

TIRUMAYAM FORT OF SIVA & VISHNU TEMPLES - A STUDY ON ITS HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Thirumayam is a place of historical importance located about 20 km south of the town of Pudukkottai in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. There is a huge hill known as Satyagiri in this village that has three rock-cut cave temples, of which two are excavated on the southern face of the hill and the third one cut into the vertical scarp of a whale back rock on top of the hill. Two of those Temples are dedicated to Siva and one to Vishnu. There is a fort almost encompassing the hill and also a citadel on its summit constructed during the 17th century. Famous freedom fighters Veerapandiya Kattabomman and his brother Umathaiturai hid in a fort at Tirumayam, after their fight against the British during 17th century. Thirumayam is from the word Thiru-meyyam which means place of truth in Tamil Nadu. The lord Vishnu is also called by the name of Meyyar. Since it is believed that he stayed in that village it is called by the name Thirumeyyam. Thiru-means 'holy' or 'sacred' and is traditionally used in front of names in all parts of TamilNadu.

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Thirumayam fort

Miles before reaching the town, one can see a fort atop a large hill. In past centuries, the fort was much larger than what now obtains; this is affirmed by the fact that the main entrance to the old fort lies about one kilometer south of the present-day fort. This entrance to the old fort still stands; it has a courtyard with pillared corridors and shrines of various deities. The sculptures on the pillars are truly beautiful². As one enters the town through the road which connects it with the highway, one finds a small temple dedicated to Bhairava (the Bhairavar-koil). This temple, which faces the main road, is a favorite with vehicle-owners who traditionally halt and pray there for a safe journey. This temple was actually built on the outermost wall of the old fort. There are two famous rock-cut shrines Sathyagirisvarar and Sathyamoorthi, one of Siva and the other of Thirumal, Adjacent to each other. The Siva temple, which stands to the west of the Vishnu temple, is the older of the two. These are located at the foot of a hillock on the south side of the town. The rock cut Shiva temple is situated on a hill amid the relics of another ancient and ruined fort. Near this example stands one of the largest rock inscriptions in TamilNadu. The inscriptions are of particular interest since they deal with music, a rare subject for inscriptions. The Thirumal temple contains an octagonal sacred tank called 'Satya-pushkarani'.

Lower Siva Cave-Temple

The Satyagirisvara is perhaps the largest cave-temple in this area excavated on the southern scarp at the foot of hill and is immediately to the west of the Vishnu cave-temple. The entire length as also the portion immediately to the west of it appears to have recuperated preliminary preparation by way of the clumping off of the undulating surface. Further it has been cut into a depth of about 1.06m uniformly on all sides in order to get a vertical scarp for the facade. The facade thus obtained measures 7.68m wide east-west and 2.86m high. They are also more widely spaced apart. The intercolumniation between the two middle pillars is 1.88m, whereas the interval or bay between the western pilaster and its adjoining pillar is 1.84m and between the eastern an *upana*-like platform, which has been chiseled later in order to maintain the same level

of the *mandapa* floor behind. The pillars and pilasters have the basal and terminal *saduram* with an intervening *kattu*. The *basal sadurams* are not *quite* square in plan, their lateral (north-south) sides measuring 60cm at the base, 58cm at the middle and 56cm at the top while the front and hind faces (east-west) measure 66cm at the bottom, 64cm at the middle and 62cm at the top. The height is about 87cm. The *kattin* is of unusual height measuring 94cm, each side of the octagon measuring about 25cm. The front and back faces of the top *sadurams* measure about 62cm whereas their lateral sides measure 56cm. The height of the top *saduram* is about 65cm. All the four faces of the bottom and top *sadurams* of the pillars are adorned by medallions, which are mostly usual lotus type. The pilasters have half medallions on their sides and the east face of the western pilaster and west face of the eastern pilaster have full medallions. These features are found both on the lower and top *sadurams* of the pilasters. The medallion consists of a circular full-blossomed lotus with four *seriate* petals, the two outer expanding while the inner two converge round the central circular torus. This is framed inside a square formed of 3 concentric lines. The corners between the innermost square and the outer rim of the lotus engraved inside are occupied by *patralata* or *kodikkarukku* design.

The lower *saduram* of the western pillar has on its western face a different pattern of medallion. The medallion engraved inside a square formed of three concentric lines has a brim of a prominent circle enclosing seven *nilotpala* flowers (water-lilies) with stalks arrayed round a central circle with small buds in between. On the northern side is found the usual type of medallion i.e. circular full-blossomed lotus with four serrate petals, the two outer expanding while the inner two converge round the central. On the eastern side of the western pillar, the lower *saduram* has a group of five *nilotpalas* inside the circle but the intervening buds are smaller with longer stalks, the corners between the circle and the square here as well as on the western side contain the same type of *kodikkarukku* design. On the southern face the conventional type or lotus medallion similar to the northern face is found. The same scheme is repeated on the four faces of the top *saduram*, viz, the two usual lotus medallions on the inner northern and outer southern faces and the grouping of four instead of seven *nilotpalas* round a central rhomboid projection without the intervening buds on the eastern and western faces. In case of the eastern pillars the western face of the lower *saduram* contains the usual type of lotus medallions but with prominent as also its northern face. Its eastern face shows a grouping of eight *nilotpalas* with intervening buds round a circular central rosette. The southern side also has the usual lotus medallion. The four faces of upper *saduram* of eastern pillar do not repeat the scheme found in the lower *saduram* as in the case of the other pillar. The northern face shows a more conventional type of lotus medallion less prominently incised with all the petals spread out resembling more rosettes arraying than a *padma*. The eastern face in consequence with what obtains below on the same side shows a scheme of four fully opened *nilotpalas* with four half opened flowers of the same kind in between and not buds as in the lower face, the whole displayed round a central circle. The southern face of the upper *saduram* shows the usual lotus medallion while on the western face is shown a lotus medallion with closer petals, the three outer series expanding and the innermost in folding round the central torus.

The eastern pilaster shows on the three sides on its lower *saduram* the same type of lotus medallions, 3/4th of medallions of inner and outer faces and full one on the western face. The upper *saduram* repeats the same on all three faces. The western pilaster also shows on its lower *Saduram*, half medallion on the front and hind faces, and full medallion on the eastern face. They are the usual type of lotus medallions i.e. circular lotus with four serrate petals, the outer two expanding while the inner two converge round the central torus. The top *saduram* of the pilaster contains similarity two half medallions one each on the front and hind face and a full one in the eastern face similar to the medallions below. The inner (northern face) is covered by a thin layer of plaster with painting evidently subsequent in date. The facade of the *mandapa* shows a large *mouDED adhishtana* the bottom moldings of which have been concealed by the flat stones of the *maha-mandapa*. The concealed portion apparently is the *jagati*, and the lower half of the rounded and *kumuda* the upper part of the *kumuda* is visible above it, are a prominent *kampa* and a *taal kantha* with another *kampa* and a thick *pattika* on top. The *kantha* is relieved at places just below the pillars and pilasters of the facade *grantha* and Tamil characters on the *vritta-kumuda*

and *kantha* portions which are partly exposed at the western end and the rest of them have been completely hidden by the modern steps constructed at a later stage. Except for this small bit of this *adhishtana* exposed at the western end, the rest is entirely covered up by the *pattika* alone being visible. There is a possibility of rock-cut steps in between the two central pillars, which has been perhaps completely camouflaged by the structural addition in front.

The corbels on the top of the pillars and pilasters are of *tarange* type. The corbels (i.e., two arms and central block) are thrice the length of the side of the top *saduram* and each arm of the corbel being equal to the side of the top *saduram* with the central block of the same dimension in between. The width of the corbel is also the same as the width of the top *saduram*. Each arm of the corbel has 9 *taranga* rolls, of which lowermost one is smallest and the fourth one at the angle is largest. Rolls are bound by a *media patta*, its width being $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ the width of the corbel. The *patta* has a bold *kodikkarukku* relief or creeper ornamentation bordered by a pair of lines one on either side. The corbels are thinner in proportion to their sides as also the beam above. The height of the corbel is about 17cm, which is also the height of the *uttira* (beam) above. Such a thin beam and corbel are not found in early *mehendra* type cave temples, though in later *mahendra* type cave-temples of Paramesvaravarman and Rajasimha periods, they are common.

Externally, over the beam runs a *vajana* and the under surface of the projecting ledge is dressed smooth with a slight downward slope from back to front suggesting a *kapota*. Since the *maha-mandapa* has constructed abutting to the overhanging ledge, the original shape and nature of the cornice is not visible at present. Most probably, it would have been plain without any form or ornamentation such as *kuduarches*, etc., as this is the general trend noticed in this area. The flanking surfaces of the cutting are also smoothly dressed. Beyond the western flank leaving a short strip of natural surface, there is again a large prepared surface for the reception of the *Grantha* musical notation. Only the fragments of the musical inscription, such as *sadja*, *pancama*, *Madhyamam*, *Dvaita*, *Gandhara*, etc are visible. The rest of the surface is obscured by a large palimpsest inscription of a later Pandya times recording the finding of a tribunal in the settlement of a dispute between the trustees of the two adjoining temples namely the Tirumeyyattu Mahadeve temple and Tirumeyyattu Ninraruliya Peruman temple of this place. This inscription extends up to the western flank of the cutting and also to the front face of the base of the western *Saduram* below the lotus medallion.

Behind the facade is a large rectangular *Mandapa* measures 8.32m east-west and 4.26m north-south. Four pilasters are cut on its hind wall (northern wall) corresponding to the pillars and pilasters of the facade. These pilasters stand over a low *Upana*- like platform. The front faces of the lower and upper *Sadurams* of the entire four pilasters show lotus medallion with slight variations in design and detail. The side faces are left plain. The corbels and the beam over it are of the same type as those of the facade. Over the beam runs a *Vajana* course extending over both the sidewalls and continuing on the inner side of the beam of the facade; thus framing the smoothly finished ceiling. The ceiling is covered for the most part with old stucco and paintings. The central portion of the painting now visible though much faded is that of a carpet canopy or *Chitra-Vitana*, occupying the central *ankana*. The extent of the painting fragment of *Vitana* design on either side indicates that this design is painted all over the ceiling. The hind wall showing between the inner set of pilasters is dressed smoothly and in the eastern most portion and almost near the eastern pilasters is a large double lined-rectangle frame with the *Grantha* label "*Parivadinida*" deeply incised in large character.

The eastern sidewall of the *mandapa* has been cut back about 656cm from the line where the outer and inner pilaster joins to its north and south, in order to get sufficient rock material for the relief of a large Lingodbhava. In the centre of this wall is found a slightly projecting and convex column in which is shown the Lingodbhava, the column itself having been itself having been smoothly curved though flat to simulate a *linga*. It has a projecting rock-cut abluition platform also at the base in its centre. The flame design is shown all along the column on its sides which perhaps indicates that the column represent a pillar of fire. The upper half of the cylindrical stele shows a large ventricular opening containing in-side the emerging form of Siva who is shown up to his thigh. He is two-armed as in all early sculptures, the right in *Varada* and the left in *Kati*. He wears a *Kati-bandha*, which resembles a belt of *phalakas* with two tassels hanging down one over

each thigh. In addition he wears two loose twisted cloths round the hip and falling to his thighs with a knot and a tassel on the left side. Above the *Kati-bandha*, he wears an *Udara-bandha*, which is also of the type of rosette shape *Phalakas*. He wears a chord-like *Yajnopavita* in the *nivita* fashion and round his neck *Kantha-bharanas* in a chaplet of beads including garland of beads. His wrists are adorned by and the upper-arms by coiled *keyuras*. In the dangling ear-lobes are prominent *Kundalas*, touching both his shoulders. The head is adorned by fine *Jataa-makuta* with loose-tresses hanging on either side, the original damaged in part owing to the exfoliation of the rock and repaired in stucco. The form of Siva is quite slim and graceful and the face benign. The shine and the pose is *tri-bhanga*. His right arm is stretched and held up palm facing front (more or less in *tajana hasta*), the thumb alone slightly spread out. His left is in *Kati*, as if resting on the loose sash (loose pleated cloth) on his top. His *vaster* reaches up to just below the knees and much above the ankle with a central pleated fold, the hem of the *Vastra* showing a slight curt up it is secured at the waist by a tight pleated *Kati-bandha* with a central knot and loop to the right and two tassels on the left of the central knot. In addition, he wears another loose pleated cloth dangling round his thighs knotted on his left side and hanging down into pleated folds almost reaching the same point as the main *Vastra*. Round his belly he wears an *udara-bandha* of beads set on a flat strap. His *yajnopavita* is a *Rudraksha* mala in the *upavita* fashion. His little fingers have rings and there are *Kankanas* and *valayas* at the wrists and coiled *keyuras* round the elbows. He wears a heavy *Jata-bhara* and touches the shoulder. The left ear-lobe, which is shorter, has a flower bud stuck into the faction of a *koppu*, a ornament even today common in the locality. Over the *jata-bhara* a small part of the hair is done up with a conical *ushnisa* on top of the head.

The sanctum inside is 3.85m square, the height slightly shorter than the sides. The floor of the shrine-chamber is raised by about 65cm from the floor-level of the *ardha-mandapa* the walls, ceiling and floor are evenly dressed. Occupying the centre of the floor is a large rock-cut circular *avudaiyar* with a diameter of 1.65m. A large cylindrical *linga*, the crest of which is slightly above the transverse middle line of the shrine-entrance, is cut over the *avudaiyar*, the *avudaiyar* is molded with a *jagati*, a round *kumuda*, *kampa*, *kantha*, *kampa* pattika and *prati*, the *prati* forming the brim of the shallow depression around the base of the *linga* with extensions over the short spout enclosing a channel. The short spout is supported by a *sejant vyala*, squatting on its haunches with the front legs planted straight. Notwithstanding, the *vyala* is found carved below the *pranala* of the rock-cut *Siva-linga* in the eastern cave-temple at Malayakkoyil, the latter differ from the former in many respects. In the case of Tirumayam the *Vyala* feature is found only in the front side (i.e. facing to the entrance) but not in the rear side. The height of the *Siva-linga* is almost the same as the height of the *pitha* below. The *pajya-bhaga* of the *Siva-linga* is marked with the *sutra* design. The parallel *brahma-sutra* of this *linga* has ascended somewhat above the *parsiva-sutra* (sideline) and the *parsiva-sutra* joins the *brahma-sutra* below the peak of the latter. This feature is found on the *pujya-bhaga* of the *lingas* datable between the second half of the 7th century and the first half of the 8th century. The *linga* is shown with domed apex, a characteristic feature of early *lingas*. Curiously enough, the ceiling does not show the *vajana*, on the floor below the spout there is a square rock-cut cistern now covered up by stone slabs. The cistern was originally intended for receiving the *abhishaka* water. At present a shallow channel cut above the covering slab and running forward to the centre of the skill, takes off the *abhishaka* water to a drain cut in the floor of the *ardha-mandapa*.

It seems the cave-temple has received constant attention from the devotees and royal people since its consecration and this is exemplified by the lot of alterations and additions in the form of sub-shrines, *prakara*, *gopura*, etc. The god of the cave-temple is known in the inscriptions as Tirumeyyattu mahadevar, Tirumeyyadevar srimulasthanamutaiya to mahadevar, Tirumeyyattu malayalan, etc. The cave-temple appears to represent a combination of a well-known early Pallava features as well as the contemporary immediately collateral Pandya and Muttaraiya elements. It is noted that the circular *linga-pitha* relatively being less in number compared to the square and octagonal *pithas* found in this area. Again the character of the *vritta-kumuda* moldings is itself suggestive of a variant structure as different from the *tripatta-kumuda* that is already well adumbrated in structural temples of the period. The comparatively simple character with a typical devotee form depicted by the side of the entrance is well known in the Pandyan caves, as

at Tirukkolakkuti, Virasikamani, Tevarmalai and this would suggest that there has been a direct impact of the Pandyan elements on this cave-temple. The nature of the corbel is not in any way against such an impact and is itself a typical Pandyan feature. Stylistically, it would be appropriate to take this cave-temple towards the latter part of 8th century CE. It is worthy to note here that this cave-temple. Carries the well-known musical inscription as found at Kutumiyamalai and Malayakkoyil Hence it is reasonable to presume that the Siva cave-temple at Tirumayam is not very much far removed in time from the cave-temples at Kutumiyamalai and Malaiyakkoyil.

Vishnu Cave-Temple

It is located to the east of the Siva rock-cut cave-temple, Tirumayam. This cave-temple is interesting as it is the only example of a natural cavern enlarged and fitted with columns so as to present the appearance of rock-cut cave-temple. The study of this cave would show how a small natural cavern was enlarged leaving enough rock material at the base for the carving of a rock-cut *Sopana* and a platform behind it, a large composite bas-relief of Vishnu as Anantasayi with attendant deities above, below and sides and for cutting a beam with corbels on the roof which separating the *garbha-griha* and the *ardha-mandapa*. The depth of the cavern is about 9.25m from the north-south, the width 8.86m and the height 4.42m. At a distance of about 2.44m from the edge of the floor is cut a *sopana* of three steps with a large Chandra-*sila* forming the fourth basal step. The semi-circle of the Chandra-*sila* is turned at either end into two curved parapets flank the three upper steps and each parapet has a terminal upturned curve suggesting the trunk of an elephant. The rock on either side of this *sopana* has been lowered but this part has been built up with brick masonry.

Behind the top tread of the *sopana* is the second higher rock-cut platform running the entire width. Recessed about 91cm from its edge is the next platform. It is on the edge of this platform the two pillars and two pilasters have been fixed. The top most platform extends behind the facade of two pillars and two pilasters as the floor of the *garbha-griha* about 2.44m wide. Immediately behind the floor all the available rock has been utilized for the very large sculpture of Vishnu recumbent on the serpent, which rises to a height of 1.53m from the ground level and occupies a length of about 6.70m. The Vishnu sculpture itself is measuring about 4.27m. The hind wall, which is flat at the middle and a little curved at the corners, is utilized for the other sculptures of *Madhu*, *kaitabha*, *Vasus*, *Kinnaras* and the *rishis* etc. The side figures are shown in almost life-size forms while the back wall figures are all comparatively smaller, though with a sharpness of outline.

The roof over the *Garbha-griha* is rendered flat and even. The rock forming the roof just over the line of the pillars and pilasters has been cut into a wide flat beam with flat Taranga corbels below. Beyond this beam, it extends as the roof of the *ardha-mandapa* and steps down by about 30cm towards the entrance of the cave-temple. Near the extremity of the dripping line a heavy *uttira* has been provided across the entire width of the *mandapa*. This is obviously an attempt to divide the cave-temple into three sections, the cellar or sanctum, the *ardha-mandapa* and the *mukha-mandapa*. The eastern rock face in front of the entrance of the cave-temple has inscription are concealed by the ceiling slabs of the front structural *mandapa*. The visible portion of the inscription refers to a donation for the supply of rice for the food offering (*tiru-amirtu*) to the *kitantapiran* i.e., the deity inside this cave-temple. The inscription found on a transverse parapet records that *perumpituku peruntevi*, the mother of Vitelvituku Vilupperatiaraican alias Cattan Maran repaired (the temple) and granted a village as *unnalikaip-puram*. The inscription is in archaic Tamil characters of about the 8th century CE. It is not clear to which temple this inscription referred to. Since this inscription is found very close to this cave-temple perhaps it may refer to the Vishnu cave-temple.

The two pillars in front of the sanctum are unusually high and made up of separate pieces inserted against the rock-cut corbels on the top. The piece of stones is also inserted below the pillars which act as a plinth of the pillars. The actual pillar portion is made up of two *sadurams* of equal size. The height of the lower *saduram* is 68cm and its width 46cm. The height of the *kattu* is 1.07m. The top *saduram* is as high as the bottom *saduram*. The two pieces making the base of

the pillar measure together 79cm. The corbels on top are very flat about 9cm high and their arms on either side are of the same width as the top *saduram*. The rock cut beam is wider than the corbels. The lower and upper *sadurams* are not perfect square in plan. Their front (47cm) and hind widths (41cm) are greater than the lateral sides, as in pillars of later Pallava period. The flat corbels show four large *tarangas*, the terminal portion being slightly incurved as in the chalukyan corbels and the lowermost part being square (it looks like six *tarangas* including the upper and lower terminals).

A figure in *jata-makuta* playing on cymbals is seated kneeling behind the hood of *Adisesha*. He appears to be singing a tune to the accompaniment of cymbals. He wears elaborate *jata-makuta*. He cannot be Chitrugupta as the local people suppose him to be. He is most probably Markandeya. Behind him at the corner stands Garuda with both his arms crossed against his chest and both the four fingers in *tarjani*. He is also two - armed and like the seated figure in front; he also wears the *Yajonopavita* in *Upavita* fashion. He wears a heavy *jata-bhara* hanging down on either side of the head below the *kirita-makuta*. He wears enormous *patra-kundalas* and *naga-keyuras* among other ornaments. The wings of the Garuda are shown prominently on either side of his shoulders in between him and the figure playing on the cymbals is another two-armed figure, holding a sword or club in his right hand and his left in adoration. He may be *Vishvakshena*. Below him is a small cavity as if doing penance inside a cave are three figures, one bearded *rishi* and two other figures behind him. One of the two figures behind *rishi* wears a *kirita-makuta* and the other a *jata-makuta*. From the navel of Vishnu ascends a lotus stalk along the back wall expending into a blossomed lotus. Brahma shown sitting on it, is four-armed and with three faces. The upper right holds the amrta-kalasa or the kamandalu, the upper left holds sruk (ladle), the lower right in *kataka* or more precisely in *chin-mudra*, the lower left placed on the lap, palm upwards as if in *dhyana*. There is an umbrella over his head and on either side of the umbrella are shown the figures with a ram's head and on either side of the umbrella are shown the figures with a ram's head suggesting Daksha and Agni. The latter is shown with a crown of flames and holding a bowl of fire with both his hands. The presence of Daksha here is one of the prajapatis. Since Daksha is a prajapati and in effect a creation of brahma, he is shown by his side. On either side of brahma is shown the personified form of *ayudha-purushas* of Vishnu as if flying. The hand Gestures of all the *ayudha-purushas* namely *kaumodaki* (the club or gada), *Sarnga* (the bow or dhanus), *Nandaka* (the sword or *Khadga*), *sudarsana* (the wheel or *chakra*) and *panchajanya* (the conch or *sankha*) express the defensive attitude and swiftness. The *Vaishnave agamas* mentions that in the *yoga-sayana* form of *vishnu* all the attributes must be depicted in personification next to brahma. The *kaumodaki*(club) is to be portrayed in female form and the *sarnga* (bow) in *napumsaka* (hermaphrodite) form. The *sudarsana* (*chakra*) is to be represented in male form, whereas the *panchajanya* (conch) in the form of *bhuta* or dwarf. Two of the *ayudha-purushas* are shown to the right (i.e., west side) of brahma and the other are to his left side (i.e., east side). The dwarfish *panchajanya* is the western most one in this group and the eastern most figure in this group is *kaumodaki*, who is shown immediately in front of the demons. All the other *ayudha-purushas* are depicted in between them. bearded and behind them all is a female figure in *anjali* or probably clapping to mark time.

Since the female figure has a halo behind her head and also shown, close with *chandra*, she may represent *Rohini*. The western end figure on the hind wall of the sanctum is *chandra*, also shown flying. he is two-armed holding lotus with long stalk in his right arm and left arm and left arm is in adoration. The huge nimbus is shown behind him. As stated elsewhere the lady in *anjali* pose and also having halo behind her head is shown just in front of him. To the left of brahma beyond the three *ayudha-purushas* are *rishi*-like seven figures with beards and *jata-makutas* in postures of *anjali* and offering . probably by their number they represent the *sapta-rishis*. Beyond them is shown *surya* has a circular background or *prabha* behind. Like *chandra* on the western end, he is also two armed holding lotus with long stalk in his left arm and right arm in adoration. Below him are *madhu* and *kaitabha* shown in treat attacked by the flames are shown on the back wall below the *ayudha-purushas* and *rishis* and above the left leg of *Vishnu*. They appear to move in the direction of the two *asuras*. The depiction of the poisonous flame (*visa-jvala*) in the form of barbs emanating from the hooded *sesha* towards *Madhu* and *kaitabha* is quite interesting. These

visa-jvaas according to the vaikhanasagama are intended to throw Madhu and kaitabha into unconsciousness, when they set demons the attack seshavayi, apparently taken as slumberous. Of the two demons the nearest one holds a dagger in his right hand and is rubbing his back by his left hand. The other demon with face turned back registering fright and defiance. On the eastern side walls on the top are two figures in anjali. Seated on the side of the coils of sesha below the left foot of Vishnu is Bhudevi kneeling with bent right leg knee up and the left leg bent down, the left thigh resting on the left foot, a pose resembling utkutika. Her hands are in and there is no kucha-bandha round her breasts.

The Anantasayingiv at Tirumayam is unique not only as it representing the uttama class of this form, but also on account of the exquisite style of its carving. It is in this panel that the artist has shown great ingenuity in carving almost all the subsidiary figures associated with the reclining form of Vishnu. The particular text that this sculpture followed is not quite clear. But the local version is that on the approach of Madhu and Kaitabha, se sha loathe to disturb the lord, himself emitted poison against the enemies and subsequently in remorse for having attacked the enemies without the knowledge of his master threw back his hood and the lord who knew this, though in yoganida consoled him by patting him. All the sculptures particularly that of Vishnu and sesha are covered by black stucco like composition almost similar to that of the paste applied to the Ranganatha image at srirangam. The ceiling right above Vishnu shows a design of a painted canopy with large circle against a red background and with borders. But the painting is much darkened by soot and age.

Upper Siva Cave-Temple

The upper rock-cut Siva cave-temple is located within the citadel. This is hardly more than a simple rock-cut cell cut into the vertical scarp of a whale back rock on top of Tirumayam hill, overlooking a ravine below which is about 6.20 m deep. The excavation for this cave-temple is made on the western face of the rock running north-south. Right on the vertical face of the rock is cut a rectangular opening of 1.98 m high and 93cm wide. Externally the vertical face is bordered by three series of offsets (sakhas) with intervening recesses simulating an over door of the simple type, more elaborate examples of which are found in early chalukyan cave and structural temples. The outermost offset shows a series of cross-frets which divides the offset vertically into different parts. The other two inner offsets are notwithstanding the three offsets are apparent on either side, the door-jamb on either side is a shallow rectangular bordered panel surmounted by a plain arch-like kudu in continuation of the upper limb of the rectangle. This recalls similar devices that are exuberant in the chalukyan region.

There is a rectangular meant formed by two concentric lines found to the north of the door-frame. This probable meant to accommodate a single Grantha label inscription as found at Malaiyakkoyil (eastern Siva cave-temple), Kutumiyamalai and the Satyagirisvara cave-temple at Tirumayam itself. The label inscriptions mention "parivadiniye" or its variant. However there is no inscription found within the rectangular frame. Immediately behind the door-jamb, the opening widens out a little more thus throwing the door-jamb into relief. The sanctum although looks like square, it is not perfect square. It measures 2.84m north-south and 2.73 m east-west and the height is 1.99m. The walls, floor and ceiling of the sanctum are evenly finished. The fine grained white granite is susceptible of an even finish. There is no Vajana course above the wall. The ceiling shows the traces of old plaster in thin section with faint paint line here and there indicating that the interior wall was covered by thin painted stucco.

Occupying the centre of the floor is a rock-cut avudaiyar with a cylindrical linga cut-out of rock. As in many of the cave-temples in this area, the avudaiyar is square and its sides are roughly $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ the sides of the cave-temple. It measures 95cm square at the base and 93 cm square at the top. The avudaiyar is finely moulded with a jagati, cylindrical kumuda, kampa, tall kantha relieved by pilasters four contouring the corners and four more are on each cardinal side. Over the kantha is cut a second kampa course carrying a pattika and prati. The faceted prati moulding is shown bordering the shallow pit at the base of the linga and the channel of the short water-spout or pranata projected from the northern side of the pitha. In the place of the cardinal pilaster stump on the northern also is cut almost into a round kneeling bhuta with its two legs

planted firmly on the kumuda below and its head abutting against the bent knees as if straining under the weight. The jata-bhaga is parted and covering on either side of the face as is typical in sculptures of the period. The bhuta has got a slight pot-belly.

The cylindrical linga is 63 cm high and the siva-linga is marked with the sutra design. The combined brahma and parsva-sutras ascend to somewhat a greater height. The parsva-sutra(sideline) forms a dome, encircling the two vertical lines of the brahma-sutra of this linga. This feature is found on the lingas datable to 6th -7th century elsewhere. Moreover the linga is shown with domed apex, a characteristic feature of rectangular cistern cut apparently for the reception of the abhisheka water. It measures 55cm east-west and 51cm north-south and depth of the cistern is about 40cm. The chemical treatment of sculpture in different locations of this temple involved the removal of thick coat of lime using 10% solution of glacial acetic acid and removal of sooty and greasy accretions with aqueous solutions of ammonia and non-ionic detergent in the ratio of 3:1 the accretionary free stone surface coat applied a preservative coat of 3% solution of puma in toluene. The buried basement of the temple was exposed, the cracked capital of one of the pillars was secured by iron bane and the uneven granite floor was set right. The compound-wall was rebuilt on the old alignment group of monuments, thirumayam, the guns were re-erected, and patch plastering and pointing were done to the walls. The walls of the palace were plastered at places. The leaky terrace over the rock-cut cave was rendered watertight.

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