Known by various names, of which the most familiar is gavākṣa (‘cow eye’ or ‘ray-eye’), the horseshoe arch form is an omnipresent feature in both of the classical languages of Indian temple architecture, the northern Nāgara and the southern Drāviḍa. Though often regarded simply as an ornament, as implied in such phrases as ‘the niche pediment is adorned with caitya arch motifs’, the gavākṣa is not only ubiquitous, but also integral to the Nāgara and the Drāviḍa, having been a basic element in the range of timber structures which provided the initial imagery for both of the two broad traditions of monumental sacred architecture in brick or stone. Gavākṣas play a role not merely in the decoration of temples, but in their composition. At times they are the essential component in architectural patterns which convey (both within an individual monument and in the evolution of the patterns through the course of a tradition) a process of emergence, expansion, proliferation and subsequent dissolution. Such expression, through formal means, seems to embody a vision of cosmic manifestation, and to do so in a more intrinsic way than through the kind of associational overtone implied in the assertion that the gavākṣa ‘retains as its outline the shape of the arch of vegetation, the shape of Prakṛti’. In any case, aside from composition and regardless of symbolism, the shapes of gavākṣas tell their own story, providing the surest hallmark.

Figure 1: Early horseshoe arch windows and gavākṣas: a. window type shown in relief carvings, with shading device; b. window type depicted in caitya hall façades, with open wooden screen; c. window on a fragment from Mathura, c third century AD; d. gavākṣa on a fragment near the Gupta temple, Deogarh (Uttar Pradesh) c AD 500; e. gavākṣa from the Old Temple, Gop (Saurashtra), c AD 600; f. from the Laksmana temple, Sirpur (Chattisgarh), c early seventh century.
of style, the most reliable indication of the time and place to which a temple belongs and of the guild or workshop which made it. While the quirks and inflections of the flowing outlines must often have arisen through unconscious habit, a typology of gavākṣa shapes can be seen to have been widely recognised by the craftsmen, and used deliberately for the sake of variation and identity.

This paper focuses on the gavākṣas found in Nāgara traditions of temple architecture, taking account of the role that they play in the different modes of Nāgara temple. It traces their origins in wooden buildings known through relief carvings and rock-cut monuments, describing the earlier varieties, identifying the types which prevailed during the heyday of temple building between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, and noting certain regional variations. One particular form is identified as the standard ‘mainstream’ Nāgara type across a very wide area, albeit with regional variants and evolving through time. The geometrical basis of this type is analysed here for the first time, allowing an explanation of the geometry of the increasingly complex combinations of gavākṣa motifs which developed.

EARLY GAVĀKṢAS
The origin of the gavākṣa lies in ancient Indian wooden architecture, as seen in narrative reliefs on the tōraṇas (archways) and railings of stūpas from the first and second centuries BC and AD. Bharhut (Figures 2, 3), Sanchi and Amaravati have provided the best known examples of such reliefs, while the recently excavated stūpa site at Kanganahalli, published in Michael Meister’s paper in this volume, is an important addition to the corpus. Reliefs of this kind depict shrines, mansions and city gateways in which barrel-roofs, thatched or occasionally tiled, are conspicuous. Distinctive horseshoe gable boards adorn the ends of these roofs, and often also the dormer windows projecting from their flanks. Lower down, rounded canopies shade balconies and verandas, and these canopies too may contain horseshoe dormers. A typical gable opening from these early reliefs is shown with the ends of two longitudinal beams supporting a lateral brace, and a woven shading device with three lobes to allow the beam ends to pass through (Figures 1a, 4).

Figure 2: Relief on a stūpa railing from Bharhut (MP), c second century BC, showing horseshoe gables on a shrine and a barrel-roofed mansion; now in the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photo courtesy of American Institute of Indian Studies.

Figure 3: Relief on tōraṇa (gateway) from Bharhut, showing wooden ‘caitya hall’ with nave and aisles. Photo courtesy of American Institute of Indian Studies.
Barrel-roofed wooden structures were translated into stone in rock-cut sanctuaries, their gable ends represented on the cliff face, thus given a prominence which invited both formal elaboration and symbolic association. An early example is the Lomāś Rṣi cave in the Barabar Hills near Gaya (Bihar), c third century BC (Figure 5). Although its interior chamber is in fact at right angles to the façade, the façade represents the end of a long roof, in this case a keel shape, with timber constructional details faithfully reproduced. Still rather like petrified carpentry are the Buddhist rock-cut ‘caitya halls’ carved in the Western Ghats between the first century BC and the second century AD. These barrel-roofed spaces are mainly apsidal-ended, housing a stūpa in the apse, with side aisles, roofed with half-barrels, meeting at the rear to form a circumambulatory passage (Figures 6, 3). The great horseshoe arch ‘caitya window’ in the façade illuminates the stūpa in the depths. Running outwards towards the gable, longitudinal joists pass across a ribcage of hooped beams, all cut in stone, and radiate out into the sunlight. Repetition of blind ‘caitya arch’ forms at a small scale across the façades of caitya halls mark the beginning of the use of this motif as an ornamental or articulating device (Figure 7). The usual form (Figure 1b), already in the early narrative reliefs (Figures 2, 3) an alternative to the type with the three-lobed shading device, contains the representation of a timber screen with radiating spokes. This pattern looks like a perspective view into a caitya hall, but that it implies a screen is confirmed by the wooden one surviving in the gable of the caitya hall at Karle (c first century AD). As at the Lomāś Rṣi, short horizontal props are shown between the vertical posts and sides of the roof.

In Gandhara, around the second century AD, the kind of barrel-roofed building typified by the caitya hall was already being rendered in structural masonry for the sake of its exterior image rather than its interior layout. This is the case in the ruined Court of the Stupa at the monastery of Takht-i-Bahi, surrounded by small shrines alternately of the ‘caitya hall’ type (Figure 8a) and a circular-domed form, respectively housing stūpas and Buddha images in a simple square sanctum. At this date, a miniature depiction of the same ‘caitya hall’ shrine form was commonly used in Gandhara as a niche-surround or aedicule (Figure 8b).

Meanwhile around Mathura, the other extreme of the Kushana empire, ornamental treatment of the surfaces of horseshoe gables attained unprecedented lushness and variety, as can be seen in surviving fragments (Figures 1c, 9, 10). These qualities were accompanied by an increasing stylisation of the linear outline of the motif, which went hand in hand with the
transformation of the imagery of wooden buildings into an architectural language for brick or stone monuments. By the fifth century the topknot of the gavākṣa had become bushy, the upturned ‘ears’ curvaceous and alert. These characteristics are typical of the gavākṣas of Gupta temples (Figures 1d, 11, 12, 13, cf 14). The giant sun windows of the fifth-century caitya halls of Ajanta (Figure 15) are similar, but with a face finial, later typical (in horned leonine form) of Drāviḍa traditions in southern India (cf. 1f, 16).
As if to afford a view through the gable window into an interior world, the caitya hall cross section is sometimes placed inside early gavākṣas, complete with miniature pillars (Figure 16). When the pillars are omitted, a trefoil remains – the origin of cusping. In the seventh-century temples of Dakṣiṇa Kōsala (Figure 1f) the view through the gable is a perspective vista down the nave, stylised to the extent that the pillars are joined by loops. (This foreshadows a similar phenomenon in the Drāviḍa traditions of the following century, in which the pillars are freely bent, then disappear, leaving billowing cusps.)
GAVĀKŚAS AND THE MODES OF NĀGARA TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Gavākśas are an integral part of all the principal Nāgara shrine forms or modes – Valabhī, Phāṃsana, Latina, Śekhari and Bhūmija. Here I am using ‘mode’ to mean a basic shape of Nāgara temple, determining a particular way of organising the components of the Nāgara ‘language’, as opposed to ‘style’, which I am using in the sense of the character, manifest in small details, which betrays a work as having been made by a particular group of people.

Figure 12: Fragment at the Gupta temple, Deogarh, c AD 500. Photo courtesy of American Institute of Indian Studies.

Figure 13: Overdoor at Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh), sixth century, now in Sarnath museum. The miniature pavilions are alternately Phāṃsana with a Valabhī projection and Valabhī on a Phāṃsana background, illustrating the close connection between the two modes. Photo courtesy of American Institute of Indian Studies.
The Valabhi mode especially, defined by its rectangular plan and barrel roof, is dominated by gavākṣas, which form its gable ends. Its simplest form has a single barrel roof, but more often there is a half barrel on either side (Figure 17a); and it should be borne mind that it is the exterior image which is important, the interior being simply a rectangular sanctum. Although the form recalls a square-ended caitya hall, having been derived from the same kind of timber prototype, the comparison has its limits, as even the most basic Valabhi shrines have an eave-cornice (kapotālā) capping the wall, indicating that the superstructure is conceived as an upper pavilion, forming a second storey.

The Valabhi concept goes back as far as second-century Gandhara, as illustrated by the barrel-roofed shrines of Takht-i-Bahi (Figure 8a). Valabhi aedicules – that is, images of Valabhi shrines used as elements of a composite temple design – were placed at the centre of proto-Nāgara compositions of the sixth century.2 By the seventh century, the newly mature Latina temples regularly displayed niche surrounds treated as Valabhi aedicules (Figures 18, 19) – another idea foreshadowed in Gandhara. The earliest surviving full-size Valabhi temples, however, belong to eighth-century central India. An example is the Mātā-kā-mandir, Nareshara, shown in Figure 22 with the upper parts conjecturally restored. Here the basic Valabhi shrine form with ‘side aisles’ has become an upper tier, raised on a further bhūmi (level), the top of which is defined by amalaka-crowned corner pavilions just like those seen in contemporary Latina shrines. A central projection (bhadra), rising up into the superstructure, takes the form of a tall Valabhi aedicule. In the wall zone, but overlapping the cornice, projects a niche or wall-shrine that is

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Figure 14: Gavākṣas on a lion capital at Eran (Madhya Pradesh), c fifth century.

Figure 15: Façade of caitya hall (Cave 26), Ajanta (Maharashtra), fifth century.

Figure 16: Niche pediment from the façade of the caitya hall known as the Višvakarma Cave (Cave 10), Ellora (Maharashtra), c 650.
also a Valabhi aedicule, but one that is already entering a new phase of more complicated, overlapping gavākṣa patterning. This example illustrates the dynamic character of the Valabhi, already suggested in Figure 16. The sense of movement is achieved through the combined principles of splitting (the pairs of half gavākṣas, though originally indicating side aisles, are conceived as having belonged to a single arch which has split, the halves gliding apart) and projection (the embedded, stepped out shrine images seemingly de-telescoping one from another).

Valabhi shrines are rare after the eighth century, but the form lives on and continues to develop as a component of other kinds of Nāgara temple. Not least, the Valabhi is the form of the antefix or śukanāsa (‘parrot’s beak’) of all the Nāgara modes. Valabhi niches continue to be the predominant variety. Free from the constraints imposed by an actual structure, it is in the superstructures of niches (along with the spine or lata of the Latina tower) that, from the eighth century onwards, proliferated, fragmented, overlapped gavākṣa patterns develop (Figures 20, 21). The different Sanskrit terms given to this kind of niche pediment may reflect the authentic terminology of canonical texts, but obscures the fact that the form is a development of the Valabhi concept, and that it is the niche as a whole, not its pediment alone, which represents in miniature an emergent Valabhi shrine.

In the Phāmsana mode, whether the shallow, ‘pent roof’ type (Figure 17b) or the steeper kinds, gavākṣas punctuate the layered eaves, representing dormer windows. When unfurling patterns of gavākṣas began to develop in Valabhi shrines and their miniature equivalents in aedicular niches, the arrangements of horseshoe arch gables in Phāmsana shrines followed similar patterns, splitting and proliferating, and abandoning their dormer origins by bursting through several eaves at a time. In fact, the Phāmsana
and Valabhi modes are closely allied, even if this is not obvious at first sight. Not only do Valabhī-like configurations emerge from the matrix of Phāṃsana layers, but Valabhi ‘pediments’ are hardly even found independently of a background of Phāṃsana-like eave mouldings. Even single gavākṣas retain at their base the triangular ends of a pent roof (Figures 1d, 1e, 12, 24a-c, 26). Indeed, full-scale Valabhi roofs, which at first may appear like pure barrel vaults, have eave corners at the foot of their gable ends, indicating a rectangular dome – an element which, in some Valabhi temples, is fully articulated and conspicuous.

The curved śikhara (‘spire’) of a Latina shrine (Figure 17c) has vestigial, Phāṃsana-like pavilions at the corners, displaying gavākṣa patterns which follow the general trends. Its central spine (lata, meaning ‘creeper’) is derived through a merging together of superimposed Valabhi aedicules to create a cascading band of gavākṣas winking through piled eave mouldings. In early examples, such as the Galaganātha, Pattadakal (Figure 23a), half-gavākṣas draw apart to reveal vistas into colonnaded depths, as a new, whole gavākṣa grows out in the middle. At the base of the lata is an intact, composite Valabhi element, and the wide recess contains minor Valabhi aedicules (balapañjara). The recess gradually disappears, and the sense of inner depth is lost as gavākṣas proliferate and overlap (Figure 23b). Eventually, overlap gives way to coalescence of gavākṣas, losing any suggestion of different planes. At this point the overlain pattern is like a woven tissue, and is termed a jāla (‘net’).

The Śekharī and Bhūmija (Figures 17d, 17e), established respectively by the tenth and eleventh centuries, are composite modes, both developing out of the Latina and with embedded Latina śikhara forms as components. They thus inherit gavākṣas along with the Latina spirelets. Gavākṣas play a less crucial role than in the earlier modes because of their reduced scale in the miniature śikhara, together with the prevalence at this stage of tightly spun jālas in which the importance of the individual motif is undermined, and the shift from frontal gable explosions to a centrifugal unfurling
of interpenetrating, three-dimensional components. Bhūmija shrines, nevertheless, keep the prominent lata, and display at its foot a giant gavākṣa (mahānāsī) which crowns a Valabhī-like centrepiece to the whole composition. Moreover, in Bhūmija temples gavākṣas seem not only to be a stylistic hallmark, but to be a conscious one, marking off the guilds who specialised in this mode.

NĀGARA GAVĀKṢA TYPES
Up to the seventh century the general proportions of gavākṣas vary. Then a norm is established, which may be termed the ‘standard Nāgara gavākṣa’. The form is widespread for some six centuries from the Gangetic plains to the west coast, at times reaching southward to the Deccan, eastwards to Orissa, and northward to the Himalayan foothills. The standardisation of this gavākṣa, descended directly from the ‘Gupta’ type, is due above all to the adoption of one particular grid (Figure 25). The grid may be stretched vertically, making rectangles rather than squares, to give more elongated proportions. To some extent the grid determines the shape, for example in the flattening of the tops of the ears, level with the top of the inner circle, and their little declivities responding to the vertical gridlines.
a-c: the ‘standard’ type (following standard grid), a. seventh to eighth centuries, b. ninth to tenth centuries (Mahā-Gurjara version), c. tenth to thirteenth centuries.

d. alternative, ‘bushy eared’ type, often used in secondary positions.

e-g: gavākṣas typical of Bhūmija temples (eleventh to thirteenth centuries), a. linear version of d, b. ‘pipal leaf’ motif, c. onion-shaped form of mahānasīs.

h-j: gavākṣas of the Pāla realms (tenth and eleventh centuries), a. relaxed version of the standard form, b. form found on Pāla period stūpas, c. vase shaped form.

k-m: Orissan gavākṣas, a. Orissan version of the seventh-century mainstream standard, b. gavākṣa at the Mukhteśvara temple, Bhuvaneshvara (c AD 960), c. eleventh-century meandering gavākṣa.
During the seventh century a strikingly uniform ‘mainstream’ style is found among Nāgara temples throughout central India, extending from Nalanda (Bihar) to Pattadakal (Karnataka) and Alampur (Andhra Pradesh). A hallmark of this style is an open-faced and pearly version of the new standard gavāksa (Figures 18, 24a, 25). This form lives on in central India through the eighth century, with little change, though becoming a little drier and less pearly as gavāksas proliferate. The broader picture of the standard type, however, is both of evolution of the shape, and at the same time of the appearance of regional variations, with their own characteristic flourishes and inflections, all without changing the standard grid. For example, the masons of the Mahā Gurjara created an incomparably crisp and curvaceous form, used in both linear and (in minor positions) surface versions (Figures 26, 27). Here the outer edge of the arch, as well as the inner opening, follows a circle. This western Indian style flourished between the eighth and tenth centuries, creating first Latina temples (Figure 23b) and eventually Śekharī ones, all the while recognisable by the character of its gavāksas.

Notwithstanding regional diversity, the gradual evolution of the standard gavāksa shape followed comparable trends all over central and western India, exaggerating the curves and loops, and progressively extending the ears laterally, as far as the edge of the grid or even beyond. By the end of the tenth century many parts of those regions had arrived at sharp and wasp-like versions of the standard gavāksa (Figures 24c, 29 upper, 31, cf 39). While similar kinds of transformation might have happened organically in separate traditions, the picture is, rather, one of interchange and general awareness of the latest fashions. This impression is confirmed by the far-flung knowledge of an alternative, bushy-eared gavāksa form (Figure 24d).

Common throughout central and western India by the tenth century, it is found side-by-side with the standard form (Figures 31, 32), consistently used in lesser positions, especially as a dormer to an eave-moulding in the base or the cornice.
Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries temples of the Bhūmija mode were built in and around Mālava (Malwa, western Madhya Pradesh), Seunādeśa (north-west Maharashtra) and in the Deccan. The architects specialised in this mode seem to have been determined to maintain a distinctive ‘style’. They did not therefore widely adopt the standard gavākṣa, though they knew it, but chose as their staple form the bushy-eared type used elsewhere as a second class gavākṣa. This they favoured both in its surface version (Figure 24d) and, especially, its linear one (Figure 24e). Another stylistic hallmark of this tradition is the ‘pical leaf’ or ‘moonstone’ motif (Figures 24f, 34), which properly speaking belongs at the waist of a pillar, and is therefore seen all over the pilaster-lined walls of Bhūmija shrines. The motif
Figure 32: The same two types used together again at the Bājrā Math, Gyaraspur (Madhya Pradesh), tenth century.

Figure 33: Mahākāleśvara temple no. 2, Un (Madhya Pradesh), c late eleventh century: lata (‘creeper’ spine) and giant gavaksha, both typical of a Bhūmiya temple.

Figure 34: ‘Pipal leaf’ motif at the Bījamandal, Vidisha (Madhya Pradesh), c late eleventh century.
evolved from the roundels with tongue-like ears seen on stūpa railings and early pillars, the roundels gradually, in the Deccan, acquiring points and becoming elongated. Although not strictly a gavākṣa, this motif was seen as belonging to the same family, to be alternated with varied gavākṣa forms as a miniature niche pediment (Figure 35). One further gavākṣa type is characteristic of Bhūmija temples: an onion-shaped type of Deccani character, with a monster finial and streaming ears, used for the large gavākṣa (mahānāsī) crowning the bhadra (cardinal projection) (Figures 24g, 33).
Eastern India, as reflected in its *gavākṣas*, had sporadic contact with central Indian traditions and also developed its own forms. Nalanda (Bihar), the great Buddhist university, had its own characteristic types during the sixth and seventh centuries. In the latter century a temple of the purest ‘mainstream’ Nāgara was built there (*Figure 25*). In temples built under the Pāla dynasty (late eighth to early twelfth centuries) knowledge of central Indian forms is evident, especially in the western part of their realms, where the geometry of *gavākṣa jālas* (explained below) has been understood. But the attitude to the standard mainstream *gavākṣa*, when it appears in isolation, is relaxed and non-geometrical (*Figure 2h, cf 24i, 36*). A special, vase shaped *gavākṣa* type (*Figure 24j, 37*) is also found in many temples of the Pāla period.

In Orissa it is not easy to trace the kind of continuous unfolding often found elsewhere in the traditions of Indian temple architecture. Here developments are better understood in terms of a succession of influxes from other regions, each in turn assimilated. Again the details of *gavākṣas* reflect the general picture. The earliest temples, belonging to the seventh century, though already unmistakably Orissan in character, are firmly rooted in ‘mainstream’ Nāgara, as indicated by the chunky Orissan version of a standard *gavākṣa* (*Figures 19, 24k*). This type persists, until a wave of Drāvidian influence from the Deccan in the tenth century brought the form shown in *Figure 24l*. The example illustrated is from the Mukhteśvara temple, Bhuvaneshvara (*c AD 960*) (*Figure 38*). Interestingly, the *mandapa* of same temple shows evidence of renewed contact with central India, not least in the pediments of its porch-like projections. These faithfully follow the contemporary ’wasp *gavākṣa*’ then sweeping through central and western India (*Figure 39, cf 24c*). That the contact was not maintained is evident in the extremely drowsy wasp *gavākṣa* of the Rajarani temple (despite the fact that central Indian inspiration underlies the overall Śekhari form of the shrine) and the Brahmeśvara temple (*Figure 24m*).
COMBINATIONS
In the mainstream Nāgara traditions of the seventh century, Valabhi ‘pediment’ designs became more elaborate, developing through the projection of further configurations from the centre of earlier designs, and also through proliferation downwards. This unfolding of an idea, in which each stage is incorporated into a subsequent stage, illustrates a way of evolving observable in the development of various other forms and aspects of Indian temple architecture. The process tends towards fusion, the individual part getting lost in the whole, and the devices which express movement in a single design – splitting (hence fragmentation) and overlap – contribute to this dissolution as the tradition progresses. Figure 40 (top)
Figure 43: This common pattern of 'o' and 'r' motifs provides the starting point (the top) for most other patterns; it is an overlapping version of the longstanding whole-over-two-halves configuration. Drawn in Mahā-Maru style of c eighth century.

Figure 44: Pattern of 'w', 'v' and 'r' motifs, drawn in Daśarṣa daśa style of c 9th century.

Figure 45: Pattern of 'r' and 'v' motifs, drawn in Karnāṭa style of c eighth century.

Figure 46: Pattern of 'ow' 'w' and 'wo' motifs, drawn in Maru-Gurjara style of c 12th century. This pediment is very close in composition to the one shown in Figure 42, although its 'style' is very different. The gavākṣas are of an extreme kind, with ears that poke half a square beyond the grid.
shows the ‘kit of parts’ from which different compositions were made in the seventh century mainstream, continuing into the eighth century. During that century, perhaps in more than one place independently, the masons discovered a property of the standard grid which both enabled the evolution towards fusion to continue, and ensured that the same grid would survive over a wide area for centuries to come. The grid allowed them to overlap and interlock gavāksas and part-gavāksas in a rich variety of complicated patterns (Figure 40 middle and bottom, Figures 43-46). As for the individual gavāksa, the grid could be stretched and modulated: in any case, it needed to be plied to the curvature and diminution of a śikhara.

A range of combinations and permutations presented itself. Some local traditions tried out almost every conceivable combination within a few decades: this was certainly the case at Pattadakal (Karnataka) where, in the Pāpanātha temple, for example, the old and new systems were used side by side (Figure 41). Figures 43-46 show typical patterns, all made from the components shown in Figure 40 (middle). They are drawn in various ‘styles’, in the sense indicated earlier (stylistic labels following the Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture), to show how composition is independent of regional style, and to some extent of date, as certain compositions are repeated over long periods (cf Figures 42 and 46). The grid system allows minor variations to these basic arrangements. For example, ‘o’ and ‘w’ motifs are interchangeable, ‘o’ can be substituted for ‘ow’ or ‘wo’, and ‘v’ for ‘r’. The Bhumija workshops adapted the standard grid to their preferred gavāksa type and wove their own kind of mesh (Figures 48, 49). In Orissa, where such principles were not understood, the designers of the tenth century took one current gavāksa type (Figure 24f) and made jālas not by overlap but through clever shifts, as if tugging at the weft (Figure 50, cf Figure 38).

In the ‘standard’ system, however, after the eighth century, while proliferation continued, no fundamentally new patterns were invented as the possibilities of the system had been exhausted.
By providing a ready-made formula, the very geometry that had generated the patterns must have hastened their fossilisation. Depth was lost as gavākṣas were flattened out and interior vistas forgotten. Sequential growth was vestigially implied where conceptual overlap remained, but this was gradually supplanted by coalescence of motifs in a single plane. In any case, gavākṣas and their combinations, while still providing a rich texture, ceased to be the focus for invention as temple architects turned to the new composite modes, where the skill lay in combining three-dimensional aedicular elements.

In the Nāgara revivals that have taken place periodically from the fifteenth century onwards, the surfaces of śikharas have often been smooth, symbolic windows no longer seen as essential. Where a tracered veil has been applied, it has followed new and less subtle patterns, as the principles that I have tried to unravel here were lost. But in earlier centuries gavākṣas were integral to the composition, expression and meaning of temple architecture, which is why this brief survey has had to attempt a lightning history of Nāgara traditions in general. Sometimes the study of a motif and its small details cannot be kept in isolation. Through the eye of the gavākṣa we can catch sight of the great fabric into which it was woven.

Drawings are by the author. Photographs are by the author except where noted.

NOTES
2 On the formation of the Latina mode see Adam Hardy (2007), The Temple Architecture of India, Chichester: Wiley, Chapters 10 (‘Nagara shrines’) and 17 (‘Early Nagara Temples’).
3 A Simhakarnā is ‘a complex gavākṣa-pediment’; an udgama is a pediment of interconnected gavākṣa-dormers (candraśālās), according to Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture Vol.II, Part 2, North India: Beginnings of Medieval Idiom c. AD 900-1000, ed. MA Dhaky (Delhi: AIIS and IGNCA, 1998), glossary, 418, 420.
4 See note 2.
6 Argument developed in Hardy, The Temple Architecture of India, Chapter 21, ‘Temples of Eastern India’.
7 Argument developed in Hardy, The Temple Architecture of India, Chapter 6, ‘Unfolding Traditions’.