
CHAPTER-V: INFLUENCE OF ISLAM IN SOUTH INDIA

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Art and Architecture

In the large tract of country towards the south of the peninsula known as the Deccan, there was developed a style of Islamic architecture of a definitely regional character. It represents a form of the building art which began when this territory was first occupied by the Delhi Sultans in the last years of the thirteenth century, ... the rulers of the Deccan seem to have ignored, to a very large extent, the presence of the existing art of the country they occupied, and proceeded to produce an original and independent style of their own. In spite of the Dravidian and Chalukyan temples of these parts being as elegant and numerous as in the others of the South, the dynasties of the Deccan took practically nothing from these fine buildings, and in no provincial style was less use made of the inherent architectural tradition. ... In practice it consisted fundamentally of the fusion of two styles of Islamic architecture, both derived from other parts and both having arrived at a state of relative maturity. One of these was the architectural system that had been gradually forming under the Sultans at Delhi, which, owing to its forceful nature was influencing to a greater or lesser degree the provincial manifestation as they arose. The other style drawn from an

entirely extraneous source, was the architecture of the neighbouring country of Persia.¹

The contact of these two important architectural developments, and their final amalgamation in the building art of the South, may be here explained.

... In the Deccan the styles of the Bahamani, Barid Shahi and Nizam Shahi kings are really most important chapters in the history of Muslim architecture. But at Bijapur the style created by the Adil Shahi Kings requires special attention because as casual observation it appears to bear close affinities to the Mughal architecture, and may have referred to it in connection with the Taj Mahal. It is true that they have only the bulbous dome and general appearance in common, but they are fundamentally different from the Taj. Their two great architects, Malik Sandil and Malik Yaqut, were strongly influenced by Turkish Motifs. They built Sultan Ibrahim's rouza (Rouza means any garden, applied in India by Muhammadans to burial place. There are many of these.) The most known is that on the hill eight miles from Daulatabad, where the emperor Aurangzeb is interred. Those of Bawa Alisar and Ganja Baksh, at Magreba, in Ahmadabad are admirably built. This same name is given also to a part of the Southern portion of the great mosque of Medina, because the prophet said, "Between my tomb, and my pulpit is a garden of the gardens of paradise) and mosque respectively. Their

names are preserved in the inscriptions.²

Central Asian Influence on Islamic Architecture in India

The Muslims in India had brought the theory and style of architecture from central Asia and Persia from the very beginning. Even up to this day we find the names of the chief architects of central Asia on numerous buildings in India. For instance, in the provinces of Bihar we find that a certain Tatar Khan built the tomb of a certain King, Sultan Shah, in 665 A.H. (1266 A.D.) and its architecture was Majid of Kabul, whose name is found in an inscription. At Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Sultan Mahmud (1458-1511) entrusted the construction of gardens to a great architect of Khurasan in 1485 A.D. because the inhabitants of Gujarat were not endowed with the requisite artistic faculty. Similar to these was the case with Ahmad Shah Wali Bahamanis (1421-1434) Mausoleum in Bidar. That King after the tradition of the Deccan Kings ordered the erection of his mausoleum in his life time, during the very first year of his reign, which fact is noted inside the dome over the southern door of the building. It was either designed or decorated by Shukrulla of Kazurin as stated in an inscription on the eastern side of the dome.³ Moreover, this beautiful edifice bears the same form of decoration and calligraphy inside the dome as we find on the tomb of Tamerlane at Samarkand. The name of the architect of the Gour-i-Amir is Muhammad-ibn-Mahmud of Isfahan, as noticed therein. It was built in 807 A.H. (1404 A.D.). If we

closely examine the architectural features of both the tombs we shall be convinced that they are of the same origin.⁴

Muslim Architecture in the Deccan

The history of Muslim architecture in the Deccan may be divided into three periods. The earliest dates from the invasion of the Deccan by Ala-ud-din and ends with the decline of the Tughlaq power towards the close of the fourteenth century. During this period, the Deccan appears to have followed North Indian Muslim style. To this period belongs the Fort of Doulatabad with its strong citadel, standing on a rock about 600 feet high. Up to the fifteenth century Muhammadan art was a foreign colonial tradition in India. Though differentiated from the rest of Muslim art by its long isolation because of the Mongol invasion, it was kept separate from Hindu tradition first by the stern Muslim consciousness of the Mameluke Sultans and later by the overbearing imperialism of Khaljis and Tughlaqs.⁵

The second period began soon after the establishment of the Bahamani Kingdom, which a number of adventurers from Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan and central Asia settled in the Deccan. Among these settlers there were scholars, poets, authors, sufi saints, artists, craftsmen and merchants. They were received kindly by Bahamani kings and encouraged by high appointments and generous treatment. The Deccan became a second centre of Islamic culture, in which the Iranian settlement was predominant. Hence the

architecture of the period turned Iranian in style. Among the buildings of the second period is the Fort of Parendah, said to have been constructed by Mahmud Gawan, the faithful Iranian minister of the Bahamani kings. The Fort is considered one of the strongest in the Deccan.⁶

The Deccan developed an individuality of its own in the field of Islamic architecture. Ala-ud-din, the founder of the Bahamani Dynasty made Gulbarga his capital in 1347, ruling over all the Deccan from Berar to the Krishna. The earlier tombs of the dynasty at Gulbarga show clear affinities with the contemporary northern style, being square in plan⁷ with sloping walls and hemispherical domes. These tombs are mostly built in the Tughlaq style and consist of a low dome, narrow door ways, decorated with blue enamelled tiles, simple and plan design, yet already in the fourteenth century the decorative style had acquired an individuality of its own. In the tomb of Ghiyas-ud-Din who died in 1397, the carving of the Mihrab displays Indian elements that are obviously local.⁸

There are two large monuments at Gulbarga which are still almost in tact, i.e., Jami Masjid in the Fort and the Shah Bazar Mosque, one clearly showing foreign and the other Tughlaq influence. According to tradition and external appearance the erection of the Shah Bazar Mosque may be placed in the reign of Muhammad-I (1358-75) as its gateway is structurally extremely

similar to Muhammad's tomb with its square dome, its corner bouquets and its thick, tapering "Tughlaq" walls, and taken by itself without the enclosure of the mosque which protrudes from both sides it might have been a structure meant to hold the remains of royal personage.⁹ But Dr. Z.A. Desai says, "... Style of the fort mosque to be an exception. These have been taken to be belonging to a different architecture styles, essentially Persian in character, which has been attributed to a Persian architect by competent scholars. This calls for a careful re-examination. The basis of this attribution as well as that of its date, 1367, is an inscription, but there is no absolute evidence of its being in situ ... the generally accepted theory that the architecture of the Fort Mosque represents an interruption in the Tughluq style does not appear to be true."¹⁰

This building is in strong contrast with another sacred building, the Jami Masjid inside Gulbarga Fort situated a few furlongs off. For here we see the hand of the foreigners, Persian and Turk, who, in conjunction with Hindu influence, revolutionised the Deccan architecture which finally cut off its Tughlaq influence in a very short time and developed into what we later called the Deccani style.¹¹

Most of these features of the Tughluqian building traditions are also found in the tomb of Hazrat Zainu'd-din at Khuldabad, which was built (according to an inscription) in 1370.

It is difficult now to say how much original character the present tomb structure has retained but its general plan and design and the typical features battered with slightly projecting central parts, the merlons, and the shape of the hemispherical dome (which is incidentally of the same shape as that of the Tughluq Shah's tomb at Tughluqabad near Delhi) entitled it to this early phase of Tughluqian influence.¹²

Dr. Yazdani says: How while tracing the connection of Tughluq architecture with the early Muslim buildings of the Deccan we should not overlook the historic fact that Bahamani Dynasty in establishing itself had set at naught the authority of the Delhi Empire and to maintain that attitude had to employ Persians and Turks in large numbers. Ferishta observes that the favourite companions of prince Mujahid Shah, son of Muhammad Shah-I, were for the most part either Persian or Turks. The Moslem architecture of the Deccan in those circumstances, therefore, could not receive the requisite sap from the parent trees of Delhi and had to depend for its nourishment, first upon Persian and Turkish, and later on local sources. The great mosque of Gulbarga, as the first example of Persian influence, thus marks a turning point in the history of Deccan architecture. The mosque was built in 1367 during the latter part of Muhammad Shah's reign - two earlier monuments of whose time built in the Tughluq style.¹³ Abdulla Chughtai writes: "These are the earliest nucleus of Islamic architecture in the Deccan which take their

origin direct from central Asia. They are of independent Islamic origin without any Hindu influence, in spite of the popular rumours to the contrary. In my view this is the only real Islamic architecture, because these mosques were erected by those Muslims who came fresh to this country with quite fresh memories of their own central Asian cities and could not possibly be influenced by local colour or tradition.¹⁴

The mosque was erected in 1367 under the supervision of Rafi, who came from the region of Elburz in North Persia.¹⁵ Dr. Haroon Khan Sherwani says: "There are at least three large monuments dating back to Muhammad-I (12.1.1358 to 21.4.1375) which are still almost in tact, i.e., Jami Masjid in the Gulbarga fort and the Shah Bazar Mosque in Gulbarga town, and the tomb of Hazrat Shamsu'd-din at Usmanabad, one clearly showing foreign and the other two Tughluq influence... The magnificent Jami 'Masjid inside Gulbarga fort situated a few furlongs off, for here we see the hand of foreigners, Persian and Turk, who, in conjunction with Hindu influence Turk, who, in conjunction with Hindu influence, had revolutionised the Deccan architecture cast off its Tughluq influence in a very short time and developed what was later called the Deccan style. The chief architect was himself a native of Qazwin, Rafi son Shams, who built the mosque in 769 A.H./1367 A.D.¹⁶ ... Whole of this mosque is entirely roofed and the inspiration for this kind of building, so obviously unsuited to Indian climate, must have been from where

the covered parts of Spanish as well as Turkish mosque can accommodate thousands of worshippers, and which have only comparatively small open courts attached to them ... The roof of this building, 216 feet east to west by 176 feet north to south, is divided into a number of gables and arches, the latter showing off in the form of domes. The domes have taken off the flat Tughlaq shape and are built over high basements. These domes are not of uniform dimensions, those over the Mihrab and the gates being much larger than others and the stilted appearance of the arches which was so much in favour with the Bahamanis, has already made its appearance in them. The interior of the mosque has a peculiar appearance. Three sides of the building i.e., northern, eastern and southern, are supported by very wide arches adjoining which, parallel to the north and south wings, are seven corridors, all leading to the central Mihrab in such a way that a votary sitting in any part of the vast enclosure should be able to see the Imam standing on a pulpit or leading the prayers. This method has produced another pleasing feature that in spite of the completely covered court, there is a free flow of air from all sides, thus partly counterbalancing the Indian heat which could, otherwise, have been the uncomfortable feature of a completely covered mosque in India.¹⁷

E.B. Havell says: "The Muhammadan builders, dispensing with the use of materials provided by the Hindu temples, they

despoiled, here began to build for themselves, and by way of experiment they varied the arrangement of the roof and arched screens. Instead of placing the latter in the usual way in front of the liwan, or sanctuary and sometimes in front of the corridors on the side facing the courtyard, about 126 feet by 100 feet, by a series of 63 small domes of the usual Hindu construction supported on column, the corridors on three sides of the quadrangled being covered by similar series of transverse."¹⁸

Taj-ud-Din Feroz Shah, who was the eighth ruler of the Bahamani Dynasty was a towering personality in the medieval Deccan. His glorious achievements in the field of politics and culture, make his reign, which covers a period of twentyfive years, unique in history. He was a scholar-statesman who possessed in a rare combination the qualities of a scholar-statesman and a nation builder. He was a great scholar of his time, well-versed in all branches of literature and science. At the same time he was a social reformer with full knowledge of the realities of the situation, and a statesman who could handle men and affairs with perfect skill and sagacity. He recognised the Deccan society by introducing some of the important reforms which bore fruit in the age that followed. He was an outstanding personality that the Bahamani Dynasty was known in India and abroad.¹⁹

Ghulam Yazdani says: "The front of the building, which

was luxuriously adorned by encaustic tiles of various hues and shades all arranged in different designs, had two stately minarets at each side, raising to the height of 100 ft. These minarets also were decorated with tiles arranged in zigzag lines, a pattern which gave the building a most attractive appearance. The forms of the minarets are worthy of notice, especially as regards the top of the balconies, which are unlike anything else in India, but recall certain prototypes in Turkish, Arabia and Persia.²¹ Persia became all powerful in the cultural life of the late 15th century Deccan. The college constructed by Mahmud Gawan with its mosque and library, is an imitation of a college of Samarkand. It is about 265 feet by 180 feet in area, and is adorned with enamelled tiles.²² The influence of Iran on the architecture of the Deccan may further be illustrated by the fine minaret situated at the foot of the hill on which Daulatabad fort stands, known as Chand Minar. This is a solitary minaret built in 849/1449 in the approved Persian style. The minaret, like its two prototype, the minaret at Mahmud Gawan's Madrassah at Bidar erected in 876/1472, and the later solitary minaret of Ek Minar Ki Masjid at Raichur built in 919/1514, is absolutely round with balconies protruding round the structure to the air and light in as well as for the Mu'ezzin to ascend and call the Muslim to prayer. All the three minarets built within seventy-five years gradually slope from the bottom to the top in order to avert top-heaviness, and all

the three are crowned by the Bahamani dome. This style of minaret architecture persists in the two tall minarets of Rauza-i Shaikh at Gulbarga built by Yusuf 'Adil of Bijapur, but it has changed in the sense that much more of purely Indian influence has crept in.²³

Dr. Z.A. Desai says, "The increasing Persian influence on the Deccan architecture is best illustrated in the two buildings, the Chand Minar at Daulatabad and the Madarsah (or college) of Khwaja Mahmud Gawan at Bidar, which were built about that time. Both these monuments are wholly Persian in character. The influence is not partial or indirect, limited to the form and design or shape or outline of some architectural number or scheme of decoration, but it is entire in design, execution and decoration. Architecturally, therefore, these monuments are totally different to other structures. The Chand Minar, built in 1435, rises up with a slight taper to a total height of about 100 feet in four stages or storeys into which it is divided by projecting galleries."²⁴

The tombs of the later Bahamani kings at Bidar show fresh contacts with Persia, especially the tomb of Ahmad Shah Wali, with its Persian frescoes and gold, red and blue inscription. The Sola Kham Masjid (or sixteen pillared Mosque), built in the reign of Muhammad Shah at Bidar, and the palaces still extant, though they have lost their original splendour, are imposing to a degree and attractive.²⁵

Turning from these palace buildings of the two principal mosques at Bidar, the difference in treatment of the two types of structure, the secular and religious, is striking, for whereas the former are fanciful in their style and vivacious in their appearance, the latter are plain and sombre almost to austerity. The two forms of architecture reflect the contrast between the colourful pageantry of the court and the simple solemnity of the creed. These two mosques are the Jami Masjid, and what is known as the Sola Khamba or 'Sixteen Pillars', a name referring to a number of columns visible in its facade. Both are in the same sedate and unaffected style as that of the covered mosque at Gulbarga, but in both instances the buildings of Bidar examples have returned to the orthodox plan of an open courtyard, pillared sanctuary, and have surmounted by a dome. In the Sola Khamba mosque this dome is raised on a fairly tall sixteen-sided drum pierced with arched openings, an elaboration which adds considerably to the lightness of the effect.²⁶

But a building at Bidar so exotic in character as to be phenomenal, is the Madarsa, or college, founded in 1472 by one who figured prominently in the annals of the Bahamani dynasty, Mahmud Gawan, the minister of Muhammad Shah-III (Plate XLVIII, Fig.2) ... Here was an Islamia College, complete with lecture halls, library, mosque, and ample accommodation for both professors and students, in an architectural style resembling

in every particular respect those stately university buildings which adorn several Persian cities; in short it might have been moved bodily from the Rijistan at Samarkand. In spite of being seriously damaged by subsequent vicissitudes the plan and arrangements of this college are quite clear. Covering a rectangular space of 205 feet by 180 feet, it has conventional quadrangle in the centre, out of which open the halls and chambers which surrounded it on its four sides. Exteriorly in the middle of three of these sides are prominent semi-octagonal projections rising up to a considerable height and surmounted by "Tartar" domes, while the fourth side, which is the main facade, contains the entrance, and has two tall minars in three stages, one at each corner. Most of this exterior elevation is in three stories of arched window openings, and there is a wide parapet over all, but, true to the Persian tradition, the building does not rely, as do most architectural styles, on its composition of lines and forms, or in the variety and distribution of its solids and voids, or play of light and shade, but depends almost entirely on its surface treatment for effect, and for which its walls are specially prepared.²⁷ Of all the monuments at Bidar, those most genuinely expressive of the Bahamani dynasty are the tombs of these rulers, as although they bear the impress of the various art currents which found their way into the country at this time, as a whole, they represent the rational development of the Deccan style. These royal tombs are twelve in number, all very much of the same type, which is

an elaboration of their earlier examples of the dynasty of Gulbarga ... But in addition to the elevation at the base, there are indications of another change in the shape of certain domes of the Bahamani tombs, which is of some significance. This takes the form of a slight constriction in the lower contour, an inward return of its curve and therefore, displaying the first symptom of the movement towards the bulbous or so-called "Tartar" type of dome, which was afterwards to become almost universal in the later architecture of the country. The interior arrangements and construction of these tombs are similar to those of the Bahamani rulers at Gulbarga, but the Persian influence, also potent at this time in other directions, shows itself in the remains of their superb coloured tile-work, notably in that of Ala-ud-din Bahman (died 1458), where there are arabesque patterns equalling in beauty of design those of a sixteenth century Persian carpet.²⁸

Foreign influence is a vague term. If it signified anything, it means a desire for, even a deliberate seeking after, a foreign fashion. This is the keynote of the cultural history of the Deccan, and it is the clue to the individuality of the monuments of Bidar, Golkonda and Bijapur.

In 1527, the dynasty of the Barid Shahi Kings assumed power. To them most of the royal buildings at Bidar must be attributed. Enamelled tiles and relief plaster-work are used for establishment, the Cypress panels in plaster and the involved

design in the tiled panels being reminiscent of the Turkish textiles and Syrian decoration. The royal private apartment is beautified with a doorway inlaid with mother of pearl, which is directly comparable with similar work at Fatehpur Sikri. All this embellishment is of the sixteenth century. The mother of pearl inlay being of the last quarter²⁹. Here in similar materials is displayed most clearly the essential difference between the north and the south. In the Mughal north, Chinese, Indian Portuguese and English influences are intermingled with the Persian traditions, upon which the court fashions were based. Here, what influence there is, is Islamic and suggestive of the near East rather than of Safavid Persia.³⁰

The ruins of Gulbarga show no vestiges of Hindu influence at all, those of Bidar very little. Also the early architecture of the Kingdoms superseding the Bahamanis is free from Indian influence, Persia, still being the model of all new fashions; until towards the end of the sixteenth century a national Deccani art springs up.

The third period, in the evolution of the Muslim architecture of the Deccan, may be said to date from the decline of the Bahamani rule and the rise of the smaller states of Bijapur, Golconda, Bidar, Ahmadnagar, including Khandesh and Berar. During this period, Muslim culture became fully amalgamated with that of the indigenous population, and the rulers adopted the language of their subjects, as their

mother-tongue, and gave equal encouragement to local art and architecture as much as they gave their own. This period accordingly is found to be a fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideas in architecture. The buildings at Bijapur are the best specimens of this period.³¹

Shi'ism naturally, had an effect on the sacred architecture of the period, though it was not so marked in the time of Sultan-Quli. Strange as it might seem, while Tarikhi Muhamad Qutb Shah ascribes the construction of thousands of mosques to Sultan Quli, there is only one solitary mosque which is certain to have been built by him in the capital and that is the small Masjid-i-Safa, later called Jami 'Masjid, just outside the Bala Hisar Darwaz of Golkonda fort. The mosque is a very handsome structure constructed according to the approved Bahamani pattern with a single dome in the centre and another small dome covering the gateway, reminding one of the much larger structure which serves as the gateway to the Shah Bazar Masjid at Gulbarga.³²

As Sir Wolseley Haig says, Sultan Quli was endowed with that peculiar sympathy for ultrarefinement in art and literature which belonged to the Persian temperament, and it was he who laid the foundation of the style of architecture named after the Qutb-Shahi dynasty. It should, however, be noted that the 'eclectic' principle of the mixture of the Persian, Hindu and

Pathan styles was to be evolved after his death.³³

There was a transitional stage between the purely Persian art flourishing in the Deccan under the Bahamanis and their successor dynasties in the 14th to early 16th centuries, and the national Indian art there springing up towards the end of the 16th century. Basically this art, too, was Persian, but it was mixed with many ornamental additions of definite Hindu origin; and it was interpreted in the spirit which was as far as possible strange to that of Persia and central Asia, and as nearly as possible related to that of Hindu civilization. For the art of the old Muslim countries had always been architectural and very conscious of the geometrical fundamental of line, surface, wall, arch vault. But in the new Deccani art these characteristics gave way to another sculptural conception, a petrified representation of exuberant biological life, so characteristic for the genuine Hindu spirit. Walls dissolve into bundles of pillars, degenerate arches, cornices etc., suffocated by masses of ornaments, pillars become lotus stems, domes, big bulbs, spires lotus buds, cupolas drums, and so on. The centre of this new Deccani art, which was later in the 18th century to spread over the whole of India, was Bijapur.³⁴

It is well known that Ibrahim was a great admirer of Hindu dance and music so much so that he is said to have shown an inclination towards Hinduism, especially towards the veneration

of Saraswati, the goddess of music and art. In Bijapur he built the Anand Mahal. It was built by Ibrahim-II (1580-1626) in his new capital (since 1599) the Sangit Mahal (both with purely Hindu names) for his Hindu dancers and musicians.³⁵

Paintings

We can in fact trace these new tendencies as we turn from the architectural monuments, to the paintings of the period under review.

The Deccani paintings began with the later reign of Ibrahim-II. Its style had the fluid outline of Persian paintings under the impress of Riza Abassi. Mughal influence was also traceable; but the lurid colour scheme, especially the lavish use of gold ornaments and gold background attested to the presence of another, probably Hindu tradition, both unadulterated and juxtaposed ... Though it is not dated, it must be of about the same years, as certain architectural features represented in it are to be found at Sola-Khamba Masjid at Bidar which is regarded as contemporary to Gagan Mahal³⁶ in Bijapur, erected in the reign of Ali Adil Shah I. The architectural background on this miniature represents indeed a palace of the many stories type of the Gagan Mahal. The drawing and colouring of this background are almost Safavi - Persian as was to be expected in view of the long Persian tradition of Muhammadan Deccan;

but the composition prefers a primitive geometrical division of the surface which is not known to genuine Persian, but is found in Vijayanagar, early Gujarati and Rajaput arts, which must be medieval Hindu. ... It is thus not only evident that this Hindu style of art in Bijapur was closely connected with the Hindu dancers and musicians in favour with Ibrahim Shah, but that the pictorial as well as the musical traditions go back to at least 1570 A.D.³⁷

Mr Jagdish Mittal classifies school of painting as follows:

i) Bahamani school 1347-1527. The Bahamani Sultans ruled first from Gulbarga and then from Bidar. Although they were in close contact with the metropolitan centres of Persian art and their Kingdom was bordered on North, West, East and South by powerful and flourishing Hindu states which preserved the ancient tradition of paintings, the art of painting was not patronised by them ... Almost all the Bahamani Sultans paid great deference to Muslim divines and hold men and it is not wonder that painting had not received patronage at their hands.³⁸

ii) Painting under the Barid Shahis (1492-1609)

iii) Ahmednagar school (1490-1633).

The Nizam Shahi dynasty was founded in 1490 by the provincial Bahamani Governor of the region, Ahmad Nizamul Mulk Bahri and the foundation of the city of Ahmadnagar was laid in

1495. No paintings of the period of the first three rulers of the dynasty are known and the earliest works of this school are assigned to the reign of Murtaza Nizam Shah I (1565-1588).

The facial type and the treatment of certain trees remind us of the Ni'mat Nama (Robert Skelton, "The Ni'mat Nama: A Landmark in Malwa Painting") of C. 1505 in India Office Library, London. The flowering shrubs, the trees, the gold sky and the landscape in general, although inspired by Persian painting, have a freedom and a gay abandon not discerned in the latter. The bright gay colours add charm, and herald a typically new Dakhni tradition. The tall slender female figure, wear looped saris which have striped or floral designs, probably in the Hindu manner of Vijayanagar ... The outline of the female figures preserves also the sinuosity of the Vijayanagar tradition. The postures as well as the stances of the king seated on the throne are also reminiscent of the Vijayanagar painting tradition, and they inspired the feature painting at the neighbouring courts of Bijapur and Golkonda.³⁹

iv) The Bijapur school (1489-1686).

Of all the schools of Deccani painting that of Bijapur has excited the greatest interest and is justly treated as the best. Quite a number of paintings have been attributed to the school of Bijapur by different writers, while several more have been occasionally reproduced as belonging to the Persian or the

Mughal schools.

Mr Jagdish Mittal quoted from Briggs translation of the *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*; for example, Briggs states (Briggs Vol. III, p. 31) that Yusuf Adil Khan (1489-1510), the first ruler of the dynasty, "invited to his court many learned men and valiant officers from Persia, Toorkistan and Roam, also several eminent artists, who lived happily under the shadow of his bounty"⁴⁰ (Briggs Vol. II, p. 31). Briggs mentions that, "Ismal was adept in the art of painting, varnishing, making arrows, and embroidering saddle cloth." There is no doubt that the Bijapur court patronised painters. (Ali 'Adil Shah was a very keen bibliophile who maintained a staff of painters and book illustrators at his court.⁴¹

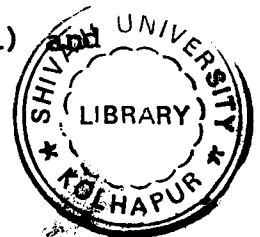
At this point we are confronted with the question: From where came this Hindu tradition in Bijapur? For, before this date Deccani Muhammadan civilization seems to have been more or less provincial Persian type; the monuments of architecture were purely Persian. What conclusion we can make about pictorial art leads the same direction. It is also a well known fact that literary life was essentially Persian. On the other hand there are the Hindu figures in the "*Najum-ul-Ulum*" manuscript, as well as in the miniature in the Baroda Museum, which must be regarded as the earliest Deccani ragmala illustration known closely related to the scenes of dancers on the great Durbar

terrace at Vijayanagar before the date of these earliest Bijapur paintings (1570). The Vijayanagara empire had been overthrown in the battle of Talikota (1565), and the destruction of its gigantic capital was not completed before 1567. It seems, therefore, very plausible to regard this whole Hindu current in Bijapur civilization as a result of the fall of Vijayanagar and of the emigration of her artisans and dancers to the victorious capitals, either as prisoners of war or as refugees.⁴²

The fall of Vijayanagar came quite unexpectedly; a few months were sufficient to reduce the proudest and most luxurious city of the south into a scene of desolation and ruins. Its buildings whose solid granite work had withstood the systematic destruction of the Muslim conquerors are admirable even today; its luxury furniture in gold, silver and precious stones had astonished all the foreign visitors; its paints had attracted attention of the Portuguese acquainted with the refined pictures of Renaissance art and its innumerable dancing girls and courtesans, accomplished and acknowledged as such by society, were famous in the whole of India,⁴³ was probable that the people who had accomplished all this, should all have fallen under the sword or have found refuge somewhere in the Hindu south which was in a state of general travail and insecurity? The Deccan Muslims had already passed the stage when every idolater was only worthy of being sent to hell. Since the

Bahamanis, Hindu were to be found in many posts of administration, Hindu ladies had married into the Muslim Zenanas, and Hindu dancing girls were appreciated by those inclined to luxurious pleasures. The war had indeed been a struggle between kings and aristocracies who had just before been allies and were connected by inter-marriage, not a war between Muslims and Hindus (though that sentiment was not absent). Would the Muslims not be desirous to avail themselves of the coveted luxuries of the fallen city?⁴⁴

... That furniture, dishes and vessels and dress material at Bijapur had been under the influence of the bronze and goldsmith's art of southern India, is evident from an analysis of the Deccani paintings. Also the taste for excessive gilding to be found in those paintings, must go back to the same source. In the buildings two currents of Hindu tradition can be traced. One represents genuine architectural devices (pillars, capitals, trabeate architectures and ceilings, perhaps also the re-duplicated arch); the other a transportation of bronze and gold work ornaments, especially of decorative rings and caps protecting wooden posts and beams, into a pillar and wall ornament. Now the Vijayanagar palaces had been constructed partly in wooden and were, according to the Portuguese accounts, richly decked with such bronze and gold work. There can be no doubt, that all these innovations were introduced in Bijapur and to a smaller degree also in Bidar (Rangin Mahal)



Golconda, by prisoners and refugees from Vijayanagar.⁴⁵ ... Here the Hindu art style, still discernible, is already assimilated into the official court art. As this assimilation was thus more or less accomplished before the years of Ibrahim's great infatuation for Hindu dance, music and religion and before the appearance of the first monuments in the new Deccani style, one is apt to conjecture that already in his early reign, the artisans, masons, carpenters, bronze and goldsmiths, painters and dancers, singers etc. from Vijayanagar had adopted themselves to the new milieu and had become a recognised section of the Hindu population of Bijapur. In Ali's reign Talikota was still too fresh in everybody's memory, and the newcomers, though protected and employed by the more liberal section of the nobles, were still strangers, and might have aroused the misgivings of the conservative people. The long and vigorous regency of his highly cultured mother, Chand Sultana had offered to the young Ibrahim II the opportunity not only to acquire a more liberal education, but also appreciate the Hindu traditions, never quite extinct in the great royal aristocratic zenanas of those times, and the art of Vijayanagar dancers and singers, no doubt incorporated into the royal establishment.⁴⁶

Influence of Hindu Architecture in the South

The temples of Muktagiri near Gawilgadha in Berar are like

the Sonagadha temples of the domes style (copied from the Muslim art). Further south in the Madras presidency, the influence of Islamic styles appears in the civil buildings of the Hindu rulers, in the palaces and pavilions of Vijayanagar and Chandragiri, Madura and Tanjore. The temples and other sacred buildings continued to be built in traditional lines although in the North even their style was modified in accordance with new style.⁴⁷

In spite of the fact that the Vijayanagar kingdom was continually at war with the neighbouring Muslim Kingdom, there appears to have been much religious tolerance and great appreciation of each other's culture. The Adil Shahi Sultans of Bijapur, like their more illustrious counterparts in the north, the Mughal emperors, were well known for their leanings towards Hinduism, and both the Adil Shahis of Bijapur and the Nizamshahis of Ahmadnagar freely patronised their Maratha chiefs and employed Hindu officers for their administration and Hindu troops for their armies. The Nizamshahis gave a great impetus to the Marathi language by making it the language of their official transactions. The Hindu rulers of Vijayanagara reciprocated the cultural liberalism of the Muslims. They took Muslim troops in their employ, encouraged Muslim traders and built mosques, for their worship. In their civil architecture they borrowed the art from their neighbours. A photograph of one

of the pavilions built before the downfall of Vijayanagar in 1565 A.D. is given by Fergusson. "It is a fair specimen of the picturesque mixed style which arose from the mixture of the Saracenic and Hindu styles."⁴⁸ It repeated cusped arches, slanting dripstones and unornamented justness of the remark."⁴⁹

The successors of the fallen Vijayanagar dynasty settled at Chandragiri⁵⁰ in the north Arcot District. There they built their palaces, the principal one of which presents a well-balanced facade of three storeys surmounted by turrets of pleasing form. Each floor consists mainly of a pillared hall, the piers are arched across both ways corbelled at the angles and closed with flat domes. The walls pierced with arches are built of brick, but the vaults are worked in stone. Tirumali Nayaks' palace at Madura⁵¹ which belongs to the seventeenth century is one of the most magnificent structures erected in the Hindu-Muslim style. The principal apartments are situated round a courtyard measuring 160 feet east and west and 100 feet north and south, and surrounded on all sides by arcades of very great beauty. The pillars which support the arches are of stone, 40 feet in height, and are joined by foliated brick arcades of great elegance of designs, carrying a cornice and an entablature. The celestial pavilion (Swarga Vilasan) stands on the west side of the court and measures 235 feet by 105 feet. It is arranged on the plan of a great mosque with three domes. In fact the whole structure, if not first related as a splendid mosque, is

marvellously like one.⁵² The central dome is supported on twelve columns, linked together by massive saracenic arches. Four similar arches are thrown across the corners and above these rests the octagonal drum which is pierced by clerestory windows. The drum is carried up and then changed from an octagon into a circular over which the dome is built. A second hall, 125 feet by 69 feet, is placed at the north-west corner of the main building and the two together correspond to the Diwan-i-Khas and Diwan-i-Aam of Muslim places. The building of the palace of Tanjore was begun by the Maratha chief who established his dynasty in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. It follows the architecture of the Madura palace and follows the same style.⁵³

The impact of Islam on Vijayanagar Empire had a remarkable effect upon its art. The emperors of Vijayanagara were in constant touch with the Musalman Kingdom of the Deccan for three and a half centuries.⁵⁴

This was evident during the first dynasty Harihara-I, in 1342, was acknowledged, according to Ibn Battuta, by the chief of Honavar and from that time the Hindus of Vijayanagar were constantly in touch with their foes.⁵⁵ The reign of Bukka-I was also one of struggle with the Musalmans. During the reign of Bukka-II Vijayanagar was invaded by Feroz Shah Bahamani. Ferishta says that the emperor of the Vijayanagar kingdom was

compelled to give his foe, the mad adventures of Devaraya-I after Nehal, the lovely maiden, brought Feroz Shah to Vijayanagar again. His successor Devaraya-II, in 1430, according to epigraphic sources, had 10,000 "Turuksha horsemen" in his service, probably these are the Mussalmans. Ferishta refers to, though he speaks of arches, and Moans probably mounted archers. Considering his dangerous situation in 1442 A.D. Devaraya-II enlisted 2,000 Muhammadan archers in his service and promised them toleration. The visit of Abdur Razzak reveals that Devaraya-II had ambassadors even from Persia. During the regime of Virupaksha-I, Muhamad Gawan, Minister of Muhammad Shah-II, captured Goa in 1469.⁵⁶

Nikitin, during the time of Narasimha-I, evidently alludes to Musalman archer, horsemen when he says that the Khorassians mounted in full armour⁵⁷ were sent after the infantry. During Krishnadeva Raya's reign the conflict continued probably in 1520, in the triumphant battle of Raichur, Krishnadeva Raya dealt a crushing blow on the Adil Shah of Bijapur.⁵⁸ Paes, the Portuguese traveller, saw the Musalman army in the Vijayanagar service "Then the Moors one must not forget them", he writes, "For they are also in the review with their shields, javelins and Turkish bows, with many bombs and spears and fire missiles; and I was much astonished to find amongst them men who knew so well how to work these weapons."⁵⁹ He also says that they belonged to the king's bodyguard. Nuniz also says that Krishnadeva

Raya sent the Moors in the Royal service to lead the vanguard of his enemy.⁶⁰ During the Achyuta Raya's reign, Ferishta and Nuniz both agree that Ibrahim Adilshah advanced so far as Vijayanagar and returned after he was given many valuable presents.⁶¹ Nuniz also adds that Achyuta Raya brought good Persian horses from Arab merchants.⁶²

Sadasiva Raya seems to have had a Muhammedan subordinate called Amana Mulukka, probably representing Ain-col-Mulk;⁶³ during the same reign Ali Adil Shah sent an ambassador to his ally, Rama Raya, the son of the Hindu monarch and who was adopted by Rama Raya's wife as her stepson.⁶⁴

Rama Raya had in his service an Abyssinian officer named Ambar Khan who for some unknown reason, was turned out of his estate which was given to Prince Ibrahim of Golconda. As a consequence the latter in the quarrel slew the former as well as his brother.⁶⁵ Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur in 1557, on Hussein Shah invading his kingdom, took refuge at Vijayanagar, and probably at this time occurred the incident. Ferishta speaks about Rama Raya that he was also on friendly terms with Ibrahim Qutb Shah of Golconda as a letter of the former to the latter shows.⁶⁶ The expeditions and depredations of Rama Raya brought about the union of the Deccan Musalman kingdom, which proved fatal to Vijayanagar in 1565. Its defeat was mainly brought about by the dastardly desertation of two Musalman generals in the

Vijayanagar service after Tirumala's return to Vijayanagar Murtaza Nizam Shah in order to be revenged on Ali Adil Shah.⁶⁷

I state here Hindu influence on Muslim architecture as follows. Firoz counteracted these purely foreign cultural influences by the fillip he gave to associating Hindu in the administration, and we see Hindu influences creeping into the general culture and architecture of the Deccan to a very large extent. It is the intermingling of the Iranian, the Hindu and the Delhi styles which has made Firoz's tomb most imposing sculpture at Gulbarga ... We see here the Perso-Bahamani arch supported by Hindu jambs on either side of doorways, and the brackets supporting the Chhajja remind one of the brackets in the Hindu temples of the Deccan.⁶⁸

Only two monuments can be ascribed with confidence to the period from 1294 to 1347 - the Jami Masjid at Daulatabad (C. 1315) and the Deval Mosque at Bodhan of the reign of Muhammad Tughlak. But both are only adaptations of Hindu shrines and have no real bearing on the history of Islamic art.⁶⁹ In that of Ghiyyas-ud-din, at the close of the fourteenth century, Hindu craftsmanship begins to appear in the carvings of the prayer niche. A generation later, the splendid mausoleum of Firuz Shah and his family measuring externally 153 feet by 76 feet, bears ⁱwitness to the growing strength of this Hindu influence as well as to the new preference for Persian

ornament.⁷⁰

Under Vijayanagar, south Indian art attained a certain fullness and freedom of rich expression in keeping with the general consciousness of the great task of the empire, namely the preservation and development of all that remained of Hinduism against onslaughts of Islam.⁷¹ But the contact of Vijayanagar emperor with the Musalmans left an unforgettable impression on the art and architecture of Vijayanagar and in this respect commercial intercourse between Vijayanagar and the Muslim Kingdoms of the Deccan is another important factor to be considered. The Musalman regiment was in the service of the Vijayanagar emperors and the soldiers are represented on walls and pillars. A slab of one of the gateways of the city shows the figures of a man who is obviously a Muhammadan guard. On the pillars of the Kalyan Mandapa of the Vitthalswami temple at Vijayanagar on springing horses ride bearded riders, evidently Muhammadans. The carvings of the House of Victory give some more interesting details about these Muslims in the city. Sometimes the camel evidently an important animal though heard of from ancient times on the west coast, is probably let by Musalmans. In another place two bearded Muslims dance bearing a small round drum. War scenes, too, are not lacking. The remarkable Muhammadan painting throws a flood of light upon social life in the Vijayanagar era and admirably confirms the observations of travellers. There is an excellent picture

of the engagement in the battle of Rakshsa Tangadi, between the Muhammadans and the Hindus. The Muhammadan artist has shrewdly eliminated whatever heroism the Hindus might have naturally displayed. So, here and there a Vijayanagar horseman fights hand to hand with a Muhammadan rider, but in the whole picture, the Musalman artist has been careful enough to give the Hindu the worst of the battle. Then follows the retreat of the Hindu army, and it is a mournful sight. The Hindu leader is portrayed as leading his soldiers forward, but his apparently cowardly horsemen, unable to stand the onslaught of one or two Musalman riders, are retreating in haste. The spirit of the situation is well brought out. What is more mournful still is that the picture shows the savage execution of Rama Raya. The great Hindu leader is laid fettered on the earth, while a Sultan, probably Hussain Nizam Shah, is seen speaking with his hand raised to Ibrahim Qutb Shah of Golconda on horseback, who is painted on another panel. It is possible that the former says to the fallen Raya, "Now I am avenged on thee!" "Let God do what He will to me".⁷²

In the panels of the House of Victory some times prisoners are brought before the King. Behind the helpless prisoners are marching a number of foot soldiers with shields and spears.⁷³ In another picture captives are brought before the king. Probably the king is Krishnadeva who built the edifice, according to Paes.⁷⁴ These are probably two captive nobles of

the army of Ismail Adil Shah of Bijapur, with whom there were some wars before the great siege of Rachol in 1520. In this panel there are seven people, the most notable of these being the king seated who has raised his left hand. His right elbow leans against the cushion at his back. His right foot rests upon a stool placed before the throne, while his left leg is placed crosswise upon his right leg. Some wanton Vandal has demolished his face. Behind him stand two courtiers, the first figure in front of the King is evidently a general, for in his right hand he holds an unsheathed sword which leans upon his shoulders, while with his left hand he is pointing to the three persons who follow him. The first two are evidently Muhammadans, for they wear long gowns and have beards as well. Their hands are clearly tied down and they are saluting the emperor. The third one, a freeman, is quite similar to these and is probably a citizen of the city, come to act as an interpreter.⁷⁵ The contact with Islam left such an impression upon the Vijayanagar people that it led unconsciously to the development of quite a new school of architecture during the Aravidu Dynasty.

There are state buildings among the ruins of Vijayanagar even today which were constructed more or less in the style prevalent in the northern Sultans; such are the Baths, the so-called elephant-stables, the Lotus palace, the tower in one of the corners of the Danaik's Enclosure, the northern tower, the zenana enclosure, and the Guards quarters. The architecture

of these buildings has led the eminent historian, the late Father Heras to argue that they were created by the Sultans during their sojourn in the city after the great battle of January 1565. But he gives no evidence for his surmise except the style of architecture. And it is now to know the fact that Vijayanagar was destroyed not by the victorious Sultans but by marauders who took advantage of the removal of Vijayanagar Court to the south.⁷⁶ Moreover, there are still a number of lofty and stately buildings such as the Vitthalswami temple, Hazara Rama temple, Krishna's temple, Achyuta Raya's temple, Kadalai Kulla temple and many others which are still standing in all their glory and whose style contrasts with the buildings enumerated above. On the other hand, even the palace of the Rayas in far off Chandragiri shows a definite bias in favour of what may be called the Indo-Persian architecture.⁷⁷

Havell says that they originally formed "the mosque built by Deva Raj II for his Muhammadan troops". The number of such troops is estimated to be over a lac, and it is quite possible that the great building which has nothing 'Hindu' about it, was originally a mosque.⁷⁸ It is only natural that the court was more affected by the ways of the Sultans than the common people, and the portrait of the regement, Ramraja, which has come down to us has the dress and the demeanour which make him look like one of the contemporary Muslim sovereigns.⁷⁹

Though India had intimate connection with these lands (Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor) from the mediaeval days, it is erroneous to think that the Muhammadan invaders introduced this principle of radiating arch into India particularly when a very similar arch of the Chaitya window existed in Buddhist art. The carved entrance to one of the rock-cut hermitages in Bihar near Gaya called the Lomas-rishi cave gives a clear idea of this radiating arch. This hermitage is considered to be one of those dedicated by Ashoka to the Ajivika sect and dates from about the 3rd century.⁸⁰ The great mosque of Altamish at Ajmere, built in 13th century, being one of the first Muslim structures in India, is compared with Chaitya window of the XIX cave at Ajantha.⁸¹ The similarity between the two is obvious, and the influence of the latter on the former could neither be improbable nor illogical. This arch was naturally reared by the Deccani Sultans of Bijapur and Gulbarga. Naturally, the Vijayanagar Emperor must have seen these structures owing to their contact already traced.

In Vijayanagar itself there are many buildings where Muslim influence becomes apparent. "The history" says Havell, "of the mutual relations between Hindu and Musalman is plainly told in the remains of the buildings of the Moorish quarter of Vijayanagar".⁸² This is purely true, but the vestiges of what Havell calls "the Moorish quarter" mentioned by Paes cannot now be discovered. Abdur Razzak says, "Although the king

possesses a considerable number of elephants in his dominions, the largest of these animals are kept in the palace in the interior of the first and second fortresses, between the north and the west." He also adds, "Each had a separate compartment, the walls of which are extremely strong and the roof composed of strong pieces of wood. The neck and back of these animals are bound with chains and end of which is strongly fastened to the top of the roof."⁸³

In fact the Jami Masjid built by Ali Adil Shah I of Bijapur after 1565, repeats the several cells of Hindu building and nearly all the arches are similar to those seen at Vijayanagar ... the several apartments are crowned by small domes concealed in the thickness of the roof and crowned by a terraced roof exactly as at Vijayanagar. In Vijayanagar structure between the two enemies, the walls are ornamented on the top with these similarly small arches, with one fairly large arch below, which gives a variety to the whole edifice ... It is quite probable that the central square of this mosque at Vijayanagar which had a two-storeied roof was crowned by a dome larger than any existing on the side, just like the dome on the Jumma Masjid, those now can be seen no more. This Vijayanagar mosque has pointed arches which are similar to those which crown the other structures in the city. This is seen for example in buildings called the "Guard's Quarters", the "Concert Hall" as well as "Rama Raya's Treasury", in which the foliated arch of the Hindu

shrine is executed by Hindu craftsmen for purely ornamental purposes.⁸⁴ No doubt this arch resembles much of the structural bases of arches of the Adil Shahi-Pir-Ki-i-Masjid at Bijapur. Nevertheless though this arch must have originated from the Buddhist "Kudu" appearing on the roof of the Hindu shrines like the Vitthalswami temple at Vijayanagar, its Musalman influence must not be lost sight of ... strange to say, in the ruins of Vijayanagar no much purely Musalman buildings are found today, for these structures are of the Arvidu style. Although they have the pointed arch, still show another arches the Kurtimukha, and in the case of the lotus Mahal, and within, on the plastered walls of this building are depicted images of Hindu deities which no faithful Musalmans would have tolerated. Exactly similar buildings are seen at Chandragiri, Penukonda, Jinji and Madura, which were all cities of the Vijayanagar Emperors.⁸⁵

The "Lotus Mahal" is another building of this type in which the foliated arch appears at its best. This building is evidently not the same structure which Durate Barbosa refers to because he describes an edifice which is much larger than the Lotus Mahal but it is probably that this was obviously the palace of Rama Raya referred to in the Svaramelakalanidhi. It is said that there Rama Raya had a palace called "Ratna Kuta" constructed by his minister, Rama Amatya, and he was struck by admiration as it excelled even Vijayam, the palace of the gods. In this palace

surrounded by extensive gardens adorned with statues and cool tanks abounding with swans, he spent his time absorbed in literature, music and other art.⁸⁶

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