1. Hindu Sectarianism and the City of Victory

1. While European and Middle Eastern migration to India in this period was largely voluntary, most Africans arrived in the subcontinent as military slaves, serving in some of the Deccan sultanates. However, military slavery as practiced in India did not confer a lifelong state of bondage. Many Africans in the subcontinent eventually experienced social mobility, with some acquiring their own military and political power and others hiring themselves out as paid laborers, including as soldiers to different armies. Thus, it was the quest for economic opportunities that often drew former African slaves to Vijayanagara, in much the same way that it drew Europeans and Middle Easterners. For discussions of Africans in Indian history, see Eaton (2005, ch. 5) and Chatterjee and Eaton (2006).

2. Carla Sinopoli (2000, 370) estimates that the population of the Vijayanagara capital in 1500 was 250,000. This made it one of the largest cities in the world at that time. According to John Haywood (2011, 116), the capital had 480,000 people by 1530, making it second only to Beijing in terms of population. Europe’s population, which had been decimated by the Black Death in the fourteenth century, began to increase to numbers approaching those in India only in the late sixteenth century. Delhi’s population seems to have peaked at just under 300,000 in the early fourteenth century, but it never rebounded from the effects of raids that took place from the end of that period until the reign of Shah Jahan (1628–58). Vijayanagara was thus the largest city in India for most of the capital’s history. See Irfan Habib (2011, 125–26) for a fuller discussion. Anila Verghese’s work (1995) on the art and architectural remains in the city documents the sculptural depiction of ethnic diversity, conveyed primarily through distinctive clothing styles, on many of the capital’s sixteen hundred remaining structures. Textual sources in a variety of languages documenting this diversity will be discussed below.

3. This perspective can be found in the work of Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1921), B. A. Saletore (1934), and K. A. Nilakanta Sastri ([1955] 1994). Vijayanagara kings also had
ongoing military clashes with “Hindu” kings, such as the Gajapatis ruling in Orissa, and with Hindu chieftains throughout the South, a fact downplayed in some of this older scholarship. It should be noted that these pioneering works in the field, despite their biases, have provided a significant basis on which further study has been built.

4. For example, Burton Stein (1999) and Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot (2006). The Vijayanagara Empire was ruled by three successive dynasties, the Saṅgama (c. 1346–1485), the Sāluva (1485–1505), and the Tuḷuva (1505–65). Most royal patronage of Jainism took place in the first dynasty or the Saṅgama period: for example, an inscription of Bukka II documents a grant to a Jain basadi; in 1424, Devarāya II granted a village to another Jain basadi; and in 1426, Devarāya II funded the construction of the Pārśvanātha Caityālaya in the Vijayanagara capital (see Verghese 1995, 121, for citations to the relevant inscriptions). Christianity did not establish a strong presence in Vijayanagara, but in the sixteenth century, Portuguese envoys, soldiers, and masons seem to have resided there on a temporary basis. The fifteenth-century court of Devarāya II extended its support for and protection of Muslim mosques and tombs, so much so that “Ahmad Kahn dedicated the mosque that he constructed for the merit of his patron, Devarāya II” (Verghese 1995, 128; she cites SII, vol. 9, pt. 2, no. 447 as her evidence).

5. The work of Anila Verghese (esp. 1995, 2000) on the capital’s religious monuments is attentive to this privileging as is recent research by Ajay Rao (2015).

6. The term Smārta derives from the term sūrti referring to the “remembered” religious literature and related practices of Hinduism. But because the sūrti corpus is so vast, defining Smārtas in reference to it is not terribly precise. Originally, Smārta seems to have connoted those Brahmins whose religious sympathies lay with purāṇic literature and with the devotional cults to deities described therein (see G. Flood 1996, 113, for a brief discussion). Smārta Brahmins apparently fused these purāṇic devotional cults with a Vedic sensibility. In the region and time frame under discussion in this book, however, I am using Smārta a bit more narrowly to refer to those Brahmins affiliated with Śaṅkara’s Advaita Vedānta and, in the case of the Sringeri Smārtas active at the Vijayanagara court, with Śaivism. These Smārtas effected a rapprochement between Vedic Hinduism, the Purāṇas, devotion to Śiva, and Advaita Vedānta philosophy.

7. Madhva is credited with founding eight mathas or monasteries in Udupi, the most famous of which contains the Kṛṣṇa icon that Madhva received, reportedly through miraculous means, and which he personally installed and worshipped. These eight mathas are laid out in a square formation at the city center; the Kṛṣṇa matha, which functions largely as a temple and has a public worship area and large facilities for feeding pilgrims, draws significant numbers of visitors annually from throughout India. While there are no inscriptive records dating these mathas to Madhva’s period, the eight mathas were certainly in existence by the fifteenth century (see SII 1932, nos. 296ff.). The late sixteenth-century Madhva philosopher and saint Vādirāja is credited with putting into place the current system (known as paryāya) of biennial rotation among the mathas for managing the worship of the deity Kṛṣṇa. See Vasudeva Rao (2002) for a historical overview and ethnographic study of the Madhva mathas in Udupi.

8. Lawrence McCrea (2015) documents the lack of engagement with Dvaita views on the part of other Sanskrit intellectuals prior to the sixteenth century. A few tombs of
Mādhva sectarian leaders located near the Vijayanagara capital and dating to the mid-fourteenth century attest to a fledgling Mādhva presence in the early days of the empire. However, beginning during Vyāsatīrtha’s lifetime, Mādhva architectural forms and institutional networks proliferated at the capital and throughout the empire. Concurrently, criticism of Dvaita doctrines by proponents of other Hindu systems of thought also proliferated throughout the subcontinent.

9. See Michael Williams (2011) for a discussion of these tactics in Vyāsatīrtha’s Nyāyāmṛta and Elaine Fisher (2013) for a discussion of how these tactics influenced early modern South Indian intellectualism more generally.

10. McCrea (2015) argues that Vyāsatīrtha engaged in a new type of doxographic writing that did not merely summarize the ideas of various systems of thought but also traced the evolution over time of certain ideas and arguments within his opponents’ systems. It is largely through this historicism, McCrea maintains, that Vyāsatīrtha was able to criticize his intellectual rivals most effectively. McCrea also points out that this “historical turn” within Mādhva doxography may not have originated with Vyāsatīrtha; his fifteenth-century Mādhva predecessor Viṣṇudāsa Cārya made similar attempts. But Vyāsatīrtha practiced it to a far more sweeping and thorough degree. He thereby inspired the production of similar historical doxographic texts among rival traditions (e.g., Appaya Dīkṣita’s late sixteenth-century Śāstrasiddhāntalesāsangraha).

11. McCrea’s (2015) work focuses primarily on Vyāsatīrtha’s criticisms of Advaita Vedānta. This is true of most scholarship on Vyāsatīrtha whose treatment of Viśiṣṭādvaita or qualified nondualism, advanced by the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, has received far less scholarly attention.

12. Eaton (2005, 88–89) summarizes these military engagements as follows:

The string began in 1509, when at Koilkonda, sixty miles southwest of Hyderabad, Krishna Raya defeated the last remnant of Bahmani power, Sultan Mahmud, along with Yusuf ‘Adil Shah of Bijapur, who was killed in the engagement. Soon thereafter the king turned south and seized Penukonda, Śrirangapattan, and Śivasamudram from the chiefs of the powerful Ummattur family. In 1513, turning to the southern Andhra coast, he reconquered the great fort of Udayagiri, which had fallen into the hands of the Gajapati kings of Orissa. Two years later his armies seized from the Gajapatis the fort of Kondavidu in the Krishna delta. In 1517 he took Vijayavada and Kondapalli, also in the Krishna delta, and then Rajahmundry, up the coast in the Godavari delta. In 1520, with the help of Portuguese mercenary musketeers, he reconquered the rich Raichur region which, lying between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers, had been perennially contested by his Sangama predecessors and the Bahmani sultans. In 1523 he penetrated further north and seized, but chose not to hold, Gulparga, the former Bahmani capital and city of Gisu Daraz.

13. See, for example, the respective travel accounts of Nunes and Paes, edited, translated, and discussed in Robert Sewell ([1900] 1995).

14. See Sinopoli (2000, 370) for a discussion of this figure.

15. Wagoner, 1996b, 851.

16. The Protestant Reformation began in this period. Martin Luther composed his Ninety-Five Theses calling for reform in the Catholic Church in 1517, and bibles were being
translated into various European vernaculars, contra Church doctrine, in the early 1500s. The reigns of Vijayanagara emperors Kṛṣṇadevarāya (1509–1529) and Acyutarāya (r. 1529–1542), as well as the first part of Rāmarāya’s regency, are contemporary with the rule of Henry VIII in England (r. 1509–1547), which marked a major turning point in relationships between European states and the Church. While Henry’s official break with papal authority in Rome did not occur until 1534, there were popular stirrings of antipapal sentiment in England during his early rule. His establishment of the Church of England inaugurated a period of intense, and often state-supported, religious strife in Europe.

17. Talbot (1995) and Wagoner (1996b) have also shown that the Vijayanagara Empire mimicked many of the Islamic courtly styles of dress and architecture, revealing the engagements taking place across political, religious, and cultural borders in South Asia. For further discussion of Hindu-Muslim material-cultural encounters in a slightly earlier period, see Finbar Flood (2009), who effectively problematizes how scholars think about cultural and other boundaries.

18. Talbot (1995, 700) argues against older scholarship that assumes the word Hindu was a religious designation, maintaining it was largely an ethnic and geographic one. Still, she allows that ethnicity encompassed a variety of features, some of which were religious (720). See also Sinopoli (2000) for an overview of different constituents of identity under Vijayanagara rule.


20. Sanderson (2009). While Alexis Sanderson documents the various forms of power that Śaiva-initiated kings conferred on their gurus, he also acknowledges that many such kings continued to patronize other religious institutions. Thus, even in kingdoms where royals made their religious preferences known, a policy of exclusivism did not prevail. However, according to Sanderson, the royal affinity for Śaivism throughout the subcontinent between the fifth and thirteenth centuries, imbued many non-Śaiva and even non-Hindu communities (e.g., Buddhist, Jaina) with Śaiva motifs, practices, and sensibilities. In this way, royal patronage exercised a homogenizing influence over diverse religious institutions. As I will demonstrate, a similar homogenizing dynamic, albeit different in scope and content, obtained under Vijayanagara rule, despite a general royal reticence regarding personal religious affinity.

21. This ambiguity seemingly dates to early Saṅgama-period inscriptions, wherein Kālāmukhas are referred to as “gurus” while Śmārtas Śaivas at Sringeri received more patronage (see Verghese 1995, 7–8). This ambiguity is also evident in inscriptions of Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s era. In a 1516 inscription, published in EC 1943, vol. 14, no. 115 (see also the discussion in Verghese 1995, 114), one Śrīvaśīnava teacher, Govindarāja, is referred to as “the ācārya of kings” and as “one’s own ācārya” (ll. 68–69). The phrase “Govindarājuguru” also appears but, rather than identifying Govinda as the rājaguru, it seems to be addressing him as “Guru Govindarāja.” Some Mādhva scholars (e.g., B. N. K. Sharma [1961] 1981, 290) have pointed out that there is another inscription in the Viṭṭhala temple in Hampi, in which Vyāsatīrtha is addressed as “Guru Gaṇḍadēva” or “Guru Vyāsatīrtha” (SII 1986, vol. 4, no. 277). Sharma ([1961] 1981, 290) also points out a text attributed to Kṛṣṇadevarāya, in which Kṛṣṇadevarāya refers to Vyāsatīrtha as his guru. Certainly, the term guru was a common honorific title in these inscriptions. (See, for example, Verghese 1995, appendix A, which provides an overview
of all the inscriptions at the capital, one of which is a 1519 grant by Krṣṇadevarāya to “Guru Basavadikṣīta.”) But I think we must consider Govindarāja's designation as the ācārya or “teacher” of kings and as Krṣṇadevarāya’s own teacher to be significant; it certainly aligns with Krṣṇadevarāya’s lavish support for Śrīvaiṣṇavism, which is discussed throughout this book. However, I will also demonstrate that Krṣṇadevarāya’s Vaiṣṇavism was not limited to the Śrīvaiṣṇava formulation but encompassed within it a significant role for Mādhvas. As I will document in chapter 4, Krṣṇadevarāya encouraged the two sects to collaborate. Indeed, this very 1516 inscription documents that Govindarāja was given land in the region of Sri-rangapatna. In the same year, Krṣṇadevarāya also granted several villages in Srirangapatna to Vyāsatīrtha, who established a matha. This ambiguity in Krṣṇadevarāya’s relationship to different Vaiṣṇava groups is likely what has led to confusion today about who his guru was.

22. Matthew Clark (2006, 221) demonstrates that the Kālāmukha and other Śaiva groups, which did not reference the Vedas but which had earlier enjoyed royal patronage, seem to have lost their courtly support in the Vijayanagara period. Such Śaiva groups may have aligned with or given way to the Śmārta-Advaita-Śaiva formation that emerged under Vijayanagara rule and which composed Vedic commentarial traditions that became emblematic of the early Saṅgama court.

23. I discuss various theories in chapter 3.

24. Legendary accounts of the empire's founding credit Vidyāranya, the fourteenth-century head of the Advaita Śmārta matha at Sringeri, with inspiring the empire's creation and choosing the location of its capital near a Śaiva pilgrimage site. Inscriptional records attest to the early Saṅgama court's support of not only this monastic community's material well-being but also of its intellectual projects, particularly Śāyaṇa’s commentary on the Vedas. While scholars impute different motives to the Vijayanagara court's support of this matha, the relationship between the Vijayanagara darbār and this sectarian monastery remains central to the empire's image. This will be dealt with at some length in chapter 3.


26. For example, in chapter 2 and in the conclusion of his Premodern Communities and Modern Histories, Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi (2005, 280) juxtaposes the lack of patronage of Viraśaivism by the Vijayanagara court with that community's burgeoning mathas, many of which are located in or near the Vijayanagara capital itself, during the period of Vijayanagara rule: “Many Śaiva and Viraśaiva ascetics had established their mathas in the city of Vijayanagar, even though state patronage to these mathas wasn't forthcoming. That fact is amply illustrated by the spectacular absence of any inscriptions or any other royal document making any grants to especially virakta mathas of Vijayanagar.”

27. See Tamara Sears (2014) for an excellent discussion of royal patronage of the Mattamayūra ascetic order at the turn of the first millennium in North India. Of course, from an early date, Buddhist and Jain monasteries, the latter of which experienced a heyday in South India in the eighth–tenth centuries, also enjoyed royal patronage (Pierce Taylor 2014).

28. For an overview of the literature on the problems of defining Hinduism and the related issue of sects, see Laurie Patton n.d.

29. As Fisher (2013, 5) has recently argued, much of this distinction between using the terms sect or religion to define entities like Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, respectively, is a matter of taxonomical preference.
30. Those scholars (e.g., Venkoba Rao 1926; Sharma 1981; Verghese 1995) who argue that many mathās were not rigidly sectarian and functioned more along the lines of a university correctly note that a mathā’s sectarian affiliation did not prevent students from other sectarian backgrounds from studying there. Vyāsatīrtha himself seems to have studied for some time at Kanchi, where there was no Mādhva mathā.

31. That mathās by this time in South Indian history had clear sectarian affiliations is suggested in the instructional manuals, written by members or leaders of these communities, governing many aspects of daily life for full-time monastic residents. Mādhva mathās followed practices laid out by the community’s thirteenth-century founder, Madhva, in texts such as the Tantrasārasaṅgraha (on Mādhva forms of ritual practice), the Sadācārasmṛti (on daily habits and routines), and the Yatipraṇavakalpa (on monastic rules and initiation). The last discusses an oath sworn by the Mādhva monastic initiate never to forsake Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, to deem other gods equal to Viṣṇu, or to associate with advocates of monism (Sharma [1961] 1981, 190). Other communities used their own such works, such as Yādava Prakāśa’s twelfth-century Yatidharmasamuccaya, used by Śrīvaiṣṇava monastics (see Yādava Prakāśa 1995). Many mathās were constructed during the Vijayanagara period on temple grounds, linking them to specific sectarian teachings, lifestyles, and obligations.

32. Many contemporary scholars assume that the Śrīvaiṣṇava community is mostly nonmonastic and that the institution of the matha therefore has not played an important role in that community’s history. This is due to the fact that many important Śrīvaiṣṇava leaders, including one of the tradition’s leading lights, Vedānta Deśika, were householders with wives and children who never renounced their families to take up śaṃnyāsa. Certainly, it is not considered necessary to renounce a worldly life to be an ācārya in Śrīvaiṣṇavism. However, the Śrīvaiṣṇava community does have a tradition of mathās with renunciant leaders, and these have played an important role in the community’s sociopolitical development. In fact, Vedānta Deśika’s disciple Brahmatantra-Svatantrar (c. 1286–1386) founded a matha in Kanchi in 1359, and this matha played a leadership role in the maintenance of the Varadarāja temple in that city (see K. V. Raman 1975, 73). The Ahobila mathā has also been of historic importance to the Śrīvaiṣṇava community, especially the Vatakalai branch. This will be discussed more in chapter 4.

33. For example, the observation of monastic practice in Vyāsatīrtha’s branch of Mādhva mathās differs somewhat from that of the Udupi mathās. While Vyāsatīrtha himself was a bālasaṃnyāsin (or one who undertook worldly renunciation as a child), the Udupi mathās are the only ones that today require their initiates to be bālasaṃnyāsins. Members of Vyāsatīrtha’s mathās can be former householders who renounce as adults. Different branches of the Mādhva mathās also adhere to slightly different versions of the textual tradition of Madhva’s works. See Sharma ([1961] 1981, 192–200) for a discussion.

34. Over the course of the sixteenth century, the Tuluva dynasty gradually excluded Śaivas from patronage while actively cultivating a shared Vaiṣṇava sensibility among the
Kannadiga Mādhvas and the Tamil and Telugu Śrīvaiṣṇavas. One could therefore argue that the Tuḷuva-cultivated Hinduism of which I speak was primarily a transregional, trans-sectarian, and translinguistic Vaishnavism. However, efforts were made by the early Tuḷuva kings Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutarāya to cultivate both Śaiva and Vaishnava institutions as part of courtly religious culture. In this sense, Vijayanagara religiosity was more generically Hindu. The details of this aspect of my argument will be discussed at length in chapters 3, 4, and 5.

35. These benefits were not experienced uniformly by all social groups, a fact I discuss more in chapter 2.

36. It should be noted that such rejection has always been largely a matter of theory rather than actual practice in the act of converting to Christianity, a religious tradition that would look much more monolithic than it actually does if converts completely severed all of their former religious allegiances. By the same token, Hindu sects would never have undergone any historic growth or diminution if individuals had never changed sectarian identities. Further evidence that Hindu sectarianism not only allowed for but encouraged acts of conversion can be found in Madhva’s thirteenth-century handbook on entering the monkhood (Yatipraṇavakalpa), wherein initiates undertake an oath of allegiance to certain doctrines and simultaneously swear to avoid other doctrines and their proponents: “Never shall I forswear Viṣṇu and the Vaishnavas. Never shall I deem Viṣṇu to be on a par or identical with the other gods. Never shall I associate with those who hold the doctrine of identity or equality of God and soul” (trans. by Sharma [1961] 1981, 190, who also provides the original Sanskrit).

37. Griffiths’s (1999) study of Hindu-Buddhist debates on the existence of God in the eleventh and twelfth centuries maintains that arguments against other systems of thought were principally addressed to the adherents of one’s own system. In his view, “Antithesistic argument for Indian Buddhists was principally a tool for elaborating, embroidering, and knitting together the conceptual fabric of their tradition, and only secondarily (if at all), a device for convincing anyone of anything” (520). In Vyāsatīrtha’s case, I would agree that a central goal of his arguments against alternative forms of Vedānta was to strengthen the intellectual commitments of his own constituency. However, history shows that intellectual and religious communities arise, grow, change, and even dwindle over time. These processes, while not determined entirely by doctrinal debate, are informed by it. I therefore maintain that Vyāsatīrtha’s polemical arguments were not addressed solely to his own followers but were intended to increase his following by convincing others of Dvaita Vedānta’s correctness.


39. O’Hanlon and Washbrook’s 2012 anthology of essays (originally published in 2011 as a special issue of South Asian History and Culture vol. 2, no. 2) contains many excellent examples of scholarship that contextualize various South Asian religious communities and their literary traditions, as does the 2015 collection (also originally published in 2015 as a special issue of South Asian History and Culture vol. 6, no 1), edited by O’Hanlon, Minkowski, and Venkatkrishnan. Many of these essays are cited in this book. When I do so, I reference the page numbers in the edited volumes. Other efforts to historicize Sanskrit authors include the collaborative research project Sanskrit Knowledge Systems on the Eve of Colonialism, directed by Sheldon Pollock.
40. Voix 2011. A similar notion regarding the superior moral nature of an ascetic’s worldly engagement is also identified in Clémentin-Ojha’s 2011 study of Ārya Samāj-ist, Swami Shraddhananda.


2. ROYAL AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY VIJAYANAGARA: A MATHĀDHIPATI AT KRŚNADEVARĀYA’S COURT


3. Stein 1999, 102. The subsequent block quote follows almost immediately upon this claim.


6. There is strong evidence for mathās acting as state agents, not just under Vijayanagara rule but in earlier Indian polities. The work of Tamara Sears (2014), Alexis Sanderson (2009), R.N. Misra (1997), and others demonstrates this in various ways, with Sanderson and Misra making particularly strong cases for the functional overlap of mathās and courts. Citing Misra’s 1997 research on nine Śaivasiddhānta mathās in the Kalachuri kingdom in the ninth and tenth centuries, Clark (2006, 192–93) summarizes their various functions as follows: “The mathās employed not only artisans and tenant farmers, but also a contingent of law-enforcement officers (virabhadrās and vajramuṣṭis) whose powers of enforcement included mutilation and castration. . . . The mathās rendered services to the state in various ways, including the garrisoning of war-forces, the provision of elephants, horses and perhaps wealth, the manufacture of armaments for battle, the maintenance of arsenals, training in warfare, and even participation in battle.” Sanderson (2009, 261–62) provides specific examples of such warfare participation on the part of monastic leaders/residents. I have not come across any such references from the Vijayanagara period, but there is ample evidence that mathās were involved in postwar cleanup and the political integration of conquered regions.

7. J. Duncan M. Derrett (1974) shows that not all mathās were necessarily run or populated by saṃnyāsin. However, in the case of Vyāsatīrtha’s mathās (and most Mādhva mathās), the residents were saṃnyāsin. In fact, some were bālasaṃnyāsin or individuals who had renounced the world as children and never entered the householder stage; this was true of Vyāsatīrtha. Not all Mādhva monastic communities insist on bālasaṃnyāsa; today, former householders may become not only members but heads of Vyāsatīrtha mathās. Smārta Advaita mathās were also generally run and populated by saṃnyāsin. As mentioned in chapter 1, the Śrīvaiṣṇava community has historically had mathās run by ascetic leaders, but there has also been a parallel tradition of householder ācāryas, who wield significant religious authority.

8. This point will be demonstrated at various places in this book, including the section of this chapter that discusses the inscriptive and monumental records. A summary of some of the evidence for this sectarianism in mathās was provided in chapter 1. Of course, not all sectarian mathās performed exactly the same roles in their respective communities.

9. See note 12, chapter 1, and Eaton (2005, 88–89) for an overview of these military engagements.
10. See chapter 1 for an overview of this complexity.

11. There are three printed editions of this text. Two of these are based on one manuscript: Venkoba Rao’s (1926) and the more recent one by D. Prahladachar (1993). The third edition is a reprint of Venkoba Rao’s (n.d.), edited by K. T. Pandurangi but with additional historical information, such as excerpts from the inscriptive record, provided by Srinivasa Ritti. Rao’s 1926 edition provides a lengthy historical introduction that attempts to situate the biography in the broader historical record. Prahladachar’s introduction provides a helpful overview of each of the text’s chapters.

12. It is this term, *kuladevatā*, and not *rājaguru* or “guru to the king,” that is consistently used to describe Vyāsatīrtha throughout the biography.

13. While Verghese (1995, 8) disputes Somanātha’s account of Vyāsatīrtha’s life in several instances, she does take it for granted that the two men were contemporaries. B. N. K. Sharma ([1961] 1981, 286ff.) also takes it for granted that Somanātha and Vyāsatīrtha were contemporaries.

14. The Sanskrit text in Venkoba Rao’s (1926, 83–84) edition states that Somanātha has the text read aloud to Vyāsatīrtha and that Vyāsatīrtha approves it. In an apparent gesture toward verisimilitude, the two readers are identified by name as Kambukaṅṭha and Kalakanṭha (see Rao 1926, intro., xliv, for a discussion of this; see Rao’s Sanskrit text, 83, for the passage). Vyāsatīrtha is presented at this moment in the text as being seated on his ascetic throne and surrounded by foreign kings, poets, grammarians, logicians, medical men, astronomers, and of course his own disciples.

15. Arguably the sole miraculous occurrence in the *Vyāsayogicarita*’s account of Vyāsatīrtha’s life is when he raises the only son of Brahmin parents from the dead after a poisonous snakebite. Other events that are given a miraculous tint in the later biographies are typically located in dreams in the *Vyāsayogicarita*, perhaps to soften their factual claim.

16. Venkoba Rao (1926) points out that there is some ambiguity in the text on this point. While Somanātha seems to take great pains in this final section to demonstrate Vyāsatīrtha’s familiarity with Somanātha’s biography and while the author does mention Acyutarāya’s devotion to Vyāsatīrtha, it is also true that the text states earlier that Acyutarāya had worshipped Vyāsatīrtha in the past (Sanskrit text, 78). This could be interpreted as a reference to Vyāsatīrtha’s demise. Rao reconciles these differences by claiming that Somanātha had a first version of the text read aloud to Vyāsatīrtha and then subsequently revised it into its current form after the *maṭhādhipati*’s demise (see Rao’s discussion in his introduction, li).


18. Ibid., 21.

19. The term *digvijaya* refers literally to the act of conquest of all directions, but the texts in which such acts are recounted are usually titled *digvijayas* or simply *vijayas*. Thus, I here use these terms interchangeably to refer to a particular subgenre of sacred biography that is distinct from the *carita*.

20. Sax (2000, 47–51) provides an overview of all *digvijaya* literature but focuses on those materials involving religious renouncers. While dating these texts is problematic, Sax maintains that the earliest possible date for any of the Śāṅkara *digvijayas*, which are often considered to be archetypal for the genre, is the thirteenth century. But other authors (Sundaresan 2000; Bader 2000; Clark 2006), who provide a more detailed discussion of these texts’ dates, give the earliest possible century as the fourteenth.
21. Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍitācārya is the author of this text. His traditional dates are 1295–1370. I would argue, following Clark (2006, 157), that this text is one of the very oldest *digvijaya* texts for a religious leader, possibly even the prototype. The text has been edited and translated by G. V. Nadgouda and was published in Bangalore by the Poornaprajna Vidyapeetha in 1991.

22. Summarizing other scholarship on this issue, notably that of Jonathan Bader, Clark (2006) argues that Anantānandagiri’s *Śaṅkaravijaya* and Cidvilāsa’s *Śaṅkaravijayavilāsa* are probably the oldest and date from the sixteenth century. For a list and rough chronology of these various texts, based largely on Bader’s research, see Clark (149, esp. 155).

23. The Nepal text is the *Vaṃśāvali of Nepal* (Clark 2006, 156).

24. See Clark (2006, 173). Vidyāranya, head of the Śringeri *maṭha*, who played an influential role in the fourteenth-century Vijayanagara court (discussed at some length in chapter 3), is often credited with composing the seminal Śaṅkara *digvijaya*. According to Hacker (1995) and Kulke (2001), the point of Vidyāranya’s *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* was to demonstrate the pan-Indian popularity of Śaṅkara’s thought and, therefore, the importance of those *maṭhas* that promulgated it. However, other scholarly opinion (e.g., Bader 2000; Clark 2006; Lorenzen 1976) assigns this text a much later date, possibly as late as the eighteenth century. Clark points out that neither the Śringeri *maṭha* nor its pan-Indian influence over a network of Śaṅkara *maṭhas* figure all that prominently in this text, despite its attribution to the erstwhile Śringeri *maṭhādhipati*, Vidyāranya.

25. Sundaresan (2000) thoroughly problematizes the dates and authorship of most of the Śaṅkara *digvijayas* and links these difficulties to modern (i.e., colonial and postcolonial) disputes among Śaṅkara *maṭhas*.

26. For example, in the *Sumadhvavijaya*, Madhva (ch. 5, v. 29ff.) is able to eat what would seem to be impossibly large quantities of food.


28. According to Novetzke (2007, 174–75), “Both endeavors, the theographic and the historiographic, exist not as oppositional categories but as perceptible shifts in genre. . . . They function together, not in contrast to one another.”


30. Ibid., 51.

31. This text and the third biography discussed below have been available to me in incomplete form only through quotes and references to them in the work of Venkoba Rao (1926). Rao supplies some lengthy discussion, as well as several direct quotes, of the two later biographies. However, what I say about each here must be taken as speculative, since I have not had the opportunity to read either text in full.

32. The text presents Vyāsatīrtha as visiting what are fairly stock pilgrimage places in *digvijaya* literature, with many of them located in North India: “Kāśi, Gayā, Gangā Setu, Badarikāśrama and other places” (see Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., lxxxviii-lxxxix). The *Sumadhvavijaya* presents Madhva as visiting many of the same places.


35. One of the differences, in addition to the role of pilgrimage, between the *Vyāsa Vijaya* and the *Vyāsayogicarita* is that the *Vyāsa Vijaya* elaborates Vyāsatīrtha’s role at
Tirupati. This will be discussed further in chapter 4. According to citations from it in Venkoba Rao’s (1926, intro., xc) edition of the Vyāsayogicarita, the Vyāsa Vijaya claims that Vyāsatīrtha was asked by Vijayanagara emperor Sāluva Narasimha to conduct the worship of Veṅkaṭeśvara in the main Tirupati temple for a period of twelve years because the regular temple arcakas had been put to death for stealing temple jewels. Vyāsatīrtha filled in until one of these priest’s sons was of age to take over. In the interim period, Vyāsatīrtha conducted the rituals according to Madhva’s Tantrasārasaṅgraha manual on worship. There are also references in the Vyāsa Vijaya to Vyāsatīrtha conducting his all-India tour in state, that is, with “retainers and with a drum on an elephant” (lxxxix). According to Venkoba Rao (xci), these are honors that Vyāsatīrtha receives only later, after living at the Vijayanagara court in Hampi. The Vyāsa Vijaya also tells a story of Vyāsatīrtha’s confrontation at Kanchi with Śaivas, who refused to let Vyāsatīrtha enter the temple to Ranganātha on the grounds that Jambukeśvara, a form of Śiva, was also there. Vyāsatīrtha arranged to run throughout the jurisdiction holding his breath. The territory he covered would subsequently belong to Ranganātha and what remained would belong to Jambukeśvara (lxxxix). Animosity regarding sectarian divisions along devotional (as opposed to intellectual) lines seems to have emerged in a slightly later historical period and is likely linked to the shift in the Vijayanagara court’s patronage from an ecumenical Śaivism to a more biased Vaishnavism. There are no references to sectarian tensions along devotional lines in the Vyāsayogicarita, although different systems of Vedānta thought are certainly described as adversarial.

36. This text, like the Vyāsa Vijaya, has been available to me only through quotes found throughout Venkoba Rao’s edition of the Vyāsayogicarita. Prahladachar (1993, iv) mentions this text in passing but does not discuss its contents at much length. However, Prahladachar does identify some ways in which the Vyāsayogicarita differs from “the tradition[s]” version of Vyāsatīrtha’s life (xvii). What Prahladachar likely means by “the tradition” is both the story of Vyāsatīrtha’s life as told in the Vyāsa Vijaya and the version told by the brief poem encapsulating the main points of Vyāsatīrtha’s life composed by the early twentieth-century Mādhva maṭhādhipati Śrī Vidyāratnākaratīrtha.

37. Recently, there was a Mādhva effort afoot to locate and identify all 732 of these icons. Due to the organizer’s unexpected death, the effort has been suspended. The link (www.vyasasamudra.org) to the website documenting these efforts is now broken.

38. If the Vyāsa Vijaya has had undue influence on Mādhva conceptions of Vyāsatīrtha, Somanātha’s text has had an equally imbalanced influence on scholars’ (including this one’s) understanding of the religious leader’s life. This is evident in the fact that Somanātha’s text has been published three times, while the other two have never been published. That the text is readily accessible perpetuates its scholarly impact.

39. There are references to Vyāsatīrtha’s sectarian identity framed in terms of his intellectual, Vedāntin identity, as opposed to his Vaishnava devotional one. These references occur in the sections on debates with Advaitins, discussed below. See also Venkoba Rao’s Sanskrit text (1926, 69) for a reference to Vyāsatīrtha’s elucidation of “Mādhwamata” or “Mādhva thought.” The text also specifically mentions some of Vyāsatīrtha’s works such as the Nyāyaṁṛta, the Tātparyacandrikā, and the Tarkatāndava (64).

40. An example of the Vyāsayogicarita’s attention to veracity is when Vyāsatīrtha receives Somanātha in order to discuss his account (Venkoba Rao 1926, Sanskrit text, 83ff.). In
addition to Novetzke (2007) and Sax (2000), Granoff and Shinohara (1994) and Winand M. Callewaert and Rupert Snell (1994) have done work on religious biographies in South Asia.

41. This procedure is discussed in Venkoba Rao (1926, intro., lxxvi, Sanskrit text, 25).

42. Venkoba Rao 1926, Sanskrit text, 13.

43. EC 1905, vol. 9, no. 153. The inscription dates from Śaka year 1445 or 1523 CE. See map 3, where the general location of the gifted villages is labeled “Abbur Maṭha.”

44. This portion of the text appears in Venkoba Rao (1926, Sanskrit text, 32); see his introduction (lxxvi-lxxvii) for a discussion.

45. We find versions of this story in Buddhist Jātaka tales and in lives of Jain saints as well as in Hindu digvijaya literature. See Clark (2006, 152–53) for some discussion of this.


47. It is possible that, due to a famine that occurred in 1475–76, Brahmaṇyatīrtha was deceased by this point (Sharma [1961] 1981, 287).


49. In fact, the word Kanchi is not used but the description of the icons in the Varadarāja temple indicate the location (Venkoba Rao 1926, Sanskrit text, 37–38).

50. Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., lxxxi; and Sanskrit text, 38.


52. ARSIE 1919, no. 370, repr. in Venkoba Rao n.d., appendix 1 by K. T. Pandurangi. The significance of this gift will be discussed more in chapter 4.


55. See Venkoba Rao (1926, intro., viii–ix) for a discussion of this.

56. “Ato dinavirāmeṇaḥ khalajanavayoḥmohacūrṇaḥ ena sarojinyā iva cireṇānidrāṇāḥ vaidikācāramandrāḥhim dinakara iva bhavān pratibodhanakārṁ hindati Tatra sarveṣām api dharmāṇāṃ rājā setur iti nyāyena bhavatā sarvadā tadā tadā sthānīstheyuḥ bhavitavyaḥḥ Purākila yogino niṣṭuḥ api mahānto dattātreyādyaya jagadupakaranāya rājanyasabhālaṅkārā babhūvaiḥ” (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., lxxiii–lxxxiv; Sanskrit text, 40).

57. “Evam eva bhaktāḥ sambhāvavantah rahasyenaḥ dharmaṇapadeśena prátyahah anugṛḥnaḥ…” (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., lxvii; Sanskrit text, 59).

58. “Vasudhādhhipena hamseneva kamalākaraḥ pratyaṃham upaśeyamāṇahḥ” (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., lxvii; Sanskrit text, 64).

59. “Nṛpanikaraś sevamāṇahḥ . . . aparimitair yodhāḥḥ pariveṣṭamāṇahḥ” (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., xv; Sanskrit text, 56).

60. An āśana is a seat and a mudrā can refer to a seal used by royals.

61. “Tadanu samāṭham āgāt kṣmādhhipena pradiṣṭam, sphaṭikamaṇimayūkhaḥ śarasopānamāģraṇaḥ|
Vipulakana kavedividrumastambharajaṁ, mrgapatir iva kuṇjaṁ medinibhṛdvārsaya ||
Tatra vyarājata samastatamonihantaṁ, mudrāsane sa nivasan munisārvabhaumah ||
mārtanda bhimbā iva mārgavāsaṁ mandaṁ, mandaṅkiniśu madaṁadhyanabhauvaṁ praviṣṭah ||
arcayantam imam arghya-pravṛvāya bhāgadheyaparinānam atmanah ||
pārthivas sapadi paryaptāyatan pāṇḍusunur iva bādaraṁyaṇam ||” (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., xvi; Sanskrit text, 58).

62. Despite the fact that Somanātha makes no reference to this event, Venkoba Rao (1926) uses it at length in his introduction to the text and attempts to identify when the event took place by looking at astronomical and epigraphic records. He also refers to how Vyāsatīrtha’s other two biographers present this event: “The Vyāsa Vijaya speaks of the Kuhuyoga as having occurred after the grant of Vyāsasamudra, but this appears to be a mistake” (intro., clxv). Rao does not supply a quote from the Vyāsa Vijaya, but he goes on to say that the third biography by the early twentieth-century Mādhva mathādhipati, Śrī Vidyāratnākara, presents the Kuhuyoga’s date and implications more accurately: “Śrī Vidyaratnakara Swami’s statement of the tradition is more in accordance with epigraphical and astronomical evidence” (clxv).

63. This event is popularly understood to be an explanation for why Vyāsatīrtha is more commonly known as “Vyāsarāya” or “King Vyāsa” even today. But, in fact, “rāya” seems to have been a common epithet for these sectarian leaders during the sixteenth-century, especially in vernacular sources. Vyāsatīrtha is referred to as “Vyāsarāya” in a Kannada inscription in a 1513 inscription in the Viṭṭhala temple in the capital city. His second teacher, Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa, was also called “Śrīpādarāya.” For an explanation of why these mathādhipatis were also “rāyas,” see the following section of this chapter on inscriptions.

64. Prahladachar 1993, intro., xi.

65. Inserted into a long sentence documenting various ways in which Vyāsatīrtha is honored at court is the following phrase: “dvipāntarabhūpālasamprāṭipradhānapurūṣair asakṛṣtsamarpyamāṇāni bahuvidhopahārapūjanāni ca” (Venkoba Rao 1926, 65). “And [to him] pujās consisting of manifold offerings were given repeatedly by the great emissaries sent by rulers from other continents.”

66. These works would be Nyāyāmṛta and Tātparyacandrikā. The Tarkatāṇḍava or “Dance of Reasoning” is in the service of the polemics of these other two texts, insofar as it discusses proper rules of argumentation.

67. The reasons for Kalinga’s importance are the subject of some scholarly debate. In general, all regions with coastal access were valuable to the largely inland empire. Moreover, Vijayanagara’s military policy in general emphasized the expansion of its northern borders. However, a recent article by Venkata Raghotam (2013) argues that Kalinga’s significance to the Vijayanagara kings was largely symbolic. Because they kept seizing and subsequently losing border forts to Kalinga’s Gajapati rulers, retaking these entities and their surrounding regions became a matter of honor.

68. Of the twenty-eight inscriptions documenting Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s gifts to the Tirupati temple, six give a lengthy praise of his conquest of Kalinga and his recapture of the Udayagiri and other forts held by the Gajapati rulers; a few other inscriptions give a briefer account (see TDI [1935] 1984, vol. 3, nos. 66–68). See also Verghese (2014) for further analysis of this event and its implications.
69. For an overview of this section of the text, see Prahladachar (1993, intro., x).

70. See Venkoba Rao (1926, intro., xixff, Sanskrit text, 60).

71. “Prāvādukasya paripanthijanasya jetā, yogīśvaro narapatiś ca tathā vadānyaḥ| Anyo-nyam uchritakprārasabhaktibhājau, vyatyastav āsa bhavanāv iva tāv abhūtām||” (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., xx; Sanskrit text, 62).

72. “Purastād eva bhūhṛtas tasya mühūrtamātre bahvībhir ativajrapātābhir upari dūṣānān avapraśasadāhyānibhir yuktiparāmparābhibhā śataśaḥ khanḍāyītvā” (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., xliii; Sanskrit text, 70).

73. Indeed, the Vyāsayogicarita states that “Śrī Krishnadevarāya vowed to devote every-thing he had to the worship of Śrī Vyāsabhikṣu: “The king wishes to do pūjā to Śrīvyāsabhikṣu with as many material objects as he has, with as much strength as he possesses, to the extent of the many enemies that he has defeated, with as much generosity as may be resorted to in action and speech, with as much accumulated wealth, and with as many qualities and as much glory as he possesses” (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., lxvi). (Yāvanto yāvanto vīṣayāḥ ṛtā bhujabalaṃ yāvatvā ṛtā jitā yāvantaś ca vadānyatā karasarojātaśrayā yāvati|| Yāvato dhanaśampado gunaṅgaṇo yāvāṃ ca yāvad yaśas tāvat kartum iyeṣa pūjanam asau śrīvyāsabhikṣoḥ nrpaḥ|| [Sanskrit text, 71].)

74. According to Venkoba Rao’s (1926, intro., cxlvii) translation/paraphrase, “The King wishes to bathe you himself in gems today, like the Parijāta tree which rains its flowers on the peak of a guardian mountain. By coming to comply with his desire, kindly favour the devotion of him who looks upon every inch of your holy self as a guardian angel. “Svāmin bhavantaṃ svayam adyaratnair ākāṅkṣate bhūramakṣatiś ca yāvadiṣyataśrayat|| kūṭāgrabhāgaṃ kulabhūdharasya prasūnajātaśrayāḥ pārijātaḥ|| Svāmin prasīda bahumantum apārakīrte| puṣpāñjaliḥ pratikalāḥ bhagavannaraśayā honepi kalayate kuladaivabhāvaṃ||” (Venkoba Rao 1926, Sanskrit text, 71).

77. Literally, “kṣoṅisura” or “gods on earth.”

78. The Lāṭās would have referred to rulers from the region of what is now the southern coast of Gujarat.

79. That is, rulers of what is now Bengal.

80. I am not sure to whom the text is referring, but it may be local rulers from the region around Delhi who are not the sultanate or the Mughals.

81. “Kṣoṅisurayatnāvıdırūkṣitāvāseṣāṇi tāni rāśiḥ kārayītvā nānāḥiśāṃ calehyas samāgatānāṃ kuṇḍalāya, tuṇḍirādhipānāṃ, keyūrāya keralānāṃ, hārāya párasikānāṃ, maktuṣṭā laṭānāṃ, anguliyaṅkāya kalingānāṃ, kāṅkaṅāya koṅkaṅānāṃ, niskāya turuskaṅāṃ, cuḍanāya gaudānāṃ, taralāya colānāṃ, kāṅcigunāya pāncalānāṃ, anyesāṃ api bhūbhujām vādāṅgaṇās sabhikṣuḥ prādiṣkaf||” (Venkoba Rao 1926, Sanskrit text, 74).

82. This could be a geographic reference to the Tamil country and not to its Cola leaders.

83. For example, in 1513, weaving communities along the Coromandel coast got Kṛṣṇadevarāya to rescind an order taxing their looms. This generosity on the part of the king is mentioned in several inscriptions, attesting to its significance (e.g., Eaton 2005, 86).
84. Because inscriptions were often carved into the walls of architectural structures, this section considers both inscriptive and monumental records together, with the heavier emphasis being on inscriptions. This will be counterbalanced somewhat in later chapters (especially chapter 4) that emphasize monumental remains.

85. Those inscriptions carved into temple walls seem to attest to the public nature of the information and ideology being documented therein. As Alexandra Mack (2011, 154–55) notes, most people were illiterate, so even if these inscriptions were publicly displayed, they would not have been comprehensible. Still, the fact that they were so displayed suggests that they were meant to be well known and talked of (Sears 2014, 46). Those inscriptions carved onto copper plates were less public and tended to be for the religious leaders of the community in question, who were typically the people benefiting most from the arrangements recorded in the inscription. In some instances, copper plates may have been forged by religious groups to make certain claims (see discussion of Heras in chapter 3 of this book). In Vyāsatīrtha’s case, copper plate inscriptions are typically in Sanskrit and bear on issues that are slightly different from those carved into temple walls, which are usually in the local vernacular or, if they involve different linguistic communities, in more than one vernacular. But many of the Sanskrit copper plates also have vernacular insertions that typically describe the land/villages involved, implying that the plates could be accessed by locals to explicate certain arrangements.


87. Vyāsatīrtha appears in several inscriptions posthumously, attesting to his continued significance. He is mentioned in copper plate grants, found in the Sosale maṭha, dating from 1627, 1642, 1703, 1708, 1709, 1712, and 1715 (see EC 1976, vol. 5, nos. 109–14, 116).

88. “Inscriptions, just like medieval court literature, are forms of discourse containing representations of the self and the world. As such, the social and political aspirations they embody must be recognized along with the ideology they convey” (Talbot 2001, 15).

89. I discuss legitimation theory in Indian history more critically in chapter 3, where I argue that political and economic motivations, more than a quest for legitimacy, were at the heart of royal interactions with religious groups and leaders. However, legitimacy was part and parcel of the honorific exchanges that did transpire between the Vijayanagara court, sectarian leaders, and temples. The economic developments brought about by royal gifts of material resources to religious institutions facilitated political integration, largely through the development of new transactional networks. These transactional networks were materially based. But such material/economic developments also improved a ruler’s standing in the public’s eyes or, in other words, gave his incursions into local affairs “legitimacy.” Of course, as will be discussed more below, Vijayanagara initiatives did not benefit all residents equally; for some citizens, the empire certainly did not feel the need to justify its actions.

90. As noted above, of the twenty-eight inscriptions documenting Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s gifts to the Tirupati temple, six give a lengthy praise of his conquest of Kalinga and his recapture of the Udayagiri and other forts located there, while a few other inscriptions mention it briefly (see TDI vol. 3, [1935] 1984, nos. 66–68, 76–81). See also Verghese’s (2014) study of the links between the conquest of Kalinga and Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s temple benefactions.

91. EC 1976, vol. 5, no. 105, and, again, in no. 106. (The translation is based on that of the inscription’s editor.) This praśasti appears in most of Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s longer inscriptions,
albeit in different languages. (Shorter inscriptions, such as those found at the Viṭṭhala temple in the imperial capital, seem to supply a truncated testament to Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s greatness [see Filliozat and Filliozat 1988]. In addition, different Indian agencies charged with documenting inscriptions have observed different protocols; some omit those sections, like the praśasti, that are redundant with other inscriptions.) Other instances where the above list of sacred sites appears in the praśasti include the following: EC 1905, vol. 9, nos. 30 and 153; EC 1902, vol. 7, pt. 1, no. 85; ARMAD 1942, no. 28; EC 1943, vol. 14, no. 115; EI 1960, vol. 31, no. 21, “Kamalapur Plates of Krishnadevaraya”; TDI 1935 (1984), vol. 3, no. 65, Inscriptions of Krishnaraya’s Time.

94. While the first two of the place names mentioned in the praśasti quoted above are easily recognizable today (Kanchi and Srisailam), the other places are more recognizable under other names: “Sonachala” is Tiruvannamalai, “Kanakasabha” is Cidambaram, and “Venkatadri” is Tirupati. The “others” mentioned above include Kālahasti, Virūpākṣa, Harīhara, Ahobila, Sangama, Sṛrānagam, Kumbakonam, Nandītirtha, Nivṛtti, Gokarna, and Ramasētum. As map 4 indicates, some of these sacred sites are either in or near the contested border zone while the bulk are in either the Tamil country or Andhra Pradesh. The praśasti portion of the inscriptions does not mention any of the sites in central or western Karnataka that Kṛṣṇadevarāya also routinely patronized. This suggests that the monarch was particularly concerned about his control over the eastern regions of his empire.

95. Mack 2011, 156.
96. The Chikkabbehalli grant of 1516 is located in Sṛrānagapatha taluk (ARMAD 1942, no. 28). It is marked on map 3 as “Sosale Maṭṭha.” (In the same year, Kṛṣṇadevarāya also granted the Śrīvaishṇava teacher Govindarāja land for establishing an agrahāra in the region of Sṛrānagapatha, which may be significant. See chapter 4 of this book for a discussion of the role of Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s patronage in Śrīvaishṇava-Mādhva material exchanges and collaborations.) One copper plate inscription (EC 1976, vol. 5, no. 105) records gifts of land in this same region that were made to Vyāsatīrtha in 1521. The Channapatha copper plate grant of Kṛṣṇadevarāya from 1523 (EC 1905, vol. 9, no. 153) records a gift of land to Vyāsatīrtha of his teacher Brāhmāṇyatīrtha’s native village (see Abbur Maṭṭha on map 3) and surrounding areas.

97. I do not intend this phrasing to convey that the recipients of royal land grants “owned” the land in the modern capitalist sense. Others continued to live on and work it and to share in its proceeds, but the recipients did get sarvamānya rights to it, meaning that they had dominion over it and that the land’s produce (agrarian, mineral, aquatic, etc.) was not taxed by the state.
98. See, for example, EC 1976, vol. 5, no. 106, ll. 20–22. This is the modern-day town of Abbūr in the Channapatha Taluk.
100. Viraraghavacharya (1953) 1954, 2:637. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.
101. EC 1976, vol. 5, no. 106. The village given is Kännerumadugu in the Kanakagiri region, north of the empire’s capital (see map 3).
102. B. N. K. Sharma ([1961] 1981, 295) cites a Telugu manuscript from the Madras Government Oriental Manuscript Library, in which a powerful chief in the Uttara Karnataka district bordering the Adil Shahi kingdom, Peddarama of Pippala Gotra, affirms his allegiance to Vyāsatīrtha: “It is now known that Vyāsatīrtha had numerous families owing allegiance to his Mutt in the Uttara-Karnataka areas bordering the Adil Shahi kingdom. Many of these were entrusted with civil and military responsibilities of ‘Deshpandes.’” Sharma goes on to note that the local authority of these “Deshpandes” (despāṇḍes) continued for centuries in the Uttara-Karnataka region.

103. Leela Prasad cites a case where Kṛṣṇadevarāya makes his expectations of his donees explicit: “The [1515] inscription recording the donation to the [Sringeri] māṭha [of a village] notes that Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s objective in making the grant ‘was threefold, viz. the destruction of his foes, unswerving attachment of his supporters and allies, and increase of his life, health and prosperity’” (B. R. Row, ed. Selections from the Records of the Śringeri Mutt [Mysore: Government Branch Press, 1927], qtd. in Prasad 2007, 74).

104. These similarities to the temple are likely what caused the māṭha to overshadow, gradually, the agrahāra as the main form of royal land grant to Brahmīns in the Vijayanagara period. Agrahāras or settlements of Brahmin families in grouped villages often attended the founding of a māṭha. This happened in Sringeri, where “in 1346 . . . the first Vijayanagara emperor, Harīhara I, founded the first Sringeri agrahara in the immediate vicinity of the māṭha” (Prasad 2007, 44). Some of Vyāsatīrtha’s māṭhas also seem to have had agrahāras established in their vicinity. This accounts for the “secular” power structure that would evolve in the region of the māṭha and was affiliated with both the māṭha and the court.

105. Kathleen Morrison (2009) has demonstrated that the empire’s emphasis on irrigation privileged elite patterns of food consumption in ways that disadvantaged others, notably dry crop farmers. Māṭhas’ reshaping of land use in potentially controversial ways is also implicit in an incident from the Vyāsayogicarita. Vyāsatīrtha is wandering in the forest and some forest residents are about to attack him. But they are so beguiled by his holy nature that they become his servants, bringing him branches, wood, leaves, and other useful materials for his survival and comfort (Venkoba Rao 1926, intro., cxx; Sanskrit text, 57). Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s (2004, v. 257) references (in “Rājanīti” of his Āmuktamālyada) to the existence of forest-dwelling hunter-gatherers as irritants to the empire may reflect similar difficulties: “Trying to clean up the forest folk is like trying to wash a mud wall. There’s no end to it. No point in getting angry.”

106. Of course, in the absence of more specific records we cannot know how evenly such benefits were distributed, and they likely were not. Yet to assume that as elite institutions, māṭhas had only exploitative engagement with the local population is probably incorrect.

107. Inscriptional sources confirm that this was the practice at Udupi at least by the fifteenth century. See SII 1932, vol. 7, nos. 296ff. Speaking generally of māṭhas under Vijayanagara rule, Verghese (1995, 115) asserts the following: “Also, mūrtis of gods and goddesses were installed in the māṭhas and regular worship was offered to them, as in the case of the famous Śrīṅgēri māṭha, where goddess Śāradā-devī and god Vidyāśaṅkara were worshipped.” It should be noted that Michell (1995, 276) argues that the Vidyāśaṅkara temple is likely a mid-sixteenth-century construction.

108. Many māṭhas in South India have these samādhis. This is true of the Sringeri Smārta māṭha (Prasad 2007, 255n41). The Mādhva māṭha in Abbur (where Vyāsatīrtha’s
teacher was from) contains Brahmāṇyatirtha's samādhi, often called a “brīndāvana” in Vaiṣṇava communities. The Mādhva maṭta in Mulbagal, headed by Śripādarāja, another of Vyāsatīrtha’s teachers, also houses the latter’s samādhi. There are eleven Mādhva samnyāsin entombed in or very near the Vijayanagara capital. One is Vyāsatīrtha’s samādhi, on an island in the Tungabhadra River, known as navabrindāvana or “nine brīndāvana (island)” because of the eight other Mādhva saints who are also buried there. While the form of the tombs likely derives from pre-Buddhist stupa-like tumuli, the samādhis also resemble thrones. The carved leaves encircling the top of many Mādhva saints are those of the tulasi plant and are indicative of Vaiṣṇava ascetic identity (McLaughlin 2014). But their arrangement also resembles a crown. Images of Rāma, Laksmana, and Hanumān installed either on or near many of the samādhis of the Mādhva saints buried in Vijayanagara suggest a long period of multifaceted worship (see ch. 4, figs. 2 and 4–9.).

109. ARSIE 1922, no. 710 (trans. in full in Filliozat and Filliozat 1988, 58).

110. Oral traditions surrounding several maṭhas in South India date the practice of “holding court” at these maṭhas on certain days to key moments of patronage from the Vijayanagara court. At such times, in both the Sringeri Smārta maṭha and the Vyāsatīrtha maṭha in Sosale, the maṭhadhipati wears certain royal emblems and explicitly mimics the darbār. On this practice at Sringeri, see Prasad (2007, 68–69); at the Vyāsatīrtha maṭha, see Sharma ([1961] 1981, 290n1).

111. The Śrīvaiṣṇava thinker Yāmunācārya (tenth century) was referred to as “Aḷavantār” (“he who came to rule”), and Rāmānuja (eleventh-twelfth centuries) was referred to as “Uṭaiyavar” (literally “He who has possession” or the “Lord”). In various inscriptions, many Mādhva samnyāsin were also called Udaïyar/Wodeyar, a term often applied to royalty. See Sanderson (2009) for other examples.

112. Virūpākṣa functioned as the empire’s tutelary or protective deity and his “signature” was consistently found at the bottom of all inscriptions documenting royal grants by the Saṅgama and Sāḷuva dynasties. However, Viṭṭhala gradually started to appear as a signatory deity under the Tūḷuvas and eventually replaced Virūpākṣa in this capacity during Rāmarāya’s rule (1542–65). While Virūpākṣa remained the empire’s emblematic tutelary deity, Viṭṭhala’s temple in the capital received increasing royal attention over the course of the Tūḷuva dynasty, attention that eclipsed that lavished upon Virūpākṣa’s shrine. I discuss this in more detail in chapter 4.

113. In one such inscription, shares of the land grant used to found the maṭha are set aside “for the Lord of the oblation at the place of the maṭha” (maṭhāvanisutapateḥ). This seems to be a reference to Rāmacandra, whose protection for the arrangement is then sought (EC 1902, vol. 7, pt. 1, Shimoga, no. 85). The gifted village is Gaurapura and the year of the gift was 1527. See map 3.

114. Verghese (1995, 50) surveys the literature on this temple.

115. This term is discussed at much greater length in the conclusion of chapter 4. Inscriptions in which Vyāsatīrtha is referred to in this way include the following: EC 1902, vol. 7, no. 85; TDI (1935) 1984, vol. 3, nos. 157, 158, 159, and 165; EC 1976, vol. 5, nos. 105–6; ARMAD 1942, no. 28.

116. As mentioned in note 21 in chapter 1, in EC 1943, vol. 14, no. 115, one Śrīvaiṣṇava leader, Govindarāja, is referred to as the acārya of kings and Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s own acārya. To counter this piece of inscriptive evidence, Mādhvas often cite another inscription in the Viṭṭhala temple in Hampi, in which Vyāsatīrtha is addressed as “Gurugalu Vyāsarāyaru”
or “Guru Vyāsatīrtha.” (*SII* 1986, vol. 4, no. 277) But the term guru was a common honorific title in these inscriptions. Verghese (1995, appendix A) provides an overview of all the inscriptions at the capital. One is a 1519 grant by Kṛṣṇadevarāya to “Guru Basavadīkṣita.”


118. This is also documented in the Mādhva hagiographical traditions surrounding Vyāsatīrtha. According to the *Vyāsa Vijaya*, Vyāsatīrtha started worshiping the main deity according to Madhva’s *Tantrasārasaṅgraha* while at Tirupati.

119. This land endowment will be discussed further in chapter 4 under “An Intersectarian Agrahāra?”

120. After indicating the coordinates of the land with reference to neighboring villages and listing off the hamlets included in the gift (ll. 39–57), the inscription discusses the main village’s various names as follows: “Kṛṣṇarāyapuraṃ ceti pratināmasamanvitam[| grāmam vyāsamudrākhyaṃ beṭṭakondāparāhavayam|].” I have come across other instances of Kṛṣṇadevarāya having a village renamed “Kṛṣṇarāyapura” as part of the donation (e.g., *EC* 1976, vol. 5, no. 105, l. 83; and *EC* 1943, vol. 14, no. 115). The scholarly literature on Vijayanagara debates how centralized the state was. This is outside my area of expertise, but it does seem that Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s inscriptions recounting his military conquests and his support of various religious institutions, as well as his renaming of villages after himself, imply that he wanted people in far-flung holdings to associate themselves with his reign. See Morrison (2009) and Sinopoli (2000). See also Eaton and Wagoner (2014, 289ff.) for a discussion of how, as a means of conveying his “expansionist intentions,” Kṛṣṇadevarāya constructed a new gate, with his emblems prominently displayed, immediately after capturing the fort of Raichur from the Adil Khan of Bijapur.

121. Telugu was not Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s mother tongue, a fact that the text itself alludes to when Kṛṣṇadevarāya is commanded by “Āndhra Viṣṇu” in a vision to compose a text in Telugu for His delight.


123. Again, the text’s focus on the life story of Yāmunācārya is generally thought to underscore Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s Śrīvaiṣṇava leanings.


125. Ibid., 603.

126. Ibid., 605.


130. Ibid., v. 242, 618.

3. SECTARIAN RIVALRIES AT AN ECUMENICAL COURT: VYĀSATĪRTHA, ADVAITA VEDĀNTA, AND THE SMĀRTA BRAHMINS

1. See Williams (2011) for a detailed study of the role of *navya-nyāya* in Vyāsatīrtha’s works.

2. As McCrea argues (2015), Vyāsatīrtha’s detailed identification of all possible Advaita arguments on particular topics as well as counterarguments to Dvaita objections amounts to a mapping of the tradition’s historical development. But like many Indian doxographies
of different philosophical systems, this map is polemical in that it helps to locate the Dvaita system advantageously in the broader philosophical landscape. Nicholson (2010, 145) points out that earlier doxographies, such as Mādhava’s Sarvadarṣanasamgraha and Haribhadra’s Saḍdarṣanasamuccaya, are ahistorical and present the systems of thought they cover as “completely static.” He sees polemic and doxography as distinct and maintains that true doxographies typically do not take the opponents’ views to task so much as they try to elucidate them. But he does allow that some types of texts straddle these two genres, for example, the Buddhist Bhāviveka’s Madhyamakāhṛdayakārikā (151).

3. In all, Vyāsatīrtha composed nine works, which include several commentaries on Madhva’s works. His three principal works, however, are the Nyāyāmṛta, the Tātparyacandrikā, and the Tarkatāṇḍava. The first two are detailed criticisms of Advaita and Viṣṇūdvaite Vedānta, with the Tātparyacandrikā focusing on the systems’ respective commentaries on the Brahma Sūtras. The third work is indirectly in the service of the same goals as the other two in that it maps out alternative argumentation techniques that support a Dvaita epistemology and metaphysics.

4. As mentioned in chapter 1, further evidence that Hindu sectarianism not only allowed for but encouraged acts of conversion can be found in Madhva’s thirteenth-century handbook on entering the monkhood (Yatipramavakalpa). According to the handbook, initiates undertook an oath of allegiance to certain doctrines and simultaneously swore to avoid other doctrines and their proponents: “Never shall I forswear Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. Never shall I deem Viṣṇu to be on a par or identical with the other gods. Never shall I associate with those who hold the doctrine of identity or equality of God and soul” (Sharma [1961] 1981, 190).

5. Another text, Bhedadhikkara or Laying a Curse on Dualism (c. 1550), written by the South Indian Advaitin Nrīsimhāśrama, is often identified as being anti-Dvaita but, according to McCrea (2015), this text does not engage Madhva’s system. However, the same author does engage and criticize Dvaita arguments in his Advaitadīpikā. It is not surprising that Mādhva intellectuals in turn responded to their rivals’ critiques throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among the more significant of these respondents were Vijayīndratīrtha (1514–95), Vādirājatīrtha (c. 1480–1600), Rāghavendratīrtha (1623–71), Nārāyaṇācārya (c. 1600–60), and Satyanātha Yati (1648–74). See B. N. K. Sharma (1981, pt. 5) for a discussion of some of their works.


7. Somanātha’s Vyāsayogicarita (ch. 4 in Prahladachar 1993), discusses preparations for one of Vyāsatīrtha’s debates, specifying that an uneven number of judges must be selected and a scribe designated to record the arguments. The passage also indicates that the terms of the debate adhere to the rules laid down in the Nyāya philosopher Gangeśopādhyāya’s Tattvacintāmaṇi. See Prahladachar’s (1993) introduction for a discussion and Venkoba Rao’s edition (1926, 52ff.) for the Sanskrit passage.

8. Along with this evidence of royal interest in Brahmin intellectual activity is the fact that Indian royals themselves engaged in literary pursuits. In addition to his Telugu text, the Āmuktaṁalāyada, discussed in chapter two of this book, Krṣṇadevarāya is also credited with composing several works in Sanskrit (the king himself mentions them in the beginning of his Āmuktaṁalāyada). Besides writing the five works mentioned there, he is also acknowledged as the author of a play, Jāmbavatī Parinayam. This is significant mainly because it
is the only one of his Sanskrit works that is still extant. Understanding the arguments of Vyāsatīrtha and his peers required that the audience have a certain intellectual aptitude and knowledge base, but one should not assume there was little public interest in philosophical debate in sixteenth-century South India. Whether or not Vijayanagara kings actually composed all the texts they are credited with, rulers who were literate and thoughtful were clearly seen in a positive light.

9. This shift is discussed more in chapter 4. Between 1354 and 1516, all royal grants documented in the imperial capital were witnessed by Virūpākṣa, a form of Śiva. From 1516 onward, some were witnessed by Virūpākṣa and others by Viṭṭhaleśvara, a form of Viṣṇu. Beginning in 1545, during the regency of Rāmarāya (for Tuluva Emperor Sadāśiva), all of the grants were witnessed by Viṭṭhala. See Verghese (1995, appendix A).

10. Of course, it was not always the teachings themselves that people responded to. It could also be the sectarian leader’s charisma, local authority, wealth, devotional fervor, displays of asceticism, and so on. But that intellectual prowess, displayed in debate, as well as knowledge of sacred texts were valued attributes is attested to in inscriptions praising sectarian leaders in these terms.


12. For example, Aiyangar 1921, Saletore 1934, and Nilakanta Sastri (1955) 1994. See also chapter 1, note 3 of this book.


15. See Verghese (1995, 115–17) for an overview of maṭhas in the Vijayanagara capital. Examples of other sectarian institutions established in the imperial capital would include shrines to deities and deceased gurus as well as guesthouses, feeding stations, and pavilions for prasād distribution. Specific examples of how sects used such things to promote their presence in a given area are provided in chapter 4.

16. As I discuss in detail in chapter 4, Vijayanagara royals encouraged a variety of sectarian religious activities (including the construction of ancillary shrines, maṭhas, guesthouses, and feeding stations) at several temple sites. These included the Krṣṇa and Viṭṭhala temples in the imperial capital, the Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara and Govindarājasvāmi temples in Tirupati/Tirumala, and the Varadarāja temple in Kanchi.

17. An example of the former attitude can be found in Verghese (1995, 9): “The conscious effort at religious conciliation seen in the Jaina-Vaishnava accord of Bukka I in A.D. 1368 was continued by the later rulers. For, despite their sectarian preferences, the Vijayanagara rulers, on the whole, adopted the deliberate policy of tolerance towards all sects, so as to incorporate them all within the polity.” Pollock’s (2006) view is discussed in greater detail below.

18. For this insight, I am grateful to Jon Keune and the panel, “The Limits of Royal Patronage,” he organized for the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Chicago, IL, November 2012.

19. As will be discussed, Kulke (2001, 234) has argued that the maṭha came into being around the same time as the empire; the oldest inscriptional reference to an actual maṭha at Sringeri is from 1356.

20. “Avyāhataprajñāḥ sāyaṅāmātyāḥ” (Śaṇa, RSBh 7.3, qtd. in Galewicz 2009, 47).

21. See Galewicz for an overview of these statements: “Other examples of ‘self-esteem’ are to be found in preambles to RS VII.3, which refers to the author as ‘avyāhataprajñāḥ
sāyaṇāmātyāḥ (‘Sāyaṇa, the king’s minister and one of unimpeded understanding’), to RS VII.4, where the author is called ‘srutitattväjñāḥ sāyaṇāmātyāḥ’ (‘Sāyaṇa, the minister knowing the true essence of the Śruti’) (2009, 47).

22. “An inscription on a copper plate dated 1377 commemorates a gift made by Harihara II in the form of an agrahāra land grant named Bukkarāyapura and consisting of fourteen villages in the Hassan district. It mentions the name of Sāyaṇācārya and his son Singana as the first two out of the sixty donees. Another inscription of Harihara, dated to 1378 and commemorating an agrahāra named Bonallapura, also mentions Sāyaṇācārya as the first out of thirty-six donees” (Galewicz 2009, 44). Kulke notes that Harihara II refers to himself as “the establisher of the Vedic path” in this 1377 inscription (2001, 238).

23. For an overview of these legends, see Subrahmanyam (1998).

24. Vidyāraṇya is often identified with Mādhava, Sāyaṇa’s brother, and “Mādhava” is also the name of a minister in the Saṅgama court. Clark (2006) argues, following Kulke, that there are two Mādhavas (the minister and Sāyaṇa’s brother) but he also rejects the identification of Mādhava, Sāyaṇa’s brother, with Vidyāraṇya. There is ample debate regarding the identity of these early Sringeri Smārta Brahmins, which creates some problems in determining the authorship of important texts.

25. Between 1354 and 1516, all royal grants documented in the imperial capital were witnessed by Virūpākṣa. See Verghese (1995, appendix A). As mentioned above in note 9 and further discussed in Chapter 4 of this book, the Vaiṣṇava deity Viṭṭhala rose to a position of prominence that in some ways eclipsed that of Virūpākṣa during the Tuḷuva dynasty. But Viṭṭhala never usurped Virūpākṣa’s status as tutelary deity.


27. For the importance of Virūpākṣa’s temple to the founding of the Vijayanagara empire, as well as to the historical evolution of the site, see Wagoner (1996a). That the Sringeri matha became linked to this temple at least symbolically from an early period is evident in the following inscription cited by Kulke, who refers to an inscription from the year 1384 in which “two other brahmin scholars, who were clearly named as disciples (śiṣya) of Vidyāraṇya, received land grants from king Harihara II in the presence of god Virūpākṣa at Vijayanagara” (2001, 229–30). He identifies the inscription as “Belugula inscription, lines 41d” (ARMAD 1933 [pub. 1936], p. 135).


32. For this information, Kulke (2001, 229n59) cites the following source, which I have not been able to locate: R. Narasimhachar, ed., Archaeological Survey of Mysore, Annual Report: 1906–1909, vol. 2, A Study by S. Settar (Dharwad: Karnataka University, 1976), 64ff.

34. ARMAD 1933, no. 24, cited in Verghese 1995, 14n78.
37. Kulke 2001, 234n75. The inscription he cites again is Belugula (ARMAD 1933 [pub. 1936], p. 135, l. 25).
39. Wagoner (1996b) and Talbot (1995) have shown that the Vijayanagara Empire mimicked many of the Islamic courtly styles of dress and architecture, to establish their authority in a Turkish and Persianized political world.
41. Pollock goes on to say, “There was no specifically Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava political practice, no specifically Jain political philosophy (as Somadevasūri’s political tract shows), no specifically Mahāyāna theory of political power. The disconnect between religion and rule was far more fundamental than contemporary scholarship acknowledges—and far more fundamental than in late medieval and early modern Europe. It is, in short, a serious misreading to claim that for the premodern period ‘the essentials of Indian politics can never be grasped without an understanding of religion’” (Pollock 2006, 431, and note 105, citing Guha 1997, 47).
42. Hacker 1995, 28. Kulke also assumes Mādhava to be the author.
43. Vidyashankar Sundaresan (2000) outlines the contours of this dispute and effectively problematizes the authorship of this text.
44. “Sringeri’s claim that its matha was founded by Śaṅkara and that afterwards Śaṅkara established in the course of his digvijaya three other advaita mathas at the cardinal points of India, put Sringeri at the centre of a new religious network covering India as a whole. Thus Sringeri’s “Śaṅkara tradition” provided a further legitimation to Vijayanagara’s claim to be the centre of the new orthodoxy” (Kulke 2001, 238).
45. Galewicz (2009, 75) notes the following:

It can be surmised that in addition to local agents of political power, a number of important centres of authority must have remained in the hands of priestly (mostly, though not only brahminical) elites and collective bodies presiding over big temples and other religious and educational institutions like mathas, some of them constituting not only religious but also economic core institutions of the hinterland. This plurality of centers of authority is what should be taken into account while explaining the early Vijayanagara rulers’ need for a unifying ideological principle that could appeal to most of them. A royal initiative presented as a commentary on the whole of the Veda could by principle serve that purpose.

In this view, the Sringeri matha created unity through its religious and scholarly activities, which enabled more efficient rule. While I agree that mathas were both religious and economic centers of authority and that the court’s bestowal of wealth on them was an efficient means of promoting certain types of economic development, I am not clear on how the very abstract and elite unity articulated in a Vedic commentary would have benefited the state in any direct way.

46. “The monastic traditions that developed at Śringeri and Kāñcipuram, as represented in the works that we have at our disposal from the hand of the early known (as opposed to
hagiographically presented) pontiffs, were essentially and distinctly orthodox. As has been indicated, they were essentially Śaiva, yet, in accord with Brahminical tradition, Śmārta orthodoxy was demonstrated by their acknowledgement of the Veda as the ultimate source of knowledge. . . . After the fourteenth century the influence and estates of the Kālāmukha and Mattamayūra orders significantly declined, their role to a significant extent being eclipsed by the new and heavily patronized Śmārta Advaita mathas” (Clark 2006, 221).

47. See Chandra Shobhi (2005, ch. 2 and conclusion) on how, despite receiving no patronage from the court, the Vīraśaiva mathas burgeoned under Vijayanagara rule.

48. It is also hinted at in inscriptions referred to in the kaditas or record books of the matha (cited in Kulke 2001, 232), which say that the Sringeri Śmārtas destroyed Buddhists and Jains.

49. Authority is not the same as orthodoxy. The Veda, by virtue of nonelites’ limited access to it and Brahmins’ distinctive role as its preservers, was certainly a symbol of the former and, for Vaidika Brahmins, an arbiter of the latter. However, other Brahmins may have identified other works more closely with orthodoxy.

50. This work is typically attributed to the Mādhava often identified as Sāyaṇa’s brother. But there is evidence that it was composed by a younger contemporary of Mādhava and Sāyaṇa named Cannibaḥṭṭa. Cannibaḥṭṭa’s father, Sahajasarvajña Viṣṇu Bhāṭṭopādhyaya, was Sāyaṇa and Mādhava’s teacher (see Thakur 1961, qtd. in Clark 2006, 209–210n114).


52. Ibid., 351.

53. See [Mādhava?] (1914), 273.

54. “If we can place anything about the [jīvanmuktiviveka] in time and space and consider Vidyāranya’s motives beyond teaching his own Advaitin followers, I think his deliberate cultural politics was to promote Advaita among sectarian Śrīvaiṣṇava laypeople in these newly controlled territories and defend the idea of liberation-in-life against the Śrīvaiṣṇava theologians” (Goodding 2002, 19).


57. See Wagoner (2000) for a helpful overview of the available sources on the empire’s founding and for a discussion of how a particular amalgamation of the themes in these sources came to influence modern scholarship on the empire.

58. Nunes’s chronicle has been translated in full by Robert Sewell. See Nunes ([1900] 1995).


61. Heras cites inscriptions, one from the Kolar district that explicitly places Vidyāranya at the Virupākṣa temple prior to the founding of the City of Victory there. The inscription recounts the story of Harihara, who had been out hunting across the river from Anegondi, when he saw that his dog had been bitten by a hare: “And seeing the god Virupākṣa along with the goddess Pampā he did obeisance to them; and drawing near, paid respect to Vidyāranya, the yati in that temple, and informed him of the above very curious circumstance” (Heras 1929, 2). Vidyāranya responds by telling the king that the place is special and that he ought
to make a city “named Vidyā” there. A similar inscription from Nellore also indicates that Vidyāranya is already being associated with the Virūpākṣa and Pampā temples. This inscription also includes Vidyāranya’s instructions advising the king to found a city there and call it Vidyānagara (Heras 1929, 3). Those inscriptions referred to earlier in this chapter, which do attest to an important connection between the Saṅgama court and the Sringeri Śmārta community, do not mention this legend in any way, a fact noted by Heras (4).

62. If a Portuguese horse trader visiting the city between 1509 and 1520 was aware of stories recounting Vidyāranya’s role in the founding of the empire, then Vyāsatīrtha would certainly have been aware of them, as well as of Rāmacandra Bhāratī’s use of them. We know that Vyāsatīrtha spent much time at the Vijayanagara capital. His presence is implied in inscriptions, wherein Vijayanagara royals bestowed land grants on him that were witnessed by deities at temples in the capital (e.g., two inscriptions from the Viṭṭhala temple dated 1513 and 1532, the latter of which documents an icon Vyāsatīrtha installed at that temple, and four inscriptions witnessed by Virūpākṣa, dated 1516, 1521, 1523, and 1527). Vyāsatīrtha is buried, together with eight other Mādhva saints, on an island in the Tungabhadra River a short boat ride from the capital. (See map 6 and figs. 2 and 4–9 in ch. 4.) Vyāsatīrtha is also credited with founding a small but still active Hanumān temple on the banks of the Tungabhadra River near the city’s sacred center, and there are remains of what seems to have been a Mādhva matha in the Viṭṭhalapura section of the city. Most of these monuments are discussed in chapter 4 of this book.

63. Heras 1929, 34.

64. For example, see the following quote: “Such religious ascetics and recluses psychologically are persons often inclined to fabricate such fables. Their knowledge of what they call absolute reality, acquired only by their practice of asceticism, inclines them to place all other things, whether existing or not existing, whether true or false, on the same level of relative reality. Hence the fabrication of a story which one might derive some profit from—provided no harm should result from the concoction to a third person—is always attractive to such religious recluses” (Heras 1929, 34).


66. Heras himself seems to acknowledge the Sringeri matha’s fourteenth-century prominence at court, even as he maintains that Rāmacandra Bhāratī was completely fabricating this history: “In fact, there is an inscription of the year 1513, in the Chikmagalur Taluka, recording a grant made by Śrī-Rāmachandra Bhāratīswāmi of the village of ‘Kūduāḷi, belonging to us, in the Melepāḷu of Vasudhāre-Sime, which Harihara-Mahārāya when he was protecting the kingdom in peace, granted to our Śringeri math as an offering to Vidyāśāṅkara’ [EC, 5, cm. 88].' This Vidyāśāṅkara is the famous Vidyātīrtha, one of the predecessors of Vidyāranya as head of the Sringeri math. The inscription shows the wish of the Jagad-guru, to show the early relations between the math and the Emperors of Vijayanagara. This was perhaps the first step in this campaign of falsification; the second was to be the story of Vidyāranya as the founder of the capital of the Empire” (Heras 1929, 34–35).
(2009, 73–75) for the original text of the inscriptions as well as Prasad (2007, 74) for a discussion. According to Verghese (1995, 149), Kṛṣṇadevarāya also gave grants of villages to the Śankaracārya matha at Kanchi in 1529.


72. McCrea 2015. See also Venkatkrishnan (2011) for a discussion of historicism in Vedāntin intellectual debates.

73. “Darśanānāṃ pravr̥ttatvān manda āśaṅkate punah anādikālato vr̥ttāh samayāb hi pravāhatah” (Madhva 1989, 100). (The fool doubts that [the darśanas] are streams that flow in [real] time in a continuous way from time that is beginningless, because [he is confused] by the fact that the different darśanas are proclaimed [by specific individuals].)

74. Pollock (1989); Clooney (1987); and Halbfass (1990) also address this issue in terms of the Veda’s anāditva, apauruṣeyatva, and svataḥ prāmāṇya.

75. It may be that Śāṅkara Advaitins did not make a conscious decision to view their leaders in this way, so as to achieve specific worldly ends. However, the doctrine of jīvanmukti helped to qualify gurus to teach about the experience to others and thereby establish their religious authority. As Patricia Mumme (1996, 263) notes, Śāṅkara himself says as much: “Commenting on Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.14.2, Śāṅkara states that one of the reasons a state of living liberation must be affirmed is the need for authoritative gurus and teachers. His point is compelling: if there is no one who has attained liberation in this life, then who would be qualified to act as a guru, teacher, or example worthy of emulation for those who are still bound? The various traditions that aim at liberation would be reduced to the blind leading the blind.” She also notes, “Jīvanmukti is a doctrinal concept whose practical importance is in authorizing founding teachers and gurus” (263). Andrew O. Fort (1998, 164–71) documents the fact that many recent Jagadgurus of the Sringeri and other Śaṅkara mathas are revered by their disciples for having achieved this state.

76. Fort (1998, 56) paraphrases Vimuktātman’s arguments on this issue as follows: “[Vimuktātman] says, following Gītā IV. 34, that the wise teacher realizes the truth and truth-knowers (tattva-darśin) alone teach the highest knowledge. If the body fell immediately after knowledge, there could be no teacher, thus no reaching vidyā, thus no liberation—which again shows that the knower’s body remains for a while.”

77. Much of the scholarly literature on Dvaita credits Vyāsatīrtha with introducing the use of this term in Dvaita. (e.g., Sheridan 1996; Sharma 1991, n. 7, 440). However, Roque Mesquita’s (2007, 9ff.) recent work on this concept maintains that Madhva himself was amenable to this term and utilized it on occasion. Mesquita’s evidence for this consists primarily of two quotations in Madhva’s works from unknown sources that Mesquita believes Madhva authored himself. Mesquita’s analysis of Madhva’s commentary on these quotes as well as Madhva’s discussion of liberation are persuasive in showing that Madhva made some equation between his two-stage view of mokṣa and Advaita Vedānta’s jīvanmukti concept. However, based on Mesquita’s discussion, my own assessment is that Madhva did not use the term jīvanmukti frequently and generally preferred to present his theory of mokṣa in terminology that would not be confused with that of Advaita.

78. Vyāsatīrtha’s presentation in this text assumes a lot of knowledge on the part of his audience of his opponents’ doctrines, which he often explains very cursorily prior to refuting. This partly reflects the dialogic context in which this text was produced.
79. It is important to note that Vyāsatīrtha often treats his particular interpretation of his opponents’ positions. His opponents, for more than a century, articulated counterarguments, some of which pointed out Vyāsatīrtha’s misrepresentation of their ideas. However, as mentioned above, the fact that Vyāsatīrtha’s polemics elicited such a protracted and detailed response from his intellectual rivals attests to the cogency of his critique.


81. Ibid., 48.


83. Fort 1998, 47ff.

84. Vyāsatīrtha summarizes his understanding of these aspects of Prakāśātman’s argument as follows: “And it is not the case that a saṃskāra is only made by an action or a cognition, because of the example of the smell of a flower lingering in the box even after the flower itself has been removed. And because of the following inference: ‘The destruction which is under dispute is [the destruction of ignorance which], like the destruction of knowledge, is invariably concomitant with a saṃskāra because this is the nature of destruction, except in the case of the destruction of a saṃskāra [in which case there is no invariable concomitance with another saṃskāra]’” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, vol. 3, 695). (na ca kriyājñānayor eva sāṃskārāḥ, niḥsāritatupṣpāyāṃ tatpūṭikāyāṃ puspaṃvāsanādārsanāt| vimato nāsāḥ sāṃskāravyāptāḥ, sāṃskāranāsānyatve sati nāsātvāt, jñānānāsāvad ity anumānāc ca|.) This last line demonstrates Prakāśātman’s care to maintain that the destruction of an impression will not invariably give rise to another impression precisely because this would mean that the achievement of final liberation would never take place. Vyāsatīrtha’s paraphrase of Prakāśātman’s argument goes on to say, “A saṃskāra is an effect that is without a material cause just like that destruction [is without a material cause]” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, vol. 3, 695). (saṃskāraḥ kāryo ‘pi dhvamsa iva nirupādānah|)

85. According to Fort’s (1998) analysis of Prakāśātman’s Pañcapadika-vivaraṇa, a commentary on Padmapāda’s Pañcapadika, Prakāśātman argues that both the saṃskāra and ignorance are based on the self, “which is why saṃskāras can continue even without the presence of avidyā.” He goes on to say Bharatītīrtha’s subcommentary on the Pañcapadika-vivaraṇa, the Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha, “agrees that pure consciousness is the locus of both, and adds that saṃskāras need no material cause, since such a cause is necessary only for existent things (not mere traces of ignorance)” (61).

86. “Avidyeva ca śuddhātmāśrita iti nāvidyāpekṣah|” (Vyāsatīrtha, vol. 3, 695).

87. “Saṃskāraḥ kāriyāḥ api dvamṣa iva nirupādānah|” (Vyāsatīrtha, vol. 3, 695).

91. “The following view has been rejected, namely, ‘that [the state of jīvanmukti] is like when you accept something contrary to known reality because there is some defect [in cognition] as in the example of seeing two moons [when you apply pressure to your eyelid with your finger] even though you know that there is only one moon.’ In this case [of jīvanmukti], [unlike] in that [example], there is no defect that is not removed by true knowledge of reality.” (Etena tattve jñāt ‘pi dvicandrādivaddo bādhitānvṛttir iti nirastam, tatrevātra tattvajñānānvartadosābhāvat” [Vyāsatīrtha 1996, vol. 3, 696].)
95. This is the pratīka for Ṛgveda 6.47.18c (Indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate), which is quoted in Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 2.5.19c. It implies that māyā or illusion is plural. Citsukha cites this text in his Tattvapradīpikā at the close of his discussion of ākāra and jīvanmukti (Fort 1998, 63).

104. “If you establish the leśa’s existence with reference to the continued working off of karma and yet you also establish the continuation [of karma] with reference to the existence of the leśa as something that obstructs complete knowledge, there would be the flaw of
mutual dependence” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, vol. 3, 697). (Sthite leśe karmānuvṛttis tadanuvṛttau ca jñānasya pratibhandhena leśasthitir ity anyonyāśrayāc ca.) For a discussion of Citsukha’s position here, see Fort (1998, 64).

105. “Tasmāt paramate mohakāryatvād akhilasya ca| jñānena mohanāśac ca jīvanmuktir na yujyate||


109. See note 77 above, which explains my response to Mesquita’s position (outlined in 2007, 9ff.) on this issue.

110. For more on this irony, see Fisher (2013, 6ff.), who applies to seventeenth-century Hindu sectarianism, Luhmann’s use of the cell/organism analogy to explain the interaction of different social groups and their systems of meaning.

111. “It is probable that some local patron commissioned the paintings when the temple started functioning again, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century spelled a period of prosperity and unprecedented stability for both the local ruling families and the merchant community, and it would be not surprising if the patron of the Virupaksha Temple paintings was either a local grandee or a wealthy merchant” (Dallapiccola 2011, 280).

112. Galewicz (2009) puts two copies of this image in the front of his book on Sāyaṇa’s commentary “in the service of empire” as an emblem of the links between the Vijayanagara darbār and the Sringeri maṭha.


114. See Venkoba Rao’s introduction to his edition of the Vyāsayogicarita for his efforts to verify this (1926, cviii and cxx–cxxx). The putative theft of the jewels is discussed more in Chapter 4 of this book.


4. ALLIES OR RIVALS? VYĀSATĪRTHA’S MATERIAL, SOCIAL, AND RITUAL INTERACTIONS WITH THE ŚRĪVAIŚṑṆAVAS


2. A. Rao 2015, ch. 4.

3. T. K. T. Viraraghavacharya (1953–54) amply documents this pluralism as well as various conflicts and negotiations between different constituents over the course of the history of the large Vaiṣṇava temple complex at Tirupati-Tirumala.

4. For more specific information on the court’s arbitrative role, see Arjun Appadurai 1981, 68.

5. According to Verghese (2000, 104), the growth in the cult of Viṭṭhala was at direct expense, in terms of royal patronage, to the cult of Virūpākṣa.
6. Between 1354 and 1516, all royal grants documented in the imperial capital were witnessed by Virūpākṣa. From 1516 onward, some were witnessed by Virūpākṣa and others by Viṭṭhaḷaśvara. Beginning in 1545, during the regency of Rāmarāya (for Sadāśiva), all of the grants were witnessed by Viṭṭhala. See Verghese (1995, appendix A), for a list and summary of the inscriptions. As mentioned in note 25 of chapter 3, Virūpākṣa apparently remained the empire’s tutelary or protective deity for the empire’s duration, but Viṭṭhaḷaśvara increasingly became a “signatory” deity on royal grants and his shrine at the capital received more attention.

7. As will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter and in chapter 5, the divisions between these two factions did not become formalized until a later period, but they do seem to have been emerging during Vyāsatīrtha’s lifetime.

8. Verghese (1995, 79) discusses this 1534 inscription (SII 1941, vol. 9, pt. 2, no. 566) as do Filliozat and Filliozat (1988, 60). The inscription states that images of thirteen Āḷvārs, including one preceptor, were installed in a special shrine within the Viṭṭhala temple and the donor of the images was a sandalwood merchant. None of the statues are in situ today.


11. According to an inscription, on May 30, 1531, a ferryman gave to the Viṭṭhala temple the revenue of the seven points of ferry service on the river. As Filliozat and Filliozat (1988, 55) point out, we know from a 1526 inscription in this temple that there were eight total points on the ferry, implying perhaps that the boatman kept the earnings made at that one point while donating the rest. This 1526 inscription is a royal decree by Kṛṣṇadevarāya proclaiming that tax revenues would be used to subsidize this ferry service for Vijayanagara residents. Verghese (2000, ch. 19) provides a helpful discussion of the likely importance of this community of boatmen (which was possibly organized into a guild) to the capital’s functioning. It appears that these ferries were the only means of crossing the river in the early sixteenth century; Domingo Paes’s 1520 travel narrative describes these boats in some detail and claims they are the only method used to cross the river (Paes [1900] 1995). Verghese (2000, 306–7) theorizes that the pylons of the ruined stone bridge, still visible in the river today near the city’s sacred center, were likely an earlier, Saṅgama-dynasty attempt to provide an alternative method of crossing. This proved infelicitous in times of war and was therefore discontinued. Verghese also discusses a later inscription from 1556, in which three hundred such boatmen of Anegondi (the “royal village” directly across the Tungabhadra from the capital) act in unison to make a significant donation to a Śaiva temple. Finally, the boatmen’s potentially high status is suggested, not only by their appearance in the 1526 royal inscription and their ability to make notable temple donations, but also by their appearance in sculptural reliefs found on slabs near one ferry gateway at Anegondi.

12. Verghese and Dieter Eigner (1998) have identified a maṭha with likely Mādhva affiliation in Viṭṭhalaṇapura, although there is no explicit reference to Vyāsatīrtha. The only extant inscription from the largely destroyed structure does not mention Vyāsatīrtha. Filliozat and Filliozat also theorize that this Viṭṭhalaṇapura building may be a Mādhva maṭha and draw attention to a carving on a pillar of a religious teacher standing before a lectern. They also
cite the inscribed name, “Śri Surendra Vodeyaru,” found on the floor of the gallery near the structure’s northern entrance and hypothesize that this may be the Mādhva teacher Surendra (1988, 19), who would have been a contemporary mathādhipati to Vyāsatīrtha. Indeed, according to Sharma ([1961] 1981, 208), this Surendratīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha shared a student, Vijayindratīrtha, and both men died in the same year (1539). Filliozat and Filliozat (1988, 24) also report another piece of evidence of the existence of a Mādhva matha in Viṭṭhalapura, namely, two copper plate inscriptions from Nanjanagudu, which they cite as appearing in “Ep Carn III 113–4, p. 203 sq.” (Unfortunately, their text does not supply a full bibliographic reference or a date for the inscription.) According to Filliozat and Filliozat, these copper plates document donations of villages to Surendratīrtha of the Mādhva sect and state that this arrangement was consecrated “in a matha situated at the southern gate of Vijaya Viṭṭhala, at the time of the ablution of Rāma, in the presence of Rāma Viṭṭhala” (24). Filliozat and Filliozat note the interesting fusion of Rāma and Viṭṭhala, a fusion that is also found in the carvings of two Mādhva tombs located in Vijayanagara. These are discussed below.


14. There is a tomb or samādhi shrine of Vyāsatīrtha’s fellow Mādhva ascetic and slightly older contemporary, Raghunandana (d. 1533), just downriver from the Viṭṭhala temple, which has a Viṭṭhala image carved into one side of it. (The religious significance of these samādhis in the Mādhva community is discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.) Raghunandana’s tomb has images of Rāma, Venugopāl, Viṭṭhala, and Mādhava on each of its four sides. See Verghese (1995, 54, 134, 267) for a description of this shrine and again, page 267, for its location on a map of the area. Vyāsatīrtha’s samādhi shrine, to be discussed later in this chapter, also has prominent carvings of Viṭṭhala and Rāma.

15. As Verghese (1995, 60) points out, “Of the eighteen prominent Haridāsas, eleven have Viṭṭhala appended to their names for their mudrika (nom de plume),” suggesting that Viṭṭhala worship was a prominent feature of popular Mādhvaism. However, the extent to which these Haridāsas were explicitly affiliated with Mādhva institutions and their Brahmin leadership requires much further study, as does the influence of distinctly Mādhva teachings and sensibilities on the Haridāsa movement. As will be discussed below (under the heading “An Intersectarian Agrahāra?”), we can connect the Haridāsa singer, Purandaradāsa, who was a Brahmin, to Vyāsatīrtha, in an inscriptional record. Furthermore, as mentioned briefly in chapter 2, one of Vyāsatīrtha’s gurus, Śripādarāja, who was mathādhipati at the Mādhva monastery in Mulbagal, was also famous for his devotional songs in Kannada. However, the connections between Vyāsatīrtha and Kanakadāsa, a sūdra devotee who composed Vaiṣṇava devotional songs in Kannada that remain very popular, are largely anecdotal. These anecdotes, which are difficult to date, suggest that historically there has been conflict over lower caste participation in Mādhva institutions, such as mathas and temples. See William J. Jackson (1998, 165–70) for a brief discussion of this feature of the legends of Kanakadāsa’s life. For recent studies of the complex links between Brahminical Hinduism and various strands of the bhakti movement in the early modern period, see Jon Milton Keune (2011, 2015), Novetzke (2008, 2012), and Venkatkrishnan (2015).


17. Vijayanagara royals certainly used icons of deities to convey, not only their religious affiliations, but also their power and authority in a given region. One of the best examples,
discussed by Eaton and Wagoner (2014), is Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s insertion of Rāmāyaṇa-themed reliefs into the gateways at the Raichur fort after his conquest of it in 1520. Images of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Hanumān are found in several of the gateways, juxtaposed with panels depicting the king himself, in what Eaton and Wagoner have called a “deliberate conflation” (308). By aligning their own iconography with that of Vijayanagara royals, sectarian leaders, too, could make political claims.

18. Filliozat and Filliozat (1988, 47) maintain that certain sculptures in the temple reflect the influence of Purandaradāsa’s music. It is true that the Mādhvas have a longer history of Viṭṭhala worship than Śrīvaiṣṇavas, who seem to have been introduced to it at Hampi. However, Verghese (1995, 65f.) counters this evidence with the fact that the Śrīvaiṣṇavas have left a much more extended monumental and inscriptive mark on the Viṭṭhalapura region of the capital. Temples dedicated to the Āḻvārs, Rāmānuja, and Śrīvaiṣṇava feeding houses and sectarian marks inscribed in Viṭṭhala temple pillars all would indicate the eventual Śrīvaiṣṇava dominance in this temple complex.

19. “A survey of the inscriptions also shows that, as far as we have evidence, the festivals and ceremonies in the temple were according to Śrī-Vaishnava practices. We have no inscriptional data of Mādhva festivals and rituals being conducted there” (Verghese 1995, 66). Another significant Viṣṇu temple, the Rāmacandra temple, which was located in the royal center amid the living quarters of the king and other nobles and which is well known for its relief carvings of scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa, also seems to have been affiliated with the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. Nāmams (sectarian marks) of the northern faction of the sect predominate there. There is no similar evidence to support any Mādhva affiliation. But, as discussed in chapter 2, Vyāsatīrtha took Rāmacandra as the tutelary deity of his mathas.

20. The installation of the images of Āḻvārs by one Tippisetti happened on July 22, 1534 (Filliozat and Filliozat 1988, 60). In 1543, there is further mention of the Rāmānujakūṭa, or the feeding house for Śrīvaiṣṇava pilgrims, and various lavish donations made to benefit it as well as rituals being performed in the Āḻvār shrines (68–70).

26. Ibid., 100.
27. Speaking of additional Rāma temples constructed after the one dedicated to Rāmacandra in the royal center, A. Rao (2015, 106) writes,

I would like to point out that the surrounding points—the Tungabhadra River, Mātaṅga Hill, and Mālyavanta Hill—gained special prominence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as Śrīvaiṣṇava temples, heightening the mythic associations of these sites dating to pre-Vijayanagara times. Śrīvaiṣṇavas, therefore, would have been agents in the construction of the landscape of the Vijayanagara capital into a virtual theophany of Rāma. The mapping of the identification of Rāma and the Vijayanagara king with the layout of the city was not, therefore, a mere synchronic fact of the Vijayanagara world but rather the result of a collaborative project on the part of both royal and Śrīvaiṣṇava agents.
28. See Venkoba Rao’s (1926, intro., xiv) discussion of this passage from the *Vyāsa Vi-
jaya*, which he quotes at length in his edition of the *Śrīvyāsayogicaritam*.

29. Philip Lutgendorf (2007, 71) describes the icon as having “his knees braced with a cloth
band such as is sometimes used by yogis to help support themselves” and goes on to note that
“such a band is a normal feature of images of Yoga-Narasiṃha (a meditating image of the man-
lion avatar of Vishnu, also popular among Madhvas.” While I do not see that band here on
the Yantrodhāraka Hanumān icon, Lutgendorf is correct that Hanumān and Yoga-Narasiṃha
share an iconographic affinity that was likely accentuated by the Mādhvas. As already men-
tioned, it was a Narasiṃha icon of this type that Vyāsatīrtha donated to the Viṭṭhala temple.

30. The reprint of Venkoba Rao’s (n.d., appendix 1, 213–14) edition of Somanātha’s
*Vyāsayogicarita* includes this inscription, which it states originally appeared in “ARSIE, 1919
B., no. 370.” The English summary of the inscription supplied here is that of Srinivasa Ritti
(appendix 1, 213).

31. This *praśasti* passage, translated in full in chapter 2, appears in most of Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s
inscriptions: “Going round and round Kanchi, Srisailam, Sonachala, Kanakasabha, Venka-
tadri and other places, often and in various temples and holy places, for his well-being in
the present and future, did he again and again bestow in accordance with the śāstras, vari-
ous great gifts like man’s weight in gold, together with the other grants associated with such
gifts.” See also map 4 for the location of these sites.


33. “Considered in chronological order the first officer to make an endowment during
Krishnadevarāya’s reign was a general of the army, named Appa Pillai son of Karavāṭṭippuli
ālvār and a resident of Uttaramērur (Mahipāla Kulakālachchēri). He had made three endow-
ments previously during the reign of Krishna Deva’s elder brother Vira-Narasiṃha . . . The last
endowment was specially meant for the merit and welfare of Vira-Narasigraya Maharaya. It
has to be remembered here that Vira Narasingaraya had great difficulty in putting down revolts
and rebellions, particularly around Kānchi and in Kongu nādu. Appa Pillai was the general in
charge, at any rate of the country around Kānchi. He may therefore have considered it desirable
to express his loyalty to his sovereign in this manner.” (Viraraghavacharya 1954, 2:637)

Viraraghavacharya then goes on to explain the grant Appa Pillai made in 1511 on behalf
of Kṛṣṇadevarāya, after the general and the king successfully brought those Kanchi kings
under submission.

34. As noted in chapter 2, Morrison (2009) argues that sixteenth-century Vijayanagara
royal initiatives to irrigate temple lands and thereby promote certain forms of agrarian pro-
duction throughout the empire were actually unsustainable in many regions and privileged
elite patterns of food consumption at the expense of other more easily generated crops.
There were certainly symbolic resonances to imposing these royal tastes on conquered ar-
eas. But they also had practical implications. The expansion of rice cultivation to meet elite
demand both decreased subsistence farming in targeted areas and increased the monetiza-
tion of the Vijayanagara economy. The latter development brought varying degrees of cost
and benefit to different segments of Vijayanagara society.

35. As Appadurai (1981, 73) puts it,

Specifically, it is argued that in the sociopolitical context of the period from 1350 to
1700 sectarian leaders were crucial intermediaries for the introduction, extension,
and institutionalization of warrior control over constituencies and regions that might otherwise have proved refractory. This intermediary role of sectarian leaders, which rendered control by conquest into appropriate (and thus stable) rule, was effected primarily in, and through, sectarian control of the redistributive capacities of the temples. Thus sectarian leaders permitted Telugu warriors to render their military expansion culturally appropriate by “gifting” activity and its main product, temple honor.

Again, see Morrison (2009) for a more nuanced view of this redistribution and some of its imbalances and contradictions.

36. According to K. V. Raman’s (1975, 137) history of the Varadarājasvāmi temple in Kanchi, there was a matha called “Veda matha,” which “specialized in the teaching of the Vedas” and was “probably patronized by the Mādhvas who were also Vaishnavas but not followers of Rāmānuja.” Today there is another Mādhva matha in Kanchi affiliated with the Mādhva guru Raghavendra. The historical origins of these mathas merit further exploration.

37. As discussed in chapter 2, Kṛṣṇadevarāya did give Vyāsatīrtha land grants in the Mādhva stronghold region between Mysore and Bangalore, in the wake of conquering some important forts there. He also donated land to Govindarāja, a Śrīvaīṣṇava ācārya who is identified in a 1516 inscription as “the teacher of kings,” in this region, indicating that Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s cultivation of a Mādhva-Śrīvaīṣṇava alliance also occasionally played out in Karnataka territory.

38. According to Viraraghavacharya (1954, 1:232ff.), this practice had begun in 1360.

39. Viraraghavacharya (1954, 1:232ff.) discusses many of these changes, which he takes up in greater depth in chapter 16 of volume 2. Appadurai (1981, 94) also discusses these changes at length, emphasizing the increased role given to non-Brahmins at the temple during Śāluva Narasimha’s period:

Śāluva Narasimha linked himself to the redistributive cycle of the Tirupati Temple and publicly established his patronage of non-Brahmin worshippers there. He did this by allocating taxes from some villages for some food offerings to the deity. He allocated the “donor’s share” of the prasātam to the Rāmānujakūṭam that he established at Tirupati, which was to be managed by Rāmānuja Aiyānār. In this case, the Rāmānujakūṭam managed by Rāmānuja Aiyānār was for the benefit of non-Brahmin Śrī Vaisnavas, a group of whom were his disciples. It was the non-Brahmin constituency that benefited from the “donor’s share” of the prasātam created by Śāluva Narasimha’s endowment. Between AD 1456 and 1473, Rāmānuja Aiyānār was the intermediary between this non-Brahmin constituency and the sanctified products of royal endowments, as well as endowments by other land controllers.

Appadurai also claims that Rāmānuja Aiyānār gave these non-Brahmins some “important roles in temple worship and thus in temple honors” (94). Narayanan (2007, 250) agrees that the Tirupati-Tirumala temples reallocated wealth and honors in ways that increased social mobility among various castes. However, see Lester (1994) for an alternative perspective.


42. Viraraghavacharya (1953, 1:525) maintains that these Vaikhānasa Arcakas were Telugu speakers, “who never gave up their old customs and their adherence to the
Chandramanapanchangam.” Yet he also writes, “It must be admitted that the Tamil speaking Tirumalai Nambi went to Tirumalai to co-operate with the Vaikhānasas in rehabilitating that place of worship and not to effect any radical changes.”

43. Verghese (1995, 69) maintains that, although this region eventually became Telugu-speaking, it was in the northern reaches of Tamil country during the Vijayanagara period. As evidence of the dominance of Tamil speakers in this region, she cites the Tirupati-Tirumala inscriptions, most of which are in Tamil. This contradicts Viraraghavacharya’s assessment (see above note 42) that Tamil speakers flooded the region only after the Madurai invasion and that their active role in the temples at Tirupati is what explains the dominance of Tamil in the inscriptions. I think it likely that this region in the border zone between Tamil and Telugu country had strong representation of speakers of both languages in the Vijayanagara period but that the Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇava influence at the Tirupati temples explains the heavy use of Tamil in the inscriptions.

44. “The Periyal Perumal (Mula Murti) has not at any time even to this day admitted inside the Kulasēkharappaḍi into His sanctum any cooked food besides the four nāḷi of rice provided in 966 A.D. Fruits, flowers, and camphor harathis are the only exceptions. All food offerings, however costly they may be, have to be kept outside the Kulasēkharappaḍi. They are all considered as Kāmyārtha offerings and therefore inferior” (Viraraghavacharya 1953, 1:523).

45. Cited in Viraraghavacharya (1953, 1:539): “A staff of competent accountants was set up in the temple and we found in 1379–80 that the Tiruninra-ur udaiyan made his debut. Ten years later in 1390 the Sthanattar as a self-constituted body came to view. Their composition is revealed in the same inscription No. 187 . . . [wherein] is found a scheme of distribution of the quarter share of the prasadams due to the donor of the gift.”

46. Jiyars were often affiliated with monastic institutions and thus, their position on the temple board at Tirupati-Tirumala suggests that Śrīvaiṣṇava maṭhas had a hand in running the temple.

47. Viraraghavacharya 1953, 1:539.

48. Appadurai (1981, 47) explains temple pluralism at the Śrī Pārthasārati temple and the way different claims are managed as follows:

What holds these various “servants” together is not a simple hierarchy of functions, no single pyramid of authority, but rather 1. their shared orientation to, and dependence on, the sovereignty of the deity they serve and 2. the sheer logic of functional interdependence, without which the ritual process would break down. Even the managerial roles, such as that of trustee and the aminā, are not conceived to be superordinate in any clear hierarchical way. They are authoritative only insofar as they do not disturb any one of the shares that they must orchestrate to keep the moral and economic cycle of temple ritual going. This should not imply, however, that the temple is an ill-disciplined collection of independent agents. Particular chains of command do exist, as well as particular norms that govern these chains. But these norms, which vary from temple to temple, are legitimated by a shared idea of the past, of hallowed convention, which is based on a fragile consensus. Thus changes in the social and political environment of the temple tend to fragment this delicate consensus fairly easily.
49. All of the inscriptions documenting these arrangements end with the phrase “May the Śrīvaiṣṇavas protect this (arrangement).”

50. Somanātha makes no such claim and does not mention the theft incident either. He does, however, maintain thatVyāsatīrtha visited Tirupati during the rule of Sāluva Narasimha, at whose court in Chandragiri he remained for several years.

51. Royal inscriptions were often recorded at this complex in several languages, notably Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and, on occasion, Sanskrit (e.g., TDI [1935] 1984, vol. 3, nos. 31–87). However, there are also nonroyal inscriptions at this complex that are in Kannada (e.g., vol. 3, no. 91) and Telugu (vol. 3, nos. 92–95).


55. The actual prasād itself is described as follows: “15½ prasādams, 2 akkâli-manḍai, 26 appam, 26 atirasam, 1¼ palam of chandanam, 75 areca nuts and 150 betel leaves” (Viraraghavacharya 1954, 2:657; see also TDI [1935] 1984, vol. 3, no. 159).

56. “It was from the offerings made out of the income from these sources that the quarter share of the prasadams became due to the Emperor and it was this quarter share that was transferred to Vyasa Tirtha Śri Pada Udaiyar to be used in his Matham, obviously for feeding his Sishyas, although not specially so stated in the inscription” (Viraraghavacharya 1954, 2:658).


59. Viraraghavacharya (1954, 2:1054): “The noteworthy point about these offerings is that no portion of the donor’s share was distributed to the Śri Vaishnavas, not to speak of those reciting the Prabandhams. . . . This shows that although Śri Pāda Udaiyar [i.e., Vyāsatīrtha] respected all festivals celebrated in the Temples, he did not countenance the Prabandham recital to any extent.” This strong statement regarding Vyāsatīrtha’s antipathy toward the Prabandham contradicts Viraraghavacharya’s earlier analysis (2: 659).

60. All quotes from the Tirupati Devasthanam Inscriptions (1984, vols. 2 and 3) are the translations of Subrahmanya Sastry and Vijayaraghavacharya, respectively.

61. The inscription specifies that on top of the hill, 222 rice cakes each will be offered to Śri Venkatesvara and the processional deity. It then stipulates the exact amounts of the ingredients to be used in the preparation of these cakes as follows: 22 vaṭṭi plus 4 marakkâl of rice, 666 nāli of ghee, 22,200 palam of sugar, and 27 nāli of pepper. It also states that 222 palam of chandanam, 11,110 areca nuts, and 22,200 betel leaves will be offered daily at the Mādhva maṭha’s maṇḍapam. At the bottom of the hill, 132 rice cakes (consisting of 13 vaṭṭi plus 4 marakkâl of rice, 396 nāli of ghee, 13,200 palam of sugar, and 16 nāli plus 1 uri of pepper) along with 132 palam of chandanam, 6,600 areca nuts, and 13,200 betel leaves will be distributed at the second Mādhva maṭha’s maṇḍapam. The inscription also requests the daily preparation of eight meals consisting of 8 measures of rice; 1 ălăkku of ghee; 1 uri of green gram, salt, pepper, vegetables, and curds; 1 palam of chandanam; 20 areca nuts; and 40 betel leaves to be presented daily to Govindarājasvāmi. If Viraraghavacharya is correct that the amount of prasād described in inscription number 159 (TDI [1935] 1984, vol. 3) would feed approximately two hundred people living in Vyāsatīrtha’s maṭhas, the amounts
here would feed far more. This attests to the extent that Vyāsatīrtha’s arrangements amplified the ritual programs at this temple complex.


63. “Further, we are empowered to receive the 6 prasādam out of the 8 sandhi (tiruppōnakam) offered to Śrī Govindarājan and as we have granted to you 4 prasādam daily for free distribution, these 4 prasādam shall be conducted to your maṭham. The remaining 2 prasādam we shall receive as our share.”


65. Viraraghavachyarya (1954, 2:660) claims that this is the oldest record in the Tirupati Devasthānam inscriptions of a village’s annual cash worth. The increasing use of cash in sixteenth-century Vijayanagara society contributed to a new social dynamism that implicated religious institutions and ideology, as will be discussed more in chapters 5 and 6.

66. The inscription’s editor identifies the village’s district as Chittoor based upon the village’s tank that Vyāsatīrtha had constructed; it is identified on map 3. Called “Vyāsasamudra,” it still exists as a regional landmark and was recently the focus of a now defunct Mādhva renovation effort, which had been documented at the now broken link www.vyasasamudra.org.

67. Bettakonda is about 128 kilometers due west of Tirupati.

68. Lest the distance of 128 kilometers between the village of Bettakonda and Tirupati seem too great for there to have been any meaningful practical connection between them, it should be noted that many Vijayanagara-era inscriptions suggest that the distances between those villages whose produce was donated to support temple worship and the temples themselves could be quite significant. More research needs to be done to map these distances in order to illuminate the manner in which goods and services circulated and, thus, the precise contours of economic and social networks in this period.

69. After indicating the coordinates of the land with reference to neighboring villages and listing off the hamlets included in the gift, the inscription discusses the main village’s various names as follows: “Kṛṣṇarāyapuraṃ ceti pratināmasamanvitam|| grāmam vyāsasamudrākhyaṃ betṭakoṇḍāparāhvayam||” (EI 1960, vol. 31, no. 21)

70. “Śiṣyapraśyasambhogyam kramād ā candratārakaṃ” (EI 1960, vol. 31, no. 21, l. 63ff.). The word agrahāra is not used in the inscription nor is there an explicit statement regarding settlement of people. Many villages given to Brahmans did not involve relocation to those villages; the gift of villages could confer upon Brahmans discretionery use of the village’s wealth from a distance. Indeed, several of the other Tirupati inscriptions cited above conform to this type of gift. However, the format of the Kamalapur plate inscriptions, particularly their reference to the Vedic education of generations of students, implies that it is to be a Brahmin settlement with the traditional Vedic educational focus.

71. Appadurai 1981, 64.

72. In fact, a few potentially Śaiva-Smārta recipients, with names such as Śrṅgeri Lingabhaṭṭa, Basava Bhāṭṭa, and Virūpākṣa, are mentioned; such names total eight. The editor of the inscription finds it striking that Vyāsatīrtha “included scholars of every persuasion among the shareholders of the endowment” (EI 1960, vol. 31, no. 21, “Kamalapur Plates of Krishnadevaraya,” 139).

73. Purandaradāsa’s sons are here identified as Laksmanadāsa (EI 1960, vol. 31, no. 21, “Kamalapur Plates of Krishnadevaraya,” l. 269), Hebaṇadāsa (l. 271), and Madh vapadāsa (l. 426).
74. As mentioned in note 15, the extent to which these Haridāsa singers were explicitly affiliated with Mādhva institutions and their Brahmin leadership requires much further study, as does the influence of distinctly Mādhva teachings and sensibilities on the Haridāsa movement.

75. See Verghese (1995, 61) for a refutation of the theory that the Viṭṭhala cult in Tirumala-Tirupati predated the Viṭṭhala cult at the Vijayanagara capital in Hampi. On the basis of the monumental evidence, she argues that the cult moved in the opposite direction.

76. Inscriptions in which Vyāsatīrtha is referred to in this way include the following: EC 1902, vol. 7, no. 85; TDI (1935) 1984, vol. 3, nos. 157, 158, 159, 165; EC 1976, vol. 5, nos. 105–6; and ARMAD 1942, no. 28.

77. The term siddhānta is a compound consisting of two words: “siddha” or “accomplished” and “anta,” meaning “end” or “aim.” When these meanings are taken together, the term connotes “the established position,” or the correct viewpoint arrived at through systematic inquiry and reasoned argument.

78. Anegondi, located across the river from the Vijayanagara capital, seems to have been the ancestral home of powerful chieftains in the area for several generations prior to the empire’s founding and to have served, therefore, as an important administrative center. It also seems to have attracted scholars, intellectuals, and religious mendicants and leaders, who took up residence in the town over the centuries and left their architectural mark on it. Subsequent to the sacking of the Vijayanagara capital in 1565 and the unraveling of the empire, members of the royal family retreated to the river’s other side and took up residence there. See Natalie Tobert (2000) for a fascinating ethnohistoric interpretation of Anegondi’s royal, religious, and domestic architecture down to the present day.

79. Older photographs of the island, for example, the insert in Sharma ([1961] 1981), indicate that maṇḍapas were once placed in front of each samādhi shrine. That these tombs were considered sacred and served as a focus of worship as early as the mid-sixteenth century is attested to by Mādhva philosopher-saint Vādirāja’s pilgrimage text, the Tīrthaprabandha, which describes this island as a tīrtha. During his time, there were only eight Mādhva saints’ shrines on the island.

The Tulasi plant is deified by Vaiṣṇavas, who believe Tulasi to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu’s consort, Lakṣmī. The Kannada term brṇḍāvana or Sanskrit vṛṇḍāvana (Hindi vṛṇḍāvan/brṇḍāvan) can mean a sacred grove of Tulasi plants and is also the name of the North Indian temple town where Krṣṇa is believed to have spent significant time.

80. If this depicted devotee is meant to represent the Vijayanagara king, it is likely Acyutarāya, who reigned during the last years of Vyāsatīrtha’s life.

81. As mentioned in note 14 of this chapter, there is an additional samādhi shrine of Vyāsatīrtha’s contemporary and fellow Mādhva leader, Raghunandana (d. 1533), located not on Navabṛṇḍāvana Island but along the Tungabhadra, between Viṭṭhalapura and the Virūpākṣa temple complex. This shrine also has four different forms of Viṣṇu carved into it: Rāma, Venugopāl, Viṭṭhala, and Mādhava (Verghese 1995, 54). Clearly, Vyāsatīrtha did not work alone in promoting this collaboration with the Srīvaiṣṇavas nor in consolidating the Mādhva sect’s standing at court. He must have had help from other Mādhva leaders, such as Surendratīrtha, another contemporary who seems to have resided at Vijayanagara, according to inscriptions cited in Filliozat and Filliozat (1988, 24). But given the much greater volume of inscriptional and literary records left by and about Vyāsatīrtha, as well as the
response to his writings and activities, we can surmise that his role in this effort was the most significant.

82. Hawley 2012, 31.
83. Ibid, 32.
84. According to Hawley (2012, 32), this term refers specifically to Mādhvas, but it can also refer generically to Vaiṣṇavas because “none of them follows without qualification an illusionist reading of phenomenal existence.”
85. Hawley 2012, 32–33.
86. Ibid., 33.
87. As will be developed in the next chapter, the devotional overlap between different Vaiṣṇava communities did not necessarily result in shared religious doctrines. One’s Vedāntin identity and one’s Vaiṣṇava identity could imply different degrees of affinity and distinction.
88. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī’s line-by-line response to Vyāsatīrtha’s Nyāyāṁrta was composed in Varanasi sometime around 1550.

5. THE SOCIAL LIFE OF VEDĀNTA PHILOSOPHY: VYĀSATĪRTHA’S POLEMICS AGAINST VIŚIṢṬĀDVITA VEDĀNTA

1. In this sense, Vyāsatīrtha’s anti-Viśiṣṭādvaita polemics are somewhat different from the anti-Advaita polemics he exhibits in both the Nyāyāṁrta and the Tātparyacandrikā. A striking feature of Vyāsatīrtha’s polemics against Advaita Vedānta and Viśiṣṭādvaita is the different manner in which he addresses the proponents of these two schools. In both his Nyāyāṁrta and his Tātparyacandrikā, Vyāsatīrtha usually introduces the Advaitins’ position with the phrase “pare tu” or “anye tu,” meaning “but others say.” But he consistently introduces the Viśiṣṭādvaita position with the phrase “kecit tu” or “but some say.” This conveys the impression that Advaitins are completely distinct in their understanding of Vedānta, whereas the Viśiṣṭādvaitins and the Dvaitins share some common ground. At the same time, however, Vyāsatīrtha uses similar styles of argument and methods of presentation against both Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita. These include the reductio ad absurdum technique; his tendency to historicize his opponents’ doctrines while also summarizing them in ways that are suitable to his own purposes; and, finally, his attention to debates internal to his opponents’ systems. But in his case against Viśiṣṭādvaita, Vyāsatīrtha tends to use these strategies to argue that Viśiṣṭādvaita premises conduce to Dvaita conclusions.

2. Of note, Dvaita never maintained an exact one-to-one correspondence between one’s caste or gender identity and one’s experience of mokṣa. Like most Hindu thinkers, Dvaitins understood caste and gender to be somewhat fluid, in that they would change over the course of an individual soul’s many rebirths. In other words, while one’s intellectual and spiritual aptitude could certainly be indexed to one’s social identity in Dvaita, such an identity was also viewed as a temporary manifestation of one’s karma. Thus, one’s caste or gender status did not have the final say on one’s capacity for mokṣa. However, Dvaita is distinct from other systems of Hindu thought in arguing for the innate capacity of souls to achieve certain soteriological ends (i.e., for the soul’s predestination). Thus, there are potentially greater eternal implications to one’s caste or gender identity in Dvaita than in other traditions of Hindu thought. See Sarma (2005) for a discussion of some of this complexity in Madhva’s writings.
3. The example he resorts to most often is Prayag, not Varanasi, contrary to what one might expect.

4. The *bhakti* of hatred is an idea that is presented in various Purāṇic narratives (as well as in epic episodes that were likely inserted some time during the post-Epic Purānic period), wherein enemies of God are revealed, at the moment of their deaths, actually to have been devotees. Examples include Rāvaṇa’s death scene in Kamban’s Tamil *Rāmāyaṇa* and Pūtana’s death in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Both of these adversaries of the divine are rewarded at death for their single-minded fixation upon the deity, even if that fixation was negative.

5. See Ganeri (2014, 252) for a discussion of this in Rāmānuja’s thought. Vyāsatīrtha discusses the soul’s ability to choose a body in *mokṣa* in the fourth *pariccheda* of the *Nyāyāmṛta* (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:712–13).

6. Again, souls’ spiritual hierarchies and their worldly hierarchical arrangement do not always correspond exactly in Dvaita thought, although some indexing between the two is definitely implied. See note 2 above.

7. Mumme (1988) and S. Raman (2007) both argue this, while acknowledging that important distinctions in emphasis and interpretation between northern and southern factions existed in earlier periods.

8. See Sarma (1997) for an overview of places where Vyāsatīrtha discusses the issue of *adhikāra* in relation to the study of the Vedas and *Brahma Sūtras* to learn about Brahman, ātman, and *mokṣa*. See also Vyāsatīrtha’s discussion in the *apaśūdrādhikaranam* of his *Tātparyacandrikā* (1.3.9) (Vyāsatīrtha 2000, 2:484ff.) for a discussion of *śūdras’* *adhikāra* to learn of Brahman’s nature from certain *smṛti* literature.


13. Ibid., 63.

14. Vyāsatīrtha also quotes more partisan sources than the *Upaniṣads* in his defense of Madhva’s doctrine of a hierarchy of souls that persists into the state of liberation. For instance, he also quotes a *śruti* text that is embedded in a *smṛti* text cited by Madhva in his *Viśnuttattvanirnaya*: "A śruti says that ‘beginning with kings and ending with Caturmukha Brahmā, liberated souls in the midst of bliss, [experience] one hundred times all the qualities in that bliss in relative hierarchy [to one another].’ Oh, great sage, even among thousands of liberated souls who have accomplished reaching Nārāyaṇa, true tranquility is very rare.” (Nrpādyāḥ śatadṛśinglyā naṃkītaḥ uttārottaram| sarvair gunaiḥ śataguṇaḥ modanta iti hi śrutibh] muktānām api śiddhānāṃ nārāyaṇ aparāyaṇāḥ| sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭiśv api mahāmune[| ityādī smṛtibhibh [Vyāsatīrtha 1996 3:705].) According to Mesquita (2008, 262), this is one of Madhva’s untraceable quotes, which Madhva was criticized for using by other Vedāntin exegetes. For further discussion of this, see this chapter’s penultimate section on concordance.
15. “Caturnukhāder itarebhya utkarṣasya dṛṣṭenādṛṣṭena vā āgantukahetunā sādhyaṭve
tatrāpi hetvantarānveṇeṣa navasthāpattyā nādiyogatāḥathāparaparyāyasvabhāvo hetur
vācya ityādiyuktyā ca tārātasyasvabhāvāvatā” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:711).

16. Mumme (1998, 63) discusses this view in terms of the fourteenth-century
Viśiṣṭādvaitin Vedānta Deśika’s interpretation. She maintains that Vedānta Deśika does ac-
knowledge that different souls have different capacities but these are due to karma and are
not caused by God’s partiality:

[Vedānta Deśika] also points out that the Lord is not being cruel or partial in granting
various degrees of ability and knowledge, in presenting various kinds of sense objects
to spark the soul’s desire, or in giving permission even to harmful activities. In all
these instances, the Lord is acting in accord with the soul’s past karma and present
effort; thus He maintains his egalitarianism (sāmya): “The unequal distribution of
limbs, ability, knowledge, desire, etc.; the lack of prevention of harmful activity; and
the permission which promotes the arising of sin—since all these are conditioned
by differences in previous karma, they do not bring cruelty or partiality to the Lord.

As B. N. K. Sharma (1991, 454) puts it, “Rāmānuja in his theory of selves is inclined to put
down the difference among the different classes of souls such as gods and human beings as the
outcome of Karma and other Prākṛtic accretions and therefore not touching their es-
sence, which he regards as equal in all, though there is numerical distinction.”

17. “Svarūpasukhānāṃ pratyekam ekatvenāṇa utvena ca saṃkhyāparimāṇakṛtvaisam-
yābhāve ‘pi jalaḥpānasukhayor iva madhuramudharataratvādvivatsvarupakṛtvaisam-
yam yuktaḥ” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:705).

18. Vyāsatīrtha (1996, 3:705) summarizes this view as follows: “The bliss that is of the
very nature of the jīva (jīvasvarūpānanda) is hierarchically arranged relative to the bliss of
other jīvas, all of whom belong to the same category by virtue of the fact that they share the
state of having a bliss that depends upon another (i.e., Brahmaṇ, who is the sole inde-
pendent reality). This is because of the fact that the bliss of the jīva [in liberation] is similar
to its bliss in the worldly realm [which is hierarchically arranged].” (Jīvasvarūpanandāḥ
paratantrānandatvasākṣād vyāpyadharmena sajātīyanandapratiyogikatāratamyavān,
jīvānandatvāt, tadīyaṣṭaḥ)

19. “Prakṛti bandhanivṛttiḥ, svasajātīyabandhanivṛttiśrayapratyogikatāratamyavān-
niṣṭhā, bandhanivṛttitvā, nigadabandhanivṛttitvād ityādy anumānaiś ca virodhāc ca|”
(Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:705)

20. “Sātiśayatve ‘pi nityatvam ceśvarād apakṛṣṭatva iva muktāntareṇa sāmya iva ca
śrutādibalād yaktām| anyathokarsasyāpy anityatvavyāpytya brahmānando ‘py anityaḥ
syāt” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:711).

21. Na ca dveṣeryādiprasaṅgamah:

Nīḥṣesagataśōṣāṇāṃ bahubhir janmabhiḥ punah|
Syād āparokṣyaṃ hi harer dveṣeryādyātaṇa kutaḥ[|]
Bhaveyur yadi cesyādyāḥ samesyapi kuto na te| Tapyamānāḥ samān dṛṣṭvā dveṣeryādiyutā api||
Drṣyaṇe bahavo loke doṣa evātra kāraṇam|
I have not translated this passage in full above; it continues along the following lines: “Many faults are evident in this world; if faultlessness alone is the cause [of mokṣa], how much more will our current reality become corrupted [if liberated beings were to have these feelings]?” It is a quote that I have, so far, been unable to trace, but I suspect it is from the fifteenth-century Mādhva Viṣṇudāśācārya, whom Vyāsatīrtha sometimes quotes and frequently paraphrases.

22. As will be discussed below, Vyāsatīrtha uses the examples of death in Prayāg as a very easy means to mokṣa and hatred of God as a form of bhakti as a somewhat unwhole-some one.


25. The smṛti quote is from chapter 3 of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the section where the sage Kapila addresses his parents on devotion: “Ityādismṛtyā mumuṣubhaktād amumuṣkor niruṇḍhikabhaṅkasyādhiṃtyoktes ca| tatrādhiṃtyasya loṇaṛisiddhatvāc ca| bhaktīḥ siddhatar garīyāsidṃṛtyā’lpabhaktisādhyamuktiḥ ‘dhikyoktes ca|” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:707).

26. Bhagavadgītā 13.25. Following is Barbara Stoler Miller’s (Bhagavadgītā 1986, 118) (more elegant) translation: “Others, despite their ignorance, revere what they hear from other men; they too cross beyond death, intent on what they hear.”

27. Bhagavadgītā 9.32–33. Miller’s (Bhagavadgītā 1986, 87) translation: “If they rely on me, Arjuna, even women, commoners, people of low rank, even men born in the womb of evil reach the highest way. How easy is it then for holy priests and devoted royal sages?”

28. Vyāsatīrtha (1996, 3:708) also quotes passages from the Brahma Purāṇa and the Mahābhārata to make his point and reminds us that these texts only support what the Taittariya Upaniṣad, quoted at the outset of his chapter, has said about states of bliss in liberation:

And because it is stated in the Brahma Purāṇa, with regard to the goal [of mokṣa] as being [shaped by] a hierarchy of methods: “And they obtain the best goal through the highest means” and [a similar idea is expressed] in the Moksadharmā [section of the Mahābhārata], where it says “your knowledge is better so your departure is better.” Thus, Brahmā and other beings are learned in that very order as has been stated in the Ānanda Śruti. (Ānanda Śruti is Madhva’s name for the Taittariya Upaniṣad.)
(Sādhanasyottamatvena sādhyam cottamam āpnuvah] iti brāhme, “adhikā tava vijnānam adhikā ca gatis tava brahmādāya kramenaiva yathānandaśrutau śrutāḥ” iti mokṣadharme ca sādhanaṁātaramyena sādhya tadukteś ca)

29. Raman (2007: 13ff.) has argued that this characterization of the division within the Śrīvaishnava community as one between Sanskrit and Tamil is inaccurate and ignores the existence of an ample literature in Manipravālam that fused the two languages. When I refer to the “Sanskritic” branch or faction, I am referring, narrowly, to those Śrīvaishnavas who advocated Vedic recitation in temple liturgy as opposed to the Tamil Prabandham. This was in dispute, at “megatemples” like Tirupati, during Vyāsatīrtha’s lifetime as was discussed in chapter 4.


32. Vyāsatīrtha (1996 3:708) states, “And if, for the sake of establishing parity in the sādhanas or the means to mokṣa, you imagine that there is greater faith in the practice of prapatti [than in the practice of bhakti] so that there is parity in the result [of the two kinds of practice], your argument will contain the flaw of mutual dependence.” (Yadi ca phalasāmyena sādhanasāmyārthaṃ prapattāv adhikāvīśvāsāḥ kalpyeta, tarhy anyonyāśrayaḥ.)


34. “Na ca devamanuṣāṇaṃ tatra sākṣāsaktāntaraṃ sākṣāsaktāntuṣṭita nityakarmaṇa iva na phalavaiśayam iti vācyam| aṣaktāśaktiṣayatvādhiṣaḥ śāmyam iti vikalatvena kāmyamokṣaṃ sādhanatvāyogaṃ tatsādhanatvāya svocita-muktiṃ phalabodhena vikārvitvāt” (Vyāsatīrtha (1996 3:708).


40. “Ca na tāvad ajñāsaṃyāva vividiśāśidvārām prapatyāśidvārāḥ va, pratyavāparyaparādṛtāvām va śīnaśdeṣaṃ sampratīṣyam ca tasya siddhatvāt” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:709).

41. Vyāsatīrtha (1996, 3:709) writes, “Nor can you argue that such activities help bring about the result [of mokṣa for the sthitaprajña]. Because that would force you to adopt the
position that karma and jñāna are equally important for the attainment of mokṣa.” (Nāpi phalopakāryaṁgam, muktau jñānakarmāṇoḥ samuccayāpātāt) For a discussion of the role of rituals in the Śrīvaiṣṇava ascetic mumukṣu’s life, see Yādava Prakāśa’s (1995, 37) Yatidharmaśamasucayya, 1.22–25.

42. “Karmaṁ vinicratvena mokṣavaicityāpātāc ca” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:709).


44. “Nāpi lokasamgrahārtham īśvarāṇāpālaṇārthām vā, tayor api svato ‘phalatvāt| nāpiśvarapṛityartham, bhaktyādinaeva mokṣaṁhetupriyēh śiddheḥ| nāpi taprītyatiṣayārtham, phalāśavaiśābhāveta tasya pāribhāṣikatvāpātāt, tadvaiyarthīyac ca)” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:709).

45. Nāpīśvaravallīrtham, ācāryaṁ vidyāṁ avāyayaitam jñānaṁ jñānaṁ abhigamyā śaṁto bhaved dānto bhavet paśyāṁ apiśaman kuryāṁ karmāvāryāyaṁ ityādinaaparokṣajñānāināṁ.

Matkarmakṛ matparamo madbhaktaṁ saṅgavajjitaṁ| Manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṁ namaskurū|| Ityādina bhakti-prapattimataś ca tadvidhānāt| (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:709)

I have not translated the entire passage above. It continues, “This follows from the textual connection [of certain stories with injunctions to perform certain acts]” (Brahma Sūtra 3.4.24) and in places like these two Gitā verses: “[May you become one] whose mind is committed to me, devoted to me, whose rituals are offered to me, may you surrender to me. [Acting only for me, intent on me, free from attachment, hostile to no creature, Arjuna, a man of devotion comes to me]” (Bhagavadgītā [11.55] 1986, 109). For Madhva’s comments on Brahma Sūtra 3.4.24, see B. N. K. Sharma (1986, 3:518): “Sūtra 24 points out that it is only by adopting this threefold standpoint of adhikaribhedād vyavastha that a proper reconciliation can be arrived at between texts that seem to be mandatory in respect of good and bad alike and others that throw the choice open to the doer to do as he pleases.”

46. Bhagavadgītā 1986, 94.

47. See verse 65 of Vedānta Deśika’s Śatadūṣṭa: “There are statements that are not found in any of the agreed upon śruti and smṛti texts. Some sinful people, in the interests of their own system of thought which conforms to their behaviour, interpolate these statements, claiming to have read them in Purāṇas that are unknown, lost, or whose beginnings and ends are not easily determined. Learned people who are steeped in the study of the available śrutis, etc. (pratyakṣaśrutīdī) can nowhere ascertain these statements.” (Yāni cānyaṁ vākyāṁ sampratipannāśrutismṛtiśv advīyāmānāṁ svācārārūpamataparacaryyā kṣecid aprasidhēsu vā nāṣṭakosesu vā nāṃripitamulāgreesu vā vānuresu praksiyā pāṇiśṭhāṁ, tāṁ pratyakṣaśrutīdiparīśilanaśālavishnuṁ gariṣṭhagoṣṭhīsu vāvākāśṣaṁ labhante.) (Qtd. in Mesquita 2000, 27–28; my translation follows Mesquita’s.) See also Appayya Dīkṣita’s Madhvaṭantramukhamardana, or Crushing the Face of Madhva’s Philosophy, which claims that Madhva invents fake texts, poses as an avatāra of Vāyu, concocts original readings of the Veda, and in the process, transgresses the very boundaries (maryāda) of vaidikatva, “what is Vedic” (vv. 2–3; qtd. in Mesquita 2000, 30).

48. “Il est de fait qu’aucun des textes sur lesquels repose la hiérarchie des deva ne nous est connu. La multiplicité des références concordantes ne prouve pas l’existence d’une tradition qui ne nous est donnée que par Madhva” (Siauve 1971, 13).


51. Madhva’s (1971) clearest statement on this is in his Viṣṇutattvavinirṇaya verse 3, where he quotes a statement reputedly from the Brahmaṇḍa Purāṇa to argue for this parity of certain sṛti texts with śrutī: “The right scriptures consist of the four Vedas beginning with the Ṛgveda, the Bhārata, the whole of the Pañcarātrāgama, the original Rāmāyaṇa, the Purāṇas corroborating these and all other works that follow these. Texts other than these are bad testimonies and through the latter Janārdana cannot be known.”

52. “Tac ca ‘jagadvāpāravarjam’ iti sūtre tvayāpi niṣiddham, atra jagadvāpārāsābda upalakṣaṇārthā iti tavāpi sammatam|” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:710).

53. “Anyathā muktasya svātantryādy api syāt|” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:710). He specifically compares the Dvaita and the Viśiṣṭādvaita interpretations of the Brahma Sūtras as follows:

In our system, the word “sāmya” or “equivalent/identical” only refers to a general type of “bhoga” or “enjoyment” due to the word “mātra” in the sūtra. It does not refer to the specific form of that bhoga [as experienced by Brahman.] And even in your system of thought, the word mātra is taken in the sense of “restriction” and not in the sense of “all” because of the fact that [Brahma Sūtra 1.4.17] has been commented upon [by Rāmānuja] as meaning “only Brahman is capable of creating, maintaining and destroying the world.” This is because the mark of equality to Brahman for the liberated soul is only in terms of “bhoga” [and not in the sense of being like Brahman in all ways and therefore possessing all of His powers.] (Bhogamātrasāmyalinyaṅgacceti sūtrasthamātrasāabhaya na mamate bhuñjate||) According to Mesquita (2008, 322), this is an untraceable quote. A notable feature of this portion of the Nyāyāmṛta is that Vyāsatīrtha quotes many more such untraceable sources here than elsewhere.


55. See Mesquita (1997, 2000). Fisher (2013, ch. 3) acknowledges that this practice became more commonplace by the seventeenth century, but there was also extensive debate about its suitability.

56. “Vārahe ca: Svādhikānandasamprāpta sṛṣṭyādvyāpṛṣṭv api| Muktatānāṃ naiva kāmaḥ syād anyān kāmāṃstu bhuñjate|| iti” (Vyāsatīrtha 1996, 3:710). According to Mesquita (2008, 322), this is an untraceable quote. A notable feature of this portion of the Nyāyāmṛta is that Vyāsatīrtha quotes many more such untraceable sources here than elsewhere.

57. Vyāsatīrtha (2000, 2:484ff.) also argues, in the “apaśūdrādhikaranaṃ” of his Tātparyacandrikā (I, 3), against the Viśiṣṭādvaita view that śūdras cannot achieve liberation through knowledge of Brahman but only through prapatti or surrender. Vyāsatīrtha maintains that śūdras can acquire some knowledge by studying ancillary sacred literature such as Itihāsa and Purāṇa, though not the Vedic texts.

58. The inscriptions are discussed in chapters 2 and 4, respectively. For more on the boatmen inscriptions, see Verghese (2000, 19).
59. Changing social status as a result of increased economic importance was fairly widespread in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Vijayanagara society. According to Eaton (2005, 85), weavers’ economic significance won them “the right to ride palanquins and blow conch shells on ritual occasions.” See also Ramaswamy (1985) for a discussion of other changes in sumptuary laws that were prompted by upward mobility in this period. These included smiths being allowed to bear insignia, play musical instruments, and plaster their homes.

60. Of course, such forms of religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity elicited similar responses in India prior to the sixteenth century as well. Finbar Flood’s (2009, 4) research on transcultural communication and transregional material exchanges in North India’s pre-modern period is eloquent on the importance of recognizing the role played by such forms of contact in identity formation: “Recent research has in fact highlighted the importance of frontier contacts for the formation or consolidation of ethnic identities in premodern South Asia, a reminder that, rather than being opposed to identity, difference may in fact be central to its construction. The historical formation and transformation of identity through such encounters also underlines that difference was not a constant (except perhaps in the rarefied world of normative rhetoric) but rather was dynamic in its emphases, contingent in its expression, and variable in its meaning.”

61. See Eaton (2005, chs. 4 and 5) for a discussion of how militarism enabled social mobility in the sixteenth-century Deccan Plateau.

62. O’Hanlon (esp. 2013 but also 2012) has written extensively on Brahminical explorations of identity in the early modern period (which she tends to date to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and the links of such exploration to broader social changes.

63. Clayton (2006, 58ff.).

6. HINDU, ECUMENICAL, SECTARIAN: RELIGION AND THE VIJAYANAGARA COURT

1. As discussed in earlier chapters, Śrīvaśnavism has a tradition of prominent, highly venerated householder ācāryas, in addition to monastic leaders. Similarly, in Mādhva and Śmārta communities, maṭhas were often affiliated with agrahāras or communities of Brahmin families, members of which often held explicit positions of power, such as that of revenue collector, in the state administration. These other forms of authority within a given religious community likely led to power-sharing arrangements of various kinds; in other words, the maṭha’s power was nowhere absolute.

2. That is, up until the blatant Vaiṣṇava chauvinism of Rāmarāya’s regency. Of course, as has been noted elsewhere in this book, there are inscriptive references implying that Vijayanagara kings had gurus; in Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s case, one Śrīvaśnava teacher, Govindarāja, is referred to in a royal edict as the “teacher of kings” and as “one’s own guru.” But Vyāsatīrtha is also addressed as guru in at least one royal inscription of Kṛṣṇadevarāya. See note 21, chapter 1 for sources and further discussion.

3. Most royal patronage of Jainism took place in the first dynasty or the Saṅgama period (Verghese 1995, 121). The early fifteenth-century court seems to have actively supported Islam, a fact made evident in Ahmad Khan’s having dedicated the founding of a mosque in the capital city to his patron Devarāya II (Verghese 1995, 126).

8. In the Tuluva dynasty under discussion here, Vaiṣṇava emblems in general and Rāmāyaṇa motifs in particular were important to royal self-presentation. This is evident in the placement of Narasimha icons at the capital’s gateways; the recording of royal patronage acts that took place before Viśhala as a witness; the identification of the Vijayanagara king with the epic hero Rāma during the public festival of Mahānavamī; and the placement of images of Rāma, Hanumān, Sītā, and Lakṣmana in proximity to images of the king, not only in the royal capital, but in conquered forts like Raichur. (See ch. 4 for further discussion of all these examples.) Furthermore, by aligning their own iconography with that of Vijayanagara royals, mathas and mathādhipatis could also make political claims. This iconographic isomorphism was a key means of sectarian self-promotion. It was also one that was likely encouraged by the court, which relied on mathas to function as outposts of the empire in conquered regions. Examples of this, discussed in chapters 2 and 4, can be seen in Vyāsatīrtha’s taking of Rāmacandra as the tutelary deity of his matha; the appearance of Rāma and other Vaiṣṇava iconography on sixteenth-century Mādhva saints’ tombs; and Mādhva installation of Narasimha and Hanumān icons, both within and beyond the sixteenth-century capital.


10. I am thinking here of the empire’s placement of mathas in refractory regions as well as of events in the Vyāsayogicarita, such as when Vyāsatīrtha is almost attacked but is then assisted by forest dwellers (Venkoba Rao 1926, 57). The interactions between mathādhipatis and different types of people living under Vijayanagara rule must have been highly variable, as they were contingent upon specific local circumstances. See Morrison (2009) for a study of the various ways different social and regional groups were affected by and responded to Vijayanagara rule.

11. See, for example, Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam (2001).

12. For a nuanced discussion of the problems of defining early modernity in European history and the varied, vague scholarly uses of the term, see Randolph Starn’s (2002) review essay. The following line hints at some of the problems Starn identifies: “Early, partly, sometimes, maybe modern, early modernity is a period for our period’s discomfort about periodization” (296). Starn also notes that one of the purposes served by the term early modern in European history is to reinvigorate the study of the time period previously—and unappealingly—thought of as “late medieval.” I would argue that this is partly what is at work in South Asian historical studies’ relatively recent embrace of this term. However, I would also agree with the growing number of South Asia scholars (e.g., Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam 2001; O’Hanlon 2013), who argue that it is important to look for modernity in other parts of the world besides Europe and, as O’Hanlon suggests, to identify how those non-European modernities may in fact have influenced processes of modernization in the West.

13. One example of this, discussed in chapter 3, is Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s inclusion of an image of himself worshipping a Śivalingam in his newly established Kṛṣṇa temple, not far from the
temple to the empire’s long-standing tutelary Śaiva deity, Virūpākṣa, in the capital’s sacred center.


15. I agree with Talbot (1995, 2001) here, but there are additional strategies that seem to have emerged in the Vijayanagara period that suggest a much broader engagement with history to construct contemporary identity. These strategies would include sectarian institutions’ use of guru–paramparā texts and religious biographies to document their histories. See also my discussion in chapter 2 of Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam’s arguments about the rise of historical consciousness in the sixteenth century as documented in caritra literature. Further, as Talbot herself argues and as is discussed in greater detail below, these engagements with the past as a way of dealing with the present unfolded under highly contingent circumstances; therefore, any study of them must be attentive to the particulars of the time period in question.

16. See N. A. Nikan and Richard McKeon’s edition of Aśoka (1958) for the text of Aśoka’s proclamations. See also Sen (2005) for a discussion of Aśoka’s governing philosophy as a harbinger of a distinctly Indian form of “secularism.” Dhamma is the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit term dharma. Both terms have a broad semantic range that includes (but is not limited to) Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religious observances, generic righteousness, individual ethical obligations, and the connections between sacred and worldly traditions. When we speak of Aśoka’s dhamma, we are speaking of his version of Buddhist ethics-cum-political philosophy as promulgated in his rock edicts and pillar inscriptions.


18. Citing Kalhana in his edition of Āgamaḍambara or Much Ado about Religion (Bhaṭṭa 2005, 17), Csaba Dezső writes, “[King Śankaravarman] also deprived the temples of the profits they had from the sale of various articles of worship; simply ‘plundered,’ as Kalhana puts it, sixty-four temples through special ‘supervising’ officers; resumed under direct state management villages held as land grants by the temples; and, by manipulating the weight in the scales, cheated the temple-corporations, reducing the allotment assigned as compensation for the villages.”

19. Sears (2014, 42–3) writes, “The gurus featured in the inscriptions of the Mattamayūras appear as active participants in their transactions with royal patrons, and they fully used those transactions as opportunities to increase their material resources and to renegotiate their social position within the structure of a newly burgeoning state.”


21. The full quote is as follows: “The Guru imbued the king through the ceremonies of initiation and consecration, with the numinous power of Śivahood in the exercise of his sovereignty” (Sanderson 2009, 260).

22. This is Sanderson’s (2009) overall argument, but he introduces it explicitly on page 43. His discussion of the relationship between Śaiva gurus and royal courts spans not only the fifth to thirteenth centuries but also many different regions of the subcontinent and includes discussions of kingdoms in Kashmir, the Kalachuri rulers of what is now Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Tamil Coḷas, and the Kākatīyas in Andhra.