CHAPTER III
POLITICAL SCENARIO
A) STATE FORMATION - THE BACKGROUND

The earliest Gaṅga inscriptions are datable, on palaeographic grounds to the close of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries AD. The majority of these early records were recovered from the modern districts of Anantapur (in Andhra Pradesh), Kolar, Bangalore and Tumkur. Toponymy would indicate that most of them relate to the area of their provenance.

The origins of the Gaṅgas are obscure. Their early inscriptions are silent on this subject. They merely state that the rulers belonged to the Kāṇvāyana gōtra and Jāhnaveya Kula. This account is maintained in all their copper plate records until the beginning of the eleventh century when the male line of the dynasty appears to have died out. However, certain lithic inscriptions from the Shimoga district, issued by the cognatic descendants of the Gaṅgas in the eleventh and twelfth centuries give us lengthy, legendary accounts of their origins and rise to power. These records trace the descent of the Gaṅgas from the Ikṣvāku monarchs of Ayōdhyā. Details of the king list vary from inscription to inscription.

However, all of them tally in ascribing the dynastic name of "Gaṅga" to the propitiation of the goddess Gaṅgā by one of the rulers of the lineage, for progeny. Another common feature of all these late epigraphic accounts is the acquisition of royal insignia, bestowed on the Gaṅgas by the god Indra. The migration to south India is ascribed to the invasion by a neighbouring ruler who coveted the insignia presented by god Indra. Padmanābha, the

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1. I depend here on the palaeographic dating suggested in K.V. Ramesh (ed) Inscriptions of the Western Gangas. The chronology of the early Gangas is a vexed question with different scholars hazarding diverse views.
2. Vide Infra, Chapter III, Section B.
4. EC. VII (old ed) Sh 4,10, 64; EC VIII (old ed) Nr. 35.
5. B. Sheik Ali, History of the Western Gangas, Mysore 1976, p. 2 cites Kalinga Gaṅga records wherein the Gangas are said to be the descendants of Yayāti.
reigning Gaṅga monarch, thereupon sent the regalia with his sons, Daṭṭiga and Mādhava to the south. On reaching Pērūr, the two princes met a Jaina acārya Simhanandi, who took an interest in them and propitiated the goddess Padmāvatī to obtain boons for them. He presented them with a sword which Mādhava (Kongaṇipurma) seized to break a stone pillar with a single stroke. Thereupon, Simhanandin, "made a coronet of Karpikara blossoms bound it on Mādhava's head and gave them the dominion of the earth, presented them with a flag and furnished them with attendants, elephants and horses..... with the lofty Nandagiri as their fortress, Kuvalālā as their city, the 96,000 country as their dominion, with the blameless Jina for their lord and victory as their faith, Daṭṭiga and Mādhava ruled over the earth".

Early Gaṅga records are silent on the subject of descent from the Ikṣvākus and the migration from North India. Indeed, the sole reference to descent from an established Purānic lineage appears in the Gummareṭṭipura plates of Durviniṅa wherein he is described as "the ornament of the VṛṢṇi clan and belonging to the family of Kṛṣṇa". This claim of Durviniṅa's is not taken up in any subsequent Gaṅga charter. Nor does it support the late accounts of the Shimoga records. The reference to Nandagiri and Kuvalālā, on the other hand, are derived from the Gaṅga lithic records of the ninth and tenth centuries, which describe them as Nandagiranātha and Kuvalālapuravāravārava. Similarly, the dominions of the Gaṅgas had come to be designated Gaṅgavāḍi - 96,000 by the eighth century. However, as we shall see below, Gaṅga paramountcy over the region which came to be known as the 96,000 country was established in graduated phases.

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9. EC VII (new ed) Md 35, l. 61 of AD 713-14, is the earliest record to mention it. References to the 96,000 country are a common place in the copper plate inscriptions of Śrīpuruṣa (AD 725-788).
10. Vide Infra, Section B.
The reference to cutting the stone pillar appears in several early Gaṅga records commencing with the Mejekōte plates of Mādhavarman II of the Talakād branch, datable to the close of the fifth century AD"11.

The Kulagāṇa plates of Śivamāra I of the early eighth century are the earliest to associate a Jaina acārya. The name of the acārya is missing since the record is effaced"12. The Kūḍlūr plates of Mārasimha II of AD 963 clearly refer to Simhanandi crowning Kongaṇiварma with Karṇīkara blossoms after he had broken the stone pillar"13. The Shimoga records have apparently elaborated on this brief reference.

By the twelfth century, the association of Simhanāndyaacārya with the foundation of the Gaṅga Kingdom had become part of the Jaina lore in Karnaṇaka. It is mentioned in two inscriptions from Sravaṇabelgola. The first dated AD 1119 records a grant by Gaṅgarāja, a celebrated feudatory of Viṣṇuvardhana Hoysala. The prelude states that the Gaṅga kingdom was brought into existence by Simhanandi munindra of Koṇḍakundānvaya and Deśīka gāpa"14. The second, an epitaph of the Jaina monk Malliśeṇa dated AD 1129, includes a praṇaṣṭi of all preceptors of the Koṇḍakundānvaya. Therein, Simhanandi Muni is said to have vouchsafed to his disciple the sharp sword of meditation on the venerable Arhat which cuts the stone pillars, the ghāṭi sins. It was this which enabled him to cut the stone pillar barring the entry of the goddess of sovereignty"15.

It would appear that the cutting of the stone pillar was one of the traditions associated with the founder of the dynasty. To this the Jainas added the element of Simhanandi's assistance. The association benefitted both, by legitimizing the dynasty in the eyes of its Jaina subjects, and securing for the Jaina sangha the extensive patronage of the

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"12. EC IV (new ed) Ch 347. "Śramaṇaśādhitah svakhaḍgaika ... rākrama yaśasah"
"14. EC II (new ed) SB547, 1.4.
"15. EC II (new ed) SB 77, 11. 24-27
Gaṅgas. We have no way of determining the truth or otherwise of the tradition connecting Simhanandi with the founder of the dynasty. However, the fact that the earliest Ganga records are silent on the subject certainly renders its authenticity suspect. It is surely significant that the association of Simhanandi with Konganiparva occurs only in the Jaina records of the eighth century and later when Jainism was at the zenith of its influence in this region. Prior to the eighth century, the Gaṅgas do not appear to have patronized Jainism to any significant degree. The majority of the Gaṅga charters of the first phase (c. AD 400–AD 725) record brahmadeya grants. The early Gaṅgas do not appear to have had the blameless Jina for their lord.

With this unsatisfactory data base, the origins of the Gaṅgas has been a vexed question with the historians working on it. Numerous hypotheses have been advanced. B.L. Rice, who established the existence of this ruling lineage suggested that they were the descendants of the short lived Kāṇḍāyana dynasty of North India. He also places the epoch of the Ganga dynasty in the second or the third century AD on the basis of dates provided by such spurious records as the Kūḍālapura inscriptions (Nanjanagudu taluk, Mysore district), and the Tanjore and Kūḍūr plates of Harivarman. Rice was uncritical in his acceptance of all Ganga records as genuine, as pointed out by Fleet. Subsequently, new records were brought to light, which led to dating the epoch of the dynasty to the second half or the close of the fourth century A.D. This would leave a yawning gap of four centuries between the Sungsabhītya Kāṇva Kings of Magadha and

16. Vide Chapter VI, Section B, Vedic Brahmanism.
17. B.L. Rice, Mysore and Coorg from inscriptions, Bangalore 1909, p.10.
18. Ec III (new ed) Nj 322. purportedly of Saka 25, Subhakṛt, issued by Konganiparva, the prathama Ganga.
20. K.V. Ramesh op. cit., No. 4 of year 188, Jaya samvatsara.
21. J.F. Fleet, Dynasties of the Kanarese Districts of Bombay Presidency; Bombay Gazetteer, Vol I pp 11-14
the Gaṅgas. Moreover, the practice of adopting brahminical gotras was a common one in south India in this period. Among the ruling lineages making such claims were the Pallavas, (Bhāradvāja gotra)\textsuperscript{23}, the Bṛhatpālāyanas and Śālankāyanas (Ānanda gotra), the rulers of Kalinga (Vāsiśtha Kula) and the rulers of Piṣṭhāpura (Rāmakāśyapas)\textsuperscript{24}. The Kadambas who were roughly contemporaneous with the Gaṅgas, claimed to belong to the Māṇavya gotra and designated themselves Hārtiputras\textsuperscript{25} following the example of their predecessors in the Banavāsi area the Cuṭkulānanda Sātakarṇīs\textsuperscript{26}. The Čālukyas of Vātāpi who supplanted the Kadambas in Northern Karnāṭaka adopted similar dynastic claims\textsuperscript{27}. The Gaṅgas thus appear to have followed current practice in claiming to belong to the Kāṇva gotra. As already observed Gaṅga records do not provide any evidence for migration from North India. In the light of these facts a link between the Kāṇva Kings of Magadha and the Gaṅgas appears unlikely.

M.V. Krishna Rao, author of the first monograph on the Gaṅgas has suggested that the Gangas were linked to the Ikṣvākus of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa\textsuperscript{28}. However, as we have seen above, early Ganga records do not provide any evidence of the Ikṣvāku connection. It is only in the late Shimoga records that the Gaṅgas are said to have been the descendants of the Ikṣvāku kings of North India. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the influence of such neighbouring states as that of the Ikṣvākus of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa might have affected state formation in Southern Karnāṭaka.

A.R. Baji accepts the account of the Shimoga records in toto and is of the opinion that the Gaṅgas were immigrants from North India. He connects the migration of the

\textsuperscript{23.} \textit{EI} VIII, No. 23 pp 233-36; \textit{EI} XXIV, No. 43, pp 296-303, etc.


\textsuperscript{25.} \textit{ECIV} pp 49. 1. 3-5.

\textsuperscript{26.} T.R. Trautmann, op. cit. p 372-73

\textsuperscript{27.} \textit{EI} III, No.8. pp. 50-53 11. 1-2

\textsuperscript{28.} M.V. Krishna Rao, \textit{The Gangas of Talakad; A Monograph on the History of Mysore from the fourth to the close of the 11th century}, Mysore 1936, p.
Ganga princes to the south in the company of forty-eight brāhmaṇas with the tradition that Mayūravarma Kadamba invited brāhmaṇas from Ahicchatra to settle in Kuṇṭala (North Karnātaka)²⁹. He cites the Tālagunda Pillar inscription³⁰ as the authority for this tradition. However, this celebrated record, which traces the origins of the Kadambas is silent on the subject of brāhmaṇa migrations from North India.³¹

Be that as it may, Baji and Arokiaswamy concur in locating the earliest nucleus of the Gaṅga kingdom in the Kongu region of Tamil Nadu (the modern districts of Salem, Dharmapuri and Coimbatore)³². Arokiaswamy identifies Pērūr, the place where the Gaṅga princes are said to have met ācārya Simhanandi with Pērūr in Coimbatore district³³, disagreeing with Rice who had located the locus in quo at Gaṅga -Pērūr in Cuddapah district³⁴. He supports his identification by the fact that Pērūr in Coimbatore district, unlike its counter-part in the Cuddappah district, has numerous Jaina remains and thus qualifies better as a seat of a Jaina Pontiff³⁵.

Baji and Arokiaswamy further corroborate their contention that the Kongu country was the earliest nucleus of Ganga power in the south by citing the Kongudēśa -rājakal, a late seventeenth century chronicle which details the history of the region³⁶. Therein the

³¹. Vide Infra Chapter IV, Section F, p246, fn 429. The Gattavādi plates are one of the earliest records to mention the brāhmaṇa migration from Ahicchatra to the South. M Liceria, A.C. "The Migration of Brahmanaṣ to Karnātaka" in K M Shrimali (ed) *Essays in Indian Art, Religion and Society*, 1987, pp 121-126 discusses the evidence in some detail.
³⁴. B.L. Rice, op. cit., p.11
Gaṅgas are said to have been the successors of the Raṭṭas, who had, by and large, supported the Jaina sangha. However, the last monarch of the Raṭṭa lineage, Tribhuvana cakravarti, reportedly turned Saivite. He was then followed on the throne of the Kongu desa by Konganivarman, the first Gaṅga ruler. Baji speculates that the conversion of Tribhuvana cakravarti led to his overthrow. The Jainas then enthroned a new ruler "who would adhere to the faith of the majority of the population." In this context he cites the Shimoga records which quote Simhanandi's injunction to the Ganga Princes to adhere to the Jaina faith. Baji attributes the silence of the early Ganga records on the subject of Simhanandi to the undeniable fact that they were from the time of Madhavavarman I adherents of brahminism. This, in his opinion made them less than eager to recollect the Jaina auspices of their rise to power.

He believes moreover, that the Gaṅgas used the Kongu country as a springboard to establish their control over southern Karnāṭaka as subordinate allies of the Pallavas. In the reign of Madhavavarman I, the Gaṅgas shifted their base to Kōlār and Paṟuvi, although, he opines, they retained a hold over the Kongu country. That Kongu was their earliest stronghold in his opinion is further supported by the fact that there is no reference to any later monarch conquering the region.

The Kongu country was undeniably an early centre of the Gaṅgas. In fact, a copper plate inscription issued by the fourth generation Gaṅga king, Simhavarman of the Kaivāra branch has been recovered from Perūr in Coimbatore district. It registers the grant of lands and a garden for a temple of the Arhat affiliated to the Mula Saṅgha, constructed by the royal favourite (rajaṇiprīvaya) Nandava. The Melekōṭe plates of Madhavavarman II of the Talakād branch too refer to a Perūr adhiṣṭhāna, the inhabitants of which together with

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*37. Ibid, p. 130.
*38. EC VII (old ed) Sh 4.
*40. Ibid.
*41. Ibid, p. 129.
*42. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit. No. 155.
the Maṇigrāma śrēṇi were to make over grants of land gold and cloth to the Buddha saṅgha. We have references to several merchants in the details of the land grant. This Pērūr may be located in the Kongu region. An important transpeninsular trade route connecting the west and east coasts passed through the Kongu country. The references to merchants and the Maṇigrāma śrēṇi may be viewed in this context. Moreover, as Champakalakshmi has pointed out, Buddhism and Jainism were patronized by the commercial classes of the Sangam towns with Jainism predominating in the inland towns and Buddhism in the coastal urban centres. Available evidence indicates that Jainism had a strong representation in Pērūr but by no means enjoyed a monopoly as believed by Baji and Arokiaswamy. If the Pērūr referred to in the Mēlekoṭe Plates is to be identified with that in Coimbatore district it certainly detracts from Baji's view that the majority of the population in that area was Jaina.

Further, even if we accept the evidence of the Kongudesarajakkal, a very late work of the 17th century, to attribute the downfall of the Raṭṭas to the conversion of its last ruler, would be farfetched. One wonders then, why the Gaṅgas escaped a similar fate, for as mentioned earlier, the majority of the early Gaṅga Kings were "ever engaged in worshipping the (brahmanical) gods, the twice-born and the elders".

This is true even of Simhavarman whose hold over Pērūr is incontestable. If the Mūla Saṅgha wielded sufficient power to establish or overthrow dynasties in the Kongu region, the continued sway of the Gaṅgas over the region after their supposed apostasy is inconceivable.

43. Ibid, No. 11, 11.6-17, 25-26.
44. R. Champakalakshmi, "Urbanization in South India; the role of ideology and Polity", Presidential Address, Section I, Indian History Congress, (47th session, Srinagar 1986), p. 10.
46. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 5. Beṇḍigānahalli plates of Vijaya Kṛṣṇavarman, ll. 7-8, for instance.
47. Ibid., No. 155, 1 19.
In sum, the evidence indicates that Perūr in Coimbatore district was a seat of the Mula saṅgha and was held by at least some of the early Gaṅga rulers. However, we have no data to prove that it was their earliest power centre. While there is no evidence to indicate that it was conquered by a successor of Kongapivarman, it must be recollected that the inscriptions, particularly of the first phase (c. AD 400 - AD 725) do not render a systematic account of the conquests of the various monarchs but abound in general statements in praise of their valour and prowess. Even where specific achievements are recounted the epigraphic prāśastis' evidence is far from reliable given the tendency of the court bards to present their monarch as the ever victorious hero.

The distinctive contribution of Baji and Arokiaswamy to the debate on the origins of the Gaṅgas has been to draw our attention to early Gaṅga control over the Kongu region. Their major drawback has been their acceptance of late evidence of the Shimoga records and the Kongudesarajakal which does not quite square with the data presented in the early Gaṅga records themselves.

B. Sheik Ali rejects all these hypotheses since they are based on unreliable evidence. Resorting to "constructive reasoning", he concludes that the "founders must have been sons of the soil. They must have watched local conditions and prepared themselves carefully for striking at the roots of the weak authority existing at the time. They must have prepared the ground previously both in respect of military force and financial resources. It is quite plausible to visualise that state formation in the area under study took place as a result of internal developments, as we shall show presently. But Sheik Ali's arguments are built on wrong premises. He believes that the Gaṅgas were drawn from among the Gaṅgaḍikāras who are even today the largest section of the agricultural population of southern Karnāṭaka.

48. Ibid., No. 12, Nopamangala Plates of Konganivarman Avinātā, II. 17-18. NO. 24; Gummareddipura plates of Durvinita 1.29.


However, Gaṅgāḍikāra is probably derived from Gaṅgavāḍikāra meaning inhabitant of Gaṅgavāḍi. As we have seen have southern Karnataka came to be designated Gangavāḍi only in the eighth century after at least three centuries of Gaṅga rule over the area. It would thus appear that the Kingdom was named after the Gaṅgas rather than the dynasty deriving its name from the territory.

Sheik Ali also argues that the Gangas derived their name from the Kāvēri, which is also known as the Dakṣiṇa Gangā, on the banks of which their earliest capital, Talakāḍ was situated. Alternatively, he suggests that the dynastic name was derivable from that of the goddess Gangā, the consort of Siva whose cult was popular in southern Karnataka. "If either the river Kāvēri or the goddess Gangā was the inspiring factor for calling the dynasty the Gangas, if could only happen when some local or indigenous leader seized power".

This argument of Sheik Ali's raises several issues. In the first place, it is interesting to note that while Sheik Ali rejects the attempt made by the Kongu school of origins to link the name of the founder, Konguṇivarman with the Kongudēśā, he resorts to an analogous argument in support of his own contention. Secondly as he himself notes, there is a general tendency to enhance the sanctity of a local river by identifying it with the Gangā. Thus like the Kāvēri, the Godāvari too has been hailed as Dakṣiṇa Gangā. It might be more rational to accept the legendary accounts of the Gangetic origins of the Gangas given in the Shimoga records, as an explanation for the dynastic name rather than to derive it secondarily from the river Kāvēri's rating as the Dakṣiṇa Gangā.

The final and most significant point raised by Sheik Ali concerns the status of Talakāḍ as the earliest capital and nucleus of Gaṅga power. Talakāḍ does not appear to have been associated with the Gangas prior to Harivarman's reign. The extant inscriptions

51. Vide supra, p.105


53. Ibid, p. 17 "The affinity of a name with the place does not entitle one to prove that he belonged to the place".

of this third generation Gaṅga monarch, the progenitor of the Talakāḍ branch, are all spurious, engraved in the characters of the ninth and tenth centuries. It is only in the period of Madhavavarman II, Harivarman's grandson that we have incontestable evidence of Gaṅga presence in the Western division (the modern districts of Mysore, Mandya, Hassan, Coorg and Chikmagalur). Their control over this region was further consolidated under Avinīța and Durvīṇīța. However, as we have seen above, the majority of the early Ganga records were found in the Eastern division (the modern districts of Kōlār, Bangalore, Tumkur and adjacent areas of Anantapur district). This region appears to have been their earliest nucleus of power. This is further borne out by the fact that lithic inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries refer to the Gaṅgas as Kuvalālapuravārēśvara and Nandagarir nātha, this at a time when the locus of Gaṅga power had shifted west-wards to the Kāverī Valley.

Further, several eighth century lithic epigraphs from the Kōlār and Bangalore districts mention the politico-geographic unit of Gaṅga - 6000. The fact that this unit included areas whence the earliest and largest number of Gaṅga records of the first phase were recovered would lend credence to the belief that it constituted the earliest nucleus of the Gaṅga Kingdom even though references to Gaṅgavāḍi - 96000 antedate those to Gaṅga - 6000.

Sheik Ali quotes T.V. Mahalingam to the effect that the Bāṇas had established themselves in the Kōlār region in the mid-fourth century AD and consequently the Gaṅgas must have established themselves in the Talakāḍ area first and then spread to the Kōlār

55. *EC III (new ed) Nj 262; ASMAR 1921, p. 7; IA VIII, p. 212.*

56. *ASMAR 1930, No. 3, pp. 113 ff.*

57. Vide Infra Section B.

58. Vide Infra Section C.

59. *EC X (old ed) Mb 80, Sp. 57, Mb 255 of the 8th century; EC X (old ed) Kl 79 of the 9th from Kolar and ASMAR 1926-27 pp 34-35 of the 8th century from Bangalore district.*
region outsting the Bānas therefrom\textsuperscript{60}. However no Bāna records of the period prior to the eighth century have been found in the eastern division, with the exception of the Muḍiyanur copper plates\textsuperscript{61} dated saka 261, Vijāmi samvatsara. Although Rice who edited the inscription has not dismissed it as spurious\textsuperscript{62}, there is every possibility that the inscription belongs to the second phase (AD 725-1025), since the use of the Jupiter cycle and of the numerical suffixes to territorial units mentioned in the record, are both features datable to that period in southern Karnāṭaka.

Moreover, references to Kongaṇivarman routing the Bānas come from very late inscriptions. One such reference occurs in the Udayendiram copper plates of Prthivīpati II of AD 921, which state that Kongaṇivarman "was anointed to conquer Bāna maṇḍala"\textsuperscript{63}. However, this reference might possibly have been intended as a legitimation of Prthivīpati's own conquest and displacement of the Bānas from their territory\textsuperscript{64}.

Available evidence thus indicates that Kōlār was the earliest nucleus of Gaṅga power. Talakāḍ too, was an early centre, the base of a collateral branch of the Gaṅgas which later defeated the rival branches and incorporated their territories in the eastern division into its own principality. However, the origins of the Gaṅgas appear as obscure as ever. The arguments of Sheik Ali in favour of indigenous origins are wrapped in a tissue of suppositions and are as unacceptable as the rest in its current form.

An alternative approach to the problem of the origin of the Gaṅgas is to study the prehistoric record of Southern Karnāṭaka. Unfortunately, while more than three hundred

\textsuperscript{60} B. Sheik Ali, op. cit., p. 16.

\textsuperscript{61} EC X (old ed) Mb 157.

\textsuperscript{62} Rice's uncriticalness in accepting all records as genuine has been noted earlier, vide supra, p.107.


\textsuperscript{64} In a similar fashion, the praśastis of the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas attribute to the Vātāpi Cālukyas conquest over the Rāṣṭrakūtas, a fact which the Vātāpi Cālukya records themselves do not mention: Ranna, Gadayuddham II 7.
prehistoric sites have been identified in this region, excavation reports are available only for T, Narsipur, Hemmige and Jağığenahalli. Consequently, our knowledge of the pre-historic cultures of this area is very limited. We are compelled to draw inferences from the data available from comparable cultures in the neighbouring regions of Northern Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Traces of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic cultures are discernible at such sites as Biligere and Kibbanahalli (Tumkur District), T.Narsipur, Ranganathapuram and Hemmige (Mysore District), Karadigudda (Hassan District), and Jalahalli (Bangalore District). 65

Around the beginning of the second millennium B.C. 66 the region appears to have been occupied by pastoralists who seem also to have engaged in some swidden cultivation. Some vestiges of survivals from earlier phases are perceptible at Hemmige where a crude flake industry is associated with the Neolithic cultural artefacts 67. The Neolithic people appear to have followed a multiple subsistence strategy. They were primarily cattle breeders—bones of cattle outnumber those of sheep and goats at T.Narsipur 68, a pattern similar that of other south Indian Neolithic sites such as Brâhmagiri, Maski, Hallur and Tekkalakota (Bellary District) 69. Rock engravings at Neolithic sites such as Tekkalakota (Bellary district) also indicate the significance of cattle for the Neolithic folk 70. Small herds

65. Details of explored sites are drawn from A. Ghosh (ed) Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology, Vol II Gazetteer of Explored and Excavated sites, ICHR, New Delhi, 1980.

66. The date of the earliest level at T. Narsipur is 1805 + 110 B.C. M. Seshadri; Report on Excavation at T. Narsipur, Bangalore 1971.


68. B.P. Sahu, From Hunters to Breeders (Faunal Background of Early India) Delhi 1988. p. 196.


70. Ibid.
of goats and sheep too appear to have been maintained. We also have evidence for swidden cultivation using digging sticks and hoes.\(^71\)

Horse gram and ragi were apparently grown, since charred grains of these species were recovered from Hallur (Dharwar district) and Tekkalakōṭa.\(^72\) The Neolithic levels at Doḍḍakoḍattūr (Kōḷur district) have yielded burnt rice husks\(^73\) which might indicate the cultivation of that cereal in southern Kāraṇataka. Apart from cattle herding and agriculture, hunting and fishing were also resorted to for subsistence.\(^74\)

At Tekkalakōṭa, Sanganakallu, (Beḷāry district), Brahmagiri (Chitradurga district), Palavoy (Anantapur district), Paiyyampaḷli (North Arcot district), etc., wattle and daub houses set on a circular ground plan have been exposed. Seneviratne, following Flannery, suggests that such curvilinear structures often coincide with nomadic and semi-nomadic societies. He estimates that each circular structure at Sanganakallu or Tekkalakōṭa may have accommodated a nuclear family and that the terraced site at either place could hold a lineage composed of around twenty such families. He is of the opinion that the Neolithic people in south India were organised in segmentary lineages, with the tribe as a whole coming together on ritual occasions. He suggests moreover, that the cyclic nature of ash mounds in the Deccan possibly indicated such periodic gatherings of the tribal segments.\(^75\)

In Southern Karnataka Neolithic habitations appear to have varied widely, ranging from rock-shelters on the castellated hill at Bānahallī to pit dwellings at

\(^{71}\) M. Seshadri, op.cit, p.7; A.Ghosh op.cit., q.v. Bannahalli.

\(^{72}\) K. Paddayya, op.cit., p. 350

\(^{73}\) A. Ghosh, op. cit., q.v. Doḍḍakoḍattūr.

\(^{74}\) K. Paddayya, op. cit., pp. 349-50

\(^{75}\) Sudarshan Seneviratne, "Pre-state to state societies: Transformations in the Political Ecology of South India with special reference to Tamil Nadu". Paper presented at seminar on State in South India, held at J.N.U., New Delhi in March 1989, pp. 5-6.

\(^{76}\) A. Ghosh (ed), op. cit., q.v. Bannahalli.
Doḍḍakaḍattūr\textsuperscript{77} to regular mud houses at T. Narsipur\textsuperscript{78} and Hemmige\textsuperscript{79}. A similar variety is reported from the Near East and Oates links it to the differing stages in the sedentarization of these people. Thus rock shelters and circular dwellings characterize nomadic and semi-nomadic groups camping temporarily at a station. Pit dwellings were a feature of a semi-permanent residence, while regular mud houses, most often rectilinear in plan, were characteristic of permanent settlements\textsuperscript{80}. Unfortunately, the relative chronology of these sites in Southern Karnāṭaka is not known, and consequently it is unclear whether sedentarization was a development over time or was site-specific.

In sum we can conclude that the Neolithic folk who are represented in over thirty two sites in our region were by and large pastoral nomads, practising some swidden cultivation also. In some sites they appear to have set up permanent settlements. The meagre evidence available seems to indicate that they were organised in fairly egalitarian segmentary lineages, with scarcely any hint of rank differentiation.

A broad spectrum subsistence strategy also characterised the iron using Megalithic communities who followed the Neolithic people often without a clear break at sites like Hunugund (Kolār district)\textsuperscript{81} and T. Narsipur\textsuperscript{82}. The beginnings of this new culture date to c. 1000 B.C.\textsuperscript{83}. It was in this phase that southern Karnāṭaka appears to have been settled on a large scale. As opposed to thirty two sites betraying signs of a Neolithic occupation we have 258 sites for the Megalithic culture, with burial sites outnumbering those with habitational deposits. Significantly, the largest number of Megalithic sites have been

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., q.v. Doḍḍakoḍattūr.

\textsuperscript{78} M. Seshadri, op. cit, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{79} A. Ghosh, (ed), op. cit., q.v. Hemmige


\textsuperscript{81} A. Ghosh (ed), op. cit., Vol. II, q.v. Hunugund.

\textsuperscript{82} M. Seshadri, op. cit., p. 8

\textsuperscript{83} A. Ghosh (ed), op. cit., Vol. I 4.17.8; p 126.
reported for Kōlār district (120) and the Mysore district (110). As we have seen earlier, the earliest centres of Ganga power were situated in precisely these areas. Kōlār itself has traces of Megalithic occupation, its gold mines appear to have been worked in this period.\textsuperscript{84} Similarly, Talakād, the other early centre of the Gangas, is situated close to T. Narsipur and Hemmige.

This profusion of megalithic sites in contrast to the meagre numbers of Neolithic-Chalcolithic sites perhaps reflects a demographic expansion. A similar trend is noticed in Andhra Pradesh as well. Seneviratne relates it to the coincident spread of settlements in Andhra Pradesh from the highland peripheral areas to the fertile deltaic plains. Moreover in his opinion, the earlier pastoral and swidden cultivation economy underwent a change in this period to become primarily agrarian, with the introduction of plough cultivation and of a new crop - paddy.\textsuperscript{85}

Leshnik, on the other hand is of the opinion that the authors of the Megalithic culture were pastoral nomads. In support of his argument he points out that in contrast to modern village cemeteries in the region, megalithic burial sites are situated beyond the arable lands and are often not associated with habitational remains. Further, the small number of graves in these iron age cemeteries would indicate that they were organised in small groups - a feature more characteristic of nomadic societies than of a sedentary agrarian milieu. Finally, he argues that the associated grave goods reflect a pastoral society. The iron implements found in the graves are in his opinion more suited as weapons of offence than of defence. He identifies the so called plough shares as pickaxes. Moreover, as we have seen a predominantly pastoral economy does not rule out an agricultural component within it.\textsuperscript{86}


\textsuperscript{86} L.S. Leshnik; \textit{South Indian Megalithic Burials}, Weisbaden 1974, p. 274.
However, as H.P. Ray points out the predominantly agrarian character of many of the Megalithic sites is undeniable. She cites the instance of Naikund and Takalghat in Vidarbha, both of which were habitation sites wherein agriculture was a major component of the economy.\(^87\)

From southern Karnatak too, we have numerous instances of habitation sites with or without associated burials. The majority of these habitation sites, it is interesting to note are situated in the upper Kaviari valley.

In the context of Tamil Nadu Seneviratne distinguishes two groups of megalithic sites. The first, situated in peripheral areas such as the Dharmapuri district and the Nilgiri-Coonoor region appear to have been more ancient, on the basis of literary evidence. These sites were perhaps associated with the earliest intrusive iron-using megalithic groups. Their economy like that of the preceding Neolithic - Chalcolithic peoples was predominantly pastoral. In addition, agriculture, essentially of the slash and burn variety as well as hunting and gathering were resorted to for subsistence. The second group of sites, situated mainly in the riverine and coastal plains\(^88\) and associated with urn burials accompanied by cairn/stone circles was characterised by plough agriculture, fishing and salt manufacture\(^89\).

In the early historic period (c. first century B.C. to the third century AD) with the burgeoning of long distance trade, artisanal and mercantile activities thrived in these areas, designated in the literature of the period as the marutam and neital tinas\(^90\).

\(^{87}\) H.P. Ray, Monastery and Guild: Commerce under the Satavahanas, Delhi, 1986, p. 170

\(^{88}\) S. Seneviratne, "Pre-state to state societies...", loc. cit, p. 15.


\(^{90}\) S. Seneviratne, "Pre state to state societies...", loc. cit., pp. 33-34.
Evidence from Southern Karnātaka is too meagre to enable us to determine whether similar temporal, ecological and economic distinctions separated the Eastern and Western divisions of our region. In any case, cattle and sheep herding continued to be significant in both divisions throughout the early medieval period when the ruling class attempted to extend the arable by construction of tanks and similar irrigation facilities. In the Megalithic phase the primacy of pastoralism in our region could only have been greater.

Apart from the development of plough cultivation, this phase witnessed the growth of craft specialisation. The similarity of iron tool types throughout the region from Vidarbha to Adichanallūr in Tamil Nadu where the Megalithic cultural artefacts are found led the Allchins to posit the diffusion of a tightly-knit group of iron-smiths. H. P. Ray suggests that these iron workers were possibly itinerant groups and she cites several ethnographic instances of itinerant craftsmen servicing a particular region. She is of the opinion that gold smiths, bead-makers and potters were similarly organised in itinerant groups. In the case of pottery, however, local traditions appear to have survived side by side with the characteristic Megalithic ware—the Black-and-Red.

From the evidence of the Sangam texts it would appear that the relations of production were based on kinship, and the family constituted the unit of production. This apparently was true even of the advanced marutam zones where wet land plough cultivation formed the subsistence base. Since kinship based production is characterized by insubstantial surpluses, the polity of the period did not develop beyond lineage based chieftoms.

91. Vide supra, Chap. II., Sec. C (V), D.
95. Rajan Gurukkal, op. cit., p. 10.
Friedman and Rowlands in their epigenetic model for the evolution of civilizations suggest that one of the earliest steps in the emergence of a state from an egalitarian tribal society is the formation of a conical clan headed by a chiefly lineage, claiming to be the nearest descendant of the local deity. Such conical clans are characterized by absolute rank difference between the chief’s lineage and the rest of the tribal community, measured in terms of genealogical distance from the ancestors/deities. The chief’s lineage consequently mediates between the community at large and its deities and as such claims and receives corvees and tribute from the other lineages.

Tamil Sangam texts appear to indicate the existence of such a conical clan structure in late proto-historic Tamil Nadu. The texts refer to a number of chieftains in the peripheral areas styled 'Perumakan', the great scion. Seneviratne opines that this may have implied descent from a tribal ancestor. He further suggests that the Megalithic mortuary practices were possibly associated with ancestor worship.

The literature of the period also attests to the practice of accumulating the harvest at the residence of the headmen and its subsequent redistribution among his kinsmen and mendicants. However, the chiefs constrained by the kinship mode of production could not mobilize sufficient surplus to build up an autonomous power base. Consequently they resorted to predatory raids on neighbouring settlements in order to mobilize further resources. Such predatory raids were characteristic not merely of the chieftains of...


97. Ibid, p. 211.

98. S. Seneviratne, "Pre-state to state".

99. R. Gurukkal, op. cit, p. 11.


the peripheral Kurići (highlands), pālai (waste lands) and mullai (pastoral tracts) eco-zones but also of the vēḷārs and ūr kīḷārs of the manutam and neital tipais and the three crowned kings, the Muvēndar.

Apart from plunder, the chiefs appear to have mustered further resources through participation in the overland and maritime commerce. The Vēḷārs in the peripheral areas capitalized on the demand for ivory, sandalwood and other products of the forest in return for "prestige goods" - gold, gems ornaments, fine cloth and other manufactured items. The Muvēndar apparently capitalized on long distance trade the most. they controlled the coastal entrepôts like Kāveripatinam and Muciri whence goods from the interior were exported. We have references to export items being sealed with the Cōḷa tiger emblem. It is quite possible that these incipient "Kingdoms" levied tolls on merchandise. The extraction of marine resources such as pearls, using slave labour also finds mention in several works.

Tribute from subordinate chieftains apparently formed another source of income for the Muvēndar. They subjugated other chiefs both by undertaking military campaigns and entering into matrimonial alliances with them. Such alliances bound several disparate lineage together. The bonds were strengthened by the Dravidian kinship system with its preference for matrilateral cross cousin marriages.

The latest strata of the Sangam texts reveal to a certain degree the emergence of stratified society and the erosion of the kinship mode of production. These texts repeatedly

102. Ibid.
103. S. Seneviratne, "Pre-state to state polities...", loc. cit, p. 33.
refer to two incipient strata - the cānpūr engaged in the noble pursuit of war and the ilicinār (uncivilized persons) engaged in manual labour."106

Thus stratification had progressed beyond the absolute rank differences characteristic of the peripheral areas. It was possibly a consequence of the social "caging" effects of long-term investment in the means of production - most notably, irrigational facilities"107 set up by rulers like Karikāla Cōḷa "108. Seneviratne also highlights the role of the metropolitan state of the Mauryas with which the Muvēndar and the Adigamāṇ chiefs had contact"109. Northern ideologies introduced new forms of legitimation for the Muvēndar several of whom are said to have patronised brāhmaṇas and performed Vedic sacrifices. They were also associated with epic traditions. Side by side, older forms of legitimation - eulogies by the Pānār who were patronized by the chiefs - continued"110. Trade which placed surplus resources at the command of the rulers also enabled them to cut loose from Kinship ties binding them to the tribe. By the close of the third century AD incipient states were emerging in the advanced marutam and neital eco-zones in Tamil Nāḍu.

If Tamil Nāḍu was on the threshold of social stratification and state formation towards the end of the early historic period, Northern Karnāṭaka and Āndhra saw the establishment of full-fledged states under the Sātavāhanas and later the Ikṣvākus in the same period. The emergence of the state in these areas was probably owing to the stimulus provided by the Mauryan state. The Mauryan administrative centre, Suvarṇāgiri


108. Karikāla Cōḷa's achievements are referred not merely in Sangam sources but also in Ganga records, eg. Bēdirur grant of Bhūvikrama, K.V. Ramesh, op. cit, No. 29, 1 26.


110. Rajan Gurukkal, op. cit., p. 32.
was situated to the south of Maski. Another cluster of sites was located in the Chitradurga district where three Aśokan edicts were found at Brahmagiri, Siddāpur and Jātinga Rāmēshwar". The primary interest of the Mauryan state in this region appears to have lain in the extraction of gold particularly from the area around Māski where there is ample evidence for gold working. Thapar suggests that the gold mined here was sent back to Magadha which would account for the lack of occurrence of gold both in the Megalithic habitations and burials in this area. The region was integrated into the long distance trade network since a large number of lapis lazuli beads were found in the cluster of sites around Māski, which could only have been imported from Badakshān in Afghanistan, the nearest source of lapis lazuli.

Although the Minor Rock edict in its various editions in this region attests to the presence of officials in this division, typically Mauryan cultural artefacts such as punch-marked coins and the deluxe Northern Black Polished ware are conspicuous by their absence. This is in contrast to the coastal sites of Andhra Pradesh which appear to have been more directly under the control of Mauryan administration. In Northern Karnataka the Mauryas apparently extracted resources through mechanisms of social control characteristic of Magalithic societies - conical clans of varying degrees of complexity.

The atrophy of the metropolitan state's control over peripheral areas was usually followed by secondary state formation in such areas. The tribal elite at the periphery were


115. Vide supra, p. 122.

116. B.D Chattopadhyaya, "Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India: Problems of
introduced to sophisticated forms of social and political control and the legitimization thereof; under the hegemony of the metropolitan state"\textsuperscript{117}.

Moreover, the opening up of trade with the more developed North India led to the "fixing" of the tribal population in the area"\textsuperscript{118}. The participation particularly of the tribal elite in such trade also led to the accumulation of the resources under their control and to disparities in the distribution of wealth in a society characterized by absolute rank difference"\textsuperscript{119}. All these processes led to the growth of stratification and state formation in Northern Karnataka and Andhra.

We have seen earlier"\textsuperscript{120} that in the opinion of scholars like Erdosy and Carter, the emergence of urban centres was intimately linked to the growth of stratification and the nascent state. Numerous excavated and explored sites in Northern Karnataka betray the characteristic features of urban centres. Fortifications of Vaḍgaon - Mādhaḍpur (Belgaum district) and Udyāvara (South Kanara district)\textsuperscript{121} religious structures at Sannathi (Gulbarga district),\textsuperscript{122} and Vaḍgaon - Mādhaḍpur, Maski and Chadrawalli (Chitradurga district)\textsuperscript{123} are indicative of their character as politico-religious centres with relatively high densities of population. Roman coins and artefacts as well as coins issued by the

\textsuperscript{117} S. Seneviratne, "Kalinga and Andhra...", loc. cit, p. 69. H. Kulke, Jagannatha Kult und Gajapati Konigtum, Wiesbaden, 1974, pp. 223-24 refers to a similar process in Bengal in the post - Gupta period.

\textsuperscript{118} M. Mann, op. cit., p. 85.

\textsuperscript{119} S. Seneviratne, "Kalinga and Andhra..." loc. cit., p. 69.

\textsuperscript{120} Supra, Chapter. II, Section E.

\textsuperscript{121} A. Ghosh (ed), Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology, Vol. I, 4. 18. 11, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{122} Cited in R. S. Sharma, Urban Decay in India c. 300-C. 1000 AD, New Delhi 1987, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
Satavahanas and their successors found at Vadgaon - Mādhavpur, Chandravalli and Brahmagiri attest to the fact that this area was intimately involved in long-distance trade. Widespread artisanal activity is suggested by the presence of beads and bangles, of glass, semi-precious stones, shell, ivory, clay and bone; of iron implements such as chisels, nails and flat bars\textsuperscript{124}, and of bronze objects at most of the above mentioned sites. Minting appears to have been another craft of which Vadgaon-Mādhavpur appears to have been the centre\textsuperscript{125}. Apart from these, pottery of various types have been recovered in large numbers from these sites. The major ceramic wares consist of the Megalithic Black- and Red, the Red polished ware, the slipped and plain red ware, black slipped ware and lastly, the Russet-coated painted ware which is diagnostic trait of the early historic phase in Karnāṭaka\textsuperscript{126}. In addition, specimens of the Roman Rouletted ware have also been found from such sites as Brahmagiri and Chandravalli\textsuperscript{127}.

Banavasi, whose urban character has been discussed earlier\textsuperscript{128} dates back to the early historic period. It was apparently a capital of the Satavahanas, the Cutukulānanda Sātakarnis and, in the beginning of the fifth century, the Kadambas. It retained its role as a political centre right through the early medieval period unlike Sannathi, Brahmagiri and Chandravalli which were apparently abandoned after the third century AD\textsuperscript{129}.

In Southern Karnāṭaka, lack of evidence makes generalisation on the socio-economic structure and the political organisaiton during the Megalithic and early historic phases hazardous. As we noted earlier, burial sites far out-number habitation sites particularly in the Eastern division comprising the Kōlār, Bangalore and Tumkur.

\textsuperscript{124} A. Ghosh, Encyclopaedia...op., cit. Vol I., 4. 18.11, p. 150. This is in contrast to the Megalithic phase when weapons bulked large in the graves.

\textsuperscript{125} R.S. Sharma, op. cit., p. 85.

\textsuperscript{126} A. Ghosh, op. cit., Vol.I, 4.18.11, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{127} R.S. Sharma, op. cit., pp. 84-86.

\textsuperscript{128} Vide supra Chap.II., Section E.

\textsuperscript{129} R.S. Sharma, op. cit., pp. 84-86.
districts\textsuperscript{130}. Following Leshnik's argument\textsuperscript{131}, this might indicate the predominance of pastoralism in the economy. This is further supported by the fact that more than 50% of the lands in this region are covered by shrub vegetation supporting large herds of cattle, buffaloes, goat and sheep even today\textsuperscript{132}.

However, agriculture, particularly paddy cultivation is also attested to. One of the sarcophagi at Jagigenahalli (Bangalore district) was cushioned in a thirty cm thick deposit of rice husks\textsuperscript{133}. It may be recollected that the Neolithic pit dwellings at Doğdakoğattūr (Kōlār district) also yielded burnt rice husks\textsuperscript{134}. Cultivation of rice thus has a long tradition in Southern Karnataka. A pastoral-cum-subsistence agriculture economy is thus indicated for the Eastern division.

In the Western division comprising Mysore, Mandya, Coorg, Hassan Chikmagalūr and Shomoga districts, we have a large number of habitation sites as compared to the Eastern division. The majority of these sites, as noted earlier, are situated in the Kāverī valley\textsuperscript{135}. This might indicate a primarily agrarian economy similar to that in the deltaic areas of Ándhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. However, even if agriculture was the major component of the economy of this region, cattle and sheep herding too was probably significant\textsuperscript{136}.

Apart from agriculture and stock breeding, considerable artisanal activity is also attested. At T. Narsipur, the Megalithic level has yielded substantial quantities of finely

\begin{itemize}
  \item[130.] A. Ghosh (ed), op. cit., Vol II.
  \item[131.] Supra, p. 119.
  \item[132.] Supra, Chap. II. Section A, p.9-10
  \item[133.] A. Ghosh (ed), Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology, Vol. II, Gazetteer. q.v. Jadigenahalli.
  \item[134.] Supra. p.117.
  \item[135.] The principal sites are T. Narsipur, Doğdahomma, Hedathale, Kāveripuram, Suttūr, etc. A. Ghosh (ed), Encyclopaedia op.cit., Vol II.
  \item[136.] Supra, p.121, fn.91.
\end{itemize}
produced Black-and-red ware (BRW), the black polished and red-polished wares. Beads of
terracotta and semi-precious stones, glass bangles and few iron implements were also
recovered. At Kendatti (Kolar district) iron slag would indicate smelting activity. Gold mines at the Champion reefs at Kolar have yielded Pale Grey ware and the BRW. This would indicate that the mines were worked from the Neolithic period onwards. This is further supported by the occurrence of gold bead in the Neolithic level at T. Narsipur. In the absence of extensive excavations it is unclear whether the gold mined were was used locally or was siphoned off in trade or as tribute to the metropolitan state as was the case in Northern Karnataka. We have seen earlier that blacksmiths were probably itinerant groups. H.P. Ray has plausibly suggested that other craft specialists were similarly organised.

On the basis of the Sangam texts, we may conclude that production was Kinship-based with the nuclear household as the unit of production. These kinship units probably supported conical clan chiefdoms similar to those of the vaṭir chiefs in the peripheral areas of Tamil Nadu. Given the lack of evidence from our region, it is impossible to determine whether these chiefdoms were integrated at a higher level represented in Tamil Nadu by the Mūvēndar.

The early historic phase in southern Karnataka does not appear to be markedly different from the preceding Megalithic culture. The Metropolitan state of the Mauryas

139. Ibid, q.v. Kolar.
141. Vide supra, p. 122
142. Vide supra, p. 122-123.
143. The ecology and economy of Southern Karnataka the Megalithic period is similar to that in the Kongu-Nilgiri region of Tamil Nadu.
apparently did not control this region. Hemmige is the only early historic site to have been excavated. In the opinion of the excavators, the site was not linked to "areas of developing economic activity" and was a rural settlement.\textsuperscript{144}

No structural remains were found with the exception of a burnt brick piece and a few iron nails. The Megalithic BRW appears to have been the major ceramic industry together with red-slipped, red-polished and black-slipped pottery. Arretine and Rouletted pottery of Roman origin are conspicuous by their absence. Some artisanal activity is attested by the presence of bangle - pieces of shell, glass and bone, biconic hexagonal beads and quadrooned beads of glass, soapstone, shell and terracotta\textsuperscript{145}. These artifacts are not numerous as in the Northern Karnataka sites cited above. The iron objects found include a chisel, a small spear or arrow-head, a small flat knife, curved knife, dagger, a bar, rod and ring\textsuperscript{146}. The perdominance of offensive weapons in the assemblage apparently indicates the persistence of the megalithic political order which was characterized by frequent predatory raids by chiefs on neighbouring settlements\textsuperscript{147}. This is further supported by the presence of sling balls in the Early Historic level at Hunugund\textsuperscript{148} (Kōlār district).

Several other Early historic sites can be so distinguished only by the presence of sherds of the Russet-coated painted ware characteristic of this phase\textsuperscript{149}. For lack of further evidence we can only conclude that they resembled Hemmige in being isolated rural settlements. The majority of these sites are situated in the Mysore district\textsuperscript{150}.

\textsuperscript{144} S. Nagaraju and M.H. Rao. \textit{Excavations at Hemmige, Mysore}, 1974., p. 74.


\textsuperscript{146} Ibid

\textsuperscript{147} Vide supra, p. 122.

\textsuperscript{148} A. Ghosh (ed), \textit{Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology} Vol. II \textit{Gazetteer}, q.v. Hunugund.

\textsuperscript{149} A. Ghosh (ed), op.cit., vol. I. 4. 18. 11, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, q.v. Ambala, Ballur. Devarahalli. Gowdahalli, Honnur, Huttu, Nallur, P.G. Palya, etc.
However, our area was not entirely insulated from outside influences. A hoard of Roman silver coins has been found at Bangalore indicating some involvement in long distance trade, however limited. In the north, Mañavalli, Balligāve, and Tālagonda in Shimoga district were the major early historic sites. Their position on the settlement hierarchy cannot be clearly determined from available evidence. However, the Tālagunda Pillar inscription of Śaṅtivarman Kadamba states that the Mahādeva temple at Sthānakundūr (same as Tālagunda) was patronized by Sātakarṇi and other kings. This would point to its inclusion in the Sātavahana domains.

Available evidence would thus indicate that southern Kāmāṭaka in the early historic phase enjoyed limited contacts with the neighbouring states in Northern Kāmāṭaka and the proto-states in Tamil Nadu. Its involvement in long-distance trade is was minimal although it is possible that the gold mined in and around Kōlar was drawn into the trade nexus. The polity and economy of the period appears broadly similar to that attested for the preceding Megalithic phase. However, since the earliest available Gaṅga inscriptions reveal the existence of full-fledged agrarian settlements, particularly in the Eastern division, agriculture must have developed to a considerable extent during the early historic period, with several new crops being introduced. Given the "nagara" suffix applied to Kuvalāla (Kōlar) and Tālakāḍ, incipient urbanisation may also be posited.

It was with this background that the Gaṅgas emerged, the earliest attested royal dynasty of this region. In origin, they were possibly one of the chiefly clans of this region. They adopted all the trappings and insignia of royalty - a gotra and Kula affiliation, patronage of Brahminical Hinduism and heterodox faiths to legitimize their new-found

151. Ibid, q.v. Bangalore.
152. Ibid
153. EC VII (old ed) Sk 176 of the fourth-fifth centuries AD
154. Vide Supra, Chapter II, Section C (vii), pp. 65 ff
155. Ibid Chap. II, Sec. E (iii)
authority and a royal court and administration modelled on those of their northern neighbours.  

In the case of their contemporaries, the Kadambas, the tribal origins are attested to by the Tālagunda Pillar inscription which state that the Kadambas acquired their name by tending the beautiful tree with Kadamba flowers growing on a spot near the residence of Mayūraśarma the progenitor. As R.N. Nandi points out, the tending of the totem tree, and the naming of the clan after the totem are characteristic features of totemic tribes. Mayūraśarma then is said to have raided the outlying territories of the Pallava Kingdom and occupied the forest tracts up to Śrīparvata. The Pallavas unable to subdue them enlisted them as feudatories and established them in a principality of their own.

Emerging possibly from a similar background, the Gangas rose to be a sub-regional power of considerable importance, outlasting the Kadambas. The process of expansion of Ganga power shall be taken up in the next section.

\[156.\] Vide supra, pp 108. This will be further discussed in sections B and Chapter V, Section B.

\[157.\] EC VII (old ed) SK 176, v. 7


\[159.\] EC VII (old ed) SK. 176, v. 19-21
As we have seen in the absence of archaeological data, the state in Southern Karnataka appears rather abruptly on the stage with the rise to power of the Western Gangas towards the end of the fourth century AD. Their earliest base was probably located in the Kólar area. By the close of the reign of Mādhavavarman I, purportedly the second ruler of the dynasty, they also controlled Paḷavi viṣaya (the political unit centred on Pārīgi, Hindupur taluk, Anantapur district) and Kuḻungijya rājya (possibly located in the Kunigal taluk, Tumkur district) in addition to their original base in Kólar. Neither Kongaṭivarma nor Mādhavavarman appear to have been subordinate to an external power. Indeed the Śāsanakōṭa plates state that Kongaṭivarma had established the kingdom by the strength of his arms (svabhujā - java - jaya - janita sujanajanapadasya).

The testimony of prāṣastis is to be taken with caution. In this case, at least two other successors of Kongaṭivarma can be cited to whom similar eulogistic phrases are applied. However, in the absence of contrary evidence, we may perhaps accept that Kongaṭivarma carved out a principality for himself in this region without external aid. It may be recollected that AR Baji was of the opinion that the Gangas established their

160. Vide Supra, Chapter III-A.


162. Ibid No.2, The identification of Kuḻungijya rājya with Kunigal is tentative.

163. Ibid No. 1, 1.3.

164. Mādhava Simhavarman of the Paḷovi branch in the Penukoṇḍa plates, Ibid, No. 8, 1.9 and Mādhava II of the Talakāḍ branch in his Noṇamangala plates, Ibid No. 10, 1.14.
control over Southern Kārṇāṭaka as the subordinate allies of the Pallavas.165. But the available records of Mādhavavarman I do not indicate that he was a feudatory.

After Mādhavavarman I we have evidence of the existence of more than one branch of the dynasty. This issue of collateral branches, like almost every other aspect of early Ganga history is a subject of considerable debate. It was Joveau - Dubreuil who first suggested on the basis of the Beṇḍigānahaḷi166 and the Penukonḍa167 plates that two dynasties of the Gangas existed in this period, the Gangas of Talakāḍ and those of Paṇuvi.

The Talakāḍ branch included Harivarman, Viṣṇugopa and Mādhavavarman II, while Mādhava Simhavarman and his son Kṛṣṇavarman belonged in his opinion to the Paṇuvi branch168. With the discovery of other records of Kṛṣṇavarman and Simhavarman it became clear that Dubreuil was mistaken in his belief that Kṛṣṇavarman was the son of Simhavarman. It was, as Śrīkaṇṭha Śāstry pointed out the other way round169.

In 1924 with the discovery and publication of the Chukunur Grant charter170, R. Shama Sastry suggested that a third branch of the dynasty, the Kaivāra had also existed, distinct from the Talakāḍ and Paṇuvi Gangas171. In his opinion, Kṛṣṇavarman and his sons Simhavarman and Viśavarman belonged to the Kaivāra branch while Āryavarman and Mādhava Simhavarman who were mentioned in the Penukonḍa plates172 belonged to the Paṇuvi branch.

165. A.R. Baji, "Acarya Simhanandi..." loc. cit, p. 126-127; vide supra, section A.
166. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 5.
171. ASMAR 1924, p. 17.
172. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit. No. 9
M.V. Krishna Rao opposed the views of both Joveau-Dubreuil and Shama Sastry. He points out that Harivarman is called Arivarman in his Tanjore plates."173

Ayyavarman, the name of the father of Mādhava Simhavarman of the Penukonda plates, is merely the tadbhava form of Arivarman in his opinion. Moreover, Simhavarman is endowed with the same attribute of "Pitryanvagata-gupā-yuktēna" in both the Chukūṭīr and the Penukonda plates. However, prāśasīs abound in such cliches as we have seen earlier. Similar hackeyed phrases have been applied to Mādhavarman II of the Talakāḍ branch as well"174 without anyone identifying him thereby with Mādhava II of the Pāruvi branch or with Simhavarman of the Kaivāra branch.

Joveau-Dubreuil's and Shama Sastry's views were also opposed by R.S. Panchamukhi and N.L. Rao. They stress the fact that the sons of both Āryavarman and Kṛṣṇavarman were named Simhavarman. They repeat the point made by M.V. Krishna Rao about Ayyavarman being the tadbhava form of Arivarman. Finally, they are of the opinion that Viṣṇugopa, the son of Harivarman in all subsequent Ganga records was the younger brother of Mādhava Simhavarman."175

T.V. Mahalingam does not deal directly with this question. However, in his article on the relations of Pallava Simhavarman with the Karnāṭaka country, he suggests that Ayyavarman named his children after Pallava Simhavarman and his siblings and father."176

K.V. Ramesh too holds that the dynasty did not branch off. However, he does point out that the fact that Viṣṇugopa is always said to be the son of Harivarman and not of

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173. IA VIII, p. 212
175. R.S. Panchamukhi and N.L. Rao, Karnatakada Arasumanetanagalu, Dharwar 1946, pp 119-120.
Āryavarman or Kṛṣṇavarman throws doubt on the single line theory. Moreover, he holds that the Kūṭalur plates describe Āryavarman as the eldest son of Mādhavarman I thereby suggesting that he had other brother"177. However, the word in the inscription is "aurasa putra"178 which does not mean "eldest son" but merely "born of the lawfully wedded wife".

Sheik Ali holds that the dynasty branched off into three separate lines. But he adds to the prevailing confusion by ascribing the Penukonda and Beṇḍīgānahalḷī plates first to Harivarman of the Talakāḍ branch179 and then to Mādhava and Kṛṣṇavarman of the Paṇuvi branch180. The confusion is further confounded when he states in the course of the same paragraph, first that Kṛṣṇavarma was the son of Mādhava, the younger brother of Harivarman, and then that he was the younger brother himself of Harivarman181.

In sum, the Talakāḍ branch appears to have had a distinct identity. K.V. Ramesh’s remark concerning the consistency of their genealogical account may be recollected. Moreover, the Talakāḍ Gangas seem to have established their sway over the Western division. As we have noted earlier, Harivarman, the progenitor of the Talakāḍ branch was the earliest Ganga ruler to be associated with Talavāṇapura (Talakāḍ) whence all his extant records, albeit spurious, have been issued182.

The Gangas of Paṇuvi and Kaivāra are less easy to distinguish. As Panchamuki and Rao pointed out, the sons of both Āryavarman of the Paṇuvi branch and Kṛṣṇavarman of the Kaivāra branch are named Simhavarman. Moreover both lineages, if indeed they were distinct from each other, were based in the Eastern division. While the Beṇḍīgānahalḷī plates

177. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., Introduction, plv
178. Ibid No. 9, Kūṭalur Inscription of Mādhava Simhavarman, 1.5
180. Ibid., p. 46.
181. Ibid
182. Vide supra, Section A, p/4, fn.55
of Kṛṣṇavarman indicate that he held sway over the Paṇḍuvi nāḍu. Other records attest to the control of Mādhava Simhavarman over the same division. Other records afford evidence for Kaivāra Ganga sway over Kaivāra viṣaya (Hosakōte taluk, Bangalore district). Kuvalāla viṣaya (Kolār and its neighbourhood) and Pērūra viṣaya (the Kongu region?) The Paṇḍuvi Gangas on the other hand seem to have controlled Marukara viṣaya (Tumkur, Tiptur and Sira taluks of Tumkur district and the Doḍda-Ballāpura taluk of Bangalore district) apart from Paṇḍuvi viṣaya.

The major factor supporting Shama Sastry's view that the Paṇḍuvi and Kaivāra branches were distinct is the fact that the Penukonda and Kūṭalur plates of Mādhava Simhavarman of the Paṇḍuvi branch state that Āryavarman and his son Mādhava Simhavarman were anointed by the Pallava monarchs Simhavarman and Skandavarman respectively. None of the Kaivāra Ganga records, on the other hand, betrays the slightest sign of subordinate status. There is of course the possibility that Simhavarman and his younger brother Viṟavarman were named after Pallava Simhavarman and his grandfather Viṟavarman as suggested by Mahalingam. But if Simhavarman of the Kaivāra branch and Mādhava Simhavarman of the Paṇḍuvi branch were in fact identical, it is unclear why the monarch should admit his feudatory status so unambiguously in one set of records and

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183. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 5. 11. 15-17.
184. Ibid, No. 8, 11. 14-16.
185. Ibid, No.7, the Chukutṭur Grant of Simhavarman. The location of Kaivāra viṣaya in Hosakōte has been tentatively suggested on the basis of later lithic records mentioning this unit-vide chap. II, Appendix I, No. 35-39.
186. Ibid, No. 156. 11 12-14.
187. Ibid No. 155; The Pērūr plates of Simhavarman clearly point to their sway over the Kongu region. The Kuḍiliyam grant charter (Ibid, No. 6) also refers to Pērūra viṣaya which is possibly to be located in the same region.
188. Ibid, No. 9; ASMAR 1930, pp. 259-65.
189. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No.8, 11. 7-8, 10-11.
190. Ibid, No.9, 11. 1-2, 9
remain silent on the issue in others. When this discrepancy is coupled with differing accounts of parentage the conclusion that the two branches were distinct and separate becomes almost compelling. In that case it becomes clear that neither branch had a stable territorial base. The Kaivāra Gangas were apparently supplanted in Paṟuvi viṣaya by the rival branch of the Paṟuvi Gangas.

We have no further evidence for the existence of these two collateral branches of Kaivāra and Paṟuvi after the reigns of Mādhava Simhaavarman and his namesake. Both were displaced by Mādhavavarman II of the Talakāḍ branch. The Chaluvanahalli plates of this monarch issued in the first year of his reign attest to his control over the old capital of Kuvalāla which Simhaavarman of the Kaivāra branch had held earlier. In fact one of the pieces of wet land, Cakra-kēḍāra, which had been granted by Simhaavarman to Matṛśārman of the Kāsyapa gotra191 was regranted by Mādhavavarman II to Divākara śārman of Vatsa gotra192. Possibly this represented an attempt by the king to build up a loyal following among the influential brāhmaṇas in the newly conquered territory. As Kulke has observed royal grants to brāhmaṇas were "a means of establishing royal power and to extend it into outer areas which had not yet come fully under the control of the central authority"193. If the Perūr adhishṭhāna referred to in the Melekoṭe plates194 is to be identified Perūr in Coimbatore district as suggested earlier, it would indicate that Mādhavavarman II retained control of the Kongu country as well.

Apart from the Eastern division and the Kongu region, Mādhavavarman consolidated Ganga possessions in the Western division as well. The Koṭunjēpuvu grant charter of his son and successor indicate that Mādhavavarman II entered into a matrimonial

194. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 11, 1.17, vide supra section A, p.410
alliance with the Kadambas\textsuperscript{195} as a result of which the Gangas appear to have gained possession of Śendraka viṣaya, Vaḷḷāvi viṣaya-8000 and Dēvalīgė viṣaya\textsuperscript{196}, units to be located in the Belūr - Chikmagalūr tract of the Western division and in Shimoga district. These areas had earlier been under the control of the Kadambas\textsuperscript{197}.

In a similar fashion the Pāṇḍāḍa and Punnāṭa territories (covering the Heggaḍedēvanakōṭe and Nanjanagūṭu taluks of Mysore district) were added to Ganga dominions as a consequence of a matrimonial alliance with the king of Punnāṭa, Skandavarman, entered into by Avinīṭa. In the reign of Durvinīṭa the son of Avinīṭa by the Punnāṭa princess, the Punnāṭa territories reverted to the Gangas in the absence of a male heir\textsuperscript{198}. This appears to have taken place sometime after his fourth regnal year since subsequent records mention both that Durvinīṭa was the daughter's son of Skandavarma, king of Punnāṭa and the overlord of the Pāṇḍāḍa and Punnāṭa territories\textsuperscript{199}. To judge from the Kulagaṇḍa plates of Śivamāra I these territories retained a distinct identity at least until the reign of Śivamāra I (AD 679 - 725) since both Śivamāra and his predecessor Bhūvikrama are given the title of the lord of Pāṇḍāḍa and Punnāṭa janapadas\textsuperscript{200}.

Unlike the Paṭuvi Ganga records, those of the Talakāḍ Gangas do not betray signs of subordination to an external power. However, the Hosakoṭe plates of Avinīṭa record the grant of a house and of lands to a temple of the Arhat caused to be constructed by the mother of Pallavāḏhiraja Simhaviṣṇu for the fame of her husband's family and her own merit, at Pulli-ūru in Kōrikunda bhōga\textsuperscript{201}. This politico-geographical unit was included in

\textsuperscript{195}Ibid No.15, Avinīṭa is described herein as the sister's son of Kṛṣṇavarma Kadamba, 11 14-15.

\textsuperscript{196}EC VIII (new ed) Hn 10.

\textsuperscript{197}EC V (old ed) B1 121

\textsuperscript{198}EC IV (new ed) Y1 167.

\textsuperscript{199}The Uttanūr plates of the 20th regnal year of Durvinīṭa are the earliest to refer to this. K.V. Ramesh op. cit., No. 21. 11 21, 26.

\textsuperscript{200}EC IV (new ed) Ch 347, 11. 14-17.

\textsuperscript{201}K.V. Ramesh, op. cit, No. 14, 11 23-25.
the Ganga dominions. The record was issued by Avinītā and dated in his own regnal years. There is no other sign of his subordination to the Pallava. M.H. Krishna has suggested that the Pallava Queen Mother was possibly a Ganga princess and on that account constructed the Jain shrine within Ganga dominions. This is possible but the inscription does not specify her relation to Avinītā. It is difficult to conclude from the evidence at our disposal as to the status of the Ganga monarch vis/vis the Pallavas.

Durvinītā's charters state that he fought victorious battles against his foes at Āndaryā, Ālattūra, Porulageya, Permnagara, etc. The adversaries are not specified. K.V. Ramesh has suggested that these battles were fought against his brother whom Avinītā had preferred and probably nominated his successor but from whom Durvinītā wrested the throne. Sheik Ali has modified this to suggest that Durvinītā's brother was supported in the succession struggle by the Pallavas while Durvinītā himself was aided by his son-in-law Vijayāditya Cālukya. He bases this on the fact that all these battles appear to have been fought in either the Kongu country or in Toṇḍaimāṇḍalam (Northern Tamil Nadu), the core of the Pallava realm.

If Ālattūr, Āndaryā and other places are to be located in Toṇḍaimāṇḍalam or in Kongu it is very possible that these battles were fought against the Pallavas. But there does not seem to be any basis to the suggestion that the Pallava aided Durvinītā's brother. As for the matrimonial alliance with the early Cālukyas, the evidence comes from one of the

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203. ASMAR 1938, p 90.
204. K.V. Ramesh op. cit, No. 21, 11. 23-24.
205. Ibid, p 1 vii.
206. Ibid, No. 21, 1.22 "Pitra parasuta - saṃāvarjītājapi Lakṣmyā svayam - abhiprātyālingita - vipula - vakṣasthalēna".
207. B. Sheik Ali, op. cit, pp. 64-65.
208. Ibid.
Shimoga records<sup>209</sup> and is not substantiated by contemporary Ganga or Cālukya records. Assuming that Durvinita waged several campaigns against the Pallavas, the outcome of these battles is not stated. Durvinita does claim victory but royal prasastis are not reliable on this point<sup>210</sup>.

Whatever the position of Avinita and Durvinita vis-a-vis the Pallavas and early Cālukyas, stereotyped phrases in their prasastis present them as overlords. Thus the Koḍunjēruvī grant charter states that Avinita was implicitly obeyed by his feudal lords (asambhrāmahavanamita samasta - sāmanta - maṇḍalasya)<sup>211</sup> while the Peṇḍa-ur Grant inscription describes Durvinita as one "whose feet were coloured by the tiara of the kings kneeling before him in fear"<sup>212</sup>. Similarly, the Kiṇuḳārēkoḷi grant charter of Muśkara, his son and successor is described as having "feet which were adorned by the juice of the flowers of garlands adorning the heads of many lords of earth defeated by him"<sup>213</sup>.

A lithic inscription from Śeruguṇḍa (Chikmagalūr taluk, district), refers to a younger son of Nirvinīta (Durvinīta?) who was crowned with the Kongapi paṭṭa (crown) by Kāḍuvaṭṭi (Pallava) and Vallavarasa (the Cālukya)<sup>214</sup>. It is possible that this younger son was identical with Polavīra whose Tagare plates<sup>215</sup> relate to the same area as the Śeruguṇḍa inscription.

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<sup>209</sup> EC VIII (old ed) Nr 35 is cited by Sheik Ali in this context.


<sup>211</sup> K.V. Ramesh op. cit., No. 15, 1.17.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, No. 19, 11. 34 - 25.

<sup>213</sup> K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 158, 11 33-35

<sup>214</sup> EC VI (old ed) Cm. 50, K.V. Ramesh for some unspecified reason opines that Kāḍuvaṭṭi here refers to the Nōḷamba, vide K.V. Ramesh, op. cit, No. 26, fn 2.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, No. 27.
From these records it is clear that a cadet line of the Gangas established itself in the Bēḷūr - Chikmagalūr tract in a subordinate capacity although it is not apparent whether their overlords were the Pallavas or Cāḷukyas. We have no evidence, moreover to determine how long this collateral branch of the Gangas lasted. Muṣkara and his descendants continued to hold the southern part of the western division - the area around Talakāḍ, the Keregōḍu viṣaya (Maṇḍya district), the Punnāḍu and Pāṇāḍa territories together with the eastern division.

Bhūvikrama and his younger brother and successor Śivamāra I were possibly the subordinate allies of the Cāḷukyas. Bhūvikrama (AD 609-679) was probably the Ganga king mentioned in the Aihoḷe inscription as having been subjected to Cāḷukya overlordship. This is not supported by the Bedirūr Grant charter of this monarch. However, Bhūvikrama claims to have defeated the Pallava king at Viḷānde. While it is not clear whether this expedition was undertaken in cooperation with the Cāḷukyas, the Jangamārahallī inscription (Pāvagaḍa taluk, Tumkur district) indicates unambiguously that a Ganga contingent accompanied Vikramādiṭya II Cāḷukya when he invaded the Pallavas.

On the other hand it is possible that the Gangas who were reduced to vassalage by the Cāḷukyas belonged to a collateral lineage. Certainly, the Ganga chief Madhava who married Vikramādiṭya I’s brothers' daughter cannot be identified with a prince of the main line of the Gangas.

217. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit. No. 28, the Kallūr inscription of Śrīvikrama (Srīnivāspur taluk, Kōlār district) and Bēdirūr Grant of Bhūvikrama, Ibid No. 29 indicate control over the Eastern division.
220. ASMAR 1941, p 220-221.
221. ASMAR 1939, pp. 129-137 11.27-29.
Filiation was a continuous process. When Bhūvikrama was succeeded in AD 679 by his younger brother Navakāma Sivamāra (AD 679-725), Bhūvikrama's descendants apparently set up a subordinate principality in the Chikka-Ballāpura taluk of Kōlār district. In 808 AD, the scion of this branch had acknowledged the suzerainty of Gōvinda III Rastrakūta.

By AD 725, the Gangas held both the Eastern and Western divisions which together came to be designated the Ninety six thousand country (shanavaṭi sahasra visaya) in the records of this period and later, as Gangavādi - 96000. Both conquest and matrimonial alliances were employed for territorial acquisition.

Even as the Gangas emerged as overlords in this territory, their own political status vis-a-vis the external powers, the Pallavas and Cālukyas, appears unclear. The Ganga records do not acknowledge the overlordship of any other dynasty but they appear to have cooperated with the Cālukyas in their campaigns against the Pallavas. The numerous collateral branches of the Ganga lineage for which we have evidence appear to have acknowledged the overlordship either of the sovereign branch of the Garīgas or of the Cālukyas and Pallavas.

The majority of these first phase inscriptions record grants of land and of whole villages to brāhmaṇas. In most cases, these charters merely state that the grant was made in accordance with the brahmadēya system (brahmadēya kramēna) which probably meant

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222. Henige has argued that inscriptional genealogies generally practice collateral suppression. He consequently attacks the general assumption that genealogies are also king lists. However, Ganga copper plates are king lists since they incorporate all the rulers, collaterals included, who preceded the executors of the particular charter. David P. Henige "Some Phantom Dynasties of Early and Medieval India" in Bulletin of the school of Oriental and African Studies Vol 38, No. 3, (1975) p. 538, 548-9.

223. EC XVII CB 66.

224. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit. No. 2, the Kaṇḍasāla grant No. 6, the Kudilliyan grant, No. 7 the Chukutṭūr grant, No. 8, the Penukonda plates etc.
that the granted land was constituted as a tax free holding. In some inscriptions however, the gift village is specifically said to have been freed from all hindrances (sarvaparihārā pariḥartavya). This is the case, for instance with the Beṇḍigāhāḷī plates of Vijaya-Kṛṣṇavarman, the Noṇamangāla plates of Mādhavavarman II (Talakāḍ branch), and the Hosakōṭe plates of Avinīta. The Uttarūr plates and the Gummareṇḍipura plates of Durviniṇa register gifts of villages which were free of thirty-two types of hindrances. (dvātrimsat pariḥāra samanvita).

Ganga copper plates do not specify the exemptions covered under these blanket phrases - sarva pariḥāra and dvātrimsat pariḥāra. Contemporary Kadamba records are more explicit on this score. Thus the Hīnāhebbāgilu plates (Piriyapatna taluk, Mysore district) of Kadamba Vijaya Śiva Mrgēśavarman register the gift of Kirunirilli village to Pingālasvāmi of Aupagahāni gotra. The gift carried the privileges of abhaṭa pravēṣa (freedom from the entry of royal agents), antaḥkara viṣṭikam (exemptions from internal taxes and forced labour) and pariḥṛta pangōṭkōṭam (exemption from all taxes and levies payable to the king). Similarly, the Malavāḷī Pillar inscription records the grant of Somapaṭṭi, Konginagara, Vēgūr and several other places by Kadamba Śivaskandavarman to


227. Ibid No. 10, 11 20-21


229. Ibid. No. 21, 1.31

230. Ibid. No.24, 1.35

231. EC IV (new ed) pp. 49.

232. Ibid 11.17-18; vide D.C. Sircar, op. cit., q.v. abhaṭa pravēṣa Appendix I.

233. Ibid, q.v. antaḥkara.

234. Ibid, q.v. Panga, utkōṭa Panga is explained as one-fourth of produce sometimes collected from rent-free holdings of brahmaṇas or deities while utkōṭa is customary presents made to the king.
the Mātāpataṅga god. A-bhata-pravesa, samsiddhikam and sarva-parihāra are the privileges mentioned in this context. Samsiddhikam is unfortunately left unexplained.235

Likewise the Hiresakuna copper plates (Sorab taluk, Shimoga district) of Mrgēśavarman Kadamba which record the grant of Kadajalakāṇi grāma to a brāhmaṇa was declared free of all hindrances (sarva-parihāra) and was not to be entered by the royal agents such as bhatas (a-bhata-pravesa).236 The Kūḍāgere plates (Sagar taluk, Shimoga district) of Kadamba Vijaya Śiva Māndhatrivarman which register the donation of twenty nivartttanas of wet land (Kēdāra) specify abhata-pravesam, antahkara-visitikam and sukhatvavasau-dana among the conditions of the grant.237 Sukhatvavasaudana implied provision of cot and shelter to the king or landlord or to the touring officers.238 Finally, we have the Sorab copper plates of Vinayāditya Cāḻukya of AD 692 which record the grant of Sālivoge village in Edevōjāḷ viṣaya at the request of Citravāhana, the son of Guṇasāgara Āḷupendra.239 The granted village was made free of all hindrances (sa-badhā-parihāra)240 exempted from taxes (a-karam)241 and the entry of royal soldiers (a-bhata-pravesa). Moreover all taxes payable in cash were transferred to the donee (sa-hiranyam).242

Grants carrying such privileges created landed estates within which the royal writ no longer ran. Instead the beneficiaries gained control over the surplus produce of the land.
in the form of taxes, in kind and in cash without any liability to pay taxes to the state. In Northern and Central India this had the effect of weakening the central authority and creating a class of landed intermediaries between the king and the peasants. However, in areas where state society was but newly established, Kulke has suggested that the function of the brāhmaṇa donees was "the propagation of the new ideal of Hindu Kingship and hierarchically structured caste society with the new Hindu rulers and priests at the top. In a modern sense they were also responsible for the erection of the whole infrastructure of the new Kingdom, particularly its administration." This appears to be substantially correct so far as Southern Karnataka is concerned.

Brāhmaṇas had a significant representation at the Ganga court. A brāhmaṇa Sōmaśarman held the position of sarvarahasyādhikṛta (privy councillor) under Mādhavavarman I and is mentioned in both the Śāsanakōta plates and the Kaṇḍāśala grant inscription of that monarch as the scribe. Similarly, the Kuḍāla grant charter of Kṛṣṇavarman (Kaivāra branch) was written by Eragaśarman the sarvamantradhikṛta. But it is the Keregalur copper plates of Mādhavavarman II (Talakād branch) which most strikingly bear out the significant role played by brāhmaṇa donees in administration.

245. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit, No. 2, the Kaṇḍāśala grant, 1 21, also vide D.C. Sircar, Indian Epigraphical Glossary (I.E.G) q.v. rahasyādhikṛta.
247. Ibid, No. 2, 1. 21
248. Ibid, No. 6, 1. 28. In the opinion of K.V. Ramesh, sarvamantradhikṛta refers to the same office as is signified by the designation sarvarahasyādhikṛta Ibid, p 6, fn 2.
249. EC VIII (new ed) Hn 10.
This record registers the gift of five villages in Vallāvi - 8000 and tenth share of the taxes of Kirumūndānāri nakara in Dēvalge viṣaya to twenty - two families of brāhmaṇas versed in the six duties and the study of the vēdas and employed within the palace enclosure (prāśāda - prākāra - baddhōdyōgānām), adept in counsel and the determination of the usage to be followed, acting as envoys, advising on making alliances of wars, determining with whom to ally and when to keep quiet after proclaiming war (vīghṛyāsana), how to march forth to battle in combination with others and how to attack the enemy in the rear, skilled in the protection of the maṇḍala (kingdom), in wielding the implements of war, in the construction of fortresses, in governing rural areas (janapada), treasury (Kōśa) and urban areas (paura),... lords over men, protectors of varṇasramadharmā, chiefs, lords over Manigrāma śṛṇi and over the citizens of the four subordinate districts (catuh - sāmanta - dēśa) of Tegure, Amaniya, Nandyāla and Simbāla,... adept in sacrifices to the gods and the manes, deeply versed in the puṣṭa...and uci...edas, in uttering the words purified by sacred formulae, engaged in congregational services, and lords over the merchants of the Tuviyal group (Tuviyal - śreṣṭhi - sarvādhyakṣa)” 250.

Apart from being described in customary terms as being well-versed in the Vēdas, the donees of this record were also rulers of subordinate districts and the King's advisers owing to their administrative expertise. The present charter had the effect of further extending their domain.

It is probably the same group of brāhmaṇas or their descendants who are referred to in the Koḍunjēravu grant charter of Avinīta as the cāturvaidyas and other important personages (pardhāna - puruṣa) belonging to Maṇiyadegeure, Nandiyāla, Śimpāla, Nandaře, Madanda, Mulōrompi, Manali, Marugare, Gamjenādū, Nirgunṛa, Celle, Velgōla and Sēndraka 251 Viṣayas. The first four units mentioned are the same as those mentioned in the Keregalur copper plates. The people of these districts, together with the cāturvaidyas are again mentioned in the Sālīggaṃe charter of Durvinița as the witnesses to the gift 252.

250. Ibid, 11. 11-16, 21 -28 Translation on p 593.


Likewise, the mahāmanusyas of Māpiya, Tegure, Asīmbāla, Nandiyāla, etc. and the cāturvaidyas are cited as witnesses to the Nallālam grant of the fortieth year of the reign of Durvinita.\footnote{253. Ibid No. 25, I.36 "Maṇiyaṭegure - Asīmbāla - Nandyālādyanēka Mahāmanusya pratyakṣam Sakala - cāturvaidya samakṣam".}

It is not altogether clear whether the mahamanusyas and pradhāna puruṣas of these units were identical with the cāturvaidyas who are mentioned conjointly with them on each occasion.

Cāturvaidyas were probably brāhmaṇas versed in all four Vēdas. This is brought out by the Śisavai charter of Gōvinda III Rāṣṭrakūṭa which mentions Viṣṇucaturvedin who is said to belong to a family of cāturvaidyas.\footnote{254. EI XXIII, p. 205.} Another record of the same monarch registers a grant to Bhaṭṭa Rāṣṭiyappa who belonged to a family of Traividyas which the editor, V.B. Kolte interprets as signifying knowledge of three Vēdas.\footnote{255. EI XXXII, No. 18, p.} At all events, the cāturvaidyas had a salient presence in the court of Mādhavavarman II (Talakād branch) and his immediate successors.

It is perhaps no coincidence that it is precisely Mādhavavarman II of the Talakād branch, his son Avinīta and grandson Durvinita who are described in their prāṣastis as maintainers of the ideal brahmanical social order, the varṇaśramadharma. In classical epic sources, the maintenance of varṇaśramadharma was ensured by the administration of danda nīti generating prosperity in the Kingdom. Its neglect was thought to bring on the Kali age with its concomitant unrighteousness, varna - samkāra and natural calamities.\footnote{256. K.M. Ganguli (translation), The Mahabharata of Krishna Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, 4th (ed), New Delhi 1981, Vol. VIII, Śānti Parva, Sec. 69, P. 154.} It is in this context that the prāṣastis of these three early Ganga monarchs have to be viewed. Thus, the Nopamangalā plates of Avinīta laud Mādhavavarman II as having been "ever engaged in the task of uplifting righteousness which had been submerged in the mud and
mire of the Kāli Age. (Kaliyuga - balāvamagna - dharmoddharapa - nitya - sannadhasya)"²⁵⁷. Avinti himself is described in the same record as being "alert in administering his Kingdom and the very Yudhiṣṭhira of this age". (Prajā-paripālana - Kula parikara - bandhena - kim bahunā idam - kāla Yudhiṣṭhirēṇa)"²⁵⁸. Durnivinti's copper plate charters describe him not merely as the Yudhiṣṭhira²⁵⁹ or Māndhāta²⁶⁰ of this age but state that he was "as good as Manu in meting out proper punishments and was the protector of castes and the various stages of life" (Yathārha-daṇḍatayānukṛta Vaivasvatenā Varnaśramābhi rakṣinā)²⁶¹.

Another aspect of the royal image where brahminical influence is clearly discernible is in claims to the performance of vajñās such as the hiranyagarbha and the aśvamēḍha. The performance of these sacrifices was a time-honoured method by which kings could claim Kṣatriya status and overlordship. In regions undergoing the transition from the pre-state to the state society stage, the performance of the hiranyagarbha particularly, lent respectability to the nascent ruling lineages²⁶². Unlike their contemporaries, the Pallavas and the Kadambas, the Gangas by and large do not make such claims. But the Koṇunjēruvu grant of Avinti and all succeeding Ganga copper plate charters conspicuously refer to his relation to Kṛṣṇavarmā Kadamba "whose body had been bathed in the waters of the uninterrupted horse-sacrifices he had performed (avichinn - āśvamēḍha - āvabhṛtha - abhiṣikta)"²⁶³.

²⁵⁷. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 12, 1.15.
²⁵⁹. Ibid, No.18, 1.37.
²⁶⁰. Ibid, No. 20, 1.38.
²⁶¹. Ibid, No. 18. 11. 34-35.
The first reference to a Ganga having performed sacrifices comes from the Nallālam grant of Durvinita's fortieth regnal year. This record states that Durvinita "had performed every year numerous special religious sacrifices and had been anointed by the waters of the great sacrifice called hiranyagarbha". Strangely, this claim is not repeated in any subsequent Ganga record. The same fate, it may be recalled, had overtaken Durvinita's innovative claim to Viṣṇi ancestry made in his Gummareḍḍipura plates, also issued in the fortieth year of his reign.

Thereafter, as Kosambi points out, the tulāpurusadāna and similar mahādānas become commoner than the hiranyagarbha. This is borne out by the Agali grant of Śripuruṣa Ganga of AD 748 which state that "the interior of his palace echoed the sounds of the religious ceremonies accompanying the great gifts made by him everyday".

After Śripuruṣa, no Ganga monarch claims to have performed these rites. This corroborates the point made earlier about the brahmanical influence being at its zenith in the reigns of Mādhavavarman II and his successors. Subsequently, the Purānic bhakti ideology gained the upper hand.

Although the majority of the first phase records are brahmadeya grants, inscriptions registering service tenure grants are not unknown. Thus, the Kallur inscription (Srinivaspur taluk, Kolar district) of Śrivikrama Ganga of the sixth to the seventh centuries AD, registers a blood grant (nettar paṭṭi) of one Kaṇḍuga of sowable paddy field to Pabhbhū who died in a battle while attempting to take Rakkasanuru. K.V. Ramesh is of the
opinion that *nettar patti* is the Kannada equivalent of *raktamanya*\(^{270}\) which has been interpreted as an endowment of rent-free land for the support of the descendants of warriors killed in battle\(^{271}\). Such grants became a legion in the second phase when they were designated as *kalnadu* (alternatively *Kalanatu*) and *balegalchu*.

The Będirūr grant of Bhūvikrama (from Yadāru, Śrīnivāspur taluk, Kolar district) dated AD 634-35 registers the gift of the village Będirūr in Hodalî viṣaya to Vikramāditya gāvunḍa who is designated the lord of Kōlālā viṣaya (Kōlār) and described as a *sat-śūdra*. The donee is described as the Kings’ valiant solider (*mama vira bhaṭa*)\(^{272}\).

Vikramāditya gāvunḍa thus appears to have been a vassal of Bhūvikrama, rendering military services to his overlord. The present charter extended his domains by adding to his lordship, Hodali viṣaya. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that Kōlār which was the original core of the Ganga Kingdom was now under the control of a feudatory. Perhaps this represents parts of the shift in the locus of the Ganga kingdom from the Eastern to the Western division. Also noteworthy is the peasant extraction of the donee as is indicated by the title of *gavunda*\(^{273}\).

Apart from these, we have several incidental references to feudatories who held various territorial units as their domains. The Beṇḍīgānahalī plates of Viḍāya Kṛṣṇavarma (Kaivāra branch) is the earliest available record to do so. This inscription registers the gift of Kuru-ūra village in the Peraṭi bhōga which was a subdivision of Paṇuvi viṣaya to Māṭṣarman. Peraṭi sēnāpati is said to have been instrumental in making the grant (pradāpayat)\(^{274}\). K.V. Ramesh is of the opinion that Peraṭi was not likely to be the proper name of the person holding the office of the sēnāpati but was possibly used to designate the

\(^{270}\) Ibid, p. 110, fn. 1.
\(^{271}\) D.C. Sircar, op. cit., q.v. Raktamanya.
\(^{272}\) K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 29, 11, 35 - 38. "Kōlālā viṣayādhiparasa purvinām sat - śūdraḥ... Māragāvunḍan tasya sūnum mama vīrabhaṭa Vikramāditya gāvunḍasya Hodali viṣaye Będirūr mayā dattam".
\(^{273}\) F. Kittel, A Kannada - English Dictionary, q.v. gāvuḍa
\(^{274}\) K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 5, 11. 12 - 18
commander in charge of the Peraṭi bhōga. The same record mentions Māṭrvarman, the son of Carakki - Murasa - Kella the writer of the copper plates. Kella was the surname of a chiefly family from the Kanara and Konkan coast.

The Chukuttūr grant of Simhavarman (Kaivāra branch) refers to Apāpa the lord of Bānapura as the writer of the record. The same individual is mentioned in the same capacity in the Koḍunjeruvu grant charter of Aṇīnīta also. Similarly, the Mejēkōte plates of Mādhavavarman II (Talakād branch) were written by Cārudatta senāpatī.

It is the Sālīgāme grant of Durviniṭa which is the most informative in this context. This record enumerates Perbbāna - Muttarasar, Siyavallavarasar, Petta - ella - sāmantar and Attānī as witnesses. A similar list of witnesses in the Kulagāna plates, which register grants of land to the caitya at Kellipūsūr, includes the Twelve of Kellipūsūr, the corporate body of its inhabitants, the Five sāmantas (Aysāmantā) and the Four Attānī (Nālattānī). Likewise, the Tagare plates of Polavīra mentions Kannelarasā as a witness together with the Mahājanas of Ānandūra and Sikkamba.

While Perbbāna Muttarasa, Siyavallavarasar and Kannēlarasa were clearly subordinate rulers as were the Five Sāmantas, it is not altogether clear who the

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277. Ibid, p. 18, fn 1
278. Ibid, No. 7, 1.27
279. Ibid, No. 15, 1.31.
280. Ibid, No. 11, 1.81
281. Ibid, No. 23, LL 33-35 "Perbbāna Muttarasarum Siyavalla varasarum. ariye Petta-ella-sāmantarum Attāniyum sākṣi"
283. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit, No. 27, l. 11-12.
284. F. Kittel, op. cit, q.v. arasa - king; lord; the Tadbhava form of rāja.
Attāni were. Some eighth century records from Kōlār district refer to individuals named Attāni. The first from Meḍutambihalli (Kōlār taluk) registers a grant of land made by Jeṭṭān, the ruler of Puttūr to Attāni of Puttūr.286 Another record from Meḍutambihalli features Attāni of Puttūr in the capacity of a donor, in association with Pettarasa. Gifts of land and a house were made to the dependents of a hero who had died in a cattle raid in which the people of Puttūr appear to have participated287. Likewise, the Balla inscription (Mōḷbāgal taluk, Kōlār district) of the close of the eighth century registers the gift of rice fields to a cowherd. The donors were Attāni and Māsarakuṭiyaru who were pleased at the valour of the hero288. From available evidence then, the Attāni appear to have been local notables who were initially involved as witnesses in the royal grants and later donated lands themselves.

Other references to subordinates come from the Bēdirūr Grant of Bhūvikrama which mention two dāṇḍādhīpas as executors of the grant (ītham kṛtaṃ)289; the Navalai inscription of his successor Śivamāra I (from Harūr taluk, Dharmapuri district), which refers to the rule of Kanda Vaṇṇādiyaraiyar over Puṟamalai Nāḍu290, the Hallegere plates (Maṇḍya taluk, district) of the same monarch which register the grant of a village of the request of Jayavrddhi and Pallavādhirāja, the sons of Pallava yuvārāja291 and finally, the Kulagāṇa plates which mention Kaṇṭamman of Gāṇje nāḍu as the ruler of Koḍugūr nāḍu; the vovgas of Oramkal and Sīṃpāl who were together ruling Tuppūr and the Pallava crown prince (Pallavēlarasa) as the donors292. The references to the Pallava crown prince in the

285. D.C. Sircar, op. cit, q.v. samanta, title of feudatory rulers; feudatories smaller than raja, a subordinate chief.
286. EC X (old ed) Kl. 229.
288. Ibid, Mb 92
290. Ibid, No. 30.
291. EC VII (new ed) Md 35, 11. 24 - 25
292. EC IV (new ed) Ch 347, 11. 27 - 28
Haïlegere and Keḷagāṇa plates is interesting. It is possible that this prince was taken hostage by the Gangas during their campaign against the Pallavas which was undertaken by Bhūvikrama. The ṣoygaś on the other hand appear to have been drawn from the local elite. K.V. Ramesh is of the opinion that ṣoyga was a corruption of the Sanskrit bhogya and was used in the sense of bhukti in Kannada epigraphs. Thus, the ṣoygaś of Oramkal and Śimpāl probably enjoyed the income from those places and were, in addition the joint administrators of Tuppūr. Kāṇṇamman of Gaṇjenāḍu possibly had a similar origin and was, additionally the ruler (āḷ) of another nāḍu.

It is noteworthy that while initially, the courtiers whether brāhmaṇa or non-brāhmaṇa, were associated with royal grants only as executors or writers or witnesses, they were themselves donating land towards the close of the first phase, albeit with the King's permission. A similar point is made by Dirks in his study of Pallava political and social structure. He has bifurcated the Pallava reign period into two phases, the first lasting from the third to the seventh centuries AD and the second from the seventh to the tenth on the basis of changes in ritual. The first phase, in his opinion was marked by the pre-eminence of yajña as the constitutive royal ritual - it not merely legitimised the king's rule but gave him the status of suzerain. Similarly, the political personages of the realm were constituted in their positions by their role in the royal dāna. The king's relatives made grants themselves, the courtiers received particular titles as a result of their executing or transmitting the royal grant, while a third category of chiefs gave expression to their subordination by their acquiescence to the royal grant. In the second phase, however, descent (vamsa) rather than yajña became the principle on which sovereignty was claimed even though dāna too continued to be an expression, in his opinion, of overlordship. However, in the second phase the vassal chiefs are identified by name, the territory ruled by them are mentioned and they become participants in the royal grant instead of a mere

294. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit, No. 35, p 139, fn 3
295. Ibid, L. 28
executor by requesting (vįj̱apati) the king to make the grant. This in Dirks' view amounts to shared sovereignty between the king and the chief. 296

The significance of yajñas, the predominance of the brahminical idiom in the royal prakśastis of the first phase, and the possible use of the royal gifts as an integrative device have been noted earlier in the context of southern Karnāṭaka. That the subordinate chiefs are mentioned in the first phase records only in the context of the royal gift cannot be denied. But to conclude from this that their political position was constituted by the nature and degree of their participation in the king's gift-giving ritual would be to take an over-restricted view of early medieval polity. The evidence from Southern Karnāṭaka indicates fairly unambiguously that the subordinate chiefs had their own domains. Whether they were agents of the centre delegated to the periphery to ensure continued control, or were autochthonous chiefs subjugated militarily is not quite clear. 297

Moreover, in Southern Karnāṭaka at least, state society was first introduced under the aegis of the Gaṅgas and their brāhmaṇa allies. They introduced to the autochthonous peoples here a highly Sanskritized and brāhmaṇical culture, as indicated by the earliest Ganga charters. With growing acculturation and the spread of literacy, more and more of the emergent tribal elite appropriated royal symbols and modes of political control. 298 These included issue of genealogies and king lists, participation in gift giving, etc. This would explain the increased frequency of references to subordinate chiefs towards the close


297. Michael Mann, op. cit, p 143 - 44 points out that the logistical problems precluded direct control over the entire territory from the centre and this necessitated either rule through the conquered local clients or the dispersal of the army commanders and troops over the realm.

of the first phase. Also significant is the fact that most of these references occur in the grant portion of the copper plate charters which increasingly were in the vernacular. In the second phase, such vernacular inscriptions predominated numerically, with the local chiefs and notables making grants, often without referring to their overlord. Their role was not then, restricted to vijñāṭī.

By the beginning of the eighth century, then, the Garīgas had emerged as a subregional power of some importance. They were overlords to an array of subordinate chiefly lineages such as the Nōlambas and Bāṇas, while they themselves were possibly subordinate allies to the Cāḷukyas of Vatāpi.
C) CONTEST FOR HEGEMONY

(A.D. 725 to AD 1030)

The second phase may be said to have begun with Śripuruṣa. Early in his reign (AD 725 - 788), a Ganga contingent led by his son Duggamāra Ereyappor joined Vikramāditya II Cālukya in his campaign against the Pallava ruler, Paramēśvaravarman. This was but one of several Ganga campaigns against the Pallavas which marked the reign of Śripuruṣa. In one of these Paramēśvaravarman was apparently slain. One of the Shimoga records state that the Gangas then appropriated the traditional Pallava title of Permāṇāṭi. However, a perusal of Ganga records shows that it was under Satyavākya Rācamalla I that the title of Permāṇāṭi came to be applied to the Gangas. However, certain lithic inscriptions apply the sovereign titles of Mahāraja Paramēśvara bhaṭāra to Śripuruṣa as do the Agali Grant and the Devarahalli plates. Nevertheless, the titles of Mahāraja and Prthvi - Kongani Mahāraja too continued to be applied. It was again Rācamalla I who was consistent in his use of sovereign titles.

The contest with the Pallavas does not seem to have resulted in territorial acquisitions for long. Śripuruṣa possibly gained some territory upto Peḻkulikoṭai in the early years of Nandivarman Pallavamalla with the aid of a minor Ganga chieftain and a Bāṇa. However, this territory (around Kuliṅṭikī, in modern Gugiyanam taluk, North Arcot district) was wrested by the Pallava monarch sometime in the middle of the eighth century.

299. Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy (ARIE) 1943-44; Inscription No.22 f, p.90


301. EC VIII (old ed) Nr 35.

302. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 90, ll. 103-104

303. EC X (old ed), Mb 80; EC IV (new ed) Ch 126, K.V. Ramesh, op. cit, No. 53.

304. K.V. Ramesh, op cit. No. 42 L. 43 although L. 35 applies the more humble title of Prthvi - Kongani Mahāraja

305. EC VII, (new ed), Ng 149, l. 59
The minor Ganga chief in actual control was slain and the Bāṇa acknowledged Pallava suzerainty. 

Pāṇḍyan records indicate that the Gaṅga hold over the Kongu region was threatened by a Pāṇḍyan invasion in which the Gangas and their Cāḷukyan ally were worsted. Peace was apparently concluded by a matrimonial alliance in which a Gaṅga princess was given in marriage to Pāṇḍya Rājasimha's son.

It is not altogether clear whether the Gangas retained Kongu after this. The Salem plates of Śripuruṣa which are dated AD 771 and record the grant of village Komaramangala in Pudukanda viṣaya (to be situated in the Kongu region) as a brahmadeya for the benefit of Indarāja, the brother of Kāṇciyabbā, the queen of Duggamāra Ereyappa, the son of Śripuruṣa, would indicate that Kongu desa remained part of the Ganga dominions. This inscription clearly postdates the Pāṇḍyan war in which the Cāḷukyas too are said to have been involved. By AD 771 the Cāḷukyas had been overthrown and replaced by the Rāṣṭrakūtas.

With the accession of the Rāṣṭrakūtas, a lengthy struggle to reduce the Gangas to submission commenced, which was to be the predominant theme of Ganga history for the next two centuries. The Tālegaoon plates of Rāṣṭrakūta Kṛṣṇa I were issued from Māṇypura, a Ganga capital under Śripuruṣa and attests to the initial success of the expedition. As Mann has pointed out the army in its march usually managed to conquer wide territories which, however, could not be controlled effectively from the centre owing to logistical constraints once the campaign was over. It was perhaps this compulsion that induced most sovereigns to remain in almost perpetual campaigning motion.

306. EI XXII, pp. 110 ff.
307. K.A.N. Sastri, op.cit, p. 156.
308. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit. No. 47, 11.43-45; 47-54.
Hence the inscriptive references to skandhāvāras. The Nandi plates of Śripuruṣa himself were issued from the royal camp at Pērūr310 while the Agāli Grant was made when he was stationed at the victorious camp at Köpigil nagara. (Köpigil - nagaram adhivasati vijaya skandhāvāre)311. Likewise, the Jávali plates of AD 750-51 were issued from the victorious camp at the village Mānne312 (Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore district). It was this village Mānne, which was later renamed Mānya nagara, that grew to be a major centre of Ganga power under Śripuruṣa. As mentioned earlier, the Tālegaon plates of Kṛṣṇa I313 were issued from Mānya pura in AD 768 betokening the success of his expedition. However his progress through Ganga domains was not unopposed. Several inscriptions from Tumkur district indicate that the feudal levies of the Gangas were mustered in defence314. Among the feudatories participating in these battles with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas at Pīrchanūr and Bāgeylīr we may mention Śiyagella the ruler of Marugārā nāḍu -300315. Muttarasa, Nāgatarasa316, Jáṭiya Muttarasa317, Kittarasa and Pulikaḍa - arasa318 Marugārā nāḍu and Kesumarātu nāḍu both of which were ruled by Śiyagella apparently bore the brunt of the invasion, since the majority of the Hiregūḍḍagal hero stones record the death of his retainers.

Kṛṣṇa I does not appear to have retained any part of Gangavādi after his return to his own dominions. Dhrūva Rāṣṭrakūṭa and his successor Gōvinda III were more successful in this regard. Dhrūva's invasion is to be dated to the post 788 AD period, during the reign of Śivamāra II who had succeeded Śripuruṣa after a fratricidal struggle with Duggamāra.

310. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 41, ll. 6-7
311. Ibid, No. 42, l. 37.
312. EC VI (old ed) Mg 36, l. 37.
313. EL XIII, No. 25, pp 275-80
314. EC XII (old ed) Mi 99 "Gangavādiyāmege Rāṭṭar ēḷa... samasta prabhīṭigaṭge Kēḷī vandu..."
316. EC XVI (rev. ed) Tm 95
317. EC XII (old ed) Mi 99
318. EC XVI (rev. ed) Tm 91
The invasion ended disastrously for Śivamāra since he was captured and imprisoned. The Maṇḍe plates of his son Yuvarāja Mārasimha claim that he defeated the cavalry of Dhora (Dhruva) at Mudugundur. Even if this is accepted the overall result of Dhruva's campaign was that the Ganga domains passed into Rāṣṭrakūta hands and Stambha Raṇāvalōka, Dhruva's son was placed in charge of them.

After the abdication or death of Dhruva, a succession dispute developed in the Rāṣṭrakūta empire between Gōvinda III, his nominated successor and Stambha Raṇāvalōka, the governor of Gangavādi. Govinda III thereupon released Śivamāra and crowned him together with Nandivarman Pallava, a fact mentioned in the Maṇḍe plates of Mārasimha. But when Śivamāra threw his lot with Stambha Raṇāvalōka, he was recaptured and imprisoned once more. Raṇāvalōka, though defeated by Gōvinda continued to rule Gangavādi until at least AD 808, the date of the Badaneguppe grant. He was succeeded by a Rāṣṭrakūta feudatory, Cākiriṇa by name, whose Kadaba plates designate him as adhiraja of Ganga Mandala. Cākiriṇa's nephew, Vimaladitya of the Cālukya vamsa, was ruling Kuṇḍalī under him. The Rāṣṭrakūtas were thus building up their own support base in Southern Karnāṭaka.

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319. ASMAR 1929, p. 104, No. 37. perhaps refers to this struggle for succession.

320. ASMAR 1926, p.88.

321. K.V. Ramesh, No. 49, ll. 57-58

322. ASMAR 1926, pp 87-88


324. EC III (new ed) Nj 278, ll. 30-31

325. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit, No. 49, ll. 64-66.

326. EC III (new ed) Nj 278, ll. 30-33.

327. Ibid

328. EI IV, No.49 pp 338-49
However, the Gangas retained some pockets. The Yuvarāja Mārasimha, son of Sivamāra II, apparently held territory around Mānyapura329 and perhaps the Paṇuvi viṣaya330 as well. An inscription from Marase (Mysore taluk, district) registers a grant to the goddess Bhagavati set up there by Bijāta331. He has been identified with Vijayāditya, the younger brother of Sivamāra II by the editor of the Mysore Archaeological Survey Report332. It was his son, Rācamalla I who "freed his kingdom of the occupation of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and thereby regained mastery over his own hegemony and won fame"333 in AD 819. However, it would seem that a portion of the Ganga domains remained with the Rāṣṭrakūṭa feudatory Bankēśa334.

Rācamalla I strengthened his political base by entering into matrimonial alliances with the Nōlambas. Rācamalla himself married the younger sister of Nōlambādhīrāja Pōlācōra and gave his daughter Jāyabbe in marriage to him335. The Nōlambas now became the feudatories of the Gangas, having earlier been the vassals of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas336. A record from Kōlar refers to the rule of Nōlambādhīrāja over Ganga - 6000337 under Rācamalla's successor, Nītimārga Eṛeyanga I. Kuvalāla - 300, Ganga 6000 and smaller units had earlier been ruled by Duggamāra Eṛeyappa338, the son of Śripuruṣa. From the ninth century the Nōlambas became entrenched in this area which came to be designated over time, the Nōlambavāḍi 32,000 country339. With this, the locus of Ganga

329. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 49, 11. 112-113
331. EC V (new ed) My 186.
332. ASMAR 1929, No.38, pp. 105-106.
333. K.V. Ramesh, op. cit., No. 90, the Perjjarangi Charter of Rācamalla I, AD 819; v 10, 11 80 - 83
334. Ibid No. 113, Keregōḍi Rangāpura plates, v. 6, 11.34-35.
335. EC XII (old ed) Si 38
336. EC XI (old ed) Cl 33, 34.
337. EC X (old ed) KI 79.
338. EC X (old ed) Mb 80, Sp 57, 65, Mb225
339. EC X (old ed) Sp 59.
power shifted westwards even as Ganga lithic inscriptions commenced referring to them as Kuvalāla puravarēśvara and Nandagirinātha in token of their ancient association with the area.

The Rāṣṭrakūṭas under Amoghavarṣa made another attempt to recover Gangavāḍi when Bankēśa led his armies far into Ganga dominions, conquering Kēḍāla (Tumkur district) and forcing the Ganga to flee from his capital of Taḷavaṇaṇapura (Taḷakāḍ). However, rebellions in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa territories compelled Bankēśa to beat a retreat returning the political situation to status quo ante. This invasion by Bankēśa is mentioned in the Konnūr inscription of Amoghavarṣa340 but is not referred to in any Ganga record. The Ganga king in question appears to have been Nītimārga Egyanga I to judge from "Nītimārga Raṇavikrama"341 occurring in double entendre in verse 24. The Gangas on their part claim victory at the battle of Raḷiḷaṇa over the Rāṣṭrakūṭas342.

The net consequence of these skirmishes appears to have been the conclusion of a matrimonial alliance between the two dynasties, with Amoghavarṣa’s daughter being married to Būtuga I, the younger son of Nītimārga Egyanga I343. The Gangas on their part seem to have acknowledged the suzerainty of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa to judge from the title of Sakala - Prthvīvallabha appended to Amoghavarṣa in the Kereg69i Rangapura plates344.

This impression is strengthened by the Cikka Sārangi inscription (Tumkur taluk and district) of AD 903 which states that a feudatory of Akālavāra Kṛṣṇa II, Pracanda daṇḍanāyaka Śrī Dāmapaiya, was stationed at Maṇpe as general of the entire south (‘tenkaṇa - diśāvarkk - ella Daṇḍanāyakan āgi Maṇpeyol ire’)345. As mentioned earlier,

340. Eİ VI, No.4., pp. 25 ff, dated 860 AD.
341. Ibid, 11. 24-25
343. Ibid, 11. 62 - 63
344. Ibid, No. 113, 1. 62.
345. EC XVI (rev. ed) Tm 78, 11. 3-6
Manape or Manyapura was an eighth century Ganga capital\(^\text{346}\) That a Rāṣṭrakūṭa feudatory was stationed here with an army and made grants\(^\text{347}\) would indicate indubitably, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa overlordship over Gangavādi.

Under Būtuga II, and his successors, Marula and Mārasimha II, the subordination of the Gangas to the Rāṣṭrakūṭas is in no doubt. The Āṭakūr inscription commences with a reference to the reign of Kṛṣṇa III Rāṣṭrakūṭa\(^\text{348}\) and goes on to record the grant to Būtuga II of Banavase - 12,000, Bēlvōla - 300, Purigere - 300, Kiśukād - 70 and Bāge-nāḍ - 70 for having slain Rājāditya Cōla in battle\(^\text{349}\). The Kūḍlūr plates of Mārasimha II enumerate other services rendered to his overlord by Būtuga II. "He recovered from Lalleya the elephants, horses, the white umbrella and throne and restored them to Kṛṣṇa"\(^\text{350}\). He is also said to have "driven Emāṅgūṭa from his country, burnt down Tānjāpuri, Nālkēlo and other fortresses and given Kṛṣṇa lordly elephants and horses"\(^\text{351}\).

No doubt a goodly share of this booty was appropriated by Būtuga himself.

His son and successor, Marula was the nephew and son-in-law of Kṛṣṇa III. One of the highlights of his reign which apparently was quite uneventful was the bestowal by the emperor (sakala mahīśa) of an umbrella (chatram) named Madanāvatāra never before obtained by and other king\(^\text{352}\).

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\(^{346}\) Vide Supra, p. 158.

\(^{347}\) EC XVII (rev. ed) Tm 78. The grants per se were made by a general (dandanāyaka) of one Durvinita together with certain corporate groups such as the Bhattavuttar - 1000, Beva 300 and Oleya - 500, but apparently with Dāmapaiya's sanction.

\(^{348}\) EL II, pp. 167 - 74, 11. 2-4.

\(^{349}\) Ibid, 11. 20-21.


\(^{351}\) Ibid, v. 24, 11. 89-90

His younger brother and successor, Mārasimha II was crowned in person by Kṛṣṇa III "on the grounds that he was quite worthy of union with the goddess of the Ganga Kingdom inherited from his ancestors" and that his head was "adorned with the ornaments of unswerving devotion and allegiance to his lord". The Kukkanur plates reveal that Mārasimha fully justified this faith. He set out on a northern expedition on the orders of king Cōḷāntaka and claims to have vanquished the Gūrjara king, Lalla, the lord of the Vindhyan ranges and Alla. He is further lauded for having ensured the coronation of king Indrarāja (IV) on the death of Kṛṣṇa III. The Śravanabelgōla eulogy of Cāvunḍarāya speaks of a campaign undertaken by Mārasimha II against Vajvilādeva by the order of king Indra. In spite of Mārasimha's loyal services, the Rāṣṭrākṣas were supplanted by the Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa in AD 973. Mārasimha passed away the following year having adopted the Jaina vow of samādhi-marapa.

The period following his death was one of political unrest. The Gangas had to contend with rebellious feudatories and invasions by the Cāḷukyas and Cōḷas. They concluded their political career as the subordinates of the Cōḷas as the Haḍe Būdanūr inscription indicates.

*353. Ibid, ll. 124-125, 141-42
*354. Ibid, ll. 136-137
*355. Ibid. No. 159, v. 34 - 35, ll. 121-27
*356. Ibid. No. 159, v. 38 - 39, ll. 128 - 133
*357. EC II (new ed) Sb 388
*358. ECII (new ed) SB 64.
*359. EC VII (new ed) Md 54