From Camp to Port: Mughal Warfare and the economy of Coromandel, 1682-1707

Chaudhuri, A.

From Camp to Port: Mughal Warfare and the Economy of Coromandel, 1682–1710

Archisman Chaudhuri

From Camp to Port: Mughal Warfare and the Economy of Coromandel, 1682–1710

PROEFSCHRIFT
ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 26 juni 2019
klokke 15.00 uur

door

Archisman Chaudhuri
geboren te Kolkata (West Bengal, India) in 1990

Promotor:

Prof. dr. J.J.L. Gommans

Promotiecommissie:

Prof. dr. P. Malekandathil (Jawaharlal Nehru University)
Prof. dr. B. Schoenmaker
Dr. A. Singh (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
Dr. C.M. Stolte

Contents

List of figures

List of maps

List of tables

Acknowledgements

Aan het begin lijkt ieder goed project onmogelijk, or 'every good project appears impossible at the beginning'– so did this dissertation, but it has finally reached the finishing line.

I was very much a landlubber who had little idea of the sea air when I began my Master's in History at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. That I have written a doctoral thesis on the economic impact of Mughal wars in late seventeenth-century Coromandel, a major manufacturing and exporting hub of the erstwhile Indian Ocean, is due to a few teachers who have led me to the sea. At JNU, Professor Pius Malekandathil introduced me to the history of South India, encouraged me to learn Dutch to explore the archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and to apply for the Cosmopolis programme which brought me to the Netherlands. Professor Ranabir Chakravarti lit up my imagination with stories of his own research on the Indian Ocean and anecdotes from the career of Ashin Das Gupta. A seminar paper I studied with Professor Joy Pachuau fanned my imagination even more by allowing me to survey Indian merchant diaspora's that traded in the western Indian Ocean.

At Leiden University, my doctoral supervisor Professor Jos Gommans, who cannot be thanked due to university regulations, emphasized the need to analyse the connections between the coast and the interior to understand the histories of early modern Indian Ocean empires of the Ottomans, the Safavids and the Mughals. Out of this idea was born the primary question of my dissertation: to research the impact of the southern campaigns (1682–1707) of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb on the economy of Coromandel in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century.

The Cosmopolis and the Erasmus Mundus–IBIES programmes provided me with scholarships to pursue a Bachelor's degree and doctoral research at Leiden University. I owe many thanks to Marijke van Wissen, the secretary of our programme, and Monique Erkelens, Carolien Stolte and Esther Zwinkels, the coordinators of our programme. I thank my teachers Lily Evers, René Wezel and Nico Langeweg who taught me modern Dutch. Lessons with Dr. Ton Harmsen and Dr. Hugo 'sJacob helped me learn early modern Dutch.

My research has benefited from interactions with Abdur Rahoof Ottathingal, Alicia Schrikker, Anjana Singh, Ariel Lopez, Atsushi Ota, Barend Noordam, Bhaswati Bhattacharya, Byapti Sur, Carolien Stolte, Dirk Kolff, Elizabeth Geevers, Erik de Odegaard, Esther Zwinkels, Ghulam Nadri, Gijs Kruijtzer, Guanmian Xu, Guido van Meersbergen, Harbans Mukhia, Ikuko Wada, Kathy Wellen, Katie Ekama, Lennart Bes, Leonard Blussé, Mahmood Kooria, Manjusha Kuruppath, Michael Pearson, Nadeera Rupesinghe, Norifumi Daito, Seng Guo Quon, Simon Kemper, Tristan Mostert and Yu Yusen. Neilabh Sinha and Pimmanus Wibulsilp were of great help in finding secondary sources for me during the last stages of revising this dissertation. Dr. M.N. Rajesh of the University of Hyderabad, whom I met during two trips to Hyderabad, offered me strong words of motivation. Tapan Raychaudhuri, who, among Indian historians,

pioneered the study of Coromandel using VOC sources, was kind enough to listen to and encourage me when I was a tyro.

I conducted research for my dissertation at the Leiden University library, particularly its Special Collections Desk, and at the National Archive of the Netherlands, The Hague. I thank the staff at both places. Steve Green, the editor of my manuscript, emphasized the need to write as clearly as possible for a wide audience and helped me immensely in improving the dissertation.

I thank my parents, Smarajit Chaudhuri and Jayanti Chaudhuri, for having shown far greater faith in my abilities than I do; Dr. Debabrata Dasgupta and Mrs. Seema Dasgupta for their ever encouraging presence; Prof. Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty and Prof. Uttara Chakraborty, my teachers from Presidency College, for inspiring me to carry on with academic research despite the setbacks that accompany the job; and my friends Biswadev Banerjee, Shreejata Ghosh, Apurbaa Chatterjee, Kanad Sinha and Haimanti Pakrashi for their support.

I fondly recall my camaraderie with a few friends who made my stay in Leiden memorable. Byapti Sur was of great help to me when I recovered from an accident. Norifumi Daito helped me find my feet when I began to explore the VOC archives. Manjusha Kuruppath became my friend, philosopher and guide, and our conversations effortlessly flit between the VOC archives and Doner kebabs! Deepshikha Boro was a great friend and a co–explorer on many book hunts. I and Abdur Rahoof Ottathingal dreamt of a world that will be more democratic, a freer and a more just place to live in. Many a time I have happily jabbered away in Bengali with Jafrin Rezwana on themes like pyrotechnics of action movies, ridiculousness of heaven and hell, and how narratives of religions and nation–states create artificial divisions.

Hartelijk bedankt allemaal!

Note on spelling

In this dissertation, mention is made of numerous villages throughout Coromandel in which the VOC had a commercial stake. Few of these villages still exist, and in most cases it has not been possible to locate them precisely or find standardized English spelling of their names. For this reason, the author has decided to use the spellings given by the VOC officials of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Alternative spellings of Gingee include Jinji and Senji. This dissertation uses Gingee. Similarly, Masulipatnam is sometimes written as Machilipatnam, and Nagapatnam as Negapatnam, but the spellings Masulipatnam and Nagapatnam are used in this dissertation. In some cases, alternative spellings are given in parentheses. For example, Chapter 3 mentions Tirumalairayanpattinam, a fifteenth–century port in southern Coromandel. By the time the VOC speak of the port in the second half of the seventeenth century, however, it had turned into a small village inhabited by weavers and dyers, and the spelling used in the VOC sources is Tirumalapattinam. The alternate spelling Tirumalairayanpattinam is given in parentheses.

For terms in Persian and other South Asian languages I use the most common transliteration, dispensing with diacritical marks but using italics. This dissertation has used translated Persian chronicles. I will refer to them on the basis of the transcription that is offered by the translator (Sarkar), being *Maasir–i–Alamgiri* and *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*. Throughout the thesis I have adopted his usage of the Persian *ezafe* for titles, technical terms and personal names.

Introduction

This introductory chapter sets the scene for my dissertation with a prelude to its major themes. We start our story against the broader canvas of the global phenomena in which the Mughal Empire and the VOC (the Dutch East India Company) played their part. We then reflect on how historians have discussed the primary concerns of this dissertation and provide the readers with an insight into its hypothesis. Finally, we bring to the table the various connective ingredients in this dissertation.

The Indian Ocean world from 1500 to 1700: Linking the inland empire to the coasts

After a century–long exploration of the Atlantic Ocean, in the late–fifteenth century the Iberian powers of Spain and Portugal made two breakthroughs: Columbus reached the Americas (1492) and Vasco da Gama disembarked in Malabar, southern India (1498). From the start of the seventeenth century Spain and Portugal were followed by their neighbours from the north, the Netherlands and England, in this maritime exploration of the world. Commercial traffic had existed in the Indian Ocean for centuries and the presence of foreign merchants across South Asia was not a novelty. The arrival of European trading companies had simply added new players to the many foreign merchant groups already thronging South Asia. In the Americas Europeans wiped out the indigenous powers, but in Asia their expansion tells a very different story.

In a time when European maritime powers were slowly establishing their empires in the Americas, large imperial states stretched from Turkey to South Asia along the southern rim of the 'arid zone'. By and large, European powers had to accommodate themselves within the imperial frameworks of Ottoman Turkey, Safavid Persia, Mughal India, Qing (Manchu) China and Tokugawa Japan. This was an Afro–Asian age of commerce which saw European expansion coinciding with state–formation by imperial Asian powers. For the imperial powers it was important to connect the empire to the booming coasts. Europeans found it difficult to establish political autonomy in coastal Persia, India and China because cavalry forces could easily reach the littorals and repel them. Consequently, in these regions Europeans restricted themselves to trade, benefiting from the imperial infrastructure that connected the hinterlands to the coasts and occasionally indulging in piracy.[1]

European efforts to control maritime trade in the region through piracy and threats of violence did not have the desired effects. Neither did they have much success in achieving their much–coveted monopoly on violence and on trade in commodities such as spices. The system of passes introduced by the Europeans never kept indigenous merchants away from the Indian Ocean. For example, merchants in Malabar smuggled pepper across the Western

[1] Jos Gommans, 'Continuity and change in the Indian Ocean basin', in: *The Construction of a Global World, 1400–1800 CE, Part 1: Foundations. The Cambridge World History, vol. 6*., eds Jerry H. Bentley, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Merry E. Wiesner–Hanks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 186–187.

Ghats into Coromandel, in defiance of first the Portuguese and later the Dutch. Asian powers were also able to develop European–style navies and defeat the European powers; the Yarubi dynasty of Oman, the Zheng Empire in China and the Marathas in western India are cases in point during the seventeenth and eighteenth century.[2] But perhaps the most notable of them all, in this respect, were the Ottomans.

In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire developed a robust military machine: its navy and artillery rivalled that of the Europeans. The Ottomans conquered and expanded to Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan and the Horn of Africa. Ottoman fleets patrolled the Indian Ocean from these bases and could send military assistance to their allies in Hormuz, Gujarat, the Swahili Coast and even Indonesia. The Ottoman exploration of the Indian Ocean shared, to varying degrees, many characteristics of European expansion: improvements in military technology, developing a political ideology to support their ventures, and a cultural and intellectual transformation that found expression in their own maps, atlases and geographical treatises on the east.[3] Moving to the east of the Ottoman domains, historiography has traditionally characterized Safavid Iran as an empire in decline after the death of its most powerful ruler Shah Abbas the Great (1587–1629). Rudolph Matthee's researches have helped revise this notion through a study of Iran's silk industry. For much of the seventeenth century, the Safavid state remained an active mediator between the Iranian silk producers and their markets. The flow of silk and the income deriving from it was regulated by the Safavid administration. Private merchants, particularly Armenians working under state auspices, explored new markets for silk and were instrumental in forging economic links with Russia.[4] To the east of Iran was Mughal India, the setting for our story.

This dissertation studies the economic impact of an imperial campaign for expansion in Mughal India that strove to link the empire with the coasts. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Mughal Empire had developed a strong politico–military and administrative apparatus that could successfully tap the rich agrarian resources of northern India and connect the heartland of the empire – Agra and Delhi – with the coastal provinces of Bengal and Gujarat which acted as outlets for maritime trade. The Mughals were poised for another round of military expansion in northern Deccan when Akbar died in 1605. The Mughal expansion in the Deccan and South India continued in distinct phases until the late seventeenth century. The last phase was marked by Aurangzeb's military campaigns (1682–1707), the focus of this dissertation, which will examine the economic impact of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns in Coromandel.

---

[2] See Tonio Andrade, 'Beyond Guns, Germs and Steel: European Expansion and Maritime Asia, 1400–1750.' *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010): 165–186.

[3] Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 3–8.

[4] Rudolph P. Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 11.

Before we look at how other historians have interpreted the effects of these wars and explore the other major themes in this dissertation, let us briefly look at the basics of Aurangzeb's campaigns: when did they start and what kind of warfare took place?

Aurangzeb's southern campaigns

When and how did the campaigns unfold?

Taking place almost a century after his great–grandfather Emperor Akbar had begun the first Mughal incursions into the Deccan in the late sixteenth century (we will deal with the pre–Aurangzeb phase of Mughal expansion in the Deccan later in this introduction), Aurangzeb's southern campaigns lasted from 1682 to 1707 and represented the final Mughal effort to settle the southern frontier of the empire. The immediate trigger for Aurangzeb's march to the Deccan was that in 1681 one of his sons, Prince Akbar, had formed an alliance with a section of discontented Rajput nobility and rebelled against his father. As the rebellion failed, Akbar, with help from his Rajput allies, escaped and found asylum at the court of Sambhaji who had been crowned the Maratha king after Shivaji.[5] For Aurangzeb, this might have seemed the ideal opportunity to conquer the Deccan for once and all. *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, a contemporary Persian chronicle of the southern wars, was written by Bhimsen, who had accompanied his employer Rao Dalpat Bundela, one of Aurangzeb's nobles, to the Deccan. It reads: 'The Emperor in order to eradicate the element of mischief-mongers personally came to the dakhan from Ajmer.'[6]

Akbar eventually managed to flee to Persia, but Sambhaji was captured and executed, and the sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda were conquered and annexed by the Mughal Empire. Nonetheless, Aurangzeb could never fully negate the challenge posed by the Marathas, and what Aurangzeb had possibly planned (and begun) as a pursuit of a rebel prince and a march to conquer the Deccan snowballed into a protracted campaign that lasted until his death in 1707. All this kept the emperor engaged in the Deccan for twenty-five years as theatres of war shifted from the west and east of the Deccan to central Coromandel.

What forms of warfare took place?

Aurangzeb's southern campaigns can be divided into four phases: 1682–1684, when the Mughals attacked the Maratha forts in the Konkan and west of the Deccan; 1685–1687, when the Mughals successfully besieged and captured Bijapur and Golconda; 1689–1698, when the scene of action shifted to central Coromandel for the siege of Gingee; and 1699–1707, when Aurangzeb spent his energies in capturing the Maratha forts in the west of the Deccan.

---

[5] John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*. *The New Cambridge History of India*, I.5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Reprint edition 1995): 182–183.

[6] Jadunath Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, with an introduction by V. G. Khobrekar (Bombay: Department of Archives, Sir Jadunath Sarkar Birth Centenary Commemoration Volume, Government of Maharashtra, 1972):134.

Aurangzeb's southern campaigns were characterized by siege warfare and at times sieges were very long indeed. The siege of Bijapur lasted from June 1685 to September 1686, the siege of Golconda lasted from January to September 1687 and the siege of Gingee, the longest of all, lasted almost a decade (at the beginning of the siege the Mughal army comprised of 26,000 men and about 100 elephants; 2,000–4,000 dromedaries and 200,000 cattle were used to transport the army's supplies and possibly as a source of milk). Another major component was guerrilla warfare, a strategy used by the Marathas as they sought to avoid pitched battles in which the Mughals could engage them in a decisive encounter. This forced Aurangzeb to concentrate on capturing the Maratha hill forts in the Western Ghats. The Marathas had some success ambushing supply units of the Mughal army and then retreating, but both they and the Mughals plundered villages to deprive one another of possible sources of food and fodder.

Historiography

Though discussion on Aurangzeb's southern campaigns has featured in works published from as early as 1857 to as recently as 2009, as yet no monograph exists which thoroughly researches the economic impact of these wars in Coromandel. My dissertation is a venture in this regard. At the risk of discounting the historiographical peculiarities of previous works which have discussed this question, either tangentially or in some detail, based on similarities in arguments made and the conclusions drawn we may tentatively categorize their results under three rubrics: the southern campaigns and the decline of the empire; revisionism; and regional centralization in Coromandel.

The southern campaigns and the decline of the empire

The idea that Aurangzeb's southern campaigns devastated the economy of the Deccan and led to the decline of the Mughal Empire first appeared in 1857, when Mountstuart Elphinstone argued that the wars that ravaged the Deccan, strengthened the Marathas and weakened the Mughals, who were unable to replenish sufficient cattle or provisions from their rural territory, and dwindling financial resources meant they failed to procure supplies from elsewhere. Echoes of this idea are found in later works that appeared in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Stanley Lane–Poole extended this theory of decline to argue that the political changes effected by Aurangzeb's wars were felt for more than a century. The anarchy created by the Deccan wars was a direct forerunner of the disturbances created by the Marathas in eighteenth-century Delhi involving Shah Alam and Wellesley. In his magnum opus, the five–volume *History of Aurangzib*, Jadunath Sarkar argued in similar terms: the economic drain caused by Aurangzeb's wars was far-reaching and durable in its impact; destruction of forests and grass due to military operations, particularly sieges, exerted immense pressure on the environment. Agriculture and livestock were badly hit, and the financial depletion caused by the wars meant repair works were not possible. Aurangzeb's

southern wars, Sarkar concluded, reduced national stock and lowered the standards of civilization.[7]

The most cogent expression of this idea appeared from the Aligarh school. The term Aligarh is often used to characterize historians associated with Aligarh Muslim University, such as Mohammed Habib, his son Irfan Habib, S. Nurul Hasan, M. Athar Ali, Iqtidar Alam Khan and Shireen Moosvi. They produced several monographs on the history of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. On the matter of Aurangzeb's campaigns, the classic Aligarh position is Irfan Habib's. He explains the downfall of the Mughal Empire in terms of peasant rebellions by the Jats around Agra, the Satnamis (a Hindu mendicant sect), the Sikhs and, most impactfully of all, the Marathas. The rise of the Marathas was connected to the oppression of the peasantry under a repressive Mughal revenue regime and the role of Aurangzeb's campaigns in this was substantial. Since *jagirs* were transferable every three or four years, the Mughal jagirdars and their amils (agents who collected revenue) paid little attention to the welfare of the peasantry and were harsh with their collections. This caused the peasantry to collaborate with the Marathas (in the Deccan). When the Mughals learned of this they confiscated horses and weapons from every village, which in turn prompted peasants in most villages to take up arms and join the Marathas, and so on. Like the Mughals, the Maratha troops were repressive too and they plundered the countryside. When Aurangzeb captured many of the Maratha forts, the only means of survival available to the peasantry was to plunder, and they joined ranks with the Marathas. Finally, given that the Mughals had limited success in consolidating their conquests during the Mughal wars, both Mughal and Maratha armies continued to ravage villages, forcing peasants to flee and desolating the Deccan even further. Though peasant distress shook the foundations of the Mughal Empire, it did not produce a new (socio–political) order. Rather it eventually led to anarchy and (English) colonial conquest.[8]

The most recent exposition of the connection between Aurangzeb's southern campaigns and the decline of the Mughal Empire was done by Gijs Kruijtzer. Referring to Aurangzeb's own perception of the empire as a ruin by the end of his reign, Kruijtzer argues that the troubles generated by the wars ricocheted off to the north and contributed to ruination of the empire.[9] In other words, the southern wars not only produced a socio–economic crisis, but they also unleashed developments that caused more instability in the eighteenth century.

---

[7] Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India: The Hindu and Mahometan Periods* (London: John Murray, 1857): 575, 588. Stanley Lane–Poole, *Aurangzib* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893): 5, 188–189. Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, *Vol. V* (Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar& Sons Ltd., 1952): 360–366.

[8] Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India 1556–1707*. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, Second, revised edition 1999): 390–405.

[9] Gijs Kruijtzer, *Xenophobia in Seventeenth–Century India* (Leiden: Leiden University Press 2009): 272–274.

In my opinion such analyses have two major drawbacks. Firstly, they overreach themselves in assuming a direct connection between events separated by decades without establishing a causal relationship between them. Secondly, they straitjacket the entire phase of warfare as decline and do not leave room for exploring any other explanation. The idea of the wars ruining the Mughal Empire and setting off forces that eventually led to English colonization of South Asia indirectly feeds into the notion of an eighteenth–century decline: the Mughal Empire declined and the weakness of its successor states paved the way for colonization of South Asia by the English (later British) East India Company.[10] This notion has been negated and revised in favour of strong regional centralization in eighteenth–century India and a concomitant impressive economic growth. Streaks of revisionism appeared in the historiography on Aurangzeb's southern wars in the 1970s.

Revisionism

While John F. Richards acknowledged the havoc wreaked by the wars in eastern Deccan, he made two significant interventions in the debate. Firstly, Richards argued that agriculture in Hyderabad improved from 1688 and that stability slowly returned to the province around 1692, and by 1697 the records show improved revenues, signifying that Mughal administration had been able to restore the links between rural production in fertile parts of the province and state infrastructure in Hyderabad, as well as tap the salt works near Masulipatnam. In fact, Richards argued that the revenue returns from Masulipatnam and Nagapatnam during 1690–1704 were even better than other parts, a feat that would have been impossible without the salt works. Though Hyderabad lost its position as the premier economic centre of the south, it was wealthy enough to be attacked by the Marathas after 1700. Two new economic centres developed to replace Hyderabad: Madras and Aurangzeb's camp. Secondly, Richards argued that as Mughal power declined, the European city states of Madras, Pulicat and Pondicherry in Coromandel became increasingly autonomous, acquired wealth and power, and acted as safe havens for non–combatants fleeing the turmoil created by the wars. Merchant groups, Armenians among them, moved from Masulipatnam to Madras.[11]

The economic pull of Aurangzeb's mobile camp illustrates how while wars cause economic disruption, they also generate their own particular forms of demand. In his study of military entrepreneurship in Europe, David Parrott argues that in long campaigns,

---

[10] Great Britain was formed by the political union of 1707 that merged the Kingdom of England (comprising England and Wales) and the Kingdom of Scotland. British colonization of South Asia took place from the second half of the eighteenth century, and by this point this European power's trading company was referred to as the *British* East India Company. However, during the period of focus for this dissertation (1682–1707), it was still known as the *English* East India Company (EIC).

[11] John F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda* (Oxford: Oxford University, Clarendon Press, 1975): 51–52, 69–70, 72, 110–111, 181–183, 185–186, 189, 211, 215, 218, 220–221, 232–233, 243. John F. Richards, 'European City-States on the Coromandel Coast', in: *Studies in the Foreign Relations of India (From the Earliest Times to 1947)*, ed. P. M. Joshi (Hyderabad: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1975): 508–509.

delegation of responsibility by states to private contractors helped maintain the vitality of well–coordinated supply lines. Large scale networks of specialist suppliers of military equipment who worked in tandem with the state or more often military commanders provided much of the support for armies and navies. By the start of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), merchants were aware that substantial profits could be made from supplying military equipment to armed forces. This economic dynamic sustained the expansion of three cities as military provisioning centres: Genoa, Hamburg and Amsterdam.[12] Stewart Gordon, whose study of Burhanpur as an entrepot stressed on the pull generated by Aurangzeb's camp, takes a similar standpoint on Aurangzeb's southern campaigns. Gordon argues that in the late seventeenth century there was demand in the area to the south of Burhanpur (towards Bijapur and Golconda) created by the Mughal camp and army, with supplies being transhipped to the army from northern India via Burhanpur.[13]

Apart from leading to a reorientation of economic networks and creating new zones of demand that could boost production and marketing, networks in the Deccan and South India outside the immediate sphere of influence of wars and political instability remained relatively unaffected. Sanjay Subrahmanyam argues that in South India coastal trade generally fared better than overseas trade against the backdrop of the aleatoric life–cycles of ports and a changing political landscape. He points out that while Masulipatnam's international trade saw a dip in the 1670s, its coastal trade continued to be high for two reasons: the depopulation of Masulipatnam had not been as high as the loss of its overseas commerce and Masulipatnam was slow to lose its importance as a grain market.[14] As we will see later in this dissertation, coastal trade in agricultural products from Bengal and Orissa to Coromandel ports continued throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This trade persisted even during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns, as is evidenced by the shipping lists cited in Chapter 4. They point out that most of the ships which arrived in Masulipatnam in the late seventeenth century originated from Bengal. In their co–authored work *Symbols of Substance* David Shulman, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Velcheru Narayan Rao argue that the effects of warfare in eighteenth–century Tamil Nadu differed from those of the preceding two centuries in one crucial regard: in the eighteenth century, warfare damaged the economy of Tamil Nadu. This was not the case during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the high frequency of military campaigns did not render any proportionate damage to production, trade or welfare. In the seventeenth century war meant taking over the economic machine of the opponent, an example being the attacks by the Madurai *nayakas* and Marava *setupatis* on Tanjore in the 1670s. In the eighteenth century, however, wars in Tamil Nadu became more ferocious with

[12] David Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 1, 196–197, 208–209, 211–219.
[13] Stewart Gordon, 'Burhanpur: entrepot and hinterland, 1650–1750' *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 25, 4 (1988): 433–434.
[14] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce Southern India 1500–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 61–62.

opposing forces endeavouring to destroy one another's economic machinery, such as during the Anglo–Mysore wars of the 1780s, when the EIC and Mysore rulers attacked the irrigation system and deported men and cattle in large numbers.[15] Shulman, Subrahmanyam and Rao's arguments therefore hint at the survival through reorientation of trade, rather than decline, after wars in the seventeenth century.

Economic growth and revenue returns from Hyderabad showed brief improvement between 1692 and 1697. This had happened not only due to a consolidation of Mughal rule, but also a shift in the theatre of war from northern to central Coromandel. Gingee was the primary site of contest between the Mughals and the Marathas from 1689 to 1698. In fact, as we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, the VOC contrasted the relative peace in northern Coromandel at this point with the disturbed conditions in central Coromandel. Here, we have an important insight: Coromandel's heterogeneity or different impact of the Mughal campaigns in different parts of Coromandel, with respect to changes in the theatres of war. The idea that the regions of Coromandel had experienced different economic impact caused by the wars was pushed further in the 1980s.

Regional centralization in Coromandel

Historians of the VOC and of northern Coromandel's textile industry, including Tapan Raychaudhuri and Joseph Brennig, concluded that the Mughal wars disrupted the economy and the textile industry of Coromandel, both in the north and south. According to this interpretation of events, northern Coromandel's textile industry would never recover from these setbacks, and the siege of Gingee forced peasants and weavers to migrate from central Coromandel.[16] A new component in the idea of regional specialization was introduced by Sinnappah Arasaratnam who argued that an economic crisis following the Mughal conquest forced people to move from northern Coromandel to the south towards Tanjore, where crop failures had been less severe. The VOC's exports fell in the period from 1688 to 1691 due to troubles with the Mughal Empire over piracy on the seas and the destabilizing effects of Mughal expansion around Masulipatnam and the Godavari delta. With the supply of textiles from northern Coromandel in decline during the 1690s, much of the demand from Europe was met by the districts of Cuddalore, Salem, Tanjore, Madurai and Tirunelveli. VOC exports improved after 1691 mainly due to their southern factories; although VOC import trade also fluctuated in the wake of Mughal campaigns, it fared better than their export trade. Arasaratnam added that not all European settlements were growing: while Madras and

[15] Velcheru Narayan Rao, David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nayaka Period Tamilnadu* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992): 240–241.

[16] Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel 1605–1690: A Study in the Interrelations of European Commerce and Traditional Economies* (The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff, 1962): 72–74, 127–128. Joseph Jerome Brennig, 'The Textile Trade of Seventeenth Century Northern Coromandel: A Study of a Pre–Modern Export Industry' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Wisconsin, 1975): 276.

Pondicherry did prosper, the Dutch settlements generally witnessed a decline.[17] Arasaratnam's argument echoes that of Richards in terms of pointing out the shift towards the south, but his formulation leaves a crucial question unanswered: How did the weaving villages in the Kaveri delta fare during the 1690s when the theatre of war had shifted in Gingee in central Coromandel?

Historians of Dutch expansion in the Indian Ocean also stress the southward shift in Coromandel, but they differ in their interpretations of the long–term impact of this change. George Winius and Markus Vink argued that Coromandel's vibrant economy and the position of the Dutch received blows in the late seventeenth century not just from the Mughal wars, but also from changes in consumer tastes in Europe and diminishing resources to generate enough of the bullion that the VOC depended on for its trade within Asia. The general turmoil resulting from Mughal campaigns in South India disrupted operations and pushed up inflation. In the wake of this, the VOC decided to shift their Coromandel headquarter from Pulicat to Nagapatnam to escape the conflict–ridden areas. But this move was to little avail because after 1690 the siege of Gingee disturbed the economy in the region surrounding Nagapatnam. Coromandel was a heavily monetized region where barter had been squeezed out and precious metals – gold and silver – were essential for trade. Japan was the main supplier of bullions for the VOC in Asia. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the Japanese *shogunate* had begun to restrict the flow of gold and silver out of the country. This affected the Dutch export of gold and silver from Japan, and there came a point when copper was introduced as a substitute. Despite the increasing volume of bullion being sent from Europe after 1695, it still could not cover the VOC's orders for textiles. Meanwhile European markets had developed a craze for Indian textiles. The clothes from Coromandel were used to get spices from South–East Asia, but the changes in tastes in European markets transformed the VOC from a spice merchant to a textile merchant. Though it is unclear what role Aurangzeb's campaigns had played, by the end of the seventeenth century the Gentlemen Seventeen instructed Batavia that Bengal (another region in South Asia that produced abundant textiles) should not suffer even when cash was short.[18]

However, the idea of decline of the VOC and by extension, that of Coromandel, was revised later in another study of Dutch expansion across the world. The continuity of the VOC in Coromandel, Jos Gommans argues, is more interesting than the question of decline resulting from political instability. The eighteenth–century in Coromandel was, in fact, politically more unstable and vulnerable to climatic vagaries caused by El Nino than the seventeenth century. The 'Coromandel miracle' came about for two fundamental reasons. Firstly, the VOC acquired direct control over the means of production in Coromandel. In

[17] Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1650–1740* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986): 46, 142, 150–151, 163.
[18] George Winius and Marcus Vink*, The Merchant–Warrior Pacified: The VOC (The Dutch East India Company) and its Changing Political Economy in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991): 50–53.

Golconda, the VOC was effectively conferred ownership of textile weaving villages such as Palakollu, Contera, Draksharama, Golepalam and Godavaram, to the north of Masulipatnam (the Qutb Shahi rulers of Golconda were the first to confer rights to these villages on the VOC, but later, after having conquered Golconda during his southern campaigns, Aurangzeb issued a firman (royal order) reinstating these privileges). The Dutch also 'owned' several villages around Nagapatnam. In addition, they had the right to mint coins in these areas, a privilege that would have been inconceivable in the Mughal provinces. Though the Dutch lost their grip on the production process in the north in the eighteenth century, they acquired control over it in the southernmost part of India thanks to the rivalries between the kingdoms of Tanjore, Madurai and Ramnad. While the conflicts here were no less frequent, their effects appear to have been less disruptive than those in Masulipatnam or Pulicat. Increasingly, Dutch and also indigenous merchants migrated to the more stable south, leading to the growth of the ports Porto Novo and Nagore. Secondly, the continuity of Dutch operations in Coromandel owed much to the close relations forged between the Dutch officials and their middlemen. In this respect, the role played by portfolio capitalists (dynamic figures who farmed revenues through bids at courts and invested their wealth in trade) was crucial. During turbulent times these individuals offered the VOC the stability it required and given the portfolio capitalists' stakes in maritime trade, it was important for them to have good relations with the Dutch (both sides stood to gain from good relations). Just such a trader cum political entrepreneur in eighteenth–century Ramnad was Shaikh Abd al–Qadir, whose family acted as Dutch middlemen in the production of textiles, while at the same time competing with the VOC as managers of the pearl fisheries.[19]

According to the existing historiography, therefore, the most significant impact of the Mughal campaigns was the shift of Coromandel's most important export industry (the textile industry) from the north to the south. So, what should readers expect from this dissertation? Aligning itself with the arguments of revisionism and regional centralization, this dissertation builds on them to construct a hypothesis. But how? Let us first explore the connections this dissertation seeks to establish with the revisionist position. Firstly, it stresses on the importance of examining the heterogeneity in northern and southern Coromandel to understand the differential impact of the Mughal campaigns. We do so by (1) developing a grid-like pattern to study the pre–Mughal history of three port–hinterland complexes across Coromandel, with reference to how these regions responded to wars, and (2) analysing the performance of these economies in the years of the Mughal campaigns, with a focus on the frequency and intensity of fighting in the surrounding regions. Secondly, and though this has rather minor presence in the chapters which analyse the impact of wars, the dissertation questions the idea of decline associated with wars by pointing out instances of trade to Mughal camp, involvement of Mughal officials in trade, and the survival of indigenous

[19] Piet Emmer and Jos Gommans, *Rijk aan de rand van de wereld: De geschiedenis van Nederland overzee 1600–1800* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2012): 347–351.

merchants. Thirdly, this dissertation argues the Mughals were quite keen to promote maritime trade and rehabilitate the regions they had conquered in Coromandel. In this context, it is instructive to look at how they reinstated the various European companies and – specifically in the case of the VOC – the terms under which they did so.

How does this dissertation build on the arguments surrounding how regional centralization developed in South India? Arasaratnam's formulation of the southern shift does not explain how the Dutch factories organized textile production in southern Coromandel during the siege of Gingee. Chapter 5 of this dissertation attempts to answer that question by analysing the condition of textile weaving villages in the Kaveri delta towards the end of the seventeenth century. This dissertation argues that although the wars did indeed disrupt textile production, they could not completely undermine the underlying resilience of an export–oriented industry which could adapt itself to a changing political landscape. Patronage played a crucial role in this respect. Here my dissertation explores the connection between the rural economy and the control that the VOC had come to exert over the production process, the first element of the Coromandel miracle. As we have discussed, the VOC lost their grip over this process in northern Coromandel in the eighteenth century. Chapter 4 studies the performance of two villages owned by the VOC near Masulipatnam and reveals the extent to which European control over production processes ensured a steady output in the years of war. In other words, it elaborates on the strength or otherwise of the Dutch grip on this region. Chapter 5 explores this phenomenon in the context of the Kaveri delta. Richards argued that the Mughal wars eventually resulted in greater autonomy for the European enclaves when non–combatants flocked to the relative security they offered. Although it is true that non–combatants sought the security of European settlements during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns, it is equally important to recognize that throughout the seventeenth century artisans and weavers were always attracted by the security of fortified settlements. From the very beginning of their presence in Coromandel, European companies had been allowed to erect walls and keep artillery. Despite the rigid terms under which the European companies (in this case the VOC) contracted weavers, the patronage and security that they offered made the weavers see them simply as another new patron – after all, European companies contracted the weavers to ship textiles abroad and this offered employment. Migration to fortified settlements or regions that had escaped the disastrous consequences of warfare was therefore not a novel phenomenon caused by the Mughal wars. As Chapter 2 of this dissertation shows, the Dutch port city of Pulicat had attracted indigenous settlers in the second half of the seventeenth century.

To study the economic impact of Aurangzeb's campaigns in Coromandel this dissertation explores several themes: ecology, economy, politics and the discourse of primary sources. We will now take a closer look at these themes, the connecting blocks of this dissertation.

Ecology: Geography and the Dakshinapatha

Two of the themes that this dissertation explores are the ecology of South India and the *Dakshinapatha*. Ecology determines soil patterns, agriculture rhythms, crop types, the effects of precipitation and – particularly relevant in the context of this dissertation – the movements of the Mughal army. From the north, the Arid Zone extends into South India in two directions, forming two distinct strips. The first runs along the arid tracts of Central India through Malwa to the northern Coromandel Coast, north of the mouth of the river Godavari. The second is mainly the rain shadow zone of the Western Ghats (the mountain ranges near the western coast of India which starts at the border of the Indian states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, and then runs through Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and ends in Tamil Nadu) which follows these mountains and turns east towards southeast India in southern Coromandel. We may argue the Deccan campaigns of Aurangzeb were bound by frontiers of the Arid Zone: the starting point of the wars was Daulatabad in northern Deccan and the Kaveri delta was the farthest point in southern India that the Mughals reached; beyond the Kaveri delta lie the dry tracts of Tirunelveli. The primary reason for this effect was the fine balance Mughal armies had to maintain while marching between pastures where their draught animals could graze and the towns and villages that could feed their men.

The impact of the monsoon and the Arid Zone divided the Deccan and South India into two distinct ecological regions: the dry south and the wet south. We will find more references to this categorization in Chapters 2 and 3. Broadly speaking, the drier zones often acted as a natural frontier area for states based in the wetter parts. The western littoral of India primarily receives rainfall from the south–west monsoon that lasts from June to August, this is Malabar's main monsoon season while it also receives some more rain during the north–east monsoon, October to December. The eastern littoral, the Coromandel Coast, receives less rainfall in the south–west monsoon season and more rainfall in the retreating north–east monsoon from October to December. During the south–west monsoon, the winds enter India through the Malabar Coast. They cause heavy rainfall there and along the Kanara and Konkan Coasts. However, as they cross the Western Ghats and blow across the Deccan to the east, they begin to lose moisture. So, the south–west monsoon causes less rainfall in Coromandel. But during the retreating north–east monsoon season, the winds blow from north to south and gain moisture as they cross the Bay of Bengal, which causes heavy rainfall in Coromandel from October to December. Among the major rivers of the Deccan, it is only the Tapti that flows to the west; the Godavari and the Krishna flow to the east. The aridness was neutralized by means of extensive tank irrigation that utilized the two monsoons of the Coromandel Coast.

What was the relationship between the ecology of South India and the *Dakshinapatha* (Southern Road)? Rather than a single artery, it comprised multiple lines of long–distance communication between northern and southern India intersected by routes to the eastern and western littorals. Jos Gommans's 'high roads controlling the empire' hypothesis for explaining the success of the Mughal military stresses the connections that states established

between different geographic zones by controlling the highways. States chose such sites for capitals that were close to rivers and could command the highways of commerce, and this was the key to Mughal success in northern India. In this respect, the argument could be extended to also explain state–formation strategies in South India. For instance, Hyderabad, the Qutb Shahi capital located near the river Musi, linked Surat and the cotton–growing tracts of Maharashtra with Masulipatnam, the most important port in the Bay of Bengal. Similarly, the Vijayanagara Empire with its capital at modern–day Hampi off the river Tungabhadra connected two very different types of ecological zone: the dry plateaus of Karnataka and Goa and central Coromandel ports such as Pulicat. We will find more references to this politico–military success in Chapters 2 and 3.

Kingdoms in Maharashtra also had to successfully connect its three geographical regions: the Konkan (Fertile Coast), the Ghats and the Desh (the plateau widest at the Ghats and narrowing to the east). The region closest to the ghats was in the rain shadow region of the mountains. Further east, however, the plain is fed by the rivers Tapti, Godavari and Krishna and was therefore fertile. Any kingdom based in the desh had to expand westwards to control the productive agriculture and the trade routes to the Konkan. The Ghats could not support even a small army, but they formed a natural retreat for rebels who raided the Konkan and the Desh and had many hill forts that were not so easy to control – as the Mughals learned the hard way in the late seventeenth century.[20] Relative latecomers in the politics of South India, the Mughals had to respond to these and other ecological realities. Located off the river Bhima, Aurangzeb's camps in Islampuri and Galgala acted as the temporary capitals of the empire. From there, the Mughals directed campaigns to conquer the Konkan in the west, Golconda in the east and Gingee in the southeast, effectively trying to gain control of two coasts, Konkan and Coromandel. Following their conquest of Golconda, the Mughals sought to integrate the workings of the coastal economy with the empire (Chapter 4). Much as the Mughals could not always decide the sites of conflicts, Aurangzeb's camp, due to its huge entourage of nobles, merchants and servants who had accompanied the emperor, effectively turned into a city and acted as an important nodal point in the arterial connections of the *Dakshinapatha*.

The economy and the seventeenth–century climate crisis

How was the economy of the Deccan and South India related to its ecology and the *Dakshinapatha*? To start with, ecological conditions affected agriculture. The annual agricultural cycle of Coromandel had two major cropping seasons: crops sown in the first season during the south–west monsoon (June–August) were harvested around September, while the harvest of the second season, during the north–east monsoon (October–December/

[20] See Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and High Roads to Empire, 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 2002): 7–37. For an analysis of the geographical features of Maharashtra, see Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas 1600–1818. The New Cambridge History of India*, II. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 12–13.

January), took place in January and was followed in Tamil Nadu by the festival of Pongal, which was and remains part of the broader calendar of winter harvest festivals across India. The principal subsistence crop was rice, produced in the coastal plains of both the Konkan and Coromandel as well as in the river valleys. Away from these zones, agriculture was mainly supported by tank irrigation. Some wheat was grown near Junnar in western Deccan, while millets were cultivated along with rice to the southeast of Hyderabad and jowar near Nellore. The black soil tracts of western Deccan produced a major commercial crop: cotton. Parts of eastern Deccan also grew cotton, but it was not a source for the weaving industry of northern Coromandel (Chapter 1). The two principal areas of cotton cultivation were: the area to the south of Daulatabad and north of the Godavari River where Paithan was an important textile weaving centre; and the area extending from Kolhapur in the west across Bijapur to Gulbarga in the east between the rivers Bhima and Krishna. Another commercial crop grown in the Coromandel and bought by the European companies was indigo.[21]

The Deccan and South India were natural trading regions, thanks to the tapered coastline that provided access to the Indian Ocean and overland routes which linked the coasts. South India's agricultural produce was also a part of its maritime economy, with the rice trade between Coromandel, Malabar and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) an age–old feature of it. Moreover, the coveted textiles of Coromandel were of course also a by–product of commercial farming. This meant that poor agricultural season could affect textile production, too, as we will see. Since the ports of the Coromandel hardly engaged in any economic production of their own except for the salt works, they depended on supplies from outside. More importantly, although Coromandel ports could be and were supplied by sea, the true source of their prosperity was their overland connection with patron capital cities, subsidiary zones of economic production and other markets in the Deccan and South India. The effects of warfare on the connections forged by the *Dakshinapatha* between ports and the inland economy were therefore quite telling, as this dissertation shows. Finally, the effects of warfare on the connections forged by the *Dakshinapatha* also affected the performance of an invading army over a long period of time since a devastated economy could not keep a military machine as large as that of the Mughals well–oiled and well–fuelled.

Geoffrey Parker writes that the seventeenth-century climate crisis was an episode of global cooling marked by a series of revolutions and a breakdown in state structures across the world. Throughout the northern hemisphere, war became the norm for settling domestic and international disputes. The Chinese and Mughal empires fought wars almost continuously, while the Ottoman Empire experienced only ten years of peace. South Asia had four instances of monsoon failures in 1613–1615, 1630–1632, 1658–1660 and 1685—1687,

[21] For illustrative maps with indexes on the economy of the Deccan and South India see Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire: Political and Economic Maps with Detailed Notes, Bibliography and Index* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982): 14B, 15B, 16B.

and each was followed by famine. However, war could bring famine even in a year of good harvest. The crucial factor, then, was not the weather, but the ability of states and societies to adapt to natural climate changes and artificial, man–made scarcities.[22] In this regard, Geoffrey Parker and Lesley Smith point out that while natural disasters resulted in high food prices in the seventeenth century, they did not always produce famines– for example in Indonesia which had abundant, alternative supplies of food.[23]

In the context of South Asia, especially within the Mughal Empire, John F. Richards has considerably modified the idea of a seventeenth–century crisis. While a general crisis seems to have occurred in the first half of the seventeenth century in several parts of the world, Richards argued that symptoms pointing to a crisis are not apparent in the Indian subcontinent for the greater part of the seventeenth century. Instead it was a period of moderate but steady population growth and rising productivity. Political crises, warfare, disease and economic disruption accompanying Mughal imperial decline appeared towards the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. Signs of economic distress too, Richards argued, are difficult to detect in the seventeenth century. Although Gujarat and the Deccan experienced several years of dearth and famine in the early 1630s, a wider pattern of recurring shortage and mortality is not readily apparent.[24]

So, if there was no general crisis what connection did the changes in climate have with the Mughal wars and their impact on the economy of Coromandel in the late seventeenth century? Two instances of monsoon failures – those in 1630–1632 and 1685–1687 – coincided with Mughal campaigns in the Deccan. The first saw Shah Jahan fighting the Nizam Shahis for conquest of Ahmadnagar and the second witnessed Aurangzeb's conquest of Bijapur and Golconda. Although there were other instances of poor monsoon in Coromandel apart from 1685–1687, as Chapters 4 and 5 show, we should not characterize each and every of these failures as an El Nino episode. Monsoon failures in South India usually caused a chain reaction affecting both the agrarian and the industrial sectors. The agrarian base was the first to be struck, resulting in loss of employment: when land could not be cultivated and as stocks of rice from previous years ran out, inflation followed, pushing up prices of food grains and fodder for livestock. The tendency to hoard whatever was still available only made things worse. Other sectors of the economy also suffered in years of bad monsoons, such as those involved in the washing and bleaching of textiles leading to en–masse depopulation of villages as people moved to areas that had fared better in terms of crop security. All of these factors could contribute to a social crisis marked by a lack of access to sustenance, from which banditry emerged. To make matters worse – even when the monsoon was good – wars

[22] Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013): xvii, xix–xx, 403.
[23] Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith, ''Introduction'' in: *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* ed. Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1997): 8
[24] John F. Richards, 'The Seventeenth–Century Crisis in South Asia' *Modern Asian Studies* 24, 4 (1990): 625, 629–630

created artificial scarcity because land could not be cultivated due to the movement of armies. During the southern campaigns when monsoons were poor climatic factors posed logistical challenges that the Mughals had to resolve in South India, particularly with regard to securing food and fodder as supply lines became vulnerable. All these features can be identified in the economy of Coromandel during Aurangzeb's campaigns. What impact they had, will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Politics

States used a variety of mechanisms to establish links with the economy of the regions they controlled. One of these, as we have already noted, was to capitalize on the arterial nature of roads to connect different ecological zones. Apart from this, states developed infrastructure to support trade and used their administrative apparatus to bring rural wealth within its reach for the purpose of revenue collection. A peculiar feature that developed in South India was portfolio–capitalism, a system whereby offices could be contracted out to the highest bidder and state officials would invest their wealth in commerce (Chapter 1). Masulipatnam's port officials and governors of Golconda's regional towns were part of this system. State support to mercantile activities encouraged foreign traders, whether in the form of European companies or their non–European counterparts. This policy of active encouragement was also manifest in the way the Vijayanagara Empire extended cultivation and provided a boost to industrial production in the Tamil country (Chapter 2 and 3). The *nayaka* states that succeeded Vijayanagara were no exception in this respect. We will introduce three sub–themes while discussing politics: why did the Mughals expand into the Deccan, and how did they incorporate the Europeans within the imperial framework and the logistics of warfare.

The Deccan and the Mughals: The struggle to control the coasts

When considering Mughal expansion in the Deccan, one fundamental question strikes us: What was at stake in the Deccan? In other words, why did the Mughals expand into the Deccan? We may argue that the major pulls for a southward expansion were the need to incorporate the maritime power of the Europeans within the Mughal imperial framework and tap the wealth that was generated in the Deccan states via agriculture and oceanic commerce. In the seventeenth century, the sultan of Golconda was reputed to be second only to the Mughal emperor in terms of wealth.[25] The idea that northern kingdoms were attracted by the Deccan's riches has its pre–Mughal roots in the career of Alauddin Khalji, the Delhi sultan (r. 1296-1316) of the Khalji dynasty.

When Alaudduin was still the nephew, son–in–law and a high–ranking noble of the previous ruler Jalaluddin Khalji, he had raided the kingdoms of Bhilsa and Malwa in central India. Not only did these raids help him amass great wealth that he eventually invested in his revolt against Jalaluddin Khalji, but they also offered him an insight into the routes to other rich kingdoms of the Deccan. After Alauddin became ruler himself he launched another

[25] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 2.

expedition to the Deccan and South India, led by his general Malik Kafur. It reached the Tamil country and was nothing more than a military raid planned to make money with hardly any durable effects.[26] The Mughals were aware of the need to link the landlocked plains of northern India with the western and eastern littorals even during the nascent days of the empire in the 1530s under Humayun. This drive towards the coast was manifest in his unsuccessful attempts to conquer Bengal and Gujarat. The dissertation argues that Humayun's failures were bound up with the historical memory with which his son and successor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) grew up. Both Bengal and Gujarat were rich in agricultural output and gateways to the Indian Ocean. We can detect a clear long-term strategy in Akbar's actions: first he took Rajputana, whose kingdoms controlled the road towards Gujarat, and then, when he had at last conquered Gujarat in the 1570s, he held dominion over a long coastline stretching from Sind to Gujarat. He followed this up with campaigns in Bengal before turning to the Deccan. As we will see again in Chapter 5, the seventeenth–century Mughal chronicler, Bhimsen, also wrote about the riches and prosperity of South India in *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*:

> In the whole world nowhere else are there so many temples. The cause of the building of these temples is that the country is very wealth producing, every year it yields four crops, and a large revenue is raised, the amount of which is known only to the Recording Angel.[27]

The first steps taken by the Mughals to extend their sphere of influence into the Deccan took the form of diplomatic manoeuvres involving them in the politics of the Deccan sultanates. To understand what happened, we must first look at the concept of *fitna*, as explained by Andre Wink.

Fitna refers to the political disruption of the *umma* or Islamic community in the early Islamic state in Arabia. In the classical Muslim version, there was a caliph chosen through consultation who represented the prophet Muhammed as 'the leader of the faithful' on earth. Under the leadership of the caliph, Muslims were united in the great brotherhood of the umma through a supra–tribal contract which made them equals. The classical Muslim state coincided with the number of Muslims and had no territorial references except the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. A product of accumulation of lands and fortunes in the wake of Arabian expansion, fitna dates back to the schism of 657 CE which marked the end of the reign of the first four pious caliphs. The schism led to three major political and doctrinal divisions in Islam: the *khawarij* or seceders who represented the forces of nomadism; the *Shia* or the supporters

---

[26] For the career of Alauddin Khalji, see Banarsi Prasad Saksena, 'Alauddin Khalji', in: *The Delhi Sultanate (A.D. 1206–1526)*, *A Comprehensive History of India, Volume Five,* eds Mohammad Habib and Khaliq Ahmed Nizami (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1970): 326–427.

[27] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 193.

of Ali who introduced the hereditary principle in the caliphate; and the *Sunni*, orthodox Muslims who had rejected the idea of hereditary principle.

The concept of *fitna* as defined in Islamic law books, religious manuals and political historiography (rebellion or disorder) appears to correspond with the various translations of the word incorporated into Arabic, Persian, Turkish and the Indian languages (including Marathi), meaning 'sedition', 'insurrection caused by factionalism', 'chaos', 'revolt', 'dissension', 'civil war', 'defection', 'withdrawing from allegiance', and so on. In the Islamic world, *fitna* was the normal political mechanism of state–formation or annexation and fitna is never–ending.

Fitna implies no more than forging of alliances (and no revolt or insurrection could succeed without allies), but unlike state formation in modern Europe, in the Islamic world *fitna* was not primarily determined by use of military power. A component of the *fitna* mechanism was 'political use of military power.' *Fitna* was a mixture of coercion, conciliation and implied exploitation of, and intervention in, local conflicts, while avoiding a purely military encounter. It can be equated with the concept of *upajapa* in the ancient Indian political treatise *Arthashastra*, which advocated conciliation, gift–giving, sowing dissension among and winning over the enemy's local supporters, and the use of force only as a last resort. In India (Wink's use implies modern–day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), sovereignty was based on allegiance and the state was open–ended, rather than territorially circumscribed. It is through *fitna*, Andre Wink argues, that the Mughals began to expand beyond the river Narmada in the Deccan. They did so by forming local alliances and intervening in local conflicts. The rise of the Marathas, Wink concludes, was the result of *fitna*. As the Mughals began to expand into the Deccan, a succession of Muslim rulers had to co–opt the autochthonous Hindu gentry or *zamindars* (literally landholders, see glossary) to keep competitors at bay. The Marathas rose to prominence as a part of this process in the Deccan Muslim polities which were under pressure from the Mughals.[28] Let us look at how *fitna* operated in the pre–Aurangzeb phase of Mughal expansion in the Deccan.

In 1591, Akbar demanded submission from the Deccan sultanates: Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, Berar, Bijapur and Golconda. Initially, none of them acceded but for Khandesh, which paid occasional tribute. Conflicts continued, however, and in 1600–1601 the sultanates of Ahmadnagar and Khandesh surrendered to the Mughals. During these conflicts, the Mughals, as we have noted, relied on *fitna*. For instance, Akbar decided to invade Ahmadnagar in 1595, when it had been going through a succession crisis, and he coerced the ruler of Khandesh to be an ally. The Mughals then besieged Ahmednagar fort, but its temporary ruler Sultan Chand Bibi managed to hold out until reinforcements arrived from Bijapur and Golconda. After being ceded some territory the Mughals pulled back. Finally,

[28] For the connotations of fitna, see Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth–Century Maratha Svarajya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 23–31.

under Akbar's command both Ahmadnagar (1600) and Khandesh (1601) fell to the Mughals. After this phase of warfare, Berar, Khandesh and a large part of Ahmadnagar were added to the Mughal territories in the Deccan.

It brought under the purview of Mughal influence three places: Ahmadnagar, Burhanpur and Asirgarh. Ahmadnagar and particularly Burhanpur were, as we will see, transit points for commerce that passed from Coromandel to western and central India, while Asirgarh was a strong fortress on the routes towards the north from Deccan. The Mughals could now deploy their mechanism for state–formation, using their strategic citadels and commercial entrepots to control the highways that connected ecologically diverse regions. As mentioned in the section on historiography in this introduction, Burhanpur became a conduit for sending military supplies to Aurangzeb during his southern campaigns.

Akbar's son and successor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) found a formidable rival in Malik Ambar, the Abyssinian minister of Ahmadnagar who fought a guerrilla war and was eventually defeated in the 1620s, when the Mughals established control over this region and compelled Bijapur and Golconda to pay indemnities for their assistance to Ambar. We find *fitna* used as a strategy in the context of Jahangir's wars too. Ambar received the support of aristocratic Maratha families of the region, as part of the process of incorporating local landed elites that we have discussed. In 1616 the Mughals defeated Ambar in a battle and razed his capital, Khirki. After the Mughals had withdrawn to North India, Ambar, who had retreated to the fort of Daulatabad, resumed guerrilla operations, repudiated the treaty that the Mughals had imposed on his kingdom and sought assistance from Bijapur and Golconda to drive out the Mughals. Eventually Prince Khurram (the future Shah Jahan) restored Mughal control over Ahmadnagar in a six-month long campaign (1620–1621).

Arguably, the manifestations of *fitna* in Mughal wars and diplomacy in the Deccan became more prominent during Shah Jahan's reign (1627–1657), which saw Bijapur and Golconda turning into tributary states of the Mughals. Politics in the Deccan also became caught up in factional rivalries at the Mughal court in this period. After having been enthroned, Shah Jahan had marched to the Deccan in pursuit of Khan Jahan Lodi (1630–1631), an Afghan nobleman under Jahangir who had not supported Shah Jahan during the war of succession before he became emperor, eventually rebelled, found refuge in Ahmadnagar and was made the commander of its armies. Campaigns by the Mughal and Ahmadnagar armies at this point coincided with a terrible famine in the Deccan and Gujarat. The rebellion was duly suppressed and soon after the Mughals successfully besieged the fort of Daulatabad (1632).

Then Shah Jahan asked Bijapur and Golconda to accept Mughal hegemony, which required paying annual tribute, minting coins struck with the name of the Mughal emperor, having the khutba read in his name during Friday prayers and having a Mughal diplomat at the court. While Golconda immediately agreed, Bijapur accepted tributary status only after it had been threatened with an invasion (1635). Here we find the basic mechanism of *fitna* at

work: political use of military power. This mechanism, combined with shifting allegiances and lobbying at the Mughal court, became the trademark of Mughal relations with the Deccan states, particularly during the second of Aurangzeb's two tenures as the governor of the Deccan under Shah Jahan, 1636–1644 and 1653–1657. The latter was followed by the war of succession between Aurangzeb, Murad, Shuja and Dara Shukoh, the heir–apparent of Shah Jahan. In the second of these two periods, confronted by budgetary deficit in the Deccan, Aurangzeb had unsuccessfully sought permission to annex Golconda. An ally of Aurangzeb in this venture was the premier of the Golconda sultanate Mir Muhammad Said (a.k.a Mir Jumla), who was primarily responsible for expanding the Golconda state between the rivers Krishna and Palar in Coromandel. He defected to the Mughal service and Aurangzeb used the incarceration of Mir Jumla's son by the Qutb Shahi sultan as a pretext to annex Golconda: Aurangzeb was to invade the state from the north and Mir Jumla would back him up from the south. Around the same time, Aurangzeb intervened in a succession crisis in Bijapur with a view to annexing that sultanate. In both cases, as the sultanates were invaded and the Mughals about to take them, Bijapur and Golconda escaped annexation by lobbying at the Mughal court with the help of Dara Shukoh (Aurangzeb's principal rival for the throne) and paying war indemnities.[29]

In other words, the forging of alliances at one level was countered by the forging of other alliances at another; *fitna* opposed *fitna*. This strategy had been used by the Deccan sultanates since the late sixteenth century. When he had been campaigning in Burhanpur, Akbar sent an Iranian noble, Mir Jamal–ud–Din Husain Inju Shirazi, as an envoy to Bijapur to forge a matrimonial alliance. However, Jamal–ud–Din's rather long stay at the Bijapur court made the restive Akbar send another envoy, Asad Beg Qazwini, (1603) to bring Jamal–ud–Din back and offer goods and wealth from the Deccan as tribute. The Bijapur court greeted Asad Beg with precious gifts and used monetary offers to induce him to stay longer. It turned out that Jamal–ud–Din had been annually receiving money from Bijapur and Golconda to stay on, and he had done so. Asad Beg made similar claims about Abdur Rahim Khan–i Khanan, the Mughal general in the Deccan.[30]

As mentioned above, the rise of Marathas was a result of *fitna*, of attempts by Deccan sultanates to find allies among the local landed elites against the expanding Mughal state. Like Akbar, who had taken advantage of a succession crisis to intervene in Ahmadnagar, the Maratha leader Shivaji availed of a crisis in Bijapur to establish his authority. Khafi Khan, the author of *Muntakhabu–l Lubab*, sets Shivaji's rise against the backdrop of weak governance and successful raids that he conducted in Bijapur:

---

[29] For an overview of Mughal expansion in the Deccan before Aurangzeb became the ruler, see Richards, *The Mughal Empire*: 52–54, 112–113, 120–121, 137–138, 154–158.

[30] Alam and Subrahmanyam, 'The Deccan Frontier and Mughal Expansion, ca.1600: Contemporary Perspectives.' *JESHO* 47, 3: 380–382.

> Adil Khan of Bijapur was attacked by sickness, under which he suffered for a long time, and great confusion arose in his territory. At this time Mulla Ahmad went with his followers to wait upon the emperor Shah Jahan, and Sivaji, seeing his country left without a ruler, boldly and wickedly stepped in and seized it, with the possessions of some other jagirdars. This was the beginning of that system of violence which he and his descendants have spread over the rest of the Kokan and the territory of the Dakhin. Whenever he heard of a district or town inhabited by thriving cultivators he plundered it and took possession of it.[31]

Raids often represented attempts by martial groups or rulers to stake claims over the economic produce of regions and use the wealth thus acquired as investments for political careers (in this respect we may recall Alauddin Khalji's raids in Bhilsa and Malwa and his investment of the wealth acquired through raids in his successful revolt to dethrone Jalaluddin Khalji). Later Shivaji extended his radius of action to raid the Mughal territories in Ahmadnagar and, more than once, Surat, the premier Mughal port. Most importantly, it signified Shivaji's ability to successfully defy the Mughal emperor and extort the principal port of the empire. His success and the failure of Mughal governor in Surat to protect the city's residents prompted a long–term change in the Mughal Empire, as we will find in the conclusion to the dissertation. Karen Leonard argued that Shivaji's raids forced bankers to migrate from Surat to other relatively safer and more stable parts of the erstwhile empire. Eventually, in the eighteenth century, they started backing non–Mughal political actors. This phenomenon played a significant part in the waning of Mughal power.[32]

In the context of acquiring control over the political economy, Aurangzeb's insistence on the annexation of Golconda makes sense. Golconda was a lucrative asset with its rich agriculture, diamond mines and thriving maritime trade that found an outlet in Masulipatnam. Annexing Golconda would have allowed the Mughals to control west–east trade routes in the Deccan– routes that ran east and south–eastwards from Surat in Gujarat to the cotton growing region of northern Deccan, and from the cotton growing region to Masulipatnam via Hyderabad/ Golconda (more on this in Chapter 1) – and thereby connect two of the richest ports in the erstwhile Indian Ocean world under Mughal authority. A second reason for annexation, it may be argued in retrospect, was the advantage that it could lend to Aurangzeb's political career: supported by the fiscal and military resources of Golconda and Bijapur Aurangzeb could ensure himself of a head start in the impending war of succession which was likely to occur after Shah Jahan's death.

As we will see in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, the basic mechanism of *fitna*, the political use of military power, became commonplace in the second half of the seventeenth century

---

[31] John Dowson ed., Muhammad Hashim Khafi Khan, *Muntakhabu–l Lubab, The History of India as Told by its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period* (Calcutta: Susil Gupta Private Ltd, Third Edition, 1960): 48.
[32] Karen Leonard, 'The Great Firm Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire.' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, 2 (1979): 151–167.

and perhaps reached its climax in the early 1680s in the context of Mughal policy towards Golconda. After having been reduced to tributaries of the Mughals, the sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda were raided in the 1650s, 1670s and finally in the 1680s before being conquered. In these cases, the Mughal army withdrew after they had been paid money. Parts of Chapters 1 and 4 explore the repetition of this pattern and its effects on the economy of the region. While engaged in the war against the Marathas in the early 1680s, Aurangzeb repeatedly threatened Golconda with invasions to ensure his demands for payment of money were met. The pretext for these demands was familiar: Golconda had helped the Maratha war efforts against the Mughals. While the claim was not entirely false (as we will find in Chapter 4), the ulterior motive for deploying this mechanism at that point was the desire to secure the funds which Aurangzeb required to finance the sieges. Hyderabad, the capital of Qutb Shahi sultanate and a primary economic centre of the Deccan, was not defended by a fortress. In this respect, it was similar to Surat which had been raided more than once by Shivaji, the Maratha king, in the second half of the seventeenth century. An invasion of Golconda would have left Hyderabad vulnerable to plunder by invading troops and the Mughals kept on securing funds from Golconda in the early 1680s by threatening invasions. As we will find in Chapters 1 and 4, when Mughals invaded Golconda the Qutb Shahi sultan retreated into the Golconda fort and left Hyderabad open for plunder by Mughal troops. From the Mughal perspective, the Deccan states would have appeared as soft targets who were not so capable in military prowess and from whom funds could be extorted by threatening an invasion or a raid. Let us now turn to the second sub–theme of this dissertation.

Co–opting the European companies within the imperial framework

Mughal expansion evoked fear among contemporaries in the Deccan. Since the 1570s, official circles in Portuguese Goa were apprehensive about the vacuum that had been created in south–western Deccan by the fall of Vijayanagara (1565). They were afraid it would result in a Mughal invasion in the region of Goa.[33] Their apprehension would only have been exacerbated by the Mughal conquest of Gujarat. Mughal–Portuguese relations were shaped by economic and religious factors at this point. The Mughal *subah* (province) of Gujarat had trading links with the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, while the Portuguese in Goa and Hormuz traded with Gujarat. An accommodation was necessary for the coastal vessels and annual fleets to the Persian Gulf to sail properly. The Mughals needed the silver pumped into the coastal economy by the Portuguese and the Portuguese needed the textiles produced in Gujarat to come from there to Goa before the clothes were shipped to Europe. The Mughal ships bound for the annual Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca sailed from Surat and the Portuguese issued *cartazes* or safe–conduct passes (in lieu of money) for ships in the Arabian Sea. The Mughals were not happy about his arrangement and the Portuguese had no intention of losing an opportunity to make money. The Mughal–Portuguese relations, argue Alam and

[33] Alam and Subrahmanyam, 'The Deccan Frontier and Mughal Expansion': 360.

Subrahmanyam, were as much a result of collaboration as of conflict, a consequence of the imbalance in the realities of maritime (and territorial) power.[34] Similar concerns in the form of co–opting the maritime forces of the Dutch, the English and the French East India companies also shaped Aurangzeb's decision-making in the late seventeenth-century, as we will see in Chapters 4 and 5.

Portuguese apprehension at looming Mughal expansion was not much different from the Dutch discourse on wars and invasions in South India in the seventeenth century, as we will find in this dissertation. As a rule, the European trading companies used to be wary of and jittery about Mughal wars, which could disrupt their normal commercial life and relative autonomy. My dissertation argues that Aurangzeb saw the VOC (and other Europeans) as a means of gaining access to the coast and resettling the economy of a region following wars of conquest. Finally, during long campaigns the European ports could also act as sources of military supplies, which brings us to the last sub–theme.

The logistics of war

During the seventeenth century a Mughal army on the march was nothing less than a city on the move. The emperor's huge entourage included his commanders, soldiers, court, performers and a mobile market comprising merchants and others who supplied basic commodities to the army. The Mughal army also tried to secure food and fodder from the areas that it marched across. Usually it maintained a balance between pastures that offered ample space for grazing for the animals and towns and villages that provided food. During his rebellion against the Mughal Empire, Malik Ambar of Ahmadnagar successfully used guerrilla warfare tactics such as destroying supply lines, plundering villages to reduce the chance of the enemy procuring food, and ambushing and harassing the opposing Mughal forces at a position that was most disadvantageous for them. This style of warfare, known as *bargir giri* in the Deccan,[35] was put into greater use by the Maratha leader Shivaji in the 1660s and later by his successors during Aurangzeb's campaigns. Its effects were greatest in the case of sieges, because such attacks could practically bring a besieging army on the brink of starvation. During Shah Jahan's campaigns both the Mughal and Ahmadnagar armies plundered the countryside – drought and a disastrous famine followed soon afterwards in the Gujarat and the Deccan, in 1630.

Crucially in the context of this study this style of warfare, could have devastating consequences for the combatants as well as the non–combatant population, particularly for agricultural centres and transit points for commerce, as we will see in Chapters 4 and 5. We now turn to the final theme in this introductory chapter.

---

[34] Alam and Subrahmanyam, 'The Deccan Frontier and Mughal Expansion': 358, 360–361.

[35] For an overview of bargir giri and its use, see Gordon, *The Marathas 1600–1818*: 37–41, 44–45.

Discourse

The main genre of sources interrogated by this dissertation to research the economic impact of Aurangzeb's campaigns is the archive of the VOC, alongside translated Mughal chronicles, memoirs of a director of the French East India Company, and the records of the English East India Company (EIC). Broadly speaking the sources fall into two categories: European and indigenous. Their creations emerged from different concerns and were shaped by contrasting worldviews; they represent, in short, two very different kinds of archive. This is not to suggest that there were no nuances within either the European or Mughal sources. These were no monoliths or completely homogeneous productions. These two genres also differ in terms of contemporaneity. Viewed as a whole, the Dutch letters, reports on inspections of villages and visits to the Mughal court, figures on textiles shipped, prices, and appraisals of politico–military conditions amount to a running commentary on Aurangzeb's wars in the Deccan and South India. Conversely, the Mughal chronicles were mostly written after Aurangzeb's demise, and therefore somewhat anachronistic. First, let us briefly discuss these worldviews.

Contrasting worldviews: The Dutch versus the Mughals

The Dutch mindset towards 'Indians' (a malleable term) drew from a mishmash of ideas that they for the most part shared with their fellow Europeans: Eurocentrism, Christ–centricism (shaped in the case of the VOC by Dutch Reformed Protestantism), climatic determinism and proto–Orientalism. The Dutch Republic served as the reference point of all comparisons, including physical features of a land, and Christian western Europe was the yardstick for civilization.[36] Their narrow perspective is powerfully illustrated by the Dutch records, which contain multiple evaluations of governance in the Deccan and South India, with each example judged as either 'good' or 'bad', assessed exclusively in terms of their usefulness for VOC trade, and accompanied by rich hyperbole on the benefits of a Christian government and the despotic nature of rulers in India. Such observations were unarguably embryonic manifestations of the Orientalism which gained more currency in the nineteenth century, a fact that should always be borne in mind while reading Dutch representations of indigenous society. Another crucial feature of the Dutch discourse on South Asia, as James Tracy also argues, was the tendency of VOC officials to blame their own failure to achieve good trade results on Asian despotism in the person of Mughal officials or the emperor himself. The trope of the despot and its connections with trade is a common thread running throughout the VOC records.[37] This, too, is a point to bear in mind when analysing the economic impact of wars with the help of Dutch sources. However common these tropes are in the VOC archives, they are not ubiquitous, as evidenced by favourable opinions expressed by the Dutch about times

[36] For a summary of Dutch perceptions of India, see Markus Vink, *Mission to Madurai: Dutch Embassies to the Nayaka Court in the Seventeenth Century. Dutch Sources on South Asia, 1600–1825*, vol. 4 (New Delhi: Manohar, 2012): 35–37, 86–87, 89, 92. For a similar perspective, see Om Prakash, 'Dutch source material on Indian maritime history in the early modern period: an evaluation.' *Indian Historical Review* 8, 1–2 (1981–1982): 35–43.

[37] James Tracy, 'Asian despotism? Mughal government as seen from the Dutch East India Company factory in Surat.' *Journal of Early Modern History* 3, 3 (1999): 256–280.

that were not marked by wars or political instability and in which trade was good (as in Golconda in 1679, Chapter 4). Ultimately, the most important consideration shaping the discourse of the VOC was what they stood to gain or lose from any politico–military and economic development.

Indigenous perceptions of the Europeans were, in turn, also shaped by cultural prisms. Responses ranged from fear and love to disgust, reticence, suspicion and wonder. The European was viewed principally as a supplier of curious objects who was brave on water and cowardly on land, untrustworthy, devious, dirty and lacking in proper toilet training.[38] In accordance with the Mughal worldview, the rulers wished to represent themselves as emperors or literally 'master–kings' (*padshah*) with a divine mandate to rule fairly and justly, a stance that found expression in the Mughal policy that portrayed the state as a haven for immigrants from the Islamic world.[39] This worldview also shaped the general outlook of Mughal chronicles such as *Muntakhabu–l–Lubab*, *Maasir–i–Alamgiri* and *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, all of which were written as celebrations of Aurangzeb's reign. Even when an author chose to be less partisan, any work within this genre ultimately remained a creation which viewed the world from the foot of the throne. That was a fundamental point of distinction between Mughal chronicles and archives of European companies (in this case the VOC), the latter having been created, maintained and regularly updated with primary purpose of ensuring the smooth functioning of business operations.

Before wrapping up this introductory chapter, let us look at two examples from the sources during Aurangzeb's wars that illustrate the differences between genres and world–views: events of considerable importance to Europeans that the Mughals chose not to refer to in their chronicles, namely European embassies to Aurangzeb's camp after the Mughals had conquered Golconda in 1687; and a comparison of the ways in which Aurangzeb and a VOC official discussed similar phenomena but drew very different conclusions.

Johannes Bacherus's embassy: Missing from Mughal chronicles

The Dutch embassy of Johannes Bacherus to Aurangzeb in 1689 is, quite naturally, widely reported in the VOC correspondence from that year. However, Mughal chronicles such as *Maasir–i–Alamgiri* and *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha* are silent on this event. Aurangzeb's last secretary Inayatullah Khan Kashmiri urged Saqi Mustaid Khan to write the *Maasir–i–Alamagiri* after the emperor's demise in 1707. The author used the Mughal archives to prepare extracts of important events and finished his work in 1710.[40] This is an important point because the Mughal state archives would have kept copies of the firmans that they had issued to the

[38] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Taking Stock of the Franks: South Asian views of Europeans and Europe, 1500–1800.' *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 42, 1 (2005): 86–87, 96–97.

[39] Ali Anooshahr, 'On the Imperial Discourse of the Delhi Sultanate and Early Mughal India.' *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7 (2014): 157–176.

[40] Jadunath Sarkar transl., *Maasir–i–Alamgiri: A History of the Emperor Aurangzib-Alamgir (reign 1658–1707 A.D.)* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, Reprint Edition 1990): v.

European companies. Bhimsen, the author of *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, was well–aware of the European presence in Coromandel, but he too chose to omit the visits made by European envoys to Aurangzeb's camp from the memoirs that he wrote. The absence of Europeans from Mughal chronicles is in line with the literary model that such 'foot of the throne' histories followed. An earlier example of this can be seen in the autobiography of the Mughal emperor Jahangir. The English ambassador Thomas Roe had visited his court and secured for the English East India Company (EIC) the right to trade in Surat. Although Jahangir mentioned the embassies that came to his court from the Safavid ruler of Persia, he never spoke of Thomas Roe.[41] In terms of representation in a celebratory Mughal chronicle, Europeans had almost no importance, while the Dutch records point out the significance that Europeans held in Aurangzeb's scheme of things during the wars, as we will see in chapter 4. In other words, the Europeans were important from a commercial perspective, but too insignificant from the perspective of Mughal chronicling of events.

The Deccan campaigns as a moment of decline: the Mughals versus the VOC

Both Mughal and Dutch sources describe the impact of Aurangzeb's campaigns, but they draw different conclusions. One of Aurangzeb's last letters, quoted by Gijs Kruijtzer, captures the sense of ruin that had gripped him at the end: 'There is no province or district where the grovelling infidels have not raised a tumult and since they are not chastised, they have established themselves everywhere. Most of the country has been rendered desolate and if any place is inhabited, the peasants there have probably come to terms with the "robbers".'[42] By the end of Aurangzeb's reign, the Dutch echoed a similar view: in a memoir addressed to his successor at the VOC, the departing director of the Dutch factory in Masulipatnam Hendrik van Oudshoorn van Zonnevelt writes that the current state of affairs was 'difficult, dangerous and changing'.[43]

Though these two different individuals speak of similar phenomena, we should try to understand what their statements meant and conveyed. For Aurangzeb, first and foremost, it implied a political defeat, a conceding of ground to opponents. Though he might have been genuinely affected by the terrible situation the peasantry found themselves in, he nonetheless identifies them as having acknowledged the authority of the 'robbers', the Marathas. For the VOC director in Masulipatnam, it meant unsafe roads, slack commerce in terms of poor sales of their imports and disturbances in the villages that produced textiles, uncertainty over the changing political dispensation in Hyderabad and a wait for conditions to improve again for their trade in northern Coromandel.

---

[41] Richmond Barbour, 'Power and Distant Display: Early English 'Ambassadors' in Moghul India.' *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 61, ¾ (1998): 345–347, 349, 354–356, 361, 364, 366.

[42] Kruijtzer, *Xenophobia in Seventeenth–Century India*: 273.

[43] National Archives (NA) VOC 8826, Memoir of succession dated 11.08.1708 from Hendrik van Oudshoorn van Zonnevelt to Hendrik Grousius: f. 516.

Organization of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part, comprising three chapters, explores the features of port–hinterland complexes in northern, central and southern Coromandel. The second part, comprising two chapters, analyses the impact of Aurangzeb's campaigns in those regions.

In the first part we follow a schematic, grid–like pattern of connections between these ports and the inland regions to study the politico-economic landscapes of three port cities: Masulipatnam, Pulicat and Nagapatnam. The two fundamental reasons for choosing these locations are that these ports had a strong Dutch presence and that the archives of the VOC provide the major primary sources interrogated for this dissertation. Put simply, we use the Dutch narrative available for these ports as the lens and barometer to understand the port–hinterland complexes: Masulipatnam for northern Coromandel, Pulicat for central Coromandel and Nagapatnam for southern Coromandel. The conclusion to Part I analyses the differences in the features of these regions with respect to their ecology and political economy (particularly textile production), before developing a hypothesis on how each of these regions responded to wars and political instability and then closing with a few remarks on how they would react during long military campaigns in their respective regions.

The two chapters in Part II study the economic impact of the Mughal wars on Masulipatnam (Chapter 4) and Pulicat and Nagapatnam (Chapter 5). Both chapters start with an overview of the Mughal campaigns in the respective regions, before moving on to analyses of how the economy (particularly as it pertained to textile production) and agriculture fared during the years of the wars. Each of the chapters in Part II ends by putting to the test the hypothesis formulated in Part 1. Part II analyses the impact around Pulicat and Nagapatnam in a single chapter for two reasons: the siege of Gingee (1689–1698) placed both these ports within the radius of a Mughal army that mainly operated from central Coromandel, and the Dutch sources do not seem to offer enough information to justify separate chapters for these regions. Part II closes with a conclusion that summarizes the findings of this dissertation and makes proposals for what should come next, i.e. for the development of the research conducted thus far into a book.

Finally, due to the fact that throughout the five years of writing this thesis I had to learn the Dutch language, including its seventeenth–century palaeography, as well as to reconnoitre the layered structure of the VOC archive, this can only but offer a hopefully heartening start of research for future scholars (including myself). Indeed, I am very much aware that although much of this dissertation is based on unpublished archival material, the latter is just the tip of a huge iceberg – i.e. the top–layer of the decision–making process. As such, this dissertation should at least demonstrate the huge potentialities of the Dutch archive for the early–modern history of South Asia.

Part I
Political and economic landscapes

Chapter 1: Masulipatnam's political and economic landscape

This chapter discusses the political and economic landscape of Masulipatnam in four sections: ecology; the economy; politics; and response to political instability and wars. The focus is on the port city and the region's spatial axes, through the prism of the ecological conditions of the port, its maritime and overland connections, an analysis of the textile industry that sustained exports from the port, the way in which political authorities in the Golconda sultanate tried to tap the wealth generated by the trade into the kingdom, and the response of the region's political economy to political instability and wars. The last section of this chapter should be seen as a building block in an attempt to develop a hypothesis on how the economic centres in the Deccan and South India behaved during wars.

1.1 Ecology

Traffic of people, goods and commodities has continued since time immemorial across the Indian Ocean to and from the many ports studding the long and indented coastline of South Asia.[1] This dissertation deals with the Coromandel Coast, which forms a large part of the eastern littoral of the Indian subcontinent. Wide plains formed by the rivers Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri, intersperse the greater coastline and the stretch of this littoral from south of the Godavari was known as the Coromandel Coast; the region to the north was denoted by the rubric Gingelly coast.[2] Though the northern part of the eastern coast in Orissa receives good rainfall from the summer monsoon, around southern Orissa fluctuations mark a departure and lead us further south to the largest area of anomalous rainfall in the subcontinent: the dry south–east where rains grace the land from October to December, the months of the retreating north–east monsoon that predominates south of the Krishna delta.[3] The Coromandel was a generally inhospitable coast for shipping: its ports were either exposed to the full wrath of the ocean or sheltered behind the mouths of rivers and creeks where shifting channels and sandbars made navigation impossible for large vessels; small native oceanic crafts ferried goods to and from the vessels. Typical of the entire coastline, such characteristics ensured parity and precluded one port from having advantage over others, concludes Sinnappah Arasaratnam.[4]

If Surat grew to be the blessed port of the Mughal Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Masulipatnam was its counterpart for the Qutb Shahi sultanate of Golconda. Located at the mouth of the river Krishna, Masulipatnam was part of a climatic transition zone. Around the Krishna delta one third of the rain falls in the last quarter of the

[1] The coastline of South Asia is defined in this dissertation as the long littoral that extends from modern–day south–western Pakistan across the Indian landmass to south–eastern Bangladesh.

[2] For these namings and their connotations see Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*: 1 and Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 7.

[3] O.H.K. Spate and A.T.A. Learmonth, *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, First Indian Edition 1984): 728.

[4] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 7–8.

year while to the south of it rainfall is even less reliable. The deltas of Godavari and Krishna were (and remain) vulnerable to occasional severe floods and cyclones.[5] As Jos Gommans points out, the arid zone extends along the Eastern Ghats to the more humid Coromandel Coast and the extreme southern end of the subcontinent.[6] Intensive rice cultivation in the deltas, helped by tank irrigation, sought to neutralize the vagaries of the monsoon climate in this region. As we will see in detail in this chapter, the densely populated delta of the Godavari supported most of the textile production in the Golconda sultanate. So, what were the environs of Masulipatnam like in the seventeenth century?

A Dutch traveller named Wouter Schouten described it in the following manner:

> The city lies along the coast into a bay; a river flows landward which is very shallow during the dry season. Therefore tonis[7]and other vessels of shallow water make use of high water. The river flows considerably inland till the kingdom of Vijayanagara [see next footnote]. Many crocodiles swim in it, but there is also a dominance of fish. The ships are forced to anchor themselves about half a mile away from the coast in three or four fathoms of water. The city lies along a pretty area on a beautiful plain. To the west one looks at a low sand plain; to the northeast lies the Sury village with a great number of palm trees. It is a great city with many houses and they prosper through the rich trade, which is conducted there every day by all kinds of nations.[8]

Daniel Havart, a VOC official who served in northern Coromandel for 14 years, described Masulipatnam in the following manner:

> The city Masulipatnam is reasonably large, has some broad and many narrow streets, it is well–populated, the houses do not stand very close to each other… the city has two gates, one toll–plaza, many cotton fabrics, various prominent buildings, not many temples, it is inhabited by people of many nations … there is an unbearable heat from April to August, there are many marshes around, which at times produce an unpleasant smell and cause many diseases.[9]

---

[5] Spate and Learmonth, *India and Pakistan*: 735–736.

[6] Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 10–11, see map on page 11 which elucidates the argument that Masulipatnam was in a climate transition zone.

[7] For more on these traditional, two–mast vessels found on the coasts of Coromandel and Ceylon, see Jean Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India Prior to Steam Locomotion, vol. 2: Water Transport* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994): 185–186.

[8] Michael Breet and Marijke Barend–van Haeften, *De Oost–Indische voyagie van Wouter Schouten* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003): 273. Seventeenth–century travellers tended to describe the domains in South India often after the Vijayanagara Empire, though this was anachronistic as the empire had considerably shrunk since the Battle of Talikota in 1565 and had been replaced by successor nayaka states (more on them in the following chapters).

[9] Daniel Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel, Eerste deel* (Amsterdam: Jan Ten Hoorn, 1693): 12, 142.

Floods, cyclones and fires

Built on low–lying land in the middle of swamps, the port city was quite vulnerable to natural hazards, particularly cyclones in the Bay of Bengal during the north–east monsoon from October to January. The Batavia daily register records on 31 January 1633 how a flood in Masulipatnam and surrounding villages caused pestilence, and extraordinary drought and recurrent rains hindered VOC affairs (trade) in and around Masulipatnam.[10] This probably meant merchandise could not be sold or textiles could not be woven and brought to the port. At times raging fire also caused damage in Masulipatnam's hinterland. The Batavia daily register notes on 31 July 1663 that in May 1663 a fire destroyed 2000 houses in Golconda including one half of the castle where the king himself resided. A large part of Nagulvancha, a settlement situated between Masulipatnam and Golconda where the Dutch had a lodge, was similarly gutted, while in Narsapore, close to Palakollu, fire razed to the ground rice warehouses and other buildings.[11] In 1666 a severe fire broke out that destroyed property across more than half of Masulipatnam.[12] A storm in November 1670 grounded three of the four ships anchored at the Masulipatnam roadstead.[13] However, this was nothing compared to the havoc wreaked by another cyclone in October 1679.

Writing to his superior, the Dutch governor of Coromandel in Pulicat, Hendrik van Outhoorn, President of the Masulipatnam board, graphically captured its wrath. The Dutch in Masulipatnam evidently doubted they would live to see another day. Strong winds and rain put the Dutch lodge under nine feet water: pepper in the warehouses swelled to bursting point, the wall around the lodge collapsed, tiles and roofs were blown away, letters, account books were destroyed and furniture, cutlery, and sundry other items were lost. In short, the lodge was totally devastated. The whole city was gripped by a pestilential odour capable of causing sickness. Labourers were no longer present. Snapped from their anchors, some ships were lost on the sea, others were capsized and swept inland. With the sand dunes gone, the Dutch lodge was in danger of being inundated during high tide. The city's three bridges disappeared while the bankshall warehouses to the north–east and south of the Dutch lodge were washed away by the sea. Further inland in the village on the river Wintera and the island of Eiduw, man and beast alike were washed away and the dead were spread all across the land. Gardens were stripped of trees. The English lodge, sheltered as it was by surrounding houses, suffered less damage, writes Outhoorn.[14] A little more than eight years later, in 1687,

---

[10] H.T. Colenbrander ed., *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts-India Anno 1631–1634* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1898): 144.

[11] M.A. van der Chijs ed., *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts–India Anno 1663* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff; Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1891): 367.

[12] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 194.

[13] Lotika Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century (Social, Economic and Political) Memoirs of Francois Martin (1670–1674), Volume I, Part I* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981): 1–2.

[14] NA VOC 1343, Letter dated 28.10.1679 from Hendrik van Outhoorn in Masulipatnam to Jacques Caulier, governor and director of the Coromandel Coast in Pulicat: f. 492r.–f. 493v.

tragedy struck Masulipatnam yet again. A fire started between the big and small gates of the city. Fanned by a fierce, hot wind from the north–west it spread along the market to the small gate in front of it and the beach, affecting the nearby Dutch lodge. The blaze engulfed most of the city, including the wealthiest parts where the foremost merchants lived, destroying their houses and merchandise. The house of the interpreter of the sultan of Golconda was also razed to the ground. The damage was 'not at all small', writes Havart.[15]

In sum: Masulipatnam was not a natural harbour, it suffered from an unhealthy climate that caused sickness and was prone to occasional but terrible fires and the vagaries of monsoon cyclones. Yet it was one of the principal marts of the Indian Ocean world in the seventeenth century. Why? An analysis of the economic and political frameworks that sustained the port city might give us clues. Let us now turn to that.

1.2 The economy

Masulipatnam and the Dakshinapatha

Masulipatnam was located at one end of the *Dakshinapatha*, one of India's main long-distance arteries connecting northern India through Malwa and the Deccan plateau to the Carnatic towards the Bay of Bengal and via its side roads the eastern littoral with its western counterpart. This connection took the form of roads from the political capitals to the ports, such as the Chaul–Ahmadnagar, Dabhol–Bijapur, Goa–Vijayanagara and of course, Golconda–Masulipatnam routes.[16] From ancient times, ports along the western and eastern littorals were the terminal points of overland routes that ran through the Deccan. These commercial arteries connected ecologically diverse regions and their economic produce with maritime outlets of the Indian Ocean. Agriculture, religious places and political centres helped stabilize the networks of routes in the Deccan.

Agriculture was a crucial connector. Crops such as cotton and rice could be grown best in specific regions because of local ecological conditions. Cotton was grown in the west of the Deccan, to the south of Aurangabad and from Kolhapur to Gulbarga via Bijapur. Rice was a major crop on the fertile coastal plains of Konkan, Kanara and Malabar in the west, and the riverine deltas of Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri in the east. We can reasonably assume that inland trade in these agricultural products had long been a feature of the Deccan economy. Cotton had to be transported to the weaving villages from where they were grown. Once woven, the textiles were taken to the nearest port or ports for export. As we shall see in this chapter, raw cotton was transported from the west of the Deccan to the Godavari delta, while salt from mines near the coast was taken to central and northern India. This was one of the principal connections that supported Masulipatnam. In times of low supplies, rice was bought in areas that had not experienced crop failures. Chapters 3 and 5 of this dissertation show that the Kaveri delta was known for its high food security, a factor that became increasingly

[15] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 221.
[16] Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 17–20, the maps on 18 and 19 point out the arterial nature of the Dakshinapatha.

important during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns when scarcity was created by wars and poor monsoons.

Religious establishments and places of pilgrimage also served as nodal points for routes in the Deccan. In his archaeological analysis of the routes of the Deccan and southern peninsula, Dilip K. Chakravarti draws on data on the density of Buddhist religious settlements to argue that in ancient times the Andhra coast was the terminal point of several trade routes, particularly the ones coming from the direction of Paithan on the upper reaches of the river Godavari and the Ganga plain through Vidarbha (modern Nagpur) and South Kosala (also known as Gondwana, an area which roughly corresponds with the western part of Chhattisgarh and areas of Madhya Pradesh that adjoin it). Unsurprisingly these routes endowed the Andhra coastline with ancient ports.[17] As we will see in Chapters 2 and 3, temple towns were important junctions in central and southern Coromandel. Being religious centres, they drew visitors throughout the year as well as on special occasions. Temple towns, as Chapter 2 shows, also supported textile production by housing weavers.

Political centres, either state capitals or forts that were seats of provincial governors, also acted as nodal points and stabilized overland commercial networks. Jean Deloche argues that a trade route existed that stretched from Bharuch in western India to the deltas of Godavari and Krishna, by way of Paithan and Ter. It is uncertain what happened to this route through the ages. However, certain nodal points helped stabilize this network from the fourteenth century onwards: the fort of Daulatabad, which became the capital of the Delhi Sultanate in 1339 (replaced by Aurangabad in the seventeenth century under the Mughals); and Golconda, which became the seat of the Qutb Shahi sultanate in 1512 (replaced as capital later that century by Hyderabad, across the river Musi). The main traversal route terminated in Masulipatnam, which emerged as the principal outlet of the Deccan, argues Deloche.[18] In this context, let us recall two points introduced in the introduction. During the southern campaigns Aurangzeb's camp resembled a city, and it had all the demands of a city. That meant a regular presence of merchants in the royal camp. We can only conjecture about the extent to which Aurangzeb's camp functioned as a nodal point for commercial routes in the west of the Deccan, because the primary sources interrogated for the dissertation offer incomplete information on this matter. The need to control the Masulipatnam–Hyderabad commercial arc and connect it with trade routes to Surat under Mughal authority was one of the reasons behind Aurangzeb's determination to annex Golconda. This overland arc, as we will see, was particularly vulnerable to warfare and political instability.

Masulipatnam's connections with Hyderabad and the west of the Deccan were important for its growth. We will look in some detail at this commercial arc later in this

[17] Dilip K. Chakrabarti, *The Ancient Routes of the Deccan and the Southern Peninsula* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2010): 126.
[18] Jean Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India Prior to Steam Locomotion, vol. 1, Land Transport* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993): 62–65.

chapter. Let us now look at land and water transport in this part of the Deccan and Coromandel.

Means of transport along the Dakshinapatha

Land transport

Jean Deloche argues that in the Indian subcontinent natural obstacles forced land transit to move along zones of least resistance and that certain valleys channelled trade from an early date and have retained their importance. However, the problems for land transport multiplied in low–lying areas crossed by rivers such as the deltas of the Godavari, the Krishna, the Kaveri and the Indus, with their innumerable distributaries. Oxen were the primary mode of transport on the plateaus and plains, including the deltas of Godavari and Krishna. Their qualities, requirements and efficiency differed from region to region. In the rice–growing deltaic plains (western coast, Bengal or Assam) only mediocre animals were raised since pastures were inadequate. In areas of low rainfall, good breeds were needed for draught and porterage. Oxen from Ongole and Nellore in the south were powerful and could pull heavy loads, while those originating in Mysore were hardy and capable of making long journeys with moderate loads. The banjaras or grain carriers who traded with the Deccan preferred the oxen from Malwa which were sturdy and tough but not swift.

Banjaras (also known as *Birinjari*, *Lambadi* and *Lambani*, depending on the region) were translocal and regional groups of itinerant cattle breeders whose livelihood depended on transporting goods from one place to another. During wars *banjaras* were the suppliers to armies because they could transport basic food products such as grain, salt and sugar over long distances from centres of production to those of consumption. They ensured the transport of indispensable goods throughout the subcontinent, among different and complementary economic zones (for instance, cotton from the west of the Deccan to the Godavari delta). They brought salt from the coast to the interior and returned with grains. These traders also transported more diversified products such as processed foodstuffs and manufactured goods.[19]

Jean–Baptiste Tavernier, a French traveller who visited India in the seventeenth century, wrote that wheeled carriages did not run between Masulipatnam and Golconda since the roads were too much interrupted by high mountains, tanks (irrigation reservoirs) and rivers, and there were many narrow and unnavigable passes. With great difficulty Tavernier took just such a carriage to the diamond mines, but having to disassemble it when conditions required it. Tavernier wrote that wheeled carriages did not travel between Golconda and Cape Comorin either. While chariots were a common mode of transport elsewhere in the subcontinent, in the Deccan and south India palanquins were used to carry men easily, quickly and cheaply. Having sailed to Masulipatnam from Hormuz, Tavernier and

[19] Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India, Land Transport*: 5, 7, 204, 241, 243, 248–249, 252, 257–258.

his party bought a palanquin, three horses and six oxen to carry themselves, while their servants travelled on foot.[20] Products meant for long–distance commerce were transported on pack animals to the nearest port and then conveyed to their destinations via boat. The pace of commercial land traffic rarely exceeded 20 km a day, regardless of the mode of transport. Using accounts of seventeenth–century travellers, Deloche estimates how long it would have taken to travel some distances, e.g., at a daily rough range of 25 km travellers would travel the distance of 920 km from Hyderabad to Surat in about 36 days and they would take 22 days to cover 665 km from Hyderabad to Goa at a rate of roughly 30 km per day.[21] Pieter van Den Broecke, a Dutchman who travelled by land from Surat to Hyderabad in 1617, started his journey from Surat on 31 October, 1617 and reached Golconda on 8 December, 1617. He rested for a day and went to Hyderabad on 10 December, 1617.[22] So, it took him about forty days to travel between Surat and Hyderabad.

Water transport

Goods were transported on pack animals to near the ports and then taken on by boat to their shipment centres, because apart from on the littoral plains the rivers of the Deccan were unsuitable for communication. The upper reaches of the rivers Godavari and Krishna were unnavigable, but flat–bottomed barges could sail on the lower courses of these rivers, and although large deposits of sand and silt at the mouth of the Krishna made its deltas difficult navigation, one of its branches was less threatened by siltation and it became the site for Masulipatnam. Low–tonnage crafts could ply to and from the port to the sea where the ocean-going vessels were anchored. The river Godavari offered better geographical conditions than the Krishna, and the deltas of the Godavari were navigable until silting destroyed them in the nineteenth century. The first trading settlements that the English East India Company established in northern Coromandel were situated in the deltas of the Godavari–Madapollam, the Bendamurlanka and the Injaramu. The shipyard at Narsapore was yet more evidence of the navigability of the Godavari's lower reaches. Located 12 km inland, Narsapore was an important centre for building and repairing ships 300 to 400 tonnes in weight.[23]

Nevertheless, water transport was not a feasible option in all parts of the Godavari delta: Palakollu and Draksharama, two villages in the Godavari delta that supplied textiles to the VOC in Masulipatnam would first transport their goods on flat–bottomed boats to nearby villages, where they would be loaded onto bullocks which carried them on to Masulipatnam.

---

[20] Valentine Ball transl., and William Crooke ed., *Travels in India by Jean–Baptiste Tavernier, vol. 1*. Second Edition (London: Humphrey Milford, 1925): 141–142, 207.

[21] Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India, Land Transport*: 261–262, 285.

[22] W. Ph. Coolhas ed., *Pieter van Den Broecke in Azie, vol. 1* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962): 136, 156. A few places have still survived on the routes sustained by the eastern road from Hyderabad to Masulipatnam. Vijaywada, for example, is now the capital city of Andhra Pradesh and an important link in the railway network to Chennai (Madras). Travellers from northern or southern India can board trains to Masulipatnam from there.

[23] Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India*, *Water Transport*: 32–33, 35, 106–107.

Inland, those wishing to transport of goods depended on pack animals managed by *banjaras* and other merchants in the commercial arc to the west of Masulipatnam.

Control of the highways of communication was crucial to the Mughal success story that connected the heartlands of the empire with Central Asia and the Indian Ocean. The rise of the Qutb Shahi dynasty and Masulipatnam had similar characteristics.

Golconda–Hyderabad and Masulipatnam: Their origins and rise

The Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda was founded by Quli Qutb–ul Mulk, who had come to India with traders of horses in the fifteenth century. He had been employed in the administration of the Bahmani sultanate in northern Deccan as the *tarafdar* (governor) of Telangana and the fort of Golconda had been added to his jagirs. Like his other counterparts in the Bahmani administration at this juncture, Qutb–ul Mulk had a free hand, and by the time he died in 1543, the kingdom of Golconda had become independent of Bahmani control. Nonetheless, Qutb–ul Mulk did not formally declare his kingship. A royal genealogy of the Qutb Shahi sultans does not use the term 'Qutb Shah' for Qutb–ul Mulk. The rulers who followed him were Jamshid (1543–1550), Subhan (1550), Ibrahim Qutb Shah (1550–1580), Muhammed Quli Qutb Shah (1580–1612), Muhammed Qutb Shah (1612–1626), Abdullah Qutb Shah (1626–1672) and lastly Abul Hasan Qutb Shah (1672–1687), whose reign saw the annexation of Golconda by the Mughal Empire. Under Ibrahim Qutb Shah, Golconda witnessed a continual influx of people from Turkestan, Arabia, Khurasan and adjacent lands. They included travellers, traders, calligraphers, architects, *ulema* (Muslim theologians, literally 'learned in Arabic') and adventurers. The fort of Golconda did not have enough space to accommodate the new arrivals and it became necessary to expand its fortifications beyond the walls. The need for living space forced Ibrahim to plan a new city, Hyderabad, across the river Musi. It was completed by Ibrahim Qutb Shah's son Muhammed Quli Qutb Shah. [24]

Founded as a settlement by Arab traders in the fourteenth century, Masulipatnam was occupied by the Bahmani sultans in the late fifteenth–century. Until the mid–sixteenth century the region between the mouths of Godavari and Krishna, where Masulipatnam was situated, changing hands several times between the Vijayanagara Empire, the Golconda sultanate and the Gajapati kingdom of Orissa. There is hardly any evidence of oceanic trade directly from Masulipatnam in the early sixteenth century, and as late as the mid–sixteenth century Masulipatnam supplied textiles to other ports along the coast to be shipped across the sea. Portuguese records from 1540s refer to the port as a haven for 'renegade' Portuguese (meaning those traders who operated on their own outside the authority of the Estado da India in Goa). The Portuguese chronicler Barros described it as a source of white and painted textiles. Ibrahim Qutb Shah (1550–1580) brought it under his rule in the 1560s and forged close links between Golconda and Masulipatnam which endured for the next century and a

[24] H. K. Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1974): vii–xiii, 2–3, 6–9, 14–16, 199–202.

half. Contemporaneous Portuguese records point to the rapid rise of Masulipatnam from the 1560s. In the 1570s and 1580s ships from Masulipatnam sailed to Aceh, the ports in the Malay Peninsula, Pegu, Arakan, and along the coast to Orissa. Regulations governing the Goa customs house mention the textiles coming from Masulipatnam and the duties to be charged on them. Around 1590 Masulipatnam started exploring links with the Red Sea and Mecca and the Estado da India and Golconda began to negotiate to prevent any possible Portuguese offensive against Golconda shipping in the Arabian Sea. An agreement reached around 1600 allowed a Portuguese captain to stay in Masulipatnam and collect passes for the vessels sailing to the Red Sea. Textiles from northern Coromandel had a market in the Middle East. Annually in late–December or early January a ship would set sail from here to the Red Sea, which carried goods of the sultan, his nobles and major merchants, rice to be distributed as alms in Mecca as well as large numbers of Hajj pilgrims who carried their own wares to fund their journeys.[25] The stability and prosperity in the Qutb Shahi sultanate of Golconda had provided Masulipatnam with a powerful springboard from which to expand, we may argue that architectural expression in the Golconda sultanate celebrated this connection with Masulipatnam. The main attraction of Hyderabad was the Char Minar and four roads jutted out of it. The eastern road from it led to the ports of the eastern coast, including Masulipatnam.

The road from Masulipatnam to Golconda and rural settlements

The location of human settlements and the routes taken by roads have a close correlation. In the seventeenth century the main route between Hyderabad and Masulipatnam, particularly the deltas of the Godavari and Krishna, passed through one of the most densely populated regions of the Indian subcontinent. Production centres for the textile industry – a major source of exports – surrounded Masulipatnam and fed into it (textile production in northern Coromandel will be explored more thoroughly later in this chapter). Descriptions of routes have survived in the itineraries of seventeenth-century travellers who visited Golconda. By far the most detailed description of roads from Masulipatnam to Golconda and Hyderabad is provided by Daniel Havart in his *Op–en Ondergangh van Cormandel*. Havart enlists about 73 settlements en route from Masulipatnam to Golconda/Hyderabad. We must bear in mind that these were only those places that featured on a route thronging with travellers from Masulipatnam. Off the beaten track there were more, about which we only have very limited knowledge. The road from Masulipatnam to Golconda passed the Eastern Ghats near Vijayawada and further east bypassing Kondapalli and Nagulvancha, where the Dutch had a factory, towards Hyderabad and Golconda.

Extensive tank irrigation and dikes facilitated agriculture in the countryside. The rural landscape was dominated by the cultivation of *nely* rice, followed by millets, cotton and some tobacco. There were also orchards and *suri*, a drink extracted from palm trees, was produced.

[25] Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*: 148–151, 154, 157–158.

The cotton grown in this region, was not used for weaving textiles that were exported from Masulipatnam, as explored in greater detail later in this chapter. The settlements that a seventeenth-century traveller would encounter along this route were mainly small villages, some of which had weekly or bi–weekly markets and some of which had inns that served as rest houses for travellers and merchants. In addition, there were settlements known as a *groot dorp* (Dutch: literally 'large village') mentioned in Havart's travelogue between Masulipatnam and Hyderabad and Golconda. The *groot dorp* (the term is a typical feature of VOC discourse on the rural landscape and its economic functions) was a village that could be said to have had a small, fixed and regulated market which served as a nodal point for marketing economic produce from nearby villages. Havart mentions three settlements along this route that qualified as a *groot dorp*: Vijaywada, Pennegentspoel and Nagulvancha. The second and third served as markets for textiles woven in the surrounding villages around. [26] Although the aforementioned places were just villages, they were slightly more sophisticated than other villages as markets for textiles produced in the surrounding region and we may guess it was this economic function which led to the adjective 'large' being used in their case. A related term from the VOC vocabulary can be seen later in the context of central and southern Coromandel: there we come across not only the *groot dorp*, but also the *grote coopstadt*, a large market town where the Dutch could procure textiles.

As the chief factory of the VOC in northern Coromandel, Masulipatnam enjoyed a special status and in terms of authority on the coast the president of the Masulipatnam board was second only to the governor in Pulicat and later in Nagapatnam. Palakollu, Narsapur, Madapallam, Draksharama, Golepalam were other places in the Godavari delta that had a Dutch lodge. Moving further inland, the VOC had a factory in Nagulvancha, located off the river Musi, and in 1662 they established a lodge in Golconda itself to look after its trade there. The VOC's trading interests in the Masulipatnam–Golconda hinterland were clearly quite extensive. Except on the subcontinent's south–western coast Malabar, the Dutch were, Winius and Vink argue, a pacified merchant–warrior in India. Nonetheless, the Dutch tended to jealously protect the trading interests which they had won over the course of the seventeenth century in the Masulipatnam–Golconda hinterland. The occasional clashes of the VOC with local powers, machinations at the Golconda court, their insistence and efforts, whenever possible, to dissuade the indigenous authorities from awarding concessions to their European rivals, were all part of their strategy to stay ahead in the commercial race.

Seventeenth–century Masulipatnam: A regional entrepot

Seventeenth–century Masulipatnam must have been something of a 'celebrity port', given that both travelogues and records of the European companies discuss it at length. The Qutb Shahi sultanate helped Masulipatnam acquire an attribute of inter–regional linkage, a feature

[26] For a description of the roads and rural landscape along the route from Masulipatnam to Golconda, see Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Twede deel*: 4–8, 11–19, 65–84, 91–95.

reflected in the trading connections with Mokha, Muscat, Basra, Bandar Abbas, Malabar, Ceylon, Maldives, Bengal, Arakan, Pegu, Tenasserim, the Malay coast, Aceh and Bantam. Europeans, argues Arasaratnam, found this feature of the port quite attractive.[27] The operations of the VOC also bore the mark of Masulipatnam's inter–regional character. Masulipatnam was not only a premier export outlet for the textiles of the Coromandel Coast that the Dutch bartered for spices in South–East Asia, but also a redistributive outlet for imports by Dutch and non–Dutch merchants into the coast. Observations made by the Dutchman Pieter van Den Broecke in the early seventeenth century provide a case in point. Travelling from Surat to Masulipatnam, Van Den Broecke encountered a caravan of Arab and Armenian merchants near a village named Rasuidi (perhaps Rajarur). Laden with spices, porcelain and other goods, the caravan was coming from Hyderabad and travelling to Surat.[28] The commodities shipped by this caravan must have been brought to Hyderabad from Masulipatnam. Although we will see more instances of such overland trade westwards from Masulipatnam later in this chapter that point to Masulipatnam's role of a regional emporium, it is extremely difficult to calculate the volume of trade that passed westwards from Masulipatnam via Hyderabad.

The Dutch lodge stood close to the sultan's toll–plaza in Masulipatnam. Built of thin palm–tree planks and coated with lime, its outward appearance was unremarkable although the residences of the president and his deputy were well–constructed, strong and beautiful in the manner of the land (Deccan). Daniel Havart describes the lodge as being unable to accommodate all its servants since many of them were married, so eight to ten families lived outside. The lodge had separate warehouses for storing textiles, oil, spices, copper, tin, lead and other goods. Once they were ready to be shipped, textiles were kept in three big warehouses. The lodge also had separate living quarters for other VOC servants such as the doctor and surgeons. Lodge security was handled by a corporal and his men. The soldiers were housed in two rooms, and one room was earmarked for the corporal. Soldiers hired inland had separate places inside the lodge, as Havart writes,[29] though we have no idea where soldiers hired from elsewhere in Asia were housed. In a letter to the governor-general Joannes Camphuis in Batavia, Laurens Pit writes from Masulipatnam in 1686 that the employees included Macassarese, Buginese and Baliers soldiers.[30]

As second–in–command to the Dutch governor of the Coromandel Coast, the president of the Masulipatnam board was the chief of Dutch factories in northern Coromandel and had the responsibility of managing the departure of laden ships at the right

---

[27] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 15–16.
[28] W. Ph. Coolhas ed., *Pieter van Den Broecke in Azie, vol. 1* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962): 152.
[29] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel:* 143–145.
[30] NA VOC 1423, Letter dated 07.09.1686 from Laurens Pit in Masulipatnam to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia: f. 218r.

time for Batavia, Ceylon, Surat, Persia and the Netherlands.[31] Shipping in the Indian Ocean depended on the season of monsoon winds, the south–west monsoon (June, July and August) and the north–east monsoon (October, November, December). Ships could sail the year round in the Bay of Bengal. Dutch ships that departed from Batavia early in the year could make a return trip by November, and sailings between Coromandel, Ceylon and Batavia were possible throughout the year. The reason behind this was the cargo – cinnamon and textiles – were almost always available.[32] The production of textiles, as we will see in this chapter, was a full–time occupation in Coromandel and they were available in profusion – as long as the producing regions had not been ravaged by warfare or political disturbance.

By the 1660s the VOC had systematized their knowledge of sailing conditions in the Bay of Bengal and developed a definitive schedule for their factories in Coromandel. Ships travelling from Coromandel to Batavia sailed no later than 7 October and avoided sailing from that date to the middle of January (this was due to the weather conditions, the onset of north–east monsoon in October was often accompanied by cyclones in the Bay of Bengal). Ships sailing to Pegu and Siriam in mainland South-East Asia usually departed from Pulicat between 15 August and 1 September, and at the latest by 10 September. They returned to Coromandel by 10 or 15 October. Usually, the VOC did not leave their ships in the roadstead of Coromandel after the first week of October. They were sent to either Colombo or Batavia. Ships sailed to Pegu (and Siriam) again at the end of the north–east monsoon, from mid–January to mid–February. The return voyage from Siriam had to begin before 22 March. Mid–January was the time of year when ships sailed to Persia.[33]

The rhythm of correspondence between VOC establishments in Coromandel and Batavia substantiates the argument that there was year–round shipping between these regions. Letters from Masulipatnam, Pulicat and Nagapatnam in May usually reached Batavia in July, while those sent in July arrived in September. Letters written and sent earlier or later in the year spent similar periods in transit. The annual fleet for the Netherlands departed Coromandel either in late December or early January. This, of course, was a particularly long voyage.

Shipping lists from 1680–1685 and prepared by the VOC provide an idea of the sailings to and from this port – these are the earliest shipping lists available. They only include non–Dutch European and indigenous ships. Despite the absence of Dutch sailings, the lists provide us with an insight into the connections and trade of Masulipatnam.

---

[31] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 146–147.
[32] Robert Parthesius, *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters: The Development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Shipping Network in Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010): 118–119.
[33] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 36.

Table 1.1 Arrivals at and departures from Masulipatnam, 1681–1686[34]

Year	Arrivals	Departures
1681–1682	Bengal, Malacca, Arakan, Tenasserim, Madras, Manila, Mocha	Mecca, Arakan, Persia, Aceh, Pegu, Tenasserim, Bengal
1683–1684	Aceh, Bengal, Arakan, Siam, Pegu, Madras, Tenasserim, Borneo via Batavia	Tenasserim, England, Goa, Madras, Arakan, Aceh, Persia, Bengal, Siam
1685–1686	Bengal, Aceh, Pegu, Malacca, Siam, Surat, Bimilipatnam, Vishakhapatnam, Conare, Puremarka,	Persia, Madras, England (possibly), Aceh, Siam, Tenasserim, Vishakhapatnam, Bengal, Arakan

The most frequent departure points or destinations are Bengal, Pegu, Siam and Tenasserim. The trade to and from Bengal was most significant, and ships owned by the English East India Company, private English traders, and Hindu and Muslim merchants all sailed to and from Bengal. While rice, sugar and silk were principal imports from Bengal, we find only limited evidence of exports to Bengal – tin and textiles are occasionally listed as export goods to the region. Imports from Pegu, Siam and Tenasserim mainly comprised elephants, ivory, wax, pickles, red pots, tin, porcelain and rice. Exports to these regions of mainland South–East Asia were mainly textiles and yarn, and at times asafetida, *paposh* (foot mats / doormats), rosewater and wine. Ships belonging to the Qutb Shahi sultan, the kings of Siam and Tenasserim as well as private traders sailed on this route.

Masulipatnam's principal trading partner in maritime South–East Asia was Aceh. The major exports from Masulipatnam were iron, steel, rice, spices, pots and clothes, and returning ships from Aceh would mainly carry gold and *harpuijs* (a mixture of resins, linseed oil and fat that guarded the masts of ships against termites and rot). The trade with Manila does not appear to have been significant: only one merchant operated on this route in this period. As these lists show, in the 1681–1684 period most sailings along the Coromandel Coast were to and from Madras, although from time to time a Danish ship features as having either departed from or being en route to Tranquebar. Sporadic shipping from western India suggests that the overland route from Masulipatnam was more useful in this context. A single Portuguese merchant operated on the route to Goa and one other ship arrived from Surat during this five–year period (1681–1686). Masulipatnam shipping sailed to Persia, Mocha and Mecca in the Middle East. The ships of the Qutb Shahi sultan used to sail to and from Mecca. Exports to Persia consisted of clothes, iron, steel and sugar, while imports included horses,

[34] Shipping lists tabulated by the author from the following: NA VOC 1378, f. 1801r.–f. 1806r., NA VOC 1398, f. 379r.–f. 383r., NA VOC 1429, f. 1175r.–f. 1177v.

rosewater, wine, raisins, dates, coffee and tobacco. Imports from Mocha included clothing, horses, tobacco and rosewater. Exports to Mecca included iron, spiaulter (an alloy of lead and tin), tin and clothing.

Of European traders whose ships feature in these lists, the English dominated. English East India Company ships mostly carried precious metals, ivory and sandalwood from South–East Asia to Masulipatnam, while private English merchant ships brought mainly rice, sugar and silk from Bengal. A major component of the coastal traffic from other parts of the Coromandel Coast in 1686 was rice. In times of inflation caused by a poor monsoon or wars, the trade in rice along the Coromandel Coast assumed a greater importance in keeping the Coromandel ports well–stocked (for more on rice trade in Bay of Bengal, see Chapter 2). In 1686, the Dutch governor of Coromandel, Laurens Pit, wrote to the governor–general Joannes Camphuis in Batavia telling him that due to a Mughal invasion and high prices imposed by the head of the army, the price for eight pounds of rice had risen to one rupee in and around Golconda. Commodities had become very expensive.[35] The total number of ships that arrived at and departed from Masulipatnam shows a progressive decline during these five years. While in 1681–1682, 41 ships called in at the Masulipatnam roads and 42 departed from the port, in 1683–1684 those numbers had declined to 36 and 32 respectively. By 1685–1686 they had dropped even further, to 33 arriving and just 15 departing. Nevertheless, these itineraries give us some idea of the kind of trade passing through Masulipatnam.

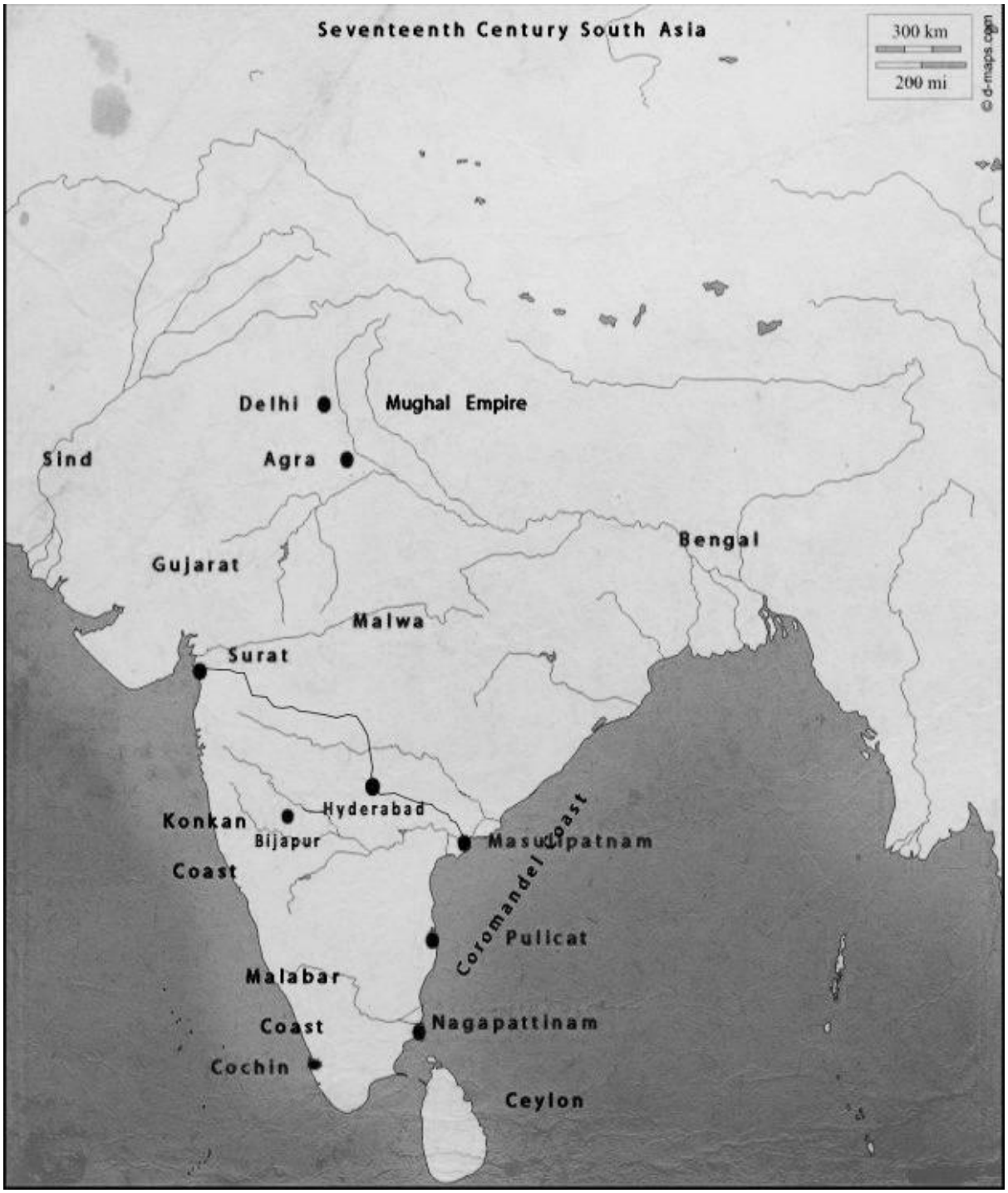
So far, we have focused our attention on the port city of Masulipatnam, detailing its climate and economic connections across the sea and even hinting at is connections overland to western and central India. The fact that this zone had such a redistributive character is bound to make us curious about the economic picture of the rural area between Masulipatnam and Golconda, the primary source of that major export commodity, textiles.

[35] NA VOC 1423, Letter dated 07.09.1686 from Laurens Pit in Masulipatnam to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia: f. 216r.

Figure 1.1: Seventeenth–century Masulipatnam[36]

[36] Original of this view of Masulipatnam and its environs from Philippus Baldaeus, *Nauwkeurige beschryving van Malabar en Choromandel* (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waasberge en Johannes van Someren, 1672). It was also reproduced in K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 117.

Map 1.1 The major inland commercial arc of Masulipatnam in the seventeenth century which stretched from the port–city through Hyderabad to Surat on the west coast of the Deccan[37]



[37] Map drawn by Saikat Mukherjee with inputs from the author.

Textile production process in northern Coromandel

A problem that we will encounter in this chapter and others when while discussing the production line of textiles in Coromandel is the paucity of information for each stage of production of textiles. Nonetheless, let us now explore some aspects of this process in the context of northern Coromandel as far as is possible. We will discuss the following: Why cotton grown in the Andhra delta was not used; what were the sources of cotton that fed the looms of northern Coromandel; what were the major varieties of textiles woven in North Coromandel; what was the composition of the population in the textile-weaving villages of the Godavari delta?

As noted in the introduction, cotton was grown along two belts in the west of the Deccan: in the region to the south of Aurangabad and north of the river Godavari, and from Kolhapur across Bijapur to Gulbarga. After harvest, cotton was thoroughly cleaned to make it ready for transportation and weaving. This comprised two stages: first the cotton lint was separated from the seed and then the lint was cleaned once more to remove dirt, twigs, leaves and other foreign matter. Seeds were always removed to make the cotton as light as possible before it was transported. Often women in peasant families (or cotton cultivating families) separated the lint from the seed during lull periods of the day, week or year, but cotton pickers also cleaned the cotton which they had received as wages for picking cotton. Both these groups sold the cleaned cotton to merchants and ocassionally they performed the second, finer cleaning and spun it into yarn themselves. Then the yarn was sold to merchants or given to weavers for being manufactured into cloth. Cotton was also sold raw to merchants who employed women to have it cleaned or sold it in uncleaned state to the spinners of yarn.[38]

Dirt, twigs and other foreign matter often stuck to cotton during picking, the first stage of cleaning and even transport. Therefore, the second and finer cleaning which involved removing dirt, twigs and leaves was usually done at a place as close as possible to where spinning took place because cotton tended to attract dirt during handling.[39] As we will see, the most probable source of cotton for the textile industry of the Godavari delta in the seventeenth century was the region between Aurangabad and Nanded in the west of the Deccan (see Map 1.2 later in this chapter). So, we may safely assume that after the first stage of cleaning cotton was transported by *banjaras* from the aforementioned region to the Godavari delta and the second stage of finer cleaning was done there after cotton had been bought by merchants.

Why was Andhra cotton not used?

---

[38] Prasannan Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants and Kings in South India 1720–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 54.
[39] Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy*: 55.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam argues that cotton was grown across South India from Tirunelveli in the south–east to the Godavari–Krishna delta in the north. This cotton cultivation seems to have been used to feed the local looms until the demand for textiles exceeded what could be locally produced.[40] As Daniel Havart's description of the routes from Masulipatnam to Golconda points out, cotton was grown in the east of the Deccan. We have noted earlier in this chapter that until the late sixteenth century Masulipatnam hardly had any international trade and functioned as a supplier of textiles to other ports of Coromandel. Although there is a lack of evidence, it is likely that during the sixteenth century locally grown cotton supported the looms of the Godavari delta. With the emergence of Masulipatnam as an international port from the late sixteenth century, locally grown cotton might no longer have been able to meet the demands of the textile industry of the Godavari delta and producers had had to look for supplies of cotton from the west of the Deccan.

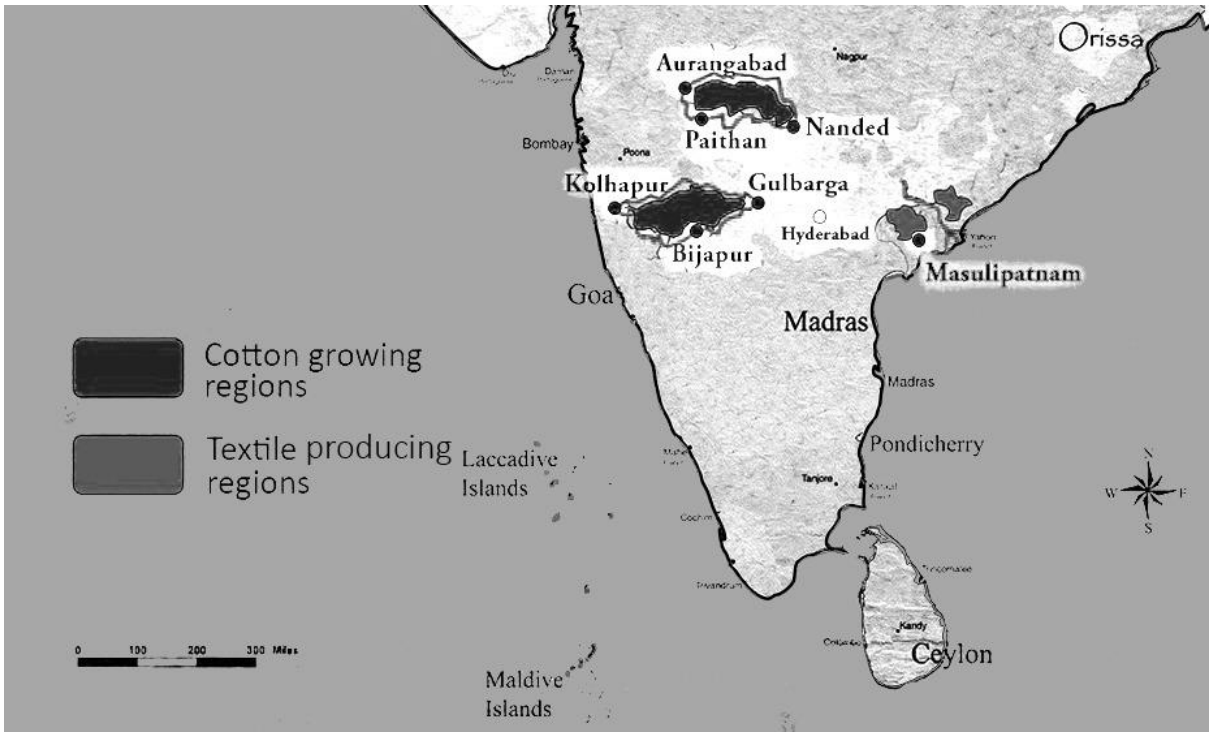
The reasons behind not using the cotton grown in northern Coromandel for the textile industry were the ecological conditions of the region and the demands of maritime trade. Dependency on imported supplies of raw cotton was identified by Joseph Brennig as a primary feature of the textile industry in northern Coromandel in the seventeenth century. The agriculture of northern Coromandel was unsuited to cotton, and high humidity and frequent flooding of the low delta during monsoons further hampered its cultivation. Brennig points out that if a season was favourable for paddy, hardly any cotton was harvested, and if the rains were seasonal they could be destructive to cotton. Though Sikakol (Srikakulam) to the north of the Godavari delta produced cotton of a coarse, white kind, it was unsuitable for weaving textiles of finer quality. For these reasons, northern Coromandel depended on imports of raw cotton for its textile industry. The *banjaras* transported the raw cotton and conducted their migrations in the Deccan cotton trade on a regular, annual basis. Water and fodder were the most important determinants of the routes taken by the banjaras. Most likely they moved along the valley of the Godavari river which extended from the cotton tracts in the west of the Deccan to the heavily populated and industrialized Godavari delta and provided them with water and fodder. Rajahmundry was the easternmost market in the cotton trade in the Godavari delta but two other centres, Dulla and Vemagiri, also on the eastern bank of the Godavari, supplied the Dutch factory in Draksharama with cloth[41] Let us now look at the origins of the cotton on which the textile industry of northern Coromandel relied.

Sources of cotton used for the textile industry of the Godavari delta in the seventeenth century
The textile–weaving villages that supplied Masulipatnam were mainly located in the Godavari delta. The cotton used for weaving textiles in these villages, Daniel Havart writes, came from northern Deccan, Bijapur and the regions to the north of Golconda. *Banjaras* who transported

[40] Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*: 71.
[41] Joseph Jerome Brennig, 'The Textile Trade of Seventeenth Century Northern Coromandel':229–230, 234–236.

salt from the coast brought cotton back on their return journey to the Coromandel Coast. The main merchants in the villages of the Godavari delta bought raw cotton from the *banjaras* and gave it to women (possibly by means of a contract) who turned it into yarn. This was later sold in the markets to weavers who eventually turned the yarn into clothes.[42] Sanjay Subrahmanyam offers a more precise location for the origin of the cotton that fed the looms of the Godavari delta. Based on the radius of *banjara* activity, he argues, the region from Aurangabad to Nanded in western Deccan was the most probable source of cotton used in the villages of the Godavari delta (see Map 1.2).[43]

Map 1.2 Cotton growing regions in the west of the Deccan and the textile industry of northern Coromandel which supplied Masulipatnam in the seventeenth century[44]



Major varieties

Joseph Brennig writes northern Coromandel produced two types of plain cloth, muslin and calico.[45] As we will find later in this chapter, Daniel Havart and other VOC officials usually distinguished between *muslin* and different varieties of calicos while describing the textile production of the Godavari delta. Being of a finer quality and open weave the *muslin* was used for turbans and veiling cloths, the latter function earning them the Portuguese term *bethilles*

[42] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 148.

[43] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Rural Industry and Commercial Agriculture in Late Seventeenth–Century South–Eastern India.' *Past and Present* 126 (1999): 85.

[44] Map drawn by Saikat Mukherjee with inputs from the author.

[45] Brennig, 'The Textile Trade of Seveneteenth Century Northern Coromandel': 227.

(veiling), which was common among European exporters from the region. *Bethilles* from Warangal were especially valued. Though *muslins* were exported by both the Dutch and the English, this cloth was more important for local exporters who sold it in the markets of the Persian Gulf. The calicos were sold in in varying lengths and quality, guinea or long cloth was 35 yards long, while *salempores* and *parcalles* were 16 and 8 yards long, respectively. All these calico varieties were produced in fine and ordinary grades. *Dongri*, also known as sailcloth, was the coarsest type of calico. It was produced in lengths of 12 yards and exported in large quantities. Most calicos were washed and bleached, but a few of the *salempores* and *parcalles* were printed.[46]

In his descriptions of Masulipatnam and its to–and–fro trade, Daniel Havart lists different textiles and their origins in the Godavari–Krishna delta. The town of Oragel (Warangal), about 72 miles north–west of Masulipatnam, and 12 villages around it produced *bethilles*, general *chiavonis* and finer varieties. Ellore and eight villages around it yielded fine *salempores*, *parcalles* and raw *bethilles*. Blue *taffachelas*, *boelangs*, negro–cloth, *madafons* and all kinds of blue cloth came from Muftabad and its ten surrounding villages. Linga and its surrounding ten villages produced fine *madafons*, *madops* and *taffachelas*. Mangalgiri and 14 surrounding villages provided *allegias* (striped and checked cotton cloth of red and white, or blue and white) and all kinds of red cloth. Located to the south across the river Krishna, Wattipore produced *Poelang–gobers* (cotton fabric with brownish blue and white blue stripes), Calewafoe and Sesterganty produced *bethilles*. Doerepindy and fourteen other villages manufactured painted clothing, *salempores* and red and white *parcalles*. About thirty miles from Masulipatnam, in Weentapalem and twenty-four villages around it, weavers produced fine guinea cloth, *salempores*, *parcalles*, *ginghams* and all kinds of fine cloth.[47]

Palakollu and Draksharama

The Qutb Shahis leased to the VOC two villages in the delta near Masulipatnam named Palakollu and Draksharama, which feature quite prominently in Chapter 4. Travelling north along the coast from Masulipatnam, the first village one would encounter was Suri, followed by Mordepalam, Wintera, Golepalam, Moggoltur, Pedddapatam and then Palakollu, where the VOC had a factory. The village had been leased to the Dutch by Abdulla Qutb Shah in 1653 for an annual payment of 5,000 Dutch guilders. Continuing firmans from the Qutb Shahi sultan kept on sanctioning the lease during the 1670s and later, until the conquest of Golconda by the Mughals in 1687. The VOC used their factory in Palakollu to buy textiles. Havart writes that trade here increased in the years after the VOC set up the factory. Guinea cloth, *parcalles*, *salempores* and chintz were all dyed in this village. For this the VOC had access to a workshop outside the village near Narsapore. The VOC paid 12 cents for a fine guinea cloth, 3 cents for ordinary guinea cloth and bethilles, and 2 cents for salempores and parcalles. Once the textiles had been dyed they were transported in flat–bottomed boats first to Gondy and then

[46] Brennig, 'The Textile Trade of Seventeenth Century Northern Coromandel': 227–228.
[47] Havart, *Op–sen ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 148.

Wintera. From there they were loaded onto bullocks and sent to Masulipatnam. Palakollu was not an outlet for selling the merchandise the VOC had imported in Masulipatnam, and it was only in on the rare occasions that the factory in Masulipatnam was under financial pressure that Dutch factors in Palakollu were asked to sell imported goods there.

The other major economic activity in the village was cultivation of nely rice. Some land in the village were demarcated for the maintenance of Brahmins, actors, dancing girls and priests of mosques. The crop was sown in May and harvested in July, then sown again in August and September and harvested in January. The Dutch forced the inhabitants of the village to buy rice at 9 guilders more than the market price. Havart's remarks on this system also reveals the mindset of Dutch observers and officials posted in Asia, one that that smacked of proto–Orientalism (as noted in the introduction). Havart writes that the VOC's share on a *khandi* (520 pounds, about 236 kilos) of rice was five–eighths, to the peasant farmer's three–eighths – although the farmer did sometimes receive a higher proportion of his crop. On top of this the state took three–quarters of the peasant's share, leaving and left him with just a quarter. Havart uses this as a pretext to differentiate between Christian rule and Hindu or Muslim rule; the former makes the land prosperous, while the latter robs it, he concluded. [48]

What to make of Daniel Havart's remark? Although the state's share of the peasant's crop does appear to be harsh, we will see later in this chapter there was a limit beyond which payments could not be made to the tax collectors and a number of checks in the revenue system ensured some protection for peasants despite the high rate of taxation in the Golconda sultanate.

In Ponnapalli, near Palakollu, blacksmiths made nails from the iron imported from Singaraina or Santomannam.[49] The products from the blacksmiths' shops would have been much in demand from the shipyard in nearby Narsapore. Iron and steel produced within the Golconda sultanate was also exported via Masulipatnam to Pegu, Tenasserim, Arakan and Acheh.[50] In a VOC memoir of succession written in 1679, Willem Carel Hartsink, the president of the Masulipatnam board, wrote to his successor Hendrik van Outhoorn that the iron and steel which had been bought in Samsoedepect by the company's inland servants were almost one and half years old. The price had risen by almost 50 percent due to demand from Mughal and Bijapuri merchants.[51] The latter probably intended to export it to mainland South–East Asia.

Even further north from Palakollu, in Draksharama, the VOC had another factory. This, too was not generally a destination for imports, although Japanese bar–copper, spiaulter,

---

[48] For a descritption of Palakollu see Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Derde deel*: 3–4, 6–17.
[49] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Derde deel*: 18.
[50] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 54, 104.
[51] NA VOC 1348, Memoir of succession from Willem Carel Hartsink in Masulipatnam to Hendrik van Outhoorn: f. 1204v.

vermilion, and round and long pepper were sold there in 1677 and 1678. The factory here carried out the washing and cleaning of several varieties cloth, including fine and ordinary guinea cloth, fine and ordinary *salempores*, raw *bethilles*, *chiavonis*, sailcloth and *dongris*. Textiles were woven in the villages of Ronara, Upara and Thuny, located four miles away to the south–west of Draksharama. Then these were dyed in Draksharama, whose dyers were unmatched in all Coromandel in terms of excellence, writes Havart. After having been dyed, textiles were transported to Golepalam and Godavaram, two other villages belonging to the VOC, to be painted. These villages had been leased by the Golconda sultanate to the Dutch for 750 Dutch guilders per year. Both villages were equipped with tanks for washing and dyeing textiles. They had about 200 'washer households' devoted to this profession. The textiles were first transported to Dangera, then to Wintera and from there to Masulipatnam.[52]

Both Palakollu and Draksharama were mainly dyeing villages. As we will find in Table 1.2 in this chapter, several villages in the Godavari delta supplied textiles to Palakollu where they were dyed. The chain of production that passed through these villages seems to have been the following: after the first stage of cleaning raw cotton was transported by banjaras from the west of the Deccan to the Godavari delta, this cotton was bought by merchants and given to women who spun it into yarn, then it was woven into textiles, after textiles had been woven they were transported to Palakollu and Draksharam for being dyed, then they were painted, transported to Masulipatnam, and finally shipped to different markets in the Indian Ocean.

The villages in the Godavari delta had similar economic profiles marked by specialization within the weaving profession. This is the zone of northern Coromandel about which we have by far the most detailed information. It is thanks to reports produced during an inspection of the area in 1682 at the behest of Jacob Jorisz Pit, the then Dutch governor of the Coromandel Coast, that we have at least some idea of the economic condition of rural settlements in the Godavari delta, some of which supplied the Dutch factory in Palakollu. A deal of the information these inspection reports contain tallies with what Havart wrote about the areas around Masulipatnam and it is quite possible that Havart used these reports for his own book.

Rural economy in the Godavari–Krishna delta: textile varieties and population groups, 1682

Journeying westwards from the Dutch lodge in Palakollu to its counterpart in Nagulvancha, Johannes Huijsman and Adriaen Verbruggen recorded their observations of the economic character of the villages along the way. In their surveys of the rural settlements, the VOC observers differentiate between brahmins, peasants and weavers while describing population groups. Their findings are tabulated below.[53]

---

[52] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Derde deel*: 47–51, 54–55.

[53] NA VOC 1378, Report dated 27.04.1682 by Joannes Huijsman and Adriaen Verbruggen, Masulipatnam to Jacob Jorisz Pit, governor in Pulicat: f. 1925r.–f. 1930r.

Table 1.2 Weaving villages between Palakollu and Nagulvancha

Village	Textile varieties	Population groups
Pollipalli	No information available	Brahmins, peasants and weavers
Bagelseram	No information available	Brahmins, peasants and weavers
Utbruram	*Salempores*	Brahmins, peasants and 10 weaver households. The weavers produced for the VOC merchants in Palakollu
Dagguluru, Ballipadu, Chikkala	Not inhabited by weavers	Peasants (no weavers lived here)
Veeravasaram	Guinea cloth, *salempores*, *parcalles* and *bethilles*	Brahmins, peasants and 40 weaver households. The weavers supplied the EIC which had a lodge here.
Singawissam	Guinea cloth, *salempores*, *parcalles* and *bethilles*	Brahmins, peasants and weavers
Goragula, Sennara, Wissakuluru and Golnolsudi	Not inhabited by weavers	Peasants (no weavers lived here)
Bhimavaram	Guinea cloth, *salempores* and *bethilles*	Brahmins and 60 weaver households. The weavers supplied the VOC merchants in Palakollu.
Raijallam, Pemmaramaram and Bondaramaram	Not inhabited by weavers	Peasants (no weavers lived here)
Dudapuni	Guinea cloth	Brahmins and 15 weaver households. The weavers produced for the VOC merchants in Palakollu and for domestic consumption.
Jakkawaram and Pimpolbrol	Not inhabited by weavers	Peasants (no weavers lived here)
Sintsali	Uncertain, but perhaps guinea cloth and *salempores*.	Brahmins, peasants and 20 weaver households that produced cloth for domestic consumption and the VOC merchants in Palakollu.
Kala	Guinea cloth and *salempores*	10 weaver households produced cloth for the VOC merchants in Palakollu
Kulakuru	Guinea cloth and *salempores*	16 weaver households supplied the VOC merchants in Palakollu
Elursadol	Guinea cloth, *salempores* and *bethilles*	Brahmins, peasants and 10 weaver households that supplied the merchants of Palakollu
Kalidindi	Information not available	Peasants and weavers
Laranamanduripeenta	Blue-striped *allegias*, *madaphons* and *patamarpha*	Oil-pressers and 50 weaver households whose products were sold in Masulipatnam
Wamawarom	Not inhabited by weavers	Peasants
Bommenimpadu	Blue-checked *madaphons*, *allegias*, *pathaparmol*	Brahmins and 10 weaver households
Korreguntapalam	*Allegias*, *madaphons* and *natannorpha*	Brahmins and 50 weaver households
Radali	*Allegias*, *madaphons* and *pathamarpha*	Brahmins and 5 weaver households
Bamalapalayam	No information available	Weavers
Purerupalapalayam	*Allegias*, *madaphons* and *parthamarpha*	30 weaver households
Saniwaripalayam, Gudawaraplayam,	Not inhabited by weavers	Peasants

Beetaoleopalayam and Bolssaragundla		
Seenstrapeggela	Blue *allegias*, *madaphons*, *pathamarpha* and raw cloth	Brahmins, peasants and 20 weaver households producing for domestic consumption
Khalapwola	Not inhabited by weavers	Peasants
Katolrupawola	Domestic consumption	Peasants and 5 weaver households
Kanpipare	Not available	Weavers
Paranki and Patamatha	Not inhabited by weavers	Brahmins and peasants (no weavers)
Vijaywada	Not available	200 brahmin households, 200 peasant households and 50 weaver households. Possibly producing for export from Masulipatnam.
Bawanipuram	Not inhabited by weavers	Brahmins and peasants
Gulsapundi	Domestic consumption	Brahmins, peasants and weavers. The weavers produced for domestic consumption.
Ibrahimpatnam	Not inhabited by weavers	Brahmins and peasants
Pennegentspul (the last major village before the Dutch factors reached Nagulvancha)	*Ginghams* and *bethilles*	150 brahmin households, 300 peasant households and 50 weaver households.

In Nagulvancha and three surrounding small villages were home to a total of around 200 families of cloth–sellers, 150 weavers, 100 cultivators, 20 coppersmiths, 15 smiths, 20 goldsmiths, 20 washers, 150 brahmins, about 20 account–keepers, 15 ox–cart drivers, a good number of bricklayers, leather–workers and parias (members or lower castes who performed menial tasks) who cleared up garbage. Havart lists Kankagiery, Khammam, Nella, Kondapilly, Chellapilly, Anantagiri, Kandiconda, Palevancha and Warangal as settlements around Nagulvancha that provided a steady supply of textiles such as guineas, *salempores*, *parcalles*, *ginghams*, table cloths, sailcloth, negro-cloth, *dongris*, *kalamkari*, *chiavoni* and *bethilles*.[54]

Although there are some matches on the itineraries of Havart's journey from Masulipatnam to Nagulvancha and Huijsman and Verbruggen's journey from Palakollu to Nagulvancha, most of the settlements they visited were different. Their records reveal to us the economic picture of two strands of the Masulipatnam–Hyderabad/Golconda hinterland that come together at Nagulvancha. Most of these villages produced textiles for markets in the Indian Ocean, but some focused on production for domestic consumption. It is difficult to ascertain whether this concerned consumption within that village itself or inland trade. Most of small villages had about 10 weaver households, while their moderately while there moderately sized counterparts had perhaps 50 or 60 weaver households. The largest concentration of weavers was in Pennegentspul (150 weaver households) and Vijaywada (200). Weaving seems to have been a full–time profession that apparently did not clash with agricultural activities (carried out by peasants). Some villages were inhabited only by peasants. The VOC observers may have used the term 'brahmin' as a generic reference that

[54] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Twede deel*: 15–17.

included not only the priestly groups who performed Hindu religious rites, but also those who worked as scribes or clerks.

Initially in the seventeenth century the VOC shipped their Coromandel textiles to South–East Asia and later in the seventeenth century also to Europe. The Dutch exported textiles mainly to South–East Asian markets in the Spice Islands of the Moluccas, Banda and Celebes, and in Java, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Siam and Burma. In Indonesia, the textiles were used to procure spices and as payment to soldiers serving with the VOC. Coromandel textiles were shipped to Taiwan and Japan, but in limited quantities. Other markets where Coromandel textiles were shipped to included Ceylon and Persia. The volume of VOC trade on the Coromandel Coast increased from 1640s throughout the seventeenth century, and this region was the chief supplier of textiles to the South–East Asian market until the 1680s. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the VOC faced competition from Java in the form of locally produced and cheaper supplies of painted textiles. In the first half of the seventeenth century, indigo, cotton yarn and saltpetre were regularly exported to Europe from the Coromandel Coast. Textile exports increased in importance as the seventeenth century progressed, and by 1652 Coromandel textiles accounted for 30 percent of the orders of textiles from India. European orders for Coromandel textiles increased even more in the 1670s.[55]

The picture emerging is of a densely populated and highly commercialized economic zone stretching from Masulipatnam to Hyderabad and more widely through overland and maritime networks. A combination of the economic infrastructure put into place by the Qutb Shahi sultans in Masulipatnam, the vibrant presence of European trading companies and indigenous merchants, and the investment of indigenous and European merchants in textile production in the Godavari delta helped to turn the Golconda sultanate into an extremely rich kingdom. Masulipatnam's success lay in its ability, as a regional entrepot, to connect remote markets; those of the interior beyond Golconda and the maritime centres around the Indian Ocean. How did the political authorities of Golconda try to tap the economic resources generated in this wealthy region of the Deccan? We turn to that question now.

1.3 Politics

H.K. Sherwani points out that a province in the Golconda sultanate was described by the term *simt* or *samt* (or *samet*) and the chief civil representative in a *simt*/ *samt* was called a *sarsimt*. But in effect the term denoted a district, rather than a province. Belamkonda, Venukonda, Nizamapatnam (also known as Petapoly), Kondapalli, Masulipatnam, Ellore and Rajahmundry were the seats of a *sarsimt* or *sarsamt* appointed by the sultan. The *havaldar* of Masulipatnam

[55] Om Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre–Colonial India, The New Cambridge History of India*, II.5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 175, 178, 180, 182–184.

(the revenue collector as we will find) was mistakenly referred to as the governor in the records of the VOC and the EIC and he was subordinate to the *sarsamt*.[56]

Daniel Havart writes that the port city of Masulipatnam was administered on behalf of the sultan by the following officials (definitions to follow): the *havaldar*, the *qazi* (the judge), the *shahbandar*, the *sarsamet* and the *kotwal*. The *havaldar* (Havart calls him *opperste*, the topmost/ uppermost/ highest) farmed the revenues of Masulipatnam and lands subordinate to it for 150000 ducats annually. He could be pestered, beaten and even killed in case of a failure to pay this amount. Apart from collecting land revenue, the *havaldar* of Masulipatnam worked the salt mines near the port which yielded good profits, for instance 180000 ducats in 1684 and 1685.[57]

Havart adds that *shahbandar* was the king of a port or a roadstead (the chief port officer or harbour master). In the early part of the seventeenth century, Havart writes, the *shahbandar* increased or decreased customs duties in Masulipatnam at will, protected the merchants and evaluated whether their merchandise was good or bad. But in the later part of the seventeenth century the prestige of *shahbandar* had declined and he had become dependent on the *havaldar*. The *kotwal* was the chief of police, responsible for the security of a town, preventing crimes, imprisoning miscreants and punishing them. He was subordinate to the governor of a district or province, or to the sultan in Golconda.[58]

Although the *havaldar*'s primary task was to collect the revenues of Masulipatnam, by the later half of the seventeenth century he seems to have become the most powerful figure in the administration of Masulipatnam. There are two reasons for this assertion. One, it does not appear from Daniel Havart's account that the *sarsamt* played any significant role in the daily administration of Masulipatnam. Two, despite there being a separation between revenue and policing functions in Masulipatnam (similar to the division of power in the provincial administration of the Mughal Empire), as is evidenced by the presence of both the *havaldar* and the *kotwal*, Havart writes that the *shahbandar*, the *qazi* and the *kotwal* were dependent on the *havaldar* who was not answerable to anyone in Masulipatnam.[59] Nonetheless, there were a few checks on the *havaldar*'s authority– he could not overrule the *qazi*'s court in the port city, nor could he impose new taxes beyond the ones that had been sanctioned by the sultan.[60]

---

[56] Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*: 511.
[57] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 225–226.
[58] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Twede deel*: 118, 239.
[59] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 228.
[60] Sinnappah Arasaratnam and Aniruddha Ray, *Masulipatnam and Cambay: A History of Two Port–Towns 1500–1800* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1994): 36.

The hierarchical relationship between the *havaldar*, a revenue farmer, and his immediate superior, a provincial/ district governor, was replicated in coastal districts further to the south of Masulipatnam. In 1679 Streynsham Master, an official of the EIC who had visited India to inspect the EIC factories, described the administration of Karedu, a small port near Nellore. The town was under the command of Mahmud Ibrahim, the *sarkhail* (head of the army) and he had in turn appointed a Brahmin as its governor (revenue collector).[61] This was similar to the *sarsamt–havaldar* relationship in the case of Masulipatnam, although– as we have noted– the *sarsamt* did not play any significant role in the administration of Masulipatnam.

So, while there was technically a separation of revenue, judicial and policing functions in Masulipatnam, by the latter half of the seventeenth century (when Daniel Havart wrote his account) the *havaldar* had become the most important official in the daily administration of the port in terms of collecting revenue and taking charge of law and order.

Revenue system in Golconda

The Golconda sultanate operated a system known as revenue farming, through which revenue officials leased out their lands to local entrepreneurs who would bid for the office, and the position went to the highest bidder. They were then entrusted with the organization and administration of revenue collection in villages and cities before crediting an annual figure to the treasury in Golconda.

The sultan's claim to a share of agricultural production was the greatest single source of revenue for the Golconda sultanate. The Qutb Shahs appropriated a large share of every harvest. The *jam–i–kamil* or perfect assessment in Golconda specified a normative land–tax figure for each village, sub-district and district in the kingdom. However, what we must remember is there would have been differences between what was assessed and what was collected (or expected to be collected). One of the secondary sources which John F. Richards studied to research the revenue system in Qutb Shahi and Mughal Golconda refers to a late eighteenth-century chronicle that in turn speaks of *hasil* or collection figures which were expected, rather than an accurate statement of the *jam–i–kamil* or 'perfect assessment'. At the time of the formulation of the perfect assessment, state demand was calculated on the basis of the equivalent of one–half share of production. Although this demand might have been initially severe, it was mitigated. The Qutb Shahi rulers did not interfere with land grants to temples, *brahmins* and mosques, or with the internal revenue settlements in villages. The Qutb Shahi state insisted on assessment and collection of tax in cash rather than in kind. As described earlier, the usual approach to revenue collection in Golconda was tax–farming through an elaborate series of lessees and sub–lessees. This system operated at the port towns and their hinterland with export centres along the coast. Similar farming terms were

[61] Richard Carnac Temple ed. *The Diaries of Streynsham Master 1675–1680*, vol. II (London: John Murray, 1911): 179.

imposed on the governors of the coastal districts north of the river Krishna and on the governor of Karnatik (districts to the south of the river Krishna). Before governors secured their appointments, they had to agree to pay an annually determined fixed sum to the central treasury which represented the normal land–tax collections for their district. Some governors were speculators who immediately sublet their entire districts at profitable rates, or commonly sublet tax collection in their districts to smaller entrepreneurs by means of an annual auction. These are the havaldars that European sources (for instance the VOC) refer to. Their primary concern was to successfully make payments three times a year to the district governor who in turn had to make annual payments to the central treasury in Golconda. Although undoubtedly harsh, this system did not halt or slow agricultural production. Contemporary observers simultaneously deplored the severe tax system in Golconda and marveled at the great prosperity in the countryside. Tank irrigation in Telangana and the fertility of the deltas in Andhra were partly responsible for this, as was the state's practice of placing a few agricultural lands beyond the reach of tax–farmers, such as by issuing grants to temples, Brahmins and mosques. Finally, the perfect assessment itself, John F. Richards argued, might have acted as a check on the revenue system. On the surface, however, it was an anomaly in the system of tax-farming. The *jam–i–kamil* could have been a bargaining point for all parties involved in the collection of revenue: the central treasury and amildars, district governors, tax–farmers and the hereditary local officials in each village or sub–district. For the local officials, the perfect assessment was probably the ceiling beyond which payments could not be made to the tax farmer.[62]

The relationship between political power and commerce was complex. Sinnappah Arasaratnam argues that in the sultanates of Golconda and Bijapur the prevailing system was one of political capitalism, and that all political figures – from royalty to the lowliest district official – invested in trade. Arasaratnam suggests that this system became increasingly dominant with the boom in trade of the Indian Ocean in the seventeenth century.[63] Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Chris Bayly have detailed the careers of figures in early–modern India who straddled the worlds of politics and commerce; described as 'portfolio capitalists', these large–scale entrepreneurs could leverage not only their own capital but also that of smaller–scale operators. Subrahmanyam and Bayly argue that the existence of portfolio capitalists depended both on the system of revenue farming which was symptomatic of the commercialization of the state and political power and on the need to link ecologically disparate regions, push back the agrarian frontier and organize commercial production.[64] An exemplary manifestation of this phenomenon can be found in the workings of the administration of Masulipatnam. Daniel Havart writes that in 1684 and 1685 the *havaldar* of

[62] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 21–23, 25–26.
[63] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 224.
[64] Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Chris Bayly, 'Portfolio capitalists and the political economy of early modern India' *IESHR* 25, 4 (1988): 401–402, 412.

the port earned 180,000 ducats from the salt works near the port. The salt was transported from Masulipatnam to northern India in return for wheat, barley, dates, opium and tamarind.[65]

And we should not forget the connections the salt trade had with the trade in cotton from the west of the Deccan to the Godavari delta: the *banjaras* transported salt from the coast and brought cotton on their return journey. Havart's remarks on the profits earned in the salt trade date from the late seventeenth century. Returning briefly to the discussion of historiography in the introduction, John F. Richards argued that after the Mughal conquest of Golconda, Mughal revenue administration profited from the salt mines in Masulipatnam and Nagapatnam. We may reasonably argue, therefore, that the establishment of the Mughal administration did not snap this crucial link between the coast and the interior.

In seventeenth–century Deccan and South India, many men made fortunes out of farming revenues and engaging in commerce. As the presence of European companies boosted economic production (mainly through textiles) and trade in the Masulipatnam–Golconda hinterland, there was commercial territory to be won and neither the European companies, nor others (merchants and portfolio–capitalists alike) were about to sacrifice their advantage. Commercial conflicts between the *havaldars* of Masulipatnam and the European companies did indeed surface every now and then throughout the seventeenth century, due in part to the involvement of the Masulipatnam governors in trade. For example, in 1617 Adolff Thomasz wrote from Pulicat to the VOC directors in Amsterdam to tell them that local officials along the Coromandel Coast were involved in trade with the Portuguese (private traders) and that these officials had seen their earnings fall off due to the Dutch disruption of Portuguese trading operations. In the same year problems created by the *havaldar* forced the VOC to shut down their factory in Petapuli or Nizamapatnam. Later, however, when the Dutch turned down requests to reopen the factory the *havaldar* befriended them.[66] Often such conflicts sprang from the following reasons: the portfolio–capitalists running into large debts with the European companies and not crediting the same, the *havaldar*'s involvement in trade from Masulipatnam, the insistence of portfolio–capitalists on being the sole supplier to the European companies and pre–emptive buying of imports. Occasionally the European companies resorted to violence to settle scores when official high-handedness paid no heed to repeated overtures.

In 1613 and 1614 Dutch successfully reclaimed money owed to them by abducting the son of one of the two *havaldars* of Masulipatnam. The Dutch protested the extortion by Masulipatnam officials and blockaded the port from 1628 to 1629 and seized ships off the coast. The port had been unsettled by the Dutch blockade and the merchants were the first

[65] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 225–226.
[66] Om Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1984): 23–24. Letter from Adollf Thomasz in Pulicat to the directors in Amsterdam 08.05.1617: 27; Letter from Hans de Haze in Masulipatnam to Jan Pieterszoon Coen in Bantam 05.01.1617: 27.

to initiate peace with the VOC. In the end a settlement was agreed upon and the Dutch factor Jacob de Wit returned from Golconda with a set of firmans in May 1630. Mir Muhammed Said Ardestani, the most well–known of the portfolio–capitalists and the Mir Jumla of the sultanate (second only to the sultan in terms of authority), began his ascendancy in Golconda during the 1640s. After successfully farming revenues and occupying various official positions, he made his fortune many times over and increased his clout to such an extent that at one juncture the Masulipatnam havaldars were his dependents. His participation in overseas trade often led to disputes with the Dutch over refusal of passes to certain ports which the Dutch claimed fell under their jurisdiction. The Dutch often had to compromise since they were dependent on Mir Jumla on the land, in other words for their business in Golconda.[67]

The Dutch write of such confrontations from time to time. The daily register maintained in Batavia notes on 11 March, 1624 that following the payment of a substantial sum of money Van Uffelen, the Dutch factor of Masulipatnam who had been imprisoned by the Golconda authorities in 1623, was released from the prison and returned sick and indisposed to Masulipatnam. Little over a year on 8 September, 1625 the daily register noted how the factors in Masulipatnam had complained of the city governor's extortion practices.[68] A 19 February, 1641 litany of similar complaints regarding harassment and ill–mannered behaviour on the part of the *havaldar* of Masulipatnam suggests tensions and conflicts were a part of the general picture.[69] For the Europeans strong–arm tactics on the sea always remained an answer. The Dutch noted in the Batavia daily register on 31 March 1663 that their refusal of passes to Muslim shipping had helped protect their trade in Golconda: the *havaldar* of Masulipatnam had penned a request to the Dutch that henceforth they could bring their merchandise to markets unhindered and that he would continue to issue permits for these activities.[70] However, when by the 1670s clashes with the *havaldar* had become more frequent the Dutch were able, as they did in 1672, to defend themselves and prevail against the *havaldar* within the city itself.[71]

We must adopt a somewhat sceptical attitude with respect to descriptions of local functionaries in the VOC records; the Dutch discourse often deliberately presented a negative image of these officials. A common trope is the 'greedy moor' who had to be kept on good terms with the VOC through regular gifts. At times the private trade of Dutch officials was allied with the commercial interests the company's brokers in Golconda who, in turn, had connections with Qutb Shahi officials. This encouraged them to cast their own failures in the

---

[67] For an overview of such conflicts see Arasaratnam and Ray, *Masulipatnam and Cambay*: 38–46, 49–50.
[68] J.E. Heeres ed., *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts–India Anno 1624–1629* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1896): 33, 190.
[69] J.A. van der Chijs ed., *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlndts–India Anno 1640–1641* (Batavia and The Hague: Landsdrukkerij and Martinus Nijhoff, 1887): 187.
[70] J.A. van der Chijs ed., *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts–India Anno 1663* (Batavia and The Hague: Landsdrukkerij and Martinus Nijhoff, 1891): 112.
[71] Arasaratnam and Ray, *Masulipatnam and Cambay*: 56–58.

guise of political despotism. This recalls Tracy's analysis, as noted in the introductory chapter. The following incident from the 1680s would support this reading: In 1685 the VOC officials in Hyderabad accused Akkanna – a minister of the sultanate, head of the army and chief bookkeeper of the crown's estate – of having embezzled goods worth 145,030 huns, and the VOC sent an embassy to the Golconda court to retrieve the goods, without success. Chirum Chodenda, a Hyderabad-based merchant and a broker for the VOC, had played a significant role in the whole affair. Documents discovered later at his house in fact implicated the Dutch factors of Hyderabad (Jan van Nijendaal, Theunis Carstensz and Michiel Janzoon) of having lost money in private trade enterprises. To save themselves from even greater embarrassment and to conceal the fact that Akkanna was not to blame the VOC went to war with Golconda. Akkanna and Madanna, both of whom had started careers as revenue farmers and went on to call the shots in the sultan's government by the 1680s, are two more examples of portfolio–capitalists in Golconda. In this role they were by far the most remarkable figures in the sultanate since Mir Jumla had defected to Mughal service in the 1650s.[72] These snapshots of confrontations demonstrate the vitality of the complex relationships involved in politics, economics and trade: it began with the system of revenue farming that commercialized revenue collection by selling positions to the highest bidder, and the tax–farmers' investment in trade leading to the expansion of European companies, trade and commerce into the Masulipatnam–Golconda hinterland. Before we wrap up this section, let us look at an instance of how tax–farmers in the Golconda sultanate invited European companies.

In 1681, Francois Martin, the director of the French East India Company in Pondicherry, travelled by land from Pondicherry to Surat. At the village of Vetapalem near the port of Nizamapatnam (located to the south of Masulipatnam), four local merchants spoke to Francois Martin who described his conversation with them in the following manner:

> They told me that 4,000 weavers specialising in the weaving of different kinds of cloth were to be found at Vetapalem and the three neighbouring villages. The English had a counter at Petapoly (Nizamapatnam) three leagues from Vetapalem, and in previous times both the English and the Dutch used to buy substantial quantities of cloth from here. Now they were drawing very little and it would be of advantage to our company to set up a counter at Petapoly to which all the cloth would be brought…. [the merchants] said that Idal Khan, governor of Bapatla, a town five miles to the north through which we would have to pass, was very anxious that we should establish ourselves on his territory.[73]

---

[72] See Gijs Kruijtzer, 'Madanna, Akkanna and the Brahmin Revolution: A study of mentality, group behaviour and personality in Seventeenth–Century India' *JESHO* 45, 2 (2002): 231–267, for this incident and the careers of the Akkanna and Madanna. Also see Kruijtzer, *Xenophobia in Seventeenth–Century India*: 224–255.

[73] Lotika Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century (Social, Economic and Political): Memoirs of Francois Martin (1670–1694), Volume I, Part II* (Manohar: New Delhi, 1983): 748–749.

1.4 Regional response to political instability and wars

This section should be considered as an element in a hypothesis on how the economy of the Deccan and South India reacted to wars. Each chapter will draw from different aspects of the economy to build this hypothesis. As we have seen, the success of Masulipatnam depended on its character as a regional entrepot, often manifested in its connecting of the cotton growing belt of western Deccan with the textile industry of the Godavari and Krishna delta and finally, the markets of the Indian Ocean. The pattern was well–established: raw cotton was brought to the villages in the deltas, woven into textiles and shipped abroad from Masulipatnam; and commodities imported into Masulipatnam were bought by merchants and transported to Hyderabad/Golconda and western India. If warfare were to threaten any part of this network, the fundamental strength of Masulipatnam as a port city would be hit.

As in other parts of India, a feature of northern Coromandel was the mobility of rural villages and populations. Quite often the rural population's response to wars, political instability or natural disaster was to desert or migrate to a less disrupted region. This phenomenon formed the crux of the Mughal emperor Babur's observation of villages in the plains of northern India in the sixteenth century:

> In Hindustan hamlets and villages, towns indeed, are depopulated and set up in a moment! If the people of a large town, one inhabited for years even, flee from it, they do it in such a way that not a sign or trace of them remains in a day or a day and a half. On the other hand, if they fix their eyes on a place in which to settle, they need not dig water-courses or construct dams because their crops are all rain–grown, and as the population of Hindustan is unlimited, it swarms in. They make a tank or dig a well; they need not build houses or set up walls – *khas*-grass abounds, wood is unlimited, huts are made, and straightway there is a village or a town![74]

Evidence provided by Francois Martin, whose observations on Bapatla we have referred to in the previous section, points to depopulation of textile weaving villages in the Qutb Shahi sultanate caused by maladministration of Brahmins, i.e., revenue farmers. In 1681 he described Mangalgiri: 'This used to be a large thickly populated town where many weavers and painters used to have their houses but it had been completely ruined by the bad government of the Brahmins.'[75]

Martin also spoke of Hulebi (a village near Nagulvancha where the VOC had a lodge) in similar terms:

---

[74] Annette Susannah Beveridge transl., *The Babur–nama (Memoirs of Babur),* vol. II (London: Luzac& Co., 1922): 487–488.

[75] Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century*, *Volume I*, *Part II*: 750.

> …(Hulebi), which used to be the centre of a flourishing manufacture of printed chintz. Wheras before as many as 2000 painters lived here, now there were only 20 of them. This diminution is a result of the Brahmin rule.[76]

Although these villages had not been depopulated due to warfare or political instability, Martin's evidence, nonetheless, hints at how rural populations might have responded to disturbances in textile–weaving villages that resulted from wars or political instability.

Such mobility was not restricted to villages. South Asian cities too, André Wink argues, had a long tradition of internal migration caused by military invasions and raids, famines, epidemics and droughts. Peripatetic political elites created numerous new towns and cities.[77] Many north Indian cities originated as military encampments in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Arcot in central Coromandel is an example: it was the site of a Mughal army camp during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns. Migration propelled by political disturbance did occur in the context of the Deccan, as we will see in Chapter 5. The introductory chapter alluded to the fact that that ports in Coromandel had aleatoric life–cycles, and typically moved up and down the hierarchy of networks over time. For example, Masulipatnam was first established as a supplier of commodities to other Coromandel ports and then it went on to become a major international port in the seventeenth–century Indian Ocean. As we will find in Chapter 2, Pulicat retrograded from an international port in the sixteenth century to a subsidiary port in the seventeenth century when it lost much of its former sheen and was sustained by the patronage of the VOC. Such changes in the life–cycles of ports were accompanied by the migration of merchant groups.

The 1620s were marked by expansion of the Mughal Empire and consolidation of Mughal control in northern Deccan. The main antagonist of Emperor Jahangir was Malik Amber, the Abyssinian minister of the sultanate of Ahmednagar. This phase of warfare affected Masulipatnam's commercial operations along the arc that ran westwards from Masulipatnam via Hyderabad. In 1621, Andries Soury, a Dutch factor at Masulipatnam, wrote to the VOC's directors in Amsterdam, saying that fear and apprehension resulting from the anticipation of war between the Mughals and Malik Amber of Ahmadnagar had brought trade to a stop; Burhanpur in the northern Deccan lay besieged and the spices in the Dutch warehouse in Masulipatnam remained unsold due to unsafe roads.[78] In VOC discourse of the outbreak of a war was usually associated with a sense of panic regarding its potential effects on commerce. Unsafe highways meant that merchants would be cautious about doing business.

---

[76] Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century*, *Volume I*, *Part II*: 754.
[77] André Wink, *Al–Hind: The Making of the Indo–Islamic World, vol. 3. Indo–Islamic Society 14th–15th Centuries* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004): 73.
[78] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India*: 147–149.

Hyderabad, another important connecting link in this hinterland, was also vulnerable to wars: this Qutb Shahi city had barely any serious defence works and was looted by Mughal troops in 1656, in a period when Aurangzeb was serving as the governor of the Deccan under his father, the emperor Shah Jahan. Mir Alam writes in his book *Haqiqat–ul–Alam* that royal workshops were ransacked by the Mughals, who took away many books and much fine chinaware. The plunder continued for a few days, but the inhabitants of the city were still wealthy after the looting had stopped, writes Mir Alam.[79] The absence of defence works in Hyderabad was typical of many Indian cities, and Surat, the principal commercial city of the Mughal Empire, was looted and sacked by the Marathas more than once in the second half of the seventeenth century.

By the 1670s, Mughal expansion in the Deccan found a serious antagonist in the Marathas under Shivaji. But Aurangzeb's general Jai Singh forced Shivaji to surrender, Shivaji was made a Mughal mansabdar and an ally in a campaign against Bijapur. A letter written by the Dutch factors from Golconda to Masulipatnam in 1674 asserted that due to the war between the Mughals, Shivaji and Bijapur, the VOC had been experiencing trade–related troubles and they did not expect the situation to change anytime soon. The VOCs primary concern was the inland trade that passed from Masulipatnam to western India through Golconda and Hyderabad. However, despite some slowdown in trade due to the war, the VOC factory in Golconda requested the following commodities from Masulipatnam: cloves, mace, Ceylonese cinnamon, Malaccan tin, Japanese bar–copper, Japanese camphor, Chinese pit (a currency made from poorly purified tin), spiaulter, long pepper, benzine, hitch silver, vermilion, gross tea, agilwood, ivory, Bengal silk, fine tea etc.[80]

It is clear from the account of the plundering of Hyderabad by the Mughals that the major connecting nodes in the hinterland of Masulipatnam were vulnerable to considerable damage, both in the capital city and along the long–distance overland routes. All the anecdotes of war discussed so far refer to the overland connections and the disruption to trade here was not durable – this applies also to the attack on Hyderabad. However, a long–drawn war would render the highways unsafe and cripple these connections. To sum up: trading activity in Masulipatnam was highly sensitive to crises that affected or threatened the political configuration of eastern and western Deccan. And as we shall see in Chapter 4, when war broke out in the late–seventeenth century Masulipatnam's fortunes changed for the worse.

---

[79] B.D. Verma transl., 'Mir Alam, Haqiqat–ul Alam' in: *Gowalkondyachi Qutb Shahi* ed. V. C. Bendre (Pune: Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal): 72. This is a lesser known translated primary source on the history of the Qutb Shahis. A copy of the book is available at the Centre for Advanced Studies library in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

[80] NA VOC 1302, Letter dated 26.01.1674 from Willem Hartsink and J.E. Nijendaal in Golconda to Jacques Caulier in Masulipatnam: f. 426v., f. 429r.–f. 429v.

There is one more inference that we may draw from the Mughal campaigns against Shivaji in the second half of the seventeenth century, one that is relevant for our discussion of the economic impact of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns examined in Part II of the dissertation. In the war against Shivaji in the 1660s, Jai Singh, Aurangzeb's general, instructed the European settlements to obstruct the activities of the Maratha fleet.[81] Such co–opting of the European companies demonstrated not only military necessities, but also had a politico–economic aspect. The ports were outlets of trade and could act as conduits of supplies for an army on the march, a fact that also shaped the Mughal strategy in the Golconda region in the late–seventeenth century. This subject is covered in more detail in Chapter 4, which analyses the impact of Aurangzeb's campaigns on Masulipatnam and its hinterland.

[81] Richards, *The Mughal Empire*: 210.

Chapter 2: Pulicat's political and economic landscape

We now shift our focus from Masulipatnam and northern Coromandel to central Coromandel. This chapter concentrates on Pulicat and its hinterland in central Coromandel, following a similar structure in its discussion of the political and economic landscape of Pulicat in four sections entitled 'Ecology', 'The economy', 'The political economy beyond Vijayanagara' and 'Political instability and wars'. The first section examines the ecological conditions around the port, including agriculture and its differences from Masulipatnam. The second section takes the form of an analysis of the economic profile of Pulicat, political patronage to the port after the fall of Vijayanagara is covered in the third section and finally, the last section looks at the impact of warfare and political instability in and around Pulicat.

2.1 Ecology

As noted earlier the Coromandel Coast was inhospitable for shipping in the sense that natural harbours were rare and its natural characteristics ensured some degree of parity between the many ports along this seaboard; since natural harbours were rare on the Coromandel Coast, the physical site of a port did not give it any special advantage over any other.[1] A port city depended on several factors, but physical factors, mainly the site, played an important role shaping a port's location and communication. A port situated in a natural harbour had the advantage that it could offer improved anchorage. Silting at the mouth of the port could create severe problems for its site, as could changes to the courses of rivers. The latter could lead to increasing difficulties in loading and offloading cargo. Most Coromandel ports of the seventeenth century were located upstream and could only be reached by small vessels – Pulicat was not an exception to this rule, however, and its fluctuating career saw it develop from a little village to a premier port, relegate to a hamlet and again develop into a considerable port. In addition to physical factors, the extension or withdrawal of political patronage could make or break ports.

Named for the lake (actually a lagoon) to its north, Pulicat (Palaverkadu/Pazhaverkadu) sits squarely in at the centre of the Coromandel Coast.[2] Central Coromandel had several ports that were close neighbours. San Thomé, for example, lay just south of Pulicat. A seventeenth–century VOC sailing manual had the following instructions for their captains trying to navigate the waters near central Coromandel:

> If a vessel sails along the Coromandel Coast from the south to the north, it should sail north–north–east from San Thomé and then turn north–north–west towards Pulicat, where the riffs stretch from the north–east and north to the south–west and had a

[1] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 7–8.
[2] Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*: 93–94.

length of about one and a half miles to the south along the shore. From the mouth of the river, the port city of Pulicat lay about three miles upstream.[3]

Familiarity with the water depths and riffs around the port was essential for the pilots. During the monsoon season the city of Pulicat resembled an island since the lands around would be flooded.[4] Jean Deloche argues that Pulicat had an advantage over other central Coromandel ports in terms of navigation because the lagoon served as a secure mooring for ships during the north–east monsoon (October to December).[5] As was the case at many other Coromandel ports, goods would be ferried from ocean-going vessels to the port city on small coastal crafts.

The Coromandel Coast is dotted with far wider coastal plains than the western coast of India. They were formed at least in part by the great deltas of the rivers Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri. As noted in the previous chapter, Spate and Learmonth point out that a belt of anomalous rainfall greets the Coromandel Coast to the south of the bend of the Krishna where most rain showers are concentrated during the months from October to December, when the monsoon is in retreat. They add that since the orientation of the coast is sub–parallel to the track of rain–bearing depressions, rainfall figures are low here. Such an uneven distribution of rainfall affects agriculture. Rice cultivation, supported by irrigation, dominates the agrarian landscape of most parts of modern–day Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, but millets are important in Srikakulam while Nellore, at the southern border of Andhra Pradesh, is a zone of transition where the principal crop is jowar, followed by rice. A portion of the Eastern Ghats run in parallel in a crescent–like shape along the littoral from the bend of the Krishna to Nellore, up to Cuddapah where the river Penner cuts across the hills and flows on to meet the sea to the east of Nellore. To the south of Cuddapah the forest cover extends to Tirupati and Renigunta, near the Swarnamukhi River. The generally arid landscape is broken by groves of mangoes around the tanks. The Penner and its tributaries including Chitravati and Papati originate not in the Western Ghats but in the Mysore plateau. As a result, in the heat of August they are no more than beds of quartzite boulders, shingle or even sand.[6]

Upstream along the Penner, westwards from Cuddapah, we find the diamond mines of Gandikota, Bellary and then the former capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, present–day Hampi. Southwards from this riverine tract we reach first Tirupati and then Chandragiri, which became the seat of the shrunken Vijayanagara Empire in the late sixteenth century. Travelling east from Tirupati we would reach eventually the port city of Pulicat, located in a lagoon off the Coromandel Coast where the Araniyar meets the sea. To the west of Pulicat along this

[3] NA VOC 5029, Description of the coastline from Trincomalee in Ceylon along the Coromandel Coast till Bengal, along with sailing instructions: f. 6r.
[4] Breet and Barend–van Haeften, *De Oost–Indische voyagie van Wouter Schouten*: 272.
[5] Deloche, *Transport and Communication in India*, *Water Transport*: 101.
[6] Spate and Learmonth, *India and Pakistan*: 723–725, 728, 738.

river are the Palem Range and the Peria Puliyur forest. The landscape between Pulicat and Ponneri, a textile weaving village on the Araniyar, is dominated by reddish soil.[7]

As in northern Coromandel, tank irrigation was one of the primary features of the agricultural landscape around Pulicat. This was due to the rhythm of the monsoon: two–thirds of the annual rainfall along this coastal strip from north of Madras to Cuddalore is concentrated in three or four months and the rivers contain hardly any water for nine months of the year, and Spate and Learmonth argue that tank irrigation is crucial to extending the growing season. From March to May the parched conditions bring agrarian work to a standstill while the villages prepare themselves for action after the little rainfall of June, when a secondary paddy crop is sown along with dry crops such as ragi, seasamum, groundnuts and pulses. These are harvested in September and October when the rains increase, and then the main paddy crop is planted for harvesting in mid–January. Whether another crop can be grown after January depends mainly on tank irrigation.[8] Despite these complex conditions, there was reportedly an abundance of rice grown in the region.

Drawing upon the evidence provided by a sixteenth–century travelogue by the Italian traveller Ludovico Varthema, S. Jeyaseela Stephen argues the eastern parts of Pulicat produced plenty of paddy and adds that multiple varieties of it were cultivated in the Coromandel region.[9] Tank irrigation was used to expand agriculture in Kanchipuram where a lot of rice was produced.[10] Varthema was struck by Pulicat's flourishing trade, and writes, 'This country is most abundant in everything which is produced in India, but no grain grows there. They have rice here in great abundance.'[11] Varthema's observation reflects the early sixteenth–century opulence of Pulicat during the heyday of the Vijayanagara Empire, but also hints at the features of agricultural production in the region: the profusion of rice contrasts with the scarceness of grain. What Varthema precisely means by grains is hardly clear. But as we saw earlier in this section the jowar and millet zone ends around Nellore which, as noted in the previous chapter, was a somewhat arid zone that produced good quality oxen. In the Tamil country, rice was the staple crop. The scarceness of grains can perhaps be explained in terms of the natural conditions around Pulicat. After all, the port was located by a lake just inland from the Coromandel Coast, a low–lying region prone to inundation. Such conditions could not support cultivation of any grains which do not require as much water as paddy does.

---

[7] This observation stems from the author's trip to the region in 2015.
[8] Spate and Learmonth, *India and Pakistan*: 743–744.
[9] S. Jeyaseela Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland: Economy, Society and Political System (A.D. 1500–1600)* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1997): 51–52.
[10] James Heitzman, 'Secondary Cities and Spatial templates in South India, 1300–1800' in: *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1400–1800,* ed. Kenneth R. Hall (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008): 310.
[11] John Winter Jones transl., *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India, and Ethiopia* (London: Hakluyt society, 1863): 195.

A delicate balance existed between supply of and demand for rice in the central Coromandel region, where Pulicat was located. Chingleput, Kanchipuram and Madurantakam were major producers of rice while a vast demand for the staple was created by the large population of manufacturing villages and towns, administrative and pilgrimage centres in the interior. When rainfall was good, harvests were good and the rice–producing regions could export their crop. When rainfall failed they had to import rice. The dependable monsoon regime along this long coastline ensured that there was never a total crop failure along the coast and normal harvests in one part always compensated for poor ones in others. Despite their increasing consumption of rice in the second half of the seventeenth century, ports such as Pulicat, Madras and Pondicherry were mostly supplied from the hinterland. Arasaratnam adds that the central Coromandel region embracing the hinterland of Pulicat, Madras, San Thomé, Sadraspatnam and Devanampatnam entered into rice deficit in the eighteenth century in the aftermath of the Mughal wars and were unable to supply ports and towns. Eventually the central Coromandel coastal areas and even inland districts came to be supplied with rice imports by sea from the north and the south.[12] Around the late seventeenth century the Dutch in Pulicat possessed some fields where the *nely* rice variety was grown.[13]

There were few obstacles to communications on the plateau towards the Bay of Bengal or on the coastal plain. Between the river Krishna and Tamil country land communication found its way on the coastal track and inland roads.[14] On a journey in 1663 from Pulicat to their factories in Tegenapatnam and Sadraspatnam, two VOC officials named Pieter de Lange and Francois Thivert followed trails along the coast since the plains had been flooded and inland ways were unsuitable for travelling.[15] The capital of the Vijayanagara Empire was linked not only to ports on the Arabian Sea but also to those on the Bay of Bengal, including Pulicat. Routes ran from Pulicat to Kanyakumari and intersected at points such as Srirangam, Tiruchchirapalli and Madurai. Jean Deloche points out that compared to northern India transit ways in the southern peninsula were of a more uncertain nature. To substantiate this, he points out how the itineraries of travellers who visited South India vary, reflecting above all an urban instability caused by wars. Porters carried goods either by placing them on their heads or by carrying them in two baskets suspended on either extremity of a pole borne on the shoulders, known as *kavadi* in the south. During wars *banjaras* supplied staples such as grains, salt and sugar to armies and were highly capable of conveying goods from zones of production to those of consumption, e.g. salt from the coast to the interior from where they returned with grains. Palanquin–bearers and pack animals were used by humans for travelling

[12] Sinnappah Arasaratnam, 'The Rice Trade in Eastern India 1650–1740' *Modern Asian Studies* 22, 3 (1988): 533, 539, 540, 542.
[13] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 105.
[14] Jean Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India*, *Land Transport*: 74.
[15] NA Inventory number 1.01.50 Stadhouderlijke Secretarie 1607, Report made by Pieter de Lange and Francois Thivert to Laurens Pit, the governor of Coromandel, regarding their return from a visit to Tegenapatnam and Sadraspatnam in 1663: f. 1r.

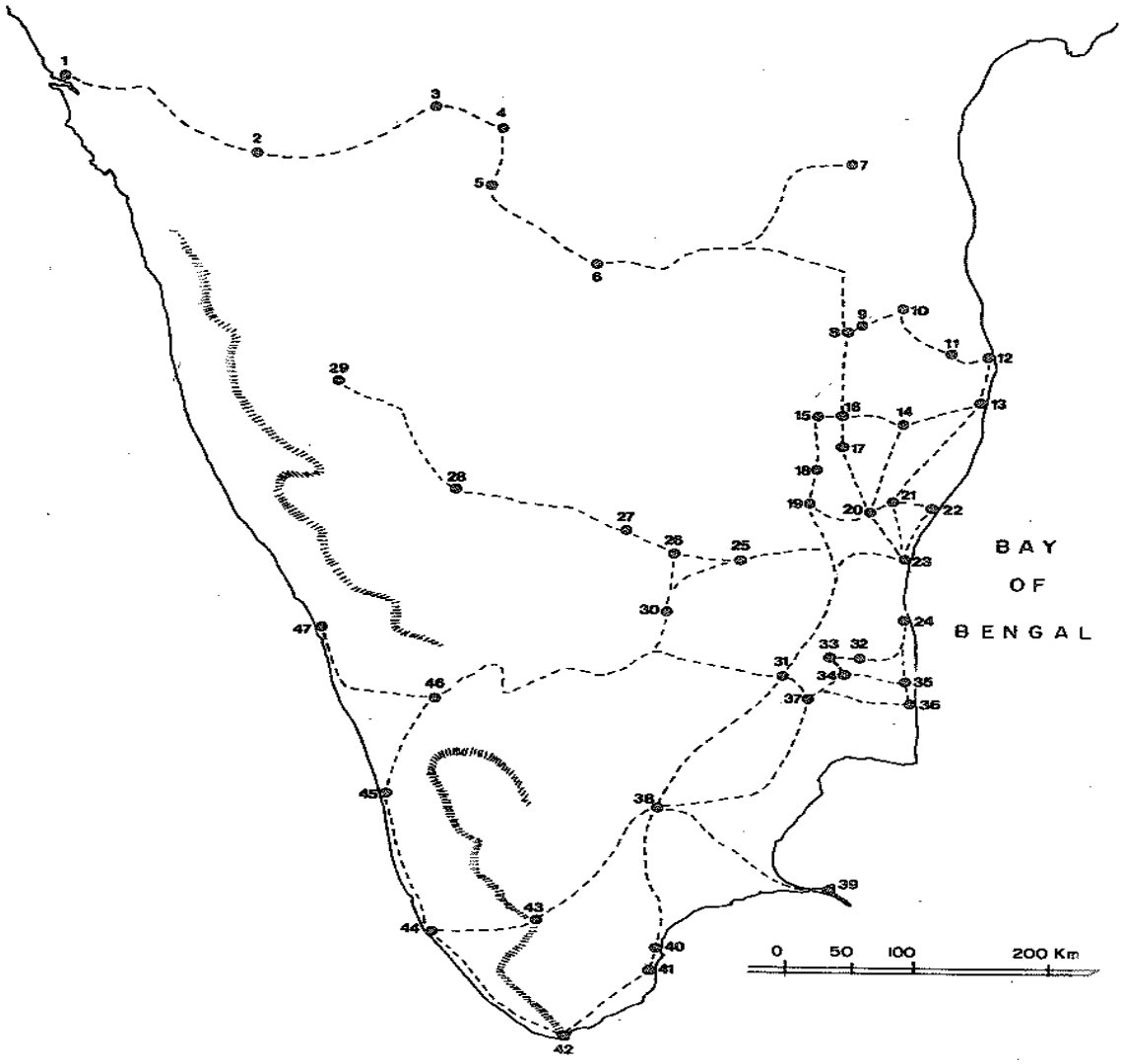
in the south and they do not seem to have used carts. Though carts existed in the plains of South India, they played a very minor role in long-distance transport.[16]

While discussing the port–hinterland complexes of Pulicat and Nagapatnam we must remember, in general, the rivers of South India which flowed across the Coromandel Coast into the Bay of Bengal did not support navigation upstream except for a few kilometres from the sea ports of Coromandel. As a result, inland transport on the Coromandel Coast had to depend almost entirely on pack animals and human porters.[17]

Culling evidence from sources such as inscriptions, literary works, Portuguese records and travellers' accounts Jeyaseela Stephen provides us with a map and description of the overland routes of sixteenth–century Coromandel which connected the major ports and towns.

[16] Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India*, *Land Transport*: 62–63, 75, 80, 204, 205–207, 249, 261.
[17] Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*: 12.

Map 2.1: Overland routes of South India 1500–1600[18]



Key

1. Goa
2. Bankapur
3. Vijayanagara
4. Bellary
5. Rayadurga

[18] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: map of overland routes of South India reproduced from page 96, 97–98 for description, 230 for keys.

6. Penugonda
7. Udayagiri
8. Chandragiri
9. Tirupati
10. Sri Kalakhasti
11. Tiruvallur
12. Pulicat
13. San Thomé
14. Kanchipuram
15. Vellore
16. Arcot
17. Arani
18. Polur
19. Tiruvannamalai
20. Gingee
21. Tindivanam
22. Marakkanam
23. Kunimedu
24. Villiyanoor
25. Attur
26. Salem
27. Kaveripuram
28. Mysore
29. Beluru
30. Namakkal
31. Srirangam
32. Chidambaram
33. Bhuvanagiri
34. Kumbakonam
35. Tiruvidaimarudur
36. Nagapattinam
37. Tanjore
38. Madurai
39. Rameswaram
40. Tuticorin
41. Punnaikayal
42. Cape Comorin
43. Aryankavu
44. Quilon
45. Cochin
46. Palghat
47. Calicut

One route ran from Pulicat via Tirupati and Chandragiri to Vijayanagara where it met the highway to Goa on the western coast. Another connected Pulicat to San Thomé (and Madras once the English established Fort St. George in the seventeenth century) and then turned west to Kanchipuram, Vellore, Arcot, Tiruvannamalai, Gingee and Kunimedu. The route to Tiruvannamalai extended further south to Srirangam where an eastern road took travellers to Nagapatnam. From Srirangam the road continued further south to Tuticorin via Madurai. The road running east from Mysore met this highway south of Tiruvannamalai. As noted in the previous chapter, religious establishments acted as stabilizing nodes in the networks of routes. Despite the shifting nature of transit ways in the south, as suggested by Deloche, the temple towns of Tirupati, Kanchipuram, Tiruvannamalai and Madurai were rather durable. Most of the highways running from west to east or north to south, cut across temple towns: Pulicat to Chandragiri and Vijayanagara via Tirupati; Pulicat to Gingee via Kanchipuram; and Mysore to Pulicat via Tiruvannamalai and Kanchipuram. This last region of Kanchipuram was also a major producer of rice and the port city of Pulicat possibly drew some of its supplies from here. These temple towns gave the local economy a shot in the arm by drawing large number of people as inhabitants, labourers, pilgrims and acting as currency exchange centres. It is unsurprising, then, that transit routes passed with these towns.

2.2 The economy

Pulicat: Origins and development

Although the earliest history of Pulicat, or Pazhaverkadu as it is known locally, is sketchy, we do know that it emerged during the reign of Devaraya II (1422–1446) and that the governor of this region Anandaraya developed it into a major port and gave it its name Anandarayapattinam. Prone, as the port was, to being submerged under seawater Pulicat also came to be known as *Pralaya Kaveri* because when inundated the area resembled the flooded river Kaveri. Such a dual nomenclature was typical of port cities of fifteenth and sixteenth–century Coromandel. Other examples include Sadraspattanam or Rajanarayanapattinam, Marakkanam or Eyirpattinam, Cuddalore or Nissarikammalapattinam, Porto Novo or Krishnapattinam and Tranquebar or Kulasekarapattinam. The suffix *–pattinam* was usually added to the name of a coastal village once it had been transformed into a centre for maritime trade,[19] and their names also tend to reflect a close association with those political figures who played a crucial role in the development of such ports. In fact, this trend of political patronage to port cities continued well into the seventeenth century when the patronage of the *nayaka* rulers combined with the investments of the European trading companies. The Dutch, the English and the French sought consent from the nayakas to keep trading from central and southern Coromandel.

European forts and munitions also offered a certain degree of security and protection that will have been attractive to the merchants of Coromandel, Stephen demonstrates. The

[19] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: 107, 109.

suffix –*kottai* was usually added to the name of a fortified town such as Adhmankottai. The fact that a Kamaiyappa nayaka revived an old market at Adhmankottai and levied taxes on merchants who traded there demonstrates that marketing functions were being combined with military functions. Merchants did also trade in open, unfortified town, however.[20] All the major European port cities of central and southern Coromandel in the seventeenth century were fortified. They include Pulicat (Dutch), Madras (English) and Pondicherry (French). Daniel Havart argues that the VOC headquarters in Pulicat, in the middle of the Coromandel Coast, was established to supervise and regulate the affairs of the company's managers in the northern and southern parts. He stresses the regulatory and political character of Pulicat rather than its export trade,[21] but there was more to Pulicat than this alone, as we will see later.

At its height (fifteenth century and first half of the sixteenth century), the Vijayanagara Empire in South India connected the arid zone of the Mysore plateau with the fertile strips of the Konkan and Coromandel coasts, and Dabhol in western India was a crucial node for Vijayanagara rulers wanting to import horses. By the sixteenth century Pulicat on the eastern seaboard had also become another important port for them. Its rise was closely linked with the fortunes of the Vijayanagara Empire, and its meteoric rise was a spectacular phenomenon commented upon by contemporary observers. Ravi Palat points out that Ma Huan's 1433 survey of the Indian Ocean did not mention Pulicat. At this juncture, it was probably a mere fishing village (Pulicat's early phase coinciding with the rule of Devaraya II, as we have noted). Yet by the early sixteenth century Pulicat had become an important export port: Duarte Barbosa visited Pulicat around 1508 and refers to the export of printed cotton cloth from there to Malacca, Pegu, Sumatra, Gujarat and Malabar.[22]

Behind this efflorescence was a multi–layered process of expansion that had merged the agrarian and pastoral worlds to create new infrastructures for appropriating the agrarian surplus; it encouraged the growth of the textile industry and promoted the maritime trade of Coromandel. Beginning from the late fifteenth century, the Vijayanagara rulers appointed *nayakas* (military leaders) who established control over the agrarian resources in their respective localities, settled the forest lands and encouraged the formation of new settlements of weavers.[23] The role played by the *nayakas* has resemblances with that of the *havaldars*, the portfolio–capitalists of Masulipatnam who traded salt produced near the port with northern and central India and imported commodities from there such as wheat, barley, opium, dates and tamarind. They used their politico-economic clout to combine the economic

[20] Stephen, *The Coromandel coast and its Hinterland*: 104–105.
[21] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 105–106.
[22] Ravi Palat, *The Making of an Indian Ocean World–Economy, 1250–1650: Princes, Paddy fields, and Bazaars* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015): 164, 166.
[23] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: 51, 73.

production of ecologically distinct regions. Political patronage was also manifest in the dual nomenclature of ports.

The Vijayanagara Empire successfully connected what Susan Bayly describes as the two contrasting natural environments of South India: the 'wet south' with its fertile river valleys and deltas in the Tamil country and the lush maritime strip of the Malabar Coast which practiced intensive rice cultivation; and its counterpart the 'dry south', the unsettled world to which the settled agrarian world of townspeople and farmers was linked. But there was always great tension between the two. From the middle of the fourteenth century the people from the forest 'fringes' pushed more and more into the wet 'core'. The Tamil country witnessed a great influx of warriors and peasant colonists. Known as *vadugas* (northerners), these mostly Telugu speakers from the southern reaches of the Deccan transformed the political organization of South India and enhanced the prestige of the dry–zone warrior groups. By the early seventeenth century, these *nayaka* newcomers had consolidated dynamic states around Madurai, Trichy (Trichinopoly/Tiruchchirapalli), Tanjore (Tanjavur) and other places. They established more contact between the settled people of the rice belt and the martial predators of the dry plains. Cash revenue was required to finance their armies and this could only be achieved through a process of rapid commercialization. The *nayakas* and their agents recruited merchants, money–lenders and literate record–keepers to their domains and built up the region's ancient textile trade by bringing in weavers and other artisans. The *nayakas* expanded production sites and founded new specialist centres populated by *kaikkolars* (groups of weavers), other local specialists and migrants, including the Kannada and Telugu–speaking *devangas* and *seniyans* and the Gujarati–speaking Patnulkaran silk weavers from Saurashtra.[24] Other incentives to weavers and artisans included social privileges and exemptions from taxes on commodities sold in local markets (*pettais*) and fairs (*sandais*), and on articles sold in temples.[25]

All these politico–economic and ecological processes, taken together, helped in shaping the transformation of Pulicat from a fishing village to a premier Indian Ocean port in the sixteenth century. Before we continue our story of Pulicat's vicissitudes in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, let us prelude it with a discussion of the industry that provided the bulk of its exports: textiles.

Textile production in the Tamil country

Many regions in the south had been important textile manufacturing and trading centres since the first millennium AD and several major ones were to be found in Tamil country, argues Vijaya Ramaswamy. Three factors governed the location of these textile manufacturing centres: soil quality, generally rich in black soil or ferruginous loam soil;

[24] Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society*, 1700–1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 19, 21, 22–23.

[25] Kanaklatha Mukund, *The Trading World of the Tamil Merchant: Evolution of Merchant Capitalism in the Coromandel* (Chennai: Orient Longman, 1999): 43–44.

availability of dyes, mainly vegetable dyes and mordants (dye fixers); and proximity to the ports because land transport was slow and expensive. Among the cotton textiles mainly *vichitra* (variegated cloth) and *sella* were woven here. *Vichitra* and *sella* are the indigenous names for respectively, the chintz or pintadoes and *muslins* or *salempores* of the European records. Muslin was a major of export item in the seventeenth century. Professional tailors and weavers were attached to temples, and the weavers were settled in the *tirumadaivilagam* (temple square or 'temple town'), and they had their own streets in every town. Usually the tax levied on weavers who resided within the precincts of a temple went to the state unless it had been specifically endowed to the temple. The weavers were assigned a share of the temple paddy. Centres catering for the inland market were linked to the *peruvali* (highways), while those that provided for the export trade were connected to the nearest port.[26] In this context, we may remember the VOC survey of textile villages in the Godavari delta mentioned in Chapter 1. It distinguished between textile production for export and for domestic consumption. Here 'domestic' may be taken to denote either the producing zone itself or inland trade.

In her discussions of broad trends of textile production, Ramaswamy contends that export trade was far larger in volume and importance than inland trade. While it cannot be refuted that the export sector was more attractive, it is important to remember that all the primary sources produced in European languages, whether company or non–company in origin, focused more on the export sector of the textile industry, so references to inland trade are less frequent in these records. Ramaswamy points out the popularity of textiles from Pulicat in Gujarat and Malabar in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Textiles from Pulicat fetched good returns through South–East Asian markets in Malacca (printed cotton clothes and chintz), Pegu and Sumatra (chintz). Gujarat clothing and Mecca velvets were imported into Pulicat and then re–exported. Textiles were shipped from San Thomé to Aceh, Priamam in Sumatra, Bantam in Java and Malacca. Though the painted clothing of Masulipatnam were artistically superior, the patterned clothes of San Thomé and Pulicat were in greater demand in the lands of the Malay Archipelago. Known as *Tape* or *Tape-sarssas*, Pulicat chintz sold in these lands required little or almost no stitching since the fabric was worn as a sarong–like (skirt) item. Weavers who produced for the export market mainly resided in the temples till the seventeenth century when they moved to company settlements on the coast.[27]

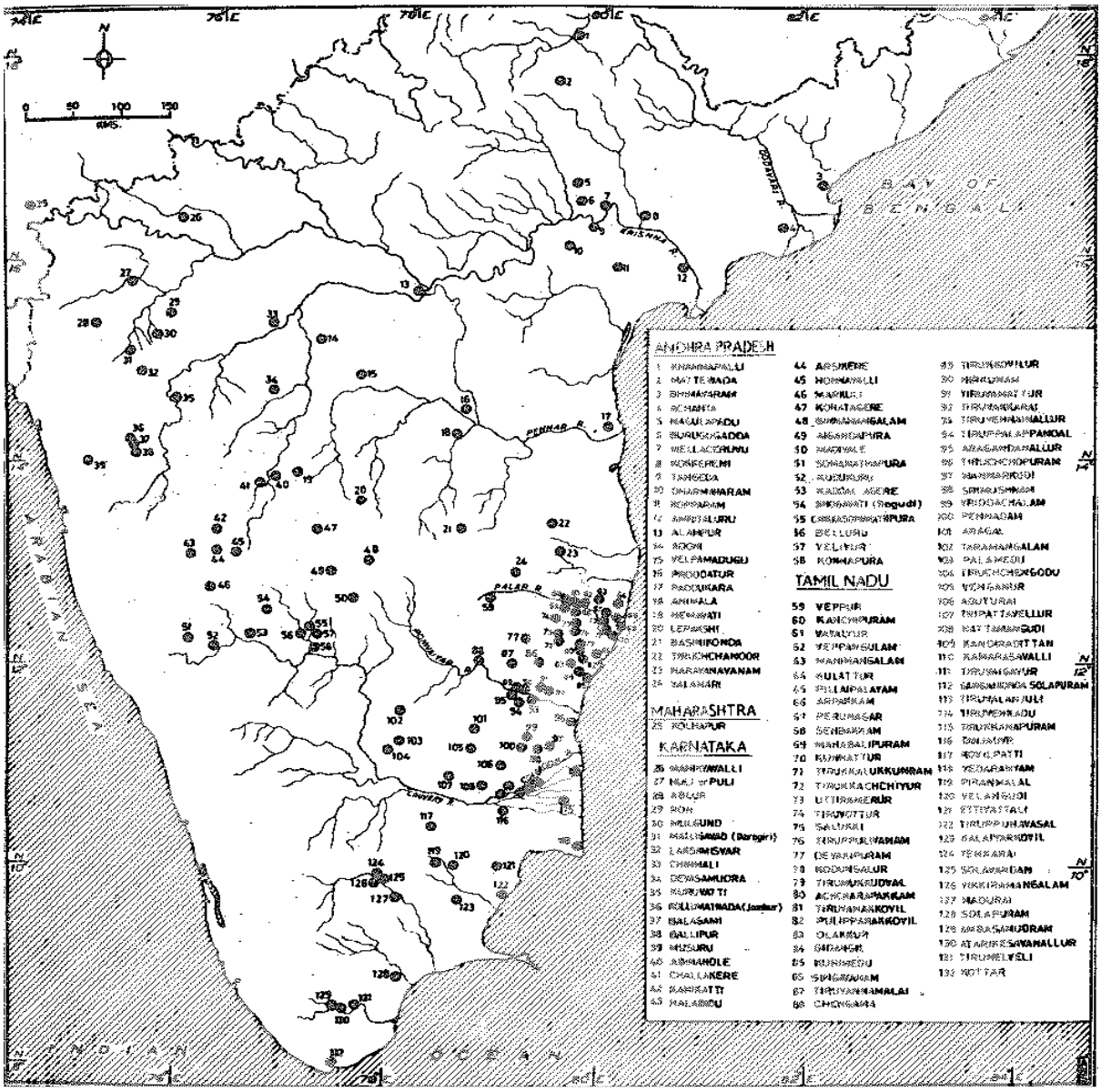
In the early sixteenth century, Pulicat thronged with great traders, Hindus and Muslims alike, writes Duarte Barbosa. He also demonstrates that the connection with the imperial capital in Vijayanagara played a substantial part in the fortunes of the port city, providing as evidence the merchants who travelled overland from different parts of

[26] Vijaya Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985): 6, 16–17, 25, 32–33, 64–65.
[27] Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers*: 6–13 (maps and charts on 7,8,9,10,11 and 12) 28, 69–71, 121.

Vijayanagara to transact business in Pulicat, where goods from Pegu such as rubies, spinels and musk had a good market. Moreover, he mentions that printed cotton cloth which had a great demand overseas was produced in the city. They earned good profits in Malacca, Pegu, Sumatra, Gujarat and Malabar.[28] This is striking because Ramaswamy presents to us a map of weaving centres of medieval south India (1000–1500), prepared with the help of epigraphic evidence, which does not locate the textile industry in Pulicat itself. The valleys of Godavari and Krishna show fewer centres of production. Of course, Qutb Shahi Masulipatnam was yet to become prominent. We find the industry to be densely concentrated along the river valleys of Palar, Ponnaiyar and Kaveri. The river valley of Pennar has a rather light concentration, to whose south lay the port city of Pulicat. Its period of dominance as the premier port of Coromandel started, as we have noted, only in the late–fifteenth century, and that is probably why the map does not show a concentration of textile industry around Pulicat.

[28] Mansel Longworth Dames transl., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and of Their Inhabitants, Written by Duarte Barbosa and Completed About the Year 1518 A.D.,* vol. II (London: Hakluyt Society, 1921): 130–132.

Map 2.2: Weaving centres in South India 1000–1500 based on epigraphic evidence[29]



The concentration of weaving centres along the coast allowed for easy access to transport to exporting ports. Ramaswamy does not speak of production within the city and it is possible that Barbosa mistook the availability of textiles in Pulicat for production in the port city itself.

[29] Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers*: I draw these inferences from the map on page 7 and the discussion of it in the book.

Apart from the production in these villages close to the coast, the temple towns of Tirupati and Kanchipuram also produced textiles.

Merchants acquired control over production by supplying raw materials and cash advances. They also ensured that the clothing produced met the desired requirements.[30] The growth of the textile industry was accompanied by occupational specialization in corollary activities. Vijayanagara Empire inscriptions provide the names of trade groups who had to pay taxes to the local and imperial authorities: dyers, fabric bleachers, tailors and cotton carders (carders combed wool for use as textiles).[31]

To an extent Pulicat's story mirrors that of Masulipatnam. Both these cities developed from coastal villages into thriving international ports dependent upon connection with and patronage from an inland territorial centre that offered a favourable environment for maritime commerce and put into place the infrastructure necessary for that. But there are differences, too, because while Masulipatnam turned into a regional entrepot, after the fall of Vijayanagara Pulicat became just a local centre. Pulicat's fluctuating fortunes hint at what fate awaited maritime outlets when their inland patrons grew weak and offers clues on the developments discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. In 1565, the Vijayanagara emperor was defeated in a battle at Talikota by an alliance of the sultanates from northern Deccan, including Bijapur and Golconda. Historians generally agree that this event was a watershed in the fortunes of Pulicat, and conclude that this port went into a downward spiral after the war as the Vijayanagara Empire began to decline. They differ, however, on the exact causes that led to this decline. The causes centred on the shifting of trade with Malacca and the decline of Vijayanagara. The third section of this chapter discusses these causes and then puts forward evidence that shows the survival of the port in the seventeenth century, when a new patron arrived on the scene – the VOC.

2.3 Decline and survival: The political economy of Pulicat beyond Vijayanagara

Causes of decline

As we have noted, Pulicat's rise in the fifteenth century was closely linked to the consolidation of Vijayanagara rule in central Coromandel. Sanjay Subrahmanyam distinguishes three major textile–producing areas in Coromandel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the central Coromandel strip, where Pulicat was located and which produced textiles for the Burmese markets and the Indonesian archipelago; the region extending from Kunjimedu to the southern extremity of the Kaveri delta; and the Krishna–Godavari delta, which was of relatively minor importance in the early sixteenth century. Textiles from all these regions were brought to Pulicat and shipped overseas. By the early sixteenth century, Pulicat's main

[30] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: 77.

[31] Carla M. Sinopoli, *The Political Economy of Craft Production: Crafting Empire in South India*, c. 1350–1650 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 82.

trading partners were Mergui and other ports of the Irrawady delta in southern Burma, Pegu and lower Burma, especially the ports of Martaban and Cosmin, and most importantly, Malacca in South–East Asia.[32]

In the early sixteenth century, Portuguese settlers in Coromandel agglomerated around Pulicat. However, from the 1530s two nuclei of Portuguese settlements developed: Pulicat–San Thomé in central Coromandel and Nagapatnam in southern Coromandel. Pulicat–San Thomé was effectively one complex as Portuguese merchants based in San Thomé traded from Pulicat, thanks to the port's good anchorage. Until 1550, Portuguese – whether the *Estado da India* (State of India) or private Portuguese – fitted themselves without much difficulty into the pre–existing commercial system of the Indian Ocean. The issuance of cartazes was nothing more than a minor tax, rather than being restrictive for commerce. Up to the middle of the sixteenth century, Coromandel's Hindu and Muslim merchants had an undisturbed commerce with Malacca. The Portuguese factors in Malacca declared in the 1550s that annually about five or six ships arrived there from Coromandel, i.e., Pulicat. At the close of the 1540s and the beginning of the 1550s, the Estado da India decided to monopolise the Coromandel–Malacca line of shipping by preventing independent Asian merchants from operating on it. The system of concessions that was developed as a part of this policy allowed a concessionary the exclusive right to trade over a particular commercial route, specified with respect both to port of departure and that of destination. In the case of Coromandel–Malacca line, this system became highly restrictive and by the late 1560s it had replaced the four or five ships which annually used to ply between Coromandel and Malacca. Now merchants who wanted to trade on this route were compelled to freight space on board the vessel of the concessionary. This development, Sanjay Subrahmanyam argues, along with the dismantling of Vijayanagara as a consumption centre (after 1565) led to a substantial decline in the internal trade to Pulicat (and external trade from it) and the port experienced a downturn from the 1560s. Drawing on evidence from Linschoten's travelogue, Subrahmanyam assigns to Pulicat a very rapid decline: by the end of the sixteenth century it was serving as a subsidiary supplier of textiles to more important ports, such as Masulipatnam.[33] Pulicat had now effectively become what Masulipatnam, in its early days, had been.

Ravi Palat argues that the political disintegration accompanying the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire acted as the more immediate cause behind the decline of Pulicat. The process, Palat states, can be traced back to the political crises that followed Achyutadevaraya's usurpation of the Vijayanagara throne in 1529. As decades of internecine warfare weakened the defences of the empire, the country was left open to predatory raids by Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi troops. The crisis of empire intensified during the thirty years that followed after Rama Raya had incarcerated Achyutadevaraya in 1535. Circuits of exchange were fragmented and there was a dramatic fall in religious endowments, especially

[32] Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*: 94–96.
[33] Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*: 105–106, 108, 110, 112–113.

after 1547 when the inscriptional record at Tirupati temple does not speak of a single grant by members of mercantile communities. This process was only exacerbated by the destruction of the capital after the Battle of Talikota (1565). Vijayanagara's decline meant that the hinterland Pulicat catered to had considerably shrunk, with the disappearance of courtly elites the demand for luxury goods too fell and inland routes were no longer safe. These turned Pulicat again into a fishing village. However, the decline of Pulicat did not mean that the connections of Coromandel's ports with South–East Asia disappeared. The decrease in flow of trade on the Pulicat–Malacca route coincided with the growth of the Masulipatnam–Aceh network.[34] In other words, trade to South–East Asia had found a new route.

Jeyaseela Stephen argues that the fall of Vijayanagara was only a secondary factor in the decline of Pulicat in the sixteenth century, and that the primary factor was the shift of Coromandel–Malacca trade from Pulicat to San Thomé in the 1540s. The Portuguese started to trade with Malacca directly from San Thomé and Pulicat was relegated to the status of mid-point on the Malacca–Goa route. This suited the Portuguese but not the indigenous merchants. It was common practice for merchants on the Coromandel–Malacca trade route to pay for the freight in advance and make their return voyage in the same ship. Facilities that served this practice were more readily available at San Thomé and merchants preferred to settle there to trade with Malacca, abandoning Pulicat.[35]

As we had noted in the introduction, the success of port cities in Coromandel primarily depended on two factors: one, their linkages with patron capital cities in the hinterland and two, their ability to export goods to markets across the Indian Ocean. The support of Vijayanagara rulers and governors, and presence of merchants trading with Mergui, Pegu and Malacca were major features of Pulicat's economy. With this in mind and the evidence provided in secondary literature, let us try to understand what had caused the decline of Pulicat. Firstly, while the political disturbances that increasingly gripped Vijayanagara from the 1530s might have indeed resulted in a loss of public order, they did not reflect on the sailings from Pulicat to Malacca. Evidence from Portuguese records, provided by Subrahmanyam, points out that four or five ships still used to arrive annually in Malacca from Coromandel in the 1550s. In the light of this it is difficult to see how a diminution in religious endowments made by mercantile communities tells us of their decline, at least until 1550. Secondly, though both Subrahmanyam and Stephen stress the role of the Portuguese policy in explaining Pulicat's decline, they differ in the conclusions drawn: for Subrahmanyam it restricted the trade from Pulicat to Malacca and contributed to ruination of the port, and for Stephen the merchants moved to neighbouring San Thomé for better facitlites of freighting space on board vessels. But this does not explain how merchants who had been stifled by Portuguese restrictions to trade with Malacca from Pulicat found it convenient to operate

[34] Palat, *The Making of an Indian Ocean World–Economy*: 181–182.
[35] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: 144.

under similar conditions from the neighbouring port of San Thomé. Thirdly, as we will see in this chapter, in the early seventeenth century VOC sources spoke of San Thomé as mainly a Portuguese port with little presence of indigenous merchants who traded with South–East Asia. Thus, the real shift of indigenous shipping may have taken place, not to San Thomé, but to the Masulipatnam–Aceh line.

So, it seems the first real blow to Pulicat's position as an oceanic port came in the 1550s after the introduction of the concessionary system that restricted the operation of indigenous merchants trading with Malacca, a fact reflected in the decreasing number of ships that plied from Pulicat to Malacca in the 1560s. This would have meant a loss of eminence in terms of export markets of the Indian Ocean, but Pulicat still had an internal market and a consumption centre to cater to. The port was, as we have noted, a centre for jewel trade. In this respect the link with Pegu (dependent on export of textiles and import of gold and rubies) was more important and so was the second blow that struck Pulicat once the capital of Vijayanagara had been destroyed in and after 1565. While the first blow had resulted in a loss of Pulicat's major oceanic market, the second blow deprived the port of what could have been another line of survival in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, it was a succession of these phenomena – introduction of the concessionary system and the disintegration of Vijayanagara – that contributed to the decline of Pulicat by the late 1560s. The decline was so rapid that Jan Huyghen van Linshcoten did not consider Pulicat to be a port of renown in the Indian Ocean around 1583–1584, and he omitted the port from a list of important centres of maritime trade on the Coromandel Coast.[36]

Clearly trade from Pulicat went into sharp decline by the end of the sixteenth century. So, a question that naturally crops up is this: What happened to the textile industry which catered to overseas markets from Pulicat. As described in Chapter 1, while internal migration between villages and cities was a symptom of unstable political life in South Asia, it also facilitated the survival of industry and marketing of economic produce by creating new nodes, ensuring the resilience of the political economy. Pulicat will certainly have decreased in population as it reverted to a minor port, but was there a synchronous migration of weavers away from the surrounding villages, leading to the dismantling of the textile industry? Early Dutch surveys of the Coromandel Coast point to the contrary: if any migration of weavers did take place following the decline of Pulicat, it was not on a massive scale.

In the 1580s Linschoten identified three major places of textile trade in Coromandel: Nagapatnam, San Thomé and Masulipatnam.[37] Following their voyages to the Coromandel Coast in the early seventeenth–century, the VOC found Pulicat to be a very suitable place for

[36] H. Kern and H. Terpstra ed., Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, *Itinerario, voyage ofte schipvaert naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien 1579–1592*. Eerste Stuk (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955): 63–69; Pulicat is missing from Linschoten's description of the Coromandel Coast.
[37] Kern and Terpstra ed., *Itinerario*: 68.

buying cotton textiles. But they also anticipated the Portuguese, stationed in the neighbouring port of San Thomé, would create problems for Dutch trade. The VOC expected Pulicat would be an advantageous place because of the cheap prices at which textiles were available.[38] It might have been a small port at the point when the VOC sent their early voyages to the Coromandel Coast, but the textile industry around it had survived and found new outlets (San Thomé). During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth–centuries Pulicat had nothing close to the kind of security Masulipatnam possessed due to consolidation of authority by the sultans Golconda. So, apparently its politico–economic condition was different from northern Coromandel and this leads us on to a problem which we should try to tackle at different stages in this thesis – to look at the heterogeneity of and differences within the Coromandel Coast while analysing its economy and trade.

The VOC and Pulicat

The early years

When the Dutch arrived in Coromandel, the Aravidu king of Vijayanagara was based in Vellore. In 1610, Arent Maertszoon, acting on behalf of the VOC, entered into an agreement with the Aravidu king regarding Pulicat. The VOC was permitted to erect a fort at Pulicat to store munitions and other goods. In return, tolls of two per cent on goods that the Dutch offloaded and shipped from Pulicat were to be paid to the king. The contract also gives us a sense of how jurisdiction in the port and its environs was shared by the Dutch and the Aravidu ruler. For example, all weavers and painters who had been contracted to dye cloth for or supply textiles to the Dutch were obliged to do so. If they failed to do so, the Dutch factor in Pulicat had the power to arrest and imprison them. If a worker were to escape from Pulicat to the king or some other part of the region, the king was required by the terms of the agreement to hand this person over to the Dutch. The king also agreed not to prohibit anyone from trading with the VOC. Last but by no means least, the king agreed not to let any other European nation trade from Pulicat.[39]

But the Dutch were not yet so strong in Pulicat that they could resist a Portuguese attack that took place in 1612. In its aftermath, in 1612 another contract was signed with the Aravidu king, Venkatapati Raja of Vellore. This time the Dutch envoy was the director of Pulicat, Wemmer van Berchem. The agreement stipulated that the Dutch would complete the building of the fort in Pulicat, and that Venkatapati Raja promised to ensure that the Dutch men and merchandise captured by the Portuguese were returned. The Dutch were also permitted to wage war against the Portuguese in Pulicat, San Thomé and all other ports and

[38] H. Terpstra, *De Vestiging van de Nederlanders aan de cust van Coromandel* (Groningen: M. De Waard, 1911): 29, 121.

[39] J.E. Heeres ed., *Corpus–Diplomaticum Neerlando–Indicum Verzameling van Politieke contracten en verdere Verdragen door de Nederlanders in het oosten gelsoten, van Privilegiebrieven, aan het verleend, enz., Eerste Deel (1596–1650)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1907): agreement made by Arent Maertszoon with Venakatapati Raja, Aravidu king, dated 24.04.1610, 84–85.

places along the coast. The contract reveals another layer in the relationship between trade and politics in early seventeenth–century Coromandel: the king promised to have a *caul* or order lent to the Dutch from Jagga Raja, his subordinate official in the region, who would protect the Dutch against enemies, since Vellore was far away from Pulicat.[40] This attests to the weakness of central control over the region from Vellore. Support not only from the king, but also his subordinate officials based closer to Pulicat was important for the Dutch trade to thrive. Eventually, in 1616, Pulicat became the VOC headquarters of Coromandel, with authority over the other company factories in the region.

In the early seventeenth century the Aravidu king based in Vellore acted as an overlord or suzerain to the three nayaka kingdoms of Tamil Nadu: Gingee, Tanjore and Madurai. Proffering evidence from an account written by a VOC official in 1615, Velcheru Narayan Rao, David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam write that these nayaka states together paid an annual tribute of 1,200,000 pagodas to the Aravidu ruler in Vellore: the nayaka of Madurai paid 600,000 pagodas, the nayaka of Tanjore paid 400,000 pagodas and the nayaka of Gingee paid 200,000 pagodas. Contemporaneous accounts written by Jesuit priests also referred to this fiscal relationship between the three nayaka states of Tamil Nadu and the Aravidu ruler based in Vellore.[41]

Dutch expectations of finding textiles cheaply and easily in Pulicat adds weight to a point alluded to earlier: though Pulicat had been relegated to the status of a subsidiary supplier of textiles to Masulipatnam, the textile industry around it had not been ruined and could offer good returns on investment. One of the terms of the first treaty signed with the Aravidu king – his promise to see that weavers and painters meet their obligations to the Dutch – hints at instability in the regions surrounding Pulicat and at the innate buoyancy of the industry in the form of the weavers possibly willing to respond to other buyers if offered better terms.

Vijaya Ramaswamy argues in favour of unsettled conditions because of the mobility of the weavers in the seventeenth century, a phenomenon unheard of in the earlier centuries because weavers moved only during extreme distress (such as famines) or to protest against increased taxation. This argument is based on two types of evidence: inscriptions on temples across Tamil Nadu and correspondence of the European companies, especially the EIC. Majority of weavers probably no longer lived within the premises of temples because very few inscriptions on temples from the seventeenth century speak of weavers. Ramaswamy cites only two seventeenth–century inscriptions from the central Coromandel region, the hinterland Pulicat depended on, which point to weavers residing in temples. An inscription on the temple walls at Pallikondai in Vellore from 1632 tells us of grant of land and ritual

[40] Heeres ed., *Corpus Diplomaticum, Eerste Deel*: agreement made by Wember van Bergen with Venkatapati Raja dated 12.12.1612, 101–103.
[41] Rao, Shulman and Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance*: 105–107.

honours to *kaikkolar* weavers. Similarly, another inscription dated 1679 from Tiruppulisvara temple at Ponneri, Chingleput (Ponneri was a major supplier of cloth to the VOC in Pulicat, as we will find out) shows that *kaikkolar* weavers made a gift to the deity of the temple, Tiruppulisvara. Besides, unlike the earlier period, a few inscriptions from the early seventeenth century dedicated to weavers have been located in the middle of villages, rather than in temples: an inscription at a village in Chingleput speaks of *kaikkolar* weavers and another inscribed on a slab in the middle of a village tells of a charter given to the weavers of Kaliyapettai in Kanchipuram. In the seventeenth century the dwelling places of weavers who produced for the export market, Ramaswamy says, had begun to shift from temples to European settlements on the Coromandel Coast. For the region of central Coromandel, Ramaswamy provides evidence from EIC records in this regard. As early as 1622 the English factors near Pulicat wrote to their superiors that many weavers and painters (dyers) had offered to follow the English wherever they go. In another correspondence from Fort St. George (Madras), dated 1676, the EIC factors say that the Dutch have their own weavers and painters (dyers) on the coast and wonder why the EIC too should not do so. The reasons for Dutch success in attracting weavers were inducements like paddy at cheap rates, low customs and taxes, and higer wages.[42]

The point about the relatively recent increase in mobility of weavers in the seventeenth century indeed has credence because the early Dutch factors in Pulicat induced weavers and dyers from elsewhere to settle in the vicinity. This phenomenon should, however, be seen within the longue dureé of historical developments in this part of Coromandel: political patrons had always induced weavers to settle in their lands, and the VOC was nothing more than a new player on the scene, albeit one that threatened weavers with punitive measures if they violated contracts (and of course mobility of weavers through migration also ensured survival of the textile industry). So, whether more weavers took to cultivation in the slump years of the late sixteenth century or not is difficult to substantiate. However, we may safely assume not many weavers took to cultivation because, as we have noted, within two decades of the destruction of the Vijayanagara capital (1565) Jan Huyghen van Linschoten listed San Thomé as a major textile exporting centre of Coromandel. It is likely the Portuguese port acted as a magnet to keep weavers and dyers occupied in central Coromandel. Subrahmanyam points out that Pulicat had fallen to the status of a secondary port by the late sixteenth century, but the textiles woven around Pulicat had not lost their market in the Indian Ocean. South Asian merchants who traded around the Indian Ocean world were well–acquainted with the intricacies of markets. They knew what could be sold and where it could be sold. The intra–Asian trade, which supported the VOC in Asia, was based on precedents established by Portuguese and Asian merchants. The VOC learned from their example and came to the Coromandel Coast in search of its textiles.

---

[42] Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers*: 120–121.

An early seventeenth-century reference from the VOC archive substantiates the idea that while there was indeed relative instability, the textile industry was also thriving. Writing in 1615, Hans de Haze describes Pulicat and its Dutch lodge and mentions the various kinds of textiles and the process whereby they were procured. Pulicat, Hans de Haze pointed out, provided painted and woven cloth at lower prices than the VOC had encountered in Tierepopelier (Tirupapuliyur) for the Moluccas, Banda, Amboina and Java. The Dutch ordered cloth from merchants who would, in turn, make advance payments to weavers and dyers. Hans de Haze also added that Pulicat was the best place to procure goods for Java because the best dyers lived there. The textiles of the region were still in demand in South–East Asia and the same letter written by Hans de Haze also referred to plundering of the villages where clothes were produced. These included Ponneri, Camonamagalom (Karungali), Narambacca and Paliam, all of which lay within the jurisdiction of the Aravidus in Vellore and were close to San Thomé.[43] The establishment of the VOC in central Coromandel boosted the textile industry around the littoral. Terpstra refers to how Hans Marcelis had induced dyers and weavers skilled in the production of textiles for Java and Malaya to settle at Tirupapuliyur.[44] The populations of villages leased to the European companies (in this context the VOC) included both weavers and dyers.

Until the fifteenth century, it seems that the textile industry remained a part–time occupation for agriculturists. Ramaswamy cites evidence of a fifteenth–century poet's verses that say while men were ploughing the fields, women were busy spinning. Just like the shift in dwellings of weavers from temples to company settlements along the coast, the picture of weavers being part–time agriculturists too changed in the seventeenth century when weaving became a full–time occupation. This dissertation's survey of the weaving villages in the Godavari delta, presented in the Chapter 1, substantiates this: weaving as a full–time occupation was ubiquitous in seventeenth–century Coromandel (including Nagapatnam, as we will see in Chapter 3). The terms of the treaties signed between the VOC and the Aravidu king, presented earlier in this chapter, also allude to the fact that weavers and dyers were contracted to work full–time for the VOC (and other European companies). It remains to be seen to what extent this development can be linked to growing specialisation within the profession, as argued by Ramaswamy for the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Evidence for this can be found in taxes. Earlier references were made to dyers and tailors, but during the Vijayanagara period there are references to taxes on carders who formed a separate professional group.[45]

---

[43] NA VOC 1059, Considerations about the Coromandel Coast which concern the interests of the factories of the company: f. 63v.–f. 64v.
[44] Terpstra, *De Vestiging van de Nederlanders*: 141.
[45] Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers*: 67, 69.

Pulicat: A coastal centre in the Bay of Bengal

By the second half of the seventeenth century, VOC political patronage and investments in textile production in the region had begun to restore some commercial viability to the port of Pulicat, with the cloth merchants adapting their networks of production and marketing to Dutch demand in central Coromandel.

In the records of the day, when the Dutch discuss contracts, negotiations or troubles concerning the industry and commerce in Pulicat, the focus is on their own trade; theirs is the richest documentation for this region available to us from the early seventeenth century. Daily registers maintained at the Dutch lodge of Pulicat help us reconstruct some of the trade flowing through the port, and they point to its status as a centre for mainly coastal trade in the Bay of Bengal's oceanic network. The vessels sailing into and out of the port were now predominantly coastal rather than ocean–going crafts trading with Bengal and Orissa.

Regular coastal trade during the 1620s brought in provisions from Orissa. In keeping with the rhythms of the agricultural cycle these goods would arrive in Pulicat in January:[46] ships left from Bengal and Orissa after the winter harvest to reach the various central Coromandel ports in January and February. The trade in food grains was necessary to keep not only the Coromandel ports stocked with rice, but also the pepper growing regions of Malabar in South–western India.[47] Some ships plying trade within the Dutch sphere of operations would stop off at other places on the Coromandel Coast on their way from Pulicat to elsewhere; others sailed from Pulicat to Masulipatnam and then on to Batavia. In February 1624, for example, a Dutch ship offloaded in Pulicat a cargo of fine textiles, saltpetre and slaves (generally ultimately destined for Batavia) before sailing on to Tegenapatnam with a view to procuring more textiles and slaves before sailing to Ejara. This was a clear case of these local centres supplying textiles to markets abroad. The same trend continued in the next year, when a Dutch ship sailed to Tegenapatnam from Pulicat and returned with textiles and slaves.[48] It is possible that the slaves in the latter case was part of preparations for a voyage to Batavia. Another example of sailings between Pulicat and other places on the Coromandel Coast comes from the daily register kept at Pulicat from 1623 to 1625. It tells us how a ship sailed from Pulicat to Masulipatnam to load cargo for the Moluccas and then depart for Batavia.[49]

In the 1620s, ships en route to Masulipatnam from Siam, Tenasserim and Arakan would stop off at Pulicat.[50] During the 1630s, too, we find that Arakan figures as a destination

---

[46] NA VOC 1087, Daily register kept at Pulicat from 20.11.1623 to 28.11.1625: f. 181v., f. 198v.
[47] Palat, *The Making of an Indian Ocean World–Economy*: 165–166.
[48] NA VOC 1087 Daily register kept at Pulicat from 20.11.1623 to 28.11.1625: f. 186r., f. 198v., f. 196r.–f.196v. The rhythm of Dutch shipping in Coromandel has been discussed in the previous chapter.
[49] NA VOC 1087, Daily register kept at Pulicat from 20.11.1623 to 28.11.1625: f. 204v.
[50] NA VOC 1087, Daily register kept at Pulicat from 20.11.1623 to 28.11.1625: f. 187r.–f.187v.

in the trade across the Bay of Bengal. Exports to Arakan, where indigenous merchants also traded, included cloth and other merchandise. That Pulicat continued to supply textiles to Batavia is clear from the varied cargo of a Dutch ship that set sail there from Pulicat in October 1632.[51] In October 1645 another Dutch ship followed the same route with a cargo of 339 packs of various sorts of textiles.[52] While the entries in the daily registers tell us that Pulicat was by now only a relatively minor maritime centre in the Bay of Bengal, the Dutch investment in the economy of the region and their demand for mainly textiles and saltpetre would have acted as a fillip for the economy of central Coromandel. On the whole, Pulicat had primarily turned into a coastal port for the VOC in the Bay of Bengal in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Pulicat restores connections with its textile-producing hinterland

Daniel Havart, whose book on seventeenth–century Coromandel was cited in Chapter 1, saw Pulicat as a coastal administrative centre for the VOC rather than as a major port, and he argues that this was what the VOC intended it to be. Though both fine and raw textiles were collected here, oceanic commerce was not a priority for the VOC lodge, the author contends.[53] In this, Havart is only partially correct, because although Pulicat was not as big a port as Masulipatnam, served as the headquarters of the VOC in Coromandel for most of the seventeenth century and indeed mainly functioned as a Dutch relay station in the Indian Ocean, the patronage and protection provided by the VOC restored its connections with the textile–producing hinterland in central Coromandel and around Nellore along the borders of the southern Telugu country, as the following paragraphs will demonstrate.

From their early days on the Coromandel Coast, all European companies depended on local merchants for access to rulers, commodities and inland markets. The middlemen or agents serving the European companies combined many and varied functions. The European presence provided the local merchants with opportunities to enlarge both their economic and non–economic spheres of action and power. Merchant–capitalists (merchants who used their economic clout to influence politics by, for example, farming out revenues of a region or port, thereby strengthening their economic position and social status) generally shared a triad of common characteristics. Firstly, they were large–scale export merchants who operated from many ports in Coromandel through an extended network of kinsfolk by birth or marriage and traded extensively with South–East Asian ports. Secondly, their commercial pre–eminence was reinforced by their contacts with rulers to the point that they emerged as recognized leaders of society in urban centres. Thirdly, they were the all–important links between the Europeans and the local economy through their purchasing of textiles and other commodities

[51] NA VOC 1109, Daily register kept at Fort Geldria (Pulicat) from 24.06.1632 to 25.12.1632: f. 277r., f. 278r., f. 280r.
[52] NA VOC 1161, Daily register kept at Fort Geldria from 23.09.1645 to 19.09.1646: f. 891r.
[53] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 105–106.

for export and their selling of imports. Since the focal point of their contact with the Europeans was textiles, trade conducted by merchant–capitalists after the first quarter of the seventeenth century became synonymous with the textile trade.[54] These figures were major partners in the joint–stock *gezelschappen* or companies formed by the Dutch in the 1660s to facilitate a smoother supply of textiles from inland. As we will also see in Chapter 3, from the 1660s, organizing textile production and supply via these *gezelschappen* became the norm in Pulicat and Nagapatanam.

In a memoir for his successor written in 1663, Laurens Pit, the departing Dutch governor of the Coromandel Coast, details the types of textile that were procured from different parts of the coast and the places around the Indian Ocean to which they were exported. The focus here will be on what the memoir had to say about Pulicat.

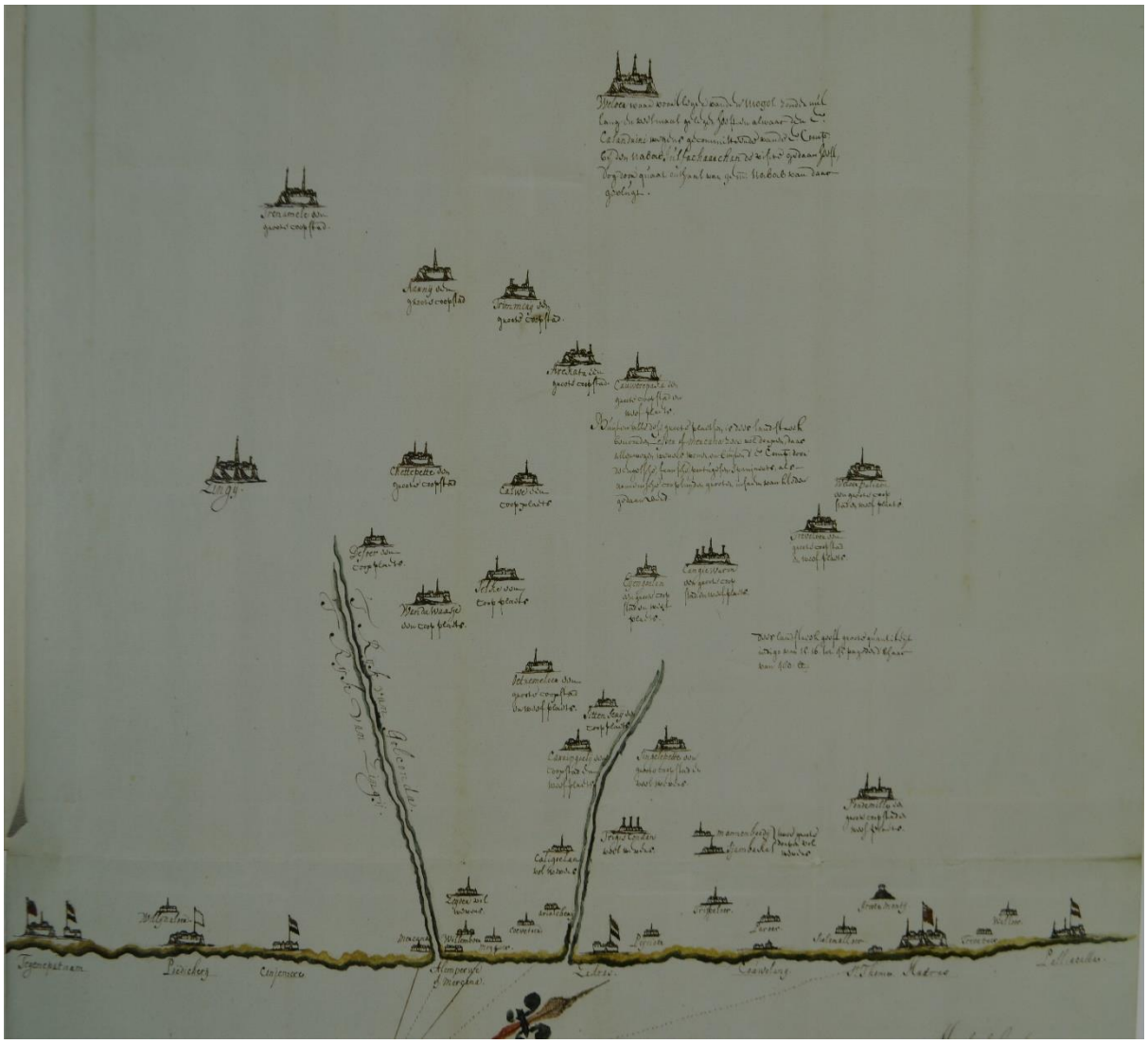
The VOC sealed contracts with merchants who supplied Pulicat with *moeris* (cotton cloth) of all qualities, varying from fine to raw. Fine *bethilles* (literally 'veiling' in Portuguese) and *chiavonis* (a very light white cotton cloth) were mostly produced at a village called Madrepakke located to the north–west of Pulicat. Arrij and nearby villages also produced these varieties. Though a reasonable quantity of *tapesarasses* (multi–coloured skirts), *gobers* (curtains) and *commtijters* were manufactured in Pulicat itself, most came from the village of Ponneri. When demand were high, these textiles were also procured from Kalleturu and Armagaon. Most of the textiles destined for Siam, Cambodia and Pegu were manufactured in the city, but some were brought in from the outskirts of San Thomé. These included *cattawanis* (painted and striped cotton cloth) and *kalamkaris* (painted or block printed textiles). The varieties for exports to Siam and Cambodia were even more in number. These, along with those for trade to Java, were produced mainly in Pulicat, Mylapore around San Thomé, Armagaon and Kalleturu. The same was true of varieties exported to Ceylon, Batavia, Amboina and Japan. Textiles intended for export to the Netherlands, which included *salempores* (plain white and dyed cotton cloth), *parcalles* (plain cotton cloth) and *ginghams* (striped and check cloth), were also collected in Pulicat through contracts with merchants.

Often supplies of cloth brought by different textile merchants varied greatly in terms of quality and length. To resolve this anomaly, the Dutch organized the main suppliers into *gezelschappen* (companies) that contracted to deliver cloth to the Dutch. The memoir speaks of three such companies for different varieties of textiles supplied to the VOC in Pulicat. Firstly, suppliers of cloth for Batavia, Pegu, Malacca and Siam were organized into a company. This enterprise provided the VOC with better qualities of the red–coloured *salempores*, *percalles*, *moeris*, *bethilles* and cotton yarn which were woven in Kalleturu (Kalutara) and Armagaon. Secondly, the region to the south of Kanchipuram and Ponnemilli specialized in the production of guinea cloth. To avoid high prices which could result from competition among different suppliers, the Dutch organized the suppliers of guinea cloth into a company

[54] Mukund, *The Trading World of the Tamil Merchant*: 53, 60, 76.

which contracted to supply these textiles to Pulicat. Thirdly, for the same reasons (to avoid competition and high prices), the VOC organized the suppliers of fine *moeris* and *bethilles* into another company. The memoir also lists textiles that were manufactured around Palakollu and Draksharama and shipped from Masulipatnam to Batavia, Japan and other places. It also describes the varieties of textiles exported by the VOC from Tegenapatnam, Sadraspatnam and Nagapattinam – all of which lay to the south of Pulicat.[55] An early eighteenth–century Dutch map depicted this textile–producing hinterland.

Figure 2.1: Textile–producing centres in central Coromandel[56]



[55] NA VOC 1242, Memoir of succession dated 25.06.1663 from Laurens Pit, governor of Coromandel to Cornelis Speelman: f. 793v.–f. 795v., f. 795v.–f. 799r.; the definitions of the textile varieties come from Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 98–101.

[56] Jos Gommans, Jeroen Bos and Gijs Kruijtzer eds *Voor–Indie, Perzie, Arabisch Schiereiland. Grote atlas van de Verenigde Oost–Indische Compagnie VI* (Voorburg: Asia Maior, 2010): sheet 350.

Drawn by an anonymous artist around 1703, when the Mughal wars were still going on in the west of the Deccan, this map provided the VOC middlemen with information on the conditions of textile manufacture inland along the stretch of the Coromandel Coast from Pulicat to Tegenapatnam, which also had a Dutch factory. The English settlement of Madras and its French counterpart Pondicherry also feature. The map is particularly intriguing for its reference to contemporary developments. In the wake of Mughal wars the Dutch headquarters of Coromandel had been shifted from Pulicat to Nagapatnam in 1690, at the insistence of Hendrik Adriaan van Reede. At the top, the map describes Vellore as a place where the Mughal army camped for quite some time while a visit by Pieter Calandrini on behalf of the company to the Mughal general Zulfiqar Khan ended unsuccessfully. With its directions for middlemen wanting to find villages of weavers and painters, the map is a visual representation of the hinterland from which Pulicat drew throughout the seventeenth century. In addition, it arguably distinguishes between bigger and smaller centres. Trenamele, Karrij, Trimmerij, Arekata (Arcot), Kaveripaka, Chettepette (Chetpet), Vellorepaliam, Treveloer (Tiruvallur), Eijengoeloer (possibly Ayyangarkulam), Cangiewaron (Kanchipuram), Octremeloer, Singelepette (Chingleput or Chengalapattu) and Pondemillij (possibly Poonamallee) are each described as a *groote coopstad,* a sizeable market town where merchants could buy large quantities of textiles.

It is quite possible that villages which produced textiles were to be found inland from these large towns. Some would have also been religious sites with big temples – continuing the trend of combining economic and religious functions throughout the seventeenth century. The map also mentions several small towns and villages where weavers resided and produced textiles. They include Desoer (Desur), Wan de Waasje (Wandiwash, the site of a famous Anglo–French battle in the second half of the eighteenth century), Pelke and Pitten Serrij (possibly Pattancherry). The text on the map locates this entire area to the south–west of Pulicat beyond Kanchipuram as a zone inhabited by numerous weavers who supplied textiles to the English and French companies and private Portuguese merchants. The merchants and middlemen for the VOC would take their advance payments and venture out to the villages along the coast and inland, where the profusion of weaving villages was a huge pool of resources waiting to be tapped.

Although all of this does not dislodge Daniel Havart's contention that Pulicat had little export trade compared to Masulipatnam and confirms the idea of the port being mainly a Dutch relay station in the seventeenth century, it, nevertheless, points to the significance of the textile industry of central Coromandel around Pulicat within the VOC's sphere of operations– a point that is somewhat neglected in Havart's survey of Coromandel. In Pulicat we find the Dutch drawing from a variety of sources for diverse markets around the Indian Ocean. There is no reason to doubt the degree of specialization or Dutch penetration into the networks of production and assemblage. The choice of sites was governed by close access to the ports and transport on small craft. While some of the textiles were produced in Pulicat itself (during periods of exceptional pressure on the region, as the next section shows), most

came from around San Thomé and Mylapore. The farthest point inland reached by Dutch suppliers operating out of Pulicat was possibly somewhere south of Kanchipuram and Ponnemilli. We find the amazing resilience of Ponneri as a centre of production from the early seventeenth century. These centres of production lay either to the south or southwest of Pulicat. It can therefore be argued that in the second half of the seventeenth century the VOC successfully restored the connections between Pulicat and its old textile–supplying hinterland.

In Pulicat's sixteenth–century heyday it shipped out textiles from production centres in the region around Nellore, in the southern border of Telugu country,[57] and it is quite possible that VOC had ambitions to bring this zone under the port's sphere of influence. Whether or not they succeeded in doing so is difficult to say with any certainty due to the cryptic nature of the primary sources on this matter. A Dutch official named Pieter de Lange travelled from Pulicat to the diamond mines in the sultanate of Golconda and submitted a report of his journey to the governor. En route north from Pulicat to the mines in Kollur, De Lange came across two villages named Mirmalur and Nulupari where chialops and ginghams (see glossary) were woven, and later he also encountered a big weaving settlement at Mutusera which specialized in rolled cloth, *chelas*, *madaphons*, *rumals* (handkerchief) and *lungis* (cloth worn from the waist to almost the toes by tying it around) for export to Persia. Mutusera attracted many Muslim merchants from Golconda and Bijapur, and De Lange writes that even during the phase of strong Portuguese presence it exported clothes to Java, Malacca, Cambodia, Siam, Pegu and Tenasserim. Nulupari, where the English used to buy cloth possibly ignited De Lange's imagination because while there he bought several samples of cloth to present to the Dutch governor of Coromandel and writes in quite enthusiastic tones about the idea of trading it for substantial quantities of copper and tin from Pegu.[58] The villages through which De Lange passed were to the north of Pulicat and most probably in the region of Nellore, which, as Arasaratnam points out, was famous for its fine textiles for the South–East Asian market.[59]

It seems likely that the Dutch were looking to expand further into the hinterland to tap into supplies of textiles and they possibly considered bringing these villages into their range of operations. The products manufactured here could have gone to either Masulipatnam or Pulicat. Since Mutusera produced clothes for Persia, its products possibly found their way to ships departing from Masulipatnam, while those from Nulupari would probably have been shipped from either Pulicat or Masulipatnam. Though this is very much speculative and difficult to corroborate, it offers a plausible insight into the textile industry to the north of Pulicat. In short there was a substantial field to choose from and the outcome

[57] Palat, *The Making of an Indian Ocean World–Economy*: 166.
[58] NA VOC 1242, Report dated 25.03.1663 by Pieter de Lange to Laurens Pit, governor of Coromandel, about the diamond mines in Golconda: f. 859r.–f. 859v.
[59] Arasaratnam: *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 55.

depended largely on the ability of the Dutch factors to penetrate the hinterland via middlemen and politico–economic conditions in the region. The economic and demographic composition of the hinterland of Masulipatnam can be reproduced with the help of reports prepared by the VOC officials and other travellers, but similar accounts pertaining to Pulicat are hard to come by.

The overall picture is of a rich hinterland producing textiles for export around the Indian Ocean. Pulicat's survival under the VOC belies the idea of decline that we tend to associate with a Coromandel port when a major imperial patron vanishes. Lines could be, and in this case were, redrawn, with 'smaller' patrons, in the form of *nayaka* rulers, who tried to resuscitate the economy. Rather than simply arguing that after the fall of Vijayanagara a decline set in around Pulicat, we would be better advised to examine the kind of changes that political crises brought to this port–hinterland complex. As we have noted, it turned mainly into a Dutch port and exported textiles across the Indian Ocean as a part of the VOC's operations. The European trading companies of the Dutch, the English and the French successfully exploited the potential of the region with their investments. The stretch of coast from Tegenapatnam to Pulicat was one with which the Dutch were quite familiar, thanks not only to the European managers who would travel to various VOC factories, but also their indigenous middlemen who were well–versed with the conditions inland. The establishment of Fort Geldria and the Dutch investment into the economy and commerce of the region played an important in part in helping Pulicat survive as a reasonably strong port city of seventeenth–century Coromandel.

If such was the picture of the hinterland of Pulicat, how did wars and political unrest affect it in the seventeenth century? The following section tries to explore the impact of wars on Pulicat, in a bid to build a hypothesis on the relation between wars and the economy of the Coromandel Coast.

2.4 Regional response to political instability and wars

As explained in Chapter 1, a section with this subtitle appears in each chapter and serves as a building block towards a hypothesis on how ports and their hinterland in South India responded to wars and political instability. It should be noted, however, that not all these sections engage with the same theme. In the context of Masulipatnam, we looked at the impact of wars on the connecting nodes of its hinterland, particularly the link with Surat. Now, in the context of Pulicat, we will look at: how some of the effects of warfare in the surrounding region tell us what kind of developments could be expected during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns; the ways in which the port, supported by Dutch patronage, survived a temporary decline in the wake of the weakening of the Vijayanagara Empire; and the differences between the port–hinterland complexes in Pulicat and Masulipatnam.

Political conditions in central and southern Coromandel were mostly unstable for the first half of the seventeenth century. In and around Pulicat this instability was a part of the scenario from the very outset of the establishment of the VOC's factory. Their troubles started

with a siege of the factory in 1614 and were followed by a succession struggle after the death of Venkata II, Aravidu ruler of Vellore. The Dutch held a neutral course during such succession struggles. In the early stages of the succession struggle the security offered by Fort Geldria led to an increase in Pulicat's population and trading activity. Manufacturers of cloth moved there in numbers great enough to cause an excess in supply of patterned cloth; more than the VOC could purchase. And in 1618 and 1819 the Dutch even deployed a naval force to protect Pulicat's trade. Thirty Indian vessels visited Pulicat in this period, while none called at the neighbouring port of San Thomé. Though the wars hit production of cloth around Pulicat quite badly in 1619, enough was produced in the city itself to ensure adequate supply.[60]

This instance points to two features which repeated themselves during the Mughal wars in the late seventeenth–century. Firstly, the fort in Pulicat acted as a haven not only for the Dutch, but also for weavers. Merchants in South India tended to prefer the security of fortified towns, hence arguably the weavers saw the VOC not as an aberration in the political landscape of central Coromandel, but simply as a new patron whose political clout offered a safe environment for trade. As noted in Chapter 1, flight from disorder to order was a traditional feature of the rural economy in India and it ensured resilience of economic production, in this case the textile industry. Secondly, though the European settlements could offer protection, they could do little to mitigate the devastating consequences of warfare. Crucially, the Dutch could not have sustained their exports solely through production within the city. Production within Pulicat could continue as long as raw materials required for production were available, but whenever their stocks got low the Dutch would have been compelled to negotiate with merchants for fresh supplies. If wars disrupted the highways and caused a dip in supplies it would have affected the exports from Pulicat.

In the 1620s disturbances emanating from wars and a struggle of succession continued to afflict Pulicat, its surroundings and the region up to Gingee. As a result, in 1625 Dutch trade ceased almost completely in Pulicat due to poor demand for the company's merchandise and the necessity to transact in cash. Tapan Raychaudhuri argues that it was a shortage of capital rather than supplies that brought this about. The turmoil barely abated in the 1630s, and it continued to impact on Dutch trade: anyone transporting goods along the highways connecting Pulicat to the hinterland were vulnerable to attack, supplies of clothes were not reaching the VOC and middlemen refused to enter into contracts. The worst of all was possibly 1638 when in despair the Dutch abandoned the island of Erikan and the village of Wansiwake (Wansiwarom of the Dutch sources), both attached to Pulicat. These years also coincided with invasions of the coast by Bijapur and Golconda which simply added to the woes as merchants did not venture out on unsafe roads to the coast to buy the company's imports.[61]

---

[60] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*: 35.
[61] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*: 36, 43–45.

Before quoting their prices to the middlemen, weavers and painters would consider the threat and insecurity posed by wars as well as availability of food, and textile prices would have been high during wars. This phenomenon would manifest itself again during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns. As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, the VOC regularly bemoaned the high prices of textiles during the Mughal wars. Though economic production must have suffered from the unsafe transport network, it did not disappear altogether. During the 1620s and 1630s, the VOC expanded its operations into other regions around the Bay of Bengal. To achieve this, the Dutch would have had to invest more bullion in Coromandel, doubtless increasing incentives for production on the coast. By this we allude to the need to procure textiles that could be traded to mainland and maritime South-East Asia; expanding maritime networks meant the VOC had to explore more textile-producing villages in central Coromandel and thus increase their investments in production of cloth. Ironically, corroboration is provided by the flight of weavers from Ponneri near Pulicat who had contracted to supply patterned cloth to the company.[62] While their flight reflects the ongoing political instability, it also points to the probability that the Dutch continued investing in textile production in central Coromandel. When speaking of decline or destruction due to warfare, it is therefore important to temper our arguments through an examination of whether or not the decline was absolute, the connections between the coast and hinterland had been irrevocably broken, economic production had completely stopped, and incentives for economic production had dried up.

In the 1640s the configurations of political power around Pulicat changed once more, when the sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda repeatedly invaded the central and southern parts of the Coromandel Coast. In 1646, the prime minister of the Golconda sultanate Mir Muhammed Said (a.k.a. Mir Jumla) occupied Pulicat and adjacent regions. As noted in the introduction, he defected to the Mughals in 1655, at which point the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan conferred upon him the lands around Pulicat as his *jagir*. After the death of Mir Muhammed Said the territory was reabsorbed into the sultanate of Golconda,[63] and remained under its control until Golconda itself was annexed by Aurangzeb in 1687. This period of relative peace in the region following Golconda's annexation of adjoining lands, accompanied by increased VOC investment, would have boosted the textile industry that supplied Pulicat. In this context, we may recall Laurens Pit's (the VOC governor of Coromandel) memoir of succession providing details on the textile industry of central Coromandel cited earlier in the chapter – it was written in the 1660s.

Stability had also played a role in the growth of Pulicat as a port and it is evidenced by the proliferation of settlements in the town. Sanjay Subrahmanyam argues that in the early seventeenth century the population of Pulicat dwindled significantly, and that this was an

[62] This builds on the discussion in Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*: 44–45.
[63] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*: 46–51.

aspect of the general decline suffered by the port in the wake of the disintegration of the Vijayanagara Empire.[64] Evidence offered by the Dutch, on the other hand, points to a growth of population in the seventeenth century. In this respect, a point that we must remember is the difference in the temporal points of evidence proffered by Sanjay Subrahmanyam and this dissertation: while Subrahmanyam's evidence comes from the early seventeenth century, the evidence cited in the dissertation to argue in favour of a revival in Pulicat's status dates from the second half of the seventeenth century. So, there is not a contradiction between the two of them. In his report on the various VOC settlements on the Coromandel Coast in the early seventeenth century, Hans de Haze notes that the population of Pulicat was sparse and that the king (of Vellore) had agreed to allow a part of the city to be populated by Dutch and another part by indigenous people.[65] It is this reference that Subrahmanyam cites to argue in favour of a decline in Pulicat. Though this letter does point that the population of Pulicat had become sparse, it also speaks of efforts to resettle the lands. Such efforts bore some fruits by the second half of the seventeenth century. In the 1660s, a Dutch traveller found the city to the south of Fort Geldria to be full of houses inhabited by indigenous people.[66] That this indigenous part of Pulicat was settled until the late seventeenth century is indirectly revealed to us in another Dutch source: in a letter written in 1688 to the directors of the VOC in Amsterdam, Hendrik Adriaan van Reede mentions that company officials had built houses and streets to the south of the fort opposite the indigenous part of the town.[67]

Of course, this interpretation of the situation is based on Dutch perspectives, but it does show that at least the port city itself had attracted some indigenous population due to its trade and the patronage of the VOC. There was no absolute decline in Pulicat and human agency had played an important a role in reviving its fortunes. The ruling authorities were willing to invite the Europeans to settle in their territories and the Dutch were keen to invest into a port–hinterland complex. The terms of the treaty between the VOC and the Aravidu ruler reflect their intentions to settle a port that had been unsettled. Changes in politico–economic conditions made and unmade ports in the Deccan and South India. The level of keenness of ruling authorities and merchants alike to invest in and trade from a port depends entirely on the surrounding politico–economic landscape. The conditions of the period are instrumental to the development or otherwise of any port and its corresponding hinterland, and it is clear that in the case of Pulicat investments brought significant improvements to the port's fortunes.

---

[64] Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*: 24.
[65] NA VOC 1059, Considerations about the Coromandel Coast which concern the interests of the factories of the company: f. 63v.
[66] Breet and Barend–van Haeften, *De Oost-Indische voyagie van Wouter Schouten*: 272–273.
[67] NA VOC 1477, Letter dated 01.12.1688 from Hendrik Adriaan van Reede, Pulicat to the Gentlemen Seventeen: f. 152v.

Atiya Habeeb Kidwai writes that the growth environment for a port is never static because it is determined by human factors operating at global, national and local levels. As an economic concept rather than a geographical one, a port's 'hinterland' represents layers of commodity flows connected by transport, markets, shipping and port facilities. Moreover, a port is often unable to lay exclusive claim on any part of its geographical hinterland, since an inland area may function as the hinterland to any number of ports.[68] If we consider these to be the defining features of a hinterland, how should Pulicat and its hinterland be characterized?

Pulicat's hinterland overlapped with those of other ports with a European presence, such as Madras (English) and Pondicherry (French). The eighteenth–century Dutch map [Fig. 2.1] that appears earlier in this chapter clearly shows that the area to the south–west of Pulicat beyond Kanchipuram had a dense concentration of weaving villages that supplied the English East India Company and the French East India Company. This was a zone whose textile products were oriented for overseas exports and the Dutch middlemen and merchant–capitalists served as feeders of funds and goods between the port and the layers of commodity production inland. In other words, they linked the coast with the geographical hinterland. Pulicat's integration into the VOC's intra–Asian trading network brought it into the economic hinterland of ports in South–East Asia.

Although it very much remained a relay station for the VOC in their intra–Asian trade in the seventeenth century, Pulicat became connected to economic nodes throughout the Indian Ocean region. The production, procurement and marketing of textiles around Pulicat was marked by the company's economic connections in the Indian Ocean and throughout the globe. The products of central Coromandel, mainly textiles, were tapped by the Dutch for exporting to markets in South–East Asia to draw spices. The overseas markets had specific requirements, as we have seen in this chapter and that points to the sheer specialization of the industry. Textiles exported from Pulicat to Java and Amboina helped the VOC acquire spices, while some of those shipped to Pegu, Siam and Malacca might have gone on to China and Japan via other merchants.

Indigenous political authorities in central Coromandel strove to utilize the flow of commodities through Pulicat (and by extension other ports) to add to the wealth of their kingdoms. For the VOC, the Pulicat was not only a place to cheaply procure many varieties of textiles for their South–East Asian markets, but also a prestigious port. In Hendrik Adriaan van Reede's 1688 instructions for Johannes Bacherus, who had been selected as an envoy to the camp of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, he relates that the Dutch had enjoyed the possession of the fort since the early seventeenth century. In no uncertain terms he asserts

[68] Atiya Habeeb Kidwai, 'Conceptual and Methodological Issues: Ports, Port Cities and Port–Hinterlands' in: *Ports and Their Hinterlands in India (1700–1950)*, ed. Indu Banga (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992): 12, 18–19.

that Dutch had settled those lands long before their annexation by the Golconda sultanate and could therefore not fall under the jurisdiction of the Mughals who had conquered Golconda.[69]

Masulipatnam and Pulicat in the seventeenth century: A comparison

The port–hinterland complex which we encounter at Pulicat is quite different from that of its northern counterpart Masulipatnam, the premier oceanic port of seventeenth century Coromandel. Masulipatnam was not dominated by any specific merchant group. Indigenous, Arabic, Persian and Armenian merchants all operated there, and the Dutch, English and French trading companies all had lodges in the port. Pulicat, on the other hand, belonged exclusively to the VOC.

The second and biggest difference between the two ports was the flow of commodities they handled: while Masulipatnam was an entrepot for goods being transhipped from South–East Asia to Persia and West Asia or to Malacca from where those were transhipped to China and Japan, Pulicat was mainly a local centre that catered for VOC–controlled foreign markets. Masulipatnam's connections with the inland market were far wider that those of Pulicat; as noted earlier, Masulipatnam was part of a commercial arc that connected it with Surat on the western coast of India. The subsidiary economic infrastructure that supported these ports were characterized by these different functions. Pulicat had a small shipyard close to Fort Geldria, whereas Masulipatnam had a big shipyard at Narsapore in the Godavari delta where vessels of between 300 and 400 tonnes were launched.

The third significant difference between Masulipatnam and Pulicat was the realtive location of the textile industry. Unlike Masulipatnam, where the textile industry was so heavily concentrated along the river valleys of the Godavari and Krishna delta, Pulicat was mostly supplied by sources close to the port. Locating the industry far away from the coast was not a sensible option in central Coromandel not only because of the logistical difficulties in balancing the supply of and demand for rice but also because of the modes of communication. Since the industry was close to the port, it was easier to transport products. In this sense, the textile industry around Pulicat was intensive.

Compared to Masulipatnam and Surat, Pulicat must have appeared somewhat lacklustre to the enquiring eyes of travellers, given the relatively few pages they devote to the smaller port in their writings. We can infer as much from the general discussion in the itineraries of Jean–Baptiste Tavernier, Francois Bernier and Francois Martin, all of whom travelled in South India in the seventeenth century. The travelogues of Wouter Schouten and Philippus Baldaeus are exceptions because, as Dutchmen, they looked at Pulicat with pride

[69] NA VOC 1450, Instructions dated 22.09.1688 from Hendrik Adriaan van Reede, in Pulicat for Johannes Bacherus, delegated to visit the northern factories of Coromandel and to greet the great Mughal (Aurangzeb) on behalf of the company: f. 966v.–f.967r.

and thus spoke of it in some detail.[70] The attention paid by travellers to Masulipatnam partly explains the rich itineraries available to us of journeys from Masulipatnam to Golconda and Surat. Jean Deloche argues that unlike northern India, where the rulers developed a keen interest in the maintenance of highways, the transit ways were of a more uncertain character in the Deccan and South India, and accounts of them vary considerably from one traveller to another.[71] The shifting nature of roadways might be another reason why no descriptions of highways from Pulicat to the interior survive in the VOC archive. Though there were regular connections with Vellore and villages to the west and south of Pulicat where textiles were produced, no thorough account of them has survived.

The decline of Pulicat in the wake of the disintegration of the Vijayanagara Empire was far from terminal. Investments into the region and efforts to settle it contributed to the survival of the local textile industry and exports. The volume of its oceanic commerce might not have been anywhere near that of Masulipatnam or Surat, but demand for the products of Pulicat's textile industry was successfully tapped by the VOC to forge connections with South–East Asia. Human agencies sustained by local and global economic forces combined to change the fortunes of Pulicat. In the late 1680s the political landscape of Pulicat changed once more when the Mughals annexed Golocnda. For almost a decade the theatre of Mughal wars was quite close to Pulicat: in their pursuit of fugitive Maratha leader Rajaram, for example, the Mughal armies moved between the Coromandel Coast and western Deccan, and during the siege of Gingee (1689–1698) the ports of central and southern Coromandel (including Pulicat and Nagapatnam) found the war almost on their doorsteps. The impact of these wars in central and southern Coromandel in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries will be examined in Chapter 5.

[70] This notion of pride is present even in Heert Terpstra's book which we have cited earlier in this chapter. In the early twentieth century, he wrote a book on the establishment of the VOC in Coromandel. In his book he has used the trope of ours, i.e., Dutch versus the Portuguese.

[71] Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India, Land Transport*: 62–63.

Chapter 3: Nagapatnam's political and economic landscape

Introduction

In a period of more than two millennia, port cities of all kinds and sizes along the two long, indented littorals of the Indian subcontinent charted journeys from inchoate entities to thriving hubs in their prime before finally withering away once more into the temporal and geographical landscape. This chapter discusses the politico–economic axes of Nagapatnam, a port city of Coromandel that had a life spanning 800 years marked by fluctuating fortunes, and the structure of this chapter reflects its life history: the first section discusses the ecological conditions around Nagapatnam and in the Kaveri delta; the second section looks at the politico–economic conditions of that region from the tenth century AD to the period of Vijayanagara rule; the third section examines the economy of Nagapatnam under the control of the Portuguese traders and then the VOC; and the fourth and final section wraps up the chapter by discussing the impact of warfare and political instability on the economy of the region.

3.1 Ecology

The wide coastal plains of the Coromandel Coast were formed by the deltas of the Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri. The Kaveri originates in the Brahmagiri near Talakaveri in Coorg (now in Karnataka) and covers a course of 764 kilometres, flowing in a generally south–eastern direction across the Deccan plateau, creating great waterfalls along the way, passing Tiruchchirappalli (Trichinopoly) and Tanjore (Thanjavur) to enter the Bay of Bengal via its distributaries,[1] forming the great Kaveri delta. At the mouth of one of these distributaries stands Nagapatnam (alternate names include Nagapattinam and Negapatnam), a port that straddles the recorded history of the eastern littoral.

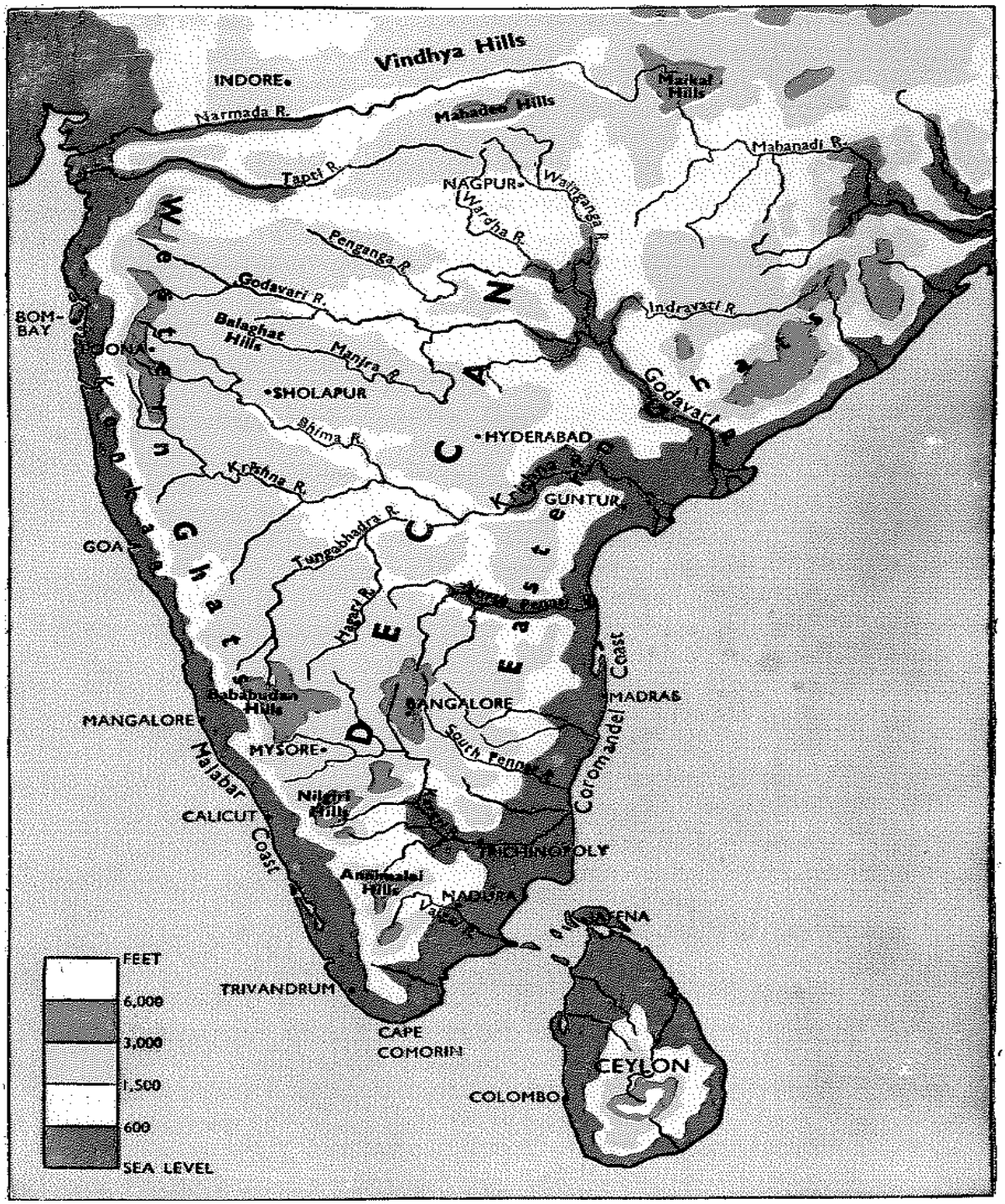
A great coastal plain extends from the Krishna delta all the way to Kanyakumari, at the southernmost tip of the Indian mainland. Nellore at the border of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu is marked by a transitional landscape where lowlands develop that are breached by the Kaveri delta; the area to the north of the delta is quite different from that to its south. Between the Kaveri delta and the Palar river basin to the north stand the hill ranges of Javadi, Shevaroy, Kalrayan and Pachaimalai, which cut across South Pennar, the river valley of the Ponnaiyar, near whose mouth stands Pondicherry. Southwards from here the Vellar river basin acts as a transition to the Kaveri delta. This coastline has an alluvial plain with embayments behind Chennai and Pondicherry while the soil in the Kaveri delta comprises littoral sands and the alluvial sands that extend far to the west of Tiruchchirappalli. Kumbakonam is the most fertile part of the delta; to the south of the Vennar, which runs by Tanjore, calcerous deposits in the soil reduce fertility. Except for the sporadic showers caused by thundery, cyclonic disturbances in May, most rainfall in this delta is concentrated in the

[1] K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India: From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijaynagar* (Madras: Oxford University Press, Fourth edition 1975): 43.

period from October to December and it diminishes in spatial distribution as it moves inland from the coast: Nagapatnam–Kumbakonam–Tanjore–Tiruchchirappalli constitute a decreasing order. To the south of the Kaveri delta is what Spate and Learmonth call the 'dry southeast', comprising Madurai, Ramnad (Ramanathapuram) and Tirunelveli. Tank irrigation prevails in Madurai and Ramnad along the Vaigai River, while to the south of it black soil tracts are common in Tirunelveli, which also has little rainfall.[2] To the west of Tiruchchirappalli and Karur, the elevation slowly increases leading up to the Kongunad or Coimbatore plateau. Beyond this is the Palghat pass which breaches the Western Ghats and is an age–old conduit of communication between the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts.

[2] Spate and Learmonth, *India and Pakistan*: 739, 741–742, 749–751, 771, 780.

Map 3.1: Land elevation of South India and Ceylon[3]



[3] Sastri, *A History of South India*: map after 34.

3.2 The political economy of Nagapatnam from the eleventh to the sixteenth century; from Chola to Vijayanagara rule

Early days and the premier Chola port

Nagapatnam has a longer history than either Masulipatnam or Pulicat. The earliest mentions of Nagapatnam date back to the first half of the seventh century AD when the Tamil saints Thirugnana Sambandhar and Thirunavukkarasar, a contemporary of Mahendravarman Pallava (604–630CE), describe it as a well–fortified city with wide roads and large ships. At this juncture, however, the major port of Pallava kings was Mamallapuram (near modern Chennai). By the mid–seventh century CE Nagapatnam had possibly become a transit port for travellers and pilgrims bound for Ceylon and South–East Asian countries. Chinese Buddhist pilgrims such as Xuanzang (Hsuen Tsang), Yijing (I–Ching) called it *Na–kia–po–tan–na*. A ninth century Pallava inscription dubs the city Nagai, and Sundarar a contemporary Tamil saint, describes it as being lit through the night, perhaps due to the heavy commercial traffic and the military forces around the fortress.[4] In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Kaveri delta formed the heartland of the Chola Empire, and Nagapatnam became its official port. Strong connections with South–East Asia were celebrated in the form of a Buddhist *vihara* (temple or monastery); the funds for its construction and the land on which it was built were donated by the Srivijaya ruler and the Chola king, respectively.[5] In the early decades of the eleventh century the Cholas were quite active in the Indian Ocean. Their military prowess was demonstrated in the conquest of Ceylon in 1017 CE and raids of port cities on the Malay Peninsula and in Sumatra in 1025 CE. Along with the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt and the Song Empire in China, the Cholas were one of the three great powers of the Indian Ocean of this period, and they were huge and powerful magnets for the maritime trade passing through their respective regions. Chola politico–economic strength undoubtedly helped Nagapatnam emerge as the premier port of the Coromandel Coast in the eleventh century.[6]

Burton Stein argues that in South India of the early twelfth century, core areas of agriculture and settlement configured in a reverse E form (see map 3.2) characterized by an elongated and discontinuous line of settlement, paralleling the Coromandel Coast in three major inward projections. Cholmandalam in the Kaveri basin was the most densely occupied one, followed by Tondaimandalam (now districts of North Arcot, South Arcot and Chingleput), Pandyamandalam (the portions of the peninsula southward from Madurai) and another line of settlement, though not in the immediate vicinity of the Coromandel Coast but important

---

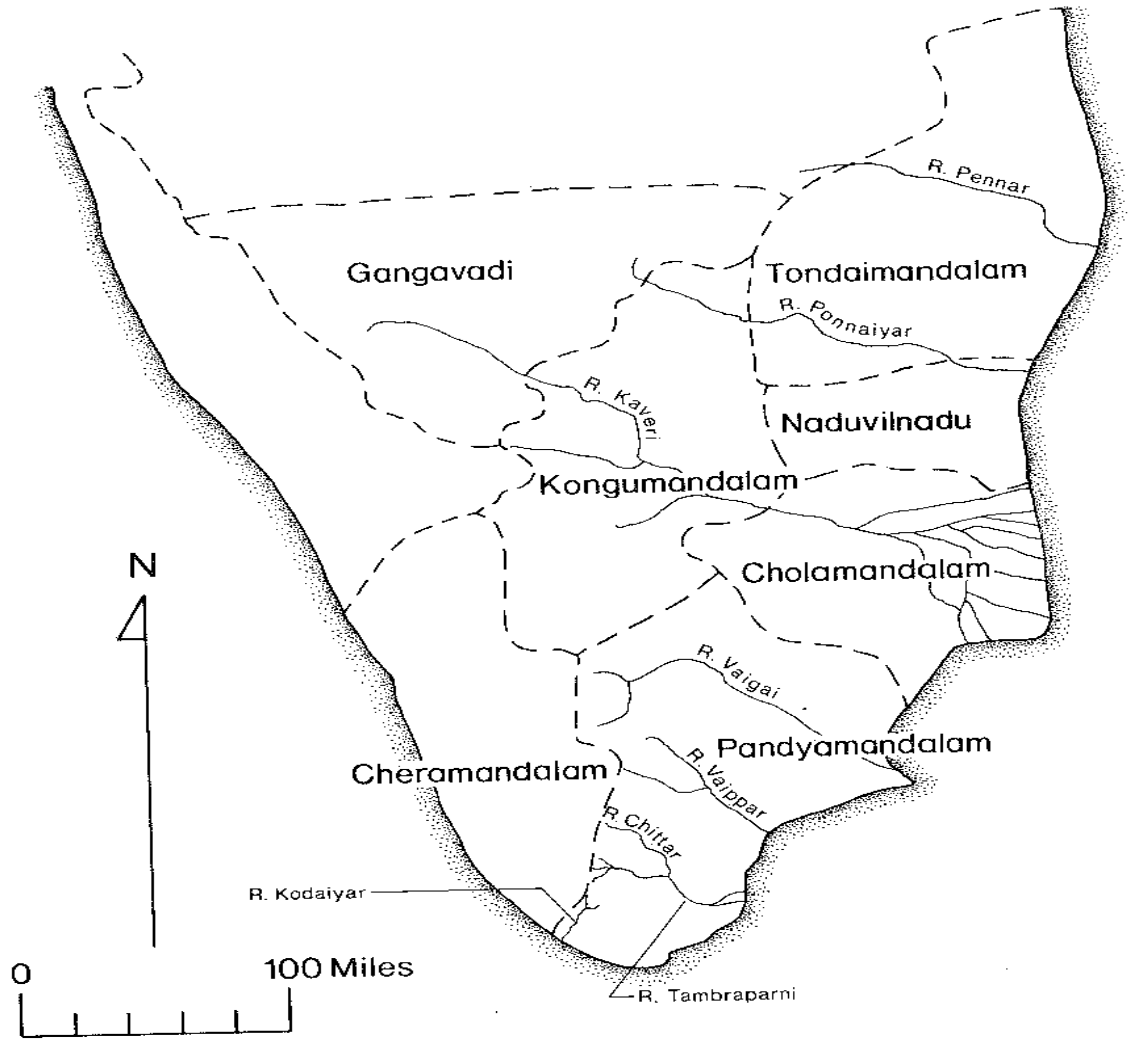
[4] Gokul Seshadri, 'New perspectives on Nagapattinam: The Medieval Port City in the Context of Political, Religious, and Commercial Exchanges between South India, Southeast Asia, and China', in: *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia,* eds Hermann Kulke, K. Kesavapanny and Vijay Sakhuja (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009): 107–109, 118.

[5] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: 14.

[6] For more on this subject see Hermann Kulke, 'The Naval Expeditions of the Cholas in the context of Asian History', in: *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa*: 1–19 and Tansen Sen, 'The Military Campaigns of Rajendra Chola and the Chola–Srivijaya–China Triangle', in: ibid: 61–75.

for communications of the Kaveri delta with Malabar, was Kongumandalam (the western portions of the peninsula to the Eastern Ghats, including parts of Mysore).[7] Well–connected to the region of Cholamandalam, Kongumandalam led up to the Palghat pass beyond Coimbatore and facilitated communication with the Malabar Coast. Mandalam, in Tamil Nadu, referred to a large territory, a division of the country. Reproduced in a map by David Ludden, these areas appear as follows.

Map 3.2: South Indian mandalams c. 1000[8]



[7] Burton Stein, 'Integration of the Agrarian System of South India', in: *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History,* ed. Robert Eric Frykenberg (Madison, Milwaukee and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969): 184; for the expansion of Tondaimandalam see page 179.

[8] David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985): map 3 after page 67, definition of mandalams 18, 261.

Cholamandalam, the heartland of the Kaveri delta, formed the core of the Chola Empire and later gave us the name 'Coromandel'. The Cholas became active once again in the Bay of Bengal during the reign of Kulottunga I (1070–1118) who maintained friendly relations with Angkor and Pagan, two major states of mainland South–East Asia. This interest was also manifest in his renaming of Vishakhapatnam as Kulottungacolapattanam, a clear hint that the Cholas were eager to trade with Burma and Cambodia via the Isthmus of Kra. Though Chola power declined from the late twelfth century, there was no decrease in south Indian trade with the Bay of Bengal and China. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries two merchant guilds of South India, Ayyavole and Manigramam, were at the peak of their activities. A large south Indian merchant community was present in China in the thirteenth century and so were Chinese traders in South India. A Chinese pagoda was built in Nagapatnam in 1267. This was a phase of intense commercial activity between South India and China, as evidenced by the discovery of hoard of Chinese coins near Nagapatnam which date from 1267 to 1275. The majority of Chinese ceramics found in South India belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[9]

How long did this early heyday of Nagapatnam last? Did new political developments affect the maritime landscape of Cholamandalam? Chola power weakened in the thirteenth century as they became embroiled in continual wars with the Hoysalas to the north–west and Pandyas to the south. In 1279, the Pandyan ruler Kulasékhara defeated both the Hoysala king Ramanatha and his Chola counterpart Rajendra III. 'That is the last we hear of Rajendra III and the Cholas,' writes K.A. Nilakanta Sastri. The Pandyas were now the masters of the Kaveri delta.[10] Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller who toured around Asia in the second half of the thirteenth century, does not mention Nagapatnam. Although Polo writes at length about the province of *Ma'bar* (which corresponds to part of the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts, roughly from Quilon in Malabar to Nellore in central Coromandel) but does not offer a single word on Nagapatnam.[11] By this time Nagapatnam had already lost its position as a premier port of the Coromandel, as it happened so often in Coromandel. However, Polo's observation is not the final word. While Nagapatnam may no longer have been an oceanic port, the archaeological findings of coins and ceramics make it apparent that the Kaveri delta still featured as one of the primary maritime zones of the Coromandel Coast, and under Vijayanagara rule Nagapatnam re–emerged as the primary outlet of economic production in the Kaveri delta.

---

[9] Kulke, 'The Naval Expeditions of the Cholas': 11–13; Tansen Sen sets the date for this pagoda in 1268, see Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino–Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003): 231.

[10] Sastri, *A History of South India*: 211–216.

[11] Ronald Latham transl., *The Travels of Marco Polo* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, Reprint edition 1978): 260–294. 'India' (Chapter 7) covers many aspects but contains no reference to Nagapatnam.

Invasions by the Delhi sultanate

More political changes unfolded in and around the Kaveri delta in the fourteenth century. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, in 1311 an army of the Delhi sultan Alauddin Khalji, led by Malik Kafur, invaded the land controlled by the Hoysalas in Dvarasamudra and the Pandyas in Ma'abar. Though the Pandyan ruler eluded capture, Banarsi Prasad Saksena writes, from the perspective of the invaders the campaigns in the heartland of the Kaveri delta represented Alauddin Khalji's suzerainty.[12] K. A. Nilkanta Sastri disagrees, arguing that the campaigns were nothing more than military raids without any durable impact – in one of these engagements Vikrama Pandya in fact even defeated Malik Kafur. *Ma'bar* is an Arabic word meaning 'passage' or 'ferry' and was used to denote that part of the Indian coastline most frequented by travellers and merchants from Arabia and Persia and which extended in from Quilon (in the modern state of Kerala) to Nellore (at the border of modern–day Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu). In 1323, the heir prince of the Delhi sultanate Muhammed bin Tughlaq conquered *Ma'bar*, imprisoned the Pandyan king and incorporated the area as a province of the Delhi Sultanate when he moved to Daulatabad in 1326 as the sultan. Eventually the Tughlaq governor of *Ma'bar*, Jalaluddin Hasan Shah, successfully rebelled and issued his own coins from Madurai (1333–1334). But between 1365 and 1370 this sultanate was overthrown by Kumara Kampana, son of Bukka who was one of the two founders of the Vijayanagara Empire, and made the Kaveri delta a part of Vijayanagara.[13] What impact did incorporation into the Vijayanagara Empire have on the Kaveri delta?

The Vijayanagara Empire and the Nayakas

Basing her arguments on evidence available from inscriptions, Meera Abraham writes that overseas trade on the Coromandel Coast in the mid–thirteenth and early fourteenth century found outlets and inlets in the Krishna delta, the Penner delta and the stretch of Pandyamandalam between Nagapatnam and Kulashekharapattinam.[14] The *Ma'bar* region in South India continued to be visited by Chinese shipping in the fourteenth century, as Tansen Sen points out. The *Daoyi zhi lüe* (Brief Record of the Barbarian Islands), Wang Dayuan's source on China's trade with the Indian Ocean in the Yuan dynasty from 1279 to about 1350, describes a pagoda at a site called Badan, which is thought to have been Nagapatnam. The commercial relationship between *Ma'bar* and Yuan China continued during the Pandya kingdom which sent missions to the Chinese court. A tributary relationship, Tansen Sen argues, continued until the mid–fifteenth century, particularly with the port of Kayal in *Ma'bar*.[15]

---

[12] Saksena, 'Alauddin Khalji', in: *The Delhi Sultanate*: 410–417, especially 414–417 for Malik Kafur's campaigns in Ma'abar.

[13] Sastri, *A History of South India*: description of Ma'abar or Ma'bar on 222; Malik Kafur's campaigns 222–229, Muhammed bin Tughalq's sojourn 233, formation of Madurai Sultanate and its demise 237 and 266.

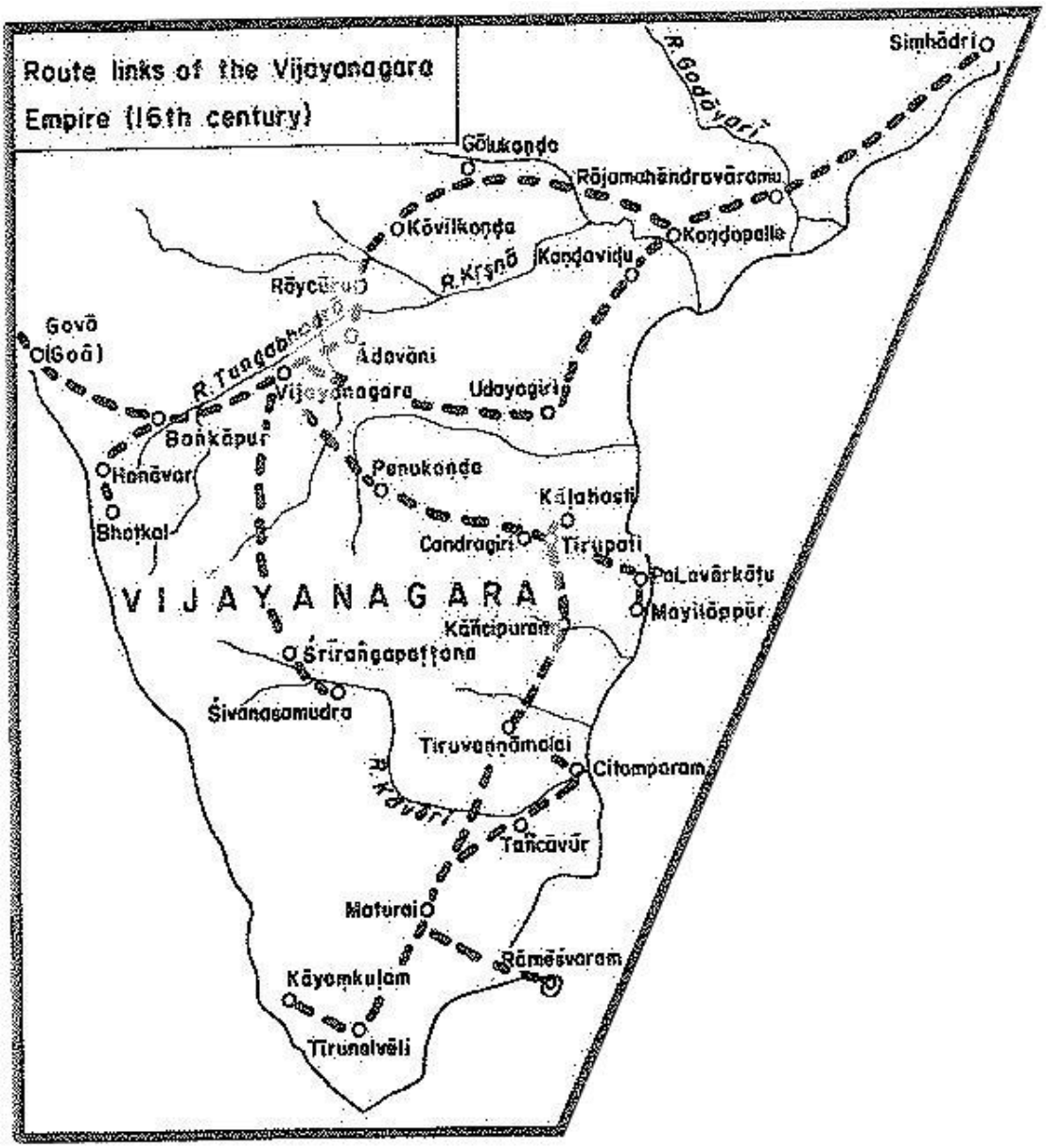
[14] Meera Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India (*New Delhi: Manohar, 1988): 145.

[15] Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy and Trade*: 231–232.

S. Jeyaseela Stephen writes that up to and including the thirteenth century Chinese traders favoured Nagapatnam while from the next century they preferred the Malabar ports of Quilon, Cochin and Calicut, a point also made by Tansen Sen. This shift should be seen in the light of the weakening of Chola power in the Kaveri delta. By the fourteenth century Nagapatnam had declined in importance and Muslim traders began to settle at Nagore, north of Nagapatnam. Saluva Tirumalai Devamaharaya, a Vijayanagara governor who ruled the Tanjore region from 1450 to 1486, founded a new port town and named it after himself: Tirumalairayanpattinam. The port city was connected by waterways to the rice cultivating hinterland. It was not until the sixteenth century that Nagapatnam became an international trading centre once again when the Muslim merchants of Nagore began to participate in the overseas commerce at the port, along with the Portuguese.[16] The case of Tirumalairayanpattinam is yet another example of the dynamic affecting port cities of the Coromandel. Discussions in earlier chapters on Masulipatnam and Pulicat have demonstrated how political and commercial patronage, indigenous as well as European, was crucial for any port city hoping to thrive and prosper. A map by Jean Deloche showing the road links of sixteenth–century Vijayanagara shows neither Nagapatnam nor Tirumalairayanpattinam as ports of the Kaveri delta. The coastal town nearest to Kaveri delta and Tanjore, as shown on the map of road links, is Chidambaram and it was no port.

[16] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: 108–109, 111.

Map 3.3: Route links of Vijayanagara in the sixteenth century[17]



Historical literature on Vijayanagara stresses its connections with the ports of the Kanara coast for importing horses. But Pulicat, too, as noted in Chapter 2, became an important outlet under the Vijayanagara Empire. Tirumalairayanpattinam had not disappeared off the landscape, however, as we will discover later in this chapter. Nagapatnam did not feature for almost two hundred years, but then resurged out of nowhere in the sixteenth century. The sudden disappearance of flourishing cities was not unfamiliar to observers in medieval and early–modern India. What explains the disappearance of Nagapatnam from the commercial

[17] Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India, Land Transport*: the map on 76 shows the land routes of South India in the sixteenth century.

landscape of the Indian Ocean? Was it due to a lack of political patronage, migration of merchant communities or a combination of both?

Often it appeared to contemporary travellers that the cities of pre–colonial South Asia had a shifting nature. As we have noted, the Coromandel Coast was not blessed with natural harbours, and ports facing the sea had a precarious existence. The silting up of rivers or changes in the roadstead or migration of merchant groups could lead to a port city's decline. In this context a port city is described as being 'absent' or 'present' on the maritime landscape only in terms of its coverage in contemporaneous literature. Travellers who visited Vijayanagara in this period – Abdur Razzak, Niccolo Conti in the fifteenth century and Dominigo Paes, Fernando Nunez in the sixteenth century – do not mention Nagapatnam.[18] We had discussed in the previous chapter that after the fall of Vijayanagara in the late sixteenth century Pulicat had probably retrograded to a minor port. A similar development, we may assume, had taken place in Nagapatnam too. We will shortly find in this chapter that it was indeed possible for ports to survive as coastal hamlets in Coromandel until they became visible again as a part of the commercial network of a European trading company. In the case of Nagapatnam, the weakening of Chola power had coincided with the migration of merchants to the neighbouring port of Nagore and the port's former connections with South–East Asia had disappeared as well. However, the economic potential of the Kaveri delta, with its rice–growing hinterland and textile industry, was increasingly tapped by administrators of the Vijayanagara Empire from the fifteenth centuy and in the long run this helped in the resurgence of Nagapatnam as a port of Coromandel.

During Vijayanagara rule there was a steady trickle of migration from the Andhra region to the Tamil country. As early as the late fourteenth century, one group of Telugu migrants may have accompanied Kumara Kampana's Tamil campaigns; it is known that by the end of the 1300s a Telugu warrior named Gandaragulu Marayya Nayaka was present in South Arcot, but not all Telugu migrants were part of a larger military movement and many were independent figures. Accompanied by over a thousand people, mostly soldiers and retainers, Ettapa Nayaka of Chandragiri left his native Chittoor district in 1423 due to changing conditions. This war–band settled around Madurai and in the 1560s their descendants constructed the Ettaiyapuram fort in Tirunelveli district. Over the centuries the warrior–peasants were joined by large numbers of Telugu artisans and merchants as part of a migration that peaked between 1400 and 1550. The Telugu migrants settled primarily in areas which were elevated, dry, and often had black soils. Initially subordinate to the Vijayanagara Empire as *nayakas*, over the longer term they established the *nayaka* kingdoms of Gingee,

[18] R.H. Major ed., *India in the Fifteenth Century: Being a Collection of Narratives of Voyages to India* (Delhi: Deep Publications, 1974) covers the accounts of Razzak and Conti; Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar)* (Shannon: Irish University Press, Reprint edition 1972) features the accounts of Paes and Nunez.

Tanjore and Madurai. There was possibly another wave of migration into the Tamil country in the years after 1565.[19]

Noboru Karashima's study of inscriptions reveals how the structure of Vijayanagara rule in the Kaveri delta changed over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the inscriptions on the Srirangam temple, north of Tiruchchirapalli, the king grants villages or remits taxes more frequently in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than in the later period. The king is mentioned in four of the 29 fifteenth–century inscriptions. Although far more inscriptions date from the sixteenth century, the frequency of grants commissioned by the king decreases; only three inscriptions which record royal grants date from the first half of the sixteenth century. There are no cases of grants by the king in the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the sixteenth–century inscriptions refer to a *nayakattanam*, a clearly defined territory bestowed by the king on *nayakas* for their own management – a phenomenon that seems to have begun in Tamil Nadu at the end of the fifteenth century and Karashima argues it was a turning point in Vijayanagara rule. The sixteenth–century inscriptions reveal that many families who had been assigned a *nayakattanam*, such as the Madurai *nayakas*, continued to act as donors for two generations or more. While the involvement of kings and ministers in commissioning land grants and remitting taxes declined during the sixteenth century, the power of locally entrenched lineages of invading Vijayanagara commanders and administrators increased.[20]

Nagapatnam's re–emergence in the sixteenth century was hardly *sui generis*. Behind it lay the layered geopolitical process of expansion of agricultural tracts, their incorporation within the Vijayanagara administration and the linking of inland territories with the maritime world of the Indian Ocean. Nagapatnam's story has striking resemblances with that of Pulicat: both expanded dramatically in the sixteenth century and their integration with the trading circuits of Bay of Bengal was part of a story of imperial expansion, of the prevailing strategies in South Asia that sought to integrate the heartland of empires with the coastal outlets. Arguably, these dynamics impacted equally on several other ports along the coastal landscape of central and southern Coromandel. Let us now turn to the arrival of European companies in the Kaveri delta.

3.3 The economy of Nagapatnam and Kaveri delta in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Sixteenth–century observers

Early sixteenth–century European travelogues touch upon Nagapatnam and the Kaveri delta when describing the different regions of the Indian Ocean. The first to do so is thought to be

---

[19] Cynthia Talbot, *Precolonial India in Practice: Society, Region, and Identity in Medieval Andhra* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001): 197–198.

[20] Noboru Karashima, *Towards a New Formation: South Indian Society under Vijayanagar Rule* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992): 64–66.

the one written by Italian traveller Ludovico Varthema, who refers to a port *Cioromandel*, which John Winter Jones interprets as Nagapatnam:

> The said city is situated opposite to the island of Zeilon, when you have passed the Cape of Cumerin. In this district they gather a great quantity of rice, and it is the route to very large countries. There are many Moorish merchants here who go and come here for their merchandise.[21]

Varthema does not reflect on what sort of merchandise was traded from and to Nagapatnam. There is no doubt that the district he refers to is the Kaveri delta, which produced vast quantities of rice and was connected to Vijayanagara and Malabar. It is possible that Varthema sailed from either Nagapatnam or Nagore to Pegu (now Bago, Myanmar), backing up with personal experience his assertion that Cioromandel was the 'route to very large countries'. As described earlier in this chapter the coastline around the Kaveri delta was also frequented in this period by Arab merchants and Muslim merchants who had settled in Nagore in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Nagapatnam appears in Tomé Pire's list of famous ports of the Vijayanagara Empire in his *Suma Oriental*. As we will find out later, he does more than merely mention the port.[22]

We will now look at the agricultural pattern of and textile production in the Kaveri delta in the sixteenth century. After all, they provided Nagapatnam with its major items of export: rice and textiles.

Agriculture and textile production in the sixteenth century Kaveri delta

Though rice dominates around Tanjore, the agricultural pattern of the delta and its margins is complex. Rice is also the major crop along the northern margins towards the river Vellar, but the Kaveri and Vellar interfluve (a region of higher land between two rivers that is part of the same drainage system) is marked by dry crops including *cumbu* (pearl millet, a grass grown in Africa and India for grains), groundnuts and sugar. Beyond Tiruchchirappalli agriculture is dominated by the *cholam* (sorghum grain) and *ragi* (millet) food crops and the castor bean cash crop. Gram is the leading crop in Karur, on the border of the Kaveri delta and Coimbatore plateau.[23]

Differences between the two ecological and social milieus of South India – the wet south and the dry south – added another layer of complexity to this agricultural picture. The fertile river valleys and deltas of the wet south were the scenes of intensive rice cultivation, while the areas beyond them formed an unsettled world inhabited by martial predators, forest– and hill–dwelling hunter–gatherers and predatory cattle–keeping plainsmen. Distinct

---

[21] John Winter Jones transl., *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India, and Ethiopia* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1863): 186–187.
[22] Armando Cortesao ed., *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, Written in Malacca and India in 1512–1515* (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Edition, 1967): 91.
[23] Spate and Learmonth, *India and Pakistan*: 764–765.

as these two worlds were, the boundaries between them were porous, particularly in areas such as the Kongunad (dry tracts of modern–day Coimbatore and Salem districts) and the Pudukkottai, which formed a frontier between on the one hand the Pandya and Chola cores, and on the other the plains country of Ramnad and Sivaganga to the north of the Tambraparni river. Exchange between the forest fringes and the wet core had been going for centuries, but they intensified from the middle of the fourteenth century.[24]

Although to the west of Pulicat along the river Araniyar were the Palem range and Periya Puliyur forest, and the landscape was generally arid to its north–west around Cuddapah, Pulicat, just like Nagapatnam, can be characterised as part of the wet south, particularly with regard to agricultural production. Majority of annual rainfall along the stretch from Pulicat to Nagapatnam, as we have noted, was concentrated during the retreating north–east monsoon from October to December. Rice, grown along the littoral, the river valleys and in the interior with the help of tanks, was the staple crop in both central and southern Coromandel. There was an important difference though: while central Coromandel had a delicate balance between the demand for and supply of rice because it could export rice in times of good harvests and had to depend on imports of the same when harvests failed, southern Coromandel, especially the Kaveri delta, was reputed to be a rice–surplus zone. As one moves further west from the Kaveri delta, there is a decrease in rainfall and an increase in elevation finally leading to the Kongunad plateau which acts as a conduit of communication with Malabar through the Palghat pass in the Western Ghats. Southwards from the Kaveri delta is the dry belt of south–eastern India in Tirunelveli that was marked by less rainfall, black soil and production of cotton. Pulicat and Nagapatnam– the two ports taken as vantage points to understand the politico–economic axes of central and southern Coromandel– were very much a part of the wet south whose primary agricultural characteristic was intensive rice cultivation. The pace of interaction between the wet zones of Tamil Nadu, such as Pulicat and Nagapatnam, and the dry zones of forests and hills, we may assume, had quickened with the expansion and consolidation of Vijayanagara rule from the fourteenth century.

But in what ways did these contacts shape the world of South India? David Ludden argues that the expansion of farm territories along the coasts connected the sea and the mountains, while sites along the coast were linked by water routes (mainly near the port for ease of access, the rivers of South India were not so navigable inland). As intensive agriculture expanded inland, coastal territories collected commodities from forests, fisheries and wet and dry farmland. Products from the uplands and mountains included timber, pepper and spices; the timber was used to build ships and the pepper and spices were traded overseas. From the twelfth century, farmers also moved north along the river systems to clear dry lands and build new irrigation systems along the Kaveri, Krishna and Godavari rivers – an example being the Kongu (Kongunad) region in the Kaveri basin. The integration of dry farm societies in the

[24] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*: 19, 21, 22–23.

interior with their old counterparts along the irrigated coast had two major effects: together they produced all the raw materials required for weaving; and the sites that were convenient to function as weaving centres. The versatility and mobility of many weaving communities in the peninsula originated in their experiences in the dry zones characterized by military competition, trade and agricultural expansion. These communities connected the black cotton soil of the upland interior and the zones of maritime trade. No wonder, David Ludden argues, that commercialism was so deep–seated in the agricultural discourse of many regions. In the Tamil country, all varieties of land and capital assets became known in local parlance for their commercial value; millets, oilseeds, pulses and cotton were produced in dry lands, and their value varied depending on the soil type. The *nayakas* and other Telugus, with their bulls and rich granaries, controlled the best black soils.[25]

The extension of agriculture into drier zones of the Tamil countryside and the growing networks of trade brought in large quantities of cash, and these changing realities of the economic and sociological realms of the *nayaka* world introduced a hedonistic aspect to their cultural expressions and their courts. The social groups that accompanied the nayakas comprised upwardly mobile entrepreneurs who combined martial and commercial skills. They moved to different regions, engaged in new activities and contributed to the commercialization of their political economy. The *nayaka* kingdoms and the Aravidu state (Aravidu is also often the name given to the dynasty which ruled the shrunken Vijayanagara kingdom from Chandragiri after 1565) earned sales tax from the market towns that had sprung up. They levied customs duties on exports from the ports on the Coromandel Coast and charged light duties on imports, making clear their intentions to promote international trade. The king's public displays of consumption and wealth, in the form of feasts and celebrations of royal splendour, were clear signals of the *nayaka*'s grip on this increasingly monetized environment.[26]

The looms that fed Nagapatnam and Nagore were located within the Kaveri delta (see Map 2.2).[27] In this regard, the port's textile industry more closely resembled that of Masulipatnam's than that of Pulicat, where weaving communities were densely concentrated along the coast. This difference was also reflected in the description of roads and villages. The Dutch surveys of the economy in the Godavari delta had echoes in the Kaveri delta, as we will see later in this chapter and in Chapter 5. The number of weaving centres tended to diminish the nearer one was to Tanjore and Tiruchchirapalli (as shown in Map 2.2, about 1500 AD), thus in a way their density corresponded with the fertility of the soil– as we have noted in this chapter. The spatial distribution of rainfall in the Kaveri delta decreases as one moves westwards from the coast: Nagapatnam–Kumbakonam–Tanjore–Tiruchchirapalli constitute a

[25] David Ludden, *An Agrarian History of South Asia, The New Cambridge History of India,* IV.4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 118–119, 152.
[26] Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 178–180.
[27] Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers*: map on page 7.

decreasing order. But this does not indicate that Tanjore was less fertile. We had discussed in Chapter 2 that the choice of weaving settlements depended on soil types, availability of dyes and ease of access to transport. Another factor that must have also mattered was food security. Fertility of soil ensured decent production of staple food crop (rice) and this, in addition to the aforementioned reasons, helps explain the proliferation of weaving settlements in the Kaveri delta until Tanjore and Tiruchchirapalli, indirectly reflecting on the food security of the region. As we will find later in this chapter and in Chapter 5, the VOC sources also speak of the concentration of weaving settlements westwards from Nagapatnam and Kumbakonam. Similarly, the decreasing number of weaving settlements west of Tanjore and Tiruchchirapalli reflects the ecological conditions of the region. As we have noted, westwards of the Kaveri delta elevation increased leading to the Palghat pass that connected southern Coromandel with Malabar. In this region intensive rice cultivation of the Kaveri delta was replaced by production of sorghum grains, millets and castor beans as cash crops. So, we may say the weaving settlements of the Kaveri delta were a part of the wet south while cotton, the raw material for the industry, came from Tirunelveli– a region that has been characterised as the dry south.

Temples also supported weaving activities. Professional tailors were attached to the Tanjore temple in the Chola Empire,[28] and weavers must also have been attached to the Srirangam temple, north of Tiruchchirapalli. To the north of the Kaveri delta weaving centres proliferated along the Ponnaiyar river and beyond it towards the Palar in central Coromandel. Around Madurai, south of the delta, weaving centres were few and far between.

Stephen points out that in the Kaveri delta of the sixteenth–century, weaving flourished in Tirupullanam, Tillaisthanam, Konerirajapuram, Tiruvidaimarudur, Achutamangalam, Tripattavellur, Nathamangudi, Kandiraditham, Kamarasavalli, Gangaikondacholapuram, Tiruvaigavur, Tiruvalanjuli, Tiruvenkadu, Tirunaithanam, Tirukannapuram, Tanjore, Kapisthalam and Vedarayam. Moreover, heavy Portuguese demand for exports to South–East Asia led the *nayakas* to reclaim forest lands and encouraged the formation of new weaving settlements. It is relevant to the discussion here of changing political structures to recall Stephen's argument that while in the fifteenth century inscriptions record how temple authorities collected loom taxes, in the sixteenth century only nayakas could collect loom taxes, and his conclusion that by this time the *nayakas* more or less controlled weaving in Coromandel.[29]

Painting on textiles was an integral part of textile production. Jón Ólafsson, an Icelandic traveller to South India in the seventeenth century, describes the process of painting on clothes:

---

[28] Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers*: 17.
[29] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: 70, 73–74, 75.

> They are skilful in every kind of weaving and painting and dyeing their cotton cloth with every kind of colour, for which purpose they have long houses without walls, within which are tables as long as the houses, and on them they have their pots of all colours and their brushes or pens, with which they mark and draw on all the cotton cloth and silk which they intend to dye. Their brushes are made of hog's bristles, and are both large and small; and with these they have great skill and artistry in making all kinds of pictures on the cloth.[30]

Vijaya Ramaswamy points out that Nagore had served as the port for those textiles that were produced in the region around Tanjore in the sixteenth century, while Nagapatnam acquired similar status in the early seventeenth century. The seventeenth century traders of Nagapatnam were Muslims and Chettis who profited from their trade with Aceh, Mocha and the Persian Gulf.[31] In *Suma Oriental* Tomé Pires points out that textiles from the Coromandel Coast, particularly the Kaveri delta region around Nagapatnam, had a good market in Sunda – various kinds of clothes, both printed and white, were sold there. In *Suma Oriental* the Coromandel is referred to as *Bonua Qlim* (or *Bonuaqelim* or *Benuaqelim*) from *Bonua* meaning land in Malay and *Qlim* or *Quelim* being a corruption of the Malayalam 'Kling'. The Portuguese applied this nomenclature to those merchants who came from the Coromandel Coast to trade and settle in Malacca.[32]

The textile industry of the Kaveri delta became increasingly specialized in catering for markets in mainland and maritime South–East Asia. In the sixteenth century, the *nayakas* in Tanjore, Madurai and Gingee hardly had any autonomy and were feudatories of Vijayanagara. However, by the seventeenth century all three became autonomous, though they still acknowledged the suzerainty of Vijayanagara.[33] This resonates with Noboru Karamshima's analysis of the inscriptions in Srirangam temple described earlier in this chapter, which he interprets as pointing to debilitating authority and presence of the Vijayanagara emperor in the Tamil country. Nagapatnam's resurgence in the sixteenth century was, therefore, as much a result of patronage from the Tanjore *nayakas* as it was of the Portuguese presence. While the Portuguese connected the port to South–East Asia and indirectly caused it to be better documented due to the increase in visiting travellers, the patronage of Tanjore *nayakas* was crucial to connecting the disperse regions in a well–knit economy looking out towards the ocean.

In a nutshell, the economy of the region around sixteenth–century Nagapatnam was characterized by cultivation of rice and textile production. Unsurprisingly, both were major

---

[30] Dame Bertha Phillpotts transl., *The Life of the Icelander Jón Ólafsson Traveller to India: Written by Himself and Completed about 1661 A.D. with a Continuation, by Another Hand, up to His Death in 1679, vol. II* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1932): 142–144.
[31] Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers*: 79–80, 134.
[32] Cortesao ed., *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*: 169, see 92 for Bonuaqelim.
[33] Mukund, *The Trading World of the Tamil Merchant*: 43, 54.

features of Nagapatnam's overseas trade; in the seventeenth century they were shipped initially from Pulicat and later from Nagapatnam itself. The rice economy can be split into two components: the huge volumes of rice cultivated in the Kaveri delta (the region maintained a surplus even during wars and poor monsoons in other parts of Coromandel); and the associated export of rice from Nagapatnam to Malabar, Ceylon and other parts of Coromandel.

Nagapatnam, Malabar and Ceylon

From a politico–economic standpoint, the connections with Malabar and Ceylon set apart Nagapatnam and the Kaveri delta from the other two port–hinterland complexes discussed in this dissertation, and this difference became quite prominent during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns, as Chapter 5 shows. The geographical proximity of southern Coromandel and Ceylon meant it was easy for larger and smaller vessels to ply trade between these regions. Vessels also sailed from the ports of southern Coromandel, including Nagapatnam, around the southernmost tip of India westwards to Malabar; the Kaveri delta was also linked with Malabar through the passes in the Western Ghats. Good agricultural production here ensured more food security than in other parts of Coromandel: the delta remained a rice–surplus region throughout Aurangzeb's campaigns and rice was a staple item of coastal trade with Ceylon and Malabar. The section on historiography in the introductory chapter characterizes coastal trade as being more immune to political instability and wars in in South India than in other regions of the sub–continent. Chapter 5 shows that the Kaveri delta was relatively resilient during Aurangzeb's military campaigns and that the overland routes between the delta and Malabar, removed as they were from the zones of Mughal military action, also remained unaffected. Controlling the overland and maritime routes from the Kaveri delta to Malabar and Ceylon offered significant politico–military leverage to any state based in southern Coromandel. The Cholas had benefitted from just such a position in the eleventh century; wealth could be tapped from the trade between the eastern and western littorals of India and with Ceylon, as well as from the connections established by merchants trading between the Arabian Sea and the ports of South–East Asia.

Ceylon traded with Malabar and Coromandel along an arc extending from Travancore through Madurai and Tanjore to Madras and Pulicat. The scale and nature of this trade was quite varied, and it was served by everything from substantial ocean–going vessels to single–masted *thonies* (or *toni*, large flat–bottomed boats common to Coromandel and Ceylon, mentioned in Chapter 1). Coromandel–based Chetty and Chulia merchants stopped off at Ceylon on their voyages between the Red Sea and the Indonesian archipelago. The main Muslim players in this commerce were large–scale traders and small–scale pedlars from Quilon, Kayalpatnam, Ramnad, Nagapatnam and Nagore. While the blood relatives of Muslim merchants from the aforementioned ports had settled in the Ceylonese towns of Puttalam, Mannar, Galle and Batticaloa, some other merchants resided dually in Ceylon and India for long periods. Chetty Hindu traders figured in large numbers and Chetty families had settled

for long periods in ports such as Colombo, Galle and Jaffna, with Tamil Hindus in Jaffna acting as their brokers and agents.

This trade was crucial for the peasant economy of Ceylon because it brought from Coromandel textiles of many kinds: coarser varieties for the peasants; dyed and painted varieties for women; and finely woven clothing for the richer sections of the population. Another major commodity exported from the Kaveri delta to Ceylon was rice, which compensated for the shortages of food supplies. In return Ceylon's major export items to India included areca nuts, coconut and its by–products, coir ropes and fibres, palmyrah wood and handicrafts of local artisans. Elephants from Ceylon were also exported in large numbers to South India. The main ports had markets where elephants were sold at auction to Indian merchants operating on behalf of rulers. Though the Portuguese made this trade a state monopoly, they did not engage in it because they found it difficult to transport the large beasts and anyway had no access to the inland markets of India.[34]

The Portuguese began to settle in Nagapatnam in the sixteenth century. Sanjay Subrahmanyam writes that the rice exported from the Kaveri delta ports served as ballast in vessels trading to Aceh. Nagapatnam also supplied rice to the west coast of Ceylon, Jaffna and, for much of the sixteenth century, southern Malabar. This trade was probably oriented primarily towards Ceylon and the profits of the rice trade to Jaffna induced Portuguese *casados* (married Portuguese settlers) to settle in Nagapatnam in the first half of the sixteenth century. A considerable part of this trade supplied the Portuguese garrisons and was hence controlled by the administration, but private traders had a good share too. They exported rice to Ceylon and imported large quantities of areca, cinnamon, timber and elephants from the island. In the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese tended to settle in and around the bustling port of Pulicat, but this pattern changed from the 1530s when two nuclei developed: one was a complex in central Coromandel incorporating Pulicat and San Thomé, and another, in southern Coromandel, encompassed the Kaveri delta around Nagapatnam. The Portuguese were also engaged in the coastal trade to Pulicat in this period. They operated alongside Marakkayars (a subdivision of the Tamil Muslims of Coromandel),[35] the principal commercial group in Nagapatnam, on small profit margins and small individual consignments in trade. By 1600, Nagapatnam was the dominant port in southern Coromandel and was linked to ports in Bengal (mainly Hughli and Chittagong); Martaban; the Malay peninsula ports of Ujangselang, Trang, Kedah and Perak; Aceh; and the ports of the Sunda Strait.[36]

The Portuguese crown did not approve of the settlers in sixteenth–century Nagapatnam. Nevertheless, they continued to trade in rice. Trigo de Almeida, one of the

[34] For the last two paragraphs see Sinnappah Arasaratnam, 'Ceylon in the Indian Ocean Trade: 1500–1800', in: *India and the Indian Ocean 1500–1800,* ed. Ashin Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1987): 225,227 for the elephant trade, 231–232.
[35] See glossary in Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 391.
[36] Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*: 53, 105, 190–191.

captains of Nagapatnam, procured rice from the hinterland and merchants such as Diogo Fernandez Pereira supplied rice regularly in 1586. The profits earned from this trade enabled the Portuguese settlers of Nagapatnam to build houses of stone in 1594. As a part of the trade between the eastern and western coasts of India, Portuguese ships annually carried more than 20,000 measures of rice from Nagapatnam. This port city was also situated at one end of another axis of domestic trade: the overland routes. As explained in the introductory chapter, indigenous merchants defied attempts by the Portuguese and the Dutch to establish a monopoly on the trade of pepper by transporting it overland from Malabar to Coromandel. Pepper was smuggled from Quilon to the Coromandel Coast through Vilinjam, Aryankavu and Puthura. An alternative route crossed the Western Ghats via the Palghat pass and Pudukkottai in Coimbatore district (Kongunad plateau). A lucrative trade, it attracted Portuguese traders in no small measure. A Portuguese resident of Cochin named Antonio Mendes traded with Nagapatnam, while another, Jose Fernandes Correa, left Cochin permanently to settle in Nagapatnam. The efforts of the Estado da India in Goa to blockade the smuggling of pepper into Coromandel failed.[37]

In part, the smuggling of pepper overland across the passes to Nagapatnam was also an act of resistance to the Portuguese monopoly by Muslim merchant groups in Malabar. Muslim merchants from Malabar known as *mappila* moved inland to explore alternative outlets and the route from Calicut to Nagapatnam seems to have been particularly effective, argues Sebastian Prange. Once it had reached the Coromandel Coast, this pepper found its way to Masulipatnam, Bengal and the ports of South–East Asia.[38]

The VOC and Nagapatnam

In what was partly a repetition of Chola military campaigns, in the second half of the seventeenth century the VOC focused on Nagapatnam's connections with Malabar and Ceylon with a view to establishing their control over the southern coastline of India. They traded in the principal export commodities of the Kaveri delta, rice and textiles, to forge commercial links with Ceylon and South–East Asia. Just like the Portuguese, the VOC shipped rice from Nagapatnam to their garrisons in Ceylon, but the primary attraction for the Dutch in southern Coromandel was, as in other regions of this littoral, textiles. Here we will trace the early Dutch expeditions around Nagapatnam, and look at how they established themselves along this coastline and strove to organize production of textiles.

The Dutch arrived on the Coromandel Coast at the turn of the seventeenth century. Their commercial reconnoitres in the early seventeenth century provide us with details of what textiles were produced around Nagapatnam and to where they were shipped. A Dutch report records that cotton textiles from Nagapatnam had a good market in Banda, Amboina

[37] Stephen, *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland*: 116–118.

[38] Sebastian R. Prange, '"Measuring by the bushel": reweighing the Indian Ocean pepper trade', *Historical Research* 84, 224 (2011): 231.

(Ambon island) and Siam but only lists the varieties that were shipped to Banda (in this case five in number).[39] The varieties being shipped to Siam were quite possibly omitted from the report because it was written when this country did not feature prominently in the VOC game plan at that point, which sought to link Coromandel with the Indonesian archipelago. After establishing factories in northern and central Coromandel, prominent among which were Masulipatnam and Pulicat, the VOC consolidated their position in the first half of the seventeenth century. By the 1630s, Dutch interests had shifted on a pan–Asian scale from China and Japan to South Asia, where the most important commodities to be procured were cinnamon in Ceylon and pepper in Malabar. Allying with the kingdom of Kandy, the Dutch waged wars against the Portuguese in Ceylon. An inconclusive struggle between the two parties continued for more than two decades, but in 1656 Colombo fell to the Dutch after a successful siege. Two years later the VOC conquered the Portuguese strongholds of Jaffna and Mannar in the north of Ceylon. In a bid to completely secure Ceylon against the Portuguese Estado the Dutch drove their expansion on to Malabar where Quilon (1661), Cranganore (1662) and Cochin (1663) fell in rapid succession.[40] Nagapatnam (1658) had also been captured by the Dutch as a part of this concerted strategy. As mentioned above, this was partly a rerun of the pattern of Chola naval campaigns – securing the coastline of the far south was crucial to controlling Ceylon and dominating the shipping of the Malabar Coast.

It could not be said that the VOC had a peaceful time of it after their victory over the Portuguese. Using the Dutch occupation of Nagapatnam as a pretext to expel all Europeans, the *nayaka* of Tanjore besieged the city. However, the Dutch defeated him and extracted an order which conceded to them the city and the ten neighbouring villages previously held by the Portuguese. At this, the inhabitants of these villages came under the jurisdiction of the Dutch and the nayaka also exempted the Dutch from all customs duties at the port. Occupied mostly by weavers of the *kaikolar* caste (alternate spelling *kaikkolar*) but partly also by members of the *seniar*, *saliar* and *chedar* castes, the villages of Puravachery, Naranamangalam, Sangamangalam and Manjikudi produced cloth for the markets in Bantam and Aceh. The merchants of Nagapatnam and Nagore drew their textiles from villages in the interior such as Sikkal, Aliyur and Tevur. Other settlements in the interior also producing cotton goods included Alivalam, Pulivalam, Kariangudy, Mapilaikuppam and Poondotum. Unlike Masulipatnam, Pulicat and Madras, the southern Coromandel ports had no great markets for local consumption of luxury goods; Tanjore, Madurai and Tirunelveli had no social classes who could afford such items. The major internal markets dealt in textiles as well as raw materials and staples such as metals, rice, other food grains, pepper and spices. The raw cotton was produced in the upper Kaveri region around modern–day Bangalore, Mysore and Kaveripakkam, which along with the black–soil tracts of upper Madurai and Tirunelveli supplied the centres of southern Coromandel. Ariyalur, to the south–west of Porto Novo, had

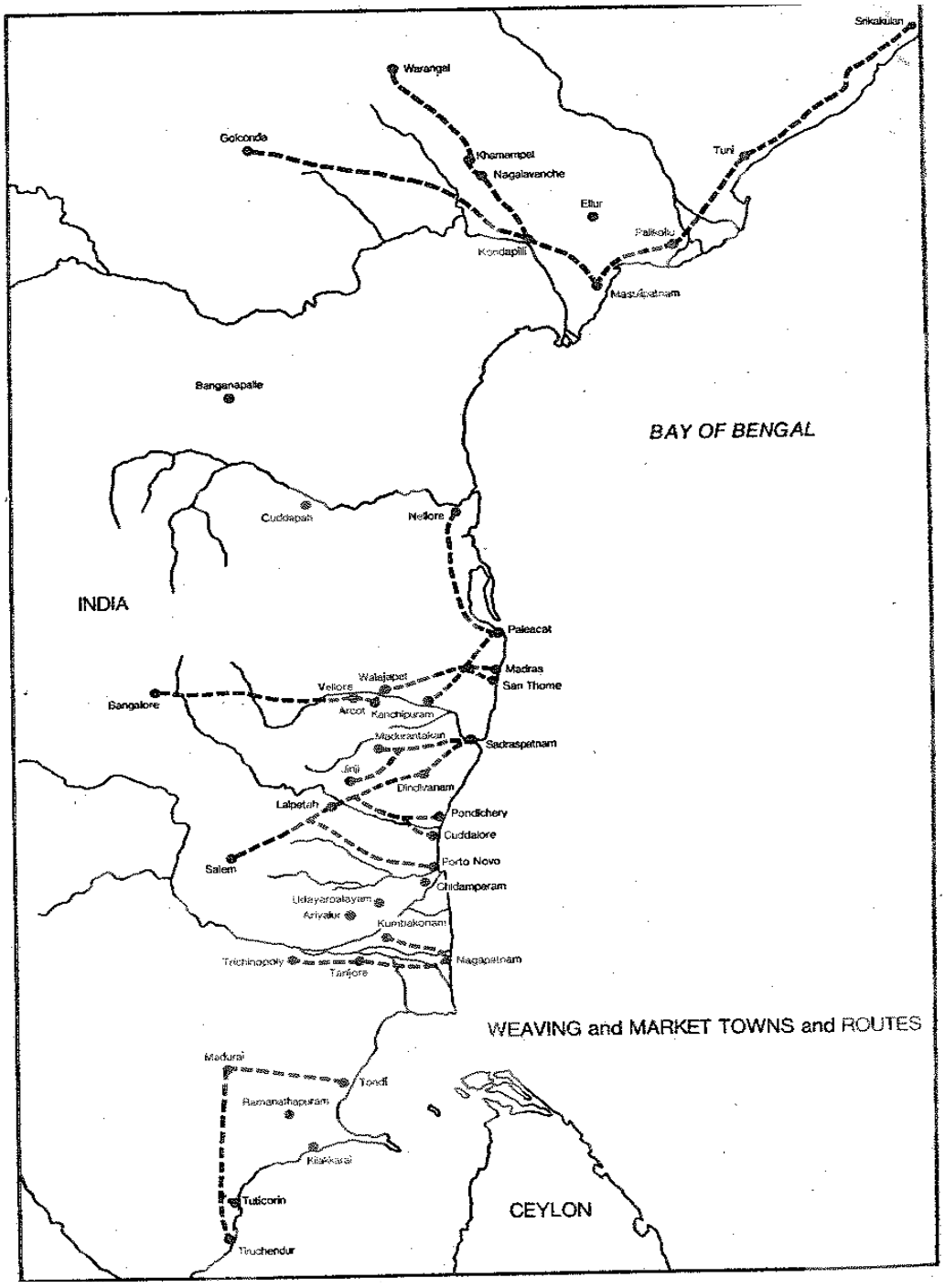
[39] NA VOC 7525, Information on various lands and islands of the East Indies, and on what merchandise was traded there: f. 99r.–f. 100r.
[40] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant–Warrior Pacified*: 27, 30-31, 37–38.

a cotton market which supplied Tanjore. In 1661 the VOC were freed from half of the tolls in all parts of the kingdom and the nayaka also confirmed their right to mint coins in Nagapatnam. Five years later the Dutch were leased the port of Tirumulapatnam, about ten miles (17km) north of Nagapatnam and four neighbouring villages.[41]

The following map shows how routes connected Nagapatnam to the markets inland.

[41] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 59–63, 71.

Map 3.4 Weaving centres and markets of southern Coromandel[42]



[42] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 59, 60–61, 62–63, 71; for textile production in the Kaveri delta, the VOC and cotton growing regions, see map on page 62.

The routes to inland markets ran in two axes westwards from Nagapatnam, one through Kumbakonam to Ariyalur and Udayaroalayam and another to Tanjore and Tiruchchirapalli. We encountered Tirumalairayanpattinam earlier in this chapter as a port that was developed by a governor of the Vijayanagara Empire and we speculated whether it had disappeared from the coastline following a weakening of Vijayanagara authority. But, as we this chapter will show, it had not disappeared. In fact the VOC leased the port and the textile–producing villages around it. This case helps us understand how it could be that in certain periods Nagapatnam, too, seemingly vanished from the landscape, as evidenced by its absence from the map of routes in Vijayanagara in the sixteenth century (Map 3.3). Weakening of political authority did not necessarily translate into immediate demise for a port. Unless silting completely blocked the mouth of the river that connected it to the sea, a port could survive despite weakening of political patronage as a minor port. The appearance on the scene of new political patrons and investments by merchants could give these maritime settlements a fresh lease of life. This also aligns with the explanation offered in the case of Pulicat (Chapter 2). Chapter 5 will again demonstrate how indigenous political authorities in central and southern Coromandel would invite in European companies such as the VOC as a strategy to revive stagnant maritime settlements. Let us now resume our discussion of textile production in the Kaveri delta organized by that trading company.

By 1663 the weavers residing in the villages leased to the VOC were producing *ramboutijns* (coarse cotton cloth) and other suppliers too brought this variety to Nagapatnam. The Dutch also procured *chialoups* and *tapesaras* (or *pintadoes* or painted cloth, worn as skirt) for export to South–East Asia. Rice continued to be exported from Nagapatnam and during famines the Dutch transported slaves too, when people sold themselves off to the Dutch to escape death through starvation.[43] The Dutch in Nagapatnam organized the merchants supplying textiles to them into joint–stock companies, just as they had done in Pulicat. In 1665 companies of this type were formed by the dyers of Nagapatnam and Nagore, the weavers of Puravacheri and Tirumalairayanpattinam and the merchants of Nagapatnam and Tevanampattinam.[44]

Surviving contracts concluded over a period of ten days in 1665 give us an insight into how the VOC negotiated with dyers and weavers: they were required to work full time and usually obliged to accept terms that gave the VOC the right to punish them if they violated the contract. On 17 April 1665 the Dutch finalized two contracts, one with the dyers of Nagapatnam and Nagore and one with the weavers of Puravacheri. In return for a guaranteed flow of work the dyers – seventeen from Nagapatnam and three from Nagore – agreed to dye clothes of all kinds brought to them by the VOC's merchants and not to dye clothes for anyone

[43] NA VOC 1242, Memoir of succession from Laurens Pit, governor of Coromandel to Cornelis Speelman: f. 798v.–f. 799r.
[44] Mukund, *The Trading World of the Tamil Merchant*: 73.

else. Any clothes found to have been dyed for other merchants, would be confiscated by the Dutch. The weavers of Puravacheri and Manjikulam were contracted on similar terms and conditions.[45] In each of these three cases the Dutch interpreters in Pulicat and Nagapatnam stood as witnesses while the weavers signed the contracts. On 24 April 1665 the VOC contracted the dyers of Tirumalapattinam (or Tirumalairayanpattinam) to work for them on similar terms.[46]

Two important clauses set out the corresponding terms covering the VOC's duty to the workers, and the workers' duty to the VOC. The weavers' desire for the security of constant work may have had its origins in the abundant availability of skilled labour; weavers, painters and dyers were present in large numbers who could produce clothes for the export markets of mainland and maritime South–East Asia. The English and French East India Companies also had their settlements in central and southern Coromandel and also exported textiles. Given the large pool of skilled labour these markets attracted, producers of textiles would always be keen to be in regular work. For the VOC's part the competition with the English and French to secure as much of the coastline as possible for themselves may have led to fears that the weavers could sell their products to other European companies or even the indigenous merchants who operated at much lower rates of profit.

The Dutch were always on the lookout to tap and map the hinterland of Nagapatnam towards Tanjore. In 1679 the VOC bookkeeper at Nagapatnam Jan Sweers was assigned to collect information on the condition of the weaving industry and draw a map showing the villages where clothes for export to South–East Asia were woven. It is thanks to his report that we have some idea the situation in the hinterland.

[45] NA VOC 1254, Contract dated 27.04.1665 made by Cornelis Speelman, governor of Coromandel, with the weavers of Puravachery: f. 557r.–f. 558r., for the contract with weavers of Manjikulam see f. 559r.
[46] NA VOC 1254, Contract dated 24.04.1665 made by Cornelis Speelman with the dyers of Tirumalapattinam: f. 553r.–f. 554r.

Table 3.1 Weaving villages in the Kaveri delta[47]

Village	Remarks
Puravachery	Held in lease by the VOC, inhabited by weavers
Small villages en route to Kumbakonam	Inhabited by peasants, merchants and weavers; guinea cloth and salempores were woven here
Kumbakonam, Karpur, Marachery, Solawaron, Tirimangalakudi, Tailokse, Adsedori, Kongirirajpuram, Nachiguyi, Valangunal, Malimangalan, Ajapaddi, Trimatsuram, Patrisuram, Mellarduri, Papanasam, Chindripurmalkuyi, Teriparmi	During Jan Sweer's visit, Rangappa, the VOC agent, revealed that earlier these villages used to produce cloth for inland markets, but he (and thus the VOC) had persuaded the weavers to produce guinea cloth and salempores (varieties traded by the VOC in the Indian Ocean). Together these villages had 905 looms that produced cloth for the VOC. Most looms were concentrated in Kumbakonam (250), a village inhabited by 8000–9000 households of merchants, weavers and peasants. Sweers estimated that together these villages could produce about 2715 pieces of guinea cloth.
Pandanalur	Fortified with moats and walls of stone, about 300 households, inhabited mostly by peasants and few weavers
Wiraboge/ Veerabhoga	Inhabited by weavers
Millitopechery	Inhabited by weavers
Goudasoleijwaron (Gujaliwaron?)	Inhabited by weavers
Paliyam	Inhabited by weavers
Udiyur	Inhabited by weavers; at Udiyur Jan Sweers met a textile merchant named Paliappa who revealed that Veerabhoge, Millitopechery, Goudasoleijwaron, Paliyam and Udiyur together housed about 300 weavers households which used to produce cloth earlier for Porto Novo and Trimalavas, but now were willing to weave guinea cloth, i.e., a variety traded by the VOC in the Indian Ocean
Troualapongoil	A village to the west of Trimalavas, about 100 households, mostly weavers

This is a snapshot of limited scale. The area north–west from Nagapatnam towards Kumbakonam was dotted with multiple textile weaving villages, some of which were mentioned but not detailed by Jan Sweers in his itinerary. We only get as far as the travelogues and the archives of the East India companies allow us. Despite their usefulness, for our purposes the letters and reports of the VOC have an inherent flaw: they tend to list only those villages which could offer profits for the textile trade to South–East Asia. This refers to the tendency of VOC surveys to provide details of those villages which wove textiles that the Dutch could trade to South–East Asia and not proffer information on economic conditions of other villages. For instance, while travelling to the west of Nagapatnam, Jan Sweers passed through several villages but there he found nothing worthy of note or interesting for the

[47] NA VOC 1349, Report made by Jan Sweers to Pieter Vorwer, commander of Nagapatnam about his findings in Kumbakonam, Ariyalur etc.: f. 1401v.–f. 1404r.

VOC.[48] Nonetheless, as we found in the chapters on Masulipatnam and Pulicat, the VOC surveys tell us of a hinterland that was closely linked with the economy of the Indian Ocean, a zone of economic production where a degree of specialization had been developed to suit export demands.

We had discussed in Chapter 2 there was a wide pool of resources in Coromandel, in terms of weaving settlements, weavers and dyers, that could be tapped by the VOC (or for that matter any other European trading company); a lot depended on the ability of the VOC officials and their middlemen to successfully forge connections between the coast and the hinterland. Apart from the examples of Rangappa, the VOC agent in Kumbakonam, and Paliappa, the textile merchant whom Jan Sweers had met in Udiyur, Sweers' report of his trip to the Kaveri delta points to another such attempt at integrating textile production inland with the operations of the VOC. At Udiyur, Sweers met five textile merchants who had earlier unsuccessfully sought to supply cloth to Tegenapatnam (a port in southern Coromandel, to the north of Nagapatnam). These merchants, Nilande Chetti, Peritambi Moddaly, Mananada Moddaly, Chimawa Moddaly and Malperumal, gave a written declaration to the VOC that neither did they owe any money to merchants in Tegenapatnam, nor were they bound by any other contract and they were willing to supply textiles to the VOC in Nagapatnam.[49] Above all, Sweers' report tells us of a hinterland where indigenous textile merchants were keen to integrate the weaving industry of the Kaveri delta with the maritime networks of the VOC in the Indian Ocean.

The historiography of European impact on the early–modern Indian Ocean world has moved on a long way from K. M. Panikkar's Vasco da Gama epoch which implied a complete European domination of Asian shipping. Later studies by Ashin Das Gupta, M. N. Pearson, K. N. Chaudhuri, Sinnappah Arasaratnam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have confuted that idea; Indian merchants did not disappear from the face of the ocean upon the arrival of Europeans. In many cases they actually co–operated with these newcomers and held on to their own business because they could afford to trade on lower profit margins. The latest work to contribute to this argument is a monograph by Ravi Arvind Palat, who argues that the participation of Portuguese and northern European trading companies did not fundamentally alter the emerging networks of trade in the Indian Ocean, or what Palat calls the 'Southern Ocean'.[50]

The Kaveri delta, like other parts of the Coromandel Coast, was a highly monetised environment where textiles had to be paid for in cash. After the arrival of the Portuguese and northern European trading companies, bullion flowed into South Asia from two sources: the

[48] NA VOC 1349, Report made by Jan Sweers to Pieter Vorwer, commander of Nagapatnam about his findings in Kumbakonam, Ariyalur etc.: f. 1402r.
[49] NA VOC 1349, Report made by Jan Sweers to Pieter Vorwer, commander of Nagapatnam about his findings in Kumbakonam, Ariyalur etc.: f. 1404r.–f. 1404v.
[50] Palat*, The Making of an Indian Ocean World–Economy*: 156.

older route was from Europe and Mediterranean via the Levant, while new silver from the Americas arrived via either the Cape of Good Hope or the Pacific Ocean. Production processes, Palat writes, were slowly being integrated within an emerging Indian Ocean world economy. The Europeans were not solely responsible for this. Merchants from the Indian subcontinent, of varying economic capacities, participated in the oceanic commerce and conveyed bullions to the Coromandel Coast. Consequently, textile manufacturing on the Coromandel Coast was restructured to meet demands arising out of increased commercial exchange. The VOC would dish out money to their chief merchants who took care of the orders of clothes. The incessant wars following the decline of Vijayanagara impacted on towns and cities, so textile producers moved to the villages. Eventually, Palat argues, settlements where textiles were manufactured closely hugged the European settlements in Coromandel.[51]

While indigenous shipping continued to thrive in this new environment the arrival of European trading companies did lead to the establishment and development certain ports that were exclusively company preserves where little indigenous shipping was permitted. A case in point, as noted earlier, was Pulicat. Indian traders here had little choice but to shift their operations to other ports. Arasaratnam argues that the same happened to Nagapatnam. As the Dutch clamped down on the presence of commercial rivals in the port, increasing numbers of indigenous merchants moved to neighbouring Nagore, which almost certainly offered incentives to weavers and dyers to produce clothes for markets overseas. In the 1670s a Maratha dynasty took over Tanjore and its new ruler Ekoji attacked the villages around Nagapatnam and besieged the port. Reinforced from Ceylon, the Dutch defeated him and by the treaty of 1676 they had won back all the concessions they had been enjoying before Ekoji's rule. In the wake of Mughal wars in Coromandel, in 1690 the VOC transferred their headquarters of Coromandel from Pulicat to Nagapatnam,[52] a decision that reflected their tendency to move away from zones affected by warfare.

3.4 Regional response to political instability and wars

This section looks at the long–term characteristics of the Kaveri delta and Nagapatnam through the prism of wars and political instability in the region. The first obvious characteristic about Nagapatnam that strikes us is the long but discontinuous 800–year recorded history of the port. What was a premier Chola port in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries was, by the fourteenth century, possibly no more than a fishing village. Its later revival and regeneration was closely associated with the emergence of *nayakas* during Vijayanagara rule, *nayaka* establishment of control over the agrarian resources in the region and the emergence of European settlements – first the Portuguese and then the Dutch. With their dominance, indigenous shipping moved to the neighbouring port of Nagore. At one point in the sixteenth century Nagapatnam straddled the trading worlds of both South–East Asia and the Middle East – the latter thanks to Muslim merchants. So, what information can we glean from the

[51] Palat, *The Making of an Indian Ocean World-Economy*: 185–186, 189, 202–205.
[52] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 28–29, 71–72.

historical sources that sheds light on the effects of war on the resilience of the political economy in the Kaveri delta?

Two broad patterns of movement can be identified in the regional impact and political reshuffling caused by *nayaka* military campaigns in the Tamil country: some populations filled the vacuum created by military expansion while others fled from areas disrupted by war. The former process had also taken place in the fourteenth century in northern Deccan when Muhammed bin Tughlaq tried to make Daulatabad an administrative centre; the latter process is perhaps one we more readily associate with war. These movements and the establishment of military camps eventually led to the creation of permanent towns, an example being Arcot. Though wars disrupted economic life, the settling of regions by immigrants could also offer fresh economic investments. It was not only the influx of conquering armies or people accompanying them that could slowly cause economic shifts in a region, because the flight of rural population from a disrupted area to a relatively peaceful one could also act as an economic catalyst. The relative food security in the Kaveri delta made it a natural destination for migrants fleeing wars. We can assume that the flight of weaving groups from other parts of Coromandel to the Kaveri delta boosted the weaving industry in southern Coromandel.

Fortified seats of power also acted as commercial centres in the Coromandel and, as detailed in previous chapters, political patronage and trade went hand in glove. The Dutch had captured Nagapatnam from the Portuguese and they had no intention of relinquishing this prized possession. The VOC in Nagapatnam displayed an unambiguous tendency to protect their trade by force – as witnessed by two conflicts in which they defeated the king of Tanjore and then Maratha forces. The port's position close to Ceylon and Malabar was of crucial strategic importance for the VOC in its efforts to control the southern coastline. The transfer of the Dutch capital of Coromandel from Pulicat to Nagapatnam in the wake of Mughal invasion and the repair works of the fort under the supervision of Hendrik Adriaan van Reede reflected a common trend during wars: the movement away from zones of conflict to less affected regions. Ultimately, however, the Mughal siege of Gingee brought war uncomfortably close to Nagapatnam.

To what extent did the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's southern campaigns displace the population of the Kaveri delta? How did Nagapatnam fare when the Mughal campaigns moved south in 1689? Could the Dutch continue to penetrate inland to procure textiles or was the production simply limited to the area in and around the fort? These and other questions will be explored in Chapter 5.

Conclusion to Part I

This preliminary conclusion sums up the major findings of the last three chapters and summarizes the differences between the port–hinterland complexes discussed so far in terms of three themes: ecology, political economy and resilience to wars.

Ecology

The common binding factors in Coromandel were the two monsoon regimes and the heavy reliance on tank irrigation which sustained agriculture away from the coastal plains and river valleys. The major sea ports on the Coromandel Coast were located at the mouths of river deltas: Masulipatnam (Godavari delta) and Nagapatnam (Kaveri delta). The coastal plains which provided gaps in the Eastern Ghats were ubiquitous in Coromandel – Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri.

Masulipatnam in northern Coromandel was marshy and swampy, and cyclones in this area could be particularly devastating. The humidity and the flood–prone character of the Godavari delta meant cotton produced in eastern Deccan was unsuitable for production of textiles and unless the monsoon had been poor, farmers did not bother to grow cotton. The principal crop here was rice. South of the Krishna delta rainfall fluctuated. Jowar was the main crop on the border of Andhra and Tamil Nadu around dry Nellore, a region whose oxen were renowned as sturdy draught animals. There was hardly any clash between cultivation and weaving. The latter was a specialized occupation, as Dutch surveys demonstrate.

The two cropping seasons in the Tamil country were from June to September and October to January. There was extensive rice cultivation in central Coromandel along the river valleys and – with the help of tanks – inland. But agriculture in this region was nonetheless characterized by a delicate balance between the demand for and supply of rice: in years of good harvests it acted as a rice exporter while after poor harvests rice had to be imported to satisfy the demand from manufacturing towns and villages. Since the coastline had two monsoons, however, the chance of a total rice crop failure was minimal.

The Kaveri delta was prone to floods and produced rice in abundance. Rainfall decreases beyond Tanjore in the west of the delta, where the soil comprises alluvium and coastal sands. In areas of higher elevation, such as interfluves, the main crops were millets and sugar. South of the Kaveri, in the ‘dry southeast’, Madurai and Tirunelveli provided cotton for the delta’s textile industry. To the west, beyond the Coimbatore plateau, are the passes in the Western Ghats that led to Malabar, forming a trade route that has been in use for perhaps two millennia.

Political economies

Each of the three port–hinterland complexes discussed in the first three chapters exhibited significant differences in the political economy. Chapter 1 showed that the Andhra delta in northern Coromandel was the terminal point of trade routes from western India and that Masulipatnam was, first and foremost, an imperial centre. As an economic entrepot, it

successfully connected the west and east of the Deccan with the Indian Ocean – a factor that European companies found attractive. The Qutb Shahis extended control here through portfolio–capitalism, a strategy whereby political figures combined their governmental role with economic functions and invested in overland and maritime commerce. The Masulipatnam port–hinterland complex extended more deeply inland than that of either of its counterparts Pulicat or Nagapatnam and the textile industry here drew its raw materials mainly from the west of the Deccan – cotton was transported along the Godavari to the villages in its delta to the west of Masulipatnam, and spices imported from South–East Asia were conveyed to western and northern India via Hyderabad.

Pulicat owed its early rise and fall to the fortunes of the Vijayanagara Empire and the restrictive effects of the Estado da India's concession system; when the Empire went into decline Pulicat shrank back to the size of a small village. Dutch patronage in the seventeenth century turned the settlement around, restored its ties with its textile–producing hinterland of central Coromandel and re–established it as a local centre and port. After the fall of Vijayanagara, political patronage in this region came from the *nayaka* states, which expanded agriculture and settled ports to boost their economies.

The logistics of textile production in central Coromandel were quite different from those found in northern Coromandel. Masulipatnam drew from production sources deep in its hinterland, while production for export from Pulicat was more concentrated around the port itself. The weaving villages that produced for export were located near the coast because of ease of access and proximity to ports and settlements that produced for inland trade were located off the highways. The frequency of temple towns increases as we move further south beyond the Krishna. As noted in the introductory chapter the Mughal chronicler Bhimsen commented on this feature of the Tamil country in *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*. Temple towns such as Tirupati and Kanchipuram supported weaving by providing accommodation for weavers. They also exercised control over rice cultivation, acted as centres to change currency and were fixed nodal points as pilgrimage centres on long–distance routes.

Although Nagapatnam, like Pulicat, was an exclusively Dutch enclave and a local centre that shipped textiles produced in its hinterland, it had a far longer history that can be dated back to the eleventh century when, as a premier Chola port, it was connected to South–East Asia. The port disappeared from the records in the fourteenth century and its re–emergence in the seventeenth century was the product of a geopolitical and economic expansion similar to the one that shaped Pulicat. *Nayaka* states connected the dry and wet farming societies of Tamil Nadu. Cotton came from near Mysore, upper Madurai and Tirunelveli, and the textile industry that fed Nagapatnam was located along the Kaveri delta and resembled Masulipatnam's in this regard. Another characteristic shared by Nagapatnam and Masulipatnam is the survival of village surveys made by the VOC, which restored Nagapatnam's connections with South–East Asia; we do not have many such surveys for Pulicat. As in Pulicat, however, the VOC in Nagapatnam established control over production

processes by setting up joint–stock companies of suppliers and binding the weavers on rigid contracts that threatened punishment for violation of their conditions. Overall, Nagapatnam's close connections with Ceylon and Malabar helped it remain more immune to shocks of military invasions from the north.

With this in mind, let us now turn to the final section to construct a hypothesis about how these three port–hinterland complexes responded in distinct ways to wars and political instability.

Political instability and wars

Most of the wars and conflicts discussed in the foregoing chapters date from the seventeenth century, but in the case of Nagapatnam we have access to older sources that offer a longer–term view of developments in the region.

As a regional entrepot for European companies, Masulipatnam would have been highly sensitive to imperial crisis. The port's overland connections with western and central India were highly vulnerable to conflicts and wars in the west and east of the Deccan. This was not so much due to length of production or trading lines, but more due to an extensive west–east web of networks that linked disparate regions having different economic specializations with each other: riverine deltas of northern Coromandel with extensive rice cultivation and textile production were connected to the black soil belts of the west of the Deccan that produced cotton. It was not possible to find local substitutes for such specialist economic functions, especially cotton. So, the vulnerability stemmed from the tendency of wars and political instability to snap or disturb the to and fro movement along this west–east web of connections between different regions with distinct economic specialization.

In this context it is also important to distinguish between production lines and trading lines. The former was vulnerable to wars, especially with regard to the west–east web of connections, but the latter could be flexible. While it would have been possible to look for alternative routes to transport textiles from weaving villages of the Godavari delta to Masulipatnam during wars or political instability, this was a slightly difficult option to replicate for cotton because one, it grew best in specific areas in the west of the Deccan and two, *banjaras* had to move along the Godavari for easy access to water during their trips to the Godavari delta. Wars could create severe difficulties when it came to growing cotton and transporting it to the Godavari delta; possible effects of that could be an inflation in prices of raw cotton and thus of cloth produced. So, the production line of textiles was more vulnerable to wars than the trading line. Wars further undermined the strength of this west–east web of connections because unsafe roads would lead to a disruption of the trade in commodities imported by European companies and other merchants. Eventually, these dynamics would strike at the vitality of Masulipatnam and result in a diminution of its position as the primary port of the Bay of Bengal. Wealthy inland centres such as Hyderabad were defenceless against armed troops; when wars had already debilitated the connecting nodes in this hinterland, the cities that depended on them could be almost crippled by raids. We can therefore conclude

that the most likely result of long wars in northern Coromandel would be the decline of Masulipatnam.

In times of war and political instability Pulicat could experience an increase in population thanks to its fortifications. Though it was a local centre, Pulicat and the weaving villages around it depended on supplies of cotton from elsewhere and continual wars would snap this connection. If conflicts in the hinterland led to an influx of weavers, for example, it would not necessarily lead to increased production since wars would put a stranglehold on the food supply, and famine and epidemics would soon ensue. Being a similarly local outlet, Nagapatnam, along with its hinterland, might have encountered comparable problems when it came to securing supplies during prolonged wars. However, the extensive cultivation of rice in the Kaveri delta offered Nagapatnam greater food security and attracted immigrants from the north during military campaigns. Given these conditions, the influx of human resources had the potential to economically strengthen or sustain this port–hinterland complex.

As we noted in Chapter 1, the Mughal general Jai Singh instructed the European companies to obstruct the activities of the Maratha fleet. This strategy was devised from a recognition of the naval power that European companies possessed. Not only military help, but the commercial operations of European companies from ports in Coromandel could also assist a marching army in terms of provisions that were brought by the sea. So, we can expect that during a long military campaign in South India the Mughals would try and incorporate the operations of the European companies within the functioning of their empire. Although European ports could attract people fleeing the disturbances caused by wars, their reputation as secure places would be unable to mitigate the consequences of wars. They had to depend on supplies from inland for exports and European companies would have found it hard to operate if the connections with inland were affected by the wars. In such a scenario, the costs of production of textiles would increase. Finally, during long wars overcrowding of European settlements could even lead to deaths of people resulting from starvation.

We can conclude the following points: Masulipatnam and its connections were profoundly weakened by long wars; Pulicat attracted migration but at the same time ran the risk of famine, Nagapatnam had similar concerns to Pulicat's but fared somewhat better because of its rice–producing hinterland, dependence on cotton from Tirunelveli and ties with Malabar and Ceylon; in general, throughout the Coromandel, the Mughals needed to incorporate the Europeans in the operation of the Mughal Empire in order to access the coast, as Jai Singh did (Chapter 1); and despite their reputation as havens for non–combatants, the ports operated by the European companies were far from immune from the devastating consequences of long wars. In the following chapters we turn our attention to the Mughal wars in the Deccan and put this hypothesis to test.

Part II

Aurangzeb's southern campaigns and the economy of Coromandel, 1682–1707

Chapter 4: Masulipatnam: The Mughal wars and their impact

Introduction

Located at the crossroads of two commercial routes, one overland to Surat via Hyderabad, and the other across the sea to South–East Asia and the Middle East, Masulipatnam was, as discussed in Chapter 1, one of the celebrity ports of seventeenth–century South Asia. This chapter discusses the effects of Mughal warfare on the economy of the Golconda–Masulipatnam region. It is organized in the following sections: the first section, along the campaign trail, provides an overview of the Mughal campaigns in this region; the second section analyses the economic impact of warfare, mainly with the help of VOC sources; the third section explores the relationship between the wars on the one hand and climate and agriculture on the other; and the fourth and concluding section states the results and summarizes the findings of this chapter.

4.1 Along the campaign trail

If one particular event could be considered the watershed moment in the history of the Mughal Empire in the seventeenth century, it could be argued that it was when the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb marched from Ajmer in Rajasthan to the Deccan in pursuit of his rebel son Prince Akbar, in 1682. Having crushed the rebellion, Aurangzeb resolved to defeat the Maratha resistance in the Deccan once and for all. At this point he surely had no idea that his military campaigns in the Deccan would snowball into a protracted war that would last until his death in 1707. Aurangzeb's southern campaigns had four quite distinct phases: the first was marked by Mughal sieges of Maratha forts in the west of the Deccan and Konkan (1682–1684); the second saw the invasions, sieges and finally conquests of the sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda (1685–1687); the third was dominated by the siege of Gingee (1689–1698) in central Coromandel; and in the fourth the theatre of war moved back to the west of the Deccan (1698–1707) with Aurangzeb focusing his energies once more on the capture of Maratha forts, which continued until his demise. As we will see in this chapter it was Golconda and Masulipatnam that felt most of the heat during the first, second and fourth phases.

The Mughals in the west of the Deccan and the Konkan, 1682–1684

The Marathas posed a stiff challenge to Mughal imperial expansion in the Deccan from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards. In the 1660s and 1670s the Mughals conducted military campaigns against the Maratha leader Shivaji, and after his death in 1680, his son Sambhaji succeeded him and allied himself with the rebel Mughal prince, Akbar. Once Akbar's rebellion was suppressed, Aurangzeb decided to crush the Maratha resistance for good.

Let us now look at first phase of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns. Much of the narrative in this section is drawn from Bhimsen's memoir of these campaigns, *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*.[1]

Marching from Ajmer via Burhanpur, Aurangzeb reached the city of Aurangabad in March 1682. Soon afterwards, plans were made to capture the Maratha forts in the west of the Deccan and along the Konkan Coast. The movement of Mughal troops in the Deccan reveals the logistical problems encountered by the army in this long campaign, as we will discover in more detail later in this section. The Mughals besieged the fort of Ramsej near Nasik, but they abandoned the siege after a while because of the loss of many men and repeated failures to secure victory. Maratha forces were continuing to plunder the region around Nasik and Nanded, and in order to counter the Maratha raids, a Mughal general forced the Marathas to retreat behind the frontiers of the Golconda sultanate. While doing so, the general's tent was left behind and provisions available for his army were hardly enough. Meanwhile a bubonic plague struck Khandesh in northern Deccan and many died as a result.[2]

The region between Aurangabad and Nanded was one of the cotton–producing areas which supplied the looms of the Godavari delta. As we will see in the section on the economy in this chapter, VOC letters from 1682 to 1683 discussed the fact that the movement of Maratha troops was making the roads between Golconda and Surat unsafe for transporting merchandise and that this was having repercussions on the export of textiles from Masulipatnam.

In approximately the same period the Mughals conducted another campaign in the Konkan, with the aim of capturing the Maratha forts along the coast. Led by Muhammed Muazzam, one of Aurangzeb's sons, the narrative of this campaign reveals the logistical problems facing the Mughal army. Muazzam crossed into the Konkan by way of Ramadarah, a sparsely populated zone where provisions were difficult to obtain. Aurangzeb ordered the Sidi of Danda Rajapuri (the Sidis, of African origin and scattered along the western coast of India, indulged in piracy and had been inducted into the Mughal service) to supply provisions to Muazzam by sea. They did so on two occasions, but it was difficult to sustain this supply line and Maratha forces attacked the Mughal camp every now and then. The climate of Konkan and lack of provisions took a toll on the animals in Muazzam's army. In the end a fresh army was sent to escort him back.[3] Though the Mughals did win some engagements against the Marathas between 1682 and 1684, they by no means crushed Maratha resistance. The first phase of Mughal campaigns could be said to have ended around 1684 when Aurangzeb diverted his attention towards annexing Bijapur. Let us now also turn to these new developments.

---

[1] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 136–142, 144–147, 152, 154–158.
[2] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 136–139.
[3] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 140–142.

The siege of Bijapur and Golconda all but won, 1685–1686

Aurangzeb moved his armies from Ahmadnagar to Sholapur and preparations were made to besiege Bijapur fort. Asad Khan was instructed to besiege the fort on its eastern side. During the siege, a Qutb Shahi force tried to assist Bijapur by opening another front against the Mughals. Khan Jahan Bahadur, a Mughal commander, fought a battle against the Qutb Shahi army near Malkhed, drove it away and chased the army as far as Hyderabad. As the Qutb Shah retreated into the fort at Golconda, the Mughal army looted Hyderabad, including the Qutb Shahi palace (Bhimsen writes that contrary to Aurangzeb's orders hardly anything of the booty looted by his soldiers found its way to the imperial treasury). Prince Muazzam was sent to Golconda, but the Qutb Shah staved off annexation by paying him a monetary tribute.[4]

Meanwhile, Bijapur lay besieged. The road between Sholapur and Bijapur had been blocked, so Mughal army rations and fodder started running low. Mughal commanders marched on Bijapur from Ahmadnagar with convoys of provisions. Though they were attacked en route by the Marathas, the Mughals managed to reach Bijapur and supplies became cheap once again. The operations against Bijapur intensified as Aurangzeb stationed commanders in Sholapur to secure the line of supplies and combat the Marathas too. Due to the long siege, the vicinity of Bijapur had been deserted by civilians and getting food grains transported was a difficult challenge. Morale was low inside the fort and Sikander Adil Shah surrendered to the Mughals in September 1686. The sultanate was annexed to the Mughal Empire and the city was renamed *Dar–ul–Zafar* (Land of Victory). During the siege of Bijapur, Aurangzeb's rebel son Akbar, who was in alliance with the Maratha king Sambhaji and still at large, had tried to move back to northern India, take advantage of the presence of his father in the Deccan. He was intercepted, however, and defeated in a battle. Akbar was sheltered by Sambhaji and later fled to Iran. With Bijapur conquered and the threat from Akbar neutralized, Aurangzeb decided to turn towards Golconda.[5]

The siege and annexation of Golconda, 1687

After conquering Bijapur, Aurangzeb marched to Golconda via Sholapur.[6] We have already discussed how Abul Hasan Qutb Shah provided military help to Bijapur when it was besieged, but the author of *Maasir–i–Alalmgiri*, Saqi Mustaid Khan, claimed that he also gave financial support to Sambhaji:

'In the many kinds of injury that the hellish Sambha [Sambhaji] inflicted on worshippers of the True God, Abul Hasan became his helper and ally. On seeing a [very] unsubstantial frown and on hearing one vain threat [from that Maratha king], what vast sums did he not send to that

[4] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 144-149.
[5] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 152-154.
[6] For a summary of developments during the Mughal siege of Golconda, see Sarkar transl., *Maasir–i–Alamgiri:* 174–181. I have used separate footnotes for citations from other primary sources.

enemy, and simply through meanness of spirit and cowardice kept himself safe from plunder by that man?'[7]

This claim does not stand up to close inspection, however, because Abul Hasan also gave money to the Mughals themselves, to save his kingdom from being plundered by them, as we will see later in this chapter.

Abul Hasan turned down Aurangzeb's overtures for surrender, abandoned Hyderabad to Mughal forces and retreated into the fort at Golconda. The Mughal siege began in late January 1687. Early Mughal assaults on the fort were, by and large, unsuccessful. In February, the Mughal army dug trenches around the fort for blasting mines and planted heavy guns opposite to it. Firing at the fort had no effect and one night the Qutb Shahi forces surprised the Mughals, destroyed the battery and took a few Mughal nobles and soldiers prisoner. Eventually, the Mughals managed to put another battery in place.[8] Using heavy guns to bombard a fort this size and force it to capitulate would have proved to be a long-drawn affair. The strategy of digging trenches and putting mines in them also had its own risks.

The Dutch report one such incident. Following Aurangzeb's instructions, mines were put around the fort. However, many exploded prematurely and killed more Mughal soldiers than their Qutb Shahi counterparts. About two thousand Mughal soldiers died in this assault. The survivors fled the scene of the battle and were pursued by Qutb Shahi troops. Two days after this incident, the Mughals carried out another assault, and again the Mughal troops suffered more casualties than the Qutb Shahis: Shahbad Khan, Mahabat Khan, Alam Khan and Mukhtar Khan, the brother of Shahbad Khan, were all killed. The Dutch write that instead of negotiating with the Qutb Shah, Aurangzeb had planned to erect a mud wall around the fort, enclosing Abul Hasan, and force him to surrender.[9]

The Dutch writings offer a typical example of Dutch discourse during Aurangzeb's wars. They evidently preferred the option of negotiating with the Qutb Shah, which they believed would have led to a truce: the Mughals could have withdrawn from Golconda after payment of a sum of money by the Qutb Shah. From the VOC's perspective, such a move would have been advantageous for the regional economy of northern Coromandel and the textile trade of the region. What prompted this analysis? Was it the result of purely mercantile prudence or a thorough understanding of the region's economic connections? Even though the former reason might seem to have been of primary importance to the Dutch, we have good reason to believe that the latter reason underlay their preference. As we will find later in this chapter, the VOC's evaluation of Aurangzeb's strategy in the early eighteenth–century

[7] Sarkar transl., *Maasir–i–Alamgiri*: 174.
[8] Sarkar transl., *Maasir–i–Alamgiri*: 175–177.
[9] NA VOC 1438, Letter dated 06.08.1687 from Laurens Pit, governor in Pulicat to Joannes Camphuijs, governor–general in Batavia: f. 1173r.–f. 1173v.

was that the Mughal emperor should have consolidated a major economic region (Golconda–Masulipatnam) instead of fighting wars in the west of the Deccan.

As if the losses from failed military engagements were not enough, during the siege of Golconda the Mughals faced logistical problems when the rains set in and the region was flooded. People died and the condition of the Mughal camp improved only after the rains had ended and supplies could be brought from the region around Golconda.

Saqi Mustaid Khan wrote:

> At this time owing to excess of rain the river Manjera raged in flood. No provision could come from the neighbourhood. Famine prevailed; wheat, pulse and rice disappeared. Cries of grief at the disappearance of grain rose from the famished on all sides of the camp. Of the men of Haidarabad, not a soul remained alive; houses, river and plain became filled with the dead. The same was the condition of the camp. At night piles of the dead were formed round the Emperor's quarters. Daily sweepers dragged them and flung them on the bank of the river from sunrise to sunset. The same thing happened every day and night. The survivors did not hesitate to eat the carrion of men and animals. Kos after kos the eye fell only on mounds of corpses. The incessant rain melted away the flesh and the skin; otherwise the putrid air would have finished the business of the survivors. After some months when the rains ceased, the white ridges of bones looked from a distance like hillocks of snow. Through the grace of God to the survivors, the rains abated, the violence of the river ceased, and provisions came from the surrounding country.[10]

Though devoid of Saqi Mustaid Khan's dramatic description of the effects of war, Bhimsen's *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha* corroborates his claim that supplies ran low and many died of hunger.[11] Eventually the Mughals did capture the fort, after a Qutb Shahi officer let a small number of Mughal soldiers inside.[12]

With the conquest of Golconda, Aurangzeb's expansionist ambitions in the Deccan turned southwards. While the Mughals sought to consolidate their control over their new *subah* (province), the Marathas found another site for contesting the Mughals, when in 1689 a siege began in Gingee that would last almost a decade – the effects of this military engagement will be discussed in the following chapter.

From the onset of the Mughal campaigns, the VOC provided a running commentary on the developments of the war and their impact on the economy of Coromandel. Let us now turn to how the Dutch regarded Aurangzeb's campaigns. An understanding of the chronology of events is crucial here because the economy of Golconda–Masulipatnam showed signs of

---

[10] Sarkar transl., *Maasir–i–Alamgiri*: 178.
[11] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 160.
[12] Sarkar transl., *Maasir–i–Alamgiri*: 182.

improvement during relatively peaceful years and suffered more during phases of intense political unrest in the region. To understand the impact of the wars in these two decades it is necessary to read the Dutch narrative on the economy with an eye to major political and climatic events.

Table 4.1 Major climatic and political events in the Golconda–Masulipatnam region, 1682–1710

Year	Event
1682	Poor rainfall
1682–1684	Aurangzeb demands money from Golconda by threatening invasion; Maratha raids affect the road (communications) between Golconda and Surat
1685–1686	Siege and conquest of Bijapur; Mughals raid Hyderabad and leave after they had been paid money; poor rainfall
1687	Siege and conquest of Golconda; famine and flood, mass depopulation of Hyderabad
1693	Poor rainfall, grain prices high
1695	Poor rainfall
1698	Maratha raids near Hyderabad
1702–1704	Maratha troops cut off Surat from Masulipatnam, only one caravan in these years; a robber blocks the road from Golconda to Masulipatnam; famine in Golconda

4.2 The economy

Golconda: War on the doorstep and an imminent conquest

Inhabited by a cosmopolitan population including indigenous merchants and their counterparts from different parts of the Indian Ocean, the success of Masulipatnam lay in its ability to convey exports, particularly textiles, from the Godavari–Krishna deltas across the sea and to convey imports inland up to Burhanpur and beyond. As we have seen, wars tended to disrupt the overland lines of communication. The VOC archives reveal that in 1621 a VOC official complained that the siege of Burhanpur – part of the ongoing war between Mughals and Malik Ambar of Ahmadnagar – meant spices could not be moved inland from the warehouses in Masulipatnam.[13] In 1674 the VOC expressed similar fears when the Mughals were fighting Shivaji in the Deccan.[14]

In 1679, Willem Carel Hartsinck, the then director of the Dutch factory in Masulipatnam, wrote a memoir for his successor. He evidently found little to lament or complain about with regard to VOC in northern Coromandel, except for the customary advice that the new director should from time to time 'cajole the greedy officials' with gifts.[15] Less than two years later the tone of Dutch correspondence changed to reflect some of the early effects of the Mughal wars. In 1681, Jacob Jorisz Pits, the governor of Coromandel, wrote to

[13] Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India*: 147–149.
[14] NA VOC 1302, Letter dated 26.01.1674 from Golconda to Masulipatnam: f. 426v.
[15] NA VOC 1348, Memoir of succession dated 13.02.1679 from Wilem Carel Hartsinck at Masulipatnam to Hendrik van Outhoorn: f. 1192v.

the VOC directors in Amsterdam that while the Mughals had besieged only Bijapur, Golconda was no less threatened because Aurangzeb was seeking military and financial assistance from the Qutb Shah, in other words, the VOC were afraid that a Mughal invasion of Golconda was around the corner. The city of Hyderabad was gripped by fears of an invasion by Sambhaji, the Maratha king. Possibly spurred on by these new political developments, some members of the Persian nobility in Golconda chose to send their merchandise to Persia on VOC ships, rather than overland via Surat.[16]

As discussed above, in this period the Mughals had been fighting the Marathas in the western Deccan and along the Konkan Coast, where logistical problems repeatedly plagued them. In 1682–1683 Aurangzeb ordered food grains to be bought in Surat and supplied by sea to his army. These supplies did not last long, however, and while the Mughal soldiers starved the Maratha troops would harry them from time to time. The situation for the Mughals were aggravated as the Konkan climate took a toll on horses and draught animals.[17] In 1685, the Mughals turned their expansionist ambitions on Bijapur and Golconda. All the heat generated by wars did not take long to strike the Golconda/Hyderabad–Masulipatnam hinterland.

VOC letters from Masulipatnam to Batavia make it clear that the situation was quickly turning from bad to worse. Though drought due to lack of rain had pushed grain prices up, in 1682 there was no great reduction in VOC trade – we can deduce from this information that the wars have not yet affected trading connections to the west of Golconda, the main conduit for the Dutch selling imports in Masulipatnam and the source of cotton for the textile industry of the Godavari delta. Nonetheless, the Dutch were observing the situation closely and evidently drawing the right conclusions, because Willem Hartsinck writes that Madanna and Akkanna, two of Abul Hasan Qutb Shah's ministers, had been trying to ward off a Mughal invasion by regularly paying money to Aurangzeb. (The introductory chapter refers to the 'political use of military power' as a central element in the operation of *fitna*. When fighting against the Marathas in the early 1680s in the west of the Deccan, Aurangzeb made repeated threats to invade the Golconda sultanate. The Qutb Shahi ministers Madanna and Akkana paid money to Aurangzeb whenever such a threat was made. This is a telling example illustrating the effectiveness of how *fitna* worked. As noted earlier, the VOC closely observed the situation in Golconda and drew the right conclusions.) Sambhaji's troops were making the roads between Surat and Golconda unsafe. Merchants stopped coming to Masulipatnam and in 1684 Willem Hartsinck could not assure Batavia that the orders for textiles for 1686 would be fulfilled. In 1685, matters came to a head when Hartsinck wrote to Batavia that subordinate factory officials had requested that he not send them any imported goods for sale. The monsoon had been poor, and textiles could not be produced in Bimlipatnam, Nagulvancha, Palakollu, Draksharama and Masulipatnam. Moreover, Qutb Shah was

[16] NA VOC 8808, Letter dated 16.10.1681 from Jacob Jorisz Pits at Pulicat to Gentlemen Seventeen in Amsterdam: f. 170v.–f. 171v.
[17] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 140, 142.

prohibiting VOC trade throughout his kingdom due to a standoff, the causes of which were explored in Chapter 1. (It was the result of a private trade venture gone awry involving the Dutch broker Sriram Shodanda (Chirum Chodenda) and VOC officials based in Hyderabad. To save face, the Dutch had accused Akkana, the Qutb Shahi minister, of owing them money and then besieged Masulipatnam when a visit to the Qutb Shahi court to retrieve the money had proved futile.) Dutch fears about the Mughal wars were confirmed when the Mughals invaded Golconda in 1686. While most other inhabitants of the city fled, the Dutch wasted little time and greeted the Mughal general Bahadur Khan with a gift. In the light of these developments the Dutch decided to take special measures to secure Pulicat.[18]

Bhimsen writes that most inhabitants who could afford carriages sought safety inside the Golconda fort, while others remained in their houses (in Hyderabad). The Mughal army plundered the city, including the house of Madanna and the Qutb Shahi palace. Most of the city's houses were destroyed.[19]

As discussed in the previous section, in 1687 the Mughal army laid protracted siege to Golconda. The effects were terrible – the population of Hyderabad and the Mughals were hit hard. The Mughal wars impacted on textile trade in the northern Coromandel, but the Mughal camp also had its own demands, as we will see later in this chapter and in Chapter 5. Instances of demand–pull created by wars also feature in the narrative of the VOC. Daniel Havart writes that sales of Dutch imports in Masulipatnam had been affected by the Mughal wars in Golconda. All the merchandise that the Dutch had brought was sent to Golconda. By 1687, Havart writes, the abysmal conditions for trade – resulting from the wars, the death of weavers and absence of big merchants – had turned Masulipatnam into just a shadow of its former self. The port had been stripped of its former glory.[20] Similar observations on the diminution of Masulipatnam population and trade were also made by William Norris, the English ambassador to Aurangzeb in the late seventeenth century:

'In the year 1686 a serious famine had occurred at Masulipatnam and in the surrounding country … Thousands of people died of starvation and many families sold themselves to the

[18] NA VOC 8808, Letter dated 17.03.1682 from Willem Hartsinck, director in Masulipatnam to Cornelis Speelman, governor–general in Batavia: f. 152r., f. 158v. NA VOC 8809, Letter dated 13.08.1683 from Willem Hartsinck, director in Masulipatnam to Cornelis Speelman, governor–general in Batavia: f. 101r. NA VOC 8811, Letter dated 07.10.1684 from Willem Hartsinck, director in Masulipatnam to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia: f. 174r. NA VOC 8812, Letter dated 15.07.1685 from Willem Hartsinck, director in Masulipatnam to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia: f. 88r.–f. 88v. NA VOC 1411, Letter dated 08.10.1685 from Willem Hartsinck, director in Masulipatnam to Gentlemen Seventeen in Amsterdam: f. 62r. NA VOC 1411, Letter dated 08.10.1685 from J.J. Pits, governor in Pulicat to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia: f. 39v. NA VOC 1429, Letter dated 08.03.1686 from Laurens Pit, director in Masulipatnam to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia: f. 1048r. NA VOC 1423, Letter dated 10.03.1686 from Jacob Jorisz Pits, governor in Pulicat to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia: f. 47v.–f. 48r., f. 49r.

[19] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 147–148, 152, 156–157.

[20] Havart, *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*, *Eerste deel*: 147, 213–214, 224.

Dutch for bread. The latter took advantage of the catastrophe and transported a large number of famine–stricken people to Batavia and the Spice Islands, where they remained in a state of slavery. The famine was followed the next year by an outbreak of plague, which carried away most of the survivors, enfeebled by their privations. In consequence of those disasters … the town had never recovered its former importance, both its population and its trade being much diminished. The famine had caused a great increase in the prices of all provisions. Most of the factories had been removed or closed, except that belonging to the Dutch. But the most serious loss to the town was the disappearance of its artificers and other workmen, as well as the art of chintz, a famous product of Masulipatnam.'

William Norris noted that when he visited Masulipatnam in 1699–1700 the art of chintz had begun to revive itself.[21]

Disturbances in the west of the Deccan and debilitation of Mughal authority in the province of Golconda had an adverse impact on textile production in the Godavari delta (this subject will be explored in more detail later in this chapter). Nevertheless, efforts were made to revive and sustain this line of exports, as Norris points out.

We now turn to a discussion of how the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb restored the privileges enjoyed by the VOC in the erstwhile sultanate of Golconda and sought to use Dutch commercial operations as a means to gain access to the coast and revive the war–battered economy of the Golconda–Masulipatnam region.

John F. Richards argues that the complete surprise of the final assault on the Golconda fort neutralized any chances of a unified resistance. This Mughal victory was marked by its relative lack of destructive effect: casualties were few, there was only limited damage to property and no massacre of the soldiers, officials, workers, merchants and peasants.[22] After a long siege which had seen depopulation of Hyderabad, the Mughals were clearly not keen to inflict even more damage on the city and the fort. Quite possibly they wanted to resettle and nurture the conquered region. Importantly from the perspective of the VOC, the Mughal conquest nullified all privileges the company had enjoyed in Golconda. The VOC sent Johannes Bacherus as an emissary to Aurangzeb's camp in the valley of the river Bhima to reconfirm these privileges. Before we examine the motives behind this embassy and its outcome which will bring to the floor various issues related to the economic impact of the campaigns, let us look at how regime change took place in the erstwhile Qutb Shahi sultanate after the fall of Golconda.

Post–conquest, Aurangzeb initially intended to secure cooperation of the former Qutb Shahi officials and convey a message that the new regime did not mark a sharp break from

[21] Harihar Das, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzib (1699–1702)* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1959): 125–126.
[22] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 52.

the past. In this respect, Aurangzeb sent firmans to all incumbent administrators and commanders who were confirmed in their positions, assured of safety and ordered to formally acknowledge the Mughal emperor's authority. Simultaneously, Mughal cavalry troops took charge of strategic points in the province to demonstrate the reality of Mughal power. The sub–governor of Masulipatnam (*havaldar*) fled and exposed the port to a force of 400 Mughal cavalrymen, but his counterpart in Poonamallee near Madras remained in his post and acknowledged Aurangzeb's authority. In general, the emperor's orders were complied with throughout the province. Aurangzeb's choice of officials for the top administrative posts in the province was a similar exercise in public relations with a view to creating a favourable opinion of the new regime in Golconda: Mahabat Khan, a former Golconda noble who had defected to Mughal service in 1686, was appointed as the first governor of the new province with command over its three territorial divisions of Hyderabad, Srikakulam amd Karnatik; Ali Askar Khan, another former Golconda noble, was appointed as the chief executive of the Karnatik and a third Golconda official who had become a Mughal *mansabdar* was made the commandant of the Golconda fort. Mahabat Khan was ordered to replace incumbent commanders of great forts of the province with capable Mughal mansabdars, send the displaced Qutb Shahi nobility with recommendations as he considered fit to Aurangzeb's camp and to appoint experienced financial officers for collecting taxes in areas that were earlier managed by Golconda's central treasury. Apart from this, no other persons were to be disturbed. By December, 1687 the populist appeal of the early appointments was perhaps no longer required. Eventually both Mahabat Khan and Ali Askar Khan were transferred from the province to northern India. Aurangzeb must have also been sceptical of delegating the entire administrative responsibility of the province to former Golconda nobles. Ruhullah Khan, the chief *bakshi* (muster–general) of the empire, replaced Mahabat Khan as the governor of the province. John F. Richards argues Aurangzeb's measures were successful in securing acceptance of his authority and cooperation of the former Golconda nobles with little delay.[23]

However, close knowledge of the administration of the province was a skill that Aurangzeb could not ignore while making appointments, especially in remote areas that were difficult to control such as the coastal districts where, for the first decade or so after the conquest, administrative arrangments showed no significant departure from the Qutb Shahi regime. Three major Golconda administrators from the border of Orissa to the district of Rajahmundry were left unaffected by the Mughal conquest in 1687: Sayyid Abdullah, *sar–i–lashkar* (head of the army) of Srikakulam, Husain Bek, governor or Rajahmundry, and Mir Muhammed Hade, governor of Narsapore (the shipbuilding centre and port to the north of Masulipatnam). They became Mughal *faujdars*, their duties and territorial responsibilities remained the same for at least two years until the end of 1689. Husain Bek was rechristened as Ali Mardan Khan and transferred to Kanchipuram in early 1690 as *faujdar* of the twelve

[23] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 53–57.

districts of Karnatik (more on this in Chapter 5). But at the same time he retained command over his former territories in Rajahmundry and four other coastal districts between the Godavari and Krishna, both Mir Muhammed Hade and Sayyid Abdullah were made his subordinates. Thus, Ali Mardan Khan held final administrative authority over the stretch of Coromandel Coast from Orissa to the south of Madras. The others remained in office until their deaths: after Sayyid Abdullah passed away in 1690 he was succeeded by Mustafa Quli Khan, another former Golconda noble, who held office until 1698, and Mir Muhammed Hade remained the *faujdar* of Narsapore unti 1700.[24]

Although Aurangzeb allowed the less formal, decentralised Golconda administration to continue practically unaltered in the districts of coastal Andhra, Mughal administrative and military control there was not weak. Mustafa Quli Khan was responsible for collecting taxes in four districts– Masulipatnam, Nizamapatnam, Rajahmundry and Srikakulam– that had been earmarked for *khalisa* revenues (directly going to the Mughal crown). Tax–farming (a major feature of the revenue system in Golconda, as we noted in Chapter 1) also continued in the set up of revenue administration of these districts under Mustafa Quli Khan. At all the coastal towns from Madapollam north of the Godavari to Orissa, Brahmins operated as revenue–farmers, governed the towns and their hinterland, and collected taxes to pay instalments on the annual bids they had made to Mustafa Quli Khan. In an instance from 1693, frustrated with the changes of *havaldars*, Simon Holcombe, the senior EIC merchant in Vishakhapatnam, became a revenue farmer himself (or the EIC) – he entered into an agreement to pay 4,862 rupees per annum as rent for the town for a period of at least three years, or alternatively as long as Mustafa Quli Khan remained in office. At Srikakulam and Kassimkota, the largest towns north of the Godavari, two of Mustafa Quli Khan's personal staff were appointed to govern the towns and collect tax instalments from *havaldar*s. South of the river Godavari there was less subletting under the personal command of Mustafa Quli Khan and much of the administration remained in the hands of *deshmukhs* (village headmen) who, unlike the town *havaldars*, did not bid for office but paid a fixed amount based on long standing assessments for each village and pargana. Two *brahmins* controlled the richest ports in this area– Nizamapatnam and Masulipatnam; in the case of the latter about 500,000 rupees were raised in taxes annually from the port and its hinterland. Instead of opting for the Mughal practice of separating command, Mustafa Quli Khan continued the old Golconda system of combining general administrative duties and fiscal functions in one person; he sublet tax farms, earned profits and made his payments directly to the emperor. Thanks to the attention he paid to Aurangzeb's orders and regular shipments of funds to the imperial camp in the west of the Deccan, Mustafa Quli Khan could maintain his autonomy for the 1690s– although a tussle for control over coastal Andhra did break out between him and Jan Sipar Khan, the governor of Hyderabad. However, it was only after Mustafa Quli Khan's death in 1698 that the Hyderabad

[24] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 61–63.

governor could have his man appointed as the faujdar of Srikakulam and by 1700 the way was clear to introduce a more formal, centralised form of administration on the Andhra Coast.[25]

So, while Aurangzeb transferred the administrative top brass of Golconda after his initial gesture of creating a favourable public opinion for the new regime and had Mughal *mansabdars* appointed as commandants of forts in the province, his decision to let older forms of Qutb Shahi administration continue in the coastal districts of northern Coromandel had a twofold objective. One, it was necessary to bank upon previous fiscal experience to help resettle the coastal districts of northern Coromandel comprising major textile manufacturing villages and ports, especially Masulipatnam; and two, resettling this region to make it economically vibrant once again was crucial to secure funds for campaigns against the Marathas. And a similar logic of resettlement underlined Aurangzeb's reinstatement of the VOC too, as we will see.

The embassy of Johannes Bacherus to Aurangzeb: Resettlement after wars

Resettling the regions devastated by wars was important for Aurangzeb, who had to ensure that the European companies which imported precious metals and silver stayed in business on the Coromandel Coast. Economic recovery was crucial to Mughal imperial plans in the Deccan and South India because they needed resources to keep financing a war whose climax was nowhere in sight. The French East India Company was the first European trading organization to have its privileges reinstated. An official from this company followed Aurangzeb from Hyderabad to Bijapur and eventually secured permission to trade freely in Masulipatnam, at a cost of 10,000 rupees. The French also retained their exemption from customs duties. Aurangzeb's orders were confirmed by the governor of Hyderabad and a Mughal official in Masulipatnam.[26]

After the conquest of Golconda, the VOC chose Johannes Bacherus as their emissary to Aurangzeb's camp. Hendrik Adriaan van Reede's instructions to Bacherus in 1688 are telling. The Mughal conquest had devastated the regions around Golconda, a famine had wiped out a sizeable part of the population and the survivors had migrated. As a result, Van Reede writes, VOC commerce in northern Coromandel had come to a standstill. Merchants had fled from Masulipatnam and the VOC could not transport their goods to Golconda due to the absence of draught animals. Increased fares quoted by those cart drivers who were still in business and the Mughal officials' demand for tolls forced the Dutch to keep their merchandise in the warehouses in Masulipatnam. Further inland, the wars had ruined and depopulated Nagulvancha, where the Dutch had a factory to procure textiles. The Dutch agenda was simple: to receive confirmation of the reinstatement of all the privileges they had enjoyed in the regions which had been conquered by the Mughals as well as those that were

[25] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 99–103.
[26] Richards, 'European City-States on the Coromandel Coast': 508.

likely to come under Mughal rule.[27] Johannes Bacherus managed to get an audience with Aurangzeb at the Mughal camp in the Bhima valley and eventually secured a firman from the emperor which did indeed reconfirm the VOC's privileges.

Johannes Bacherus prepared a list of the various privileges enjoyed by the VOC in the erstwhile Golconda sultanate for his audience with Aurangzeb. The list states that the Dutch possessed the villages of Palakollu and Contera near Masulipatnam, and three others near Pulicat (these villages will be studied in more detail in Chapter 5). When referring to these 'VOC villages', the phrase used in the Dutch translation of the Persian firman is '*gifte des keijsers aan de edele compagnie*', or 'gifts from the emperor to the honourable company'. The firman gifted the VOC five villages: three in Pulicat (Erikan, Masliewarom and Auweriwaka) and two in Masulipatnam (Palakollu and Contera). The status of the latter two (Palakollu and Contera) in the list of privileges enjoyed by the VOC under the Qutb Shahi sultans reads 'in vrijen eigendom geschonken', or 'gifted in free ownership'. Thus, in the light of the phrase 'gifts from the emperor to the honourable company' in the Dutch translation of Aurangzeb's firman, we may say, in essence, the Mughal emperor had reinstated the Dutch as owners of these villages. If tolls on textiles amounted to four pagodas, one and a quarter of that was assigned as the share of the Dutch. Similarly, when it came to tolls on clothes amounting to more than four pagodas, three parts would go to the emperor and one to the VOC, and the Mughals and the VOC were to have half a share each of tolls on goods brought by ships from outside and then reshipped by merchants. Along the same lines the Mughals and VOC were to take equal shares of tolls on goods bought by merchants, transported and sold in markets in other places. As before, the VOC in Masulipatnam remained free from tolls on merchandise and export goods and taxes on land and roads. The villages of Golepalem, Gondewarom and Draksharama had previously been rented to the VOC by the Qutb Shahi rulers for an annual payment of 150 pagodas. Aurangzeb's firman renewed agreement for the same amount, payable to the emperor. Officials were instructed not to harass or levy taxes on textile washers in these villages employed by the VOC. In Narsapore, which had a shipyard, labourers who came there to help build or repair ships for the Dutch were exempted from charges of any kind and officials were also instructed not to obstruct any labourer or washer willing to settle there. In Masliwaron, a village in Masulipatnam under VOC control, only six families of textile washers had remained after the wars. They and any additional washers were not to be disturbed and were free to also wash the textiles in the village of Suri if they wished. The VOC was also exempted from payment of road tolls in Bimlipatnam, Srikakulam, Eluru, Rajahmundry, Draksharama, Palakollu and Nagulvancha.[28]

---

[27] NA VOC 1450, Instructions dated 22.09.1688 from Hendrik Adriaan van Reede to Johannes Bacherus, delegated to visit the factories in northern Coromandel and to greet the great Mughal (Aurangzeb) on behalf of the company: f. 948r.–f. 948v., f. 952r.–f. 952v., f. 957r.–f. 957v., f. 963r.–f. 963v.

[28] NA VOC 1510, List of privileges and rights enjoyed by the VOC in Coromandel to be shown to the Mughal emperor Auragzeb: f. 370r.–f. 370v. NA VOC 1510, Firman dated 24.10.1689 from the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb to Johannes Bacherus: f. 375r.–f. 378v.

The firman issued as a result of the Dutch embassy offers a glimpse into the Mughal mindset regarding the rehabilitation of regions after wars. By incorporating VOC trade within the imperial framework and expressing a desire to rebuild through granting liberties to textile washers and other labourers who worked in the villages of the VOC, the Mughals were trying to breathe new life into the economy of a zone devastated by wars. Nothing expresses this mindset more cogently than the clause exempting carpenters who came to work at the shipyard in Narsapore from any payment and warning officials not to frustrate any labourer who was willing to settle there. This was a small but concrete commitment to promote maritime trade. Unlike the French and Dutch East India Companies, the English did not immediately secure trading privileges from Aurangzeb; their rights were reinstated eventually, however, and the events leading to that development feature in the next chapter. During the 1690s, when the Mughals marched farther south to Gingee where a siege kept them engaged for almost a decade, the Golconda/Hyderabad–Masulipatnam hinterland did not experience as much turbulence as it did before during the first (1682–1684, Mughal sieges of Maratha forts in the west of the Deccan) and the second (1685–1687, Mughal conquest of Bijapur and Golconda) phases of the southern campaigns, and finally during the last phase of the campaigns when the theatre of war moved back to the west of the Deccan (1698–1707) after the fall of Gingee. Let us have a look at how the economy of Golconda–Masulipatnam region fared during the 1690s.

Golconda–Masulipatnam in the 1690s

The siege of Golconda followed by its fall and annexation into the Mughal Empire was marked by mass depopulation of the surrounding region – the aforementioned instructions to Johannes Bacherus bear witness the devastation caused by the wars. Little had changed by the beginning of the last decade of the seventeenth century. In 1690 Laurens Pit, the governor of Coromandel, wrote to Batavia explaining that due to famines and pestilence there was hardly any textile trade in Masulipatnam and other factories of northern Coromandel. Because of the wars and general devastation for the area, the lands could not be settled. Supplies of cotton had been affected and weavers could not produce guinea cloth, *salempores* and other textiles.[29] The following year, however, conditions improved slightly, and the Dutch sent goods to Golconda, albeit accompanied by a strong military force. Merchants were able to procure textiles in Palakollu for export to South–East Asia, the Netherlands and Japan, and 29 families moved to the VOC's villages in Palakollu and Contera to boost production of clothes. Masulipatnam received textiles from Draksharama for the Netherlands, Ceylon and Japan and merchants were contracted to supply a cargo of clothes for Persia.[30] The governor in Nagapatnam wrote to the directors of the VOC in Amsterdam to say that production of

[29] NA VOC 1473, Letter dated 23.07.1690 from Laurens Pit, governor in Pulicat to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia 23.07.1690: f. 299r.–f. 299v.

[30] NA VOC 1499, Letter dated 08.10.1691 from Barent Wildelandt in Masulipatnam to Joannes Camphuis, governor–general in Batavia: f. 272v.–f. 273r.

textiles had resumed in northern Coromandel to fulfil orders for the Netherlands and Batavia and other parts of Asia.[31] Another letter, sent from Nagapatnam to Batavia in 1692, sounds optimistic: the production of textiles had begun again and it was easier than in the previous year to meet demand from Asia and Europe.[32] The table below takes Golepalem as an example to indicate the make–up of the population of VOC–run villages in northern Coromandel around 1692. Five years after the conquest of Golconda, it appears that the VOC had indeed managed to maintain a healthy economic environment in Golepalem: Dutch investment and control over production processes acted as incentives to attract groups of specialist workers to the village.

Table 4.2 Population groups in Golepalam, 1692[33]

Group	**Households**
Textile merchants (Chettis)	11
Weavers	83
Dyers (of textiles)	57
Washers (of textiles)	6
Gold and silversmiths	5
Coppersmiths	4
Peasants	11
Brahmins	3
Pions (probably labourers)	5
Coolies	4
Muslims	3
Poor widows	4
Musicians	1
Dancing girls	8
Low castes (the Dutch use the term 'parias')	10
Others	34
Total	249

The group dubbed as 'others' included oil pressers, betel sellers, tobacco sellers, woodcutters and carpenters. In deference to indigenous customs, according to VOC sources, woodcutters, barbers, dancing girls, pions, musicians, low castes and poor widows did not have to pay taxes to the Dutch.

Internal troubles in and around Golconda had dissipated by this time, but were not fully over: Poelas Venkatrao, for example, a bandit who had been robbing, plundering and

[31] NA VOC 1508, Letter dated 26.01.1692 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to the Gentlemen Seventeen in Amsterdam: f. 127r.–f.127v.
[32] NA VOC 1508, Letter dated 10.10.1692 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Oudhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 148r.
[33] NA VOC 1511, List of the inhabitants of the company's village Golepalem prepared in July 1692: f. 1135–f. 1142.

torching villages, was apprehended by Rustam Dil Khan, the governor of Golconda, and sent to the Mughal court. Meanwhile, troops under Raja Ram, the fugitive Maratha king, continued to make sorties into the lands around Golconda, extorting individuals and robbing travelling merchants of their goods. These activities led to a dip in trade.[34] Though instances of robbery tell of a still insecure environment, on the flip side they also reveal that merchants were willing to risk their goods, so some trade was clearly going on. But the unrest clearly affected VOC import trade. A letter from 1693 tells us how their imports mostly remained unsold in Golconda and other places.[35] As we have seen, Hyderabad was a reshipment centre for imports from Masulipatnam. Poor sales of merchandise there meant that the link to Surat was badly affected and the routes were unsafe, a possible reason behind commodities remaining unsold.

In the 1690s, the Mughal campaigns shifted to Gingee in central Coromandel. Around 1692–1693, Masulipatnam and its subordinate factories supplied 269 packs of textiles. Inland trade in Golconda also suffered also due to a confusion over the tolls imposed by the Mughal emperor. The VOC representative sent to the Mughal camp to resolve this issue had to await the return of Aurangzeb from Bijapur and about the same time pestilence broke out in the Mughal camp. The Dutch were uncertain how long it would take to solve this problem. Though the Dutch are silent about it, pestilence in the Mughal camp could have also contributed to the VOC's imports remaining unsold in Hyderabad in 1693. Merchants who bought commodities in Hyderabad and traded with the Mughal camp might have been reluctant to travel to it when there was a danger of infection. Around this time, textile production in Palakollu was poor while in Draksharama it was good. Apart from textiles, other sectors of VOC export trade were also suffering: the cultivation of indigo, for example, was poor due to a combination of the absence of cultivators and the unwillingness of those remaining to take over this role. In Masulipatnam, the VOC had not been hindered in the to and fro movement of commodities despite the confusion over tolls. The governor allowed the Dutch to sell their imports. Meanwhile rains failed, pushing up the price of grains around the port.[36] By 1694 not much changed in Golconda because the orders clarifying the tolls had not yet been received from Aurangzeb. Textile production in Palakollu and Draksharama continued unhindered. The officials in Masulipatnam entrusted to them the production of a cargo for Malacca, Japan and Ceylon, comprising guinea cloth, *salempores*, *parcalles* and *dongri* (sail cloth).[37]

---

[34] NA VOC 1518, Letter dated 13.08.1692 from Bruijnig Wildelant in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 697v.

[35] NA VOC 1526, Letter dated 23.05.1693 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f.300r.–f. 300v.

[36] NA VOC 1537, Inventory of textiles produced in the various factories of Coromandel: f. 276r.–f. 277v. NA VOC 1537, Letter dated 19.09.1693 from Bruijnig Wildelant in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 634v.–f. 635r., f. 636r.–f. 637v., f. 643v.

[37] NA VOC 1546, Letter dated 24.09.1694 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 449v.–f. 450v.

We find some evidence of commerce with Tenasserim and Siam conducted by traders other than the VOC. Abdul Karim, the *nakhoda* or ship master of a certain Mahmud Sadik arrived from Tenasserim with Japanese bar copper and porcelain. The ship departed in March 1694 for Tenasserim with a cargo of steel for Mahmud Sadik, clothes for the king of Siam and textiles for other merchants. A ship belonging to the king of Siam arrived in Masulipatnam in March 1694 with a cargo of bar copper, sandalwood, ivory, porcelain and tin. Their return cargo consisted of different kinds of textiles and iron. In April 1694 *Surat Salamat*, owned by Mir Muhammed Hussain, set sail from Masulipatnam for Tenasserim carrying cotton, bethilles from Srikakulam, steel and horses.[38]

By 1695 trade conditions began to improve again: the Dutch could once more sell their cargoes to middlemen in Golconda, the problem concerning tolls having been resolved. The production of textiles was normal in Palakollu and Draksharama and the VOC hoped to meet demand from Batavia. Similarly, in Masulipatnam the Dutch write of a decent export trade; the company's inland trade from here was still suffering because of the absence of merchants in the port. Scarcity of food and water, due to lower rainfall, meant draught animals could not be used, so goods could not be transported. Poor sales depleted the company's reserve of cash in Masulipatnam.[39] Often the improvements that the VOC officials wrote about could not be sustained and were patchy at best. In 1696, VOC textile trade in Palakollu and Draksharama suffered because cotton was expensive and supplies low due to a bad harvest of the crop. On the other hand, in Masulipatnam the Dutch trade went on without any serious trouble.[40]

Attempting to explain how much of the demands for textiles from northern Coromandel could be met in 1696, the VOC managers write that the amount to be supplied from Masulipatnam for the Netherlands had been reduced because of the governor's stipulation of a limit on what was produced in northern Coromandel,[41] but neglect to mention why the governor set this limit. We can only assume it was due to the reasons mentioned by Bruijnig Wildelant in his letter to Batavia: expensive cotton and low supplies. The same note also lists the orders for Ceylon, Siam, Batavia and Japan to be supplied by VOC's factories in northern Coromandel. Though cotton continued to be expensive and in short supply, the Dutch factories in Palakollu and Draksharama were assigned to produce textiles for Batavia and Japan. While prices of basic commodities continued to be high in Masulipatnam, the VOC

[38] NA VOC 1546, Letter dated 20.10.1694 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 432v.–f. 433v.
[39] NA VOC 1570, Letter dated 08.10.1695 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 325, f. 338, f. 339, f. 343, f. 346.
[40] NA VOC 1581, Letter dated 26.09.1696 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 357–f. 358, f. 360.
[41] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 04.10.1696 prepared by Hendrick van Outshoorn van Sonnevelt on textiles supplied by northern Coromandel to meet the demands from the Netherlands, Batavia, Siam, Japan, Ceylon and Nagapatnam: f. 370.

continued to trade without much trouble thanks to the company's good relations with the Mughal officials.[42] In general, during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns the textile production remained especially vulnerable due to the threat of plundering of the cotton growing regions and highways that linked these regions to the weaving villages near the Coromandel Coast. An insecure environment and high grain prices were the primary reasons behind inflation in prices for raw cotton and textiles. This effect of the wars was common across Coromandel, as we will see in Chapter 5, which will focus on the case of central and southern Coromandel.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the fall of Gingee pushed the theatre of war back to the west of the Deccan, but the Marathas had not been suppressed. This was the beginning of the fourth and final phase of the campaigns. The situation remained tough for the Dutch, and in 1698 they could not find buyers in Golconda for a cargo of tin. About the same time Maratha troops appeared near the city. Cotton continued to be dear, weavers were few and as a result the production of cloth in Palakollu suffered, and the demand from the Netherlands and Batavia could not be met. Nonetheless, Masulipatnam assigned Palakollu its share of textile production for the same places (Netherlands and Batavia). On the other hand, textile production in Draksharama remained fairly resilient because it had more weavers than Palakollu, a reason why Masulipatnam assigned this factory to produce a considerable share of clothes destined for the markets in Batavia and Japan.[43]

The regions around Masulipatnam experienced disturbing conditions for trade. In 1699, two pions employed by the VOC were murdered on their way from Golconda to Masulipatnam by Maratha troops. The Dutch wrote that such incidents had become commonplace for travellers who were not accompanied by a strong group. Despite the unrest gripping the market centres, the Dutch plodded along with their sales in Masulipatnam. Meanwhile, the English were pumping capital into the textile industry. In Vishakhapatnam, the English contracted their merchants to produce guinea cloth, salempores and bethilles. This, the VOC director in Masulipatnam wrote to the governor–general in Batavia, was disadvantageous for them because their merchants were unwilling to arrange for production due to a lack of capital.[44] But these cases at least demonstrate that trade had not come to a standstill. For the Dutch, Draksharama continued to fare better than Palakollu. In 1700, this factory produced more than enough textiles to make up for the poor performance of Palakollu.[45] The Dutch had managed to keep the weavers tied to the place. During the 1690s

[42] NA VOC 1596, Letter dated 13.09.1697 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 126–f. 127, f. 133.
[43] NA VOC 1610, Letter dated 04.09.1698 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 245, f. 247, f. 248–f. 249, f. 250–f. 251.
[44] NA VOC 1624, Letter dated 31.08.1699 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 226, f. 228, f. 229–f. 230.
[45] NA VOC 1638, Letter dated 06.10.1700 from Theodorus de Haase, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 224, f. 228.

despite the problems of poor sales, expensive cotton and lack of draught animals, the Dutch held on to their position in northern Coromandel.

Shipping in Masulipatnam, 1696–1714

We now turn to the subject of shipping in Masulipatnam from 1696 to 1714. Separate shipping lists from Masulipatnam are unavailable for the earlier years of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns (except 1681–1686, covered in Chapter 1) and so we have no option but to use the lists from this eighteen–year period to form an idea of shipping that plied to and from Masulipatnam. Except for the first two years of this period, the shipping lists tabulated below come from a time when the west of Deccan and northern Coromandel was experiencing serious political instability as the site of Mughal–Maratha conflict shifted to the west of the Deccan following the fall of Gingee until the demise of Aurangzeb in 1707. As we will see in more detail later in this chapter, after 1700 the Masulipatnam's connection with Surat was affected by Maratha raids near Hyderabad and the operations of bandits in the province of Golconda. Although VOC commerce in northern Coromandel still bore the marks of Masulipatnam's inter–regional linkage (Dutch imports were conveyed from here to Hyderabad and beyond, and locally produced textiles were exported across the Indian Ocean) the shipping lists tell us of the changes in Masulipatnam's position as an entrepot. All the ships mentioned in the lists below belonged to private merchants and non–Dutch traders.

Table 4.3 Masulipatnam: arrival and departure of ships, 1696–1714

Year	Arrivals from	Departures to
1696	Madras, Siam, Bengal, Pulicat, Tenasserim	
1697	Bengal, Surat, Pulicat, Madras, Tenasserim	Bengal, Vishakhapatnam, Siam
1698	Madras, Bengal, San Thomé, Pulicat	Bengal
1699	Bengal, Madras, Tenasserim, Persia	Bengal
1700	Madras, Krishnapatnam, Vishakhapatnam,	
1701	Bengal, Tenasserim, Madras, Surat, England, Pulicat (a small vessel with goods belonging to the king of Siam)	Bengal, Madras
1702	Bengal, Malacca,	
1703	Bengal, Tenasserim, Pondicherry, Madras, China and English ships from Batavia	Pondicherry, England, Bengal, Madras, Vishakhapatnam
1707	Tenasserim, Bengal	
1708	Bengal, Ganjam, Bimilipatnam, Madras	Bengal
1709	Vishakhapatnam (en route to Madras), Ganjam, Manikpatnam, Bimilipatnam	Madras
1710	Ujang Selang (French ship), Madras, Ganjam, Manikpatnam, Bimilipatnam, Bengal	Bengal
1713	Ganjam, Manikpatnam, Bimilipatnam,	
1714	Ganjam, Manikpatnam, Bimilipatnam, Bengal, Madras, Mylapore, Tenasserim, Pondicherry	Bengal

The above table clearly points to a waning of Masulipatnam's trade in the Indian Ocean. Private merchants sailing to and from Persia, Aceh or other parts of maritime South–

East Asia no longer figure in the lists, although Siam and Tenasserim continue to be a major destinations on mainland South–East Asia.[46] Coastal trade had been an integral part of Masulipatnam's maritime circuits throughout the seventeenth century, but with trade with other parts of the Indian Ocean shrinking it now seemed to be to dominating the commercial scene, Madras was the most prominent coastal trading partner, followed by Bengal. The table also reflects the export sector had been hit by the Mughal wars, with imports far outweighing exports. English trade in Masulipatnam had begun to pick up in the 1700s, and all the listed ships sailing from Persia, China, Malacca and Batavia were English. And English merchants also traded between Madras, Masulipatnam and Bengal. Of the non–Dutch ships, it was mostly English and occasionally other merchants who would export cloth from Masulipatnam. This provides us with a glimpse into the survival of non–Dutch textile trade in northern Coromandel during the Mughal campaigns. Some of the voyages to Bengal were to reship products brought from elsewhere, for example Madras. Rice and wheat were often a part of the cargo from Bengal while the small vessels from ports on the Orissa coast brought rice, oil and other provisions to Masulipatnam.[47]

As we have seen, throughout the seventeenth century Masulipatnam thronged with indigenous and foreign traders, both European and non–European, and it is their absence that stands out most in these lists. Sinnappah Arasaratnam argues that wealthy Persian traders based in Masulipatnam lost their ties with Golconda after the establishment of Mughal rule. Textile trade shifted the north of Masulipatnam to Vishakhapatnam (an English settlement), Ingeram and Ganjam, all of which grew in importance as textile ports. Big merchants migrated from Masulipatnam in the 1690s. Some of the Persian and Arabic merchants left for Bengal, which developed direct commercial links with western India and the Middle East. Arasaratnam writes that in the early eighteenth century Persian and Pathan merchants began to settle in Madras and San Thomé, probably having migrated from Masulipatnam. Hindu merchants, he continues, moved north of Masulipatnam to the ports of Vishakhapatnam, Ganjam and Bimlipatnam, where some may have had kinship ties with the merchant castes.[48] Kinship ties were an important factor determining behaviour among both Muslim and Hindu merchants around the Indian Ocean; as noted in Chapter 3, merchants from Nagapatnam who traded with Ceylon had families and kinsfolk there, for example. In short, in Masulipatnam by

[46] Maritime South–East Asia is used here to describe the area equivalent to modern–day Malayasia, Indonesia and Phillipines; mainland South–East Asia is equivalent to modern-day Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

[47] Mentions in VOC documents of 'Englishmen' refer to private merchants as well as the English East India Company. The shipping lists were tabulated by the author from the following archive documents: NA VOC 1596, f. 182–f. 189. NA VOC 1610, f. 269–f. 274. NA VOC 1624, f. 247–f. 254. NA VOC 1649, f. 185–f. 196. NA VOC 1678, f. 291–f. 299. NA VOC 1761, f. 428–f. 434. NA VOC 1796, f. 28–f. 38. NA VOC 1855, f. 53–f. 57.

[48] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 159–160, 166–167.

the early–eighteenth century a substantial proportion of non–European company merchants, both indigenous and Persian/Arabic, had begun to shift their bases away from.

Sinnappah Arasaratnam pointed out that in the early eighteenth century the European companies continued their operations in Masulipatnam– although on a reduced scale. In northern Coromandel, the EIC mainly drew their supplies of textiles from Masulipatnam, Madapollam and the lower Godavari region. The dislocation of the hinterland of Masulipatnam, Arasaratnam added, made it difficult for the EIC to procure textiles and their merchants demanded an increase in textile prices due to rising costs of grains, cotton and wages. English free merchants (private) and Armenians still traded from Masulipatnam as it provided commodities for West Sumatra, Persia and Mokha.[49] Thus the experiences of the EIC, in terms of textile production, were similar to the effects of the war encountered by the VOC in northern Coromandel: an increase in textile prices due to higher costs of living and production. Indeed, as we will see in Chapter 5, the EIC in Madras bemoaned this fact. But, as the shipping lists tabulated in this chapter show, the English merchants– both company and non–company– had slowly begun to feature more and more in the sailings to and from Masulipatnam in the early eighteenth century. So, although the EIC's textile trade in Masulipatnam too felt the heat of the Mughal wars and conquest, its experience was different from that of the VOC on one count: not only did the EIC and non–EIC English merchants continue to operate from Masulipatnam, but they also began to move to the north of Masulipatnam, especially to Vishakhapatnam which had an English factory and eventually emerged as a textile port in the eighteenth century. The VOC, however, do not seem to have explored new avenues for investment in northern Coromandel, instead they strove to exercise greater control over the production of textiles in Palakollu and Draksharama.

Golconda–Masulipatnam: 1700–1713

Bruijnig Wildelant prepared a memoir for his successor Theodorus de Hase, in Masulipatnam in 1700. Around this time the Mughal administration of Golconda saw a change. Mehdi Khan was appointed as the new governor and *sar–i–lashkar* (head of the army). The Dutch greeted him and his son Mirza Muhammed with gifts, in accordance with common practice among merchants in South Asia. In his writings, Wildelant argues for caution while doing business in these uncertain times and asks his successor to await more peaceful and better days. This is typical of Dutch discourse during the wars. The textile trade in Bimlipatnam, Palakollu, Draksharama and Masulipatnam continued without any disruption. The Dutch managed production by delegating manufacture and supply to selected merchants who formed small companies (*gezelschappen*) to this end. As described in Part I, the VOC devised this system to cut down on competition among its suppliers and improve quality. Bruijnig Wildelant also notes that the English were beginning to create problems for the Dutch in the textile trade. He complains that the textiles from Palakollu and Draksharama were getting worse day by

[49] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 166–167, 189.

day while the English merchants were able to procure the good varieties.[50] Although the wars were still ongoing in the west of the Deccan, Wildelant seems more concerned about the activities of the English. Giving up a strong front against other European competitors was a common subject in VOC discourse.

Two years later, while writing a memoir for his own successor, Theodorus de Hase speaks of the changes in the government of the surrounding lands. Mehdi Khan had been replaced as the governor of Golconda by Rustam Dil Khan, whom the Dutch greeted with gifts and money. The VOC had kept the suppliers of textiles engaged under familiar terms: they were obliged to sell clothes only to the Dutch and not negotiate with the English or the French.[51] At this point, it was more important than in the preceding peaceful years for the Dutch to maintain cordial relations with the Mughal officials. Changes in the local administrative apparatus had to be dealt with tactfully because of the volatile conditions created by wars. Maratha incursions had made some routes from Golconda and Masulipatnam to inland markets quite unsafe. In Palakollu the production of clothes was hindered by an uprising led by a local raja, when his followers captured the warehouses of merchants trading with the VOC. The Dutch pacified him with gifts. In Draksharama, meanwhile, production progressed reasonably well.[52]

But the troubles inland were continuing and by 1703 the VOC in Masulipatnam did not have enough money to fund textile production. Political unrest and roads susceptible to attack meant import merchandise could not be moved inland and the sales of these VOC goods suffered. The Dutch were in need in cash and requested 20,000 pagodas from Nagapatnam. The Dutch factors in Masulipatnam were unsure when imports would start moving inland again, and they could only hope that the situation would improve with the appointment of Syed Muzaffar Khan as the governor of Golconda. But the Mughals were unable to crush the bandits rampaging inland. Though Syed Muzaffar Khan managed to drive away a robber named Gendappa, another by the name of Riza Khan plundered Golconda before moving on to Warangal and proceeding to block the routes from Masulipatnam to Golconda. This drastically reduced the supply of textiles from northern Coromandel. The governor in Nagapatnam decided not to approve the Masulipatnam factor's request for 20,000 pagodas because he was of the opinion that most of the capital required to buy textiles in northern Coromandel should come from the sales of merchandise that the VOC imported to Masulipatnam. He felt that the amount of money requested by the VOC factors in Masulipatnam would only help them temporarily and was not a long–term solution to the problems that afflicted Dutch trade. Despite these problems, some snippets of information in the archive point to trade continuing (as described earlier in this chapter), albeit in unsafe

[50] NA VOC 1638, Memoir of succession dated 27.03.1700 from Bruijnig Wildelant in Masulipatnam to Theodorus de Hase: f. 127–f. 128, f. 130–f. 132.
[51] NA VOC 8819, Memoir of succession dated 08.04.1702 from Theodorus de Hase: f. 350, f. 363.
[52] NA VOC 8313, Letter dated 07.10.1702 from J. van Steeland in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 295–f. 296, f. 298.

conditions. Caravans would wait until the roads were deemed safe: one carrying 1,600 textiles for VOC trade in South–East Asia from Golconda to Masulipatnam waited 'rather a long time', but once crossing a flooded Krishna this caravan lost most of the merchandise and only a portion of the goods, '440 pieces', arrived unscathed in Masulipatnam. To the south of Golconda, a merchant's caravan was robbed of its cargo comprising textiles, butter and oil worth a total of 16,000 rupees.[53]

In fact, this last instance in particular points to the continuing survival of indigenous trade in northern Coromandel; to an extent it also substantiates the conclusions drawn from the shipping lists examined above. What the Dutch sources do not tell us is the destination of the merchant concerned. It is impossible to be certain whether he had been travelling in an inland direction or to Masulipatnam. Meanwhile, Maratha troops continued to swarm around Golconda and the surrounding highways. As a result, for the two years until 1704, just a single caravan managed to get from Surat or northern India to Hyderabad while the Maratha troops looted other merchants; the road from Masulipatnam to Hyderabad was also unsafe. In their writings, the Dutch lament that instead of establishing order in the provinces of Golconda and Bijapur, Aurangzeb was making repeated efforts to conquer Maratha country. Meanwhile, conditions for trade in Masulipatnam and Golconda continued to worsen. Razi Khan, the Mughal governor of Golconda, was incapable of effectively crushing resistance, they write. Small towns and villages had been plundered and their inhabitants bore the brunt of banditry, a mayhem in which the Mughal personnel played no less a part. The Dutch foresaw no improvement so long as the troubles continued. Sales suffered due to these disturbances. Raw cotton was expensive, its transport problematic and all the while the suppliers of textiles were increasing their prices. Disturbances arose in Palakollu due to a conflict between the local *zamindar* Timmaraja and the governor Rustam Dil Khan that started when the raja's subordinates forcibly took a pack of clothes from the warehouses of textile merchants in Palakollu. Parts of it were returned after the raja ordered his subordinates to do so, after the weavers complained to the him that they had no work and the merchants in Palakollu had been considering not to procure clothes from there anymore due to this sort of problem – there was very little production within the raja's domains while Masulipatnam was expecting a pack of 68 textiles from elsewhere in the region. In this period, famines and disease spread in the region around Golconda.[54]

Masulipatnam and its subordinate factories in northern Coromandel were finding it difficult to transport merchandise and lacked the funds to order textiles,[55] but by 1706 textile

[53] NA VOC 8821, Letter dated 10.10.1703 from Dirck Comans in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 835, f. 851–f. 853, f. 856–f. 857.
[54] NA VOC 8822, Letter dated 02.02.1704 from J. van Steelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 129–f. 133, 147.
[55] NA VOC 8822, Letter dated 19.10.1704 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 178.

production in Palakollu had slightly improved, mostly thanks to the good relations the Dutch had managed to forge with the local ruler.[56] In 1707 Aurangzeb died and the protracted southern campaigns ended. This did not translate into immediate notable improvement, however, with the Dutch sources revealing that the situation in Golconda was barely better than in previous years. The governor of the province was allowing them to trade freely, but they were yet to receive a firman from the new emperor. The VOC in Masulipatnam was waiting for a consignment of textiles which was ready for transport in Golconda, but the surrounding region remained disrupted. In the turmoil following Aurangzeb's death the textile merchants did not dare make advance payments to the weavers of Palakollu. The key to trading peacefully, as usual, lay in lining the pockets of officials, and Dutch trade ran smoothly in Masulipatnam, Palakollu and Draksharama once payments had been made to the governor.[57]

The following table shows the profits from sales of imported commodities in Masulipatnam from 1702 to 1712. An appendix at the end of the dissertation provides annual financial results for Coromandel from 1626 to 1714 and compares the figures of Table 4.4 below with the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century. The goods were usually auctioned in Masulipatnam. The figures inserted by the Dutch in such reports represented profits in a specific period each year, ranging from three to four or even six months; here they have been rounded off.

Table 4.4 Masulipatnam: Import goods and balance, 1702–1712 (for this ten–year period, specified sales figures are available only for the periods given)[58]

Year	**Goods**	**Balance (in Dutch guilders)**
1702	Sandalwood, vermilion, Persian wine, rosewater, tin	0 (Dutch sources indicate a loss)
December 1703	Spices and Japanese bar copper	16,915
September 1707 to February 1708	Spices and Japanese bar copper	19,658
September 1708	Spices and Japanese bar copper	17,551
July 1712	Spices and Japanese bar copper	8,104
August 1712	Spices and Japanese bar copper	14,277

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the wars and the presence of the Mughal army had driven up sales in Golconda in the second half of the 1680s. It is quite conceivable that a

[56] NA VOC 8824, Letter dated 03.10.1706 from Hendrik van Oudshoorn, director in Masulipatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 140.
[57] NA VOC 8825, Letter dated 07.10.1707 from Hendrik van Oudshoorn, director in Masulipatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 7–f. 9, f. 11–f. 12.
[58] These figures were tabulated by the author from the following sales reports- NA VOC 8820: f. 330–f. 331. NA VOC 8822, Volume One: f. 150. NA VOC 8826: f. 189–f. 190. NA VOC 8373, Volume One: f. 2–f. 3. NA VOC 8829 Volume One: f. 122–f. 125.

portion of the spices sold to merchants in Masulipatnam found its way to the Mughal camp. Though these sales point to the prevalence of inland trade, the inland links were quite vulnerable, especially the link with Surat had been hit hard, as it was in the 1620s during the war between the Mughals and Malik Amber and again in the 1670s (see Chapter 1). For instance, only a single caravan could come to Masulipatnam from northern India during the 1702–1704 period due to movement of Maratha troops and operations of bandits who attacked the highways. That might explain the loss noted against the balance for 1702, perhaps caused by low demand for the merchandise and absence of merchants. In fact, as Appendix 1 shows, the VOC incurred losses worth 86,990 Dutch guilders for the annual financial year of 1703–1704, although we must remember that annual financial results in Appendix 1 speak of the Coromandel as a whole (net profits) while Table 4.4 simply provides us with an idea of sales in Masulipatnam. Nevertheless, we may say there is some commensurability in the poor figures for Masulipatnam in particular and Coromandel as a whole for 1702–1704.

As Table 4.4 shows, the balance of sales of import goods in Masulipatnam in December, 1703 was at almost 17,000 Dutch guilders, reflecting that auctions had attracted merchants and thus some inland trade could still ply on in the Masulipatnam–Hyderabad hinterland (perhaps avoiding routes affected by unrest and accompanied by a strong group). Another reason behind the decent figures of December, 1703 in comparison to 1702 might have been a change in the composition of import goods: spices and Japanese bar copper were the major commodities sold through auction from 1703 to 1712 which earned profits ranging from almost 18,000 to 23,000 Dutch guilders over these years. As Dutch correspondence tells us, the economy of northern Coromandel did not have much respite from political unrest during the first decade of the eighteenth century and thus we may safely assume that the sales figures in Table 4.4, especially from 1703 to 1712, point to the VOC operating as a major supplier of spices in northern Coromandel and Hyderabad still functioning as an important spice market in the region.

The hostile conditions experienced during the wars actually deteriorated even further following Aurangzeb's death, writes Hendrik van Oudshoorn van Zonnevelt in his 1708 memoir for his successor Hendrik Grousius in Masulipatnam. Golconda and Masulipatnam were also drawn into the war of succession, with the territory being held by different factions at different time. Kambakhsh, fighting against Shah Alam (later crowned as Bahadur Shah I), invaded Golconda. The governor in Masulipatnam sided with Shah Alam and held under his command the regions of Elluru and Rajahmundry. All these developments had a negative effect on trade in Masulipatnam, since Rajahmundry in the Godavari delta was home to many textile–weaving villages. Aurangzeb's death meant all the royal privileges secured by the VOC from him were annulled and Hendrik van Oudshoorn feared that Mughal officials would try to take advantage of the situation. The Dutch were afraid that business transactions or the movement of goods would be obstructed by Mughal commanders. Nonetheless, Van Oudshoorn does not hide his surprise that no difficulties had been encountered by the time

of writing and that to continue the sale of merchandise a firman would be acquired from the new Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah.[59] The Dutch factories continued their production of textiles in various places: in Palakollu a consignment of raw and fine textiles was ready for transport while Draksharama had supplied fine textiles and indigo to Masulipatnam. Despite disturbances in the Masulipatnam hinterland, the Dutch kept on pumping capital into textile production, with Japanese bar copper and 40,000 pagodas being shipped in for investment in trade in 1708.[60]

Despite these hopeful signs, it seems that times had changed for the worse. Writing to his successor Daniel Bernard in 1710, Joannes Steelant reports that the 'many–headed government' (*veelhofdige regeringe* in Dutch, or absence of a strong central power), was causing many problems with trade in northern Coromandel. Steelant was referring to the fragmentation of authority in the region. Only regular payments to the local administration, which frequently changed hands, could ensure the safe continuation of business. Specifically, Steelant had made payments to the governor of the Orissa and Srikakulam regions, and he expresses his hope that business there would continue unimpeded.[61] The provision of payments or gifts to local officials was commonplace in the Deccan as it was elsewhere in India, but its importance doubtless increased greatly during these years. In summary, then, while some textile production did continue, the to and fro movement of commodities between the coast and hinterland was difficult in an environment where Mughal political authority had waned and was being challenged by others. This unsettled situation soon affected the textile trade from Masulipatnam.

Governor Hendrik Grousius writes in 1711 that textile manufacture in Palakollu and Draksharama was fine, but that the export products could not be brought to Masulipatnam via the usual routes or their delivery had to be entirely cancelled due to the revolt of Mahmud Azarbek's troops which had made the ways unsafe. As a result, the Dutch decided to use coastal vessels had to transport their merchandise via Narsapore to Masulipatnam.[62] When it came to long–term prospects for Dutch trade, Hendrik Grousius did not lull either himself or his successor Gerrit Westreenen into a false sense of security. Grousius writes that political changes in Golconda had ruined the region and he saw no likelihood for improvement in sight under the contemporary ruler.[63]

---

[59] NA VOC 8826, Memoir of succession dated 11.08.1708 by Hendrik van Oudshoorn van Zonnevelt to Hendrik Grousius: f. 497, f. 499, f. 509–f. 510.
[60] NA VOC 8826, Letter dated 16.09.1708 from Hendrik van Oudshoorn and Hendrik Grousius in Masulipatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 414–f. 415, f. 420.
[61] NA VOC 8827, Memoir of succession dated 30.09.1710 from Joannes Steelant at Nagapatnam to Daniel Bernard: f. 19–f. 22.
[62] NA VOC 8444, Letter dated 29.09.1711 from Hendrik Grousius at Masulipatnam to Abraham van Riebeck, governor–general at Batavia: f. 11–f. 12.
[63] NA VOC 8444, Memoir of succession dated 27.09.1711 from Hendrik Grousius in Masulipatnam to Gerrit Westreenen: 26.

The main problem for the economy clearly remained the political unrest in northern Coromandel caused by Maratha raids and weak Mughal control over the region. The weaving villages around Bimilipatnam had been burnt to the ground, the weavers had fled and reduced rainfall meant the cotton could not be washed or bleached. In Draksharama, however, production levels were reasonable. The story in Palakollu was similar but suppliers would complain of the troubles they faced in supplying the quantities agreed upon the contracts, due to the high price of cotton (insecure environment would have increased costs of transport) and disruption of the region. In 1712, a considerable cargo was ready at Palakollu while the Dutch factors there requested Masulipatnam for more money to invest in textile production. The director in Masulipatnam accepted their request but decided that the money should only be sent to Palakollu once the troops of Inayat Khan had left Golepalem. The Dutch sales too suffered because of the unsafe ways as merchants did not dare transport merchandise.[64]

In 1711 northern Coromandel supplied 954 packs of textiles, while the next year the number dropped to 926. The Dutch in northern and southern Coromandel give differing explanations for their poor performance: in the north, political unrest and wars hindered production while in the south the Dutch were held back by a lack of cash.[65] The stated problems in the south imply that the English and the French had more cash to invest in textile production and were suffering less disruption from the wars. In this context we should bear in mind that at that point, southern Coromandel was not as disturbed as northern Coromandel, where the lines of production for textiles were especially vulnerable to political unrest mainly due to waning Mughal control which could not effectively counter Maratha attacks and establish a congenial environment ensuring public order. Chapter 5 will examine what impact the Mughal campaigns had in central and southern Coromandel. A mid–eighteenth–century compilation of figures for the export of textiles from Coromandel during the 1690s and early 1700s gives the following summary.[66]

Table 4.5 Export of textiles from Coromandel and their value, 1691–1713[67]

Year	Packs of textiles	Value (in Dutch guilders)
1691	667	373,762
1692	2,927	1,296,196
1693	4,660	1,449,993
1694	3,469	1,080,189

[64] NA VOC 8828, Letter dated 27.05.1712 from Gerrit Westreenen, director in Masulipatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 108–f. 109, f. 111.

[65] NA VOC 8829, Letter dated 28.11.1712 from Daniel Bernard, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 39.

[66] Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise*: 222; As in Om Prakash's study of pre–colonial European commercial enterprise in India, which used the same source, the values are rounded off to the nearest whole guilder.

[67] NA Hoge Regering Batavia 341, A description dated 25.11.1757 of the company's trade in Coromandel prepared by Jacob van der Waijen, a member of the Board of Indies: f. 31–f. 32.

1695	4,297	1,270,911
1696	2,235	974,164
1697	1,554	691,965
1698	1,386	1,050,456
1699	2,959	1,171,546
1700	4,216	1,395,980
1701	4,866	1,699,772
1702	3,166	1,647,238
1703	5,330	1,560,720
1704	2,842	837,780
1705	2,127	759,321
1706	2,604	1,073,943
1707	4,307	1,635,813
1708	5,575	1,991,110
1709	5,607	2,138,199
1710	5,073	1,905,173
1711	4,419	1,760,407
1712	5,155	2,037,520
1713	5,301	1,834,596

In 1757, a member of the High Government in Batavia[68] named Jacob van Der Waijen prepared a report on VOC trade in Coromandel. It included a list of textiles exported from there between 1691 and 1755, and is the most comprehensive record of exports during the Mughal wars in the region. The available data does not enable a differentiation between the quantities of textiles supplied by northern and southern Coromandel. The figures from 1691 to 1713 have been used here, and wherever relevant figures are available from other sources, they also appear in this chapter.

Figure 4.1 Volume of VOC's textile exports from Coromandel, 1691–1713 (on the basis of Table 4.5)

[68] The High Government in Batavia refers to the governor–general and his council who were in overall charge of the VOC operations in Asia. The governor–general was not all powerful, but simply the first person in the council. The second person was the director–general who supervised the company's trade in Asia. Other members of the council looked after various aspects of VOC trade in Asia such as bookkeeping, military affairs and shipping. For more details on this see Femme S. Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC: Opkomst, bloei en ondergang*. (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, Elfde druk 2012): 73.

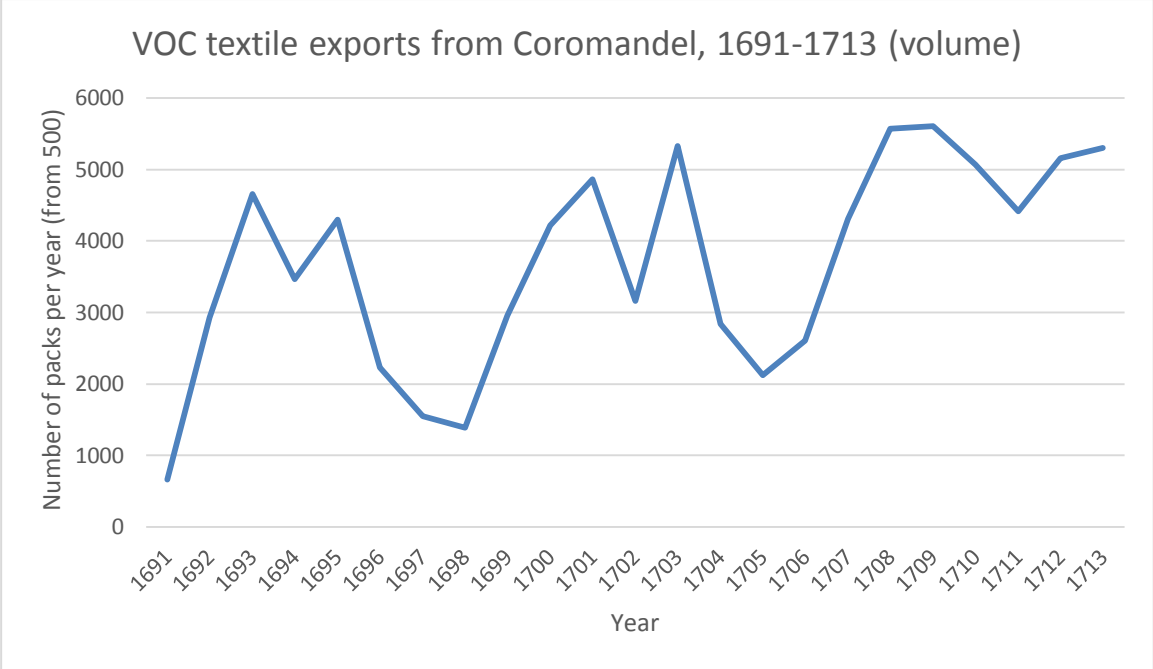
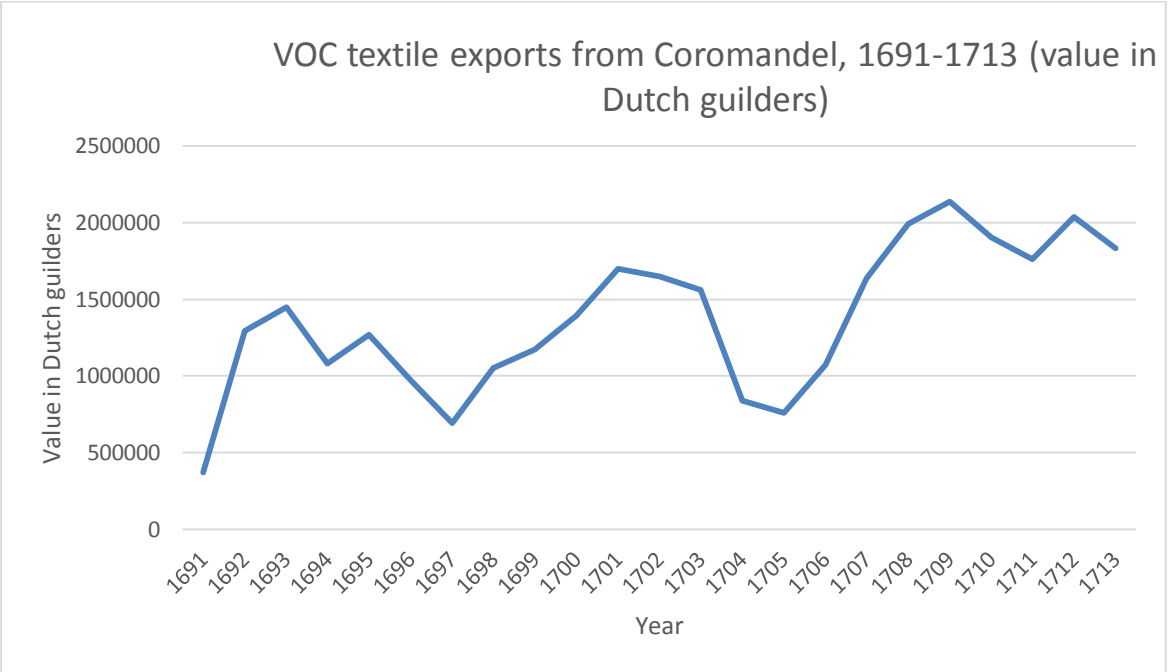


Figure 4.2 Value of VOC's textile exports from Coromandel, 1691–1713 (in Dutch guilders, on the basis of Table 4.5)



Except in 1691, 1697 and 1698, the number of packs exported each year in this period exceeded 2,000 and rose above 5,000 on three occasions: 1703, 1708 and 1709. A total of 84,542 packs of textiles were exported from Coromandel during this 23–year period, making an annual average of approximately 3675 packs. The most number of packs of textiles exported in a year was 5,607 in 1709 and worth about 2.1 million Dutch guilders, while the least number of packs exported in a year was 667 in 1691 and worth about 373,000 Dutch guilders. For the greater part of the 23–year period, except 1691, 1696, 1697, 1704 and 1705,

the packs exported each year were valued at more than 1 million Dutch guilders – the highest being 2.1 million Dutch guilders in 1709. While there were differences in the varieties of textiles procured by the VOC from northern and southern Coromandel as well as in their respective prices, we may try to trace the development of prices of textiles per pack and per year on the basis of the total value in Dutch guilders. The prices we arrive at are rounded off to the nearest whole guilder and by no means do they represent the precise value of a single pack.

Table 4.6 Price per pack of textiles exported by the VOC from Coromandel, 1691–1713 (calculated on the basis of Table 4.5)

Year	Number of packs	Value in Dutch guilders	Price per pack in Dutch guilders
1691	667	372,762	560
1692	2,927	1,296,196	445
1693	4,660	1,449,993	312
1694	3,469	1,080,189	311
1695	4,297	1,270,911	296
1696	2,235	974,164	436
1697	1,554	691,965	445
1698	1,386	1,050,456	758
1699	2,959	1,171,546	396
1700	4,216	1,395,980	331
1701	4,866	1,699,772	349
1702	3,166	1,647,238	520
1703	5,330	1,560,720	293
1704	2,842	837,780	295
1705	2,127	759,321	357
1706	2,604	1,073,943	412
1707	4,307	1,635,813	380
1708	5,575	1,991,110	357
1709	5,607	2,138,199	381
1710	5,073	1,905,173	376
1711	4,419	1,760,407	398
1712	5,155	2,037,520	395
1713	5,301	1,834,596	346

Throughout the 1690s the price of textiles per pack keeps on fluctuating from as low as 296 Dutch guilders (1695) to as high as 758 Dutch guilders (1698) commensurate to the number of packs exported– 4,297 (1695) and 1,386 (1698). The low price per pack of 1695 could be attributed to the reasonably large quantity of textiles exported that year and vice–versa for 1698; indirectly this might be an indicator of textile production as low supplies and high prices of cotton would have made textiles expensive. A similar case can be seen in 1691 when the price per pack stands at 560 Dutch guilders, of a total cargo of 667 packs of textiles. Although the price in Table 4.6 is calculated on the basis of per pack, high or low prices could also result from the contents, i.e., the quality of the textiles contained in each pack– textiles of finer varieties would have been more expensive compared to the coarser varieties. From 1699 to 1713 the price per pack stays between 300 and 400 Dutch guilders, yet again

corresponding to a stability in production levels as the number of packs of textiles exported in the 1700s usually ranges from about 4000 to 5500 per year.

As we have noted, the data in Table 4.5 does not enable a differentiation in the number of packs of textiles supplied by northern and southern Coromandel. However, drawing on an argument from Sinnappah Arasaratnam (see Introduction), Om Prakash points out that during the 1690s and the early years of the eighteenth century the main area of procurement of Coromandel textiles shifted from the north to the south. The districts of Cuddalore, Salem and Tanjore provided the bulk of textiles for both South–East Asia and Europe.[69] An example of this phenomenon can perhaps be seen for the years 1711 and 1712 when northern Coromandel respectively supplied 954 and 926 packs of textiles, as we have discussed in this chapter.[70] If we compare these figures with the data of the respective years available in Table 4.5 – 954 out of 4,419 packs in 1711 and 926 out of 5,155 packs in 1712 – the share of northern Coromandel stands at about 21 per cent (1711) and 18 per cent (1712), which at least points out that a greater part of the cargo was supplied by southern Coromandel in the early eighteenth century. Occasionally accidents during transport could also reduce the share that northern Coromandel supplied: for instance, in 1703, a caravan carrying about 1600 textiles for the VOC's trade to South–East Asia lost most of the merchandise while crossing a flooded Krishna and only 440 pieces arrived in Masulipatnam.[71] Although a shift to the southern Coromandel cannot yet be substantiated on the basis of the Dutch figures, if we assume with Om Prakash that such a shift happened, it could have been one of the major effects of Mughal wars in northern Coromandel, where roads were unsafe, cotton had become expensive and weavers had fled from the manufacturing villages in the Godavari and Krishna deltas. These processes dominate VOC discourse on the economy and military conflicts in these years. The impact of Mughal wars on Tanjore and Nagapatnam will be examined in Chapter 5.

If that be the case, how do we make sense of the figures for this 23–year period and what do they tell us of the economic conditions, especially for northern Coromandel? The extremely low figures for packs of textiles exported in 1691 (667) were the result of the establishment of Mughal control in Golconda; it was also reflected in the price per pack this year (560 Dutch guilders) indicating high prices of textiles in Coromandel. Resettlement after the Mughal conquests was only just getting underway at this juncture – a phenomenon reflected in the low number of packs of textiles supplied by Masulipatnam during 1692–1693

[69] Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise*: 221.
[70] NA VOC 8829, Letter dated 28.11.1712 from Daniel Bernard, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 39.

[71] NA VOC 8821, Letter dated 10.10.1703 from Dirck Comans in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 856–f. 857.

(269)[72] – and this year was also in the early period of the siege of Gingee in central Coromandel (see Chapter 5). The high figures of textiles exported after 1700 are possibly the result of the shift of the theatre of war from central Coromandel after the fall of Gingee to western Deccan which made the south less vulnerable. As we have noted, northern Coromandel experienced serious political instability after 1700 that continued until Aurangzeb's demise (1707) and afterwards, and two examples (1711 and 1712) show that it accounted for just about 20 per cent of the textiles exported from Coromandel. Nonetheless, it remains tricky to speak of the quantitative differences between northern and southern Coromandel.

Social banditry in Mughal Golconda: The rise and fall of Pappadu, 1695–1710

As noted in the introductory chapter, banditry in Golconda emerged from a social crisis during the Mughal wars. In this context, the career of Pappadu (Pap Rai) exemplifies the development of a local politico–military figure into a new landlord who eventually pays tribute to a bigger ruler and thus acquires some glow of royalty. In certain ways, Pappadu's activities mirrored those of similar figures and the Marathas during Aurangzeb's campaigns. For instance, in 1691 a local landed chief, Venkat Rao of Paulas (Kaulas, or Poelas in VOC correspondence, to the north–east of Hyderabad, hereafter Poelas), was captured by Rustam Dil Khan, the governor of Golconda, after a series of looting expeditions in which he plundered and burnt villages. Venkat Rao surrendered goods and money with a total value of 100,000 rupees as tribute to his captor. Pappadu entered Paulas Venkat Rao's service at a point in his career.[73] The Marathas owed their success (see Introduction) to their control of the hill forts of the Western Ghats and skilful use of *bargir giri* against the Mughals. Early exploits in Shivaji's career included raids of rich cities, such as Surat, and poor peasants were present in the Maratha troops that lived off plunder in the years of the war. André Wink argues that the availability of peasants made landless by Mughal and Maratha operations in Maharashtra enabled Maratha leaders such as Nimaji Shinde and Dhanaji Yadav (Dhanaji Jadhav) to recruit many men in a short time.[74] As we will see, landless peasants formed the core of Pappadu's troops. However, the most significant difference between Pappadu and the Marathas was this: association with royal privilege and status had come early for the Marathas; for Pappadu they did not. Born to a Maratha nobleman employed by Bijapur, Shivaji had been made a Mughal mansabdar before he crowned himself king. For Pappadu, as we will find, the payment of tribute to the Mughal emperor was not of much help.

The Mughals regarded both the Marathas and Pappadu as 'robbers'. The Dutch too subscribed to the idea of bandits for politico–military figures who robbed caravans and

[72] NA VOC 1546, Letter dated 24.09.1694 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 449v.
[73] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 111–112, 175, 247.
[74] Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India*: 103.

asserted their authority in northern Coromandel at a time when Mughal political power was on the wane, for instance, the Dutch characterized Poelas Venkat Rao and Riza Khan as bandits, as we have seen in this chapter.[75] There is a similarity in the worldviews of these two different genres of sources – the VOC evidently hoped that the Mughal Empire would firmly establish its authority in Golconda. A VOC letter written in 1704 said it would have been better had Aurangzeb consolidated his control over Masulipatnam and Golconda, rather than fighting wars in western Deccan.[76] The timing of the letter is telling: it was written in a period (1702–1704) when caravans could not move freely between Surat and Hyderabad.

Drawing upon Eric Hobsbawm's analysis of social banditry, Richard Eaton defines social bandits as peasant outlaws who while being denounced by the state as criminals, are championed as heroes in peasant society and celebrated in folk songs (Robin Hood is a prime example of this phenomenon in Europe, although there is a much more reliable historical record of Pappadu's career than that of Robin Hood). Social bandits are likely to emerge from relatively inaccessible areas in order to attack highways and rob merchants, and they tend to flourish in times of economic distress. All these criteria apply to Pappadu, whose rise coincided with the breakdown of Mughal political order in Telangana. Landless peasants formed the majority of Pappadu's troops, and there was no dominant religious colour to his movement: his followers included Hindus, Muslims and members of tribes. His principal lieutenants were Sarva and Purdil Khan, a Hindu and a Muslim respectively. Pappadu targeted Hindu and Muslim women alike. His opponents were merchants from various communities, 'respectable people' (*sharif*) and the landed elite of Telangana regarded him as an upstart craving for the status of a zamindar.[77]

Pappadu was born in Tarikonda, a village near Warangal, into the 'toddy tapper' community, a low caste group who earned a living by extracting sap from palm trees, fermenting it and selling the liquor. Pappadu's career in banditry began dramatically in the late 1690s when he assaulted and robbed his wealthy and widowed sister. The money and ornaments Pappadu stole from her enabled him to assemble a group of followers and build a crude hill fort in Tarikonda. Using this as his base, he robbed the merchants thronging the north–eastern highway from Golconda–Hyderabad to Warangal, and in so doing struck a blow to an important supply line for an already weakened regional economy. When he was driven out of Tarikonda by local military governors, Pappadu entered the service of Venkat Rao in

---

[75] The Dutch sources use the word *rover*, meaning robber, or brigand. For Paulas Venkat Rao, see NA VOC 1518, Letter dated 13.08.1692 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhorrn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 697v. For the plundering expeditions of Riza Khan that blocked the road between Hyderabad and Masulipatnam, see NA VOC 8821, Letter dated 10.10.1703 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 851–f. 852.

[76] NA VOC 8822, Letter dated 02.02.1704 from J. van Steelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 129–f. 133.

[77] Richard Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan, 1300–1761: Eight Indian Lives*. *The New Cambridge History of India,* I.8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 169–173.

Kaulas (VOC letters refer to him as Poelas Venkat Rao) but soon reverted to his old ways. He was imprisoned and set free later in an act of mercy by Venkat Rao's wife.[78]

Thereafter Pappadu went from strength to strength: after erecting a hill fort in Shahpur near Tarikonda, he resumed marauding operations. Merchants and others made pleas to Aurangzeb to suppress Pappadu for once and all, but Mughal efforts were unsuccessful in this regard during the early years of the eighteenth century. The deputy governor of Hyderabad, Rustam Dil Khan, besieged Pappadu's fort but he with his followers escaped. Although Rustam Dil Khan had the fort blown up, once the Mughals had retreated, Pappadu returned, rebuilt the fort and again gathered followers. His ascendancy in central Telangana coincided with the two-year period from 1702 to 1704 when caravans could not travel from Surat to Hyderabad. In 1706, Rustam Dil Khan approached the bandit Riza Khan in Hydrabad, to urge him to defeat Pappadu. Resorting to pitting one bandit against another only served to highlight the poor internal security in the region and waning Mughal control. Riza Khan's attempt to defeat Pappadu failed. In 1707, Rustam Dil Khan besieged Pappadu who managed to escape execution by bribing the Mughal governor. The occasion could not have been more opportune for Pappadu as Aurangzeb had died in February 1707.[79]

A year later, in April 1708, Pappadu plundered Warangal, a major inland commercial centre. As discussed in Chapter 1, Warangal was a major production centre for textiles, particularly its costly carpets. The raid had been timed to coincide with the Islamic festival of Muharram. For three days Warangal was thoroughly plundered by Pappadu and his followers. As well as costly goods such as carpets, they carried off many of the town's upper–class residents, including the wife and daughter of Warangal's chief judge, to be held for ransom in Shahpur. This raid transformed Pappadu's fortunes and he invested the proceeds in more military equipment. Though he began to style himself as a king, Pappadu, in effect, was merely a landholder as he seized caravans of banjaras and made their draught animals plough his fields.[80] Pappadu's fortunes at this point should also be seen in the light of the Mughal wars of succession that had broken out after Aurnagzeb's death. The Dutch 1708 governor's warnings to the successor of political instability in which 'the conditions for trade were difficult, dangerous and changing' come into sharp relief in the light of these events (also referred to in the introductory chapter and elsewhere in this chapter).[81]

In June, 1708 Pappadu unsuccessfully raided Bhongir, another wealthy inland town, but his troops managed to take a number of hostages. Pappadu's high point came the following year in 1709 when, he paid a large sum to the new Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah at an audience in Hyderabad, where he was instated as a legitimate tributary chieftain and

[78] Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan*: 160, 162.
[79] Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan*: 162–164.
[80] Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan*: 164–165.
[81] NA VOC 8826, Memoir of succession dated 11.08.1708 from Hendrik van Oudshoorn van Zonnevelt to Hendrik Grousius: f. 516.

received a robe of honour. Many members of Telangana's Muslim nobility were troubled by this and they sent a delegation to Bahadur Shah to request that he punish Pappadu. The emperor instructed Hyderabad's new governor Yusuf Khan to eliminate Pappadu. In June, 1709 an expeditionary force under Dilawar Khan marched to Shahpur. Although intense fighting followed during the siege and Pappadu escaped to the fort at Tarikonda, the Mughals failed to make any headway. Finally, in 1710 Yusuf Khan himself led another force against Pappadu. After a long siege lasting from March to May that year, Pappadu's men surrendered when the Mughal governor offered them double what Pappadu was paying them. Pappadu fled once again, and took shelter in a toddy shop in Hasnabad, a village that he had founded – but the shopkeeper turned him over to the Mughals. After Yusuf Khan had interrogated him about his accumulated wealth, Pappadu was executed, his head sent to Bahadur Shah's court and his body hung from the gates of Hyderabad as a trophy and warning.[82]

After driving Pappadu out of Shahpur in 1709, Dilawar Khan stayed behind to inventory his wealth and accounts. He discovered that Pappadu's operations as a bandit–entrepreneur had placed him at the centre of a wider redistributive network that helped sustain him for nearly two decades. Pappadu obtained money by robbing merchants, raiding wealthy towns, ransoms, rent from landless peasants and sale of stolen goods through middlemen, and he spent the proceeds on forts, troops, military equipment, bribes to enemy combatants and tribute to the state. The notion of him being a lone criminal is ill–suited to gaining an understanding of Pappadu's actions.[83] More research should be done on figures such as Paulas Venkat Rao and Riza Khan, whom the Dutch dubbed bandits, to understand the redistributive economic networks that they organized during the southern campaigns of Aurangzeb.

4.3 Climate and agriculture

The revenue system in Golconda depended on tax–farming, and despite the rapacious nature of the system, the sultanate was extremely rich and wealthy. As noted in Chapter 1, revenue farming in Golocnda operated through an elaborate system of lessees and sub–lessees: officials who had earned the rights to farm revenues of a place by making a successful bid at the court often sublet it to smaller entrepreneurs. Agricultural productivity in Golconda involved extensive tank irrigation and production of rice in the deltas of the Godavari and Krishna; two factors that compensated for the rapacious nature of tax–farming were the practice of the Golconda sultanate to place some lands beyond the reach of tax–farmers (such as grants to temples, mosques) and the fact that the figure of assessment for revenue collection in villages was a bargaining point beyond which payments could not be made to the tax–farmers (see Chapter 1 for more details). What was the impact of the military campaigns on agriculture in the Masulipatnam–Golconda hinterland and how do we go about researching it? Direct references in our primary sources concerning how the military

[82] Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan*: 166–169.
[83] Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan*: 168, 173–174.

campaigns affected agriculture are few and far between, and so we must rely mostly on circumstantial evidence.

Droughts, famines and wars in the seventeenth century

Failure of monsoons has taken place in South Asia both before and after the seveneteenth century. However, in the context of this dissertation, for the Indian sub–continent, the seventeenth century was the century of El Nino, which caused monsoons to fail again and again, in four periods: 1613–1615, 1630–1632, 1658–1660 and 1685–1687. And in 1630, the arrival of El Nino coincided with volcanic eruptions. Drought struck across Gujarat and the Deccan, and conditions were aggravated by the heavy rains that fell in 1632. In 1659 south–eastern India experienced a severe famine whose effects were intensified by rains failing the following year. Gujarat and the Gangetic plain did not escape famine and drought in this period. Malabar had three years of drought, and grain prices shot up in Bengal.[84] As we have noted in the introduction to the thesis (a la John F. Richards), these episodes of droughts and famines did not have any serious long–term aftermath on the Indian subcontinent and the seventeenth century was a period of economic growth and rising productivity. While one episode of El Nino, 1685–1687, coincided with Aurangzeb's siege and conquest of Golconda, there were other seasons of poor monsoon too– as we have discussed in this chapter– but those seasons should not be equated with El Nino. In general, monsoon failures would have caused a reduction in food supplies at any temporal point. But failure of monsoon during wars could create severe problems for an army that tried to procure supplies from the areas it marched through. Moreover, for non–combatants the failure of monsoon during wars could detrimentally affect cultivation, resulting in a reduction in food security and leading to depopulation in the region through deaths caused by famine or migration to lesser affected areas. As noted earlier, the famine that broke out in Golconda during the time of the Mughal conquest was preceded by a failure of monsoon rains.

Cases of drought and famine during Aurangzeb's campaigns

During the long campaigns, Mughal and other armies on the march would drain the resources of villages and towns they passed through. Famine would result from droughts and floods alike. As discussed earlier in this chapter, when the Mughals were fighting in Konkan their supplies started running low as early as 1682. Aurangzeb issued orders that the necessary provisions be brought by sea from the territory of Sidi of Dauda Rajpuri. Even though food grains had been supplied twice to the army it was difficult to sustain this line of supply. Soldiers died as a result and meanwhile the Marathas were repeatedly attacking the Mughals. Aurangzeb ordered the Mughal governor in Surat to buy grains to feed the Mughal army. Konkan did not suit the horses and other draught animals at the disposal of the Mughals,

[84] Parker, *Global Crisis*: 403, 409.

complained the prince Muhammed Muazzam. Eventually a fresh army arrived to bring him back to Aurangzeb's camp.[85]

In 1685, while fighting in Bijapur the army of Muhammed Azam Shah faced a severe famine and wheat became very expensive, and it was impossible to get supplies from outside sources. Eventually Firuz Jang Bahadur arrived with reinforcements to relieve the prince. Two floods hit the Mughals hard, in 1697 in the river Bhima and in 1700 at the siege of Parli food grains could not be brought in due to floods. Though the Mughals took the fort, their draught animals died due to the famine. In yet another case a drought broke out in the imperial camp near Pune in 1703. Wheat and rice became scarce, and the *shahganj* (royal market) was filled with the cries of beggars. The Mughal (and other) armies were of course part of the problem. In 1701, for example, in Khelna they cut down trees and destroyed other vegetation to make a road for horsemen.[86] The extended nature of the campaigns would have only added to the pressure exerted on ecology. With this in mind, let us examine how the Mughal wars affected agriculture in Golconda, on the one hand, and the monsoon records of this period, on the other.

The impact of wars on agriculture in Golconda

The Golconda sultanate was a well–cultivated region. Daniel Havart's descriptions of the routes from Masulipatnam to Golconda refer every now and then to agricultural fields in the region, as we saw in Chapter 1. Along the deltas of the rivers Godavari and Krishna rice was produced. Northwards from the Godavari the littoral of Orissa supplied wheat and rice, along with mustard oil. Rice and millet were cultivated to the south–east of Hyderabad. Irrigation from tanks supported cultivation to its north–west where wheat was grown.[87]

During the wars in the Deccan and South India we can observe the following repeated cycle at work: failed rains bringing drought and famine followed by heavy rains and flooding. In Golconda this pattern repeated over the course of two decades: crop failures in 1686 and then floods in the next year during the siege of Golconda (1687), poor rains in 1693 and 1695 and then floods. As described earlier in this chapter, at the siege of Golconda, famine affected the Mughals and Qutb Shahis alike when supplies could not reach them due to flooding.

Rains had been poor in 1686, the year before Golconda was conquered, and crops had failed in almost the entire Deccan region. The ongoing conflict meant that rice could not be planted in and around Hyderabad. Eventually, heavy rains flooded the region. Immediately after the conquest, conditions were terrible. The wars, crop failures and famine had depopulated the region on a massive scale. Food was short, prices soared, and zamindars and bandits were robbing foodstuffs and money from merchants. Despite the monsoon rains of 1687, there were few peasants available to cultivate the land. Although agricultural

[85] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 140, 142.
[86] Sarkar transl., *Maasir–i–Alamgiri*: 162–163, 236, 257–259, 268, 283.
[87] Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*: sheet 15B.

production began to pick up in 1688, the shortages and high prices continued until the following year, wrote John F. Richards. In the ensuing ten years (1688–1698), the Mughal revenue system in Golconda established connections between the state and producers of wealth in the countryside and towns of Telangana – craftspeople, merchants and particularly agricultural cultivators. The improved performance of the Mughal revenue machinery was based on their successful tapping of road and ferry tolls, excise taxes on merchandise, and taxes on shops and houses. The grain market in Hyderabad served as an important source for Aurangzeb's huge camp. Banjaras were encouraged to transport large quantities of grain from Hyderabad to the market at the imperial camp. However, after 1700 administrative order broke down and the Mughal officials failed to resist Maratha attacks. Bandits devastated the routes between Hyderabad and Masulipatnam. The Maratha attacks disrupted agricultural production, the peasants lost draught cattle to the invaders and harvests dropped as a result. In 1702, famine spread through both western and eastern Deccan. By 1703 the cultivated area in Hyderabad, Bijapur and Khandesh had dwindled in size.[88]

Implicit to this analysis is the correlation between political stability and improvement in agricultural conditions. Rains failed during the years of the war. In 1693 the Dutch wrote from Masulipatnam that food grains had become quite expensive due to decreased rainfall.[89] However, excessive rainfall was a problem as well. In 1695 the economy was still trying to cope with the effects of food scarcity when the rains struck hard once again. The previous failure of rains had brought drought. Draught animals had barely enough fodder so merchants trading with the VOC could not venture onto the roads. Dutch hopes for a recovery were dashed when heavy rainfall flooded the lands around Masulipatnam and merchandise could not be transported.[90] In 1697 the Dutch write from Masulipatnam that food grains had become quite expensive.[91] The problems caused by these devastating climatic cycles, were exacerbated by the hoarding of grain. Rice cultivation continued in the deltas near the coast, and in 1699 in Palakollu the Dutch did receive rice after the harvests.[92]

The Dutch were highly susceptible to the effects of climate on agriculture and in turn the economy. Export products such as cotton and indigo, were, after all, agricultural products. By extension, Dutch records of a dip in textile exports due to high cotton prices indirectly tells

---

[88] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 50, 69–70, 181–182, 183, 185–186, 189, 215, 218, 219–220, 221, 233.

[89] NA VOC 1537, Letter dated 19.09.1693 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 643 v.

[90] NA VOC 1570, Letter dated 08.10.1695 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 343.

[91] NA VOC 1596, Letter dated 13.09.1697 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 133. The same letter speaks of how scarcity of cotton had been affecting textile production in Palakollu f. 126. NA VOC 1610, another letter dated 04.09.1698 from Masulipatnam to Batavia follows a similar line of argument: f. 248–f. 249.

[92] NA VOC 1624, Letter dated 31.08.1699 from Bruijnig Wildelant, director in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 226.

us of the agricultural conditions. A rise in cotton prices could be caused not only by actual violence associated with wars and banditry (the latter made transport insecure and thus increased its costs ultimately pushing up prices) but also by a more general hostile environment for production that interfered with a normal rhythm for sowing and reaping the harvest and reduced the quantity grown. This might have resulted from armies damaging fields or workers deserting their villages out of fear. For the weavers themselves, engaging in and maintaining textile production in a decade when the region seems to have oscillated between decent and dismal monsoons would have been quite a challenge.

We can conclude from the sources that although rainfall was irregular, the monsoon was not too bad in the 1690s, except in the two years reported by the Dutch: 1693 and 1695. In fact, the years from 1692 to 1697 were relatively stable for the Mughal administration which restored state ties with fertile parts of Telangana and Hyderabad supplied grains to Aurangzeb's camp. The Dutch experience of conditions in central Coromandel in this period was quite different, as Chapter 5 shows. Food security seems to have been low during these years. A general inflation created by the wars pushed grain prices high and the threat of famine was present too. One bad year of rains coupled with devastation caused by movement of troops was enough to produce a famine. Other key indicators for the situation in this period were the shipment by coastal vessels of grains and other edible goods from Bengal and Orissa, recorded in the shipping lists. While this was by no means an unusual feature of the Bay of Bengal economy, it can be argued that its importance would have increased during the wars in northern Coromandel and accompanying decline in food security. Finally, Maratha attacks after 1699 and the movement of troops reduced the cultivated area around Hyderabad by 1703.

4.4 Conclusion

Assuming the Dutch records are correct, during the period of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns the economy of Golconda–Masulipatnam swung dramatically due to spells of famine and drought, and wars and relative peace. How do we make sense of these period spanning a quarter of a century? To evaluate the results, the discussion in this section distinguishes between the immediate effects of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns on Golconda, the short–term and long–term aftermath of the wars and conquest in Golconda, and what might be considered quite normal during long campaigns. We will discuss the long–term aftermath of the wars around three themes: the Surat–Hyderabad–Masulipatnam route(s); the VOC and their control over the production process of textiles; and a comparison of John F. Richards' evaluation of Mughal administration of Golconda with that of the VOC officials who served in this region from 1690 to 1710.

The immediate effects of Aurangzeb's campaigns against the Marathas in the west of the Deccan were reflected in the Dutch correspondence from Masulipatnam in the early 1680s. While the VOC factors found little to complain about in 1679, by 1682 they wrote that the Mughal threat on Golconda was looming large as Aurangzeb had been extorting money

from the Qutb Shah. The insecure milieu that ensued soon induced some of the Persian nobility in Golconda to send their merchandise to Persia on VOC ships, instead of being transported to Surat and shipped from there. From 1684 to 1685 Sambhaji's troops attacked the highways between Golconda and Surat while merchants stopped coming to Masulipatnam. The VOC factors in Masulipatnam were not sure if they could fulifill the orders for textiles for 1686 and they had been requested by the subordinate factories not to send the latter any import goods for sale.

So, by 1685 Aurangzeb's campaigns in the west of the Deccan had considerably affected both the overland and maritime connections of Masulipatnam–Hyderabad hinterland. The Mughals, we may say, turned the heat on Golconda even more as they invaded Hyderabad in 1686, looted the city for three days and then withdrew. Crops failed in the Golconda region around the same time, coinciding with the occurrence of El Nino– as we have noted. We may argue the first short–term effect of the Mughal siege of Golconda from early 1687 was a terrible famine (also partly a result of crop failures) that affected the besiegers and the besieged alike, a mishap which was only worsened by floods that struck with the south–west monsoon and put armies on the brink of starvation. Another short–term effect of the Mughal siege was, as Daniel Havart pointed out, an increase in sales of import goods in Golconda due to demand created by the presence of the Mughal army, pointing that merchandise had found a new market: the Mughal camp in Golconda. However, the biggest aftermath of the Mughal campaigns in the 1680s and conquest of Golconda was Masulipatnam turning into a shadow of its former self due to wars, absence of weavers and migration of big merchants – a fact lamented by Daniel Havart in 1687.

While evaluating the long–term aftermath of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns in Golconda, the first issue to be grappled with is whether the hypothesis constructed in the conclusion to Part I with respect to Golonda–Masulipatnam holds true. To explore that, we must turn our attention to the impact of the Mughal wars on the redistributive character of Masulipatnam. And the evidence does indeed confirm that the region behaved as hypothesized it would if confronted by long wars. The effects of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns on the Surat–Hyderabad–Masulipatnam route(s) were quite telling from the early 1680s. It started when members of the Persian nobility in Golconda decided to send export merchandise to Persia from the port of Masulipatnam, instead of first overland to the port of Surat and then to Persia. This was accompanied by a general unrest in the region to the west of Golconda due to the presence of Mughal and Maratha troops, who made it difficult for caravans and banjaras to make their return trips along this axis. The low–point from this perspective was the two–year period from 1702 to 1704, when only a single caravan managed to make its way from Surat, the highways having been besieged by robbers. The VOC complained on several occasions of poor sales of their imports in Masulipatnam and Golconda because of insecure roads.

The effects of political unrest and general lack of security on the redistributive character of Masulipatnam were reflected most clearly in the volume of trade passing through the port. The shipping lists show that the majority of vessels calling at this port during the years of the war originated in Bengal, Orissa and Madras. In this period, there were almost no sailings on behalf of indigenous merchants to and from Masulipatnam to maritime South–East Asia, signifying a serious decline in the importance of this port, and big merchants started migrating from Masulipatnam to Bengal and Madras. The final effect of all these developments was that Masulipatnam retrograded from a premier Indian Ocean port to one that served only the network of coastal trade in the Bay of Bengal. Small wonder, then, that Daniel Havart remarked that the wars had left Masulipatnam, a shadow of its former self. The English ambassador to Aurangzeb's court, William Norris, made similar observations.

Let us now turn to the second theme: the VOC and their control over the production process of textiles. Two aspects are of significance here: inflation in cotton prices and successfully engaging weavers for work. Cotton for the textile industry of the Godavari delta was brought from the west of the Deccan, from the region between Aurangabad and Nanded. The war pushed cotton prices higher, a fact that the Dutch bemoaned repeatedly in their records from this period. General insecurity along the Surat–Hyderabad–Masulipatnam axis will have increased payments to the banjaras transporting cotton along the Godavari river, and the plundering of villages in the west of the Deccan by Mughals and Marathas surely interfered with the cotton season, possibly leading to a decrease in the harvest. This situation was certainly not helped by unreliable and poor rainfall. Taken together, these factors caused merchants to quote high prices to the Dutch.

Successfully engaging textile weavers was a challenge for the VOC after the depopulation around Golconda in 1687. In this respect, they were certainly helped by the favourable terms at which Aurangzeb reinstated their privileges, though at the local level a lot depended on good relations that the Dutch could maintain with Mughal governors and landed magnates. For instance, when trade in Golconda was at a standstill due to confusion over tolls to be paid to the Mughals, the VOC were able to keep trading in Masulipatnam thanks to their good relationship with the port city's governor. The Mughal wars in the east of the Deccan depopulated Nagulvancha, a settlement on the road from Masulipatnam to Hyderabad where the VOC had a lodge, employed weavers and procured textiles for South–East Asia from the surrounding villages. A few years into the war, the VOC had to abandon their lodge in Golconda and textile production organized by the VOC came to be increasingly concentrated in the villages of Palakollu and Draksharama near Masulipatnam. Draksharama seems to have been the more successful of the two mainly due to the larger number of weavers living there. The case of the Dutch–run village Golepalem demonstrates that infrastructure put into place by the VOC kept merchants, weavers, washers, dyers and other allied occupations tied to such production centres.

A crucial factor in the analysis of textile production in this period is that we no longer find the sort of information–rich Dutch surveys of the rural economy of Masulipatnam's hinterland referred to in Chapter 1, despite the fact that as late as 1707 Rajahmundry retained its weaving population and the VOC still drew their supplies of cotton textiles from there.[93] As a consequence, no specific figures are available for the quantities of textile supplied by villages other than Palakollu and Draksharama, or for the number of weaving families inhabiting the villages in the Godavari delta. No Dutch survey has been found of textile villages in the Godavari delta towards the end of the seventeenth century. This hints at the possibility that textile production organized by either the VOC themselves or merchants who supplied them was increasingly concentrated around Palakollu and Draksharama. In cases where local political figures hindered the movement of textiles, the VOC found alternative routes, shipping them first to Narsapore and then to Masulipatnam. Despite these efforts, the scale of operations of the textile industry of northern Coromandel was substantially reduced by the disruptive effects of the Mughal wars in western and eastern Deccan, as was evidenced by the calculations we made for northern Coromandel's share of the total pack of textiles exported from Coromandel in 1711 and 1712. However, the way in which the Dutch managed textile production during Aurangzeb's wars, particularly after 1700, suggests that the biggest problem was political instability, rather than the reduced vitality of the textile industry. Had the Mughals been able to consolidate their control over the east of the Deccan and provided stability, the fortunes of the textile industry of northern Coromandel and Masulipatnam might have been very different.

In his evaluation of the Mughal revenue system in Golconda, John F. Richards makes a somewhat positive assessment of Mughal administration in the province from 1690 to 1700. He argues that within five years of Mughal conquest and annexation, certain sectors of the economy of Hyderabad recovered from the effects of wars and political change. In the early 1690s the Mughals tapped into some of the most lucrative sources of revenue in the province: the 40 to 50 of most fertile and accessible parganas of Telangana, Hyderabad's markets for food grains and other goods, the ports and centres of export along the littoral, the coastal salt works and the diamond mines. Hyderabad was soon financing the cost of its own administration and this enabled Aurangzeb to use revenues from the province to support his southern campaigns, particularly when it came to meeting the expenses of the Mughal army led by Ghaziuddin Firuz Jang, one of Aurangzeb's generals who was engaged in a lengthy campaign against the Marathas.[94]

But after 1700, argues John F. Richards, the Mughal administrative machinery which had been controlling Golconda for the preceding decade started to falter, leading to a deterioration of public order, in a period when Hyderabad was coming under attack from both

[93] NA VOC 8686, Letter dated 05.06.1707 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 177.
[94] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 211.

Marathas and Berads and suffering the consequences of the operations of the bandits such as Pappadu and Riza Khan in the province. Hyderabad's governor, Rustam Dil Khan, had made no significant attempt to defend it, and in 1702 it was plundered for three days by Maratha troops, who only agreed to leave once the governor had paid them 700,000 rupees from the provincial treasury. The attacks by Marathas and bandits affected long–distance trade in the province (in the 1702–1704 period only a single caravan traversed the route between Surat and Hyderabad) and Maratha attacks disrupted agricultural production and harvesting. This led to a reduction in the land–tax that was collected. John F. Richards concludes that consolidation in Hyderabad was unsuccessful because the energies of Aurangzeb, his most reliable administrators and the empire's surplus resources were diverted to expensive military campaigns, rather than focused on strengthening Mughal control over Hyderabad. In short, Richards argues, Aurangzeb's failure in Hyderabad was due to bad management rather than a failure of the administrative system.[95]

Would the Dutch have agreed with this evaluation of Mughal rule in Golconda: that it had a positive effect for the first couple of years and but that, later on, public order declined sharply? The answer is a conclusive yes. Reports by VOC officials seem to confirm this general picture of Mughal rule in the Golconda–Masulipatnam region. From the outset, the Dutch translation of Aurangzeb's firman and their reports from early 1690s pointed out the efforts to resettle the war–devastated region. These efforts bore some fruit by 1695, when the VOC state that textile production had begun to pick up in Palakollu and Draksharama, although inland trade from Masulipatnam did not see much improvement. At this juncture, as we will find in Chapter 5, the VOC in Nagapatnam contrasted the relatively peaceful conditions for trade in northern Coromandel with the disturbances that had been unleashed due to the siege of Gingee in central Coromandel. After 1700, observations by VOC officials in Masulipatnam reflected the growing disturbances in the form of rampant banditry and attacks by Maratha troops along the already weakened east–west economic axis from Masulipatnam to Surat. Finally, the Dutch also concluded that Aurangzeb should have consolidated Golconda–Masulipatnam, a primary economic region of Coromandel, instead of fighting wars against the Marathas in the west of the Deccan. In the early eighteenth century, departing VOC directors in Masulipatnam warned their successors of an insecure political milieu where 'many–headed' governments (*veelhofdige regeringe*) were a cause for grave concern about conditions for trade. This was a result not of the military campaigns, but of a lack of central rule or control in the region. In short: it was due to poor management of the region by the Mughals.

The condition of agriculture in Golconda also helps us differentiate between the short–term and long–term aftermath of Mughal campaigns and conquest. In the 1680s, agricultural productivity had sharply declined with the occurrence of El Nino (1685–1687) that

[95] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*: 215, 218–219, 220–221, 309, 311.

was marked by failure of rains and harvests, only to be followed by the Mughal siege of Golconda which interfered with planting of crops, reduced food security and eventually led to a terrible famine resulting in depopulation and migration of survivors. This might be considered to be a short–term effect of the wars on agriculture. Conditions for cultivation improved with the relative stability and public order that Mughal rule established in the province, especially in the 1690s when the Mughal revenue system tapped fertile parts of Telangana and the coastal districts of northern Coromandel. But this improvement could not be sustained in the early 1700s when Maratha attacks disrupted agricultural production and public order declined. This also coincided with the success of bandit–entrepreneurs in Mughal Golconda, especially Pappadu, majority of whose troops – as we have noted – were landless peasants. For the latter, joining an employer who could provide material gains in a time of low food security must have been an incentive. While climatic factors like poor rainfall (1685–1687, 1693 and 1695) reduced food security, the real challenge was to make Mughal Golconda relatively immune to such pressures. This was mainly done in three ways: one, the Mughal revenue administration's success in improving agricultural production during the 1690s allowed Hyderabad to function as a grain market; two, the coastal trade from Bengal and Orissa regularly shipped rice and wheat into Masulipatnam; and three, as we will find in Chapter 5, another option was to buy rice in southern Coromandel in the Kaveri delta when failure of harvests, either due to low rainfall or attacks by roving troops, caused famine like conditions in northern Coromandel. However, as we have seen, success in ensuring food security was limited and agricultural conditions deteriorated after 1700. So, just like the textile industry, the real problem with agriculture in Golconda during these years was poor management of the region by the Mughals. In other words, agriculture in Mughal Golconda suffered more from a decline in public order than the vagaries of monsoon in the first decade of the eighteenth century.

A theme that we may also ponder over as part of the long–term aftermath of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns in Golconda is whether the weakening of Masulipatnam–Hyderabad had shifted economic gravity to the west of the Deccan after 1700 with the rise of the Marathas. The situation in Maharashtra in the early eighteenth century was hardly promising. As Aurangzeb kept on besieging Maratha forts, the war had devastating consequences for the countryside since both sides plundered villages to forage for food and fodder. Famine struck Maharashtra in 1703–1704 leading to depopulation and migration; the economic conditions sharply declined. Following Aurangzeb's death in 1707, there was a civil war in Maharashtra for the next eight years on the question of succession to the Maratha throne involving on the one hand Shahu, the son of Sambhaji, and on the other hand Tarabai, the queen and widow of Rajaram (Maratha king during the siege of Gingee), who made a case for her son. Both the claimants to the throne as well as the Mughals competed for the loyalty of the leaders of Maratha bands that raided Mughal territories, especially Ahmadnagar and Burhanpur after 1710 (the latter was a connecting node between northern Coromandel and west of the Deccan, and northern India). By 1712–1713, Stewart Gordon concludes

Maharashtra had slipped into near total anarchy. After a lengthy process of winning over allies and negotiations at the Mughal court through his *peshwa* (chief minister) Balaji Vishwanath, Shahu finally gained control over Maharashtra in 1719. Following this the *peshwa* successfully induced banking families to join Shahu; they helped Shahu raise armies and meet the expenses of government from one harvest to another by providing credit against future revenue receipts.[96]

So, it is extremely difficult to argue in favour of an economic shift from the east to the west of the Deccan in the early eighteenth century. We find leaders of Maratha bands attacking economic nodes that connected northern Coromandel and western Deccan with Surat. Our analysis of the economy of Masulipatnam–Hyderabad in this chapter has given us a fair idea of what kind of an impact such attacks could have on overland trade that plied between the east and the west of the Deccan, as well as the lines of textile production. Even with the help of banking families who provided credit to support military expansion that filled the treasury and attracted traders, shift of economic gravity to the west of the Deccan under the Marathas would have taken years to complete. And a story of economic recovery of Maharashtra in the early eighteenth century must also a follow a parallel trajectory analysing the economic conditions of Hyderabad which became virtually independent of Mughal control in the 1720s under Nizam–ul–Mulk Asaf Jah. A comparative study of the relationship between warfare and economy in these expanding states of the eighteenth century can help us understand to what extent economic centres had shifted from northern Coromandel to the west of the Deccan.

What can be considered normal for the economy of northern Coromandel in a time that swung between phases of wars, relative peace and political unrest? Trade, it seems, had become fairly used to the troubles associated with wars and political instability. For example, two pions employed by the VOC were murdered on their way from Golconda to Masulipatnam by Maratha troops in 1699 and the Dutch wrote that such incidents had become commonplace for travellers (and merchants) who were not accompanied by a strong group. Indirectly it tells us how trading caravans could move at that time: buoyed and secured by a strong group. Looking for alternative routes to transport textiles was also an option that the VOC explored, for instance in 1711, when due to unrest around Palakollu and Draksharama they shipped cloth on coastal vessels from Narsapore to Masulipatnam. Lining the pockets of Mughal officials also smoothened trade, especially when a new ruler was crowned or new administrative personnel were appointed– although this was not new its importance would have increased during the 1690s and 1700s. Finally, the fluctuations in textile production in northern Coromandel, as evidenced by VOC correspondence during the 1690s and 1700s, may be considered normal at a time when connections between textile weaving zones in northern Coromandel and cotton growing regions in the west of the Deccan

[96] Gordon, *The Marathas 1600–1818*: 101–106, 110, 113.

remained vulnerable to movement of armies disrupting agricultural cycles and highwaymen attacking caravans. In this context, we may say the VOC did fairly well in keeping textile merchants, weavers, dyers, washers and allied occupations tied to the villages of Palakollu, Drakshrama and Golepalem during the 1690s and 1700s, and in so doing, helping the textile industry survive the effects of wars and conquest.

We can conclude, therefore, that Aurangzeb's Deccan campaigns caused at least three important shifts in the economy of the Golconda–Masulipatnam region. Firstly, Masulipatnam lost its eminent position as a port in the Bay of Bengal. Secondly, Mughal political authority waned in the early eighteenth century as Hyderabad was raided by Maratha troops and banditry struck at an important feeder of the regional economy in Warangal. Thirdly, the weakening of Hyderabad coincided with the development two new economic centres in the south: Aurangzeb's camp and Madras (see the introductory chapter and John F. Richards' contrasting of these developments). Nonetheless, Hyderabad continued to supply grains to Aurangzeb and the Masulipatnam salt works provided a steady stream of revenue for the Mughals. These phenomena afford us some insight into the Mughals' ultimate motivation conducting these campaigns: they were seeking to integrate the coasts with the heartland of the empire. Aurangzeb's reinstatement of the VOC and other European companies fitted well with this project of integration. Although Aurangzeb planned to use the revenues from Hyderabad and trade conducted by the European companies to offset the negative impact of the campaigns in northern Coromandel and to support his wars in the west of the Deccan, his reinstatement of the VOC at favourable terms shows a commitment to promote maritime trade. So, while Mughal wars did disrupt the economy of northern Coromandel, certain aspects of it survived. The biggest problem afflicting the textile industry of northern Coromandel was not a significant decline in the demand for its products, but the political instability that caused the costs of production to rise. One of the effects of the Mughal campaigns was the migration of people from northern Coromandel to the south. The following chapter explores the rise of the south and the impact of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns in central and southern Coromandel.

Chapter 5: Pulicat and Nagapatnam: The Mughal wars and their impact

Introduction

Once Bijapur and Golconda had been conquered, Aurangzeb concentrated his energies on crushing the Marathas. Sambhaji, their king, was captured and executed in 1689, but the Maratha resistance did not die. Bhimsen, the author of *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, writes:

> Rama [Rajaram], the second son of Shiva[ji], after the capture of Sambha, raised his head in pride, but fled with some trusty officers and went towards the kingdom of Srirangapatan. Rama, going towards Gingee, betook himself that fort by any means he could. When the emperor learnt that Rama [Rajaram] had entered the fort of Gingee, he sent Zulfiqar Khan with a huge army to crush him.[1]

That was the beginning of the siege of Gingee, a fort which would not be captured for almost a decade. During the siege of Gingee, the Mughals also raided the Kaveri delta to secure food supplies.

Chapters 2 and 3 examined Dutch control of the prominent ports of Pulicat and Nagapatnam in central and southern Coromandel, respectively, and the roles of these ports as outlets for local manufactures. In 1690, Nagapatnam replaced Pulicat as headquarters of the Dutch *gouvernement* of Coromandel. This chapter will take these ports as its vantage points to study the impact of Mughal campaigns in central and southern Coromandel. There were several other ports between Pulicat and Nagapatnam, Madras, San Thomé, Sadraspatnam, Pondicherry, Tegenapatnam (Devanampatnam) and Porto Novo being the major ones. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, along this stretch of coastline, and especially in central Coromandel, the textile weaving villages were located close to the ports. One port in central Coromandel will be mentioned in this chapter for the first time: Sadraspatnam. Specific information relating to Pulicat is rather thin on the ground for the period under consideration in this chapter, and the VOC's evaluation of the conditions around the neighbouring port of Sadraspatnam will help us explore the economic impact of Mughal wars in central Coromandel in the late seventeenth century.

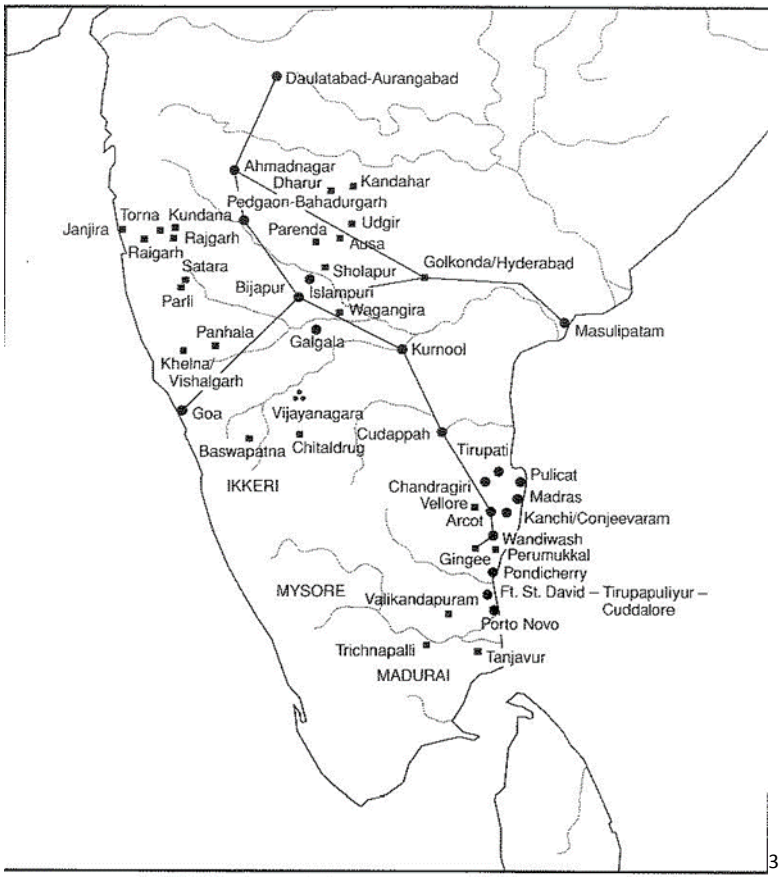
Like the previous chapter, Chapter 5 is organized into four sections: the first provides an overview of the Mughal siege of Gingee; the second discusses the economic impact of the campaigns in central and southern Coromandel, particularly with respect to textile production; the third explores the relationship between climate and agriculture in this region during the years of the wars; and the fourth, the conclusion, states the results and summarizes the findings of this chapter.

---

[1] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 169–171.

5.1 Along the campaign trail[2]

Map 5.1 Southern expansion of the Mughal Empire in the late seventeenth century. In the far south we can see the expansion towards Gingee and Vellore and the location of ports such as Pulicat, Madras and Pondicherry in central Coromandel



[3]

The map indicates the major direction of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns: from Daulatabad–Aurangabad to Bijapur and Golconda, and then on to Gingee. The siege of Gingee (1689–1698) was the main site of Mughal–Maratha wars in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Along the coast in central Coromandel are the settlements of the various European

[2] The central narrative in this section is derived from Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 187–199.

[3] The map shows the direction of the southern expansion of the Mughal Empire, from Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 187.

companies, such as Pulicat, Madras and Pondicherry. The most south–eastern settlement shown on this map is Tanjore (here spelt Tanjavur), directly to the west of Nagapatnam (not shown).

The siege of Gingee, 1689–1698

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Rajaram, who became the leader of Maratha resistance against the Mughals after their king Sambhaji was executed in 1689, had fled from Raigarh in the west of the Deccan to Gingee in central Coromandel. Zulfiqar Khan, who had been sent by Aurangzeb to defeat and capture Rajaram, pursued the Marathas and marched through the region of Raichur and arrived in Gingee in 1690 to besiege the fort.

The hill fort of Gingee was at a strong strategic location and it became the focal point of the Mughal–Maratha wars of the 1690s. The fort was surrounded by mountains on all sides. The *nayakas*, its early occupants, improved and enlarged the existing fortifications in the late–fifteenth and early–sixteenth centuries. During the occupations of first the Bijapuris (1649–1677) and then the Marathas (1677–1698) the fortifications were strengthened even further. With its well–covered granaries and two perennial springs of water at the summit of the citadel, the fort was well–equipped to withstand sieges. The Iranian commander of the Mughal army, Zulfiqar Khan, began the siege a year after Rajaram had arrived. His father Asad Khan, the *wazir* or prime minister of the empire, secured the supply lines to the north by controlling the towns of Kurnool and Cudappah. Nonetheless, the Mughals still had quite a tough time managing their supplies, as we will see. The siege of Gingee extended the Mughals' logistical line far into the south. Confronted with recurring attacks by Maratha and Bidari plunderers, the Banjara grain–carriers found it quite difficult to keep the Mughal army well–supplied.[4]

At the time of Zulfiqar Khan's arrival in Gingee (1690), the Mughal army comprised a force of 26,000 men: 10,000 Mughal horsemen, 8,000 Bundela musketeers and 8,000 soldiers from the Carnatic. To carry the tents and heavy luggage of the army and of the troops and merchants who followed the army, there were 100 elephants, 2,000 to 4,000 dromedaries and countless porters, along with more than 200,000 cattle. Initially, this ensured food remained relatively cheap, but as the siege progressed, the logistical problems worsened, and by 1690 many of the Deccani *mansabdars* who accompanied Zulfiqar Khan to Gingee had deserted to the Marathas, partly as a result of the scarcity of grains.[5]

By 1691, the Mughals were facing serious shortages of supplies. The wazir Asad Khan, supported by the prince Kam Bakhsh, was sent to Gingee to relieve the Mughal army, while Zulfiqar Khan raided Tiruchchirapalli and Tanjore for provisions. Although the *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha* is not explicit on why shortages had become so severe at the Mughal camp, we may make a guess based on the observations made by its author Bhimsen. By 1691, the region

[4] Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 189–192.
[5] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 173.

around Gingee in central Coromandel had been devastated by the movements of Mughal and Maratha troops – Bhimsen notes that especially the region between Kanchipuram (to the south of Pulicat) and the coast appeared desolate. This would have made it difficult for the Mughals to procure supplies from the countryside around Gingee. Bhimsen writes how reinforcements from the north lifted the mood in the Mughal camp in Gingee: 'Scarcity was raging here; it now turned into an abundance of grain, and brought new life into the bodies of men.'[6]

Though the hyperbolic tone may be intrinsic to the language used in chronicles written from the Mughal standpoint, it makes the point rather well. There was a pattern of Mughal plundering raids in the Kaveri delta during the remaining years of the siege: similar raids were conducted in 1694 and 1697 – in January and February of those years, immediately after the winter harvest.

During the 1690s, the siege of Gingee turned into a battle of attrition. Not only did the Mughals repeatedly face shortages of supplies, but they also encountered the Maratha troops led by Santa Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav which arrived from the north to reinforce the besieged Maratha garrison in Gingee. When this happened in 1692, the Mughals were outnumbered and forced to withdraw their outposts around the fort. The arrival of Maratha reinforcement troops further worsened the situation for the Mughal army in Gingee. Although the Mughals were victorious in skirmishes with Marathas near the fort, procuring supplies became very difficult. Horses, camels and other draught animals died from lack of food, and in January 1693 the Mughals were forced to retreat from Gingee to Wandiwash in the north. Once in Wandiwash, Zulfiqar Khan first devoted his energies to recapturing forts which had been taken by the Marathas, for example Perumakkal and others in central Coromandel. In February 1694, Zulfiqar Khan attacked Tanjore from Wandiwash and collected tribute from the *zamindars* of Tanjore. While returning to Gingee, Zulfiqar Khan captured the fort of Palamkota. During 1695 and 1696, the main Mughal–Maratha encounters took place around Vellore and Arcot to the north of Gingee. Zulfiqar Khan besieged the Marathas in Vellore, the garrison was reduced to much distress and yet again Maratha generals arrived from the west of the Deccan to relieve the besieged troops. Zulfiqar Khan raised the siege of Vellore and pursued the Marathas to Gingee; on two occasions – in December 1695 and April 1696 – the Mughals under Zulfiqar Khan defeated the Marathas. In early 1697, Zulfiqar Khan raided Tanjore to procure supplies and collect tribute from the zamindars. In November 1697 he marched from Wandiwash to Gingee and besieged the fort once again. The Mughals soon captured one of the outer gates of the fort and dug trenches there. Alarmed at this development and the lack of provisions inside the fort, Rajaram, the Maratha king, managed to make his escape. In January 1698, the Mughals found a road that led to the fort. After a number of unsuccessful assaults, the soldiers of Daud Khan Panni and Rao Dalpat Bundela

[6] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 181.

(employer of Bhimsen, the author of *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*) scaled the walls of the fort and captured it.[7] With this, Gingee came under Mughal occupation.

During the siege of Gingee, both the Mughals and Marathas repeatedly plundered the countryside, resulting in devastation of the regional economies that had begun to expand in the wake of a new phase of *nayaka* state formation in Chandragiri, Gingee and Tanjore. But the siege of Gingee was prolonged less by logistical problems or military failures than by the apparent unwillingness of Zulfiqar Khan, the Mughal commander, to capture the fort. Some believed he had a secret understanding with Rajaram that they would divide the territories in the Deccan between themselves after the impending death of Aurangzeb. Bhimsen, a diligent chronicler of the Mughal wars in South India, points out that the prolonging of sieges was a common practice among Mughal generals; they tended to delay the successful completion of sieges to avoid being transferred elsewhere for further military duties. Moreover, the rich rice fields of southern India (and the commercially vibrant Coromandel Coast) would have made an attractive proposition for the Mughal commanders. Eventually, however, as described above, Gingee fell to Zulfiqar Khan in early 1698.[8]

The Mughal administration in Hyderabad Karnatik

After its conquest in 1698, the fort of Gingee was placed under a Bundela noble in Mughal service.[9] With the siege of Gingee over, the main Mughal–Maratha front shifted once again, to the west of the Deccan, for the remaining years of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns, until his death in 1707.

Earlier, in 1688, Aurangzeb had begun the administrative reorganization of the southern part of the erstwhile Golconda sultanate: twelve districts south of the rivers Gundlekamma and Krishna were detached from Hyderabad to form a separate Mughal administrative unit called the Hyderabad Karnatik. Its administrator, a Mughal *faujdar* stationed in Kanchipuram to the south of Pulicat, reported directly to Aurangzeb's imperial camp in the west of the Deccan and all administrative documents went to Aurangabad, the headquarters of the Deccan provinces of the Mughal Empire. The *faujdar* of Kanchipuram was required to send taxes and tribute collections directly to Aurangzeb, and to mobilize funds and supplies for the Mughal troops fighting at Gingee. The *faujdar* was assisted by the diwan, or fiscal officer, and other officials. The post of *faujdar* of Kanchipuram was first held by Ali Askar Khan, a former Golconda noble who had been inducted into Mughal service, from 1688 to 1690. He was followed by Ali Mardan Khan (mentioned in Chapter 4, one of the several Golconda nobles retained by Aurangzeb who controlled the coastal districts of northern Coromandel), from 1690 to 1692. Although the administration of the Mughal *faujdar* in Kanchipuram was intended to be different from the military headquarters of the Mughal army

[7] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 184, 187–189, 193–195, 197, 200–201, 206–209.
[8] Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 194.
[9] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012): 350.

at Gingee, after Ali Mardan Khan was captured by the Marathas in 1692 and held to ransom for two years, Aurangzeb placed the Hyderabad Karnatik under the command of the military administration in Gingee and gave full administrative powers to the Mughal commander Zulfiqar Khan. After the conquest of Gingee in 1698, Daud Khan Panni, a commander under Zulfiqar Khan, was made deputy *faujdar* of Hyderabad Karnatik and of the region that had been recently conquered. Between 1700 and 1704, Daud Khan Panni campaigned against the Telugu *zamindars* (landlords) of the region to force them to accept Aurangzeb's authority and pay tribute to the Mughal emperor.[10]

One important development that followed the establishment of Mughal administration in Hyderabad Karnatik was the incorporation of Telugu *zamindars* into the political system of the Mughal Empire and the revolt of these *zamindars* against the empire. In the erstwhile Golconda sultanate some *zamindars* (mainly Telugu *nayakas* and a few Afghan chiefs) with local power also acted as commanders of locally recruited cavalrymen. These cavalry forces were raised by the zamindars temporarily from season to season; they were used by the Golconda sultanate for collecting taxes and at times as an auxiliary force against tributary chieftains. Aurangzeb wanted the *zamindars* to become a part of the Mughal Empire and intended this practice to continue in the Hyderabad Karnatik. In keeping with this strategy, Ali Askar Khan, the first Mughal *faujdar* of Kanchipuram, did not disturb the *jagirs* (see glossary) of *zamindars* such as Ismail Khan Makha and Yacham Nair (also known as Achappa Naik), both of whom allied themselves with the Mughals. In February 1688, they and two other *zamindars* fought against the Marathas in Kanchipuram. But these zamindars were only casual servants of the empire, and in 1689 the alternative of serving with the Marathas became more attractive for them after Rajaram, the Maratha king, took refuge in Gingee. There were few material incentives for the *zamindars* of Hyderabad Karnatik to desert Mughal service and join the Marathas, and it seems to have been Aurangzeb's religious zeal that induced the zamindars to do so. In late 1689, Aurangzeb issued orders to pull down the temples in Hyderabad Karnatik, but the efforts of Mughal officials to execute Aurangzeb's orders were thwarted by the *zamindars* of Hyderabad Karnatik. The Mughals had to retreat. Yacham Nair quit Mughal service and went over to the Marathas in Gingee. After discussions with Rajaram, in February 1690, Yacham Nair led a joint force of Maratha and Telugu troops against the Mughals. Local *zamindars* joined his ranks and so did Ismail Khan Makha – although he was possibly motivated less by religious zeal than by a desire for political autonomy. The Mughal troops in Hyderabad Karnatik were outnumbered by this force, so there was no option but to retreat, and the Mughal *faujdar* of Kanchipuram took refuge in Madras. The success of the anti–Mughal rebellion was only temporary, however. The arrival in Hyderabad Karnatik of the Mughal commander Zulfiqar Khan with a large force soon snuffed out the revolt: Yacham Nair suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Mughals and was pushed back to Gingee. By October 1690, the Mughals were in full control of Hyderabad

[10] John F. Richards, 'The Hyderabad Karnatik, 1687-1707' *Modern Asian Studies* 9, 2 (1975): 241–243, 251.

Karnatik. Ismail Khan Makha submitted to the Mughal Empire once more and later even fought against the Marathas at the siege of Gingee. The Mughals were, however, unable to suppress Yacham Nair's raids in the Mughal districts of Hyderabad Karnatik. Eventually, Yacham Nair was lured back into Mughal service by Zulfiqar Khan with the promise of a high mansab (see glossary). In 1694, not long after Yacham Nair had joined the Mughals, Zulfiqar Khan, acting on Aurangzeb's orders, executed him and announced publicly that the Telugu *zamindar* had been punished for treason.[11] As we will see later in this chapter, the English East India Company in Madras assisted the Mughals in suppressing the revolt of the Telugu *zamindars* and this helped them in having their trading privileges in Coromandel reinstated by the emperor Aurangzeb.

After the conquest of Gingee, the Mughal administration chose to develop a new political centre in central Coromandel: Arcot. This process was initially led by Daud Khan Panni, possibly with the ultimate aim of carving out an independent state. After 1705, the once small town of Arcot (and the site of a Mughal camp during the siege of Gingee) became the seat of Daud Khan Panni. He continued to operate from the Gingee–Arcot region until 1713, when he was transferred to Gujarat. The next major figure responsible for the development of Arcot was Muhammed Said, who had been posted as *diwan*, or Mughal fiscal officer, to the same region about after the siege of Gingee. In 1710 or thereabouts, Muhammed Said came to be referred to more as Saadatullah Khan (a title he had originally received from Aurangzeb) and in the 1720s, he increasingly consolidated the position of Arcot as an autonomous state.[12] The emergence of Arcot was part of the larger process of impressive regional state–formation in eighteenth–century India: Mughal successor states such as Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad developed themselves as independent kingdoms while maintaining a nominal subordination to the weakened Mughal Empire.

Major climatic and political events

This table listing the major political and climatic developments in central and southern Coromandel between 1689 and 1710 offers important information and context for the following analysis of the economic impact of the Mughal wars.

Table 5.1 Major climatic and political events in central and southern Coromandel, 1689–1710

Year	**Event**
1689–1698	Siege of Gingee
1691, 1694, 1697	Mughal raids in Kaveri delta for supplies
1695	Good harvest, but rice prices high because of famine in lands to the north of the Kaveri delta
1698	Poor monsoon, cotton prices high
1705	Poor monsoon

[11] Richards, 'The Hyderabad Karnatik': 243–248.

[12] Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*: 349–351, 365; for the career of Saadatullah Khan see 363–391.

1707	Flood in Kaveri delta
1708	Poor monsoon
1710	Rebellion in Tanjore, cultivation affected

5.2 The economy

Pulicat and Nagapatnam during the 1690s

By 1690 the conquest of Golconda had already affected the area up to Pulicat and Madras to varying extents. In 1688, the governor of Pulicat, Laurens Pit, wrote to his superiors in Batavia to inform them that famines, Maratha invasions and plundering of 'major places' (urban centres, quasi–urban centres and markets) had caused substantial damage in the lands up to Madras.[13] Officials of the English (later British) East India Company (EIC) in Madras made observations of a similar nature: for instance, that the EIC could not invest money in the textile trade due to the wars. The scarcity of textiles meant one of their ships bound for Aceh could not be loaded with its intended cargo, so it took on cotton instead.[14] The Dutch write, with some scepticism, of the excuse that Sadraspatnam merchants gave for failing to supply their quota of textiles: the merchants claimed that weaving villages bordering the former Golconda sultanate and Gingee had been robbed by troops on the march. This lack of trust may well have been undeserved, especially given that the same letter points out how the Mughal–Maratha wars had made it unsafe to travel north of Pulicat. These conditions had made the transport of cotton and weaving of textiles increasingly difficult. Meanwhile, the VOC were still enjoying toll–free trade from Pulicat and Sadraspatnam to markets inland, thanks to the permits granted by the Mughal official in Kanchipuram. Johannes Bacherus was yet to receive a firman from Aurangzeb.[15] The disturbances caused by the campaigns and the onset of the Mughal–Maratha struggle for Gingee in 1689 induced the French in Pondicherry to increase the prices of cloth that their merchants had been contracted to supply.[16] Throughout the remaining years of the Mughal wars, the European trading companies, including the VOC, were compelled to buy textiles at high prices, as we will see in more detail later in this chapter.

The implications for Pulicat of the Bacherus embassy

In his instructions to Johannes Bacherus for negotiating with the Mughals, Hendrik Adriaan van Reede was clear about the special status of Pulicat. Van Reede wrote in 1688 that the port of Pulicat had been conferred upon the VOC by the Aravidu dynasty (last line of the Vijayanagara rulers, who ruled from several capitals in central Coromandel after 1565, see

[13] NA VOC 1454, Letter dated 15.05.1688 from Laurens Pit in Pulicat to the governor–general in Batavia: f. 821v.–f. 822r.

[14] *Diary and Consultation Book of 1689, Records of Fort St George, vol. 15* (Madras: Superintendent Government Press: 1916): 1–2.

[15] NA VOC 1463, Letter dated 20.09.1689 from Laurens Pit in Pulicat to Joannes Camphuijs, governor–general in Batavia: f. 384v.–f.385v.

[16] Lotika Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century: Social, Economic and Political (Memoirs of Francois Martin) Volume II, Part II* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985): 1223.

Chapter 2) and the Dutch had won it from the Portuguese (this is a reference to the Portuguese attack on Pulicat in 1613 that the VOC had repulsed). Van Reede argued that, as a consequence, the VOC's privileges in Pulicat were dependent neither on the Golconda sultanate which had conquered the region around Pulicat in the 1640s nor, by extension, the Mughal Empire which had now conquered Golconda in 1687. Nonetheless, since the Mughals had conquered the region around Pulicat, the VOC (and Van Reede) thought it prudent to request Aurangzeb to reconfirm to the VOC the privileges they enjoyed in Pulicat.[17]

Similar to what we had noted in Chapter 4 in the context of Masulipatnam, three villages around Pulicat– Eergam, Masliewarom and Auweriwaka– had been owned by the VOC since 1646–1647: the list of privileges prepared by Johannes Bacherus gives their status as '*in't vrije bezit en eigendom geschonken*', or 'gifted in free ownership'.[18] These villages around Pulicat were restored to the Dutch by Aurangzeb after Johannes Bacherus' embassy. The Dutch and the Mughals also shared tolls that accrued from commodities (mainly textiles) traded in the port. For example, on packs of textiles that were valued at four pagodas, the Dutch share would be one–and–a–quarter pagodas. For packs of textiles worth less than four pagodas, the tolls would be shared equally by the Mughals and the VOC. From tolls on those packs of textiles that were valued at more than four pagodas, the Mughals would have three quarters and the Dutch one. Of tolls on goods brought by ships to Pulicat and then reshipped, one half would be for the Mughals and the other half for the VOC. Tolls on goods bought and transported by merchants as well as those sold by them at other market places (around Pulicat) would be equally shared by the Dutch and the Mughals.[19]

The firman represented the Mughal project of integrating the booming coasts with the heartland of the empire in three ways: firstly, it confirmed Dutch control over textile production around Pulicat by restoring villages to them; secondly, the sharing of tolls on merchandise was part of the Mughal strategy to provide stability to the region around Pulicat and tap its income to invest in the wider projects of the empire – including the wars in the Deccan, in this case Gingee (similar to the strategy in Masulipatnam); and thirdly, in retrospect, the decision later supported Mughal strategy in central Coromandel. The Mughal armies had to march from Aurangzeb's camp to central Coromandel (see Fig. 5.1 in this chapter) along the following route: first east from Galgala and Islampuri to Kurnool, then south to Cudappah, Tirupati, Vellore and finally Gingee. Being the major ports along this stretch, the Mughals needed to have Pulicat (VOC) and Madras (EIC) within their sphere of

[17] NA VOC 1450, Instructions dated 22.09.1688 from Hendrik Adriaan van Reede to Johannes Bacherus delegated to visit the factories of northern Coromandel and to greet the great Mughal (Aurangzeb) on behalf of the company: f. 966v.–f. 967r.

[18] NA VOC 1510, List of privileges and rights enjoyed by the VOC in Coromandel to be shown to the Mughal emperor Auragzeb: f. 369v.

[19] NA VOC 1510, Firman dated 24.10.1689 from the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb to Johannes Bacherus: f. 375r.–f. 376v.

control as these ports could provide the Mughal army with military supplies. In his *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, Bhimsen wrote that ports in central Coromandel would supply the Mughal army with food when it was based in Gingee, 'Articles like wheat, lentil, mash [dal, lentil] both green and black and other grains come in ships and these things are sold in abundance to the imperial army.'[20] Contemporary evidence from the VOC archive substantiates this argument: a 1694 letter, for example, mentions that the Dutch had, on multiple occasions, supplied gunpowder to the Mughal wazir Asad Khan and his son Zulfiqar Khan, the Mughal general, during their conflict with the Marathas in the Carnatic; the siege of Gingee.[21]

The English East India Company was less successful than the VOC in their dealings with the Mughals following their conquest of Golconda. In fact, they were almost expelled from the Coromandel Coast. The English had earlier clashed with the Mughals in Bengal and Gujarat over disputes related to customs duties, and this had made it difficult for them to secure concessions for their settlements controlled from Madras. Immediately after Golconda was conquered, the EIC withdrew their personnel from all factories on the Coromandel Coast except Vishakhapatnam, and simultaneously strengthened their defences at Madras and Fort St. David near Cuddalore. Talks had begun between representatives of the EIC and the Mughals at the imperial camp in Galgala and Surat to secure trading concessions, with very limited results. An English armada captured 80 Indian ships off the western coast in 1688 and Aurangzeb quickly retaliated. Orders were issued to arrest all English merchants, occupy their trading centres and prohibit business with the EIC throughout the Mughal Empire. The English factories in Masulipatnam, Madapollam and Vishakhapatnam were seized by the Mughals. Down south in Madras, the EIC was saved by the outbreak of revolts among Telugu zamindars which diverted Mughal energies. Meanwhile the EIC's Surat council sought to ensure peace by paying a war indemnity of 150,000 rupees to the Mughals, but the real breakthrough for the EIC came when they supported Mughal war efforts in the Carnatic against the Marathas and Telugu *zamindars* by supplying munitions, grains, gunners and surgeons. As the siege of Gingee continued, it became even more important for the Mughals to accommodate the EIC, who controlled Madras, one of the major sources of military supplies. Negotiations with Asad Khan, the Mughal wazir who had arrived in the Carnatic to redouble the war efforts, ensured concessions for the English. The EIC kept on trading and maintained their autonomous control over Madras.[22]

As the 1692 *Diary and Consultation Book of Fort St. George* shows, the Mughal prince Kam Baksh thanks the English for having helped the Mughals to subdue the rebellions of Telugu *zamindars* and supplied Zulfiqar Khan with ammunitions. He permitted them to mint

[20] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 194.
[21] NA VOC 1546, Letter dated 20.10.1694 from Bruijnig Wildelant in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 415r.
[22] Richards, 'European City–States on the Coromandel Coast': 510–511.

coins with stamps of the Mughal emperor. Asad Khan, the wazir, goes on to instruct the EIC not to let Rajaram escape on any ship from Madras, and let it be known that if an offer were to be made by the Marathas, the English should intercept Rajaram and turn him over to the Mughals.[23] The first evidence of this approach to the Dutch and the English (discussed elsewhere in this chapter and in the previous chapter) was during the Mughal campaigns against Shivaji led by Jai Singh, who dispatched agents to the European settlements in the 1660s and clearly instructed them not to help the Maratha fleet. This supports an element of the hypothesis presented in Part I in the context of the early years of the wars: the Deccan and South India could not be won by the Mughals without the cooperation of the European enclaves.

The impact of the siege of Gingee

The turmoil created by the war played a part in shaping VOC policy in Coromandel. One of the early effects of the Mughal wars was the transfer of the Dutch headquarters of Coromandel from Pulicat to Nagapatnam. But this move, as was pointed out in the historiography section of the introductory chapter, was an overly hasty response to the siege of Gingee bringing the wars close to Nagapatnam.[24] The effects of the siege of Gingee were felt in the hinterland of ports in central Coromandel. In *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, Bhimsen describes the condition in around 1692 of the region between Kanchipuram, a temple town near Pulicat, and Coromandel Coast. In the following extract, Bhimsen first discusses Kanchipuram and then the surrounding region:

> Brahmins reading the Vedas, grocers, traders of this country live here. Of the people of Hindustan [Mughals], only a strong fort, with towers and bastions, are fixed as the abode of faujdar. Owing to the coming and going of the imperial army, which has brought hardship to the inhabitants, desolation has affected the place; it did not look flourishing [*abad*]. The city of Vishnu Kanchi [temple] is larger than that of Shiv Kanchi [another temple] and its revenue has been assigned as the faujdar's salary; therefore, its neighbourhood is prosperous [*abad*] and also worship is done and much revenue is collected. From the neighbourhood of Adoni and Karnul to Kanchi and the kingdom of Gingee and the ocean, there is not a village in which there is no temple, large or small. Every place [temple] is named after Rama, Lakshman or Mahalakshmi. In spite of the desolation a place of beauty was seen.[25]

We can only conclude that the region around Gingee and Kanchipuram had been badly affected by the wars as early as 1692.

---

[23] *Diary and Consultation Book of 1692, Records of Fort St. George, vol. 18* (Madras: Superintendent Government Press, 1917): 8–9.
[24] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant–Warrior Pacified*: 51.
[25] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 180.

In 1692, the Dutch feared devastation around Tanjore because of the slow progress the Mughals had made in Gingee and expected that local potentates would seek to take advantage of the turmoil. This is a typical instance of Dutch discourse that painted a picture of greedy indigenous political figures. Though the VOC had been supplied cotton from Tuticorin, textile merchants could not be engaged to produce textiles due to the ongoing troubles in the region. Around this time, the VOC was responding to demand from the Netherlands, Colombo, Jaffna, Trincomalee, Malabar, Cape Town and Persia, as well as South–East Asia. Sales of their imports had also been hit by the wars in southern Coromandel.[26]

However, the VOC's sales of some commodities were hit not by disturbances resulting from wars, but by other factors. For example, in the case of the areca nut trade from Malabar, VOC operations were hindered by the private merchants who were supplying large volumes of this item to the Kaveri delta. By extension, VOC records bemoaning this fact imply that Mughal campaigns had not closed off all channels of commerce in the Kaveri delta. Historically, commercial routes had run from Malabar across the Western Ghats to the delta (see Chapter 3). These routes not been affected as much as the areas close to the coast and within the sphere of Mughal military operations, if we are to believe the Dutch. By 1693, Pulicat's role had declined for the VOC, although the port of Sadraspatnam had done reasonably well despite the disturbances that the siege of Gingee had created in the neighbourhood of the port; it was mainly the VOC factories in Tegenapatnam and Porto Novo that compensated for the poor trade in other factories of central Coromandel.[27]

The Dutch sources reveal that by 1695 rice had become quite expensive around Tanjore, and private traders in Nagapatnam were finding it difficult to ship rice to Ceylon profitably. Despite a reasonably good local rice harvest, prices were high because of a scarcity in the lands to north of Tanjore and many merchants had poured in to buy grains (the cause was poor rainfall in northern Coromandel in 1693 and 1695, as noted in Chapter 4). Textile prices were also high thanks to the wars and the Dutch were not expecting them to drop anytime soon.[28] To maintain supplies and not to lose out on them during the times of war, the VOC had decided to increase the prices,[29] but textile merchants were refusing to settle for the prices offered by the Dutch. In roughly the same period the Dutch sought to tap the resource

[26] NA VOC 1508, Letter dated 10.10.1692 from Laurens Pit, governor in Pulicat to Willem van Oudhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 172r.–f. 172v., f. 180v., f. 201v.–f. 204v., f. 217r.–f. 217v.
[27] NA VOC 1526, Letter dated 23.05.1693 from Laurens Pit, governor in Pulicat to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 286r.–f. 286v., f. 326v.
[28] NA VOC 1570, Letter dated 24.03.1695 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 187, f. 194.
[29] NA VOC 1570, Letter dated 08.06.1695 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 284.

of the weaving villages in the hinterland of Nagapatnam. A VOC official named Theodore Telghuijs travelled around the Kaveri delta several times and prepared reports on the villages.

Usually another VOC servant and indigenous textile merchants, many of them Chettis, accompanied Telghuijs on his journeys. Telghuijs wrote that these trips were motivated by a desire to find out what kind of textiles were produced in the villages, to what extent these textiles were being woven for the EIC and private merchants, and what interest the VOC might have.[30] In short, the VOC was exploring more avenues of production. The following table lists the names of the villages with remarks on their special features: the textiles they produced and the markets they supplied.

Table 5.2 Inventory of weaving villages around Tanjore in the Kaveri delta, 1695[31]

Village	**Remarks**
Chinagemangalam	26 households owned by the VOC producing types of moeris (rated as 'thin') called *madripack* and *moeatte catchies*. The latter variety was exported to Malacca and Aceh.
Aliyur/Ariyur	Mainly producing moeatte catchies for Malacca and Aceh. Orders for these textiles came from English (private and/or EIC) and other merchants.
Jepoer (possibly Chepur)	30 households, mainly producing cloth for Aceh, *madripacks*, *ramboutins* and *moeatte catchies*. These were taken to Tranquebar and from there to Porto Novo, Fort St. David, San Thomé and Madras.
Thewoer	*Madripacks* and *salempores*, for Malacca and Aceh
Nertemangalam	Guinea cloth, *salempores*, *chelas* and sailcloth
Puravachery	30 households owned by the VOC producing *madripacks*, *gingams*, *bethilles*
Zikel	*Madripack* and various varieties of guinea cloth
Mangecolle	Cloth from this village were shown to Telghuijs at Anthonijpette (note the suffix denoting a small town; see Chapter 3 for details). Producing cambay cloth, *gingams* and *bethilles*
Tirumalapatnam	Producing *gingams*, *bethilles* and *tapesarasses*
Tilliaer	Varieties of cloth were displayed at a weekly Sunday market that also sold cotton that had been cleaned after harvest
Viradur; here Telghuijs was also shown cloth produced in nearby villages such as Chettaiyur, Erroewaddy Polagam, Apparampette, Uddatangudy, Thiesemudy, Parrangudi, Ambel and Mudiakondan	Produced *salempores*, guinea cloth, *madripack*, *bethilles* and *moeatte catchies*
Tirimeerde, together with Tondapaloer, Tiagrapette and Pontagram	Around 200 households producing *bethilles*, *gingams* and various varieties of *gingam*

[30] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695 by Theodore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 89.
[31] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695, 12.04.1695 by Theordore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 89–f. 166.

Aperampette	Producing mainly *madripacks*
Poetegaram	30 weavers producing cambay cloth and *gingams*
Pollegom	Mainly *madripacks*, *ramboutins*, *moeatte caetjes*
Trimalem (the textiles from Ponotte Coetenoer, Aljempette, Caddagampudi, Nellechierij, Bitnawarom, Cornade, Tanneoer and Trivendoer were brought here for Telghuijs)	*Madripacks* and *salempores* of various kinds
Thuthukudi	Telghuijs mentions that the cloth woven here was similar to what was produced in other such settlements
Mapellecoupang	About 500 weavers in 7 streets or neighbourhoods producing *ramboutins*, guinea cloth, *salempores* and *bethilles*, as well as varieties of *madripack* whose quality was poor compared to other places, says Telghuijs
Tiruvallur	*Bethilles*
Wisjewaron	About 60 weavers from Malabar producing *bethilles*
Carrapaddang	*Dupattas*, *chelas* (sold for indigenous use), guinea cloth and salempores
Poijpanem	*Dupattas* and *chelas*. Other varieties had previously been woven here but many weavers had left due to poor conditions presumably caused by wars
Caljemere	About 5 or 6 weaver households producing clothes for indigenous consumption due to the lack of investment in other varieties of textiles
Tatpetoere	*Chions*, *dupattas*, *chelas*; sent to Ceylon
Nijwelleke	*Dupattas* and *chelas*; Lack of investment had caused weavers to stop producing salempores, guinea cloth, parcalles and other types of textile
Corwapalem	*Dupattas* and *chelas*
Carrepatnam	*Dupattas* and *chelas*
Tellekade	*Dupattas* and *chelas*
Pamenij	Production for inland markets
Korke	*Chions* and *chelas*
Mangudi	Salempores, guinea cloth, *chelas* and *chions*; weavers complained of poor conditions and high prices of *nely* rice
Killioer	3 or 4 unemployed weaving households
Schieolsjaweron	Guinea cloth, *ramboutins*, *dupattas*, *chelas*, *chions*

Telghuijs prepared his report after several journeys to the villages to the west of Nagapatnam in the Kaveri delta. The list he prepared is significant because it helps us explore the condition of the textile industry of the Kaveri delta during the siege of Gingee. Let us now analyse the results coming from this survey.

We should bear in mind that the benchmark for Telghuijs's evaluation of textiles and weaving settlements was their usefulness in the Dutch trade to South–East Asia and the Netherlands; he found the *moeris* at Chiangemangalam too thin for European tastes, for example. At Tilliaer, Telghuijs visited the weekly Sunday market to examine various types of cloth (cotton which had been cleaned after harvest was also sold here). This settlement was one of the many links in a long–distance economy, places to which raw materials were brought to be turned into manufactured goods for export. But Telghuijs did not rate Tilliaer

as useful for the VOC. What he meant was it did not produce or sell the varieties that the Dutch sought for trade in South–East Asia.

At each village that Telghuijs surveyed, local textile merchants and weavers presented to him the varieties of textiles woven there and in the surrounding villages. At Viradur, for example, merchants and weavers showed to Telghuijs several varieties of salempores and guinea cloth. Telghuijs considered one of the salempore varieties to be useful for the VOC but noted that the price quoted by the merchants (15 fanums) as higher than the previous years. Nonetheless, he collected samples of it for the governor in Nagapatnam. This is another indication of an effect of the Mughal wars that was common across Coromandel in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century: high prices of textiles. Although the main action during the siege of Gingee had been taking place in central Coromandel, we must not forget that during the 1690s the Mughal commander Zulfiqar Khan raided the Kaveri delta on three occasions to procure supplies: in 1691, 1694 and 1697. The presence of this threat would have contributed to the high prices of textiles.

The survey also revealed other effects of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns on the textile industry of the Kaveri delta. One of these was migration from the north. Theodorus Telghuijs spoke of weavers who had migrated from the north of Coromandel to escape the lack of food and to look for better living conditions; they had been assimilated in the villages of the Kaveri delta, for example among the weaving populations of Tirimeerde and Tellekade. Teluijs wrote that he had encountered such migrants from the north in other parts of the Kaveri delta too, although he did not provide any further details.[32] In VOC parlance 'north Coromandel' refers to regions incorporated in the erstwhile sultanate of Golconda, but we may safely assume that some weavers migrated here from central Coromandel due to the disturbances created there by the siege of Gingee: weavers fleeing the campaigns found refuge in the Kaveri delta, which did not experience frequent crop failures even during the years of war, as we will see later in this chapter.

Another effect of the Mughal campaigns in the Kaveri delta was a change in the economic character of some textile weaving villages that had earlier catered to the needs of the export market, but now produced for the indigenous population: Carrapaddang, Poijpanem, Caljemere and Nijwelleke. These villages had experienced a downturn during the Mughal wars, with weavers migrating due to the rising costs of grains and lack of investments from European companies – Danish and English cash advances had stopped flowing into Carrapaddang, and as a result of this, weavers had deserted the village. In Poijpanem, Telghuijs found that most of the weavers had left the village due to high costs of living and that those who had remained were now working as labourers to sustain themselves.

[32] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695, 12.04.1695 by Theodore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 130, f. 159–f.160.

Investments for producing textiles for exports had dried up in Caljemere and the village began to produce cloth mainly for domestic consumption, i.e., inland trade or use of textiles within the village itself (details unavailable), the situation in Nijwelleke was similar to that in Caljmere.[33] It is possible that the Mughal wars forced the Danes and the English to prioritize some villages over others, and consequently, their investments in textile production had dried up in some villages, as reported by the Dutch. As we have seen, this prompted the weavers to migrate and the remaining weavers to produce for domestic consumption. Another village visited by Telghuijs, Tatpetoere, was producing cloth for Ceylon. Clearly, then, though the Mughal wars had caused an increase in prices of textiles and affected production in the countryside, the textile industry of the Kaveri delta sustained production and offered employment to weavers who had migrated from the north.

As discussed in Part I, rulers in Coromandel would invite the European companies to settle in and trade from regions ruled by them. This dynamic was also in evidence during Telghuijs's journey to the villages of the Kaveri delta. At Viradur, an agent working for Rama Nayaka of Tranquebar met Telghuijs and asked him to visit the villages that fell under Rama Nayaka's jurisdiction and inspect the textiles produced there. The Dutch, however, turned down this request for the time being.[34] This case could be just another example of encouragement offered by local rulers to European companies, but it could have also represented an attempt to counter another European presence in Tranquebar: that of the Danish East India Company. Such supposition is based on similar developments that took place earlier in the seventeenth century. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the *nayaka* of Tanjore had invited the VOC in the 1650s to oust the Portuguese from Nagapatnam and once the VOC had done that, they settled in the port.

There is additional evidence that economic activity in the Tamil country continued during the wars. The Dutch were not having much success in trading areca nuts from Malabar. The routes from Malabar were open to competition and private merchants were continuing to flood the markets with their consignments of areca nuts. Apart from this, wars also have an economy of their own. The Mughal camp attracted many merchants: for example, in his description of the siege of Bijapur (1685–1686) in *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, Bhimsen speaks of a Mughal nobleman named Khwaja Shamsuddin, whose army was always adequately supplied with rations for the soldiers and fodder; Khwaja Shamsuddin would encourage merchants to come to him. Bhimsen also writes that his employer, Rao Dalpat Bundela, guarded the property of traders as the Mughal army marched towards Wakinkheda, en route to Gingee.[35]

---

[33] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695, 12.04.1695 by Theodore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 149, f. 153–f.154, f. 157–f. 158.
[34] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695, 12.04.1695 by Theodore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 123.
[35] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 146, 178–179.

An Armenian merchant accompanied the convoy that supplied the Mughals in Gingee with food, munitions, money and troops in the 1692–1693 period.[36] Some goods, such as the silk brought by the Dutch from Bengal, sold better during the wars, because it was bought by merchants in Nagapatnam and then sold to the Mughal army,[37] clearly a case of demand stimulated by the essence of the Mughal army. Another example of such demand is the case of broadcloth, a woollen textile that was imported in Coromandel by the EIC. By the 1680s, the EIC in Madras had been making its suppliers of textiles accept broadcloth partly as a payment for the cloth that textile merchants supplied to Madras. Slowly this practice was extended further south towards Cuddalore and Porto Novo. However, the EIC's suppliers were initially reluctant to accept this mode of payment because there was not much demand for broadcloth among the peasant socieities of southern India and they found it difficult to sell the product. It was used for making carpets, covers for tents, saddles, caps and coats, and sold best to marching armies and cavalry. So, not surprisingly, sales of broadcloth improved after 1685 as the Mughal wars continued, and by 1690 the merchants of Madras were willingly accepting broadcloth from the English in lieu of cash investment. Captains of ships and sailors also used to bring broadcloth in permitted quantities and sell it in the Coromandel ports.[38]

The sales of Bengal silk and broadcloth to the marching armies illustrate the fact that although troops on the move could devastate the existing economy in the regions they passed through, the armies themselves generated demand. Primarily such demand was for food, fodder and military supplies. As we have noted in this chapter, during the siege of Gingee coastal vessels plying to the ports of central Coromandel brought food products that were sold to the Mughal army, while both the VOC and the EIC supported the Mughals during the siege of Gingee by supplying them with gunpowder, munitions, gunners and surgeons. The cases of sales of Bengal silk and broadcloth point to the armies generating demand for specific varieties of cloth which had been imported into Coromandel; indirectly these developments reflect on import trade of the European companies in Coromandel and reveal the connections that indigenous merchants of the EIC and VOC could forge with the Mughal camp. Later in this chapter we will find an example of how the presence of Mughal army could also create demand for occupations allied with the textile industry of central Coromandel.

In 1698, the siege of Gingee came to an end and the Mughal–Maratha front moved to the west of the Deccan, where Aurangzeb spent the last years of his reign and life (1699–1707) personally leading attempts to capture Maratha forts. In a letter to Batavia in 1698, the Dutch governor in Nagapatnam wrote that the region around the ports of Pondicherry and Tegenapatnam had been laid to waste by years of warfare and famine. They did not sound

[36] Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century*, *Volume II, Part II*: 1435.
[37] NA VOC 1596, Letter dated 19.07.1697 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 10–f. 11.
[38] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 156–157.

optimistic and bemoaned the low production levels due to the high prices and scarcity of cotton. Tegenapatnam was only able to supply a cargo of 265 packs of textiles, far less than the promised figure of 482. In the same letter, the Dutch governor contrasts the condition of textile trade in southern Coromandel with its counterpart in northern Coromandel where production had not been hit by wars. However, this reference to southern Coromandel was made while discussing the textile trade in Pondicherry and Tegeneptnam, and not ports such as Porto Novo or Nagapatnam that lay further south. The VOC in Nagapatnam instructed its subordinate factories to procure as much cloth as they could, and they expected the price of cotton to remain high as rainfall had been poor. In addition, the production of indigo had been affected by the bad monsoon making indigo scarce and expensive around Pondicherry and Porto Novo, due to the resulting drought.[39]

The VOC in Pulicat were unable to supply the textiles that Nagapatnam requested, and Porto Novo was unable to make up Pulicat's shortfall. The governor in Nagapatnam had no choice but to drop the matter. In the same period, according to Dutch sources, the EIC was attempting to make inroads at the weaving villages around Sadraspatnam. They sent an emissary to the ruler of Zeijoer (possibly Cheyoor/Cheyur), a principality that stretched from the river Markara in the north to Sadraspatnam, in order to secure rights over Alemperwe (Alamparam), which was located along this river. The EIC contracted merchants for the supply of guinea cloth, salempores and *percalles*, and the Dutch found this an ominous development because the hinterland of Sadraspatnam was important for the VOC's trade. The villages near the port of Sadraspatnam specialized in the varieties of cloth that the VOC sought for South–East Asia; cotton was brought to the villages near Sadraspatnam in considerable quantities from the regions to its west and south–west (Mysore plateau). Other non–Dutch actors involved in the textile trade in southern Coromandel at this juncture included Persian merchants. The Dutch write that a ship laden with various types of textile and owned by the Persian merchant Aliaboka had sailed from Porto Novo to Kedah along the Malacca strait. The ship, however, landed in Galle, possibly thrown off course by strong winds.[40]

There are additional examples of non–European merchants trading from Porto Novo, as we will see later in this chapter. In the context of Alamparam, the VOC's competition with the English shows that European companies were aware of the need to control or retain those weaving zones which had survived the negative impact of the Mughal wars.

Pulicat and Nagapatnam: 1699–1711

The performance of the VOC in Pulicat did not improve immediately after the siege of Gingee ended. Despite having issued an order promising all help and assistance for Dutch trade, the Mughal governor Muhammed Zafar prohibited the textile dyers employed by the VOC from

[39] NA VOC 1610, Letter dated 18.05.1698 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 14–f. 16, f. 36–f. 37.

[40] NA VOC 1610, Letter dated 11.10.1698 from Laurens Pit and Dirck Comans, governors in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 301–f. 302, f. 304.

working in Ponneri, a village close to Pulicat. The dyers had to leave the village, and efforts to resettle them were unsuccessful. Further down the coast, the VOC factory in Sadraspatnam had been doing well both in terms of sales of merchandise and procurement of textiles. It had prepared a sizeable quantity of cloth in 1699. In Porto Novo, the Dutch expected a decent sale of imported commodities and production of textiles, as long as the Muslim officials did not turn hostile towards them. The Dutch measures to ensure a safe trade included the usual – having a garrison, in this case eleven topaz soldiers and a European corporal to guard the factory, and gifts for the *havaldar*.[41]

The VOC reveal their insecurities when, after the arrival of the English ambassador William Norris around Pulicat with gifts for Aurangzeb, they write that they could only foresee difficulties ahead for Dutch trade in textiles. We should be sceptical of such hyperbolic statements, because they are typical examples of the Dutch tendency to blowing minor matters out of all proportion. In general, the VOC tended to equate political stability with congenial conditions for trade in South Asia. In 1699, the VOC wrote that the Mughal general Zulfiqar Khan (in Gingee) had departed north to Aurangzeb's camp in the west of the Deccan, and conditions were generally peaceful and therefore conducive to the sale of imported goods and the production of textiles.[42] The following year the VOC in Nagapatnam reported to Batavia that the procurement of textiles and the sale of commodities had resumed to an extent in Sadraspatnam and Porto Novo. In and around Nagapatnam, merchants had been contracted to supply 789 packs of textiles. They even agreed to make up for the deficit in Masulipatnam, where factors had been unable to supply the share assigned to them by Nagapatnam.[43] Although the volume of textiles supplied and shipped from Nagapatnam were far from staggering, it was sufficient to substantiate the argument made in the previous chapter with respect to Masulipatnam: the textile industry had survived the wars.

As noted earlier, one effect of the Mughal wars common across Coromandel was higher costs of production leading to increases in textile prices. This phenomenon persisted even after the siege of Gingee had ended. In 1703 in Porto Novo, for example, weavers refused to work for merchants at wages lower than what was usually paid. The VOC had another factory close to Pondicherry in Conjemere (possibly Kunimedu) that was doing well in terms of sale of imports and procuring of textiles, but there were fears of an attack by the French.[44] The VOC governor in Nagapatnam wrote to Batavia that merchants who supplied

[41] NA VOC 1617, Letter dated 29.04.1699 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 42r.–f. 42v., f. 44v.–f. 45r.
[42] NA VOC 1617, Letter dated 10.10.1699 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 89r.
[43] NA VOC 1638, Letter dated 25.01.1700 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 7–f. 8.
[44] NA VOC 8820, Letter dated 27.04.1703 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 478–f. 479, f. 482.

textiles in Pulicat were refusing to lower their prices.[45] It is quite possible that merchants could not contract weavers at low wages because of the high cotton prices, higher costs of living and general insecurity. Not only the Dutch, but also other European companies were having to deal with the high prices of textiles. For example, EIC merchants operating in the hinterland of Madras complained of the rising costs of food grains, cotton and wages for weavers.[46]

In 1704 the Dutch in Pulicat supplied the usual stock of ginghams and other textiles. But trade was very low in Sadraspatnam. The VOC again blamed the decline on problems caused by local Mughal officials. Around this time, Nagapatnam instructed its subordinate factories to procure good quality textiles at a low price, but only Conjemere was able to do so. The VOC governor in Nagapatnam wrote that while earlier textiles of poorer varieties had been accepted by their officials due to the disturbed conditions in Coromandel, the company would no longer do so. Porto Novo provided a decent output of guinea cloth, salempores, *parcalles*, *baftas*, *boelangs* and *bethilles*. Some of these were meant for the Netherlands and Japan. The VOC wrote that the textile merchants supplying the Dutch factory in Porto Novo still tended to quote higher prices for textiles whenever possible due to expensive cotton and yarn. But the Dutch company increasingly cast doubt on these claims and the governor in Nagapatnam asserted that there was no basis for the high prices that merchants were charging. The same Dutch letter reveals continuing uncertainties about doing business here when it relates rumours of Maratha armies approaching the ports of Coromandel and Aurangzeb's death.[47]

Although the complaints about having to pay the high prices quoted by textile merchants persists in the VOC's letters from Nagapatnam in the early eighteenth century, on one occasion at least, merchants in Pulicat agreed to settle at the price insisted on by the VOC for packs of *bethilles* after Dutch threatened to return and cancel the entire consignment. The Dutch had sent an emissary to Daud Khan Panni, the Mughal general, to resolve the troubles in Sadraspatnam. He granted the port and its tolls to the Dutch for an annual payment of 8,750 Dutch guilders. Yet again, this underscores the willingness of Mughal officials posted in Coromandel to link the regions under their control with the wider maritime network; a steady source of revenue was more than welcome (this should also be seen in the context of the discussion of Mughal administration in central and southern Coromandel after the siege of Gingee: Daud Khan Panni possibly planned to develop Arcot as an autonomous state). At the Conjemere factory, the number of packs of textiles supplied had been steadily decreasing in number every year except a major fluctuation 1702–1703, e.g.,

---

[45] NA VOC 8821, Letter dated 10.10.1703 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 865.
[46] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 189.
[47] NA VOC 8822, Letter dated 19.10.1704 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 211–f. 214, f. 217, f. 219–f. 221, f. 223.

1701–1702: 600

1702–1703: 2156

1703–1704: 300

1704: 148

1705: 11

Separate figures for textiles supplied from Conjemere in earlier years are unavailable. The above figures seem to have been mostly the number of packs of textiles that were supplied annually. As we had noted in Chapter 4, fluctuations in the number of packs of textiles supplied by different VOC factories of Coromandel had become normal during the 1690s and 1700s and the high number of packs supplied in 1702–1703 by Conjemere should be viewed as a part of this general trend. In 1705, the Dutch in Conjemere claimed they were not short of capital. But, as a factory, Conjemere was hardly profitable. Although the Dutch do not state it clearly, we have some indication of the cause that might have contributed to decreasing numbers from Conjemere: poor trade in raw materials required for the textile industry near Conjemere because the VOC sought to address that very problem in their efforts to improve the conditions of this factory. To step up the trade in cotton and yarn, the Dutch factor in Conjemere organized a market place at Arramante, north of Conjemere. The idea, write the Dutch, was to attract suppliers, merchants and other people to a new and active market place. However, the early days of this new market place were unsuccessful because the toll–collectors of Bonnepalayam and Chingerecoil prevented the merchants from going there. Yet again, local officials in Coromandel obstructed trade. It is possible in this case that the VOC had not paid money to the local toll collectors. Despite the failure of their venture in Arramante and although it might not have been a novel venture, the Dutch strategy of organizing a new and active marketplace is telling, because it points to the fact that a slow transformation was taking place in central and southern Coromandel, one that might have been going on since the beginning of the Mughal wars: when old market centres died, new ones sprang up to take their place. This dynamic of transformation would seem to have parallels with the developments in weaving villages around Tanjore and Nagapatnam, where migrants from the north were assimilated into weaving villages, and some villages catering to production for domestic consumption due to the absence of investments from European traders such as the Danes and the English.[48]

In 1705, the production of textiles around Porto Novo and sale of imports were reasonably good. Abdul Nabi, the Mughal faujdar of Chidambaram, a town to the south–east of Porto Novo, had recently been promoted and now had 500 cavalrymen under his

[48] NA VOC 8823, Letter dated 07.10.1705 from Joannes Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 208–f. 210, f. 240, f. 248–f. 249, f. 251–f. 252.

command. He asked the VOC in Porto Novo to allow him to send 10 or 12 packs of cloth to Jaffna. His intention was to have profits from this transaction credited to him in the form of Ceylonese elephants. The Dutch turned this offer down but promised any help he needed if he paid in cash to import the elephants. Eventually the faujdar paid 1,250 pagodas to the Dutch and the money was transferred from Nagapatnam to Jaffna for buying elephants. This exchange offers a rare snapshot of how local Mughal officials were trying to engage in trade. The clothes spoken of here must have included the varieties that were shipped from southern Coromandel, mainly Nagapatnam, to Ceylon. Possibly the faujdar had bought them at an inland market or from merchants who had visited him. This complements our earlier observations regarding trade with the Mughal camp. Might it also be an instance of a local Mughal official involved in the logistics of warfare, who needed elephants? Perhaps, the elephants were required for transporting the army supplies. For the next year, 1706, the textile trade around Nagapatnam was good; the Dutch wrote that Nagapatnam had delegated the demand for clothes destined for South–East Asia and the Netherlands to its subordinate factories.[49]

In 1706, the Dutch factors in Tegenapatnam reported that Aurangzeb had ordered the general Daud Khan Panni to seize all Europeans on the Coromandel Coast along with their goods. This had been done to retaliate against the loss of ships of Surat merchants in the Arabian Sea, which the European companies were supposed to guard. The English deployed more topaz (Eurasians, especially one ancestor was of Portuguese origin) soldiers and repaired their fortifications in Fort St. David. The Dutch put their factories in Coromandel on alert. However, the textile trade around Nagapatnam does not seem to have been adversely affected by Aurangzeb's orders. As they had done in Pulicat, textile merchants here asked the VOC to pay more for the cloth they supplied; raw materials (cotton and yarn), had become more expensive since the contracts were signed. The merchants themselves had had to buy the raw cotton at a high price, because untimely showers had destroyed the standing cotton crop in the fields. In this case, the Dutch were willing to accept the prices quoted by the merchants because they feared that if they did not the entire consignment might not be delivered.[50]

The VOC also encountered high prices of cotton and yarn in Sadraspatnam, where they had no choice but to pay the textile merchants more than the price which had been contracted for guinea cloth, salempores and baftas. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb died in 1707 and the long southern campaigns came to an end. However, the war of succession that broke out among Aurangzeb's sons made highways across northern and southern

[49] NA VOC 8823, Letter dated 07.10.1705 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 252–f.254, f. 256, f. 259–f. 261, f. 275–f. 276.
[50] NA VOC 8824, Letter dated 25.05.1706 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 385–f. 386, f. 450–f. 451, f. 455–f. 456.

Coromandel unsafe. This affected the sale of imported goods while textile production had been reasonably healthy despite the unstable political climate, wrote the Dutch in 1707.[51]

The VOC's letters from 1707 and 1708 provide us with a rare glimpse into how indigenous textile merchants operated in central Coromandel. In 1707, due to a dispute between two caste groups of weavers in Madras, one group of weavers retreated to San Thomé and hindered the transport of provisions to Madras. As a result, the EIC faced a serious shortage of grains. Taking advantage of this situation, a textile merchant named Sunkumuda Rama Chetti colluded with a presumed grain–hoarder in Madras, had him supply grains to the distressed weavers and persuaded them to deliver their textiles to the VOC in Sadraspatnam, instead of the English in Madras. The English, however, found this out and arrested the merchant.[52] Further evidence of Sunkumuda Rama Chetti's association with the VOC comes from a letter written in 1708. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in the early eighteenth century the VOC tried to expand their business in central Coromandel. For example, they attempted to set up an inland market place in Arramante to facilitate the sale of cotton and yarn. A similar attempt to expand business was made in Alemperwe (Alamparam), a small port near Sadraspatnam that had been leased by the Mughals to the VOC in 1703. But over the course of time, Alamparam did not turn out to be profitable for the Dutch. So, in 1708 they decided to quit and defer the village to the merchants of Sunkumuda Rama Chetti's company in Sadraspatnam for procuring textiles on behalf of the VOC.[53]

More than anything else, the unstable political climate was the cause of the troubles that the Dutch encountered. Reports from Pulicat in 1708 pointed out that Islam Shaikh, the Mughal faujdar of the region, had occupied the island Erikan ('Eergam' in the VOC records) and the adjacent villages which belonged to the VOC in Pulicat. The Dutch factors in Pulicat lodged a complaint with Daud Khan Panni and strengthened the garrison. Although the actions of the Mughal *faujdar* caused some trouble (as we will see), the VOC's textile trade in Pulicat continued. The VOC assigned their dyers around Pulicat to supply 5 packs of *tape grinsing* (a sarong or skirt–like cloth, see glossary), 9 packs of *tape Malaya*, 20 packs of *chintz* of the Persian variety (traded in the Persian Gulf) and 25 packs of *gobar* textiles of different varieties. In order to quickly finish this task, the dyers proposed to do the job in Ponneri and Triwelecanij. However, the Dutch did not approve their proposal because they were worried that Ponneri and Triwelecanij would be unsafe given the unstable political climate of the

[51] NA VOC 8686, Letter dated 09.09.1707 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 462–f. 463, f. 494–f.495.
[52] NA VOC 8825, Letter dated 11.10.1707 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 92–f. 93, f. 95–f. 97.
[53] NA VOC 8826, Letter dated 15.09.1708 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 355–f.356.

region (presumably due to the actions of the Mughal faujdar). The *gobars* and *tape* varieties of textiles from Pulicat were required for the Sultan of Bantam in South–East Asia.[54]

In 1709 the conflict between the Dutch and the Mughal faujdar Islam Shaikh came to a head. He obstructed the transport of grains from Mangiewake to Pulicat, killed a pion employed by the VOC and arrested several others who did not manage to escape. Eventually, however, Daud Khan's intervention led to the restoration of VOC control over the villages around Pulicat. About the same time a Persian merchant by the name of Mahmudu Mohim came to Pulicat to have several big and small tents painted for the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah, whose army was in Golconda. The merchant offered to negotiate in favour of the VOC at the Mughal court concerning their control over Pulicat. The Dutch, however, politely turned down his offer.[55] The Dutch interaction with this Persian merchant reveals two points: Firstly, it offers us yet another example of the kind of demand that an army could make on the regions through which it marched and we had alluded to this example while discussing the cases of sales of Bengal silk and English broadcloth to the Mughal army. Secondly, the VOC's refusal to entertain this Persian merchant reveals their issue of dealing with Mughal officials: they preferred to negotiate with the Mughals through Daud Khan, someone they knew well and had dealt with earlier.

The VOC's letters from Nagapatnam to Batavia in 1709 and 1710 refer to the activities of indigenous traders in southern Coromandel, and their connections with Malabar, Ceylon and South–East Asia. A ship belonging to two Muslim merchants named Syed Jaffer and Jainulabedin had sailed from Porto Novo to Aceh via Nagore (north of Nagapatnam). En route the ship was put off course by a storm and ended up in Galle in Ceylon. Stranded there, these merchants made Abdulla Khan Sherwani, the Mughal faujdar of Porto Novo, request the Dutch to have their cargo transported back to Porto Novo. To keep the faujdar and his counterpart in Chidambaram, Abdul Nabi, some of whose goods were on this ship, on good terms, the VOC accepted their request and let these merchants depart for Colombo.[56] A Muslim merchant of Porto Novo named Aga Mudu (possibly Muthu) Nayana, who was supported by Daud Khan Panni, had requested the VOC to help him in transporting timber from Malabar that had been bought there by his agents. The merchants who plied their trade between the Kaveri delta and Ceylon undermined the pass system of the VOC in southern Coromandel: they did not show passes to the VOC while sailing either to or from Ceylon – on the voyage back from Ceylon, indigenous merchants would pass Nagapatnam at night and anchor in Nagore. The VOC officials in Nagapatnam asked their colleagues in Colombo to

[54] NA VOC 8826, Letter dated 15.09.1708 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 349–f. 352, f. 355–f. 356, f. 371.
[55] NA VOC 8373, Letter dated 07.05.1709 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 62–f. 65.
[56] NA VOC 8373, Letter dated 07.05.1709 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 62–f. 65, f. 69–f. 70.

make merchants show their passes while leaving for the Coromandel and resolved to do the same themselves in Nagapatnam when the merchants sailed to Ceylon.[57]

The period analysed in this dissertation to assess the impact of Mughal wars on the textile industry of southern Coromandel ends around 1712. VOC letters indicate that the costs of production remained high due to high prices of grains, and this, in turn, led to increased wages for weavers and prices of textiles. The VOC governor in Nagapatnam wrote to Batavia in 1710 that the trading company had no choice but to increase the prices of textiles that were painted and dyed in the city because of the high prices of grains. Otherwise it would have been difficult for the painters and dyers to sustain themselves. Merchants supplying indigo to the VOC were affected by the same problems. To worsen matters, in 1710 the indigo crop was ruined by a spell of rain. The VOC governor increased the prices of ginghams by two pagodas per pack to secure their supply as the merchants had been complaining about the high prices of cotton and indigo. The ginghams were an essential commodity in the VOC trade from Coromandel to Java. Nagapatnam assigned to each subordinate factory its share of textiles to meet the orders for South–East Asia for the year 1711.[58]

In 1712, the VOC in Nagapatnam were yet again compelled to pay their textile suppliers' even higher prices. This rise in costs, the Dutch wrote, was caused by two reasons. Firstly, some of the cotton crop could not be harvested in time and was wasted due to lack of labour, stemming from widespread depopulation in the lands around Mysore and to the north. Secondly, while the price of cotton was indeed high, the Dutch suspected that whatever had been harvested was being hoarded by the merchants to create an artificially increased scarcity and push the prices even higher. For the textile orders of 1712, in Sadraspatnam and Porto Novo too the Dutch had to pay more for textiles. The scarcity of cotton is listed as the reason behind delays in the supply of textiles. Political instability was another factor that affected production of textiles, and VOC letters point out that southern Coromandel had not been as badly hit by political instability as northern Coromandel.[59]

Thus far, we have discussed the major effects of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns on the economy of southern Coromandel, especially its textile industry. Textile trade persisted despite an increase in costs of production which was caused mainly by high prices of grains and occasionally poor cotton harvests. Despite their complaints, the VOC had no choice but to accede to the demands of textile merchants and buy textiles at high prices. As we have noted, weavers migrated from northern Coromandel to the Kaveri delta, which offered greater food security. The same factor would have also attracted merchants to the ports of

[57] NA VOC 8827, Letter dated 22.08.1710 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 213–f. 214.
[58] NA VOC 8827, Letter dated 22.08.1710 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 93, f. 99–f. 100, f. 107, f. 109–f. 110, f. 213–f. 214.
[59] NA VOC 8828, Volume One, Letter dated 10.07.1711 from Daniel Bernard, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 20–f. 21, f. 32–f. 33, f. 39–f. 41, f. 55.

southern Coromandel, such as Porto Novo. Let us now look at what impact the Mughal wars had on agriculture in southern Coromandel. This will also offer us insights into food security around the Kaveri delta.

5.3 Climate and agriculture

As in the case of northern Coromandel, any analysis of the agricultural conditions in central and southern Coromandel during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns must mainly be based on circumstantial evidence.

The southern part of Coromandel experienced fewer crop failures than other parts of Coromandel during the Mughal wars. During the siege of Golconda and immediately after its annexation by the Mughals in 1687, people migrated from northern Coromandel to the Kaveri delta where crops had not failed. Similarly, as noted earlier in this chapter, during the siege of Gingee, Zulfiqar Khan raided Tanjore and the Kaveri delta for provisions, in 1691, 1694 and 1697.

After the siege of Gingee began, the movement of troops often denuded vegetation or rice fields; the Mughal reinforcement troops deployed from the north to Gingee in 1690 and 1691 found that armies on the march had made a track in what was otherwise a dense forest cover between Cuddapah and Kanchipuram in central Coromandel. Similarly, when Zulfiqar Khan tried to bring grains from Wandiwash in January 1693, the Mughal draught animals such as oxen and camels got stuck in the mud in a rice field, while horses passed only with great difficulty. As the siege of Gingee continued and the conditions worsened, the Mughals were forced to retreat to Wandiwash where grains were available.[60]

The war soon impacted on agricultural conditions in central Coromandel. In 1692 the French director of Pondicherry, Francois Martin, wrote in his memoirs that the presence of Mughal troops had made it impossible for peasants to plough their lands around Pondicherry in the regions of Valudavur and Alamcoupam. The French had been fearing a siege of Pondicherry by the Dutch and they received rice from the Golconda coast (possibly from their compatriots in Masulipatnam). Martin pointed out that rice had become dear because the peasants had failed to cultivate their lands due of the wars. Merchants tried to send rice from places inland that still had stocks (perhaps due to hoarding and having escaped the effects of the wars). For example, two bullock carts laden with rice and travelling from the inland plains towards Pondicherry were seized by the Mughal and Maratha troops.[61]

Bhimsen's *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, sums up the effects of the Mughal-Maratha wars on agriculture in this region:

---

[60] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 180, 186–188.
[61] Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century, Volume II, Part II*: 1374–1375, 1394, 1420.

> In the whole world nowhere else are there so many temples. The cause of the building of these temples is that the country is very wealth producing, every year it yields four crops, and a large revenue is raised, the amount of which is known only to the Revenue Angel.

He was candid enough to add this:

> During the sovereignty of Bijapur, Hyderabad and Telang, the country was extensively cultivated. Many places have been turned into wastes on account of the passage of the imperial troops, which has caused hardships and oppression to the people.[62]

In 1695 the Dutch wrote that while the Kaveri delta had a good harvest, the region to the north of Tanjore was not so fortunate. Merchants kept coming from the north to buy rice in and around Tanjore. This had made grains expensive.[63] Providing more evidence of declining food security in central Coromandel, Bhimsen points out that food was becoming very scarce when the Mughals moved towards Doderi after a battle with the Marathas near Vellore during November and December 1695. Many horses and cattle died.[64] Although southern Coromandel usually had greater food security, in 1698 the region suffered from the effects of a poor monsoon; cotton became expensive and indigo production dipped.[65]

As discussed in Chapter 3, rice was a major commodity in the trade between southern Coromandel and Ceylon, and the VOC would export rice from Nagapatnam to their colleagues in Ceylon. The winter harvest of January 1700 of *nely* rice in Tanjore was quantified by the Dutch at 22,000,000 *calangs*.[66] Thanks to good harvests, the VOC in Nagapatnam kept on supplying rice to their colleagues in Ceylon: in 1704 they shipped 305 *lasten* of rice and 612 2/3 *lasten* of *nely* rice to Colombo, 522 23/75 *lasten* of *nely* rice to Jaffna and 99 1/3 lasten to Trincomalee.[67]

In 1705, the VOC wrote, the cultivation of rice around Tanjore and Nagapatnam suffered due to a lack of water in the fields which came down the river; a poor monsoon had affected irrigation. Even when the production was better the following year when rainfall

---

[62] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 193–195.
[63] NA VOC 1570, Letter dated 24.03.1695 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 187.
[64] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 200–201.
[65] NA VOC 1610, Letter dated 18.05.1698 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 36–f. 37.
[66] NA VOC 1638, Letter dated 25.01.1700 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 12. The VOC glossary defines 1 calange as equivalent to about 7.2 grams. See *VOC–Glossarium: Verklaringen van termen, verzameld uit de rijks geschiedkundige publicatiën die betrekking hebben op de Verenigde Oost–Indische Compagnie.* (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 2000): 25.
[67] NA VOC 8822, Letter dated 191.10.1704 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 235. 1 last is equivalent to 1250 kg, *VOC–Glossarium*: 67.

improved, the VOC's supplier of rice around Nagapatnam withheld the supply to the Dutch and sold it instead to private merchants.[68] Possibly, the presence of other merchants had increased the prices and the latter were prepared to spend more. Rice was hoarded too, as we have seen, to create artificial scarcity and push up prices. Rice cultivators in Tanjore and around Nagapatnam also had to cope with problems caused by flooding in the Kaveri delta – in 1707 the northern part of the delta suffered particularly bad floods. The VOC in Nagapatnam remarked they had not witnessed such a flood in that region in the previous fifty years. The floods ruined the *nely* (or *neli*) rice stored in ground pits as well as the newly sown in rice paddies all the way from the interior to the coast. As was usual in such conditions, the VOC only expected rice to get dearer.[69]

Rains failed in 1708 and consequently the prices of *nely* rice sold in the markets of Nagapatnam increased over a month and a half from December 1708 to January 1709. The VOC in Nagapatnam could not supply the quantities requested by Jaffna and Colombo; they had no choice but to ask their colleagues in Colombo to look for rice further south along the coast around Madurai or the Kanara Coast in south–western India.[70] In 1710, agriculture was affected by political insecurity caused by the war that the king of Tanjore, Sahaji Raja, had been fighting against the rebels in his kingdom. Many rice fields around Tanjore lay uncultivated because of the death and migration of peasants, write the Dutch. Then, even the meagre harvest itself was ruined by a severe storm that hit Nagapatnam. There seems to have been a shortage of rice at this point in southern Coromandel. The VOC unsuccessfully sought to buy it around Karaikal and other places near Nagapatnam.[71]

However, the harvest seems to have been better again the next year (1711). At times Tamil merchants who were domiciled in Colombo and had commercial networks in the Kaveri delta worked as middlemen to help the VOC buy rice for their colleagues in Ceylon. That year, the VOC governor in Nagapatnam bought 1290 1/3 *lasten* of *nely* rice, with the help of a certain Sedassua Moddelij, a resident of Colombo in Ceylon. This consignment was shipped to Colombo, Jaffnapatnam and Trincomalee for the Dutch garrisons in these places.[72]

Agriculture in southern Coromandel, especially the Kaveri delta, suffered from poor monsoons and floods on four occasions during the period that we have surveyed, mainly after the siege of Gingee ended in early 1698: in 1698 (poor monsoon), 1705 (poor monsoon), 1707

---

[68] NA VOC 8824, Letter dated 25.05.1706 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 387.
[69] NA VOC 8686, Letter dated 09.09.1707 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 466–f. 468.
[70] NA VOC 8373, Letter dated 07.05.1709 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 104–f. 105.
[71] NA VOC 8827, Letter dated 22.08.1710 from Daniel Bernard, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 99, f. 144, f. 148–f. 149.
[72] NA VOC 8828, Volume One, Letter dated 10.07.1711 from Daniel Bernard, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor-general in Batavia: f. 136–f. 138.

(flood) and 1708 (poor monsoon). In 1710, cultivation in Tanjore was affected by the king's war against rebels, which led to the death of peasants. However, an important point to remember is that even after the aforementioned cases of natural calamities such as poor monsoons and floods, the VOC did not speak of depopulation in the Kaveri delta caused by a lack of food. The only occasion when they do speak of depopulation is in 1710, during a rebellion in Tanjore. We can therefore fairly safely assume that during natural calamities which affected agriculture, people in the Kaveri delta survived on rice that had been stored from previous years. In short, food security seems to have remained good.

5.4 Conclusion

Like Chapter 4, we will distinguish between the immediate effects, short–term and long–term aftermath of wars and conquest to understand the impact that Aurangzeb's southern campaigns had on central and southern Coromandel.

The immediate effects of the conquest of Golconda (1687) were felt in central Coromandel by 1688–1689. The VOC wrote of how major economic centres had been plundered by Mughals and Marathas in the region up to Madras. The EIC complained of unsafe roads which had made it difficult to transport cotton and thus engage weavers for work. The French were compelled to increase prices of textiles around Pondicherry in 1689. Also, the decision to transfer the Dutch headquarters of Coromandel from Pulicat to Nagapatnam in 1690 was shaped by the Mughal conquest of Golconda and the beginning of the siege of Gingee in 1689.

Within a couple of years the siege of Gingee had affected the economy of central Coromandel. Its short–term impact was first felt in the region between Kanchipuram and Pulicat that had turned desolate by 1692, thanks to the movement of troops which had denuded vegetation and reduced the cultivated area– a fact bemoaned by the Mughal chronicler Bhimsen in *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*. Another short–term effect of the siege of Gingee on the economy of central Coromandel was how the presence of the Mughal army had created demand for certain commodities, mainly food and fodder. Coastal crafts disembarking at the ports of central Coromandel brought rice, wheat and lentils that were sold to the Mughal army. The sales of Bengal silk and broadcloth to the Mughal army (or at the Mughal camp) are more examples in this regard. In this respect, an element of the hypothesis presented in Part I also holds good: the Deccan and South India could not be won without co–opting the European enclaves. As in the case of Masulipatnam, Aurangzeb's reinstatement of the VOC's privileges in Pulicat was an example of the larger Mughal project of integrating the coasts with the heartland of the empire. In the context of the southern campaigns, the income accruing from sharing of tolls in Pulicat and profits from sales of textiles could be invested in wars. Moreover, these encalves acted as sources of military supply: both the VOC and the EIC supported Mughal war efforts in Gingee by supplying gun powder, gunners, technicians and surgeons. The effects of the siege of Gingee were especially hard on Pulicat which had been poorly performing as a centre for procuring textiles for the VOC's trade in the Indian Ocean

by 1693. About the same time, 1692–1693, the Dutch did not have much to complain in southern Coromandel, although they feared devastation would follow to Tanjore because of the slow progress the Mughals had made at the siege of Gingee.

This concluding section evaluates the long–term aftermath of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns in central and southern Coromandel from two perspectives: the applicability of the long–term hypothesis in the conclusion to Part I, and the shifts that Aurangzeb's southern campaigns brought to the economy of central and southern Coromandel.

Part I of this dissertation shows that during wars in northern Coromandel, people tended to migrate to the Kaveri delta because it offered greater food security. After assimilation, these migrants helped to expand agricultural and textile production in the delta, such as during the rule of the *nayakas*. It is the hypothesis of this dissertation that although long wars doubtless detrimentally affected textile production in the Kaveri delta and pushed up prices, the greater food security of the region ensured it was somewhat immune to the devastating effects of wars, making it attractive for migrants from the regions to the north. This pattern was repeated during Aurangzeb's campaigns, and we can therefore declare that the hypothesis holds true in this case. Due to depopulation and famines in northern Coromandel, weavers and artisans had migrated to the south. The survey conducted by the VOC official Theodore Telghuijs and presented in this chapter, points to the presence of weavers who had migrated from the north and were active in the villages that the Dutch factor visited in 1695.

This development was primarily a result of good food security in the Kaveri delta even during the years of the siege of Gingee. The low incidence of Mughal campaigns in southern Coromandel during the 1690s compared to central Coromandel also helped the Kaveri delta remain stable: the main site of Mughal–Maratha contest was the region around Gingee and Vellore, while Zulfiqar Khan raided the Kaveri delta only thrice (1691, 1694 and 1697) to collect tribute from Tanjore and secure supplies. In retrospect another factor that could have also shaped the decision of weavers to settle in southern Coromandel was a high demand for their skills: the prospective employers of weavers in southern Coromandel comprised the European companies (in our case the Dutch) and indigenous textile merchants who had a strong presence in Porto Novo and Nagore, as we have seen. So, from a weaver's perspective (although we do not have references to support this argument!) the profusion of prospective employers in southern Coromandel would have made an attractive proposition. The VOC survey of weaving villages in the Kaveri delta not only reveals the survival of the textile industry, but also points to a reorientation of focus: during the war years, the absence of investments from buyers prompted some centres which had previously produced for the export markets to begin producing for inland domestic markets. As in northern Coromandel, in the south the high prices of cotton, higher costs of living (grains) and general insecurity meant weavers could only be contracted to work at high wages. So, the hypothesis

constructed in Part I stands good: the textile industry survived in southern Coromandel thanks to greater crop security, albeit with high costs of production.

In northern Coromandel, examining the performance of Masulipatnam as a regional entrepot helped us understand the impact of Mughal wars on overland and maritime connections. Unlike Masulipatnam, both Pulicat and Nagapatnam were local centres and, therefore, less sensitive to imperial crises. Masulipatnam's primary strength as a regional entrepot of Bay of Bengal in the seventeenth century was the connection it could forge between the west of the Deccan and South–East Asia, mainly thanks to its role as an exporter of textiles. If long wars struck at this maritime–overland node, Masulipatnam's fortunes were likely to deteriorate and this hypothesis holds good– as we have noted in Chapter 4. However, both Pulicat and Nagapatnam were mainly VOC relay stations in Coromandel in the seventeenth century; they supplied locally produced textiles as a part of Dutch commercial operations in the Indian Ocean, had little presence of non–Dutch merchants and were part of a network of coastal trade in the Bay of Bengal. In other words, the extent of their maritime–overland networks and scale of commercial operations were nowhere near that of Masulipatnam in the seventeenth century. Although wars in the hinterland of these ports could (and did) affect their role as exporters of locally produced cloth, the intensity of impact would be much less compared to northern Coromandel and thus, we may say, these ports were less sensitive to an imperial crisis involving the Mughals in South India.

Evidence for maritime connections for ports in central Coromandel, especially Pulicat, is meagre during the 1690s. In this conext, we allude to its poor performance as a supplier of locally produced textiles for the VOC's operations. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Dutch concluded that the central Coromandel region had been put to waste by the Mughal wars and any recovery would take years. Ports further south, however, seem to have performed better. Despite the ravages unleashed by warfare which caused prices of grains to increase, food security was still high in southern Coromandel. The years of the Mughal wars saw the rise of Porto Novo which had a strong presence of indigenous merchants backed by the support of local Mughal military commanders, and Persian and other merchants traded here with South–East Asia. Another port that had attracted migration of indigenous merchants was Nagore. Finally, the career of the southern Coromandel port of Nagapatnam points to the survival of both overland and maritime connections. The old commercial routes from Malabar across the passes in Western Ghats to the Kaveri delta remained largely unaffected by the Mughal wars. In addition to the textiles being exported to South–East Asia, good harvests allowed the VOC in Nagapatnam to keep supplying rice to their colleagues in Ceylon. We may conclude that the VOC's continued operations and reasonable performance at Nagapatnam contradict Sinnappah Arasaratnam's formulation (cited in the introductory chapter of this dissertation) that the Dutch factories were in general decline. Indigenous coastal trade between the Kaveri delta and Ceylon defied the system of Dutch passes and persisted during the wars. This would support Sanjay Subrahmanyam's observation of coastal trade in South India being relatively immune to the aleatoric life cycles of ports. The single

biggest impact of the Mughal wars in central and southern Coromandel was the rise of port cities of southern Coromandel.

Conclusion

Aurangzeb's southern campaigns: Moment of transformation

The key to Mughal success was the integration of the booming littorals with the heartland of the empire. This dissertation focuses on the economic impact of the last great Mughal campaign for expansion, which exemplifies the coast–interior connection of the Mughal Empire: Aurangzeb's southern campaigns. Aurangzeb's experience of serving twice as an administrator in the Deccan played a substantial part in his decision as a ruler to annex Golconda, Bijapur and the Konkan, with their rich agriculture and their Indian Ocean trading conduits. Gujarat, with its principal port Surat, had been a part of the Mughal Empire since the 1570s, and, as explained in the introductory chapter, annexation of Golconda would have given the Mughals access to an overland commercial axis which connected two of the major ports in the seventeenth–century Indian Ocean world, Surat and Masulipatnam, via Hyderabad. Had Aurangzeb succeeded, the southern Mughal campaigns under him would have rated as a spectacular high point in Mughal history. The Mughals had limited success in defeating the Marathas, and consolidation of Mughal authority in Golconda remained weak after its annexation into the Mughal Empire. However, the 25 years of Mughal military campaigns in the Deccan and South India were not marked by decline. As Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 show, there were differences in the impact of the wars in northern, central and southern Coromandel. This dissertation concludes that Aurangzeb's southern campaigns marked a moment of transformation rather than decline.

Result of the campaigns: Reorientation of economic centres in Coromandel

Weakening of Masulipatnam as the entrepot of northern Coromandel

Part I developed the hypothesis that Masulipatnam was highly sensitive to imperial crisis and asserted that this hypothesis was confirmed in the context of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns. This assertion was evidenced in Part II, Chapter 4. The Masulipatnam–Hyderabad–Surat axis of commercial operations was weakened by not only recurring Mughal and Maratha military operations in the west of the Deccan, but also a decline in Mughal administrative control over the province of Golconda after 1700.

VOC correspondence during the Mughal wars reveals that this effect could be felt from the early 1680s onwards through phenomena such as the reluctance of some of the Persian nobility in Golconda to send their merchandise to Persia via Surat because the region to the west of Golconda had been affected by the wars. By 1688, Dutch reports spoke of the mass depopulation in the province of Golconda and the flight of merchants from Masulipatnam that the region had experienced due to the Mughal siege and subsequent annexation. However, the firman granted by Aurangzeb to the VOC revealed Mughal efforts to resettle the war–devastated lands of northern Coromandel. As noted in Chapter 4, John F. Richards' analysis of revenue administration in Mughal Golconda showed that in the 1690s, particularly from 1692 to 1697, the Mughals successfully restored ties of the state administration with the fertile parts of Telangana and worked the salt mines near the coast in Masulipatnam. The

province remained an important source of grains to Aurangzeb's camp in the west of the Deccan and managed to finance its own administration.

But the connections which the Mughals established between Hyderabad and the deltas in northern Coromandel were fragile and susceptible to being snapped the very moment any political unrest broke out. This became apparent after 1700 when a decline in public order and Mughal administrative control in Golconda coincided with attacks on the province by the Marathas and the Berads, and the success of bandits in closing off highways. VOC correspondence seems to concur with this view of deterioration in the fortunes of Golconda–Masulipatnam. Their reports point out that in the early eighteenth century caravans encountered severe difficulties when attempting to traverse along the Surat–Hyderabad–Masulipatnam axis due to disturbances in the region to the west of Golconda and the operations of Pappadu and Riza Khan. VOC directors in Masulipatnam warned their successors of the volatile conditions in Golconda due to a lack of central rule that had been affecting VOC trade, and bemoaned Aurangzeb's preoccupation with wars in the west of the Deccan when he could have been strengthening Mughal control over Golconda–Masulipatnam.

The textile industry of the Godavari delta was also affected by the weakening of Masulipatnam's overland axis. VOC correspondence shows that cotton became expensive because of an increase in transportation costs and general insecurity. When the Dutch speak of textile production in northern Coromandel post–1687, they mainly refer to their factories in Palakollu and Draksharama. Although the Dutch point to the presence of weaving population in Rajahmundry in the Godvari delta around 1707, we rarely come across Dutch surveys of weaving villages in the Godavari delta between 1687 and 1713. This is possible evidence for an increased VOC focus on acquiring control over textile production in Palakollu and Draksharama.

The changes in the role of Masulipatnam as a port – from primary exporter of textiles in the Indian Ocean to a port on the network of coastal trade in Coromandel – affected its stature as an entrepot in Bay of Bengal, and this trend was reflected in the decline of international arrivals and departures. Masulipatnam retrograded to a coastal centre that mainly traded with Bengal, Orissa and other parts of Coromandel, especially Madras. Chapter 2 demonstrated that Pulicat underwent a similar process after the decline of Vijayanagara, which was marked by a loss of eminence in the Indian Ocean and survival as a coastal centre. In other words, Masulipatnam was no longer an entrepot that connected the subcontinent to the ocean, but a port on the network of coastal trade between Coromandel and Bengal. Another feature of this reorientation in Masulipatnam's fortunes was the migration of big merchants from the port. Persian shipowners began to leave in the 1680s, and in the same period Armenian merchants moved to Madras.

As explained in the introductory chapter, by the end of the southern campaigns, both Aurangzeb and the VOC director at Masulipatnam were writing about the damage the wars

had caused. Their words conveyed the image of a region in severe distress; they spoke of the miserable condition of the peasantry, and of how political instability had made roads insecure and conducting commerce difficult.

A shift to the south in Coromandel

If Aurangzeb's Deccan campaigns debilitated the Masulipatnam–Hyderabad–Surat axis, they also caused another significant shift: the rise of the port cities of southern Coromandel. The siege of Gingee had caused disturbances in the textile–weaving hinterland of ports in central Coromandel, but economic connections in the Kaveri delta remained stable, at least in comparison to the north.

In terms of transformation, the Mughal wars marked the genesis of a significant process in Coromandel: a shift to the south. This refers to the rise of southern port cities, which became magnets attracting economic produce for export around the Indian Ocean. Commodity flows along the Nagapatnam–Malabar–Ceylon axis remained more stable and lesser affected by the wars compared to Masulipatnam. The production line of textiles remained stable in southern Coromandel compared to the north during the Mughal campaigns because of two reasons. One, as Dutch sources point out in Chapter 5, the Kaveri delta continued to be a producer of textiles and the VOC's source of cotton, the dry south–eastern part of Tamil Nadu in Tirunelveli and Madurai, was way beyond the radius of Mughal military action. Two, the low incidence of Mughal campaigns in the Kaveri delta during the 1690s compared to central Coromandel along with good rice harvests helped the VOC (and other textile merchants) keep weavers tied to the villages. So, the threat of vulnerability from wars was less compared to the north. Dutch trade with Malabar and Ceylon also persisted during the decades of war. Local Mughal officials were involved in the trade with these regions, while indigenous merchants from Porto Novo and Nagore were active in the trade with South–East Asia. All of this would not have been possible without the good rice harvests that provided food security to weaving groups and traders in the Kaveri delta and helped the region remain a rice–surplus zone during the wars. The availability of rice induced people to move from northern and central Coromandel to the Kaveri delta during the 1680s and 1690s. The rise of the port cities of southern Coromandel was a very significant effect of Aurangzeb's campaigns.

Part I presented the hypothesis that during their campaigns in the Deccan and South India the Mughals attempted to incorporate the European settlements in the workings of the empire for the purposes of supporting military operations. Although European settlements could also serve as havens for non–combatants fleeing the ruination caused by wars, the settlements could not escape the negative impact of wars because their network of commodity flows was reliant on the port's overland connections. Despite prices of textiles remaining high during wars, Nagapatnam would fare better than regions to its north because of greater food security and connections with Malabar and Ceylon. Chapter 5 demonstrates that this hypothesis holds good in the context of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns.

Aurangzeb's reinstatement of the VOC and the EIC in central Coromandel revealed the demands of his southern campaigns. As sources of provisions, the European ports along this stretch of coast were important for Mughal success, and Chapter 5 points out that both the Dutch and the English provided the Mughals with military assistance during the siege of Gingee.

The introductory chapter examines John F. Richards' argument that the rise of Pulicat, Madras and Nagapatnam was associated with the assurance of security during and after Aurangzeb's southern campaigns: non–combatants were attracted by the protection that these walled European enclaves could offer in times of unrest. This dissertation argues that this feature was by no means unique, and Part I shows that fort towns often combined their defensive function with a commercial, market function – as testified to by the suffix *kottai* for towns in Tamil Nadu and the European settlements in Coromandel that had been allowed to fortify themselves since the early seventeenth century. Part I also shows that the weavers saw the VOC as a new patron among the many foreign and indigenous merchant groups who operated in South India.

Chapter 5 shows how the siege of Gingee and the accompanying unrest in central Coromandel adversely affected the hinterland of ports such as Pulicat and Sadraspatnam. Textile production in this region remained irregular because both ports found it difficult to supply cloth to Nagapatnam. Villages to the west and south–west of Pulicat supplied textiles to several ports in central Coromandel: Pulicat, Madras, San Thomé and Sadraspatnam. The VOC were aware that if this producing hinterland was threatened by war and political instability, the ports would find it difficult to act as outlets for locally produced cloth. The Dutch trading company concluded after the siege of Gingee that the hinterland of ports in central Coromandel had been put to waste by the wars and that it would take a long time for the economic centres in this region to recover from the effects of war. It is therefore difficult to establish a causal connection between Aurangzeb's southern campaigns and the rise of European enclaves, at least for Pulicat, in the eighteenth century.

Notwithstanding a rise in prices of textiles, as bemoaned by the VOC, which was common to Masulipatnam, Pulicat and Nagapatnam during the 1690s and 1700s, it is extremely tricky to speak of the region as a whole considering the differences in the impact of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns across northern, central and southern Coromandel. In this context, we encounter an extensive web of connections (east–west and north–south) of varying scales. In terms of east–west connections, the long–term aftermath of the campaigns told most on Masulipatnam, a regional entrepot, whose maritime–overland links were weakened by wars and political instability, especially after 1700, but the textile industry could function on a reduced scale. Pulicat, as a Dutch relay station of central Coromandel, was put to waste by the siege of Gingee and found it very hard to provide a steady output of textiles during the 1690s. Nagapatnam's east–west connections– supplying textiles for the maritime

trade of the VOC and commerce with Malabar – remained largely unaffected by the campaigns.

The picture becomes more vibrant if we look at the north–south connections in Coromandel. Firstly, coastal trading networks from Orissa to Ceylon remained resilient during the southern campaigns; as we have noted in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, coastal crafts plied regularly between Orissa, Masulipatnam and Madras, and between the Kaveri delta and Ceylon. The coastal trade between Orissa, northern Coromandel and central Coromandel, we may argue, paralleled the south–eastern movement of Mughal armies from the west of the Deccan to central Coromandel in the late seventeenth century. Although coastal trade, in general, withstood the aleatoric lifecycles of ports in Coromandel, its importance and propensity to produce profits would have increased manifold in a time when the presence of Mughal armies and Aurangzeb's camp created demand for food products among both combatants and non–combatants. Secondly, we must also consider the north–south connections that the Mughals tried to establish by linking the heartland of the empire with the coasts, as reflected in the terms at which Aurangzeb reinstated the VOC in Masulipatnam and Pulicat. More dynamic was the role of Mughal commanders like Daud Khan Panni who sought to counter the effects of the siege of Gingee in central Coromandel and strengthen his military–fiscal resources by leasing out ports to European companies (in our case the VOC) to organize textile production. As we have noted in Chapter 5, the Hyderabad Karnatik (which corresponded with a large part of central Coromandel) became a separate revenue unit following the conquest of Golconda and the revenue collected was to be directly transported to Aurangabad in the west of the Deccan. Daud Khan Panni's active role in trying to promote maritime commerce in central Coromandel comes into sharp relief in the light of this administrative arrangement as well as his intentions to develop Arcot as an independent state after the death of Aurangzeb. Thirdly, while in the north the VOC strove to acquire greater control over textile production at centres like Palakollu and Draksharama but did not explore new avenues for expanding investment, they tried to be more assertive in the south by organizing new markets– although success in such efforts was limited. So, the picture was quite varied from the north to the south.

Chapters 4 and 5 pointed out that during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns agriculture suffered from both natural and man–made factors. Given the varied impact that the southern campaigns had on agriculture across the littoral, it is difficult to speak of a general climate crisis in Coromandel in the late seventeenth century despite poor monsoons on multiple occasions. As we had noted in the introduction to the thesis, a crucial factor was the ability or otherwise of states and societies to adjust to vagaries of climate. In the context of northern Coromandel, except 1685–1687 when an El Nino episode coincided with Mughal siege of Golconda, we do not find large–scale depopulation caused by poor monsoons and famines. In fact, the establishment of Mughal rule restored agricultural production in the province which helped Hyderabad supply grains to Aurangzeb's camp in the 1690s. Agricultural productivity dwindled in Golconda after 1700 more due to a decline in public order causing

an increase in Maratha attacks than due to the vagaries of monsoon. In central Coromandel, agriculture was mainly affected by Mughal–Maratha clashes during the siege of Gingee (1689–1698) rather than poor monsoons. By 1692–1693 the cultivated area had significantly shrunk due to the movement of troops and often stocks of rice coming from inland villages to the central Coromandel ports were seized by the Mughals and Marathas. This created a shortage of food in the region. To secure food and fodder, the Mughals depended on a long and vulnerable supply line from the north; they raided the Kaveri delta thrice (1691, 1694 and 1697) for supplies and bought provisions that were brought to central Coromandel ports (Pulicat and Madras) by coastal crafts from Bengal and Orissa. Finally, food security remained relatively high in southern Coromandel (the Kaveri delta and Tanjore) compared to northern Coromandel. The region was a source of food grains for the Mughals and merchants from the north in the 1690s, and it attracted migrants from the north. During the period that this dissertation has studied, southern Coromandel experienced poor rainfall thrice– 1698, 1705 and 1710. However, on none of these occasions the VOC reported depopulation in the Kaveri delta due to starvation. The only occasion when they did so was during a rebellion in Tanjore in 1710 when peasants had died and lands could not be cultivated. So, most probably during poor monsoons southern Coromandel survived on stocks of rice from previous years.

Thus, even in seasons of poor monsoon during Aurangzeb's southern campigns the long coastline of Coromandel ensured food security by transporting food grains from surplus to deficit regions (mostly from southern Coromandel to northern Coromandel) and by means of the coastal trade in provisions from Bengal and Orissa to Coromandel, especially for the Mughal army during the siege of Gingee. We may fairly safely assume that the two monsoons of the Coromandel Coast also perhaps helped in preventing a total failure of rains in a year. In this regard we may point out, on the basis of evidence from the VOC correspondence in Chapters 4 and 5, that the years of poor monsoon in northern Coromandel (1693 and 1695) did not coincide with the years of poor monsoon in southern Coromandel (1698, 1705 and 1708). So, despite the reduction in agricultural area caused by Maratha attacks in northern Coromandel after 1700 and in central Coromandel caused by movement of troops during the siege of Gingee, and poor monsoons on a few occasions, it is tricky to speak of a general crisis in climate in Coromandel during Aurangzeb's southern campigns– except in 1685–1687 when the failure of rains was followed by the Mughal siege of Golconda, a terrible famine and flood.

In the context of the performance of the VOC, it would be worthwhile to revisit the idea of a decline in its position in Coromandel that begun in the late seventeenth century. As we had discussed in the section on historiography in the introduction to this dissertation, Sinnappah Arasaratnam, George Winius and Markus Vink speak of a decline of the VOC mainly because of two reasons: one, the destabilising effects of the Mughal wars on the VOC's export and import trade in Coromandel; and two, changes in consumer tastes in Europe that transformed the VOC from a spice merchant to a cloth merchant. While European markets developed a craze for Indian textiles, Japan, the primary source of bullions in Asia that the VOC needed for the textile trade of Coromandel, increasingly restricted the outflow of gold

and silver in the second half of the eighteenth century. So, the company had to invest the bullions in the best manner possible and although it is not clear the role that Aurangzeb's southern campaigns had played in shaping their decisions, by the eighteenth century the VOC decided to prioritise Bengal (another major producer of textiles) over Coromandel in its South Asian operations.

Contrary to this, Jos Gommans (also discussed in the historiography section of the introduction) argues it is more interesting to explain the why of VOC's continuity in Coromandel in the eighteenth century, rather than its decline. Despite the eighteenth century being marked by more occurences of El Nino with failure of rains and more political instability compared to the preceding century, the Dutch miracle in Coromandel was a result of two reasons: one, the VOC acquired control over production process of textiles across Coromandel, especially in villages whose ownership they had been effectively conferred– Palakollu, Contera, Draksharama, Golepalam and Godavaram in northern Coromandel– and a number of villages around Nagapatnam; and two, the good relations that the VOC forged with portfolio–capitalists like Shaikh Abd al–Qadir on the Pearl Fisheries Coast who helped the Dutch tide over difficult times like wars and political instability. While the VOC lost control over the production process in the north in the eighteenth century, it acquired control over the same in the south thanks to rivalries between the kingdoms of Tanjore, Madurai and Ramnad.

In this respect, as we have noted in Chapter 4, the performance of the VOC in Palakollu and Draksharama pointed out the extent to which they could succeed in controlling the production of textiles in the 1690s and 1700s. The Dutch had little control over external factors like prices of cotton (dependent on agricultural conditions in cotton growing areas and general security or the lack of it along routes of transport) and public order, but this dissertation concludes that they were reasonably successful in controlling internal factors like organising textile production. Firstly, this was reflected in the population census from Golepalam in 1692 which showed how the VOC had kept different occupational groups tied to the village. Secondly, the comparatively better performance of Draksharama in relation to Palakollu was mainly due to the more number of weavers who resided there. Thirdly, although the Dutch could not explore new avenues of investing in textile production in northern Coromandel in the late seventeenth century and had to encounter an increasingly unstable political milieu after 1700, their continued operations from Palakollu and Draksharama demonstrated that the real problem with northern Coromandel's textile industry was not a reduction in its vitality, but poor management of the region by the Mughals. However, as we had noted in Chapter 4, the share of northern Coromandel in VOC's export trade of textiles from Coromandel did indeed lessen in the early eighteenth century. In this respect, we can at least point to the years 1711 and 1712 when northern Coromandel's share of the textiles exported from Coromandel stood at 21 per cent and 18 per cent respectively. Finally, contrary to Arasaratnam's formulation, there was not a general decline of VOC factories in Coromandel. Although Pulicat and its hinterland had been devastated by

the siege of Gingee, Mughal wars and political instability had been less disruptive in southern Coromandel, where the resilience of Nagapatnam's maritime–overland connections question the idea of a general decline of VOC factories in Coromandel.

In his study of the eighteenth–century South Indian economy focusing on the textile industry, Prasannan Parthasarathi argues that weavers enjoyed a good degree of autonomy and had a strong position in the economic and political order of South India. The high demand for South Indian cloth (in the Indian Ocean and Europe) translated into a high demand for the services of weavers and placed them in a strong bargaining position vis–à–vis the textile merchants, European companies and states. Evidence for strong autonomy of weavers was reflected in their tendency to cancel contracts made with one European company by returning the advance they had been paid and entering into contract with another company for the lure of more money. As a result of this, the European companies had to match each other in terms of cash advances. Parthasarathi proffers evidence from the records of the EIC in this respect: in 1694, the EIC's textile merchants in Vishakhapatnam appealed to the company for advances of money to keep the weavers engaged in work, otherwise the VOC would employ them; and in 1697, the EIC's merchants in Madras argued in similar terms that weavers must be supplied with money if they had to be kept away from working for others. Migration was integral to survival strategies of weavers, especially during wars, droughts and famines, and the threat of migration was also an important bargaining point for weavers in their conflicts with merchants and states. Since weavers could lead to an increase in state revenues, they were welcomed by states throughout South India.[1]

In the context of this dissertation, evidence from the VOC archives corroborates the largely autonomous and strong position of weavers in the economy of South India. The threat of weavers responding to other buyers was present for the VOC from the early seventeenth century itself. To begin with, the VOC had induced weavers producing cloth for the markets in Java and Malaya to settle in Tirupapuliyur. As we have noted in Chapter 2, this threat was reflected in the terms of the contract that the Dutch entered with the Aravidu king: weavers and dyers who had agreed to weave and dye cloth for the VOC were obliged to do so and if they failed in this the Dutch factor in Pulicat could imprison them. The VOC were also aware of the threat of migration and so the contract had another clause which requested the king to return those workers who had run away from Pulicat to the Dutch. And, as we have noted in Chapter 3, the contracts that the VOC entered with weavers in villages of the Kaveri delta in the 1660s similarly prohibited weavers from weaving cloth for any other merchant and if they produced cloth for other merchants it would be forfeited by the VOC. This was mainly a reflection of the strong position of weavers who could always respond to other buyers if offered better pay; migration of weaving groups could also help ensure buoyancy and

[1] Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy*: 22, 26, 28–30.

strength of the textile industry, especially in times of war, as Chapter 5 points out with regard to the Kaveri delta in the 1690s.

Around 1800, Prasannan Parthasarathi argues, cotton cultivation in South India was largely concentrated in the interior, but the major weaving centres were located at the coast. The cotton trade went from its production centres in the Deccan to the weaving centres along the coastline of the Godavari and Krishna river deltas (Andhra Pradesh) and in the northern Tamil country. Cotton was carried by *banjaras* from its growing regions in the west of the Deccan to the Andhra Coast. Trade routes of cotton extended southwards from the Maratha country north of the Krishna and from the Raichur region through Mysore and Bellary (modern–day Karnataka) to Nellore (at the border between Andhra and Tamil country, produced textiles for South–East Asian markets, Chapter 2) and Walajapet, a major cotton market in central Coromandel. However, the southward trade from the Deccan to the northern Tamil country was bigger than its Andhra counterpart, as is evidenced by the forms of trade: it was not organised or financed by *banjaras*, but by large–scale merchants who resided in the Deccan. Further south from Madras and the Kaveri delta were the main centres of cotton cultivation in the Tamil country: Coimbatore (to the north–west of the Kaveri delta), Madurai, Ramnad, Dindigul and Tirunelveli. The last three of these centres supplied the south–eastern coast. Merchants from Tanjore annually bought cotton from here and transported it to Nagore.[2] From this information we can conclude that: one, the major connecting links of the textile industry in Coromandel had survived the wars and political reshuffling of the eighteenth century, partly because best quality cotton that was used for weaving textiles for export only grew in specific areas; two, the density of weaving settlements was greatest in the Tamil country; and three, the port–cities in this area had fared better than their counterparts in the north.

The port–hinterland connections that Prasannan Parthasarathi's work demonstrates for the late eighteenth century are also very much in evidence here with respect to the seventeenth century. This dissertation has examined the links connecting the cotton–producing region in the west of the Deccan, the weaving centres in the Godavari delta and export of textiles from Masulipatnam; and the links connecting Mysore plateau, Tirunelveli, the Kaveri delta and exports from Nagapatnam. Finally, we noted the shift towards southern Coromandel in the aftermath of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns: Chapter 5 shows the presence of weavers in southern Coromandel who had migrated from the north and had been integrated in the weaving population of the villages in the Kaveri delta. Although there is a gap of about a century in the temporal points of evidence provided by this dissertation and Parthasarathi's work, it could reasonably be asserted that Prasannan Parthasarathi's conclusions about the textile industry in late eighteenth–century South India resonate at least in part with the conclusions of this dissertation with respect to the economy of Coromandel

[2] Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy*: 67–71.

in the late–seventeenth and early–eighteenth century, in the aftermath of Aurangzeb's campaigns. In this context, we mainly allude to the shift towards southern Coromandel.

Clearly, then, Aurangzeb's southern campaigns ushered in a moment of transformation. They caused significant shifts in Coromandel's economy and were marked by a waning of Mughal authority in the province of Golconda. This was primarily a case of poor management of the region after 1700, because in the 1690s Mughal administration had been successful in restoring agricultural production in Telangana and working the salt mines near Masulipatnam. In their assessments of the impact of the siege of Gingee in central and southern Coromandel, the VOC contrasted this period of temporary peace and stability in northern Coromandel with the disturbances in central Coromandel. But after 1700, Mughal authority in Golconda went into a sharp decline that was accompanied by the enervation of Masulipatnam's overland axis. The decline of public order was reflected in the failure of Mughals to counter Maratha raids on Hyderabad and success of bandits in obstructing highways. The VOC alluded to this poor management of the region by the Mughals when they lamented that Aurangzeb's energies were focused on conquering the Marathas instead of consolidating Golconda.

The keenness of the Mughals to reinstate the European companies in Coromandel was an expression of their intention of promoting maritime trade from the coastal outlets controlled by these companies. Their strategy sought to stabilize the regional economies that fed these ports, helping them to recover from the impact of the campaigns and provide the Mughals with military provisions and financial resources to compensate for the costs of war. Most importantly, the impact of military campaigns was heterogeneous across Coromandel. While northern Coromandel saw the weakening of Masulipatnam as a premier regional entrepot, the wars were less devastating in southern Coromandel because of greater food security, which attracted merchants and weavers to settle there and contribute to the emergence of ports in this part of the Coromandel. In 1712 or thereabouts, the VOC in Nagapatnam concluded that political instability had not affected southern Coromandel as badly as it had affected northern Coromandel.

The years following Aurangzeb's death and the coronation of Bahadur Shah I as the new Mughal emperor (1707–1713) witnessed a debilitation of Mughal authority in the Deccan. The governor of Hyderabad gradually became increasingly independent of Mughal control and the Marathas, too, grew in strength. The introductory chapter points to the growing consensus that, rather than decline, eighteenth–century India witnessed impressive economic growth and strong regional states.[3] In the Deccan and South India, the 1720s were the early years of a definitive Maratha expansion under Baji Rao I and consolidation of power by Nizam–ul–Mulk Asaf Jah in Hyderabad. By the second half of the eighteenth century,

[3] Seema Alavi, 'Introduction', in: *The Eighteenth Century in India,* ed. Seema Alavi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002): 1–56.

western and eastern Deccan had come to be divided between the Marathas and the state of Hyderabad, ruled by the Asaf Jahis. Down south, the state of Arcot allied itself with the EIC and emerged as a strong player in regional politics; Mysore started its own impressive expansion in the 1760s. In this respect, we may reiterate a point mentioned in Chapter 4 about the long–term aftermath of Aurangzeb's military campaigns in northern Coromandel: only a comparative analysis of the relationship between warfare and economy with regard to the Maratha state and Asaf Jahi Hyderabad in the eighteenth century can help us understand to what extent there was a shift of economic gravity from the east of the Deccan to the west.

This dissertation has opened a research agenda for studying the relationship between warfare and economy in early–modern South Asia in the context of the expansion of the Mughal Empire in South India in the late seventeenth century. It has also demonstrated the potential of using the archives of the VOC in researching the relationship between warfare and the economy of South Asia. Further research to understand this relationship in the context of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns should focus on financial credit as a crucial component of military logistics and an integral element of warfare in South Asia. Constraints of time did not allow this dissertation to study the issue of credit at length. On this matter, Karen Leonard has pointed out the shift in the eighteenth century of the weight of the great banking firms from the Mughals to other powers such as the Marathas, the Nizams of Hyderabad and the EIC. Aurangzeb's failure to protect Surat's banking firms against repeated Maratha raids in the 1660s prompted the beginnings of this move, and around 1702 bankers refused Aurangzeb's request for interest–free loans to pay arrears for his troops in the Deccan. Wars also offered the bankers opportunities to expand their investments.[4] Researching the factor of credit and its role in Aurangzeb's southern campaigns would help nuance this study of the economic impact of Mughal wars in Coromandel.

[4] Leonard, 'The "Great Firm" Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire': 159–161.

Appendix 1

The reader should bear in mind that the VOC's annual commercial figures do not provide us with a complete picture of VOC commerce in Asia: they only indicate the condition of commerce in particular regions of Asia. The bookkeeping system used by the VOC in Batavia gives only figures that are compilations of results from multiple factories in Asia. One weakness of this method was that the VOC's exports from Asia were solely accounted for against their respective purchase prices (which were low in Asia) and did not represent their market value in Europe. For instance, while the VOC in Ceylon often appeared to be running a deficit, its chief export from the island – cinnamon – could be sold at huge profit in Europe or elsewhere in Asia.[1]

The financial results of the VOC's trade in Asia were compiled and collated at the office of the bookkeeper–general in Batavia. This bookkeeping system was instituted in 1613 and remained unchanged since then. The system could be described as a form of factory bookkeeping, wherein Batavia worked as a factory of the company in the Netherlands and was responsible for the goods and money that were received. Similarly, the subaltern VOC factories in Asia were answerable to the headquarters in Batavia. Goods were exchanged between Batavia and the Netherlands against their cost price; the same system of evaluation was followed for Batavia and the subaltern factories in Asia. As a result, the profit and loss statements of individual factories (or regions) do not reveal much (because the profits in Europe are not covered).[2] Despite such flaws, the table below offers an insight into how the VOC fared in Coromandel from the 1620s to the 1710s.

Like Table 4.5 in Chapter 4 that provides a list of textiles exported annually from Coromandel, the figures in the appendix below do not enable a differentiation between profits from different parts of Coromandel. If we look the performance of the VOC in Coromandel in the late seventeenth century, we find that 1679-1685 and 1689-1691 were very good years for the Dutch when they earned profits over 1 million Dutch guilders and this mark was never crossed again until 1713, when our analysis of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 ends. In general, profits in Coromandel ranged between 200000 Dutch guilders and 600000 Dutch guilders during the 1690s and 1700s. The VOC incurred losses on three occasions, 1686–1687, 1703–1704 and 1705–1706, when expenditure was more than gross profit.

On the basis of the analysis done in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, we may guess the probable causes that might have led to losses on these three occasions. Firstly, 1685–1687 was marked by serious turmoil in northern Coromandel. Rains had failed in 1685, a devastating famine followed in 1686 and Golconda was besieged and conquered in 1687– the region had been depopulated by wars and big merchants had migrated from Masulipatnam.

[1] For an explanatory note on the annual financial results of the VOC in Asia and Coromandel, see Winius and Vink, *The Merchant–Warrior Pacified*: 151–155.

[2] For more details on the VOC's bookkeeping system in Batavia, see Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC*: 134

Secondly, as we had noted in Table 4.4 in Chapter 4, the VOC ran into losses while selling import goods in Masulipatnam in 1702. Sales were difficult because of unsafe highways. Until 1704, only one caravan made its way from Surat to Hyderabad as the highways had been closed off by Maratha attacks and bandits, especially Riza Khan who had blocked the road between Golconda and Masulipatnam, and Pappadu who had done the same to a feeder of this regional economy towards Warangal. Besides there was famine in Maharashtra about the same time while Aurangzeb had been besieging Maratha forts. All this would have increased the costs of the trade in cotton from Maharashtra to the Godavari delta and the northern Tamil country. In turn this would have made weavers bargain for higher wages and pushed up textile prices.

Nonetheless, as we had concluded in Chapter 4 and in the overall, it is extremely difficult to speak of the region as a whole, except perhaps the rise in prices of textiles– a fact bemoaned repeatedly by the VOC. In the early eighteenth century northern Coromandel accounted for a lesser share of the total number of packs of textiles exported from Coromandel and the major area of procurement had shifted to southern Coromandel, where even during 1703–1704 and 1705–1706 (years of losses) textile production had not been affected as severely as it had been in northern Coromandel. Two reasons for this, as we had noted in Chapter 5, were the good rice harvests of the Kaveri delta which ensured food security despite poor monsoon in southern Coromandel (1705 and 1708) and the location of sources of raw material for the textile industry, i.e., cotton, in the Tirunelveli region which was beyond the radius of Mughal campaigns.

Annual financial results of the VOC in Coromandel, 1626–1713 (in Dutch guilders)[3]

Year	Gross profit	Expenditure	Net Profit	Net Loss
1626–1627	80,000	50,000	30,000	Not applicable
1627–1628	156,135	60,995	95,140	Not applicable
1628–1629	132,804	60,438	72,366	Not applicable
1629–1630	150,943	62,478	88,465	Not applicable
1630–1631	178,902	87,603	91,299	Not applicable

[3] For the annual financial results of the VOC in Coromandel see Winius and Vink, *The Merchant–Warrior Pacified*: 177–180.

1631–1632	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not applicable
1632–1633	142,000	Not available	Not available	Not applicable
1633–1634	121,898	58,634	63,264	Not applicable
1634–1635	Not available	Not available	154,734	Not applicable
1635–1636	330,839	78,839	252,000	Not applicable
1636–1637	462,627	85,394	377,233	Not applicable
1637–1638	285,000	87,927	197,073	Not applicable
1638–1639	147,227	71,918	75,309	Not applicable
1639–1640	304,838	178,148	126,697	Not applicable
1640–1641	Not available	Not available	185,913	Not applicable
1641–1642	272,660	83,183	189,477	Not applicable
1642–1643	217,941	97,872	120,069	Not applicable
1643–1644	219,104	99,025	120,079	Not applicable
1644–1645	186,885	114,872	72,013	Not applicable
1645–1646	195,168	146,012	49,156	Not applicable
1646-1647	151,767	125,647	26,120	Not applicable
1647–1648	58,417	126,400	Not applicable	-67,983
1648–1649	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
1649–1650	302,049	284,261	17,788	Not applicable
1650–1651	230,830	138,465	92,365	Not applicable
1651–1652	113,147	237,269	Not applicable	-124,122
1652–1653	223,799	190,907	32,892	Not applicable
1653–1654	138,833	226,023	Not applicable	-87,190

1654–1655	396,681	243,279	153,402	Not applicable
1655–1656	267,514	222,555	44,959	Not applicable
1656–1657	177,651	195,920	Not applicable	-18,269
1657–1658	344,203	215,764	128,439	Not applicable
1658–1659	395,314	198,400	196,914	Not applicable
1659–1660	389,299	216,840	172,459	Not applicable
1660–1661	209,658	169,233	40,425	Not applicable
1661–1662	193,459	231,680	Not applicable	-38,221
1662–1663	359,191	262,742	96,449	Not applicable
1663–1664	428,010	231,041	196,969	Not applicable
1664–1665	794,473	206,005	588,468	Not applicable
1665–1666	672,757	283,893	388,864	Not applicable
1666–1667	899,448	229,571	669,877	Not applicable
1667–1668	1,015,090	226,855	788,235	Not applicable
1668–1669	1,289,919	230,757	1,059,162	Not applicable
1669–1670	963,296	245,375	717,921	Not applicable
1670–1671	788,807	228,278	560,529	Not applicable
1671–1672	830,902	250,190	580,712	Not applicable
1672–1673	260,885	314,467	Not applicable	-53,582
1673–1674	486,992	341,058	145,934	Not applicable
1674–1675	437,746	451,056	Not applicable	-13,310
1675–1676	448,940	275,758	173,182	Not applicable
1676–1677	503,164	249,622	253,542	Not applicable
1677–1678	635,331	265,143	370,188	Not applicable
1678–1679	886,844	210,987	675,857	Not applicable
1679–1680	1,001,317	185,066	816,251	Not applicable

1680–1681	1,251,143	196,921	1,054,222	Not applicable
1681–1682	875,737	238,362	637,375	Not applicable
1682–1683	1,273,956	247,132	1,026,824	Not applicable
1683–1684	1,520,667	245,365	1,275,302	Not applicable
1684–1685	1,493,193	248,466	1,244,727	Not applicable
1685–1686	724,937	279,319	445,618	Not applicable
1686–1687	349,044	367,933	Not applicable	-18,889
1687–1688	667,037	350,872	316,165	Not applicable
1688–1689	1,089,769	348,126	741,643	Not applicable
1689–1690	1,056,547	406,380	650,167	Not applicable
1690–1691	1,097,916	376,332	721,584	Not applicable
1691–1692	662,240	409,522	252,718	Not applicable
1692–1693	688,923	396,956	291,967	Not applicable
1693–1694	497,947	183,854	314,093	Not applicable
1694–1695	996,611	729,985	266,626	Not applicable
1695–1696	637,306	493,584	143,722	Not applicable
1696–1697	512,334	421,025	91,309	Not applicable
1697–1698	505,040	347,876	157,164	Not applicable
1698–1699	407,960	345,349	62,611	Not applicable
1699–1700	391,348	279,824	111,524	Not applicable
1700–1701	571,585	239,019	332,566	Not applicable
1701–1702	352,313	298,006	54,307	Not applicable
1702–1703	419,852	316,856	102,996	Not applicable
1703–1704	222,799	309,789	Not applicable	-86,990
1704–1705	389,453	339,344	50,109	Not applicable
1705–1706	333,920	375,359	Not applicable	-41,439

1706–1707	409,321	338,412	70,909	Not applicable
1707–1708	459,873	328,789	131,084	Not applicable
1708–1709	569,709	341,430	228,279	Not applicable
1709–1710	353,051	336,467	16,584	Not applicable
1710–1711	380,538	349,776	30,762	Not applicable
1711–1712	396,086	330,176	65,910	Not applicable
1712–1713	528,353	312,846	215,507	Not applicable

Samenvatting

De politieke en economische cohesie van vroegmoderne Aziatische imperia in Azië was voor een belangrijk deel afhankelijk van de relatie tussen kust en binnenland. In dit proefschrift wordt die relatie onderzocht aan de hand van de interdependentie tussen oorlogvoering en economie in vroegmodern Zuid-Azië. De studie spitst zich daarbij toe op de economische gevolgen van de grootschalige militaire campagnes (1682-1707) van keizer Aurangzeb (1658-1707), de laatste van de zogenaamde Groot Mogols, voor de Coromandelkust; dit was in die tijd de belangrijkste textiel-producerende en textiel-exporterende regio in het Indische Oceaan gebied. Met haar vele handelsposten tussen Kaapstad in het uiterste westen en Nagasaki in het uiterste oosten was de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) tijdens de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw een belangrijke speler in de mondiale handel met deze regio.

Beginnend vanaf de vroege zeventiende eeuw, verliep de Mughal verovering van de Deccan in verschillende fases. In de jaren dertig van de zeventiende eeuw, tijdens de regering van Shah Jahan (1627-1657), werden de sultanaten van Bijapur en Golconda reeds schatplichtig gemaakt. Aurangzebs zuidelijke campagnes kunnen worden beschouwd als de laatste poging van de Mughals om de zuidelijke grens van het rijk op orde te brengen. In de laat-zeventiende eeuw vormden Bijapur, Golconda en de opkomende macht van de Maratha's de belangrijkste politieke oppositie tegen de legers van de Mughals. Aurangzeb veroverde weliswaar Bijapur en Golconda, maar de oorlog tegen de Maratha's duurde voort tot aan zijn dood in 1707. Terugblikkend heeft het er alle schijn van dat Aurangzeb deze sultanaten – en dan vooral Golconda – wilde veroveren met het oog op de toegang die dit hem zou opleveren tot de havenplaats Masulipatnam, en daarmee tot de lucratieve belasting- en handelsinkomsten van de Cormomandelkust. Alhoewel de VOC delen van Indonesische Archipel had veroverd om daarmee controle over de productie van fijne specerijen te verkrijgen, was haar positie in India (met uitzondering van Malabar) van een geheel andere aard. Door de overmacht van de lokale rijken speelde de VOC hier een betrekkelijk marginale, passieve rol als handelaar. Met handelskantoren langs de gehele oostelijke kustlijn van het Indiase subcontinent, was de VOC er aanvankelijk vooral op gebrand om de hoogwaardige lokale textielproducten in te zetten voor de verwerving van Indonesische specerijen, maar gedurende de zeventiende eeuw ook steeds meer voor de directe export naar Europa. Behalve uit handelaren, bestond de Compagnie uit ijverige boekhouders en rapporteurs met een scherp oog voor de mogelijke economische consequenties van Aurangzebs militaire campagnes. Het VOC archief biedt daarmee een prachtig venster op de politieke, economische en militaire ontwikkelingen in dit gebied en daarmee is het tevens de belangrijkste bron voor de onderhavige studie.

De zuidelijke campagnes van Aurangzeb zijn een relatief onderbelicht thema in de geschiedschrijving van Zuid Azië. Eerdere historici hebben dit thema weliswaar onderzocht, maar tot op heden is er geen systematisch onderzoek naar de economische gevolgen van deze campagnes gedaan. Mijn proefschrift probeert in deze leemte te voorzien. In mijn benadering ligt daarbij niet de nadruk op het verval van het Mughalrijk, maar zoek ik

aansluiting bij de revisionistische geschiedschrijving die zich juist richt op het achttiende-eeuwse proces van regionale centralisatie. De studie benadrukt bovendien het heterogene karakter van de economie van Noord- en Zuid-Coromandel om daarmee een beter zicht op het verschil in impact op de verschillende regio's te krijgen. Met dat doel voor ogen, worden systematisch drie haven-achterland complexen bestudeerd en wordt steeds een vergelijking gemaakt tussen de lange-termijn situatie voorafgaand aan de Mughal campagnes en de situatie tijdens en direct na die campagnes. De analyse spitst zich daarbij zo veel mogelijk toe op de veranderingen langs een uitgestrekt netwerk van handelswegen, zowel van noord naar zuid als van oost naar west, die vraag en aanbod in deze regio met elkaar verbonden. Daaruit blijkt dat oorlogvoering niet zonder meer met economisch verval in verband kan worden gebracht. De meeste inheemse handelaren bleken goed te kunnen overleven en enkelen profiteerden zelfs van de nieuwe handelsvooruitzichten die voortkwamen uit de aanwezigheid van het enorme Mughal legerkamp-*cum*-hof. Naarmate zijn legers verder naar het zuiden optrokken, was Aurangzeb er alleen al om logistiek-militaire redenen alles aan gelegen om het binnenland met de kust te verbinden. Ook de voorwaarden die hij de VOC en andere Europese compagnieën oplegde voor het behoud van hun positie, bevestigen het beeld dat hij ook op de lange termijn de stabiliteit van de veroverde gebieden wilde continueren. Ook zijn veldheren zoals Daud Khan Panni hadden hetzelfde doel voor ogen toen zij aan het begin van de achttiende eeuw probeerden bepaalde havens aan de Europese compagnieën te verpachten.

Kijkend naar de kust-binnenland relatie, waren de lange-termijn consequenties van de campagnes het grootst voor Masulipatnam. Vooral na 1700 verloor de stad haar positie als supra-regionaal handelsemporium in de Golf van Bengalen en opereerde ook de textielnijverheid op een kleinere schaal dan voorheen. Dit komt ook tot uiting in de verslaglegging van de VOC: in plaats van de eindeloze campagnes in de westelijke Deccan tegen de Maratha's, had Aurangzeb zich veel beter kunnen toeleggen op de consolidatie van de Golconda-Masulipatnam regio. Ten zuiden van dit gebied, in centraal Coromandel, verwoestte de lange belegering van Gingee het achterland van de havenplaats Pulicat. In de jaren negentig van de zeventiende eeuw, ondervond deze havenplaats dan ook serieuze problemen met de export van regionale textiel. Verder zuidwaarts, dreef ook Nagapatnam op de textiel-relatie tussen kust en binnenland, maar was er bovendien sprake van een directe handelsrelatie met Malabar via het binnenland. Al deze zuidelijke relaties werden niet of nauwelijks door de militaire campagnes beïnvloed. Kijkend naar de noord-zuid verbindingen valt op dat ook de kusthandel van Orissa tot Ceylon relatief immuun bleef voor het oorlogsgeweld. Deze kusthandel kon daarmee een belangrijke rol spelen in de bevoorrading van de steeds verder zuidwaarts marcherende Mughal legers. Wat de textiel betreft probeerde de VOC zowel in het noorden als in het zuiden meer vat op de productie te krijgen door bepaalde weversdorpen te pachten. Ook hier zien we echter dat de Compagnie steeds meer prioriteit legde op het zuiden en juist daar meer ging investeren in de ontwikkeling van nieuwe markten. Deze inspanningen hadden slechts beperkt succes. Dit laat wederom zien

hoe de impact van de militaire campagnes per regio verschilde. Al met al kunnen we concluderen dat Aurangzebs militaire campagne naar het zuiden niet een algemeen verval, maar wel een diepgaande transformatie van de Coromandelse economie heeft veroorzaakt. Dit komt vooral tot uiting in de terugval van Masulipatnam van supra-regionaal entrepot in de Golf van Bengalen naar een van de vele lokale havenplaatsen die vooral de kusthandel tussen Bengalen en Coromandel bediende. Mede geholpen door de overvloedige rijstbouw, bleef het uiterste zuiden relatief immuun voor de Mughal oorlogsverwoestingen en wist dit gebied, juist in deze periode, zelfs nieuwe groepen handelaren en wevers aan te trekken. Het grootste gevolg van de zuidelijke campagnes van Aurangzeb was daarmee de relatieve opgang van de havensteden in het uiterste zuiden van de Coromandelkust.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Archival sources

NA Hoge Regering Batavia 341

NA Stadhouderlijke Secretarie 1607

NA VOC 1059, 1087, 1109, 1161, 1242, 1254, 1302, 1343, 1348, 1349, 1378, 1398, 1411, 1423, 1429, 1450, 1454, 1463, 1473, 1477, 1499, 1508, 1510, 1511, 1518, 1526, 1537, 1546, 1570, 1581, 1596, 1610, 1617, 1624, 1638, 1649, 1678, 1761, 1796, 1855, 5029, 7525, 8313, 8373, 8686, 8808, 8809, 8810, 8811, 8812, 8819, 8820, 8821, 8822, 8823, 8824, 8825, 8826, 8827, 8828, 8829, 8444

Published sources

1916. *Diary and Consultation Book of 1689. Records of Fort St. George, vol. 15*. Madras: Superintendent Government Press

1917. *Diary and Consultation Book of 1692*. *Records of Fort St. George*, *vol. 18*. Madras: Superintendent Government Press

Baldaeus, Philippus. 1672. *Nauwkeurige beschryving van Malabar en Choromandel*. Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waasberge en Johannes van Someren

Ball, Valentine translated and William Crooke ed. 1925. *Travels in India By Jean–Baptiste Tavernier, vol. 1*. Second Edition. London: Humphrey Milford

Barbosa, Duarte. 1921. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: An account of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean and their inhabitants, written by Duarte Barbosa, and completed about the year 1518 A.D., vol. II* translated by Mansel Longworth Dames. London: Hakluyt Society

Breet, Michael and Marijke Barend-van Haeften. 2003. *De Oost–Indische voyagie van Wouter Schouten*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers

Chijs, J.A. van der ed. 1887. *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts–India Anno 1640–41*. Batavia and The Hague: Landsdrukkerij and Martinus Nijhoff

_____ ed. 1891. *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts-India Anno 1663*. Batavia and The Hague: Landsdrukkerij and Martinus Nijhoff

Colenbrander, H.T. ed. 1898. *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts–India Anno 1631–34*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

Coolhaas, W. Ph. 1971. *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs–Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, deel IV 1675–1685*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

Cortesáo, Armando ed. 1967. *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512–1515*. Reprint Edition. Mendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus

Das. Harihar. 1959. *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzib*. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay

Dowson, John ed. 1960. *Muntakhabu–l Lubab of Muhammad Hashim Khafi Khan*. *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period*. Third edition. Calcutta: Susil Gupta (India) Private Limited

Havart, Daniel. 1693. *Op–en ondergangh van Cormandel*. 3 vols. Amsterdam: Jan Ten Hoorn

Heeres, J.E. ed. 1896. *Dagh–Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts–India Anno 1624–1629*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

_____. ed. 1907. *Corpus–Diplomaticum Neerlando–Indicum Verzameling van Politieke contracten en verdere Verdragen door de Nederlanders in het Oosten gesloten, van Privilegiebrieven, aan het verleend, enz., Eerste Deel (1596–1650)*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

Jones, John Winter translated. 1909. *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India, and Ethiopia*. London: Hakluyt Society

Latham, Ronald translated. 1978. *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Middlesex: Penguin Books Reprint edition

Major, R. H. ed. 1974. *India in the Fifteenth Century being a collection of narratives of voyages to India*. Delhi: Deep Publications

Phillpotts, Dame Bertha translated. 1932. *The Life of the Icelander Jón Olafsson Traveller to India: Written by Himself and completed about 1661 A.D. with a continuation, by another hand, up to his death in 1679. Volume two: Life and Travels: Denmark, England, the Cape, Madagascar, Comoro Is., Coromandel Coast, Tranquebar, St. Helena, Ascension Is., Ireland, Iceland 1618-1679*. London: Hakluyt Society

Prakash, Om. 1984. *The Dutch Factories in India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers

Sarkar, Jadunath translated. 1972. *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha (Memoirs of Bhimsen Relating to Aurangzeb's Campaigns): Sir Jadunath Sarkar Birth Centenary Commemoration Volume with an Introduction by V.G. Khobrekar*. Bombay: Department of Archives, Maharashtra

_____. 1990. Reprint edition. *Maasir–i–Alamgiri: A History of the Emperor Aurangzib Alamgir (reign 1658–1707) of Saqi Mustaid Khan*. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society

Varadarajan, Lotika translated and annotated. 1981. *India in the 17th Century: Social, Economic and Political (Memoirs of Francois Martin) 1670–1674, Volume I, Part 1*. New Delhi: Manohar

_____. 1985. *India in the 17th Century: Social, Economic and Political (Memoirs of Francois Martin) 1688-1694, Volume II, Part II*. New Delhi: Manohar

Temple, Richard Carnac ed. 1911. *The Diaries of Streynsham Master 1675–1680*, vol. II London: John Murray

2000. *VOC–Glossarium: Verklaringen van termen, verzameld uit de rijks geschiedkundige publicatiën die betrekking hebben op de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*. The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis

Secondary sources

Alam, Muzaffar and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. 2004. 'The Deccan Frontier and Mughal Expansion, ca. 1600: Contemporary Perspectives', *JESHO* 47, 3: 357–389

Alavi, Seema ed. 2002. *The Eighteenth Century in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

_____. 2002. 'Introduction', in: *The Eighteenth Century in India,* ed. Seema Alavi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press): 1–56

Andrade, Tonio. 2010. 'Beyond Guns, Germs, and Steel: European Expansion and Maritime Asia, 1400–1750', *Journal of Early Modern History* 14: 165–186

Arasaratnam, Sinnappah. 1986. *Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1650–1740*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

_____. 1987. 'Ceylon in the Indian Ocean Trade: 1500–1800', in: *India and the Indian Ocean 1500–1800,* eds Ashin Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson (Calcutta: Oxford University Press): 224–239

_____. 1988. 'The Rice Trade in Eastern India 1650–1740', *Modern Asian Studies* 22, 3: 531–549

_____ and Aniruddha Ray. 1994. *Masulipatnam and Cambay: A History of Two Port–Towns 1500–1800*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers

Asher, Catherine B. and Cynthia Talbot. 2006. *India Before Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Banga, Indu ed. 1992. *Ports and Their Hinterlands in India (1700–1950)*. New Delhi: Manohar

Bayly, C. A. 1983. *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British expansion, 1770–1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bayly, Susan. 1989. *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bendre, V. C. ed. *Gowalkondyachi Qutb Shahi*. Pune: Bharat Sanshodhak Mandal

Brennig, Joseph Jerome. 1975. 'The Textile Trade of Seventeenth–Century Northern Coromandel: A Study of a Pre–Modern Asian Export Industry'. University of Wisconsin–Madison: Unpublished PhD thesis

Casale, Giancarlo. 2010. *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Chakrabarti, Dilip K. 2010. *The Ancient Routes of the Deccan and the Southern Peninsula.* New Delhi: Aryan Books International

Chaudhuri, K. N. 1985. *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Das Gupta, Ashin. 1979. *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat c. 1700–1750*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner

_____ and M. N. Pearson, eds 1987. *India and the Indian Ocean 1500–1800*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press

Deloche, Jean. 1993. *Transport and Communications in India Prior to Steam Locomotion, vol. 1, Land Transport*. Delhi: Oxford University Press

_____. 1994. *Transport and Communications in India Prior to Steam Locomotion, vol. 2, Water Transport*. Delhi: Oxford University Press

Dey, Nundo Lal. 2005. Reprint Edition.*The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*. New Delhi: Low Price Publications.

Eaton, Richard Maxwell. 1978. *Sufis of Bijapur 1300–1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

_____. 2005. *The New Cambridge History of India, I.8: A Social History of the Deccan, 1300–1761: Eight Indian Lives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Elphinstone, Mountstuart. 1857. *The History of India: The Hindu and Mahometan Periods*. London: John Murray

Frykenberg, Robert Eric ed. 1969. *Land Control and Social Structuring in Indian History*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press

Gaastra, Femme S. 2012. Elfde druk. *Geschiedenis van de VOC: Opkomst, bloei en ondergang*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers

Gommans, Jos, Lennart Bes and Gijs Kruijtzer. 2001. *Dutch Sources on South Asia c. 1600–1825: Bibliography and Archival Guide to the National Archives at The Hague (The Netherlands)*. New Delhi: Manohar

_____. 2002. *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and High Roads to Empire, 1500–1700*. London: Routledge

_____, Jeroen Bos and Gijs Kruijtzer, eds 2010. *Voor–Indie, Perzie, Arabisch Schiereiland. Grote atlas van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie VI*. Voorburg: Asia Maior

_____ en Piet Emmer. 2012. *Rijk aan de rand van de wereld: De geschiedenis van Nederland overzee 1600–1800*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker

_____. 2015. 'Continuity and change in the Indian Ocean basin', in: *The Construction of a Global World, 1400–1800 CE, Part 1: Foundations*. *The Cambridge World History, Vol. 6*, eds Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Jerry H. Bentley and Merry Wiesner–Hanks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 182–209

Gordon, Stewart. 1988. 'Burhanpur: Entrepot and Hinterland, 1650–1750', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 25, 4: 425–442

_____. 1993. *The New Cambridge History of India, II.4: The Marathas 1600–1818*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Habib, Irfan. 1982. *An Atlas of The Mughal Empire: Political and Economic maps with Detailed Notes, Bibliography and Index*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

_____. 1999. Second, revised edition. *The Agrarian System of Mughal India 1556–1707*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Habib, Mohammad and K. A. Nizami, eds 1970. *A Comprehensive History of India. Volume Five: The Delhi Sultanate (A. D. 1206–1526)*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House

Hall, Kenneth R. ed. 2008. *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1400–1800*. Lanham: Lexington Books

Heitzman, James. 2008. 'Secondary Cities and Spatial Templates in South India, 1300–1800' in: *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean realm, c. 1400–1800*, ed. Kenneth R. Hall (Lanham: Lexington Books): 303–334

Jacobs, Els M. 2006. *Merchant in Asia: The Trade of the Dutch East India Company in the Eighteenth Century*. Leiden: CNWS Publications

Joshi, P.M., ed. 1975. *Studies in the Foreign Relations of India (From the earliest times to 1947)*. Hyderabad: Government of Andhra Pradesh

Karashima, Noboru. 1992. *Towards a New Formation: South Indian Society under Vijayanagar Rule*. Delhi: Oxford University Press

Kidwai, Atiya Habeeb. 1992. 'Conceptual and Methodological Issues: Ports, Port Cities and Port-Hinterlands', in: *Ports and Their Hinterlands in India (1700–1950)*, ed. Indu Banga (New Delhi: Manohar): 8–43

Kruijtzer, Gijs. 2009. *Xenophobia in Seventeenth–Century India*. Leiden: Leiden University Press

Kulke, Hermann, K. Kesavapanny and Vijay Sakhuja, eds 2009. *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

_____. 2009. 'The Naval Expeditions of the Cholas in the Context of Asian History', in: *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*, eds Hermann Kulke, K. Kesavapanny and Vijay Sakhuja (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies): 1–19

Lane–Poole, Stanley. 1893. *Aurangzib*. Oxford: Clarendon Press

Leonard, Karen. 1979. 'The 'Great Firm' Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, 2: 151–167

Ludden, David. 1985. *Peasant History in South India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

_____. 1999. *The New Cambridge History of India. IV.4*: *An Agrarian History of South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Matthee, Rudolph P. 1999. *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Moreland, W.H. 1923. 'Dutch Sources for Indian History: 1590 to 1650', *Journal of Indian History* vol. 2, 2: 222–232

Mukund, Kanaklatha. 1999. *The Trading World of the Tamil Merchant: Evolution of merchant capitalism in the Coromandel*. Chennai: Orient Longman

Palat, Ravi. 2015. *The Making of an Indian Ocean World–Economy, 1250–1550: Princes, Paddy fields, and Bazaars*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Parker, Geoffrey and Lesley M. Smith. 1997. 'Introduction' in: *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, eds Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith. London and New York: Routledge: 1–31

Parker, Geoffrey and Lesley M. Smith, eds 1997. *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*. London and New York: Routledge

_____. 2013. *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Parrott, David. 2012. *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Parthasarathi, Prasannan. 2001. *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants and Kings in South India 1720–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Prakash, Om. 1981–1982. 'Dutch Source Material on Indian Maritime History in the Early Modern Period – An Evaluation', *Indian Historical Review* 8, 1–2: 35–43

_____. 2008. *The New Cambridge History of India, II.5*: *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre–Colonial India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Prange, Sebastian. 2011. 'Measuring by the Bushel': Reweighing the Indian Ocean Pepper Trade', *Historical Research* 84, 224: 212–235

Ramaswamy, Vijaya. 1985. *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press

Rao, Velcheru Narayan, David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. 1992. *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nayaka Period Tamilnadu*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Raychaudhuri, Tapan. 1962. *Jan Company in Coromandel 1605–1690: A study in the Interrelations of European Commerce and Traditional Economies*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

Richards, John F. 1975. 'European City–States on the Coromandel Coast', in: *Studies in the Foreign Relations of India (From the earliest times to 1947)*, ed. P.M. Joshi. Hyderabad: Government of Andhra Pradesh: 508–521

_____. 1975. *Mughal Administration in Golconda*. Oxford: Clarendon Press

_____. 1990. 'The Seventeenth–Century Crisis in South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies* 24, 4: 625–638

_____. 1995. Reprint Edition. *The New Cambridge History of India, I.5*: *The Mughal Empire.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Saksena, Banarsi Prasad. 1970. 'Alauddin Khalji' in: *A Comprehensive History of India. Volume Five: The Delhi Sultanate (A. D. 1206–1526)*, eds Mohammad Habib and K. A. Nizami (New Delhi: People's Publishing House): Chapter 4, 326–427

Sarkar, Jadunath. 1952. *History of Aurangzib, Vol. V*. Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar& Sons Ltd.

Sastri, K. A. Nilakanta. 1975. *A History of South India: from Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijaynagar*. Madras: Oxford University Press Fourth Edition

Sen, Tansen. 2003. *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino–Indian Relations, 600–1400*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press

_____. 2009. 'The Military Campaigns of Rajendra Chola and the Chola–Srivijaya–China Triangle' in: *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*, eds Hermann Kulke, K. Kesavapanny and Vijay Sakhuja (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies): 61–75

Seshadri, Gokul. 2009. 'New Perspectives on Nagapattinam: The Medieval Port City in the context of Political, Religious, and Commercial Exchanges between South India, Southeast Asia, and China' in: *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*, eds Hermann Kulke, K. Kesavapanny and Vijay Sakhuja (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies): 102–134

Sewell, Robert. 1972. *A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar)* Shannon: Irish University Press, Reprint edition

Sherwani, H. K. 1974. *History of the Qutb Shahi dynasty*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers

Sinopoli, Carla M. 2003. *The Political Economy of Craft Production: Crafting Empire in South India, c. 1350–1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Spate, O.H.K. and A.T.A. Learmonth. 1984. First Indian Edition. *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers

Stein, Burton. 1969. 'Integration of the Agrarian System of South India' in: *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History,* ed. Robert Eric Frykenberg (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press): 175–216

Stephen, S. Jeyaseela. 1997. *The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland: Economy, Society and Political System (A.D. 1500–1600)*. New Delhi: Manohar

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay and Chris Bayly. 1988. 'Portfolio Capitalists and the Political Economy of Early Modern India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 25, 4: 401–424

_____. 1990. 'Rural Industry and Commercial Agriculture in Late Seventeenth–Century South–Eastern India', *Past and Present* 126: 76-114

_____. 1990. *The Political Economy of Commerce Southern India 1500–1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

_____. 2005. 'Taking Stock of the Franks: South Asian views of Europeans and Europe, 1500–1800', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 42, 1: 69–100

_____, Jerry H. Bentley and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, eds 2015. *The Cambridge World History, vol. 6. The Construction of a Global World, 1400–1800 CE, Part 1: Foundations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Talbot, Cynthia. 2001. *Precolonial India in Practice: Society, Religion, and identity in Medieval Andhra*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Terpstra, H. 1911. *De vestiging van de Nederlanders aan de kust van Coromandel*. Groningen: M. de Waard

Tracy, James D. 1999. 'Asian Despotism? Mughal Government as Seen from the Dutch East India Company Factory in Surat', *Journal of Early Modern History* 3, 3: 256–280

Vink, Markus. 2012. *Dutch Sources on South Asia c. 1600–1825, Vol. 4*. *Mission to Madurai: Dutch Embassies to the Nayaka Court of Madurai in the Seventeenth Century*. New Delhi: Manohar

Winius, George D. and Marcus P.M. Vink. 1991. *The Merchant–Warrior Pacified: The VOC (The Dutch East India Company) and its Changing Political Economy in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Wink, André. 1986. *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth–century Maratha Svarajya*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

_____. 2004. *Al–Hind: The Making of the Indo–Islamic World, Vol. 3 Indo–Islamic Society 14th–15th Centuries*. Leiden: Brill

List of abbreviations

EIC: English East India Company

JESHO: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

NA: National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague

VOC: Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie)

Glossary

General terms

Amil: Mughal revenue collector

Banjara: itinerant cattle–breeders and traders who transported goods over long distances in India

Bargir giri: guerilla warfare in the Deccan

Calange (Dutch transliteration: coelang): weighing unit, 1 calange equals about 7.2 grams

Dakshinapatha: southern road

Deshmukh: head of an armed elite family controlling a *pargana* (see glossary below), or in other words, village headmen

Faujdar: commander in charge of law and order of a group of *parganas*

Havaldar: local tax collector in Qutb Shahi Golconda

Jagir: temporary revenue assignment to collect land tax of a specific unit for salary

Jagirdar: holder of a jagir, usually a *mansabdar*

Kandijl (Dutch transliterations: candi, candil, khandi): weighing unit that varied across India; 1 khandi equivalent to approximately 218 kilos in Masulipatnam and 236 kilos in Golconda

Lasten (a Dutch term): weighing unit, 1 last equalled about 1250 kg

Mansab: Mughal official rank indicating status, pay and size of military contingent

Mansabdar: holder of a *mansab*

Maund: weighing unit, 1 maund equivalent to 12 kg (in Masulipatnam)

Nayaka: military leaders under Vijayanagara who later became independent rulers

Neli/ Nely: variety of rice grown in Coromandel

Pagoda: gold coin, also known as *hun* in Golconda, minor variations across South India

Pargana: territory fixed by Mughals for revenue and administration

Poligar: a military chief, commander of a fortress

Sarsamt (Sarsimt): governor of a province in Qutb Shahi Golconda

Topaz (Topas/Tupas): Eurasians, especially one parent was of Portuguese origin

Vadugas: literally 'northerners in Tamil'; Telugu migrants during the Vijayanagara period

Zamindar: hereditary landholders who claimed part of land revenue and controlled peasants

Textiles

Allegias: originally coloured fine silk from Turkistan, could also be made of a cotton–silk mix; in Coromandel this word was used for red and white or blue and white striped and checked cotton cloth.

Bethilles: from the Portuguese for 'veiling' or 'to veil', a variety of muslin

Boelang: from Malay, dyed blue cloth used as headcloth

Caetchie (Cachchai): coarse cotton (moetta–catchie: loincloth made of coarse cotton)

Calicos: type of plain cloth from northern Coromandel

Cambay cloth: guinea cloth from Cambay, Gujarat in the west of India

Cattawani (Cattawary): painted and striped cotton cloth

Chelas (Chialou): cheap checked cotton cloth

Chiavoni (Chiavony): very light white cotton cloth

Chintz: from Malay, coloured cotton or silk cloth

Dongri (Dungri): sail cloth, a variety of calicos, made of coarse cotton, could be plain or dyed

Dopatta (Dupatta, Dupatty): cloth in two widths, used as a wrap

Gingham: checked or striped cloth

Guinea cloth (long cloth): variety of calico

Kalamkari: painted or block–printed textiles

Madaphon: striped cloth

Moeri: staple cotton cloth of high quality

Muslin: type of fine quality, open–weave plain cloth from northern Coromandel

Parcalles (Percalles): variety of calico, plain cotton cloth

Poelang–gobar (–gober): from Javanese, red-coloured cotton curtain material, could also come in brownish blue, or white and blue stripes

Ramboutin (ramboetin): coarse cotton cloth

Salempores: plain white and dyed cotton cloth

Sella: indigenous name for muslins

Tafachela: fine white striped cloth

Tape sarasses (Tapi sarasses): decorated, multicoloured skirt, variants include Tape Malaya (possibly exported to Malaya) and Tape Grinsing

Vichitra: indigenous name for chintz

Curriculum Vitae

Archisman Chaudhuri was born on 23rd January in Kolkata in West Bengal, India. He pursued his Bachelor's degree in History at Presidency College, Kolkata and his Master's degree at Jawaharlal Nehru University, in New Delhi, India. In 2012, he was awarded a Cosmopolis scholarship to pursue a Bachelor's degree at the University of Leiden which he completed in 2013. An Erasmus Mundus scholarship enabled him to continue his studies at Leiden at the PhD level.

Propositions

1. Aurangzeb's southern campaigns were part of the Mughal project of integrating the coasts with the heartland of the empire.

2. The impact of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns was differently felt across Coromandel.

3. Aurangzeb's southern campaigns reoriented the economic centres of Coromandel. Masulipatnam lost its position of a regional emporium in the Bay of Bengal and the Kaveri delta prospered.

4. The southern campaigns transformed Coromandel's economy rather than initiating its decline.

5. Exploring the links between the coasts and hinterlands is crucial to understanding histories of the early modern Indian Ocean empires of the Mughals, the Safavids, the Ottomans and the Manchus.

6. Indian Ocean maritime and overland trade networks are not different entities and cannot be treated as such.

7. There is economy in military history and military in economic history.

8. Wars have an economy of their own. Financial credit and military logistics have won and lost wars.

9. Instead of fearing archival research, a historian should make the archives fear her or him!

10. A PhD is a five–day test cricket match. It is as much an examination of academic skills as it is one of endurance and stamina.