CRISPIN BRANFOOT

THE TAMIL *GOPURA*

From Temple Gateway to Global Icon

1

Outermost *gopura* completed in the 1570s on east side of Aruṇācaleśvara temple, Tiruvannamalai.

All photographs and diagrams by the author

Abstract

The *gopura* is a tall pyramidal temple gateway that has been a distinctive feature of South Indian religious architecture for the past millennium. This essay examines the circumstances under which the *gopura* evolved within the Tamil country during the tenth to thirteenth century. Most *gopura*s were built for Hindu temples. A few are located in front of Jain temples, although none are known from Buddhist structures, despite the transmission of the Tamil Drāviḍa language to neighboring Sri Lanka. An important juncture in the *gopura*'s development was the adoption of the Tamil Drāviḍa language of temple architecture at the height of Vijayanagara authority across most of southern India in the fifteenth and especially sixteenth centuries. The subsequent fragmentation of the Vijayanagara Empire in the later sixteenth century resulted in the former governors or Nayakas *(nāyaka*s*)* of Tamil Nadu overseeing the creation of the greatest number, scale, and prominence of the *gopura* in its Tamil birthplace during the seventeenth century. These developments established the foundation for the *gopura*'s global dissemination beginning in the nineteenth century under British colonial rule, a visual proclamation of South Indian identity and of the deep, historic roots of Tamil culture in the global diaspora.

IN AUGUST 1948, A YEAR AFTER INDIA ATTAINED INDEPENDENCE from Britain, the government of Madras declared that henceforth the state emblem would be the *gopura*, a tall pyramidal temple gateway.[1] Today, across the globe, temples are constructed wherever South Indian communities have been established, and the *gopura* is the most visible manifestation of their presence. This distinctive pyramidal temple gateway evolved within the Tamil country during the tenth to thirteenth century. Most *gopura*s were built for Hindu temples, a few for Jain temples. The absence of significant Buddhist structures in South India, and their prevalence in neighboring Sri Lanka, enables a consideration of the historical context within which the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture and the *gopura* were disseminated to Sri Lanka, especially between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, as well as the religious associations of both building vocabulary and use of space. But the important juncture in the *gopura*'s development was the adoption of the Tamil Drāviḍa language of temple architecture at the height of Vijayanagara authority across most of southern India in the fifteenth and especially sixteenth centuries. The subsequent fragmentation of the Vijayanagara Empire in the later sixteenth century resulted in the former governors or Nayakas of Tamil Nadu overseeing the creation of the greatest number, scale, and prominence of the *gopura* in its Tamil birthplace during the seventeenth century. These developments established the foundation for the *gopura*'s global dissemination beginning in the nineteenth

century under British colonial rule, a visual proclamation of South Indian identity and of the deep, historic roots of Tamil culture in the global diaspora.

Approaching the Temple: The Genesis of the South Indian *Gopura*

The huge, towering gateways of the South Indian temple are a striking feature of the landscape—the first sight of the temple seen by approaching devotees—and they tower above all surrounding structures (fig. 1). Though present from at least the eleventh century, their great number and scale are characteristic of the temple complexes built in South India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The earliest temples in the area built in stone date to the sixth and seventh centuries in two regions, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Although they share a common origin and interacted thereafter, each region developed its temples in parallel, resulting in a Karnata Drāviḍa and a Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture. Each is based on the morphology of a pyramidal shrine (*vimāṇa*) with a distinct sequence of base moldings; a pilastered wall with an overhanging eave featuring horseshoe motifs (*kūḍu*); and an upper pavilion with a domed, apsidal, or barrel-shaped roof, a *kūṭa, pañjara*, or *śāla* respectively. More elaborate *vimāṇa*s pile these pavilions up in tiers or stories (*tala*s) with corresponding projections in the elevation below; typical patterns have three pavilions with a corner *kūṭa* on either side of a central wider *śālā*, or five projections if two narrow *pañjara*s are inserted between them. This is repeated in successive, narrower tiers up to the summit.

The two architectural languages were closely related until the tenth to eleventh century. During that period, the Karnata Drāviḍa language developed a more complex arrangement of staggered and radial geometry, which led in the eleventh to thirteenth century to stellate *vimāṇa*s based on a rotated square plan. Some scholars consider such geometrical and architecturally dynamic complexity to represent a new language of architecture, the Vesara alongside Nāgara and Drāviḍa. Others see the gradual emergence of these tendencies within the later development of Karnata Drāviḍa, before the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century disappearance of the language of architecture in the Deccan.[2] The more inherently conservative Tamil Drāviḍa retained its orthogonal and relatively static character, but the eleventh century marked a moment of change in the increasing prominence, scale, and number of *gopura*s. They would come to dwarf the diminutive *vimāṇa*s at the temple's heart, resulting in the characteristic Tamil conception of the temple as a complex of structures entered through great pyramidal gateways on one or more sides.

A *gopura* has a large rectangular stone elevation on a molded base, supporting a towering brick and plaster superstructure capped by a barrel-shaped *śālā* roof, which is an architectural form with a long history in Indian architecture.[3] On the basis of both textual descriptions and the architectural form, it has been suggested
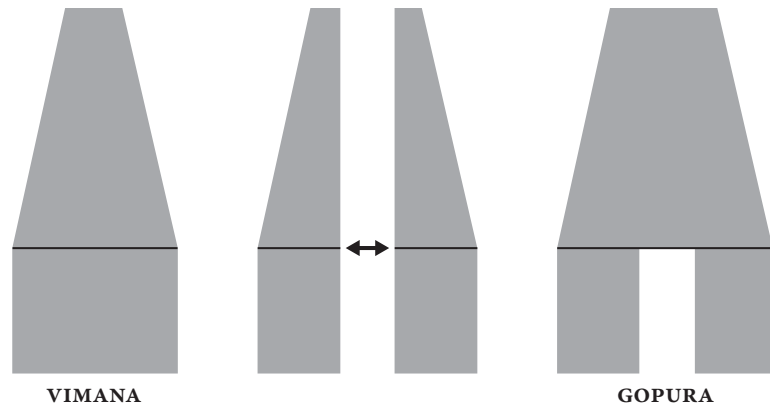
VIMANA **GOPURA**

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Diagram of the conceptual relationship between *vimāṇa* and *gopura*
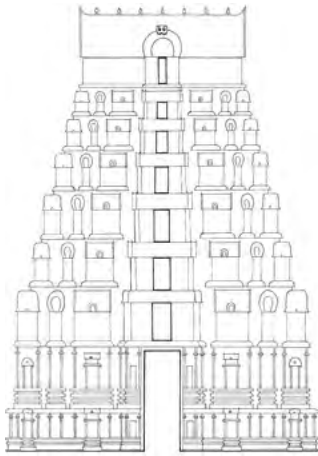
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Diagram of a seven-tier (*tala*) *gopura*

that *gopura*s are based on *vimāṇa*s, the main shrine of the Drāviḍa temple: a *gopura* is a *vimāṇa* split in half with the *garbhagṛha* surviving as a largely redundant small chamber on either side of the *gopura* entranceway.[4] Unlike *vimāṇa*s however, *gopura*s are always rectangular with two equal sections on either side of the gateway (figs. 2, 3). Such a conception of splitting dynamic form to reveal the deity within has a counterpart in exterior wall niches (*devakoṣṭha*) containing images of deities framed by the two halves of a split column. When a *śālā* replaced the relief *makaratoraṇa*[5] over these niches in the thirteenth century, the conceptual relationship between niche and *gopura* was enhanced. The devotee approaching one of the later South Indian temple complexes would proceed through a series of gateways that conceptually divide to gradually reveal the deity at the temple's heart. The multiple *gopura*s embodied the unfolding nature of the divine and the oscillating, expanding energy of the sacred site made manifest in architectural form.

The stone elevations of many *gopura*s are very similar to *vimāṇa*s, though some gateways are so high, they are composed of two distinct elevations of base (*adhiṣṭhāna*), optional sub-base (*upapīṭha*), and pilastered wall on top of one another. This is comparatively unusual in *vimāṇa* design, the Rajarajēśvara at Tanjavur being a notable exception. The *gopura*'s elevation at times is enlivened, as are *vimāṇa*s, with a series of niches that may have contained figural sculptures, though they often are too narrow or shallow.[6] The *gopura* entrances are as high as the base beneath the superstructure and about half as wide as high; in many cases, they are redundantly large. The upper superstructure rises up in a series of receding stories (*tala*)—which, unlike those on *vimāṇa*s, are always uneven in number—to the capping *śālā* roof. Modest examples may be only five to six meters tall, while the largest *gopura*s may be more than sixty. There is a general trend toward taller superstructures; some built in the sixteenth to seventeenth century have concave profiles to enhance the upward sweep of the eye. *Gopura*s initially were built entirely from stone, but from the twelfth century they had superstructures constructed largely from brick, similar to *vimāṇa*s, perhaps for reasons of economy as much as for reduced load-bearing. Maratha period temples around Tanjavur were built almost wholly of brick in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; stone was retained only for the most important load-bearing elements, such as the jambs or lintels of *gopura*s and other entrances. The *gopura* of the early eighteenth-century Bhūlōkanātha temple at Kilkoyilpattu near Papanasam is an example (fig. 4).[7] Several massive unfinished *gopura*s dating to the sixteenth–seventeenth century have

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Brick *gopura* of eighteenth-century Bhūlōkanātha temple at Kilkoyilpattu

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Unfinished *gopura* with tall jambs, fifth *prākāra*, east side of Jambukēśvara temple, Srirangam

soaring monolithic jambs, demonstrating that stone was important only for this part of the structure (fig. 5). In addition to being a gateway into the temple's inner enclosures, the *gopura* may have interior steps leading to the upper levels of the tower. These staircases are used by priests during the periodic reconsecration of the temple (*mahākumbhābhiseka*), which has taken place at twenty- to thirty-year intervals since at least the early-mid-nineteenth century.[8] On these occasions, water is poured over the pot-like finials, usually one for each of the uneven number of stories, on the *śālā* roof. The *gopura*'s upper stories are not otherwise used for any clear purpose.

Elements of the *gopura*'s form can be traced back to the earliest free-standing Tamil Drāviḍa temples built in stone by the Pallavas at Mamallapuram and Kanchipuram in Tondaimandalam, the northern region of Tamil Nadu bordering Andhra Pradesh.[9] Just in front of and on axis with the main east-facing Śaiva shrine of the early eighth-century "Shore" temple at Mamallapuram there is a small opening in the enclosure wall above the usual base moldings (fig. 6). Over this gap in the wall is an enlarged barrel-roofed *śālā* that is wider and higher than the adjacent smaller *śālā*s along the parapet. The opening's location and form anticipate a *gopura* even if it were not designed as a separate structure inserted into the wall, as later examples were, and was not intended to be used as a functional entrance. Built shortly afterward at the nearby Pallava capital at Kanchipuram, the Kailāsanātha temple has *śālā*s located in the enclosure wall on the north, south, and west sides and a barrel-roofed shrine on the east side, all carefully aligned with the main *vimāṇa*. The western *śālā* was originally over a gateway that was later blocked up, though the other three are not over such an entrance. These structures' forms and alignment with the *śālā*s embedded at the center of each projecting side (*bhadra*) of the *vimāṇa* itself clearly anticipate the later distribution of the *gopura*, facing the cardinal directions. Modest *gopura*s are also located in front of the late ninth-century Āvani Kandarpa Īśvara temple at Kilaiyur, north of Tanjavur, and at the late tenth-

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"Shore" temple at Mamallapuram with proto-*gopura* within east wall

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Gopura of Nīlakaṇṭēśvara (or Irungōlēśvara) temple at Laddigam

century Nīlakaṇṭēśvara (or Irungōlēśvara) temple at Laddigam farther north on the Tamil-Andhra border (fig. 7).[10]

But it was at the Rājarājeśvara (Bṛhadīśvara) temple at Tanjavur, consecrated in 1010, the largest temple built in South India to that date, that the form and distribution of the *gopura* was firmly established. Two stone *gopura*s, constructed by 1014 as distinct structures within the *prākāra* walls, are aligned with the much larger *vimāṇa* on the main east–west axis into the temple. They are of similar design, though the outer is higher at approximately thirty-three meters with five stories; the inner *gopura* has three stories. Yet both were built around the same time (fig. 8).[11] This makes it clear that the presence of larger *gopura*s over smaller inner ones cannot be accounted for solely by a later date or a desire to overshadow earlier achievements; the aesthetic principle was clearly established in the eleventh century. Three additional small doorways in the *prākāra* wall on the north, south, and west sides, all aligned with the *vimāṇa*, anticipate later temple complexes with *gopura*s facing the cardinal directions.[12] Often considered to be the culmination of several centuries of development and representing the "mature" Tamil Drāviḍa temple, the Rājarājeśvara temple is a notable aberration to the general trend that retained a smaller *vimāṇa*. Thereafter, most temples built in the Tamil region, even quite modest-sized ones, were architecturally dominated by their ever-taller *gopura*s, now constructed with brick superstructures on a stone base rather than wholly from stone. These may be located on one, two, or four sides of the temple, which may be enclosed in one, two, or as many as seven concentric enclosure walls (*prākāra*s), and the *gopura*s increase in scale toward the exterior. Clearly established by the seventeenth century, when the number of *gopura*s and scale of the Tamil temple reached its greatest extent, this idea of the temple was first formed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Following the political disruptions in the region during the fourteenth century and the rise to regional dominance of the Vijayanagara empire, the Tamil *gopura* ultimately became a central element of all major temples across southern India (see the section titled "Imperial Designs," below).

Between about 1150 and 1300, four *gopura*s were constructed in the irregular third and outermost enclosure or *prākāra* wall surrounding the Naṭarāja temple at the centre of the Tamil town of Chidambaram. In contrast to the earlier

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Inner and outer *gopuras* of the
Rājarājeśvara at Tanjavur

temple at Tanjavur, these four *gopura*s on the north, south, east and west sides gave the temple greater spatial emphasis to the four cardinal directions.[13] This was the first temple to arrange multiple *gopura*s in this fashion. However, in contrast to the careful axial arrangement of later temple planning, these *gopura*s, the first seven-story examples built, are aligned neither with each other nor clearly (except for the southern one) with the main shrine or other structure. It is therefore not clear which is the main ritual axis or even the primary entrance to the temple for all the *gopura*s are of similar size. Chidambaram is important for its four *gopura*s, but the plan of the temple is far from typical of the late Chola period or indeed thereafter. Other late Chola period temples in the central Kaveri delta—such as those around Kumbakonam at Darasuram, Tribhuvanam (fig. 9), Kil Palaiyarai, Tukkachi, and the thirteenth-century layout of Vriddachalam further north—retain the emphasis on a single east–west ritual axis marked by one or two *gopura*s within rectilinear walled enclosures. These temples are more representative of the period than Chidambaram alone.

The arrangement of *gopura*s spreading out on all four sides from the main shrine was still in its infancy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Others examples include the huge temple complex at Srirangam; it reached its current seven-*prākāra* form in the seventeenth century but by the thirteenth century clearly had *gopura*s spreading out in all four cardinal directions, perhaps in five *prākāra*s. The geographical center for these developments was central Tamil Nadu, the Chola heartland along the Kaveri River. But the developing conception of the Tamil temple was part of a shared religious culture across the region, including Pandya Nadu further south, and cannot be tied to dynastic patronage or the flow of master-archi-

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Outer *gopura* of the Kampaharēśvara
temple, Tribhuvanam

tects from an imperial center. The expansion of Chola hegemony in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries cannot fully explain the diffusion of the *gopura* across the Tamil country. Though now it is largely a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century construction, the Mīnākṣī-Sundareśvara temple in the Pandyan capital of Madurai may have encompassed a similar area in the thirteenth century as it does today, but with fewer *gopura*s—perhaps only four aligned east to west—than the thirteen built by the seventeenth century. The earlier temple may have been damaged during the fourteenth-century rule of the Madura Sultanate, even before the renovations and expansions of the Nayaka period, and thus the layout of this earlier temple and its relationship with the current one cannot be clearly ascertained. In the thirteenth century, the tenth-century Nellaiyappar temple in Tirunelveli further south was entered through a single east *gopura* and two *prākāra*s.[14]

Religious Identities and the *Gopura*
While the genesis of the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture cannot be geographically located in any single region—whether Tondaimandalam, the Kaveri delta, Pudukkottai district, or Pandya Nadu—it also cannot be defined along religious or sectarian lines. Primarily used for religious buildings before the late twentieth century, when Drāviḍa motifs were adopted for public buildings such as railway stations and universities, this design language or building vocabulary is not specifically *Hindu*. Furthermore, there is no distinction between the structures, such as *gopura*s, for Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples, except in details of the sculpture, where present, whether the painted plaster figures over the pyramidal superstructure or the regularly spaced images in niches within the stone base.

Jain communities have been present in the Tamil region from at least the earliest centuries CE: the earliest written records in Tamil, Brahmī inscriptions, are located in a number of partially modified natural caves and caverns used by Jain ascetics.[15] Jains later built temples in the same style and language of architecture as Hindus. Though there may be a spatial distinction in the layout of Tamil Jain temples in comparison with contemporary Hindu ones, the use of the *gopura* as a gateway is shared to some extent. The twelfth-century-and-later Vardhamāna temple at Tirupparutikkundram (Jina-Kanchi) is entered through one.[16] Other Jain *gopura*s are to be found at the tenth-century-and-later Kundavai Jinalaya temple at Tirumalai and the ninth-century-and-later Parśavanātha temple at Melsittamur: the *gopura*s at these sites date to the twelfth century or later. The *gopura* of the Jain temple at nearby Tachambadi in North Arcot district has an inscription from the 1440s, during the reign of Devarāya II, stating that it was built with the stones of a ruined Śiva temple.[17] Jain temples in the Tamil region, however, do not have multiple gateways in a series of enclosure walls in the manner of the massive Hindu examples built from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for few are of any great scale. The absence of a series of large *gopura*s in Jain temples can be partially explained by a different conception of temple symbolism. One explanation for the presence of several increasingly large *gopura*s in Hindu temples is the architectural expression of the unfolding, expanding energy of Śaiva Siddhāntha and Śrīvaiṣṇava cosmologies and the creative potential of the site on which the temple is built. The symbolism of the Jain temple is less explicitly dynamic, a consequence of a more static underlying cosmology and the conception of the temple as modeled on both the world of perfect order and the *samasavarana*, the preaching hall from which a Jina delivers his first teaching following his enlightenment to an assembly of gods, humans, and animals.

But what of the Buddhist temples of the Tamil region? Buddhism's place within the Tamil religious landscape from perhaps as early as the first century CE and certainly from the fourth until at least the fourteenth century is now more clearly established. Literary references, especially the sixth-century poetic narrative text the *Maṇimēkalai*, have been joined by a substantial body of both stone and bronze sculpture, largely dating between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, as well as inscriptions from many sites across the region, especially Tondaimandalam, the Kaveri delta, and around Madurai.[18] However, absent are the remains of temples or image-houses within which these Buddhist images were placed; furthermore, the remains of stupas from the Tamil region have not survived. Some Buddhist temples were undoubtedly destroyed or simply neglected; others were converted or reused as temples for Hindu deities after Buddhism's decline in the thirteenth century. The discovery of a massive, more than life-size Buddha image in the

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Lankatilaka near Kandy, Sri Lanka

Kāmākṣi temple in Kanchipuram has been cited as evidence of the temple's later conversion to Śaivism.[19] But the scale of some surviving stone images measuring more than a meter high and the numbers of metal images—around 350 Buddhist bronzes were excavated at the well-known monastic site on the coast at Nagapattinam alone, the majority in 1926 and 1934—makes it unlikely that they were used in solely a monastic or domestic environment for which there is little surviving trace.[20] Although inconclusive without more surviving structures, whether brick or stone, it is probable that Buddhist temples were also designed in the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture. The situation in neighboring Sri Lanka is suggestive and offers evidence for the mobility of architectural design across geographical, political, and religious boundaries.[21]

In the 1340s, two large stone Buddhist image-houses were built in the hills west of Kandy in central Sri Lanka, the Laṅkātilaka at Handessa (fig. 10) and another at Gadaladeniya three miles away (fig. 11). Large inscriptions on the rock surface in both Tamil and Sinhala confirm what is evident from their architectural design: South Indian architects were involved in the creation of both royal temples in the opening years of nearby Gampola's status as the Sinhala capital.[22] Tamil communities were in Sri Lanka possibly from as early as the beginning of the first millennium CE, though the evidence is sparse before the tenth century, and the island was integrated into the political dynamics of southern India under the rule of the Pallavas, Cholas, and Pandyas. Material evidence for the cultural interaction between South India and Sri Lanka can be seen in the construction of the eighth- or ninth-century Nalanda *geḍige* between Kandy and Sigiriya in central Sri Lanka, a wholly stone Buddhist temple of rectangular plan with a barrel-shaped *śālā* roof similar

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Gadaladeniya near Kandy, Sri Lanka

to the monolithic seventh-century Bhima and Gaṇeśa *ratha*s at Mamallapuram.[23] During the Chola occupation of northern Sri Lanka between 993 and 1070, at least fifteen Hindu temples in the Tamil Drāviḍa language of the Kaveri region were constructed, most at the Chola capital at Polonnaruwa.[24] Some were made wholly from stone and others from brick and stone. The construction of the stone image-houses in the Kandyan highlands in the fourteenth century marks a further stage in the transmission of the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture outside South India, the inclusion of Sri Lanka into a wider religious architectural culture, albeit one in which Buddhism, not Hinduism, was dominant. The huge dual-language Sinhala and Tamil inscriptions on the rock surfaces are striking features of both sites. These date both temples to circa 1344, the third year in the reign of Bhuvanaikabāhu IV (reigned 1341–51), and suggest that Tamil architects had migrated to the central highlands from either southern India or northern Sri Lanka. One "Sthapatirayara" is named as one of the artisans at Handessa. At Gadaladeniya, the chief architect of a group of master-artisans (*sthāpati*) was Gaṇeśvarācāri. He was said to be well versed in architecture and image making (*vāstuśāstra* and *pratimāśāstra*), which suggests his South Indian, perhaps Tamil, origin. There is little evidence for the circulation of such South Indian *śāstra*s in textual form in Sri Lanka; shastric architectural knowledge was transmitted in the body of its practitioners, such as this *sthāpati*.[25]

But although the Tamil Drāviḍa language may have been appropriated in an ongoing dialogue between South India and Sri Lanka, the characteristic Tamil temple planning of the thirteenth century and later—with a series of concentric high-walled enclosures entered through towering *gopura*s—was not. This may have been a consequence of the different ritual requirements or symbolic meanings of the Buddhist image-house, in contrast to the Hindu temple in the fourteenth–fifteenth century.

Now if the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture was not seen as distinctly Hindu in fourteenth-century Sri Lanka, then it would seem that the Tamil temple

plan—with *gopura*s and high concentric walls—was considered unsuitable for a Buddhist *vihāra*. The elite patrons of these Gampola period Buddhist monuments may have wanted the temples at Gadaladeniya and Laṅkātilaka to be recognizably different in layout to the contemporary Hindu temples of both the mainland peninsula and those in northern Sri Lanka. Pandyan invasions of Sri Lanka in 1258 and 1263 led to the establishment in the late thirteenth century of an independent Ārya Cakravartti or Jaffna Kingdom in the far north.[26] The two Buddhist temples near the new highland Sinhala capital at Gampola were built just when the Jaffna polity was at its expansionist height, ruling parts of the northwest coast as far south as Puttalam before subservience to Vijayanagara from the 1370s, conquest by Parakramabāhu VI from his new coastal capital at Kotte in the 1420s, and the execution of the last king by the Portuguese in 1620.

Temples established in the tenth or eleventh century during Chola rule on the island—such as the Tirukkētīśvaram at Mantai near Mannar and the Tirukkōṇēśvaram in Trincomalee, celebrated by the *mūvar*, the three preeminent Śaiva poet-saints Appar, Cuntarar, and Campantar—undoubtedly were expanded and new ones built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Portuguese iconoclasm in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries resulted in the destruction of many of Sri Lanka's major coastal Hindu temples.[27] The parts of these structures that survived suggest that thirteenth-century Tamil Drāviḍa design was transmitted to northern Sri Lanka, possibly under Pandyan patronage, as suggested by the presence of the Pandyan double-fish-and-crook dynastic symbol on stone doorjambs and ceiling fragments. The great degree of late sixteenth- to early seventeenth-century damage means that the fourteenth-century layout of these temples cannot be determined accurately. But *gopura*s would have been a standard element in common with South Indian practice in the same period: the Nakulēśvaram temple at Kīrimalai, north of Jaffna, is said to have had three *prākāra*s and five *gopura*s before the Portuguese destroyed it in 1620.[28]

Imperial Designs: The Tamil *Gopura* in the Vijayanagara Empire
If the two Tamil *sthāpati*s in highland Sri Lanka in the 1340s had migrated from mainland India rather than the north of the island, then it may have been as a consequence of the dearth of architectural patronage in the Tamil country in the late thirteenth to fourteenth century. Following the Chola Empire's disintegration in the 1280s, a series of incursions into the Tamil country by the Hoysalas of southern Karnataka and others were followed by raids by the Khaljī and Tughluq sultanate from Delhi in 1310–11, 1318, and 1323. The conquest of Madurai by Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan Shāh in 1327, and his establishment of the Madura Sultanate (or Sultanate of Ma'bar) independent from Delhi in 1333, displaced the last Pandyan rulers of

Madurai further south. Within a short time, all the old polities of southern India disappeared. This long period of political upheaval in the Tamil country continued from the 1360s, as the newly founded and expansionist Vijayanagara Empire extended its rule over northern Tamil Nadu from its capital in northern Karnataka. Under the leadership of Kampaṇa, eldest son of Bukka I (reigned1354–77), Vijayanagara forces moved south, overthrowing the Madura Sultanate. Few temples or even modest additions date to this period of disruption, but this changed in the fifteenth century, especially in the Vijayanagara Empire's eponymous capital.

In the fifteenth century, little was built within the empire, except at the capital; only in the early to mid-sixteenth century did temple construction pick up, and then on a massive scale.[29] The source of this monumental architectural language was not in the vicinity of the metropolitan capital in the northern Deccan, but one region of the diverse empire: the Tamil country. As is well known from the extensive research on the architecture at Vijayanagara conducted since the 1980s, the temples built in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, such as those on Hemakuta Hill, continued a local, Deccani mode of design.[30] The foundation of the Rāmacandra temple—built between 1406 and 1417 under the patronage of Devaraya I (reigned circa 1406–22) and located in the heart of the "royal" zone—marked a new architectural departure in the capital. This was the case both in planning—the temple was set in a walled complex with multiple shrines, halls, and aligned gateways—and design, for it was based on the Tamil Drāviḍa tradition of architecture. Given the temple's distinctive elevation of basement moldings, engaged column design, and stepped pyramidal *vimāṇa*s, the source of its design is clearly farther south. Yet Deccani modes of design are still evident, such as the *śukanāsa*, a wagon-roofed projection on the east side of the superstructure above the *ardhamaṇḍapa*, the enclosed hall adjoining the main shrine, and the square outer hall (*mahāmaṇḍapa*) entered on three sides. Although built within a walled enclosure, the Tamil form of *gopura* was not included: the eastern and northern gateways do not have a soaring superstructure but are flat-roofed. Whether the temples built in the new manner were designed by Deccani *sthāpati*s conversant in the new architectural language or by mobile Tamil ones is unclear, given the paucity of evidence. The small Saumya Someśvara temple at Nimbapuram, the location of Valli's cremation after he was shot by Rāma, five kilometers from the Virupākṣa temple in Hampi's sacred center, was built in a similar modified Tamil tradition around 1450.[31] The presence of Tamil characters and numbers on almost all the architectural elements, including doorjambs, pilasters, and slabs, of this modest temple suggests that these are masons' marks made by *sthāpati*s migrating to the imperial capital to assist in its construction, and that the architectural elements were designed elsewhere.[32]

Over the course of the fifteenth century, and especially in the early sixteenth

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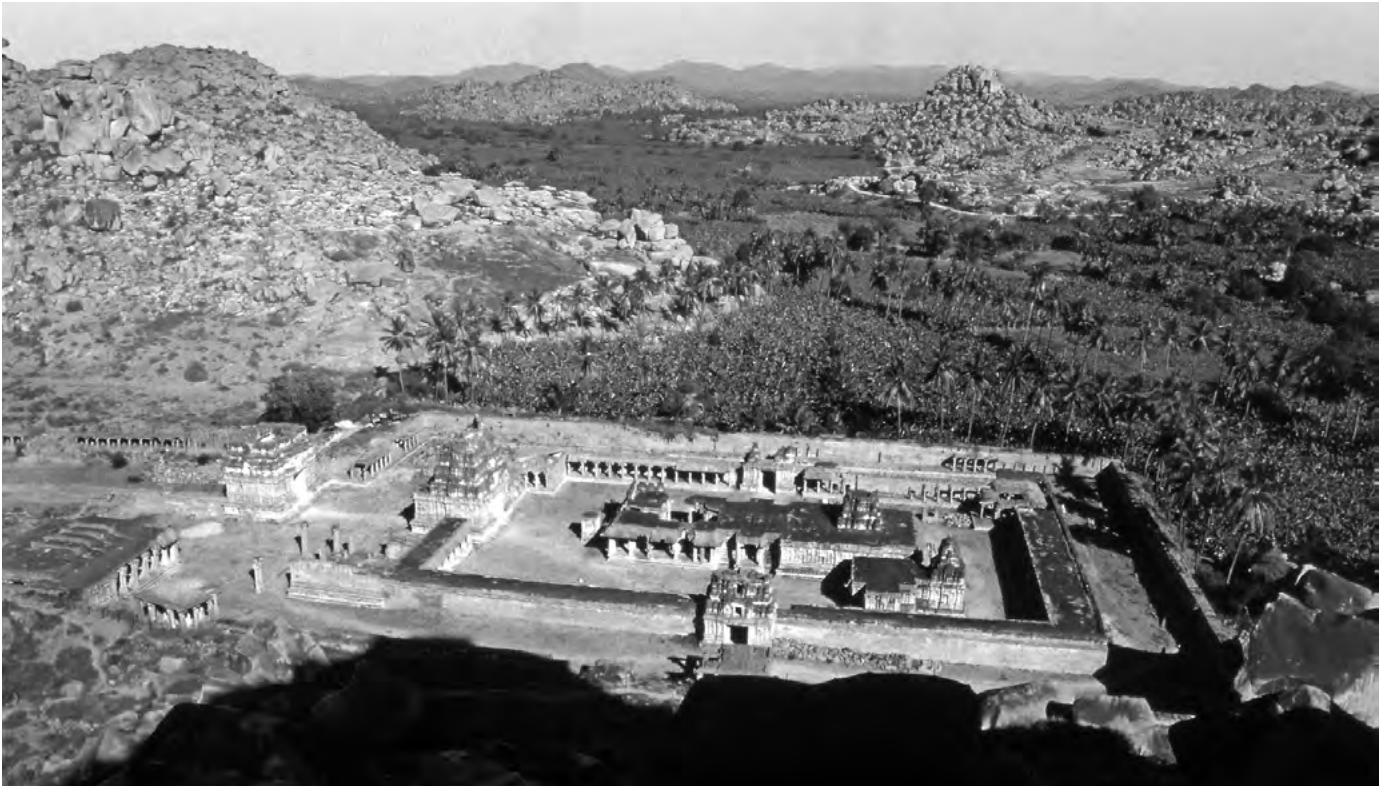
Tiruveṅgaḷanātha temple at
Vijayanagara

century, coinciding with the establishment of the third Tuluva dynasty of Vijayanagara kings, there was a transformation in scale, design, and elaboration of imperial temple construction. Additions were made to both the Virūpākṣa and Viṭṭhala temples, followed by the establishment of major new temples, many of them Vaiṣṇava: the Kṛṣṇa (1515), Anantaśayana (1524), Tiruveṅgaḷanātha (1534; fig. 12), Paṭṭābhirāma, and Raṅganātha, both in the 1530s.[33] The adoption of the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture and the Tamil mode of temple planning—with concentric walled enclosures entered through *gopura*s and containing many detached columned halls for use during festivals (*utsavamaṇḍapa*), architecturally defined processional routes, and festival tanks (*teppakulam*)—all emphasize the break with past architectural traditions and the creation of a new imperial language of temple architecture in the early sixteenth century at the capital. The Tiruveṅgaḷanātha was one of the few temples entirely built in this period that had more than one *gopura* aligned on the same axis. Two *gopura*s were built in the early sixteenth century on the east side of the Virūpākṣa temple, though the current structure of the outer one, the largest at the site, primarily dates to the early nineteenth century. The major contribution of the Tuluva period in architectural terms, when the empire under Krishnadeva and Achyutadeva was at its height of power and territorial extent, was the adoption of the Tamil Drāviḍa temple form and layout at the capital, its adaptation in both design and scale at the imperial center, and its subsequent dissemination across the empire in the sixteenth century.

This was the moment when the *gopura* became not simply a regional, Tamil architectural form but a broader southern Indian one that transcended geographical, ethnic, and linguistic diversity across the wide and disparate empire. Though many historians have criticized Burton Stein's model of the "segmentary state" and

its application to the Vijayanagara Empire, noting a much greater degree of imperial integration than his ritual emphasis would suggest, he was correct to note that changes in architectural style were one of the chief ways in which Vijayanagara as a state made a difference.[34] To some extent, the empire under Krishnadeva and his successors was unified, albeit briefly, and established a long-term legacy through the visual coherence of monumental religious architecture across southern India, with the towering *gopura* as its most visible manifestation. The study of the visual culture of the Vijayanagara Empire has tended to emphasize the arts of the capital at the expense of the different imperial regions across modern Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, and discussions of the varied patterns of building activity over two centuries usually mention only the peak of activity in the early sixteenth century. Artistic development across the wide region in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is not simply about centrifugal diffusion away from the capital. In many regions of the empire, provincial emulation and adoption of those metropolitan forms joined the continued development of existing local traditions, especially in Kanara, the lowland coastal strip of Karnataka beneath the Western Ghats, and the Tamil country. Was the *gopura* one element in an "imperial language of art" during the sixteenth century?

Broadly speaking, the answer would be a cautious affirmative, but a detailed examination of the architecture of this wide region over two hundred years is nevertheless informative. Outside the capital, in central and southern Karnataka, there are very few sites with substantial building activity from the mid-fourteenth right through to the mid-sixteenth century; the paucity of substantial construction is striking after the richness of the capital. At Chitradurga, for example, a great hill fort enclosed a large inhabited area that was a major urban center throughout the Vijayanagara period. While the fortifications are fifteenth or sixteenth century, temples were clearly not a priority at the site, for there is no great multi-enclosure temple complex with towering *gopura*s as one might expect after seeing the similar urban landscape of Vijayanagara. With the notable exception of the Cenna Keśava temple at Belur with its single *gopura*, few of the large number of temples built during Hoysala rule in southern Karnataka (circa 1006–1346) have any significant later additions or became the nucleus for a later temple complex of substantial proportions with one or more *gopura*s, as occurred with similar earlier temples in the Tamil region.[35]

The greatest architectural activity was around the periphery of Karnataka, the Kannada-speaking region—along the western coast and the borders of the Telugu and Tamil countries. In Kanara, the coastal strip between Goa and Mangalore, large numbers of Hindu and Jain temples were built in the fifteenth and through the mid-sixteenth century. Temple construction in this region flourished as a result

of its ports' importance to inland, coastal, and Indian Ocean trade. Most temples in the region were built in a distinctive regional tradition of architecture with steep, pitched roofs in stone that imitated earlier wooden construction. They are almost all built on a relatively small scale and do not demonstrate any clear *architectural* connection with the imperial center. The increasing use of stone, rather than the ephemeral and more readily available wood, is one of the few clear signs of change as a result of the Vijayanagara conquest of the region in the 1340s, though stone had been used for basements and a very few complete, though modest, temples before this.[36] But the conception of the temple as a complex of structures entered through a series of *gopura*s did not take root in this region in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

On the border of the Telugu and Tamil countries to the east and southeast of Vijayanagara—modern Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu—there are further clear signs of Vijayanagara temple construction. It was modest in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and on a widespread and monumental scale in the first half of the sixteenth century, demonstrating a similar pattern to that at the capital. The modest Madhvarāya temple at Gorantla, dated circa 1354 (Ś. 1276), is an early example, though the small foundation of a *gopura* probably dates to a century later or more.[37] The shift toward the later adoption of the Tamil Drāviḍa architectural language is more clearly evident in the example of the Rāma and Śiva temples at Penukonda (late fifteenth or early sixteenth century) and the Vīrabhadra at Lepakshi (1530s).[38] However, no *gopura*s were built in front of either temple at Penukonda, and at Lepakshi the two stone *gopura* basements on the north side remain without towering pyramidal superstructures to this day. In a cluster on the border with the Tamil region south of Mysore, the Lakṣmī-Varadarāja and Gopālaswāmi at Terakanambi; the Vijayanārāyaṇa and a further cluster of four temples at Gundlupet; and the Triyambakeśvara at Triyambakapura all date to the first half of the sixteenth century and include *gopura*s as part of their design.[39] But given their proximity to the Tamil region, there is no reason to assume any centrifugal dissemination of architectural knowledge from the capital. The Cholas occupied this part of southern Karnataka in the eleventh century, and prior to that the Ganga dynasty constructed many Drāvida temples.[40]

Across the Deccan plateau, in Andhra, is the most substantial evidence for Vijayanagara period temple construction outside the capital itself—at temples established before the fifteenth century, such as Ahobilam and Srisailam, and new foundations, for example, Tadpatri, Vontimitta, and Somapalem. Far fewer temples were constructed in the sparsely populated areas of the eastern Deccan, and so the new ones built in the Vijayanagara period, especially in the early sixteenth century, had a greater visual impact, including the establishment of the *gopura* as a standard

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Kodaṇḍarāma temple at Vontimitta

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Southern *gopura* of Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple at Tadpatri

design element. The east-facing Kodaṇḍarāma temple at Vontimitta is located in a large, open *prākāra* with *gopura*s on the north, east, and south sides (fig. 13). Though there is no foundation inscription, this temple is undoubtedly a new structure of the mid-sixteenth century, judging by the architectural forms. Next to the east *gopura*, two stele, just over 1.5 meters high, have inscriptions recording land grants to the temple dated 1555/56 and 1558/59.[41] A magnificent, open *maṇḍapa*, with good examples of figural composite columns, is comparable to the contemporary *maṇḍapa* of the Viṭṭhala temple at Vijayanagara. Tadpatri illustrates both the absence of a single, creative artistic center disseminating architectural knowledge across the imperial territories of the empire and also the localized creativity in the "margins." Together with the distance, circa 120 miles from the capital, this may explain the unparalleled sculptural density of the unfinished north and south *gopura*s of the Rāmaliṅgeśvara at Tadpatri, built by circa 1510 (fig. 14).[42] The temples at Vontimitta and Tadpatri lie on the road between Vijayanagara and the great pilgrimage center at Tirupati, suggesting the routes along which architectural ideas traveled.

The dissemination of Tuluva monumentality and the establishment of a Vijayanagara presence in the Tamil country are evident from the construction of wholly new temples and the extensive expansion of existing ones. Very little was built before the sixteenth century, and what was built in the first half of the sixteenth century was largely in the Tamil-Andhra border area around Tirupati/Tirumalai, anticipating the shift of the capital's center there in the 1590s. One example will suffice here: the massive expansion between 1514 and 1530 of the west-facing Vedanārāyaṇa temple at Nagalapuram.[43] A modest eleventh-century shrine was enclosed within three concentric *prākāra*s—more than the usual one or at most two of other Tuluva- period temples—and entered through a series of three *gopura*s in the west wall and two further aligned *gopura*s in the north and south outermost walls. The stone base of the outermost *gopura* on the west side is among the larg-

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"Porch-*gopura*" of Tyāgarāja temple at Tiruvarur

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"Stone palace" (*kalla upparige*) on Hemakuta Hill, Vijayanagara

est built in the early sixteenth century, measuring approximately thirty by twenty meters, and is to be compared with the similarly dated inner, south example at the Ekambareśvara temple at Kanchipuram; the detached *gopura* at Srikalahasti; and further afield in southern Karnataka, the detached *gopura* at Melukote. In contrast to this expansion of an existing temple, the two Kalyāṇa Veṅkateśvara temples at Narayanavanam and Mangapuram were entirely new.[44] Perhaps the Vijayanagara period temples in this region were more familiar to the later Nayakas and their *sthāpati*s than those in the capital itself. Indeed, the Madurai Nayakas' inscriptions mention the lineage as coming from Kanchipuram.[45]

Architectural Innovation and Religious Change

The *gopura* is a building type that developed in the Tamil region in the eleventh to thirteenth century and was built on a monumental scale at Vijayanagara before it was disseminated south both back to its source region and across wider South India. But one specific type of *gopura* seems to indicate Vijayanagara innovation. This is what may be termed a "porch-*gopura*," in which the stone base is divided into two levels with an extended porch supported by columns on the outer side and sometimes also the inner side, creating a squarer ground plan than usual. The supporting columns of such *gopura*s are typical of the early sixteenth century, with an attached rearing *yāḷi* (mythical lion-like animal) or with three smaller colonettes around a larger core column supporting a deep S-curved stone eave, another feature of the period. The genesis of this *gopura* type seems to be firmly Tuluva. As with much of Vijayanagara imperial design, however, the sources appear to be both the temple architecture of eleventh- to thirteenth-century central Tamil Nadu and regional Deccani architecture, in this instance, a form of entrance pavilion. At Sirkali, south of Chidambaram in the Kaveri delta, the main entrance to the first *prākāra* of the Brahmāpurīśvara temple has porch extensions on the inner and outer sides that date to the eleventh to twelfth century. Further south in the Svētāranyēśvara temple

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Two "stone palace" (*kalla upparige*)
gateways, Chitradurga

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"Porch-*gopura*" on south side of the
Raghunātha temple, Vijayanagara

at Tiruvenkadu, two modest *gopura* foundations to the east and west of the first *prākāra* similarly date to this period and include a columned extension on one side. The Tyāgarāja temple at nearby Tiruvarur also has a "porch-*gopura*" dating to the twelfth to thirteenth century among the eight *gopura*s of this large temple (fig. 15). At the capital, the prototype of this gateway can be traced to the Rāmacandra temple, like the Tamil Drāviḍa tradition itself. For though this temple does not include a *gopura*, two of the flat-roofed entrances have extended porches.

A type of entrance pavilion that predates the fifteenth-century arrival of the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture at Vijayanagara may have been the precursor for the new form of porch-*gopura* in the early sixteenth century. This is the "stone palace" (*kalla upparige*) discussed by Philip Wagoner, of which four examples survive at Vijayanagara (fig. 16) and two at the fortified citadel of Chitradurga, dated circa 1250–1400 (fig. 17).[46] These square, originally three-storied, free-standing entrance-pavilions were used as temporary residences for deities from the adjacent temple; lamp-columns and stone swings were placed alongside. The later examples of the six such entrances identified have a projecting extension to the base, similar to some later porch-*gopura*s, suggesting their morphological relationship.[47]

Several examples of this new *gopura* type at the capital date from the first half of the sixteenth century. Perhaps the earliest is the great east *gopura* of the Kṛṣṇa temple (1515/16). It is followed by the *gopura* of the south-facing Rāmānuja temple in Vitthalapura, the inner of the two *gopura*s on the north side of the Tiruveṅgaḷanātha temple (1534), and the large south *gopura* of the Raghunātha temple on Malyavanta Hill (fig. 18). The latter two temples demonstrate that this form of *gopura* was one option, for the standard rectangular form was used alongside the porch-*gopura* in the same temple. The greater scale of the southern *gopura* of the Raghunātha temple in comparison with the more modest eastern one may suggest it was the primary entrance. Wagoner notes that the southern approach to temples often was favored over the eastern in the Deccan, a pattern shared with the entrance pavilions discussed above.[48]

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South *gopura*, Saṅgamēśvara temple, Animela

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Vēdanārāyaṇa temple, Nagalapuram

This characteristically early sixteenth-century Vijayanagara *gopura* type spread to outlying sites in the eastern Deccan during the same period. At the Saṅgamēśvara temple at Animela, *gopura*s with porches on the inner and outer sides were placed in the north and south walls (fig. 19) of the single *prākāra* alongside normal rectangular ones without the porch to east and west.[49] An additional porch-*gopura* was built on the west side of the *maṇḍapa* in front of the north-facing cave dedicated to Nārasiṃha at Upper Ahobilam, one of the Tuluva period extensions to the site in the 1530s–40s. Further south in the region, around Tirupati, which received much patronage and architectural activity in the Tuluva period, porch-*gopura*s were built at Srikalahasti, Nagalapuram, and Narayanavanam. At Srikalahasti, the entrance to the inner *prākāra*s, largely rebuilt in the early twentieth century, is through an unusual porch-*gopura* with an *upapīṭha*-extension on three sides with six *yāḷi* columns. Inscriptions from the reigns of Achyutadeva and his successor suggest a construction date in the 1530s.[50] Similarly dated and also of this type is the north Bhikshala *gopura* through which most pilgrims continue to enter the temple's outer enclosures near the detached Krishnadeva *gopura*.[51] Four columns with lion-based, single colonettes support the deep eave of this square *gopura*; eight Vijayanagara boar-and-sword symbols on the jambs and doorframes corroborate the Tuluva period dating. Of the five *gopura*s of the Vēdanārāyaṇa temple at Nagalapuram, which was massively expanded between 1514 and 1530, only the innermost is the porch type.[52] Unusually, the extension is at the level of the *upapīṭha* (fig. 20) rather than higher up, and thus it has much taller supporting columns, a *gopura* design that is repeated at nearby Narayanavanam.

Further examples of a Vijayanagara addition to the Tamil sculptural repertoire are the high-relief women on the jambs of *gopura*s built across southern India. Within the gateways' entrance corridors, women standing on *makara*s clutching sinuous creepers were included on the few *gopura*s built in the Deccan beginning in the fifteenth century. But from the early to the mid-sixteenth century these sculpted women were prevalent across the whole South. This is in contrast to pre-sixteenth

century Tamil *gopura*s, which omit such figures, an example of the dissemination of a motif from the capital region across the empire. Furthermore, the pre-fifteenth century distinction of these threshold women as the river goddesses Gaṅga and Yamuna on their respective *makara*s and *kurma vāhana*s was lost with the diffusion of this North Indian and Deccani iconography to the far south at the height of the empire. *Gopura*s in sixteenth-century Tamil Nadu frequently included women on all four jambs, similar to *gopura*s across the empire. Many dispensed with the *makara*, however, making any identification with Gaṅga unlikely; thus, they are identified as more generic *lāṭasundari*s (auspicious women holding foliage).[53] The eleventh- to thirteenth-century temples in Tamil Nadu are places to search for the origin of many characteristic and widespread Vijayanagara period developments, including the detached festival *maṇḍapa* and the composite columns with *yāḷi*s and figural sculpture that fill these halls in many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century temples across southern India.

If it is clear that the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture was transmitted beyond the Tamil region and adopted by the rulers of Vijayanagara in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, then the reason why is less certain. The chronology suggests a connection with the move from a conquest state in the fourteenth century to a tributary empire. It has also been suggested that the adoption of a Tamil mode of architecture was a conscious move on the part of the Vijayanagara rulers, who sought to visually emulate the power and prestige of the former Chola empire that had dominated South India for several centuries.[54] However, Leslie Orr persuasively suggests that if Vijayanagara emulated a Tamil model of imperial temple culture, then the Pandyans, rather than Cholas, may be a more appropriate model. During the fourteenth century, the Pandyans' concentrated and strategic donative activity at specific sacred sites in newly conquered areas, especially Chidambaram, Srirangam, and Tiruvanaikka, was in marked contrast to the comparative absence of such actions by Chola monarchs.[55] As discussed above, the developing Tamil temple complexes with multiple *gopura*s of the thirteenth century and later were the models for sixteenth-century temple construction at Vijayanagara and across the Deccan. The striking and suggestively imperial "Vijayanagara symbol," the boar in profile alongside an erect sword and often with an adjacent sun and moon,[56] may have been deployed, however occasionally, on temples in imitation of the Pandyan dynasty's use of its own symbol, the two fish beside a crook, on some of their temples. Sites of the Pandyan symbol from the late twelfth–thirteenth century include the outer west *gopura* of the Mīnākṣī-Sundarēśvara temple in Madurai, the ceiling beams of the outer east *gopura* of the Svētāraṇyeśvara temple at Tiruvenkadu, and the fort wall of Trincomalee Fort in Sri Lanka. By the sixteenth century, memory of the Cholas and their empire had dissipated to a much

greater degree than that of the Pandyans at the height of power and authority across southern India, and with subordinates in northern Sri Lanka, more recently in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The memory of past Pandyan power lingered longer in the Tamil country than the Cholas; indeed, several figures claiming Pandyan royal descent were still issuing inscriptions in the early eighteenth century.[57]

The wider dissemination of the *gopura* and the Tamil conception of the temple-city occurred within the Vijayanagara empire's territories. But a further reason for its adoption may have had less to do with any political associations and more to do with the increasing prominence of Vaiṣṇavism across the South, especially Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇavism, during the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Veṅkateśvara at Tirupati is among the most important Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇava pilgrimage sites, and though established by the tenth century, the temple gained the preeminence it maintains to this day under the patronage of Krishnadeva and Achyutadeva, both great devotees of Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇavism.[58] The Śrīvaiṣṇava turn and the increasing popularity of Tamil forms of Viṣṇu, such as Veṅkateśvara, at the imperial capital is evident from the eight temples identified as dedicated to the deity, known there as Tiruveṅgaḷanātha, from the mid-fifteenth century on. The most notable of these is the large north-facing Tiruveṅgaḷanātha temple founded in 1534 by Achyutadeva's brother-in-law, Hiriya Tirumalaraja. The Rāmacandra temple built between 1406 and 1417 was the first temple at Vijayanagara both to adopt the Tamil Drāviḍa tradition of temple architecture and to be dedicated to Rāma. Another large temple, dedicated to Paṭṭābhirāma (Rāma after his coronation) or Raghunātha, was built at the capital in the 1530s.[59] Raṅganātha of Srirangam and Varadarāja of Kanchipuram were also important Śrīvaiṣṇava forms of Viṣṇu, whose presence at the capital is evident from material remains, though neither were as important as Veṅkateśvara.[60] It would be misleading to suggest that Vaiṣṇavism at Vijayanagara and across the empire was equated with Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇavism, for other Vaiṣṇava sects, such as the Madhva *sampradāya*, emerged in this period. But it was the most popular tradition from the late fifteenth century. Furthermore, temples for deities of other non-Tamil sects, including Kṛṣṇa from Udayagiri and Viṭṭhala from Pandarpur—and indeed Shaiva temples—were built in the *Tamil*-derived language of architecture at the capital.

The selective adoption of a Tamil language for the temple architecture of the imperial center and its subsequent dissemination, with the political and religious associations that followed, is all the more striking when compared to contemporary palace and courtly architecture. As George Michell has demonstrated, the courtly architecture of Vijayanagara and other sites, such as Penukonda and Chandragiri,

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Bhaktavatsala temple,
Tirukkalukundram

is an original synthesis of Bahmani courtly and religious architecture and the language of South Indian temple design.[61] The history and culture of the Deccan is no longer considered in terms of opposing monoliths, Hindu Vijayanagara versus the Muslim sultanates. Recent scholarship has instead emphasized the cosmopolitan and culturally fluid character of court cultures in this region during the fifteenth to seventeenth century; Vijayanagara courtly architecture demonstrates this.[62]

Tamil Temple Cities and the Nayaka Period *Gopura*

The greatest number and boldest-sized *gopura*s were built as part of the many temple complexes in the Tamil region that were founded or substantially added to in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was a period of enormous architectural energy, especially when compared to any century going back to the late thirteenth century. The growth in number, size, and grandeur of temples coincided with the increasing independence of the Nayaka governors from their Vijayanagara overlords, especially following the disastrous defeat of the *rāya* (king) and the sack of the capital in 1565. This suggests that the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries should be regarded as a distinct "Nayaka period" and not simply as "late Vijayanagara." Three Nayakas dominated the Tamil country from their respective centers at Gingee (or Senji) in the North, and the older seats of power at Tanjavur, the Chola imperial capital, and Madurai, the Pandyan capital. In the Deccan, the Nayakas ruled from Ikkeri or nearby Keladi in the Western Ghats and from Mysore and Bangalore in the South. The increasingly tense and ambiguous political relationship between the nominal overlord and the supposedly subservient Nayakas was brought to a head in a major civil war that lasted intermittently for more

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Monumental *gopura* of the
Vatapatraśāyi temple, Srivilliputtur

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South *gopura* of Mīnākṣī-
Sundareśvara temple at Madurai

than a decade following the death of Venkata (reigned 1586–1614). The Aravidu dynasty of Vijayanagara survived until the death of Sriranga III in 1672. The civil war that began in 1614, however, clearly demonstrated that the Aravidu monarch was just one among several regional rulers competing in a shifting "hierarchy of kings," although he was the heir to a distinguished but distant imperial legacy. The political, religious, and cultural legitimacy of the Nayakas was based on both their relationship with the Vijayanagara emperor and the imperial center, and their association with the cultural traditions of their adopted territory.

The temple architecture of the Keladi Nayakas in the sixteenth century combined elements of the regional Kanara and Malnadu tradition with the Vijayanagara palace architecture, with its parapets of merlons and cusped arches and other features ultimately derived from Bahmani sultanate architecture in the Deccan.[63] The *gopura* was not a prominent element of Keladi Nayaka architecture. In Mysore and Bangalore, the Tamil mode of temple architecture was firmly established by new temples built by the Wodeyars and Gowdas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which included the *gopura* as a standard.[64] In the Tamil country, the Nayakas' relationship with the declining authority of Vijayanagara and established local Tamil traditions was expressed through their patronage of temple rituals and regional religious institutions; the additions, expansions, and renovations of old temples, especially the great pilgrimage sites; and the foundation of new temples. The many *gopura*s constructed in this period, many bigger than anything built before, are one visual expression of these political and cultural changes, as the Vijayanagara empire fragmented.

The paradigmatic late South Indian temple complex is often said to have a series of *gopura*s of increasing height on four sides, spreading out toward each of the cardinal directions from the comparatively diminutive main shrine at the heart of the temple (fig. 21). Some seventeenth-century *gopura*s were more than sixty meters in height; the eleven-*tala gopura* before the Vatapatraśāyi temple at Srivilliputtur is a good example, compared in an undated inscription to Mount Meru

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Rājagopāla temple at Mannarkuti

in place of the *vimāṇa* that once claimed such a distinction in many temples (fig. 22).[65] However, this is not typical of all Tamil temples built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which exhibit a much greater variety of plan: there is no consistent layout, whether by region or in terms of dynastic patronage. While there are many temples with three or more concentric rectilinear enclosures (*prākāra*s), only some of these have *gopura*s on four sides. Fewer still have as many *gopura*s as the Mīnākṣī-Sundareśvara in Madurai with thirteen (fig. 23), the Rājagopāla temple at Mannarkuti with fifteen (fig. 24), and the Ranganātha temple at Srirangam with nineteen—temples that all reached their greatest extent in the seventeenth century.[66] The number, size, and distribution of *gopura*s in a temple complex with three or more *prākāra*s vary from temple to temple, each placing differing emphasis on three planning principles: the main ritual axis leading to the *vimāna*, the three less prominent cardinal axes, and the concentric plan of the *prākāra*s. The first two *prākāra*s may have one or two *gopura*s on the main ritual axis, and only from the third enclosure wall will additional gateways be added to indicate the other remaining cardinal directions.[67] Thus, while the outermost *prākāra* suggests the equality of each side, the temple spreading out to all directions from the sacred center, the axis leading directly into the temple remains preeminent, as the largest number of *gopura*s along that route indicates. Many more temples have *gopura*s on either a single side marking the main ritual axis and pilgrims' route inward. Or if they have two or more *prākāra*s, on just two sides, with *gopura*s in front of and directly behind the main, central shrine and on one clearly defined axial alignment. The rear *gopura* of such temples with pyramidal gateways on two sides serves no clear purpose as a gateway to lead devotees toward the ritual, sacred center; instead, it seems to be there to ensure balance in the overall plan.

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Corkkavācal in north wall of the Alakar temple at Alagarkoyil

26

West gateways of Raṅganātha (Rangji) temple, Vrindavan

A further group of temples have a series of one or more *gopura*s marking the main axis into the structure but are joined by a single additional *gopura* in the north wall of the first or second *prākāra*. This is the Vaikuṇṭha-*vacal*, *corkkavācal*, or *paramapatavācal*, literally "heaven's gate," a feature unique to the many Vaiṣṇava temples built in this period. It is an exit for Viṣṇu during a specific annual festival performed in every Srivaishnava temple, the Festival of Recitation (*Adhyayanotsavam*). Architecturally, the "heaven's gate" is undistinguishable from other *gopuras*, though it is always located on the north side of a temple, whatever the overall orientation. Viṣṇu's heaven, Vaikuṇṭha, is understood to lie to the north. Sometimes it is just a gate and not a *gopura* as such. It is usually located in the first or second *prākāra* wall, which may not be the temple's outermost wall. While many *gopura*s are placed in pairs in opposite walls, a *corkkavācal* is placed only in the north wall and has no southern counterpart. The Raṅganātha temple at Srirangam, for example, faces south, and its *corkkavācal* is in the north wall of the second *prākāra*. The wholly Nayaka period Bhū Varāha temple at Srimushnam faces west, but the *corkkavācal* remains in the north wall of the second *prākāra*.[68] *Corkkavācal*s are used once a year during the month of Mārkali (December–January), when they are opened for ten days from the early morning of Vaikuṇṭha *ēkātaci*, the eleventh day after the full moon. During this time, Viṣṇu leaves the temple via this exit to a particular *maṇḍapa* used for the festival, where the temple's priests recite the entire Śrīvaiṣṇava canon, the *Nālāyiradivyaprabandham* (Divine Collection of 4,000 [Hymns]) in the deity's presence. A small, four-columned *maṇḍapa* may be located directly outside the *corkkavācal* in which images of the *āḻvār*s, the Tamil Vaiṣṇava poet-saints, are placed to greet Viṣṇu upon his first departure from his temple on Vaikuṇṭha *ēkātaci*. The Āṇṭāḷ temple at Srivilliputtur and the Aḻakar temple at Alagarkoyil both have such a *maṇḍapa* (fig. 25). Tamil Vaiṣṇava temples are now divided between those following the northern Vaṭakalai or southern Teṉkalai doctrine of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Many Vaṭakalai temples omit this gateway; for example, the preeminent Vaṭakalai Varadarāja temple at Kanchipuram and the Vaiṣṇava temples of Kumbakonam, all now Vaṭakalai, do not have a *corkkavācal*. In contrast, most

103   THE TAMIL GOPURA

Teṉkalai temples do have such a northern gateway. The emergence of such a ritually determined *gopura* is indicative of the growing architectural and sectarian distinction of Teṉkalai from Vaṭakalai temples of the sixteenth–seventeenth century, a period of increasing Vaiṣṇava sectarianism across India.[69]

Throughout this period, the relationship between *gopura*s—with the largest toward the outside, a principle established in the early eleventh century at Tanjavur—was consistently maintained. The *gopura*s were similarly the most visible and architecturally impressive elements of the temple, towering over the comparatively diminutive *vimāṇa*s, increasingly roofed in at the heart of the temple and not visible from outside. Several of the largest *gopura*s were unfinished, huge stone bases with tall, monolithic jambs reaching up to an absent superstructure. Both of the largest temples in South India, the Raṅganātha and Jambukēśvara on Srirangam Island, as well as those at Narayanavanam, Tirukkurunkudi, and Rameshvaram have monumental, unfinished gateways. In Madurai, the massive foundations of the *rayagopura* marked the proposed expansion of the Mīnākṣī-Sundareśvara temple east in the 1620s and 1630s. If this huge *gopura* had been completed, then its associated enclosure wall might have encompassed an even greater area within the temple precincts, including the concentric streets currently surrounding the structure at the heart of the old city. *Gopura*s within high walls would thus have architecturally defined as sacred space what festival processions of the deities could only periodically claim.

The Global *Gopura*

If the sixteenth century was the moment when the Tamil *gopura* became a widely South Indian architectural form, then the nineteenth century was the age of its global dissemination as South Indian communities migrated overseas. The decline of the Nayakas in the later seventeenth century resulted in the diminution of temple construction in the Tamil region. Still, the rulers of Maratha Tanjavur, Pudukkottai, Ramnad, and Shivagangai, as well as merchant communities in colonial cities like Madras, continued to be the patrons of temples through the eighteenth century and *gopura*s continued to be built.[70]

The transmission of South Indian architectural knowledge, including the distinctive *gopura*, occurred across colonial India, as is evident from the construction of South Indian temples in North India, especially at pilgrimage sites. The largest temple at the preeminent Vaishnava pilgrimage site of Vrindavan, the Raṅganātha (Rangji) temple, was constructed between 1845 and 1851; its *gopura*s in two large rectangular *prākāra*s transformed the North Indian urban landscape (fig. 26). The distinctive South Indian tower-gateway, the expansive walled enclosure of sacred space, and the lavish festival processions distinguish this temple from its North

27

27
Āṭkōṇḍanātar (Śiva) temple, Iraniyur

Indian neighbors. These include both the seventeenth-century red sandstone temples, such as the monumental Govindadeva temple (circa 1590), and their later *haveli*-temple successors built from the eighteenth century in the form of a courtyard house with no prominent tower (*śikhara*) rising above the sanctum. The merchant-patrons of the Rangji temple were lay followers of a Teṉkalai Śrīvaiṣṇava *ācārya* (teacher) in Hyderabad.[71] Members of the same family of Marwari merchants from Shekhavati in northern Rajasthan were the patrons of another Rangji temple in Pushkar, built in the 1840s.[72] Separation from the distant Tamil homeland has resulted in *gopura*s that have soaring superstructures but rest on plainer stone basements with minimal Tamil Drāviḍa moldings or wall treatment; examples can be found at Vrindavan and in other modern *gopura*s and *vimāṇa*s.

In the early years of the twentieth century, British archaeologists were outraged by the number and scale of temple renovations taking place across the Tamil country. Surveys of historic monuments and the colonial authority's efforts to conserve and understand the architectural history of South India—which started in the 1850s and was established on a more professional footing in the 1880s—were seemingly threatened by native Tamil patronage for the renovation and construction of Hindu temples. Singled out as responsible for most of these temple-building projects was the Nattukkottai Chettiar (or Nakarattar) community, a group of merchants and moneylenders who became very wealthy within the colonial economy of British India, Burma, and Malaya.[73] Their successful business activities led not only to local investment in colonial Southeast Asia but also to a flow of wealth back

28

28
Sri Murukan temple, East Ham,
London

to their Tamil homeland, the remote, arid region of Chettinadu in southern Tamil Nadu between Madurai and Tiruchirappali, south of Pudukkottai. The material evidence for this can be seen not only in the large and elaborate mansions each family built in its clan villages in Chettinadu, but also in their extensive collective patronage of major temple renovations across the Tamil country and the construction of substantial new temples in Chettinadu itself, whose scale and number seems to defy the isolation and low population of the region (fig. 27).[74]

In Tamil-speaking Madras Presidency and Ceylon, the later nineteenth century marked a period of regional renaissance and revival for Tamil literature, culture, and religion, stimulated by the scholarly declaration of the ethno-linguistic distinction of the "Dravidian" South. If Chettiar patronage and the Tamil renaissance resulted in the construction and renovation of temples in South India, then the nineteenth century was also when the *gopura* became a feature of the wider British Empire with the migration of many South Indians, especially Tamils, to British overseas territories, including Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaya, Mauritius, South Africa, and the Caribbean. Although some migrants returned to India after a few years, temples provide evidence for the establishment of South Indian communities in new lands, sometimes earlier than other written sources, such as Tamil-language newspapers.[75] The *gopura* was often the most visible declaration of South Indian identity, an affirmation of the cultural connection with the Tamil homeland (*Tamilakam*) and its deep-rooted historic traditions.

A second wave of global migration of South Indians to Europe and North America in the late twentieth century, especially the Tamil diaspora following the outbreak of civil war in Sri Lanka in 1983, has resulted in the further construction of

temples beyond South India (fig. 28).[76] The *gopura* is a clear, distinguishing expression of the South Indian identity of the deities and the worshipping community of the temple, in contrast to the Nāgara temples constructed for North Indian Hindu and Jain communities in the transnational diaspora. Tamil architects, craftsmen, and indeed priests are more mobile than ever, so the requirements for traditional design can be easily effected in the global diaspora.[77] If there are insufficient funds or indeed space for a full-size *gopura*, then simply adding a pyramidal tower over the temple's entrance, divorcing the basement from the superstructure, or even just a *gopura*-façade on an existing building are sufficient indicators of religious and regional identity.

Some in Tamil Nadu now debate which *gopura*, one in Madurai or in Srivilliputtur, was the model for the state emblem or indeed whether it is appropriate to have such an overtly religious, and explicitly Hindu, symbol associated with the secular state. Yet the *gopura* remains a potent symbol of South Indian cultural and religious identity in both India and in the transnational diaspora.

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NOTES

1 S. K. Chelliah, "Stately Gopurams of South India," *Times of India*, August 8, 1948.

2 Ajay Sinha, "Architectural Invention in Sacred Structures: The Case of Vesara Temples of Southern India," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 55, no. 4 (1996), 382–99; Adam Hardy, "Tradition and Transformation: Continuity and Ingenuity in the Temples of Karnataka," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60, no. 2 (2001), 180–99.

3 While the meaning of the Sanskrit *gopura*—Tamil *kōpuram,* anglicized as *gopuram*—as a gateway to a temple or town is established, the word's etymology—literally "cow-city"—is less certain; see James C. Harle, *Temple Gateways in South India: The Architecture and Iconography of the Cidambaram Gopuras* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1963), 1. The Tamil *kō* meaning "lord, king" is often cited as a partial explanation, *kōyil* being the Tamil for temple.

4 Harle, *Temple Gateways*, xxiv, 1–5.

5 A cusped arch motif in relief with mythical aquatic monsters (*makara*) at each side, issuing foliage from their mouths and usually with a grimacing *kīrtimukha* ('face of glory') at the top.

6 Though occasionally sculptures have been removed from *vimāṇa* or *gopura* niches, it is common practice to omit them entirely from *gopura*s. The Chidambaram *gopura*s' extensive iconographic program is thus unusual. See Harle, *Temple Gateways*, and Gerd Mevissen, "Chola architecture and sculpture at Chidambaram" in *Chidambaram: Home of Nataraja*, ed. Vivek Nanda and George Michell (Bombay: Marg, 2004), 82–95.

7 *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy* (*ARIE*), nos. 310–11 of 1965, records the construction of the temple in Ś.1656 (1734/35) during the 1729–35 reign of the Maratha king Tukkoji.

8 These rituals took place at Chidambaram in 1858, Tiruvannamalai in 1870, and Madurai in 1877–78, but earlier occasions have not yet been identified; see Crispin Branfoot, "Temple sculpture in colonial Madurai: The reconsecration of the Minakshi-Sundareshvara temple in the 1870s," in *Art, Icon and Architecture in South Asia: Essays in Honour of Devangana Desai*, ed. Anila Verghese and Anna L. Dallapiccola (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2015), 277–92; and C. J. Fuller, "The Renovation Ritual in a South Indian Temple: The 1995 *Kumbhabhiseka* in the Minaksi Temple, Madurai," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (*SOAS*) 67, no. 1 (2004), 40–63.

9 Harle, *Temple Gateways*, 1–16. Some of the following material was first discussed in Crispin Branfoot, *Gods on the Move: Architecture and Ritual in the South Indian Temple* (London: Society for South Asian Studies, 2007), 53–82.

10 The twin-temples at Kilaiyur are dated circa 880–900; see S. R. Balasubramanyam, *Four Chola Temples* (Bombay: N. M. Tirupathi), 1963 and Blandine Legrand, *Kilaiyur-Melappaluvur: Épanouissement D'une Dynastie Princière En Inde, À L'époque Cola* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1987). The brick superstructure above the ninth-century stone base at Kilaiyur may be a later addition.

The stone temple at Laddigam is variously dated to circa 1000, following the earliest inscription on the *maṇḍapa* dated Rajaraja year 9 (circa 994; see *ARIE*, no. 551 of 1906), or to Kulottunga year 16 (circa 1086; see *ARIE*, no. 553 of 1906) given the earliest dated inscription on the *vimāṇa* itself. The style of the building's design suggests an earlier tenth-century date for both the *vimāṇa* and the adjoining *maṇḍapa*. There are no dated inscriptions on the wholly stone *gopura* itself, which, even if dated to the late eleventh century, preserves an earlier *gopura* design.

11 Six inscriptions on the inner *gopura* are dated to Rajaraja's twenty-ninth year (circa 1014): *South Indian Inscriptions* 2, inscription nos. 24–28, and 90, on pp. 121–33, 413–14. For a summary, see George Michell and Indira Viswanathan Peterson, *The Great Temple at Thanjavur: One Thousand Years, 1010–2010* (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2010), 176. Though inscriptions on the outer *gopura* do not establish a date, there is little formal evidence to suggest the two gateways are not coeval.

12 Though none of these openings have *śāla*s above, they do project beyond the wall: for illustrations, see Pierre Pichard, *Tanjavur Brhadisvara: An Architectural Study* (New Delhi and Pondicherry: IGNCA & EFEO, 1995), 215.

13 Harle, *Temple Gateways*, 46–69.

14 A greater degree of rebuilding in southern Tamil Nadu between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries may be responsible for the comparative paucity of ninth- to twelfth-century temples in Pandya Nadu as opposed to Chola Nadu; see Crispin Branfoot, "Remaking the Past: Tamil Sacred Landscape and Temple Renovations," *Bulletin of SOAS* 76, no. 1 (2013), 21–47.

15 On Jain art in Tamil Nadu, see A. Ghosh, ed., *Jaina Art and Architecture*, 3 vols. (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1974), and R. Champakalakshmi, "Jainism in Tamil Nadu: A Historical Overview," in *Religion, Tradition, Ideology: Pre-Colonial South India*, ed. R. Champakalakshmi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 356–410.

16 Though there was probably a temple on this site in the sixth century, judging by its mention in a Pallava copper-plate inscription, the current temple dates much later. See T. N. Ramachandran, *Tiruparuttikunram and Its Temples* (Madras: Government Press, 1934) and K. V. Soundara Rajan in *Jaina Art and Architecture*, vol. 2, 324. An undated inscription in *grantha* script records the construction of the *gopura*: see *ARIE*, 1923, no. 98.

17 *ARIE*, 1941, no. 155. Further west at Vijayamangalam, twenty miles west of Erode, the tenth-century Candraprabhā *basti* was enclosed within a *prākāra* entered through a single *gopura* built in the fifteenth to sixteenth century. Cf. I. K. Sarma, *Temples of the Gangas of Karnataka* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1992), 171–74.

18 Anne E. Monius, *Imagining a Place for Buddhism: Literary Culture and Religious Community in Tamil-Speaking South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Vidya Dehejia, "The Persistence of Buddhism in Tamilnadu," in *A Pot-Pourri of Indian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Marg, 1988), 53–74; K. Sivaramalingam, ed., *Archaeological Atlas of the Antique Remains of Buddhism in Tamilnadu* (Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 1997); Peter Schalk and A. Velupillai, eds., *Buddhism among Tamils in Pre-Colonial Tamilakam and Ilam*, vols. 1–2 (Stockholm: Uppsala University), 2002.

19 T. A. Gopinatha Rao, "Bauddha Vestiges in Kanchipuram," *The Indian Antiquary* 44 (1915), 127–29. R. Nagaswamy is skeptical of this claim, however; Schalk and Velupillai, *Buddhism among Tamils*, 128. K. Sivaramalingam (*Archaeological Atlas*, 63) goes further in considering that many of Kanchipuram's temples were originally Buddhist or at least were built on the site of former *vihāra*s.

20 T. N. Ramachandran, *The Nagapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum*, (Madras: Director of Museums, 1954).

21 The Islamic architecture of Tamil Nadu, including that of the fourteenth-century Sultanate of Ma'bar, also adopted some aspects of the Tamil Drāviḍa language of architecture, especially the massed stone columns with bevel-edged bracket-capitals and later, from the fifteenth century, the "flower" bracket-capital (*puṣpapotikā*). Some Islamic structures included Drāviḍa moldings and wall articulation too. The late seventeenth- to early eighteenth-century Jāmī *masjid* at Kilakkarai near Ramnad is a good example; J. Raja Mohamad, *Islamic Architecture in Tamil Nadu* (Chennai: Government Museum, 2004), 46–48. Cf. Mehrdad Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India: The Sultanate of Ma'bar and the Traditions of the Maritime Settlers on the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts (Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa)* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

22 S. Paranavitana, "Lankatilaka Inscriptions," *University of Ceylon Review* 18 (1960), 1–45, and S. Paranivatana, "Gaḍalādeṇiya rock-inscription of Dharmakīrtti Sthavira," in *Epigraphia Zeylanica* 4, *1934–41*, (1943), 90–110.

23 P. L. Prematilleke, *Nalanda: a short guide to the "Gedige" shrine* (Colombo: Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1985), and H. C. P. Bell, *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon,*

Annual Report, 1910–11, vol. 10 (Colombo, Ceylon: H. C. Cotlie, Government Printer, 1914), 42–50.

24 H. C. P. Bell, *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report for 1906*, 17–22, and *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report for 1908*, 2–11; Sujatha Arundathi Meegama, "South Indian or Sri Lankan? The Hindu Temples of Polonnaruva, Sri Lanka," *Artibus Asiae* 70, no. 1 (2010), 24–45.

25 Samuel K. Parker, "Text and Practice in South Asian Art: An Ethnographic Perspective," *Artibus Asiae* 63, no. 1 (2003), 5–34.

26 S. Paranavitana, "The Arya Kingdom in North Ceylon," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon)*, n.s., 7, no. 2 (1961), 174–224; S. Pathmanathan, *The Jaffna Kingdom* (Colombo: Arul M. Rajendran, 1978).

27 Chennai's Kapalīśvara temple in Mylapore may also have been destroyed in the sixteenth century by the Portuguese, who had a more demonstrably destructive impact on South Indian temple architecture than the fourteenth-century Madura sultanate.

28 S. Pathmanathan, *Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Thirukketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society & Kumaran Book House, 2006), 125. Many Sri Lankan Hindu temples were rebuilt in the late nineteenth century, a consequence of the Tamil renaissance and Śaiva revival across the Tamil-speaking region, further obscuring any remaining evidence of earlier Portuguese iconoclasm.

29 Temple architecture in fifteenth-century Tamil Nadu is surveyed in Crispin Branfoot, *Gods on the Move: Architecture and Ritual in the South Indian Temple* (London: Society for South Asian Studies, 2007), 16–22.

30 Among the many recent publications on the history of temple architecture at Vijayanagara are George Michell and Phillip B. Wagoner, *Vijayanagara: Architectural Inventory of the Sacred Centre*, 3 vols. (New Delhi: Manohar & American Institute of Indian Studies, 2001), and Anila Verghese, *Archaeology, Art and Religion: New Perspectives on Vijayanagara* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 58–93.

31 George Michell, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*, vol. 4, *South India, Drāviḍadesa, Later Phase, ca. AD 1289–1798* (New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 2001), 64; T. M. Manjunathaiah, "Saumya Somesvara Temple, Nimbapura," in *Vijayanagara: Progress of Research 1987–88*, ed. D. V. Devaraj and Channabasappa S. Patil (Mysore: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, 1991), 165–67.

32 Such marks, largely unknown in Tamil Nadu, suggest that the temple may have been created elsewhere and moved, the labels guiding its reconstruction. Wagoner's discussion of the Kannada labels on a large stepped tank in Vijayanagara's "royal center," which had been removed from an earlier site west of the capital, demonstrates that such labeling and architectural transport was possible before the colonial period, when people began to collect antiquities, including whole structures; Phillip B. Wagoner, "Reviving the Chalukya Past in the 16th Century Deccan: Archaeological and Literary Perspectives," *South Asian Studies* 23 (2007), 1–29.

33 Michell, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*, 81–135; Verghese, *Archaeology, Art and Religion*, 58–93. There is an absence of epigraphic evidence for the Paṭṭābhirāma, and Raṅganātha temples, so their construction dates cannot be so accurately determined.

34 Burton Stein, *The New Cambridge History of India*, vol. 1, pt. 2, *Vijayanagara* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 110.

35 Belur's *gopura* may have been constructed as early as the fourteenth century, although the current structure probably dates to at least the late fifteenth century. Crispin Branfoot, "Regional Pasts, Imperial Present: Architecture and Memory in Vijayanagara-Period Karnataka," in *The Temple in South Asia*, ed. Adam Hardy (London: British Academy & Society for South Asian Studies, 2007), 105–25.

36 Crispin Branfoot and Anna L. Dallapiccola, "Temple Architecture in Bhatkal and the Ramayana Tradition in Sixteenth Century Coastal Karnataka," *Artibus Asiae* 65, no. 2 (2005), 253–308, and John Henry Rice, "Hindu Temples," in *Kanara: A Land Apart*, ed. George Michell (Mumbai: Marg, 2012), 44–57.

37 *ARIE*, no. 92 of 1912.

38 Lepakshi has been dated to the 1530s based upon several grants made in honor of Achyutadeva by Virapanna, the governor of Penukonda: see *ARIE*, nos. 88–90, 569–80 of 1912.

39 *Archaeological Report of the Mysore Archaeology Department for the year 1937* (Bangalore: Government Press, 1939), 19–27.

40 The circa ninth-century Sōmēśvara temple at Gangavara, northeast of Bangalore, includes a wholly stone proto-*gopura* similar to that at Laddigam around fifty miles to the east (see above). I. K. Sarma, *Temples of the Gangas of Karnataka* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1992), 58–63.

41 In *ARIE*, nos. 411–12 of 1911, they are dated Ś.1480 and Ś.1477.

42 V. Jayaprada, *Vijayanagara Temples at Tadapatri* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, 1998), 7, notes that the earliest inscription is dated 1507; one dated 1509 mentions the grant of villages after the

construction of a *bhogamaṇḍapa*, *gopura*, and *prākāra*.

43   *ARIE*, nos. 619–29 of 1904.

44   A clear foundation date of Ś.1463 (1531/32), in the reign of Achyutadeva, for Narayanavanam is given in a Tamil inscription that wraps around the central shrine (*ARIE*, no. 373 of 1911), although the presence of a slab in the *maṇḍapa* floor dating to the reign of the Chola Raja-raja (reigned 985–1012) suggests there was an earlier temple on the site that was replaced in the sixteenth century. The single recorded inscription at Manga-puram refers to the installation of images of the *ālvār*s and *ācārya*s by 1537/38 but gives no indication of the temple's founding (*ARIE*, no. 247 of 1904).

45   *ARIE*, nos. 255 of 1930, 245 of 1933, 111 of 1939.

46   Phillip B. Wagoner, "Kannada Kalla Upparige (Stone Palace): Multistoried Entrance Pavilions in Pre- and Early Vijayanagara Architecture," *Ars Orientalis* 31 (2001), 167–83.

47   Wagoner, "Kannada Kalla Upparige," figs. 12c, 12d.

48   Wagoner, "Kannada Kalla Upparige," 181–82.

49   Inscriptions record grants to the temple between 1531 and 1592; see *ARIE*, nos. 197–98 and 200–202 of 1937–38.

50   D. Kiran Kranth Choudary, *Srikalahastis-vara Temple: A Study Based on Epigraphs and Sculptures*. New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 2008.

51   This *gopura*, one of the finest monuments of Krishnadeva's reign, collapsed on May 26, 2010; when last visited by the author in January 2011, the site had been cleared and nothing remained.

52   At Nagalapuram, a modest eleventh-century shrine was enclosed within three concentric *prākāra*s, more than the typical one or two of other Tuluva period temples, and entered through a series of three *gopura*s in the west and two further aligned *gopura*s in the north and south walls of the outermost wall. The stone basement of the outermost *gopura* on the west side is among the largest built in the early sixteenth century, measuring approximately thirty by twenty meters, and is to be compared with the similarly dated inner south example of the Ekambarēśvara temple at Kanchipuram, the detached *gopura* at Srikalahasti, and further afield in southern Karnataka, the detached *gopura* at Melukote. See *ARIE*, nos. 619–29 of 1904.

53   One exception is the fourth *gopura* on the main south axis of the Raṅganātha temple at Srirangam, which has niche sculptures identified as Gaṅgā and Yamunā on either side of the entrance.

54   George Michell, "Revivalism as the Imperial Mode: Religious Architecture during the Vijayanagara Period," in *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past*, ed. Catherine B Asher and Thomas Metcalf (New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., 1994), 187–97.

55   Leslie C. Orr, "Cholas, Pandyas, and 'Imperial Temple Culture' in Medieval Tamilnadu," in *The Temple in South Asia*, ed. Adam Hardy (London: British Association for South Asian Studies [BASAS], 2007), 83–104.

56   The boar or Varaha *avatāra* as a royal symbol was used by a number of dynasties in the Deccan and South India from the seventh century, but not in combination with the sword, which was new in the Vijayanagara context. The sun and moon are included with inscriptions to indicate their perpetuity. R. N. Saletore, *Vijayanagara Art* (Delhi: Sundeep, 1982), 183–84.

57   T. A. Gopinatha Rao, "Some Inscriptions of the later Pandyas or the Decline of the Pandya Power," *Travancore Archaeological Series* 1, no. 6 (Madras: Methodist Publishing House, 1910–12); Crispin Branfoot, "Dynastic Genealogies, Portraiture and the Place of the Past in Early Modern South India," *Artibus Asiae* 72, no. 2 (2012), 323–76. For later Pandyan temple architecture dating to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Crispin Branfoot, *Gods on the Move*, 19–22.

58   For the Vijayanagara period transforma-tion of Tirupati, see Burton Stein, "The Economic Function of a Mediaeval South Indian Temple," *Journal of Asian Studies* 19 (1960), 163–76, and T. K. T. Vir-araghavacharya, *A History of Tirupati*, vols. 1–3, 2nd ed. (Tirupati: Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam Religious Publications, 1977). The architectural history of the temple is summarized in Branfoot, *Gods on the Move*, 16–18.

59   Virupākṣa as the state deity at the heart of the capital never seems to have acquired a substantial following across the wider empire, as might be expected. A Virupākṣa temple was built at Kolar in the southeast Deccan in the 1440s; only four recorded early Sangama period inscrip-tions from three sites in northern Tamil Nadu suggest the limited dissemination of the deity's cult to part of the Tamil country. See *ARIE*, nos. 50, 96–97 of 1940–41, and *South Indian Inscriptions* 1, no. 55.

60   On Srivaishnavism at the capital, see Anila Verghese, *Religious Traditions at Vijayanagara as Revealed through Its Monuments* (New Delhi: Manohar and American Institute of Indian Studies, 1995), 69–84; Ajay K. Rao, "A New Perspective on the Royal Rama Cult at Vijayanagara," in *South Asian Texts in History: Critical Engagements with Sheldon Pollock*, ed. Yigael Bronner, Whitney Cox, and Lawrence McRea (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2011), 25–44, and *Re-Figuring the*

Ramayana as Theology: A History of Reception in Premodern India (Abingdon, UK, and New York: Routledge, 2015).

61 George Michell, *The Vijayanagara Courtly Style: Incorporation and Synthesis in the Royal Architecture of Southern India, Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992).

62 The transformation in scholarly understanding of the Deccan from the Vijayanagara and sultanate perspectives is evident in the numerous publications, conferences, and PhD dissertations on this region in the past decade, and the major exhibition *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500–1700: Opulence and Fantasy* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (April 20–July 26, 2015).

63 Anila Verghese, "Aghoresvara Temple at Ikkeri: A Synthesis of Architectural Styles," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* 81 (2008), 124–32.

64 Michell, *Encyclopaedia*, 171–84.

65 *ARIE*, no. 560 of 1926.

66 For the historical development of these temples and their plans, see Branfoot, *Gods on the Move*.

67 The Mīnākṣī-Sundareśvara in Madurai is an exception to this pattern, i.e., the presence of *gopura*s on four sides from the second, rather than the usual third, concentric *prākāra* wall counting outwards.

68 For a plan and discussion of the temple at Srimushnam, see Crispin Branfoot, "Dynastic Genealogies, Portraiture and the Place of the Past in Early Modern South India," *Artibus Asiae* 72, no. 2 (2012), 323–76.

69 Pika Ghosh's examination of Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava temples in contemporary Bengal—with a ritually determined design around two axes plus an accommodation of increasingly congregational worship—is a good parallel with the South Indian context; Pika Ghosh, *Temple to Love: Architecture and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Bengal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

70 Examples from this period include Kalaiyarkoil, east of Madurai, and the many temples in Madras discussed in Joanna Waghorne, "The Diaspora of the Gods: Hindu Temples in the New World System 1640–1800," *Journal of Asian Studies* 58 (1999), 648–86.

71 F. S. Growse, *Mathura: A District Memoir* (1882), 217–18, and Mark Thornhill, *The personal adventures and experiences of a magistrate during the rise, progress, and suppression of the Indian Mutiny* (London: John Murray, 1884), 97–98.

72 These two temples alone emphasize the need for serious scholarly study of nineteenth-century temple architecture across India. Cf. Ambujam Ananatharaman, *Temples of Western India* (Delhi: Westland, 2011), 167; H. Bhisham Pal, *The Temples of Rajasthan* (Jaipur: Prakash Publishers, 1969), 30; Alka Patel, "Mercantile Architectural Patronage in Hyderabad, 18th–19th Centuries," in *Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition*, ed. Alka Patel and Karen Leonard (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 139–64.

73 Crispin Branfoot, "Remaking the Past: Tamil Sacred Landscape and Temple Renovations," *Bulletin of SOAS* 76, no. 1 (2013), 21–47, and David W. Rudner, *Caste and Capitalism in Colonial India: The Nattukottai Chettiars* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1994).

74 Crispin Branfoot, "Temple renovation and Chettiar patronage in colonial Madras Presidency," in *The Contemporary Hindu Temple: Fragments for a History*, ed. Annapurna Garimella, Shriya Sridharan, and A. Srivathsan (Mumbai: Marg Publications, forthcoming 2016).

75 Cf. Sunil Amrith, "Tamil Diasporas across the Bay of Bengal," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 3 (2009), 547–72, and *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Fred W. Clothey, *Ritualizing on the Boundaries: Continuity and Innovation in the Tamil Diaspora* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006). For Hindu temples in South Africa, see Paul Mikula, Brian Kearney, and Rodney Harber, *Traditional Hindu Temples in South Africa* (Durban: Hindu Temple Publications, 1982); only one of the Drāviḍa temples described has a *gopura*, the early twentieth-century Mariamman temple in Pretoria (pp. 106–7).

76 Contemporary temples (especially in North America) have been studied by a growing number of scholars, but few architectural historians.

77 Ganapathi Sthapati (1927–2011) and his successors have played a leading role in transmitting Tamil temple architecture abroad. For a list of their international projects, see www.vastuved.com/vastu-overseas.htm, accessed June 13, 2014. A comparable role has been occupied by the Sompuras of western India, constructing Nāgara temples for Jain and Swaminarayan communities in their transnational diasporas.