Candesa was one of the devotees of Śiva who is said to have lived earlier than Thirunāvukkarasu. He is revered as one of the sixty three nayanmars. He is regarded as the chief custodian or accountant in the Śiva temples and
his shrine is invariably found close to the main sanctum on the northern side, his image being set up in a separate shrine or as a parivāra devāta. According to Sritatvanidhi he has four faces and three eyes. He wears the tiger's skin and has jatāmukta with crescent moon on it. His four arms hold chisel, trident, rosary and abaya mudrā. According to Sarasvatiyacitrakarmasāstra he may be depicted in standing or sitting posture. If it is a standing figure he stands in samabhanga or abhangā form. Sometimes he may be doing anjali holding a chisel. If seated the left or right leg is to be on the seal or pedestal and the other is to hang down.

The image of Candikēśvarā is seen in an isolated shrine in the northern side of the second prākāra. The image is seen seated on a pīta in sukāsanā.

Sūrya (Plate 42)

The image of sun God (Sūryā or Ādityā) is found in the north eastern side as usually seen in Śīvā temples. A single image of Sūryā in the conventional standing posture with two lotus buds in hands and the sūrya mandala (the halo) behind him. It is in the later chōla style datable to the 12th or 13th century A.D.

Bhairavamūrti (Plate 43)

In the north eastern side of the second prākāra is the sculpture of Bhairavamūrti in samapadasthanka attitude. The fierce looking Śīvā in nude is ornamented with garland of skulls, running from the left shoulder down to the knees. His
jwāla sikhā contains serpents on either side with Gangā in the middle. He holds damaru and pāsā in the rear hands the sūla and the skull, in the front ones. He also wears the nāgabandhā in his waist, and behind him is his vāhanā the dog. This image also is datable to the chōla period.

Sanīsvarā (Plate 44)

The image of Sanīsvarā is seen on the eastern veranda as we complete the circumbulation from northern side.

Nandi

The image of nandi is seen in front of flag post as the circumbulation is completed. The nandi is in its squatting posture with its eyes fierce and ears erect. The bell model chain or gantahāra decorates the neck and the back. This sculpture is also dated to chōla period.

Third Prākārā

Amman shrine

In the third prākārā on the east, south and west no sculptural art is seen. On the northern side is the shrine of Sundaragujāmbal or Alagiamāmulai amman (called so on account of beautiful breasts of the deity).

Sundaragujāmbal Amman

The image of Sundaragujāmbal is one of the best of its kind in the temple. Her face looks graceful and charming. She
ears jatamakutā, a hārā, and a patrakundalā and a makara undalā in her ears. The rear right and left arms hold the arland of beads (rudrākṣṭha) and a lotus flower. The front arms are in abhaya and varadha poses. The image represents the amapadasthanka attitude that is the feet firmly set on a well hissed lotus pedestal. The image is 4' tall and depicts hūla style.

warapālakīs (Plate 45)

The Dwarapālakīs are female door keepers. They are seen at the entrance of the shrine of amman. They are slightly stout, carry saktī and vijra in the rear hands gadhā in the front right hand while the left is in suchimudrā. They wear a hārā a garland of bells flowing down to the knees. Other details are common to both male and female door keepers.

Vīnāyaka, Subramanya and Candikēswari

As we circumbulate the amman shrine, in three separate rooms the images of Vīnāyaka, Subramanya (the two legendary sons of Śiva and Parvati) and Candikēswari are seen. The features of the stone image of Vīnāyakā are the same as seen in the second prakara of the main shrine.

Subramanya: He is seated on his vahana the peacock. The rear hands carry his symbols or weapons such as the spear, sword, shield, tankā, noose, akshamālā a bundle of peacock.

Candikēswari: The image of Candikēswari (Plate 46) the female counter part of Candikēswara, she is in an isolated closed
room located on the northern side of the Amman shrine. She faces west and resembles Candikēswarā in postures.

**BRONZES**

The whole of India is deservedly famous for its bronzes, but the most prolific production has been in the south where some of the great masterpieces have been produced. The bronzes occur in abundance in Tamil districts in South India, especially in the Tanjāvūr district. These bronzes are famous for their elegance and beauty. All these images were prepared according to the instructions laid down in the silpa and āgama texts. The images were cast by cire-perdue or lost wax process. Copper is mainly found in bronzes in large proportions while the other metals such as lead, tin, arsenic and iron are added in small proportions. Gold and silver which are said to be added to the bronzes according to silpasāstra are hardly found in actual analysis. Since, these bronzes were meant as utsavamūrtis (processional deities) meticulous care has been given while fashioning them.

**Bronzes in the first prākāra**

The details of bronzes seen in the sanctum complex are discussed below in the order of circumbulation.

**Vishnu**

The image of Vishnu in bronze 2' tall and is instanding form holding sanka and cakra and in abaya and katihasta in his four hands. He has kottika makutā and jewelled necklace, anklets, waistlets, and an ornate katibandhā with a simhamukā
clip. Beaded strings decorate the thigh and hip of the images. Lotus flowers in bronze indicate the worship of Śiva with lotus flowers to obtain chakrā.

Cakrapradhāna mūrti (Plate 47)

Cakrapradānamūrti is one of the names of Śiva. He is named so, for presenting chakrā to Vishnu. Śiva and Pārvatī in a seated posture are seen in the same room. On a pīta they are seated in sukāsanā attitude with Śiva’s right leg hanging and left leg folded across. He wears kritīka makutā, hārā, and utarabandhā while two of his hands hold deer and axe, the other two are abaya and varadha hastā. Pārvatī wears a karanta makutā and hārā and the posture of the two signify Śiva’s blessings with cakrā to Vishnu.

Vināyaka

The standing Gaṇapati (another name for Vināyaka), an important deity in the Hindu pantheon is the remover of obstacles. He is depicted with four hands holding ankusā, and pāsā, in the rear ones. In the front right hand, he holds the broken tusk (ekadantā) and the left arm is having a cake (mōdhagam) which he is shown picking up with his trunk. The legs are short in samapadasthanka posture. The head is crowned with karandamakutā and the idampuri tusk is slightly larger in size. He has the nāga utarabandhā around his prominent belly.
Mappillaiswāmi (Plate 48)

The utsava bhāra kalyāṇasundaramūrti is also known in Tamil as Mappillaiswāmi (God in the form of bridegroom). The bronze icon of kalyāṇasundaramūrti is (3') tall with ambāḷ (2') on the right side. The image is in standing posture with jata makuta and his face in sroncarabhāva. The swāmi holds a stick with a nandimukā, on his right hand and his left hand in abaya hastā. A bull stands on his left side touching his left hand. At his feet is seen an eye indicting the nēthra of vishnu who performed pūjā with lotus flowers, replacing a missing flower with his eye according to legendary tales. Ambāḷ is seen with her left hand in katahastā and the right hand hanging. The bronze icons of Śiva and Pārvathī named as Kalyāṇasundarar and Kāthyāyani belong to chōlī period.

Icons of minor deities

An assorted collection of icons is kept in a closed room next to the shrine of kalyāṇa sundara utsavabhāra called Mappillaiswāmi. The bronze image of Ayyanār is seen in utkutikā fashion. His one leg is bent on the ground and the other one is little raised the knee touching the shoulder. He has four hands with a side knot and an yāgnopavītā. In the right hand he holds a whip and his left arm rests on the bent left leg.

The image of Mahāśaṭā

The deity Sāṭa or Hariharaputrā is called Sāṭa because he is able to control and rule over the whole world, etymologically therefore, the word means a ruler of a country.
The Tamil nigaṁtuṁs call him by the additional names satavāhanā the rider of the white elephant, kāri the wielder of the weapon known as sendu, the consort of Pūraṇā and Pushkalā, the protector of dharma and yogi.15 The descriptions of the image of Sāstā are found given in the Amsunad-bhādāgama, the Suprabhādāgama and Kāranāgama (different āgamaḥ). Accordingly the figure of Sāstā has four arms, three eyes and a peaceful countenance and is seated upon a padmāsanā. The front right and left hands are held on the abhaya and varada poses respectively and the back right and left hands carry a khadga and khētakā respectively.

The two consorts of Sāstā are Pūraṇā and Pushkalai. The images of these two consorts are seen with large breasts and adorned with all ornaments.

The image of Pidāri a village goddess, is depicted in a seated posture with jvālāmukā holding trisulaḥ and kapāla in the upper right and left hands and an upraised sword and a vessel in the lower right and left hands respectively.

The icons of Appar, Sambandar and Manickavāsagar the devotees of Śiva are seen in standing postures with anjali hastā, to show their devotion and they are datable to later chōla period.

The images of Kāthyāyani and Kāthyāyana rishi (legendary) are seen in standing position. The Kāthyāyana rishi is standing on a padmapītha shown as an old man, with flowing beard reaching up to his chest, with jatāmakutā on his head, yagnopavitaḥ, and with his forehead marked with three streaks
of Vibūti (bhasmā or ashes). He has a walking stick and his right hand is in ēkāka mudrā pose, and rest the left arm on the knee of the left leg which is bent and resting upon the seat.

The image of sumangalai the legendary wife of Kāthyāyana rishi is seen along side. She is in a standing posture with akashmālā and kamandala in her hands.

The icon of Miilalai Kurumbar (legendary character) a devotee of Śiva is short in stature with anjali hasta in a standing posture.

The icon of Vishnu is in the conventional standing posture with four arms having the disc (chakrā) and the conch (Saṅkhu) in abhaya and another kati. He has a prominent kritamakutā jewelled necklace, armlets, anklets and a katibanda. He has a srivatsā mark on his right chest.

Bhikshatana-mūrti

A rare form of Śiva is of Bhikshatana depicted as naked beggar in the streets of vaRaṇāsi (kāsi) which form he had taken on a curse for brahmahatyā; according to purānic accounts. The exquisite icon depicts Bhikshatana walking nude with pādaraksha (sandals) in his feet, the begging bowl in his lower hand, and the upper right hand holds a damaru. The upper lefthand holds a trisūlā across his back shoulders and the lower left is hanging down. The front left arm has a kapāla. A kanthi or the necklace the yaṅnpavitā the udara bandha and the nāgā waist band are seen on his body.
Sambhāramūrtti (Plate 49)

Sambhāramūrtti is one of the forms or aspects of Śivā in which he is depicted as the slayer of yamaḥ or demon. The theme has been popular since the seventh century A.D. Thirunāvakkarasu 16 and Sundaramūrtti 17 refer to this form of Śivā in their Tēvāram hymns. Śivā has four hands that hold skull, vīsmāyā mudra, drum and trident.18 An image of yamaḥ is shown below upon which Śivā places the trident.

Maṇōnmaṇi (Plate 50)

An icon image of Ambaḥ named Maṇōnmaṇi is seen facing south next to Sambhāramūrtti. The expression on her face is of fear and has a krita makutā.

Bronzes in second prākāraḥ

In the second prākāraḥ on the eastern side, there is no bronze seen. On the western side of the second prākāraḥ are seen the bronzes of Sōmaskandā, Subramanyā and his consorts which are discussed below:

Sōmaskandamūrtti

The origin of the sculpture of Sōmaskandamūrtti may be traced from the Pallavā school of sculpture. The image of Sōmaskandā is depicted on the back wall of Ekāmareśvarā, and Kailasanāthar temples of Kānchi. Under the chōḷās Sōmaskandamūrtti was installed and worshipped as the processional deity in many of the Śivā temples. Both Śivā and Umā Pārvati are seated in Sukāsanā posture with one leg
hanging down. In the case of Śiva his right leg hangs down and the left leg is to bend cross-wise so as to lie flat on the pedestal. The back right hand of Śiva holds tanka and the left holds mirgā. The front right hand is held in abaya hasta and the left in varada hasta. His jatās are tied and made up in the form of jatāmakutā. He wears a hārā and utarabandā. Pārvati in Lalitāsanā wears a karandamakutā and hārā. She holds a flower in her right hand and her left hand is held in kataka pose. In between Śiva and Uma stands skandā holding a flower in each hand. These are excellent icons of the chōlā period (11th century AD).

Subramanya and his consorts

The icons of Subramanya, Vallī and Deivānai are seen in a closed room next to the shrine of Sōmaskandā. The bronze image of Subramanya with six faces and twelve arms seated on a peacock mount with his right arm showing abaya. He has karandamakutā and is flanked by his consorts Vallī and Deivānai, both in standing posture with flowers in one hand and the other hanging down. These images are datable to later chōlā period based on the iconographic details (12th or 13th century A.D.).

Natarājā (Plate 51)

The beautiful bronze image of Natarājā and Sivakāmi are seen in northern side of the second prākāra.

Lord Śiva the king of dances is variously known as Natarājā, Ađavallān, and Sabāpathy, in his dancing aspect. He
is said to have performed 108 karanās in toto which are supposed to interpret the mathematical law of the universe and personify the kinetic aspect of the lord. Among his dancing poses seven are popular in the iconographical study. They are Ānandatāndavā, Sandhyātāndavā, Umatāndavā, Gauritāndavā, Kalikatāndavā, Tripuratāndavā, and Samhāratāndavā. Some of the saiva āgamas note only seven types of tāndavās namely Gauritāndavā, Sringāratāndavā, Samhāratāndavā, Tirupuratāndavā, Urthavatāndavā, Ānandatāndavā and Kalikatāndavā.

The iconography of Natarāja was a contribution of the chōla art traditions to Indian heritage. Natarāja’s figure stands for the five ideas known as pañcakritavam namely srīsti (creation), Sthithi (maintenance), samhāram (destruction), thirūbhavam (embodiment) and anugraham (release). The dance of Śiva is also identified with pañcāksara namely na-ma si-vā-ya or si-vā-ya-na-ma which gives relief from worldly māyā (illusion), It is a cosmic dance denoting the cosmic course.

The image of Natarāja in bronze has four arms. The right back arm holds udukkai (kettle drum) while the right front presents the raised palm of protection. The left back hand holds an agniguṇṭā or firepot while the left front is pointing to the demon with the left leg raised across. The right leg bent slightly is trampling the demon called Apasmāra or Muyalaka. The locks of hair flow on either side of the face in the jatakalāba fashion (virisadai). The face radiates the supreme bliss and spiritual splendour. The gangā, the crest
moon, and the nāga are seen in jatāmakutā. He wears kapālamālā (garland of skulls) ratnabandhā and bilvabandhā.

Sivakāmi (Plate 51)

On the left side of Natarāja stands Sivakāmi. She stands with her right leg slightly bent. She wears the karanda makutā, a hāra, with her right hand in simhakarnamudrā and the left hand hanging. The bronze images of Natarāja and Sivakāmi are enshrined in a separate room in the northern veranda of the second prākāra facing south. Both icons belong to the chōḷā period.

Dwajasthambā (Plate 15, 16)

The Dwajasthambā or flag post of the main shrine is about 62' height with 5' circumference at its bottom. It is on a raised platform. The dwajasthambā is made of metal with seventeen partitions with a square box at the bottom. The box has carvings of floral designs and seated on top of the post nandi petite in stature facing the sanctum.

SECTION - II

Wood works, Stucco works and painting

Vāhanās

A number of vāhanās or processional vehicles are seen in the temple in the mandapā of northern veranda in the second prākāra. Each one of the vehicle is made of either single country wood or out of pieces joined together. We find two
rishaba, and one yaman, horse, simhā, yāli, būdhā and būdhachī vāhanās. Of the above, horse, simhā and yāli are bigger in size compared to the rest. The vāhanās are in a damaged condition and require repair and care.

The temple car (Plate 52)

The rathā or temple car is yet another good specimen of wood work. It is a miniature temple with beautiful decorative works. Like the temple it has the adhistānā and a super structure built with many horizontal and a cluster of wooden pillars, Over the pillars is the prastāra in the form of a vimānā. There are four wheels each of which is 3' diameter. The temple car is datable to Vijaya-nagar period. The rathā at present is in a multilated state, being stationed in front of the temple tank.

Stucco Works

Examples of stucco works are seen on the vimānā, gōpurās and mandapās. The images of brahmā, vishnu, rishīs are depicted in the Rajagōpura and images of dēvi in different forms are found in the smaller gōpurā leading to amman shrine. They have undergone renovation and replastering. At the entrance of Māppillaiswāmi shrine, a figure of Cajalakshmi is seen in a sitting posture with four hands. She is flanked by two elephants and two female figurines one is Lakshmivāni and the other Sarasvati. This popular representation is considered as an auspicious symbol.
Gold and gold ornaments

Gift of gold for burning lamp in the temple, and gift of ornamental jewels are referred to in the inscriptions.

An inscription of Rājendra I on his 26th regnal year refers to gift of gold for making jewellery for the main deity. A record of Rājādirāja (1018-1054 AD) mentions a donation of 128 kalanju and four manjādi pon (gold), out of the interest of which one hundred and forty four kalam of rice is made to be used for pūja of utsavamūrti in the temple. An inscription of Vīra Rājendra speaks of donation of gold and gold jewellery to the temple and also golden roof proposed to be made over the main shrine. Two inscriptions of Kulottunga II dated 1125 A.D. mention about donation of kuttuvilakku and grant of oil to burn and donation of gold to the temple by two individuals. One was Chirrambalamudayar from Vilandaï who donated 202 kalanju and 2 manjādi gold and another Vanadirayar from Tirunarayur who donated 104 kalanju and 2 manjādi gold to the temple. Nallapon irunūrriru kalanjiyum irandu manjādium nālu māvu .... Thiruvārānathukku itṭa ponnai' is the epigraphical note of the temple towards royal contribution to jewellery for the deities.

Several other gifts of ornaments to the deities might have gone unrecorded as the whereabouts of even the recorded ones are not known. Personal interviews reveal that the temple has only about 20 sovereigns of gold in the form of Ambāl's mangala sūtra and swarna bandhā and a few ear and nose ornaments, besides plates, abishēka kalam made out of silver.
Painting

The art of painting which was cultivated by the Pallava kings to a limited extent reached the zenith of glory under Rājarāja chōlā the great as exemplified by the specimens available in the great temple of Tanjāvūr. Subsequent to this period the art seems to have suffered for want of patronage. But the art witnessed a revivalism and fresh impetus in the Vijayanagar epoch when a great spurt in the painting art was noticeable in many of the temples.33 The specimens of Vijayanagar paintings are seen in Vīlināthaswāmī temple, on the roof of the artha maṇḍapā on its southern extension.

The entire roof of the extended maṇḍapā is painted. The subject matter of the painting is religious and is limited in range. There are three panels which are discussed below.

The first panel is on the eastern side of the roof. (Plate 53) It shows Krishna dancing on the heads of Kaḷingā (snake demon) holding the tail in his left hand and the right indicating his grace by its position in abayā boon conferring attitude.34 The face of Krishna is exquisitely charming. There are four feminine figures two on either side and a regular shower of flowers in appreciation of Krishna’s subjugation of Kaḷingā. The immediately flanking figures are the consorts of Krishna namely Rukmini and Satyabāma. The other figures are Salabhanjikās standing under the kalpa creeper as attendant nymphs.

The second panel is at the centre. It shows kamalam or lotus with four yāli faces in four corners. (Plate 54) This
painting is conventional and is having clear conception. Further there are exquisite figures of female dancers arranged in a group around the kamalam. Ornamentation and draping in the case of all figures has been done with great restraint.

The third panel is on the western side. It depicts a favourite theme as Krishna (called Venugopala) playing the flute, with his right leg crossed against the left. (Plate 55) The weight of his body is resting on the left foot; the tribhangā or the tribend of Krishna making the figure very charming. The force is exquisite and the entire delineation is done with great charm. The kalpā tree almost twinning around forms as it were an arch above the head as half creeper and half tree, a combination of kalpavrikshā and kalpavātī as a favoured mode in many Vijayanagar representation of Venugopala.35 The rapt attention with which cows and calves listen to the divine music with face turned towards the divine musician in a deep gaze standing still without the least movement is indeed a commentary on the celestial music. The snake is shown close to the cow listening and on its hoods would be seated the frog for which a snake is a terror all were lost in the charm of celestial music. There are six gopīs three on either side the border of the panel is exquisitely done.

The paintings display Vijayanagar style with reference to the style of dress and figures. The colour has become dull and can be seen only in patches. Light yellow is used for body complexion of gopikās, light blue for krishnā, and red has
been used for garments while golden colour is used for jewels like necklace bangles etc.

Dr. Paramasivam who has done considerable scientific analysis of the chōḷā and Vijayanagar paintings has observed that the paintings of the Vijayanagar times were generally done in the technique known as fresco secco as distinct from the fresco technique adopted by the chōḷā artists. The former method consists in mixing the pigments with limewater and applying it over the wet plaster. The chōḷā paintings had to be done before the wet plaster could dry up. Hence they required dexterous and swift hand on the part of the artist. But in the fresco secco process of the Vijayanagar days the painting was done on the dry wall. This process did not require the skill and quickness in execution.

As Dr. Paramasivam remarks: 'the five centuries that separate the chōḷā art from the Vijayanagar art mark a period when slow decadence set in not only over the art of painting but also in the technique of the process of painting.'

As seen earlier the temple possesses a number of beautiful sculptures, metal icons, wood work of different periods. They indicate the rich iconographic content and aesthetic value of the architectural and artistic contributions of many generations.
References

7. Ibid, p.179
10. Sritatvanidhi Pt I 3:123
11. Sarasvatiyacitra, *Karma Sastra* ch 30 vv 14-21
13. Ibid p.2
14. Stalapurana pp 4-5
15. T.A. Gopinatha Rao Opcti, p.488
19. Ibid 22, p-10

24. Ibid.

25. ARE; 432; of 1908. TNSDA; 543, of 1977

26. ARE; 393; of 1908. TNSDA; 528, of 1977

27. ARE; 384; of 1908. TNSDA; 509, of 1977

28. ARE; 384; of 1908. TNSDA; 509, of 1977

29. ARE; 386; of 1908. TNSDA; 517, of 1977

30. ARE; 430; of 1908. TNSDA; 539, of 1977

31. ARE; 430; of 1908. TNSDA; 593, of 1977

32. Scholars interview with Mr. V. Muthukumar, Manager of Vilinathaswamy, Temple.


35. Ibid

36. Ibid, Also see, K.R. Srinivasan, *South Indian Paintings*, proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Allahabad 1944.