ART AND ARCHITECTURE

देवतावेश्मपूर्वाणि नगराणि कलेक्युमूर्गे। कर्तिवानि महिपालैः स्वर्गोऽक्षमाभिन्नुभि:॥

-VishnuDharmottara
Chapter Eleven

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The artistic activity of our period is mainly the construction of temples. Yet apart from that, some artistic pursuits of the people are reflected in the contemporary literature.

There were professional painters who painted on cloth and prepared wall-paintings. Rangavali or Rangoli, the peculiar art of colour powders was practised especially by ladies (Utt.273, GC 187). Embroidery was also known (GC 257). Jnanesvari gives a number of references to marionettes and shadow plays. Dancing and music were popular. There was a class of professional dancing girls (GC 107; Jn.X,320). Even temples arranged their programmes on festivals. Some of the prostitutes were also well-versed in the art of dancing and music (Jn.XVII,p.297). Dramatic performances were also staged (App.Insc.no.43) and there were professional actors.

Sculpture:

But the art of that age which survives to-day is only sculpture and architecture. Exhuberant carving of the exteriors of temples was a fashion of the day. The sculpture displays a number of motifs and themes. Deities, dancing parties, women, sanyasis, kings, queens, attendants, warriors, battles, animals, Epic stories, and sexual scenes are displayed on the temples. Too much prominence is given to the jewelery and the drapery is only suggested. 'The female charm is made to centre in great hips and breasts and faces are expressionless.'

In all this activity the artist is more under the impact of tradition than his originality and it is extremely difficult...
to find the reflection of contemporary life in it. The author made an attempt at the Gondeswara group of temples at Sinnar. A few pencil sketches prepared on the spot have been reproduced here. It is interesting to note the aspects in which woman is represented though they are common motifs. The artist is successful in depicting the distinguishing characteristics of a mother and child from a noble family, a busy house-wife and village milk-maid. The female hair-styles as seen from the sculptures are also reproduced. The artist must have copied them from real life. Though the temples sculpture shows some masterpieces, in general it is not a production of very high artistic quality. 

Architecture:

Architecture is art applied to building construction as a whole but so far as our period is concerned the constructional activity that survives to-day consists mainly of temples. We know from Jnanesvari that there were architects who built three-storeyed houses, mentions, royal palaces and temples.

The credit of starting the activity of structural temples in the Deccan goes to the Silaharas and Yadavas. The Rashtrakuta period was one of cave-cutting and there is no positive evidence to suppose that the later Calukyas built any temples in the Deccan. Our purpose here is to consider a temple building activity of our period as a whole and bring out its characteristics.

The period has definitely contributed towards temple architecture by evolving a style of its own. It is a variant of the Northern or Nagara style laid down by the Silpa-sastras. Yet it has no special text of its own like other regional variants, e.g. the Bhuvanapradipa of the Orissan style, Aparajitapraacha,
Diparnava etc. of Gujarat style, Vṛksharnava of Rajasthan and Samrangaṇapaśutrādhāra of the central Indian style. At least such a text has not yet been discovered.

The Yadava temples show a synthesis of elements from other styles and through evolution developed a peculiar style of their own. The combination of elements was consciously done. An inscription (App.Insc.no.18) tells us how a temple at Kuppatur was planned in perfect accordance with many rules of Architecture and was freely decorated with Dravida, Bhumija and Nagara styles. The same must have been the case of the Deccan-temples also.

'Hemadpanti' Style:

The 'Yadava style' is a convenient term. It does not mean that all the temples of that style are built under the Yadavas. The style is popularly known as Hemadpanti. This term may be examined here. Dry-order construction (masonry used without mortar) is usually supposed to be its distinguishing feature and Hemadpant who is believed to have invented this method is credited of having built such temples. But the dry-order construction is not confined to the Deccan temples alone and does not become their peculiarity.

The term Hemadpanti actually sums up what people do not understand, rather than what they know about the early mediaeval temples. These temples stand as a class by themselves and could be distinguished from the later temples of the Muslim-Maratha periods. So only as distinguished from the later temples of the same area, the absence of mortar becomes their peculiarity.

Moreover the temple building activity constitutes an aspect of the Puranic religion, and it is but natural that they are
popularly ascribed to the greatest advocate of that religion. Hemadri must quite likely have given patronage to this activity but the invention of the so-called new type of construction, like that of his Modi script is imposed upon him during later periods.

**Characteristics of Yadava Style:**

The style of a group of temples consist in the peculiarities of the Sikhara, the plan, pillars and the particular architectural elements and other factors. The decorative elements are almost common to all early mediaeval temples but their variations, order of arrangement and absence or presence of some, foster on a particular group and individuality of a separate style. The time and space factors often operate behind the evolution of a style.

The temples of the Yadava style or the early mediaeval temples of the Deccan are built out of the amygdaloidal trap quarried as a rule on the spot. The point is already referred to in the chapter on Geography. This material has proved a limitation on the size and durability of the temples. This stone full of flaws and cracks was unsuitable for large beams. All parts of the temple being in strict proportion, the size of the temple was limited by the length of the shaft and the trap could not give long shafts.

The Gordeswara temple at Sinnar is the largest example of this style. In general the Deccan temples of our period are smaller in size and also fewer in number as compared to the temples of North Gujarat, Karnatak etc. As the stone was quarried on the spot, a well or tank usually goes with every temple. Such wells are known as Hemadpanti wells.
The Sikhara is the most distinguishing feature of this style. The Yadava Sikhara is known as Bhumija type and it is one of the three prominent varieties of the Northern Sikhara. It rises as a single tower with a fretted vertical band ('Lata') running up each of its four faces. The corners between the bands are filled up with horizontal tyres of miniature sikharas as decorative details. This type is also found at Khajuraho. It could be appreciated in comparison with the sikharas of other styles. (See illustration). The influence of this type is also found on Maratha temples.

The plan of such temples is of mainly of two types, rectangular or starshaped arrived at by revolving a square about its centre. So it is the same as Gujarat temples. The plan shows multiplicity of angles which are carried up through the walls and towers with numerous horizontal mouldings. Among its variations are found three-shrined (e.g. Jhodga) and multiple-shrined temples (e.g. Balsane).

The pillars are also an important distinguishing feature. The Yadava pillars are faceted. Their main characteristic is the square, octagonal, square and round shape. The Patna pillar is the prevailing Yadava type but there are numerous varieties as shown in the illustration. These pillars considerably differ from those in Gujarat.

The ceiling is a conspicuous characteristic of internal decoration. The ceiling of the sanctum is simple but that of the hall is fully decorated. It is domical or square, octagonal in design. The domical ceiling is constructed out of concentric diminishing rings laid upon one another and having decorated undersides.
The best examples of the Yadava style are not many and most of them are dilapidated. The earliest ones belong to the 11th century like the famous Ambarnath temple (Silahara), Mahadeva temple at Patna and Balsane temples. To the 12th century belong the Gondesvara (Sinnar) and Jhodaga (Nasik dist.) and Laxminarayana temple at Pedgaon (Ahmedanagar dist.). Then number of temples in Berar and the famous Nagnath temple at Aundha associated with Namdeva belong to the 13th century. Dr. A.V. Naik has chronologically divided the temples into six periods between 1050 A.D. and 1400 A.D. The Sthana-Pothi gives a number of architectural terms describing the contemporary temples. But they are all ordinary temples not of aesthetic value.

Thus the temples constitute the principal architectural activity of the period. They survive to remind us of the glory and devastation of the bygone age.
References

2. Ibid., p. 83.
3. Ibid., p. 86.
7. Ibid.
FEMALE HAIR STYLES
[CONDESVAR]
Darpana-kanayaka

Mother & Child

A common motif
Gondesvar- Sinnar

(Main Temple - Gondesvar)
Sinnar
(Nandi Temple - Gondesvar) Sinnar

(Nandi Temple - Gondesvar) Sinnar
Milk-Maid

(Main Temple-Gondesvar)
Sinnar

(Main Temple-Gondesvar)
Sinnar
A BUSY HOUSE WIFE

(GONDESVAR - SNNAR)
SIKHARA TYPES

THREE VARIETIES OF THE NORTHERN TYPE OF SIKHARA

BHUUMIJA

LATIN

VIMANA NAGARA

ORISSAN

MARATHA ON YADAVA STYLE

DRUIDIAN
AISVARA [SINNAR]
[CHALUKYAN STYLE]
MAHADEV TEMP.- PATAN
HEMADPANTI WELL

BELHE [Dist. POONA]
DILLARS

AMBERNATH

PATNA

BALSANE

MARATHA

AISVAR (CHALUKYAN)
SIMPLE
CEILING AND PILLAR