Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Chaudhuri, A.

Citation

Chaudhuri, A. (2019, June 26). *From Camp to Port: Mughal Warfare and the economy of Coromandel, 1682-1707*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/74438

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: Leiden University Non-exclusive license

Downloaded from: https://hdl.handle.net/1887/74438

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page

Universiteit Leiden

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/74438 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Chaudhuri, A.
Title: From Camp to Port: Mughal Warfare and the economy of Coromandel, 1682-1707
Issue Date: 2019-06-26

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.

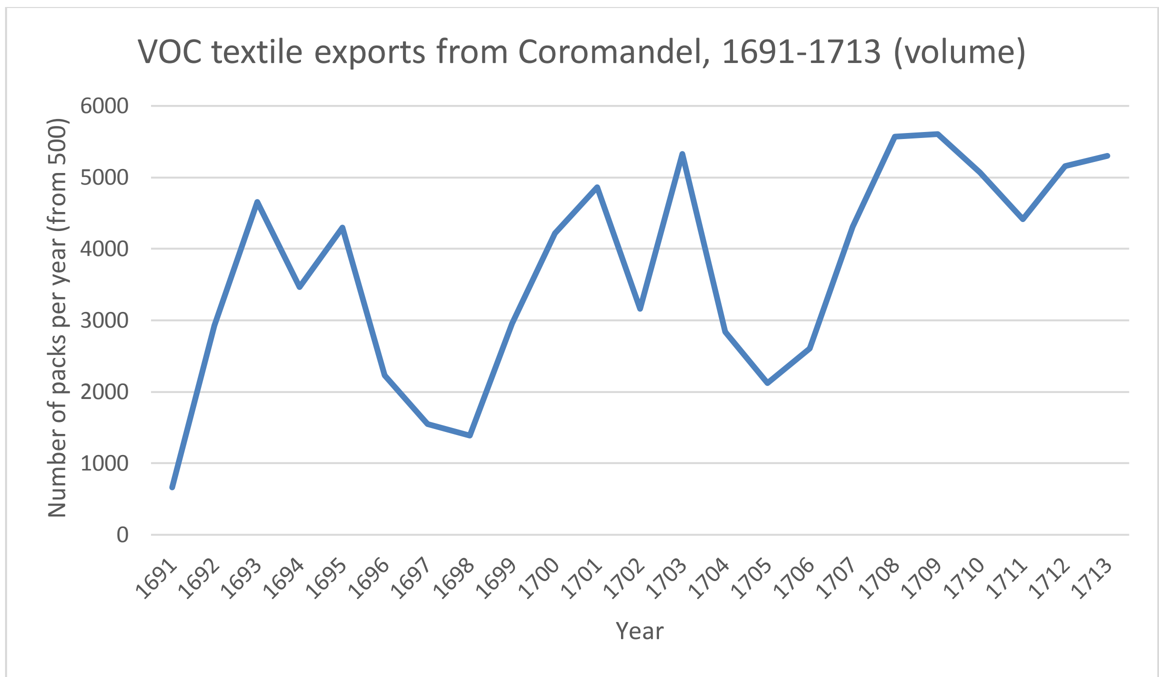
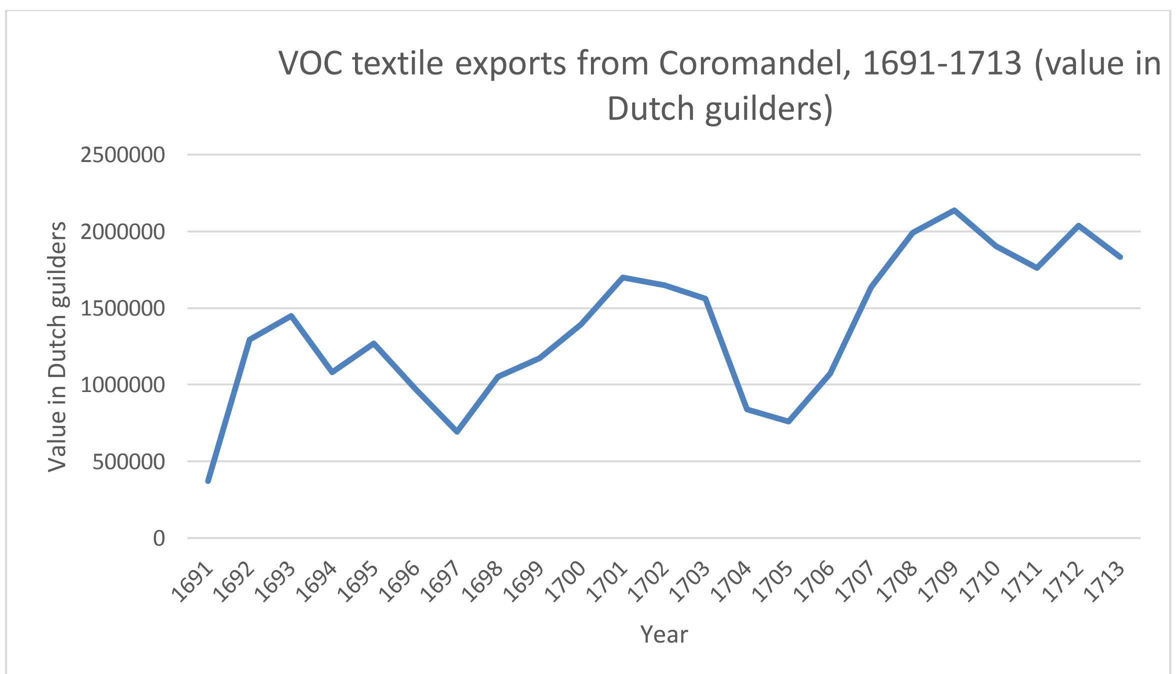


Figure 4.2 Value of VOC's textile exports from Coromandel, 1691–1713 (in Dutch guilders, on the basis of Table 4.5)



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.