

adaptation and localization of Chinese influence were vital for this period. The issue of Indianization of Linyi therefore needs further investigation in archaeological terms, and the research proceeding on rampart of the Tra Kieu citadel will hopefully provide triggers to tackle the issue.

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### Antecedents of the State (Polity) Formation in Early South India

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The paper seeks to try and discuss the historical antecedents of the state formation in the early Deccan in general with and the Tamil macro region in particular. It is theoretically accepted widely that the state formation, inevitably *sui generis* in a class structured society, which precludes diffusion or transplant, can be studied only against its historical socio-economic processes. Analysis of historical socio-economic processes is best done within the theoretical framework of social formation. Hence, the paper first goes about characterising the socio-economic

processes of the early Deccan as the background of the Andhra/Sātavāhana political formation briefly. Then it proceeds to characterise the early historical social formation of the Tamil macro region and its political formations represented by the three principal chiefly lineages (*mūvēntar*), namely the Cēra, Pāndya and Cōla, the hill chieftains (*vēlir*), and the village chieftains (*ūr-kilar* or *ūr-mannar*) in some detail. Historians making little difference between lineages and dynasties or chieftains and kings, have treated Andhra/Sātavāhana as a dynasty on the basis mainly of the genealogy given in the Puranas and the royal names mentioned in the inscriptions. They have treated the early Cēra, Pāndya and Cōla as dynasties too on the basis mainly of allusions in the colophons of the Tamil heroic poems.



The landscape ecotypes and human habitation in the Deccan and Andhra as revealed by archaeological studies show that the socio-economic processes thereof during the immediate post-Mauryan period were of the coexistence and interaction of multiple strategies of subsistence based on varying levels of technology ranging from those of the hunter-gatherers, primitive tribal agriculturists, agro-pastoral clans, plough farmer households, crafts producers and long distance traders. Most of the fertile alluvial plains along the Krishna and Godavari rivers were not under plough as yet, and plough agriculture was confined to small isolated pockets managed by local headmen and big merchants who had owned *dāsa/bhrutaka* (slave) labour. Some of them were successors of the Mauryan officers like *mahāmātras*, *rajukas*, *prādēsikas* etc. Heirs of such office bearers of the Mauryan state seem to have continued as local chieftains (*rathika-s* and *bhōjaka-s*) wielding control over resources and people. The Sātavāhana rulers must have emerged from among these prominent chiefly households, particularly of the merchant leader. This had involved only a binary social division between the chieftains and their *dāsa/bhruthka-s* who ensured the former of goods and services, precluding the possibilities of any complex structural differentiation. Naturally, they were chieftains through-out their early phase until the localities witnessed wet-rice agrarian expansion and caste based social stratification with a remarkable influence of Brahmanical religion that subsequently conferred upon them Kshatriya identity and royal status, signifying the formation of the state.

The *Vēntar* represented biggest of chiefly lineages and there were three of them (*mūvēntar* or *mūvar*) namely: the Cēras, Pāndyas and Cōlas. They had their core areas in Karūr, Madurai and Uraiyur with the peripheral strategic points at Muciri, Kōrkai and Puhār respectively. The Cēras held sway over the *kuriñji* dominated zones of the Western Ghats towards sea, the Pāndyas, the *mullai*, *pālai*, neital dominated zones in the south central region of Tamilakam and the Cōras, the *marutam* dominated Kāvēri region. There was no notion of precisely demarcated territory and apart from references to core areas of each, the poems give us no clues to the actual spheres of each one's control. The control got transmitted through subordinate chiefs towards the periphery where it waned and constantly fluctuated. There is no evidence for any regular periodic exaction in fixed measure or quantity by these chieftains who like the lesser chiefs had to depend on predatory campaigns and voluntary offerings. The returns from exchange relations must have enabled the *Vēntar* to possess gold and other prestige items. They had a large body of dependents such as their kinsmen (*kilainar*), scholarly bards (*pulavar*), warrior chiefs (*maravar*, *kilār* and *mannar*), warrior men (*maravar*), bards (*pānar* and *porunar*) magico-religious functionaries and so on. Plunder was indispensable for them since their redistributive network

was much more elaborate and complex. The poetic flower symbolism of *vetci* (cattle raid), *karantai* (cattle recovery), *vañji* (chieftain's raid), *kāñji* (chieftain's resistance of a raid) and *tumpai* (preparation for raid) show how institutionalized and common the plunder was. There is no evidence for the *Vēntar* maintaining a ready troop of warriors like a standing army. They had only a set of people belonging to the fighter clan with kinship ties who could be mobilized instantaneously by the beating of a battle drum.

The central argument of the paper is that the society in the Deccan as well as the Tamil macro region was largely non-stratified and, therefore, the postulation of the state is an anachronism. In the case of Deccan there was a bit of difference in culture due to the influence of both the Sramana as well as the Brahmana world views. Agro-pastoral clan settlements were more in the region compared to the situation in the Tamil country. However, the political formation of the chiefdom characterised both the regions, where absence of features such as stratified society, territory, standing army, bureaucracy, and periodic exaction is conspicuous. However, the chiefdom in the Deccan, relatively monetized and document based in its transactions, was fast heading towards the state. Contemporary political authority was determined by the range of redistributive social relationships sustained through predatory accumulation of resources. Until the expansion of wet-rice agriculture and spread of the new relations of production leaving the society class-structured, the chiefly lineages remained as part of the pre-state polity. Antecedents of the state formation involved transition from kin-labour to non-kin labour, multiple functionaries to hereditary occupation groups, clans to castes, clannish settlements to structured agrarian villages, and chiefdom to monarchy.

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