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# TEMPLES OF TADPATRI

by  
N. S. RAMASWAMI

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*General Editor :*  
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TEMPLES OF TADPATRI

Dr. N. KAMATHAN

1953



Dr. N. KAMATHAN, Director of Archaeology and Museums,  
Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

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## PREFACE

The two temples of Tadpatri are among the finest in Andhra Pradesh. They are of capital importance in the study of Vijayanagar art. There is architecture, sculpture and painting to be admired here. Some of the features, like the sculptural reliefs on the bases of the gopuras of the Bugga Ramalingesvara temple, are distinctive.

I consider myself fortunate that I have been provided the opportunity by Dr. N. Ramesan, the Director of Archaeology, Government of Andhra Pradesh, to discuss these two fine temples in this monograph. Nobody can be better aware than I am of the many faults of this work. Yet it is something to be able to present to the reader an account of Tadpatri religious art. I am thankful to Dr. Ramesan for permitting me to write this book.

I studied the two temples in February, 1975. Mr. K. Raghavendra Rao, took the photographs which are reproduced in this monograph. My thanks are due to him.

N. S. RAMASWAMI

November 6, 1975.

Dept. of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Ch. 29-8-77 B 171 - Bill No. 149



## CHAPTER I

The Bugga Ramalingesvara and the Chintala Venkataramana temples at Tadpatri, in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh, occupy an important place in the history of Vijayanagar ethos and art. The former was built on the eve of the golden age of this school, the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and the latter in the second half of the next. They are not the least of the achievements of the great age, which extended from the accession of Krishna-devaraya in 1509 to the death of Achutaraya in 1542.

The Tadpatri temples have not received the scholarly attention that is their due. In his "History of Indian Eastern Architecture" published about a century ago, James Fergusson wrote, "It is not quite clear that it is there (Hampi) the chefs-d'oeuvre of this dynasty are to be found, but rather at a place called Tadpatri". Describing the "wonders of the place", which are "two gopurams" of "the Ramesvara temple", he said "One of these was apparently quite finished, the other on the north never carried higher than the perpendicular part. In almost all the gopurams of India this part is comparatively plain, all the figure-sculpture being reserved for the upper or pyramidal part. In this instance, however, the whole of the perpendicular part is covered with the most elaborate sculpture, cut with exquisite sharpness and precision, in a fine close-grained hornblend (?) stone, and produces an effect richer, and on the whole perhaps in better taste, than anything else in this style".

The "Manual of Bellary District", published in 1872 provides a brief layman's account. It says that the two temples are "elaborately decorated with sculptures representing the adventures of Rama, Krishna and other mythological events. Among the bas reliefs is a figure holding a Grecian bow, rarely seen among Hindu sculptures". It adds that the "temple on the river bank", the Ramalingesvara, is "by far the finest but was never finished. The Gopuram of the other temple was struck by lightning about 30 years ago and split in half".



present in the sub-consciousness of the people, a mass psychosis which they are unable to suppress". The living counterparts of these cavaliers in stone were "of the finest calibre, inspired and led by rulers of great audacity and daring". For two centuries "they kept their hereditary foes at bay, whereas almost every other part of the country succumbed at once". There was a "feeling of exultant invincibility translated into the power of good over evil". Hence this "colonnade of furiously fighting steeds each rearing up to a height of nearly nine feet, the whole executed in a technique so emphatic as not to be like stone but hardened steel".

It was indeed an iron age. The apparent paradox of the opulent and luxurious capital, as the many foreign visitors to Vijayanagar have described it, is explained as the obverse of the coin. Men sought relaxation in beauty. It was a song in the throat of death. This fact explains the somewhat restless or feverish aspect of Vijayanagar sculpture.

The emperors were intensely pious, and manifested their piety in extensive religious buildings. "The reign of the Vijayanagara rulers witnessed a greater activity in temple-building than had been the case in the times of the Cholas", the greatest builders of earlier ages. No longer were unified compositions made, but groups of structures were added around the main sanctum. This change had two advantages. The temple rituals had become elaborate, and there was need for many mandapas. Secondly, these mandapas provided an outlet for the exuberance of art that was awaiting release. It is the pillars on many of these mandapas that are characteristic of Vijayanagar art, even more than the towering gopuras of the south.

It was State policy to promote martial feelings among the people. Vira Narasimha, for example, "tried to make his people more warlike by encouraging his nobles to settle their disputes by duelling, and he rewarded skill in sportsmanship by presenting the winners with beautiful girls". The temples too served this purpose. Well might the people have thought, as they looked wonderingly at the towering gopuras or at the intricate carvings, "A safe stronghold is our God still, a mighty shield and weapon". We shall never understand the spirit of Vijayanagar art unless we realise that it was a beleaguered art. It had to make strong



immediate impressions on the populace so as to keep them heartened. The Vijayanagar times were splendid times, as every foreign visitor confirms, but they were also daunting, even fearful. The smell of burning villages was ever in every nostril, and the blood of the martyrs cried out for vengeance. Religious art had to play its part in steeling the hearts of the multitude. Vijayanagar art had to be bold and magnificent, even overweening. If it had not been, it would have been untrue to the spirit of the times.

Four centuries after Rakshas-Tangadi, the Vijayanagar temple stands out from the temples of the other dynasties for its bravura in the north of the empire and in the south also by sheer size which, as artists know, is an element in the creation of profound impressions. Yet, apart from the magnitude, the means the Vijayanagar artist employed to achieve his effects appear rather insignificant; just a few new architectural features and developments of some old ones. But it is in the nature of great art to obtain its ends through small means. As Coleridge said, Shakespeare has merely to drop a kerchief to freeze our blood.

One important change Vijayanagar art made was, it completely discarded, in the northern provinces, the soft stones its predecessors had used. It wrought on hard stone except for the vertical slabs on which it carved figures of the river goddesses and maidens and affixed them to the entryways of the gopuras.

The main innovations of the time include an enlarged kapota. This, which was "till now thick and curved down, becomes large, much thin, and with a double flexure, and extends far forward, often showing the imitation in stone of the wooden ribs of the frame-work supporting it". Some of the kalyana mandapas carry at the corners of the kapota large stone chains, "all the links, including the cornice stone-piece from which it hangs down, being cut out of one stone".

The Chalukyan heritage preserved in many of the Deccan temples contains the extension of the hara over the mandapas, the introduction of the sukanasika in front of the vimana superstructure, and the navaranga pattern of the mandapas.

Among the decorative elements, the kumbhapanjara motif becomes elaborate and ornate. The devakoshtas do not carry toranas as in Pallava and Chola times, but panjaras, sala structures with elongated roofs. They are smaller in size than their predecessors and, what is important, bear no images. They are regarded as an ornamental feature. Kudus appear in some cases.

Vijayanagar temples always contain a separate shrine for the Goddess, a feature surviving from Chola days in Tamilnad. But shrines for the parivara devatas are no longer significant. The separate shrine for the Goddess perhaps precluded any for the matrikas, whose worship was in a way merged with that of the Goddess. Today Chandikesvara and Nandi are the only survivals of the ancient scheme.

The characteristic Vijayanagar contributions are the elaborations of the mandapas and the building of huge gopuras. In the Tamil province the Pandyas have built big gopuras earlier, but the Vijayanagar emperors often surpassed their efforts. They dispensed with sculptural decorations over the cornice, using architectural designs. But the two tiers below the cornice contain niches with images.

The gopuras are gigantic structures. Those built by Krishnadevaraya at Kalahasti, Kanchi and Tiruvannamalai are of no less than eleven storeys each. The tallest in the Tamil region, that at the Andal temple at Srivilliputtur, was constructed by the Naiks of Madura in the Vijayanagar tradition, adopting the Pandya principle of a slender form, in preference to the Chola heavy squatness. The magnificence of the Vijayanagara gopura, however, is due not merely to its magnitude, but also to its decorative richness.

The mandapas are characterised by the fundamental Vijayanagara gift of fantasy. South Indian religious art is rich in pillar designs. Perhaps it was in Chola times alone that not much individual attention was paid to the pillar. (But some Chola emperors valued the artistic pillars of other dynasties and, wherever they could, brought them home from their conquests. Rajendra I installed many lovely Nolamba Pallava pillars in the temple at Tiruvaiyar). Under Vijayanagara rulers the pillar became an object of wondrous beauty.



There are many types of Vijayanagar pillars. The style is often determined by the position of the column in the mandapa. Generally those in the interior are of an ornate cubical variety. Those which occur most frequently are composite pillars in which, to quote Percy Brown's description which cannot be bettered, "the shaft becomes merely a central core for the attachment of an involved group of statuary, often of heroic size and chiselled entirely in the round, having as its most conspicuous element a furiously rearing horse, rampant hippogryph or upraised animal of a supernatural kind". These pillars may have columnettes, mythical animals like the "yali" and the "gajayali", iconographic sculptures or portraits in the shafts. The columnettes are sometimes attached to the main shaft and sometimes detached. Some groups have just one columnette. But the number ranges up to as many as fifteen. The composite pillar then almost becomes a sculptural group. The mahamandapa of the Vittala temple at Hampi contains the most striking examples of this. Rearing horse sculptures occur at the end of the Vijayanagar period, and mostly in the south, as so notably at Srirangam.

The pillars carry brackets in their capitals. Below the brackets there are usually pendants. In elaboration, this feature becomes a volute, ending in an inverted flower bud. It is often connected with the main pillar by a shaft.

Since the mahamandapa of the Vittala temple is the most brilliant example of its kind, a brief account of it will be useful for purposes of comparison with the mandapa in the Chintala Venkataramana temple at Tadpatri. The Hampi mandapa stands on an ornate adishthana, which carries sculptured friezes of swan, horse and warrior. These are interspersed with projections in the form of miniature vimanas with Dasavatara figures inside. Of the three entrances to the mandapa, one has an "elephant balustrade" and the others, balustrades with involuted mythical lions. The cornice is a powerful member and is much carved. There are stone rings at the corners.

There are fifty-six pillars. Sixteen form a rectangular court in the centre, and the others constitute an aisle around the free sides. Each column is less a pillar than a "composite sculptural unit". Those along the outer edges are sculptural groups of the type described above, while those in the interior are of the "yali" type. The reliefs carved



on the pillars include women, drummers and dancers. The corbels are heavy and of the "flower bodigai" type. The ceiling is a wonderful creation with beautiful floral carvings.

The Tadpatri temples are studied best in the context of the general ethos of Vijayanagar art. They differ from the norm in a few respects. They are not congregations of various buildings, but unified structures. The pillars in the mandapas are not so martial or huge as those in the Vittala temple are. Nor are the temples very big in size by Vijayanagar standards. But in most other respects they are characteristic of their times. No one can mistake either temple for anything but as a product of Vijayanagar times.

## CHAPTER II

Neither of the Tadpatri temples contain a foundation inscription. That they are of Vijayanagar times is a fact that leaps to the eye, but a more precise date has to be deduced from the inscriptions they contain. There is some evidence from tradition too, but it is not unimpeachable.

Among the manuscripts that Colonel Colin Mackenzie, that indefatigable collector of historical artefacts, gathered there is a 'Tadpatri kafiāt'. Documents of this kind are not always historical. They are apt to be a mixture of fact and fancy. But they are valuable as preserving the beliefs and notions of the times, the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.

In 1812-13 Colonel Mackenzie deputed one Ananda Rao to gather information at Tadpatri. He obtained statements from the local people. They said that Tadpatri was established in Vijayanagar times. Its Vijayanagar name was "Tadiparti". Its first settler was a Brahmin named Narayana Bhattu. After Vidyaranya had established the city of Vijayanagar, Narayana, who was "from the east", sought assistance of him. Vidyaranya, giving him some money, told him of a Bhaskara kshetra on the banks of the Pinakini, or the Pennar where there was a tract of palm trees in which some hunters lived. Narayana was to go there and build a house for himself. "Then the village will develop". Narayana came to "Tallapalli" and built a temple to Adinarayanamurthi. South of this temple, at a distance of "four bara", he also erected a mandapa in which he enshrined an image of Hanuman. He had the palm trees cut and the forest cleared. Harihara and Bukka the first Vijayanagar emperors, gave Tadpatri to him as an "agrahara".

The region was under the political control of Gillella Chalapathi Razu, who was deputed by Bukka for the purpose. Chalapathi Razu built a fort at Gandikota, about twenty-five miles east of Tadpatri. It was the headquarters of the region in Vijayanagar times and later it became



a prominent fortress and was frequently besieged by invaders. Under Harihara II (1377 — 1404) Nandala Viraraghava Razu displaced Chalapathi Razu, who went to Penukonda. Gooty, another important place in this area along with Yadiki, came under Viraraghava's charge.

The Pemmasani family, two members of which built the two temples, appears first in Tadpatri's history in the reign of Praudha Devaraya (1422-1446). This family was one of the many which provided generals and governors to the empire for many generations. The emperor sent Pammasani Timma Nayudu as governor of this region. His headquarters was Yadiki.

Ramalinga, Timma's son, built the Bugga Ramalingesvara temple. The area's name was, under the emperor's orders, changed from "Tallapalli" to "Tadiparti". Ramalinga erected a fort on the "agneya" side of the village and also a "jagati" on the banks of the river. He came to build the Ramalingesvara temple as a result of an unusual event, which figures in the mythology of some other temples too, for example, Tirumala itself. When Ramalinga's cows were taken to the fields to graze, one particular animal used to empty its milk on an ant-hill. The cowherd hurled an axe at the ant-hill. That night Ramalinga had a dream in which the Lord told him that the cowherd had harmed Him. Ramalinga was asked to build a temple at the spot.

The next day Ramalinga and the local people went to the spot, and there they clearly saw a linga. They sent the news to Vijayanagar, and the emperor granted a huge amount of money to build a temple. Linganachari and other artists were entrusted with the task. Dressed stones were brought from the Vajragiri Narasimha hills, "3 kos away" and from Timmachipatna (also called Tallamanchipatna), towards the "isanya" side, by cart through a valley named Yerramlagunta. The architects built three entrances to the temple, on the south, west and north. Nidhalapathi Venkata Somayajulu was the first priest. The Raya also made him the manager of the temple and met the cost of worship, festivals etc. Ramalinga built another temple, to Obalesvara, in a place now apparently in Kurnool district.

The Chintala Venkataramana temple came into being in the next generation. It was built by Timma, a son of



Ramalinga. It too owed its origin to an unusual incident. In the "agneya" direction of the village there was a cluster of tamarind trees. One particular tree broke into pieces one day and disclosed a Vishnu image inside. Timma, then living at Gandikota, was informed of this by Uddhanda Nayudu, a relative of his, who was governing Tadpatri under him. When Timma arrived in Tadpatri, he heard a big crackling sound and he saw the Vishnu image clearly. That night he had a dream in which he was told that the Lord was Chintala Tiruvengadanathaswami and that he should build a temple. This was made known in the village by public outcry. Timma sent the news to Vijayanagara and obtained permission to build the temple.

The "kafiat" mentions many of the structures that were built, garbhagrha, sukanasika, soodile, madhyarangam, asthanam, sowdhantharala, gopura prakara, stupile panchanala, yagasala, kalyana mandapa, Ashwaradhi mandapa, Seshalaya, Garuda mandapa, Varaha mandapa and a vahana mandapa. Also mentioned are sculptures and paintings of Bharata, Ranganatha and the Asthadikpalas. Tirumalayaganini and Ramayavaram Ramacharlu were appointed "archakas", Golla Obaladasni, the store-keeper. There were many other servants too. A festival of nine days and a float festival were instituted.

Timma also built a Narasimha temple at Vajragiri. Further, he sank four irrigation wells and brought land under the plough. He introduced Kammas "Challas" as agriculturists.

Yeratimma, a son of Timma, succeeded him when the emperor was Achutharaya. During the succession dispute after Achutharaya Aliya Rama sought Yeratimma's help and took shelter in Gandikota. His enemies asked Yeratimma to surrender Rama, but he refused. At a battle fought near Komali, five miles west of Tadpatri, Yeratimma killed Sakalam Timmanna and several other enemies. (There were many other battles, at Juturu, Betemcherla and Pendachallu). Aliya Rama, now made emperor, was grateful to Yeratimma and made him large gifts. With these Yeratimma made improvements to the Venkataramana temple and added paintings.

After Yeratimma, Narasimha Nayudu became governor of Gandikota. After Rakshas Tangadi great calamities came

to this region as to many others. The Gandikota Pemmasani chiefs are said to have submitted to the Sultan of Golconda. By 1650 the area was under Muslim occupation. Mir Jumla, the celebrated Golconda general, was in Gandikota on August 27, 1652. But in 1685 the Mughals annexed Golconda, and terrible times were in store for Tadpatri.

In 1708 Zulfikar Khan, a general of Aurangzeb destroyed the Rangaswami temple and built a mosque on the site. It was handed over to Mir Mohammed, a "pahelwan." The Venkataramana temple also suffered. Its mandapa was blasted, many sculptures defaced and walls built against doors so that worship ceased.

It was, however, restored presently. "Tondra Mallu," a Dewan of Daud Khan, renewed it. He also constructed "forts" and an office in the temples. Sivirisetti, from the Mysore country, lived in one of the forts. He built a shrine in the Venkataramana temple and installed an image of Chennakesava, providing for worship. Thammaji Timmappa, a deputy of Daud Khan and an amaldar, arranged for car festivals in both the temples. He asked the villagers to pay a cess on their income to meet the expenses.

In 1746 Murari Rao, the celebrated Mahratta chieftain, captured Gooty and Tadpatri. His Dewan, Sardesai Narasinga Rayani, carried out "some repairs" in the Venkataramana temple. In 1756 amaldar Ramoji Pantulu had the car festival of the Vaishnava temple, previously celebrated in the month of Vaisakha, changed to Aswija.

A "paliya" from Anantapuram, twelve "cos" away, named Dasappa and his followers looted Tadpatri when Rango Govindu was amaldar. They carried the amaldar away and exacted a ransom. Nuguru Dasappa and others belonging to Cuddapah came to Tadpatri and saw that the plastering in the Saiva temple had fallen away. He restored it. This must have been after 1756. Dasappa also provided a door to the western gopura and added paintings. For three years he renovated the temple. He replastered the other temple too with money provided by Narasinga Rayani. He was renovating the gopura when, on his being kidnapped by Pale Khan, a khilledar, the work was stopped. Dasappa was subsequently ransomed.



Tadpatri fell to Hyder Ali in 1775 and in 1793 to the Nizam of Hyderabad. In 1800 Rayalaseema was handed over to the East India Company. The British took two or three years to restore order in the region. Sir Thomas Munro, the Principal Collector, took considerable interest in its temples. He ordered that "all the temples" be renovated. He sanctioned the reconstruction of the "asthana" and the kalyana mandapas in the Venkataramana temple. He also ordered that the temple be properly maintained.

The "Kafiat" adds that there were nine temples in Tadpatri, five aided by the British Government in respect of worship and the rest under local management. There were two temples without images.

This was what Ananda Rao heard from the people of Tadpatri in 1812-13 of the history of the town and its temples. It is useful to the historian to some extent, but many parts of it cannot be relied on. Tadpatri did not arise in Vijayanagar days. The earliest dated inscription in the town, to be found on the first stone of the north-west corner of the prakara of the Ramalinga temple, is of 1198 A.D. It records a Jaina benefaction by Udayaditya, son of Somideva and Kanchaladevi, and a resident of Tatipara or Tadpatri. The stone must have been brought from some other Jain building, of which no trace remains. The inscription suggests that Tadpatri is older than Vijayanagar days, contradicting what the "kafiat" asserts.

There are two other epigraphs in Tadpatri which seem to indicate that the two temples are older than the reign of Vira Narasimha (1505-1509), during which the Ramalinga temple, the earlier of the two, was erected. But their evidence is far from conclusive. The two inscriptions, adjudged to be in "15th century characters", are fragments and are to be found in the Saiva temple. One records an agreement or a "sthira sasanam" entered into by an assembly, including representative of "ayyavali", who were assembled in a "maha-mukhamandapa". The second "seems" to mention a gift of levies such as the "kaddayam" "kanika" and "vidhi viralam". It mentions "panivojulu" probably as benefactors of the gift. The other details are lost.

The first relevant dated inscription is of Vira Narasimha's reign. Dated 1507 A.D., it occurs in the



north-west corner of the prakara of the Ramalinga temple. It mentions Saluva Timma, the minister. Adjoining it is another epigraph dated two years later, the last year of Vira Narasimha's reign. It too mentions Saluva Timma.

There is an inscription of 1513, when Krishnadevaraya had been on the throne for four years. There is none else of this reign. The next in time is of 1540, in Achutharaya's rule. Occurring in the Saiva temple, it records the remission of "jodi oppalu" payable by the people of the "sarvamanya agraharas" of Bhogasamudram and Kaverisamudram in Jagati-Gutti-sima. The next year, another epigraph in the same temple records, there was a royal gift of the income from a levy called "maharaja guttalu" given to Salakaraju Achutharaju to celebrate certain festivals to the Lord ("Gurunatha") in the temples of Hampi Virupaksha, Tadpatri and two other places.

The first inscription of Sadasiva's reign, appearing in the Ramalinga temple, is dated 1544 and records a gift by many of the "mahajanas" of Tadipatri to Ramesvaradeva for the "Kartika dipa". The epigraph next in date occurs in front of the Anjaneya temple in the village of Enumalachintala, in Jammalamadugu taluk, in Cuddapah district. Dated 1551, it records the gift of that village then called Yanamala chintala, by Chinna Timma Nayudu to Chintala Tiru-vengalanatha of Tadpatri for the merit of Aliya Ramapayya.

The earliest of the inscriptions in the Venkataramana temple is dated 1563. Engraved on the gopura, it mentions a gift of land by purchase to meet the expenses of twenty-seven specified festivals during the year to Tiruvengalanatha of Tamdiparti. When, twenty-five years later, Pammamani Nayudu made a gift of allowances for Tiruvengalanatha, Rakshas-Tangadi had been fought and the Tadpatri temples were about to encounter trouble. As yet, however, the stream of piety continued to flow. To the same year, 1588, belongs another inscription which mentions an allotment to Lord Hanumantha of the "sannidhividhi" out of a provision made for offerings to Chintala Tiruvengalanatha on the occasion of a lunar eclipse.

These inscriptions testify to the unassailable faith of the people despite the hostility of the current rulers. A donor, Lingamma, made in 1594 a gift of land to provide "tulasi"

and "chattupadi" services to Tiruvengalanatha and Raghunatha. The last dated epigraph is of 1663. It records a gift of one "dharanum" for every hundred pagodas by the inhabitants of Tadpatri to Tiruvengalanatha.

There are a few undated inscriptions. In the characters of the seventeenth century is one in the Vaishnava temple recording the homage paid by some persons to Tiruvengalanatha. In the same temple there is another epigraph which registers a monetary transaction. An inscription on a boundary stone south-east of the village of Timmapuram, in Tadpatri taluk, states that the stone marks the boundary of the village, the name of which is lost, belonging to Tadipaka Ramesvara. Another epigraph in the Anjaneya temple in Ellanuru, another village in the same taluk, "seems" to record a gift of land to Lord Chintala of Tadipatri. It is in "late characters". The Amman shrine in the Saiva temple contains an inscription, also in "late characters", recording obeisance to Ramesvara and Kamakshi Amman by Basavappa and his wife Naganikamma. Basavappa was a son of Kesavayyanalu. In the Vaishnava temple there are two inscriptions, one recording obeisance to Chintalaraya by Gundara Tippala of Konnuru and her husband, and the other, in "late characters", mentioning the cancellation of certain dues because they had been tampered with.

It now remains to arrive at the probable dates when the two temples were built from the three areas of evidence available, traditional, epigraphical and artistic. The "kafiat" states that Ramalinga, the builder of the Saiva temple, was a son of Timma, who was the governor of the region under Praudha Devaraya, emperor from 1422 to 1446. The earliest dated inscription relevant to the history of this temple is of 1507. How long before this year the temple came into being there is no determining. But, following the principle of assigning a quarter of a century to a generation, it may be deduced that the temple was built in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

This hypothesis, for it is nothing more in the present state of our knowledge, seems to be strengthened by the statement in the "kafiat" that Yeratima, a supporter of Aliya Rama in the disputes followed Achutharaya's death, made improvements to the Vaishnava temple, adding paintings. It was in 1543 that Aliya Rama celebrated the



coronation of Sadasiva after having overcome Salakaraju Timma, or Tirumala. It was only then that he could have felt secure and in a position to reward his supporters in the late conflicts. All these facts suggest that the Chintala Venkataramana temple must have been built about the first quarter of the sixteenth century. This date agrees with the statement in the "kafiat" that later temple was built by a son of the builder of the earlier one.

That neither could have been built in the second half of the sixteenth century may be deduced from the fact that this period was full of troubles. Rakshas-Tangadi was fought in 1565. There is an inscription in the Venkataramana temple recording a gift of land by Pammasani Timma Nayudu in 1578, in the reign of Sriranga I. But the times were such that no big temple could possibly have been built. The people's instinctive devotion could be fulfilled only by making gifts to existing temples. All the best known temples in the northern provinces were built in the reigns of Krishnadevaraya and Achutharaya, the Hazara Rama and the Vittala by the former, the Achutharaya by the latter.

Two artistic points of comparison are available, the paintings in the Venkataramana temple and the sculptural style in both. The "kafiat" states that paintings were added to the Ramalinga temple, but nothing has survived. Those in the Vaishnava temple bear a close stylistic affinity with those at Lepakshi, the celebrated temple in the same district which was built in Achutharaya's reign. A comparative study of the mandapas in Lepakshi and Tadpatri also suggests that the two could not have been built at any great interval of time between the one and the other. The general impression, the art of the mandapas creates may be described as peaceful exuberance as distinct from the martial exuberance of the Vittala temple mandapa, a war manifesto in stone, as it were.

The few inscriptions believed to be of a date earlier than the last quarter of the fifteenth century need present no difficulties. That of 1196 is a strayed epigraph from an earlier building, very probably at Tadpatri. A few others are stated to be in the characters of the fifteenth century. But palaeography is not such an exact science that it is not



possible to ascribe mistakenly to an earlier period what really belongs to a later.

It is a reasonable hypothesis, then, that the Bugga Ramalingesvara temple was built in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the Chintala Venkataramana temple in the first half of the next.

### CHAPTER III

Since the Pennar turns north at Tadpatri, the site was regarded as a sacred one in keeping with a popular belief in south India. The temple of Amaresvara at Amaravati stands near where the Krishna bends northwards, and so do the nine temples of Pattadakal, in north Karnataka, on the banks of the Malaprabha where it turns north. At the exact place where the Pennar becomes a "uttravahini", the Bugga Ramalingesvara temple was built. About a furlong to its north stands the temple of Chintala Venkataramana, formerly called Tiruvengalanatha.

The main entrance to the Saiva temple today is from the south under a gigantic, though unfinished, gopura. The shrines of the Lord and the Goddess face west. The two shrines lie contiguous to each other. That of the Goddess, which also contains a sanctum for Sri Rama, is far more ornamented. The Lord's shrine presents a contrast to it in its plainness. The temple as a whole has survived much as its builders left it except that the eastern prakara wall, where there is no gopura, has been re-erected.

The Lord's shrine is composed of the sanctum, an ardhhamandapa and a mukhamandapa in an axial line. The mukhamandapa contains a few pillars on which not much artistry has been bestowed. The linga, unhewn in keeping with its character as a "swayambhu", has been consecrated at a small perpetual spring; hence the attribute in the Lord's name, "Bugga". The vimana is in two talas crowned by a round sikhara. At the edges of each of the talas there are a karnakuta, a sala, and, again, a karnakuta. Those on the second tala are naturally smaller in size. The kalasa is lacking.

On either side of the mukhamandapa, to its south and north, there are porches, which contain pillars with rearing yalis and pilasters, rather more ornamented than elsewhere in the shrine. To the east of the southern porch there is a shrine dedicated to Virabhadra, and near the northern there is another consecrated to Parasurama. It is believed



that Parasurama worshipped Lord Siva in His "Lingakara" form at the spot where the temple stands.

A shrine with two sancta, dedicated to the Goddess and Sri Rama, stands near the southern porch. It is a handsome structure and, together with the three gopuras, the artistic part of the temple. The vimana of the Goddess is in two talas with a sala sikhara. The scheme of the hara on the talas is a karnakuta, a sala, and another karnakuta. The Sri Rama sanctum faces south. The walls of the shrine are decorated more than those of the Lord's shrine.

The mandapa of the Goddess' shrine is a handsome structure and can, to some extent, be compared with the mukhamandapa of the Vaishnava temple. It contains sixteen pillars and nine pilasters. In the middle of the hall four pillars form a small inner mandapa. A lotus has been carved on the ceiling, and there are small figures nearby. A typical column has shafts attached to it on all the four sides. There are rearing lions at the base of many of the pillars. Facing the Sri Rama sanctum there are two pillars which carry exceptionally big figure sculptures. There are lotuses at each of the four corners of the ceiling. On the inner cornice along the wall ganas have been carved.

The artistic glory of this temple is its gopuras. The southern and the northern are truly gorgeous creations. The western, much plastered over, is comparatively plain. There is no gopura to the east. It is said that floods in the river in 1851 flowed into the river and brought down the upper part of the southern gopura, also damaging the lower portion. Its outer face has still not been restored. What has survived is the inner face in the lower part apart from the first tala above the cornice.

The grandest of the gopuras is the northern, though it is unfinished, lacking the upper part. The outer face, looking into the river bed, the entryway and the inner face have been sculptured gloriously. The sculptures at the base are not merely architectural forms, as in most other gopuras in south India. There is a harmonious blending of figure, architectural and decorative elements here.

There seems to be no reason, mythological, artistic or practical, why a gopura should not have been built in the east too. It is unusual for a temple to have three gopuras.

The smaller ones have one, many two, and the bigger ones four. However this may be, sculptural decoration has been lavished on the northern gopura, probably because it overlooks the "uttaravahini" river. A detailed account of this gopura will be found instructive.

The most striking reliefs are panjara forms, a bigger one with smaller ones on either side. These have been brought forward from the surface so as to attract attention. The biggest, with a kirtimukha on top, encloses a miniature shrine, complete with an adhishtana and three talas, on which is superimposed a small image set within a prabhavali. There are a number of small pillars in the shrine which contains an image. The prastara, the griva, the sikhara and the stupa are all reproduced in small scale. The entire composition is a dainty mixture of architectural and sculptural decoration, usually carved not on the base of a gopura, but elsewhere.

Above this grand miniature vimana, vertically in a row, there are more small images set on each of the horizontal members, exquisitely carved. At the very top is another composition of a miniature shrine with a bigger image of a divinity. This is flanked by a vertical row of creepers and then by a magnificent kumbhapanjara. Adjoining these, on either side, there are some human figures. One of them wears a Vijayanagar cap and faces the temple with folded hands. There is a more authoritative figure, with a larger and a slightly different headgear, on the southern gopura. He may be identified with Ramalinga Nayudu, the builder of the temple.

Nothing is more remarkable than the manner in which vertical and horizontal lines have been combined on the inner surface of the northern gopura to produce rich effects. There are no less than eleven horizontal rows of reliefs. That at the bottom contains sikharas, as if of vimanas submerged. Then a row of seated ganas apparently playing music, with a bold adhishtana member, in which very small vimanas are inset, above it. Then a number of elephants march by, divided one from the other by pretty pilasters which reproduce all the members of a contemporary column, including the flower volute. This fact provides evidence of the temple's date, the late middle Vijayanagar period, when this feature had become well developed. Then there is a row of kirtimukhas with lion finials. This is set off by a



group of highly decorated swans. There then follow two rows of human figures, above this another of varied design, the Vijayanagar lanchana of the squatting lion, rosettes and kirtimukhas. Finally, there is a group of ganas seemingly Atlantes holding up the last big tala.

The scheme is much the same on the proper right side except that there are two niches and a Bhikshatana on top.

The surface of the entryway has been divided vertically. The first row contains the dikpalas, ganas in shrines and, on top, divine personages. The next row, which stands out, contains representations of river goddesses or maidens almost similar in style to those in the Chintala Venkataramana temple. There are three other rows. One contains a recessed mandapa with riders on yalis on either side. In the middle there is a big gana. The subsequent row features maidens and the last divine figures.

On the base of the gopura outside, looking at the river, there are three niches each on the right and left sides. There is a superb sculpture of Mahishmardhani on the top on the right. The corresponding figure on the left bears a bow. It is apparently not a divine personage. Is he the one holding a 'Grecian bow'? These four sculptures, located prominently two on the inner side of the gopura and two on the outer, are very striking creations. The material used is all a black stone, but the rows containing reliefs of river goddesses are of red stone.

Though the southern gopura is damaged, it quite sustains a comparison with the northern. There is a sense of elemental grandeur about it. The scheme of decoration on the inner base is somewhat different from that on the outer. There are three niches at the bottom to the left, the central one bigger than the neighbours. Above the horizontal row there is a figure with folded hands, who is perhaps Ramalinga Nayudu, the builder of the temple. The personage cannot be the architect, for he is of royal, or at least baronial mien. His headgear bears a resemblance to that which Krishnadevaraya wears in the celebrated bronze effigy of him in the Tirumala temple. Next to this figure there is a kumbhapanjara, then a Bhikshatana, followed by another kumbhapanjara and a devotee. On the base to the right, above the horizontal row of three niches, there is an archer again, as in the northern gopura, not Sri Rama or

any other divine personage. These two figure reliefs have no connection with the Sri Rama shrine in the temple. As it happens, they are the only martial emblems in all the wealth of sculpture in this temple. There is an interesting sculpture of Lord Ganesa with two Consorts.

The entryway has been sculptured in the same manner as in the northern gopura. The outer side of the base is built over with plain stone, evidently to lend stability to the structure, damaged in the floods of 1851. Only a remnant of the brick portion above the cornice has survived.

The western gopura is not distinctive. Heavily plastered over, it has a rather commonplace look. However, it contains a shallow relief of the Vijayanagar lanchana, the boar and the moon.

While the artistic emphasis in the Ramalinga temple is on the gopuras which, unusually enough, were selected to be sculptured, it is, agreeably to the common Vijayanagar mode, on the mandapa and its pillars in the Venkataramana temple, about a furlong away. This temple suffered under the Muslims. Some of the sculptures have been knocked about. But the temple has survived substantially as its builders left it. The main gopura, on the east, is badly damaged. It is said to have been struck by a thunderbolt. The eastern prakara wall seems to be of a later date than the rest.

The main entrance, towards east, overlooking the river at a distance, having become impracticable, devotees enter through a narrow aperture on the north wall. There is a small gopura above this entrance, of no account.

The temple is seventy-five yards long and about forty-five yards wide. Its architecture is compactly organised. Had the towering gopura survived in its entirety, the composition would have refuted a common criticism that Vijayanagar architecture is apt to be sprawling and formless.

The sanctum of the Lord faces east. In axial line with it there are an ardhmandapa with porches on either side, the magnificent mukhamandapa, a stone chariot enshrining Garuda, the dhvajastambha, the balipitha and finally, the gopura. The Thayar's shrine is located to the left of that of the Lord and not as is usual in Vaishnava temples, to the right. According to a local tradition, based on the fact



that the sankha is carved on the right side of the entrance to the ardhmandapa from the mukhamandapa and the chakra on the left, the image enshrined is that of Chennakesava and that, consequently, the Thayar shrine is located to the left. There is some confusion here. There is a shrine to Chennakesava in the temple, but it is located in the northern prakara. In any case, the earliest relevant inscription states clearly that the image is that of Chintala Tiruvenkatanatha.

The Lord's vimana is in two talas. The "hara" on the first consists of a karnakuta, a panjara with an image in it, a sala, another panjara, and another karnakuta. On the second the scheme is a sala flanked by karnakutas, all smaller in size. Some of the stucco images in the griva are missing. The stupi rises from a two-petalled lotus.

The sanctum is, as it were, inset in the ardhmandapa, with no circumambulation path. There are four pillars in this mandapa. On the ceiling a lotus has been carved. There are three entrances to the mandapa, from the mukhamandapa and from two porches.

The outer walls of the ardhmandapa and the shrine contain some superb small reliefs. It is for these that the temple is popularly known. Incidents from the "Ramayana" and the "Mahabharata" are illustrated in neat little panels. These are set against a background, as it were, of restrained decoration on the wall surface. On the southern wall, after the porch, the surface is divided into three by pilasters. There are also devakoshtas and kumbhapanjaras. Between them are three horizontal rows of reliefs.

The scenes include the sacrifice Dasaratha performed to obtain issue, Rama's marriage with Sita, Hanuman seating himself in Ravana's court on a little mountain of his own tail, Hanuman handing over the insignia to Sita, Sita's ordeal by fire and, most beautiful of all, Rama's reconciliation with Sita. This relief depicts the Divine pair standing hand in hand. There are divine personages on one side of them and monkeys on the other. In front is Agni testifying to Sita's sanctity.

There is an iconographically unusual panel depicting Lord Narasimha killing the demon. He wrestles with him foot to foot before despatching him. The sculpture of the Vamana avatara is also striking.

Scenes from the "Bhagavatha" are also illustrated, but not consecutively. The "kaliyamardana" scene, so beloved of Hindu artists down the ages, is a little masterpiece.

The mukhamandapa is a splendidly organised structure, though it may seem a little short. This, however, is redeemed by the bold cornice. The mandapa, which contains forty pillars, is not a "forest of stone", but a handsome garden of granite. When its sculptures were unmutilated and when the paintings glowed on its ceiling, it must have been a wonderful sight. Even as it is, it is quite the most handsome part of a handsome temple.

A passage at ground level leads from the ardhamandapa to the stone chariot. There are raised platforms on either side, with twenty pillars on each. The columns stand in three rows. That at the edge of the platform begins at the turn of the contours and runs near the wall of the ardhamandapa. The second row, beginning near the steps leading from the stone chariot stops short opposite to the seventh pillar in the first row. There are four pillars in the third row adjoining the passage, three in succession immediately after the steps and the fourth opposite the seventh in the second row, near where a flight of steps leads from the mukhamandapa to the ardhamandapa. The same pattern has been followed on the other platform. There are entrances to these platforms from the northern and the southern prakaras between the fourth and the fifth pillars on either side.

The pillars are real works of art. Some of them carry figures of women with heavy coiffeur. All these sculptures are mutilated, the hands being lost. This type of pillars stands on either side of the entrances from both the prakaras, but there are a few elsewhere too. Facing into the mandapa there are seventeen pillars with yalis. There are two similar columns on either side of the stone chariot. It is said that most of the shafts are musical pillars.

A typical pillar is in three sections. The capitals contain flower volutes on either side. Depending from the main shaft of the pillar are huge sculptures of riders on rearing yalis. Some of the square surfaces contain a few reliefs iconographically rare. One of them depicts the Matsya avatara. The Lord, with His lower form in the



shape of a fish, kills the prostrate demon. There are carvings of music players at the bottom of some of the pillars looking inside.

Paintings, of which little notice has been taken, possibly because they are in scanty patches, are to be found on the ceiling of this mandapa and on those of the two porches.

The stone chariot is smaller than the celebrated one at Hampi. Like the wooden chariots used in festivals, it is in the form of a shrine except that it contains four wheels. These are shown with axles on the adishthana. The wall surface is relieved by two kumbhapanjaras flanking a shrine which has a long sikhara. There are three small Garuda images each on the left and right immediately above the adishthana. The vimana is in one tala, which carries a sala in the middle with a semi-circular kuta and a pillared kuta on either side. The sikhara is circular.

The balipitha, which is of granite, has reliefs of singing and dancing ganas in the adishthana with a broad sala above. There are three niches above this on each side. That in the centre, which projects, contains a figure.

The gopura is badly damaged in its superstructure and is, therefore, not in use today. It was so built that on Ekadasi, Dwadasi and Triodasi days after the Rathasapthami the rays of the rising sun fall at the Deity's feet. The lower part of the gopura, in stone, is in a reasonably good state of preservation. It too contains reliefs other than architectural at the base, but they are not so many as in the Siva temple.

On the western part, to the right of the entrance, looking into the prakara there are a sala niche enshrining Garuda and an empty niche. Above this there is a row of elephant and horse. A niche, with an image of Lord Narasimha in standing posture, is located above this. This shrine is flanked by kumbhapanjaras. On the base to the other side there is a two-handed figure of Surya with two women attendants. The Vijayanagara emblem is carved above this. There are two more rows of reliefs and, above them, a relief of Lakshmi Narasimha.

There are two vertical rows of carvings on each side of the entrance. At the bottom there are representations of mai-

dens in tribhanga with one arm raised. Above them raises a beautiful floral scroll extending to the top, running along the ceiling and then down the other side until it reaches the other maiden. The next vertical row contains two rearing yalis and four women in floral chaplets. The same scheme is followed on the ceiling. On the other side there are yakshas, dancing figures and small niches with lions and danseuses. These vertical rows are of a softer stone than the rest. The maidens are superb art and are among the achievements of Vijayanagar times. They do not seem to be river goddesses because their customary mount is not to be found.

The thayar shrine has a pretty appearance, immaculate in proportions and with many pleasing reliefs. The vimana is in ekatala with a kuta, a panjara, and a sala. The wall surface is broken up by a scheme made up of a kumbhapanjara, a pilastered niche, two more kumbhapanjaras on either side of this, a niche and a kapota. At the back there is a niche flanked by kumbhapanjaras.

The mukhamandapa is a lovely creation. It contains fourteen pillars, each containing architectural motifs in two sections. Four columns form an inner mandapa. The ceiling of this is very attractive. A big lotus found there could, it is said, be rotated in former times. Dancing girls are carved on its petals. There are two other rows of music players. To the south of the mandapa there is a small shrine in the form of Sri Chakra. It is now empty.

A pillared cluster runs along the southern prakara. Its adishthana contains carvings of horse. In the northern prakara there are many shrines to Anjaneya, Varaha, Chennakesava and Ramanuja. The Chennakesava image contains carvings of the "Dasavatara" on its "prabhavali". There is also a "yagasala" in this prakara. A mandapa connects the eastern and northern prakaras at the corner.

The kalyanamandapa is located in the southern prakara. In front of it there is another mandapa, a long one, with two rows of pillars. Neither structure is very distinctive.



## CHAPTER IV

With their sculpture, architecture and painting, the Tadpatri temples occupy an important place in the evolution of Vijayanagar art. Their art contains little of that febrile magnificence that marks, for example, the Vittala temple at Hampi. On the whole, Tadpatri art is subdued and serves as a complement to what may be called the martial art of many other Vijayanagar fanes. The pre-occupation here is the cultivation of beauty.

The two temples present many of the Vijayanagar characteristics and innovations described in previous pages. For example, the pillar capitals contain the distinctive floral volute, the columns themselves are in the authentic tradition, and the presence of maidens on the jambs in the gopuras is another tell-tale sign. But there are some differences between the art of the two temples which, as I have suggested (rather than asserted), were built the earlier in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the latter half of the sixteenth. It is difficult, on the evidence as I have been able to assess it, to be more precise. On the whole, the two temples may be taken as marking the trends that prevailed just before the great outburst of Vijayanagar art which culminated in the masterpieces at the capital. But the Ramalinga temple demonstrably belongs to an earlier period than the Venkataramana temple.

This is clear from the fact that the Saiva temple is less "ornamented". The sculptures on the bases of the gopuras are truly remarkable, but they are not, as so much of Vijayanagar art is, decorative merely. In any case, they are distinctive, if not unique. It is impossible to say why the builders should have chosen to depart from custom in trying to add figure, rather than architectural, sculpture to the gopuras. Whatever the reason, their example was not followed, and the Ramalinga temple towers stand by themselves.

Another part of the Ramalinga temple that has received the sculptor's attention is the mukhamandapa of the Goddess shrine. This is certainly a beautiful structure,

particularly its pillars. But, on the whole, it is far more restrained than the mandapa in the Vaishnava temple. It may be deduced from a comparative study of the styles that the Saiva temple sculpture is, as it were, feeling its way to the loveliness in the Vaishnava temple.

Artistically speaking, the Ramalinga temple is notable as prefiguring the developments that were in store, more particularly in the temples of the capital, but also in the Venkataramana. The culmination was the Vittala, but the Tadpatri Vaishnava temple, deriving from the art of the Saiva fane, shows the way.

Probably because the provinces felt the martial spirit of the times less than the capital, the Venkataramana temple, which must have been built when percipient people must have sensed the approach of disaster, is a lyric in stone. There are few equally lovely temples of the size even in Vijayanagar art. It may be described as a jewel box. Less attention has been paid to the gopura, but more, so characteristically Vijayanagara, to the mandapa. The variety, the planning, and the achievement to be noticed in the art of the mandapa are remarkable. If some of the other Vijayanagar mandapas in the empire seem products of martial times, this one is easily perceived to be one of relaxation. The mukhamandapa of the Lord's shrine is a big masterpiece, and that of the Goddess a small one. In big and small, the Vijayanagar artist could produce wonders. The facility with which he could evoke beauty is amazing. He has only to group four pillars or carve a lotus on the ceiling or build a shrine in the form of Sri Chakra or create a stone chariot, to make one wonder at his virtuosity.

Paintings seem to have been added to the Saiva temple, but not an inch has survived. This temple has been rebuilt and renovated to a greater extent than the other. The murals in the Venkataramana temple are far from extensive, only a few patches on the porches and on a part of the mukhamandapa. Yet, enough has survived to affirm their Lepakshi idiom.

It is difficult to say, on the evidence available, which temple was built earlier, Lepakshi or the Venkataramana. It may perhaps be deduced that both were erected in Achutaraya's reign. If this surmise is correct, the two



productions are more or less contemporary. But this could be easily affirmed on the strength of their styles.

The paintings occur on the ceiling in that part of the mukhamandapa which adjoins the ardhmandapa wall and also a little to the front. But it is on the ceiling of the porches that the best survivals are to be found. The left one contains a big panel of Lord Vishnu and two Consorts. There are also two attendants with chowries. On the ceiling of the mukhamandapa, a sage is represented. In another part three rows have survived, separated by bands not unlike the rows of relief on the outer walls of the Lord's shrine. These are all that have survived of the paintings which must once have covered the entire ceiling.

According to a statement in the "Tadpatri kafiya", the paintings were added by Yeratima, the local governor, under Aliya Rama Raya. But this cannot be taken to indicate that there were no earlier paintings on the temple. However this may be, since Aliya Rama was the virtual successor of Achutharaya, not many years could have elapsed. These paintings, then, are in Lepakshi style.

This is clear from their characteristics. The women of Lepakshi are notable for their enormous coiffeur. So are the women of Tadpatri, particularly the attendants in the Vishnu panel. There can be no mistaking the style of the profiles, shown in half inclination. The flower and other decorations are in the authentic style.

Just as the Virabhadra painting in the ardhmandapa at Lepakshi is a gigantic masterpiece, the Vishnu panel at Tadpatri attracts attention. It is a magnificent creation, the devotion of the painter suffusing his technical skill.

The temples of Tadpatri, so notable for their art, so important for their place in the history of Vijayanagar art, and, unlike most other Vijayanagar temples, living centres of faith, deserve to be cherished.

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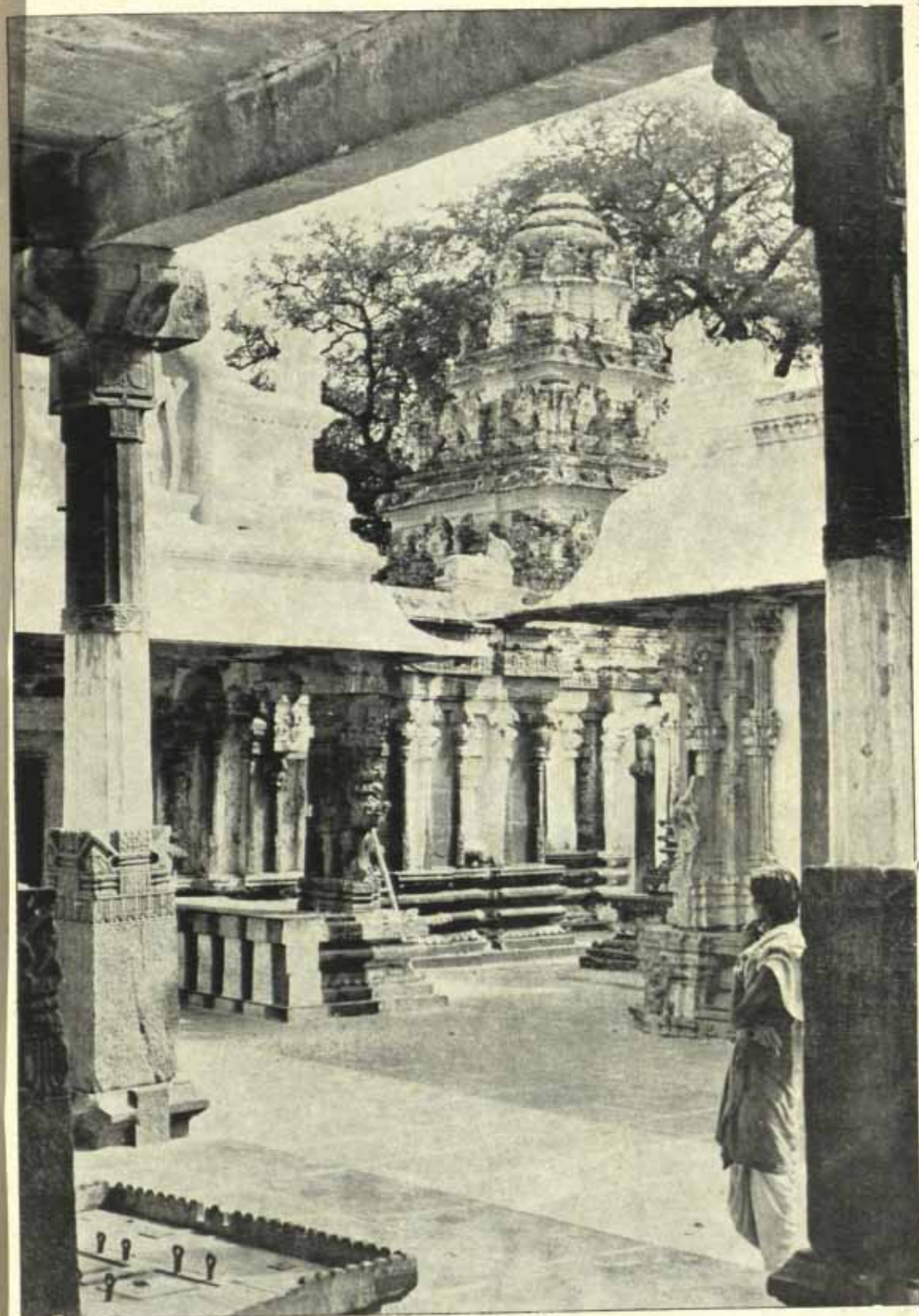




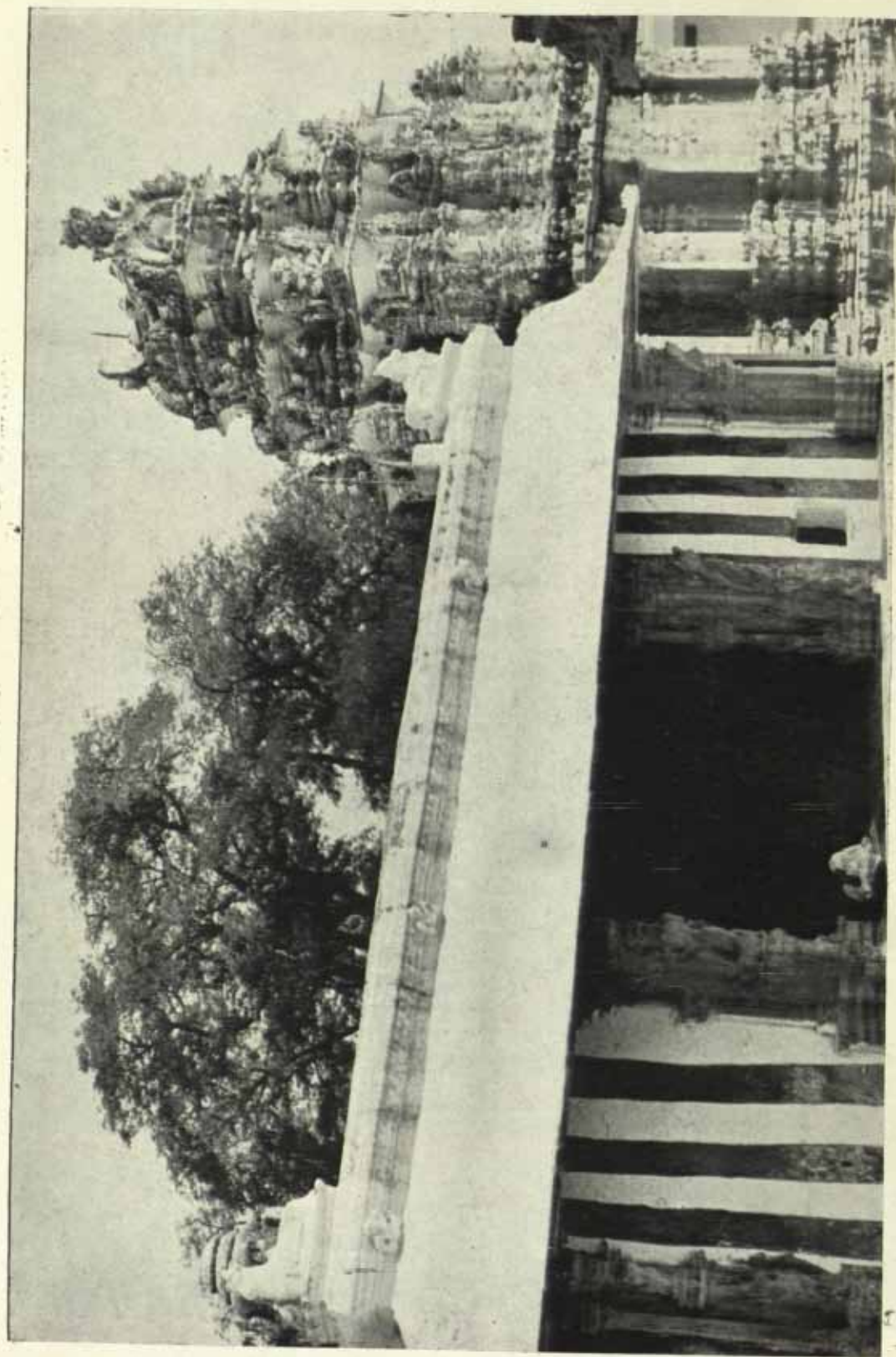






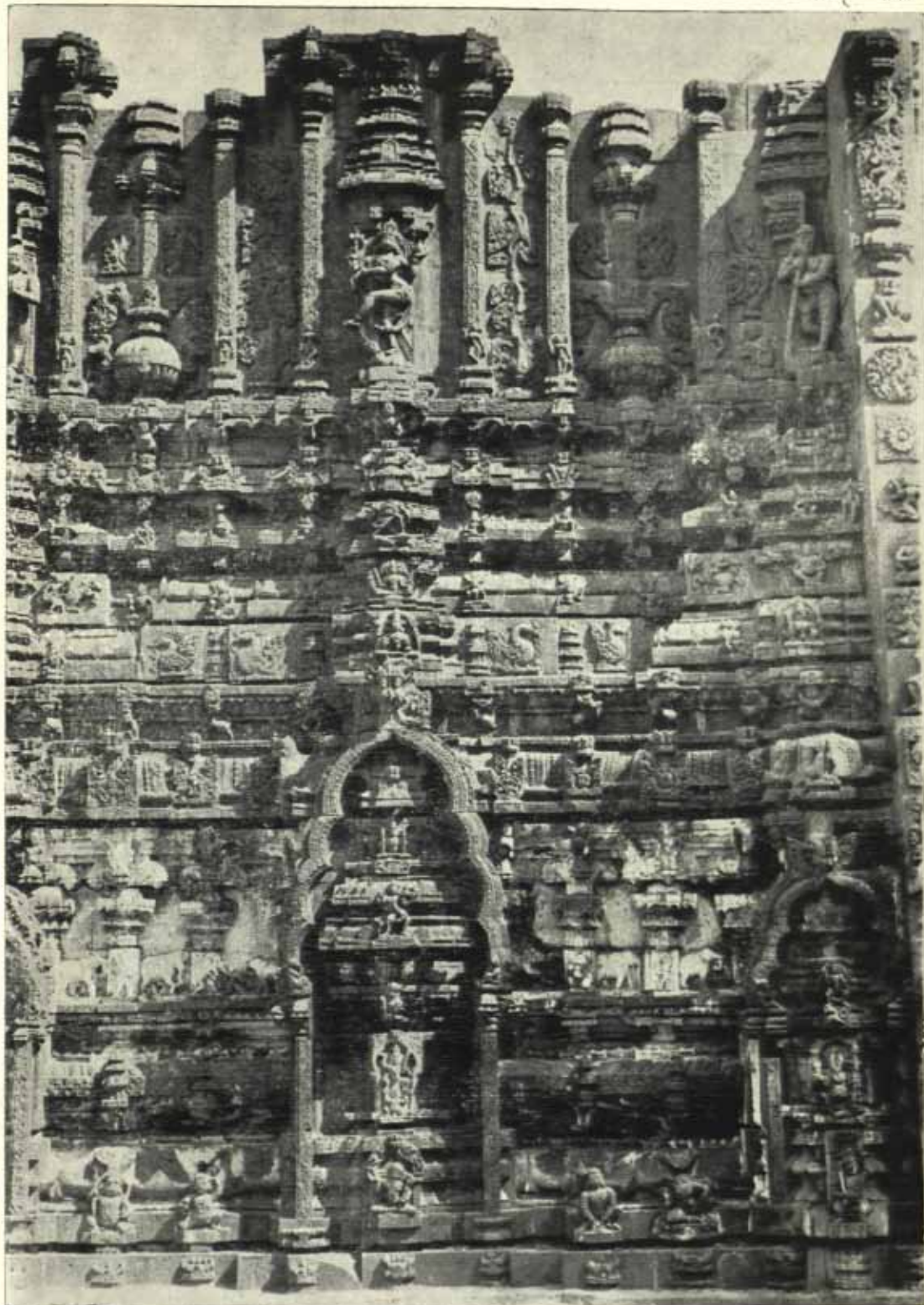


Ramalingesvara temple ; A view of the vimana of the Lord's shrine.



Ramalingesvara temple ; The shrine of the Goddess and of Sri Rama.





Ramalingesvara temple ; The sculptures on the base of the inner side of the northern gopura.



Ramalingesvara temple ; another view of the same gopura  
taken from outside.





Ramalingesvara temple ; The splendid sculpture of Mahishamardhani  
on the same gopura.



Ramalingesvara temple ; A view of the same gopura showing its gorgeous sculptures.



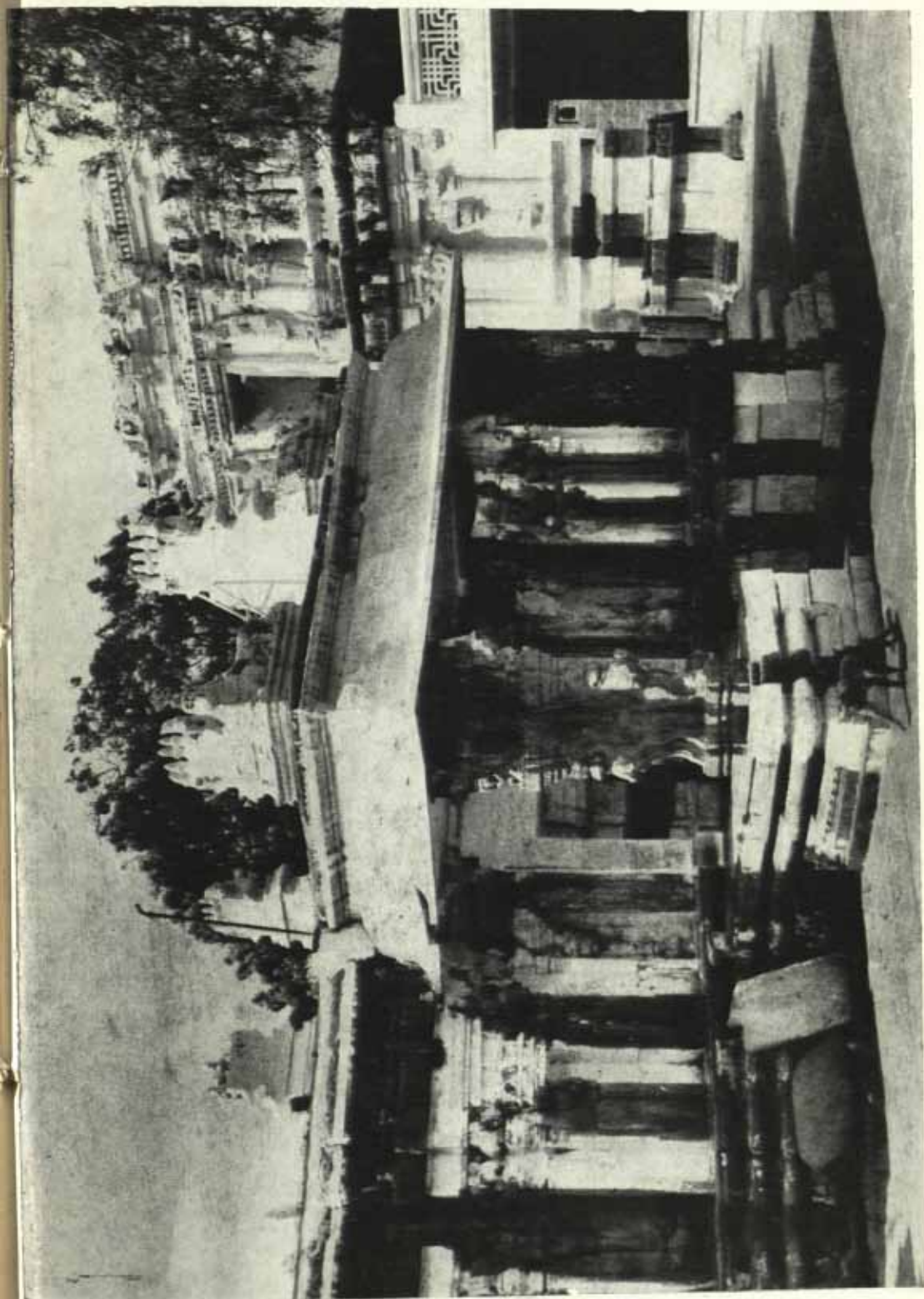


Ramalingeswara temple; image of Lord Ganesa on the base of the southern gopura



Ramalingesvara temple ; A figure sculpture on the southern gopura.  
It is probably Ramalinga Nayudu, the builder of the temple.



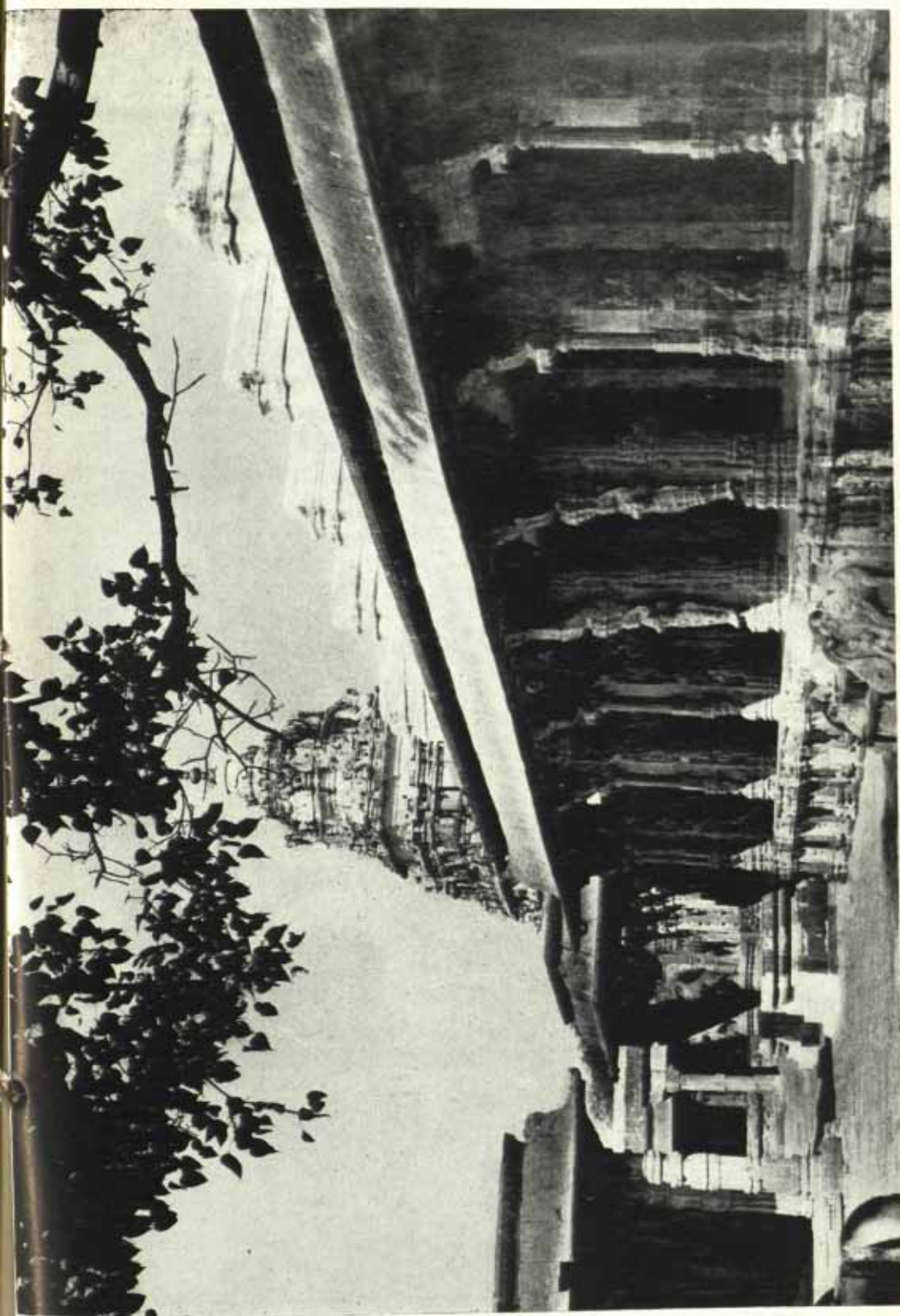


Ramalinga temple ; A view of the western gopura.

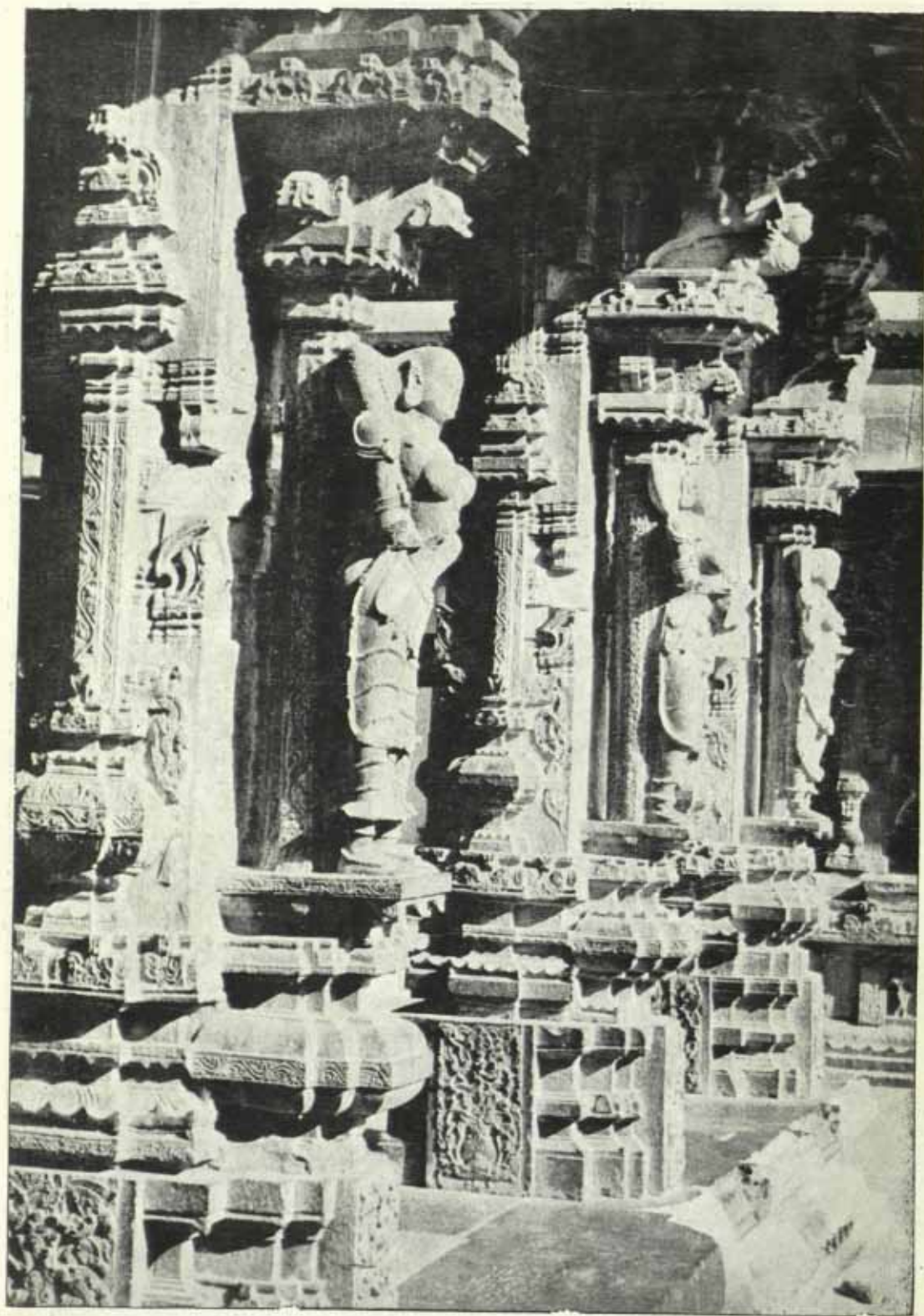


Venkataramana temple ; A view of the mukhamandapa from the southern side.



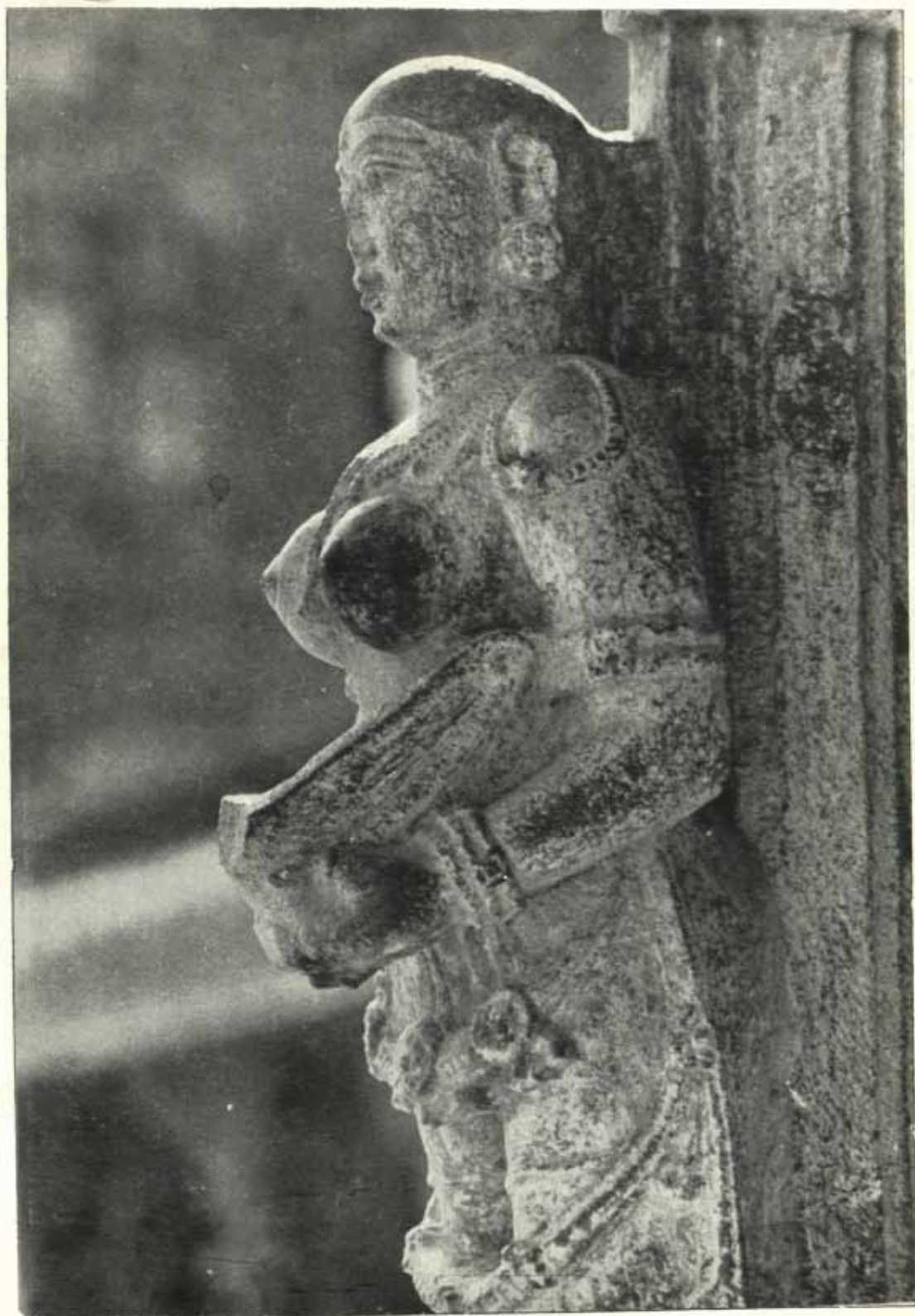


Venkataramana temple ; Another view of the mandapa, showing some of the lovely pillars.



Venkataramana temple ; Some of the outer pillars on the southern side of the mandapa.





Venkataramana temple ; One of the pillar sculptures which have been mutilated.



Venkataramana temple; A carving on one of the pillars in mandapa, depicting the Matsya avatara, not a frequent theme in Hindu sculpture.





Venkataramana temple ; Yali pillars in the mukhamandapa.



Venkataramana temple ; Another view of the mandapa interior.





Venkataramana temple ; A remarkable sculpture on the outer wall of the Lord's shrine. Lord Narasimha is seldom depicted, as He is here, killing the demon after a fight foot to foot.



Venkataramana temple ; A depiction of the Vamana avatara on the  
outer wall of the Lord's shrine





Venkataramana temple ; The humorous incident of Hanuman seating himself on a taller pedestal than Ravana



Venkataramana temple ; This is how splendidly the reliefs are disposed on the wall.



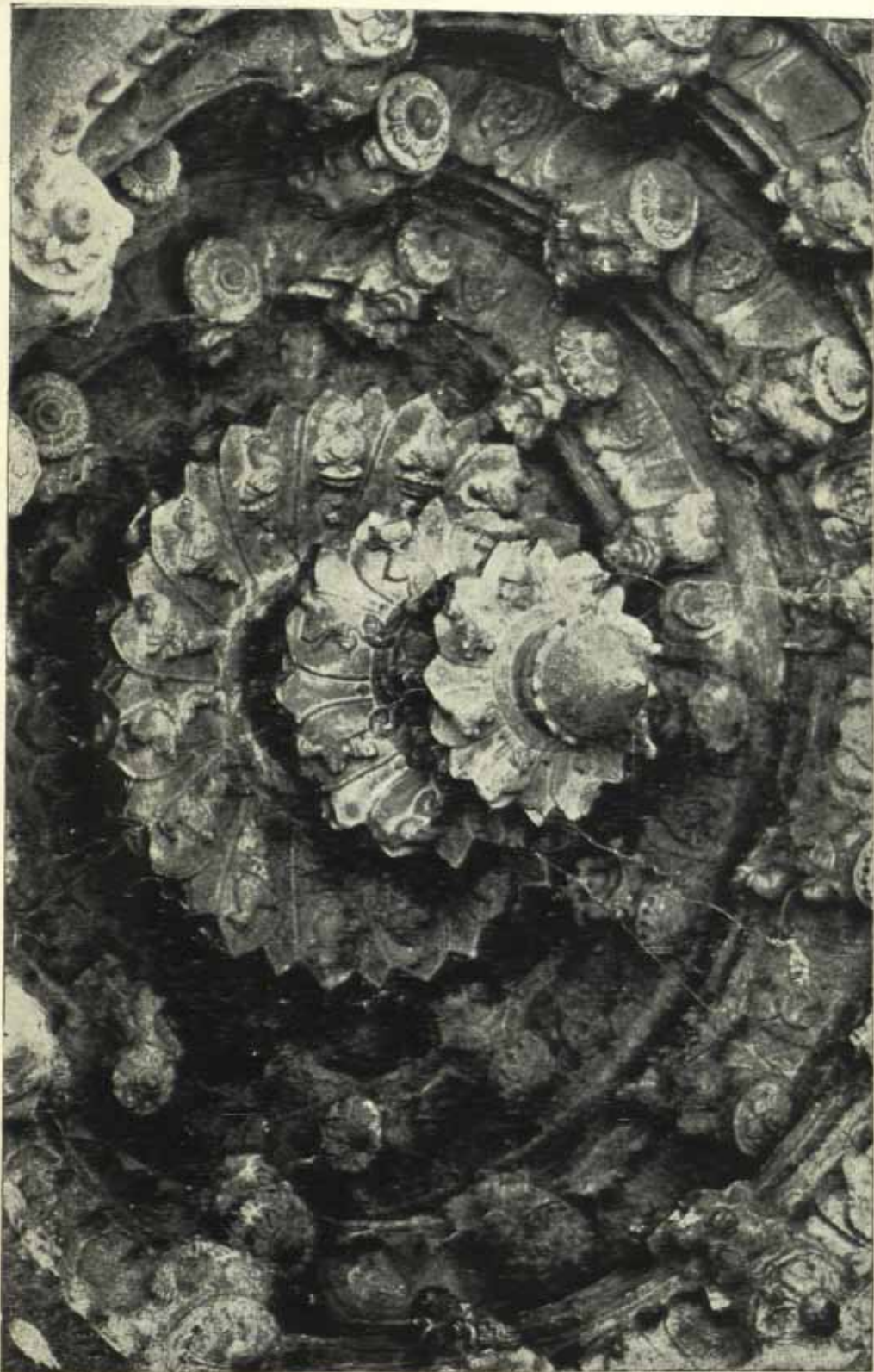


Venkataramana temple ; Magnificent kumbhapanjaras like this one are a feature of the reliefs on the wall.



Venkataramana temple ; The lovely stone chariot, which also serves as a shrine for Garuda.





Venkataramana temple ; The lotus on the ceiling of the mukhamandapa of the Thayar shrine.  
It is said that formerly it could be rotated.



Venkataramana temple ; One of the glories of sculpture in this temple, this one occurs on a jamb in the entryway of the gopura.

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