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# The Central Indian Yādava Dynasty: Epigraphic Self-Representation versus Hemādri's Account

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## 1. Introduction

Medieval rulers called Yādavas are referred to in numerous inscriptions from Maharashtra and northern Karnataka dating from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, as well as in the *Vratākhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, composed by an author named Hemādri, a minister at the court of the Yādavas in the thirteenth century. Based on the epigraphic material, two lines of the Yādava dynasty can be distinguished (Table 1): an early one with the capital at Sindinagara, present-day Sinnar near Nasik in western Maharashtra (850–1100), and a late one with the capital at Devagiri, present-day Daulatabad in the Aurangabad District of central Maharashtra (1100–1320).

Early Yādavas	850 – 1000	no inscriptions extant
	1000 – 1100	copperplate charters
Late Yādavas	late 12th – mid-13th century	stone inscriptions
	late 13th – early 14th century	stone inscriptions and copperplate charters

Table 1. Inscriptions of the Yādava period

Hemādri called this family *yādava-varṁśa*. In their own epigraphic records, the kings of this royal house were named Yādava or described as members of the Yadu dynasty (*yadu-kula*, *yadu-varṁśa*, or *yadv-anvaya*) and as descendants of one branch of the mythical lunar lineage (*soma-varṁśa*). The historical Yādavas were not the only dynasty which used the name Yādava.<sup>1</sup> Before them, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa

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1 The label “historical Yādavas” is used by modern historians, but was, of course, no concept that was really applicable in their time, because the kings of that dynasty would not have

kings had employed this name as a secondary appellation since the reign of Amoghavarṣa I (Schmiedchen 2014, 48–51). The Karnataka-based Hoysaḷa rulers, contemporaries of the Yādavas, also tagged their royal dynasty with the same appellation as a secondary designation (Derrett 1957, 15). The historical Yādava kings were also called *Seuṇa* (*Sevaṇa*, *Sevuṇa*), although not so much by themselves but rather by their adversaries, for instance, the Hoysaḷas and the Kākatīyas (Verma 1970, 71–72, 86, 103–4). An early ruler of the Yādavas had borne the name *Seuṇacandra*, and the Yādavas used the designation *Seuṇadeśa* for their core area, the present-day Khandesh region (R. G. Bhandarkar 1927, 138; Schmiedchen 2014, 325, 331, 343).

Inscriptional evidence for the activities of the early Yādava line starts after the decline of Rāṣṭrakūṭa power, around the year 1000. The earliest Yādava rulers (850–1000), who were probably subordinates of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, seem to have left no epigraphs of their own. They are only mentioned in the *praśastis* of their immediate successors (1000–1100), who had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Western Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa. The upper Godāvāri area was the heartland of the Yādava polity during the eleventh century. We possess a small number of inscriptions from this period, almost exclusively Sanskrit copper plates.

The late Yādava phase sets in towards the end of the twelfth century. Only stone records are known from the decades until the mid-thirteenth century. Although several copperplate charters have survived from the period of the second half of the thirteenth to the first half of the fourteenth century, stone records outnumber them by far (Schmiedchen 2014, 325–26). The late Yādava rulers extended their rule over large parts of the Deccan, which today belong to Maharashtra and to north and central Karnataka. This expansion towards the south had become possible because of the steady decline of Cālukya power around Kalyāṇa at the end of the twelfth century (Table 2).

Calukyas of Bādāmi	Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Gujarat	6th to 8th century
Rāṣṭrakūṭas	Maharashtra, Gujarat, and north Karnataka	8th to 10th century
Yādavas	Maharashtra and north Karnataka	early: 9th to 11th century late: 12th to 14th century
Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa	Karnataka	10th to 12th century

Table 2. Chronology of the Yādavas and some other important central Indian dynasties

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made a distinction in their self-perception between their mythological ancestors and their historical predecessors. It seems, however, justified to apply this label, because this royal family stands out from others in using this name as a primary appellation.

The link between the early (Table 3) and the late (Figure 1) Yādava branch is not entirely clear. Epigraphs which can be safely attributed to the early Yādavas seem to cease with Āiramadeva (Schmiedchen 2014, 329), whereas inscriptions which can be safely attributed to the late Yādavas start only with Bhillama V (*ibid.*, 338). Hence, Yādava history is obscured between the end of the eleventh and the late twelfth century. From this interim period, we know a few stone records of a more private character, which were either issued by local rulers whose relationship to the Yādavas is a matter of speculation, or refer to the Yādava dynasty in an incidental way without mentioning their pedigree. On the other hand, all the *praśastis* from the late Yādava period, with just one exception, trace back their genealogy at the most up to Yādava Siṅghaṇa I (*ibid.*, 339). Hence, if we had only these inscriptions, we would know virtually nothing about the potential connection between the early and the late Yādava lines.

1.	Dr̥ḍhaprahāra/Dr̥ḍhaprahārin	
2.	Seuṇacandra I	
3.	Dhāḍi[yappa]	
4.	Bhillama I	
5.	Rāja	
6.	Vandiga/Vaddiga (+ queen Voddiyavvā)	
7.	Bhillama II (+ queen Lacchiyavvā/Lakṣmī)	ŚS 922 (1000 CE)
8.	Vesū[ka] (+ queen Nāyiyaladevī)	
9.	Bhillama III (+ queen Avvalladevī)	ŚS 948 (1025 CE), ŚS 974 (1052 CE)
10.	Seuṇacandra/Seuṇendu II	ŚS 991 (1069 CE)
11.	Āira[m]madeva (+ queen Yogallā)	ŚS 1009 (1087 CE), ŚS 1020 (1098 CE)

Table 3. Line of succession and dates of the early Yādavas according to their epigraphs

The decisive epigraphic clue is not provided by a copperplate charter, but by the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II* (r. 1247–1261), dated ŚS 1176 (1254 CE), which has been engraved on the door lintel above the entrance to the main hall of the Anantaśayana temple in Methi (Dhule District in northwestern Maharashtra). In this epigraph, the dynastic pedigree of the Yādavas is traced back up to Dr̥ḍhaprahāra (Table 3), the founder of the early line.

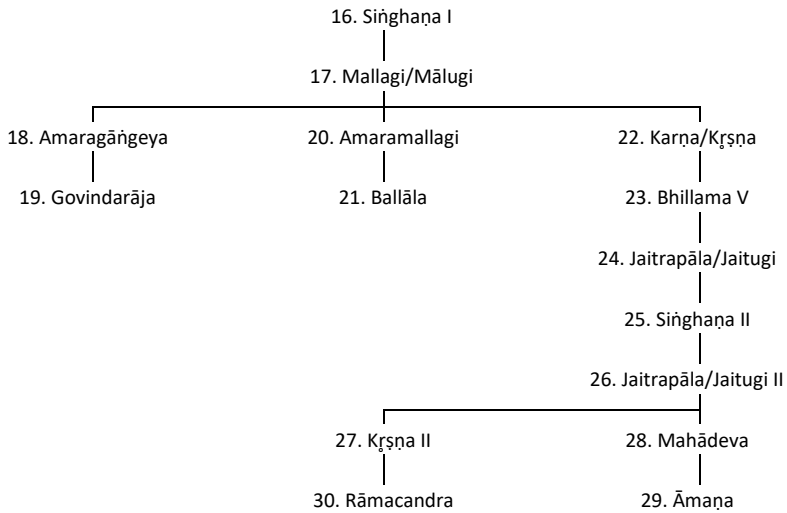


Figure 1. Pedigree of the late Yādavas, reconstructed on the basis of inscriptions and Hemādri. The reason for starting the numbering with 16 is that Hemādri's pedigree for the early Yādavas has been taken into account here; see Table 4 below.

## 2. Epigraphic versus non-epigraphic *praśastis*

The obscure relationship of the late Yādavas with the early line of the same name is comparable to that between the late Western Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa and the early Calukyas of Bādāmi<sup>2</sup> (Pollock 2006, 153–61). The gap between the early Calukyas and the late Cālukyas was one of two hundred years, caused by the two centuries of Rāṣṭrakūṭa rule in between. The Calukya/Cālukya and the Yādava traditions have in common that, besides inscriptions, non-epigraphic texts are available for historical reconstruction: the *Sāhasabhīmavijayam* for the Cālukyas and Hemādri's *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* for the Yādavas.<sup>3</sup> Some of the *Vratākhaṇḍa* manuscripts of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* comprise a pedigree of both the lines. We owe this important information to R. G. Bhandarkar (1927, 136), who explicated:

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- 2 For my distinction in the spelling of the names between “Calukya” (for the Bādāmi line) and “Cālukya” (for the Kalyāṇa line), see Schmiedchen (2014, 7 n. 5). See also Fleet (1882, 17–30, 39–56) and Kielhorn (1902–03, 2, 26).
- 3 For the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, see also De Simini (2016, 235, 256, 268, 283).

The genealogy of the Yādavas is given in the introduction to the *Vratākhaṇḍa* attributed to or composed by Hemādri, who was a minister of Mahādeva, one of the later princes of the dynasty. Some of the Manuscripts of the work, however, do not contain it, and in others it begins with Bhillama, as it was he who acquired supreme power and raised the dynasty to importance. Others again contain an account of the family from the very beginning, the first person mentioned being the Moon who was churned out of the milky ocean.

As the *Bibliotheca Indica* edition of the *Vratākhaṇḍa* does not contain these *praśastis*, Bhandarkar (1927, 136–37 n. 2) studied the manuscripts and edited the longer version, which consists of more than fifty stanzas, as *Rājapraśasti I*, and the shorter one as *Rājapraśasti II* (*ibid.*, 191–98).<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, the royal genealogy in the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II*, ŚS 1176, comprises only two stanzas (vv. 4–5), presenting ten members of the early Yādava line and eight members of the late Yādava line up to King Kṛṣṇa II, in a listlike manner. It is worth mentioning that this record merely combines data from early and late epigraphic *praśastis*, without adding any information. Those representatives of the early Yādavas who were left out in the charters, because they belonged to collateral branches, are also missing here, a practice labelled as “collateral oppression” by David Henige (1975). The composition of the *Methi stone inscription* must have been based on similar sources as the early Yādava copper plates, or on copies of such charters. But why can we suppose that some members of the dynasty were omitted in the records? The main reason for this assumption is that Hemādri, who apparently aimed at providing a “complete” pedigree of the royal dynasty he was serving, has listed more family members of the early Yādava line (Table 4) than all the known stone and copperplate inscriptions together (Schmiedchen 2014, 329).

The differences in the early Yādava pedigrees deducible from all the epigraphs on the one hand and from the account in Hemādri’s *Vratākhaṇḍa* on the other pose the question for the reasons behind these obvious genealogical disparities. Had the composers of the early inscriptions attempted to streamline potential disruptions in the actual line of succession through systematic omissions, or did Hemādri, conversely, try to subsequently fill certain gaps in the transmission? As the two source types do not generally contradict each other, it can be assumed that the first option is the more likely one, i.e. that the authors of the epigraphs tried to streamline the official Yādava pedigree. Those who commissioned the inscriptions seem to have instructed the chancelleries to

4 For these “paratexts,” see also De Simini (2016, 236).

make a selection of only the most important Yādava protagonists in terms of dynastic politics and to omit certain others (Schmiedchen 2014, 337).

Copperplate charters, ŚS 922–1020	Methi stone inscription, ŚS 1176	Hemādri, <i>Vratakhanda</i> , ŚS 1182–1192
1. Dṛḍhaphrahārin	1. Dṛḍhaphrahāra (v. 4)	1. Dṛḍhaphrahārin (v. I.20)
2. Seuṇacandra I	2. Seunna I (v. 4)	2. Seuṇacandra I (v. I.22)
3. Dhāḍiyappa	3. Dhāḍipaka (v. 4)	3. Dhāḍiyasa (v. I.23)
4. Bhillama I	4. Bhillama I (v. 4)	4. Bhillama I (v. I.23)
5. Rāja	5. Rāja (v. 4)	5. Rājagi (v. I.23)
6. Vandiga/Vaddiga	6. Vādugi (v. 4)	6. Vādugi I (v. I.23)
		7. Dhāḍiyama (v. I.24)
7. Bhillama II	7. Vara-Bhillama (v. 4)	8. Bhillama II (v. I.24)
8. Vesūka	8. Vesugideva (v. 4)	9. Vesugi I (v. I.24)
9. Bhillama III	9. Mṛga-Bhillama (v. 5)	10. Bhillama III (v. I.26)
		11. Vādugi II (v. I.26)
		12. Vesugi II (v. I.27)
		13. Bhillama IV (v. I.28)
10. Seuṇacandra II	10. Seunna II (v. 5)	14. Seuṇa II (v. I.28)
11. Āiramadeva		15. Parammadeva (v. I.30)

Table 4. Comparison of the line of succession of the early Yādavas in different sources

Since the role of *praśastis* may have differed in epigraphic and non-epigraphic writing, it might be advisable to take a closer look at the authors of these texts. One of the opening stanzas (v. 13) of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* identifies Hemādri as the *sarva-śrīkaraṇa-prabhū* or ‘head of all administrative departments’<sup>5</sup> of King Mahādeva (r. 1261–1271). The colophons of this work use a similar term to denote its author, namely *samasta-karaṇādhiśvara*, ‘supervisor of all administrative departments.’<sup>6</sup> A minister called Hemādri is also described in the *Thane copperplate charter of the time of Yādava Rāmacandra* (r. 1272–1311), dated ŚS 1194

- 5 Kane (1930, 356 n. 849). Sircar (1966, 318) gives as first meaning of *śrīkaraṇa*: “the drafting of documents; a scribe or scribe-accountant or secretary,” adding that “the minister Hemādri was styled *Sarva-śrīkaraṇa-prabhū*.” He lists as second meaning: “record office; the record department; the department responsible for drawing up documents,” as third meaning: “record officer; the officer in charge of drawing documents,” as fourth meaning: “the income department.” The *Lekhapaddhati* (2.0, vv. 7–10) itemises 32 departments (*karaṇa*), headed by the *śrīkaraṇa*, which Strauch (2002, 482) translates as “state chancellery; income department.” As Hemādri was the “head of all *śrīkaraṇas*,” the term was perhaps used as a synonym for *karaṇa*.
- 6 Cf. Kane (1930, 356 n. 850). The term *śrīkaraṇa* is hardly attested in Yādava inscriptions, but it occurs frequently in epigraphs of the Śilāhāras of North Konkan, dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries; see Schmiedchen (2014, 238–45, 489–94).

(1272 CE). It is highly probable that this high-level official was identical with the famous contemporary author of the *Caturvarṅacintāmaṇi*:

[Now,] while King Śrī-Rāmacandra, a moon for the water-lily of the Yadu family, is ruling the entire terrestrial globe, and while Śrī-Hemādri, the supervisor of all the elephant-keepers, a crest-jewel among the ministers, a Rohaṇa mountain of gems of virtue, who makes [others] happy with his own virtues [and] who has conquered the province of Jhāḍi, is bearing the burden of the whole kingdom, which he has obtained through his (Rāmacandra's) favour, and executing the supervision of all the departments (*samastakaraṇa*) [...].<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to the information about the author of the *Caturvarṅacintāmaṇi*, there is only very little known about the officials who drafted the inscriptions. Unlike the charters commissioned by several other dynasties, the copper plates from the Yādava kingdom often do not contain any data about the individuals who composed these title-deeds. Less than half of the extant records engraved on copper plates during the late Yādava period reveal who authored these texts.

The evidence from the thirteenth-century copper plates of the Yādava kingdom suggests that no general template was used for the drafting of the epigraphic *praśasti* of the royal dynasty. However, there is some proof that certain *praśasti* versions were employed more than once (Schmiedchen 2014, 501–5):

1. The *Chikka-Bagevadi copperplate charter* and the *Bendigere copperplate charter*, both of the time of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II and dated ŚŚ 1171 (1249 CE), have some panegyric verses in common.
2. The *Kalegaon copperplate charter of Yādava Mahādeva*, ŚŚ 1182 and the *Paithan copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚŚ 1193 have 16 *praśasti* stanzas in common.
3. Ten verses of the Yādava *praśasti* are identical in the two *Thane copperplate charters of the time of Yādava Rāmacandra*, dated ŚŚ 1194 and 1212.

7 *Thane copperplate charter of the time of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚŚ 1194, ll. 38–41: *sakala-bhūvalayam anuśāsati yadu-kula-kumuda-caṁd्रे śrī-rāmacandra-nareṁdre tathaitat-prasādāvāptanikhīla-rājya-dhurīṇatārī vahati samasta-hastipakādhyaḱṣe nija-guṇa-subhagaṇi-bhāvuka-bhāvake samasta-karaṇādhipatyam anigikurvāṇe ca nirjita-jhāḍi-maṇḍale maṇtri-cūḍā-maṇau guṇaratna-rohaṇādrau śrī-hemādrau [...]*. For the interpretation, see also Kane (1930, 357 n. 851).



4. The *Neurgaon stone inscription* and the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, dated ŚS 1200 (1278 CE) and 1232 (1310 CE), have seven stanzas of their *praśasti* version in common.<sup>8</sup>

Besides, there are also a few intersections between the otherwise independent versions of examples 2 and 4. One stanza (v. 13) of the *Paithan copperplate charter* describing Siṅghaṇa II makes its reappearance in the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter* (v. 4);<sup>9</sup> and the first hemistich of another stanza from the Paithan record (v. 21ab) depicting Rāmacandra gets recycled as the second hemistich of a different verse in the Purshottampuri title-deed (v. 13cd).

Example 2 indicates that the *praśasti* of a predecessor (Mahādeva) was sometimes updated for a successor during his early reign (Rāmacandra). But the eulogy could also be substituted by an entirely new version during the later rule of a successor (see example 4).<sup>10</sup>

All the four examples reveal that the officials who drafted the texts of the charters must have repeatedly drawn on a template-like stock of official or semi-official *praśasti* stanzas. But the specific relation between these clerks and the chancellery cannot be derived from the Yādava-period epigraphs. All the relevant inscriptions from that time provide at best the name of such a “scribe,” but no details regarding his particular role or designation.<sup>11</sup>

Hemādri, on the other hand, is explicitly labelled as having been in charge of the administration in the Yādava kingdom during the rule of King Mahādeva (*Caturvargacintāmaṇi*) and most probably also during the early years of the reign of King Rāmacandra (*Thane copperplate charter of the time of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1194). The portfolio of minister Hemādri’s duties most likely included the responsibility for the royal chancellery at Devagiri, the capital. In this role, he must have had, *inter alia*, access to the administrative records of the dynasty.

8 The first of the two slabs of the *Neurgaon stone inscription* begins with the first seven stanzas of the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, but the *praśasti* is illegible thereafter. In addition, the *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* has also five stanzas in common with the *Neurgaon stone inscription of Yādava Rāmacandra*, and seven stanzas with the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*. For the details see below.

9 This stanza is also attested as verse 4 in the *Neurgaon stone inscription* and in the *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, respectively.

10 For a similar practice under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, see Schmiedchen (2014, 31, 35, 466–78).

11 Schmiedchen (2014, 341, 501–5). For instance, the *Kalegaon copperplate charter of Yādava Mahādeva* and the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* do not refer to the authors of the epigraphs; the *Paithan copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* mentions that a certain Paṇḍita Dhaneśvara had drafted the record.

However, the Yādava *praśasti* as given in Hemādri's work seems to have been composed independently from the versions produced in the chancellery for the official epigraphs. Despite the comprehensiveness in listing the (male) members of the Yādava dynasty, the information given by Hemādri is far less detailed, often markedly cursory, compared with the inscriptional data. In terms of content, a further main difference between the two sources is that Hemādri does not mention a single queen, whereas the copperplate charters of the early Yādavas do record matrimonial alliances (Table 3). However, it was not only Hemādri who omitted any reference to such relations, as the epigraphs of the late Yādava period are equally silent about them.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Eulogies of subordinate rulers under the late Yādavas

The main focus of the later inscriptions is on military conflicts and encounters with rival kings, as well as on interaction with subordinate rulers (Schmiedchen 2014, 337, 341). In comparison to the early Yādava kings, a typical feature of the epigraphic attestations from the late period of Yādava rule was a rather great diversity in hierarchical relations and a ramified system of vassal and sub-vassal contacts, with several Brāhmaṇas having obtained the status of military leaders. A clear indication for the strong impact of vassals<sup>13</sup> from the eleventh century onwards is the fact that the number of known copper plates issued by subordinates of the Yādavas was three times higher than the number of those commissioned by Yādava kings. Besides, the inscriptions of vassals provide more information on late Yādava history than the records of the Yādava rulers. Whereas all the seven extant copperplate charters of the early Yādava period were issued by kings of that dynasty (Schmiedchen 2014, 498–500), only three of the twelve completely preserved charters of the later period were commissioned by Yādava rulers (Schmiedchen 2014, 500–505), namely the *Kalegaon copperplate*

<sup>12</sup> There seems to exist at least one exception to this general tendency. The *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, v. 7ab, introduces King Rāmacandra as the son of Kṛṣṇa II and Lakṣmī: *jayati jagati rāmaḥ kāma evāvatīrṇṇaḥ punar api yadu-vaṁśe kṛṣṇa-lakṣmī-tanūjah|*.

<sup>13</sup> Due to a lack of better alternatives, I am using here the terms “subordinate” and “vassal” interchangeably for all those rulers who seem to have acknowledged the suzerainty or sovereignty of any of the Yādava kings, although I am aware of the fact that the concept of vassalage has been borrowed from descriptions of medieval European history and might be almost as problematic as the terms related to “feudal” and “feudatory.”

charter of *Yādava Mahādeva*, ŚS 1182, the *Paithan copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1193, and the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1232.<sup>14</sup> So far, we do not know of any copperplate charters issued by the kings Siṅghaṇa II or Kṛṣṇa II themselves. On the other hand, some of the stone epigraphs can be directly attributed to Yādava rulers, for instance, the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II*, ŚS 1176, and the *Neurgaon stone inscription of Yādava Rāmacandra*, ŚS 1200. Accordingly, not only is our knowledge about the late Yādava kings to a great part derived from the inscriptions of their subordinates, but we also have much more information about these vassals than about the Yādava kings.

There is another noteworthy point to be added: as already mentioned, ancestry from the maternal side is not pointed out for the late Yādavas either in their own inscriptions or in the records of their subordinates, nor even in the account of Hemādri. However, this does not mean that references to maternal ancestry are completely absent from the epigraphic material of that region and period. The inscriptions commissioned by vassals of the Yādavas show that the paternal ancestry as well as maternal parentage are mirrored in epigraphic genealogies of some subordinates of Brahmanical descent. For Kholeśvara, a subordinate of Yādava Siṅghaṇa II (Schmiedchen 2014, 338, 364–69), not only is his mother Candrā explicitly mentioned, but so are his mythical forefathers (Mudgala and Kaśyapa) as well as the last three male ancestors on both the paternal and the maternal side. The paternal line of Kholeśvara consisted of Brāhmaṇas famous for their expertise in traditional Vedic learning/teaching. Kholeśvara's father, the Brāhmaṇa Trivikrama, had been born in a Brahmanical settlement (*agrahāra*) named Umbarapaṅktikā:

From him (Svāmideva) descended the famous Trivikrama, a pure incarnation of [religious] merit, an excellent Brāhmaṇa. Through his birth, the entire Brahmanical settlement with the name Umbarapaṅktikā became flawless.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast, his mother's family, though also of Brahmanical origin, was strongly associated with temporal power (Schmiedchen 2014, 365).

14 The *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, however, was rather jointly commissioned by Yādava Rāmacandra and his subordinate Puruṣaināyaka alias Puruṣottama (Schmiedchen 2014, 505). So far, this is the last known dated and complete endowment record of the Yādava period. But see also the *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*.

15 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, v. 7: *tataḥ prasiddho 'mala-puṇya-mūrttis trivikramo 'jāyata vipra-varyaḥ| yad-udbhavād umbarapaṅktikāhvaḥ sarvo 'grahāro vimalo babhūva||*.

For Puruṣaināyaka alias Puruṣottama, vassal of Rāmacandra and co-donor of the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, the last four male forebears of the paternal line as well as the last two on the maternal side were enumerated (Schmiedchen 2014, 385).

The subordinates of the Yādavas did not always explicitly label their overlords through a direct reference to their dynasty, but rather through enumerating the individual rulers in their line of succession (Schmiedchen 2014, 325). The subordinates often expressed their loyalty towards the sovereigns, frequently modelling their genealogies and epithets on the panegyrics of their overlords.

Siṅghaṇa II (r. 1200–1247) was the longest-reigning and the most successful Yādava king. Under his rule, large parts of Maharashtra and north Karnataka were integrated into the empire, and even for the core area around Devagiri, there is evidence of a well-developed network of vassalage. King Siṅghaṇa II was able to stabilise the kingdom through the efficient inclusion of different layers of subordinate rulers and by balancing their diverse interests.

One of Siṅghaṇa II's vassals was the aforementioned Kholeśvara, who is known from four stone epigraphs which have been found in and around Ambajogai (Bid District in central Maharashtra): the *Sakaleśvara temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, ŚS 1150, the *Ambajogai fragmentary inscription of Kholeśvara*, the *Yogeśvari temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, and the *Rāmanārāyaṇa temple inscription of Lakṣmī*, ŚS 1162. These records are composed in Sanskrit, but also contain passages in Marathi. Only two of the four epigraphs are dated: ŚS 1150 (1228/29 CE) and ŚS 1162 (1240 CE). Kholeśvara served as military leader under Siṅghaṇa II in the north of the Yādava kingdom. Some military achievements were simultaneously attributed to him as well as to his overlord. Two identical stanzas in three of the epigraphs contain a comprehensive list of victories assigned to Siṅghaṇa II:

The flawless king Śrī-Siṅghaṇa [II], a fire of mighty prowess, is one who has defeated the troops of all [his] enemies, [and] whose fame [shines] white [like] jasmine on the horizon. He took, in a moment, the whole powerful, prospering kingdom of Arjuna, which was full of horses and elephants, [and also] destroyed [the city of] Dhārā, an ornament of the earth. He killed the Teluṅga, and smashed the extremely strong Gūrjara. Keśi (“the hairy one”) pulled out his hair [out of desperation]. The Hosala (Hoysaḷa), with his people, was chased to the water of a puddle, the Coḍa (Cōḷa) to the “breast” of

the sea. The man-killing Subhaṭa was driven to death in battle. The Gauḍa was thrown out of the game, and the Turuṣka was rapidly made run away.<sup>16</sup>

Arjuna must have been the Paramāra ruler of Mālava, as his residence Dhārā is mentioned; and Subhaṭa may be identified as Subhaṭavarman, Arjuna's father. Conflicts between the Yādavas and the Caulukyās of Gujarat, in epigraphs often called Gūrjara, are not only described in contemporary inscriptions: the Gujarat chronicles also record these events, e.g. the *Kīrtikaumudī* of Someśvara (4.42–53). The *Lekhapaddhati* (2.44), on the other hand, contains a template for a kind of non-aggression-and-mutual-assistance pact (*yamala-patra*) dated VS 1288 (1231 CE), in which the two parties of the notional agreement are a *mahārājādhirāja* Siṅghaṇa and a *mahāmaṇḍalesvara* Lāvaṇyaprasāda, to be identified with Yādava Siṅghaṇa II and the contemporary Vāghelā ruler Lāvaṇyaprasāda. The Teluṅga against whom Siṅghaṇa II had to fight was probably the Kākatiya ruler Gaṇapatideva (r. 1199–1262). The identity of King Keśi is not clear, but Ajay Mitra Shastri (1972, 13) opined that he might have been Jayakeśin II, a Kādamba ruler of Goa. The contemporary Hoysala adversaries were Ballāla II (r. 1173–1220) and Narasiṅha II (r. 1220–1238). Siṅghaṇa II's opponents on the Cōla side may have been the kings Kulottuṅga III, Rājarāja III, and Rājendra III, but there is no external evidence that the Yādava ruler was ever able to defeat his Cōla rivals. The military success against the Gauḍa or Bengal king is not attested otherwise, and the Turuṣka was probably a contemporary Muslim ruler or military leader.<sup>17</sup> This Turuṣka may have been the same as the “hero”

16 The *Sakalesvara temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, vv. 2–3: *asti dhvasta-samasta-vairi-nikaraḥ prauḍha-pratāpānalah kumda-śveta-digaṃta-kīrttir amalāḥ śrī-siṅghaṇaḥ kṣoṇipah| yenāhāri haribha-sambhṛtaṃ atisphitaṃ samastaṃ kṣaṇād rājyaṃ prājyam athārjjunasya dalitā dhārā dharā-bhūṣaṇaḥ|| teluṅgo yena nīto nidhanam atibalo gūrjaro jarjjaratvaṃ keśiḥ keśāpanodaṃ parijana-sahito hosalaḥ palvalāmbhaḥ| coḍaḥ kroḍaṃ payodhe raṇa-bhuvī subhaṭo mṛtyu-kālaṃ ṛkālo gauḍaḥ krīḍā-nirastaḥ kṛta iha sahasā prāpta-dikkas turuṣkaḥ||* See also vv. 2–3 in the *Ambajogai fragmentary inscription of Kholeśvara* and in the *Yogeśvari temple inscription of Kholeśvara*, as well as Schmiedchen (2014, 367 Table 17).

17 Chattopadhyaya (1998, 30): “Another instance of an ethnic term changing into a generic term in the early medieval period is Turuṣka; its use was too frequent to have been restricted to a single ethnic connotation alone.” For the use of this term in different regions/periods, see Sanderson (2009, 112); Chojnacki (2011, 205–10); Rao (2016, 71–76); Slaje (2019, 141–46).

Hammīra<sup>18</sup> mentioned in the *Patne stone inscription of the time of Yādava Siṅghaṇa II*, ŚS 1128 (v. 7).<sup>19</sup>

In his *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, ŚS 1150, Kholeśvara is labelled a military leader (*sainyādhipati*) and prince (*kṣmāpati*),<sup>20</sup> and is compared to the sages Viśvāmitra and Agastya<sup>21</sup> as well as to Indra.<sup>22</sup> Kholeśvara is credited with a number of military successes, which have been also attributed to his overlord, Yādava Siṅghaṇa II, in the epigraphs from Ambajogai. This fact, of course, stresses the importance which their vassals had for the Yādavas in military encounters. The *Sakaleśvara temple inscription* records victories of Kholeśvara against the already known enemies of Siṅghaṇa II: the Gūrjaras (i.e. the Caulukyās), Paramāras of Dhārā, Cōlas, Hoysaḷas, and Teluṅgas (i.e. the Kākatīyas), as well as Mahāhammīra. In addition, the list of ostensible foes of Kholeśvara also includes the Raṭṭas, the kings of Vaṅga (i.e. the Senas), of Kosala (i.e. the Kalacuris), and of Kaliṅga (i.e. the Eastern Gaṅgas), as well as the Nepālikas.<sup>23</sup> It is rather striking that the list of military achievements attributed to the subordinate Kholeśvara comprises triumphs over many more adversaries than that for his overlord Siṅghaṇa II. The reliability of this account with regard to anything other than the battles against the Gujarat kings, the Paramāras, and Hammīra is questionable.

The last of the four Ambajogai inscriptions, the *Rāmanārāyaṇa temple inscription of Lakṣmī*, was issued by Kholeśvara's daughter, who ruled on behalf of the (minor) son of her deceased brother Rāma, her father's successor. Lakṣmī's epigraph contains a new *praśasti* composition, in which, unlike the inscriptions of her father, any reference to maternal ancestry is missing, and not even her mother's name is mentioned. But in stanza 4, her father's Maudgala lineage is described as "shining through a multitude of gifted male and female jewels"

18 For the term *hammīra* derived from Arabic *ʿamīr*, see Sircar (1965, 341). It is not clear who this Hammīra of the first half of the 13th century was. One of the first Muslim rulers denoted as Hammīra was Maḥmūd of Ghaznī (b. 971; d. 1030); see Slaje (2019, 141 n. 76). For the term *hammīra-vīra* being used for the Muslim adversaries of the Gāhaḍavāla king Govindacandra (r. 1109–1168), see De Simini (2016, 241).

19 See also Schmiedchen (2014, 346).

20 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, v. 4. The same stanza occurs in the *Ambajogai fragmentary inscription* and the *Yogeśvarī temple inscription*.

21 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, v. 8. The same stanza occurs as v. 23 in the *Yogeśvarī temple inscription*.

22 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, v. 15.

23 *Sakaleśvara temple inscription*, v. 16 and prose in ll. 27–32. The same stanza occurs as v. 25 in the *Yogeśvarī temple inscription*.

(*maudgalānām sa vaṁśo viśada-puruṣa-yoṣid-ratna-puñja-prakāśaḥ*), and Kholeśvara is described as kingmaker in a very self-confident way:

[Kholeśvara] himself, this ‘Club of Śrī-Yama,’ this unique preceptor for [the granting of] shelter and protection, this teacher for the rules of proficiency in installing kings, this ‘Forest Fire’ for the woods which were his enemies, rendered Śrī-Siṁha (Siṅghaṇa II) a carefree ruler. Who else on earth was like him?<sup>24</sup>

Kholeśvara’s son Rāma, like his father a military leader (*sainyādhipati*), is said to have fought against the Caulukyās alias Gūrjaras, losing his life in these battles. The eulogies of her father and brother are followed by Lakṣmī’s own panegyric, including a description of the religious grant which she made in Rāma’s honour.

#### 4. Post-Hemādri panegyrics

As already discussed above, the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II* and some manuscripts of the *Vratākhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* provide evidence for reconstructing the link between the early and the late Yādava lineages. But their transmission of the dynastic pedigree ends with Kṛṣṇa II and Mahādeva. The composition of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* was probably completed during the reign of Mahādeva, as no successor of this king is mentioned in the text. Hence, for the last decades of Yādava history, we again depend on inscriptions. Some additional information is provided by the emerging Marathi literature of the Mahānubhāvas, as well as by Arabic sources on the rule of ‘Alā al-Dīn Khaljī (r. 1296–1316),<sup>25</sup> who finally subjugated the Yādavas of Devagiri.

Rāmacandra was the nephew of Mahādeva, but not his direct successor. Mahādeva’s son Āmaṇa seems to have ascended the throne after his father’s demise. No inscriptions attributed to Āmaṇa’s reign are known so far, and not all later Yādava epigraphs mention him (Schmiedchen 2014, 339). The throne appears to have been quickly usurped by Rāmacandra, Āmaṇa’s cousin. These events of contested collateral succession are reflected in the various *praśastis* in different ways. The *Paithan copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra, ŚS 1193*, the earliest preserved record of this king, contains a genealogy following the model

24 *Rāmanārāyaṇa temple inscription of Lakṣmī*, v. 9: *eṣa śrī-yama-damḍa eṣa śaraṇa-trāṇaika-dikṣā-gurū rāja-sthāpana-kārya-kausāla-vidhāv ācārya eṣa svayam| eṣa dveṣi-vaneṣu dāva-dahanaḥ śrī-siṁham eṣa prabhūm niścīntam vyadadhād amuṣya sadṛśaḥ ko ’nyo ’bhavad bhū-tale||*

25 Altekar (1960, 546–55); Joshi (1966); Lal (1967); Verma (1970, 151–52); Mahalingam (1992, 151–55).

already attested in the *Kalegaon copperplate charter of Mahādeva*, Rāmacandra's uncle. Stanza 23 of the latter presents Kṛṣṇa II's successor as his younger brother (*tasyānujaḥ*), and verse 24 refers to this king by his name Mahādeva. The *Paithan copperplate charter*, however, only contains the first of these two stanzas (as v. 19), and, hence, the younger brother of Kṛṣṇa II is not mentioned by name here. In this record of Rāmacandra, the Yādava pedigree is updated through the introduction of Āmaṇa as son of Kṛṣṇa II's younger brother in stanza 20; and the next verse describes the transfer of power from Āmaṇa to Rāmacandra:

From him (Āmaṇa), this Rāma[candra], son of Kṛṣṇa, has forcefully taken away his territory [and] enjoys [it now]. His sword makes the directions fragrant through deeds which are like blossoming lotuses.<sup>26</sup>

The *Purshottampuri copperplate charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* also presents the succession in the same sequence (Kṛṣṇa II – his younger brother Mahādeva – his son Āmaṇa [here Anmaṇa]<sup>27</sup> – Kṛṣṇa II's son Rāmacandra), though in a different textual composition. The first hemistich of the stanza describing the conflict just quoted from the *Paithan copperplate charter* has been reused here:

Having ascended the most formidable Devagiri over ladders [made] of the heads of enemy kings, this Rāma[candra], son of Kṛṣṇa, has forcefully taken away from him (Āmaṇa) his territory [and] enjoys [it now].<sup>28</sup>

The next stanza describes the tactic of recapturing the capital Devagiri in detail:

First intrusion into Devagiri, then observation of the manner of dancing, afterwards assembling of voluntary foot-soldiers, then throwing off of ornaments, removal of the opponent for the aspired aim, and appropriation of

26 *Paithan copperplate charter*, v. 21: *prasahya tasmād apahr̥tya bhūṁkte kṛṣṇātmajaḥ svām avaniṁ sa rāmaḥ| yasyāsir ujjr̥mbhita-kairavābhair diśo yaśobhiḥ surabhikaroti||*. For detailed reports on these events, see Schmiedchen (2014, 353–54).

27 His description is positive, expressing that Āmaṇa exempted Brāhmaṇas from paying taxes: “[Then] was born his mighty son, King Anmaṇa, who very much supported Brāhmaṇas being plagued by taxes – [as] {the Spearman (Skanda) freed the gods who had been afflicted} by [the demon] Tāraka.” *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, v. 11: *jajñe śakti-dharas tasya sūnur anmaṇa-bhūpatiḥ| bhū-devān uddharam̐n uccaiḥ kara-tāraka-pīditān||*

28 *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, v. 13: *āruhya vairi-kṣitipāla-mauli-niśreṇibhir devagirim̐ garis̥tham| prasahya tasmād apahr̥tya bhūṁkte kṛṣṇātmajaḥ svām avaniṁ sa rāmaḥ||*



the earth from him – that was done successively by Śrī-Rāma[candra]. Hence, his fame is extraordinary.<sup>29</sup>

Some Mahānubhāva texts in Marathi also address the details of the encounter between Rāmacandra and Āmaṇa. The *Līlācaritra*, said to have been composed in 1278,<sup>30</sup> gives a vivid account of the confusion caused by the sudden attack of Rāmacandra and his supporters.<sup>31</sup>

The *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* provides some additional evidence of the official depiction of this conflict. Due to its incomplete state of preservation, the date of the inscription is not known. Because of the content of the preserved portion of the *praśasti*, it can be assumed that this stray plate must have once belonged to a charter issued after ŚS 1193, the date of the *Paithan copperplate charter*, which is still based on an older version of the eulogy. The *First copper plate* contains twelve panegyric stanzas to praise the Yādava dynasty, but only seven of these are also attested in the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, namely its verses 1–5 and 8–9, whereas its verses 6–7 and 10–12 are different. The omissions and substitutions of individual stanzas are revealing with regard to the Yādava succession quarrels, which are narrated in a modified way here.<sup>32</sup> Mahādeva and Āmaṇa are omitted in the description of the line of succession. Stanza 6 of the *First copper plate* mentions Kṛṣṇa II, and verse 7 moves on straightaway to King Rāmacandra, describing him as son of Kṛṣṇa and Lakṣmī. As stanza 8 follows the verse already known from the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, graphically narrating the recapture of Devagiri through the

29 *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*, v. 14: *ādau devagiri-praveśanam atho nṛtta-prakāreḥṣaṇam paścāt svaira-padāti-melanam athālamkāra-vikṣepaṇam | anviṣṭārtha-virodhi-dūra-karaṇam tasmād rasāsādanam śrī-rāmeṇa kṛtaṁ tatas tata itaḥ śloko 'sya lokottarah||*. See also Mirashi's (1939–40, 205) comment: "The [...] verse gives an interesting description of the ruse which Rāmacandra adopted to obtain possession of the impregnable fort. He entered it with a party of dancers who were his soldiers in disguise. When admitted inside, he rallied his foot-soldiers and attacked his antagonists apparently while they were engaged in seeing the dance. The dancers also, throwing off their ornaments (i.e. disguise), joined in the fight. [...]"

30 Gupte (1926, 198–99); Novetzke (2020, 123–31).

31 Gupte (1926, 198–99); Novetzke (2020, 129). For other versions from Mahānubhāva works, see Verma (1970, 137–38). Āmaṇa is said to have been blinded or even killed.

32 Stanzas 1–5 of the *First copper plate*, narrating the eulogy up to Jaitrapāla II, the father of Kṛṣṇa II, are identical with vv. 1–5 of the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*. Stanzas 6–7 are different verses for the description of the succession up to Rāmacandra. Stanzas 8–9 for Rāmacandra are identical with vv. 14–15 of the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*; stanzas 10–12 are new verses for him.

trick just quoted above, but without any reference to the identity of Rāmacandra's adversary so far. Then and only indirectly, in a mythological pun related to the ruler's further description, is the conflict with his rival recorded, still without mentioning his name:

After having vanquished Mahādeva's capable son, Rāma[candra] acquired [his own] father's royal power and subjugated the supporter of Arjuna, [just as] {Rāma, having broken Mahādeva's favourite bow, obtained Janaka's daughter (Sītā) and defeated the one who had destroyed [Kārtavīrya] Arjuna's fame (Paraśurāma)}.<sup>33</sup>

The reasons for this modification in the *praśasti* can be only speculated about, and they are even more in the dark, as the date of the stray plate is unknown. One might be inclined to assume chronological explanations, i.e. that Mahādeva and Āmaṇa were erased from the officially recorded sequence of succession in the course of time, and, hence, the amendment should be expected to be later than the eulogy in the *Purshottampuri copperplate charter*. But this interpretation is rather unlikely, because the latter inscription itself was issued relatively late, namely in ŚS 1232 (1310 CE), and Rāmacandra's rule is believed to have already ended in or around 1311.<sup>34</sup>

Geographical explanations for the differences in the *praśastis* do not seem to be plausible either, as all the relevant charters were found in central Maharashtra, in an area covered by the present districts of Ahmadnagar, Aurangabad, and Bid, to the south of Devagiri, the Yādava capital. The original provenience of the *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra* is not known, but it was discovered in Aurangabad in the 1950s. For the time being, we can only conclude that different versions of Rāmacandra's self-representation must have been floating, differing in the degree to which the collaterals Mahādeva and Āmaṇa were made visible in the genealogy.

Two semi-official epigraphic records of the time of Rāmacandra, the *Thane copperplate charters*, ŚS 1194 and 1212, belong to a different region, namely to western Maharashtra, about 300 km to the west of Devagiri. They were issued by two subordinates of Rāmacandra, reigning over the Konkan coast. The Yādava genealogy in these two inscriptions (see example 3 above, p. 193) mentions King

33 *First copper plate of a charter of Yādava Rāmacandra*, v. 10: *rāmeṇa kāmukam bhāṅktvā mahādevasya naṁdanani| prāptā janakajā lakṣmīr nirjito 'rjuna-kīrtidaḥ||*. The Arjuna mentioned here must be a different Arjuna from the one referred to as an adversary of Siṅghaṇa II.

34 For the so far latest extant inscription referring to Rāmacandra, probably dated ŚS 1233, see Bhoir (2002).

Mahādeva as successor of Kṛṣṇa II, but omits his son Āmaṇa. It can be surmised that the main reason for this deviation is the fact that this was the version circulated among local rulers of the Konkan region.

## 5. Conclusion

Royal copperplate charters are the main medium available to us for the study of the official self-representation of the early Yādavas. For the genealogical descriptions of the late Yādavas, we possess copperplate and stone inscriptions issued by the rulers of that line as well as epigraphs commissioned by their vassals. The latter stand for the presentation of others from the viewpoint of subordinates who portray their suzerains. Due to the specific relationship of dependence, these inscriptions do not contradict the contemporary official *praśasti* versions. They rather provide a larger picture, which includes the self-representation of the vassals, emphasising and sometimes exaggerating their own role for the success and stability of the reign of their overlords, whose names and pedigree they mention, but without any reference to the Yādava descent of these rulers.

Almost all the epigraphs of the late Yādava period are silent about the early Yādava kings, with only one exception known so far: the *Methi stone inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa II, ŚS 1176*. Besides, some manuscripts of the *Vratākhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* by Hemādri also comprise a pedigree of both the lines, depicting them, in fact, as one consecutive lineage. Although Hemādri served as a minister under the Yādava kings Mahādeva and Rāmacandra, his versions of the dynasty's genealogy can be also regarded as presentation of others, because he does not seem to have composed his Yādava *praśasti* on behalf of the ruling dynasty, but rather independently. Although his description does not directly contradict the contemporary official genealogy, it lists several members of the dynasty absent from the epigraphic records.

Whereas the mentioning of queens was part of the official self-representation in the early Yādava period, these references are omitted in inscriptions from the late Yādava rule. Hemādri does not mention any royal ladies either, neither for the early nor for the late Yādava times. However, references to maternal ancestry were included in the epigraphic self-representation of some of the subordinates of Brahmanical descent.

Finally, the inscriptions from the late Yādava period indicate some changes and modifications in the official self-representation of the rulers, especially in cases of contested collateral succession and resulting collateral oppression.

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See page xvi about references to primary sources.

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