

## *Examrace*

### South Indian Temple Style

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- Architecture in the Deccan Many different styles of temple architecture influenced by both North and South Indian temples were used in regions like Karnataka.



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- While some scholars consider the buildings in this region as being distinctly either nagara or dravida, a hybridised style that seems to have become popular after the mid-seventh century, is known in some ancient texts as vesara.

- By the late seventh or the early eighth century, the ambitious projects at Ellora became even grander.
- By about 750 CE, the early western Chalukya control of the Deccan was taken by the Rashtrakutas. Their greatest achievement in architecture is the Kailashnath temple at Ellora, a culmination of at least a millennium-long tradition in rock-cut architecture in India.
- It is a complete dravida building with a Nandi shrine — since the temple is dedicated to Shiva — a gopuram-like gateway, surrounding cloisters, subsidiary shrines, staircases and an imposing tower or vimanarising to thirty metres.
- One portion of the monolithic hill was carved patiently to build the Kailashnath temple.
- The sculpture of the Rashtrakuta phase at Ellora is dynamic, the figures often larger than life-size, infused with unparalleled grandeur and the most overwhelming energy.
- In the southern part of the Deccan, i.e., in the region of Karnataka is where some of the most experimental hybrid styles of vesara architecture are to be found.
- Pulakesin I established the early western Chalukya kingdom when he secured the land around Badami in 543.
- The early western Chalukyas ruled most of the Deccan till the mid-eighth century when they were superseded by the Rashtrakutas.
- Early Chalukyan activity also takes the form of rock-cut caves while later activity is of structural temples.
- The earliest is probably the Ravana Phadi cave at Aihole which is known for its distinctive sculptural style.
- One of the most important sculptures at the site is of Nataraja, surrounded by larger-than-life-size depictions of the saptamatrikas: three to Shiva's left and four to his right.
- The figures are characterised by graceful, slim bodies, long, oval faces topped with extremely tall cylindrical crowns and shown to wear short dhotismarked by fine incised striations indicating pleating.
- They are distinctly different from contemporary western Deccan or Vakataka styles seen at places such as Paunar and Ramtek.
- The hybridisation and incorporation of several styles was the hallmark of Chalukyan buildings.
- The most elaborate of all Chalukyan temples at Pattadakal made in the reign of Vikramaditya II (733 - 44) by his chief queen Loka Mahadevi, for instance, shows complete knowledge of Pallava buildings at Kanchipuram and as a corollary, Mahabalipuram.
- The temple is one of the best early examples of the dravida tradition.
- By contrast other eastern Chalukyan temples, like the Mahakuta, five kilometres from Badami, and the Swarga Brahma temple at Alampur show a greater assimilation of northern styles from Odisha and Rajasthan.
- At the same time the Durga temple at Aihole is unique having an even earlier style of an apsidal shrine which is reminiscent of Buddhist chaityahalls and is surrounded by a veranda of a later kind, with a shikhara that is stylistically like a nagaraone. the Lad Khan temple at Aihole.
- Inspired by the wooden-roofed temples of the hills, except that it is constructed out of stone.
- With the waning of Chola and Pandya power, the Hoysalas of Karnataka grew to prominence in South India and became the most important patrons centred at Mysore.
- The remains of around hundred temples have been found in southern Deccan, though it is only three of them that are most frequently discussed: the temples at Belur, Halebid and Somnathpuram.
- Perhaps the most characteristic feature of these temples is that they grow extremely complex with so many projecting angles emerging from the previously straightforward square temple, that the plan of these temples starts looking like a star, and is thus known as a stellateplan.
- Since they are made out of soapstone which is a relatively soft stone, the artists were able to carve their sculptures intricately.
- This can be seen particularly in the jewellery of the gods that adorn their temple walls.
- The Hoysaleswara temple (Lord of the Hoysalas) at Halebid in Karnataka was built in dark schist stone by the Hoysala king in 1150.
- Hoysala temples are sometimes called hybrid or vesaraas their unique style seems neither completely dravidanor nagara, but somewhere in between.
- They are easily distinguishable from other medieval temples by their highly original star-like groundplans and a profusion of decorative carvings.
- Dedicated to Shiva as Nataraja, the Halebid temple is a double building with a large hall for the mandapato facilitate music and dance.
- A Nandi pavilion precedes each building.
- The tower of the temple here and at nearby Belur fell long ago, and an idea of the temples' appearance can now only be gleaned from their detailed miniature versions flanking the entrances.
- From the central square plan cutout angular projections create the star effect decorated with the most profuse carvings of animals and deities.

- So intricate is the carving that it is said, for instance, in the bottom-most frieze featuring a continuous procession of hundreds of elephants with their mahouts, no two elephants are in the same pose.
- Founded in 1336, Vijayanagara, literally 'city of victory', attracted a number of international travellers such as the Italian, Niccolo di Conti, the Portuguese Domingo Paes, Fernao Nuniz and Duarte Barbosa and the Afghan Abd, alRazzaq, who have left vivid accounts of the city.
- In addition, various Sanskrit and Telugu works document the vibrant literary tradition of this kingdom.
- Architecturally, Vijayanagara synthesises the centuries-old dravidatemple architecture with Islamic styles demonstrated by the neighbouring sultanates.
- Their sculpture too, although fundamentally derived from, and consciously seeking to recreate Chola ideals, occasionally shows the presence of foreigners.
- Their eclectic ruins from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries preserve a fascinating time in history, an age of wealth, exploration and cultural fusion.

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