CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHOLA ARCHITECTURE

INTRODUCTION

"A culture develops its own architectural dialect and strikes its own critical attitudes through a slowly formed consensus of opinion, that some of these combinations are more agreeable than others".

- Sinclair Gauldie(1)

Through a maze of Pallava temples, the first visual impact that the Early Chola temple makes is one of compact economy, modest scale and uniformity in plan. A square garbhagriha, flat roofed, carries an ekatala or dvitala superstructure. From the garbhagriha we are led into a rectangular flat ardhamandapa. Commendable articulation, they offer scope to spatial imagination in their chiselled and bare blocks of gneiss and granite walls.

The conquest of Tanjavur and success at Tirupurambiyam about 878 A.D. saw an increased vivre in their art activities. The legacy of a rich tradition offered itself as a challenge for reinterpretations and innovations. The 'anukāya' elements were perhaps most attuned to cope up with such change, that gave both refinement and identity to the Chola. The unique way in which the elements were handled and rendered lift it out of its being a
general Dravidian idiom, to the only Chōla and all Chōla style.

Through odds when its tracts of land were being overrun with occupied areas; specially between 864 to 871 A.D. When adversity loomed large as the Pāṇḍya and Pallava the Chōla lay low, but not defeated. The Takkolam inscription of Āditya I himself confirms his ascension in 871 A.D. This is further attested by the absence of Pāṇḍya and Pallava inscriptions, etc. Thrown open to politic and diplomatic office; and occupying much of Muttaraiya land it was natural to have intercourse with all. With an eye for the best they stole a march over friends, and adversaries. They introduced 'inflections and accents' giving us a healthy view of their egoism and personality. Their urge shows us that "culture is not a mere reflex, but a progressive appropriation and renewal"(2). They are a 'family of mind' making choices and therefore show a 'classic stability'. However, the following sections show us that this was achieved by opposing factors of affinity and contradiction. It was not a single factor that predetermed their predeliction for style. A complexity of factors saw a mutuation of forms. It is our task here to explore these forms, how they began, evolved, changed and emerged. And thus is style determined.

Political chronology is used here for convenience, however, wherever the need arises, other aspects take liberty of moving in and out of this chronology which is not binding.
Just as in the previous section, this chapter too is divided into the adhisthāna, the 1st tala and upper tala respectively.

IV.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADHISTHĀNA

Despite the traditional 'padabandha' being in popular usage the restlessness manifested itself in the search for new forms. The plainness of the pādabandha was to some extent relieved by the galapāda carrying relief sculptures of purāṇic and epic themes. These are casually carved, perhaps because they are in such places that did not call for great detail, or due to limited space, or because it was much too below the eye level to catch great attention. The episodic nature of sculpture was a change from animal or vegetative motifs.

The padmabandha (fig.22) emerged as an important feature. This is found in contemporary Irurukuvēḷ and Paḻuvēṭṭaraiyar architecture. It was an elaboration and sculptural play on form. What was a mere hint of lotus petal, like the first frothy wave that touches the shore and becomes a diffused trickle, became the wave that rode the crest. From mere incision the form was scooped out smoothened and carved into a passion swept wave like petal. This was his architectural precision. The kapōṭabandha seen in Pallava Olakkanēśvara (fig.24) as the kapōṭa of the
high upapitha, which was very rare - saw a sudden rebirth as the adhisthāna feature in the temples of Tārāntaka I. Once again it is the usage, transformation and persistence that established a norm here. Such variation of mixing, matching and alternating also saw the padmaka, vaprabandha, Sundarabja and pus’pabandha adhisthāna. It will be seen that the last became an all time favourite in the latter half of the tenth century A.D.

The making of Chōla architecture began with Vijayālaya’s conquest of Kō Ilango Muttaraiyar’s Tańjavūr. While the fundaments of architecture were already known, and thus in an advanced stage, sculpture too worked towards greater heights showing more promise. The Muttaraiya vassals were a class apart sharing the same Drāviḍa legacy; they had established an identity even in a very short span of reign. The search for the Chōla style must therefore begin somewhere here. When we say Vijayālaya we simultaneously mean Muttaraiyar or pre-Āditya or the post-Muttaraiyar-Chōla style. Architecture does not preclude us here, in fact very artfully it confirms its presence and its influence. Similarly, the Irrukuvēḷ and Paḻuvēṭṭaraiyar, also immediate neighbours, allies and vassals at different turns played a major role. The important thing to be remembered however is that
with the Chōla hegemony these idioms naturally gave and took from them and are called Early Chōlanādu style with respective sub styles or idioms. These are called 'oscillations of artistic enterprise'. The Muttaraiyar were subdued while the Irrukuvēḷ were more Pallava vassals, yet they shared a camaraderie and a 'cultural nexus' with the Chōla. Proximity was a major cause for architectural and artistic exchange.

The Vijayālaya phase naturally includes most of the Muttaraiyar sites as a prelude, to the Chōla temples. Two of their temples the Panangudi Agastīśvara and Viralūr Bhūmisēvara (figs.38,39) are considered to be the earliest independent examples of the ekata Chōla vimāna, with traces of subshrines. They are the 'isolated essays' of the Early Chōla style. We tread surer grounds when we touch the Āditya I phase. The Anbil plates of Sundara Chōla dated in his 4th year extol the virtues of Āditya I as the builder of lofty and indestructible stone temples on the banks of the Kāvēri(2). Balasubramanīyam has explored the authenticity of these and laid claim to thirty eight temples of Āditya I in the region. Inscription and paleography however pose a problem. Do the dates belong to its construction or terminus ante quem? Visual elements and style hence call our attention. The temples
become a cumulative evidence of the Āditya I phase. The Tirupurambiyam battle gave further impetus to political and cultural expansions into the heart of Tondaimandalam. From a buffer state, they rose into prominence as evidenced by a spurt of activity. The timing perhaps was right for a cultural ferment, with a much of the innoculum coming in from friends and foes alike. Partial to creativity, their artistic temperament couldn't be ignored. Propinquity was an advantage above all. The 'oscillations of artistic enterprise' couldn't have a better alternative. A Cālukyan, Gaṅga, Irrukuvēḷ and Pāṇḍya kinship and a complementary Pallava-Muttaraiyar-Chōla one is suggested by K.V. Soundara Rajan. The Muttaraiyar as a primary agency for the assimilation of Pallava agencies transmitted much to the Chōla. No temple in this phase can be used as a prop to chronology. Within a given time span they are placed and dated approximately. The Rājakēsari inscriptions and biruḍa can perhaps be misleading due to their indiscriminate usage. Renovation and reconstruction are partly responsible for their failing.

Nevertheless, the maturity gained in his phase is carried over gracefully into the reign of Parāntaka I. The embellishment of the adhisthana, on the threshold of fulfilment, continued with little change. Whatever change occurred
was affected during the latter's last years. Tiruccendu-rai began to anticipate a general change and the temples thenceforth could be dated with more precision or a 'terminus ante quem'. The temples of this period are about two dozen in number, and included both new constructions and renovations. The general style is conservative and repeated olden patterns. The noticeable advances are made in the treatment of complex wall surfaces and quality of sculpture. With the end of Parāntaka I's reign the 1st or Āditya phase come to an end.

The IInd phase from 940-970 A.D. began from the latter part of Parāntaka I to the accession of Uttama Chōla, as based on inscriptional and stylistic grounds. The temples of the latter part of his reign are crucial for the fulfilment and restlessness which moves towards a change.

The IIIrd or Sembiyāñ Phase that followed saw from Uttama's ascension to the reign of Rājarāja I in 985 A.D. Politically the Chōla were worn after the Takkōlam debacle. They were slowly recovering their losses. It was in such troubled times that Sembiyāñ Mahādevi, the queen of Gandārāditya and mother of Uttama took up the cause of temple building. A combination of personal
losses and political setback drew her into piety. Her undivided attention to temple building and devotion to religious deed saw the fulfilled human and a fulfilment in art. From the Uyakkondan inscription, as early as the 34th year of Parântaka I to the beginning of the eleventh century A.D. - a period of sixty years she is extolled and remembered for her noble and charitable acts. It is within this ambit that we shall survey the emergence and growth of Early Chōla style.

Instead of breaking up into historic sections, we shall take the individual adhisthāna and study the temples under each of these categories. The adhisthāna ten in number are enumerated below.

i) Pādbandha
ii) Pratibandha - Pratikrama
iii) Padmaka
iv) Vaprabandha
v) Padmabandha
vi) Padmapuśkala
vii) Kapōṭabandha
viii) Puśpabandha
ix) Sundarābja
x) Śrībandha
The pādabandha was every man's heritage in the Drāvida-
dēśa. With variation in heights they are seen in all the three phases of Early Chōla temples. Its usage did not necessarily mean an altogether austere temple. Conservative, they are successive layers of geometric and mathematical precision over each other. Dominated by horizontals and lesser verticals they are basically functional. To one who looks at them carefully they are like exercises in scales, repeating the same note a little different from the other. These flat straight notes are the upana, jagati, kumuda, kaṇṭha and paṭṭika. The Kaliyapāṭṭi Śiva, Panaṅgudi Agastīśvara, Visalūr Mārghasahāyēśvara, Viralūr Bhumīśvara, Naṅgavaram Sundarēśvara, Tillaisthānam Ghṛasthānēśvara, Kilattanaiyam Uttaṇamāṭhasvami, Nēmam Iravāṭēśvara and Nārttamalai Vijayālaya Chōḷēśvaram are Muttaraiyar examples of this adhisthāna with no exceptional quality. (figs. 80,38,69,39, 71,42,70,41)

The Tillaisthānam temple has a pranāla and slightly more pronounced features. This could be because the āṅga divisions are very distinct. The karna, salīlantara and bhadra are clear cut. This also makes it more rigid. The Sundarēśvara at Naṅgavaram has its adhisthāna
buried upto the tripatta kumuda, only the kañtha, paṭṭika and prati are seen. The parivāralaya show the pranāla cut in the pattika below the vedi. The Iravatēśvara and Vijayālaya Chōlisvara both Muttaraiyar Chōla transition temples have galapāda decorations either with a deity or purānic scene. The Early Chōla examples of this adhisthāna are numerous. The Tirutantōrīśvara at Uraiyūr; Tiruppanturutti Puṣpavanēśvara; Tiruppālaṇam Āpatsahyēśvara; Erumbūr Kadambavanēśvara; Uyyakōṇḍan Tirumalai Ujjīvanātha; Kōyil Tēvarāyanapēṭtai, Matsya-purēśvara (fig.92) Turaiyūr Vismaṅgalēśvara; Kōvilādi Divyajñānēśvara; Tiruvērumbūr Piplēśvara (fig.87) and Puṅjai Naḷtunai are examples of the pādabandha. Of these the Naḷtunai Īśvara; Vismaṅgalēśvara(figs.43A,44a) and Piplēśvara follow the Iravatēśvara and Nārttamalaid in galapāda decoration. The first (fig.43) is an excellent display of proportion in elevation enhanced by a robust pādabandha. The galapada of the vedi and adhisthāna have a mini tableaux which show spirit and skill in terms of their composition. Vivid movement is caught in these rectangular blocks. A similar but coarser vivacity is reflected in the Vismaṅgalēśvara with lively animals like the bull, cow, rams and elephants (fig.44,44a). Epic reliefs of the Vāli Sugrīva combat, Narsimha and Nataraja in the ānandatandava are found on the vēdi
galapāda. The Piplīśvara includes the floral motifs. Tiruppaniuruttī PuspavănŚvara has a pranāla at the upana level which suggests an earlier Muttaraiyar site. This is supported by the mātrika sculptures found there.

Surprisingly even the Sembiyā construction at Konēri-rājapuram Umamāhēśvara (fig. 91), Tiruvījaimarudar Mahēlingasvāmi; Anāṅgur Agastī śvara; Tirukuruhavūr Tiruvellādai Īśvara, the Udaiyarguḍi AnantīŚvara (fig. 90) are also on this simplest form of base.

ii) PRATIBANDHA PRATIKRAMA ADHISTHĀNA (fig. 45)
The earliest examples of this adhisthāna are seen in the Kānci VēḷiŚvara, and somewhat ornated in the Jalāntēśvara at Takkōlam (fig. 46) both Pallava temples. The Sēndalai Sundārēśvara (fig. 47) and Kīraṇur Uttamadānēśvara (fig. 48, 49) were two Muttaraiyar temples that give it their own special quality. Architecturally there is a cuboid like block that is seen just below the corner engaged pillars where the ends of the two floor joists are carved. A single vyāla and projecting bevelled member on the top, bottom and sides are seen. Below the intermediate pilasters two on each facade, the ends of floor joists are indicated by the smaller bevelled member projecting from the horizontal groove. The feature
that catches our eye is the curve of the kumuda which is asymmetrical and rounded. The ribs and minor cyma recta seen at Takkōlam are not here; but the kumuda is more pronounced fleshy and confidently carved than even at Vālisvaram. The Kīranūr Uttamādintisvara has apart from a smooth curving kumuda a frieze of vyāla which are facing breast front on faces turned sideways. The compact, neat rows are smooth and in a continuous rhythm. Placed at a very moderate height, one can observe three distinct shapes succeeding one another. The angular profile, the curved one and a dynamic one with forms of life.

The adhisthāna is like a mirror reflection of the hamsa-māla and overhanging flexed kapāta at the bottom; and act as if between them they hold up an austere wall, with equally austere Brahmakanta pilasters.

Sēndalai and Kīranūr, specially the former are transtion temples.

iii) PADMAKA ADHISTHĀNA

This adhisthāna is a unique feature seen in the Tiruccaturai Odavanēśvara (fig.50) and the Kumbakōṇam Nāgēśvara (fig.51,52) both temples of Āditya I phase. The name
padmaka derives from the lotus, and it is the flowing wave like petals which come closest to our feet as we circumambulate the temples. This adhisthāna is a flourishing touch on the pādabandha. The artist in the architect sculptor breaks his upana and uses it as the ksudrō-pana with the heart like lotus petals. This cyma recta moulding at the lower most section is carefully carved. It is more like a jeweller at work. This is all the more enhanced because the vimāna is divided into a neat bhadra and karna, with the former just projected forward. Relieving the harsher angles of the jagati, antarita, kumuda now tripatija kumuda, kampa, gala etc. the cyma recta is a softer modelling of form. How it draws attention to itself is a question, perhaps it did not have such ostentatious intentions and was only the creative urge to soften, model and externalise a finer sensibility into stone. The Tiruccaturai has an additional antarita which Kumbakōṇam does not have. The latter takes the padmaka even in its ardhamanḍapa. The petals are more elaborate. The vimāna is broken into the bhadra and karna too and adds to the rhythmic movement back and forth. The galapāda have themes like Rāmāyaṇa in shallow relief.
iv) **VAPRABANDHA ADHISTHĀNA (fig. 53)**

Innovative and original this takes a few more steps from the pratibandha pratikrama types. Upon a cuboid uapana and jagati rests the vṛttta kumuda, the very word vṛttta makes it curved. Clasping it on either sides are small closely carved lotus petals called adhah padma and urdhva padma. Following this is the pratimukha. This is enclosed on either side by the antarita and prativajana. It is seen that the gala in both pratibandha and vaprabandha are absent. The pratimukha carries a finely carved dynamic vyālāvari. Examples of these types are the Tirukkāṭṭupalli Agnīśvara, Sītnivāsanallūr Koraṅganātha (fig. 54) and the Allūr Pāṅcanāḍiśvara. The jagati in these temples is relatively higher, and the kumuda more deeply cut specially in Koraṅganatha. This temple slightly larger than many temples of this phase is remarkable for its clarity and resonance of forms and masses. Powerfully rendered vyāja and a makaratunda carrying human figures form a vigorous garland around the vimāna. Divided into the karna, salilantara and bhadra there is a rhythmic flow of opposing forces that create greater movement. The finer quality once again in barely perceptible to a common eye, for the adhahpadma is barely visible. The urdhvapadma is carved out in shallow relief, as if they replicate silver or gold filigree.
The galapāda above the vēdi are left bare. There is a slow building up of different human qualities from the basement till we reach its fulfilment in the life size sculptures (fig.54). The Tirukāṭṭupalli Agnīśvara is simpler with a smaller adhah and urdhvapadma and vyāḷavari. The vimāna of the Allūr Paṇcanāḍīśvara is also a simpler version of the Koraṅganātha with a relatively smaller vṛttamūrta. The vyāḷavari with elephants is less powerfully rendered.

The Manavāḷīśvara in Tiruvilakudi is similar to Koraṅganātha but adds an additional minor ksudrapadma between the jagati and upana somewhat recalling Tiruvāḍuturai.

A unique example of the Kodanḍarāmēśvaram (Ādityēśvaram) in Tondaimāṇḍ which is a pallipaṇḍai in memory of Āditya I was constructed in the 34th year of Parantaka I i.e. 941 A.D. The only surviving adhishṭāna of the Pratikrama Vaprābandha type it has a ribbed kumuda called kāṭakāvṛṭta kumuda. Its earlier prototype is seen in later Pallava temples of Takkōḷam and Uttaramēṟūr. The verticallly fluted and slightly curved kumuda have been subtly carved and have supported gracefully well rendered vyāḷa in high relief. Smaller than the Jalanēthēśvara and Sundaravarada of Takkōḷam and Uttaramēṟūr resp. (figs.46,27)
the jagāti carries the katakāvṛta kumuda clasped by adhah and urdhva padma. this type does not feature anywhere in the Early Chōla temples. Both geographically and stylistically its leans towards the Pallavas. This kumuda relieves the rigidity of other components by its mellifluous wave like flutings. Lying in the heart of the Pallava domain, it naturally shows Pallava affiliations and handwork.

v) PADMABANDHA ADHISTORYĀNA (fig. 55)

Temples of the Early Chōla style, like the Kiliyanur Agastīśvara, Lālgudi Saptarṣićśvara; Pullamaṅgai Brahma-puriśvara, Tirunāmanalur Tirutoṅdīśvara; Tirurarayūr Siddhanātha; Allūr Paṅcandīśvara; and Vālikandāpuram Vālikandēśvara follow the padmab .andha adhisthāna which is an elaboration of the vaprabandha with a padma or major cyma recta moulding in place of the jagāti. The earliest development occurs in the Pallava Alavai-k-kōvil at Māmallapuram (fig. 22); the same is called padmōpana above which stands the tripattā kumuda or its deco-rated version called kārava. The padmaka adhisthāna developed thereafter and the proper padmabandha, giving emphasis to the major cyma recta moulding occurs. The major difference is the treatment of this part. Apart from this in place of an angular kumuda it continues
to use the vṛttakumuda with adaha and urdhava padma as in the vaprabandha adhistantha. Three forms of adhisthana are combined here to create a new form.

Above the vṛttakumuda clasped by the adaha and urdhva padma are the dynamically carved vyālāvari.

The Saptarṣisvara at Lālgudi (fig.56) shows us a curved in padma with the tips of its petal rising up like waves. The fall of the open petals from a small convex to concave, and rising back like the crest of a wave gives us the illusion of a full bloom lotus floating on the water surface. Complimented by a moderately curved kumuda, the mouldings have a natural fluidity. The vyālāvari is the turbulent surface rendered with vigour. The necklace of leonine and elephant forms with riders and warriors thrown in are the dramatic and only such forms in the whole of the 1st tala. From ripples to high tide and turbulence the various mouldings take us through similar feelings. The wall kanthas are exceptional sculptured blocks bearing panels from Śiva Purāṇa and Rāmāyana. The makara tunda in each case are awesome.

The other interesting example is the Tirutoṇḍisvara at Tirunāmanalūr of the late Parāntaka Phase, 975 A.D. This is not as exciting an adhisthana as the former,
but is relatively austere, and has a convex curve that opens slightly into restrained curves of the petal. The adaha and urdhva padma are also rounded, while the vyāśa are not strung close together and are scanty. The closely packed lotus petals appear almost in a straight line despite the slightly projected bhadra.

vi) KAPOTABANDHA ADHISTHĀNA (fig.57)

Kapotabandha literally means bound by the flexed or overhanging cornice. The earliest example of this feature occurs in the upapīṭha of the Pallava Olakkanesvar at Māmallapuram (fig.23). The interesting aspect is that this form had practically died out after Rājasimha Pallava. This form appears as a variation of the pratibandha with a major additional component. The Pullamangai Brahmapurisvara; the Šomūr ruined temple and the Tiruccenamapundi Čāyaiyar kovil follow this form.

Pullamangai has a high kapotabandha adhisthāna with vivid carvings of epic themes in the galapāda. A rectangular block of upana carries a high jagati a vṛta kumuda with only urdhva padma, kampa, gala and again sculptured galapāda urdhva, kampa, kapota and the pratimukha or vyāśāvari with a makara tuṇḍa in corners (fig.58). The kapota is like the keel of an inverted boat and
is enhanced with valḷi in the corner, and candramandala along the rims. The vyāśa and makara in the pratikanṭha are complimentary life forms. Mythic, floral and animal motifs find place in continuous blocks; clarity and perfection of each architectural form reflect the architect's fetish. Love for minute detail is seen in the careful carvings of miniature reliefs. Such crisp and sensitive details find place even in the kumuda, kaṇṭha and kapōṭa. The kapōṭa is the focus of attention.

The Cāḍaiyar Kōvil in Tiruccenampundi (fig.59) was possibly rebuilt in 920-921 A.D. during Parāntaka I(3). Both vimāṇa and the ardhamanḍapa are on the kapōṭa bandha adhisthāna. The galapāda are not so remarkably adorned. The carvings are not as masterly. The vedi has pāda adorned with charming miniature reliefs and floral motifs. This also has over the vṛttā kumuda the barely discernable urdhva padma. The kapōṭa valḷi are not overly commendable due to being partly defaced, but the precision with which the vyāḷāvari runs round the vimāṇa is very rhythmic and compact. They can compare to Kīranūr and Śrīnīvāsa-nalūr in their precision in workmanship.

The Sōmūr ruined templed supposedly has a remarkable adhisthāna standing on a very narrow upana, broader
jagati, a vṛttā kumuda clasped by a shallow carving of adaha and urdhava padma, and an unadorned gala over which hangs a prominent kapōṭa. This has a band of arabesque or kodikkaruku. running on the ridge and a kūdu arch at equal intervals to relieve the linerarity of the band. The pratikaṇṭha or padmavājana carries the vyāḷāvari and makaratuṇḍa at the corners.

vii) PUSPABANDHA ADHISTHĀNA (fig.60)

Puspa bandha literally calls to our mind garlands of puśpa placed at the feet of the Lord. Euphemistic perhaps but true. Moulding after moulding are interwoven garlands of petals running round the vimāna, perhaps the fervour reaching a fever pitch. The last years of Parāntaka I saw the emergence of the puspabandha with auxilliary laminations of minor cyma recta mouldings for the first time. It was prominently used in the latter half of the 10th century A.D. This period, the last years of Parāntaka I otherwise too saw advances made in some of the larger temples like the Tiruvāduṭuari Gōmuktēśvara and Puṇjai Naṭtunai Śvarām. New trends were ushered in this phase. The former temple poses much problem due to its controversial inscription and misleading word ‘kūḍapa ḍai’(4). D. Barret’s investigation is agreed to be most plausible so far. The 25th year inscription
of a Parākēsari Parāntaka I, 932 A.D. mentions the construction by a Karralip - Piccan and a 38th year inscription of Parāntaka I which records a donation of 500 Kalanju of gold for the construction of the temple from the kūḍa-paḍai upwards. This could according to S.R. Balasubramanyam be the donation made by the king before the final installation of a stupi in gold. Ghai and K.G. Krishnan call it the kumuda paḍai i.e. the temple was constructed from the kumuda upwards in the 38th year of Parantaka I, 945 A.D. M.A. Dhaki takes the kumudapaḍai closer to its Saṁskrit equivalent khūrpaṭṭa, which is the jagati below the kumuda and is the first mouldings of the base, and thus began the construction from 945 A.D. onwards.

The only valid alternative is that the brick structure constructed by Piccan Karrali was rebuilt by Parāntaka I in stone, and this is the most plausible one, since both architecture and sculpture support it. The temple as a whole is complementary and conforms to its design. The interplay of different features with super skill makes it a royal, late Parāntaka I foundation.

Tiruppāṇḍal Arupācalēśvara; the Tirunāgēśvaram Nāgēśvara, The Tiruvāḍuturai Ğōmuktēśvara; Kīḻappaluvūr Tiru Ālan-durai Mahādevar; Kuhūr Āmravanēśvara, Sembiyāṉ Mahādevi Kailāsannaṉ, Tiruvāṭūr Acalē śvara and the Kūṟuṟṟaṅgudi
Vasisthesvara fall in this category of adhisthāna. All these temples apart from the Arunacaklesvara have series of padma from the upana to the vājana. Above the upana are moderate sized padma which run around the vimāna, parallel and running successively in the other mouldings, the inverted lower petals above the jagati are called ambuja. This is an additional new feature. Clasping the vyuḍṭa kumuda are the adhah and urdhvapadma. Above this is the kampa, gala, urdhva kampa, urdhva padma which clasps the mahāpaṭṭi from below and the ksudra padma which does the same from above. The topmost section is the vājana paṭṭi. Thus every rigid geometric shape is counter balanced and relieved by the carefully and lovingly chiselled padma or puspa.

The Gomuktesvara (fig.61) ushered in this trend, and they were seen in the latter years of Parāntaka I and justifiably carried over into the Sembiyaṭ phase. The Tiruvaduturai temple also uses this form in its kōshṭa paṇjāra. There are miniature panels on the galapāda of the vēdi. There is no māha-padma, but smaller ones. The ambuja and adhahpadma have the semblance of the plaited feature. Another notable feature is the intervening spaces have lozenge decorations which are rich and carved to minute detail. Such a unique base is found nowhere
in this phase again. The Sembiyan adhisthāna do not come anywhere near these, while the Nāgēśvara and Arunā- calēśvara are also otherwise a little doubtful(5). The Second Phase anticipates this base in the Third Phase, but the latter lacked in surpassing the former.

viii) SUNDARĀBJA ADHISTHĀNA (fig.62)
A rare form of adhisthana, there appears to be none other than the Āduturai Āpatesahyēśvara (fig. 63) which has it. Very similar to the puṣpabandha in all respects, the only major change occurs in the major cyma recta moulding 'mahā-padma' which takes the place of both upana and jagati. It stands on a very slight ksudropana. Falling convex and then concave its petals rise gently. The total effect is one of a cascade. The vṛttā kumuda is less prominent because of this and the adhah-urdhva padma are barely discernible. the kaṇṭha or galapāda is bare. There is such a dominating spirit in the maha-padma that the other features appear comparatively subdued. This adhisthāna combines the puṣpabandha and padmabandha adhisthāna.

ix) ŚRĪBANDHA ADHISTHĀNA (fig.64)
The human urge to mix and match, put the pieces of a jigsaw together are suggestive of man’s restlessness
and dissatisfaction. When a skill is not yet acquired, his ego refuses to acknowledge his defeat, and so he tries it over and over again. Once the means and end have arrived the rest takes on a meaninglessness; i.e. an 'intended effect' once produced kills interest in it, and the unquenching thirst takes them to newer heights. Exposure to other types of development and guilds have played a role in the emergence of this type of adhisthāna.

The three major temples which follow this adhisthāna form are the Vṛddhacalam Vṛddhagirisvara, Kuttālam Uktavēdisvara, and the Tirupurambiyam Sāksāvara; and all these belong to the Third or Sembiyaṭ hase. The Gandārittam Sokkēśvara and the Govindaputtūr Gaṅgajatādharēśvara also follow the same.

This adhisthāna has a medium padama above the ksudropana, a jagati, the ambuja and adhah padma, the vṛttā kumuda, the ārdhva kumuda, gala, kapōṭa, paṭṭika, padma-kampa and prati. The ambuja is also called ksudrapadma and has an antarita or īlinga above which comes the adahapadma. The cyma recta mouldings which besides differentiating also intergrate the other features carefully.

The Tirupurambiyan Saksāvara (fig. 65) is more ornate, in that it has a dressed kapōṭa with kodikkaruku and
a kūdu arch. A vyāla frieze is also seen. This kind of adhisthāna is described as śrībandha in the Vaikhānasā Āgama and Māricisamhita. The vyāla friezes are not impressive, while the jagati vṛtta kumuda, gala etc. are dominating. The minor cyma recta mouldings are like delicate ornaments over the body of the major mouldings. The vallī and kūdu arches also appear graceful and modest. Interestingly the lowermost section, where the pillars of pañjārakōṣṭha stand are projected with pairs of vājana puruṣā holding up the same.

The Vṛddhagirīśvara and Uktavēdīśvara are similar. Both have modestly carved adhisthāna. The latter is on a high base, and the vēdi kaṇṭha show carved episodes in relief from Śiva Purāṇa and secular themes.

x) PADMA PUŚKALA ADHISTHĀNA (fig.66)
The adhisthāna with the mahāpadma as in the padmabandha, and the vṛttakumuda clasped by the adhah and urdhva padma as in vaprabandha go into the making of the padma-puśkala. Although relatively simpler it is one of the most graceful and austere rich. They are the perfect bases for one of the most perfect examples of the Irrukuvēl and Pālavēṭṭaraiyar temples under the Early Chōla style. Upon a very usual upana, in place of the jagati are
the most elegantly carved mahāpadma. This is surmounted by the vyāțakumuda with the adhah and urdhva padma with the antarita below the former. The pratimukha of vyāța recall Kiraŋūr Uttamadāṁśvara (fig.49) of the Muttaraiyar. Perhaps the Cadaiyar Kōyil at Tiruccendarapundi and Korāṅganātha at Śrīnivāsanallūr both drew from these sources (figs.54,59).

The best examples at hand and the best preserved ones are the Koḍumbēḻur Mūvar Kōil, Tiruccendurai C andrasēkhara both of the Irrukuvēḻ idiom, the Kïlaiyūr Agastīśvara and Chōllēśvara, and the Paṅcanādēśvara at Tiruvaivyāru (figs.76,77b,67,68).

The Mūvar Kōyil shows large or broad cyma recta mouldings which again fall into upturned tips of petals. The incised carved out areas give an elegant shape to the form. Not too fleshy, but with sufficient emphasis, they come close to naturalism. Surmounted by the vyāțakumuda it is only upon close observation that the adhah and urdhva padma are visible. The vyāțēvāri need no further commendation, they are a rhythmic flow of dynamism and vivre. The Candrasēkhara at Tiruccendurai is similar.

If the Irrukuvēḻ's ample sweep of the mahāpadma and the striking quality of the powerful vyāța characterise
these temples, the Paluvēṭṭaraiyars were none the less. The perfect carving of the slightly smaller mahāpadma make it appear rich and velvety. Pouring over, the petals have a double curvature effect. This is an example of the conquered medium and outstanding architectonics. The vṛtta kumuda with the adhah and urdhva-padma are cushion and lace, as if embroidered upon the docile stone. The vyāḷāvari in contrast is all animation above the subtlety of the lower components and these are reflected both in the Chōḷīśvaram and Agastīśvaram at Kilaiyūr.

The Paṁcanādiśvara in Tiruvaiyāru sees this kind of adhisthāna, where the mahāpadma is similar to the Mūvarkōil. The adhah and urdhva padma pulsate with life as if impatient to grow.

General observation shows us that despite the large number of temples both new and renovated, the Chōḷa temples proper used the pādabandha most frequently. The puṣpabandha was the uniquely new feature while all the others are found in the Pallava, Irrukuvēḻ Mutta-raiyar and Paluvēṭṭaraiya temples. It is their play of changing, interchanging, emphasising and giving expression in their own precise way that calls forth for them accolades. It is also seen that those temples which
cause us some doubts regarding history, dating, etc.
come up with these variations, like the Gōmuktesvara, or the Mūvarkōil. Falling under and within the Early Chōla reign, the Irrukuvēḷ Muttaraiya and Paluvēṭtaraiya sources have contributed to a large extent in this madness towards the hybrid form. The yield needless to say was a rich output of architecture and architectonics, forms which metamorphosed over and over again into new shapes, carrying a revived life, perhaps the life elixir. Royal patronage appears to have had a key role in determining the relative importance of these temples.

The form and texture so go together that the qualities of shape are manipulated by the Chōla with dexterity. Emphasis or blur is shown on the surface which enhances or conceals accordingly. The human urge is hence both exhibitionist and reticent, where enhanced display and camouflage give it that unique identity. They are evocative compositions in stone.

IV.2 THE FIRST TALA (THE WALLS OF THE VIMĀNA)

"Above the adhisthāna rise the walls of the temples, (called the first tala). These are large fields of beautiful and accurately worked hard stone left plain, and
carefully placed pilasters and engaged pillars were used to articulate the wall surface. The effect achieved is one of classical precision and severity, and the architect is never tempted to emphasise his decorative detail at the expense of his forms" (6).

-Douglas Barret

The above description is most succinct and complete within itself. It is for us to identify, sift and then see the emergence of style from this part of the temple. The visual impact upon this area is very relevant, for falling within the human vision and proximity the space is aptly utilised for both elaboration and education. The wall with its focal niches became the spokesman for all that stood for religious thought. From being a very necessary and strictly functional architectural component it metamorphoses into a play field, upon which the artist sets off in a love affair. However, the walls of the Early Chola temples stay apart, beyond all compare, accessible yet not accessible, proud and aloof, commanding the respect and reverence of its sculptor - architect lover.

The wall proper begins at the vedi and ends at the vāḷāvari or kapōṭa. Discrete punctuation by pillars
and pilasters of different orders - The Brahmakanta, Visnukanta, Isakanta, Indrakanta and Saumyakanta are seen on the wall. They offered great scope to the sculptor, for upon its surface he created and tamed the medium to his will, and dressed them in ornaments in the mālasthāna, lasuna, ghaṭa and manṭi. This finely finished member carried a palagai some times. The vimāna had either one or different types of pillars and pilasters, while the ardhamandapa was usually punctuated by the Brahmakanta. The interiors had Viṣṇu, Ṣa or Indrakanta types. The Brahmakanta was never used as a free standing pillar. These pillars are either bare or dressed in shallow relief. The shaft or kal is either square, round octagonal, polygonal and fluted delicately. The fluted shaft was referred as the 'sundobhēda' - one like the split bamboo. Resting on a square base saduram, the 'kal' carries a kalaśa bound by the padmabandha moulding. At this point is the mālasthāna with either tasseled decorations, muktāvali floral or foliate motifs. The capital which is above has respective members; the vase like kalaśa surmounted by a moulding 'taḍi' (echinus) which spreads in a convex profile. The kumbha a rounded vase topped by a padma cyma recta, with its tops curving inwards makes a powerful torus moulding. Some times indenta-
tions mark the petal tips called 'munai'. The palagai or abacus surmounts this; they carry the 'virakaṅṭha' which appears to be inserted into the poṭṭika.

The poṭṭika is either plain and angular, or the taraṅga type we have already seen in the preceding chapter. The arms are hewn off at an angle of approx. 45°; and could be either plain, or with the slanting and horizontal faces with roll or reed moulding taraṅga. A plain or decorated median band 'paṭṭa' holds these in the centre. In the plain angular poṭṭika this paṭṭa is prominent. The prastāra rests on this poṭṭika; and often has mouldings called the uttira and valabhi (a strong convex moulding bearing the haṁsa or bhūta mala which kind of bind and perform aesthetic functions). Overhanging on this is the kapūṭa, which is basically employed to throw off the water and protect the beams and joists of the roof. The flexed curve became the sculptor's delight and carried the patralata or kodikka-ruku in the corners, and centre. They substitute for the koṇa paṭṭa which braced the corners of the kapūṭa in its wooden prototypes. The lower ridge of the kapūṭa have rows of flat bosses or candramāṇḍala which again take off from the metal bossing upon the wooden prototype. Above this at uniform intervals occur the kūḍu
(nāsi·), horse shoe shaped with sinhavaktra finials and mukhapaṭṭi. The gadha cavity may or may not be filled with motifs. Above this is the vyājamāla between the prastāra and the hāra of the second tala. At first glance all these components look the same; and infact they are common to all South Indian architecture. The relative emphasis and articulation make one aspect more dominant or recessive than the other. The Pallava pillar for instance is shallow, using very little recession. The kalaśa ran smoothly into the shaft preserving the columner aspect. The Sundaravarada Perumāḷ at the Uttaramērūr shows the padmabandha recession, the inward curve of the base of the kalaśa which is basically the nature of manipulation. In contrast to this, the nature of the Chōla articulation is more vibrant and expressive. On one hand the quality of architectural precision is at the fore, sturdy and dominant while on the other the sculptural emprisement reflects his urge for freedom of expression. This is seen in their adhisthāna superstructures and walls. The Early Chōla potṭika is a complex profile of vertical ending fascia, with an angular throating. The Lalitāṅkūra at Tirucirāppalli anticipates the roll ornaments and its use at the lower angle of a large role with an 'incised volute'. The South Indian prastāra is more or less
the same, the change is upon the dressed surface —
for the Pallava finial of the kūdu is shovel shaped
while the Chola finial is usually the lion mask and
an overflowing arabesque.

The dēvakāṣṭha, one of the most important features of
the wall becomes next important to the garbhagṛha with
the mūla dēvata. It is usually the vehicle for religious
thought and mythology. Elongated and rectangular,
this recess is shallow or deep. It is a classic under-
statement — for with restrained elegance, it draws our
eye to the enshrined god. They are framed by two
split pilasters of the Brahmakanta type, with a poṭṭika
virakaṇṭha or palagai, a lintel of two straight mouldings
and separated by the cyma recta of lotus which may
or may not be carved. Crowning this is the tōrāṇa,
simple or elaborately carved with either floriate or
geometric motifs interspersed with human or semidivine
figures and a central lāḷātābimba. This tympanum is
usually a 'makara tōrāṇa' which is as old as the cave
temples of the Pallavas and seen in the Dalavanūr Satru-
malla, and the Trīmūrti cave temple (figs.10,16). It
is said that the Pallava never forgot the original function
of the tympanum which was that of the lintel for support.
To be able to make any change in it was a professional
risk. The risk however we see was overcome, and the spirit of adventure was fulfilled in the Early Chōla tōraṇa.

With this brief description this section is divided into four parts or phases.

i) The Pre Āditya or Vijayālaya phase (850 A.D.)

ii) The Āditya I phase (870 - 907 - 940 A.D.)

iii) The Second phase (940 - 970 A.D.)

iv) The Third or Sembiyaṇ phase (969 - 985 A.D.)

The temples dealt in these phases are more or less stylistically grouped, except in some rare cases where doubts exist they are treated as close as possible to whatever predilection they show.

i) THE PRE ĀDITYA OR VIJAYĀLAYA PHASE (850 A.D.)

The lesser or smaller temples of the Muttaraiyar which are closest to the ekatala vimāna of the earliest Chōla temples are clearly articulated by the Brahmakanta pilasters minus the dēvakōṣṭha. The Kaliyapaṭṭi Śiva, Visalūr Marghasahāyēśvara (figs. 80, 69) are apt examples. Shallow, but nevertheless they relieve the bare walls. An incised band for the mālāsthāna continues with barely
any change into the lausuna or kalaśā. Over this is
the taḍi, kumbha - the rectangular cushioned capital
and palagai over which is an angular poṭṭika. Hidden
above are the uttira, valabhi and prastāra components
by the kapōta. This austere kapōta has a patralata
at the extreme corners followed by two rounded kudu
arches minus the finial. A candramāla runs along the
rim of the kapōta. Slightly recessed in the prastara
is the vyāḷāvari, with pairs of vyāḷa breast front
and facing each other sideways.

The Viralūr Bhūmīśvara (fig. 39) is larger and has a
central devakoshta and crude remains of a tōraṇa.
Framed by split pilasters it is narrow. There is a
merest hint of the bhadra and karna., with the former
ever so slightly projecting. The pilasters are the
Brahmakanta two are the corners of the bhadra and
pairs on the extreme ends of karna. The Panāṅgudi
Agastīśvara (fig. 38) finds the Brahmakanta with plain
angular corbels too. The ardhamanḍapa here also has
evenly spaced pilasters. Rectangular niches at the
entrance are present to receive the dvārapāla. These
are the earliest and simplest forms of the Early Chōla
vimāna. D. Barret says "the question remains whether
it is a true primitive of the style", due to lack of
other really usable material. The Bhūmisvāra still has sculptures that could be dated to this formative phase on stylistic grounds.

The major temple on this Chōla conquered Muttaraiya tract is the Vijayālaya Chōlisvāra (fig. 41). Here again we encounter slightly pronounced Brahmakanta pilasters with the projecting palagai and plain angular potṭiṅka. The vertical shafts are minus the lasuna. The unique identity of this temple wall are in the paired row of pilasters in contrast to the mushrooming upper talas. Unarticulated upto the taṇḍi, by virtue of their simplicity and thinness they give a heightened elegance to it. Flat ribbon like, these pilasters frame the wall in five sections while the geometrically plain and angular corbels rise up to merge with the uttira. The ardhamanaḍapa pilasters are similar but barely pronounced.

The pillars in the interior are massive, cut square at the top and bottom and octagonal in between. They derive from the Pallava and the Pāṇḍya cave temples. The front corners have Brahmakanta pilasters with the potṭiṅka decorated with large even rolls bound up with a plain median paṭṭa which indicates a throating - very much the Early Chōla.
The Nēmam Irāvātēsvara (fig.70) also has simple Brahma-kanta with archaic decor on its kalaśa. Like the Tirupattūr Tālināṭha there is a slight incurving of the kalaśa - just a slight play is also shown in the pilaster of the same order. The variation is an intentional one to show the difference between a supporting pillar and a relieving one.

The Ghṛṣṭhānesvara at Tillaisthānam (fig.42) ushers in features that become typical Chōla. The wall section leans heavily on the formative Chōla idiom, and is a definite advance over the Muttaraiyar. The Viṣṇukanta is prominently used in the karna and the Brahmakanta for the sham niches in the recesses, and the bhadra dēvakāśṭa. The bhadra itself is framed by the Rudrakanta. This is exceptional because thus far the Muttaraiyar only used the tetragonal Brahmakanta. There is archaic decoration on the mālasthāna and the kalaśā as at Panāṅgudī Agastisvarā. The walls further are dependent on the offsetting basal divisions and are thus also enhanced by them. The two pairs of Viṣṇukanta for corners distinguish that particular space with greater clarity, while the simpler Brahmakanta underplay the sham niches in recesses. The Rudrakanta are used as dominant frames that enclose the bhadra which has
a deep dēvakōṣṭha framed by split pilasters. Variety or variation create a visual logic of forward backward, high and low rhythms. The pillars and pilasters are roll or taraṅga poṭṭika throated with a plain median patta. The interior pillars have cushioned capitals, less pronounced shaft and slightly projecting saduram. The Sundarēśvara at Naṅgavaram (fig.71) also has Viṣṇu-kanta pilasters without the lasuna on the corner pilasters. The pillars and pilasters have the roll taraṅga poṭṭika throated with a median band, which is a rectangular fillet, they are not as slender and elegant as Tillaisthānam, specially the pilasters are high with a cushioned ghata or kumbha, and lesser in the mid section with a slightly more prominent saduram similar to Tillaisthānam. Unlike this temple, the Sundarēśvara does not have dēvakōṣṭha.

This temple poses a problem of chronology. The inscrip-
tional evidence is somewhat confusing. A 10th year inscription of Parākesarivarman 337 of 1903 which refers to a munificent gift by a lady Sīlapperundēviar (Perun-
 gaṅgai consort of Sembiyaṇ Irrukuvēḻ). The Parākesari perhaps refers to Parāntaka I. The fabric supports a date within the first two decades of the 10th century A.D., according to D. Barret and thus in the Parāntaka I
Looking at the wall treatment there are Mutta-rayar features, whereas the superstructure up to the dvitala (from hāra to grīva) share in Irrukuvēḷ features. It can best be called the Early Chōla style of the mixed Mutta-rayar Irrukuvēḷ idiom. The Mutta-rayar Irrukuvēḷ comaraderie during Cattan Mārvan period is a historical fact; so was the social connection strong due to marriage ties between the Irrukuvēḷ and Chōla (7). It was not otherwise strange to share certain cultural traits and not others. "The architecture shows a kinship with that of the Early Chōla, though not identical. The differences are enough to admit a cognate Köṅṅāḷ idiom within a general Chōla framework (8).

**ii) THE ĀDITYA-I PHASE**

The Āditya I phase proper ushers in a new confidence. Apart from the stylistic evaluations, there are supporting inscriptionsal evidences that build and sustain the Chōla idiom. Only temples which offer us some clues and are relevant to causing style are taken here.

The Tiruccatuarai Odavanēśvara (fig. 72) shows fully articulated Brahmakanta with taraṅga potṭika and a median pāṭṭa. The vimāna is similarly divided into āṅga like the Tillasthānam temple but with a projecting bhadra.
The pilasters with the kumbha, the lasuna or kalaśā and maṇḍi are all carved with elegant floral arabesques. From the padmabandha to palagai are various jewellery like vegetative scrolls. Such jewellery like workmanship is seen in the Tiruppanturutti Puṣpavanāśvara (fig.73). Finely carved filigree the aesthetic aspect outdoes the functional one. With the treatment of medium showing such skill and care as the goldsmith would show his gold. The tympanum is not very clearly readable, while the corbelling is taraṅga with a plain median band. An interesting feature is the muktāvali on the underside of the lower ridge of the palagai, adding delicate grace to the spirited florals of the echinus.

The Sundar ēśvara at Tirukatṭalai (fig.74) which is again partly a mixed idiom of Chōla-Irrukuvēl is similar to the Tiruccaturai; the difference is in the shallower and narrower dēvakōshṭa and less sharply distinguished angā. The exquisite scroll work from the mālasthāna is a simultaneous occurrence. The interesting feature is the introduction of rearing vyāla in the corner of the vimāna front piece, standing upon the palagai with head reaching just below the kapōṭa. They are placed at angles, so as to conform to the corbel projection as if meeting their weight. Does this occur for the
first time? Perhaps within the Chōla, but a variation of this is seen in the Arjuna ratha in larger number (fig. 19). All the pilasters but the corner ones flanking the images carry it on their corbel. The very early precedent was known and reused here similarly. There is also a protractor like tōraṇa above the pottika of the split pilaster that sits on a base of minor cyma recta moulding.

The most typical and remarkable temple is the Vēdapūrīś-vara at Tiruvēdikudi (fig. 75) where we now have an established corbel order with a decorated median band. There is a variation of the Tīlaisthānam pillars and pilasters, while the aṅga are not on a straight mānasūtra, they project here in the bhadra. The pilasters vary according to this. The karna take Brahmakanta, the bhadra corners Viṣṇukanta these have fine lasuna carved from above the mālasthāna. The pilasters bordering the niches are round Ḍakanta, with cushioned capitals. All these show us a close link with the Muttaraiyar temples at Naṅgavaram, Nēmam and Nārṭtamalai. Were these types or was the emergent Chōla showing residual elements, is ponderable? The compulsion to settle this question before the beginning of the 10th century A.D. is overwhelming, and a few more Irrukuvēḻ examples
and other types will precipitate an answer based on the visual. The Koṭūmbāḷūr Mūvarkōil (fig.76) and the Tiruccendurai C .andaśēkhara (fig.77) should perhaps help us. The former, a delight in architectural poise and perfection is divided into the aṅga with the bhadra slightly projecting. Over the dynamic vyāḷāvari rises a classically austere wall relieved by graceful Brahma- kanta and very lovingly carved mālasthāna. Hooped muktāvali, floral tassels, foliate bands, the same motifs of lasuna, and the floral one on the ghaṭa show familiarity but excellent workmanship qualitative. The temple poses a chronological problem. the base shows the typical phase-I style while the sculptures otherwise, and the superstructure a mid 10th century A.D. complex(9). The other temple, which is also of this idiom is the Tiruccendurai Candraśēkhara. Less ornamented, perhaps closer to Tirukkaṭṭalai, architecturally a similarity is shared, but a lot of the ornamental features are blurred. A dynamic tōraṇa of the makara type is fairly pronounced. The central medallion figure is a dancing gaṇa, surrounded by a loop of muktāvali bearing alternate figures of vyāḷa and gaṇa. The catch here is in the bold lines and bolder execution of the motif. A nervous rendering aiming at dramatic form is apparent.
Drawing our attention simultaneously and compulsively is the Paluvēṭṭaraiyar, Kilaiyūr Avanikandarpa Iśvarīgrham. The twin shrines of the Agastīśvara (fig.67) and Chōlisvara are about the same time in 884 A.D. If Koṭumbālūr is the 'pièce de resistance' of the Irrukuvēḷ, then these twin shrines are nonetheless of Paluvēṭṭaraiyar. In their pillars and pilasters are seen a delicacy of equal measure. The mālasthāna are superbly rendered crowns a slender flame form, as if turned to clay and by the sunlight spun into gold. These temples show skilled hands at work, there is not a trace of tension or uncertainty in any feature. Distinct padmabandha, lasuna of flowing scrolls and tassels and puktalāvali add to the solitary grandeur of these temples. The kalaśa takes the kodikkarruku or patralata in an inverted arch. The central motif flowing down and opening out and again upwards was a popular feature. The kumbha or ghaṭa the pāli, carry an indu-mañḍala on the palagai. The southern wall pilasters have a fine echinus with a row of haṃsa- mālā within a sprouting vegetation. The forms are biomorphic, growing and merging to intricacy. The ardhamañḍapa is also supported by four cushion type pillars of Iśakanta sīṃhapāda. The sculptor architect has turned his blocks of stone into fluid, malleable and ductile forms. These are flame like-
falling, winding meandering into spirals suggesting movement and growth. The torana are equally elaborate and classically carried upon simple Brahmakanta with tapestry like ornament on the kalaśa, with palagai and angular corbels. They rise into a crescent filled with an exquisite embroidery of forms. The central field has an eight armed dancing Śiva flanked by gambolling gana on music. Two flying deities are present on either side. The muktāvali carries flora, fauna and gana, spewn from the makara mouth. There are horsemen, vyāla and gana. Agitated movement but with a definite format is seen. there is struggle to eliminate or create the unknown; but having reached a totality of conception the sculptor now only attends to the task of giving the final or finishing touch. The motifs are like a birds eye view of green vegetation upon a sea of wall. The Chōlisvara imitates its twin with perhaps just a little less finesse. the manḍapa pillars are simhapada below the mālasthāna, while two other pillars are leonine and elephant faced; the Agastīvaram also has these, and recall Pallava precedents.

The Tiruvaiyāru Pāncanāḍīśvara (fig.78) now only in fragments has the taraṅga poṭṭika, with decor comparable to Tiruccaturai and Tiruppanturutti and shows the similar
mode of flame like jewel on the lasuna, kumbha and palagai.

The Lālguḍi Saptārsisvara (fig. 56) comes to us replete with Pallava Pāṇḍya, Paluvēṟaraiyar and Chōla inscriptions (10). Well preserved, the Viṣṇukanta has taraṅga pottika and decorated median bands, the saduram is cut in the Brahmakanta and the shaft is fluted. The other parts are decorated while the capitals have flutings falling in line with those on the pillar. The mandi run is octagonal and simulates the large petals of the padma in its segments. The palagai is over the taraṅga pottika meeting an uttira and then taken over by the valabhi with bhūta. This bhūtalabhi is in consonance with the same in the adhisthāna. There are detailed blocks of sculpture in wall kaṇṭha. carrying purāṇic scenes. The split pilasters of the same Viṣṇukaṇṭha type imitate the main pilasters and carry elaborate but eroded makara tūrana. There is no central medallion with clarity but the muktāvali loop has nothing in them. From the mouths of the makara are spewn, figures. The emphasis here is given more to the sculpture, adhisthāna and to the superstructure.

The other very important Chōla temple the Kumbakōṇam Nāgēsvarasvāmi (fig. 79) rebuilt in 886 A.D., shares
in the many features seen thus far. The typical Brahma-kanta pilasters for karna and bhadra on a straight line, the recessed hara recesses recalls Tillaisthānam (fig. 42). The important feature is the presence of dancing figures of apsara for the first time. We have seen these in Tirukkaṭṭalai as rearing vyāla but the dancing figures do not occur elsewhere. Their order is seen thus, the karna carry the apsara, and the vyāla: are on bhadra pilasters. There is a fine row of bhūtagaṇa under the kapōṭa. The central dēvakōṣṭha has split pilasters and is further flanked by cantoning pilasters. The salilāntara recesses have figures too. This kind of wall treatment and ornamentation foreshadow many decorative aspects of the full fledged Early Chōla temple.

The straight ardhanāḍapā has a central dēvakōṣṭha and two bald niches on either side. The recesses connecting the ardhanāḍapā to vimāna show female figures. A continuous row of bhūta run under the kapōṭa but visible only when carefully seen. It is seen that the walls are relatively unadorned here. The bhadra and bāra recesses are carefully used and this was perhaps deliberate, to facilitate a greater focus on figurative sculpture. A snapshot frieze was probably
intended to capture attention in the finer details and aspects of such sculpture that would stand on the threshold of life, upon an austere and bare surface. The Āduturai Āpatsahāśvāra (fig.63) is similar but highly misleading due to its paint and stucco; it is not fair to discuss it in detail. The feature that is noteworthy is the complex wall treatment of the āṅga, which only carry the mīraka variety of pillars and pilasters—Viṣṇukanta for karna, Brahmakanta for hāra recesses, Brahmakanta for bhadra and Rūdrakanta for central dēvakōṣṭha. The centre two and karna pillars carry a padma maṇḍi with the torus of padma with its munai. This is a new feature not seen anywhere in the Chōla land, however, a tentative crude form is seen in the Kānci Mātaṅgaśvāra and Muktēśvāra of the Later Pallavas in the post-Rājasimha phase. This is improved in the Koilpaṭṭi Purvanāthasvāmi temple in Pāṇḍinādu about 878 A.D. and comes closer home, where they are confidentially carved.

A word about the kapōta—most of these share a similarity. If Kāliyāpaṭṭi (fig.80) shows two nāsi on the kapōta, from the Viṟalūr Bhūmiśvāra (fig.39) onwards they appear in alignment and in pairs with the pillars and pilasters. So much to so that in the Nārttāmalai it (fig.41) shows even pillar and pilasters carrying
the kūdu in alignment with the mukhapattī and with human faces. Most of the temples show two, one, one, two for the karna, bhadra, bhadra and karna and thus totally six. In between are kodikkaruku, with the ridges carrying candramandala. Some of the gāḍha cavities carry floral motifs or nothing at all.

Thus far we are in the germinal state. Most known features and few unknown features are brought together and being reconstructed and some of these similar and new characteristics have been highlighted here. Their purpose is more than description. They show the direction forms were taking, there is no alienation and nothing we have seen is such a uniquely isolated phenomena. The phase of conforming and assimilating is yet on; the general trend ascertained - we move on to the more definite Parāntaka I phase, the latter part of Āditya I phase.

ii) THE ĀDITYA PHASE [THE REIGN ON PARĀNTAKA I (907 - 940 A.D.)]

The trend was ascertained in the last decades of Āditya I. There was no friction in the cultural output between the overlord, vassal or foe. A momentum had been gained and alongwith it the format had been finalised,
the fulfilment had not yet reached a plateau. Conservative and restrained (or disciplined) they used and reused the older patterns. There was certainly no evidence of a 'creative menopause' because advances were not blatant. The wall surfaces were being qualitatively improved, so was the sculpture. Qualitative change is also one of the determining factors of style. A few temples stand in testimony to heights achieved by the sculptor architects of this period.

The wall is treated with a wider variety of pada and pilasters distinctive in decoration and character.

The Kailāśanātha at Allambākam, Allūr Pasūpatiśvara and Andanallūr Vadatirthanāthar have Brahmakanta pilasters, pillars with plain angular corbels. The tympana are barely discernible, and do not show anything unique, nor does the Mucukundēśvara at Koḍumbūḷūr. Even if these temples don't suggest anything more than self compliance, they are compact, limited - in their wall treatment, superstructure and sculpture, suggesting a uniformity in style. The Kumbakōṇam Nāgēśvara had made an impact in certain aspects like sculpture; but not as such otherwise. Pullamṅgai Brahmapuriśvara or Pasūpatiśvara (fig.81,82) with an elaborate scheme
like Tirupāllanam is the crème of architecture, sculpture and architectonics. There is such an interplay between the three that together they blossomed as winners all the way.

The temple has no Āditya I inscription. There are five Parākēsari ones, of which three are Parāntaka I and one of Gaṅga Prīthivipati II, a feudatory. This is a royal construction of the 3rd year of Parāntaka I. Consciously or unconsciously we react at once to space, shape, form and the play of light and dark. More than vision alone, something else intimates to us the presence of these. The relationship of these parts brings about such an evocation. The bhadra and karna are clearly defined and offset with the mysteriously recessed hārāntara. It is in this offsetting that we are aware of the light and shade; enhancing the same. Well proportioned wall sections with ornate pillars and pilasters of the misraka type are, the Viṣṇukanta for the bhadra, split Īsākanta for the central devakoshta, and Brahmakanta for the karna: and pañjārakōṣhta. These components come to life with floral and vegetative patterns, fauna and human figures ensconsed within a muktāvali or other creeper forms. The mālasthāna is a complex design of even spiral or circular motifs.
with small carved figures, while some figures are seen in the loop. The kalaśā has the flame like design we are now so familiar with. The kumbha is also adorned, while the palagai gracefully holds up amara, apsara and vyāḷa on the corner. Even the taraṇaṅga potṭika are decorated on its median band with a patralata and can be called patra potṭika. A vigorous bhūtamāla appears below the kapōṭa. The love for detail and embroidery like decoration was an overwhelming feminine aspect of creativity. It reflects the sensitivity and touch of graceful elegance. The Viśṇukanta which flank the dēvakōṣṭha have a vivid mālāsthāna with dancing figures between the flutings and a muktāvali loop enclosing them. The kalaśā and kumbha are also fluted and have the flame like decor. The split pilasters are Īśkanta with square bases, with a garland of pearls for the mālāsthāna, floral scrolls like filigree. The muktāvali seen in the padmabandha, lasuna etc. are more or less similar, but the execution and detail are one of clarity and precision. What is felt here is the positive and definite use of spaces. It is as if they are marked for elaboration and ornamenting not in the usual manner, but highlighting these minor features and making them stand apart. They are deliberately isolated and carved out for more than a passing
They are there, compulsive and beckoning us to enter into a sensual and aesthete experience.

The tūrāna is the final building up, the highest note or 'crescendo, vigorous and in consonance to the melli-fluous pilaster ornament, they abound in the wild growth of the vines, berries and foliate details.

An interesting feature is the chattra over the deities both in the vimāna and ārdhamañḍapa. The earliest and crude manifestations are seen in the Harīhara niche in the Varāha mandapa and the Ādīvarāha caves over the four armed Durga in Māmallapuram (fig. 104). It is found in Kāñci Sālākāra shrine of Mahēndra III Pallava. It is also seen closer home in the Chōlisvara at Kilaiyūr over the Dakṣinamūrti (fig. 125) and in the Erumbūr Kadambayanēśvara as a shallow inverted lid (fig. 162). The Takkōlam Jalanāthēśvara also has this. The Brahma and Gaṇapathi (figs. 139, 143) have half a sphere over their heads. The upper dome is in the form of huge petals dropping into a rim of a tiny muktāvali; of a straight row of pearls and looped pearl strands below, and motifs within. The perfect hemispherical chattra stands out as a remarkable feature suggesting divinity and royalty. On either sides are gaṇa, musicians,
mooshika and the gala with seated devotees and standing figures. The Brahma is flanked by two seated adorers in three fourth profile. The vyāla and bracket figures add to the sense of heightened theatrical forms of Pullamangai.

The replicating of details of the adhisthāna and the vēdi in the kapōṭa on the inner niches of the vimāna and the central section of the ardhamāṇḍapa wall are seen. The kapōṭa form surmounts the niches over the corbel and bhūtavalabhi. This kapōṭa has a pair of kapōṭa nāsika with a floral motif encircling it, as it emerges from the siṃhavakṭra or siṃhalata and mukhapaṭṭi. The rim of the kapōṭa has perfectly proportioned candra-maṇḍala and a remarkable valli or cakravāki motif.

Over this is a vyālāvari which carries a minor niche 'pañjārkōṣṭha' with deities or amāḷa. These figures are flanked by Brahmakanta pilasters and carry miniature models of different types of vimāna with a gāḍha of the major kapōṭa nāsi of the siṃhavakṭra, from the mouth of which pours out the patralata or circular floral bands. The corners of the palagai here also carry rearing vyāla.

Pullamaṅgai is the water mark of the 1st phase. The architecture is a grand culmination of this phase -
expressed in an equally elaborate articulation of the wall which is totally transformed into a complexity of architectonics. The texture and quality make it the most satisfying of all temples. Crisp and sensitive, the love for detailed carving makes it an architectural and sculptural haven, the small similarity to the Kumbakōṇam Nāgēśvara carving on the Kanṭha and pillars is only incidental; Pullamāṅgai is the dream realised.

Closely related to this is the Cāḍaiyar Kōvil in Tiruccennā mapunḍī (fig. 83) about 920 A.D. with incontrovertible Parāntaka I inscriptions from his 14th to 37th year. Another Nṛpatuṅga Pallava inscription of the 22nd years suggests its rebuilding in stone during Parāntaka I. The plan shows and advance over many other temples of the phase. The bhadra and karna are very slightly differentiated. This has misraka order with Viṣṇukanta for karna with the padmamaṇḍi with the torus or the munai visible above the bun like kumbha. The hāra recesses have Brahmakanta split pilasters with a decorated lasuna and cushioned ghaṭa. The central bhadra have Indrakanta pilasters. The maṇḍi of these pillars is the pāli form. The Rudrakanta flanks the ‘dēvakōṣṭha. The finesse of Pullamāṅgai is absent here, yet a balance and austerity is easily perceivable. There are simha-
maddala in lieu of the bhūtavalabhi. The corbels are taraṅga type with a plain median band. The central dēvakōṣṭha is dressed with a blurred but elaborate tūraṇa. To torus of the padma carved with a munai is similar to Tirupāllanam Āpsahāyēśvara. This is mature realisation of the earlier attempts. The mastery and perfect finish give it a unique place for a realised anukāya element of the pillar and pilasters. With the superstructure present, this temple would have certainly commanded a special stature in the Early Chōla period.

Within a span of the next seven years, more or less contemporary to the Caḍaiyar Koil is the Koraṅganātha at Śrīnivāsanallūr (fig.54). The earliest incontrovertible inscription here belongs to the middle and second half of the Parāntaka I reign(11). Stylistically the temple supports 927 A.D. It ranks with Kumbakōṇam and Pullamaṅgaip; both in its architectural and sculptural output, larger than the afore mentioned; this vimāna is divided into clean aṅga on a straight line; but with hāra recesses pushed backwards. The wall treatment is a rich experience. Karna support Brahmakanta, the hāra recesses have Īṣa or Rudrakanta, while the bhadra dēvakōṣṭha has split Rudrakanta, and the cantoning pilasters of the bhadra are Viṣṇukanta, all carry cushioned capitals,
while the Viṣṇukanta takes on a fluted form. The pāli and padma mandi are present together and carry rectangular palagai. One of the Viṣṇukanta pilasters and a split pilaster show an octagonally cut shape according to the echinus of maṇḍi. The pāli form is seen over Brahma and Viṣṇukanta pilasters, the īśa or Rudrakanta takes on the padma form with the torus of the lotus very slight. Both the kalaśa and mandi are very carefully shaped and the decorations variegated richly. Exquisite pearl and scroll festoons, musicians and dancing figures, a complex patterning of human and other decorative motifs abound. There are exquisitely elaborate tūrana - spewn from the mouth of makara both from the top and centre. The kapōṭa is high and in place of vyālāvari vertical lūpa are found, (similar ones are found in the Dharmāpuri Mallikārjuna temple complex of the Bāna in the second quarter of the 9th century A.D.). With this classically majestic temple there is a sudden lull and no really remarkable structure to compare.

The Tirunāmanallūr Tirutoṅḍisvāra 935 A.D. has over superlative padmabandha an austere wall with central dēvakōṣṭha in a very very slightly projecting bhadra. The really striking feature are the apsara on the palagai
in sharp angles on the outer side of the pilasters in various poses. The bhūta on the bhūtamāla alternate with mṛnālika (eve strut). These are first examples in the Chōla temple. to be brief only the impressive adhisthāna and the newly occurring mṛnālika are notable.

The Ujjivanātha Uyyakonḍan Tirumalai shows bold decorations on the mālasthāna, lasuna, pāli etc. The usual figural and floral motifs appears and are only shown here to point out the continuing trend of the same.

Grāmam, Palūr, Vālikandāpuram and Tirukandiyūr vimāna have nothing much to show in either architecture or sculpture.

iii) THE SECOND PHASE (940 – 970 A.D.)

The last years of Parāntaka I usher in once again new trends simultaneously as they preserve some of their heritage in other temples. These latter temples need not be sullied, but may be considered to be modest outputs in a tradition bound society. Innovations and variations, and creativity are seen in select vimāna. These are relatively larger and due to proximity of the ruling house, important in status. Royal patronage became vehicles for incorporating both the old and
the new. Once these trends were introduced in an already accepted and existing format, they become the regular features of the later temples. Some of these temples are highlighted to pin down the continuing and the newly introduced features.

The near end of Parāntaka I's reign becomes the beginning of a new phase. It is the Naḷṭunai Iśvara at Puṇṭai which open the door. Less elaborate of the Chōla temples, the tour de force in this vimana are its galāpāda reliefs, pilaster carvings and remarkable sculptural finesse. Despite the lack of architectural rhythms of the aṅga it maintains a unique identity. The miśraka variety of wall pillars and pilasters are used, with the Indrakanta for the split pilasters flanking the deva-kāŚhta. The deva-kāŚhta of the ardhamañḍapa uses the Brahmakanta. Graceful, they are treated very carefully (fig.84,85,86). The malāsthana is treated as māla and malāsthana, the lower vertical section and the upper horizontal band are separated by a fine muktā-vali. The lower sections have looped garlands, with fine tassels in between, and the interiors of loops carrying intricate scroll work. The kalaśa or lasuna in contrast are left relatively simpler, with only the flame like motif. They are in much clearer relief. Some bear
human figures seated, while others have beside the scroll patterns clearly delineated dancing figures.
The padmabandha shows clear lotus petals clasped on either side by a strand of pearls. The cushioned ghata show florate scrolls on the corners and centre. The padmamanaḍi are in a process of transformation. They are no longer exact lotus petals, but move towards a more animate form which are fully and better expressed in the ardhamanḍapa and in other temples. The Viṣṇukanta pillars also show the artists love for detail. The loops of pearls with floral arabesque, the pearl tassels, and the horizontal band of māla with circular motifs set within the squares all follow the planes of the flutings. The padma bandha has softly modelled lotus petals clasped on either sides by the strand of pearls. The flame motif is seen, and the pāli is cut octagonally holding the palagai. tōrāṇa arches carry miniature scenes, with lively naturalistic human figures. The Agastya and Gaṇapati both have tōrāṇa not clearly readable. The taraṅga poṭṭika is seen with a plain median band; and the vigorous bhūtamāla. The ardhamanḍapa shows an interesting feature which is the extending of the flutings into the capital and the nāgadaḷa form of the maṇḍi. Here the huge lotus petals transform into snake like hoods with a sharp munai. The quality
makes it a key transition from the Parāntaka I to the Sembiyan phase. S.R. Balasubramanyam puts it in Āditya II's period, D. Barret calls it one of the best Early Chola temples 'essentially a transitional monument though far less advanced than Tiruvāduturai'.

The Tiruvāduturai Gomuktesvara approx 845 A.D. (fig.61) is more elaborate. The bhadra projects forward, while the karna is pushed back slightly with elaborate projecting pāṇjārakōṣṭha, similar to Pullamaṅgai. The finish and quality is lesser than the latter, but it is next only in beauty and importance to Pullamaṅgai. The feature par excellence are the architectural grandeur of the pillars cantoning the karna and bhadra. Boldly ornamented, the Viṣṇukanta stand on alternating geometric and flexible floral pus'pabandha adhisthāna. The architectural members of the walls show a vertical domination. The māla and mālasthāna are in the vertical and horizontal bands in harmony with the sundobhēda fluting. The scrolls form a bold 'S' curve of pearl garlands while the flame like motif is stylised in the ghaṭa, pāḷi and hīraka. The shorter pilasters of the pāṇjāra-kōṣṭha have besides the above features figurative reliefs on the mālasthāna. The palagai are squarish, with corbels of the taraṅga with a plain median band. The
vigorous bhūta appear to support the roof and kapōṭa like vājanapurusā. The kūdu on the kapōṭa have the mukhaṇḍa from the Siṃhavaktṛa. The sides have single kūdu. The ridge has candramañḍala and cakra-vāka birds motifs. Between the corbels these features appear in much smaller form on a miniature pañjāra-kōshṭa which reaches up below the kapōṭa. The mukhapaṭṭi, siṃhavaktṛa and kūdu are rendered with dynamism, and are more sculpturesque than architectural, to balance the geometricity of architecture. The ardhamañḍapa shows a similar complexity.

The controversial inscriptions spell gloom due to one damning word 'kūḍapaḍai' used in an unexplained context, which meant either the adhisthāna or finial which are the lowermost and uppermost parts of vimāna(12). Stylistically it points to the late date of Parāntaka I's reign which D. Barret says could be his 38th regnal years. The changes and features of the temple as a whole mark the real movement taking off in a newer and definite direction.

The eve of the battle of Takkōlam saw a dark phase for about nearly two decades. Paucity of temples after Tiruvāduturai is seen. The scale could also not be
maintained. A few odd temples, not of royal patronage were seen in the shrunken kingdom. They are Kovilādi Divyajñēśvara, Tiruvērumbūr Piplīśvara, Turaiyūr Visamaṅgalēśvara and the Peraṅgiyūr Śiva temples.

The Tiruvērumbūr Piplīśvara (fig.87) also controversial in chronology has mixed inscriptions(13). Based on the format it is closer to 952 A.D. The projecting pañjārakōśta, the high adhisthāna with vēdi and wall kaṁṭha are the horizontal flow counterbalancing the vertical. The pillars and pilasters have heavy ornament in their upper components, except the lasuna and pāli. There is no unique aspect calling forth description. The plan however is not found in phase I, and therefore posits a later date due to the mārkaka order, pañjārakōśta etc. It is very probable that the brick structure of the 19th year of Āditya I was rebuilt in 952 A.D. by Vēlan Vīramāraiyānan in the third year of Gandārdāditya.

The 5th year inscription of Gandārdāditya found in Turaiyūr Visamaṅgalēśvara (fig.88,89) posits 955 A.D. as its date. This temple due to lot of oil paint is difficult to decipher, but has the mālāsthāna, etc. in the similar style; so are the āṅga differentiated and the pañjāra-
kōshta represented. The capital is topped by a full hooded nāgādala maṇḍi. The framing pilasters of the pāṇjtārakōshta are octagonal above the ōma or saduram; and above this is the īsakanta which is unusual. Although the ardhamanḍapa shows nothing unique, the Brahmakanta have four triangular motifs which have not been encountered before. Similarly the Peraṅgiyur Śiva temple also has a mālāsthāna with floral and human figures. Some pose like dvaraṇapāla guarding the linga while the others are in dance postures. Generally the finish if observed carefully, brings out the care taken by the sculptor while carving these.

iv) THE THIRD OR SEMBIYAN PHASE (969 - 985 A.D.)

The death of Āditya II, accession of Uttama as defacto ruler and the slow convalescence from the ravages of Takkūlam gives us a confused picture of the Chōla. A visible laxity in temple building after Tiruvāduturai shows a preoccupation with more practical and political matters. The finale had been reached at Pullamaṅgai and Tiruvāduturai, and there were no new innovative or radical changes worth their name. There is a plateau on which sprouted indistinguishable temples, but neither was there a downhill trend. Whatever changes occurred were not architectural by nature. They were concerted
efforts in the iconographic programme, and positive crystallisation in the iconic conventions in the third quarter of the 10th century A.D. There was a new convention where the ardhamandapa walls received a hieratic meaning and specific Śaivite images.

The gradual reclamation of their lost land, as well as some in Tondaimandalam, peace and security again led to the revival of the nobler arts on a grand scale. The credit of fairly well dated temples goes to Sembiyān Mahādēvi. Her name occurs first in the 11th year of Parāntaka I and was seen continuously till the beginning of the 11th century A.D. as a munificent and pious donor.

One of the earliest temples of this phase is the Kattumānārgudi or Udaiyargudi Anantisvāra (fig.90). The walls show those features which are of the miśraka columns, with the usual ornamentation; the planes of certain pillar faces are used according to their shapes in the decoration. The new feature that is seen are the haṁsa just above the ōma carved out fleshily on the pilaster. Meaty sworling forms, they sprout out as contrast to the angularity of the pilasters and delicacy of ornamental detail. The temple is a problem poser. S.R. Balasubramanyam feels it is an ancient Parāntaka I
foundation in character with incontrovertible inscriptions of his 33 to 38th year. D. Barret offers two suggestions based on the ardhamanḍapa. The plan of the ardhamanḍapa is new and is seen only in Tirukuruhavūr, and Vṛddhacalam, of Uttama's 12th and 13th years and therefore belong to his IIIrd Phase (14).

Konerirājapuram Umā Māhēśvara (fig. 91) is a key monument of the IIIrd Phase and is closely dated between 969-74 A.D. The south wall inscription say it is a Sembiyan Mahādēvi construction (15). A 7th year inscription of Uttama (16) corroborates this. No new features are seen. There is only a heavily treated wall with miśraka columns with inferior decoration. The decoration and wall treatment is similar in the Mahālingasvāmi at Tiruvidaimarudar; the plan shows projecting bhadra and karna. Qualitatively the Anaṅgur Agastisvara is also similar (fig. 205).

The Matsyapurīśvara at Kōyil Tevarāyanpēṭtai (fig. 92) austere and utterly simple, is usually said to belong to Āditya I reign (17) but the 1st tala is very close to Kilappalūvūr (fig. 93) of the IIIrd Phase; specially its sculptures. Divided into sharp āṅga the wall is treated with Brahmakanta and its decoration; the karna
carry padjarakṣṭa which is a 1Ind phase feature. The flair for aesthetic excellence is also seen in the Tirukōṇīkāval Tirukōṇīśvara (fig.94). The rich decorative bands almost occupy half the pilaster. Using the elongated loop motif within which is encased a floral foliate arabesque, the mālāsthāna is a horizontal gushing of scroll work. This is discretely offset by the padmahandha, above which the lasuna again expresses dynamism in its flame like motif. There is a rare nāgavaktṛa manḍi in the capital section. Though the relief decorations are shallow they have a rich textural quality. The pillars and pilasters of the ardhamāṇḍapa have the torus of the padma carved with a munai. An earlier Kō-Ilānˈgo Muttaraiyar temple existed here, but the 11th year inscription of Uttama refers to its construction in stone by Sembiyān Mahadevi.

The Sembiyān munificence is seen in the 12th year inscription of Uttama in the Vṛddhagiriśvara Vṛddhācalam (fig.95), where the śri Kōyil, snāpāna manḍapa, gopura, surallī (covered verandah) and the subsidiary shrines were Sembiyān constructions. The wall features are not unique, but again the level of artistic output is superior. The dexterous art of carving intricate floral and foliate arabesques, the dynamic reliefs of deities
and animals from mythic scenes, the muktāvali where gross stone is carved out into small pearls, where every motif is so articulated are such that they appear to be a tapestry. The ardhamañḍapa has the central dēvakōṣṭha and two additional ones one on either side. The recessed wall spaces have dēvakōṣṭha with tympanum enclosing a single lozenge piercing. There is a rather perfunctory method of accommodating the full iconographic scheme on the ardhamañḍapa. This phase shows many temples like the Kailāsañātha at Sembiyā Mahādēvi, the Tiruvelḷaḷaṟai Isvara temple at Tirukkuruhavūr, the Gaṅgajaṭādharar at Goviṇḍaputtūr the Mānavāḷiśvara at Tiruvilākuḍi, Āmravanēśvara at Kuhūr and the Nāgēśvara at Tirunāgēśvaram; however there are no architecturally unique features really to be discussed.

There are two temples that need to be briefly discussed. These are the Tiru Ālandurai Mahādēvar at Kilappaluvūr (fig.93) close to Kilaiyūr; and the Sākṣīvara at Tirupuram-biyum (fig.65). The former poses a dating problem. There is an inscription in the south wall ardhamañḍapa of the 15th year of a Parākesari which states that the Paluvēṭṭaraiyar chief Māravan Kandan built this temple. There is apparently some confusion regarding the biruḍa. S.R. Balasubramanyam calls it a Parāntaka I
inscription; but stylistically, the temple posits a later date in the Uttama period. There are thin pilasters with the Brahmakanta, Viṣṇukanta and Īsakanta. The bhadra projects slightly forward. The central dēvakōśṭha is flanked by split Īsakanta, whereas the bhadra pilasters have Viṣṇukanta, the karna have Brahmakanta pilasters on the paṇjārakōśṭha. There are rearing vyāla on to palagai. The tympanum are elaborate but short. There is a fer ociousness about the makara from the mouth of which emerge warrior and the like. The centres of these lalāṭabimba are the Nāṭarāja in āṇanda tāṇḍava, Narasimha, Gajasura etc. The Āduturai Āpatsabhāyēśvara also has similar features with lesser finesse carrying the rearing vyāla but no paṇjārakōśṭha.

The Sākūśāvara (fig.65) has differentiated karna and bhadra on a straight mānasūtra. All the pāda are Viṣṇukanta with typical Sembīya carvings and bases, the bhadra dēvakōśṭha however has split Īsākanta. Over the vyāḷa va rī with corner makaratuṇḍa rise the vēdi with the decorated wall kaṇṭha. The recessed spaces of the wall kaṇṭha are carved with full lotus discs which is a late feature. The paṇjārakōśṭha reach the kapōṭa which are elaborate with two ornamented kūḍu and elaborate konapaṭṭa. Above this rise minia-
ture shrines of the sala type. The other pilasters carry the taraṅga poṭṭika with rearing vyāḷa and bhūtāmāla. The temple walls are overly articulated with a change in the paṇḍārakōṣṭṭa and the full blown lotus motif in the wall kāṇṭha recesses. The ardhamanḍapa is equally elaborate, but is relieved by the central dēva-kōṣṭṭa flanked by recesses—two on either sides carrying divinities. The tōraṇa is relatively small and ordinary.

The Sembiyāṇa style continued even after the accession of Rājarāja I, till his royal and imperial construction eclipsed all else. The Tirunaraiyūr Siddhanāthasvāmi with the 2nd year inscription of Rājarāja was a lesser known temple. High quality decoration is seen on its Visṇukanta and Brahmakanta pilasters. The other features we are now aware of prevailed with only some variation due to different men at work. The Sāmavedīśvara at Tirumaṅgalam has miniature relief sculptures in the oma of padas, which was not common in Chōla architecture; but is as old as the cave temple of the Pallavas. Such a feature is also seen in the Mallikārjuna temple at Dharmāpurī which was a Bāna foundation. This rare occurrence was not even a trend setter, but an isolated feature. The notable feature is the prominent padmākara mandi where the torus of the munai is sharp at the
ridges. This is also seen in the pañjārakōśṭa. The pañjārakōśṭa is a notable feature and shows a kapota surmounted by a larger mahānāsi and a face on top. A bhūtamāla runs beneath the kapota. This is generally a neat temple.

The Acalēśvara, at Tiruvārūr (fig. 96) is also an example of a qualitatively neat and interesting temple, this is specially in respect to its sculptures. The āṅga of this temple are clearly defined with the bhadra further having the subhadra. The Viṣṇukanta has a padmākara maṇḍi, while all other misraka pillars and pilasters have the pāli type. The niches have moderate tāraṇa. If the sculpture reflects the importance of this temple, architecture speaks up for the Uktavē-dīśvara at Kuttālam, differentiated into various āṅga, it also shows the misraka variety type of columns. The major feature that again draws our attention is the strongly formed pañjārakōśṭa inserted in the centre of the karna, which extend upto the bhūtamāla. The Rudrakanta pilasters have a prominent padmākara maṇḍi or nāgadāla. The ōma of the pilasters show for the first time mukula endings and a median band of carvings. This feature will be seen much later and more popularly in the 13th century A.D.
A typical Sembiyan example almost at the fag end of the century before the imperial structures began is, the Sakalabhuvaṃśavara at Tirumiyacēr. The decor, the pilasters with padmākara maṇḍi, śālakōśṭha, kapṭa, mahānāsi, gādha cavity and the siṃhavaktra are the fully developed Sembiyaṇ decorations. In place of the pañjārakōśṭa is the śālakōśṭha. This is one of the later Sembiyaṇ temples that goes into the Rājarāja Phase.

Thus far these phases have shown us the articulation of the walls with the Brahmakanta pilasters, gradually including the miśraka variety in the Āditya I phase. Their places are determined for karna, bhadra, corners, and for those flanking the dēvakośṭa. The tōraṇa from being coarse turn into intricate diadems. The recessed space from carrying sham niches or shallow ones begin to take the pañjārakōśṭa or śāla kōśṭa. The Chōḷa niche is narrower. Although the tōraṇa maintains a fluidity of highly stylised forms, they also tend to become more semispherical. The shovel shape finial is altogether replaced by the siṃhavaktra, specially noted in the pañjārakōśṭa. An important feature is the Early Chōḷa corbel that supports on the Virakanta or palagai a lintel of two mouldings separated by palin or carved lotus petals. It is over this that we see the demilune.
This became an area for great elaboration - festoons and people garlands issuing in massive curves from the mouths of makara or simha. At the top of the curve addorsed makara heads receive the garlands with deities or mythic scenes. Such is the making of the ornament into a habit.

IV.3

THE UPPER TALA (SUPERSTRUCTURE)

Temples are classified either by their size or the number of floors or tala. They are either alpa vimāna or mahā-prāśāda. When they have one tala or bhūmi, they are ekatala prāśāda. Depending on the number of tala thus they are eka, dvi, tri tala etc. When their shapes have to be referred or identified they are sama caturāsra, vṛtta, caturāsradīrgha, gaja or hastipṛṣṭha, vṛttāyata, shatakōpa or astāśra. They are also generally referred to as kūtagāra caturvarga, śadvarga sālakāra, cāpakāra, gajapṛṣṭha, miśra Viṣṇucchanda, Brahmacchanda, Rudrabha-cchanda and miśraka.

D. Barret rightly says that the tower is the most difficult part of the Early Chola temple to study, due to peripheral mushrooming of other structures, or thick coats of stucco in all its stages of wear and tear.
The Early Chola sikhara is either domical or square and very rarely octagonal, with a pronounced waist above the outward curve at the base. The topmost section is the stūpi, which adapts according to the shape of the śikhara. The stūpi base is generally not a flat one but is a circular row of open lotus petals. The śikhara is concave but has an incurved feature like a waist that slightly skirts out at the base. From the base of stūpi to the base of the sikhara run ribs with floral mantling called the patralata or kodikkaruku, which spreads on the outward curve of the śikhara. There are also recessed bands of flat circular bosses. These are compulsive habits that didn't die and had their roots in the wooden prototypes. These were the metal bracings with function, which became non functional decoration.

The śikhara is supported by a square, octagonal or circular clerestory called gala or grīva. This has four grīva kōṣṭha facing four cardinal directions. They contain sculptures, and are called the vimāna dēvata. This is surmounted by the kūdu or mahānāsi instead of the makara tōraṇa of the first tala. The mahānāsi has a simhavaktra which extends high above the waist. If the first tala shows the makara tōraṇa, it now combined with the kūdu and became a highly elaborate mahānāsi
from the mouth of which are spewn floral and foliate mukhapatti enclosing a gadha cavity. These were again habits left over from the past, for they replicate the dormer windows of their wooden prototypes.

It is also a noticeable feature that between every section or tala there is a frieze. In this case at the top of the griya just below the sikhara curve is a frieze of haṁsa supported at the base by a simple series of projecting and recessed mouldings. In turn the griya rests on a wide square platform surrounded by usually vigorous vyālamāla. At the prati corners are the vṛṣa or nandi - when the prati with the vṛṣa and the vyālamāla became the topomost members supporting the sikhara immediately after the wall, kapota and prastāra it is called the ekataла vimāna. The variation and number of storeys other than this occur when additional members or tala are introduced between the sikhara and prastāra. Between these two, every 'tala' that is introduced is repetitive. The principle of design for every tala is the same.

The Early Chōla vimāna are usually ekatala or dvitala and usually encourage a great clarity of design and proportion between the component features. The variation of scale and detail of individual forms are a total blend of the two, the individual and collective.
The Pallavas had already exhausted their repertoire. Two hundred years of mastery show a variety of śikhara, along with the stenciling of tala. This repetition does not reduce the coherence of forms but its gradual reduction in size builds up the magnificence of height. The hāra may or may not be used. It may be added around the grīva platform, particularly obscuring it. This further enhances and encourages the vertical or pyramidality of the temple. The grīva and śikhara are not to be treated as a tala. Any additional tala would include a vyālāmāla above the prastāra up to the vyālāmāla below the prati or hāra. The components of the hāra are from top to bottom, the koduṅgai or kapāta with bhadra śāla or kōṣṭha in the centre with the simhavaktra nāsi. This is a rectangular wagon roof attique. A little higher up in the corners are the tilanāsika or kūḍu similar to these in the kapāta. This is supported by a grha-piṇḍi which may have a niche just below the nāsi in the bhadra-śāla itself. There are karnakūta in the extreme corners with nāsi and in between there may or may not be nētrakōṣṭha with small nāsi on the hārantara. The karnakuta may carry in its central koshta a deity. These small supporting pilasters are called vitardika. The portion just below the karnakūta is called manca. It is beneath this the vyālāmāla garlands the tala.
This makes up the second or dvitala or the hāra, and every additional one makes it another tala.

Thus far we have observed certain features that persist. These are the kūdu forms - the mahānāsi, kapōta nāsi, tīlanāsi. Right from the śīkhara to the kapōta of the first tala. Śala, kūta and kapōta are also noticeable features which provide the right space for the different kūdu forms. These are the ornaments of the vimāna. They are more pronounced as decorative motifs and are the field for artistic expression, experiment and preservation of tradition.

The Early Chōla temple specially is a play of opposing forces. This is what preserves its identity - that of balance and unsurpassed poise. Every feature which demands a geometric concept of horizontals and verticals, is balanced by contrasting forms. The sculptor and architect were constantly striving towards a balance. The wall and the grīva were the important components which provided a clear vertical thrust to counter balance the horizontal aspect of the tala and adhisthāna. The grīva also separates the śīkhara from the tala and gives it a unique identity.

The hāra it may be noted was an ambulatory parapet in the Pallava temple, while in the Early Chōla vimāna
it became a mere architectural repetition.

The superstructures follow the same phases; divisions we have seen in the earlier section.

i) THE PRE ĀDITYA OR VIJAYĀLAYA PHASE (650 A.D.)

The earliest ekatala vimāna lie in the heart of the Muttaraiyar land. These are the Visalūr, Kaliyapattί, Viralūr and Panaṅgudi temples (figs.69,80,39,68).

Over a kāpota, dressed austerely with two kūdu, vallikandra and the candramandala, rises the vyālāvari. Paired vyāla facing each other, and on a smaller base above this is the prati bearing vṛṣa usually.

The Kaliyapattί Śiva, Panaṅgudi Agastīśvara and Visalūr Marghasahāsīśvara have square grīva with centrally placed grīvakōṣṭha, intended to carry the vimāna devata. This is surmounted by another kāpota or ridge of the śikhara which is square. There is no vyālavari in these. Instead the ridge is ornamented by the band of candramandala broken just at the centre over the grīvakōṣṭha to form the mahanāsi. The Panaṅgudi and Visalur vimāna have the Śīkhavakra spewing the mukhapattί and a central gadha cavity; the Kaliyapattί temple
does not have it or must have lost it. The waist or
curve of the śikhara has the vallimaṇḍala or kodikkaruku.
Visalūr has one that extends all round the grīva waist.
The outward curve of the śikhara now closes into support
the padma-ḥūṭha with its sweeping petals which carries
the stūpi. This stūpi is made up of the stūpika, kumbha,
nālika and mukula. The ridge from top to bottom may
also have a foliate strip as at Kāliyapaṭṭi. The Panāṅguḍi
tries to simulate the shape of the śikhara very slightly.

The Viṭalūr Bhūmaṭṭavarā has a circular base carrying
a circular grīva and śikhara; and therefore appears
bell shaped. A vyāḷavari runs beneath the circular
ridge of the śikhara, while the grīva has grīva-kōṣṭha
framed by split pilasters. The simhavaktra mahānāsi
the candramāṇḍala on śikhara ridge, the padma-ḥūṭha,
around the stūpi are all visible. The Kāṇṭanūr Bālaśub-
ramaṇya of Pāṇḍināṭu looks similar but with a sharper
waist in the śikhara.

These are the closest to and within the Muttaraiya-Chōla
tracts; however, the farthest we can trace back takes
us as far back as the Satvāhana and Ikṣāvāku relief
sculptures. The structural stone examples are of course
fully evolved in the Ramānuja cave, Arjuna’s penance
and the Trimūrti caves at Māmallapuram. The Northern Piḍāri ratha is an example of the basic kind of vimāna which undergoes a metamorphosis of shape and size with elegant and curvilinear bends.

However, there is a sudden burst of energy that mushrooms into the Vijayālaya Chōjisvara at Nārttamalai (fig. 41) as a tritala vimāna, with the astaparivārālaya. As a classic example of proportion and architectural display, the kapōta carries a single māsi for each pilaster below. Surmounted by a dynamic vyāvari, the second tala is seen to rise over a mañca with a vitardaka, the parapet walls decorated with a series of miniature shrines called 'pañjāra'. The corners have cubical karnakūta. The centre has bhadrāsāla with the bhadra-kōshta. In the interspace are jutting sala forms over the parapet with dancing figures. This second tala over the garbhagṛha merges with the ardhamanḍapa. Above this rises the third tala within a smaller area, so that the structure becomes a diminishing one. This hāra is similar to the second one.

Surmounting this is a circular feature, grhaṇaṇḍi. There is a kapōta which carries the kūdu and above which is a circular hamsavājana. Above this is the circular
griva with vṛṣa on the prati corners. The grīvakōṣṭha carry vimāna dēvata facing the cardinal directions. The semi circular śikhara has four mahānāsi, mukhapati of simhavaktra type, with an empty gadha. There are smaller anunāsi in the interspace. It is also observed that the grhapiṇḍi is square upto the square section and become round at the base of the grīva. Another observation is the cloister above the grhapiṇḍi of the second tala is formed by the karnakūta followed by two śāla instead of one which is a Pallava convention as also its form. The style here is mixed. It draws from the common South Indian heritage. This temple shows the Pallava and Muttaraiyar conventions.

The parivārēlaya show square sanctums with bulbuous śikhara and rectangular open maṇḍapa in the front. These are a contrast, for they are simple ekatala vimāna models also seen in the afore mentioned temples.

The typical Muttaraiyar features are the amastha with rounded shoulders and arms in the kūta and śāla (fig.112). A feature to be noted is that the ardha maṇḍapa has a prastāra topped by a cloister of kūta and central śāla which are seen in Pallava and Early Čālukyan temples. A few more specific temples which take us closer to
the formation of the Chōla style are in this Muttaraiya-Chōla idiom. The Nēmam Iravatēśvara (fig.70) is a dvītalā vimāna and shows the kapōṭa with paired kūḍu with kinnāra heads in the gadha cavities. There is an unclear mukhapatti and finial. The kapōṭa is dressed as usual with the kodikkaruku and candramaṇḍala too. A little to the back and above is the vigorous vyāḷāvari. The maṇḍa is above this and carries the hāra of karna kūṭa, nāśika kōṣṭha and bhadra śāla. The cloisters contain male divinities, similar to those in Nārttamalai. These divinities are crowned by the nāśika without the gadha in very shallow lined relief. The plane surface is cut into small lozenge shapes. There is apparently a hamsavājana beneath the soffit of the śikhara which is square, but heavily renovated. A circular stūpi is found 'in situ' but lying on the ground. Other aspects appear suspicious and could be later additions.

The Ghrṣṭānēśvara at Tīlaisthanam (fig.42) is also a dvītalā vimāna which ushers in typical Chōla features; a broader line case it leans more heavily towards the Chōla and falls in the early years of Āditya I Chōla. The same features of the kapōṭa as in Nēmam are seen here too and are typically Muttaraiyar. The features like the maṇḍa and hāra are similar. In place of standing
divinities there are seated figures. The corner figures are females in semi-profile; and the central ones are seated males, facing frontally. The figures are more relaxed and forms more flexible, expressing those qualities which make Chōla sculpture stand apart, as we shall see in the following chapters.

The grhapindi also supports another kapota with the same ornaments and is surmounted by the vyālāvari. The components like the prati, vṛṣa, a square grīva, grīva-kōṣhta etc. are normal features. The same goes for the square śikhara. There is window like lattice work in the gāḍha cavity of the mahānāsi. The stūpi is modern. Features like the paired alpanasi, archaic bhūtamāla and figures on kūṭa and śāla are Muttaraiya features undergoing slow and steady changes. The human form, the body language now come closer to Chōla so does the waist of the karnakūṭa. The grīvakōṣhta figures maintain the Muttaraiya features. The vṛṣa also become more poignantly naturalistic, in that they are slightly built and bovinely expressive. The mētrakōṣhta in the hārāntara and vṛtasphutita in the grhapindi are close to the Irrukuvēl-Kōṇāḍu idiom.

Showing such a mixed idiom is the Naṅgavaram Sundarēśvara dvitala vimāna (fig.71). Resembling Nēmam in the
kapōta and Tillaisthānam in the hārāntara they also carry both standing and seated figures. This temple shows skillfully carved nāsika, tilanāsika and mahānāsika. The grhapindi is specially subdued or indrawn and creates a chanda which is the intermediate between the arpita and anarpita (with or without hāra). The kapōta above this is like all the other examples of this phase. The vimāna dēvata are modern. The subdued grīva draws our attention at once to the crowning sikhara with prominent mahānāsi and gādha cavity. Both the sikhara and stūpi are renovated. The feature that shares a strong kinship with the earlier and smaller Muttaraiyar temples is the strong flexed karnākūta roofs as seen at Visalūr and Kaliyappatī.

The subshrines show for the saptamātrika the sāla type, Ganeśa the gajaprś-tha and for the other two existing shrines rudracchanda.

These were temples with mixed features but establish certain norms that will keep occurring over and over again with barely and change.

ii) THE ĀDITYA PHASE (870 - 907 A.D.)

The temples briefly surveyed in the earlier phase also continued well into the Āditya I phase. The Āditya I
Phase proper begins with the Tiruccaturai Odavanēśvara (fig.72) a dvitala vimāna with a square griva and sikhara and stūpi. The super structure is a individual variation of the same types encountered so far. The seated deities or figures are close to Tillaisthānam. Stucco hides what could have been a fruitful exercise.

The Tiruppanturutti Puṣpavanēśvara is an ekatala vimāna, with the kapōta, vyāḷāvari etc. The grīva is surmounted by a semi-circular sikhara of brick. The vṛṣa are late. Perhaps well articulated then today, it is again covered with impenetrable stucco. The Tirukaṭṭalai Sundarēśvara (fig.74), of the mixed Irrukuvēḻ-Chōḷa idiom, a dvitala vimāna is in fairly good condition. It follows the Naṅgavaram, Tiruccaturai and Nēmam temples with scroll work on the kūdu and kapōta with remarkable skill. The hārāntara features are now established and show in the kōshta or pañjāra seated figures. The saḷa are slightly recessed and have prominent tilanāsika with the siṃhavaktra finials. The bhadrāśāla show horn like incurring feature on the sides; quite different from Naṅgavaram or Tillaisthānam. The tilanāsika frame human and decorative motifs. Behind this we can see the high grhapindī carrying the haṃsaṃāla and then the pīṭha carrying the yāḷi frieze. The Rudracchanda
grīva and śikhara changes its contour to a less formidable one. The features of kapōṭa and hārāntara are similar to the temples already seen, while the slightly flexed waist recalls Tiruvēdikudi. The vṛṣa become more and more naturalistic. The delicate waist draws our eye to its inward curve close to the Agastīśvara at Kīlaiyūr. This is only smaller in size. The padma-pīṭha and sfūpi are the crowning glory of the excellent workmanship. In fact every normal architectural feature in this temple is accentuated by fine jewellery like decor.

If excellent workmanship marked the Paluvēṭṭaraiyar-Chōla idiom, the Irrukuvēṭ-Chōla idiom is no less. The temples combine rigorous principles of architectural discipline, as well as the freedom to create. A curious blend produced such a harmony. Not very different from the Kīlaiyūr temple in architecture is the Tirucendurai Candrasēkhara temple (fig.77a,b). The square grīva and śikhara of this dvitala vimāna is replete with anukāya elements. The hārāntara or hāra sections show no new feature, except for two additional Brahmakanta framing the central bhadra-kōśṭha. These have four complimentary alpanāśi therefore. The Lālgudi Saptarṣīdeva which is ekatala shows in place of the candramandala in the kapōṭa, rosettes. Besides this the gadha cavities don't
show figures. A round bulbous sikhara crowns the grīva. The Nāgēśvara at Kumbakonam has a barely discernible superstructure due to garrish renovation. Stripped of this it may well be close to the temples thus far seen. Problems of renovation and repetition have beset us, but the superstructure calls forth again and again mere repetition. The Tirupallanam Aṇpatśahāyēśvara is such an example.

One example shall conclude the description of this aspect. The Mūgar kōil of the Irurukvēl at Koḍumbālūr (fig.76.98) carries a superstructure of remarkable clarity. Over a beautifully carved kapōṭa with paired karna kūdu, bhadra, pilaster nāsika, the vallīmanḍala and the candra- manḍala, a vigorous vyālāvari is seen in contrast to the mellow kapōṭa. This is surmounted by the maṇca vitardaka, karnakūta and bhadrāśāla with the hārāntara. The nāsika at the karna kūta are single. There are ksudramāṭika in between and four nāsi for the bhadrā- śāla with four pilasters. The bhadrākōṭa has deities in dynamic action. The gṛhapindī raises the bhadra śāla with a prominent nāsi. Two important vraṇaphuṭīta elements of round pillars as if bearing the weight of the kapota are seen. The dynamism of the vyālāvari is now left behind and we reach up the soulful vṛṣa,
and the most natural but ethnic sculptures of vimāna devata. The well flexed waist of the śikhara carries Koḍikkaruku, candramandala and a mahanāsi with the simhavaktra spewing intricate scroll work. The stūpi compliments the curved kūta type śikhara. The gādha cavity carries a lattice.

From the afore details it can be safely concluded that the plan of the vimāna was usually square, on a straight or differentiated mānasutra and aṅga. These aṅga are the karna and bhadra emphasised by the salilantara recesses. The ekatala prāśāda was generally favoured although dvitala is common and tritala, as in Nārttamalai, Pullamangai and Tiruvavur are very rare. The grīva is often stone but the śikhara a brick reconstruction. The dvitala vimāna carry the full kūta, hāra and śāla elements and the ardharīka walling of the dvitala carries its own prastāra and is then topped by grīva and śikhara. The kūta and nāsika carry am or rsi. The śāla and grīvakōṣṭha also carry these figures of deities and may often be in hieratic consonance with the figures of the first tala. Since temples are mostly Śaiva ones, the prati corners take vṛṣa.

The śikhara are usually Rudrachanda vṛtta sikhara while the dvitala and tritala favour Brahmachanda stūpi
for karnakūta. The śikhara follow the configuration of the roof, those for the śāla are of course round.

One of the most unique temples of this phase which is a little confusing is the Koranganātha at Śrīnivāsanallūr (fig.99). Above the first tala rises the grhapindi which is as high as the first tala. It replicates all the features of the ground tala and then only shows the hāra, kūta and śāla sections. Even these are relatively tall and carry almost round nāsika and are flanked by īśa-kanta pillars. The kōṣṭha are all bare. The relative proportion of the diminishing features are therefore inter-linked. This superstructure is an isolated example.

The Parāntaka I phase, the Second and Third phases do not offer us much scope for any relevant study of style; and have therefore nor been singled out. Apart from this, heavy stucco work render us perplexed, and cause confusion even to the most shrewd.

SUMMING UP

Looking at the repetition and details in the same architectural components, one is more and more convinced that the Chōḷa style proper and its extended idiom are typological variations. The interaction and architectural
programmes were handed out to them. They didn't have to formulate anything functional, but improved upon the structural embellishment was found more on an aesthetic need than functional. The adhisthāna showed this in its architectural bloom of new types. The walls say it all in the same vocabulary but heightened by a keen sensual and mathematical precision of forms. The super-structure only gave a final contour; and recognised the advantage of the more compact eka and dvitala. Aesthetic decisions thus evolved perhaps over years through the interplay of ideals within a group. This Early Chōla form as a whole was a successive series of intentions woven together and realised. 'Coherence' was its sustainance. It may well be remembered too that "aesthetic intention is not merely grafted upon the functional and structural intentions but is rooted in them and even inspired in them, he derives his organic unity from these itself"(19). It is not perfunctory cosmetics but a far deeper interplay of form and creative urge which culminated into an under-statement called Chōla.

The awareness of space and structure are clearly understood and exploited by them in gauging distance and height. The structural soundness shows the immanent rightness in organic forms and 'logical response to forces
like gravity, wind pressure and balance'. They reflect in the hāra and hārantara, the ability to distinguish patterns of repeated movements. There is a visual line of communication as well as an auditory one that we can apprehend. The eye traverses the facade and records the up and down high and low, curved and geometric features, and alterations on walls and superstructure. This rhythm indicates a visual movement and occurs due to the enriching of vocabulary through stone, texture, placement, alternating components etc. It is following and recreating these conventions in their own way that a unique dialect of architecture developed and a style was recreated. The pillar was more than a supportive block, it was a visual refinement and an aesthetically more acceptable one. The scale was one of moderation, neither human nor superhuman. The right scale of the vimana suggests the proper awe, power and autocracy. The base determined this aspect to some extent. The proportional relationship was established - he reduced disparities and irregularities increasing visual correspondence and ordered it based on the earlier compendium of knowledge. He took every 'visible module' worked at it and achieved a subtle correspondence'. This dimensional correspondence is seen in the rhythmic scale of successive storeys or tala and hāra. Discrepency and
and monotony in turn are reduced. There was an enhanced use of solids and voids, vertical versus horizontal causing in their contrast a 'continuity'. This harmony of contrasts gives a special identity to the Early Chōla vimāna and is the 'potential energy' elastic and vital but well in control. The flaccidity of some of the Later Pallava temples perhaps influenced the Chōla temples towards a sustained energetic form. These are very obvious in the hāra and kapoṭa with a touch of freedom and a dose of discipline that is self imposed; to check the vulgarity of excess. The style shows no divorce between freedom of expression and discipline, aesthetic urge and structural logic, extremes of plainness and confusion. The kuḍū with soft curves give relief for example to preponderantly rectilinear grid of proportions, while the flutings mālasthāna etc. in the pillars and pilasters are magnetically attracted.

The subconscious awareness of mass, saw a balanced and not too unwieldly temple. The weight of certain architectural components are discretely reduced by the embroidery like decoration and shapes. The centre of gravity was apparently so well conceived that the vimāna carry off well with stability. The principle of compression was precisely applied because they stood for
strength and stability. The Early Chōla temple was compressed enough. This was reduced however by the variation of curved and delicate architectonics. The prastāra of every tala, the mānca, vitardaka uttira, vallabhi etc. are all features which are compressed aspects for stability, but their rigidity and probably uncouth weight was reduced by the vājanapurusā, vyālā-vari and haṃsamāla which encourage movement. These are active curves as opposed to passive. The quality of shape are further made stable or light by emphasising or blurring the nature of the surface. The decorative aspects all camouflge the gross form and in using these cause an opposite feature, a light but firm one. The texture was so manipulated that it became evocative. "Texture can mitigate or reinforce the suggestion made by the shape which carries it" (20).

The word decoration has appeared successively throughout; this is because they were a special enrichment. They articulated the unwieldy form. It is the "nature of ornament to seize and hold the eye by a display of energy, it provides a most obvious means of focussing attention and thus of making a distinction between one part and another" (21). This decoration is further used to enrichen the verticals as verticals and horizontals.
as horizontals, too sometimes. The pillar or column emphasises itself as something that stands, the entablature as something that lies. The articulation is supplied by ornament, when the structural system provides none. This is seen in the pilaster, kūdu and tympanum, so forth.

Early Chola architecture was not revolutionary in nature, but more evolutionary and embellishing.
REFERENCES


