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Architecture and Art of the Deccan Sultanates

GEORGE MICHELL
and
MARK ZEBROWSKI



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CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

Though most of the monuments and works of art surveyed in this volume are categorised as Sultanate, Mughal or Maratha, these essentially stylistic designations should not be understood as implying chronologically discrete periods. The chief sultans of the Deccan maintained their independence for more than a century after the Mughals first invaded the region at the end of the sixteenth century. This means that Sultanate and Mughal epochs overlapped rather than one succeeding the other. From the last quarter of the seventeenth century onwards the Mughals and Marathas were forced into an uneasy coexistence. This led ultimately to the disintegration of the great North Indian empire. Such concurrent dynastic developments, though resulting more often in war than in peace, form the background to the highly spirited artistic tradition that is the subject of this volume.

The turbulent events of these centuries are explained to some extent by the unique location of the Deccan plateau as a meeting place of forces from both North and South India, the promise of boundless land and wealth inspiring repeated invasion. In the first decades of the fourteenth century, the Deccan was subjugated by the Khaljis and Tughluqs, the first Muslim rulers of Delhi; some two and a half centuries later the Mughals arrived, though it took them more than one hundred years to consolidate their conquests. Resistance to these assaults from Delhi occurred in three waves: the military thrust of the mighty Hindu Vijayanagara kingdom south of the Tungabhadra–Krishna rivers in the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries; the opposition of the Shia Muslim sultans throughout most of the seventeenth century; and the guerilla tactics of the Hindu Maratha warriors in the second half of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries.

Since the Deccan encompasses the heart of the peninsula, from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal, it was also able to act as a receptacle for influences arriving from abroad. Direct emigration of literary and religious figures from the Iranian, Turkic and Arab lands, as well as of soldiers and slaves from East Africa, the so-called Habshis, resulted in an influential population of newcomers, mostly Muslims. The struggle for domination between these immigrants of varied origins, known as Afaqis, and the descendants of the original invaders from North India and their local Hindu converts, the Dakhnis, is a crucial feature of courtly life in the Deccan, especially during the Sultanate period. Beginning in the early sixteenth century, these newcomers also included the Portuguese who were established on the Arabian Sea coast. Before long, they too became enmeshed in local affairs. They were followed in later centuries by the Dutch, French and English.

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THE KHALJIS AND TUGHLUQS

At the time of the first Muslim invasion from Delhi at the end of the thirteenth century the Deccan was occupied by the Yadavas of Devagiri (later renamed Daulatabad), the Kakatiyas of Warangal and the Hoysalas of Dorasamudra (modern Halebid). The territories controlled by these three dynasties of Hindu rulers more or less coincided with the Marathi, Telugu and Kannada linguistic zones of the region. The expedition of Alauddin, nephew and son-in-law of Jalaluddin Firuz Shah, the Khalji ruler of Delhi, disrupted these kingdoms. After fording the Narmada and Tapti rivers, Alauddin reached the outer walls of Devagiri in April 1296. Unprepared for Alauddin's onslaught, Ramachandra, the Yadava raja, was compelled to pay a huge ransom of gold, jewels, textiles, elephants and horses. Alauddin's soldiers plundered the Devagiri palace, but left one month later after Ramachandra had agreed to pay an annual tribute. Returning directly to Delhi, Alauddin was proclaimed sultan in October that same year, his claim to the Khalji throne bolstered by the Yadava treasure that he had carried off as booty from the Deccan.

Not content with having conquered Devagiri, Alauddin headed another expedition in 1302-3, this time directed against Warangal. Unlike the assault on the Yadavas, the attempt to plunder the Kakatiyas failed. The next intrusion into the Deccan occurred in 1309-10, the Khalji army on this occasion being led by Malik Kafur. Having secured the loyalty of Ramachandra, Alauddin turned his attention once more to the war with Warangal, ordering Malik Kafur to subjugate its ruler, Prataparudra. The operation met with success and in 1310 Prataparudra sued for peace, promising to remit an annual tribute to Delhi. Encouraged by these lucrative assaults and discovering the riches of the Hoysala and Pandya kingdoms further south, Alauddin conceived yet another campaign. Leaving Delhi in October 1310 and passing by Devagiri to recruit reinforcements, Malik Kafur arrived at Dorasamudra in record time. After the Hoysala king Ballalla had surrendered, Malik Kafur persuaded him to march with the Delhi troops against Madura, headquarters of the Pandyas in the Tamil lands in the extreme south of the peninsula. This mission met with little resistance and Malik Kafur was once again able to acquire an immense treasure.

At the conclusion of these raids, an uneasy peace returned to the Deccan, the Yadavas, Kakatiyas and Hoysalas having been reduced to vassals by Delhi. Yet the supremacy of the Khaljis in peninsular India was challenged by Singhana, who succeeded Ramachandra as ruler of Devagiri in 1312. Malik Kafur was despatched once again to the Deccan and in the ensuing battle Singhana lost his life. This time the Yadava citadel and the surrounding country were permanently occupied by the Delhi troops. The Khalji annexation was completed when Alauddin issued coins in his own name from the Devagiri mint. Malik Kafur was recalled to Delhi in 1315, shortly before Alauddin's death. In the dynastic turmoil that followed, Malik Kafur



1 Fort with artificially scarped hill, Daulatabad, thirteenth to seventeenth centuries

was murdered and Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah came to power. Concerned that Devagiri was slipping out of control, Qutbuddin organised a march to the Deccan in 1317, taking with him his favourite commander, Khusro Khan. Devagiri was once again occupied, and Qutbuddin returned to Delhi, but only after ordering a mosque to be erected to commemorate the Khalji victory (see chapter 3).

Khusro Khan remained in the Deccan to plan further forays southward. But his influence came to an end in 1321 when the Khaljis were overthrown by the Tughluqs. One of the first tasks of the new dynasty was to incorporate the Deccan into the Delhi Sultanate. In 1323 Ghiyathuddin Shah, first of the Tughluq sultans, ordered his son Ulugh Khan to occupy the region and to press southward into the Tamil area. Maintaining control over these farflung territories proved difficult, however, and several local rulers took the opportunity of rebelling. On the death of his father in 1325, Ulugh Khan assumed the throne under the name of Muhammad Shah. In an attempt to consolidate the Tughluq hold on the Deccan and the Tamil lands further south, Muhammad Shah conceived the notion of shifting the Delhi court to Devagiri. In 1327 this citadel became the second capital of the Tughluq Sultanate under the name Daulatabad, City of Prosperity (Fig. 1). Ramparts and gates added to the fort at this time are still extant (see chapter 2).

Muhammad's drastic move proved only a temporary measure, for within a few years many of the North Indian migrants returned to Delhi. Nor did the relocation of the imperial seat succeed in achieving political stability; many parts of the

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conquered Deccan broke away, such as Warangal in 1329 and, further south, Madura in 1334. The year 1336 marks the traditional foundation date of Vijayanagara, the kingdom established by the Sangamas at their new capital on the Tungabhadra, some 500 kilometres south of Daulatabad. All lands beyond this river were from this time on permanently lost to the Tughluqs.

Unrest in the Deccan reached a climax in 1345 with a rebellion led by Ismail Mukh, an Afghan officer who routed the army sent by the Delhi sultan. Daulatabad's treasury was seized and the governorships of the different provinces were redistributed among the nobles. Hasan, ablest of Muhammad Shah's followers and honoured by him with the title of Zafar Khan, was appointed military commander. But under his leadership the tendency towards independence continued and the Deccan nobles finally broke with Delhi. To advertise his success, Zafar Khan ordered the erection of a victory tower known as the Chand Minar at Daulatabad (see Fig. 34). In August 1347 Zafar Khan ascended the throne as Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah.

THE BAHMANIS

Alauddin (1347-58) gave his family name to a new line of rulers, henceforth known as the Bahmanis after the legendary hero Bahman of the Persian epic, the *Shah Namah*. His first task was to obtain the submission of local chiefs and to bring all the Deccan territories of the former Tughluqs under his control. He then occupied the Konkan, a narrow strip of land flanking the Arabian Sea coast. The former Kakatiya citadel of Warangal, however, remained beyond his grasp, though not that of his successors. Towards the end of his rule, Alauddin selected Gulbarga, 320 kilometres south-west of Daulatabad, as the new Bahmani capital.

The reign of Alauddin's son and successor, Muhammad I (1358-75), is marked by a division of the Bahmani territories into the provinces of Daulatabad, Bidar, Gavilgad and Golconda. To mark the special status of Gulbarga, Muhammad ordered the construction of a Jami mosque within the fort (see Fig. 36). Muhammad's reign coincided with the introduction of gunpowder into the Deccan, where it was used as early as 1365. The consequence of this type of warfare is seen in fortifications with slit holes for guns and rounded bastions with crenellations (see Fig. 4). Like later Bahmani sultans, Muhammad was preoccupied with wars against the Sangamas of Vijayanagara. The main source of conflict was control of the richly watered tract of territory between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra. Strategic sites in this area, such as Raichur and Mudgal, were won and lost on more than one occasion.

A period of instability followed upon Muhammad's death, during the reigns of two short-lived rulers, Mujahid and Dawud. The comparatively peaceful reign of Muhammad II (1378-97), the next sultan, was marked by only minor skirmishes with Vijayanagara. The period of Tajuddin Firuz (1397-1422), one of the most

powerful of the Bahmani rulers and certainly the outstanding personality of the era, saw the influx of numerous Persians, Arabs and Turks. This resulted in a struggle for power between the newcomers and the older-established elite that marked the beginning of the Afaqī-Dakhni friction. Firuz was a learned sultan and his era has been viewed in terms of cultural synthesis. He was also a pious man who invited prominent Sufi teachers, such as the Chishtī saint Hazrat Muhammad Gesudaraz, to settle in his capital. Though Firuz attempted to achieve peace with Vijayanagara by marrying the daughter of Devaraya I, struggles over the disputed territories were never resolved. It was while returning from a successful expedition beyond the Tungabhadra in 1400 that he founded a palace city named after himself as Firuzabad (see Fig. 8). One problem for Firuz in his later years was the rift that grew between himself and his brother Ahmad. This was aggravated by Gesudaraz's prediction that Ahmad would inherit the Bahmani throne.

This, in fact, came to pass after Firuz died, followed soon after by Gesudaraz. Firuz was buried in a magnificent mausoleum on the outskirts of Gulbarga, within sight of the saint's tomb (see Figs. 39 and 40). At some date between 1424 and 1427, Ahmad I (1422-36) decided to shift the Bahmani capital to Bidar, about 100 kilometres to the north-east. This move signalled a perceptible change in the character of the Sultanate, which thereafter manifested increasing contacts with the Mongol and Timurid world of Iran and Central Asia. As a result, the Afaqis became the dominant faction at the Bahmani court. The influence of these foreigners is discernible in the architecture of the era which displays obvious Iranian tendencies (see chapters 2 and 3). Another manifestation of the increased contacts with the Middle East are the links that Ahmad established with saintly figures such as Shah Khalilullah, son of the revered Shah Nimatullah of Kirman, and a formidable shaykh in his own right, who arrived in Bidar in 1431. Throughout his reign, Ahmad was preoccupied both with wars against Vijayanagara and with struggles against rival sultans in Malwa and Gujarat, the regions to the north and north-west of the Deccan respectively. The outcome of these confrontations, however, was rarely decisive and the Bahmani kingdom survived more or less intact.

Ongoing strife between the Afaqis and Dakhnis and fruitless campaigns against Vijayanagara, Malwa and Gujarat disrupted the reign of Alauddin Ahmad II (1436-58). The supposed tyrannical behaviour of the next sultan, Humayun (1458-61), is sometimes explained by the attempts of the Afaqis to depose him. It was under Humayun that Mahmud Gawan began to be involved with affairs of state. His political career progressed during the reign of Muhammad III (1463-82). As prime minister under this youthful ruler, Mahmud Gawan assumed full responsibility for state affairs. Though his policy of balancing Afaqis against Dakhnis won him the support of the indigenous population, Mahmud Gawan's own sympathies were with the Afaqis and the Shia sect to which many belonged. In a bid to affirm the supremacy of Shiism at the Bahmani court, Mahmud Gawan ordered the construction of a grandiose madrasa. Though surviving only in a damaged state,

this theological college testifies to the pervasive influence of Iranian architectural and religious traditions in the Deccan (see Figs. 43 and 44). Its brilliantly coloured tiles are the finest of the era in India (see Fig. 100).

Difficulties with Malwa, the region immediately north of the Deccan, led to a major battle in 1467–8, but under Mahmud Gawan's able command the Bahmani forces emerged unscathed. A triumph of his diplomacy was the coalition with Vijayanagara against the Orissan army which had threatened the Bahmani kingdom on its north-eastern frontier. Another objective was Goa, the leading port of the Konkan, which was taken in 1472. With the Bahmani territories stretching from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal and from the Tapti on the north to the Tungabhadra on the south, Mahmud Gawan was able to carry out administrative reforms, including a revision of land measurement and revenue assessment. These successes must have aroused considerable envy, for in 1481 he became the victim of a conspiracy and was beheaded by order of the sultan. On learning of the plot Muhammad suffered remorse and he himself died exactly one year later.

The long reign of his son Mahmud (1482–1518) coincides with the disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom, a process which was hastened by courtly intrigues. The most important military commanders established themselves with greater authority in their provincial headquarters: thus, Nizam al-Mulk at Ahmadnagar, Imad al-Mulk at Achalpur, Yusuf Adil Khan at Bijapur and Sultan Quli Qutb al-Mulk at Golconda. Qasim Barid, an officer based in Bidar, challenged the sultan's authority, forcing Mahmud to appoint him as prime minister in 1488. This provided an excuse for the provincial governors to declare their autonomy. Meanwhile, the threat from Vijayanagara continued, especially under Narasimha Saluva who had wrested the throne from the Sangamas. Narasimha and Yusuf Adil Khan, leader of the Bahmani forces, met on several occasions in the ensuing war. With the arrival of the Portuguese the Bahmanis suffered losses on the Arabian Sea coast, including Goa. Only minor figures with little actual power occupied the Bahmani throne between 1518 and 1538. They are, however, buried in the company of their more powerful predecessors in the necropolis at Ashtur on the outskirts of Bidar (see Fig. 45).

THE NIZAM SHAHIS, IMAD SHAHIS AND FARUQIS

The opening decades of the sixteenth century witnessed the fragmentation of the Bahmani kingdom into smaller Sultanates, each governed by an independent dynasty. The three most powerful dynasties of Deccan kings were the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur and the Qutb Shahis of Golconda. Their territories more or less coincided with the Marathi, Kannada and Telugu countries. Lesser rulers were the Imad Shahis based at first at Gavilgad, capital of Berar on the north-eastern fringe of the Deccan, and the Baridis who governed from Bidar in continuation after the Bahmanis. Another state is Khandesh, located

between the Tapti and Narmada on the northern periphery of the Deccan. Founded in 1382 by Malika Raja, a former Tughluq officer, the Faruqis enjoyed a history that was longer than that of the Bahmanis, maintaining their lineage throughout the sixteenth century.

A review of the simultaneous careers of these Sultanates reveals an unceasing history of shifting alliances and wars, effectively preventing any single kingdom from attaining supremacy. Afaqi-Dakhni strife inherited from Bahmani times continued; so too did conflicts with Vijayanagara. Short-lived coalitions with the Tuluvas, the new line of rajas at Vijayanagara, contributed further to the instability of the period. Only when all of the Deccan sultans perceived the empire on their southern flank as a common enemy was a consortium formed that led to the battle of January 1565 in which the Vijayanagara forces were finally vanquished.

The first Sultanate to attain autonomy was that of the Nizam Shahis. These kings traced their origins to Malik Hasan Bahri, a converted Hindu in the service of the Bahmanis, who gained recognition by waging wars on behalf of Mahmud Gawan. However, Malik Hasan fell victim to the hostilities that beset Bidar following the death of Mahmud Gawan; he was himself murdered in 1486. Thereupon his son, Ahmad Nizam al-Mulk, broke into open revolt. Establishing his headquarters at Junnar in the western Deccan, Ahmad successfully resisted the forces sent to subdue him by Qasim Barid of Bidar and Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur. He then declared independence, striking coins in the name of Ahmad Bahri Nizam Shah (1496-1510).

As a result of the relations that he forged with local Maratha chiefs, Ahmad Bahri augmented his holdings by acquiring the strongholds of Daulatabad and Panhala. He also attempted an assault on Khandesh in the hope of expanding his dominions to the north. On his death, Ahmad was buried in a magnificent tomb on the outskirts of Ahmadnagar (see Fig. 50), the capital that he founded towards the end of his reign and which was named after him. Though only a child when he ascended the throne, Burhan I (1510-53) was supported by his capable commanders who protected the kingdom from the attacks of the Imad Shahis and Adil Shahis. They were, however, unable to avoid clashes with the armies of Khandesh and Gujarat. Shiism was adopted as the state religion, thereby bringing the Nizam Shahi kingdom into sympathetic relations with Iran. In the wars against Bijapur throughout the period, Burhan often allied himself with Golconda and Vijayanagara.

Burhan's son and successor, Husain I (1553-65), secured the Nizam Shahi frontiers and achieved an accord with the Portuguese. The resulting peace gave the sultan an opportunity to construct the great circular fort of his capital (chapter 2). In 1564 Husain's army joined that of Bijapur, Bidar and Golconda to counter the threat from Vijayanagara. Their victory over Ramaraya, commander of the vast Tuluva army, was decisive, but Husain himself died shortly after. The Nizam Shahi throne was inherited by his eldest son, Murtaza I (1565-88). The alliance with Bijapur and Golconda was soon broken and Murtaza was involved in new power struggles. The declining fortunes of Bidar and Berar inspired Murtaza to join forces

with Ali I of Bijapur. The policy proved successful and in 1574 Berar became a province of the Nizam Shahi kingdom. That this was the high point in the fortunes of Ahmadnagar is suggested by the grandiose Farah Bagh complex built just outside the capital (see Figs. 17 and 18), considerably more imposing than the palaces built on similar plans in Iran at the same time. The obviously Middle Eastern features of the Farah Bagh contrast with the more Deccani style of the Damri mosque, the most exquisite monument of the era (see Fig. 51). Painting and the fine arts also flourished at the Nizam Shahi court during Murtaza's reign judging from the two imposing portraits of this ruler (see Colour Plate 2 and Fig. 110). These extraordinary miniatures, executed in a refined and original style, are among the earliest known paintings produced in the Deccan.

The circumstances in which the much smaller kingdom of Berar was founded in the extreme north-east corner of the former Bahmani state parallels those of Ahmadnagar. Fathullah Imad Shah, after whom the dynasty was named, rose to power as a military officer under the Bahmanis. After assisting Mahmud Gawan in his campaigns of 1472-3, he was appointed governor of Berar from where he attempted to maintain cordial relations with the commanders of Bijapur and Bidar. The citadels at Gavilgad and Narnala were consolidated under his orders (see chapter 2). Fathullah was succeeded by his son, Alauddin (1510-30), who resisted the aggression of the Nizam Shahis by enlisting the aid of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. The next Imad Shahi ruler, Darya (1530-61), attempted an alliance with Bijapur in order to avert the threat from Ahmadnagar, but this strategy proved futile. It was not until the reign of the next sultan, Burhan (1562-74), that Berar was finally annexed by the Nizam Shahis.

To return to the affairs of Ahmadnagar: the later years of Murtaza's rule were marked by plots and assassinations, with renewed assaults from Bijapur. Having occupied Berar, Murtaza continued to press northwards and made several raids on Khandesh. Here he was checked by the Mughal army which from 1586 presented an entirely new threat to the Deccan. Relations with his own family deteriorated rapidly and in 1588 Murtaza was imprisoned by his own son.

A period of uncertainty ensued. The next Nizam Shahi ruler of any importance, Burhan II (1591-5), was partly supported by the Mughal emperor Akbar who attempted to interfere in local affairs. After the death of Burhan, there was a series of short-lived sultans whose powers were curtailed by courtly strife. With the invasion of the Adil Shahis in 1595 and the subsequent demise of Ibrahim, who occupied the throne for a few months only, state affairs were taken over by Ibrahim's sister, Chand Bibi. Though she proved an able ruler, Chand Bibi was unable to prevent the loss of Berar to the Mughals in 1596. Ongoing quarrels at the Nizam Shahi court offered further opportunities for Mughal intervention. Ahmadnagar was taken in 1600 by Akbar's commander Abul Fazl, who had Chand Bibi murdered.

The following years witnessed the rise of Malik Ambar, a Habshi (African) slave who emerged as the most powerful figure in the Nizam Shahi state at the turn of the

seventeenth century. It was only with his support that the Mughals were expelled from Ahmadnagar and that Murtaza II came to be crowned there in 1600. Malik Ambar overcame his internal enemies, led expeditions against Bidar and Golconda and even managed to withstand the attacks of the Khan-i Khanan, commander of the Mughal forces under Jahangir.

After installing Burhan III (1610–31) on the throne, Malik Ambar resumed his offensive against Bijapur and Golconda, but had only limited success with the Mughals. Besides his outstanding military leadership, Malik Ambar was also an active builder. His tomb at Khuldabad, 8 kilometres north of Daulatabad, is the finest of the Nizam Shahi period (see Fig. 53). In subsequent years the Mughals intensified their assaults on the Nizam Shahis, often with the aid of reinforcements from Bijapur. A temporary respite for Ahmadnagar came in 1633 when Shahji, a Maratha noble, helped the Nizam Shahi forces to recover the forts at Pune and Junnar. However, this only served to provoke the Mughals, who stormed Daulatabad that same year. This citadel now became the chief garrison of the invaders under their new leader, Prince Aurangzeb. The conquest of Ahmadnagar's territories proceeded and in 1636 Murtaza III, the last Nizam Shahi ruler, was taken prisoner. Shortly after, this Sultanate was absorbed into the Mughal empire.

The Faruqis of Khandesh have already been noted. These kings established themselves first at Thalner on the Tapti, shifting later to Burhanpur 150 kilometres upstream. The turbulent history of the Faruqi kingdom is partly explained by its location: to the south were the Bahmanis and their successors, the Nizam Shahis; to the north was the kingdom of Malwa, annexed by Gujarat after 1531. Though both the Nizam Shahis and the Gujarat sultans repeatedly intruded into Faruqi-held lands, Khandesh preserved its autonomy for more than 200 years before succumbing to the Mughals in 1600. Among the many Faruqi rulers of distinction was Adil Khan II (1457–1501). His long reign witnessed the transformation of Burhanpur into one of the wealthiest centres of trade and textile production in the Deccan. It was the widow of a later ruler of the same name, Adil Khan III (1508–20), who built its imposing Bibi-ka mosque (see chapter 3).

THE ADIL SHAHIS AND BARIDIS, ASCENDANCY OF THE MARATHAS

The early history of the Adil Shahis derives from the career of Yusuf Adil Khan, governor of Bijapur under Mahmud Gawan. Following the example of Ahmad Nizam al-Mulk, Yusuf asserted his autonomy in the last years of the fifteenth century and was able to consolidate his holdings in spite of opposition from Qasim Barid. One of Yusuf's first tasks was to fortify Bijapur and to provide it with a sophisticated hydraulic system (see chapter 2). By the time of his death in 1510, Yusuf's territories extended from the Bhima on the north to the Tungabhadra on the south. In 1503 Yusuf proclaimed Shiism as the state creed at Bijapur,

inspired by Shah Ismail, the Safavid ruler of Iran who had acted similarly in the previous year. Shortly afterwards, the Portuguese arrived at Goa. Yusuf attempted to expel the Europeans by attacking Goa and fostering an alliance with the Egyptian and Gujarat fleets. But the port was irrecoverably lost to the Adil Shahis and from 1510 onwards the Portuguese were permanently established on the Arabian Sea coast.

The next ruler, Ismail Khan (1510–34), succeeded as a minor to the Bijapur throne. Kamal Khan, the regent, was forced to make peace with the Portuguese. He then turned his attention to the internal affairs of the state, restoring the Sunni rites of worship in the mosques and suppressing the Afaqi contingent at the Adil Shahi court. Kamal Khan's ambitions for power turned against him and in 1512 he was stabbed to death. In the civil strife that followed the Afaqis rose to power. The disorder at Bijapur created an excuse for Amir I (1504–43), the first Baridi ruler, to invade parts of the Adil Shahi territories. Amir I was supported by Krishnadevaraya, the new and powerful Tuluva emperor, with the result that Vijayanagara recovered a portion of the lands previously lost to the Bahmanis. The arrival of the Gujarat army put an end to this process and with the aid of these supplementary forces Bijapur was able to recover most of its possessions.

In contrast to his regent, Ismail did everything possible to sponsor connections with Iran. He was rewarded in 1519 when Shah Ismail addressed him in an embassy as 'Shah'. Thereafter, the Bijapur sultans considered themselves superior to the other Deccani rulers. Ismail was so captivated with Iranian culture and manners that he had his officers wear the Shia headdress and included the name of the Safavid ruler in the Friday prayers recited in the mosques of the kingdom. These acts formed part of an anti-Dakhni policy in which the sultan vowed to admit only Afaqi officers to his army and court.

After a year of uncertainty following Ismail's death, the Adil Shahi throne was occupied by the teenager Ibrahim I (1535–58), with Asad Khan as prime minister. This figure, who was probably a Sunni, revoked the pro-Shia policy of Ismail, and Dakhnis were once again favoured for military and courtly positions. Under Asad Khan's able command, the Bijapur army enjoyed successes against both Vijayanagara and Ahmadnagar, and in 1543 resisted the machinations of Sultan Janshid of Golconda. On the western flank, they were attacked by the Portuguese, forcing Ibrahim to sue for peace. The situation had not much improved when Ali I (1558–80) succeeded, by which time Ali Shah (1543–80) was ruling at Bidar. Ali Adil Shah I reverted to Shiism, favouring the Afaqi contingent. He attempted to enter into an agreement with Ramaraya of Vijayanagara with whom he campaigned against Ahmadnagar in 1559–61. This association was abandoned in favour of the celebrated confederacy of Bidar, Ahmadnagar and Golconda against Vijayanagara. Of all the Sultanates, Bijapur benefited most from the triumph of January 1565, amassing considerable booty and securing lands beyond the Tungabhadra. An idea of the large-scale building projects that this victory made possible may be had from

the imposing Jami mosque at Bijapur (see Fig. 55). Ali I met his end by stabbing and was the first Adil Shahi sultan to be laid to rest in the capital.

Ali Barid Shah, his counterpart at Bidar, died the same year and was buried in a lofty domed monument on the outskirts of his capital (see Fig. 48). This sultan was involved in the struggles of the period, shifting his alliances from Ahmadnagar to Bijapur as circumstances dictated. Among his architectural achievements is the Rangin Mahal in the Bidar fort, the most complete and exquisitely decorated courtly structure to survive from the sixteenth century (see Figs. 97 and 98). Ali was succeeded by Ibrahim (1580–7), heir to a declining kingdom threatened by powerful states on all sides.

The long reign of Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580–1627) is often considered a golden age in the fortunes of Bijapur. His rule began under the regency of Kamal Khan and the administration of the Habshi officer Ikhlas Khan. The importance of Ikhlas Khan, who rose to the position of prime minister, may be gauged from the miniature paintings in which he appears together with his royal patron (see Figs. 132 and 133). Ibrahim's reign was marked by war with Ahmadnagar and difficulties with disobedient chiefs. In 1591 Akbar sent a diplomatic mission to Bijapur in order to ascertain whether the Adil Shahis would accept Mughal suzerainty; Ibrahim declined. Meanwhile, Malik Ambar had recovered Ahmadnagar and attempted to invade the Bidar kingdom. Benefiting from the commander's preoccupation with the Mughals, Ibrahim succeeded in taking Bidar in 1619 and annexing the Baridi dominions. This aroused the wrath of Malik Ambar who marched unhindered to Bijapur where he stormed Ibrahim's unfinished new city of Naurasapur (see chapter 2). One minor incident of Ibrahim's reign was the loss of the island fortress of Janjira to the Habshi naval generals in 1618. Known as the Sidis, this line of local rulers was to outlast the Adil Shahis themselves.

Ibrahim II enjoys the reputation of having been the greatest patron of the arts of his era. Contemporary literature praises the sultan as a skilled poet, who preferred to use Deccani Urdu rather than Persian, as well as a musician, calligrapher and connoisseur of painting. The truth of this description is borne out by the rapturously coloured miniatures, some of them royal portraits, ascribed to his reign (Fig. 2; see also Colour Plate 1 and Figs. 121–9). Here, in a surprising way, Iranian pictorial traditions are animated by Deccani opulence and fantasy. Ibrahim was no less significant as a builder. The mausoleum and accompanying prayer hall that he completed before his death on the outskirts of the capital, a complex known as the Ibrahim Rauza, are unsurpassed for their splendid domed compositions and virtuoso stone carving (see Figs. 58 to 61).

After the death of Ibrahim II, the Dakhni contingent at court was successful in placing his second son, Muhammad (1627–56), on the Bijapur throne under the regent Khawas Khan. This noble attempted to form an alliance with Ahmadnagar in order to restrain the Mughal advance. This, however, did not prevent the emperor Shah Jahan from dispatching an army to Bijapur in 1631, directed by his

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2 *Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II holding castanets*, attributed to the Bodleian painter, Bijapur, c. 1610–20

father-in-law, Asaf Khan. Though this expedition was repulsed, it paved the way for a better organised campaign five years later which forced Muhammad to sign a deed of submission. Having suffered this humiliation, Muhammad was freed for a time from the Mughal threat and was able to concentrate on expanding his borders.

It was during the later years of Muhammad's rule that the Adil Shahi Sultanate reached its maximum extent, hampered neither by Ahmadnagar, which by now had become part of the Mughal empire, nor by Golconda. This was the period of Bijapur's most ambitious architectural achievements, as exemplified by Muhammad's own mausoleum, the Gol Gumbad, the most technically advanced domed structure to be erected in the Deccan (see Figs. 62 and 63), reputedly the largest dome in the world after St Peter's in Rome. That this was also a time of artistic flowering is borne out by the many miniatures ascribed to Muhammad's reign. The obviously Mughal appearance of these works suggests the influence of North Indian artistic and cultural modes. Military operations under Muhammad tended to be directed southwards. Under the able leadership of Randaula Khan and Shahji, the latter having arrived from Ahmadnagar, the Bijapur troops marched into the Tamil lands where they occupied the fortresses at Vellore and Gingee, overcoming

opposition by the Nayaka kings of Thanjavur. Meanwhile, Muhammad attempted an association with Dutch traders in an attempt to restrain the Portuguese who had by now established maritime supremacy in the Arabian Sea.

One event which was to have far-reaching consequences was the insurrection of Shahji's son, Shivaji, who had been granted governorship of the Pune province, now part of Bijapur's domains. Taking advantage of Muhammad's preoccupation in the south, Shivaji occupied the citadel of Torna in 1646. Shahji was arrested by Muhammad in an attempt to subdue his disloyal son, but he was released when Shivaji capitulated. Yet Shivaji became active soon after and in 1650 took the hill forts of Purandhar and Rairi, the latter destined to become his capital as Raigad. Over the following years Shivaji captured a number of mountain strongholds in the Sahyadri ranges on the north-western fringe of the Adil Shahi territories. Though his influence extended also to the Konkan, Shivaji was unable to capture the island citadel of the Sidis at Janjira.

War with the Mughals broke out during the reign of Ali II (1656-72). Prince Aurangzeb led the Mughal army which arrived at Aurangabad in 1657 and from there headed south. Only after seizing Bidar and the fort at Kalyana did Aurangzeb march on Bijapur. But at the last moment he was recalled to Delhi by Shah Jahan and was forced to conclude a hasty peace with Ali. Both the Adil Shahis and the Mughals were troubled by raids executed with considerable daring by bands of Maratha warriors led by Shivaji. These rebels were temporarily subdued in 1665 when Shivaji was compelled to sign a treaty by which he agreed to assist in the war against the Adil Shahis. However, this did not prevent Shivaji from steadily consolidating his influence in the western Deccan. In 1674 he had himself crowned as a traditional Hindu monarch, assuming the title of chhatrapati, lord of the [royal] umbrella. The ceremony took place in his newly completed ceremonial headquarters at Raigad (see Figs. 29 and 30).

Khawas Khan assumed command of the Adil Shahi sultanate on the assumption of the throne by the infant Sikandar Ali (1672-86), but was ousted in turn by his rival, Bhalol Khan. Courtly intrigue at Bijapur left the capital open to attack by the forces of Shivaji, who then proceeded south as far as Thanjavur, absorbing all the previous Adil Shahi conquests in the Tamil lands. In 1679 Shivaji joined a contingent of the Mughal army in an attempt to besiege the Adil Shahi capital. But the campaign was abandoned and Shivaji died soon after in April 1680. Freed of his most skilled adversary, Aurangzeb, now emperor, was thus able to concentrate on the two remaining Sultanates. It was, however, not until 1685 that the Mughal army reached the outer walls of Bijapur. Some eighteen months of siege were required to force Sikander to hand over the keys of the citadel, whereupon Bijapur became a province of the Mughal empire.

HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

THE QUTB SHAHIS

Sultan Quli Qutb al-Mulk, founder of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, rose to prominence as a governor of the Bahmanis. In 1487 he was sent to the eastern provinces of the kingdom to quell rebellious leaders. After establishing himself at Golconda, which he strengthened with rings of ramparts and formidable gates (see Figs. 24 and 25), he mounted expeditions against the forces of Vijayanagara, taking Warangal from the rebellious Shitab Khan. In the later years of his governorship Qutb al-Mulk resisted the combined armies of Bidar and Bijapur which had attempted to occupy Golconda. Unfortunately, he came to an ignoble end when he was murdered by his son, Jamshid (1543–50), who then assumed power. Though Jamshid never proclaimed himself sultan, he compelled local chiefs to accept his authority and managed to wrest several forts from the Baridis. For a time he entered into a coalition with Ahmadnagar and Berar.

The next ruler of consequence, Ibrahim (1550–80), overcame his distrust of rival sultans and lent his army to the confederacy against Vijayanagara. As a result of the 1565 victory, Ibrahim inherited the hill forts of Adoni and Udayagiri. He then raided Penukonda, the fortified site where the Vijayanagara court had fled. Ibrahim was involved for much of his reign with struggles against the Nizam Shahis. He was the first Golconda ruler to assume the title of sultan and to issue coins in his own name.

One of the first acts of Muhammad Quli (1580–1611) was to shift the Qutb Shahi capital to nearby Hyderabad. The focal point of the newly planned city was the Char Minar, the most architecturally innovative monument of the era (see Fig. 27). The flowering of poetry and painting at the new capital owed much to the personality of this sultan, who equalled his contemporary Ibrahim Adil Shah as an impassioned patron of the arts. Muhammad Quli was soon plunged into conflicts with Bijapur, as well as being threatened with aggression from the Mughal army. Chand Bibi appealed to Muhammad Quli to join the Ahmadnagar forces in a common cause against the conquerors, but her request failed. Meanwhile, the Golconda king crushed a rebellion at Kondavidu in the eastern Deccan and occupied the Vijayanagara stronghold of Gandikota.

The Mughals brought increasing pressure to bear on Muhammad, the next Qutb Shahi ruler. On receiving Shah Jahan's envoy at Golconda in 1616, Muhammad agreed to further the Mughal cause by withdrawing all support for Malik Ambar. The reign of this sultan is marked by the first contacts with European merchants who were attracted to Golconda by the diamonds and textiles for which the kingdom was famous. That Muhammad was also a capable builder is revealed by the Mecca mosque at Hyderabad, as well as by his own mausoleum in the royal necropolis at Golconda (see Fig. 68).

The Mughal menace affected much of the long reign of Abdullah (1626–72). In 1636 Abdullah was forced to sign the deed of submission, bringing the Qutb Shahi

territories directly under Shah Jahan's surveillance, thereby reducing Golconda effectively to a Mughal protectorate. Among the terms imposed, the Sunni faith was to replace Shiism as the state religion, and the name of the Mughal emperor was to be recited in the Friday prayers. But even these measures did not guarantee the end of Mughal aggression, for in 1656 Aurangzeb and his forces once again besieged Golconda.

Abul Hasan (1672-87), last of the Qutb Shahis, was led into an agreement with Shivaji whom he perceived as an ally in the struggle against the Mughals. The Maratha leader spent a whole month in Hyderabad in 1677 before mounting his southern campaign. After the fall of Bijapur to the Mughals in 1686, the imperial army was free to concentrate on Hyderabad. The third siege of Golconda lasted eight months and in September 1687 the gates of the fort were opened by treachery. Abul Hasan was taken prisoner and died three years later in captivity at Daulatabad. In spite of this sorry end to the rule of the Qutb Shahis, the Hyderabad court shows no sign of artistic decline in its later years, judging from the sumptuous portraits of royal figures and elegant maidens ascribed to the reigns of Abdullah and Abul Hasan (see Figs. 145-54), a tradition that continued into the early eighteenth century under the patronage of the Mughals, then the Asaf Jahis.

DECLINE OF THE MUGHALS, RISE OF THE ASAF JAHIS

The last two decades of Aurangzeb's life were spent in almost continuous warfare with the Marathas. In 1688-9, Aurangzeb's armies marched south and east to repossess the former territories of Bijapur and Golconda taken from the Mughals by Sambhaji (1680-9), Shivaji's son. With the help of Shaykh Nizam, former officer of Golconda who had gone over to the Mughals, Aurangzeb captured and executed Sambhaji. He then occupied Rajgad and Torna, both of which had been strengthened by Shivaji (see chapter 2). The imperial army pursued Rajaram (1689-1700), brother and successor of Sambhaji, all the way to Gingee, but it was only with difficulty that the Mughals secured this citadel in 1698. Rajaram was killed soon after and the Maratha leadership passed eventually to Sambhaji's son, Shahu (1708-49), who was also imprisoned by the Mughals. Aurangzeb met with little resistance when he occupied Pune and Satara, principal centres of Maratha power.

Though much preoccupied with these campaigns, Aurangzeb found time to build extensively, especially at Aurangabad. This city, renamed after the emperor himself, served as capital of the Mughal empire from 1693 until his death. The fortifications, gates and royal residence constructed during Aurangzeb's reign still stand (see chapter 2); so too the imposing garden tomb of his wife, known popularly as the Bibi-ka Maqbara, erected in 1661 by his son Azam Shah, then governor of the Deccan (see Fig. 75). In spite of the instability of the emperor's later

years as well as of those of his successors, the Mughal court at Aurangabad enjoyed vigorous artistic activity, owing mainly to the patronage of high-ranking officers in Aurangzeb's service, including many Rajput officers. Paintings in a mixed Mughal-Rajput style were produced at Aurangabad and other centres at this time (see Figs. 117-19).

Aurangzeb's deep attachment to Sufi saints at Khuldabad explains his decision to be buried in the simplest possible manner next to the tomb of Shaykh Zainuddin Shirazi. The emperor's death in 1707 initiated a struggle among his sons for control of the Deccan. Azam ascended the Mughal throne at Ahmadnagar barely one month after his father's death. Before withdrawing to Delhi, he released Shahu in a bid to encourage civil strife among different Maratha factions. Since the Deccani wars had proved costly, the pay of the Mughal army was kept in arrears. This proved a handicap for Azam who was challenged by his brother Muazzam, who eventually ascended the imperial seat as Shah Alam Bahadur Shah (1707-13). A dispute with the Deccani nobles was resolved with the appointment of Dhulfiqar Khan as viceroy. He intrigued with other Mughal princes in an effort to dislodge Bahadur Shah. Though Dhulfiqar was appointed prime minister, he did not relinquish his governorship of the Deccan which he continued to control through his deputy Dawud Khan.

Dynastic turmoil in Delhi, which resulted in Farrukh Siyar (1713-19) being crowned emperor, together with the depleted treasury of the Mughal army, forced Dawud Khan to accept the military support of the Marathas. In return, the Maratha generals were permitted to collect taxes from the southernmost provinces of the Deccan. In 1713 Dawud Khan was replaced by Nizam al-Mulk who ended the remission of taxes, thereby earning the loyalty of disaffected Maratha chieftains such as Sambhaji of Kolhapur (1714-60), a rival claimant to Shahu's throne. After his recall to Delhi and the murder of Farrukh Siyar, Nizam al-Mulk was appointed prime minister of Muhammad Shah (1719-48), the new emperor. In 1724 he returned to Aurangabad where he confronted the armed opposition of the Mughal nobles. The ensuing battle was only won with the aid of Bajirao, the peshwa, or chief minister, of Shahu. In the following year Muhammad Shah conferred on Nizam al-Mulk the title of Asaf Jah in gratitude, confirming his governorship of the Deccan and leaving him to rule virtually free of interference from Delhi. The Asaf Jahi kingdom, as it came to be known, developed into the last great bastion of Islamic culture in India, surviving until 1950.

The vast territories encompassed by the six Deccani provinces, extending from the Narmada in the north to the Kaveri in the south, yielded an income almost equal to that of the rest of the Mughal empire including Afghanistan. In consequence, Nizam al-Mulk's power rivalled that of the Delhi ruler himself. Supported by adequate funds, Nizam al-Mulk bestowed estates on his nobles and promoted his officers. Though enjoying effective autonomy, he avoided the use of royal

insignia, assuming the title of Nizam instead, a practice followed by his successors. The sack of Delhi in 1739 by Nadir Shah of Iran and the consequent loss of the imperial treasury signalled the end of Mughal leadership.

A struggle for succession lasting three years ensued upon Nizam al-Mulk's death in 1748. It was his third son, Salabat Jang (1751-62), who emerged victorious, aided by French troops under Dupleix and Bussey. This ruler paid his debt to the French by conceding to them trading possessions on the Bay of Bengal coast. Salabat Jang maintained his own contingent of European troops in an effort to ward off the Marathas. On the outbreak of war between England and France in 1756, the French were driven out of the region by the English with whom Salabat Jang had concluded various arrangements. The Maratha forces invaded the Asaf Jahi territories soon after, compelling Salabat Jang to surrender Aurangabad and Bidar in 1761. As a result, Salabat Jang's nobles lost confidence in his capability as an effective leader and he was deposed by his younger brother, Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jah II (1762-1802).

This ruler was responsible for transferring the Asaf Jahi capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad. Nizam Ali Khan then set about recovering the territories lost to the Marathas, beginning with the reoccupation of Daulatabad. Hostilities against the Marathas continued up to 1765 when peace was finally achieved. This permitted the Nizam to enter into a treaty with the English by which they would furnish him with subsidiary forces in return for a permanent presence in Hyderabad.

The outstanding event during these years was the growing influence of Haidar Ali, a noble who had distinguished himself in earlier Mughal campaigns and who had acted as governor in the southern part of the Kannada lands. Haidar's aggressive campaigns, together with those of his son and successor, Tipu Sultan, persuaded Nizam Ali Khan to ally himself with both the Marathas and the English. Though these forces were successful in 1791, this did not prevent Tipu from reasserting his power; nor did it dissuade the Marathas from turning against the Nizam. No doubt it was the fear of Maratha domination that persuaded the Hyderabad ruler to agree to the establishment of a British garrison at nearby Secunderabad. According to a new treaty of 1798, Nizam Ali Khan was compelled to join forces with the British against Tipu. But the triumph over this valiant figure at Srirangapattana in 1799 did not mean the end of Maratha attacks, which were to continue into the following century.

DISPERSAL OF MARATHA POWER

Shivaji's ascendancy during the period of the Mughal invasion of the Deccan and his coronation at Raigad in 1674 have already been noted; so too the careers of Sambhaji and Rajaram, both of whom met their deaths at the hands of the Mughals. With Shivaji begins the revival of Hindu traditions that was to become the outstanding feature of eighteenth-century Maratha culture. This led to the

increased popularity of Hindu pilgrimage sites with the consequent resuscitation of temple architecture and art which display many innovative tendencies (see chapter 8).

The Marathas under Shahu commanded most of the western Deccan, but were unable to expand eastwards owing to the Mughal presence. Under the able leadership of Balaji Vishvanath (1714–20), the first peshwa, the Marathas accepted the vassalage of the Delhi emperor, but with the right to collect taxes from the northern provinces. As representative of Maratha power, Balaji personally visited Delhi in 1719 to ratify the terms of the treaty. The next year his son, Bajirao I (1720–40), succeeded as the second peshwa. It was this minister who conceived the notion of expanding northward, and in this endeavour he was joined by the Gaekwad, Holkar, Shinde and Bhonsale chiefs. Bajirao's campaign proceeded rapidly and by 1729 the Maratha armies had passed through Malwa and Gujarat on their way to Rajasthan. The peshwa pushed on to Delhi and in 1737 briefly held the Mughal emperor to ransom. Bajirao next turned his attention to the Konkan and developed the Maratha naval capacity at ports like Alibag. He attacked the Portuguese possessions of Bassein and Chaul, both of which fell in 1740. Among the building projects of the second peshwa are the fortified residence of Shanwar Wada and the temple of Omkareshvara, both at Pune (see Fig. 188).

Shahu chose Bajirao's son, Balaji Bajirao, known also as Nana Saheb (1740–61), as the third peshwa. His rule coincided with the greatest extent of Maratha influence. Successful raids on Bihar and Orissa brought parts of East India within the Maratha orbit. By this time, the Maratha kingdom of Thanjavur had enjoyed virtual autonomy for several decades. The Marathas fought only one major campaign against Hyderabad in these years. It began with the siege of Aurangabad and ended in 1751 with the annexation of Khandesh and the western half of Berar. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Marathas had occupied substantial tracts of the former Mughal empire and in the process had adopted many aspects of Mughal administration. The impact of Mughal culture on Maratha art is also seen in the brightly coloured murals produced at this time (see chapter 4). A significant departure from Mughal procedure, however, was the autonomy with which the Maratha chiefs ruled the conquered territories: the Gaekwads in Baroda, the Holkars in Indore, the Shindes in Gwalior, the Bhonsales at Nagpur. These figures had considerable impact on the revival of temple building in the regions under their control, as can be seen at Trimbak, Ellora and Jejuri (see chapter 8).

Rebellion broke out at the death of Shahu and Nana Saheb had difficulty in persuading the Maratha chiefs to accept Ram Raja as chhatrapati in 1749. Thereupon, the Marathas came into conflict with the French, whom they routed with ease in 1751. The defeat of the combined Maratha forces at Panipat in 1761 by the Afghan army, however, signalled the beginning of their decline. The fourth and fifth peshwas, Madhavrao I (1761–72) and Narayanrao (1772–4), had difficulty in controlling the breakaway Maratha factions and keeping the Hyderabad forces at

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bay. Madhavrao II (1774–96), who succeeded as the sixth peshwa, allied himself with the English in an attempt to curb the rise of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. By the time the British stormed Srirangapattana in 1799, the Maratha state had disintegrated into civil war.