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Self-Representation and Presentation of Others in Indic Epigraphical Writing

Dániel Balogh, Annette Schmiedchen

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Self-Representation
and Presentation of Others
in Indic Epigraphical Writing

Edited by
Dániel Balogh and Annette Schmiedchen

Asien- und Afrika-Studien 63
der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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Introduction

by Annette Schmiedchen and Dániel Balogh, with contributions by Natasja Bosma

1. Preface

This volume investigates the specific forms of “self-representation” of the issuers of inscriptions in a range of epigraphic texts from South Asia, focussing on political ideology as well as on patronage policy. In this connection, “self-representation” is not to be understood as the way in which particular persons (such as kings) represent themselves, but rather as the way in which the socio-political institutions embodied in these persons (such as kingship) articulate their own representation. The contributors have paid particular attention to the description of intra-dynastic rivalries and rivalries between dynasties as well as to comparing the self-representation of dynasties and rulers with the depiction of the same kings in the records of their adversaries. They also examine the presentation of religious figures and the relationship between overlords and their subordinates. The eleven papers collected here are based on talks given at the 34th Deutscher Orientalistentag held in Berlin on 12th to 17th September 2022. With one exception, these were presented during the panel entitled “Self-Representation and Presentation of Others in Epigraphical Writing” organised by the Berlin team of the European Research Council project “The Domestication of ‘Hindu’ Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia (DHARMA).” Six of the articles in this volume are authored by DHARMA members, the remaining five by invited guests.

The panel addressed a range of questions related to epigraphic (re)presentation in South Asia. Inscriptions are far from neutral reflections of the periods in which they were produced, for they transmit texts that were created to serve particular legal, political, social, and religious purposes. The majority of pre-modern epigraphs from the subcontinent are official (or semi-official) documents of specific kinds, namely public inscriptions on stone and donative charters on copper plates. These inscriptions often contain panegyric passages

describing the kings and their dynasties, the donors, and their families, as well as religious figures and their lineages. Eulogies of the rulers and their ancestors are in most cases not factual “self-portrayals,” yet they project an image of authenticity and authority inasmuch as they are frequently said to be compositions of named court officials, and royal copperplate charters bear a seal and/or an imitated signature of the king. These panegyric descriptions contain not only “self-representation,” but also “presentation of others”: the records of sovereign rulers can include eulogies of their subordinates; and vice versa, the inscriptions of subordinates often comprise laudatory depictions of their overlords. Moreover, eulogies may contain descriptions of adversaries – intra-dynastic rivals and enemies from other dynasties –, and the presentation of opponents was used as a backdrop for self-representation.

As copperplate charters constitute the main sources of many of the papers, and as they are a specific category among the different types of epigraphic material from South Asia, their distinct features will be shortly discussed here. Such charters are official legal records, written on sheets of copper as if to emphasise their permanent character. The common purpose of these title-deeds was to report on financial support (mainly in the form of income from land) to Brahmins, temples or temple gods, monasteries, and other religious people or institutions. Their appearance became widespread after the fourth and fifth centuries CE, alongside the religious developments that took place at that time in the Indian subcontinent (Hawkes and Abbas 2016). Since most of these grants were made by a reigning king, by a member of the royal family, or by a subordinate ruler, the numerous corpora of copperplate charters preserved today are a testimony to this practice of royal endowments.

Despite the fact that the composition of these copperplate inscriptions can be diverse, they typically contain a certain set of components. The first lines often form a preamble to the official notification, usually with a religious invocation, a reference to the place of issue, an introduction to the grantor, and an address to all those involved in the grant (such as the officials concerned and the inhabitants of the granted village or land). Then follows the formal notification, in which the grant is specified, together with the name or names of the receiving party, possibly with a reference to the occasion and intention of the grant. In the last lines, the villagers are sometimes warned to pay the royal share of their crops at the proper time to the grantee, and a few relevant verses are often quoted to emphasise this exhortation. Names of functionaries or officials that were involved in the execution of the endowment may be mentioned (for example, the court poet who composed the inscription, the messenger who conveyed the order, or the goldsmith who engraved the characters on the sheets of

copper), and the grant is authenticated with a date and a final reference to the ruler.

The main focus of this volume is on the descriptions of the protagonists mentioned in copperplate charters and other inscriptions, particularly on the portrayal of the donor, generally a reigning king (e.g. Chhabra 1962, 10; Gaur 1975, x; Salomon 1998, 116). Some accounts are plain and utilitarian catalogues of the ruler's pedigree, but in a typical case they go far beyond simple lists of names and relations: they feature a cavalcade of magniloquent epithets as well as elaborations of present and past rulers' mental acuity, corporeal beauty, martial prowess, and beneficent generosity written out at length as a eulogy (*praśasti*) in poetic prose or verse. Such panegyric passages cannot be read as accurate reflections of historical events, because they combine legendary and factual history to make an inspirational narrative. But impression management requires a grain of truth to be effective. Hence, Daud Ali (2000, 184) refers to these introductions as "living narratives." For some dynasties, a standard version would be developed for all grants issued by a king during his reign, whereas changes would be made and new feats would be added whenever the political circumstances allowed or required it. The added value of the panegyrics lies not only in the extensive "self-portrayal" of the donor, but also in the references to "others" (such as overlords and subordinates) that occur along the way. The depiction of other players in the grant process, especially of the donees, is also not infrequent, although less pervasive and less extensive.

Within such passages, references to dynastic links, political actions and historic events have long been appreciated by scholars as valuable (if somewhat distorted and unreliable) sources of knowledge. Claims to various virtues have been accepted at face value by some historians (perhaps out of patriotic sentiment), but in general they received less attention from early scholars and were indeed often ignored (presumably as blatant flattery of the "oriental despot"), or perceived as an idle excrescence resulting from the dictates of fashion, worthy of attention only as exemplars of poetic expression, but as irrelevant to the historian as they are to the legal or documentary function of copperplate charters (Chhabra 1962, 10). Yet, as Emmanuel Francis (2018, 413) has recently put it, "why take so much effort in placing at the beginning of copperplate grants lengthy eulogies of kings, if these documents were not meant in the first place to be read?"

The answer begged by the question, namely that such charters were, after all, meant to be read, has received ever more recognition in the last half century or so, even though little is known about the particular circumstances in which copperplate grants may have had a "public life." The royal order embodied in

them was in at least some cases proclaimed with much pomp already prior to the issue of the copper plates (Ali 2000, 172–74), and it is plausible to assume that they were displayed and read out when a grant was first made as well as whenever a legal dispute occurred concerning the granted land (Kulke 1997, 239). Moreover, copperplate eulogies represent just one of the rather few surviving segments of a larger, dialogical “scale of texts” (Inden 2000a, 12–13), whose participants were not limited to other inscriptions in copper and stone (both of which were certainly produced in much greater numbers than the specimens now extant), but definitely included more ephemeral creations such as bardic panegyrics, royal proclamations recited by itinerant agents, and missives exchanged between rulers and other prominent personages, conveyed either orally or written on a perishable substrate. Such texts carried a similar message to varying audiences who engaged with them in different ways. The vast potential of these mass media of the time to shape (while being in turn shaped by) public perception is easy to overlook while working with the relatively small number and presumably limited reach of the lithic and copper inscriptions now available for study.

Even if that wider ecosystem of texts is disregarded, inscriptions may be seen as spreading “the standardized message of a great kingship” (Stein 1977, 17) in order to maintain a link between centre and periphery. A fanciful royal genealogy may be perceived as “an assertion of the king’s status pride couched in the idiom of kinship[, ...] an idealised view of the king as a larger-than-life figure,” and moreover as “an ideological construct, a statement about the nature of the world and the place of kingship in it” (Spencer 1984, 416). In addition to articulating sovereignty, a copperplate endowment (in all its gleaming, clangorous materiality and with the ceremony accompanying its bestowal) also had great impact on the status of the donee (Kulke 1997, 238).

Although the main focus is on epigraphy, several articles draw upon other textual sources, too. The majority of the papers study regional inscriptional corpora, often mainly consisting of copperplate charters and occasionally including stone epigraphs (Bosma, Balogh, Furu, Gururaja, Schmiedchen, Shin, Watelier-Bricout). The bulk of the records investigated here dates from the early medieval period, namely from the sixth to thirteenth centuries, and is written in Sanskrit. Some of the papers explore later inscriptions exclusively engraved on stone (Detige, Obrock) and partly composed in other languages. The epigraphic sources originate from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh. Most of the articles are philological-historical explorations of inscriptional and literary sources. In addition, some of the

contributions also make use of statistical methods (Bosma) and content analysis (Balogh). Whereas most authors study material from the reigning periods of certain rulers or dynasties, one paper provides a *longue-durée* perspective (Ghosh and Porel). Moreover, while the majority of the contributions investigate the epigraphic records of temporal rulers, two presentations focus on Jaina sources (Detige, Chojnacki).

Suchandra Ghosh and Soumya Porel explore the representation of a particular group of “others,” namely forest people, in inscriptions of the third century BCE to the twelfth century CE and in contemporary literary texts. They point out indications of the transformation of forest spaces into kingdoms, as a consequence of which persons of tribal origin appeared in positions of power and status.

Natasja Bosma evaluates the copper plates of the Pāṇḍava dynasty of Dakṣiṇa Kosala in the sixth and seventh centuries, pointing out radical differences in the lengths of passages dedicated to royal self-representation by various rulers. In particular, she asks why King Tīvaradeva, not mentioned by his successors, went to great lengths to establish his image.

Amandine Wattelier-Bricout studies the “coronation names” — normally alternating Mahābhavagupta and Mahāśivagupta — used by the Somavamśins of Orissa, with particular attention to cases where a ruler’s records do not employ a coronation name. Using the inscriptions of successors, she seeks to identify the circumstances explaining this absence.

Ryosuke Furui revisits the struggle over Kannauj at the end of the eighth century, contrasting the different accounts left by the dynasties involved. He shows that the Pālas, the Gurjara-Pratihāras, and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas highlighted respectively a single moment of triumph, the sentiment of victory through valour, and the establishment of superiority over other kings.

Jae-Eun Shin investigates the representation of self and others by sub-regional powers, namely by the Pālas of Kāmarūpa and the Candras of Vaṅga in the tenth and eleventh centuries. She points out how the imperial Pālas remained a benchmark in the self-representation of these lesser dynasties, but with a starkly differing perspective depending on current power relations.

Dániel Balogh analyses the descriptions of Eastern Cālukya kings and their underlings in copperplate grants. Deriving representational profiles from a content analysis of these descriptions, he demonstrates that subordinates as well as court officials tend to be depicted more in terms of individual qualities than the rather stereotypically characterised rulers.

Samana Gururaja juxtaposes the genealogies of the Hoysala kings in their own records with those presented in the inscriptions of their subordinates in

the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. She observes that while some subordinate houses emphasised their loyalty to the Hoysaḷas spanning generations of both families, others recalled ancestors serving predecessors of the Hoysaḷas.

Annette Schmiedchen scrutinises the epigraphic self-representation of the Yādava dynasty and its presentation in the literary work of Hemādri, a minister at the thirteenth-century Yādava court. She indicates that the latter provides a fuller list of the male members of the dynasty, albeit cursory in detail, while the epigraphs foreground only the key political figures, but record more about them.

Luther Obrock explores the continuation of epigraphic Sanskrit into the sultanate period. Using the late sixteenth-century Arabic and Sanskrit bilingual inscriptions of the mosques at Asirgarh and Burhanpur as illustrations, he points out how Sanskritic *topoi* were adapted to an Islamic context and examines the division of labour between the Sanskrit and the Arabic parts of the inscriptions.

Tillo Detige presents early modern Digambara Jain memorial stone inscriptions from Western and Central India, attesting to the status of *bhaṭṭārakas* in the ascetic hierarchy of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā and to the relations of this Jain community to local and imperial rulers. He interprets the repeated shifts of the seat of this religious group as a continued reaction to a changing political environment.

Christine Chojnacki examines four major Śvetāmbara Jain narrative works composed between the eighth and tenth centuries in Western India, selected by her for matters of content. She focusses on the key question whether these texts reveal an ideology of kingship distinct from the well-known and also better studied model(s) of the Digambara Jains.

The papers in this book touch on many concepts that elude an accurate definition. In particular, we emphasise that the word “Hindu” does not occur in any of the primary sources in its present meaning, and is used here as an umbrella term for the theistic religious world-views that characterise the Indian subcontinent in the period under study. For the sake of facility, all authors have generally endeavoured to use plain English terms of their own choice in discussion and especially in translations of source texts. This is not meant to imply that the concepts denoted by these terms carried precisely the same meaning and connotations in their original context as they might in the mind of any particular modern-day reader. Thus, technical terms associated with the European Middle ages – such as “king,” “prince,” “vassal” or “feudatory,” and “baron” – and with generic social and political roles – such as “priest,” “chaplain,” “minister,” “general” – are used as convenient terms only loosely equivalent to the terms used in the original, which are cited where necessary and discussed where

relevant. The editors have fostered consistency throughout the volume, but did not see any advantage to enforcing a uniform translation of technical terms.

We would like to illustrate this on the basis of one example which is relevant for our topic. The presentation of the interaction between overlords and their subordinates is discussed in several articles of this volume. There can be no doubt that relationships of suzerainty and subordination played a significant role in early medieval Indian history and were also echoed in epigraphic sources of that period. The Sanskrit terminology to denote subordinates could differ from region to region and must have also changed in the course of time. Even if the same term was used, it may reflect different concepts, and it has been rendered in several ways. Most authors in this volume use the terms “subordinate” or “subordinate ruler,” either for general references or for the translation of specific Sanskrit terms. Samana Gururaja explains to have chosen “the words ‘overlord’ and ‘subordinate’ to highlight the relative status that individuals had to one another, rather than trying to locate them in absolute hierarchy, as suggested by terms like ‘feudatory’ or ‘vassal’.” Furthermore, she observes that “there were several terms that delineated the role of a subordinate in a complex political structure, and while it is difficult to map the exact structure of these hierarchies from epigraphical material, what we can often determine is their position in relation to one another.” Annette Schmiechen states to have used the terms “subordinate” and “vassal” interchangeably, “due to a lack of better alternatives,” for all those who seem to have acknowledged the suzerainty/sovereignty of another ruler, although “the concept of vassalage has been borrowed from descriptions of medieval European history and might be almost equally problematic as the terms related to ‘feudal’ and ‘feudatory’.” One could perhaps add that the terms “vassal” and “sub-vassal” have at least the potential to reflect the rather great diversity in and the ramified system of medieval hierarchical relations.

A central Sanskrit designation for a subordinate is *sāmanta*, or derivations from this basic term, for instance, *mahāsāmanta* or *mahāsāmantādhipati*. Natasja Bosma translates *sāmanta* as “feudatory” or “feudatory chief.” Ryosuke Furui and Jae-Eun Shin refer to subordinate rulers in general. Dániel Balogh uses the renderings “subordinate” and “underling” in a broader sense, and translates the term *mahāsāmanta* in a more specific way as “baron.” In the corpus studied by Amandine Wattelier-Bricout, the designation *rāṇaka* is more common, which she also renders as “subordinate.” Samana Gururaja distinguishes for her corpus between the rank of a *mahāsāmanta* or “ruler of a peripheral region,” and the higher rank of a *mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* or “lord of a circumscribed domain.”

Although the term *sāmanta* (or *mahāsāmanta*) was not the only designation for a subordinate rank, it was the most commonly used in epigraphical sources from many parts of early medieval India. Moreover, this expression has also become the key term in historiographical discussions on the structure of medieval Indian polities since the 1960s (e.g. L. Gopal 1963; K. K. Gopal 1964), namely in the debate on a so-called “Indian feudalism” (e.g. R. S. Sharma 1961; Yadava 1966). Hermann Kulke (1996, 31) coined the expression “*sāmantization*” to describe the increasing influence which *sāmantas* exerted on the royal administration. Such subordinates probably had to pay tributes and deliver troops to their suzerains. Reciprocally, *sāmantas* received privileges and elevated positions at the court. It can be assumed that they were also repaid for their services through the allocation of tax income from villages and landed property (R. S. Sharma 2001, 24). In pre-tenth-century land-grant charters engraved on copper plates, *sāmantas* appear as donors or as petitioners requesting the ruler to bestow an endowment on a religious person or institution. But these records rarely mention secular fiefs. Thus, the emergence of the *sāmanta* network remarkably pre-dates any attestation for service assignments to “feudatories” (Chattopadhyaya 1994, 194). With regard to subordinates, this volume does not focus on their potential economic role, but on their presentation vis-à-vis that of their overlords, either in their own epigraphic records or in inscriptions commissioned by their suzerains.

2. Editorial conventions

All of our papers make extensive use of primary sources of the manuscript and epigraphic traditions. Texts of both kinds are referred to with titles (and, where known, the name of their authors), which are always italicised (e.g. the *Moharājaparājaya* of Yaśaḥpāla; the *Kharod stone inscription of Īśānadeva*), and may be abbreviated after the first occurrence (e.g. the *Moharājaparājaya*; the *Kharod inscription*). In discussions involving many inscriptions, the DHARMA identifiers introduced below may be used instead of titles. The texts referred to within each chapter are listed at the end of the chapter under the heading “Primary sources,”¹ where each list item gives the reference to the preferred edition (and/or translation) of the source concerned, which may be either a print publication or a DHARMA digital edition. Print publications are shown in this list as a standard author-date reference (with publication details in the bibliography at the end of the book). Specific parts of epigraphic sources are referred to with

1 Except in Tillo Detige’s chapter, where the editions of the texts are appended.

line numbers (l., ll.) or, when applicable, verse numbers (v., vv.) as found in the preferred edition. In referring to primary sources of the manuscript tradition, the indices applicable to the work in question (e.g. chapter, section, verse) have been used or, where none are relevant, page numbers (p., pp.) of the preferred edition have been specified.

DHARMA editions are preferentially cited whenever they are available, as not only do they represent the latest scholarly position on the respective texts, but they also include references to earlier printed editions, a “critical” apparatus showing deviations from such editions, and usually an English translation and some commentary. Digital editions may continue to evolve dynamically; citations in this book reflect the state of the editions at the time when the respective articles were written. The DHARMA editions are classified into named corpora, and have a five-digit number within each corpus. Accordingly, DHARMA editions are referred to in this book with an abbreviated identifier composed of a label for the corpus and the number of the text, such as BengalCharters00091. In the future, DHARMA editions will be accessible through a searchable database and displayable in various renditions. As of 2024, they may be viewed via a provisional front end by simply opening <https://dharmalekha.info/texts> in a web browser and entering the edition’s identifier in the search box. To access a digital edition directly, open the URL <https://dharmalekha.info/texts/ID>, where ID stands for the full identifier of the edition, consisting of the prefix DHARMA_INS followed by the above abbreviated identifier, e.g. DHARMA_INSBengalCharters00091. This provisional website shows several alternative renditions of each digital edition, as well as the machine-readable (XML) file. The full XML files may also be retrieved from GitHub at <https://github.com/erc-dharma>. Once the completed database and web interface become available, it will be likewise easy to retrieve individual inscriptions on the basis of their identifiers.

Dates throughout this book are to be understood in the Common Era unless otherwise indicated (e.g. VS for Vikrama *saṃvat* and ŚS for Śaka *saṃvat*). The abbreviation CE (or BCE) only appears when a date in the Common Era is juxtaposed to a date in a different reckoning.

Words and names in non-European languages are generally presented throughout this book in accurate transliteration reflecting their original orthography. The exceptions to this primarily consist of contemporary proper names, in particular the names of published authors and internationally well-known geographic names (e.g. Deccan, Maharashtra, Jaipur). Less prominent geographic names are transliterated or Anglicised on a case by case basis. A few words that have gained enough currency in (technical) English to qualify as loanwords rather than as foreign words have also been used in an Anglicised

form and without italics (e.g. sandhi). To reduce confusion and ambiguity, transliteration in citations from other publications has in most cases been silently normalised to the standards followed here.

Words of languages normally written in a form of Arabic script are transliterated according to the IJMES standard, except when such items are cited verbatim from a source in an Indic script, in which case the transliteration reflects the orthography of the latter.

Languages written in an Indic script are Romanised according to the ISO 15919 standard (ISO 2001).² Thus, *anusvāra* is transliterated *m̐*, and syllabic liquids are represented by *r̥* and *l̥*, while *ṛ* and *ḷ* are dedicated to the retroflex flap consonant of New Indo-Aryan languages and the retroflex lateral approximant respectively. The retroflex central approximant of Dravidian languages is represented as *ḷ̥*, and the alveolar trill as *r̥*. The *upadhmanīya* is transliterated with *ḷ̥* where distinguished from a *visarga* in a primary source.

For Sanskrit and other languages where the phonemes /e/ and /o/ are always long, these Latin vowels are used without a macron. In Dravidian languages such as Kannada, where short and long forms of these vowels are distinguished, the transliteration without a diacritical mark (*e*, *o*) means the short form, while that with a macron (*ē*, *ō*) means the long form. When pertaining to the context of such a language, loanwords and names consisting partly or wholly of Sanskrit components also employ the macron (e.g. *Sōmēśvara*, *sēnādhipar* as opposed to *Someśvara*, *senādhipa* in a Sanskrit context). However, Sanskrit technical terms appearing in English discussion are transliterated according to the Sanskrit standard even when pertaining to a Dravidian context (e.g. *maṇḍaleśvara*, as opposed to *maṇḍalēśvara* in citing the text of a primary source). In the transliteration of Middle Indo-Aryan languages, the diaeresis (¨) has been added to *i* and *u* when occurring adjacent to *a*, in order to distinguish the vowel clusters *aī* and *aū* in hiatus from the Sanskrit diphthongs *ai* and *au*. In New Indo-Aryan languages, the silent final *a* inherent in the orthography has been generally preserved in transliteration.

Words, phrases, and longer citations from texts in Indic languages have been segmented with spaces (for separate words) and hyphens (for words in compound) to facilitate parsing. Taking advantage of Romanised transliteration, such separators have also been inserted at points where it would not be possible to do so in an Indic script (e.g. *tad api*, *tat-putra*) but vowels fused in sandhi have

2 The full editions appended to Detige's article follow the DHARMA transliteration scheme (Balogh and Griffiths 2020), which is an extension of ISO-15919. The relevant details are introduced next to the editorial notation on page 257.

not been broken up to allow segmentation (e.g. *tathāpi*, *rājendra*). Hyphens for compound segmentation are not ubiquitous: they are generally avoided in short compounds established in a particular sense (e.g. *dinakara* ‘sun’) as well as in close-knit units within a longer compound, and never used within proper names.

Excerpts of primary sources in general preserve the orthography of the original, except that *avagrahas* (apostrophes) have been silently supplied where initial *a* is elided in Sanskrit sandhi, and elision in Kannada sandhi is likewise indicated with apostrophes. The readings of the preferred edition have been adopted even when they are marked by the editor as uncertain, or when they are editorial emendations or restorations. To verify such philological details, please consult the editions of these texts. Editorial punctuation has been silently supplied in longer excerpts, consisting primarily of *daṇḍas* (vertical bars) at the ends of hemistichs and double *daṇḍas* at the ends of stanzas. When isolated words of a primary source appear in English discussion, peculiarities of the original orthography are also silently normalised (thus, e.g. *dharma* even if the original spelling is *dharmma*).

In translations of primary sources, square brackets indicate words added or repeated by the translator for the sake of clarity and syntax, e.g. “bowing [to him] by bending [their] shaking crowns.” Parentheses mark explanatory additions by the translator, e.g. “an abode of (the goddess of) Fortune” as well as words of the original inserted for explanation or clarification, e.g. “qualities (*guṇa*).” In the translation of bitextuality (*śleṣa*), curly braces have been added around alternative translations of text already translated in a primary sense, e.g. “his famous lineage {bamboo cane}.”

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Portrayal of the Forest People: the “Other” in the Epigraphic Records of Early India

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1. Introduction

The forest and its people have been portrayed in many ways in early Indian written sources. This portrayal at times showed — but often lacked — awareness of this space and its inhabitants. In spite of a great deal of ambivalence in their representations among the various categories of sources, there is a common agreement that both the space and its occupants were regarded as the “other.” In the 1990’s, three influential works shaped our understanding of the dichotomy and the complementarity between the forest space and the settlement (Sontheimer 1994; Malamoud 1998, 75–88; Thapar 2001).¹ Textual and epigraphic sources offer an array of terminologies to denote a forest, considering that the forest as a space was diverse. In the texts as well as inscriptions forests were known as *vana*, *jāṅgala*, *aṭavī*, *araṇya*, etc.² Significantly, terms meaning ‘forest’ were sometimes used in inscriptions as components in the names of kings, subordinate rulers, and officials of the state. Thus, one can see names like

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- 1 Romila Thapar delivered the first Sontheimer Memorial Lecture in Pune in December 1998 on this theme, an expanded version of which was published in 2001.
 - 2 This nomenclature has been further discussed by Chattopadhyaya (2017) and Aloka Parasher-Sen (2019).

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Aṭavidurjaya (*Cipurupalle plates of Viṣṇuvaradhana I*), Vanasirīha (*Pandiapathar plates of Bhīmasena, Year 89*), and others.

When we turn our gaze from forests to forest people, we find that they were generally referred to as *āṭavika* in our sources. But singularly, they had different nomenclature and often defined territories. Śābara, Pulinda, Niṣāda, and Kirāta are largely the forest people who are alluded to in the textual and epigraphic sources. It appears that *āṭavī* was used together with *mleccha* in the *Arthaśāstra* (7.10.16) in the context of acquiring a land with permanent enemies (Olivelle 2013, 666).

These forest groups were equipped with extraordinary skills which ranged from physical prowess to medicinal knowledge. In the present essay, we wish to study the epigraphic portrayal of the Śābaras and the Pulindas, who were by and large the “other” of the Brahmanical society. The rationale behind the choice of these two groups lies in the fact that in the textual sources Śābaras and Pulindas are often mentioned in the same context, and their names became generic appellations for “barbarous” tribes and forest groups. Aloka Parasher-Sen (1991, 93–101) includes them within the category of *mleccha*. The marginality of the forest people remained an almost perennial theme in the long-term history of the subcontinent. However, there were occasions, particularly from the fourth century, when these forest people were represented as being in positions of power or status in a range of epigraphic records.

2. A few references in literary texts

The first Brahmanical text to mention the habitat of the Śābaras and Pulindas was the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (7.3.18), where it is said that these two groups along with a few others lived beyond the borders. They were regarded as the cursed sons of Viśvāmitra, as they had disobeyed their father and thus were banned to live beyond the borders. The *Arthaśāstra* (2.1.6) also mentions the Śābaras and Pulindas together as peoples who guard the regions between the frontiers and the interior of the kingdom. Thus, Brahmanical textual sources confirm that the location of these forest people is at or near the frontier. They lived at the edge of settled areas, which indirectly implied that there should ideally be a forest at the border of such areas (Chakravarti 2014, 181). The *Arthaśāstra* (8.4.42) paints a negative picture of the forest people, comparing them to robbers: “Highwaymen rob those who are heedless, are few in number and sluggish (*pratirodhakāḥ pramattasyāpaharanti, alpāḥ kunṭhāḥ*), and are easy to recognise and apprehend, whereas, living in their own region (*svadeśa-sthāḥ*) and being

numerous and brave, forest tribes fight in the open, plunder and destroy regions, and behave like kings (*deśānām rājasadharmāna iti*.)” In other words, they were more dangerous than robbers as they were in control of their own territory. In the *Amarakośa* (2.10.21), the Pulindas along with the Kirātas and the Śābaras are mentioned as outcastes (*kirāta-śabara-pulindā mleccha-jātayaḥ*) (Parasher-Sen 2019, 140). They were regarded as the “other” in contrast to the “civilised,” even though they were often used for the benefit of the state. The *aṭavī-bala* (army composed of forest people) formed one of the six kinds of armies of the king.

With regard to the area of habitation of these forest groups, most of the textual sources prefer to place them around the Vindhyan region or parts of Odisha, but they are also spoken of as dwelling in the Dakṣiṇāpatha. In this context I would privilege Bāṇabhaṭṭa as an author for his graphic description of the Vindhyan forests and the intense portrayal of Śābara men both in the *Kādambarī* and the *Harṣacarita*. In addition to these two works, another text of about the tenth century demands our attention, the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva.

In the *Kādambarī* we get a vivid description of the Śābara army. A sense of horror prevails in that description as it is portrayed as “all the nights of the dark fortnight rolled into one... like a crowd of evil deeds come together; like a caravan of curses of the many hermits dwelling in the Daṇḍaka forest...” (Ridding 1896, 27). Following the description of the army is a lengthy depiction of the young Śābara leader whose name was Mātaṅga (*ibid.*, 28–33). He is compared to Ekalavya,³ and Bāṇa describes him as a handsome strong youth who was capable of conquering the Vindhya Mountain. While Mātaṅga’s physical beauty is underscored with analogies from the forest and its inhabitants, Bāṇa does not hesitate to highlight his cruel nature by stating that he was “partial avatar of death.” Another description demonstrates the brutality of a hungry old Śābara man who mercilessly killed tiny parrots (*ibid.*, 33) to satisfy his hunger. The Śābara man, the cruel “other,” is contrasted with Hārīta, a youthful hermit, whose mind was purified with all knowledge and who is the son of the great ascetic Jābālī (*ibid.*, 35).

Bāṇa’s other creation, the *Harṣacarita*, portrays the Śābaras as living in a settled society within the forest. The Śābaras lived both by hunting and by farming. The context of Bāṇa’s description of the Śābaras was the time when Harṣa entered the Vindhya forest in search of his sister Rājyaśrī (Cowell and Thomas

3 The story of Ekalavya is narrated in the *Mahābhārata*. He was a Niṣāda (another forest group), who was an excellent archer. He wanted to be the disciple of Droṇa, the teacher of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. However, Droṇa refused to take him as a student as he was lowly born.

1897, 232). In the last chapter of the *Harṣacarita*, Bāṇabhaṭṭa gives a heroic description of a Śabara boy, named Nirghāta, who was the nephew of the Śabara chief:

the young mountaineer had his hair tied into a crest above his forehead with a band of the *śyāmalatā* creeper dark like lampblack, and his dark forehead was like a night that always accompanied him in his wild exploits, with an involuntary frown which branched in three lines. His ear had an ear-ring of glass-like crystal fastened in it, and it assumed a green hue from a parrot's wing which ornamented it, while his somewhat bleared eye, with its scanty lashes, seemed to distil hyena's blood which had been applied as a medicine. His nose was flat, his lower lip thick, his chin low, his jaws full, his forehead and cheek-bones projecting, his neck a little bent down while one half of his shoulders stood up, he seemed to mock the broad rocks of the Vindhya's side with his brawny chest, which was broadened by exercise and hardened by incessantly bending his bow, while his arms, which were more solid than a boa-constrictor, made light of the tallest *śāla*-trees of the Himalaya. [...] His right hand seemed busily engaged with a[n] [...] arrow, having its point dipped in a potent poison, and looking like a black snake which had been stupefied by certain roots. He was like a moving dark *tamāla* tree on the side of a mountain or a pillar of solid stone artificially wrought, or a moving mass of black collyrium or a melting block of iron from the Vindhya, a very fever to the elephants, the noose of death to the deer, a comet of ill omen to the lions, the last day of the *Durgā-pūjā* to the buffaloes, the personified essence of destruction, the embodied fruit of sin, the cause of the *Kali* age, the lover of doom's-night.⁴

If we analyse the vibrant portrayals of the Śabara men in both the texts, a common pattern can be located. The bodily strength and the muscle power of the Śabarās were highlighted in both the cases. This may be a stereotypical description of forest people. Their body language, ritual, lifestyle — everything — was different from “civilised” society. The forest people were feared, but their help was also taken when required.

Within various contexts, the Śabarās figure as a powerful presence in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. In one story, the hero Śrīdatta is looking for his beloved Mṛgāṅkavatī in the Vindhya and meets a Śabara chief called Śrīcaṇḍa. The chief dupes him and brings him to the hamlet (*pallī*) of the Śabarās, where he is planning to offer Śrīdatta as a sacrifice to the goddess Caṇḍikā. In the meantime, Sundarī, the daughter of the Śabara chief, falls in love with Śrīdatta, who agrees

4 Cowell and Thomas (1897, 230–32).

to marry her in the *gāndharva* form of marriage, as this would free him from his fetters. While the chief is away, they meet regularly, but Śrīdatta can eventually return to his home at the behest of the wife of the Śabara chief. The Śabara chief is portrayed as a cruel man (Tawney 1880, 64).

On another occasion, we find that Śrīdatta was confronted by a group of robbers who were Śabarās. He was ultimately able to save himself by the grace of his Śabara wife Sundarī. Thus, Śrīdatta, though not a Śabara himself, took over the Śabara village from his wife and became its chief (Tawney 1880, 65).

These glimpses of textual references of various genres are clear indicators that these forest people were the “other” of the society, the robber, the destroyer of peace. In the description of the Śabara men, their muscle power is clearly underscored.

3. Epigraphic mentions: changing positions of the forest people

Epigraphy offers a slightly different picture, which is much more complex. The references to forest people in epigraphic records were apparently guided by a multiplicity of contexts relating to the politics and historical traditions of the respective regions. This should be kept in mind while studying the allusions to Śabarās and Pulindas in epigraphy.

It is commonly known that the first epigraphic reference to the forest dwellers (*aṭavi*) comes from the *Major rock edict XIII of Aśoka*, where it is quite evident that the emperor is not pleased with them and thus goes to the extent of stating that he could be compelled to take stern measure against them. *Āṭavikas* were actually told that the emperor would pardon only up to the limit that was pardonable; he would regret (*anutāpe*) having to hurt them, which is nothing more than an assertion of his power (*pabhābe*) (Tieken 2023, 96). The practices of the forest dwellers were obviously not in congruence to what Aśoka envisioned for his Dhamma. The forest people must have continued to be an irritant to the state in the post-Mauryan period as well, as their perception is much sterner in Book 8 of the *Arthaśāstra*. It is widely accepted that the *Arthaśāstra* consists of different layers, and Books 8 and 9 may have been composed by the end of the first or the beginning of the second century (Olivelle 2013, 25–30).

The *Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta* carefully details the differences between frontier kingdoms, forest kingdoms, non-monarchical powers, etc. The record states that Samudragupta reduced all the *āṭavika-rājas* to the status of servants (*paricārakī-kṛta*). What is significant to note is that Aśoka referred only to the *aṭavi*, meaning the forest people, whereas the *Allahabad inscription*

mentions forest kings/chiefs (*āṭavika-rāja*). These *āṭavika-rājas* occupied forest territories between the Āryāvarta and Dakṣiṇāpatha. By the time the Guptas came to power, the forest people had become organised and transformed the forest space into chiefdoms of the people living there.

The specific location of such forest kingdoms was revealed for the first time — with reference to eighteen *āṭavika-rājyas* in the *Betul plates* (c. 519) and the *Khoh plate* (c. 529) of Saṁkṣobha of the Parivrājaka family — as the region of Bundelkhand and the adjoining areas (presently around Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh). The ruler was governing the core area of Ḍabhālā/Ḍahālā *rājya*, which included the peripheral areas of eighteen forest kingdoms (*sāṣṭādaśāṭavirājyābhyantara*), and which he had received through inheritance (*anvayāgata*). The use of the term ‘inheritance’ here indicates that prior to him this forest space was already a kingdom. It is clear from the two inscriptions that his father Hastin was the ruler of this kingdom. Romila Thapar (2001, 13) points out that “this was part of the conversion of the Vindhyan region from forest to kingdom, from *vana* to *kṣetra*.” Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya (2017, 66) observes that none of the elements of forest life can be seen in the record, except for the goddess Piṣṭapurī, who was of *āṭavi* origin, but was transformed into a Brahmanical deity housed in a temple (*devakula*). Prior to this inscription, the *Navagrāma grant* of Saṁkṣobha’s father Hastin (c. 517) records the grant of the village Navagrāma, which was located in the *pulinda-rāja-rāṣṭra* (the territory of the Pulinda king) within his kingdom. This not only implies the presence of a locality under control of the Pulinda chief within the kingdom of Hastin, but also the transformation of a forest space inhabited by the Pulindas to a more settled locality.

The Pulindas experienced internal change over a period of time, and gradually came to have a chief and chiefdom for themselves. From Khoh itself we come across the mention of a person called Pulindabhaṭa in the *Khoh copper plate of Śarvanātha* from Uccakalpa, issued in the year 214 of the Gupta era, c. 533. The king had earlier granted two villages, Kācarapallika and Vyāghrapallika, as a mark of favour (*prasādi-kṛta*) to Pulindabhaṭa in perpetuity (*ācandrārka-samakālikau*). He in turn (*tenāpi*) presented (*pratipāditau*) them to Kumārasvāmin as [property] to be enjoyed by the lineage of [Kumārasvāmin’s] sons and grandsons, for the sake of the worship (*pūjā*) of the goddess Piṣṭapurī and for the restoration of ruined [structures] and damaged [movables] at the temple (*devakula*) commissioned [by Pulindabhaṭa] in Mānapura.⁵ The name ending *bhaṭa* added to Pulinda is noteworthy. We have the expression *cāṭa* and *bhaṭa* in inscriptions. These were lower-level employees of the kingdom who acted as a kind of

5 We are grateful to Dániel Balogh for discussions on the purport of the inscription.

constable. It may so happen that some of the Pulindas, who were local inhabitants, were employed in this position for their martial character and gradually became important. We can imagine that the appointment of a few of the local people into a position in the king's service could have created a kind of social hierarchy among the indigenous population. It appears from the inscription that Pulindabhaṭa dispossessed himself of the two villages given to him by the king, passing them on to the Brāhmaṇa Kumārasvāmin for the worship at and upkeep of the temple. For the transfer of rights, he perhaps sought the permission of the ruler, as King Śarvanātha claims in the inscription to have endorsed the grant of the two villages (*tāmra-śāsanenānumoditau*). Pulindabhaṭa himself had commissioned the construction of the temple and installed the goddess Piṣṭapurikā, who was an autochthonous deity. Once Piṣṭapurikā was installed as a Brahmanical deity, Pulindabhaṭa lost all rights to be directly associated with the temple due to his autochthonous origin. By giving the two villages he made arrangements for the upkeep of the temple. This act perhaps gave him the satisfaction of indirectly being associated with the goddess. Significantly, the inscriptions from Khoh speak only of the Pulindas as a forest group, while the Śābaras are not mentioned. Perhaps this area around Bundelkhand was largely the habitat of the Pulindas.

As we move eastward from central India to Odisha, we find that the *Parikud plates of Madhyamarājadeva* of the Śailodbhava dynasty (694) mention one Pulindasena, a reputed person from Kaliṅga (*khyātaḥ kaliṅga-janatāsu*). It is said that he prayed to Svayambhū to create a capable ruler who could take care of the region, and thus the dynasty's founder emerged from a rock (*śilā-śakalodbhedī*). This Pulindasena is associated with the forest tribe Pulinda, and the territory of the Śailodbhavas was the area known as Koṅgadamaṇḍala around present-day Ganjam, Khurda, and Puri of Odisha. What is evident from this inscription is the position of respect that Pulindasena was accorded for being associated in the founding of the dynasty. After the Śailodbhavas, these areas were under the control of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty, which ruled from the eighth century to the tenth.

That the Pulindas continued to be present here can be foregrounded with the help of the *Hindol plate of Śubhākaradeva* belonging to the Bhauma-Kara dynasty, datable to the mid-ninth century.⁶ Śubhākaradeva granted a village at the request of Pulindarāja (*pulindarāja-vijñāptyā*), half of the village being meant, *inter alia*, for the worship of the god Vaidyanātha-bhaṭṭāraka installed in the Pulindeśvara temple founded by him (i.e. Pulindarāja).

6 We are thankful to Debankita Das for drawing our attention to this inscription.

Like the Pulindas, the Śābaras too found a place in the epigraphic records of the period from the sixth to the tenth century. Here we do not intend to provide an inventory of all the mentions of Śābaras, but shall draw attention to those records where the Śābara presence is seen. The *Chicacole plates of Devendra-varman*, an Eastern Gaṅga ruler, are significant because here a Śābara held the position of a *mahattara*. It is said that the epigraph was written in the presence of this *mahattara*, the Śābara Nandiśarman. The position of a *mahattara* is important in the village administration and is much above an ordinary *kuṭumbin*. The name Nandiśarman is also indicative of Sanskritisation and Brahmanisation, but the addition of Śābara before his name suggests that the ethnic identity of this *mahattara* was not to be forgotten. One cannot miss the fact that he was present when a charter was written which records a royal grant in favour of six Brāhmaṇas, whose names also all end in *-śarman*. The village donated was called Poppaṅgika, located in Saraūmaṭamba of Kroṣṭukavartani. The names may indicate that it was a locality largely inhabited by non-Sanskritic population.

Another inscription of significant importance is the *Mallar plates of Jayarāja*, year 9, which can be dated to the middle of the sixth century. The plates were issued from Śarabhapura near Sirpur, in the present-day Chhattisgarh area. They are about the donation of a village to two Brāhmaṇas, Maheśvarasvāmin and Rudrasvāmin. Rudrasvāmin is further identified as *śabara-bhogika*. Gouriswar Bhattacharya and M. Sivayya (1961–62, 29) opined that the term *śabara-bhogika* may mean either that he hailed from an administrative division (*bhoga*) called Śābara, or that he was in charge of a locality called Śābara. On the other hand, Ajay Mitra Shastri (1995a, 26 n. 33) opines that the expression should be taken to mean that Rudrasvāmin acted as a priest of the Śābaras. Whatever may be the case, the inscription at least indicates the presence of the Śābaras in the area. The area around present Chhattisgarh was known for its forests, and it was the natural habitat of the forest people.

The *Udayendiram plates of Nandivarman Pallavamalla* (ninth century) are an example of the Śābaras attaining a position of power and then being defeated by a ruler, in this case Nandivarman. The grant proudly affirms that Nandivarman's general defeated Udayana, king of the Śābaras, and captured his mirrored banner made of peacock feathers (*mayūra-kalāpa-viracitaṁ darppaṇa-dhvajaṁ grhītavān*). The Śābara king must have been growing in power and this position of power of the Śābaras, the "other," caused much anxiety to the settled kingdoms.

In contrast, the *Khajuraho stone inscription of Dhaṅga* of the year 1059 has an interesting portrayal of a Śābara. The inscription was composed by the poet Rāma, son of Balabhadra and grandson of the poet Nandana, who is said to have

been born of Śabara extraction (*sāvāra-vamśa-janmā śrī-naṁdanaḥ*). The implication of this statement is that the composer of this inscription hailed from a family of poets belonging to the Śabara lineage. In spite of the Śabara background, members of the family learnt Sanskrit and became famous as poets. There was no attempt to iron out his lineage, rather it was recorded. This inscription is a eulogy which states that the fame of Dhaṅga spread far and wide.

That the Śabarās continued to be in positions of power in eastern Odisha is clear from the *Korni second copperplate grant of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga* (c. 1113). This inscription clearly states that Kāmārṇava I, the originator of the Eastern Gaṅgas, took charge of the Mahendra mountains and killed the local tribal chief Śabarāditya. The Gaṅga charters claim that the god Gokarṇeśvara bestowed on them the right to rule Kaliṅga. According to B. P. Sahu (1985, 155), Gokarṇeśvara was the patron deity of the Śabara tribe in the Mahendra mountains, and this deity was given the name Śiva Gokarṇeśvara and made the patron deity of the Eastern Gaṅga family. Here is another case of appropriation of the deity of the forest people, the Śabarās. This was a convenient way of eliciting support from the common people.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be said that there is not an iota of doubt about the multiple perceptions of the forest people. Notions and contexts alter over time. Forests could have been a liminal space, located often between two villages or a city and the village. Land grants to Brāhmanas, bordering forests, led to encroachment on forest lands and thereby on the lives of the forest people. This opened up spaces for re-grouping and consolidating. It appears that while in the literary texts the forest people are clearly the “other,” in the epigraphic context they are represented in multiple ways, beyond the binary distinction between “civilised” and “uncivilised.” A few cases discussed from the epigraphic records reveal that there were various ways of seeing and recognising the forest people. The notions differed according to the specific circumstances. Expressions like *śabara-mahattara*, *śabara-bhogika*, *pulinda-rāja-rāṣṭra*, or names like Pulindabhaṭa in the epigraphs undoubtedly indicate enhanced social status along with participation in the affairs of the state. In this context, along with the other examples cited above, one can also add a story narrated in the *Kuvalayamālā* of Uddyotana (779).⁷ The story (Kumar 2015, 183) is about the kingdom of Viniṭā (in Madhya-

7 About the *Kuvalayamālā*, see also Chojnacki’s paper (pp. 261ff.) in this volume (eds).

deśa), which was ruled by King Dṛḍhavarman, whose queen was called Priyaṅguśyāmā. The story records that Suṣeṇa, a Śabara prince (*sabara-senāvai-putto*) was sent to war against the Mālava king. He returned victorious and visited King Dṛḍhavarman, who was seated in the inner assembly along with the queen and a few selected ministers. Suṣeṇa narrated to the king in an exuberant manner how the army of the enemy was routed along with capture of the child prince and the war-spoils. Here the Śabara prince, being a valiant warrior, was used by the monarch.⁸

The forest chiefs were closely working within the ambit of a monarchical system. The forest deities were appropriated, and the monarchs were engaging with the forest dwellers in a bid to effectively control the forest space, which was a veritable source of economic resources. Ranabir Chakravarti (2022, 129) has recently suggested that “appropriation of the autochthonous cults into the Brahmanical pantheon was neither a peaceful, nor an innocuous nor an innocent process” and, in this case, it was the forest people who, living in a liminal space, were subject to an ambivalent situation. Most inscriptions are from the forest tracts of Central India, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha. The myth of the Śailodbhavas arising from a splinter of rock with divine blessings in answer to the prayers of a Pulinda speaks of the tribal origin of the dynasty on the one hand, and of a step towards the Brahmanisation of the dynasty on the other. One can notice that the Śabararas continued to be present in the epigraphic records for a longer time than the Pulindas.

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The Position of Tīvaradeva in the Light of Panegyric Passages in Inscriptions of Dakṣiṇa Kosala

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1. Introduction

One of the regions where the royal sponsoring of religion became increasingly widespread during the sixth and seventh centuries was Dakṣiṇa Kosala. In the aftermath of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka hegemony, a period of political reorganisation and shifting boundaries, the Dakṣiṇa Kosala region developed into a stable and flourishing kingdom under the rule of two successive royal houses, namely, the kings of Śarabhapura and the Pāṇḍava kings of Śrīpura (modern Sirpur). The distribution of archaeological sites and the provenances of inscriptions indicate that the core of the kingdom consisted of the areas north and south of the Seonath river (see Figure 1), which corresponds to the heart of modern Chhattisgarh. In an earlier publication (Bosma 2018, 7–49), I suggested that the Kosala kingdom may originally have been confined to the area south of the Seonath river, whereas the area north of the river corresponded to the kingdom of Mekalā, running up to the Maikal range of hills along the northwestern border of Chhattisgarh. The kings of Śarabhapura likely hailed from the southern part of this Mekalā, but they extended their influence across river to Kosala during the reign of Sudevarāja, as was emphasised by the shift of their royal headquarters to Sirpur (the extended kingdom being “Dakṣiṇa Kosala”). The Pāṇḍava kings likely hailed from the northern part of Mekalā, where they may have been feudatories of the kings of Śarabhapura. They gained a foothold in Dakṣiṇa Kosala when *sāmanta* Indrabala was stationed as Sudevarāja’s chief minister (*sarvādhikārādhikṛta*) in Sirpur. Soon after, the Pāṇḍavas took over the region and established their dominion.

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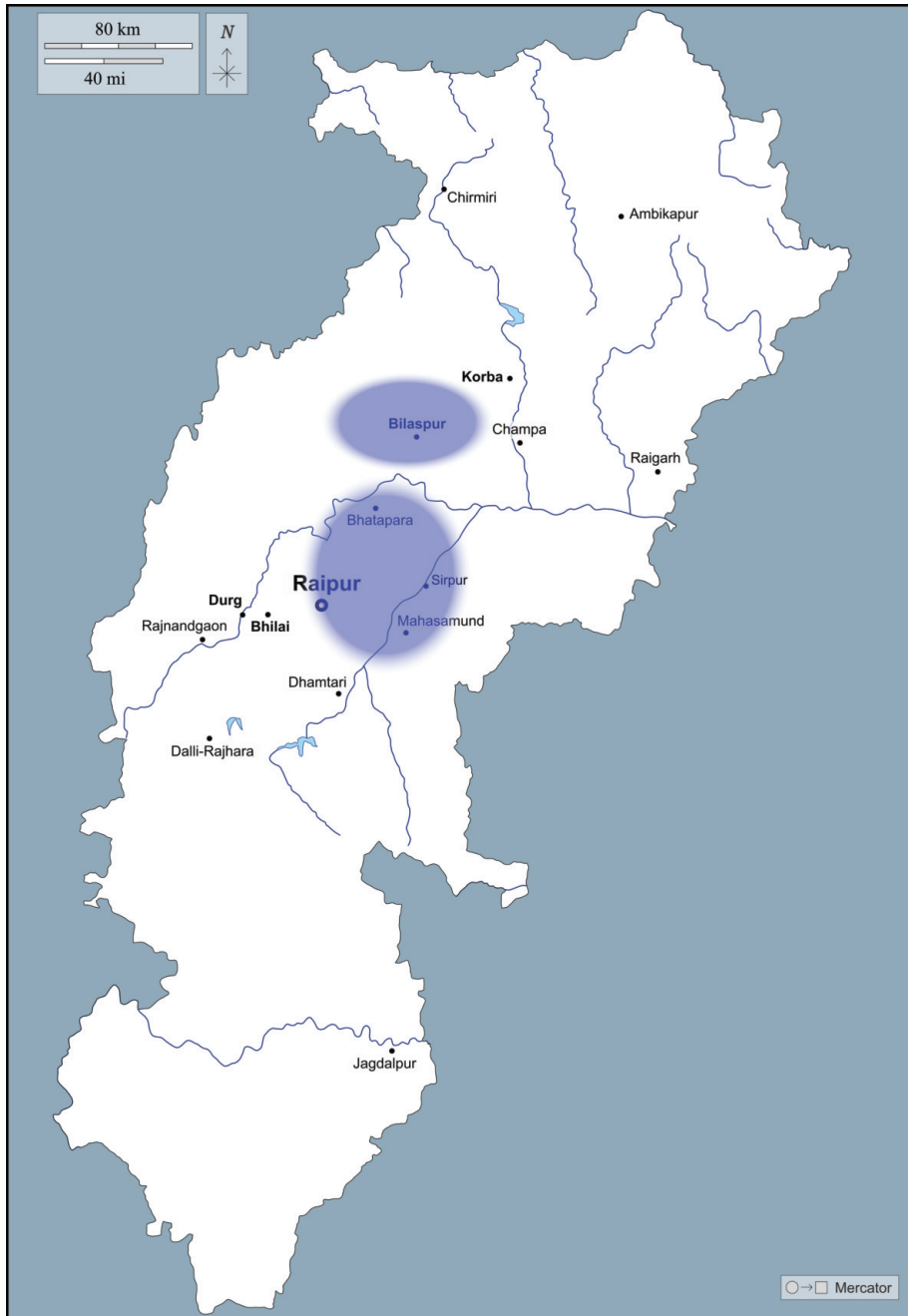


Figure 1. The kingdom of Dakṣiṇa Kosala

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Most of what is known about the Pāṇḍava kings comes from the inscriptions of the last known king of the dynasty: Śivagupta Bālārjuna (r. c. 590–650). The length and prosperity of this king's reign likely facilitated developments in the religious history, art, and architecture of the region, which makes him an important historical figure. From the inscriptions of Śivagupta we know that the Pāṇḍava kings traced their pedigree back to the legendary progenitor Udayana, king of Vatsa. He also commemorates Indrabala, the Pāṇḍava king who first took control over the region by means of a coup d'état and was, therefore, an important historical predecessor. Another Pāṇḍava king who appears to have been important for the prestige and strength of the kingdom, was Tīvaradeva. He is not mentioned by Śivagupta and he issued only four known charters himself, but the panegyric passages in these inscriptions are very extensive compared to those of the other kings from Dakṣiṇa Kosala. He is portrayed with long strings of epithets, composed by the court poets, and this raises the question as to whether he was indeed an important figure in the dynasty's history, or whether he needed to propagate himself in this way to strengthen his position. The present article examines this question by analysing the panegyric passages in the copperplate charters of the kings of Śarabhapura and the Pāṇḍava kings, against the background of their political history.

2. Panegyric passages in the corpus of Dakṣiṇa Kosala

The extant corpus of copperplate charters that were issued by the kings of Śarabhapura and the Pāṇḍava kings of Mekalā and Sirpur comprises a total of 47 inscriptions: 42 complete charters and 5 stray plates. The text of a complete charter is written on three sheets of copper, of which the middle sheet is inscribed on both sides. The two outer sheets are often used on the inside only (with the exception of some longer inscriptions, for practical reasons), in order to protect the engraved characters from wear. For the same reason, the outer edges of the sheets of copper are usually thickened, so that the surfaces of the plates do not rub together. The ends of the ring that joins the plates together are soldered on a seal of the ruling king, to give the grant authority and to prevent the removing or adding of plates (see Figure 2).

The inscriptions in this corpus can be ascribed to ten different kings, who are represented in lavender in the genealogies of the two royal houses that are depicted in Figure 3. Their (presumed) succession is indicated by the numbers before their names. No extant copperplate charters were preserved from the kings represented in green, but their names are either known from the

occasional stone inscription or mentioned as a predecessor in the introductions of the issuing kings. The dashed borders of some of the green boxes in Figure 3 indicate that there is uncertainty about the precise relationship of the king in question with his predecessors or successors. For example, in the case of Prasannamātra of Śarabhapura we know that he was the father of Jayarāja and Durgarāja, but the relationship between him and Narendra remains unclear because the latter two kings do not refer to Narendra as their grandfather and there are no known inscriptions of Prasannamātra himself.



Figure 2. The Kurud plates of Narendra. Photograph by the author, 2009. Courtesy of the Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum, Raipur.

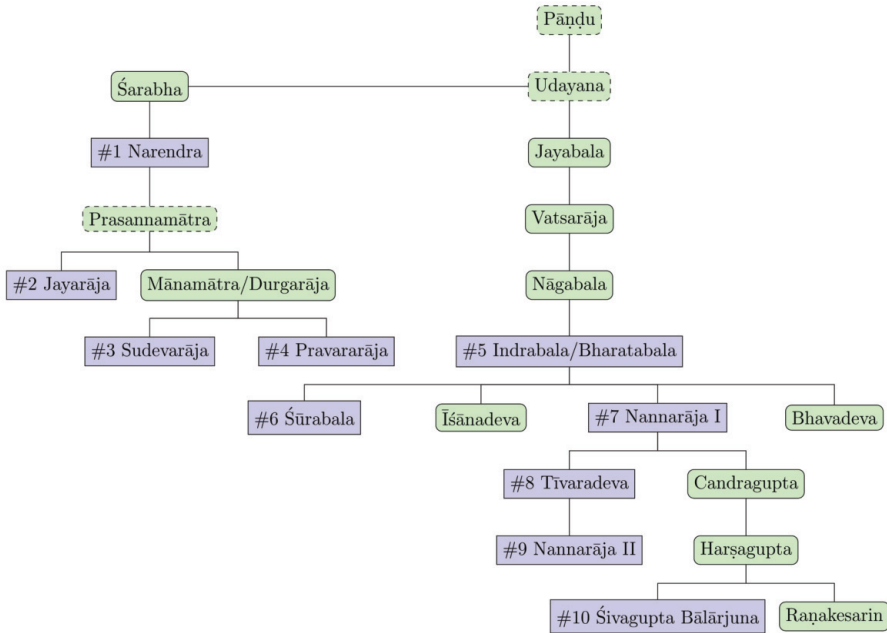


Figure 3. The kings of Dakṣiṇa Kosala (6th to 7th centuries)

Panegyric passages in the preambles of copperplate charters introduce and portray the issuing king, but they may also refer to relevant “others” along the way (such as references to overlords and subordinates, or descriptions of adversaries or intra-dynastic rivals). They cannot be considered as actual reflections of historical events because legendary and factual history were combined to make an inspirational narrative, in which court poets used their talents to extol the virtues and military achievements of the sponsoring kings. Nevertheless, impression management requires a grain of truth to be effective. Hence, Daud Ali (2000, 184) refers to these introductions as “living narratives” and they can be valuable in our knowledge of local history and the political profile of a region. In the introductions of the copperplate charters that were issued by the kings of Śarabhapura and the Pāṇḍava kings, the portrayal of “others” is largely limited to incidental references to the father and predecessor of the issuing king, whereas the portrayal of the kings themselves varies from short and simple to rather extensive.

The kings of Śarabhapura are known from 17 inscriptions, one of which is a stray plate that cannot be linked to any of the issuing kings because it is the middle plate of a set. The pedigree of these kings can only be established from

the short metrical verses on the seals that authorise the grants, because there are no references to predecessors in the overall template used across kings – the exception being the two charters issued by Sudevarāja from his new capital of Sirpur, in which he is introduced as “the son of the illustrious great Durgarāja.”¹ The seals are helpful because several of the legends contain a phrase that identifies the issuing king as a son of his father, thus disclosing the family relations.² In terms of panegyric, Narendra is portrayed in very basic terms, just stating his great devotion to Viṣṇu (*parama-bhāgavata*) and his parents’ favour to him (*mātā-pitṛ-pādānudhyāta*). The same unpretentious wording is used in Jayarāja’s *Amgura plates*, but starting with the charters from his fifth regnal year, his generosity and qualities as a conqueror were added to the formulaic standard in eloquent words: “His feet are washed by the sprinkling water that is the brilliance of the crest-jewels of his feudatories who have been brought into submission by his prowess. He made the women of his enemies tear out their parted hair, and he was a giver of riches, land, and cattle.”³ The kings of Śarabhapura who followed Jayarāja on the throne all seem to have used this same formula to introduce themselves.

Among the Pāṇḍava kings there is much more variation in the way they are introduced in the preambles of their charters. Their family history can be partially drawn from 30 copperplate inscriptions in the corpus of Dakṣiṇa Kosala, and several stone inscriptions have also been important for establishing their pedigree.⁴ It is fitting that the earliest Pāṇḍava record should be the one of Indrabala, the king who likely gained the throne by means of a coup d’état and,

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- 1 These charters are the *Dhamatari plates* and the *Kauvatal plates* of Sudevarāja, both using the phrase *śrī-mahā-durgarāja-putra-śrī-mahā-sudevarājah*.
 - 2 Narendra is referred to as the son of Śarabha (*śarabhāt prāpta-janmanah*) in the legend on the seals of his *Pīparḍūlā plates* and *Kurud plates*. Jayarāja is described as the ‘heart’ of Prasanna (*prasanna-hṛdayasya*) in his *Amgura plates* and *Āraṅg plates*, and as the son of Prasanna (*prasanna-tanaya*) in his *Malhār plates*. The seals of Sudevarāja’s *Nahna plates* and *Āraṅg plates* identify Sudevarāja as the son of Mānamātra, and the latter as the son of Prasanna (*prasannārṇava-sambhūta-mānamātrendu-janmanah*). This implies that Mānamātra was an alias of Durgarāja. Pravararāja is also described as a son of Mānamātra on his seals (*mānamātra-sutasya*).
 - 3 *vikramopanata-sāmanta-makuṭa-cūḍāmaṇi-prabhā-prasekāmbubhir dhauta-pāda-yugalo, ripuvilāsini-simantoddharana-hetur ... vasu-vasudhā-go-pradaḥ*.
 - 4 In particular, the *Kharod stone inscription of Īśānadeva*, the *Āraṅg stone inscription of Bhavadeva*, and the *Sirpur (Lakṣmaṇa temple) stone inscription of Vāsaṭā*, wife of Harṣagupta and mother of king Śivagupta. For a more detailed account on the history of the Pāṇḍava kings with references to these stone inscriptions, see Bosma (2018).

therefore, perhaps the most important figure in the dynasty's history. He was still acting as the chief minister of Sudevarāja when he issued his charter from Maṇḍaka, which may be the reason why he does not refer to his Pāṇḍava background. In the introduction of his charter, he is characterised with the same formulaic phrases as Narendra, but these are accompanied by two metrical verses. The first one alludes to a father who was powerful like Indra, splendid like the moon, and solid like a mountain, whereas the second verse celebrates Indrabala:

To him was born a son, whose impact is as clear as that of a troop of elephants; who has a handsome appearance; who always bestows gifts duly; who is strong and unpredictable in battle; whose fame has extended in all directions; and by whom the illustrious Lakṣmī (i.e. prosperity) is carried away after forcibly conquering the enemy troops. That illustrious king, an abode of (the goddess of) Fortune, who takes pleasure in worship, was Indrarāja!⁵

All that is known about the early generations of Pāṇḍava kings (up to Indrabala) comes from the charters of Śūrabala. Alternating passages of verse and prose not only eulogise this king's parents (both father and mother), but also the three generations before them. His own introduction is limited to a single verse, praising him under the alias of Udīrṇavaira:

He who overcame {stepped on} all regions with his pair of feet having the splendour of a full-blown lotus flower and touched by the heads of many feudatory chiefs laid low because of the threefold powers with which he was endowed: that illustrious king Udīrṇavaira was born, whose numerous good qualities are unparalleled and whose birth is celebrated by people highly [with the words]: "Famous is the auspicious Lunar Lineage!"⁶

Both Indrabala and Śūrabala issued their grants in the Pāṇḍava homeland of Mekalā, whereas Nannarāja I and his successors issued theirs from Sirpur, the former headquarters of the kings of Śarabhapura. This different setting is reflected in the style and script of their records, as the copperplate charters of these later Pāṇḍava kings were engraved by the same scribal community that

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- 5 *Malga plates*, v. 2: *jātas tasyātmaḥ pi prakāṣa-gaja-ghaṭā-ghaṭṭanaś cāru-mūrttir nityaṁ dātābhīmāni raṇa-capala-ṣaṭur bhrānta-paryanta-kīrtiḥ| nirjityārāti-pakṣam prasabham apahṛtā yena lakṣmī viśālā sa śrīmān śrī-niketaḥ prati-mati-ruciraḥ indrarājo narendrah||*
- 6 *Malhār plates*, v. 7: *yo 'sau saṁpūrṇa-śakti-traya-vinīpatitāneka-sāmanta-mūrdha-prodghṛṣṭot-phulla-padma-dyuti-calana-yugākrānta-dik-cakravālah| saumyaḥ somasya vaṁśaḥ prabhava iti janaiḥ kīrtiyate yasya coccaiḥ sa śrīmān sambabhūvāpratima-guṇa-gaṇodīrṇavairo narendrah||*

had served both Sudevarāja and Pravaraarāja and, therefore, followed the same template as the kings of Śarabhapura.⁷ One big difference, however, is the variation in how they are portrayed themselves: Nannarāja I is the first Pāṇḍava king who is characterised with a rather extensive string of epithets (15 in total) that praise his power and fame, great skills and knowledge, as well as his kindness and purity.⁸ Even more impressive and suggestive of “historical importance” is the introduction of his son Tīvaradeva, with a total of 25 epithets as well as a preceding verse:

Victorious is the illustrious Tīvaradeva, who is the ornament of the three worlds (heaven, earth, lower world); an auspicious buttress for the palace of the (Pāṇḍava) kings; and foremost of those who perform meritorious deeds! [Tīvaradeva] who illuminates the neighbouring regions with his mirror-like toenails, which are polished by the tips of the diadems of the many feudatory kings who salute him, being permitted the (privilege of the) five great titles; whose fingers bluntly seize the good Fortune of adversary kings by the locks of her hair in public; by whom the battlefields are adorned with heaps of pearls, thoroughly smeared with thick blood oozing from the domed foreheads of the elephants of his enemies, struck down by the hard strokes of his sharp sword; who is a submarine fire to the salt water of his enemies swelling with the desire of acquiring a multitude of various gems; who does not cause distress by (levying heavy) taxes, just like the rising moon {does not cause distress by its rays}; who demonstrates a wealth of many most excellent treasures, just like the ocean of milk {demonstrates a wealth of many most excellent jewels}; who is competent in uprooting evil, just like Garutmat {is competent in destroying serpents}; who ruins the black collyrium [applied to] the eyes and the floral saffron designs on the tender cheeks of the [widowed] wives of his defeated enemies; whose mind is focused solely on the protection and establishment of virtuous behaviour; moreover, who is worshipped by people on account of his tirelessness in [performing] religious austerities in previous [births]; who is not easily satisfied in [acquiring] fame; who is trustworthy in keeping secrets; whose mind is very pure; whose eyes are bright; and whose body is adorned with youth; who, though being a commander {a Swami}, does not (indulge in) excessive talking; who, though desirous of conquering land {being an unreformed addict}, is excessively liberal (in the granting of land); who, though fierce to the family of his adversaries

7 The charters of Indrabala and Śūrabala were engraved in nail-headed characters, whereas box-headed characters were used for the charters issued by the kings of Śarabhapura and the later Pāṇḍava kings. For an analysis of the lineage of goldsmiths responsible for engraving the charters issued from Sirpur, see Ali and Zhang (2022).

8 *Philadelphia Museum of Art plates of Nannarāja I*, ll. 1–13.

(i.e. like the sun), is gentle in appearance (i.e. like the moon); who, though adorned with majesty {ashes}, is not harsh in disposition; furthermore, who is insatiable in generating religious merit, [but] not in accumulating wealth; who is devoid of anger, [but] not of power; who is longing for fame, [but] not for appropriating the fame of others; who is skilful in eloquent speech, [but] not in consorting with promiscuous women; who has consumed the lineage of his adversaries completely, as a heap of cotton, with the fire of his splendour; who illuminates the horizons with his massive fame as bright white as the rocky mountain of snow (i.e. Himālaya); who is loved by his subjects; [...] who has obtained sovereignty over the whole of Kosala; who reduced all misfortune in the world with his meritorious acts; who has removed all thorns (i.e. annoying enemies) with the needle of his wisdom; who is entirely devoted to Viṣṇu; and who is favoured by his father and mother [...]⁹

This is clearly a genuine panegyric, the most extensive one in the corpus. The idea that Tīvaradeva may have lived up to these claims is suggested in the *Aḍbhār plates* issued by his son and successor Nannarāja II. The introduction of this charter is all about the greatness of Tīvara, who is said to have expanded the kingdom beyond the boundaries of Kosala, whereas Nannarāja II himself is characterised only as “wholly intent on following the example of [his father’s] deeds” (*caritānukaraṇa-parāyaṇaḥ*).

Perhaps most noticeable is the contrast between Tīvaradeva’s extensive panegyric and the self-portrayal of Śivagupta Bālārjuna (r. c. 590–650), who was the last-known king of the Pāṇḍava dynasty and whose reign lasted for almost sixty years. Two thirds of all extant Pāṇḍava charters were issued by him and, judging from the contents of his inscriptions, he was a great patron of religion. Also, given the length of his reign, he must have been successful, powerful, prosperous, and the like. Thus, there certainly appears to have been enough reason to praise and eulogise him, but compared to Tīvaradeva, he is portrayed in modest terms, with only a few epithets stressing his discipline, virtue, valour, intelligence, and strength. The contrast between the introductions of both kings has raised the question as to what made the poets in Tīvaradeva’s court compose such an elaborate panegyric: was he indeed an important figure in the dynasty’s history, or did he need to propagate himself in this way to strengthen his position and establish himself as a king?

9 This introduction is found in all four of Tīvaradeva’s copperplate inscriptions (the *Boṇḍā plates*, the *Rājim plates*, the *Sirpur plates*, and the *Baloda plates*); see the electronic editions for the Sanskrit text.

3. Statistical analysis

To examine the varying lengths of the panegyric passages in the copperplate charters of the kings of Śarabhapura and the Pāṇḍava kings more closely and to analyse whether they may follow a pattern, a visual representation was made to display their flow (Figure 4). For this purpose, the relevant portions of text were converted to numerical values. For each record, both the number of lines dedicated to the self-portrayal of the issuing king and the total number of lines of the inscription were determined. Then, the number of lines dedicated to self-portrayal relative to the total number of lines (hereafter: L) was calculated, to account for the possibility that a more elaborate inscription may also have a longer panegyric passage.

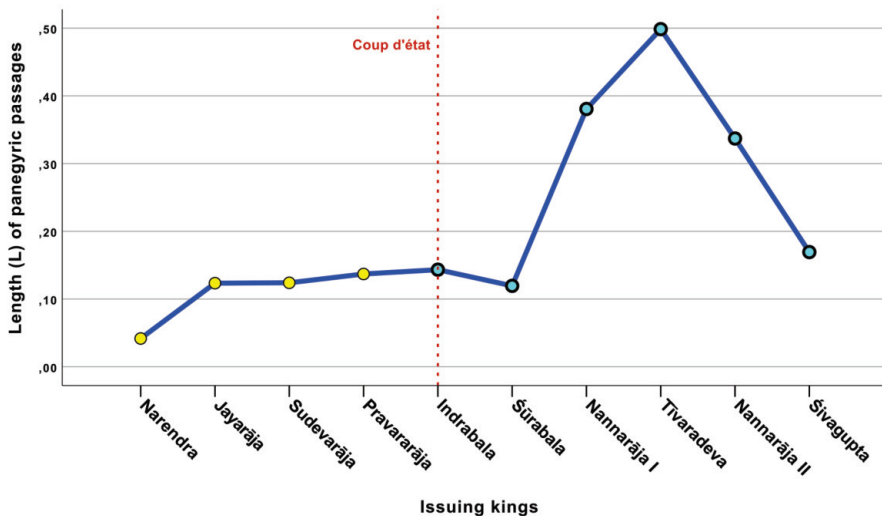


Figure 4. Visual representation of the lengths of panegyric passages in the Dakṣiṇa Kosala corpus

To give an example, the *Kurud* plates of Narendra depicted in Figure 2 above consist of 21 lines of text: five lines engraved on the verso side of the first plate, five on either side of the second plate, and six on the recto side of the third plate. The introduction of the king – *parama-bhāgavato mātā-pitṛ-pādānuddhyātaḥ śrī-mahārāja-narendraḥ*, “the illustrious Mahārāja Narendra, who is supremely devoted to Viṣṇu and is favoured by his father and mother” – takes up slightly more than one line on the first plate, marked with a blue outline in Figure 5. A value of 1.1 lines has been assigned to this self-portrayal, so the calculated value

of L was 0.05. Out of the corpus of 47 records, two were left out because they are stray plates that do not contain an introduction to an issuing king or other grantor. Most of these were complete charters, but in the case of a missing plate, an informed guess was made about the total number of lines of the inscription based on comparison with other records of the same king.



Figure 5. Example of collected data. Photograph by the author, 2009. Courtesy of the Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum, Raipur.

The visual representation in Figure 4 contains a marker for the average length of the panegyric passages of each issuing king (yellow for the kings of Śarabhapura and aqua for the Pāṇḍava kings). The line that runs through these markers confirms and displays the unique length of Tīvaradeva's self-portrayal among this group of kings and the great contrast between Tīvaradeva and Śivagupta regarding the length of their panegyric passage. However, it also shows that Tīvaradeva's extensive eulogy does not appear out of the blue. If we follow the line, it makes a first jump upwards from Narendra to Jayarāja. Then, after a relatively stable trend and a minor drop from Indrabala to Sūrabala, the line makes a big jump from the latter to Nannarāja I, after which it reaches a peak at Tīvaradeva's marker. The timing of these three increases in the length of the self-portrayal relative to the preceding king(s) will now be given a closer look.

Aiming to experiment with statistical methods from the social sciences, the collected data were further analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics software (Version 25). It is common in statistical studies to formulate two complemen-

tary hypotheses: the null hypothesis, which is the statement that one attempts to disprove, and the alternative hypothesis, which is an opposing statement that can be accepted if there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (Moore, McCabe, and Craig 2021, 350–51). In the current experiment, the guiding hypotheses are that the panegyric passages in the inscriptions of the ten issuing kings are all equal in length (null hypothesis), or that at least one king stands out (alternative hypothesis). To test the null hypothesis, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Kruskal-Wallis test were considered. These are both statistical tests that can be used to compare three or more “groups” and to discover whether any of these groups are different from each other to a statistically significant degree. The difference between them is that the first one is a so-called parametric test, whereas the second one is nonparametric. The main advantage of parametric tests over nonparametric tests is that they are more powerful and precise, which means that they have a higher chance of finding a true difference (or effect) if it exists. However, parametric tests are also restricted by a number of assumptions about the pool from which the data is gathered and the conditions under which that happened. Most of these assumptions cannot possibly apply to the data of the present article. Hence, performing an ANOVA would be pointless because the results would be invalid. As a nonparametric and more flexible alternative, the Kruskal-Wallis test fits the data better (Kruska-Miller 2014, 33–39, 123–28).

In the present context, the ten issuing kings constitute the “groups” that are compared, and the focus of their comparison is the length of the panegyric passage within each group (i.e. in the inscriptions that are available for each king). If we could assume that the variability in this length follows a similar distribution curve for each king, the Kruskal-Wallis test could have been used to compare the median values (midpoints). This is not the case, however, which means that we can only approach a precise comparison by ranking the data. The Kruskal-Wallis test is also called the “*H*-test” because its test statistic is a variable denoted by *H*. However, since this is a rather complicated statistic, the results of the test are usually simplified into a value of chi-square (specified by the degrees of freedom and the significance of the test). In the current experiment, the result was $\chi^2(9) = 39.825, p < 0.001$. This basically indicates that the probability of finding the observed data (i.e. the described differences in panegyric passages between the kings) is less than one in a thousand under the null hypothesis. Typically, a significance level of 0.05 is chosen as a threshold to determine statistical significance (Agresti 2018, 162), which means that the evidence of the result is strong enough to reject the null hypothesis: we can accept that at least one king stands out.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test is an omnibus test, which means that it can be used to determine if there are statistical differences between the groups within the comparison, but it cannot point out where that significant difference lies. To narrow this down, post-hoc testing is needed to identify exactly which groups differ from each other (i.e. which king stands out). Pairwise comparisons can be made with the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test (Agresti 2018, 213–16). It is beyond the scope of the experiment to present the details of forty-five pairwise comparisons here, but to name a few: the self-portrayal of Jayarāja is significantly longer than that of Narendra ($U = 0, p = 0.03$), but there is no significant difference in the length of panegyric passages between Jayarāja and Sudevarāja ($U = 9, p = 0.35$). Also, Tīvaradeva's self-portrayal does not differ significantly from that of Nannarāja I ($U = 0, p = 0.16$), but it certainly is significantly longer than that of Śivagupta ($U = 0, p = 0.002$).

Obviously, all of these results should be interpreted with caution. For one thing, the methods are used outside their ordinary context and some of the issuing kings have less than five inscriptions, which makes the approximation of H with chi-square less accurate. The case could also be made that a repeated measures analysis (the Friedman test) should have been used because the panegyric passages in the inscriptions of the ten kings cannot be considered as “independent observations.” After all, the design of a king's inscription builds on that of his predecessors. On the other hand, it could also be argued that the inscriptions of the kings are no sample of collected data that is used to draw conclusions about a broader population. Notwithstanding the limitations, the main point of this experiment was to try out something new and to promote the idea that borrowing analytical methods from other fields may bring new insights.

4. Discussion

The visual representation in Figure 4 and the analysis of the copperplate charters lead back to the question at the heart of this study, namely: what may have brought about the elaborate introduction of Tīvaradeva? Along the same line, similar questions may be asked about the increase in length of the introductions of Jayarāja and Nannarāja I compared to those of their predecessors. Why are the qualities of these three kings highlighted and not those of, say, Śivagupta? An answer may be found in the political history of the region and the contemporary arrangements of power; when collated together, the reigns of Jayarāja,

Nannarāja I, and Tivaradeva seem to have coincided with some major shifts in the political landscape of Dakṣiṇa Kosala.

In the case of Jayarāja, he may very well have been the first king of Śarabhapura who issued copperplate charters as a fully independent ruler. In any case, there are good reasons to suppose that Narendra was not ruling independently yet. The aforementioned *Kurud plates* report on Narendra's grant of the village of Keśavaka to a Brāhmaṇa named Śaṅkhasvāmin. The full religious merit of this donation is to be conveyed to someone referred to as 'the paramount sovereign' (*parama-bhaṭṭāraka-pāda*). The grant was actually a reconfirmation of the latter's original grant of the village to Śaṅkhasvāmin's father Bhāsrutasvāmin, which had been written on palm leaves and was destroyed by a fire in the house of the donee. In the inscription it is also told that the paramount sovereign made his original grant when he was taking a bath in the river Gaṅgā.¹⁰ Since the Guptas used and popularised the term *parama-bhaṭṭāraka* as an imperial title, and one of their headquarters was Pāṭaliputra on the river Gaṅgā, it is likely that the paramount sovereign of Narendra's *Kurud plates* was a Gupta king. Also, the respectful way in which the *parama-bhaṭṭāraka* is referred to in the charter suggests that Narendra may have been loyal to him (Sircar 1955–56). The exact relationship between Narendra and Prasanna cannot be determined with certainty because there are no inscriptions of the latter, but he did issue some re-poussé coins that were minted in imitation of coins that can arguably be ascribed to the Gupta emperors Kumāragupta I and Skandagupta (Bosma 2018, 15–19). Jayarāja was the first king of Śarabhapura with the word *mahā-* prefixed to his name, 'the Great Jayarāja,' suggesting an increase of royal authority and political prestige. This, together with the first use of some eulogising epithets in his introduction, can be interpreted as an indication of independent sovereignty and his consolidation of the kingdom.

The situation of Nannarāja I bears a clear similarity to that of Jayarāja in the sense that he was also the first person in his family who established independent control over the Dakṣiṇa Kosala region. As mentioned above, Indrabala was acting as Sudevarāja's chief minister in Sirpur after the kings of Śarabhapura expanded their kingdom towards the south and founded their second capital. His own *Malga plates* were issued while he was still holding this office. It is clear that he was in an ideal position to bring about the coup d'état of the Pāṇḍavas, and given the reign of his progeny, he succeeded. There is, however, no evidence that he ever ascended the conquered throne himself to rule from Sirpur. The same goes for Śūrābala, who is only known from the charters he issued in

¹⁰ *Kurud plates of Narendra*, ll. 4–11.

Mekalā. Nannarāja I issued his charter from Śrīpṛthivīpura, which is likely to be an unattested variant of Śrīpura (i.e. modern Sirpur). This makes him the first Pāṇḍava ruler who can be attested to have ruled from Sirpur and, thus, to have settled in the capital of the former overlords. The comparatively long string of epithets that make up his introduction may be seen as a reflection of his rising success and the establishment of Pāṇḍava hegemony.

Tīvaradeva appears to have been a venturesome king, someone who moved beyond local boundaries. In his own copperplate charters, he is praised for having obtained sovereignty over the whole of Kosala, but in the inscription of his son and successor Nannarāja II he is lauded for having ruled in Utkala (i.e. the coastal districts of Odisha) and other surrounding countries as well.¹¹ Any claim on Utkala would have been contested by the Gauḍas ruling north of that region, but Tīvaradeva may have received help from the Maukhari emperor Īśānavarman. The latter controlled Magadha in the second quarter of the sixth century and was in an excellent position to facilitate Tīvara's march into Utkala by putting pressure on the Gauḍas from the west. In return, Tīvaradeva may have supported Īśānavarman in his campaign against the king of Andhra (Bosma 2018, 33–34; Bakker 2014, 53–62). The likelihood of an alliance between both kings can only be deduced from the geographical and political circumstances at the time, but finds support in the later marriage of Tīvaradeva's nephew Harṣagupta with Īśānavarman's granddaughter Vāsaṭā. The implication that can be drawn here is that Tīvaradeva expanded the Pāṇḍava kingdom beyond Dakṣiṇa Kosala alone, which would make him the victorious king that he is portrayed to be in his charters.

Śivagupta Bālārjuna was by far the longest-reigning king in the history of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. During the nearly sixty years of his reign, the country seems to have been devoid of any political instability. Time and money could be invested in religious and cultural activities, such as large-scale temple construction and the provision of charity. The archaeological remains that date back to his time and the many inscriptions that record his donations are a clear indication of this (Bosma 2013). The length and impact of his reign do not, however, correspond to the length of his self-portrayal in the preamble of his charters. Apparently, peace and prosperity are no breeding ground for legends, whereas war and strife are. The pattern of the means plot made three kings stand out in terms of the length of their introduction, and a closer examination of the political history

11 The phrase *prāpta-sakala-kosalādhipatyah* is used in Tīvaradeva's own charters, while the text *sva-bhuja-parākramopārajita-sakala-kosalotkalādi-maṇḍalādhipatya-māhātmyasya śrī-mahāśiva-tīvararājasya* appears in the *Aḍbhār plates of Nannarāja II*, ll. 5–7.

of Dakṣiṇa Kosala has revealed that each of their reigns can typically be associated with the act of either establishing or extending control. Hence, each of them acted in a conflictual context that was characterised by victory and defeat, the very elements that feature prominently in panegyrics. Thus, the analysis of panegyric passages in the copperplate charters of the kings of Śarabhapura and the Pāṇḍava kings of Dakṣiṇa Kosala has offered some insight into what may have inspired their composition.

Primary sources

See page xvi about references to primary sources in general, and page xvii about DHARMA digital editions with a corpus ID and a number.

- Aḍbhār plates of Nannarāja II*: DaksinaKosala00029.
Amgura plates of Jayarāja: DaksinaKosala00004.
Āraṅg plates of Jayarāja: DaksinaKosala00006.
Āraṅg plates of Sudevarāja: DaksinaKosala00011.
Baloda plates of Tīvaradeva: DaksinaKosala00028.
Boṅḍā plates of Tīvaradeva: DaksinaKosala00025.
Dhamatari plates of Sudevarāja: DaksinaKosala00009.
Kauvatal plates of Sudevarāja: DaksinaKosala00012.
Kurud plates of Narendra: DaksinaKosala00002.
Malga plates of Indrabala: DaksinaKosala00018.
Malhār plates of Jayarāja: DaksinaKosala00007.
Malhār plates of Śūrabala: DaksinaKosala00020.
Nahna plates of Sudevarāja: DaksinaKosala00008.
Philadelphia Museum of Art plates of Nannarāja I: DaksinaKosala00024.
Pīparḍūlā plates of Narendra: DaksinaKosala00001.
Rājim plates of Tīvaradeva: DaksinaKosala00026.
Sirpur plates of Tīvaradeva: DaksinaKosala00027.

Use and Functions of the Coronation Name During the Somavaṃśin Dynasty

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1. Introduction

Within the corpus of the Somavaṃśin dynasty from Odisha, consisting of forty-eight records, the ruling king is very often referred to by two distinct names to which honorific and sectarian titles are affixed. Indeed, he is generally called in the date section by his personal name and in the notification part by his coronation name,¹ the latter generally alternating between Mahābhavagupta and Mahāśivagupta. These coronation names ending in *-gupta* are almost never used alone, but are often found together in a long compound and are linked by the expression *pādānudhyāta*, whose meaning has been discussed by Ferrier and Törzsök (2008). From this meaning, one can argue that the issuer king uses the whole compound in order to legitimate his position by a direct succession from father to son. Although this practice seems to be attested in all the land donations made by the kings of this dynasty, the coronation name does not always appear in donations made by third parties, and seems to be absent from stone inscriptions. Also noteworthy is the fact that the coronation names are totally absent from Indraratha's record, even though a detailed genealogy has confirmed his legitimacy. Surprisingly, the same Indraratha is omitted in the genealogies of his successors. Is the coronation name only the result of a religious consecration ceremony? Does it contribute to a claim of legitimacy? Or is it simply reserved for direct succession from father to son? If this coronation name confers legitimacy, why is it not mentioned systematically? Does its presence indicate a political stability and its absence the opposite? This paper will

1 The term 'coronation name' will be used in this paper for the designations Mahābhavagupta and Mahāśivagupta because several scholars (J. K. Sahu 1979; Shastri 1995a) referred to them by a similar term.

seek to track the use and to determine the functions and the scope of the coronation name within the Somavaṁśin dynasty. It will be based on a diachronic and synchronic study of the different names used by the Somavaṁśin kings to designate themselves and of those used by their contemporaries, whether relatives or subordinates. For this survey, all the published sources available today have been consulted.²

2. The corpus of the Somavaṁśin dynasty

First, it is necessary to define exactly what is meant here by the Somavaṁśin dynasty. Indeed, more than one king claims to belong to the lunar lineage (*soma-vaṁśa*) and yet not all the kings from the Soma lineage are representatives of the Somavaṁśin dynasty. The origins of the latter are still a subject of discussion among historians today,³ since the last known king of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśin dynasty — Śivagupta Bālārjuna — describes himself as belonging to the Soma lineage in several of his grants.⁴ However, while the Pāṇḍuvaṁśin and Somavaṁśin dynasties share some common features, and while it is still possible that the latter is descended from the former,⁵ they differ radically in certain respects that

2 In the framework of the ERC-DHARMA project, I have carried out a survey of all the inscriptions identified as belonging to the Somavaṁśin dynasty. These have been gathered from all the volumes of the *Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy*, as well as the works of Shastri (1995a; 1995b), of Tripathy (2010), and of Acharya (2014). Inscriptions previously published in the journal *Epigraphia Indica* or in the volume dedicated to this period by Rajaguru (1966) have also been consulted. Of course, it is always possible that an inscription has escaped my vigilance. In addition, the as yet unpublished records unfortunately could not be taken into account in my survey. For the sake of brevity and ease of reference, I refer to each record by its DHARMA identifier rather than its title. A full list of all the inscriptions consulted, complete with titles and, where necessary, bibliographical references, can be found at the end of this paper.

3 On this topic, see Panigrahi (1981, 104–9) or the discussion in Shastri (1995b, 172–76).

4 *Bārdūlā plates of Śivagupta*, year 9, l. 4, *Boṇḍā plates of Śivagupta*, year 22, ll. 4–5, *Lodhiā plates of Śivagupta*, year 57, l. 4, *Malhār plates of Śivagupta*, undated (presumably year 6), l. 4, *Malhār plates of Śivagupta*, undated, ll. 4–5: *soma-vaṁśa-sambhavaḥ*.

5 The hypothesis of an affiliation comes from the strong similarities between the records coming from the last two representatives of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśin dynasty (Tivaradeva and Bālārjuna) and the first ones of the Somavaṁśin dynasty. Both claim to belong to the lunar lineage, and jointly use the prefix *mahā-* and the suffix *-gupta* in their (probably) coronation names, which they attach to their birth names. Some scholars, such as Hunter and Sahu (1956), have proposed to see a father-son relationship between Śivagupta Bālārjuna

make us distinguish between the two.⁶ Thus the records of the Somavaṁśin dynasty discussed in this paper are those published, for the most part, by Rajaguru (1966) and by Shastri (1995a, 167–367). For a general idea of this dynasty and an overview of its members, the lineage tree of succession proposed by Shastri (1995a, 199), shown in Figure 1, is very useful, but it can only serve as a starting point, as it contains information on dates, succession order or familial relationships that still remains based on hypothesis.⁷ As regards the dynastic period, the only chronological clue available can be deduced from two donations issued by a member of another dynasty, the Bhauma-Kara: the *Baud plates (A and B) of Tribhuvanamahādevī, year 158*. Lines 17–22 (plate A) and lines 16–22 (plate B) of these two grants mention Svabhāvatuṅga, who is certainly the same Svabhāvatuṅga mentioned in Somavamsin00002 as the father of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya.⁸ Panigrahi (1981, 110) and Tripathy (2000, 53) date this plate to 894.

and Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya. This hypothesis is nowadays inadmissible since the records never mention Bālārjuna as the birth name of Janamejaya's father, whom they call Svabhāvatuṅga.

- 6 There is a real split between the records from the last representative of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśin dynasty and the first ones from the Somavaṁśin dynasty. This split seems to be temporal, palaeographic, and geographical: the scripts differ but are said to be from one century (Shastri 1995b, 175); their areas of influence would not be the same; and lastly, the kings of these two dynasties did not decorate their seals in the same way.
- 7 For instance, in this lineage tree, the filial relationship between Śivagupta and Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya was just a hypothesis in 1995, which has now been confirmed thanks to the discovery of a set of copper plates from Gopalpur issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya in his first regnal year (see Shastri and Tripathy 2011–12). On the other hand, the dates given by Shastri (1995b, 199), those proposed by Panigrahi (1981, 106) or even those suggested by Shastri and Tripathy (2011–12) all differ and remain approximate and hypothetical. Indeed, the inscriptions of the Somavaṁśin dynasty are all dated in regnal years and do not refer to any particular era. I am currently working on a dynastic tree that better reflects the grey areas and doubts raised by the epigraphic evidence.
- 8 Since the discovery of Somavamsin00002, it is known that Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya was born from Svabhāvatuṅga (see Somavamsin00002, vv. 5–6). For further details, see Shastri and Tripathy (2011–12, 104–6).

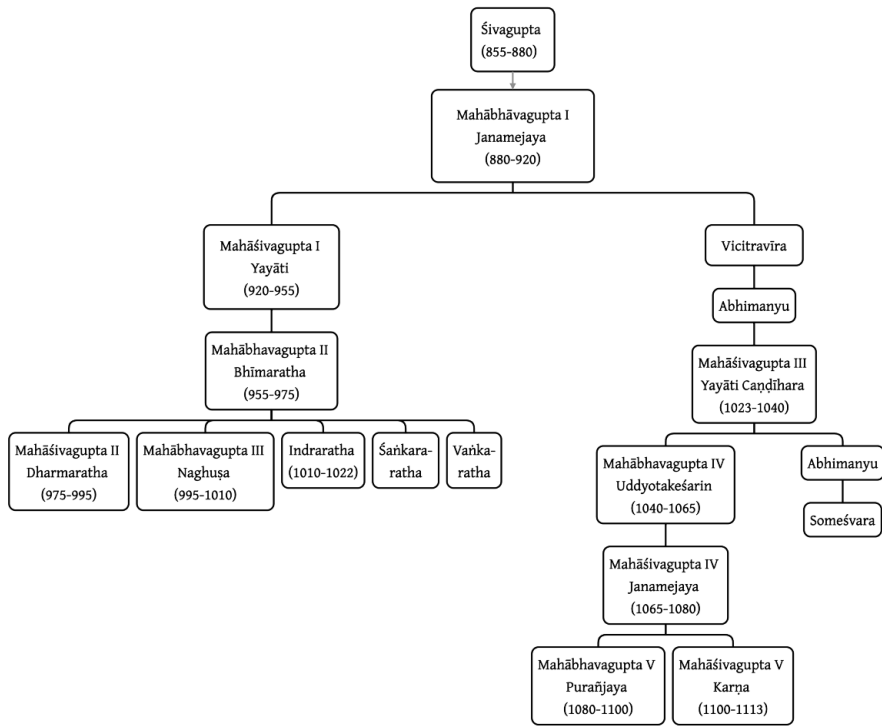


Figure 1. The Somavamśin dynasty according to Shastri (1995a, 199)

The lineage tree based on Shastri's hypothesis (1995a, 167–367) highlights two interesting features of the dynasty. First, it seems to be essential to designate the Somavamśin kings by two different names to dispel ambiguities, and even this double designation remains equivocal in one case, because there are two Mahāśivagupta Yayātis. The regular alternation of the coronation names between Mahābhavagupta and Mahāśivagupta and the redundancy of the birth names lead to several problems of correct identification when only one name is mentioned. I shall address this issue in section 3. Secondly, this lineage tree brings to light that some of the members of the Somavamśin royal house were ruling kings, while others were not. What is particularly striking is that Indraratha appears in this lineage tree as a king who did reign but did not have the typical name in Mahā...gupta, even though he seems to be the last direct and legitimate heir before the rise to power of a Somavamśin king born in a collateral line. The latter, Yayāti Caṇḍihara, bears the coronation name Mahāśivagupta, which alternates with the presumed predecessor of Indraratha, viz.,

Mahābhavagupta Naghuṣa. The Mahā...gupta names are understood by scholars to imply a coronation ceremony. For instance, Sahu (1979) speaks of “coronation sobriquets” which he defines as *abhiṣekanāman*, suggesting a name acquired during and used after a coronation ceremony. When he compares and lists the common features between the Pāṇḍuvarmśin and Somavarmśin dynasties, Shastri (1995a, 172) first shows that both dynasties use names beginning with *mahā*- and ending in *-gupta*, and then adds, “these names, which were perhaps assumed at the time of coronation and are thus indicative of regnal power, were different from the personal names, which are often met with in the *praśasti* portion or in connection with the specification of date (*sic*) in many inscriptions.” Thus, the absence of a coronation name for Indraratha may indicate that his coronation ceremony did not take place. But on the specific question of Indraratha’s non-use of this name, Shastri (1995a, 213) remains rather vague:

Indraratha assumed all the sectarian and regnal titles found employed for other Somakula monarchs but did not adopt the *gupta*-ending coronation name for reasons that cannot be ascertained at present.

Then, considering the meaning of the compound linking the two alternative coronation names by the word *pādānudhyāta*, one might believe that Indraratha’s rise to power was illegitimate, unlike that of his successor, Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara. However, Indraratha’s grant issued in his fourth regnal year suggests the opposite: Indraratha appears here as the legitimate heir who saved the kingdom from Abhimanyu’s illegal seizure of power.⁹ From these observations, it appears that resorting to the coronation name in a royal charter is the most common legitimation strategy, but not the only one. This leads to several questions about the particular use of the names in Mahā...gupta. What is their function? Why do they appear on copper plates and not on stone inscriptions? When, why, and by whom were they used? A brief look at the records reveals that some of the coronation names shown by Shastri are not attested. Thus, it is also necessary to check if the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta really occurred (and if so, in which contexts), or if the alternation is rather a pure supposition. By doing so, it may be possible to find out the reason why Indraratha did not use it, whereas his successor did.

9 From the information contained in the grant issued by Kolāvati (Somavamsin00030), it is known that Abhimanyu was the father of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara.

Like many other epigraphical corpora, the corpus attributed to the Somavāṁśin dynasty is sparse and incomplete;¹⁰ its distribution among issuer kings and media is disproportionate, and many records are uncertainly attributed (see section 3 below). For instance, as Figure 2 shows,¹¹ almost half of the copper plates available today are dated to the reign of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, and nearly a fifth of them were issued by his successor Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. In the case of some kings, such as Indraratha and Dharmaratha, only one record is available. Hence, the analysis of the designations based on the records issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya may result in the identification of some usage trends, but this will not be the case when there is only a single inscription extant. Within the whole corpus, there are forty-three copperplate records and only five stone inscriptions.¹² Within the copperplate charters, thirty-one were issued by Somavāṁśin kings, while eight sets were commissioned by third parties (feudatories of the Somavāṁśin kings or members of the royal family). None of the five stone inscriptions were issued by a Somavāṁśin king. Consequently, the data coming from the third-party records will be more difficult to interpret. Thus, even though this survey takes all the available data into account, the features of the Somavāṁśin corpus limit the results, and one must always consider them with great caution, keeping in mind that what is not observable may nonetheless have existed or that a seemingly unique use could be a regular one.

10 The copperplate records are mostly sets of three plates recording land grants. Four of them are isolated or incomplete plates and could not be used in this study (Somavamsin00045, 00035), or could only be used in part (Somavamsin00044, 00033).

11 The figure also indicates the remaining doubts in identifying the issuers (see section 3 below).

12 Somavamsin00027, 00029, 00030, 00034, and 00048.

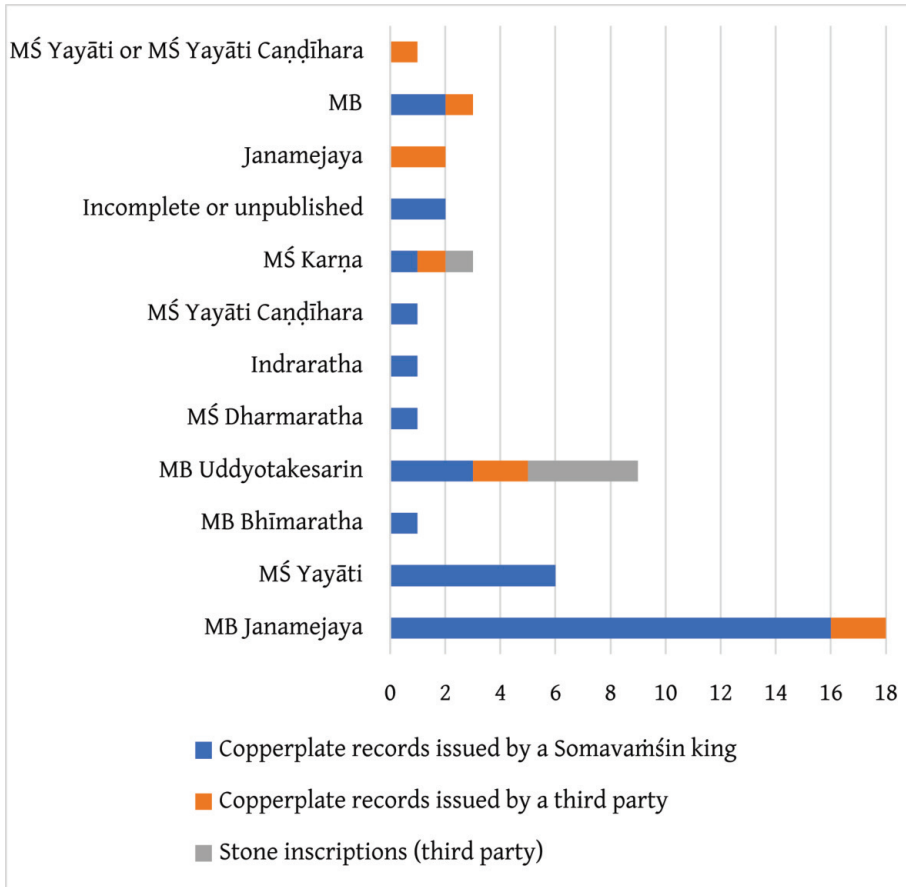


Figure 2. Distribution of copperplate and stone inscriptions. MB stands for Mahābhavagupta and MŚ for Mahāśivagupta.

3. Reassessing the identities of issuers

The systematic survey of coronation and birth names throughout the corpus has resulted in a reassessment of the attribution of some sets, and in new designations for some others, to reflect only what is found in the engraved text. Indeed, in order to offer the most reliable and accurate study of the use of the coronation name by one Somavamśin king or another, it was necessary first to ascertain the correct attribution of each set. Nonetheless, the identity of the king mentioned in a few of the copperplate sets (Somavamsin00021, 00026,

00028, 00039, 00040, and 00046) remains subject to doubt and debate, as I shall discuss below.

3.1. Scenario 1: Only a coronation name is mentioned

As explained above, when the birth and coronation names are not mentioned together, it is sometimes difficult to identify the king to whom the text refers. So, when only the coronation name is used, there are many possibilities, as in the case of three copperplate sets in which a king is referred to only by his coronation name Mahābhavagupta (Somavamsin00028, 00039, 00026). The striking similarity of the first two of these sets indicates that they were issued by the same king, whose identification, however, remains a matter of debate.¹³ At the current state of my research, I cannot confirm any of the suggested attributions, so these two cases will be considered independently in the results presented below.¹⁴

Unlike these two sets issued by an unidentified Somavaṁśin king, the third one, Somavamsin00026, was issued by a third party. Kielhorn (1896–97b) suggested on the basis of palaeographical criteria that this set had been composed at the time of Mahābhavagupta Bhīmaratha, which should be reassessed since we now have access to more charters from the Somavaṁśin dynasty than when this set was first published. Shastri (1995b, 263) and Tripathy (2010, 88) agree with Kielhorn without noting the disagreement of Rajaguru (1966, 241), who asserts that this set was composed at the time of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin. Consequently, we should remain cautious and think that the identification of this set remains to be confirmed by various clues.

3.2. Scenario 2: Only a birth name is mentioned

The identification of three other sets raises questions because they mention only the birth name of the ruling king, Janamejaya (Somavamsin00021, 00037, 00040). These sets may have been issued in time of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya or of Mahāśivagupta Janamejaya. Shastri (1995b, 358) dates Somavamsin00021 to the time of the latter, but he justifies this dating neither in his edition (Shastri 1995b, 358–61, esp. 360 n. 25), nor in his introductory volume (Shastri 1995a, 218–19). The issuer of this set is named Dharmaratha and designated as a

13 The following identifications have been proposed: Naghuṣa (Tripathy 2010, 88), Uddyotakeśarin (Panigrahi 1981, 37; Shastri 1995a, 186), the immediate predecessor of Janamejaya (Panda, Chopdar, and Nayak 2002, 77; Acharya 2013), the grandfather of Janamejaya (J. K. Sahu 1979, 1120).

14 The problem of identification arising from these inscriptions was the subject of a paper presented in January 2023 in Pondicherry (Wattelier-Bricout 2023).

yugarāja (heir-apparent). We know from several Somavamśin records that the Somavamśin king Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha was the great-grandson of the first Janamejaya. Shastri argues that since Somavamsin00021 is dated in the fifth regnal year of Janamejaya, this Dharmaratha is not Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha, and this Janamejaya is the second one. But once the former is accepted, then this Janamejaya could very well be the first one, or even a third Janamejaya otherwise unknown and belonging to a collateral line of the Somavamśin dynasty. A further clue in Somavamsin00021 is the name of the *mahāsandhivigrahin* Malladatta and his title *rāṇaka*. A *mahāsandhivigrahin* of the same name is mentioned in eight grants issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, without a title in the earlier ones, and with the title *rāṇaka* from the seventeenth year onward.¹⁵ In several of these royal charters, Malladatta is described as the son of Dhāradatta, but given that his lineage is not recorded in Somavamsin00021 and that the repetition of names in a lineage is a common practice, the identification cannot be asserted. Other clues (such as the scribe's name, the wording, the script, the format of the set, etc.) deserve to be studied in greater depth, but this cannot be undertaken here. That said, even though the attribution of this set remains uncertain, the data collected in this set will be included in my study.

The set Somavamsin00037, although it was issued by a third party, can be probably attributed to the time of the first Janamejaya. Among the clues noted by Shastri (1995b, 348 n. 4, 353 n. 67), the most noteworthy is the name of its engraver, Saṅgrāma, and his lineage (son of Rāyaṇa Ojhā), which totally match with the name and the engraver's lineage indicated in four grants issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya.¹⁶

As for the set Somavamsin00040, its first editor Nayak (2012) attributes it to Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya. Since then, to my knowledge, no study has addressed the question of whether it can be ascribed to the first or the second Janamejaya. However, the evidence for this attribution is pretty thin. Nayak (2012, 72) dates the script and language to the ninth century, but without further argument. Although he advances the dating of this set with caution, he attributes it to the first Janamejaya without even considering another possibility or arguing this claim. A more detailed study of the script and language, for example, could possibly help to date the set, but for now, it would be more prudent

15 Malladatta is mentioned without a title in Somavamsin00004, 00006, 00007, 00008 (of the years 12, 6, 6, and 8 respectively), and with the title *rāṇaka* in 00009 and 00010 (year 17); and in 00011, 00042, 00043 (year 31).

16 Somavamsin00001, 00002, 00003, 00008. Of these, 00002 and 00003 had not yet been discovered when Shastri (1995b, 348 n. 4, 353 n. 67) noticed that the engraver of 00037 also worked on 00001 and 00008.

to hold that the attribution to the first or the second Janamejaya has not yet been established.

3.3. Scenario 3: Doubt despite the presence of both names

Finally, in some cases doubt may remain despite the joint mention of the coronation and birth names, because there are two homonymous kings Mahāśivagupta Yayāti.¹⁷ Of the eight sets presenting this scenario, six mention the immediate predecessor of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti by his birth name (Janamejaya), allowing for firm identifications. Therefore, only two sets remain problematic. One of these (Somavamsin00024) is a grant issued by the king himself in his fifteenth regnal year, which, while it does not mention the immediate predecessor, shares features with another record linked to the first Mahāśivagupta Yayāti dated in his eighth regnal year (Somavamsin00022), namely that these two sets come from the same place; they were written by the same person Utsavanāga or Uchchavanāga, son of Āllava or Āllavanāga;¹⁸ they were approved by the same *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta;¹⁹ and finally, they share a concluding verse specific to these two donations alone. All together, these elements establish that this set (Somavamsin00024) was certainly issued by the same person, namely the first Mahāśivagupta Yayāti.

The second set (Somavamsin00046) is more problematic as it is a grant issued by a third party. Rajaguru (2011, 101–2) suggests dating this charter to the time of the second Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. His argument is based on the following common features between this set and another one found in the same place

17 Somavamsin00016, 00017, 00018, 00022, 00023, 00024, 00025, 00046.

18 Pointed out by Shastri (1995b, 244 n. 61). Āllava being the *kāyastha* in a set issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya (Somavamsin00008, ll. 43–44), it is possible to imagine that his son Utsavanāga / Uchchavanāga continues the profession of his father under the reign of the immediate successor of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, i.e. the first Yayāti.

19 This *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta is also mentioned in two other grants. In Somavamsin00012, issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya in his thirty-fourth regnal year, the charter is said to be written at the permission of *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta (ll. 51–52: *likhitam idaṃ tāmra-śāsanam mahāsandhivigrahika-rāṇaka-śrī-dhāradattasyābhimatena*). In Somavamsin00025, issued by Mahāśivagupta Yayāti during his twenty-fourth year, it is said that the text was written with the knowledge of *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta (ll. 63–64: *likhitam idaṃ śāsanam mahāsandhivigrahikarāṇaka-dhāradattāvagatena mahāsandhivigraha-kāyastha-tathāgateneti*). So, it seems that *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta was a person of influence from the end of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya's reign to the twenty-fourth year of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti's reign.

(Somavamsin00026):²⁰ both issuers come from the Māthara lineage; they received the grace of the goddess Kāleśvarī; they both bear the title *māṅḍalika-rāṇaka*. While these are rightly pointed out and are rather useful for an attempt at dating, when Rajaguru (2011, 241) does so, he bases his argument on the palaeographical dating proposed by Kielhorn (1896–97b) — namely that the script would date from the twelfth century — but he omits the fact that Kielhorn himself considers Somavamsin00026 to have been composed at the time of Mahābhavagupta Bhīmaratha, who reigned from 955 to 975 according to Shastri (1995a, 208). Thus, Rajaguru retains Kielhorn’s dating but not his attribution, and conjectures that Somavamsin00026 dates from the time of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin. Considering the script of Somavamsin00046 to be older, Rajaguru proposes dating it to the time of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin’s predecessor, i.e. the second Yayāti, Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṅḍihara. Without an in-depth palaeographic study of Somavamsin00046,²¹ but assuming that its script is indeed older than Somavamsin00026 — given that Tripathy (2010, 86) and Shastri (1995a, 209; 1995b, 263) both suggest dating the script to the mid-tenth century and both attribute Somavamsin00026 to the time of Mahābhavagupta Bhīmaratha — it would also be possible to infer that Somavamsin00046 was issued during the reign of the first Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. Therefore, the attribution of the set Somavamsin00046 remains doubtful.

4. Use of the coronation name in grants issued by the Somavamśin kings

Now that the grant attributions have been ascertained as precisely as possible, it is possible to analyse the use and the functions of the coronation name within the royal grants. Indeed, while the dynastic tree proposed by Shastri gives the impression that the use of the coronation names, the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta, and a double designation of kings (with birth and coronation names) are the specific features of the Somavamśin dynasty, the absence of a coronation name in the royal grant issued by Indraratha calls these statements into question and calls for a reassessment of the role that the coronation name can play in the royal grants. In order to observe the legitimating

20 As seen above (section 3.1), Somavamsin00026 presents only a duo of coronation names of the ruling king (Mahābhavagupta) and his predecessor (Mahāśivagupta), opening up numerous attribution possibilities.

21 For the time being, such a study is not possible, as Rajaguru (2011) gives no information on the current place of preservation of the set. As for the photos of the set, they are of very poor quality.

strategies deployed by the Somavamśin chancellery in the royal grants, I have carried out a precise survey of the kings' designations, keeping track of the person to whom they refer (the king, his immediate predecessor, his ancestors), the honorific titles by which they are accompanied, and the part of the text in which they appear. As each part of a royal grant bears a specific function, the presence of the coronation name in one particular part may contribute to its function, while its co-occurrence with titles or the immediate predecessor could shed light on the relationship of the ruling king with his predecessor and reveal how his position is legitimated by this relationship.

4.1. *Praśasti* part

The grants issued by the Somavamśin kings do not systematically include a long sequence of glorifying or genealogical verses²² and the *praśasti* part in the Somavamśin corpus does not have a fixed form: it sometimes includes a long genealogy, sometimes only a few lines of glorification, and sometimes these references are found at the end of the copper plates rather than at the beginning.²³ What distinguishes this “*praśasti* part” from the “notification part” is first that the former is in verse, whereas the notification part is in prose, and second, that the content of these two parts differs. The purpose of the eulogistic part is to emphasise the valour of the ruling king and his lineage by telling their heroic deeds, and to sanction the rise to power of the ruling king through his genealogical account. Consequently, the presence of the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta in this part may reinforce the legitimation strategy deployed by indicating a continuous transmission of the coronation names.

The results of the survey show that eulogies, where present, typically use the birth name of the reigning king as well as his predecessors, and never mention any coronation name.²⁴ The records of the first four kings generally contain

22 For instance, there are no verses of glorification in the three grants commissioned by the first Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya (Somavamsin00001, 00003, 00006), in one amongst those issued by the first Mahāśivagupta Yayāti (Somavamsin00024), and in the unique record of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara (Somavamsin00016). Similarly, the two sets whose attribution is problematic (Somavamsin00028 and 00039) contain no genealogical details.

23 The various practices of the royal eulogy within the corpus deserve to be studied in greater detail, but this cannot be done here.

24 All the following sets contain a eulogistic section: Somavamsin00002, 00004, 00005, 00007, 00008, 00009, 00010, 00011, 00012, 00013, 00015, 00017, 00018, 00019, 00020, 00022, 00023, 00025, 00031, 00037, 00038, 00041, 00042, 00043, 00047. The birth names are found in all

just a few verses: they refer to the ruling king, his immediate predecessor and sometimes to his grandfather only by their birth names. One can observe a turn in the practice with Indraratha's grant (Somavamsin00013), in which fourteen verses are devoted to his genealogy and deeds. Next, there is no eulogistic part in the unique grant of Indraratha's successor, Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara (Somavamsin00016). His rise to power is not explained by any genealogical details. From the time of his son and successor Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin, a kind of standard genealogical account seems to be created and reused.²⁵ This time, the eulogistic part retraces the history of the Somavamśin dynasty up to the first Janamejaya, but without ever mentioning the coronation names, which could have given cohesion to the whole.

4.2. Notification part

The notification part of the royal grants consists of the administrative details of a donation (the place, the identities of the donor and of the recipient(s), the description of the gift, its purpose, the witnesses, etc.). The description of the king as the donor is the most relevant information for the present study. The data collection points out two major facts: first, all the royal grants introduce the king by using a specific compound linking the ruling king to his immediate predecessor or his parents by the word *pādānudhyāta*; second, as mentioned in the introduction, all the royal grants use the coronation name to designate the donor, except the one issued by Indraratha.

Of the thirty-one sets for which data can be studied,²⁶ twenty-seven use the following expression: *parama-bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara-śrī-mahā-[X]-gupta-deva-pādānudhyāta-parama-māheśvara-parama-bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara-soma-kula-tilaka-trikalingādhipati-śrī-mahā-[Y]-gupta-rāja-devaḥ*.²⁷ The formula is only absent in four sets. Of these, Somavamsin00028 and 00039 were certainly issued by the same person, but, as noted above (section 3.1), the identity of that king is still a subject under discussion. The formula is replaced

these records, except for 00011, 00012, 00042, and 00043, in which the reigning king is named Dharmakandarpa.

25 The three grants issued by Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin (Somavamsin00015, 00038, and 00047) contain the same eleven verses. The unique record of Mahāśivagupta Karṇa (Somavamsin00031) has the same eleven verses, adding eight more to complete the genealogical account up to Karṇa's rise to power.

26 Somavamsin00001, 00002, 00003, 00004, 00005, 00006, 00007, 00008, 00009, 00010, 00011, 00012, 00013, 00015, 00016, 00017, 00018, 00019, 00020, 00022, 00023, 00024, 00025, 00028, 00031, 00038, 00039, 00041, 00042, 00043, 00047.

27 I quote here one instance of the expression. The order of the titles is almost the same, but the number of the immediate predecessor's titles can be less than that of the ruling king.

by *mātā-pitṛ-pādānudhyāta* in these. The latter formula also appears in Somavamsin00013, issued by Indraratha, Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha's brother or half-brother. Finally, the formula is altogether absent in Somavamsin00031, issued by Purañjaya's brother Mahāśivagupta Karṇa, who is referred to only with his coronation name and the usual honorific titles. From these observations, it can be deduced that the full-length *pādānudhyāta* compound is a kind of official formula that certifies the authority transmitted by a direct succession line, since it is always used in a father-son relationship. When the *pādānudhyāta* compound mentions only the two parents or is not present, this may indicate the accession to power of a new royal authority, either through the foundation of a new dynasty or following a discontinuity in the succession line.

It is remarkable that only two sets use birth names in the notification section of the text. One of these is Somavamsin00013, which, as discussed above, uses a compound linking Indraratha to his parents by the formula *pādānudhyāta*. The other is Somavamsin00016, which uses the coronation names of the donor king and his predecessor, but also mentions the birth name of the donor king in the following way: *śrī-mahābhavagupta-pādānudhyāta-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara-praṇamita-rājanyopasevita-pādāravinda-yugalaḥ śrī-mahāśivagupta-śrī-yayāti-devaḥ*.²⁸ The way in which this king is presented in his own record differs from the other royal epigraphs in two particular respects in addition to the combined use of coronation and birth names: each name is preceded by *śrī* in a kind of emphasis, and the coronation name of the predecessor is not preceded by the usual honorific titles. These two sets are particularly noteworthy since Somavamsin00013 was issued by Indraratha who, according to the same set, came to power with the approbation of the best *dvijas* after killing Abhimanyu, who had acquired power without the authorisation of his predecessor,²⁹ while Somavamsin00016 was issued by Abhimanyu's son, who is said to have acquired the title *trikaliṅgādhipati* by his own arm and to have been chosen by the countries as in a *svayamvara*.³⁰ The version of the event told by his wife Kolāvati is slightly different, as in her stone inscription he is said to have been brought to power by the unanimous agreement of the ministers.³¹ These two sets originate from

28 Somavamsin00016, ll. 17–18.

29 Somavamsin00013, v. 14: *yo vidvān abhimanyum apy anucitān prāptādhipatyam bhuvovamśāsyanadhikāriṇaṁ rana-bhuvivi vyāpādayad dveṣiṇaṁ | tal-lakṣmīn dvija-sattamair anumatām āśādy senādhipaiḥ trairājyañ ca turaṅgakena jagṛhe yenātha rājyāntaram||*.

30 Somavamsin00016, l. 14: *kaliṅga-korīgodotkala-kośala-svayamvara-prasiddhaḥ* and l. 15: *svabhujopārjita-trikaliṅgādhipatiḥ*.

31 Somavamsin00030, v. 7.

a period in Somavāṁśin history that was characterised by internecine struggles for power.

To explore the formula further, it is necessary to look in more detail at the context in which the coronation names Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta are used. It should be recalled that these names are never used alone but almost always in combination with various honorific titles. The titles usually used in compounds are as follows: *parama-māheśvara*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka*, *mahārājā-dhirāja*, *parameśvara*, *soma-kula-tilaka*, *trikalingādhipati*, *rāja-deva* or *deva*. Considering the restricted and occasional use of the coronation name and its conjunction with honorific titles, it may be necessary to question that the epithets Mahābhavagupta and Mahāśivagupta are “coronation names” in the customary sense, implying that the person thus named has been consecrated as king by a ceremony. Given that this *pādānudhyāta* formula was used in its fixed form in case of a succession of power from father to son, and that some titles may have a religious connotation, we could see in them the affirmation of a divine transmission of power: the son presenting himself as authorised by his father, both being the *protégés* of Śiva and enthroned by him.³² The fixed form and repetitive structure of the *pādānudhyāta* formula set a kind of solemn and official tone to the royal grants. Its function may be political by establishing legitimacy through filial transmission, and may be religious by asserting the divine protection of Śiva. That said, a more in-depth study of the exact composition of the honorific titles used for the ruling king and his immediate predecessor should be undertaken, as the initial survey shows that there are some divergences in practice: sometimes the honorific titles are exactly the same on either side of the term *pādānudhyāta*; sometimes the predecessor’s title is omitted, while in one case there is a striking imbalance (Somavamsin00016).

4.3. Date

Since dates in the Somavāṁśin corpus always refer to the regnal year of a particular king, a coronation name on its own would be impracticable due to the confusion caused by the alternation of these names, while birth names could identify kings more unequivocally. Indeed, of the thirty-four copperplate sets issued by the Somavāṁśin kings, the overwhelming majority mention the birth name alone without associating it with the coronation name, as Figure 3 clearly shows.³³ This means that the use of a coronation name in the date could be seen as a deviation from the regular pattern. For this reason, I analyse the cases of

32 On the possible divinisation of the Somavāṁśin kings, see Smith (1991, 92–94, 105).

33 There is no information available for Somavamsin00033, 00041, 00044, and 00045.

deviation hoping to gain a better understanding of the function of the coronation name. There are three scenarios of deviation: the date may be recorded without name; with the coronation name alone; or with both the coronation and birth names.

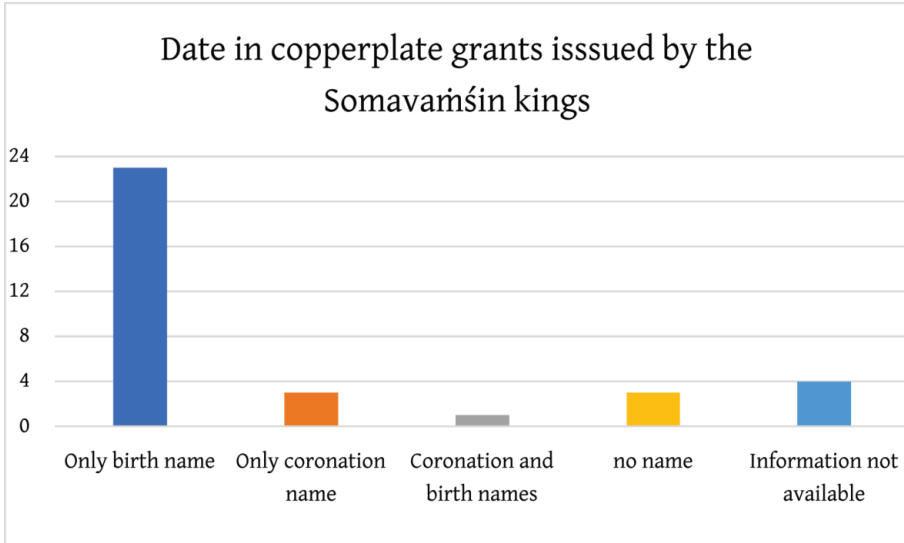


Figure 3. Use of coronation and birth names in the date section of Somavamśin copperplate sets

The three sets without a name in the date (Somavamsin00020, 00028, 00039) give no clue to the use of coronation or birth names in date. But it is noticeable that in the whole text of two of them, the king is only designated by his coronation name (see section 3.1 above).

The three sets which use only the coronation name (Somavamsin00011, 00042, and 00043) can be considered as a single case since they were issued by the same king, on the same day of the same year, to the same recipient, and contain almost the same text (except for the details of the villages granted). This triple grant to a single person, Sādhāraṇa, son of Śobhana, who is none other than the minister of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya and who was already the minister and the recipient of the king's grant issued in the first year of his reign (Somavamsin0002), confers an exceptional nature upon these three sets. They also have one feature in common: their text designates Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya with the sobriquet Dharmakandarpa, which is found only in one other

grant.³⁴ As the seal of one of these three sets attests to the mention of a coronation name (see 4.4), it should be noted that these three sets are atypical within the corpus in their use of the coronation name.

The single set that uses both coronation and birth names in the date (Somavamsin00016) is particularly interesting because it is the only one that can be attributed with certainty to Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara. The text of this donation mentions that Yayāti won his glory by his own arms and that he was appointed by the ministers. Given that there seems to have been some confusion in the succession when Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara ascended the throne, the joint use of the birth and coronation names in the date could be interpreted as a reaffirmation of the royal authority or legitimacy of the ruling king.

The birth name is generally accompanied in the date by honorific titles much the same as those in the notification part, although in half of all cases, the three titles indicating religious affiliation (*parama-māheśvara*), the lineage (*soma-kulatilaka*) and geographical dominion (*trikaliṅgādhipati*) are omitted from the date. There are also some exceptions, but their analysis does not lead to any straightforward explanation.

4.4. Seals

As the seal is used in particular to authenticate a donation, the presence of a coronation name on it might have a stronger authentication value than the birth name. The authenticity of the seal is essentially based on the emblem of the dynasty emblazoned on the seal, but the accompanying legend also contributes to it. If the coronation name is used on these seals, we can deduce that this designation also plays a part in the seals' function as certificates of authenticity.

Although twenty-six royal seals have come down to us,³⁵ there are only two seals for which the editors explicitly mention that they do not bear a legend (Somavamsin00012, 00015), and only four that bear a known and legible legend (Somavamsin00001, 00028, 00039, and 00043), plus two that are illegible but

34 This is Somavamsin00012, which is dated in the thirty-fourth regnal year. The sobriquet is used in two verses glorifying the king and his minister Sādharma. These two eulogistic verses can also be found in Somavamsin00009 and 00010 (both dated to the seventeenth regnal year), but without the sobriquet (see Shastri 1995b, 216 n. 35).

35 Somavamsin00001, 00002, 00003, 00004, 00006, 00007, 00008, 00009, 00010, 00011, 00012, 00013, 00015, 00016, 00017, 00018, 00019, 00020, 00022, 00023, 00024, 00025, 00028, 00031, 00033, 00038, 00039, 00041, 00042, 00043, 00047.

conjecturally restorable (Somavamsin00011 and 00042).³⁶ Seven seals cannot be involved in the study because their legends have not been reported accurately,³⁷ while eleven are illegible due to corrosion.³⁸ Of the four seals with a known legend, only one mentions a Somavaṁśin king by his birth name (Somavamsin00001), while three use the coronation name (Somavamsin00028, 00039, and 00043), to which we could very hypothetically add Somavamsin00011 and 00042.

All the occurrences of the coronation name on a seal are attached to sets exhibiting some special features. The three similar sets Somavamsin00011, 00042, and 00043 issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya in his thirsty-first regnal year name the king with his coronation name in the notification part, but in the eulogy part use a sobriquet (Dharmakandarpa) not found in any other of his grants issued before this date, and employ only the coronation name in the date (see 4.3 above). The other two seals bearing a coronation name (Somavamsin00028 and 00039) are attached to sets whose identification remains particularly problematic, especially as the royal symbol represented on these seals, a bull, diverges from all the other dynastic symbols on the Somavaṁśin seals, which represent a Gajalakṣmī. These grants are dated in a regnal year but without mentioning any names. The results of this survey are obviously difficult to interpret, but they seem to indicate that a coronation name on a seal is used in specific cases.

4.5. Summary

From the whole systematic survey of the coronation name within the grants issued by the Somavaṁśin kings, several trends can be identified. First, the coronation name is never found in the eulogy part (where only birth names are used). Its absence and the preference for birth names could certainly be explained in various ways, but the most likely reason might be that birth names, often drawn from the epics, favour the elaboration of praise, making it easier to draw laudatory comparisons with mythological characters. Another reason

36 Except only the details of the villages granted, the text inscribed on these two sets is similar to Somavamsin00043, for which Fleet (1894–95) reads the coronation name of the king in the seal legend. Obviously, it cannot be taken for granted that this applies likewise to Somavamsin00011 and 00042, but it is highly likely. The presence of an illegible legend is only mentioned for the seal attached to 00011, while the seal of 00042 is completely corroded.

37 Somavamsin00005, 00013, 00016, 00022, 00025, 00038, 00041.

38 Somavamsin00002, 00003, 00004, 00006, 00008, 00009, 00018, 00019, 00020, 00024, and 00047.

could be specific to the Somavamśin dynasty: a genealogical account requires a clear identification of the kings, which the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta does not guarantee.

The notification part typically employs the *pādānudhyāta* formula linking the coronation name of the ruling king to that of his immediate predecessor. Thus, the use of the coronation names is rather confined to the administrative part of the grants and belongs to a formal protocol composed by the chancellery. The alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta along with a list of honorific titles certainly serves to establish the king's authority and legitimacy (as shown by the adaptations of the formula in case of contentious succession). All the deviations observed from this formula are from problematic cases of succession: Indraratha (Somavamsin00013); his successor Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara (Somavamsin00016); Mahāśivagupta Karṇa, brother of Purañjaya (Somavamsin00031); and probably the issuer of Somavamsin00028 and 00039. Consequently, the functions of the coronation name are both political and juridical.

Coronation names are occasionally found in the date, but the custom seems rather to be the use of the birth name there. Given that coronation and birth names also occur in seal legends, either of these two designations seems to be suitable for authentication, although a pattern cannot be established due to the scarcity of preserved seal legends.

It should be noticed that the coronation name is hardly ever used alone and that, although the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta is a well-attested practice among the Somavamśin kings in the royal grants, this alternation is not attested for all the kings of the dynasty. In fact, Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya always refers to his predecessor as Śivagupta, without the initial *mahā-*. In addition, there is no evidence of coronation names for four subsequent kings: Naghuṣa, Indraratha, the second Janamejaya, and Purañjaya. Considering that there is only one case where a Somavamśin king is designated by both his coronation and birth name (Somavamsin00016), one may wonder whether it is correct to speak of Mahābhavagupta III Naghuṣa, Mahāśivagupta IV Janamejaya and Mahābhavagupta V Purañjaya as Shastri (1995b) and Acharya (2014) do in all the titles they give to the records.³⁹

39 Rajaguru (1966) and Tripathy (2010) are much more cautious in naming the grants and only use the names attested in them.

5. Use of the coronation names in non-royal grants

Among the forty-eight records available, nine copperplate grants⁴⁰ and five stone inscriptions⁴¹ were issued by a royal relative or a third party. My objective is to observe how such grants adapt the *pādānudhyāta* formula and the patterns and trends detected within the royal grants, and whether they refer to the ruling king by his coronation name as well as by his birth name.

5.1. Issued by a family member

Three records were issued by a royal relative. Two of them are copperplate grants (Somavamsin00021 and 00032), both problematic. The first, issued by Dharmaratha born in the Soma family and designated as *yuvarāja* and *kumārādhirāja* (both meaning an heir-apparent or crown-prince), only mentions the birth name of the ruling king, leaving open two options for attribution.⁴² The second was commissioned by Someśvaradeva, a member of the Somavamsin family styled *kumārādhirāja*, and is dated to the first year without specifying a king as point of reference. The third record is a stone inscription (Somavamsin00030) engraved on the wall of a temple recording its construction, issued by the queen Kolāvati during the reign of her son Uddyotakeśarin. Its content differs from the structure of the copperplate grants as it does not have a notification part and, consequently, does not include the *pādānudhyāta* formula. Nevertheless, this record can speak to how the Somavamsin kings are designated in the *praśasti* part and how the date is given.

Concerning the *praśasti* part, Somavamsin00030 is the only record to include a genealogical account. Its details are extremely valuable since the troubled period after Dharmaratha's death is explicitly mentioned, stating that the grandfather and father of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin were named Abhimanyu and Caṇḍihara. Here, as in the royal copperplate grants, the Somavamsin kings are all designated by their birth names. The coronation name is thus absent here, just as in the *praśasti* of royal inscriptions.

40 Somavamsin00014 (time of Karṇa), 00021 (uncertain dating), 00026 (uncertain date), 00032 (time of Uddyotakeśarin), 00035 (incomplete plate not used in my study but probably contemporary of 00032), 00036 (time of Janamejaya), 00037 (time of Janamejaya), 00040 (uncertain dating), 00046 (uncertain dating).

41 Somavamsin00027, 00029, 00030 (time of Uddyotakeśarin); 00048 (certainly from the time of Uddyotakeśarin) and 00034 (time of Karṇa).

42 See section 3.2 above.

The notification part can be observed only in the two copperplate sets issued by men designated *kumārādhirāja*.⁴³ As one can infer a filial relationship to the reigning king from this title, the presence of the *pādānudhyāta* formula could be expected within the notification part. In Somavamsin00021, Dharmaratha, the issuer, is described with several titles used by ruling kings as well as by a regional title (*paścima-kaliṅgādhipati*), but without the *pādānudhyāta* formula. Despite its absence, the honorific titles seem to give a royal touch to his grant. In Somavamsin00032, Someśvaradeva is designated with five honorific titles very close to those used by the Somavamśin ruling kings: *parama-māheśvara*, *parama-mahā-bhaṭṭāraka*, *kumārādhirāja*, *parameśvara*, and *paścima-laiṅkādhipati*. The exact identity of Someśvaradeva and his familial relationship to Uddyotakeśarin are not yet clarified (Sircar 1949–50, 324) and the text of this set is rather corrupted. It employs the *pādānudhyāta* formula and refers to Uddyotakeśarin by both his birth name and a coronation name, in addition to styling him *parama-māheśvara*, *parama-mahā-bhaṭṭāraka*, *mahārājādhirāja*, *parameśvara*, and *trikaliṅgādhipati*. The coronation name is, however, anomalously Mahāśivagupta instead of Uddyotakeśarin's regular Mahābhavagupta. This anomaly is imputed to the scribe by both Shastri (1995b, 319 n. 8, 322 n. 56) and Tripathy (2010, 468 n. 1723). Given the corruption of the text, it is difficult to conclude whether the *pādānudhyāta* formula is used here to confer legitimacy to Someśvaradeva, but it seems that the text reflects more or less the chancellery's discourse found in the notification parts of the Somavamśin ruling kings.

Concerning the date part, the stone inscription (Somavamsin00030) includes it at the end and mentions the birth name of the ruling king as seems usual in the royal copperplate grants issued by the ruling kings. It is noticeable that the honorific titles associated with the birth name are those which are generally omitted in the date section of the royal grants (*parama-māheśvara*, *soma-kulatilaka* and *trikaliṅgādhipati*) but usually quoted in the *pādānudhyāta* formula. Hence, here the date is given with a kind of royal touch through the choice of specific honorific titles. In Somavamsin00021, the date is recorded at the beginning of the grant and the same use of the king's birth name accompanied by honorific titles is observed: here one can read all the honorific titles found in the *pādānudhyāta* formula, except *parameśvara*. The date of the third record (Somavamsin00032), as explained above, is quite problematic and does not feature any name or honorific title.

43 As Shastri (1995b, 322 n. 53, 361 n. 28) points out, these are the only occurrences of this title in the Somavamśin corpus.

5.2. Issued by a subordinate *rāṇaka*

Among the records available, there are four stone inscriptions and seven copperplate grants issued by subordinates during the time of a Somavamsin king, one of which has been excluded from the study.⁴⁴ The stone inscriptions, like that of Kolāvati in 5.1 above, do not include a notification part. As their content is very short, they also do not contain a *praśasti* part. Two of the three texts engraved on cave walls at Khaṇḍagiri (Somavamsin00027, 00029) use the king's birth name in order to indicate the date of the recorded pious acts.⁴⁵ Contrary to what was observed in the temple inscription issued by the queen mother, no honorific title accompanies the king's birth name here. Somavamsin00034 is a label incised on an image of Sūrya, and the surviving text consists only of two damaged lines referring to the reign of Karṇa, probably to date the installation of the image. Three honorific titles are wholly or partly preserved, but Shastri (1995b, 335) goes further and reconstructs the text by adding all the honorific titles found in the *pādānudhyāta* formula. This reconstruction, although possible, remains questionable, since my previous observations point out that the convention of giving a date fluctuates within the Somavamsin corpus. It thus appears that honorific titles are used only sporadically in stone inscriptions by third parties, while a preference for the birth name of the ruling king is universal.

Among the six copperplate grants issued by the third parties, there is only one record containing a *praśasti* part (Somavamsin00037). This eulogy is devoted to the donor and not to the ruling king, but it is interesting to notice that the relationship between the donor and the ruling king is mentioned in line 14 of this *praśasti* part by quoting the latter's birth name, Janamejaya. This grant is also quite exceptional because its notification part contains the expression *mātā-pitṛ-pādānudhyāta* applied to the issuing subordinate. Yet there is no instance of the *pādānudhyāta* formula in the notification parts of the five other sets, which consist only in a presentation of the donor with his own honorific titles. Consequently, no third-party grant alludes to the ruling king in its notification part, while the *pādānudhyāta* formula is present in one of them to refer to the donor.

Conversely, all grants except Somavamsin00037 refer to the ruling king in the date section. In Somavamsin00037, the date consists only of the day and the month, and is hence given without mentioning the name of the king. In Soma-

44 Somavamsin00035 seems to be issued by a third party but as its text is incomplete, this single plate is excluded from the study.

45 Somavamsin00048 is undated.

vamsin00040, the year is linked to the king's birth name, Janamejaya. The absence of honorific titles in the date has been interpreted by the first editor of this set as a clue to a distant relationship between the issuer and the ruling king. But by taking into account that there are two other examples of a date without titles among the third-party records, it is difficult to ascertain that the issuer of this grant "enjoyed greater liberty than other chiefs and that his subordination to Janamejaya was nominal" (Nayak 2012, 73). The sets Somavamsin00014 and Somavamsin00046 start with the date, which is a little more elaborate, since it includes some honorific titles linked to the ruling king. In the royal grants, it has been observed that in half of all cases, the honorific titles *parama-māheśvara*, *soma-kula-tilaka*, and *trikaliṅgādhipati* are omitted in the date. Here, this is not the case. Somavamsin00046 mentions all the honorific titles usually found in the notification part of a royal grant. It also designates the king by both his coronation and birth names. All of this gives the grant a kind of royal touch and a somewhat pompous tone. The date in Somavamsin00014 also displays an accumulation of honorific titles slightly different from the usual titles: *parama-māheśvara-mahābhaṭṭāraka-somavamśa-kula-kamala-tilaka-bhāskara-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara-śrī-karṇa-deva* (ll. 1–4). Here again, the whole seems to give to the grant an official tone.

The two remaining sets are particularly striking because both of them include the *pādānudhyāta* formula in the date. In Somavamsin00026, the ruling king and his predecessor are both designated by their coronation names and qualified by the same honorific titles on both sides of the word *pādānudhyāta*. In Somavamsin00036, the scenario is somewhat different: the date is given twice, at the beginning and at the end of the record. The first instance includes an unbalanced *pādānudhyāta* formula where the ruling king, the first Janamejaya, is qualified by more honorific titles than his predecessor. Thus, this instance reproduces the *pādānudhyāta* formula found in all the royal grants of this king. The second mention of the date is given with the birth name of the king accompanied by the two honorific titles usually observed in the date section of royal grants (*parama-bhaṭṭāraka* and *mahārājādhirāja*). Hence, in these two sets, the *pādānudhyāta* formula used at the beginning of the grant seems to reflect some knowledge of the chancellor's discourse used in the royal grants.

5.3. Summary

From the survey of the coronation name within the records issued by the royal relatives, the trend to designate the kings with their birth names within the eulogy part is confirmed by the unique record available. In contrast, two different trends are noticeable: first, the *pādānudhyāta* formula is not used in the case of

an heir-apparent without royal investiture,⁴⁶ but a royal touch is given to his grant by the accumulation and the similarity of his honorific titles to the ones of the ruling king; second, the honorific titles usually attached to the ruling king in the *pādānudhyāta* formula seem to be transferred to the date. Hence, the deference of the royal relatives to the ruling king is expressed by means of the honorific titles. None of these records use the birth and coronation names of the ruling king together.

Even if it is not possible to identify a regular manner of naming the ruling king in the third-party grants, it is noticeable that the joint use of the coronation and birth names is exceptional, and that the ruling king is generally designated by his birth name. Nevertheless, it is also observed that the honorific titles and the *pādānudhyāta* formula are sometimes used, conferring to the subordinates' grants an official tone.

6. Conclusion

Through the mapping of the coronation names in the different textual parts of the available records, it appears that the mention of the coronation name belongs to the chancellor's discourse and is almost always a part of an official formula, viz., the *pādānudhyāta* compound, which is found in the notification part of the royal grants. This formula seems to reflect a claim of legitimacy: in a case of regular power transmission from father to son, the compound contains the coronation names of the ruling king and his immediate predecessor, both qualified by more or less the same honorific titles; in a case of irregular transmission from an elder brother to a younger (Indraratha and Karṇa), the *pādānudhyāta* formula is slightly modified; while it is strongly altered when there is a break in the line of transmission (Somavamsin00016). Thus, the *pādānudhyāta* formula may also have a political function. When it is quoted in full with alternating coronation names and similar honorific titles associated with both names, it seems to indicate a political stability. On the other hand, when the formula is shorter or unbalanced, it conveys some prevailing instability.

The presence of a religious title within the *pādānudhyāta* formula and the meaning of the coronation names (*protégé* of Śiva and *protégé* of Bhava) seems to indicate a religious value of the whole compound, raising the question of the

46 Although the content of Somavamsin00032 is very corrupted, lines 4–5 seem to indicate that Someśvara has been appointed at the head of a territory and invested to a kingly role.

involvement of Śaiva gurus within the political sphere. Indeed, two sets issued by two Somavaṁśin kings (Somavamsin00004, 00020) indicate that the grant was made at the request of the king's preceptor (*rājaguru*). To go further, it will be necessary to carry out an in-depth comparison of the honorific titles mentioned to better understand their political, religious, and administrative implications.

The distinct study of the third-party grants points out that members of the royal family or subordinates could designate Somavaṁśin kings by their coronation name in their donations to give them a kind of royal and official touch. Finally, the whole survey points out that the association of both the birth and coronation names to designate the Somavaṁśin kings does not reflect the convention used by the chancellery or the third party: there is only one instance of a compound joining the birth and coronation names (Somavamsin00016) among the royal grants, and another one among the third-party grants (Somavamsin00046). Both refer to Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. Hence, except for this king, it would be more appropriate to designate the Somavaṁśin kings by their birth names. Table 1⁴⁷ gives an updated account of the Somavaṁśin kings as they are named in the royal grants as well as in the third-party grants.

ruler	associated inscriptions
Svabhāvatuṅga Śivagupta	
Janamejaya (Mahābhavagupta)	Somavamsin00001, 00002, 00003, 00004, 00005, 00006, 00007, 00008, 00009, 00010, 00011, 00012, 00041, 00042, 00043, 00044, 00045
Yayāti (Mahāśivagupta)	Somavamsin00017, 00018, 00022, 00023, 00024, 00025
Bhīmaratha (Mahābhavagupta)	Somavamsin00019
Dharmaratha (Mahāśivagupta)	Somavamsin00020
Naghuṣa and/or Abhimanyu	
Indraratha	Somavamsin00013
Mahāśivagupta Yayāti (Caṇḍihara)	Somavamsin00016
Uddyotakeśarin (Mahābhavagupta)	Somavamsin00015, 00033, 00038, 00047
Janamejaya	
Purañjaya	
Karṇa (Mahāśivagupta)	Somavamsin00031

Table 1. List of Somavaṁśin kings as named in inscriptions

47 The table follows a chronological order. The designations in brackets are alternative designations which are not usual in the whole corpus. In the current state of knowledge, it is impossible to assert whether Naghuṣa and Abhimanyu both reigned, and in what order if both did. The genealogical accounts found in Somavamsin00013, 00030, 00015, 00037 and 00047 tell different versions of events.

The absence of a coronation name in the case of Indraratha is unsurprising and could be explained in several ways: if the coronation name is really an *abhiṣekanāman*, its absence may simply mean that Indraratha was not yet consecrated even if he received the permission of the best *dvijas* (Somavamsin00013, v. 14); while if not, it could also be the result of a radical change of the chancellery members or an intent to present the ruling king in a new way. Indeed, the genealogical account found in Indraratha's grant asserts his Śaiva faith and his belonging to the lunar lineage, but also states that Indraratha's father, Bhīma, is an *avatāra* of Vivasvat (the Sun) on the earth. To go further, a better understanding of the history of the succession is required through an analysis and a comparison of the different genealogical accounts given by the different members of the Somavamaśin family.

Primary sources

See page xvi about references to primary sources in general, and page xvii about DHARMA digital editions with a corpus ID and a number.

List of Somavamaśin inscriptions

Somavamaśin inscriptions are listed here by their DHARMA identifiers matched to titles. For items in parentheses, a digital edition is not yet available, so bibliographic references follow the title. Primary sources other than Somavamaśin inscriptions are listed below.

Somavamsin00001: *Vakratentali grant of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 3.*

Somavamsin00002: *Gopalpur plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 1.*

Somavamsin00003: *Gopalpur plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 10.*

Somavamsin00004: *Gopalpur plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 12.*

Somavamsin00005: *Patna plates of Mahābhavagupta I Janamejaya, Āṣāḍha month, year 6.*

Somavamsin00006: *Patna plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, Kārttika month, year 6.*

(Somavamsin00007): *Kālibhanā plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 6.* Shastri (1995b, 184–88).

(Somavamsin00008): *Satalma plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 8.* Hultzsch (1905–06).

(Somavamsin00009): *Sonpur plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 17.* Chhabra (1935–36).

(Somavamsin00010): *Gaintala plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 17.* Rajaguru (1966, N° 21).

(Somavamsin00011): *Chaudwār plates #1 of Mahābhavagupta Dharmakandarpa, year 31.* Fleet (1894–95, N° B).

- (Somavamsin00012): *Kālibhanā plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 34.* Rajaguru (1966, N° 25).
- Somavamsin00013: *Banpur plates of Indraratha, year 6.*
- Somavamsin00014: *Kamalpur plates of the time of Karṇa, year 4.*
- Somavamsin00015: *Bālijhari plates of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin, year 4.*
- Somavamsin00016: *Jatesinga-Dungri plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 3.*
- (Somavamsin00017): *Orissa State Museum plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 4.* Srinivasan (1969–70).
- (Somavamsin00018): *Pāṭṇā plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 28.* Laskar (1905, N° J).
- Somavamsin00019: *Cuttack plates of Mahābhavagupta Bhīmaratha, year 3.*
- (Somavamsin00020): *Mahulpara plates of Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha, year 11.* Srinivasan (1967–68).
- Somavamsin00021: *Nuapatna plates of the time of Janamejaya, year 5.*
- Somavamsin00022: *Pāṭṇā plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 8.*
- (Somavamsin00023): *Cuttack plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 9.* Fleet (1894–95, N° E).
- (Somavamsin00024): *Nibinna plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 15.* Mazumdar (1911–12, N° B).
- (Somavamsin00025): *Pāṭṇā plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 24.* Laskar (1905, N° I).
- Somavamsin00026: *Kudopali plates of the time of Mahābhavagupta, year 13.* Kielhorn (1896–97b).
- Somavamsin00027: *Lalāṭendukesari cave inscription of the time of Uddyotakeśarin, year 5.*
- Somavamsin00028: *Pāṭilījira grant of Mahābhavagupta, year 11.*
- Somavamsin00029: *Navamuni cave inscription of the time of Uddyotakeśarin, year 18.*
- Somavamsin00030: *Brahmeśvara temple inscription of the time of Uddyotakeśarin, year 18.*
- Somavamsin00031: *Ratnagiri plates of Mahāśivagupta Karṇa, year 6.*
- Somavamsin00032: *Kelga plates of Someśvaradeva, year 1.*
- Somavamsin00033: *Stray plate of Uddyotakeśarin from Mahada.*
- Somavamsin00034: *Gandhibedha Sūrya image inscription of the time of Karṇa.*
- Somavamsin00035: *Stray plate of a Somavaṁśin or Telugu-Coḍa grant from Kelga.*
- (Somavamsin00036): *Sambalpur University Museum plates of the time of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 23.* Shastri (1995b, Supplement I, 343–47).
- (Somavamsin00037): *Degaon plates of the time of Janamejaya.* Shastri (1995b, Supplement II).
- Somavamsin00038: *Sankhameri plates of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin, year 4.*
- Somavamsin00039: *Ruchida plates of Mahābhavagupta, year 8.*
- Somavamsin00040: *Baragaon plates of the time of Janamejaya, year 13.*
- (Somavamsin00041): *Ranipur-Jhari plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 16.* Unpublished, mentioned by Acharya (2014, N° 12).
- (Somavamsin00042): *Chaudwār plates #2 of Mahābhavagupta Dharmakandarpa, year 31.* Fleet (1894–95, N° D).
- (Somavamsin00043): *Chaudwār plates #3 of Mahābhavagupta Dharmakandarpa, year 31.* Fleet (1894–95, N° C).

(Somavamsin00044): *Stray plate of Janamejaya, year 3*. Unpublished,⁴⁸ mentioned by Acharya (2014, N° 21) and Tripathy (2010, N° 6).

(Somavamsin00045): *Stray plate of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya*. Unpublished, mentioned by Acharya (2014, N° 22) and Tripathy (2010, N° 7).

Somavamsin00046: *Khandahata plates of the time of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 3*.

Somavamsin00047: *Kāṇḍavindhā plates of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin, year 3*.

Somavamsin00048: *Navamuni cave inscription, undated, maybe of the time of Uddyotakeśarin*.

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Baud plates A and B of Tribhuvanamahādevī, year 158: Tripathy (2000, N° 13, 14).

Boṇḍā plates of Śivagupta, year 22: DaksinaKosala00036.

Lodhiā plates of Śivagupta, year 57: DaksinaKosala00046.

Malhār plates of Śivagupta, undated: DaksinaKosala00050.

Malhār plates of Śivagupta, undated (presumably year 6): DaksinaKosala00032.

⁴⁸ The field trip carried out in January 2023 enabled me to photograph and read the five legible lines. This plate, cut in half, is the third one of a set and the five legible lines include the quotation of a usual benedictive and imprecatory stanza and the mention of the date.

Struggle Over Kannauj and Beyond: the Pālas, the Gurjara-Pratihāras, and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas

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1. Introduction

The political arena of North India between the late eighth and early ninth centuries was dominated by the confrontations of the Pālas, the Gurjara-Pratihāras, and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in connection with the succession war over the throne of Kannauj. The kings of these dynasties fought each other, supporting either of the two contenders, and their deeds are depicted in the eulogies (*praśasti*) in the inscriptions of themselves, their descendants, and subordinates. As representations of the same events from different perspectives, these eulogies provide not only building blocks for the reconstruction of political history, but also clues to their perceptions of self and other, which would reveal their views on power relations involving all the parties. In the present article, I will compare the mutual representations of those three dynasties — especially what and how the eulogies tell, or not tell, about the kings and their opponents — and discuss the conceptualisations of kingship and political order shared or not shared by them.

Before the main discussion, I would like to present a flow of events reconstructed on the basis of fragmentary information from the inscriptions, with some uncertainty in chronology and timeline, as a background of my discussion.

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2. Reconstruction of events

The kingdom of Kannauj or Kānyakubja, the centre stage of events, was ruled by the Āyudhas in the eighth century. Indrāyudha and Cakrāyudha were the contenders for the throne. As Cakrāyudha is called a grandson (*napty*) of Yaśovarman in the *Mohipur plate of Gopāla II* (v. 5), the Āyudha kings seem to have ruled Kannauj as his descendants.

Indrāyudha first ascended to the throne, whereupon Cakrāyudha sought the help of Dharmapāla (r. c. 780–812),² the Pāla king of Bengal. Dharmapāla defeated Indrāyudha and installed Cakrāyudha as the king of Kannauj. Indrāyudha in his turn obtained the aid of Vatsarāja (r. c. 780–800), the Gurjara-Pratihāra king ruling western India, who defeated Dharmapāla and reinstalled Indrāyudha. Then Dhruva (r. c. 780–93), the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king ruling the Deccan and Gujarat, in conflict with the Gurjara-Pratihāras, attacked and defeated Vatsarāja. In the area between the Ganga and Yamuna, he also defeated Dharmapāla, who seems to have renewed his attempt to install Cakrāyudha on seeing the weakness of Vatsarāja.

The return of Dhruva to the Deccan, his own territory, provoked another action of Dharmapāla, who again defeated Indrāyudha and his allies and re-installed Cakrāyudha. Then Govinda III (r. c. 793–814), Dhruva's son, who had defeated Nāgabhaṭa II (r. c. 800–833), the son of Vatsarāja, interfered and defeated Dharmapāla. Dharmapāla and Cakrāyudha submitted to Govinda III, whose return to the Deccan incited Nāgabhaṭa II to attack Kannauj. Nāgabhaṭa II defeated Cakrāyudha, occupied Kannauj and invaded the Pāla territory as far as Munger. He shifted his capital to Kannauj, which would remain with the Gurjara-Pratihāras until their decline in the early eleventh century. The Gurjara-Pratihāra occupation of Kannauj concluded the struggle over the city, though the confrontations of the three powers continued for some more while.³

With this reconstruction of the flow of events, I will proceed to the analysis of eulogies in the inscriptions of each dynasty, which represent the same events in different ways.

2 The reigning periods and dates related to the Pāla kings given in this article are provisional ones based on my own calculation.

3 For an outline of the events, which needs some updates, see Sircar (1985, 11–16). For an updated description with input of new data, see Chowdhury (2018, 706–15).

3. The Pālas: focus on one event

The earliest presentation of the struggle over Kannauj in the Pāla inscriptions appears in the copperplate charters of Dharmapāla himself. His *Indian Museum plate* dated year 26 of his reign (c. 806) depicts an event in the struggle as follows:

The one who was duly praised by the kings of Bhojas, Matsyas with Madras, Kurus, Yadus, Yavanas, Avantis, Gandhāras and Kīras, bowing [to him] by bending [their] shaking crowns, and whose golden water pot of his own *abhiṣeka* was raised by the thrilled elders of Pañcāla, the illustrious Kānyakubja king (Cakrāyudha) was installed by him (Dharmapāla), with a mark [put] on [his] charmingly moving eyebrow.⁴

The verse is repeated as stanza 12 of the *Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāla, year 32* (c. 812). Focus on the one event, the coronation of Cakrāyudha as the king of Kānyakubja, is clear in this description. The exalted position of Cakrāyudha is emphasised by the admission of him as a ruler by the elders of Pañcāla (the area around Kānyakubja), who participated in his coronation, and by the submission of the kings of the diverse regions of North India. The presence of Dharmapāla is kept rather low-key, but his superior position is suggested by the simple fact that he installed Cakrāyudha as a king. The exaltation of the latter indirectly expresses the supremacy of the former.

Focus on this particular event continues in the inscriptions of the descendants of Dharmapāla. The *Jagajjibanpur plate of Mahendrapāla*, his grandson, dated year 7 (c. 854), describes the same event in the following manner:

After defeating these irrepressible enemies beginning with Indrarāja in battle, after destroying the lord of Sindhu country, by this king who appeared rapidly, by him, his own earth with Mahodaya (Kānyakubja) was given to Cakrāyudha, the petitioner possessing valour, as if [the three worlds were given] by Bali to the Vāmana stooping without duplicity, who was entitled to [three] steps.⁵

4 *Indian Museum plate of Dharmapāla, year 26, v. 12: bhojair matsyaiḥ sa-madraiḥ kuru-yaduyavanāvanti-gandhāra-kīrair bhūpair vyālola-mauli-praṇati-pariṇataiḥ sādhu saṅgīyamāṇaḥ| hṛṣyat-pañcāla-vṛddhodhṛta-kanakamaya-svābhiṣekoda-kumbho dattaḥ śrī-kanyakubjas salalita-calita-bhrū-latā-lakṣma yena||* The translations of all the verses cited in this article are my own, improved through valuable comments by Dániel Balogh and Annette Schmiedchen.

5 *Jagajjibanpur plate of Mahendrapāla, year 7, v. 4: durvvārām dviṣato vijitya samare tām indrarājādīkām sindhūnām adhipam pramathya rabhasād unmīlita-kṣmābhṛtā| dattā yena mahī mahodayavatī vikrānti-bhāje nijā nirvyājānati-vāmanāya valinā cakrāyudhāyārthine||*

The event in focus is the same, though the expression was changed to the bestowal of the earth with Kānyakubja. One motif added in this verse is the defeat of enemy kings, of whom Indrarāja or Indrāyudha, the contender for the throne of Kannauj, is clearly mentioned. In contrast, the presence of the Gurjara-Pratihāras, the main enemy of the Pālas, is obscured. The lord of Sindhu country could denote a Gurjara-Pratihāra king, but the indication of his territory as Sindhu, which was then controlled by the Arabs, makes this identification invalid. Another addition is the Trivikrama motif, in which Dharmapāla and Cakrāyudha are respectively compared to Bali and Vāmana. While it presents their mutual relation as a donor and a supplicant, the conclusion of the myth, namely that Viṣṇu as Vāmana stepped on Bali and banished him to the nether world, makes their power relation ambiguous.

The same event is represented in the *Mohipur plate of Gopāla II*, the nephew of Mahendrapāla, dated year 3 (c. 877):

By these villages beginning with Kuśasthala (Kānyakubja), Hari sought peace, and [because of these villages] the son of Gāndhārī (Duryodhana) abandoned his son, life, bowing brothers and names.⁶ After conquering [them], these villages were bestowed with a smile on the friend, the grandson of Yaśovarman (Cakrāyudha), by him (Dharmapāla), praiseworthy in war and voracious for enemies.⁷

This verse is also found in two other plates of the same king — the *Suvarnakarikadanda plate of Gopāla II, year 4 (no. 1)*, and the *Suvarnakarikadanda plate of Gopāla II, year 4 (no. 2)* — with a slight difference.⁸ The object of bestowal is changed to the villages including Kuśasthala, another name for Kānyakubja, for which a semi-historical episode from the *Mahābhārata*, the negotiation between Kṛṣṇa and Duryodhana, is provided. The appellation “the grandson of Yaśovarman” gives a clear identity to Cakrāyudha and his lineage.

6 Kuśasthala was one of the five villages (the others are Vṛkasthala, Māsandī, Vāraṇāvata and any village to be chosen by Duryodhana), of which the bestowal was stated by Yudhiṣṭhira as a condition for peace with the Kauravas in his message to be conveyed by Kṛṣṇa, who was despatched as envoy (*Mahābhārata* 5. 70. 15–16). As a result of the war which he could have avoided by conceding these villages to the Pāṇḍavas, Duryodhana lost his son Lakṣmaṇa Kumāra, his Kaurava brothers, and his reputation.

7 *Mohipur plate of Gopāla II, year 3, v. 5: yair grāmaiḥ sa-kuśasthala-prabhṛtibhiḥ sandhim yayāce harir gāndhāryās tanayo jahau sutam asūn bhrātṛṇ natān nāmakān| nirjityāhava-śālinā praṇayino naptur yaśovarmmaṇas te grāmā ripu-ghasmareṇa hasatā yena prasādī-kṛtāḥ||.*

8 In these plates, *sutam* in the second *pāda* is presented as *sukham*, which functions as an adverb, ‘comfortably,’ for the verb ‘to abandon.’

After Gopāla II, the Pāla kingship shifted to the collateral line of Vākpāla, the younger brother of Dharmapāla. Dharmapāla continues to figure in the later Pāla grants, due to the importance of his relationship with his brother Vākpāla, who had served him as a military commander. The event related to Kannauj is also described in the *Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla, year 17* (c. 895):

After defeating the enemies beginning with Indrarāja, the acquired Goddess Fortune of Mahodaya (Kānyakubja) was given again by him, the strong one {Bali}, to the petitioner Cakrāyudha {the one holding a discus as his weapon (Viṣṇu)}, bent {becoming Vāmana} by bowing.⁹

The focus continues to be on the installation of Cakrāyudha by Dharmapāla. In this verse, the object of bestowal is abstracted to the personified royal fortune or kingship of Kānyakubja. The defeat of enemy kings beginning with Indrarāja and the comparison of Dharmapāla and Cakrāyudha to Bali and Vāmana — motifs added in the *Jagajjibanpur plate of Mahendrapāla* — are repeated. Together with the choice of Mahodaya as a name denoting Kānyakubja, they suggest that the eulogy used in the latter plate was consulted in drafting the present one.¹⁰ This verse also appears in the *Bharat Kala Bhavan plate of Rājyapāla*, Nārāyaṇapāla's son, dated year 2 (c. 934), but it is not reproduced in the grants of the kings following him, though they continue to mention Dharmapāla.

The representation of the struggle over Kannauj in the Pāla grants is characterised by a single focus on one event, the installation of Cakrāyudha by Dharmapāla. While the event is embellished by associating it with mythical and epic motifs, the conflicts surrounding the event are barely depicted, except the defeat of Indrāyudha. The Pālas seem to have chosen their single moment of success as the theme, keeping their adversaries, and also their crushing defeats at the hands of the latter, out of sight.

9 *Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla, year 17*, v. 3: *jitvendra-rāja-prabhṛtīn arātīn upārijitā yena mahodaya-śrīḥ| dattā punaḥ sāvālinārthayitre cakrāyudhāyānati-vāmanāya||*

10 The consultation of eulogies used in the earlier charters is presumable from the adoption of the first two stanzas of the *Mohipur plate of Gopāla II, year 3*, to the first two stanzas of the *Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla, year 17*, with a slight modification. The Pāla chancellery seems to have kept drafts of eulogies used in the earlier royal charters. They were reproduced in the later grants and gave some consistency to the eulogies of the Pāla charters, especially the later ones.

4. The Gurjara-Pratihāras: valour and achievement

On the side of the Gurjara-Pratihāras, the earliest inscription mentioning the struggle over Kannauj is the *Stone inscription of Gallaka*, a subordinate ruler of Vatsarāja, dated ŚS 717 (795 CE). It contains the eulogy of the Gurjara-Pratihāra overlords, and one of the verses dedicated to Vatsarāja describes his victory over Dharmapāla in the following manner:

The royal fortune of the lord of Gauḍa, the master of the four oceans, which was like a village belle in battles and staying within a narrow space among an assembly of huge elephants, was obtained by him (Vatsarāja) who had unlimited forces, after killing a multitude of warriors in a combat, in his two arms hardened by blows of the string [attached to] the limbs of the bow whose tips made a sound destroying the pride of irresistible enemies.¹¹

The exaltation of the lord of Gauḍa, Dharmapāla, as the master of the four oceans heightens the status of Vatsarāja, the winner. On the other hand, an overtone of the military achievement and personal valour of Vatsarāja is recognisable in the expression.

A victory over Dharmapāla, along with the earlier victory over the Rāṣṭra-kūṭa king depicted in the previous verse (5), is incorporated in the motif of the conquest of quarters (*digvijaya*), claiming universal lordship for Vatsarāja, in the next verse:

He (Vatsarāja) gained the kingship of the entire earth, after violently conquering the lord of Gauḍa, the king of kings who was the master of the southern region, and the Mlecchas and Kīras of the western and northern country.¹²

The eulogy of Vatsarāja is followed by that of Śrīvarmaka, a subordinate ruler, and his son Gallaka. Verses 17 to 19 depict Gallaka's contribution to the victory over the Pālas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas:

11 *Stone inscription of Gallaka*, ŚS 717, v. 6: *durvvārārāti-garvvoddharaṇa-ṛaṇa-ṛaṇat-koṭi-kodaṇḍa-daṇḍa-jyā-ghāta-krūra-doṣṇor vikaṭa-kari-ghaṭā-saṅkaṭāntar-niviṣṭā| hatvājau yodha-vṛndān aparimita-balenārjijitā rāja-lakṣmīḥ saṃgrāma-grāma-rāmā catur-udadhi-pater yena gauḍādhipasya||*

12 *Stone inscription of Gallaka*, ŚS 717, v. 7: *gauḍa-nātham avajitya balād yo dakṣiṇāpatha-patim ca nṛpeśam| mleccha-kīram aparottara-deśam sārva-bhauma-nṛpatitvam avāpa||* In the third *pāda*, the original reading *aparottarandiśam* has been emended on the suggestion of Dániel Balogh, which makes the metre of this verse *svāgatā*, not an unidentified *mātrāsamaka* as proposed by Ramesh and Tewari (1975–76, 55).

In the war, there was the hero of Gauḍa, who had a sharp blade causing deadly wounds to enemies and burning splendour of the rays of the sun. After seeing the unharnessed elephants [of the Gauḍa hero] running away, the blade of his (Gallaka's) sword was like a laughter let loose {the unsheathed [sword] Aṭṭahāsa}.

He, a lion in the real sense, destroyed his enemies as if they were elephants, who had the wealth of haughtiness due to their beauty and the stream of tears of Vallabha broad and white at the front of the battle.

Out of regard, he (Gallaka) made illustrious Indrabhaṭa (Indrāyudha), the warrior, virtuous and knowing the truth of what should be done, all-pervasive in his own kingdom.¹³

Verses 17 and 18 claim his contribution to the victory over the strong Gauḍa hero Dharmapāla, and over Vallabha, a Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, with emphasis on his personal valour. Verse 19, in contrast, extends his contribution to the political domain, namely the re-installation of Indrāyudha, which could have been credited to Vatsarāja, his overlord.

A contribution to the victory over Dharmapāla is also claimed for Kakka II, a subordinate ruler of Nāgabhaṭa II, belonging to another Gurjara clan, in the *Jodhpur stone inscription of Bāuka*, his son, dated VS 894 (837 CE):

From him in turn was born the son Kakka (II) with great mind, united with fortune. By him was obtained fame in the battle with the Gauḍas at Mudgagiri.¹⁴

A concrete reference to Mudgagiri — present Munger — as the place of battle makes the claim credible, as his son and the composer of the eulogy intended.

One inscription of the Gurjara-Pratihāras themselves, the *Gwalior stone inscription of Bhoja I* (r. c. 836–885), describes the struggle over Kannauj in verses 9 and 10 eulogising Bhoja I's father Nāgabhaṭa II, while not mentioning any

13 *Stone inscription of Gallaka*, ŚS 717, vv. 17–19: āsīd dviṣad-viśasana-kṣata-tikṣṇa-dhāro bhāsvatkarojvala-rucir yudhi gauḍa-vīraḥ| dṛṣṭvā vimukta-kariṇaḥ prapālāyamānān muktāṭṭahāsa iva yasya kṛpāna-paṭṭaḥ|| mūrtyātimāna-dhanāḥ samara-mukhoru-sita-vallabhāśru-dhārāḥ| yasya ripavo gajā iva naṣṭāḥ paramārṭtha-kesariṇaḥ|| yaś cakāra nīje rājye sarvva-vyāpinam ādarāt| guṇinaṁ kārya-tattva-jñānā śrīmad-indrabhaṭaṁ bhaṭaṁ||. The reading of verse 18 is uncertain and its metre, supposedly āryā, is broken. The estampage attached to the volume of *Epigraphia Indica* is not good enough to allow any improvement on the transcription by Ramesh and Tewari except correcting their reading of -dhanāḥ to -dhanāḥ. Accordingly, the translation presented here is provisional.

14 *Jodhpur stone inscription of Bāuka*, year 894 Vikrama Era, v. 24: tato 'pi śrī-yutaḥ kakkah puttro jāto mahā-matiḥ| yaśo mudgagirau lavdhanā yena gauḍai samaṁ raṇe||.

achievement of Vatsarāja related to this struggle in the verses 6 and 7 dedicated to the latter:

After defeating Cakrāyudha {gaining the upper hand over Viṣṇu}, whose inferior character {dwarfish appearance} was made evident by his dependence on another {in taking refuge with an enemy}, he (Nāgabhaṭa II {Bali}) — the one wishing for the success of meritorious deeds founded on the three Vedas {craving the increase of benefits in the business of the three worlds}, who had a succession of taxes imposed (in a manner) fixed by the (proper) conduct of Kṣatriya estate {a collection of stories of Bali narrated (in a manner) connected with the rules of the condition of his power} — reigned with an attitude reverential to discipline {shone with a form humble because of modesty}.

Having subdued the master of Vaṅga, who was a terrible thick darkness consisting of the best elephants, a multitude of horses and a flock of vehicles of the irresistible enemy, he (Nāgabhaṭa II), came forth illuminating the three worlds on his own like the rising sun.¹⁵

Verse 9 emphasises his victory over Cakrāyudha, while referring to Dharmapāla indirectly as “another” on whom the former was dependent. Calling Dharmapāla the master of Vaṅga in verse 10 is rather a misnomer in view of the sub-regions under his control,¹⁶ but understandable as the cognition of outsiders. The emphasis on the greatness of Dharmapāla and his army in this verse accentuates the power of Nāgabhaṭa II who defeated him, while verse 9 extols his virtues by contrasting them with the lowly nature of Cakrāyudha.

The contribution to the victory over the Pālas is still mentioned in the later inscription of a subordinate ruler of the Gurjara-Pratihāras. In the *Chatsu stone inscription of Bālāditya* (r. c. 900–920), the Guhila king of Chatsu, Kṣṇarāja, Bālāditya’s great-great-grandfather, is credited with the victory over a Gauḍa king, presumably Dharmapāla.

Having previously made an oath, on the battlefield filled with a troop of excellent elephants, after defeating the warrior (*bhaṭa*), the king of Gauḍa, he

15 *Gwalior inscription of Bhoja I*, vv. 9–10: *ttrayy-āspadasya sukr̥tasya samr̥ddhim icchur yaḥ kṣattra-dhāma-vidhi-vaddha-vali-pravandhaḥ | jītvā parāśraya-kṛta-sphuṭa-nīca-bhāvaṃ cakrāyudhaṃ vinaya-namra-vapur vvyarājat || durvvāra-vairi-vara-vāraṇa-vāji-vāra-yānaughasamghaṭana-ghora-ghanāndhakāraṃ | nirjitya vaṅga-patim āvirabhūd vivasvān udyann iva ttri-jagad-eka-vikāsako yaḥ ||*

16 For the location and character of Vaṅga, the southern sub-region of Bengal, see Furui (2020, 28–29).

(Kṛṣṇarāja) forcibly made the earth, seized in combat, an affectionate female servant of the two feet of his master (Nāgabhaṭa II). From him was born he, the king Śamkaragaṇa, who won many battles.¹⁷

In this expression too, the personal valour and military achievement of the protagonist loom large.

The eulogies of the Gurjara-Pratihāras tend to emphasise the valour and military achievement of the kings in the struggle over Kannauj. This may be due to the fact that most of them appear in the inscriptions of their subordinate rulers, who also claim their own contributions to the victories with emphasis on personal valour exhibited in the battlefields. This tendency is shared by the eulogy of the Gurjara-Pratihāra kings themselves in the Gwalior inscription, though it also tries to present Nāgabhaṭa II as a virtuous king superior to his opponents, Cakrāyudha and Dharmapāla.

5. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas: insignia and imperial vision

The earliest securely dated Rāṣṭrakūṭa inscription mentioning the struggle over Kannauj is the *Nesarikā grant of Govinda III, ŚS 727* (805 CE). Its verse 8, which is reproduced in all the charters of the same king and his brother Kambha, and the *Javakheda plates of Amoghavarṣa I* following the same *praśasti* template,¹⁸ extols the deed of Dhruva, the father of Govinda III, in the struggle as follows:

Speedily driving Vatsarāja, who was intoxicated by the royal fortune (*rājya-kamalā*) of Gauḍa appropriated easily, to the trackless centre of desert by his matchless army, he (Dhruva) took away from him not only a pair of umbrellas of the Gauḍa king, white like beams of the autumnal moon, but also at the same moment his fame standing at the end of the quarters of heaven.¹⁹

Dhruva's victory over Vatsarāja, who had defeated Dharmapāla, established his position superior to both. At the same time, it is remarkable that his superiority

17 *Chatsu stone inscription of Bālāditya*, v. 14: *pratijñān prāk kṛtvodbhaṭa-kari-ghaṭā-samkaṭa-raṇe bhaṭam jivā gauḍa-kṣitipam avanim saṅgara-hṛtām| valād dāsīm cakre prabhu-caraṇayor yah pranayinīm tato bhūpaḥ so 'bhūj jita-vahu-raṇaḥ samkaragaṇaḥ||*

18 For a list of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa inscriptions containing the same verse, labelled as stanza 8 of the genealogy '2' by Annette Schmiedchen, and the classified data of them, see Schmiedchen (2014, 33 Table 2, 468-471, 473, and 475, Nos 25-34, 40, and 46).

19 *Nesarikā grant of Govinda III, ŚS 727*, v. 8: *helā-svikṛta-gauḍa-rājya-kamalā-mattam praveśyācirāt durmmārgam maru-madhyam aprativalair yo vatsarājam valaiḥ| gauḍīyam śarad-indu-pāda-dhavalam cchatra-dvayam kevalam tasmān nāhṛta tad-yaśo 'pi kakubhām prānte sthitam tat-ksanāt||*

is expressed as his acquisition of two white umbrellas, the symbol of the kingship of Gauḍa.

The motif of the acquisition of royal insignia is repeated in a refined manner in verses 21 to 24 of the same charter, which eulogise Govinda III:

A fish from the lord of Pāṇḍya country, a bull from the master of the Pallavas, a tiger from the Cola, an elephant from the Gaṅga and a bow from the Kerala [king], a boar from the Andhra, Cālukya and Maurya [kings], a gentleman associated with a [door] panel (a doorkeeper) from the master of the Gūrjaras, a bull from the master of the Pallavas, the names (of each) from both the kings of Kosala and Avanti, and also from the Siṃhala [king], the renowned goddess Tārā from Dharma, the king of Vaṅgāla — thus having taken away these and other insignia of kings, Jagattuṅga {the one at the peak of the world} (Govinda III) bestowed the seal of Garuḍa on the entire world.²⁰

As many as thirteen kings, including the Pallava king mentioned twice, are listed as those from whom Govinda III took away their royal insignia. Among them, Dharmapāla, the Pāla king, receives a special treatment. He is explicitly mentioned by name, and his royal emblem, the Goddess Tārā, is described as “renowned,” though calling him the king of Vaṅgāla is a bit of misnomer, another case of the misconception of outsiders.²¹ Still, he is depicted as one of the kings over whom the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king wielded suzerainty represented by the Garuḍa seal. The same can be said of the Gurjara-Pratihāra king, presumably Nāgabhaṭa II, whose royal insignia were also taken away. Thus, the motif of royal insignia merges with the imperial vision, and both rivals in the struggle over Kannauj are incorporated in the order headed by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king.

The motif of the acquisition of symbols of kingship is also worked out in the *Baroda plates of Karka II*, a ruler of the collateral Rāṣṭrakūṭa lineage of Gujarat serving Govinda III, dated ŚS 734 (812 CE), in describing the deed of Dhruva:

20 *Nesarikā grant of Govinda III*, ŚS 727, vv. 21–24: *pāṇḍya-deśādhipān matsyaṃ vṛṣabhaṃ pallaveśvarāc| colād vyāghraṃ gajaṃ gaṅgāc cāpa-yaṣṭim ca keralāt|| andhra-cālukya-mauryebhyo varāhaṃ gūryareśvarāt| phalaka-prativaddhāryaṃ vṛṣabhaṃ pallaveśvarāt|| kosalāvaṃti-nāthābhyāṃ siṃhālād api nāmakaṃ| tāraṃ bhagavatīm khyātām dharmād vaṅgāla-bhūmipāt|| ittham etāny athānyāni cihnāny ādāya bhū-bhujām| garuḍāṅkaṃ jagattuṅgo vyadhata sakalam jagat||* Annette Schmiedchen (2014, 85) points out the fact that only the *Nesarikā grant* contains these stanzas.

21 For Vaṅgāla denoting the coastal area of southeastern Bengal constituting a part of Vaṅga, see Furu (2020, 29).

To him (Dhruva) was born the son, Govindarāja, a Puruṣa of fame. He (Dhruva), taking both Gaṅgā and Yamunā, beautiful with waves, from the enemies, at the same time acquired the lordship of the highest position in person as well as on the pretext of symbols, as if the quarters were pervaded by his roaming virtues whose profusion was not measurable by [his own] body.²²

Here, obtaining Gaṅgā and Yamunā, in images or as jars of their water,²³ is equated with the acquisition of the territory between the two rivers. Both symbolise universal kingship.

The deeds of Dhruva and Govinda III in the struggle over Kannauj are also described in the inscriptions of the time of Amoghavarṣa I (r. c. 814–878), the latter's son. The first case to mention is verse 5 of the *Nilgund stone inscription* eulogising Govinda III, dated year ŚŚ 788 (866 CE), which is also found in the *Sirur stone inscription* of the same year:

Having bound the Keralas, Mālavas and Gauḍas, along with the Gurjaras, those staying at the fort of Citrakūṭa mountain and the masters of Kāñcī, he (Govinda III) became a Nārāyaṇa of fame (Kīrtinārāyaṇa).²⁴

In this description, the Pālas are incorporated in the scheme of the conquest of the quarters as the rulers of the east, while the Keralas, Mālavas and the Pallavas of Kāñcī constitute the kings of other three directions. The Gurjara-Pratihāras are given a secondary treatment alongside the three kings, together with some anonymous kings staying at the Citrakūṭa fort, which may include the Guhilas subordinate to the Gurjara-Pratihāras.

The *Sanjan plates of Amoghavarṣa I*, dated ŚŚ 793 (871 CE), on the other hand, give descriptions with more specificity, depicting a deed of Dhruva in the following manner:

He (Dhruva) took away the white umbrellas, which were lotuses for the play of Lakṣmī, of the king of Gauḍa running away in the middle of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā.²⁵

22 *Baroda plates of Karka II*, ŚŚ 734, v. 17: *yo gaṅgā-yamune taraṅga-subhage gṛhṇan parebhyaḥ samam| sāksāc cihna-nibhena cottama-padam tat prāptavān aiśvaram| dehāsammita-vaibhavair iva guṇair yyasya bhramadbhir ddiśo| vyāptās tasya babhūva kīrti-puruṣo govinda-rājaḥ sutah||*

23 For the interpretation that Gaṅgā and Yamunā denote jars of their water, the acquisition of which symbolises universal sovereignty, see Inden (1990, 259).

24 *Nilgund stone inscription of the time of Amoghavarṣa I*, ŚŚ 788, v. 5: *keraḷa-mālava-gauḍān sagurjarāmś citrakūṭa-giri-durgga-sthān| baddhvā kāñcīśān atha sa kīrttinārāyaṇo jātaḥ||*

25 *Sanjan plates of Amoghavarṣa I*, ŚŚ 793, v. 14: *gaṅgā-yamunayor mmadhye rājño gauḍasya naśyataḥ| lakṣmī-līlāravindāni sveta-cchattrāni yo harat||*

The motif of the acquisition of royal insignia reappears here with the addition of a specific incident, the defeat of Dharmapāla at the area between the two rivers.

The tendency towards specificity is also found in the verses describing the deeds of Govinda III, which refer to the names of the kings.

After snatching away the irremovable true fame of the two kings Nāgabhaṭa [II] and Candragupta in battles, then he (Govinda III), devoted to the acquisition of fame, uprooted kings deficient in fortitude on [their] own land and planted others in [their] position, like paddy seedlings.

The water of springs at the mountains of Himavat was drunk by [his] horses, and that of the Gaṅgā by [his] elephants. And the roar of its (Gaṅgā's) thundering in its ravine was doubled again by musical instruments (*tūrya*) accompanying [his ritual] immersion. Those Dharma and Cakrāyudha surrendered themselves to him (Govinda III), the great one. He was (like) Himavat, as he attained resemblance [to it] in terms of fame, so that he was [called] Nārāyaṇa of fame (*Kīrtinārāyaṇa*).²⁶

The defeat of Nāgabhaṭa II and Candragupta, the Pāṇḍuvamśin king of Dakṣiṇa Kosala, and the voluntary submission of Dharmapāla and Cakrāyudha are embedded in the lofty claim of uprooting and implanting kings, and conquest reaching the Himalayan Mountains.

The eulogies in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa inscriptions referring to the struggle over Kannauj show their peculiarity in a recurrent rhetoric of the acquisition of royal insignia equated with kingship. This rhetoric is combined with the specificity of the involved persons, locations, and events. Remarkably, both rhetoric and specificity are played out in reference to the imperial vision, in which the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings reign over all the other kings on the earth, including the Pālas and the Gurjara-Pratihāras, the main adversaries in the struggle over Kannauj.

26 *Sanjan plates of Amoghavarṣa I, ŚS 793, vv. 22–23: sa nāgabhaṭa-candragupta-nṛpayor yaśo 'ryam raṇeṣv ahāryam apahārya dhairya-vikalān athonmūlayat| yaśorjjana-paro nṛpān sva-bhuvi śālī-sasyān iva punaḥ punar atīṣṭhīpat sva-pada eva cānyān api|| himavat-parvata-nirjharāmvu turagaiḥ pītañ ca gāmgañ gajair ddhvanitarñ majjana-tūryakair dviguṇitarñ bhūyo 'pi tat-kandare| svayam evopanatau ca yasya mahatas tau dharmā-cakrāyudhau himavān kīrtti-sarūpatām upagatas tat kīrtti-nārāyaṇaḥ||.*

6. Concluding remarks

In depicting the same events in the struggle over Kannauj, the eulogies in the inscriptions of the Pālas, the Gurjara-Pratihāras, and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas show differences in their emphases and perspectives. The Pāla eulogies are devoted to a single event, the coronation of Cakrāyudha by Dharmapāla, obscuring the presence of adversaries other than Indrāyudha. The Gurjara-Pratihāras emphasise the personal valour and military achievements of the kings and their subordinate rulers. In the eulogies of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings, the acquisition of the royal insignia of other kings, who are incorporated into their imperial order, looms large.

This difference, on the one hand, could come from the different degrees and forms of involvement in the struggle, and the outcomes from them. The Pālas, on the losing side despite being a main participant, have to concentrate on the one moment of their glory. The Gurjara-Pratihāras, another active participant and the ultimate winner, boast their victory achieved by valour. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas, for whom the struggle over Kannauj was just one of the military campaigns they fought in all the directions, locate their victories within the imperial vision.

On the other hand, the difference could be connected with the power structures reflected in the inscriptions. The Pālas, who kept their subordinate rulers under check, consistently narrate the single story of royal success in the grants they issued monopolistically. In case of the Gurjara-Pratihāras, both the kings and autonomous subordinate rulers under them present diverse moments of valour and achievement as shared memories in their respective inscriptions. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas, competing with other imperial contenders for supremacy, put more emphasis on the capture of royal insignia, which symbolically demonstrates their superiority over other kings in their own inscriptions.

All the participants, even the Pālas, shared a particular notion of power and order of their period, represented by concepts of *digvijaya* and universal kingship over all the others. How it could be, or could not be, substantiated in eulogies depended on the actuality of political events and power structures, as the depictions analysed above show.

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Claiming Sovereignty on the Edge of the Imperial Kingdom: the Pālas of Kāmarūpa and the Candras of Vaṅga

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1. Introduction

The Pāla dynasty was one of the strongest polities of early medieval India, holding sway over northern and western Bengal and eastern Bihar and making occasional expeditions to neighbouring regions and beyond, for about three hundred and fifty years between the second half of the eighth and the end of the eleventh centuries. However, despite its dominant position, the existence of constant Pāla control over the eastern region is very difficult to justify, because the level of Pāla military supremacy and political influence was different in terms of time and space; and accordingly, the Pālas' relationship with other powers of the region has undergone substantial changes. Among several transitional phases of Pāla history, the beginning of the tenth century was of particular interest because of both internal and external events. While within the domain of the family, the Pāla royal succession shifted from the main line of rulers to a collateral line, in the adjoining areas of the Pāla territory, two new dynasties, the Pālas of Kāmarūpa and the Candras of Vaṅga, grew at the expense of the Pāla dominance. The relations between these fast-rising powers and the imperial Pāla kingdom were complicated given their geographical proximity. Not only did both conflict with the imperial Pāla dynasty, but they also took advantage of the latter's fame by appropriating its political idiom and vocabulary. This, however, does not mean that the two neighbouring dynasties contending against Pāla authority were each other's allies, nor does it imply that they had congenial relations. In reality, the two powers clashed with each other as each of them fought against the imperial Pālas.

The dominant scholarly concern of the past several decades was to unravel this tangled history with an accurate assessment of the political and military

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events reflected in the epigraphical records of the three dynasties.¹ This positivist historiography, despite its internal differences, seems so preoccupied with reconstructing a sequence of events in chronological terms that it pays almost no attention to a time discrepancy between the occurrence of an event and that event being recorded. And also, it seldom addresses the question why a reference to self or others in previous political events and warfare assumed its importance at a particular moment in the dynastic history. This lack of interest in time is symptomatic of a wider problem, which might be glossed as an underestimation of the contextual articulation of self and others in epigraphic records. In considering these issues, I focus on how the details of historical incidents described in royal eulogies relate to their changing political and religious contexts and how mutual perception and self-representation are expressed through these details including the time of articulation, point of accentuation, and choice of terms and expressions. The primary sources utilised here consist of twenty-seven copperplate charters, of which nine were issued by the rulers of the Kāmarūpa Pālas, eleven by those of the Candras and seven by those of the imperial Pālas of Bengal, all belonging to a period between the beginning of the tenth and the mid-eleventh centuries. By examining these records with a specific attention to time and comparing them in spatial terms, we can get some idea of how the two lesser dynasties having uneven power relations with the imperial Pālas recognised this strongest polity of eastern India and, conversely, how they viewed themselves and others in a transitional period of history.

2. Self-representation in the changing political contexts

After the failed attempt to establish their control over Kannauj, the focal point of the tripartite struggle in the late eighth to the early ninth century,² political activities of the Pālas were redirected to eastern India. Their military expedi-

1 For general historical writings on the Kāmarūpa Pālas and the Candras of Vaṅga which include this complicated history of conflicts and disputes, see Dani (1960, 36–44); Chowdhury (1967, 154–89); Sircar (2007, 140–71); Islam (2018, 551–690). For some examples of historiography more focused on their relationship itself, see Chowdhury (1978, 33–39); Choudhury (1988, 105–46); Ghosh (2010–11, 110–18).

2 The tripartite struggle means the fight for control over Kannauj (Kānyakubja) between three major early medieval powers, namely, the Pālas of Bengal, the Gurjara-Pratihāras of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of the Deccan. For details, see Furui's contribution in this volume, pp. 57ff.

tions, which were carried out in the northeastern and southwestern directions from north Bengal, reached victorious outcomes and therefore the geographical limit of Pāla dominion extended to Kāmarūpa, Nepāla, and Utkala in the first half of the ninth century.³ However, over the next one hundred years, the situation changed considerably in two aspects, namely, a significant decline in Pāla military activities and increasing attempts to tighten control over Pāla subordinate rulers and rural society. The former is attested by the Pāla *praśastis* of the period which contain fulsome praise for the rulers' valour and fame, while making no mention of any specific military campaigns. We are not yet sure whether such military stagnancy was directly related to the shifting of Pāla royal succession from the main line of rulers to a collateral line, i.e. to the family of Vākpāla, a brother of the second king Dharmapāla, in the late ninth century. An in-depth discussion of how such a political change affected the Pāla military power, which depended heavily on their subordinate rulers' service, is beyond the scope of this paper. What is clear is that the political sphere of Nārāyaṇapāla (r. c. 878–932), the first king of the collateral line, was only limited to south Bihar and north Bengal,⁴ and his three successors, Rājyapāla II (r. c. 932–969), Gopāla III (r. c. 969–975), and Vīgrahapāla II (r. c. 975–987), made no attempt to expand the zone of Pāla political control beyond the dynasty's core territory. The reigns of these three rulers were therefore deemed “a period of inaction and stagnation” (Chowdhury 2018, 750). They rather sought to consolidate and

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- 3 Devapāla's (r. c. 812–847) victory against the kings of Kāmarūpa, Nepāla, and Utkala has been emphasised repeatedly in the records of his successors. There are three examples. The *Jaḡajjibanpur plate of Mahendrapāla, year 7* (r. c. 847–862) speaks (v. 10) of Devapāla's dominion over Kāmarūpa obtained by the play of eyebrow and his acceptance of tribute from the inaccessible land of the Himālaya. Here the inaccessible land of the Himālaya probably refers to Nepāla in view of the *Mirzapur plate of Śūrapāla I, year 3* (v. 12), which mentions Devapāla as the conqueror of the lord of Nepāla (*nepāla-nātha-vijayi*). The *Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla, year 17* (v. 6) mentions that when his grandfather Jayapāla, by the order of Devapāla, set forth with the desire to conquer all around, the king of Utkala gave up his own city and the king of Prāḡjyotiṣa (i.e. Kāmarūpa) surrendered to Jayapāla. However, in the same period, the Pālas did not or could not expand their political control to the eastern part of Bengal: Vaṅga, Samataṭa, and Harikela.
- 4 This point is clear from the findspots of Nārāyaṇapāla's inscriptions and the inscriptions mentioning his name. The *Gaya temple inscription* of his 7th year and the image inscription of his 9th year in the Indian Museum are believed to have been found in Bihar. See Sircar (1963–64, 225); Banerji (1915, 62 Pl. 31). The *Bhagalpur plate* of his 17th year, which was issued from Mudgagiri (Munger), proves that he was the master of Maḡadha (Patna and Gaya Districts) including Aṅga (Munger and Bhagalpur Districts), according to Chowdhury (2018, 749). The *Badal pillar inscription* discovered in Dinajpur proves his suzerainty over the northern part of Bengal.

enhance royal power within their dominion with new measures which include (1) a decrease of royal grants to the religious institutions founded by subordinate rulers and the increased implantation of Brāhmaṇas as agents of royal authority through grants, and (2) an imposition of land measurement and assessment of production in currency units for tightening control over rural society. The implementation of such measures had begun during the reign of Gopāla II (r. c. 874–878) and continued for over two hundred years and more, albeit not necessarily in a constant way (Furui 2017, 356, 349–52).

The Pālas' inward-oriented politics may have led to a change in the geo-political configuration of tenth-century eastern India, which was partly responsible for the emergence of the Pālas of Kāmarūpa ruling the lower Brahmaputra valley in the western part of present Assam and the Candras of Vaṅga ruling the Bengal Delta and the eastern fringe of Bengal including Samataṭa and Śrihaṭṭa in present Bangladesh. The former was established with the rule of Brahmapāla (r. c. 900–920) and the latter with that of Trailokyacandra (r. c. 905–925). Both were contemporary with Nārāyaṇapāla (r. c. 878–932), the first king of the collateral line of the imperial Pāla rulers. Though Brahmapāla and Trailokyacandra achieved power through different political processes, the resemblance between the two kings is noteworthy. They both rose from a subordinate position to an independent, or semi-independent, status;⁵ consolidated their control of core areas with military strength and so laid the foundation of their families; and, eventually, paved the way for their sons' ascendancy. Certain similarities continued with the next rulers of the two dynasties: Ratnapāla (r. c. 920–960), son of Brahmapāla, and Śricandra (r. c. 925–975), son of Trailokyacandra. Having

5 The ancestors of Trailokyacandra were probably landowners of Rohitagiri, i.e. Rāṅgāmāṭi in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, under the kings of Harikela of the Chittagong region and its adjacent areas. He rose from a subordinate position to the kingship of Candradvīpa, also known as Vaṅgāleśa. The name Vaṅgāla, denoting the coastal regions of southeastern Bengal, gradually extended its meaning over wide areas of eastern Bengal with the expansion of Candra dominion towards the north, that is to say, the localities represented by the modern districts of Faridpur and Dacca. Trailokyacandra ultimately took possession of the citadel of Vikramapura. For the origin and early development of the Candra family, see Sircar (1959–60b, 135–36); Chowdhury (1967, 159–61). Similarly, Brahmapāla rose from a subordinate ruler of his overlord (the last king of the Mleccha dynasty) to the ruler of Kāmarūpa, but nothing is yet known about his ancestors. The name Kāmarūpa denotes the area lying on both the upper and lower banks of the Brahmaputra and also the surrounding hilly area. The Karatoya river of north Bengal remained as the western boundary of Kāmarūpa by the sixteenth century.

assumed the imperial titles *parameśvara-paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja*,⁶ both second-generation kings established a new capital within their respective domains, i.e. Durjayā in Kāmarūpa and Vikramapura in Vaṅga, due to the strategic importance of each location in the control of river traffic. Besides, both kings took an aggressive policy to expand their sphere of influence far beyond their respective political centres.⁷ The rulers of the three dynasties are listed with their approximate reign periods in Table 1.

Bengal Pāla	Kāmarūpa Pāla	Candra
Nārāyaṇapāla (878–932)	Brahmapāla (900–920)	Trailokyacandra (905–925)
Rājyapāla II (932–969)	Ratnapāla (920–960)	Śricandra (925–975)
Gopāla III (969–975)	Indrapāla (960–990)	
Vigrahapāla II (975–987)		Kalyāṇacandra (975–1000)
Mahīpāla I (987–1035)	Gopāla (990–1015)	Laḍahacandra (1000–1020)
	Harṣapāla (1015–1035)	Govindacandra (1020–1045)
Nayapāla (1036–1051)	Dharmapāla (1035–1060)	

Table 1. The Bengal Pāla, Kāmarūpa Pāla, and Candra dynasties in the 10th–11th centuries

In this context, the claim that their predecessors were “chosen by the people” took on a special significance. This reference was obviously an intertextual echo

6 The *Bargaon plate of Ratnapāla*, ll. 51–52; the *Paschimbhag plate of Śricandra*, year 5, ll. 26–27.

7 For the political development of the Pālas of Kāmarūpa during the reign of Brahmapāla and Ratnapāla, see Sircar (2007, 140–47). For that of the Candras of Vaṅga during the reign of Trailokyacandra and Śricandra, see Chowdhury (1967, 154–79); Islam (2018, 616–25).

of the foundation myth of the Pālas of Bengal, which had already been mentioned in two of their earliest charters, namely, the *Indian Museum plate* and the *Khalimpur plate*, both issued by Dharmapāla (r. c. 780–812) in his regnal years 26 and 32, respectively. The two records trace the Pālas' descent from Dayitaviṣṇu, the progenitor of the lineage, and his successor Vapyāṭa, and then narrate the installation of Gopāla, son of Vapyāṭa, as a king elected by the people. They both read, "His son was the crest-jewel of the heads of kings, the glorious Gopāla, whom the people (*prakṛtibhir*) made take the hand of Fortune, to put an end to the rule of fishes."⁸ However, neither of them gives any details of the situation which was designated such an anarchical world or the people who took part in the installation of Gopāla as the first Pāla king. Considering the complete absence of this statement in the *Nalanda plate of Dharmapāla*, which predated the other two charters aforementioned, it is highly probable that Gopāla was not born into any distinguished royal family and the Pāla foundation myth was set up in the latter part of Dharmapāla's reign. As Sanyal (2014, 174) argues, this myth only became relevant "when he had to draw on legitimacy of his paramount status from his predecessor as he was aspiring to figure in the larger power-axis of northern India."

About a century later, the eulogists of the Kāmarūpa Pālas drew upon this political rhetoric of the Bengal Pālas for asserting the dynasty's supposed historical facts. The best example of this is the *praśasti* for Brahmapāla in the copperplate charters issued by his son Ratnapāla. Having mentioned Śālastambha — the founder of the previous dynasty of the region — as the supreme lord of barbarians (*mlecchādhinātha*), who had taken the throne of Kāmarūpa in a state of confusion,⁹ this *praśasti* explains how Brahmapāla, the predecessor of Ratnapāla, gained the royal seat.

When the twenty-first king of the line [of Śālastambha], named Tyāgasimha, retired to heaven without an heir, his people, thinking that "a Bhauma should be our lord once again," made Brahmapāla, capable of shouldering

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- 8 The *Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāla*, v. 4; the *Indian Museum plate of Dharmapāla*, year 26, v. 4: *mātsya-nyāyam apohituṃ prakṛtibhir lakṣmyāḥ karaṇ grāhitaḥ śrī-gopāla iti kṣitīśa-śirasām cūḍā-maṇis tat-sutaḥ*. Here the rule of fishes (*mātsya-nyāya*) means political disorder or anarchical condition of the society. For further details of this concept in the political context of early medieval eastern India, see Pal (2008, 21–36).
- 9 *Bargaon plate of Ratnapāla*, v. 9; *Śaratbāri plate of Ratnapāla*, year 12, v. 9.

and protecting the earth, [their] king, because he was a kinsman [of the Bhaumas].¹⁰

Here Bhauma means one belonging to the *bhaumānvaya* or the lineage of Bhūmi's son Naraka who was deemed the mythical progenitor of the first dynasty of Kāmarūpa known as the Varmans in the fifth to seventh centuries. But it is difficult to believe that Brahmapāla was actually a descendant of one of the members of the previous Varman family, because, in that case, his claim would have been expected to be more specific, as Sircar (2007, 141) points out.¹¹ Rather, this *praśasti* was intended to give Brahmapāla credit for being eligible to be a new king, and the eligibility condition was drawn from his supposed connection with the first ruling family of the region. Intriguingly, the people who made him a new sovereign are represented as 'his people' (*tat-prakṛtayo*), that is to say, the local elites and administrative officials of Tyāgasimha, the last ruler of the second dynasty called the Mlecchas. This, along with the detailed reference to the Mleccha genealogy, does raise the possibility that Brahmapāla was one of the subordinates owing allegiance to the Mleccha ruler, but succeeded in taking possession of the throne after the demise of his overlord. Ratnapāla, who commissioned this *praśasti*, sought to borrow legitimacy from his father Brahmapāla by casting him as the ruler raised by the people, as Gopāla was deemed the people's chosen leader in the records of Dharmapāla. With self-conscious adaptation of the family name 'Pāla' from the Pālas of Bengal,¹² Ratnapāla seems to have connected himself to a tradition that extended beyond the purely regional one. This concern was expressed in the poetical description of distant places and people, such as Śaka, Gurjjara (Gurjara-Pratihāra), Gauḍa, Kerala, Vāhika (Bāhika of Punjab), Tāyika (Tājika, i.e. Arabs) and the Deccan, whose rulers had heard about the invincible city Durjayā of Kāmarūpa and feared its king Ratna-

10 Bargaon plate of Ratnapāla, v. 10; Śaratbāri plate of Ratnapāla, v. 10: *nirvaśam nṛpam ekaviṁśatitamam śrī-tyāgasimhābhidhan| teṣām vikṣya divam gatam punar aho bhaumo hi no yujyate| svāmīti pravacintya tat-prakṛtayo bhū-bhāra-rakṣā-kṣamam sāgandhyāt paricakrire narapati-śrī-brahmapālam hi yaṁ||*

11 Here the implication of the term *sāgandhya* is that Brahmapāla was not really a Bhauma, but he "smacked of one" and was thus acceptable in absence of the real thing. I would like to thank Dániel Balogh for pointing out the importance of this term.

12 This developed further with new epithets in the following period. For instance, Harṣapāla (r. c. 1015–35) and Dharmapāla (1035–60) were described as "the light of the Pāla family" (*pāla-kula-pradīpa*) and "the sun to the lotus of the Pāla lineage" (*pālānvayāmbuja-ravi*). See the *Puspabhadra plate of Dharmapāla*, vv. 5, 8.

pāla.¹³ That was obviously an exaggeration, yet it offered a new vision of trans-regional political space.¹⁴

Like the rulers of both the Pālas of Bengal and Kāmarūpa, Śrīcandra, the contemporaneous Candra king, also used similar political idioms (with the word *prakṛti*) for representing his predecessor. The *praśasti* for Suvarṇacandra (r. c. 876–904), the grandfather of Śrīcandra, reads, “It [gold] was not purified in fire, not put on a balance, but connected with heaviness by nature.”¹⁵ The subtextual meaning embedded in this suggestive statement is that Suvarṇacandra was neither born into the Agnikula (one of the distinguished Kṣatriya lineages) nor performed *tulāpuruṣa* (the ritual weighing of a king against gold and its distribution among Brāhmaṇas), but was imbued with dignity by the *prakṛti* (people). It is a subtle way of saying that Suvarṇacandra, the son of the Candra progenitor Pūrṇacandra, was not a member of any dignified royal family but earned the support of the people. This statement is, however, conspicuously absent from the new format of *praśasti* that was produced three years after the *Paschimbhag plate of Śrīcandra, year 5*. The first example of the new format is the *Dhulla plate of Śrīcandra*, issued around 933. Based on a distinct Buddhist narrative associated with their lineage name Candra, the moon, the new *praśasti* recounts a different family history for Śrīcandra. His grandfather Suvarṇacandra is thus recast as the son of Pūrṇacandra, the ruler of Rohitagiri, belonging to the majestic lineage of the moon, and as a Buddhist born into the family of the moon which devotedly carries in its curve the Buddha’s hare birth story (*buddhasya ... śaśaka-jātakam*)¹⁶ in the form of a mark. This change indicates that the narrative framing of the Candras as a devout Buddhist family was made retrospectively, that is¹⁷ eight years after Śrīcandra’s accession to the throne. By connecting his

13 The *Bargaon plate of Ratnapāla*, ll. 34–36.

14 For more details of how a new idea of kingship developed by the Bengal Pālas found an echo among the Kāmarūpa Pāla rulers, see Shin (2022a, 601–3).

15 The *Paschimbhag plate of Śrīcandra*, v. 3, and the *Kedarpur plate of Śrīcandra*, v. 3: *nāgnau viśuddho na tulādhirūḍhaḥ kintu prakṛtyaiva yuto garimṇā*.

16 The *Śaśajātaka* (Cowell 1897, 34–37) was one of the representative stories exemplifying *dānapāramitā* (the Buddhist Perfection of Generosity), and was thus often depicted in Buddhist art and architecture since the third-fourth centuries CE. However, its presence in a royal eulogy was rare and its association with a royal lineage was rather unusual. The Candras’ conscious identity-making based on this *Jātaka* story should therefore be understood in the historical context of the time of Śrīcandra when they first claimed their lineage. For more details, see Shin (2022b, 1–8).

17 See the *Dhulla plate of Śrīcandra*, vv. 2–3. This format continued till the end of Śrīcandra’s reign, as seen in the *Rampal plate of Śrīcandra*, vv. 2–3; the *Bogra plate of Śrīcandra*, vv. 2–3;

lineage name Candra to the moon with the hare mark of the *Jātaka* story, Śrīcandra could locate this rising political power within the ambit of the Buddhist world of eastern India. Otherwise, he might have faced difficulty in legitimising his rule due to the low status of his grandfather, even though the latter appears to have gained the support of the people.

The conscious adaptation of the Bengal Pālas' political idiom by both these fast-rising rulers, Ratnapāla and Śrīcandra, to the eulogy of their predecessors ran in parallel with their challenge to the former's imperial authority. However, valuable information about this challenge is not supplied by their own records but by those of their successors. The *Gachtal plate of Gopāla* (r. c. 990–1015), a great-grandson of Ratnapāla, refers to the victory of Ratnapāla precisely against Gauḍarāja Rājyapāla, that is to say, Rājyapāla II (r. c. 932–969).

When he (Ratnapāla) with his two arms defeated Rājyapāla — the Gauḍa king churlish on account of (the strength of) his arms — in (several) battles, he transformed, so to speak, the Mandākinī (Gaṅgā, known to have clear water) into the daughter of Kalinda (Yamunā, known for its dark water), thickening its water with moonlike spots of ichor from his lordly elephants.¹⁸

Its vivid description of the Gaṅgā whose colour was changed by the ichor of Ratnapāla's elephants may suggest the advance of his troops into the heart of the Bengal Pāla territory. The absence of Kāmarūpa/Prāgjyotiṣa from the list of groups and regions that submitted to Rājyapāla II implies Ratnapāla's success in a feat against the imperial Pālas of Bengal, who had subdued the king of Prāgjyotiṣa about one hundred years earlier.¹⁹

the *Bangladesh National Museum plate of Śrīcandra*, vv. 2–3; the *Madanapur plate of Śrīcandra*, vv. 2–3.

18 The *Gachtal plate of Gopāla*, v. 15, ll. 28–29: *dor-darppa-durllāḍitam ājiṣu gauḍa-rājam yo rājyapālam avajitya bhujā-dvayena| manye gajendra-mada-candraka-sāndra-toyām mandākinīm api kalinda-sutāñ cakāra||*

19 According to the *Bhaturiya stone inscription of Yaśodāsa* from the time of Rājyapāla II (v. 8), when Yaśodāsa was occupying the post of the *tantrādhikārin*, his master Rājyapāla II's command was obeyed by the Mlecchas, Aṅgas, Kaliṅgas, Vaṅgas, Oḍras, Pāṇdyas, Karṇāṭas, Lāṭas, Suhmas, Gurjaras, Kṛitas, and Cīnas. Though employing an utterly conventional expression, it gives a glimpse of groups of people who served Rājyapāla II and his sphere of influence. Kāmarūpa/Prāgjyotiṣa is conspicuous by its absence in the list. The subjugation of Kāmarūpa/Prāgjyotiṣa is mentioned only as the achievement of his great-great-grandfather Jayapāla, a cousin of Devapāla (r. c. 812–847), in the *Bharat Kala Bhavan plate of Rājyapāla*, year 2, v. 6, which merely repeats the *Bhaḡalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla*, v. 6, q.v. footnote 3. This indicates that the Pālas had lost their grip on the northeastern frontier by the mid-tenth century.

Likewise, Śricandra's success against the Bengal Pālas is also described in the records of his son and grandson, Kalyāṇacandra (r. c. 975–1000) and Laḍahacandra (r. c. 1000–1020). The *Dacca plate* of the former mentions that Śricandra installed Gopāla, i.e. Gopāla III (r. c. 969–975), as a king, and a plate of the latter speaks vaguely of Śricandra's victory against a Gauḍa king.²⁰ However, due to the conspicuous lack of any historico-referential information in the *Jajilpara plate of Gopāla III* from his 6th year, which is the only known copperplate charter of Gopāla III to date, it is difficult to assess Śricandra's political impact on the Bengal Pālas accurately. The tenth verse of this record describing the victorious campaign of Gopāla III in the four cardinal directions (Misra and Majumdar 1951, 142) is nothing but the conventional *digvijaya* over the *cakravarti-kṣetra*, because it is also applied to Viḡrahapāla II (r. c. 975–987) and Mahīpāla I (r. c. 987–1035).²¹ What is assumed is that during the second half of the tenth century, Pāla control over northern and western Bengal was increasingly contested by the rise of the Kāmbojas and the attack of the Candellas (Chowdhury 2018, 754–55). Śricandra seems to have intervened militarily in the political turmoil hitting the Pālas, and to have restored Gopāla III to the throne, probably in the last phase of his reign. The strongest contenders for the Pāla kingship at that time were probably the Kāmbojas, whose ruler even assumed the title *gauḍapati* or Lord of Gauḍa.²² This being the case, the Gauḍa king who is stated to have

20 The details of two copper plates of Kalyāṇacandra have yet to be published. Dani (1960, 41) and Sircar (1967–68, 299) give only a partial quotation from the *Dacca plate of Kalyāṇacandra*, according to which Śricandra was soft in removing the fears of other kings (or of a ruler named Pṛthvipāla) and harsh in destroying Govarṇa, and he initiated rejoicing by installing Gopāla on the throne (*mahotsava-gurur gopāla-saṁropanē*). For the reference to Śricandra's victory over a Gauḍa king whose name is not mentioned, see *Laḍahacandra's first grant, year 6, v. 5*.

21 It reads, "Whose war elephants, like clouds, having drunk clear water in the eastern country, which abounds with water, after that having roamed according to their own wills in the sandal forests of the valley of the Malaya [country], [and] having caused a coolness in the Maru lands by throwing dense sprays [of water emitted from their trunks], enjoyed the slopes of the Himālaya." See the *Bangarh plate of Mahīpāla I, year 9, v. 11*.

22 The *Dinajpur pillar inscription*, dated to the second half of the tenth century (also known as the Bangarh pillar inscription), records the erection of a temple of Śiva by a lord of Gauḍa belonging to the Kāmboja line (*kāmvōjānvaya-jena gauḍa-patinā*). Chowdhury (2018, 813) conjectures on the basis of the Irda and Kalanda plates that Rājyapāla and his two sons, Nārāyaṇapāla and Nayapāla, who ruled over the southern portion of west Bengal in succession during the tenth century, belonged to the Kāmboja family. These plates call this Rājyapāla *kāmbōja-varṇsa-tilaka*. In the stagnant period of Pāla history, they could spread their influence in northern and western Bengal, while Pāla dominion was possibly limited

been defeated by Śricandra in *Laḍahacandra's first grant* may have been a Kāmbōja ruler, even though we have only limited evidence on Kāmbōja presence in the heart of the Pāla territory of north Bengal.

However, the question that should be asked here is not whether this political scenario is true, but why the reference to military or political success of the two neighbouring rulers — Ratnapāla and Śricandra — against the imperial Pālas took on its particular significance between the late tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries, that is to say, during the reign of Mahīpāla I (r. c. 987–1035) of Bengal. Another pertinent question is how the aspirations of the Kāmarūpa and Candra rulers changed at that time. To answer these, it is important to remember that, in his four grants, Mahīpāla I is credited with having obtained his father's kingdom or the kingship of his paternal kingdom, which had been snatched away by unentitled people.²³ The enemies who dispossessed Mahīpāla I of his paternal kingdom are identified with the Kāmbōjas, and the area which he retrieved is considered to be Varendra or northern Bengal (Sircar 1951–52, 3; Chowdhury 2018, 760). The first appearance of this verse in the *Belwa plate*, dated to the second regnal year of Mahīpāla I,²⁴ attests to his success against his enemies in the very early part of his reign, and its repeated occurrence in several other land grants, such as the *Amgachi plate of Vighrapāla III* (r. c. 1050–1076) and the *Manahali plate of Madanapāla* (r. c. 1144/45–1165), shows the importance of his achievement. Mahīpāla I reestablished Pāla authority over northern Bengal and some part of western Bengal, and held sway over southern Bihar. Towards the close of his reign, he succeeded in ensuring Pāla control over northern Bihar. The absence of any serious trouble from outside, except for Rājendra Cola's invasion in 1021, helped him to consolidate Pāla power in eastern India (Chowdhury 2018, 766).

Such were the political circumstances confronting both the Kāmarūpa Pāla and the Candra rulers between the late tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries. Unlike Ratnapāla and Śricandra, who had taken advantage of the political turmoil and military stagnancy of the Bengal Pālas to expand their

to Aṅga and Magadha. It was against this backdrop that the Kāmbōja rulers adopted names identical to those of the Bengal Pāla kings and one of their consorts. They modelled their genealogy on the Pāla one. This is another example of the political adoption of the Pāla idioms by neighbouring lesser powers in eastern India.

23 *anadhikṛta-viluptaṁ rājyam āsādyā pitryam*, in the *Belwa plate of Mahīpāla I, year 2*, v. 11; the *Rangpur plate of Mahīpāla I, year 5*, v. 12; the *Dinajpur plate of Mahīpāla I, year 9*, v. 12; the *Biyala plate of Mahīpāla I*, v. 11.

24 As to the date of the *Belwa plate*, I adopt the modified date of year 2 suggested by Furui (2011a, 242 n. 4), based on his reading from a digital photograph.

activities far beyond their respective core regions in the first half of the tenth century, the descendants of both the rulers saw the Pālas recovering from their political instability. It was, therefore, not wholly a coincidence that a heroic vision of their dynasties' past was cherished by both the Kāmarūpa Pāla and Candra rulers during the long-term stable reign of Mahīpāla I, when they could not make actual military expeditions into the Bengal region. In this vision of the past, the success of Ratnapāla and Śricandra against the Bengal Pālas was represented as a political event that was worthy of being remembered with historical accuracy. The plates of Gopāla and Kalyāṇacandra, both referring to specific Bengal Pāla sovereigns by name, demonstrate a keen awareness of their forefathers' opponents.²⁵ Though this specificity gives way to the vague expression of "a Gauḍa king" in the grants issued by Laḍahacandra (r. c. 1000–1020) and Govindacandra (r. c. 1020–1045) in the last phase of the Candra dynasty, their forefather's victory against the imperial Pālas remained a political event to be cherished and valued. Such historical retrospection certainly involved political overtones in the reign of Mahīpāla I who reconsolidated the Pālas' hold on power in eastern India.

In sum, the array of Kāmarūpa Pāla and Candra epigraphic records bears witness to the self-images of kingship those rulers sought to project under changing political circumstances. At a time of their ascendancy, the first half of the tenth century, the Kāmarūpa Pāla and Candra rulers drew upon the political idiom of the Bengal Pālas to compensate for their obscure origin and establish their image as successors of kings chosen by the people. However, when the Pālas of Bengal reassumed their sway over much of eastern India from the late tenth century, they rather emphasised the facticity of past military action or political intervention over some previous Pāla kings of Bengal. As a point of reference, the Pālas were used continuously in making the consummate self-images of their contenders, and in doing so, the Pāla sphere of influence in representational practices actually expanded when this strongest polity of eastern India became an empire in decline.

25 For the *Gachtal plate of Gopāla* mentioning Ratnapāla's victory against Rājyapāla (i.e. Rājyapāla II), see footnote 18. For the *Dacca plate of Kalyāṇacandra* referring to Śricandra's restoration of Gopāla (i.e. Gopāla III), see footnote 20.

3. Presentation of others in a changing religious landscape

The two neighbouring powers contending against Pāla authority were unlikely to ally themselves to each other, due to the Candras' several attempts to take over Kāmarūpa.²⁶ The first one was made by Śrīcandra, who led further military expeditions into the northeastern corner of the subcontinent, following his father Trailokyacandra's subjugation of Samataṭa. The *Paschimbhag plate of Śrīcandra, year 5*, the earliest known charter of this king, gives an account of his military campaign against Kāmarūpa.

His soldiers at the (time of the) conquest of Kāmarūpa, it is said, lingered in the woody regions of the Lohitya river darkened by black aloe trees, with its flocks of pigeons taking wing, monkeys roaming about bowers of plantain trees yellow with ripening fruit, and the eaves (of the forest) frequented by yaks falling asleep in the lethargy of their rumination. "This is Citraśilā, the Painted Rock, bedecked in a delightful efflorescence of rock tar! This is the river Puṣpabhadrā whose banks rustle with the fair leaves of palmyra trees!" — such [verses] were recited eagerly and at length by the scholars of his army in a lesson at the time of the conquest of the Northern Region, after attending to the deities of the locality on the Snow Mountain.²⁷

This interesting account seems to contain an admixture of actual observation and literary convention: the former is evident in the specific names of a rock and a river found in Kāmarūpa, whereas the latter is noticeable in the stereotypical description of Kāmarūpa's flora and fauna and its location of being assigned to the Northern Region (*uttarāpatha*), just as in Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*, which refers to this place as the last country to be subdued by Raghu's northern expedition.²⁸ While showing great concern for the space, both experienced and

26 Kāmarūpa was much coveted by the rulers of Gauḍa and Vaṅga because of its resources, including the areca nuts, betel leaves, aloe wood, silk cotton trees, and gold from the alluvial deposits of the Brahmaputra, and its location on the important horse trade route. For more details, see Ghosh (2010–11, 116–17).

27 The *Paschimbhag plate of Śrīcandra, year 5*, vv. 12–13: *yat-sainyaiḥ kila kāmarūpa-vijaye rohat-kapotī-ghanā nirvviṣṭāḥ phala-pāka-piṅga-kadalī-kuñja-bhramad-vānarāḥ | romanthālasa-vaddhanidra-camarī-samsevita-prāntarā lohityasya vana-sthali-parisarāḥ kālāguru-śyāmalāḥ || saiṣā citraśilā manorama-śilā-puṣpa-pratānācitā tālī-sacchada-marmmaraiḥ parisaraiḥ sā puṣpa-bhadrā nadi | ity utkaṅṭhulam uttarāpatha-jaye yat-sainika-śrotriyair adhyāye paṭhitās ciraṁ himagirau dṛṣṭvā sthali-devatāḥ ||*.

28 *Raghuvamśa* 4. 81–84. The northern region called *udīcyā* or *uttarāpatha* comprises the region between the eastern Punjab and the Oxus in the northwest as well as the entire Himālayan region.

imagined, this earliest Candra record of Kāmarūpa pays less attention to the historical event itself. What is noticeable is the Candra soldiers' eagerness to conquer Kāmarūpa, as seen in verse 13 of the record. The mention of the Puṣpabhadra river, which has been identified with a small stream to the north of the Brahmaputra near Guwahati (M. M. Sharma 1978, 255), suggests that the Candra military expedition penetrated the area around Durjayā, Kāmarūpa's then political centre. However, the account mentions neither the name of Śrīcandra's adversary nor the extent of his success.²⁹ The Kāmarūpa Pāla armies also do not figure in this account. Śrīcandra's direct control appears to have extended to Sylhet, as the land donation was made in Śrīhaṭṭa *maṇḍala*, but his subjugation of Kāmarūpa remains uncertain. Given the complete silence on this expedition in his seven other records, Śrīcandra's raid was probably short-lived and the effects of Candra presence were restricted to only a small portion of Kāmarūpa.

About five decades later, Śrīcandra's son Kalyāṇacandra (r. c. 975–1000) led another military campaign against Kāmarūpa whose then ruler was Indrapāla (r. c. 960–990). A generation after this invasion, the *Gachtal plate of Gopāla* (r. c. 990–1015), Indrapāla's son, gives a direct reference to their clash and Kalyāṇacandra's defeat by Indrapāla in a naval war.

Strong Kalyāṇacandra, Śrīcandra's son, the king of Vaṅga, he of the invincible arms [demonstrated] in his clash with the frenzied Gauḍas, was himself overtaken (by the army of Indrapāla) at the border of the battlefield. Defeated by him (Indrapāla), he slunk miserably away to somewhere, abandoning with fearful mind his fleet of boats beautifully festooned with fluttering golden medallions as well as his glory.³⁰

What makes the reference noteworthy is the way it portrays Kalyāṇacandra. He is credited with having demolished the frenzied Gauḍas with his undefeatable arms. Here the expression, "the frenzied Gauḍas" (*mādyad-gauḍa*) alludes to the

29 Dani (1966, 34), on the other hand, on the basis of his revised reading of the *Dacca plate of Kalyāṇacandra*, suggests that the Kāmarūpa ruler who was defeated by Śrīcandra was Ratnapāla. His new reading sounds plausible since both the rulers were contemporaries. However, Śrīcandra's victory over Ratnapāla was very unlikely to lead to the annexation of Kāmarūpa. For more details, see Islam (2018, 622).

30 The *Gachtal plate of Gopāla*, v. 20, ll. 36–38: *mādyad-gauḍa-vimarḍa-durddama-bhujah śrīcandra-sūnuḥ svayaṁ prāptaḥ saṅgara-sīmni vaṅga-ṅṛpatiḥ kalyāṇacandro valī cañcat-kāñcana-cakra-cāru-racitaṁ nau-cakram uttrasta-dhī tyaktvā yad-vijitaḥ sahaiva yaśasā dīnaḥ pralīnaḥ kvacit||*.

Pālas of Bengal renowned for their war elephants rutting in battlefields.³¹ The portrayal of Kalyāṇacandra as the vanquisher of the Gauḍa army indirectly inflates Indrapāla's superiority, because this Kāmarūpa ruler becomes the annihilator of the Candra king. By accentuating the military achievement of their adversary, the Kāmarūpa Pālas could successfully cast themselves as the strongest power in eastern India.

In contrast, the records of Kalyāṇacandra's successors, Laḍahacandra (r. c. 1000–1020) and Govindacandra (r. c. 1020–1045), refer to Kalyāṇacandra's triumph in Kāmarūpa in a very metaphorical way: "he caused shedding of big tears in the eyes of the *mleccha* women"³² and "he made double the waters of the Lohitya river by means of the tears from the eyes of the *mleccha* women, which had been caused by him through killing their husbands."³³ We cannot in actual fact be certain about the result of their clash, since both dynasties claimed to be the victor. Nevertheless, the fact that the Candra accounts make no direct reference to the war itself throws doubt on their claims. Considering the difficult mountainous terrain and overflowing rivers in Kāmarūpa, which gave all Bengal armies including the Bengal Sultans and Mughals in the later period little chance of success, Kalyāṇacandra may also have faced the hard reality of ultimate defeat. It is therefore understandable why the later Candra records are eager to project a successful image of Kalyāṇacandra with such a conventional poetic expression.

Support for this supposition also comes from the term *mleccha*, which is applied to describe the people of Kāmarūpa. Scholars including Sircar (1973, 49) have been quite explicit that the *mlecchas* figured in later Candra records mean the second ruling family of Kāmarūpa known as the Mleccha dynasty. However, this is very unlikely to be the case in view of two facts: first, the period of Kalyāṇacandra's campaign simply did not match up with that of the Mleccha rule which flourished in the eighth-ninth centuries in the mid-Brahmaputra valley with present Tezpur of Assam as its political centre; and second, a dynastic name is not a common feature of presenting others in the epigraphic practice of early medieval eastern India, which almost always uses a name of a region in referring to another political power, such as Gauḍa, Vaṅga, Samatāṭa, Harikela and so on. The Candra records, too, use Kāmarūpa or Prāggyoṭiṣa to denote both

31 For the abundance of elephants in the Pāla army described in an Arab account of the ninth century, see Ahmad (1989, 43–44).

32 *Laḍahacandra's first grant*, v. 8a: *mlecchīnān nayaneṣu yena janitaḥ sthūlāśru-koṣa-vyayo*.

33 *Govindacandra's grant*, year 6, v. 7: *yenāsau dviguṇikṛtaḥ pati-vadhād udvejitānām ghanair mlecchīnān nayanāmbubhir vīgaltair lohitya-nāmā nadaḥ*.

the polity and the people of the northeastern region at the beginning of the tenth century.

If so, how do we explain the appearance of this new nomenclature, *mleccha*, in the eleventh-century Candra charters? To answer this question, we must first recognise that it arose in the context of increasing Brahmanical influence on the last two Candra rulers: Laḍahacandra and Govindacandra. Though both continued to use the Buddhist symbol of the *dharmacakra* as the emblem on their seal and the Buddhist epithet *parama-saugata* as one of their titles, their donations were neither made in the name of the lord Buddha, nor contained any other Buddhist elements. On the contrary, Laḍahacandra granted lands in the name of Viṣṇu, a form of whom was even named after himself, and Govindacandra did the same in the name of Śiva, to whose son Mahāsenā he was considered to be equal.³⁴ Laḍahacandra was a Vaiṣṇava and Govindacandra had obvious Śaiva leanings. The Candras' self-image was also redesigned in accordance with the new genealogical claim tracing their descent from the moon god Candra, the light sprung from the sage Atri's eye (*atri-netra*).³⁵ This claim certainly drew on the origin myth of the Candravamśa well known in Epic-Purāṇic traditions.³⁶ Given a long absence of Kṣatriya identity-making based on the

34 The two charters of Laḍahacandra record grants of land in the name of Vāsudeva-bhaṭṭāraka (the lord Vāsudeva, i.e. Viṣṇu) in favour of Laḍahamādhava-bhaṭṭāraka (the lord Laḍahamādhava) installed by the king. See *Laḍahacandra's first grant*, ll. 53–54; *Laḍahacandra's second grant*, ll. 20–21. As Mādhava is a well-known name of the god Viṣṇu, Laḍahamādhava was undoubtedly a form of Viṣṇu named after the king Laḍahacandra himself. His strong attachment to the Brahmanical creed is also attested in his pilgrimage to Vārāṇasī and Prayāga, where he made an offering to his ancestors and offered gifts of gold to numerous Brāhmaṇas. See *Laḍahacandra's first grant*, vv. 16–18. *Govindacandra's grant*, on the other hand, records a donation which has been made in favour of the dancing form of Śiva called Naṭṭeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka, in the name of Śiva-bhaṭṭāraka (the lord Śiva). It also refers to this king as an equal to Mahāsenā (i.e. Skanda, Kārttikeya), and his parents to the latter's parents, Śiva and Śivā. See *Govindacandra's grant*, ll. 46–47, v. 13. Despite its beginning with a prayer to Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, Govindacandra's charter concludes the record of donation with a prayer to the gods Svayambhū, Hari, and Hara. See *Govindacandra's grant*, v. 16.

35 *Laḍahacandra's first grant*, v. 1; *Govindacandra's grant*, v. 2.

36 As one of the seven great sages who were all born from the god Brahmā's mind, Atri figured prominently in the Vedic-Epic-Purāṇic corpus. He was married to Anasūyā Devī and had three sons, namely, Dattātreyā, Durvāsas, and Candra. The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 9.14.1–9.24.67 tells us that the god Brahmā had a son called Atri, and the latter had a son called Soma (i.e. Candra), who was born out of his tears of joy. Soma had a son, Budha (i.e. Mercury), by his spouse Tārā, and Budha had one offspring, Purūravas, by his consort Ilā. It

Lunar/Solar lineages in eastern epigraphic records, the Candras' conscious attempt to link themselves to the prestigious Candravamśa is even more noteworthy.

Seen in this context, the emergence of the Candras' Kṣatriya consciousness and the rise of their contemptuous attitudes towards the neighbouring Kāmarūpa people were processes which unfolded simultaneously over the first half of the eleventh century. This simultaneity suggests that boosting their self-image was bound up with demeaning the image of others. Often translated as 'barbarian,' the term *mleccha* used to refer not only to aliens from outside of the subcontinent, but to tribes who were not part of the agrarian *varṇa* society of Indic civilisation. In general, these groups were recognised as perpetual outsiders and potential contesters of Brahmanical norms and, therefore, often mentioned in unfavourable terms in Sanskrit literature (Talbot 1995, 698; Parasher-Sen 2006, 435). Labelling the Kāmarūpa people as *mlecchas* may have been instrumental to the primary goal of providing the Candra rulers with a self-image as the upholder of law and society. A strong tribal substratum, which left the northeastern region with much less Brahmanical influence than its neighbours, was another important factor in accentuating the otherness of the Kāmarūpa people. What is also noteworthy is that the term *mleccha* is never applied to the people of Gauḍa, the nuclear area of the Bengal Pālas, though they were also the Candras' adversaries.³⁷

However, we should not take that as an indication of a regionalist view. In Kāmarūpa too, rulers similarly employed the Brahmanical concept of *mleccha* for political rivals within their region, as it was one of the most resonant images of the other. For instance, the first known charter of the Kāmarūpa Pālas refers to the founder of the previous dynasty with discernible disdain as the supreme lord of barbarians (*mlecchādhinātha*).³⁸ Though not in epigraphic records, the negative image of the Kirātas, a local tribe vanquished by Naraka, the son of the Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu, is well reflected in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* of the first half of the eleventh century, probably composed during the reign of Dharmapāla of the Kāmarūpa Pālas. Here the Kirātas embody the Brahmanical notion of the tribal other, devoid of culture and civilisation. Naraka's victory against this

then gives us a long list of the descendants of Purūravas, all of whom comprised the renowned Lunar Dynasty called Candravamśa/Somavamśa. For further details of changing genealogical claims of the Candras, see Shin (2022b, 1–8).

37 For instance, the later Candra plates proclaim Kalyāṇacandra's great victory over the people of Gauḍa or Gauḍa king, but they never use the term *mleccha* in this context. See *Laḍahacandra's first grant*, v. 8; *Govindacandra's grant*, v. 7.

38 The *Bargaon plate of Ratnapāla*, v. 9; the *Śaratbāri plate of Ratnapāla*, v. 9.

“strong, cruel and foolish people” is deemed a preamble to a Brahmanical kingdom in Kāmarūpa, renowned for its sages, Vedic studies, and practice of *varṇa* order and *dāna* (*Kālikāpurāna* 38.101, 128–130). It is noteworthy that the Kāmarūpa Pālas, being discounted as *mlecchas* by the Candras, in turn discounted their local people as the typical tribal other. The new royal epithet *śrī-vārāha*, the one born in the family of illustrious Varāha, was used in a figurative way to represent the Kāmarūpa Pāla kings’ descent from Naraka, emphasising their Vaiṣṇava patrimony (Shin 2022a, 583–617). The considerable importance attached to this epithet in the time of Gopāla (r. c. 990–1015) and Dharmapāla (r. c. 1035–1060) suggests that the making of a Brahmanical vision of kingship in contrast to the barbarian other was not limited only to the eleventh-century Candras.

Behind this development of a new type of representation worked deeper political, social, and religious changes in eastern India. First, the strong grip of Mahīpāla I (r. c. 987–1035) and Nayapāla (r. c. 1036–1051) on Bengal probably curbed the military activity of both the later Candra and Kāmarūpa kings (Islam 2018, 628). This is clear from the complete absence of verses praising the military achievement of Laḍahacandra and Govindacandra in their charters, and also from the very poetical exaggeration of Dharmapāla’s valour in his *praśasti*. When they did not or could not have any martial accomplishment to celebrate and commemorate, their self-promotion was made either at the expense of others or on the basis of an inflated genealogical claim, or sometimes both. In this context, Vaiṣṇavism with its Brahmanical orthodoxy proved attractive to both the Candra and Kāmarūpa Pāla rulers. A clear shift in the religious affiliation of Laḍahacandra and Dharmapāla towards Vaiṣṇava faith at the personal level contributed to reinventing their images as an embodiment or a descendant of the god who ruled the cosmos and the world by taking on many different forms.³⁹

Migrant Brāhmaṇas, hailing from north Bengal and induced to settle in Vaṅga and Kāmarūpa by land grants, probably played an important role in the creation of a “Vaiṣṇava” lordship of both the rulers. The installation of Laḍahamādhava, Viṣṇu named after Laḍahacandra, may have been induced by the Brāhmaṇas from north Bengal where the prevalence of the same habit is

39 The two charters of Laḍahacandra begin with an invocation to Vāsudeva: *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*. See *Laḍahacandra’s first grant*, v. 1; *Laḍahacandra’s second grant*, year 6, v. 1. The last charter of Dharmapāla of Kāmarūpa also begins with a salutation to Viṣṇu in his Varāha form: *svasti śrīmān sa kroḍa-rūpo jayati*. See the *Puspabhadra plate of Dharmapāla*, v. 1.

attested by several pieces of epigraphic evidence.⁴⁰ The worship of *Laḍahamādhava* at *Paṭṭikeraka*, established by *Laḍahacandra*, remained as a symbol of royal authority till the late thirteenth century, as the *Grant of Vīradharadeva* attests.⁴¹ In the case of *Kāmarūpa*, it is evident that *Brāhmaṇas* with a *Vaiṣṇava* orientation migrated from north Bengal to the region upon the direct intervention of *Dharmapāla*, who donated the largest plot of land to a *Brāhmaṇa* in over two hundred years of *Pāla* history.⁴² The last, but not least, point concerns the close ties between this religious change and self-projection: the singular devotion to *Viṣṇu* was developed in parallel with overt emphasis on the *Kṣatriya* origin of both the *Candra* and *Kāmarūpa Pāla* rulers, and this lineage-based self-representation was followed by new dynasties including the *Varmans* (r. c. 1050–1125) ruling southeastern Bengal, and another *Candra* line (r. c. 1120–1200) holding sway over the lower *Brahmaputra* valley in the twelfth century.⁴³ The rulers of India's easternmost region finally fell within the ambit of the early medieval convention of making *Kṣatriya* identity, which, in contrast, was never attempted by the imperial *Pālas* till the end of their days. The two lesser powers were more adaptive and responsive to new modes of political representation. Those modes were followed by the *Senas*, who eventually overpowered the imperial *Pālas*.

40 According to *Furui* (2013, 397), a number of *Viṣṇu* images are inscribed with names ending with his epithets like *Mādhava* and *Nārāyaṇa*, which are prefixed with male or female personal names. For instance, a form of *Viṣṇu* called *Sonnakādevī-Mādhava* was named after a woman called *Sonnakā* or *Sonnakādevī*. For the presence of *Brāhmaṇas* hailing from north Bengal in the *Candra* kingdom, see *Fleming* (2010, 225).

41 The *Grant of Vīradharadeva* of the later *Devas* was made in favour of the lord *Vāsudeva* named *Laḍahamādhava*. For palaeographic reasons, his plate is assigned to the thirteenth century by *S. C. Bhattacharya* (1983, 20, 23).

42 For instance, *Madhusūdana*, a *Brāhmaṇa* donee attached to the worship of *Mādhava* from his boyhood, is said to have originated from a village called *Khyātipali*, an abode of pious and learned *Brāhmaṇas* as well as a place of sacrifice and Vedic study, probably situated in *Varendra* of Bengal. *Madhusūdana* was the only *Brāhmaṇa* who was granted land yielding as much as 10 000 (*droṇas* of) paddies during the rule of the *Pālas*. See the *Puspabhadra plate of Dharmapāla*, v. 18; vv. 9–11; v. 21. For more details, see *Shin* (2022a, 605).

43 The *Vaiṣṇava Varmans* traced their origin from *Yadu* and claimed their status as the kinsmen of *Hari* (*Kṛṣṇa*). See the *Belava plate of Bhojavarman*, vv. 1–4. The *Candras*, whose charter begins with a salutation to the lord *Vāsudeva* and invokes *Varāha-Viṣṇu*, also claimed *Candravaṁśa* origin. See the *Assam plates of Vallabhadeva*, vv. 1–3.

4. Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that the epigraphic representation of self and others should be viewed as contextual articulation. Only through understanding the changing context of politics, society, culture, and religion can one account for the diversity in the representational practices of the Pālas of Kāmarūpa and the Candras of Vaṅga, the two lesser powers flourishing on the edge of the Pāla empire of Bengal in a transitional phase.

First, their self-image as leaders chosen by the people appeared at the time of their ascendancy, the first half of the tenth century, when the Kāmarūpa Pāla and Candra rulers consciously adopted the political idiom of the Bengal Pālas to disguise their obscure origin and to secure legitimacy. However, when the Pālas reassumed their sway over much of eastern India from the late tenth century, a heroic vision of the past surfaced in the two dynasties' records, with detailed references to their military action or political intervention directed at earlier Pāla kings. As a point of reference, the Pālas were used continuously in making the consummate self-images of their contenders, and in doing so, the Pāla sphere of influence in representational practices expanded even as this strongest polity of eastern India became an empire in decline. Second, while representing themselves in relation with the imperial Pālas, the two powers defined their political rivals as *mleccha*, clearly connoting a lack of culture and civilisation. By the first half of the eleventh century, the Candras applied this term to the Kāmarūpa Pālas, and the latter did the same to the previous dynasty of their region, which had arisen from local tribal people. Their contemptuous attitudes towards others, whether within or outside a region, coincided with their growing consciousness of the Vaiṣṇava divine kingship and Kṣatriya genealogical claim, in which migrant Brāhmaṇas from north Bengal played an increasingly important role. This pejorative characterisation of the others was, therefore, a by-product of the process of their identity formation, and in the course of which the other was always defined in an uneven power relation.

Located on the periphery of the imperial Pāla heartland, the two lesser powers constructed their image through a twofold process: adapting political idioms and religious attributes from north Bengal on the one hand, and distancing themselves from others, whose deficiency in Brahmanical norms is highlighted, on the other. Self-representation and the presentation of others were not effected in isolation: they were reflective and reciprocal.

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See page xvi about references to primary sources in general, and page xvii about DHARMA digital editions with a corpus ID and a number.

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The Portrayal of Underlings in Eastern Cālukya Copper Plates

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1. Introduction

As is now widely recognised and also set out in the introduction of this book, inscriptions in general and copperplate *praśastis* in particular have much to tell the historian beyond the names and dates recorded in them. What I wish to explore here is an aspect of the perceptual world into which these inscriptions provide a glimpse, namely, the public personae of rulers and underlings and the way these are articulated by the texts under study. Epigraphically based historical studies often fall into one of two broad kinds, either adopting a bird's eye view of a massive (and vaguely defined) corpus to point out large-scale historical trends and patterns, or embracing a hermeneutical close reading of a single inscription or a very small corpus and generalising from the insights gained thereby. This article reports an attempt to apply an intermediate perspective, and to ground the study of representation in inscriptional *praśastis* more solidly in the texts themselves than afforded by either of the above approaches. My intention is to explore how these texts characterise public personages and what the underlying key themes of such characterisations might be, and to look (synchronously) for patterns and (diachronically) for historical trends in these themes. My subject matter consists specifically of the copperplate grants of the Eastern Cālukya dynasty, which I have spent the last few years re-editing for the DHARMA project; and to accomplish my aim, I have borrowed textual analysis methodology from the social sciences.

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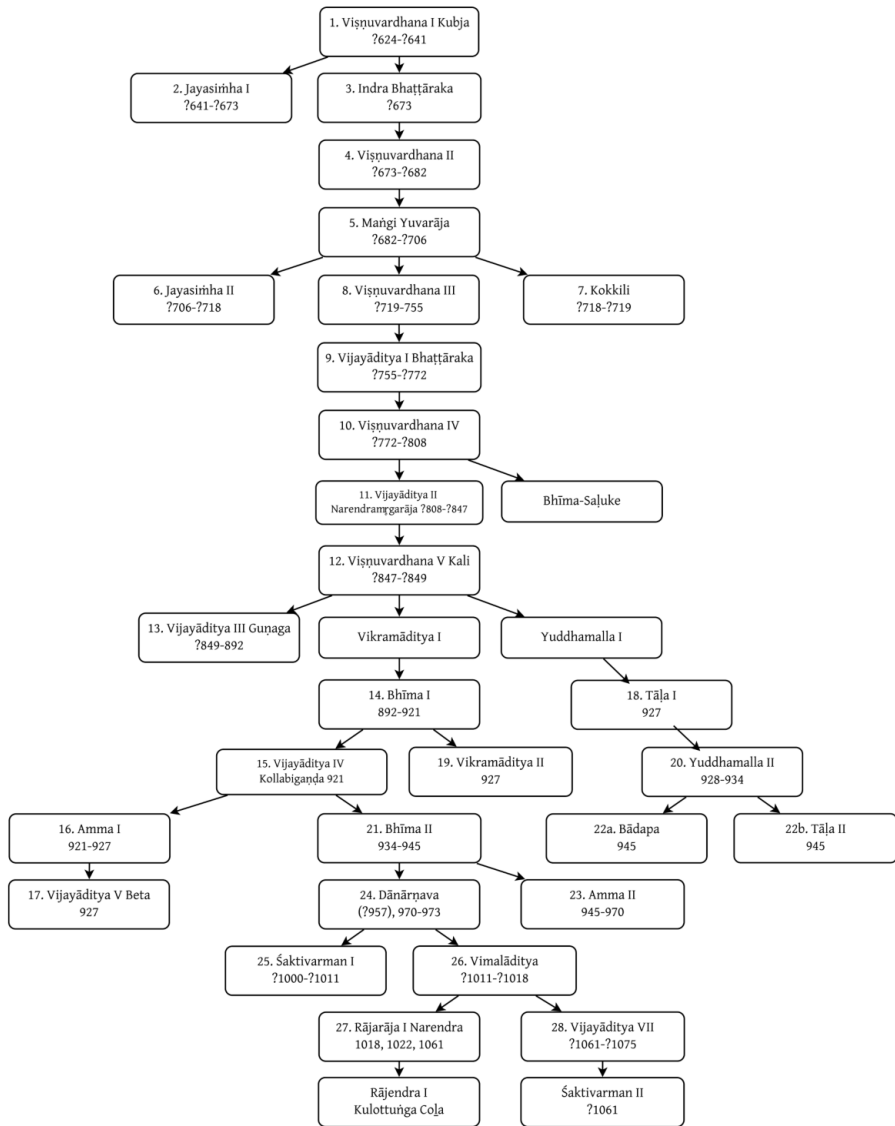


Figure 1. The lineage of Eastern Ālukya kings

1.1. Eastern Cālukya dynastic history

The establishment of the Eastern Cālukya dynasty was a consequence of the Bādāmi Calukya¹ Pulakeśin II's conquest of the Godavari delta and coastal Āndhra in the second decade of the seventh century.² In circumstances that are not very well understood but probably included a relative political vacuum left behind by the waning of Viṣṇukuṇḍi power (Sankaranarayanan 1977, 89–90), Pulakeśin's younger brother took control of the conquered territory and eventually established himself as an independent ruler by the name Kubja-Viṣṇuvar-dhana or Viṣṇuvar-dhana I. The pedigree of the male scions of the dynasty is illustrated in Figure 1, where numbers preceding names indicate the order of succession to the throne, and numbers below the names are reign periods given in the Common Era; people without a number did not ascend to the throne.

Over a century later (in 753), the Rāṣṭrakūṭas rose to overthrow the Bādāmi Calukya line, and began to harass the Āndhra country by 769.³ An uneasy balance of power — with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas mostly having the upper hand — seems to have been achieved, consolidated through repeated marriage alliances, and maintained for nearly two centuries before the situation escalated. In the ninth century, the Eastern Cālukya king Vijayāditya II Narendramṛgarāja (r. c. 808–847) briefly lost his throne to his half-brother Bhīma-Saḷuke, a puppet set up by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Govinda III. Vijayāditya II reasserted himself with great vigour when Amoghavarṣa I (r. 814–878) ascended to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa throne as a child, but probably had to submit to Amoghavarṣa later on. Vijayāditya II's grandson Vijayāditya III Guṇaga (r. c. 849–892) apparently spent part of his career conducting independent campaigns, part warring against Amoghavarṣa, and another part as Amoghavarṣa's ally; then after the latter's death turned the tables

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- 1 I adopt Annette Schmiechen's use of Calukya for the Bādāmi (Vātāpi) line (see note 2 on p. 190) and Cālukya for the offshoot dynasties. In fact, the Eastern Cālukyas use a short *a* (and generally a retroflex *l*) in their earlier grants, and long *ā* (and dental *l*) in the later ones. In translations from primary texts, I follow the spelling of the original. While I employ the terms "Eastern Cālukya" and "Veṅgī Cālukya" interchangeably, I prefer not to distinguish the primary Bādāmi dynasty with the label "Western," since this latter can also refer to the later (and uncertainly related) Cālukya line of Kalyāṇa.
 - 2 See Fleet (1891b, 94–95), Krishna Rao (1973, 78–84) and Sankaranarayanan (1977, 110–15) for slightly varying accounts of the dynasty's founding and for the relevant primary sources.
 - 3 The following crash course in Eastern Cālukya history draws on the summaries of Nilakanta Sastri and Venkataramanayya (1960) and Sircar (1955, 132–39), and the in-depth treatment by Krishna Rao (1973, 160–404). All of these accounts are speculative as regards many details, but the broad outlines I present here are securely established.

and forced Kṛṣṇa II (r. 878–914) into submission. Kṛṣṇa in turn eventually defeated and captured Vijayāditya III's nephew and heir Bhīma I (r. 892–921),⁴ and orchestrated a successful invasion of Veṅgī territory.

The manner of Bhīma's return to Veṅgī and power is unknown, but the Rāṣṭrakūṭa policy of fomenting internal dissension and supporting collateral Cālukya contenders for the Veṅgī throne apparently gained momentum around this time. Bhīma's uncle Yuddhamalla (a half-brother to both Bhīma's father Vikramāditya and Bhīma's predecessor Vijayāditya III) probably never gained the crown, but his descendants did so repeatedly. Yuddhamalla's son Tāḷa I ruled for one month (927) after the death of Bhīma I's grandson Amma I. He was ousted by Vikramāditya II — an uncle of Amma I (thus a nephew of Bhīma I) — who was in turn replaced after less than a year by Tāḷa's son Yuddhamalla II. It then took six years for Amma I's brother Bhīma II (r. 934–945) to snatch back the crown, and when Bhīma II's son Amma II (r. 945–970) inherited the throne at the tender age of twelve, he first had to flee into exile from Yuddhamalla II's sons Bādapa and Tāḷa II, who enjoyed the support of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III (r. 939–967). After some time, Amma II apparently gained the backing of powerful subordinates⁵ and returned to the throne, whereafter Yuddhamalla's line disappeared for good. However, later on Amma II had to flee anew from Kṛṣṇa III, who set up Amma's brother Dānārṇava to rule in Veṅgī (957). Amma did return yet again to rule the country until 970, whereupon Dānārṇava again took over (possibly without Rāṣṭrakūṭa support). He died after a brief reign in 973, probably at the hands of the formerly subordinate Telugu-Coḍa chief Jaṭā-Coḍa Bhīma. The latter then governed Veṅgī for the next twenty-seven years, an interlude mentioned only as a period of kinglessness in the later Cālukya annals.

Much at the same time, Tailapa of the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas overthrew the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, occupied their capital Mānyakheṭa (973) and set about consolidating his supremacy. The primary external power influencing Āndhra now became the ascending Cōḷa empire. Rājarāja I (r. c. 985–1014) restored Dānārṇava's son Śaktivarman I (r. 1000–1011) to the throne of Veṅgī, and kingship subsequently passed to his younger brother, then to the latter's descendants. Among

4 Bhīma I is the first Veṅgī Cālukya king whose date of accession is known precisely, recorded as the expired Śaka year 814, Caitra *kṛṣṇapakṣa* 2 in his *Attīli grant*. Reigns preceding this date can be established with fair accuracy thanks to an unusual custom followed by almost all Eastern Cālukya grants from the time of Bhīma's immediate predecessor Vijayāditya III onward. To wit, these grants list all previous rulers of the dynasty (including collaterals of the current king) back to Viṣṇuvardhana I, and even state the length of each one's reign.

5 See also note 26 on p. 104 below.

them too, contention was fuelled by Kalyāṇa Cālukya support for one faction and Cōḷa backing for another. The latter ultimately gained the upper hand, but the last scions of the Eastern Cālukya dynasty appear to have maintained only a desultory interest in increasingly contested Veṅgī. When the Cōḷa male succession line died out (1070), Dānārṇava's great-grandson Rājendra succeeded to the Cōḷa throne as Kulottuṅga I.

1.2. The value of underlings

In the centuries of internecine struggle fuelled by external interference, the loyalty of underlords and court officials could make or break a king of Veṅgī. The significance of securing the allegiance of underlings⁶ is clearly reflected in the nature of the recipients of grants.⁷ Figure 2 shows the proportion of various kinds of recipients: each horizontal bar represents the totality of analysed grants issued by a given king (which varies from 1 to 15 charters), while the actual number of grants is shown inside the bars, separately for each class of donee.

Over the first good two centuries of the dynasty's existence, from the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana I (r. c. 624–641) to that of Viṣṇuvardhana V (r. c. 847–849), all 43 of the analysed charters are “classical” religious donations. Two were given to Hindu temples and three to Jaina ones, while the recipients of the other 38 are run-of-the-mill Brāhmaṇa donees (singly, in small groups or occasionally in large groups). These people — whom I shall for want of a better term call householder Brāhmaṇas — receive land essentially by dint of being qualified Brāhmaṇas, and what is expected from them in return is to carry on being Brāhmaṇas and thereby generate merit for the king.

6 The scope of my term “underling” includes, but is not limited to, subordinate lords, as it also encompasses courtiers who may or may not have controlled a domain of their own, as well as officials who probably did not.

7 This has already been observed with regard to the grants of Amma I, Bādapa and Tāḷa II (Estienne-Monod 2008, 32).

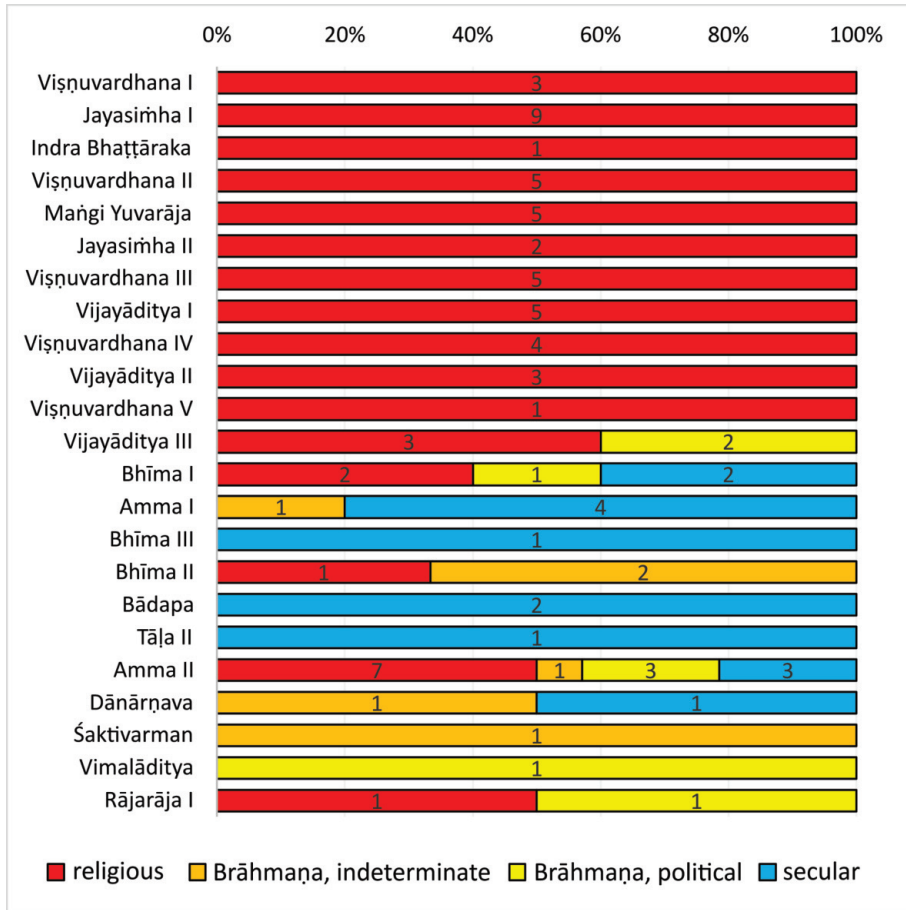


Figure 2. Recipients of Eastern Cālukya grants

However, in the time of Vijayāditya III (r. c. 849–892) — the first ruler of Veṅgī to contend with a collateral candidate backed by the Rāṣṭrakūṭas — there emerges a novel class of donee, to which I shall refer as the political Brāhmaṇa. Unlike his householder fellow, the political Brāhmaṇa is a minister, a court official or even a general of the king and seems to receive grants as reward or incentive for his services in this function. Two of the five known grants of Vijayāditya III go to such political Brāhmaṇas: one to a counsellor —

that foremost of the Brāhmaṇa class whose marvellous advice pleased [Vijayāditya] when in a battle teeming with horses and soldiers struck down by various weapons and with enraged elephants he [Vijayāditya] slew Maṅgi,

who had defeated the entire host of enemy rulers and in an exuberance of passion ridiculed the munificence, courage and prowess of the king —⁸

and another to a warlord of Brāhmaṇa extraction, who —

overcoming indomitable enemies by the blade of his single sword, seizes great riches and offers them to his lord.⁹

With the next king Bhīma I (and the escalation of Rāṣṭrakūṭa interference in Veṅgī politics), another class of donees makes its debut: secular dignitaries — such as court officials and members of wealthy and/or influential families — who are either explicitly not Brāhmaṇas or are not stated to be Brāhmaṇas. Out of 35 analysed grants issued in roughly eight decades from the reign of Bhīma I (r. 892–921) to that of Dānārṇava (r. 969–971), classical pious donations represent less than thirty percent.¹⁰ Of these ten grants, one went to a Jaina temple, two to a Jaina teacher, one to a Hindu temple and six to householder Brāhmaṇas.

A further five (14%) were awarded to Brāhmaṇas who have no evident political impact, but are described in more detail or in different terms than regular householder Brāhmaṇa donees.¹¹ The recipients of another four (11%) were political Brāhmaṇas, and a staggering 14 (40%) went to a diverse cast of lay

8 The *Masulipatam plates of Vijayāditya III*, v. 5: *hatvā maṅgiriṃ vijita-sakalārāti-bhūpāla-varggam rāgodrekād dhasita-nṛpati-tyāga-śauryya-pratāpam| nānā-hety-āhata-haya-bhaṭṭamatta-hastiprakīrṇṇe yuddhe yasya dvija-gaṇa-varasyādbhutādeśa-tuṣṭah||*

9 The *Kāṭlaparṇu grant of Vijayāditya III*, v. 31: *dussādhyān sādhyaitvārīn svasyaivaikāsi-dhārayā| dravyāny āhr̥tya bhūyāmsi svāmīne yaḥ prayacchati||*

10 The pattern appears to hold for the grants of later rulers too, but I disregard these in the present statistical summary because I have not yet re-edited many of the extant later charters. The texts of the four later charters that I have re-edited so far have been included in the analysis presented later in this article.

11 Three of these atypical Brāhmaṇas have nonetheless been classified as “ritualists” for my textual analysis (see 3.1 below), including two who undertook ascetic observance for the merit of their lord (in the *Māṅgallu grant of Dānārṇava* and the *Velam̄barṇu grant of Amma I*) and one who may be an official of an underlord (in the *Kolavenṇu plates of Bhīma II*). Another, noted for his hospitality and for his politically active sons, has been classified as a “dignitary” (in the *Ākulamannaṇḍu grant of Bhīma II*), while the fifth is said to be Amma II’s *kula-brāhmaṇa*, but could not be included in the textual analysis since he is not described in the extant portion of the *Masulipatam incomplete plates of Amma II*.

dignitaries¹² such as Śrī-Mahādevī, the (probably widowed) wife of Bhīma I's castellan¹³ Vijayāditya, a lady of a minor Cālukya lineage who —

was slender but bent with [the weight of] her plump and firm breasts; her eyes were bright and wide, her fingers, toes, soles and palms resembled tender *aśoka* sprigs, her navel was recessed and her hips heavy, her lips were like a ripe *bimba* fruit, and her complexion was like heated gold —¹⁴

or the apparently low-ranking soldier Vemarāja who had undertaken a vow to accumulate merit for his king Vijayāditya IV, and whose grandfather had ascended an elephant as a favour of Vijayāditya III, and —

who by his daring is a Śūdraka of the Kali age —¹⁵

or the warlord Bhaṇḍanāditya who —

by sounding the drum of heroes while defeating the force of [my, Amma I's] enemies in the thick of battle, [became] an abode of great reputation hall-marked by the sobriquet “Kuntāditya,” [and] having pleased my mind, attained a position as [my] retainer and obtained [my] favour [through being] a conqueror of puffed-up enemy rulers with numerous troops, and elevated [both] by his illustrious descent and by [the might of his own] arms.¹⁶

A similar trend is evident in the grants made by a king at an underling's instigation. In the charters of the Eastern Cālukyas, instigation is usually denoted by a form of the verb *vijñāpayati* in the earlier grants, and by a form of *prārthayati* in

12 The reason these percentages do not add up to 100% is that some grants are partially preserved, and their donees cannot be classified.

13 “Castellan” is my provisional rendering of the term *kaṭakarāja*, a term frequently featured (with many variants) in grants of the Eastern Cālukyas. It is usually taken to denote an official in charge of the royal camp (e.g. Sircar 1966, s.v.), but in Veṅgi the *kaṭakarāja* seems actually to have been a general executive “hand of the king” in all kinds of affairs. The position was, at least for several generations, hereditary.

14 The *Moga grant of Bhīma I*, vv. 8–9: *tat-sutām śrī-mahādevīm dhavalāyata-locanām| aśoka-pallavākāra-pāṇi-pāda-talāṅgulīm|| pīnonnata-kucānamrām nimna-nābhīm guru-kṣitām| pakva-bimbāharān tanvīm tapta-hema-prabhām śubhām||*

15 The *Cevuru plates of Amma I*, ll. 20–21: *vemarājo nāma subhaṭaḥ sāhasena kali-yuga-śūdrako*. The reference is to the mythical King Śūdraka, associated with valour in literature and legend.

16 The *Eḍeru plates of Amma I*, v. 15: *śātrūṅāṁ tumuleṣu vīra-ṣaṭaḥ saṁśrāvya jtvā balaṁ kuṁtāditya iti śrutāṁkita-mahā-kīrtti-pratāpālayaḥ| mac-cittam paritoṣya bhṛtya-padavīm labdhvā prasādam gataḥ sphītāneka-balāri-bhūpa-vijaya-śrī-janma-bāhūnnatiḥ||*

later ones, although other expressions also occur in both periods. The following overview only considers grants in which instigation is explicitly mentioned.¹⁷

Five (12%) of the 43 analysed grants issued before the reign of Vijayāditya III (i.e. to the middle of the ninth century) were explicitly instigated. In two of these, however, the petitioner is a Jaina teacher who secures a grant for his temple.¹⁸ There are thus only three grants of this period that were made at the instigation of a subordinate, and only one of these persons — the instigator of the single known grant of Indra Bhaṭṭāraka — is presented in any detail:

the firstborn son, named Indravarmān, of King Koṇḍivarman, who was an ornament of the sky of the Āryāhū lineage.¹⁹

Here, the qualification as an ornament of his lineage and the title of King (*mahārāja*) go syntactically with the father, but may have been intended by the composer to describe the instigator himself. The petitioners of the remaining two are merely named, without any further qualification whatsoever.²⁰

Conversely, among the 40 analysed grants issued by the kings from Vijayāditya III (r. c. 849–892) to Dānārṇava (r. 969–971), there are nine (23%) that were issued upon request. Seven of these were petitioned by personages of conspicuous political, military, or financial importance, such as the castellan Durgarāja, who was —

17 Instigation may be implicit in cases where someone constructs a temple which is then endowed with a royal grant (in the *Musinikuṇḍa grant of Viṣṇuvardhana III* and the *Pedda-Gālidiparru grant of Amma II*), or where a non-Brāhmaṇa obtains a grant and in the same charter passes the entire gift on to someone else, who may be Brāhmaṇa or non-Brāhmaṇa (in the *Kākamrāṇu grant of Bhīma I* [briefly discussed below] the *Ārumbāka grant of Bādapa*, and the *Īteru grant of Bādapa*). Except for the *Musinikuṇḍa grant*, all of these disregarded cases belong to the latter period discussed here, so they affirm the same trend.

18 These are the two sets of *Peddāpurappāḍu plates of Viṣṇuvardhana II*. A third, previously unpublished set found with these two has been reported to feature the same teacher (*Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy* 1997–98 [Ravishankar 2011], App. A. No. 3). Since the completion of the research presented here, I have edited this set as *VengiCalukya00096 (Peddāpurappāḍu plates (set 3) of Viṣṇuvardhana II)*, and can now confirm that this third grant was also issued at his request.

19 The *Koṇḍanagūru grant of Indra Bhaṭṭāraka*, ll. 26–26: *āryāhū-vaṁśa-gagana-tilaka-bhūta-koṇḍivarmmaṇo mahārājasyāgra-suta-indravarmma-nāma-dheya-vijñāpanayā*.

20 These are the *London plates of Maṅgi Yuvarāja* and the *Peṇukapaṇu grant of Jayasimha II*, instigated by Gaṇadugarāja and Gobbaḍi respectively. Neither of these people are known from other grants of the dynasty.

a repository of eminent qualities and a residence of heroic majesty, virtuous, honest, selfless, opulent, magnanimous and victorious in battle; moreover, his sword ever served solely for guarding the royal majesty of the Cālukyas, and his famous lineage {bamboo cane} [ever served solely] as a support {prop} to the superb great country called Veṅgī.²¹

Political impact is not clearly evident, but also likely in the other two. One of these (the *Sātalūru plates of Vijayāditya III*) was instigated by a Nṛpakāma introduced as the king's younger brother (*anuja*) but not known from other sources.²² He may have been a foster brother or milk-brother belonging to a prominent family rather than a blood brother, but whichever the case, his allegiance would have been crucial to Vijayāditya in his rivalry with his other brother Yuddhamalla. The second (the *Kalucurṁbaṛru grant of Amma II*) was made at the instance of Cāmekāmbā, a lady introduced as a courtesan (*gaṇikā*), but obviously an influential one, as she belonged to the Paṭṭavardhini family known from multiple other records and described in this grant as “belonging to the retinue of the majestic royal Calukya dynasty.”²³

Even more telling than the mere number of instigated grants is the length and detail of description lavished on the instigators. As noted above, the instigators with potential political significance before Vijayāditya III are barely portrayed at all. Directly (in passages describing their persons) and indirectly (in passages describing their forebears or other relations), the three of them together receive two attributions in my analysis,²⁴ i.e. on average less than one attribution per instigator. This is shown in the upper rows of Table 1, while the lower rows of the same table show the seven grants instigated by persons of unquestionable political significance from the period between Vijayāditya III and Dānārṇava. These together feature six aristocrats, as Durgarāja, part of whose description has been cited above from the *Maliyapūṇḍi grant of Amma II*,

21 The *Maliyapūṇḍi grant of Amma II*, v. 16: *tat-putro durggarājaḥ pravara-guṇa-nidhir ddhārmikas satyavādī tyāgi bhogī mahātmā samitiṣu vijayī vīra-lakṣmi-nivāsaḥ| cālukyānām ca lakṣmīyā yad-asir api sadā rakṣaṇāyaiva vaṁśaḥ khyāto yasyāpi veṅgī-gadita-vara-mahāmaṇḍalāmbanāya||*.

22 Unless he is a predecessor of Nṛpakāma Saronātha mentioned below.

23 L. 52: *śrī-rāja-calukyānvaya-parivārīta-paṭṭavarddhikānvaya*.

24 By “attribution” I mean the association of a quality or action with a person; see section 2.2 for further details. The two attributions in this case are that Indravarman's father Koṇḍivarman was a *mahārāja* and that he was an ornament of his lineage. In terms of my analysis, this is the total number of attributions with these people as a “focus,” including those pertaining to the foci themselves as well as those pertaining to their “satellites.” See section 3.2 below for the explanation of these terms.

was also the instigator of the *Vemalūrpāḍu plates of Amma II* where the donee, Durgarāja's minister Musiya, steals all the thunder with 8 direct and 8 indirect attributions, while Durgarāja himself is barely mentioned. The six instigators between them are allotted 55 direct attributions and another 71 indirect ones. That is to say, on average, each of them garners thirty times as much recognition as their fellows had in the earlier period.

grant/plates	issued by	instigated by	attributions for instigator		
			direct	indirect	total
Koṇḍaṅagūru	Indra Bhaṭṭāraka	Indravarmaṇ	0	2	2
London	Maṅgi Yuvarāja	Gaṇadugarāja	0	0	0
Peṇukaparu	Jayasīmha II	Gobbaḍi	0	0	0
total, 7th century to 849			0	2	2
average, 7th century to 849			0	0.7	0.7
Bezvāḍa	Bhīma I	Kusumāyudha	2	0	2
Kolaveṇṇu	Bhīma II	Vājjaya	9	0	9
Guṇḍugolanu	Amma II	Nṛpakāma Saronātha	5	5	10
Maliyapūṇḍi	Amma II	Durgarāja	14	6	20
Pedda-Gāḷīdiparru	Amma II	Bhīma and Naravāhana	18	36	54
Vemalūrpāḍu	Amma II	Durgarāja	0	1	1
Māṅgallu	Dānārṇava	Guṇḍyana	7	23	30
total, 849 to 971			55	71	126
average, 849 to 971			9.2	11.8	21

Table 1. Politically significant instigators in Eastern Cālukya grants

Nicholas Dirks (1976, 149–51) has noted the rising prominence of petitioners in Pallava grants from the end of the seventh century onward, and especially from the reign of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla in the mid-eighth century. He links this to a model of kingship based on shared sovereignty, where subordinates partake of perquisites that were formerly the sole property of the overlord. Following up on his work, Burton Stein (1998, 158–59, 171) has emphasised the importance of public honour, as opposed to mere mention, accorded to the petitioner, and observed that it signifies a new idiom of incorporative kingship rather than the first emergence of a wholly new kingship model. He further discussed (*ibid.*, 163–69) how this new idiom was particularly relevant to the Pallavas striving to establish dominion over lands traditionally ruled by other dynasties, and even more so to Nandivarman II, who rose to power from a collateral line of his house amidst a dynastic crisis and succeeded in consolidating his reign.

The Cālukyas of Veṅgi likewise had to assert their power over local lordlings with a history of allegiance to other sovereigns, and the “incorporative” representation of underlords certainly takes centre stage at a time when they were

undergoing a dynastic crisis. Indeed, many of the non-royal protagonists of their grants clearly conform to a pyramidal model where subordinate foci of power are limited replicas of higher foci (e.g. Stein 1977, 9–11). The lineage of castellans to which the above-mentioned Vijayāditya and his son Durgarāja belonged clearly had, in addition to a hereditary court position, its own core area in the southern marches of Veṅgī (now in the Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh), which they controlled at least since the days of the former's grandfather Pāṇḍaraṅga. Pāṇḍaraṅga himself was Vijayāditya III's general and castellan, but also commissioned stone inscriptions in his own name;²⁵ Durgarāja (and presumably his forebears too) had his own minister (the *Vemalūrpaḍu plates of Amma II*, discussed above). Much the same probably applies to other instigators (as well as to many secular donees), some of whom evidently held dominions of their own,²⁶ were accorded titles,²⁷ or belonged to illustrious lineages.²⁸

Yet the rollcall of personages honoured in the grants is by no means limited to petty kings. I have already pointed above to the soldier Vemarāja: Amma I (in his *Cevuru plates*) made him the headman (*grāmakūṭa*) of a village, implying that he had no other lands to his name.²⁹ The courtesan Cāmekāmbā (in the *Kalucumbarru grant of Amma II*) was evidently involved in some deep power games, but

25 See Butterworth and Venugopaul Chetty (1905), *Ongole* 3, 39, and 40; *Kandukur* 31 and 32. For *Ongole* 3, see also Lakshmana Rao (1927–28). On Pāṇḍaraṅga in copious, if somewhat overenthusiastic, detail, see Suryanarayana (1987, 10–13).

26 Such as the Saronāthas, named after their power base at a lake, probably the Kolleru lake. Nṛpakāma Saronātha has been mentioned above as the instigator of the *Guṇḍugolanu grant of Amma II*, from which we learn that he was Amma's father-in-law. Interestingly, he was, probably at an earlier time, also given a grant and recognition by Amma II's rival Bādapa (in his *Ārumbāka grant*).

27 For example, among the instigators listed above, Kusumāyudha has his name prefixed with *śrī* (*Bezvēḍa plates of Bhīma I*), while Vājjaya is identified as a *kṣitiśa* (*Kolaveṅṇu plates of Bhīma II*).

28 Among the above instigators, Vājjaya may belong to a house named Pānara (*Kolaveṅṇu plates of Bhīma II*); Nṛpakāma is of the Saronātha or Saraḥpati lineage (*Guṇḍugolanu grant of Amma II*); Durgarāja's family does not seem to have a permanent name, but as noted above, he is descended from the famous Pāṇḍaraṅga, whose line is called *kaṭakarāja-varīśa* in the *Moga grant of Bhīma I*; Guṇḍyana belongs to a family called Sāmanta Voḍḍi (*Māṅgallu grant of Dānārṇava*), had ancestors with the title (or name?) *rāṣtrakūṭa*, and bears the surname Kākatya, being possibly a predecessor of the later royal Kākatiyas (Parabrahma Sastry 1978, 15–20).

29 He probably did have a claim to that particular village, since his grandfather Candeyarāja had been headman (*rāṣtrakūṭa*, here probably equivalent to *grāmakūṭa*) there. Vemarāja's father was Candeyarāja's younger son, however, so he presumably had no clear hereditary right to the position.

was assuredly not a typical node in a hierarchy of rulers. The brothers Bhīma and Naravāhana in Table 1 above belonged to a family named the Triṇayana *kula* (the *Pedda-Gāḷidiparṇu grant of Amma II*), apparently of mercantile background. Their grandfather had become head of the royal chancellery (*śrīkarāṇa*), and King Bhīma II had conferred on the two brothers the rank and insignia of a “baron” (*sāmanta*), but this may have been a formal title without actual control of much territory or armed force. The donee of the *Kākamrāṇu grant of Bhīma I* is explicitly a Vaiśya, though a powerful one (*vaiśyādhipa*) whose father “surpassed even Kubera in affluence.” He receives a village from the king and donates it right away to a throng of no fewer than ninety Brāhmaṇas. Another donation of Bhīma I (in his *Attili grant*) goes to a courtesan (or at any rate a musician lady) whose father had apparently been born out of wedlock to another courtesan. This diverse cast is the subject of the analysis presented herein.

1.3. Textual analysis

The method adopted for this investigation belongs to a diverse methodological family derived from an approach known by the name Content Analysis. Content Analysis investigates meaning in texts and is, according to one of its great exponents, the recently deceased Klaus Krippendorff, “an empirically grounded method, exploratory in process, and predictive or inferential in intent” (Krippendorff 2004, xvii). The term was first used in 1941 by Bernard Berelson, who also published the first systematic description of the method in 1952, after which it quickly spread from its original application in propaganda studies to other disciplines such as psychology and ethnography.³⁰

With this dispersion and the accompanying adaptation to varied research interests and metatheoretical stances came a methodological diversification, boosted further by advances in communication theory and literary studies. Complementing the initial focus on quantitative analysis and deductive inference, the method branched out to allow for a qualitative approach focusing on inductive inferences. These two varieties are often labelled Classical or Quantitative Content Analysis on the one hand and Qualitative Content Analysis on the other, but in actual fact many studies employing Content Analysis methodology encompass both quantitative and qualitative aspects or phases. The dichotomy of qualitative versus quantitative analysis is rather a fuzzy spectrum, and the term “Mixed Methods” is often used for investigations taking advantage of both.

30 A detailed history of the method may be found in Krippendorff (2004, 3–17) and Schreier (2012, 9–13).

Some purely or predominantly qualitative approaches focusing on exploration and description have been developed in great detail and are distinguished from both qualitative and quantitative content analysis.³¹ These include Applied Thematic Analysis (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012) concerned with the identification of salient themes and patterns within texts, and Grounded Theory, more accurately the Grounded Theory Method (e.g. Charmaz 2014; Bryant 2017), devised for the inductive construction of theories on the basis of actions and processes featured in texts.

In this article I use the relatively neutral term “textual analysis”³² to refer to all members of this methodological family, bound together through a shared essential core of data reduction by means of “coding.” They start with data that were not created for the purpose of being analysed – namely texts in the broad sense encompassing primarily written language but often including recorded speech and extensible to non-linguistic messages – then proceed with “locating meaning in the data” (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, 49) and systematising it through the application of codes. Data reduction is neither a denial of polysemy nor an insinuation that the reduced data represent the sum total of what the texts have to say, but a pragmatic technique to facilitate analysis. Losing certain specifics on the individual level is the price one pays for being able to learn more about the aggregate level (Schreier 2012, 7–8), and any insights gained thereby remain open to additional exploration by other methods.³³

A “code” in textual analysis methodology refers not to computer code but to “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña 2016, 4). In coding, one reads the text closely with attention to its conceptual context and the research interest, and assigns an applicable code to relevant points in the text. Coding is thus a kind of indexing whereby various loci in the text are identified as pertinent to a particular field of interest. Depending on the specific method, codes may be predetermined (on the basis of theoretical considerations or of previous research on related material), or they may emerge gradually and evolve in the course of multiple iterations of the coding process. While coding can be applied to many aspects of a text (including for instance grammatical structure, narratological features or poetic devices), the

31 For a detailed discussion of the diverse methodologies, see Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012, 3–12) and Schreier (2012, 13–17).

32 The expression “textual analysis” is sometimes used to distinguish exploratory analyses from “content analysis” proper which is then defined as obligatorily drawing inferences to social reality (Schreier 2012, 180).

33 See also J. Horstmann (2020, 158–62) for a discussion of “scalable reading.”

kind of analysis I pursue here attaches codes to the meaning of linguistic content.

Whereas earlier theories of content analysis often conceived of meaning as something inherent in the text and objectively discoverable there, the method itself is fully reconcilable with the idea of meaning arising out of a complex interaction of text, context, and recipient. Constraining the essential multifariousness of meaning to a manageable level of diversity is in fact another, often implicit, aspect of data reduction in textual analysis. The analyst on the one hand excludes potential meanings which are irrelevant to the subject of research, and on the other hand restricts potential meanings to those applicable to a particular context in which the texts have been read and of which the analyst is knowledgeable.³⁴

2. Method

2.1. The textual corpus

Out of the copperplate records issued by the Eastern Cālukya rulers over roughly four and a half centuries of the dynasty's existence, more than a hundred and forty are now known to scholarship, though only a scant hundred of these have been so far published in internationally accessible editions (with more than another dozen published only in Telugu periodicals). In the course of building the DHARMA Project's Eastern Cālukya corpus, I have processed 87 copperplate grants so far. These include 3 novel editions on the basis of photographs, 52 thorough reeditions based on the collation of previous editions with good rubbings and/or photographs, and 32 more or less deficient reeditions where the visual documentation supplementing the published editions was inadequate, incomplete or wholly absent. My efforts have been directed mostly at the grants issued by the rulers up to Dānārṇava, of which I have (more or less thoroughly depending on the available visual documentation) edited or reedited 83. Grants issued by subsequent rulers are therefore underrepresented in the analysis presented in this paper, which encompasses all the 87 charters that I have encoded.

³⁴ See Krippendorff (2004, 22–25) and Schreier (2012, 176–78) for in-depth discussion of these considerations.

2.2. Methodological overview

Here follows a quick summary of the actual method of analysis that I have pursued. A fuller account is in preparation for publication.³⁵ The DHARMA editions used as a basis for my textual analysis are encoded in EpiDoc XML,³⁶ and it is in principle possible to supplement their encoding with XML tags representing textual-analytical codes. There is, however, no out-of-the-box solution to accomplish this, whereas devising a custom encoding from scratch and integrating it with the EpiDoc of the editions would not have been pragmatic. I therefore extracted plain text renderings of each of these editions, creating a “curated text” in which editorial emendations and restorations were not distinguished from the received text.

I then used a simple, custom XML markup to add classificatory data to each text, including a unique identifier, a title, a corpus identifier, an identifier of the ruler who issued the charter in question, and an approximate date (hereafter: text metadata). Also using custom XML, I tagged passages describing a particular person and annotated them with further classificatory data to specify who is described (hereafter: description metadata). The description metadata are introduced in more detail below (2.3).

The actual analytical coding for content – the classification of how someone is described – was implemented in the open-source web application CATMA, a tool designed for undogmatic literary annotation.³⁷ Since my research interest is the representation of people, my units of analysis were attributions of characteristic traits or actions to a person. This does not include identificatory

35 So far, I have only written in Hungarian about a preliminary attempt to use a much sketchier and immature version of the method deployed here (Balogh 2023a). A more mature iteration of that early foray (Balogh *forthcoming a*) as well as a more detailed description of my methodology (Balogh *forthcoming b*) are in press, and the technical details (Balogh *in preparation*) are underway.

36 Here, “encoding” means the creation of digital editions involving computer code, not content-analytical coding. EpiDoc is a subset of the TEI standard for the representation of texts in digital form using the XML markup language. See e.g. Bodard (2010) for an introduction to EpiDoc and Balogh and Griffiths (2020) for details of the DHARMA project’s EpiDoc encoding.

37 CATMA (Gius et al. 2022), for “Computer Assisted Text Markup and Analysis,” was developed and is being maintained at the University of Hamburg. The creation of its version 6, used for this study, is connected to the forTEXT project funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. In the meantime, CATMA version 7 has been launched. For further information see J. Horstmann (2020) and the tool’s website <https://catma.de>. I take this opportunity to thank lead developer Malte Meister for his help with CATMA (email communication, June to August 2022).

details (such as personal, family and *gotra* names, Vedic schools, etc.), but does include titles and epithets when these are used in addition to, rather than instead of, a name. One attribution may thus be as brief as one word (or one member of a compound word), or — in principle — as long as several sentences or stanzas describing a single particular action. Each attribution was tagged with exactly one code representing the most salient — and analytically most relevant — trait being asserted thereby.

The list of possible codes and the much shorter list of “dimensions” into which I classified the codes were developed on the go, in several iterations of coding and reflection. Multiple cycles of coding conducted in this manner are generally characteristic of qualitative approaches and have been elaborated with great sophistication in the Grounded Theory Method (e.g. Bryant 2017, 96–97). Starting with a preliminary list of codes, in this qualitative stage of the analysis I closely read a limited number of texts, and with each attribution I considered whether an already existing code provides an adequate indication of what is being attributed, or whether a new code needs to be created to give it justice. In a subsequent reflection phase, I considered splitting certain codes into two, merging two or more existing codes into a single one, and assigning codes to more abstract dimensions. In the course of this work, I made much use of CATMA’s functions to retrieve text tagged with a specific code and display it in context, to semi-automatically add codes to text on the basis of search queries, and to replace selected instances of an existing code with a different code. After two cycles of coding and reflection I completed the final coding of the entire corpus of text. For the analysis presented in this paper, I have made some final tweaks to the conceptual hierarchy of the codes, reassigning some of them to a different dimension. This rearrangement did not as a rule affect the codes in the text, only the manner in which particular codes were treated in the analysis. The set of codes and dimensions is introduced below (2.4).

While CATMA includes some analytical utilities, it does not cater for the largely quantitative analyses I intended to pursue in the next stage. Moreover, I needed to analyse my codes of descriptive content in conjunction with the text and description metadata encoded earlier, and CATMA at present provides only very rudimentary means of analysing combinations of codes. I therefore exported all my code data from CATMA and created an Excel spreadsheet in which I could, after some complex transformations, create exactly one record for every instance of a descriptive code and incorporate in each of these records

the metadata for the descriptive passage containing that particular code as well as the metadata for the text containing the passage.³⁸

Rendered in this manner, the data could then be investigated in a number of ways including, but by no means limited to, those presented in this paper. At the most basic level, they could be used like an index to look up descriptions meeting specific criteria, such as descriptions of dignitaries in charters issued by a particular ruler. At a slightly higher level of complexity, they could be utilised for demographic statistics, for instance to obtain lists of particular kinds of protagonists described in particular subsets of the corpus, or the total number of attributions used to describe these people, as for instance in Table 3. I have taken advantage of both of these methods while writing section 1.2 above. A more complex investigation involving the creation of “personality profiles” for various sets of protagonists will be introduced in section 2.5 profiles’ below.

2.3. Description metadata: “Who is described?”

In addition to describing protagonists — key players in the grant process such as the issuer and the donee — the texts frequently include descriptions of some ancestors (and occasionally other relatives) of a protagonist. As indicated above while discussing direct and indirect attributions about people, in my view these other people are not presented per se, but to enhance the representation of the protagonist to whom they are related. This has led me to conceptualise the descriptions in grants as having a potentially separate “focus” and “target.” By focus, I mean a protagonist whom the text was meant to represent to the audience, while a target is the particular person being described. For the relationship of the target of a description to its focus, I use the term “orbit.” Focus, target, and orbit together comprise the basic metadata for identifying who is being described in any particular descriptive passage.

Foci (i.e. protagonists being represented to the audience) are allocated in my analysis to one of four classes. “Sovereign” is used for descriptions focused on the ruler who issued the charter in question. “Ritualist” includes typical householder Brāhmaṇas as well as people in a priestly occupation (such as temple priests), regardless of whether or not they are Brāhmaṇas. “Dignitary” denotes people occupying a politically prominent position, including Brāhmaṇa ministers as well as members of the warrior elite. Finally, foci who do not qualify for any of these three positively defined classes are classified as “Commoner.” This

38 This data table is available for download (Balogh 2023b). The procedure by which the data were created and rendered will be discussed in a separate publication on the method (Balogh *in preparation*).

diverse but small catchall group includes three engravers, three courtesans or society women, two soldiers without an apparent high rank, a merchant, and a poet. The present article is primarily concerned with descriptions of foci of the Dignitary class.

The orbit (i.e. the relationship of the target to the focus) is designated as “self” when the person being described is himself or herself the focus of a description. Orbits other than self (that is, relations of the target to the focus other than identity) are collectively termed “satellite orbits.” In my actual metadata, satellite orbits are specified more precisely with relationship terms (such as “grandfather”) or collective terms (such as “lineage”), but the full detail would be beyond the scope of this paper.

Combinations of these two facets of a description — focus class and orbit designation — can then be used as criteria for analysing descriptions of various groups. To allow for further differentiation, I have explicitly encoded the gender of each target who is an individual, and the religious affiliation of all ritualist targets. In addition, targets (i.e. the actual persons being described) could be identified individually (using a normalised form of their name) to allow for analysing descriptions of a particular person regardless of the text in which these occur, and regardless of whether they appear as the focus of a description or as a satellite.³⁹ The target identifiers did not play a role in the present investigation.

2.4. Descriptive codes: “How is someone described?”

My analysis of the Eastern Cālukya copperplate corpus employs 184 unique codes. These are arranged into twelve large groups, to which I shall refer as dimensions. The actual hierarchy often involves additional levels: categories intermediate between codes and top-level dimensions, serving to group together codes that are similar enough to be considered variations on a core theme, but distinct enough that keeping them separate may be useful for research. This set of codes and the hierarchy of dimensions to which they can be allocated is the primary outcome of the qualitative stage of analysis.

Most of the comparisons I present below are concerned only with top-level dimensions, but the use of intermediate categories facilitates “zooming in on” certain details while still retaining a wider perspective on the data, as illustrated in Figure 8 below. For an even closer look, some codes carry additional

³⁹ In my actual setup, I have chosen not to use individual identifiers for ritualists and their satellites, because such persons are present in large numbers in my texts, but their descriptions are almost always short and highly stereotyped, and a single individual is hardly ever described in more than one charter.

“properties,” which have not been used in this analysis, but which serve to make certain details retrievable without looking up the text. For instance, the code for religious devotion carries with it a property “toWhom,” specifying the object of devotion. Similar detail is sometimes represented on the codes themselves, such as in the case of education, where I have used more than twenty distinct codes to tag education in various fields.

In order to facilitate management and sorting, my codes begin with an initial slash followed by three uppercase letters identifying the dimension to which the code belongs. The codes end in a term⁴⁰ intended to capture the essence of the code, separated by a colon from the dimension acronym. Codes with more than two hierarchical levels include additional terms for the intermediate level or levels, each separated by colons. Thus, the code /INT:education:science:logic is on the fourth (deepest) level of the hierarchy, along with several other subclasses of /INT:education:science. This third-level code in turn has several peers within the second-level category of /INT:education, which together with several other codes on that level comprises the dimension of Intellect.

Here follows a description of the twelve dimensions of my analysis, with some examples of codes belonging to each.⁴¹ The order in which the dimensions are presented is largely arbitrary, since the dimensions are in principle independent. Because their independence may not in fact be complete, and because I find that this facilitates reading the charts in which findings are plotted (2.5), I have attempted to place conceptually similar dimensions close to each other.

Prestige is comprised of qualities pertinent to reputation and recognition as well as displays or symbols of status. While most attributions in every dimension carry a connotation of prestige, this dimension groups traits and actions in which prestige is primary. This includes public shows of generosity, distinguished from charity and patronage which come under Benevolence. Examples:

- /PRE:majesty. Possessing or being the master of majesty or royal fortune (*śrī*).
- /PRE:glory. Having glory (*yaśas*); descriptions of glorification (e.g. sitting on Indra’s throne).
- /PRE:reputation. Having reputation (*kīrti*, *nuti*), being famous (*khyāta*, *viśruta*, *prasiddha*).
- /PRE:opulence. Having richness, opulence, magnificence, splendour (*vibhava*, *vibhūti*, *sampad*, *dhana*, *vṛddhi*, *ādhyatva*, *bhoga*; *lakṣmi/padma* when this seems distinct from *rājyaśrī*). Includes several more specific subcategories such as
 - /PRE:opulence:generosity. Generosity, bountifulness, or magnanimousness in a

40 Or occasionally a brief phrase written in “camel case,” e.g. favouredByLord.

41 The full list of codes and their definitions is included in my dataset (Balogh 2023b).

- general sense (*audārya*, *prasāda*, *dāna*; comparisons to *kalpa-taru* and *kāma-dhenu*), without specific recipients and without mention of renunciation.
- /PRE:opulence:hospitality. Honouring (*pūj-*, *ārādh-*, *sev-*) guests (*atithi*); descriptions of hospitality, respect or food offered to others.
 - /PRE:title:Royal. Being designated as “king” or “queen” without any particular distinction (*devī*, *rājan*, *ṛpa*, *bhūpati*, *kṣitīsa*, etc.). Includes several more specific subcategories, which also permit recording the actual title as a property, such as
 - /PRE:title:royal:supreme. Possessing a royal title or designation indicating supreme or sovereign status (*mahārājādhirāja*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka*, *parameśvara*).

Dominance aggregates qualities or actions representing political or social domination or sovereignty, the act of overcoming or the state of having overcome others. It is distinguished from Eminence, which is superiority without a sense of aggression or control. Examples:

- /DOM:casualVictory. Nonchalance, ease, or playfulness in defeating or overpowering others, e.g. doing so in a moment (*kṣaṇa-vaśīkṛta*), with a mere frown (*bhrū-bhaṅga-mātra*), all alone (*khaḍga-mātra-sahāya*), playfully (*līlayā*), or without even intending to.
- /DOM:homage. Receiving homage, typically having one’s feet worshipped (with light cast on the feet from subordinates’ crowns), but also including simpler and more generic acts of homage by subordinates (*vandita*, *nuta*, *ārādhita*).
- /DOM:indomitability. Possession of authority, power or an army that is irresistible, impossible to challenge or to overcome (*apratihata*, *alamghya*, *aparājita*).

Belligerence groups together warlike or aggressive qualities and actions. It is distinguished from Dominance, which means the state of having asserted superiority, and from Prowess, which is about potential rather than actual warlikeness. Examples:

- /BEL:exploits. Carrying out a specific heroic exploit or martial feat, e.g. making a brave stand, executing a tactical manoeuvre, penetrating into a notable region with one’s army.
- /BEL:ferocity. Being ferocious or fearsome (*caṇḍa*, *bhīma*, *ugra*, *parantapa*); displaying wrath (*kopa*, *krodha*); description of fear (*bhaya*, *trāsa*) caused by the target; causing an enemy to flee (*vidruta*). Includes bad omens or portents afflicting the target’s enemies. Includes more specific subcategories such as
 - /BEL:ferocity:gruesome. Gruesome or graphic details of martial deeds, such as skulls, slaughtered mounts, decapitation, being bathed in blood. This applies to actual descriptions of the target’s deeds, not to generic battle scenes.
- /BEL:war. Waging war, participating in battles (*yuddha*, *samara*). Includes subcategories such as
 - /BEL:war:conquest. Conquering a country or region (*vāsaviṃ jitvāsām*, *maṇḍalam āptavān*). Includes obtaining a new kingdom by conquest, but does

not include generic reference to the acquisition of kingship by a dynasty, such as by the favour of a god (*prasāda-labdha-rājya*). Distinguished from the subjugation of persons, which is an act of Dominance.

Prowess is the collective name for qualities of physical prowess or aggressive potential. It is distinguished from Belligerence, which applies to aggressive action rather than potential, and from Dominance, which refers to the condition of having overpowered others. Examples:

- /PRO:army. Possessing a strong army or troops (*senā, cakra, camū, bhaṭa, bala*).
- /PRO:brawn. Having physical strength, strength of arm (*bhuja, bāhu, dos* with or without *-bala*), which may be meant metaphorically.
- /PRO:valour. Having valour, bravery (*vikrama, parākrama, vīrya, śaurya*); being fearless, brave, courageous (*atrasta, abhaya*); being a hero (*vīra, ajeya*); performing unspecified heroic deeds (*sāhasa*).

Competence refers to qualities of personal talent, proficiency, or aptitude other than Intellect and Prowess. It is distinguished from Eminence, which does not involve any particular skill or quality. Examples:

- /COM:capacity. Possessing capacity, potential or power (*śakti, prabhāva, anubhāva, aiśvarya, prabhutva*) in a generic sense.
- /COM:quality. Possessing unspecified virtues or good qualities (*guṇa*), mentioned in general, as being appropriate to kings or Brāhmaṇas (*brahma-guṇa, kṣatra-guṇa*), or in addition to (*-ādi-guṇa-gaṇa*) specified qualities (which should be tagged as applicable).
- /COM:steadfastness. Steadfastness, stalwartness, reliability, perseverance (*dhairya, dhṛti, udyoga*).

Eminence consists of indications of being eminent or superior to others, distinguished from Dominance by a lack of the sense of overpowering, and from Competence by the emphasis on being outstanding rather than on having any particular skill. Examples:

- /EMI:exaltedness. Being noble in spirit, exalted or magnanimous (*ārya, mahātman, mahā-sattva, udita, udāra* when not meaning generous); generic references to high social standing may be tagged so.
- /EMI:excellence. Being outstanding, superior, or unique: the best (*uttama, vara, bhūṣaṇa, candra, siṃha, mukhya, rāja, īśvara, indra*) or an ornament (*ratna, tilaka, cūḍāmaṇi; alaṅkariṣṇu*) of a group or the world; being incomparable (*nirupama, ananya-sādhāraṇa, asama, atula*).
- /EMI:pedigree. Having a high birth (*janma, abhijana*) or a good family (*kula*), belonging to a praiseworthy *gotra* or spiritual lineage (when that *gotra* or lineage is not described in enough detail to warrant a description tag of its own). The mere

naming of the target's family or *gotra* does not qualify for this tag, only the actual claim that it is a notable one.

Intellect groups together traits of intellectual aptitude and accomplishment. It includes both religious and secular fields, but not the application of religious or Brahmanical knowledge, which normally belongs to Morality. Examples:

- /INT:education. Having knowledge or erudition (*vidyā, jñāna, śikṣā, adhyayana*) or being learned (*vidvat, paṇḍita*) without specific details. Has subcategories with an additional hierarchical level, such as
 - /INT:education:science. Learnedness in science or lore (*śāstra, sūtra, āgama* when not clearly sectarian), without a specified field, or specified as “all” or “many.” With further subcategories by discipline, e.g.
 - /INT:education:science:grammatics. Learnedness in grammatics (*vyākaraṇa*).
 - /INT:education:vedic. Learnedness in Vedas or unspecified fields of Vedic learning (*veda, śruti*). With subcategories for specialisations.
- /INT:intelligence. Being generally intelligent or shrewd (*budha, paṭu, catura*); possessing intelligence or a sharp mind (*buddhi, manas, mati, prajñā, dhī*).

Morality is defined as qualities and actions involving ethical excellence and moral or religious (dharmic) duty or obligation. Distinguished from some aspects of Beneficence, which focus on benefitting others, and from some factors of Prestige, where the emphasis is on public recognition. Examples:

- /MOR:compassion. Having compassion (*dayā, maitra, kṛpā, karuṇā, ghrṇā*).
- /MOR:conduct. Practicing good or moral conduct (*carita, cāritra, ācāra, vṛtta, śīla*), being a decent person (*sādhu, sujana*). Includes specific subcategories such as
 - /MOR:conduct:discipline. Having discipline, modesty, or humility (*vinaya, hrī, niyama*), being obedient to authority other than parents (e.g. teachers), descriptions of modest behaviour.
- /MOR:duty. Doing one's duty (*kṛta-kṛtya, dharmānuṣṭhāna*); pursuing the *trivarga*; performing social/moral obligations (*aṅgana*). Includes specific subcategories.
- /MOR:religious. Honouring or worshipping Brāhmaṇas or the gods, respecting or following the way of the Vedas. Includes specific subcategories such as
 - /MOR:religious:devotion. Worshipping (*ārādh, tṛp, arc, smṛ*) or being devoted (*bhakta*) to a deity, being a bee at a god's feet.
- /MOR:righteousness. Possessing, knowing, or following *dharma* (*dhārmika, dharma-parāyaṇa, dharma-yuta, dharma-jña*, etc.) in general or in a field other than rulership. Includes specific subcategories.

Beneficence comprises beneficent or benevolent qualities, actions, or effects. Distinguished from some members of Morality and Prestige by an emphasis on the benefit to others. Examples:

- /BEN:charity. Donating to, succouring, or helping those who seek help (*arthin, āśrita, yācaka*); the destitute (*dīna, anātha, daridra*) or the ailing (*andhaka, ātura*).
- /BEN:patronage. Supporting, pleasing, being kind to or donating to good or deserving people (*sajjana, sādhu, pātra*). Includes specific subcategories such as
 - /BEN:patronage:clients. Supporting, uplifting, rewarding, or honouring (*man-*) relatives, associates, friends, and retainers (*bandhu, mitra, bhṛtya, poṣya, anujīvin*); bestowing rewards where due (*ḷṛta-jñā*).
- /BEN:protection. Providing protection or shelter (*pālana, āśraya, trāṇa*) to subjects or in general. Not to be used when verbs meaning protection are used merely in the sense of “rule.”

Submission is made up of qualities and actions indicating subordination to or dependency on a greater power. Examples:

- /SUB:favouredByLord. Having the favour of one’s lord (*priya, lālita, jita-hṛdaya*); receiving favours or rewards (*prasāda, tulayā dhāraṇa*) from one’s lord.
- /SUB:job. Occupying an office, being a servant, functionary, or retainer (*bhṛtya, sevaka, anucara, niyukta, parivāra*) of a lord. With specific subcategories such as
 - /SUB:job:military. Engaging in martial acts for a lord, including being a champion (*malla, aṅkakāra*) or soldier (*bhaṭa*) for a lord.
- /SUB:service. Rendering service or undertaking efforts (*ḷṛta-kleśa, sahāya, sev-*) for the sake of one’s lord; acting according to the wishes of or desiring to please one’s lord; raising or restoring the lord’s fortune; undertaking an observance for one’s lord. Includes specific subcategories, e.g.
 - /SUB:service:death. Dying in service of or sacrificing life for one’s lord.

Appeal consists of qualities of charisma, appeal, or attractiveness. Examples:

- /APP:affection. Inspiring affection or joy (*āhlādana, ānanda*) in, or being loved by or dear to (*manorama, manohara, priya*) the world, people, the subjects.
- /APP:beauty. Comeliness, physical attractiveness, handsomeness (*kānti, rūpa, ruc, dyuti*); phrases indicating generic beauty. With numerous specific subcategories such as
 - /APP:beauty:breasts. Prominent, full, or attractive breasts.
 - /APP:beauty:shoulders. Wide or muscular shoulders.
- /APP:charm. Being charming or likeable in an unspecified way (*cāru*). Includes subcategories such as
 - /APP:charm:kindness. Being kind in speech (*priya-vāk, sūṇṛta-vāk*).

Entitlement is made up of circumstances of being entitled to rulership or sovereignty. While many qualities associated with rulers fulfil a function of “legitimation,” this dimension is for items that do not fit any other, more specific category. Examples:

- /ENT:ancestral. Mytho-historical ancestry, *gotra* name, metronymic, (e.g. *hāritī-putra*, *mānavya-sagotra*) as presumable qualification for rulership. Only for claims of ancestral lineage, not for mentioning individual mytho-historical ancestors as part of a genealogy. Not applicable to the *gotras* of Brāhmaṇas.
- /ENT:sacrifice. Performance of royal sacrifices as client.
- /ENT:sanction. Being endorsed by a certain person or group, as per the subcategories, which include
 - /ENT:sanction:divine. Favour of a divinity as presumable mandate for rulership. Typically *-anudhyāta* and *-prasāda*, but also including *-anudhyāyin* and *-bhakta* when used in contexts implying divine sanction.
 - /ENT:sanction:dynastic. Succession sanctioned (*anudhyāta*) by parent(s) or predecessor.
 - /ENT:sanction:popular. Succession desired or welcomed by the populace.

2.5. Charting and reading representational profiles

Apart from simple demographic statistics, the principal way in which I have utilised my content coding for analysis has been the creation of profiles. In Figure 2, for illustration, I show a profile comprised of the twelve dimensions of representational content as introduced above, calculated for an aggregate of all the descriptions in the analysed corpus. The profile is plotted as a spider chart. Each spoke of such a chart represents a variable, in this case one of the twelve dimensions. The mark on any particular spoke represents the relative prevalence of that particular variable (dimension) in the sample being plotted, in this case the whole of my data. Thus, in this figure, the dimension of Prestige is extremely prominent, Belligerence, Eminence and Morality are in the mid-range, while Appeal and Submission are barely present.

Both the set of variables and the sample of data can of course be different. The spokes could correspond to a smaller subset of the 12 dimensions, or to the second-level categories of any particular dimension; in principle, one could even draw up a chart with 184 spokes for each of the distinct codes. As for the sample, the aggregate of all data is only used here as an illustration, but where spider charts really come into their own is in comparison. Such charts may be plotted for any subset of the data delimited on the basis of the text metadata and/or description metadata described above. This allows putting the profiles of, for instance, dignitaries and issuing sovereigns side by side or one atop the other to facilitate the evaluation of differences.

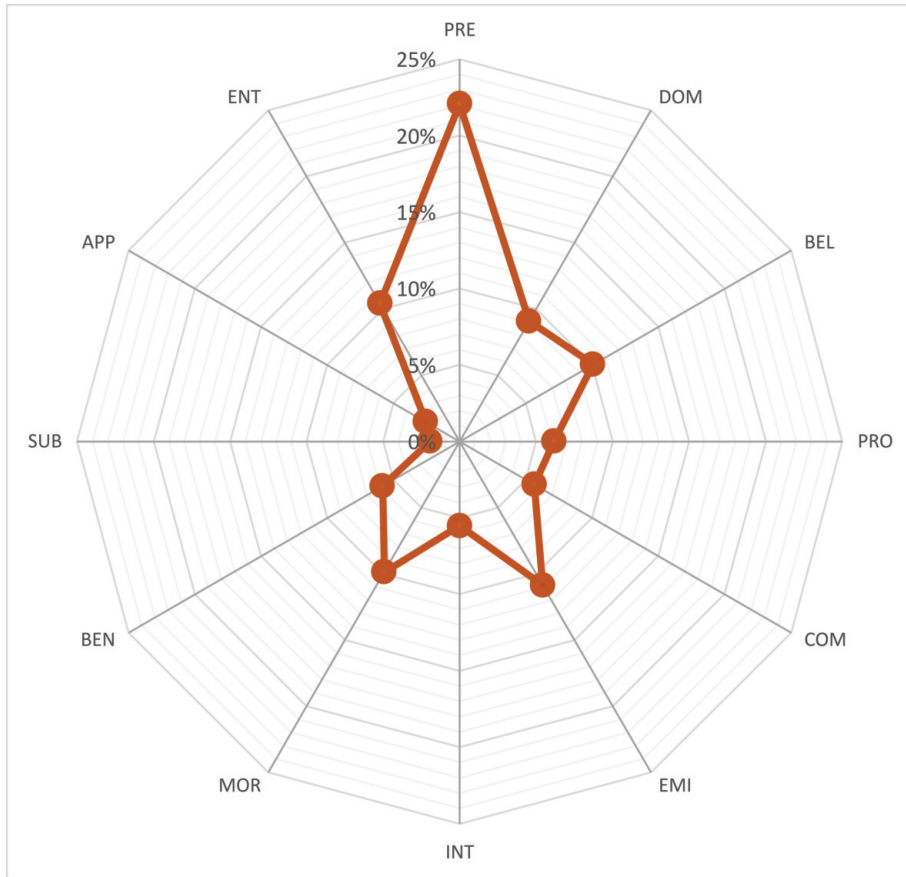


Figure 3. A spider chart profile of representational dimensions for all descriptions in the corpus. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

While these charts are intuitively very informative, in order to use them as more than technicolour illustrations spat out by number-crunchers, a few additional technicalities must be kept in mind. First of all, prevalence in this context means more specifically frequency:⁴² the total number of times a code relevant to a specific dimension occurs in the reduced data, i.e. the total number of times a trait or quality relevant to that dimension is mentioned in the sample of passages selected for an analysis. That is to say, if a certain trait is attributed

⁴² See e.g. Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012, 138–41) about the use of frequencies in analysing thematic data.

repeatedly (whether within a single descriptive passage, in multiple descriptive passages within a single text, or in multiple passages across texts), then its prevalence will be greater than if that particular trait were attributed only once.

Later descriptions within the Eastern Cālukya corpus tend to be more verbose than earlier ones, so if we were to compare, for instance, a late and an early ruler with regard to a single dimension of representation, we would probably find that the dimension in question is more prevalent in the later sovereign; the same result would probably obtain in comparing (typically long) descriptions of kings to (typically much shorter) descriptions of underlings. In both cases, the likely root of the observed difference is simply that the right boxes are ticked a greater number of times in a longer description, and not that the trait being studied is more emphatically presented in some descriptions.

In order to eliminate such bias, all the charts presented here are based on relative, not absolute, frequency. That is: rather than plotting the number of times codes of a particular kind occur in a particular subset of the data, I plot the proportion (percentage) of codes of that particular kind relative to the total number of attributions made for that particular subset of the data. If, say, a sample of sovereigns is claimed to be prestigious ten times out of a total of fifty attributions, and a contrasted sample of underlings is claimed to be prestigious twice out of a total of ten attributions, the relative prominence of Prestige is the same (20%) in both samples.

Another characteristic of the analysis and presentation to be kept in mind is that the dimensions are in principle independent, and their order is altogether arbitrary. The very different shapes plotted in a chart with the dimensions in, say, alphabetical order clockwise from top would carry exactly the same information as the charts presented here. Furthermore, although spider charts resemble a rolled-up line chart in appearance, the adjacent spokes (axes) represent discrete variables, rather than different measurement instances of a single variable. The line connecting the values plotted on each axis is thus not in itself meaningful and only serves as a prop for visualisation.

Finally, in discussing the profiles, I sometimes use turns of phrase along the lines of “sovereigns are more prestigious than dignitaries.” Such statements are not claims about actual social reality (though some of them may be correct as such), but simply a quicker and less cumbersome way of saying that “the relative prevalence of prestige is higher in the representation of sovereigns than in that of dignitaries.” Even this more circumspect expression is, moreover, only factually correct inasmuch as the data under analysis are concerned, and apply to “prestige,” “sovereigns” and “dignitaries” as defined for the purpose of this analysis.

3. Discussion of results

This section presents the findings from the quantitative stage of my textual analysis. If the concepts and terminology used here are difficult to follow, please refer back to section 2 above. The terms “focus,” “orbit” and “satellite” are defined in 2.3; “dimensions” are explained (with their three-letter abbreviations listed) in 2.4, and the charts used for illustration are introduced in 2.5, where I also discuss some caveats. The data altogether comprise 5779 individual attributions, of which 4432 pertain to sovereigns, 916 to dignitaries, 364 to ritualists and 67 to commoners; Table 2 below shows a finer breakdown of the number of attributions in various classes.

3.1. Foci: sovereigns, dignitaries, ritualists, and commoners

Figure 4 shows the profiles obtained for the four kinds of foci distinguished in the analysis; Table 2 presents the same data in numerical form, giving the absolute number of attributions in each cell. Although the chart is something of a jumble, it can already reveal a number of things about the way Eastern Cālukya grants represent protagonists. Incidentally, it reassures us that pursuing this analytical route is not futile, for the four profiles shown in different colours are quite differently shaped. We can also read from this chart the qualities most prominently ascribed in the grants to the four focus classes and point out which class receives the highest proportion of ascriptions in any given dimension.

Thus, at a glance, the sovereigns who issued the charters (indicated by a purple profile) are generally represented as having enormous prestige; entitlement, dominance and belligerence are quite prevalent in their descriptions, while their qualities of appeal, submission and intellect are negligible. The dignitaries (shown in blue) have a somewhat similarly shaped profile, implying an underlying commonality between noblemen and royalty. However, in their descriptions, attributions of morality and eminence feature even more prominently than prestige, and much more conspicuously than in sovereigns. Intellect is also more prevalent than in the representation of sovereigns, and traits indicative of submission make their appearance. The commoners (green) are most notably qualified by eminence; similarly to dignitaries, morality, prestige, intellect, and submission are prevalent in their descriptions, whereas belligerence is largely absent from their characterisation. Ritualists (orange) are unlike any other group in that intellect is far and wide their most prominent quality, with morality a distant second, but still more prevalent than in the other classes. Prestige is important among ritualists too, but less so than in any of the other focus classes, while competence, though about as emphatic as prestige, is

in this class again more prominent than in any other. All other dimensions are, however, barely if at all present here.

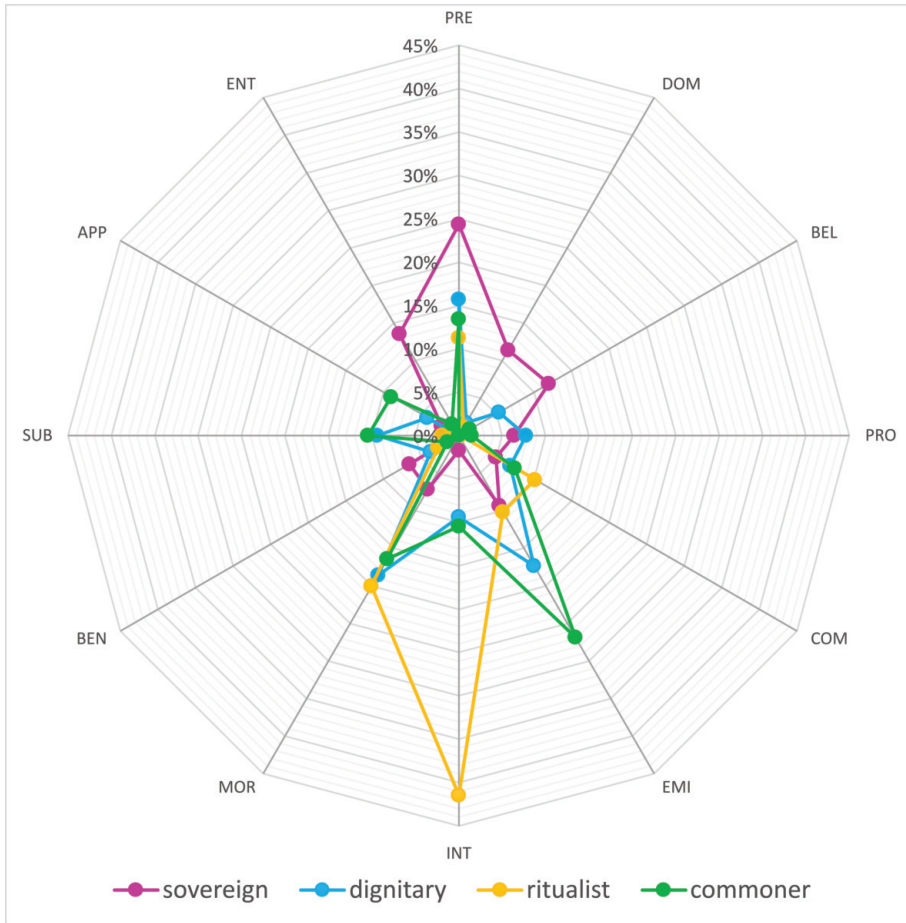


Figure 4. Profiles of different foci in the corpus as a whole. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

	sovereign	dignitary	ritualist	commoner	total
prestige	1081	144	41	9	1275
dominance	505	16	4	0	525
belligerence	532	49	0	1	582
proress	283	71	1	1	356
competence	221	63	37	5	326
eminence	414	159	37	18	628
intellect	75	86	151	7	319
morality	316	170	73	11	570
beneficence	291	34	10	1	336
submission	12	86	7	7	112
appeal	101	38	3	6	148
entitlement	601	0	0	1	602
total	4432	916	364	67	5779

Table 2. Number of attributions by dimension and focus class

3.2. Orbits: self and satellites

As indicated above, one of the assumptions underlying my analysis of representation is that the copperplate charters are concerned with projecting an image of the protagonists of the grant, primarily the donor and the donee. Thus, when a text portrays somebody's illustrious family, conquering grandfather, doe-eyed wife, or diligent son, this is done primarily to elaborate and enhance the image of that somebody (the focus), and not to project a separate image of the family, grandfather, wife, or son (the satellites). In all of my comparative analyses elsewhere in this paper, the descriptions of satellite orbits are accordingly lumped with the descriptions of the foci themselves. Doing so increases the amount of data involved in the analysis and thus aids in the recognition of patterns which may, for smaller amounts of data, be obscured by random variation in the sample. It is, however, worth keeping in mind that, at least within certain focus classes, there also seem to be trends in the attribution of various traits to different orbits. In this section I explore these trends briefly before shutting the door on them to foreground the patterns of difference between focus classes.

For this analysis, I have bundled together the individual orbits corresponding to patrilineal predecessors and successors not limited to the direct line of descent but including collaterals (such as uncles).⁴³ I use the name "patriline" as a collective term for these orbits, and compare their descriptions with those

⁴³ Successors are not presented in the texts as a rule, but in a few cases the son or sons of a focus are described.

of the “self” and “lineage” orbits.⁴⁴ Recall that “lineage” is the term for descriptions of a person’s dynasty or family as a whole as opposed to individual descriptions of particular members of that family, and is thus a different entity than the patriline. The profiles for these three types of orbit deviate from each other differently in the different classes of focus. Due to the small quantity of data, the representation of ritualists and commoners cannot be meaningfully broken down into separate orbits, so I limit the discussion to sovereigns and dignitaries.

Figure 5 shows the profiles for these three orbits in the focus class of sovereigns. Prestige is an important trait for all the orbits, but most emphatic in the sovereign himself (29.2%), followed closely by his patriline (24.6%) and less closely by his lineage (16%). The royal dynasty as a whole is predominantly characterised by entitlement to sovereignty (54.3%), which is barely present in the descriptions of individual people such as the sovereign himself (3.5%) or his patrilineal predecessors (0.8%). Dominance is likewise primarily indicated for the lineage (20.5%), but is also present, if less prevalent, in the descriptions of the sovereign (8.2%) and his patriline (9.7%). In the descriptions of patrilineal predecessors, attributions of belligerence feature prominently (21.9%), while being more of a background note in “self” descriptions (9.1%) and altogether absent from the representation of the lineage (0%). The current rulers themselves stand out in eminence (13%) and beneficence (10%), but the patriline follows quite closely behind the sovereign in both of these dimensions (9.1% and 7.1% respectively), while the dynasty lags far behind (1.3% and 0%). Morality is of relatively minor, but constant importance throughout the orbits (at 7% in self profiles and the patriline, and 7.4% for the lineage). All other dimensions (viz. prowess, competence, intellect, and appeal) are absent or negligible (0% to 0.2%) in descriptions of the ruling house, while being present to some extent (roughly 2 to 10%) in the portrayals of the sovereign himself and his patriline.

44 This classification does not cover all possible orbits: targets described in the corpus also include some spouses, some matrilineal predecessors, some predecessors in a spiritual (teacher-disciple) lineage, and some spiritual lineages or schools as a whole. Such cases are excluded from the analysis in this section.

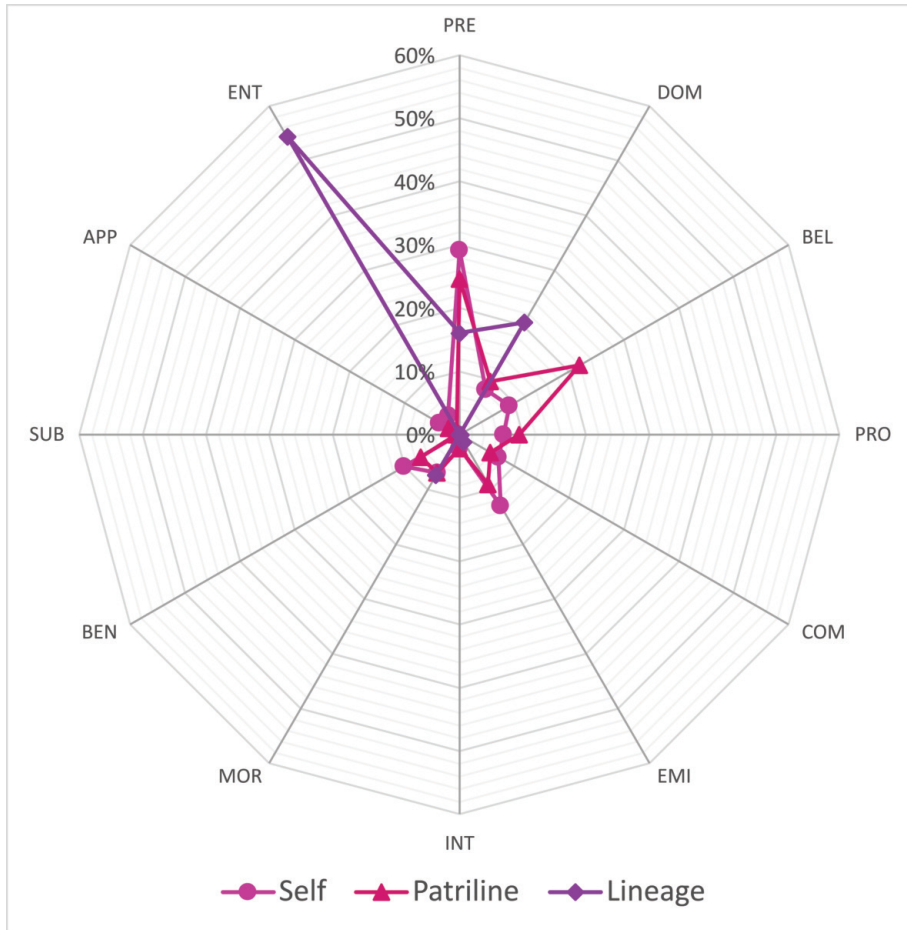


Figure 5. Self, patriline and lineage profiles for sovereigns. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

The simplistic, yet probably not altogether wrong, gist of this is that according to the royal ideology of these grants, the dynasty as a whole comes invested with entitlement to sovereignty and has a claim to universal dominion. The reigning king's forebears have asserted their prerogative through martial action, but the current king himself is not essentially belligerent. What is

important about him personally is rather that he bears great prestige and does a decent job at ruling.⁴⁵

Figure 6 shows the same breakdown into self, patriline and lineage for the focus class of dignitaries. Here, the orbit profiles are more alike than in the case of sovereigns, yet there are some conspicuous differences. The lineage descriptions stand highest in the dimensions of prestige (26.3%), competence (15.8%) and eminence (26.3%). Dominance, belligerence, prowess, beneficence, and appeal are, however, not present at all in the lineage descriptions, while featuring to some extent in the presentation of dignitaries themselves and of their patrilineal predecessors. The self and patriline profiles are exceedingly similar except for the dimension of submission, which is very prevalent in the dignitaries themselves (13.5%), markedly present in their lineages (10.5%), but less conspicuous in their predecessors (5%). A smaller but noticeable difference shows in competence, which is lowest in self profiles (4.9%) and middling in the patriline (10.3%). Entitlement is absent from all three orbits, and they differ very little as regards intellect (9% to 10.5%).

Since these comparisons are based on a fairly small number of actual attributions, inferences based on them must be savoured with a pinch of salt; they do, however, provide fertile ground for speculation. The distribution of the profiles in the dimensions of prestige, competence, and eminence — in each of which lineage stands first, followed by patriline and self coming in last — probably points to the importance of aristocratic dynasties. There is little room for self-made men here: for an underling to be worthy in the eyes of the sovereign, he had to be backed by a traditionally powerful family of subordinates.

Some of the variance in other dimensions may, perhaps, reflect a milieu of uncertain and occasionally shifting allegiance. To be sure, some families of underlings are praised in the grants for remaining loyal to the Cālukyas over generations, which perhaps accounts for the prevalence of submission on lineage descriptions. In other cases, the actual focus himself is noted for being a faithful subordinate, but submission is rarely featured in the portrayal of patrilineal predecessors. This may imply that some of our protagonists had forebears who stood on the other side of the battlefield or political arena, wherefore the grant composers preferred to maintain a dignified silence as regards their submis-

45 This division of work across orbits need not, however, be characteristic of other dynasties. The Maitrakas of Valabhī, for a counterexample, characterise their dynasty as dominant through belligerence rather than innate entitlement. The phrase “the Maitrakas, whose antagonists were forcibly prostrated” (*prasabha-praṇatāmītrāṇām maitrakānām*) occurs in practically all their grants with an extant preamble (Annette Schmiedchen, personal communication, 30 March 2021).

siveness. The slightly different configuration of morality, which features prominently in self and patriline descriptions but less so in the presentation of dignitary dynasties, could be explained along similar lines, supposing that some noble houses hedged their bets in their play for power. Their pro-Cālukya scions, current and historic, thus earned the Cālukya suzerains' praise for morality, but the lineages as a whole did not.

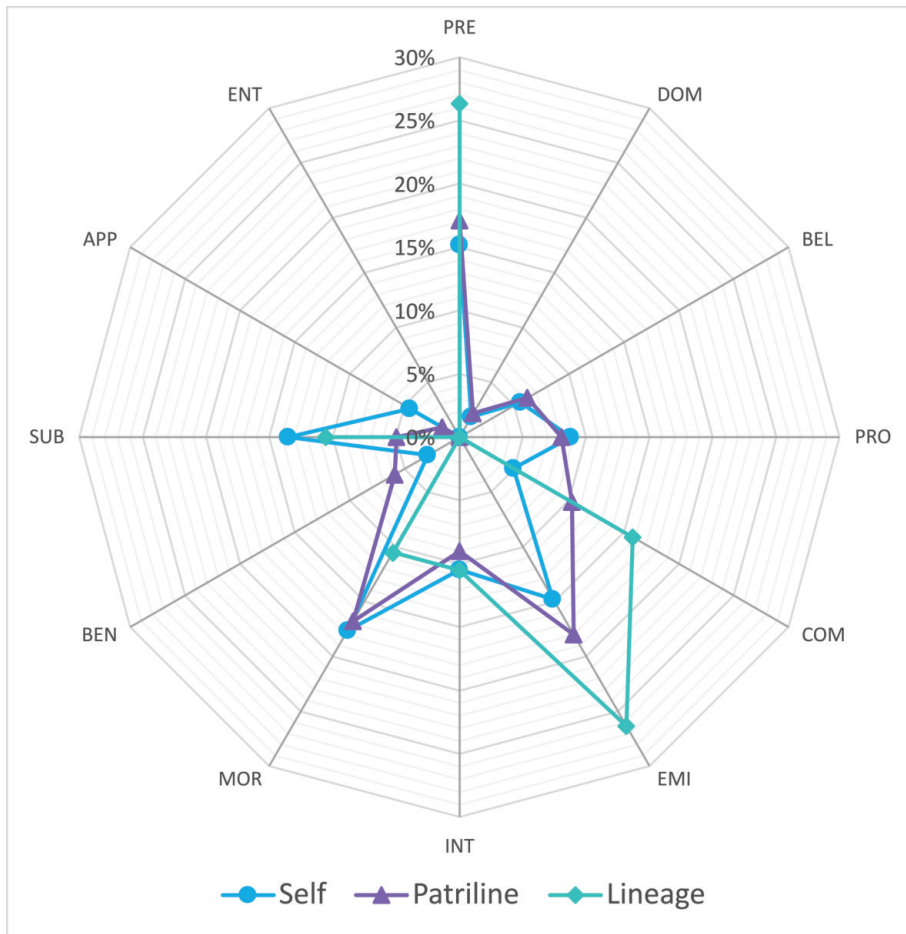


Figure 6. Self, patriline and lineage profiles for dignitaries. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

The absence of belligerence and prowess in the portrayal of noble houses (and their simultaneous presence in self and patriline profiles) may also indicate that the recognition of such competencies was reserved for loyal retainers. However, given the analogous lack of emphasis on these dimensions in the sovereign dynasty, it is likely that there was a general preference to see these traits as individual rather than familial.

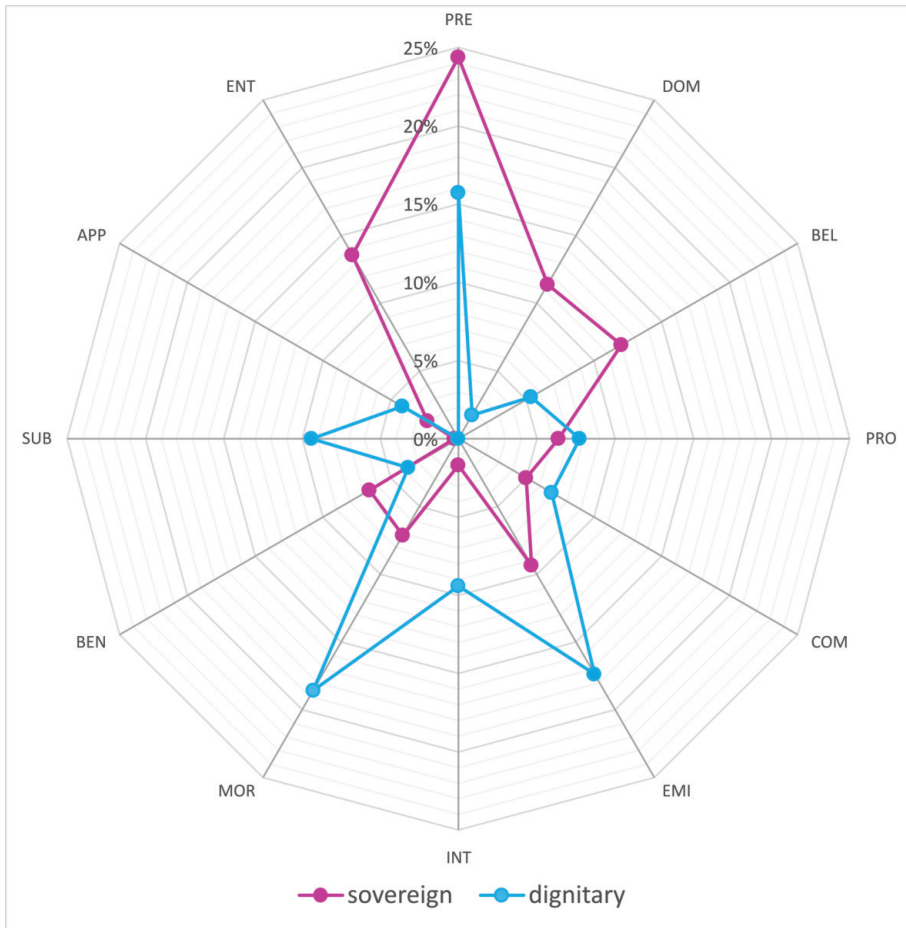


Figure 7. Profiles of sovereigns and dignitaries. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

3.3. Kings and underlings

In order to be able to compare sovereigns and dignitaries more closely, Figure 7 shows the same profiles as Figure 4 above, but with ritualists and commoners excluded. In addition to reducing clutter, this eliminates the extremely high values of intellect in ritualists and eminence in commoners, in effect allowing us to zoom in on the chart for a clearer view of values under 25%. As partly already noticed above, sovereigns outdo dignitaries in terms of prestige, dominance, belligerence, beneficence, and entitlement. Conversely, dignitaries surpass sovereigns in prowess, competence, eminence, intellect, morality, submission, and appeal.

3.3.1. Entitlement and dominance

The greatest disparity between the generic profiles for sovereigns and dignitaries obtains in the dimension of entitlement. Attributions of this trait make up 13.6% of the profile of sovereigns (being the second most common kind of attribution in this class of foci), but are completely absent in the profile of dignitaries (0%, thus the least prevalent). The dimension of entitlement has been defined above as consisting of circumstances of being entitled to rulership or sovereignty that do not fit any other, more specific category. These include being endorsed by a divine being, by one's parents or by the populace, as well as claims of having or winning the people's loyalty (*anurāga*), possessing bodily features indicative of a universal sovereign (*cakravartin*), having performed kingmaking sacrifices, and being descended from a mythical or divine being. Entitlement is frequently attributed to the current ruler. This takes place most commonly by claiming that his succession was sanctioned by his parents (*mātā-pitṛ-pādānudhyātāḥ*), but is also indicated by the loyalty, or even the choice, of the subjects. However, as noted above, entitlement is most strongly featured in the standard description of the dynasty:

the lineage of the majestic Calukyās — who are of the Mānavya *gotra* which is praised by the entire world, who are sons of Hārītī, who attained kingship by the grace of Kauśikī's boon, who are protected by the band of Mothers, who were deliberately appointed (to kingship) by Lord Mahāsenā, to whom the realms of adversaries instantaneously submit at the [mere] sight of the superior Boar emblem they have acquired by the grace of the divine

Nārāyaṇa, and whose bodies have been hallowed through washing in the purificatory ablutions of the Aśvamedha sacrifice...⁴⁶

The sharpness of the distinction in entitlement between sovereigns and dignitaries may to some extent be due to my classification of codes. Claims of a good family or a high birth have been assigned to the dimension of Eminence (/EMI:pedigree), but carry implications similar to some aspects of Entitlement. Moreover, much the same implication is implicitly present when some ancestors or the family of a protagonist are named or described, but this nearly ubiquitous feature of all descriptions has not been coded as an attribution applicable to that protagonist.⁴⁷

In a pattern similar to entitlement, dominance comprises 11.4% of all attributions pertaining to sovereigns, and is thus the fourth most prevalent kind of claim for such foci. Conversely, among dignitaries it only comes to 1.8%, which makes it the second least prevalent attribution in that class. This dimension has been defined as political or social domination or sovereignty, the act of overcoming or the state of having overcome others. It thus includes a fairly disparate (though not very large) set of codes, among which the most frequent in both groups are claims of fame extending all over the earth (distinguished from reputation which, without this qualification of pervasiveness, is a component of the dimension of Prestige).⁴⁸ For dignitaries, almost all other attributions of dominance involve aggression, such as the subjugation of others and the vanquishing of powerful enemies (both of which are distinguished from unqualified victory, which contributes to belligerence).⁴⁹ Such claims are not absent from the dominant traits of sovereigns, but there, the emphasis on overt aggression is

46 The *Zulakallu plates of Vijayāditya I*, ll. 1–5: *śrīmatām sakala-bhuvana-saṁstūyamāna-mānavya-sagotrāṇām hāriti-putrāṇām kauśiki-vara-prasāda-labdha-rājyānām mātr-gaṇa-paripālītānām svāmi-mahāsena-pādānudhyātānām bhagavan-nārāyaṇa-prasāda-samāsādita-vara-varāha-lāṁchaneḥṣaṇa-ḥṣaṇa-vaśīkṛtārāti-maṇḍalānām aśvamedhāvabhṛtha-snāna-pavitrīkṛta-vapuṣām calukyānām kulam.*

47 As a borderline case, the *Nāgiyapūṇḍi grant of Amma II* describes the subordinate Bikkirāja's grandfather as belonging to the Solar lineage (*sūrya-vaṁśa*). I have taken this as a name and accordingly did not assign a code to it, but it could have been interpreted instead as an attribution of divine ancestry, thus an aspect of entitlement. See also p. 157 about a lady classified as a commoner (thus excluded from the present discussion), who definitely boasts of divine ancestry.

48 The code /DOM:famePervasive amounts to 31.3% of all dominant attributions pertaining to dignitaries, and 23.2% of those pertaining to sovereigns.

49 These are /DOM:subjugation and /DOM:enemyEminent, which together make up another 50% of dominant attributions on dignitaries.

matched by attributions of superiority, as in claims of having subjugated every possible rival and of vanquishing enemies with playful ease.⁵⁰

3.3.2. Submission

Submission amounts to 9.4% in the characterisation of dignitaries (tied in the fourth prevalence rank with intellect), but only to 0.3% (being the least prevalent kind of attribution) in that of sovereigns. As indicated above, the dimension of submission consists in attributions that a protagonist has performed certain services for or occupies a certain office under a higher power, as well as indications of gaining or wishing to gain the favour of a higher power. For example, the Veṅgī Cālukya king Tāla II introduces his minister Kuppanayya as follows:

with [Tāla II's] heart moved to supreme compassion by the diverse services of an extremely staunch man of Pallava lineage who has won his master's heart by the pains he undertook and by his good conduct, who has proved worthy in the four trials (of honesty) and has been appointed to the rank of "Great Baronial Minister," and who is ornamented with all the multitude of virtues and brilliant in [serving] the cause of his lord...⁵¹

There are, by my count, six separate attributions of various kinds of submission here,⁵² and Kuppanayya's father adds two more, since he —

had undertaken pains and died in our service.⁵³

Attributions of dependency pertaining to dignitaries usually concern the services done for their overlord and the offices held.⁵⁴ As for the Eastern Cālukyas themselves, although their aspirations for universal dominion were only occasionally fulfilled, and then only for a given value of "universal," they

50 /DOM:paramountcy and /DOM:casualVictory together represent over 33% of attributions of dominance for sovereigns.

51 The *Śrīpūṇḍī grant of Tāla II*, ll. 20–24: *parama-nibhṛtasya kṛta-kleśācāra-jita-svāmi-hṛdayasya pallavānvayasya catur-upadhā-śuddhasya mahā-sāmantāmātya-pada-niyuktasya sakala-guṇa-gaṇālakṛtasya patihita-dhavalasya nānā-kiṅkurvvāṇatayā parama-karuṇāpanna-hṛdayas san.*

52 *kṛta-kleśācāra* (/SUB:service), *jita-svāmi-hṛdayasya* (/SUB:favouredByLord), *sāmantāmātya* (/SUB:job:minister), *pada-niyuktasya* (/SUB:job), *patihita* (/SUB:service) and *nānā-kiṅkurvvāṇatayā* (/SUB:job). Arguably, *mahā-sāmantāmātya-pada-niyuktasya* could be counted as a single attribution instead of my two.

53 *Ibid.*, ll. 27–28: *asmat-prastāva-mṛtasya kṛta-kleśasya.*

54 /SUB:service with its subcategories and /SUB:job with its subcategories together comprise a hair over 80% of all attributions of submission in dignitaries. This is not illustrated in a chart here.

nonetheless consistently projected an image of possessing, or at least being eligible to possess such dominion. In doing so, they clearly set themselves apart from their underlings, in whose characterisation submissiveness played a prominent role.

The handful of attributions of submission pertaining to Veṅgī Cālukya kings or their satellites are of three kinds. Out of the twelve such attributions in my corpus, six are cases where a member of the royal dynasty is described as acting in a military capacity for a senior member of his own family. This is once said of Bhīma II, who was apparently a general and regent on behalf of his underage nephew Vijayāditya V — the appointed successor of Bhīma II's elder brother Amma I — before ascending to the throne in his own name.⁵⁵ The other five occurrences of this scenario are instances of a stock stanza describing Vikramāditya I as an army general.⁵⁶ Vikramāditya I probably never donned the crown, but he was the appointed *yuvarāja* of his elder brother Vijayāditya III, and the father of the next king Bhīma I. Clearly, he commanded armies for his brother in the capacity of *yuvarāja*.

In two cases, conversely, subordination to a Rāṣṭrakūṭa suzerain is openly acknowledged by a king of Veṅgī. Both times, this is a member of a collateral line who temporarily displaced the formal successor to the throne. Thus, Amma II's rival, his brother Dānārṇava, pays lip service to Amma, then in the same breath announces that Amma has presently departed to Kaliṅga, and that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king (Kṛṣṇa III) has given the kingdom to Dānārṇava:

Magnificent like (Indra) the Lord of the Gods, crowned with the turban, his son Ammarāja (II) defeated his enemies and protected the earth for eleven years, [then] went to the Kaliṅgas because of Kṛṣṇa's wrath. [Now] his half-brother, Lord Dānārṇava, [the son] of Bhīma (II) born of the body of Aṅkidevī

55 This is my interpretation of v. 2 of the *Diggubarru grant of Bhīma II*, whose relevant part (literally as received) is *bhimo mma-sūno bbhaṭas san māsāṣṭakam āvad eva vasudhām* (v. 2). The charter's original editor, John Faithfull Fleet, made an emendation I consider unwarranted (*-sūnur bbhaṭas*, where *-sūnor bbhaṭas* would be more appropriate), and interpreted the stanza to refer to an otherwise wholly unknown son of Amma I, whom he called Bhīma III (Fleet 1891b, 269). The existence of this person has been widely accepted owing to Fleet's nimbus (e.g. Krishna Rao 1934–35, 29; Nilakanta Sastri and Venkataramanayya 1960, 928), but in my opinion he is a phantom.

56 This stanza occurs with negligible variation in five known grants issued by at least three different kings from Amma II onward, including the *Nāgiyapūṇḍī grant* and the *Masulipatam incomplete plates of Amma II*. The relevant text is *tad-bhrātur vvikramāditya-bhūpates sac-camūpateḥ*.

likewise protects the earth to the delight of all the populace and according to the policy of Manu, having obtained kingship from the Vallabha.⁵⁷

Most interesting are the four remaining attributions of royal submission. All of these apply to Vijayāditya III, who during part of his reign was subordinate to Amoghavarṣa I and conducted campaigns on the latter's behalf. Some of his much later successors took enough pride in his military successes during this period to mention them in the presentation of their forebear, apparently attempting to downplay – without denying – the fact that these were achieved in a subordinate capacity. Thus, a charter of Amma II prevaricates:

His (Kali-Viṣṇuvarḍhana's) eldest son, that Lord Guṇaga Vijayāditya, the champion to whose arms the Vallabha king personally paid homage, and who was moreover the foremost of heroes and the turban jewel of good soldiers...⁵⁸

3.3.3. *Intellect and other competencies*

The fourth dimension in which dignitaries differ markedly from sovereigns is that of intellect. 9.4% of all attributions pertaining to dignitaries concern intellect, whereas the prevalence of this dimension is only 1.7% in the profile of sovereigns. As observed above, intellect shares the fourth rank with submission in the dignitary profile; in the profile of kings, however, it comes second last, preceding only submission.

My interpretation of this finding is that personal merit was deemed to be relatively irrelevant (and/or taken for granted) in the case of sovereigns, whose kingly status was by and large a given. Conversely, among underlings, aptitude and merit were probably fundamental criteria of selective promotion. In line

57 The *Māṅgallu grant of Dānārṇava*, v. 4. *sūnus tasyāmma-rājas surapati-vibhavaḥ paṭṭa-baddho dharitrīṃ rakṣann ekādaśābdāñ jita-ripur agamat kṣṣṇa-kopāt kaliṃgāñ| tasya dvaimāturaḥ kṣmāñ sakala-jana-mude vallabhād āpta-rājyo bhaimo dānārṇaveśo 'py avati manu-nayād amikidevī-tanūjah||*. The other episode of this kind concerns Bādapa – Amma II's rival in succession – who in his *Ārumbāka grant* speaks frankly of ousting Amma II with support from Kṣṣṇa III; v. 1 *āsṛitya karṇa-rājākhyā-vallabhañ bādapādhipaḥ| vinirggamayya tan deśād amma-rājākhyam ūrjjitam||*.

58 The *Kalucumbaru grant of Amma II*, v. 2: *sutas tasya jyeṣṭho guṇaga-vijayāditya-patir amikāras sāksād vallabha-ṛpa-samabhyarccita-bhujah| pradhānaḥ sūrāṇām api subhāṭa-cūḍāmaṇir asau*. This has been coded as three distinct attributions of subordination (*amikāra*, *vallabha-ṛpa-samabhyarccita-bhujah* and *subhāṭa*). The fourth similar attribution about Vijayāditya III is in the *Eḍeru plates of Amma I*, where verse 10 recounts Vijayāditya's victories in great detail, noting that he was sent on these missions by the Rāṣṭra-kūṭa king (*raṭṭeśa-saṃcodito*).

with this hypothesis, the dimensions of eminence, competence and prowess are also each more prominent in the profile of dignitaries than in the profile of sovereigns, although the difference between the two groups is much smaller in these dimensions.

3.3.4. *Morality*

Finally, the dimension of morality deserves a closer look. This is the number one most prominent dimension in the profile of dignitaries, amounting to 18.6% of all attributions pertaining to this focus class, whereas in the kingly profile it ranks sixth, at 7.1%. Morality in my coding scheme includes attributions of performing dharmic duty as well as generic moral/ethical qualities. The moral qualities pertaining to dignitaries and sovereigns differ not only in prevalence, but also in composition. Figure 8 shows the factors contributing to morality in these two focus classes.

Sovereigns stand out in purity, but this is due to the numerous instances of a stock phrase according to which the royal lineage became “pure” or “holy” (*pavitra*) through royal sacrifice.⁵⁹ If the lineage is excluded from the analysis (not illustrated), then the purity of kings becomes mediocre, and less prominent than that of dignitaries. The next most frequent contributor to royal morality is the concept of justification, which I define as the representation of aggressive action presented as arising from a moral imperative, such as couching the repression of enemies in the metaphor of light overcoming darkness. Two other categories where sovereigns surpass dignitaries, albeit only by a slight margin, are righteousness—acting or ruling in accordance with (*dharmā*)—and compassion.

Dignitaries, on the other hand, are most prominently characterised by good conduct (23.2% of their morality), a trait that also features in the descriptions of sovereigns, but attains only the fourth rank there. Honesty is the second most important moral qualification of dignitaries (16.7%), and the third is religiousness. Purity is very close behind religion, and if lineage descriptions are excluded, then purity is more prevalent in dignitaries than in sovereigns.

59 See the standard description of the dynasty cited on p. 128 above.

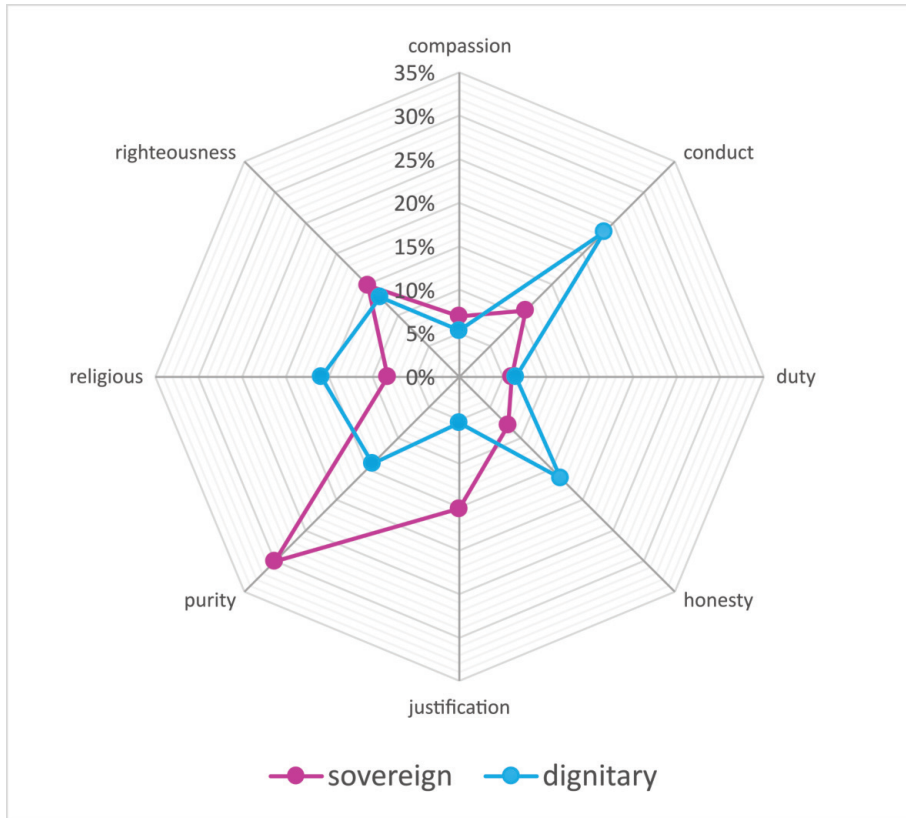


Figure 8. Subcategories of morality in sovereigns and dignitaries. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

In addition to the general finding that morality is much more crucial to the representation of dignitaries than to that of sovereigns, we can thus deduce that these two groups act in partly different, though partly overlapping, moral domains. The morality of kings is primarily concerned with dharmic duty including the justification of aggression, and only secondarily with ethical behaviour, with purity predicated as their innate property thanks to the sacrifices of their ancestors. The morality of underlings, on the other hand, is chiefly defined by ethical purity, discipline, and honesty.

3.4. Feminine and masculine ideals

3.4.1. Female and male profiles

Although only a very few actual protagonists (i.e. people in the “self” orbit) are female in my texts, women do make their appearance every now and then in the satellite orbits of various (typically male) foci. In this section, therefore, I compare female targets with male targets, primarily in the aggregated data from my corpus, but with occasional reference to particular focus classes. Table 3 shows the numbers of individual foci, the total number of targets (including the self orbits of the foci), and the total number of attributions concerning these targets, broken down by gender and by focus class.⁶⁰ In the ritualist class, female targets are wholly absent: there is not a single grant in the corpus that mentions the wife or the mother of a householder Brāhmaṇa or a temple priest. Also, the number of individual males in this class could not be counted, since ritualists who are householder Brāhmaṇas (the majority) were not assigned an identifier in my coding.

	female			male			total
	foci	targets	attributions	foci	targets	attributions	attributions
sovereign	0	15	56	21	38	3404	3460
dignitary	1	13	65	45	88	832	897
commoner	3	5	20	7	11	46	66
ritualist	0	0	0	?	?	342	342
total	4	33	141	73	137	4624	4765

Table 3. Female and male genders in the focus classes

As shown in Figure 9, female targets on the whole are represented with a much narrower gamut of dimensions than males. In this assortment, the dimensions of eminence (36.9%), morality (25.5%) and appeal (21.3%) stand out, and are in fact far more prominent than in the aggregated male targets (12%, 9.9% and 2.6% respectively). Prestige is also quite prevalent (10.6%), but much less so than in males (23.6%). There are a few attributions of competence (3.6%), intellect

⁶⁰ Attributions pertaining to lineages and spiritual lineages have been classified as genderless and therefore excluded from this analysis, which is why the total number of attributions shown in the bottom right-hand cell is less than the grand total in Table 2. These lineage entities could arguably be perceived as implicitly male, but the gender profiles may be more accurate if only explicit males are included. The only notable change that results from the inclusion of lineages in the male profile is a conspicuous spike of entitlement which, as already demonstrated, is mostly associated with the royal dynasty.

(1.4%) and entitlement (0.7%), but the traits of dominance, belligerence, prowess, beneficence, and submission are completely absent from female profiles.

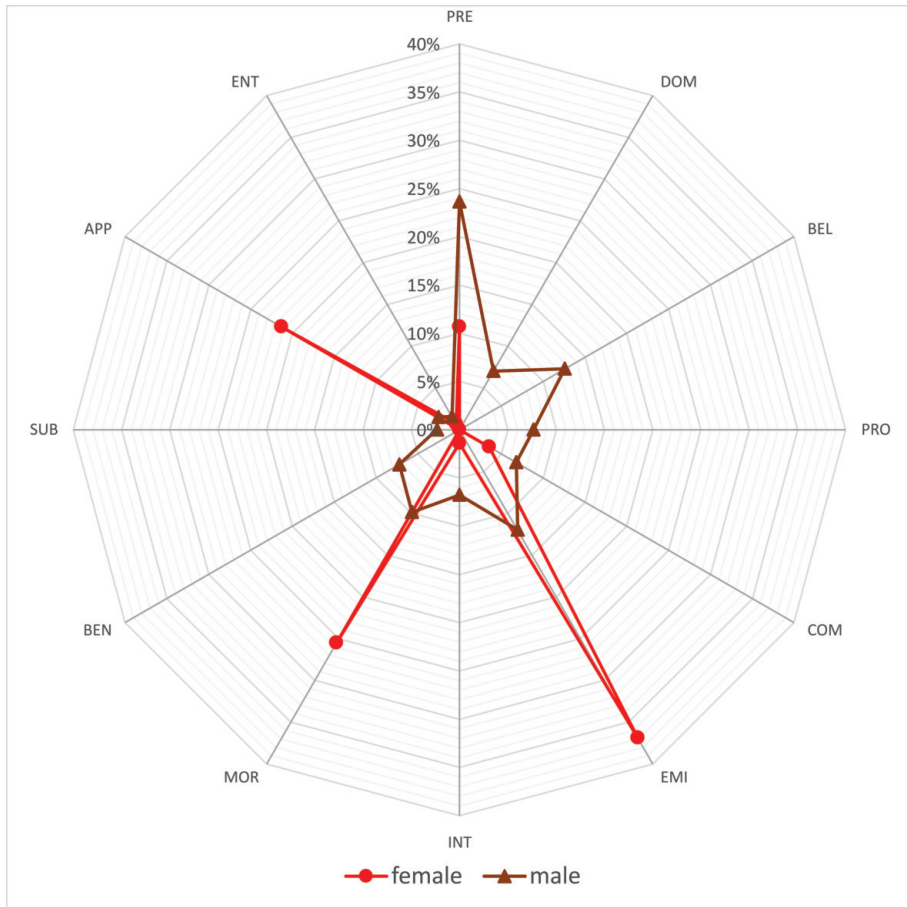


Figure 9. Male and female profiles in the aggregated data. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

While there is some intriguing material in the Eastern Cālukya copperplate charters for the study of empowered women, it is not readily accessible to the methodology of textual analysis. What we see here is a bird's-eye view of women being represented mostly as stereotypical accessories to male protagonists. In the mainstream discourse of the eulogies, they are now and then praised for being eminent and prestigious (or for coming from such families), but most of

all they are pictured as being dutiful in their dependent feminine roles and looking pretty:

His lotus-eyed wife — faithful to her husband, endowed with purity, morality and beauty, gentle and fertile — was named Bijjekavvā.⁶¹

Looking into female profiles broken down by focus class (not illustrated with charts), there appear several differences. As compared to the aggregated set of female targets, prestige is barely present in the profiles of the women associated with dignitary foci (1.5%), but highly prominent in the sovereign class (21.4%). The female satellites of sovereigns are overwhelmingly noted for their eminence (50%), but much less often spoken of as moral (12.5%) or appealing (10.7%). Morality is, however, conspicuously high among the women of dignitaries (38.5%). The persona of commoner women is very close to the aggregated female profile, with eminence somewhat lower (25.5%) and several other dimensions slightly higher, including appeal (30%) and intellect (5% as opposed to 0% in the womenfolk of dignitaries and 1.8% in that of sovereigns). It would be tempting to infer that some women, though not born into a royal or aristocratic family, could attain status capitalising on their wit, charm, and beauty. However, the sample of data is very small, and this as well as the other differences noted here (for which no straightforward explanation offers itself) may simply be random variation.

Male foci, in contrast, are characterised most strongly by prestige (23.6%), but attributes of belligerence (12.6%), eminence (12%) and morality (9.9%) are also prominent in the representation of males. All other dimensions are also present to a non-negligible degree, the least prominent being entitlement (under 2%), followed by submission and appeal (both 2 to 3%). The characteristics of males belonging to various focus classes are not discussed here, since the comparisons and analyses throughout this article are based predominantly on males.

3.4.2. *Feminine and masculine appeal*

Appeal is the third most prevalent dimension in female profiles. Within this dimension, attributions of physical beauty amount to 73.3% of the characterisation of women. Spousal love or conjugal felicity makes up another 13.3%. Female appeal is often noted in the class of commoners (30% of all attributions pertaining to female commoners) and dignitaries (27.7% of attributions), while being

61 The *Nāgiyapūṇḍi grant of Amma II*, v. 12: *tasyāravinda-nayanā pati-vratā śauca-śīla-rūpa-yutā/sādhvī putravatī yā bhāryāsīt bijjekavvākyā*/. See also the description of Śrī-Mahādevī cited on p. 100 above.

much less prevalent in that of sovereigns (10.7%). Only commoner women (specifically courtesans) are noted for being sexually attractive, but physical beauty is most prevalent in the appeal of dignitaries' women (83.3%) and least notable in female commoners (50%).

Although in the aggregated male profile appeal is only the third least prominent dimension (2.6%), attributions of this trait still do occur widely throughout the corpus. It is most strongly associated with the men among sovereigns (in whose profile it comes to 2.8% of all attributions) and dignitaries (2.4%). The association of appeal with ritualists is rare (0.9%), and this trait is completely absent from the profiles of commoner men (0%). As in females, the most important factor in male appeal is physical beauty (43.2%), but that category refers in this context to a rugged macho aesthetic such as broad shoulders and muscular arms. A charming demeanour and the allegation of having won the affection of others, in short, charisma, are also conspicuous among the factors of male appeal (15.5% and 19.6% respectively). In men, sexual attractiveness is strongly associated with members of the royal family (coming to 16.8% in this focus class) and, to a smaller degree, with the aristocracy (5%). Kings are frequently compared to the god Kāma in this respect, but the sex appeal befitting their alpha male status is sometimes described in more graphic detail, such as —

the surface of whose chest is as wide as a cliff of the Golden Mountain and decorated with the remnants of saffron ointment rubbed off from the firm breasts of voluptuous women languid with desire.⁶²

3.5. Kinds of underlings

While up to this point I have been treating dignitaries as a homogeneous group, let us now recall that the focus class of dignitaries in fact includes both “political Brāhmaṇas” and secular people, with most but not all of the latter being members of the military aristocracy. While my original coding for description metadata was not designed to distinguish these types from one another,⁶³ it did involve the recording of remarks for each descriptive passage, which I used among other things to note down whether a dignitary is a Brāhmaṇa minister or a military aristocrat. For the present analysis, I used these remarks to classify dignitaries into three types: “aristocrat,” “minister” and “bureaucrat.” These are labels of convenience that may not in all cases correspond accurately to these persons' actual function. Representatives of the aristocrat type explicitly

62 The *Cendalūr plates of Maṅgi Yuvarāja*, ll. 19–21: *madālasa-mattakāśinī-jana-ghana-payodharāvalupyamāna-kurinkuma-pankāvaśeṣa-śobhita-kanaka-giri-śilā-viśāla-vakṣaḥ-sthalah*.

63 See also 4.2 below.

belong to the military elite and usually bear family names implying Kṣatriya status or royalty. Those assigned to the minister type are political Brāhmaṇas, whose Brāhmaṇahood may be explicit or implied by the activities ascribed to them and/or by their names. Many, but not all of them are explicitly ministers (e.g. *mantrin*), and some are praised for military action, although this may mean strategy and possibly tactical leadership rather than actual fighting. The bureaucrat type was assigned when neither of the former was applicable, and thus has the least internal consistency. The most prominent member of this type is a high official of the Vaiśya *varṇa* who, with his satellites, is described at great length. The type also includes several executors (*ājñapti*) who may be military aristocrats but are presented too tersely to ascertain this, another executor who may be a Brāhmaṇa minister, and one person rewarded for faithful service who may be a commoner.

Figure 10 shows the representational profiles for these three types of dignitaries. As expected, each of the three profiles differs from the other two at least in some aspects. Most conspicuously, belligerence and prowess are fairly prevalent (at 9.3% and 12.7%) in the aristocratic profile, while being barely or not at all present in the other two kinds (under 3%). On the intellect axis, ministers stand out (at 17.4%), while the other two lag behind (under 5%). The bureaucrat type is most prominently characterised by morality (at no less than 35.2%) and prestige (22.5%). These latter two dimensions are still highly prevalent in the other two types, yet much less so than among bureaucrats.

I turn now to a one-by-one investigation of these three types of dignitaries, comparing each to two other subsets of people: to another focus group that may have some traits in common with the dignitary type under analysis, and to the combined set of dignitaries outside the type being examined. The dimension of entitlement is included in all these comparisons in order to retain the dodecagonal arrangement of dimensions in the spider charts, but since this dimension does not occur at all in dignitaries, it will not be discussed in this section.

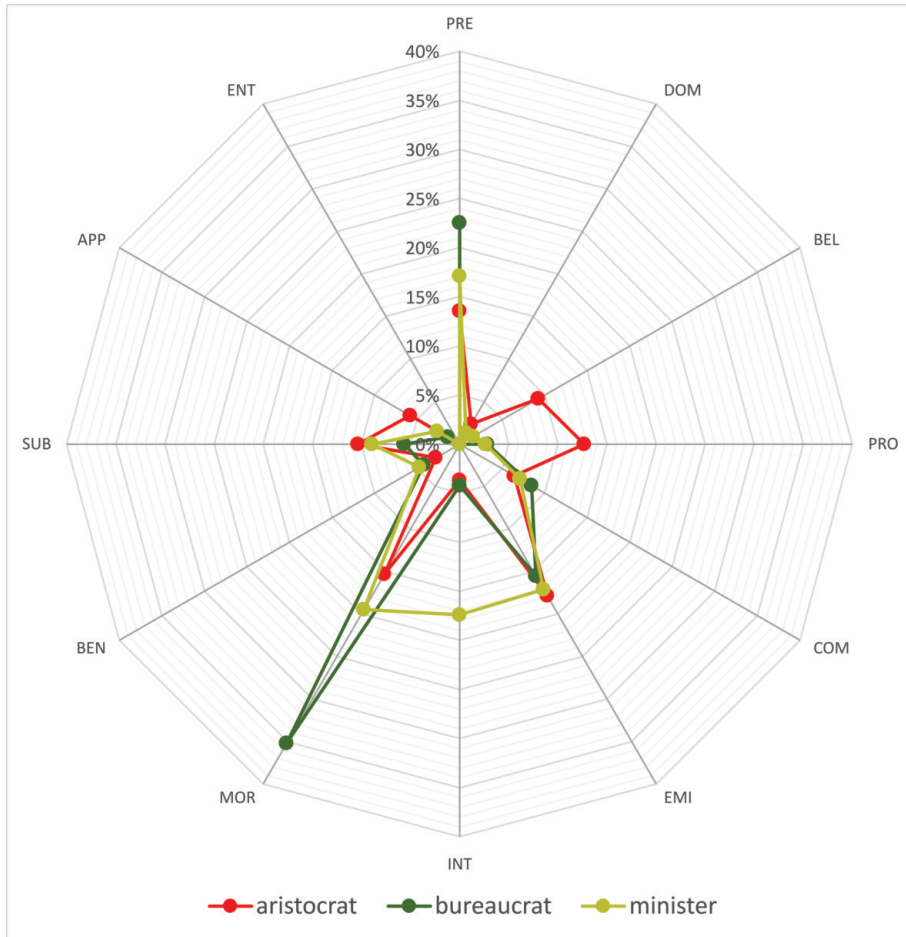


Figure 10. Types of dignitaries. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

3.5.1. Aristocrats

Figure 11 juxtaposes aristocratic dignitaries with other dignitaries and with sovereigns. Since most aristocrats belong to families that control domains of their own, the overall expectation in this comparison is that aristocrats would show a profile transitional between that of non-aristocrat dignitaries and that of sovereigns. This expectation is fulfilled in the dimensions of dominance, belligerence, competence, intellect, and morality. Aristocrats are closer to other dignitaries than they are to sovereigns in the dimensions of dominance (2.4% for

aristocrats, 1.1% for other dignitaries, against 11.4% for sovereigns) and competence (6.5% in aristocrats, 7.3% in non-aristocratic dignitaries, but only 5% in sovereigns). They are also on a par with other dignitaries in the dimension of eminence (17.9%), although here they stand highest by a small margin rather than in between the scores of non-aristocrats (16.9%) and sovereigns (9.3%). Aristocrats are, conversely, more akin to sovereigns than they are to other dignitaries in belligerence (9.3%, compared to 12% in sovereigns against 1.3% in non-aristocrats) as well as in intellect (3.7%, with sovereigns at 1.7% and non-aristocrats at 15.3%). As regards the prevalence of morality, aristocrats (815.3%) stand roughly halfway between sovereigns (7.1%) and other dignitaries (22%).

In the remaining dimensions, however, aristocrats are positioned well outside the bracket provided by sovereigns and non-aristocrat dignitaries. In the prevalence of prowess (12.7%) they have more lead on sovereigns (6.4%) than the latter do on the non-aristocratic dignitaries (2.7%). Simultaneously, however, submission too has a greater share of their traits (10.3%) than of those of other dignitaries (8.4%) or sovereigns (0.3%). Aristocrats are also more prevalently attributed qualities of appeal (5.8%) than either other dignitaries (2.4%) or sovereigns (2.3%). Conversely, aristocrats are least characterised by prestige (13.6% as opposed to 18% in non-aristocrats and 24.4% in sovereigns) and beneficence (2.8%, against 4.7% in other dignitaries and 6.6% in sovereigns).

The overall picture I make of this is that in the characterisation of aristocrats, individual aptitude is more relevant than for sovereigns, as the latter's suitability for the position is projected to be determined by birth into an entitled and dominant royal family. Individual aptitude or merit is expressed in the dimensions of competence, intellect, and eminence, as well as possibly by the appeal of their womenfolk.⁶⁴ Aptitude is, simultaneously, on the whole less essential for aristocrats than for courtiers in an advisory or administrative function, who acquire and retain their posts primarily on account of their competence and intellect. Most of all, the aristocrat is portrayed as someone with great military might, manifest in the outstanding emphasis on prowess and nearly as much weight on belligerent acts as in sovereigns. As a check to this potentially disruptive power, however, the ideal aristocrat acquiesces to the sovereign's supremacy rather than asserting his own authority (either by main force, as in the dimension of dominance, or through ostentatious largesse, as in beneficence), and is content with a share of prestige carefully trimmed so as not to outshine

64 More than two thirds of the attributions of appeal in the set of aristocrats concern female targets. If women are excluded from the analysis (not illustrated), the appeal of aristocrats and sovereigns both stands at 2.2%, while that of non-aristocrat dignitaries is at 2.5%. The exclusion of women has very slight effect on the other dimensions in each profile.

that of his overlord. His moral rectitude serves to guarantee his good behaviour, and includes an even greater share of proper conduct (21.1%) and honesty (23.9%) than shown above for dignitaries in general.

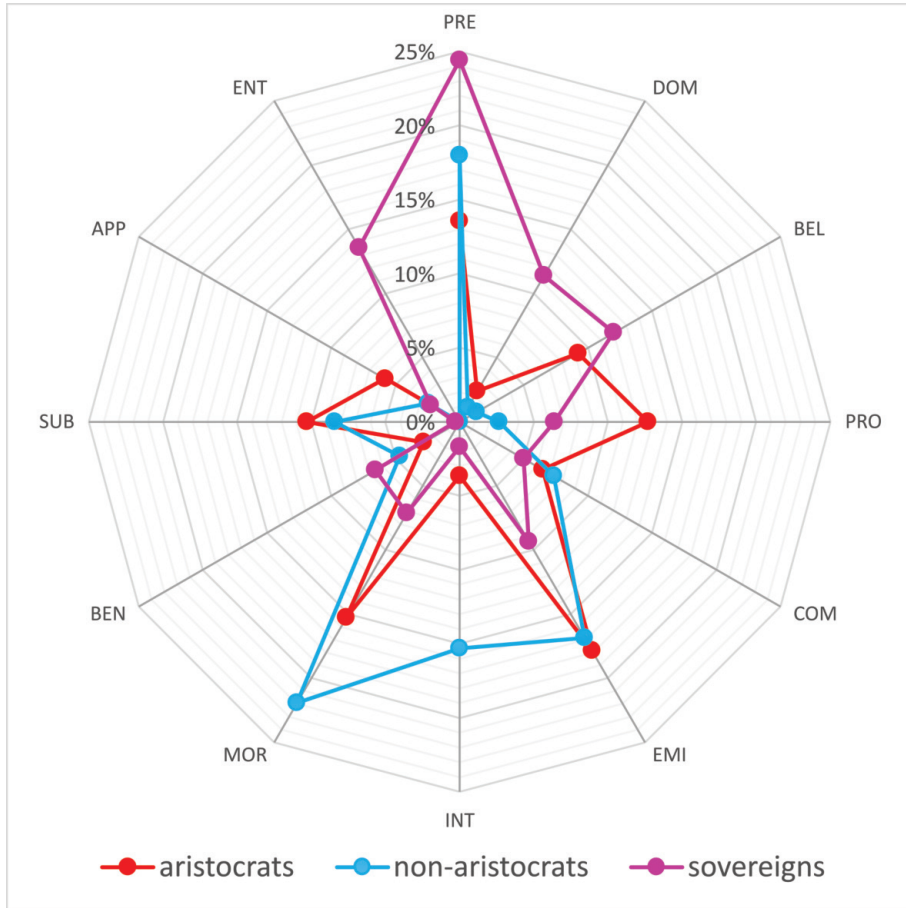


Figure 11. Aristocratic dignitaries compared to dignitaries as a whole and to sovereigns. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

3.5.2. Ministers

Figure 12 compares ministers to other dignitaries and to ritualists (whose class also includes a small number of non-Brāhmaṇa people in a priestly function). Given that ministers are both Brāhmaṇas and courtiers, they can be expected to

exhibit a mix of the traits of these two groups, and to have scores in some dimensions that are transitional between other dignitaries and ritualists. This latter is indeed the case in all dimensions except for prestige and beneficence, but in most cases, ministers are much closer to one of the comparison groups than to the other.

In intellect, which is one of their most prominent traits at 17.4%, ministers score very close to halfway between non-minister dignitaries (3.7%) and ritualists (41.5%). The same applies at a much smaller scale to appeal, whose prevalence is 2.6% in ministers, much higher (5.2%) in non-ministers and much lower (0.8%) in ritualists.⁶⁵ Morality is almost equally conspicuous in the characterisation of the three groups; what little variation there is conforms to the expected pattern (ministers at 19.5%, non-ministers at 17.9%, ritualists at 20%). Ministers' prestige is also quite prominent (17.1%), even more so than that of either non-ministers (14.7%) or ritualists (11.3%). They surpass the other two groups in beneficence as well, but all scores in this dimension are low ministers at 4.7%, the comparison groups (both below 3%). All three groups have similarly low scores in dominance (ritualists 1.1%, ministers 1.3%, and non-ministers 2%).

In belligerence and prowess, ministers are much more similar to ritualists than to non-minister dignitaries. Ritualists are entirely non-belligerent (0%) and have practically no prowess (0.3%⁶⁶); ministers are only slightly above ritualists in this regard (belligerence 1.6%, prowess 2.6%), while both dimensions are decidedly present in other dignitaries (8% and 11.4% respectively). In the remaining dimensions, however, ministers are more akin to other dignitaries than to ritualists. Their competence, at 7.1%, is marginally more prominent than that of non-ministers (6.7%), but conspicuously less so than that of ritualists (10.2%). Eminence has great weight in the profile of ministers (17.1%) and a hair more in that of non-ministers (17.5%), but comes less to the fore among ritualists (10.2%). Similarly, submission is a valued trait in ministers (9%), and slightly more so in other dignitaries (9.7%), but quite irrelevant in ritualists (1.9%).

65 The high appeal of non-ministers, as noted above, is mostly thanks to the female satellites of aristocrats. If only males are included in the analysis, then ministers actually have slightly more appeal than non-ministers.

66 The non-zero score is thanks to a single Brāhmaṇa described as fearless, *atrasta-manāḥ*. This man Paṇḍiya was not a householder Brāhmaṇa, but someone who had undertaken an ascetic vow for the sake of Amma II (according to the *Paḷaṅkalūru grant of Amma II*), so his "prowess" is in fact resolve in a non-martial context.

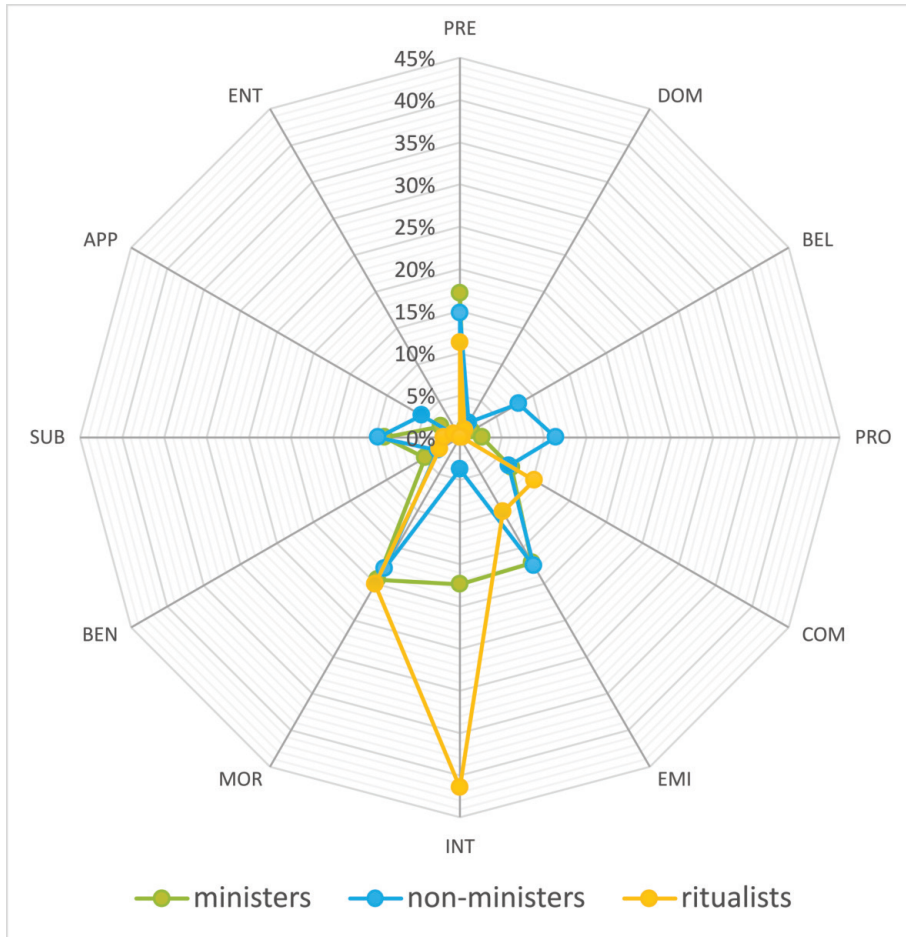


Figure 12. Brahmanical ministers compared to dignitaries as a whole and to ritualists. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

The detailed comparison thus confirms what has already been indicated by Figure 10: ministers differ conspicuously from non-ministerial dignitaries — most of whom are military aristocrats — in their lack of belligerence and prowess, and in their abundance of intellect. The relatively high emphasis on intellect coupled with the low prevalence of belligerence and prowess renders their profile somewhat similar to that of ritualists. They, however, differ markedly from ritualists in the frequent appearance of submission in their descriptions, whereas the dependency of ritualists does not need to be articulated in their

presentation. Moreover, ministers have a more multifaceted profile than ritualists, who are defined primarily by intellect and morality, and secondarily by prestige, competence, and eminence, these five dimensions constituting almost the entirety of their profiles. The fuller profile of ministers also explains why competence — clearly a desirable trait in ministers — is relatively less prominent in them than in the profile of ritualists. Within the dimension of intellect, too, they differ from ritualists in that the latter group's subcategories of intellect are comprised almost entirely of learnedness (94%, not illustrated). Being educated is also a prominent hallmark among ministers (50% of their intellectual attributions), but intelligence is a close second (28.8%), and a smattering of other intellectual qualities (such as expertise in policy and providing counsel) is more noticeable here than among ritualists.

3.5.3. *Bureaucrats*

In Figure 13, the bureaucratic type of dignitary is profiled side by side with other dignitaries and with commoners who, like bureaucrats, are non-aristocratic and non-Brahmanical public figures. The bureaucrat profile is expected to be a mix of the traits of the two groups of comparison.

Bureaucrats are, most of all, characterised by morality (35.2%) and prestige (22.5%). Both of these dimensions are in fact distinctly more prominent in the bureaucrats' profile than in those of the compared sets. The difference is especially striking in morality, which stands at 17.2% in non-bureaucrats and 16.4% in commoners, but is also unmistakable in prestige (15.2% in non-bureaucrats and 13.4% in commoners).

In the above two prominent dimensions, bureaucrats are slightly closer to other dignitaries than they are to commoners. A commonality with other dignitaries is clearly manifest in eminence, which, while still highly prominent in bureaucrats (15.5%), is slightly more noted for non-bureaucrats (17.5%) and far more for commoners (26.9%). On a much smaller scale, bureaucrats also resemble non-bureaucratic dignitaries in having more beneficent traits (4.2% and 3.7%) than commoners (1.5%).⁶⁷

Bureaucrats differ both from non-bureaucratic dignitaries and from commoners in intellect, which is in this group noticeably low, though not negligible (4.2%), while being much more prevalent in other dignitaries (9.8%) as well as in commoners (10.5%). Submission is much less noticed among bureaucrats (5.6%), than among non-bureaucrats (9.7%) or commoners (10.5%), and appeal

⁶⁷ All dignitaries including bureaucrats lack entitlement (0%), a dimension that has some presence in the profile of commoners (1.5%), which I discuss on p. 156.

shows a similar distribution, with bureaucrats lowest (1.4%), other dignitaries higher (4.4%) and commoners quite a bit higher still (9%). Competence, conversely, is highest among bureaucrats (8.5%), though almost as prevalent among commoners (7.5%) and only a little less noted for other dignitaries (6.8%).

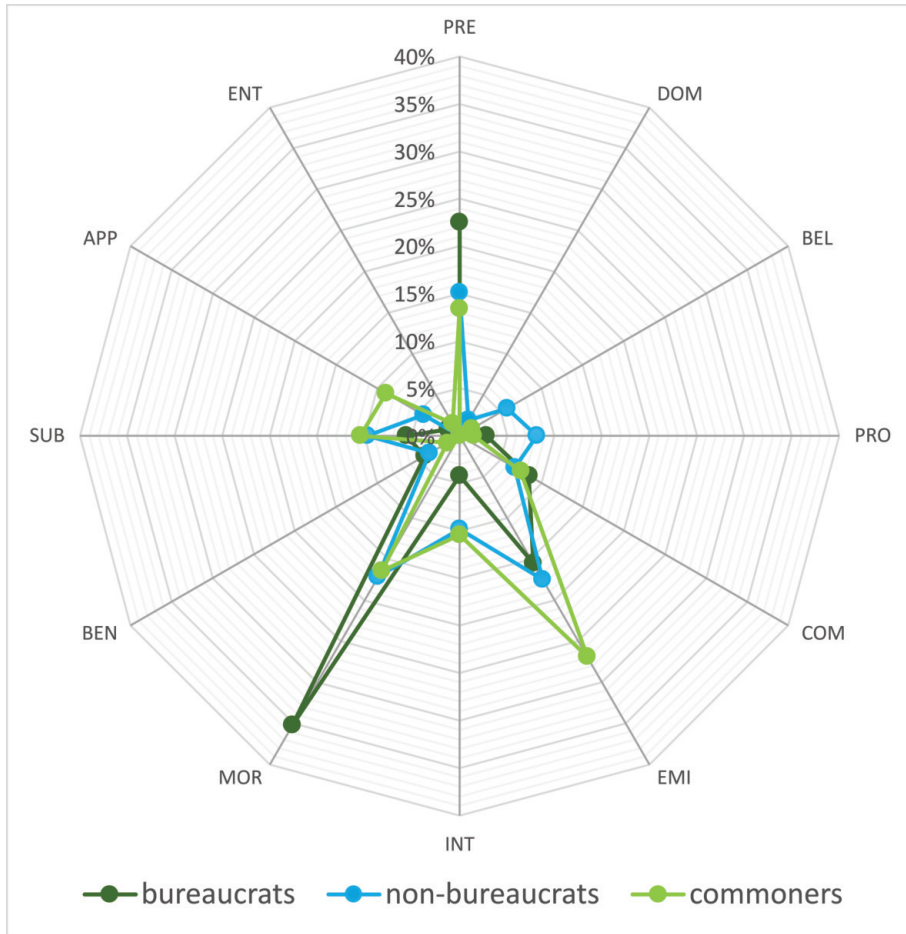


Figure 13. Bureaucratic dignitaries compared to dignitaries as a whole and to commoners. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

Finally, bureaucrats appear more akin to commoners than to non-bureaucratic dignitaries in their relative lack of prowess (2.8%), which is also largely absent in commoner foci (1.5%), but definitely present in other dignitaries (8.2%) due

to the inclusion of aristocrats in that group. The situation is the same as regards belligerence (0% in bureaucrats, 1.5% in commoners, versus 5.8% in other dignitaries), and, on a much more subdued scale, as regards dominance (0% in bureaucrats and commoners, versus 1.9% in non-bureaucratic dignitaries).

Bureaucrats differ from aristocratic dignitaries in that belligerence, prowess and dominance are absent from their profiles, and can be set apart from Brahmanical dignitaries by the low prevalence of intellectual qualities in their characterisation. Finding tendentious differences between the profile of bureaucrats and that of commoners is difficult. Both of these groups contain “sundries” who did not fit clearly into a positively defined class. Moreover, both samples are small, so some of the findings are likely to be haphazard and would not conform to the same profiles found on a larger sample of similar data, if such were available. Nonetheless, it is perhaps not accidental that bureaucrats are most prominently noted for morality, since they, unlike the commoners, are court functionaries in responsible positions.⁶⁸ Conversely, commoners are mostly noted by their eminence, which suggests that the specific virtues and traits imputed to sovereigns, dignitaries and ritualists are less relevant to these foci who, when they are given praise, get it largely in general terms.

3.6. Changes over time

While introducing the Eastern Cālukyas above, I have pointed to a fairly sharp division into two periods, marked in the texts by a sudden rise in the visibility of underlings (including instigators, secular donees and Brāhmaṇa donees in political office) from the reign of Vijayāditya III onward (r. c. 849–), and connected this to supraregional politics, in particular to heightened Rāṣṭrakūṭa interference in the affairs of Veṅgī both through direct military assault and through supporting contenders for the Veṅgī throne. In this section I explore whether and how the characterisation of rulers and underlings reflects the changing political milieu.

3.6.1. Sovereigns before and after 849

Figure 14 shows the profiles obtained for sovereigns in grants issued before the reign of Vijayāditya III and in those issued by or after Vijayāditya III, while

⁶⁸ This applies at least to people featured as executors (*ājñapti*), whom many earlier grants of the dynasty introduce in a slightly varying *anuṣṭubh* verse with the qualification *nirmalo dharmasamgrahaḥ* (or *dharmavatsalah*). The category of good conduct is also an important factor in the moral aspect of bureaucrats.

Figure 15 illustrates the fluctuation of selected dimensions over time, based on separate sovereign profiles created for each century of the dynasty's lifetime.⁶⁹ As noted in the description of the corpus, the eleventh century is represented by a mere four charters, hence that segment of the data is more prone to idiosyncratic variation.

The most conspicuous difference between the two periods is a peak of belligerence in the later one: at 16.1%, belligerence is in this time bracket the second most prevalent trait of sovereigns. While the related dimensions of dominance and prowess stay quite constant, belligerence makes up only 4.9% of attributions in the earlier bracket, which gives it the humble eighth rank out of twelve. Breaking the data down by century shows that the share of belligerence in royal representation increases quite steadily: although it is actually a bit smaller in the eighth century than in the seventh, it is under 6% in both. It then nearly doubles in the ninth century, and climbs until it reaches 19.5% in the eleventh. The rise in belligerence is accompanied, and perhaps balanced to some degree, by a definite, though less striking, growth of emphasis on the beneficent aspect of the king, from 4% in the earlier period to 8.2% in the later. Century by century, beneficence rises steadily up to the tenth century (peaking at 9%), but drops off again in the eleventh.

In the earlier time bracket, the prominence of prestige, competence and entitlement exceeds the values obtained for the later bracket. Prestige is the number one most frequent characteristic of sovereigns throughout time, but is at its peak (28.9%) in the eighth century and at a low (21.9%) in the tenth. Following a similar trend, entitlement peaks in the eighth century at 18.6%, with slightly smaller prevalence in the seventh, and a steady decline from the ninth century onward, dipping to 7.8% in the eleventh century. Entitlement ranks as second most prevalent up to the ninth century, but from the tenth, it drops behind belligerence. Competence, though never emphatic in the representation of rulers, drops noticeably from 8% in the earlier period to 3.2% in the later one. The prevalence of this dimension peaks in the eighth century (9.1%), then drops sharply in the ninth (2.7%), after which it rises very slowly but steadily.

69 Although some of the earlier (up to the mid-eighth century) and some of the later (from the mid-tenth century) charters of the Veṅgī Cālukyās are dated, most are not. For the purpose of this comparison, undated grants were arbitrarily assigned to the rough midpoint of the issuing ruler's reign; where the issuer is himself uncertain, either the midpoint of a larger period was set (for consecutive issuer candidates) or the most likely issuer was assumed to be factual (for non-consecutive candidates).

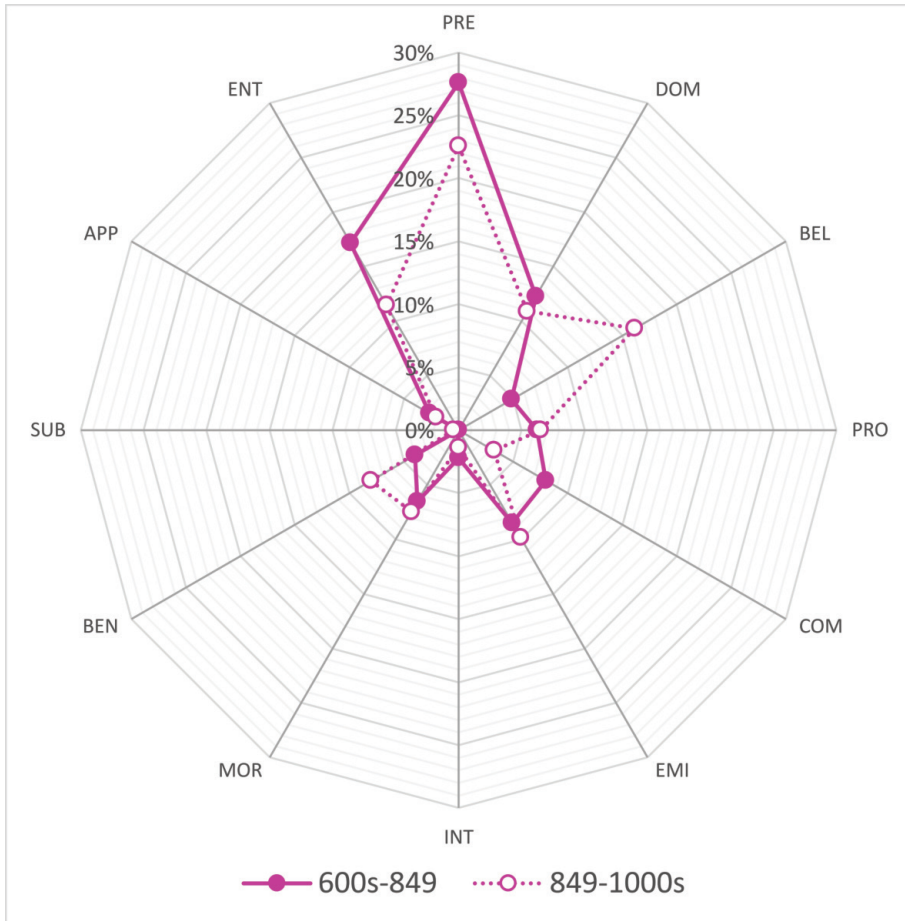


Figure 14. Sovereigns before and after 849. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

The mounting emphasis on the belligerent traits of rulers is in accordance with the change in the political atmosphere, and may also conform to a more widespread trend towards a culture of military opportunism (Davidson 2002, 62–67). The diminishing prevalence of entitlement is largely due to a simple matter of quantity and proportion. As demonstrated above (Figure 5), entitlement is mostly attributed to the royal dynasty rather than to individual members. With the progress of time, the acclamation of the dynasty stays much the same after

the roughly standard formula crystallises in the late seventh century.⁷⁰ However, individual people – predecessors as well as the reigning king – are presented in increasing detail, the result of which is a waning relative prevalence of entitlement. Looking only at the “self” orbit of descriptions, the drop in entitlement is much smaller (5.2% in the earlier period to 2.5% in the later, not illustrated in a chart), while in patrilineal ancestors it is barely noticeable (0.9% to 0.8%).

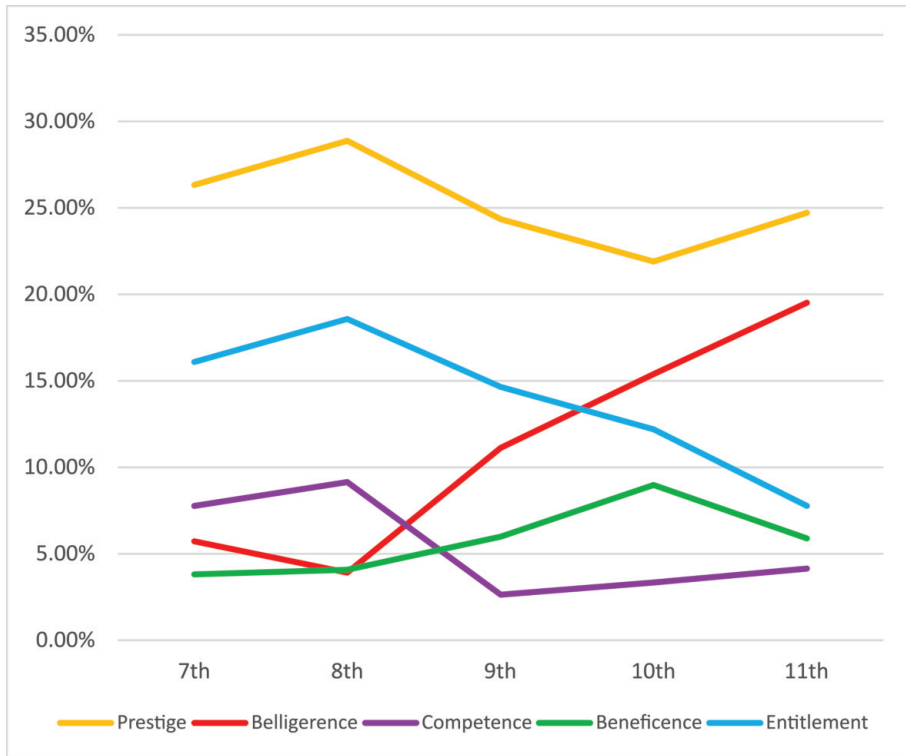


Figure 15. Changes over time in the profile of sovereigns

No straightforward explanation offers itself for the other differences noted between the profiles of the two periods. The unmistakable rise in belligerence has to come at a cost to other components of the profile (as the sum of all dimensions in a profile is always 100%). Since much of the price seems to have been paid by prestige and competence, it is possible that belligerence

⁷⁰ The formula is cited on p. 128 above.

increasingly replaced non-martial competence as a qualification of a ruler, and that the prestige accrued from aggressive action made it less necessary to heap on other attributions of generic prestige. That said, if the prevalence of individual dimensions is charted separately for each ruler who issued extant grants (not illustrated), the fluctuation is much larger in all dimensions than that seen in the breakdown by century. In the later period, peaks of belligerence often correspond to troughs in prestige, and occasionally to troughs in competence too. Still, much of the jaggedness at this level of the data is probably more or less random rather than tendentious.

3.6.2. *Aristocrats before and after 849*

Figure 16 shows the profiles of the aristocratic type of dignitaries for the same two periods. Only male targets are included in this analysis, because there are no female targets at all in the earlier period, so their presence in the later segment would distort the comparison.

While the belligerence of aristocrats is practically identical in the two periods (10.5% earlier and 10.3% later), there is a marked decrease in their dominance (10.5% to 2.3%) and prowess (21% to 16.6%). This is accompanied by a significant increase in morality (0% to 14.1%) and submission (5.3% to 11.8%). It is likely that suzerains and underlords alike engaged in military activities more often and on a more massive scale in the later period than in the former. But while this is reflected in the belligerence scores of sovereigns, it is not apparent in the belligerence attributed to aristocrats, whom later royal propaganda depicted as more submissive and dutiful than in the less tumultuous olden days. If this analysis of limited data reflects a genuine trend, then the interpretation which offers itself is that the sovereigns who issued these grants treasured — and hoped to instil — reliability rather than rapacity in their underlings.

I hasten to add that there are a mere 19 attributions characterising aristocratic dignitaries in the earlier period (and all of these are from the seventh century), as opposed to 398 in the latter period, so any surmise is doubtful. Breaking the data down by centuries or by issuing rulers (neither of these is illustrated here), the picture becomes more chaotic. Dominance and prowess still decline steadily from the ninth century to the eleventh, but morality peaks in the tenth century and then falls off rather than continuing to increase, while submission drops sharply from the ninth to the tenth, then bounces back to rise higher than ever in the eleventh.

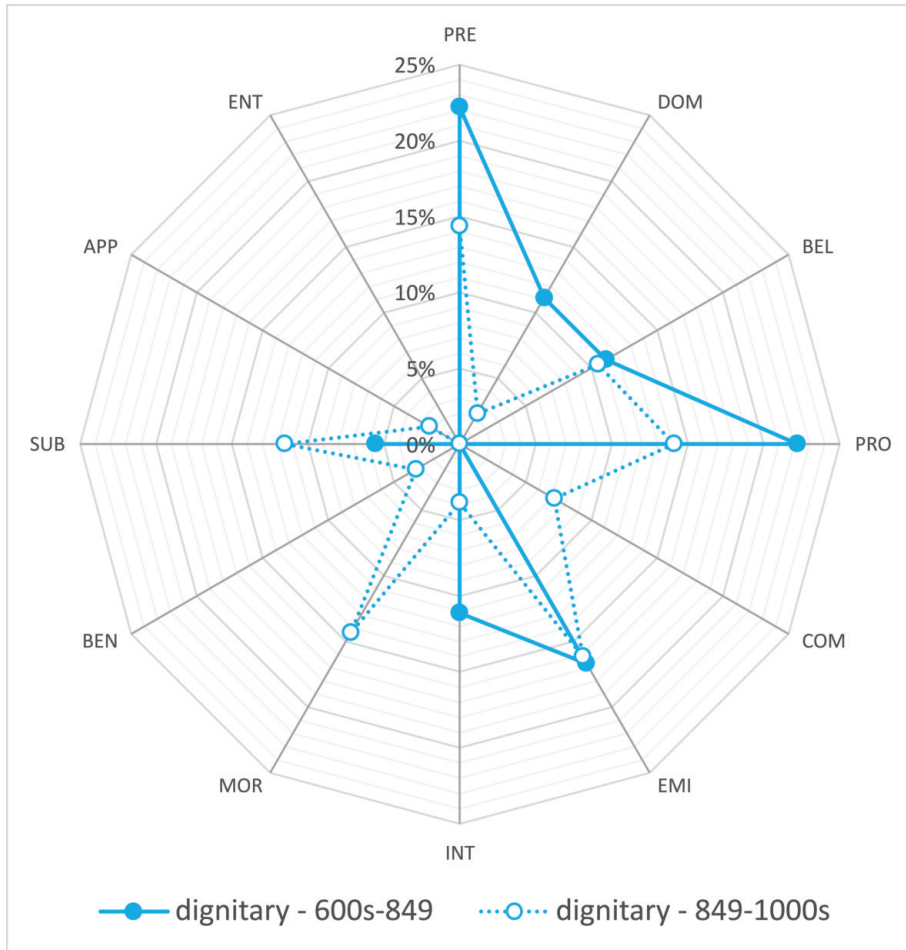


Figure 16. Aristocrats before and after 849. The dimensions, clockwise from top, are Prestige, Dominance, Belligerence, Prowess, Competence, Eminence, Intellect, Morality, Beneficence, Submission, Appeal, and Entitlement.

4. Concluding thoughts

4.1. Summary of quantitative findings

As pointed out above, dimensions with a small number of attributions in the corpus are difficult to analyse in profiles that also incorporate more widely prevalent dimensions, because variation in these smaller dimensions is

overshadowed by the larger ones. This problem of scale notwithstanding, most of the dimensions identified in the qualitative stage are useful in distinguishing various classes of actors. The following discussion involves the three focus classes of sovereigns, ritualists, and commoners, while the fourth class of dignitaries is here subdivided into the three types of aristocrats, ministers, and bureaucrats. Table 4 shows the prevalence of each dimension in these six types of protagonists, and is colour-coded according to the prevalence of each dimension across profiles. In each row, the profiles of the six types have been ranked from lowest to highest according to the prevalence of the dimension represented by the current row, relative to the same dimension's prevalence in the other profiles. Colours from black through blue and yellow to red indicate increasing prevalence, as shown in the last row of the table.

	sovereign	ritualist	commoner	aristocrat	bureaucrat	minister
prestige	24.4%	11.3%	13.4%	13.6%	22.5%	17.1%
dominance	11.4%	1.1%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	1.3%
belligerence	12.0%	0.0%	1.5%	9.3%	0.0%	1.6%
pro prowess	6.4%	0.3%	1.5%	12.7%	2.8%	2.6%
competence	5.0%	10.2%	7.5%	6.5%	8.5%	7.1%
eminence	9.3%	10.2%	26.9%	17.9%	15.5%	17.1%
intellect	1.7%	41.5%	10.5%	3.7%	4.2%	17.4%
morality	7.1%	20.1%	16.4%	15.3%	35.2%	19.5%
beneficence	6.6%	2.8%	1.5%	2.8%	4.2%	4.7%
submission	0.3%	1.9%	10.5%	10.3%	5.6%	9.0%
appeal	2.3%	0.8%	9.0%	5.8%	1.4%	2.6%
entitlement	13.6%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
colour key	highest	very high	fairly high	fairly low	very low	lowest

Table 4. Prevalence of dimensions in types of protagonists

Prestige is quite prevalent in all classes, although conspicuously more so in sovereigns and bureaucrats. Yet even in the class least characterised by prestige, namely that of ritualists, this trait makes up almost half as large a part of the profile as in sovereigns. Thus, prestige is not the best criterion for distinguishing between various kinds of people. However, its fairly even distribution across classes is a strong indication that copperplate charters serve not only to elevate

the status of the donor and to fix other actors in a position of dependency, but also to heighten the esteem of these other actors. The surprisingly high preponderance of prestige among bureaucrats is in all probability a quirk of statistics: about two thirds of all prestige-related attributions associated with this type pertain to the brothers Bhīma and Naravāhana and their family, who are certainly not typical members of this vaguely defined class.⁷¹

Dominance is almost solely a royal prerogative. It is hardly or not at all present in most classes, though aristocrats are allowed a modicum of this trait. References to dominance in the inscription thus very clearly set the status quo: the sovereign is absolutely dominant, with subordinates a very long step below them, though a little above non-aristocratic players. Moreover, as pointed out in 3.3, the dominant traits of dignitaries (chiefly comprised of aristocrats) consist primarily in the aggressive overpowering of specific others (the king's enemies, presumably), while those of the rulers include surmounting all rivals.

Belligerence is also most prevalent among sovereigns, but here, aristocrats are a very close second, while everyone else is far behind. The message is again clear: while kings readily assert their dominance when they have to, a certain degree of aggressiveness is a generally valued trait in aristocrats. It is worth recalling in this connection that within royal profiles, belligerence mostly characterises the patrilineal predecessors of the anytime current ruler, while there appears no such difference in aristocratic profiles, among whom the here and now readiness to exercise violence is as important as a family history of having done so.

Prowess is closely associated with belligerence, but with some important, if small, distinctions. In this dimension, aristocrats stand foremost by far, with sovereigns a distant second and everyone else lagging far behind. This inverse pattern compared to the distribution of belligerence among sovereigns and their subordinates seems to say, yet again, that a subordinate must possess the potential for warfare, but unleash it only in specific circumstances against specific targets, as directed by his suzerain.

Competence has low to middling prevalence in all classes of people. It is highest in ritualists and bureaucrats, and lowest in sovereigns, but the variation in this dimension is too small on the whole to differentiate readily between classes. The pattern may nonetheless be significant; at any rate, it corresponds to the expectation that proficiency in one's tasks is most crucial for these specialists.

⁷¹ See p. 105 about Bhīma and Naravāhana.

Eminence, the faculty of standing out without the specification of any particular skill, is highest by far among commoners and lowest (but still quite prevalent) in sovereigns. Aristocrats and ministers are in the upper mid-range, with bureaucrats only slightly less characterised by this dimension. Like the related dimension of prestige, eminence is thus imputed to all kinds of actors, but most of all to commoners who do not abound in more specific virtues worthy of mention (compare intellect below), and to generalists such as aristocrats and ministers. It is worth noting in this connection that although aristocrats score higher than all other classes in belligerence, eminence is actually more prevalent than any other dimension within the aristocratic profile.

Intellect has tremendous prevalence in the class of ritualists, far in excess of ministers, among whom intellect is nonetheless a crucial dimension. While the ritualist profile is narrow, with very few other dimensions playing a significant role, that of ministers is much broader, so no single dimension can stand out as far as intellect does in the highly specialised ritualists. Intellect also has some relevance to the profiles of commoners, but is barely present in the characterisation of other classes.

Morality stands out in the image of bureaucrats almost as much as intellect does in that of ritualists. Although the class of bureaucrats has been defined above more by exclusion than by inclusion criteria, and is represented only by a small number of attributions, it is perhaps no accident that qualities related to integrity are highly valued in this class. Morality is also highly prevalent in all other classes except for sovereigns, and is actually the most noted characteristic of ministers, whose virtue and honesty are also crucial for their masters.

Benevolence is a hallmark of status. Although it is low in all profiles when compared to other dimensions in the same profile, it is still clearly the highest among sovereigns when compared across profiles. Bureaucrats and ministers stand a step lower, aristocrats and ritualists lower still, and commoners lowest. Benevolence in fact consists of factors such as protecting subjects, supporting dependents and being hospitable: these three, however, do not really go hand in hand. Rather, each characterises a different class: protection is a kingly activity, supportiveness is primarily aristocratic, and hospitality is most typical of political Brāhmaṇas.

Submission is an essential characteristic of commoners and aristocrats, as well as of ministers to a slightly lower degree. It is noted to some extent among bureaucrats, but very low in ritualists and practically absent in sovereigns. The basic trend here seems to be that the more military power a group wields, the more important it is to emphasise their submissiveness. Thus, from the perspective of royal ideology, ritualists — i.e. householder Brāhmaṇas and temple

officiants — are not rivals, and therefore need not be expressly represented as submissive. At the other end of the spectrum, the military aristocracy's descriptions are carefully articulated to assert submissiveness on their part. Recall also that submission becomes more prominent over time in the class of aristocrats. Bureaucrats are a mixed group which probably includes some members of said aristocracy, which may explain their middling submission. The high prevalence of submission in the representation of commoners seems to be an exception from the trend, but this may be unreliable as the sample is very small, with only 67 attributions describing the group as a whole. Of the mere seven attributions that pertain to submission among commoners, three in fact refer to being employed in an office, and two each to rendering a particular service and to having the lord's favour. The submission of aristocrats and bureaucrats includes a fourth factor, that of accepting the lord's supremacy. The absence of this factor from the profiles of commoners, ministers and ritualists may indicate that in their context, attributions of "submission" actually imply usefulness to the lord rather than acceptance of subordinate status. The high prevalence of submission in ministers may be explained by the same reasoning, or by the fact that they wield considerable political power.

Appeal generally has low prevalence, but is highest in commoners, middling in aristocrats and low to very low in all other groups. As discussed above, much of this variation depends on the degree to which women are present (as foci or satellites) in a group: when only males are scrutinised, it is in fact ministers who stand highest in appeal while commoners have none. Male appeal seems to be largely a leadership quality, and within it, physical handsomeness and erotic attractiveness go primarily with rulers and their subordinate aristocrats, while in ministers, appeal manifests rather in the form of charisma. Female appeal, on the other hand, seems to be associated as if by rote with the women of aristocrats and sovereigns, but may in commoners be an actual trait or talent for which some non-aristocratic women were specifically noted.

Entitlement makes the clearest distinction between sovereigns, who possess it, and everyone else, who as a rule do not. This implies that sovereigns differ from their underlords and subjects not only in terms of scale, but also in essence. Even though subordinate rulers share many aspects of kingship, including some level of recognised dominance, they — at least according to their overlords' ideology — lack explicit indications of being entitled to rule over other rulers. The presence of entitlement in the profile of commoners is entirely

thanks to a single person, a minister's mistress.⁷² This extraordinary lady, Sabbākā, does not fit any category of my analysis and was assigned to the commoners on the basis of exclusion from the other focus classes. She belongs to the Paṭṭavardhinī family, said to be descended from the celestial handmaiden Jayā, thus qualifying for entitlement through divine ancestry. What this actually implies is, however, not a divine right to rule and dominate, but a capacity to be a supernaturally excellent member of the royal retinue.

4.2. The analytical framework

The conceptual framework I have devised for the analysis of representation in copperplate *praśasti* has only been introduced in rough outline above, and will be discussed in detail in a separate paper on the method. At this point, I wish only to touch briefly on one of its shortcomings.

My simplistic fourfold classification of foci into sovereigns, dignitaries, ritualists, and commoners was reached after considering several more complex alternative schemes at length. Due to numerous uncertainties and idiosyncrasies in the data, I saw no way to set up definable criteria for a finer classification without obtaining either many discrete classes with very few cases in most of them, or many unclassifiable cases, or both. In order for quantitative analysis and comparison to be meaningful, a fair amount of data must be available for each class, so I have discarded these alternative schemes.

In hindsight, as shown by the present analysis, there is good reason to allow a distinction at least between dignitaries of the ministerial type and the aristocratic one. However, the introduction of this distinction has resulted in the creation of the bureaucrat type, which does include some bureaucrats, but also has in its ranks people who defy the above pigeonholes, as well as people who probably belong to another class but have not been described in enough detail to indicate this clearly. In this way, the bureaucratic type of the dignitary class has much in common with the commoner class.

The moral of this is that a finer classification of foci is desirable in description metadata in order to facilitate analyses in pursuit of a variety of research questions. The smaller and more specific focus classes could then be joined into various kinds of metaclasses that are expedient to the research question at hand. This is in fact what I have done in the case of orbits, where the initial metadata recorded relationships quite precisely, but many of these specific relations were then merged into the metaclass of patriline for the analysis

⁷² She features in the *Īnteru grant of Bādapa*, a previously unedited grant which I intend to publish and discuss in the near future.

presented here. Also depending on the actual research interest, some of the small focus classes could and should be excluded from analysis, just as some orbits have been ignored in my above comparison of profiles for foci themselves, their patriline and their lineage. While a much larger textual corpus would afford analysis on some smaller classes, for the present, research questions targeting small classes can only use quantitative analytical methodology exploratively, while for drawing any inferences, the established method of close reading remains the primary tool.

4.3. Qualitative findings

This paper has focused on quantitative comparisons, but the set of codes and their hierarchy of categories and dimensions is in itself a tangible outcome of the qualitative stage of my analysis. The mere effort to code the attributions made in the texts has forced me to pay more thorough attention to the sources than I had done earlier. In this respect, the experience is similar to that of translating a text that one has edited. In the course of editing, one can accurately judge what makes sense grammatically and semantically, even to the degree of being able to propose emendations or non-standard interpretations that are very likely to fit the original creator's intent better than what is indicated by the letter of the received text or its interpretation according to standard rules. Even so, the act of translating the text to another language forces one to take a stand on many details that otherwise remain vague. For instance, when a Sanskrit inscription speaks of someone's *tejas*, it is possible to edit the relevant part without considering whether and how *tejas* differs, say, from *ūrjas*, *śakti* or *kīrti*. Such distinctions must, however, enter the translator's awareness at least when they occur in proximity to one another. Even more so in coding, where proximity is less relevant, since the aim is to code concepts consistently throughout the corpus and, when a word may indicate two or more concepts deemed to be different, to establish criteria on the basis of which this distinction can be made.

This is why in the course of my iterated coding cycles I frequently found myself ruminating on what concepts various synonyms or conceptually related words might have meant for the people who employed them in their compositions and who read or heard them in those compositions. The outcomes of this cognitive process are difficult to communicate in any form other than the reductionistic list of codes and their definitions, but the actual experience is definitely a broadening one. For the three words noted above, I can say that at least in the Eastern Cālukya *prāśastis*, *tejas* and *ūrjas* seem to convey much the same idea of active power or virility, whereas *kīrti*, reputation, is a completely

different concept even though “glory” is listed in dictionaries as a meaning for both *tejas* and *kirti*.

When it comes to organising individual codes into a hierarchy of themes, vagueness and polyvalence are more acutely relevant than in attaching codes to content. In a somewhat procrustean attempt to make use of all of the material available to me, I have done my best to assign to a dimension every single attribution made in the texts, while keeping the total number of dimensions manageable and the individual dimensions passably discrete. It was also my ground rule that each code can belong to one dimension only. I have repeatedly considered setting up a classification system in which some codes may contribute, with perhaps different weights, to two or even more dimensions (so that, for example, victory in battle might count toward belligerence, dominance, and eminence), but I feel that the added complication involved in such a scheme would not improve the analysis as much as it would reduce its transparency.

The set of twelve dimensions I have ended up with has proven satisfactory for my present interest of exploring the projected personae of various kinds of foci. However, the relative prevalence of dimensions varies widely, so minor dimensions (i.e. the ones less talked about in the texts, such as appeal and beneficence) cannot be effectively studied in profiles that also include such highly prevalent dimensions as prestige. As in the classification of the persons being described, so too in the categorisation of descriptive attributions it may be useful to pursue quantitative comparison only or primarily for the major dimensions, and to accept that the “miscellaneous” codes assigned to minor dimensions are, at least with a corpus of this size, not readily accessible to this form of textual analysis. Quantitative scrutiny of the minor dimensions on their own, such as my exploration of the kinds of morality attributed to kings and underlings above, can, however, still serve as a useful exploratory step in the scalable reading of the sources.

My set of dimensions is far from being the only, or even the best, way to classify the content codes established for my corpus. Its purpose is not to reify certain concepts, but to serve as a prop for exploration and understanding. At least some of the dimensions, I feel, constitute fairly good models of actual themes — clusters of closely associated concepts — in the minds of the original recipients. The segregation of dominance, belligerence, and prowess, for example, seems to work: although these three dimensions are conceptually related, even this rudimentary analysis has shown that they are not always correlated in representational personae. Other dimensions may be my own impositions that do not really correspond to any emic theme. My label morality, for instance, is quite likely to be extraneous, and the variation in the data could be

better understood by dividing morality into an ethical component and another component of *dharma* and duty.

Although I have incorporated dimensions and intermediate hierarchical levels into my code names, this was only done for practical purposes. The dimensions and categories need not be seen as intrinsic properties of the individual codes. As I suggested for the classification of foci, so too in the classification of codes, new groupings can be created with ease without having to re-code the texts. And here too, the classes do not need to encompass every single code, but can concentrate on those relevant to the research interest being pursued.

4.4. The applicability of textual analysis to copperplate charters

I have endeavoured to analyse the content of copperplate eulogies as it would have been perceived by the original audience of these texts in the historical context in which they were circulated, and inasmuch as it pertains to the representation of public personages. My underlying assumption has been that *praśastis* play a role in “crafting the king’s charisma” (Spencer 1984, 428), in other words that they intend to project the notion that the described persons (including but not limited to kings) conform to an ideal associated with their socio-political role and are therefore excellent candidates for that role. Through studying the thematic composition of these ideal schemata, I hoped to contribute to our understanding of how these roles were projected, perceived, and articulated in their original milieu.

Textual analysis has already proven highly applicable to studies of essentially similar nature. According to Krippendorff (2004, 75), “[c]ontent analyses are most successful when they focus on facts that are constituted in language, in the uses of the very texts” which are subjected to analysis. Such facts constituted in language include, among other kinds, “attribution of competence, character, morality, success, and belongingness to particular categories of people[, which] enables or discourages actions, makes or breaks politicians, creates heroes and demonizes villains, identifies leaders and marginalizes minorities” (*ibid.*, 76). Most of this could be lifted verbatim into my above conceptualisation of *praśasti*.

Another reason why the method seems to fit the subject matter well is that the style of these eulogies tends to be highly formalised, to-the-point and coherent. If we were to compare this genre to the kinds of texts which are commonly subjected to textual analysis techniques, we would in this respect find them more similar to directed public opinion questionnaires and structured interviews than to columnist articles and press releases. Moreover, unlike the often incoherent, redundant, and elliptical natural language of survey and

interview responses, *praśastis* have been carefully engineered by their composers (and by the process of cultural evolution, in which more successful specimens were imitated more) for efficiency: to deliver a maximum of characterisation with maximum clarity and optimum impact in a minimum of space. Indeed, often they are hardly more than a list of simple statements attributing one quality after another to the person being described. Where complexity does crop up, typically in the form of poetic stanzas elaborating a particular quality or characterising action for greater impact, the intended message is still quite straightforward, largely devoid of prevarication and innuendo.

Nonetheless, in part precisely because of the deliberately maximised efficiency of these texts, many of the concepts used in *praśasti* are rich with nuance and connotation. Coding such concepts for meaning inevitably involves subjectivity and potential bias. My familiarity with the expression of Eastern Cālukya copperplate grants gained in the course of years spent editing these texts certainly helps in constructing meanings they would likely have communicated to their intended audiences, but the reduction of complexity still comes at a price. What makes textual analysis to some degree objective and empirical in despite is the systematic design of a coding frame and consistency in its application to all texts, paired with transparency in the reporting of the analysis.⁷³

Coding is inevitably labour-intensive, and the labour must come from a qualified scholar familiar with both the language and the textual corpus. The invested time can be reduced to some extent with the aid of computer tools, but as of now, there exists no out-of-the-box open-source software to accomplish the kind of analysis that I have presented here. I have not experimented first-hand with proprietary analytical software, but the commercial packages are also unlikely to cater for all analytical needs. Moreover, all software — free or commercial — comes with a fairly steep learning curve. Nonetheless, with the wildfire spread and increasing accessibility of digital humanities, at the very least digital corpora are increasingly available thanks to projects such as DHARMA, and the possibility to integrate content-analytical coding into TEI-encoded texts is within reach.

I do not claim that this methodology is in any way superior to a hermeneutic close reading of the same texts or the bird's eye view of the historian, nor that it should replace other approaches. Being more of a philologist than a historian, I also make no attempt to pull the exposed details into a coherent and

73 See Krippendorff (2004, 316–21) for a detailed overview of the concern of validity primarily in inferential content analysis, and Schreier (2012, 25–26) specifically in qualitative analysis.

comprehensive model. However, having tried textual analysis, I do believe there is scope for further investigations using similar methods, which may be able to enrich our knowledge by complementing, substantiating, refining, or questioning previous hypotheses, or even by turning up new insights. The quantitative comparison of clearly demarcated large groups is the most strikingly informative and the most empirically grounded outcome of this kind of analysis. Nonetheless, what I found even more intriguing than that was the ability to zoom in on the ragged edges and back out again, and to slice my data in diverse ways to see where differences occur and what criteria produce coherent groups. This kind of scalable reading is perhaps the most profitable way to apply textual coding to copperplate eulogies.

Primary sources

See page xvi about references to primary sources in general, and page xvii about DHARMA digital editions with a corpus ID and a number.

- Ākulamannaṇḍu grant of Bhīma II*: VengiCalukya00034.
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Cevuru plates of Amma I: VengiCalukya00027.
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Eḍeru plates of Amma I: VengiCalukya00028.
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Īteru grant of Bādapa: VengiCalukya00070.
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Juxtaposed Genealogies of the Hoysaḷas and their Subordinates

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1. Introduction

The Hoysaḷas were a family that ruled in what is now southern Karnataka and parts of present-day Tamil Nadu between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. First recognised as local rulers in Malenāḍu or the ‘mountain region’ in the Western Ghats, they were ennobled by the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa as *mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras* or rulers of a circumscribed domain in the mid-eleventh century. In 1117, the third major ruler of the dynasty, Viṣṇuvardhana won an important battle against the Cōḷas and reclaimed the city of Talakāḍu, which the Cōḷas had occupied in 1004. This victory was important both materially and symbolically because Talakāḍu had been the seat of the Western Gaṅgas. The Hoysaḷas made a concerted effort to mark themselves as the successors of this dynasty, which had ruled in southern Karnataka between the fifth and tenth centuries.

Following this important military victory, Viṣṇuvardhana commissioned the Vijayanārāyaṇa temple at Belur. The inscriptions that mark the establishment and endowment of this temple also contain the first formalised genealogy of the Hoysaḷa dynasty, including their claim to descent from mythological heroes, and the origin story of the name Hoysaḷa (*Belur 58, Belur 71*). This genealogy, with only minor variations, would become the standard adopted by the Hoysaḷas and their subordinates in the inscriptions they commissioned for the next two centuries. When read at face value, the consistency of this narrative across time and geography indicates a deep loyalty of the subordinates to their overlords. However, subtle discrepancies in the choices made by the Hoysaḷas and their subordinates contradict the absolute and totalising rhetoric the inscriptions imply.

In this paper I compare the instances where and when the subordinate genealogies aligned with the established narrative of the Hoysaḷa family, and

where and when they deviated from it, to better understand the evolving relationship of the overlord and subordinate with the changing fortunes of each. I choose the words “overlord” and “subordinate” to highlight the relative status that individuals had to one another, rather than trying to locate them in absolute hierarchy, as suggested by terms like “feudatory” or “vassal.” There were several terms that delineated the role of a subordinate in a complex political structure, and while it is difficult to map the exact structure of these hierarchies from epigraphical material, what we can often determine is their position in relation to one another.

We learn of the history of the Hoysaḷas and their subordinates primarily through inscriptions in Kannada, a language still spoken in the present-day state of Karnataka. These inscriptions contained many registers: the eulogistic *praśasti* sections were composed either in Sanskrit or in a poetic register of Kannada replete with Sanskrit vocabulary, while the portion that recorded the actual donation employed more colloquial language. Commissioning an inscription awarded the donor of a grant the opportunity to record and celebrate the achievements of their ancestors. In shorter inscriptions this could include merely the identification of a memorialised warrior’s parents, while longer inscriptions boasted elaborate narratives which celebrated the ancestry of the donor and the lineage of the overlord. It was through these narratives that donors positioned themselves politically, geographically, and cosmologically in relation to the world around them.

It was as subordinates to the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas that the Hoysaḷas emerged as prominent political actors, and during the joint rule of Vinayāditya and Ereyāṅga that subordinates of the Hoysaḷas in turn began to commission inscriptions of their own. Despite their growing influence, the Hoysaḷas continued to acknowledge and even celebrate their loyalty as subordinates to the Cālukyas until the late twelfth century when Ballāḷa finally won independent sovereignty. Even after this, the achievements of Ereyāṅga and Vinayāditya as subordinates continued to be recorded as part of the Hoysaḷa genealogy. This contentious and somewhat contradictory relationship that the Hoysaḷas had with their own overlords is reflected in the ways they chose to represent themselves, but also in the relationships that they had with their subordinates and how these subordinates chose to represent them.

2. Standard expressions of loyalty in Kannada epigraphy

In the Kannada epigraphy of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, subordinates expressed their loyalty to their overlords in a number of standardised ways. Inscriptions usually began with a regnal date, which identified the king ruling at the time of composition or at the time of the activity which the inscription commemorated. In shorter inscriptions, the acknowledgment of the overlord was limited to this date. In the case of longer inscriptions, this section could be extended to include royal genealogies and elaborate praise of the king and his ancestors. The inscription then proceeded to identify the subordinate of the king as *tat-pāda-padmopajīvin*, or ‘one sustained by his lotus feet,’ identified his subordinates as sustained by his lotus feet, and the hierarchy went on until the donor of the inscription and the donation was detailed. In some cases, this hierarchy was comprised of several levels, including the king, an intermediate regional ruler, and then a local ruler or administrator.

The different levels of the hierarchy were demarcated by a set of Sanskrit titles, which have been translated variously across regions. The Hoysaḷas’ rank of *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* under the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa is one example. Based on scattered references to the ceremonies that accompanied the conferment of these titles, it is sometimes possible to discern their relation to one another. In the Cālukya polity, *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* was the highest rank below the king himself, who was styled as the *mahārājādhirāja* or ‘king of kings.’ Ronald Inden describes a *maṇḍala* in the political context of early medieval India as a “circle of kings,” (Inden 1990, 229) and makes the distinction between the *mahārājādhirāja*, who ruled the “whole world,” and the *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* who was the lord, *īśvara*, of a “circumscribed domain” or *maṇḍala* (*ibid.*, 239). Similarly, the rank of *mahāsāmanta*, who acknowledged the overlordship of the ‘king of kings,’ was lower than that of *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara*, as discerned by ceremonies which marked the promotion of subordinates from the former to the latter.¹ *Daṇḍanāyaka* was a more basic title for a military leader, which could be held in conjunction with several other descriptive and administrative titles, such as *sarvādhikārin*, *sandhivigrahin*, and *bhaṇḍārin*, roughly equivalent to universal administrator, “officer in charge of the foreign relations department who was often the writer

1 The inscription which provides evidence of this (*Chiknayakanahalli 20*) is discussed in detail below.

of important documents,” (Sircar 1966, 295) and treasurer² respectively. Lower in rank than these officials were the local administrators of smaller villages or groups of villages, namely *pergaḍe* and *gāvuṇḍa*, and other members of society such as merchants, artisans, or female relatives of these officials.

During the time of the first Hoysaḷa rulers, namely Nṛpakāma and Vinayāditya, there were fewer than five subordinates whose inscriptions are extant, and we can trace the progression from the earliest inscriptions — which were short and recorded the donations or memorialised the martial heroism of fairly minor actors³ — to a proliferation of titles and grants once the Hoysaḷas became ennobled by the Cālukyas. It is at this time that subordinates began emerging with administrative titles which suggested a courtlike apparatus in the Hoysaḷa polity.⁴ However, the inscriptions remained relatively basic until there was yet another drastic rise in their quantity and quality after Viṣṇuvardhana’s conquest of Talakāḍu in 1117.

The *mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras* and the *mahāsāmantas* could either be members of the royal family who were given charge over a region, or local rulers who were ennobled with titles and grants from the ruling family. They therefore acted as intermediaries between the royal family and the local administration, and their self-representation often reflected a careful balance between these loyalties. In exchange for the revenue of taxed land, subordinates provided military service, embarking on expeditions on the king’s behalf. The Hoysaḷa ruler Ereyaṅga, for example, is regularly identified as the weaponised right arm of the Cālukya king or *cālukya-bhūpālakana balada bhujā-daṇḍam* (*Shimoga* 64), and celebrated for his victories stretching as far as Mālava in modern-day Madhya Pradesh (*Belur* 58, *Belur* 71).

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- 2 There is considerable discussion about the exact meaning of these titles and their functions in different regional contexts. For the purposes of this argument, it is enough to understand them simply as administrative designations which subordinates held in addition to their martial roles.
 - 3 A heavily damaged hero stone dated 1027, found at Rajendrapura in the Manjarabad Taluk (*Manjarabad* 44), records that a warrior perished as he attacked Banavāsi on Nṛpakāma’s orders. The text of the inscription is very brief and contains very little information either about Nṛpakāma or his subordinate.
 - 4 In a hero stone dated 1084, found at Neralige in the Arasikere Taluk (*Arasikere* 6), Vinayāditya’s subordinate Bammayya is identified with the title *mahāsāmanta*, and a 1096 inscription at Kedagigere in the Kadur Taluk (*Kadur* 142) identifies Nāgadēva Nāyaka as the *mahāsandhivigrahin* when Vinayāditya was ruling with Ereyaṅga as his *yuvarāja* or heir apparent.

These heavily embellished accounts of military success, and the emphatic language of complete loyalty and devotion of the subordinate to the overlord, led early scholars to the assumption of highly regimented models of state formation in which local rulers controlled sub-regions, which then fell under larger kingdoms over which the kings only had ritual authority.⁵ In exchange for the revenue and military support, the kings would provide the local rulers with marks of nobility and divine favour. However, closer examination of the genealogical portion of inscriptions reveals that even subordinate rulers, when given the chance to commission inscriptions and compose genealogies, made subtle deviations from the narratives of the same overlords to whom they swore complete loyalty.

The royal genealogy was primarily concerned with recording the progression of the male line. It therefore included only the successive kings and the mothers of their heirs. All other wives are only known through the inscriptions that they commissioned themselves. The histories of subordinate families were recorded in inscriptions only after first reinforcing the greatness of their overlord. Lengthier, more detailed inscriptions commissioned by subordinates therefore always contain a eulogy of the ruling family while the reverse is almost never the case. While beholden to record the genealogy of their overlords, the subtle deviations that subordinates chose in narrating their overlords' and their own family histories belie the totalising rhetoric of absolute loyalty the inscriptions themselves espouse, especially in the eulogistic portions. Although inscriptions may appear formulaic at first glance, subordinates made deliberate choices about how to represent both their own and their overlords' genealogies.

More recent scholarship⁶ therefore has begun to question the idea of a static model of governance in favour of a loose confederation of polities, the boundaries of which were in constant flux, and whose rulers functioned in complex, nested, and overlapping hierarchies. In this conception, the creation of genealogies which reflected the history and achievements of one's ancestors and relatives was a dialectical process by which political actors constituted and

5 Most relevant to the South Indian context specifically is Burton Stein's "segmentary state" model in which he argued that sub-regions of the Cōḷa polity, or *nāḍu*, were largely self-governed with only ritual affiliation to the imperial dynasties. The local authorities controlled the means of production, but the imperial forces dominated and exploited them through ritual power. This created an image of a self-sustained proletariat, so to speak, with royal families and their activities hovering above them, tenuously connected by ritual authority enforced by the Brāhmanas whom they deployed to shore up their authority outside of their core territory (Stein 1980).

6 See Inden (1990), Heitzman (1997), Talbot (2001).

reconstituted their identity with respect to these hierarchies. As Cynthia Talbot notes in her work on the Kākatīyas of Andhra Pradesh, “although the conceptual inequality inherent in the lord-underling relationship is never forgotten in the rhetoric of inscriptions, it is clear that subordinates were active agents whose accomplishments were admired and who engaged in their own forms of honouring overlords” (Talbot 2001, 150).

3. The Hoysaḷa genealogy

The genealogy of the Hoysaḷa family as presented in the inscription *Belur 58*, dated 1117,⁷ provides a very linear understanding of the family’s descent. It was among the first Hoysaḷa inscriptions discovered in the nineteenth century; the lineage found therein formed the basis of early historiography on the Hoysaḷas. The narrative begins by describing the descent of the Hoysaḷas from Purāṇic figures — Atri, Purūravas, Nahuśa, and Yayāti — and proceeds to identify the dynasty as descendants of Yadu and the Yādava lineage. As William Coelho notes in his foundational monograph on the dynasty, a “cursory examination of the inscriptions reveals the fact that almost all the dynasties of the south claimed Purāṇic descent in about the 11th century A.D.” (Coelho 1950, 7). These narratives of divine and semi-divine descent allowed new dynasties to stake claim to prominence in a recognisable cosmology, through “texts that formed part of an integrated discursive practice” (Ali 2000, 176). By connecting themselves to Purāṇic figures, and in turn connecting those Purāṇic ancestors to local ones, they positioned themselves both as being strongly rooted in the land and powerful enough to be connected to the universally acknowledged cosmology of the *Purāṇas*.

In the Hoysaḷa case, the Purāṇic ancestors are very loosely connected to the local, mythical ancestor Saḷa merely by identifying him as a descendant of the Yādava lineage. The story of Saḷa follows this general contour: in the town of Sosēvūr (in Kannada) or Śaśakapura (in Sanskrit), an ascetic was attacked by a tiger as he was meditating. Saḷa, his pupil and a local warrior, jumped to fight the tiger, at which point the ascetic shouted, “Poy, Saḷa!” meaning “strike, Saḷa.” Saḷa successfully slew the tiger. The ascetic blessed him with sovereignty over the land. Although some effort was made in very early historiography to

7 This inscription is found on an interior wall of the Cennakēśava/Viyajanārāyaṇa temple at Belur, and an almost exact replica of its contents is recorded in the copperplate inscription *Belur 71*, which was also found in the same temple.

identify Saḷa with a historical figure, it has since been widely accepted that this narrative was invented to explain the family name Hoysaḷa, or the older Poysaḷa. It also serves to highlight the origin of the Hoysaḷa family as ‘hill chiefs’ or *malepar*, an attribute of their lineage which they continued to celebrate throughout their reign.

According to the genealogy, Vinayāditya was a distant descendant of Saḷa. Recognised with the epithet, ‘lord of hill chiefs’ or *maleparol gaṇḍa*, he moved his capital from Śaśakapura in the Western Ghats to Belur and eventually Dōrasamudra (present day Halebidu) in the plains. He is the first historical Hoysaḷa ruler identified in the genealogy. His primary queen was Keleyabbe, and they had a son named Ereyaṅga, who is celebrated in the genealogy for his military expeditions on behalf of the Kalyāṇa Cālukya king Vikramāditya VI. Ereyaṅga in turn had three sons: Ballāḷa, Viṣṇuvardhana, and Udayāditya. Ballāḷa, as the eldest son, succeeded Ereyaṅga but died shortly thereafter, upon which his younger brother Viṣṇuvardhana assumed the throne. It is this Viṣṇuvardhana who commissioned the Belur inscriptions in which this genealogy is first recorded.

Successive generations continued to use this narrative and build on it, resulting in the genealogy visible in Figure 1. Over the years, several variations entered the Saḷa origin story, including the identification of the ascetic as a Jaina teacher named Sudatta and the inclusion of the local goddess Vāsantikādēvī into the narrative, sometimes as a quelled opponent of Saḷa and other times as the deity who recognised his virtue and bestowed sovereignty upon him.⁸ The Hoysaḷas made their roots in the mountain region, or *malēnāḍu*, a foundational element in their origin story. The mythological portion of their genealogy, including their Purāṇic descent and the story of their ancestor Saḷa, worked to simultaneously position them in a broader cosmology and to reiterate their local roots.

8 For details on the variations of this story in different inscriptions, see Joshi (1946), Coelho (1950, 13–16).

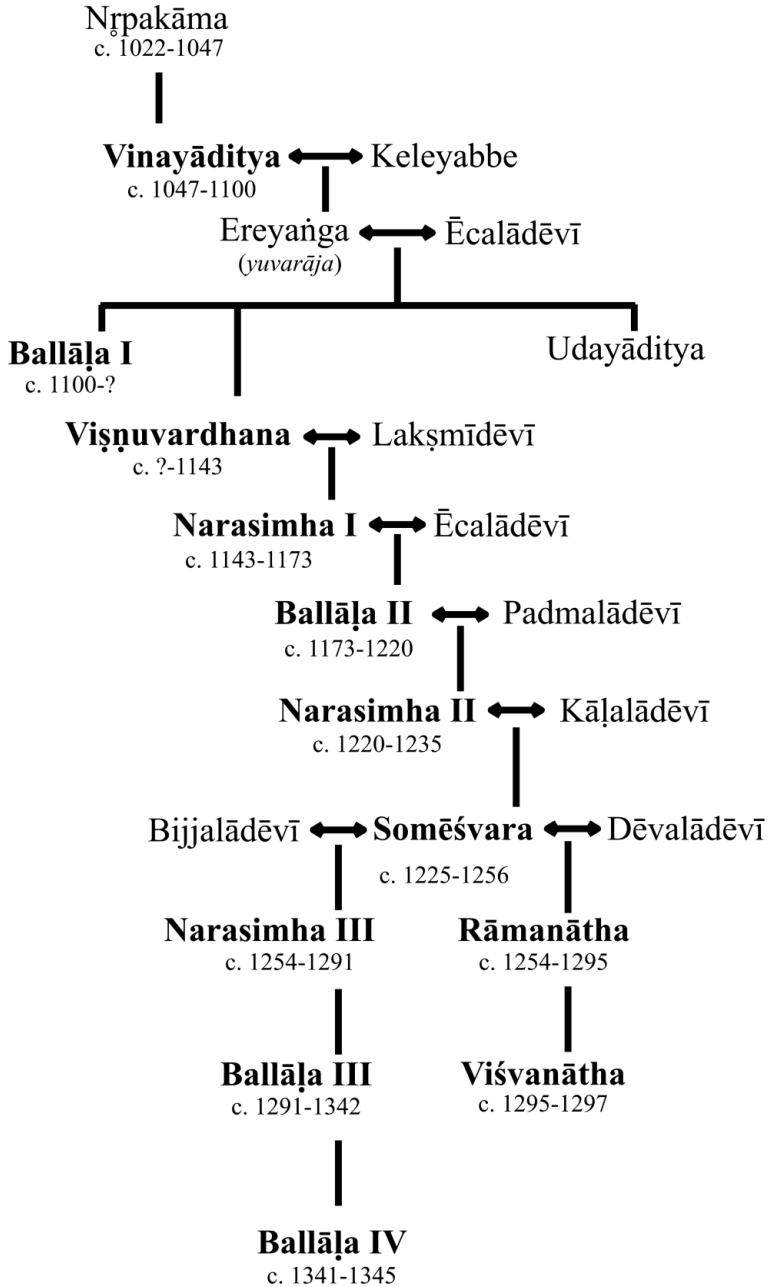


Figure 1. The Hoysala genealogy

In emphasising the greatness of the dynasty, the established royal genealogy gave the entire credit for military victories to its kings. For example, Viṣṇuvardhana is credited with the victory over the Cōḷas at Talakāḍu in the Belur inscription, and is from then on referred to with the epithet, *talakāḍu-gonḍa*, or ‘one who made Talakāḍu his own.’ Only from the inscriptions of a subordinate named Gaṅgarāja do we learn that he too played a vital role in the 1117 conquest.⁹

Another noteworthy discrepancy in the Hoysaḷa genealogy as represented by the inscriptions of Gaṅgarāja and his family is the explicit mention of Nṛpakāma. An 1120 inscription — marking Gaṅgarāja’s establishment of a *basadi*, or Jaina temple, at Śravaṇa Belgoḷa — mentions that his father Ēcirāja had been in the service of Nṛpakāma.¹⁰ Nṛpakāma does not appear in the genealogy commissioned by Viṣṇuvardhana at Belur, which goes straight to Vinayāditya from the mythical Saḷa. The Belur inscription identifies the Hoysaḷas’ place of origin as Śaśakapura in Sanskrit, or Sosēvūr in Kannada. This town was later identified as present-day Angadi in the Chikmagalur District. Located on the slopes of the Western Ghats, it is the findspot for a number of the earliest inscriptions of the Hoysaḷa dynasty. Only through these inscriptions do we learn of Nṛpakāma, Vinayāditya’s father.

According to these early-eleventh-century inscriptions, Nṛpakāma’s reign predated the Cālukyās’ ennoblement of the Hoysaḷas to *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara*. In the inscriptions of the time, it was common for subordinates to identify themselves by using the name or epithet of their overlord before their own name. For example, the Hoysaḷas first became subordinates of the Kalyāṇa Cālukyās under the king Sōmēśvara I whose epithet was Trailokyamalla. His subordinates would use the epithet Trailokyamalla before their own names to acknowledge their subordination: Trailokyamalla Hoysaḷa, Trailokyamalla Pāṇḍya etc.¹¹ In the Sosēvūr inscriptions however, we find the Hoysaḷa ruler styled with the epithets *rakkasa* and *rācamalla*, the names of the last Gaṅga rulers.

9 Both a stone slab inscription placed in a doorway on the *doḍḍa betṭa* or “big hill” of Śravaṇa Belgoḷa (*Śravaṇa Belgoḷa* 240) and an 1117 inscription carved into the hill at Tippur in the Malavalli Taluk (*Malavalli* 31) recount the details of the battle in great detail, where Gaṅgarāja marched against the Cōḷa *mahāsāmanta* Aḍiyama in a surprise attack and caused him to flee, “uniting the whole *nāḍu* under the dominion of a single umbrella.”

10 Nṛpakāma is thought to have reigned from 1022–1047, while Gaṅgarāja commissioned this inscription in 1120. Although this suggests rather long careers of both father and son, I am assuming that Ēcirāja served under Nṛpakāma towards the end of his reign, and that Gaṅgarāja was an older subordinate of Viṣṇuvardhana. This tracks with Gaṅgarāja playing an important role in the conquest of Talakāḍu.

11 See, for example, *Chikmagalur* 15, in which Vinayāditya is identified with the title *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* and the epithet Trailokyamalla, borrowed from the Cālukya king Sōmēśvara I.

The Gaṅga dynasty ruled southern Karnataka from the fifth to the early eleventh century. The region which the Hoysaḷas ruled as subordinates of the Cālukyas was named Gaṅgavāḍi after this family. In 1004, however, they were unseated from their capital at Talakāḍu, southeast of modern-day Mysuru (Mysore), by the Cōḷas. Branches of the family continued to appear in inscriptions, but as subordinates to the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas, ruling under them in the Banavāsi region.

Coelho assumes the relationship between the Hoysaḷas and the Gaṅgas to be fairly straightforward, where the Hoysaḷas, once subordinates to the Gaṅgas, later styled themselves as their successors when the Gaṅga dynasty fell from power. However, closer examination of the inscriptions reveals that the Gaṅgas had an extremely tenuous relationship with the mountainous region where the Hoysaḷas originated. The only Gaṅga inscriptions found in this region are in Coorg, and cite the *malepar* or mountain-chiefs as the protectors of a grant made by the Gaṅga king. One of these inscriptions (*Coorg 2*), discovered at a town called Peggur and dated to 978, corresponds with the rule of Rācamalla IV and his brother, Rakkasa. These are also the epithets which the early Hoysaḷas, Nṛpakāma and Vinayāditya used in their inscriptions.

An inscription (*Mudgere 19*) recording a grant from 1025, found close to Sosēvūr, for example, identifies Nṛpakāma with the title Rācamalla Vermmāḍi, and a 1063 inscription (*Mudgere 13*) located outside the Jaina temple at Sosēvūr declares that the Hoysaḷa king had the syllables *ra-kka-sa-voy-sa-ḷan* emblazoned on this flag. The appearance of these rulers' names before Hoysaḷa indicates that the Hoysaḷas at this time positioned themselves as subordinates to the by then displaced Gaṅga dynasty. With their ennoblement by the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas, however, they began to claim the titles of the Gaṅga sovereigns and style themselves as Gaṅga kings rather than subordinates. When the then Cālukya prince, Vikramāditya VI, was stationed at Banavāsi, ruling the region on behalf of his father, Sōmēśvara I, he took on the titles of the erstwhile Gaṅga kings. It is likely therefore, that the Cālukyas bestowed this title on the Hoysaḷas when they ennobled them to the position of *mahāmaṇḍalesvara* over the region of Gaṅgavāḍi.

This is most likely the reason that Viṣṇuvardhana, when he commissioned the first royal genealogy, chose to omit Nṛpakāma and begin the lineage with Vinayāditya, the first Hoysaḷa to bear the title of *mahāmaṇḍalesvara*. However, Viṣṇuvardhana's subordinate Gaṅgarāja chose to retain the record of Nṛpakāma's rule in order to recall his father's service to the Hoysaḷa family before his own, which provides a slightly different picture of the Hoysaḷa genealogy. In the following sections, I illustrate how this desire to record certain details of the family's history, despite deviation from genealogy commissioned by the royal family, came to depend on the time a subordinate family spent in service to the

Hoysaḷas, their distance from the Hoysaḷa nexus of power, and the fortunes of the Hoysaḷa family themselves over time.

4. Subordinates with generational ties to the Hoysaḷas

Like Gaṅgarāja, there were many subordinates who boasted generations-long associations with and service to the Hoysaḷa family. Gaṅgarāja, while commissioning inscriptions under Viṣṇuvardhana's patronage, celebrated his father's service to Viṣṇuvardhana's great-grandfather Nṛpakāma. Similarly, other subordinate families who first commissioned inscriptions under Viṣṇuvardhana systematically recorded how their ancestors had served previous generations of Hoysaḷa kings.

One of the most detailed accounts of such a generational association comes from a family who claimed affiliation with the Hoysaḷas starting with the reign of Vinayāditya. I call them the Mariyāne family after their patriarch. I have reconstructed the genealogy of this family (Figure 2) primarily from their two longest inscriptions: a mid-twelfth-century stone slab inscription from Sindigere in the Chikmagalur District, which records the family's relationship with the Hoysaḷas from Vinayāditya to Viṣṇuvardhana (*Chikmagalur 160*), and another stone slab inscription dated 1184, found near the entrance of a village called Alisandra, which extends the genealogy two generations further and records a grant made during the rule of Ballāḷa II (*Nagamangala 32*). There are several shorter inscriptions which make mention of this family, but they provide supplementary information to the chronology that emerges in the inscriptions at Sindigere and Alisandra.

The older Sindigere inscription was commissioned towards the end of Viṣṇuvardhana's reign in the late 1130s. The inscription relates the family's intergenerational relationship on the one hand with the Hoysaḷas, and on the other with the town of Sindigere. The Alisandra inscription shows us how the family's own fortunes grew with those of their overlords — they continued to renew their rule over Sindigere and maintain the Jaina temples there, but also commissioned a Jaina temple at Alisandra, then Anuvāsamudra, to mark the new territories under their rulership. While the cluster of inscriptions among which the above Sindigere inscription is found is closer to the central nexus of the Hoysaḷas, the Alisandra inscription is closer to Mysuru and shows that the Hoysaḷas' territorial expansion reflected in the increased dominion of their subordinates over time. Both inscriptions contain the same narrative, which marks the repeated renewal of the relationship between the Mariyāne family and the town of Sindigere, in conjunction with an event that marked a new connection to the Hoysaḷa family.

In both inscriptions, the first Hoysaḷa king mentioned is Vinayāditya. According to the account, his senior queen Keleyabbe accepted a military envoy named Mariyāne as her younger brother, and she and Vinayāditya performed the *kanyādāna* or ‘gift of the bride’ at his marriage, along with the *bhūmidāna*, or ‘gift of land,’ of Sindigere. Both inscriptions provide a date for this event, though they differ slightly – 1047 in the Sindigere inscription and 1045 in the Alisandra inscription – and record that it took place in Sosēvūr, the earliest residence of the Hoysaḷas in the Western Ghats (*Chikmagalur* 160, ll. 9–10).

The inscriptions go on to record that the oldest grandson of Vinayāditya, Ballāḷa I, married three highly accomplished daughters of the Mariyāne family in 1103 (*Chikmagalur* 160, ll. 15–18). At the wedding in Belur, Sindigere was granted to the family in payment of the *molevāla ṛṇa*, ‘debt of breastmilk.’ The Sindigere inscription stops detailing the relationship between the Hoysaḷas and the Mariyāne family at this generation. It then proceeds with praise of the king Viṣṇuvardhana and identifies two brothers from the Mariyāne family as his subordinates – Mariyāne II and his younger brother Bharata. The inscription then begins narrating their lineage and identifies an ancestor of the Mariyāne family, Ḍākarasa, who served both the Hoysaḷas and their predecessors, the Gaṅga dynasty.¹² Although this mention is relatively short when compared to the vast amount of the genealogy that does correspond with the established narrative of the Hoysaḷas, the assertion that their ancestor was already a distinguished lord (*prabhu*) under the Gaṅgas emphasised the Mariyāne family’s local prominence with the implication that it preceded the advent of their Hoysaḷa overlords and would therefore likely outlast them.

In these deviances from the Hoysaḷa line – both in the case of Gaṅgarāja mentioning his father’s service to Nṛpakāma, who remained unacknowledged in the Hoysaḷa genealogy, and in the mention of Ḍākarasa’s service to both the Hoysaḷa and Gaṅga families in the Mariyāne family’s case – I see two important signs. First, it was a politically and financially weighted act to commission an inscription, whether it be for the establishment of a new temple or even just for donations to an existing one. Judging by the limited number of inscriptions from a single subordinate family, these endowments were rare chances to record the family history. Later generations therefore bore the responsibility to account for their families’ compounded loyalty to the overlord’s family over generations. Second, these families and their local ties often pre-dated the dynasty to whom they swore loyalty. Deviation from the established royal genealogy, in

12 *Chikmagalur* 160, l. 63: *gaṅga-rājya-poysaḷa-rājyakk’ ēka prabhuvēne negaldam ḍākarasa daṇḍanātha.*

particular, was a way to express that they would remain successfully tied to the land whether or not the fledgling dynasty ultimately established itself.

As it happens, the Hoysaḷas did go on to achieve greater territorial success and firmly plant themselves as rulers of the region, first as subordinates to the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa and then under Ballāḷa II as independent sovereigns after his defeat of the Cālukyas in 1189. The later Alisandra inscription of 1184 allows us to see the progress of the Mariyāṇe family in conjunction with the growing fortunes of the Hoysaḷas. It records achievements of further generations of the Mariyāṇe family, and provides details about members of its many branches. For example, the inscription describes the marital relationships between the Mariyāṇe family and that of Gaṅgarāja. Gaṅgarāja is recognised as the *maiduna*, or sister's husband to Mariyāṇe I, while his son Boppadēva was the *maiduna* to Mariyāṇe II and his brother Bharata I (*Nelamangala* 32, ll. 27–33). According to the inscription, these brothers (also the donors of the Sindigere inscription) named their son Biṭṭidēva after the king Viṣṇuwardhana, and in exchange for a tribute of 1000 *hon* (a unit of gold), renewed their lordship over Sindigere. In addition, they were also given two more territories, namely Baggavaḷḷi and Diṇḍiganakere. During the reign of Narasiṃha I, the brothers paid a tribute of 500 *hon* to renew their lordship over all three places.

Finally, the Alisandra inscription discusses the rule of Ballāḷa II when Bharata II and his younger brother Bāhubali renewed the grant and their lordship of all three places in 1183. This corresponds with the date of the inscription, which records that during the *mahādāna* or ceremony of the 'great gift' following the birth of Ballāḷa's son, Narasiṃha II, the two brothers renewed their previous grants and provided funds for the services of the *basadi* they established at Anuvasamudra. They once again tied the renewal of their grants to a major event in the Hoysaḷa family.

In this later inscription, though the genealogy beginning with the ancestor Ḍākarasa is mentioned, the detail about his service to the Gaṅga dynasty no longer features. By this time therefore, the Mariyāṇe family was content to be recognised solely through their connections to the Hoysaḷas and the network of subordinates that fell under their overlordship. Along with the ongoing and evolving relationship with the Hoysaḷa family, the genealogy in both inscriptions also traces the movement of the dynasty geographically, from their town of origin at Sosēvūr to Belur and finally to Dōrasamudra. At the same time, the Alisandra inscription shows the Mariyāṇe family's acquisition of new territories as their relationship with the Hoysaḷas was sustained across generations.

The genealogy of the Hoysaḷas as presented by the Mariyāṇe family echoes the official royal genealogy, but for the brief mention of their ancestor's

lordship under Gaṅga rule. Like the established royal genealogy, and unlike in the inscriptions of Gaṅgarāja, it omits Nṛpakāma. This shows that even over the short duration of Viṣṇuvardhana's reign, there was an increased alignment between the narratives commissioned by the royal family and the powerful subordinates close to them. We see that both the Mariyāne family and Gaṅgarāja had associations with the Hoysaḷas generations before the reign and victory of Viṣṇuvardhana, but it was the resources and recognition that victory brought which allowed them to quite literally set that history in stone. The mention of figures outside the established Hoysaḷa genealogy reflects the precarity of aligning themselves entirely with the new dynasty, but as time went on and the Hoysaḷas' position grew more secure, even the small reference to their connection to the Gaṅgas disappeared.

To further illustrate this pattern, Kēśirāja, a subordinate of Ballāḷa II who commissioned a much later inscription in the early thirteenth century, makes the explicit claim that his lineage came into being alongside that of the Hoysaḷas.¹³ In concurrence with this claim, the inscription in Agrahara Balguli found on the wall of a temple and dated 1210 (*Chennarayapatna 244*), lists each successive generation of Kēśirāja's family serving a successive generation of the Hoysaḷa family. Rāma-daṇḍādhipa served Vinayāditya, and his son Śrīdhara-daṇḍanātha was Ereyaṅga's eminent minister (*mantri lalāman*). Śrīdhara had three sons, Mallidēva, Dāmarāja, and Kēśavarāja. As leaders of the army (*mukhya sēnādhipar*) they participated in the expansion of Viṣṇuvardhana's kingdom. Further, Mallidēva's sons were Mādhava, Dvijēndrōpama, Beṭṭarasa, and Dāma who served under Narasiṃha I. To Beṭṭarasa and his wife Lakṣmī were born five sons and one daughter in Ballāḷa II's kingdom. The inscription states that all of these children went on to distinguish themselves in Ballāḷa's kingdom, but proceeds to describe only the descendants of Kēśava (Kēśirāja) and Mallapa (Mallidēva).

The Agrahara Balguli inscription lauds Kēśirāja as one of the most prized ministers of Ballāḷa's court, and describes his extensive construction of temples and tanks, and his establishment of *agrahāras* in Nallūr, Taḷirūr, Bāgiyūr, Bālagarcche, and Beḷgaḷi. The inscription also includes imagery describing the splendour of Ballāḷa's court or *āsthāna*, and Kēśirāja is praised as appearing like a ruby among gems in Ballāḷa's court. He also has the title of *mahāpradhāna*, and the inscription describes in detail the creation of the Kēśavapura *agrahāra* in a village formerly known as Beḷgaḷi in the Nirguṇḍa-nāḍ. Having received the village as a grant from the king, he built two reservoirs named Kēśavasamudra and

13 *Chennarayapatna 244*, l. 7: *end āyṭu poysalānṅayam and āyṭu kēśirājan' anṅayam*.

Lakṣmīsamudra, and established the deity Kēśavēśvara, for whose rituals several individuals made donations.

An inscription from 1249 (*Chikmagalur 20*), from the reign of Hoysaḷa Sōmēśvara I, the grandson of Ballāḷa II, records the ongoing genealogy of Kēśirāja's family. The portion that records the Hoysaḷa genealogy and their relationship with it, however, is greatly attenuated and begins only with Viṣṇuvardhana rather than with Vinayāditya. By this time, subordinate families were apparently content to associate exclusively with the Hoysaḷa family, without any deviation from the official Hoysaḷa version of their genealogy. There were no claims to prior association as Kēśirāja's family is literally described as having emerged along with the Hoysaḷas. The Hoysaḷas' growing political influence is reflected in the way the subordinates geographically closest to them no longer felt the need to claim associations other than with their overlords as the Hoysaḷas became the uncontested rulers of Gaṅgavāḍi over the course of the twelfth century.

5. The Huliyar Family: Service to multiple royal families

The last family I examine shows that even this trend was not universal and there was a variable apart from time which determined the genealogical narratives of subordinate families: distance. The Huliyar family — I call them that because of their generations-long association with the town of Huliyar in modern day Tumkur District — were a family of subordinates that first appear in inscriptions during the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana in the mid-twelfth century, and continue to be active through successive generations (Figure 3). They owed their ability to commission inscriptions and record their genealogy to Hoysaḷa patronage; however, they celebrated the varied affiliation of their ancestors to multiple ruling households. Huliyar rests on the border between three districts, namely Hassan, Chikmagalur, and Tumkur. In the early medieval period, this would have been in the Noḷambavāḍi region, which only came under Hoysaḷa overlordship in the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana. The inscriptions associated with the family range from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century.

The earliest inscription of this family, *Arasikere 55* from 1143, identifies one Gōyidēva with the epithet, *huliyēra puravarādhīśvara*, or lord of the town of Huliyera. The genealogy of the family begins with his ancestor, only identified by his titles — in most cases *sthira gambīra* — and later named Kariyabamma in the inscription *Kadur 30* from the 1170s. Multiple inscriptions relate the same account where he earned titles for his service and achievements in different courts. He earned the first title, *vīra-taḷa-prahāri* (*Kadur 30*) or *gaṅḍa-taḷa-prahāri*

(*Kadur* 35),¹⁴ because he defended the Noḷamba king's senior queen,¹⁵ Śrīdēvī, when enemies attacked and abducted her. The second, he obtained due to his great skill in battle. As though killing for sport, he slew the great warrior, Doḍḍanka in the Cālukya king Āhavamalla's camp, thereby gaining the title of *doḍḍanka baḍiva*, or one who strikes in the great battlefield.¹⁶

There are two possible explanations for the shift in Kariyabamma's affiliation here. On the one hand, he might have travelled to different courts in search of a patron. However, I think it is more likely, given the family's ongoing connection with Huliyaṛ, that this shift reflected the changing rulership of the locality. While the family remained relatively established in the region, what changed was the suzerain to whom they owed allegiance. This is supported by the fact that the first Hoysaḷa ruler the family served was Viṣṇuvardhana, which corresponds with the latter's eastward territorial expansion, and with Viṣṇuvardhana's and Ballāḷa I's defeat of the Pāṇḍyas of Uccaṅgi in the early twelfth century.

Unlike the families discussed in the previous section, the Huliyaṛ family continued to celebrate their allegiance to the Noḷamba Pallavas and the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa well into the twelfth century when Hoysaḷa power was more established and subordinates like the Mariyāṇe family allowed their identity to be entirely subsumed under the Hoysaḷa genealogy. Gōyidēva's father, Bhīma, gained acclaim in Viṣṇuvardhana's court and it was ultimately Narasiṃha I who gave Gōyidēva the position — not only in his ancestral Huliyaṛ but also in Arasikere, closer to the centre of Hoysaḷa power (*Arasikere* 55) — which allowed him to first record the family history. This earliest inscription describes Gōyidēva as Narasiṃha's "right hand," but that did not compromise Gōyidēva's prerogative to record his ancestors' achievements under multiple rulers.

14 Rice (1901, 6) translates *gaṇḍa-taḷa-prahāri* as "slapper on the cheek" in *Kadur* 30 but I suggest that *taḷa-prahāri* translates to 'the one who struck with his palm,' in reference to the fact that Kariyabamma apparently quelled the enemies who had abducted the Noḷamba queen with just the open palm of his hand (see note 15 below); *vīra* and *gaṇḍa* are prefixes, meaning 'valorous one' and 'lord' respectively.

15 *Arasikere* 55, ll. 16–18: *sthira-gambhīra-noḷamban agra-mahiṣi śrīdēviyaṃ tadviśōtkar ant āgaḷe bandu bandi viḍiyal tad vairi saṅghātamaṃ | bharadind eydi taḷa prahāradoḷe koṇḍ and ittan ā bhūpan ā daradiṃ vīra-taḷa-prahāri-vesaram dhātrī-taḷam baṇṇisa||*.

16 *Arasikere* 55, ll. 18–20: *cālukyāhavamalla nṛpālana kaṭakadoḷe kondu doḍḍankamumaṃ līleyoḷe paḍedan adaṭam pālisi doḍḍanka baḍivan emb ī birūḍam*.

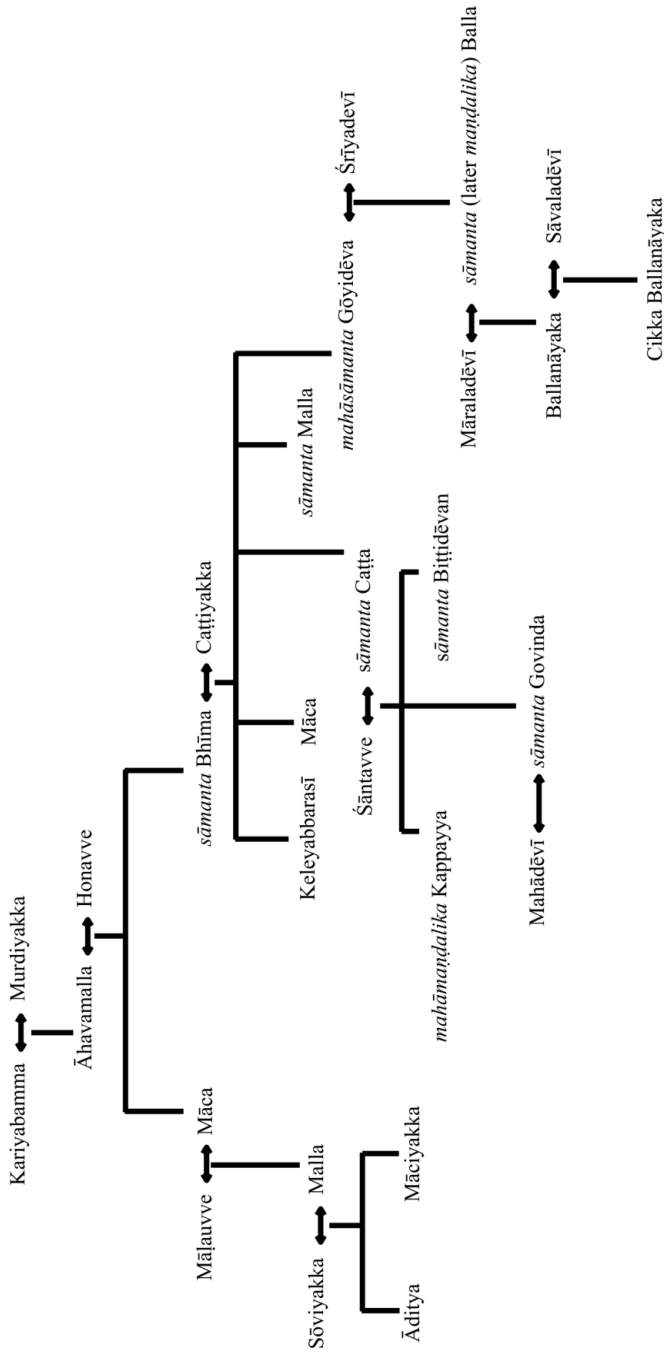


Figure 3. The Huliya family tree

Kariyabamma and his wife Murdiyakka, who is again identified by name only in a much later inscription (*Kadur 36*), had one son, Āhavamalla. Subordinates often named their children after their overlord, and Āhavamalla was the epithet of the Cālukya king Sōmēśvara I, at whose camp Kariyabamma also gained his second title. Sōmēśvara I was also the overlord of the early Hoysaḷas in the late eleventh century, so it is likely that these local rulers came under the Cālukya umbrella around the same time. This also helps us date Kariyabamma to the early to mid-eleventh century, which is when Sōmēśvara I lived and ruled.

Āhavamalla and his wife Honnavve had two sons, Bhīma and Māca, who are never mentioned together in the same inscription. It is only through their common identification of their father and grandfather that I was able to deduce their relationship by reading across multiple inscriptions. Both lines had among their ranks important subordinates, especially to Ballāḷa II, his son Narasiṃha II, and his grandson Sōmēśvara. Bhīma gained the title of *sitaḡara gaṇḡa*, or 'lord/conqueror of the unchaste,' from Viṣṇuvardhana. In rendering the accomplishments of their lineage, various members of the family recalled the family's service not only to the Hoysaḷa rulers but also to the Noḷamba-Pallavas and the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas. Their geographical location in Noḷambavāḡi meant that they existed on the periphery of the Hoysaḷa polity. It was therefore more important to them to celebrate their loyalty to multiple ruling families and emphasise their continuing presence in the area surrounding Huliyaṛ.

Bhīma's son Gōyidēva is the most prolific member of this family, followed closely by his brother, Caṡṡa. They ruled Huliyaṛ and the nearby Magare in the 1130s. Gōyidēva outlived Narasiṃha I to serve Ballāḷa II, and in honour of this, named his son Ballāḷanāyaka. Members of several different branches of the family have inscriptions around the same area, within a twenty-mile radius of Huliyaṛ. In an inscription from the Channarayapatna District, Gōyidēva's brother Caṡṡa's son Biṡṡidēvan identifies Ballāḷanāyaka as his younger brother (*anuja*), showing that the different branches of the family acknowledged their relationships (*Chiknayakanahalli 21, Chiknayakanahalli 32*).

A stone inscription of 1188, found at Yadagatta in the Chiknayakanahalli Taluk, records Ballāḷanāyaka's promotion from the title *mahāsāmanta* — which his father and previous ancestors held in Huliyaṛ — to *mahāmaṇḡalika*.¹⁷ The transition here, from *sāmanta* to *maṇḡalika*, showed both that Ballāḷa ennobled his namesake in recognition of his family's longstanding connection with the region — over at least three generations — and that the ambit of Hoysaḷa territory

17 *Chiknayakanahalli 20*, ll. 24–26: *idirānta-vairi-nṡparam kadanadoḷ irid' ikki vīra-hoysaṇa meccalu mudadiṃ balleya-nāyakan odavida maṇḡalika-padaviyaṃ nēre paḡedan.*

was growing: they were in control of a large enough territory around Huliyaṛ to warrant a higher-ranked officer there. An inscription from around the same time identifies his wife, Māraladēvi with the titles of *piriyarasi* and *paṭṭamahādēvi* (*Chiknayakanahalli 14*), senior queen and crowned consort, respectively. By ennobling Ballāṅāyaka, Ballāṅa thus raised the status of the entire family. As later inscriptions attest, descendants of the Huliyaṛ family continued to carry the title *maṅḍalika* well into the thirteenth century. In one inscription from 1232 found on a stone at a temple in the village of Heggere, Gōyidēva's brother's son and Ballāṅāyaka's paternal cousin Kappayya is seen holding the title (*Chiknayakanahalli 27*).

In later inscriptions of the family from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, after the promotion of Ballāṅāyaka to *maṅḍalika*, the genealogy of the family changes. In these inscriptions, the narrative begins from Bhīma — the same ancestor who first gained renown in Viṣṇuvarḍhana's court (*Chiknayakanahalli 13*, *Chiknayakanahalli 14*). This illustrates a similar pattern to the subordinates who were closer to the Hoysaḷas geographically, although on a delayed timeline. Once they were secure in the prospects of the Hoysaḷa family in their ancestral locality, they were willing to allow their identities to be entirely defined by the relationship with their overlords.

6. Conclusion

Comparing the genealogies of the Hoysaḷas and their subordinates shows us that though the rhetoric of the inscriptions themselves supported the idea of the subordinates' complete loyalty to their overlords, the deviations in their genealogies and accounts of their family's achievements belies this totalising rhetoric. Instead, it exposes us to a political world in which subordinates had a significant amount of autonomy in how they chose to tell the stories of their ancestors, even when it deviated from the established royal genealogy. However, the evidence also illustrates that the way subordinate families saw and represented the Hoysaḷas changed depending on the security of the family's fortunes and their distance from the nexus of Hoysaḷa rule. Therefore, the subordinate families could either see the Hoysaḷas as one of the many royal families their ancestors served, or — with time and increased faith in the Hoysaḷas' own fate — allow their identity and their history to be entirely subsumed within that of the Hoysaḷas.

The political and military position of the Hoysaḷas therefore determined the way their subordinates represented the royal genealogy as well as their own,

which in turn allows us a glimpse into the inclusions and omissions that went into the process of composing a genealogy. Rather than being merely a record of events, as early epigraphists tended to understand them, they were the product of continuing choices based on the fortunes and relationships of the various families involved.

Primary sources

See page xvi about references to primary sources.

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Chiknayakanahalli 14: Epigraphia Carnatica 12 (Rice 1904b).
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The Central Indian Yādava Dynasty: Epigraphic Self-Representation versus Hemādri's Account

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1. Introduction

Medieval rulers called Yādavas are referred to in numerous inscriptions from Maharashtra and northern Karnataka dating from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, as well as in the *Vratakhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, composed by an author named Hemādri, a minister at the court of the Yādavas in the thirteenth century. Based on the epigraphic material, two lines of the Yādava dynasty can be distinguished (Table 1): an early one with the capital at Sindinagara, present-day Sinnar near Nasik in western Maharashtra (850–1100), and a late one with the capital at Devagiri, present-day Daulatabad in the Aurangabad District of central Maharashtra (1100–1320).

Early Yādavas	850 – 1000	no inscriptions extant
	1000 – 1100	copperplate charters
Late Yādavas	late 12th – mid-13th century	stone inscriptions
	late 13th – early 14th century	stone inscriptions and copperplate charters

Table 1. Inscriptions of the Yādava period

Hemādri called this family *yādava-varṁśa*. In their own epigraphic records, the kings of this royal house were named Yādava or described as members of the Yadu dynasty (*yadu-kula*, *yadu-varṁśa*, or *yadv-anvaya*) and as descendants of one branch of the mythical lunar lineage (*soma-varṁśa*). The historical Yādavas were not the only dynasty which used the name Yādava.¹ Before them, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa

1 The label “historical Yādavas” is used by modern historians, but was, of course, no concept that was really applicable in their time, because the kings of that dynasty would not have

kings had employed this name as a secondary appellation since the reign of Amoghavarṣa I (Schmiedchen 2014, 48–51). The Karnataka-based Hoysaḷa rulers, contemporaries of the Yādavas, also tagged their royal dynasty with the same appellation as a secondary designation (Derrett 1957, 15). The historical Yādava kings were also called *Seuṇa* (*Sevaṇa*, *Sevuṇa*), although not so much by themselves but rather by their adversaries, for instance, the Hoysaḷas and the Kākatīyas (Verma 1970, 71–72, 86, 103–4). An early ruler of the Yādavas had borne the name *Seuṇacandra*, and the Yādavas used the designation *Seuṇadeśa* for their core area, the present-day Khandesh region (R. G. Bhandarkar 1927, 138; Schmiedchen 2014, 325, 331, 343).

Inscriptional evidence for the activities of the early Yādava line starts after the decline of Rāṣṭrakūṭa power, around the year 1000. The earliest Yādava rulers (850–1000), who were probably subordinates of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, seem to have left no epigraphs of their own. They are only mentioned in the *praśastis* of their immediate successors (1000–1100), who had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Western Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa. The upper Godāvāri area was the heartland of the Yādava polity during the eleventh century. We possess a small number of inscriptions from this period, almost exclusively Sanskrit copper plates.

The late Yādava phase sets in towards the end of the twelfth century. Only stone records are known from the decades until the mid-thirteenth century. Although several copperplate charters have survived from the period of the second half of the thirteenth to the first half of the fourteenth century, stone records outnumber them by far (Schmiedchen 2014, 325–26). The late Yādava rulers extended their rule over large parts of the Deccan, which today belong to Maharashtra and to north and central Karnataka. This expansion towards the south had become possible because of the steady decline of Cālukya power around Kalyāṇa at the end of the twelfth century (Table 2).

Calukyas of Bādāmi	Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Gujarat	6th to 8th century
Rāṣṭrakūṭas	Maharashtra, Gujarat, and north Karnataka	8th to 10th century
Yādavas	Maharashtra and north Karnataka	early: 9th to 11th century late: 12th to 14th century
Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa	Karnataka	10th to 12th century

Table 2. Chronology of the Yādavas and some other important central Indian dynasties

made a distinction in their self-perception between their mythological ancestors and their historical predecessors. It seems, however, justified to apply this label, because this royal family stands out from others in using this name as a primary appellation.

The link between the early (Table 3) and the late (Figure 1) Yādava branch is not entirely clear. Epigraphs which can be safely attributed to the early Yādavas seem to cease with Āiramadeva (Schmiedchen 2014, 329), whereas inscriptions which can be safely attributed to the late Yādavas start only with Bhillama V (*ibid.*, 338). Hence, Yādava history is obscured between the end of the eleventh and the late twelfth century. From this interim period, we know a few stone records of a more private character, which were either issued by local rulers whose relationship to the Yādavas is a matter of speculation, or refer to the Yādava dynasty in an incidental way without mentioning their pedigree. On the other hand, all the *praśastis* from the late Yādava period, with just one exception, trace back their genealogy at the most up to Yādava Siṅghaṇa I (*ibid.*, 339). Hence, if we had only these inscriptions, we would know virtually nothing about the potential connection between the early and the late Yādava lines.

1.	Dr̥ḍhaprahāra/Dr̥ḍhaprahārin	
2.	Seuṇacandra I	
3.	Dhāḍi[yappa]	
4.	Bhillama I	
5.	Rāja	
6.	Vandiga/Vaddiga (+ queen Voddiyavvā)	
7.	Bhillama II (+ queen Lacchiyavvā/Lakṣmī)	ŚS 922 (1000 CE)
8.	Vesū[ka] (+ queen Nāyiyaladevī)	
9.	Bhillama III (+ queen Avvalladevī)	ŚS 948 (1025 CE), ŚS 974 (1052 CE)
10.	Seuṇacandra/Seuṇendu II	ŚS 991 (1069 CE)
11.	Āira[m]madeva (+ queen Yogallā)	ŚS 1009 (1087 CE), ŚS 1020 (1098 CE)

Table 3. Line of succession and dates of the early Yādavas according to their epigraphs

The decisive epigraphic clue is not provided by a copperplate charter, but by the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II* (r. 1247–1261), dated ŚS 1176 (1254 CE), which has been engraved on the door lintel above the entrance to the main hall of the Anantaśayana temple in Methi (Dhule District in northwestern Maharashtra). In this epigraph, the dynastic pedigree of the Yādavas is traced back up to Dr̥ḍhaprahāra (Table 3), the founder of the early line.

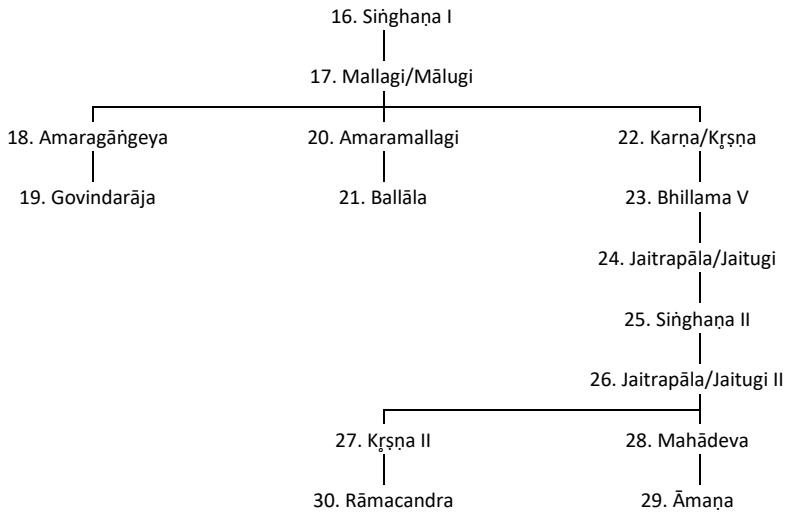


Figure 1. Pedigree of the late Yādavas, reconstructed on the basis of inscriptions and Hemādri. The reason for starting the numbering with 16 is that Hemādri's pedigree for the early Yādavas has been taken into account here; see Table 4 below.

2. Epigraphic versus non-epigraphic *praśastis*

The obscure relationship of the late Yādavas with the early line of the same name is comparable to that between the late Western Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa and the early Calukyas of Bādāmi² (Pollock 2006, 153–61). The gap between the early Calukyas and the late Cālukyas was one of two hundred years, caused by the two centuries of Rāṣṭrakūṭa rule in between. The Calukya/Cālukya and the Yādava traditions have in common that, besides inscriptions, non-epigraphic texts are available for historical reconstruction: the *Sāhasabhīmavijayam* for the Cālukyas and Hemādri's *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* for the Yādavas.³ Some of the *Vratākhaṇḍa* manuscripts of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* comprise a pedigree of both the lines. We owe this important information to R. G. Bhandarkar (1927, 136), who explicated:

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- 2 For my distinction in the spelling of the names between “Calukya” (for the Bādāmi line) and “Cālukya” (for the Kalyāṇa line), see Schmiedchen (2014, 7 n. 5). See also Fleet (1882, 17–30, 39–56) and Kielhorn (1902–03, 2, 26).
- 3 For the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, see also De Simini (2016, 235, 256, 268, 283).

The genealogy of the Yādavas is given in the introduction to the *Vratākhaṇḍa* attributed to or composed by Hemādri, who was a minister of Mahādeva, one of the later princes of the dynasty. Some of the Manuscripts of the work, however, do not contain it, and in others it begins with Bhillama, as it was he who acquired supreme power and raised the dynasty to importance. Others again contain an account of the family from the very beginning, the first person mentioned being the Moon who was churned out of the milky ocean.

As the *Bibliotheca Indica* edition of the *Vratākhaṇḍa* does not contain these *praśastis*, Bhandarkar (1927, 136–37 n. 2) studied the manuscripts and edited the longer version, which consists of more than fifty stanzas, as *Rājapraśasti I*, and the shorter one as *Rājapraśasti II* (*ibid.*, 191–98).⁴

In contrast, the royal genealogy in the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II*, ŚS 1176, comprises only two stanzas (vv. 4–5), presenting ten members of the early Yādava line and eight members of the late Yādava line up to King Kṛṣṇa II, in a listlike manner. It is worth mentioning that this record merely combines data from early and late epigraphic *praśastis*, without adding any information. Those representatives of the early Yādavas who were left out in the charters, because they belonged to collateral branches, are also missing here, a practice labelled as “collateral oppression” by David Henige (1975). The composition of the *Methi stone inscription* must have been based on similar sources as the early Yādava copper plates, or on copies of such charters. But why can we suppose that some members of the dynasty were omitted in the records? The main reason for this assumption is that Hemādri, who apparently aimed at providing a “complete” pedigree of the royal dynasty he was serving, has listed more family members of the early Yādava line (Table 4) than all the known stone and copperplate inscriptions together (Schmiedchen 2014, 329).

The differences in the early Yādava pedigrees deducible from all the epigraphs on the one hand and from the account in Hemādri’s *Vratākhaṇḍa* on the other pose the question for the reasons behind these obvious genealogical disparities. Had the composers of the early inscriptions attempted to streamline potential disruptions in the actual line of succession through systematic omissions, or did Hemādri, conversely, try to subsequently fill certain gaps in the transmission? As the two source types do not generally contradict each other, it can be assumed that the first option is the more likely one, i.e. that the authors of the epigraphs tried to streamline the official Yādava pedigree. Those who commissioned the inscriptions seem to have instructed the chancelleries to

4 For these “paratexts,” see also De Simini (2016, 236).

make a selection of only the most important Yādava protagonists in terms of dynastic politics and to omit certain others (Schmiedchen 2014, 337).

Copperplate charters, ŚS 922–1020	Methi stone inscription, ŚS 1176	Hemādri, <i>Vratākhaṇḍa</i> , ŚS 1182–1192
1. Dṛḍhāprahārin	1. Dṛḍhāprahāra (v. 4)	1. Dṛḍhāprahārin (v. I.20)
2. Seuṇacandra I	2. Seunna I (v. 4)	2. Seuṇacandra I (v. I.22)
3. Dhāḍiyappa	3. Dhāḍipaka (v. 4)	3. Dhāḍiyasa (v. I.23)
4. Bhillama I	4. Bhillama I (v. 4)	4. Bhillama I (v. I.23)
5. Rāja	5. Rāja (v. 4)	5. Rājagi (v. I.23)
6. Vandiga/Vaddiga	6. Vādugi (v. 4)	6. Vādugi I (v. I.23)
		7. Dhāḍiyama (v. I.24)
7. Bhillama II	7. Vara-Bhillama (v. 4)	8. Bhillama II (v. I.24)
8. Vesūka	8. Vesugideva (v. 4)	9. Vesugi I (v. I.24)
9. Bhillama III	9. Mṛga-Bhillama (v. 5)	10. Bhillama III (v. I.26)
		11. Vādugi II (v. I.26)
		12. Vesugi II (v. I.27)
		13. Bhillama IV (v. I.28)
10. Seuṇacandra II	10. Seunna II (v. 5)	14. Seuṇa II (v. I.28)
11. Āiramadeva		15. Parammadeva (v. I.30)

Table 4. Comparison of the line of succession of the early Yādavas in different sources

Since the role of *praśastis* may have differed in epigraphic and non-epigraphic writing, it might be advisable to take a closer look at the authors of these texts. One of the opening stanzas (v. 13) of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* identifies Hemādri as the *sarva-śrīkaraṇa-prabhū* or ‘head of all administrative departments’⁵ of King Mahādeva (r. 1261–1271). The colophons of this work use a similar term to denote its author, namely *samasta-karaṇādhiśvara*, ‘supervisor of all administrative departments.’⁶ A minister called Hemādri is also described in the *Thane copperplate charter of the time of Yādava Rāmacandra* (r. 1272–1311), dated ŚS 1194

- 5 Kane (1930, 356 n. 849). Sircar (1966, 318) gives as first meaning of *śrīkaraṇa*: “the drafting of documents; a scribe or scribe-accountant or secretary,” adding that “the minister Hemādri was styled *Sarva-śrīkaraṇa-prabhū*.” He lists as second meaning: “record office; the record department; the department responsible for drawing up documents,” as third meaning: “record officer; the officer in charge of drawing documents,” as fourth meaning: “the income department.” The *Lekhapaddhati* (2.0, vv. 7–10) itemises 32 departments (*karaṇa*), headed by the *śrīkaraṇa*, which Strauch (2002, 482) translates as “state chancellery; income department.” As Hemādri was the “head of all *śrīkaraṇas*,” the term was perhaps used as a synonym for *karaṇa*.
- 6 Cf. Kane (1930, 356 n. 850). The term *śrīkaraṇa* is hardly attested in Yādava inscriptions, but it occurs frequently in epigraphs of the Śilāhāras of North Konkan, dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries; see Schmiedchen (2014, 238–45, 489–94).

(1272 CE). It is highly probable that this high-level official was identical with the famous contemporary author of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*:

[Now,] while King Śrī-Rāmacandra, a moon for the water-lily of the Yadu family, is ruling the entire terrestrial globe, and while Śrī-Hemādri, the supervisor of all the elephant-keepers, a crest-jewel among the ministers, a Rohaṇa mountain of gems of virtue, who makes [others] happy with his own virtues [and] who has conquered the province of Jhāḍi, is bearing the burden of the whole kingdom, which he has obtained through his (Rāmacandra's) favour, and executing the supervision of all the departments (*samastakaraṇa*) [...].⁷

In contrast to the information about the author of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, there is only very little known about the officials who drafted the inscriptions. Unlike the charters commissioned by several other dynasties, the copper plates from the Yādava kingdom often do not contain any data about the individuals who composed these title-deeds. Less than half of the extant records engraved on copper plates during the late Yādava period reveal who authored these texts.

The evidence from the thirteenth-century copper plates of the Yādava kingdom suggests that no general template was used for the drafting of the epigraphic *praśasti* of the royal dynasty. However, there is some proof that certain *praśasti* versions were employed more than once (Schmiedchen 2014, 501–5):

1. The *Chikka-Bagevadi copperplate charter* and the *Bendigere copperplate charter*, both of the time of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II and dated ŚS 1171 (1249 CE), have some panegyric verses in common.
2. The *Kalegaon copperplate charter of Yādava Mahādeva*, ŚS 1182 and the *Paithan copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1193 have 16 *praśasti* stanzas in common.
3. Ten verses of the Yādava *praśasti* are identical in the two *Thane copperplate charters of the time of Yādava Rāmacandra*, dated ŚS 1194 and 1212.

7 *Thane copperplate charter of the time of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1194, ll. 38–41: *sakala-bhūvalayam anuśāsati yadu-kula-kumuda-caṁdre śrī-rāmacandra-nareṁdre tathaitat-prasādāvāptanikhīla-rājya-dhurīṇatārī vahati samasta-hastipakādhyakṣe nija-guṇa-subhagaṇi-bhāvuka-bhāvake samasta-karaṇādhipatyam anigikurvāṇe ca nirjita-jhāḍi-maṇḍale mantri-cūḍā-maṇau guṇaratna-rohaṇādrau śrī-hemādrau [...]*. For the interpretation, see also Kane (1930, 357 n. 851).

4. The *Neurgaon stone inscription* and the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, dated ŚS 1200 (1278 CE) and 1232 (1310 CE), have seven stanzas of their *praśasti* version in common.⁸

Besides, there are also a few intersections between the otherwise independent versions of examples 2 and 4. One stanza (v. 13) of the *Paithan copperplate charter* describing Siṅghaṇa II makes its reappearance in the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter* (v. 4);⁹ and the first hemistich of another stanza from the Paithan record (v. 21ab) depicting Rāmacandra gets recycled as the second hemistich of a different verse in the Purshottampuri title-deed (v. 13cd).

Example 2 indicates that the *praśasti* of a predecessor (Mahādeva) was sometimes updated for a successor during his early reign (Rāmacandra). But the eulogy could also be substituted by an entirely new version during the later rule of a successor (see example 4).¹⁰

All the four examples reveal that the officials who drafted the texts of the charters must have repeatedly drawn on a template-like stock of official or semi-official *praśasti* stanzas. But the specific relation between these clerks and the chancellery cannot be derived from the Yādava-period epigraphs. All the relevant inscriptions from that time provide at best the name of such a “scribe,” but no details regarding his particular role or designation.¹¹

Hemādri, on the other hand, is explicitly labelled as having been in charge of the administration in the Yādava kingdom during the rule of King Mahādeva (*Caturvargacintāmaṇi*) and most probably also during the early years of the reign of King Rāmacandra (*Thane copperplate charter of the time of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1194). The portfolio of minister Hemādri’s duties most likely included the responsibility for the royal chancellery at Devagiri, the capital. In this role, he must have had, *inter alia*, access to the administrative records of the dynasty.

8 The first of the two slabs of the *Neurgaon stone inscription* begins with the first seven stanzas of the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, but the *praśasti* is illegible thereafter. In addition, the *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* has also five stanzas in common with the *Neurgaon stone inscription of Yādava Rāmacandra*, and seven stanzas with the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*. For the details see below.

9 This stanza is also attested as verse 4 in the *Neurgaon stone inscription* and in the *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, respectively.

10 For a similar practice under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, see Schmiedchen (2014, 31, 35, 466–78).

11 Schmiedchen (2014, 341, 501–5). For instance, the *Kalegaon copperplate charter of Yādava Mahādeva* and the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* do not refer to the authors of the epigraphs; the *Paithan copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* mentions that a certain Paṇḍita Dhaneśvara had drafted the record.

However, the Yādava *praśasti* as given in Hemādri's work seems to have been composed independently from the versions produced in the chancellery for the official epigraphs. Despite the comprehensiveness in listing the (male) members of the Yādava dynasty, the information given by Hemādri is far less detailed, often markedly cursory, compared with the inscriptional data. In terms of content, a further main difference between the two sources is that Hemādri does not mention a single queen, whereas the copperplate charters of the early Yādavas do record matrimonial alliances (Table 3). However, it was not only Hemādri who omitted any reference to such relations, as the epigraphs of the late Yādava period are equally silent about them.¹²

3. Eulogies of subordinate rulers under the late Yādavas

The main focus of the later inscriptions is on military conflicts and encounters with rival kings, as well as on interaction with subordinate rulers (Schmiedchen 2014, 337, 341). In comparison to the early Yādava kings, a typical feature of the epigraphic attestations from the late period of Yādava rule was a rather great diversity in hierarchical relations and a ramified system of vassal and sub-vassal contacts, with several Brāhmaṇas having obtained the status of military leaders. A clear indication for the strong impact of vassals¹³ from the eleventh century onwards is the fact that the number of known copper plates issued by subordinates of the Yādavas was three times higher than the number of those commissioned by Yādava kings. Besides, the inscriptions of vassals provide more information on late Yādava history than the records of the Yādava rulers. Whereas all the seven extant copperplate charters of the early Yādava period were issued by kings of that dynasty (Schmiedchen 2014, 498–500), only three of the twelve completely preserved charters of the later period were commissioned by Yādava rulers (Schmiedchen 2014, 500–505), namely the *Kalegaon copperplate*

¹² There seems to exist at least one exception to this general tendency. The *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, v. 7ab, introduces King Rāmacandra as the son of Kṛṣṇa II and Lakṣmī: *jayati jagati rāmaḥ kāma evāvatīrṇṇaḥ punar api yadu-vaṁśe kṛṣṇa-lakṣmī-tanūjah|*.

¹³ Due to a lack of better alternatives, I am using here the terms “subordinate” and “vassal” interchangeably for all those rulers who seem to have acknowledged the suzerainty or sovereignty of any of the Yādava kings, although I am aware of the fact that the concept of vassalage has been borrowed from descriptions of medieval European history and might be almost as problematic as the terms related to “feudal” and “feudatory.”

charter of *Yādava Mahādeva*, ŚS 1182, the *Paithan copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1193, and the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1232.¹⁴ So far, we do not know of any copperplate charters issued by the kings Siṅghaṇa II or Kṛṣṇa II themselves. On the other hand, some of the stone epigraphs can be directly attributed to Yādava rulers, for instance, the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II*, ŚS 1176, and the *Neurgaon stone inscription of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1200. Accordingly, not only is our knowledge about the late Yādava kings to a great part derived from the inscriptions of their subordinates, but we also have much more information about these vassals than about the Yādava kings.

There is another noteworthy point to be added: as already mentioned, ancestry from the maternal side is not pointed out for the late Yādavas either in their own inscriptions or in the records of their subordinates, nor even in the account of Hemādri. However, this does not mean that references to maternal ancestry are completely absent from the epigraphic material of that region and period. The inscriptions commissioned by vassals of the Yādavas show that the paternal ancestry as well as maternal parentage are mirrored in epigraphic genealogies of some subordinates of Brahmanical descent. For Kholeśvara, a subordinate of Yādava Siṅghaṇa II (Schmiedchen 2014, 338, 364–69), not only is his mother Candrā explicitly mentioned, but so are his mythical forefathers (Mudgala and Kaśyapa) as well as the last three male ancestors on both the paternal and the maternal side. The paternal line of Kholeśvara consisted of Brāhmaṇas famous for their expertise in traditional Vedic learning/teaching. Kholeśvara's father, the Brāhmaṇa Trivikrama, had been born in a Brahmanical settlement (*agrahāra*) named Umbarapaṅktikā:

From him (Svāmideva) descended the famous Trivikrama, a pure incarnation of [religious] merit, an excellent Brāhmaṇa. Through his birth, the entire Brahmanical settlement with the name Umbarapaṅktikā became flawless.¹⁵

In contrast, his mother's family, though also of Brahmanical origin, was strongly associated with temporal power (Schmiedchen 2014, 365).

14 The *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, however, was rather jointly commissioned by Yādava Rāmacandra and his subordinate Puruṣaināyaka alias Puruṣottama (Schmiedchen 2014, 505). So far, this is the last known dated and complete endowment record of the Yādava period. But see also the *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*.

15 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, v. 7: *tataḥ prasiddho 'mala-puṇya-mūrttis trivikramo 'jāyata vipra-varyaḥ| yad-udbhavād umbarapaṅktikāhvaḥ sarvo 'grahāro vimalo babhūva||*.

For Puruṣaināyaka alias Puruṣottama, vassal of Rāmacandra and co-donor of the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, the last four male forebears of the paternal line as well as the last two on the maternal side were enumerated (Schmiedchen 2014, 385).

The subordinates of the Yādavas did not always explicitly label their overlords through a direct reference to their dynasty, but rather through enumerating the individual rulers in their line of succession (Schmiedchen 2014, 325). The subordinates often expressed their loyalty towards the sovereigns, frequently modelling their genealogies and epithets on the panegyrics of their overlords.

Siṅghaṇa II (r. 1200–1247) was the longest-reigning and the most successful Yādava king. Under his rule, large parts of Maharashtra and north Karnataka were integrated into the empire, and even for the core area around Devagiri, there is evidence of a well-developed network of vassalage. King Siṅghaṇa II was able to stabilise the kingdom through the efficient inclusion of different layers of subordinate rulers and by balancing their diverse interests.

One of Siṅghaṇa II's vassals was the aforementioned Kholeśvara, who is known from four stone epigraphs which have been found in and around Ambajogai (Bid District in central Maharashtra): the *Sakaleśvara temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, ŚS 1150, the *Ambajogai fragmentary inscription of Kholeśvara*, the *Yogeśvari temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, and the *Rāmanārāyaṇa temple inscription of Lakṣmī*, ŚS 1162. These records are composed in Sanskrit, but also contain passages in Marathi. Only two of the four epigraphs are dated: ŚS 1150 (1228/29 CE) and ŚS 1162 (1240 CE). Kholeśvara served as military leader under Siṅghaṇa II in the north of the Yādava kingdom. Some military achievements were simultaneously attributed to him as well as to his overlord. Two identical stanzas in three of the epigraphs contain a comprehensive list of victories assigned to Siṅghaṇa II:

The flawless king Śrī-Siṅghaṇa [II], a fire of mighty prowess, is one who has defeated the troops of all [his] enemies, [and] whose fame [shines] white [like] jasmine on the horizon. He took, in a moment, the whole powerful, prospering kingdom of Arjuna, which was full of horses and elephants, [and also] destroyed [the city of] Dhārā, an ornament of the earth. He killed the Teluṅga, and smashed the extremely strong Gūrjara. Keśi (“the hairy one”) pulled out his hair [out of desperation]. The Hosala (Hoysaḷa), with his people, was chased to the water of a puddle, the Coḍa (Cōḷa) to the “breast” of

the sea. The man-killing Subhaṭa was driven to death in battle. The Gauḍa was thrown out of the game, and the Turuṣka was rapidly made run away.¹⁶

Arjuna must have been the Paramāra ruler of Mālava, as his residence Dhārā is mentioned; and Subhaṭa may be identified as Subhaṭavarman, Arjuna's father. Conflicts between the Yādavas and the Caulukyās of Gujarat, in epigraphs often called Gūrjara, are not only described in contemporary inscriptions: the Gujarat chronicles also record these events, e.g. the *Kīrtikaumudī* of Someśvara (4.42–53). The *Lekhapaddhati* (2.44), on the other hand, contains a template for a kind of non-aggression-and-mutual-assistance pact (*yamala-patra*) dated VS 1288 (1231 CE), in which the two parties of the notional agreement are a *mahārājādhirāja* Siṅghaṇa and a *mahāmaṇḍalesvara* Lāvaṇyaprasāda, to be identified with Yādava Siṅghaṇa II and the contemporary Vāghelā ruler Lāvaṇyaprasāda. The Teluṅga against whom Siṅghaṇa II had to fight was probably the Kākatiya ruler Gaṇapatideva (r. 1199–1262). The identity of King Keśi is not clear, but Ajay Mitra Shastri (1972, 13) opined that he might have been Jayakeśin II, a Kādamba ruler of Goa. The contemporary Hoysala adversaries were Ballāla II (r. 1173–1220) and Narasiṅha II (r. 1220–1238). Siṅghaṇa II's opponents on the Cōla side may have been the kings Kulottuṅga III, Rājarāja III, and Rājendra III, but there is no external evidence that the Yādava ruler was ever able to defeat his Cōla rivals. The military success against the Gauḍa or Bengal king is not attested otherwise, and the Turuṣka was probably a contemporary Muslim ruler or military leader.¹⁷ This Turuṣka may have been the same as the “hero”

16 The *Sakalesvara temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, vv. 2–3: *asti dhvasta-samasta-vairi-nikaraḥ prauḍha-pratāpānalah kumda-śveta-digaṃta-kīrttir amalāḥ śrī-siṅghaṇaḥ kṣoṇipah| yenāhāri haribha-sambhṛtaṃ atisphitaṃ samastaṃ kṣaṇād rājyaṃ prājyam athārjjunasya dalitā dhārā dharā-bhūṣaṇaḥ|| teluṅgo yena nīto nidhanam atibalo gūrjaro jarjjaratvaṃ keśiḥ keśāpanodaṃ parijana-sahito hosalaḥ palvalāmbhaḥ| coḍaḥ kroḍaṃ payodhe raṇa-bhuvī subhaṭo mṛtyu-kālaṃ ṛkālo gauḍaḥ krīḍā-nirastaḥ kṛta iha sahasā prāpta-dikkas turuṣkaḥ||* See also vv. 2–3 in the *Ambajogai fragmentary inscription of Kholeśvara* and in the *Yogeśvari temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, as well as Schmiedchen (2014, 367 Table 17).

17 Chattopadhyaya (1998, 30): “Another instance of an ethnic term changing into a generic term in the early medieval period is Turuṣka; its use was too frequent to have been restricted to a single ethnic connotation alone.” For the use of this term in different regions/periods, see Sanderson (2009, 112); Chojnacki (2011, 205–10); Rao (2016, 71–76); Slaje (2019, 141–46).

Hammīra¹⁸ mentioned in the *Patne stone inscription of the time of Yādava Siṅghaṇa II*, ŚS 1128 (v. 7).¹⁹

In his *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, ŚS 1150, Kholeśvara is labelled a military leader (*sainyādhipati*) and prince (*kṣmāpati*),²⁰ and is compared to the sages Viśvāmitra and Agastya²¹ as well as to Indra.²² Kholeśvara is credited with a number of military successes, which have been also attributed to his overlord, Yādava Siṅghaṇa II, in the epigraphs from Ambajogai. This fact, of course, stresses the importance which their vassals had for the Yādavas in military encounters. The *Sakaleśvara temple inscription* records victories of Kholeśvara against the already known enemies of Siṅghaṇa II: the Gūrjaras (i.e. the Caulukyās), Paramāras of Dhārā, Cōlas, Hoysaḷas, and Teluṅgas (i.e. the Kākatīyas), as well as Mahāhammīra. In addition, the list of ostensible foes of Kholeśvara also includes the Raṭṭas, the kings of Vaṅga (i.e. the Senas), of Kosala (i.e. the Kalacuris), and of Kaliṅga (i.e. the Eastern Gaṅgas), as well as the Nepālikas.²³ It is rather striking that the list of military achievements attributed to the subordinate Kholeśvara comprises triumphs over many more adversaries than that for his overlord Siṅghaṇa II. The reliability of this account with regard to anything other than the battles against the Gujarat kings, the Paramāras, and Hammīra is questionable.

The last of the four Ambajogai inscriptions, the *Rāmanārāyaṇa temple inscription of Lakṣmī*, was issued by Kholeśvara's daughter, who ruled on behalf of the (minor) son of her deceased brother Rāma, her father's successor. Lakṣmī's epigraph contains a new *praśasti* composition, in which, unlike the inscriptions of her father, any reference to maternal ancestry is missing, and not even her mother's name is mentioned. But in stanza 4, her father's Maudgala lineage is described as "shining through a multitude of gifted male and female jewels"

18 For the term *hammīra* derived from Arabic *ʿamīr*, see Sircar (1965, 341). It is not clear who this Hammīra of the first half of the 13th century was. One of the first Muslim rulers denoted as Hammīra was Maḥmūd of Ghaznī (b. 971; d. 1030); see Slaje (2019, 141 n. 76). For the term *hammīra-vīra* being used for the Muslim adversaries of the Gāhaḍavāla king Govindacandra (r. 1109–1168), see De Simini (2016, 241).

19 See also Schmiedchen (2014, 346).

20 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, v. 4. The same stanza occurs in the *Ambajogai fragmentary inscription* and the *Yogeśvarī temple inscription*.

21 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, v. 8. The same stanza occurs as v. 23 in the *Yogeśvarī temple inscription*.

22 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, v. 15.

23 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, v. 16 and prose in ll. 27–32. The same stanza occurs as v. 25 in the *Yogeśvarī temple inscription*.

(*maudgalānām sa vaṁśo viśada-puruṣa-yoṣid-ratna-puñja-prakāśaḥ*), and Kholeśvara is described as kingmaker in a very self-confident way:

[Kholeśvara] himself, this ‘Club of Śrī-Yama,’ this unique preceptor for [the granting of] shelter and protection, this teacher for the rules of proficiency in installing kings, this ‘Forest Fire’ for the woods which were his enemies, rendered Śrī-Simha (Siṅghaṇa II) a carefree ruler. Who else on earth was like him?²⁴

Kholeśvara’s son Rāma, like his father a military leader (*sainyādhipati*), is said to have fought against the Caulukyās alias Gūrjaras, losing his life in these battles. The eulogies of her father and brother are followed by Lakṣmī’s own panegyric, including a description of the religious grant which she made in Rāma’s honour.

4. Post-Hemādri panegyrics

As already discussed above, the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II* and some manuscripts of the *Vratākhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* provide evidence for reconstructing the link between the early and the late Yādava lineages. But their transmission of the dynastic pedigree ends with Kṛṣṇa II and Mahādeva. The composition of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* was probably completed during the reign of Mahādeva, as no successor of this king is mentioned in the text. Hence, for the last decades of Yādava history, we again depend on inscriptions. Some additional information is provided by the emerging Marathi literature of the Mahānubhāvas, as well as by Arabic sources on the rule of ‘Alā al-Dīn *Khaljī* (r. 1296–1316),²⁵ who finally subjugated the Yādavas of Devagiri.

Rāmacandra was the nephew of Mahādeva, but not his direct successor. Mahādeva’s son Āmaṇa seems to have ascended the throne after his father’s demise. No inscriptions attributed to Āmaṇa’s reign are known so far, and not all later Yādava epigraphs mention him (Schmiedchen 2014, 339). The throne appears to have been quickly usurped by Rāmacandra, Āmaṇa’s cousin. These events of contested collateral succession are reflected in the various *praśastis* in different ways. The *Paithan copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1193, the earliest preserved record of this king, contains a genealogy following the model

24 *Rāmanārāyaṇa temple inscription of Lakṣmī*, v. 9: *eṣa śrī-yama-damḍa eṣa śaraṇa-trāṇaika-dikṣā-gurū rāja-sthāpana-kārya-kausāla-vidhāv ācārya eṣa svayam| eṣa dveṣi-vaneṣu dāva-dahanaḥ śrī-siṁham eṣa prabhuṁ niścīntam vyadadhād amuṣya sadṛśaḥ ko ’nyo ’bhavad bhū-tale||*

25 Altekar (1960, 546–55); Joshi (1966); Lal (1967); Verma (1970, 151–52); Mahalingam (1992, 151–55).

already attested in the *Kalegaon copperplate charter of Mahādeva*, Rāmacandra's uncle. Stanza 23 of the latter presents Kṛṣṇa II's successor as his younger brother (*tasyānujaḥ*), and verse 24 refers to this king by his name Mahādeva. The *Paithan copperplate charter*, however, only contains the first of these two stanzas (as v. 19), and, hence, the younger brother of Kṛṣṇa II is not mentioned by name here. In this record of Rāmacandra, the Yādava pedigree is updated through the introduction of Āmaṇa as son of Kṛṣṇa II's younger brother in stanza 20; and the next verse describes the transfer of power from Āmaṇa to Rāmacandra:

From him (Āmaṇa), this Rāma[candra], son of Kṛṣṇa, has forcefully taken away his territory [and] enjoys [it now]. His sword makes the directions fragrant through deeds which are like blossoming lotuses.²⁶

The *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* also presents the succession in the same sequence (Kṛṣṇa II – his younger brother Mahādeva – his son Āmaṇa [here Anmaṇa]²⁷ – Kṛṣṇa II's son Rāmacandra), though in a different textual composition. The first hemistich of the stanza describing the conflict just quoted from the *Paithan copperplate charter* has been reused here:

Having ascended the most formidable Devagiri over ladders [made] of the heads of enemy kings, this Rāma[candra], son of Kṛṣṇa, has forcefully taken away from him (Āmaṇa) his territory [and] enjoys [it now].²⁸

The next stanza describes the tactic of recapturing the capital Devagiri in detail:

First intrusion into Devagiri, then observation of the manner of dancing, afterwards assembling of voluntary foot-soldiers, then throwing off of ornaments, removal of the opponent for the aspired aim, and appropriation of

26 *Paithan copperplate charter*, v. 21: *prasahya tasmād apahr̥tya bhūṁkte kṛṣṇātmajaḥ svām avaniṁ sa rāmaḥ| yasyāsir ujjr̥mbhita-kairavābhair diśo yaśobhiḥ surabhikaroti||*. For detailed reports on these events, see Schmiedchen (2014, 353–54).

27 His description is positive, expressing that Āmaṇa exempted Brāhmaṇas from paying taxes: “[Then] was born his mighty son, King Anmaṇa, who very much supported Brāhmaṇas being plagued by taxes – [as] {the Spearman (Skanda) freed the gods who had been afflicted} by [the demon] Tāraka.” *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, v. 11: *jajñe śaktidharas tasya sūnur anmaṇa-bhūpatiḥ| bhū-devān uddharam̐n uccaiḥ kara-tāraka-pīditān||*

28 *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, v. 13: *āruhya vairi-kṣitipāla-mauli-niśreṇibhir devagirim̐ garis̥tham| prasahya tasmād apahr̥tya bhūṁkte kṛṣṇātmajaḥ svām avaniṁ sa rāmaḥ||*

the earth from him – that was done successively by Śrī-Rāma[candra]. Hence, his fame is extraordinary.²⁹

Some Mahānubhāva texts in Marathi also address the details of the encounter between Rāmacandra and Āmaṇa. The *Līlācaritra*, said to have been composed in 1278,³⁰ gives a vivid account of the confusion caused by the sudden attack of Rāmacandra and his supporters.³¹

The *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* provides some additional evidence of the official depiction of this conflict. Due to its incomplete state of preservation, the date of the inscription is not known. Because of the content of the preserved portion of the *praśasti*, it can be assumed that this stray plate must have once belonged to a charter issued after ŚS 1193, the date of the *Paithan copperplate charter*, which is still based on an older version of the eulogy. The *First copper plate* contains twelve panegyric stanzas to praise the Yādava dynasty, but only seven of these are also attested in the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, namely its verses 1–5 and 8–9, whereas its verses 6–7 and 10–12 are different. The omissions and substitutions of individual stanzas are revealing with regard to the Yādava succession quarrels, which are narrated in a modified way here.³² Mahādeva and Āmaṇa are omitted in the description of the line of succession. Stanza 6 of the *First copper plate* mentions Kṛṣṇa II, and verse 7 moves on straightaway to King Rāmacandra, describing him as son of Kṛṣṇa and Lakṣmī. As stanza 8 follows the verse already known from the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, graphically narrating the recapture of Devagiri through the

29 *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, v. 14: *ādau devagiri-praveśanam atho nṛtta-prakāreḥkṣaṇam paścāt svaira-padāti-melanam athālamkāra-vikṣepaṇam| anviṣṭārtha-virodhi-dūra-karaṇam tasmād rasāsādanam śrī-rāmeṇa kṛtaṁ tatas tata itaḥ śloko 'sya lokottarah||*. See also Mirashi's (1939–40, 205) comment: "The [...] verse gives an interesting description of the ruse which Rāmacandra adopted to obtain possession of the impregnable fort. He entered it with a party of dancers who were his soldiers in disguise. When admitted inside, he rallied his foot-soldiers and attacked his antagonists apparently while they were engaged in seeing the dance. The dancers also, throwing off their ornaments (i.e. disguise), joined in the fight. [...]"

30 Gupte (1926, 198–99); Novetzke (2020, 123–31).

31 Gupte (1926, 198–99); Novetzke (2020, 129). For other versions from Mahānubhāva works, see Verma (1970, 137–38). Āmaṇa is said to have been blinded or even killed.

32 Stanzas 1–5 of the *First copper plate*, narrating the eulogy up to Jaitrapāla II, the father of Kṛṣṇa II, are identical with vv. 1–5 of the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*. Stanzas 6–7 are different verses for the description of the succession up to Rāmacandra. Stanzas 8–9 for Rāmacandra are identical with vv. 14–15 of the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*; stanzas 10–12 are new verses for him.

trick just quoted above, but without any reference to the identity of Rāmacandra's adversary so far. Then and only indirectly, in a mythological pun related to the ruler's further description, is the conflict with his rival recorded, still without mentioning his name:

After having vanquished Mahādeva's capable son, Rāma[candra] acquired [his own] father's royal power and subjugated the supporter of Arjuna, [just as] {Rāma, having broken Mahādeva's favourite bow, obtained Janaka's daughter (Sītā) and defeated the one who had destroyed [Kārtavīrya] Arjuna's fame (Paraśurāma)}.³³

The reasons for this modification in the *praśasti* can be only speculated about, and they are even more in the dark, as the date of the stray plate is unknown. One might be inclined to assume chronological explanations, i.e. that Mahādeva and Āmaṇa were erased from the officially recorded sequence of succession in the course of time, and, hence, the amendment should be expected to be later than the eulogy in the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*. But this interpretation is rather unlikely, because the latter inscription itself was issued relatively late, namely in ŚS 1232 (1310 CE), and Rāmacandra's rule is believed to have already ended in or around 1311.³⁴

Geographical explanations for the differences in the *praśastis* do not seem to be plausible either, as all the relevant charters were found in central Maharashtra, in an area covered by the present districts of Ahmadnagar, Aurangabad, and Bid, to the south of Devagiri, the Yādava capital. The original provenience of the *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* is not known, but it was discovered in Aurangabad in the 1950s. For the time being, we can only conclude that different versions of Rāmacandra's self-representation must have been floating, differing in the degree to which the collaterals Mahādeva and Āmaṇa were made visible in the genealogy.

Two semi-official epigraphic records of the time of Rāmacandra, the *Thane copperplate charters*, ŚS 1194 and 1212, belong to a different region, namely to western Maharashtra, about 300 km to the west of Devagiri. They were issued by two subordinates of Rāmacandra, reigning over the Konkan coast. The Yādava genealogy in these two inscriptions (see example 3 above, p. 193) mentions King

33 *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, v. 10: *rāmeṇa kāmukam bhaṅktvā mahādevasya naṁdanani| prāptā janakajā lakṣmīr nirjito 'rjuna-kīrtidaḥ||*. The Arjuna mentioned here must be a different Arjuna from the one referred to as an adversary of Siṅghaṇa II.

34 For the so far latest extant inscription referring to Rāmacandra, probably dated ŚS 1233, see Bhoir (2002).

Mahādeva as successor of Kṛṣṇa II, but omits his son Āmaṇa. It can be surmised that the main reason for this deviation is the fact that this was the version circulated among local rulers of the Konkan region.

5. Conclusion

Royal copperplate charters are the main medium available to us for the study of the official self-representation of the early Yādavas. For the genealogical descriptions of the late Yādavas, we possess copperplate and stone inscriptions issued by the rulers of that line as well as epigraphs commissioned by their vassals. The latter stand for the presentation of others from the viewpoint of subordinates who portray their suzerains. Due to the specific relationship of dependence, these inscriptions do not contradict the contemporary official *praśasti* versions. They rather provide a larger picture, which includes the self-representation of the vassals, emphasising and sometimes exaggerating their own role for the success and stability of the reign of their overlords, whose names and pedigree they mention, but without any reference to the Yādava descent of these rulers.

Almost all the epigraphs of the late Yādava period are silent about the early Yādava kings, with only one exception known so far: the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II, ŚS 1176*. Besides, some manuscripts of the *Vratakhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* by Hemādri also comprise a pedigree of both the lines, depicting them, in fact, as one consecutive lineage. Although Hemādri served as a minister under the Yādava kings Mahādeva and Rāmacandra, his versions of the dynasty's genealogy can be also regarded as presentation of others, because he does not seem to have composed his Yādava *praśasti* on behalf of the ruling dynasty, but rather independently. Although his description does not directly contradict the contemporary official genealogy, it lists several members of the dynasty absent from the epigraphic records.

Whereas the mentioning of queens was part of the official self-representation in the early Yādava period, these references are omitted in inscriptions from the late Yādava rule. Hemādri does not mention any royal ladies either, neither for the early nor for the late Yādava times. However, references to maternal ancestry were included in the epigraphic self-representation of some of the subordinates of Brahmanical descent.

Finally, the inscriptions from the late Yādava period indicate some changes and modifications in the official self-representation of the rulers, especially in cases of contested collateral succession and resulting collateral oppression.

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See page xvi about references to primary sources.

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On the Bilingual Inscriptions of the Fārūqī Sultans of Khandesh

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1. Introduction

In the 1580s, the Fārūqī Sultan ʿĀdil Shāh IV (also known as ʿĀdil Khān IV) undertook a noteworthy architectural and epigraphic campaign. In 1584 and 1590, ʿĀdil Shāh dedicated two mosques, one in the hill fort of Asirgarh and one in the city of Burhanpur, both located in the south of the present-day state of Madhya Pradesh. Asirgarh and Burhanpur were two important sites for the Fārūqīs, the ruling family of the small but relatively long-lived Sultanate of Khandesh. ʿĀdil Shāh Fārūqī dedicates these mosques with bilingual Arabic-Sanskrit inscriptions placed in the *mihrāb* in both Asirgarh and Burhanpur. Each inscription is rather brief: the *Asirgarh mosque inscription of ʿĀdil Shāh IV*, the shorter of the two, has two lines of Arabic over three lines of Sanskrit, while the longer *Burhanpur mosque inscription of ʿĀdil Shāh IV* consists of three lines of Arabic over six in Sanskrit. The Arabic text, written in Naskh, contains a benediction, Qurʿānic quotations, a cursory genealogy of the Fārūqī Sultans, and a date. In a mixture of verse and prose, the six lines of Sanskrit contain a praise of God, called the *ṣṛṣṭi-kartṛ*, the ‘agent of creation,’ a lineage of ʿĀdil Shāh, and a date for the construction of the mosque. In both inscriptions, the Arabic and the Sanskrit text are parallel in structure, however the Sanskrit is far more fulsome in its praise of the Islamic God and its genealogy of ʿĀdil Shāh and much more detailed in its dating; the Sanskrit also provides the year, calculated in two reckoning systems, and exact astrological moment.

While bilingual inscriptions are not rare in South Asian epigraphical history, these tend to use Sanskrit and a regional vernacular such as Kannada or Tamil.

1 I would like to thank Pushkar Sohoni for first drawing my attention to the Sanskrit inscriptions in the Burhanpur Mosque and the Asirgarh Fort, and for the many illuminating conversations I have had with him on related topics.

The transregional elite languages of Muslim religion, literature, and trade appear next to Sanskrit in a smaller yet significant body of bilingual inscriptions. These bilingual inscriptions combining Arabic or Persian with Sanskrit tend to be either epitaphs or commemorations of pious donations of more “secular” spaces, for instance gardens and wells. To my knowledge, these Fārūqī bilingual inscriptions are unique given their placement within the *mihrāb*, the site of religious focus in the mosque. The bilingual Sanskrit-Arabic inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī are doubly marked both by the tension between two languages of religion and power and by their architectural context in a site of Muslim worship. However, the visual and material presence of the bilingual inscriptions at such a prominent place suggests that each of these languages were doing work recognised as the legitimate sphere of each language, and that this work was legible in the juxtaposition of the two languages embodied in the two scripts.

In this brief essay, I introduce and contextualise ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī and his epigraphical project to examine the continuing prestige and the new elasticity of Sanskrit epigraphical culture in the Sultanates. While the history of representations of Islamic power in Sanskrit in South Asia stretches back as far as the presence of Islam in the Subcontinent, Sanskrit has tended to be portrayed as completely indifferent to Islamic religion, Islamicate cultural practices, and Muslim people in general. Yet its use in this highly visible religious context shows that various actors continued to valorise the language and that it retained powerful expressive possibilities even in Islamic spaces and sultanate² politics. While the Fārūqīs are marginal within the history of pre-Mughal sultanate polities and while bilingual inscriptions using Islamic languages of prestige are marginal in the history of Sanskrit epigraphy, ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī’s mosque inscriptions can serve as instructive examples for the diverse and often surprising habitations of Sanskrit in the sultanate period.

The question thus arises: why was Sanskrit, a language deeply connected to the religious texts and practices of Hinduism, used to consecrate an Islamic place of worship? This basic question, which can help destabilise and recontextualise a priori assumptions about historical periodisation and cultural divisions, leads to further, perhaps more salient questions about this particular use of Sanskrit in a charged religious and political setting. What is the relationship

2 Here and throughout I use the adjective “sultanate” with a lower-case “s” as a shorthand for a historical moment between the stabilisation of the first Islamic polities and the rise of the Mughal imperium. In such a way the sultanate period, or the period of the plural sultanates, is taken as a time without clear centralised political or cultural power, in which different regional polities are negotiating their own power, prestige, and representation.

between the Arabic and the Sanskrit portions of the inscription? How are the languages presented in stone? How does the inscription relate to architecture? How does it speak to elite political and religious practice? Finally, how does this single (and perhaps singular) use of Sanskrit enrich and complicate both the history of Sanskrit and the history of elite Hindu-Muslim interactions in the sultanate period?

At the outset it must be stressed that the bilingual inscriptions of ʿĀdil Shāh IV belong to a completely Islamic context. Unlike in the well-known Veraval Sanskrit-Arabic bilingual inscription, there is no invocation of Hindu religious or political agents.³ While the Veraval inscription seems to speak to different political, social, and religious communities in different languages, the Fārūqī inscriptions are present an integrated vision of the Fārūqīs, their temporal power, and their pious largesse. The inscriptions themselves appear on the *mihrāb*, the focus of Islamic worship in the mosque. These inscriptions do not mark sites of encounter or a liminal space of cross-cultural exchange. The interplay between Sanskrit and Arabic must then point to some other salient feature of language and self-presentation in sultanate South Asia. As an experiment toward thinking through the tensions and possibilities of bilingual inscriptions in the sultanate period, this paper reads the Sanskrit-Arabic mosque inscriptions of the Fārūqī Sultans and asks what work does such an inscription do that an inscription entirely in Sanskrit or Arabic could not. In the words of Sheldon Pollock (2006, 502), language deployment represents “choices of cultural-political actors in response to differential cultural-political circumstances.” While this introductory essay cannot hope to present a new “theory” of Sanskrit in the sultanate world, a careful reading of the bilingual inscriptions of ʿĀdil Shāh IV provides some insight into the “life” of Sanskrit in relation to emergent languages, religions, and polities in the complex ecology of elite culture in sultanate South Asia.

2. The Fārūqī Sultanate

Before looking at ʿĀdil Shāh Fārūqī’s inscriptions, the history of the Fārūqīs and the Khandesh Sultanate must be rehearsed. The Fārūqīs (Table 1) are a somewhat obscure upstart group that managed to take control of Khandesh, an area on the border of present-day southern Madhya Pradesh and northern Maharashtra. Hemmed in by larger and more powerful neighbours — most notably

3 For the Veraval inscription, see Patel (2008).

the Gujarat and the Ahmadnagar Sultanates — the Fārūqīs managed to survive, even flourish, from their sultanate’s inception in the late fourteenth century until their eventual defeat and annexation by the Mughals in 1610. While much further research remains to be done on the Fārūqīs in Persian language accounts, a basic sketch of their history has been recounted in both Muḥammad Qāsim Firishta’s *Tārikh* and Abū’l-Faẓl’s *Ā’in-i Akbarī*. The Fārūqī Sultans began as an upwardly mobile family in the service of the Delhi Sultans. Firishta (Briggs 1829, 803–4) recounts that the Fārūqīs were “among the most respectable nobles at the Delhi Court” and that they claimed high status through descent from the Khalif ‘Umar Fārūq. Firishta records their rise to prominence with an anecdotal account that upon receiving timely help during a hunt, the Delhi Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq granted the districts of Thalner and Karanda to a young Arab from this family, Malik Rājā Fārūqī. He served the Delhi rulers well on their southern frontier and managed to subdue several recalcitrant petty chieftains in the countryside nearby. After the death of Fīrūz Tughluq in 1390, Malik Rājā, through a combination of shrewd political alliances, military boldness, and seeming sheer luck, managed to carve out an independent principality. His son, Malik Naṣīr (r. 1399–1437), captured the important Asirgarh fort and founded the cities of Zainabad and Burhanpur on the east and west banks of the Tapti River, respectively. The sites of Asirgarh and Burhanpur figure strongly in the history and self-presentation of the Fārūqī Sultans.

While the importance of these two sites could be inferred solely from the congregational (*jāmi*‘) mosques and the prominent inscriptions patronised by ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī, both Burhanpur and Asirgarh figure centrally in the historical accounts of Firishta and Abū’l-Faẓl. These Persian sources provide a narrative context for the bilingual inscriptions. Around twenty kilometres apart, Asirgarh and Burhanpur appear as the two major nodes of Fārūqī power. The *Ā’in-i Akbarī* puts these two sites in conversation as the most notable places in Khandesh. Abū’l-Faẓl writes: “*Asir* is the residence of the governor, it is a fortress on a lofty hill. Three other forts encompass it which for strength and loftiness are scarcely to be equalled. A large and flourishing city is at its foot. *Burhanpur* is a large city three *kos* distant from the *Tapti*.”⁴ Citing Firishta, the *Bombay Gazetteer* (Ramsay and Pollen 1880, 234) records: “The only prosperous part of the district was near Asirgad, where Āsa, a rich Ahir, had during the famine fed the people from his grain stores and built many great works, among them the walls of Asirgad fort.” The story as told is less than flattering, in which Naṣīr *Khān* Fārūqī tricks the

4 Translation from Jarrett and Sarkar (1949, 232), italics in original.

ruler of the fort and is able to displace its former Ahir ruler under false pretences.

Burhanpur for its part became an important religious, cultural, and mercantile centre. Originally founded by Naṣīr Khān in honour of the Deccan saint Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb, a famed Ṣūfī whose own journey mirrors that of the Fārūqīs, beginning in North India and rising in power and prestige in the Deccan. According to Muḥammad Shafī (2012), Burhanpur “commemorates his name, for [Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb] had given his blessings to an ancestor of its founder, Naṣīr Khān Fārūqī (r. 801–41/1399–1437), when he rested here on his way to Deōgīr and foretold the rise of the Fārūqīs and their founding of the city.” The Burhanpur congregational mosque was thus central to the public persona of the Fārūqī rulers. Consecrated in 1590 by the Fārūqī Sultan ‘Ādil Shāh, the mosque was meant to stand as a testament to the longevity and power of the Khandesh Sultanate. Such self-confidence was short-lived: ‘Ādil Shāh’s son, Bahādur Khān, surrendered to the Mughal forces under Akbar less than ten years later. After its conquest, Akbar himself had a new inscription carved under the left *minaret* placing the mosque – and by extension the Khandesh Sultanate – in a relationship of inclusion within and subservience to a new political dispensation.

Name	Regnal dates	Attestation
Malik Naṣīr	1399–1437	chronicles, Burhanpur
Mirān ‘Ādil <u>Khān</u>	1437–1441	chronicles
Mirān Mubārak	1441–1457	chronicles
‘Ādil <u>Khān</u> II	1457–1503	chronicles
Dāūd <u>Khān</u>	1503–1510	chronicles
Ghaznī <u>Khān</u>	1510	chronicles, Burhanpur
Qaiṣar <u>Khān</u>		Burhanpur
Hassan <u>Khān</u>		Burhanpur
‘Ādil <u>Khān</u> III	1510–1520	chronicles, Asirgarh, Burhanpur
Mirān Muḥammad	1520–1535	chronicles
Mubārak <u>Khān</u>	1535–1566	chronicles, Asirgarh, Burhanpur
Mirān Muḥammad II	1566–1576	chronicles
Rājā ‘Alī <u>Khān</u> , ‘Ādil	1576–1596	chronicles, Asirgarh, Burhanpur
Bahādur <u>Khān</u>	1596–1599	chronicles

Table 5. List of the Fārūqī sultans, showing attestation of names in the inscriptions of Asirgarh and Burhanpur, and the chronicles of Abū’l-Faḍl and Firishta

These narratives of the Fārūqī sultans and the two main sites of political power are here told in brief to contextualise the setting of ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī’s inscriptional project. Asirgarh was an emblem of martial strength and military power, taken through the efforts of the upwardly mobile family. Burhanpur was a symbol of both the Fārūqīs’ piety and their divine ordination. The town flourished through divine favour shown by the saint and the ingenuity of the new sultanate he had chosen to honour. ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s inscriptional project is deeply imbricated in Fārūqī history and in a project of elite self-presentation. In the two bilingual inscriptions in Asirgarh and Burhanpur, ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī gestures toward Malik Naṣīr’s long and expansionist reign in his epigraphical and architectural project from the end of the sixteenth century. These two key sites of Malik Naṣīr’s reign become the stage for ‘Ādil Shāh IV to present his surprising inscriptions describing and inscribing their piety and locating it in time.

3. Contextualising the Fārūqī Sultan’s bilingual inscriptions

The two bilingual inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV are placed at sites of architectural and religious focus in congregational mosques. Such a prestigious placement makes the interplay between languages, materiality, and ideology all the more salient. Through their spatial position and material durability, the public linguistic juxtaposition of Sanskrit and Arabic demands a careful theorisation. Unlike manuscripts, which may circulate only in rarefied elite circles, inscriptions confront the viewer; similarly, even if the viewer had no knowledge of Sanskrit (or Arabic for that matter), the difference in script is clearly manifest. There was no escaping the implied conversation of these two languages played out on the walls of Islamic religious buildings. The Sanskrit text was certainly meant to be seen, and to be seen in the context of political and religious practice of the congregational mosque.⁵ It was placed firmly in the Islamic visual mode (as the letters are raised in the fashion of many Perso-Arabic elite inscriptions rather than incised), yet the different script highlights a disjunction between the two languages, or at least implies that these two languages operated in different spheres. The *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur mosque inscriptions* stand as invitations to think through the interplay of language, political power, religion, and architecture in pre-Mughal sultanate South Asia. To put it more bluntly, they call into question simple notions of religious community bounded by language,

5 See for instance Insoll (1999, esp. chapter 2).

architecture, and practice, and demand a language practice long defined by Hindu and Muslim religious communities in premodern South Asia.

While scholars like Steven Vose have studied the relationship of the Jainas and the Delhi Sultanate and Audrey Truschke has investigated the complex ties between the Sanskrit literati and the Mughal Court, there remains much to uncover. In particular, a careful study of the inscriptional record can highlight the diverse habitations of Sanskrit, still important enough to be commemorated in stone and flexible enough to speak to diverse communities in diverse spaces. Rather than speaking of large-scale processes of state or identity formation, this paper attempts a beginning of a microhistory, to see how languages frozen in time, embedded in stone, and set in architectural spaces can illuminate, and perhaps complicate, histories of language, piety, identity, and elite self-presentation in medieval South Asia.

While discussions of religion and power often begin with ideology or belief, the physical presence of ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s inscriptions within a built space invites centring materiality and public practice in their contextualisation. Materiality and architecture have recently begun to take more prominent place in reconstructing the history of both sultanate polities and Hindu-Muslim interaction in South Asia. In particular, Finbarr Flood’s *Objects of Translation* (Flood 2018) and Richard Eaton and Phillip Wagoner’s *Power, Memory and Architecture* (Eaton and Wagoner 2014) have fruitfully brought material culture and architecture into the discussion of the formation of Indo-Islamic elite practice. Flood’s *Objects of Translation* in particular looks at the negotiation of power and difference in material culture. In particular, his attention to “the mutual imbrications of animate subjects and inanimate objects” and his sensitivity to “the constitutive relationships between subjects, objects, and political formations” (Flood 2018, 12) is a guide to thinking through the complex web of relations that the bilingual inscriptions in context illuminate.

The use of language then can be seen as taking part in the same web of constitutive relationships that the inscriptions’ material forms instantiate. How then to see the relationship between Arabic and Sanskrit in the inscriptions? This question is especially salient given both Sanskrit and Arabic’s status as “cosmopolitan” languages. At a basic level, “cosmopolitan” means a learned language that transcends regional particularity and historical contingency. However, a cosmopolitan language tends to be defined against an “other,” a living vernacular language. In the case of Sanskrit, Sheldon Pollock (1996) argues that the “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” is an order of languages centred on Sanskrit in relation to South Asian vernaculars. Pollock bases his theory of the Sanskrit Cosmopolis on epigraphical data, particularly on how Sanskrit is articulated as a

language of power. This often comes into relief in the epigraphical record when Sanskrit is inscribed next to a regional language, a vernacular. While Pollock's theory has been deployed to explain South Asian cultural and literary history largely in terms of the cosmopolitan and vernacular divide, I would like to return to the basis of his theory, the order of languages in epigraphy. Pollock distinguishes two portions of the text, the documentary and the workly. "Our public poets did not confuse these two realms, they usually (and as time passed invariably) segregated them by a differentiation of codes, with two different kinds of truth, operative in two different kinds of worlds" (Pollock 1996, 242). These two different codes spoke to different concerns: Sanskrit transcended particularity and operated as the language of aesthetics and politics, while the vernacular spoke to worldly and temporal concerns.

Such a model holds for bilingual inscriptions in early Sanskrit epigraphical history. Sanskrit bilingualism works differently, however, when put next to the Islamicate languages of Arabic and Persian. Most obviously, while Sanskrit and the vernacular are different languages, they often use the same script. When Sanskrit comes next to Arabic, the difference in script is pronounced. While bilingual Sanskrit-Arabic and Sanskrit-Persian inscriptions are relatively well-known, reading the two portions of such an epigraph demands a careful contextualisation as to why each language was deployed in the context of the inscription. Given that Sanskrit is the language of public piety and political self-presentation in Hindu contexts and Arabic (and Persian) plays that role in Islamic contexts, the presence of both in a single inscription calls out for a reading of their interaction. While a clear-cut order of languages in the sense of cosmopolitan and vernacular is not present in the inscriptions of 'Ādil Shāh IV, the presence of two languages demands a theorisation for their division of labour.

The Fārūqī inscriptions present their Sanskrit text in the *praśasti* style, a way of writing in inscriptions that stretches back to the first instantiations of Sanskrit as a language of political power in the world. Elite inscriptions thus use *praśasti* to articulate kingship. Sanskrit *praśastis* thus establish the genealogy of the dynasty, highlight the dynasty's merits, and praise the current ruler. Yet in bilingual inscriptions especially, *praśastis* and their stress on succession, sovereignty, and royal qualities are informed by the interplay between the "work" done by different languages in different portions of the inscription. To return to Pollock's model, "cosmopolitan" Sanskrit depends on what he calls "the division of labour" which exists "between cosmopolitan and vernacular language use, the one expressive and the other documentary" (2006, 121). The Sanskrit is expressive: it took part in the political aesthetic which supported all claims

toward sovereignty. The vernacular languages then took “the quotidian status and function they had in everyday life” (2006, 118).

I think it is necessary to rehearse Pollock’s arguments about *praśastis* in bilingual inscriptions here because they form the basis for his use of the term “hyperglossia,” that is to say, the order of languages in South Asia with Sanskrit on top. The aesthetic resources of Sanskrit “enabled the writer to say or write things not yet sayable or at least not yet inscribable in any of the other languages of southern Asia” (2006, 136). This model theorises the relation between South and Southeast Asian vernaculars, yet when Sanskrit is placed next to Arabic, an increasingly important elite language in South Asia, what sorts of claims are being made? What “work” do these languages do, and what does their juxtaposition mean in the context of Fārūqī elite discourse? A careful reading of the Sanskrit *praśastis* in bilingual inscriptions can shed light on elite self-presentation between Indic and Islamicate modes in the sultanate period.

In her book *Precolonial India in Practice*, Cynthia Talbot argues that instead of dealing with large-scale models of civilisational processes, careful analyses of a complex of localised factors can provide a way to think through received colonial and post-colonial notions of community, religion, state, and power that colour scholarship on medieval South Asia. This is especially salient given the highly politicised place of religion, particularly in terms of national and communal conflict, in contemporary India. Talbot (2001, 14) privileges a “micro-history so that the biases encoded in colonial forms of knowledge can be overcome; macroscopic portrayals and master-narratives impute western forms of knowledge, thus one must get as close to the ground as possible in order to minimise their influence.” She argues that microhistorical projects and thick descriptions should provide the basis of historical work in South Asia since with these types of studies, scholars avoid “creating abstract models of reality that suppress its complexity and ambiguity” (*ibid.*).

The two inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV present such an opportunity to think about large issues on a small scale: how can we imagine the role of the Sanskrit language of praise poetry operating in the premier space of religious power and legitimacy in the heart of the Khandesh Sultanate? This paper argues that the division of labour in the Fārūqī mosque inscriptions shows that languages were used to do different things: Arabic was used to frame donative piety in quotations from the *Qur‘ān* and Hadith. Sanskrit was used for praise of God and kings and for locating the mosque precisely in time. This division of labour is different from that which characterised Pollock’s “cosmopolitan” bilingual inscriptions; however, it seems that elite actors within the Khandesh Sultanate still recognised the political and aesthetic power inherent in epigraphical Sanskrit and

deployed it next to the sacred language of Islam. In so doing, the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* inscriptions present a new sort of language politics deploying the prestige of Arabic and Sanskrit into new and unexpected relation.

4. The Arabic inscriptions

To begin with the Arabic portions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s inscriptions, both are similar in placement, calligraphy, and content, and do similar ideological work. Both are placed in the prayer niche of a congregational mosque, both contain a number of lines in Arabic positioned over the Sanskrit inscription, and both are inscribed in relief — that is to say, unlike most Sanskrit and Indic-language inscriptions and like many Arabic and Persian inscriptions, the letters are raised with the negative space carved away. The similar style of letters is not surprising, given that the same person, one Muṣṭafā son of Nūr Muḥammad, is said to be the scribe for both inscriptions. The *Asirgarh inscription* consists of five lines, two of Arabic and three of Sanskrit. The *Burhanpur mosque inscription* contains three lines of Arabic and six of Sanskrit.

Outside of their physical placement and aesthetic appearance, the contents of both the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* inscriptions are largely parallel. They both do similar work, focusing on the building of the mosque and the pious merit that accrues from such a construction. The Arabic inscription in both begins with two quotations praising the construction of mosques — one from the *al-Jinn* chapter of the *Qur’ān* (72.18): “And verily mosques are built for God, invoke no other God but Him” and a Hadith quotation: “And the Prophet, may peace be on him, says, ‘One who builds a mosque for Allāh, even if it be as small as the nest of a Qaṭāt bird, Allāh builds for him a house in paradise.’”⁶ This statement is found in the fourth chapter, “Mosques and Congregations” of the *Sunan ibn Mājah*: “It was narrated from Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh that the messenger of Allāh said ‘Whoever builds a mosque for the sake of Allāh, like a sparrow’s nest or even smaller, Allāh will build him a house in Paradise’” (Khattab 2007, 1:485). This quotation is a clear reference to learned discussion of the meritorious efficacy of building a mosque and the merit that will accrue to the donor of a mosque. This short portion of the Arabic text finishes with the statement that “This auspicious mosque, which is one of the bounties of the time and like a mole on a beautiful face, was built by the order of our lord and master, the Sultan.”⁷

6 Translation from Rahim (1961, 56–57), typo corrected.

7 Translation from Rahim (1961, 57).

When comparing the two texts, the Arabic portion of the *Asirgarh inscription* is much simpler. After discussing the meritorious nature of mosque construction, it states that it was ordered by “‘Ādil Shāh, son of Mubārak Shāh, son of ‘Ādil Shāh al-Fārūqī, al-‘Umarī, al-‘Adawī” and asks that God “accept (appreciate) his pious actions through the holy Prophet and his companions and descendants!”⁸ This rather truncated genealogy focuses on ‘Ādil Shāh and only goes back three generations. The *Burhanpur inscription*, by contrast, goes back six generations: “‘Ādil Shāh, son of Mubārak Shāh, son of ‘Ādil Shāh, son of Ḥasan Khān, son of Qaiṣar Khān, son of Ghaznī Khān, son of Rājā Malik al-Fārūqī, al-‘Umarī, al-‘Adawī [...]”⁹ In both Arabic inscriptions, the genealogy is rather simply stated. Each consists merely of names connected by patrilineal descent to the current ruler. Finally, both Arabic inscriptions end with a wish for God to accept the donation.

To return to what “work” the Arabic does, the focus of the Arabic is completely on the central place of the mosque in the *Qur‘ān* and the meritorious nature of the donation of a mosque. Beyond a formulaic benediction, there is no praise of God or *bismillāh* in this portion of the inscription. The Arabic portion of the inscription is an argument centred on the physical presence of the mosque and its social and political implications. The inscriptions move from Qur‘ānic quotation to Hadith quotation to locating the mosque as the “auspicious mark” of the age, to connecting it to Sultan ‘Ādil Shāh IV and his lineage. The spiritual merit gained by the construction is further located in this specific site and in the person of the sultan and his family. While the Arabic takes pride of place, being positioned above the Sanskrit in the topmost portion of the *mīhrāb*, the “worldly” portion of the text — the praise of God, the praise of kings, and the exact auspicious moment of its construction — is recorded in Sanskrit. At this point we need to turn to the Sanskrit portion of the inscription which, by its very presence, supplements, reinforces and even questions the Arabic portion, and brings us back to the question of the order of languages that ‘Ādil Shāh’s inscriptions imply.

5. The Sanskrit inscriptions

While it might seem that within an inscription recording the pious construction of a mosque and placed within the mosque itself, the main “religious” work of

8 Translation from Kuraishī (1926, 1).

9 Translation from Rahim (1961, 57).

the inscription would be done in Arabic, the Sanskrit portions of the Fārūqī mosques draw this into question. As in the case of the Arabic inscriptions, both the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* Sanskrit texts are similar; however, the later *Burhanpur inscription* is an expansion and polishing of the earlier *Asirgarh inscription*. While they are not identical, they both use similar words, phrases, and concepts and can be fruitfully read together to give a sort of large field in which to place the translation of Islamic religion and Fārūqī power into Sanskrit. While the Arabic portion locates the mosque within Qur'ānic traditions, the Sanskrit portion does three discreet things: first, it praises the Islamic God; second, it eulogises the Sultanate Dynasty; and third, it provides an exact date for the construction of the mosque based on Indic calendrical models. Here I will read each of these portions in turn.

Both the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* inscriptions begin with a similar benediction. As would be expected in any Sanskrit royal inscription, the Fārūqī mosque inscriptions eulogise a deity; here however we find the Muslim God placed into Sanskrit categories. The *Asirgarh inscription* begins:

Homage to the divine person (*puruṣa*) as the maker! Homage to you, who are the essence (*ātman*) of all qualities (*guṇa*) [yet] without qualities (*nirguṇa*), whose inherent form is [both] manifest [and] unmanifest,¹⁰ whose essence is the bliss of consciousness,¹¹ the support (*ādhāra*) of the universe (*viśva*).¹²

The *Burhanpur mosque inscription* for its part uses similar language to praise the Islamic God in Sanskrit. The inscription states:

Homage to the illustrious maker of creation! The unmanifest (*avyakta*), pervading (*vyāpaka*), permanent (*nitya*), beyond qualities (*guṇātita*), essentially consciousness (*cidātmaka*), the cause (*kāraṇa*) of what is manifest — I praise that Lord (*īśvara*), manifest and unmanifest (*vyaktāvyakta*).¹³

In each inscription we have the same key words repeated: manifestation (*vyakta*), quality (*guṇa*), consciousness (*cit*), and eternity (*nitya*). While none of these concepts would be foreign in the praise of a Hindu deity, the two Sanskrit

10 Or following Ḳuraishī, “manifest yet hidden.”

11 Or following Ḳuraishī, “inherent in *chit* (mind) and *anand* (happiness).”

12 *Asirgarh mosque inscription*, l. 1: *śrī-kartṛ-puruṣāya namaḥ| guṇātmane nirguṇāya vyaktāvyakta-svarūpiṇe| cid-ānāmdātmane nityaṁ viśvādhārāya te namaḥ||*. I would like to thank Dániel Balogh for the emendation of Ḳuraishī’s (1926) text *viśvādhārayate* to *viśvādhārāya te*. Here and throughout, translations from Sanskrit are my own.

13 *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, l. 1: *śrī-sṛṣṭi-kartre namaḥ| avyaktaṁ vyāpakaṁ nityaṁ guṇātitaṁ cid-ātmakaṁ| vyaktasya kāraṇaṁ vaṁde vyaktāvyaktaṁ tam īśvaraṁ||*.

texts marshal them in order to address specific aspects of Islamic theology in Sanskrit. The language here relies on certain notions of creation as well as the connection between a god that is beyond all qualities (*gunātīta*) yet still somehow present. The Burhanpur mosque is just one of many examples of how the Sanskrit language attempts to include Muslim conceptions of God. As Richard Salomon (1998, 307) noted in reference to his translation of line 1 of the *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, “this invocatory verse is so phrased as to be acceptable to both Muslim and Hindu beliefs.” Such a statement seems true, yet why use such language at the religious focal point of an Islamic place of worship?

While I know of no other uses of Sanskrit language descriptions of the Islamic God within the religious space of a mosque, the Fārūqī inscriptions’ Sanskrit description resonates with other examples from the first Sultanates. For instance, in the northwest of the Subcontinent, the mint of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī in Lahore struck a remarkable set of coins in 1027–1028.¹⁴ The *dirhams* (called in Sanskrit *ṭaṅkas*) bear the Islamic profession of faith (the *kalimat*, “there is no god but God and Muḥammad is the messenger of God”) on one side in Arabic, with a “translation” on the other side written in Sanskrit in the Śārādā script. The Sanskrit translation reads *avyaktam ekaṁ muhamadaḥ avatāraḥ nṛpatiḥ mahamūdaḥ*, “The unmanifest (*avyaktam*) is one. Muhamada is [his] *avatāra*. The king is Mahamūda.” While drawing a direct line between the Fārūqī inscriptions and the Ghaznavid coin legend is tenuous at best, it is striking to see similar language being used to make the Islamic God legible in Sanskrit.

While the languages are similar, the difference in material form and context can be instructive. In both the bilingual *dirham* and the mosque inscriptions, the essential question is about legibility: who were these different languages meant to be legible to? In the case of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī’s coin, the two sides of the coin are not direct translations, but rather separately address different elite groups across the stretch of territory where the legends of the coin would be circulated. With its connotations of mobility, exchange, and a shared language of value, Maḥmūd of Ghaznī’s bilingual *dirham* stands at the beginning of a long and experimental process of state formation and cultural negotiation underlying the stabilisation of Muslim states in South Asia. The “translation” of the praise of God in the Fārūqī inscriptions stands at the other end of this process and shows a much more complex relationship than just two complementary “sides” doing the same thing. The two halves of the inscriptions, Arabic and Sanskrit, must be read in terms of complementary legibility. Within the sacred

14 This coin has of course garnered a fair amount of scholarly attention. For an account, see A. K. Bhattacharya (1964), and Goron and Goenka (2001, xxvi–xxvii).

and elite precincts of the mosque, the physical instantiation of the two languages portrays the ideological stabilisation of Fārūqī power. It does not matter that neither the Sanskrit nor the Arabic would be actually understandable outside of small circles of elite specialists; the work that they do would be translated by elite valorisation of their actual physical presence of the languages and their scripts.

Following the conventions of the Sanskrit *praśasti* genre, the inscription moves from the benediction to the *vaṁśa-prastavana*, the praise of the lineage of the donor. Interestingly, the Sanskrit highlights the longevity of the Fārūqī lineage rather than the mosque. While the Arabic-language inscriptions centre the mosque, it is not mentioned until the very end of the Sanskrit inscriptions, which rather focus on praise of God and of the king. Both the *Asirgarh* and the *Burhanpur* inscriptions are similar:

Asirgarh:

As long as the moon, sun, and stars remain in the sky [and] the Gaṅgā River on the earth, so long may that faultless lineage of the Phārukis remain upon the earth.¹⁵

Burhanpur:

As long as the moon and sun and stars remain in the sky, so long may the lineage of the Phārukis rejoice long on the earth!¹⁶

Similar statements are found throughout the Sanskrit epigraphical record; it is a common stock phrase in epigraphical Sanskrit and many inscriptions even have the sun and moon carved into the top of the record to artistically represent the durability of which the inscriptions speak. However, it is noteworthy that this wish for permanence is not for the pious donation, the mosque, but rather for the patron's family.

From this statement, we move on to a general lineage of the Fārūqīs. While the *Asirgarh* inscription does not go into the lineage in any poetic detail, the *Burhanpur* inscription places the dynasty within Sanskrit poetic expectations. To

15 *Asirgarh* mosque inscription, v. 2: *caṁdrārkkā-tārā gaṁgādi tiṣṭhanti gagane bhuvī| tāvat phāruki-vaṁśo 'sau vimalo bhuvī tiṣṭhatu||*.

16 *Burhanpur* mosque inscription, v. 2: *yāvac caṁdrārkkā-tārādi-sthitiḥ syād ambarāṁgaṇe| tāvat phāruki-vaṁśo 'sau ciraṁ naṁdatu bhū-tale||*. Accepting Salomon's (1998) *sthi* for Hira Lal's (1907–08) *ṣṭhi*.

begin with the *Asirgarh* version, the inscription marshals the possibilities of Sanskrit compounding to give a short encomium of ‘Ādil Shāh IV. The text states:

[The inscription¹⁷] of the Overlord of the Kingdom of Victory, the illustrious Khandesh (*ṣānadeśa*), Ādila Śāha (‘Ādil Shāh IV), son of Mubārakha Śāha (Mubārak Khān), son of the emperor (*pātaśāha*), the seven times illustrious Ādila Śāha (‘Ādil Shāh III), [that ‘Ādil Shāh IV who is] the sun of splendour (*pratāpa*) that is dear to those risen (*udīta*) in the illustrious family of the Phārūkīs,¹⁸ the full moon that bestows joy on the *cakora* birds of allies (*mitrajana*), dedicated to thinking on the God without Qualities (*nirguṇeśa*).¹⁹

Although this part of the inscription is in prose, it utilises the ornate, compound-heavy style that hearkens back to the first royal *praśastis* preserved in Sanskrit. Similarly, it deploys the term *pratāpa*, ‘heroic vigour or strength, royal splendour,’ which is key to the ideological vocabulary of kingship in Sanskrit; and likewise, the image of the king as the sun and the moon, gladdening different groups of people, is a stock trope, as is the *cakora* bird that survives by drinking moonlight. The inscription also presents the king’s sectarian affiliation in purely Sanskritic ways, saying that he is fully intent on or engaged in (*parāyaṇa*) thinking about (*cintana*) the God without Qualities (*nirguṇeśa*). Here too the Sanskrit negotiates similarity and difference; while the format is the same as would be expected for Hindu kings, the specific form of God beyond qualities is again highlighted, reinforcing the Islamic eulogy at the beginning of the inscription. It is perhaps also noteworthy that ‘Ādil Shāh is presented as ‘thinking about’ (*cintana*) rather than the more common ‘meditating upon’ (*dhyāna*) used in reference to Indic deities. Perhaps these words are merely synonyms, but it seems to me that perhaps a qualitative difference of practice is being flagged, with *cintana* being the functional equivalent of something like the Arabic *zīkr*.

The genealogy in Sanskrit follows the Arabic text, referring to only two ancestors, Mubārak Shāh (r. 1535–1566) and ‘Ādil Shāh III (r. 1510–1520).²⁰ Perhaps noteworthy is the use of the Arabic *bin*, spelled in Sanskrit as *bina* to indicate

17 The word *adhipateḥ* is in genitive case without a clear antecedent. It could be taken with the mosque, the inscription, or perhaps the year from what follows.

18 The *akṣara ṣi* in the inscription could be a mistake for *kī*. It could also, however, be an attempt to transcribe the Arabic *q*.

19 *Asirgarh mosque inscription*, ll. 2–3: *śrīmat-phāruṣī-kulodita-prīta-pratāpa-dinakara-mitrajana-cakorānaṇḍa-kara-pūrṇacarāndra-nirguṇeśa-cintana-parāyaṇa-pātaśāha-śrī-śrī 5 ādilaśāha-bina-mubārakhaśāha-bina-ādilaśāha-vijayarājya-śrī-ṣānadeśadhīpateḥ*.

20 For a full genealogy of the Fārūqī Sultans, see Table 1 above.

‘son of.’ While the genealogy presented in the Asirgarh mosque is cursory at best, the *Burhanpur inscription* provides a more fleshed-out poetic account. In two *upajāti* stanzas, the history of the dynasty is rehearsed:

In this lineage, it is said, there was a Lord of the Fārūqīs, the king Malika (Malik Naṣīr) by name. He had a son of noble mind, an ornament to the family, the king Gajanī (Ghaznī Khān). From him [was born] the hero Kesara Khāna (Kaisar Khān). His son [was] the king Hasana (Ḥasan Khān). After him was the king Edala Śāha (‘Ādil Shāh III). He had a son, the lord Mubārakha (Mubārak Khān).²¹

As in the *Asirgarh inscription*, the names of kings mentioned in the genealogy match the names mentioned in the Arabic; however, here the genealogy is poeticised in Sanskrit verse. Each new generation gets a quarter or half stanza giving the notion of an orderly succession.²² The genealogy culminates in a glorification of ‘Ādil Shāh:

His son, whose lotus feet are polished by the tops of the crowns of enemy kings, whose fame (*kīrti*) is real, the lord of the earth, who bows day and night to the highest *brahman* who is beyond all qualities — the illustrious King Edala (‘Ādil Shāh IV) is victorious, the crowning jewel among other kings.²³

Written in the *śārdūlavikrīḍita* metre, often used for texts of praise, the verse takes the same basic elements of the prose panegyric in the *Asirgarh inscription* and polishes them into ornate poetry. Each of the four quarters of the verse focuses on a different aspect of conventionalised royal representation in Sanskrit: overlordship, fame, piety, and benedictory praise. The example of crowns polishing the overlord’s feet is a stock image for showing sovereignty, *ādhipatya* or *aiśvarya*. As in the *Asirgarh inscription*, ‘Ādil Shāh’s *pratāpa* is specifically invoked; however, here this is paired with his great fame or renown, his *kīrti*. While the *Asirgarh inscription* spoke of the Islamic God as *nirguṇeśa*, the idea is expressed in

21 *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, vv. 3–4: *vaṁśe ’tha tasmin kila phārukīmdro vabhūva rājā malikābhīdhānaḥ| tasyābhavat sūnur udāra-cetāḥ kulāvataṁso gajanī-nareśaḥ|| tasmād abhūt kesara-khāna-vīraḥ putras tadīyo hasana-kṣitīśaḥ| tasmād abhūd edala-śāha-bhūpaḥ putro ’bhavat tasya mubārakheṁdraḥ||*

22 Like the Arabic genealogy, the Sanskrit genealogy seems to skip some generations and rulers and paper over certain gaps and misremember some of the succession. This is not rare in Sanskrit epigraphy; for an example in Sanskrit during the sultanate period, see Obrock (2022, 65–66).

23 *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, v. 5: *tat-sūnuḥ kṣitipāla-mauli-mukūṭa-vyāghṛṣṭa-pādām̐bujāḥ sat-kīrttir vilasat-pratāpa-vaśagāmitraḥ kṣitīśeśvaraḥ| yasyāhar-nīsam ānatir guṇa-gaṇātīte pare brahmaṇi śrīmān edala-bhūpatir vijayate bhūpāla-cūḍāmaṇiḥ||*

terms not of a Lord (*īśā*) but rather in terms of the highest *brahman*. Such an equation of a god with the *parama-brahman* is not uncommon, however it is noteworthy that the text further qualifies the *nirguṇeśa* of the *Asirgarh inscription* with clear allusions to larger theological concepts and debates coming from the Hindu tradition.

The verse concludes with an implied benediction: “the king is victorious (*vijayate*).” This simple conclusion, I would argue, is the point of this entire genealogical and panegyric section of text. The terms *vijaya* in the *Asirgarh inscription* and *vijayate* in the *Burhanpur inscription* anchor the entire genealogical/panegyric section. The culmination of the Sanskrit is a royal benediction for the king to prosper on earth. Such a desire is absent from the Arabic section, which focuses on piety and the mosque itself. Here, then, it seems that a division of labour is being worked out between two languages. While Arabic is the language of piety in the world (instantiated in the mosques themselves), Sanskrit is the language of kingship performed in the world. The positioning of the words *vijaya/vijayate* marks the performance of kingly power. On one hand, the Arabic presents the king in a documentary way as a pious donor and asks God to remember his piety. On the other, the Sanskrit is written from the perspective of ritualised praise, in which the king is the locus of genealogical pedigree, hierarchical political power, fame and renown, and religious devotion. Sanskrit poetic language here still fills the role of political self-presentation, even within the sacred precincts of a mosque.

The first two portions of the Sanskrit text speak to a translational project in which Indic notions of divinity and kingship are marshalled to serve the Fārūqī project. Again, this “work” is different from the work done by the Arabic section. However, along with the Sanskrit panegyric verses, the establishment of the date of the mosque takes up the most space in the Sanskrit inscriptions of ʿĀdil Shāh IV. In the *Burhanpur inscription*, the calculation of the exact astrological conjunction of the mosque’s construction takes up almost one third of the entire inscription. It does not simply state the year (as is given in the Arabic portion) but rather the exact astrological moment at which construction began. This speaks to a relationship between the royal court and astronomers deeply learned in Sanskrit conventions. It also implies that ʿĀdil Shāh IV began construction of the mosque at an auspicious moment in consultation with astrologers learned in Indic systems. While the year is simply stated in the Hijri era in the Arabic, the Sanskrit gives the year in two different reckoning systems and speaks of particular astronomical moments on a specific day in a particular month. It is only after the precise date and time of the construction is given that the mosque (in Sanskrit, *masīti*) itself is finally mentioned.

This final line of the Sanskrit inscription echoes some of the language and concerns of the Arabic, although in a truncated form. First is the mention of the physical space of the mosque itself, which is absolutely essential to the Arabic portion. This mosque then is placed within the field of pious donation through the Sanskrit compound *svadharmā-pālana* (for the sake of nourishing/protecting his own religion). While thus we have a return to the central concerns of the Arabic, perhaps bookending the inscription in a sort of bilingual ring structure, this seems almost an afterthought after the amount of time and energy spent on praise and astrological calculation.

To conclude this investigation of the Sanskrit section of the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* inscriptions, I would like to return to the larger question: what did ‘Ādil Shāh use Sanskrit to do? Both inscriptions share a common imagination of the structure of the Sanskrit and what the Sanskrit was supposed to say. Both inscriptions repeat the same general topics, although clearly the later *Burhanpur* text presents the most fully formed and most polished version. In this way there seems to be an underlying assumption about what Sanskrit does, its role in the political imagination of the Fārūqī sultans. To put it succinctly, in ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s inscriptions, Sanskrit is the language of praise, lineage, and auspicious occasions. To return then to Pollock’s distinction between the “workly” and the “documentary,” Sanskrit here appears to be doing the same work that it did in “cosmopolitan” Sanskrit inscriptions. Yet, the positioning of the texts — the Arabic above the Sanskrit — speaks to a different sort of language hierarchy than in earlier Sanskrit bilingual epigraphic texts.

6. Conclusion

While the Arabic portion of the Fārūqī bilingual inscriptions state that “mosques are for Allāh,” the Sanskrit portion rather highlights how the mosque is for the Fārūqīs, particularly ‘Ādil Shāh IV, as it instantiates the worldly power of the Sultan, as a king and devotee. While the Arabic portion of the inscription serves to place the Fārūqīs and their mosque within an Islamic set of relations, much of the “work” of the inscription in the lived world of kingship in practice is done by the Sanskrit, especially in its utility as a language of praise and as the language of auspicious astrological calculation. In this reading then, the mosque is “for” a lot of things, and each language refers back to different traditions of elite piety and self-presentation. However, it is in the juxtaposition that ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī’s ideology of kingship becomes visible, as his epigraphical project puts Sanskrit and Arabic into a new and evocative relationship. Unlike the

Veraval inscription, which clearly speaks to two communities in the two languages and presupposes “insider” and “outsider” groups to religious communities, the Fārūqī inscriptions speak to one undifferentiated community of the twin poles of authority instantiated by the mosques, God, and the king. While such a juxtaposition of Sanskrit and Arabic in a mosque is not (to my knowledge) found elsewhere in South Asia, it seems to me that ‘Ādil Shāh IV is just one instantiation of the creative negotiations occurring between Sanskrit and other emergent modes of expression from the increasingly Islamicate culture in India. These negotiations continue throughout the sultanate period, and the extant fragments of Sanskrit that exist speak to the ongoing way different agents resorted to, adopted, and adapted Sanskritic literary forms for their own purposes outside of centralised courtly spaces.

When the two portions of the bilingual inscriptions are read together, a picture of the division of labour between Sanskrit and Arabic begins to take shape. Arabic is the language of piety and religion which sets the donation of the mosque within canonical Islamic ideas of piety. In the Sanskrit portion of the inscriptions, political representation takes centre stage and ‘Ādil Shāh IV uses it as the language of the public performance of power. While the meritorious nature of his pious gift is adumbrated in the Arabic, its location within the world is done in Sanskrit.

The sultanate period has been long overlooked as a site of creative engagement with the aesthetic and political utility of Sanskrit, yet as the bilingual *dirham* of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī shows, Sanskrit was an integral part of royal self-presentation for many Muslim polities from their very inception. The *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur mosque inscriptions* stand at the end of this period of creative negotiation of new forms of political expression. In the coming decades, the Mughal Empire consolidated its political and aesthetic supremacy, and the decentralised and experimental dynamic of various sultanate polities was eclipsed as they assimilated into the Mughal Imperium. In fact, the ascendancy of Mughal power is itself inscribed on the very same sites so central to ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s project. On January 26, 1601 CE (22nd of Rajab, 1009 Hijri), the Mughal forces took the Fort of Asirgarh. Faced with the overwhelming might of the Mughal Army, the last Sultan, ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s son Bahādur Khān, submitted to Emperor Akbar’s forces. While similar events happened at numerous sultanates large and small throughout South Asia, the Fārūqī Sultans’ defeat is noteworthy for its material commemoration in a set of public inscriptions in Persian. Emperor Akbar commanded the Mughal courtier, calligrapher, and poet Mīr Muḥammad Ma‘ṣūm of Bhakkar, also known by his penname of Nāmī, to record the Mughal victory in a set of Persian verses to be inscribed at the entrance of the Asirgarh

Fort as well as on the congregational mosque in Burhanpur. On a pillar inside the mosque within Asirgarh fort, Nāmī writes:

The world-subduing and world bestowing Sovereign, Akbar Bādshāh, conquered Asīr(garh) by dint of his youthful good fortune. When Nāmī sought the date of its conquest, wisdom said [the chronogram] “He took the hill of Asīr.”²⁴

Similarly, a rock outside of the main gate of the fortress also bears an inscription completed by Nāmī, commemorating the event. Another similar verse, also executed by Nāmī, is found on the base of the southern minaret of the Jamī mosque built by ʿĀdil Shāh IV Fārūqī in Burhanpur. Nāmī again writes:

His majesty the emperor with the audience hall of the sky, the shadow of God, made Burhānpur the camping ground of the victorious standards, and Bahādūr Khān, having presented himself, was granted the favour of paying obeisance (and) the emperor pardoned his as well as his dependants’ lives. And the fort of Asīr was taken.²⁵

These two inscriptions, set at two of the most important sites of the Fārūqī Sultans’ power, mark the end of their two-hundred-year rule in Khandesh²⁶ at their two most important sites of power. The annexation into the Mughal imperium is marked by a new epigraphical language of power, Persian, literally inscribed over ʿĀdil Shāh IV’s creative marshalling of Sanskrit and Arabic.

In the end then, ʿĀdil Shāh IV’s project was a failure; however, attention to his epigraphical texts in material and historical contexts provides perhaps a small window into the dynamic cultural history of Sanskrit beyond cosmopolitanism. As one final note, in his edition of the Sanskrit inscription Hira Lal (1907–08, 306) writes the following note: “I have seen some Sanskrit manuscripts in Persian character in the possession of some Maulvīs of Burhānpūr, preserved as heirlooms from their ancestors, who apparently studied them under State encouragement. Unfortunately, most of these valuable records have been destroyed by the fires of 1897 and 1906 which caused damage to the extent of about 57 lakhs besides loss of life.” While in all likelihood the Sanskrit texts of the *maulvīs* are all irrevocably lost (and their families are most likely long gone from Burhanpur), such a comment reminds the modern scholar to look for traces of the vibrant and creative multilingualism of the sultanates, and to read

24 Translation from Kuraishī (1926, 4).

25 Translation from Rahim (1962, 73).

26 The dating is slightly problematic. The dating of the *Burhanpur mosque inscription* seems to be more accurate. See the discussion by Rahim (1961, 72–74).

inscriptional texts like those of ʿĀdil Shāh IV as hints toward the dynamic politics of language and self-presentation in sultanate South Asia. To this end, the bilingual inscriptions of the Fārūqīs of Khandesh remain as a testament to the creative deployment of Sanskrit in Islamicate or perhaps even Islamic contexts.

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See page xvi about references to primary sources.

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27 Briggs's spellings have been updated and standardised.

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A Tale of Two Courts: Records of Kachavāhā *mahārājas* in Digambara Jaina memorials

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1. Introduction

Throughout most of the second millennium, the Digambara Jaina mendicant traditions were led by lineages of *bhaṭṭārakas*. The *bhaṭṭārakas* of Western India were venerated as ideal, paramount renunciators by ascetic and lay Digambara communities, but also carried important socio-political functions. They developed and maintained links with rulers on behalf of merchant communities, often setting up their own seats in royal and imperial capitals. In this chapter, I focus on the inscriptions of ten mid-17th-to-19th-century Digambara memorial stones commemorating *bhaṭṭārakas* and lay *paṇḍitas* related to what I call the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā, the Mūlasaṅgha Balātkāraṅga ascetic lineage which was active in the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍa region of present-day Rajasthan (Figure 1 in section 5 below). These inscriptions consistently and elegantly defer to the reigning Kachavāhā dynasty *mahārājas* of Amer (Āmera) and Jaipur (Jayapura). A mere few other examples are found of such references to local rulers in Digambara memorial inscriptions from other parts of Western India. This idiosyncratic epigraphic practice in Ḍhūṇḍhāḍa speaks of a particularly close alignment between the local *bhaṭṭāraka* lineage and the Kachavāhā court. Ritualised legitimisation and economic transactions between both polities are also evident from other aspects of Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā commemoration practices.

2. *Bhaṭṭārakas*: Digambara renunciators

From the latter half of the Sultanate period (1206–1526), throughout the Mughal era (1526–1857), and up to the early 20th century, Digambara Jaina mendicant lineages were led by renunciators with the *bhaṭṭāraka* rank. While the Digambara

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ascetic ideal is that of the naked, itinerant and possessionless, male *muni*, *bhaṭṭārakas* from at least the 16–17th centuries onwards were clothed and mostly sedentary. *Bhaṭṭāraka* seats (*gaddi*) continue to function and flourish in South India today, but the *bhaṭṭāraka* lineages of Western and Central India were all discontinued by the 19th and 20th centuries. As *munis* reappeared in increasing numbers in the first half of the 20th century, they came to stand at the centre of Digambara devotion. At the same time, the autocratic, courtly style of leadership which characterised the *bhaṭṭāraka* traditions fell from grace as lay communities came to prefer representative and bureaucratised modes of governance and administration, and modern organisations and institutes. When laypeople retracted their support for the *bhaṭṭārakas*, the “old regime” *bhaṭṭāraka* polities collapsed.

Scholarship long conceived of the pre-20th-century Digambara *bhaṭṭārakas* as administrators, “clerics”, ritual specialists, or at most “semi-renouncers”. Digambara *munis* were often taken to have disappeared all at once in the Sultanate period due to the harassment of naked renouncers by Islamic rulers and to have been replaced by clothed *bhaṭṭārakas*. *Bhaṭṭārakas* were thought to have had only celibate but not fully-initiated renouncers (*brahmacārin*) and lay scholars and ritual specialists (*paṇḍita*) among their pupils. It is now clear, however, (1) that in the medieval period (8th–13th cent.) the *bhaṭṭāraka* rank was inserted on top of the prior Digambara ascetic hierarchy, above the *muni* and the *ācārya* ranks; (2) that in the early modern period (c. 14th–18th cent.) the *bhaṭṭārakas* of Western and Central India were regarded and venerated as ideal renouncers by the lay and ascetic communities which supported them (Detige 2019a);¹ and (3) that *bhaṭṭārakas*’ ascetic communities (*saṅgha*) included *munis* up to the 17th century and *ācāryas* up to the 18th century (Detige 2020). Prosopographical studies of manuscript colophons (Detige 2018) and memorials (Detige forthcoming) allow us to reconstruct the evolution of the *bhaṭṭāraka* circles. Up to the 17th century, these were sometimes substantial *saṅghas* including renouncers of a broad spectrum of lower ascetic ranks, both male (*maṇḍalācārya*, *ācārya*, *muni*, *brahmacārin*) and female (*āryikā*, *brahmacāriṇī*, *kṣullikā*). In the 18th century we see constellations of *bhaṭṭārakas*, *ācāryas*, and *paṇḍitas*, and from the late 18th to the early 20th century, *bhaṭṭārakas* operated with networks of associated *paṇḍitas*.

1 The rituals for the veneration of living pre-20th-century *bhaṭṭārakas* (*pūjā*, *ārati*) are also performed for contemporary Digambara renouncers (Detige 2024).

3. *Bhaṭṭārakas*: Digambara lords

One of the *bhaṭṭārakas*' functions which scholarship has always stressed, yet never fully explored, is their interaction with rulers on behalf of lay communities. While regarded as venerable renouncers, the *bhaṭṭārakas* of Western India also carried considerable political and socio-economic clout, functioning as the kingpin of devotional and financial networks constituted by ascetic and lay communities. Digambara communities consisted of wealthy merchant castes whose elites included chief donors (*saṅghapati*) and, at least in the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍa region, ministers (*dīvān*) and courtiers at the royal court, lower-level officials, and financiers. Following ideas of Inden (1990, 22–33), as recently applied by Hatcher (2020, esp. 73–100), I conceive of the *bhaṭṭāraka* circles as renouncer-centred polities operating within a hierarchical, poly-centric “scale of forms”. Polities can be conceived of as partially self-governing groups with a collective identity constituting an identifiable political entity, organised through institutionalised social relations, capable of mobilising resources, and led by a sovereign lord (after Ferguson and Mansbach 1996, 33–40). The scale of forms refers to a range of polities with overlapping realms of authority and graduated power. This model captures worldly rulers and religious leaders within a single analysis, highlighting forms of governance and ritual practices common to both.

The 17th-to-19th-century Ḍhūṇḍhāḍasākhā *bhaṭṭāraka* polity specifically inscribed itself into that of the regional rulers (*mahārāja*) of the Kachavāhā dynasty, and these were in turn subordinated to and closely allied to the paramount polity of the Mughal emperors.² Local Digambara caste councils (*pañca*), in the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍa region predominantly of the Khaṇḍelavāla caste, family patriarchs, and possibly *pañḍitas* operating in *mandiras* and towns away from the *bhaṭṭāraka* seat can be seen as standing at the centres of polities subservient to the *bhaṭṭāraka* seat. Other regional religious traditions constituted polities parallel to that of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍasākhā, regularly standing in conflict or competition. Among these were both Hindu and other Jaina traditions, and the latter included both the Śvetāmbara tradition and the Digambara Terāpantha which opposed the *bhaṭṭārakas* of the Bīspantha tradition and introduced ritual reforms.

2 The connections between the three polities go back to the early 16th century, as shown by a large consecration festival held in Mauzamabad in VS 1664, at which the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍasākhā *Bhaṭṭāraka* Devendrakīrti consecrated a *mandira* and thousands of temple icons (subsequently distributed throughout northern India), with some, possibly nominal cooperation by the Mughal emperor Akbar and the Kachavāhā Mahārāja Māna Siṅha (Kāsalivāla 1989, 151).

Lordship was articulated in largely similar ways in *bhaṭṭāraka* polities and at royal courts, with an epistemic continuity in conceptions of authority, legitimacy, and governance. The *bhaṭṭārakas* styled themselves in royal fashion, surrounded with regal paraphernalia like parasols, sitting on thrones, travelling in palanquins, and installed on the seat with anointment rituals parallel to royal consecrations (Detige 2019b). The practice of erecting *bhaṭṭārakas*' memorial pavilions, 'stone umbrellas' (*chatrī*, see next), was itself also shared with the Kachavāhā and other Rajput courts, whose commemorative practices constituted a performance of kingship, political authority, and legitimacy and in turn referred to the Indo-Islamic tomb tradition (Belli Bose 2015, esp. 9–14, 33–92). The ethical virtues, intellectual qualities, and literary practices embodied and claimed by the *bhaṭṭārakas* and the rituals of their glorification also matched with elements of the courtly culture of royal and imperial polities (Ali 2006, esp. 69–96). Such alignments formed a lingua franca which facilitated ritualised interaction between hierarchically differentiated but structurally similar polities. Religious lords like the *bhaṭṭārakas* drew authority from their association with rulers. And in ceremonially honouring the mastery of such gurus, *mahārājas* acknowledged the wealthy lay communities associated with them and integrated them into their realms. In the present chapter, I begin to study the interactions of *bhaṭṭāraka* lineages with secular courts based on evidence from the inscriptions of Digambara memorials.³

4. Digambara memorial inscriptions

Digambara memorials are typically pavilions (*chatrī*), often erected on hilltops, sheltering a foot icon (*pādukā*) representing the commemorated individual or a pillar with carvings depicting him (far less frequently, her). Often referred to as *nasiyā* (*nasiyām*, *nasiyā*, and other variants), commemoration sites sometimes grew into necropolises with a substantial number of memorials. In a survey mostly conducted in Western India but also including a smaller number of find-spots in Central India, I documented some two hundred Digambara memorials

3 The close interaction between Jaina mendicant leaders and Indian rulers long predates the current case. Famous examples from the Śvetāmbara tradition are the association of Ācārya Hemacandra with the Caulukya rulers in 12th-century Gujarat (Cort 1998, esp. 96–97, see also p. 105) and the Kharataragaccha Jinaprabhasūri's (c. 1261–1333) close association with Sultan Muhammed bin Tughluq (r. 1325–51) (Vose 2022, esp. 4–6).

of the 11th to 20th centuries, the majority from the 16th to the 19th centuries.⁴ These memorials commemorate *bhaṭṭāarakas*, lower-ranking male and female renouncers, and lay *paṇḍitas*. As the paramount renouncers, *bhaṭṭāarakas* were often commemorated with the grandest monuments. These memorials are important sources to study the early modern *bhaṭṭāarakas*' venerability, the composition of their *saṅghas*, the geographic distribution of the various lineages, and the frequent shifts of their seats within specific regions. The inscriptions of the small number of late medieval memorials discovered are short, recording but sparse information, a date, and the name of the commemorated renouncer. In the early modern period and into the 19th and 20th centuries, when the Digambara mendicant lineages themselves had also become more formalised, their memorial inscriptions became longer and somewhat standardised. A memorial inscription's date can either be that of the commemorated individual's death or that of the memorial's consecration, and mostly we do not know which type of date is recorded. Only rarely do the inscriptions explicate this or include both dates (e.g. 5.1), although sometimes other sources help us to interpret the dates.

The memorial inscriptions of the *bhaṭṭāaraka* traditions are almost entirely composed of information on the commemorated individuals and their lineage, featuring little eulogy other than honorific markers. Typically included are the name of the commemorated individual, the appellations of the ascetic tradition (*saṅgha*, *gaṇa*, *gaccha*) to which he or she was affiliated (in the inscriptions discussed here, the Mūlasaṅgha Balātkāragaṇa), and the names of a few successive lineage incumbents (*bhaṭṭāarakas*, *maṇḍalācāryas*, sometimes *ācāryas*) leading up to the incumbent flourishing at the time of the memorial's consecration, who often performed the consecration. These successions help us determine the specific lineage attested (here, the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā, my nomenclature). *Bhaṭṭāarakas* consecrated the memorials of their direct predecessor (5.1) or earlier predecessors (5.2) and of lower-ranking renouncers, who are often though not always explicitly identified as their pupils. In the 19th and 20th centuries, *paṇḍitas* also consecrated memorials of their *paṇḍita* gurus (5.3). Occasionally, further renouncers, *paṇḍitas*, or other laypeople are mentioned as pupils or devotees of the commemorated or commemorating individual or as involved in the memorial's erection. The inscriptions usually conclude with the consecrating agent(s) offering eternal salutations to the commemorated

4 Detige (2023; *forthcoming*). I did not survey memorials of renouncers of the 20th-to-21st-century *muni saṅghas*, which developed independent from the *bhaṭṭāaraka* traditions.

individual⁵ and a blessing for prosperity.⁶ As such, and although many specimens do not include all these categories of information, the structure and contents of Digambara memorial inscriptions largely overlap with those of the inscriptions of Digambara temple icons (*mūrtilekha*) and Digambara manuscript colophons.⁷ However, names and genealogies of lay donors are commonly included in the latter two kinds of sources while rarely appearing in memorial inscriptions. Likewise, references to rulers are fairly standard in colophons but exceptional in memorial inscriptions and *mūrtilekhas*.

5. Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā memorial inscriptions attesting Kachavāhā rulers

Within a corpus of some two hundred Digambara memorial inscriptions, only thirteen contain a reference to a ruler (in two cases incomplete). Ten of these inscriptions, dating from the mid-17th to the second half of the 19th century, defer to the Kachavāhā *mahārāja* reigning at the time of the memorial's consecration. These belong to memorials of *bhaṭṭārakas* (Figure 1) and *paṇḍitas* related to the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā, and are found in Jaipur and towns in its immediate surrounding. A late-19th-century memorial of a *paṇḍita* related to the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā but deferring to a ruler of Ajmer is found in Bundī, further south in the Hāḍautī region. Two examples stem from the Vāgaḍā region on the Rajasthan-Gujarat borderland. They relate to one of the Balātkāragaṇa lineages operating there and date to the early 16th century and the first half of the 19th century (6). The preponderance of such attestations from the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā and the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍa region and the elegant deference⁸ given suggest a close association between this *bhaṭṭāraka* lineage and the Kachavāhā court. The relative silence about the Jainas in the documents of the royal court⁹ would indicate that this may mostly express a desire of the Digambaras to present themselves as closely allied to the Kachavāhās. Other elements of the *bhaṭṭāraka* tradition's consecration, commemoration, and building practices, however, confirm actual interactions between both polities, including Kachavāhā recognition and legitimisation of the *bhaṭṭārakas*, and land grants to them (5.1, 5.2).

5 E.g. *nityaṃ praṇamati, nityaṃ praṇamanti*, “he/they bow eternally.”

6 E.g. *śrīr astu, śubham bhavatu, kalyāṇam astu*, etc., “may there be prosperity.”

7 On Digambara manuscript colophons, see Detige (2018).

8 *mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāi-[X]-siṃha-rājya-pravarttamāne*, and variations.

9 As pointed out to me by John Cort, with reference to the work of Monika Horstmann (2009; 2013).

An early example found in a mid-17th-century *bhaṭṭāraka* memorial in Amer dates from the time when the connection between the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā and the Kachavāhā polities was being forged (5.1). The Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā practice of deferring to the reigning Kachavāhā monarch in memorial inscriptions became standardised from the late 18th century onwards. The chronologically next specimen is a collective *bhaṭṭāraka* memorial found at the same site in Amer as the latter memorial. This VS 1845 pillar stood as the axis around which Kachavāhā legitimisation of Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā incumbents was ritually enacted (5.1). At the very end of the 18th century, a new Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā commemoration site was inaugurated in Jaipur at a plot of land donated by the Kachavāhā court. Late-18th-to-early-19th-century Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā *bhaṭṭāraka* memorials at this site (VS 1853 [3] and VS 1881) and in the nearby town of Cākasū (VS 1886) uniformly and relatively lengthily defer to the reigning Kachavāhā *mahārājas* (5.2). Similar references are also included in the inscriptions of memorials of three 19th-century *paṇḍitas* related to the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā, found in Jaipur (VS 1880) and in two nearby towns, Caurū (VS 1888) and Phāgī (VS 1924) (5.3). In the following subsections, I discuss these ten Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā memorials attesting Kachavāhā rulers and their inscriptions one by one. An edition of the inscriptions is given in the concluding section (8).¹⁰

¹⁰ I occasionally refer to other memorial inscriptions, both from the same findspots and from elsewhere. I do not, however, offer a full edition of these, nor of the three memorials attesting local rulers found in other regions.

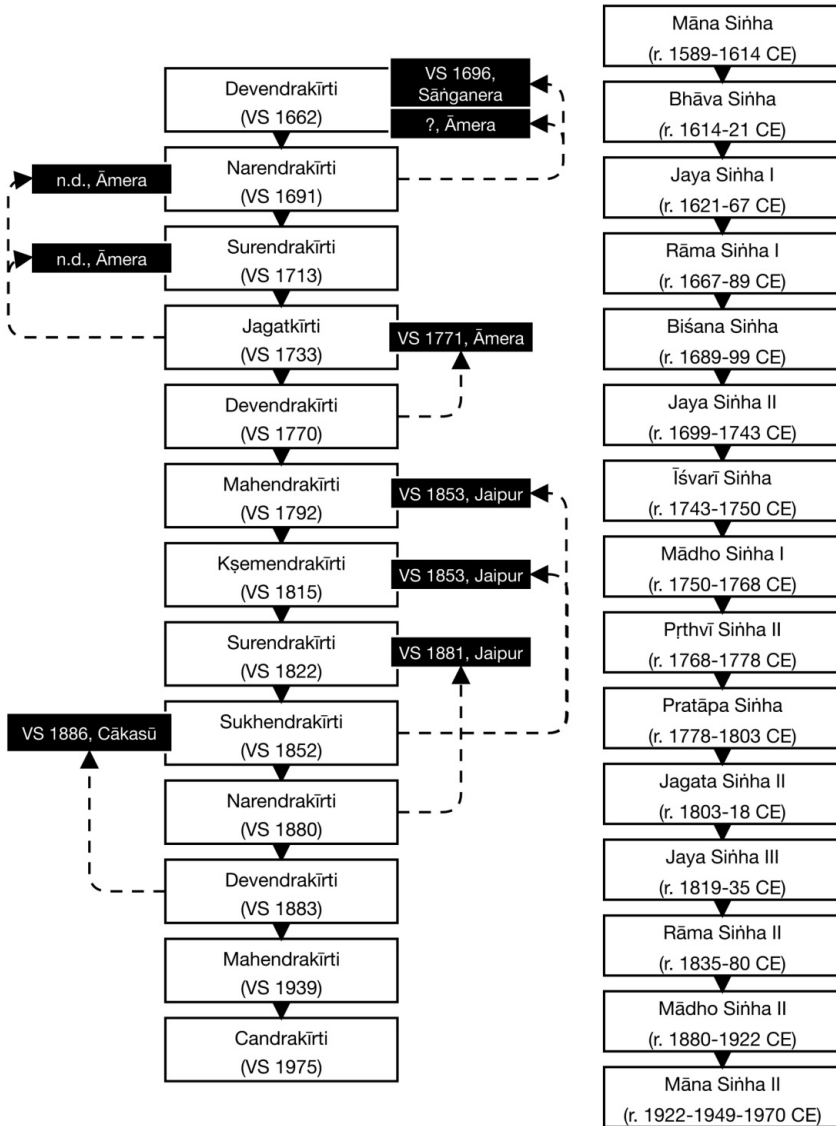


Figure 1. Succession of Kachavāhā rulers (right) and Dhūṇḍhāḍasākḥā bhṭṭārakas (left) with discovered memorials, incl. indication of year of consecration (VS), town of provenience, and consecrating bhṭṭāraka (dashed arrows)

5.1. Amer (VS 1691–1722, VS 1845)

The earliest memorial from the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍa region to record the ruling Kachavāhā mahārāja is found at the Kīrtistambha Nasiyārī, a Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā commemoration site in Amer named after a communal memorial pillar (*kīrtistambha*) from VS 1845 discussed below (this section). Here, a single raised platform supports four *caraṇa-chatrīs* with *pāḍukās* installed in small shrines (Figure 2, Figure 3). The latter set-up is almost entirely unique to this site; the only other example found in Western India is a single *chatrī* in Bundī (Figure 10 L). The oldest memorial at the site in Amer commemorates Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti and was consecrated by his successor Narendrakīrti (Figure 2). The *pāḍukā* inscription records the reign of Mahārāja Savāi Jaya Siṅha (I)¹¹ (r. 1621–67) and, calling for long-lasting veneration, informs that the memorial was built by the *brahmacārin* Keśava out of *guru-bhakti*. The date in the inscription is effaced, but internal and external evidence places the memorial in the mid-17th century. Devendrakīrti was on the seat from VS 1662 to VS 1691, his successor Narendrakīrti from VS 1691 to VS 1722 (Hoernle 1891, 355; 1892, 83). Devendrakīrti's death in 1634 (VS 1691), as recorded in the inscription of another *pāḍukā* of his found in Sāṅgānera (see next), is a *terminus post quem* for his memorial in Amer. The roughly coterminous end of Narendrakīrti's incumbency in 1665 (VS 1722) and of Jaya Siṅha's rule in August 1667 (VS 1724) a *terminus ante quem*. It is most probable that Narendrakīrti consecrated the memorial earlier in his incumbency, especially since he also consecrated another memorial of Devendrakīrti in Sāṅgānera in VS 1696.

11 8.1: *mahārājāḍhirāja-jayasimha-rājya-pravarttamāne*.



Figure 2. Carāṇa-chatrī of Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti (TL., Hindu chatrī in the background) with pādukā (BL) installed in small shrine (R), no legible date, mid-17th century. *Kīrtistambha Nasiyān, Amer, February 2013.*

At the Nasiyā in Sāṅgānera, a town south of Amer and Jaipur, a second memorial stone of Devendrakīrti was found. The pādukā was stored in a small, modern-day shrine, but its inscription refers to Narendrakīrti building a chatrī in VS 1696. This original chatrī may have become ruined, or removed to make space for a big temple building project underway at the site at the time of my visit (February 2013). The Sāṅgānera pādukā's inscription does not feature a reference to the Kachavāhā ruler, but includes other information rarely found on early modern Digambara memorial stones, concerning Devendrakīrti's death and succession and the consecration of his memorial. Devendrakīrti accordingly passed on the bhaṭṭāraka seat (paṭṭa diyā) to Narendrakīrti on the 15th day of the dark half of the month of Kārttika in VS 1691 (22nd October 1634).¹² Devendra-

12 The inscription on Narendrakīrti's own pādukā in Amer records his ascension to the seat in Sāṅgānera a day earlier, on the 14th day of the dark half of the month of Kārttika VS 1691. Paṭṭāvalis (lineage succession texts) situate it a few days earlier again, on the 8th

kīrti died a few days later, on the 5th day of the bright half of the month of Kārtika (27th October 1634), and Narendrakīrti built his *chatrī* and consecrated his *pādukā* five years later, in VS 1696, possibly on the 3rd day of the bright half of Phālguna (25th February 1640). Devendrakīrti was consecrated to the seat in Cākasū (A. Nyāyatīrtha 1985, 421) but is also said to have spent his incumbency in Sāṅgānera (Hoernle 1892, 83), and the memorial found here thus likely represents his actual place of residence, demise, and cremation. Narendrakīrti on the other hand was consecrated in Sāṅgānera (A. Nyāyatīrtha 1985, 421) but probably moved the Ḍhūṅḍhāḍaśākhā seat to the flourishing Kachavāhā capital Amer, and may have erected a secondary memorial of his predecessor Devendrakīrti there in an attempt to formally moor his lineage in its new hometown. The then uncommon, explicit reference to Mahārāja Savāi Jaya Siṅha (I) may well express Narendrakīrti's intent to insert his polity into that of the Kachavāhās. Narendrakīrti no doubt anticipated the larger platform on which he built Devendrakīrti's *caraṇa-chatrī* to be used for the erection of further memorials. This indicates that he had good hopes for the Ḍhūṅḍhāḍaśākhā seat to flourish in the Kachavāhā hub.

Three further Ḍhūṅḍhāḍaśākhā *bhaṭṭāarakas* were commemorated at the Kīrtistambha Nasiyām (Figure 3): Narendrakīrti himself, and his successors Surendrakīrti and Jagatkīrti, all of whom are known to have resided in Amer (Hoernle 1892, 83). Their *pādukās'* inscriptions follow the example of Devendrakīrti's Sāṅgānera *pādukā* in recording dates for the successions. According to these, Narendrakīrti was, as we already saw, consecrated in VS 1691, and died in Amer in VS 1722. Surendrakīrti both passed the seat to his successor Jagatkīrti and died in Śrāvaṇa VS 1733. The inscriptions of these two memorial stones do not record when they were consecrated, but they are installed under a twin *chatrī*, a combined memorial for both (Figure 3 right), and the inscription of Narendrakīrti's *pādukā* explicitly records that it was consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraaka Jagatkīrti, who occupied the seat from VS 1733 to 1770. The inscription on Jagatkīrti's own *pādukā*, installed in a separate *chatrī*, records that Jagatkīrti died on the 5th day of the dark half of the month of Māgha in VS 1770, that his successor was consecrated six days later (*badi* 11), and that the memorial was consecrated some ten months later, in Mārgaśīrṣa (*sudi* 2) VS 1771. The latter inscription also

(Hoernle 1891, 355; 1892, 83) or the 11th (Hoernle 1892, 83). Further cases are known of *bhaṭṭāarakas* abdicating from the seat and consecrating their own successors while still alive. Yet it was probably more common for new incumbents to be consecrated by the community after the demise of the previous *bhaṭṭāaraka*. Sometimes a gap of a few months or years fell before a new incumbent was consecrated, possibly indicating that it took time for a suitable candidate to be identified or agreed upon.

records the name of the artisan (*karigāra*) who built the *chatrī*, and probably its donor, information which is only very infrequently found on Digambara memorial stones. Neither of the inscriptions of these three further *bhaṭṭāraka* memorials at the Kirtistambha Nasiyām take up the practice of referring to the reigning Kachavāhā *mahārāja*. This became common practice only from the end of the 18th century, in one further memorial at this site (see next), and at other *bhaṭṭāraka* memorials in Jaipur and Cākasū (5.2).



Figure 3. Platform with *caraṇa*-*chatrīs* commemorating the *bhaṭṭārakas* Devendrakīrti (mid-17th cent., left on picture), Narendrakīrti and Surendrakīrti (probably late 17th cent., double *chatrī*, right), and Jagatkīrti (VS 1771, extreme right). Kirtistambha Nasiyām, Amer, February 2013.

The Kirtistambha Nasiyām in Amer is also home to a communal memorial pillar (*kirtistambha*) consecrated by another Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā Bhaṭṭāraka Surendrakīrti in May or June 1788 (VS 1845) (Figure 4 L). I found about half a dozen of such “pillars of glory” in Western India, related to various Mūlasaṅgha Balāt-kāraṅga and Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha Nandītaṭagaccha lineages (Detige *forthcoming*). *Kirtistambhas* are an iconographic format for the commemoration and glorification of an entire mendicant lineage rather than an individual *bhaṭṭāraka*. They feature a large number of small, generic depictions of renunciators (Figure 4 R), identified as the consecutive incumbents of a specific lineage with inscribed

captions giving their names and often dates of consecration.¹³ At approximately four metres, the Amer pillar is taller than other discovered *kīrtistambhas*. It was erected in a dedicated *chatrī*, which is provided with stone lattices (*jālī*) between the pillars and as such appears a rather enclosed structure. A longer inscription near the base of the pillar chronicles its consecration but remained unfinished. Space was left blank for the day of the fortnight and the name of the reigning Kachavāhā monarch. Perhaps the missing data were meant to be inscribed as part of the consecration rituals of the *kīrtistambha*. Or, more pragmatically and maybe more likely, they were perhaps originally left open in consideration that the date of consecration might change and the ruler might pass before that time – and ultimately never got added. Yet Mahārāja Savāi Pratāpa Siṅha (r. 1778–1803), who had been on the throne in Jaipur for ten years at the time of the memorial’s consecration, flourished and reigned for another decade and a half.



Figure 4. *Ḍhūṅḍhāḍaśākhā* kīrtistambha installed in a *chatrī* (L., VS 1845) with depictions of bhāṭṭārakas (R., left Surendrakīrti, paṭṭa VS 1822; middle *Ḍṣemendrakīrti*, paṭṭa VS 1815; right undedicated). *Kīrtistambha Nasiyān, Amer, February 2013.*

13 I here forego an edition of these inscriptions on the Amer pillar, which record the Mūla-saṅgha and Balātkāraṅgaṅa succession from the first century BCE onwards roughly as known from *paṭṭāvalis* (Hoernle 1891; 1892).

The inscription also refers to the *darśana* and veneration of the icons of the gurus,¹⁴ and to the rituals and great festivities held for the consecration of the pillar, for which Bhaṭṭāraka Surendrakīrti reportedly gathered masses of laypeople. A part of the proceedings was apparently held in Cākasū (*campāvati*), a town 40 km south of Jaipur where the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā seems to have been established briefly in the early 17th century, before it relocated to Sāṅgānera and Amer.¹⁵ Involving the community of Cākasū in the erection of this important ritual object probably served to reconfirm the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā's ties to this town. In a section which is difficult to read (8.2, lines 2–3), the inscription seems to record the involvement of “all the *munis*” (*sakala-munibhi*). The latter presumably is a shorthand uncommonly used here to refer to lower-ranking, not fully initiated renunciators like *brahmacārins*, since *munis* are rarely if ever attested in this period.

The Amer *kīrtistambha* seems to have had a double function of both commemorating prior incumbents and legitimising new incumbents. In the original design, a number of additional, generic depictions of renunciators had been carved into the pillar, left void of any inscription (Figure 4 R). Three of these were marked as further Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā incumbents after the pillar's consecration by Bhaṭṭāraka Surendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1822–52): Sukhendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1852), Narendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1880), and Devendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1883).¹⁶ The names of new incumbents were inscribed on the pillar not upon their passing but at the time of their consecration to the seat. At these events, the Kachavāhā court sent a shawl of honour, and a procession took place with much pomp (A. Nyāyatīrtha 1997, 9; Varmā 1998, 20, 28).¹⁷ The *kīrtistambha* thus functioned as a medium of expression for Kachavāhā legitimisation of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā *bhaṭṭārakas* and for ritualised interaction between both polities. Bhaṭṭāraka Surendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1822–52), who erected the pillar, was generally particularly active in icon consecrations and temple building and renovation projects,

14 8.2: *śrī guruṇāṁ pratimā-darśanārcana-vaidanā-vidhāṇāṁ*.

15 Anūpacanda Nyāyatīrtha (1985, 421) ascribed the consecration (*paṭṭābiṣeka*) of four consecutive, 16th-century incumbents, up to Devendrakīrti, to Cākasū, but these instead seem to have been associated to Cittaūrāgarāha and the Mevāḍa region.

16 8.2: *śrāvaka-śrāvika-samdoha-kṛta-paramotsava-yuktābhiḥ*.

17 The names of yet two further Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā incumbents, Mahendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1939, d. VS 1974) and Candrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1975, d. VS 2026), were not added on the *kīrtistambha*, perhaps because these later-day *bhaṭṭārakas* had shifted their activities to Mahāvīrajī, or because the type of ritual pomp connected to the inscription of new incumbents' names on the pillar no longer found sufficient support. Nineteen of the generic images which had been carved on the pillar in anticipation of a longer continued lineage remained unmarked.

travelling widely throughout the region to perform *pratiṣṭhās* (Varmā 1998, 14–15; Cort 2002, 59–60). When he consecrated the *kīrtistambha*, Surendrakīrti had been on the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā seat for over two decades, being succeeded by Sukhendrakīrti seven years later. In the decades before the erection of the Amer *kīrtistambha*, debates had raged in Jaipur between *bhaṭṭāraka*-supporting Bīsapantha Digambaras and anti-*bhaṭṭāraka* “reformist” Terāpanthīs. The important Terāpantha author Paṇḍita Ṭoḍaramala was murdered in VS 1822, possibly in anti-Jaina riots. After this, the Bīsapantha-Terāpantha animosity in Jaipur is said to have decreased. Yet by the time of the pillar’s consecration two decades later, Ṭoḍaramala’s son Gumānīrāma was attempting to resuscitate the Terāpantha fervour by starting an even stricter reform movement, the Gumānapantha, also known as Śuddha Terāpantha Āmnāya (Cort 2002, 61–62). It seems almost impossible then not to see Surendrakīrti’s conception of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā “pillar of glory” as part of an effort to defy Terāpantha influence and materially re-establish the glory of the Bīsapantha polity, setting up the pillar as an axis for the ritual enactment of the connection between the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā Bīsapanthī polity and the Kachavāhā court.

5.2. Jaipur (VS 1853, VS 1881) and Cākasū (VS 1886)

In 1727, Mahārāja Savāi Jaya Siṅha (II) (r. 1688–1743) founded the city of Jaipur as the new Kachavāhā capital. The city quickly flourished as a crucial trade post for long-distance trade routes. Jaina merchants, administrators, intellectuals, and litterateurs migrated to Jaipur, and among Jaya Siṅha’s (II) courtiers were many Digambaras. In 1725 and 1735 respectively, the Pāṭodī Mandira and the Baṛhā Terāpantha Mandira were constructed close to the royal palace as central temples for the Bīsapantha and the Terāpantha traditions, expressing the insertion of both separate Digambara polities within the city (Cort 2002, 55), and their proximity to the royal court. Still, in 1735 (VS 1792) the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā incumbent Mahendrakīrti was consecrated in a Digambara *mandira* in Jayasiṅhapurā (A. Nyāyatīrtha 1985, 421). This neighbourhood of Śāhjahānābād, close to Connaught Circle in today’s New Delhi, had also been founded by Jaya Siṅha (II). Mahendrakīrti also seems to have spent part of his incumbency in Delhi, during the rule of the Mughal Emperor Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1719–48). Bhaṭṭāraka Mahendrakīrti probably turned towards Delhi thanks to the Kachavāhā connection to the Mughal empire. We here see the lords of three polities in a hierarchical scale setting up court in proximity to each other, the Digambara *bhaṭṭāraka*, the Kachavāhā *mahārāja*, and the Mughal emperor. The respective connections between the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā *bhaṭṭārakas* and the Kachavāhā rulers, and between the latter and the Mughals, opened up avenues to the imperial capital

for Digambara lay communities. Mahendrakīrti soon left Delhi, no doubt after the Persian Afsharid dynasty ruler of Persia, Nādir Shāh (r. 1736–47), invaded the Mughal Empire and defeated Muḥammad Shāh in battle in 1739. He took control over Delhi but after an uprising sacked the city and took huge booty back to Persia. Mahendrakīrti is subsequently attested firstly in some other, smaller towns in Rajasthan, but ultimately seems to have settled, unsurprisingly, in Jaipur (Detige 2018, 289–92).

The consecration of Mahendrakīrti's successor Kṣemendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1815–22) was organised at the Pāṭodī Mandira in Jaipur. His successor Surendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1822–52) was not only consecrated in the Pāṭodī temple but shortly after also moved the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā seat there.¹⁸ At the very end of the 18th century, less than a decade after Surendrakīrti had erected the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā *kīrtistambha* in Amer, his successor Sukhendrakīrti initiated a new commemoration site south of Jaipur, still referred to as the Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām (Figure 5). The plot of land on which it was built had been donated to Bhaṭṭāraka Mahendrakīrti by the royal court in 1744 (VS 1801) (Varmā 1998, 13–14), early in the reign of Mahārāja Savāī Īśvarī Śiṅha (r. 1743–50). In the 18th and early 19th century, the Rāmabhāga royal palace was developed on an adjacent plot of land. *Mandiras* found at early modern Digambara commemoration sites often postdate the memorials. At the Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām however, a *mandira* was built under Bhaṭṭāraka Surendrakīrti in 1769 (VS 1826), predating four memorials later consecrated at the site. Among these are three particularly elegant *bhaṭṭāraka caraṇa-chatrīs* raised on a shared, pillared platform. The octagonal, eight-pillared *chatrīs* are richly decorated with floral and geometric motives on the plinths, pillars, and lintels, inside the domes, and on the drums of the cupolas. The *pādukās* installed in them (Figure 6 R) are intricately carved, octagonal stones with plentiful floral decorations and large depictions of the ascetics' paraphernalia: *kamaṇḍalu* (water pitcher), *picchī* (whisk), and *mālā* (rosary). The stylistic development of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā memorials parallels that of Kachavāhā memorial architecture, from its earlier specimens in Amer, erected in local, grey stone, and with smooth domes and plain pillars, to the Makrana marble, more sumptuous ornamentation, and more bulbous, externally segmented domes of the *chatrīs* at Geṭora, the new royal commemoration site in Jaipur (Belli Bose 2015, 52).

18 Joharāpurakara (1958, 111–12); Joharāpurakara and Kāsalivāla (1975, 261); Jaina (1978, 44); Cort (2002, 59).



Figure 5. Platform with three bhaṭṭāraka caraṇa-chattrīs, VS 1853 (right and middle) and VS 1881 (left), Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām, Jaipur, February 2013.

Two of the *chattrīs* at the Jaipur Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām commemorate the consecutive *bhaṭṭārakas* Mahendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1792, Figure 6 R) and Kṣemendra-kīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1815), who as we saw were the first Dhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā incumbents to be active in Jaipur. Their names had already been inscribed on the Amer *kīrtistambha*, presumably at the time of their consecration (5.1). Their dedicated *chattrīs*, however, were consecrated only in early February 1797 (Māgha śukla 5 VS 1853) by Bhaṭṭāraka Sukhendrakīrti, their successor to the second and third degree, a little more than a year after his own consecration to the seat in early January 1796 (Mārgaśīrṣa kṛṣṇa 9 VS 1852) (Hoernle 1892, 83). The delay in the erection of these memorials may have been related to the Terāpantha polemics raging at the time. Like Narendrakīrti at the Kīrtistambha Nasiyām in Amer about a century and a half earlier, Sukhendrakīrti may also have undertaken a grand commemoration project to establish his lineage in his new hometown, the new Kachavāhā capital, similarly erecting these memorials on a larger *chattrī* platform. A third *pādukā* is installed on a waist-high pillar in open air next to the platform. According to its inscription, it was consecrated by Sukhendrakīrti on the same day as the two *chattrīs'* *pādukās*, the 1st of February 1797. The inscription, oddly, does not name whom the memorial commemorates. Carvings of ascetic paraphernalia next to the feet indicate that it was intended as a renouncer's memorial. The *pādukā* is more weathered than those installed in the *chattrīs* and is of a different, somewhat less refined design, and its inscription

also differs in phrasing and orthography. The idea comes to mind that the *pādukā* may have been a prototype that was disapproved but later nonetheless installed on a simple pedestal. Perhaps it was used as a generic memorial for all earlier Dhūṅḍhāḍaśākhā incumbents like the *kīrtistambha* in Amer. The inscriptions of these three VS 1853 memorial stones record the continued rule of Mahārāja Savāi Pratāpa Siṅha (r. 1778–1803),¹⁹ who was already on the throne at the time of the erection of the Amer *kīrtistambha*.



Figure 6. Bhaṭṭāraka caraṇa-chatrī (L) and pādukā of Bhaṭṭāraka Mahendrakīrti (VS 1853, R).
Bhaṭṭārakiya Nasiyām, Jaipur, February 2013.

Perhaps Sukhendrakīrti devised the larger platform in the hope that his own memorial would be erected on it, but his *caraṇa-chatrī* is found in Cākasū (see next). His successor Narendrakīrti instead used the remaining space for a *caraṇa-chatrī* of Sukhendrakīrti's predecessor Surendrakīrti. Narendrakīrti, the commemorated *bhaṭṭāraka*'s successor to the second degree, consecrated the *pādukā* on the 24th of January 1825 (Māgha śukla 5 VS 1881), doing so – like Sukhendrakīrti three decades earlier – very soon after his ascension to the *bhaṭṭāraka* seat, which took place in VS 1879 (Hoernle 1891, 355) or VS 1880 (Joharāpurakara 1958, 113). It probably was not a coincidence that Nendra-

19 8.3: *mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāi-pratāpasimha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne*; 8.4: *mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāi-pratāpasimha-jid-rājya-pravattamāne*; 8.5: *mahārājādhirāja-śrī-savāi-pratāpasimha-jid-rājye*.

kīrti consecrated the third *caraṇa-chatrī* at the Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām on the same calendar date as when Sukhendrakīrti had consecrated the first two memorials at the site, the 5th day of the bright half of the month of Māgha. Narendrakīrti also followed the by then standardised practice of deferring to the Kachavāhā monarch in recording the reign of Mahārāja Savāi Jaya Siṅha (III) (r. 1819–35).²⁰ The three *caraṇa-chatrī* inscriptions also record that the *pādukās* were installed and consecrated with great festivities,²¹ and call for the continued performance of *pūjās* at the memorials.²²

Bhaṭṭāraka Sukhendrakīrti, who developed the Jaipur commemoration site, probably died in Cākasū during a visit to this town with long-standing relations to his lineage (5.1). His *caraṇa-chatrī* (Figure 7) is found at a site outside of the town centre, which was formerly also referred to as the Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām but has recently been developed under another name (Digambara Jaina Atīśaya Kṣetra Akṣayanidhi Ādīśvara Dhāma). Sukhendrakīrti's *chatrī* is the latest Ḍhūṇḍhāśākhā *bhaṭṭāraka* memorial found, and probably the last to have been erected. It was consecrated on the 28th of November 1829 (Mārgaśīrṣa śukla 2 VS 1886) by Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1883), once more the commemorated *bhaṭṭāraka*'s predecessor to the second degree, and once more within the first few years after his ascension to the seat. As we saw, Sukhendrakīrti's direct successor Narendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1880–83) did consecrate a memorial for his earlier predecessor Surendrakīrti in Jaipur. It may have taken more time for the Cākasū community to gather funds for the erection of a grand memorial. Or for some reason the pattern of memorials consecrated not by direct successors, as was more common elsewhere, but by successors to the second degree, may have come to be seen as the expected practice. The design of the Cākasū *chatrī* is similar to that of those at the Jaipur Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām, being particularly close to the latest pavilion there, from just five years before (VS 1881). It also stands on a pillared platform, a feature unique to these two sites. The *pādukā*'s inscription records the continued rule of Mahārāja Savāi Jaya Siṅha (III).²³

20 8.6: *śrīman-mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāi-jayasimha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne*.

21 8.3 and 8.4 (VS 1853): *mahotsavena*; outdone by Bhaṭṭāraka Narendrakīrti in 8.5 (VS 1881): *mahā-mahotsavaṅ kṛtvā*.

22 8.3 and 8.4: *pūjakānām kalyāṇāvalīm karotu*; 8.5: *pūjakānām kalyāṇa-paramparām karotu*.

23 8.7: *śrīman-mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāi-jayasimha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne*.



Figure 7. Caraṇa-chatrī of *Bhaṭṭāraka Sukhendrakīrti* (VS 1886) raised on pillared platform with recently renewed balustrade, next to recent constructions (right on R). *Bhaṭṭārakiya Nasiyān, Cākasū, December 2014.*

5.3. *Paṇḍita* memorials: Jaipur (VS 1880), Caurū (VS 1888), Phāgī (VS 1924)

By the 19th century, lower-ranking renouncers had disappeared from the *bhaṭṭāraka saṅghas*, and the *bhaṭṭārakas* operated within networks of lay *paṇḍitas*. The latter probably served as adjuncts to the *bhaṭṭārakas*, as satellites of their polity. Memorials and manuscript colophons attest pupillary lineages of *paṇḍitas* connected to the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā *bhaṭṭārakas* based both in Jaipur and in smaller towns in the broader region. Memorials of *paṇḍitas* were commonly erected from the late 18th to the early 20th century and were often substantial structures. According to Bhaṃvaralāla Nyāyatīrtha (1986), the 19th-and-20th-century *paṇḍitas* of Jaipur were celibate. In the inscription of a memorial of *paṇḍitas* related to the Ajmer Balātkāragaṇa lineage, two *paṇḍitas* are recorded with honorifics of venerability otherwise reserved for Digambara renouncers (*pūjya*, 108) (Detige *forthcoming*). *Paṇḍitas* probably took up additional activities and a higher standing in the absence of broader circles of renouncers. Within their own localities, they may have acted as the lords of their own small-town polities as masters of Jaina doctrine and philosophy, as ritual specialist, teachers, preachers, storytellers, astrologists, or experts in yet further associated arts. The inscriptions of the memorials of three *paṇḍitas* related to the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā refer to the Kachavāhā rulers flourishing at the time of their consecration. Two of these date to the same period as the latest of the Jaipur and the Cākasū *bhaṭṭāraka* memorials, the second and third decades of the 19th

century. The third dates to almost half a century later. One is found in Jaipur, the others in two nearby towns some fifty kilometres further southwest.

At the Śyojī Godhā Nasiyām to the north of Jaipur, a VS 1880 *pādukā* of Paṇḍita Kesarīsīnha is found in a spacious modern building, at the time an unusual, innovative commemorative structure. The structure is a type of *tibārā*, a simple block building with three open arched doorways which now have been provided with metal lattices (Figure 8). Another three arched doorways against the back wall create a *garbhagr̥ha*-like structure. Paṇḍita Kesarīsīnha's *pādukā* in the middle section is the only cult object in an otherwise bare room. The *pādukā* is an octagonal drum-shaped stone installed waist-high on a pillar, possibly meant to provide easy ritual access.²⁴ The finely carved, hexagonal *pādukā* slab with a large lotus flower below the feet is akin to the coeval *bhaṭṭāraka pādukās* at the Jaipur and Cākasū Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyāms and may well have been commissioned from the same artisans. The inscription refers to the incumbent Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā Bhaṭṭāraka Narendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1880–83) and to the reign of Mahārāja Savāi Jaya Sīnha (III) (r. 1819–35).²⁵ The *pādukā* was consecrated by Paṇḍita Lālacandra on the 7th of March 1824 (Phālguna *śukla* 7 VS 1880) “in eternal memory and praise” (*niraṃtarasmarañārtham vandanārtham ca*) of Paṇḍita Kesarīsīnha. Lālacandra was the pupil (*tadāṃtevasī*) of Kesarīsīnha, the crest-jewel among *paṇḍitas* (*paṇḍita-sīromaṇi-paṇḍita*), and the latter is recorded as himself a pupil of the foremost *paṇḍita* (*paṇḍita-pradhāna-paṇḍita*) Sukharāma. The inscription also records Lālacandra's own pupil Paṇḍita Jhāñjhūrāma and two pupils of the latter for whom no title is indicated, Devālāla and Bhairūlāla. In total, the inscription thus records five pupillary generations: Paṇḍita Sukharāma > Paṇḍita Kesarīsīnha > Paṇḍita Lālacandra > Paṇḍita Jhāñjhūrāma > Devālāla + Bhairūlāla. The whole *paṇḍita* succession is recorded as standing in the tradition (*-āmnāye*) of Bhaṭṭāraka Narendrakīrti,²⁶ who was on the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā seat at the time of the memorial's consecration, but is cited here without the usual mention of his predecessors, next to the longer-running *paṇḍita* pupillary succession and without an explicit indication of his relation to

24 The socle seems to be more recent than the *pādukā*, and the whole is sunk deeper into the ground than the rest of the shrine room. Some renovations seem to have been performed, perhaps in view of ritual practice. I thank Brian Hatcher for raising my attention to these material aspects of the memorial.

25 8.8: *śrī-mahārājāḍhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāi-jayasīnha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne*.

26 Joharāpurakara and Kāsālīvāla (1975, 248) give a pupillary pedigree of up to eight generations of *paṇḍitas* as stemming from the 17th century Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā Bhaṭṭāraka Narendrakīrti. They do not give the source of this information, but it seems likely these are instead *paṇḍitas* who traced their descent from the 19th-century namesake *bhaṭṭāraka*.

them. It is remarkable that Paṇḍita Lālacandra himself consecrated the memorial stone, rather than calling upon the *bhaṭṭāraka* who was present nearby and is deferred to in the memorial's inscription. Apparently Paṇḍita Lālacandra had sufficient autonomy to undertake such a project and the ritual authority to consecrate the *pādukā*.



Figure 8. Pādukā of Paṇḍita Kesarisinha (VS 1880) waist-high on a pedestal sunk into the ground (R) in the back section of the shrine room separated off with arches (L) Pārśvanātha Digambara Jaina Mandira Nasiyām Śyōjī Godhā, Jaipur, December 2014.

A *caraṇa-chatrī* at the *nasīyā* in Caurū (Figure 9 L & R), a town some 60 km southwest of Jaipur, is a memorial of Paṇḍita Dhanarāja established in November 1831 (Mārgaśīrṣa *kṛṣṇa* 5 VS 1888). The inscription records the continued rule of Mahārāja Savāi Jaya Siṅha (III),²⁷ but the incumbency by then of Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti (*paṭṭa* VS 1883–1939; Varmā 1998, 31). Paṇḍita Dhanarāja's memorial was built (*kārayitvā*) and consecrated (*prasthāpitam*) by his pupil (*tad-amtevasinā*) Paṇḍita Ratanasukha, “for eternal remembrance and praise” (*niraṃtaram smaraṇārtham baṃdanārtham ca*). Paṇḍita Dhanarāja is remembered as a pupil of the “foremost paṇḍita” (*paṃḍita-pradhāna-paṃḍita-jicchri*) Baṣatarāma (= Bakhatarāma). This pupillary succession of *paṇḍitas* is recorded as standing in the tradition (*-āmnāye*) of Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti, who ascended the seat some five years before. The inscription runs closely parallel to that of Paṇḍita Kesarisinha's *pādukā* in Jaipur from less than a decade earlier, and is clearly modelled after it or after another common source. Although different

27 8.9: *śrīman-mahārājādhirāja-mahārājya-śrī-savāi-jayasinhā-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne*.

pupillary successions of *paṇḍitas* are attested at both sites, this indicates a relation between both.



Figure 9. Caravāṇa-chatrīs, Nasīyā, Caurū, February 2016. L: pādukā of Paṇḍita Dhanarāja (VS 1888). R: From right to left: caravāṇa-chatrīs commemorating Paṇḍita Dhanarāja, an unidentified individual, and Muni Puṣpadantasāgara (VS 2048, repurposed). Inset: unmarked pādukā.

Two further *caravāṇa-chatrīs* at the Caurū nasīyā (Figure 9 R) are roughly contemporary to, and of similar design and size as, that of Paṇḍita Dhanarāja. These are fairly typical examples of the 19th-century Digambara *chatrīs* of Central Rajasthan, medium-sized, elegant, and well proportioned, standing on an octagonal plinth and featuring bulbous, ribbed domes with a stone *maṭaka kalaśa*, angular eaves, and arched openings between the eight, graceful pillars. One of the other two *chatrīs* at the Caurū nasīyā (central in Figure 9 R) shares a platform with that of Paṇḍita Dhanarāja, another indication that it is near contemporary to it. It houses a *pādukā* without inscription (Figure 9 inset), which has a somewhat more rudimentary design than that of Paṇḍita Dhanarāja and therefore seems to be slightly older. The third *chatrī* (left in Figure 9 R) is raised on its own, spacious platform, slightly higher than the other. It may be slightly more recent than the other two *chatrīs*, but architectural elements clearly show it to be of comparable antiquity. It has, however, been repurposed as a memorial for a local, contemporary Digambara *muni*. It was whitewashed more recently than the other *chatrīs*, and decorative patterns and verses of poetry were painted on its pillars and lintels and inside the cupola. Furthermore, it features a *pādukā* of Muni Puṣpadantasāgara, a pupil of Ācārya Dharmasāgara, according to the inscription born in nearby Mauzamabad in VS 1969 and deceased in Caurū in VS 2046 (1989), his memorial having been erected in VS 2048 by *brahmacāriṇī* Pyāribāi under the inspiration of Āryikā Pārśvamatī Mātājī. Given the similar

size of all three *chattrīs* on site, the repurposed *chattrī* and the *chattrī* with the unmarked *pādukā* likely also commemorated *paṇḍitas*.

At the Candraprabhū Digambara Jaina Nasiyām in Phāgī, another town 50 km southwest of Jaipur, ten kilometres east of Caurū, stands a memorial of Paṇḍita Jayacanda consecrated in July 1867 (Āṣāḍha śukla 2 VS 1924). The memorial is a simple platform with a *pādukā* installed in open air (*caraṇa-cabūtarā*). The inscription on the *pādukā* again follows the same structure as those of the Jaipur and Caurū *paṇḍita pādukās* discussed before. It records the continued incumbency of Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti and the reign by then of Mahārāja Savāi Rāma Siṅha (r. 1835–80).²⁸ The memorial was built (*caraṇālayam kāravitvā*) in eternal remembrance and praise of Jayacanda (*niraṃtaram smaraṇārtham vaṃdanārtham*) by his pupil Paṇḍita Śivalāla. Jayacanda is commemorated as a pupil of Paṇḍita Amaraṇḍa, who in turn is recorded as a pupil of Paṇḍita Vaṣatarāma (= Bakhatarāma), most probably the same *paṇḍita* as attested in the Caurū inscription. As in Caurū, this *paṇḍita* pupillary succession is recorded as standing in the tradition (*-āmnāye*) of Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti. The design of the *pādukā* is similar to that of Caurū, though slightly less refined. Some emblems are also depicted which are not found on the earlier Caurū *pādukā*, two flowers, a *mālā*, and a simple rectangular shape probably representing a scripture or manuscript (*śāstra*). Paṇḍita Jayacanda's *caraṇa-cabūtarā* is of course a far more modest memorial than Paṇḍita Dhanarāja's *caraṇa-chattrīs* in Caurū and Paṇḍita Kesarisīnha's memorial building in Jaipur. Paṇḍita Jayacanda's name was still remembered in the town by elderly Jainas at the time of my visit (February 2016).

As attested by these memorials, related pupillary lineages of *paṇḍitas* were active in the nearby towns of Caurū (Paṇḍita Bakhatarāma > Paṇḍita Dhanarāja > Paṇḍita Ratanasukha) and Phāgī (Paṇḍita Bakhatarāma > Paṇḍita Amaraṇḍa > Paṇḍita Jayacanda > Paṇḍita Śivalāla). No memorials have been found of the other *paṇḍitas* of these lineages, although they may be among the unidentified memorials of Caurū or at other sites in the region. The inscriptions of these three Ḍhūṇḍhāśākhā *paṇḍita* memorials all defer to the flourishing *bhaṭṭāraka*, which expresses their allegiance to the Jaipur *bhaṭṭāraka* polity. The inscriptions do not, however, explicate the specific link of the commemorated or consecrating *paṇḍitas* to the *bhaṭṭārakas*. Instead, the pupillary *paṇḍita* successions are recorded at great length and generically said to have stood in the incumbent *bhaṭṭāraka*'s tradition (*āmnāye*). Given the geographic location of Phāgī and Caurū, within the zone of influence of the Jaipur *bhaṭṭāraka* seat and at the same time

28 8.10: *śrīman-mahārājādhirāja-māhārājya-śrī-savāi-rāmasiṅha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne*.

at some distance from it, local *paṇḍitas* here may have had some additional agency, more autonomy, and a higher, more strongly profiled standing in their local communities. Yet even the *paṇḍita* memorial inscription from Jaipur shares this stronger focus on the *paṇḍitas*' internal relations than on their relation to the incumbent, and in this case nearby, *bhaṭṭāraka*. While these successions of several pupillary generations of *paṇḍitas* flourishing in Jaipur and in outlying towns thus seem to have operated with some self-determination, they were undoubtedly still subordinate to the *bhaṭṭārakas*, whose polity was itself inscribed within that of the Kachavāhās.

6. Other Digambara memorials attesting rulers

Only a few further examples are found of Digambara memorials from Western India deferring to local rulers. One of these is a *paṇḍita* memorial found in Bundī in the Hāḍautī region, on the border with Mevāḍa. At the *nasīyā* outside of this town almost 200 km south of Jaipur stands an elegant ensemble of four *caraṇa-chatrīs* commemorating local *paṇḍitas* with links to the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍasākḥā (Figure 10 L). The oldest memorial has the mid-19th-century (VS 1911) *pādukā* of Paṇḍita Ḍuṅgarasidāsa installed in a small shrine under the *chatrī*, like the much earlier examples from Amer (5.1). Around the turn of the 20th century, the smaller *chatrīs* of three *paṇḍitas* in Ḍuṅgarasidāsa's pupillary lineage were erected in a nicely laid out, symmetrical plan around the memorial of their predecessor. Among these are two direct *paṇḍita* pupils of Ḍuṅgarasidāsa, Rāmasukha (VS 1949) and Śivalāla (VS 1949), and a pupil of again the latter, Paṇḍita Ratnalāla (prob. VS 1956). The inscription on Paṇḍita Śivalāla's *pādukā* also records a ruler of Ajmer, Rāvā Rapudīra Siṅga. The two VS 1949 *pādukās* were consecrated along with a grand festival by Bhaṭṭāraka Mahendrakīrti. The latter is described as "the leader of the Mūlasaṅgha" (*mūla-saṅgha-nāyaka*) and "the leader of the whole śrāvaka community" (*samasta-śravaga-saṅgha-nāyaka*). No further indications of his lineage are recorded, but this is no doubt the Mahendrakīrti who had then occupied the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍasākḥā seat for a decade.



Figure 10. L: Chatri of Paṇḍita Śivalāla (VS 1949, left in front) next to other paṇḍita memorials, Digambara Jaina Mandira Nasyājī, Bundī, February 2014. M: Bṛhadvāgaḍāśākhā kīrtistambha (VS 1571), Nasīyājī, Naugāmā, January 2014. R: Memorial of Bhaṭṭāraka Yaśakīrti (VS 1887), Sambhavanātha Mandira, Iḍara, January 2014.

The last two memorial inscriptions referring to local rulers stem from the Vāgaḍā region on the Rajasthan-Gujarat borderland and relate to one of the Balātkāragaṇa lineages which were active there. They are separated by over three centuries, dating to the second decade of the 16th century and the third decade of the 19th century. In both cases we can discern specific circumstances which may have motivated the inclusion of this uncommon reference in the inscription. The first is a VS 1571 Bṛhadvāgaḍāśākhā *kīrtistambha* found at the Nasīyājī in Naugāmā (Figure 10 M). The pillar's long foundation inscription also includes an extensive family pedigree of its Hūmbaḍa caste lay patrons. Through this feature, rarely encountered on early modern Digambara memorials, the inscription conforms more to the template of manuscript colophons. This also renders less unexpected the short, seemingly defective reference to the reign in the Vāgaḍā land of an unnamed ruler, whose name is possibly missing by mere oversight of the carver.²⁹ Yet the intended reference to the regional monarch could be seen as specifically appropriate for this communal memorial, mooring the *bhaṭṭāraka* lineage in the royal polity just like the later Amer *kīrtistambha* (5.1). At the time, Naugāmā was administered by *ācāryas* of the Laghuvāgaḍāśākhā, who were subordinated to the Bṛhadvāgaḍāśākhā *bhaṭṭārakas* settled in nearby Sāgavāḍā. The Laghuvāgaḍāśākhā later became an independent *bhaṭṭāraka* lineage, but at the time of its consecration, the Naugāmā

²⁹ *vāgavara-deśe rājādhirājye*. The phrasing *rājādhirājye* seems to be an erring contraction of the common *mahārājādhirāja-māhārāja-[X]-rājya*.

kīrtistambha stood as an axis connecting three hierarchically differentiated polities, namely those of the Naugāmā *ācāryas*, the *bhaṭṭārakas* of their mother lineage, and the royal court.

The last memorial to be noted here is a VS 1887 Bṛhadvāgāḍāśākhā *bhaṭṭāraka* memorial found at the Sambhavanātha Mandira in Īḍara (Figure 10 R). The memorial consists of a heavy, hourglass-shaped base with separate *niṣedhikā* and *pādukā* stones installed in a spacious, no doubt purpose-built *chatrī* annexed to the temple. According to the *pādukā* inscription, in an entirely unique attestation, Bhaṭṭāraka Yaśakīrti installed his own memorial. A separate inscription on the back of the *niṣedhikā* records the victorious rule of Māhārāja Gambhīra Siṅha over the fortress of Īḍara. Yaśakīrti seems to have been the first Bṛhadvāgāḍāśākhā incumbent to have established his seat in Īḍara, at the Pārśvanātha Mandira, one of the other Digambara temples in town. Yaśakīrti's deference to the local ruler in his own memorial may well be seen as expressing efforts to insert his own polity in the local kingdom. This would be similar to the case of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍāśākhā Narendrakīrti two centuries earlier, who initiated the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍāśākhā practice of referring to Kachavāhā *mahārājas* in memorial inscriptions when moving into their capital Amer (5.1). That the record of the ruler in Īḍara was added in a separate inscription confirms its intentionality.

7. Conclusions

After the early, 17th-century example (5.1), nine late-18th-to-19th-century Ḍhūṇḍhāḍāśākhā memorial stones are found deferring to the ruling Kachavāhā monarchs. Four of these commemorate consecutive *bhaṭṭārakas*, one is a collective *bhaṭṭāraka* memorial, and one is an unspecified renouncer's memorial (5.2). Three other memorials commemorate *paṇḍitas* (5.3). No individual memorials have been retrieved of four further Ḍhūṇḍhāḍāśākhā incumbents from the 19th and 20th centuries, and they probably were never erected. The waning of the Kachavāhā court's autonomy in the colonial period probably also reflected on the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍāśākhā. A number of further memorials found in Jaipur and other small towns in the area possibly commemorated *paṇḍitas* related to the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍāśākhā, but either the *pādukās* do not feature inscriptions or the memorial stones are missing altogether. In other words, not a single Ḍhūṇḍhāḍāśākhā memorial contemporary to those recording the Kachavāhā rulers has been found which does *not* follow this practice. On the other hand, references to rulers are particularly uncommon in Digambara memorials elsewhere, being represented by only three further examples in my corpus of some 200 Western

and Central Indian Digambara memorials predating the contemporary *muni saṅghas*.

In several cases from both the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍa region and elsewhere we can identify circumstantial factors which potentially prompted the Digambara agents erecting and inscribing memorials to defer to the local ruler. They may have sought to establish associations to the royal court after newly settling in its territory, to formally record and acknowledge established relations with or favours received from the court, like land donations and royal legitimization of the *bhaṭṭā-raka* lineage, or simply to portray themselves as closely linked to the Kachavāhā court. We also see connections between three, hierarchically differentiated polities. The pupillary lineages of *paṇḍitas* in the Jaipur region formed semi-autonomous, satellite polities under the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā *bhaṭṭā-rakas*, themselves subordinated to the Kachavāhā throne. In the Vāgaḍā region, the Laghuvāgaḍāśākhā *ācāryas* of Naugāmā worked under the Bṛhadvāgaḍāśākhā *bhaṭṭā-rakas*, who at various points also seem to have sought to connect their polity to local kings. And the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā *bhaṭṭā-raka* Mahendrakīrti capitalised on the Kachavāhā ties to the Mughal court in turning to Delhi.

Connections to local rulers were no doubt initiated and cultivated by *bhaṭṭā-rakas* throughout Western and Central India on behalf of the lay constitution of their polities. The uncommon but consistent, relatively elaborate, and elegant deference given to the Kachavāhā rulers in the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā memorials from the late 18th and 19th century seems to express a particularly close alignment between the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā and the Kachavāhā court. Beyond a purely symbolic claim to a connection to the court on the part of the Digambaras, an actual link between both polities had already been established in the 17th century, when Narendrakīrti settled in Amer, and is also confirmed by the Jaipur *mahārājas*' engagement with the Amer *kīrtistambha* and their donation of the plot of land in Jaipur which became an important Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā commemoration site. The structural alignment of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā with various royal and imperial courts on the longer run also becomes clear when mapping the repeated shifts of its seat onto political history. From the early 16th all the way up to the 20th century, each relocation of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā seat can be connected to the revolving fortunes of imperial and royal polities and attendant socio-economic conditions (Detige *forthcoming*).

8. Inscriptions

The following editions conform to the DHARMA transliteration scheme (Balogh and Griffiths 2020), an extension of ISO-15919. In this system, full (initial) vowel signs of the original script are rendered as uppercase Roman vowels (e.g. *mahotsava-Arcakam* corresponding to Devanagari महोत्सवअर्चकं), and *virāma* marks attached to consonant characters are rendered with a · (median dot) sign after the transliterated consonant (e.g. *saṁvat·* corresponding to Devanagari संवत्). The following editorial markup is used in these editions:

<1>	line numbering
3	space blank in original, with size in approximate number of <i>akṣaras</i>
[...]	lacuna in original, extent indefinite
[×]	lacuna in original, number of × marks indicating approximate number of <i>akṣaras</i> lost
[a?]	lacuna in original, tentatively restored
(a)	unclear or ambiguous characters in the original, confidently legible in context
(a/b)	ambiguous characters in the original, alternative readings
(a?)	unclear or ambiguous characters in the original, tentative reading
<<a>>	scribal insertion in original
[[×]]	deletion in original, number of × marks indicating approximate number of <i>akṣaras</i> deleted and now illegible

8.1. *Pādukā* of Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti

Consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Narendrakīrti, built by Brahma Keśava, date unknown, Kīrtistambha Nasiyām, Amer.

<1>[...] varṣe (dvi?)tīya śrāvaṇa vadī 8 ma(r̥m?)galavā(re?) A(r̥m?)vāvati-nagar(e?) mahārājādhirāja-jayasīmha-rājya-pravarttamāne kuṁdakuṁdācāryyānvaye bhaṭṭāraka śrī-deve(r̥m?)dra [××××××××××] <2>v(a/e/ai)(dy/ch)ā(r?)takāra bhaṭṭāraka-śrīman-narendrakīrti-jī tasya pādukā (sthā)(ppa?)taṁ|| sevaka vra keśava karāpya ta guru-bhakti nimita cira(r̥m?) va(r̥m?)datu śubhaṁ bhavatu||

8.2. *Kīrtistambha* of the Ḍhūṇḍhāḍaśākhā

Consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Surendrakīrti, VS 1845, Kīrtistambha Nasiyām, Amer.

<1>saṁvat· 1845 madhye jyeṣṭha-māse kṛṣṇa-pakṣe _3_ tithau Arībhāvati ka[r̥vvaṭe?] mahārājādhirāja-śrī-savāī _3_ sīmha-rājye śrī-mūla- <2>saṁghe naṁdy-āmnāye

balātkāra-gaṇe kuṁḍakuṁḍācāryyānvaye bhaṭṭāraka śrī-sureṁdrakīrtinā sakalamunibhi dāka-gaṇi-ni^{<3>}dhi-pūjjana-śrāvaka-śrāvika-saṁdoha-kṛta-paramotsavayuktābhi(h?) caṁpāvati-Arca-sṭhāpanā-vivaddanānamtaraṁm atra niveśitam^{<4>}mahotsava-Arcakam|| śrī-gurūṇāṁ pratimā-darśanārvana-varḍanā-vidhā(tr?)ṇāṁ sarvadā maṁgalāvalī saṁgh(obhayādanārate?) ||śrī||

8.3. Pādukā of Bhaṭṭāraka Mahendrakīrti

Consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Sukhendrakīrti, VS 1853, Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām, Jaipur.

^{<1>}saṁvat 1853 māgha-māse śukla-pakṣe pañcamī guru-vāsare ḍhumḍhāhaḍa-deśe savāl-jaya-nagare mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāl-pratāpasimha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne śrī-mūla-saṁghe naṁdy-āmnāye valā^{<2>}tkāra-gaṇe sarasvatī-gacche kuṁḍakuṁḍācāryānvaye Amvāvati-paṭṭodayādri-dinamaṇi-tulya-bhaṭṭārakemdra-bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-deveṁdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-mahendrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-kṣemeṁdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-sureṁdrakīrtti-ji-deva-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-su^{<3>}khemdrakīrttinā Iyaṁ śrī-mahendrakīrtti-guroḥ pādukā prasthāpya mahotsavena pratiṣṭāpitā pūjakānāṁ kalyāṇāvalīm karotu śrīr astu śubhaṁ bhavatu||

8.4. Pādukā of Bhaṭṭāraka Kṣemendrakīrti

Consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Sukhendrakīrti, VS 1853, Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām, Jaipur.

^{<1>}|| saṁvata 1853 māgha-māse śukla-pakṣe pañcamī guru-vāsare ḍhumḍhāhaḍa-deśe savāl-jaya-nagare mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāl-pratāpasimha-jid-rājya-pravattamāne śrī-mūla-saṁghe naṁdy-āmnāye valātkāra-gaṇe sarasvatī-gacche kuṁḍakuṁḍācāryānvaye Amvāvati-paṭṭodayādri-dinamaṇi-tulya-bhaṭṭā^{<2>}rakemdra-bhaṭṭāraka-jī(c-ch?)rī-mahendrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-kṣemeṁdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-sureṁdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-sukhemdrakīrttis-te<<neyam>> śrī-kṣemeṁdrakīrtti-guroḥ pādukā prasthāpya mahotsavena pratiṣṭitā|| pūjakānāṁ kalyāṇāvalīm karotu|| śrīr astu||

8.5. Pādukā of unspecified renouncer

Consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Sukhendrakīrti, VS 1853, Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasiyām, Jaipur.

^{<1>}|| savat 1853 kā māgha śukla pañcamyām guru-vāre savāl-jaya-nagare mahārājādhirāja-śrī-savāl-pratāpasimha[××××]drājye śrī-mūla-saṁghe naṁdy-āmnāye valātkāra-gaṇe sarasvatī-gache kuṁḍakuṁḍācāryānvaye Amvāvati-paṭṭe bhaṭṭārakemdra-bhaṭṭārakaḥ^{<2>}śrī-deveṁdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-śrī-mahendrakīrtti-jitkasya bhaṭṭāraka-śrī-surendrakīrti-deva-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-śrī-

sukhemdrakirttinā Iyaṁ pādukā ^{<3>}pratiṣṭ(t/ṭh)āpitā

8.6. Pādukā of Bhaṭṭāraka Surendrakīrti

Consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Narendrakīrti, VS 1881, Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasyiām, Jaipur.

^{<1>}|| saṁvat 1881 māgha-māse śukla-pakṣe pañcamī soma-vāsare ḍhumḍhāhaḍa-deṣe savāī-jaya-nagare śrīman-mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāī-jayasīmha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne śrī-mūla-saṁghe naṁdy-āmnāye valātkāra-gaṇe sarasvatī-gacche kuṁdakuṁdācāryānvaye bhaṭṭārakeṁdra-bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-mahemdrakīrtis tat-pa(ṭṭe?) bha ^{<2>}ṭṭāraka-śrī-kṣememdrakīrttis tatpaṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-śrī-suremdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-śrī-sukhemdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-jic-chrī-naremdrakīrtti-jika Eteṣāṁ madhye bhaṭṭāraka-śrī-naremdrakīrttinā mahā-mahotsavaṁ kṛtvā bhadra-bhāvena śrī-suremdrakīrtti-guroṣ caraṇa-yugalaṁ prasthāpya pratiṣṭhitāṁ pūjakānāṁ kalyāṇa-paramparāṁ karotu|| śrīr astu|| śrīḥ||

8.7. Pādukā of Bhaṭṭāraka Sukhendrakīrti

Consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti, VS 1886, Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasyiām, Cākasū.

^{<1>}|| śrī-gurave namaḥ|| saṁvatsare rasa-basu-siddhīṁdu-yute 1886 mṛga[×]sira sudi 2 śani-vāsare ḍhumḍhāha-deṣe caṁpāvati-nagare śrīman-mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāī-jayasīmha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne śrī-mūla-saṁghe naṁdy-āmnāye balātkāra-gaṇe sarasvatī-gacche kuṁdakuṁdācāryānvaye bhaṭṭāraka-śirośekhara-bhaṭṭā ^{<2>}raka-jic-chrī-suremdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭodayādri-dinamaṇi-bhaṭṭāraka-śrī-sukhemdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭe bhaṭṭāraka-naremdrakīrttis tat-paṭṭa-śaila-dinamaṇi-sama-vinayavatā bhaṭṭāraka-devemdrakīrttinā śrī-bhaṭṭāraka-sukhemdrakīrtter guror mahā-mahotsavaṁ kṛtvā caraṇa-yugalaṁ prasthāpya pratiṣṭitāṁ|| jagatāṁ śam astu||

8.8. Pādukā of Paṇḍita Kesariśimha

Consecrated by Paṇḍita Lālacandra, VS 1880, Śyojī Godhā Nasyiām, Jaipur.

^{<1>}|| śrī-paramātmane namaḥ|| saṁvata 1880 phālgūṇa śukla saptamī ravi-vāsare savāī-jaya-nagare śrī-mahārājādhirāja-mahārāja-śrī-savāī-jayasīmha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne śrī-mūla-saṁghe naṁdy-āmnāye balātkāra-gaṇe sarasvatī-gacche kuṁdakuṁdācāryānvaye bhaṭṭāraka-ji-śrī-narendrakī<<rtti>>jid-āmnāye paṁḍita-pradhāna-paṁḍita-jic-chrī-sukharāma-jitkas tac-chiṣya-paṁḍita-śiromaṇi-paṁḍita-ji-chri-kesariśimha-jitkas tad-amtevasī paṁḍita-lālacandras tac-chiṣya-vara-paṁḍita-^{<2>}jhāmjhūrāmas tac-chiṣyau dvau prathamāḥ devālāḥ dvitīyāḥ bhairūlāḥ Eteṣāṁ madhye paṇḍita-lālacandreṇa caraṇālayaṁ kāriyitvā sva-guroḥ śrī-kesariśimha-jitkasya caraṇa-kamala-yugaṁ niraṁtara-

smaraṇārthaṃ vandanārthaṃ ca prasthāpitam|| śrīr astu||

8.9. Pādukā of Paṇḍita Dhanarāja

Consecrated by Paṇḍita Ratanasukha, VS 1888, Nasīyā, Caurū.

^{<1>}|| śrī-paramātmāne namaḥ|| sambat: 1888 kā māsottama-māse mṛgasira kṛṣṇa pañcamī gura-vāsare dhūṃḍhāhaḍākaye deṣe corū-nāmnī nagare śrīman-mahārājādhīrāja-mahārājya-śrī-savāī-jayasīmha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne śrī-mūla-saṃghe nāṃdy-āmnāye balātkāra-gaṇe sarasvatī-gacche kuṃdakuṃdācāryyānvaye bhaṭṭārakendra-bhaṭṭāraka-jīc-chrī-deveṃdrakīrti-jīd-āmnāye paṇḍita-pradhāna-paṇḍita-jīc-chrī-baṣatarāma-jitkas tac-chiṣya vidyadhara-paṇḍita-dhanarāja-jī^{<2>}tkas tad-amtevasīnā paṇḍita ratanasukhena caraṇālayaṃ kārayitvā sva-guro śrī-dhanarāja-jitkasya caraṇa-yuga(m?) niraṃtaraṃ smaraṇārthaṃ baṃdanārthaṃ ca pras(th)āpitam|| śrīr astu||

8.10. Pādukā of Paṇḍita Jayacanda

Consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti, VS 1924, Candraprabhū Digambara Jaina Nasīyām, Phāgī.

^{<1>}|| śrī-paramātmāne namaḥ sarivata 1924 kā māsottama-māse Asāḍha-māse śukla-pakṣe doyaja vudha-vāsare dhūṃḍhāhaḍākaye deṣe phāgaī-nag(are) śrīman-mahārā(j)ādhīrāja-mahārājya-śrī-savāī-rāmasīmha-jid-rājya-pravarttamāne śrī-mūla-saṃghe nāṃdy-āmnāye valātkāra-gaṇe sarasvatī-gacche ^{<2>}kuṃdakuṃdācāryyānvaye bhaṭṭārakendra-bhaṭṭāraka-jī-śrī-deveṃdrakīrti-jīd-āmnāye paṇḍita-jī-śrī-vaṣatarāma-jitkas ta-siṣya-vidyadhara-paṇḍita-jī-śrī-Amaracānda-jitkas ta-siṣya paṇḍita-(vidyadhara)-jayacānda-jitkas tad-amtevasīnā paṇḍita-śivalālena caraṇālayaṃ kārayitvā sva-guro śrī-jayacānda-jitkasya caraṇa-yuga niraṃtaraṃ smaraṇārthaṃ vaṃdanārthaṃ pras(thā?)pit||

Jaina Ideologies of Kingship: Perceptions from Early Medieval Śvetāmbara Narratives

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1. Introduction

Studies on the Jaina ideologies of kingship in medieval India are still few and far between. Some of them have focused on the Digambara movement in the 9th century, mainly based on one work, Jinasena's *Ādipurāṇa*, and point to a model of the renouncing king.¹ The others were devoted to the Śvetāmbara movement between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, based on a play, the *Moharāja-parājaya* of Yaśaḥpāla, evoking the conduct of King Kumārapāla,² and narrative works, including Merutuṅga's *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, dealing in part with the rulers of the Caulukya dynasty and highlighting an evolving model of the secular king.³ However, given the wide chronological gap in the texts analysed, it is questionable whether there is a model of royal Digambara ideology opposed to

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- 1 Dundas (1991) examined the practical and theoretical models for the conduct of a king that appear in Jinasena's *Ādipurāṇa* (9th century). More recently, Taylor (2021) has argued that in this same work, worldly kingship and spiritual kingship were intertwined into a system presenting renunciation not only as superior to temporal power, but also as being a politically feasible option.
 - 2 Leclère (2013, 285–302) has suggested how plays could contribute to the legitimisation of royal power at the same time as they offered a model for political conduct.
 - 3 Taking into account various narrative sources from the 12th to the 14th century (Hemacandra's *Dvyāśrayakāvya*, mid-twelfth century; Hemacandra's *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita*, 1160–1172; Somaprabha's *Kumārapālapratibodha*, 1184; Arisimha's *Sukṛtasamkīrtana*, c. 1229; Prabhācandra's *Prabhāvākācarita*, 1278; Merutuṅga's *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, 1305; Jina-prabha's *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, 1333; Rājaśekhara's *Prabandhakośa*, 1349), Cort (1998) has shown how the portraits of four historical (Mūlarāja, Jayasimha Siddharāja, Kumārapāla) or semi-legendary (Vaṇarāja) rulers reflect a variety of royal ideologies ranging from a lack of support for Jaina monks to a conversion to Jainism.

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a Śvetāmbara model during the medieval period,⁴ or whether the positions of the two Jaina groups rather depend on different socio-political contexts.⁵ I therefore propose to examine whether Śvetāmbara works composed between the 8th and 10th centuries in Northwest India reveal an ideology of kingship distinct from the Digambara model analysed by Paul Dundas and Sarah Pierce Taylor in Jinasena's *Ādipurāṇa*. To this end, I shall analyse data from four lengthy narrative Śvetāmbara works: Haribhadra's *Samarāiccakahā* (8th century), Uddyotana's *Kuvalayamālā* (779), Śīlānka's *Caiṣṣannamahāpurisacaria* (868) and Vijayasīmhasūri's *Bhuvanāsuṇḍarī*. These works have been chosen because several characteristics make them likely to provide information about a royal ideology. Thus, like the *Purāṇas* or "Universal Histories,"⁶ they propose a vision of the world in its entirety through the journey of specific souls from birth to deliverance. Moreover, while they do not use historical figures as heroes, as the *Prabandhas* do,⁷ they do include stories about the lives of royal characters.⁸ Finally, they use the refined style of *kāvya* to address an aristocratic elite, and their inclusion of themes of love and war, and of technical passages, for example on horses, alchemy, and subsoils, are also indicative of an audience beyond the scholarly monks.⁹

4 Cf. Taylor (2020, 487).

5 I thank here Prof. von Hinüber for drawing my attention to a talk given by John Strong in Seoul in 2017, and I thank Prof. Strong for providing me with a copy of his unpublished paper. Strong shows that the Aśoka legends reflect several understandings of kingship. They do not only exemplify a model of an ideal Buddhist ruler, but they also warn about the potential dangers of kings who do not act in Buddhist ways. Besides, although they generally show Aśoka as a righteous ruler, they also show him acting in a ruthless manner. In addition, at times Aśoka appears as a reformer of the community, and at times as responsible for the spread of the *dharma* out of India. Thus, there is more ambiguity about kingship than is often admitted (Strong 2017, 4–5).

6 On the *Purāṇas* and the insertion of a royal ideology, see Inden (1990, 228–44; 2000b). On the composition and development of the Jaina universal history, see Bruhn (1954, 114–31).

7 On the *Prabandha* genre, see Deleu (1981).

8 In the *Kuvalayamālā*, the hero is Prince Kuvalayacandra; in the *Samarāiccakahā*, the main soul incarnates as a prince in six of nine existences: Guṇasena (1), Sīmha (2), Jaya (5), Sena (7), Guṇacandra (8), Samarāditya (9). In the *Bhuvanāsuṇḍarī*, the two main heroes are the princes Harivikrama and Virasena.

9 See for instance Lienhard (1984, 31–34); Smith (1985, 55–102).

2. The Jinasena model

In his study, Dundas (1991) first points out how Jinasena's work is relevant for studying the Jaina perception of kingship insofar as it is probably addressed to King Rāṣṭrakūṭa Amoghavarṣa, who seems to have favoured Jainism while remaining in the Hindu-Brahmanical tradition. Dundas then demonstrates the existence of three essential characteristics of the royal ideology presented by Jinasena. The first is the model of a Jainised king, exemplified by Bharata presented as a righteous king who conquers the four directions for the most part through his qualities of energy and calmness, without using violence. The second characteristic is the superiority of the model of spiritual kingship represented by Bāhubali over the model of temporal kingship represented by Bharata. Indeed, despite his qualities, Bharata reveals his imperfection when he is confronted with his half-brother Bāhubali. Twice he manifests the flaw of anger and its fatal consequences. The first time, anger leads Bharata into battle when Bāhubali refuses to acknowledge Bharata's authority on the sole ground that Bharata is the elder; the second time, fury leads Bharata to break his promise not to use weapons and to throw his magic discus against Bāhubali. Conversely, Bāhubali masters his passions, renounces the world, and becomes the first being in this world to attain deliverance. Thus, a hierarchy is clearly established between the two characters: while Bharata illustrates a temporal kingship that remains imperfect, Bāhubali manifests the triumph of spiritual kingship.¹⁰ The third characteristic is the presence of an exposition of royal *dharma* marked by Jaina values in chapter 42 of the *Ādipurāṇa*. According to this, the doctrine for distinguishing the true from the false is that enunciated by the Tīrthaṅkaras; the king is encouraged to renounce the world to protect his soul whereas in Hinduism kings are not required to renounce; and the subjects to be protected are not the Brāhmaṇas who rejoice in violence and meat-eating, but the Jainas, who are worthy of honour on account of their qualities rather than their birth.

3. Praising the path of royal renunciation

Against the theoretical and practical royal ideology contained in Jinasena's *Ādipurāṇa* for the Digambaras, what do we find in the contemporary or slightly later Śvetāmbara works composed by Haribhadra, Uddyotana, Śīlāṅka and

10 Bharata is a perfectible being since a year later he pays homage to Bāhubali. Nevertheless, a hierarchy is clearly established between the two characters (in a manner reminiscent of the opposition between Kṛṣṇa and Nemi in the universal history).

Vijayasimha? In the long narrative works selected, renunciation is — for kings as well as for other members of society — the successful outcome of a spiritual path of a being who experiences the upheaval provoked by the discourse of a master (*saṃvegin*), or of one who is provoked to awakening by the sight of an external event (*pratyekabuddha*).¹¹ Thus, in the *Samarāiccakahā*, when King Sena¹² and the merchant Bandhudeva go to pay homage to a superior nun who has just obtained omniscience,¹³ they are so impressed by the venerable nun's speech that they become monks:

Immediately afterwards, the assembly was distressed. The king and Bandhudeva spoke up, "Venerable one, it is as you have indicated. By abandoning the refuge of our house, we shall adopt the *dharma* taught by the Tīrthaṅkaras." The Venerable One replied, "It is at your pleasure, Majesty (beloved of the gods), do not delay."¹⁴

In the same work, as King Simha¹⁵ prepares to do battle with an enemy king, he is awakened by a scene that leads him to adopt the monastic path:

As the king walked in that direction, what did he not see! An osprey was devouring an old snake with a large body, very black skin, which was dazzling with the flames of poison shooting from its protruding eyes. The snake itself was swallowing a bullfrog, whose head was frightening to see, so distorted was it by terror, and whose body was shaking with accelerated convulsions. And the osprey itself was being swallowed by a python with a body as wide as the trunk of a celestial elephant and terrifying red eyes. As the python devoured the osprey, the osprey swallowed the old snake, which in turn devoured the bullfrog.¹⁶

11 In the progression of a soul towards deliverance, the two types of awakening can occur alternately during the existences.

12 King Sena is the seventh existence of the main protagonist soul, of which nine existences are narrated in detail in the *Samarāiccakahā*.

13 She is called either *pravartini* or *gaṇini*.

14 *Samarāiccakahā* p. 574, ll. 8–10: *etthantarammi saṃviggā sabhā. bhaṇiyaṃ rāya-bandhudevehiṃ: bhayavaī evaṃ eyaṃ jaṃ tae āṇattaṃ ti. paḍivajjāmo amhe gihāsama-pariccāeṇa titthayara-bhāsīyaṃ dhammaṃ. bhayavaīe bhaṇiyaṃ: ahāsuhāṃ devāṇuppiyā, mā paḍi-bāṇdhaṃ kareha.*

15 He is the second existence of the main soul.

16 *Samarāiccakahā* p. 145, ll. 6–10: *gao taṃ ceva bhūmi-bhāgaṃ rāyā jāva diṭṭho teṇa mahā-kāo aikasiṇa-deha-chavī viṇimta-nayaṇa-visa-jālā-bhāsure gahiya-rasaṃta-maṇḍukka-gāso bhayā-ṇaya-viyariyāṇaṇa-duppeccho duyayara-pavelliraṅgo mahayā kurareṇa gasijjamāṇo juṇṇa-bhuyāṅgamo, kuraro vi dig-gaya-karoru-kāeṇa rattaccha-bībhacchaṇa ayagareṇa. jahā jahā ya*

Finally, King Guṇacandra¹⁷ contemplates a scene that made him think about the difference between life in the world where all expansion (of territory and wealth), even if aimed at service, leads to violence, and the life of a renunciant who abandons all violent action and possession:

He saw a river filled with water mixed with pieces of wood and blades of grass, which overflowed on all sides. It washed away the banks, destroyed the shelters, dirtied itself, teemed with cruel water creatures, lacked (pure) water suitable for wise people, was beset by eddies, knew no boundaries, and frightened people, starting with children, with all its frightening whirlpools. After watching this spectacle for a while, the king entered the city. Some time elapsed. In the autumn, as he went to the racetrack to run the horses, the king saw the same river. It was again in its natural state, filled with pure water, devoid of the cruel water creatures, and could serve for the consumption of the most refined beings. Seeing it thus, the king remembered his past experience and, by virtue of the maturation of the *karman* of this nature, he was very distressed. [...]

Even if this (conduct) allows one to provide for some people, it is no less cruel; indeed, it is not possible to achieve this highest goal without causing torment to others. What is more, the essential thing is the service rendered to the being. And this service cannot happen at all without abandoning all aggression and possession. In human life, this must be given. What good is something else that has no purpose?¹⁸

ayagaro kuraram gasai tahā tahā so vi juṇṇa-bhuyaṅgamaṃ, juṇṇa-bhuyaṅgamo vi ya rasaṃta-maṅḍukkayaṃ ti.

17 The 8th existence of the main soul.

18 *Samarāiccakahā* p. 773, l. 11 – p. 775, l. 11: *ditṭhā sariyā kaṭṭha-taṇa-kalileṇa pūriyā jaloheṇa vittharamī savvaṃ, nivāḍayaṃtī kūlāni, viṇāsayaṃtī ārāme, kalasayaṃtī appāṇayaṃ, saṃgayā kūra-jalayarehiṃ, rahiya buha-jaṇa-sevaṇijjeṇa jaleṇa, ahitṭhiyā kallehiṃ, vajjiyā majjāyāe, accaṃta-bhisaṇeṇaṃ mahāvatta-saṃghāeṇaṃ bālāi-bhaya-jaṇaṇi tti. taṃ ca kaṃci velam pulaiya pavitṭho nayariṃ rāyā. aikkaṃtā kaṃci diyahā. saraya-samae āsa-parivāhaṇa-nimittam vāhiyāliṃ gacchamaṇeṇa puṇo payai-bhāva-tṭhiyā, saṃgayā sacchodaṇe, vajjiyā kūra-jalayarehiṃ, viṣiṭṭha-jaṇovabhoya-saṃpāyaṇa-samatthā sa cceva ditṭha tti. taṃ ca datṭhūṇa sumariya-puvva-vuttamāssa rāṇo tahā-kamma-pariṇai-vaseṇa samuppanno saṃveo. [...] tahā jai vi kesiriṃci davvovayāra-saṃpāyaṇa-samattham eyaṃ, tahāvittaro; tao na anna-piḍāe viṇā paramatthao so vi saṃbhavaṃ. pahāṇo ya bhāvovayāro na yāparicattāraṃbha-pariggaho savvahā taṃ saṃpāḍei. juttam ca maṇuya-bhāve tassa saṃpāyaṇam kim anneṇa niratthaṇaṃ ti.*

This example clearly shows the hierarchy established by the monk-writer between the monastic path and the worldly path, in accordance with the parable of the two roads in the canonical tradition and repeated in the *Samarāicccakahā*.¹⁹

Several other indications suggest that the secular path is an intermediate stage of spiritual evolution. First, the hero himself, like King Purandaradatta in the *Kuvalayamālā*, recognises that he does not yet have the strength to take the monk's vows, and wishes to first abide by the vows of the Jaina layman:

The Venerable One said, "Then, Great King Purandaradatta, has some decision imposed itself on your heart?" At this, the king thought to himself, "The Venerable One surely knows then that I was here before." As he thought, he said, "Venerable One, everything is surely as you taught, but I am not yet ready to abandon the *kākoḍumbarī* figs of Kuḍaṅga Island.²⁰ Therefore, I ask you, Venerable One, to prescribe for me some form of embarkation more appropriate to myself by which I might cross this ocean that is the cycle of existences." The Venerable One said, "If such be your will, take, then, those five jewels that are the Lesser Vows, and the three Reinforcing Vows as well as the four Disciplinary Vows and observe thereby that *dharma* of the lay follower made of these twelve vows and founded in right belief."²¹

On the other hand, the master refuses ordination when a prince does not yet fulfil the conditions for adopting the monastic way of life, for example in the exchange of words between Prince Kuvalayacandra and the master Sāgaradatta:

"O you who have affection for all the souls of the universe, you granted me a great favour by arranging to have me carried away and by giving to me right

19 The parable of the two roads is referred to in the *Āvaśyakaniryukti* vv. 904–906, and subsequently developed in the exegetical commentaries (*Āvaśyakacūrṇi* of Jinadāsa, *Āvaśyaka-vṛtti* of Haribhadra, *Āvaśyakavṛtti* of Malayagiri) and in the *Samarāicccakahā* p. 442, l. 1 – p. 445, l. 9; see Mette (2010, 127–30, translation; 334–36, commentary). Two roads can lead to deliverance: a road that is full of pitfalls (the monastic path), but straight and fast, and a comfortable road (the secular path), but with detours and therefore much longer.

20 This is an allusion to the parable dealt with elsewhere in the *Kuvalayamālā* (p. 88, l. 26 – p. 90, l. 20): see Chojnacki (2008, 282–86).

21 *Kuvalayamālā* p. 91, ll. 18–22: *bhaṇiyam ca bhagavayā, "bho bho mahārāya purandaradatta, kiṃ tuha valaggaṃ kiṃci hiyayammi?" tao rāṇā cimtīyam, "ṇissamsayam jāṇio bhagavayā ihāgao" ti. cimtīyamteṇa bhaṇiyam ca ṇeṇa, "bhagavaṃ, jārisaṃ tae samāitṭham tārīsaṃ savvaṃ paḍivaṇṇaṃ. kiṃtu ime kuḍaṅga-kāuṃbarī-phalāṇi mottuṃ ṇa cāmi. tā iha-tṭhiyassa ceya desu bhagavaṃ, kiṃci saṃsāra-sāgara-taraṇḍayaṃ" ti. bhagavayā bhaṇiyam, "jāi evaṃ, tā geṇha imāiṃ paṃcāṇuvvaya-ṛayaṇāiṃ, tiṇṇi guṇa-vvayāiṃ, cattāri sikkhā-vayāiṃ, sammatta-mūlaṃ ca imaṃ duvālasa-vihaṃ sāvaya-dhammaṃ aṇupālesu" ti.*

belief. Grant me, I pray you, one further favour and allow to me that embarkation across the great ocean that is the cycle of existences, I mean ordination according to the *dharma* of the Jinas.” The monk replied, “Prince, do not try to hurry matters so! For the present, what you must do is experience with happiness a *karman* whose fruit is pleasure. Once you have worn away this *karman*, you will be able to take ordination and lead the homeless life of a monk. But for the present, you must follow rather the *dharma* of the lay follower.”²²

Finally, the texts suggest that the only true kingship is spiritual kingship, insofar as the acquisition of *dharma* by a king or prince does not segue into the description of a temporal Jaina kingship, but rather into that of the progress of a Jaina layman who controls his passions in all the occasions of existence. Thus, in the *Bhuvanāsumdarī*, Prince Vīrasena goes to a temple to pay homage to the Jina before meeting the princess with whom he had fallen in love and from whom he had been separated when he set out to fight against King Narasiṃha, who had killed his father:

With his body quivering after the praise of the qualities of the goddess and intense contemplation, and with his face bathed in tears of joy, Vīrasena prostrated himself again. Then he said to his friend, “Bandhudatta, let me see Candraśrī! Would you be troubled by mistakenly believing that I am very unhappy?”²³

Much later in the romance, a courtesan falls in love with Prince Vīrasena, whom she sees in the temple of Vāsupūjya. Consequently, she decides to give a dance show in the temple in order to attract the prince. But, while Vīrasena praises her performance, he is not sensible to her charms, for that is not proper:

22 Kvalayamālā p. 111, ll. 1–4: “bhayavaṃ savva-jaga-jīva-vacchala, mahānto esa me aṇuggaho kao, jeṇa avahārāvīṇṇa sammattaṃ maha diṇṇaṃ ti. tā desu me mahā-saṃsāra-sāyara-taraṃḍayaṃ jīṇa-dhamma-dikkhāṇuggahaṃ” ti. muṇiṇā bhaṇiyaṃ, “kumāra, mā tāva tūrasu. aṇṇa vi tuha atthi muha-veyaṇijjaṃ bhoya-phalaṃ kammaṃ. to taṃ nijjariya aṇṇaṅariyaṃ dikkhaṃ geṇhahiha tti. saṃpayāṃ puṇa sāvaya-dhammaṃ parivālesu” tti.

23 *Bhuvanāsumdarī* vv. 2160–2161: iya devīe guṇatthū-mahattha-paribhāvaṇā-pulāiyāṅgo| āṇaṃda-bāha-pakkhāliyaṇaṇo paṇavaī puṇo vi|| to bhaṇāi vīraseno “dāvasu maha baṃdhudatta caṃdasirim| aīdukkhio tti kāwā muhāe kiṃ mitta velavasi?||.

The association of respectable beings with venal women is not suitable. My handsome friend, even when they feel love, courtesans are devoid of the fragrance of qualities.²⁴

A second time, after his marriage to Candraśrī, Vīrasena is separated from her because of royal matters he has to settle, and when he comes back, he does not indulge in the pleasure of reunion with his wife, whom he has not seen for a long time (vv. 6410–6415), and, on the advice of his friend Bandhudatta, does not delay in acting according to his duty:

There, after paying homage to the Jina, he applied the rule of self-control and fell asleep on the ground keeping the vow of chastity.²⁵

In contrast, kingship without the virtues of Jainism is prone to excesses. In the *Samarāiccakahā*, before his awakening by a Jaina monk, Prince Guṇasena (the hero's first birth) mocks the ugliness of the chaplain's son, Agniśarman, and torments him in various ways, driving him to despair and triggering his decision to leave the world:

To amuse himself, Prince Guṇasena made him dance among the townspeople to the sound of a great number of instruments — various drums, flutes, and cymbals — while the prince laughed and clapped his hands; he also made him ride a donkey at full speed many times up and down the royal road to a great fanfare accompanied by rousing drumbeat, carrying lotuses made of rags and being hailed with the titles of a great king while surrounded by a flock of jeering children. While being humiliated in this way every day by the prince as if by Yama incarnate, Agniśarman became detached.²⁶

24 *Bhuvanāsumdarī* vv. 5370cd-5371ab: *pannamgaṇāi-saṅgo garuyāṇaṃ aṅucio hoi|| aṇurattāu vi suṇḍara guṇa-gaṇḍha-vivajjiyāo vesāo|*

25 *Bhuvanāsumdarī* v. 6419: *tattha vi jīṇa-pūyā-puvvam eva nivattiūṇa niyama-vihim| so baṃbhacera-dhāri pāsutto bhūmi-sayaṇaṃmi||*

26 *Samarāiccakahā* p. 11, l. 11 - p. 12, l. 4: *taṃ ca kouhallaṇa kumāra-guṇaseṇo pahaya-paḍu-paḍaha-muimṅa-varisa-karisaḷaya-ppahāṇeṇa mahayā tūreṇa nayara-jaṇa-majjhe sahattha-tālaṃ hasaṃto naccāvei, rāsahammi āroviyaṃ, pahatṭha-bahu-ḍim̐bha-vim̐da-parivāriyaṃ, chittaramaya-dhariya-poridariyaṃ, maṇaharuttāla-vajjan̐ta-ḍim̐dim̐maṃ, āroviya-mahārāya-saddaṃ, bahuso rāya-magge su-turiya-turiyaṃ hūṃḍāvei| evaṃ ca paḍiṇaṃ kayam̐teṇeva teṇa kayatthijjan̐tassa tassa veragga-bhāvaṇā jāyā.*

In the same work, Haribhadra describes at length a prison, which appears, as in the Buddhist sources,²⁷ to symbolise the violent rule of King Ānanda who had cast his father Siṃha there:

The prison was full of an overwhelming smell of excrement, with reptiles sleeping on its dilapidated walls; with swarms of buzzing flies and mosquitoes; with a quantity of rats issuing from the openings of cavities and holes, with creepers of serpents hanging from above; with a canopy formed of cobwebs; it was like the abode of the age of evil, the pleasure ground of a lack of piety, the brother of the Śimantaka hell, the assembly hall of the multitude of all miseries, the paternal home of all torments, the resting place of death, and the field of success of the god of death.²⁸

Other works also give various examples of bad kings who were violent, proud, and immoral. In the *Bhuvanāsumdarī*, in an attempt to expand his kingdom, King Narasiṃha kills Śūrasena, the King of Campā, and usurps his place:

In time, the child was born (to Śūrasena), and only three days after his birth, the city of Campā was surrounded by kings in all directions. Śūra(sena) gave the name Vīrasena to his son and engaged in battle. Then, in spite of his victory in battle, he was killed dishonestly. Then Narasiṃha became the king of the city of Campā, whose territory Śūra himself had rendered free from insurgency.²⁹

The text implies the unworthiness of this king in several ways: he did not respect the ten-day period allowed for the giving of the name; he killed his enemy dishonourably and replaced a king who had been able to get rid of potential enemies.

27 See Strong (2017, 4).

28 *Samarāiccakahā* p. 151, ll. 1–4: *taṃ ca accaṃta-nimmahamāṇa-purisa-kalamala-gaṃdham phaḍḍiya-bhitti-pasutta-sirīsivariṃ, bhūṇibhiṇāyamāṇa-masaya-makkhiyā-jālaṃ dari-vivara-muhaviṇiggaya-mūsa-ukkeram uvari-vilambamāṇoraya-nimmoyam lūya-taṃtu-virāya-viyāṇayam vāsaharam piva dussamāe, līlā-bhūmiṃ piva adhammassa, sahoaram piva simāntayassa, sahā viva savva-dukkha-samudayāṇaṃ, kulaharam piva savva-jāyaṇāṇaṃ, vissāma-bhūmiṃ piva maccuṇo, siddhi-khettaṃ piva kayamṭassa tti.*

29 *Bhuvanāsumdarī* vv. 1788–1790: *jāo kāla-kameṇaṃ taiya-diṇe tammi jāya-mettammi| nīsesa-disārāehiṃ veḍḍhiyā caṃpā-vara-nayari|| siri-vīraseṇa-nāmaṃ kāuṃ puttassa kuṇai saṃgāmaṃ| vijje vi hu saṃgāme akkhatteṇaṃ hao sūro|| to sūreṇa sayam ciya nikkamṭi-kaya-dharā-yalucchamge| narasiho saṃjāo rāyā caṃpāe nayariē||.*

In the same work, King Narasiṃha is angry with his astrologer who announces the arrival of his enemy in the city instead of indicating to him the right moment for the departure of his army:

Then not trusting the word of his astrologer and full of pride, King Narasiṃha, in anger and with forehead red with fury, cried out:
 “Ah, you astrologer, you know nothing, how could this being cause me harm? How could the mightiest of fireflies suppress the splendour of the sun? Its arrival is not possible! In short, you were wrong in your prediction. How could an inhabitant of the earth have arrived here since he does not fly?”³⁰

In each case, remorse and the adoption of the monastic path begins to redeem the faults of the hero as he progresses through his subsequent existences.

Among the faults associated with the royal *dharma*, a delicate point is the use of violence, which has been reflected in various ways in literary works. Thus, as Peterson (2003, 136) has observed, in the early centuries CE, Aśvaghōṣa’s *Buddhacarita* presents Siddhārtha rejecting the warrior *dharma* and adopting the *dharma* of Buddhist renunciation leading to deliverance, while later works echo the debates over royal *dharma* and offer alternative points of view, such as Bhāravi’s *Kirātārjunīya* (c. 5th cent.), which reflects diverse religious attitudes. While Indra in the *Kirātārjunīya* presents the ideal of the renunciant and the *dharma* of the cessation of all action (and thus condemns the warrior *dharma* in terms reminiscent of the Buddhist and Jaina positions), Arjuna gives him a response that represents the solution of the Brahmanic social system and aims to show the legitimacy of the violence of the royal *dharma* (Peterson 2003, 133). In the *Kapphiṇābhyudaya* (9th century),³¹ as noted by Hahn (2019, 121–22), Śivaśvāmin insists that the violence of war must only be a last resort and imagines a miracle of the Buddha averting deaths on the battlefield.³²

30 *Bhuvanasaṃdarī* vv. 5210–5212: *to bhaṇāi sa-kova-maṇo narasiṃho rosa-tāmbira-ñiḍālo/ nemittiyassa vayanāṃ asaddahaṃto sa-gavvo ya|| re joisiya ayāṇaya! teṇa vi maha kaha ṇu kīraī aṇattho?| balio vi hu khajjoo kaha teo haṇāi sūrassa?|| saṃbhavaī na āgamaṇaṃ gaṇamaṇo savvahā tumāṃ bhullo| kaham ettha so pahutto bhūcārī jaṃ na so khayaro||*

31 For an edition of the text and a partial translation, see Hahn (2007; 2013).

32 See also Hahn (2019, 124), “The remarkable thing is the fact that the poem is entitled *King Kapphiṇa’s Triumph*, that a military defeat is declared a success. This makes the message of the poem clear: More important than success or failure or what has been undertaken is what one has gained from it spiritually. King Kapphiṇa’s triumph is the fact that he met the Buddha and that he understood and internalized his doctrine.”

In the eight-to-tenth-century narrative works under consideration, the Śvetāmbara monk-writers clearly reject the use of violence. Indeed, kings who provoke fierce battles and kill human beings suffer the consequences in a miserable fate. Thus, in the *Caiṣṣannamahāpurisacariya*, which gives one of the versions of the universal history of the Śvetāmbara tradition, several kings go to hell for cutting off the heads of their enemies, such as the *cakravartin* Subhūma:

Once Subhūma had killed Paraśurāma because of his anger towards him, he deprived the land of Brāhmaṇas twenty-one times.

Then, after ruling the land of Bharata consisting of six parts and increasing his prestige, Subhūma came to the end of his life and obtained an infernal destiny.³³

In addition, the authors devise various narrative stratagems for the avoidance of violence. To begin with, fight scenes are few and far between in the *Samarāiccakahā*, as well as in the *Kuvalayamālā* and the *Caiṣṣannamahāpurisacaria*.³⁴ Second, when further developing the battle scenes, the writer-monks are careful to circumscribe them in several ways. In the one developed scene of the *Samarāiccakahā*, the description of the march of a majestic army is longer than that of the fight.³⁵ In the *Bhuvanāsumdarī*, the sometimes lengthy war scenes depict single combat that mostly ends without violence (except a rogue Vidyādhara).³⁶ Thirdly, in the struggle between two kings, several devices are used to

33 *Caiṣṣannamahāpurisacaria* p. 167, ll. 21–22: *paḍiyammi parasurāmammi to subhūmeṇa tassa roseṇa| vārō ekka-visaṇ kayā mahi bambhaṇa-vihūṇa|| bhottūṇa bharaḥa-vāsaṇ chakkhamḍaṇi vaḍḍhiūṇa ya payāvani| āyua-khayammi patto aho-gaiṇi taha subhūmo tti||*

34 There are three such passages in the *Samarāiccakahā*: a battle between King Sanatkumāra and King Vidyādhara Anaṅgarati (p. 427, ll. 1–5), Anaṅgarati’s troops (p. 431, ll. 1–5), and the clash of the armies of Sena and Muktāpīṭha (pp. 636–642, vv. 604–644); in the *Kuvalayamālā* three passages: the battle fought by General Suṣeṇa (p. 10, ll. 3–11), a duel between Prince Kuvalayacandra and Prince Darpaparigha (p. 136, ll. 8–29), and the fight between Prince Vajragupta and a Vidyāsiddha (p. 252, ll. 1–30); in the *Caiṣṣannamahāpurisacaria* several battle scenes: between the kings Puruṣasirṇha and Niśumbha (p. 136, ll. 8–24); between the kings Kṛṣṇa and Jarāsandha (p. 188, l. 8 – p. 189, l. 2); between the kings Brahma-datta and Dīrgha (p. 241, l. 23 – p. 242, l. 12); and the battle in the imagination of the royal ascetic Prasannacandra against his ministers plotting to usurp the throne he had left to his young son (p. 308, ll. 1–10).

35 The advance of the armies is described in verses 592 to 622, the battle in verses 623 to 644.

36 The *Bhuvanāsumdarī* describes the fights between Harivikrama and the *kṣetrapāla* Kharṇḍakapāla (vv. 264–268, 296–310), between Vīrasena and King Narasirṇha (vv. 1998–2005, 5655–5668, 5678–5690, 5704–5714), between Vīrasena and the Rākṣasa (vv. 2775–2783), between Vīrasena and the Vidyādhara Aśoka (vv. 3240–3283), between Vīrasena

emphasise non-violence. A recurring motif is the hero's compassion for his enemy. In the *Caṅgannamahāpurisacaria*, Prince Brahmadaṭṭa fights against Dīrgha — a king who is a friend of Brahmadaṭṭa's late father and has become his mother's lover to ensure that Brahmadaṭṭa will no longer be a threat to the extension of his power — but when Brahmadaṭṭa triumphs, he forgives Dīrgha for his sinful action in the name of his father's friendship with him.³⁷ In the *Bhuvanasaṃdarī*, the hero-king Vīrasimha saves the lives of several of his enemies, including King Narasimha (v. 2019) and the Vidyādhara Aśoka (v. 3216). Another motif is the enemy's recognition of the heroic king's merit. For example, in the *Samarāicakahā* of Haribhadra, King Mukṭāpīṭha attacks the territory of King Sena. The latter defeats him in single combat but spares his life. Mukṭāpīṭha then acknowledges Sena's victory, while Sena in turn dismisses Mukṭāpīṭha back to his own kingdom without taking advantage of his position. (p. 642, l. 11 — p. 643, l. 3). An even more frequent motif is the enemy's utterance of the formula of homage to the five supreme entities, which makes the hero-king recognise a co-religionist. Thus, in the *Kuvalayamālā*, the prince confronts the leader of the Bhillas who have assailed the caravan, but at the decisive moment when he is about to triumph, he hears the Bhilla chieftain pronounce the formula of homage. Thereupon, the enemy becomes a friend, and the irreparable action is not committed.³⁸ In the *Bhuvanasaṃdarī*, the author presents a long battle scene between Prince Aśoka and a Vidyādhara, ending with a climactic moment when Aśoka pronounces homage to the five supreme entities (vv. 3240–3283). Similarly, at the apogee of a long battle between Bandhudatta and the Vidyādhara (vv. 3668–3831), the situation turns around and violence gives way to forgiveness when the Vidyādhara king Śekhara pronounces the formula of homage (vv. 3832–3833).

Thus, the long narrative works of the 8th–10th centuries clearly show the supremacy of royal renunciation and the rejection of violence from the *dharma* of a ruler in a Śvetāmbara context before the turn of the first millennium. Moreover, as will now be seen, they are even more conservative than the Digambara *Ādipurāṇa* of Jinasena, since they do not know of a secular royal *dharma*, and in the biography of Bharata and Bāhubali they give each of the heroes traits that

and some Rākṣasi sent by King Narasimha (vv. 5473–5491), between Vīrasena and the *yogin* (vv. 5740–5746), between Vīrasena, the goddess and the *yogin* (vv. 5766–5795), between Vīrasena and a Vidyādhara (vv. 7202–7207), between Harivikrama and King Mahābala (vv. 8282–8289).

37 *Caṅgannamahāpurisacaria* p. 242, ll. 15–17.

38 *Kuvalayamālā* p. 137, ll. 8–9.

illustrate the primacy of the path of renunciation more clearly than in the Digambara version.

4. The conservatism of the Śvetāmbara sources

In the *Kuvalayamālā* there is, in addition to the examples in the narrative, a long dialogical passage which clearly shows royal renunciation as the goal of kingship and the non-existence of a secular royal *dharma*.³⁹ Indeed, while referring to a *dharma* passed on by rulers from generation to generation and mentioning the medium of a copper tablet on which royal edicts are inscribed, Uddyotana does not seek to define a royal *dharma* marked by Jaina values, but unequivocally substitutes it with the monastic *dharma*, as both the context and the content show. The context presents an ageing king, Dṛḍhavarman. He tells his son Kuvalayacandra that he now wishes to live religiously but does not know which *dharma* to adopt to proceed towards deliverance. The prince's stratagem is not to impose on his father the Jaina path that he himself has adopted, but to invite him to consult their tutelary deity so that she can give him the *dharma* that has been in force in their family for generations. The king could thus adopt it confidently since many kings of the Ikṣvāku dynasty (to which the Jina Ṛṣabha and other holy figures of Jainism belong) have obtained deliverance through it. The king complies and prays to the family goddess Lakṣmī to grant him this favour. On the second watch of the second night, the goddess gives him a golden tablet with the family *dharma* that was once the Ikṣvākus'.

Moreover, the content of the *dharma* presented in the *Kuvalayamālā* has features similar in part to that enunciated in the *Ādipurāna* of Jinasena.⁴⁰ Indeed, in the royal *dharma* which King Dṛḍhavarman receives, Uddyotana mentions three of the five areas in which a king's protection must be exercised: the three jewels of the doctrine —

39 *Kuvalayamālā* pp. 201, l. 32–202, l. 30.

40 See Dundas (1991, 182): “According to the *Ādipurāna* (42.3–4), the *kṣatriyas* were enjoined by Ṛṣabha to protect and the objects of their protection are five: religious community (*kula*) (i.e. those who are suitable for ordination), doctrine, self, subjects and equality.”

The purity of faith, the acquisition of right knowledge and the support of right conduct are the agents of deliverance and the source of all forms of happiness.⁴¹

the king's subjects —

When such is the supreme reality, how is it that one can fight against the soul in the body? Only beings prey to delusion would fight against a soul which is, in fact, no different from their own selves.⁴²

and the *ātman* —

Show benevolence towards souls, show respect towards those who possess good qualities, o you who are firm of character, show charity towards the unfortunate, and show indifference to the prideful.⁴³

Nonetheless, the royal *dharma* of the *Kuvalayamālā* is essentially about the king renouncing the world and adopting the monastic life to undertake a spiritual conquest leading to deliverance. Thus, the imperfection of temporal power is explicitly denounced:

Know you, o king, that every soul that you see in this world has made itself drunk with the intoxicating liquor of power and of glory, and this fate too was my own.⁴⁴

Moreover, the five vows to be adopted are clearly those of the monk and not of the layman, since they include the rejection of the world —

O king, it is this *dharma* that you must adopt, which involves the detachment of the world.⁴⁵

Finally, the conduct of discipline recommended for the king is unequivocally characteristic of the renunciant's way of life. Not only must the king achieve a spiritual conquest by becoming a monk and dominating his senses —

41 *Kuvalayamālā* p. 201, l. 33: *daṁsaṇa-visuddhi-nāṇassa saṁpayā caraṇa-dhāraṇaṁ ceya| mokkhassa sādhyāṁ sayala-suhāṇaṁ ca mūlāṁ||*.

42 *Kuvalayamālā* p. 202, l. 9: *iya evaṁ paramatthe kaha paharijjāū jiyassa dehammi| attāṇa-nivviseṣe mūdhā paharaṁti jiyammi||*.

43 *Kuvalayamālā* p. 202, l. 12: *jīesu kuṇasu mettīm guṇavaṁte kuṇasu āyaraṁ dhīra| kuṇasu dayarā dīṇa-maṇe kuṇasu uvekkhaṁ ca gavvīyāe||*.

44 *Kuvalayamālā* p. 202, l. 11: *jarā jarā jayammi jīvaṁ peccasi siri-vihavamaya-maūmmattaṁ| taṁ taṁ maṇṇasu ṇaravara erisao āsi ahayaṁ pi||*.

45 *Kuvalayamālā* p. 202, l. 3: *taṁ ṇaravara geṇha tumāṁ dhammaṁ aha hoi jattha veraggo|*.

Practice austerity in such a manner as to be completely pure! Cause to cease, without fear, that enemy that the senses represent! When angry, pacify yourself! Be mindful that, in love, there is always lust as well!

Against pride be humble! When there is an opportunity for deception, display uprightness! Vanquish greed through disinterestedness and delusion with the weapon of knowledge!⁴⁶

but he must also wander in search of one's alms and eat according to the monastic rule —

Do not cook your food! Seek your alms and eat according to the rule! Do not act unreflectingly and immerse yourself in study!⁴⁷

Moreover, in the treatment of the biography of Bharata and Bāhubali, unlike the *Ādipurāna*'s exposition of two royal paths — that of the lay king protecting the Jaina devotees, and that of the renouncing king whose asceticism leads him to deliverance — the *Caūppannamahāpurisacaria* advocates a Śvetāmbara path by which Bharata achieves a limited exercise of power and Bāhubali an unsuccessful royal renouncement. Indeed, unlike the Digambara version of Jinasena, the *Caūppannamahāpurisacaria* gives little importance to Bharata's role as representing temporal royalty. Thus, once he has been consecrated in the royal function by his father Ṛṣabha, who had renounced the world (40.8), Bharata is involved in only two episodes. The first is the famous one in which he fights a battle to enlarge his territory and uses a magical discus to ensure his triumph against Bāhubali, and the second is one in which, while leading the life of a king, he realises the futility of the beautiful appearance conferred on him by his royal finery. While the former illustrates the violence associated with royal *dharma* and the perfidy involved in the appetite for conquest,⁴⁸ the latter only briefly alludes to his activity as a ruling king:

Bharata suitably protected the royal fortune, enjoyed pleasures, had shrines built with the likenesses of all the Tīrthan̄karas on the Aṣṭāpada, had eight

46 Kuvalayamālā p. 202, l. 15–16: *kuṇasu tavaṃ su-visuddho im̄diya-sattvaṃ n̄irumbha bhaya-rahio/ kovammi kuṇaha khar̄tiṃ asuiṃ ciṃtesu kāmammi|| māṇammi hosu paṇao māyā-ṭhānammi ajjavaṃ kuṇasu| lohaṃ ca aloheṇaṃ j̄na mohaṃ n̄āṇa-pahar̄hiṃ||*

47 Kuvalayamālā p. 202, l. 18: *mā kuṇasu pāga-kiriyam̄ bhikkhaṃ bhamiūṇa bhumiṇasu vih̄ie| mā acchasu ṇicciṃto sajjhāe hosu vakkhitto||*

48 Similarly, Strong (2017, 14) observes that the ambiguity of Aśoka's kingship is inherent in his character and not erased with his conversion to Buddhism in one version of the story of the queen Tiṣyarakṣitā.

paces cut into Mount Aṣṭāpada, and instituted a great festival for Indra's thumb.⁴⁹

This clearly attests to the fact that temporal kingship is of no interest to the monastic author Śīlānka, especially when viewed in contrast with the way he develops in two stages the defects of the royal life, which prevent renunciation and hinder the spiritual progress leading to deliverance. First, he presents Bharata's reaction to the news of the deliverance of his father — the first Jina Ṛṣabha — not as that of a devout king, but of a frivolous king seeking oblivion from grief in the pleasures of royal life. Secondly, he emphasises Bharata's realisation that without his royal ornaments his body looks poor:

One day, to entertain his heart, upset because he had learned of the Lord Ṛṣabha's deliverance, he went to bathe in the company of the women of his harem. Having played various games in the water, he left the vicinity of the pool, entered the hall of mirrors to examine all his limbs, and then began to inspect them. As he was slowly examining himself, he noticed that the jewel on his toe had slipped off. Seeing that toe without its gleam, he asked himself, "Why does it not shine like the other limb?" After this thought, he understood that it was because it had no ornament. Immediately afterwards, the darkness of delusion disappeared and the cloud of *karman* dissipated. Then he said to himself, "We must think of a purification for this cursed body filled with defilements such as flesh, blood, marrow, faecal matter, urine, and excrement, which naturally feeds on all sorts of essentially impure things; it shines when enhanced by the beauty of adventitious and artificial ornaments, and not otherwise."⁵⁰

Śīlānka expands on the above narrative with a group of eight verses (p. 50, ll. 9–16) presenting Bharata's reflections condemning the body and the trappings of

49 *Caṭṭhānāmaḥāpurisacaria* p. 50, ll. 1–2: *io ya bharaho pālīūna jahociyaṃ rāya-siriṃ, bhurjjiūna bhoē, kāūna aṭṭhāvāve savva-titthayara-sa-rūva-ṣaṇṇihāim ceiyāim, ṇimnaviūna aṭṭhapaya-paricchiṇṇaṃ aṭṭhāvayaṃ, parūviya-sakkaṃguli-mahimḍūsavo.*

50 *Caṭṭhānāmaḥāpurisacaria* p. 50, ll. 2–8: *aṇṇayā usabha-sāmi-nivvāna-gamaṇāyāṇṇaṇa-jāya-saṃvega-hiyaya-viṇoyanattamā saha aṃteuriyā-jaṇeṇaṃ majjiuṃ payatto. tao majjiūna vivihā-kilāhiṃ, mottūna sara-varucchaṃgaṃ, savvāvayava-ṇirūvaṇattamā āyaṃsa-haraṃ pavittḥo samāno ṇirūvium āḍhatto sarirāvayave. saṇiyāṃ ca ṇirūvaṃtassa viyaliyāṃgutthala-rayāno samavaloio aṃguṭṭhao. tao taṃ asobhamāṇaṃ pecchiūna cimtīyaṃ: "kim esa avarāvayavo va ṇa sohai?" tti. cimtīyaṃteṇa vavagayāharaṇo tti viṇṇāyaṃ, tayāṇamtarāṃ ca viyalīyaṃ moharidhayāraṃ, vihaḍiyaṃ kamma-vaḍalaṃ. tao cimtīuṃ āḍhatto "eyassa haya-sarirassa payatī savvāsui-pahāṇāhārassa maṃsa-ṣoṇiya-majjāmejjha-mutta-purisāi-mala-bhariyassa cintijamtaṃ kiṃci sohaṇaṃ ti, āgaṃtuga-kittimāharaṇa-sohālaṃkio esa chajjai, ṇa aṇṇaha" tti.*

royal fortune. The passage concludes with the effects of awareness, which quickly lead to his successful royal renunciation:

At these thoughts he experienced detachment, reviled the body, renounced royal glory, and began to slowly remove all his other adornments. Seeing that the more he removed the ornaments from the limbs of his body, the less he shone, he became ever more detached. As awareness grew in him, he gradually acquired supernatural knowledge, his remaining *karman* became reduced to the auspicious maturation of what he had accumulated during other existences, and thus he reached the stage of unprecedented purity, the scale of the annihilation of *karman*, and then omniscience.⁵¹

The way Śīlānka treats Bharata's temporal kingship makes it clear that at best it is a stepping stone to the monastic path, but not a political path as it is for Jināsena.

As for Bāhubali, he is not the glorified hero that he is in the *Ādipurāṇa*. To be sure, both Jināsena and Śīlānka present Bāhubali as a king who prefers royal renunciation culminating in an ascetic life and deliverance to the victory of the king-warrior. But while their treatment of the battle and its outcome is similar,⁵² that of the ascetic life is very different. In the *Ādipurāṇa*, Jināsena praises in 70 verses the practice of difficult asceticism and self-control that gives Bāhubali supernatural powers.⁵³ On the other hand, the faults that prevent Bāhubali from

51 *Caūppannamahāpurisacarīya* p. 50, ll. 17–21: *evam-āi veragga-bhāvīya-maṇo ṇimīdiṇa sarīraṃ, pariḥariṇa rāya-siriṃ, saṇiyāṃ sesālaṃkāraṃ moium āḍhatto. jao jao sarīrāvayavāo avaṇeī bhūsaṇaṃ so so ṇa tahā chajjai tti suṭṭhuyaraṃ veraggam oiṇṇo. tao pavaḍḍhamāṇa-saṃvegassa pai-samayaṃ uttarottarāsāiya-jjhāṇāsayassa bhavantarabbhāsāsāiya-suha-pariṇāmāvasesiya-kamma-rāsiṇo apuvva-karaṇaṃ, khavaga-seḍḍhī, samuppaṇṇaṃ kevala-ṇāṇaṃ*. From the eighth stage (*apūrvā-karaṇa*), two scales are possible, that of the appeasement of *karman* (*upaśama-sreṇi*) and that of the annihilation of *karman* (*kṣapaka-sreṇi*). While the former enables a being to go up to the eleventh stage of spiritual qualification, the latter enables him to climb all fourteen stages and attain omniscience and deliverance (von Glasenapp 1984, 195–99; 1942, 72–74).

52 Contrast *Ādipurāṇa* 36.1–104 (from battle to renunciation), v. 102 (Bharata's remorse) with *Caūppannamahāpurisacarīya* p. 47, l. 21 – p. 48, l. 8 (from battle to renunciation), p. 48, ll. 8–17 (Bharata's remorse) and p. 48, ll. 18–19 (Bharata's rule).

53 Thus, the royal monk has his body emaciated by his harsh asceticism (vv. 112, 150–151); he is equanimous and suffers all sorrows (vv. 115–116); he is not influenced by the senses (v. 117); he keeps away from women (v. 120); he is indifferent (v. 121) and silent (v. 122); he controls all his passions (vv. 129–131), he is pure (vv. 137, 147); he gains extraordinary powers (vv. 146, 153, 155), he practices pure meditation and contemplations (vv. 159–160, 184) and has a calming influence on all animals and other creatures (vv. 164–183).

attaining omniscience are his conduct towards his elder brother Bharata (whose deceit in their battle had been prompted by Bāhubali's refusal to relinquish his part of their territory), and the fact that they have not reconciled since. But in this case only Bharata, and not Bāhubali, was responsible for the lack of reconciliation, and for this reason Bāhubali suffered only from a small impediment to the rise of his omniscience.

In contrast, in the *Caiṣṭannamahāpurisacarīa*, Śīlānka devotes very few lines to asceticism and, what is more, he mentions this asceticism not to praise Bāhubali's patience, but to give his sisters Brāhmī and Sundarī an opportunity to express surprise that he had not attained omniscience earlier.

Elsewhere, while Bāhubali had spent a year practising difficult mortification of the body, Brāhmī and Sundarī, very much affected, said to the Venerable Ṛṣabha, friend of the three worlds and progenitor of the universe, when they had the opportunity to speak: "Venerable One, Bāhubali has spent many days practising difficult asceticism, yet because of the destruction coming from the darkness of delusion and because of the formation of obscuring and obstructive *karman*, omniscience does not occur for him. So, Venerable One, please tell us, what is the cause of this obstructive *karman* even today?"⁵⁴

Moreover, the defect obstructing Bāhubali's omniscience is not his relationship with Bharata, but his own pride, which prevented him from coming to prostrate before Ṛṣabha and his brothers younger than him. Ultimately, he is unable to remedy this himself, he must be awakened by his sisters, which is a way of emphasising an important impediment to omniscience.

The Venerable One said, Bāhubali has destroyed many *karmans*, but he is under the influence of a fraction of the *karman* of delusion, and while he is under its influence, omniscience does not occur; he is under the influence of pride, which is a fraction of the *karman* of delusion, and immediately after your words he will experience the appeasement of that *karman*, so go quickly to Bāhubali. At the behest of the Venerable One (Ṛṣabha), the two sisters went to Bāhubali and said to him, "Venerable One, for you who have understood the true nature of the cycle of existences, who consider equally blades of grass and jewels or clay and gold, who have given up all attachments, it is not

54 *Caiṣṭannamahāpurisacarīa* p. 48, ll. 20–22: *io ya saṁvaccharaṁ jāva dukkaraṁ kāya-kilesaṁ aṇuhavaṁtassa bāhubaliṇo taccarita-piḍiyāhiṁ bambhi-sundarihiṁ bhaṇṇo kahāvasare telokka-baṁdhū jaga-piyāmahō bhagavaṁ usabha-sāmi jahā: bhayavaṁ bahūṇi divasāṇi bāhubaliṇo dukkaraṁ tava-caraṇaṁ carāntassa, ṇa ya se mohaṁdhayāra-khaṇaṁ āvaraṇaṁtarāya-vihaḍaṇeṇaṁ kevala-ṇāṇaṁ samuppajjai, tā sāheu bhayavaṁ kim ajja vi puṇaṁ aṁtarāya-kāraṇaṁ? ti.*

appropriate to ride on the beautiful elephant. Representing this to yourself, please get off the elephant!”⁵⁵

This hindrance takes on special significance when we compare the biographies of Bāhubali. Indeed, while in the Śvetāmbara version of Śīlāṅka, pride appears at the time of asceticism, in Jinasena’s work it appears as a recurrent trait of the royal character before ordination,⁵⁶ which causes him to wage war against Bharata and provoke that hero’s misconduct. But there, this defect disappears, and only his good qualities remain, once Bāhubali has adopted royal renunciation. By insisting on the persistence of Bāhubali’s defect into monastic life, the Śvetāmbara sources suggest not only that temporal kingship is a source of heavy impediments to liberation, but that it is all the more necessary to adopt the Jaina virtues for the royal dharma even before becoming a monk. Moreover, in Śīlāṅka’s work (*Caüppannamahāpurisacaria* p. 48, l. 20 – p. 49, l. 13), the very structure of the episode emphasises that the mention of pride in the ascetic life is not an anecdotal detail. Indeed, the reflections on the evils of pride occupy more than half of the passage, and so they contrast even more with the brevity of the narrative that follows once the hero remedies this defect:

After these reflections, he again said to himself, “What is the use of following this path taken by unwise beings? I will go to the Venerable One (Ṛṣabha), I will see my brothers who have obtained pure eminent knowledge.⁵⁷ I have long had a great desire to speak to these eternal beings.” So, as the towering mountain of pride disappeared and the cloud of delusion dissipated, Bāhubali pushed back a multitude of creepers⁵⁸ along with the creeper of deceit and went to the Venerable One (Ṛṣabha). Thereupon — as the net of his misguidance due to heavy *karman* was unravelling and as he had only been prevented from supernatural knowledge by pride — he gradually attained on the scale

55 *Caüppannamahāpurisacaria* p. 48, ll. 23–27: *bhayavayā bhāṇiyam: khīṇa-bahu-kammo bāhubalī, kiṃtu mohaṇiyāvayavodae vaṭṭai, ṇa ya tassodaye vaṭṭamaṇassa kevala-ṇāṇam uppajjai, tassa mohaṇiyāvayavamāṇodao vaṭṭai, so ya tumha vayanāṇantaram evovasamaṇ gacchāi tti, tā siggham vaccaha bāhubali-samīvam. tao tāo bhagavayāseṇam gayāo bāhubali-samīvam. bhāṇio ya tāhim bāhubalī: bhayavam, viya-saṇsāra-sahāvassa sama-taṇa-maṇi-leṭṭhu-kamcaṇassa catta-sayala-saṇgassa ṇa juttam gaya-varārohaṇam ti, tā sayam eva viyappiṇa hatthio oyaraha tubbhe.*

56 35, v. 1 *dodarpa*; v. 4 *durgarvita*; v. 8 *mānadhana*; v. 9 *mānoddhata*; v. 10 *durmadin*.

57 The expressions ‘eminent knowledge’ (*jñānātīśaya*) and ‘supernatural knowledge’ (*atindriya-jñāna*) may refer more generally to the three types of suprasensory knowledge (*atindriya-jñāna*) including clairvoyance and telepathy, but the author uses them here in the restricted sense of omniscience.

58 While Bāhubali has meditated, immobile, for one year, vines have grown around him, as is also represented in the gigantic statue at Śravaṇa Belgōḷa.

of *karman* annihilation the divine omniscience which enables one to recognise the categories of the past, future and present. Having arrived at the Lord (R̥ṣabha), he sat in the assembly of the omniscient.⁵⁹

5. Conclusion

While the fourteenth-century *Prabandhas* make it clear that the Śvetāmbaras did adopt the model of a secular king by the middle of the twelfth century, the long Śvetāmbara narrative works composed before the end of the first millennium are far from showing the figure of a Jaina king as opposed to a Digambara model of a royal renunciant. As a matter of fact, they are more conservative than the Digambara sources, insofar as they do not present a Jainised lay king like the Bharata of the ninth-century *Ādipurāṇa* and, what is more, they disparage the royal figure even after he has undertaken the monastic path. Thus, they reveal a Śvetāmbara path that retains a clear opposition between a temporal kingship associated with vices and passions, and a spiritual kingship that noble souls embrace as soon as possible. In this regard the Śvetāmbara sources of the 8th to 10th centuries are also more conservative than the Buddhist *Kapphiṇābhyudaya* of Śivasvāmin (9th century). Indeed, like the Śvetāmbara sources, the *Kapphiṇābhyudaya* does not present an image of a temporal kingship; but unlike them, and like the Digambara sources, it valorises the figure of the royal ascetic. In the story of the *Kapphiṇābhyudaya*, King Prasenajit attains worldly victory through the power of a miracle of the Buddha. The real triumph, however, goes to the eponymous Kapphiṇa, who suffers a worldly defeat but wins the spiritual battle. As a matter of fact, the Buddha manifests himself to him, recognises him as an *arhant* and as capable of adopting the monastic path once he has carried out his royal duties. The respective positions of each religious school would be in accordance with the political situation, where Śvetāmbaras and Buddhists lacked royal support in the North, while Digambaras were in favour with kings in Karnataka.

59 *Caiṣṭyannamahāpurisacarīya* p. 49, ll. 9–13: *evaṃ cīmtiūṇa puṇar avi cīmtiyarī: “kim aṇeṇābuhajanāṇṇeṇa maggeṇa? tti tā gacchāmi bhagavao samīvaṃ, peccāmi ya vimaluppaṇṇa-nāṇāisae ṇiyaya-bhāuṇo, aṇāi-ṇihāṇṇ jaṃtūṇaṃ kāla-bhūya-mahallaya-vivakkha” tti. vibhāvīūṇa viyaliya-guru-māṇa-pavvaeṇa vavagaya-moha-paḍalenam avañiūṇa māya-vallīe saha vallī-viyāṇaṃ samuccalīo bhagavao samīvaṃ. ettharītarāmmi viyaliya-mahā-kamma-moha-jālassa māṇa-mettāvāriya-divva-ṇāṇassa khavaga-seḍhīe kameṇuppaṇṇaṃ tiyāṇāgaya-saṃpaya-payatthubbhāsagaṃ divvaṃ kevalaṃ ṇāṇaṃ. gaṃtūṇa sāmī-samīve kevalī-parisāe āsīṇo tti.*

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See page xvi about references to primary sources.

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