views of modern scholars. The unique character of the front mahāpā, and the enclosure and the two gopuras are also dealt with.

Interestingly, this royal temple had a few structures added during subsequent centuries like the Amman shrine, Subrahmanya shrine, Natarāja shrine and Ganesha shrine which were also built by kings, like the Amman shrine by a Pāṇḍya in 1400 ce, Subrahmanya temple by the Nāyak in 16th century, and the Natarāja and Ganesha shrines by the Marathā ruler in 1800. Thus, it is a total royal temple. The enclosure built by the commander-in-chief of Rājarāja gives the temple a lay out of Śiva Rajadhani. Every structure in the temple is dated with the help of inscriptions. The story is taken through the centuries and its change in meaning and ritual are brought out in this volume which point out what a Hindu temple mean when in full form and through the centuries. The personality of the builder, the role of Rāja-guru in planning and guidance and also the names of architects who designed and carved the sculptures and executed the lovely paintings are also furnished in this volume which makes it an invaluable work on the temple.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, who worked tirelessly for the documentation, study and publication of Indian art and culture, conceived the Brhadisvara project when she witnessed the great abhisheka performed to that great linga Rājarājeshvara at Tanjore. When the milk was poured over the linga from hundreds of pots and the milk was descending in waves like the celestial Gāndā coming down from ākāśa (outer space) it provided the inspiration for the project. Dr. Kapila ji took keen interest in the project that was conceived in several modules like measured architectural drawings, iconographic programme, epigraphic wealth and paintings. The first volume consisting of architectural drawing by Dr. Pichard of the Ecole Française D’Extrevme Orient has already come out. This volume on iconography was in the press when Madame L’Hermault who undertook photography of Tanjore temple suddenly passed away, so the volume on iconography was brought out in her memory. This volume got long delayed, due to causes beyond our control.

I express my profound thanks to Dr. Kapila ji for all encouragement she gave me in this project, and but for whose enthusiastic and scholarly support this project would not have come to fruition. I am glad to note that the present Member Secretary, IGNCA, Dr. Jyotindra Jain is evincing equally great interest and I thank him for this gesture. I am also thankful to Dr. Molly Kaushal, Head, Janapada Sampada Division and Dr. B.L. Mall, Senior Research Officer, for their active support of this work. I thank Shri Vikas Arya for bringing out this volume neatly.

R. Nagaswamy
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