

PRASADA - Research

Art and Empire under Vijayanagara and the Successor States

(Crispin Branfoot, Anna Dallapiccola and Anila Verghese)



This collaborative research project seeks to build on the foundations laid by two decades of research and publication concentrated at the capital city of Vijayanagara, to examine the art and visual culture of

South India throughout the Vijayanagara empire and its Nayaka successor states from the mid-14th to the early 18th century. The intellectual focus is not on the capital itself but the regions of the empire and their relationship with the imperial centre. A key theme is the dissemination of Vijayanagara culture throughout the South, and its interaction with regional cultures including the western coastal strip of Kanara, the Deccan plateau and the Tamil country. A joint book is planned by the three authors, together with an international conference in 2007 reflecting on nearly three decades of research at Vijayanagara, the city and its empire.

Publications:

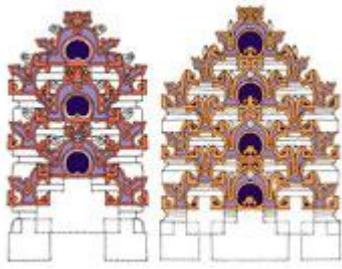
- Anna L. Dallapiccola, *Hindu Visions of the Sacred* (London: British Museum Press 2004)
- Anna L. Dallapiccola, *Hindu Myths* (London: British Museum Press, 2003)
- Anna L. Dallapiccola and C.T.M. Kotraiah, *King, Court and Capital. An Anthology of Kannada Literary Sources from the Vijayanagara Period* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003).
- Anna L. Dallapiccola, *Dictionary of Hindu Lore and Legend* (London: Thames and Hudson 2002)
- Anna L. Dallapiccola and Anila Verghese, "Narrative Reliefs of Bhima and Purushamriga at Vijayanagara " in *South Asian Studies* 18 (2002), 73-76.
- Anna L. Dallapiccola and Anila Verghese, *Sculpture at Vijayanagara: Iconography and Style* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998).

The Commercialisation of Hand-embroidery in Western India

Eiluned Edwards

The Temple Architecture of India

Adam Hardy



The Temple Architecture of India is a book by Adam Hardy to be published by Wiley Academy in 2007 (ISBN: 0 470028270). The study is the result of nearly 25 years of research in this field.

The temples of India (Buddhist, Hindu and Jain) are unparalleled in their combination of direct sensuous appeal and complex formal structure. Starting from basics and setting the architecture in its historical, cultural and religious context, the book will explain the principles and processes underlying the designs of these monuments. It will trace the origins and formation of the two classical 'languages' of Indian temple architecture, the northern Nagara and southern Dravida, and their incredibly varied development during the great age of temple building between the sixth and thirteenth centuries. The book will survey the continuing vitality of these systems up to the present, and explores the lessons that can be learned from them by architects and artists today.

By giving a coherent explanation of how to look at the architecture, as a whole and in detail, the book aims to convey an understanding of the design conception of the temples and of their development. The starting point of the analysis is the realisation that the principal elements of temple designs are themselves images of temples. Once this is recognised, the complex architectural compositions of the temples become clear. It will be shown how, through the expression of movement, this architecture is perhaps closer to dance than to any other art form, and close connections will be revealed between patterns of architectural composition and recurrent perceptions of the cosmos and the divine in Indian religion and philosophy.

Culturally Sensitive Healthcare Environments

A team led by Professor Mark Johnson (De Montfort University) was commissioned by NHS Estates in 2004 to examine the need for culturally sensitive environments in healthcare. Adam Hardy researched (a) healthcare arts in relation to diversity and (b) provision of multifaith prayer rooms. The following are provisional conclusions:

Healthcare arts and diversity

- Art works chosen for their qualities as objects, and works for which the process of creation is an end in itself, both have their role in healthcare arts reflecting cultural diversity.
- Culturally diverse art can be enrichment for everybody, as well as something meaningful for particular groups.
- The NHS can promote new forms of multicultural art through the development or frameworks for collaboration.

- The display of works by ethnically diverse artists is desirable, though not *per se* expressing cultural diversity.
- A culture is not something uniform and changeless, and a whole range of kinds of art is potentially available from any given 'culture'.
- Carefully chosen hand made art works from developing countries are better than reproductions and often no more expensive.
- The need for stress-relieving art work in a healthcare setting should not lead to 'realistic' nature pictures alone: the use of pattern, including abstract pattern, can also be calming.
- Future research could use art as a research tool.

Multifaith prayer rooms

- Careful consideration, after consultation, should lead to a choice of one of three possible approaches: a neutral space, a space for each religion, a space expressing various faiths through a synthesis.
- Design of a multifaith space can be by an architect/designer/artist, by a faith community itself, or as a collaboration with architect/designer/artist as coordinator.
- A space for prayer, meditation and contemplation should evoke a different world from the healthcare building where it is set.
- The qualities of light and sound should be different from standard hospital qualities in such a setting.
- Characteristics common to many traditions of sacred architecture can be drawn upon: centrality/ multicentricity, significant transitions, levels and layers.
- The realms of healthcare arts and multifaith provision could fruitfully be brought together.

Publication:

Creating Culturally Sensitive Healthcare Environments, with Mark R.D. Johnson et al., report to the NHS Executive (Leeds: NHS Estates, forthcoming 2006).

Indian Classical Dance and Temple Architecture

Adam Hardy, Alessandra Lopez y Royo

This AHRB-funded project had three aims:

- to explore the relationship between dance and architecture, two disciplines which deal with space in ways which are analogical and complementary, taking the Hindu temple and Indian classical dance as a starting point for the comparison;
- to integrate theoretical questions with practice based research, providing a basis for charting an alternative, interactive account of historic Hindu architecture, moving away from assumptions of space as contained and bound;

- to make this exploration of relevance to contemporary architectural work which serves and satisfies the socio-cultural needs of a South Asian diasporic community in its search for different, identity-defining spatialities.

The exploration took place in combined dance and architectural workshops, and seminar discussions, culminating in an exhibition (De Montfort University, March 2003) comprising drawings, clay models, a computer animation accompanied by a music score composed by mridangist Balachander, videorecordings of dance workshops led by Vena Ramphal in collaboration with Dr Lopez and Jhilmil Kishore, and videorecordings of seminar sessions.



The research team began by considering composition. The compositional elements of Hindu architecture are in the form of shrine-images or aedicules, conceived three dimensionally and as if embedded in the body of the temple. An analogy was drawn between the aedicule and the *karana*, described in the *Natyasastra* (a Sanskrit canonical text on dance music and drama) as a unit of dance movement. In either art form the basic components are grouped into larger wholes within the overall composition. In dance the larger groupings of **karanas** are the **angaharas**, movement sequences composed of three or more *karanas*. If the temple is thought of as an entire dance, then the architectural equivalents of *angaharas* are the architectural sub-groupings of elements within the composition. Clusterings of this kind can be seen in the composite temple forms, above the scale of the individual aedicules, created within the overall matrix.

It is in the patterns of movement expressed by Hindu temple architecture that the connection with the human body can most palpably be experienced. Discussion of movement in architecture seems usually to be about people moving through buildings - performing rituals, or simply experiencing. Links between dance and architecture tend to be seen from this perspective, focusing on buildings as the spatial setting for dance, and on dance movements in relation to this setting. Discussion of architectural rhythm tends to relate to the movement of the eye and mind over or through the architecture: more analogous to music than dance, though approaching dance when the actual or imagined bodily experience of such rhythm is considered. There is ample scope to explore Hindu temple architecture in these ways, given the long tradition of dance in ritual contexts; not to mention the sculptural depiction of dancers on temple walls, that has already given rise to a body of scholarship. However, the ways in which architecture can actually represent movement have never been explored in relation to dance.

One obvious parallel is the concept, in both art forms, of movement as originating at a single point, and relating to a vertical axis. In the tradition of dance the point of origin is the navel conceived as the mid-point of a circular *mandala*, positioned frontally and vertically, divided into four quarters by vertical and horizontal axes passing through the navel. The navel area also corresponds to a *cakra*, which emphasises its potency. In a Hindu temple the underlying axiality is strikingly similar to this, but at the same time quite different. Here the *mandala* is both horizontal, aligned with the four cardinal directions, and three-dimensional, with a central,

vertical axis rising to the point at the summit. Movement is expressed as progressing downwards from this point, and outwards from the vertical axis, all the way down its length, predominantly towards the cardinal points.

It is in these directions that the aedicular components are made to appear to proliferate, to emerge and expand out from the body of the shrine, and out from one another, as interpenetrating elements differentiate themselves and come apart. As the forms are conceived as three-dimensional and embedded, the rhythm is an accelerating pulse from within, not simply a ripple across the surface. This pattern of growth (and simultaneous dissolution) is conveyed through clearly identifiable and mutually reinforcing architectural means: projection, staggering (multiple projection), splitting, bursting of boundaries, progressive multiplication and expanding repetition. The dynamism is conceptual, but also often illusionistic, almost cinematic. Just as the idea of the aedicule, the little god-house, is very concrete, human and graspable, so the dynamic structure of the relationships between the aedicules is, once seen, eminently human and best explained through bodily gestures.

In a literal sense the architectural elements of a temple composition are arranged statically in space, their positions and interrelationships fixed in stone. Thus at first sight a temple design seems the opposite of dance, where poses are momentary instances in a continuum, linked in the memory through a sequence of movements. The overall structure of the dance, conceived in terms of the body, can be held only in the mind. But temple architecture, conceptually, also has a temporal structure, of which a given spatial arrangement is a momentary glimpse, or rather a succession of such glimpses. A series of elements, or of configurations of elements, is sensed not as a chain of separate entities, but as the same thing seen several times, at different stages, evolving and proliferating.

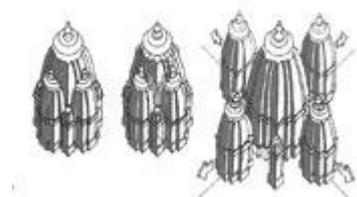
Publication:

Alessandra Lopez Y Royo, 'Embodying a Site: Choreographing Parambanan ', in *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 10(1): 31-48, 2005, pp. 31-48.

See websites www.dancetemple.org.uk and traumwerk.stanford.edu:3455/43/29

Shekhari Temples

Adam Hardy



Indian temples have often been studied in terms of the 'style' that they have exhibited in a particular region during a particular period. Their architecture can be more clearly understood in terms of the 'architectural languages', Nagara and Dravida, which provide a repertory of forms, and of the types or modes which are characteristic ways of putting the forms together.

The Nagara or north Indian architectural language is the basis of four modes: Latina, Vallabhi, Shekhari and Bhumija. The Shekhari (or Anekandaka) mode is the composite 'multi- spired ' type that emerged from the unitary Latina around the turn of the first Millennium, and became the predominant kind of temple throughout central and western India. Adam Hardy's earlier studies have argued that both Nagara and Dravida temple compositions were conceived, and are most readily conceivable, as clusters of embedded aedicules or shrine-images. The increasingly complex designs of Shekhari temples are explicable in this way.

This study examined the whole tradition of Shekhari temple building, from its formation to its most complex manifestations some 800 years later, analysing both the compositional patterns of individual temples and the way in which these evolve. Part of the project, involving field work in Gujarat, was funded by the Society for South Asian Studies.

Publication:

Adam Hardy, 'Sekhari Temples', in *Artibus Asiae* 62, No. 1 (2002), pp. 81-137.

Vernacular Architecture of Orissa

Adam Hardy

The PRASADA Orissa project was set up to document the settlement pattern, architectural forms, construction methods and building processes of a number of distinct types of village in Orissa, and has been funded by the INTACH (UK) Trust and the Society for South Asian Studies. Two villages in the coastal plains of Orissa were studied in 1997. Birabalabhadrapur, founded in the 1650s by Raja Balabhadra Deva, is one of the ' Sasana ' villages, Brahmin settlements established by the rulers of Puri to serve the cult of Jagannatha. A planned village, Birabalabhadrapur consists of a straight street of terraced courtyard-houses, running east-west between two temples. Erbang, inland from Konarak, is a widely dispersed village, made up of several small settlements separated by paddy fields. Each of these in turn may comprise two or more subdivisions or sahis (' endships '). These correspond to caste groups, and accordingly manifest a variety of living patterns in their house forms.

Publication:

Adam Hardy, 'Birabalabhadrapur: a Brahmin Village in Orissa', in *South Asian Studies* 15 (1999), pp. 67-84.

The Material Culture of Muslim Trading Communities in Western India

Elizabeth Lambourn

This project focuses on the complex world of Muslim trade diasporas in western India during the pre-modern period and more particularly on the contribution of the study of material culture to an understanding of their encounters with South Asia.

The project has been supported by a Society for South Asian Studies Postdoctoral Research Fellowship and by the Fondation Max van Berchem in Geneva. The resulting research has been published in a number of articles and will shortly culminate in a book on *Trade and Patronage in the Indian Ocean: the material culture of the Muslim trade networks of western India*.

CONFERENCE

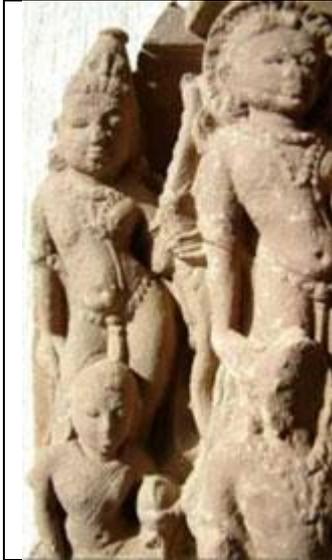
Traditional Arts of South Asia: Past Practice, Living Traditions

This conference aimed to assess the role of the traditional arts of South Asia in both the understanding of the past and in current practice, issues central to the activities of the university's research centre, PRASADA, Centre for the Arts of South Asia. The conference explored three key themes: Firstly, how can a historical and theoretical understanding of traditional South Asian arts inform contemporary artistic and architectural projects, both within and beyond South Asia? Secondly, how can an understanding of contemporary practices and design issues inform the study of art and material culture in the past? Finally, how have changing conceptions of art and craft influenced the study, understanding and practice of South Asian traditional arts?



Abigail McGowan (University of Pennsylvania) and Robin Jones (Southampton Institute) both addressed the colonial foundations for our knowledge and interpretation of South Asian traditional arts, in their papers *Indian Crafts in Colonial Display and Policy 1880-1920* and *British interventions in the traditional crafts of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) c.1850-1930*.

Jyotindra Jain (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) and Sharada Srinivasan (National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore) explored the impact of colonialism and modernity on the production and reception of Hindu images. In *The Hindu icon: Between the cultic and the exhibitory space*, Jain examined the mass-produced Hindu imagery of the late 19th and 20th centuries and the rise of new exhibitory contexts. In her paper, *From temple to mantelpiece: changing paradigms in the art and craft of south Indian metal icons*, Srinivasan explored the ways in which current practices help inform our understanding of past images and their production.



Southern India remained the focus of both Anna Dallapiccola (PRASADA) and Samuel K. Parker (University of Washington, Tacoma). In her paper, A contemporary pantheon: popular religious imagery in south India, Dallapiccola discussed the traditional temple arts of late 20th century Tamilnadu. She demonstrated how modern imagery and aesthetics are influencing brick and plaster sculptures and temple murals, adding a wealth of new elements to age-revered forms. In Shapes of time and identity: a 'royal' temple in contemporary south India, Parker examined the construction during the past century of a granite Hindu temple by the leaders of the Nadar community in Aruppukottai, of the sort popularly associated in Tamilnadu with claims of royal sovereignty.

Eiluned Edwards (PRASADA) and Ismail Mohammad Khatri (Dhamadka village, Kachchh) discussed the textiles of Kachchh in Gujarat. Ismail's account of block-printing came from his own perspective as a practising craftsman. Edwards' paper, Cloth and community: local consumption and trade of resist-dyed and block-printed textiles in Kachchh, Gujarat, discussed the resist-dyed and block-printed textiles produced by the Khatri for the many castes of the region. She examined the changes in the essentially local markets for these textiles and the emergence of new markets for the Khatri ' textiles, as a result of post-Independence industrialisation, changes in traditional caste occupations and patterns of consumption, and advances in textile technology.

Traditional architecture was the theme of the three papers by the architects Adam Hardy (PRASADA), Kamil Khan Mumtaz (Anjuman-I-Mimaran, Lahore) and Nimish Patel (Abhikram, Ahmedabad). Hardy's paper, Approaching Design through History and History through Design, used examples from Indian temple architecture to demonstrate that finding an appropriate way of seeing architecture can lead to an understanding of the process of its creation. Such a 'design approach' to architectural history is the basis for understanding the transformations of architectural traditions, and, it was argued, if they can be deduced, then they can be learned and used. Such an approach was expressed in the remaining two papers. Mumtaz ' background as a Western-trained architect, practising in Pakistan and with a keen interest in traditional architecture informed his discussion of two current projects for a mosque and a tomb in Pakistan. Patel similarly discussed the characteristics of traditional architecture and the creative process, and how this understanding can be used in contemporary architectural practice and conservation, illustrated by work on a number of projects in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

CONFERENCE

The South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein

International Conference, 6-7 March 2004

Organised by PRASADA in collaboration with Circle of Inner Asian Art, University of London



Sir Aurel Stein lived for most of his life in India and his achievements in the field of South Asian textual and material studies opened up new ways of research that are as important today as in his day. However, Stein's international fame today is based on his explorations in Central Asia and studies on him (including his two biographies) deal relatively little with his work in the regions of India and Pakistan. For the first time this conference explores Stein's contact with South Asia on a personal level and present aspects of South Asian research to which Stein has made a contribution. In several cases he started excavations of sites which are still being researched or excavated today. The conference presents Stein's other interests, his contact with South Asia as well as with his native country, Hungary.