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CONCLUSION

The art historical approach has slowly but surely shown us the different ways to understanding style and its various moods. The political, religious and cultural outputs of the Early Chōla show the 'dual personality' of a cultural group in a historical moment. The one side of this personality trait bespeaks of a mutual or common socio cultural ethos it shared with the Drāviḍa region as a whole. Underlying centuries of differing events and occurrences which identify a period, there was a mutually inherited regional psyche. The make-up of this particular period shows us besides, that the Chōla were survivors. Having survived, their anxieties were quelled by an armour of steel politically, and a finer sense of aesthetic within. The latter manifesting itself sensually in stone, metal and lyric poesy. The other name for this would be outpourings of Bhakti. The external and active political strain were balanced by an internal urge for the opposite. This other side of the unmanifested personality began to manifest itself in religion and art. They became marks of higher and nobler minds linking themselves, both to, the tracts of land they possessed and the 'Omniscient God', besides annexing politically. Such an annexing first occurred in the Muttaraiyar tracts. Thenceforth, they shared a common heritage

from a larger legacy of culture. Politically, geographically and culturally close, the conquest for Tañjāvūr by Vijayālaya and occupation of Muttaraiyar land resulted in one kingdom, the Chōḷa. At the level of the masses there was possibly no dichotomy. Under the circumstances, the intermingling and cohabiting in all walks of life was natural. In this context the Wollflin approach confirms that; "to explain a style then can mean nothing other than to place it in its general historical context and to verify that it speaks in harmony with the other organs of its age"(1). This also meant that a collective approach was followed by the Chōḷa but with different and more subtle means of manifestation. Questioning the nature of a personality and asking how and why it came to be is futile. What is observed is that aspect of a personality which was unique and different from others. A question like why did Parāntaka I enhance and glorify Śaivism? The answer naturally is evasive or subjective; yet the consecration of Āḍavallan, the kuladēvata as Naṭarāja and the royal patronage which made the Saptasthāna sacrosanct show this unique partiality towards Śaivism. The standard answer would be reaching back until the chthonic features are detected. An exposure and taste for certain forms

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cannot be questioned. The Chōla realised the many manifestations of arts; art as fundamentally being one, and thus the idea of their best should be universal. The peculiarity of the Early Chōla however was to look inwards and within. Exposed to different schools of thought we have seen under the religion section they had imbibed a little from each. The spiritual and gross syndrome did bother them, and thus they made a compromise. A little of their individuality, the infinite and divine are disclosed. The tangible human form was used to communicate the release from the medium the physical. "The guiding motive behind all art in the Chōla period, behind architecture, sculpture (and painting) was to connect life with the spirit. Everything was suppressed that would not serve the purpose or might distract the mind..... it was efforts towards revelation of the grace and beauty of the soul, aspects denoted by the concept of 'lavanya'" (2). The attitude of cooperative enterprise gave them the tenacity and strength to survive all adversities because of this single mindedness. The political and religious attitudes reveal their open minded approach which had made them adjust to constant interchange of ideals and techniques with other cultures without losing their own identity. What has been brought out in the first two chapters is their capacity to adopt, adapt and survive. It is recognised that their temperament covered the 'entire field of human activity, intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, economic and political..... and a spiritual zeal is characterised in

all. Their sculpture, their temples, their literature and philosophy were unique self expressions which show the Saundarya yoga in essence". This is seen in the power and strength of their architecture, the balance and beauty of poise in their sculpture, the delicacy and idealism..... the subtlety and spiritual appeal.....(3).

The overall influence of religion and philosophy at all stages had thus affected the Early Chōla style. This was more so because of a persistent sectarian emphasis. Furthermore the Śaiva Nāyanmars, the wandering bards, exposed by oral tradition to the populace a very accessible means to god, and a sense of belonging to the community. Singing in praise or extolling the greatness and virtues of gods and goddess and glorifying their mythology had great effect in the introducing of new deities in the iconographic scheme. The sectarian emphasis guided the inclusion of Lingōdbhava for example, during the Parāntaka I time who was already in a state of religious fervour. Such fervour reflects the choicest philosophy of Bhakti they had imbibed. The florescence of Śaiva temples, the hagiology of saints and the quint essence of religious philosophy show a finely attuned culture.

The content of art and architecture showed these special qualities illustrating and extending themselves and creating a specific

order that became their style. The diverse factors which have been shown as developments or historical strands show that the Chōḷa despite a larger homogeneity of religion, politics and culture, chose from within these very heritages and chalked out a life different from others. 'The source' of such diversity goes far beyond 'accords discords', adaptations and adoptions related to race, time and environment. From somewhere deep within their psyche emerge 'affinities and accords' which are too subtle to be boxed up or grouped under a category. In the words of Focillon, "there exists a kind of spiritual ethnography which cuts across the best defined 'races'. It is composed of families of mind - families whose unity is effected by secret ties, and who are faithfully in communication with a style, even each technique seeks out by preference a certain state of man's nature, a certain spiritual family. This is a universal language"(4). In the nature of such affinity and families of mind they are closer to the Muttaraiyar and Paḷuvēṭṭaraiyar, and to a lesser degree the Irrukuvēḷ. After their establishment as a dominant power there is no evidence of disharmony with either of the feudatories. It was the 'fatal attraction' of the Chōḷa for these smaller domains than a local Pallava one. The attitude towards the former was that of acceptance and this stemmed from within, with the latter that of an adversary and foe. They never belonged; the Pallava influence was only incidental and one of convenience. Architecture and architectural motifs for example occur continuously.

They are unerring tradition, rudiments learnt, absorbed and perpetuated. Somewhere along the way their original functions were forgotten and a habit had formed. Perhaps boredom of repetition caused a change to occur and the forms began to metamorphose. Meanings changed with function and these are seen in continuously evolving motifs, with cosmetic variations, as in the kūdu arch, the stambha tōraṇa and the adhīsthāna etc. Similarly, the thematic content was also reorganised from the dramatically narrative to a crisp synoptic expression and another aspect of style began to be determined. Their attitude in the modern sense was not like picking up the 'know how' at a price because the price they would pay would be heavy their identity and individuality. Nevertheless, they outsmarted their opponent by transforming the existing into something unique. In Fergusson's words "they conceived like giants and finished like jewellers". And this calls to the mind, the wonder of the form and the possibility of its ever changing nature.

The second and more important aspect of the Chōḷa personality is the commanding position from where art is transformed into unique forms. The visual or formal aspect of style shows that Chōḷa art aimed at allowing itself to be viewed over and over again by its repertoire and spatial treatment both in architecture and sculpture. As form it draws our attention to it. Honore de Balzac calls everything as form, life itself is form, form

is modality of life. The relationships that bind them together are not pure chance, and constitute an order, such an order is also seen within the formal relationships within the work or art.

On seeing Chōla art we are at once conscious of both content and form. Try as much to dissociate one from the other, there is a certain flaw. It is together they combine to produce their unique style. This is seen in the component organisation of their architectural features, their sculptures both in stone and metal, and in their iconography. One without the other leaves something to be desired. The essential Chōla trait seen as the psychological approach towards an expression and style does not reject, nor stop. The Chōla tradition shows a continuous thought process and art manifestation in transformation in its early phase particularly. The plastic forms are subjected to the principle of metamorphosis by which they are perpetually renewed..... within the same shape there are changes(5). This is amply justified and illustrated, through the Pallava and into the Chōla. As mentioned earlier a common heritage and an established visual data is likens a literature review. The norms had been fully exploited from the simplicity of the Māmalla rathas to the Baroque excess; the Chōla architect could have either continued or even selected some aspects for total imitation. None of the Chōla architecture in as much shows such plagiarism.

It is those functional features which had wooden prototypes scattered all over the Tamil land that are responsible for architectural development in stone. Transient interest is the most we can say which saw a few Pallava elements in the Early Chōḷa, more so in sculpture than in architecture. Architecture we at home in the Muttaraiyar tract, and they had also naturally taken some features from the pioneering Pallavas. Sculpture was what basically conformed to the principles of metamorphoses. The Muttaraiyar idiom with a strong Pallava influence in technique and form tried to change by expressive variations. From the rubric Pallava they changed to spectral forms. It was the Early Chōḷa in the Vijayālaya Āditya I Phase at Tiruvēdikūḍi, Tiruccaturai etc. which tried to humanise as well as spiritualise. This was achieved by manipulating the medium and shaping them. Shape after shape changed till a total organising occurred. The form derived much from their natural human counterparts. Beyond the constant, 'ciphers' were being written variously till they found the harmony in Tiruvēdikūḍi, Pullamaṅgai, Kumbakōṇam and Śrinivāsanāḷlūr sculptures. These new values which they created repeatedly and in variation became their vocabulary and hallmark.

Pallava was the constant factor in religion, philosophy, and content in architecture and sculpture. The Chōḷa thus changed the form and created a new vocabulary, by treating them differently. Similies and metaphors were sought. At the earliest

juncture the Pallava prototype of the rock cut ratha influenced the Muttariayar and in turn the Chōḷa. Thus, there is an obvious influence in architecture. This influence was only short lived, because with the Parāntaka I temples, major departures were made and a distinct vocabulary was established. The total style was not affected, it was just a moment in the continuous change.

In sculpture again something of the Muttaraiyar, Paluvēṭṭaraiya and Irrukuvēḷ form intermingle. The initial attempt was first of all imitative and after this the forms began to obey their own rules, which are inherent in them, or in the regions of the mind. This is why certain similarities and dissimilarities are seen with these three idioms although they contribute and belong to the larger matrix of the Chōḷa.

Within the Early Chōḷa Phase itself the metamorphoses occurs in different ways. From the spectral to the humanised and tangible, was seen in the Āditya I Phase, some sculptures still recall vestiges of the Pallava technique. The Parāntaka I Phase of the Āditya Phase reached the height of communicating transubstantiation through the form. The Sembiyaṇ age totally turned to full blown realism where the interplay between form and space was the major preoccupation.

The Chōḷa artist from the Āditya I Phase itself and grasped the fundamentals of forms and shapes. The tactile values and

tangibility were communicated by the intuitively rendered bulk, weight and texture. Distinct dimension, occupation of space, its 'presence' and restraint contributed towards a quasi religious and sensuous stirring. They encourage us to move our eyes up and down and around them. Bernard Berenson would call these a stirring of imagination to "..... realise their potential resistance, span their distance from us, encourage us, always imaginatively to come into close touch with, to grasp, to embrace, or to walk around them". Or perhaps, to stand in awed or dumb struck silence. The sculptures from Pullamaṅgai, Puṇjai and Tiruvāduturai conceived the inherent nature of an object and its use. They strived towards the perfecting of form, and show us the relation of parts to the whole and vice versa. This intuitive grasp of interrelationships was by experience more than śāstra. This has been proved by G. Shiromony and others who did a computer analysis on the iconometry and found the sculptures otherwise. Within the human form are introduced individual shapes which are so organised that this form becomes a quality beyond cognizance. It is on an ideated plane. Symmetry and movement, weight and balance have been achieved in the Sembiyaṇ Phase. The way the parts are interlocked or merged cause the emergence of a form, and this is a constituent of style. However, it is in the Parāntaka I sculptures that art reaches into the realms of ideated sensations. It further extends and enlarges upon this plane in the Sembiyaṇ sculptures in both stone

and bronze. Deliberate attempts have been made in bringing out the details of muscular changes, tensions, flexions and relaxation that appear with every action or movement. The characteristics specialized in the Early Chōḷa period are on accent and articulation, stress and counter stress, resistance and yielding. This is the balance of 'passion and control'. Once again expanding in the words of B. Berenson the object becomes a cipher and fullness of its own being.".....he sees a complete shape, perceives the organic necessity of every contour, of every spot and shadow, and every touch of colour..... he grasps the whole as a pattern, unique and irreplaceable because its particular individuality has never existed before, and never will exist again, and is therefore to be cherished as something at once sacred and intimate, remote and near, intangible and yet caressing"(7).

The architectural innovation seen in Srinivasanallur and Kumbakonam bring us to the subject of space. The treatment of wall and the placement of dēvakōshṭa ushered in new trends. The sculptures are situated in these specially allotted spaces. Although function and norm demanded that the sculptures be placed in dēvakōshṭa the sculptor freed himself from its binding quality. This is a characteristic feature. The figures all stand at the threshold of the niche. To relieve boredom of architectural space they are placed in slightly turned positions and semi profiles. The niche no longer exists as a closed space, but becomes a point

in space with its extension beyond and its presence ahead where we stand. The figures come halfway out to meet us. The Śiva sculptures in his tandava forms specially in bronzes enhance and encompass more space than just their physical requirement. We are made subtly aware of this in the catura and ananda tandava where space is both void and occupied by forms. The movement suggested in the object, which is indwelling energy not only vitalises it but also delimits the outline of that object. The movement delineated in the outline is energised into a contour. The way these contours thrust out in space or recede in shows the absence and presence of it. A rigid form with the line being harsh and geometric, limits the aesthetic possibility by trapping the form within it. The contour suffers. The Chōla sculptor used lines with fluid grace. It was as fluid as the molten metal, such fluidity is movement and created dynamic or subtle contours. They helped in diminishing or extending the virtual space.

The other interesting aspect of projected and receding space is seen in the anga divisions where sculptures are also placed in niches. These provide the physical architectural space for further embellishment or affect indirectly the contour of a sculpture by its casting of light and shadow. Space that is close and space beyond as dark and unfathomable are both exhibited. And thus continued the life cycle of the Early Chōla art. The

metamorphoses is likened to the continuous adding and shedding, a chrysallis emerging into a butterfly; so delicate is the act of creating.

The Early Chōḷa style emerges like the desert bloom from forms complying with an internal organising logic. They multiplied by mitosis. Mythic memory, families of mind, the inherent trait and knowledge 'a priori' are uniquely combined. They extend or condense as may be the case and manifest themselves, paving the way for a new emergent style. Pallavas were doubtlessly pioneers; the annals of history support them; but to give them the 'parent status' or the 'genetic status' is negating artistic creativity of new forms. We would have been left with something like the modern amazonian concretes touching the skyline. Architecture and sculpture show otherwise. The Pallava was the initiator and keeper of the South Indian legacy or heritage. It was not the imitative or creative sources that were taken from them but mere functional data. The Chōḷa evolved his own style after his initial 'loan' from the Pallava, which he returned manifold at a later juncture; They evolved their own style which was not the thing or object alone, but the way it was manipulated, converted, understood and presented. These conversions were in the nature of transformations seen in the treatment of space, mass, volume, lines, texture and decorative values. They were independently treated but were interrelated and full within the matrix of the whole.

The content and form are complimentary in the Early Chōla style. The physical and visual, simultaneously with the abstraction and conception of religion, myth and philosophy culminated in this compact economy of the temple and understated thought. The flair to extract like the perfumer, the 'essence'; the sensitivity to touch, like the jeweller who lovingly creates his filigree; and the intense lover in man with keen perceptions and finely tuned aesthetics leaves us overawed by the graceful austerity and enigmatic poise of the self-contained Early Chōla temples and their sculpture. A style was born.

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