EWA DĘBICKA-BOREK

THE BRAVERY OF SĀḶUVA NARASIṂHA AND THE GRACE OF NARASIṂHA DEITY[1]

The names of the kings of several Hindu dynasties such as the Pallavas, Gangas or Hoysalas (Narasiṃha, Narasiṃhadeva, Narasiṃhavarman) suggest that the worship of Narasiṃha deity was quite important to them (Sastri 1996). Besides such *avatāra*s as Rāma and Varāha, Narasiṃha seems to be a prominent figure functioning as a model for the king's duties. A point of departure for the considerations presented in this paper is the relevant portions of the *Rāmābhyudaya* (*The Triumph of Rāma*), the Sanskrit poem praising the heroic deeds of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha, the king of the Vijayanagara Empire who reigned from 1485 until 1491 and established the dynasty of Sāḷuvas. My aim is to discuss what reasons might have been behind the apparent predilection for the cult of Narasiṃha deity in the case of this particular dynasty (hinted at already in the name given to its founder, Sāḷuva Narasiṃha) and whether such a predilection could be meaningful in the context of creating the image of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha's bravery.[2] Similar pieces of information regarding the genealogy of Sāḷuvas are to be found in another historical poem praising the Sāḷuva Narasiṃha, namely in the *Sāḷuvābhyudaya* (*The Triumph of Sāḷuva*), as well as in the records of two copperplate inscriptions commissioned after

[1] The research is conducted in the frame of the project funded by the National Science Centre (NCN) on the basis of decision no. 2013/11/D/HS2/04521.

[2] I would like to thank Prof. Lidia Sudyka for inspiring me to take up the problem of differentiation of Narasiṃha worship in Andhra as well as anonymous reviewers for their suggestions regarding the present paper.

Sāḷuva Narasiṃha's death by his son, Sāḷuva Immaḍi Narasiṃha (reigned: 1491–1505), but due to limited space I will not refer to them here.

The Sāḷuvas formed the second dynasty of Vijayanagara, and the shortest, as it existed for only 20 years (1485–1505). Its founder, Sāḷuva Narasiṃha, a noble from the Sāḷuva clan, was a commander of a royal army of the Sangama dynasty. To save the kingdom from dissolution after the death of Vrūpākṣa II (1485), who could not prevent a power struggle among his subjects and was finally killed by his eldest son, Sāḷuva Narasiṃha, commanded his general Narasa Nāyaka to capture the city and usurped the throne. Throughout his reign the new king had to fight against major internal opposition and chieftains as well as foreign opponents. Still, he managed to revive the horse trade, which had been essential for the Vijayanagra cavalry but was displaced during the reign of Virūpākṣa II, and he also reinforced the efficiency of his army. Sāḷuva Narasiṃha died in 1491 when his two sons were still young and the story repeated itself, as soon the princes were assassinated and the throne of Sāḷuvas was usurped (1505) by the son of Narasa Nāyaka, the regent appointed by Narasiṃha himself, namely Vīra Narasiṃha Rāya, the founder of the third or the Tuluva Dynasty of Vijayanagara (Sastri 1996: 273–275).

Both the *Sāḷuvābhyudaya* and the *Rāmābhyudaya* were composed during Sāḷuvas' time and despite their conventional panegyric form the poems provide some information about the history and ancestors of the dynasty. Howevever, while the authorship of the former is rather certain – it was composed by Rājanātha Ḍiṇḍima (Sastri 1996: 350, Lienhard 1984: 22) the court poet of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha – the authorship of the latter is still problematic. Its composition has so far been usually ascribed to Sāḷuva Narasiṃha himself. However, as Lidia Sudyka proposed recently in her book *Vijayanagara. A Forgotten Empire of Poetesses. Part I. The Voice of Gaṅgadevī* (2013), it is highly possible that we owe it to another poet from the famous Ḍiṇḍima family. Based mostly on the colophons of the subsequent chapters of the *Rāmābhyudaya*, Sudyka draws

the convincing conclusion that its author might have been Aruṇagirinātha Ḍiṇḍima, the court poet of Devarāya II from the Sangama Dynasty (Sudyka 2013: 127–133). His son, Rājanātha Ḍiṇḍima, might have rewritten his work for the sake of dedicating it to the new king, namely Sāḷuva Narasiṃha. In this context Sudyka (2013: 132–133) writes:

> "However, that man of military and administrative talents, planning to establish a new dynasty, had to surround his family with an aura of kingship. He did not move the capital of the kingdom to the more convenient for him and secure Candragiri, his patrimony. The 'City of Victory' was the symbol of the empire. He could have aspired to imitate the example he witnessed himself — the life at the court of Devarāya II. The Ḍiṇḍima poets were connected with the royal house of Vijayanagara from its very beginning, as is attested by a copper plate grant of Bukka I. Definitely, it must have been essential for a new ruler to have a poet or poets coming from this family at his service. Rājanātha, a son of distinguished Aruṇagirinātha Ḍiṇḍima Kavīndra Sārvabhauma, was an ideal candidate to write a panegyrical poem on the king's ancestors and heroic deeds. It seems that the quickest way to achieve this aim was to rewrite the existent (perhaps unfinished?) poem, or at least its parts, and dedicate it to the new king. It was enough to add information about Narasiṃha and his ancestors to the first canto of the poem and suitable colophons dedicating the poem to the ruler".

The *Rāmābhyudaya* informs us about the genealogy of Sāḷuvas just before telling the story of Rāma. As Sudyka (2013: 128) observes, the concluding verses of its subsequent *sarga*s play with the concept of Narasiṃha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu[3]

[3] For example *Rāmābhyudaya* 147 cd: *viṣṇoḥ śrīnarasiṃhavigrahabhṛto bhāvormisetau kṛtau | śrīrāmābhyudaye `tra kāvyatilake sargo `yam ādir gataḥ* || – "Here ends the opening *sarga* in the composition *Triumph of Rāma*, which is an ornament of poetry, a bridge over the waves of *bhāva*s, the composition for/of Viṣṇu who takes the form of Narasiṃha" (in translation of Sudyka (2013: 128)).

– "the victories of Narasiṃha Sāḷuva are comparable to those of Rāma and he himself is compared to Viṣṇu in his Narasiṃha *avatāra* (an allusion to the name of the usurper)." I would, however, like to draw attention to another motif pointing mostly to the importance of Narasiṃha deity in the case of this particular dynasty and appearing in the introductory verses of the 1st *sarga* of *Rāmābhyudaya*. It is then developed in the 2nd *sarga*[4] of the *Sāluvābhyudaya* and present in the two abovementioned copperplate inscriptions written in Sanskrit commissioned by the son of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha. The date of the Bankanakaṭṭe copperplate *śāsana* of Immaḍi Narasiṃha corresponds to April 29, 1504,[5] while that of Chākenhaḷḷi (Demasamudra) grant corresponds to 1492.[6]

The *Rāmābhyudaya* introduces Sāḷuva Narasiṃha as a son of Guṇḍaya, who in turn was a son of Gautama, who was a son of Maṅgi. The great-grandfather of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha was a founder of the family and played an important role in the Madurai campaign of Kampana, the son of Bukka I. It is said that during this campaign he earned the title 'Sāḷuva' (a hawk used in hunting according to Telugu and Kannada lexicographers). The Sāḷuvas claimed to be *kṣatriya*s. Traditionally, they migrated from northern Karnataka to Andhra (Durga Prasad 2014: 50).[7]

> *Rāmābhyudaya* 1.34:
> *putreṣu tasya bahuṣu bhuvanaśrutakīrtiṣu* |
> *kṣamām apālayat kṛtsnāṃ khyāto gautamabhūpatiḥ* ||

[4] It has not been edited so far, therefore I am consulting the text which comes from the manuscript DC No. 11818 & 11819, Government Oriental Mss Library, Chennai. Unfortunately the text is full of lacunas. I would like to thank Prof. Lidia Sudyka for providing me with the copy of the manuscript.

[5] See Epigraphia Indica Vol VII (1902–1903): 80ff.

[6] See Annual Report of the Mysore Archeological Department for 1924: 96ff.

[7] *Sāluvābhudaya* and both inscriptions present Sāḷuvas' genealogy similarly. Also, all of them refer to the grace of Ahobilanarasiṃha thanks to whom the Sāḷuva Narasiṃha was born after his elderly parents retired to Ahobilam and performed penances for the sake of having a child.

Among his (Maṅgi's) many sons, famous around the world, there was a prince called Gautama, who ruled the whole earth.

Rāmābhyudaya 1.37ab:
akhaṇḍamahasas tasmād abhūd guṇḍayabhūpatiḥ |

From him, possessing absolute power, King Guṇḍaya was born.

Rāmābhyudaya 1.42:
mallāmbikā mahābhāgā tasyāsīt sahacārīṇī |
devī daśarathasyeva kausalyā kulabhūṣaṇam ||

His wife was the eminent Mallāmbikā, a goddess, who like Daśaratha's Kausalyā was the jewel of the family.

Similarly to other sources, the *Rāmābhyudaya* shows Sāḷuva Narasiṃha as born out of the grace of Narasiṃha deity as a result of his parents' (Guṇḍaya and Mallāmbikā) penances performed in Ahobilam, the distant centre of Narasiṃha worship, located in present-day Andhra in the Nallamala Hills that form a part of the Eastern Ghats. This particular god was the family deity of Guṇḍa (see *Rāmābhyudaya* 1.46). Therefore, as we may suppose, when the long awaited son was born, he was named after him.

Rāmābhyudaya 1.43–1.44:

tataḥ kadācid ekānte sa guṇḍayamahīpatiḥ |
cintām anantām atanot santānāptivilambanāt ||

Then, once, in a secluded place, King Guṇḍaya was endlessly thinking because of the delay in having an heir:

atarpitāgni savanam alakṣitapataṃ nabhaḥ |
anudgatendum ambhodhim aputraṃ māṃ pracakṣate ||

"They consider me, sonless, as an offering with unsatisfied Agni, as a cloud, which dispersed unnoticed, as an ocean, which did not bring out the moon."

Rāmābhyudaya 1.46–1.48:

iti cintāparo dhyātvā nṛhariṃ kuladaivatam |
sa tayā sahacāriṇyā tapo 'kuruta duścaram ||

Lost in thought, having meditated upon Nṛhari, the family deity, he, together with his wife, performed a severe penance.

tapasā tena santuṣṭas tasya svapne puro 'bhavat |
ahobalanṛsimhas tam abravīd adbhutaṃ vacaḥ ||

Satisfied with this penance, Ahobalanṛsiṃha[8] appeared before him in his dream and said marvelous words:

śauryagāmbhīryasaundaryadhairyaudāryādibhūṣaṇaḥ |
tavāstu tanayo vatsa! sarvorvīcakranāyakaḥ||

"My dear child, yours will be a son adorned with heroism, dignity, beauty, intelligence and generosity, the leader of troops of the entire earth."

Rāmābhyudaya 1.51:

tathā guṇḍayabhūbhartuḥ tanayo 'bhūt tataḥ phalāt |
nanaguṇagaṇas tasyāṃ narasiṃha iti śrutaḥ ||

Thus, as a result, the son of King Guṇḍaya, possessing various qualities, known as Narasiṃha, was conceived in her [Mallāmbikā].

These verses provoke two questions: might this strategy of recurrent referring to Narasiṃha be meaningful? And is there

[8] Both versions of the name are in use: Ahobala[m] and Ahobila[m].

anything behind pointing to a particular, locally known form of the deity, namely Narasiṃha from Ahobilam?

In short, according to a Vaiṣṇava version of a pan-Indian myth of Narasiṃha, the 4th *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, Brahmā granted the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu invulnerability to all conditions as well as to all beings. Neither man nor animal could kill the demon; it could be done neither during the day nor at night, neither within a house nor outside it, neither with a weapon nor by hand, etc. Therefore Viṣṇu appeared in the terrifying form of half a man and half a lion, at dusk, on a threshold etc. and killed him with his claws. However, as Soifer (1992: 104–107) observes, with the development of *bhakti* cults the main reason for the appearance of Narasiṃha on the earth became to save Prahlāda, an ardent worshipper of Viṣṇu, from his father Hiraṇyakaśipu.

Narasiṃha's cult became popular in the times of the Vijayanagara Empire. It happened concurrently with the expansion of settled agriculture into forested zones and the rise of local rulers (Sontheimer 1985: 144). Most probably it was the earliest non-Śaivite cult in the city of Vijayanagara, which appeared there by the early 14th century. According to Verghese (1995: 41) Narasiṃha could not compete in prestige and patronage of Vijayanagara kings with the cults of Paṃpā-Virūpākṣa, Rāma, Viṭhala or Veṅkateśvara. Nevertheless, in contrast to other Vaiṣṇava cults, Narasiṃha's existed there continuously from the pre-Vijayanagara times up to the destruction of the city. In this context one should remember that the pantheon of gods worshipped by the rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire was very expansive and inclusive. Such gods as the abovementioned Narasiṃha, Veṅkateśvara and Viṭhala or, for example, Vīrabhadra or Mailār, had primarily been regional deities worshipped by pastoralists or forest people (Sontheimer 1985, Sinopoli 2000: 375–6). Regarding the tribal past of Narasiṃha, Sontheimer (1985: 145) claims that his roots are theriomorphic and he originated "in a forest, on a hill, in a cave or a ravine". The autochthonous people visualized it as an animal of the feline order, usually a lion. In the process of

Hinduisation this deity began to be called Narasiṃha and was identified with the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. In the case of Andhra it seems to be corroborated by the oldest (3rd–4th century AD) representation of Narasiṃha found at Kondamotu, showing a lion with a tail but holding in his two human hands a *gadā* and a *cakra*, both symbols of Viṣṇu (Waheed Khan 1964).

Most often it was the numerical and economic power of tribals that led to their integration into the very dynamic state, along with their gods and beliefs (Durga – Reddy 1992). Yet, as Sinopoli (2000: 376) points out, there are two important factors to be noted in regard to the deities which were elevated in status by Vijayanagara kings:

> "First, all were fierce gods, with attributes of warriors and protectors and were explicitly linked to the militaristic qualities of Vijayanagara. (...) Second, (...), the marginal populations from which these deities were drawn, especially the pastorialist communities of the inland southern Deccan, had come to play a very important role in Vijayanagara military and political structure".

In this light it seems natural that the bravery and martial inclinations of such gods might have inspired warriors and kings, and that is why they were chosen by them as family deities. It is worth noting that such fierce gods happened to be reconcilled under one roof despite their sectarian affinity. For example, the Temple of Vīrabhadra in Lepakshi, patronized by the Tuluva Dynasty, contains a painting of Narasiṃha venerated by a king who, according to Pachner (1985: 337), might be a Sāḷuva.[9] As Verghese suggests (1995: 45) the reason for the popularity of the Man-Lion during the Vijayanagara Empire might have been the fact that his wrathful nature "suited well the temper of the times". The terrifying aspect of Viṣṇu, known for killing his enemy the demon, might have caused the rulers of a warring empire to seek his protection and blessing.

[9] The painting is in a very poor condition today so it is diffficult to say anything more (see fig. 2).

Leaving aside the Narasiṃha myth it is also interesting to refer in this context to the association between heroic warriors and lions expressed in the 14th stanza of the 9th chapter of the *Madhurāvijaya* by Gaṅgādevī, the beloved of Kampana, the son of Bukka I of the Sangama Dynasty (14th century AD). As Sudyka (2013: 165–167) observes, the stanza in question[10] employs *rūpaka* and *śleṣa*. The idea of the former is that when the fighting kings encounter enemies on the battlefield they behave like lions. The latter points to the compound *rājasiṃha*, which might be translated as 'the kings-lions' and 'the kings among lions'. Since according to the *kāvya* convention lions claw the heads of elephants, the behavior of warriors towards their enemies might be interpreted in the same way. Taking into consideration the outcomes of the research of Vassilkov,[11] according to whom such epithets like 'tiger-man' (*puruṣavyāghra*) or 'lion-man' (*narasiṃha*) referring to warriors might be traced to the animal symbolism of Indo-Aryan warrior brotherhood, Sudyka (2013: 167) concludes that "The stanzas from Gaṅgādevī's poems leave no doubt that the mythological link between a hero (*vīra*) and a lion (*siṃha*) as well as the image of lion-warrior brotherhood was still very much alive in the minds of medieval poets". In this light it seems not without meaning that the cult of Narasiṃha was patronized by the kings of the Sāḷuva Dynasty: as mentioned above, it was established by an usurper who, as it happens in such situations, had to fight the opposition and legitimise his newly gained rule.

The importance of a regionally recognized form of Narasiṃha, i.e. Ahobilanarasiṃha, in the case of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha's "biography" can be interpreted as opening another dimension in the discussion on the possible strategies of

---

[10] *Madhurāvijaya* 9.14: *saṅgrāmav anyām abhitaś caranto darpoddhatāḥ kecana rājasiṃhāḥ |*

pratyarthināṃ pārthivakuñjarāṇāṃ śirāṃsy abhindan nakharaiḥ kharāgraiḥ || –

"<In their war madness> <certain kingly warriors>, wandered all around the battlefield and tore the heads of of their <powerful> adversaries with their sharp nails,

like<the kings among lions> <aroused by (the smell) of ichor> do to the mighty elephants." (in translation of Sudyka (2013: 165)).

[11] See for example Vassilkov 2015. I was not able to consult other articles by him mentioned by Sudyka.

creating the image of a brave, heroic king. Obviously, the recurrent motif of being born out of the grace of Ahobilanarasiṃha is rather conventional and cannot be taken literally, but references to Ahobilam, the actual space, may have some historical meaning; for example, it may suggest that during the life of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha's father this centre of Narasiṃha worship in the Nallamala Hills had already played an important role on the pilgrimage map of the empire. Clearly, temples which were built in the wild areas were very important for the expansion of the settled culture and spreading of religious influences. In addition, most probably for the sake of integration of different language zones within the empire, the rulers of Vijayanagara encouraged pilgrimages and took part in them themselves within the borders of the empire (Verghese 1995: 3).

The earliest literary reference to Ahobilam[12] comes most probably from the *Periya Tirumoli* (1.7.1–10)[13] of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār, and therefore we may presume that it must have been present in the minds of pious pilgrims until the 8th century. It is difficult to say whether Tirumaṅkai himself visited the hill, yet his depiction of both the sacredness and the wildness of the spot is very vivid and convincing. Apart from praising the god who descended there in his ferocious aspect (*ugra*) to protect his followers and kill the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, the author mentions terrifying hunters. These hunters are most probably members of the hunter-gatherer Ceñcū tribe that still live in the forests around Ahobilam. Yet, the place did not become recognized as one of the most influential Śrīvaiṣṇava centres until the Ahobila *maṭha* was established there by Ādi vān Śaṭhakopa Jīyar (the 2nd half of

[12] The oldest inscription found in Ahobilam records the gift of Prolaya Vema Reddy, a chief in the army of the Kākatīyas (the 14th century AD). His court poet was Yerrāparagada (1325–1353) who praised the Narasiṃha of Ahobilam in Telugu language in the *Narasiṁhapurāṇam* (Sitapati 1981: 14).

[13] I would like to thank Prof. Govindaswami Rajagopal for consulting this portion of the text, see also Dębicka-Borek 2013.

the 15th century). The bonds with Vijayanagara were reinforced when the first superior of the *maṭha* became a guru of Allassāni Peddanna, a poet in the court of Kṛṣṇadeva Rāya of the Tuluva Dynasty (Raman 1975: 80–81), who visted Ahobilam himself (Sitapati 1982: 15).

As the essence of the Ceñcūs' life has been hunting and gathering, the predatory features of Man-Lion must have spoken to their imagination, hence Narasiṃha might have become a "divine integrator" of the *vana* and *kṣetra*, two spheres constantly mingling in Ahobilam: the local/tribal and that of the so called Great Tradition of Hinduism.[14] The integration of this particular tribe with a settled life is reflected in a widely known pattern depicting a second marriage of a recognized god with a local girl, in this case the marriage of Narasiṃha, who while hunting in the forests of Ahobilam falls in love with a Ceñcū girl (see fig. 1). The story exists in a variety of oral legends, yet through the Sanskrit play *Vāsantikāpariṇayam* ascribed to Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika (16th century), the 7th superior of the *maṭha* in Ahobilam, it was included into the literature of the Great Tradition of Hinduism, proving the final acceptation of tribal communities there. In the course of time the Ceñcūs have obtained limited rights in the local Narasiṃha temples. Also, the kings of Vijayanagara engaged them in spying on local enemies and Muslim rulers or in tracking the criminals living in the Nallamala hills (Subba Reddy 2010: 225).

Nevertheless, it appears that the remoteness of this particular place prevented the local tradition from full integration into the mainstream Hinduism and created a kind of a mixture of local and orthodox beliefs. Some functions of Narasiṃha remained significant only in the particular surroundings: within the Nallamala forest around Ahobilam he still happens to be associated with a great hunter (Murty 1997: 185). Besides, during the process of "harassing" the wild realm some

[14] According to Sontheimer (1987: 147–148) the *vana* is a wild, forested space with its inhabitants whereas the *kṣetra* is an inhabited space with a regular settled system of agriculture based on the plough. For more on the strategies of joining these two realms in the area of Ahobilam see Dębicka-Borek 2013.

components of *vana* have been associated with a recognized narrative, which is why many elements of the Vaiṣṇava version of Narasiṃha's myth, mostly those regarding the demon's death, have been imposed upon local topography (Dębicka-Borek 2013: 131–136). For instance, according to a local tradition Narasiṃha appeared out of a natural rock-cleft (*ugrastambha*) in the nearby, vertical hill, which in a consequence of reusing a *purāṇic* story, is believed to be either a pillar of Hiraṇyakaśipu's palace or the ruined palace itself. If we follow the observations of Sontheimer (1985: 151–152) in regards to the folk tradition of Khaṇḍobā, which as far as mythology and ritual are concerned displays many similarities with the local traditions of Narasiṃha, then the claims that Ahobilam is the exact spot where Narasiṃha killed the demon might be interpreted in the context of extension of the king sovereignty into the wild areas after defeating a local enemy.

To sum up, the life of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha as the King of Vijayanagara could not have been easy: after usurping the throne of Sangamas he had to enhance and prove his power to his internal and external opponents. That the poet used the character of Narasiṃha deity associated with the attributes of warriors, either as a wrathful incarnation of Viṣṇu or as an integrator of orthodox and wild realms, seems possible for the sake of creating the image of a fearless, heroic and protective ruler who has to fight his enemies. Furthermore, in order to achieve his aim the poet might have consciously used both the power of a terrifying deity and the power of the particular place, namely, Ahobilam. Showing the king as an incarnation of Narasiṃha from Ahobilam, the sacred spot that was so closely connected to the hunter-gatherer Ceñcū tribe, might have alluded to the policy of drawing the communities which were marginalized[15], but because of their valor and warlike skills could have reinforced the state during the turbulent times.

[15] In the context of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha's tolerance it is worth mentioning that according to Stein (1984: 294–299) under his patronage the group of non-brahmin *sāttāda* Śrīvaiṣṇavas played an important role in the Tirupati temple organization (comp. Lester 1994).

Bibliographic References

Primary sources

Annual Report of the Mysore Archeological Department for the year 1924. 1925: Bangalore: Government Press. Retrieved from: http://www.new1.dli.ernet.in/scripts/FullindexDefault.htm?path1=/data8/upload/0237/456&first=1&last=180&barcode=99999990040173 (access: August 2015).

Epigraphia Indica Vol VII (1902-1903). 1981. New Delhi: Director General Archeological Survey of India. Retrieved from:
https://archive.org/stream/epigraphiaindica014351mbp#page/n93/mode/2up (access: August 2015).

Periya Tirumoli, retrieved from:
http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/4_drav/tamil/pm/pm006__u.htm
(access: July 2013).

Sāluvābhyudaya – manuscript DC No. 11818 & 11819, Govt. Oriental MSS Library, Chennai.

Vāsantikā Pariṇayam. A Play in Sanskrit and Prākrutam by Sri Saṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahadesikan. English Translation by Dr. Parthasarathy Desikan. Retrieved from: http://www.ibiblio.org/sadagopan/ahobilavalli/Vaasanthika_PariNayam.pdf (access: August 2015).

Visalakshy, P. (ed.). 2003. *Rāmābhyudayam*. Trivandrum Sanskrit Series 267. Thiruvananthapuram: SB Press (P) Limited.

Secondary sources:

Dębicka-Borek, E. 2013. "Born in the mountains, living in a forest. Some remarks on Narasiṃha in Andhra with special reference to Ahobilam". *Pandanus: Nature in Literature, Art, Myth and Ritual* 7.1, pp. 123–138.

Durga, P. S. K. – Reddy, Y. A. S. 1992. "Kings, temples and legitimization of autochthonous communities. A case study of a South Indian temple." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 35.2, pp. 145–166.

Durga Prasad, J. 2014. "Vijayanagara Rule in Andhra (AD 1336–1660)". In *Late Medieval Andhra Pradesh AD 1324–AD 1724.* Ed. by R. Soma Reddy. New Delhi: Tulika Books, pp. 40–71.

Lester, C. R. 1994. "The Sāttāda Śrīvaiṣṇavas". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114.1, pp. 39–53.

Lienhard, S. 1984. *A History of Classical Poetry: Sanskrit–Pāli–Prakrit.* Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz.

Murty, M.L.K. 1997. "The God Narasiṃha in the folk religion of Andhra Pradesh, South India". *South Asian Studies* 13, pp. 179–188.

Pachner, R. 1985. "Paintings in the Temple of Vīrabhadra at Lepakshi". In *Vijayanagara – City and Empire. New Currents of Research.* Ed. by A. Libera Dallapiccola in collaboration with S. Zingel-Avé Lallemant. Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden Gmbh, pp. 326–343.

Raman, K.V. 1975. *Srī Varadarājaswāmi Temple – Kānchī.* New Delhi: Shakti Malik Abhinav Publication.

Sastri, Nilakanta K. A. 1996. *A History of South India. From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar*. Delhi: Oxford University Press [1955].

Sinopoli, C. M. 2000. "From the Lion Throne: Political and Social Dynamics of the Vijayanagara Empire". *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 43. 3, pp. 364–398.

Sitapati, P. 1982. *Sri Ahobila Narasiṃha Swamy Temple: Temple Monograph*. Hyderabad: Archeology & Museums, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh.

Soifer, D. A., 1992. *The Myths of Narasiṃha and Vāmana. Two Avatars in Cosmological Perspective*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.

Sontheimer, G. D. 1985. "Folk Deities in the Vijayanagara Empire: Narasiṃha and Mallaṇṇa/Mailar". In *Vijayanagara – City and Empire. New Currents of Research.* Ed. by A. Libera Dallapiccola in collaboration with S. Zingel-Avé Lallemant. Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden Gmbh, pp. 144–158.

Sontheimer, G.-D. 1987. "The *vana* and the *kṣetra*: the tribal background of some famous cults". In *Eschmann Memorial Lectures*. Ed. by G. C. Tripathi, H. Kulke. Bhubaneswar: The Eschmann memorial fund, pp. 117–164.

Stein, B. 1984. *All the Kings' Mana: Papers on Medieval South Indian History*. Madras: New Era Publications.

Subba Reddy, C. 2010. *The Life of Hunting & Gathering Tribe in the Eastern Ghats*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publication.

Sudyka, L. 2013. *Vijayanagara. A Forgotten Empire of Poetesses. Part I. The Voice of Gaṅgadevī*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka.

Vassilkov, Y. 2015. "Animal Symbolism of Warrior Brotherhoods in Indian Epic, History and Culture". In *The Volatile World of Sovereignty. The Vrātya Problem and Kingship in South Asia*. Ed. By T. Pontillo, C. Bignami, M. Dore, E. Mucciarelli. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., pp. 231–253.

Verghese, A. 1995. *Religious Traditions at Vijayanagara as Revealed through its Monuments*. New Delhi: Manohar.

Waheed Khan, A. 1964. *An Early Sculpture of Narasiṃha (Man-Lion Incarnation of Vishnu Found from the Coastal Andhra along with Pāncha Vīras)*. Hyderabad: The Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Fig. 1. Narasiṃha with a Ceñcū girl. Śrī Lakṣmī Narasiṃha Svāmi Temple. Ahobilam. (Author's photograph).

Fig. 2. Narasiṃha venerated by noblemen. Vīrabhadra Temple. Lepakshi. (Author's photograph).