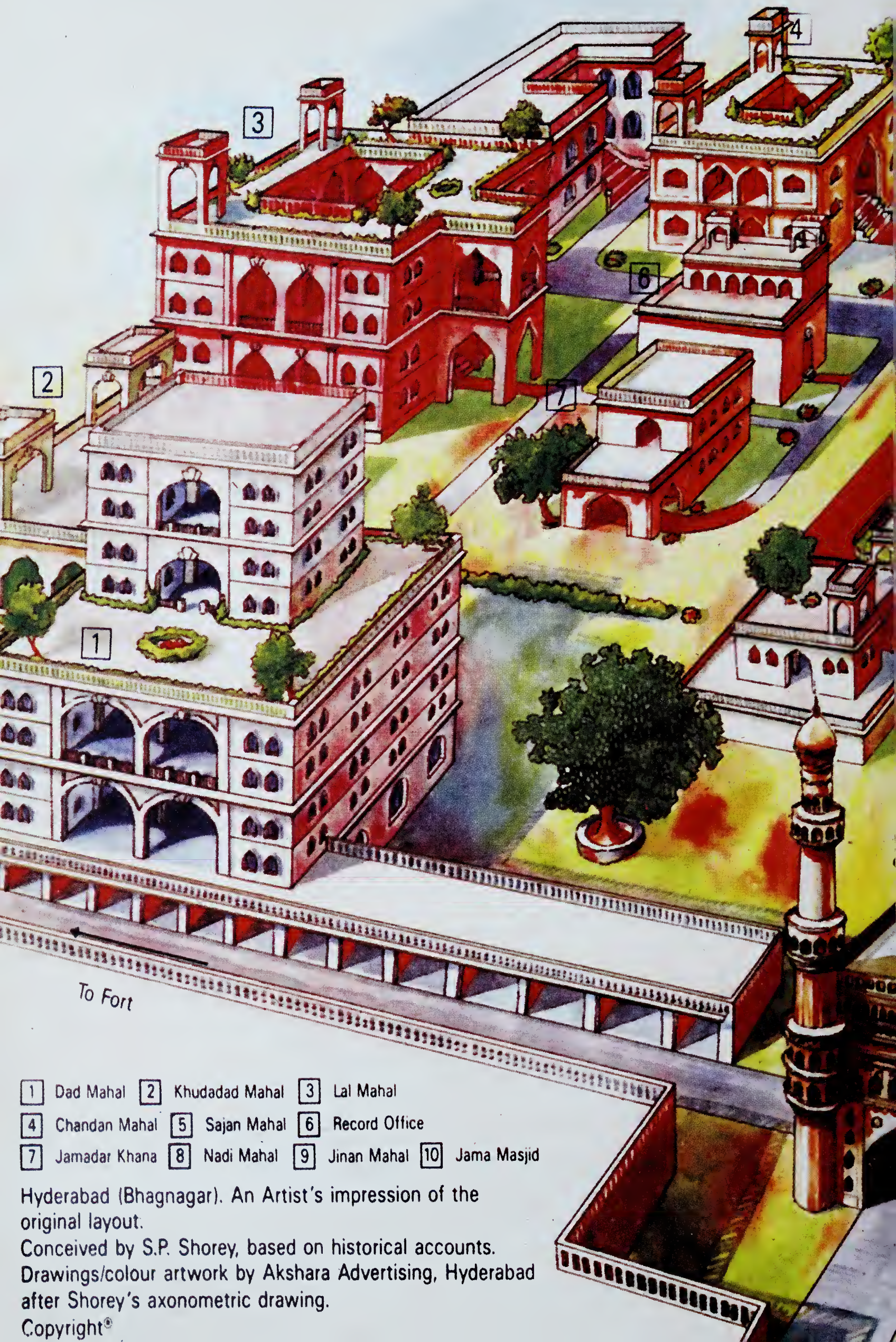


Prince
Poet
Lover
Builder



Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah
The Founder of Hyderabad

Narendra Luther



- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------|---|----------------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Dad Mahal | 2 | Khudadad Mahal | 3 | Lal Mahal |
| 4 | Chandan Mahal | 5 | Sajan Mahal | 6 | Record Office |
| 7 | Jamadar Khana | 8 | Nadi Mahal | 9 | Jinan Mahal |
| 10 | Jama Masjid | | | | |

Hyderabad (Bhagnagar). An Artist's impression of the original layout.

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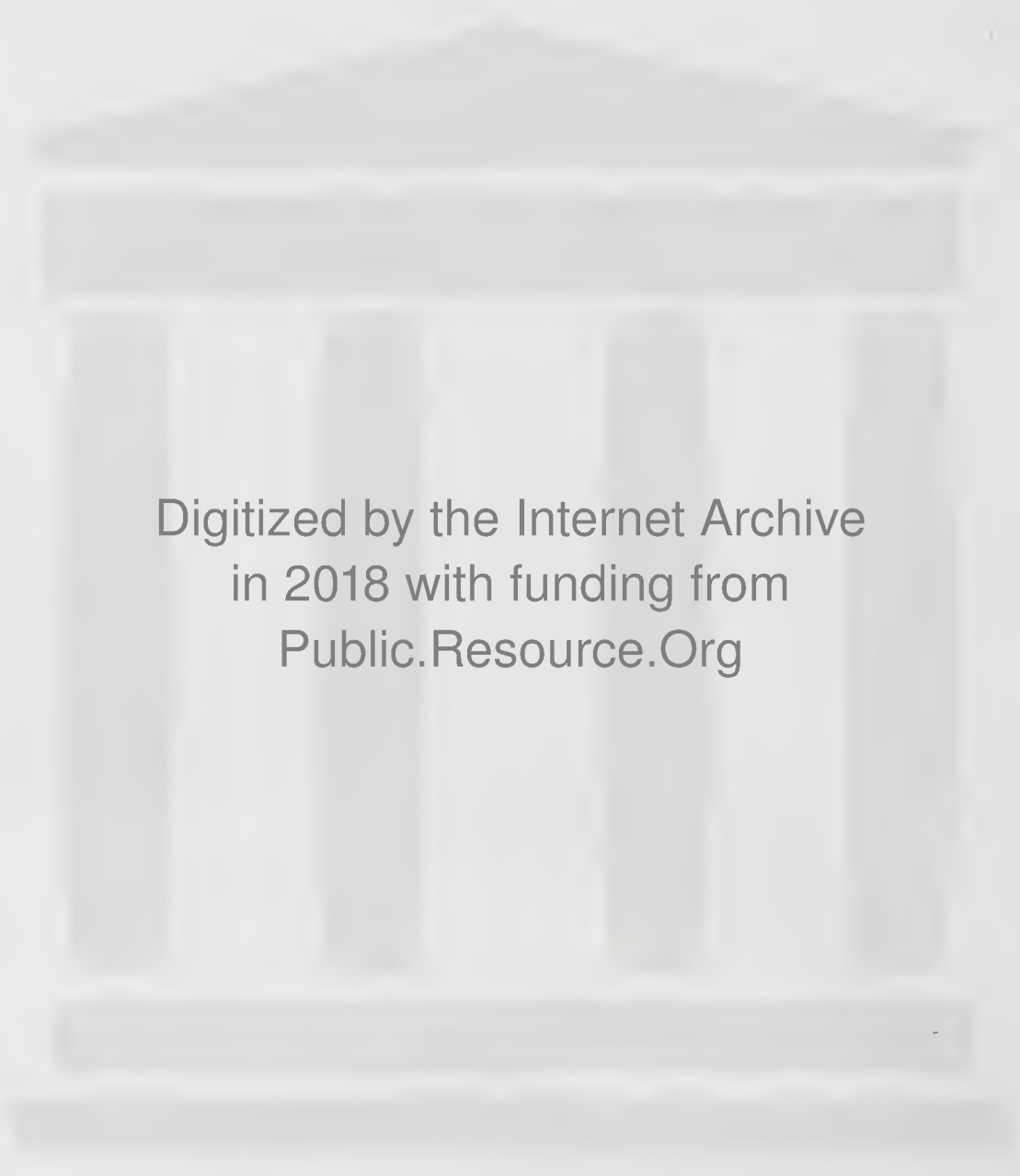
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To River Musi

To Masulipatnam



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**Prince
Poet
Lover
Builder**

**Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah
The Founder of Hyderabad**

Narendra Luther



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Preface

Indian history is long and full of diverse pageants. Many kings and emperors, conquerors and adventurers, tyrants and despots, dictators and dukes have strutted across its stage and then passed into oblivion. Our history has largely been a narration of their achievements and failures, a record of their crusades and enterprises, a catalogue of their passions and prejudices, a tale of their pride, cruelty, eccentricities and ambition.

On a different plane, there have been poets and writers, artists and sculptors, teachers and thinkers, saints and scholars, educators and reformers—people who eschewed power as such and pursued virtue and made a far more valuable contribution to the social and cultural history of the land.

The paths of these two sets of people seldom crossed. Yet, together they interwove a tapestry unique in its pattern and colour scheme.

There was yet another band—a very small number—of people who defied either category. Their versatile personalities transcended the two boundaries.

Those names stand out. Asoka, Akbar, Nehru—to name just a few. Even when history of kings and wielders of political power is cleansed of warmongering, conquest-making, cruelty-inflicting tyrants, those names will remain. They sought glory in fulfilling a larger destiny. They had visions of a happier, lasting future for the vast masses. They struggled

to impart a meaning to the mystery of life as it is lived by the common man.

There were some others also, like them elsewhere in the country, not projected on the national screen but at the regional level. Their names too endure.

One such man was Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah who ruled over that part of the Deccan which broadly constitutes the State of Andhra Pradesh today. He lived from 1565 to 1611 and ruled over the kingdom of Golconda for 31 years out of a life span of 46.

After the passage of nearly 400 years, his name is still enshrined in the hearts of the people today. They remember him with affection. They pay homage to him every year by celebrating his birthday. This book is an essay on him; it is an inquiry into the reasons for the abiding popularity of this versatile person. He did not have a mission. He lived life in its fulness as is given only to a prince to do. He did not seek to wage wars. He fought only those battles which were thrust upon him. His conquests were of a different sort. He drank, made merry and wrote poetry. He fell in love with a commoner with an intensity and sincerity rare among princes. He founded the capital city of Hyderabad and built its architectural centrepiece, the *Char Minar*. He was a many-faceted personality, a *prince*, a *lover*, a *poet*, a *builder*. It was the sum of all these which made the man whose legend lives.

It is the story of this man that we are going to tell in the pages that follow. Why has his name survived so long? And is he relevant today? An earnest attempt has been made to answer such queries.

A word of caution. This is not a history of a king for scholars. It is a story by a layman for the millions. With the passage of four centuries, many facts have got blurred, over-

laid with myths or even supplanted by legends. Partial observers, expedient contemporary chroniclers, biased historians, prejudiced commentators have all contributed their share to the haze of confusion. But there are enough data to set the record straight. So, while sticking to factual accuracy based on considerable research, we have avoided giving footnotes and references to authorities which detract from the flow of a running narrative. However, for those who may like to delve deeper into a particular aspect of the story or check some sources, a bibliography is given at the end.

The story has relevance today. I hope the relevance will be obvious as the story unfolds.

Narendra Luther

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I'd also like to acknowledge gratefully the help and assistance I received from:

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Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah : The Founder of Hyderabad

existence of the seal of the *Qazi* of Bhagnagar referred to in the book.

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The Background

Our story is set in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which fall in the later Middle Ages of Indian history. It is desirable to look at the picture of the country at that time.

The first point to be borne in mind is that though a geographical entity, politically India was never one country in the sense in which we understand the term today. It was divided into numerous kingdoms, principalities and estates in a feudal system of hierarchies. Even when there were 'empires' in India, at no time was it under the effective control of one central authority.

Emperors, kings and chieftains kept on fighting with different groupings, sometimes gaining, sometimes losing territories. The boundaries of different states were for ever shifting and one's loyalty was to a particular kingdom and not to the 'country' today called India. Patriotism was not love of a nationstate because none existed but to numerous smaller clashing kingdoms.

At the close of the 12th century, Delhi had come under Turkish rule and from then on the Sultan of Delhi became the predominant power in India occupying the Indo-Gangetic valley upto Bengal. Each successive Sultan tried to extend his boundaries in all directions from Delhi.

For a modern reader who takes the concepts of nation-state, democracy, universal suffrage and parliamentary form of government and secularism for granted, it is necessary to have a look at the picture that prevailed in India when the Turkish Sultans sat on the throne of Delhi and gradually brought most of the country under their direct or indirect rule.

The Islamic System

The Turkish Sultans were Muslims. The administration was, therefore, based on Islamic principles. Sovereignty under Islam belongs to God. The king was a trustee of God, answerable to Him alone on the Day of Judgement. In form, the Sultan was elected by nobles and chiefs. In practice, however, he achieved his objective by force and the route to the throne was generally littered with heads chopped off by the successful aspirant and his supporters. The selection too was limited to the royal family and the law of primogeniture was followed subject to the aspirant being mentally and physically fit. That is one reason why the practice of blinding the potential contenders to the throne by the successful candidate was widely prevalent. The king was the supreme executive and judicial authority. There was no legislature as such. There was no codification of laws either. The legal and administrative framework was provided by the *Sharia*, i.e. the Quran—the holy book of the Muslims, and the *Hadith*—the sayings and actions attributed to Prophet Muhammad. *Sharia* was supplemented by *Ijma*, i.e. consensus amongst the most learned of the Prophet's companions and *Urf*, i.e. local customs and practices. Besides this, the king issued decrees and orders in residuary matters not covered by the earlier two categories and in secular matters like revenue, military and appointments. These orders were called *firman*s.

The populace was subject to a common criminal law. In civil matters, however, the personal law of the community applied. Non-Muslims were liable to the levy of *jazia*—a poll-tax. The king's power in all matters was absolute. In modern terms, the system was that of a political and ecclesiastical tyranny. The degree of severity depended upon the person of the Sultan.

On the social side, slavery was prevalent. But slaves could be and often were set free for good service. There was no limit to the heights they could attain in public offices. Actually, some of them became generals, ministers and even kings. The first Sultan of Delhi, Qutb-ud-din Aibak was a slave who founded what is called the 'Slave Dynasty' in Indian history which ruled for 84 years from 1206. Similarly, non-Muslims also rose to high positions of trust which was bound to happen in a situation where the rulers were in such a small minority and not conversant with local conditions and customs.

In general, the Middle Ages had a static character. People looked to an 'ideal' past. The attitude of 'other worldliness', taught by both Hinduism and Islam encouraged apathy, fatalism, complacency and submission to authority. Society was regressive and orthodox which served to strengthen political despotism. Education, rooted deeply in religion, did not promote scholarship but pedantry.

Absence of means of transport and communication isolated people and regions and slowed down, if not prevented, the spread of ideas. The fastest system of communication was available only to the administration, which again served to give the authorities another advantage over the populace. Art and literature depended upon patronage for survival. This fostered flattery and glorification of the patron. Artistic instinct had to be adjusted to expediency.

Invasion of the South

The history of the North and the South proceeded more or less independently at the political level. The Vindhya range of mountains and the river Narbada provided a double barrier between the two regions. But such barriers could not hold back those who had ambitions of a bigger empire. A century after the occupation of Delhi, the South was invaded.

This was done by Ala-ud-din Khilji who was then governor of Kara. In 1294, he subdued the Hindu kingdom of Deogiri. In 1306-7, because of default on the part of Ramachandra Deo of Deogiri in remitting the agreed tribute to Delhi, Khilji sent Malik Kafur to reduce Deogiri to a regular vassal. In 1308, the next Hindu kingdom of Warangal was also attacked and subdued. Warangal was finally made the capital of a province of the Delhi Sultanate in 1323 and its name was changed to Sultanpur.

Muhammad Tughluk, who became Sultan of Delhi in 1325, shifted his capital from Delhi to Deogiri for some time in 1327 in order to control his extended empire better from a point geographically more central than Delhi. He also changed its name to Daulatabad. He established a system of administration under which there was a governor for a group of 100 villages somewhat like the Roman system of centurions. Tughluk was a harsh ruler. In 1346, some of these governors revolted against him and elected one amongst themselves, Ismail as their king. In 1347, Ismail abdicated in favour of a strong man, Zafar who with the title of Ala-ud-din Hasan Bahman Shah established a dynasty known as Bahmani. It had 18 rulers and it ruled effectively till 1518 but survived nominally till 1527.

Historians reject the legend that the name of the Bahmani

dynasty had anything to do with a Hindu, Gangoo Brahmin. According to this legend, Hasan was at one time a servant of Gangoo, a Brahmin, who had treated him well and had also predicted that one day he would be a king. So, when the prophecy came true, Hasan adopted his benefactor's surname to show his gratitude. The real reason for his adopting the surname of Bahman was that he claimed descent from an early Persian king of that name.

Sultan Quli

During the reign of the Bahmani Sultan, Muhammad Shah Lashkari (1463-82) a fugitive Turkish chieftain from Hamdan came to his court. He belonged to a Turkish tribe called "Black Sheep" as contrasted with its rival, the "Blue Sheep". The "Black Sheep" tribe had lost power to its rival and its leaders were being persecuted. Therefore, their chief, Uwais Quli, sent his son, Sultan Quli with his brother, Allah Quli to India. The uncle and the nephew made their way to the Bahmani court where they were well received.

The Bahmani ruler seemed to have developed a liking for Sultan Quli. The young man too liked the place. After the second visit, when Allah Quli was going back home, Sultan Quli, then about twenty, stayed back. He was given a minor appointment in the Bahmani court.

Sultan Quli had good looks, dynamism and scholarship combined with skill in martial arts. These qualities accounted for his rapid rise. There was an influx of foreigners into the Deccan in King Muhammad Shah Lashkari's time. The nobles around the king were divided into the *foreigners* and the *Dakhnis*. There were constant feuds between the two. Once in 1487, Sultan Quli saved King Mahmud (1482-1518) by thwarting an attempt on his life by the *Dakhnis*. After this

incident his rise in royal favours was rapid. In 1493, he quelled the rebellion in Goa. The title of *Qutb-ul-Mulk* and the governorship of Tilangana followed this achievement. Because of his martial and literary talents he was addressed as “master of the sword and of the pen.”

The Golconda fort was also given as a *jagir* to Sultan Quli on his appointment as governor of Tilangana in 1495-96. At that time it had mud walls. He strengthened it, gave it the name of Muhammad Nagar and made it his capital. He conquered more territories and captured about 70 forts, thus extending the boundaries of his charge upto Machilipatnam on the Bay of Bengal.

The feud between the *foreigners* and the *Dakhnis* ultimately led to the break-up of the Bahmani kingdom. By 1518, the Bahmani governors became independent of the Bahmani king one after another and five smaller kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Berar, Bidar and Golconda came into being. Golconda was the last of these breakaway kingdoms.

Sultan Quli declared himself a Shia in 1501 and dropped the name of the Bahmani king from the *khutba* and inserted instead the name of Shah Ismail Safawa of Persia. *Khutba* is read after the noon prayers in the mosques in the name of the reigning monarch. In Islam it is one of the indications of sovereignty. This Shia *khutba* persisted till the reign of the sixth of the eight rulers of the Qutb Shah dynasty when in 1633 it was abolished under the ‘Deed of Submission’ signed with the Mughals.

It is also worth noting that though he was virtually independent of the Bahmani Kings, Sultan Quli did not formally declare his independence and although he survived the last Bahmani king by five years, he never assumed the title of a king. *Sultan*-the normal appellation of early Muslim

kings was part of his name, not his title. His full name ‘Sultan Quli’ meant ‘servant of the king’. His dynasty took its name from the title—Qutb-ul-Mulk given to him by his Bahmani overlord. He was known as the *Bare-Malik* or the great lord and that is the title inscribed on his grave as well.

He ruled till 1543 when he was said to have been close to ninety. One day while he was at prayers, he was killed allegedly with the connivance of his son, Jamshid.

Jamshid

Jamshid was not the eldest son of Sultan Quli and much blood was shed in the in-fighting for the throne. One of his brothers was blinded and the other, Ibrahim fled first to Bijapur and then to the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar where he was given political asylum for seven years. Rama Raya, the ruler of Vijayanagar treated him well. There he married a Hindu woman, Bhagirati by name.

Ibrahim Qutb Shah

Jamshid ruled from 1543 to 1550. He grew into a powerful ruler and got the better of his neighbour and rival, Ali Barid who had to cede some territory to him. He was a fairly good poet in Persian. After a reign of seven years he died in 1550. Jamshid’s son, Subhan was an infant at the time of his father’s death. There was, therefore, a dispute amongst the nobles regarding the successor. By consensus and popular acclaim, Jamshid’s exiled brother, Prince Ibrahim who was a refugee at Vijayanagar, was recalled and proclaimed king. He was the sixth and the youngest son of the founder of the dynasty and technically the first king so proclaimed though the *khutba* continued to be read in the name of the Persian king. He was 20 at the time of his accession. The infant son

of Jamshid, Subhan was put to death. His reign lasted barely six months and he is, therefore, not reckoned in the history of the Qutb Shahis.

Ibrahim enforced law and order in his kingdom which was in a bad shape. He rid his territory of thieves and highway robbers. He consolidated and expanded his kingdom. For keeping a better check on various departments and his nobles, he established an intelligence department. He rebuilt the Golconda fort and strengthened it by a double rampart about 8,000 metres in circumference with eight iron gates and 400 bastions. This is said to have cost him about 2.1 million rupees.

His long stay as a political refugee at the court of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar in his impressionable years and his marriage there to a Hindu woman influenced his attitude towards the local language, Telugu and his Hindu subjects. He was a patron of Persian, Urdu and Telugu. The development of Kuchipudi dance as a separate form owes its origin to Ibrahim. He assigned the revenue of a village for the promotion of the art. Amongst the Hindus, out of regard and popularity for him, his name got corrupted into 'Malkibharama' or just 'Abhirama'. It is significant that even today members of the Hindu *Lodha* community who have a settlement near the fort, make monthly offerings and sacrifice goats at the mausoleum of Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah out of reverence for him. Because of his long stay in exile at Vijayanagar, Ibrahim had a better understanding of the Deccan politics. He sent representatives both to the Mughal as well as the Iranian courts.

He took interest in public works also. He constructed the Hussain Sagar Lake which lies between the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Another lake was constructed at a town called Ibrahimpatnam about 25 kilometres from the

city of Hyderabad. The first bridge on the river Musi was also built by him in 1578. It is now one of the five bridges on the river and is appropriately called the *Purana Pul* (old Bidge).

The most important political and military event of his reign was the establishment in 1564 of the confederacy of the four sultanates of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Bidar and Golconda to fight the Vijayanagar empire. The famous battle of Talikota or Banihatti took place in 1565. The confederate armies won unexpectedly by virtue of superior strategy and routed Sadashiva Raya, the over-confident ruler of Vijayanagar. This dealt a crushing blow to the great Hindu empire and had a tremendous impact on the history of South India. About 100,000 people were killed in the battle. The city of Vijayanagar, capital of the empire, was ransacked and the unprecedented loot is said to have enriched the army and the states of the confederacy.

The confederacy, however, proved a union of convenience. As soon as the immediate objective was achieved, it fell apart.

Shortly after the victory at Talikota, our hero, Muhammad was born to Ibrahim and his Hindu wife, Bhagirati.

Ibrahim extended his kingdom to the border of the present Orissa State.

He also initiated some moves to ease the pressure within the fort and thought of expanding the city towards the west. Ibrahimbagh today is situated there. Subsequently, however, the city developed in another direction.

When Ibrahim Qutb Shah died in 1580, the kingdom of Golconda was firmly established. An era of growth and prosperity followed.

The Prince

Birth

Ibrahim died in 1580. Muhammad Quli was not his eldest son. Not much is known about his birth. Years later, his court poet, Vajahi wrote about his birth in his book *Qutb Mushtari* with usual poetic exaggeration. In this poem, he mentions about the happiness and generosity of the King, Sultan Ibrahim on the birth of his son. Of the celebrations on the occasion, he says:

“Because in this gathering, angels had come to render service, the king gave them so much gold that they made a new sky of gold. The sky itself was given so much gold that it keeps on going round day and night to find a place to keep it (According to the belief of the age, prevalent in Urdu poetry even upto now, the sky gyrates). The earth itself was given so much wealth that it is begging heavens for space to keep it. After giving all these charities, the king himself celebrated the festival of spring (*Basant*) with diamonds. On Muhammad Quli’s birth, gold was distributed so liberally that it has become cheaper than dirt. So many jewels and gems were scattered all over that swans have started coming on land to pick up their food. Gold, due to the fall in its value, has become pale.”*

* Maulvi Abdul Haq ed. *Qutb Mushtari* by Vajahi : (New Delhi : Anjuman-e-Urdu, 1939) P.22

The chronogram drawn upon his birth called him “provider of sustenance to the people of the world.”

Two points are to be noted here. First, the fortuitous fact of his birth in the year of the battle of Talikota (or Bannihatti) which practically crushed the Vijayanagar empire was to give comparative relief to the future Sultan from the normal threat posed by a powerful neighbour. The second was that he was born of a Hindu mother, apparently a Vijayanagar princess and this presumably influenced much of his thinking, attitude and behaviour as a monarch.

Accession

Muhammad Quli had two elder brothers and normally would not have expected to succeed to the throne. One of them, Abdul Quadir apparently died before his father and so there was only one senior contender in the field. There is no evidence of any warfare or bloodshed which was the normal feature preceding most successions in medieval Indian history. However, some intrigues and manipulations did take place which placed Muhammad, a young lad of 15, on the throne. He had three younger brothers, two of whom died during the early part of his reign. The last surviving brother kept up good relations with him and so he had no trouble from him except once during his closing years.

At the time of the accession of Muhammad Quli, his elder brother, prince Husain Quli was engaged to the daughter of Mir Shah Mir, the *Peshwa* or the Prime Minister of the kingdom. At the crucial time of the death of Ibrahim, Mir Shah Mir happened to be away at Naldurg leading, in league with the Nizam Shahi forces, the Golconda contingent in a campaign against Bijapur. Mir Shah Mir would have naturally been in favour of the accession of his prospective son-in-law.

His absence from the capital was, therefore, a favourable factor for Muhammad Quli. He was thus able to manipulate his enthronement. In collusion with some courtiers a will of the late king was contrived which nominated Muhammad Quli as his successor.

Mir Shah Mir returned to the capital and in the changed circumstances his daughter was married to Muhammad Quli instead of his elder brother. The young king did that presumably to win the backing of Mir Shah Mir for his claim and strengthen his position.

The siege of Naldurg had been going on for some time. Mir Shah Mir advised the new king to lead his forces personally to boost their morale. It was also considered that a victory at the start of his reign would be a good beginning for him. Muhammad Quli accepted the advice and went to the field himself. The besieged forces were led by the redoubtable Chand Bibi and her generals employed Maratha guerillas called *bergis* to harass the besieging army. They cut off supplies to the enemy and drove it to famine conditions. The siege went on fruitlessly for one whole year and in sheer disgust, Muhammad Quli withdrew from personal command and returned to Golconda.

This setback naturally gave rise to suspicion about the advice of the *Peshwa* to the king. This culminated in his dismissal and despatch to Persia. He died on the way. Presumably, his daughter, Muhammad Quli's wife was also sent away with her father and nothing was heard of her later.

Rebellion

Next, Muhammad Quli had to tackle the rebellion of Ali Khan Lur. It started off as a minor administrative problem. Lur was

appointed to the citadel of Kondavidu in Guntur, but when he went to take over command, the incumbent commander resisted. Lur, thereupon, appealed not to his overlord for instructions, but for help to Raja Venkatapati of Penukonda who was the ruler of the remnant of the once-mighty Vijayanagar empire. In keeping with the frequency of resort to arms in the medieval period and the absence of permanent loyalties, Lur set up his own private army and invaded some forts successfully, but was subsequently defeated and killed. During this episode the Qutb Shahi forces had to face some discomfiture at the hands of Venkatapati.

This rebellion was followed by some reorganization of the Qutb Shahi army and the civil set up. Later, Muhammad Quli took up construction of the new capital city before he got back to the unfinished task of dealing with Venkatapati who had helped Lur against him. During the interval, Muhammad Quli had also to deal with his old rival, the Sultan of Bijapur.

Clash with Venkatapati

In 1597, Quli sent a strong force to the South. He followed the main army himself. The Hindu rajas of Nandyal and Kalagur were subdued rather easily. Their estates were restored to them on the condition that they become his tributaries. Thereafter, Muhammad Quli crossed the Krishna and occupied the forts of Gooty, Kurnool and Gandikota.

These successes made Muhammad Quli bold enough to strike at the capital of Venkatapati, Penukonda. He did not encounter any resistance. Instead, the Raja suggested truce for three days after which a peace treaty would be worked out. The Sultan agreed to this. The Raja utilized this period

not to prepare for peace but to equip himself for a fresh attack. Muhammad Quli, infuriated at this breach of trust, ordered an attack but his generals advised against it. The siege, they counselled, would be long drawn-out and behind them would be the Krishna which would soon be in floods. In the fighting that ensued on the banks of the Pennar, Muhammad Quli's forces suffered repeated reverses. He, therefore, withdrew after making arrangements for adequate defence of the territory between the Pennar and the Krishna rivers.

Venkatapati continued to harass the Sultan's forces. The latter's stand was further weakened by dissensions amongst his generals. The result was defeat for Muhammad Quli's forces. The Qutb Shahi borders thus shrank on the east to the banks of the Krishna, the only trans-Krishna outpost left being Kondavidu.

There were troubles in the eastern frontier too. The rebels and recalcitrant elements were aided and abetted by Venkatapati. The Sultan was, however, able to put down the rebels through Amin-ul-Mulk and save the fort of Kondavidu.

In the north-eastern frontier bordering the present Orissa State, there was a series of rebellions. The Sultan was, however, more successful in dealing with troubles there.

Bijapur

On the western borders, there was an engagement between Bijapur on the one side and Golconda and Ahmadnagar on the other, in which Bijapur was worsted. Later, a political solution was arrived at on the dispute between Bijapur and Golconda. Muhammad Quli's sister, Chand Sultana was married to Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur. The princess was married *in absentia*.

Pretender's Claim

Apart from the troubles at the borders, there was an interesting case of a pretender at home. Muhammad Quli's elder brother, Abdul Qadir was married to a girl of the family of Shah Khalilulah Kirmani. The prince was known by the title of *Shah Sahib*. During the reign of Ibrahim, *Shah Sahib* had been confined to the fort of Dewarkonda for some misdemeanour. There he was taken ill and died.

In about 1592, a certain person who was about the same age as Abdul Qadir, declared in Bidar that he was the real prince and that he had not died but escaped from his confinement at Devarkonda. The family of Shah Khalilulah supported this pretension and secured his release from prison by Ali Barid who had made him captive at the instance of Muhammad Quli. The pretender gathered support of some disgruntled elements and proclaimed himself the Sultan of Golconda on the bank of the river Krishna. Muhammad Quli sent a force under the commander of Kondavidu to deal with him and after some resistance, the pretender was crushed. He fled to Bijapur and faded into oblivion.

There was another incident involving his other brother, Khuda Banda. Since the Bahmani days there had been a constant rift between the *foreigners* and the *Dakhnis*. In the closing years of the reign of Muhammad Quli, some Mughals forced their way into the royal pavilion at the *Nabat Ghat* overlooking the Hussain Sagar Lake. Thereupon, the Sultan ordered those Mughals, Pathans and Arabs, who were not in government service to be expelled. A rumour spread in the city that they were murdered. This, in turn, led to rioting and looting of the property of the Mughals. The riots were put down with a heavy hand.

The *Dakhnis*, incensed with this latter action, revolted against the Sultan. It was really a revolt against *Shiaism* which Muhammad Quli professed and also against the excessive Iranian influence in the Court. The *Dakhnis* set up Khuda Banda as their leader. However, the revolt was put down, the ring leaders imprisoned and Khuda Banda incarcerated. He died in captivity in 1611.

Foreign Relations

In foreign relations, Muhammad Quli had to deal with the big power in the North, the Mughals. His rule coincided with the last quarter of the reign of Akbar and the early years of Jahangir.

Mughals

The supremacy of the Mughals had been acknowledged from the very beginning. When Timur invaded India and came to Delhi, the Bahmani King, Feroz Shah had sent an envoy and paid his homage to him in 1398. In return, Timur issued a *firman* conferring the sovereignty of the Deccan as also of Malwa and Gujarat on him. He also conferred the title of *Farzand-e-Khair Khwah* (well-wisher son) on him. Feroz had also promised him military support, should Timur send one of his sons to rule over India. After the first battle of Panipat in 1526, Babur too received congratulatory messages from the Sultans of the Deccan including Sultan Quli in which they expressed loyalty to him. Babur, however, did not live long enough and Humayun was on the run for most of the time and could not consolidate his victories before he was plucked away. However, when Humayun reduced Ahmedabad and most of Gujarat, the Deccan Sultans petitioned him to spare Khandesh while at the same time taking care to form an alliance to fight against him in case of necessity. Babur's

successors did not recognise anyone of the Sultans as independent political entities and did not allow them a chance for recognition by the Mughal court.

After he had firmly established himself in the North, Akbar proceeded to formulate a clear policy towards the Deccan. Abul Fazal talked of the Deccan Sultans as protected princes of the Mughal empire. The Sultans considered the Mughal emperor as a formidable foe who should be kept in good humour, but at bay. They made *peshkash* to Akbar which comprised mostly gifts on a voluntary basis. After the fall of Gujarat to the Mughals, Akbar felt encouraged to push southwards. The Raja of Khandesh, Ali Khan Faruqi voluntarily became a vassal of Akbar and died fighting for him. Ahmadnagar was the next to be taken on by Akbar, but in spite of its internal factions and feuds it proved a hard nut to crack. The situation in Ahmadnagar was indeed very confusing and the confusion was worse confounded when, to the mutual rivalries of the *foreigners* and the *Dakhnis*, the sectarian element was added. *Shiaism* which was the state sect of Ahmadnagar was challenged by the followers of the *Mahdavi* cult. Here, Chand Bibi's heroic struggle against the mighty Mughal emperor to protect the independence of Ahmadnagar is worth noting. In this struggle, Muhammad Quli along with the ruler of Bijapur rendered her help on request. This alliance of sorts of the Sultantates saved Ahmadnagar and the first assault on the kingdom under Akbar's son, Prince Murad, resulted in a peace treaty in 1595. The price of peace for Ahmadnagar was cession of Berar to the Mughals.

The Mughals invaded Ahmadnagar again in 1597 and once again Bijapur and Golconda responded to the appeal of Chand Bibi for help. Though the Bijapur and Golconda contingents inflicted heavy casualties on the Mughals, victory

eluded them due to lack of proper co-ordination. Ahmadnagar fell after a valiant defence and Chand Bibi was killed by her own people.

Chand Bibi's indomitable spirit was kept alive by Malik Ambar, a Negro and a former slave who gave the Mughals enough trouble and wrested the fort of Ahmadnagar from them. In his fight against the Mughals, Malik Ambar sought and secured help from Ismail Adil Shah of Bijapur and Muhammad Quli. He warned them that if he was defeated, their fall could not be far away.

Thus, though Muhammad Quli did not come into direct conflict with the Mughals, he extended his help thrice to save Ahmadnagar from their onslaught. While on the one hand, he paid tribute to Akbar, on the other he helped Ahmadnagar against him. He, alongwith other Sultans suggested that Akbar should depute a representative to be stationed in his court for ensuring amicable relations. There was no immediate response to this suggestion. After some years, one Masud Beg was deputed by Akbar as a political agent to Golconda to drive home the supremacy of the Mughal emperor.

Muhammad Quli continued the practice of paying *peshkash* to Jahangir also.

Relations with Persia

A discussion of the foreign policy of Muhammad Quli can't be complete without a reference to his relations with Iran, then called Persia. It has to be remembered that both Persia and what was called Hindustan or the Mughal India were world states. In contrast, Golconda was a mere native state. But Golconda tried to keep the Mughals at bay by maintaining political relations with Persia. Amongst them there was what has been called by a student of the subject, a "relational triangle."

As mentioned earlier, the founder of Qutb Shahi dynasty, Sultan Quli, had dropped the name of Mahmud Shah Bahmani and introduced instead the name of Shah Ismail Safavi in the *khutba*. Ismail's son, Tehmasp received an ambassador from Sultan Quli and sent him a bejewelled crown. Shah Abbas I of Iran sent his roving ambassador to the Deccan Sultanates. He was *Kark Yaraq* which means the chief of ordnance. It is, therefore, believed that he was sent to give advice on military matters. Muhammad Quli sent his first embassy to Shah Abbas I led by Qazi Mustafa with a letter which was full of excellent prose and poetry. In this letter he affirmed his faithfulness to Persia and made a veiled complaint against the Mughals. In 1604, a return embassy was sent by Persia to Muhammad Quli. A reception was accorded to it even as far as the port of landing at Goa. The Persian monarch sent a letter and a crown for Muhammad Quli. The embassy included about 100 military experts who presumably gave advice and training to the Qutb Shahi army. The ambassador also brought a proposal for the marriage of the Sultan's only daughter, Hayat Bakshi Begum with one of the Persian princes and stayed on in Hyderabad for over six years. But, the proposal did not meet with success.

Muhammad Quli also tried to enlist the good offices of King Abbas I with the Mughal emperor, Jahangir for softening the latter's attitude towards Golconda. On Muhammad Quli's death, King Abbas sent a letter of condolence to his successor which was full of praise for the Sultan. The Persian monarch was also in correspondence with Muhammad Quli's Peshwa, Mir Muhammad Mumin.

The Qutb Shahis recognized the Persian emperor as an overlord voluntarily. There were ties of the common sect of Shiaism between the two. Persia could not provide any military

support to Golconda against the Mughals but the friendly relations between the two carried diplomatic advantage for Golconda. The Qutb Shahis tried somewhat vainly to set Persia as a counterpoise to the Mughals. But geography was an unfavourable factor in this calculation. Distance limited the role of Persia in this game of balance of power.

Commerce and Trade

Apart from these political contacts, there were also extensive commercial and trade relations between Golconda and Persia. Textiles, tobacco, gun powder, rubies and wooden furniture constituted the main exports from Masulipatnam to Persia while carpets, ceramics, glass, silver, pearls, fruits and horses were the main imports from Persia. However, their commercial relations were not merely bilateral. While Golconda occupied a key position in the Persian foreign trade carried on in the East, so did the latter occupy an important position in the westward trade of the Coromandal coast. Slaves also constituted an item of import-export on both sides.

Professionals like architects, civil engineers and skilled artisans came from Persia, as also material for books and book-binding. The Greco-Arab or the *Unani* was the official system of medicine in Golconda and a good number of physicians professing this system also came from Persia. Shamsuddin and Saifuddin Mohammad were the two famous *Unani* physicians during Muhammad Quli's period.

Superior administration and military establishment was virtually in the hands of Persians. A continuous flow of immigration from Persia contributed to strengthening of their role in various aspects of administration and every day life. Teachers in general and tutors for princes in particular, were Persian. The Persian system of education was taken as a model

to be emulated. Persian influence was, therefore, all-pervasive and the standards of excellence in all fields were set by the Persians. Golconda was virtually an intellectual colony of Persia and it revelled in it.

Methwold, a factor in the Dutch factory at Masulipatnam records in his *Relations* written in 1618-22 that there were 66 forts and castles in the Golconda kingdom. Each was commanded by a *Naik*. He saw three of them himself and was impressed by the enormity and impregnability of the fort at Kondapalle. The garrison there consisted of 16,000 soldiers. The soldiers were paid the equivalent of three rupees a month and that too not regularly. In his opinion, the fort “could not be undermined except by treachery, scaled without wings or battered but by famine.” Between this and the fort at Kondavidu, which was 25 miles away, there existed a system of “nightly correspondence” through signals.

According to the same writer, the Golconda Fort was bigger and more ‘sumptuous’ than any other fort belonging to the great Mughal or any other king. This was the opinion, according to him, of those who had travelled all over India.

The king had four wives and at least 1,000 concubines. Methwold found it surprising that this was lauded by his subjects. He told them that in contrast his own king had three kingdoms and only one wife!

According to three different estimates, those of Methwold, Schoerer and one anonymous (most probably Van Ravesteyn), the revenue of the Sultanate varied between 1.7, 1.9 and 2.5 million *pagodas*. This was a European name for *hon*, which though a standard of the Vijayanagar empire circulated freely in the Sultanates of the Deccan. The value of a *hon* was about four-and-a-half rupees. Thus the average

revenue towards the close of Muhammad Quli's reign could be put at about one crore rupees. According to Vincent Smith, the annual income of the Mughal empire in 1648 was estimated at Rs. 22 crore. This gives us some idea of the relative strength and resources of the Mughal empire and the Golconda kingdom-about 25:1. Land revenue was the chief source of income for the state. It was paid either in cash or kind. Agricultural land was "farmed out" to the highest bidder. Besides this, there was the system of *peshkash* or presents paid to the court for the work done, particularly on behalf of European companies which started their establishments in the beginning of the 17th century. Other sources of revenue were octroi which was levied on tobacco and salt, excise duty on toddy and export duties which affected principally the Dutch and the English. Of these, the Dutch were more favoured because they were opposed to the Portuguese who were not liked because of their rapaciousness and proselytizing excesses. The Dutch paid four per cent customs duty both on import and export and were exempt from stamp duty which was 11 per cent. Later, they were able to get the duties compounded by the payment of a lump sum of 3,000 *pagodas*.

There was also a tax on diamonds. Diamond mines were let out on contract at the rent of three lakh *hons* for small diamonds and a higher rate for larger ones. Tavernier visited the mines of Kulur and recorded that 30,000 men worked in them. Diamonds of upto 900 carats were mined there. One such was the *Koh-i-Noor* (the mountain of light) which Mir Jumla presented to Shah Jahan, the Mughal emperor, when he deserted the Qutb Shahi Sultan. It was among the vast booty taken by Nadir Shah to Persia after the sack of Delhi in 1739 and now it adorns the British crown.

Foreign Trade

The main exports were textiles, steel products and diamonds. Imports consisted of lead, cloth, horses, dry fruit, china-ware and pearls. Saltpetre used in the manufacture of gunpowder was another important item of import. While foreign trade was carried on from both the east and the west coasts, the eastern coast was more important for the Qutb Shahis, since a good part of it was directly under them. Masulipatnam and Srikakulam were the principal ports of the kingdom. Narsapur was known for ship-building. The Persian word for port was *bandar*. Masulipatnam town is still commonly referred to by this name by the local people.

Land Revenue

Land belonged to the Sultan and the cultivators paid a share of their earning as land revenue which was collected with coercion. There was a system of *jagirs* and the administration had a hierarchy of three tiers—village, group of 100 villages forming a district and the Central Government.

Prices

It is interesting to note the price level prevalent at that time. Schoerer and Methwold in their *Relations* recorded the price level of some of the necessities of daily life some years after Muhammad Quli's death. One can, therefore, assume that the prices would have been still lower in his time. Here is a representative list:

Rice—a rupee for 40-60 kg.

Wheat—a rupee for 20 kg.

Ghee—a rupee for 20 kg.

Ox—four to five rupees per head.

Goat—about 60 paise per head.

Pepper—Rs. 125.00 for 240 kg.

Cloves—Rs. 25-45 for 240 kg.

Raw China silk—Rs. 15-17 per kg.

Twisted China silk—Rs. 4.50 per kg.

Ships sailed in all directions from the two ports of the kingdom, viz. Masulipatnam and Srikakulam. The travel cost of the Qutb Shahi ships was much less than that of the European ships—about one third. Roads led from Hyderabad to Surat in the west, Bijapur in the north-west, Goa in the south-west and Madras in the south-east. Bullock-cart was the usual mode of travel for the common citizen. It travelled at an average rate of 20 miles a day. Horses travelled much faster and in times of emergency, the army through forced marches covered as much as 200 miles a day. Mail was carried at a speed of over 100 miles a day. Tavernier has mentioned the existence of a good and efficient postal system in Golconda. For some time in the 17th century, the Mughal postal system existed side by side with the Qutb Shahi system. The superior Mughal system replaced it later.

Although *Shiaism* was the state sect, Hindus constituted the majority of the population. There was acute rivalry and antipathy between the Shias and the Sunnis. The followers of each faith were left pretty much on their own and each community was governed by its own personal law. Muslims were mostly in government service and Persians occupied most senior positions. Some of the Persians and Afghans also indulged in usurious money-lending charging interest at rates as high as 4-5 per cent a month.

Writers of the period have given an account of the generally prosperous conditions in the countryside. Quoted below is a passage from Jadunath Sarkar's *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. I. This is based on a number of diverse sources and sums up the overall picture of the period.

“Golconda was a very fertile and carefully irrigated country, with a large industrious population. The capital, Haidarabad, was at this time the centre of the diamond trade, not of Asia alone, but of the whole world. A number of foreign traders assembled here and transacted business. The kingdom was famous for several industries. The steel works of Nirmal and Indur (two villages north of the city) supplied the raw materials for the world-famed Damascus blades and the local out-turn of swords, lances and daggers was distributed in large quantities over all parts of India. The skilled cloth weavers of Masulipatnam were sought after for the imperial factories of Burhanpur and Delhi and the chintz woven there had a continental celebrity. The carpet industry of Ellore, conducted entirely by Muhammadans, was famous for centuries. To its smiling cornfields, tanks teeming with fish, and flourishing handicrafts, must be added the diamond and gold mines which made the name of Golconda known even in far-off Europe. The kingdom also possessed in Masulipatnam the best anchorage in the Bay of Bengal and the only place on the East Coast whence ships sailed for Pegu, Siam, Bengal, Cochin, China, Manila, and even Mecca and Madagascar. The forests of the kingdom sheltered large herds of highly prized elephants, which added to the wealth of the king. Tobacco and the palm flourished exceedingly, and the excise on tobacco and toddy juice yielded a large revenue.”

Muhammad Quli ruled for thirty-one years. He had inherited a well-governed state from his father. He had his share of intrigues, factions, rebellion and border skirmishes. He himself undertook some expeditions. However, in military action he did not cover himself with glory. In an age in which it was considered the duty of a king to wage war, he proved to be a reluctant fighter. He did not expand his provinces and engaged in action only to protect his dominions. He was not an empire-builder. He was content to keep his inheritance broadly intact.

His involvement with the Mughals also was marginal and indirect. He acknowledged the supremacy of the Mughal power in India but hoped to keep to himself a semblance of sovereignty. For that he needed the help of Persia. For success in this balancing act what was required was diplomatic skill and he did fairly well in that. His influence in the affairs of the five Deccan Sultanates was wholesome and he kept up the somewhat predominant position of Golconda in the Deccan.

His heart, however, lay not in statecraft or diplomacy but in the arts which are inspired by peace. He was at home with the Muses. Poetry, literature, music, architecture, town-planning, all beckoned him and it is to these fields which we should now turn to make an overall assessment of his performance.

The Poet

The main reason for the enduring popularity of Muhammad Quli is that he was a poet of no mean order. He was *not* the first Poet in Urdu. But his distinction lay in his being the first Urdu poet whose complete works were published in a book form in one volume—a *diwan*. This was done after his death by his successor, Sultan Muhammad Qutb Shah who was his son-in-law as well as his brother's son. The latter was himself a poet. Muhammad Quli's published output is said to exceed 100,000 lines.

Emergence of Urdu

The biographies of some people are of interest and importance because they also constitute a larger history of some sort. In the history of Urdu, Muhammad Quli stands out as a colossus. Urdu is one of the fifteen languages recognised by the Constitution of India. It held sway for a long time in the far-flung parts of India.

The word 'Urdu' is Turkish in origin and means a 'camp' or 'army'. The English word 'herd' is of the same root and there is a similar German word 'herde' which means a crowd.

The term was in use during the period of Chingiz Khan, the Mongol (1162-1227). His mobile army was divided into four units—the royal camp called *urdu-e-mutalla*, or the

‘golden camp’; the camp of the princes royal called *urdu-e-muzhab* or the ‘silver camp’; the camp for the nobles called *urdu-e-mualla* or the ‘exalted camp’; and lastly, the camp for the rank and file simply called *urdu*. The last two terms were used one after the other for the language called Urdu in India because the members of these two *camps* were the first to come into contact with the public at large giving birth to the language.

Though the first Muslim invasion of India occurred in 712 AD when Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sind, it was in the nature of an Arab incursion. This resulted in an encounter between the local language, Sindhi on the one hand and Arabic on the other and to a lesser extent, Persian. However, a sustained and unbroken contact which expanded territorially with the passage of time and which exposed the native Indian language to a *full-scale* communion with Persian occurred in 1020 when Mahmud of Ghazni annexed Punjab and made it part of his empire. As a result, an army of occupation came to be stationed in Punjab for 167 years—as long as Punjab remained under the Ghaznavid rule. Mahmud and his army spoke Persian. This conquest of the Punjab also led to extensive and repeated waves of immigration into India from areas where Persian was spoken.

In 1186, Muhammad Ghori defeated the Ghaznavid ruler and made Punjab part of his empire. Seven years later, in 1193, Ghori’s General, Qutb-ud-din Aibak subjugated Delhi, marking the beginning of the rule by Muslim Sultans. For the next seven centuries Delhi remained the capital of the Persian-speaking rulers of India and the headquarters of their armies.

Thus, the earliest—and prolonged—contact between the Persian-speaking invaders and the people of India occurred in Punjab. Out of sheer necessity the invading army had to

pick up a smattering of the local language. On the other hand, there was greater, though unconscious, pressure on the populace to learn the language of the new, victorious ruling class. There were thus diverse social contacts, even conversions and inter-marriages which contributed to the evolution of a new 'mixed' language. In this process a number of Persian, Turkish and Arabic words were also assimilated into the local language. The presence of such words in the Punjabi language testifies this influence.

Under the new dispensation, Persian was the language of the court, but it could not become a medium of general social intercourse. It stands to reason, therefore, that a new language, a practical mass medium employed by the army (*Urdu*) would have come into being in Punjab where the first of a sustained interaction between an alien army speaking Persian and the natives took place. The birth of a language is not a sudden biological event which can be precisely dated, but a slow sociological, organic process, spread over a long period. The close affinity between Urdu and Punjabi suggests that Urdu was born on the highway to Delhi which lay in Punjab and not in or around Delhi as is suggested by some scholars.

Those who ascribe the origin of Urdu to Delhi and its environs ignore a considerable chunk of 177 years of earlier history of uninterrupted interaction between Persian and Punjabi. Their theory also fails to explain the existence of Urdu in the South in the form of *Dakhni* prior to the suggested period of the birth of Urdu, as also the presence in *Dakhni* of a large number of Punjabi words and grammatical constructions. In view of this background, it seems that the late Prof. Mahmood Sherwani and Prof. Zore were right in holding that Urdu was born in Punjab. There is ample historical and literary evidence to support this view.

After the establishment of the Sultanate at Delhi, Urdu developed further and imbibed influences of the language and dialects spoken in the surrounding areas of Delhi. The 'camp' remained entrenched in Delhi for a hundred years before Ala-ud-din Khilji invaded the Deccan. The army which had earlier invaded Punjab and later Delhi composed mostly of foreigners, speaking a foreign language. The army which now crossed into the Deccan largely comprised soldiers recruited from within India. The mother tongue of this army was *Urdu* as that of Ghazanavids' and Ghoris' armies had been Persian. Later, Muhammad Tughluk shifted the capital from Delhi to Deogiri in 1327. So, an army of occupation was stationed in the Deccan whose mother tongue was Urdu. What had happened in Punjab in the 11th and the 12th centuries and in Delhi in the late 12th and 13th centuries repeated itself in the Deccan in the 14th century. Assimilation also took place between Urdu on the one hand and the regional languages of the Deccan—Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu and Kannada, on the other, but this was more with the first two languages because they belonged to the Aryan family as compared to the latter two which belonged to the Dravidian group.

We have noted in the last chapter that in 1347, Zafar, a local centurion after a rebellion against Muhammad Tughluk founded the Bahmani dynasty in the Deccan with Daulatabad as the capital. This revolt was based on local patriotism and not on religion. It was directed against the Sultan of Delhi. The new regime took care to keep itself insulated from the North. From the middle of the fourteenth century till the regular forays of Akbar into the Deccan, there were few armed incursions and little political interference from the North. Urdu in the North and in the Deccan, therefore, grew independently of each other, more or less in isolation. The Urdu that evolved

in the Deccan came to be called *Dakhni*. *Deccan*, meaning the *South* in this context covered the territories of Gujarat, Aurangabad, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Bidar and Golconda. That explains the differences between the Urdu of Delhi and the North often called *Urdu-e-mualla* or the *Muhawara-e-Shahjahanabad*, and the Urdu of the *Deccan*—*Dakhni*. Not surprisingly, the latter had many Punjabi words and constructions, part of the original ballast of Urdu picked up during its infancy in Punjab in the 11th and 12th centuries.

This isolation was definitively broken when Aurangzeb moved to the South in 1678 to subjugate the southern Sultanates. He never returned from there. Aurangabad was the headquarters of Aurangzeb and after his conquest of Bijapur in 1686 and of Golconda in 1687, it also became the headquarters of the Deccan province of the Mughal empire. A new cultural and linguistic intercourse between the South and the North ensued from this conquest and Urdu of the North and *Dakhni* of the South began to influence and enrich each other. While Vali *Dakhni* went to Delhi from Aurangabad, Siraj Aurangabadi and Ismail Amrohavi came from Delhi to Aurangabad.

When Vali *Dakhni* visited Delhi in 1700 and his anthology appeared there in 1720, people were impressed with the maturity and the capacity for expression of the *Dakhni*. For a long time Vali was wrongly considered the first poet of Urdu. In the long run, *Urdu* of the North superseded *Dakhni*, reducing it in course of time to a mere spoken dialect.

Although we have been talking of the Urdu language, it is interesting to note that this term was not used for the language till 1752. Even the term ‘Urdu’ for army camp, it has been suggested, was used first at the time of Babur, the Mughal who conquered North India in 1526. But as we have

stated earlier, the term was in use even earlier, though not in India.

For over six centuries, therefore, Urdu was growing without the name by which it is known today. It was then called Hindi or *Hindvi*—an appellation generally applied by the Arabs and the Persians both to the people of India and its language, somewhat like the terms English, French, German, etc. Even today, Arabs and Iranians refer to an Indian as ‘Hindi’. For them, the term does not have the linguistic or religious connotation which it evokes within our country. A comparable situation perhaps exists today in the world of Indian cinema. What are called ‘Hindi’ films are in fact largely Urdu films with dialogues and songs basically in Urdu written mostly by popular writers and poets of Urdu.

It was not as if the first contacts between Islam and Persian and Arabic languages and the people of India occurred only on the battlefield. Commercial and maritime relations between South India and Arab countries had existed much before Islam came as a conquering force to India. A number of Arabic and Persian works had been rendered into Hindi and *Dakhni* to spread the message of Islam. There were numerous Muslim settlements in the South prior to the Islamic invasion of India. Ibn Batuta noticed these and some mosques during his visit to the South in the 14th century. There is the record of a Hindu Raja, Ballala Deva of Dwara Samudra, having 20,000 Muslim soldiers in his army. Such early relations and associations also must have contributed to the evolution of a common language.

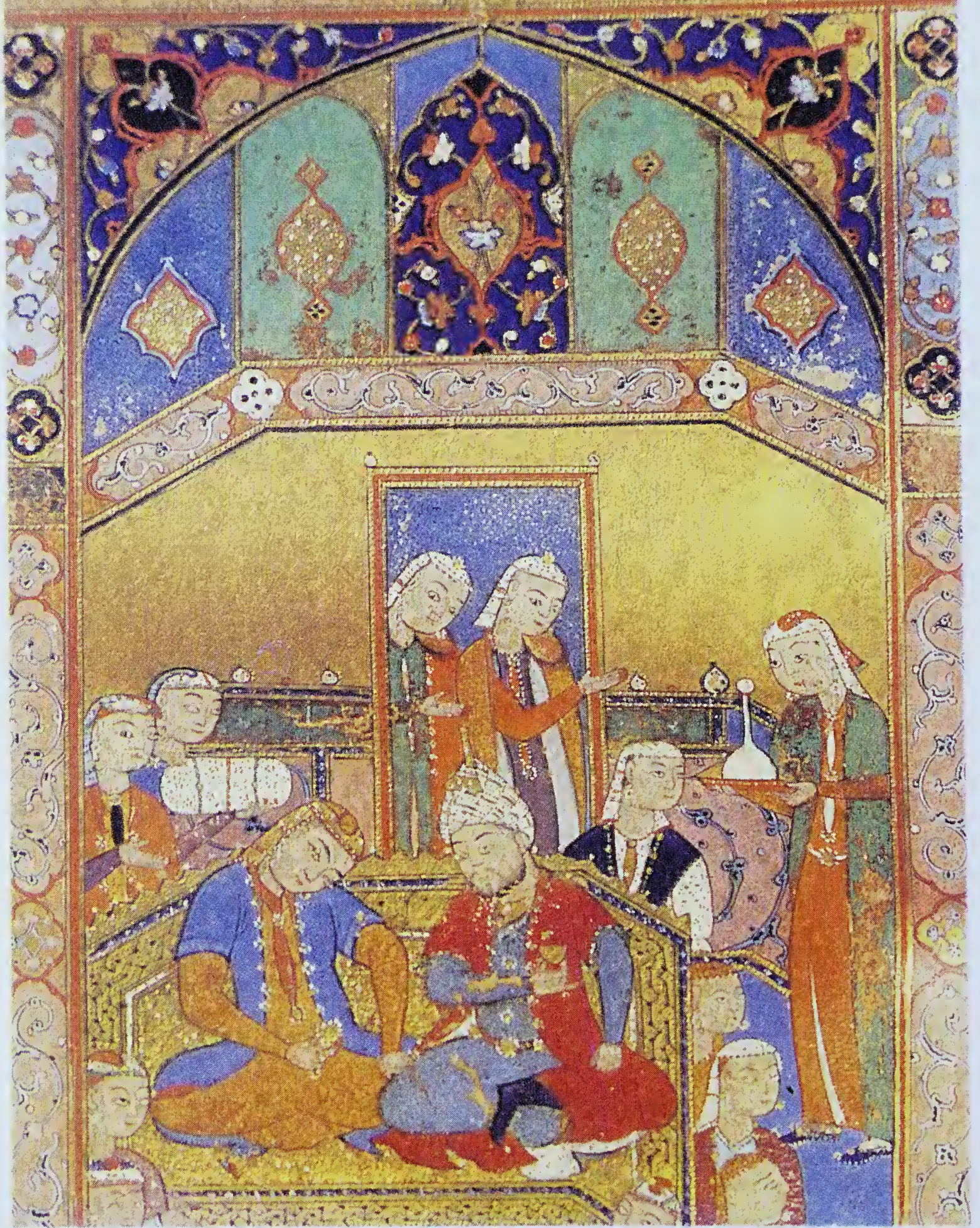
Another medium for the growth of the language was the religious *Khanqahs* or monasteries of the Sufis which were used for the propagation of Islam and Sufiism.

Even in the armies of Ala-ud-din Khilji when he invaded the Deccan, there were men like Amin Hasan Sijzi, a distinguished disciple of Khwaja Nizam-ud-din Auliya of Delhi. Branches of a number of Sufi orders were established in the South as early as 1318.

Since people belonging to different religions and speaking different languages assembled in these places, it was only natural that a common language evolved there. Further, the need for propagating the creed necessitated the use of a simple language understood by the people.

This then, is the brief history of Urdu. Just to complete the story and up-date it, it may be added that Persian was the court language of the Sultans of Delhi and the rulers who followed them. However, the language of social communication amongst the masses was Urdu and it was growing rapidly as a full-fledged native language. Persian also shared the decline of the Mughal empire. In the 18th century, after Vali *Dakhni*'s visit to Delhi, a movement came into being there which sought the expulsion of Persian as a 'foreign' language and its substitution by Urdu, a native language. Arzu, Dard, Souda and Mir were the leading lights of this campaign. But paradoxically, they also felt that in order to enable Urdu to supplant Persian, Urdu should be purged of 'rough' and 'vulgar' words and enriched by the infusion of refined Persian words into it. That was the time when the local idiom and words came to be jettisoned and substituted by Persian. It also meant rejection of a number of Hindi words freely in use at that time. Till then Urdu was very simple. There was hardly any difference between Hindi and Urdu. Urdu was full of words which today we may call Hindi. It was the Persianization of Urdu which pulled it away from the mass language it had been for a long time. Its natural progression

خدا یارِ دیا یاقطبہ کون
دعا موز بند کی موز چاکر تیر



One of the illustrations in the *diwan* of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. Manuscript in the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad
(Courtesy: Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad)

was halted. Henceforth it leaned towards Persian and Arabic and came to draw upon them excessively, sometimes needlessly. In the process, it distanced itself away from the local and the indigenous.

We seem to have gone a little out of the way in dealing with this background but this digression will help to understand the language, its career and the reason for its branching off into *Dakhni* in which a wealth of literature came to be created.

In literature, poetry precedes prose. In Urdu too, poetry antedates prose and in this regard Muhammad Quli stands out as a pioneer.

Muhammad Quli was a poet who wrote largely in *Dakhni*. Some people were of the view that he wrote poetry in Telugu also but no evidence has been found so far in support of this claim. In Persian, he was an admirer of Hafiz, some of whose poems he also translated into Urdu. But his extant Persian poetry is very little. His Urdu poetry, on the other hand, is voluminous. He adopted seventeen pseudonyms for his Urdu poetry out of which four are common- 'Qutb Shah', 'Maani', 'Turkman' and 'Quli'.

Ghazal (lyric or love lyric) is the most popular form in Urdu poetry. Apart from that, there are *qusida* (ode), *marsiya* (elegy), *mathnavi* (romance) and *tazkira* (anthology or biographical anthology). Muhammad Quli was not only successful in *ghazal*, he also showed equal facility in the other forms. His work is divided almost equally between *ghazal* on the one hand and the rest of the forms of Urdu poetry on the other.

In this section we will deal with his poetry. Wherever necessary, samples of his poetry have also been given.

Although he wrote in the Persian script, the text also is given in Devanagari so that it can reach a wider readership. A free translation of the quoted pieces is also given in English.

Hazards of Translation

A word about translation here will be in order. The reader will no doubt be aware of the hazards of translation, particularly of poetry. Translation is murder, so goes the Italian saying. Robert Frost called poetry the untranslatable element of language. This view, however, is not entirely correct. As Auden pointed out, poetry has three broad aspects. The first relates to ears—sound of words and properties and relations arising out of it, like rhyme, rhythm, pun, alliteration and onomatopoeia. These cannot be put across from one language to another. The second aspect concerns what the eye sees—images, similes and metaphors which are drawn from sensory experience. They are translatable. Lastly, there is the poet's unique way of seeing things—his *perspective*. This element will also survive translation.

Quli has an abundance of the first two elements in his poetry. So, in part he is easy and in part difficult to translate. But then there is no other way of giving an idea of his verse except through translation.

Secular Element

Quli is the first poet to introduce a secular note in Urdu poetry. Hitherto, it had mainly been religious. Quli talks of nature in its variegated aspects, seasons of the year, flowers, fruits, vegetables, gardens, social life, customs and festivals. He sings of the pleasures of love, of physical love with a candour and an abandon, surprising in a medieval monarch. Religion doesn't inhibit him from enjoying himself nor from

dyscribing the pleasure he has derived from his indulgences. There is no difference between a Hindu and a Muslim in these respects:

مسلمان ریت کافر ریت کیا ریت اے نہ جانوں میں
کہ جگ کے لوگ ریتیاں چھوڑ پکڑے ریت تجھ جمیوا

مسلمانوں ریت کافر ریت کیا ریت اے نہ جانوں میں
کہ جگ کے لوگ ریتیاں چھوڑ پکڑے ریت تجھ جمیوا

(What is the Muslim path, what is the kafir's way? I know not these; people are leaving these and following your path).

کفر ریت کیا ہو ر اسلام ریت
(اور)

ہر اک ریت میں ہے عشق کا راز
کفر ریت کیا ہو ر اسلام ریت
(اور)

ہر اک ریت میں ہے عشق کا راز

(What is the heathen's path, what is the Muslim's. Every practice is based on the secret of love).

Further:

میں نہ جانوں کعبہ و بیت خانہ و مے خانہ کون
دیکھتا ہوں پر کہاں دستا ہے تجھ ممکھ کا صفا

(نہ کھتا) (منہ) (جیسا صاف)

मैं न जानूँ काबा-ओ-बुत खान-ओ मै-खान कू
देखता हूँ पर कहां दिस्ता है तुझ मुख का सफ़ा
(दिखता)

(I don't know the holy kaaba or the idol's temple or the tavern;
I look everywhere but can't see a face as clear as yours).

Again:

جہاں توں واں ہوں پیارے مینے کیا کام ہے کس سوں
نہ بیت خانے کا رنج پر وا نہ مسجد کا خبر مینج کوں

जहां तू वां हूँ प्यारे मिन्जे क्या काम है किस सूँ
न बुतखाने का मिंज परवा न मस्जिद का खबर मिंज कूँ

(I am where you are, my dear. I have nothing to do with any
one else. I am bothered neither about the temple nor about the
mosque).

This theme was to be picked up by Mir, two centuries later and by Ghalib in the next century and then become a commonplace with other poets. But it required courage on the part of a medieval Muslim monarch to equate Islam with paganism. And the language reads like that of Kabir and the Sufis. There is no poetic artifice or conceit in this.

His poetry also substantiates the general view about his complete identification with his people. Their fairs and festivals, their customs and rituals, ceremonies and celebrations, are all subjects competently dealt with by him. He says about himself:

ہندو ریت کوں تم دیتے، میں روا جاں
کہ بت خانہ نمنے ہے تو بھی ہمیں سر

ہندو، ریت کूं تم دتے ہیں ریتاں
(کو) (ہو) (ریتاں)
کے بتخانہ نامنے ہے تو بھی ہمیں سر
(کی) (کے سمان) (ہم جیسا)

(You give encouragement to Hindu practices-that is the accusation. After all the temple is also like the mosque).

Quli's Ghazals

Ghazal simply put, is love poetry consisting of couplets each one of which is sufficient by itself and need not be related to the next. The *nazm*, on the other hand, is generally descriptive in character and there is a thread of continuity running through the whole poem. Muhammad Quli's great achievement was that he enlarged the scope and content of *ghazal*. From a lyrical form, he converted it into a vehicle for the descriptive. He bent the *ghazal*, as it were, to the purposes of *nazm*. He dealt with external subjects with great ease. Suzanne Langer and William James equated the novelist with the historian. Both, they argued, present history; only their methods are different. As James put it "to represent and illuminate the past, the actions of man, is the task of either writer." Quli is that type of poet who has documented the history of his age for us in his poetry. For example, writing about one of his palaces, the *Khuda-dad-Mahal* he says:

خدا داد محل کو محمد سنوارے اُس میں جنت کے نگاراں نگارے
(تصویریں سجائے)
بلندی محل کا ہے آسمان جیسا سورج چاند تارے ہو اُس تھے سنگارے
(سجائے)

جو آسٹوں بہشتِ نینے آسٹوں چھپے ہیں خضر چٹے بہتے ہیں تیش میں سدا رہے

खुदादाद महल को मुहम्मद संवारे-उस में जन्नत के निगारों निगारे
 (तस्वीरें) (सजाए)
 बुलन्दी महल का है असमान जैमा-सूरज चांद तारे हो उस थे मिंगारे
 (में) (सजाए)
 जो आठों बहिश्त नमने आठों छजे हैं-खिज़र चश्मे बहते हैं तिस में सदा रे

(Muhammad has decorated the *Khuda-dad-Mahal*. There are aspects of heaven in it. The palace is as high as the sky, the sun, the moon and the stars ornament it. Its eight storeys are like eight heavens in which the springs of nectar flow eternally).

Note that this poem documents the architectural features of the palace-its height, its eight storeys, its fountains and its beauty.

This and other palaces no longer exist. The particular palace was gutted in a fire during his successor's time. Others were destroyed by the Mughals. But we have the story of Aurangzeb as a conqueror passing by one of the palaces and enquiring with wonder about the tall building. The guide, Nemat Ali Khan told him it was *Dad Mahal*. To which Aurangzeb punned satirically-"Rather say it is *Shaddad Mahai*" (Shaddad was a Persian tyrant). Nemat Ali Khan replied with caustic cool behoving a defeated but proud adversary, "Only those who have high resolve can build such tall buildings."

Later, when Aurangzeb's son, Prince Azam asked for permission to build a new residence for himself at Hyderabad, Aurangzeb asked him if the Qutb Shahi palaces were not adequate for him. The prince replied that he could not afford to light them!

In Hyderabad, there was a revival of interest in

Muhammad Quli in the early 20th century. That led to excessive adulation for him and the tone adopted by some writers and commentators of that period, notably Dr Zore, was so full of praise giving an impression that they were his court chroniclers. Quli has his strong points and also his limitations. He is primarily a poet of sensuousness. His poetry arises out of satiation, not want; out of surfeit, not deprivation. He writes as a gay philanderer, not as a pining lover. He writes without reserve, not with circumspection and discretion associated with a monarch. There is complete frankness in his writings. He conceals nothing. He sings about "all thoughts, all passions, all delights, whatever stirs this mortal frame." He teases his beloved of the day. There is mock-craving for her. She is unresponsive and cold. Then he makes her drink and she opens up on her own:

ہزاروں مینتاں کرے تالو ٹھکانے ہنس بولتی تیس سہی
(ذرا سا) (نہیں)

سو آج اُتری ہے باتاں میں کہ میں مدہی پلایا ہوں
(شراب)

हज़ारों मिन्तां करता तो दुक हंस बोलती तैस सही श्री
(ज़रा सा)

मो आज उतरी है बातों में के मैं मद की पिलाया हूँ

(I implored her a thousand times and she would't speak.

Then, today that I made her drink, words have started pouring out of her).

On love he has some observations of universal truth:

سنو لوگ میری پریم کہانی کہ پیلا ہے رنگ عاشقی کی نشانی

सुनो लोग मेरी प्रेम कहानी - के पीला है रंग आशुकी की निशानी

(Listen folks to my tale of love; a pallid complexion signifies a lover).

Symptoms of illness, like yellow colour of the skin, are often used in poetry, 'as pointed out by Susan Sontag, in *Illness as Metaphor*.

Again :

محبت کی لذت فرشتیاں کو نہیں ہے
بہت سعی سوں میں سولذت پچھانی

मुहब्बत की लज्जत फ़रिशत्यां को नई है
(प्रेम) (का मज़ा) (देवताओं)
बहुत सई सूँ मैं सो लज्जत पछानी ।
(कोशिश) (से)

(Angels don't know the taste of love; I have recognised it after a great deal of effort).

And on love:

جنہیں کامل کیا ہے پریم اپنا غنی ہے دو جگ میں نہیں ہے وہ محتاج
(عشق) (امیر) (آزاد)

जिन्हे कामिल किया है प्रेम अपना
(प्रेम)
गनी है दो जग में नई है वो मुहताज
(स्वतंत्र)

(He who has attained the height of love is rich in both the worlds. He is not in want of anything else).

Generally, poetry, particularly Urdu poetry, is considered to be the product of separation from the beloved, helplessness and acute deprivation. Quli suffered from none of these. He was a king, he could commandeer anything. He sings of the intoxication of wines which multiply his enjoyment, of the union of sexes and of the beauties of his palaces which make both these possible. There is real merry-making, complete abandon, a full enjoyment and indulgence of the senses. Quli exults in his own fortunate situation. He believes that he was born to enjoy; or better still, 'enjoyment' was created for him:

سودھن جا عیش کھوں پوچھے کہ توں آیا ہے کس خاطر
(عورت) (کو)
کہیا ہنس عیش ازل تھے میں قطب شاہ خاطر آیا ہوں
(کہا) (سے)

सूधन जा ऐश कूं पूछे के तूं आया है किस खातिर
(स्त्री) (को)
कहया हँस ऐश अज़ल थे मैं कुतब शाह खातिर आया हूं
(कहा) (शुरू से)

(The lady asked luxury why it came to the world; it laughed and said it came for the sake of Qutb Shah).

He attributes all his blessings to the Prophet. It is because of that he got a houri of heaven. He tells himself to love and rule merrily:

نبی صدقے پایا ہے جنت کی حور
محبت قطب کر خوشیاں سوں توں راج
(خوشی) (سے)

نबी صدقے پایا ہے جنت کی حور
مہربان کتب کر خوشیاں سوں توں راج
(خوشی سے)

And again:

صدقے نبی کرتا قطب کو تار تھے آپار عیش
(خدا) (کے) (بے حد)
صدقے نبی کرتا کتب کتار تھے آپار عیش
(کے)

(The Prophet be praised. Oh Qutb, you are having unbounded luxury and indulgence).

Erotic Poetry

His poetry is predominantly of the *Sringar* rasa-erotic type and he chooses an appropriate metre and rhyme for that:

پیا سوں رات جاگی ہے سو دِستی ہے سودھن سرخوش
(کے ساتھ) (دیکھتی) (عورت)
مدن سرخوش سین سرخوش، انجن سرخوش، نین سرخوش
(دعش) (سیج) (سرمہ) (آنکھیں)

پیا سوں رات جاگی ہے سو دِستی ہے سودھن سرخوش
(کے ساتھ) (دیکھتی) (ناری)
مدن سرخوش، سہجن سرخوش، انجن سرخوش، نین سرخوش
(سیج) (سرمہ)

(Oh lady, it is clear that you have kept the whole night awake with your lover. That's why Cupid is happy, the bed is happy, the collyrium is happy and your eyes are happy).

Use of Sounds

The alliteration in this whole poem is notable. As a matter of fact, alliteration is a predominant feature of a number of Quli's poems.

Note the use of this device in the following:

ساجنی سجن محل میں ساج کر چنڈاں سو آئی
(محل کا نام) (سج کر) (ناز واد کے ساتھ)
جان جانی ہو کے جاں کا پیالہ سو میخ کو پلائی
(تھے)

साजनी 'सजन महल' में साज कर छंदां सू आई
(भवन का नाम) (बन ठन कर)
जान जानी हो के जां का प्याला सो मिंज को पिलाई
(मुझे)

(My beloved made herself up and in all her coyness came to my palace. Then she, with all her love and life, poured me a drink).

And further:

پہن آ بھرن جگمگیں چھن چھن گلے شہ کے لگے چھن چھن
(پہن کر) (نفیس لباس) (گھنگرو کی آواز) (پل پل)
چلن میں ڈگمگیں چھن چھن ہو یاں بھی باولیاں بالیاں
(ہوئیں) (مست) (جوان لڑکیاں)

पैन अभरन जगमगीं छन-छन गले शाह के लगे छन छन
(पहनकर) (सुंदर वेष) (घुंघरू की ध्वनि) (पल पल)
चलन में डगमगीं छन छन होईयां भी बावलियां बालियां
(हुई) (मस्त) (बालाएं)

(Having put on resplendent ornaments, they come jingling and in a moment embrace the Sultan. The young damsels are high and so have become unsteady in their gait).

And in the following distich on *Basant* (Spring) we hear the music of the instruments, especially *tabla*:

کنھٹی کوئل سرس ناراں سنائے
(اچھے گلے والی) (رِس بھری) (آوازیں)

تنن تن تن، تنن تن تن، تلالا

कंठी कोयल सुरस नादां सुनाए
(अच्छे गले वाली) (रस भरी) (ध्वनि)

तनन तन तन, तनन तन तन तलाला

Along with this we notice onomatopoeia. He evokes situations, movements and even objects by creating their sounds. Note the onomatopoeic features of this distich:

دھن کا دھن، ہیریاں کا کھن، لب لعل کندن ہے ذقن
(نازنین) (دھن) (ہیروں کی) (طشتری) (ٹھڈی)

سُنے سینے پر کُچ رتن کُنیں ایسی کس یوگ ری

धन का दहन हीरियां का खन, लव लाल कुन्दन है जकन
(नारी) (मुख) (हीरों) (तश्तरी) (होंठ) (ठुड्डी)

सुने सीने पर कुच रतन कई ऐसी किस योग रीं
(सोने) (स्तन)

(The mouth of the beloved is a dish of jewels; lips are rubies; chin is shining bright. On the golden breast are the jewels of boobs. What a woman!).

Or, the evocation of sound in the following:

دن دنا گرے جو بن یا دل بہن
(مانند)
کنگن جھلکار میج سناؤ تم
(مجھے)

दन दना गर्जे जोबन बादल निमन-कंगना झलकार मींज सुनाओ तुम
(भांति) (मुझे)

(Youth thunders like a cloud; Let me hear the jingling of bangles).

Rhythm, rhyme, internal rhyme abound in his poetry but alas, they can't be put across in translation.

Again, in very simple colloquial language he describes the pang of separation and the pleasure of union:

دوری مارن، ملن جیون تجھ آگاہی کرن سکتا

दूरी मारन मिलन जीवन तुझ आगाही करन सकता

(Distance is death, union is life, this you need to know).

پیالہ ہت پیا کے پیو تو جگ نشاہی کرن سکتا
(ہاتھ)

प्याला हत पिया के पियो तो जग शाही करन सकता
(हाथ)

(Drinking from the hand of your lover is as good as ruling the whole world).

There is absolutely no reserve in his description of his amorous exploits. Most rulers indulged themselves but

projected a discreet, even a hypocritical stance. Quli on the other hand, not only makes no bones about it, but openly revels in it. He is steeped in pleasure and enjoys each episode twice if not thrice—first, he anticipates it excitedly; secondly, he lets himself go for the duration of the event; and, lastly he relives it in its retrospective contemplation. Quli drinks “life to the lees”, in the manner of Tennyson’s *Ulysses*.

There is something blatantly pagan about his revelries and he makes the reader privy to all his amours and intimacies.

His description of his women, their types, nature, dress and ornaments, makes Prof. Sayeda Jaffar suggest that he was well-versed in the classical Sanskrit literature on the subject. He seems to be familiar with *Kok Shastra* and *Rati Shastra*, famous Indian treatises on the art of love. Those Sanskrit works had already been translated into Persian and Urdu. *Jama*, a court poet of Muhammad Quli is said to have translated *Kok Shastra* into Persian and Quli seems to have read this because he refers to the four types of women described in the *Kama Sutra*, viz. *Padmini*, *Chitrini*, *Sankhini* and *Hasthini*. Was it for this that Muhammad Quli was an admirer of the Sanskrit language and likened it to ‘seven oceans’ whoever acquires its knowledge sees its benefits:

کہ سات سمندر نمن سنسکرت کا علم ہے

(مانند)

تو لوڑے جن وہ کاری دکھاوے اس کے گتاں

(حاصل کر لیا) (جو) (کامل) (کیفیت)

کے سات سمندر نمن سنسکرت کا علم بھے

(کی)

(ज्ञान)

تو لکڑے جن وہ کاری دیکھاوے اس کے گتاں

(لے لے)

(جو)

(पूर्ण)

(कैफियत)

Muhammad Quli was the first erotic poet of Urdu. Later poets like Jurrat, Insha and Rangeen only followed the tradition initiated by him.

Ragas

Judging from his mention of the various *ragas*, *raginis* and musical instruments in his poetry, his knowledge of the subject seems to be vast and profound. In these references there is an easy air of someone who is thoroughly at home with them and is aware of their fine points. It is perhaps because of this that we find an unusual measure of musicality and resonance in his language. His alliteration and onomatopoeia seem to arise out of his facility in music. He declares his preference for music in the following couplet:

میرے سنگ میل بجاتی سنکھ گاتی سنکھرا ابھرن
(راگ کا نام)

سری راگاں جو گاتی استری تو محکون سہباتی ہے

(मेरे संग मिल बजाती संख गाती संखरा अभरण

(राग का नाम)

सिरी रागां जो गाती इस्त्री तो मुज कूं भाती है

(श्रीराग) (स्त्री) (मुझे)

(The one who plays the conch with me and sings *Sankarabhran*, the one who sings *Sri raga*-that woman I like).

He makes special mention of *Asavari*, *Dhanasri*, *Gauri*, *Malhar*, *Kalyan*, *Basant* and *Ram Kali* ragas. He was obviously a connoisseur and patron of music and dance.

Though some writers have called Quli deeply religious, his religiosity seems only skin-deep. His conduct certainly

did not conform to such a claim. He pays formal and ritualistic tribute to the Prophet and the twelve Imams. Most of his poems end either by thanking one or more of them for his good fortune or by supplicating to them for continued future favours. He pays them fulsome tributes and having done that, turns to his favourite pastime-wine and women. He was particular in offering prayers but was not devout or godly. He thanks the Prophet for making him a lover and says that the *Panjtan* (the five sacred personages of Islam, viz. Muhammad, Fatima, Ali, Hasan and Husain) provide him the wherewithal for it.

Writing on *Id* he ends up saying:

پیالہ ادھر چکاتا سا جن وقت پلاتا
(ہونٹ) (چکھانا)
لالن کوں سیج لانا ہے وقت خوش زکی کا
(رچاؤ)

प्याला अधर चकाना साजन वकत पिलाना
(होंठ) (चखाना)
'लालन' कूं सेज लाना है वकत खुश ज़की का
(को) (रचाव)

(Put the cup to the lips of the lover (me). Bring *Lalan* to my couch because it is an occasion to be happy).

The Indian element in his poetry is refreshing and substantial. His similes, his metaphors, all the literary devices, all his allusions draw not upon foreign, imported contrivances but upon everything Indian. His figures of speech are not lifted from the old stockyard of mass-produced phraseology, available to every poet, big and small. He manufactures them in his own private smithy. They are authentically his very own. The entire variety of Indian birds, animals, flowers, items of dress, ornaments, games, fairs and festivals, the monsoon,

basant—the festival of spring, winter, his own birthdays—everything is real and genuine, things which he saw, events which happened before him, episodes which he experienced. They were all his raw materials and his products were hand-crafted in his own workshop. He talks of *saree* and we don't hear of this common women's garment in Urdu for the next four centuries till we come to the progressive poets of the 20th century and then too very seldom. The crescent of *Id* for him is the ivory of the sky-elephant. Teeth are nuts of *chironjia sapida*, lips are kernel of coconut, beads of perspiration are poppy-seeds, eyes are drunkards sleeping under the arches of mosques, the long hair of the beloved spread on her white breast are dark clouds ascending a mountain. In another metaphor, talking of the black nipple on the white breast of the beloved, he wonders how the sun has 'arrested' night within itself! The candle melting before the beauty of the beloved is like hail-stones which vanish before the sun. Similes and metaphors of such refreshing originality are not found before him—not even afterwards. It is not the rivers of Arabia or Persia that he talks of, not the *Dajla* and the *Farat* or the *Jehoon* or the *Sehoon* but the Ganga and the Yamuna, the eternal rivers of Hindustan. One of his beloveds sings:

تمہیں میرے مندر سو آؤ آج لالہ

(میں)

تم اُپر تھے جو بن واروں گی سو بالہ

(سو بار)

(اوپر سے)

تुमों मेरे मन्दिर सू आओ आज लाला

(में)

तुम उपर थे जोवन वारुंगी सौ बाला

(से)

(Oh my lover, come to my temple today; I will spend all my, youth upon you).

People's poet

This is nothing but Hindi and a Hindu 'geet' and has the ring of Meera and Surdas. The overall impression of his language, its metres and the figures of speech used by him are strongly suggestive of the type of language used by the 'saints' of the *Bhakti* movement. His poems titled- *Tera Sain Tujh Mein* (Your Lord is within you) and *Kafir Reet* could have been written by Kabir or Nanak. The title of the first poem is in fact derived from a *doha* of Kabir. The entire ring of the language of Quli is suggestive of some of the compositions in the *Adi Granth*.

The late Dr Zore compiled his pioneering anthology of Muhammad Quli's poetry along with his commentary in 1940. He mentions therein that one Jamal-ud-din Hyder heard Muhammad Quli's poem on 'Jalva' at a wedding ceremony in Jagitial of district Adilabad in 1940. Some of his *munajat* (prayers), particularly the one on the city of Hyderabad are commonly sung even today. Some of the functions even start with the singing of that poem as a tribute to the founder of the city.

Muhammad Quli was prolific in his writings, his choice of subjects was unlimited, the entire range of life in its variegation was covered by him. His idiom sprang from the soil and his language was the one spoken by the common people in their daily lives. He has been compared to Nazir Akbarabadi (1740-1830) of Agra as a people's poet. But Nazir was a plebeian, "an inspired vagabond" as Sadiq Muhammad calls him. He lived in the streets. Muhammad Quli, on the other hand, literally lived in his 'ivory tower'. Yet both used

a similar idiom. Both share “an exuberant vitality, a passion for life at the sensuous level and involvement in the variegated phenomena of life.” Nazir looked at the scene over his shoulder, Quli surveyed it from his *jharoka*.

Besides the *ghazal*, Muhammad Quli wrote masterfully in the *marsiya*, *qasida*, *rubayi*, *masthnavi* and *rekhti* forms of Urdu poetry.

Marsiya

Marsiya (elegy) calls for an intensity of feeling and a spontaneity of expression. One has to avoid the hazards of hackneyed and laboured cliches and convey an impression of genuine grief which should move the audience. It has also a distinctive cadence which facilitates mass mourning. Five of his *marsiyas* are extant and are available in his anthologies. Muhammad Quli adopted an appropriate language for this genre which demands more stylized and formalized diction than was his wont to write.

His *marsiyas* were very popular during his reign and it is conceivable that they were recited by people at the mourning sessions during *Muharram*. These sessions were led by the poet-king himself. Listen to the opening of one of his *marsiyas*:

آؤ مل کر ماتمیاں سب اس غماں تھے لہو روویں
وا اماں یا اماں یاد کر کر دل کھوویں

आओ मिल कर मात्मियां सब इस गमां थे लहू रोवें
वा इमामां या इमामां याद कर कर दिल खोवें

(Come, let us gather and weep blood on this mournful occasion. Let us remember the Imams and cry our heart out).

It has a mournful beat and one can imagine how the halls must have resounded with mass mourning and the beating of breasts which went with it.

In 'marsiya' writing he excels his contemporaries.

Qasida (ode) was not a very popular form amongst the *Dakhni* poets. Muhammad Quli is the first *qasida*-writer of the Deccan. *Qasida*-writing has acquired a reputation for exaggeration. It was generally used as a means for obtaining favours through flattery and sychophancy of the royalty or the nobility. Muhammad Quli being above the needs of that kind could write as he pleased. The result was some fine *qasidas* on topics like *Id*, *Nav Roz* (the Persian New Year's day) and *Basant* (spring) which convey the bustle of royal palaces and depict the manners and customs of the period. He took liberties both with the size prescribed by the masters and also with the form of the *qasida*. On *Nav Roz* he rejoices in his typical manner:

کچھیاں کنولیاں کنواریاں ناریاں کلیاں کو نوز آ
محمد صدقے قطب اکبر اننداں سوں ملایا ہے
(خوش قسمتی سے)

कच्चियां कंवलियां कंवारियां नारियां कलियां को नौ रोज़ आ
मुहम्मद सदके कुत्बा कूं अनन्दां सूं मिलाया है.

(Fresh lotuses, virgin, maiden, buds have come on the New Year's Day. Thanks to the Prophet, it is a matter of pleasure that we all met today).

Alliteration and onomatopoeia are also worthy of note in this couplet.

Rubayi

This form consists of a poem of four lines and is usually preceptory in its tone.

Dakhni poets introduced *rubayi* in Urdu. Quli was also the first poet to give a new dimension and depth to it. This form which hitherto was a medium for advice and instruction became, in the hands of Quli, a vehicle for conveying the sentiments of love and eroticism. He gave *rubayi* an Indian character by making it reflect the milieu in which he lived. Here is an example:

اے باؤ میری بات اُسے چوری سوں کہہ
میری سو گپیت بات توں اُس چوری سوں کہہ
پھل جائے بمن ووبات اُس گوری سوں کہہ
(مانند)

سمجھا توں نکو سر زوری سوں کہہ
(نہ) (زبردستی) (سے)

ऐ बाव मेरी बात ऊसे चोरी सू कह
(वायु) (उसे) (से)
मेरी सो गुप्त बात तूं उस छोरी सू कह
(जो)
फुल जाए नमन वो बात उस गोरी सू कह
(फूल की भांति)
समझा तूं, नको सरजोरी सू कह
(मत) (ज़बरदस्ती)(से)

(Oh breeze, go and tell her my wish stealthily. Convey my secret wish to her. Go and tell this to her softly like a flower. Don't be harsh. Speak gently to her).

Rekhti

Rekhti is an interesting form in Urdu poetry. It is the opposite of *ghazal*, in the sense that whereas in *ghazal* men literally 'talk' to women, in *rekhti*, it is women who express their sentiments for men in a language exclusively spoken by them. Besides *ghazal*, *rekhti* is employed in other forms also. It, therefore, requires considerable virtuosity to deal with this form. Quli has written some fine and delicate poems in this style. Here is a piece which reflects the anguish of a woman at her lover's infidelity and tells him that she knows everything:

پیا کس سوں گمائی رات ساری
 (ساتھ) (گزاری)
 تم نے آنکھیاں میں پائی میں خساری
 گما کر رین دوتی سے کی چھپاتے
 (رات) (دیکھ کے ساتھ) (کیا)
 میں تو بھی ہوں نشانیاں سب رین کی

پیا کس سوں گمائی رات ساری
 (ساتھ) (گزاری)
 تو من آنکھیاں میں پائی میں خساری
 گما کر رین دوتی سے کی چھپاتے
 (سوت) (کیا)
 میں بھڑی ہوں نشانیاں سب رین کی

(Oh my lover, with whom did you spend the whole night? I can see the fatigue of a vigil in your eyes. Having spent the night with someone else, what are you trying to hide? I can see all the tell-tale signs of your rendezvous).

Square

An original form of poetry is also found in Quli. It is called *Chahar-dar-chahar* (four-into-four) or a 'square'. The special feature of this form is that it can be read horizontally or vertically. Each line read either way is complete by itself. It exhibits the writer's skill and craftsmanship in composition somewhat like Amir Khusro's puzzles in verse. Consider the following example:

چہار در چہار

| | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|--------------|
| نہیں کیں | تجھ اسی | سہیلی | چھبیلی |
| تجھ اسی | نہ اچھے سے | جگت میں | رنگیلی |
| سہیلی | جگت میں | نہ دکھیا | گھیلی (شوخی) |
| چھبیلی | رنگیلی | گھیلی | نرلی |

‘چہار در چہار’

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| نہیں کی | تو ایسی | سہیلی | छबेली |
| तु ऐसी | न इछ से | जगत में | रंगेली |
| सहेली | जगत में | न देखया | गहेली (शोख) |
| छबेली | रंगेली | गहेली | नवेली |

(I have not seen in this world anyone who is so good, as fresh, coy and colourful).

Reading him today, one is strongly reinforced in the view that Urdu sprang from the Punjab. There are countless Punjabi words in all his poems-words which have presumably been driven out of Urdu over the centuries but are still in use in Punjabi. This holds good for other *Dakhni* writers and poets also.

And also there are signs of the early promise of Urdu-to be a language of union, a vehicle of integration and assimilation—to be fully reflective of the the Indian kaleidoscope. There seemed to be no difference at that time between Urdu and Hindi except that of script. In the whole of his poetry, there is hardly any Arabic or even Persian word. In the glossary of old or archaic words used by Quli and other poets prepared by some anthologists, one sees Sanskrit, Hindi and Punjabi words but very few from Arabic and Persian. Even common Arabic terms like *khuda* or *Allah* for Almighty are seldom used. Instead, he used epithets like *Kartar*, *Swami*, *Dayawant*, *Gosain*, *Sain* and *Niranjan* which are Hindu forms of address for God and which were also used by Kabir and Nanak and other poets of the *Bhakti* movement. There is no foreignness in his language, no heaviness, nothing which sends one looking for lexicons. There is a fresh smell of earth of one's own land in Quli's language.

When he refers to himself as a king, he doesn't use the common Persian terms for king or emperor (*padshah* or *shahanshah*) but Hindi terms-*Raja* or *Rajadhiraj*. In his poem *Raj Tarana* which should mean 'royal anthem' he says to himself:

صدقے نبی دولت نجات جم راج کرو راجے سدا

सदके नबी दौलत बख्त जम राज करो राजे सदा

(भाग्यवान)

(Thanks to the Prophet, you fortunate *raja*, may you stay on the throne and do your *raj* forever).

Self-praise

There is a tradition amongst Urdu poets to indulge in mock self-praise. Quli is no exception to this and there are numerous couplets and distiches written in his own praise. He eulogizes not only his poetry but also his kingship. As a poet:

معانی کی باتاں تھے جھڑتا نمک

(تخلص) (سے)

جے چا کھے کہے ہے نمک سوں شکر

(جو) (کھائے) (میں)

मआनी की बातां थे झड़ता नमक

जे चाखे कहे है नमक सूं शकर

(जो) (में)

(There is salt in what 'Maani' (Quli) says. And if you taste that salt you find it is sugar).

And of his own learning, he boasts:

عالم مجھے سکھائیں گے کیا اپنا علم

وہ نانوں کے حروف ہیں دل میں ہے کلام

(اُس) (نام) (ہمارے)

आलम मुझे सिखाएं गे क्या अपना इलम

(ज्ञानी) (ज्ञान)

वोह नांव के हरुफ हमन दिल में है कलाम

(उस) (नाम) (अक्षर) (पूरी बात)

(What will the learned people teach me of their knowledge. They only know the letters of a word while my heart has the entire composition!).

He calls his couplets variously "pure unpierced pearl"

and “coloured pearl”. He declares:

محمد شاہ ہے اس زمانے کا شاعر

محمد شاہ ہے اس زمانے کا شاعر

(Muhammad Shah is the poet of the Age).

Not being content with that, he equates himself with Khaqani and Hafiz, the renowned Persian poets:

نزاکت شعر کے فن میں خدا بخشا ہے تحسین
معانی شعر تیرا ہے کہ یا ہے شعر خاتانی

نزاکت شعر کے فن میں خدا بخشا ہے توجہ

(کلا) (دیا)

معانی شعر تیرا ہے کہ یا ہے شعر خاتانی

شعر تیرا در و گھر ہے معانی سب میں
شعر حافظ کے سرا پر ہے تاج پرویز

شعر تیرا در و گھر ہے معانی سب میں

(موتی-جواہر)

شعر حافظ کے سرا پر ہے تاج پرویز

(جیسے) (پرویز کا تاج)

And we agree with him when he exults in his popularity:

شعر تیرا معانی صدقے نبی
لکھ لیتے پاتے بات گات پات

शेर तेरा 'मआनी' सदके नवी
 (कुली)
 लिख लेते पाते हात गात प्लात
 (हाथ) (गाते)

(By the grace of the Prophet, Oh Maani, your poetry is taken down by the people and sung by them).

Alliteration in the second line is very powerful. Unfortunately, it can't be translated.

And he prophesied that "no one will be able to write any commentary on my work because it is like a miracle."

نہ لکھ سکے گا کنے شرح مجھ کتاباں کا
 (کوئی بھی) (میری) (کتابوں)
 ہمارا علم ہے سب عالماں میں جیوں اعجاز
 (مثل)

ना लिख सकंगा कने शरह मुझ किताबों का
 (कोई भी) (टीका) (मेरी) (किताबों)
 हमारा इल्म है सब आल्मां में ज्यों ऐजाज़
 (ज्ञान) (ज्ञानियों) (समान) (चमत्कार)

He also wrote a number of poems on his own birthdays. It is significant to note that he doesn't call the event *Saalgirah* but *Baras Ganth*. The former is Persian and current now in Urdu. The latter is Hindi.

There is one distich in his poem "To A Telangi Woman" which makes a very charming use of a Telugu phrase. Presumably he made overtures to a damsel and she rebuffed him:

نہی صدقے قطب شاہ سانولی سوں

(سے)

بچن ہندی سوں لولی "ایم مری ایم"

(میں) (کیا رے کیا؟)

نہی صدقے قطب شاہ سانولی سوں

(سے)

بچن ہندی سوں لولی "ایم مری ایم"

(میں) (کیا رے کیا)

(Qutb Shah fell for the dark damsel. She said in Hindi-"Eh what is that?").

This suggests that he knew Telugu but calls it 'Hindi' meaning local language.

Muhammad Quli was a versatile poet in whom a keen observation, a fertile imagination, a sound knowledge of Indian music and aesthetics and an extensive vocabulary joined to produce a remarkable effect. There is also a complete synthesis of the Persian and Indian cultures and religions with a happy predominance of the Indian element.

Quli is a poet of sight and sound, of relish and savour, of fragrance and redolence, of spice and flavour, of sunrise and daylight, of rhyme and rhythm, of dance and music-of the celebration of life. His poetry glorifies all phases of biological

existence. He rejoices in seasons of the year, the rhythmic succession of which makes the sum of our life-spring, monsoon, winter, summer. He celebrates festivals, birthdays, weddings, New Year days. On each topic, there is not one poem, but many. As life's cycle goes on, he reverts to each of these recurring events with renewed vigour. He doesn't get bored with life, because every aspect of it excites him. There is no pessimism or cynicism in him. He is an extrovert whose reaction to events is always positive. He gloats on being the favourite 'servant' of the Prophet and the Imams which made him a favourite of Fate. He glories in being a ruler and living a life of ease and sensuality. He eulogizes the rhythm of an animal existence. A pure sense of life pulsates through his writings.

He is a poet also of gratitude. He worships Bacchus, his pleasures are all pagan but he bows to his formal religion. Virtually, every poem of his ends in his thanking the Prophet and the Imams of the Shiite creed for their blessings which he often recounts. But there is just that much religion in him and no more. His religiosity is ritualistic. "Thanks my Lord for Thy glory", he seems to say, "that was a wonderful experience. Give me more like that." Like children ending their day with prayer which opportunity they also exploit for asking for something which they so ardently desire, Quli ends his poems with prayers and entreaties to his Lord or his deputy on earth. His religiosity is thus superficial, a mere formality to keep the invisible powers happy. But he is not a hypocrite; he is not double-faced. His ribald existence was public for his contemporaries; he also put it on record for posterity.

Muhammad Quli was not the first or the only poet of *Dakhni* Urdu. But he was one of the greatest of his time and one of the masters for all times. He glorified Deccan in his poetry and the Deccan continues to be proud of him.

Patronage of Art and Letters

Himself a poet, it was natural for him to patronize letters. The patronage covered Persian, the court language, Telugu, the language of the masses and *Dakhni* or Urdu.

Persian

Quli held the Persian poet, Hafiz in high esteem and translated some of his poetry into Urdu. He is, thus, the first poet-translator in *Dakhni*. The reputation of the king as a poet and his patronage to letters attracted many learned men from Persia to Golconda. Among them was Mirza Muhammad Amin Shahirstani who came to Golconda and was appointed Mir Jumla on the recommendation of Mir Mumin. For the next ten years he remained at the helm of affairs. When Muhammad Quli died, he went back to Persia. Later, he returned to take up service under the Mughal emperor Jahangir. His official responsibilities did not deter his creativity and he wrote good poetry in Persian. He planned to write five books of *masnavis* (*khamisa*) out of which he was able to complete four. Besides this, his *ghazals* and other poetry make for a bulky volume of good quality.

Another Persian poet was Mulla Mu'n Misak Subazwari who came from Ahmadnagar and became the court poet of Golconda.

There were also a number of minor poets who constituted part of the constant traffic of literary men to and from the court of Golconda.

Telugu

The Qutb Shahi kings used to appoint a Telugu poet laureate in their court. He was called *Kutubshahi Samasthana Panditulu*. During Muhammad Quli's period, one Patta-Metta

Somayaju Kavi was appointed to that post. Kama Reddi, a patron of Telugu letters, was honoured by Muhammad Quli. Tamma Mantri whose full name was Sarangu Tamayya Matendu wrote an interesting devotional story entitled 'Vipranarayana Charitra.' According to the author, Lord Rama appeared before him and literally dictated the story. The outline of the story is as follows:

“Vipranarayana was a Vaishnava Brahmachari of Srirangapatnam on the Kaveri. He had a flower garden at his cottage and he lived on the income from the flowers he sold to Lord Rama's devotees. There were two courtesans named Madhuravani and Devadevi living at Srirangapatnam. The younger of them wanted to entice the holy man but did not succeed at first. She was, however, so sure of her charms that she vowed that if she failed in her attempt, she would give up her profession. She thereupon dressed herself like a devotee and went to Vipranarayana. She told him that she had given up the life of a prostitute and that she would like to serve him as his maid. In course of time she was so much taken up by the piety of the holy man that she even surpassed him. Vipranarayana on his part, was so much moved by her devotion that he himself consented to go to her house as a domestic servant. Thus Devadevi fulfilled her vow. But she was a changed woman; she refused to re-enter her base profession to the great chagrin of her mother who locked her up in a room and drove Vipranarayana out of the house. Vipranarayana now went to his cottage and prayed till Brahma himself appeared in the guise of a Brahman and gave him gold ornaments which Vipranarayana took to Devadevi's mother. When the saint was accused of theft and was about to be killed, Brahma appeared before the executioner and declared that Vipranarayana was absolutely blameless.”

Urdu

In Urdu, there are two well-known names in the court of Muhammad Quli. Vajahi wrote one long allegorical poem called *Qutb-Mushtari* in 1609. It is a romantic tale of a handsome young prince who falls in love with a princess of Bengal after seeing her in his dream. He undergoes numerous hardships and overcomes great obstacles and finally succeeds in winning her love.

It is believed by some that this is a veiled story of Muhammad Quli and Bhagmati. It must have been very flattering to the vanity of the prince whose namesake is the hero of the poem. Vajahi shows considerable narrative skill and his verse is smooth, flowing and racy. In this work he devotes a section to his views on the nature of poetry in general and in praise of his own poetry. He is one of the greatest poets of Urdu.

Vajahi was also the author of the very first prose work in Urdu. His *Sab Ras* or the Story of Beauty and Heart was written in 1634, after the death of Muhammad Quli. It is an allegory of love and the characters are named Beauty, Heart, Love, Intellect and various parts of human body. The theme is the natural attraction of Heart and Beauty, the difficulties that stand in their way and how they manage to come together.

The story comes to a close in a reconciliation between Intellect and Love. According to the compromise, Intellect becomes the Minister of Love. Vajahi believes that though Love is supreme, it should be kept in check by Intellect. It is probably a translation of a Persian work in which Sufi teachings are presented in a narrative form. The story is somewhat spoilt by recurrent sermonizing. Given below are

two examples from Vajahi's *Qutb-Mushtari*, translated by T. Grahame Bailey.

The Dawn of Love

1. Not on earth she appeared nor in heaven.
The prince recked of naught but the maid;
2. He was restless in numberless ways.
Nor in words could the matter be told,
3. Nor yet could all understand,
Only he upon whom it had passed.
4. In this state he remained night and day,
With himself alone had he speech.
5. The charmer absorbed all his thought,
Like amber attracting the grass.
6. He arose, but anon went and slept,
For the maid was seen only in dreams.
7. If the friend comes thus in a dream,
Then the lover wants nothing but sleep.
8. Bewildered, distressed and perturbed—
No peace all the day, save in sleep.
9. Not openly can it be told,
To whom can I trust this my woe?
10. On my couch I'm a tossing sea surge,
For my dream friend my thirst has aroused.

A Wine Feast

1. One night the Emperor an assmebly made;
The sons of ministers sat with him there,
2. And every youth was handsome, fair to see,
And winsome everyone with youthful charm;

3. In war as unafraid as great King Jam,
In bravery not Rustam's self more brave.
4. Courtiers and singers, elegant and wise.
Sat in one place together with the King.
5. Goblet and pitcher taking in their hand,
The courtiers one and all engaged in talk;
6. And when the singers rhythmically sang,
The earth was trembling with the jovial sound.
7. Upon them, as they sang in that wild waste,
A frenzy passed through overmuch desire;
8. And they that served the King in minstrelsy,
Were adding melody to melody.
9. The singers entering into merriment,
Would presently make even mourners gay.
10. With wine and pitcher, salted fruits and cup,
Intoxicated all the guests became.
11. When half the night was come and midnight lowered
Bereft of sense were friends with sense before.
12. Courtiers remembered not how to converse,
And singers their surroundings heeded not.

Vajahi as a court poet took on some of his contemporaries and satirized them, especially Gavassi. But Gavassi turned the tables on him when there was a new king and he became the Poet Laureate.

Gavassi whose life spanned the reign of three kings Muhammad Quli and his two successors, was poor but rose to a life of ease and comfort. As often happens, affluence affected his writing adversely. He wrote better when he was poor. He is considered a good poet but not as good as his

contemporaries Vajahi and Ibn-e-Nashati. His two works are *Qissa-e-saif-ulMulk-O-Badr-ul-Jamal* and *Tuti Nama*. The first is the story of a romance of an Egyptian prince with a Chinese princess. It is 14,000 lines long and is supposed to be derived from the *Arabian Nights*. The second is a poetical translation from Persian which in turn is based on a Sanskrit original.

The tradition of patronage of letters continued with the three successors of Muhammad Quli who were also poets.

We conclude this section by giving five poems of Muhammad Quli both in Persian and Devanagari script along with their translation in English as a sampler:

مرگ کال

| | |
|---|--|
| مرگ ہینے کوں ملالے ملکاں میل لگتاں میں (میں) (دلاکے) (فرشتے) (آسمان) | سمد موتیاں کے جوہرے سو بھرتیے انگن میں |
| دھرت بند جوہر چولی زنگ پاج کرانگ پر (دھرتی) (باندھ) (پکڑی) (باندھکر) | ہر بہوٹیاں لعلوں اترے ہیں بنناں میں (کپڑے مکڑے) (ہر جگہ) |
| کو کے چوندھرتے میوراں ہرے بن پھر طرفاں دیکھ (آواز دی) (مور) | چنکھی رنگارنگی نعیں کریں مستہ جو چمنیاں میں (پرنڈے) |
| ہرے صحرا میں نہوے لالی گلا لاں نہوے بن میں (نہوے) | شبنمی تیل سوں شمعوں جہاں زمرہ لگتاں میں |
| موسنیاں تازے طراوت سوں سرنگ ننگ لگی ابری (خوش رنگ) (بہاں) | بھونے بند چھند سوں لگتیاں جو بنوں کے جو بنوں میں (ہین کپڑے) |
| امرت اوصاف سجل سات ہے ظلمات سوں بھینٹ | یا نچھل وودلاں سما ہے جو بنوں کے کھناں میں |

دیکھ عجب چمزد و دین مچ رہے حیراں ہو کہے یوں جو اہے کیوں لگناں اپسوں کچک کسناں میں
 کرنے نظر رے ہوا کے پیساں نے مست ہیلیاں میگھ ملہار بھونر گلے سوتن تن سمناس میں
 نہوے مشکیں بھنوراں و وجوہن کر رہیں پھل میں نزل آجھے ہیں تلاں ووسمناس سے ذقناں میں،
 (نہوے) (کلے) (پھول) (تھڈی)
 سر تھے پگ لک جو مکمل ہوزرینے نے سکیاں من ہرن مچ لبدا یاں گنگھروہور پیچسناں میں
 (سے) (پیر) (تک) (سیجے ہوئے) (زیورات) (میں) (جیت کر) (مچلی) (ذرافہ کرنا) (پا زیب)

मृग काल

मृग महीने कूं मिला ले मलकां मिल गगनां में — समद मोतियां के जो बरसाए सो भरिए अंगनां में
 (मैं) (बुला के) (फरिश्ते)
 धरत बन्द चीर जवाहर चोली रंग पाच कर अंग पर — बर बहूटियां लाला सू उतरे हैं यमनां में
 (धरती) (बांध) (पगड़ी) (बांध कर) (कीड़े मकौड़े) (हर जगह)
 कूके चौंधर थे मयूरा हरे बन चौ तरफां देख — पंखी रंगा-रंगी नगमें करें मस्त हो चमनां में
 (बोले) (चारों ओर) (पंछी) (गीत गाएं)
 हरे सैहरा में नहवे लाली गुलालां नहवे बन में — शबनमी तेल सू शम्मां जूं ज़म्मरुद लगनां में
 (जंगल) (न होवे) (ओस) (की भांति)
 मोहनियां ताजे तरावत सू सुरंग अंग रंग की अबरी — झोने बन्द छंद सू लटकातियां जोवनां के जोवनां में
 (अच्छा रंग) (लिबास) (महीन कपड़े)
 अमृत ऊ साफ़ सजल सात है जुल्मात सू भेटन — या निछल वो बदलां स्याम है जोवन के खनां में
 (वह) (अंधकार) (श्याम)
 देख अजब छंद वो नैन मच रहे हैरां हो कहे यू — जो अहे क्यों लगनां अपर सू कंचक कसनां में
 करने नज़ारे हवा के पियां मैं मस्त सहेलियां — मेघ मल्हार भंवर गाए सो तन तन समनां में

नहवे मशकीं भंवरा वो जो वतन कर रही फुल में — निर्मल आझे हैं तिलां वो समनां से जकनां में
 (न हो) (काले) (घर बना लिया है) (मोती) (ठुड़ी)
 सिर थे पग लक जो मुकल्लल हो ज़रीने मने सकियां — मन हरन मच लवदायां धुंगरू होर पौजनां में
 (तक) (सजी हुई) (जेवर)(मेरी) (जीता) (मछली) (मुग्ध होना) (पाजेब)

The Rainy Season

The angels in the sky have invited the rainy season, and delighted by it, have rained sea-pearls, flooding the courtyard. The earth has wound a turban of pearls and worn a crystal—coloured skirt. The red velvet-coloured insects have appeared everywhere. In the green forest the peacocks are crying, and the particoloured birds are singing songs of joy in the garden. What you see in the forest are not crimson-coloured flowers, but candles burning in dew-drenched oil. Seeing the freshness of the season, the beautiful damsels adorn themselves in gay clothes, displaying their charms as they walk gracefully. Their clean breasts, fresh like the water of immortality, are surmounted by black nipples which on the sky of their beauty look like two black clouds in a transparent sky. To enjoy the beauty of the season, the girls have regaled themselves with wine. Among the jasmine flowers the black bees are flying about singing malhar. These black bees disporting themselves amidst flowers, are like the black moles on their jasmine-white chinds. The gaudy clothes in which they are dressed from head to foot and the music of the morris bells on their feet, have captured my heart and made it restless like a fish out of water.

(Translation by Mohd. Sadiq in his *A History of Urdu Literature*).

برس گانٹھ

نبی کی دعا تھے برس گانٹھ آیا
 خوشیاں کی خبر کے دماغے بجایا
 (سے)
 پیا ہوں میں حضرت کے ہست آب کوثر
 تو شاہاں اوپر مجھ کھس کر بنایا
 (ہاتھ)
 میرا قطب تارا ہے تاریاں میں نہیں
 تو مج پر فلک رنگ کا چھتر چھٹایا
 (نہجے)
 سورج چندا پے تال ہو کر بجیں نت
 منزل ہو فلک ہم ٹماریاں بھجایا
 (خود)
 کریں مشتری رقص مج بزم میں نت
 برس گانٹھ میں زہرہ کلیان گایا
 (دھول)
 میرا گلستان تازہ اس تھے ہوا ہے
 مج اس باغ تھے سب درم دم کھلایا
 (دشمن)
 دندے دشمنوں کوں سو یک جا ملا کر
 سوا سپند کے پاتراں کر نچپایا
 (دشمن)
 خدایا معافی کی اُمید برسیا
 کہ جیوں سانت کے بیہوں تھے بگ گھلایا
 (ساملن)
 خدا کی رخصتوں برس گانٹھ آیا
 سیس شکر توں برس گانٹھ آیا
 (سے)
 دماغے اماں تھے مج راج قائم
 خدا زندگانی کا پانی پلایا
 (میرا)

बरस गांठ

नबी की दुआ थे बरस गांठ आया — खुशियां की ख़बर के दमामे बजाया
(से)

पिया हूं मैं हज़रत के हत आबे कौसर — तू शाहां ऊपर मुज कलस कर बनाया
(मुहम्मद) (हाथ) (अमृत) (मुझे)

मेरा कुतब तारा है तारयां में निछल — तू मुज पर फ़लक रंग का छतर छाया*
(ध्रुव) (ना हिलने वाला) (गगन)

सूरज चांद अपे ताल हो कर बजें नित — मंदल हो फ़लक टम टमायां बजाया
(छैनो की भांति) (आकाश) (डफ़)

करे मुश्तरी रक्स मुज बजूम में नित — बरस गांठ में ज़ोहरा कल्याण गाया
मेरा गुलस्तां ताज़ा इस थे हुआ है — मुज इस बाग़ थे मेवा दम दम खिलाया
(बाग़) (सदा)

दंदे दुशमनां कूं सो यकजा मिला कर — सो असपन्द के पात्रां कर नचाया
(शत्रु) (को) (एक स्थान पर) (मेंहदी के बीज) (नर्तकी)
खुदाया 'मआनी' की उमीद बर लया — के ज्यों सांत के मीहं थे जग अघाया
(सावन) (से) (तृप्ति)

खुदा की रज़ा सूं बरस गांठ आया — सहस शुक़ तू बरस गांठ आया
(इच्छा) (से)

दुआए इमामां थे मुज राज कायम — खुदा ज़िंदगानी का पानी पिलाया ।
(इमामों के आशीर्वाद) (से) (मेरा)

* कुतब शाहों का सरकारी रंग नीला था

My Birthday

Through the prayer of the Prophet I've now reached my
birthday;

And beaten the drums sounding forth the good news.

I have drunk at the hand of Muhammad sweet nectar;

God therefore has made me the crown over kings.

The Pole Star my name star, is nobler than all;

My canopy* coloured expands in the sky.

The sun and the moon both are clashing like cymbals;

With sky for arena and tambourines' sound.

* (Sky-blue was the official colour of the Qutb Shahis)

There Jupiter dances to honour my birthday;
 While Venus is chanting a victory song.
 My garden is thus overflowing with freshness;
 And furnishes fruit every hour of the day.
 My enemies all in one place God has gathered;
 And wishes to burn them like incense in fire.
 Fulfil, O My God, all my hope's expectation;
 As Thou gladdenest the earth with the soft rain of peace.
 The favour of God has brought me my birthday;
 Give true thanks to Him for thy birthday now reached.
 Through prayers of the priests my kingdom stands firmly,
 God gives me to drink of the water of life.

(Translation by T.G. Bailey).

بسنت

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| تہیں ہیں چاند، میں ہوں جوں ستارا | بسنت کھیلے عشق کی آپیارا |
| بسنت کھیلی ہوا رنگ رنگ سنگارا | پیایک پر ملا کر لبائی پیاری |
| | (دیر ٹیر کر) (لائی) |
| سور و ماروم حمید کیاں لائے دھارا | جو رنگ کے رنگ غنائے رنگ مدن بھرا |
| (رواں رواں) (چمک پکارتاں) | |
| عجب سورج میں ہے، کیموں نس کو ٹھارا | بھگی چولی میں بھینٹن نس نشانی |
| (ٹھہرا) | (سرپستان) (رات) |
| رنگیلا ہو رہیا ترلوک سارا | نبی صدقے بسنت کھیلیا تمطب شاہ |
| (دریا) (دینوں جہان) | (کھیللا) |

बसंत

बसंत खेलें-इश्क की आ प्यारा—तुम्हीं हैं चांद मैं हूं जू सितारा
पिया पग पर मिला कर ल्याई प्यारी—बसंत खेला हुआ रंग रंग संगारा

(पैर पड़ कर) (लाई)

जोबन के रंग खाने रंग मदन भर—सो रोमा-रोम चिर्कियां लाए धारा
(पिचकारियां)

भीगी चोली में भेटन निस निशानी—अजब सूरज मैं है क्यों निस को ठारा
(ठहराया)

नबी सद्के बसंत खेलया कुतब शाह—रंगीला हो रहया तरलोक सारा।
(गया)

The Spring Festival

Come my lover, let us celebrate *basant* (the spring festival). You are moon and I am a star. She brought her lover home by falling at his feet. Playing *basant* with him, each limb of her body was embellished. Filling the bath-tub of youth with love, each pore was sprayed with the liquid. In the wet bra, the nipples of her breast look black as if night has been arrested in the midst of sun. The Prophet be praised, Qutb Shah played *basant* and all the three worlds have become colourful.

A Popular Poem

(Translation by N. Luther).

پیا باج پیالہ پیاجائے نہ پیا باج یک تیل جیاجائے نہ
(ایک پل)

کہتے ہیں پیا بن صبور می کرو کہا جائے اماں کیا جائے نہ
(صبر) (سچتے)

نہیں عشق جس وہ بڑا کھڑ ہے کہہیں اس سے مل بیجا جائے نہ
(جابل) (کبھی) (بیٹھا)

قطب شاہ نہ دوج دیوانے کھ پند دیوانے کوں کچ پند ریا جائے نہ
(کھ) (کچھ)

پیا باج پالا پیا جاے نا — پیا باج یک تیل جیا جاے نا

(اک پل)

کتے ہں پیا بیا سبوری کرو — کہا جاے امما کیا جاے نا

(کہتے) (سب)

نہیں عشق جس کو بڑا کڑا ہے — کدیں اس سے میل بےسا جاے نا

(جاہل) (کبھی) (بےسا)

قوت شاہ نا دو مچ دیوانہ کو پند — دیوانہ کھ کھ پند دیا جاے نا

(شکشا) (کو) (کھ)

(Without the lover one cannot drink the cup; without him one cannot live for a moment. They advise you to be patient in the absence of your love.; Ah, it is easier said than done. The man who is not acquainted with love is a half-wit; don't ever have anything to do with him. Oh, don't give any advice to a lunatic like me because you can't put sense into the head of an insane person).

(Translation by N. Luther).

سانولی

نہی سانولی پر کیا ہوں نظر
خبر سب گنوا کر ہوا بے خبر

تین چلبلائی سوں کرتی ہے ناز
ہمیں روں روں بھیدیا ہے اسکا اثر

(دہنے) (جاندہ)

ہنساج کرے نازا و مل سیتی
دن جوت منج کوں دیس جو قمر

(دو) (پانی سے)

تراسر و قد نکلے جب چھند سوں
اڑے کھونپے کاسچ اوپر تب چنور

(ناز واداسے)

سودھن کسوتاں کر جو آئی آنگن
اجالا دو کسوت تھے ایسا انبہر

(عمرت) (لباس پہن کر)

(لباس) (آسمان)

موتی رنگ کا نیمتنی پہننے لڑی دیسے منج نفیر تری بہشتی سندر
 (نیم تن لباس) (پہنے) (دکھائی دے) (مجھے) (کچھ) (خوبصورت)
 معافی نہ آلت تیرا سب برہمیا توں اس کوں کنتھے کا بہکانو شکر
 (برہمیا) (دیسے) (اگر گلے ملا جا)

सांवली

नन्ही सांवली पर किया हूं नज़र — ख़बर सब गंवा कर हुआ बेख़बर
 नैन चुलबुलाई सूं करती है नाज़ — हमन रुं रुं भेदया है उसका असर
 (हमने) (जान लिया)

हंसा जब करे नाज़ ओ जल सेती — दिसन जोत मुंज कूं दिसैं जूं क़मर
 (नख़रा) (वह) (से) (दिखाई दे) (मुझे) (दिखे जैसे) (चांद)
 तेरा सर-क़द निकले जब छंद सूं — ऊड़े ख़ोपै का तुज ऊपर तब चनूर
 (नखरे से) (जूड़ा) (मोरछल)

सूधन कसूतां कर जो आई आंगन — उजाला वो कसूत थे पाया अंबर
 (पहनावा) (उस वेश से)

मोती रंग का नीम तनी पेने तूं — दीसे मिंज नज़र तिल बहिस्तो सुंदर
 (वस्त्र जिस से बदन दिखाई दे) (दिखे) (मुझे) (कुछ) (स्वर्गिक)

'मआनी' नज़ाकत तेरा सब बूझया — तूं इस कंठे का चका दो शकर
 (समझ गया) (आ कर गले मिल जा)

Sanvali (The Dark One)

Ever since I set my eyes upon the little dark one, I have forgotten everything else. With her bubbling eyes, she plays

the coquette and that has affected every pore of my being. When she laughs in her special way, I see the affluence of moonlight. Your hair-bun waves like the 'morchhal'. When you come to the verandah in your dress, the very sky becomes radiant. When you wear pearl-coloured transparent robes, I get the glimpse of heavenly beauty. I am not unacquainted with your delicate being. Come and embrace me.

Muhammad Quli stands at the head of the cavalcade of Urdu poetry in the Deccan. His story, therefore, must close with a word about the development of Urdu in the Deccan and the contribution of the Deccan in this. As mentioned earlier, Urdu originated in the North and came to the South with the first invasion of Ala-ud-din-Khilji in 1296. Thereafter it became isolated from the northern Urdu first under the Bahmanis and later under the Adil Shahis and Qutb Shahis. Since it developed some distinctive features from the Urdu of the North it came to be called *Dakhni*.

With the second invasion and conquest of the South by the Mughals in the 1680's, a different Urdu came from the North and struggled for supremacy against *Dakhni*. Needless to say, the latter lost and was reduced to a dialect.

The extent of contribution of the Deccan to Urdu literature came to be acknowledged in the thirties with the discovery of some of the important works of the masters in the old Urdu of Deccan. Dr Masud Husain Khan says on this point:

“All the poetic forms and most of the trends for which Urdu poetry of the 17th and 18th century is distinguished, have had their sprouting on the soil of Deccan. Mathnavi, Qasida, Ghazal, Rekhta and Rekhti as well as styles of narrative and descriptive poetry were first developed in the Deccan. Dakhni literature contained certain linguistic

and social trends which were unfortunately lost in later periods. In the Deccan, a linguistic balance between the Indian and Perso-Arabic elements has been achieved. This balance was disturbed as the centre of literary activity shifted to the North in the 18th century. Similarly, purely Indian elements and sentiments were the principal themes of inspiration in Dakhni-Urdu literature. Even the mystic thought was dominated by indigenous elements. This synthesis underwent a basic change in the North during the 18th century. Even in poetic forms emphasis shifted from Mathnavi to Ghazal, from narrative and descriptive poetry to lyrical and highly subjective and symbolic poetry, so much so, that Ghazal became synonymous with Urdu poetry.”*

* Dr. Masud Hussain Khan : Dakhni Urdu—article in the History of Medieval Deccan ed. H.K. Sherwani and P.M. Joshi, (Govt. of Andhra Pradesh/1973) p. 34.

The Lover

Muhammad Quli was an aesthete and a lover. It is acknowledged by all historians and writers that he was given to a life of ease and sensuality. His poetry is a testimony to that. It is an open confession of his unchecked indulgence in wine, women and music. He declares quite unabashedly in one poem that indulgence and enjoyment were created specially for him. He also admitted that he couldn't live without wine and women:

شراب ہو ر عشق بازی باج میخ تھے نارہیا جا سے
(اور) (مجھ) (سے) (رہا) (جائے)
کہ یو دو کام کرنا کر میں لئی سو گندھ کھ یا ہوں
(یہ) (کر نے کیلئے) (قسم)

शराब होर इश्क-बाज़ी बाज मिंज थे ना रहया जासे
(मुझ) (से) (रहा जाए)
के यो दो काम करना कर मैं लई सौगंद खाया हूं
(करने के लिए मैं ने)

(I cannot live without drinking or playing the game of love. I have sworn to do these two things).

Muhammad Quli believed that luxury came to the world for his sake. He thanks the Prophet who so arranged that he can spend his whole time amongst new women every day:

شراب ہو ر عشق بازی باج میخ تھے نا رہیا جا سے
 (اور) (مجھ) (سے) (رہا) (جائے)
 کہ یو دو کام کرنا کر میں لئی سو گندھ کھا یا ہوں
 (یہ) (کر کے کیلئے) (قسم)

شرا ب ہو ر عشق-بازی باج میخ تھے نا رہیا جا سے
 (میں) (سے) (رہا جاؤں)
 کہ یو دو کام کرنا کر میں لئی سو گندھ کھا یا ہوں
 (کرنے کے لیے میں نے)

He has written many poems on his women. Names of 19 women occur frequently in his poems. What is unusual about Quli is not the number of women in his life-that was the accepted part of the perks of royalty-but the fact that he himself celebrated most of them in his poems. His way of paying them court was writing uninhibited poems about them.

The Twelve Beloveds

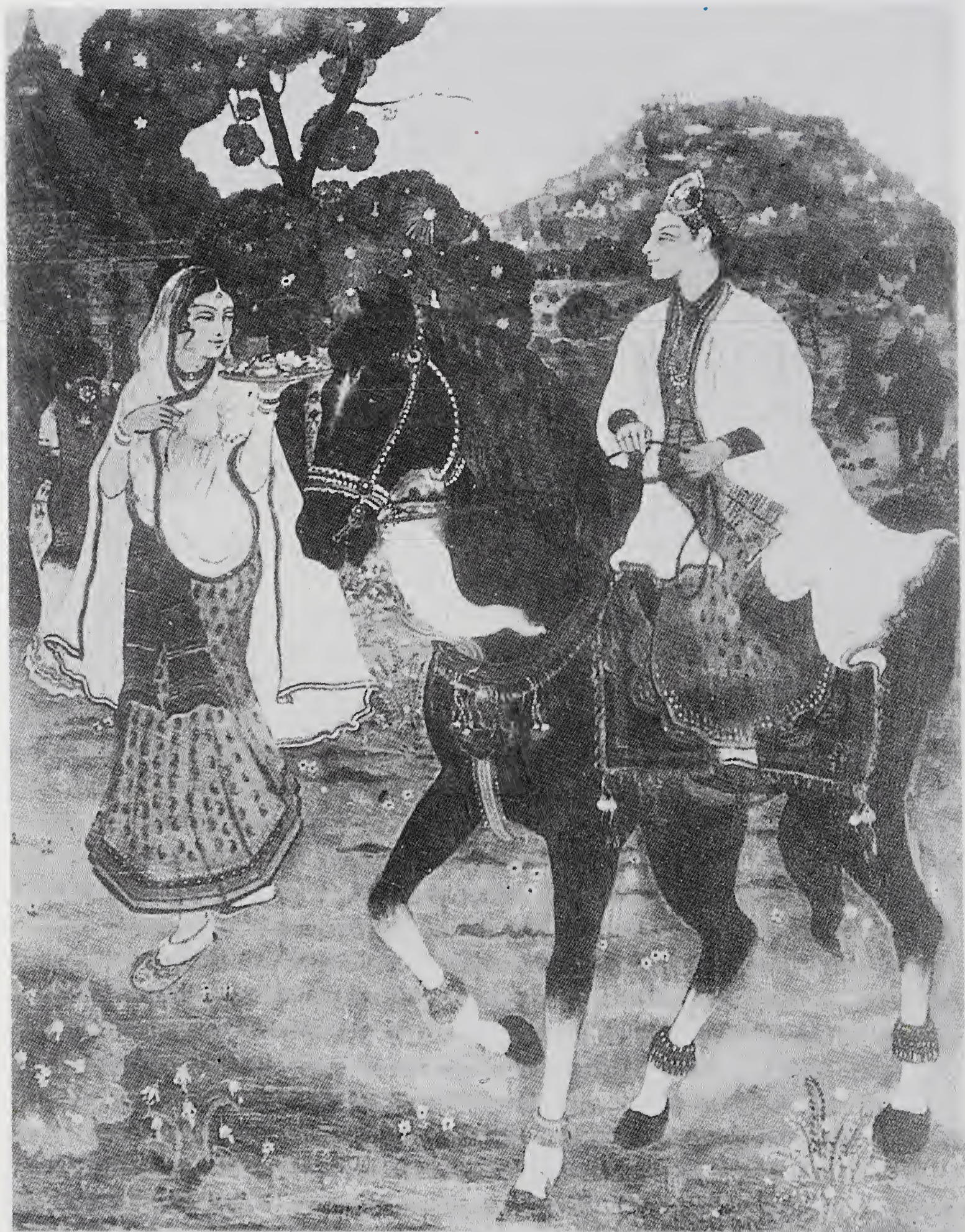
Muhammad Quli wrote specially about his twelve beloveds and there are no less than 38 poems on them. Some of the names of those beloveds are *Nannhi* (The young one), *Sanwali* (The dark one), *Kanwali* (Lotus), *Gori* (The fair one), *Lala*, *Lalan*, *Mohan* and *Mushtari* (Jupiter). Then there are ten others like *Sundar*, *Sajjan*, *Padmini* and *Bahamni Hindu*. He wrote

48 poems and 335 couplets in praise of these women. Apart from these poems specifically dedicated to particular women, Quli's numerous other poems overflow with romantic sentiments. He mocked at his teachers who tried to educate him declaring vaingloriously that he was born for love. Teachers are not conversant with real knowledge, he says. "They themselves don't know alpha and they ask me to pronounce beta. In love it is difficult even to comprehend alpha." In another couplet he says that "even angels are unacquainted with the luxury of love. I learnt to savour this delicacy after a great deal of labour." Unlike most poets, he did not merely versify about love theoretically. He wrote about it on the basis of his rich and varied experience. Quli was a philanderer, nay more, he was a connoisseur in the art of love. Love was part of his daily diet. In Urdu poetry, *ghazal* is love-lyric. Out of his total output of 100,000 lines of poetry, about half comprise love-lyrics. Even in the other forms employed by him the theme of love predominates. To write so much on love, he needed to know about it. And he did, as he says, work hard at it!

Was there any particular quality in women that attracted him? His poems are not of much help in this regard. He seemed to be looking for novelty. It was purely the physical aspect which mattered to him. If there was any special characteristic in any of his girl friends, he put it down in his poems. His *Nanhi* is coquettish, *Sanwali* is good-natured and like a *koel* (cuculus) *Kanwali* stands holding a cup in her hand and her eyes are already heavy with drink, *Gori* is unequalled in her beauty. When it comes to *Chhabeli*, he can't live a moment without her, *Mohan* is coy and Quli feels for her like *Majnun* for *Laila*. She is "full of virtues". *Bilquis* is a *houri* from heaven. He feels like a bonded slave of *Bahamni Hindu*.



Bhagmati—the beloved of Muhammad Quli Qutab Shah. From a painting in the Salar Jung Museum
(Courtesy: Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad)



A painting depicting the first meeting between Muhammad Quli and Bhagmati on her way to the temple. The Golconda fort is seen in the background.



The Golconda Fort today: Muhammad Quli Shifted the seat of government from here to the new city of Bhagnagar (Hyderabad) in 1596-97.



Char Minar, the city centre built in AD 1591 by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. View from the southern side.

Rangeeli takes the cake. She is sweet-tongued and gives him a sweet drink. Her eyes betray the languor of the nocturnal vigil and the way she walks—

دھلک تارا لٹک چالاں منے چالاں نپاتی ہے
(چمکتا، چھوٹی چال)
مدن گانٹھاں نوے جہرین نوے تن اوپر سیتے

دھلک تارا لٹک چالاں منے چالاں نپاتی ہے
(چمکتا) (چھوٹی چال)
مدن گانٹھاں نوے جہرین نوے تن اوپر سیتے
(یووا شہر پر نئے یوون کا اٹھار)

This distich conveys very effectively not only the image of a young luscious woman walking but also the tantalizing sound she and her ornaments make in that act.

Bhagmati

In the perpetually colourful and ceaseless succession of women in his life, the name of one woman stands out. The story goes that as a young prince in his early teens, he fell in love with a young Hindu peasant girl by name Bhagmati. She was a beauty and an accomplished dancer. She lived in a village called Chichlam which was across the river Musi and close to where the *Char Minar* monument stands today. According to one version of the legend, his passion for her was so strong that on a stormy night when the river was in spate, he jumped his horse into the river unmindful of the risk to his life just to keep his rendezvous. Upto this point the story is quite plausible. He was not the first nor the last to do such a rash act under the influence of blind passion. The incident was duly reported to his father, the king. Concerned about the danger to the life of the prince, the story proceeds, he ordered a bridge to be built across the river. It still exists and is called

the *Purana Pul* or the old bridge. The chroniclers say that it took two years to complete the bridge at a cost of Rs. 100,000. The story stands out in sharp contrast to the heartless reaction of that otherwise humane Mughal, Akbar the Great to his son, Prince Salim's affair with Anarkali, at about the same time. According to the legend, the Mughal emperor had buried her alive in a brick wall!

According to another version, as a punishment for this dare-devilry the young prince was confined to his quarters and provided with a bevy of international beauties to lure him away from his infatuation for a rustic commoner.

Shortly thereafter the king died and the prince ascended the throne. He could now indulge his passion for Bhagmati without any check. He bestowed honours upon her. He ordered 1,000 horses to accompany her whenever she came out to visit the king. Later he married her. In 1591, Muhammad Quli founded the new city and called it Bhagnagar after her. Later, when she was given the title of *Haider Mahal*, the name of the city also was changed to Haiderabad.

Whatever the details of the story, there is general agreement about the historicity of Bhagmati. It is inevitable that in the hands of story-tellers, some embellishments would have been added to the core of historical facts. The historian, Firishta, (1570-1623) writing in 1619-20 says that "the Sultan was greatly fascinated by a prostitute named Bhagmati. He ordered that whenever she came to the court she should not look one whit inferior to any of the great nobles. Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah founded and populated a city four kols away He called it Bhagnagar first but later was sorry for what he had done and changed the name to Haiderabad. But the public at large continued to call it Bhagnagar."

Faizi, who was emperor Akbar's resident at Ahmadnagar during 1591-94 reported to his master that Muhammad Quli

had “built a city called Bhagnagar, named after Bhagmati, the old hag who has been his mistress for a long time.” Another contemporary chronicler, Nizam-ud-din Bakshi, also confirmed it in his *Tabqate-Akbar Shahi* written around 1594. Khafi Khan and Nihawandi also refer to this story in their works. Tavernier who visited Golconda twice in 1648 and 1652, Thevenot who did so in 1665-66 and Bernier who followed a year later, refer to the city of Bhagnagar (or Bagnagar)*. There is reference to it also in *Hadiqatul Alam* 1214 AH (AD 1799), *Tareekh-e-Qutb Shah* by Qader Khan Munshi of Bidar 1306 AH (AD 1888) (p. 16) and *Gulzar-e-Asafi* 1260 AH (AD 1844).

Apart from these direct references to Bhagmati in historical works, there is an allegorical reference to her in poet Vajahi’s long romance *Qutb-Mushtari*. Reference to this work has been made in the chapter on the poetry of Muhammad Quli. In this work, the hero is supposed to be Quli himself while the character of the heroine is based on Bhagmati.

Subsequent historians and writers have accepted this story as part of history. A controversy was raised by the late Prof. H.K. Sherwani who questioned the authenticity of the person of Bhagmati and the naming of the city after her. In a pamphlet and later in his monograph on Muhammad Quli published in 1967, he goes to great lengths in disproving the entire story of Bhagmati and dismisses it as a pure legend created during the early Asaf Jahi period to spite the Qutb Shahi dynasty.

It is significant that Prof. Sherwani stands almost alone in his refutation of the story of Bhagmati. His lead has recently

* For more detailed references to these writers see the chapter : “The Builder”.

been followed by Prof. Sayeda Jaffar in her introduction to her anthology of the poetry of Muhammad Quli. This book written in 1985 on the lines of Dr Zore's who produced his pioneering work in 1940. It is marked by many revisions and improvements on Dr Zore's work. On Bhagmati too, it takes a stand diametrically opposed to that of Dr Zore. It can be said that Dr Zore and Prof. Sherwani represent two extremes on certain aspects of the life of Muhammad Quli. Dr Zore writes with blind adoration of the Sultan. He is, no doubt, given somewhat to fiction. Prof. Sherwani, on the other hand, while sharing Dr Zore's admiration of the Sultan, brings critical objectivity to bear upon his view of the achievements of the Qutb Shahi monarch. Dr Zore is an apologist of Muhammad Quli. He tries to represent him as an ideal, perfect ruler. Prof. Sherwani notices his weaknesses. One is a litterateur, the other a historian.

But on the question of Bhagmati, Prof. Sherwani seems to be on uncertain grounds. He seems to have over-stretched himself. His arguments against her very existence seem rather weak and far-fetched. He questions Firishta on this point while accepting his authority in other matters. Faizi's testimony is not acceptable to him because he wrote from distant Ahmadnagar and on the basis of hearsay. The French travellers' chronicles quoted above are suspect because one out of them confused the name of the woman in question and the other misspelt it. Subsequent historians are not original enough for Prof. Sherwani. There is also a feeling, more pronounced in Dr Sayeda Jaffar that it wasn't like a religiously-inclined king to do such an honour to a mere pagan dancer!

However, an array of historians have accepted the story without demur. It is also conceded that people at large believed the story for ages. Thevenot visiting Hyderabad in 1665-6,

testified that “The Capital City of this Kingdom is called *Bagnagar*, the *Persians* call it *Aider-abad*.” When any name particularly of the city is changed, the old name persists amongst the common people. Firishta too made a mention of this.

To conclude that because a Frenchman missed an ‘H’ in his spelling of an Indian proper noun, one cannot construe that he meant a different thing altogether. It is also to be noted that the letter ‘H’ is missing in the relevant sentence both from ‘*Bhagnagar*’ as well as ‘*Hyderabad*’. It is also well-known that the French language is soft in its spelling and pronunciation. Thevenot and other travellers and writers have spelt almost all proper names in their own way and have not followed any standard practice. To conclude from the Frenchman’s spelling that he was alluding to an abundance of gardens and thus calling it a ‘garden city’ is rather fat-fetched. If one is to be so exacting in one’s requirement, then the point can be raised that if Thevenot did not use an ‘H’ after ‘B’, he also did not do so after ‘G’ which is necessary if one is to write *Bāgh*. Otherwise it could have meant only *Bāg* which means tiger and one could justify this by suggesting that the environs of the city abounded in tigers! But there is no such deviation from the standard spelling in Firishta, or others who wrote in Persian. If the name had really been *Bagnagar* as averred by Prof. Sherwani, and not *Bhagnagar*, Ferishta and others would have mentioned that. Instances of incorrect spelling of Indian names by European chroniclers and others are not lacking. As an example one can mention that the Journal of P.W. Floris, while recording the death of Muhammad Quli mentioned the hostility of Sultan Muhammad “to Mir Sumela, the fountain of tyrannie”. What he meant was Mir Jumla. Similarly, Pulicat is referred to by him as ‘Paleacatte’. Again, Van Ravesteyn, a Dutch merchant

writing in 1614 in his journal refers to Qutbshah as 'Cotebixa'. The British changed the spelling and pronunciation of a host of names of persons and places in India. Some of them were restored to their originals only after India attained independence.

In one of the accounts in the *Relations of Golconda*, written most probably in 1614, it is stated that "every year in the month of April, the prostitutes of the whole kingdom have to travel to Bagnagar whither they are summoned by *Maldaer* (a sort of tipstaff), to dance in celebration of the death of the first Moslam King, a thing which seems to me very strange." In the footnote to this narrative, the editor, Moreland has explained Bagnagar as "Hyderabad, the new capital of Golconda" and 'maldaer' as 'amalder'. Abbe Carre in 1672 also referred to the city as Bagnagar and found it full of strangers and merchants.

Recently, a document relevant to this subject and pertaining to AD 1637 has been located in the State Archives of Andhra Pradesh at Hyderabad. This document is an attestation of succession and bears the stamp of one 'Zaheer-ud-din, Qazi of Bhagnagar'. This also confirms the existence of the city called Bhagnagar. And from Bhagnagar the city, to Bhagmati, the woman is a logical step backward if one is to accept the reasoning of Prof. Sherwani.

Syed Hossain Bilgrami and C. Willmott writing as late as in 1884 say that the new city was "styled Bhagnagar after one of the king's Hindu mistresses ... " They add that "After her death Muhammad Quli changed the name to Haidarabad, although to the present day many natives, especially Hindus, style the city Bhagnagar" (Vol.II, p. 552). In an article in the journal of the Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library of Patna (Vol.47, 1988, pages 87-106), Dr Nazir Ahmed of Aligarh

has recapitulated considerable evidence to prove the historicity of Bhagmati.

Here a point may be made which, to my knowledge, has not been noted earlier by anyone. Nobody disputes that the chronogrammatic name given to the new city was *Farkhunda Buniyad* in Persian. *Bhagnagar* happens to be its synonym in the popular language of the day. Was it a mere coincidence or did the experts take pains to coin a name in Persian which translated so beautifully the given name of the city? When a story is believed by such a large number of people for four centuries, the likelihood is that it would be true. It fits in with the temperament of the prince and is in tune with the spirit of the times. There is also a certain romance about the story and one is inclined to give a short reply to the doubting Thomases that if there really was no Bhagmati, it would have been necessary to invent her. For generations people have believed that this city was founded in love and this story glorifies and reinforces a romantic and secular tradition.

Bhagmati was not the only lady-love of the Sultan. He had many. He sang poems to only a score of them. But from all evidence and contemporary references, she seems to have been his abiding passion. If there is no reference to her in the official history of the Sultans of the dynasty, so is the case of his wife or wives. Some incidents and episodes are discreetly ignored in official histories. Bhagmati's case was perhaps one of them. Muhammad Quli's successor could not have been proud of it and hence possibly the hush-hush about it. Considering the fact that the size of the harem of oriental rulers was not constrained by considerations of caste or creed or even by the entrants' standing, Bhagmati's pride of place in Muhammad Quli's seraglio should not scandalize and even surprise anyone today.

Unlike other rulers who indulged themselves rather pointlessly, all said and done, Quli's amours served one useful purpose. They constituted the raw material of experience for much of his poetry. Having satisfied his passion, he recollected the incidents in tranquillity and recorded them in detail. That's how much of his poetry came into being. He had thus a royal prerogative reinforced by 'poetic licence'. The returns from these have turned out to be more than commensurate. We do not, therefore, grudge him his indulgences. In any case who could have stopped him? A genius does what he must do. And Quli was no doubt a genius in love and letters. He had to pay for his carefree life-style. He died rather early at the age of 46. That is the only count on which one feels sorry for the merry and gifted Sultan.

The Builder

Muhammad Quli was a great builder. In his passion for building great and magnificent buildings, he prefigured Shah Jahan, the Mughal emperor. Most of the buildings built and gardens laid out by him were destroyed by the ravages wrought by the victorious armies of the Mughals. However, we still have intact his masterpiece, the *Char Minar* and some other notable buildings. And then, of course, there is the city itself grown beyond recognition now and celebrating its fourth centenary.

The Golconda Fort had become overcrowded even under the reign of Ibrahim, Muhammad Quli's father. Because of excessive population the place had become unhealthy. Some reconnaissance work seems to have been done at that time to relocate some of the population from the fort to relieve the congestion there. Ibrahim had a bridge constructed over the river Musi in 1578. He had thought of the expansion towards the west and the north of the fort and accordingly he laid out the resort now called Ibrahim Bagh situated to the west of the city. This plan did not make much headway because of the rocky nature of the terrain and the scarcity of water there.

However, a suitable piece of land was found across the Musi, thanks to the existence of the old bridge, which was the only one at that time. It combined a number of favourable factors like proximity to the fort, open, gently sloping, well-

drained land located on the main commercial highway and a large perennial water source called the Jallapalle Tank. A village called Chichlam stood there. That was chosen to be the centre of the new city. And that is where the *Char Minar* stands today. Chichlam was also the village to which the legendary Bhagmati, the beloved of the new king is said to have belonged. So, geographical merit and romantic factor combined to determine the selection of the place.

On an auspicious day, according to Firishta, the historian, “when the Moon was in the constellation of Leo and Jupiter in its own mansion,” Muhammad Quli ordered the preparation of the plans for a city which the Sultan wanted to be “unequalled in the world and a replica of paradise itself.” These were ready in 1591.

Plan of the City

The city was laid out on the grid system in the form of a giant double-cross. The *Char Minar* was its centre-piece. Four roads were to radiate from the *Char Minar* in the four cardinal directions. Out of these, two already existed. The road leading to Masulipatnam on the east coast was there. At the other end of this road about eight kilometres away across the bridge stood the Golconda Fort. At right angles to it and running north and south, a road was made to intersect it. This road led to the river Musi on the north. On the southern side, it led to the *Koh-i- Tur* palace. The palace no longer exists, but it is believed that the site was where the present *Falak Numa* Palace stands.

This pattern divided the area into four quarters. The north-western quarter was reserved for the royal palaces and state offices: the north-eastern quarter was set apart for the residence of the nobles. The main thoroughfares were lined with some 14,000 shops, mosques, *serais* (inns) baths and schools.

The Char Minar

The construction of the city started with the *Char Minar*. According to one view it is built like a *taziya*, i.e. a replica of the mausoleum of Imam Husain. This view is not shared by several others. It was simply the city centre. It is built of plaster and stone and is a perfect square; each side is 18.26 metres in length. There is one arch on each of the four sides. Each arch is 7.3 metres broad and 9.14 metres high. The minarets rise to a height of 48.7 metres from the ground and 24.4 metres from the roof of the building. They are divided into four storeys each. Each minaret has 146 steps up to the top storey. There are three floors in the main building. On the western side of the roof there is a mosque. It has five double arches representing the five great personages of Islam held sacred by Shias, viz. Prophet Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain. Each pointed arch is framed by a cusped arch. This is attributed to the Mughal influence. Though Golconda was still an independent state, the Mughal influence was creeping fast and permeated not only architecture but also dress, manners and food. Moreover, the common source of inspiration for both the Mughals and Qutb Shahis, was Persia. While the minarets added to the beauty of the building, in order to minimise the height to the viewer, a double screen of arched openings was set up at the roof between the minarets.

There are forty-five covered places for prayers in the hall within the covered *liwan* of the mosque and a considerable open space in front of the mosque. It is said that there was a school in the second storey of the *Char Minar*. If so, it must have been one of the most inconveniently located schools. It is also stated that water was brought here from the Jallapalle Tank for the palaces and the city. There is no evidence of the existence of any system at any time of storing and distributing

water from here. The planners who could prepare such elaborate layouts and the architects who could construct such magnificent buildings could certainly devise a better water supply system. Moreover, to combine the functions of a school, a mosque and a water reservoir in an ornamental monument seems very unlikely from both the practical as well as aesthetic points of view. However, Thevenot mentions about water being taken up to the galleries and there is general agreement about the existence of a school there. According to S.A.A. Bilgrami, the *Char Minar* cost 900,000 rupees to build. After the conquest of the kingdom by Aurangzeb when Bahadur Dil Khan was the *subedar* of Hyderabad, once lightning struck one of the minarets and shattered it to pieces. As it happened, about that time, a rich businessman of the city died without leaving any heir. His property amounting to 125,000 rupees was made over to the *subedar*. According to the story, he spent Rs. 60,000 out of it on the reconstruction of the minar and distributed the rest of the amount in charity. In 1824, the plastering of the entire building was got done at a cost of 100,000 rupees. In 1886, iron railings were fixed around the monument with a gate on the northern side.

The *Char Minar* continues to be one of the most magnificent monuments in the country. It has remained a symbol of the city ever since its construction and a look at it is a must for every visitor. A grand view of the whole old city can be had from the top storey of this building. In 1756, the *Char Minar* and the gardens in its vicinity were occupied by the French commander, Bussy and his troops. In 1884, a guard of the Afghan City Police was posted here.

Ever since its completion, the *Char Minar* has also served as a rendezvous of the idlers who exchange notes there. Many a rumour has its origin in the idle talk indulged in here. It is



Mausoleum of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah at Hyderabad



The procession of Abdullah Qutb Shah (1626-72). In the background is a section of one of the palaces built by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah
(Courtesy: State Public Library, Leningrad)

called *Char Minar Ki Gup*. (The gossip of *Char Minar*). A number of Irani tea houses and other cheap restaurants around it also serve the same purpose.

The chronogrammatic name given to *Char Minar* on its completion time was *Ya Hafiz* which is an invocation to God as the Protector. It yields the date of 1000 AH or AD 1592.

Char Kaman

At a distance of about 76 metres north of the *Char Minar* was the central plaza now known as *Char Kaman* or the four arches. It was originally called the *jilukhana* or the guard's square. In its centre was an octagonal fountain, called the *char-su-ka-houz* (fountain of the four cardinal directions). About 114.3 metres from the centre on all four sides were four arches. Each arch was 18.30 metres high, 11 metres wide at the base and 1.8 metres thick. The western arch was the gateway to the palace area. It was originally called the *Sher-i-Ali* (Ali's lion). It was guarded by a gate 18.3 metres high and 10 metres wide. It is said that Mir Mumin, the *Peshwa* of the Sultanate, got a stone pillar erected by the side of this gate and had some Quranic verses and charms inscribed on it to repel any magic against the royal family. Because of this, the arch came to be known as *Kaman-e-sehar-batil* (the arch for the false magic). Because of the closeness of the pronunciation of *Sher* (lion) and *sehar* (magic) the name got corrupted into *Sher-i-batil*. This means a false lion and in one more step it came to be called in the vulgar idiom *mitti ka sher* or the lion made of clay, which is the same thing as a false lion. The other three arches did not have any individual name and were collectively called 'tripolia' or the three arches. Later, the eastern arch came to be called *Kali Kaman*, the northern arch *Machhli Kaman* and the southern arch *Char Minar Kaman*. On the

eastern arch, royal musicians. sat playing *shehnai* and other instruments five times a day.

The western arch (the arch of the *false lion*) which constituted the entrance to the palace area, opened on to a vast triangular area about 914 metres square which extended right up to the right bank of the river Musi. All the palaces, the *serai* (inn) and the general hospital were in this area. The area is now covered by Ghasi Bazar, the High Court, the City College and the *Petla Burj* and the Quli Qutb Shah Stadium and it is not easy to imagine the original plan and its grandeur from the present confusing and cluttered picture. The central plaza had coconut and betel-nut palm trees in it and must indeed have looked grand and impressive.

The Palaces

The gate of the palace area was highly decorative. Its doors were made of ebony and sandalwood adorned with precious stones and nails of gold. There was a screen of cloth-of-gold behind the shutters. The main palaces were the *Lal Mahal*, the *Dad Mahal*, the *Jinan Mahal*, the *Qutb Mandir* and the *Khuda-dad-Mahal*. Of these, the *Dad Mahal* was the palace of justice. Here the Sultan himself used to sit, receive petitioners and dispense justice. The palace was easily accessible to petitioners. *Lal Mahal* was meant for the royal servants. The Sultan himself stayed in *Qutb Mandir*. Only women attended the functions held in this place. The *Khuda-dad-Mahal* was built after the marriage of the king's daughter, Hayat Bakshi Begum and had eight storeys. *Nadi Mahal* was on the bank of the river Musi and was meant for the relaxation of the Sultan and his guests. A pavilion was also built here.

There are six poems in Quli's works on six different palaces—the *Khuda-dad-Mahal*, the *Ala Mahal*, the *Koh-iTur*

Mahal, the *Sajan Mahal*, the *Haider Mahal* and the *Qutb Mandir*. From these one gets an idea of the special features of each palace. The *Khuda-dad-Mahal* was clearly the tallest building because according to one of Quli's poems, its "windows opened on to the sky" and one could "see a hundred thousand views." On seeing the *Koh-i- Tur* palace "one's hunger and thirst vanishes." It was the "abode of the grandeur of the 'Lion of Yazdan' (Ali)". In the poem on *Qutb Mandir* palace there is no mention of the architectural features of the palace. Instead, Quli dwells here on the loveliness of his girlfriends who, when they talked "scattered clean, pure pearls." In these poems on his palaces, he reverts repeatedly to his pet themes of enjoying himself with wine and women. An idea of the grandeur of the palaces can be had from a painting showing the procession of Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah riding an elephant with courtiers and musicians. The original painting is in the State Public Library of Leningrad. It is reproduced in the book *Deccan Painting* by Mark Zebrowski (Rolli Books International, New Delhi 1983, Plate No. 152 p. 180).

Gardens

During one of his chases, Muhammad Quli over-extended himself and ran short of water. His attendants were sent in all directions in search of water. It was then that what is now called the Hussain Sagar lake was sighted by the side of a hillock. The Sultan liked the hillock and the view and ordered a pavilion to be built there. The hillock was named *Nabat Ghat* or the Botanical Hillock. It is now called *Naubat Pahad* because later, during the Asaf Jahi rule, it was used to make important public announcements by the beating of drums or *naubat*. The botanical section was later extended right upto the river and covered the areas subsequently covered by Bashirbagh, the Public Gardens, the *Fateh Maidan* and the

Residency. The total area was about twenty-three square kilometres.

Thus the approach to the city was by way of gardens. The *Fateh Maidan* was the ground in which the victorious armies of Aurangzeb camped in the eighteenth century and the name was given by him to commemorate his victory. It is only in the last thirty years-within the sight and memory of the author, that the Bashirbagh palace first came to house a government department and was then demolished to build high-rise buildings. The *Fateh Maidan*, an open ground where public meetings, parades and cricket matches were held was converted into a stadium and was walled around. Now, Hyderabad has no open ground for public meetings and the shrinking grounds of the Nizam College nearby are used for that purpose.

A similar construction of a pavilion was made on the southern side of the *Char Minar*. The hillock there, *Koh-i-Tur* had a commanding view and salubrious climate. A water body also existed there. It was just over three kilometres from *Char Minar*. It is on this site that later the *Falak Numa Palace* was constructed. Thus, from the *Nabat Ghat* to *Koh-i-Tur* there was a vast continuous green belt. Now there is hardly any trace of the greenery and whatever is left faces the grave threat of being gobbled up by masonry. Muhammad Quli thus built a garden city and till this day the names of some of the localities have the suffix or prefix of *bāgh* (garden) attached to them though there may be no blade of grass in them. The tradition, however, continues verbally.

Similar extension of gardens took place surrounding the new city in all directions. Not only was the city surrounded by gardens, but within it, each locality had a park and each mansion in the locality had its own private garden. The garden

city feature of the new town was commented upon with admiration by contemporary chroniclers, foreign travellers and subsequent historians. Rafi'ud Din Shirazi observed in his *Tazkuratul Muluk* written in 1608 that "a large city with magnificent mansions was founded everyone of which had a garden attached to it. Some of the trees of these gardens were so tall that they seemed to touch the very sky. Both bazars and houses are so full of trees that the whole city looks like one garden and there is such a variety of fruits from Khurasan and Portugal that they have lost all their worth."

Thevenot who visited Hyderabad in 1665-66 also wrote about the extensive gardens in and around the city and even on the terrace of palaces and wondered how trees were grown there. In his own words:

"There are many fair Gardens in this Town, their beauty consists in having long walks kept very clean, and lovely Fruit-trees; but they have neither Beds of Flowers nor Water-works, and they are satisfied with several Cisterns or Basons with Water. The Gardens without the Town are the loveliest, and I shall only describe one of them, that is recknoed the pleasantest of the Kingdom. At first one enters into a great place which is called the first Garden; it is planted with Palms and *Areca-trees*, so near to one another, that the Sun can hardly pierce through them. The Walks of it are Streight and neat, with borders of white Flowers which they call *Ghoul Daoudi*, the *Flowers of David*, like Camomile-Flowers; there are also *Indian Gilly-flowers*, with some other sorts. The House is at the end of this Garden, and has two great Wings adjoining the main Body of it : It is two Story high, the first consisting in three Halls, of which the greatest is in the middle, the main Body of the House, and in each

Wing there is one, all three having Doors and Windows, but the great Hall has two Doors, higher than the others, which open into large *Kioch* or Divan, supported by eight great Pillars in two rows. Crossing the Hall and Divan, one goes down a pair of Stairs into another Divan of the same form but, longer, which (as the former) hath a Room on each side, opened with Doors and Windows. The second story of the Building is like the first, save that it hath but one Divan; but it hath a Balcony that reaches the whole length of that front of it. The House is covered with a flat Roof of so great extent, that it reaches over the outmost Divan of the lower Story, and is supported by six eight-cornered Wooden Pillars, six or seven Fathom high, and proportionably big.

From the lower Divan, a Terrass-walk two hundred Paces long, and fifty broad, faced with Stones runs along all the Front of the House and two little groves of Trees, that are on the sides of it. This Terrass that is at the head of the second Garden, (which is much larger than the first,) is raised a Fathom and a half above it, and has very neat Stairs for going down into it. The first thing that is to be seen (looking forwards,) is a great square Reservatory or *Tanquie*, each side whereof is above two hundred Paces long; in it there are a great many Pipes that rise half a Foot above Water, and a Bridge upon it, raised about a foot over the surface of the Water and above six Foot broad, with wooden Railes. This Bridge is fourscore Paces long, and leads into a Platform of an octogone figure in the middle of the Reservatory, where there are Steps to descend into the Water, which is but about a Foot lower than the Platform: There are Pipes in the eight Angles of it, and in the Pillars of the Railes, from Whence the Water plays on all sides, which makes

a very lovely sight. In the middle of the Platform there is a little House built two Stories high, and of an Octogone figure also, each Story hath a little Room with eight Doors, and round the second Story there is a Balcony to walk in: The Roof of this Building which is flat, is bordered with Balisters, and covers the whole Platform also: That Roof is supported by sixteen wooden Pillars, as big as a Mans Body, and about three Fathom high, (if you comprehend their Capitals,) and there are two of them at each Angle, of which one rests upon the Wall of the House, and the other is near the Railes that go round it.

The Garden wherein this Reservatory is, is planted with Flowers and Fruit-trees: All are in very good order, and in this, as well as in the first Garden, there are lovely Walks well Gravelled, and Bordered with divers Flowers: There runs a Canal in the middle of the great walk, which is four Foot over, and carries away what it receives from several little Fountains of Water, that are also in the middle of that Walk, at certain distances: In short, this Garden is very large, and bounded by a Wall which hath a great Gate in the middle that opens into a Close of a large extent, Planted with Fruit-trees, and as nearly contrived as the Gardens”.

Badshahi Ashur Khana

After the *Char Minar*, the first religious building constructed was *Ashur Khana*, a building to house the *alams* (replicas) of the standard carried by the Prophet's grandson Husain at Karbala. It was constructed in 1596. Muhammad Quli used to light 1,000 lamps each day for the first ten days of *Muharram* so that at the end of that period there were 10,000

lamps and the whole place glittered like a diamond. He himself composed *marsiyas* and used to lead the assembly in mourning during the month of *Ramadan*. During this period, he would give up drinking and merriment and wear black robes. Even till today during the period of *Muharram*, mourning congregations are held here as in other *Ashur Khanas* where sacred relics or their replicas are stored.

In the *Ashur Khana* there are numerous inscriptions in the *Tughra* style of Persian on enamelled tiles all over. In one of the inscriptions Muhammad Quli is referred to as the 'slave of Ali'. The tiles have been very artistically prepared and skilfully jointed. They retain their original lustre till this day. This building continued to attract the attention of Muhammad Quli's successors and later of the Asaf Jahi rulers for its periodic maintenance and repair. Asaf Jah II assigned a *jagir* with a revenue of Rs. 12,000 for its maintenance. At present the approach to the building is not befitting a monument of this type. Its extensive courtyard is used as an auction hall for junk.

Jami Masjid

After the second-storey mosque in the *Char Minar*, the first mosque to be constructed in the new city was the *Jami Masjid* in 1597. It can accommodate 700-800 persons for prayer. Its unusual feature was that its entrance was not from the front but by the side of the building. This was presumably done so as to bring the entrance to face the main road radiating from the *Char Minar* towards the north. The mosque must have presented a contrast in its size to the lofty *Char Minar* on the one side and the southern arch of the *Char Kaman* plaza under the shade of which it seems to rest. From this mosque, one also notices the discrepancy between the orientation of the

Char Minar and this mosque.

Its entrance gate has been encroached on and blocked by some petty booksellers and one has to go to the mosque by another side entrance now. The name-board of the middle encroacher, hides completely the inscription on the original entrance gate. Originally, a school, a monastery and a bath were also attached to the mosque but subsequently they became dilapidated. The date of the construction of the building is expressed in a phrase which in translation exclaims: "How excellent is this lofty beneficent building." According to S.A.A. Bilgrami, the custom of learning the holy Ouran by rote was started in the city through the exertions of Hafiz Oazi Mir Shuja-ud-din, Khalifa of Shah Rafi-ud-din who stayed in this mosque when he first came from Burhanpur and started imparting Arabic education to his pupils.

Darush Shiffa

After these, the main public building of note and the only secular construction is the *Darush Shiffa* (General Hospital) completed in 1595. The total area covered by this two-storey building was about 2,326 sq. metres. Its three wings have 12 double rooms each on the ground and first floors while the entrance-side has only eight rooms on each floor. However, the visible arches are only eleven on each of the floors on three sides. There is no way of verifying the number of rooms as the staircases have been blocked by squatters. In the centre, there is a building constructed much later. It houses *alams* and is sorely anachronistic in the style of its construction.

This building housed a medical college and a hospital of the *Unani* system of medicine. The students of this college could get scholarships to complete their studies and were assured of employment on graduation. The location of the

hospital on the bank of the river Musi assured fresh air which helped in the treatment and recovery of patients. There was a Turkish bath attached to this hospital which doesn't exist any more. The mosque, however, is still there, intact. The *serai* has been turned into a slum. The names of many eminent physicians and surgeons came to be associated with this hospital.

In the 19th century, the building was used as a barrack by some of the irregular troops of the Nizam. Now, most of the building has been occupied by squatters, but otherwise it is in reasonable shape.

Muhammad Quli's Mausoleum

It seems strange to list the mausoleum of Muhammad Quli also amongst his achievements as a builder. It was a good custom in the medieval times for monarchs to have their own mausoleums built in their lifetime. It must have led them to reflect on the fleeting nature of power and pageantry and on the dictum that "the paths of glory lead but to the grave." The succeeding generations judge the deceased monarchs so much by their resting places!

Qutb Shahis are perhaps the only dynasty who all "live together" in one compound even after their death. Only the last ruler, Tana Shah, could not complete his tomb before he was taken captive by Aurangzeb to die 14 years later in Aurangabad. Of the tombs of the other monarchs and their family members and other nobles, Muhammad Quli's stands out, as he did himself in his life, and does so even after death. It has a double terrace. The main platform on which the mausoleum stands is raised 5.5 metres from the ground. The lower terrace is 38.5 square metres and the upper terrace 6.7 square metres. The height of the dome from the ground is

37.6 metres. The outer dimensions of the dome are 21.7 metres each way. A colonnade runs round the mortuary chamber in the pillar and lintel style. The actual vault where the Sultan is buried can be reached by steps from the terrace on the south-east side. By way of symmetry on the north-east side a door leads upto the minaret. The crypt has an open approach from all the four sides. There is lattice work on the eastern opening. Through it, the first rays of the rising sun fall on the grave. From the vault above, the *Char Minar* is also visible so that the Sultan could 'see' his masterpiece from his resting place.

The tomb is of polished black basalt on which the *Shiite* creed and verses from the Quran are inscribed in the best Tauqui style. His date of death, his age at the time of death and the length of his reign are given in the inscriptions in *Naskh* script in Persian.

The list doesn't exhaust the number of buildings raised by Muhammad Quli. He founded a city and a city doesn't consist of buildings alone. A city is primarily people; people living, growing, seeking the fulness of their being in it. A city, Aristotle said, comes into being to make life possible. It continues in existence to make life better. A city is never fully completed at any point of time. It is always growing, always decaying in some parts, always changing, always evolving. So also, with Hyderabad. But there is a formal inauguration, a launching of the city, its birth. And this seems to have occurred in 1596. The king and his nobles and the populace moved to the new city of Bhagnagar. The chronogrammatic name for the new city was *Farkhunda Buniyad* (the city with fortunate foundations), or simply *Bhagnagar*. And when he shifted to the new city, the poetking's hands went up reverentially and he prayed to his Creator:

میرا شہر لوگاں سوں معمور کر
 (لوگوں) (سے) (پُر)
 رکھیا جوں توں دریا میں من یا سمیع
 (مچھلیاں)

मेरा शहर लोगों सँ मामूर कर
 (से) (भर दे)
 रखया जूं तूं दयां में मिन या समी
 (नदी) (मछली) (ऐ खुदा)

(Oh God, fill up my city with people just as you have filled the river with fish).

In the same poem he prayed that “May God do good to those who were good to me and shove my enemies into fire. Amongst all the thrones, make mine like the diamond in a ring.”

It must be admitted that the moving force behind the project was his *Peshwa*, Mir Mumin Astarabadi. He had come from Iran and was a versatile person, being a great architect, a lover of culture and a poet and critic of some repute. He wielded enormous power from 1585 till his death (in 1624 or 1626) spread over two reigns. He seems to have been instrumental in the selection of the site of the new city and in procuring the services of architects and skilled craftsmen from Iran. Mir Mumin had witnessed the period of the development of the city of Isfahan in Iran under Shah Abbas. He nurtured hopes of building a similar garden city at the new site. Amongst the expert draftsmen and others whom he got from Iran were Mir Abu Talib, Kamal-ud-din Shirazi and Shehar



Francis Bernier, a French physician attached to Shah Jahan. He wrote 'Travels in the Mughal Empire' in two volumes. He came to Golconda at the time of its conquest by Aurangzeb in 1687.



Jean Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1688), a dealer in diamonds visited Hyderabad twice. He is the author of 'The Six Voyages' translated into English. He has given a detailed description of Bhagnagar.

Yar Jahan. It is beleived that the preparation of plans for the construction of *Char Minar* and the royal palace *Daulat Khana-e-Ali* was entrusted to Mir Abu Talib while Shehar Yar Jahan was given the responsibility for the palaces-the *Khuda-dad-Mahal*, *Dad Mahal* and *Koh-i-Tur Mahal*. On the completion of the project, the former was awarded the title of *Nazar-ul-Mulk*. The plan for the whole city was based on the principles of town planning of Iran which was then the fount of inspiration in the East. Mir Mumin, in one of his poems in Persian addressed to Muhammad Quli's successor, Muhammad Qutb Shah, told him that "if because of King Abbas, Isfahan had become new, because of you the city of Hyderabad had started looking like a new Isfahan." The historian, Firishta (1570-1623) who had seen the great cities of the Mughals like Agra and Lahore observed that there was no city as grand and impressive as Hyderabad in the whole country. In addition, there are the accounts of some European travellers, who visited India during the 17th century. Important amongst them are Manucci the Italian, Schoerer the Dutch, Methwold the English and Tavernier, Thevenot and Bernier, all French. Thus, we have fairly exhaustive information available about the new city and the life of the people there.

It would be appropriate to quote extensively the description given by Tavernier who visited Hyderabad in 1648 and again in 1652, and Thevenot who visited it in 1665-6, for nothing evokes better the flavour of the period than the unedited eyewitness accounts of those observers who breathed that air and ate and drank with the people then alive. It was the first of what Prof. Manzoor Alam, a contemporary geographer of Hyderabad, has called the six stages of the growth of the city. Tavernier (1605-1688) who was a dealer in diamonds and made six visits to the East speaks first:

“BHAGNAGAR is the name of the capital town of this kingdom, but it is commonly called GOLCONDA, from the name of the fortress, which is only 2 *coss* distant from it, and is the residence of the King. This fortress is nearly 2 leagues in circuit, and maintains a large garrison. It is, in reality, a town where the King keeps his treasure, having left his residence in BHAGNAGAR since it was sacked by the army which AURANGZEB sent against it, as I shall relate in due course.

BHAGNAGAR is then the town which they commonly call GOLCONDA, and it was commenced by the great grandfather of the King who reigns at present, at the request of one of his wives whom he loved passionately, and whose name was NAGAR¹. It was previously only a pleasure resort where the King had beautiful gardens, and his wife often telling him that, on account of the river, the spot was suitable for building a palace and a town, he at length caused the foundations to be laid, and desired that it should bear the name of his wife, calling it BHAGNAGAR, i.e. the Garden of Nagar. This town is in 16° 58" of lat². The neighbouring country is a flat plain, and near the town you see numerous rocks as at FONTAINEBLEAU. A large river³ bathes the walls of the town on the south-west side, and flows into the

¹ Bhagnagar, or the Fortunate City, was so called by Kutab Shah Muhammad Kuli after a favourite mistress, whose name was, however, Bhagmati, not, as stated by our author, Nagar, which merely signifies town. It was built close to the banks of the Musi river, and became the seat of Government instead of Golconda, which is 7 miles distant. By the Persians, according to Thevenot, it was already called Haidarabad, and is so generally now. Bath, a distinct word, means garden.

² The true latitude of Golconda is 17°22' N., the longitude being 78°26' 30" E.

³ The Musi river. (Footnotes by the translator, V. Ball).

Gulf of BENGAL close to MASULIPATANAM. You cross it at BHAGNAGAR by a grand stone bridge, which is scarcely less beautiful than the PONT NEUF at PARIS. The town is nearly the size of ORLEANS, well built and well opened out, and there are many fine large streets in it, but not being paved-any more than are those of all the other towns of PERSIA and INDIA-they are full of sand and dust; this is very inconvenient in summer.

Before reaching the bridge you traverse a large suburb called AURANGABAD, a *coss* in length, where all the merchants, brokers, and artisans dwell, and, in general, all the common people; the town being inhabited only by persons of quality, the officers of the King's house, the ministers of justice, and military men. From 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning till 4 or 5 in the evening, the merchants and brokers come into the town to trade with foreign merchants, after which they return home to sleep. There are in these suburbs two or three beautiful mosques, which' serve as *Caravansarais* for strangers, and several pagodas are to be seen in the neighbourhood. It is through the same suburb that you go from the town to the fortress of GOLCONDA.

When you have crossed the bridge you straightway enter a wide street which leads to the King's palace. You see on the right hand the houses of some nobles of the court, and four or five *caravansarais*, having two storeys, where there are large halls and chambers, which are cool. At the end of this street you find a large square, upon which stands one of the walls of the palace, in the middle of which is a balcony where the King seats himself when he wishes to give audience to the people. The principal door of the palace is not in this square, but in another

which is close by; and you enter at first into a large court surrounded by porticoes under which the King's guards are stationed. From this court you pass to another of the same construction, around which there are several beautiful apartments, with a terraced roof; upon which, as upon those of the quarter of the palace where they keep the elephants, there are beautiful gardens, and such large trees, that it is a matter for astonishment how these arches are able to carry such a weight; and one may say in general terms that this house has all the appearance of a royal mansion.

It is about fifty years since they began to build a splendid pagoda in the town; it will be the grandest in all INDIA if it should be completed. The size of the stones is a subject for special astonishment, and that of the niche, which is the place for prayer, is an entire rock, of so enormous a size that they spent five years in quarrying it, and they employed 500 or 600 men continually on this work. It required still more time to roll it upon the conveyance by which they brought it to the pagoda; and they told me that it took 1400 oxen to draw it. I shall explain why the work is incomplete. If it had been finished it would have justly passed for the noblest edifice in the whole of ASIA.

On the other side of the town, from whence one goes to MASULIPATANAM, there are two large tanks, each of them being about a *coss* in circuit, upon which you see some decorated boats intended for the pleasure of the King, and along the banks many fine houses which belong to the principal officers of the court.

At three *coss* from the town there is a very fine mosque where there are the tombs of the KINGS OF

GOLCONDA; and every day at 4 o'clock P.M. bread and *palao* are given to ap the poor who present themselves. When you wish to see something really beautiful, you should go to see these tombs on the day of a festival, for then, from morning to evening, they are covered with rich carpets.

This is what I have been able to observe concerning the good order and the police which is maintained in this town. In the first place, when a stranger presents himself at the gates, they search him carefully to see if he has any salt or tobacco, because these yield the principal revenue of the king. Moreover, it is sometimes necessary that the stranger should wait for one or two days before receiving permission to enter. A soldier first gives notice to the officer who commands the guard, and he sends to the *Darogha* to give him notice also. But as it often happens that the *Darogha* is engaged, or that he is taking exercise outside the town, and sometimes also as the soldier whom they have sent pretends not to have found him, in order to have an excuse for returning, and being much better paid for his trouble the stranger is obliged to await the termination of all this mystery, and sometimes, as I have said, for one or two days.

When the King administers justice he comes, as I stated, into the balcony which overlooks the square, and all those who desire to be present stand below, opposite to where he is seated. Between the people and the wall of the palace they plant in the ground three rows of sticks of the length of a short-pike, at the ends of which they attach cords which cross one another, and no one is allowed, whosoever he may be, to pass these limits without being summoned. This barrier, which is not put

up except when the King administers justice, extends the whole length of the square, and opposite the balcony there is an opening to allow those who are summoned to pass through. Then two men, who hold by the ends a cord stretched across this opening, have only to lower it to admit the person who is summoned. A Secretary of State remains in the square below the balcony to receive petitions, and when he has five or six in hand he places them in a bag, which a eunuch, who is on the balcony by the side of the King, lowers with a cord and draws up afterwards, in order to present them to his Majesty.

It is the principal nobles who mount guard every Monday-each in his turn, and they are not relieved before the end of a week. There are some of these nobles who command 5000 or 6000 horse, and they encamp under their tents around the town. When they mount guard each goes from his home to the *rendezvous*, but when they leave it they march in good order across the bridge, and from thence by the main street they assemble in the square in front of the balcony. In the van you see ten or twelve elephants marching, more or fewer according to the rank of him who goes off guard. There are some among them bearing cages (*howdahs*) which somewhat resemble the body of a small coach, and there are others which only carry their driver, and another man instead of the cage, who holds a sort of banner.

After the elephants, the camels follow two by two, sometimes up to thirty or forty. Each camel has its saddle, upon which they place a small *culverin*, which a man, clad in a skin from head to foot, like a sort of pantaloons, and seated on the crupper of the camel with a lighted match in hand, quickly turns from side to side before the balcony where the King is.

You see coming after them the carriages, around which the servants walk on foot, after which the ledhorses appear, and finally the noble to whom this whole equipment belongs, preceded by ten or twelve courtesans, who await him at the end of the bridge, leaping and dancing before him up to the square. After him the cavalry and infantry follow in good order. And as all that affords a spectacle, and has something of pomp about it, during three or four consecutive months which I have sometimes spent at BHAGNAGAR, my lodging being in the main street, I enjoyed the amusement every week of seeing these fine troops passing, which are more or less numerous according to the rank of the noble who has been on guard in his turn.

The soldiers have for their sole garment but three or four ells of cloths, with which they clothe the middle of the body before and behind. They wear the hair long, and make a great knot of it on the head as women do, having for sole head-dress a scrap of cloth with three corners, one of which rests on the middle of the head, and the other two they tie together on the nape of the neck. They do not have a sabre like the Persians, but they carry a broadsword like the Swiss, with which they both cut and thrust, and they suspend it from a belt. The barrels of their muskets are stronger than ours, and the iron is better and purer; this makes them not liable to burst. As for the cavalry, they have bow and arrow, shield and mace, with helmet and a coat of mail, which hangs behind from the helmet over the shoulders.

There are so many public women in the town, the suburbs, and in the fortress, which is like another town,

that it is estimated that there are generally more than 20,000 entered in the *Darogha's* register, without which it is not allowed to any woman to ply this trade. They pay no tribute to the King, but 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, and if he is not, an eunuch signals to them with his hand that they may withdraw.

In the cool of the evening you see them before the doors of their houses, which are for the most part small huts, and when the night comes they place at the doors a candle or a lighted lamp for a signal. It is then, also, that the shops where they sell *tari* are opened. It is a drink obtained from a tree, and it is sweet as our new wines. It is brought from 5 or 6 *coss* distant in leather bottles, upon horses which carry one on each side and go at a fast trot, and about 500 or 600 of them enter the town daily. The King derives from the tax which he places on this *tari* a very considerable revenue, and it is principally on this account that they allow so many public women, because they are the cause of the consumption of much *tari*, those who sell it having for this reason their shops in their neighbourhood.

These women have so much suppleness and are so agile that when the King who reigns at present wished to visit MASULIPATANAM, nine of them very cleverly represented the form of an elephant, four making the four feet, four others the body, and one the trunk, and the King, mounted above on a kind of throne, in that way made his entry into the town.

All the people of GOLCONDA, both men and women, are well proportioned, of good stature, and of

fair countenances, and it is only the peasantry who are somewhat dark in complexion.”*

Jean de Thevenot (1633-67) who visited India in 1665-66 says:

“The Capital City of this Kingdom is called *Bagnagar*, the *Persians* call it *Aider-abad*; it is fourteen or fifteen Leagues from *Viziapour*, situated in the Latitude of seventeen Degrees ten Minutes; in a very long plain, hemmed in with little Hills, some Cosses distant from the Town, which makes the Air of that Place very wholesome, besides that, the Countrey of *Golconda* lies very high. The Houses of the Suburbs, where we arrived, are only built of Earth and thatched with Straw, they are so low and ill contrived, that they can be reckoned no more than Huts. We went from one end to the other of that suburbs, which is very long, and stopt near the Bridge which is at the farther end of it. There we stayed for a note from *Cotoual* to enter the Town, because of the Merchants Goods of the Caravan, which were to be carried to the *Cotouals* House to be searched: But a *persian* named *Ak-Nazar*, a favorite of the Kings, who knew the chief of the Caravan, being informed of its arrival, sent immediately a Man with orders, to let us enter with all the Goods, and so we past the Bridge, which is only three Arches over. It is about three Fathom broad, and is paved with large flat Stones: The River of *Nerva* runs under that Bridge, which then seemed to be but a Brook, though in time of the Rains, it be as broad as the *Seine* before the *Louvre* at *Paris*. At the end of the Bridge, we found the Gates of the City, which are no more but

* *Travels in India* by Jean Baptise Tavernier Vol. 1, 1676. Translated by V. Ball (London : Macmillan and Company/1889) P. 150-159.

Barriers: Being entered, we marched a quarter of an hour through a long Street with Houses on both sides, but as low as those of the Suburbs, and built of the same materials, though they have very lovely Gardens.

We went to a *Carvansearay* called *Nimet-ulla*, which has its entry from the same Street: Everyone took his lodging there, and I hired two little Chambers, at two *Roupies* a Month. The Town makes a kind of Cross, much longer than broad, and extends in a straight line, from the Bridge to the four Towers; but beyond these Towers the Street is no longer straight, and whilst in walking I measured the length of the Town, being come to the four Towers, I was obliged to turn to the left, and entered into a *Meidan*, where there is another Street that led me to the TownGate, which I looked for. Having adjusted my measures, I found that *Bagnagar* was five thousand six hundred and fifty Paces in length, to wit, two thousand four hundred and fifty from the Bridge to the Towers, and from thence, through the *Meidan* to the Gate which leads to *Masulipatanam*, three thousand two hundred Paces. There is also beyond that Gate, a Suburbs eleven hundred Paces long.

There are several *Meidans* or Public places in this Town, but the fairest is that before the Kings Palace: It hath to the East and West two great Divans very deep in the Ground, the Roof whereof being of Carpenters work, is raised five Fathom high, upon four Wooden Pillars; this Roof is flat, and hath Balisters of Stone cast over Arch-ways, with Turrets at the corners. These two Divans serve for Tribunals to the *Cotoual*, whose Prisons are at the bottom of these Divans, each of them having a Bason of Water before them. The like Balisters go round the

Terrass-walks of the place: The Royal Palace is to the North of it, and there is a Portico over against it, where the Musicians come several times a day to play upon their Instruments, when the King is in Town.

In the middle of this place, and in sight of the Royal Palace, there is a Wall built, three Foot thick, and six Fathom in height and length, for the fighting of Elephants, and that Wall is between them, when they excite them to fight; but so soon as they are wrought up to a rage, they quickly throw down the Wall. The ordinary Houses there, are not above two Fathom high; they raise them no higher, that they may have the fresh Air during the heats, and most part of them are only of Earth; but the Houses of Persons of Quality are pretty enough.

The Palace which is three hundred and four score Places in length, takes up not only one of the sides of the Place, but is continued to the four Towers, where it terminates in a very loftly Pavillion. The Walls of it which are built of great Stones, have at certain distances half Towers, and there are many Windows towards the place, with an open Gallery to see the shews. They say it is very pleasant within, and that the Water rises to the highest Appartments: The Reservatory of that Water, which is brought a great way off, is in the top of the four Towers, from whence it is conveyed into the House by Pipes. No Man enters into this Palace, but by an express Order from the King, who grants it but seldom; nay, commonly no body comes near it, and in the place there is a circuit staked out, that must not be passed over. There is another square *Meidan* in this Town, where many great Men have well built Houses. The *carvanseras* are generally all handsome, and the most esteemed is that

which is called *Nimet-ulla* in the great Street opposite to the Kings Garden: It is a spacious square, and the Court of it is adorned with several Trees of different kinds, and a large Bason where the *Mahometans* performe their Ablutions.

That which is called the four Towers, is a square building, of which each face is ten Fathom broad, and about seven high: It is opened in the four sides, by four Arches, four or five Fathom high, and four Fathom wide, and everyone of these Arches fronts a Street, of the same breadth as the Arch. There are two Galleries in it, one over another, and over all a Terrass that serves for a Roof, bordered with a Stone-Balcony; and at each corner of that Building, a Decagone Tower about ten Fathom high, and each Tower has four Galleries, with little Arches on the outside; the whole Building being adorned with Roses and Festons pretty well cut: It is vaulted underneath, and appears like a Dome, which has in the inside all round Balisters of Stone, pierced and open as the Galleries in the outside, and there are several Doors in the Walls to enter at. Under this Dome there is a large Table placed upon a Divan, raised seven or eight Foot from the Ground, with steps to go up to it. All the Galleries of that Building, serve to make the Water mount up, that so being afterwards conveyed to the Kings Palace, it might reach the highest Appartments. Nothing in that Town seems so lovely as the outside of that Building and nevertheless it is surrounded with ugly shops made of Wood, and covered with Straw, where they sell Fruit, which spoiles the prospect of it.

There are many Officers and Men of Law at *Bagnagar*, but the most considerable is the *Cotoual*: He

is not only Governour of the Town, but also chief Customer of the Kingdom. He is besides, Master of the Mint-house, and Supream Judge of the City, as well in Civil as Criminal matters; he rents all these places of the King, for which he pays a good deal of Money. There are in this Town many Rich Merchants, Bankers and Jewellers, and vast numbers of very skilful Artisans. Amongst the Inhabitants of *Bagnagar*, we are to reckon the forty thousand Horse, *Persians*, *Moguls*, or *Tartars*, whom the King entertains, that he may not be again surprised, as he hath been heretofore by his Enemies.

Besides the *Indian* Merchants that are at *Bagnagar*, there are many *Persians* and *Armenians*, but through the weakness of the Government, the *Omras* sometimes squeeze them; and whilst I was there, an *Omra* detained in his House a Gentile Banker whom he had sent for, and made him give him five thousand *Chequins*; upon the report of this Extortion, the Bankers shut up their Offices, but the King Commanded all to be restored to the Gentile, and so the matter was taken up.

The Tradesmen of the Town, and those who cultivate the Land, are Natives of the Country. There are many Franks also in the Kingdome, but most of them are *Portuguese*, who have fled thither for Crimes they have committed: However the *English* and *Dutch* have lately set led there, and the last make great profits. They established a Factory there, (three years since) where they buy up for the Company, many *Chites* and other Cloaths, which they vent elsewhere in the *Indies*. They bring from *Masulipatanam* upon Oxen, the Goods which they know to be of readiest sale in *Bagnagar*, and other Towns of the Kingdom, as Cloves, Pepper, Cinnamon, Silver,

Copper, Tin, and Lead, and thereby gain very much; for they say, they get five an twenty for one, of profit; and I was assured that this profit amounted yearly to eleven or twelve hundred thousand French *Livres*. They are made welcome in that Countrey, because they make many Presents, and a few days before I parted from *Bagnagar*, their Governour began to have Trumpets and Tymbals, and a Standard carried before him, by Orders from his Superiours.

Publick Women are allowed in the Kingdom, so that no body minds it when they see a Man go to their Houses, and they are often at their Doors well drest, to draw in Passengers: But they say, most of them are spoiled. The common People give their Wives great Liberty: When a Man is to be Married, the Father and Mother of his Bride, make him promise that he will not take it ill, that his Wife go and walk through the Town, or visit her Neighbours, nay and drink *Tary*, a drink that the Indians of *Golconda* are extremely fond of.

When a Theft is committed at *Bagnagar*, or elsewhere, they punish the Thief by cutting off both his Hands; which is the Custome also in most Countries of the *Indies*. ”* (sic)

Abbe Carre in 1672 observed:

“This large town ... Bagnagar (is) full of strangers and merchants. That trade is carried on by foreigners and others without restriction as to their nationality or particular business. There is such a concourse of every kind of people, merchandise and riches that the place seems to be the centre of all trade in the East.”

* The Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot Into the Levant Vol. III. Translated by A. Lovell (London : H. Clark, St. Paul’s Church Yard 1687) p. 94-97

And further the testimony of the anonymous author in Moreland's *Relations*, who served in Nizampatnam (1608-14), written for official use. This provides a view from the east coast:

“A citie that for sweetness of ayre, convenience of water and fertility of soil, is accounted the best situated in India, not to speak of the King's Palace, which for bignesse and sumptuousnesse, in the judgement of such as have travelled in India, exceedeth all belonging to the Moghull or any other prince: it being twelve miles in circumference, built all of store and within, the most eminent places garnished with massie gold in such things as we commonly use iron, as in the barres of windowns, bolts and such like and in all other points fitted to the majesty of so great a king, who in elephants and jewels is accounted one of the richest princes of India.”

Finally, we turn to a very unusual source. Of all the people, a Thug-Ameer Ali. *Confessions of a Thug* by Meadows Taylor was published in 1839. Ameer Ali made a 'professional' visit to Hyderabad in late twenties of the 19th century. Nizam Akbar Ali Khan Sikandar Jah Asaf Jah III was the ruler of Hyderabad and the city had been in existence for over 230 years.

He came to Hyderabad via Alwal and describes his gradual approach to the city. From the Tank Bund, he saw the Hussain Sagar lake “whose surface was curled into a thousand waves, whose crests as they broke sparkled like diamonds and threw their spray into our faces as they dashed against the stonework of the embankment. We stood a long time gazing upon the beautiful prospect, so new to us all and wondering whether the

sea could be anything like what was before us.” He had not yet seen a sea!

Then he noticed ahead of him *Naubat Pahad* and rode on to it. From there he saw the breath-taking view of the city- “the first city of the Dukhun, justly celebrated throughout the countries I had passed.” From there he looked at the city and saw white terraced houses gleaming brightly amidst “almost a forest of trees.” The *Char Minar* and *Mecca Masjid* rose proudly from the masses of buildings by which they were surrounded. He found the city of “immense extent” and thought “it was composed principally of gardens and inclosures.” Each of his companions also “ejaculated his praise of the beautiful scene.” He however, found that “the streets were narrow and dirty and the interior of the city certainly did not answer the expectation we had formed from its outside and distant appearance; still there were evident tokens of its wealth in the number of elephants on the back of which, on canopied umbaras (sic), sat noblemen or gentlemen attended by their armed retainers.”

Around the *Char Minar*, however, he found broader streets: “How grand! I exclaimed, stopping my horse and looking up the huge minarets, which seemed to pierce the clouds; ‘to see this alone is worth a journey from Delhi’.”

He was one of the few who visited the mausoleums of the Qutb Shahi rulers. He had a rendezvous with a lady, Azima, who had fallen in love with him after she had just a glimpse of him when he, unaware of her existence, happened to pass below the balcony of her house. So inflamed by passion was she by the sight of the handsome young man, that the same evening she sent her maid Kallu to the Thug beseeching him to ‘rescue’ her. Herself a most beautiful young woman, she

had been married to a much older and very cruel man. Ameer Ali and Azima agreed to meet the next morning at the *durgah* of Hazrat Shah Wali from where they were to elope.

The *durgah* was near the mausoleums and since Azima was late in coming, the Thug spent some time seeing the monuments. He was “astonished at their size and magnificence.” Inside the compound he found:

“The silence and desolation were oppressive and we scarcely made a remark to each other, as we traversed one by one the interiors of the noble edifices-some of them dark and gloomy and filled with bats and wild pigeons whose cooing reechoed within the lofty domes-and others whose wide arches admitted the light of the day, and we were more cheerful in appearance.”

Incidentally, if the Thug is to be believed, the elopment ended in a happy marriage!¹

We have it from Briggs that “on reference to the accounts of Meer Aboo Talib, the King’s private treasurer, it appears that seventy eight lac of hors (a hors was about 4.50 rupees) were expended in the construction of public works during the life time of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. A sum of 60,000 hors was annually distributed to the poor, of which 12,000 hors were given in charity during the months of Muharram alone.”²

A New Interpretation

According to Firishta, Muhammad Quli had ordered that the

¹ *Confessions* is actually a novel. It should really be taken as a description by Taylor who served in the area as an Asst. Resident.

² From the Appendix of Briggs Translation of *A History of the Rise of Mohammedan Power in India* by Firishta Vol. III 1829, page 484.

city should be, *inter alia*, “a replica of paradise itself”. On the face of it one takes it as a poetic metaphor. But Jan Pieper, a German Scholar, has recently come out with a new interpretation. In an article³ published in 1988 he has tried to show that the Sultan’s injunction was to be taken literally. The city was, in fact, laid out on the model of the Garden of Eden. It is an interesting interpretation and is worth summarising before concluding this section.

Jan Pieper says that first of all the cross of the axial streets is not in exact correspondence with the cardinal directions. Nor does it relate to the astronomical data connected with the foundation of the city. The deviation of the east-west axis from the true east is about 10° to the south. This is in order to give it a direction towards Mecca. “The orientation of Hyderabad, therefore, seems to be based on the *Kibla* direction of the central mosque on the upper floor of the *Char Minar*.”

There are two crosses—one at the *Char Minar* and the other about 225 feet (Actually it is 250 ft. or 76 metres) away at the *Char Kaman* which has four massive arches in four directions. In its centre was the *Char-su-ka-Houz* (fountain of the four directions). Originally this was the focal point of the royal quarters. In the west was the royal area shut off from the main centre by an arch by the side of which was a gate on which hung a curtain of cloth-of-gold. On the opposite side behind the arch (now called *Kali Kaman*) was the house of the royal drums. Musicians sat on this arch and played *shehnai* five times daily. Beyond this were the barracks of the royal guards. It is this area and the ‘meaningful relationship’ of a number of architectural elements in it which according to

³ Jan Pieper : “A Quranic Paradise in Architectural Metaphor, ‘Environmental Design’ : The Journal of the Islamic Design Research Centre, Special Issue. January 1983 P. 46-51.”

Pieper, is based on the Quranic vision of the Garden of Eternity.

First is the very fountain itself. Its very name evokes Sura 47, 16 (Actually it is 14 not 16). "In heaven there are streams of water which can never be spoilt, streams of milk which will never change its taste, streams of wine, pleasant to the thirsty and also streams of purified honey." These four streams have their sources in a mystical fountain in the middle of paradise which issues its waters in the four directions. *Char-su-ka-Houz* seems to be a synonym for this fountain and the radiation of four streets an architectural transformation of this image.

Again, originally, this impressive fountain had also trees planted next to it corresponding to the Quranic description. Though it is not clear whether there were two or four trees, they were of two types-coconut and betel-nut palm. This according to Pieper corresponds to Sura 56, 28. "... The followers of the Right Hand ... will dwell under the thornless *Sidr* trees and well ordered *Talh* tree in a broad shade and by perennial streams." The mythical Quranic trees have no exact counterparts on earth. The author believes that the coconut trees correspond to the tree of life in paradise. The betel-nut palm-tree is a rather inverted allusion to the Quranic *Talh* tree.

Having dealt with the architectural features corresponding to the features of the Garden of Eden, Pieper proceeds further. In Sura 7,47 there is a mention that the abode of the blessed is closed in by a very high wall on both sides. According to him the four arches represented the 'wall'. The two arches-northern and southern were the watch-posts of the royal guards. They represented the fierce Quranic "Men of the Wall", and allegories of Paradisian exclusiveness-while

the eastern and western arches stood for the Quranic pleasures. The enormous gold curtain on the western arch flowing in the air and the *shehnai* players on the eastern arch filling the air with the 'nasal' sound of the instrument, are taken as the evocation of Sura 55. According to this, in paradise the blessed are attended by houris (beautiful girls), "with large black eyes, kept for you in flowing tents." They will sing in their nasal voices and play music enchanting the Garden of Eternity with their ethereal melodies.

And finally the mystery of the double cross is resolved.

Sura 55 tells us that there is not one paradise for all but a hierarchy of them. "There are two gardens yielding flowers and all sorts of luxury for a festive and representative life, while two others are filled with herbs and fruits and humble amenities of pleasurable civic household." These two gardens are reserved for those "who live in peace with their Lord." Behind the western arch lived the king-the 'lord' and in other quarters lived his subjects-"in peace with their lord."

It sounds a rather far-fetched interpretation. Even fantastic, it seems. But then, Muhammad Quli was a poet and his fancy was capable of enormous flights. And there was that superb architect, invited specially from Iran. The guiding spirit was Mir Mumin, poet, architect, a stout Shia and a person of great versatility. With a combination like that, who knows!

Epilogue

Muhammad Quli passed away in 1611 at the age of 46. He died rather early. His reign marked the high watermark of the Qutb Shahi period in diverse respects. There was comparative peace within the borders. Direct confrontation with external enemies was marginal. Commerce and arts flourished. Due to the Sultan's own interest and predilections, literature got a fillip. The silent but inexorable penetration of the European powers in the South also started during his reign through the incorporation of trading companies.

Muhammad Quli had no son. He had a daughter, Hayat Bakshi Begam who was destined to play a crucial role in the politics of Golconda as the daughter of one Sultan, wife of his successor and the mother of the next ruler. On Muhammad Quli's death, his nephew and only son-in-law, Sultan Muhammad ascended the throne.

It was during Sultan Muhammad's period that Mughal Prince, Khurram brought Malik Ambar to submission. Thereby he earned the title of Shah Jahan. As a result of this, Golconda too had to pay an indemnity to the Mughal emperor. However, soon thereafter when Shah Jahan rebelled against his father, Sultan Muhammad allowed him and his family safe passage twice through his territory. Sultan Muhammad started

construction of the *Mecca Masjid* in 1617. At the function for laying the foundation stone of this mosque, he announced that this auspicious duty would be performed by a person who had never missed a prayer in his life. When no one stepped forward, he rose himself to do so declaring that since his twelfth year he had not missed any of the prescribed five daily prayers. He also undertook the publication of the complete works of his father-in-law, Muhammad Quli. The relations between Iran and Golconda were strengthened further during the period.

Muhammad's eldest son was Abdullah. On the advice of astrologers, Muhammad did not see his son for twelve years after his birth. After that when the father and son met, the former was taken ill and died. Abdullah thus ascended the throne at the tender age of 12 and ruled for 46 years from 1626 to 1672. During his reign, the relations between Iran and Golconda became even more intimate. The rapid decline of the kingdom set in during this period.

Shah Jahan became the Mughal emperor in 1628. He first subdued Bijapur and then turned to Golconda, which not long ago had rendered him help during his rebellion. Abdullah had to sign a humiliating 'Deed of Submission' with the Mughals in 1636. This reduced Golconda to the status of a vassal of the Mughal empire. Resultantly, Shiaism was replaced by Sunnism as the official sect of Golconda and gold and silver coins were struck with the name of the Mughal emperor on them. The same year Aurangzeb was appointed viceroy of the Deccan which included the 'Kingdom' of Golconda.

Another important political event of this period was the defection of Mir Jumla, a nobleman of the Golconda Court,



A view of modern Hyderabad from the top of *Naubat Pahar*, originally known as Nabat Pahar. In the foreground is the Government Museum building. In the background is the Char Minar . The Osmania General Hospital and the dome of the High Court building can also be seen.



Modern Hyderabad: On the top of *Naubat Pahar* (*Nabat Pahar*) is the Balaji Temple. The white-marble building shines like a pearl at night.

to the Mughals.

In 1656, Aurangzeb's son, Muhammad Sultan under the orders of Emperor Shah Jahan marched to Golconda. He was later joined by his father Aurangzeb. The siege of Golconda was lifted after Sultan Abdullah agreed, amongst other things, to marry his daughter to Aurangzeb's son. The marriage took place a month after the lifting of the siege and it was agreed that after Abdullah's death, the Mughal prince, Muhammad Sultan would become the ruler of Golconda.

Abdullah lived his long reign under humiliating and provocative circumstances and survived through political manoeuvrings taking advantage of the rift between Aurangzeb and Shah Jahan's favourite son, Dara Shikoh who was at the capital of the Mughal empire, Agra. But this very game cost him dearly when Aurangzeb came out on top in the war of succession and became the emperor himself.

Though the Sultanate was on the decline, it was in Abdullah's time that his governor of Karnataka-Neknam-Khan starved San Thome in Madras into surrender and forced the British to allow the Qutb Shahis to have a warehouse in St. Fort at Madras and to collect customs dues direct. Abdullah also issued a firman warning the Dutch not to harass the British.

The last Sultan of Golconda came to the throne in a very unusual manner. According to the treaty with the Mughals, Prince Sultan Muhammad was to succeed Abdullah on the latter's death. But as fate would have it, the designated successor was imprisoned by Aurangzeb himself for his dereliction and so the question of his succeeding Abdullah didn't arise.

Abdullah had no son. Of his two other daughters, the

marriage of the younger one to one Syed Sultan of Najf was objected to by the elder son-in-law who belonged to Mecca. In the circumstances, one Abul Hasan who was remotely related to the royal family and who at that time was living as a disciple of the Sufi saint, Shah Raju outside the city, was brought up and married to the princess. Through an intrigue in the palace, Abul Hasan became the new king of Golconda.

The story of Abul Hasan Tana Shah reads like a tragic romance. There are numerous versions about how he became king, how he ruled for fourteen years and how ultimately he was taken prisoner by Aurangzeb to die fourteen years later in captivity at Aurangabad. He was popularly known as *Tana Shah* because of his delicacy of temperament and finesse, and not due to his despotic and unpredictable behaviour with which the term has come to be associated now.

Under him, Madanna, a Hindu, held the office of the Prime Minister. Madanna tried to strengthen the kingdom and appointed in key positions a number of men enjoying his confidence. The appointment of Madanna, an infidel, as Peshwa was one of the ostensible reasons given by Aurangzeb for his attack on Golconda. Shivaji, the Maratha chief, also paid a visit to Golconda and had a meeting with Tana Shah from whom he was able to secure help for his campaigns against his own brother, the Mughals and Bijapur. Tana Shah's efforts at reviving the old glory of Golconda were too feeble and too late. The Mughals invaded Bijapur and then while its siege was still on, decided to invade Golconda because Tana Shah was extending help to Bijapur.

The siege of Golconda lasted eight lunar months. The brave and heroic defence of Golconda against the Mughal army under the personal command of the Mughal emperor makes a glorious finale to the story of the Qutb Shahi dynasty.

Tana Shah and his generals held out and there was no prospect of the Mughals winning but for large-scale defections. One night the barking of a pariah-dog woke up the garrison just in time to block the entry of the Mughals into the fort. The dog was honoured with a gold collar and given a place of honour by the side of Tana Shah's throne! In this last phase of the Golconda Sultanate, ignominious treacheries were matched by acts of exceptional courage by officials high and low. Ultimately, the fort was taken by deceit and bribery. Abul Hasan Tana Shah, the ease-loving ruler of the crumbling dynasty distinguished himself by his courage and poise when he was being taken prisoner. He kept the Mughal general, Ruhullah Khan waiting while he said his morning prayers and then, to the utter disbelief of the Mughal general, coolly invited him to share breakfast with him before being taken to the Mughal camp as a captive.

The capture and transfer to Aurangabad of Tana Shah in 1687 ended the Qutb Shahi dynasty. It had lasted 169 years. Golconda became a part of the Deccan province of the Mughals with capital at Aurangabad. The unfinished tomb of Tana Shah, the last ruler of Qutb Shahis, at the necropolis near the Golconda fort reminds tragically of the "unfinished business", of which Aurangzeb had once spoken rather derisively when he was requested for further financial grant for the decoration of the *Mecca Masjid* in the city. Tana Shah lies buried at Aurangabad. Under the same earth lies his victor Aurangzeb. Death is indeed a great equalizer.

After its sack in 1687, the city of Hyderabad which had fondly been named *Farkhunda Buniyad* by its founder was given the rather vengeful-sounding name of *Darul Jihad*-(the "site of crusade") by Aurangzeb. Golconda was merged in the Deccan province of the Mughals the capital of which was

Aurangabad. Hyderabad thus ceased to be the capital city. In 1724, the Mughal Governor of the Deccan, Nizam-ul-Mulk became independent of the Mughal Emperor but retained his capital at Aurangabad. It was only in 1763, after a gap of 76 years, that Hyderabad once again became the capital of the Deccan. Life began to return to the city which had laid in neglect for three quarters of a century. The new dynasty called Asaf Jahi ruled Hyderabad till 1948 when the state of Hyderabad was absorbed into the Indian Union.

And in the long line of kings and potentates, particularly from 1518 to 1948, Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah stands out as a multi-faceted personality, remembered affectionately by succeeding generations as no other ruler of this part of India is. The answer to the question-Why is it so?-is perhaps, *because he was different*. He did not try to strike a pose, but had the courage to be himself. He identified himself naturally and easily with his subjects. In an age of cruelty and bigotry, he exhibited a surprising degree of tolerance and liberalism. The poet in him surpassed the monarch. He touched responsive chords in the hearts of his people. His identification with them transcended the barriers of religion and of time, and generation upon generation of men and women have recalled his name with fondness. The singers of Hyderabad still include some of his compositions in their repertoire and draw cheers when they recite his benediction for the city he founded. The name and memory of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah endures-and doubtless, with justification.

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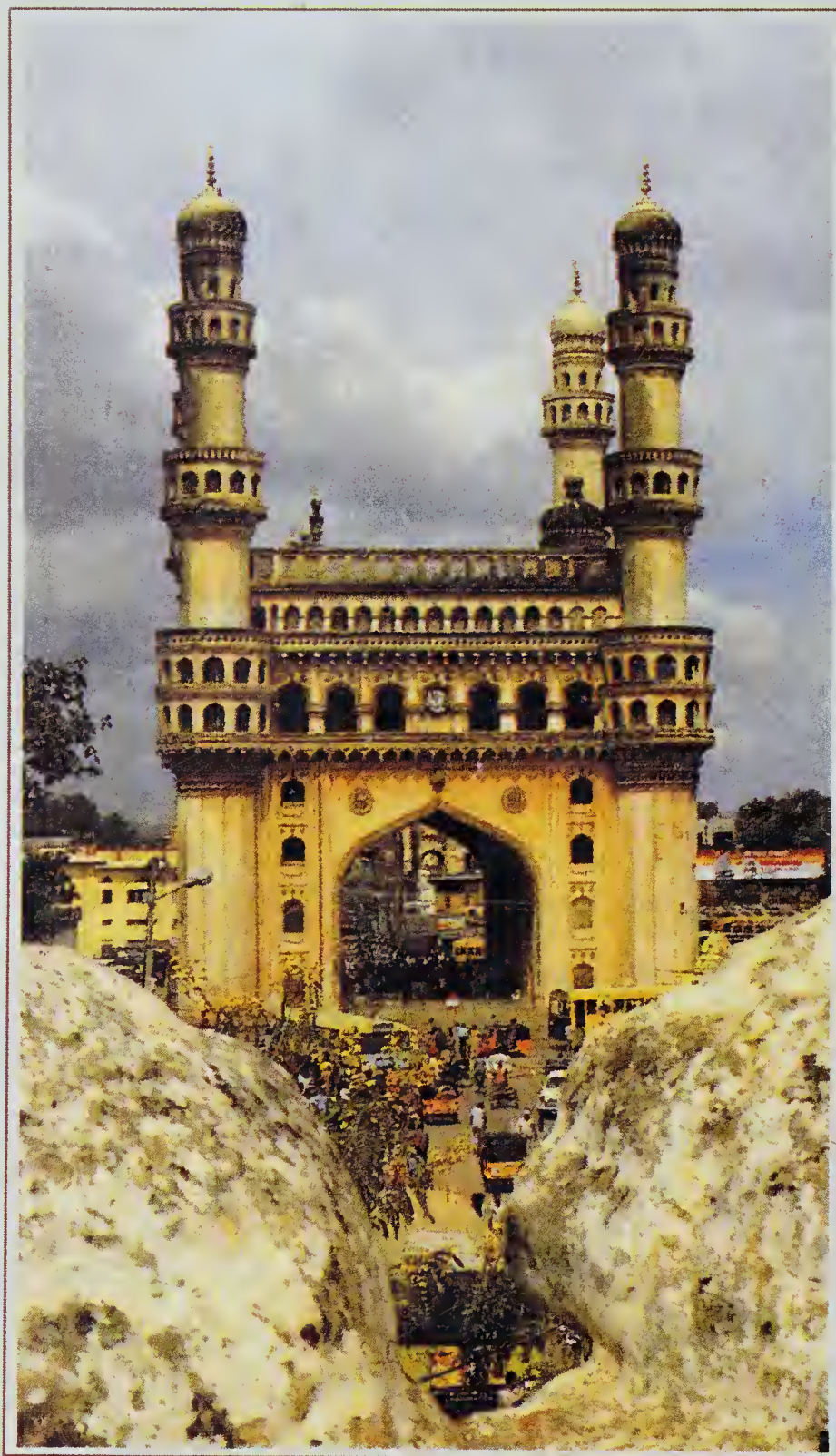
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