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HIST 344/HIST 999
The Islamicate Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals
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Spring 2013
Final Term Paper

The Mughal conquest of South India



The Mughal Empire was only the second empire in history to extend across the entire Indian Subcontinent.¹ Descendants of both Tamerlane and Genghis Khan, the Mughals combined a sterling military pedigree with dynastic prestige unrivalled even by the Ottomans and Safavids. Starting with their conquest of the Delhi Sultanate² in 1526, the Mughals gradually emerged by the reign of Akbar (r. 1556-1605) as the paramount power on Indian political landscape. Under his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the empire was further consolidated, allowing the economic and cultural life of India to flourish and reach new heights of affluence and refinement. Although it might have seemed by now the Mughals would have transformed themselves from vigorous nomad conquerors into indulgent Indian potentates, their passion for martial glory and conquest remained undiminished. Besides battling the Safavids and Uzbeks to extend the empire's frontiers in the north-west, the Mughals also commenced the arduous task of bringing South India into the imperial fold. The empire's advance south was fiercely resisted by the Deccan sultanates of Ahmadnagar, Golconda and Bijapur as well as the Marathas, and it was only under Aurangzeb that Mughal rule finally extended into the deep south of India. By examining South India's geopolitical landscape and the Mughal state of the 17th century, this paper discusses the reasons behind the Mughals' southern campaigns. Explaining how these were achieved, the paper then assesses the impact of the conquests on the South Indian political milieu and the challenges they posed to the Mughal polity itself.

The Geographical Setting

To properly understand the Mughal conquest of southern India, an appreciation of the region's topography is useful (Refer to Appendix: Map 1). The Deccan Plateau³ is the region's most notable

¹ The Mauryan Empire was the first nearly pan-Indian empire, ruling from 322BCE - 185BCE. The British Empire was the third, beginning from 1757 and lasting till 1947.

² The Delhi Sultanate was ruled in this period by the Lodi Dynasty, which was of Afghan origin. The Lodis presided over the wane of the three-century-old sultanate. Their authority was by now confined to the Punjab and the Ganges-Yamuna valley.

³ The name Deccan is the Anglicization of the Prakrit word *dakshin*, derived from the Sanskrit, *daksina*, meaning 'south.'

geographical feature; a massive triangular-shaped formation, this dry, hot plateau extends southwards as far as the Kaveri River. In the north, the Deccan is separated from the Indo-Gangetic Plain by the Vindhya and Satpura Ranges but these low rolling hills did not historically serve as much of a barrier to movement between north and south. The Narmada River that flows down from these hills demarcates the northern boundary of Maharashtra, the region inhabited by the Marathi-speaking people.⁴ From ancient times, the *Dakshinapatha* or “Great Southern Highway” that passed through this region served as India’s main north-south thoroughfare and facilitated the movement of goods, people and ideas across the subcontinent. The Deccan is rich in mineral ores: iron, copper and gold, and around Golconda, diamonds and gemstones upon which that region’s renowned wealth was founded. Good stone: granite, sandstone and marble, is also plentiful, providing easy access to material for the construction of fortresses, palaces and religious monuments.⁵

Stretching along South India’s western coastline, the Western Ghats are another important feature of the region’s geography. The Ghats play an important role in shaping regional rainfall patterns since they break the strength of the monsoon moving into the western Deccan. This means farmers on the plateau tend to cultivate *jowar* (sorghum) and *bajra* (millet) – grain crops requiring much less water than wheat or rice.⁶ Along the thin coastal strip of Konkan and Malabar rainfall is plentiful however, allowing rice cultivation and additionally in Malabar, the cultivation of spices like pepper. The major ports of these coasts: Calicut, Goa and Surat tend to look westward and are commercially-oriented towards the Arabia, Persia and East Africa.⁷

⁴ Stewart Gordon, *The New Cambridge History of India - The Marathas 1600-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), [Page 10], accessed April 21, 2013, <http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/histories/chapter.jsf?bid=CBO9781139055666&cid=CBO9781139055666A005>.

⁵ *Ibid*, [Page 12].

⁶ Ethel Simkins, "The Agricultural Geography of the Deccan Plateau of India," *Geographical Association*, Geographical Teacher ser., no. 2 (1926): [Page 28-30].

⁷ Burton Stein, *A History of India* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), [Page 11].

On its eastern edges the Deccan Plateau meets the Eastern Ghats; much lower than the Western Ghats, these hills have been worn down over millennia by the erosive effects of rivers flowing down from the plateau towards the Bay of Bengal. From Orissa's Mahanadi to the Godavari and Krishna of the Telugu country, these rivers provide water vital for irrigation, allowing cultivators here to shift from growing sorghum or millet to rice.⁸ South of the Telugu lands lies the Coromandel⁹ Coast which runs right down to the tip of the subcontinent. The ports of the Coromandel look east towards the Bay of Bengal and Southeast Asia and were the point from which Indian religious and cultural influences spread to that region.¹⁰ The Tamil country lies adjacent to this coastline is watered by the Kaveri River but the people have also used a sophisticated system of irrigation and dams have since ancient times¹¹ to also harness the monsoons, making this area one of India's most agriculturally-productive.

The human geography of South India is also worth consideration. Linguistically, the region is bifurcated between two main language families. The languages spoken in the northern Deccan: Marathi, Konkani and Oriya belong to the Indo-Aryan family of languages and display Sanskritic influence. In the south, the languages: Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Tulu and Malayalam, belong to the quite different Dravidian family of languages, though they display some Sanskritic influence due to Sanskrit's role as Hinduism's liturgical language.¹² In terms the religious affiliations of its people, South India is home to Hindus who adhere to the Vaishnava, Shaiva or Shakta traditions and comprise four-fifths of the population today. Islam arrived in the 8th century but was initially confined to Malabar; following the establishment of Muslim states in the South, Sunni Muslim communities

⁸ Ethel Simkins, "The Agricultural Geography of the Deccan Plateau of India," *Geographical Association*, Geographical Teacher ser., no. 2 (1926): [Page 30-2].

⁹ The word 'Coromandel' comes from the Portuguese corruption of the word *Cholamandalam*, "The Land of the Cholas," the medieval Tamil dynasty that ruled over that area.

¹⁰ Burton Stein, *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), [Page 37-9].

¹¹ John Keay, *India - A History* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), [Page 118].

¹² Bhadriraju Krishnamurti, *The Dravidian Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), [Page 43-4].

emerged elsewhere as well. The first Muslims in the region tended to be ethnically Afghan, Turk or Arab, having come to the south with conquering armies or as traders, but over the centuries most of the region's Muslims were soon of Indian origin. From the 15th century onwards, the Deccan also saw a growth in Shia communities due Muslim rulers' encouragement of immigration from Iran. These Muslim royal courts were also responsible for establishing a small population of Africans, known as 'Siddis' or 'Habshis'¹³ who were brought as slaves and employed by Deccan rulers as eunuchs or soldiers.¹⁴ Other smaller communities found in South India include Jains (Karnataka), Christians, Jews (both Malabar) and Parsees (Konkan) most of whom involved themselves in commerce.¹⁵

The Deccan Sultanates – Origins

The first Muslim incursions into South India began in the 14th century under Alauddin Khilji (r. 1296-1316) of the Delhi Sultanate. Led by the infamous Malik Kafur,¹⁶ these plundering raids severely destabilized the great medieval Hindu kingdoms that dominated the south: the Kakatiyas (Warangal), Yadavas (Devagiri), Hoysalas (Halebidu) and Pandyas (Madurai).¹⁷ It was not until the reign of Muhammad Tughluq (r. 1325-1351)¹⁸ however that Delhi finally succeeded in bringing the south under its direct administration. Tughluq's subsequent ill-founded decision to move his capital from Delhi to Devagiri (Daulatabad) in 1326 however led the sultanate down a path to ruin. Though

¹³ The word *Siddi* is believed to derive from the Arabic 'saydi,' or war-captive. The *Habshis*, from the Arabic name for Abyssinia, Al-Habash, were slaves employed by the Islamic regimes of the Deccan for their great physical strength and lack of personal ties, thus ensuring loyalty to their masters. Their descendants still live in India and are known as the *Siddis*.

¹⁴ Omar H. Ali, "Bengal and Deccan," *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean World*, last modified 2011, accessed April 23, 2013, <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africansindianocean/essay-south-asia.php#Bengal>.

¹⁵ Burton Stein, *A History of India* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), [Page 134,162].

¹⁶ Malik Kafur was a Hindu captured by the Alauddin Khilji when he invaded Gujarat. Subsequently, he was castrated, converted to Islam and made a court eunuch, but his talents on the battlefield were noticed and he rose to become commander of the Sultan's army. He led the campaigns into South India, defeated the Hindu kingdoms of the region, sacked their wealthy temple complexes and amassed huge booty. He was also notorious for his cruelty.

¹⁷ John Keay, *India - A History* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), [Page 257-8].

¹⁸ The Tughluqs cultivated the Delhi Sultanate as a bastion of Islamic power and culture in the face of the Mongols. Presiding over an ostentatious court, Muhammad Tughluq patronized artists, preachers and scholars from all over Muslim world. It was during his reign that the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta visited India and served for a while as a *qazi*. Yet, Tughluq was a notoriously capricious ruler, known to inflict harsh punishments for small transgressions.

his decision was motivated by a desire situate his capital more centrally, security fears from increased Mongol raids into northern India may also have informed his decision.¹⁹ The Sultan evacuated Delhi and force-marched its entire population 700 miles to the south. Once there however, he found it impossible to sustain an imperial capital in the dry Deccan and back-tracked, marching the hapless population back to Delhi. The social and economic disruption precipitated by his blunder crippled Delhi, which took nearly a century to properly recover. In the final years of Tughluq's reign, his governors in the south – Ahsan Khan at Ma'abar (Madurai) and Hasan Kangu at Gulbarga broke into open rebellion.²⁰ Muhammad Tughluq's death in 1347 before he could quell the revolts allowed Hasan Kangu, who took the name Alauddin Bahman Shah,²¹ to establish the Bahmani Sultanate as an independent state in the Deccan.

After Muhammad Tughluq, the Delhi Sultanate went into steep decline. In 1398, the ruthless Turco-Mongol conqueror Tamerlane sacked Delhi. In the aftermath of that catastrophe, more provinces seceded from Delhi (Refer to Appendix: Map 2) and its weak rulers proved incapable of halting the decay. In 1526, Ibrahim Lodi, the last Sultan of Delhi was defeated at Panipat by Babur, an upstart Timurid prince from Kabul and the sultanate passed into Mughal hands.

Insulated from the tumult of the north, Bahman Shah and his successors worked on consolidating their rule in the south. Securing religious sanction to rule the Deccan from the Caliph, Bahman Shah's rebel dynasty now possessed the legitimacy needed to rule in the eyes of their Muslim subjects.²² To staff the new bureaucracy, the Sultan encouraged the migration of large numbers of his fellow Persians into the region. While these Persians proved to be effective

¹⁹ Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate - A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), [Page 164-5].

²⁰ Ishwari Prasad, *History of Medieval India* (Allahabad, India: The Indian Press Limited, 1965), [Page 255-6].

²¹ Hasan Kangu of Persian stock, took his dynastic name from Bahman, a hero from the *Shahnameh*. He established the capital of the Bahmani Sultanate at Gulbarga.

²² S.A.Q. Husaini, *Bahman Shah - Founder of the Bahmani Kingdom* (Kolkata: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1970), [Page 136]. The figurehead Abbasid caliph in Cairo was compelled to legitimize both Firuz Shah's as well as his 'rebel' governor, Bahman Shah's right to rule as India as rival Muslim rulers.

administrators, in time however, the growing power and influence of these ‘Newcomers,’ or *Afaqis* incited the jealousy of the older *Dakhni* nobility who predominantly Hindu converts to Sunni Islam. Shi’ism, popular in Iran, also began to gain sway at the Bahmani court and added sectarian tensions to the festering ethnic rivalry.²³ The inability of the Bahmanis to adequately ameliorate these tensions contributed to the weakening and eventual disintegration of the Sultanate.

The growing power of the Vijayanagara Empire²⁴ also presented the Sultanate with another challenge. Under a series of vigorous rulers, the kingdom, founded partly as a Hindu reaction to the ascendance of Muslim political power in the south,²⁵ adroitly capitalized on its rival’s internal dissensions to expand northwards. The tenure of Mahmud Gawan as *wazir* (1466-1481) coincided with a brief revival of the Sultanate’s military and economic fortunes but as a Persian *Afaqi* even he was ultimately unable to escape the hostility of *Dakhni* rivals at court and was put to death. Without Gawan’s stabilizing hand, the Sultanate soon lurched into even more severe crises while its southern Hindu rival continued to gain in strength.²⁶

The Bahmanis based their administrative models off those of the Delhi Sultanate.²⁷ Though the Sultan was the supreme authority in the land, he delegated substantial control over provincial affairs to military governors (*amirs*), known as in the Deccan as *tarafdars*, who served as ‘sultans-in-miniature’ within their respective *tarafs* (divisions). Though the Bahmanis initially tried to prevent *tarafdars* from sinking roots into the regions they governed by periodically rotating them, later

²³ K.K. Aziz, "Glimpses of Muslim Culture in the Deccan," in *Vijayanagara - City and Empire*, by Anna Libera Dallapicola (Stuttgart, Germany: Steiner Verlag Weisbaden GMBH, 1985), [Page 162-3].

²⁴ The Vijayanagara Empire (1336-1646) arose under the Kannada chieftains Harihara and Bukka who reunified the remnants of the Hoysala Empire and the rest of South India, including the Sultanate of Madurai into their new empire. Under a series of dynamic rulers, Vijayanagara revived Hindu fortunes and enabled an economic and cultural revival in the South.

²⁵ Burton Stein, *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), [Page 372-3].

²⁶ D.C. Verma, *History of Bijapur* (New Delhi: Kumar Brothers, 1974), [Page 7].

²⁷ Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate - A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), [Page 95-8].

sultans were too preoccupied with rampant factionalism at court to properly enforce this policy.²⁸ Beginning with Bijapur in 1489, the *tarafdars* of Ahmadnagar (1491), Berar (1491), Bidar (1492) and Golconda (1512) all seceded, leaving the Bahmani sultan a mere figurehead under the protective custody of Bidar.²⁹ These five successor states were collectively known as the Deccan sultanates.

The Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar

Following the death of Mahmud Gawan, the Sultan appointed Malik Hasan Bahri, a *Dakhni* nobleman as his new *wazir*. When Bahri was murdered in 1490 by *Afaqis*, his son Malik Ahmad, fled the deadly factionalism of the court and entrenched himself at the provincial capital of Daulatabad in the western Deccan. To defend himself from his rivals, Malik Ahmad raised an army from the Maratha clans of the Sahyadri Hills³⁰ and proclaimed himself *Nizam ul-Mulk*.³¹ Going by the royal name of Ahmad Nizam Shah, he founded the city of Ahmadnagar in 1494 which from then on served as the capital of his new Nizam Shahi dynasty. Though independent, the Nizam Shahis remained vulnerable from both their Muslim neighbours as well as the new-arrived Portuguese. Following Portugal's naval victory at Diu (1509) Ahmadnagar was forced to pay them tribute but Ahmad Nizam Shah saw the Portuguese as a useful counterweight against other Deccan rivals like Bijapur and cultivated commercial relations with them.³²

The religious leanings of the sultanate also shifted in 1537 following the conversion of Ahmad Nizam Shah's successor, Burhan Shah, from Sunnism to Twelver Shi'ism under the influence

²⁸ H.K. Sherwani, *The Bahmanis of the Deccan* (Hyderabad, India: Saood Manzil Publications, 1953), [Page 76-80].

²⁹ The last Bahmani, Kalimullah Shah wrote to the victorious Mughal Babur after Panipat to rescue him from the captivity of the Barid Shahis but Babur was too preoccupied with consolidating his empire in the north help. Fearing for his life, Kalimullah Shah fled Bidar for Bijapur and then Ahmadnagar where he died in 1538, ending the Bahmani line.

³⁰ The Western Ghats once they enter Maharashtra are known as the Sahyadri Hills and were until modern times not well covered by roads. They were also densely forested, allowing rebels and brigands of all kinds to see refuge in them.

³¹ The title *Nizam ul-Mulk* means "Administrator of the Realm."

³² H.K. Sherwani, Prof. and P.M. Joshi, Dr., *History of the Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* (Hyderabad, India: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1973), [Page 236-40].

of his *wazir* Shah Tahir Ismail.³³ Though Burhan Nizam Shah's decision to establish Shi'ism as the state creed seem to be genuinely influenced by personal conviction, his decision was also strategic: he hoped religious affinity with the powerful Safavids of Iran would discourage attacks on his kingdom by his neighbours.³⁴ In this, he was foiled; though relations between Ahmadnagar and Iran blossomed, Burhan Shah's Muslim neighbours, Gujarat, Bidar and Khandesh, citing his heretical turn, continued to harass his territories. Burhan Shah then looked to Vijayanagara as a potential ally but this inadvertently allowed Maharaja Aliya Rama Raya to inveigle the internecine politics of the sultanates for his own objectives. According to the historian Ferishta,³⁵ Vijayanagara's armies in the Deccan while assisting Ahmadnagar against its rivals frequently harassed Muslim villages, stabled their horses in mosques and acted raucously towards local Muslim women as they marched through the region.³⁶ Besides those outrages, the role of paramount arbiter in the Deccan's politics was essentially assumed by Rama Raya; fearing they would soon be overwhelmed by their powerful southern neighbour, the Deccan sultanates formed a rare coalition against Vijayanagara and defeated it at Talikota in 1565. The defeat was catastrophic: the *maharaja* was killed, his army slaughtered and the capital sacked by the victorious Muslim armies. The Portuguese historian, Diogo do Couto, an eyewitness to events at the time, wrote of the subsequent sack of Vijayanagara by the victorious Muslim armies, detailed how the invaders,

“Came to destroy and carried out their objective relentlessly. They slaughtered the people without mercy... broke down the temples and palaces... and wreaked such vengeance upon the abode

³³ Shah Tahir Ismail was an Ismaili (Sevener) scholar and Sufi from Iran. He served under *taqiya* (hiding one's true faith) at the court of Shah Ismail Safavi, who had embraced Imami Shi'ism (Twelver) but when the truth was revealed, he fled to India and made his way to Ahmadnagar where he won the confidence of Burhan Nizam Shah.

³⁴ Salma Ahmed Farooqui, *Comprehensive History of Medieval India: From Twelfth To The Mid-Eighteenth Century* (London: Pearson Education, 2011), [Page 172].

³⁵ Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta (1560-1620) was a Persian historian who was commissioned by Ibrahim Adil Shah II to write the history of the Deccan sultanates from the establishment of Muslim rule in South India till the advent of the Mughals.

³⁶ Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi Firishtah, *Ferishta's History of Dekkan from the first Mohammedan conquests*, trans. Jonathan Scott (London: W. Eddowes, 1794), [Page 291], accessed April 28, 2013, <http://ia700303.us.archive.org/20/items/ferishtahistory01firi/ferishtahistory01firi.pdf>.

*of the kings... that with few exception, nothing remains but a heap of ruins to mark the spot where stately buildings once stood. They lit huge fires in magnificently decorated buildings...smashed its sculptures with crowbars and axes. Never before in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought so suddenly, on so splendid a city, teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next day seized, pillaged and reduced to ruin...”*³⁷

Though the capital was destroyed, Vijayanagara’s ministers had earlier managed to whisk the royal treasury to safety and re-established the dynasty’s capital at Penukonda. Despite this, the truncated empire soon fragmented into a patchwork of small states ruled by Hindu *nayaks* and *polygars*³⁸ who could not pose much of a threat to the Deccan sultanates. With no common enemy to fear now, the Deccan sultanates resumed their feuding; in 1572, Ahmadnagar successfully overthrew one of its rivals, Berar, and annexed its territories.

The Adil Shahis of Bijapur

Yusuf Adil Khan, the founder of the Adil Shahi Dynasty was the Bahmani *tarafdard* of Bijapur. An *Afaqi*, he was a confidant of Mahmud Gawan and gained much military experience defending the southern borders of the sultanate against Vijayanagara. Amidst the chaos following Gawan’s death, Adil Khan built up his power in the south and carved out of Bahmani sultanate as his personal kingdom, the territory between the Bhima and Tungabhadra Rivers. His breakaway regime however was soon at war with Qasim Barid of Bidar. An ex-Turkish slave, Barid had shunted aside the Bahmani Sultan and sought to assert his supremacy across the whole Bahmani realm. The conflict between them also took on sectarian overtones since Barid was an orthodox Sunni and the Persian Yusuf Adil Khan harboured Shi’ite sympathies.³⁹ In the end, Qasim Barid was bested and also forced

³⁷ Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire - Vijayanagar - A Contribution to the History of India* (Shannon, Republic of Ireland: Irish University Press, 1972), [Page 200-9].

³⁸ The *Nayaks* were originally regional military governors who governed on behalf of the Vijayanagara emperors. They became de facto independent rulers after Talikota; amongst them the *Nayaks* of Keladi, Madurai and Thanjavur were the most powerful. Under their patronage, there was a revival of Hindu temple building and major investment in infrastructural projects to improve irrigation. Anglicization of the Tamil *Palaiyakkarar*, the *Polygars* were chieftains who governed smaller towns and cities on behalf of the *Nayak* rulers. The *Polygars* waged several fierce guerrilla wars against British encroachment upon their territories between 1799 and 1802 but were brutally crushed.

³⁹ H.K. Sherwani, *The Bahmanis of the Deccan* (Hyderabad, India: Saood Manzil Publications, 1953), [Page 392-4].

to relinquish the old Bahmani capital of Gulbarga to Bijapur, giving Yusuf Adil Khan tremendous political prestige and well as fertile new territory in the north upon which to build his kingdom.

Bijapur like Ahmadnagar also had to contend with the threat of the Portuguese. Though they established a commercial presence at Calicut, both Vasco Da Gama and Pedro Cabral had been frustrated in their attempts to make further inroads at ports up the coast due to fierce opposition from the Muslim merchants who dominated the region's maritime trade.⁴⁰ A Muslim fleet defeated the Portuguese at the Battle of Chaul (1507) but the Portuguese Viceroy Francisco d'Almeida refused to concede defeat and sailed north to inflict as much damage to Muslim commercial interests as he could. Looting the Bijapuri port of Dabhol, the Portuguese then destroyed the Egyptian-Gujarati fleet at Diu in 1509, establishing themselves as the supreme naval power in the Arabian Sea.⁴¹ Following on their victory, the Portuguese set their sights on Goa - closer to Gujarat and the Persian Gulf than Calicut, they saw it as the ideal place to locate their Indian headquarters. Portuguese actions were also subtly backed by Vijayanagara which saw them both as a useful military ally and a commercial partner who could supply them with high-quality horses⁴² they desperately needed for military purposes. In 1510, Afonso d'Albuquerque seized Goa and held off repeated Bijapuri efforts to retake it; eventually, unable to make much headway against the Portuguese, the Adil Shahis reconciled to the loss of Goa. A peace treaty was eventually signed, with Bijapur promising not to attack Goa provided Portugal refrained from raiding its other ports.

As with the Nizam Shahis at Ahmadnagar, the establishment of Shi'ism as the official religion of Safavid Iran had a ripple impact on the religious leanings of the Adil Shahi rulers. Encouraged by

⁴⁰ D.C. Verma, *History of Bijapur* (New Delhi: Kumar Brothers, 1974), [Page 54-5].

⁴¹ John Keay, *India - A History* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), [Page 306].

⁴² Jos J.L. Gommans, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and Highroads to Empire, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge, 2002), [Page 111-4]. South Indian armies depended heavily on Arab and later Portuguese merchants to provide them with good war-horses. The Indian climate and lack of pasturage meant feeding horses with good fodder proved difficult. This, along with the insalubrious tropical climate and disease meant the horses of the army needed to be replenished frequently.

Shah Ismail's example, Yusuf Adil Khan acted to make Shi'ism the state religion of Bijapur. Unlike Iran however, the Sultan also promised religious tolerance for all faiths and made special efforts to reward his Sunni officials to ward off dissent that might imperil his regime. Following Yusuf Adil Khan's death in 1510 however, the minority of his successor, Ismail Khan triggered dormant *Dakhni-Afaqis* rivalries when the *Dakhnis* attempted to restore Sunnism to official status. With *Afaqis* and *Dakhnis* troops clashing in the streets of Bijapur, the sultanate seemed likely to collapse. Eventually, the *Afaqis* managed to gain an upper hand and ruthlessly restored order. The young Sultan retrieved full control of his throne and dismissed most of his *Dakhni* officials. It was also then that the Adil Shahis assumed the title of *Shah* for the first time as evidenced by numismatic analysis of gold coins minted in the fourth year of his reign (1514).⁴³ This effectively marked the point from which any lingering ties of allegiance the Adil Shahis maintained towards their Bahmani masters was severed.⁴⁴

The internal weaknesses of Bijapur did not go unnoticed by the shrewd ruler of Vijayanagara, Krishnadevaraya. With the Adil Shahi army in disarray, the Maharaja seized control of the Raichur *Doab*,⁴⁵ a fertile tract long contested between the two kingdoms and crushed Ismail Adil Shah's subsequent efforts to regain this territory. Following Vijayanagara's ill-conceived overextension into the Deccan affairs in the 1560s and its disastrous defeat at Talikota, Bijapur proved biggest beneficiary of the demise of the once-powerful kingdom.⁴⁶ Over the next century, the Adil Shahis, capitalizing on the political vacuum, steadily pushed their borders southwards reaching the Kaveri Delta by 1660. (Refer to Appendix: Map 3).

⁴³ H.K. Sherwani, Prof. and P.M. Joshi, Dr., *History of the Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* (Hyderabad, India: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1973), [Page 306-8].

⁴⁴ Sherwani and Joshi, *History of the Medieval*, [Page 312-6].

⁴⁵ The Raichur *Doab* was the fertile strip of land between the Krishna and Tungabhadra Rivers that had been a bone of contention between Vijayanagara and the Bahmanis. It changed hands many times and when Bijapur ceded, it inherited this festering dispute.

⁴⁶ M.A. Nayeem, *The Heritage of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur* (Hyderabad, India: Hyderabad Publishers, 2008), [Page 37-9].

The Qutb Shahis of Golconda

The founder of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty, Sultan Quli was descendant of the Qara Qoyunlu “Black Sheep” Turkmen of north-west Iran. Having suffering under the tyrannical rule of Tamerlane, the Qara Qoyunlu reasserted their independence upon his death and expanded over most of Iran, ruling as far east as Herat.⁴⁷ Qara Qoyunlu fortunes did not last long; following a debilitating conflict with the Aq Qoyunlu “White Sheep” Turkmen of Uzun Hasan, most of the tribe’s leadership was killed. The few survivors fled to India; seeing little opportunity in the declining Delhi Sultanate, they travelled to the Deccan and entered the service of the Bahmani sultans. Amidst the disintegration of the Bahmani Sultanate at the end of the 15th century, Sultan Quli remained loyal, quelling rebellions, and stabilizing the faltering authority of the Bahmanis in Konkan and Telengana. Following his victories, he was bestowed with the title *Qutb ul-Mulk*⁴⁸ and appointed *tarafdar* of Telengana with his headquarters at Golconda; it was from here he subsequently ruled as an independent ruler once Bahmani power evaporated entirely. Expanding his territories north, Sultan Quli conquered coastal Orissa (Circars) and stabilized the precarious financial health of his new kingdom by expanding the exploitation of the Kollur diamond mines located within his territory.⁴⁹ Golconda’s efforts to expand southwards across the Krishna however met with failure in this period. Vijayanagara was at the acme of its power and its ruler, Krishnadevaraya defeated Golconda, seized its coastal territories before pushing into Orissa himself. It was not until the formidable Maharaja’s death in 1529 and the weak rule of his successor, Achyuta Deva Raya that Sultan Quli could defy Vijayanagara’s armies with any degree of success.

⁴⁷ Patrick Clawson and Michael Rubin, *Eternal Iran: Continuity and Chaos*(London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), [Page 23-5].

⁴⁸ The title *Qutb-ul-Mulk* means “Axis” or “Pivot of the Realm.”

⁴⁹ Marikar Sarkar, *Golconda Through Time: A Mirror of the Evolving Deccan* (New York: New York University Institute of Fine Arts, 2007), [Page 141].

Sultan Quli ruled longer than any of the other founders of the Deccan sultanates; unlike his rivals who made little effort to hide their independence from the Bahmanis, Sultan Quli took great pains to show his deference and continued to send them rich gifts and tribute even though he was for all intents and purposes independent.⁵⁰ He also tried to keep out of the entangling alliances and feuds of the other Deccan states and relied on his own resources to thwart both Bijapur and Bidar's efforts to test his defences. Though an effective ruler, Sultan Quli was ultimately assassinated in 1543 by his son, Jamshid Shah. According to Ferishta, the prince purportedly was frustrated by his father's long rule and committed parricide while Sultan Quli was at prayer.⁵¹ In contrast to the other *tarafdars* who seceded from the Bahmani sultanate to establish their own kingdoms come across as devious, selfish individuals in Ferishta's account, Sultan Quli is very well-regarded. Praised for his chivalry towards his enemies he was nonetheless an effective military leader and a skilled bureaucrat who stabilized and prospered his territories.⁵² Like several of his contemporary Deccan rulers, Sultan Quli was a Shi'ite. His subservience to his Sunni Bahmani master did not however preclude his later introduction of the Shia *khutbah* to prayer services. Golconda, unlike the other Deccan states remained uninterruptedly of Shia persuasion all the way till its overthrow in 1687.⁵³

Following his father's assassination, Jamshid Qutb Shah ruthlessly blinded or exiled his brothers. One, Ibrahim Shah however managed to escape to Vijayanagara where he appealed for help to retake Golconda. Jamshid Qutb Shah in response called upon Ahmadnagar to help him ward off his brother, involving Golconda dangerously in the Deccan geopolitical maelstrom their father had assiduously avoided. When Jamshid Qutb Shah died in 1550 however, his ministers were divided on

⁵⁰ Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi Firishtah, *Ferishta's History of Dekkan from the first Mohammedan conquests*, trans. Jonathan Scott (London: J. and W. Eddowes, 1794), [Page 198], accessed April 28, 2013, <http://ia700303.us.archive.org/20/items/ferishtashistory01firi/ferishtashistory01firi.pdf>.

⁵¹ H.K. Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1974), [Page 34-5].

⁵² Firishtah, *Ferishta's History of Dekkan*, [Page 407].

⁵³ H.K. Sherwani, Prof. and P.M. Joshi, Dr., *History of the Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* (Hyderabad, India: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1973), [Page 422].

choosing his successor; initially selecting the dead Sultan's young son, Subhan Shah, they later backtracked and invited his fugitive uncle, Ibrahim Shah back from Vijayanagara to take the throne.

Ibrahim Qutb Shah also proved to be an effective and diligent ruler. First, he worked on curbing rampant banditry which had become a menace to merchants travelling from the interior where the gem mines were located to the coastal ports like Masulipatnam. Scaling back on involvement in costly foreign wars and alliances, the Sultan decided to confine his authority just to lands inhabited by the Telugu-speaking people; Sherwani suggests this was mainly due to a fear of overextending of his limited military resources along his long, vulnerable border with the Vijayanagara Empire.⁵⁴ The empire was in an expansionist phase and though Ibrahim had friendly relations with Rama Raya after spending his exile at Vijayanagara, he remained wary of the Maharaja's designs.⁵⁵ Ultimately, this concern impelled Ibrahim Qutb Shah's participation in the coalition against Vijayanagara. Their subsequent victory at Talikota saw the obviation of a major rival of the Qutb Shahis. Without Vijayanagara to check their southward expansion, Ibrahim Qutb Shah was able in his last years to extend Golconda's borders down the Coromandel Coast into modern-day Tamil Nadu.⁵⁶

The Mughal Conquest of the Deccan

While the successor states of the Bahmani Sultanate squabbled and jostled for pre-eminence in the south, North India's geopolitical landscape was undergoing profound change. In 1526, the Delhi Sultanate was overthrown and its territories absorbed by Babur into his empire. Babur's death in 1530 left his imperial project in the hands of his inexperienced son Humayun who was soon

⁵⁴ H.K. Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1974), [Page 120-1].

⁵⁵ H.K. Sherwani, Prof. and P.M. Joshi, Dr., *History of the Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* (Hyderabad, India: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1973), [Page 422].

⁵⁶ Salma Ahmed Farooqui, *Comprehensive History of Medieval India: From Twelfth To The Mid-Eighteenth Century* (London: Pearson Education, 2011), [Page 178].

challenged by a formidable rival for his throne - the Afghan general, Sher Shah Suri. Humayun was scholarly and superstitious, caring more for astrology and elaborate court ritual than dealing fervently with the threat from Suri.⁵⁷ By 1540, the Mughals were driven from Delhi by the Afghans who established the new Suri Dynasty. Humayun was forced to seek refuge (and convert to Shi'ism for a while) at the court of Shah Tahmasp I in Iran. Suri's death in 1554 allowed Humayun to return to India and reclaim his throne,⁵⁸ but his own death in 1556 saw his minor son Akbar, left to confront still more challenges to Mughal rule. Aided by his able regent, Bairam Khan however the young emperor triumphed at the 2nd Battle of Panipat (1556), defeating the remnants of Suri's powerful Afghan army and finally claimed his throne in Delhi.

Having gained valuable military experience at a young age, Akbar was well-schooled in military affairs and determined to aggrandize the territories inherited from his predecessors. Successfully extending Mughal control over Gujarat, Kashmir and Bengal, his biggest challenge came from the fiercely-independent Rajputs.⁵⁹ Holed up in their impregnable fortresses, the Rajputs *rajās* refused to submit, forcing Akbar to painstakingly besiege their citadels one by one, employing the latest in gunpowder technology: matchlock muskets, rockets, heavy cannons and mines to breach even the sturdiest Rajput defences.⁶⁰ After twenty years of war (1567-1583) Akbar finally compelled the Rajputs to submit to the Mughals; many were co-opted and took up service at his court in Delhi as bureaucrats while others served as generals in his army. Now his attention turned to the south.

The Mughals' capture of Malwa and Khandesh in 1562 extended the imperial frontier right to the doorstep of Ahmadnagar. Distracted other matters Akbar did not press on until 1591, when he

⁵⁷ Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), [Page 45-8].

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, [Page 108-9].

⁵⁹ David Nicholle, *Mughal India, 1504-1761* (London: Osprey Books, 1993), [Page 33-5].

⁶⁰ William Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls - Its Organization and Administration* (New Delhi: Eurasia Publishing House Pte. Ltd., 1962), [Page 270-3].

dispatched emissaries to the Deccan courts demanding they acknowledge Mughal suzerainty. Though wary of Akbar's power, the sultans balked at his demands, with Ahmadnagar treating the envoys particularly roughly.⁶¹ Though the emperor did not punish the transgression then, his chance came in 1588 when violence broke out over the Nizam Shahi succession. The candidate Ismail Shah backed by the *Afaqi* faction defeated his brother Burhan Shah who was backed by the *Dakhnis*; fearing for his life, Burhan Shah fled to the Mughal court. With the sultanate wracked by civil strife, Akbar was concerned the violence might spill into Mughal lands. To end the turmoil, the Emperor dispatched Burhan Shah with an army to retake the kingdom. However, having claimed the Nizam Shahi throne, the new Sultan haughtily rejected Mughal demands he acknowledge their suzerainty; this blatant betrayal convinced Akbar to annexe outright the troublesome territory in 1596.⁶²

The intriguing Chand Bibi⁶³ now emerged on the scene. Assuming the regency on behalf of her young nephew Bahadur Nizam Shah, she attempted to thwart the Mughal annexation of her homeland by rallying the proud though divided *Dakhni* and *Afaqi* nobles of Ahmadnagar to unite in collective defiance of the invaders. After resisting valiantly the Mughal siege of the capital, Chand Bibi agreed to cede Berar to the empire in return for an end to hostilities. Though her pragmatism saved the kingdom, jealous nobles resenting her growing influence, accused her of colluding with the Mughals. She was caught and stoned to death.⁶⁴ Capitalizing on the confusion, the Mughals took Ahmadnagar in 1600.

⁶¹ Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), [Page 160].

⁶² Radhey Shyam, Dr., *The Kingdom of Ahmadnagar* (Varanasi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966), [Page 211-2], accessed April 23, 2013, <http://books.google.com/books?id=5C4hBqKdkEsC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁶³ Chand Bibi, the "Moon Lady" was the daughter of Hussain Nizam Shah and married to Ali Adil Shah I of Bijapur. She sought to bring about reconciliation in the bitterly divided Nizam Shahi court but despite a common enemy in the Mughals, keeping all the powerbrokers on board in the long term was hard for even her. In the end she was betrayed and killed by her own subjects.

⁶⁴ Radhey Shyam, Dr., *The Kingdom of Ahmadnagar* (Varanasi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966), [Page 230], accessed April 23, 2013, <http://books.google.com/books?id=5C4hBqKdkEsC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

Yet despite the fall of the capital, the Nizam Shahi state survived. Rallying the kingdom's disbanded soldiers to his banner, the *Habshi* general Malik Ambar⁶⁵ launched a guerrilla war from the Sahyadri Hills to expel the Mughal presence from the Deccan.⁶⁶ He placed a Nizam Shahi pretender on the throne and assuming the post of *wazir*, tried to persuade the other Deccan sultans to jointly resist the Mughals; when they demurred, he ravaged their territories for money to prosecute his war effort. Capitalizing on Mughal distractions following Akbar's death in 1605, Malik Ambar seized even seized the Mughal provincial capital of Daulatabad and recreated an administrative apparatus and land revenue system to fund his rump state.⁶⁷ By 1612, he had recaptured most of the sultanate's former territory, dealing a huge blow to Mughal prestige. Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605-1627) now resolved to settle the issue by deploying tens of thousands of men to the Deccan to suppress the crafty Ambar but he easily defied these clumsy Mughal efforts to squash his mobile bands of Maratha troopers.⁶⁸ The Mughals then tried to cut his base of support by coercing the other Deccan sultans to join forces against him but the *Habshi* general still could not be brought to heel. (Refer to Appendix: Images)

Malik Ambar's talents lay not just in his effective military strategy, known in Marathi as *bargi-giri* ('hit-and-run tactics,' which avoided sieges and pitched battle at all cost)⁶⁹ but also his administrative nous at raising revenue and manpower for his cause even when beset by enemies on all

⁶⁵ Malik Ambar was born in Harar, Ethiopia in 1549. Sold to an Arab slave merchant as a child, he ended up in the Deccan as the property of a Nizam Shahi nobleman. Proving himself as a skilled soldier and administrator, he found service in both the Ahmadnagar and Bijapur Sultanates before returning to rescue Ahmadnagar from the Mughals.

⁶⁶ H.K. Sherwani, Prof. and P.M. Joshi, Dr., *History of the Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* (Hyderabad, India: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1973), [Page 260].

⁶⁷ Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), [Page 260].

⁶⁸ Richard M. Eaton, "Malike Ambar (1548–1626): The Rise and Fall of Military Slavery," in *The New Cambridge History of India - A Social History of the Deccan, 1300–1761 Eight Indian Lives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), [Page 122-4], accessed April 8, 2013, http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/histories/popups/pdf_viewer.jsf?cid=CBO9781139053907A009&hithighlight=on&ref=true&pubCode=CUP&urlPrefix=cambridge&productCode=CHO.

⁶⁹ Jos J.L. Gommans, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and Highroads to Empire, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge, 2002), [Page 196].

sides. He was skilled at exploiting all avenues of support: surreptitious English merchants at the Mughal port of Surat to conduct external trade, Portuguese freebooters for weapons, and Maratha clans frustrated with their disenfranchisement under new Mughal administrators. He also exploited the Mughals' own internal dissensions, temporarily sheltering the rebel prince Khurram (the future Shah Jahan) in the hope Khurram might gain the throne and cease hostilities against the Nizam Shahis.⁷⁰ The cat-and-mouse game between Malik Ambar and Jahangir lasted till 1626 when the old general died, aged eighty. The fame and prestige of the slave-turned-*wazir* was so great that even Jahangir's biographer, Mutamid Khan noted,

*"This Ambar was a slave but an able man. In warfare, in command, in sound judgement, and in administration he had not rival or equal. He well understood predatory warfare. He kept down the turbulent spirits in that country, and maintained his exalted position to the end of his life, and closed his career in honour. History knows no other instance of an Abyssinian slaves arriving at such eminence!"*⁷¹

Malik Ambar's struggle was continued by his son, Fath Khan but unlike his father, he failed to manage dissensions between the powerful Maratha and *Habshi* commanders of his army.⁷² Under Jahangir's successor, Shah Jahan, efforts to pacify the Deccan were resumed. This time the Mughals capitalized on Nizam Shahi disunity and reduced their holdings to just the city of Daulatabad; bowing to the inevitable, Fath Khan surrendered the Sultan and the city to Shah Jahan.

Yet incredibly, for the third time the Nizam Shahi state survived. The Maratha general Shahaji (the father of Shivaji), formerly in the service of Malik Ambar, found another Nizam Shahi pretender and proclaimed him Sultan Murtaza Nizam Shah III. This effort to resuscitate the nearly-extinct sultanate seems to have been guided by nothing more than Shahaji's sheer opportunism; Burhan Nizam Shah II had killed his father-in-law but the Maratha leader saw it would be easier to carve out

⁷⁰ Fergus Nicholl, *Shah Jahan - The Rise and Fall of the Mughal Emperor* (London: Haus Publishing, 2009), [Page 129].

⁷¹ Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), [Page 262].

⁷² Nicholl, *Shah Jahan - The Rise*, [Page 217-9].

an autonomous Maratha kingdom for himself in the Konkan under an puppet sultan than under the heavy hand of the Mughal imperium.⁷³ Shah Jahan now appointed his son Aurangzeb as Viceroy of the Deccan and tasked him to finish off the Nizam Shahis and their Maratha protector. Forestalling any military assistance to Shahaji from Bijapur or Golconda, Aurangzeb finally forced him to hand over the young sultan to the Mughals. Shahaji himself was spared on the condition he bound himself to military service at Bijapur. Shah Jahan's hope was that by tying Shahaji and his turbulent Marathas to the Adil Shahi court, he would be rid of their trouble-making.⁷⁴ Now in 1636, after forty years of campaigns did the Mughals finally terminate the Nizam Shahi sultanate.

Unlike Ahmadnagar which lay on the frontline, Bijapur further south, initially had the luxury of space and could combining moderate military resistance with flexible diplomacy and copious payments of tribute to stave off the Mughals. Bijapur like the other Deccan states rejected Akbar's demand to submit but with the Mughals distracted by other matters, Bijapur's rulers were free to concern themselves with courtly pursuits and indulge in the patronage of fine art, architecture and literary culture.⁷⁵ Under Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II, the fine art and architecture of the Deccan reached its apogee as the sultan lavishly patronized countless aesthetic projects to impress foreign guests and glorify his dynasty. The Deccan art that emerged in this period combined seamlessly Persian, European and Indian styles; and the cultured milieu of the Bijapur court presided over by Ibrahim Adil Shah was acclaimed even by Akbar himself.⁷⁶ The religious life of Bijapur also flourished; though the Sultan chose the Sunni creed, the eclectic, cosmopolitan atmosphere of his court saw the intermingling of Hindus, Shias and Sunnis freely. Ibrahim Adil Shah was particularly

⁷³ Shivaram Laxman Karandikar, *The Rise and Fall of the Maratha Power*, vol. 1, *Shahaji, Shivaji, Sambhaji* (Pune, India: Sitabai Shivram Karandikar, 1979), [Page 23-4].

⁷⁴ H.K. Sherwani, Prof. and P.M. Joshi, Dr., *History of the Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* (Hyderabad, India: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1973), [Page 276].

⁷⁵ K.K. Aziz, "Glimpses of Muslim Culture in the Deccan," in *Vijayanagara - City and Empire*, by Anna Libera Dallapicola (Stuttgart, Germany: Steiner Verlag Weisbaden GMBH, 1985), [Page 164-7].

⁷⁶ M.A. Nayeem, *The Heritage of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur* (Hyderabad, India: Hyderabad Publishers, 2008), [Page 37-9].

devoted to Hazrat Banda Nawaj, the Sufi saint of Gulbarga; the Sultan's his great spiritual openness led to Ferishta acclaiming him as *Jagadguru Badshah*, or "Spiritual Lord of the World."⁷⁷

The absorption of Ahmadnagar into the Mughal Empire in 1636 left Bijapur directly in the frontline against the Mughal juggernaut. The court of Muhammad Adil Shah was deeply divided as to how to negotiate this threat. In this vital debate, the pro-Mughal faction under *Wazir* Mustafa Khan gained ascendance and made a great show of deference towards Shah Jahan. A Deed of Submission was drawn which settled upon a partition of disputed lands between their two states north of the Bhima River. The Konkan Coast was also ceded to Bijapur but several key fortresses along with a large indemnity were to be paid annually to the Mughals.⁷⁸ Shah Jahan at this time also obtained the submission of neighbouring Golconda which was reduced to a proper tributary of his empire.

The Marathas and their leader Shahaji though reduced to quiescence by military service to Bijapur never really relinquished their dream of an autonomous Maratha state in the Konkan. Sidelined by the pro-Mughal power dynamic prevailing in Bijapur, Shahaji's dream looked further than ever but his son, Shivaji had grown into a capable warrior in his own right and was himself faced with two options: join Adil Shahi service like his father and be assured of a decent though mundane career, or as per his mother, Jijabai's exhortations, break free of the sultanate and try to restore Hindu rule in the Deccan, an onerous task by any standards with the Mughal imperium advancing ominously southwards.⁷⁹ He decided to take his mother's advice and rallied the disgruntled Marathas of the Adil Shahi army to his cause in the Sahyadri hills. An adroit practitioner of guerrilla warfare, Shivaji

⁷⁷ Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi Firishtah, *Ferishta's History of Dekkan from the first Mohammedan conquests*, trans. Jonathan Scott (London: W. Eddowes, 1794), [Page 328-34], accessed April 28, 2013, <http://ia700303.us.archive.org/20/items/ferishtashistory01firi/ferishtashistory01firi.pdf>.

⁷⁸ D.C. Verma, *History of Bijapur* (New Delhi: Kumar Brothers, 1974), [Page 193-4].

⁷⁹ James M. Laine, *Shivaji - Hindu King in Islamic India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), [Page 4-5].

seized Poona, Junnar and a series of other strategic hill forts from Bijapur⁸⁰ but when heard of his father's arrest to ensure his good behaviour, he was forced to curb his swashbuckling ways for a time.

With a seemingly durable peace finally in place with the Mughals and Shivaji's Marathas temporarily pacified, the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda felt secure enough to indulge in a bit of territorial expansion into the Carnatic (Tamil Nadu). Here politics remained constantly fluid as the *nayak* rulers of Mysore, Tanjore and Madurai jostled for pre-eminence and the lesser *polygar* chiefs entered and broke alliances as per their contingencies. Attempting to harness their powerful northern neighbours against their local rivals, the *nayak* rulers of Madurai invited the sultans into the region to fight the *Nayak* of Tanjore;⁸¹ the unfortunate outcome of their miscalculation, was the Deccan armies rapid overpowering of both and a sweep through the Carnatic which yielded a large amount of war-booty. The Mughals, when they heard of this adventurism by the Deccan sultans, were not pleased, viewing Muhammad Adil Shah's military actions with alarm and unbecoming of a supposedly deferent 'tributary'; Muhammad Adil Shah perceived his actions differently since he did not deem the Deed of Submission an agreement to vassalage under the Mughals. Still, in order to stave off the capricious Shah Jahan, the Sultan deferentially sent a share of the booty and effusive apologies for his indiscretion.⁸² In 1657, Muhammad Adil Shah died with Bijapur Sultanate at the height of affluence and territorial reach. He had staved off a potential second phase of Mughal expansion in the Deccan and expanded the territories of his kingdom into the far south. Domestically, he had been a great patron of art and culture, built an extensive irrigation infrastructure to water the dry southern regions of his kingdom (Mysore) and built fittingly as his mausoleum, the imposing Gol Gumbaz, a true

⁸⁰ S.R. Bakshi and Sri Kant Sharma, eds., *The Great Marathas*, vol. 1, *Shivaji and the Emergence of the Marathas* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2000), [Page 14-17].

⁸¹ B. Sheik Ali, *History of Bahmani and Adil Shahi Rulers* (Mysore, India: Mysore Book House, 2011), [Page 141-5].

⁸² B. Sheik Ali, *History of Bahmani and Adil Shahi Rulers* (Mysore, India: Mysore Book House, 2011), [Page 149].

emblem of Deccan architecture, about the same time Shah Jahan was building his Taj Mahal.⁸³ Though the ambiguity of Bijapur's status vis-a-vis the Mughals in the Deed of Submission proved problematic, the sultanate had managed to exploit the peace is granted to successfully to push its borders all the way to the Bay of Bengal with tribute from subjugated *nayaks* more than compensating for any of the indemnities paid to the Mughals.⁸⁴ However, while Shah Jahan could be assuaged with treasure, the arrival of his son, Aurangzeb on the Deccan scene would mark a hardening of Mughal resolve to alter in their favour the problematic political relationship they thus far maintained with Bijapur and Golconda.

The Qutb Shahs, being the weaker of the two felt Aurangzeb's hostility first. Deeming its sultans feeble, pleasure-seeking Shia heretics who should be made to tow the Mughal line or face extinction, he enticed the Qutb Shahi *wazir* Mir Jumla⁸⁵ to his side and then imposed a humiliating treaty on the hapless Abdullah Qutb Shah in 1656 which stipulated the Sultan's successor should be Aurangzeb's own son, Muhammad Sultan!⁸⁶ With his grip over the Deccan states tightened, the Prince felt well-placed in the impending conflict with his brother for the main goal: the Mughal throne at Delhi.

Shah Jahan's severe illness in 1657 precipitated a furious succession struggle between the heir-apparent Dara Shikoh⁸⁷ based at Agra and his younger brothers, Aurangzeb and Murad Baksh.

⁸³George Michell and Mark Zebrowski, *The New Cambridge History of India - Architecture and Art of the Deccan Sultanates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), [Page 15].

⁸⁴H.K. Sherwani, Prof. and P.M. Joshi, Dr., *History of the Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* (Hyderabad, India: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1973), [Page 371].

⁸⁵Mir Jumla was a Persian merchant who mixed politics and business with great skill at Golconda, rising in importance and wealth in the kingdom. Cornering the diamond market he used the various offices he held in the Qutb Shahi government to acquire monopolies on several industries and also created his own private army. When Mir Jumla's obnoxious son acted brazenly towards the Abdullah Qutb Shah himself, the Sultan imprisoned him, driving his father into the hands of Aurangzeb who saw merit in embracing this defector for his objectives in the region.

⁸⁶Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), [Page 326-8].

⁸⁷Dara Shikoh was known for his religious eclecticism and broad patronage of arts and culture. An adherent to Sufism he was also notable for his friendship and kindness to Hindus and took on many attributes of his great-grandfather Akbar. He

Iftikhar Ghauri in his analysis of the personalities of the princes involved in the contest for the Mughal throne attributes Aurangzeb's ruthlessness in the Deccan to his determination to use it as a base of military and financial support in the succession struggle he knew would come.⁸⁸

Dara Shikoh, in turn grasped his brother's motives and used his influence over Shah Jahan to discourage any further efforts by Aurangzeb to consolidate himself in the region, knowing how powerful he would be if his brother could become if he had the wealth of the Deccan sultanates at his disposal. In the conflict that erupted between them however, Aurangzeb proved to be far more ruthless than his brother.⁸⁹ With an experienced army from his time in the Deccan, Aurangzeb trounced Dara Shikoh, captured then executed him. Deposing the hapless Shah Jahan (who had recovered from his illness), Aurangzeb then seized the throne in 1658.

Shivaji the Maratha

While the Deccan sultanates manoeuvred cautiously to avoid antagonizing their increasingly belligerent Mughal overlord, the wily Shivaji manoeuvred adroitly both militarily and diplomatically to seize any advantages he could get in the interstices of these larger political actors. With the death of Shahaji in 1660, the limited leverage Bijapur had held over Shivaji vanished. Though Shivaji did not pose an existential threat to the sultanate like the Mughals, he was no less problematic since his seizure of Bijapur's fortresses in the Sahyadri Hills allowed him to nullify Adil Shahi control over the Konkan Coast and gain mastery over the north-western corner of the Bijapur domain.⁹⁰ When he learnt of Aurangzeb's coronation, Shivaji quickly recognized how this might threaten his activities and made ostentatious professions of submission to the Emperor. Towards Bijapur, he continued as

was also favored by Shah Jahan but he was unprepared to face the battle-hardened Aurangzeb and was routed. He was popular amongst the common people of Delhi and his humiliating treatment at the hands of Aurangzeb after his capture, when loudly protested by the masses, convinced the Emperor it was too dangerous to leave such a powerful rival alive.

⁸⁸ Iftikhar Ahmad Ghauri, *War of Succession between the Sons of Shah Jahan* (Lahore, Pakistan: Publishers United Ltd., 1964), [Page 40-2].

⁸⁹ Ibid, [Page 118-27].

⁹⁰ John Keay, *India - A History* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), [Page 118].

before, finally compelling them to assemble a powerful army under the general, Afzal Khan to suppress him. Faced with such a force, Shivaji decided to make peace but when the two commanders met in person, Afzal Khan tried to assassinate Shivaji; the Maratha was too shrewd however and assassinated the Adil Shahi commander before making his escape. Having lost their commander the Bijapuri army fell apart and the Sultan was forced to acknowledge Shivaji's authority over the north-west and Konkan Coast.⁹¹

Having achieved his first objective of gaining a secure base of operations, Shivaji now pursued his second: the quest to create an independent Hindu kingdom in the Deccan. He now brazenly launched raids directly into Mughal territory, attacking the important Gujarati port of Surat in 1664, plundering the English warehouses located in the city. His transgression invited Mughal retribution and he was cornered by the Mughals' Rajput general, Jai Singh and compelled to negotiate. In the ensuing Treaty of Purandar (1665) he signed, Shivaji was to abandon his loyalty (whatever that meant to Shivaji) to Bijapur and now assist the Mughals in their impending campaign against the Adil Shahi sultanate. Jai Singh also conveyed Shivaji to Delhi where he was to present submission to Aurangzeb in person. Once there however, the Emperor humiliated then imprisoned him but true to his wily nature, Shivaji escaped to safety through cunning.⁹²

Having now defied both the Mughals and Adil Shahis so successfully, Shivaji now decided to throw down the gauntlet by crowning himself *Chhatrapati*, or "paramount sovereign" of the Marathas in 1674. While modern writers like James Laine seem to deemphasize the impact his coronation as an

⁹¹ K.A. Keluskar, *The Life of Shivaji Maharaj* (Mumbai: Manorajan Press, 1921), [Page 194-200].

⁹² H.G. Rawlinson, *Shivaji the Maratha - His Life and Times* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), [Page 72-4]. Though Jai Singh had placed Shivaji under his personal protection, once in Agra, even the powerful Rajput's words meant little to the emperor. When Shivaji failed to show Aurangzeb proper deference in the manner of the court, the emperor derisively granted Shivaji a paltry *mansab* far below his supposed rank. Furious, Shivaji complained and was placed under arrest. Realizing that he was in peril, he devised a cunning ploy to escape. Citing ill health, he distributed sweets to the *fakirs* and *pirs* of the town to pray for his health in large baskets every day. After a few days, his sentries declined to check the baskets and Shivaji was able to escape Delhi hidden in a basket. Disguised as a *sadhu*, he returned to Raigad before Aurangzeb could do anything about it. Rawlinson suggests that Jai Singh's son, Ram Singh, Shivaji's host in Delhi may also have assisted in his daring escape.

independent Hindu *maharaja* had on the Hindu political consciousness at a time, it still seems important to acknowledge how this action was powerfully symbolic, at a time when Muslim power seemed poised to reign supreme across the subcontinent.⁹³ The move also served to cement the position of the Marathas as *kshatriyas* in the eyes of their more caste-conscious Hindu subjects since by their peasant origins, they would have technically been only *sudras*. With the coronation, the Marathas could now claim warrior lineage and stand toe to toe with any other Hindu warrior caste and also have these high-caste *kshatriyas* serve under the Maratha flag without contradiction.⁹⁴ Shivaji then now embarked upon his most ambitious and on hindsight, shrewd campaign. Cutting a swathe through modern-day Karnataka, he seized a string of fortresses in the south: Bangalore, Vellore, Jinji, and Tanjore by 1676, acquiring strategic depth in the deep south of India should the Konkan come under Mughal attack.⁹⁵ (Refer to Appendix: Map 4). Shivaji did not live enough to see his grand Maratha state come to fruition however and died in 1680.

Endgame

Shivaji's death removed the last possible distraction for the Mughals in their quest to extend their control over the Deccan sultanates. A succession tussle now also broke out within Shivaji's Bhonsle clan with Sambhaji and his young brother Rajaram dividing the loyalties of the once united Marathas. With the Marathas preoccupied,⁹⁶ Aurangzeb could now realize his long cherished dream - the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda.

Siddi Masud, the Regent of Bijapur who ruled on behalf of the young sultan, Sikander Adil Shah had been trying to revive the floundering kingdom amidst onerous tribute payments to the

⁹³ James M. Laine, *Shivaji - Hindu King in Islamic India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), [Page 7-19].

⁹⁴ Stephen F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), [Page 264].

⁹⁵ .A. Keluskar, *The Life of Shivaji Maharaj* (Mumbai: Manorajan Press, 1921), [Page 457-63].

⁹⁶ Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), [Page 479].

Mughals, lost commercial revenues due to Maratha raids and rampant court factionalism. Aurangzeb now appeared in the Deccan. Proclaiming his goal the elimination of the Maratha threat, he demanded the Adil Shahi court furnish at its own expense all the provender and supplies his enormous army needed, or be attacked itself.⁹⁷ Unable to comply, Bijapur appealed to Aurangzeb's well-known Islamic piety and questioned the righteousness of the Mughals Empire's attack upon a fellow Muslim state.⁹⁸ The Emperor in response derided the Shia leanings of Bijapur as heresy and dismissed the Adil Shahis as heretics no different in his eyes from infidels Marathas. With all diplomatic avenues exhausted, Bijapur girded itself for a siege; it resisted the Mughals for 15-months, but after tremendous privation, was forced to capitulate in September 1686. When the Sultan rode out to submit personally to Aurangzeb, the Emperor haughtily referred to him as Sikander Adil 'Khan' - an indication that as the direct successor to the Delhi Sultanate, the Mughals regarded themselves politically-superior to Bijapur - a breakaway regime of the Bahmani Sultanate (also a rebel regime)., and thus unworthy of comparison to the glory and prestige of the Mughals.⁹⁹ Unlike Ahmadnagar, Bijapur would not be revived and was incorporated as a Mughal province.

Now Aurangzeb turned to Golconda. Having been ruled for nearly fifty years by the indolent, pleasure-loving Abdullah Qutb Shah (r. 1626-1672), the kingdom, though wealthy, was left utterly unprepared militarily to face the Mughals.¹⁰⁰ The Sultan left matters of state to his mother Hayat Baksh Begum and when she died, to his ministers, while he devoted his time to painting, wine and women in. According to the French diamond merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who lived at the

⁹⁷ According to Mughal sources, there were 400,000 animals (horses, sheep, oxen, camels and elephants) accompanying the Mughal army to the Deccan. The dilapidated state of Bijapur's finances would have been utterly incapable of providing fodder for all of them plus the food and provisions the Mughals demanded for their men. It was a mere formality for the Mughals to declare war on Bijapur following their rejection.

⁹⁸ Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga*, [Page 488].

⁹⁹ H.K. Sherwani, Prof. and P.M. Joshi, Dr., *History of the Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* (Hyderabad, India: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1973), [Page 393].

¹⁰⁰ H.K. Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1974), [Page 338-43].

capital Hyderabad¹⁰¹ in the 1640s, the city was affluent but also notorious for its decadent lifestyle.

Tavernier notes that,

*“There are so many public women(prostitutes) in the town... more than 20,000(are) entered in the register... a certain number of them are obliged to go every Friday with their governess and their music to present themselves in the square in front of the balcony. If the King be there they dance before him. (There are also) shops where they sell ... a drink (toddy) obtained from a tree, and it is as sweet as our wines... and carried in leather bottles, about 1000 or 1200 of them enter the town daily. The King derives from the tax which he places on this, a very considerable revenue, and (this is also why he) allows so many public women.”*¹⁰²

When Abdullah Qutb Shah died in 1672, his son-in-law Abul Hasan Qutb Shah succeeded him but like his predecessor, Abul Hasan preferred the pleasures of the *zenana* to affairs of state and remained woefully oblivious to the impending storm.¹⁰³ His *wazir*, Madanna, a Brahmin managed the government but under his watch, the military had been left to atrophy in a poor state of readiness. When faced with Aurangzeb’s demands to capitulate, Abul Hasan merely handed over his priciest diamonds. In order to make a clear case for war, the Emperor then sent envoys tasked to goad the Sultan into creating a diplomatic incident but Abul Hasan refused to be provoked. When the envoys derided the sultan for addressing himself as King, Abul Hasan wittily responded “If we are not to be called kings, how can Aurangzeb be styled ‘King of Kings?’” Unable to incite him further, Aurangzeb seized upon secret correspondence between Golconda and the Marathas as evidence of hostile intent and began his invasion. Abul Hasan took refuge in the Golconda fortress and was promptly put under siege by the Mughal army. Producing a list of crimes which included,

“First, placing the reins of authority and government in the hands of vile, tyrannical infidels; oppressing Sayyids and Sheikhs, and other holy men; openly giving himself to excessive debauchery

¹⁰¹ Hyderabad was built in the reign of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah and became the capital of the Qutb Shahi state in 1591 though Golconda still served as its main fortress and also housed the royal palace.

¹⁰² Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trans. Valentine Ball (Ann Arbor, MI: Library of the University of Michigan, 1889), [Page 157-8], accessed April 8, 2013, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=mJYdAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&authuser=0&hl=en_US&pg=GBS.PP2.

¹⁰³ Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), [Page 489-90].

and depravity; indulging in drunkenness and wickedness day and night; making no distinction between infidelity and Islam...(and the dispatch of) a lakh of pagodas(to) the wicked Sambha(ji)... ”¹⁰⁴

Aurangzeb dismissed Abul Hasan’s pleadings to spare his kingdom. In any case, the fortress of Golconda was a tough nut to crack even for the Mughals with their great expertise in siege-craft. The defenders met every Mughal sally bravely and were only overcome after eight months when in September 1687 a turncoat opened the gates to Aurangzeb’s army.¹⁰⁵ A huge booty, gems, gold and the fine productions of Golconda’s artisans fell into Mughal hands, as did the unfortunate Abul Hasan and his kingdom was annexed into the empire.

With the Deccan sultanates conquered, Aurangzeb now turned his attention to his last opponent in the South, Sambhaji who headed the Maratha state from Raigad. Sambhaji had exploited Mughal preoccupation with Bijapur and Golconda to rampage along the Konkan coast, plundering European factories at coastal ports and imperilling Mughal trade. Sambhaji though skilful militarily, lacked his father’s patience and frustrated with the guerrilla approach of warfare, faced the much stronger Mughal army in pitched battle in 1689. Unsurprisingly he was defeated and captured. Brought before the Emperor, Sambhaji refused to submit to the Mughals; Aurangzeb had him tortured and killed. Soon, the Marathas also lost Raigad and their hill-forts in the Sahyadris to a redoubled Mughal to extirpate the Maratha polity. Sambhaji’s family, including his young son, Shahuji were also captured and imprisoned in Delhi. Thrown into disarray in the Konkan, the scattered Marathas rallied around Sambhaji’s brother Rajaram who had escaped to safety in the Carnatic where he continued to resist the Mughals from the Jinji and Vellore forts.¹⁰⁶ When Rajaram died in 1700, his widow, Tarabai assumed the throne on behalf of her young son Shivaji II while several Maratha

¹⁰⁴ Mustaid Khan and Muhammad Saqi, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, trans. I.H. Siddiqui (Calcutta, India: Brit Thesis Service, 1947). Mustaid Khan was a minister and biographer of Aurangzeb.

¹⁰⁵ William Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls - Its Organization and Administration* (New Delhi: Eurasia Publishing House Pte. Ltd., 1962), [Page 288-9].

¹⁰⁶ S.R. Bakshi and Sri Kant Sharma, eds., *The Great Marathas*, vol. 1, *Shivaji and the Emergence of the Marathas* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2000), [Page 198].

generals operating autonomously furiously contested Mughal hegemony in the Deccan. Aurangzeb's joy at Rajaram's early death turned to dismay when the Marathas he dismissed as being led by "two young children and a helpless woman," turned out to have yet more bite left in them. An astute politician, Tarabai successfully ameliorated the fierce dissensions amongst the Marathas clans over the succession as well as how to prosecute the campaign against the Mughals. Her task was also helped by the fact that the Maratha state, extremely decentralized at this time did not need to pay its troops fixed salaries, allowing them instead to pillage undefended Mughal *jagirs* for booty as the Mughal army became increasingly stretched.¹⁰⁷

In 1699, Aurangzeb was also confronted by the revolt of the Sikhs under Guru Gobind Singh. Alienated by persistent Mughal persecution and the execution of several of their *gurus*, the Sikhs now organized formally into a militant brotherhood, the *Khalsa* and waged their own guerrilla war against the Mughals in the Punjab.¹⁰⁸ Earlier religious policies against Hindus enacted by the puritanical Aurangzeb (destruction of temples, reintroduction of the *jizya* and pilgrimage tax) had progressively alienated many powerful Rajput clans upon whom the Mughals depended; without their committed assistance, the Mughal war-effort struggled against determined opponents like the Marathas and Sikhs.¹⁰⁹ Aurangzeb was by now in his eighties yet he continued to direct campaigns from Daulatabad against increasingly elusive guerrillas who gave him no respite. Years of relentless campaigning had also worn out his troops. By the first decade of the 18th century, the Marathas,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, [Page 246-9].

¹⁰⁸ Burton Stein, *A History of India* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), [Page 11].

¹⁰⁹ Stephen F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), [Page 260-1].

having gained in power even began to shift from their well-honed *bargi-giri* tactics to pitched battles against the ragged imperial army. According to Niccolao Manucci,¹¹⁰

“Artillery, musketry, bows and arrows, with elephants and camels and their tents...in short, they are equipped and move about like the armies of the Mogul...only a few years ago they did not march about in this fashion. Armed thus, they prowled about on the frontiers, picking up here and there what they could and made off home again. At present, they move about like conquerors, showing no fear of any Mogul troops.”¹¹¹

The aged emperor was also deeply troubled by the future of the empire and the succession; having outlived many of his sons, those who remained alive were rather old themselves. The Emperor looking back on his reign and the chaotic state of the Mughal Empire found itself, could only lament,

*“Alas, my life has been wasted in vain!
I have (merely) consumed a quantity of water and fodder.”¹¹²*

Conclusion

The Mughals’ drawn-out efforts to conquer South India stretched over a century and were perhaps the greatest military endeavour they undertook in any of their theatres of war. The Mughals encountered several capable leaders: Chand Bibi, Malik Ambar, Shahaji and Shivaji in their efforts to conquer South India. Though these tenacious adversaries possessed several advantages in their contest against the Mughals, they were eventually overcome by the superior military resources and personal determination of the Mughal emperors to subjugate the South. The reasons for the Mughal conquest of South India seem to be manifold: economic (tribute, resources), ideological (suppressing heresy) and political (imperial prestige-making) but their inadvertent weakening of extant politico-military arrangements in the region allowed previously subdued groups like the Marathas to emerge

¹¹⁰ Niccolao Manucci(1639-1717) was an Italian traveller and writer whose work, *Storia do Mogor*, provides a detailed account of Mughal India in the late Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb’s reign. He had also privileged access to the Delhi court and was a companion for a while of Dara Shikoh.

¹¹¹ Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor (Mogul India) 1653-1708*, trans. William Irvine (London: Murray Publishers, 1907), [Page 313-4], accessed April 8, 2013, <http://archive.org/details/storiadomogororm02manuuoft>.

¹¹² Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Empire - The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), [Page 513].

as new political and military checks against these same Mughal efforts to absorb the region. In the long run, new approaches to war employed by these groups in tandem with problems in other parts of the far-flung Mughal Empire diminished the ability of emperors to maintain effective control over their realm as a whole. It was telling how less half a century after Aurangzeb's death, the very same Marathas, set loose by the Mughal campaigns into South India were in possession of Delhi, with the hapless Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II their tribute-paying vassal.

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Appendix
Chronology of Rulers

Timuri Mughal Dynasty of Agra/Delhi

Babur	(1526–1530)
Humayun	(1530–1540)
~~~~~Suri Interregnum~~~~~	
Sher Shah Suri	(1540–1545)
Islam Shah Suri	(1545–1554)
~~~~~Mughal Restoration~~~~~	
Humayun (second reign)	(1555–1556)
Akbar	(1556–1605)
Jahangir	(1605–1627)
Shah Jahan	(1627–1658)
Aurangzeb	(1658–1707)
Bahadur Shah I	(1707–1712)
Jahandar Shah	(1712–1713)
Farukhshiyar	(1713–1719)
Muhammad Shah	(1719–1748)
Ahmad Shah Bahadur	(1748–1754)
Alamgir II	(1754–1759)
Shah Jahan II	(1759)
Shah Alam II	(1759–1806)
Akbar Shah	(1806–1837)
Bahadur Shah II	(1837–1857)

Bahmani Dynasty of Gulbarga/Bidar

Hasan Kangu	
(Alauddin Bahman Shah)	(1347–1359)
Muhammad Shah I	(1359–1375)
Mujahid Shah	(1375–1378)
Daud Shah I	(1378)
Muhammad Shah II	(1378–1397)
Ghiyath-ud-Din Shah	(1397)
Da'ud Shah II	(1397)
Firuz Shah	(1397–1422)
~~~~~Bidar Period Begins~~~~~	
Ahmad Shah I	(1422–1436)
Ahmad Shah II	(1436–1458)
Humayun Shah	(1458–1461)
Ahmad Shah III	(1461–1463)
Muhammad Shah III	(1463–1482)
Mahmud Shah	(1482–1518)
Ahmad Shah IV	(1518–1520)
Alauddin Shah	(1520–1523)
Waliullah Shah	(1523–1526)
Kalimullah Shah	(1526–1538)

**Rulers of Vijayanagara**

~~~~~Sangama Dynasty~~~~~	
Harihara Raya I	(1336–1356)
Bukka Raya I	(1356–1377)
Harihara Raya II	(1377–1404)
Virupaksha Raya	(1404–1405)
Bukka Raya II	(1405–1406)
Deva Raya I	(1406–1422)
Ramachandra Raya	(1422)
Vira Vijaya Bukka Raya	(1422–1424)
Deva Raya II	(1424–1446)
Mallikarjuna Raya	(1446–1465)
Virupaksha Raya II	(1465–1485)
Praudha Raya	(1485)
~~~~~Saluva Dynasty~~~~~	
Narasimha Deva Raya	(1485–1491)
Thimma Bhupala	(1491)
Narasimha Raya II	(1491–1505)
~~~~~Tuluva Dynasty~~~~~	
Narasa Nayaka	(1491–1503)
Vira Narasimha Raya	(1503–1509)
Krishna Deva Raya	(1509–1529)
Achyuta Deva Raya	(1529–1542)
Venkata I	(1542)
Sadasiva Raya	(1542–1569)
~~~~~Aravidu Dynasty~~~~~	
Aliya Rama Raya	(1542–1565)
Tirumala Deva Raya	(1565–1572)
Sriranga I	(1572–1586)
Venkata II	(1586–1614)
Sriranga II	(1614)
Rama Deva Raya	(1617–1632)
Venkata III	(1632–1642)
Sriranga III	(1642–1646)
<b><u>Barid Shahi Dynasty of Bidar</u></b>	
Qasim Barid I	(1489–1504)
Amir Barid I	(1504–1542)
Ali Barid Shah I	(1504–1580)
Ibrahim Barid Shah	(1580–1587)
Qasim Barid Shah II	(1587–1591)
Ali Barid Shah II	(1591)
Amir Barid Shah II	(1591–1601)
Mirza Ali Barid Shah III	(1601–1609)
Amir Barid Shah III	(1609–1619)

**Imad Shahi Dynasty of Berar**

<b>Fathallah Imad-ul-Mulk</b>	(1490–1504)
<b>Aladdin Imad Shah</b>	(1504–1529)
<b>Darya Imad Shah</b>	(1529–1562)
<b>Burhan Imad Shah</b>	(1562–1568)
<b>Tufail Khan (usurper)</b>	(1568–1572)

**Nizam Shahi Dynasty of Ahmadnagar**

<b>Ahmad Nizam Shah I</b>	(1490–1510)
<b>Burhan Nizam Shah I</b>	(1510–1553)
<b>Hussain Nizam Shah I</b>	(1553–1565)
<b>Murtaza Nizam Shah</b>	(1565–1588)
<b>Miran Nizam Hussain</b>	(1588–1589)
<b>Ismail Nizam Shah</b>	(1589–1591)
<b>Burhan Nizam Shah II</b>	(159–1595)
<b>Ibrahim Nizam Shah</b>	(1595–1596)
<b>Ahmad Nizam Shah II</b>	(1596)
<b>Bahadur Nizam Shah</b>	(1596–1600)
<b>Murtaza Nizam Shah II</b>	(1600–1610)
<b>Burhan Nizam Shah III</b>	(1610–1631)
<b>Hussain Nizam Shah II</b>	(1631–1633)
<b>Murtaza Nizam Shah III</b>	(1633–1636)

**Adil Shahi Dynasty of Bijapur**

<b>Yusuf Adil Shah</b>	(1490–1510)
<b>Ismail Adil Shah</b>	(1510–1534)
<b>Mallu Adil Shah</b>	(1534)
<b>Ibrahim Adil Shah I</b>	(1534–1558)
<b>Ali Adil Shah I</b>	(1558–1580)
<b>Ibrahim Adil Shah II</b>	(1580–1627)
<b>Mohammad Adil Shah</b>	(1627–1657)
<b>Ali Adil Shah II</b>	(1657–1672)
<b>Sikandar Adil Shah</b>	(1672–1686)

**Qutb Shahi Dynasty of Golconda**

<b>Sultan Quli Qutb-ul-Mulk</b>	(1518–1543)
<b>Jamshid Quli Qutb Shah</b>	(1543–1550)
<b>Subhan Quli Qutb Shah</b>	(1550)
<b>Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah</b>	(1550–1580)
<b>Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah</b>	(1580–1612)
<b>Sultan Muhammad Qutb Shah</b>	(1612–1626)
<b>Abdullah Qutb Shah</b>	(1626–1672)
<b>Abul Hasan Qutb Shah</b>	(1672–1689)

**Maratha Bhonsle Dynasty of Raigad/Pune**

<b>Shivaji</b>	(1674–1680)
<b>Sambhaji</b>	(1681–1689)
<b>Rajaram</b>	(1689–1700)
<b>Tarabai</b>	(1700–1707)
<b>Shahuji</b>	(1707–1749)
~~~~Peshwas rule the Maratha Empire~~~~	
Ramaraja	(1749–1777)
Shahuji II	(1777–1808)
Pratap Sinhe	(1808–1819)

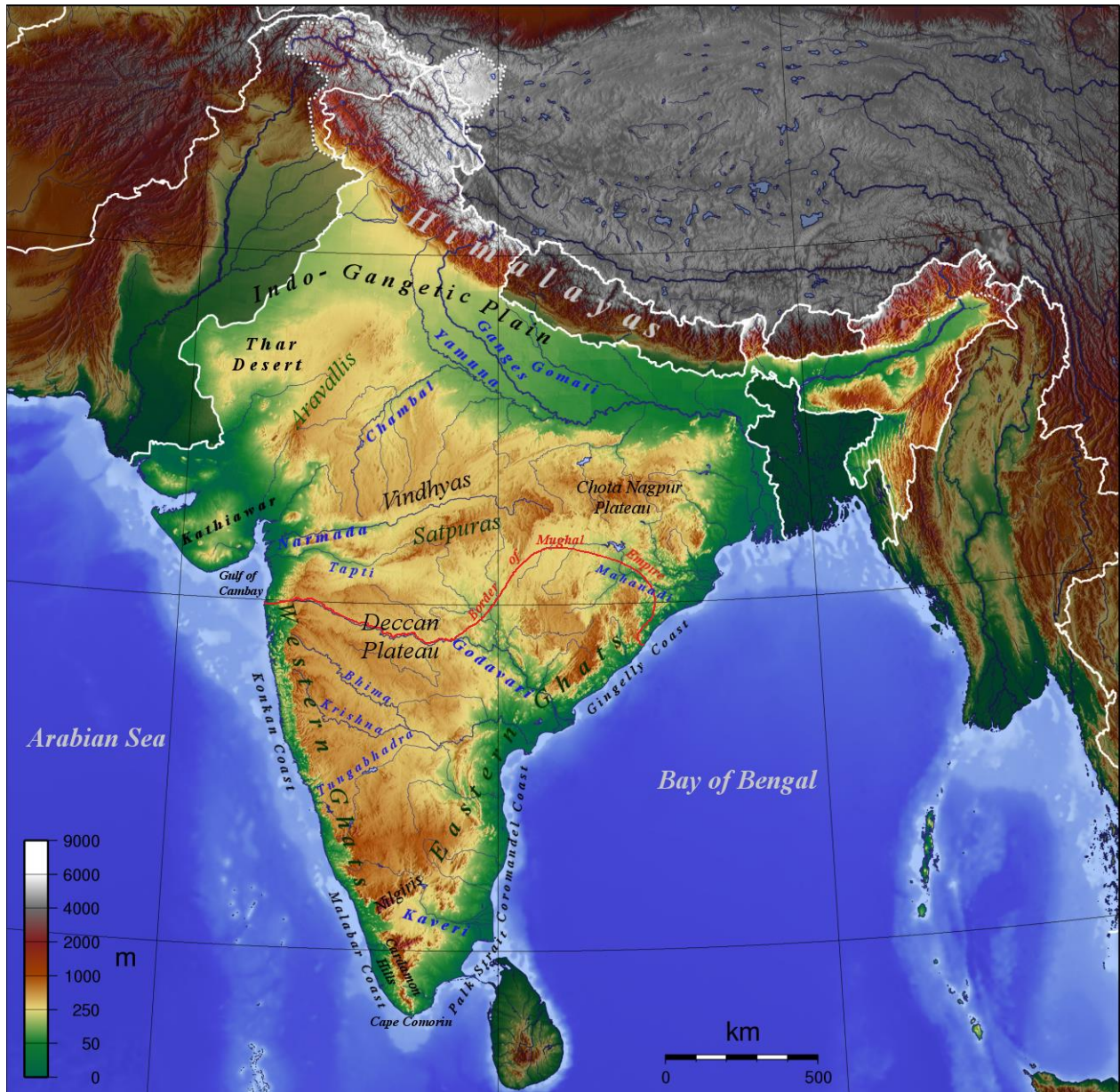
Images



Painting by Mughal miniaturist Abu al-Hasan (1589-1630) (Victoria & Albert Museum, London). It depicts Jahangir shooting arrows through the decapitated head of Malik Ambar. This painting was created in 1616 as perhaps an effort to reassure the angry Emperor that victory against the *Habshi* general would indeed be possible. The symbolism of the objects in the painting - the fish and the ox which support the globe seem to be taken from Hindu iconography while the cherubs handing the Emperor weapons seem to be a European influence. The owl resting on Malik Ambar's head is an omen indicating his ill-fortune.

Maps

Map 1: Geography of India (southern border of Mughal Empire in 1630 indicated)



Map prepared by Navin Kumar.

Map 2: India at the before Babur's invasion, 1525



Map prepared by Navin Kumar, adapted from "India in 1525 A.D." Map. In *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, by Ishwari Prasad, 269. Allahabad, India: The Indian Press Pvt. Ltd., 1965.

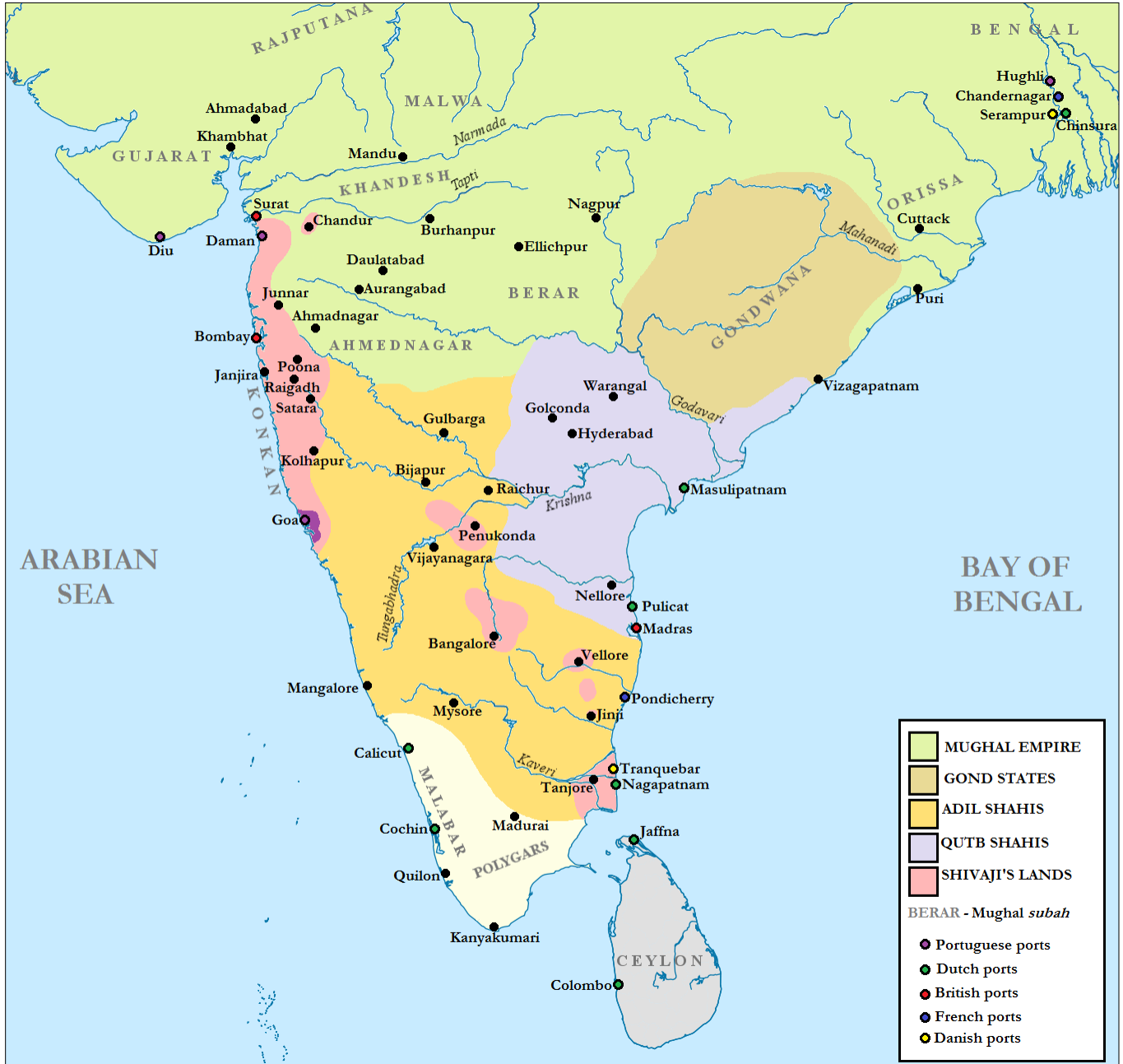
Map 3: Mughal India at the death of Jahangir, 1627



- | | |
|---|--|
| Mughal Empire | Nizamshahs of Ahmednagar |
| Territories lost to Safavids, 1649-1653 | Adilshahs of Bijapur |
| | Qutbshahs of Golconda |

Map prepared by Navin Kumar, adapted from "Bijapur Kingdom, 1656-1674." Map. In *The Heritage of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur*, by M.A. Nayeem, Dr., 43. Hyderabad, India: Hyderabad Publishers, 2008., "Qutb Shahi Dominions, 1670." Map. In *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, by H.K. Sherwani, 493. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1974. and "Empire of Akbar." Map. In *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, by Ishwari Prasad, 428. Allahabad, India: The Indian Press Pvt. Ltd., 1965.

Map 4: South India at death of Shivaji, 1680



Map prepared by Navin Kumar, adapted from "Bijapur Kingdom, 1656-1674." Map. In *The Heritage of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur*, by M.A. Nayeem, Dr., 43. Hyderabad, India: Hyderabad Publishers, 2008., "Qutb Shahi Dominions, 1670." Map. In *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, by H.K. Sherwani, 493. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1974. and "Mughal disintegration and the rise of regional powers," map, Digital South Asia Library, September 29, 2009, accessed April 27, 2013, <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=091>.

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