Reminiscing History, Reviving Lost Heritage

Parnavi Shrikant Bangar[1]

[1]*Architect, Maharashtra, India.*

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Abstract - *"Hampi" group of monuments is a UNESCO World Heritage site, like most of the harmed monuments the site is in ruins. The research focuses on transcending the ruinous state to its actual existence in time by virtue of graphics and imagery. Its Reminiscence can give the actual impact of this iceberg. Previous efforts in this matter explore reconstruction in the form of 3D models, which limits to give an impactful outside application and to differentiate between the existing structure and revived drawing. All over the world, we can see multiple approaches to restore and remember the lost Heritage, which articulates the need for innovative ideas. Reinterpreting the entirety of the complex in its true scale, consists of a study of existing literature, visitor's journals, miniature sculptures on intact structures, and the monument itself, following steps like determining the height of the structure, vertical elements, etc. The product of this analysis is in the form of graphic illustrations which becomes universal, allowing innovation without strangulating the continuity of tradition. Furthermore, the venture tries to generate a modular process of Form Finding, which can be used as a framework to re-interpret other historic sites as well. One of its on-site applications is in the form of transparent signage in front of the monument. The main intention of this innovation is to add on to the ruins something awe-inspiring that seems to be missing, something to spare a thought for, along with the game-changing intensions to benefit the monuments themselves.*

*Key Words**: Heritage, Restoration, Ruins, Hampi, Underground Shiva Temple, Architecture, Illustrations, Vijayanagara*

1. INTRODUCTION: Lost Heritage

Figure 1: Pushkarni, Vigaya Vitthala Temple

History is the root of our culture and Historic monuments are the elements that bind it together. The ancient rituals and festivals are often entangled with architecture, standing to this day. Today as called the "City of Ruins", the Hampi group of monuments is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Like most of the harmed monuments, the site is in ruins, which has disconnected it from Culture sensitive rituals. The land has over 1600 ancient sites in the state of decay and some intact Temples. The massiveness of what remains, the beauty of carvings, and the spread of the complexes make it incommensurable and unique from others. Highlights of these remnants include Temple Complexes, Royal Enclosures, Townships, Bazar streets, Water Tanks, Defence Architecture, and Hydraulic Technologies like Aqueducts. Can we only imagine its actual existence? Can that imagination be retouched?

Figure 2: Rangamandapa base, **Figure 3:** Illustration

2. Existing Recreations

Previous efforts in this matter explore reconstruction in the form of 3D models, following are done by Vijayanagara Research Project (published in 2014) and Digital Hampi, a project for preserving Indian Cultural Heritage (published in 2017). These renderings are available on their websites, books, and publications available online. This limits to give an impactful outside application for the benefit of ruins at the site and to easily differentiate between the existing structure and revived drawing. All over the world, we can see multiple techniques to restore and remember the lost Heritage, which detects the need for new ideas.

Figure 4: Vijayanagara Research Project.

Figure 5: Digital Hampi. References: [2], [3].

3. Roots of Imagination

What we see is a fact, in order to achieve the unseen, one has to collect all the pieces of the puzzle. Re-interpreting the

entirety of the complex in its true scale requires theory, expressed through existing literature about Vijayanagara, visitor's journals, miniature sculptures on intact structures, surrounding typologies, architecture style, material language, and analysis of the monument itself. This venture intends to formulate 'form finding process' a modular concept to re-imagine other ancient ruins as well.

Figure 6: Spice market, Vijaya Vitthala Temple

4.1 Ancient Architecture

'Architecture observes itself historically' (Hadid and Schumacher), its evolution gives us the typologies we study today. The challenge of re-imagination is highly contextual, associated with the topography and architecture of that region. Dravidian form, style, language and principles of architecture, development in a temple complex, use of grids, philosophies, elements of construction play a pivotal role in redesigning. Hampi was ruled by Sangama Dynasty, Chola Dynasty, Tuluva Dynasty, later concurred by Deccan sultans, giving this region a wide range of Dravidian styles of architecture. The relations of the Vijayanagara Empire were excellent with Jains, Muslims, and Foreigners which lead to the existence of Jain temples, Indo-Islamic architecture, and use of foreign materials.

In order to understand the steps of form finding, let's consider Gopuram of Underground Shiva Temple for instance. Situated between the Royal Enclosure and Bhima's gateway, this unique example is positioned sunken from the actual ground level and the Garbhagriha is partially underwater.

4.2 Analysing the Remnants

The first step is to analyze things at hand, it could be the base of the structure, plinth, foundation, or parts of the super-structure. Analysis of the remains will form the base for further investigation. Our example here, the base of the Underground Shiva Temple's Gopuram was an addition to this temple complex during the reign of Emperor Sri Krishnadevaraya. This particular structure was never completed entirely, as the empire was already at war, leaving only the base that we see today. The carvings on the base give a gist about how intriguing the top carvings would be. As it is an addition to an existing complex, it is intrinsic to represent similarities, taking in the surroundings into the field of analysis.

Figure 7: Base of Gopuram of Underground Shiva Temple

4.3 Essence of the Structure

The sole 'purpose' of the monument is its Inception. Here the purpose is religious, hence the deity being worshipped is the origin. Sculptures, carvings, details revolve around it, the smallest of details can tell us the deity that temple is dedicated to. The deity here is Lord Shiva and the study of Gopurams in other Shiva Temples can tell us the associated elements. The purpose can vary from institutional, political, household, organizational like structures for water management, etc. Details on the remains and surrounding monuments in the vicinity can suggest the kind of essence the lost structure must have had. Recreations will be influenced by these references only.

4.4 Determining the Height of the Structure

Traditionally Vijayanagara expresses stone structures in combination with brick for royal monuments and roofs of timber like Chandan wood in some cases, which were burnt at the time of the invasion. "Maha-Navmi Dibba" is one such example of a timber structure of 9 stories with a stone base, leaving only a massive plinth on site today. The extent and spread of the base are crucial in understanding the height of the structure, these dimensions can give us a tentative height the plinth can structurally withstand. The use of grids is seen in horizontality but a ratio is recurring in the proportionality of the vertical elevation with which we can further divide the height of the structure in progressive intervals. Some thumb rules are, the understanding of skyline in a temple complex-the height of the outermost Gopuram will be the highest and the Vimana of Garbha-Griha shortest, floors of existing Gopurams are considered for assuming floors of the broken, literature about the monument like the Maha-Navmi Dibba and on-site evidence of grooves for columns, joineries, parts of roofs and parapets, etc.

4.5 Vertical Principles

Mathematics and tessellation go hand in hand, the focal attributes of verticality of an elevation flow the viewer's attention to the sky dramatically. Multiple principles pointed out in the following picture contribute to the moment of vision. In religious monuments a philosophy that the temple is a house of god and god is generally associated with the universe it is understandable that the sky retains a special

value. In structures of different typologies, the function evolves the vertical principles. Some principles are explained in the following picture figuratively.

Vertical Principles viz. Projection, Staggering, Progressive Multiplication, Bursting of Boundaries, Splitting, Expanding Repetition, Pictorial Representation. Reference: [7].
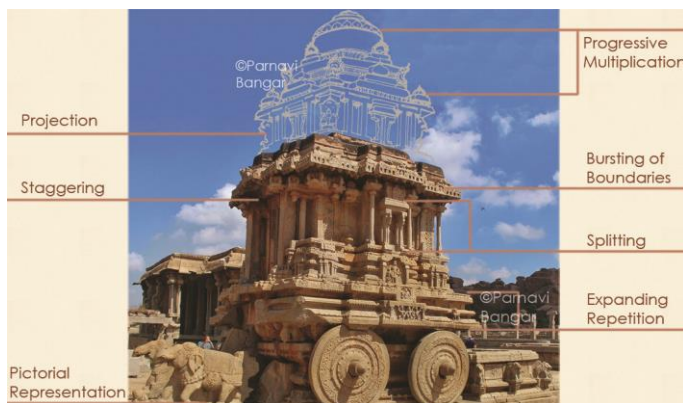

Figure 8: Stone Chariot

4.6 Width of the floors

Perceiving the vertical principles the width proportion gradually diminishes as the structure narrows down in the vertical axis, which induces balance in the elevation. In religious models like Gopurams, the chamfering is progressive fractionally directly proportional to the height. In non-religious models, the standardization of this proportion differs with respect to the function. Often the structures are restricted to the ground floor along with parapets of bricks on a stone slab with refined carvings is likely to be seen. Blocks of Basar streets, mandapas, Storage units, covered passages around Pushkarnis, housing units these are some such examples.

Figure 9: Steps

Figure 10: Completion of Gopuram of Underground Shiva Temple

5. Reminiscence

Accumulating all the data and analysis in the form-finding process as discussed, with a dramatic touch of figurative detailing, we witness the reviving of an incomplete icon. As for the example considered, refinement of standard elements like multiple stories of Gopuram, their skylights, and Kalasha- the barrel-vaulted head, carvings of Lord Shiva and a few designs inspired by existing sculptures in the temple complex evolves into the final visual. A revived graphic of this entrance base pictures the forgotten skyline of that era, the ancient architecture and paints a photographic memory to the eidetic history.

Antiquity is often associated with stories of the old days, while listening to one we all picture a thematic representation as per our imagination. The creative energy that has redefined the fascination of the past, deepens the bars of curiosity for one's inspiration. Once a new perspective is obtained the mind starts thinking ingeniously. This curiosity can be utilized for seeking attention and for generating awareness. Historic information is available on boards near every monument but that too is photographed and left behind in most instances, tourists are revolving around the guides, and locals are preoccupied with myths. Hampi is at its pinnacle of fame where footfall is increasing day by day by national and international tourists, yet occasions like the destruction of monuments due to illegal mining and the wrath of youngsters for a YouTube video take place even today. The main intention of this innovation is to add on to the ruins something awe-inspiring that seems to be missing, something to spare a thought for.

Reinterpretation of a forgotten monument can strengthen its bond with the younger generation, their curiosity has no limits. This venture can take a new turn for the documentation of ancient wonders. The involvement of softwares and new technology can grow the contribution of the youth. There can be limitless applications to this reconstruction from the development of a travel-assist mobile application to formulate walk-throughs for tourists with information and visuals of the heritage site, to a complete digitalized 4D experience through VR- Virtual Reality of this Dravidian marvel at the time of its glory. The Form finding process can be useful for redesigning a piece of work from that era, like movie sets with aesthetics that go back in time viz. Mohenjo-Daro, a film recalling the Harappan civilization or Bahubali, with a new yet relatable ancient setting. As the procedure is modular the outcomes on other sites can be parallel, making the reminiscence of lost historic models possible. For sites unlike Hampi which are facing negligence, re-interpretation can have a good impact. The illustration can be printed graphically on transparent signage and placed in front of the monument, seen through which the ruinous structure in front will be perceived as its actual entirety of existence. Reminiscence is mere one step in the pool of imagination, a portal to history, its improvisation can be extraordinary.
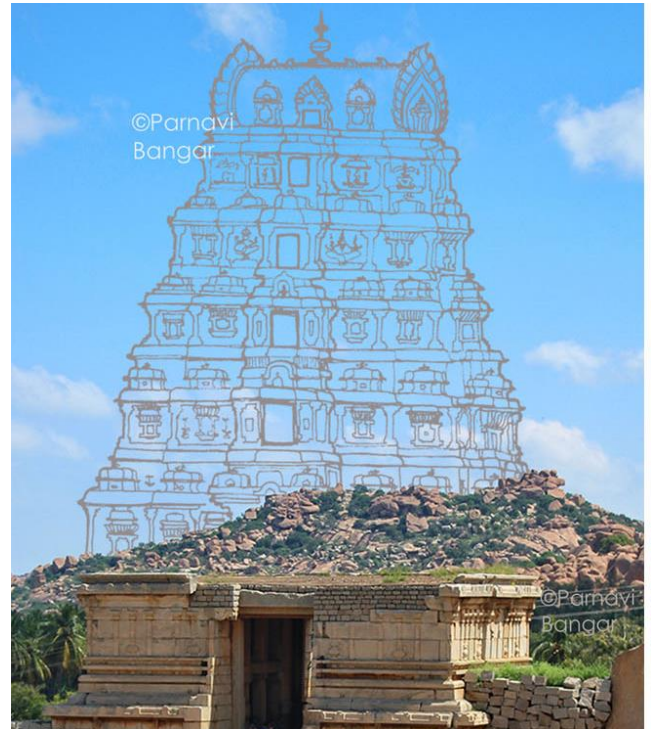
Figure 11: Signage in front of Stone Chariot

6. Revived Illustrations, Hampi

Figure 12: Vijaya Vithhala Temple

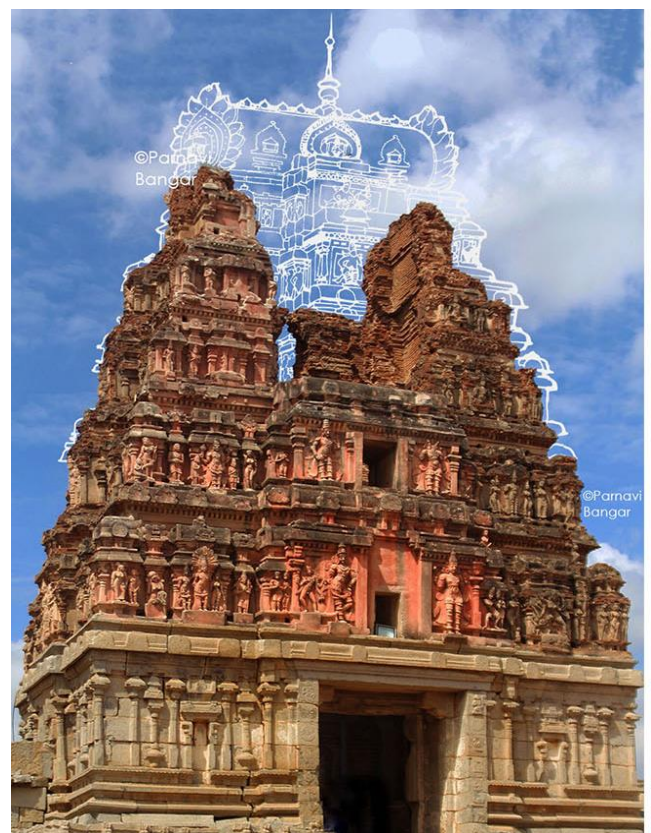**Figure 13:** Virupaksha Temple Gopuram

Figure 14: Vijaya Vitthala Temple Gopuram
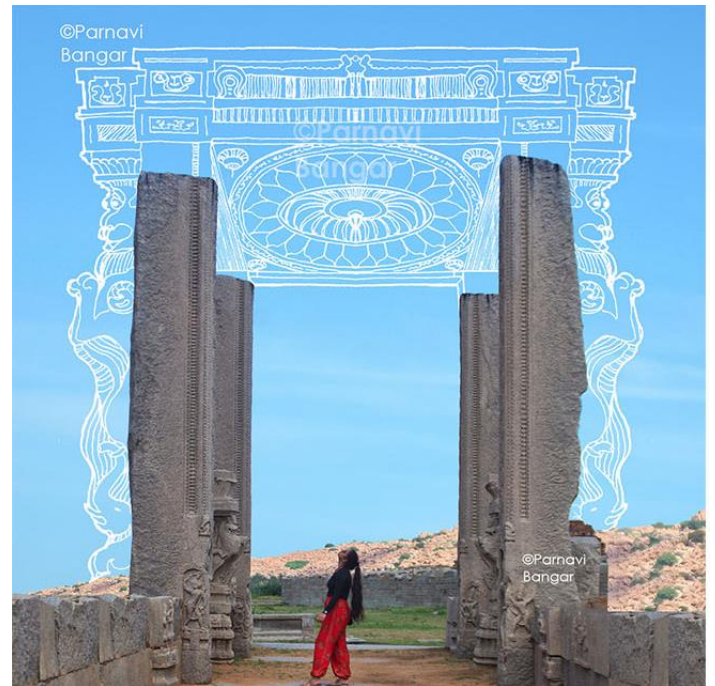
Figure 15: Lakshmi Narsimha

Figure 17: A doorway Structure near Vijaya Vitthala Temple Complex

Figure 16: Achyutaraya Temple Gopuram

Figure 18: Mahanavmi Dibba, Kings Palace in Royal Enclosure

Figure 19: Vijaya Vitthala Temple Complex

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BIOGRAPHY

Ar. Parnavi S Bangar is the founder of Reminiscing History an online effort of showcasing reimagined historic monuments. Her previous published work includes Bhutan an insight into architectural geography, photography and research.

Find out more about Reminiscing History on Social Media:
Reminiscing History (@Reminiscing_Hst) / Twitter
Parnavi Bangar (@reminiscing_history) • Instagram photos and videos