at several of the major urban centres of India, at Gujarat, Golconda, Malabar, the east coast as well as at Burhanpur and Agra. The banking facilities he was prepared to offer to those willing to avail of these were commensurate with his widespread mercantile network. Outside the country he maintained relations with Java in the Southern Seas \(^9\), and with Basra and Gombroon in the Gulf region. With the passage of time it appeared to the English as though Virji Vora was the sole monopolist in European commodities. From the description given by Martin of the privileges the brothers Boras were prepared to offer to the French Company, and following from the shrewd suspicion formed by the Diarist that the ultimate aim of the two brothers was that of acquiring a monopoly hold on the activities of the Company, it appears reasonable to surmise that one of the two brothers was in fact Virji Vora. The degree of expertise involved in carrying on negotiations with the Company in Paris \(^10\) was not a skill many merchants at Surat could have possessed. If, however, this tentative identification is to be made more definitive, the probable age of Virji Vora in the year 1685 has to be established. It is in this year that the brothers Boras receive their last mention by François Martin.

The name, Virji Vora, comes up for the first time in the English records in the year 1619 \(^11\). Kamdar states that by year of the first sack of Surat by Shivaji in 1664, Virji Vora was already “quite old”. Moreland surmises that the year of the death of this merchant prince could be placed to 1677. If the year of the birth of Virji Vora is taken as 1600 he would have been 19 in 1619. He is known to have provided the English with substantial credit in the year 1630, which presupposes that he should have been well settled by this date. He could well have achieved this position by the age of thirty, and even today in India, sixty-four, the age he had probably reached in the year 1664, is considered reasonably advanced. In 1685 he would have been eighty-five years old and it is well within the realms of historical probability to stretch the year of the death of Virji Vora by an additional decade beyond the year 1677 as given by Moreland. In view of the weight of this circumstantial evidence it appears reasonable to identify the elder of the two brothers Boras as Virji Vora, particularly as Martin makes it quite explicit that of the two brothers he was the senior partner in every sense of the term.

Lotika Varadarajan

\(^9\) The term loosely used in the seventeenth century to define the region around the Malaysian Archipelago including the Philippines.

\(^10\) As shown in the letter sent by the brothers Boras to the Company in Paris cited by Martin in his entry dated September 1684.


Nāyakas as Lease-holders of Temple Lands\(^1\)

Introduction

There are many Tamil inscriptions of Vijayanagar times which are inscribed on the walls of a Śiva temple in Devikapuram, North Arcot District, Tamilnadu, in South

\(^1\) The Japanese original of this article, which differs in several points from this English version, was published in Jubilee Volume presented to Dr. Tatsuro Yamamoto on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday (Yamakawa Shuppansha, Tokyo, 1972).

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India. Thirteen of these inscriptions record the lease of the temple lands to individuals or institutions on certain conditions. Not only in these Devikapuram inscriptions but also in the inscriptions of many other localities do we find similar cases of the leasing of the temple land, when we go through the contents of Vijayanagar inscriptions in *The Annual Report on (South Indian) Epigraphy*. Such abundance of evidence of the lease of temple lands leads us to infer that the lease system was probably of importance among the various systems of land tenure prevailing in the Vijayanagar Empire. So far, however, no detailed study of such leases has been attempted and I wish to examine in this paper these thirteen Devikapuram inscriptions 2) so as to place the problem in the wider context of the land systems and the control of land attempted by both the central and local powers.

**Temple Authorities**

As for the authorities who leased out the temple land, there appear in inscriptions the names of several groups and individuals. Those groups are: tänattär, mabēśvarar, tänamabēśvarar, gurukkal and kaikkōlamudaligal. The individuals are Isānaśivāchārya 3) and Viśvēśvaraśivāchārya, both of whom belonged to Bhikshā-mātha of Devikapuram and are stated to be responsible for the finances of the temple.

Though we do not know the interrelation of these groups, one thing is clear: that when tänamabēśvarar is mentioned in the inscriptions as one of the authorities who transacted the lease, the tänattär or mabēśvarar do not appear. The tänamabēśvarar, therefore, may have consisted of tänattär and mabēśvarar together, or may have combined in one body the functions of the two.

As our present concern is with the lease-holders and not the temple organization, we simply treat these groups as the representatives of the temple and do not go into details concerning them.

**Lease-holders**

As for the lease-holders, the first thing we notice on reading the thirteen inscriptions is that five out of the thirteen recipients of the land were nāyaka. They are: Tirumalai-nāyaka (No. 352), Sadāśīva-nāyaka (353), Koniappa-nāyaka (369), ... śiva.-nāyaka (387) and Namaśśivāya-nāyaka (389). In the inscriptions of the Devikapuram temple which record the donation of land and other items there appear yet other nāyakas as the donors. Many of those nāyakas who appear in the Devikapuram inscriptions are mentioned as “belonging to the regiment of Kappaṇḍiya nāyakas who stay in

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2) Nos. 352-354, 365-369, 372, 373, 375, 387 and 389 of *The Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for the Year 1912*. The dates of these inscriptions fall within about thirty years in the first half of the sixteenth century, i.e., A.D. 1507-1548. Though the texts of these inscriptions are still unpublished, I have read the transcripts and impressions of them preserved in the Office of the Chief Epigraphist, Mysore, under the kind permission of Dr B. B. Lal, then Director General, and Dr G. S. Gai, the Chief Epigraphist, of the Archaeological Survey of India, for which I am very grateful to them. In the interpretation of some words and phrases I was helped by Mr C. R. Srinivasan, Epigraphical Assistant at the Office of the Chief Epigraphist and my thanks are also due to him.

3) Isānaśivāchārya was an āchārya of high reputation. See *A.R.E.* 1923-1924, para 50.