HEURISTICS
Chapter Three
HEURISTICS

The historian's first task is 'die heuristik' — the search for relevant documents. So all the authentic traces of the thought and actions of the men of our period must first of all be collected. The sources of the Yadava period are varied and cover a number of fields. Here we may take a broad critical survey of them.

Inscriptions:

Our first important set of sources is the inscriptions. They are authentic contemporary witnesses though not a systematic documentation of the times. Inscriptions issued with reference to the reigning Yadava king may be called Yadava inscriptions proper. They might be issued by the Yadava rulers themselves or by their feudatories and subjects. Five hundred and twenty-eight Yadava inscriptions have been enlisted in the Appendix A. The existence of such a large number of Yadava records has been for the first time brought to light. Still the author cannot claim the list as a thoroughly exhaustive one. Moreover, there is further scope for the discovery of new inscriptions.

Apart from the Yadava inscriptions proper records of contemporary neighbouring dynasties also occasionally refer to the Yadavas and constitute sources for us. They may be termed as non-Yadava inscriptions. The Caulukya, Kakatiya, Hoyasala, Paramara and Silahara records would be particularly useful in this connection. They have been referred to wherever necessary.
The nature and character of the Yadava inscriptions are the same as those of the early mediaeval dynasties. They are copper-plates and lithic records. The copper-plates are mostly land grants, containing eulogistic accounts. The Yadava plates are comparatively of a larger size. Dr. A.V. Naik has observed that of all the early mediaeval dynasties of the Deccan, the largest plates belong to Yadavas and particularly to Ramacandra. The copper-plates are far fewer in number than the stone inscriptions — only 16 against 512. Yet most of the copper-plates are important documents yielding valuable information.

The lithic records are very large in number though often crude in execution. They are eulogistic, commemorative and donative records, fulfilling one or more of the three purposes. They deal with land grants, construction or renovation of temples, remission of taxes, conferring of offices, deaths of heroes, satis, sanyasis and also sometimes interesting matters like village disputes etc. They eulogise kings and their officers and chronicle their achievements in poetic terms. But apart from their main theme, their incidental references to a number of contemporary matters throw valuable light on the period.

But the inscriptions sometimes create more problems than they solve, e.g. the regnal years of the kings. Here it must be noted that when innumerable records are set up at distant corners of a vast empire in a decentralised manner, correct information cannot be expected — errors apart. Moreover, a uniform practice of counting also cannot be presumed. Hence the dates (initial and the last) of most of the Yadava kings are required to be arrived at only reasonably, without conclusive evidence.
Moreover, the achievements of the rulers are recorded in metaphorical claims and deriving of historical facts from them becomes a risky task. They do not render much help in fixing the chronology of events. Yet in spite of the pitfalls in their use, the inscriptions, undoubtedly constitute a veritable mine of information.

The various tables attached in this chapter help us to bring out the historical value of our inscriptions. Their number in itself is neither encouraging nor significant. Certain conclusions may be summarised here in this respect.

(1) Out of 528 records, 172 are undated. Out of these again 13 do not even refer to the reigning king though they belong to the dynasty. This reduces their historical value.

(2) More than half of the total number (311) still lies unpublished and merely noticed in the Annual Reports on Epigraphy. It is not known what material — valuable or otherwise, has remained beyond the historian's reach in this case.

(3) So far as the language is concerned, a large majority (442) of Yadava records are in Kannada; 44 in Sanskrit and only 19 in Marathi. The rest are mixed as would be clear from the table. Only by of exceptions, two Telugu and one Tamil inscriptions have been found.

(4) The geographic distribution of these records is also instructive. They have been found from 34 modern districts of Maharashtra (19), Mysore (10), Andhra (4) and Gujarat (1) states. Their find-spots (especially of lithic records) provide a positive evidence to ascertain the extent of the empire though their absence implies nothing.
(5) As a rule the inscriptions are written in the local language of the region if not in Sanskrit. So the Kannada ones are found in Kannada-speaking areas and the Marathi in the Marathi-speaking areas, except those on the border lines.

(6) The overwhelming number of Kannada inscriptions only suggests that the practice of issuing such lithic records was very common in Karnataka and it was not so in Maharashtra. Moreover the custom of setting up inscribed hero-stones called Virgals, is peculiar to Karnataka and absent in Maharashtra where the hero-stones are not inscribed. Among the Kannada inscriptions of the Yadavas, 129 happen to be only hero-stones.

**Literary Sources:**

The next important set of our sources are the Sanskrit and Early Marathi literature and the Persian chronicles. The bibliography refers to all of them. Here we may take their broad survey to know what particular light they are going to throw on our period.

(a) Sanskrit Works:

Hemadri's Caturvarga Cintamani (CC) (c.1270 A.D.) which is an encyclopaedia on Dharmasastra is the first important Sanskrit source. The historically important portion of CC, Rajaprasasti gives the genealogy of the Yadavas, puranic as well as historical. This portion is not found in the published editions of CC. Only Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar has reproduced it from the manuscript (BG, Vol.I, part II, also Bhandarkar EHD). The various khandas of CC do give stanzas in praise of Yadava kings but they do not add anything to the information from the Rajaprasasti. Hemadri in one sense is the first court historian of the Yadavas.
Then, Jalhana's Suktimuktavali, an anthology of poets and their works (1257 A.D.) throws light on Yadava kings from Mallugi to Krishna as Jalhana and his ancestors held the office of the commander of elephant corps under the Yadavas.

Three important works from Gujarat render valuable help in reconstructing Simghana's invasions on that country. The first is the Hammiramadamardanam (HMM), a drama written by Jayasimhasuri (1220-1230 A.D.) on the repulsion of a Muslim invasion on Gujarat by the de facto king Viradhavala and minister Vastupala. The second, Vasanta Vilasa of Balacandrasuri (c.1244 A.D.) is a long poem describing the history of Vastupala's ministry. The third, Kirti-Kaumudi is also a 13th century poem by Somesvara, singing the glory of Viradhavala and Vastupala. These three contemporary works are of special importance. Moreover, works like Prabandha-cintamani and Prabandhakosa also refer to some of the events but they are later works.

Apart from the above ones, there are certain works which give occasional references to our period, e.g. Muktaphala of Bopadeva, Ayurveda-rasayana of Hemadri, Lekhapaddhati, Sangeet-Ratnakara of Sarangadeva, Nasaka-kalpa (Prakrit) of Jinaprabhasuri and so on. They would be referred to wherever necessary.

(b) Early Marathi Literature:

The early Marathi literature is even more important than the Sanskrit sources. In fact Yadava period can never be reconstructed without it. In this field, the literature produced by the followers of the Mahanubhava cult is very rich and forms a class by itself.
Among the non-Mahanubhava works, Jnanesvari the celebrated commentary on Gita composed in 1290 A.D., stands colossal. Jnanesvara in the lucid exposition of his subject-matter brings in varied illustrations from all walks of contemporary life. Thus his work constitutes a treasure-house of primary facts for the historian. Unfortunately the original Jnanesvari is lost. A close approximation to it is to be found in the redaction of the original text done by Eknath in 1584 A.D. To-day it is accepted as authoritative.

A number of other contemporary saints like Namdeva, Nivritti, Sopan and Muktabai could also be, to some extent, used as sources. But the contemporary character of their works becomes doubtful due to the modernised language. One Marathi work called Mahikavati-ci Bakhara needs to be discarded as a spurious document.

Mahanubhava Works: The first and foremost in this class, is the Lila-Caritra. It is a biography of Cakradhara the founder of the cult, prepared by Mahimbhatta (c.1276 to 1286 A.D.), after examining every possible source with meticulous care. Though the words of Cakradhara are received with blind faith, their authority is scrutinised with methodical doubt. This makes the Lila Caritra a valuable historical document. A collection of episodes and memoirs, significant or otherwise, the Lila Caritra reflects almost the entire life of the 13th century Maharashtra.

But the value of the work has been reduced because the original text was lost during the Muslim invasion at the beginning of the 14th century. Fresh attempts at research in it were made by various followers of the cult and this industry which went on for three
centuries gave birth to the various versions of the Lila Caritra available at present. To-day the earliest available manuscript belongs to 1541 A.D. A still earlier manuscript of 1480 A.D. was lost in Pakistan. The published edition of Lila Caritra (by H.N. Nene) has many short-comings and a co-related new edition is a desideratum.

Two more works reflect the life of the period and supplement the Lila Caritra. One is Govindaprabhu Caritra biography of Cakradhara's guru, compiled by Mahimbhatta in 1288 A.D. on the same style of Lila Caritra. The other one is Smriti-Sthala containing 1) Nagadevacarya caritra, biography of the first acarya of the cult and 2) Vriddhacara, being account of the later acaryas. Then the 14th century Sthana Pothi which enlists the places visited by Cakradhara must be considered as it describes the 13th century geography. A map based on Sthana Pothi has also been prepared and published recently. There are some other works also but they are based on Lila-Caritra itself. One Mahanubhava work — Bhanuvijaya giving a lot of information of the Yadavas has been proved to be a spurious document and must be discarded.

(c) Persian Chronicles:

The Muslim historians who wrote the Persian chronicles are indispensable for the reconstruction of Ala-ud-din's Deccan expeditions and the downfall of the Yadavas. Among them, Khusrau, Barani, Isamy, Ferishta and Wasaff would be particularly useful. Amir Khusrau (1253-1325 A.D.) the versatile genius, lived under the patronage of six successive sultans of Delhi. Among his works, Khanzain-ul-Futuh or Tarikh-i-Alai, describes the first
sixteen years of Ala-ud-din's reign and particularly Malik Kafur's campaigns which are not noticed in details even by Barani. The work is translated into English by M. Habib in the JIH vols. VIII & IX, and later published under the title 'The Campaigns of Ala-ud-din Khilji' (Madras, 1931).

Barani (1286-1359 A.D.) is an impartial historian. He wrote the history of the Sultanate of Delhi under the title Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi. It is a continuation of Tabakat-i-Nasiri of Siraj, refers to the Deccan campaigns.

Isamy's Futus-us-Salatin is a work on the Bahamani kingdom written in 1358-59 A.D. Its account of the political turmoil before the foundation of the Bahamani kingdom is particularly useful for us. Isamy's representation of Ramdeva seems to be more reliable than Ferishtas.

Wassaf's history completed in 1328 A.D. actually deals with the Mongols in Persia but his occasional references to Indian affairs prove useful to us. Then, Ferishta also needs to be referred to. This courtier at Ahmednagar wrote a general history of Muslim rule in India. It is rendered into English by J-Briggs as 'The History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India' (4 Vols.). Most of these historians are dealt with by Elliot and Dowsen in their Vol.III.

Coins:

The coins of the Yadava rulers constitute an important numismatic source of their history. So far, coins of Simghana, Krishna, Mahadeva and Ramadeva have been discovered. They are known as Padmatanks. Sir Walter Elliot in his 'Coins of South India' (1885) thought them to be Kadamba coins but S.R. Aiyangar for the first time discovered that they belonged to the Yadavas.
These coins are cup-shaped with reverse blank and observe bearing four marks in the four corners and a lotus in the centre punched afterwards. There are two Sris in old Telugu-Kannada script and the Devanagari legend with the figure of a sword, bow or conch.

PADMATANKAS

Simghana Krishna Mahadeva Ramdeva

The Hyderabad Museum possesses 150 of such coins. Yadava coins have so far been discovered from 1) Krishna district, 2) Raigarh, 3) Sonpur and 4) Kalamba in Yachtmal district. The Bibliography refers to their publication which need not be repeated here. It may be noted that it is the numismatical evidence that has substantiated the claims of the Yadava rulers to have subdued the Kalacuri dominions which otherwise were thought to be mere boasts.

Monuments:

The monuments are always a standing testimony of the period of which they are a product. They have much to reveal about the times they have seen, provided we succeed in taking them into confidence. The principal monuments of our period are the temples of a style of their own, which can be called the Yadava style. Our period sums up the evolution and deterioration of this style. The later types popularly known as Hemadpanti tempes are innumerably found in the Deccan though the best examples of the style are very few.
But as most of the monuments are undated we have to assign their period only on the stylistic grounds. Then we also have wells, monasteries, forts like Chandor, Enkai, Tankai, Devagiri etc. and a few caves at Patana, Enkai etc. But we shall better deal with all these in the chapter on Art and Architecture.

**Archaeological Sites**:

Apart from monuments there are some archaeological sites which constitute a potential of historical source-material. Very few of them have been excavated, nor those excavated, have thrown any substantial light on the material culture of our period. The Nevasa (1954-56) and the Paithan (1936) excavations have not given any specific evidence of our period. Only the Kolhapur excavations (1945-46) throw some light on the houses and a few domestic things of the Yadava-Silahara period.

Yet there are a number of sites which speak something of our period viz., Chandor, Sinnar, Paithan, Ritpur, Patana, Devagiri, Ellichpur, Ramtek and so on. The author has visited Chandor, Sinnar, Paithan, Patana and Ramtek for personal observations. A trial trench at Ritpur and systematic excavations at Paithan may prove fruitful. In fact what is necessary is the entire sequence of material culture of the Deccan by means of vertical and horizontal diggings at selected sites.

Thus ends the survey of our sources. They represent both, our means and limitations. On them, and them alone shall be based our endeavour to reconstruct something that has irreparably been lost.
References

1. Two years ago I came across a person associated with exploration duty, who was kind to show me about 35 Yadava inscriptions, discovered and copied by him from Bydgi, Ranebennur and Haveri talukas of Dharwar district. All of them were unpublished. I persuaded him to publish the lot which he kindly agreed. But for one reason or other it has remained undone.

2. BDCRI-IX, p.16,17.

3. V.K.Rajwade has published one text of Jnanesvari which he claims to be even earlier.


5. Information kindly supplied by Mahanubhava Mahanta Muralidhar Shastri Aradhya of Bhusaval. I could get from him one 18th century manuscript written in Sakali script. A page from it is photographed and reproduced in the thesis as a specimen of a Mahanubhava pothi. See Pl.1


9. Indian Archaeology - A Review (IA-R), 1959-60, pp.25-28, fig.10, Pls.XXVII-XXXI.

10. Excavations at Brahmapuri (Kolhapur) 1945-46, by H.D.Sankalia and M.G.Dikshit; Deccan College Monograph Series, no.5; Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Poona, 1952.
## Classification on Yadava Inscriptions

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### Classification on Yadava Inscriptions
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### Geographical Distribution of Hero-Stones

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**Total no. of Hero-stones: 129**