

Unit -2

Art and Architecture of Tamil Nadu



Learning Objectives

- ❖ To understand the evolution of temple architecture in South India
- ❖ To gain knowledge about the cultural heritage of Tamils
- ❖ To know the contribution of Pallavas, Cholas, Vijayanagara and Nayak rulers to the development of temple art in Tamil Nadu

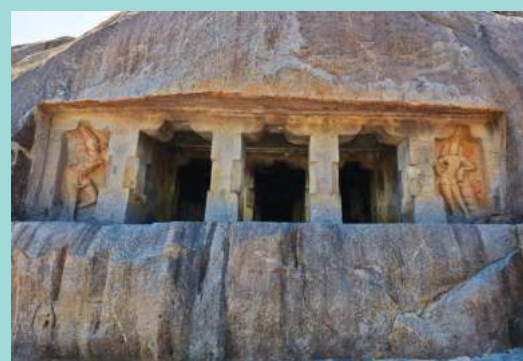


Introduction

Dravidian architecture is of indigenous origin. It advanced over time by a process of evolution. The earliest examples of the Tamil Dravidian architectural tradition were the 7th century rock-cut shrines at Mahabalipuram. The absence of monuments in South India prior to the 7th century is attributed by scholars to temples ought to have been built in wood, which were eventually destroyed by forces of nature. In Tamil Nadu, the evolution of temple architecture took place in five stages: (1) The Pallava Architecture Epoch AD (CE). 600 to 850); (2) Early Chola Architecture Epoch AD (CE) 850 to 1100); (3) Later Chola Architecture Epoch AD (CE) 1100 to 1350); (4) Vijayanagara / Nayak Architecture Epoch AD (CE) 1350 to 1600); and (5) Modern Architecture Epoch (After AD (CE) 1600).

Pallava Epoch

The Pallava epoch witnessed a transition from rock-cut to free-standing temples. Rock-cut



Rock-cut Cave Temple,
Mandagapattu

temples were initially built by carving a rock to the required design and then rocks were cut to build temples. The Pallava king Mahendravarman was a pioneer in rock-cut architecture. Mandagapattu temple was the first rock-cut temple built by him. The rock-cut cave structure has two pillars in the front that hold it. All the cave temples have simple sanctum cut on the rear side of the wall with a frontage-projecting *mandapa* (pavilion).