
**CRAFTSMEN AND SOME POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS IN
THE GOA REGION (AD 1000 TO 1510)**

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ABSTRACT

The craftsmen played an important role for the rulers and elites. They were involved in the minting of coins as well as during the time of making donations. They also produced items which were utilised by the elites as well as the common people. Besides this, they were also involved in various temple celebrations and activities. They also made various grants for the upkeep of the temples. This article attempts to study the contributions of the craftsmen in the political and religious domain.

Keywords: Craftsmen, artisans, goldsmiths, inscriptions

INTRODUCTION

The craftsmen played an important role for the state and the elites. They were required at the time of donations and giving of gifts. They were also involved in donations to temples. V. R. Mitragotri has briefly mentioned about the craftsmen and their role in the society of Goa. G. M. Moraes has touched upon some aspects of guild activity. V. V. Mirashi, R. N. Gurav and S. L. Shantakumari have provided important details as well as inscriptions wherein the craftsmen and artisans have been mentioned. These inscriptions help gain an insight into the actions of the rulers and elites as well as the temples and how the craftsmen interacted to play a role in the political and religious sphere. Some of the inscriptions which show the role that the craftsmen played in the political and religious landscape will be seen.

POLITY

Goa has the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka on its land boundary and the Arabian sea on its coast.ⁱ The Silaharas of the South Konkan ruled from AD 750 under the Rashtrakutas and later under the Western Chalukyas. The Silaharas of the North Konkan and the Silaharas of Kolhapur were also prominent in the region. The Kadambas of Goa ruled under the Western Chalukyas from about AD 1020.ⁱⁱ In the early fourteenth century AD, the region saw the attacks of the forces of Ala-ud-din Khilji and later of Muhanad-bin-Tughlak. The Vijayanagara empire came to

control Goa. By AD 1472, Goa was lost to the Bahamani empire. Goa came under the jurisdiction of the Adil Shah of Bijapur with the weakening of the Bahamani dynasty. The Portuguese took Goa soon after in AD 1510.ⁱⁱⁱ

CRAFTSMEN, RULERS AND ELITES

In the case of South India, the royal household and state officials were consumers of goods.^{iv} The Smritis also indicate the importance of the performance of *danas* and *vratas*. Some of the *danas* which the kings performed included the *tuladana* wherein they weighed themselves against gold which was granted.^v The Cambay plates of the Rashtrakuta prince Govinda IV found in Cambay refers to a grant dated AD 930. It informs that the prince ascended the scales and weighed himself against gold and granted land as well as money in the form of coins like *suvarnas* and *drammas*.^{vi} The scales that he ascended when he made these grants was the *tulapurusha*.^{vii} The Marcella plates inform that Guhalladeva II of the Kadambas of Goa was ruling in AD 1038. It goes on to inform that he made a grant of the village of Sauvai near Veraka to a person by weighing himself against gold (*tula-purusha-kamchana-samchayena*).^{viii} The Gandevi inscription dated AD 1042-43 informs that Shastha II of the Kadambas of Goa visited Prabhasa. After worshipping the god Somesvara there, he twice distributed gold in charity after weighing himself against gold. On his way back, he constructed a pavilion at the market place near Gandevi which would serve as a resting place.^{ix} Jayakesi I of the Kadambas of Goa is also known to have performed the *tula-puru-shav-irddu* by weighing himself against gold more than once and granting *agraharas*. The Asoge plates inform of him procuring precious stones and jewels from the ocean and distributing them.^x A *vrata* finds mention in the grant of Gandaraditya which informs of the *pancha-langala-vrata*.^{xi} The Talale copper-plates of the *Mahamandalesvara* Gandaraditya of the Silaharas of Kolhapur dated AD 1110 records that he performed the *pancha-langala-vrata* wherein a gift of land, five ploughs of wood, five ploughs of gold and ten bulls were made.^{xii} Hence it would appear that the craftsmen, especially goldsmiths, played a crucial role at the time of donations by the kings and elites.

In the case of South India, gold and silver jewellery were utilised by the affluent people and brass and copper items were used by the common people. The craftsmen were also involved in minting coins.^{xiii} The Pattanakudi plates believed to be of Avasara II of the Silahara of the South Konkan dated AD 988 informs that three merchants paid the king 40 *dinaras* for the confirmation of some rights.^{xiv} The Gandevi inscription informs that Shastha II of the Kadambas of Goa gave gifts of gold regularly. He also went on pilgrimages and gave learned men gold.^{xv} The Thana stone inscription of Aparaditya II of the Silaharas of the North Konkan dated to AD 1185 records that various flowers as well as money were used during the ceremony when the grant was made.^{xvi} An inscription of the Kadambas of Goa informs that during the time of Jayakesi, a number of palanquins could be seen in the city. Their poles were covered with jewels

and their owners who sat inside wore gold earrings.^{xvii} All these instances indicate that the people used items which were probably made by the local artisans and craftsmen.

In South India, portrait sculpture also was a common requirement for the royals.^{xviii} The period of the Vijayanagara rule in Goa also witnessed the production of portrait sculpture. The portrait of Madhavamantri, who administered Goa under the Vijayanagara kings, is one example. The sculpture depicts him with a bow and sceptre in his hands and a quiver of arrows on his shoulder. He is also shown wearing necklaces and anklets.^{xix} The presence of such sculptures indicate that the services of the sculptors were utilised by the elites.

In the North Konkan, there were a few types of coins present. The *dramma* was a silver coin, also called the *rajata-nishka*.^{xx} The *gadyanaka* was a gold coin mentioned in the inscriptions of the Silaharas of the North and South Konkan. The Kharepatan plates of Rattaraja refers to it as the *suvarna gadyanaka*.^{xxi} Under the Kadambas, the *gadyana* was an important coin. There were variations in the coins like the *Bhairava-gadyana* and the *Brihat-bhairava-gadyana* which are found mentioned in a grant of Tribhuvanamalla dated AD 1107.^{xxii} Another coin called the *honna* was known to be used by the Kadambas of Hangal. A coin called the *nishka* finds mention in the inscription of King Vishnuchitta of the Kadambas of Goa wherein ornaments worth 500 *nishkas* were stolen by a person. The *haga* was another coin mentioned in their inscriptions.^{xxiii} Moraes believed that under the Kadambas of Goa, the custom of striking coins differently on the obverse and reverse became more distinct. It was on the basis of their coins that the Vijayanagara kings based their *varaha* coinage. The practice of writing inscriptions in parallel lines on the reverse was also followed by the Vijayanagara kings.^{xxiv} The Panjim copper-plates of the reign of the Vijayanagar king Harihara II dated to AD 1391 records the grant of an *agrahara*. This *agrahara* village was created by combining the two villages of Govali and Mauli. The total revenue of the combined villages of Govali and Mauli came to 367 *tamkas* and 34 *jaithalas*. The coin called the *jaithala* was probably the same as the *jital*.^{xxv} All these different coins indicate that they were used by the people at the time. The making of these coins by the goldsmiths indicate that their services were an essential part of the economy.

CRAFTSMEN AND THE TEMPLES

The Chinchani plate of the reign of Chhittaraja of the Silaharas of the North Konkan dated to AD 1034 was found in the Thana district. It records that Chamundaraja, a feudatory of the Silahara king Chhittaraja, granted a *ghanaka* or an oil-mill to the temple of goddess Bhagavati at Samyana. The oil of the mill was to serve two purposes. One was for the burning of a lamp in the temple. The other was to apply on the feet of the Brahmana scholars who would visit the temple. The oil mill was donated free of all taxes. The oil as well as oil cakes produced by it were to be made over to the temple. The grant was made by pouring water over the hand of a scholar by the

name of Vihada. It appears that he was placed in charge of the oil mill. There were also a number of terms stated. It informed that none should obstruct him from using or allowing him to give others access to use the oil mill. It was also not to be assigned or attached. The oil mill could also not be entered by *chatas* and *bhatas*.^{xxvi} The inscription indicates that the production of oil was an important activity.

Yewur in the Gulbarga district was earlier known as Ehur.^{xxvii} An inscription at Yewur of the time of the Western Chalukya king Vikramaditya VI dated AD 1110 refers to some donations. These donations were made by 120 members of guilds of craftsmen to the temple of Kammatesvara at Ehur. The guild of the stone-cutters provided one gold piece. The guild of the braziers provided lime for the drawing of sacred figures. The carpenters, the blacksmiths and the goldsmiths provided one *ada* for every house.^{xxviii} The Madanbhavi inscription dated AD 1138 informs that Jayakesi II was ruling along with his queen Mailala-mahadevi. Madanbhavi is near Kittur. It records that Jayakesi came to the temple of Kalidevasvami in the village of Mandura (modern Madanbhavi) and granted land. This was done to mark his vow of visiting the place every Monday. Besides others, we are also informed that the blacksmith (*kammara*), the washerman (*madivala*) and the oilman (*telliga*) made some grants.^{xxix} A slab in the Dharwad Museum containing an undated inscription of the reign of the Western Chalukya king Jagadekamalla II who is known to have been in power from AD 1139-1149 makes mention of a gift from a goldsmith. The gift was a gold plate which was valued at 12 *pons*. The gift was made out of the goldsmith's income from *akkasalada achchina keni*. This probably referred to the goldsmith's income for minting of coins for offering *palu-mandage* which is a sweet dish served with milk.^{xxx} These inscriptions indicate that the craftsmen were involved in the making of donations to the temples.

A Kadamba inscription in a ruined Siva temple in the village of Siddapur is dated Saka 1080. It is of the time of the *Yuvaraja* Vijayaditya who ruled with his brother, the *Mahamandalesvara* Sivachitta. The inscription also mentions control over the territories of Palasige 12000 and the Konkana 900. The inscription records that certain dues were to be collected which would go towards the worship and maintenance of the temple of the of god Prabhulinga of Hosavalal in Kitturu 30. Among the various groups included were a group of sixty people who had to provide one set of earthen pots for oil. The gardeners were to provide one *paga* for each of the ceremonies of the Chaitra and the Pavitra.^{xxxi} A record from Bailur belonging to the twelfth century AD informs that certain people made grants and offerings for the *chaitra-pavitra* celebrations of god Hermesvara. These people included Singoja the *akkasali* or goldsmith, Dasoja the *kammara* or blacksmith and Madivala-Soppayya, the washerman.^{xxxii} The inscription of the Kadambas of Goa mentions that the gardeners gave a *haga* for both the Chaitra and the Pavitra celebrations at the temple of Kaleswaradeva of Attibavi.^{xxxiii} A stone inscription of the

period of Harihara I of the Vijayanagara period dated AD 1402 in the Marathi language was found at Veluz in the Sattari taluka. It informs of the contribution of one *gadyan* of the people of the Masarvade village of the Athwale region towards temple worship. It further informs that payments were to be made for certain services and to the temple servants who were involved in the worship of the deity called Ravalnath. The payments included one *tanka* to the priest, four *tankas* towards lighting of the lamp, six *tankas* to the washerman and three *tankas* to the other temple servants. It gives an idea of the temple servants and the rituals involved. Another inscription from the same place and same king dated AD 1408 refers to the donation of 1/36th part of the produce to the temple. A stone inscription in the Nageshi temple at Bandivade in the Ponda taluka in Goa is dated to the Vijayanagara period. It informs that four hundred earthen lamps and wicks were to be provide by Mai Senvi to be lit for the *dipamala* celebrations.^{xxxiv} All these inscriptions show that the craftsmen were involved in donations of different kinds during the celebration of festivals.

CONCLUSION

In south India, in various regions, the artisans attempt to gain higher status by trying to develop special relationships with various elites. These included the king, the temples and brahmanas.^{xxxv} In Goa, Mitragotri was of the opinion that the craftsmen produced silver items for the temples and also assisted the government in the production of gold and silver coinage. This would have led them to claim a higher status.^{xxxvi} From the various inscriptions, it is seen that the craftsmen were required by the elites and the temples. They played a part in the minting of coins and the goldsmiths would have played a role in the assaying of gold items that were given as gifts at the time of donations. The inscriptions also record different craftsmen making donations to the temples at the times of various festivals. They were an essential part of temple activity. All these inscriptions indicate that the craftsmen and artisans of the region played an important role in the political and religious sphere.

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