INTRODUCTION

The subject of the present study is 'The Chalukyan Architecture of Mahabub Nagar District'. It has attracted the attention of scholars for a long time. The temples of Alampur have won due recognition in the writings of the past. But no detailed study has been undertaken on Alampur. The aim of the present author is to study the Chalukyan architecture from 578 A.D. to 1290 A.D. in this district, a phenomenon concurrently taking place along with the two phases of the Chalukyas of Badami and the Chalukyas of Kalyani. In this connection the field trips to the district brought to light the Sangameswar temple at Kudavelli, the Panchalingesvara temple at Panchalingala, Chennakesvara temple at Pudur and the Suryanarayanaswamy temple at Alampur. Hence it was decided to review and examine the whole group of temples from this district.

PREVIOUS WORK:

G. Yazdani (1926) was the first to bring to light the temples of Alampur and Papanasi. The report however, was not accurate as required.

Yazdani has traced the stylistic affinities of the Alampur group to the Parashurameswar temple at Bhuvaneshvar and the cave temples of Western India, especially cave

No. XIX at Ajanta. He concludes that the towers of the Alampur temples show the influence of the north while the plans show the influence of the cave temples. He has also recorded the Papanasi group of temples and remarked that the temples of Papanasi are not architecturally important and are constructed at various periods.

The same author (1961) in a later work concludes by saying that the temples at Alampur, according to the epigraphic evidence, can be dated to 12th century A.D. He does not seem to have undertaken a detailed study of the temples and has drawn certain conclusions regarding their style and date which would be shown later on as erroneous.

Percy Brown (1942) takes note of the Alampur temples as follows:

"They are, however, more in the style of the Papanath at Pattadakal, as they have Indo-Aryan sikhars, and may accordingly be assigned to the same date as that example, namely the latter half of the 7th century. Although appearing to be a modified reproduction of the Papanath type in plan and in their interior arrangements, they show a certain individuality, illustrating what seems to be a local manifestation of the style. In the shape and position of the pillared hall and the shrine chamber, the Alampur structures are not unlike the rock cut temples of the Ravana.

ki-khai in the Ellora group (Chapter XV) also of the 7th Century.3

Percy Brown's comments though partly correct, are again based on insufficient data. The evolutionary aspect of the temples of Alampur when fitted within the chronological scheme of-Chalukyan architecture, gives us the correct perspective of the architecture of the area.

S.K. Saraswati (1957) has merely repeated Percy Brown's observations, with their factual errors included.4

M. Radhakrishna Sarma (1959) read a paper on "Studies in Temple superstructures in Early Medieval Telengana."5 The temples at Alampur and Papanasi form the core of the paper. The author makes two categories of temples, namely the temples with superstructures and the ones with flat roof. The examples given for these categories are both from Alampur and Papanasi. Here it is pertinent to say that there are no flat roofed temples either at Alampur.

3. Percy Brown, Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Periods), Bombay, 1942, p. 70
or Papanasi.

The author enumerates at length the canons of Orissan architecture and employs Orissan terms for the description of the superstructures at Alampur and Papanasi. In profile, design and various component parts of the temples of Deccan differ radically from the Orissan temples. Hence it is difficult to see any reason why the author has chosen a particular school's terminology, especially when there are many texts from the Deccan. The author dates the temples of Alampur from 7th to 9th Century A.D. The wealth of epigraphs and the architectural peculiarities miss the attention of the author in dating these temples. It is possible to show an order in this group of temples. The author further makes no attempt to consider the place of the architectural aspects of the temples of Alampur in the larger perspective.

Regarding the Papanasi group of temples the author opines that the apsidal temple is the earliest temple and the upper limit is fixed as 11th Century A.D. for the whole group. No chronological order is indicated, where it is possible to show an order by taking into consideration the factors like epigraphy, architectural features, material, plan and orientation.

M. Rama Rao (1961) published an article on "The Temples of Alampur"6. The same author (1963) reviewed the temples

of Alampur and Papanasi in an article entitled "Early Chalukyan Architecture - A Review." In this article the author makes an attempt to interpret the classification of Nagara, Vesara and Dravid with examples from Chalukyan centres. The latest publication of the same author (1965) "Early Chalukyan Temples of Andhra Desa" includes the previous writings on Alampur and Papanasi.

The section on inscriptions includes only the published inscriptions. The lable inscriptions on the temples, which are helpful in the chronology of the temples miss the attention of the author.

The section on Architecture contains in the first paragraph itself the statement.

"They have to be assigned to the latter half of the seventh century A.D. at the latest on the basis of the inscriptions contained in them and their architectural style confirms this date."9

The inscriptive data and the architectural features, which can point out 7th Century A.D. have nowhere been explained.

The description of the temples begins with the Mahâdvâra. The description of the temples are not in

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9. Rama Rao, M., op. cit., p. 11
chronological order but on a geographical basis, perhaps as a visitor enters this group of temples.

TARAKA BRAHMĀ:

The plan of the Taraka Brahmā temple has not been clearly stated. The author mentions only the Garbhagrha and the Mandapa. The plan of the Taraka Brahmā temple consists of a Garbhagrha, an antarala and a mukha mandapa. The mouldings of the base of the temple are not clearly described. The author has not followed either the correct description of the shape of the mouldings or the equivalent Sanskrit terms. For example the 'segment of octagon' or Tripaṭṭa Kumuda moulding is merely recorded as a 'moulding'.

The description of the doorway states "on its lintle, a seated female deity attended by a woman on each side."10 This figure is Gajalakshmi in Pralamba pada attended by two elephants. The author states that the jambs are decorated with dwarfs playing musical instruments. On the contrary, the jambs are plain. The author makes no identification of the figure in Sukhāsiṅka. The panel is Natarāja in tandava pose.

PACMA BRAHMĀ:

The author makes no mention of the pillars in the niche, the details of the pillars, the wall pattern of

10. Rama Rao, op. cit., p. 13
the Garbhagṛha and the details of the base. The Maṇḍapa on the three sides of the temple is called by the author as the entrance. About the doorway of the temple the author states that it is plain. The Ganges and Yamuna figures at the base of the jambas, Gandharva in the lalāṭa bimba, decorated jambas and finally dvārapālas are the details of the doorway.

**SVARGA BRAHMĀ:**

The plan of the Svarga Brahmā temple given by the same author does not coincide with what exists there today. The plan consists of Garbhagṛha, antarāla, Maṇḍapa, agra Maṇḍapa, an enclosed Pradeśaṇī patha in the interior and a mandapa on all sides at the exterior from the layout. The architectural peculiarities of this temple are not explained.

**GARUḍĀ BRAHMĀ:**

The author's description of this temple contains incomplete and faulty data. The pediment is called by the author as the 'top of the Koṭṭha'.

**BĀLA BRAHMĀ:**

This temple is subjected to various additions in different periods. The author makes no attempt to distinguish the latter additions from the original.

**VIŚVĀ BRAHMĀ:**

The data is faulty. The author compares this temple to 'the small shrine on the bund of a tank near Maha-kutēsvara Temple.' Perhaps the author might be referring
to the Sangameshwar Temple. If this is so, there is little comparison, as the temples of that group are of formative types, while the Visva Brahma is an evolved type.

VIRA BRAHMA:

The author states that there exists a projecting pavilion on each side. At present there are no pavilions.

ARKA BRAHMA:

The author does not mention the details of the plan. He states further:

One remarkable feature is that the pillars in the temple are strongly reminiscent of the Buddhist pillars found in some of the caves and numerous marble pillars from Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. No explanation is given about the details of the pillars of Arka Brahma and the details of the pillars of Nasik, Amaravati or Nagarjunakonda.

KUMARA BRAHMA:

Regarding the plan and construction of the temples, the author states that:

"It is of the same plan and construction as the other temples." In plan and in other details, this temple is far removed from the other temples in Alampur. This is the simple type in the whole group as will be

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11. Rama Rao, M., op. cit., p. 18
12. Ibid.
shown later. The pillars do not have bases whereas the author has stated that the pillar bases contain Gaja-lakshmi and lion with rider.

PAPANASI:

The author records 22 temples while there are 24 temples. He makes no attempt to show any order in this group. The details about the temples are scanty and there is no site plan which would have been helpful to follow his numbering of the temples. Hence it is difficult to follow which temple the author is describing.

The review of the previous work reveals that there is no systematic and detailed study of the temples of Alampur and other related temples. Hence a systematic and detailed study is undertaken.

PLAN:

The main objective is to document precisely the interesting group of temples found at Alampur and at other sites and to show the importance of the architecture of Mahabubnagar District in the history of the Chalukyan architecture in particular and Indian Architecture in general.

The temple in historic times is the centre for all the activities of life. The creation of these stupendous temples should be viewed in the cultural setting. So the first chapter gives a perspective in the cultural setting of the period with special reference to Mahabubnagar.
District. The interaction of geographical, political and religious factors that prompted to the growth of temple building activity is analysed.

The second chapter is an account of the architectural character of the temples of Mahabubnagar District.

The third chapter is a study of an interesting problem to which not much attention is paid by scholars. How the temple structure and temple sculpture were adjusted to each other to achieve coherent effect. The problems involved in the integration of sculpture into architecture are shown. The mode of representation and the transformation of various motifs is also studied.

The fourth chapter contains a comparative analysis, by which relative and absolute chronology is established with the help of inscriptions. The influence of various art zones and the individuality of the temples are also emphasized.

The last chapter is a summary of conclusions.