The study of specialized craft production has a long tradition in archaeological research. Through analyses of material remains and the contexts of their production and use, archaeologists can examine the organization of craft production and the economic and political status of craft producers. This new study combines archaeological and historical evidence from the author’s twenty years of fieldwork at the imperial capital of Vijayanagara to explore the role and significance of craft production in the cities’ political economy of the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. By examining a diverse range of crafts from poetry to pottery, Sinopoli evaluates models of craft production and expands upon theoretical and historical understandings of empires in general and Vijayanagara in particular. It is the most broad-ranging study of craft production in South Asia, or in any other early state empire.

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The Political Economy of Craft Production

Crafting Empire in South India, c. 1350–1650

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In memory of
Richard Carl Sinopoli
and Channabasappa S. Patil
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