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Marriage, Kinship, And Political Hierarchy In The Evolution Of The Hoysala Family

Samana Gururaja
University of Pennsylvania

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Marriage, Kinship, And Political Hierarchy In The Evolution Of The Hoysala Family

Abstract
The Hoysala family ruled in southern India, in the present-day state of Karnataka from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. Previous studies of this family and other contemporary royal households have primarily focused on establishing a chronology for the lineage and demonstrating how kingship and administration were mutually constituted. This dissertation expands the scope of study for royal households by examining how the marriage and kinship functioned as essential components of political hierarchy, and by de-centering the role of the king and kinship, examine how royal families functioned as dynamic, unstable, and constantly shifting entities. The constant conflict that occurred between smaller, successor states after the fall of the relatively large, centralized Cōḷa and Cāḷukya states collapsed has generally been characterized in a negative light, but as the dissertation reveals, this conflict was not regarded in the light of a problem to be solved but actually constituted the nature of polity in this period. In the absence of reliable consanguinal bonds, it was important for a claimant to the throne or an aspiring lord to cultivate a network of support — allies who could be called to arms in the event that claims to sovereignty were challenged. The source material for this dissertation is drawn primarily from stone and copper-plate inscriptions as well as some court poetry. While intended to record the establishment of and donation to temples and other religious institutions, they often contain the praise of the donor (praśasti) and their genealogy (vamśa praśasti), from which family trees are reconstructed and contradictory or conflicting claims which belie the totalizing rhetoric employed in the text itself are highlighted.

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MARRIAGE, KINSHIP, AND POLITICAL HIERARCHY IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE HOYSALA FAMILY

Samana Kaivar Gururaja

A DISSERTATION

in

South Asia Regional Studies

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Supervisor of Dissertation

________________________

Daud Ali
Associate Professor of South Asia Regional Studies

Graduate Group Chairperson

________________________

Davesh Soneji, Associate Professor of South Asia Regional Studies

Dissertation Committee

Davesh Soneji, Associate Professor of South Asia Regional Studies

Kathleen Morrison, Sally and Alvin V. Shoemaker Professor of Anthropology
This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and inspiration of my family, friends, colleagues, and faculty mentors. From my first semester at the University of Pennsylvania, my supervisor Daud Ali has encouraged me to broaden the scope of my research. I thank him for challenging me and for his generosity with ideas and resources. My work and my thinking are all the richer for it. I thank the faculty of the South Asia Studies department with whom I completed my coursework and had my first experiences teaching: Lisa Mitchell, Ramya Sreenivasan, Deven Patel, Terenjit Sevea, and Allyn Miner. Working with my dissertation committee was an enriching experience. Davesh Soneji has always been generous with his time and knowledge and apart from opening my eyes to new questions and perspectives, Kathleen Morrison showed me the kindness and support I most needed when I was feeling unsure of myself. I am extremely thankful to both of them.

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I first explored the idea of studying the history of Karnataka when I was working with Annapurna Garimella in Bangalore. She introduced me to the literature that inspired me to pursue graduate studies, and she continues to be a role model and a constant source of unwavering kindness and wisdom.

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ABSTRACT

MARRIAGE, KINSHIP, AND POLITICAL HIERARCHY IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE HOYSALA FAMILY

Samana Kaivar Gururaja

Daud Ali

The Hoysaḷa family ruled in southern India, in the present-day state of Karnataka from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. Previous studies of this family and other contemporary royal households have primarily focused on establishing a chronology for the lineage and demonstrating how kingship and administration were mutually constituted. This dissertation expands the scope of study for royal households by examining how the marriage and kinship functioned as essential components of political hierarchy, and by de-centering the role of the king and kinship, examine how royal families functioned as dynamic, unstable, and constantly shifting entities. The constant conflict that occurred between smaller, successor states after the fall of the relatively large, centralized Cōḷa and Cāḷukya states collapsed has generally been characterized in a negative light, but as the dissertation reveals, this conflict was not regarded in the light of a problem to be solved but actually constituted the nature of polity in this period. In the absence of reliable consanguinal bonds, it was important for a claimant to the throne or an aspiring lord to cultivate a network of support — allies who could be called to arms in the event that claims to sovereignty were challenged. The source material for this
dissertation is drawn primarily from stone and copper-plate inscriptions as well as some court poetry. While intended to record the establishment of and donation to temples and other religious institutions, they often contain the praise of the donor (praśasti) and their genealogy (vamśa praśasti), from which family trees are reconstructed and contradictory or conflicting claims which belie the totalizing rhetoric employed in the text itself are highlighted.
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Transliteration and Abbreviations

In order to quote inscriptions and texts in the original Sanskrit or Kannada, I rely primarily on the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST). Because Kannada has both long and short ‘o’ and ‘e’ sounds, unlike Sanskrit, I have made the distinction between long and short as I would with other vowels, long ‘a’ being ā and likewise, long ‘o’ being ō. This is not necessary in Sanskrit but keeps the style consistent as the inscriptions often switch between the two languages. When rendering Kannada and Sanskrit text into Roman script, I have not used capitalization but the proper nouns are in bold for easy distinction.

When quoting, I have preserved the spellings used by the respective authors but all other diacritic choices are mine.

Abbreviations

EC — Epigraphia Carnatica

O.S. — Old Series

N.S. — New Series

EI — Epigraphia Indica

SII — South Indian Inscriptions

IA — Indian Antiquary

MAR — Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department

ARIE — Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The Hoysaḷas were a family that ruled predominantly southern Karnataka between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries, and they are best known for the visually spectacular temples they commissioned, ornate with hyper-detailed sculptures. When visiting the most well-known of these temples at Belur and Halebid, it is near impossible to escape the story of the queen Śāntaladēvi, wife of the king Viṣṇuvardhana who ruled in the twelfth century. Vaguely aware that inscriptions record her proficiency in dance, music, and dramaturgy, tour guides point to the female forms that adorn the temple and declare that they are renditions of her in various dance poses, memorialized by her loving husband. There are no fewer than four twentieth-century novels which fictionalize her life in the vein of a tragic romance.

Ironically, in the same compound where tourists are regularly and confidently informed that the sculptures that adorn the main temple at Belur are portraits of Śāntaladēvi, very few people learn that Śāntaladēvi commissioned the Kappe Channigarāya temple that sits just to the left of the main temple. As I travelled through Karnataka for my field work in 2017, I kept hearing echoes of the fictionalized mythos around this figure and it drew me closer to the questions that undergird the present dissertation. In isolation, Śāntaladēvi appears to be an extraordinary woman who stood out in history for her unique and exemplary talents. Indeed this narrative has been attractive to many scholars of royal women, even outside the Hoysaḷa context. I
discovered the central questions of this dissertation in an attempt to remove a figure like Śāntala from mythical status and situate her in the systems and institutions of her own time. As a result, I attempt in this first foray to understand the networks of kinship formed through marriage between royal families of Early Medieval South India, how they were intertwined in the politics of the period, and how individuals at different levels within the network navigated it.

Situating Hoysaḷa Historiography in “Early Medieval India”

The primary source material for this dissertation is drawn primarily from the inscriptions collected and published by B.L. Rice and the Mysore Archaeological Department between the late nineteenth and the late twentieth century. The British first became aware of the wealth of inscriptions in southern Karnataka, then Mysore State, after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in the fourth Anglo-Mysore war of 1799. They undertook an extensive survey of his former territory in order to make measurements and in the process came across many articles of historical interest, including stone and copper-plate inscriptions.¹ It was over sixty years later that the first attempts were made to document, read, and translate these inscriptions. The man tasked with the job was Benjamin Lewis Rice, who, in 1871 was given a collection of photographs taken on commission by Major H. Dixon, an officer of the Madras Native Infantry. “There were 150 altogether —

129 from inscriptions on stone and 21 from those on copper-plates — nearly half of the whole number being from Balagāmi and Taldagundi, close to it, both in the Shimoga District.” Rice first engaged with the inscriptions in his authorship of the *Mysore Gazateer* of 1872 and proceeded to publish translations in *Mysore Inscriptions* in 1879.

In 1881, the other major Kannada epigraphist, John Faithful Fleet who had been publishing inscriptions in periodicals, came out with his foundational publication, *Dynasties of the Kanarese District* which dealt with inscriptive material from the Bombay Presidency, what is now the northern half of Karnataka.

This spike in epigraphic research and discovery, specific to Kannada inscriptions corresponded with what Richard Salomon calls the “Period of Maturity,” when both publishing and translation of inscriptions improved greatly and formed the authoritative corpus that remains relevant today. In this dissertation, I primarily rely on Rice’s compilation of over nine thousand inscriptions in twelve volumes of the series, *Epigraphia Carnatica*. These volumes were collated between 1886 and 1905, with six supplements being added between 1940 and 1950 by Narasimhacharya and M. Krishna. In the 1970s, a collection of scholars at Mysore University republished *Epigraphia Carnatica*, including inscriptions that had previously only appeared in the annual reports of the society.

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of the Mysore Archaeological survey (MAR). For inscriptions that go beyond the
reaches of the erstwhile Mysore state — and now the Bangalore Circle of the
Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)— I have relied on a variety of sources including,
*Epigraphia Indica* (EI), *South Indian Inscriptions* (SII), and the *Journal of Indian
Antiquary* (IA).

Until the 1980s, the publications of the Archaeological Survey of India and the
Mysore Archaeological Department remained mutually exclusive and made no effort to to
cross-reference inscriptions in their publications. However, since the latter stopped
collecting new inscriptions, the ASI has taken over reporting new, unpublished
inscriptions, started collecting their own estampages of the EC inscriptions. Their more
recent reports acknowledge if an inscription has been published in EC.

The early historiography of the Hoysaḷa family was greatly influenced by the timeline
on which inscriptions were discovered. One of the first Hoysaḷa inscriptions scholars read
was on the wall of the Belur Chennakeshava Temple and recorded Visnuvardhana’s
establishment of it. This inscription also happens to contain the first formalized
genealogy of the Hoysaḷas which ascribed *purānic* descent to the Hoysaḷas from the lunar
dynasty and the Yādava family, and narrated the origin story of their forefather, Saḷa who

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5 In the citations, I use the abbreviations O.S. and N.S. for the old series and new series of
*Epigraphia Carnatica*, respectively.

6 S. Nagarajappa (Assistant Superintending Epigraphist, Kannada, ASI Bangalore Circle) in
conversation with the author, 7/3/2017. I further cross-referenced this in ARIE volumes from the
1990s and 2000s, where the reports and inscription summaries do in fact cross-reference EC
publication data.
slew a tiger on the orders of his preceptor, and began the line of Hoysala kings as a continuation of the Yadhava lineage.

When the inscriptions at Angadi were discovered a few years later, they revealed that Vinayaditya’s father, Nṛpa Kāma had been a local ruler in Sosēvūr as early as 1025 C.E., and there was a preoccupation with investigating whether Nṛpa Kāma had been the Saḷa of the origin story. In the Belur inscription, Sosēvūr was called Śaśakapura, and scholars assumed that the former was the localization of the latter, due to the assumption that the Sanskrit must be the original and pure form of the coinage. This illustrates the privilege that was afforded to inscriptions that were in Sanskrit, contained the most detail, the least orthographical errors, and the most organized genealogies. They were looked at as the authoritative sources for establishing a cohesive chronology, which was the primary concern for the authors of dynastic history. Dynastic histories of the Hoysalas, particularly the work of William Coelho and J.D.M. Derrett followed this pattern and attempted to trace the Hoysalas from their origins as pastoral hill dwellers to their zenith as rulers of most of Karnataka and then to their decline, as always caused by excessive ambition, decadence, and the invasion of the Malik Kafur, the military envoy of Alauddin Khalji.

These histories follow the chronology laid out by the Belur inscriptions, and numerous inscriptions that built on the same, formulaic narrative in successive

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7 William Coelho, The Hoysala Vaṁśa (Indian Historical Research Institute, St. Xavier’s College, 1950), 20.

generations. To give a brief overview of the political history of the Hoysala dynasty, the earliest inscriptions that refer to the title “Hoysala” or “Poysaḷa,” in old Kannada date back to the late tenth and early eleventh century, where they were identified as enemies of the Cōḷas. The first named Hoysala ruler, Nṛpa Kāma appeared in an inscription from 1025 CE, and records his antagonism with the Koṇgāḷvas, subordinates of Rājēndra Cōḷa. The Hoysaḷas initially lived in a town called Sosēvūr near present-day Chikmagalur, district, and Nṛpa Kāma’s son, Vinayāditya was the first ruler in the dynasty to gain predominance in the plains, where he ruled from about 1070 C.E. onwards.

Under the rule of Vinayāditya, and his son Ereyanga, the Hoysaḷas declared loyalty to the Western Cāḷukyas and in turn, were ennobled with the title of mahāmaṇḍalēśvara, or lord of a circle of kings. In the fashion of overlord-subordinate relationships of the time, the Hoysaḷa rulers took on the titles of their overlords and and styled themselves as “dwellers at their lotus feet” (tat pāda padmopajīvi). As the territory under Hoysaḷa dominance grew, they began to take on several signs of sovereignty and kingship, the first being the development of the purānic lineage that appears in the Belur inscription discussed above and the second was the development of a legend that traced the origin of the word Hoysaḷa to an altercation between a mythical ancestor, Saḷa and a tiger.

Although there are several variations of the story, it follows this general pattern: In the Yādava lineage, there was a ruler named Saḷa. In the town of Sosēvūr or Śaśakapura, he came across a muni or ascetic, who was suddenly attacked by a tiger, and exclaimed to him, “poy saḷa!” poy or hoy meaning hit in old Kannada. Thus, according to the legend,
the Yādava race became known as the Poysaḷas or Hoysaḷas from that time onwards.

Some versions of the legend include the local goddess, Vāsanṭaka Dēvi, who sometimes takes the form of a tiger and by whose submission Saḷa gains control of the land. A shrine to Vāsanṭamma exists in Angadi even today. In most genealogical accounts of later inscriptions, Vinayāditya is mentioned directly after Saḷa. This has led older historians of the Hoysaḷa dynasty to suspect that Saḷa was Nṛpa Kama, but it seems more likely that the later Hoysaḷas abandoned mentioning their lesser-known ancestors in favor of this legend which lent their dynasty a more expansive and mythologized history.9

Vinayāditya’s grandson, Viṣṇuvardhana attempted to achieve independent sovereignty during his reign but it was only his grandson, in the late twelfth century who was able to seize the Cāḷukya seat of power and declare himself mahārājādhirāja, as opposed to the subordinate mahāmanḍalēśvara that his ancestors had used. However, Ballāla’s victory was never secure; he was constantly in conflict with the Seuṇas or Yādavas of Dēvagiri (present-day Daulatabad) who also harbored ambitions to attain the erstwhile Cāḷukya supremacy. His successors were forced to compromise with the Seuṇas, and concentrated their attentions more towards the southern territories, going into Tamil Nadu. In the thirteenth century, they were able to aid the Cola king in retaining his supremacy and thereby gained the title of “cōḷa rāya pratiṣṭhācārya” (establisher of the Cōḷa king). The king Sōmēśvara who ruled in the thirteenth century, primarily resided in the capital of

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Kaṇṇanūr in Tamil Nadu. Since the territory was expanding rapidly, Sōmēśvara decided to create a dual rule between his two sons, Narasimha III, who ruled from Dōrasamudra, and Rāmanātha, who ruled from Kaṇṇanūr. Mounting tension between the two brothers coupled with pressure from external challengers left the Hoysaḷas depleted and their territory open to new claims of sovereignty. It was at the same time that Alaudin Khilji began his conquests southward, first concentrating first on the wealthy capital of the Yadava kingdom at Dēvagiri, and once that was conquered, moving further south. Before the Hoysała rulers disappear from inscriptive records entirely, in 1343 C.E., they were tributaries to the Delhi sultanate for some time but inscriptions which mention their lineage disappear at this time.

In the dynastic histories, everything that happened outside of this established chronology, and the respective achievements of failures of each king, is considered peripheral. This is illustrated by the fact that the chapters of both Coelho and Derrett’s monographs go king by king, describing the military victories of each.¹⁰ There is then usually a set of chapters which abstracts and discusses administration under the Hoysaḷas. This is not to say that these texts are entirely obsolete, in fact their rich empirical research and collation continues to form the base for revisionist histories. However, the privileging of a master narrative, the assumption that one approaches it with more detailed and organized inscriptions belies the true precarity of ruling families in this

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¹⁰ The sections of Derret’s monograph are “The Beginnings,” “The Rise of the Hoysaḷa,” “The first attempt at achieving Imperial Status,” “The Second Attempt at Achieving Imperial Status, Its Success and The Aberration,” “The Decline” and “The Collapse.”
period. This type of history writing is not restricted to the past, however. Indian scholars continue to engage in this kind of empirical research, with their works providing glosses of inscriptions and texts that pertain to a particular subject. However, there are several critical questions that this exclusive focus on individual kings and their martial and political achievements leave unexamined.

There are roughly speaking three phases of the study of the period in question, now called Early Medieval India, which follow chronological pattern. In the first stage, historians reconstructed the chronology of the dynasties which had been discovered in inscriptions through a positivist reading of the genealogies they presented and accounts of their territorial conquests. On the surface, the purpose of these projects were to establish standard chronologies for each of these dynasties and therefore for India in general. In a second embedded goal, these historians resisted the claim that India did not possess historical consciousness before the advent of the British colonial rule by meticulously scouring the details provided in inscriptions and using them to construct empirically rich histories of battles, transitions of power, and administration from the top down.

They took the information provided in the inscriptions at face value which led to the image of strong, centralized states with the benevolent king at the locus. In the second phase, scholars with strong roots in Marxism challenged this mode of history writing, criticizing the lack of focus on demographics beyond the royal household and their

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assumption that the descriptions of administration in the inscriptions could be abstracted into comprehensive systems. In response to Marx’s own assertion that Asia had not gone through the stage of feudalism, and that the Asiatic mode of production existed outside of this paradigm, these scholars engaged with the question of whether Medieval Indian society had been feudal or not. There was also a secondary motivation to re-evaluate the religion-based periodization of South Asian history. As a result, they came to focus more on transitions in economic and agricultural practices. Although the question of feudalism in India was never settled and later abandoned as futile, this body of scholarship shed focus on hitherto unexamined actors like local authorities that governed intermediate power structures.

Most significant to the South Indian context was Burton Stein’s segmentary state model in which he argued that sub-regions of the Chola polity, or nāḍu, were largely self-governed with only ritual affiliation to the imperial dynasties. The local authorities controlled the means of production but the imperial forces dominated and exploited them through ritual power. This created an image of a self-sustained proletariat, so to speak, with royal families and their activities hovering above them, tenuously connected by ritual authority enforced by the brahmans whom they deployed to shore up their authority outside of their core territory. The Brahmans formed the link between these royal families

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12 See for example, R. S. Sharma, Material Culture & Social Formations in Ancient India (Macmillan India, 1983) and Dwijendra Narayan Jha, Feudal Social Formation in Early India (Chanakya Publications, 1987), and Land System and Feudalism in Ancient India: Proceedings Edited by D. C. Sircar (University of Calcutta, 1966).
and the local authorities and peasantry through the establishment of temples as key nodes of this ritual authority.

Stein pushed back against scholars like Nikalanhasastri who had argued for a highly organized, centralized state under Cōla dynasty and moved away from this reading to emphasize the role of peasants and local authorities. He based his argument on the disappearance of kṣatriyas from structures of local power. He therefore argues that the connection between the center and the nādu was exclusively through the ritual authority of the state. Scholars of Karnataka who focused on the agricultural and administration, such as G.S. Dixit and Mālini Adiga, espoused Stein’s understanding of the rural economy as existing exclusive from, but feeding into the aristocracy that hovered above it.

This formulation of state-peasant binary necessitated an entire field of study around the concepts of kinship and legitimacy, that is, how the king was able to establish his authority to the extent that allowed him to extract revenue from the peasantry. A vast body of scholarship concerns itself with the abstract concept of Hindu kingship which was believed to apply universally across South Asia and envisioned the king as a sacred figure in a contentious but co-dependent relationship with the Brahman who legitimized his ritual authority.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Kallidaikurichi Aiyah Nilakanta Sastri, *The Čolas* (University of Madras, 1975).

This created two distinct academic silos, social and economic history which dealt with land relations and means of production, and cultural history which dealt with the activities of royal courts and temples; activities which were considered exploitative and entirely superfluous to the accumulation and redistribution of wealth. This binary also separated the sources for each respective branch of study. While the social historians looked at the donative portions of inscriptions, the cultural historians focused on courtly texts and visual media such as architecture, painting, and sculpture.

This binary began to collapse with the work of scholars like B.D. Chattopadhyay and James Heitzman who more closely examined the empirical data around economy and practices of gift giving in South Indian polities. Chattopadhyay was concerned with reframing the post-Gupta period not as one of decline, but as a time when new, more locally-inflected forms of polity were emerging. He used the term “Early Medieval” to denote this period of new, more complex agricultural formations which in turn brought in processual change to state formation.

James Heitzman examined how temples functioned as economic and social centers of wealth accumulation and redistribution, and presented a critique of Stein’s model, arguing that his generalizations were inconsistent with the evidence in inscriptions. If the king as a ritual figurehead was so central, he should have been associated with most temple-

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17 Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, 16.
building projects, however temples with direct royal patronage were few and far between in the Cōḷa context. Complicating than the binary of a ritual state vs a productive peasantry, this focus on the inscriptive evidence led to the understanding of South Asian polity as a continuum of lords and subordinates, with emphasis on their relative, and highly volatile positions with respect to each other, rather than an absolute and unchanging relationship of authority and submission.18 “The ‘circle of states’ (maṇḍala) concept [is] a vision of political authority that is multi centered, necessarily shifting, and automatically encompassing a wide range of semi-autonomous forms or intermediate authorities within the ambit of the realm.”19

These works inspired the a body of history writing from which this dissertation draws, where the binary between cultural and social history was collapsed in service of reading south Asian sources on their own terms, and repoliticizing what had hitherto been considered an exclusively “cultural” realm. In the same vein, sources like inscriptions which had been the cache of social history was subjected to the methodology of disciplines like anthropology, archaeology and literary criticism. The praśasti, or poetic praise portion of the inscription which had been used as a tool for the positivist reconstruction of chronology in dynastic histories, and had been dismissed as merely exaggerated, sycophantic praise of the king in feudalism-based studies, was now recognized for the enunciative role it performed in the constitution of the king’s

18 Ronald Inden, “Hierarchies of Kings in Early Medieval India,” in Text and Practice: Essays on South Asian History (Oxford University Press, 2006)

19 Heitzman, Gifts of Power, 15.
sovereignty. As a result, inscriptions came to be read as an active part of the polity-building of the period rather than just passive records that recorded it.

There was also increased emphasis on inscriptions as physical objects, which allowed for new questions and discoveries precluded by merely viewing them for their textual content. This also placed inscriptions which contained text in continuum with memorializing markers on which text was minimal or even optional, such as vīragals (hero stones) and satigals (stones memorializing the self-immolation of wives on their husbands’ funeral pyres), and situated them as a very small part of a much larger system. The fact that it is the only evidence we have does not necessarily mean that it accounts for the entirety of life during the medieval period. The project of medieval history in recent years therefore, can be grouped under the umbrella of moving away from Eurocentric studies which assumed the European models, with their roots in eighteenth and nineteenth century social theory, as the norm and the Asiatic model as a deviation from that norm. Scholars are instead interested more in contending with South Asian sources on their own terms, and understanding the models that they present.

For this dissertation, and particularly in the examination of inscriptions, I draw on a body of scholarship which as emerged since the 1990s, and has, in the words of Cynthia Talbot, “rehabilitated, historically speaking,” the concept of Medieval India. Instead of being seen as a stagnant or regressive phase, the medieval era was, “a period of

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progressive change, characterized by the extension of agrarian settlement, a rise in the number of religious institutions, an expansion of commercial activity, and an evolution of political systems and networks.”

James Heitzman with a focus on the data available in Cōla epigraphy, instead of drawing a distinct binary between royalty and peasantry, identified a much wider gamut of actors whose activities, as recorded by the inscriptions, revolved around the temple. In this vein, he attempts to parse the types of subordinates and intermediaries which assisted in Cōla administration.

Cynthia Talbot’s work on the Kākaṭiya dynasty of modern Andhra and Telangana ascribes similar valence to inscriptions. “Inscriptions enable us to track individual actors in motion and are thus our primary source of information on what people actually did as opposed to what they were supposed to do.” Her analysis of titles that emerged between the shows an increasingly complex world of overlords and subordinates, tied together by implicit martial loyalty, rather than solely ritual-based submission to the king.

Perhaps most relevant to this dissertation is Ronald Inden’s examination of Rāṣṭrakūṭa polity, where he posits that the most reductive assumption to make about Early Medieval Indian polity was the dichotomy between war and peace. All rituals, according to this argument, were constitutive of a king or lord’s authority, and, “if a court failed to sustain and reshape itself as circumstances chanted, its most powerful lords would begin the

21 Talbot, Precolonial India in Practice, 2.
23 Talbot, Precolonial India in Practice, 2.
making of other courts that would eventually displace one imperial court with another.”

The composition and commissioning of inscriptions which generally recorded votive donations, formed an important part of this remaking and sustenance, where every subordinate reiterated the praise of the overlord’s genealogy. Daud Ali builds on this formulation by reading inscriptions, “not as so many separate “documents” that mirror political and social realities, but instead as texts that formed part of an integrated discursive practice…By seeing them as discursive, we can turn our attention to how they participate in larger systems of sights that cross particular genres and textual moments.”

Ali further remarks that the inscriptions rather than being diversions from a true meaning of the Purāṇas were intended to supplement them. The kings who made these claims, knew what they were asserting and were aware that they could be challenged and called upon to prove their supremacy.

Drawing on these ideas, I use the genealogies, praise poetry, and epithets found in inscriptions to establish links between individuals that the inscriptions don’t necessarily highlight. An inscription in which a subordinate identified his overlord, the overlords’s wife, and then himself as a relative of the wife, as in the case of an inscription commissioned by the maiduna, or sister’s husband of Viṣṇuvardhana’s queen, Śāntaladēvi, was not merely recording of that individual’s relationship but is an attempt

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24 Inden, Imagining India, 230.


26 Ibid 185.
to position himself in closest possible proximity with his overlord. This both reinforced
the supremacy of the overlord and asserted the limited sovereignty that the subordinate
was accorded as a result of the association spelled out in the inscription.

**Epigraphy in Karnataka**

The historiography of Karnataka followed a very similar pattern to the generalized
historiography of south India above, but there are very few studies that move beyond
dynastic and marxist history. Scholarship in Karnataka continues to be dominated by
empirically rich studies in the service of positivist reconstruction with little critical
intervention. Thus, methodologically, I draw on the extensive scholarship on the Cōḷa
kingdom, as well as work on the Kākaṭiyas who were based in what is now Andhra
Pradesh and Telangana. However, there are some important differences between the
epigraphic materials in each of these regions, so here I provide a description of the
different types of inscriptions in the Kannada/Karnataka case.

By the Hoysaḷa period, the Kannada script was highly standardized and even.
Inscriptions occurred in a variety of forms: on temple walls, on large steles that were
often found in the middle of agricultural fields, on pillars that were part of temple
architecture as well as freestanding pillars, and hero-stones. Contrary to common practice
in the Tamil country, where most inscriptions are found on temple walls with
corresponding copper-plates, a majority of longer inscriptions in the Kannada-speaking
regions were on large, freestanding steles. This presents challenges as the inscriptions
were more mobile, and it’s less clear how the inscriptions were displayed in their own
time. Presently, for the most part, inscriptions from all the villages near a temple are
gathered into its vicinity; the only find spots are therefore those originally recorded by
B.L. Rice in *Epigraphia Carnatica*. Similarly, copper-plate inscriptions have generally
been found in the possession of private families, and inscriptions continue to be
discovered today.

The stele inscriptions, which are the largest type, vary in size from about two to seven
feet in height, and about two to four feet in width. These are the kind of inscriptions
which generally contain the detailed genealogies and were commissioned by fairly
affluent subordinates, as well as the royal family themselves. Many of these inscriptions
were commissioned after the establishment of the puranic genealogy in the Belur
inscription of 1117 C.E. and follow a similar format. In order to describe the general
contents and patterns of these inscriptions, I will first break down the parts of the largest
inscriptions following which it becomes easier to see which parts of the inscriptions are
most necessary in the shorter iterations.

The Belur inscription was the first to lay out the new, puranic genealogy of the
Hoysalas in detail. The puranic history of the dynasty transitioned into the recent,
“historical” genealogy of the royal family with the origin myth of Saṅga killing the tiger
and the Yādava lineage being renamed Hoysāla. Vinayāditya was then identified as the
first direct ancestor following which verses in praise of each successive king, and
sometimes his queen, the mother of his heir appear. Details of women’s heritage are not
provided in these genealogies and they are praised with generic tropes of ideal wifehood and generosity. This genealogical portion of the inscription accords the composer the most poetic freedom. Though the specific praises for each generation remain quite standard (for example, Vinayaditya is praised for subduing the hill-chiefs or malēpar, Ereyanga for winning significant battles on his overlord, Vikramāditya VI’s behalf), there are different ways in which they are expressed. The most elaborate and lengthy praise is reserved for the specific king under whom the inscriptions patron is serving, and after praising him, the inscription depending on the length goes into equally elaborate praise of the subordinate family and genealogy.

One of the inscriptions I discuss in the following chapters was found in the Chikmagalur district outside of the Brahmeshwara temple in Sindigere and is a stele that measures 6’2” by 3’2”. The text of the inscription begins with a two-line verse invoking the deity to whom it records a donation — in this case, a Jain monastic order. Other inscriptions invoke Śiva, Viṣṇu, or their composite form, Harihara. The longer inscriptions generally end with the record of the specifics of the donation being made, along with an imprecatory verse, warning anyone who obstructs this grant of dire consequences, like being born as a worm in excrement, and in some cases, the composer and inscriber’s names.

The content that exists in between these two components forms the majority of the text in longer inscriptions found on steles, pillars and temple walls, and generally consists

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27 EC VI (O.S.) Chikmagalur, 160.
of eulogistic verse or prose in praise of the donor’s genealogy, and the the genealogy of their overlords, and in some cases, the sectarian lineage to which the preceptor of the donor belongs (see for example, inscriptions at Śravana Belgola). The ordering of inscriptions is somewhat counter intuitive for the modern reader in that it does not begin with the subject. Rather, they generally open by invoking their highest overlord and proceeds to identify subordinates or kin in descending order of status until it reaches the donor or subject of the inscription. The inscription from Chikmagalur, mentioned above begins with the standard epithets in praise of the Chalukya king, Vikramaditya VI.

When the refuge of all the world, favorite of earth and fortune, mahārājādhirāja paramēśvara parama bhaṭṭāraka, ornament of the Satyāśraya kula, glory of the Chāḷukyas, śrīmat Tribhuvanamalla’s victorious kingdom was growing on all sides, to continue as long as the sun, moon, and stars…

The Hoysala king, Vinayāditya is then identified as his subordinate, or a “dweller at his lotus feet,” and Mariyāne daṇḍanāyaka as a dweller at Vinayāditya’s lotus feet, and like a younger brother to his wife, Keleyabbarasi. The inscription then goes on to narrate an intertwined history of the two families, with praise for each successive king of the Hoysala family until it arrives at Viṣṇuvardhana, the king under whom the grant was made. The genealogy of the Hoysāla family presented in the inscription adheres to the official genealogy laid out by the Belur inscription, culminating in a long series of epithets in praise of Viṣṇuvardhana, and further identifying the grandsons of Mariyāne daṇḍanāyaka as his subordinates (tat pāda padmōpaṭīvīgal). The inscription continues
with their praises as well as their genealogy. A pillar inscription from the same temple compound condenses this hierarchy further.

It begins with the same praise of the Chalukya king, identifies the Hoysala king, Viṣṇuvardhana as his subordinate:

Entitled to the five big drums, the mahāmaṇḍalēśvara, boon lord of Dvārāvati-pura, sun in the sky of the Yādava-kula, a perfect head-jewel, champion over the hill chiefs, adorned with these and many other titles, śrīmat Tribhuvanamalla, the capturer of Talakāṇu, Kongu, Naṅgali, Gangavāḍi, Nolambavāḍi, Banavase, Hānungal and Halasige, the strong armed Vīra Ganga Hoysa Deva.28

The inscription then identifies Mariyane’s grandson’s as his subordinates and praises them for their service to him in several capacities. There is very little information about what these titles actually entailed in terms of practical functions at court. The scholars who argued for a feudal society in early medieval India attempted to equate terms like mahamaṇḍalēśvara with European terms like “feudatory.”

The only concrete information we have about these relationships however, is their relative status to one another. Inscriptions which detail hierarchies, like the one above show us for example, that mahāmaṇḍalēśvara was the highest rank after mahārājādhirāja, after which came mahāsāmanta. The prefix mahā or great, also denoted a higher status than a title would without it. This is the case in other spheres as well. With regards to queens, paṭṭamahādevi was the highest status and that only one queen possessed it at one time while pīriyarasi, or senior queen was lower in status and

28 This series of titles and epithets follows a pattern of all mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras of the Western Chalukyas, where they identified their place of origin, their purānic lineage and other details.
was a title that multiple queens could carry. This is made discernible by inscriptions in which a *piriyarasi* acknowledged her superior *paṭṭamahādevi* the same way that the *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* acknowledged the *mahārājādhirāja*.

To the extent possible, I have avoided providing direct or simple translations for terms and have instead discussed relationships through the lens of relative status with the terms “overlord” and “subordinate,” since my emphasis is instead on examining the relationships these terms represented. For ease of understanding, however, I do provide the translations which have been suggested by scholars who have studied these intermediary figures.

In simpler, shorter inscriptions the elaborate, poetic descriptions of the overlord and subordinate families’ achievements are pared down, sometimes only announcing their epithets in a series of compounds as seen above. The inscriptions which contain the shortest and simplest text are hero-stones, which memorialize the deaths of warriors in a variety of conflicts, ranging from military battles to the protection or abduction of women and livestock. These are by far the most localized inscriptions and sometimes do not even mention the king, instead praising the local authority for whom the warrior in question fought. If a king is mentioned, it is generally purely for regnal dating, and very

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29 The distinction between the descriptive, poetic section of the text which glorifies the accomplishments of the overlord and subordinates’ families is somewhat similar to the distinction that Whitney Cox makes between the *meyykārti* and the *praśasti* in the Chola context in Whitney Cox, *Politics, Kingship and Poetry in Medieval South India: Moonset on Sunrise Mountain* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 54.

The *praśasti* section is generally more open to the poet’s creativity and can be in Kannada, Sanskrit, or both. The part of the inscriptions that lists the king’s accomplishments and identifiers as a series of compounds is always in Kannada, and is almost identical across inscriptions.
brief. These are also the inscriptions which are the most difficult to date as they do not always contain information about the time and place of the donation. Therefore, comparing the most elaborate inscriptive texts with the simplest, the most important information is about the reason for the establishment of the inscription, followed by the beneficiary’s immediate overlord and family members, and then if there is more space and resources, the patron can afford longer and more elaborate poetic sections.

Until recently, these more elaborate sections were dismissed as merely exaggerated accounts however, there has now been a move to understand these sections of the inscriptions not merely as descriptive but as constitutive acts, contributing to the political identity of the patron. It is in this vein that I examine the praśasti and more specifically the vamśa praśasti (in praise of entire genealogies) sections of inscriptions to uncover networks that the inscriptions themselves may not make explicit. I do this by examining the kin networks that are established in these praśastis.

A Note on Kinship

The primary focus of this dissertation is the kinship revealed in inscriptions and texts pertaining to the rule of the Hoysaḷa family. I choose to use the word “family” instead of “dynasty” in an attempt to subvert the linearity that the latter implies. Instead, I attempt to focus on a more lateral understanding of family, which included relatives by marriage, and subordinates incorporated into the family through affinal relationships, or
relationships created through marriage. This kind of relationship is defined against consanguineal relationships which are, to put it simply blood relationships, or the sharing of common ancestors.\(^{30}\)

Thomas Trautmann has done extensive work in his monograph *Dravidian Kinship*, in which he constructs a model based on the study of kinship terms, ritual and legal, and in his final chapter, the historic material available about South Indian dynasties.\(^{31}\) He distinguishes between classificatory and descriptive terms of kinship and uses the latter to disambiguate terms like the English “uncle,” which do not map directly onto the kinship terms of South India. Instead, he uses descriptive terms like father’s brother, mother’s brother, father’s sister’s spouse, or mother’s sister’s spouse. In Kannada kinship terminology, much like that of other Dravidian languages, the terms for same sex siblings of each parent and their spouses are different than the terms for opposite-sex siblings and their spouses. Different terms also existed in the individual’s own generation. Children of same-sex siblings were parallel cousins while children of opposite-sex siblings of the parents were cross-cousins. Marriage was possible, and even encouraged with opposite-sex cross-cousins, a phenomenon that occurs frequently in the inscriptive evidence I explore.

Trautmann goes into much greater detail and uses a complex system of symbols to represent the entirety of this model (See Chapter 2), which he postulates is a remnant of a

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model that preexisted all of the discrepancies which later became visible between region. In the dissertation, I build off of several of his discussions, most notably the sections on kanyādāna as the ideal form of marriage according to the dharmaśāstras, and the presupposed hypergamy it suggests. Many of the cases I examine subvert this expectation and the model of Dravidian kinship that Trautmann presents. Although this model has proven foundational, it has since been supplemented by studies such as Jack Goody’s work on kinship in pre-industrial South Asia in which he “tries to get away from the influential tendency to see 'kinship systems' as things in themselves,” noting the disjuncture a restrictive model causes with disciplines like History. In his study, he explores the situation for women after marriage, arguing against the idea that marriage was merely an exchange of goods among which women were one. He illustrates how women maintained ties to their natal families and fulfilled daughterly duties even after marriage.

Further inspiration for the framework and questions of this dissertation came from a relatively new subfield of history writing that has grown within the study of medieval history in Europe, queenship studies (for a comprehensive summary of the field’s development, see Lois Huneycutt’s essay). This field, which began with the initial awareness that the study of queens and queenship, until the 1970s had remained restricted

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to biographical works on exceptional, visible royal women, has since expanded to question the role of queens in the larger context of courtly culture and politics, especially with regards to networks of marriage formed between royal families. This area of study has also expanded by looking not only at queens, in the sense of the king’s spouse, but at queen regents, princesses, and other royal and noble women. This was particularly useful in observing and understanding larger trends among the many Hoysala queens I encountered during my research, and de-centering the concepts of “kingship” and “dynasty” which have been so fundamental to south asian scholarship on the royal family.

As Theresa Earenfight notes, “Analyzing monarchy as both kingship and queenship reveals a complex institution embedded in a patriarchal political environment that privileged rule by a king, but that could both limit a woman’s range of options and propel her forwards in both the personal and the political spheres.”34 This is particularly resonant in the Hoysala case where queens were rarely memorialized by their husbands and sons. The queens who were mentioned in the established genealogy never overlapped with those who commissioned their own inscriptions contemporary to their husbands’ rule. It was therefore entirely up to the royal women themselves to ensure their donative activity was recorded; this was also the only opportunity they had to make note of their own genealogies and religious affiliations. Woman in Early Medieval India did not enjoy a liberated status as the dynastic histories and glosses will claim, but there was a limited

range of opportunities available to them depending on the status of their marital and natal families, and the relationships they shared.

Inscriptions don’t offer much in the way of understanding the inner lives of women who became the conduits for these affinal relationships, but the donative practices they detail, their find-spots, women’s genealogies, and epithets used for successful queenship provide an alternate basis for inquiry. For example, the queen Śāntaladēvi’s title savati gandhavārana or “an elephant goad to her co-wives” illustrates that the king had multiple wives despite there not being any inscriptions which acknowledge them. Women were also seldom acknowledged either by their natal or marital families, and it was only when they commissioned inscriptions that they were able to provide details about their own heritage. I have relied on these details to draw connections between geographically and temporally disparate inscriptions, and trace patterns of kinship, a departure from much of the scholarship on courtly women in medieval south Asia thus far, which focused on visible, individual queens.

Older, dynastic studies regularly contain a separate chapter on the “status of women,” most often a gloss of any and all sources which mention women’s activities; they typically support the notion that the ancient and early medieval periods were India’s “golden age” where women had social status and notable opportunity even if not equal to what was available to men. These sections present an implicit contrast with the “high medieval” period when the status of women purportedly suffered a decline under the rule
of Muslim invaders. The studies of scholars such as A.S. Altekar, M.B. Padma\(^\text{35}\) provide rich empirical catalogues but the implicit agenda precludes more critical questions on the access and agency of women in the undeniably patriarchal society of medieval South Asia. Notable exceptions to this general trend include Leslie Orr’s work on queenship and patronage, Ruby Lal’s work on domesticity in the Mughal court,\(^\text{36}\) and Padma Kaimal’s work on the prevalence of female patronage in trends of Cōḷa temple building.\(^\text{37}\) Lal questions the hierarchy ascribed to Mughal sources — with some being considered canonical for their supposed facticity — and centers those sources which reveal hitherto unexamined layers of Mughal polity, including the extension and maintenance of kin networks. Kaimal argues that the architectural style of temples commissioned by royal women of the early Cōḷa period showed their enduring connections to their natal homes, and further argues that it was the queens of the Cōḷa court who initiated the practice of patronizing temples in the first place. In a similar vein, Daud Ali discusses the marriage of Cēra princess, Kōkkilāṇ Atīkal to the Cōḷa king, Parāntaka I in his study of two homosocial friendships of the Cōḷa period.\(^\text{38}\)


\(^{36}\) Lal, Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World; “Historicizing the Harem: The Challenge of a Princess's Memoir.”


Leslie Orr attempts a nuanced understanding of different levels of queenship in the Cōḷa polity, based on the heritage and marital status. She makes the useful distinction between queens identified in royal genealogies commissioned by their husbands and sons, and those who claim to have senior status but are in fact only appear in inscriptions they have commissioned. Although the distinction she draws does not map directly, I have attempted in this dissertation to shed a similar slight on queens in the Hoysaḷa context with specific focus on what the geographical concentration of inscriptions reveals about the queens who participated in donative practices around the temple.\(^{39}\)

**Summary of the Argument**

The idea that marriage played an important role in Early Medieval South Indian politics is not a new one. Since the first dynastic histories, scholars have made mention of important queens and consorts in their discussion of dynasties and, when relevant, have noted how these alliances benefited the kings in question and determined martial alliances. However, what many of these studies have not accounted for is the variety in the types of marriages and the purposes they served. While the śāstric norms prescribed hypergamy — where the bride-givers were of a lower social status than the bride-takers — there were also many cases of hypogamy, where overlords gave their daughters in

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\(^{39}\) Leslie Orr, ““Chiefly Queens: Local Royal Women as Temple Patrons in the Late Chola Period,” in Francis, Emmanuel, and Charlotte Schmid ed. The Archaeology of Bhakti II: Royal Bhakti, Local Bhakti. (Institut français de Pondichéry, 2016).
marriage to their subordinates. Trautmann’s foundational work on Dravidian kinship\(^{40}\) filled some of these blanks with his discussion on cross-cousin marriage in South Indian history, a system which equalized bride givers and takers. This is certainly an observable and important phenomenon in the historical record, but it only accounts for a fraction of the marriages which occurred in Early Medieval South India among nested hierarchies of ruling overlords and their subordinates. Through close reading of inscriptions and courtly literature, this dissertation examines more closely the variety of marriages that existed in this political milieu by looking at specific cases of marriage and the political effects of the affinal relationships they created.

The examples highlighted in this dissertation show how marriage and the movement of women forged alliances across geographical and political boundaries, between subordinates and overlords, and reveal that marriage was most often a way to implicate subordinates further into one's service and dependence or to insert oneself into the politics of a neighboring kingdom. Each such alliance, intended to bolster a network around one's own authority, was a gamble in which a member of the ruling class chose one claimant of another territory to support. This disaggregates the idea of a royal family or dynasty as a single, homogenous unit, given that each member with a claim to the throne could form his own network to support that claim, as long as he could convince them that he was worthy of overlordship. In this context, marriage formed an important mode of exchange between two men, and often defied the prescription of the śāstric

norms, most notably that of hypergamy and \textit{kanyādāna} (gift of the bride) in which the bride-giver and the bride-taker were placed in a clear hierarchy with the latter in a position of advantage over the former. In several cases I explore, giving a daughter was a more powerful king’s means of inserting himself into the local politics of a sub-region through the adoption of a son-in-law into his network. In these cases, giving a daughter in marriage abetted the king-making capabilities of the more powerful king.

When the Hoysaḷas first emerged as political actors in the mid-eleventh century, two major powers ruled most of south India: the Western Cāḷukyas or the Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇi and the Cōḷas of Tamil country. Local rulers acknowledged the overlordship of one or the other. The primacy of these two powers decreased over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, leaving South India controlled by a loose federation of precariously connected lords, each trying to gain and maintain the kind of central power that their erstwhile overlords had possessed in their prime. This created what James Heitzman calls a “community of interest” between rulers and intermediate power holders. The community was maintained when each party performed their role, and disrupted if either party attempted to change their role.\footnote{James Heitzman, \textit{Gifts of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State} (Oxford University Press, 1997), 19.}

These communities of interest were governed by an “ethos of martial heroism”\footnote{Cynthia Talbot, \textit{Precolonial India in Practice: Society, Region, and Identity in Medieval Andhra} (Oxford University Press, 2001), 147.} in which lords bestowed those subordinates who carried out successful military exploits on their behalf with honors including titles, objects of royalty, and land rights undergirded
this system. The subordinates also actively sought favor with powerful overlords through military feats and once accepted and honored as subordinates, reciprocated these honors by exalting their overlords in inscriptions. Military battles in this ethos were, “complex dialectical and eristical acts, determinative of relationships between the parts of polities and of polities to each other in an imperial formation.”

As South Indian political relationships became increasingly precarious and complex, the importance of these deliberately forged bonds of overlordship and subordination superseded those of consanguinity, or relation by blood. Daud Ali’s argument about the nature of courtly love, when applied to these homosocial relationships provides one possible framework to understand how Inden’s imperial formation functioned at an individual level, which is important to address the relationships I examine. The simultaneous tension and co-dependence that existed between the overlord and the subordinate in Ali’s formulation allowed for them to enjoy degrees of relative freedom, based on their status and capacity for autonomy. I propose that affinal relationships formed between the men of ruling families played into the equation of relative autonomy between two men.

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43 Ronald B. Inden, *Imagining India* (Hurst, 2000), 222.


Chapter Summaries

Each of the following chapters illustrates how these alliances functioned in different phases of the Hoysaḷa family’s three-century reign. The chapters follow a loosely chronological order but do not constitute a continuous narrative as a dynastic history in the vein of Coelho or Derrett. Rather than reading inscriptions merely as descriptive records which confirm or challenge an established chronology of events, I view them as constitutive of polity following Ronald Inden’s reading of Rāṣṭrakūṭa sources. In each chapter I highlight important instances where choices of marriage and/or subordination played a role in attempts to constitute and consolidate of Hoysaḷa politics, and pursue two major avenues of investigation. First, I examine a wide variety of marriages, those that conformed to either the cross-cousin model or to the šāstrīc prescription of hypergamy and those which did not: cases of overlords being bride-givers and paying bride price. The type of marriage chosen defied prescriptive patterns and were instead predicated on political imperatives, while still employing šāstrīc vocabulary. Second, I triangulate what has been considered marginal information across inscriptions. This destabilizes the totalizing narratives inherent in the rhetoric of the inscriptions themselves reveals contradictory claims, in turn revealing the inherent instability of royal institutions.

46 Inden, Imagining India, 232.
Chapter 2 originated in the quest to illuminate the relationship between the Hoysaḷas and the Western Ganga family who ruled in southern Karnataka between the eight and eleventh centuries, and for whom the region Gangavāḍi 96000 is named. Based their successive rule of what is now southern Karnataka, and the fact that the Hoysaḷas at first adopted subordinate Ganga titles such as *permāḍi* and *rācamalla* as early as the 1020s, and subsequently styled themselves the rulers of Gangavāḍi from mid-eleventh century onwards, scholars have thus far assumed that the Hoysaḷas simply filled the power vacuum the Gangas left in southern Karnataka when the Cōḷas seized the Ganga capital of Talakāḍ in 1004 C.E. Further investigation reveals, however, that the circumstances that led to the Hoysaḷas adopting the Ganga royal titles and claiming themselves their successors began to take shape much earlier as a result of a succession of dynamic alliances between members of various south Indian ruling families.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, the affinal network of the Western Gangas included their overlords, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mānyakhēta who ruled in northern Karnataka and from whom they were bride takers. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas, in turn, received brides from the Kalacuris of Cēḍi. In both of these cases, the bride-takers were subordinate to the bride-givers, which went against śāstric prescription, however these relationships allowed direct access to the politics of other territories through the sons of their daughters and sisters, often affording the overlord king-making capabilities. A successful claim bolstered the political status not only of the claimant but also of all his allies.
The overthrow of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas by their subordinates, the Western Cāḷukyas in in 973 C.E. ended Rāṣṭrakūṭa tenure and weakened the Ganga stronghold on southern Karnataka. As a result, they succumbed to Cōḷas aggression in 1004 C.E., ceded their capital city of Talakāḍ and continued to exist only as a minor subordinate family under the Western Cāḷukyas in the Banavāsi region. The Cōḷas ennobled a local family, the Kongāḷvas and gave them lordship over the southern stretch of malenāḍu (mountain region) in the Western Ghats. In the 1040s the western Cāḷukya prince, Vikramāditya VI adopted Ganga titles such as vīraganga and permādi in his capacity as ruler of these regions, and ennobled the Hoysaḷas’ as mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras, and I argue, malēparoḷ gaṇḍa, or “lord among hill-chiefs.”

I therefore argue that the Hoysaḷas inherited the epithets of Ganga royalty as well as the titles of mahāmaṇḍalēśvara and malēparoḷ gaṇḍa through their ennoblement as Cāḷukya subordinates, and that this ennoblement was the result of a long process of shifting affinal networks and overlapping claims to territory, rather than a simple assumption of power by the Hoysalas in the absence of a local overlord. Marriage played a significant role in these shifting networks and often heralded important political shifts; it was no different in the case of the alliance between the Hoysalas and Cāḷukyas.

Chapter 3 examines the evolving relationship of the Hoysalas and Cāḷukyas from the mid-eleventh to the mid-twelfth century, beginning with the marriage between the Cāḷukya king, Sōmēśvara I, and piriyarasi or “senior queen” Hoysaladēvi, which coincided with the earliest instances of Hoysala rulers acknowledging subordination to
the Cālukyas. This was the first of three distinct phases in the ongoing relationship between the two families during the reign of the early Hoysaḷas, namely, Vinayāditya, Ereyanga, Ballāḷa I and Viṣṇuvardhana. In the first stage, the Hoysaḷa family was incorporated into the marital network among Cālukya subordinates, both through the hypergamy of Hoysaḷadēvi as well as the marriage of Ereyanga to an Uchhangi Pāṇḍya princess, Mahādēvi. The resources and ennoblement from their Cālukya overlords allowed the Hoysaḷas to begin building a network among their own subordinates which mimicked the one they participated in under the Cālukyas.

The pattern of marriages shifted in the second phase with the marriages of Ereyanga’s sons, Ballāḷa I and Viṣṇuvardhana, who both married women from subordinate families in the first two decades of the twelfth century. Nominally, they continued to acknowledge their subordination to Western Cālukyas through their use of the title, mahāmaṇḍalēśvara but the their choice to marry among the families of their subordinates strengthened ties with and among them and suggested their growing ambitions toward independent sovereignty. Ballāḷa I married the three daughters of Mariyāne Daṇḍanāyaka in 1103 C.E., and died very soon after. Viṣṇuvardhana succeeded him and in the early years of his reign, Śāntalāḍēvi was his most prominent queen. Śāntalāḍēvi bore no connection to the Cālukya family but connected Vishnuvardhana to northern Karnataka through her origin from Balligāvi, near present-day Shimoga district.

This reign of Viṣṇuvardhana also saw numerous alliances formed among his subordinates, which he actively facilitated. These marriages were followed by significant
military victories for Hoysaḷas, most notably the victorious campaign against the Cōḷas and recapture of the Ganga capital of Talakāḍ in 1117 C.E. Under Viṣṇuvardhana. On the strength of these victories and his now greatly expanded network of support, Viṣṇuvardhana launched an attack on his overlord, Vikramāditya VI in the 1120s which was quelled by a fellow Cāḷukya subordinate, Acugi II of the Sinda family. Following this unsuccessful attempt to achieve independence, he was reincorporated into the Cāḷukya marital network as a mark of his renewed subservience.

Chapter 4 follows the progress of a number of the subordinate families, introduced in the second chapter, into the reign of Ballāḷa II. More specifically it looks at ways by which these families communicated long-standing loyalty to their Hoysaḷa overlords, and the ways in which they demonstrated their agency in politics, despite acknowledging their subordinate position to their overlords. The rule of Ballāḷa II, best known for his successful bid for independent sovereign in 1198 C.E., saw the most prolific production of inscriptions, both in terms of quantity and geographic dispersal of inscriptions which acknowledged him as overlord. During this period the ennoblement of more subordinate families thanks to the success of Ballāḷa, granted them the opportunity to record their family genealogies in donative inscriptions, and took this opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of their ancestors.

This chapter examines two different ways in which the newly ennobled subordinates used the opportunity to record their families’ histories in inscriptions. On the one hand were families who celebrated multigenerational loyalty to the Hoysaḷa family, which
predated their ability to record it. On the other, subordinates like the family who ruled in south-eastern Karnataka from a town called Huliyar celebrated their ancestors’ successive service to, and titles won under, the Western Cāḷukya king, Sōmēśvara I in the eleventh-century, to the Noḷamba Pallavas in the next generation and finally to the Hoysaḷas under Ballāḷa II. The combination of subordinates who showed longstanding loyalty and those who came with a history of varied employment established that the Hoysaḷas’ power was growing both as a local power and as an attractive alliance for those on the periphery. The chapter also examines the ways in which Ballāḷa II’s queens performed the duties of military subordinates which further blurred the line between queenship and subordination.

Chapter 5 examines the later Hoysaḷas’ relationships with their southern neighbors, the Cōḷas and the Madurai Pāṇḍyas through the Gadyakarṇāṃrta, a Sanskrit text composed at the Hoysaḷa court in the mid-thirteenth century. The text consists of two sections: the first, a purānic frame story that takes place in the court of the deity, Śiva, and the second, a story being read to the members of Śiva’s court about the battle of epic proportions between the Hoysaḷas and the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai. The events that take place in the purānic section, specifically at the abode of Śiva in Kailāsa provide causality for the battle — as a squabble between Śiva’s son, Kumāra and his disciple, Paraśurāma playing out on earth with them having taken the mortal forms of the Hoysaḷa and Pāṇḍya kings, respectively.
I look at the ways in which the text articulates the Hoysaḷas’ relationships with the deity Sōmanātha of Saurāṣṭra, in present day Gujarat, and with the other major power in south India during the thirteenth century, the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai, through two marriages of the Hoysaḷa king, Sōmēśvara, with the Paṇḍya princess, Bijjalādēvi and the princess blessed by Sōmanātha, Dēvikā.

Through these chapters, I explore the ways in which mapping networks of kinship illustrates the inherent instability of the political structure in Early Medieval South India, belying the totalizing rhetoric of the inscriptions themselves. Loyalty and therefore lordship and subordination were constantly in flux, and marriage and the movement of women represented one way in which these relationships were articulated. I also look at the ways women found ways to locate and make themselves visible in a system in which they largely functioned as markers of homosocial relationships.
CHAPTER 2: South India and the Emergence of the Hoysaḷas

The Hoysaḷas came to power as local rulers in southern Karnataka in the mid-eleventh century and established themselves as inheritors of the Gangavāḍi region by adopting the political apparatus that had been instituted under the Western Gangas beginning in the fifth century C.E., identifying themselves with the Ganga titles, and likening their acts of piety to those of erstwhile Ganga rulers. There is very little evidence to suggest a direct relationship between the two families, however, and as a result, the relationship between the Gangas and the Hoysaḷas has long been assumed but understudied. In contrast, inscriptions provide much clearer evidence for nature of the the Hoysaḷas’ subordination to the Kalyani Cāḷukyas, beginning in the mid-eleventh century — from carrying their epithets and subordinate titles, to fighting battles on their behalf, inscriptions record extensive interpersonal relationships. Through close attention to this contrast, and the period of transition between Ganga and Hoysaḷa rule in southern Karnataka, I argue that the Hoysaḷas were extremely minor, peripheral subordinates at the tail-end of Ganga rule (the late-tenth century) and that they staked their claim to the region as successors Gangas only due to their ennoblement by the Kalyāṇi Cāḷukyas in the mid-eleventh century. I demonstrate how this process unfolded against the backdrop

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of evolving networks of marriage and subordination among prominent ruling families of South India.

The standard account of the Hoysaḷa family paints them as as obscure pastoralists before their descent into the plains and their entry into civilization. This narrative presupposes a civilizational trajectory, but neglects evidence that isn’t directly connected to the Hoysaḷa lineage. Rather than merely seeing their migration to the plains as the personal ambition of individual men, my approach frames the shift in rulership as the result of ongoing shifts in kinship networks among ruling families, and demonstrates how the dissolution and reformation of these networks contributed to the shifting nodes of power in the region. Even as inhabitants of the hills, or “malē” the Hoysaḷas were actively engaged in the politics of the plains, particularly in the early-eleventh-century conflict between the Gangas and the Cōḷas. Following the Cōḷa occupation of the Ganga capital, Talakāḍ, the Hoysaḷas continued to resist the Cōḷa incursion into southern Karnataka, though unsuccessfully. Their rising prominence made them attractive subordinates for the Western Cāḷukyas, the contemporary supra-regional power, centered in northern Karnataka.

The chapter consists of three sections. In the first, I examine the network of political alliances in South India from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, with specific focus on the marital relationships between the Ganga, Noḷamba-Pallava, Rāṣṭrakūṭa, and Kalacuri families. Most notably, I look at what it meant for a family to be either bride givers or takers, and what the directionality of these alliances implied. In the second section, I trace
the origin of the Hoysaḷa title, *malēparoḷ gaṇḍa*, which Rice translates as “lord among hill-chiefs,” and the adoption of Ganga titles by the earliest Hoysaḷa rulers, Nṛpa Kāma and Vinayāditya, and the third section examines the relationships of marriage and subordination between the Western Cāḷukyas and the Gangavāḍi region, with a focus on the events that led to their eventual alliance with the Hoysaḷas.

A Brief Chronology of Ganga-Rāṣṭrakūṭa Relations

The Western Ganga dynasty, for whom the Gangavāḍi 96000 region is named, were the first recorded rulers of southern Karnataka. Their earliest inscriptions date to the fifth century C.E., and they ruled the region until the Cōḷas seized their primary residence, Talakāḍ in 1004. C.E. After this, they moved northward to rule Maṇḍali in the Banavāsi region as subordinates to the Western Cāḷukyas.49 Over the course of their rule, the Gangas sustained relationships with numerous ruling families of South India such as the Kadambas of Banavāsi, the Cāḷukyas of Badami, and the Noḷamba-Pallavas, among others, but their most significant relationship was with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mānyakhēṭa

48 There is considerable debate about the meaning of these numerical suffixes that appear after the names of political divisions in the Kannada-speaking region. For smaller divisions it is easier to tell since there are inscriptions which list the villages that belong to a division with less than fifty villages. These smaller divisions made up the bigger ones, but there is still a lack of clarity on what these very large numbers like 96000 at the end of Gangavāḍi, or Seven-and-a-half-lakh Country mean. Explanations range from these numbers representing revenue collection (R.S. Sharma) to “the capacity of subject-citizens to constitute headships (or assemblies) for villages (the tens), associations of villages (the hundreds), or even associations of a district (nāḍu, the ten thousands)” (Inden 224).

49 See EC VII (O.S.) Shimoga, 97.
which began in the late ninth century and proved foundational for the political changes that occurred in the region over the course of the ninth and tenth centuries C.E., eventually leading to the rise of the Hoysaḷas. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas came to power by overthrowing their overlords, the Cāḷukyas of Badami and ruled most of modern-day Karnataka, then called Kuntala or the seven-and-a-half-lakh country, beginning in the eighth century C.E. Gangāḍi 96000 formed an integral part of the seven-and-a-half-lakh country, and the Gangas had strong matrimonial and martial alliances with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas during the latter half of their rule in Gangāḍi. This alliance between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Gangas, has conventionally been read as a symbol of peace between the two families. However, the direction of the alliance, that is the giving of a daughter from the politically superior overlord to his subordinate needs further investigation.

According to the dharmaśāstras, isogamy — marriage in which the families of the bride and groom are of equal status — is the ideal and the only form of marriage that is prescribed. Other forms of marriage in which the bride and groom’s families are of unequal status, are merely accepted and carry legitimacy of a lesser degree. The anulōma (literally, in the direction of the hair) or hypergamous type of marriage, where the bride is of lower status, is considered appropriate while the the pratiḷōma (against the hair) or hypogamous type, where the bride is of higher status is allowed but not preferred.50 There

G.S. Dikshit, Local Self-Government in Medieval Karnataka, 1964

was no strict adherence to this norm in early medieval South India. Cross-cousin marriage was a salient feature of the Dravidian kinship model and allowed for parity between two families where both were bride givers and takers however, this does not account for the phenomenon in early medieval South India where overlords married their daughters to their subordinates.
Political marriages afforded subordinates the familial titles of son-in-law or aliya or brother-in-law or bhava/maiduna, which they used to assert their proximity to the overlord. As recipients of these gifts the subordinate was expected to show loyalty to the overlord and provide military support against mutual enemies. While it is easy to assume that these alliances were formal diplomatic arrangements between entire royal families, it is important to take into account that members of the family were not always loyal to one another. A marriage alliance of this sort was, therefore the bride-giver’s gamble that the groom they chose for their daughter, became the next ruler of the dynasty, thereby cementing their influence over the politics of the subregion. A situation of this nature played out between the Gangas, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the Kalacuris, and the Noḷamba-Pallavas over the course of the late ninth and early tenth centuries, and the continuity and interruptions in their ongoing alliances shed light on how the choices made about whom to marry anticipated major political changes.

Malini Adiga divides Ganga rule into two periods, the first from the fifth to the eighth century and the second from the eighth century to the eleventh. The first phase was marked by three distinguishing features: the deployment of Ganga family members to rule different regions, and the establishment of agriculture through bramhadēyas, meaning brahmans were granted the revenue from the land free of taxation, and limited

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51 This is explicitly stated in the inscriptions which say that grants were made “in accordance with the brahmadēya system (brahmadēya kramaṇa)”Adiga, The Making of Southern Karnataka, 103; K.V. Ramesh, Inscriptions of the Western Gangas (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1984), nos. 2, 6, 7, 8. For a longer discussion of these taxes, see Adiga p. 104
bounds of Ganga territory. They ruled what was then called the Gangavādi 600052 with Kuvalālapura or Kōlālapura (modern-day Kolar), as their residence. The intertwined practices of territorial expansion and marriage alliances between royal families began in this early period. For the Gangas, the first of these alliances was with the Kadambas of Banavāsi. A copper-plate inscription from the fifth/sixth century mentions the marriage between the Ganga king, Mādhavavarman II and a Kabamba princess by identifying his son, Āvinita as the nephew (sister’s son) of the Kabamba King, Kṛṣṇavarma (śrī kṛṣṇavarma mahādhirājasya priya bhāginēyasya janani, or “he whose mother was the beloved sister of king Kṛṣṇavarma)53 Following this alliance, the Gangas came to control Sēndraka Viṣaya, Vallavi Viṣaya and the Dēvalige Viṣaya which had earlier been under Kadamba rule.54 A second important, early alliance was with the king of Punnāṭa, near present-day Mysore. Āvinita, mentioned above, married the daughter of the king Skandavarma of Pannāṭa and Punnāḍa, which the former's son Durvinita inherited as a dauhitr (daughter’s son) due to the lack of a male heir on his maternal side of the family.55 Notably, the women aren’t named in these inscriptions, the emphasis being on the resulting relationships between their male relatives.

52 Adiga, The Making of Southern Karnataka, 75.


54 EC 8 (N.S.) Hassan 10.

The second phase of Ganga rule, more immediately relevant to this argument, was marked by an increasingly complex political network in which the right to rule was granted less on the basis of consanguinity or blood-relation, and more on the strength of affiliation and ennoblement of local rulers. In this arrangement, the Ganga overlords would collect tribute from the rulers of surrounding territories while allowing them to rule with almost complete autonomy in their own region. This mutually beneficial arrangement allowed the Gangas to expand their territory westward as the central overlord, while the local ruler gained access to the markers of cosmopolitan kingship.

The relationship between the Gangas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas began in this period, on an antagonistic note. In the seventh century C.E., the Rāṣṭrakūṭas deposed their overlords, the Cāḷukyas of Bādami and in the eighth, began an aggressive expansion southward. In 768 C.E. the first Rāṣṭrakūṭa king who attempted to expand southwards — Krishna I was unsuccessful and met resistance from the Ganga king, Srīpuruṣa and his subordinates. Though he issued an inscription from Mānyapura, or Manne, there is little to indicate that he retained control over Gangavāḍi or cemented the Gangas' subordinate status from this expedition. His successors, Dhruva and Gōvinda III were more successful against the Ganga king, Sivamāra II, twenty years later. Though skirmishes continued with the Ganga family throughout the first half of the ninth century, with the contemporary inscriptions claiming both Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Ganga sovereignty over parts of Gangavāḍi, by the ninth century, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas held sway over most of the region.56

Rācamalla Permmāḍi, also known as Rācamalla I (r. 816-843 C.E.) pushed back against the Rāṣṭrākūṭas. According to inscriptions which recall his achievement, he left only a fraction of the territory under the control of the Rāṣṭrākūṭa subordinate, Bankēśa or Vankēśa.

Śivamāra’s younger brother’s son was Rājamalla (I), whose powerful arms destroyed his enemies and whose feet were adorned with the diadems of subdued kings. Like the rising cool-rayed moon which dispels darkness, he freed his kingdom of the occupation of the Rāṣṭrākūṭas and thereby regained mastery over his own hegemony and won fame.\(^{57}\)

…On Satyavākya (i.e. Rājamalla) bearing the burden of the earth of which only a fragment was left in Vankēśa’s possession, the elephants of the quarters Śēsha and the Lōkapālas came to enjoy the rest.\(^{58}\)

In the ninth century, the Rāṣṭrākūṭa subordinate ruler, Bankēśa attempted a recovery of the Gangavādi territory on behalf of his overlord, Rāṣṭrākūṭa Amōghavarṣa I. While Rāṣṭrākūṭa inscriptions claim that Bankēśa was successful until the time he was called back to the Rāṣṭrākūṭa capital to quell an internal rebellion, Ganga records claim that the they were victorious over the Rāṣṭrākūṭas.\(^{59}\) Simultaneously, Amōghavarṣa gave his daughter, Abbalabbā in marriage to the Ganga prince, Būtuga I and she “came to live, like a second Lakṣmī in the broad chest of this Būtuga who had the second name of Guṇaduttaranga.”\(^{60}\) A second daughter of Amōghavarṣa, Rēvakkanimmaḍi was married to

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\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.
a man named Ereganga and while his origins are not explicitly stated, he seems to be of Ganga lineage based on his name. Amoghavarṣa therefore tried to enter into Ganga politics through these marriages during the ninth century but ultimately his sons in law did not rule, resulting in the delay of significant Rāṣṭrakuṭa influence in Gangavāḍi.

During this contentious period, the Gangas also had a series of marriages with the Noḷamba-Pallavas, who were also attempting to resist Rāṣṭrakuṭa aggression. The erstwhile Gangavāḍi-6000 became known as Noḷambavāḍi where the Noḷamba-Pallavas ruled as subordinates to the Gangas, who were now based out of Talakāḍ, as their territory expanded westward. An inscription from Baragur in Sira Taluk, dated 878 C.E. details multigenerational marital relationships between the two families in describing the lineage of the Noḷamba-Pallava king, Māhendra. Māhendra's mother, Jāyabbe was the Ganga prince, Nītimarga-Permmāḍi’s younger sister (tange) and daughter (magal) of Satyavākya Kongunivarmma and a Noḷamba princess, the younger sister of Noḷambāḍhirāja, whose father was Pallavāḍhirāja. There are two important marriages here, one between the Pallava princess (who is unnamed and identified only as the younger sister of Noḷambāḍhirāja), and Satyavākya Kongunivarmma, and the second

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61 SII Vol. XI, No. 7

62 EC XII (O.S.) Sira 24 (900 C.E.); 38 (878 C.E.).
between her daughter, the Ganga princess, Jāyabbe and the Pallava prince (also unnamed), who was Māhendra’s father. Māhendra cites this lineage in numerous inscriptions. Despite being the scion of the Pallava family, he chooses to throw his maternal connection with the Gangas into higher relief. This is one way to discern that the Gangas were in a relatively advantageous political position with respect to the Noḻamba-Pallavas — the latter found it prestigious to acknowledge the relationship while the former did not.

An inscription originally found on a pillar in the Taluk office compound at Dharmapuri in Salem district, dated 929 C.E., extends this lineage three more generations. Like the Baragur inscription above, it starts with the marriage of Jāyabbe and Polālcōra, having identified them as the daughter (magaḷ) and son (magan) of Satyavākya Kongunivarma and Pallavādhiraja, respectively. The inscription then informs us that their son, Māhendra married a gangamagaḷ, or “daughter of the Gangas,” Gāmabbe. They had a son, Ayyappadēvan who also married a daughter of the Ganga family, Vollabbarasi. Ayyapadēvan and Vollabbarasi’s son, Aṇṇigan married a daughter of the Cāḷukya family (cāḷukya magal), Attiyabbarasi; their son Irulacōra, is the subject of the inscription.

This serves as an example of cross-cousin marriage involving a direct exchange and in the first two generations, when the Gangas and Noḻamba-Pallava kings were both bride-givers and bride-takers. From the marriage of Jāyabbe and Polālcōra onwards

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63 SII Vol. IX No. 23
however, the Gangas were exclusively bride givers to this family, who articulated their subordination and celebrated these alliances in their lineage. Interesting to note is the interruption in the line of Ganga brides, and the alliance with a Cāḷukya family through Attiyabbarasi. Since the Western Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa would not come to prominence until later in the tenth century, it is possible that the Noḷamba-Pallavas allied with their immediate neighbors to the east, the Cāḷukyas of Vengi. Aṇṇigan (known as Ayyappadēva in other inscriptions) was the first in the lineage, according to the inscription, who did not marry a Ganga princess. His rule coincided with the subordination of the Gangas to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa overlords, based on an alliance forged between the Ganga prince, Būtuga and Rāṣṭrakūṭa prince, Amōghavarṣa III, both of whom were estranged from their homelands, and who were enabled by this alliance to claim their respective thrones. It is impossible to say for sure, but perhaps Ayyappadēva had been subordinate to the rulers whom the duo overthrew, and once he was out of favor chose to marry outside of this long-standing tradition.

A major development Ganga-Rāṣṭrakūṭa relations came with the marriage between Būtuga II and Rēvakanimmaḍi, the daughter of Amōghavarṣa III (not to be confused with the daughter of Amōghavarṣa I of the same name). The Sudi grant, a copper-plate inscription dated 938 C.E. describes how the Ganga Prince Būtuga II, “possessed of prosperity and wealth acquired by his own arm, went to the glorious Baddega [Amōghavarṣa III], the favourite of the earth, in the country of Ḍahāḷa, and then, being of
the most excellent understanding, wedded his daughter… at Tripuri.”⁶⁴ At the time of the marriage, neither Amōghavarṣa III nor Būtuga II were active rulers of their ancestral kingdoms, and Amōghavarṣa was staying at the Kalacuri court in Tripuri — home of his maternal ancestors. Ereyappa and Rācamalla were jointly on the Ganga throne at Talakāḍu. The Sudi inscription further details how Būtuga secured the Rāṣṭrakūṭa throne for Amōghavarṣa’s son, Kṛṣṇa III: he took royal insignia such as elephants, horses and white umbrellas from other kings and gave them willingly to Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa in turn supported Būtuga’s claim to the Ganga throne and “killed Dantiga and Vappuga, who were probably Noḷamba princes and feudatories of Rāchamalla, the Ganga ruler then upon the throne. Then he attacked and killed Rāchamalla himself, and put his brother-in-law in the throne.”⁶⁵ This instance possibly illuminates the apparent fracture between the Gangas and Noḷamba-Pallavas — the latter were subordinates of Ereyappa and Rācamalla and did not support Būtuga’s usurpation of the throne.

The gamble turned out to be a profitable one for the Kṛṣṇa when Būtuga fought on his behalf against the Cēḷa prince Rājāditya at Takkolam in 949 C.E. His defeat and the death of Rājāditya proved to be a decisive turning point in establishing Ganga, and thereby Rāṣṭrakūṭa dominance in the region. For this act of loyalty, Būtuga was granted the lordship of Banavāsi and Śāntalige by his brother-in-law and overlord.⁶⁶ The relationship

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⁶⁶ Atakūr Inscription, EI VI, p. 50
between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Gangas, continued until the former were overthrown by their subordinates, the Western Cāḷukyas in the late tenth century. The Hebbal inscription, found on a stone tablet at a temple outside the village, from 975 C.E., records the multigenerational alliances between the two families, presenting the multiple marriages as a continuous narrative of cooperation between the two families. The inscription recalls that Amōghavarsha I (r. 814-878 C.E.) gave his daughter, Abīlabbā to Būtuga I. His son, Butuga II (r. 938-961) married Rēvakānimmāḍi, daughter of Amōghavarśa III (r. 936-939), and his son and successor, Maruḷa married Bījabbe, daughter of Krishna III (r. 937-969),67 possibly trying to affirm the relationship in retrospect at a time when Ganga sovereignty was under threat from the growing prominence of the Cōḷas.

The location of Būtuga and Rēvakānimmāḍi’s marriage in Tripuri, the maternal home of Amōghavarśa III, brings to light the relationship the Rāṣṭrakūṭas shared with the Kalacuris of Cēḍi. While the Rāṣṭrakūṭas acted exclusively as bride-givers to the Gangas, they shared the opposite relationship with the Kalacuris, based in present day Madhya Pradesh, in which they were exclusively bride-receivers. All of the recorded alliances are examples of princesses from the Kalacuri family marrying Rāṣṭrakūṭa princes or kings. Initially because of the assumption that hypergamy only existed from the bride’s side, historians assumed that the Kalacuris held some kind of subordinate status to the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, but “it is striking that our knowledge of these marriages comes, not from the wife-giving Kalacuris as we might have expected (reasoning that they had been the

67 Hebbal Inscription, EI IV No. 50, pp. 350-356.
Intergenerational Network of Marriage in Ninth and Tenth-Century South India
advantaged party), nor even from the records of the first Rāṣṭrikaṭa kings who arranged or participated in them but, rather, from the last two generations of Rāṣṭrikaṭas, specifically the records of Gōvinda IV, Kṛṣṇa III, and Kakka II, that is, during the final forty-odd years of the Rāṣṭrikaṭa empire when it was seized by a turmoil of its feudatories." At this same time, during the late tenth century, the Cāḷukya ruler, Tailapa began noting in his early inscriptions that his mother, Bontādevī had been from the Kalacuri family, which marked a shift in the marriage patterns of the Kalacuris. The shifted support was probably a significant contributing factor in, and a symptom of, the gradual recession of Rāṣṭrikaṭa power. They no longer appeared prudent allies to the Kalacuris who shifted their affiliation while the Rāṣṭrakuṭas attempted to emphasize their previous, generations-long arrangement.

Members of the Ganga family, on the other hand, as bride receivers from the Rāṣṭrikaṭas, continued to support their overlords well into the tenth century, even after the Cāḷukya Tailapa had claimed sovereignty over the entirety of the Rāṣṭrikaṭa domain. The Ganga king Mārasiṃha supported his nephew, Indra IV’s claim to the throne69 but was ultimately unsuccessful in challenging Tailapa II, who defeated all of his challengers.70 Notably, Indra IV was the grandson of Kṛṣṇa III, whose claim to the throne had been supported by his bhāva, his sister Rēvakanimmaḍi’s husband, Būtuga II. There was clearly a strong bond between these specific branches of the two respective families.

68 Trautmann, Dravidian Kinship, 383.
69EC II (O.S.) Shravana Belgola, 59.
70 Altekar, Rāṣṭrakuṭas and Their Times, pp. 131-132.
Despite longstanding relationships, loyalties could change from one generation to the next — marriages were only acknowledged, sometimes in retrospect, as strategic nods to the alliances between families, and we can assume that it was the party which stood to gain that acknowledged these alliances in their inscriptions, sometimes to rally the support of their relatives and sometimes to announce political ambitions to expand their territory by claiming their maternal heritage. This is visible in the earlier period in the Noḷamba Pallava king, Māhēndra citing his maternal descent from the Ganga lineage, which preceded his attack on Talakāḍ in the late ninth century. More generally, however, kings did not acknowledge maternal ancestors, preferring to use general epithets of beauty and devoted wifehood. It therefore highlighted the emphasis on the relationships between men of these royal families when they invoked their foremothers’ origins. When both parties had political power in their respective regions, these alliances and the resulting networks formed the basis for the creation of large empires. On the other hand, the decline of one’s overlord and the network which one’s family was part of could have far-reaching consequences. The decline of Rāṣṭrakūṭa sovereignty in northern Karnataka, was a major contributing factor in weakening the Gangas in the south against the Cōḷas.

Malēnāḍu, Malēpar, and the Rise of the Hoysaḷas

One of the Hoysaḷas’ most prominent and repeated epithets, “malēparol ganda,” or “lord among hill-chiefs,” was first adopted in a stone inscription of 1063 C.E. in praise of
the Hoysaḷa king, Poysaḷa Dēva, or Vinayāditya,\textsuperscript{71} and continued as a feature of the successive rulers’ inscriptions through out their reign. This title, along with the fact that the earliest inscriptions referring to the Hoysaḷas as rulers appear in Angadi — a town located in the Western Ghats — has concretized the narrative of the Hoysaḷa family starting out as tribal chieftains, who eventually descended into the plains in pursuit of civilization. Derret writes for example,

With his home in this neglected corner, the Hoysaḷa’s entry upon our stage in his own person is as suggestive of what had preceded it as it was dramatic. Little imagination is needed to build up from the meagre details of the lithic records a picture of this anonymous chieftain as he consolidates his hold upon the recently-won plain-lands.\textsuperscript{72}

While this narrative is plausible based purely on the movement of the Hoysaḷas from their mountain-residence, Sosēvūr to Bēḷūr in the plains in the late eleventh century, it neglects evidence for their military engagement in the politics of the plains of southern Karnataka in the period immediately following the Cōḷa conquest of Talakāḍ in 1004 C.E., up until the emergence of the first individually recognized Hoysaḷa ruler, in 1025 C.E. Inscriptions from this period provide glimpses into the family’s evolution as a local power, which in turn made them attractive allies to the Kalyāṇi Cāḷukyas in the mid-tenth century.

\textsuperscript{71} EC VI (O.S.) Mudgere 13.

\textsuperscript{72} J.D.M. Derrett, \textit{The Hoysaḷas: A Medieval Indian Royal Family} (Oxford University Press, 1957), 17.
The appearance of the term “malēṇāḍu” or hill-region in inscriptions dates back to the ninth century and appears in both Ganga and Cōḷa inscriptions. Y. Subbarayalu connects this family to the Maḷavas of the Sangam anthologies, who were “a predatory tribe inhabiting mostly hilly areas.” A prominent Cōḷa queen Sembiyan Mahadēvi, wife of the Cōḷa king, Gaṇḍarāditya (r. 944 - 956 C.E.), is identified as the daughter of the “malavarāyar” or “hill king.” Gaṇḍarāditya and Sembiyan Mahādēvi’s son, Uttama Cōḷa also married two women from his mother’s family. Trautmann infers from this that before Rājarāja I’s ascension to the Cōḷa throne — when many of the smaller nāḍus were absorbed into ten larger regions called valanāḍu — the chiefdoms in the hilly areas practiced a feudal relationship with the Cōḷa king, where the local ruler continued to exercise sovereignty over the region he ruled while paying tribute to the overlord. In Trautmann’s formulation, the marital alliances bolstered this relationship; I would extend his argument to posit that the marriage of daughters to the overlord formed part of the tribute. This is why we see a continued practice of bride-giving from the malavarāya’s family to the Cōḷas over at least two generations.

The Western Ganga inscriptions suggest a far more removed relationship with malēṇāḍu, which lay on the western border of Gangavāḍi 96000. Over the course of their reign, they sustained marital relationships with multiple south Indian ruling families, but

74 SII Vol. 19, no. 11.
75 Ibid, no. 311.
none from the male region. The only Ganga inscriptions found in Coorg include an inscription from the ninth century located on a stone in Biliyūr, in which local actors called the malē sāśīrvarum, or “those of the Male thousand,” protected grants made by the Ganga kings\textsuperscript{76} and an inscription, in Peggūr, which marks the first appearance of the term malēpar or “hill chief” in the late tenth century.\textsuperscript{77} The Biliyur and Peggūr inscriptions cite “those of the male thousand” and “four malepar,” respectively as protectors of grants made by Ganga kings to local Jain temples, as opposed to other groups who are identified as witnesses to these grants, namely “those of the 96000” (tombattaru sāśīrvbaru), the five sāmantas (ay sāmantaru), the Beddoregare-72, and the eight okkalu (eṇṭ-okkluru; translated as householders by Rice). These inscriptions confirm interaction between the Ganga royal family and the group called the malēpar or male sāśīrvbaru in the ninth and tenth centuries, but do little to illuminate any further potential relationship they had.

The first named Hoysala rulers, Nṛpa Kāma and Vinayāditya adopted the names of the Ganga rulers who appeared in the Peggūr (978 C.E.) inscriptions as epithets in their inscriptions from the mid-eleventh century. The date of the Peggūr inscription corresponds to the rule of the Ganga king, Rācamalla IV, and his younger brother, Rakkasa. An inscription recording a grant from 1025 C.E. found close to Sosēvūr, identifies Nṛpa Kāma Voysala with the title Rācamalla Vemmādi.\textsuperscript{78} Another inscription

\textsuperscript{76} EC I (O.S.) Coorg, 2.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid Coorg, 4.

\textsuperscript{78} E.C. VI (O.S.) Mudgere 19, 1025 C.E.
from 1063 C.E. located outside the basadi at Sosēvūr praises the king (Vinayāditya through the correspondence of the of date) as having the words, “Rakkasa Voysaḷan,” emblazoned on his flag.79

The adoption of these epithets is the strongest evidence for an overlord-subordinate relationship between the Gangas and the Hoysaḷas in the tenth century. Based on this evidence, Rice even posits that Hoysaḷas were members of the Ganga extended family.80 The Hoysaḷas’ assumption of Ganga titles in the eleventh century, and their adoption of the title malēparōḷ ganda shortly thereafter, makes it tempting to associate the Hoysaḷas of the early eleventh century with the malēpar and the malē sāsirvbar of the Peggūr and Biḷūr inscriptions. Through association of the titles alone, a narrative in which the family gradually rose to prominence among the other small principalities in Malenāḍu and eventually became a leader among their rulers is somewhat plausible but the geographical distance between these inscriptions which mention malēpar and Sosēvūr challenges this conclusion. Inscriptions which refer to Malenāḍu, the Malē-1000, and malēpar from the period of Ganga rule appear only in the Coorg district, far south of where the Hoysaḷas’ initial residence of Sosēvūr lies. This discrepancy calls for further investigation into how the terms, malēnāḍu and malēpar expanded between Ganga and Hoysaḷa rule, to accommodate the constant battles that were taking place to gain and retain power over the

79 EC VI (O.S.) Mudgere 13, 1063 C.E.
80 B.L. Rice, EC Vol VI (O.S.), Introduction, p. 15.
Gangavādi region, most prominently, the struggle between the Cōḷas to the south, and the Western Cāḷukyas to the north.

Following his conquest of Talakāḍ in 1004 C.E., the Cōḷa king, Rājakēśarivarman, or Rajarāja I made provisions to create a network of subordinates that would rule what had been the Ganga territory on his behalf. The same year, an inscription from the northernmost tip of the Coorg district describes the ennoblement of local ruler of Coorg, Maṇija from the Kongāḷva family through which he was given a “vaṭṭa” (otherwise pronounced “paṭṭa”), or fillet by the Cōḷa King Rājakēśarivarman.81 The vaṭṭa came with the title, kṣatriya śikhāmanī kongāḷva or “Kongāḷva, crown-jewel among warriors.” According to the inscription, Maṇija was given the vaṭṭa for his valor in the battle of Paṇasoge, where he vowed to defeat, and then vanquished all of his enemies.82 From this time onwards, the Kongalva kings bore the epithet of the Cōḷa rulers and became their proxy rulers in present-day Coorg, also where the Biliyur and Peggūr inscriptions discussed above were found. Maṇija also received rights over the region of Mālavvi, or present-day Malambi, on the north-eastern border of the Coorg district, and very close to where the first traces of prominent Hoysaḷa rulers appeared.

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81 R.N. Nandi best defines a paṭṭa: "The paṭṭa did not represent the sword but it did emphasize a formal contract based on the mandatory performance of military service in lieu of a grant of land" Ramendra Nath Nandi, State Formation, Agrarian Growth, and Social Change in Feudal South India, C. AD 600-1200 (Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2000), 47.

82 EC I (O.S.) Coorg, 46.
The first mention of the name ‘Poysala’ during this period\(^{83}\) appears in 1007 C.E. An inscription in the Tirumakuldu Narasipura taluk \(^{84}\) illustrates the first known instance when the Hoysalas, among other rulers who had been subordinates of the Ganga and Rāṣṭrakūṭa family, attempted to resist Cōla incursion. The inscription identifies Cōla subordinate (mahāmātya), Apramēya, who belonged to the Tellakuka and ruled over Kottamangala, as the destroyer of the malēpakula (malēpakula kālam). In his rendering of the inscription, B.L. Rice singled the Hoysalas out and translated the inscription as though it referred specifically to a battle between Apramēya and the Hoysalas general Nāgaṇṇa. He also concluded, from the depiction of a battle at the top of the inscription, that it was a memorial stone marking the death of Apramēya.

At the time of Rice’s late-nineteenth-century survey, the inscription was on a slab, built into the ceiling of the Gopalakrishna temple in Kaliyur (a town just south of Talakāḍ, on the opposite bank of the Kaveri river). Rice’s estampage was therefore heavily obscured which led to a faulty transcription and translation of the inscription. The structure of the temple has since collapsed, which allowed epigraphists to obtain and publish a much clearer reading of the inscription.\(^{85}\) Hanumantharao’s reading reveals that

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\(^{83}\) The first ever mention of the word Poysala appears in an inscription from 950 C.E. found in the Marale district. An individual named Poysalamāruga is identified as the grandson of a sāmanta named Arekella, and is described in conflict with the Noḷamba king, Ṭaṅgiga. Since the word appears in passing and it is impossible to establish the connection between Arekella, Poysalamāruga and the later Hoysala family, I have not undertaken an analysis of the inscription in this chapter.

\(^{84}\) EC III (O.S.) TN 44 / EC 6 (N.S.) TN 220.

\(^{85}\) M. Hanumantharao, “Apramēya’s Jayastambha Inscription at Kaliyur” in Śrīkaṇṭhikā: Dr. S. Srikanta Sastri Felicitation Volume (Mysore: Geeta Book House, 1973), 79-84.
rather than being a hero stone, this was a victory pillar that marked Apramēya’s defeat of this confederation of kings at Kaliyur. It also reveals that rather than being identified individually, the Hoysaḷas were cited among several families who rose up against Cōla dominion in the years following the latter’s capture of Talakāḍ. The inscription lists the kings with whom the Hoysaḷa king, merely called “Poysaḷa” in this inscription, fought Apramēya.86

The inscription begins with the epithet, malēparamalla, which is almost identical to malēporol gaṇḍa. However, it doesn’t seem to be the descriptor of the Hoysaḷas at this time. The epithet is in the singular which indicates that it was either referring to a separate individual, or describing the king who is named immediately following it — Cottarali here. If the epithet were referring to all the kings named in the verse, then it would appear in the plural, “malēpara mallar.” The other figures in the inscription are very difficult to identify given that we are only given one name. Hanumantarao posits the following theories about the origin of the various participants in this battle:

Both and Ereganga were Gangas but whether they belonged to the main line and took part in the battle after they were driven out from Gangavāḍi or belonged to one of the ganga branches which ruled parts Gangavadi unsubdued by the Cōlas, cannot be determined. Gōviga and Kakkaga appear to be the scions of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa family. A Senavara is mentioned in the record but it does not mention the name. There was a Senavara king ruling Banavase 12000 under the Cāḷukyas during this period who might have participated in this battle. One Shindiga from the Nolamba family is stated in the record to have been one of those who ran away

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86 malēpara malla cottarali gōyiga būtuga sēnavāra poysaḷa belgupan i jōrega saṃcīga kakkaga sinnavara/māgalā yeregaṁga mardasa barammaṇanum modalāgi kottamamgey ānman igōdī sattavara lekhkhaman ār arivar dharitriyōḷu/gaṇḍara gaṇḍa munḍa jagakārīga biruga nāgavarmma māguṇḍ arikalla muttara noḷambara candīga ponna nannī/gam munḍ- arivarmarājā naragam sirigam kalavūra māḷadoph vendīran ikki oṭidar avar kkula māṇika kājirāṁgadoph
from the battle field leaving their wives behind. This Nolamba Chandiga is not referred to elsewhere. Biruga might be a Santara chief who ruled Santalige.\footnote{Hanumantharao, “Aramēya’s Jayastambha Inscription at Kaliyur” p. 82.}

Other names like Nanni are impossible to identify, given that it could be affixed to the name of any dynasty; there is a Nanni in the Nolamba, Kabamba, and Ganga families. From the associations Hanumantharao makes however, we can glean that these rulers came together from geographically diverse areas of southern Karnataka, and in the absence of a central power launched an offensive attack against the Cōla proxy stationed in Gangavādi, Apramēya. This is further emphasized by the location of the battle at Kaliyuru, situated just south of Talakāṇḍu — all the kings came from territories further north to attack Apramēya’s camp.

Although the Poysaḷa is not identified by name and appears among a long list of kings, he is singled out twice in the inscription, first in the sixth line where he is lauded as alone being the “Bhīma among lords” (ad orvane gaṇḍara bhīman) — this line also singles out Beḷgupan who is described as the only one intoxicated with victory (ad orvaneyām vijaya pramattanum) — and second in the twenty-second line of the inscription where Apramēya is praised for having defeated enemies of boundless strength (ananta balaram) like Eḷagam and Poysaḷa. Of all the rulers mentioned in the inscription, Poysaḷa is singled out and mentioned most frequently. This suggests that his defeat was Apramēya’s greatest achievement in the battle. Although the battle at Kaliyur was important for having been the site of resistance from multiple rulers of southern
Karnataka, Apramēya’s victory was decisive and it was only twenty years hence that the Hoysaḷas began to commission their own inscriptions, and appeared as local rulers in Sosēvūr. They were therefore unsuccessful in establishing themselves as the successors of the Gangas but continued to grow as a local power.

From the 1020s onwards, the Hoysaḷas begin to appear in more inscriptions which illustrate both the increasing importance of their residence, Sosēvūr, and their growing sphere of activity in the larger political landscape. Several hero stones in which they are referred to simply as Poysaḷa or Poysaḷadēva attest to the fact that the Hoysaḷas were in a consistently adversarial relationship with the Cōḷas and their subordinates, the Kongāḷvas, in this decade. Two hero stones from Rajendrapura in the Manjarabad Taluq describe heroic acts of warriors during conflicts between Nṛpa Kāma and Rajendra Cōḷa. The first describes a general who, on the orders of Nṛpa Kāma, attacked the horse of Kannamāra in battle, and lost his life. The second describes a warrior, whose name is effaced, fighting at Banavāsi also on the orders of Nṛpa Kāma. An inscription in the Arkalgud Taluk describes a battle that took place between the “muṇḍa” (or base) Poysala and Rājendra-Cōḷa-Kongāḷva. The beneficiary of this hero stone was fighting on the Kongāḷva side and was the son of Peṇṇalūra Kungalācārya (or the teacher/sculptor of the Kongāḷvas from Peṇṇalūru). Here, the Poysaḷa is referred to with the derogatory descriptor, muṇḍa which Rice translates as “base,” literally meaning bald.

88 EC V (O.S.) Manjarabad 43, 1022.
89 EC V (O.S.) Manjarabad 44, 1027
90 EC V (O.S.) Arkalgud, 76.
The inscriptions found at Sosēvur (modern-day Angadi in the Chikmagalur district), mention the Hoysaḷas supervising grants for the construction of new *basadis*, as well as the construction of tanks. In two of these inscriptions, they assume Ganga titles. The first of these is an inscription from 1025 C.E. found in the Mudgere Taluk, about three kilometers from Sosēvūr/Angadi. It describes the establishment of a *chatra* or accommodation, for Brahmans by a merchant and his wife, and dates the grant to the seventh year of Nṛpa Kāma Poysaḷa, also known as Rācamalla Permāḍi. Rācamalla Permāḍi was the name of the two successive, penultimate Ganga rulers of the Gangavāḍi region, who ruled collectively from the 970s to the 990s. Racamalla IV did also come to Male-nāḍu in 978 C.E, but far south of the Hoysaḷas’ residence. While it is possible that the Gangas also visited the northern part of the hilly region and proffered the title on a member of the Hoysaḷa family, it is more likely, given the geographical distance that the Hoysaḷas assumed this title independently to assert their identity as ennobled Ganga subordinates.

A 1063 C.E inscription at Angaḍi contains the following praise of Poysaḷa-dēva, probably Nṛpa Kāma’s son, Vinayāditya based on the date: “If, writing the six letters, Rakkasa Ho-ysa-la on his flag, he hoists it, can a hundred thousand enemies stand before him in the battle-field?” The term “rakkasa” was a commonly occurring Ganga title — Rakkasa was the name of Rācamalla IV’s younger brother who succeeded him to the

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91 EC VI Mudgere, 19.
92 EC VI Mudgere, 13.
throne in 986 C.E. Vinayāditya’s invocation of this title over half a century after this king’s rule further supports the possibility that the Hoysaḷas, rather than having had a direct connection with the Ganga royal family, were using these titles to stake their claim to local authority, through a recognizable titular idiom.

Evidence for warriors taking orders from Nīpa Kāma, and their enemies singling the Hoysaḷas out as important adversaries illustrates that the Hoysaḷas were gaining a modicum of local authority. However, it seems that they were largely unsuccessful in their campaigns against the Cōḷas, who were advancing rapidly northwards, encroaching on the territory of the Kalyāṇi Cāḷukyas. In 1054-55 C.E., the Cōḷas advanced up to Koppam, in present day Maharashtra and Rājendra (II) Cōḷa erected a victory pillar there, marking his defeat of the Cāḷukya king, Sōmēśvara I. Koppam has since been identified with the modern day town of Khidrapur near Kolhapur as the inscription also mentions Kollapura and the Mahālakṣmi temple there. The Cāḷukyas, who had until this point focused on the territory immediately surrounding the central region of their rule turned their attention southwards with the appointment of Sōmēśvara I’s sons, Vikramāditya VI and Jayasimha as the mahāmāṇḍalēśvaras of the Gangavāṇi and Noḷambavāṇi respectively. Through an alliance with Vikramāditya VI, the Hoysaḷas were further ennobled and firmly established their presence in Gangavāṇi. It is at this time, that they appear in inscriptions with the titles, mahāmāṇḍalēśvara and malēparol gāṇḍa. Cāḷukya

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94 Ibid, xlv.
overlordship and patronage simultaneously inducted the Hoysaḷas into their court and gave a name to their local power. In response to the Cōḷas’ ennoblement of the Kongāḷvas in Malenāḍu, the Cāḷukyas ennobled the Hoysaḷas in order to strengthen their hold on southern Karnataka. The following section explores the shifting alliances that led to this development from the Western Cāḷukya perspective.

**The Cāḷukyas in Gangavāḍi**

When the Hoysaḷas became subordinates of the Cāḷukyas in the mid-eleventh century, they had already made attempts to resist the encroachment of the Cōḷas, along with other families from southern Karnataka who did not accept the suzerainty of the Cōḷas. Though *malēpar* had existed during the last century of Ganga rule, and clearly interacted with the Ganga royal family, there is very little evidence to suggest that ancestors of the Hoysaḷa rulers held an important position in the Ganga administration or kin-network, especially given that the references to *malēpar* in this period were geographical restricted to the Coorg district, far south of where Hoysaḷas eventually emerged. After the Gangas’ decline the Hoysaḷas emerged as a significant name in this region over the course of the early eleventh century, but they were unsuccessful in establishing more than a hyper-local presence, around their residence at Sosēvūr. At this time, their association with and subordination to the Cāḷukyas of Kalyaṇa, beginning in the mid-eleventh century was born of a mutually beneficial arrangement that helped both parties resist the aggressive
military expeditions of the Cōlas. The Cāḷukya prince, Vikramāditya was in the early and mid-eleventh century ruling the southern portions of the Cāḷukya territory from Banavāsi, and it was at this time that the Hoysaḷas came to be recognized as mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras under him, and his father, Sōmēśvara I.

The Western Cāḷukyas or Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa initially rose to prominence as subordinates to the Raṣṭrakūṭas in the late ninth century. The Narasalgi inscription describes a Cāḷukya subordinate of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, Kṛṣṇa III ruling under the Tardavāḍi 1000 region. In the tenth century, they joined the rebellion of a collective of subordinates against the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, which eventually led to Taila II of the Cāḷukya family assuming rulership of his erstwhile overlord’s kingdom. These later Cāḷukyas claimed to be descended from the Cāḷukyas of Badami who were the predecessors of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in Northern Karnataka, and asserted through inscriptive genealogies that they were claiming the birthright which had been stolen from them.

During the Western Cāḷukya king, Sōmēśvara I’s reign (1042-1068 C.E.), he deployed his sons to different parts of southern Karnataka to rule as mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras, or “lords of circumscribed regions.” His first son, Sōmēśvara II ruled Beḷvola and Purigere, close to the center of Cāḷukya power, his second son Vikramāditya VI was in Gangavāḍi and his third son, Jayasimha was dispatched to Noḷambavāḍi. The alliance between the Hoysaḷas and the Cāḷukyas, in which the Hoysaḷas became mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras in their

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95 Since the Cāḷukyas only established their capital at Kalyāṇa in the eleventh century, I use the term Western Cāḷukyas to discuss the family as it encompasses the earlier generations who ruled from Mānyakhēṭa.
96 SII XI No. 40.
own right formed when Vikramāditya was in the south, ruling as his father’s proxy. As the ruler of Gangavāḍi, Vikramāditya VI took on the titles of the Ganga sovereigns like vīraganga and permāṇaḍi, and I argue that the Hoysaḷas assumed the Ganga titles as successors to Vikramāditya, rather than inheriting the titles directly from the Gangas. Before they accepted Cāḷukya overlordship, the only titles the Hoysaḷas assumed where the epithets of the last Ganga kings, Rakkasa and Rācamalla. Their association with the Cāḷukyas elevated their status in the region and they began styling themselves as the successors of the Ganga dynasty in Gangavāḍi, rather than just as their subordinates. The patronage of the Cāḷukyas also afforded the Hoysaḷas the support they required to carry out the ambitions they had already expressed when they confronted the Cōḷas and their subordinates.

The Western Cāḷukyas had a volatile relationship with the Cōḷas, which, over the course of several decades included, both enmity and alliance. The Cāḷukyas resisted several military advances from the Cōḷas since their ascent to the throne under Tailapa II, and under Sōmēśvara suffered repeated wars in which the Cōḷas seem to have been successful in penetrating their most prominent cities. The first four generations of Cāḷukya rulers resided at Manyakhēṭa, the erstwhile Rāṣṭrakūṭa capital, but they were forced to move after the city became susceptible to multiple attacks. It was then that Sōmēśvara I shifted the capital to Kalyāṇa, modern-day Basavakalyan.

In retrospect, Cāḷukya inscriptions underplay the significance the Cōḷa success, and though they did not become subordinate to the Cōḷas, the latter proved a significant
threat. Furthermore, the Cōḷas had already defeated the Gangas at Talakāḍ, Gangavāḍi was predominantly under the control of the Cōḷas and the Malenāḍu region, under their subordinates, the Kongāḷvas. It was in this climate that Vikramāḍitya was dispatched to the south, specifically to Balligāvi in Banavāsi. An inscription from the Hadagalli Taluk in the Bellary district describes Vikramāḍitya ruling in the southern regions of Gangavāḍi 96000, Banavāsi 12000, and Nolambavāḍi 32000 in 1057 C.E. It states that he was ruling these territory with the right of kumāra vṛitti and identifies him primarily with the title, Ganga Permāḍī and only second by his name, Vikramāḍitya. These lines identify Ganga-permāḍī as both the son of Āhavamalla or Sōmēśvara I and the younger brother of Sōmēśvara II. The inscription then goes on to describe Ganga permāḍī’s triumphs in battle against the Cōḷas, the Gauḷas, the Barbara rāja, the Maḷavas, the Gurjaras as well as his physical beauty before identifying the region of his rule.

Two inscriptions from 1058 and 1060 C.E., from Shikaripur taluk, also cite Vikramāḍitya as the ruler of Ganvavāḍi, ruling from the town of Baḷḷigāve. The inscription from 1058 C.E., located very close to Baḷḷigāve provides even more elaborate and specific titles that associate Vikramāḍitya with the marks of Ganga sovereignty. Here, he is not only cited as ruling the region on his father’s behalf but is identified with the

97 SII IX 118, p 93.
98 tat tanayam somānukan uttamam anumuni caritraṃ āhava rāmam mattebha vairi-shauryan udāṭta yaśam dānī gangu permāḍī nrpam (v. 17 - v. 18); ā cāḷukya vikramāḍitya gangu permāḍī dēvaru ganguvāḍi tombattāru sāṣirumum banavāse pannirecchāsirumum noḷambavāḍi mūvaticchāsirumum kumāravṛitiyiṃ sukha saṃkathā vinodadini rājyaṃ geyuttam iral... (v. 21-v. 22)
highest Ganga titles including satyavākya konguni varmma, nanniya ganga, and dharma maharājādhīrāja.99

Fleet and Rice both posit that this was because Vikramāditya VI’s mother was of Ganga lineage, these titles were inherited from the maternal side of his family.100 Sōmēśvara’s third son, Jayasimha on the other hand had the title Noḷamba-Pallava-Permādi101 and Fleet and Rice argue that this indicates his Noḷamba-Pallava maternal lineage. In Bilhaṇa’s Sanskrit text about the life of Vikramāditya VI, Vikramāṇkadēvacarita, Sōmēśvara has only one queen and she bears all three sons, however, an inscription at Gadag dated to the twenty third year of Vikramāditya VI’s reign identifies Bācaladēvi, the senior queen, or piriya-agramahīṣi of Sōmēśvara I, only as the mother to Sōmēśvara (II) Bhuvanaikamalla and Vikramāditya (VI) Tribhuvanamalla.102 The above inscription lends credence to the theory that Bācaladēvi might have been of Ganga lineage as both of the princes identified as her sons, Sōmēśvara II and Vikramāditya VI, held Ganga titles at different points. Jayasimha, who carried titles of the Noḷamba-Pallavas is not mentioned.

However, there is no inscriptive evidence apart from the assumption of these titles by the respective sons of Sōmēśvara I to substantiate the theory that Bācaladēvi was from the Ganga family. While a marriage alliance was possible, especially given that the

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99 EC VII (O.S) Shikaripur, 83.
100 EC VII (O.S.) Introduction, p. 19.
101 EI Vol. IV, p. 212.
102 EI Vol. 15, p 348.
Gangas were now subordinate to the Cāḷukyas, it is impossible to be certain that this was the case. In total, six queens of Sōmēśvara I have been identified in inscriptions but none of them correspond with the Ganga and Noḷamba princesses that are thought to be the mothers of Sōmēśvara and Vikramaditya VI, and Jayasimha, respectively. It is therefore equally plausible that Sōmēśvara I’s sons took on these titles to establish themselves as the successors to previously powerful dynasties who had ruled Gangavaḍi and Noḷambāvāḍi. Even within the Cāḷukya lineage, there was precedent for Sōmēśvara and Vikramaditya VI harking back to the alliances their ancestors made with important ruling families.

According to the genealogy of the Western Cāḷukyas in the Yewur inscription, Taila II (the first ruler of the Western Cāḷukya family) was born of the marriage between Vikramaditya IV and and Kalacūri princess, Bontādēvi. The marriage is described as follows “Vikramaditya married according to rite Bonthādēvi, the glory of the family of the lords of Chēḍi, the daughter of king Lakshmaṇa possessed of (good) character that was commended.” In turn, Taila II’s queen was a Rāṣṭrakūṭa princess:

As Lakshmī was (born) from the ocean, so from that king, the glory of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa family, who resembled Brahmā and Hara, (there was born) a daughter named Śrī-Jākabbā. The king Śrī Taila, the son of the sky which was the family of the Cāḷukyas, married her; and their union, like that of the excellent moonlight and the moon, was for the happiness of mankind.

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104 J.F. Fleet, Sanskrit and Old Canarese Inscriptions, IA Vol VIII, p 15; other inscriptions which record the genealogy are the Kauthem, Nilgund, and Miraj plates; Altekar, Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Their Times, 127.
Their son was Satyāśraya, also known as Irivādeṇga. The inscription details further generations of the Cāḷukya family, but stops mentioning the queens from this point onwards. From other inscriptions, we know that in the following generations, in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, the Cāḷukyas cultivated marriage alliances with the Noḷamba-Pallavas, the Kadambas of Goa and Banavāsi. It is curious, however, that the rulers who established these genealogies chose only to claim their distant maternal heritage, and leaves the question of Bācaladēvi’s heritage open-ended.

When Vikramāditya VI took on Ganga titles and claimed to rule the south in the mid-eleventh century, he was actually ruling from Banavase 12000 region, the northernmost region ascribed to his governance, with Ballīgāvi as his residence. The Cōḷas held power over most of Gangavādi. These Ganga titles were therefore, possibly aspirational and announced the intentions of the Cāḷukyas to expand and regain these territories, and that the respective princes were charged with expansion of territory into the regions for which they bore titles. It therefore follows that Vikramāditya VI, based in Banavāsi was attempting to expand the Cāḷukya territory southwards through successive alliances with kings who had previously been important political actors during the interregnum following the Gangas’ defeat at Talakāḍ.

Several inscriptions also make clear the hierarchy that existed between the members of the Cāḷukya family ruling their respective territories. Sōmēśvara I was the central ruler, under whom his sons exercised varying degrees of power as the rulers of their respective regions. While Sōmēśvara I was alive, this arrangement functioned smoothly, but with his
death fraternal tensions began to foment between the brothers, especially Sōmēśvara II and Vikramāditya VI. This conflict forms the central dramatic arc of Bilhana’s Sanskrit epic, *Vikramāṇkadēvacarita*. According to the narrative of this poem, Vikramāditya VI found refuge in the Cōla court when he was sent back to the south after his father’s death and Sōmēśvara II’s coronation, around 1070 C.E. He then married the daughter of the Cōla king as a mark of friendship between them, and came to his brother-in-law’s aid during his own fratricidal war of succession. Sōmēśvara II, on the other hand, allied himself with the usurper of the Cōla throne, Kullotunga in order to best Vikramāditya VI. However with the help of the allies that he had made in southern Karnāṭaka, Vikramāditya defeated his brother and ascended the throne.105

While the *Vikramāṇkadēvacarita* posits the conflict between the two brothers as arising from their respective characters, Vikramāditya being an ideal son, brother, and ruler as opposed to Sōmēśvara II who became a megalomaniacal despot after his ascent to the throne, the inscriptive evidence reveals that their battle was tied into the alliances they forged as *yuvarāja* and *kumāra*, respectively, during their father’s reign. While Sōmēśvara II ruled with his father in the epicenter of their territory, Vikramāditya was left to form new alliances with the local rulers of the south. Depending on how power was seized, the new ruler either adopted the local rulers who were already present in the region, or they replaced them with their own subordinates. This is clear in the case of the *mahapradhāna* and *hadavāḷa* Lakṣmaṇa, a subordinate of Sōmēśvara II who ruled from

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Banavasi in the 1070s, for the brief period when the latter was on the throne. Lakṣmaṇa is prolific in this handful of years and disappears completely from the record once his overlord was deposed.\textsuperscript{106}

In this inscription, Sōmēśvara II confers the title of \textit{mahāmanḍalēśvara} on Lakṣmaṇa, among many other epithets. The inscription bolsters the latter’s credentials by referencing his previous loyalty to the recently deceased Sōmēśvara I, and identifies him as a “promoter of the kingdom of Bhuvanaikamalla.” This inscription provides significant information about the hierarchy within the Cālukya family:

While in two reigns, the subjects and foreigners alike praised him, two emperors in one (and the same) affectionate manner wrote a śāsana and gave him the Vānavāsi country, together with horse, elephant, crown and army, and sustained him with their favour, —this Lakshmana shone throughout the world as the maṇḍalika-Trineta. Junior is the king Vikram-Ganga to me; to that Permāḍi-Nēva the next junior is Vīra-Nolamba-Nēva; to me, to Permāḍi and to Singi you are the junior; but to you all (the rest) are juniors; thus with the favour exalting him, Sōmēśvara gave to Laskhmaṇa full and dignified rank.\textsuperscript{107}

The two emperors mentioned in the inscription are Sōmēśvara I and Sōmēśvara II; Lakṣmaṇa praised as a loyal servant to the father, as well as an important supporter of the son. This inscription also highlights the relationship between the three brothers, Sōmēśvara II, Vikramāditya VI, and Jayasimha after their father’s death. Lakṣmaṇa’s position is delineated as just below that of Sōmēśvara’s brothers, who were subordinate only to Sōmēśvara himself. Vikramāditya and Jayasimha continue to bear the titles of the regions they held under their father’s rule, and it seems likely that the intention was for

\textsuperscript{106} EC VII (O.S) Shikarupur, 135.

\textsuperscript{107} EC VII (O.S.) Shikaripur, 136.
each of the brother’s to consolidate their power in one region, thereby bringing all three under the sovereignty of the Cāṇukya family. An inscription at Annigeri highlights the work of Lakṣmaṇa in renovating a Jain temples — that had been destroyed during the battles of Koppam and Kalyāṇapura against the Cōlas — while he was ruling the Belvola-300 and the Purigere-300 in 1071 C.E.

(Verse 13) When the base Chōḷā, falling in his position, deserting the religious practice of his own race, set foot upon the province of Belvala and burned down a multitude of temples, he gave his head in battle to Trailokyamalla, suddenly gave up the chase, and brought about the destruction of his family, so that his guilt bore a harvest in his hand.

(Verse 14) That deadly sinner the Tivula, styled the Pāṇḍya-Chōḷā, when he had polluted these temples of the supreme Jinas erected by the blest Permāṇadī, sank into ruin.

(Verse 15) Later, when the generals, barons and feudatory princes who held this province of Belvala had continued to forsake the path of religion, the feudatory prince Lakshma, being devoid of the qualities of the Kali age (and) following the practice of the Kṛta Age, inspired by intelligent thought, restored the damage suffered in the domain of pure religion.108

The Gangas are therefore remembered as the monarchs who patronized Jainism, and established institutions in the region for its continued support. On the other hand. The Cōlas are characterized as having abandoned their moral and religious principles. Given that this inscription looks back at the events that took place between the Cōlas and Cāṇukyas in the eleventh century, the author was able to manipulate the narrative to reflect an ultimate victory for the Cāṇukyas and Sōmēśvara I.109 A mere two years after inscriptions recorded the activities of Lakṣmaṇa on behalf Sōmēśvara II, Vikramāditya deposed his brother and claimed the throne; Lakṣmaṇa disappears completely from the

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108 EI XV No. 23, p 345.
New rulers, therefore, gave the most important and powerful positions to men whom they trusted, and the fortunes of these subordinates were often inseparable from that of their overlords.

The Sindas of Belguṭṭi shared a similar trajectory between the rule of Sōmēśvara II and Vikramāditya VI. The Sindas ruled in what is now Northeastern Karnataka and parts of Andhra Pradesh. Based on the fact that the region was called Sindavāḍi, the Sindas had held hereditary rights there, but lost them when the Rāṣṭrakūṭas conquered Western Karnataka under Krishna II (r. 880-911). Under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, a member of the Sinda vamśa, Nanniya Sinda appears in an inscription from 967 C.E. with epithets that praise his military prowess but he is identified only by name, without any titles, as the subordinate (tatpādapadmopajīvi) to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa mahāśāṃanta, Śūdrakayya who was ruling Andhra-maṇḍala at the time.\(^{110}\) His successor, Jātarasa, on the other hand, became the mahāśāṃanta to Tailapa II in 992 C.E.\(^{111}\) They achieved the status of mahāmaṇḍalēśvara under Sōmēśvara I, in 1061\(^{112}\) but then disappeared from the inscriptional record for about fifty years, only appearing again in 1117 C.E. well into Vikramāditya VI’s reign. It is only in inscriptions from the mid-twelfth century that we learn of the kings who ruled after Kayavīra. According to the inscriptions, his successor was Piriya Caṭṭarasa. Based on relative dates, Dinkar Desai\(^{113}\) infers that the extensive

\(^{110}\) EC XI (O.S.) Holalkere, 23.

\(^{111}\) EC (O.S.) XI Davangere, 114.

\(^{112}\) EC VII (O.S.) Shikaripur, 69.

\(^{113}\) Dinkar Desai, The Mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras Under the Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa (Bombay: Indian Historical Research Institute, 1951), 19.
praise for Piriya Caṭṭarasa referred to his participation in the battles between the Cōḷas and Sōmēśvara II in the early 1070s. This raises the possibility that the Sindas were loyal to Sōmēśvara II in the struggle for the Cāḷukya throne, while Vikramāditya VI had the support of his southern allies, including the Hoysaḷas and the Pāṇḍyas of Uccangi. Their disappearance from the epigraphical record could indicate their fall from grace after the death of their overlord and their return to power, barring one inscription from the rule of Vikramāditya VI, occurred when the latter’s son came to power in the mid-twelfth century.

To a large extent, the Hoysaḷas followed a similar trajectory: before the advent of the Cāḷukyas and especially Vikramāditya VI in southern Karnataka, they were minor political actors who, along with other rulers in the region, attempted in vain to reclaim Gangavādi from the Cōḷas. It was through their association with Cāḷukyas, and their ennoblement through successive titles that they were able to expand their sphere of influence. The first inscription which suggests the Hoysaḷas’ subordination to the Cāḷukyas is from 1061 C.E., when Hoysaḷa Vinayāditya appeared with the epithet, Trailokyaṁalla to mark his subordination to Sōmēśvara I.

As discussed above, the first reference to Vikramāditya VI ruling southern Karnataka on his father’s behalf was in 1057 C.E, and in 1058 C.E., an inscription identifies Hoysaḷadēvi as a senior queen (piriyarasi) of Sōmēśvara I. The relationship between

114 EC VII (O.S.) Shikaripur 136.
115 EC VI (O.S.) Chikmagalur 7.
116 EC VII (O.S.) Honnali 1; Detailed discussion of this marriage in the following chapter.
the Cālukyas and Hoysaḷas was most probably brokered by Vikramāditya VI, though the latter formally declared subordination to his father. In 1062 C.E., they were recognized as *mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras*¹¹⁷, and 1063 C.E. is when the title, *malēparol gaṇḍa* is used for the first time.¹¹⁸ Their first concrete association with the term *malēpar* appears only after their subordination to the Cālukyas, Similar to the *vaṭṭa or paṭṭa* that the Cōḷas bestowed on the Kongāḷvas shortly after their conquest of Talakāḍ, *malēparol gaṇḍa* was possibly a title conferred upon the Hoysaḷas to designate them the rulers of Malenāḍu under Cālukyas, and as such, the Cālukyas’ answer to the Cōḷas’ ennoblement of the Kongāḷvas, in the Coorg region.

Later inscriptions, from the period of Viṣṇuvardhana inform us that his father, Ereyanga who is identified as *yuvarāja* under his father, was one of Vikramāditya’s loyal supporters in his bid for the throne, and in his military campaign to Mālwā.¹¹⁹ This is where the Hoysaḷa trajectory diverged from the one I proposed for Sindas of Belagutti. While the latter disappear from the epigraphical record for a generation because of their support of Sōmēśvara II, the Hoysaḷas’ supported of the eventual victor who also went on to have a long, successful reign, bolstered their own ascent to power.

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¹¹⁷ EC VI (O.S.) Mudgere 17
¹¹⁸ EC VI (O.S) Mudgere 13
¹¹⁹ EC V (O.S.) Belur, 58.
Conclusion

The emergence of the Hoysaḷas as prominent political actors in Southern Karnataka was predicated on the political changes that took place in the century before their ascent, following a pattern that had been built during the establishment of the Gangas in Southern Karnataka. When new families came to power, they attempted to consolidate their position by creating networks of filial and martial loyalty in a network of subordinate rulers. Marriage alliances played an important role in the way these networks were formed, given that such an alliance could be the precursor to the joining of two territories. However, alliances didn’t necessarily exist between two families long-term, given that members within a single family were often feuding for the throne.

Alliances were therefore created between specific rulers, and the gift of a daughter to a subordinate was a bid for support as well as a wager on that subordinate’s success in his own local region, as evidenced in the case of Būtuga I’s relationship with the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, Krṣṇa III, as well as the Kalacuri king’s decision to give his daughter in marriage to Taila II of the Cāḷukya family, rather than to a Rāṣṭrakūṭa prince as had been the tradition for generations.

In the Hoysaḷas’ specific case, a confluence of events, starting from the ninth century onwards, led to their eventual rise. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Gangas established a strong relationship between the two regions through ongoing marriage alliances and martial
service. When Rāstrakūṭas were deposed by their subordinate, the Cāḷukya Tailapa, the Gangas lost their primary source of support and lost Talakāḍ to the Cōḷas in 1004 C.E. effectively ending their rule in Gangavāḍī.

While the Cāḷukyas were consolidating their new territory and resisting the advance of the Cōḷas, the Hoysaḷas also attempted in 1007 C.E., in confluence with other rulers in southern Karnataka, to launch an offensive against the Cōḷa general Apramēya, and remained in conflict with the Kongāḷvas through out the early eleventh century. In the 1050s, when Vikramāditya VI was ruling in southern Karnataka from Banavāsi, on his father’s behalf, he forged an alliance with the Hoysaḷas in which they took on the subordinate status of mahāmaṇḍalēśvara and, I argue, the title of malēparol gaṇḍa. Though they rose to power in the Gangavāḍi region, the Hoysaḷas did not inherit Ganga titles from their predecessors, rather they inherited them from Vikramāditya VI on whose behalf they ruled southern Karnataka until the mid-twelfth century.
CHAPTER 3: Marriage, Kinship, and the Territorial Expansion of the Early Hoysaḷas

The Hoysaḷas came into prominence in the political landscape of eleventh-century south India as subordinates or mahāmaṇḍalēśvara of the Western Cāḷukyas. A significant symbol of their incorporation into the network of mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras was the network of marital alliances that emerged within the next fifty years, that is between 1040 C.E. and 1090 C.E. This chapter focuses on the Hoysaḷas’ marriage patterns through the reigns of their early rulers: how they were incorporated into the network of ruling families through marriage, and how they constructed a network among their own subordinates that mimicked the one they participated in under the Cāḷukyas. This chapter also traces how these alliances reflected and reinforced the political and territorial ambitions of the successive rulers of the Hoysaḷa family.

Marriage between ruling families often reflected military alliances or relationships of superior and subordinate. They also formed networks of kinship that bolstered solidarity among the geographically dispersed rulers, who took on titles of service to a single overlord. Participating in these kin networks reinforced a sense of belonging to this larger network, while marrying outside of it reflected a claim to independent sovereignty. In the mid-eleventh century, the Hoysaḷas first appear in inscriptions with the title, mahāmaṇḍalēśvara, a title that indicated their position as under-lords of the Kalyāṇi Cāḷukyas. At this time, their marriage practices reflected this position, where later they
ceased to marry into the Cāḷukya kin network as a means to consolidate their own sovereignty.

To illustrate this pattern, the chapter explores the early generations of recorded Hoysaḷa history, specifically the kings Vinayāditya and Ereyanga, and Ereyanga’s two sons, Ballāḷa and Viṣṇuvardhana, along with the networks they participated in through marriage. The first phase, during the rule of Vinayāditya and Ereyanga, was focused on strengthening an alliance with the Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa, where the Hoysaḷa kings became subordinate administrators, with the title, mahāmaṇḍalēśvara. At this time, they performed the roles of local rulers as well as conducting military expeditions on behalf of the Cāḷukya kings. In the second phase, though Ballāḷa I and Viṣṇuvardhana still identified as mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras and acknowledged their subordinate status, there was much more of a push to create and cultivate a strong network among their own subordinates. Finally, after Viṣṇuvardhana’s failed attempts to challenge Cāḷukya sovereignty, he re-entered the marital network of their subordinate ruling families.

Along with specific instances of marriage described in inscriptions, I also explore the extent to which Hoysaḷas’ marriage patterns adhered to and/or diverged from śāstric norms. Particularly relevant to the inscriptions that appear in this chapter is the term kanyādāna, giving the bride or young woman to the groom. Through the examples of marriage in this chapter, the term kanyādāna appears in different contexts, and illustrates that the rules and rites of marriage were often adjusted towards political ends, not always following the rules of hypergamy.
Building a Relationship with the Western Cāḷukyas

The important developments that heralded the inclusion of the Hoysaḷas into the Cāḷukya complex of power were the hypergamous marriage of Hoysaḷadēvi, a daughter or sister of Vinayāditya with with the Cāḷukya king, Sōmēśvara I and inclusion of Ereyanga into a larger network of subordinate rulers of more or less equal status. While evidence prior to Vinayāditya’s rule shows that his father, Nṛpa Kāma was recognized as an adversary of the Colas, and even travelled as far as Banavāsi\textsuperscript{120}, the scope of their world, and potential territory was quite limited. With their ennoblement as mahāmanḍalēśvaras and induction into this larger network, Ereyanga’s reported conquests spread as far as Mālwa,\textsuperscript{121} and they became part of a larger network of subordinates within which marriages strengthened their ties and expanded the possibility for territorial growth.

The mid-eleventh century found the Hoysaḷas beginning their tenure as mahāmanḍalēśvaras of the Western Cāḷukyas. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, they had displayed significant political ambition in attempting to remove Cōḷa dominance from the Gangavāḍi region even before the advent of the Cāḷukyas in southern Karnataka. The first named Hoysaḷa ruler was Nṛpa Kāma Hoysaḷa, who carried

\textsuperscript{120} EC V (O.S.) Manjarabad, 44.

\textsuperscript{121} EC V (O.S.) Belur, 58.
the titles, Rācamalla and Permaḍi, of the Ganga dynasty, and ruled in the small region of the Hoysaḷas’ origin: the hills of the Western Ghats, around Chikmagalur, in the Malēṇaḍ, or “mountain-region.”

In 1024 C.E., Sōṃēśvara I, the Cāḷukya king, sought to expand his control in southern Karnataka and sent a daṇḍanāyaka, or military envoy called Mallidēva to collect tribute. According to an inscription found in present-day Hangal, Mallidēva besieged the camps of the Cangāḷvas, Kongāḷvas, Cōḷas, and Hoysaḷas during this expedition. This was probably the first interaction that the Hoysaḷas had with the Western Cāḷukyas and it was brief and clearly hostile. An alliance was formed only when Vikramāditya VI, Sōṃēśvara’s son, spent time in the South and built relationships with the rulers there. It was at this point, in the 1060s that Vinayāditya appears with the titles mahāmaṇḍalēśvara and malēparōḷ gaṇḍa. A standard verse in praise of Vinayāditya says that he placed his foot on the heads of malēpar who disobeyed him (an act of subjugation) and put a

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122 EC VI (O.S.) Mudgere, 19.


Derrett cites the source for this inscription as the Walter Elliot collection, but does not specify the publication. He does quote the inscription in the above dissertation. “Cangāḷva-Kongāḷva-Nidumtōḷam-Cōḷan emba bhūbhujaroḷ kappama goṇḍu Hoysaḷaṇa bīḍan geldam Mallī-dēva-daṇḍadāṭam.”

protective hand on the heads of those who obeyed him. The Hoysalas’ acceptance of this subordinate position is also illustrated through Vinayaditya’s adoption of the prefix, Trailokyamalla; this was the protocol followed by all mahāmandalēśvaras of the Western Cāḷukyas.

These signs of subordination were complemented by the marriage between Hoysaladēvi, either a sister or daughter of Vinayaditya, and Sōmēśvara I. In an inscription from Honnāli in the Shimoga district, where Hoysaladēvi made a donation to the Mallikārjuna temple, she is recognized with the title piriyarasi or ‘senior queen.’ She either rose to, or obtained due to the status of her natal family, a high enough position in the Cāḷukya household to make and record this significant donation. Though the inscription is fragmented, the verses in praise of Hoysaladēvi echo the praise other queens of Sōmēśvara I. For example, her contemporary, Mailalādēvi made donations to the same deity, Mallikārjuna, at a site near Śrīśailam in present-day Andhra Pradesh. The text in her inscription is almost identical to that of Hoysaladēvi’s, where both of them are described as dwelling on Trailokyamalla’s chest, as generous donors, and as destroyers of...
their co-wives’ pride. Notably, they made donations to the same deity, albeit at different locations — Mailalādevi’s donation was at a major site while Hoysalādevi’s was at a minor one. Honnāli was also the seat from which Vikramāditya ruled southern Karnataka on his father’s behalf. The distant locations of the two queens’ donations, and the proximity of Hoysalādevi’s to her natal home present the possibility that queens supported temples near their natal home, further serving to establish their husband’s relationship with the deity and the region.

The Hoysaḷas resided at this time, in a town called Sosēvūr or Sosavūr, located in the Western Ghats near modern-day Chikmagaluru. Later inscriptions of the twelfth century, which contain an official genealogy of the family use a Sanskrit version of this name, Śaśapura or Śaśakapura, which literally translates to the town of the hare. Early scholarship presumed that that Sosēvūr was the vernacularization of Śaśakapura but B. Hanumantharao points out that that Sosēvūr appears for the first time in the Praise of Hoysaḷa Dēvi:

\[
\text{Praise of Hoysaḷa Dēvi:} \quad \text{svasti anavarata parama kalyāṇabhudaya sahasra paḷa bhōga bhāgini dvitiya lalikā samāne samastāntahpura-mukha-mandani savati-mada-bhājihkāne āsrita-jana-kāmadhēnu śrīmat-trailokyamalla-ḍēva-viśāla-vaksha-sthāla-nivāsini śrīmat-piriy-arasi hoysaḷa dēviyar kalyāṇada neleviṇḍinoḷ sukha-saṅkathā-vinōdadiṁ rājyam geyyut īldu...}
\]

(EC VII Honnali, 1)

\textbf{Praise of Mailalā Dēvi:} tatpādapadmōpajīvi svasty-anavarata-parama-kalyāṇa

\begin{align*}
7 \text{ bhudaya sahasrāpāla bhoga bhāgini dvitiya lākhūmr śrī} \\
8 \text{ viḷāsini śōdaśa dāna-cintāmaṇi savatimādabhanjani sa} \\
9 \text{ mast-āntarpura-mukha-mandani śrīmat trailokyamalladē} \\
10 \text{ va-viśāla-vakṣa-stāla-nivāsiniyar appa śrīmat pi} \\
11 \text{ riyarasi mailaladēviyarum śri ballavarasarum śrī} \\
12 \text{ man-mallikārjuna dēvarallige bijayamgeydu pāṭāla} \\
13 \text{ gangeyam mindu śrīman Mallikārjuna dēvara sanni} \\
14 \text{ dhānadoḷ (SII IX, No. 119)}
\end{align*}

\text{Several inscriptions even contain a story which explains the origin of the Sanskrit version of the name. According to this version of the Hoysaḷa origin myth, when Saḷa arrived in the area, he saw a hare chasing a tiger, showing that this was a land where the law of animals or matsyaṁyāya would not reign supreme. He chose this place as his residence based on that sight.}
inscriptions at the Belur temple, in 1117 C.E., and Śaśakapura in 1129, inscriptions at the site which identify the town as Sosēvūr appear as early as 1047 C.E. He posits that the name Sosēvūr refers to the Kannada term for daughter-in-law, sosē, and therefore translates to the “town of the daughter-in-law.” It is possible, therefore, that the town was named for the Hoysalas’ connection with their overlords through marriage, and supports the connection between the marriage of Hoysaladēvi and Sōmēśvara I, and the rising fortunes of the Hoysala family.

Between 1070 and 1075 C.E., as Vinayāditya’s rule continued in limited parts of the Gangavādi region, a war of succession took place following the death of the Cāḷukya king, Sōmēśvara I. His elder son, Sōmēśvara II or Bhuvanaikamalla succeeded him in 1068 C.E., but was deposed by his younger brother, Vikramāditya VI in 1074 C.E. This war of succession forms a central plot line of the poet Bilhaṇa’s twelfth-century Sanskrit work, the Vikramāṅkadēvacarita. In the poem, Vikramāditya is on a military campaign in southern Karnataka when he receives news of his father’s death. Torn with grief, he returns to the capital at Kalyāṇa and supports his brother’s succession. Sōmēśvara II, also known as Bhuvanaikamalla, soon becomes manic with power and banishes his brother. It is during this period of banishment that Vikramāditya travels to the south and befriends the older Cōḷa monarch, who gives him a daughter in marriage as a mark of their friendship.

129 EC VI (O.S.) Mg 22

Whitney Cox observes that while the bond that is forged between the two men plays a pivotal role in the plot — Vikramāditya later fights on behalf of his brother-in-law when the older Cōḷa ruler is killed — the daughter to whom Vikramāditya is married plays no significant role. The text merely mentions that he treats her with great respect and gives her all the joys of the three worlds. However, the protagonist feels no special affection for the woman herself. Cox juxtaposes the dismissive manner in which this woman is treated by the text with the way it later explores its primary romance; when Vikramāditya marries another queen, Candralēkha, almost an entire canto is dedicated to describing their lovemaking and mutual affection.

From this analysis, there are two points of note for the Hoysaḷa case. For the sake of a cohesive narrative, Bilhana chooses to highlight the friendship between Vikramāditya and the Cola ruler. However, the text mentions and inscriptions corroborate, that while he was in the southern region of Karnataka before his father’s death, he formed relationships with several local rulers to expand Chalukya rule and keep the Colas, with whom his father was locked in constant conflict, at bay. Cox’s analysis illustrates that women given and taken in marriage were both a symbol and a sealant of an alliance between two ruling families. The marriage alliance between the Hoysaḷas and the Cāḷukyas, much like the alliance formed as a mark of friendship in the Vikramāṅkadēvacarita marked the beginning of a relationship that would deepen with the next generation.

During the same period, Vinayāditya had two wives. The first, mentioned in only one inscription, is Pariyaladēvi. She and Vinayāditya are praised in a verse that appends an inscription marking the donation of the wiseman (vidyāvanta), Poysalaacāri and his son, Māṇika Poysalaacāri, to a basadi, or Jain monastery at Sosēvūr. Although Vinayāditya is not identified by name — the individual praised in the inscription being cited only as “rakkasa voysaḷan” — the association of the ruler in this inscription with Vinayāditya is a conjecture based on date. The inscription does not provide any information that would point to the origin of Pariyaladēvi, and Pariyaḷa or Hariyaḷa is a common name. Her praise is also exclusively generic tropes, comparing Pariyaladēvi to several women from the epics and purāṇas: Srivanita, Lakṣmi, the consort of Viṣṇu, Dharaṇi, or the earth goddess, Vāgdēvi, the goddess of speech, Rugmini, the wife of Kṛṣna, Rati, the wife of Kāma, Rambhe, an apsara or performer in Indra’s court and Sita, the wife of Rāma.

The second recorded queen of Vinayāditya was Keleyabbarasi, and while reference is made to her much more often, it is only in retrospect, in the standardized genealogies of the Hoysala family which developed during Viṣṇuvardhana’s rule. In these genealogies, Vinayāditya is the first acknowledged ancestor and his wife is always identified as Keleyabbe or Keleyabbarasi. Like Pariyaladēvi, there is no indication of Keleyabbe’s ancestry. She had one notable relationship outside of marriage, a close sibling-like bond with the subordinate, Mariyāne Daṇḍanāyaka. Inscriptions

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133 EC IV (O.S.) Nagamangala, 32; EC VI (O.S.) Chikmagalur, 160.
commissioned in the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana and Ballāḷa II respectively (early and late-twelfth century), recall that in 1047 and 1049 C.E., Keleyabbe, Vinayāditya’s senior queen or piriyarasi, protected Mariyāne Daṇḍanāyaya as her own younger brother (tanna tamman endu rakṣisi). In this capacity, she and Vinayāditya performed the kanyādana (gift of the bride) of one Dēkave Daṇḍanāyakīti along with bhūmīdana, (gift of earth or land) of Sindagere in Āsandināḍ (kanyā dānamum bhūmi dānamumam dhārāpūrvakkam koṭṭu...) to Mariyāne and began his family’s prabhutva, or “lordship,” of Sindigere in Asandināḍ. Although it is the relationship between Keleyabbe and Mariyāne that is clearly articulated here it is noteworthy that Vinayāditya and Keleyabbe perform the kanyādana a woman with whom no such affiliation is established. This illustrates that even as they had just begun marrying into the network of Cāḷukya subordinates themselves, with the union of Sōmēśvara I and Hoysaḷadēvi, they began to replicate the pattern of intermarriage among their own subordinates.

Vinayāditya’s son, Ereyanga never ruled himself but inscriptions identify him as the yuvarāja or heir apparent as late as 1096 C.E. He greatly bolstered the Hoysalas’ position among the ranks of Cāḷukya mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras through his military service. While Vinayāditya ruled from the new Hoysaḷa residence of Bēlur, performing the duties of a local ruler, Ereyanga went to war on behalf of his Cāḷukya overlord and fulfilled the duties of a military subordinate. The latter’s relationship with Vikramāditya VI is apparent in an inscription found near Belur, which also introduces us to one of Ereyanga’s wives,

134 EC VI (O.S.) Kadur, 142.
Mahādēvi, whose detailed descent allows unprecedented access to the network of subordinates in which the Hoysaḷas participated.\footnote{EC V Arasikere, 102a.}

The inscription is dated in the ‘vikrama kāla’ during the twenty-fifth year of Vikramāditya’s reign, or 1100 C.E.\footnote{Generally, Hoysaḷa inscriptions use the Śālivāhana Śaka dating system. This is one of the rare occasions when the new era and dating system that Vikramāditya VI introduced, appears.} This is the first sign of their inclusion into, and adoption of, the larger network of Cāḷukya power. The inscription proceeds with praise of Vinayāditya, and describes the extent of his territory, up to Tālakāḍ, which he was ruling akin to the lord of gods, Dēvēndra. It moves on to the praises of Ereyanga which focus exclusively on his military exploits on behalf of the Cāḷukya king (cāḷukya cakravartiya besadim). The inscription then praises his consort, Mahādēvi, as a Lakṣmidēvi in the mortal world. She is the first Hoysaḷa queen to bear both the titles, piriyarasi and paṭṭamahādēvi, terms which Rice translates these terms as “senior queen” and “crowned queen,” respectively. From later inscriptions, it is evident that the two were distinct positions and that the paṭṭa or filet was something that ceremonially worn. The phrase paṭṭamam dharayisidal, used in reference to queens, indicates this.\footnote{EC V (O.S.) Hassan, 116.}

On her father’s side, Mahādēvi descended from the Ucchangi Pāṇḍya family, prominent in the region of Nolambavāḍi 32000. Her paternal grandfather, Tēja Rāya is first noted as being part of the armies of the Cōḷas. His son, and her uncle was simply known as Pāṇḍya, and her father, his younger brother is Irukkavēḷan. The individuals
mentioned in this part of the inscription can be cross-referenced with in several
inscriptions of the Davangere district, at the center of what was once Noḷambavādi. In
the Davangere genealogies, an Irukkapāla appears in place of Mahadēvi’s father,
Irukkavēḷan, and a different Irukkavēḷan appears in a later generation. B.L. Rice conflates
Irukkavēḷan from Mahādēvi’s genealogy with the Irukkapāla who appears in the
inscriptions at Davangere to create a cohesive family tree for the Ucchangi Pāṇḍyas.
As subordinates of the Kalyāṇi Cāḷukyas and Vikramāditya VI in particular, they along
with Ereyanga supported Vikramāditya VI in the battle for succession against his brother
Sōmēśvara II. The inscription states that Ereyanga, among his other military exploits,
“made the older brother turn around” (aṇṇa moregolisi), on the orders of the Cāḷukya
cakravarti. The description for Pāṇḍya’s (Mahādēvi’s father’s brother) support is more
detailed, and praises Pāṇḍya for, “Turning back Bhuvanaikamalla so that the earth was
terrified, he with great rejoicing, seized his kingdom and in his own body gave it to
Tribhuvanamalla, — the champion Pāṇḍya.”

The fact that the inscription mentions Mahādēvi’s paternal uncle shows the
importance of establishing her most obvious link of the family with the Cāḷukyas, and the
marriage of Ereyanga and Mahadēvi, who came from several illustrious lines shows the
implication of Ereyanga into the larger Cāḷukya network of subordination. This was a

138 EC XI (O.S.) Davangere, 39, 40, 41.
139 EC XI (O.S.) Introduction, p. 18.
140 bhuvaiakamallanam bhūthavanav asungoḷe maraḷchi rājyaman adhikōtsavadim
tribhuvanamallang avayavadim koṇḍu koṭṭa gaṇḍaṃ pāṇḍya ||
first for the Hoysaḷa family and linked Ereyanga and the Hoysaḷas not only to the
Ucchandi Pāṇḍyas and the Mārāya of Kārkaḍa (on Mahādēvi’s maternal side), but
strengthened their position as subordinates of the Cāḷukyas.

An inscription from the Banavāsi district mentions another subordinate of
Tribhuvanamalla or Vikramāditya VI, ruling Eḍetorenāḍ in the Maṇḍali 1000. Here,
Ereyanga is once again praised as the strong right hand of the Vikramāditya VI (ātaṁ
cāḷukya bhūpālakana balada bhujā daṇḍam). His conquests on behalf of the Cāḷukya
king are consistent with the previous inscription and shows a standardization of the
narratives that praised these ancestors. The inscription was composed in the time of
Narasimha I, the grandson of Ereyanga, and deals with descendants of the Ganga family,
who subordinates of the Hoysaḷas by that time. It is perhaps an effort, therefore, to
establish a connection between the current ruling family and the subordinates in question
by citing an old marital relationship and praising the Hoysaḷa ancestors through this
relationship. The inscription praises both the Hoysaḷa and the Ganga lineages, along with
the Cāḷukyas before it goes on to detail the donation made to a Jain basadi in the Bidare
hubli of the the Shimoga Taluq. This inscription provides further evidence that Hoysaḷas
were marrying into a larger network of Cāḷukya and that their association as loyal
subordinates was something that lent their lineage prestige, even in retrospect.

After the reign of Vinayāditya and Ereyanga, however, the relationship between the
Kalyāṇi Cāḷukyas and the Hoysaḷas became much more combative. Ereyanga’s sons and

141 EC VII (O.S.) Shimoga, 64.
successors, Ballāla I, very briefly, and then his younger brother Viṣṇuvardhana’s ambitions lay outside of just being subordinate to their overlords in Kalyāṇa. Rather, they sought to establish political supremacy in Gangavāḍi, routing the Cōḷas from this region. Therefore, the period in which the Hoysaḷas were active and willing members of the Cālukya network of subordination reached its peak with Ereyanga, who is often hailed in retrospective praise as the right hand of the Cālukya emperor.

During the period of Vinayāditya and Ereyanga’s rule, there are very few military and administrative subordinates who appear in an inscription. The inscriptions are also very few in number and are hero stones — that is, the men mentioned in these inscriptions are honored for giving their lives in battle but they are not patrons in their own right. This

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142 EC V (O.S.) Arasikere, 6 mentions Vinayāditya’s mahāśāmanta, Bamayya; EC IV (O.S.) Nagamangala, 56 mentions a danḍanāyaka called Masaṇaya who fought when Hoysaḷa Deśa was waging war. I discuss this further in Chapter 3.
changed in the following generation, when there was a drastic rise in both the number of inscriptions and the subordinates of the Hoysaḷas during the rule of Ereyanga’s sons and successors. It was during this time that the recorded marriages of the Hoysaḷa rulers were not to other South Indian ruling families, but occurred with their own subordinate rulers and with daughters of men of lower rank. This heralded their changing ambitions.

The Rise and Consolidation of Hoysaḷa Subordinates

Emerging on from a period where they were firmly entrenched in the Cāḷukya network, the new generation of rulers sought to establish independent sovereignty in the region of Gangavadi 96000.\footnote{Gangavāḍi refers to the region that contained the present-day districts of Hassan, Mysore, and Chikmagalur. The exact meaning of the large numerical suffixes are contested, but for the purpose of this paper, I treat the regions’ names along with the suffixes as proper nouns, specifying the general area they covered.} However, they still declared their subordination to the Cāḷukyas through the use of the epithet of the king as a prefix to their names. When Trailokyamalla/Sōmēśvara I was on the throne, Vinayāditya took the prefix, Trailokyamalla. After the ascension of Vikramāditya VI to the throne in 1075 C.E., the Hoysaḷa rulers took the prefix Tribhuvanamalla.

According to Hoysaḷa genealogies, Ereyanga and his wife Ecalāḍēvi had three sons, Ballāḷa, Biṭṭiga (later and more widely known as Viṣṇuvardhana), and Udayāditya. Ballāḷa ruled for a very short period, from about 1101 to 1104 C.E.\footnote{William Coelho, The Hoysaḷa Vamsa (Bombay: St. Xavier’s College, Indian Historical Research Institute), 57.}, and there are very...
few inscriptions to his name. One important event that is recorded however, is his marriage to the three daughters of Mariyāne Daṇḍanāyaka, whose family had a long and evolving relationship with the Hoysaḷa family. There are two major\textsuperscript{145}, and several minor inscriptions\textsuperscript{146} that deal with the history of this family and their relationship with the Hoysaḷas. Though they were composed in the late twelfth century, they record dates of important events in generations past with great precision, and emphasize the long-standing connection between the two families as well as the history of the family’s rule over a town called Sindigere.

The marriage that initiated this connection was between Mariyāne Daṇḍanāyaka and his wife, Dēkavve, mentioned in the previous section. Dated to śaka 969 in Cm 160 \(=1047\) C.E/śaka 967 in Ng 32 = 1049, the inscriptions recognize Keleyabbe as Vinayāditya’s senior queen or \textit{piriyarasi}, who protected Mariyāne Daṇḍanāyaka as her own younger brother (\textit{tanna tamman endu rakṣisi}). In this capacity, she and Vinayāditya performed the \textit{kanyādāna} (gift of the bride) of Dēkave Daṇḍanāyakiti along with \textit{bhumidāna}, (gift of earth or land) of Sindagere in Āsandināḍ. Thus the first tie between the Hoysaḷas and the Mariyāne family was established, along with the first instance at which the family was gifted the \textit{prabhutva}, or “lordship,” of Sindagere.

The next marriage was between Ballāḷa, then ruling at Belūr, and the three daughters of Mariyāne Daṇḍanāyaka and a second wife, Cāmave Daṇḍanāyakiti: Padmalāḍēvi,

\textsuperscript{145} EC IV (O.S.) Nagamangala, 32; EC VI (O.S.) Chikmagalur, 160.

\textsuperscript{146} EC VI (O.S.) Chikmagalur, 161; EC V (O.S.) Hassan, 119, Arasikere, 141, Chennarayapatna, 198, Chennarayapatna, 221.
Cāvaladēvi, and Boppadēvi in 1103 C.E. Interestingly, the term *kanyādāna* does not appear in this instance. Rather, the Mariyāne family was re-granted the *prabhutva* of Sindagere in return for the “debt of breast-milk” or *molevālarna*. This marked an important transition taking place here. Where in the previous generation, the Hoysaḷa family was in a position to give rights over the land as *bhumidāna*, along with the *kanyādāna* of Dēkavve, they were now in a position to make it a transactional relationship.

The cause of Ballāḷa’s death is never mentioned but it's clear that he ruled for a very short period. There are very other few inscriptions which account for the Hoysaḷa family in the first decade of the twelfth century but two inscriptions from the Dharwad Taluq mention a *mahāmaṇḍalesvara*, Permādiyarasa, ruling a region called Māsavādi under Vikramāditya VI in 1113 C.E. He also had the titles, *dvarāvatipuravarādhiśvara*, “lord of Dvāravatipura” and in one inscription is identified as *malēparol gaṇḍa*. The combination of the Ganga title *permādi*, which the Hoysaḷas adopted in the style of Vikramāditya VI and the epithets which appear in Hoysaḷa inscriptions suggest that this subordinate was either Viṣṇuvardhana or some other member of the Hoysaḷa family, serving under Vikramāditya VI. It was only after Viṣṇuvardhana’s subordinate Ganga Rāja led the Hoysaḷa defeat of the Cōḷas and the reclamation of Talakāḍ in 1117 C.E that

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147 There is some confusion over whether the Mariyāne married to Dēkavve and Cāmavve were the same person or father and son, but the Sindigere inscriptions clarify that it was in fact the same man with two different wives.


149 SII XI pt. 2, No. 206.
the numbers of subordinates with courtly titles and positions burgeoned, as evidenced by a new preponderance of inscriptions.

The first major event after Viṣṇuvardhana’s military victory against the Cōḷas was the establishment of the Vijayanārāyaṇa temple at Belur, and the Kirtinarāyaṇa temple at Talakāḍ. The inscription that marks the establishment of the former contains the first instance of the Hoysala origin myth and what would become the standard genealogy, beginning with Vinayāditya. Following the introduction of the Hoysalas’ purānic descent from the lunar dynasty in the Yādava lineage, and the story of Saḷa killing the tiger, Vinayāditya is credited with subjugating the malēpar; Ereyanga is praised for his brutal onslaught of the Mālwa king, Bhoja’s fortresses, and Ballāla and Viṣṇuvardhana are credited with defeating the Pāṇḍya king and capturing his wealth, “together with the central ornament of his necklace” (tat padakaṁ beras eyde koṇḍu bhaṇḍāraman).

Without explaining the circumstances of Ballāla’s death, the inscription proceeds with a lengthy prāsasti for Viṣṇuvardhana, citing his many military achievements and his victory over the Colas, with the new title, talekāḍugonda, or the one who possessed Talakāḍ. The inscription then goes on to praise Viṣṇuvardhana’s queen, Śāntalādevī. Since they were already married by the time of the temple’s construction, we can only infer that their wedding predated the first inscriptions which mention Śāntalādevī in 1115 C.E. She is identified with the titles piriyarasi and paṭṭamahādevi, “senior queen and

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150 E.C. V (O.S.) Belur, 58, 71.
151 EC VI (O.S.) Mudgere, 32.
“crowned queen,” respectively and was born in Balipura or Balligave, near Shimoga; her parents were Mārasiṅga and Mācikabbe. Śāntaladēvi made two major architectural contributions during her lifetime. She commissioned the Savatigandhavāraṇa basadi, dedicated to Pārśvanātha at Śravaṇa Beḷgola in 1118 C.E. and the Kappē Cannigarāya temple in Belur, located in the same compound as the Vīranārayaṇa temple in 1120 C.E. In 1123 C.E., Viṣṇuvardhana granted her the village of Śāntigrāma near present-day Hasan where her father built a temple dedicated to the deity, Dharmēśvara. Through this collection of records and a few inscriptions which mention in her in passing it is possibly to construct the most comprehensive prosopography of any Hoysala queen.

The 1120 C.E. inscription which marks establishment of the Kappē Cannigarāya temple describes the ceremony where Viṣṇuvardhana tied the paṭṭa or filet (paṭṭamam pati kaṭṭal) on Śantaladēvi, in honor of the her beauty and virtues which pleased him, giving her the title, paṭṭamahādēvi.152 Therefore, as Viṣṇuvardhana’s military successes grew more frequent, there were more resources to commit to record the imagined roles of the king and queen, along with detailed praise. In the case of kings, prāśasti or praise was mostly about their martial prowess, and to a lesser degree, about their physical beauty. For queens, the praise poetry focused mostly on the following features: their physical beauty, equal to that of goddesses, their dedication to their husbands and being beloved to them in return, their religious piety and generosity in grants to the four types of religious

152 EC V (O.S.) Belur, 16.
institutions (śaiva, vaiśnava, baudha and jaina), and the power to subdue their co-wives. Śāntala being praised as an elephant-goad to her co-wives both in the inscription (savati gandha hastiyum) and in the name of her basadi, Savatigandhavāraṇa, is the only evidence that she was one among many wives during this period.153

Viṣṇuvardhana’s gift to Śāntala of the central village (grāma), Śāntigrāma and several smaller villages (hālli) surrounding it was possibly tied to the patta, an honor which was generally associated with a land grant. An inscription from 1123 C.E. records that her father Mārasingayya commissioned the Dharmēśvara temple and he, Śāntala and Viṣṇuvardhana made donations to its upkeep and granted the revenue from the peripheral villages or hāllis to 222 brahmans.154 One of the standard epithets for Śāntaladēvi was, dharmēśvara varaprasāda, or the blessed offering of Dharmēśvara. The use of this epithet predates the establishment of the temple at Śāntigrāma and points to Mārasingayya’s adherence to the deity of the same name at Baḷīgāve. He therefore established a new locus of worship for the deity of his preference, based on his daughter’s newfound position and favor with the king. In this inscription, Mārasingayya is also identified with an administrative title for the first time, herggađe, or administrative head. Other than his adherence to the deity Dharmēśvara and the resulting connection to

153 There is one possible exception to this in an inscription which identifies a Candaladēvi as a piriyarasi or senior queen of Viṣṇuvardhana as well as the daughter of the Kongālva king. However, this inscription carries no date so it is difficult to place this queen within the argument. She made a donation to the the same Jain preceptor as Śāntala, causing scholars to conflate the two at first. Śāntala’s decisive parentage negates this possibility. EC 6 (N.S.) Krishnarāhapete 21; MAR 1927, “The Inscription at Shravanahalli,” no 115.

154 EC V (O.S.) Hassan, 116.
Balligāve, where an older Dharmēśvara temple existed, there is no information about Mārasingayya’s descent or genealogy. Śāntaladēvi’s maternal ancestry is more detailed.

Śāntaladēvi died in 1131 C.E. at Śivagange. The exact reason for her death is unknown but it initiated a flurry of memorialization around her *basadi* in Śravaṇa Belgoḷa. From these inscriptions we learn more about her mother’s side of the family, adherents of the *Mūla Samgha*, the most prominent Digambara sect of Jainism, and lay disciples Prabhācandra Siddhāntadēva, an ascetic in the lineage of Kundakunda.\(^{155}\)

Shortly after Śāntala’s death, her mother, Mācikabbe also took a vow of voluntary death called *paṇḍita*. In her honor, Mācikabbe’s brother, Singimayya set up a pillar near the Savatigandhāraṇa *basadi*.\(^{156}\) Yet another inscription at the site records the donations of her other family members, including Mācikabbe’s parents, brother, sister, and their respective spouses. Mācikabbe’s father was Baladēva *daṇḍanāyaka*. If we assume that the term *daṇḍanāyaka* here implies his military subordination to the Hoysaḷas, it seems likely that Mācikabbe, a native of Gangavādi, was married to Mārasinga, who lived in Balipura/Balligāve and they travelled back due to the alliance of their daughter with the then prince.

There are a few passing mentions of Śāntala which also provide small insights. An early inscription from approximately 1115 C.E., from the Mudgere Taluq, records that Śāntala was traveling with her husband, the *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Tribhuvanamalla

\(^{155}\) EC II (O.S.) Shravana Belgola, 132; EC II (N.S.) Shravana Belgola, 162.

\(^{156}\) EC II (O.S.) Sb 143 (N.S.) Sb 176.
Biṭṭidēva. In another inscription, where she is once again identified as his piriyarasi and paṭṭamahādēvi, her name is mentioned in order to establish the donor’s relationship with the king. The inscription says that her maiduna, Balleya Nāyaka was ruling in Māḷige in the Kabbahu 1000. Rice translates the term maiduna as ‘nephew,’ but I believe that this is erroneous. The most common dispensation of the term is to describe the younger brother of one’s husband. This seems unlikely — if Balleya Nāyaka was indeed Viṣṇuvardhana’s brother, or even a cousin, he would not need to identify himself through Śantala. Therefore, it is possible that here, maiduna refers to an alternate meaning, sister’s husband. As we move into the interrelationships between Viṣṇuvardhana’s subordinates, this term appears repeatedly, along aliya, which could mean either son-in-law or sister’s son, both of which were conflated because of the proclivity towards cross-cousin marriage in the region. Both Śāntaladēvi’s father Mārasingayya and her maiduna, Balleya Nāyaka cited their proximity to the king through their relationship with Śāntaladēvi.

Śāntaladēvi’s connection to Balipura, or Baḷḷigāve had manifold significance to Viṣṇuvardhana as illustrated by the fact that the details of her birth were provided in an inscription recording the king’s establishment of the Vjayanārāyaṇa temple. In every case other than hers, any information available about the natal families of Hoysaḷa queens is from inscriptions that they commissioned. Otherwise they are merely praised in abstract

157 EC VI (O.S.) Mudgere 32.
158 EC IV (O.S.) Krishnarajapet 68; EC 3 (N.S.) Krishnarajapet 66.
terms as beautiful, skilled, and devoted to their husbands. The inscription at Belur calls Śāntaladēvi, “the lotus born in the milk-ocean of Balipura (balipura vara ksīra vārāsi janita kamaleyum),”\(^{159}\) and another inscription, which predates her father’s establishment of the Dharmēśvara temple at Śāntigrāma, describes Śāntala, as discussed above, as the consecrated offering of Dharmēśvara.

Two artisans who migrated south to Belur to work on the Vīranārāyaṇa temple, Dāsōja and his son, Cāvaṇa were also from Baḷḷigāve — several inscriptions at Belur call the former balligrāmeya dāsoja, or Dāsoja of Baḷḷigāvi\(^{160}\) — and also devotees of Dharmēśvara,\(^{161}\) suggesting strongly that there was a connection between these sculptors and Śāntala's family which facilitated their migration south upon the marriage of Viṣṇuvardhana and Śāntaladēvi. This is further cemented by the inscriptions, mentioned above, which describe the mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Permaḍi, with Hoysaḷa epithets, ruling Māsavāḍi-140 in Dharwad, showing that someone from the Hoysaḷa family was likely in the Dharwad region just before Viṣṇuvardhana’s major successes. Kellyson Collyer, in his extensive work on Hoysaḷa artists, has noted that the artists who worked on the temple at Belur came from a group of towns along the Tungabhadra river, namely, Baḷḷigāvi, Banavāsi, Lokkigundī (Lakkundi), and Gadag\(^{162}\). While the first two were close in

\(^{159}\) EC V (O.S.) Belur, 58.

\(^{160}\) E.C. V (O.S.) Belur, 34-39, 45.

\(^{161}\) EC XV (O.S.) Belur 255. The inscription describes Dāsoja as, svāsti srimatu balligrāmeya dammeśvaradēvara pādapankaja bhramara, or a bee at the lotus feet of Dharmēśvara of Baḷḷigāvi.

\(^{162}\) Kellyson Collyer, *The Hoysaḷa Artists*, 70.
proximity, the other two are near Mundargi, where the Hoysaḷa envoy was stationed early in the twelfth century. It seems likely that the sculptors, Cāvaṇa and Dāsoja, who were from Balḷigāve were connected to Śāntala’s family. It is probable that these sculptors came with Śāntala’s family when they migrated after her marriage.

Śāntaladēvi bore an important connection to the network of Viṣṇuvardhana’s subordinates through the religious affiliation of her maternal family to the Jain ascetic lineage of the scholar, Kundakunda, or kondakundānvaya. Many of inscriptions at Śravaṇa Belgoḷa record donations to Jain preceptors, in Śāntala’s family's case, Prabhācandra Siddhāntadēva, disciple of Meghacandra Siddhāntadēva. Another prominent donor at the site was the subordinate who had led the victorious recapture of Talakāḍ on Vuṣṇuvardhana’s behalf, Ganga Rāja. He and several of his family members erected basadis at Śravaṇa Belgoḷa in the name of their preceptor, Śubhacandra Siddhāntadēva who came from the same lineage. This provides another clue to the origins of the marriage between Viṣṇuvardhana and Śāntaladēvi, possibly arranged through this religious network.

Ganga Rāja, in turn was related to the Mariyāne family, whose first two marriage alliances with the Hoysaḷas has already been established in this chapter. Their descendants continued to be important members of Viṣṇuvardhana’s court. Among them were the two brothers, Mariyāne and Bharata, both Daṇḍanāyakas, along with several other titles. In the two inscriptions that detail their family’s history, they are the third

163 EC II (O.S.) Shravana Belgola, 73. *pustaka gaccha, desiga gana, kondakundānvaya/mūla samgha*
generation who were granted the prabhutva of Sindigere, this time in exchange for tribute to the king.\textsuperscript{164} In addition, the inscriptions mention their wives, and brings to light the fact that Bharata was married to Visnuvardhana’s daughter, Hariyale. There is some contention over whether she was in fact Visnuvardhana’s daughter or if the word mārāya, is in fact the name of another local ruler. In another inscription from 1129 C.E., we come across the only son of Viṣṇuvardhana mentioned during his lifetime, Kumāra Ballāla, his oldest younger sister is also Hariyabbarasi, but she is married to a man named Vibhu Singa, whom B.L. Rice identifies with may be Singa of Arasikere.\textsuperscript{165}

Furthermore, the history of Mariyāne and Bharata details that they were aḷiyas, either sons-in-law, sons of an opposite-sex sibling or both, of Ganga Rāja. Ganga Rāja is most known for his prominent role in regaining control of Talakāḍ from the Cōlas, and as a result was celebrated by Viṣṇuvardhana through a series of grants which allowed him to construct, repair, and maintain several basadis across the Gangavāḍi region. Ganga Rāja was the maiduna of the senior Mariyāne (hiriya mariyāne daṇḍanāyakana mayduna) of the second generation, and Bharata and Mariyāne were the maidunar of his son, Boppadēva or Ėci Rāja.\textsuperscript{166} The use of a term such as maiduna allowed the inscriber to establish an affinal relationship between two men without the details of the women who became conduits for this relationship. The term maiduna carries many possible meanings. In the case of Śāntaladēvi’s maiduna, mentioned above, and in this case could either

\textsuperscript{164} EC IV (O.S.) Nagamangala, 32.
\textsuperscript{165} EC VI (O.S.) Mudgere, 22.
\textsuperscript{166} EC (O.S.) IV Ng 32.
mean that Ganga Rāja’s sister was married to Mariyāne or vice versa. In the first
generation, Ganga Rāja is identified as the maiduna while in the second, the junior
Mariyāne and Bharata are called the maidunar of Ganga Rāja’s son. An inscription at
Sindigere provides the detail that Mariyāne and Bharata were sons-in-law or aliyar of
Ganga Rāja,\textsuperscript{167} possibly clarifying the direction of bride-giving — Ganga Rāja’s
daughter(s) were married to one or both of them. However, the term aliya could simply
refer to the fact that Bharata and Mariyāne were cross-cousins to Ganga Rāja’s children.
The Mariyāne family acknowledging the relationship underlines the fact that Ganga
Rāja’s family were the more favored party in terms of proximity to Viṣṇuvardhana
himself. It is interesting therefore, that once again we have the family of the higher
position in a bride-giving role.

The relationship between these two subordinate families illustrates that there were
alliances occurring within the Hoysaḷa network, but an inscription from Belur, about a
subordinate named Viṣṇu Daṇḍādhipa confirms that Viṣṇuvardhana as overlord was
actively involved in brokering these marriages.\textsuperscript{168} The inscription details Viṣṇu
Daṇḍādhipa’s virtues and accomplishments and that the king favored him to such an
extent that he performed his thread ceremony, or upanayana, and when he came of age,
“Viṣṇuvardhana Dēva himself lifted a golden kalaśa, and pouring water on his hand, gave

\textsuperscript{167} EC VI (O.S.) Chikmagalur 161.

\textsuperscript{168} EC V (O.S.) Belur, 17.
away the virgin thus providing him with a marriage of unimagined happiness”\textsuperscript{169} The “virgin” (Rice’s translation of \textit{kanyā}) was the daughter of Viṣṇuvardhana’s prime minister. In this case, Viṣṇuvardhana was technically the bride-giver, but was not performing the rite for his biological daughter. As already noted in the above section, Vinayāditya and Keleyabbe performed a similar \textit{kanyādāna} in the case of Dēkavve when she married the senior Mariyāne. Rather than being related to Dēkavve, as might be expected, Keleyabbe is credited with protecting Mariyāne as her brother.

\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Ibid.}

\textit{nija pradhāna daṇḍanātha putriyam kanyāratnamam tand ā viṣṇuvardhana dēvam tāne kanaka kalaśavan etti kai nir eradu kanyādāna phala parītasṭan āge vīvāha kalyāṇaman aksūṇa manoratham tāledu...}
The overlord was therefore proactive and personally involved in facilitating relationships among his subordinates in order to build solidarity and loyalty among them. These cases also suggest that the overlord possessed rights over the young women in subordinate families; the patriarchal hierarchy within a family was therefore nested into the political hierarchy. This is in line with Ronald Inden’s understanding of subordination in this political context.

It was an act which signalled [sic.] the willingness of one lord to another to place not only himself under the orders of an overlord, but those people, animals, and things that constituted his own domain as a lord. He would offer his elephants, horses, men, beautiful daughters, treasure, weapons and grain for the use or enjoyment of his overlord.\footnote{170 Ronald Inden, “Hierarchies of Kings in Early Medieval India” in \textit{Text and Practice}, 147.}

As evidenced by the above examples, the overlord also possessed rights over the potential merit gained from the act of \textit{kanyādāna}, and the fact that this is celebrated in the inscriptions indicates that it was a mark of great honor to have the king and/or queen themselves perform the \textit{kanyādāna} at a marriage ceremony.

The use of the term \textit{kanyādāna} expressed an adherence to \textit{dharmaśāstras}, but many of the actual marriage practices contradicted the prescriptions there in. The \textit{dharmaśāstra} recognized several types of marriages but recommended only a few. Bride-givers, families who gave their daughters, were not supposed to be bride-takers with the same family, as the act of \textit{dāna} was to be performed only to someone of higher rank, without the expectation of reciprocation. As a form of \textit{dāna} or ritual gift, the merit of the act was tarnished if it accrued any tangible benefit in the material world. Thus the bride-givers were supposed to be of a lower social order than the bride-takers; this cast an unfavorable
light on bride-giving, especially when the bride giver accrued material benefits. This was not necessarily the case in the kin-networks of South Indian royalty, where cross-cousin marriage was prevalent. In some cases, as with the Cōḷas and the Eastern Cāḷukyas of Vengi, there is clear evidence for cross-cousin marriage across generations, where brides were both given and received by both sides of the family. In Hoysaḷa case, as with the other royal marriages explored in Chapter 1, there were no examples of brides being given and taken in the same generation, but there are instances of them being both bride-takers and receivers in different generations as happened in the Hoysaḷa case with the Mariyāne family. Encouraging subordinates to marry amongst themselves, facilitating the creation of this network, and participating in it themselves by marrying the daughters of subordinates, Ballāḷa and Viṣṇuvardhana attempted to create a strong enough force to challenge their own overlords, the Cāḷukyas. In order to do so, they imitated the kind of marital network their father had participated in as a Cāḷukya subordinate.

Viṣṇuvardhana re-enters the Marital Network of Cāḷukya Subordinates

Throughout his reign, Viṣṇuvardhana attempted to encroach on the sovereignty of his overlord, Vikramāditya VI. Inscriptions as early as 1117 C.E. mention Ganga Rāja’s successes against the Cāḷukya army¹⁷¹ and by the 1130s, Viṣṇuvardhana had extended his territory as far as Banavāsi and was camped at Bankāpura. In the 1130s and 40s,
Viṣṇuvardhana made continued attempts to take advantage of Vikramāditya VI’s death and the instability that followed as he was succeeded by Sōmēśvara III in 1126 C.E. and Jagadekamalla in 1139 C.E. He remained unsuccessful, however, as he continued to use the subordinate term, mahāmaṇḍalēśvara and acknowledge Cāḷukya supremacy. The most prominent queens who appear during this period reflect Viṣṇuvardhana’s failure to challenge Cāḷukya sovereignty.

Śāntaladēvi died in 1131 C.E., and a new queen named was Bammaladēvi appeared in inscriptions with the title, paṭṭamahādēvi from 1134 C.E. The genealogical information available in inscriptions she commissioned identify her as the “Lakṣmi of the milk-ocean that is the Pallava family” the daughter Gōvindara and his wife, Cāvunḍabbe. A set of inscriptions of the Pāvaguḍa taluq in the Tumkur district (what was Nolambavādi) reveal that Gōvindara was also the name of the Nolamba-Pallava king, Irungoḷa’s father. Irungoḷa ruled Nolambavādi in 1150 C.E., and the correspondence of the dates points to this being the same individual cited as Bāmmmaladēvi’s father. Another inscription dated to 1232 C.E., which recalls the genealogy of the Nolamba-Pallava family also mentions Gōvindara as Irungoḷa’s father. While Bammaladēvi was born to Cavunḍabbe, Irungoḷa

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172 Coelho, The Hoysaḷa Vamsa, 92.

173 EC (O.S.) XII Gubbi, 13.
Pallava kulam ade pāl gaḍal alliya siriyādal

174 Ibid.
Cavunḍabbarasigam urvi vara Gōvindarargam udiyisi sakalorvi vara viṣṇuge bāmmmaladēviye tāṃ paṭṭadarasi ene negald irdal

175 EC XII (O.S.) Pavaguda, 43.

176 Ibid, 52, 53.
was born to a queen named Mahādēvi. Iruṅgoḷa is not mentioned in the inscriptions which discuss Bammaladēvi’s lineage, nor is Bammaladēvi mentioned in the Pallava records but conjecture based on dates and the common name of their father makes it likely that they were siblings. Like Śāntaladēvi, Bammaladēvi also travelled with her husband. She is variously acknowledged as being with him at Ucchangi and Hangal.

The association with the inscriptions in Tumkur confirm that the Pallavas in question here were the Noḷamba Pallava family who had a long-standing connection with the Cālukyas, including several marriages over generations. It is noteworthy that they had largely disappeared from the inscriptive record during the reign of Vikramāditya VI, who made the Pāṇḍyas of Ucchangi the rulers of Gangavāḍi. They re-emerged as subordinates of the Cāḷukyas after his death. This is possibly because they had supported Sōmēśvara the first in the 1074 C.E. battle of succession, and fell out of favor for the duration of Vikramāditya’s reign. The Ucchangi Pāṇḍyas on the other hand, had played a major role in Vikramāditya’s victory (as discussed in the first section). This marriage of Viṣṇuvardhana was therefore symptomatic of a defeat at the hands of Jagadekamalla, and therefore a re-assimilation into the larger body of subordinates.

At the same time, there was also a piriyarasi called Rājaladēvi who is identified as the ‘anuje’ or younger sister of Bammaladēvi. Whether they were related before their marriage to Viṣṇuvardhana is unknown, but this inscription does show that there was a

177 Ibid, Pavaguda, 43.
178 Ibid, Tiptur, 14.
distinction between the titles piriyarasi and paṭṭamahādēvi; the inscription which mentions Rājaladēvi identifies her as piriyarasi but simultaneously acknowledges Bammaladēvi as both piriyarasi and paṭṭamahādēvi. Paṭṭamahādēvi was therefore a title held by only one woman while there could be multiple queens with the title, piriyarasi. Rājaladēvi is mentioned in an inscription at Santekere in Kaḍur taluq to establish her maternal uncle or sōdara māva, Manciyaraśa’s connection with the king, Viṣṇuvardhana. Manciyaraśa with title maṇḍaleśa, is praised as an ornament to the Cāḷukya vamśa or family (cāḷukya vamśa tilakam), and as the son of Dattarasa. In the inscription, he is credited with the establishment of the Mancēśvara temple for which Viṣṇuvardhana granted lands around the village of Viṣṇusamudra.\textsuperscript{180} At this point, I am not certain what the association with the Cāḷukya vamśa entails for Manciyaraśa. It seems unlikely that it was a direct connection with the Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇi, but he might be a son of one of the smaller families or of a subordinate family.

This new phase of Viṣṇuvardhana’s marriage alliances showed him once again being incorporated into the larger body of local rulers, a change in strategy which was preceded by several important events. In the inscriptions that detail Ganga Rāja’s exploits on behalf of Viṣṇuvardhana, one of his major accomplishments was to keep the Cāḷukyas at bay. It is clear that Viṣṇuvardhana was planning to create a polity strong enough to supersede his overlord’s authority.\textsuperscript{181} This is why a large portion of alliances were made to shore up the

\textsuperscript{180} EC VI (O.S.) Kadur, 96

\textsuperscript{181} EC II (O.S.) Shravana Belgola 73.
115
relationships between the Hoysaḷas and their subordinates, creating a community of
interest among them. In 1116 C.E., the defeat of the Pāṇḍyas of Uchangi was an indirect
challenge to Cāḷukya supremacy as the former were very loyal subordinates, ruling over a
significant portion of the southern regions of the Cāḷukya sphere of influence.

In the 1120s, Viṣṇuvardhana had his first direct confrontation with the forces of
Vikramāditya VI, led by a the Sinda chief, Ācugi II in which he was unsuccessful. Yet
another altercation happened in the late 1130s, when he faced Acugi’s son, Permāḍidēva.
Once again, despite his efforts to expand northwards and his residence in Bankāpura
towards the end of his reign, Viṣṇuvardhana was unable to overpower the Cāḷukyas, and
much of his territorial expansion was nullified during the reign of his son, Narasimha I.

182 (J.F. Fleet, “Old Canarese and Sanskrit Inscriptions relating to the Chieftains of the
Sindavamśa, edited with translations, notes, and remarks” in JBBRAS XI, 219-277 - Inscriptions
III and IV.)
Later, his grandson, Ballāḷa would finally discard the titles of subordination in the early years of the thirteenth century.

**Conclusion**

The rise of the Hoysaḷa family’s political prominence is intertwined with the history of their networks of kinship. The initial expansion of their sphere of influence came with the incorporation of Vinayāditya into the Cāḷukya political order as a mahāmandalēśvara and the marriage of Trailokyamalla/Sōmēśvara I and Hoysaḷa Mahādēvi. Their position as subordinate rulers was strengthened by Ereyanga’s marriage to a princess from another family of Cāḷukya subordinates, the Ucchangi Pāṇdyas, both of whom supported Vikramāditya VI in the war of succession against his brother, Sōmēśvara II. In addition, a relationship between the Hoysaḷas and the Gangas during this period, where Hermāḍi dēva is recognized as the son-in-law, or aliya of Ereyanga, is recalled in an inscription from Narasimha’s time, when the Hoysaḷas were the overlords of the Gangas. This was the first major phase of Hoysaḷa history, which was marked by alliances across south India, with prominent ruling families.

The second stage was marked by a consolidation of kin networks among the Hoysaḷa subordinates, who could now commission inscriptions, temples, and basadis. Not only did the Hoysaḷas marry daughters of their subordinates, and of men of lower rank, they also encouraged marriage among their subordinates and sometimes performed the
kanyādāna themselves. During his reign, Viṣṇuvardhana attempted to assert independent sovereignty, and these marriages were one aspect of that assertion. The fact that this attempt failed is evidenced by his re-incorporation into the marital network of local rulers who came under Cāḷukya rule. These marriages were not only diplomatic alliances; they also enforced and reproduced existing structures of power and played a major role in the shifting politics of Early Medieval South India.
CHAPTER 4: Viṣṇuvardhana to Ballāḷa: The Struggle for Sovereignty and the Expansion of Subordinate Networks

Viṣṇuvardhana’s attempts to achieve absolute overlord status remained unsuccessful until his death in 1143 C.E. at his northern residence of Bankāpura. His reign and military successes however brought significant resources to the religious, political, and economic centers of the Hoysaḷa kingdom and resulted in an effusion of new inscriptions, with the employment and ennoblement of several new military subordinates, merchants, artisans, and administrators. Following a brief period of stagnation during the rule of his son, Narasimha I (r. 1141-1173 C.E.), where the latter was barely able to maintain his father’s position, the reign of his grandson, Ballāḷa II (r. 1173-1220 C.E.) saw the most widespread, prolific period for inscriptions affirming his overlordship and celebrating the achievements of subordinate families over several generations.

This chapter examines how these subordinate families chose to frame and celebrate their genealogies once they had access to adequate resources and favor of the king to commission inscriptions. Often, these genealogies contained specific details such as dates and events that took place as many as four generations before the commission of the inscription. The case studies for this chapter, drawn from an extensive survey of subordinate genealogies, include subordinate families who recorded their genealogy for multiple generations and provided details which allow for contextualization of their
claims in a larger historical context of contemporary South Indian politics.\textsuperscript{183} Among these cases, there are two observable patterns of genealogy. In the first, more common pattern, the family claimed multigenerational loyalty to the Hoysaḷa family itself, and in the second, the family celebrated their service to multiple ruling families over the course of their history, finally explaining how they became favored subordinates of the Hoysaḷas.

Both of these patterns illustrate different ways in which inscriptions commissioned by subordinates bolstered the centrality of Hoysaḷa rule. On the one hand, the genealogies which mirrored the Hoysaḷa lineage repeated and reinforced the established history of the dynasty, and on the other, families who recorded service to multiple rulers illustrated the ultimate choice to serve the Hoysaḷas. Apart from the explicit acknowledgment of their movement between courts, subordinates often had their place of origin as the prefix to their given name, the variety of which indicates the extent to which these families were traveling in order to secure employment in the Hoysaḷa court, and sanction for their preferred religious activities. It showed the voluntary movement of skilled individuals to the Hoysaḷa domain reinforcing its prosperity and centrality to the ‘entire earth’ as understood in Early Medieval South India.

Marriage continued to play an important role in the subordinates’ claims to prestige and proximity to the king. With the exception of one queen, Cōḷa Mahādēvi, whom he

\textsuperscript{183} This chapter is especially rife with numerous names and relationships. Many individuals possess the same or similar names. If they are the same individual, it is explicitly discussed. If not, it is safe to assume that they are distinct individuals with the same name.
married much later in his reign, all the wives of Ballāḷa who appear in inscriptions came from subordinate families. Furthermore, subordinate families began to claim affinal relationships with subordinates who had a longer history of association with the Hoysaḷa family. Multiple families, for example, cite their marital bonds with the Mariyāṇe family, indicating that the practice of marriage among subordinates was still common. Furthermore, the queens of Ballāḷa II stopped carrying the titles of piriyarasi and pāṭṭamahādēvi during his reign and gained subordinate titles like tat pāda padmōpajīvi. They also performed the role of military subordinates, and travelled independent of their husband, blurring the line between queenship and subordination.

Subordination Under the Early Hoysaḷas

In the period of the earliest Hoysaḷa rulers, Vinayāditya and Ereyanga, there were fewer than five identifiable subordinates, and their inscriptions are clustered around the Hoysaḷa residences of Sosēvūr and Belur. Even this limited activity only began in the 1080s and 1090s, after the Hoysaḷas had an established position under Cāḷukya suzerainty. By the time their subordinates began to commission longer inscriptions, they already been given courtly titles indicating that the Hoysaḷas sought to mimic the structure of the Cāḷukya court. The assumption of titles such as mahāpradhāna, and mahāsandhivigrahi, and bhaṇḍāri suggests that a network of subordinates already existed under the Hoysaḷas, but very few were granted the rights and resources to commission
inscriptions and record their achievements. This changed drastically late in the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana, who made increasingly explicit efforts to separate himself from his Cālukya overlords and challenge their absolute sovereignty. The subordination which was a celebrated aspect of Vinayāditya and Ereyanga’s rule became merely a nominal acknowledgment in the coming generations, one that was constantly being challenged.

There are three Hoysaḷa subordinate figures of note in the eleventh century: Pōcimayya, Barmayya and Cāvunḍarāja. An inscription at Bīrur in the Kadur Taluq\(^\text{184}\) states that while *sriman mahāmaṇḍalēśvaram tribhuvanamalla poysaḷa dēvaru* and *kumāran ereyanga dēvaru* were ruling the Gangavādi 96000, starting with *malē viṣayam*, Pōcimayya had the titles, *samasta viṣayakam piriya daṇḍanāyaka* (the senior military official for all regions) and *sandhivigrahi*.\(^\text{185}\) Barmayya appears in two inscriptions. The first one is a hero stone which describes the heroic death of Barmayya’s uncle, in a battle between the Pergade of the Neralige region and the Nolamba ruler, Āḷamayya in 1084 C.E.\(^\text{186}\) Here, Barmayya is identified as as the *mahāsāmanta* of Vinayāditya. In a second inscription, Barmayya is once again identified as Vinayāditya’s *mahāsāmanta*.\(^\text{187}\) The inscription further records a donation to the Gangēśvara temple in Yalambaḷase when he and his senior wife (*piriya pendati*), Baganabbi were ruling there. The inscription is partly effaced so the identity of the donor is not entirely clear. The third subordinate

\(^{184}\) EC VI (O.S.) Kadur, 161.

\(^{185}\) Rice translates this as “minister for peace and war.” *Sandhi* means conjunction and *vigrahi* is one who wages war — therefore, one who presides over both

\(^{186}\) EC V (O.S.) Arasikere, 6.

\(^{187}\) EC VI (O.S.) Kadur, 21.
contemporary to Vinayāditya is Cāvuṇḍa Rāja, who appears in two inscriptions from the Arasikere district with the title, *mahāsandhivigrahi*.\(^{188}\)

In all of these inscriptions, the subordinate individuals are identified as rulers of a smaller regions, in the case of Cāvuṇḍarāya it was Dēsavāṇi in Āsandināḍ. In Barmayya’s it was Yelambaḷase. Pōcimayya’s case is more complicated, as several villages are cited as his āḷkēyrṛgṛalu, or the towns under his rule. The inscription praises him for establishing tanks, irrigation, and wells in these places, and then also states that along with these towns, he was also ruling several other places — Tāvarekere, Nandināgara, Muṇḍare, Kalhāḷu, Hosagaṭam, all in or close to the present-day Kaḍur district. The furthest location at which an inscription was found from this period was Maṇḍagadde, in the Tirthalli taluq. Barmayya’s title as *mahāsāmanta* indicates that his territory was on the periphery of the Hoysaḷa domain, and when arranged on a map, the find spots of these inscriptions show its probable extent at the time. As expected, based on their relationship with the Cāḷukyas and their conflicts with the Kongāḷvas and the Cōḷas, their subordinates fanned north and east. It also seems likely that these men had some local authority before their association with the Hoysaḷas. Barmayya’s uncle, who is memorialized in the inscription at Neralige (now spelled Nerlige) is identified as the *perṛgade* or local administrator. The network of Hoysaḷa subordinates therefore, probably began with Vinayāditya winning the allegiance of local rulers or possibly ennobling allies he already had, just the Hoysaḷas had been ennobled by the Cāḷukyas on a larger scale.

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\(^{188}\) EC V (O.S.) Arasikere 186, 187.
There are very few inscriptions from the first two decades of the twelfth century, and as discussed in the previous chapter, this is possibly because Viṣṇuvardhana was ruling the Māsavāḍī region under direct Cāḷukya command. After the victory against the Cōḷas in 1117 C.E., and the reclamation of the entirety of Gangavāḍī, both the number of subordinates and the inscriptions they commissioned burgeoned. Even though Viṣṇuvardhana is credited with two major military victories, it was actually his military subordinates who carried them out. Ganga Rāja led the victorious campaign against the Cōla envoy, Aḍiyama while Puṇisa Daṇḍanāyaka led a simultaneous conquest of Bayalunāḍ, present-day Waynad in Kerala, to the south west of the Hoysaḷa domain.\textsuperscript{189} The two military leaders are praised in their respective inscriptions for winning these battles and bringing power and wealth to their overlord, Viṣṇuvardhana. At the same time, each of these three major actors undertook extensive building projects. Viṣṇuvardhana comissioned the Vijayanārayana temple at Bēlur to commemorate this victory,\textsuperscript{190} his queen, Śāntala Dēvi commissioned the Kappē Cannigarāya in the same compound, and Ganga Rāja and Puṇisa both commissioned large Jain basadis at Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa and Arakoṭṭāra (present-day Chamarajanagar).\textsuperscript{191}

These were the only two subordinates who made inscriptions in the earliest years of Viṣṇuvadhana’s rule. This was the beginning of the Hoysaḷas’ ability to support and fund these projects in return for military support from their subordinates. As a result, the

\textsuperscript{189} EC IV (O.S.) Chamarajanagar 83.
\textsuperscript{190} EC V (O.S.) Belur 58.
\textsuperscript{191} EC IV (O.S.) Yedatore, 6; Chamarajanagar 83.
families commemorated the relationships that they had shared with the royal family for generations, often with specific events and dates, showing perhaps that the preservation of family history was practiced outside of the creation of inscriptions. These records became a manifestation of this knowledge, preserved in a more immediate and permanent way.

With Ganga Rāja, we have the first example of a Hoysaḷa subordinate’s family creating a cluster of architecture. At Śravana Belgoḷa, there are basadis which were commissioned by Ganga Raja himself, by his wife Lakṣmi, and in honor of his mother, Pōcavve. Furthermore, his son Boppa Dēva built a basadi in Dōrasamudra in his honor when he died in the 1130s. This basadi is called the Drohagharaṭṭa Jinālaya, referencing an epithet that was bestowed upon Ganga Rāja. In several inscriptions which record these commissions and donations, Ganga Raja’s descent is described going back two generations. His father was Ėci Rāja, the son of Māra and Mākanabbe. Ėci Rāja’s wife and Ganga Rāja’s mother was Pocikabbe.

An 1120 C.E. inscription that commemorates Ganga Raja’s dedication of a village to Pocikabbe’s basadi at Sravana Belgola, records that Nṛpa Kāma, the first named Hoysaḷa ancestor was Ėci Rāja’s overlord. This is significant because Ganga Rāja invokes Nṛpa Kāma to assert his families longstanding loyalty to the Hoysalas, but in the inscriptions commissioned by Viṣṇuvardhana himself, starting with the first genealogy at Belur, the

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192 EC II (O.S.) Shravana Belgola, 70.
193 EC II (O.S.) Shravana Belgola, 118.
Hoysaḷa lineage began with Vinayāditya. Nṛpa Kāma, as discussed in the Chapter 1, was a local ruler and pre-existed the Hoysaḷas ennoblement under the Kalyāṇi Cāḷukyas. It was left to the later generations to ensure that relationships with their patrons were preserved and their family’s loyalty, compounded over generations was accounted for.

Ganga-Rāja’s success also allowed several members of his family to patronize the construction of *basadis* at Śravana Belgola. His mother and wife both had *basadis* in their names and this expands our own knowledge of the family, as each inscription accounts for the relationships of the individual commissioning it. This relationship with the Hoysaḷas was extended further when Ganga Rāja died in 1133 C.E. At this time Viṣṇuvardhana was in Bankapura, leading his campaign to the north when Ganga Rāja’s son, Boppa Dēva brought news of a new *basadi* he constructed in Dōrasamudra in his father’s honor and travelled to Bankāpura to give Viṣṇuvardhana the consecrated offering or *prasāda*. The inscription states that Viṣṇuvardhana attributed his victory in battle as well as the birth of his son, Narasimha I to the consumption of the the *śeṣa*, literally remainder, of *gandhōdakam*, or sandal-infused water from the consecration of the *basadi*. In his joy, he named the deity Vijaya Pārvatēva and the newborn prince, Vijaya Nārasimhadēva. The importance of Ganga Rāja’s position in proximity to Viṣṇuvardhana was further highlighted when the Mariyāne family identified him as the

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194 EC V (O.S.) Belur, 58.

195 *i dēvara pratiṣṭheya phaladim vijayotsavamūṃ kumāra janmotsavamūṃ ādūv endu santoṣa parampareyan eydi dēvargge śrī vijayapārśvanātha emba pesarumāṃ kumārāṅge śrī vijayanārasimhadēvan emba pesarum īṭtu...* EC II (O.S.) Shravana Belgola, 118.
maiduna, (sister’s husband) of the senior Mariyāne who was an important subordinate to Vinayāditya and his wife, Keleyabbe.

Families With Intergenerational Loyalty to the Hoysaḷas

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Mariyāne family also had the first opportunity to record their genealogy and their ongoing connection with the Hoysaḷa family during the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana, though their activity continued well into the years when Narasimha I and Ballāḷa II ruled. The first inscription, in the Chikmagalur Taluq, that chronicles three generations of this family is dated to 1137 C.E., during the later years of Viṣṇuvardhana’s life. It recalls the family’s connection to the Hoysaḷas from the senior Mariyāne, who was first given the prabhutva, or lordship, of Sindigere while Vinayāditya and Keleyabbe performed the kanayādāna of his bride, Dēkavve Daṇḍanāyakiti in 1047 C.E. The lordship was once again granted to Mariyāne upon the marriage of his three daughters with Ballāḷa I in 1103 C.E.. In the third renewal of their rights, two important subordinates and members of Viṣṇuvardhana’s court, the brothers Mariyāne and Bharata acquired the rights of lordship by laying a tribute of 500 hon at the feet of the sovereign.196

196 EC IV (O.S) Nagamangala, 32.
Due to the confusing arrangement of the inscription, the construction of the family’s
genealogy required cross-referencing between the Sindigere and Alisandra inscriptions in the Chikmagalur and Nagamangala districts. The more detailed genealogy in the Chikmagalur inscriptions, found on a large stone outside the Brahmēśvara temple, states that the family hailed from the Bhāradvāja Gotra and takes us back to an ancestor named Dākarasa, who the inscription claims served both the Ganga and the Hoysaḷa kingdoms. Here the Mariyāne family, in the time of Viṣṇuvardhana’s reign, make the assertion that the achievements and prominence of their family preexisted their current overlords, reinforcing the idea that they were active agents in acknowledging the Hoysaḷas as their overlords and contributing to their ascent.

A second inscription at Sindigere further clarifies that, Dākarasa, father of Mariyāne and Bharata was the son of the senior Mariyāne and his wife, Dēkavve, as well as sons-in-law or aḷiya to Gangappayya, Bācarasa and Sōvarasa. For the most part, the inscriptions describe Mariyāne and Bharata jointly holding several important positions in Viṣṇuvardhana’s court, like sarvādhikari, mānika bhaṇḍāri, and prāṇādhikārī. Much like they acknowledged their relationship by marriage with Ganga Rāja, their prominence in Viṣṇuvardhana’s court was underlined by several other subordinates acknowledging affinal relationships with them.


198 The term adhikārī roughly translates to an administrative positions, mānika bhaṇḍāri means the treasurer of rubies. It remains unclear what courtly duties accompanied these titles. mariyāne daṇḍanāyakanum bharata daṇḍanāyakanum sarbādhikāriḷum mānika bhaṇḍārigaḷum, and prāṇādhikārīgaḷum āgi sukhadim saluttam ire
An inscription in the Dudda Hubli, for example, records that Būci Rāja, a subordinate of Ballāla II commissioned a basadi in Marikali. Būci Rāja is praised as a poet in both Sanskrit and Kannada as a “lord among ministers” or mantrināyaka. He is also identified with the titles, mantri māndalālaṃkaram, srimat sandhi vigrahi. His wife was Śāntala, whose fathers were Mariyāne and Bharata. The Sindigere inscription from the perspective of the Mariyāne family identifies her more specifically as Bharata’s daughter (daṇḍanāyaka bharatātmaje), and details her establishment of a temple dedicated to Pārśva Jineśvara at Sindaghaṭṭa, about 50 kilometers from Mysore. In this inscription, her husband is identified as Ėci Rāja, but I suspect that is an orthographical confusion given that the two letters are very similar in form. The inscription commissioned by her husband praises of Śāntala, comparing her piety with that of Atimabbe, (a celebrated Jain woman who built several basadis and had thousands of manuscripts of the Śāntipurāṇa commissioned). Both Śāntala’s natal and marital families recognize and identify her, indicating that this marriage was advantageous to both parties.

In a set of inscriptions from Bamannahalḷi, another subordinate family identifies their relationship with the Mariyāne family, while also establishing long-standing loyalty to the Hoysaḷas. These inscriptions, are dated to 1137 C.E. and 1159 C.E., ranging from the later years of Viṣṇuvardhana’s reign to the middle of Narasimha I’s. This is another instance where the introductory verses praising the Hoysaḷa lineage begin from Nrpa

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199 EC V (O.S.) Hassan 119.
200 EC V (O.S.) Arasikere, 141.
201 EC V (O.S.) Arasikere, 144.
Kāma rather than from Vinayāditya. It is hard to say for sure why this is, but it is possibly a mark of the family’s service dating back to the time of Nṛpa Kāma, though that connection is not explicitly stated. The earlier inscription recounts that one bhanḍāri Cāvuṇḍayya’s received the grant to make Karigunda his own land or, svabhūmi during Viṣṇuvardhana’s tulāpuṣa mahādāna ritual, after having worshipped at his feet (pāda-pūje āntu karigundavam sva bhūmiyāge dhāre vaṭedu...) and then details the donations he made from it to the deity established by Brahmarāsi Paṇḍita. The later inscription relates that Parisayya (Cāvuṇḍayya’s son) lost his life in the battle between Narashima and Āhavamalla, the Cāḷukya king — this inscription records the grant that Narasimhadēva made in memory of his sacrifice (parokṣa vinayavāgi), giving him Karigunda in Niruguṇḍanāḍ along with its lordship, or prabhutva. There was therefore once more, a hereditary connection between the family and this particular location.

Their vamśa praśasti begins with the mahapradhāna Cāvuṇḍayya whose wife was Jakkanavve. They had six sons, of them Pārśva built a chaityālaya in Niṭṭur, and Jinadēva was distinguished for his learning. Jinadēva’s and his wife, Haneykavve’s son was Cāvuṇḍāyya, who with his wife Dekanayve had a son Parisayya, treasurer or paṭṭisa bhanḍāri to Viṣṇuvardhana. The inscription compares Parisayya's wife Bammala-Dēvi to Attimabbe in both her devotion to her husband and to the Jina-lord, and identifies as the
daughter of the “epitome of ministers,” Mariyāne, and his wife Jakkave; her uncle (or father’s younger brother) was Bharata daṇḍanāyaka.202

While the Sindigere inscriptions, dated to 1137 C.E. stop at the generation of Mariyāne and Bharata, the Alisandra inscription goes on to record the genealogy of the Mariyāne family during the reigns of Narasimha I and his son, Ballāla II. These inscriptions shed light on the multigenerational, three-sided relationship between the Hoysaḷa family, the Mariyāne family and the regular renewal of the latter’s lordship. As discussed, in the first two generations of the association, the lordship over the land was granted in association with marriages that occurred between the two families. Thereafter, the Mariyāne family continued to renew their lordship through the payment of tribute. On the birth of a son in their family, they named him Biṭṭidēvan after the king, renewed their lordship over Sindagere and acquired lordship of Baggavaḷḷi, and Diṇḍiganakere in Kalikaṇi-Nāḍu (Daḍaga), by laying a tribute of 1000 hon at Viṣṇuvardhana’s feet. and a further 500 hon when Narasimha was ruling.203

Finally, the Alisandra inscription discusses the rule of Ballāla, when Bharata daṇḍanāyaka and his younger brother, Bāhubali renewed the grant and their lordship in 1183 C.E. This is the actual date of the inscription, with all the events being recalled in

202 pati-bhaktiyōla amalina jina pati-bhaktiyōla attimabhēy end ī bhuvanam satatam bammala đēviyan aṭi-mudāḍim pogaḷut irpuḍd iruluma pagaluṃ jaṇakam śrī mariyāne mantri tilakam jakkave tāy vīśva-bhū jana chintāmaṇi daṇḍanāhā bharatam dhairyyānvitam sauryya śāli nayajñām kirī-ayyan.

203 tamm anvayada sindagereyumam bāyvennegē baggavallaḥyumam kalikaṇināḍa diṇḍiganakereya prabhūtvakē 500 honnam pāda pūjeyam koṭṭu nārasinghadēvana kaiyalu punar datiy āgi hadādu sukhadim irē...
131
retrospect. The inscription states that during the mahādāna that followed the birth of the prince, Narasimha II, the two brothers renewed their grant and provided funds for the services of the basadi they established at Anuvasamuddra.204 Until late in the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana, the family renewed their lordship of Sindigere which existed very close to the Hoysaḷa residence. However, in the later generations, they were active in a second area comprising of several villages in the Mysore district. The chronicle of this family’s achievements and associations through these inscriptions, therefore, allow for the reiteration of the Hoysaḷas’ own history, the success of the Mariyāne family heavily implying the growth of Hoysaḷa sovereignty.

The case which most clearly articulates the emphasis placed on loyalty to the same ruling family over time is the descent of Ballāḷa II’s subordinate, Kēśirāja. An inscription from Agrahara Belguli dated 1210 C.E. found on the wall of a temple, begins with the assertion that Kēśirāja’s lineage began with that of the Hoysaḷas and questions how their family’s loyalty could be compared to new subordinates who began their service just yesterday?205 The inscription then goes onto record the service of Kēśirāja’s ancestors in each successive generation of the Hoysaḷa family.

Rāma Daṇḍādhipa served Vinayāditya, and his son Srīdhara-daṇḍanāthan was Ereyanga’s eminent minister (mantri lalānam). Srīdhara had three sons, vibhu-Mallidēva daṇḍādhipa-Dāma-rāja, and sachivvōttama-Kēśava-Rāja. As leaders of the army (mukhyā

204 kumāra vīra nārasiṅgha dēvaṁ jalmōtsaha-mahā-dānadoḷu tamm anvayada sindagereya ballḷavallīya kalukanīṇāda daḍiganakereya anuvasamuddrada siddhāyada kannē

205 end āyutu poysalāṇvayam and āyutu kēśirājan ānvyayam adu tān ind āytu nīneyy āyṭ emb andada posa daṇḍanāthar ond anvayamē EC V (O.S.) Chennarayapatna 244.
they participated in the expansion of Viṣṇuvardhana’s kingdom. Further, Mallidēva, or Malla’s sons were Mādhava amātya, Dvijēndrōpama mantri, Beṭṭarasa, and Dāma-daṇḍēśa who served under Narasimha the I. To Beṭṭarasa and his wife Lakṣmi were born five sons and one daughter in Ballāḷa II’s kingdom. The inscription states that all of these children went on to distinguish themselves in Ballāḷa’s kingdom.206 but proceeds to describe the descendants of only Kēśava (Kēśirāja) and Mallapa.

Kēśirāja is lauded as one of the most prized ministers of Ballāḷa’s court, and describes his extensive construction of temples, tanks and the creation of agrahāras in Nallūr, Taḷirur, Bāgiyūr, Bālagarche, and Belgaḷi. The praise of Kēśirāja also provides imagery describing the splendor of Ballāḷa’s court or āsthāna; Kēśi-Raja is praised as appearing like a ruby among gems when he was in Ballāḷa’s court (manīgalol mānīkyam irppandadim). He also has the title of mahāpradhāna, and the inscription describes in detail the creation of the Keśavapura agrahāra in a village formerly known as Belgaḷi in the Nirguṇḍa-nāḍ. Having received the village as a grant from the king, he built two reservoirs, Keśavasamudra and Lakṣmisamudra and established the deity, Kesavēśvara-dēva, for whose rituals several individuals made donations.

Kēśirāja and his wife, Padumāvati had three sons: Vallāḷa daṇḍēśa, mantri-Mādhavam, and Beṭṭa Sēnāni. Mallapa and his wife Nāgala-dēvi also had three sons, vibhu-Dāvana-daṇḍanātha, Kēśava, and Beṭṭa-Camūpa. All of these cousins, from a single lineage, were in the service of Ballāḷa II. An inscription from the Chikmagalur

206 ballāḷa nṛpa rājyaḍal ellarum avar adhika punyar anupama ṣauryyar kallada vidyeyum avargaḷa gellada ripur bālamum illa bhūmanaḍaḍal ūbid.
133
district from 1249 C.E.\textsuperscript{207} shows the continuing relationship of this family with the
Hoysaḷas. Recorded during the reign of Sōmēśvara, Ballāḷa’s grandson, when he was
living in Kannanur of present-day Tamil Nadu, the inscription relates the donation of
Kēśirāja’s son, Beṭṭarasa-daṇḍanāyaka (also called Beṭṭa Senāni above). The lineage in
this inscription, however is less detailed than in the Agrahara Belguli inscription.

Here, Beṭṭarasa’s lineage begins with Srīdhara who is cited as a mahapradhāna to
Viṣṇuvardhana. While this is not entirely inconsistent with the previous lineage as
Srīdhara could have outlived Ereyanga and served under his son, the next part of the
inscription which details Beṭṭarasa’s descent from Srīdhara seems to skip a generation.
Srīdhara’s sons are identified identically to Cn 244 as Malyaṇa, Dāma, and Kēśi-Rāja
(the names are spelled slightly differently but this is because they have varying suffixes).
However, this inscription skips the generation which Cn 244 identifies with Narasimha
I’s reign and cites Keśi-Raja (who is the primary subject of Cn 244) as the son of
Malyaṇa. Then it again converges with the other account when Keśi-Rāja and
Padmāvati’s sons are identified as mantri-Mādhava and Beṭṭa-chamūpa.

In contrast to the Mariyāne family, where they recalled an ancestor who held lordship
under both the Western Gangas and the Hoysaḷas, thereby predating the ascent of the
latter, Keśi Rāja’s celebration of his ancestry is founded in its simultaneous emergence
with the Hoysaḷas. Moreover, unlike in the cases of Ganga Rāja and Cāvundaṭṭaya (of
Karigunda), they don’t take the Hoysaḷa genealogy back to Nṛpa Kāma, but begin it with

\textsuperscript{207} EC VI (O.S.) Chikmagalur, 20.
Vinayāditya, like the official Hoysaḷa genealogies themselves. The very explicit mapping of their ancestors in roles of service to generations of Hoysaḷa kings shows their desire to be directly associated with their overlords’ progress. The explicit assertion that their lineage began simultaneously with the Hoysaḷa family, marking their superior loyalty and status compared to new subordinates, makes this even clearer. This illustrates a slightly different trajectory from that of the previous examples, though all of them claim loyalty to the Hoysaḷas from the inception of their lineage. The mention of Nṛpa Kāma, who does not appear in the standardized Hoysaḷa genealogy suggests a slight subversion of the royal family’s version of the story.

In the Mariyāne case, it is telling that the genealogy which harkens back to an ancestor’s lordship in the Ganga kingdom appears in the earlier inscription, dated to Viṣṇuvardhana’s rule. It is likely that the Hoysaḷas and their genealogy were less established during this time and the subordinate families had more freedom to harken back to those ancestors. By the time of Ballāḷa when the Alisandra inscription was composed, the Mariyāne family’s genealogy begins with the relationship between the senior Mariyāne and Vinayāditya. This echoes the way in which Keśi Rāja’s genealogy is structured. The common factor between all of these examples is the fact that they were all of subordinates who were fairly close to the Hoysaḷa heartland of Gangavāḍi, specifically to their residences of Sosēvūr, Belur and Dōrasamudra. In the case when a subordinate family was located further away from this center, however, the nature of their intergenerational affiliations changed.
Mariyāne Family Tree

Dākarasa ← → Yeciyakka

Ganga Rāja ← → Daughter
Nākaṇa

Dekavve ← → Mariyāne I ← → Cāmavve

Duganbhe ← → Dākarasa
Mācaṇṇa ← → Hāmavve

Jakkavve ← → Mariyāne

Boppan Hegāḍedevan

Parisayya ← → Bammaladevi

Bharata ← → Hariyale

Biṭṭidevan Mariyāne Śāntala ← → Būcirāja

Marīyāne Rāyadeva

Bāhubali

Cāvāladevi Padimaladevi Boppādevi → Ballāla I
Subordinates with Shifting Loyalties to Multiple Royal Families

The family that has the most varied and specific history of military achievements under different ruling families is the sāmantas of Huliyara. Huliyara is in present-day Tumkur district of Karnataka, but rests on the border between three districts, namely Hassan, Chikmagalur, and Tumkur. In the early medieval period, this would have been in Nolambavädi 32000, which only came under Hoysala overlordship late in the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana. Inscriptions about this family are found in three different modern-day districts but once mapped reveal that their activity and the activity of those individuals who acknowledge their rule was in and around the center of Huliyar, which was in the Magare 300. The inscriptions that deal with the family range from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century. Sometimes more detailed information about the older generations is available in the later inscriptions, perhaps because it was only then that the family had the resources to commission them.

The earliest inscription208 that deals with this family identifies Gōvidēva with the epithet, huliyera pura varādhiśvara (or as Rice translates it, the boon-lord of Huliyera). Although this is one of the groups of subordinates who are explicitly identified with a place of origin, their lineage boasts of service to several successive kings. The first ancestor, only identified by his titles in most of the inscriptions dealing with this family and is called sthira gambīra. In a later inscription from 1170 C.E., however, which

208 EC V (O.S.) Arasikere, 55.
describes another branch of his descendants, his name is revealed as Kariya Bamma. In his praises, the multiple inscriptions relate the same account where he earned titles for his service and achievements in different courts. The first title is *vīra taṇa prahāri* because he defended the Noḷamba king’s senior queen (*agra-mahīṣī*), Sridēvi, when his enemies attacked her. The second, he obtained due to his great skill in battle. As though killing for sport, he slew the great warrior, Doḍḍanka in the Cāḷukya king, Āhavamalla’s camp, thereby gaining the title of *doḍḍanka baḍiva*.

There are two possible explanations for the shifts in Kariya-Bamma’s affiliation. On the one hand, he might have travelled in search of patrons. However, I think it is more likely, given the family’s connection with Huliyera that the transitioning rulers were a reflection of the changing rulership of the locality. While the family remained relatively established in the region, what changed was the suzerain to whom they owed allegiance. This is supported by the fact that the first Hoysaḷa ruler the family served was Viṣṇuvardhana, which corresponded with his own territorial expansion east, into their homeland, and his and Ballāḷa I’s defeat of the Paṇḍyas of Ucchangi in the early twelfth century. Kariya-Bamma and his wife Murdiyakka, who is again identified by name only

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209 EC VI (O.S.) Kadur, 30.

210 sthīra gambhīra noḷamban agra mahishi *śrīdēviyam* tadviśō- |tkarar ant āgale bandu bandi viḍiyal tad vairi sanghātamaṃ |bharadind eydi taṇa prahāradole koṇḍ and ittan ā bhūpan ā- |daradim vīra-taṇa-prahāri-vesaram dhāṭřī-taḷaṃ baṇṭīsala ||

211 *cāḷukyāḥavamalla* nṛ |pāḷana katākadole kondu doḍḍaṅkamumaṃ |fileyole paḍedan adaṭaṃ |pāḷiśi **doḍḍaṅka baḍivan** emb ī birūḍam ||
in a much later inscription,\(^{212}\) had one son, Āhavamalla. It is likely that they acknowledged Cāḷukya overlordship at this time as subordinates often named their children after their overlord (for example, Viśṇu-daṇḍādhipa in Chapter 2 or Biṭṭidēvan of the Mariyāne family). Āhavamalla was the epithet of the Cāḷukya king, Sōmēśvara I, at whose camp Kariya-Bamma also gained his second title. Sōmēśvara I was also the overlord of the early Hoysalas in the late eleventh century, so it is likely that these local rulers came under the Cāḷukya umbrella around the same time. This also helps us date Kariya Bamma to the early to mid-eleventh century, which is when Sōmēśvara lived and ruled.

Ahavamalla and his wife Honnavve had two sons, Sāmanta Bhīma and Māca, who are never mentioned together in the same inscription. It is only through their common identification of their father and grandfather that I was able to deduce their relationship. However, both lines had among their ranks, important subordinates, especially to Ballāḷa II, his son Narasimha II, and his grandson, Sōmēśvara. Sāmanta Bhīma gained the title of sitagara gaṇḍa from Viśṇuvardhana, “So as to cause pleasure to the mind of the fierce lion to the herd of elephants the proud, the king Viśṇu, he slew Sitagaragaṇḍa in the king’s capital, and being accepted as a brave, received from the king the title of Sitagaragaṇḍa through out the world.”\(^{213}\) It is not entirely clear who sitagaragaṇḍa was, and it might even have been an animal. What these records illustrate is the validity and

\(^{212}\) EC VI (O.S) Kadur, 36.

\(^{213}\) EC V (O.S.) Arasikere 55.
importance of a subordinate family’s military service, even to other royal families. In rendering the accomplishments of their lineage, various members of the family recalled the family’s service not only to the Hoysaḷa rulers but also to the Noḷamba-Pallavas and the Kalyāṇi Cāḷukyas.

Sāmanta Bhīma’s son, Gōvidēva is the most prolific member of this family, followed closely by his brother, Sāmanta Caṭṭa. They ruled Huliyera and the Magare 300 in the 1130s. B.D. Chattopadhyāya cites Gōvidēva in his case study on the village of Kalikaṭṭi.”

His aim, however, is more to understand the transitioning rulership of a single village rather than a focus on the evolution of this family. He is also concerned with the nature of the relationship between the subordinates as royal functionaries and as local rulers. He sees Kalikaṭṭi as an “assignment” for Gōvidēva where Huliyera was his hereditary place of origin. This is possible, considering Kalikaṭṭi is identified as the foremost city of Magare-Nāḍu, however, the proximity of Kalikaṭṭi to Huliyera, especially given the ambit of the inscriptions where these sāmantas are mentioned, seems to point more to this family being in favor during the rule of Ballāḷa II and being given official governance of an area which they inhabited historically.

This is further supported by the presence of a different sāmanta in Kalikaṭṭi in the 1130s, Mahāśāvanta Singarasa/Singayya who established the deity Singeśvara there.

Another inscription at the same site provides further details: Singarasa was caused to

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move from Arasikere and received Kalikaṭṭi as a grant from the king.\textsuperscript{215} Here, Chattopadhyya’s argument that this signaled Viṣṇuvardhana’s desire to spread his emissaries out as his territory expanded, is convincing.\textsuperscript{216} By the time of the inscription, based on the distribution of inscriptions, Arasikere was already a heavily populated and prosperous center for the Hoysalas, very close to their central residence at Dōrasamudra. However Kalikaṭṭi is just over twenty miles from Arasikere, which raises the question of what it actually meant for Singayya to “relocate” to Kalikaṭṭi, if not for the nominal border between different Nāḍus. Siṅgarasa is praised both as “a dweller at the lotus feet” of Viṣṇuvardhana, and the Noḷamba king (noḷamba dēva pādārādhaka). This seems to support the idea that both Siṅgarasa and the Gōvidēva’s family’s allegiance changed because of which overlord it was most expedient to ally with at the time, given their location.

Gōvidēva served during the rule Narasimha I\textsuperscript{217} and was identified as his right hand. He outlived Narasimha to serve under Ballāḷa II. In honor of this, he named his son Ballāḷa Nāyaka, also called Balla or Balleya. Members of several different branches of the family have inscriptions around the same area, within a twenty-mile radius of Huliyar. In an inscription from the Channarayapatna District, Gōvidēva’s brother, Caṭṭa’s son, Sāmanta Biṭṭidēvan identifies Ballaḷa Nāyaka as his younger brother, or anuja,\textsuperscript{218}

\textsuperscript{215} singarasa[n arasikere]ind ettisi tandu magare munnūrakkam modala bāḍada kalikaṭṭiyam padedu sarvvaḥādhe pariḥāram āgiy āluttam ire EV V (O.S.) Ak 45.

\textsuperscript{216} Chattopadhyaya, Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India, 102.

\textsuperscript{217} EC V (O.S.) Arasikere 55.

\textsuperscript{218} EC XII (O.S.) Chiknayakanhalli, 21, 32.
showing that the different branches of the family acknowledged their relationships. An inscriptions from the late 1180s, records Balla’s promotion to the status of mahāmaṇḍalika (maṇḍalika padaviyam nere paṭedan) from mahāsāmanta which his father and previous ancestors held in Huliyera.\(^{219}\)

The transition here, from sāmanta to maṇḍalika showed both that Ballāḷa ennobled Balla in recognition of his family’s longstanding connection with the region, over at least two generations and that the ambit of Hoysaḷa territory was growing as they were in control of a large enough territory around Huliyar to warrant a higher ranked officer. In the same inscription which identifies Ballā ’s attainment of the maṇḍalika title his wife, Mārala dēvi is identified with the titles of piriyarasi and paṭṭamahādēvi. By ennobling Balla therefore, Ballāḷa raised the status of the entire family. If we accept the theory that they served different overlords at different times because of the shifting power over this region, rather than because they moved to different courts. This presents convincing evidence that they possessed some local authority, but their ancestral claims to military achievements were not restricted to their association with the Hoysaḷa family, though they only appear in inscriptions of that period.

Other examples of individuals moving between different courts are more incidental, but helped bolster the status of Ballāḷa II’s kingdom as a cultural, economic, and religious center. An inscription on a stone at the basadi in Arasikere records the migration of the minister (sacivōttamam) of the Kalacūri family, Rēcarasa, to Arasikere, and his

\(^{219}\) EC XII (O.S.) Chiknayakanhalli 14, 27.
establishment of the Sahasrakuṭa Jinālaya there.\textsuperscript{220} The inscription suggests that the reason behind his migration was the account he had heard of the city of Arasikere, and the freedom to practice Jainism there, and details how Ballāḷa allowed him to construct a \textit{jinālaya} and gave him the revenue of the village, Handarahāḷam for the rituals, the maintenance of practitioners, and the upkeep (\textit{jīrnodhāra}) of the temple. The inscription then goes onto provide a generic description of Arasikere, which appears in multiple inscriptions and further emphasizes why it was an attractive place for Rēcarasa to seek refuge.

To those who properly observe, in Arasiyakere, the brahmanas were properly versed in the vedas, the guards brave, the traders wealthy, the fourth caste [\textit{paridar}] of unshaken speech, the women beautiful, the labourers submissive, the temples ornaments to the world, the tanks deep and wide, the woods [\textit{vanam}] fool of fruit, the gardens full of flowers (\textit{pūḍota}). With lotuses covered with bees, with groves [\textit{udhyāna}] filled with parrots and cuckoos, with tanks overflowing, pervaded with the perfume of \textit{gandhaśāli} rice, filled with flowers, sugar-cane and wells, having lofty and handsome temples, crowded with an increasing population, an ornament to the earth — who can describe Arasiyakere? The Jina dharma and all other \textit{dharmas} are cultivated without opposition by the thousand families of the good in Arasiyakere.

In this inscription and in others, Arasikere is also referred to as the Ayyāvoḷe or Aihole of the south (\textit{tenkaṇa ayyavaḷe}). As Daud Ali notes in his work on the activities of two Hoysaḷa merchants, this refers to a group of merchants called the Ayyāvoḷe 500, who after first appearing in the tenth century, dominated south Indian trade.\textsuperscript{221} In the above description of Arasikere, the word \textit{āyvāḷgaḷ} (those of \textit{ayvāl}, a shortened form of

\textsuperscript{220} EC V (O.S.) Arasikere 77.

Ayyāvoḷe) is translated by Rice as merchants. The inscription is trying to claim, both implicitly and explicitly that so many of the Ayyavoḷe 500, the most prominent merchants of the time, had settled there that it had become like the southern counterpart. In Ali’s discussion of one Kunjiseṭṭi’s career, he surmises that the merchant was once in service of the Uchhangi Pāṇḍya king but accepted Ballāḷa’s overlordship when the latter defeated the Pāṇḍya’s and took the Ucchangi fort in the 1170s. Ballāḷa in turn saw the advantage in Kunjiseṭṭi’s alliance and gave him a paṭṭa or filet, making him a member of the Hoysaḷa court. After this Kunjiseṭṭi is said to have brokered peace between Ballāḷa II and Ballaham, thought to be Saṅkama, the contemporary Kalacuri king. “How Kunjiseṭṭi was able to negotiate this peace remains somewhat uncertain, but his trans-regional mercantile networks must undoubtedly have been of key importance.”

In both of these cases, families shifted loyalties for different reasons. In the case of the Huliyar family, it was a wholly local concern, based on the family that was powerful in their region at that time. The activity space of their family remained limited within a forty-mile radius of Huliyar. On the other hand, the merchants of the Ayyāvoḷe 500 had a much larger activity space, given their extensive network connected by nagaras. However, the incorporation of these two families into Ballāḷa II’s network of subordinates served a similar purpose, to establish the heartland of the Hoysaḷa kingdom as the new mercantile centre. In the same vein that Inden has argued that constructing temples were an attempt to shift the soteriological center of the world, the assertions in these

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222 Ibid 206.
inscriptions attempt to shift other centers as well, and the choice of subordinates to migrate to these centers forms a pivotal component of that assertion.

Queens of Ballāḷa II

During the first half of his reign, until he declared himself mahārājādhirāja in 1198 C.E., all of Ballāḷa’s known wives, of which they are at least seven, were from subordinate families. Notably, however, they were not from families who claimed a long-time association with the Hoysaḷas. The titles of priyarasi and paṭṭamahādēvi also do not appear in these inscriptions. However, a new development saw queens being identified with the markers of subordination such as tatpādapadmopajīvi and in one case, mahāmaṇḍaleśvari, the feminization of mahāmaṇḍalēśvara. This further blurred the line between queens and subordinates and cemented their role as functionaries of the court. The queen Umādēvi even conducted military campaigns against the Seunas of Dēvagiri on her husband’s behalf, as evidenced by a series of memorial stones in Honnāḷi taluq. Furthermore, the inscriptions commissioned by these queens as well as those that mention them shed light on the fact that they were often in charge of their own households, with subordinates who answered to them. In this section, I will discuss three important queens.

In contrast to the presentation of queens both before and after this period, where their activities were largely limited to commissions of, and donations to temple activities,
Ballāḷa’s fulfilled additional roles. With the exception of Viṣṇuvardhana’s queen, Bammalādevī, who patronized a “crown riding school,” or paṭṭa sāhana in 1140 C.E.,223 inscriptions did not record the activities of queens beyond the realm of donation and building. The difference in Ballāḷa’s reign was the heightened participation of queens in military expeditions. It is possible that with the expansion of the Hoysaḷa domain, more limited sovereignty was granted to a wider range of people, including queens, and gave them a wider range of potential activity.

Chronologically, the first queen who appears in inscriptions, the same year that Ballāḷa came to the throne in 1173 C.E., is Bammalādevī. She is described as mahāmaṇḍalēśvari, the feminization of mahāmaṇḍalēśvara. On the one hand, this could just be attributed to to her being the wife of a mahāmaṇḍalēśvara, the same way that the wives of daṇḍanāyakas are referred to as daṇḍanāyakiti, on the other, it could indicated her lordship of a significant territory under the overlordship of her husband. This is supported by the praise of her military prowess in an inscription from Halkūr, where she is described as uprooting and scattering the very roots of the malēpar and brandishing the fame and advancement of the best wives.224 The inscription then goes onto describe the achievements of her uncle, also named Ballāḷa.

An inscription at Attihalli praises Bammalādevī as the beloved of Ballāḷa’s heart and eyes (manonayana priye), and contains a number of familiar epithets, praising her skill in

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223 EC V (O.S.) Arasikere 58.

224 malam aladu maledu malepara kulamam ber verasi kittu bammale mudadim ghalaghalaku ghalaku ghalak enal alevaḷu para satiyara vara kirti unnatiyam EC V (O.S.) Arasikere 62.
various performing arts, her piety and generosity, and her superiority over co-wives. It then goes on to praise her parents, Mokhari Lakkayya and Sōmavve, and records their establishment the Amṛteśvara at Tavarekere. In 1173 C.E., her father, Mokhari Lakkayya was ruling at Hulikal in Nirguṇḍa nāḍu, now in Tumkur district. Although the names of both her maternal and paternal grandparents are provided in the inscription, nothing is said of their background before they became subordinates of the Hoysaḷa family. However, the name Mokhari points to the possibility of an association with the very old family with the same name from Kanauj. In a short article, P.B. Desai reveals an inscription, dated to the rule of Vikramaḍītya VI from the Cāḷukya court where another subordinate also bears this prefix.225 He cites this as the earliest epigraphic reference to a Maukhari family member in Karnataka. If not a direct descendant, Bammaladēvi’s father was at least attempting to invoke association with this old and prestigious family. It is possibly this association that made him attractive to Ballāḷa as an affine.

Ballāḷa’s second significant queen, Umādēvi appears in 1189 C.E.. She was the daughter of Keśavadēva, the senior treasurer (hiriya bhandāri) under Ballāḷa. Umādēvi, in almost all inscriptions which mention her is identified as tatpādapadmopajīvi to Ballāḷa, positioning her more as a subordinate. She also performed the duties of a military envoy, as a series of hero stones226 in the Honnāli taluq illustrate. These hero stones record the deaths of several warriors who fought against Mallidēva, a subordinate of


Sōmēśvara II, the contemporary Cāḷukya king, whom Ballāḷa was attempting to overthrow.\(^{227}\) There are five hero stones, found in Chekkereḥalli which memorialize warriors who fought in Umādēvi’s sudden raid on the town of Beḷagutti, the primary residence of the Sinda family. According to these inscriptions, her attack involved “suddenly coming with horses” and “seizing the cows,”\(^{228}\) and these valorous men lost their lives resisting her attack. Although the hero stones claim that Umādēvi’s attacks were successfully thwarted, that seems unlikely as these attacks, in 1196 C.E. occurred just two years before her husband’s adoption of the title, mahārājādhirāja.

As the above hero stones show, Umādēvi went on expeditions independent of her husband and commanded a cavalry. The queens in this period therefore, performed functions very similar to military subordinates. Umādēvi appears in inscriptions as late as 1213 C.E, and continues to be identified as a beloved queen to Ballāḷa. Paṇḍita \(daṇḍanātha\) is identified as the son of Ballāḷa and Umādēvi, and the mahāpradhāna of the latter in 1209 C.E. The inscription records that he requested and was granted the village of Diṇḍīgūrū to convert into an \(agrahāra\). It is unusual in Hoysaḷa records to find the mention of children fulfilling these positions, and hints that Umā Dēvi not only acted as a subordinate to her husband, but also employed subordinates under her, a phenomenon that is further elucidated under Cōḷa Mahādēvi.

\(^{227}\) EC VII (O.S.) Honnali 46.

\(^{228}\) EC VII (O.S.) Honnali 37.
The third important queen appears only later in a 1220 C.E. Inscription at Kembaḷa. In inscriptions from the period of his son, Narasimha II’s rule, Ballāḷa is credited with protecting his southern neighbors from the growing threat of the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai for which he gained the title, cōḷarāyapratiṣṭhācārya. Presumably, this marriage formed the foundation of the new relationship which obligated Ballāḷa to help the Cōḷa king and reinstall him on the throne. I discuss this relationship further in Chapter 4. Apart from the information it provides us about the new alliance between the Hoysaḷas and Cōḷas, this inscription presents interesting stylistic differences with other accounts of Hoysaḷa royal women.

The inscription is a hero stone which commemorates the death of one Kētamalla nāyaka, a subordinate of Cōḷa Mahādēvi who was ruling Kembaḷa at the time. His epithets, kancipura varādhiśvara or “lord of Kāncipurā” and kaidaḷanāḍ āḍvam or “one ruling Kaidaḷa,” suggest that he was of Noḷamba Pallava descent. However, he is described as a descendent of the Baliyara family and his ancestors all carry the title gauḍa, a term denoting local authority. The inscription goes on to narrate the circumstances of his death, where upon hearing some harsh words, Cōḷa Mahādēvi ordered him to attack Bevūr and he was killed in the ensuing conflict. Upon hearing this, Cōḷa Mahādēvi felt remorse at having hurt her “children” and sent her administrators (heggade) to give Ketamalla’s son a land grant. The inscription clearly illustrates that

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229 EC V (O.S.) Chennarayapatna 205.
Cōḷa Mahādevi had multiple functionaries and in effect, her own court at Kembälā. In this inscription also, she is described with the epithet, tatpādapadmopājīvi, in line with the designation of other queens, and perhaps to signify that she performed the role of a subordinate.

While Ballāḷa’s rule was the most expansive in terms of territory and political status, with him achieving independent sovereignty and the status of mahārājādhirāja, it is notable that this was also the period when his marriages were heavily focused in his local network until his last marriage with Cōḷa Mahādevi. This is possibly why the titles of piriyarasi and paṭṭamahādevi did not appear; subordinates were so wholly dependent on the overlord that there was less need to acknowledge their agency and relative independence compared to the earlier periods.

Conclusion

The most salient feature of the period of Ballāḷa II’s reign was the simultaneous geographical expansion which saw inscriptions that acknowledged Ballāḷa’s sovereignty, and the attempt to attract and retain skilled individuals in Hoysala political, economic, and religious centers. On the one hand, families which claimed multi-generational loyalty to the Hoysala family entrenched the generations of history and martial prestige that the Hoysalas themselves claimed through the reiteration of their established genealogy. On the other hand, families which celebrated a history of their ancestors’ loyalty to multiple
different patrons illustrated both implicitly and explicitly that they had now chosen to acknowledge the overlordship of the Hoysaḷa king. This often resulted in the establishment of important monuments of different sects, and following Inden’s argument, re-imagining the Hoysaḷa heartland as the soteriological center of the world. This was especially important in the constant of Ballāḷa’s ambitions for overlordship over the entirety of South India, displacing the Cāḷukyas, their former overlords.

The contours of queenship also changed during this period with the introduction of queens as military subordinates to their husband, the king. Although they still performed the acts of donation and piety, through which their inscriptions were recorded, the titles and epithets with which they were described seemed to highlight their subordinate status over their beauty and femininity, though those praises still appear in formulaic fashion. They were also often fighting battles or ruling territories away from their husband, and the expanse of territory seems to have necessitated a clearer alienation of power.

Ballāḷa’s successful bid for independent sovereignty and his defeat of the Cāḷukyas was never conclusive however, because of the ongoing conflicts with the Seunas of Dēvagiri who were also vying for the title of mahārājādhirāja. This is the most likely reason that he turned to the south for new opportunities, both of alliance and of expansion.
CHAPTER 5: Marriage and Politics in Sanskrit Literature of the Late Hoysaḷa Period

The period from the late twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century saw the decline in the two major powers which had ruled South India as overlords, the Cōḷas and the Western Cāḷukyas. While Cāḷukya sovereignty ended with the encroachment of the Hoysaḷas and the Seunas, both attempting to claim the title of mahaṛāja dhiraṇḍiriṇa from their erstwhile overlords, the decline of the Cōḷas took place with the rise of the Pāṇḍyas under Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I, to their south. Nilakantha Sastri calls this period the “Age of the Four Kingdoms,” namely the Hoysaḷas, Pāṇḍyas, Kākaṭiyas, and the Yādavas or Seunas.230

During the rule of Ballāla II (r. 1173-1220) the Hoysaḷas were primarily concerned with northward expansion, and the rivalry with the Seunas of Dēvagiri. Upon defeating the latter in a decisive battle, Ballāla assumed the title mahaṛāja dhiraṇḍiriṇa, declaring himself the ruler of the south (dakṣinacakraṇa) and the seven-and-a-half-lakh country or Kuntala, among many other titles.231 However, the political rivalry and battles over territory between the two families continued into the reign of Ballāla’s son, Narasimha II. With time, they established the Tungabhadra river as the tenuous boundary

230 Nilakanta Sastri, K. A. The Cōḷas: With over 100 Illustrations (Madras: University of Madras, 1955), 203.

231 EC VII (O.S.) Ci 64; EC VII (O.S.) Sb 140. For a detailed description of the battle of Soraṭūr and the rivalry between the Hoysaḷas and the Sevuṇas, see Coelho, The Hoysaḷa Vamsa, pp. 154-159 and “Political Rivalry Between the Hoysaḷas and the Seunas in the Thirteenth Century” by A.V. Narasimhamurthy in Indian Epigraphy pp 116-123.
between the two kingdoms and Narasimha turned his attention to the South, highlighting his relationship with the Cōḷa and Pāṇḍya families.

Ballāḷa II, for his part had maintained the southern boundaries of his kingdom, and fostered relations with the kingdoms beyond them. A queen named Cōḷa Mahādēvi held the titles paṭṭamahaādēvi and piriyarasi232 and Ballāḷa himself is remembered from his son’s generation onwards with title cōḷarāyapraṭiśṭhācaārya, presumably because he defended the Cōḷa king’s throne some time in the early thirteenth century. His son, Narasimha II came to power in 1220 C.E. and also carried the title. Following his successes in the south, Narasimha installed his son, Sōmēśvara as the ruler of the Cōḷa kingdom in 1226 C.E. Sōmēśvara ascended the Hoysaḷa throne in 1235 C.E. after his father’s death but continued to rule from his capital in the Tamil country, Kaṇṇanūr (modern-day Samayapuram).

This chapter focuses on Narasimha I and Sōmēśvara’s relationship to their southern neighbors over the course of the thirteenth century, through a close reading of excerpts of the Sanskrit text, Gadyakarnāmrta, written by Sōmēśvara’s court poet, Kālakalabha, who carried the title, vidyacakravartin, as a member of the family of Hoysaḷa court poets. Although the only extant manuscript of the text is incomplete, when read against inscriptional and literary evidence from similar genres, and time periods, it provides insight into how the two marriages of Sōmēśvara reflected his political, territorial, and religious intentions. Specifically, his marriage to Dēvāḷādēvi cemented the

232 EC V (O.S.) Cn 205
establishment of a connection between the Hoysaḷa family and the deity, Sōmanātha of Saurāstra, and his marriage with Bijjälēvi, which we know of only through inscriptions, provides insight into the contentious political relationship between the Hoysaḷaśas and Pāṇḍyas in the thirteenth century.

In an effort to move beyond the use of literary texts merely as sources of dynastic information, I also illustrate how marriage and women appear as metaphors for connection to various institutions in other texts, namely, Bāna’s Harṣacarita and Bilhana’s Vikramānkadēvacarita, which each address the lineage, life, relationships and exploits of a particular king. By showing that marriage is foundational to the plots of these texts, I attempt to illustrate its use as a metaphor for a king’s homosocial and religious ties. At the same time, inscriptions show us that these women were able provide their account through the inscriptions they commissioned to record their donations and temple-building projects. In combining these two perspectives, we reach a more robust understanding of the significance of marriage as both a political tool, and a literary device, each informing the other.

**Summary of the Gadyakarṇāṃṛta**

The narrative of the Gadyakarṇāṃṛta takes place in two phases. The first, a frame story, describes events at Śiva’s court in Kailasa where Nārada arrives seeking audience and offers to recite a newly-composed poem for the court’s entertainment, the second is the
contents of this poem, describing the conflict between the Hoysaḷa and Pāṇḍya kings on earth. Nārada visits Śiva’s court with the new composition found by his disciples, Vyāsa and Vālmiki. When Nārada informs Śiva of the content of the composition, Śiva identifies the kings as “his boys” (vastayōḥ); the Hoysaḷa and Pāṇḍya kings in the composition are none other than his son, Kumāra and his disciple Paraśurāma, respectively. He then goes on to explain that during the Spring festivities in Kailasa, some informal banter between Kumāra and Paraśurāma escalated into a serious argument. Kumāra’s friend, Sārasvata speaking on his behalf, insulted Paraśurāma and following an angry exchange, Paraśurāma and Sārasvata cursed each other to be born on earth.

Soon after, due to disturbances in the universe caused by the austerities of the Hoysaḷa king and queen, Narashima (II) and his wife Kalāvatī in order to have children, and a request from the goddess of the earth for Śiva to ease her burden, Śiva requests his son, Subramanya/Kumāra to be born on earth as the Hoysaḷa king’s son and join his friends, Paraśurāma and Sārasvata. This would end Narasimha and Kalāvatī’s austerities while the conflict between the Hoysaḷa and Pāṇḍya kings would ease the burden of the earth. He also promises that he, his consort Parvati, his other son, Vignēśvara, and the mātrganas will descend to earth to help Kumāra during his mortal life.

After Śiva concludes this narration of this backstory, they retire for the night planning for the recitation of the composition the following evening, following which there are elaborate descriptions of Śiva and Parvati’s living quarters, the many women
therein, their romantic moments, and lovemaking. They reconvene in court the next evening to hear Vyāsa narrate the new composition by the Kavi Kālakalabha.

Vyāsa begins his narration with a description of Dhōrasamudra, as well as the austerities of the king and queen, following which an ascetic named Paramasiddhānanda -- a disciple of Adbhutānandasiddha of the land granted by Gōrakṣanātha (gorakṣanāthasya dākṣinyabhūme) and a worshipper of Sōmanātha of Surāṣṭra -- arrives in Dhōrasamudra. He tells Narasimha that the deity Sōmanātha is pleased with his and his wife Kalāvatī’s worship gives them prasāda from the deity: holy ashes endowed with the grace of Lord Śiva. The queen, Kalāvatī becomes pregnant after they partake of these ashes and gives birth to a son, Sōmēśvara (named for the deity who blessed his birth). Kalāvatī passes away soon after and Narasimha enlists a woman named Padmāvati to look after the prince.

Sōmēśvara receives royal training and education, and when he comes of age Narasimha begins to plan for his marriage to an appropriate young woman. He sends envoys out to search for a suitable bride but before they return, a messenger from the Cōla king arrives asking for Narasimha’s assistance in quelling an incursion from the Pāṇḍyas and their subordinates. Narasimha consults his minister, Mallikārjuna who tells him that he should help his friend (prīyasakha) — it is possible to find a bride for

233 Dhōrasamudra (present-day Haḷebīḍu) was the primary residence of the Hoysaḷa family. It is spelled with the aspirated “dh” in Sanskrit texts but with the unaspirated “d” in Kannada. Inscriptions also refer to it as Dvaratipura.

Sōmēśvara in the process. Narasimha sets out with Sōmēśvara and his army. At Mahēndramangālam on the Cōla border, they defeat Adhikamān, the ruler of the region. They then proceed into Cōla country where they release Rājarāja from the captivity (vimocayāmāsa sakhāyaṃ coḷēśvaram) of the Kāḍava king at Jayantamangalam.

Narasimha’s army then proceeds further south and forces the Pāṇḍyan king to become a tributary (karadīcaḷā...pāṇḍyāḍhipamam).

After this victory, when the messengers who were sent out in search of a bride for Sōmēśvara return to report to Narasimha, a learned woman (viduṣī) named Gamalā presents herself and tells him the story of a prospective bride, Dēvikā. Devika’s paternal grandfather, a king named Vallabha, having achieved great military success and wealth began spending his time exclusively in the women’s quarters (kēvalam antahpura vāsa rasikōbhavat) and indulging in overconsumption of alcohol, leaving all of his political responsibilities to five ministers. Eventually, the ministers, worried that all subjects of the kingdom would emulate the king’s behavior, banished him with two sons, Nandidēva and Kṣēmarāja. Vallabha wandered courts and cities in search of refuge but was persistently turned away because people feared his former ministers. Finally, Śūrapāla, the king of Gurjara not only offered him shelter but contracted matrimonial alliances with his two sons. He married a daughter of the Suramedha family to the older son, Nandidēva and to Kṣēmarāja, he gave his own daughter, Nāgādevī in marriage. As part of the marriage gift (yautaka rupena), he gifted Kṣēmarāja a third/fourth (turīyaṃ bhāgam) of his kingdom.
Nandidēva and his wife had a son, also named Vallabha while Kṣēmarāja and Nāgādevī had a daughter named Dēvikā by the blessings of the deity Sōmanātha in Surāṣṭra. At her birth, they heard a divine voice which announced that she would marry a cakravartin and that their son would also be a cakravartin. The couple also had a son soon after, following which Nāgādevī passed away. With time, Šūrapāla, Vallabha and Kṣēmarāja all died in quick succession and the sāmantas seized the region. Nandidēva came to take care of the family when their kingdom was hit with a severe, three-year-long drought. Left with no choice, Nandidēva abandoned Gurjara, hid Dēvikā in a secret location under her brothers’ protection and set out to Kanci, to pay his respects to the deity, Ekāmranātha, and presumably to seek alternate employment and shelter.

At this point, Gamalā’s narration ends and she informs Narasimha that Nandidēva is at Kanci now. He asked the ministers to convey his request that Narasimha accept his niece into their family and is now waiting for his response. Narasimha agrees and remarks that he has heard a lot about this gem of a young woman. He summons his minister, Mallikārjuna and orders him to prepare an army, collects the necessary accoutrements and sets off for Kanci. The only available manuscript of the text ends abruptly at this point, leaving many questions about whether the ninety-day war was ever accounted for, and what exactly the precise mapping of the puranic figures onto their earthly counterparts would be.
Previous Interpretations of the Gadyakarṇāmṛta

Based on the correspondence of the events in the Gadyakarṇāmṛta with those described in the Tiruvendipuram inscription\textsuperscript{235}, dated to the sixteenth year of Rajarāja III Cōla’s reign, Nilakantha Sastri has determined that the date of these events was 1231-32 C.E.\textsuperscript{236}

Derrett dates the composition of the text itself either to 1252 or 1257 C.E\textsuperscript{237}, and posits that it was composed when the Pāṇḍyas had the upper hand in Tamil country and Sōmēśvara had been forced to leave his capital at Kannanur relocate to Dōrasamudra. He argues that this text along with the Sūktisudhārṇavam, an anthology by Mallikarjuna which compiled verses from past and contemporary Kannada literary works were intended to reinforce the stability of Sōmēśvara’s kingdom despite his alienation from Tamil Country, to which he was most attached.\textsuperscript{238} As discussed below, Warder believes that the text was composed much later because, according to him, the conflict in the extant portion (which corresponds to 1231-32 C.E.), described in just a few lines can not actually be the great ninety-day battle that the text was intended to describe.

Scholars who have commented on and analyzed the text — S.S. Janaki in the introduction to her critical edition, and A.K. Warder in Vol. VII of his series, Indian Kāvyā Literature — have primarily been preoccupied with two concerns: how the text

\textsuperscript{235} El Vol. VII, No 23

\textsuperscript{236} K. A Nilakanta Sastri, The Cōlas: With over 100 Illustrations (Madras: University of Madras, 1955), 421.

\textsuperscript{237} J. Duncan M. Derrett, The Hoysaḷas: A Medieval Indian Royal Family (Oxford University Press, 1957), 230

\textsuperscript{238} Derrett, The Hoysaḷas, 127.
would have proceeded and looked in its complete form -- based on the mapping of the
*purāṇic* section onto the historical -- and what dynastic information we can draw from it
based on that mapping. However, as Whitney Cox observes in his work on the
*Vikramāṇkadēvacarita*, a text with similar narrative and purpose to the *Gadyakarṇāmṛta*,
this does not necessarily limit the text’s literary or historical value, as previous
scholarship, which would reduce Bilhaṇa to a sycophantic courtier, has suggested.\(^{239}\)

It is entirely plausible that each of these puranic figures mapped directly onto a
historical individual, given that the poet would have pleased the king by equating his
court with that of Śiva, and the insights of Janaki and Warder have proved invaluable in
establishing these connections. While acknowledging these arguments, I attempt to move
beyond merely establishing one to one correspondence and focus on those relationships
which the text itself emphasizes, along with how these representations interact with those
found in epigraphical records thus far.

Warder’s analysis of the text focuses primarily on arguing for his mapping onto
historical events; Janaki adds a thorough philological analysis to this historical mapping
based on other similar texts, especially Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita*, composed in the seventh
century C.E. Although their primary goal for the text remains similar, their respective
close readings and interpretations diverge considerably, most importantly on one point:
whether the ninety-day battle Nārada describes in the puranic section of the text takes
place in the extant portion of the manuscript or not.

S.S. Janaki deals with the ambiguity of the ending by taking the available text literally, and argues that the conflict between the Hoysalas and Pāṇḍyas which Nārada narrates to Śiva, is the one described briefly just before Narasimha begins the search for his son, Sōmēśvara’s bride. This is consistent with her reading of the text in which the the earth Goddess asks Śiva to answer the Hoysala king’s austerities and grant him a son, following which Śiva summons Kumāra and asks him to descend to earth as the Hoysala emperor’s son. The first section in the composition deals with Sōmēśvara’s birth as foretold by the ascetic from the Sōmanātha shrine:

The teacher had sent holy ashes through his disciple to be used by the king and queen for the fulfillment of their yearning. The king then repairs to the queen’s chambers where the queen Kalāvatī was worshipping the moon. The royal couple partake of the prasāda sent by the teacher Adbhutananda. And in due course of time Kalāvatī becomes a mother and Sōmēśvara is born. Obviously, the prince is named Sōmēśvara because of the blessings received from the holy shrine of Sōmanātha.

The mention of Kalāvatī worshipping the moon is also noteworthy here as Sōma is a name for the moon or moon-god (the association of the site of Sōmanātha with the moon deity Sōma is discussed in a later section). The birth of Sōmēśvara directly follows Śiva’s request to Kumāra to descend to earth as the Hoysala king’s son, which lends credence to this reading. She further argues that the conflict between the Hoysalas and the Pāṇḍyas described in the text is the war that Nārada narrates in Śiva’s court. “In the actual historical narration the description of this battle is confined to a single line. On the other hand it is from the mythological prelude that we learn the fact of this terrific battle

\[\text{vimocayāmāśa sakhāyaṃ coleśvaram karaṇīcaśara} \]

\[\text{cakrāratalatādanamukharasatamakhamakuṭakarmogra bhujacindmāṇam pāṇḍyādhipam} \]

being waged for ninety days.” She explains this discrepancy by arguing that because Nārada has already described the battle in great detail, it’s unnecessary for the historical portion of the text to repeat the description.

A.K. Warder, on the other hand, argues that the battle that the composition describes doesn’t take place in the extant portion of the text at all. Rather, he sees the entirety of the historical portion available to us as the prelude to that great battle. Warder anchors this argument in the suspicion that the small conflict described in one line cannot possibly be the great battle that took place over ninety days, as described in the puranic section. He goes on to associate Kumāra’s brother Vignēśvara with Ramanātha’s brother, Narasimha III who ruled the northern half of the kingdom while Ramanātha ruled the south. He therefore argues that the great battle in the text was meant to describe the conflict between the Pāṇḍyas and the Hoysaḷas in the 1260s, during Ramanātha’s reign, rather than events that took place in either the reign of his father or grandfather. While in Janaki’s reading, the Sōmēśvara is the incarnation of Subrahmaṇya born on earth to settle scores with his friend Paraśurāma who was born as Mārarvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I, Warder’s interpretation maps the descent of the gods differently. Śiva promises to descend in part (kalā) into Kalāvatī, and according to Warder, “this seems to imply that Sōmanātha (Hara) is going to be partially incarnated as Narasimha’s son Sōmēśvara. Kumāra will then be Sōmēśvara’s son, Rāmanātha”

242 Ibid 39.
243 Warder, Indian Kāvya Literature, 819.
According to Janaki, Narasimha carries a part of Śiva, based on the line of text in which Śiva declares that he will descend as the father and king, Parvati, correspondingly descending in part into the queen, Kalāvatī. Janaki finds it difficult to identify the historical equivalent for Kumāra’s older brother Vigneśvara, and it is here that Warder’s interpretation gains some traction. He argues that since there is no record of Sömēśvara having an older brother (agraja) the text must be referring to the following generation where Sömēśvara very importantly had two sons, Rāmanātha and Narasimha III, who ruled the northern and southern halves of the Hoysaḷa kingdom, respectively. Warder argues, therefore, that Śiva must map on to Sömēśvara rather than Narasimha II.

The foundation for this disagreement stems from each of their reading of a line in the last section of the text. When Dēvikā is born, a divine voice says the following to her parents, “kanyaka pāṇigrhitika variśyati bhartāram cakravartinam janayiśyati(si) ca kumaram cakravartinam,” roughly that the young woman would marry a husband who was a cakravarti, or emperor and would cause the birth (janayiśyati) of a prince who would also be a cakravartin. According to Janaki, this refers to Dēvikā’s brother, Dēva, whose birth is described in the next line of the text. Warder, on the other hand, interprets “janayiśyati” as Dēvikā herself giving birth to a cakravartin (Rāmanātha) following her marriage to a cakravartin (Sömēśvara). Since we do not know how far the plot of the text would have extended, and taking into account the possibility that the war described

244 Janaki, Gadyakarnāṁṛta of Sakala-Vidyacakravarttin. Text, p.

245 Anthony Kennedy Warder, Indian Kāvya Literature: The Wheel of Time. ... (Motilal Bāṇarsidass, 2004), 823.
was the one between Ramanatha and the Pāṇḍya king, Jātavarma Sundara Pāṇḍya in the 1260s, as Warder proposes, the meaning of the phrase remains ambiguous.

I therefore choose in the sections below, to focus on how the text addresses the relationship between political and marital relations in the extant part of the text, given what we know about the identifiable historical figures from epigraphy and other texts. In examining the various forms of kinship expressed in the Gadyakarṇāmṛta, and understanding its role in the elevation of its central family, this chapter attempts to situate the text in the larger political context to which it belonged, and as Cox suggests, to access its wider significance, beyond recording historical events.

**Marriage of Sōmēśvara and Bijjalā**

Although the Gadyakarṇāmṛta does not directly deal with the marital relations between the Hoysaḷas and Pāṇḍya families in the extant portion of the text, epigraphical and literary evidence from the period after the events of the text took place illustrates that the Hoysaḷas and Pandyas eventually came to a tenuous accord, at least temporarily. Using this knowledge to read the purānic and historical portions of the text reveals a complex relationship, not only between the two families but also the political position of the author, Kālakalabha, and his family who were simultaneously employed at both courts.

They served in the Hoysaḷa courts across generations, from Ballāḷa II (r. 1173-1220) to Ballāḷa III (r. 1292-1342), as Sanskrit poets who carried the title,
vidyacakravarti or emperor of poets. The *Rukmini kalyana*, a text composed by Kālakalabha’s descendent at the court of Ballāla III, provides details about this family and their long-standing association with the Hoysala family over generations, and identifies three poets in successive generations who carried the title *vidyacakravarti*. Kālakalabha was the second of these, and the author of the *Rukmini kalyana*, the third. The *Rukmini kalyana* also details how the second *vidyacakravarti* was honored at the Pāṇḍya court (*prthvīpati prītimavāpya pāṇḍyastam vallabhosiḥ yamājuhāva*). The joint employment of this family in both courts forms the context from which I analyze the treatment of their relationship in the *Gadyakarṇāmṛta*. Janaki uses this lineage to analyze the relationship between the Hoysalas and the Pāṇḍyas at length, detailing the Hoysalas’ failing hold on northern Karnataka in the face of constant Seuṇa aggression, and their resulting focus on southward expansion. The Hoysalas had a contentious relationship with the Cōḷas from the time of their emergence until the rule of Narasimha I. This seems to have changed during Ballāla II’s reign when he had a queen named Cōḷamahādēvi, who according to an inscription from the turn of the thirteenth century, had the titles *pattamahādēvi* and *piryarasi*, illustrating that she was one among, if not his most prominent queen until 1217 C.E. When Narasimha II as a

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246 For a detailed discussion on the family of poets who carried this title and were employed by successive generations of Hoysala kings, see Janaki’s introduction, p 4. For family trees that outline the correspondence between the two families, see p. 22.


248 EC V (O.S.) Chennarayapatna 205.
prince under the command of his father, Ballāla II resisted Pāṇḍya aggression into Cōla country he assumed and remembered his father with the titles, cōlarāyapratistācārya, or establisher of the Cōla king, and cōlakulaikaraksaka. This relationship between the Hoysaḷas and the Cōḷas, with the Hoysaḷas as the latter’s allies and protectors appears to have formed the basis of their antagonistic relationship with the Pāṇḍyas, who attempted to encroach Cōla territory in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Since a fall of the Cōḷas would endanger the southern boundaries of the Hoysaḷa kingdom, it was in their interest to support the Cōḷas and establish a nominal ruler from the dynasty who would then owe them tribute for their protection.

The alliance between the Cōḷas and the Hoysaḷas is what prompts Narasimha II’s travel southwards in the Gadyakarṇāmrta. When the messenger comes to tell him that his friend, the Cōḷa king, Rajaraja III has been captured and taken prisoner, Narasimha seems to be anticipating this turn of events given that a number of former Cōḷa subordinates have begun to rebel and deflect to Pāṇḍya suzerainty. As Sastri notes,

the Cōḷas were exposed to assaults from within and without. The Pāṇḍyas in the south and the Hoysaḷas in the west had by now risen to the rank of great powers led by rulers of exceptional merit, and the one chance of survival for the Cōḷas was the rivalry between these two new powers neither of which would let the ancient Cōḷa Kingdom fall prey to the other.

The Tiruvendipuram inscription, dated to the sixteenth year of Rajaraja III’s reign (1231-32 C.E.) records the events of this battle to rescue the Rajaraja III, the Cōḷa king

250 Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cōḷas*, 418-19
and Narasimha’s friend, from the Kaṭava king Kopperunjinga, from the perspective of two Hoysaḷa subordinates or *dannākas* (a local rendition of *daṇḍanāyaka*), Samudra Gōpayya and Apanṇa, mirroring the events of the *Gadyakarnāmrta*. Further study of the incidents and figures from this inscription confirms that Kopperunjinga accepted Rajaraja III as his sovereign up until 1229-1230 C.E., two years before the Tiruvendipuram inscription. Shortly after this, he abducted the latter in an attempt to overthrow the Cōḷas with Pāṇḍya support. It is possible that the Pāṇḍyas would have then installed Kopperunjinga as the de facto ruler of the Cōḷa kingdom under their suzerainty.

Narasimha and Sōmēśvara’s rescue of Rajaraja III, and his re-establishment as the Cōḷa ruler prevented this and extended Rajaraja III’s rule at least until 1233-34 C.E. when his last record appears. It also allowed the Hoysaḷas to extend their territorial and political claims further south. As a result, the Cōḷas became less of a dominant force in Tamil country, and Narasimha II established a residence at Kaṇṇanūr, which Sōmēśvara adopted as his primary residence during his reign. With the Hoysaḷas now being their neighbors, the relationship between the Pāṇḍyas and them became less one of contention and more of constant negotiation. As we know from the *Rukminikalyāṇa*, Bijjalā, one of Sōmēśvara’s queens and the mother of his northern successor, Narasimha III, was of

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251 E. Hultzsch, EI Vol. VII, No 23: “The Tiruvendipuram Inscription of the Time of Rajaraja III, Narasimha II, and Kopperunjinga” a rare type of inscription that does not record a donation but only the events of this battle from the perspective of two Hoysaḷa subordinates or dandanayakas, Apanṇa and Samudra Gōpayya.


253 SII Vol I No. 64.
Pāṇḍya descent. Narasimha III in turn, married his mother's niece (brother’s daughter), Padmama.²⁵⁴

Scholars of epigraphy have long been preoccupied with the identification of Sōmēśvara as māma by the Pāṇḍya and Cōla inscriptions of the mid-thirteenth century.²⁵⁵ The term māma carries multiple meanings in the Dravidian kinship system, including spouse’s father, mother’s brother, and father’s sister’s spouse. These terms overlap because of the prevalence of cross-cousin marriage. It was likely and often assumed that one would marry the child of one’s parent’s opposite-sex sibling. The prevailing understanding of this term in Sōmēśvara’s case was that his daughter or sister was married to the Pāṇḍya king, making him the latter’s father in law. There have been attempts to identify this Hoysaḷa princess as a lady named Pammiyakkan who appears in an inscription at Kīḷaccheval (in present-day Tirunelveli district), based on the Kannada origin of her name and her apparent power to grant land for the construction of a temple.²⁵⁶ The above information provided by the Rukminikalyāṇa, however, offers a much simpler explanation: Bijjalā was the paternal aunt -- attai -- of the Pāṇḍya king making her husband, Sōmēśvara, māma.

²⁵⁴ śrībijjalāmbāvarajasya pāṇḍyapṛthvīpatēḥ paścīmasindhubhartuḥ | sa padmamāṃ nāma sutāṁ surūpāṁ jagrāha pāṇau narasiṃhabhūpaḥ ||
RukminiKalyāṇa (Canto I, page 3) as quoted by Janaki, “Introduction,” Gadyakarnāmrta of Sakala-Vidyacakravarttin, 89

²⁵⁵ William Coelho, The Hoysaḷa Vaṃśa (Indian Historical Research Institute, St. Xavier’s College, 1950), 188.

²⁵⁶ ARSIE 1912, p. 64; ARSIE 1911 Nos. 562, 527.
The development of the relationship between the Hoysalas and Pāṇḍyas after the events of the *Gadyakarṇāṃṛta* casts the events of the text, both *purānic* and historical in a new light, adding insight to the relationship between the two families. It renders what was probably an extremely violent conflict, as it played out in real time, into a predestined resolution of a squabble between two divine friends, playing out on earth. The narrative of text is bolstered by the relationship the Hoysalas and Pāṇḍyas shared in the mid-thirteenth century following the dissolution of Cōla power. The implication was that they were friends before the skirmish and would continue to be friends after this conflict. Both kings are identified with divine figures who have important relationships with Śiva, Subrahmanya being his son, and Paraṣurāma being his greatest disciple and devotee. Śiva calls them “his boys” (*vatsayōḥ*) thus prompting the reader to understand that the family deity of both Hoysaḷa and Pāṇḍya families loves them equally and has vested interest in resolving their conflict and forming a peaceful relationship.

The mythical origins of each of the three primary figures also speaks to the author’s motivation to emphasize underlying friendship between these two families. “The brahmanical claim that it was Paraṣurāma who created *their* land and gave it to *them* is seen all over the western seaboard in India.”

Speaking about the way in which Paraṣurāma peopled the land of Kerala after raising it from the sea, the Keralotpatti says that the Brahmans who were brought and settled in the first instance would not stay; they returned to their original home in Ahicchitra for fear of serpents in the new land. Para surama brings a

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second wave of Brahmans from Ahicchitra. In order that they would not be accepted if they returned, he has their hair style and style of clothing changed. He also persuades them to accept matriliny so that he could expiate for his own matricidal sin; but only the house of one village, namely Payyanur, would oblige. Paraṣurāma also establishes 108 temples each for Śiva and Durga. He selects 36000 Brahmans from the different gramas and confers on them the right to arms (sastrabhiksa), so that they could protect their land themselves.²⁵⁹

With time, they realized that they are becoming corrupt due to the right to arms and choose to create a new type of ruler born of a kṣatriya woman and a brahman man. According to this tradition, Paraṣurāma not only reclaimed land and made it habitable, but also showed his piety towards Śiva and Durga by building numerous temples in their name. The Pāṇḍya kingdom, at its zenith included large parts of Kerala and casting the Pāṇḍya king as an incarnation of Paraṣurāma is plausibly an allusion to this mytho-history.

The author of the text, Kālakalabha chooses to identify himself with the divine figure, Sārasvata, son of Sarasvati and Dadhica. The Harṣacarita details the origin of Sārasvata, the son born to Sarasvati on earth when she was cursed to descend for one lifetime by the sage Dūrvāsa. Indra softened this curse by modifying it so that Sarasvati could return to dēvaloka, or the divine realm, after the birth of a son. On earth, Sarasvati fell in love with and married a prince and sage named Dadhica, who fathered her son, Sārasvata. According to the modified curse, she returns to dēvaloka upon his birth and Sārasvata is nursed by a woman whose biological son, Vatsa, becomes like a brother to

²⁵⁹ Veluthat, The Early Medieval in South India, 135-36.
him. As an adult, Sārasvata joins his father as an ascetic while Vatsa originates the Vātsyayana lineage from which Bāṇa, author of the *Harṣacarita*, claims to descend.260

The *Gadyakarṇāmṛta* confirms that its author Sārasvata is the same as Bāṇa’s ancestor by identifying him as “dadhicasūnuḥ,” or Dadhica’s son.261 Kālakalabha therefore identifies himself both with the mythical figure, son of Saraswati, and with the lineage of authors to which Bāṇa belongs. Both Janaki and Warder comment that the *Gadyakarṇāmṛta* draws on the *Harṣacarita* in its style of description and the events it covers. Janaki in particular does an exhaustive comparison of the two texts, tracing the echoes in their themes, structure, and poetic conceits.262 Kālakalabha was probably trying to make this connection more apparent by associating himself to Bāṇa’s puranic lineage through the figure of Sārasvata. Kālakalabha could not claim to be part of the Vatsyayana lineage to which Bāṇa belonged, he claimed connection to it by identifying himself as an earthly incarnation of Sārasvata. While in the Harṣacarita, the purānic sections is in the very distant past, in the *Gadyakarṇāmṛta*, the events taking place in Kailasa are contemporaneous to those on earth. Kālakalabha imagines puranic figures like Nārada, Vyāsa, and Valimiki — the latter two being the composers of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, respectively — sourcing his text and considering it worthy for the entertainment of Śiva.

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Finally, the Hoysaḷas themselves are associated with the family of Śiva, with his son, Kumāra descending as the Hoysaḷa prince. For the purposes of this analysis, it is not as important to determine whether he descended as Sōmēśvara or Rāmanātha. Rather I want to highlight the attempt by the author to frame a significant conflict between the two major powers as a predestined event that was, in the grander scheme of things, merely an unfortunate incident that disrupted a friendship that existed before and after its resolution.

**Marriage of Sōmēśvara and Dēvikā**

The final available section of the text focuses on the ancestry of Dēvikā, a prospective bride for the then crown-prince, Sōmēśvara. The Hoysaḷa king, Narasimha II, upon defeating the subordinate of the Pāṇḍyas and rescuing his friend, the Cōḷa king, continues the search for a suitable bride for his son. At this time, an old wise woman (viduṣī) presents herself to him and tells him the story of Dēvikā’s forefathers, which serves simultaneously to convince him that she is the ideal bride for Sōmēśvara. Two important marriages take place in this section -- the first between Dēvikā’s parents, Kṣēmarāja and Nāgādēvī -- and the second the proposed marriage between Sōmēśvara and Dēvikā herself. Each marriage illustrates a different aspect of the political milieu, but ultimately serves to connect the Hoysaḷa family with the deity and site of Sōmanātha in Saurāṣṭra.

Dēvikā’s paternal grandfather, Vallabha, once a glorious king, fell into decadence after he had defeated all his enemies. He spent all of his time in the women’s quarters
following which his ministers deposed him for fear of the kingdom’s subjects following
his example. They banished him along with his family and he wandered in destitution for
many years until Śūrapāla, the king of Gurjara gave him refuge. In addition, Śūrapāla
integrated Vallabha’s two sons, Nandidēva and Kṣēmarāja into his court by way of
marriage. Nandidēva was married to a kinswoman from the extended family
(śūramedhakulajām kāṃscit kanyakāṃ pariṇāyata), while he gave Kṣēmarāja his own
daughter, Nāgādevī’s hand in marriage (nijaduhitaram udvāhayamāsa). Along with this
he presented him with a third of his kingdom (yautaka rupena svasya rājyasya turīyam
bhāga pratyapādayat).

Yautaka, according to śāstra literature dating back to the Manusmrta, is one of the
classifications of strīdhana or women’s wealth. Derived from the Sanskrit root yuj,
meaning to join or attach, it was the term used to describe gifts given to the bride during
their wedding rituals. Although different schools of sastra have varying definitions of
the term, they agree on its devolution through unmarried daughters, then to married but
unsettled daughters, before they go to settled daughters and finally sons. The
Gadyakarṇaāmrta itself uses passive voice, therefore making it impossible to investigate
the term further through the specification of its recipient, but Warder assumes that it was
a gift from Śūrapāla to his daughter, Nāgādevī, when he glosses, “as dowry, he gave her a
quarter of his kingdom.”

The details of Kṣēmarāja and Nāgādevī’s marriage correspond with Tambiah’s description of the customary tradition of the uxorilocal son-in-law:

Each of these customary institutions was intended to enable a sonless father to keep a married daughter with him; or to do the same if his only child was a daughter, thereby obtaining through her an heir to the estate. Furthermore, the uxorilocal son-in-law would contribute the labour and services equivalent to those of a resident son.265

By this logic, it would follow that Śūrapāla wished to keep his daughter close to him, and considered Kṣēmarāja a worthy heir. The portion of territory granted to him was intended to make this offer appealing:

But this institution, if it is to be attractive to a man in the context of patrilineal groups and patrilocal residence, must concede to the incoming son-in-law important rights. The institution of uxorilocal son-in-law is therefore only a stop gap and a temporary discontinuity in the patrilineal-patrifocal fabric.266

This seems likely because with Kṣēmarāja taking responsibility for a section of Śūrapāla’s own kingdom, he could ensure that his child would remain close to him rather than being sent to a marital home in another kingdom. The second possibility, not mutually exclusive from the first is that Śūrapāla appreciated the courtly and administrative skills in which the two princes had. These young men could be assets to his court, but without proving a significant threat to his sovereignty, being disenfranchised from their hereditary kingdom. In fact, their own sustenance depended completely on his generosity.


266 Ibid.
Attempts to identify Dēvikā’s ancestors mentioned in the text, Vallabha, Nandidēva, Kṣēmarāja, and Śūrapāla, with figures who appear in inscriptions, have yielded vague results at best. Only Dēvikā later appears in inscriptions as Sōmēśvara’s wife and mother to their children, Rāmanātha and Ponnambalamahādēvi. In an inscription she is called Dēvalādēvi and praised as the light of the Cāḷukya family (cāḷukya kula candrikā).

“The name Vallabha given to the grandfather of Dēvikā suggests that she might have belonged to the royal family of the Rastrakutas or Western Cāḷukyas. But the Western Cāḷukyas who supplanted the Rastrakutas at the close of the 10th century, themselves ceased to be ruling powers in the period we are considering now.”

The last Western Cāḷukya king on record was Sōmēśvara IV (r. 1189-1200), who failed to resist the incursion of the Hoysalas, Seunas, and Kakatiyas. Being Dēvikā’s grandfather places Vallabha in roughly the same generation as Sōmēśvara’s grandfather, Ballāla II, who overthrew the Western Cāḷukyas and declared independent sovereignty around 1200 C.E.. It is therefore chronologically plausible that Vallabha was connected to the Kalyani Cāḷukya family as either a minor relative or subordinate.

Another possibility is that this identification referred to Dēvalādēvi’s descent from the Caulukya/Solanki family from her maternal side, given that that is also where her father last ruled. The names Caulukya and Cāḷukya are often used interchangeably, as in

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267 ARIE 602 of 1919.

268 The epithet “vallabha” was used in both Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Cāḷukya overlords.

the works of Bilhaṇa, so it’s possible this was the case here as well.\textsuperscript{270} Janaki’s attempts to identify the historical equivalent of Śūrapāla as a minor, subordinate family who ruled in Vagaḍa under the Caulukya/Solanki dynasty\textsuperscript{271}, but the evidence is patchy at best and doesn’t serve to lend historical credibility or detract from the text’s narrative. In fact, the vagueness in the identification of these figures seems deliberate, as though they weren’t meant to be identified with specific historical figures or events, but rather with the geographical spaces they occupied.

In the same vein, the text itself does not identify Dēvikā by her dynastic descent but rather by her connection to the deity, Sōmanātha through the divine voice that speaks at her birth and her identification as the blessing of Sōmanātha and the goddess upon her parents. Her family’s migration to Gurjara and her maternal descent from the king Śūrapāla and his daughter, Nāgādevī serves to bolster this connection by situating her birth close to the shrine of the deity. Dēvikā’s birth is described as follows, “\textit{kālena kanīya kumāraḥ kṣēmarāja surāṣṭra Sōmanātha dayitāyā devyāḥ prasādāt dēvikāṃ nāma duhitaram nākādevyām utpādayāmāsa},”\textsuperscript{272} indicating that she was born by the blessing of the goddess associated with Sōmanātha of Saurashtra. This connection with

\textsuperscript{270} Asoke Kumar Majumdar, \textit{Chaulukyas of Gujarat: A Survey of the History and Culture of Gujarat from the Middle of the Tenth to the End of the Thirteenth Century} (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1956), 11. Majumdar discusses the theories around the original immigration of the Caulukyas from the northern region down to the then Madras Presidency. He posits from this evidence that all of the dynasties that carried this name were connected. It is impossible to say whether they were or not, but is noteworthy that they all chose to claim this common heritage.


the deity is the point of emphasis from the section of the text describing her descent, and is what establishes her as the appropriate bride for Sōmēśvara. Her connection with this deity is further borne out in an inscription\textsuperscript{273} where her daughter and Ramanātha’s sister, Ponnambalamahādēvi made a donation to the temple at Śrīrangam, and which establishes the latter’s connection to Sōmanātha as well.\textsuperscript{274}

The text describes Sōmēśvara’s connection to Sōmanātha in even more detail, naming the ascetic who travelled from Prabhāsa Paṭṭana to bless Narasimha and Kalāvatī with a son because the deity was pleased with their worship. This passage also links the ascetic, who comes to visit the couple on behalf of his guru and the deity Sōmanātha, with the Gōrakṣanātha sect of the nāth tradition, and uses the same vocabulary to describe Narasimha and Kalāvatī’s devotion to the deity (saparyāpara) as is used later for Ponnambalamahādēvi in the inscription cited above.\textsuperscript{275} Furthermore, Dēvikā and Sōmēśvara’s son, Ramanātha’s name carried the “nātha,” suffix, the only one in the Hoysaḷa lineage. Based on how his parentage is explained in the Gadyakarṇāmṛta, it appears that this was yet another attempt to connect the family to that deity and religious tradition. The earliest references to Gōrakṣanātha appear in early-thirteenth-century

\textsuperscript{273} SII Vol 4, No. 504; Janaki, “Part I: The Critical Study,” Gadyakarṇāmṛta of Sakala-Vidyacakravartin, 53

\textsuperscript{274} śrīsōmanāthadēva-sarasija-saparyā-paryāpta-sāmrājya-vibhavā-śrī-ponnambalamahādevī

\textsuperscript{275} āyuman, avehi māṁ salakulakandikandacandrapiḍalāṅcanasya caturangīcaryāvicakṣaṇasya gorakṣanāthasya dākṣinyabhūmeradbhutānandasiddhapādasya anteśvinam surāṣṭrāsōmanāthasaparyāparaṁ paramānandasiddhināmānaṁ kamapī tāpasam | prekṣitoham prabhāta eva prabhāṣavāsinā bhosalavāṃsaparohapīṣavārsavālasāhakena hosalamahipālāngrahakārīnādbhutānandasiddhipādēna | madantaritenā ca nivedita viśvāyuṁ ma viśida putreṣṭhaṁ | vatsa, bhavatsaparyāỹ ciraprayuktayā prasannaḥ Sōmanāthah | pratipadva tvatpriyāyāṁ kalāvatyā kalayāvatiṣyati |
compositions in Sanskrit and in Kannada, and he is mentioned as one of the five deities in a 1287 C.E. inscription from Somnāṭh. Furthermore, all of the deities described in the final section of the text carry the “nātha” suffix, the deities of Kanci being referred to as Ekāmranātha and Dviradagirinātha. There seems to be an effort therefore to map existing temples as a part of this sect’s religious network.

The Sōmanātha shrine is best known in Indian history as a major site of Mohammad of Ghazni’s raid in 1026 C.E., was mentioned as early as in the epics and purāṇas as Prabhāsa Paṭṭana, a well known site of worship and pilgrimage in Saurashtra. The temple there was associated with the god Sōma, of the moon and plants, and the purāṇas linked the site with the story of Sōma’s marriage to the twenty seven daughters of Dakṣa: Sōma gave preferential treatment to Rohini, his favorite wife, which enraged their father, who cursed Sōma to become consumptive and unable to perform sacrifices. The other gods begged Dakṣa to take back the curse which he could not do, but he softened on the condition that Sōma would treat all of his wives equally. This story traditionally explains the waxing and waning of the moon, but carries further significance with specific reference to this temple: Sōma bathes in the confluence of the three rivers every lunar cycle and regains his “prabhasa” or luster -- hence the name of the town, Prabhāsa Paṭṭana. There is evidence of both Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist dominance at and

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277 Romila Thapar, Sōmanātha: The Many Voices of a History (Verso, 2005), 18.
near the site in the early years of the common era, only after which it became predominantly Śaiva, as we see in the Gadyakarnāmṛta. However, well into the medieval and early modern periods, the site remained home to a community comprised of both Śaiva and Jain residents and patrons.278

Persian chronicles describe the destruction of the Somnath temple, in 1026 C.E., in vivid detail as one of Mohamad of Ghazni’s greatest achievements, especially as a victory for iconoclasm. Successive accounts, further and further removed from the incident exaggerated this siege to indicate that the temple was desecrated and left entirely unsuitable for worship. As Romila Thapar notes, however, the local sources suggest that the temple was an active site of pilgrimage not long after the raid, and no mention is made of the kind of desecration the chronicles suggest. Rather, they framed their improvements to the temple as a necessity borne of its deterioration due to natural causes and neglect. She argues therefore that each party had separate motivations for how they represented their “conquest” of the temple. She contrasts the Caulukya king, Kumārapāla’s renovation of the temple with the raids of Mahmud:

Kumārapāla’s renovation was an act of veneration for Shiva, but was he also using this symbolically to further his suzerainty over Gujarat? Was this the inversion of Mahmud seeking legitimation through plundering the temple and destroying the icon? Renovation and destruction of the temple seem to have become a kind of counterposed legitimation where renovation is required of the Chaulukyas and destruction is required of the Turks?279

279 Thapar, Sōmanātha, 82.
Even before the Turkic raids of the eleventh century, the temple was rich in taxes and donations while the Gujarat region was divided into a series of smaller kingdoms who were constantly in conflict. One of the tasks of a unifying force who brought them all under his control, was to hold kings responsible for raids on pilgrims that took place in their territory. The king who did this was therefore in control of great wealth.

At this point, Gujarat was under the rule of the Caulukya or Solanki family under Bhima II. Many of the Caulukya kings’ names carried the suffix pāla which suggests one possible lead for the interpretation of the Śūrapāla who appears in the text. Janaki takes his name literally and in an attempt to find a man named Śūrapāla, identifies him with a minor Guhila family, who were feudatories of the Caulukyas. Given the lack of detail about any of Dēvikā’s ancestors, however, it is also possible that the name Śūrapāla is an invocation of the Caulukya dynasty rather than the identification of a specific king. The Caulukya ruler named Kumārapāla was responsible for important renovations to the Śōmanātha temple complex in the mid-twelfth century.

Two inscriptions from around the Śōmanātha temple attest to Kumārapāla’s donations towards these renovations as well as his appointment of a brāhman named Bhāva Brihaspati to care for and protect the wealth of the temple. In the second inscription, Bhāva Brihaspati claims that he was the one who encouraged the king to undertake these renovations based on a message from the deity himself who was worried that the earth, in

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280 Ibid 78.
the Kali age, was neglecting the correct path so in order to set that right he appeared to a
member of Bhāva Brihaspati’s family asking them to encourage the king to renovate his
temple. Śiva plays a similar role in the Gadyakarnāmrta asking Subrahmanya to
descend to earth and lighten the earth goddess’ load, further cementing the connection
that the text was trying to establish with this deity and site.

Soon after the composition of the Gadyakarnaṛmrta another northern invader, Alauddin
Khalji set his sights on Sōmanātha, and in 698 H, or 1298-99 C.E. Khalji’s brother, Ulugh
Khan was deployed with, “a powerful army [that] was despatched towards Gujrat with
the avowed object of reducing the country and destroying the temple of Somnath.”

According to Khusrau’s account, Ulugh Khan defeated the rulers of the Gujarati
subregions with ease, plundered the temple and broke the idols therein, except for the
central icon, presumably the linga, which was sent to Delhi as a marker of this victory
and the victory of Sunni Islam. Thapar notes however that there were several accounts of
temple renovation that do not bear out when compared with the archeological evidence
present at the site. Therefore, the site’s importance and the claims made on it existed at a
much vaster scale in the political imagination of its rival claimants than in its physical
form.

The significance given to the site in the Gadyakarnaṛmrta gives us a new vantage point
from which to view the notion of Sōmanātha, one that draws a connection directly

282 Thapar, Sōmanatha, 78-79.

283 Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī, Khazain-Ul-Futuh, Khazā’īn Al-futūḥ. English (Islamabad: National
Committee for 700th Anniversary of Amir Khusrau, 1975), 17.
between it and a ruling family in south India. This was not the first time such a connection was made between the Hoysaḷas and important sites of pilgrimage. The Mahālakṣmi temple at Doddagaddavalli was called “abhinava kollāpura” or “the new Kolhapur in reference to the Mahalakṣmi temple in Kolhapur Maharashtra.284 During the rule of Ballāḷa and his son, Narasimha II, the Kedareśvara temple at Dōrasamudra was an importation of the deity from the pāśupata sect further north.285 In chapter 2, I discussed the importation of the god Dharmeśvara from Baḷḷigavi to Śāntigrāma in the Hassan district by Viṣṇuvardhana’s father-in-law, Mārasinga.286 The Jain teachers who gained prominence in the Hoysaḷa family and the families of their subordinates were also from this region.287

These examples illustrate the precedence that existed for the establishment of religious connections between the Hoysaḷas and cites to their north, especially through marriage. These connections established in the inscriptions and in this case in the Gadyakarṇāṁrta might have reflected aspirations to claim ownership of a territory that was debarred to them physically by their uneasy truce with the Seunas, in which the Tungabhadra river formed the boundary between their two kingdoms. While they expressed expansionist ambitions literally in the south by involving themselves in Cōḷa and Pāṇḍya politics, the

284 EC V (O.S.) Hassan 16.


286 EC V (OS) Hn 116.

287 Both Santaladēvi and Visnuvardhana’s trusted military envoy, Ganga Rāja followed Jain preceptors of the Kondakundanvaya, based in Balligāvi.
claim to the north was more tenuous. Marriage to Dēvikā who was both blessed by Sōmanātha and born in the same region as the deity’s shrine, allowed the Hoysaḷa family to draw a different kind of relationship with the deity and his geographical location.

This resonates with Inden’s conception overlords using the construction of temples to re-situate the center of the world. “The completion of a temple was itself also simultaneously to be seen as a symptom of the grace of the god taken as overlord of the universe by the universal monarch: that god, in the particular form designated by this emperor, had chosen to manifest himself in his devotee’s temple.”288 In this instance, the text performed a very similar function to a temple in Inden’s framework. It situated the god, not in a built environment or a physical place, but in the king and his family by not only framing the story with the purānic context, but articulating explicitly that both Sōmēśvara and Dēvikā were the direct prasāda of Sōmanātha and the goddess associated with him.

The text then proceeds to create circumstances by which Narasimha heard of Dēvikā as a prospective bride for his son. When the children were still young, Kṣēmarāja was captured by the mighty sāmantas (prabalasāmantagṛhīte) in Gurjara and succumbed to an illness (viśamadaśa-āpanna). This indicates that upon Śūrapāla’s death, there was a battle for the throne of Gurjara. Among the claimants were his son-in-law, Kṣēmarāja and the sāmantas, or rulers of peripheral territories. In this case the sāmantas seem to have won over Kṣēmarāja, and captured him, leaving his children to their care of their only

288 Inden, Imagining India, 254.
living relative, their paternal uncle, who arrived in Gurjara to take charge of the family
(kuṭumba bharāṇya paryabhramat).

Because loss begets loss, according to the text, it didn’t rain in the kingdom for
the next three years, causing a continuous drought. This drought, described in great detail,
one again forced Nandidēva to begin traveling in search of a new home for his niece,
nephew, son, and himself. He hid the princess away, instructing her brothers to guard her,
and came to Kanci to pay his respects to the deity, Ekāmranātha. While there, he met the
Hoysaḷa envoys and entreated them to convey to the king that he should accept Dēvikā as
the prince’s bride. At this point, Gamalā’s narration ends, Narasimha himself declares that
he has heard of this jewel of a woman and readies an entourage to ask for her hand in
marriage.

Both incidences of marriage in this text present an interesting contrast to the
formulaic swayamvara presented in the Vikramāṅkadēvacarita, or the carefully
calculated alliance in the Harṣacarita, discussed in the next section. Śūrapāla, rather than
seeking out the most (ostensibly) powerful prince or king for his daughter to marry, chose
to give her hand to a disenfranchised prince who would rule a large portion of his own
kingdom. Similarly, Sōmēśvara does not find his bride through an elaborate display of his
own prowess, either as a warrior or a potential lover, but presumably marries the princess
his father deemed a worthy choice for him, once again from a family alienated from their
hereditary kingdom and looking for employment and refuge.
Kinship Patterns in the Harṣacarita and the Vikramāṇkādevacarita

In both Bāṇa’s Harṣacarita (seventh century) and Bhilhaṇa’s Vikramāṇkādevacarita (twelfth century) are texts which precede the Gadyakarṇāṁrta chronologically but have the similar narrative arcs and literary styles. The Gadyakarṇāṁrta is actually identified by both Janaki and Warder as an adaptation of the Harṣacarita’s literary style. In both these texts, great battles form the crux of the text’s plot. In the Vikramāṇkādevacarita, Vikramāditya VI spends time in the south and builds relationships with southern kings, including the Cōḷas, during his first expedition south on his father’s orders, it is his second expedition, after the coronation of his brother in which the central battle between him and Sōmēśvara takes place. The entire plot is built through the alliances that are set up in the first half of the story. Vikramāditya VI takes refuge in the court of the Cōḷa king and is given his daughter’s hand in marriage. He fights Kulōttunga on behalf of his wife’s brother, while his brother and rival claimant for the throne, Sōmēśvara I allies with Kulōttunga against him.

The Harṣacarita’s plot is similarly driven by a series of alliances, both of marriage and of subordination and homosocial companionship. Harṣa and his older brother Rājyavardhana grow up with companions drawn from the families of kin and political allies; those mentioned in the text are their mother’s brother’s son, Bhandi and two princes their father recruits from later Gupta family, Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta. Prabhākaravardhana, their father, assigns Kumāragupta to Rājyavardhana and Mādhavagupta to Harṣa. All three of these characters appear throughout the text as
important and trusted envoys of the two princes. Hornele posits that Rājyavardhana and Harṣa’s mother, was the princess of Malwa, daughter of the king, Yasodharman-Vikramāditya and argues that Prabhākaravardhana used this position as son-in-law to put his claim for the Gupta throne forward, contesting the succession of Vikramāditya’s son, Śilāditya.289

However, Hornele’s view of the text has since been contested. Among scholars of the later Guptas, the family that Mādhavagupta and Kumāragupta were from, there is considerable disagreement about where the later Guptas were based. On the one hand, scholars like Hornele believed that they were based in Malwa, drawing on on Bāna’s description of Mādhavagupta as the son of the King of Malwa. In opposition to this, Dēvahuti posits that while they may have had an association with Malwa at some point, they made their primary residence in Magadha pretty early on in their career. 290 This makes the differentiation between the Gupta princes that Prabhākaravardhana and the king of Malwa with whom Rājyavardhana fought later in the text. In fact, it is more likely that Harśavardhana and Rājyavardhana’s mother, Mahāsenaguptā was the sister of Mahāsenagupta, the father of Mādhavagupta and Kumāragupta, based on the similarity in their names.291


291 Ali, Courly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India, 53.
Harṣa’s sister, Rājyaśri was married to the prince of Kanyakubja, Grahavarman, son of Avantivarman of the Maukhari family. When Harṣa is in the east, avenging his brother’s murder at the hands of the Gaūda king, “the man named Gupta” attacked and killed Grahavarman, seized Kānyakubja and imprisoned Rājyaśri. Harṣa at once went to search for his sister, leaving the attack on the Gaūda king to Bhandi. “This course may have been dictated by considerations both humane and political…. the presence beside him of the late king’s queen would definitely enhance Harsha’s chances of succession to the Maukharī domains.”\textsuperscript{292} The marriage of Rājyaśri and Grahavarman, therefore positioned Harṣa as a contender to rule those territories, especially if he demonstrated his relationship with the widowed queen.

As Whitney Cox observes on Vikramāditya VI’s relationship with the Cōla royal family, “With his father dead and his elder brother in the grip of a demonic madness, Vikramāditya must look elsewhere for the support and sustenance that should rightly be found among his male relations; and in making Vikramāditya’s brief but intense friendship with Vīrarājendrā into one of the emotional crescendos of the poem, Bilhaṇa figures the Cōla king as a surrogate guru-elder in place of Vikrama’s departed father and deranged brother-king.”\textsuperscript{293} Cox also observes the parallels drawn between Vikramāditya and Kullōttunga despite being pitted as enemies in the text. Neither of them were first in line to the throne, and both of them ascended to kingship through rebellion and

\textsuperscript{292} \textit{Ibid}, 77.

\textsuperscript{293} Cox, \textit{Politics, Kingship and Poetry in Medieval South India}, 129.
usurpation. I would like to draw focus, however, to the fact that the marriage between Vikramāditya and the daughter of Vīrarājendra is what provided Vikramāditya access to Cōla politics, and in turn induced his brother to ally with Kullōttunga against him.

Vīrarājendra’s decision to give Vikramāditya his daughter’s hand in marriage also marked an important departure from the existing pattern across generations of giving Cōla princesses in marriage to Vengi Cāḻukya princes. Kullōttunga’s mother, Ammanga Dēvi was also from the Cōla family, as was his father’s mother, Kundavvai. This pattern didn’t break in Kullōttunga’s case as he was also married to a daughter of Rājendra (r. 1054-1064) named Madhurāntaki, but it gave Vikramāditya similar access to the machinations of the Cōla royal family. It was in his interest that his brother-in-law be on the throne while Kullōttunga allied with Sōmēśvara II in order to subvert the alliance between their maternal uncle and brother, respectively.

The other marriage of Vikramāditya VI described in the Vikramānkadēvakarita is with Candralēkha, a Śīlāhāra princess. Bilhaṇa’s choice of which marriage to highlight is noteworthy, because while the marriage between the unnamed Cōla princess and him existed solely to mark his friendship and obligation to Vīrarājendra and his son, his marriage to Candralēkha is described with great attention to the romantic and erotic elements of the story. In the spring, en route to Kalyāṇa after his victory against his brother, Vikramāditya hears of the Candralēkha, daughter of the Śīlāhāra ruler, based in Karhāṭa, or modern-day Karhad in Maharashtra. As he hears of her great beauty, according to the nakhaśikhavārṇana convention of description starting from the toes and
ending with the hair, he immediately falls in love with her and sends a spy to investigate if he has a chance of winning her hand in marriage. Upon learning that she too has fallen in love with him and has chosen him as her husband, he rushes to attend her swayamvara. Among the kings gathered there is Kullōttunga himself. Candralēkha’s caretaker, an older woman from the antahpura introduces each of these kings but Candralēkha spurns them and has eyes only for Vikramāditya whom she eventually chooses. It is difficult to assess the historicity of this swayamvara ceremony, since this entire section of the story presents a very conventional mode of marriage dating back to the epics and present in the mahakāvyā genre, however, it is worth noting the how the symbolism translates when applied to local politics.

The earlier section of the plot deals with Vikramāditya quelling his enemies through military force and strategic alliance-building. In this section of the text, by having a princess native to the Kannada-speaking region choose him as her husband, he expresses his dominance over the other kings in a different though equally effective manner. Candralēkha or Candrikā is identified as the princess of Karhāḍ, very close to Kolhapur where the Cōḷas had set up a victory pillar upon defeating the Cāḷukyas and plundering Kalyāṇa in the early eleventh century. The fact that Candralēkha disdained other kings, including Kullōttunga re-established Cāḷuka supremacy over the region through another mode. It also gave Vikramāditya access to the region’s politics through marriage.
In metaphors of kingship, the earth is often compared to a woman who chooses the king as her consort. In this episode, Candralekha does the same in the swayamvara marriage format where she disdains the other kings and chooses Vikramaditya as her husband. The king then enjoys amorous moments with her, in which they are totally devoted to one another. Therefore, the wife that Vikramaditya marries from the Cōḷa family complements the homosocial political alliance between him and the Cōḷa king, putting him on equal footing with Kullottunga who was also married to a Cōḷa princess. The marriage with Candralekha complements his relationship with the territory of Kuntala, over which the Cāḷukyas claimed sovereignty — and his relationship with her reflects his relationship with the region itself. There is a reclamation of the Karhāḍ region through this marriage as well as the establishment of Vikramaditya’s superiority to Kullottunga.

The prominent marriage in the Harṣacarita is not the hero’s own but that of his sister, Rājyaśrī, who marries a prince of the neighboring kingdom, Kanyakubja. The fourth uccaḥvāsa of the text describes the birth and early life of the three royal siblings, Rājyavardhana, Harṣavardhana, and Rājyaśrī, born over the course of six years to the queen, Yaśōmati. Shortly after Rājyaśrī’s birth, the queen’s brother offers his son, Bhandi, as a servant to the two princes and the king loved him as a son. When the princes reach

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294 J.D.M. Derrett discusses the concept of the king as an enjoyer of the earth in the article, “‘Bhū-Bharaṇa, Bhū-Pālana, Bhū-Bhojana’: An Indian Conundrum,” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London 22, no. 1/3 (January 1, 1959): 108–23. Ronald Inden also addresses this relationship between the king and the earth as a marriage, with the coronation ceremony being likened to a wedding, Imagining India, 234.
adolescence, their father recruits two princes as companions for them with the following advice:

My dear sons, it is difficult to secure good servants, the first essential of sovereignty. In general mean persons, making themselves congenial, like atoms, in combination, compose the substance of royalty. Fools, setting people to dance in the intoxication of their play, make peacocks of them. Knaves, working their way in, reproduce as in a mirror their own image. Like dreams, impostors by false phantasies beget unsound views. By songs, dances, and jests unmatched flatterers, like neglected diseases of the humours, bring on madness. Like thirsty catakas, low-born persons cannot be held fast. Cheats, like fishermen, hook the purpose at its first rise in the mind, like a fish in Manasa. Like those who depict infernos, loud singers paint unrealities on the canvas of the air. Suitors, more keen than arrows, plant a barb in the heart. For these reasons I have appointed to wait upon your highnesses the brothers Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta, sons of the Malwa king, inseparable as my arms from my side; they are men found by frequent trials untouched by any taint of vice, blameless, discreet, strong, and comely. To them your highnesses also will show a consideration not enjoyed by the rest of your dependents.  

In this section, the king establishes the nature of the relationship between his sons and their subordinate companions. They are to be attached to the princes at all times, while the princes bestow special favor on them in exchange for their trustworthiness and loyalty. The relationship is one to one, with each of the princes being assigned a specific companion, Mādhavagupta is assigned to Rājyavardhana while Kumāragupta is assigned to Harṣa. This companionship, according to Prabhākaragupta is to protect the princes from the false platitudes likely to ensue from members of the court, in their own interest. He implies that he has tested the two princes before choosing them as companions for his sons, and found them worthy of this task.

The passage that immediately follows this one introduces the subject of Rājyaśri’s marriage, and the king’s feeling that he is now obligated to search for a groom for her. The assignment of the two princes as servants to his sons directly mirrors his responsibility to find an appropriate husband for his daughter. Rājyaśri’s marriage is then described in great detail, beginning with Prabhākaravardhana promising her hand to Grahavarman, son of Avantivarman, the ruler of the neighboring Kanyakubja. The text makes it a point to note that these rulers were from the illustrious Mukhara family, and therefore carried the title, Maukhari. Upon the arrival of the groom, a brahman tells him,

My son, by obtaining you Rajyashri has at length united the two brilliant lines of Puspabhuti and Mukhara, whose worth, like that of the Sun and Moon houses, is sung by all the world to the gratification of wise men's ears. Previously you were set fast by your merits on the king's breast, like the Kaustubha jewel on Vishnu's. But now you are one to be supported, like the moon by Shiva, on his head.

This image speaks to the transformation that the marriage wrought in Prabhākaravardhana and Grahavarman’s relationship. The image of the moon and Śiva plays an interesting role in outlining the new relationship.

By śāstric norms, the bride-giver was necessarily lower in rank to the bride taker in the most coveted form of marriage (pratilōma). However, in this case, Prabhākaravardhana was either of equal status or in fact superior to Grahavarman as the line about him housing Grahavarman on his breast suggests — the latter was an ornament to him. As a son-in-law, Prabhākaravarma’s head is technically supposed to be at his feet but the image of the moon on Śiva’s head is cleverly employed to both acknowledge and

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subvert this norm. The moon is technically on top of Śiva’s head, but only because he sought Śiva’s help from a curse. Śiva thus controls the moon’s waxing and waning and wears it as a head ornament. It is also noteworthy that the word “supported” is used here, implying that Grahavarman’s career will now be bolstered by this relationship with his father-in-law.

Several examples appear in epigraphy as well (as cited in previous chapters), where marriage alliances allow the father of the bride to have a significant hand in the conflicts of his son-in-law’s family. Amōghavarṣa was heavily involved in establishing Būtuga II on the throne, against rival claimants while Ganga kings attempted to resist the Cāḷukya usurpation. At the same time, the Kalacuri kings, who had until this point given their daughters in marriage to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa princes, married the princess — to the first Cāḷukya king, Tailapa II immediately preceding his successful claim to the throne of his former overlords (see Chapter 1). There is also evidence to suggest that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Amōghavarṣa stayed at the Cēḍi court while his rival claimant to the throne ruled in Mānyakheta, and as he planned it’s recovery. Marriage therefore wasn’t necessarily an agreement between two families, but an agreement between two men of different families to allow each other access and provide each other support in their respective ambitions towards succession and territorial expansion.

Conclusion
The *Gadyakarṇāmṛta*, though incomplete and of limited use to the positivist reconstruction of dynasty chronology, offers a unique glimpse into the motivations behind the production of court literature at the time of the later Hoysaḷas, and the manner in which the literary representation of marital and diplomatic relations between royal families were used as means by which to stake a claim to different political and religious geographies. It sheds light on the complex and contentious relationship between the Hoysaḷa, Pāṇḍya, Cōḷa families at a time when the power balance in south Indian politics was shifting away from the large, older powers, the Cōḷas and Western Cāḷukyas, and into the hands of their former subordinates. After settling on a northern boundary between them and their rival claimants for Cāḷukya supremacy, the Seunas of Dēvagiri, the Hoysaḷas looked southward to ensure that they had a foothold in the politics of the waning Cōḷa territories.

This effort was begun by Ballāḷa in the late eleventh century, as evidenced by a queen named Cōḷamahādēvi carrying the titles of *piriyarasi* and *paṭṭamahādēvi*, and the several titles that remember him as the establisher of the Cōḷa king. This support for the Cōḷas against the defection of their subordinates to the ambitious Pāṇḍyas was cemented by his son Narasimha II, as the events of the *Gadyakarṇāmṛta* attest. Sōmēśvara was so deeply involved in the politics of the region that he chose to make his primary residence at Kaṇṇanūr. This however necessitated some kind of accord between the two powers, which was marked by another series of marriage alliances, as noted in the *Rukminikalyāṇa*. This series of events prompted Kālakalabha to frame the great battle
between Narasimha and Sōmēśvara, and Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya II as merely a fight between two divine friends, Kumāra and Paraśurāma, which was predestined to play out on earth at the behest of the earth goddess.

In addition to framing this great battle as merely a short period of hostility in an otherwise long, mutual friendship, the Gadyakarnāmrta also establishes a very clear connection between the Hoysaḷa family and the Sōmanātha shrine in present-day Gujarat through the selection of Dēvikā as the ideal bride for Prince Sōmēśvara. The clarity with which the text identifies religious figures and sites stands out in high relief against the vague descriptions of Dēvikā’s ancestors, and the narrative seems most concerned with establishing this connection. Despite the fact that the references to Dēvikā’s parents and grandparents aren’t specific, they provide insight into a mode of marriage that is rarely seen in literary works, though it is discussed at length in the śāstras that of the uxorilocal son-in-law, where a man was absorbed into his wife’s family, and given a share of her father’s property, rather than the traditional patrilineal arrangement. Similarly, Dēvikā is deemed the perfect bride for Sōmēśvara based on her blessing from the deity rather than because of her beauty or virtues, or her potential to reify an alliance between two families. The association with Sōmanātha also allowed the Hoysaḷas to lay claim to a region, in a sense, that they were now debarred from by their truce with the Seunas.

The Gadyakarnāmrta provides perspective on two marriages which achieved different political ends -- one created the impression of friendship between the Hoysaḷa and Pāṇḍya families when they became the two most prominent powers in the south, and
the other established the family’s connection with a region that was out of their reach through adherence and connection to a deity there. The text thereby illustrates how courtly literature and the tropes of marriage therein could be used to make statements of diplomacy and political ambition.
Conclusion

In each of the chapters above, I have examined different instances of marriage and subordination and the way they were intertwined in this particular period of South Indian history. The information available in inscriptions voluminous, but it’s hard to lose sight of the fact that their original purpose was extremely specific and that the only way to contend with them is to understand them in that context. I have therefore tried to understand inscription-making as action that was intended to reconstitute the world in whatever small or large way was available to the individual commissioning it. It allowed them a chance to place themselves in a larger narrative, connect themselves with overlords and rulers, and through them with the divine beings of the purāṇas. The individuals I examine presumably commissioned these inscriptions to situate themselves in a greater political, if not cosmological context. In the process they elaborated on their connections and histories, and this is what I draw from.

Each of the chapters examined distinct features of kinship, marriage and subordination, trying to draw a more robust picture of households that extended beyond co-habitation. In the chapter on the emergence of the Hoysaḷas, I looked at the ways in which women, through marriage, functioned as conduits for the relationships and alliances that initiated huge political shifts. We know very little about Revakkanimmaḍī, but the relationship that was forged between her father, Amōghavarṣa III and her husband, Būṭūga II shaped politics in the region for the next century. The defeat of the
Rāṣṭrakūṭas at the hands of their subordinates, the Western Cāḷukyas was also anticipated by the marriage of the Kalacuri princess, Bontādēvi with Vikramāditya IV, a break in the long tradition of Kalacuris being bride givers to the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. Without the patronage of their overlords, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the Gangas too succumbed to the aggression of the Cōḷas. This created the circumstances that allowed the Hoysāḷas to distinguish themselves, and their situation in the mountains made them the perfect foil in the eyes of the Cāḷukyas to challenge the Cōḷaś ennoblement of the Kongāḷvas. Cāḷukya diplomacy in southern Karnataka was also peppered with marriages, some of which worked in favor of individual Cāḷukya claimants to the throne, like the support of the Hoysāḷas ensured by the marriage of Sōmēśvara I and Hoysaḷadēvi, and some which didn’t, like the marriage of Vikramāditya VI to the Cōḷa princess whose brother he failed to protect against the usurpation of Kullōṭtunga.

The third chapter deals specifically with the relationship between the Hoysāḷas and the Cāḷukyas — examining stages when the subordinate-overlord relationship functioned smoothly and when it met friction. The Cāḷukya ennoblement of the Hoysāḷas was extremely advantageous to Vikramāditya VI, given Ereyanga’s support in his successful bid for the throne and his subsequent successes in Malwa. However, it also created the foundation for Ereyanga’s son to harbor ambitions of independent sovereignty. He prepared for this by expanding and strengthening the network of subordinates under him through marriages brokered between them, and by inviting skilled individuals like the artists who worked on the Belur temple to his residence. In this, his marriage with
Śāntaladēvi was pivotal and as the number and range of her inscriptions attest, she used this position of advantage to make significant donations and commission several building projects. Viṣṇuvardhana’s entry back into the network of Cāḷukya subordination through a marriage is an excellent demonstration of how these relationships functioned. An overlord ennobling a subordinate always stood on the precipice between peace and conflict, and as Inden has observed, these two were not inherently opposed to each other in this political system.

The fourth chapter zooms in even further to understand the choices subordinate families made when they were given the opportunity to record their family histories, and how that reflects on the nature of subordination in the period. Starting with the later years Viṣṇuvardhana’s reign spanning that of his son, Narasimha I and grandson, Ballāḷa I, the survey of inscriptions revealed two major patterns in these vamśa praśastis, genealogies in praise of the donor’s descent. While some families like the Mariyāne family meticulously recorded their long-standing, intergenerational relationships with the Hoysaḷas, others chose to honor their ancestors’ service and achievements with multiple royal families. In the end both worked in the favor of Ballāḷa II who was attempting to draw skilled and important people towards Hoysaḷa political, religious, and economic centers. While Hoysaḷa territory expanded outwards, almost all of Ballāḷa’s wives came from lower-rung subordinate families, and several of them performed the duties of military subordinates. They still commissioned temples and made donations, but their activity in that sphere was limited compared to what Śāntala’s had been, for example.
The final chapter is somewhat of a departure from the methodology of the first three, given that it focuses on a Sanskrit text written at the court of Sōmēśvara I, Ballāla II’s grandson. However, I attempt to approach similar questions through it. Specifically, I looked at the ways in which the tex reflected the two marriages of Sōmēśvara. His marriage to Bījjalā served to mark the accord with the Pāṇḍyas that was suggested by the purānic frame story, in which the Hoysaḷa and Pāṇḍya kings were just two quarreling friends. His marriage with Dēvikā, which is built up at length in the text, though it is cut off before we witness the actual ritual, serves to connect him further to the deity Sōmanātha. Much like a temple, this text served the purpose of bringing Sōmanātha to Hoysaḷa country, not through ritual or temple building, but through the assertion that the deity had come to inhabit the king himself, and that all his family were similarly divine beings.

The common thread that runs through the chapters is the notion of individuals negotiating the precarity of the political apparatus, and making decisions about which relationships to forge and which to forgo. In this context, marriage and resultant affiliation between men was one of the strongest ways to ensure alliance and support. As happened in several cases, the wrong choice would result in major setbacks in the family’s political and social mobility while the right ones could ensure its future for another generation. In this context, where rules like primogeniture were not strictly followed, it was these relationships that determined how the political landscape was shaped.
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