CHANDRAGIRI
Chandragiri is the headquarters of a taluk in Chittoor district, situated about 8 miles from Tirupati on the North-west and 29 miles north north-east from Chittoor. It is famous for the great fort situated in it, and was the headquarters of IVth dynasty of Vijayanagar.

Political History:

Tradition ascribes the building of this fort to a certain Immadi Narasimha, about 1000 A.D. a Yadavaraya chief who ruled over the region. But this is not supported by contemporary epigraphical evidence as nowhere in their inscriptions does Chandragiri find mention. On the other hand the earliest epigraphical reference to Chandragiri occurs in an inscription at Sivapuram, Madanapalle taluk, Chittoor district dated 1325 A.D. 1403, during the reign of Harihara II. Another inscription of the same period dated 1328 A.D. 1406, falling in the reign of Devaraya I referring to Chandragiri, comes from Tamballapalle in Madanapalle taluk in Chittoor district. During this period, it is not known what role did Chandragiri play.

Again we find Chandragiri being referred to in another inscription at Tirupati dated 1330 A.D. 1409 belonging to Mallana or Mallana Udaiyar and falling in the reign of Devaraya I. As his last known date is 1366, A.D. 1444, this Mallana Udaiyar who was originally governing Barakuru, appears to have been shifted to the governorship of Chandragiri rājya which
took place around 1330 A.D. on which occasion he made arrangements for the provision of Naivedyam and Nityadīpam to Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśwara. During the last years of Devarāya II we find a Śāluva chief by name Peri Mallayadēva mahārāja, in an inscription at Tirupati dated 1368 A.D. This Peri Mallayadēva mahārāja, son of Era Kaṃpayadēva mahārāja, was a mahāmāndalāśvāra and held the charge of Chaṇḍragiri rājya after Mallaṇa had left it. About the same period we come across a commander by name Tippada Nāgeya Nāyakar dated 1364 A.D. son of Muddiya Nāyara, and was probably an officer of Devarāya II and commanded the forces stationed at Chaṇḍragiri.

In the year 1352 A.D. Śādhāraṇa, a Śṛigirīśvāra or Śṛigiri is found presenting a golden paṭṭam to Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśwara. This Śṛigiri is identical with Śṛigiri Bhūpāla surnamed Pratāpadēvaraya, son of Vijaya and the younger brother of Devarāya II. He is said to have been ruling over Markata Nagara Prāṇṭa in south Arcot district in 1346 A.D. But the Madras Museum plates also mention him as the younger brother of Devarāya I while the present record calls him as the son of Devarāya II. Whatever it be, it is enough to note for purposes of our study that Śṛigiri ruled over the Chaṇḍragiri rājya about 1382 A.D.

In the reign of Mallikhārjuna, we have only one inscription at Tirupati referring to Chaṇḍragiri and from this we learn that Chaṇḍragiri formed part of Vaikuṇṭha Velanādu. This period is also remarkable for the rise of a new family of subordinate
chiefs (viz.) Sāluvas, who were later to come into prominence. Among them we find 3 chiefs appearing simultaneously, including Sāluva Narasiṅga, the remaining two being Sāluva Śrī Mallayadēva mahārāya, son of Malugangadēva mahārāya, who made a grant of money to the temple of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭēśvara in 1372 A.D. and Sāluva Mallayadēvamahārāya, son of Erakampayadeva mahārāya, and younger brother of Peri Mallayadēva, noticed already under Devarāya II, and who made a grant of some village Chambakkam in the Chaṇḍragirī rājya. This later grant makes us believe that Sāluva Mallayadēva was ruling almost independently over Chaṇḍragirī as found from the absence of any reference to the reigning monarch in the inscription. Sāluva Narasiṁha, the founder of the IIInd dynasty of Vijayanagar, belonged to another branch of the same family. His father was Sāluva Guṇḍayadēva mahārāja. Having been a subordinate chief of Mallikhārjuna, and enjoying semi independent status in the south, he gradually extended his power over the present North Arcot (Chittoor and Vellore) and South Arcot districts and rose to a pre-eminent position of defacto ruler of the empire, under the 1st Dynasty. His earliest record at Tirupati is dated 1378 A.D. and the last 1411 A.D. thus making up a total period of 36 years rule.

During this period, Kapilēśvara Gajapati, according to the Anaṅtavaram grant dated 1463 A.D. after his capture of Kondavidu and Udayagiri sent an expedition under the command
of Kumāra Haṁvira, against south. Mallikārjuna made necessary preparations to meet the Oriya invasion, and transferred Sāluva Narasiṁha, his governor at Chaṇḍragiri to Penukonda to defend the central part of the empire, leaving Chaṇḍragiri in the charge of Sāluva Rāmaĉaṇḍra. Kumāra Haṁvira, according to the above grant succeeded in capturing the forts of Udayagiri, Chaṇḍragiri, Padaivīdu, Vedulampatti, Usavadi, Tiruvaṁrūr and Tiruchirāpalli. Thus came Chaṇḍragiri under Gajapati occupation, which was placed under the command of Kumāra Kapilēśvara Mahāpātra; son of Haṁvira, and his kingdom extended from the Ganges to Kaveri. However this was only short lived, as we find Sāluva Narasiṁha by 1465-66, recapturing from the Gajapatis the Tamil districts in the south.

From Sāluva Narasiṁha inherited his ancestral kingdom with its capital at Kalyānapuram and later on, acting up on the advice of his minister, shifted his capital to Chaṇḍragiri, owing to the inaccessibility of its hills and the impregnability of its fortifications. From this we have to surmise that his earliest record at Tirupati dated 1378 A.D.1456 was issued after the change of his capital.

Sāluva Narasiṁha was followed by his son and successor Immadi Narasiṁha. During this period we find two generals Periya Obala Ṛṇadakara, Ṛma Ṛṇadakara as the chief commandent of Vijayanagar forces from an inscription 1426 A.D.1504 which bestows on him the title Śriman Mahānyakāchārya and Raya rayasam Konduvāṇḍu and another, Timmana Dannāyakkar, son of Karanīkka...
Annadātā Dēvagal dated 6.1415 A.D.1495 which mentions that he resided at Chandragiri,23 perhaps as the commander of the forces stationed at Chandragiri.

After this, Chandragiri finds mention again during the reign of Krishnadēvarāya. During this period we learn from Nuniz, that, Krishnadēvarāya's minister Sāluva Timmarusu, imprisoned Achyuta Rāya whom he calls as Buśbala Rao, together with his own three brothers, in a fortress called 'Chaodegary', where he remained till he died.24 Again he also says "Before the death of king Krishṇa Rao, from his disease, as he has been before recounted, being sick and already despairing of his life, hemade a will, saying that of his 3 brothers, whom at the time when they raised him to be king, he had sent to be confined in the fortress of Chandragiri, with his nephew, son of the king Basbala Rao, they should make king of his brother Acutarāo, who now reigns . . After his death, Saluvaraya became minister of the kingdom, and governed till the coming of Achitea Rao, from the fortress of Chandragary where he was detained"25. During this period, we find, according to an inscription at Tirupati issued by Lakshmi amma, wife of Saluva Timma, the prime minister, his son-in-law Appayan or Nādeṇḍla Appa, elder brother of Gōpa, as ruling at Chandragiri.26 Another general noticed during the period is Periya Ōbara Nāyakkar, who served under Immādi Narasimha. He is represented by an inscription dated 6.1434, making the gift of a village Singōdupalli in Sittanavōlu Sirmai, in Pulugurunādu, and we learn
that he served under 2 successive kings as the commander of Vijayanagar forces at Chandragiri. 27

During the reign of Achyuta, Chandragiri was governed by Rāmanātha Bhūtanātha. From the discovery of his inscriptions at Tirupati, Kalahasti and other surrounding places, he appears to have governed Chaṇḍragiri rājya from 1458 to 1463 A.D. 1536 to 1541. 28 We also find Achyuta Raya making a fond mention of Chaṇḍragiri in a copper plate dated A.D. 1532. He visited it several times and actually stayed there for some months. In fact part of Achyutaraya's army was kept at Chaṇḍragiri under the command of his Brahmin general Dalavāyi Timmarusayya, son of Pradhāni Sōmarusayya. 29

In the reign of Sadāśiva, immediately after his accession, trouble arose to Rāmarāja the defacto ruler, from the aggressions of the ambitious ruler of Travancore, and the proselytising activities of the Roman Catholic missionaries, with the active support of the Portuguese governor of Goa. Alfenso de sousa 30 Added to this was the trouble caused by the opponents of Rāmarāya, who took control over Chaṇḍragiri and the Chōla country. Hence in order to suppress the rebels and establish his authority, Rāmarāya, sent an expedition to the south in 1543 under the command of his cousin China Tirumala and Vithala. In the process they first attacked Chaṇḍragiri and captured it. 31 The names of the opponent from whom they took it is not known. Later on they routed the forces of the rebels and re-established their
authority. As a result, China Tirumala was appointed to rule
over the subdued regions, jointly with his brother Vithala.

After the great battle of Rakkasa Tangadi in A.D.1565,
begins a new phase in the history of Chañdragiri. Finding the tragic
destruction of the great capital Vijayanagar, Tirumala, the
brother of Rāmaraya repaired to Penugonda along with Sadāsiva the
dejure ruler, and enormous treasures. From this period onwards
he began exercising authority practically, paving way for the
rise of another dynasty viz. Āravīdu or the IVth dynasty. During
this period, he reorganised the administration of the kingdom in-
to 3 provinces, and appointed his youngest son Venkatapati II
to rule over Chañdragiri as the governor of Tamil districts,
while his elder brother Śri Raṅga I was ruling over Penugonda,
the Telugu country. Following the death of Tirumala, Śrī
Ranga I became the emperor in A.D.1572. During his reign, came
an invasion from the Bijapur Sultan Ali Adil Shāh, in A.D.1576,
who, accompanied by Handī Timmappa nāyaka, marched against
Penugonda. At this Śrī Raṅga I, left the defence of his
capital to Savaram Chennappa and repaired to Chañdragiri.

In the next reign i.e. of Venkaṭa II, took place the
transfer of capital, again from Penukonda to Chañdragiri.
It is difficult to say, when exactly this took place. According
to some writers it was in 1585 A.D. while according to some,
it happened in A.D.1592. This reign of Venkaṭa II brought
Chañdragiri to prominence and it enjoyed absolute peace.
In 1597-98 he suppressed a rebellion of Nandyala chiefs at Gandikota and captured their leader Krishnamrāju and imprisoned him at Chandragiri. He even received an envoy from the Mughal emperor Akbar. The Bijapur Sultan, Ibrahim Adil Shah II also sent an embassy to him in 1604 A.D. probably to enter into an alliance, against the possible danger of Mughal invasion.

After Venkata II Chandragiri had a quick succession of masters. It was during the reign of Śrī Ranga III in AD.1639, the site on which the present fort of St. George is located, was granted to Francis Day, when the emperor was residing at Chandragiri. It passed into the hands of the Gōlconda Sultān in 1646 A.D. In 1758, it was ruled by Nawab Abdul Wahāb Khan, brother of the Nawab of Carnatac of Arcot. In 1782 Hyder Ali took it, and it remained so under them till 1799 A.D.
"The fort of Chandragiri is built upon a high rounded mass of granite rising about 600 ft. above the valley. A large space upon the southern side of the hill is enclosed by strong walls, surrounded by a ditch. The style of architecture is very similar to that of Vellore Fort. . . . The enclosure upon the plain is divided into three walls by two inner walls running North-south and in the space is the palace of the Rajahs. There are two main entrances on the east and another on the west . . . The hill itself which is isolated by an inner and outer wall of circumvallation built of large granite rocks neatly fitted together. Of the two, outer is the most massive and ornamental, having an embattled wall with small projecting towers and presenting a very pleasing effect. Where the fall of the rock is so steep as to make ascent impossible, fortifications are discontinued. Upon the summit are a few small buildings and a pool of water". 38

The fort of Chandragiri roughly covers an area of about 1 mile in circumference and extends over an area of about 25.50 acres; and consists of two parts (viz) lower and upper forts. The former, i.e. Lower Fort encircles the entire plain terrain below i.e. at the foot of the hill on three sides i.e. east, south and west, while on the north rises the high hill. On plan the fort resembles a crescent or semi-circle and hence appears to have derived its name Chandragiri (Moon hill). The lower
fort comprises two rampart walls, 4 gateways - two on each side i.e. east and west, and a number of bastions about 30 belonging to both rectangular and semi-circular shapes interspersed at regular intervals of distance. On a general look, the fort of Chandragiri appears to bear close similarity to the other two Vijayanagar Forts (viz.) Penukonda and Hampi in matters of constructional technique, i.e. cyclopaean masonry, and the use of material i.e. irregular and crude blocks of heavy granite, the plan of the Gateways with right angled turns inside and the shape of bastions i.e. rectangular.

Lower Fortification wall:

The fort of Chandragiri is entered through an outer gateway built in the outer rampart wall on the east. Actually the entrance itself faces north, and not east as is considered to be. The wall runs to a short distance on the northern side, i.e. right of the entrance, while on the left it proceeds to a considerably long distance. Here the wall is built of heavy and irregular blocks of crude white granite with chips of pebble serving as core in between the crevices. Subsequent traces of lime pointing can also be seen. Here the extant height of the wall rises to about 5 mts. with 5 courses in it. Proceeding towards North, i.e. right of entrance, and noticed two bastions of rectangular shape at the bottom and square at the top; reminiscent of those at Hampi, but humble in proportion and size. Here the wall rises to a height between 5 to 6 mts.
with 15 courses of smaller stone blocks in it. From the 2nd bastion the wall turns towards west i.e. making it the Northern wall, which runs through the hill, with a number of bastions of semi-circular shape. On this side the wall is found to be interrupted at several places, because of the high spurs of the rock and continuous forward again wherever necessary.

The eastern wall on this side is devoid of any parapet, and hence no loop holes or crenellations. It has a wide wall-walk or battlement, on the top in the interior. Behind it, is the huge earthern wall with stone veneering on the exterior.

Proceeding towards left of the entrance, i.e. South the wall, the runs for considerably longer distance than on the north;. On this side the wall rises to a considerable height, built of huge and irregular blocks of granite with a wide wall walk on the top in the interior. There are 5 bastions on this side, of which 4 are of semi-circular type, unlike those noticed on the northern side. There are also clear traces of lime pointing and mortar which points evidence to its reconstruction and renovation, at a later date.

On this side, there is a flanking watch tower, of rectangular type, resembling the one at Hampi near the Bhima's gate. Walking along the wall walk or battlement, after a short distance comes the 1st Bastion, which is devoid of any parapet wall. Along the outer edge are noticed 4 protruding corbels on the front face in the centre, with openings in between in
the floor. Walking further beyond, comes the 2nd bastion also of semi-circular plan, which is better preserved. The 4th bastion, which is reached after some distance further, prevents a peculiar look than the former. It, like the others, is semi-circular in shape. But over it are found turrets, resembling a temple gopura or Śikhara on 3 sides i.e. east, north and south, resting on heavy protruding corbels of temple designs. Of them the central one appears to be larger in size than the two. These turrets of Śikhara type probably serve as aṭṭālakas or Indrakōsa mentioned by Kautiliya. Viewed from outside it consists of a small aḍhistāna, a bhitti or wall portion with two pilasters, a Kapōta or cornice above and surmounted by a slopy surface on the top. The wall portion on the exterior, has 3 loop holes, one in each of the compartments. On the interior, there is a wide entrance gap into them providing accommodation for soldiers to sit. Above the entrance or door jamb is the carved figure of Gaṇeśa in the lintel portion, while on either side of the entrance on the doorjamb are mutilated figures of Hindu nature. This existence of Hindu turrets in the midst of a semi-circular bastion presents a baffling problem in dating this part of the Fort. Since, the upper part i.e. turrets cannot be considered as earlier than the Lower part of the wall, and as the semi-circular bastions also continued even during the Vijayanagar period as evidenced at Penukonda and Hampi in its middle and late phases, it can only be surmised that, this part of the wall was rebuilt and renovated
by the later Vijayanagara occupants of the fort i.e. IVth dynasty, and probably during the time of Venkata II.

After this comes the last bastion i.e. Vth of Octogonal design built of brick. Along the outer edge on the top are two lines of brick work, obviously showing a phase of later construction. From this, the wall turns towards west, i.e. making it the southern wall.

Outside the wall on the east, are traces of a moat, which is not in existence now. Hence it is difficult to know its real nature and its depth and width as the ground is full of agricultural fields.

Proceeding along the ramparts on the south, are noticed a number of bastions, all of semi-circular shape. Near the 6th bastion, is found the inner wall proceeding from the main one running in south-north direction which merges into the 2nd gateway and continues beyond further towards north. On this side also, the wall is devoid of any parapet. The wall walk or battlement becomes narrow, measuring about 6.40 mts. width. The 7th bastion also shows traces of turrets, which are completely fallen. The 8th bastion is of square or rectangular type, and small in size. After this continue the bastions further. Near the 11th comes again the inner wall on the west similar to the one on the east, noticed near the 6th bastion running parallelly in south-north direction. Near the 12th is noticed a small postern gate, at the foot of the wall leading to the
out side of the fort. After this are 5 more bastions. Near the 17th i.e. last one, the wall turns towards north i.e. making it the outer wall on the west. In it is noticed the outer gateway beyond which, the wall proceeds further towards north into the high hill along the precipice with a steep and slopy scarp on the outside. There are 4 more bastions of semi-circular type noticed on this side, beyond which the wall discontinues. On the interior of this wall are a flight of steps leading to the wall walk or battlement providing ascent up the hill.

**Outer Gateway:**

As pointed out already the outer entrance of the 1st gateway on the east faces north. On the left side is a huge rectangular watch tower while on the right is the shrine of Hanuman. Here the entrance gap measures 5 mts. wide. Proceeding further towards north through this entrance one has to turn towards right i.e. westwards and walk for considerable distance further through the large courtyard before reaching the huge and magnificent main entrance. On the left side i.e. south is a small empty shrine. This main entrance, resembles the entrance of a temple gopura with a covered ceiling above in the interior. The entrance gap, is about 3 mts. wide, while it runs to a considerable distance of 4 mts. length in the interior. Inside are two low platforms on either side, each comprising 2 rows of pillars of 5 in each. These pillars supporting the ceiling above, are typically Vijayanagar in style with yali figures in the front ones, while those
in the hind rows are simple and rounded in design. The ceiling consists of horizontal beams placed across. \textit{On plan}, this gateway appears to be simple than the inner or second one with only one outer entrance and one court yard and one right angled turn inside.

After passing through this one has to walk for about 1/2 mile distance further towards west, to approach the 2nd gateway. On either side of this gateway runs the 2nd wall parallelly to the outer one in North-south direction emerging from the main one on the south and proceeding towards north up the hill. On the left side i.e. North the wall projects inwards for a considerable length, and then turns towards north in allignment with the main entrance. On this side the height of the wall is comparatively low in view of the high levelled ground below. There are 4 bastions of square or rectangular type, while the third one is semi-circular. The 1st bastion comes after about 30 mts. distance. But it is very much ruined. Beyond it, with in a distance of about 50.45 mts. comes the 2nd which has a width of about 11.34 mts. at the base with a forward projection of 9.70 mts. This wall also has no parapet on the top and hence no loopholes or crenellations.

On the left side, the wall proceeds forward towards south, but suffered destruction badly. It finally merges into the outer wall. No extant bastions are noticed in this wall.
2nd gate way:

Unlike the 1st gateway in the outer wall, this faces east. On either side, it has two rectangular watch towers. On plan this appears to be somewhat complex in design than the outer. It is entered on the east. On the left side i.e. south the wall rises to a height of 5.40 mts. while on the north, it is much higher. Proceeding through it, one faces the wall on the north, compelling him to take a right ward turn. On the right side, comes the northern wall which projects forward, making the entrance very narrow. Again passing through this, one has to take a left ward turn and again to the right and left again. Thus it comprises 2 outer entrances, and 2 courtyards, before reaching the main entrance of the 2nd gateway. Here the main entrance resembles that of the outer one. On the right side of the exterior i.e. South, are the Hindu carved figures of Hanuman, a boar, and sword, the royal insignia of Vijayanagar dynasty, thus indicating the construction of the fort by the Vijayanagar rulers. It was a narrow entrance gap with temple pillars in the inside, and low platforms serving as guard rooms for the sentries. The roof is devoid of ceiling which must have suffered destruction.

Proceeding through this gateway one has to walk for about 1/2 a mile further towards west, to reach the 3rd gate, or the inner wall of the west gate. The gateways of this and the IVth i.e. outer most wall, resemble in plan with simpler turns and curves, the outer gateway on the east.
In between the third gateway on the west, and the 2nd gateway on the east lies the citadel portion, in the northern wing i.e. near the foot of the hill. In it are the two famous palaces, called Raja Mahal and Rani Mahal, a big tank, and a number of halls and water springs, which have come to light during recent Archaeological excavations. Also noticed are traces of water cisterns, running for long distances, made of earth or clay and plastered with mortar. Traces of other palace structures built of brick and lime mortar, have also been unearthed, probably belonging to the period of its Vijayanagara occupants in the 15th and 16th Centuries.

Upper Fort:

It is reached by means of ramped pathway up the hill towards west, from the northern end of the wall. On the left i.e. South along this path, is a low wall built of crude boulders of rock. On the right i.e. north, runs the high outer rampart, obviously of the Muslim period, with steep scarp on the outside and a deep valley below. After walking for a considerable distance, parallel to the 2nd or inner gateway on the west, is encountered an entrance in the hill. Like the gateways in the lower forts it is also slightly curved with a right angled turn inside. Outside are two semi-circular watch towers. Proceeding through it, and turning towards right, after a short distance comes the gate, parallel to the outer one.
in the west. This also like the 1st is curved, protected by high watch towers of semi-circular type. Inside is a flight of steps to climb up and reach the hilly area inside. On the top, in the bastions are turrets, with arch shaped parapets, providing large accommodation to the soldiers. There are also large and wide loop holes in the arched parapets.

Inside this gateway lies the vast hill portion without any structures worth mentioning. It is served by a number of water clefts formed in the rock itself known by several names as Ŭppusetti and Pappusetti könēru, Akkachellendra, Könēru etc. This top most part of the hill is protected by the fortification wall running around. While the wall on the right i.e. North merges into the main one i.e. outer, that on the left i.e. South encircles the hill on the south, and proceeds for a short distance on the west also where it is ruined and remains incomplete. Inside is another wall proceeding from the main i.e. right of entrance running towards east and protecting the top most peak.
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