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The Portrayal of Underlings in Eastern Cālukya Copper Plates

Dániel Balogh

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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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The Portrayal of Underlings in Eastern Cālukya Copper Plates

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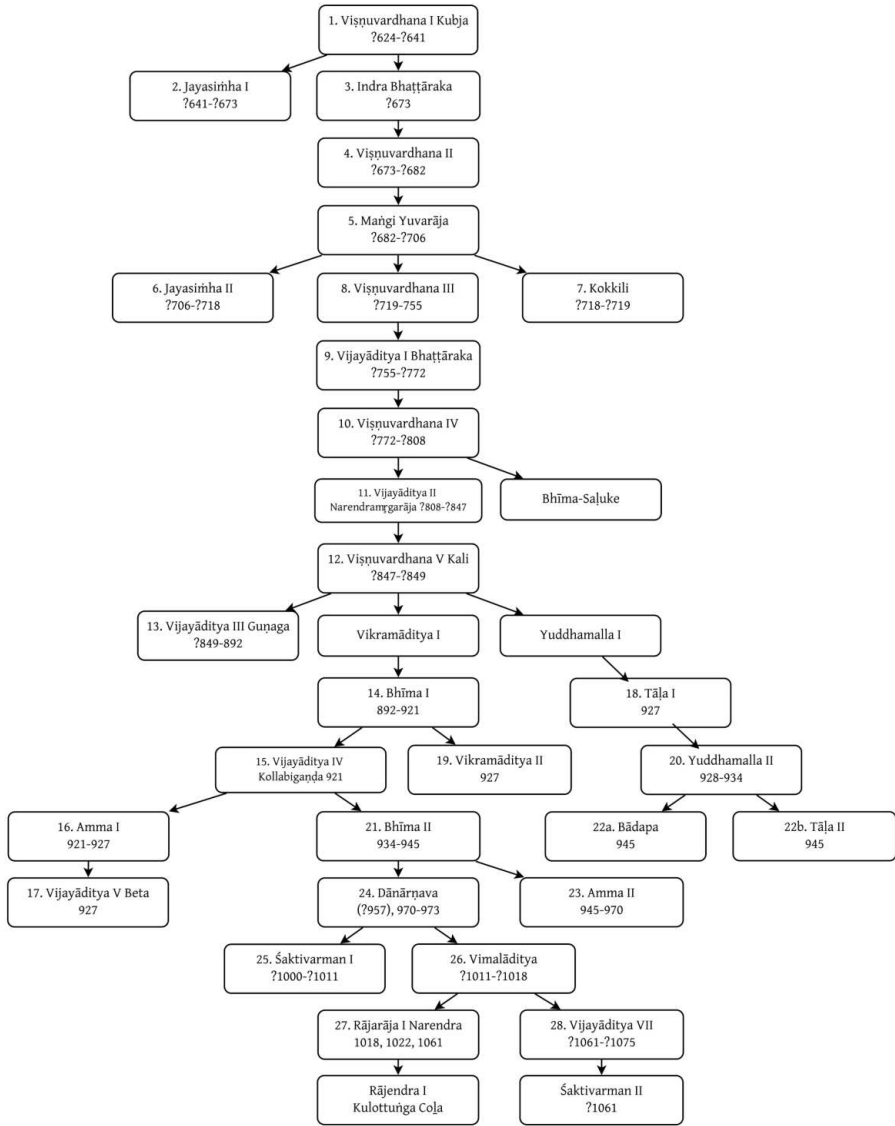
1. Introduction

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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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

-
- 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.

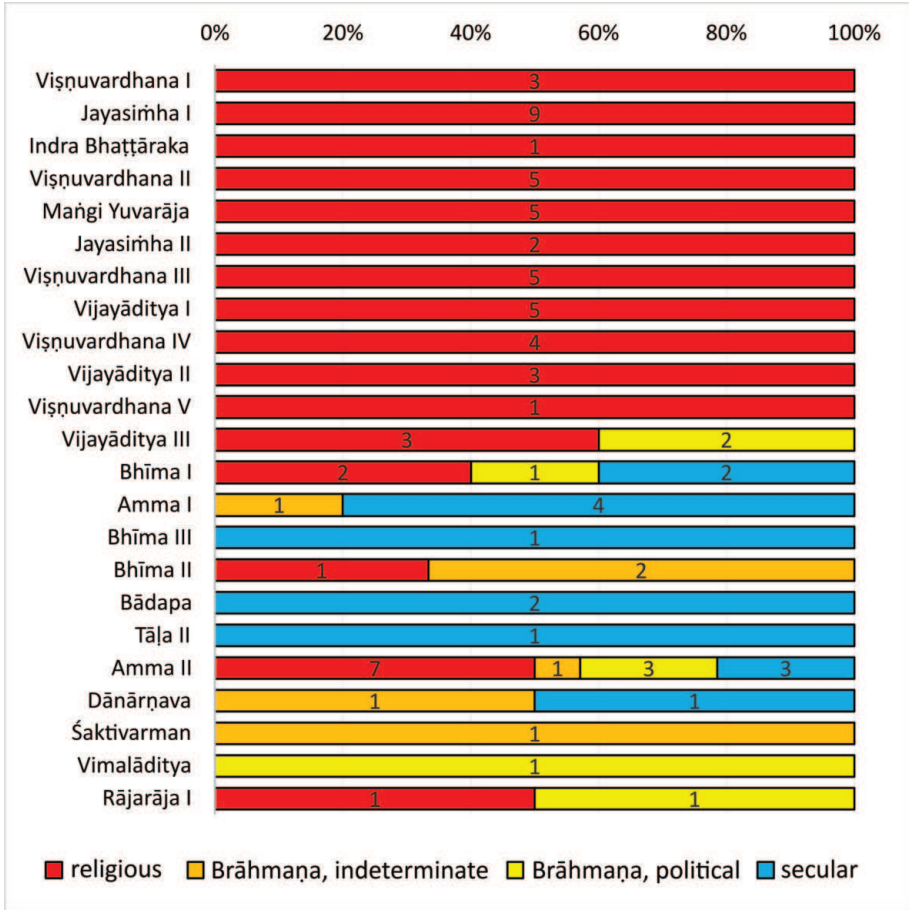
1.2. The value of underlings

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 Viṣṇuwardhana I (r. c. 624–641) to that of Viṣṇuwardhana 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).



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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-talāṅgulim|| 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: *śātrūṇāṁ 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-Gāḷidiparru 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 *Īnteru 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-varṇśa-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 *Kalucurṅbarṛu 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 durggarājāḥ 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-mahā-maṇḍalāmbanāya||*.

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
Koṇḍanagūru	Indra Bhaṭṭāraka	Indravarma	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-Gālidiparṇu 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*, *ṛṣpa*, *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 (*kṛta-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 (*kṛta-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, sūnṛta-vāk*).

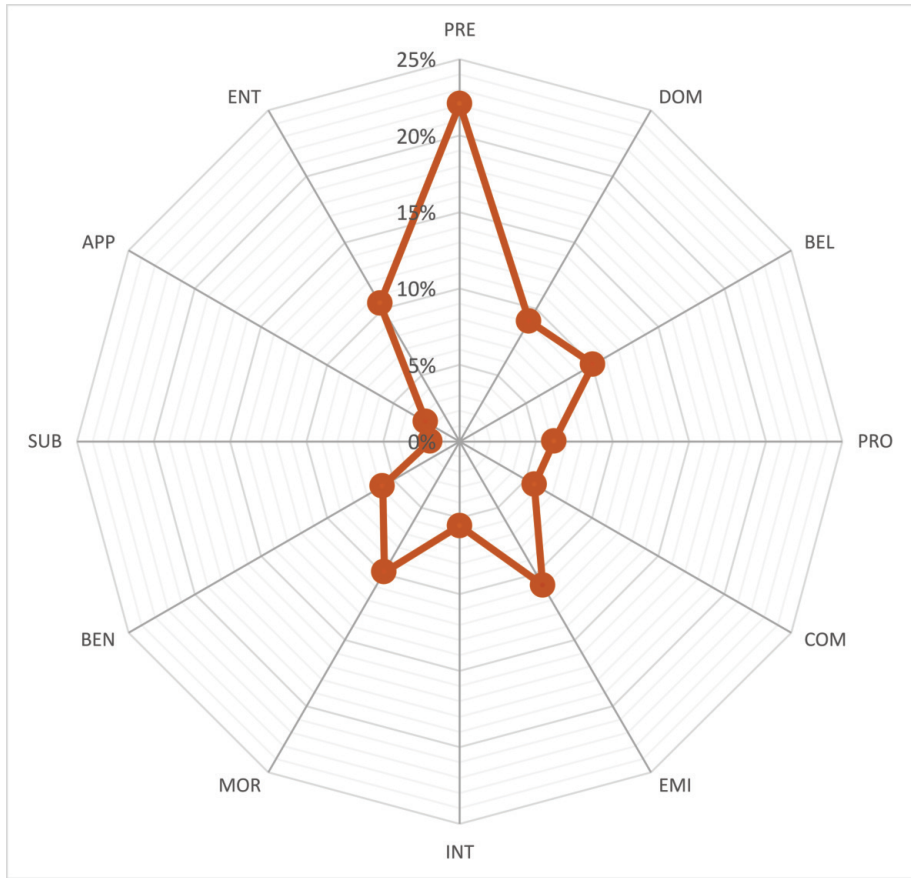
Entitlement is made up of circumstances of being entitled to rulership or sovereignty. While many qualities associated with rulers fulfil a function of “legitimation,” this dimension is for items that do not fit any other, more specific category. Examples:

- /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.



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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.

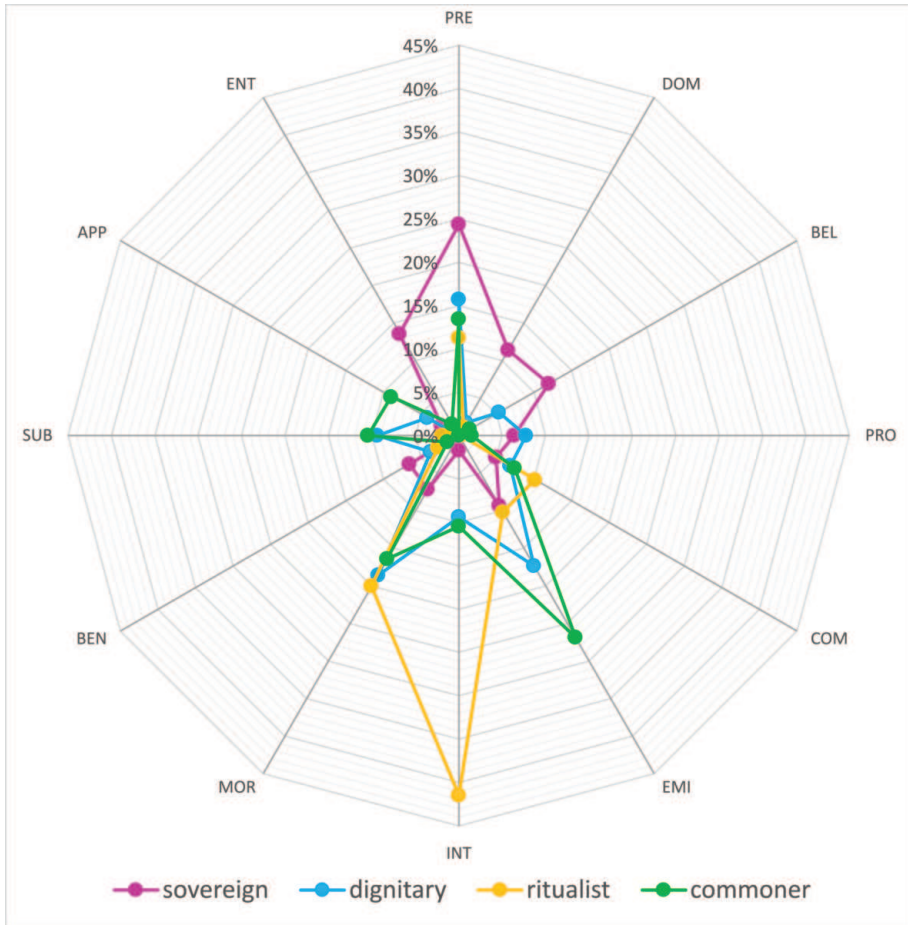
3. Discussion of results

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



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	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.

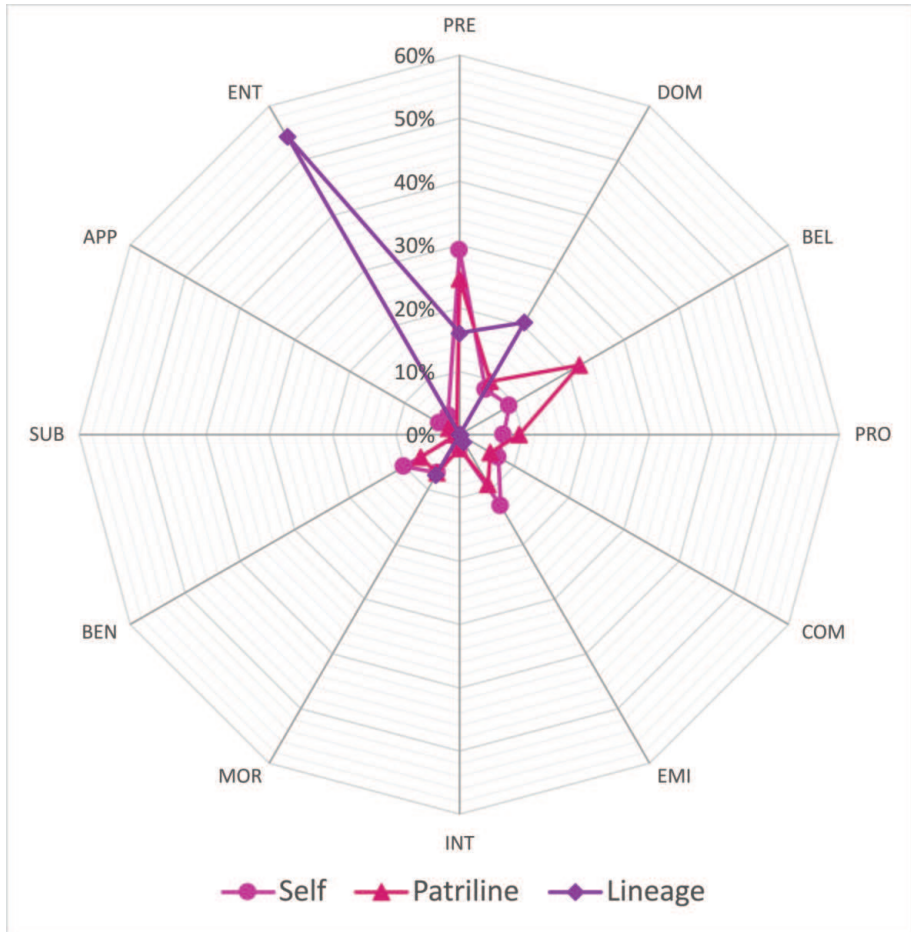
For this analysis, I have bundled together the individual orbits corresponding to patrilineal predecessors and successors not limited to the direct line of descent but including collaterals (such as uncles).⁴³ I use the name "patriline" as a collective term for these orbits, and compare their descriptions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



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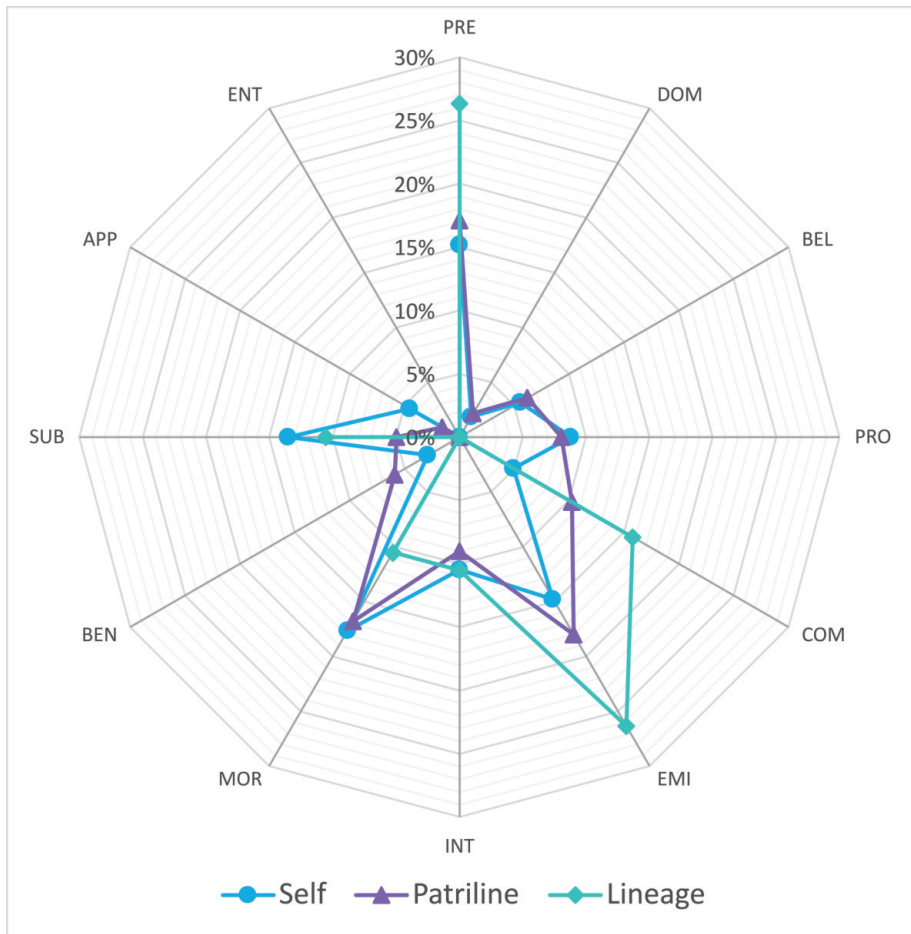
important about him personally is rather that he bears great prestige and does a decent job at ruling.⁴⁵

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-

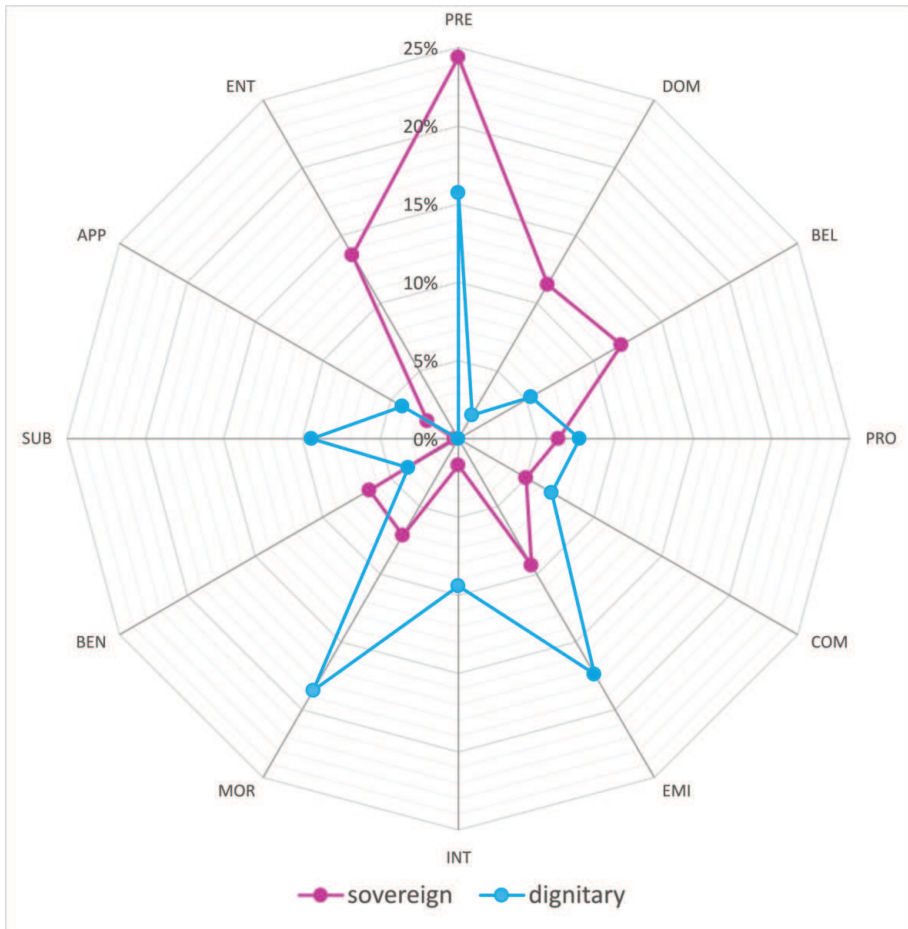
45 This division of work across orbits need not, however, be characteristic of other dynasties. The Maitrakas of Valabhī, for a counterexample, characterise their dynasty as dominant through belligerence rather than innate entitlement. The phrase “the Maitrakas, whose antagonists were forcibly prostrated”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



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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 *bhīma 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-bhrātūr 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 kaliṅgāñ| 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.

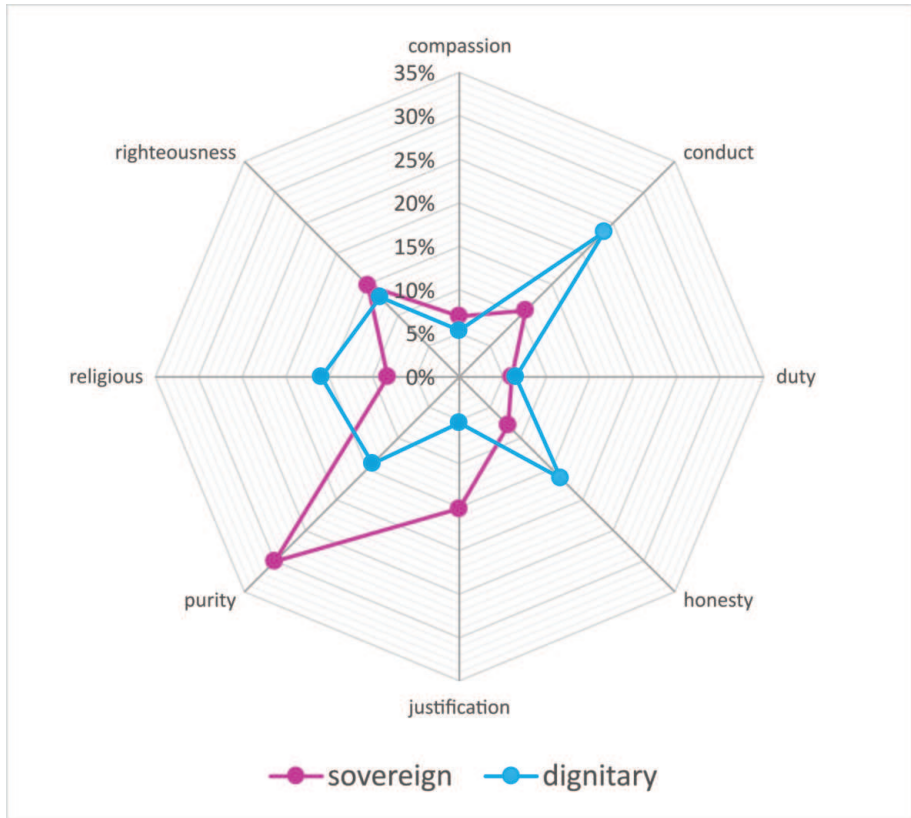
3.3.4. *Morality*

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 (*dharma*)—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.



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3.4. Feminine and masculine ideals

3.4.1. Female and male profiles

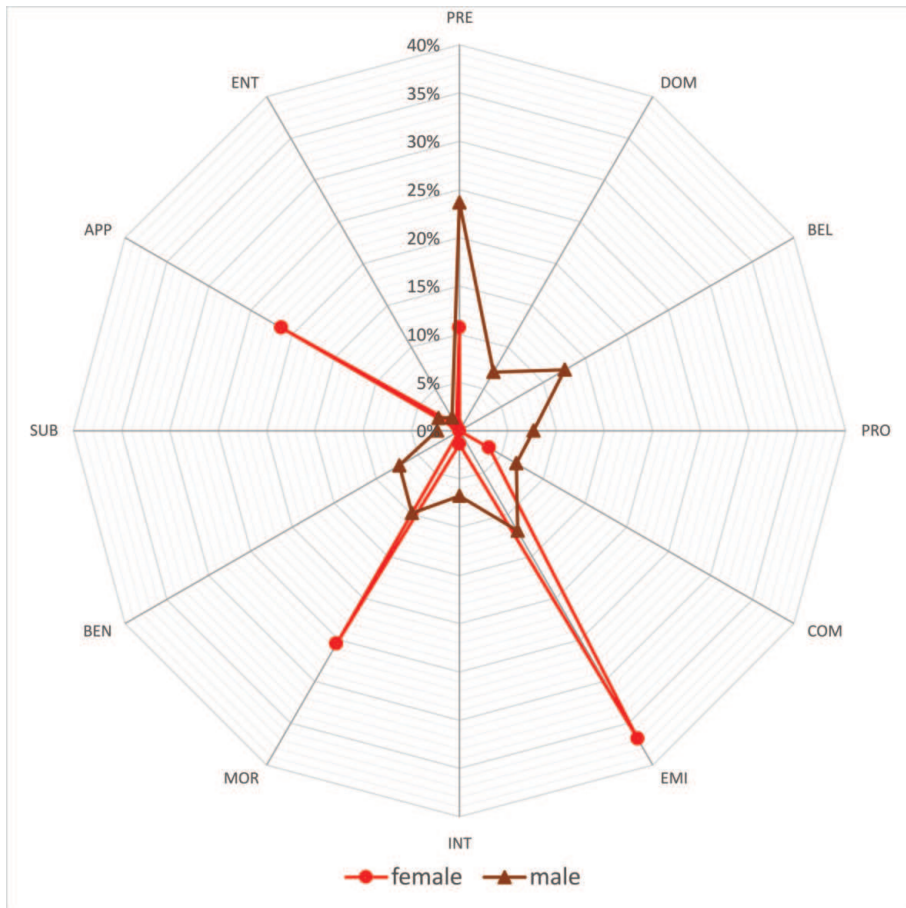
Although only a very few actual protagonists (i.e. people in the “self” orbit) are female in my texts, women do make their appearance every now and then in the satellite orbits of various (typically male) foci. In this section, therefore, I compare female targets with male targets, primarily in the aggregated 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.



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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 *Nāgīyapūṇḍī 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

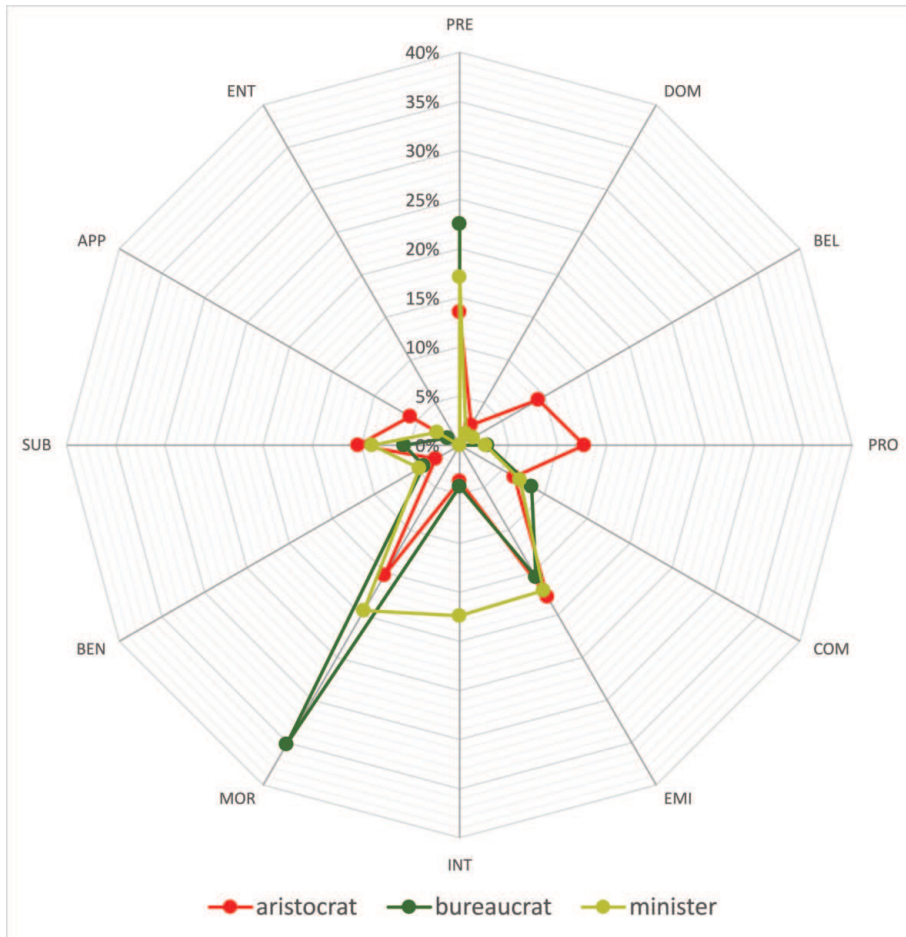
62 The *Cendalūr plates of Maṅgi Yuvarāja*, ll. 19–21: *madālasa-mattakāśinī-jana-ghana-payodharāvalupyamāna-kurinkuma-pankāvaśeṣa-śobhita-kanaka-giri-śilā-viśāla-vakṣaḥ-sthalaḥ*.

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.



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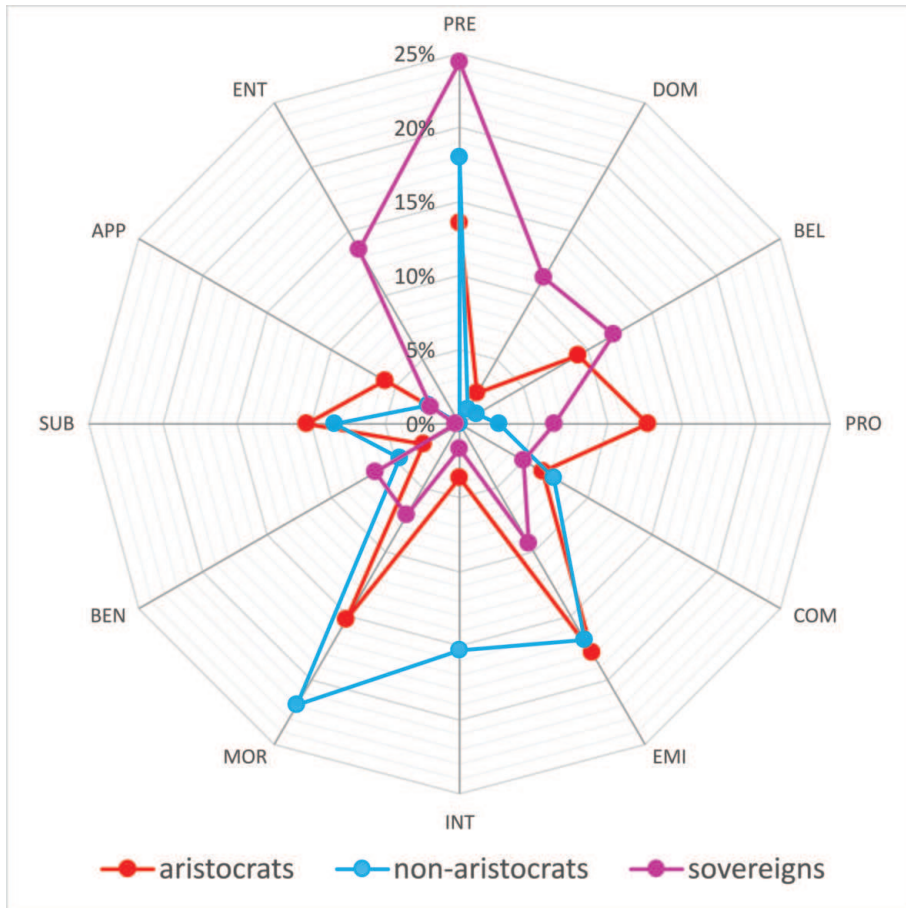
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aristocrats, 1.1% for other dignitaries, against 11.4% for sovereigns) and competence (6.5% in aristocrats, 7.3% in non-aristocratic dignitaries, but only 5% in sovereigns). They are also on a par with other dignitaries in the dimension of eminence (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.



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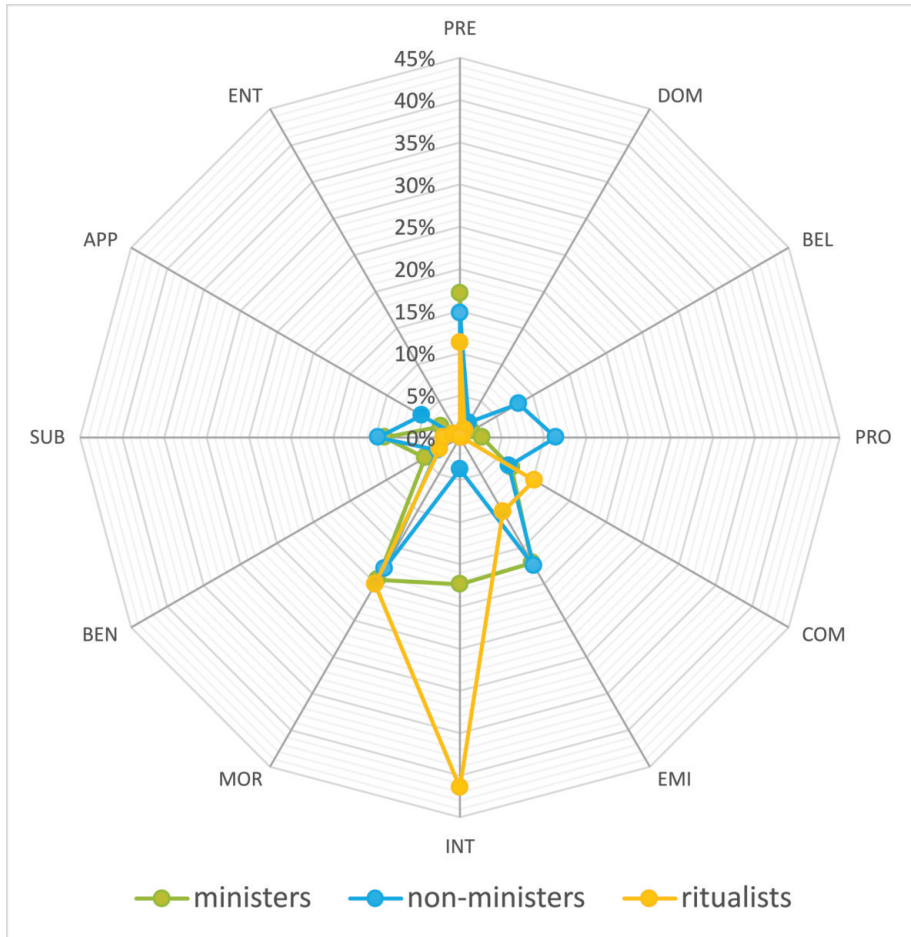
exhibit a mix of the traits of these two groups, and to have scores in some dimensions that are transitional between other dignitaries and ritualists. This latter is indeed the case in all dimensions except for prestige and beneficence, but in most cases, ministers are much closer to one of the comparison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



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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*

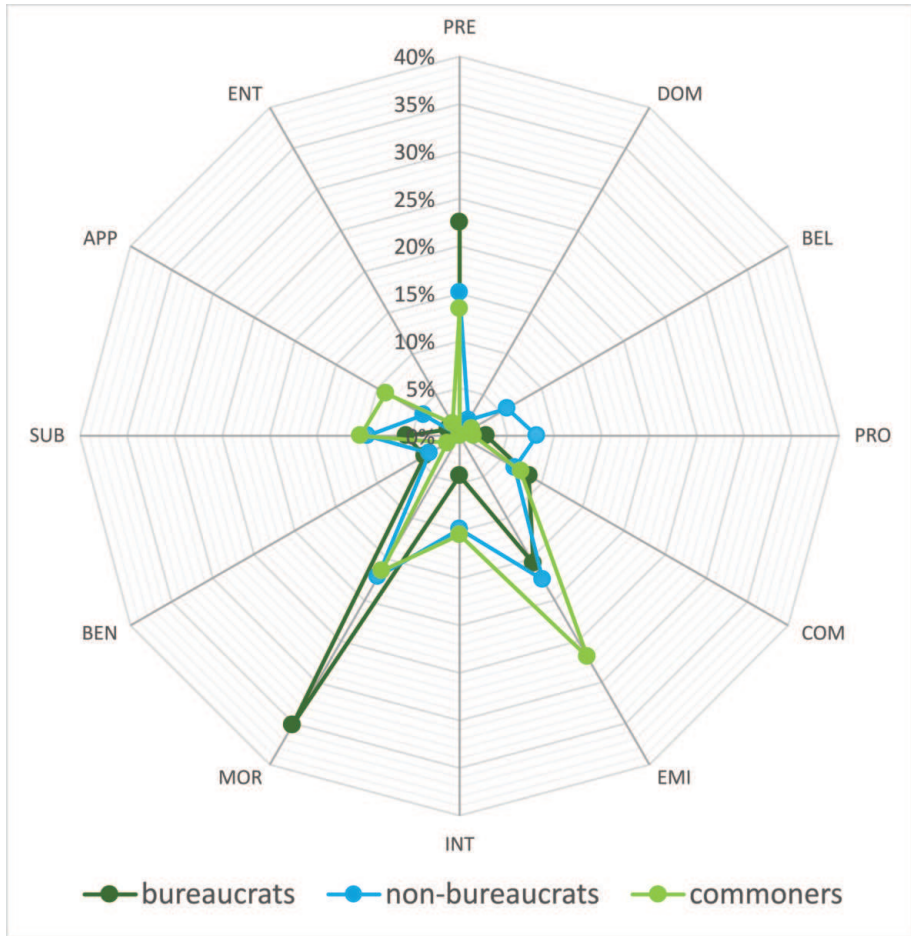
In Figure 13, the bureaucratic type of dignitary is profiled side by side with other dignitaries and with commoners who, like bureaucrats, are non-aristocratic and non-Brahmanical public figures. The bureaucrat profile is expected to be a mix of the traits of the two groups of comparison.

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.



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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

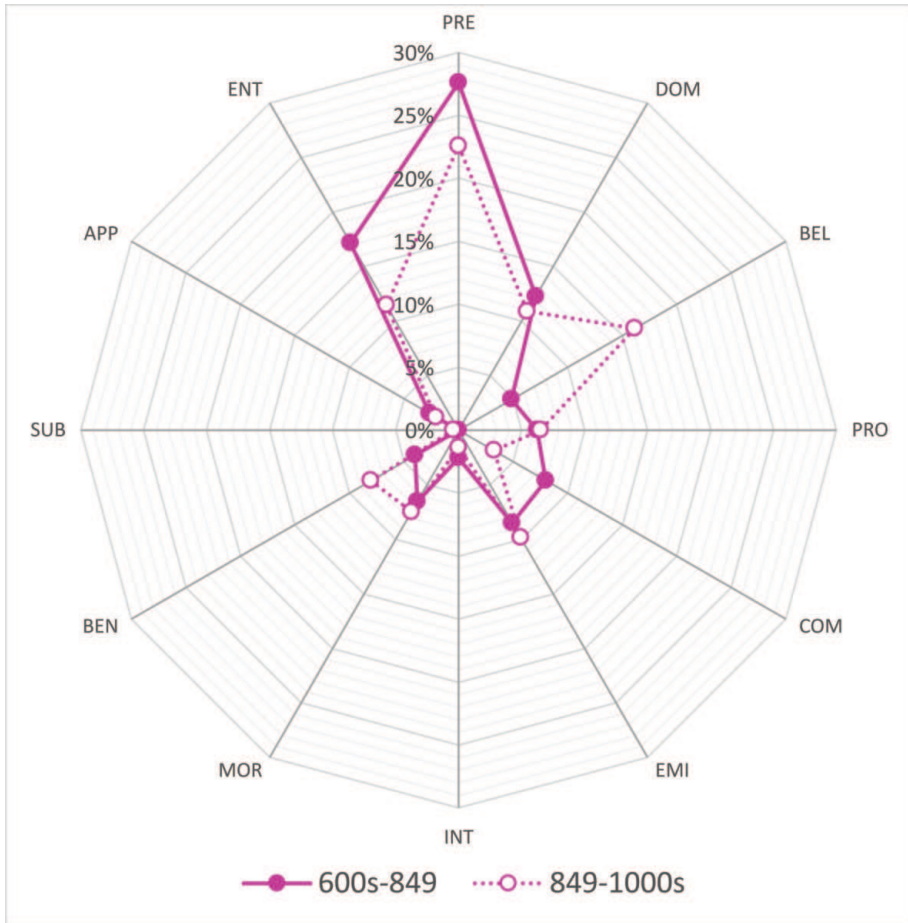
⁶⁸ This applies at least to people featured as executors (*ājñapti*), whom many earlier grants of the dynasty introduce in a slightly varying *anuṣṭubh* verse with the qualification *nirmalo dharmasamgrahaḥ* (or *dharmavatsalah*). The category of good conduct is also an important factor in the moral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

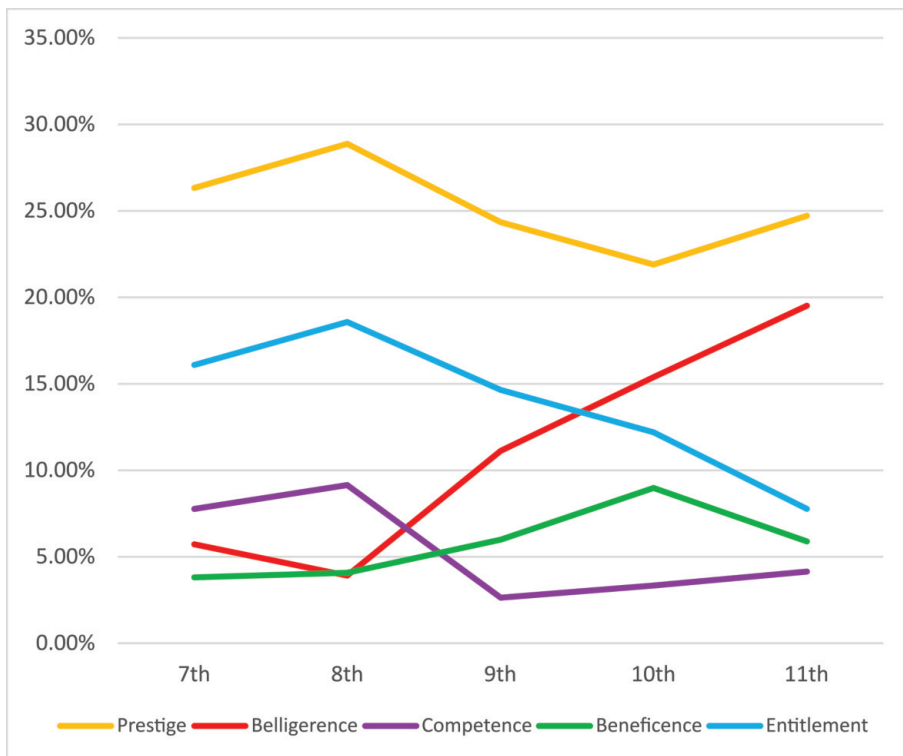
69 Although some of the earlier (up to the mid-eighth century) and some of the later (from the mid-tenth century) charters of the Veṅgī Cālukyās are dated, most are not. For the purpose of this comparison, undated grants were arbitrarily assigned to the rough midpoint of the issuing ruler's reign; where 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).



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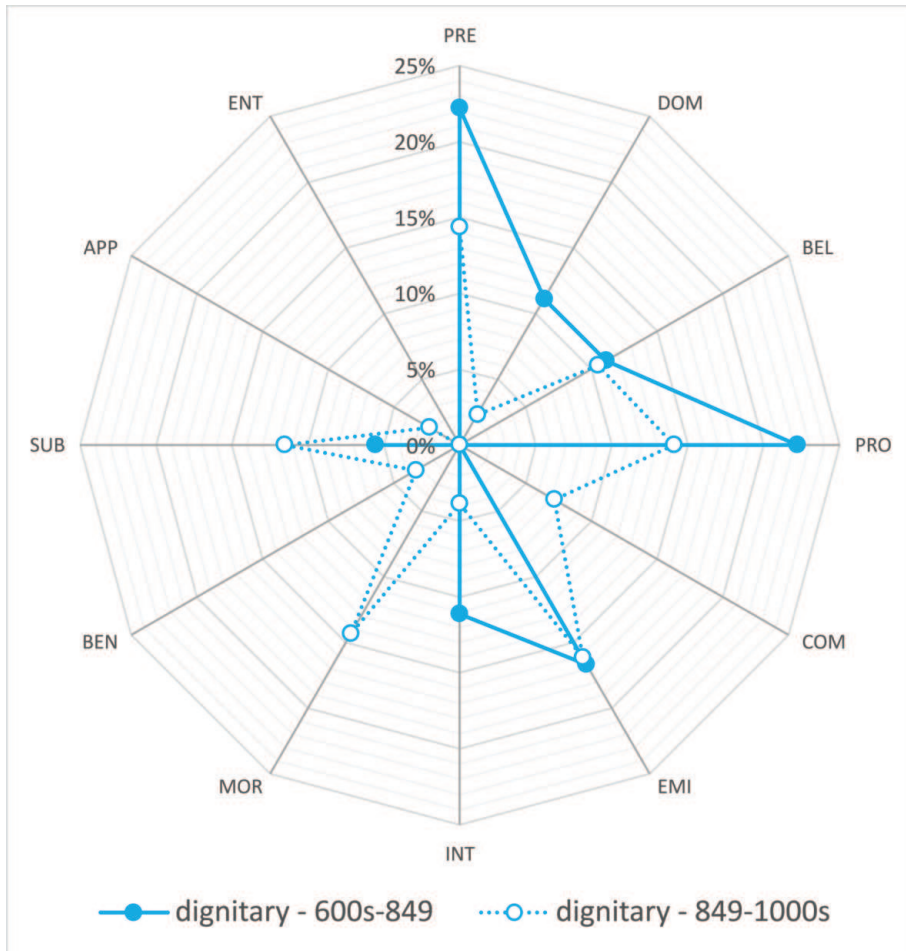
increasingly replaced non-martial competence as a qualification of a ruler, and that the prestige accrued from aggressive action made it less necessary to heap on other attributions of generic prestige. That said, if the prevalence of individual dimensions is charted separately for each ruler who issued 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.



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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 firsthand 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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