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HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATES ON VIJAYANAGARA STATE

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Historians have analyzed Vijayanagar history using various approaches such as the *Orientalist approach*, the *Regionalist approach*, the *Nationalist approach*, the *Segmentary Statehood approach* and the most recent being the *Material Culture approach*. The recent approach towards the study of Vijayanagara is the one using an interdisciplinary method of correlating the archaeological remains or data with the reconstruction of the material culture of the period. Anila Varghese in her article on the historiography of Vijayanagara discusses on various approaches towards the study of Vijayanagara history starting from Robert Sewell in 1900 AD till the recent researches undertaken by scholars like John M. Fritz, George Mitchell, Pirre Filliozat, Vasundhara Filliozat, Katheleen Morrison and others. She emphasizes on the interdisciplinary nature of the study of Vijayanagara.

The first published accounts of Vijayanagara and its monuments appeared in the course of nineteenth century. The earliest of these is probably the partial account of Vijayanagara presented to the English-speaking world by Marks Wilks in 1810 A.D. Wilks work was prepared while he was the English East India Company's *Resident* at the court of the Wodeyar king of Mysore, after this dynasty had been reinstalled in 1799 A.D on the throne seized from them some 40 years ago by Haider Ali. The basis of Wilks's reconstruction was an eighteenth century Kannada language work by a Brahmin scholar known as Pootia Pundit. In 1836, the description of Hampi-Vijayanagara by the Orientalist scholar H.H Wilson appeared, accompanying the translation of twelve inscriptions from the site of E.C Ravenshaw, which marks the beginnings of investigation into geographical records of the capital.

Historical studies on the Vijayanagar Kingdom began with the publication of Robert Sewell's work aptly titled, *A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagara); A Contribution to the History of India* in 1900. This was the earliest attempt to give a comprehensive picture of the empire and its capital from its foundation to its downfall. Sewell's book provided the foundation on which a regular history of the Vijayanagara Empire could be constructed. The year 1917A.D saw the publication of the first official guide-book on the capital city, A.H. Longhurst's *Hampi Ruins; Described and Illustrated*. These British writers sought to devise a historical past not for the sake of pure knowing, but for the purpose of controlling a subject people whose past was to be so constructed as to make British rule a necessity as well as a virtue. Since that time systematic investigations of the epoch have resulted in the accumulation of an appreciable amount of empirical information about Vijayanagara. The Orientalist approach

to the writing of Vijayanagara history was bound to change as Indians seized control of the writing of their own history. The earliest and most influential Indian successor to Sewell was Krishnswami Iyyenger. In his opinion, the Vijayanagara Empire was founded at a very crucial period in the history of South India and played an important part in arresting foreign expansion in the south and fostering Indian culture and tradition. This view was upheld, either directly or indirectly in the writings of B. Suryanarayana Rao, K.A. Nilakantha Sastri and others. During this period, although the focus continued to be primarily on the political history of Vijayanagara, the earliest attempts to understand the social and cultural life under Vijayanagara and the economic conditions that prevailed were also made by the historians B.A. Saletore and T.V. Mahalingam respectively. Thus, in the first half of the 20th century, during the Indian National Movement, these nationalist historians and historical writings highlighted the role of Vijayanagara as a bulwark against foreign rule and an alien culture and as the protector of Hindu religion and culture.

During the freedom struggle, various regional and linguistic sentiments were also appealed to, in order to awaken the masses against British rule. This was true both of the Kannada and Telugu-speaking peoples. Therefore, many scholars took a regionalist approach to the writing of Vijayanagara history. The Karnataka Vidya Vardhaka Sangha, founded in 1880 A.D, focused on the Kannada-speaking people in the Bombay Presidency with the dream of unifying all Kannada-speaking regions into a single provincial unit. The Kannada Sahithya Parashat, founded in 1915A.D, concentrated on promoting Kannada language and literature, while Karnataka Sabha, established in 1916 A.D, pursued the unification efforts politically. Simultaneously, the Telugu-speaking people formed the Andhra Mahasabha and pressed for the formation of a linguistic state of their own. Both groups laid claims to the Bellary district, in which Hampi-Vijayanagara is located. To strengthen their positions, both groups put forth theories about the origins of the Vijayanagara empire and of its founders, the Sangama brothers, in support of their view points.

One can divide the major ideological strands of the historical investigations on the state and society of the Vijayanagaraa period into two distinct parts as the work of traditional historians and recent works. The traditional historians were Robert Sewell, S.K. Aiyangar, N. Venkataramanayya, Father Heras, B.A. Saletore, K.A. Nilakantha Shastri, A. Appa Dorai, T.V. Mahalingam and others. The recent works were the works of Burton Stein, Noboru Karashima, Sanjay Subrahmaniyam, Subbarayalu, Hermann Kulke, Rothermund, John Fritz, George Mitchell and others.

The traditional histories of the Vijayanagara have by and large concentrated upon political and dynastic history and have made no attempt to integrate these events to the broad social and economic movements of the time. For example, A. Appadorai in his *Economic Conditions in Southern India (1000-1500 AD)* gave primary attention to the economic conditions of the time; these conditions were not related to the political organization of the state and to the structure of the society. Similarly, T.V. Mahalingam in his *Administration and social life under Vijayanagar* and B.A. Saletore in his *Social and Political life under Vijayanagar Empire (1346-1646 AD)* have described facts of social and administrative organization without attempting a comprehensive study of the interaction of these elements. Burton Stein in his *Vijayanagara* observed the historiography of Vijayanagara state into three phases. Firstly, European Orientalists, viz. Marks Wilks, Colonel Colin Mackenzie who used the earlier Indian accounts and with the help of Indian Subordinates. Secondly, Krishnswami Aiyangar and Heras, who defined the Vijayanagara historiography with an anti-Muslim and broad nationalistic bias. Thirdly, B.A. Saletore and N. Venkataramanayya, who saw in that history a bias for the narrower nationalism or regional patriotisms of Karnataka and Andrapradesh.

It is generally believed that the Vijayanagara Kingdom was founded by Harihara and Bukka, who belonged to a family of five brothers. Their father was Sangama, the last Yadava King. Though there is no disagreement among the historians about the founders of the dynasty, but there are divergent opinions about their origin. As a matter of fact, the origin of the kingdom has been a topic of intense debate for over several decades among various historians. There are a few theories on their origin, such as Telugu origin theory and Kannada origin theory. There is another view is that the formation of Vijayanagara state expressed the collective will of Hindu kings and people to save Hindu religion and culture from the Muslim invasions.

ROBERT SEWELL AND OTHER DISCOVERIES

Telugu claims

It was in 1900 A.D that Robert Sewell first drew the attention of both scholars and the general public towards the devastated capital of Vijayanagara rulers *Hampi*, that is as seen by him on the eve of publishing his unforgettable work, *A Forgotten Empire. (Vijayanagara); A contribution to the history of India*. In this work, he attempted to trace the history of Vijayanagara with the help of two foreign travellers like Domingo Paes and Nuniz, who had noticed a bustling and thriving capital city at Hampi in the beginning of the 16th century and the picture of received moments and a deserted area as he looked upon Hampi with his own eyes by the end of the 19th century, that is three centuries after his sources Domingo Pais and Nuniz had seen the place. Sewell perhaps could not compromise with two opposite pictures as perceived by his mind, one, that of a bustling grandeur and the other, that of total desertion. In his reconstruction of the history of Vijayanagara its rise and fall Sewell visualized, at once, the grandeur referred to by his sources on the one side and on the other, what lay in front of him towards the end of the 19th century. What Sewell failed to understand was that his sources were referring to the hey days of the Rayas, and what lay in front of him had passed through the ravages of time, nature and vandalism for nearly three and quarter centuries after the fall of the Rayas and Hampi.

Robert Sewell fixes the responsibility for the fall of Vijayanagara to the Bahmanis, by observing dilapidated condition of monuments. He concludes that Bahmani rulers who are supposed to have looted and destroyed the capital of the Rayas and regarded this struggle as a religious war. Here it seems that, Sewell seems to have already conceived a notion about what interpretation he should give to the developments noticed by him in the accounts of Domingo Pas and Nuniz. This notion may have reasonably been influenced by his own reading of the medieval European scene of crusades, the expansion of Moors into Europe and the Christian princes and Knights making an all-out effort in defence of their honour, religions and regions from the invading Moors. Sewell seems to adopt this pattern of medieval European historiography which clarified the deeds of the crusading princes and knights against the expansion of the Moors in Europe. He now applied the same model and methodology to the events he was trying to trace in South Indian history during the Vijayanagara period. In fact, it is possible that his 16th century sources Paes and Nuniz were also quite familiar with the crusading zeal of the Europeans against the Moors. Sewell in fact, begins his book with a comparison of the year 1336 A.D to the reign of Edward III of England. Naturally his pre-occupation with European developments must have induced him to see a setup in south India similar to that of the medieval European conflict between the Moors and Christians, which he tried to identify in the conflicts of the Bahmani rulers, who happened to be Muslims and the Vijayanagara rulers who were Hindus. The parallels that he draws between the two are not only illogical and irrational but also fail, when subjected to the test of evidence.

Thus, emerges his idea of the rise of Vijayanagara in South India as a safeguard for the Hindu religion and culture from the onslaught of Islam and the Vijayanagara Kingdom as the last refuge of Hinduism. Not only that, when Robert Sewell was writing his book India was witnessing an enormous growth of national movement. He sees the rise of Vijayanagara state as the natural result of the persistent efforts made by the Mohammadan to conquer all India. When these invaders reached the Krishna River the Hindus to their South, stricken with terror, combined and gathered in haste to the new standard which alone seemed to offer some hope of protection. The decayed old states crumbled away into nothingness and the fighting kings of Vijayanagara became saviour of the south for two and half centuries.

He was the advocator of the Telugu origin theory of Vijayanagara state. As regards the Andhra or Telugu origin theory of Vijayanagara state, Robert Sewell quotes what Francis Buchanan has written in his famous survey report. This statement of Buchanan was based on the information that he had collected from a Sanskrit work *Vidyaranya Sikka* shown by a person Ramappa Vormika. It says that the founders of Vijayanagara State were Hakka or Harihara and Bukka, who were brothers and they were guards of the treasury of Pratap Rudra of Warangal. They met a sage, Vijayanagara, who was head of the monastery of Sringeri and later founded for them the city of Vijayanagara. This was in 1336 A.D. Harihara was made the first king. Sewell argues that, Harihara and Bukka were the officers in the court of Warangal, the Kakatiya Kingdom, and were of Golla caste.

Being a civil servant of Madras Presidency Sewell was serving as the record keeper in the Madras Record office. He was tasked with responsibility for documenting ancient inscriptions and remains in the region. As with other British administrators of his type at that period, his purpose was not scholarly but rather to bolster administrative control by constructing a history that placed British rule as a virtue and necessity rather than something to be denigrated.

N. Venkataramanayya supports the contention of Robert Sewell on Telugu origin theory and highlights the Andhra links of the Harihara and Bukka in his *Studies in the History of the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagara* (1935). He refers to literary works like *Vidyaranya Kalajnana* in Sanskrit; *Vidyaranya Vruthantha*, *Rajakalanirnaya*, *Pithamahasamhitha*, *Sivatatwaratnakara* in Kannada and the statements of Muslim historians like Ziyauddin Barani and Faristha, foreign travelers like Ibn Batuta and Nuniz; the inscriptions such as Gazalavidu and argues that the founders of the Vijayanagara state were at first in the service of Pratapa Rudra of Warangal. He further states that when Pratap Rudra was defeated by Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, the Delhi Sultanate, and taken as prisoner, his treasury guards, Hukka and Bukka fled to Kampili and took refuge in the court of Kampilideva. They were, however, captured by the Sultan after the sack of Kampili in 1326 A.D, and were carried away to Delhi, where they were forcibly converted to Islam.

On the outbreak of a rebellion in Kampili and the collapse of the provincial government, they were released by the Sultan from prison, and sent with an army to Kampili to reconquer it from the rebels and rule the province as his deputies. Though, they did it, they did not remain loyal to the Sultan. They came in contact with Vidyaranya, who persuaded them renounce Islam, and threw in their lot with the *Andhra nationalists* who had just then succeeded, under the leadership of Kapaya, in expelling the Musalmans and re-establish their national independence. N. Venkataramanayya concludes that Hukka and Bukka then reverted to their ancient faith and having declared their independence assumed the leadership of the Hindus of Kampili in their fight against the Musalmans. He further says that the crest and administrative divisions of the Vijayanagara state, like *sthala* and *nadus* were borrowed from the Kakatiya of Warangal.

In both writings of Robert Sewell and N. Venkataramanayya, a strong overtone of communalism is existent. As a matter of fact, one of the more dubious trends in the India National Movement in the beginning of the 20th century was overtone of communalism. It was also reflected in the traditional historical accounts of the Vijayanagara period. This analysis of the origin of the Vijayanagara state, purely as a Hindu response to Muslim onslaughts has been accepted by every historian of the Empire. For example, S. Srikantayya wrote in 1938, *the origin of Vijayanagara may not have been a miracle. It may have been the result of supreme Hindu efforts, in order to protect their religion, their dharma and their country and to provide a bulwark against the devastating Muhammadan hords from the north of India.* K.A. Nilakanta Sastri also opined that, *starting on, its career a decade earlier than the Bahmani Kingdom, that of Vijayanagara became the focus of a resurgent Hindu culture which offered a more successful resistance to Islam in this part of the country than anywhere else.* T.V. Mahalingam in of the opinion that, *the empire itself was founded by a band of five brothers in the second part of the 14th century to crush the onrush of aggressive Islam into South India. The invasions of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq and the subsequent Muslim threats to the Hindus of South India led to much unrest and the rise of a feeling of political unity among them ultimately resulting of the birth of the Vijayanagara State, which came of symbolize Hindu resistance to the onslaught of Islam.*

Nilakanta Sastri is also the supporter of the Telugu origin theory of Vijayanagara State. His major contributions to Vijayanagara history were his sponsorship of a three-volume *Further Sources of Vijayanagar History*, 3 Vols in 1946, edited jointly with Venkataramanayya and another was his long, synthetic chapters on Vijayanagara in his *A History of South India*, first published in 1955. Nilakanta Sastri's *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History* reflected on Vijayanagara history as a heroic struggle to protect *dharma* from Islam - the last glorious chapter of the independent, Hindu India of the South and the other was seeing the polity of Vijayanagara to about relations among great warrior families, rather than about conventional, centralized administration. Sastri's *History of South India* reflected Chola model in the characterization of the Vijayanagara political system. He argues that, Vijayanagara was a centralized hereditary monarchy, which was prevented from achieving full central authority, because of the constant threat from Muslim States and intransigence of feudatories. He made the centre of his interpretive analysis the onslaught of Islam. So he calls Vijayanagara a *war state* or *military state*.

Nilakantha Sastri was sceptic about historical sources other than inscriptional one. To Nilakantha Sastri, the way to a historiography that Europeans could admire was through reliance upon the relatively chaste, datable and locatable epigraphically records, of which tens of thousands had been collected in South India, and by casting interpretations of these fragmentary data in a universal frame that showed medieval South India administrative institutions to be of the same quality of European one.

Another important work of Nilakanta Sastri was *A History of South India from Pre-historic Times to Vijayanagar*. It is grounded in an intellectual perspective, which made the historian Herman Kulke to term this book as *Indian Historiographic Model*. Sastri, viewed the later medieval period, in South India, during which the Chola and Vijayanagara empires took shape, as a period of cultural resurgence, marked by the re-emergence of highly centralized and powerful politics, after a period of early medieval fragmentation and decline. For Nilakantha Sastri, Vijayanagara was an exemplar of the *Hindu* empire, whose task was to conserve Hindu society and save it from the dissolution which threatened it from several directions. Thus, he viewed Vijayanagara as a powerful and centralized military state that became the focus of a resurgent Hindu Culture, albeit one that sacrificed longstanding traditions of autonomous villages for its military mission. This interpretation of Vijayanagara, as a highly centralized and effective military state, drew primarily on inscriptions and historical accounts (not material

evidence) remained the dominant view of the empire. It continues to hold considerable sway in popular and same scholarly literature on Vijayanagara.

Writers like B. Suryanarayana Rao, Srinivas Rao, M.H. Ramasharma, Subbarayalu and others supported the Telugu origin theory of Vijayanagara state. But majority of the historians refused to accept the literary traditions supporting the Telugu origin theory. They say that these literary works belong to a period of 16th to 19th century. They were in the form of *Kalajana* or in the form of predictions, a practice that was developed from the 16th century onwards. The lateness as well as the legendary nature of the accounts makes their evidence doubtful.

Kannada Claims

S. Krishnswami Iyenger the advocator of Kannada origin theory of Vijayanagara. He is known for the new methods he introduced in interpreting the history of Vijayanagara. His historical methodology is considered to be Indian nationalistic. S.K. Iyengar assisted Robert Sewell in his analysis of the epigraphy and archaeology of South India. These publications inspired Iyengar to make a detailed enquiry into the history of Vijayanagara. His, historical methodology was however, a marked deviation from that of Sewell's and historians who had lived before him. His works devoted more attention to the Hindu-Muslim conflicts that shaped the history of Vijayanagara. In his book *Ancient India* (1921), Iyengar states that the Hoysala king Veera Ballala III made a patriotic effort to dislodge the Muhammadans from the South. But he fell in the effort, and brought his dynasty to an end in carrying on this great national war of the Hindus.

S.K. Iyengar pointed out the connection of the Sangama brothers Harihara and Bukka with the Hoysalas and on its basis asserted the Karnataka origin of Vijayanagara. The large number of Kannada inscriptions of Vijayanagara, the resemblances of the early Vijayanagara coins with those of the Kadambas and Yadava, the Kannada characters in the legends of their coins, their titles reflecting imperial claims in Karnataka etc., are pointed out in support of the theory that they hailed from Karnataka.

S.K. Iyengar's methodology and his books on South Indian history were written from all Indian perspective where in South India is assumed to be closely related to the rest of the country and its history and civilization depicted as if it were a part of a greater Indian tradition.

Father Henry Heras was a Spanish Indologist. The Telugu origin theory of Vijayanagara was rejected by father Heras. He was an advocator of Kannada origin theory of Vijayanagara. According to him, Harihara was associated with the Hoysala court. Heras on the basis of inscriptional evidence states that Balappa Dandanayaka, a nephew of Hoysala Vira Ballala III was married to a daughter of Harihara I, the founder of the empire. According to Heras, the original founding of the capital Vijayanagara was in 1320 by Veera Ballala III, the city then being known as Vijaya Virupaksha Hosa pattana. By 1344 A.D the transfer power from the Hoysala empire to the emerging Vijayanagara Empire seems to have been gradual and without bloodshed, as ex-Hoysala officials melted away from a crumbling Hoysala power to support the Sangama cause.

Father Heras also rejected the fact that Harihara and Bukka were converted to Islam by the Sultan of Delhi. The testimony of epigraphs proves that the areas around Hampi constituted their homeland. The empire never had a Telugu origin. The patron saint of the early kings was saint Vidyanaya, the 12th Shankaracharya of Sringeri in Karnataka, and this is proof enough of their unquestionable identity with the Kannada country.

B.A. Saletore is also another proponent of the Kannada origin theory of Vijayanagara. He in his work, *Social and Political life in the Vijayanagar Empire* (1931), argues on the basis of literary and numismatic evidence that the founders of the Vijayanagara state were from Kannada region only. He points out that even those famous Telugu scholars of that time, Vallabharaya and Srinath, in their works called the brothers *Karanta Kshiti natha*, indicating they were a Kannada family. Early records of Harihara I, also called him *Karnataka Vidya Vilasa* or *learned man of Karnataka*. He also cites the title of Harihara II, *Loin to the scent elephant of the Andhra King*, to demonstrate their anti-Telugu propensity. Saletore was the first among scholars from Karnataka to empathetically prove the Kannada origin of the empire. He resoundingly argued against a Telugu origin propounded by N. Venkataramanayya with literary and numismatic evidence.

P.B. Desai also claims that the founders of the Vijayanagara State are of Kannada origin. He in his work *History of Vijayanagar Empire* (1936), states that, the theory of capture of Harihara and Bukka by the Sultan of Delhi and conversion to Islam is false and that the testimony of epigraphs proves that the patron-saint of the early kings was Saint Vidyananya, and this goes to prove their unquestionable identity with the Kannada country. He cites the statement of Faristha, who called the emperors as *Rayas of Karnataka*.

Suryanath Kamath is also supported the Kannada origin of Vijayanagara state. He tries to prove the proximity of Harihara and Bukka I to the Sringeri Peetha, but also the alliance between the Hoysala kingdom and the Sangama brothers. Kamath argues that in 1346 A.D, Harihara I made a grant to Bharati Tirtha, the Sringeri pontiff in the presence of Krishnayitayi, Queen of the slain Hoysala King Veera Ballala III. Harihara I was commander in the Hoysala Kingdom and had been appointed by Veera Ballala III with autonomous power after the fall of Sevuna or Yadava dynasty and Kampili kingdoms, to administer the northern territories. Also, the very first fortification that Harihara I built was at Barkur in coastal Karnataka in 1333 A.D. He was a Hoysala commander in charge of its northern territories from his seat in Gutty in modern Ananthapura district of Andhra Pradesh, at that time a Hoysala territory.

Kamath also says that, Harihara I assumed the Kannada titles *Purvapaschimasamudradhishvara*, *Arirayavibhada* and *Bhashegetappuvarayaraganda*. According Kamath, when Veera Ballala III died fighting the Sultan of Madurai, Harihara I seems to have gained sovereign power over the entire Hoysala territory. Kannada writings of that time such as *Chikkadevarava Vamsavali* and *Keladinrupa Vijaya* claim that the Sangama brothers were Kannadigas by linguistic affinity, making them people of Karnataka. Regarding the earliest modern work written on the history of the Vijayanagara Empire by Robert Sewell *A Forgotten Empire*, Kamath claims that Sewell had not used all sources, but had copiously used travelogues and other works written by only European travellers to forward his theories. He also points out that almost half of the Vijayanagara empire inscriptions, out of a total of 7000 available to us, are in Kannada. The kings used titles such as *Bhashegetappuvarayaraganda*, *Mooruraraganda* and *Arirayadatta* which are pure Kannada language titles.

Suryanath Kamath also argues that, the great devotion the founders of the empire had in Lord Chenna Keshava of Belur and Lord Virupaksha of Hampi testifies their origin from Kannada country, though in political and administrative matters, the Vijayanagara Kings followed the Hoysala, Kakatiya, Chola framework in the various provincial regions of the empire.

According to Appadorai, the Vijayanagara Empire was originally of the Karnataka region and it drew its inspirations from the Hoysala Empire and the Western Ganga dynasty of the Karnataka and the Chola and Pandya of the Tamil Country

Thus, up to the mid-twentieth century, historiography on Vijayanagara has passed through three broad stages; European Orientalists opened the field by identifying its major literary and inscriptional sources and its broad chronology. They were succeeded by scholars like S.K. Aiyangar and others who added greatly to the knowledge of Vijayanagara history; but in their somewhat different ways, these historians highlighted an anti-Muslim and nationalistic bias in Vijayanagara's history. Vijayanagara history then passed into a third phase when scholars like B.A. Saletore and Venkataramanayya explored new sources of Vijayanagara history and raised questions regarding the origins of this empire, but they sought in this history a basis for the regional patriotisms of Kannada and Telugu-speaking peoples. One feature common to all the three approaches is that they all focused on textual and inscriptional sources for the reconstruction of Vijayanagara history. Challenges to this longstanding, understanding began to be raised in the later 1970's pushed both by new historical and inscriptional research and perspectives and the exponential growth of archaeological research.

RECENT WORKS

Burton Stein

A more recent approach to Vijayanagara historiography came from a group of historians from outside India. Among them Burton Stein is important. He is an American historian. Borrowing from anthropology, he applied a radical new model to interpreting the political structure of Vijayanagara and the preceding state of the Cholas – which he called the Segmentary State. His important book *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* published in 1980 A.D. The monumental significance of the work of Burton Stein on medieval South Indian history arises from the fact that he is the first historian to attempt to integrate the different sectional histories to provide an explanation of the development of South Indian society in the Middle Ages. He does not view gifts to the temples merely as the expression of faith in a neither deeply religious age, nor trade as the activities of a few merchants. To him each of the elements have their own reality, certainly, but such realities are not established for their own sake, rather, they are significant only in so far as they contribute to the reconstruction of historical reality. In this book, he tries to trace the history of South India from the age of the Pallavas to the time of Vijayanagara Empire.

Burton Stein subjected Nilakantha Sastri's work to a serious historiographic critique. He pointed out conceptual contradictions in his historical generalizations. The main criticism was against his characterization of the policy as a centralized and bureaucratized set-up with autonomous provincial administration, a perception not taking account of the conceptual contradiction between centralization and autonomy. Stein's historiographic attack, to a great extent, affected only the semantic fabric of Sastri's generalizations, rather than the factual basis of his expositions strongly wedded to multilingual sources. Burton Stein rejects the idea of Vijayanagara as a strong and centralized empire. He applies the *Segmentary State model* to Vijayanagara. Stein's *Segmentary State Model* adopted a perspective first defined by Africanist ethnologist Aidan Southal. Stein argued that Vijayanagara and its Chola predecessor were relatively weak decentralized *segmented polities*, held together through ritual sovereignty rather than political or military power. Burton Stein claimed that, outside the *core* territory of the empire, the Vijayanagara monarchy exercised only a *ritual sovereignty* and that even at the height of their power in the early 16th century beyond the heart land of their empire where their power and the resources commanded were formidable, the Rayas were content with the homage and occasional tribute of distant chiefs. Moreover, they tolerated, if they did not actually foster, the creation by their nominal agents of compact territories – known as the *Nayaka states*, whose competition later helped to destroy the empire.

Some modern scholars appreciated this approach as being refreshing new way of looking at the Vijayanagara history. Many other scholars fierily criticized it as being a one-sided and impolite approach that could not adequately answer certain questions.

Noboru Karashima

Noboru Karashima introduced a major methodological shift in the historiography of South India. He replaced the impressionistic, speculative generalizations based on inscriptions by definitive statements based on a systematic, quantitative analysis of the epigraphically data. In that sense, we can describe him as one who was responsible for inaugurating a new epoch in South Indian historiography, or bring about a veritable shift in the paradigm of writing history in relation to that part of the country.

Karashima's interest in Indian studies stemmed from his own Buddhist background as well as his father's influence as a Chinese scholar. Being a Japanese scholar Japanese Indology was heavily oriented towards Sanskrit studies those days, but Karashima's to study South India using Tamil sources revolutionaries the field. Where earlier writers were impressionistically talking about the solid revenue base of the Chola State, what with the *myriad* revenue terms and a many-tired *revenue department*, this analysis brought out very interesting patterns regarding the frequency as well as distribution in space and time of the different lives. This changed the understanding of revenue system and of the state in early medieval South India. Loose statements about *a solid revenue base or alternatively, the slender revenue base* of medieval South Indian State got replaced by rigorous, testable, data analysed in a system manner.

Karashima extended this further in association with Y. Subbarayalu, when he embarked on a computer aided analysis of personal names figuring in the Chola inscriptions. Based on three thousand published inscriptions, this concordance, identifies nearly 96000 individuals by their name, father's name, village of origin, caste, titles held name, father's name, village of origin, caste, titles held and the purpose for which they care there in the inscription. Rather than looking at the rule of the Cholas in South India as a continuous, unbroken, affair spanning four centuries, these studies also showed that there were visible breaks, following which Chola rule was divided into four periods.

Karashima extended his work to the later period also. His considerable work on Vijayanagara, the pattern of Nayak rule and other details, likewise, took our understanding of that state much beyond a *Hindu bulwark* understanding of Vijayanagara. The rigour and discipline which systematic analysis enables can be seen even here. Karashima listened to the *whisper of inscriptions* intently and produced what are some of the best examples of micro-level studies. He made a thorough survey of the archaeology of India ocean trade. He also examined the development of religion particularly the way in which institutions such as the Mathas developed in the post-Chola period and influenced the ideology of the state. Throughout his career, he consistently wedded large generalizations to the rigorous and comprehensive use of sources.

Noboru Karashima had rejected the *Segmentary State Model* of Burton Stein. He in his work *South Indian History and Society; Studies form Inscriptions, 850-1800*(1984) focuses on the relations between kings and local lordship and the appearances of complex land holding rights. Karashima on the basis of his study of Vijayanagara *Nayakas* in the inscriptions of South Arcot, Tiruchirappalli, and Thanjavur districts, North Arcot and Chingelpet districts, discuss their rule as local rulers by ascertaining for the first time their numerical strength during Vijayanagara period. Examining the relations which those *Nayakas* had with the Vijayanagara king, Karashima points out the conspicuous political relations existing between the *Nayakas* and the King. Conversely, Burton Stein denies the

existence of political relations between *Nayakas*, who were according to him, magnates in the *segment or locality*, and the king, who integrated all of the localities only ritually.

Subbarayalu has reviewed some of the important issues related to the Vijayanagara history, namely the administrative structure, revenue system, Nayankara system, land revenue, and structure of the state in his article, "Recent developments in the Historiography of the Vijayanagara State". He compared the views of major authors like Burton Stein, N. Venkataramanayya, and Noboru Karashima to trace the trends in historiography.

MATERIAL – CULTURAL APPROACH: RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL ENTERPRISES

Since the late 1970's there has been an upsurge of interest in Vijayanagara archaeology. The focus of attention has been particularly on the city of Vijayanagara. Some work has also been done during the last few years in studying the monuments and material remaining in the wider areas of the empire in order to understand Vijayanagara history, art and culture.

This recent material-cultural approach to Vijayanagara historiography has not only focused on the material remains, it has also been interdisciplinary and collaborative in nature. The last three decades of research on Vijayanagara has involved historians, epigraphists, art historians, religious historians, geographers, geologists, astronomers, anthropologists and archeologists, who were interested in understanding questions concerning the nature, organization and history of the Vijayanagara Empire from the 14th century to the 17th century as the largest and most effective polity in pre-colonial South India. The approach of this collaborative community of Vijayanagara scholarship has differed from that of earlier historians.

For most of the early generations' scholars on Vijayanagara it was the texts that mattered-whether they were inscriptions, travelers' accounts, poetic works, sacred texts, chronicles and so forth. It was these that told the story of the lost grandeur of the Vijayanagara Empire. In their view, the material remains might have been impressive, but their role was largely secondary in nature, serving merely to illustrate the stories told by the texts.

For the scholars engaged in the recent approach to the study of Vijayanagara, the material remains, whether the monuments, sculpture, pottery or even carvings on the rocks, speak loudly.

The recent scholars raise a whole range of questions not touched upon in the written sources. They speak about the organization and construct of space and the kinds of activities that took place in the spaces that were created; about the labour and work; about structures of power and methods of force; about structures of power and methods of seeking legitimation of power won by force; about beliefs and religious practices; of how food was grown and craft products manufactured ; of the processes of cultural assimilation, synthesis, transformation, creation and dissemination that were at work resulting in a great mobility of ideas, of content, and form and of new trends in art and architecture, religious practices and courtly styles. The textual material is not ignored by these scholars; it is used as corroborative and supportive to the data provided by the archaeological remains.

This interest, beginning initially with the remains of the present-day Hampi, the erstwhile city of Vijayanagara, the capital of Vijayanagara Empire and later widening its scope to the larger area of the empire. The important recent investigations are, the work of an Indian-French team under Vasundhara and Pierre Filliozat at Hampi, the architectural and inscriptional study of Vithala Temple; Seminar in Germany at the South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University on Hampi, which was resulted in the publication of the two-volume book, *Vijayanagara:*

City and Empire. This included essays on the new insights and discoveries made about the site within the wider context of the empire.

The important scholars who involved in this approach are Carla M. Sinapoli, M.S. Nagaraja Rao, John M. Fritz, and George Michell. Carla M. Sinapoli, who has been a part of the Vijayanagara Community of Scholars from the early 1980's, highlights three aspects that have made the *new wave* of Vijayanagara scholarship so distinct; the sustained nature of the work; the respect for interdisciplinary perspectives; and the creation of a mutually supportive scholarly community. She describes some of the new insights into Vijayanagara history offered by this recent scholarship that has combined a serious engagement with both material remains and written records. For example, new understandings of the complex history of the empire as a whole and of religious practices and beliefs in the Vijayanagara period in South India; important insights into the agricultural economic foundations for urban growth and imperial expansion, and about communication and movement across the Vijayanagara landscape and so forth.

John M. Fritz, has been instrumental in bring Hampi to the attention of a wide audience worldwide. Kathleen Morrison, who joined the community of Vijayanagara scholars as a young student in the early 1980's and who, along with Carla M. Sinapoli, pioneered the Vijayanagara Metropolitan Survey, on the regional setting of the city of Vijayanagara. Nagaraja Rao was very active in surface archaeology, and mapping, excavations, conservation work, epigraphically studies of Hampi. Naline Thakur, a architectural conservationist, was directly involved with the drawing up of an Integrated Management Plan for the Hampi region. Thakur believes that every heritage site has the potential of unifying the community the heritage place and its historic dimension into one programme.

The scholars in the field of material culture like John. Fritz and George Michell also support the sectarian conflict between Hindus and Muslims. The appropriation of the sectarian trope is reflected in the work of John Fritz and George Michell who claims Vijayanagara's material history is primarily a reflection of 'Hindu' character. Fritz and Michell argue that Vijayanagara was the 'greatest of all medieval Hindu capitals in India' and that the 'power and magnificence of its rulers were the envy of the Muslim rulers'. They support this position by arguing that layout, monuments, and landscape of Vijayanagara represent a 'symbolic system that can be comprehended only within a framework of Hindu myth and culture'. Central to their argument is the location of the Ramachandra Temple at the center Vijayanagara's royal enclosure. According to Fritz and Michell this structure represents a 'state chapel'. By locating a state chapel at the center of the royal enclosure, they deliberately attempt to collapse the realms of religious so that the former eclipses the latter. A feature of this force or Hinduism according to Fritz and Michell is that religious and non-religious matters are never separate; it is unimaginable that any activity, impulse, or process is without some connection with the divine. Hinduism encompasses the complete spectrum of Indian life, from the very day of agricultural labour of the villager to the transcendental speculation for the philosopher. Fritz and Michell conclude that the layout of the royal center is symbolic of the "meeting of king and God", and as such representative Vijayanagara's Hindu character. They point two important points relating to the Vijayanagar kingship' First, they argue that the 'Vijayanagara ruler was ritually identified with Ramachandra, the divine hero-king'. Secondly, they state there was a vague analogy between the empire of Vijayanagara and the kingdom of Ayodhya, the overall equivalences is the assertion that the king manifests the same heroic and regal qualities as that of the God'.

In contrast historian Burton Stein argues that Hindu-Muslim conflict actually played a relatively minor role at Vijayanagara when compared to strife among Hindus. Actually, those who bore the brunt of Vijayanagara military power were most often Hindu rulers, not Muslims. And, ironically perhaps, the most strategically placed military units of the Vijayanagara military formation were composed of Muslims. He further problematizes the historical basis of the sectarian trope by noting the 'founding brothers of Vijayanagara had served in Muslim armies and that Devaraya II kept a copy of Koran beside his throne so that his Muslim soldiers could properly swear allegiance. He further says that although Fritz and Michell use material evidence to support the validity of the sectarian trope, the argument that Vijayanagara is understandable only from within the framework of Hindu myth, is also questionable from a material culture perspective. While discussing the symbolic character of Vijayanagara, Fritz and Michell fail to address the fact that Islamic architecture exists less than a hundred meters from the city's 'sacred 'Hindu center, the Ramachandra Temple. Furthermore, located in the *danaik* or governor's enclosure, these buildings are in fact closer to the Ramachandra Temple than any of the palace structures. Also, while Vijayanagara's heavily fortified wall system encompasses the Ramachandra Temple, it excludes the vast majority of the city's sacred sites; ironic for a city based on Hindu cosmology. This fact is surpassed in irony only by the fact *all* the city's mosques are located within the Vijayanagara's walls. In short Burton Stein argues that, Fritz and Michell's sectarian trope fails to result in a better understanding of Vijayanagara.

The other scholars were B. Sarathchandra, George Michelle, Alexander Greenlaw, S. Rajashekara, Anna.L. Dallpiccola, Anila Varghese, Alexandra Mack, Richard Shaw, Crispin Bran foot, Brigitte Khan Majlis, Barbara Mears, and Chudamani Bandagopal etc. George Michell is an architectural historian came to Vijayanagara in 1980 and started detailed documentation of the standing monuments.

COSMIC CITY CONCEPT

The literal meaning of *Cosmic City* is related to the regions of the universe distinct from earth. It can also be defined as vast or immeasurably extended in space or time. In other words, *cosmic city* means, a coming together of heads of government to take up the cosmic business of nations. The word *cosmos* comes from the Greek *Kosmos* meaning a well ordered whole.

Carla M. Sinopoli and Kathleen D. Morrison have identified *cosmic* natures in the Hampi the capital City of Vijayanagara Empire. According to him Vijayanagara imperial control as its capital through a consideration of variable contexts for and objects of imperial control. Imperial control of production and reproduction may be divided into two broad categories, like the control of humans, their labour as well as social and biological reproduction; and the control of access to a wide varsity of non-human resource. Among the latter are land, raw materials and tools, as well as the ability to mobilize resources through taxation, tribute gifts, markets or plunder. According to John Fritz, the alignments of Vijayanagara's roads also play an important role in the 'cosmic city' thesis. Vijayanagara Empire was the largest and most effective empire in pre-colonial South Indian history. Pre-existing political and economic structures, sacred beliefs and social frameworks, though modified during the Vijayanagara period, were integral to ideological, social and economic practices and organization. They argue that the strategies of control were ideology, militarism and movement, production and distribution.

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