

A Study on the Influence of Nāgara style on Temples of Paṭṭaḍakal, Karnataka

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Abstract: Pattadakal, is a small village in Bagalkot district, Karnataka located near the northern bank of Mālāprbhā River a tributary of Krishna River. Human activities began in Pattadakal from the Prehistoric period onwards. It became the unique center of temple models in the seventh CE, during the period of early Chalukya. Pattadakal is also called Pattadakallu or Raktapura means Red City. It is one of the world heritage sites recognized by UNESCO in December 1987. According to UNESCO Pattadakal is “a harmonious blend of architectural forms from northern and southern India”, especially Nagara and Dravida styles of temple construction and it's also called “the laboratory of Indian temples”. Monuments at Pattadakal are evidence of the cultural interaction between early northern and southern India.

This study focuses mainly on the Nagara-style temples of Pattadakal and the main objective of the study is to document all the Nagara-style temples found on the site of Pattadakal. This research paper gives a detailed idea about the importance of the site and analyzes the Nagara-style temple architecture found in the temples of Pattadakal.

Keywords: Architecture, Chalukyas, Dravida, Nagara style, Pattadakal, Temple, etc...

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INTRODUCTION

Pattadakal or Pattadakallu (Map: I) is situated on the northern bank of Malaprabha River (a major tributary of Krishna River) in the Bagalkot district of Karnataka. It's a well-known Archaeological site and is also registered on the world heritage list UNESCO. The temples of Pattadakal include eight temples that represent both the Dravida styles of south India and the Rekha-Nagara styles of north Indian temple architecture. Pattadakal, Badami, and Aihole, as well as several other sites, are famous for their marvelously constructed temples. The temples of Pattadakal were constructed during the period of early Chalukyas of Badami (Vattapi). They were the prominent south Indian dynasty that ruled a large part of south and central India between the sixth to twelfth CE. Pattadakal also served as the capital city at the time of early Chalukyas. During this period they propagated and patronized Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. For the propagation of religious faith, they constructed temples and monuments in various places. The rule of Chalukya was noted as an

important milestone in the history of south India because of their religious harmony. Their rule led to the growth of powerful administration, overseas trade and commerce, and the development of a new style of architecture called “Chalukyan architecture”.



Map I: Map of Pattadakal

Source: Pattadakal Road and Rail Map (tapioca.co.in)

Early Chalukyas ruled over the regions of Karnataka from the middle of the sixth to the twelfth CE. The Badami kings are generally designated as the early Chalukyas to distinguish them from a dynasty established at Kalyan in northern Karnataka during the eleventh and twelfth CE, generally called the late Chalukyas (Michell, 2002: 2). Jayasimha was the first ruler of the dynasty but it's a controversial one because of lack of evidence. During the reign of Pulikesin I, the kingdom witnessed a powerful rule so we can call him the real founder of the dynasty. He was the first king to rule over an undivided kingdom of Karnataka. The rule under Chalukya's Karnataka witnessed growth and development in the field of socio-cultural and economic-political fields. The reign of Vijayaditya is significant because temple-building activities were revived and developed much better in the regions of Badami, Aihole, and Pattadakal.

Temple, according to Oxford Dictionary is “an edifice or place devoted to divine worship”. But it is also a part of holiness, worship, solemnity, anticipation, get-together, and festivals. Temples are part of the socio-religious and cultural part of society. The construction of the temple is rooted in the Vedic period but the building of a structured temple reached its zenith during the Gupta period. The classical Hindu temples comprised, the sanctum (*garbhagriha*): the house of the principal deity of the temple, *mandapa*: which is the entrance or the hall of the temple, *sikhara/vimana*: a mountain like a spire, *vahana*: it is the mount or vehicle of the main deity.

The temples of Pattadakal (Figure I) represent both *Rekha-Nagara* and *Dravida* styles of Temple construction styles in southern and northern parts of India. The Karnataka Nagara temples of Pattadakal are defined by their curvilinear tower with three vertical bands called *Latā*. All these temples were dedicated to God Siva. The temples are very rich in sculptures as well as architectural beauty. The *Nāgara* style/*Rekha-Nagara-Prasada* style of temple architecture is popular in the Northern part of India. Even in the *Nāgara* School, different sub-schools emerged in the Western, Central, and Eastern parts of India. The temples generally followed the *Panchayatana* style of construction, which consisted of subsidiary shrines laid out in a crucified ground plan concerning the principal shrine. It has three styles of *Sikhara*; *Latina* or *Rekha Prasad*, *Phamsana*, and *Valabhi*. The Odisha School, Khajuraho School, and Solanki School of temples consisted of this style. This style represents many other art and architecture features also. The best examples of this style of the temple are; Sun Temple at Konark, Kaṇḍariya Mahadeva Temple, Lakshman Temple at Khajuraho, and Modhera Sun Temple in Gujarat, etc.

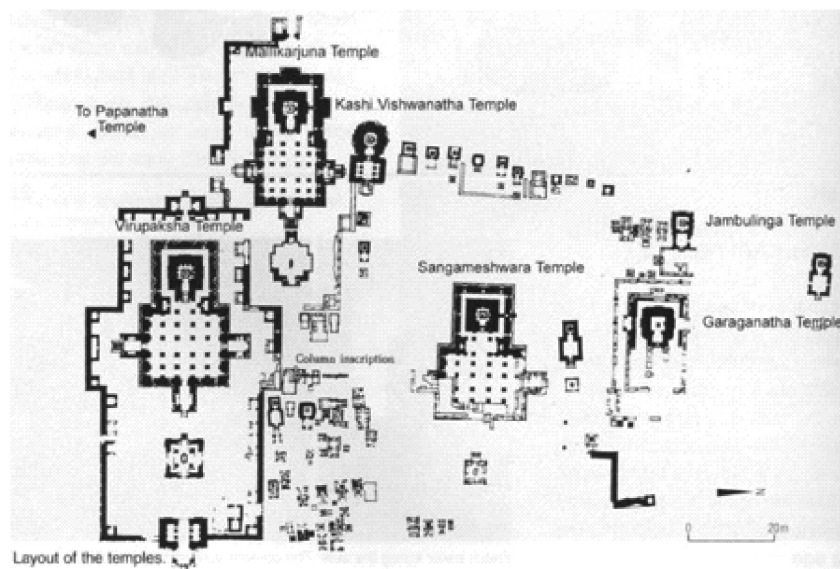


Figure I: Site plan of the temples at Pattadakal

Source: Pattadakal is a World Heritage Centre in Karnataka | Bangalore Orbit

The main temples of Pattadakal (Table: I) are;

Table I: list of temples at Pattadakal

Styles	Name of Temples	Period of Construction
Nagara	Kadasiddhesvara Temple	Late 7 th CE
	Jambulinga Temple	Late 7 th CE
	Galaganatha Temple	8th Century CE
	Kasi Visvanatha Temple	Late decades of the 8 th century CE
Dravida	Sangameswara Temple	Circa 725
	Mallikarjuna Temple	Last decades of 8 th CE
	Virupaksha Temple	Last Decades of 8 th CE
	Chandrasekhara Temple	Late 9 th CE
Nagara + Dravida	Papanatha Temple	7 th – 8 th CE

THE KARNATAKA NAGARA TEMPLES AT PATTADAKAL

The Karnataka Nagara temples of Pattadakal are explained separately in the preceding pages;

THE KADASIDDHESVARA TEMPLE (FIGURE II)

It is situated near Galaganatha Temple. It is the smallest and humblest of all *Nagara* structures on the site, the northernmost. This is one of the earliest temples, dating back to the first decades of the eighth century and during the reign of Vijayaditya. It contains a *Grabhagriha*, open to the East, and a *Mandapa* on the same axis. The roof of the *mandapa* was missing. The sculptures of Siva and Parvati, Harihara Siva, and Ardhanarswara are present. The tower of the temple is in the Latina model with three vertical bands (*latas*) and three horizontal partitions (*Bhumi*). The angle bands are made of three pairs of similar *Kapotas*, and each pair is topped by an *Amalaka*. The *sukasini* in the middle of the tower (Eastern side) contains partially damaged *Natyasiva*. This temple maintained a balanced proportion of architecture and it's graceful with lots of sculptures related to mythic events. This is the simplest temple in this style of architecture because it's maintained a *Mandapa* without pillars and less concentrated on aesthetic activities.



Figure II: The Kadasiddhesvara Temple

THE JAMBULINGESVARA TEMPLE (FIGURE III)

This temple is also facing to East and in *Nagara* styles of architecture. This temple is situated between the south of Kadasiddhesvara and the west of Galagnataha temple. The Jambulingesvara temple has been constructed during the first decades of the eighth century. It also shows various features of the *Dravida* style of temple art and architecture. But the tower above remains purely *Nagara* style. Its model is also the same as in the Kadasiddhesvara temple with three *Bhumis* and three *Latas*. The top platform is there but the *Amalaka* of the tower is missing. Likewise, at Kadasiddhesvara temple, the central part of the *Sikhara*, a *Sukasini* with the images of dancing *Siva* with *Parvati* and *Nandi* was

placed. The external wall of the temple has the sculptures of Harihara in the west, Surya in the north, and Lakulisa in the North. The monument suffered from time to time, but also the temple stands like an elegant one.



Figure III: The Jambulingesvara Temple

THE GALAGNATHA TEMPLE (FIGURE IV)

This temple is also situated near Kadasiddhesvara and Jambulinga temples, in the *Nagara* style, assigned to the seventh CE during the period of early Chalukya king Vinayaditya. It purely followed the Nagarastyle of architecture, being devoid of any Dravida elements. The temple has towers at its four corners and in the center of which the ribbed *Amalaka* and *Kudu* are repeated at every level. The lintel in the doorway is carved with a dancing Śiva and decorated with various floral designs. The tower above the *garbhagriha* is the most impressive element of the temple. Curiously, the sophisticated design and refined detailing of its tower represent a stylistic advance on the slightly later, but more rudimentary *Nagara* scheme of the Kadasiddhesvara and Jambulingesvara temple (Michell, 2002: 28). The *Sikhara* of the temple is a well-preserved and the *Sukasini* of the eastern side is missing. This is the only temple with ambulatory having windowed porches on three sides and the temple with a tower having *Amalaka* and *Kalasa* among this group of temples at Paṭṭadakal.

THE KASIVISVANATHA TEMPLE (FIGURE V)

It is situated near Mallikarjuna Temple faces east and is constructed out of a dressed block of sandstones constructed during the eighth century. The temple has a tower in *Nagara* style, but the *Nandi-Mandapa* in front of the temple is ruined. Like other temple, this temple consists of *Garbhagriha*, *Antarala*, *Mandapa* and *Nandi-Mandapa*. The pillared *Mandapa* of the temple has been decorated with various sculptures of mythic events related to Lord Siva and Krishna. Among these pillars, three are in *Ghata-Pallava* and one is in *Amalaka* pillar order. The interior wall of the *Mandapa* is decorated



Figure IV: The Galagnatha Temple

with various pilasters and the ceiling of the *Mandapais* decorated with images of sitting Siva and Parvati accompanied by Nandi and Parvati holding a child. The roof is also decorated with figures of *Ganas*, and floral and creeper designs. This is one of the richly decorated temples of Pattadakal.



Figure V: The Kasivisvanatha Temple

CONCLUSION

The group of Karnataka-*Nagara* temples predates the Karnataka-*Dravida* group. The latter was introduced on the site of Pattadakal by royal will, the foundation of Vijayesvara by Vijayaditya, then pursued by the will of queens of Vikramaditya II through various expeditions and cultural contact with North Indian dynasties helped Chalukyan rulers for constructing monuments on a different style. But they never copied the same *Nagara* style that we have seen in the northern part, they harmoniously blended the architectural form from Northern and Southern India and reproduce it in Pattadakal. The Pattadakal is the treasure house of art and architecture due to the culmination of various styles and the place got an important place on the cultural map of India. The harmonious blend of both *Nagara* and *Dravida* styles is the only one we can see in a few sites in India among these sites most famous one is Pattadakal.

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