

Emergence of a Regional Statehood: On Kakatiyan Polity

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Nearly a thousand years ago, the great polymath Al-Biruni, as if retrogressively resonating with the colonial historiographical attitude, stated:

‘unfortunately Hindus do not pay much attention to the historical order of things. They are very careless in relating the chronological succession of kings, and when pressed for information they are at a loss, not knowing what to say and invariably take to tale-telling’.¹

This strand of thinking extended to and was hypertrophied in the nineteenth-century British orientalist school of thought, spearheaded by men like James Mill who talked of the ‘astounding stationary condition’ of India’s institutions. It was apparently incorrigibly evident that India bore a ‘very uniform appearance during the long interval from the visit of the Greeks to that of English’, which, it may be worth reiterating, is a statement made in reference to a period of over two and half millennia.² Similarly, Karl Marx, in the vein of his intellectual predecessor Hegel, who also never visited the country nor knew any of its languages, was pompously confident enough to conclude that the entirety of Indian civilization was composed of self-sufficient villages in which ‘the lifestyle of time immemorial was reproduced indefinitely’.³ Needless to say, such statements reveal far more about these colonial commentators’ socio-cultural contexts than it does about the multi-variegated historical trends experienced by the India which they write of. It is only after the post-colonial rush of historical revisionism that these hitherto unquestioned historiographical strands were most frontally challenged, partly taking inspiration from the active nationalist historicising occurring during the independence struggle

But, unfortunately, much of this revisionist scholarly fervor was solely limited to and centered upon the North Indian terrain and, especially so, the Indo-Gangetic plains. As a result, there is relatively little work that posits a South Indian cultural and physical landscape as a site for doing history; moreover, one finds an even larger vacuum on histories of the Andhra-Telangana region. There are many reasons for this scarcity. One main reason could be that the Deccan region never had an enduring imperial or

¹ Al-Biruni, Abu’ l Raihan. *Tahqiq ma fil Hind*, as translated by Edward C. Sachau. London, 1888.

² Mills, James, *History of British India*, Baldwin Publishers, 1826.

³ Marx, Karl. *The British Rule in India*. New York Daily Tribune, 1853.

cultural center, unlike the Northern landscapes where such illustrious dynasties like the Guptas, Sultanates and Mughals, amongst many others, ruled for extended periods. Indeed, there is a greater abundance of literature on certain exceptional kingdoms such as the Kalyani Chalukyas, Cholas and the Vijayanagar rulers who have a significant impact on Indian peninsular history. But in any attempts to understand other minor kingdoms during the medieval times, ones that existed centuries before the above dynasties but which ruled significant geographical stretches, we are at a severe loss. Such a dynasty is the focus of this essay, a kingdom whose imperial influence extended from 1163-1325 CE: the Kakatiyas. In contrast to the colonially established image of a pre-colonial India as composed of a highly rigidified and static social structure, emplaced timelessly under and within Brahmanical hegemony, I will seek to present an 'alternative' historical reality as can be observed during the Kakatiyan times within the Andhra-Tel region. This is, needless to say, not to deny the existence of social hierarchies and such, but my effort here will be to suggest a pre-history of the social life of the caste structures in its thoroughly institutionalized form. I will delineate the nature of Kakatiyan polity as being charged with three main elements: (1) the political dynamism of the Kakatiyan state was directly linked to the demographic movements and technological developments that ultimately led to the creation of a distinctive Telugu statehood, (2) as opposed to the general historical outlook, the functionally deterministic and highly systematized workings of caste rigidities are not obvious features in Kakatiyan polity. Instead of the more matured form of caste *system*, what we can instead notice can be termed 'caste *clusters*' which then has further differential implications on our understanding of socio-political structures, (3) drawing from that, I turn my attention to trace social mobility and the varied personalized channels that facilitate this dynamism, by mainly showing that individual achievement and martial statuses were closely linked in shaping people's public identities, (4) and lastly, drawing from the above three points, I will delineate how the methods of documentation and anthologizing were critical features that enabled an emergence of historical consciousness that further established and legitimized the Kakatiyan polity. In order to illustrate the last point, I will be using a primary text, an anthology called *Sakala Niti Sammatamu*, produced in the early fifteenth century, which is attributed to a certain Madiki Singana about whom we know very little, only as can be derived from his prefatory writings.

When we look at the very first historical records that refer to the Kakatiyas, mostly dating from the mid-eleventh century, they are talked of as 'a minor family of chiefs entrenched in the town of Hanumakonda who rule its vicinity in Warangal District'.⁴ Yet, as is generally the case with royal genealogies, when we look at a text called *Pratapaparudra Caritamu* written by Ekamranatha, produced

⁴ Talbot, Cynthia. Pre-Colonial India in Practice: Society, Religion and Identity in Medieval Andhra. Oxford Publishers, 2001.

in the early sixteenth century, more than a century after the end of Kakatiya regime, we are presented with a mythification of the dynastic lineage. Here, Ekamranatha traces the genealogy from Narayana to Atri to Moon to Buddha to Puruhuta to Nahusa, and so on, before linking through the Pandavas and finally arriving at the founder of the dynasty, Somadeva.⁵ Apart from the mythological imagination, inscriptional genealogies suggest that Kakatiyas may have been active as far back in Telangana as the tenth century but given the lack of primary resources available before that, we are currently unable to know of their activities preceding this time. However, by the eleventh century, Kakatiyas were one of several Telangana chiefs to accept the overlordship of the Kalyani Chalukyas and thus issued their inscriptions in Kannada.⁶

Firstly, when we look at contemporary inscriptions as well as various other written works, such as Nannaya's epic poetry and Singana's prose works, we see the gradual but unmistakable emergence of Andhra as a unique, distinct, and self-conscious cultural region, even several centuries prior to the reign of Kakatiya's last and most popular king, Pratapa Rudra. As early as 1053, the term *Andhra Bhasha* was being used synonymously for Telugu, 'indicating that people were mapping language onto territory, whether consciously or not'.⁷ Further evidencing this proposition, we can look at the mid-eleventh century Nannayya's *Mahabharatam*, which is regarded as the first full-length poetic text produced in Telugu; this adds historical bite to Nannayya's epithet in *Adi Kavi*, where, in the 16th and the 26th poems in the Adi Parva, he refers to *Tenugu* as the language of the Andhras. This text, though, was produced under the lordship of Eastern Chalukyas, where Nannayya was a court poet to Rajaraja Narendra of Vengi Nadu; Vengi refers to the deltaic region of the Krishna and Godavari rivers. Similar evidence can be found in Nannaya Chodu's early twelfth-century *Kumara Sambhavam*, a prefatory series of poems where he talks of *Tenugu* as a '*Desiya Bhasha*', thus hinting at the emergence of a certain vernacular consciousness. Nor was Andhra alone in this process of emerging distinctive self-definition, which created a localised understanding of a linguistically defined region. A Marathi religious text dating back to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century enjoined its devotees to stay in Maharashtra and not to go to the Telugu or Kannada countries, 'a sentiment suggesting that in Maharashtra, too, region and language had become conceptually fused'.⁸ Thus, we can observe that there was a process of linguistic and vernacular gradation of regional consciousness underway before Kakatiyas broke into the picture as an independent kingdom. In fact, the unique grammar of a language

⁵ Rao, Ramachandra. A Chronicle of the Kakatiyas of Warangal. ICHR Monograph Series, 1984.

⁶ Talbot, Cynthia. Pre-Colonial India in Practice: Society, Religion and Identity in Medieval Andhra. Oxford Publishers, 2001.

⁷ Eaton, Richard. A Social History of Deccan, 1300- 1761. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁸ Ibid

and its concomitant geographic territory were, by now, more or less established; but to complete this project of distinctive regionalization, what was required was the scaffolding of an imperial statehood. It was the Kakatiyas who brought closure to this territory-language-statehood triad, ensuring its position in relation to similarly emerging linguistic states around Andhra, including Karnataka Hoysalas, Tamil Chalukyas, Maharashtra Yadavas.

In the early eleventh century, the Kakatiyas, aside from fighting other local chieftains in Telangana, also participated in military campaigns launched by the powerful Chalukya emperors Someshvara I and Vikramaditya VI outside Andhra. At this time, the coastal Andhra belt, which included West Godavari, East Godavari, Prakasam, and Krishna, was still under the control of Tamil Cholas. This situation persisted until the mid-twelfth century when both Kalyani Chalukyas and Tamil Cholas declined, leaving 'behind a political vacuum in the Andhra region'.⁹ It was only in 1158 that Kakatiya Rudradeva, taking advantage of the shifting political balances, launched a dynastic expansion into the Andhra hinterlands and northeastern coastal belts. It was during his reign that the Thousand Pillar temple in Hanumakonda, the then Kakatiyan capital, was built. The stone inscription, commemorating its founding in 1163 CE and written in Sanskrit but in the Telugu script, presents an elaborate genealogy of his ancestry and lists out his military accomplishments. But since 'this was the earliest of Rudradeva's inscriptions to omit any mention of the Chalukyan dynasty of Kalyani, we can assume that the construction of the temple was meant to mark Rudradeva's new status as an overlord in his own right'.¹⁰ In the succeeding thirty years of Rudradeva's reign, he built a fort in Warangal and shifted the capital from former Hanumakonda. Though Rudradeva was the first Kakatiyan king to establish the kingdom as independent, even at his peak the political stronghold did not extend beyond the Telangana region. It was only during the long reign of over six decades (1199-1262) of Ganapati Deva, Rudradeva's grandson, that Kakatiyan inscriptions started to appear outside of the Telangana region. Within a decade, after launching sustained attacks on coastal Andhra, he was able to control the area around the mouth of the Krishna river and the coastal territory immediately south of it. Thus also, his reign marked the first time that the Telugu speakers of the coast became politically unified with those of the interior. To reiterate, it was at this point that 'a process of supralocal identity formation and community building' began where the rulers of 'all three states (Hoysalas, Yadavas, Kakatiyas) promoted the fusion of language, linguistic region and dynastic authority'.¹¹

⁹ Sastry, Parabrahma. *The Kakatiyas of Warangal*. Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1976.

¹⁰ Talbot, Cynthia. *Pre-Colonial India in Practice: Society, Religion and Identity in Medieval Andhra*. Oxford Publishers, 2001.

¹¹ Eaton, Richard. *A Social History of Deccan, 1300- 1761*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

The last Kakatiyan king, Pratapa Rudra, gradually asserted his dominance in southern Andhra, conquering the Kayasthan chief, Ambadeva. Ambadeva was instrumental in the death of Pratapa Rudra's grandmother Rudrama Devi, who also ruled the kingdom for over two decades. Pratapa Rudra was just about able to conquer parts of southwestern Andhra, including two districts in Rayalseema, Kurnool and Cuddapah, which were hitherto under the Kakatiyan control only during the Ganapati Deva's reign. By around 1315, under Pratapa Rudra, Kakatiyas were able to defeat the Pandyan army, in a place near Kanchipuram, which was notorious for its increased alliances with the Rayalaseema chieftains that had been instrumental in the defeat of previous Kakatiyan kings. But Pratapa Rudra's enemy was not the same as his predecessors, who had only to fight local chieftains and the neighboring Tamil kingdoms. By now, Pratapa Rudra was being forced to pay tributes to Ala-ud-din Khalji, the Delhi Sultan, after the successful siege of the Warangal fort by the Khalji general Malik Kafur in 1310. Pratapa Rudra apparently stopped paying his tributes regularly to the sultanate though in 1318, he was forced to ritually acknowledge his subservience to the Sultan before, in 1323 after sustained and repeated failures of tributary payments, the Warangal fort was besieged. Though accounts vary on the details of his death, the general assumption is that Pratapa Rudra died soon after entering captivity. His death brought an abrupt end to the Kakatiyan empire, at the peak of its influence and power.

The process that was crystallized and consolidated most perfectly during the Pratapa Rudra's reign is also reflected in the broader history of the Kakatiyan dynasty; namely the dynamism of the moving economic and social frontiers it set forth. Precisely because of this, it was also able to fundamentally transform the character of both the land and the people it brought under its political control. On this account, the stone inscriptions, as Talbot and Eaton note, reflect the dynamic and the consolidatory nature of the Kakatiyan polity. During the Eastern Chalukyan times, the Deccan's dry interior, which includes the southwestern districts of Andhra (Kurnool, Cuddappah, Anantapur, Chittoor) had only been inhabited by a few pastoral groups or shifting cultivators. But the undulating landscape of Telangana, the central political region throughout the Kakatiyan reign, was well-suited for the construction of reservoirs or "tanks" formed by stone or mud embankments built across the rain-fed streams.¹² This, in turn, propelled the use of irrigation systems which enabled both wet and dry farming in this previously relatively unproductive frontier zone, including increasing the cultivation of wet rice in these areas. This ensured that the Kakatiyan state did not have to be as dependent upon or desperate to control the coastal littoral districts which had initially been the most important resource base available. According to Professor Pandu Ranga Rao, Chairman of Hanumakonda Degree College, around five thousand tanks were built all over the frontier regions by various warrior families subordinated by the Kakatiyas. Many

¹² Ibid

of these tanks are still in use today.

Such changes, as observed, not only ensured the creation of multiple resource bases for sustaining and improving agriculture but were also instrumental in ‘assimilating the former herders and shifting cultivators into a predominantly agrarian society’.¹³ Given these, before I delineate the issues of status typology, martial networking, and documentation practices in sharper focus, it is clear that during these long-term processes, (i) there was a gradual but large scale demographic movement into the interior territories of shifting cultivators, herders and, other artisans (ii) there was an increasing shifting of political power away from the coast to the hitherto uncontrolled centres in Rayalaseema hinterlands and further southern Andhra frontiers, including districts like Nellore, which was the deepest point in the Kakatiyan reign (3) and finally, given the consolidatory and functional political power of the Kakatiyas, there emerged a ‘Telugu state’ and, therefore, also concomitantly, the emergence of an increasingly distinctive Telugu cultural identity that spanned the lowlands and the uplands of the southeastern Deccan plateau.

Given this, much of the Kakatiyan and, for that matter, medieval south Indian history is traceable primarily through inscriptional and epigraphic sources. This is largely owing to the fact that, especially during these times, royal patronage of temple-building was central to practices of legitimizing kingship. Thus, statehood was connected to religious patronage in very intricate ways. It was during the construction of these temples when many epigraphic inscriptions are founded as public documents. This display of details regarding the donors, the subordinate networks, the controlling royal nobility and so on proved significant in constructing and curating the public identities of the parties involved. Given these were public documents, they also held an exhibitionistic value that led to the negotiation, establishment and legitimization of the identities of the different donors. These were also occasions to gain favor and entry into the upper classes and networks of the polity. One of the most important contributions of epigraphic inscriptions is that they provide, most often, very specific details and contexts about the exact place and time that is otherwise generally lacking in literary texts produced in medieval and ancient periods. As Sheldon Pollock notes, because the Indian intellectual tradition adopted the ‘model of the eternal character of religious truth for all forms of knowledge’, the medieval literary texts embraced a timeless character.¹⁴ Apart from these, many of these epigraphic inscriptions found on temples provide us with details about patronage networks, endowment records and, in the Kakatiyan case, details and attitudes of a diverse set of people that are generally not mentioned in either literary productions or the

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Talbot, Cynthia. *Pre-Colonial India in Practice: Society, Religion and Identity in Medieval Andhra*. Oxford Publishers, 2001.

formal institutional texts, such as merchants, landed peasants, herders, warrior chiefs, and women.¹⁵ Thus, it is not far-fetched to assume that epigraphic production was a social act directly linked to the growth and vitality of political networks.¹⁶

Here thus, social classification, as can be derived from the names and titles of the donors of religious endowments, can inform the different models of Kakatiyan social organization. Thereby, after observing certain patterns and shifts within those patterns, we will be in a position to construe possibilities of social mobility and individual achievement. Given this, any discussion of pre-colonial India must address the issue of caste and subcaste, as based upon the systems of *Varna* and *Jati*. The fourfold schema of varna and the multiple jatis that branch out from it have long been understood as the idealized paradigm of social structuring in pre-colonial India, contributing to a general discourse of medieval India as being highly rigid and uniform in its institutional setups and social functioning. But if this was the case and *varna* and *jati* were, in fact, the most significant central identity markers in pre-colonial India, we would 'expect to find numerous references to them in medieval Andhra inscriptions'. Yet, as Talbot notes, 'few of the donors of the endowments recorded in these documents choose to describe themselves in these terms.'¹⁷ Instead, what was presumably a more important detail to be recorded, and thus to be identified by, was genealogical accounts, ancestral lineages, and the names of their overlords. This claim, indeed, is not to deny the existence of anything like caste, varna or jati but, instead, what this evidence points to is the fact that different types of identities take centre stage at different historical moments in the society's public sphere. As Talbot and Somashekhar Sharma note, one of the 'peculiarities' of the Andhra society at this time was that many of the leading warrior families did not claim *kshatriya* status, but instead 'proudly proclaimed their descent from the Brahma's feet'.¹⁸ Similarly, there are many inscriptions from the mid-fourteenth century which uphold the *sudra* status as 'the best of the four varnas because they are the bravest and/or the purest'. Talbot produces one such inscription, interestingly written in Sanskrit:

The four-faced Brahma, having sprung from the centre of Vishnu's navel-lotus, created the celestial beings. Then from his own mouth, arms, thighs, and lotus-feet, he produced the brahman, the king, the Vaishya, and the Sudra, respectively. The Kakatiya dynasty, praised by the entire world and belonging to the fourth varna, then came into existence. In it was born the

¹⁵ Eaton, Richard. *A Social History of Deccan, 1300- 1761*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹⁶ Talbot, Cynthia. *Pre-Colonial India in Practice: Society, Religion and Identity in Medieval Andhra*. Oxford Publishers, 2001.

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ *Ibid*

king named Prola, who was renowned for being exceedingly judicious.¹⁹

Thus, it is interesting to note that, though in the majority of contemporary inscriptional accounts, Kakatiyan overlords and Kings were proudly publicizing their *sudra* status, the later texts like *Pratapa Rudra Caritam* were actively engaging in schematizing and emphasising a more illustrious ancestry by linking the ruling families with the ancient lunar dynasty and gods of the Brahminical fold. It is beyond the scope of this essay to delineate the reasons behind this reconstruction of the royal imaginary, but it is largely linked to the Vijayanagara polity's attempts to consolidate its multi-lingual subject territories and imitations of imperial Chola rulers. But essentially, what the absence of caste-records on inscriptions attests to is that caste affiliations were considered irrelevant for the purpose of enhancing the prestige and public power of donor communities. Instead, the clan and patrilineal identities were more important. Thus, we see in almost every epigraph from the time the mention of *gotra*, and *vamsa*.

From the twelfth to the mid-fourteenth centuries, given the complex political interpellations, identity fluidities, and the emergence of new kinds of social consciousness, the many rulers and writers of the time produced and showed a great interest in theorizations and reflections about the nature of statehood and social polity. Additionally, the conditions that existed for general upward mobility among many Deccan communities motivated many of these writers to produce these works in Telugu. As Narayana Rao notes, some of the authors of *niti* books from this period were themselves kings, ministers or ones associated with people of power in some way.²⁰ One such contemporary anthological text is *Sakala Niti Sammatamu* compiled by Madiki Singana in which he describes his act of compiling the process of making a garland, stitching together different flowers that can spread a fragrance throughout the state. In the *Pitika* section, he even declares that *niti* should have equal circulation everywhere like a coin with the visage of the sultan. In the text, Singana selects 982 different poems from seventeen distinct *niti* texts, some of which are not available to us currently. In it, for instance, he quotes from *Nitisaramu*, written by Rudradeva I, the figure discussed earlier in this essay; Sivadevayya's (1250-1300) *Purusharthasaramu* also features Siddaveya being a minister of the king Ganapati Deva. The text also has many poems that Singana himself authored, and it also contains poems by Appappamantri who wrote a Telugu version of Bhoja's *Carucarya*, a book of advice about healthy habits for wealthy people to follow.²¹

In his 'contents page', Singana lists out forty-seven categories covering various topics related to kings,

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Rao, Ramachandra. A Chronicle of the Kakatiyas of Warangal. ICHR Monograph Series, 1984.

²¹ Ibid

accountants, doctors, commoners, astrologers and scribes. Mainly, given this is a *niti* text, the tone is ‘this-worldly’ or *loukika*, as opposed to a *dharma sastra* text which would be more religiously inclined. Thus, *niti*, the etymological root for *neta* or political leader, can better be understood as being mainly concerned about the pragmatics and practical affairs of the state, rather than providing a theological formulation or spiritual reasoning for legitimizing kingship and so on. It is about the ethical conduct of the subjects.

In Singana’s text, we get an idea of kingship not as a divinely legitimated right, nor as a ritualistic force that supposes political and social unity of its territory. Instead, we see a strong awareness of kingship as being situated in a fragmentary state, vulnerable to instabilities and shifts. This makes sense when we consider that Kakatiyan territorial boundaries, apart from the core areas, were always shifting as every king or ruler changed. Even within a single ruler’s reign, there was a constant struggle to withhold attacks not only from neighboring states of Tamil Cholas, Maharashtra Yadavas and Hoysalas but also from within. Internal conflicts recur, like Rudrama Devi’s struggles against Ambadeva, who was a local Kayastha chieftain, or during Ganapati Deva’s rule, when northeastern districts allied with Orissa’s Kalingas and Southwestern districts of Rayalaseema sided with Pandyas, constantly waging battles against Kakatiyan rule. Looking at the following excerpts from Singana’s texts provides clarifications:

- A king who does not command is like a king in a painting, (good only for looks). If a king doesn't punish anyone who defies his command- even if the wrongdoer is his own son- he does not rule long.
- Wherever a letter might come from, a king should never disregard it. It is only through letters that a king knows everything- from alliances to enmities.
- Not killing criminals amounts to killing a host of gentle people. All that you need to do in order to kill cows is to spare a tiger.²²

In the above excerpts, apart from the straightforward nature of this advice, a sense of kingship is portrayed that is plagued by dangers from external enemies, and also from within like the ‘wrongdoing son’. As such, this text is solely concerned with success gained by dealing with challenges to stability, and not positive theocratic delineations of royal authority, as is found in Manu’s *Dharmasastra*, for instance, where we find verses such as these:

²² Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. Notes on Political Thought in Medieval and Early Modern South India.

- The king is godly, and that is what Manu says, and he should be treated as such, and wise people should not treat him otherwise.
- Even if he is a boy, a king should not be treated as an ordinary mortal. He's god and that's how he should be treated.²³

Thus, in the Singana text the king is locally situated, not claiming universal status as is generally the case. This also attests to a general trend in the inscriptional evidence, where the Kakatiyan kings refer to themselves as *mahamandaleshwara* (great tributary lord, *mandala* referring to a locality, or a tributary domain) as opposed to the more pompous *maharajadhuraja* (king of kings) which was, for instance, more common in the Tamil states. The other excerpts follow:

- To allow merchants to take as much as they want is to ruin your people.
- If you don't make scales and measures uniform, it means you effectively permit thieves to go scot-free.
- If a king increases taxes, that effectively prevents (foreign) goods from entering his country.²⁴

Here again, a pragmatic economic traffic appears, one that a king has to control and manipulate in order to arrive at the most profitable position for all. Though slightly far-fetched, here again we see that a community or communities are being referred to as merely 'merchants', rather than a 'merchant class' or *vysyas* as we would expect from a text primarily concerned with the codes of conduct and ethics of specific communities. This again attests to a clustering of castes in the Kakatiyan polity that was distinct from the matured, modern Indian caste system. Further, Singana's text mentions Brahmins exclusively in specific instances. Advice is also given about homogenising the economic apparatus for the sake of common people and there is a clear aim to unify and consolidate the Kakatiyan social polity. Such a goal was even more pertinent in the early emergence of Telugu statehood, in its path towards self-definition and in its determination to divorce from the external tutelage of the Tamilian and Kannada states.

Thus, the importance of the Kakatiyan dynasty is clear in the initiation and establishment of new formations that arose from agrarian resettlements and expansion, growth of population, and an extension of ruling landscape from coastal littoral sites to the drier inland. Such change further

²³ Rao, Ramachandra. A Chronicle of the Kakatiyas of Warangal. ICHR Monograph Series, 1984.

²⁴ Ibid

catalysed the development of a localized regional idiom of kingship and polity that was concerned with its own linguistic identity and, needless to say, it has entered and sustained the popular imagination for centuries after its decline. It was for this very reason that Vijayanagara kings were highly concerned with the reconstruction of this image ideologically through texts such as *Pratapa Rudra Caritamu*, and even to this day, Tollywood film-makers are willing to spend crores on historical movies set during the period.

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