Chapter IV

SCULPTURAL REPRESENTATIONS IN TEMPLES OF VIJAYANAGARA
Sculptural Representations in Temples of Vijayanagara

The sculptural representations provide a source to understand the visual scenario of dance during the times. They are also major evidences to identify the technical aspects of dance as seen in the dance treatises of the times. Chapter III is based on the sculptural representations seen in the temples of Vijayanagara. As the study focuses on the Andhra region, the temples built in this area are taken up as the main source for this study. The Vijayanagara kings contributed widely to the temples in the Andhra region. However, the major temples built by them which depict dance are in the present Rayalaseema region, and in the temples of the coastal Andhra region, the Vijayanagara kings made additions to the then already existing temples. Therefore, the major focus of this research study pertains to the temples in the Rayalaseema region. Many scholars have mentioned about the historicity and the architecture of these temples, but not much is revealed on the aspects of dance. Hence, this study attempts to discuss the dance aspects as seen in these sculptural representations.

The description of each temple starts with a brief mention about the features and then describing the dancing figures seen in the temple. The study is divided into two parts. Part A describes all the dancing figures, while correlating them to the technique mentioned in the Natya Sastra. Part B correlates the dancing figures to the desi categories mentioned in Sangeeta Suryodayam. This would help to analyse the movement patterns followed in those times. A description regarding the musical instruments, costumes and jewellery is also mentioned in this part.

Introduction

The South Indian temple construction is primarily in the Dravidian style. The temple is built in a pyramid structure with intricate carvings of deities, dancers, musicians, animals and celestial beings on the walls. The construction of the Dravidian temple chiefly consists of the vimana (the pyramid shaped tower on four sides of the temple), mantapas (halls with several pillars), prakara (enclosure wall with a walkway around the temple) and the garbhagriha (the inner sanctum containing the main deity).

The Vijayanagara temple styles present a vibrant combination of the Chola, Chalukya and the Hoysala styles. Drawing inspiration from its predecessors, the Vijayanagara style
carved a niche of its own which influenced the development of arts at best in those times. Some of the significant features exclusively seen in the temple were the ornate pillared kalyana mantapa (marriage hall), vasanta mantapa (open pillared halls) the rayagopura (tower) and yalis (pillars scultped with warriors on horses charging for war), which were later adapted by the South Indian architechture. The temples were built in hard granite, most of which were built as a mark of victory at different war campaigns.

The Plan of Vijayanagara Temple

The Vijayanagara temples primarily consist of the garbhagriha, antarala, the pradakshinaprakara, mahamantapa and the kalyana mantapa. The garbhagriha and the antarala have an adhisthana. The exterior walls of the prakara are decorated with kumbha panjaras (Fig. 1) and devakosthas. This is followed by the ranga mantapa and natya mantapas which have ornate pillars with yalis (Fig. 2) sculpted on the entrance pillars. Sometimes, there are additions of mukhamantapas and ardhamantapas. The kalyanamantapa is a separate hall in the temple complex.

All the mantapas consist of many pillars with exquisite carvings and various ornamental reliefs. The ceilings are sometimes, painted with figures depicting stories from mythology, and painted with typical vegetable dyed colours for which the Vijayanagara School of painting is famous. The mantapa roofs are curved with rings at the corners for hanging chains. The pillars display both ordinary and composite style of carving. The ordinary ones are of cubical variety having puspapodigai corbels with or without joining bands, and the composite one is where the ordinary cubical has an attached shaft which holds the sculptures of the yalis.
Fig. 1: *Kumbha panjara*

Fig. 2: *Vijayanagara Yali*

Fig. 3: Unfinished *Kalyana mantapa* at Veerabhadra temple- Lepakshi
An effort is made to identify the sculptures that show or closely resemble the technique of marga category from these temples of Andhra. They majorily include the hasta mudras, pada bhedas, sthankas and karanas.

Temperles of Vijayanagara in Andhra region

Tadipatri

Tadipatri is a Taluq headquarters in the district of Anantapur. Located on the banks of Penna River, it was an important administrative centre during the Vijayanagara times. The temples of Bugga Ramalingeswara³ and Chintala Venkataramana were built by the Pemmasani chiefs who were the administrators of the region during the time of Krishnadevaraya.

The earliest epigraphical sources record Tadipatri as a Jaina pilgrimage centre. An epigraphical source records of Jaina benefactions to Tadipatri around 1198 A.D by Udayaditya, son of Somideva and Kanchaladevi, a resident of Tadipatri⁴ at the
Ramalingeswara temple. However, presently there are no Jaina remains in the temple. Before the Vijayanagara rule, Tadipatri was first under the rule of Someswara IV, the Kalyani Chalukyan king and later under the Ballala III, the Hoyasala king. During these times, Tadipatri was a part of the Gutti Sima. During the Vijayanagara rule, it became one of the important administration regions of the empire.

The Tadipatri Kaifiyat mentions that Jillela Chalapati Raju was deputed by Bukka I to look after the affairs of Tadipatri. Later, this was transferred to Nadendla Viraraghava Raju who developed the place. During the rule of Devaraya II, the administration of this place was annexed to the Pemmasani family who were the local feudatory chiefs of the region.

**Ramalingeswara Temple**

Ramalinganayudu succeeded his father as the feudatory chief at Tadipatri during the rule of Krishnadevaraya. He built the Ramalingeswara temple at Tadipatri, which was the first of its kind in Vijayanagara period to be built at Tadipatri.

Situated on the right bank of Penna River, the temple stands as an outstanding example for intrinsic architecture and sculpture. The Ramalingeswara shrine, Parvathi shrine, and the Rama shrine are the central temples on the premises. Other small shrines comprise of the Virabhadra and Saptamatrika shrines to the north of the Ramalingeswara shrine and the Chandi shrine to the south. A Navagraha shrine is situated on the north-east corner along with the Kalyana mantapa. The entire complex is surrounded by a prakara with gopuras on north, south and west. The mantapas and the gopuras are in a dilapidated condition.

The temple was benefacted with many grants from the Vijayanagara kings and noblemen. An inscription dated 1509 A.D records that Mahapradhani Saluva Timmaya granted Nelandalapadu village for the maintenance of the temple rituals and festivals after the construction of the bhogamantapa, gopura and prakara. A further inscription dated 1513 A.D. records land gifts by Saluva Govindayya. Another inscription of the same year mentions grant of land in Kolapatichenu by Singaraiyam, son of maha-mandaleswara Srinadharaju Ramaraju. Several inscriptions dated 1540-1560 A.D. record money collected as tolls being granted to the temple.
As for the features of the temple, the edifices are built in granite and the rest of the temple structures are built in brick and stucco. The temple plan consists of a mukha mantapa, antarala and a garbhagriha. The temple stands on a moulded adisthana. The base in the mukha mantapa, garbhagriha and the antarala is in the style of padabandha adisthana. The padma is in the centre of the roof with averted tips in all the three. The walls are decorated with kumbhapanjaras and kudyastambhas. There are figures of Siva, Parvathi, and Bhikshatana murti on the walls. The doors of the garbhagriha carry the figure of gajalakshmi sculpted in the middle at the lalata and dwarapalas at the base on two sides.

**Dancing figures in the temple**

The temple consists of dancing figures which are majorly present on the prakara walls of the gopuras, the Rama Shrine and the Kalyana mantapa.

**The South Gopura**

The entrance to the temple is from the South gopura. This gopura has reliefs of dancers on the base of the entrance. It carries a relief of two celestial beings, one in katyavalambita\(^7\) (the hand placed on the thigh and the other left down normally, at ease) position and the other in urdhwajaanu karana (one foot placed down, and the other foot’s knee raised up to the level of the chest), holding dandas (sticks) in their left hands. Beside them is a figure of a yaksha in kuncitapada (one of the foot movements, wherein the foot rests on the toes and the heel is raised up) holding a madira patra in the right and a musical instrument with bells attached in a string in the left. The right hand is turned outward similar to the apaviddha karana (one hand on the thigh and the other held on the chest).

There is a figure of a male musician in a seated position blowing the trumpet at the base of the South gopura. Another figure on the opposite wall depicts two ladies and a man. All the three are in samapada (the feet are in normal position kept close). The ladies placing their hands in katyavalambita and recaka (hands moved in different directions) positions. The man’s figure is sculpted as if holding the recaka hands of the ladies. There is a yaksha sculpture with a musical instrument similar to the veena before entering the temple.
In the precincts of the temple, there is a panel depicting kolatam dancers sculpted on the base of the south gopura facing the temple. The upper walls of the gopura depict figures of a rishi and a devapurusha seated with a stringed instrument in their hands. On the same gopura wall, there is a figure of a nartaka with the hand gestures of suchi (the index finger held straight out) and musti (closed fist) with the left and right hand respectively, both placed above the head. A mutilated figure of Lord Shiva is seen beside.

The North Gopura

The prakara wall of the north gopura displays a figure of a lady deep in thought. The right hand is in ardhachandra (half moon – with all fingers stretched out while the thumb is stretched and separated) and the left is in tamrachuda hasta (the index finger curved and other fingers closed into the fist) with an expression denoting as if she is lost in thought. The waist is in chinna kati. Next to this is a miniature figure in swastika (crossed) feet with hand in ardhachandra placed on the thigh. There are also sculptures of musicians and ganas holding the tambura and the dappu on this wall. The upper part of the gopura is mutilated. It holds life size figures of Nataraja. A smaller image of Nataraja is carved in the inner side of the gopura walls. An interesting sculpture noticed here is that of a soldier with a sword in his hand. He is accompanied by dappu dancers on both sides. This might be a representation of veeranatyam done while motivating the soldiers to go to war. The other figures are the chamara purushas in gajakriditha karana (one hand near the ear, the other left free, and feet separated with some distance between them) and accompanied by musicians blowing the trumpet.

The West Gopura

The west gopura depicts a miniature figure of a female dancer in a posture similar to the gajakridita karanam in the inner side facing the temple. Parallel to it is a sculpture of a female dancer in the vivratakara, accompanied by a male musician playing the mridangam. The dancer is bent to one side as if dancing to the beats of the mridangam. There is a lady to the right in sampada holding a stringed instrument similar to the tambura. The outer walls depict a female dancer in the urdhwajana karana (Fig.5) with both the hands in samdamsa hasta (the forefinger bent and joined with thumb and the other fingers stretched out and spread) the left placed near the thigh, the other above the head on the right side8. Opposite to
it stands a sculpture of a mridangist and a musician with a tambura. These representations denote as if the dancer is dancing to the accompaniment of these musicians.

Fig.5: Female dancer in urdhwajana karana on the west gopura- Ramalingeswara temple.

The dwaramantapa on the west gopura has a female dancer in the gajakriditha karanam along with a male musician. But the hasta is not known as the hands of the dancer are mutilated. The musician’s face is also mutilated, hence it cannot be ascertained whether he is a yaksha or a deva purusha. The outer wall of the gopura depicts a mutilated figure of a deva purusha denoting the same suchi and mustihasta, like the figure on the North Gopura. At its base, there is an interesting figure of three yakshas depicted as acrobats. In this, the arms of the middle yaksha are merged with the arms of the side figures\(^9\) (Fig. 6), and so are the legs. The same wall also depicts a male dancer with a dappu, probably representing the dance of the common folk prevalent during those times.

Fig.6: Yakshas denoted as acrobats.
The prakara of the west gopura is unfinished. But it has life size sculptures of Nartana Krishna and Venugopala along with a sculpture depicting the Gajasura Samhara by Lord Shiva in urdhwajanu karana.

**Rama shrine**

Though dancing figures are not so dominant in this shrine, the pillars in ranga mantapa, common to both the Rama and the Devi shrine, depict life size female dancing figures. One representation holds a surapuspa in the left hand while holding the kapitthahasta (the forefinger of tamrachuda hand to be bent and pressed by the thumb). Another figure has a samdamsa hasta placed above the head and the right in Ardhachandra placed on the thigh. Both the figures have their feet in samapada. The others are miniature figures at the base of the pillars holding sura pushpas in one hand and leaving the other hand in dola hasta (the two shoulders at ease with pataka hands hanging down to the sides) with feet in samapada. There is also a male dancer holding a danda with musti hasta above his head, the legs turned out and held apart with one tala distance between them as if dancing. The outer walls to the right side have medium size sculptures. One figure holding the varada mudra\(^{10}\) (palm little hollowed, signifying giving a boon) and the dola hasta. Another figure has suchi hastas in the left and the right hand is left in katyavalambita. There is a mutilated figure on the left side of the outer wall which holds the mudra resembling the simhakarna mudra\(^{11}\) (fingers raised upwards as if expressing wonder or surprise) with the left and the katyavalambita with the right. There is another sculpture of a lady holding the surapuspa, but with the suchi hasta. The dwarapala figures in the ranga mantapa are sculpted in the urdhwajanu karana.

**Kalyana mantapa**

The base of the kalyana mantapa has panels of kolatam dancers similar those present on the base of the south gopura. The panel depicts the court dancers dancing in front of the royal ladies. There is a life size figure of a royal lady carved on one of the pillars of the kalyana mantapa\(^{12}\), holding the right hand in ardhachandrahasta placed on the thigh, and the feet in samapada sthanaka.
The other figures seen in the temple precincts are of Krishnadevaraya and Timayanayudu in _anjali hasta_. Sculptures of various _lata_ designs on the _dwaramantapa_, figures of Lord _Krishna, Mahishasuramardini_, panels of different animals and birds and various celestial beings are spread all over the area of the temple. Sculptures of _yakshas_ sculpted on the north and the south _gopuras_ and at the base of the Rama shrine seem as if holding the base of the _gopura_.

The major dance sculptures can be seen on the _prakara_ walls of the temple. These are majorly accompanied with musicians. It gives an impression that probably these sculptures are representations of dancers who participated in the festival processions of the temple. Importance is given to dances that depict _veeranatyam_.

**Venkataramana Temple**

The Venkataramana temple is located at the north eastern end of Tadipatri. The temple was built by Yera Timma Nayudu, son of Pemmasani Timmayanayudu and brother of Ramalinganayudu. He came into prominence during the time of Rama Raya, when he assisted Rama Raya in many battles against the Adil Shah. The Tadipatri Kaifiyat records Yera Timmanayudu as the patron of the Venkataramana temple at Tadipatri. The temple received rich patronage and according to some inscriptions, received several grants and benefactions.

The temple is built with granite and bricks. The temple complex comprises of the Venkataramana shrine, Devi shrine, Varaha shrine, Lakshminarayana shrine, Ramanuja shrine, Kesava shrine, a _kalyana mantapa_, a Garuda shrine in shape of a stone chariot and a _tulasikota_. It has three entrances, one each from the north, east and the south. The main entrance to the temple is from the east. The northern and the southern entrances remain closed.

**Dancing figures in the temple**

The dancing figures (Fig. 7) are seen on the _vijayastambha_ erected in front of the east _gopura_ while entering the temple. There is a relief of a group of two male musicians with _mridangam_ and the _talas_. There are panels of dancers on all the four sides of the
vijayastambha in various positions. Most of them are seen in the gajakriditha karana and mandala sthanaka (feet apart and obliquely placed with a distance of four talas to the sides).

Fig. 7: Dancing figures on the Vijayastambha – Venkataramana temple.

There is a panel which depicts manmadha dancing with celestial figures beside him. There are also panels depicting the vasantotsava with sculptures of male and female dancers sprinkling coloured water and enjoying the festivities.

After entering the temple, on the gopura wall facing east, one can see sculptures showing groups of yakshas in kuncita, sama and turned out feet position, playing different musical instruments. Various musical instruments like the dappu, chidatalu, tambura and talas are seen here. Similar representations are seen on the southern side of the gopura. In the middle of the panel facing south, there is a sculpture of a rishi dancing holding the right hand above the head and the left placed near the thigh in ardhachandra. On the main door of the east gopura, there is a sculpture of Balakrishna holding butter in his hand with the feet in kuncita pada. Above this is a figure of Nartana Krishna dancing on the hood of kaliya. His feet are in kunchita pada and he holds the hood and the tail of kaliya in each of his hands. On each side of him are two ladies dancing with feet in mandala sthanaka and hands in ardhachandra hasta on the thigh. On the opposite side, there is a female dancer in mandala sthanaka holding samdamsa hasta with the right hand. Over this relief is a panel showing three dancers, two male and one female. The male dancers are on either side of the female dancer, the right dancer with a mridangam and the left one holding the cymbals. The female dancer holds a flower in her right hand and the left hand is in katyavalmbita position. The feet of all the three are in the turned out position.
To the right side of the *dhwajastambha* is the *tulasikota*. This has intricate carvings of male and female dancers on all the four sides, with various kinds of instruments in their hands. The feet are mostly in *kuncitapada*, *swastika* or the turned out position. On the lower panel of one side, a male dancer is seen holding *anjalihasta* (two *pataka* hands joined together) above the head with feet turned out. The other dancer is a *vidushaka*, turning to one side and raising the left foot up to the height of the right knee. This resembles *baddhacari* (the side movement of the thighs with the shanks crossed) in movement. In the middle panel is again a figure of Balakrishna carved holding butter in his hand with feet in *kuncitapada*.

**Ranga mantapa**

In the *ranga mantapa*, there are various figures of royal ladies sculpted as *Suka sundaris* in *samapada sthanaka*, *Darpana sundaris* in *sukahsana*¹⁴ (seated with one leg freely hanging down and the other folded), *madhupatradharinis*, *veenadharis* in *samapada sthanaka*. Sculptures of other ladies carrying flower baskets, pooja articles, and few celestial figures with *abhaya*¹⁵ and *varada mudras* can also be seen. The feet of all these ladies are in *samapada sthanaka* (feet in natural position with a distance of one *tala* between them). These might be the representations of the *devadasis* attached to the temple as the activities they carry on are more connected to the rituals of the temple and it was only the dancers who conducted these services.

The other important dancing figures shown in the temple are the panels with *kolatam* dancers, sculpted on the north and south entrances of the *mukha mantapa*. The panel consists of the usual number of 8-20 dancers. But the figures are more intricate than the ones seen in Ramalingeswara temple. The feet of the alternate figures are raised, the waist is in *echina* (pushed to a side) position and their sticks intersperse with each other. A variety of movement patterns are depicted in these sculptures, which are mentioned in Part B of the chapter.

The base of the *ranga mantapa* has sculptures of *yakshas*, each holding a musical instrument. These figures are carved in the square shaped *ranga mantapa* on the base of the extreme inner pillars. There is an open space between these end pillars which might have been used for dance and music activities in the temple. This space directly faces the main
diety. This gives a strong evidence that the *ranga mantapa* might have been used as the *natya mantapa* too. Fig. 8 depicts the figures of the *yakshas* starting from left to right.

![Yaksha with flute standing in Kuncita pada](image1)

![Yaksha in sampada with Dappu](image2)

![Yaksha with Chidatalu with left foot in kuncita pada](image3)

![Yaksha in sitting position with Dappu](image4)

Fig. 8: Description of *Yakshas* with musical instruments in *Ranga mantapa*, starting from the left.
Yaksha with conch, with knees turned inside and held as *kuncitas*

Yaksha with *ektara* probably in sitting position

Chamara purusha

Yaksha with flute in the right hand, left hand in *dola hasta*, feet in *samapada*

Fig. 8: Description of *Yakshas* with musical instruments in *Ranga mantapa*. contd
Yaksha with maddela probably in sitting position

Yaksha with conch with feet turned out in kuncita position, head tilted to one side

Balakrishna in sitting position

Yaksha with trumpet, feet in kuncita position

Fig. 8: Description of Yakshas with musical instruments in Ranga mantapa... contd
Yaksha with dappu in the right hand, danda in the left hand, feet in samapada

Yaksha in dance

Fig. 8: Description of Yakshas with musical instruments in Ranga mantapa.

There are a few beautiful sculptures depicting the childhood deeds of Lord Krishna carved in the ranga mantapa. There is a miniature figure of Nartana Krishna carved on the stone chariot. It depicts him in urdhwajana karana. He holds butter in his left hand and his right hand depicts the patakahasta (fingers of the hand stretched out completel and the thumb bent), turning upwards.

Devi shrine

Similar to the ranga mantapa walls, the outer walls of the Devi shrine have reliefs of royal ladies carrying out various activities. Not much of dancing sculptures are seen here. The
feet of all of the ladies are in *samapada sthanaka*. There are sixteen life size female figures seen in the *mukha mantapa* of the Devi shrine. They are attached to sixteen pillars, each figure depicting one of the *shodasopacharas* (sixteen rituals) done to the deity.

The other sculptures seen in the temple are of the *chamara purushas*, *gopikavastrapaharanam*, Krishna with Yashoda, and Krishna killing Sakatasura, etc. There are no Shaivite figures except for one which shows Lord Shiva in *samapada sthanaka*.

The Tadipatri temples are beautiful examples of detailed dance sculptures pertaining to the Vijayanagara period. No other temples in the Andhra region depict such fine sculptures, especially in both the *marga* and the *desi* category. These sculptures throw a lot of light on understanding the different classes of dancers of the times.

**Gorontla**

**Madhavaraya Temple**

Gorontla is located in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. It has access to all the major towns of the district. The temple of Madhavaraya Swami is situated on the banks of river Chitravati in Gorontla, on the roadway from Gorontla to Kadiri.

Inscriptions date back the time of the temple to 1354 A.D., known to be built by Saluva Narasimha Raya of the Saluva Dynasty of Vijayanagara. Epigraphic sources mention about Addeppanaidu providing grants for the festivals of Vijayadasami in 1524 A.D. There are also inscriptions dating to 1610 A.D., mentioning the Penugonda king, Chikkavenkatappa Nayadu, providing few villages for the maintenance and performance of the daily rites in the temple.

**Features of the temple**

Built to a height of 26 metres, the temple has a *mukha mantapa*, an *antarala* and a *garbhagriha*. All the pillars in the temple have reliefs of dancers, musicians and the *avataras* of Lord Vishnu carved on them. On the left of the temple is a *pushkarini* and to the right is a small temple of Someswara. The main deity of the temple is Madhavaraya Swami. Though
the temple is not in a mutilated condition, the image of Madhavaraya Swami has been mutilated.

**Dancing figures in the temple**

**Mukha mantapa**

The *mukha mantapa* consists of 16 pillars divided into four rows. While entering the *Mukha mantapa*, the inner left pillar in the first row shows a relief of dance. There are two musicians and one dancer in the relief, all male. The dancer is in the middle, standing in the *mandala sthanaka* and the two musicians are on either side of the dancer. The instrument held by the musician on the left is not clear, but the right one is holding a *dappu*. The legs of the dancer are in the *mandala sthanaka* and intersperse with the left and right legs of the musicians respectively. To the extreme left, there is a pillar depicting the story of Rama refusing Shoorpanakha’s amorous advances. Shoorpanakha is dancing and Rama’s hand is raised denoting he is not interested in her. On the same pillar, beside the above relief, is a *naga* in a dance posture with feet in *kuncitatapada*. While one can see the above two reliefs on the left side, the extreme right side contains a sculpture of two acrobats. To the extreme right in the second row, is a relief depicting the *mallayuddha* (wrestling) by the *yakshas*. In the third row, to the inner left, is a *kolatam* panel. The dancers in this relief wear a short skirt until the thighs, unlike the other *kolatam* dancer’s costumes. These panels give an example of the variegated dress patterns of the dancers in the Vijayanagara times.

There are again reliefs of dancers on the left side in the last row of the pillars. One relief on the inner left pillar shows a dancer accompanied by an orchestra. There are three ladies, the lady in the middle in *urdhwajanu karana* with two *samdamsa hastas*, one above the head and the other placed near the waist. The lady on the left is holding cymbals and the lady to the right is playing the *mridangam*. Unlike the other panels, this panel has women playing the instruments as accompaniment to the dance. Hence, this is a unique panel and probably indicates the all woman *nattuvamela* group.

Above this relief, there is a miniature panel depicting reliefs of female dancers round the pillar, dividing the pillar into two. The top part of the pillar depicts three female dancers, all with one hand placed near the waist and the other above the head. Here, the costume of
each dancer is different from the other. The *hastas* placed near the waist resemble the *samdamsa hasta*. On the opposite side of the same pillar, a *Nartana Krishna* is carved dancing on Kaliya. He holds the serpent with his two hands and the stance is *urdhwanjan karana*.

The outer right side pillar in the last row also has reliefs of dancers. These figures depict movement which bear close semblance to those mentioned in *Sangeeta Suryodayam*. The details of these sculptures are given in Part B of the chapter. In the second row, the inner right pillar again depicts *Nartana Krishna* in a slightly different way. He is in *urdhwanjan karana*, dancing on the hood of Kaliya and holding the tail with his left and the middle body with his right hand, respectively. There is a pattern followed here while carving the reliefs of dancers and *Nartana Krishna* alternatively in the entire row. The *Nartana Krishna* sculptures are more dominant than any other temple as the main deity of the temple is a form of Lord Krishna.

**Antarala**

While proceeding into the *antarala*, the upper panel of the entry door from the *Mukha mantapa* to the *Antarala* has carvings of *veenadharis* (Fig.9). The *antarala* is built in a square plan, has two entrances, one from the east and the other from the south, and has four pillars.

![Fig. 9: Veenadharis at the mukha mantapa – Madhavaraya temple, Gorontla](image-url)
All the pillars have two reliefs on each side which are divided by a miniature panel of female dancers. The miniature carvings are very intricate. The pillars are joined with each other with a circular platform of one feet high. This kind of architecture is seen in the natya mantapas of the Kakatiyas. It may be a possibility that this antarala might have also been a natya mantapa.

In the antarala, the outer left pillar from the garbhagriha is carved with a relief of male and female celestials in dolahastas and feet in samapada. The lower half of the inner left pillar has a dancer in urdhwanjanu karana with left hand in samdamsa hasta placed above the head and the right hand placed obliquely towards the right, resembling varada mudra. The dancer is accompanied with two musicians, one male and the other female, the musician on the right side (male) plays a mrdangam and the musician to the left (female) has the tambura in hand (Fig. 10).

Fig. 10: Dancer with male and female musicians – pillar of Antarala, Madhavaraya temple, Gorontla

On the other side of the same pillar, a dancer is carved in urdhwanjanu karana holding the samdamsa hasta turned outwards with the left and the right hand placed above the head. The right hand hasta is not clearly known. To the opposite side of this relief, is a yaksha dancing with both the hands in recaka. Beside this is a vidushaka accompanied by a female musician. The feet and hands of the vidushaka are turned inwards depicting a clown. The inner pillar to the right side towards the garbhagriha depicts a dancer in urdhwanjanu
karana, and a mridangist. The outer pillar has carvings of female dancers in sampada and hands in recaka, dancing in front of Hayagriva swami.

**Garbhagriha**

The Garbhagriha is on an adhisthana with three steps. On both sides of the steps are two pillars each depicting dancers’ reliefs. On one side is a dancer accompanied by a mridangist. The dancer is in urdhwajana karana, but the hasta is not clearly known. There are two reliefs of Nartana Krishna.

This temple complex is a small one when compared to the other temples of Vijayanagara. Yet, it treasures very beautiful and a variety of dance sculptures. It is interesting to note that in such a small complex, the dancing figures are dominant than the other divine figures and has intricate patterns. This shows the importance of dance in the temple activity.

**Lepakshi**

Lepakshi is situated in the Hindupur Taluq of Anantapur district. The temple is said to be built by Virupanna, son of Nandilakisetti. The time of the construction of the temple can be ascertained around 1522–1538 A.D. Achyutadevaraya presented several grants to the temple. An inscription of 1533 A.D. mentions that the king donated pearls worth his own weight to the temple.

The temple is famous for the roof paintings displaying the Vijayanagara style. Apart from the paintings, a special feature is the innate carvings of fine design in the temple. The temple is also famous for Asia’s largest monolith figure of Nandi, Lord Shiva’s bull. There are not many inscriptions which speak about the grants or benefactions made to the temple. But few of them inscribed on the walls of the temple mention about Virupanna and his brother. In addition, few more sources mention few villages given as grants to the temple by Virupanna.

The temple is located on a hill called Kurmasaila – a tortoise shaped hill, which comprises of 185 acres. The temple initially had seven prakaras, out of which only three are
remaining at present. These three prakaras occupy around five acres of the hill. The other prakaras have been encroached by the village. Even today, one gets to see pillars of the prakaras as support for the roofs in the village houses. The temple faces north. The entrance is from the the first prakara, which was originally the third prakara. The temple has a total of 876 pillars.

**Dancing figures in the temple**

The temple contains several exquisite figures and panels of dance. The dance figures are seen in almost all the main mantapas and prakaras of the temple.

**First Prakara**

One can see a variety of musicians and dancers as bas relief of the pillars. The mantapa of the first prakara extends to all sides and displays a number of dancing figures. The north facing mantapa entrance contains sculptures of male dancers playing the dappu. Two sculptures of yakshas can be seen in the north side mantapa, accompanied with a yaksha seated with a danda in his hand. The dancing yakshas are carved in the mandala sthanaka, one yaksha has the hands in recaka, and the other has hands rested on the thigh with ardhachandarahasta. There are figures of male dancers with a variety of instruments like the dolu, dappu, etc., in the same mantapa.

There are two figures of dancers in the south facing mantapa of the first prakara. The first dancer displays the urdhwajamu karana. The left hand is placed on the thigh and the right hand is raised to a side near the head. The second dancer displays the recitanikuttakam karana (right hand in recita and left feet on toes). The costumes of the two dancers are different. There is a bas relief of Virupanna with anjali hasta in the same mantapa. There are numerous other bas reliefs of yakshas in the mantapa. On the south side, there are sculptures of four more yakshas in the mandala sthanaka, holding dandas in their hand.

In the west facing mantapa of the same prakara, there are figures of yakshas holding musical instruments. Two yakshas are holding chidathalu in their left hands, and the right hands are placed on the thighs. The feet are similar to the posture of gajakriditha karanam.
There is another figure of a female dancer seated with the right hand raised above the head in *ardhachandrahasta*. The left hand is placed on the thigh.

**Kalyana mantapa**

The *Kalyana mantapa* has four rows of pillars on the side opposite to *Ugrarupa Vinayaka*. However, as the *kalyana mantapa* was left unfinished\(^2\), the appearance of the sculptures is not completely refined. These pillars display few dancing figures. In the first row of the *kalyana mantapa*, there is a bas relief of a male dancer playing a small *mridangam*. The same row contains a sculpture of a female dancer displaying a posture similar to the *dandapaksha* karana (in *urdhwapajana* karana, the hands in wavy gesture). In the left hand, she holds a musical instrument similar to the trumpet. As the sculpture is unclear, it is difficult to notice the exact instrument. The row also contains sculptures of acrobats, similar to the sculptures found in Gorontla. On one relief, there are two male acrobats encircling each other while holding each other’s legs with their hands. In the other, there are three male acrobats who look like *vidushakas*. The one standing in the middle is in the *mandala* sthanaka and the other two are to the sides with feet turned apart. Their hands are joined together in front of the chest in the *hasta* similar to *pushpaputa* hasta (both hands held together with palms facing upwards, like holding flowers). This sculpture, when observed closely, shows two different positions. When the outer legs of the side acrobats are closed, it represents the *vidushaka* standing in a position with feet turned inwards. When the inner legs are closed, it shows the *vidushaka* in the *mandala* sthanaka. There is also a sculpture depicting a *deva purusha* in the *gajakriditha* karanam with the left hand placed on the thigh, and the right hand placed under the chin.

There is a figure of Bala Krishna in *agratalasanchara* feet (the toes on the ground and heel raised), one hand is raised upto the head, and the other placed near the chest, probably holding butter. Sculptures of female dancers are depicted as *darpanasundari, sukasundaris*, dancers in *gajakriditha karanam*, are seen in the *kalyana mantapa*. There are figures of ladies playing the musical instruments. There is a bas relief of two *deva purushas* dancing with feet in *kuncita* and the hands in *recaka*.

The fourth row displays four figures of *yakshas* playing different musical instruments. The first one is in *samapada* playing an instrument similar to a *dommanagoya* (a small sized
trumpet). The second one is playing the kommu, while bending low to the left side. The third one displays a maddela and the fourth one is seated playing the sankha. The Matsyavallabha shrine has two miniature figures displaying one female dancer playing the kolatam, and the other female dancer in the edakakridita cari (jumping up and down with feet in agatalasancara) in movement with hands in recaka.

**Entrance to Natya mantapa**

The doorways on both the sides have vertical panels with miniature figures of dancers and musicians. The first four panels on the left side display a Nartana Krishna, a chamara purusha, two female dancers in recitanikuttakam karanam, a male mridangist and a female dancer respectively, from the top. The fifth panel displays a male and a female musician playing a trumpet, the sixth depicts female dancers playing kolatam, and the last panel displays a lady musician seated and playing two tablas.

On the right side, the third panel displays kolatam dancers. The fourth displays a lady dancer accompanied with a male musician on the cymbals and the fifth one again displays a kolatam panel.

The second entrance too displays dancing figures. The middle panel to the left displays a dancer in kuncita padam and the hands in recaka. The right side displays a male mridangist and a female dancer with her feet turned inside.

**Natya mantapa**

The most exclusive and ornate carvings of dance are displayed here in the Natya mantapa. In total, there are six rows of pillars in the mantapa with three on each side, creating an empty space in between, probably for dancing. This space directly faces the main deity in the garbhagriha. From both the sides, the inner most pillar forms the central pillar on which life size dancing figures are displayed. The four corner pillars of this central space have five sides, whereas the others are square shaped.

**Description of dance reliefs on the natya manpata pillars**
In the first row, there is a figure of a chamara dharini in samapada. There is a yaksha in the mandala sthanaka, holding a danda in his hand. Kolatam panels are depicted in the second row around the pillars. In the third row, there is a figure of a female dancer in the posture similar to the chinnam karana (one hand in alapadma on the waist, and the feet obliquely placed, similar to vaisakha stanakam). A yaksha is seated cross-legged, and with the hands resting on the knees. The same row contains a sculpture of the celebrated saint Annamacharya. The fifth row again has a dancing figure of a yaksha in the dandaka recita karana (hands and feet in recita). The sixth row depicts a figure of Krishna dancing in urdhwajanu karanam on the hood of Kaliya. He is holding the tail of the serpent with his left hand and the right hand is placed on the thigh in ardhachandra hasta.

Description of the central pillars in the Natya mantapa

The natya mantapa is specially designed depicting a dance scene of Rambha, the celestial nymph, in front of Lord Shiva and Parvathi. Rambha is accompanied by other celestials on different musical instruments. The pillar of Rambha’s sculpture is directly opposite to the pillar on which the natyaguru Bhringi is sculpted, and the posture of Rambha is exactly the same as that of Bhringi. This might be an indication that Bhringi, as a guru, is guiding or prompting Rambha on the movements while she dances. An interesting fact about these two sculptures is that the pillar of Bhringi can only be seen from the pillar with Rambha’s sculpture, and not from any other pillar. This gives strength to the probability of Bhringi prompting Rambha as a teacher guiding a student not to make mistakes in a performance. Fig. 11 below shows the sculptures of Bhringi (left) and Rambha (right), respectively.

Fig. 11: Sculptures of Bhringi (left) and Rambha (right) in the natya mantapa – Lepakshi temple.
The central pillars forming the part of the dance series are the pillars 2, 5, 8 and 11.

The figurative map of the *natyamantapa* is given below.

![Fig. 12: Figurative map of the natyamantapa – Lepakshi temple.](image)

The order of sculptures on the pillars (starting from right to left):
Shiva in *urdhwa janu karanam*
2\textsuperscript{nd} pillar – (a) Parvathi viewing the dance of Rambha, (b) Sakhi of Parvathi, (c) Shiva lingam and lata designs (d) Lata designs, (e) Sakhi of Parvathi with chamara

Surya on the trumpet, Tumbura on the Veena, Rishi on mridangam

5\textsuperscript{th} pillar – (a) Bhringi prompting to Rambha (this side of the pillar is only visible from the pillar of Rambha), (b) Nandi playing the mridangam, (c) Bhikshatana murthi figure of Lord Shiva, (d) Parvathi offering alms to Lord Shiva- Bhikshanatana Murti\textsuperscript{23}, (e) Lata designs

Nandi with mridangam, Panchamukha brahma on the mridangam

8\textsuperscript{th} pillar – (a) Nataraja in Dandapaksha karanam, (b) Deva purusha playing the dolu, (c) Tumbura playing the mridangam, (d) Saraswathi playing the veena, (e) Brahma on the cymbals

Deva purusha, Rishi (probably Brihaspati), Nataraja in Bhujangatrasita karanam (in kuncita movement of feet, the legs obliquely placed)

11\textsuperscript{th} pillar – (a) Rambha dancing, (b) Deva purusha on the mridangam, (c) Lady with chamara, (d) Salabhanjika, (e) Deva purusha playing the cymbals

Dattatreya on the cymbals

\textit{Ardha mantapa}

The \textit{ardha mantapa} also depicts dancing figures. Sculptures of a musician playing the veena seated on an aasana, men playing the dappu, and figures of female dancers in a variety of poses are present in the \textit{ardha mantapa}. One dancer exhibits a pose with the feet turned inside and the hands left in \textit{dola}. Another dancer represents a similar posture to \textit{gajakriditha karana} with the left hand raised to a side, and the right hand placed on the thigh. Both the hands are in the \textit{ardhachandra hasta}. Another relief shows a dancer in \textit{recitanikuttikam karanam}. One relief shows a lady with the chinnakati, both the hands in the \textit{ardhachandra hasta}, the left placed on the thigh and the right raised to a side. Another relief exhibits a lady in a seated position, with hands above the head, the right hand in \textit{musti hasta} holding the left hand depicting the \textit{suchi hasta}. There is a figure of Krishna dancing on the hood of Kaliya.

Various figures of \textit{yakshas} are also represented. One relief depicts a \textit{yaksha} in the seated position with the right hand placed on the right thigh, and the left hand in \textit{dola} placed on the knee of the left leg, which is stretched out. Sculptures of a \textit{yaksha} in the \textit{mandala sthanaka}, a \textit{yaksha} in \textit{ardhwanjanu karana} holding a musical instrument in the left hand, and another \textit{yaksha} playing the tambura are also present.
**Antarala**

On one of the pillars in the *antarala*, there is a figure of a male dancer standing with feet apart at a distance of one *talam* and the hands are in *recaka*. The *antarala* roof contains panels of female dancers accompanied by male musicians and dancing figures of *yakshas* alternately on the four sides of the roof. However, the exact description of the positions is very difficult as the *antarala* is dark and the figures have been charred. There is a huge sculpture of a *Natya Ganapathi* with four hands displaying the *urdhwa janu karana*. The upper hands hold the *pasa* and the *ankusa*, the lower right hand displays a *modaka* and the left hand holds the *tusk*. This figure is to the right side of the *Garbhagriha*. The left side displays a *Gajasura Samhara* Murthi of Lord Shiva.

*Virupanna*, being a devotee of Lord Shiva, left no stone unturned to depict the utmost magnificence of the lord. This is perhaps the only temple in Andhra region which depicts so many themes revolving around Lord Shiva. It is sad that such an exquisite temple is left unfinished. Yet, it depicts great architecture in terms of dance which marks it as an important site to understand how dance was patronized in the Vijayanagara times.

**Ahobilam**

Ahobilam, located in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, is famous for the Nava Narasimha shrines. As the name suggests, Lord Narasimha is the main deity. His nine forms are sanctified in the nine temples and constitute the Nava Narasimha shrines.

**Ahobilam Kaifiyat**

The Ahobilam Kaifiyat, which is a part of the Mackanzie’s collection, is written by Kasuba Karnam Ramanna, giving information regarding the temples. The Ahobilam temples received patronage from the Kakatiyas, Reddis and the Vijayanagara kings. The Ahobilam Kaifiyat mentions the epigraphical evidences indicating the contribution of the Vijayanagara kings. An inscription dated 1385–86 A.D. mentions the construction of the *mukha mantapa* in Upper Ahobilam by Harihara II of Vijayanagara. Another inscription mentions the visit paid by Krishnadevaraya on his way to the conquest of Kalinga. It also mentions the jewellery presented to the Lord by the king along with his titles like *Purva-
There are also a series of inscriptions mentioned from the time of Sadasiva Raya. An inscription speaks about the plundering of the temple in 1578 A.D., by Ibrahim Qutub Shah and that the temple was under the possession of the Muslims for several years. The same inscription also mentions Satagopaswamy, the disciple of Parankusa Mahamuni and the head of the Ahobilam Mutt. It mentions that he visited Sriranga Raya and requested him to release the temple from the Muslim authority. On the order of Sriranga Raya, Sri Kodaraju Venkatara and Sri Tirumalaraju, the Telugu Choda chiefs marched against the Muslim forces at Ahobilam and freed the temple from their authority. Later, the plundered temple was renovated. Few inscriptions from Venkatapati Raya’s time mention the different rituals observed in the temple.

**Nava Narasimha temples**

Divided into lower and upper Ahobilam, the nine forms of Narasimha in the temples are *Jwala Narasimha, Ahobila Narasimha, Mahalola Narasimha, Kroda Narasimha, Karanja Narasimha, Bhargava Narasimha, Yogananda Narasimha, Kshravata Narasimha and Pavana Narasimha*.  

**Location of the temples**

The *Jwala Narasimha* temple is 10 furlongs to the north east of Garudachalam hill. To the south west from this temple is the *Ahobila Narasimha* temple. To the north at a distance of two miles from this point is the *Mahalola Narasimha* temple. Two miles south from this point lies the *Kroda Narasimha* temple. To the north-west at a distance of three furlongs is the *Karanja Narasimha* temple. The *Bhargava Narasimha* temple is two furlongs from the *Karanja Narasimha* temple. From this temple, the distance of three furlongs at the west side leads to the *Yogananda Narasimha* temple. To the south west direction from here, at a distance of six furlongs is the *Kshravata Narasimha* temple. To the eastern direction at a distance of one *amada* is the *Pavana Narasimha* temple. To the north east of this temple at a distance of ten furlongs is found to be the *Ugrasthambham*, the pillar from which the *avatara* of Lord Narasimha incarnated.
At a distance of eight kilometers from the lower Ahobilam is the upper Ahobilam. These two temples are called diguva and eguva Ahobilam, respectively. All the temples are built of granite and the super structures with brick and stucco.

**Upper Ahobilam temple**

This temple is built in the hills where the Bhavanasini river flows. This is the main temple in Upper Ahobilam. It is said to be the place where the Lord has manifested himself as Swayambhu Ugra Narasimha Swamy and killed the demon Hiranyakashyapa.

**Lower Ahobilam**

This temple does not form a part of Nava Narasimha temples. This was later built by the Vijayanagara kings around 1532 A.D. There are inscriptions in the temple which substantiate this fact. An inscription dated 1515 A.D. mentions that Krishnadevaraya visited Ahobilam and gifted jewels to the Lord³¹.

**Features of the temple**

The temple sculpture is similar to that of Vitthal temple at Hampi. The temple stands on a moulded adhisthana. Intricate carvings are seen on all the important structures of the
temple. There are two levels of sculptures on the base of the *adhisthana*. The lower level carries panels of elephants and horse riders on the *upapitham*. Above this level, are carved reliefs of soldiers. The next level consists of swans. The pillars are well sculpted with *puspapadogias*. The corbels are carved as if the *yakshas* are holding the pillars with their hands. Beside the *yakshas*, are the figures of *Yalis*.

**Dancing Figures in Lower and Upper Ahobilam**

**Upper Ahobilam**

A figure of a *yaksha* dancing in *gajakriditha karana* is present on the outer wall of the main *gopura*. The base of the *gopura* contains a sculpture of a female dancer with feet placed similar to *gajakriditha karana*, the left hand in the *kapittha* and the right hand in *ardhachandra*. A miniature carving of a male is present beside this dancer, as if praising her. His left hand is in *katyavalambita hasta*. There are dancing figures on the walls of the *maha mantapa* of the shrine. A panel of the outer wall of the *maha mantapa* depicts a female dancer dancing in ecstasy. Another sculpture depicts Rama freeing Ahalya from the curse and Ahalya emerging as a woman from stone. Ahalya is seen holding the *anjalihasta* above her head. Another sculpture represents a *nartaki* in *urdhwajanu karana* with her right hand in *aralahasta* placed above the head to a side. The *hasta* of the other hand is not clear. On the way to the *garbhagriha*, there is a relief depicting *suka sundari* in *samapada*, and a figure of a male dancer in the *swastika* position. As the temple is located on a hill, the *kalyana mantapa* is constructed on a level higher than the main shrine. On the way to the *kalyana mantapa*, figures of female and male dancers dancing in groups are carved on the side walls of the pathway. Few of them are posing in the *urdhwajanu karana*, few in *baddhacari* and others in *gajakriditha karana*. There are panels depicting *Chenchulakshmi* hunting and *Nartana Krishna* on Kaliya. An interesting feature observed in all the temples is that the attire of Krishna differs from one temple to the other. The attire of the dancers in this temple is simpler without intricate work when compared to the Tadipatri temples. The figure of *Nartana Krishna* here depicts the *urdhwajanu karana* but the leg is raised more above the thigh. With the right hand, he holds the body of the serpent, while the left hand is stretched out.
**Kroda Narasimha temple**

There are bas reliefs in the *mantapa* of the temple. Some interesting reliefs to note in the *Mantapa* are the ones of the Portuguese. This denotes trade relations that existed between the Vijayanagara kings and the Portuguese. One pillar depicts a figure of a male Portuguese carrying a *danda* in hand. A rural folk playing the *mridangam* is shown on another pillar. This *mridangam* is different from the other *mridangams* seen in other temples of Vijayanagara. A *darpana sundari* is seen on another pillar.

On the way to this temple, sculptures of dancers and musicians are carved on random pillars, which are not clear at present. There is a relief of *Nartana Krishna* holding butter in his left hand, with feet similar to *gajakriditha karana*. The right hand is in *katyavalambita hasta*. Another panel shows a female dancer dancing in front of the king depicting the *urdhwanjanu karana* (Fig. 14). She is accompanied with musical instruments such as the cymbals, *mridangam* and the *tambura*. Beside this panel, two female dancers are carved in *gajakriditha karana*. The costume is different from the costumes seen in the other panels. There is also a bas relief probably showing a royal lady holding the *suchi hasta*.

![Image of dancer in the urdhwanjanu karana – Kroda Narasimha temple, Ahobilam](image)

**Lower Ahobilam – Ranga mantapa**

The *ranga mantapa* has beautiful life size dance sculptures similar to those seen in the Vitthali temple at Hampi. Some of the important ones include, (a) Man playing on the *mridangam*. The feet are in the turned out position, (b) Man with cymbals in his hands. The
feet are in *samapada*, (c) Man with a *tambura* in his hand as if proceeding for *bhajan*. The feet are in *samapada*, (d) Man playing on *mridangam*. The *mridangam* is smaller and more intricately carved. The feet are in turned out position, and (e) Female dancer with flowers in her hands. The feet are in the turned out position as if ready to start the *puspanjali*.

There are also statues of Krishnadevaraya, Timmarusu, a *dhanurdhari*, Hanuman and Devi. The costumes and ornaments depict the styles of those days. Unlike the other figures and bas reliefs seen in the temple, these particular sculptures are more intricate, fine and stylish. On the outer walls of the *garbagriha*, there is a panel depicting celestials dancing.

Apart from these figures, there are bas reliefs of musicians and dancers in the sub *mantapas* of the *ranga mantapa*. One relief shows a musician playing the trumpet. There is a relief of *Nartana Krishna* dancing, carved in such a way that it gives an impression that he is holding the base of the pillars in the *ranga mantapa*. The feet are in the *samapada*, the left hand is placed in *ardhachandra* on the thigh. With the right hand, he holds the pillars of the *ranga mantapa*. There is also a relief of a dancer with feet in turned out position holding the *madhupatra*. She depicts the *suchi hasta* with the left. The stance indicates as if she is asking whether to serve *madhuvu* or not. Her costume is similar to the short skirts noticed in the Gorontha temple.

**Kalyana mantapa**

The *kalyana mantapa* is to the southern side of the temple. The base of the *kalyana mantapa* has bas reliefs of male musicians playing the *dappu*, trumpet, *veena*, etc. All are in dance stances while playing the instruments. The *dappu* dancer is in a stance of *baddha cari* and the rest are in *gajakrddktha karana*. The most interesting panel here is the panel with one female dancer dancing to the accompaniment of the orchestra. The dancer is in the *vishnukranta karana* (one foot stretched forward, and hands in *recita*) with her left leg raised above her head (Fig. 15). The two hands are in *dola*. To her right is a *mridangist* playing, and to her left is another with bells in his hands, the left hand kept near the raised leg of the dancer and the right hand parallel below. It looks as if the dancer is attempting to touch the bells with her raised leg. This denotes the acrobatic feats the dancers used to perform as part of the dance movements.
There are two mantapas on either side of the main gopura which have interesting reliefs. The left one is referred by the local people as the uyyalamantapa and the right one as Mrtyungrahanavmantapa. There is no evidence as to why exactly these mantapas were built for.

**Uyyala mantapa**

There is a bas relief of a shy woman on one of the pillars. She holds the left hand patakahasta while covering her breast, and with the right hand she holds the ardhachandra hasta placed on her right thigh. The feet are in samapada, but turned out to one side. Another pillar carries a relief of a sukasundari in samapada. There are two reliefs of Nartana Krishna. In one relief, he is in the mandala sthanaka holding butter in his hand and rests his foot down. The other is in urdhwajana karana.

**Mrtyungraha mantapa**

There are a number of interesting dancing figures seen in this mantapa. Though the purpose of this mantapa is unknown, many sculptures of dance and musical instruments are depicted on the pillars. It might be possible that this mantapa was used for dance and music. One relief shows a dancer in the mandala sthanaka and the hands in dola. The hairdo is different for this dancer, tied as a bun completely to a side. It resembles the Mohini attam style of dressing more closely. There is also a figure of a darpanasundari completing her toilette. There are figures of rural folk playing the dappu on two pillars. Both are in samapada. There is a statue of a male dancer with a bowl in his hand. The feet are in turned out position and the left hand is in ardhachandra hasta placed on the thigh. Two carvings of
male mridangists can also be seen, with feet turned out in both the reliefs. What is interesting here is the instruments. While in one the regular mridangam is seen, the other looks similar to that of a maddela. A variety of instruments are depicted in these sculptures. Another pillar shows a male musician playing a trumpet, but a shorter one when compared to the figure of the musician in the ranga mantapa. There are two figures of male acrobats in feet turned out position. They represent stances of getting ready for a fight, probably malla yuddham.

**Mantapas on the way to Upper Ahobilam**

**Raghupati mantapa**

The pillars in the Raghupati mantapa also carry few dancing reliefs. There is a figure of a chamara purusha on a pillar with the feet in kuncita. This is unlike all other figures of chamara purushas depicting the gajakriditha karana. There is an interesting figure of a naga, with the feet turned inside and the knees touch each other. Sculptures of a clown and a nartaka playing the cymbals are also present, which are carved as if bending down to look at the feet of the dancer and playing accordingly.

**Yenugula mantapa**

There is a figure of a rishi in samapada, but with a gap between his feet. With the right hand, he holds the kamandala and the left hand is in samdamsa hasta. There is also a figure of Arjuna aiming at the matsyayantra. Apart from these, there are also sculptures depicting the Nava Narasimha incarnations and other forms of Vishnu.

**Srisailam**

The temple of Srisailam, a popular Shaivaite pilgrim centre, is situated in the Nandikotkur Tuluq of Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. The presiding deity is Lord Mallikarjuna. It is one of the self emanated (svayambhu) lingas in the country. The temple of Goddess Bharamba, consort of Lord Mallikarjuna, is one of the principal shakthipeethas among the eighteen shakthipeethas in the country. The temple is located in midst of the Nallamala ranges, on the right bank of River Krishna on the Srigiri Parvata. Four other temples are considered as gateways to Srisailam. They are Tripurantakam in the east,
Alampur in the west, Umamaheswaram in the north, and Siddhavatam in the south. Srisailam temple has a long history of patronage by various kings in Andhra. The Ikshavakus, Pallavas, Vishnukundinas, Rashtrakutas, Kadambas, Chalukyas, Kakatiyas, Reddis and the Vijayanagara kings have extended their services to the temple from time to time. The Vijayanagara kings made Srisailam as one of their main provinces after they conquered this region from the Reddis.

The Srisailam–Tripurantakam area was always the bone of contention between the Vijayanagara and the Reddi kings. However, Bukka I conquered the area in 1363-64 A.D., and entrusted the service of the temple to the chiefs of the Ravela family.

Harihara II contributed in building the mukha mantapa of the temple and also in making additions to the existing mantapa of the southern Gopura. His wife, Vithalamba, contributed grants for the construction of the steps leading to Patalaganga.

Inscriptions from 1457 and 1458 A.D. in the temple mention Praudhadevaraya appointing female servants for services of the lord. Whether they were the dancers or not is not known. However, keeping in mind the various rituals associated with dance in the temple, it can be said that these servants might have been experts in the field of dance and music, and their service included dance and music activities in the temple. Inscriptions in the temple also mention the visit of Saluva Vira Narasimha Raya and paying homage to the Lord. Mahamandaleswara Parvatayya of this family visited the temple and made contributions of lands, gardens and buildings to the temple in 1468 A.D. In the year 1485 A.D. Saluva Pedamallaparaju gifted a tank to the temple. These people might have been high rank officers or chieftains of provinces during the Vijayanagara rule.

Srisailam temple received extensive patronage during the reign of Krishnadevaraya. He visited the temple after conquering Kondavidu from the Gajapatis. The prakara walls of the temple were built during his time. The officers and other personnel of his court also contributed benefactions to the temple.

After the fall of the Vijayanagara rulers, the temple suffered repercussions due to the outcome of wars with the Muslim rulers over the region. However, after the visit of Shivaji, the Maratha ruler, the temple was again restored and protected. Shivaji left a contingent of
soldiers to protect the temple. Today, the Srisailam temples are under the supervision of the Puspagiri Matha

Features of the temple

The temple is located on the top of the Srigiri hill. The Mallikarjuna Temple is at the northern side and the Bhramaramba temple is at the west of the temple complex. The complex is surrounded by four prakaras, whose walls are built with huge blocks of granite. The walls stand on a plain base below and comprise of a row of stones with the tips averted out at the end. The space between the base and the stones contains sculptures. The first row contains panels of elephants, the second has warriors on horses, the third contains dance and hunting scenes and the fourth and fifth rows have various stories based on Shaivism.

Dancing figures in the temple

Sculptures on the outer walls of the Prakara

The prakara walls predominantly depict figures of Lord Shiva in dance. There are pictures of ganas, Bhringi, other female and male dancers, and musicians. The new renovations and barricades built around these walls have covered most of the sculptures, making them inaccessible to watch. Only few can be noticed. In addition, the walls have been prone to weather deterioration and the sculptures are not clearly seen.

South Prakara

There is a panel depicting Bhringi dancing, with three legs and two hands (Fig. 16). Lord Shiva and Parvathi are seated on a bull beside him with two men behind them, one holding the chatram and the other holding a kamandala. To the right of Bhringi is a gana and an unknown person in anjali hasta. However, it is not clear whether the person next to the gana is Nandi or someone else. To the extreme right is a rishi with his left hand placed on the thigh in ardhachandra and his right kept near the chest.
The position of Bhringi is interesting. While two legs are in the gajakriditha karana, with the third leg, he assumes the bhujangancita karana (the feet in bhujangatraista, the hands in wavy and recaka movements). In his right hand, he is seen holding a tambura. Another relief shows Ganesha playing the flute. He is standing with the left leg straight and the right slightly bent, outward at a distance of one tala. He has four hands, with the upper hands holding the pasa and the parasu and with the lower hands, he plays the flute. There is another figure of a dancing Ganesha in the bhujantrasta recita karana. He has four hands - the upper hands hold the pasa and the parasu while the lower right is in abhaya hasta and the lower left in kari hasta before the chest. Next to him, to one side is a woman playing the mridangam and on the other side is a woman standing with her right hand raised, in samapada.

Another panel consists of a female musician playing the trumpet. There are two panels of the same posture, facing each other. Another figure is of a juggler with the knees turned in, head tilted to a side, hands kept on the sides, with the wrists turned out. There is another sculpture of a gana dancing with a danda in his right hand, and the left hand is raised. He is in a posture similar to the gajakriditha karana. There are very interesting panels of Nataraja on the south wall. One panel depicts the tandava of Lord Shiva, in the bhujangatrasta recita karana, accompanied by a musician playing the dolu.
East Prakara

The east prakara wall consists of sculptures depicting musicians and dancers. These sculptures are similar to those in Hazare Ramaswami temple at Hampi. There are five rows of panels, and the sculptures of dancers and musicians are present on the fourth and the fifth rows. These panels depict figures of male musicians playing a variety of instruments like the mridangam, talas, bheri, veena and the trumpet.

In the fifth row, there is a panel of Shiva and Parvathi witnessing the dance of a gana. On another panel, the dancing figure of Bhringi is sculpted. The same row contains a figure of Chaturbhuja Nataraja. There is also a panel depicting a male musician playing the mridangam and another male dancer observing the lalatatilka karanam (the leg raised and bent from the back over the head as if to make a mark on the forehead with the big toe). Above this, a relief of a Dhanurdhari in urdhwajanu karanam is present. The fourth row depicts a sculpture of Nataraja in bhujantrasta recita karanam dancing on the apasmara purusha. He is holding damaru and agni in his upper right and left hands, respectively. He is accompanied by a gana on mridangam. Next to this sculpture is a statue of Mahishasura mardini.

There are no dancing figures on the north and the west prakaras. The north prakara contains iconic figures of divinities. The west prakara is simple. It has only two dancers performing the kolatam near the doorway. The walls are simple and the super structure is fallen down.

Dancing figures on the base of entrances to the shrines

The base of the doorway of the eastern porch of the mukha mantapa contains few dancing figures. They are:

1. Dwarapalaka standing in swastika position. The left hand is in ardhachandra placed on the thigh and the right hand is in katyavalambita.
2. Male dancer standing in mandala sthanaka playing the cymbals.
3. Female dancer with feet turned out and hands in recaka.
4. Woman playing the mridangam.
5. Woman playing the cymbals with feet in turned out position.
6. Two female dancers holding each other’s hands.
7. Female dancer playing the mridangam.
8. Female dancers performing the kolatam.
9. Female dancer in mandala sthanaka with the left hand in ardhachandra hasta placed on the thigh and the right hand raised above the head.
10. Male musician with a trumpet.
11. Male musician with a damaru.

Conclusion

Though there are depictions of sculptures in the marga category, the dance sculptures seen here are close to many of the desi movements mentioned in Sangeeta Suryodayam. Most of the sculptures depict characters from Shiva mythology which are not seen in other temples. The sculptures are more of the rural folk and simple in design, but depict intricate and vigorous movements. It is possible that the sculptures might have been taken from the Veera Shaiva practices of the times, as these practices are depicted in the sculptures dominantly. Hence, more of desi movements could be identified. The identifications and interpretations drawn from these sculptures are mentioned in Part B of the chapter.

Tirupati

Tirupati is one of the most sacred centers of South India. The seven hills of Tirumala are the abode of Lord Venkateswara. This temple received continuous devoted attention of the Vijayanagara kings. There are numerous inscriptions mentioning the benefactions made by the Vijayanagara dynasty to Tirumala temple. However, due to security reasons, access to documentation of dance figures could not be obtained. Hence, this research cites information obtained from different publications of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams and tries to mention the few sources available.

The major source referenced and studied for identification of dance sculptures is Dr.N. Ramesan’s work on the Tirumala Temple published by the T.T.D. Publications Department, Tirupati. This source has photographs of the precincts of the inner temple on a large scale, and hence is taken up for study. However, T.T.D publications mention
inscriptions describing dance and about the dancers attached to the temple. More details of these are given in the fifth chapter of this thesis.

**Dancing figures in the temple.**

Due to the inaccessibility for documentation of the temple sculptures, the research does not describe all the dancing figures present in the temple. An analysis of the dance movements is carried out in this present research work while referring to the already published plates of the dancing figures. The author, N. Rameshan does not go into the description and hence the following is done based on the photos available in the book.

Plates as mentioned

1. Plate 4 – shows a pillar of the temple with the figure of a yali. To the sides are bas reliefs. The topmost one shows Vishnu in the posture similar to the gajakriditha karana. The hands are left in dola.

2. Plate 12 (e) – shows a female dancer with feet in samapada, but kept at a distance. The hands are kept above the head in musti hasta.

3. Plate 12 (j) - shows a person with a crown, probably a deva purusha with feet in samapada, turned inside while the knees are touching each other. The hands are in dola.

4. Plate 14 – shows a bas relief of Krishna dancing on the hood of Kaliya. He is depicting the urdhwajanu karana.

5. Plate 18 – depicts a female dancer. She is in samapada while holding a flower in the right hand. The left hand is in katyavalambita. Near her feet are two reliefs of rishis on each side who seem to be smitten by her beauty.

6. Plate 31- depicts Hanuman in anjalihasta.

7. Plate 45 (a) – depicts a male dancer with a dappu

8. Plate 64 (d) – depicts a yaksha playing the flute. He poses the ancitabheda with the left foot, and the right foot in sama.

9. Plate 65 (a) – depicts a female dancer seated. The left hand is placed on the thigh, with the right, she depicts the kapittha hasta.

10. Plate 65 (b) – shows a dancing couple. The left dancer poses in the gajakridthakaranam and the right dancer poses the urdhwajanukaranam with the feet. The hands hold some property which is not clear.
11. Plate (65) – shows another female dancer seated on the floor with both the legs turned out and joined at the heels. The left hand is in *katyavalambita* and the right hand is in *kapittha*.

12. Plate 82 (a) – shows a female dancer performing the *lalatatilaka karana*. While doing the *karana*, she holds her left leg toe with her right hand. The left hand is in a *hasta* similar to *samdamsa hasta*.

13. Plate 82 (b) – shows a dancer with feet turned out at a distance of one *tala*. The hands are in *samdamsa hasta*, left kept at a level of the head and looking towards it, and the right placed near the waist.

14. Plate 82 (c) – shows a male *dappu* dancer

15. Plate 82 (d) – shows a lady *mridangist* with feet turned apart in *samapada*

Out of the very limited information available on dancing figures, it was not possible to analyse whether the dancing figures depicted a movement pattern or what exactly is the speciality of the dancing figures. But, the inscriptions present in the temple do mention information about different dancers and their services to the temple. Hence, the inscriptions form a major source for the study in this temple rather than the dance sculptures.

**Kalahasti temple**

Kalahasti is a temple town located in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. This is one of the famous Shiva temples in South India, and is said to be the site where Kannappa, one of the 63 Saivite *Nayanars*, was ready to offer his last remaining eye to cover the blood flowing from the Shiva linga before Lord Shiva stopped him and granted him salvation. Sri Kalahasti temple, situated 36 km away from Tirupati is famous for its *Vayulinga*, which is the only shrine of the god of wind in India. Constructed in the 12th century by the Chola king, Rajendra Chola, Vayu is incarnated as Lord Shiva and worshipped as Kalahasteeswara\(^43\).

The Vijayanagara king Krishnadevaraya had built a 100 pillared *Mantapa* at Kalahasti. King Achyutraya had his coronation done here. Inscriptions speak about the benefactions made to the temple by Krishnadevaraya and Achyutadevaraya.
Features of the temple

This temple is one of the most impressive Siva temples in India. It features an enormous, ancient gopuram (tower) over the main gate. The tower is 36.5 m high. The entire temple is carved out of a side of a huge stone hill. First built by the Pallava rulers, it was later renovated by the Chola kings. Further additions were made by the Vijayanagara kings. The most outstanding contribution to the temple is the 100 pillared mantapa built by Krishnadevaraya in 1516 A.D.¹⁴.

Dancing figures in the temple

There was limited access to photography and documentation in the temple. Given below are few descriptions of the dancing figures present in the mantapa adjacent to the main entrance gopura which were accessible for documentation.

The mantapa is a pillared hall with bas reliefs. One relief shows a chamaradharini in the recaka hand gestel while the feet are in mandala sthanaka. Another relief is of the dancing Krishna on the hood of Kaliya, in urdhawjanu karanam. There is a relief depicting two kolatam dancers with their backs to each other, in buddha cari movement. Next is a relief depicting Krishna with four arms, in the swastika position, and playing the flute. Another relief shows a naga dancing in mandala sthanaka. A very interesting figure of a dancer seen here is where she performs the vrishcika karanam (the two hands to be bent over the shoulders, and a leg bent and turned towards the back). However, the hasta of the dancer is not clear as the original composure of the relief has been damaged by the addition of new layers of paints. There is a representation of a yaksha with a danda in the left hand and the right hand in dola, with the feet performing the urdhwajavanu karanam.

The costumes of the female dancers vary. However, a detailed study is difficult as the pillars have been dabbed with lime stone and paint. Photography was allowed only in this section. However, further research in future could throw light on many of the dancing figures present in the 100 pillared mantapa of the temple.
An attempt has been made to majorly record and document the dancing figures. However, the temples of Tirupati and Kalahasti need much more documentation. Further research into these temples would throw light on many more movement patterns of dance.

**Part B**

Part B of the chapter discusses the sculptures which were correlated to the categories of *caris*, *sthanakas* and *utpluta karanas* mentioned in the treatise of *Sangeeta Suryodayam*. This would help to understand whether the movement patterns were continuing from the earlier times or not. It also sheds light on whether any new additions in the dance treatises of the times were reflected in the sculptures or not.

In this context, two important points need to be mentioned. One, that certain dance sculptures reflected exactly the definitions given in the treatise and two, there are also sculptures, which though do not exactly reflect the given definition of a movement, closely resemble the finishing movement or sometimes the movement in the process of its execution. There are around forty sculptures identified in this context. However, as many variations were present, the sculptures bearing very close resemblance to the definitions mentioned are only considered for this study and mentioned below. Since a detailed description along with the original *slokas* of *Sangeeta Suryodayam* are already mentioned in the third chapter of the thesis, only the names and the category are mentioned here with reference to the pages where the originals are present in the previous chapter.

For the interpretation, the movements of *karanas*, *caris* and *sthanakas* are taken from *Sangeeta Suryodayam* and compared with the dance sculptures found in the Vijayanagara temples. The following are the *utpluta karanas* found to be the closest to the definition of the respective *karanas* named against the photograph.

1. *Ancitam* *(Utpluta karanam- I, Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 115, chapter 3 of thesis)*
This figure from the temple of Lepakshi represents the movement of ancitam. The sculpture seems to be frozen while the dancer is taking a jump and then she lands on ancitam. This movement can be identified as the ancitam utplutya karanam as the right foot is seen with the heel turning outwards indicating the finish of the movement in ancitam.

2. Antarlagam (Utplyuta karanam- 8- Nrittadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 116, chapter 3 of thesis)

The above figure is a very close representation of the utplyuta karana, Antarlagam. The two dancers here turn outwards with their stomach facing towards the sky (as per the definition of antarlagam). However, the head is not clearly touching the hips as the dancers are in movement. The dancers are holding each other’s legs to enable the rolling movement in dance. It represents the movement in action.
3. **Darpasaranam and Jalasayi**

*Darpasaranam* (Utplutya karanam-12, Nrttyadhyaya- SangeetaSuryodayam, see page 117, chapter 3 of thesis)

*Jalasayi* (Utplutya karanam- 13, Nrttadhyaya, Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 117, chapter 3 of thesis)

This sculpture, seen on the pillars of the Gorontla temple, bears close resemblance to two of the *utplutya karanas*, Darpasaranam and Jalasayi. Depicting both the karanas, the figure is in the reclining posture. This karana might have been used to show movements of sayanam, relaxation, etc.

4. **Ucita bhramari** (Utplutya Karanam- 30, Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 121, chapter 3 of thesis)

The above figures represent the movement of the *karana*, Ucita bhramari, wherein the dancer takes a round, and ends the movement while touching the foot to the head. However, there is no mention whether the movement ends in the sitting or standing position,
but we can see variants of the same movement. The first two figures are from the temple of Srisailam engraved on the *prakara* walls and the other is from the temple of Gorontla.

5. **Samapadancitam** *(Utplutya karanam- 33, Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 122, chapter 3 of thesis)*

![Fig. 21: Samapadancitam](image)

This figure from the Natya mantapa of Lepakshi depicts the *karana Samapandicitam*. The sculpture shows the dancer in movement wherein the dancer is ready to take the jump while bending the shoulder towards the ground.

6. **Dandapramanancitam** *(Utplutya karanam-4, Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 115, chapter 3 of thesis)*

![Fig. 22: Dandapramanancitam](image)

This *kolatam* figure from the Chinta Venkataramana temple, Tadipatri is close to the definition of the *karana Dandapramanancitam* as defined in *Sangeeta Suryodayam*. 
In the above panel, the left dancer’s movement is like that of taking an *utplavanam* and the right dancer has finished taking the movement and landed on the ground. This is another form of the movement pattern observed which is close to *Dandapramanancitam*.

7. *Tiryakswastikam*  
   *(Utplutya karanam- 23, Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 120, chapter 3 of thesis)*

Both the above figures represent movements of the *karana*, *tiryakswastikam* closely. While the figure on the left depicts the movement of the head in *bhramari*, the figure on the right shows the finished movement of *tiryakswastikam* where the dancer has turned her feet to sides and the hands are let loose in the air. The movement pattern when closely observed represents movements of intoxication, swoon and dizziness and *tiyakswastikam* is performed to denote these movements.

8. *Tiryagancitam*  
   *(Utplutya karanam-21 Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 119, chapter 3 of thesis)*

Fig. 23: *Tiryakswastikam*

Fig. 24: *Tiryagancitam*
The above picture shows a miniature panel of dancers and musicians sculpted on the base of the stone chariot of the Chinta Venkataramana temple. The dancer at the right can be seen in the *tiryagancita karana*, wherein his feet have finished the movement in *kuncitam*. The position of his feet indicate a jump taken and landing on the ground. This is close to the above karana.


![Bhairavancitam](image)

The above sculpture is seen on the second level stairs of the Mahanavami Dibba at Hampi. The dancer to the right of the middle dancer, depicts the *Bhairavancita karana* very closely. She is placing her foot on the other thigh which is clearly noticed when compared to the dancer in the middle. This sculpture may be denoting the start of the *karana*.

This movement is also similar to the *cari, Suci* (see page 133, chapter 3 of thesis).

*Sthanakas*

1. *Samhatam* (*sthanakam- 4-Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam*, see page 136, chapter 3 of thesis)
The above posture of the dancer seen in the mukhamantapa of Diguva Ahobilam bears a close resemblance to the samhata sthanakam.

2. Gaarudam- (sthanakam- 20-Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 139, chapter 3 of thesis)

These two figures from the Kadalekalu Ganesa temple in Hampi and Lepakshi temple respectively, depict the movement pattern of Gaarudam sthanakam, with the knee facing upwards and the foot placed on the ground in sama, according to the definition.
3. Khandasuci - (sthanakam- 16-Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 138, chapter 3 of thesis)

The above two sculptures portray the Khandasuci sthanakam. One leg is turned outwards and stretched forward. The sculptures are from the Bugga Ramalingewara temple (left) and Lepakshi temple (right), respectively.

4. Kurmasanam - (sthanakam- 21- Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 139, chapter 3 of thesis)

The definition of the sthanaka mentions placing the knee and the heel on the ground. This posture is seen in the above sculptures. However, there are variations of postures in the
same. The above sculptures (a) and (b) from the Krishna temple and the Anantasayana temple of Hampi respectively depict the sitting position, which is slightly varied from the sculpture (c) seen in the Bugga Ramalingeswara temple. All these seem to be the variation of kurmasana.

5. Samapadam (sthanakam – 5- Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 136, chapter 3 of thesis)

![Fig. 30: Samapadam](image)

The above sculpture from the temple of Ramalingeswara temple at Tadipatri depicts the samapada wherein the feet are at a distance close to one vitasti and the body in the natural position.

6. Ekapadam (sthanakam -6 - Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 136, chapter 3 of thesis)

![Fig. 31: Ekapadam](image)
The above sculpture from the Ahobilam temple depicts the *Ekapada sthanakam* closely, wherein the right foot of the dancers is seen in the *sama* position and the left foot closely drawn towards the right foot. This sculpture may also be taken as the dancer is in the process of forming the *Ekapada sthanakam*.


![Fig. 32: Madalasam](image)

The above picture from the *prakara* wall of Srisailam depicts the posture of *madalasam*, with the position of the feet corresponds to the definition and the head turned to a side.


![Fig. 33: Nagabandham](image)
There are two postures depicting the *sthanakam* of *nagabandham*. The middle figure of the *yaksha* sculpted in the panel of the first sculpture from Lepakshi depicts his right shank placed over the left leg. The second sculpture is from the Anantasayana temple of Hampi, which also depicts the shank placed on the other one, but with a slight variation of the knee raised upwards. This could be one of the variations of depicting the *nagabandham*.

9. **Nandhyavartam** (sthanakam – 3 -Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 135, chapter 3 of thesis)

![Fig. 34: Nandhyavartam](image)

The above sculpture from one of the *mantapa* of Diguva Ahobilam temple depicts the posture of *nandhyavarta sthanakam*. The dancer’s feet are separated indicating a distance between them.

10. **Shaivam** (sthanakam – 19- Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 137, chapter 3 of thesis)

![Fig. 35: Shaivam](image)
This sculpture of a nartaka is from the Pushkarini Street in the capital city of Hampi (Fig. 34). This depicts the movement of both the feet drawn together which closely resemble the definition of the sthanaka, Shaivam.

11. Strastaalasam (Sthananakam – 6 – extra sthanakam - Nruttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 141, chapter 3 of thesis)

The above sculpture depicts as if the dancer has just finished the movement of taking a round and positioning herself in the strastalasa sthanaka. The sculpture, when observed closely, shows that the hand is positioned as if just finished the round and stopped in mid-air. The flow of the costume into the air also indicates the same. This sculpture is from the mantapa of Diguva Ahobilam.

12. Vardhamaanakam (Sthanakam – 2 - Nruttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 135, chapter 3 of thesis)
The above sculpture from the Chinta Venkataramana temple is one example for *Vardhmaanakam*. The feet of all the three, namely the dancer and the two musicians, are in similar position of the definition mentioned for *Vardhmaanakam*.

13. *Vimuktam*  
	*(sthana-kam - 9- extra sthana-kam - Nrttdhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 142, chapter 3 of thesis)*

![Image of Vimuktam](image)

*Fig. 38: Vimuktam*

The above sculpture is from the *mahamantapa* of the Anatasayana temple in Hampi. This bears a close semblance to the above said definition. However, the sculpture present here depicts the side movement in the posture which may be slightly varied if seen from the front.

14. *Vishkambham*  
	*(sthana-kam – 4- extra sthana-kam - Nrttdhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 141, chapter 3 of thesis)*

![Image of Vishkambham](image)

*Fig. 39: Vishkambham*
The above seen sculpture is from the Vitthal temple of Hampi. The dancer here is spreading out his arms and legs. This bears a close resemblance to the definition of Vishkambham.

15. *Vrishabhasanam* - *(sthanakam – 23 - Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 140, chapter 3 of thesis)*

The above sculptures are from the temples of Anantasayana and Kadalekalu Ganesa of Hampi, respectively. Here, the dancers’ knees are placed on the ground and the body is in *saushtava* position. In the first sculpture, the *saushtava* position is not very clearly seen, whereas in the second sculpture, the body is in *saushtava*, but bent backwards a little. This might be the movement which is performed by the dancer after assuming the *vrishbhasanam*.

16. *Kraantam* - *(sthanakam – 3- extrasthanakam - Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 141, chapter 3 of thesis)*

Fig. 40: Vrishabasanam

Fig. 41: Kraantam
The above sculpture is from the mahamantapa of Diguva Ahobilam. This closely depicts the definition of Kraantam, wherein the hand of the dancer is placed on the chin, and the head touches the shoulder and it is as if expressing grief. The expression on the dancer’s face too can be noticed.

The above are few of the sculptures corresponding to the definitions of sthana\text{kas} mentioned in Sangeeta Suryodayam.

\textit{Caris}

Caris in actuality describe the movement of the leg in a particular fashion. When it comes to the correlation of the dance sculptures with the caris, the sculptures depicting the finished movement of the cari are only taken up, as it is not possible to compare the execution of the movement with the frozen sculptures. Hence, very few sculptures could be identified in this category.

The following are the bhaumi caris.

1. \textit{Radhacakram} - (\textit{cari- 1- Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam}, see page 123-124, chapter 3 of thesis)

Fig. 42: \textit{Radhacakram}

The above sculpture from the temple in Gorontla depicts the \textit{cari, radhachakram}. In this relief, the dancer in the middle is stretching his legs outwards. The distance between his feet is equal depicting a square shape. Hence, this representation closely resembles \textit{radhachakram}. 
2. *Tiryagmukham* - *(cari- 4- Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 124, chapter 3 of thesis)*

The above two sculptures are close to the movement of *Tiryagmukham* but with slight variations. In the first sculpture (a), which is from the *natya mantapa* of Lepakshi, the definition of this *cari* of the feet turned out and hitting the ground, the representation of the movement in execution is evident. The second sculpture (b), which is also from the southern *prakara mantapa* of Lepakshi also looks close to the finishing movement.

3. *Langhajhanganancitam* *(cari–21 - Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 128, chapter 3 of thesis)*
The first picture (a) depicts the dance sculpture from the temple of Kalahasti. The second is from the natyamantapa of Lepakshi. In the khandasuci position, one leg is stretched out, when the stretched out leg is raised, the movement comes very close to the posture depicted in the above two sculptures. Both the sculptures also show movements as if they are ready to take a jump, depicting the cari, langhajanghancitam.

4. Taladarshini - (cari – 27 - Nrttadhyaaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 129, chapter 3 of thesis)

The above two sculptures are close to this movement as the feet are in samhata sthanakam and the distance between them measures about one tala. The hands are also kept in the same distance. Hence, the sculptures can be said to depict the Taladarshini cari. The first sculpture is from the Krishna temple, Hampi, and the second one is on the south prakara wall of the Kadiri temple.

5. Sarikam (cari – 30- Nrttadhyaaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 130, chapter 3 of thesis)
This sculpture is from the kalyana mantapa of Vitthal temple. The dancer is accompanied by a musician. When the movement of the dancer is observed closely, it depicts as if the dancer is dancing while hitting his toes (forepart) on the ground, or finishing the movement by hitting the forepart of his leg. This is close to the cari, Sarikam.

**Aakaasiki caris**

1. **Ullola** *(cari – 19- Nrttadhyaya- Sangeeta Suryodayam, see page 135, chapter 3 of thesis)*

![Fig. 47: Ullola](image)

The sculpture present on the entrance of the Hazare Rama temple Hampi, falls into this movement pattern. The execution of the dola pada is seen here, and hence, the movement can be close to the cari, Ullola.

These are the sculptural representations which could be correlated with the desi movements written in Sangeeta Suryodayam. This correlation majorly throws light on the visual representation of the movements being executed during the time when Sangeeta Suryodayam was written. It also helps in understanding the variances of movement patterns from time to time and how they were reflected in the dance sculptures. Identifying these movements also denote the importance given to the technique of dance. The temple sculptures are the main source for identifying the dance patterns of the times, as they are the only visual reproductions of the past which are available to us today.
Part C

Musical instruments of the Vijayanagara times

Dance is incomplete without music. And this fact is proven beyond doubt by the sculptural representations and panels that we see in the temples. Hence, we will look at a brief description about the musical instruments used as accompaniments for dance.

Along with dance, music played an important role in the cultural life of Vijayangara. It was very much an integral part of all the important festivities and occasions of performance. Nicolo De Conti observes “their weddings are celebrated with singing and feasting and the sound of trumpets and flutes ...with the exception of organs, all other instruments in use among them for singing and playing are similar to our own...”

The kings were lovers of music. The Krishnapura inscription mentions Krishnadevaraya as adept in music. Along with the kings, the queens were also adept in the art of music. Apart from the royal household, the courts had singers and musicians who performed daily in the court, who were appointed to perform in the temple, and who accompanied the king during battle. There are a number of inscriptions which mention musicians appointed by the king for different services and entertainment.

The prabandha literature mentions the different kinds of instruments used during those days. Amuktya malyada mentions use of upangamu (used for sruti), avajamu, dolu, bheri, mauri, gummeta (folk instrument used by Burra katha performers) dhakki, venu, kinnera, kahala, pataha (drum), etc.

After a thorough observation, it was clear that the musical instruments were categorized as per the divisions mentioned by Bharata in Natya Sastra. The temples depict sculptures of musicians and the exclusive instruments they played as per the same division.

1. Stringed instruments (tata vadya)
2. Percussions instruments (avanaddha vadya)
3. Wind instruments (sushira vadya)
4. Solid instruments (ghana vadya)
Given below is the description of the instruments, with evidences of sculptures substantiating the same.

**Stringed instruments (tata vadya)**

**Tambura**

The major stringed instruments observed in the sculptures were the *tambura* and the *veena*. The *tambura* has a single gourd, made of wood with a finger board. It has strings and pegs. Sometimes the gourd is spherical and sometimes it is flat. The instrument might have been light in weight as almost all the sculptures depict the musician holding it their hand. This was also seen as an accompaniment with the dancer or played with a group of musicians.

![Fig.48: Musicians playing the tambura](image)

The above two figures show the musicians playing the *tambura*. The first picture depicts a panel on the *dhwajasthambha* of Chinta Venkataramana temple showing a group of musicians, which includes the *tambura* player to the extreme right. The second picture is a relief from the *mukhamantapa* of Gorontla temple which shows the dancer in the middle, accompanied by the *tambura* player to the right.
**Veena (also known as tuila)**

This is a type of stringed instrument comprising of a bamboo stick stretched with a shell of half cut bottle gourd attached to the upper end. This is played by holding it diagonally across the body with the dry shell toward the chest. It is played with only three fingers without moving them up and down. The sculptures depict this instrument in single reliefs and as played by *veenadharis* and *yakshas*. This might have been associated more with the temple, than in the folk and other processional activities as it is sculpted dominantly in single reliefs in the inner precincts of the temple or the *mantapas*. A sculpture in the *ardha mantapa* of Lepakshi temple depicts this instrument. However, this instrument is also noticed on the *prakara* walls of Srisailam, but as an accompaniment to the *tandava* dance of Lord Shiva. Hence, it can be only understood that it might be a representation of a celestial playing the *veena*.

![Fig.49: Celestial playing the veena – Ardha Mantapa, Lepakshi temple](image)

**Percussion instruments (Avanaddha vadya)**

Percussion instruments, used to mark the rhythm, are vessels or frames which are usually covered with leather. Various percussion instruments like the *mridangam*, the *iddaka* and the *dappu* were seen during the Vijayanagara times.

The *mridangam* is horizontal in shape, with an elongated body and narrowed down towards the ends. Another version has an elongated body with a narrowed down middle. This is usually worn around the neck or kept on the ground and played. This is a percussion
instrument. There are quite a number of sculptures depicting this instrument. They were commonly found accompanying the dancers, which denote their purpose of marking the rhythm for the dance. The *iddaka* is similar to a *damaru*, but big in size. This is played with *konas* or wooden sticks and hung over the neck with leather straps. These types of instruments were identified in the temple of Ahobilam. The last one is the *tappeta* or *dappu* which is a wooden or a metal strip which is bent to give it a round shape. This instrument was depicted as an accompaniment of the rural folk and was very commonly seen in almost all temples of Vijayanagara.

![Fig. 50: Musicians playing (a) *mridangam*, (b) *iddaka* and (c) *dappu*](image)

The above sculptures depict the various kinds of percussion instruments. The first figure (a) depicts the *mridangam*. This life size figure in the temple of Ahobilam is seen as an accompaniment to the dancer sculpted on the immediate pillar. The second one (b) is also from Ahobilam depicting the *iddaka* and the third one (c) is from the temple of Virupaksha at Hampi which depicts the *dappu*. There a number of dance movements depicted by the musicians playing the *dappu* which denotes that the *dappu* might have been commonly used in festive activities and processions wherein the musicians played it while dancing.

**Wind instruments (*sushira vadya*)**

In this division, the instruments identified were the *kommu*, *sankha* and the *venu*. The *kommu*, or the trumpet, is thin at one end and broadens at the other end. This instrument is also seen mostly on the *prakara* walls of the temples which denote that it might have been used by rural folk or musicians in processions and in folk dances. The three figures below are
the sculptures on the *prakara* walls of Srisailam and Bugga Ramalingeswara temple, respectively, and the third one is seen in the *mukhamantapa* of Ahobilam.

![Fig.51: Musicians playing *sushira vadya*](image)

The *sankha* or the conch derives its name because of the shape. This is bit rarely found in the temples. The below figure is from the temple of Ahobilam. The usage of this instrument might be little less when compared to the other instruments.

![Fig. 52: Musicians with *sankha* (conch)](image)

The *venu*, or the horizontal flute, is mostly found in the sculptures as being played by celestial beings. The sculpture below is a relief from the *prakara* walls of Srisailam. It depicts Ganesha playing the flute. Though not necessarily seen as accompaniment for dance, this instrument is seen as a singular instrument in the temple sculptures.
Solid instruments (*Ghana vadya*)

The most commonly found instruments are the Cymbals. They are discs made of metal which are struck against each other to produce a sound, and vary depending on size and material. All the temples carry sculptures of musicians with cymbals as accompaniment to the dancers as they also mark the rhythm of dance, along with the *mrdangam*. The sculpture below shows a musician with the cymbals, seen in the Ahobilam temple.
Part D

Costumes and Jewellery of the Vijayanagara Dancers

As aharya abhinaya is a major part of the Abhinaya and as important as the technique of dance, we would proceed to look at the representations of costumes of the nartakis and the musicians of the Vijayanagara times.

Costumes of the dancing girls

There is a lot of variety and design seen in the costumes of the dancers. But, all the patterns were based on two major kinds of designs i.e, the skirt patterns and the kaccham style. There are also certain sculptures of dancers who did not wear any costumes or clothes on their bodies⁴⁹. The proper reason behind this is not known.

![Fig. 55: Costumes of the dancers](image)

Fig. 55 (a): Figure from south mantapa of the prakara wall, Lepakshi
Fig. 55 (b): Dancer wearing the skirt pattern costume – Mukha mantapa of Chinta Venkata Ramana temple, Tadipatri.
Fig. 55 (c): Lady in the kaccham pattern of dress – outer left mantapa of the main prakara, Diguva Ahobilam temple.
Given below is a description of variation of patterns noticed in the temple sculptures

**Description of various costumes of the dancers**

There are a number of variations seen in the dance costumes. They can be divided into a number of categories like the costumes of the *nartakis*, costumes of the *nartakas*, costumes of the musicians, and costumes depicting the folk styles. All the costumes show the richness and splendour of the artists during the times.

**Nartakis**

The patterns of the dresses of the dancing girls look quite sensous in their appeal. A dancing figure seen on the wall of the west gopura of the Bugga Ramalingeswara temple depicts the skirt pattern of the dancer. It is a frilled skirt, till the knee of the dancer. There are three layers of the skirt. The first layer is tightened with an ornate girdle, and the other two layers of the skirt are frilled, which are spread out. She is seen wearing a tight fitting blouse covering her chest.

![Fig. 56: Dancer skirt pattern - west gopura wall, Bugga Ramalingeswara temple](image)

When it comes to the *kolatam* dancers, however, slight changes are noticed in the skirt patterns. The *kolatam* dancers too are depicted with skirts, but sometimes they are simple and plain skirts with just frills between the legs. These skirts might have been transparent as the dancers are seen wearing a tight fitting pant extending upto the ankle. This pattern can be
noticed in several temples. A pattern is shown below from the panels on the *prakara* walls of Srisailam.

![Pattern from prakara wall, Srisailam temple](image)

**Fig. 57: Skirt pattern of Kolatam dancers – prakara wall, Srisailam temple**

In the temple of Gorontla, the same kind of pattern is seen in the costumes. However, the length of the skirt is only upto the thighs.

![Pattern from Gorontla temple](image)

**Fig. 58: Skirt pattern of dancers – Gorontla temple**

It is clear that this pattern is special to the Vijayanagara period, as this pattern is commonly seen in all the temples of Vijayangara in the Andhra region and also in the temples of the capital city of Hampi.

The *kaccham* style of dress is also seen in a number of varieties. The basic *kaccham* costume is a dress with frills separated by a fan in the middle. This fan may be small, or sometimes extended till the ankle. Few dresses depict many frills with designs whereas some depict plain frills. The *kalyana mantapa* of Lepakshi temple depicts one such *kaccham* costume worn by the dancers.
Another interesting kind of dress pattern can be seen in the mukhamantapa of Eguva Ahobilam temple. The sculpture depicts a very poised dancing girl in a striking pose. The lower garment spreads out as a kaccham, reaching her ankles. The cloth looks to be of fine silk as the flow of the cloth is seen clearly in the sculpture. The ends of the kaccham flow out near the ankles giving it a beautiful wavy look. There are two tassels in the middle of the kaccham, one flows out to the thigh, the other reaching out till the ankles. The upper garment is not clear, and possibly looks like the dancer is wearing a tight fitting blouse.

A sculpture in the Mukha mantapa of the Diguva Ahobilam temple depicts the same pattern, but the veil that flows with the kaccham is draped over the breasts, similar to how the regular saree is worn. However, in some panels it is draped from the right, and in some from
the left. The same style of kaccham is also shown in the Ranga mantapa of Chinta Venkataramana temple at Tadipatri, but there are long tassels of cloth from top to bottom and the kaccham is decorated with long chains, one from the waist, and one near the knees. These sculptures show the influence of the dress patterns from the Hoysala and the Kakatiya times, as such patterns are also seen in the temples of Belur and Halebid built by the Hoysala kings and also in the Ramappa temple built by the Kakatiyas.

\[\text{Fig. 61: Kaccham pattern – Mukha mantapa, Diguva Ahobilam temple}\]

Another pattern is noticed in the kalyana mantapa of Srikalahasti temple. Here, the dancer is wearing a skirt which reaches her thighs, above which is a transparent skirt flowing upto her ankles. The skirt has a tassel in the middle and she is wearing a tight fitting blouse. This dress pattern is rare and reflecting the contemporary Deccani style of the times. This shows the influence of the Muslim and the Deccani style on the costumes.

\[\text{Fig. 62: Skirt pattern of dancers – kalyana mantapa, Srikalahasti temple}\]
Musicians

The male dancers are mostly seen accompanying the female dancers with instruments. Most of the male musicians are seen without any upper garments. The lower garments are mostly *dhotis* in different patterns. They are seen wearing conical caps in different sizes, which are special to the Vijayanagara style of costumes in men.

A figure of a male musician playing a *mridangam* can be seen on the *Vijayastambha* of the Chinta Venkataramana temple at Tadipatri. He has no upper garments, but is wearing a *dhoti* with a tassle in the middle, and adorning a long conical cap with a frilled cloth at the top of the cap. Beside him is another musician with the same dress pattern, but the cap is round instead of conical. This figure resembles a *dasari*.

![Fig. 63: Dress patterns of musicians – Chinta Venkataramana temple, Tadipatri](image)

An interesting figure from the *natyamantapa* of the Lepakshi temple depicts a musician with cymbals in his hand. He adorns a full sleeved tunic covering the entire arms. There are three frilled fans which flow out from the waist in the middle of the tunic. There are also tassels hanging from the sides of the hips. This is a quite decorated dress pattern seen rarely in the dress patterns of the male musicians.
A similar kind of a costume is seen worn by the musicians playing the *dappu*. The musicians are seen with a plain dhoti with no upper garments. However, all of them are wearing conical caps. The noticeable feature in the male costume is the dhoti with tassels and the conical cap which seems to be a regular head gear of all men in the Vijayanagara society.

**Ornaments**

A sculpture of a dancing girl is shown adorned with a multitude of ornaments, ranging from hair-parting to toe decorations. A decorated *hamsa tilaka* was worn in the parting of hair. On special occasions, a net of pearls was worn over the head. Ears were decorated with rings, stars, pendants and golden floral designs. *Koppu* is a prominent hair style worn on the upper part of the head, either to a side or left dangling on the back.

The number of ornaments worn by the *devadasis* is always more than that of the other dancers. This is clearly noticed in the sculptural variations of the dancing girls. However, it may be possible that the court dancers or the dancers in the service of the royal household also wore heavy jewellery as this description was noticed by many of the foreign travelers visiting Vijayanagara during that time.

The overall jewellery consisted of neck ornaments worn in several levels starting from close to the neck and extending to belly. Five strings of pearls with gold beads, a prominent pendant and a heavy necklace, either of gold or gems, was worn in the middle. Armlets also
were worn. Bangles consisted of gold, silver, and various other precious metals. They were studded with gems, semi-precious stones and beads. Rings were worn on all the fingers. Anklets were of silver and gold. Rings were worn on all toes of the feet and specially designed rings were confined to first two toes. The ornaments of the musicians mostly consisted of long chains and armlets. The kulavi was decorated with precious stones and gems.

Hair Styles

Pig-tails among girls, single and double hair-buns and coiffures among women were common styles of the dancers. Hair was fastened with silk tassels which can be seen in the sculptures of the temples. It might be possible that they used nets and artificial hair to exhibit a variety of hair decoration which suited their whims and fancies. Men rolled turbans or kulavis around their hair.

The dress patterns of Vijayanagara reflect their prosperity, at the same time help us to ascertaining the role of the dancers in the temple.

The mantapas in the temples depict dance sculptures wearing the kaccham style of costume, whereas the skirt pattern is seen as worn by the dancers sculpted only on the prakara walls and base panels of the temples. This gives strength to our assumption that dancers wearing the kaccham style of dress were probably the dancers dedicated to god, and were performing marga or classical style of dance whereas the other dancers probably belonged to the court or dancers practising the folk tradition.

Among these, the Natya mantapas are of special interest. In these mantapas, one can see dancers wearing a variety of costumes and are heavily bejewelled. In the absence of a special natya mantapa, the mukhamantapas and the ranga mantapas were the main areas wherein the dance sculptures with heavy dressing and jewellery were exhibited. The ranga mantapa of the Chinta Venkataramana temple carries sculptures of dancers with heavily draped costumes. Such preference for heavily draped dancers in the ranga mantapa leads to a couple of inferences. One, that they probably were the representations of the devadasis attached to the temple and two, they were wealthy. The heavily draped dancer sculptures are
absent in the outer precincts of the temple indicating that these dancers were confined to the inner precincts of the temple and danced in front of the main deity.

The base panels of the *kalyana mantapas* and the *dhvajastambha* in the outer precincts of the Chinta Venkataramana temple show dancers with simpler skirt patterned dresses and jewellery. This variance of costume may probably be to show the other dancers attached to the temple. They may be the folk dancers (since they are seen as *kolatam* dancers) or they might also be the dancers who carried out their duties in the outer precincts of the temples, and might have been involved in dancing in front of the processional deities.

**Conclusion**

The representations of the costumes in the sculptures of Vijayanagara temples are very much similar to the literary descriptions of those times.

Covering all the major areas of dance, music, costume and jewellery, the temple sculptures reflect a visual picture of dance during the Vijayanagara time. This chapter under the sections of dance sculptures, musical instruments, costumes and jewellery of the dancers thus fulfills the objective of correlation of the dance treatises and dance sculpture of the Vijayanagara times with visual evidences.
The capital of Hampi is situated among the hard granite hills. This could be one reason as hard granite was abundantly available. Also, as the capital was always under the threat of war, the temples could have been built in the capital with hard granite as it cannot be easily destructed. However, this might have become tradition as even the temples in Andhra are also built in hard granite, and the region of Rayalaseema where the major temples of Vijayanagara are built has abundance of hard granite. The metaphor used for Rayalaseema is Rallaseema (land of rocks).

2 The karanas include various movements of performance before freezing on a particular finishing position. The source to correlate the karanas noticed in the temples was taken from Dr. Padma Subramanyam’s work on karanas of Natya Sastra. (Subramanyam, Padma. 2003. Karanas. Common Dance Codes of India and Indonesia. Chennai: Nrithyodaya.)

3 The Tadipatri Kaifiyat mentions of a story that led to the construction of the temple. When Ramalinganayudu’s cattle were taken for grazing on the fields, it was noticed that a cow used to offer milk to an ant hill. One day, the cowherd noticed this and threw an axe on the ant hill. The same night, Ramalinga had a dream in which Lord Shiva appeared and told him that the cowherd had hurt him in the ant hill. He ordered for a temple to be built on the spot of the ant hill where a linga emerged. The king hurried to the spot and saw the linga in a small perpetual spring at the same spot of the ant hill. Hence, the attribute bugga came to use and since then, the temple came to be known as Bugga Ramalingeswara temple. (Ramaswamy, N.S. 1976. Temples of Tadipatri. Hyderabad: Department of Archeology, Government of Andhra Pradesh)


5 Rayavachakam and Krishnaraya Vijayam record the assistance of Ramalingayya Naidu to Krishnadevaraya during the war with Bahmani Sultans in 1512 A.D. Hence, it is clear that he was administering the Tadipatri region during Krishnadevaraya’s time. (Ramaswamy, N.S. 1976.)

6 Kamble, M.T. 2000 :7


8 This figure is carved inside, in the gaps present to the sides of the prakaraat the entrance. That maybe one of the reasons that the sculpture is not mutilated.

9 This kind of depiction is one of the interesting features seen in several temples of Vijayanagara, but with different figures of yakshas, male dancers, animals, etc. These representations are seen in almost all temples of Andhra region and Vitthal temple in Hampi.

10 Srinivasan, T.N. 1955 :23

11 Ibid: 25

12 This figure may probably be denoting the queen of Krishnadevaraya or Timmanayudu’s wife. However, the chances are more of the sculpture being the queen of Krishnadevaraya. Most of the temples have the figures of the kings and queens sculpted in the temple complex as they were the patrons of the temple.

13 In 1551 A.D., the temple received a grant of the Enumala Chintala village by Cina Timmanayudu, younger brother of Yera Timma Nayudu. An inscription dated 1578 A.D., mentions Pemmasani Timmanayudu granting three putti of land for the maintenance of the temple. Pemmasani Narasimhanayudu granted land for the supply of tulasi garlands in 1578 A.D. The epigraphs of 1663 and 1664 A.D. record lands granted by local chieftains Timmanayudu and Linganna, son of Krishnamaraju, to the temple.

14 Srinivasan, T.N. 1955 : 35
Virupanna was a royal officer in the court of Achyutadevaraya. He rose to a prominent position and was given the charge of ruling Penugonda on behalf of the King. He was an ardent devotee of Virabhadra, and along with his brother Viranna, built the temple of Lepakshi.

Legend says during the construction of the kalyana mantapa, few officers misguided Achyuta that Virupanna was misusing the funds donated to the temple which angered the king. He ordered Virupanna’s eyes to be pulled out. The latter hearing this, got depressed and pulled out his eyed by himself and threw them against the wall of the mantapa to prove his innocence. After this incident, the construction of the temple stopped and hence the kalyana mantapa remains unfinished. Even today, one can see two red spots on the wall which are believed to be the marks of Virupanna’s eyes.

This may however refer to the Eguva Ahobilam temple as there is no mention of the Diguva Ahobilam deity in the inscription. However, the earliest inscription which can be taken into account for determining the temple date would be the one referring to Achyutadevaraya dated 1532 A.D. This inscription records that Abbiraju, son of Gubbaraju Thipparaju of Porumamilla, belonging to the Vashishta gotra, Asvalayana sutra and Ruk sakha, made certain gifts to Sri Ahobileswara at Diguva Ahobilam. As this is the earliest inscription available, the date of the building of the temple can be ascertained before 1532 A.D. Another inscription dated Saka 1486, also refers to Sadasivaraya and mentions that the jeeyar (pontiff) of the temple at that time was Srimad Paramkusa Sathokpoajiyangar.
Parvathanayudu, a servant of Krishnadevaraya, gilded the mukha mantapa with gold and set the copper-plate around the sanctum in 1513 A.D. Chandrasekharamatya, a minister in the court of Krishnadevaraya, contributed towards the construction of the kalyana mantapa and a shrine. He also gifted two villages in the Cagalamari seema and Basavamatha in 1529 A.D. The mantapa in front of the unjalseva room of the Lord is also attributed to his time. He set up statues of himself, Krishnadevaraya and Timmarusu in the temple. A subordinate of Mahamandaleswara, Salakaraju Tirumala, built the Yajnasala in the temple.

The temple again received contributions during the time of Rama Raya. He visited Srisailam in 1542-43 A.D. after the conquests of Penugonda and Gandikota and presented many gifts to the temple.

During the reign of Venkatapatni Raya II, a certain Madagani Basavareddi Kumarudu remitted taxes on the lands of the village Vippanagandla in favour of Lord Mallikarjuna. In 1592 A.D., Krishnappa Nayaka gifted two villages in the Gangaikondanadu.

41Ibid : 19


43The Temples in India, Temples of Andhra Pradesh. www.indiantemples.com

44Temples of Andhra Pradesh: www.templenet.com


47Ibid : 100

48Ibid : 102

49These patterns are mentioned in the chronicles too. Pietro de Valle, observes the ambassodars notice several companies of young girls, well cothd after their manner, with some of the above mentioned wrought and figured silk from the girdle downwards: and from thence upward either naked, or else with very pure linen, either of one colour, or stirp, and wrought with several, besides a scarf of the same of the same work cast over the shoulder