CONCLUSION
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This chapter primarily aims at briefly reviewing the main points that emerge out of our discussion in the preceding chapters. An attempt, however, will also be made to see how do they relate to the conventional or current historiography on early medieval India.

We began with an exercise in historiography, with reference to early medieval India in general and the Deccan in particular, so as to be able to define our problem in clear terms. The idea was not to present a detailed historiographical critique of the existing literature on agrarian history; rather we wished to make the point that the available models offer several generalizations about land grants and the nature of early medieval agrarian order which remain to be tested and substantiated at sub-regional levels. It is primarily, though not solely, the examination of some of those widely accepted generalizations in the light of epigraphic evidence of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period that our study has been concerned with.

In the first chapter we set out to delineate what is generally described in historical literature as empire/state/kingdom. The focus of the study was the geographical distribution of inscriptions of the different branches of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, including the Malkhed or the imperial branch, and the locational analysis of the places figuring in them. In this section, we chose to treat the data in chronological sequence that brought out several points that have important bearings on the way the territory/empire/kingdom has been conceptualized in both conventional and current historiography.

To begin with, our exercise indicates that the spatial domains of all the houses of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas were not static in time; the end points of their spatial domain kept shifting in space from one period to another. Thus, the territorial domain always remained an open entity in space.
Another point that our exercise highlights is that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa domain was not an undifferentiated political entity in space. There were differential organization and distribution of power within the territory, thereby implying spatial and temporal variation in the nature of control exercised by the central or imperial authority. These different powers had their own spatial domains, which were also not fixed, rather they were undergoing alignments and realignments. This calls into question the notion of the existence of a permanent core and periphery in a given political set up as visualized by the proponents of the Segmentary state model.

Apart from this, the most important point that our exercise brings out is the process and mechanism of integration of the disparate areas into the state structure. Contrary to the notion of fragmentation of central authority embedded in the feudal construct of the early medieval India, our exercise shows that the formation of the imperial domain of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas was the result of processes of integration; the mechanism by which this integration was achieved was lineage control. In the first chapter we have shown how as the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Malkhed acquired an imperial status, different members of the family branched out to different areas as sāmanta, mahāsāmanta, etc and it was through this lineage network that resources were mobilized for the sustenance of the Imperial power. There were, however, variations in the nature of mechanism of integration. In the case of three sub regions this was achieved through integrating local polities into the apparatus of the state. Notwithstanding these variations, our exercise brings out the process of integration rather than of fragmentation as the main characteristic of the imperial authority of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas.

Realizing the fact that the broad area demarcated as the domain of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas is too large to be geographically homogenous, we set out to examine the geographical profile of the area with a view to marking out such sub-regions within which the occurrence of geographical variation could be
Since the boundaries of the river basins have long term history and the possibility of the occurrence of variation is minimum, we marked out different sub-regions on the basis of basin area of the major river systems of the Deccan that become the subsequent spatial unit of analysis in our work. Apart from its well demarcated historical existence, the advantage with such regions was that they were neither too general and broad nor too specific and particular.

Our exercise, however, was not confined to examine the geographical profile of the territory alone. Once the units of study were demarcated, we attempted to see if these geographical units also corresponded to the domain of differential authority that existed within the Râșṭrakûtas Empire. Our exercise shows that in most cases there was frequent convergence of the boundaries of the domain of different authorities with those of the sub-regions. This exercise helped us to identify two different types of power zones viz. the area of direct control and the area where the authority of the Râșṭrakûtas was acknowledged. It may be pointed out that our records clearly show that there was nothing ritual about the differential power that the Râșṭrakûta central authority exercised in different areas.

In the second chapter we moved on to analyze the way agrarian space was organized within the territory of the Râșṭrakûtas. The central focus of our exercise was the pattern of geographical distribution of rural settlements—the basic unit of agrarian production. Apart from this, we also attempted to examine the mechanism through which apparently disparate settlements in space were organized and integrated into the larger authority structure called the state. In order to find out how their shifting patterns of organization correspond with changes in the power structure, we divided our exercise into two time segments. The first covered what may be termed as the period of the local houses of the Râșṭrakûtas, which ranges in time from c. A.D. 750 to c. A.D. 6th century. The second one comprises the period of the rule of the
house of the Malkhed branch of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas who acquired the status of a supra-local imperial power from c. A.D. 750 onwards.

The exercise brought out typological variations and also variations in the pattern of their geographical distribution. Our data further show that even the way these rural settlements were organized and integrated into the larger state structure was not the same everywhere. A comparative study of the organizational pattern of settlements of two different time segments also brings out the fact that once the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of the Malkhed metamorphosed themselves from local to imperial power, there was a greater emphasis on the integration of rural settlements. A clear indication of this is provided by the increased references to different types of administrative units within which the rural settlements were organized. An important development seems to have taken place in some pockets of the Malpraha Ghatprabha and the Tungabhadra basin. The extension of imperial domain into these areas possibly led to the extension of agrarian economy in areas that were dominated by pastoral economy. This is indicated by the availability of certain hero stones and inscriptions recording transfer of resources such as ghee. The boundary disputes, which are mentioned in hero stones possibly suggest that such rural settlements, which figure in the context of such disputes, were not old enough to have recognizable boundaries.

Apart from this, our data clearly show that neither the units of rural settlements nor the agrarian space within which they were located can be visualized as an undifferentiated unit of space as has generally been done by the colonial and nationalist historians. In fact, the various terms or suffixes that we get in our records in the context of rural settlements and also the way they are referred to in the charters are clear indications of how different rural settlements were viewed differently by the then rural society itself. Not only that, differentiation also existed among settlement units that were apparently of the same type.
One of the significant finds of this exercise has been the evidence of brahmanical settlements in different regions. This only shows that the migration of *brāhmaṇas* in our region pre-dated the event of land grant in our area of study.

Apart from this, the data that we have examined also makes it difficult to accept the thesis that the rural settlements began to have isolated and closed existence during the early medieval period. On the contrary, our evidence shows that members of one village not only owned land in other village, but also participated in various capacities on the occasion of resource transfer of different areas. Our exercise also shows that in may cases groups of rural settlements were organized into one administrative units and this must have involved interaction of these rural settlements at various levels. Further evidence of interaction of rural settlements is provided by the Kandhar inscriptions the details of which throw light on how one settlement can draw several types of settlements into a wider network of exchange.

Our exercise also brings to the fore different categories of donors having differential authority status. If on the one hand, we have sovereign authority making grants of villages, on the other hand certain individuals, whose authority status was not important enough to be mentioned in the charter, also figure as the donor. In between them, we also find different categories of subordinate authorities making grants. Added to this, we have references to several categories of people figuring in various capacities in the process of the grant. As is expected, they all did not enjoy the same proprietary rights; nonetheless they all did have some rights over the landed property.

Our data also show a considerable degree of *regional* variation in the composition of the donors. For example, while in the case of the Malpraha-Ghatprabha and the Tungabhadra region the dominant class of the donor consisted of local groups and local authorities of different types, in rest of
the regions most of the donation came from the sovereign authority. Our records also indicate that people having the same designation may not have the same right everywhere. For example while certain Mahasamata and samantas have been shown making donation entirely on the basis of their own authority, others having the same designation have been shown making right only after taking the consent of the apex authority.

Our exercise in this section therefore brought to light the differential rights enjoyed by different categories of people in different localities during the period of our study.

These findings can possibly be brought to bear upon the debate on the nature of landownership in the context of the early medieval India. For a long time the colonial and the nationalist historians, largely on the basis of textual evidence, have argued on the lines of the exclusive state-rights or individual rights over land in ancient India. Our data, however, points to the need of looking at the issue of land rights in terms of the hierarchy of rights rather than one group, individual or authority, having exclusive or absolute rights over land. Apart from this these evidences are also indicative of rural society being stratified one.

In the next chapter we have attempted to examine how far transfers of land and its resources along with rights and privileges have been able to alter the existing agrarian order. In this chapter we undertook a detail analysis of the nature of rights and privileges, generally known as parihāra, that were transferred in favour of different recipients along with the village/villages or land/lands. Along with this we also tried to construct a picture of the nature of composition of the recipients of those assignments. We end with a nodal analysis of the character of the Rastrakuta state formation in terms of its functionaries.

Considering the central objective of our exercise, we organized our data little differently in the sense that data of each region was been grouped
by century, which was further sub-grouped on the basis of authority involved in making the grants. The idea behind this was to see not only the regional distributions of various terms denoting rights and privileges but also to see if the rights to transfer certain rights and privileges were specific to certain authorities.

As was evident in earlier exercises, even in this section we found a considerable degree of regional variation in the rights and privileges that were delegated to the recipients along with the land/village. A chronological review of the list of rights and privileges though conveys the impression of a progressive increase in terms denoting rights and privileges, yet side by side we also notice gradual disappearances of some of the those terms which gave immunities to the recipient from the interference of state authority. This possibly shows that at no point of time the state was willing to let go all its control over the donated settlements.

Even this tendency of transferring more and more rights in favour of the donee was a phenomenon, which was confined to certain regions only. The regions like Malprabha-Ghatprabha basin, Tungabhadra basin and to a large extent even Kaveri basin reflect an entirely different picture.

Our analysis of the composition of recipients also brings out points which goes against the supposed migration of brâhmaṇa through land grant leading to the expansion in the agrarian economy. As far as the composition of the donee is concerned most of them were individual brâhmaṇa though their gōtra and śākhās were different. As far information about their home is concerned most of them have been described as vāstavya of a place, which was not far away from the locale of donation. In some cases we are told about their migration to the donated areas but we must remember that such cases were largely limited to individual brâhmaṇas. While assessing the impact of such migrations we must also keep in mind that our charters clearly indicate the existence of brâhmaṇa community in different region
before the grant was made. What is noteworthy is the fact that no record relating to the sub-regions of the Malprabha-Ghatprabha, Tungabhadra and Kaveri basin speaks about the migration of brāhmaṇa. In fact our records give us enough indication to believe that brāhmaṇas were already an integral part of the rural population in these regions and the manner of reference to the brāhmaṇas in the records of these regions hardly points to any sharp differentiation between them and other social groups.

Since the impression, from the phraseology used in the inscriptions, seems to be that the grants were mostly in the cultivated landscape, a violent upheaval in the social world of the villages through land grants seems unlikely, at least during the period. In addition, those who are mentioned in the records as already holding land or as witness on the occasion of the grant were actually participating in a way in the occasion. This does not seem to substantially alter their social status; rather, it seems to suggest new individuals as recipients of land joining their ranks of elite in rural society.

The data also brings into question the two of the important construct of feudal social formation such as:

In the last chapter we took up the analysis of the structure and the function of state and the nodal analysis supported by maps. The records that we have examined refer to different authorities in different capacities in the process of transaction. This occurrence of the references to a variety of authorities / officials in different contexts in the process of the transfer of landed properties and other resources points to the existence of multiple-layered authority structure through which the entire process was taking place. Apart from this, no less frequently mentioned in those charters were certain individuals or the representatives of certain social groups in different capacities. These evidences taken together are suggestive of the fact that the transfer of agrarian resources, land or otherwise, took place within an
existing societal and governmental structure and there were certain procedures that required to be followed before the grant, whatever may be the basis of the authority of its issue, became effective.

As far as the centers of authority are concerned, our study points to certain important changes over time. With the emergence of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Malkhed as an imperial power, we see the formation of several centers of authorities the nature of which was also varied. By the time of the ninth century, we not only notice increase in their numbers but also the emergence of an extra-local centers of authority.

Thus, some of the results of our study that we have summarized here raises doubt about many of the generalizations that exist regarding land grants, and the early medieval agrarian order and state. It also calls for taking up such sub-regional study in the context of other regions if we have to arrive at any clear picture of the early medieval agrarian order.