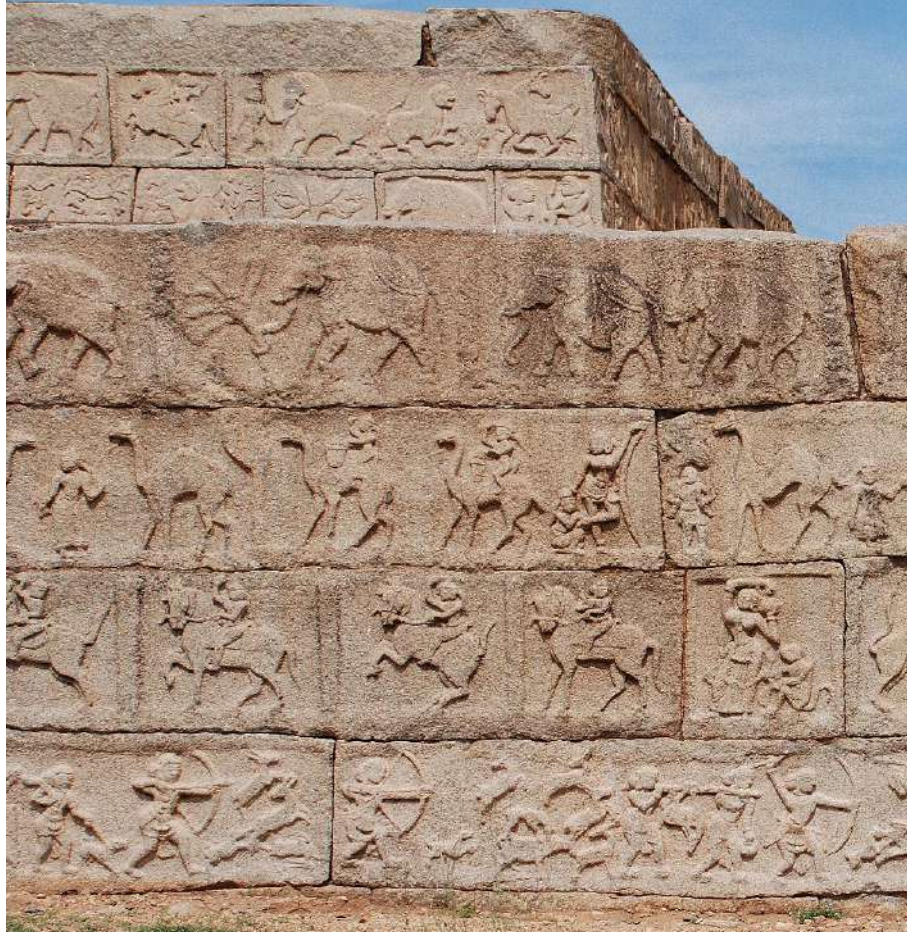




ROYAL ENCLOSURE



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
HAMPI CIRCLE



Aerial view of Royal Enclosure
(view from west)

The Royal Enclosure, with a dense cluster of structures is the core of the Royal Centre of the ancient city of Vijayanagara. This enclosure is bounded by high walls and has a small doorway in the middle of the west side. There is also a flight of steps in the northeast which serves as an approach to the Mahanavami Dibba and a gateway in the northwest adjacent to the King's Audience Hall. This gateway is defined by six columns, fragments of doorjambs and threshold pieces. A pathway now runs on the north side of the enclosure. This enclosure has foundation courses, basement mouldings and multiple layers of plaster flooring indicative of structures of various sorts and dimensions, serving a wide range of functions. They are subjected to many successive phases of rebuilding and renovation. This leads one to believe that this enclosure was in continuous use throughout

the life of Vijayanagara Empire. The Mahanavami Dibba and Audience Hall are the two significant structures in this enclosure. Most of the structures are rectangular in shape with different arrangement of the interiors. They are mostly entered from the middle of their long sides, where stone steps are often found. These structures have a number of chambers or rooms that are created either by walls or by columns into regular bays. There are also long rectangular courts defined by platforms. This enclosure is also remarkable for the complex series of water system including tanks, wells, aqueducts and sluices.

Mahanavami Dibba

The 'Mahanavami Dibba' or 'Dasara Dibba', is a prominent structure in the Royal Enclosure and is popularly known to be associated with ceremonies of



Mahanavami Dibba

Mahanavami or Dasara festival. It is also termed as 'Throne Platform' or 'Great Platform'. The accounts of Persian Ambassador Abdu'r - Razzaq and Portuguese traveller Domingo Paes refers to this magnificent structure. It served a royal function, probably the place from where the King viewed the festivities and cultural entertainments. The extant structure faces west and consists of three platforms set on top of one another in diminishing tiers, constructed at different periods. The flight of steps on the east and west sides, leads to the top of the third platform and that on the

south leads only to the top of the first platform. On the eastern side, there are two flights of steps accessible from a common chamber with bas reliefs on the walls. The platform is built in granite and a subsequent casing in dark green schist can be seen on the west face of the first two storeys. The walls have bas reliefs of animals, royal portraits, warriors, dancers, musicians, military parades, hunting scenes etc. The carvings depicting foreign representatives, probably a Chinese embassy and Arab horse dealers reflect the foreign presence in the Vijayanagara Court. At the top of the platform, column footings are visible indicating that this platform originally had a pillared hall or pavilion. (Structure: 1)





Aerial view of King's Audience Hall

King's Audience Hall

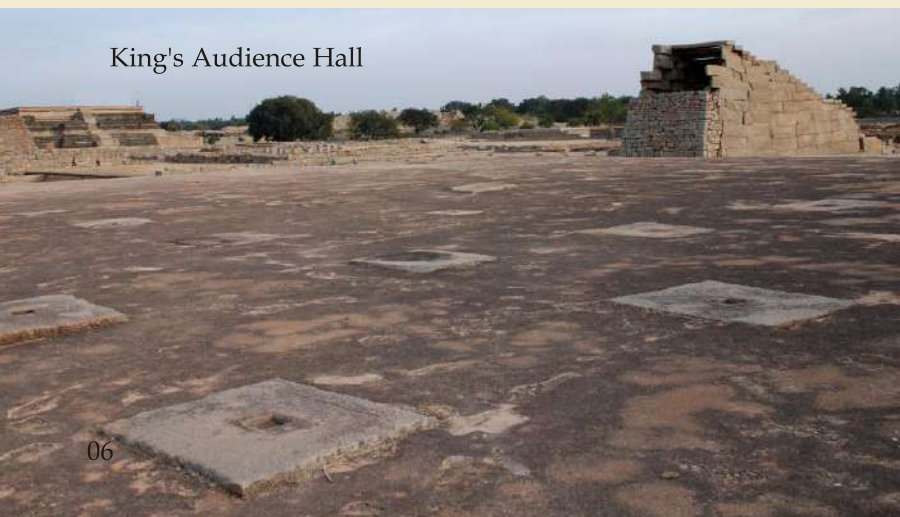
This hall is located slightly to the west of the Mahanavami Dibba in the Royal Enclosure. The accounts of Persian Ambassador Abdu'r - Razzaq and Portugese traveller Domingo Paes refers to this magnificent structure. The King held Court and heard his subjects here and hence the Audience Hall is also called Nyayagriha (Court). This storeyed structure built in granite, faces north and is entered through flight of steps. The central flight of steps with balustrade in green schist leads to an intermediate platform which runs round three sides. The two large flights of steps at the eastern and western extremities leads to the top of the platform. This platform has

vestiges of 100 regularly spaced stone column footings, suggesting it to be a hall of hundred pillars. Each footing has an indented square measuring 80-85 cm and a socket that held the timber columns and superstructure, that is extinct now. A flight of steps on the south leads to an upper storey, from where the King might had given audience to the public. On the west, a partly collapsed structure bounded by high granite walls is also visible. An open court with pavement slabs and traces of plaster floor on concrete are found on the south east part of the Audience Hall. (Structure: 2)

Underground Chamber

This small Underground Chamber is popularly known as Secret Chamber. It is built in green schist and is located to the south west of Mahanavami Dibba in the Royal Enclosure. The structure is accessed by a flight of steps on the northwest and it leads to a narrow corridor and then to a central chamber. This central chamber has four free standing columns and engaged columns at the corners. Persian Ambassador Abdu'r - Razzaq records it as a subterranean treasury within the palace, while Portugese traveller Domingo Paes thought it may have been a shrine. The narrowly guarded entrance and thick concrete roof suggest that this structure may have functioned as a storeroom or treasury. (Structure: 3)

Underground Chamber



King's Audience Hall



Other Important Structures

Among the other important structures is a structure located to the southeast of Audience Hall. This structure is rectangular with basement mouldings and rows of column footings and is accessed from the west. A covered drain skirts this structure on its south and west. (Structure: 4)

To the southwest of the above structure is a rectangular structure with basement mouldings. It has two rooms on its west side, created by walls made of earth and rubble. A plaster lined chamber associated with a drain is found in the north. (Structure: 5)

Another rectangular structure with rows of column footings is noticed to the southwest of the Audience Hall. It has an entrance in the middle of the east side. The remnants of earth and rubble walls are observed on north and west sides of structure. This structure also has a small well and tank adjacent to it. (Structure: 6)

Another notable structure is located to the south of the above mentioned one and is built at a higher level than its adjacent structures. It is square in plan and has a complex series of basement mouldings with fragments of balustrades depicting striding elephants on the east, but the stairs are lost. (Structure: 7)



Structure: 7

To the south of the above structure is a rectangular one, well defined by number of column footings and entered by steps in the middle of the east and south sides. (Structure: 8)

Located in the south side is one of the largest structures in the enclosure. It is approximately square and seems to have consisted of a central space, perhaps a courtyard, with rooms on four sides. It has two flights of steps that provide access, on each of the north and south sides. The steps at the northeast corner apparently ascend to an upper level. An area of plaster-covered brickwork with a shallow channel within the northwest chamber may have been for ablutions. (Structure: 9)

Another significant structure is the one located to the east of the above mentioned one. It has a square area with a rectangular extension on the north. It has on its north, steps flanked by elephants made of schist. Outlines in the middle of the floor suggest a square chamber. The remarkable feature of this structure is its basement mouldings with finely carved friezes depicting mainly female figurines engaged in various activities such as hunting, dancing etc. (Structure: 10)



Structure: 10



Adhithana of Structure: 10

A group of structures in the southwest of the enclosure draws our attention due to its uniform lay out and exceptional length. They are rectangular in plan consisting of basements and numerous in-situ column footings. No other structures of a comparable typology are found elsewhere in the Royal Centre. The exact function of these structures is not known. They may have been used for administrative, ritual or residential activity, or even a combination of these functions. (Structure: 11)



10

Structure: 11

WATER SYSTEM

The water system in this enclosure is defined by a series of tanks, wells, aqueducts and sluices. The water apparently enters the enclosure from a channel in the middle of the east side, now only preserved in fragments. At first laid on the surface, then raised as a U-shaped stone channel supported on piers, and later the line of supporting stone piers disappearing, the aqueduct branches and proceeds to different directions of the enclosure. This aqueduct can be observed as running in east-west direction on the south side of the enclosure. It feeds the principal water supply tanks and wells in the enclosure. The channels supply water to the stone basins and plaster lined tanks part of the structures. Some of the channels ultimately vanish beneath the enclosure walls to the north. To the west and southwest of the Mahanavami Dibba are four principal water supply tanks and a stone aqueduct, all in a north south alignment.

Tank

A tank with rubble wall and plaster lining is located on the west side of the Mahanavami Dibba. This tank is separated into two sections, one shallow and other deep. There are steps and a carved stone



Structure: 12

11

spout at its southwest corner, from where the water enters the tank. Four brick piers in the tank's centre indicate the presence of a structure, which is now lost. (Structure: 12)

Tank

To the south of the above tank is another plaster lined tank with projections and recesses. It has steps on its west side and a conduit enters from the southwest. A small square basin carved in rock is found on the east side of the tank. (Structure: 13)



Structure: 13

Stepped Tank

Further south of the above tank is a stepped tank (*pushkarni*), built of well-dressed schist stone, distinct from the other tanks in the Royal Enclosure. It is square shaped and each side measures 22 m and 7 m in depth. The tank built in stepped order is provided



Aerial view of Stepped Tank and Structure 16



Stepped Tank

with five landings. These five landings of the tank make four inner squares decreasing in measurement and each square accommodates pyramidal steps. On each of the four sides there are 9,7,5,3 and 1 such pyramidal steps between first and second stage, second and third stage, third stage and fourth stage, fourth stage and fifth stage respectively. A small inscription or mason mark in old Kannada-Telugu characters indicating the exact location of the member, direction and the row to which it belongs is found in every stone block of the tank. It indicates that the stepped tank is constructed by excavating a pit in stepped order and then veneered it with finished stone blocks probably brought directly from the manufacturing centre. The water for the tank is sourced from Kamalapura tank through stone aqueducts visible on the north side. This tank was found during the excavations by ASI. (Structure: 14)

Large Public Bath (Great Tank)

This tank is the largest hydraulic feature located in the Royal Enclosure. It has a rectangular water basin measuring 67 m x 22 m and stepped courses built of stone, brick and lime concrete on all sides. In the middle of each side are narrow platforms, each with four stone columns, now mostly fallen. The columns facing the water basin are carved with composite animals. On the west side is a mandapa built on an elevated platform. Plaster covered brick steps on the east and stone steps on the west leads to



Aerial view of Large Public Bath (Great Tank)

the water. A sewage system for letting used water out of the tank is observed on the south side of the plastered floor of the tank. In the northeast corner is a sluice that once carried water in to this tank from Kamalapura tank, a principal source of water during the Vijayanagara period. A plaster covered walkway can also be seen around the tank. (Structure: 15)

Another interesting structure, is located in between the Stepped Tank and the Great Tank. This structure is defined by a square brick chamber and column footings (pillared hall) all around it. The chamber has a square platform of schist stone measuring 2 m x 2 m at the centre and an opening on the north. (Structure: 16)

Outside the enclosure wall, on north side, is an exquisitely carved monolithic door and two stone posts along with a mortar machine. The original location of these is not known. The door carved out of



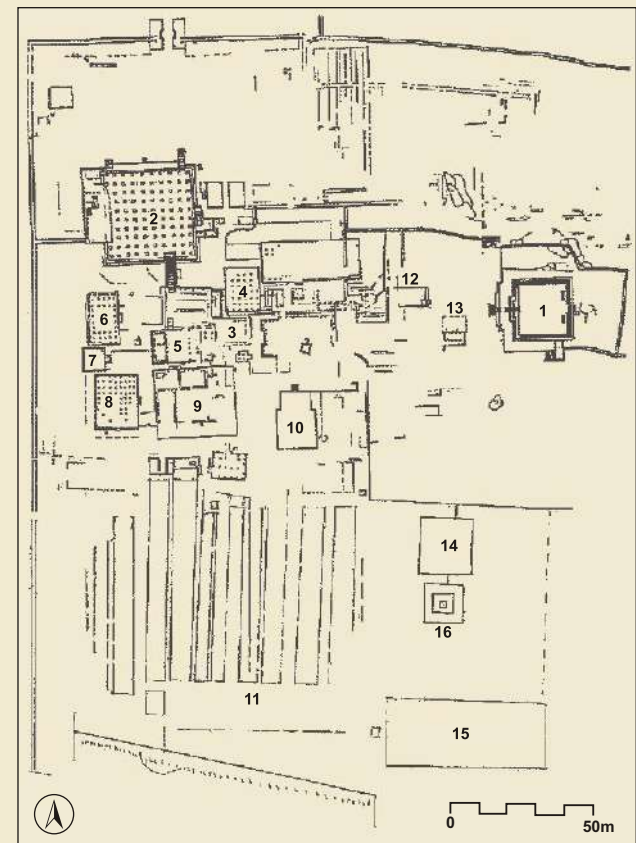
Structure: 16



Monolithic Door

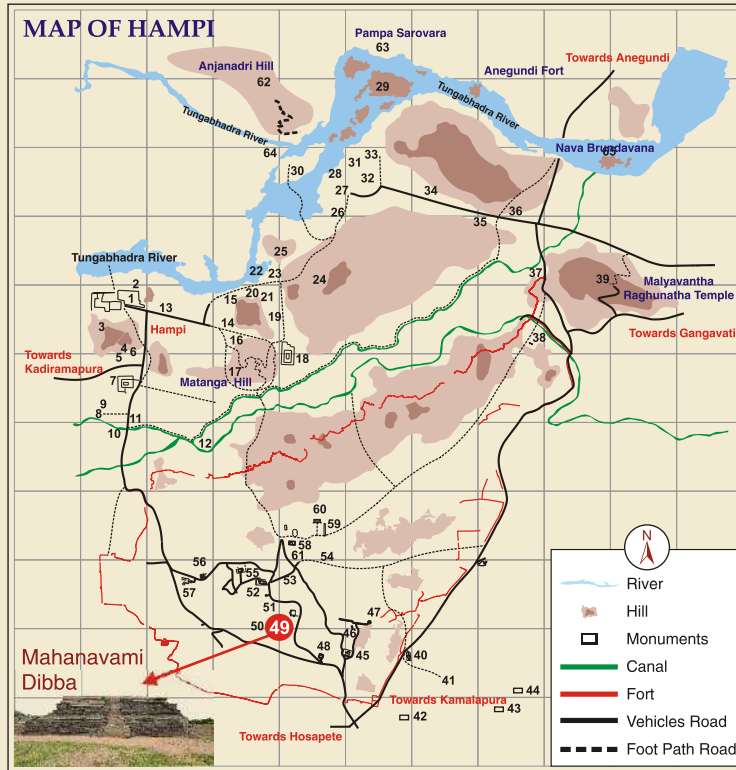
a single stone is 3.3 m x 0.9 m in dimension. It is an imitation of the wooden original as indicated by detailed carvings including bolt sockets. The two stone posts along with mortar machine, is found further west of the monolithic door.

The Royal Enclosure with its wide array of structures gives us a glimpse of the architectural marvel as well as the social and political life of the Vijayanagara Empire.



Site Plan: Royal Enclosure

MAP OF HAMPI



1. Virupaksha Temple
2. Manmatha Honda
3. Group of monuments at Hemakuta Hill
4. Two Storeyed Mandapa
5. Sasivekalu Ganesha
6. Kadalekalu Ganesha Temple
7. Krishna Temple
8. Lakshmi Narasimha Temple (Narasimha Statue)
9. Badavilinga Temple
10. Chandikeswara Temple
11. Uddhana Virabhadra Temple
12. Thurtu Kaluve (Canal)
13. Hampi Bazaar
14. Greenlaw's Photo Gallery
15. Kampa Bhupa Marga
16. Yeduru Basavanna (Monolithic Bull)
17. Matanga Hill
18. Achyutaraya (Tiruvengalanatha) Temple
19. Soolai Bazaar (Achyutapete)
20. Yantroddharak Anjaneya Temple
21. Kodanda Rama Temple
22. Chakratirtha
23. Varaha Temple
24. Narasimha Temple
25. Sri Raghunandanatirtha Brundavana
26. Gateway
27. King's Balance
28. Purandara Mandapa
29. Sri Naraharitirtha Brundavan
30. Stone Bridge
31. Inscribed Vishnu Temple
32. Vitthala Temple
33. Brahma Vitthala Temple
34. Pushkarni
35. Kuduregombe Mandapa
36. Gejjala Mandapa
37. Talarigatta Gate
38. Ahmed Khan's Mosque
39. Malyavanta Raghunatha Temple
40. Ganagitti Jaina Temple
41. Bhima's Gateway
42. ASI Museum
43. Pattabhirama Temple
44. Domed Gate
45. Chandrasekhara Temple
46. Saraswati Temple
47. Octagonal Water Pavilion
48. Queen's Bath
49. Mahanavami Dibba
50. Stepped Tank
51. King's Audience Hall
52. Hazara Ramachandra Temple
53. Pan Supari Bazaar
54. Pattana Yellamma Temple
55. Palace of Vira Harihara
56. Noblemen's Quarter
57. Prasanna Virupaksha (Underground Shiva) Temple
58. Lotus Mahal
59. Elephant's Stable
60. Guards' House
61. Ranga Temple
62. Anjanadri Hill
63. Pampa Sarovara
64. Chandramouleshwara Temple
65. Nava Vrindavana

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