



DECCAN I. POLITICAL AND LITERARY HISTORY

I. POLITICAL AND LITERARY HISTORY

Outline of political history.

Although the Deccan was in commercial contact with Persia and Arabia from ancient times, it first became a part of the Islamic world in 695/1296, when the Delhi sultan 'Alā'-al-Dīn Ḳaljī (695-715/1296-1316) invaded the Hindu kingdom of the Yadavas, with its capital at Deogiri (now Daulatabad), and made it a vassal state. The succeeding Ḳaljī and Tughluqid sultans undertook further expeditions against the Hindu kingdoms of the Hoysalas (at Dwarasamudra), the Kakatiyas (at Warangal), and the Pandyan (at Madura). Although at first these expeditions were essentially raids that left the Hindu dynasties intact, gradually a series of local revolts and reconquests from Delhi led to the incorporation of these realms into the empire.

Sultan Moḥammad b. Toḡloq (725-52/1325-51) made Deogiri the secondary capital of his realm in 728/1328, transferring most of the Muslim population of Delhi there the following year; he briefly controlled the entire Deccan, as well as the Tamil and Malabar country in the extreme south. In 736/1336 a former Hoysala officer who had served the Tughluquids rebelled and founded the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar in the far south.

Meanwhile the centurions (*amīrān-e šada*) in the Deccan also revolted against



the Tughluqids in 746/1345, and in 748/1347 ‘Alā’-al-Dīn Ḥasan took the title *bahmanšāh*. The [Bahmanid dynasty](#), recognized by the ‘Abbasid pretender in Cairo, ruled the Deccan (first from Golbarga, then from [Bīdar](#)) as an independent kingdom until the early 16th century, when increasingly restive governors effectively divided the realm into five minor kingdoms, ruled respectively by the Neẓāmshāhīs in [Ahmadnagar](#), the ‘Ādelshāhīs in [Bījāpūr](#), the ‘Emādshāhīs in Berar, the [Barīdshāhīs](#) in Bīdar, and the Qoṭbshāhīs in Golconda. To these may be added the minor state of Khandesh, with its capital at [Borhānpūr](#) in the northern Deccan, ruled by the [Fārūqīs](#) from the late 14th century. Struggles among these small Deccani sultanates led to the conquest of Vijayanagar by a confederation of the princes of Ahmadnagar, Bījāpūr, and Golconda in 973/1565; the absorption of Berar by Ahmadnagar in 982/1574; and the conquest of Bīdar by Bījāpūr in 1028/1619.

The Mughals represented a more serious threat, however. [Akbar I](#) (963-1014/1556-1605) enrolled the Fārūqīs as tributaries and after 999/1590 as military allies against Ahmadnagar. In their quest for allies the rulers of Ahmadnagar, Bījāpūr, and Golconda, who had adopted Twelver Shi‘ism at various times, consistently cultivated relations with the Safavids of Persia, sometimes addressing them in the manner of vassals to an overlord (Islam, II, pp. 107-99). Akbar conquered Khandesh in 1009/1601, and Jahāngīr (1014-37/1605-27) took Ahmadnagar in 1043/1633. Awrangzēb (1068-1118/1658-1707) spent the last years of his reign campaigning against the two surviving sultanates, defeating Bījāpūr in 1097/1686 and Golconda the following year. The Mughals had already begun to lose their hold on the Deccan, however, owing to resistance from the Marathas, who had founded their own kingdom under Shivaji in 1085/1674. Although the Marathas founded an explicitly Hindu state and assumed rights of taxation, they acknowledged theoretical Mughal supremacy and, from their capital in the western hills, functioned as an efficient war machine throughout the Deccan and northern India until they came under British domination in the early 19th century. In 1137/1724 the Mughal viceroy in the Deccan, Neẓām-al-Molk ĀsĀf-jāh, declared himself an independent ruler. The Āṣafjāhī dynasty of *neẓāms* (q.v.) ruled (at first from Awrangabad and then from Hyderabad) throughout the period of French and British imperialism up to 1948, when their domain was incorporated into the Indian Union. Presently the region is divided among the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.



Persian literature and culture in the Deccan.

With the transfer of the Muslim population to Deogiri in 729/1329 the Persian culture that flourished in the Delhi sultanate was transplanted to the Deccan. The leading court poet Amīr Najm-al-Dīn Ḥasan Dehlavī (655-737/1275-1336) was one of those forced to move (Şafā, *Adabīyāt* III, pp. 817-31). Tughluqid officials in Deogiri and elsewhere sponsored works in Persian on such subjects as lexicography and Islamic law, and at nearby Rawḥa (now Khuldabad) the Sufi circle around the Češtī Shaikh Borhān-al-Dīn Ġarīb (d. 738/1337; see ČEŠTĪYA) produced an extensive mystical literature, including recorded oral teachings (*malḡūzāt*), hagiographies, and speculative treatises (Ernst, p. 116 and passim). Legends about Sufis in the Deccan before the Kaļjī conquest are late hagiograph-ical inventions unsubstantiated by contemporary documents. After the brief period of Tughluqid rule the Deccan sultans contributed to a remarkable flourishing of Persian literature. Persian culture always existed in tension with local Indic cultural traditions, however, as it was totally dependent upon court patronage and elite Sufi circles. The different types of Persian literature produced in the Deccan may be categorized as follows.

Court poetry and belles-lettres. The sultans of the Deccan were great patrons of Persian poetry, and some were known as poets themselves. Of the many poets who came from Persia and Central Asia to India seeking their fortunes (according to Golčīn-e Ma‘ānī, more than 700 in the Safavid period alone; I, pp. [5-18]), a large portion came to the Deccan courts (see Sherwani and Joshi, II, pp. 77-103). Moḡammad-Qāsem Ferešta (I, p. 302; tr. Briggs, II, pp. 215-16) reported that the Bahmanid Moḡammad Shah (780-99/1378-97) even tried unsuccessfully to lure Ḥāfeẓ from Shiraz, but the reliability of this story has been questioned (e.g., Ġanī, p. 136 n. 1; cf. Ḥāfeẓ, comm., II, pp. 1193-95). His successor Aḡmad Shah Walī (825-39/1422-36) made Golbarga a center of Persian culture. After the establishment of the minor Deccan sultanates Moḡammadqolī Qoṭbšāh (d. 1020/1611) and his descendants eagerly welcomed talented Persian poets at Golconda. At Bījāpūr Ebrāhīm ‘Ādelšāh (d. 1035/1627) employed Ẓohūrī Toršīzī (d. 1026/1617; Şafā, *Adabīyāt* V, pp. 977-88, 1717-14), who wrote his *Seh naṭr* as an introduction in rhyming prose to his patron’s Dakhanī Urdu treatise on poetry and music, *Ketāb-e nowras*. Many critics regard Ẓohūrī as a chief exponent of the luxuriant “Indian style” (*sabk-e hendī*). Even the Mughal court poet Abu’l-Fayẓ Fayẓī (Şafā, *Adabīyāt* V, pp. 838-57) was impressed with his “extremely flowery” style (Golčīn-e Ma‘ānī, II, p. 827).



Stylistically the Persian poetry produced in the Deccan did not differ notably from that produced in northern India or Persia; many poets circulated among all three areas. For example, Moḥammad Amīn (d. 1047/1637-38), who produced at Golconda an admired epic quintet (*kamsa*) in imitation of Neẓāmī's works, went on to Bījāpūr and then back to Persia before finally obtaining a satisfactory position from the Mughals (Sherwani and Joshi, II, pp. 98-99). Borhānpūr also became an important center of literary patronage under the Mughal viceroy 'Abd-al-Raḥīm Kān-e Kānān (d. 1036/1627), who surrounded himself with a large circle of Persian poets, mentioned in 'Abd-al-Bāqī Nehāvandī's *Ma'āṭer-e raḥīmī* (comp. 1025/1616), which is dedicated to him. They included Naw'ī Kabūšānī (d. 1019/1610), author of *Sūz o godāz*, a *maṭnawī* on the Indian theme of a widow (*satī*) who immolates herself on her husband's funeral pyre (Ṣafā, *Adabīyāt* V, pp. 881-92). In the late 18th century, while Delhi court taste was turning toward Urdu poetry, Persian anthologies continued to appear in the Deccan; the prolific Gōlām-'Alī Āzād Belgrāmī (d. 1200/1786) composed three (*Yad-e bayzā*, *Sarv-e āzād*, and *Kezāna-ye āmera*), his Hindu student Lačmī Narāyan Šafīq (d. after 1214/1799) composed two (*Gol-e ra'nā* and *Šām-e gārībān*), and several other scholars compiled their own *taḍkeras* at Awrangabad (Naqawī, pp. 255, 275, 378, 383, 393, 415, 425, 445, 489). Although in the 19th century Persian literary activity waned in favor of Urdu, Hyderabad continued as a center for Persian studies, and the former court libraries there (the Āṣafīya, now the Andhra Pradesh Oriental Manuscript Research Library, and the Salar Jang) still have the finest Persian collections in the region.

Historical works. Historiography in the Deccan was modeled on the epics and chronicles of the Ghaznavids and Ghurids, which had formed the basis for the court culture of the Delhi sultanate. The first great historical work produced in the Deccan was 'Abd-al-Malek 'Eṣāmī's *Fotūḥ al-salāṭīn* (comp. 751/1351), which celebrated the triumph of the Bahmanids over the Tughluqids in epic *maṭnawīs* modeled on those of Ferdowsī's *Šāh-nāma*. Āḍarī Ṭūsī (d. 866/1461-62) wrote *Bahman-nāma* (British Library, London, ms. no. Or. 2780/3; Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms. no. 2544/3) for Aḥmad I Walī (825-39/1422-36), modeling it on the prose history *Toḥāfat al-salāṭīn* by Mollā Dāwūd Bīdarī (d. 817/1414-15). In fact, the close literary relationship between Persia and the Deccan is particularly exemplified by Āḍarī's career; he was initially a poet at the courts of the Timurid Šāhroḡ (807-50/1405-47) and Olōḡ Beg (850-53/1447-49), then a disciple of the Sufi Shah Ne'mat-Allāh Walī before going to India; after he completed his service with Aḥmad Shah Bahmanī he



returned to Khorasan (Şafā, *Adabīyāt* IV, pp. 323-32). The Sufi shaikh ‘Ayn-al-Dīn Bījāpūrī (d. 795/1393) wrote a continuation of the 13th-century chronicle *Ṭabaqāt-e nāşerī* of Menhāj-e Serāj Jūzjānī. The latter and the *Toḥfat al-salāṭīn* of Bīdarī are lost, but they were used as sources by historians of the Bahmanid successor states, like Ferešta and Sayyed ‘Alī Ṭabāṭabā; some excerpts can also be found in the modern Urdu history of the Deccan by M. A. Molkapūrī, whose library of unique manuscripts of Bahmanid texts was unfortunately destroyed in the Hyderabad flood of 1908. Ṭabāṭabā’s *Borhān-e ma’āṭer*, written in 1004/1596 for Borhān Neẓāmšāh II, is a history of the Bahmanid and Neẓāmšāhī dynasties. The most famous Deccan history, however, is Ferešta’s *Golšan-e ebrāhīmī*, written for Ebrāhīm ‘Adelšāh between 1015/1606-67 and 1033/1623-24; it is a general history of Indian dynasties focused on Bījāpūr, with an important appendix on Sufi shaikhs. The work attracted the attention of the British in the late 18th century, and most of it was translated into English. Important Bījāpūr chronicles include the *Taḍkerat al-molūk* of Rafī‘-al-Dīn Ebrāhīm Šīrāzī (comp. 1020/1611-12) and the *Tārīk-e ‘adelšāhī* of Nūr-Allāh (b. Sayyed Moḥammad ‘Alī; d. 1077/1666-67). The transition from the Mughals to the Āşafjāhī *neẓāms* in the Deccan can best be measured from the voluminous biographical dictionary *Ma’āṭer al-omarā’*, compiled by Şamsām-al-Dawla Şahnavāz Khan (vizier to the first *neẓām*) and completed by Āzād Belgrāmī; almost every important political figure of the 17th and 18th centuries is included. Numerous other significant monographic histories in Persian, most unpublished, were devoted to the reigns of individual sultans of the different Deccan kingdoms (including the Marathas) down to the end of the 19th century (Sherwani and Joshi, II, pp. 102-07, 575-88; Storey, I, pp. 738-65, 1330-33). The able Bahmanid minister ‘Emād-al-Dīn Maḥmūd Gāvān (813-86/1411-81) wrote a memorable collection of state letters, *Rīāż al-enşā’*, which includes correspondence with eminent Sufis and authors like ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān Jāmī, K̄vāja Aḥrār, and Şaraf-al-Dīn Yazdī. The Persian Shi’ite scholar Shah Ṭāher (d. 956/1549), adviser to Borhān Neẓāmšāh of Ahmadnagar, also left a collection of official letters (*Monş’a’āt-e Şāh Ṭāher*) that is of some historical importance. In addition, a treatise on political theory, written in 984/1576 by ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf Monşī and entitled *Nafā’es al-kalām wa ‘arā’es al-aqlām*, was dedicated to Raja ‘Alī Khan Fārūqī (985-1005/1577-96), the last independent ruler of Khandesh; the unique manuscript is in the Khuda-Bakhsh collection in the Oriental Public Library at Patna (ms. no. 948, H.L. no 946).

Sufi literature. Sufi literature was initiated under the Bahmanids, when the



Češtī Sufis at Rawza, led by Borhān-al-Dīn Ġarīb's successor, Zayn-al-Dīn Šīrāzī (d. 771/1370), began to compile *malfūzāt* (Ernst, pp. 80, 134-38, 321 n. 226). Zayn-al-Dīn had no successors in Rawza, but later Sufis of Borhānpūr, like Bahā'-al-Dīn Bājan (d. 912/1507), claimed to have inherited the authority of Borhān-al-Dīn. In the meantime leadership of the Češtīs passed to Moḥammad Ḥosaynī Gisūderāz (d. 825/1422), who had left Delhi for Golbarga in 800/1398 and become attached to the Bahmanid court. A prolific author, he was a major force in transmitting the heritage of Persian Sufism in the Deccan. He wrote many mystical treatises in Persian, including *Ḥaṣā'ir al-qods*, *Asmār al-asrār*; commentaries on classical works on Islamic law, theology, and Sufism; letters; and poetry. His descendants also made literary contributions to Sufism (Siddiqi, pp. 199-206; Hussaini, *passim*). The writings by members of other Sufi orders (*selsela*) prominent in the early Bahmanid period, particularly the Jonaydīs, are now known only through later references (Siddiqi, pp. 95-107, 207-09). The Bahmanid rulers encouraged the immigration of Sufi masters from Persia and Iraq as part of a policy of favoring foreigners (*āfāqī*) over Indians. The Ne'mat-Allāhī order became established at Bīdar when its founder, Shah Ne'mat-Allāh Walī (731-834/1330-1431), sent one of his grandsons to act as a guide for the prince who later became Aḥmad II Bahmanī (839-62/1436-58); the order thrived in the Deccan until its leaders decided to return to Persia in the late 17th century. The Qāderī order arrived at Bīdar from Baghdad, also in the 15th century, and later spread to Bījāpūr and Golconda (Eaton, pp. 56-58; Siddiqi, pp. 69-95).

At Golconda the Qoṭbšāhīs, who continued to favor Shī'ism, concentrated their patronage on Dakhani Urdu and Telegu poetry in honor of the imams and on scholarship and poetry in Arabic. There is little evidence of Sufi activity at Ahmadnagar, and in Bījāpūr the 'Ādelšāhīs seem not to have become patrons of Sufism until the late 16th century, when Sunni Islam replaced Shī'ism there under Ebrāhīm 'Ādelšāh (Eaton, pp. 70-79). At that time many Češtī and Qāderī Sufis settled in the city, and the Šaṭṭārī order from northern India also established centers at Bījāpūr and Borhānpūr. An exceptionally strong literary tradition was initiated by Češtī authors like Šams-al-Dīn Mīranjī (d. 905/1499), Borhān-al-Dīn Jānam (d. after 1006/1597), and Amīn-al-Dīn 'Alā' (d. 1086/1675), who wrote poetry in Dakhani Urdu addressed to a wide readership. Their Persian works (often translations or commentaries on the Dakhani texts), on the other hand, were aimed at a more specialized Sufi audience (Eaton, pp. 135-74, 243-81).



As the Mughals expanded into the Deccan, so did Sufi orders that were well established in their domain. Disciples of [Aḥmad Serhendī](#) (d. 1034/1624), leader of the Mojaddedī Naqšbandīs, settled in Borhānpūr, and separate Naqšbandī lineages were established at the convents (*kānaqāhs*) of Shah Mosāfer Ġojdovānī at Awrangabad and Shah ‘Enāyat-Allāh (d. 1117/1705) at Balapur in Berar. The Šaṭṭārī master Moḥammad Ġawṭī (d. 971/1563) had flourished under the Mughals, and his disciples from Gujarat developed a major center in Borhānpūr, a city to which many Sufis from Sind were also attracted. The successive leaders of this Šaṭṭārī lineage were Laškar Moḥammad ‘Āref (d. 993/1585), ‘Īsā Jond-Allāh (d. 1031/1622), and Borhān-al-Dīn Rāz-e Elāhī (d. 1083/1672); ‘Īsā in particular was a prolific writer on mystical topics (e.g., *‘Ayn al-ma‘ānī*) and a commentator on Islamic law and theology. Among other significant works produced by this school were Ebrāhīm Šaṭṭārī Jannatābādī’s *Ā’ina-ye ḥaqā’eqnomā*, a commentary on Moḥammad-Šīrīn Māğrebī’s *Jām-e jahānnomā* based on the metaphysics of Ebn al-‘Arabī. At the end of the Mughal period there was also a renaissance of the Češtī order in the Deccan under the leadership of [Neẓām-al-Dīn Awrangābādī](#) (d. 1142/1728), who followed the instructions of his teacher in Delhi, Shah Kalīm-Allāh Jahānābādī (d. 1142/1729). Neẓām-al-Dīn’s relationship with Neẓām-al-Molk Āṣaf-jāh was so close that the latter wrote a biography of him (Nizami, 1980-85, I, pp. 290 ff., V, pp. 81-181). A good survey of Sufism under the later *neẓāms* has yet to be written.

As many important Persian Sufi writings from the Deccan remain in manuscript or have not survived, biographical works that include excerpts from them are extremely valuable. Among the most important is the pan-Indian hagiography *Akbār al-akyār* by ‘Abd-al-Ḥaqq Dehlavī. Also of great value for the Deccan is Moḥammad Ġawṭī’s *Golzār-e abrār* (comp. 1022/1613), which is devoted especially to the saints of Gujarat and western India. Other significant Persian hagiographies for the Deccan are the anonymous *Fath al-awlā’* (1020/1610) on the saints of Rawza and Borhānpūr, composed for ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm Kān-e Kānān; *Rawzat al-awlā’* (comp. 1161/1748) by Āzād Belgrāmī on the saints of Khuldabad and Awrangabad; *Meškāt-e nobūwat* (1220/1804-05) by ‘Alī Mūsawī on saints of the Deccan, including Hyderabad; and *Rawzat al-awlā’*. *Taḍkera-ye awlā’-e Bījāpūr* (comp. 1241/1825-26) by Moḥammad-Ebrāhīm Zobayrī (Storey, I, pp. 979, 984, 1024; Ernst, pp. 91-92, 209-12; Eaton, pp. 334-35). Most of these collections were either produced under royal patronage or include traditions of political origin, so that their accounts must often be measured against the traditions found in *malfūzāt* texts and other



Sufi writings. As use of the Persian language declined during the 19th century, the history of Sufism in Hyderabad and the rest of the Deccan must be supplemented with works written in Dakhani Urdu and other local languages for the benefit of devotees.

Other kinds of literature. Various minor Persian works were written on the subjects of music, Islamic law, astronomy, and the like, and some translations from Arabic (generally on religious topics) and Sanskrit (on veterinary science and music) were produced. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these works is the well-known Persian dictionary *Borhān-e qāṭe'*, composed by Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Borhān Tabrīzī for 'Abd-Allāh Qoṭbshāh in 1062/1652. It was the target of caustic criticism by the 19th-century poet Mīrzā Asad-Allāh Gāleb in his *Qāṭe'-e borhān*.

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