

# Masulipatnam and Cambay

A HISTORY  
OF TWO  
PORT TOWNS  
1500-1800

Sinnappah Arasaratnam  
Ceylon  
Aniruddha Ray

Masulipatnam  
and  
Cambay

A history of two port-towns 1500-1800



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Sinnappah Arasaratnam  
and  
Aniruddha Ray

*with a foreword by*  
Prof. Irfan Habib



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## Foreword

Economic historians have shown an increasing interest in the environment in which Indian oversea trade was conducted in pre-colonial times. This has called for studies of the relationship between hinterland and port, between inland political power and merchants, and between different sets of merchants. After 1498, the European intrusion, with its disruption of the preceding 'circular flow' and its growth into dominance, legitimately tends to occupy the centre-stage. Quite naturally, there have been a number of explanations for the European success. Neils Steensgaard, developing van Leur's theory, saw it as the result of the triumph of the centralization and concentration of merchant-capital, achieved by the East India Companies, over the mass of small units of indigenous capital 'pedlars'; M.N. Pearson underlines the indifference of the large land-powers to overseas trade owing to its relative insignificance as source of revenue; Ashin Das Gupta assumed a contraction of the hinterland (at least in relation to Surat) as a consequence of the decline of the Mughal Empire, which undermined the strength of indigenous capital. None of these theories quite fit the other picture drawn by C.A. Bayly in which colonial rule seems to arise out of a creative development of Indo-British collaboration.

The large canvases on which historical analysts of different schools and traditions paint have, however, to have their details drawn from researches directed at more limited areas. It is by such studies too that the larger hypotheses can be tested, sustained or challenged. It should therefore be particularly welcome that Professor S. Arasaratnam and Aniruddha Ray have given us studies of two ports, Machchhilipatnam (Masulipatnam) and Khambayat (Cambay), tracing their fortunes over the three centuries, 1500-1800. The studies aim at working out the commercial and administrative histories of the two cities and examining how commerce and politics interacted there. The source-material used is largely (and necessarily) in English, Dutch and French. This

explains the Europeanized forms in which Indian names often occur in these two studies, though "Mirza Thomas" for Mirza Tahmasp on p. 258 should, perhaps, have been re-Indianized. The authors have done their best to correct the obvious biases in their material by a combination of moderate scepticism and judicious selection.

At first sight, the two cities appear to have had little in common. One is situated on the Bay of Bengal, the other on the Arabian Sea. For much of the period Masulipatnam belonged to a regional state, and Cambay to an all-India empire. In later times, Masulipatnam passed into French and British control directly from Mughal (or the Nizam's) hands; Cambay pursued its existence as a port-principality for over forty years, before it finally came under full British possession. Nor did Cambay achieve, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the size of trade which passed through Masulipatnam, being often little more than a satellite of Surat. The local mercantile classes also were differently composed, and impression one would already have gained from Arasaratnam's fundamental work, *Merchant Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast*. Yet there was one identical factor, viz., the European Companies. Their mode of working, whether on the East or the West Coast, was the same. Masulipatnam and Cambay could, then, show how these ports, differently situated and administered as there were, responded to a common challenge.

One important element, which one can see as constant, in all the massive detail explored by Professors Arasaratnam and Ray, is that of simple force. Masulipatnam and Cambay did not see their trade dry up, their merchants ruined or turned into miserable compradors, by the success of the English Company, in simple 'free-trade' competition; at all crucial turns, it was the Company's increasing capacity to call the tune by seizure of ships and deploying force on land that enabled it to claim and enforce privileges, and to subvert indigenous authorities.

There is one other standing fact which Arasaratnam and Ray only marginally refer to, but which may be considered in the context of the particularly heavy decline which struck both Masulipatnam and Cambay in the second half of the eighteenth century. They do not directly deal with it, because it does not technically come within the history of either port. This is the gradual British conquest of India, beginning with the Carnatic Wars, Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764). The conquests not only provided the English with enormous revenues out of local taxation to sustain an expanding trade without import of bullion or capital. These also constricted and distorted the pattern of inland long-

distance trade, since Bengal silk, cottons and other commodities tended now to be largely monopolized for the foreign market, and the demand for luxury products by Indian aristocrats fell as their territories were seized and incomes reduced. Masulipatnam had no longer a rich hinterland (once extending, in the case of import of elephants, even to northern India), and Arasaratnam notes the drying up of its trade with both Hyderabad and Bengal. The textile industry of Gujarat, so heavily dependent upon overland silk imports from Bengal, withered, and Ray notes the heavy fall in the value of English Company's purchases of piece-goods at Surat and the replacement of textiles by agate and cornelian at Cambay.

The two studies also offer rich fare to historians with interests other than economic. The descriptions that Arasaratnam gives of the long wooden bridges over the marsh at Masulipatnam and Ray of the port administration at Cambay must appeal to the curiosity of students of local history. The Maratha interventions in Cambay administration and revenues that Ray brings out in Chapter 9 are of relevance to the debate over the nature of eighteenth-century Maratha polity. The contrasts the Maratha system offered to its Mughal predecessor are particularly visible in Ray's account.

I hope the two studies I have been honoured by being asked to write a Foreword for, will have both a large readership and an influence on the general interpretation of the eighteenth century that they so well deserve.

IRFAN HABIB

*Aligarh*  
*20 June 1994*



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This research project was conceived and initial work begun in the Department of History, University of New England when Professor Ray was a Visiting Fellow under the University's Research Fellowship scheme. We wish to thank the University, its Internal Research Grants Committee and the Department of History for their generous assistance which was crucial in the planning stages of the project. Miss Madeleine Hyson, senior Administrative Assistant to the Department, was extremely helpful at all stages in getting the manuscript to press and both authors owe her a deep debt of gratitude. She has put up with much pressure from us and has never complained.

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S. ARASARATNAM

A. RAY

## Introduction

In this monograph, the two authors have set out to deal with the history of two ports of the Indian subcontinent. The two ports covered—Cambay and Masulipatnam—have each their own distinct characteristics and a distinct personality in the context of the chronological period that has been studied. Yet they also betray some common features in their development and historical existence. The two authors have taken different approaches in their treatment of the subject, partly conditioned by their respective styles of history writing and partly, probably to a larger extent, by the nature of the sources they have available to them.

The study of pre-colonial port-towns and port-settlements is in an embryonic stage of development. The attention of maritime historians has so far been centred on the colonial port-settlements and their eventual growth as metropolitan port-cities dominating a vast hinterland as well as emerging as important administrative centres. Even in this historiography, it may be argued that the early phase of the development of these ports has not been as intensely studied as their nineteenth and twentieth century growth. In this situation, it is all the more important that we direct our attention to ports of the pre-colonial period and look at the dynamics of the development or non-development of these ports. There are a number of questions to be investigated and, in this monograph, we have only begun to ask and attempt to answer a few of these.

An obvious issue for investigation is the role of the ports in the overseas trade of the Indian subcontinent and of the states systems of which they were a part. An integral part of this is the way in which the particular port became integrated in the oceanic trading systems eastward and westward of the port. On this subject, there is a good deal of data for the immediate pre-colonial period from a European point of view, the early modern period, i.e. the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. There is a growing historiography to draw upon and in the

following pages the two authors have dealt with the trading world of the two ports, Cambay and Masulipatnam, in some detail. Both Cambay and Masulipatnam are seen to have played active roles in the Indian Ocean regional trading systems. Cambay started as a major player in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, looking both east and west and was hailed as a prominent port in the Indian Ocean trading world. Masulipatnam began its career somewhat later, towards the end of the sixteenth century but soon rose to be an important port in the eastern Indian Ocean with arms stretching towards Southeast Asia and westwards to western India and west Asia.

In both the ports, the states systems in which they were located has had an important impact on their operations and their longevity. Cambay was a prominent port of the Sultanate of Gujarat and its initial growth was greatly favoured by the patronage of the ruling élite. The conquest of Gujarat by the Mughals had an immense effect on that port and the Mughals consciously favoured Surat as the major outlet in western India. This, combined with the shifting coast and sandbanks, adversely affected Cambay but Ray has shown that it did not totally destroy the port. On the contrary the thrust of his argument is that Cambay and its immediate hinterland continued to play prominent roles in the overseas trade of the Mughal empire. Thereafter the Gujarat region becomes the home of a gripping contest between the Marathas and the Mughals from the mid-eighteenth century and the English, as an independent third party, were busy taking the pickings.

Masulipatnam also underwent a very important change to its hinterland states system. Golconda, which had fostered the birth and growth of this port into an international outlet, was destroyed and annexed by the Mughals. This does not, of course, necessarily explain the decline of Masulipatnam, though in one sense this change is relevant to an understanding of the decline. Golconda was a state with only an eastern outlet to the sea and this geographical factor forced the development of this port as its major entrepôt. Large parts of interior Golconda, including the important consuming centre of the capital Golconda, were fed by the ports to the east led by Masulipatnam. When the Mughals annexed Golconda, this compulsion was not there as the empire had eastern and western coastal outlets and the important trading region of Gujarat was across the frontiers of this subah. Mughal Hyderabad continued to be supplied from Masulipatnam but also supplemented its trade through western and northern routes to Gujarat and Rajasthan.

A mercantile system of directed trade which Golconda founded in Masulipatnam to enable its growth was double-edged, admittedly contributing to this growth as well as sometimes working to its detriment. It contributed to the growth of the port in directing investment into commerce as well as into shipping. Narsapore and Madapollam, in close proximity to Masulipatnam, on the branches of the Godavari river, were developed as ship-building centres with state support. At the same time, excessive state interference led to periods of instability and decline of trade in Masulipatnam. Monopolies and arbitrary imposts on merchants were exercised intermittently by ambitious havaldars and district governors. The Mughal state, when it took over from Golconda, did not see fit to continue this mercantilist system centred on Masulipatnam. The imperial state had other centres of trade and commercial revenue. The subah authorities located in Hyderabad had other priorities. It is significant that with the establishment of Mughal authority over Masulipatnam, European private trade grew further. The Mughals had no fundamental interest in continuing the system founded by Golconda and centred on the port of Masulipatnam.

The timing of the Mughal conquest is also significant. It came when Asian trade was at its most competitive and when Europeans were pushing their participation in that trade to great heights. The massive push made by Europeans in Masulipatnam in the 1680s, in the last years of the Golconda Sultanate, has been noted in later chapters. Furthermore, the Mughal empire itself was having very pressing preoccupations inland all over the subcontinent. The resources crisis that historians of Mughal decline have written about was beginning to appear. The period of interest and involvement in overseas trade by imperial and noble élites was passing. All this affected Mughal commitment to Masulipatnam and to the maintenance of its position as a window on Indian Ocean trade. This is reflected in the nature of the administrative arrangements made by the empire in their coastal lands. The challenge to Mughal authority put up by Andhra zamindars and rajas further diverted their attention. Masulipatnam had moved away from being the premier port of a kingdom to one of several ports of an extensive empire.

The varied time span in the treatment of the two authors also forms an interesting contrast, reflecting the nature of the historical process through which these two ports passed. Masulipatnam's growth coincides with the consolidation and prosperity of the Golconda state.

The historical evidence of this growth is most intense for that period, from the 1620s to the 1680s. From this evidence we see something of the nature of the trade links of the port in the Indian Ocean world and of the internal structure of the port and its administration during the process of urbanization. The evidence tapers off as the port loses its significance in Indian Ocean trade in the eighteenth century, though it is possible that a detailed investigation of Mughal subahs and taluq records would yield more information on the port and its hinterland. The author has not been able to do this. Cambay, as noted above, has a longer history, yet there is not great deal of evidence generated during the period of the Sultanate of Gujarat and the heyday of the Mughal empire in the seventeenth century. This is understandable as all the attention in this later period is on Surat and Cambay is one of several feeder ports to that great entrepôt. The evidence on Cambay increases in volume in the middle and later years of the eighteenth century as it becomes the seat of the Nawab and as Marathas establish themselves in the vicinity and want a share of the commercial and other resources of the region. English involvement in this, especially after their conquest of the Surat castle, means that we are left with an abundance of almost daily information on the political struggle, though it is admittedly from an English Company perspective. Consequently the author is able to spread out the story into the end of the eighteenth century and beyond and talk about the daily contests and travails of the port and its hinterland.

The diversity in treatment by the two authors also reflects the nature of the two ports in their relation to the hinterland. The weaving centres from which Masulipatnam drew its goods were at a considerable distance from the port and the major rice and textile-producing villages were up the Godavari delta rather than the Krishna on which the port was located. Cambay by comparison was right in the middle of a cluster of weaving villages and producing centres. Over time, Cambay itself developed suburban centres of production. As the seat of the nawab, it had close communication with the near and distant hinterland. When the Marathas established themselves in the region and claimed a share of the revenues of many districts, Cambay was drawn into an intricate political tangle with constant intense military action in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The author has sketched this conflict in great detail, showing the balance of forces between the nawab, the Marathas and the English at Surat. He has

shown how Cambay's trade persisted throughout this century, ebbing and flowing according to short-term political conditions.

The evidence presented by Ray shows the continuing involvement of Cambay, both in the trade to west Asia and as a feeder of the Surat trade. The west Asia connection is persistent and indeed the trade sometimes grew under difficult internal political conditions. The trade to Mokha and Busora continued throughout this period and fits in with the evidence presented by other scholars of a growth in the trade of west Asia in the second half of the eighteenth century. Cambay continues as a supplier of textiles both in direct exports to west Asia and as a feeder to Surat. Ray's evidence on the continuity of the production processes is interesting and should contribute to our reconsideration of trade and politics in eighteenth century India. An interesting feature in the trade of Cambay highlighted by Ray is the emergence of a brisk trade in arangoes, a type of bead made of carnelian, mined in the hinterland. The exporters, including the English, had to organize a large labour force to cut and polish these stones in the required quantities. This aspect of the production process is worth further study.

The theme of European inputs into the development of both these ports is to be found in both accounts, though again, after the mid-eighteenth century, the two diverge and go their own ways in respect of English influence. In Cambay, European influence dates back to the early sixteenth century when Portuguese penetration of Gujarat brought them to that port where they had an extensive presence. Masulipatnam was outside the Portuguese system, though they did try to extend their influence over it. The two Companies, English and Dutch, had a major influence in the trade of the two ports, though in Cambay the Companies had to restrict their physical presence to Surat. The Mughal administration of Surat jealously guarded the centralization of all export trade at Surat. Cambay was a feeder port for the investment of the Companies where their brokers and middlemen looked for goods for export. With the expansion of English power, the effect on each of the ports in the first phase diverges. In north Coromandel, after the English expelled the French and acquired hegemony in Hyderabad and the Carnatic, Masulipatnam did not feature in overseas trade at all. The English Company had its major seat in the port of Vizagapatnam which became their chief port for shipment in this region. The French shipped goods at Yanam and the Dutch at Jagannaikpuram. All these ports were to the north of

Masulipatnam and better situated from the point of view of weaving villages. The English used Masulipatnam as a seat of administration to control other residencies in Injeram, Madapollam and Ganjam. Thus mid-eighteenth century saw the end of Masulipatnam as an Indian Ocean port.

With Cambay, the situation was different. The nawab and the Marathas were still forces to be taken into account. The British were in control at Surat but required the links with Cambay and the limited commerce that was being carried out there. Company investment continued in and around Cambay and contributed to keeping alive economic activity of the port and the hinterland. Customs revenues were coming in and money supply was constantly being replenished. In this sense Cambay enjoyed a continuity which was lacking in Masulipatnam. The decline was gradual and largely painless, giving time for the various groups to adjust to change. The existence of a large commercial centre in the vicinity, Surat, now firmly under English control, had a cushioning effect on commercial groups of Cambay. They could always migrate to that port and carry on their trading activities from there.

Another element in the European impact is the growth of European private investment and trade in these two ports and their surroundings. Masulipatnam saw an increase in private European trade, as well as of their physical presence in the second half of the seventeenth century. This increased shipping and investment in the port. Permissive Golconda policies led to the growth of the European presence in neighbouring places such as Narsapore, Madapollam, Kakinada and Yanam. With the decline of the port, this presence also disappeared in the course of the eighteenth century and reappeared only in the last decades of the century. When this happened, it was not in the port of Masulipatnam but in Vizagapatnam and the French settlement of Yanam as well as in some inland weaving centres. Cambay and its surroundings were more tightly controlled administratively by the Mughals and private settlement was discouraged. What did develop was private trade of English Company officials located in Cambay and of several English merchants of Surat. This private trade in textiles, indigo and arangoes kept the trade of Cambay going for many years.

In both ports, climatic and physical changes had an adverse impact. The changes that took place to the approaches to Cambay at the end of the sixteenth century had been already noted. Cambay thereafter lived with the problems of silting and of shifting sandbanks. Ray has

convincingly shown that this was not a major factor in the changing fortunes of commerce in Cambay. In Masulipatnam, the river which could admit small boats over the bar through most of the seventeenth century, appears to have become much shallower and useless for any shipping. Important changes seem to have taken place to the outflow of the Krishna river in the nineteenth century. Frequent cyclonic storms and the pounding of the surf transformed the ocean-front of the port.

It is the hope of the two authors that, in the following pages, they have made some contribution to the understanding of what may be called traditional Indian port-towns. They have attempted to present evidence, some of it hitherto unpublished, and raise questions which other scholars may want to follow.

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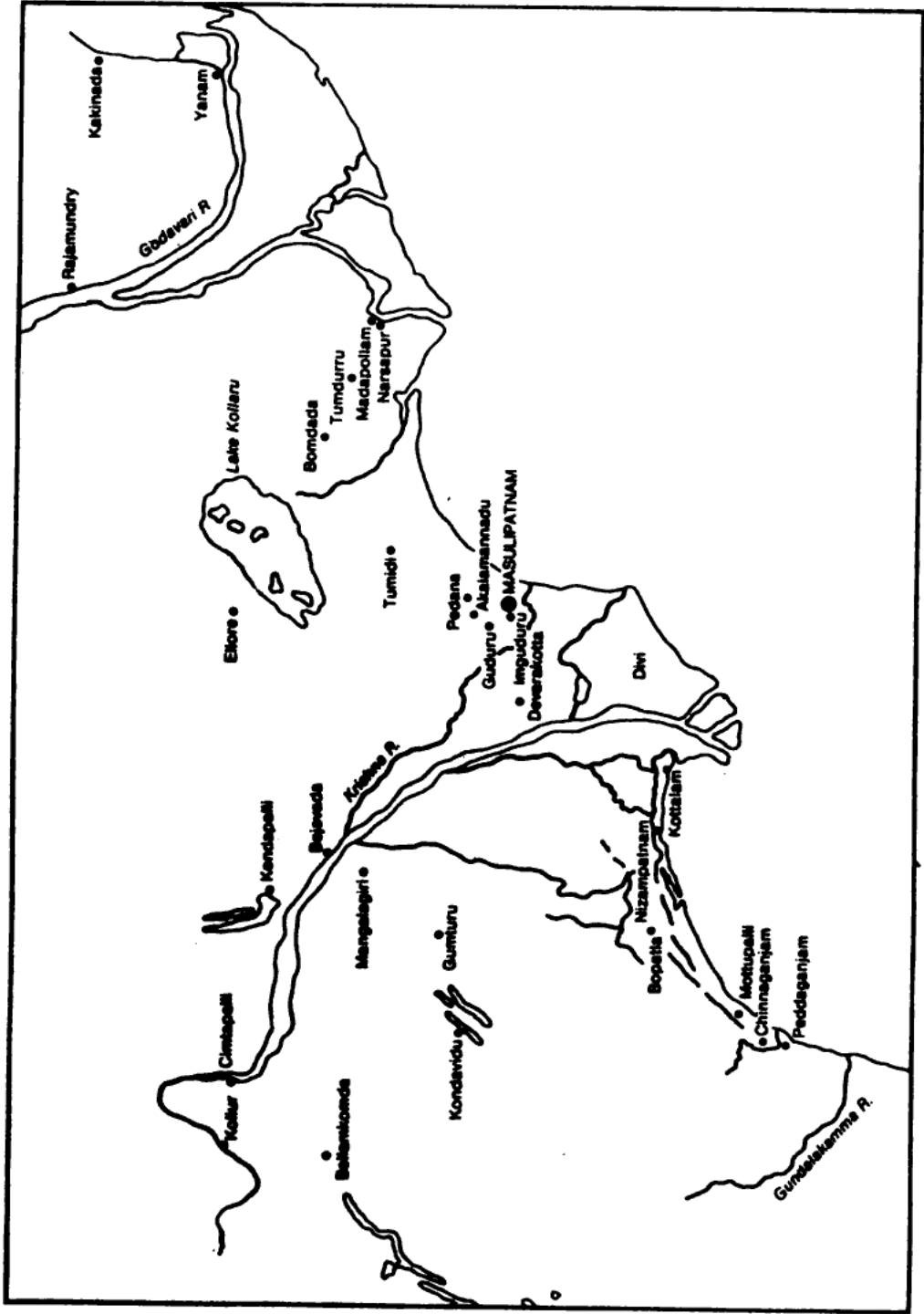




**PART ONE**

**MASULIPATNAM**

**S. Arasaratnam**



Map 1. Masulipatnam and its Dependencies.

## CHAPTER 1

### General Description—Origins and Growth

#### I

Masulipatnam was referred to in Golconda official records as the auspicious port-city (*bandar-i-mubarak*) and occupied a special economic status during the century of its administration by the Golconda sultanate. Yet the perception of this port coming through contemporary records is mixed and contradictory in nature, praised for some of its characteristics, reviled and hated for others. It appears to have produced extremes of approval and hate from observers of the seventeenth century. It is thus claimed as an excellent harbour and a dangerous roadstead, healthy and airy while also being putrid and of foul stench, well-watered and swampy, good stately buildings and dangerously congested streets, a place of extensive and busy commerce and of rigorous state monopolies. While every feature of these descriptions has some element of truth, taken together they express the contradictory and complex nature of the climate, physiognomy and society of this port-city. They also reveal the subjective nature of the evidence one has to work with. The city was all things to all people; no-one in the seventeenth century could ignore it.

In the way it grew in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, consolidated itself through a good part of the seventeenth century and stagnated and declined slowly and unsteadily in the eighteenth, it possessed a *persona* all its own in Indian Ocean ports of that period. The contradictions are first seen in the physical qualities which this port possessed—its climate, its geology, its environment and its air. Masulipatnam is situated at one of the many exits of the River Krishna and its tributaries into the Bay of Bengal and these tributaries form an alluvial plain called the Krishna delta. One branch of the river falls into the sea at Pt. Divi while the major stream breaks

up into three mouths and discharges itself further to the south. Pt. Divi is an important navigational mark for ships sailing into Masulipatnam. From Pt. Divi, the coast stretches north-northwestwards and forms a semi-circular bay in which Masulipatnam lies. In this whole stretch a number of branches of the Krishna fall into the sea and deposit large quantities of earth forming shoal flats along the coast. The coast is of low level and the rise and fall of tide is about 4 to 5 feet in the spring at the mouth of these rivers. The shore is very flat and the depth in approaching it is not more than half a fathom for the distance of a mile. Large ships bound for the Masulipatnam road are advised to keep along the edge of the shoal flats and not approach closer than 4 fathoms of water. The semi-circular bay has at its eastern-most end, Pt. Narsapore, where the river of Narsapore, a branch of the Godavari, falls into the sea.<sup>1</sup>

Voyagers to Masulipatnam in the age of sail are unanimous in their praise of the port's roadstead. Though an open roadstead port, like many other Coromandel ports, it was reported to possess the best anchoring ground. Firm ground, a mixture of sand and mud, was available from 1 to 4 miles from the shore where ships of up to 1000 tons could anchor safely for most of the year, except during the turbulent months of October, November and December. One observer called it the best anchoring ground in the Bay of Bengal. The ships stood in 3 to 4 fathoms of water. The port was situated on the southern side of a bay commonly known as the Bay of Masulipatnam. The surf was not as high and the swell not as great as in the ports of Madras and Paleacat, and loading and unloading could be done in greater safety. In fact the *masula* boats that plied from shore to ship, carrying goods and passengers, were generally of larger size than those further to the south. They had a capacity of 6 to 8 lasts or 12 to 16 tons.<sup>2</sup>

The bay to the north of Masulipatnam provided safe anchorage for vessels during the height of the south-west monsoon, in the months of June and July, when the winds in the Bay of Bengal are strong. While at this time there is strong surf at the bar of the Masulipatnam port and to the north and south, this bay is totally calm. Native craft, which face the heavy surf on the roads of the port, sail into this bay and anchor in its smooth waters. It has a soft muddy bottom. It lacked the depth necessary for larger vessels, but admitted all the small craft of the area. It extends for 3 miles between the villages of Pechapatnam and Chinnakarai. During this period even the smallest bark or catamaran could land in perfect safety on this stretch of coast.<sup>3</sup>

There were two creeks which opened into the sea north of Masulipatnam but neither of these was large or perennial as to support vessels of any size. One which was north of a suburban village Surigama to the north of Masulipatnam, was of no commercial use. This was a village of palmyrah palms inhabited by toddy tappers who tapped the palms for toddy for a living. The other directly north of the town of Masulipatnam, was functional for sea-transport and was of some use to the port and the city. There is much difference in the depth of this creek as reported by observers of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century, it is clear that the bar of the creek had filled up to such an extent that there was only around 1 or 2 feet of water in it in dry seasons.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, in the seventeenth century there was said to be 3 to 18 feet of water in it in various seasons. It was said to be free of bars or islands and could accept boats all round the year. Some described it as a beautiful river with a lot of activity on it, teeming with fish and useful to man.<sup>5</sup> The shallowness of the coast meant that during high tide the sea poured into the rivers and into the land and was blocked by innumerable sand dunes that prevented these waters from flowing into the city. But low-lying land, up to a mile or two inland would be inundated during high tide. Likewise, the creeks would overflow with water pouring down from the inland during the strong monsoon winds of October and November.

Much of this water was stagnant, creating swamps all round the city that emitted a nasty stench in some months of the year. This foul odour emanating from stagnant waters was observed by many European residents and the unhealthy air issuing as a result was seen as a major cause of sickness and discomfort in the port. Apart from this feature, there is contradictory evidence on the salubrious nature of life in Masulipatnam. While some commented on the fresh sea-breeze that blew every day as a relief, others noted that the hot, dry land winds were a cause of acute suffering to the Europeans.<sup>6</sup> Though it is reasonable to expect that the stagnant water would have bred mosquitoes, there is only one reference to this problem. A 1699 report describes graphically the change of wind and the problems created by this.<sup>7</sup> In March the hot winds began to blow from the inland in a northwesterly direction but relief from them was provided now and then by winds changing direction and blowing from the ocean. These winds raised a lot of dust and windows had to be kept shut to keep out the sand. April also brought hot winds but again the heat was allayed by the spring tides which filled up the morass and produced a cooling

effect and doused the dust. In October the moist air and the heavy rains brought different problems producing chills and fevers. To the Europeans, the major problem was the heat and the hot air, coming over dry land for most of the year and without the protection of trees or shade. The hot air penetrated houses and inhabitants sprinkled water on walls and windows to keep the interiors cool. There was the case of an Englishman who is said to have died of sun-stroke walking from the city to the bar, a distance of about a mile.<sup>8</sup>

The water of Masulipatnam was brackish, saline and not fit for consumption. Water for the city was brought from about 5 miles inland and it was said that the best water came from 9 miles in the interior.<sup>9</sup> Europeans generally boiled the water with spices before drinking. This shortage of good, drinkable water created problems and added to the difficulties of living in the city.

These climatic and environmental hazards made Masulipatnam a difficult station for Europeans. Death rates were high among the Dutch and the English, who at some periods were present in substantial numbers. This explains the constant pursuit of residences in the interior in the suburban villages of Masulipatnam. Both the English and the Dutch, as will be seen in detail later, secured land and built country cottages in villages, 3 to 4 miles from the city. They were always on the lookout for other places of escape. The English had established Madapollam and suburban areas of the riverine port of Narsapore as their places of escape. The port of Petapuli to the south was another place of residence. As places situated near perennial rivers and in the shade of a cultivated interior of the Godavari delta, they were much more pleasant and proved healthier. Another such place of retreat was the delta island of Divi where some Europeans had cottages. Thus the Europeans settled in Masulipatnam were always on the lookout for some escape from the heat, the dust and the stench that seems to have been intense in particular months of the year.

The relationship between port and city left much to be desired. Goods could be unloaded on the beach outside the river-mouth or boats of about 10 to 15 tons could enter the river and unload goods nearer the city. The city was a little over a mile away from the bar of the river. At the bar of the river, on the sea-front there appears to have been a small complex of buildings, to grow later and be called the bar town, which would have included a banksal and small office and guardpost for the shahbandar. Between the city and the sea was a low sandy stretch that was inundated by the flow of the tide and became

swampy. At some point, it is not clear when, a bridge was built over this swamp to make easy the transport of goods loaded at the sea-front into the city. The city was built on low-lying land, an extension of the sandy terrain along the coast. To its north the river flowed to some distance with a channel deep enough to admit small boats. Once inside the bar, the river was free of islands or navigational impediments and was navigable throughout the year. The land on which the city was rose gradually from low sea-level elevation near the river so that the southwestern part of the city was on higher ground, less prone to floods and received better ventilation. All the commercial activity, however, was on the lower northern side, towards the river.

In a review of the geographic background to the development of Masulipatnam port and city, one fact that is striking is the relative frequency of cyclonic storms and floods which ravages this coast. While the areas further to the north, in the Gangetic delta, see a greater incidence of these violent storms, they hit the Gingelly coast north of and up to Masulipatnam as well. Flooding of the Krishna and Godavari deltas could be caused by a sudden rise in tidal levels of the ocean as well as by excessive rains in the interior which disgorged with a suddenness breaking the bounds of the innumerable outlets of these two major rivers. In 1606 the city was flooded and again in August 1614 when the rains were more intense to the north. The cyclone and rains of the last day of December 1659 and on 1 January 1660 are better recorded when the city took a severe beating. What began as heavy rains were soon followed by cyclonic winds that blew from east to northwest bringing the sea into land already filled with flood waters. A vast area extending across the Krishna and Godavari deltas was inundated, many humans and cattle lost and several ships lost at sea or smashed to pieces on land. Sea-coast and coast-fringe towns such as Masulipatnam, Narsapore, Petapuli and Palakollu were devastated.<sup>10</sup>

Another storm accompanied by heavy rain seems to have struck Masulipatnam in 1662. The rivers overflowed from their banks and the city was completely flooded out. Merchants were forced to salvage what goods they could and move them to higher ground and to interior villages.<sup>11</sup> But the worst climatic calamity that hit Masulipatnam in the seventeenth century was the cyclone of October 1679. It has been graphically described in the Dutch records and especially by Daniel Havart in his description of Coromandel.<sup>12</sup> On the 22 October winds started blowing from the northeast to east to southeast accompanied by rain and increasing in velocity. The winds were



strong enough to uproot trees along the coast and a few miles into the interior. At 9 P.M. the water level began to rise and water first entered the streets and houses nearest the river, on the north side of the city. Wind and rain continued and reached their maximum intensity at 2 A.M. and at 4 A.M. the winds began to subside. At daybreak the water started receding but it had already done its damage. On the river side of the city water entered houses up to about 12 feet as it did in the Dutch factory where the ground floor was under water and the Dutch officials scrambled with their families to refuge on the first floor. The upper slopes of the city, to the south and the southwest were not so badly affected. The English residence, which was in this part, for example, was only knee-deep in water. But the northern and lower part of the city was heavily populated and here thousands of houses and huts were swept away and flattened. The two bridges on two sides of the city were washed away and planks and beams were strewn all over. Ships in the road were swept out to sea or destroyed against the shore. Many boats standing within the river mouth were carried miles inland and some were hanging from palmyrah trees by their masts and ropes. The palmyrah grove to the north of the city was flattened and washed away. Estimates put the number of deaths at about eighteen thousand people but this probably includes the loss in Masulipatnam city as well as neighbouring villages. Such was the havoc created by a cyclone that raged for no more than about fifteen hours.

From the above description of the topography of the port and the city, it can be seen that there was no physical continuity between port and city. They were separated by an unfriendly terrain of about 1 to 1.5 miles and until the building of the bridge on the road from city to port to its northeast, communications during times of high tide would have been only by the river. The port itself, at least in its early development, must have appeared desolate, with a few shabby buildings that served as temporary godowns and weighing and customs stations. The main banksal and godowns were, however, in the city, up the river. As far as the evidence will allow, there were no residences of any sort in the port in the early seventeenth century. One of the features of the growth of the port was the growth of private residences, official buildings and defence installations on the ocean-front and indeed the use of the term 'bar town' to distinguish it from the main city over a mile away.<sup>13</sup> The factors behind this growth will be discussed later.

Most observers speak of the city as devoid of any stately buildings erected for public or private purposes, though in the latter half of the

seventeenth century, there is greater reference to large, attractive residences built by wealthy private individuals. The main public buildings were the banksals or custom houses and a court house. There were a number of mosques, a figure of about thirty to forty is mentioned, but none of them large enough to attract specific mention.<sup>14</sup> Likewise there were Hindu temples but again of no great size. In the middle of the century, a Portuguese religious order secured permission to build a church but again it was a simple and small structure. There were bathhouses erected in different parts of the city looked after by attendants.

Thus it would appear that neither the Golconda sultanate nor the Mughal empire and its Deccan subadar thought it fit to make substantial investment in public and palatial constructions in this port-city as they did in many places in the interior. Nor did the influential Hindu merchant community choose to invest in one or more large temples as a mark of their presence and affluence. This latter is of course a feature of all ports and port-towns on the Coromandel coast. Under the earlier Hindu kingdoms in ports such as Nagapatnam, Karikal, Mylapore, and Mamallapuram, important temples were constructed both by rulers and by merchants. But after the decline of these kingdoms, in what may be called the later medieval period, even ports that carried a substantial trade did not become centres of grandiose building by Hindu élites. While this is understandable with the Hindus who had lost political power, it is surprising that the Islamic rulers of the Golconda state, who called Masulipatnam their 'auspicious port' and drew substantial wealth through it, chose not to invest in buildings of grandeur in that place. This is very significant and we shall return to discuss this point in a more general way when considering the role of ports and their relation to the hinterland.

The one exception to this was the construction of two bridges, one to the northwest of the city, linking it with the suburbs and the main road to Golconda/Hyderabad and the other to the northeast linking it, as noted earlier, with the port and the Bar Town. But then these fall into a different category of functional and even necessary expenditure. Both bridges bestrode swamps and marshes which were impassable during rainy seasons and there must have been a great impediment to the movement of bulk goods before they were built. There were different reports as to when they were built and by whom but the most plausible evidence is that they were built around 1638 by Mir Abdullah Bakir, probably on the orders of Sultan Abdullah while he was on a

tour of the Andhra lowlands and the port of Masulipatnam. Of the two the bridge to the inland suburbs was the more spectacular being about a mile long. This bridge and the smaller one were a great attraction in the city, almost all European visitors to Masulipatnam who put pen to paper speak of them in glowing terms. They compare them to bridges in their own home countries in Europe, and a Frenchman (Bouchet) goes to extremes of exaggeration in describing it the longest in the world.<sup>15</sup>

Fortunately there is a very detailed and reliable account of it by Havart, complete with statistics of measurements and of architectural features.<sup>16</sup> It was a wooden bridge built on 2,100 upright posts. The cross beams were rivetted down with nails and bolts. It had a height of 12 feet and was 12 feet broad, allowing bullock cart and palanquin traffic to pass in opposite directions. The bridge had no rails but there were four broad staircases on the side so that palanquins and other heavy loads may be brought on to the bridge from the side. Also people could get on and off the bridge from these stairs in the dry season as a short-cut to wherever they were going. There were three wayside stations on the bridge. The first, going out of the city, was 500 paces from the gateway, the second 200 paces further and the third 250 paces further on. At this third station there was a wooden shed where water was doled out to thirsty travellers. It was also a refuge from the rain. At the city end of the bridge was a large gate-way, referred to contemporarily as the Great Gate, with a guard. A drawing reproduced in Baldaeus' work on Coromandel and Ceylon (1671) provides an excellent visual representation of the bridge as it must have looked in the seventeenth century, though some of its details are wrong.<sup>17</sup> The picture shows three stair-cases leading up to the bridge on both sides but Havart informs us that they were only on the right side of the bridge and there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of this statement. It was rather crudely built but was remarkable for its size and enormity.

This bridge was one of the casualties of the cyclone and floods of October 1679. Its planks and beams were blown and washed away and were found scattered up to a mile inland, a few even as far as the village of Mirmol.<sup>18</sup> The importance of the bridge to Masulipatnam was recognized by the Golconda state and the king ordered its immediate reconstruction as a matter of high priority. Royal officials of the district set about doing this and the bridge was reconstructed. The cost in material and labour was estimated at over 100 thousand pagodas, which, if correct, was a major public investment by the state in the

furtherance of commerce. It was rebuilt in its earlier form, with the one difference that now there were two wooden houses as way-side stations opposite each other, while previously there had been only one.<sup>19</sup>

Most contemporary observers, while commenting on the spartan nature of public buildings, speak enthusiastically about the city's private residences.<sup>20</sup> From this evidence can be seen something of the urban development that was going on in Masulipatnam throughout the seventeenth century. In the early part of the century there is no reference to large and stately private houses. Indeed, European Companies found it difficult to secure decent accommodation on rent. They generally took in rent small cramped houses which they used with discomfort as living quarters and storerooms. The situation changed by the middle of the seventeenth century and, with the growth in the Indian Ocean trade of the port, the city grew in the grandeur of its house construction. Most of the construction appears to have been done by Persian merchants and Golconda officials as well as by agents of neighbouring states—Bijapur, the Bengal subah and the Mughals. The demand for accommodation by the Europeans—Portuguese, Dutch, English, Danes and French—and by trade agents of Indian state officials and those of Southeast Asian states—Arakan, Siam, Pegu, Acheh—seems to have created a market in housing of large, spacious type.

Both these factors—residence and storage needs of wealthy merchants, and a rental market for foreign residents—seem to have created a boom in construction that went on till the 1680s. Understandably almost all the stately homes built were of Islamic style. They tended to be tall rather than broad, with stark and dark frontages and all the attractive features in the interior. They were sometimes four, five and six storeys high. The English factory residence, which when it was established had no tall buildings in its neighbourhood, soon found itself being looked down into by a number of multi-storeyed buildings around it and the residents complained that they no longer had privacy.<sup>21</sup> The houses were plastered with lime and plenty of wood was used in construction. Folding wooden windows, with rattan lattice work, opened out. Spacious balconies were shaded by large sheds covered with tiles. Fryer who saw Masulipatnam in the 1670s, describes a stately house which he had obviously visited.<sup>22</sup> A stately gatehouse led to a square court through a passage. In the middle of the court was a water tank.

There was a vaulted flat roof above, and a terrace with walks, to wash in the water and take air. The whole fabric was covered on top.

Some names of owners of such houses confirm the fact that the merchant and official élites of Masulipatnam were building extravagantly, both for their pleasure and for investment. Prominent Persian merchants like Mir Kamaldin and Mir Abdullah Bakir had palatial residences for themselves. The shahbandar and kotwal of the city were putting up houses for rent to Europeans and others, besides residences of their own. Prominent district governors and rentiers, including the havaldar put up residences in the city. Mughal agents, before the conquest of Golconda, Bijapur agents, agents of the Nawab of Bengal—all of whom had trading interests in the port constructed houses. William Norris, the English ambassador to the Mughal court, was put up in a stately house which had belonged to the Nawab of the district and had previously been constructed to house the Sultan of Golconda when he visited the city.<sup>23</sup> Thus it was that in the second half of the seventeenth century European Companies found it relatively easier to rent large houses that could serve them as residences and warehouses. The English secured one such and later the Danes and the French were able to rent large houses. The French rented from the shahbandar a brand new house he had just erected.

The rental on a large house was 5 pagodas a month, while a smaller house sufficient to accommodate a family would go for 3 pagodas. This compares with 2 to 3 pagodas per month allowed for house rent to Company servants in Madras in the 1670s. This expansion of the city was, in the last quarter of the century, being continued towards the sea, to the Bar Town.<sup>24</sup> In 1679, Streynsham Master, on a journey of the Andhra coast, detoured to see a stately house built by a Persian merchant in the Bar Town. This is the first reference to a structure of any size and importance in the Bar Town and it leads one to speculate whether the town over the previous few years had gradually begun expanding over the bridge at the point where the river entered the sea. This speculation is strengthened by a request made by the Dutch in about 1672 to the sultan to build a storehouse at the Bar Town.<sup>25</sup>

It is significant that all references to large houses are to their being built in Islamic style and the owners were Islamic merchants and officials. Does this mean that the Hindu merchant ship-owners and brokers were not building large houses in the city, or were their houses of the traditional Hindu extended family type that did not stand out to the visitors to the city? Apart from the large houses, which were

obviously few in number, there were a number of smaller dwellings, of wood and of mud and thatch, littered all over the city occupied by the poorer sections of the community. These were mostly Hindus, artisans, labourers, fishermen, boatmen. It appears that these smaller huts were interspersed among the larger houses so that there was no spatial segregation between richer and poorer areas.<sup>26</sup> The thatched huts were dangerous fire hazards to themselves and to the neighbouring large houses. As will be seen later, major fires swept through the city and devastated parts of it now and then.

There is very little evidence on the transport system within the city. The two bridges provided an all-weather route from the port to city and from city to the hinterland. Observers speak of a few broad streets within the city, built on an elevation to withstand floods and a number of small roads branching from them. It may be presumed that the broad streets took heavy traffic from the banksals and customs quays to market places and outside the city. There were three large markets which were reputedly always busy and crowded. The traffic on roads would have been bullock carts, pack-bullocks, horses, palanquins and loads carried by individuals. The picture in Baldaeus shows elephants travelling up the bridge towards the city but there is no reference to the use of elephants within the city as load-carriers.

Fire was a very definite hazard to which the city was constantly exposed. The long hot and dry season, the winds, the many dwellings of thatch and the widespread use of wood in construction combined to make the city a potential tinder-box. On 8 June 1665 there was a great fire in which Masulipatnam and a number of neighbouring towns and villages were affected. For about ten days in Masulipatnam fire broke out in different parts of the city and arson was suspected. Different accounts put the destruction as ranging from half to two-third of the city.<sup>27</sup> The major recorded fire in the city broke out on 17 May 1687 which began between the two city gates and was quickly spread by a strong northwest wind along the market and up to the waterfront. Havart says that this fire destroyed five-eighth of the city, among which were the streets with the best residences belonging to wealthy merchants. It was said that the city and some of its merchants never really recovered from this fire.<sup>28</sup>

The evidence on population and its social composition is scanty and impressionistic. By the middle of the seventeenth century, a population of one hundred thousand is mentioned and in 1673 Fryer estimates it as two hundred thousand but both these could be over-

estimates.<sup>29</sup> There is certainly no doubt of growth in the first half of the seventeenth century from very low figures in the preceding century and it is likely that the figure of one hundred thousand may have been reached in the peak period of the 1670s and 1680s. All the observers talk of Masulipatnam as a Muslim-dominated city and port by which they mean that Muslims dominated its trade, finances and administration.<sup>30</sup> These visible signs of power and influence were there to be seen by our observers who were themselves merchants and Company officials. There is unanimity that Persians dominated trade and constituted the most affluent and influential sectors of society. By the 1670s they had secured a certain degree of autonomous military power in the city, having their own security guards and even cavalry. They often intervened on behalf of their European clients in disputes with local authority. The most distinct example of this was their intervention on behalf of the French East India Company, at a time when the French were at war with the Golconda state. They protected French officials in the city, safeguarded their goods, helped French soldiers and mariners to safety when they were stranded and altogether acted in 1672-4 in a manner that showed their enormous influence in the affairs of the city.<sup>31</sup>

Distinguished by their appearance and dress from other Muslim inhabitants of the city, observers often commented on their gait, their arrogant manner and the pomp of their life-styles. They rode about in palanquins, had rondel-bearers preceding them and an army of servants. These pompous life-styles were copied by the Europeans who soon matched them in all these respects. Fryer speaks of another group of Muslims who appear to be distinct from the Persians and, from his description, could be Pathans who were settled along the coast in small numbers.<sup>32</sup> Unlike the Persians, they were not themselves ship-owning merchants but went on board foreign ships as they arrived in the roadstead to offer their services as interpreters, brokers and general fixers for a small consideration. Fryer calls them more modish than the rest, with a more civil garb, calico turban on the head, long loose breeches, sash on waist. They spoke English.

While the Persian and other expatriate Muslim merchants lived in the city, local domiciled Muslims who were prominent in administrative and revenue positions appear to have been mainly located in the suburbs of Masulipatnam. If one crossed the large bridge to proceed westwards into the interior, one came directly to a line of villages situated close to each other. The first of these was Imguduru and the



villages extended continuously for 5 miles to the township of Guduru, the most important of them, the seat of the havaldar of the city and his entourage. Here the havaldar had his palatial residence and held court. A number of prominent officials of the city lived in the neighbourhood. In the village of Imguduru, there were the capacious residences of the principal merchants and brokers of the city. The fields and gardens along this entire stretch were well-cultivated and the villages were the source of Masulipatnam's daily food supply. Most of the Hindu merchants and brokers of the port also lived in these suburban villages. These wealthy Hindu and Muslim groups preferred to live in the open, clean and airy country suburbs rather than in the increasingly congested, hot, dirty streets of the city.<sup>33</sup>

Most of the Hindus who lived in Masulipatnam belonged to the poorer classes and were in the employ of the wealthy Muslim communities. This explains the oft-repeated comments of the contemporary observers that the Muslims lord it over the Hindus, the Muslims are arrogant, haughty in demeanour while the Hindus are docile and so on. This superficial view of course hides the fact that there were Hindu accountants and financiers, merchants and brokers who were prominent in the port's trade. But there is no doubt that they depended very much on the favours of the Muslim élites and their presence was very much a muted one. In any case, Hindus would have formed a great majority of the population.

The European presence in Masulipatnam increased enormously in the course of the seventeenth century. It was an index to the growth of the port in Indian Ocean commerce and the European community settled in the city had a love-hate relationship towards it. The presence of the great Companies and their servants followed by a sizeable private trading community of individuals was the consequence of their commercial activities which will be discussed later. What is discussed here is the social character of the establishment of a sizeable European community. The Portuguese had been hostile to Golconda through most of this period but few *casados* had settled there for trading purposes, especially through Masulipatnam's links with Arakan and the Pegu coast where there was a substantial community of Portuguese traders. Somewhere around 1645, the Portuguese secured permission from the sultan to build a small church which was run by the Augustinians.

The Dutch began modestly in 1606 in a small rented house with a staff of eight to nine persons. After some ups and downs in the



relationships between the Dutch East India Company and the Golconda state and local authority, the Dutch settled down to a consistent expansion of their trade and presence in Masulipatnam in the 1640s. They rented a substantial house near the river on the north side of the city. This house was suitably close to the king's banksal. From here they expanded their available space by renting neighbouring houses and vacant yards as opportunity presented itself. By the 1670s they were comfortably ensconced in a large contiguous area which they had fenced off and within which they had put up a number of structures suitable to a trading factory.<sup>34</sup> Daniel Havart gives a very detailed description of the Dutch factory. The main residence was a large, elongated building. It had substantial godown space in the bottom floor. In the upper floor were a church, and living quarters for some Dutch Company servants and Indian soldiers in the Company's employ. Within the compound was a two storey residence for the chief of the factory in the midst of a beautifully laid out garden. The constructions were made of timber and plastered over with lime. There was also a stable for horses. There was a great main gate at the entrance with a guard post and soldiers constantly on guard. The Company paid an annual rent of about 450 pagodas to the landlord.

The Company servants soon began to affect the pomp and pageantry that the Muslim élites of the city displayed. They hired a large army of Indian servants and retainers. They used palanquins, rondel-bearers, drums and pipes to play music during their walks in the city. At one time they had as many as 120 Indian servants working for them. More importantly, they smuggled pieces of artillery and cannon and ammunition to the residence, had a company of Dutch soldiers and were settled in a secure fortified position which gave them great strength in their dealing with the local authority. The downturn in trade forced them to cut down on some of this pageantry in 1678. After this the Dutch presence never reached the large numbers it did before.<sup>35</sup>

Compared to that of the Dutch, the English presence was rather muted, though they too expanded their staff and began to affect some of the grandeur of high living. The English at first rented a very old and spacious house at a high rental. In 1628 they gave it up and rented a smaller house. Soon this house proved inadequate to house the Company's servants and its stock.<sup>36</sup> After the so-called Golden Farman of 1634 by which the sultan granted them freedom from transit dues, they saw the need for a large establishment in Masulipatnam. They

applied to the sultan for permission to build a house but the Masulipatnam authorities were always reluctant to allow foreigners permission to build as they liked in the city. They do not appear to have secured this permission and continued to live in a rented house which by 1650 was in a very bad state of repair. Its rooms were dark, ill-ventilated, the structure was decaying and it leaked when it rained. Masulipatnam Company officials estimated the cost of repairs at about £500 to £600 (1250 to 1500 pagodas). The upper rooms were in danger of collapsing and were pulled down. The house had been built in all round with tall multi-storeyed houses which looked down into it and there was little privacy. When the havaldar visited the English factory, there was no decent room in which he could be entertained. They hastily erected a tent in the terrace and the havaldar had to ascend a ladder to get there, as there were no stairs.<sup>37</sup>

In 1676 the Company was permitted to build rooms in the upper floor of their house and extensions in the ground floor into the garden. When this happened the English residence was a solid roomy building, housing the chief and some of the servants.<sup>38</sup> Many married servants were allowed to live in rented houses in the neighbourhood. In fact many preferred to live outside rather than crowd together in the factory compound. In the 1670s they were able to rent a house for 3 to 3.5 pagodas a month and a rent allowance of 3 pagodas was given to these servants. Some of them kept paying lodgers from those arriving temporarily in the ships on the roadstead.<sup>39</sup> As the Dutch had done, the English extended their factory by purchasing land. In 1682 they purchased a plot of land with an old house in front of the factory for 100 pagodas and set about building godowns to stock excess cloth.<sup>40</sup>

Though it was not as commodious, well-laid out and defensible as the Dutch residence, it had the advantage of being in the upper southern side of the city. Consequently it was not damaged anywhere nearly as that of the Dutch in the great cyclone of 1679. Water came into the factory only knee-deep and soon flowed away. The officials were able to salvage the goods without much damage.<sup>41</sup> Like the Dutch, the English adopted some of the grand life-style of the Persians and Islamic officials. They had forty to eighty Indian servants and retainers. They travelled in palanquins, had rondels carried before them and had drums and music played in processions.<sup>42</sup> Sometimes such lofty pretensions brought them into conflict with the city's authorities but

very often the English gave as good as they received and never yielded privileges they had secured one way or another.<sup>43</sup>

Both the Dutch and the English had several Indian dependents, both directly in their service and contracted to work for them. In direct service were a number of peons whom both had trained into an auxiliary force to fight with European soldiers. From the middle of the century, both powers were recruiting Rajput mercenaries to fight for them and on a few occasions used them in local military actions. These peons and armed retainers appear to have lived in quarters within the factory and were often used in its defence. Other Indians were in contract relationship with the Dutch and the English but in some cases the nature of the work they were contracted to do was such that the Europeans claimed prescriptive rights over their labour. This was so with regard to some painters, washers, dyers and carpenters. The amount of work that the Europeans gave them was such that they could and did become full-time employees of the Companies and became dependent on them for their livelihood. The Companies in turn offered them protection against the demands of local authority and even took up arms in defence of their employees.<sup>44</sup>

The French presence in Masulipatnam was more sporadic but left quite an impression at certain periods. The French, after the Armenian merchant Marcara secured trading concessions for them in Masulipatnam, looked for a house to rent. They temporarily took up a house that had belonged to William Jersey an English merchant. This was, however, too small, and in 1669 they rented a large roomy house built in Islamic style belonging to the shahbandar of the port.<sup>45</sup> They then rented three other contiguous houses up to the river which cost them 30 pagodas a month. They tried to enclose this entire property leading up to the river, an action which brought them into conflict with the factor of the King of Siam who used to use river-front land to lay out his maritime equipment. The French went ahead and enclosed their property but the conflict with Golconda intervened.<sup>46</sup> When they returned after a peace was patched up, they re-entered this factory and in 1693 built a small square, the area coming to be known as Frenchpeta.

The Danes secured permission to establish trade in Masulipatnam and established a factory there in 1625. They traded in close collaboration with Masulipatnam merchants, freighting their goods to Southeast Asia, and borrowing in the money market there. They had a regular trade from Masulipatnam to Macassar from where they

procured cloves, nutmeg and sandalwood for the Golconda market. There was a conflict between the Danes and their Indian partners in 1627 when the Danes blockaded Masulipatnam and seized a ship belonging to the Sultan of Golconda. The conflict was settled and the Danes resumed their trading. They had a large residence close to the river-front and later shifted to another house near the royal toll-house for which they paid a monthly rent of 5 pagodas.<sup>47</sup> Danish trade did not feature prominently in the second half of the seventeenth century, but the Danes were always present, working in partnership with Indians in Masulipatnam, as they did in other parts of the Coromandel coast.

Besides the institutional presence of the Companies, permitted and fostered by the sultan through the grant of occasional farmans, there were a significant number of unattached free merchants, mainly English but also Portuguese, Armenians and Jews who appear to have made Masulipatnam their home. They rented or even bought homes there or, as will be explained later, tended to favour some other coastal and riverine ports such as Virasvaram, Petapuli, Madapollam and Narsapore. Almost all of them were merchants engaged in some form of sea-borne traffic, but some of them began to take to tax farming and speculating in their revenue farms. The existence of a Catholic Church was referred to above as were lodging houses for their short-term residence. An Englishman opened a tavern to cater to the European population. Also noteworthy is the presence of a mixed-race population which found its way to this port-city to eke out a living.

This above description of city and port society shows the multi-ethnic, plural character of its inhabitants. The two predominant cultures were Hindu and Muslim and, though most of the European observers speak of the dominance of the Islamic and subservience of the Hindu element, there is every evidence of a totally peaceful coexistence of the two cultures. In fact, all evidence points to a peaceful social environment of live and let-live between people of diverse cultures, beliefs, life styles and languages. A list of the various ethnic/linguistic groups shows the diversity: Mongols, Turks, Persians, Arabs, Chulia (Tamil) Muslims, Golconda Muslims, Telugus, Orissans, Tamils, Kannadas, Armenians, Jews, Pathans, Portuguese, Siamese, Arakanese, Peguans, Achenese, Malays, Javanese, English, Dutch, Danes and French. It appears that both Persian and Telugu were widely used and it was necessary to be able to transact business in either of these languages. Whatever complaints the Europeans made about the tyranny of the city government in commercial dealings,

standards of law and order appear to have been rigorously maintained. The kotwal's regiment of peons, while not very impressive in defending the port from external attack, was very efficient in maintaining law and order. Theft and robbery does not appear to have been a problem. A rare report of a theft of a bar of silver from the English warehouse was investigated and solved even after a lapse of ten years.<sup>48</sup>

Likewise communal harmony appears to have been successfully maintained. It is very significant that in this very period the port-towns occupied by Europeans—Madras, Paleacat, Pondicherry, Nagapatnam—were plagued by civil strife among Hindus of an inter-caste, factional nature. None of this is heard of in this Islamic administered port and city. Nor was there any Hindu-Muslim tension. On the contrary the two communities, both substantial in number, lived side-by-side and carried on their public worship and their festivals without the least interference of the other community. The best testimony to this comes from William Norris who lived in the city for some time and was able to observe race relations and public practices. He remarks on the absence of drunkenness, disorders, riotous behaviour or quarrelling in the city.<sup>49</sup> Part of this may be attributed to the broadly tolerant attitudes of the Shiah-Muslim state of Golconda. The Persian élites of the city were not fundamentalist in their practice of Islam. The Hindus realized the limits of their power and did not seek to implant obtrusive Hindu institutions in the city. The city administration appears to have been well aware of the advantages of keeping the city peaceful and safe.

One feature that struck most observers and comes through from the events that will be recorded later was the utterly defenceless nature of the port and the city. It was understandable that the port was defenceless from the sea as no Indian power sought to strengthen its ports against attack by sea. This kind of defence architecture had not developed in India. The Golconda state did not construct a flotilla of boats that could be used even for coastal defence, though it had during this period a substantial merchant fleet. It is interesting to note that some move was made in this period towards military constructions at the entrance to the port. What is less understandable is that the land defences of the city were neglected and no efforts were made to fortify the city and strengthen it with a standing army that could assert control in the case of internal unrest or external attack from land. The defences of the city were in the hands of a hundred or so peons, badly armed and trained, under the kotwal. Out in the suburbs, about 5 miles away, was the

havaldar and his entourage, again with a very small force of more honorific than military significance.

This was of course the usual practice in Indian ports. All that was needed was to guard the customs sheds, warehouses, and entry points, to dispense justice and keep the lower and servile classes to their obligations. With Masulipatnam growing into a port of Indian Ocean trade, attracting powerful nations and Companies as traders, this was not found to be sufficient. The major Companies—Dutch, English and French—backed up by their respective states, and by superior military technology, needed a strong and powerful state to keep them within bounds. The Golconda state did not realize this and neglected to back up its regional and city authorities with sufficient military force as to constantly maintain the ascendancy of the state and its interests. This led François Martin, a widely experienced French Company official, to observe that in Masulipatnam the Europeans enjoyed the greatest freedom and autonomy among any other Indian ports.<sup>50</sup> The situation improved somewhat after the Mughal conquest of 1687. Military force was always available in the hinterland but by this time the hinterland itself was in uproar and a different set of factors began to operate.

It will be seen in subsequent accounts that over and over again European powers were in a position to win major concessions and assert their interpretation of controversial contracts. When they decided to resort to immediate and localized force, there was nothing the city authorities could do except to climb down with ignominy. There was never sufficient armed force to defend the customs house or banksal from assault, much less to attack the Europeans in their well-defended factories. Sieges of these residences could easily be broken up by sudden assaults from inside. Injunctions against the import of arms and ammunitions in the city were violated by the Companies. All three Companies—Dutch, English and French—were successful in holding the city forces at bay for short periods, the Dutch imposing the ultimate humiliation in expelling the Golconda officials and taking over the port and the city for a few months in 1686.

Golconda authorities were not totally impervious to the need to fortify the city and they took some half-hearted steps to do so. During the French blockade of Masulipatnam in 1672, the Golconda government erected a crudely built fort of mud and supported by palm tree trunks at the bar of the river. At one end of the bay a new battery was erected enclosed by a stockade. At the entrance to the bridge

leading to the port where there was a small gateway, a battery was erected and two cannons set on it. Within the city, defence structures were weakly and hastily put up as and when need arose, such as in the customs sheds and the gateway to the bridge.<sup>51</sup> In the event, the Dutch factory was by far the best defended place in the city. When the Dutch briefly took control of the city in 1686, they put up some defence structures, notably strengthening the pallisade in the Bar Town. This later became the nucleus of a fort during the Anglo-French wars. When the French occupied Masulipatnam in 1752 they began the first major fortification works of the city.

Masulipatnam had a complex and variable relationship with its hinterland and its coastal neighbours. While it became the pre-eminent port of the north Coromandel coast, it did not achieve or retain this position without competition. Though it was the best anchoring ground of the coast, there were other landing places available and all had equal access to the textile-producing hinterland. Nizampatam and Petapuli about 36 miles to the south, Narsapore and Madapollam, about 40 miles to the north, were all places from which goods could be shipped, though none of these ports could take in large ocean-going vessels for loading. Consequently, Masulipatnam became a port for the centralization and shipment of goods collected from the region by land and by sea. The presence of the many tributaries of the Krishna and the Godavari meant that much of the transport of goods could be done less expensively by water. It is not clear to what extent local shipping used ports other than Masulipatnam for its long-distance trade. In the eighteenth century, when the Companies began to by-pass Masulipatnam, they used other ports such as Ganjam, Bimilipatnam, Vizagapatnam and Kakinada as points of shipment and it is not unreasonable to assume that this would have happened even earlier on the part of Indian shippers.

Masulipatnam's strength lay in its better direct access to a deep hinterland by road and by an administrative link that eased the movement of goods. A trunk road ran from Masulipatnam to Golconda/Hyderabad, accessible at all times and passing through a number of market towns on the way. This and other roads, besides giving access to textile villages, iron and steel producing areas and the diamond mines in the interior, also enabled imported goods to be sent rapidly to the capital and on to other markets of Hindustan. Masulipatnam thus had an immediate hinterland from which it drew most of its exports and a deep hinterland to which it sent out its imports.



The suburban villages of Masulipatnam contributed to its commercial activity. The administrative centre of Guduru was the havaladar's seat of power but does not appear to have been of commercial significance. It had stately buildings where the havaladar and the other officials resided. The proximity of the havaladar's residence to the city (about 5 miles) rendered easy the transaction of business by Indian merchants and European Companies relating to taxation, transit and royal prerogatives and ironing out disputes over interpretation of contracts and farmans. Just outside the long bridge were the villages of Imguduru, Malekpatnam and Nawabpeta. These villages were inhabited by painters and washers, many of whom worked for the Companies. About 5 miles from the city was the hamlet of Mullavel, probably inhabited by weavers, which the English had leased for some time. About 2 miles outside the bridge was the village of Masaram (Masaratotam) where the sultan had allowed the Dutch and the English some land to construct a garden and a holiday resort as well as for use as a cemetery. They took advantage of this concession and the Dutch built a two-storey building to store goods in the ground floor and rooms for residence upstairs. They later built another house with all comforts for a family to live in. In the property there was a large tank with a playhouse of wood in the middle. They cultivated local vegetables in this land. Dutch officials retired to this place to escape the heat of the city.<sup>52</sup> The English garden was not as well appointed or elaborately furnished. English officials seem to have used Madapollam as their holiday resort, where they had put up many comfortable facilities.

Masulipatnam was particularly noted for the painted chintzes and dying of excellent colour done in neighbouring villages. The dye was made out of the *chaya* root that grew in abundance in the islands of Divi. The weaving villages extended up to a 50 miles radius from Masulipatnam, with the parganas of Narsapore, Divi, Nizampatnam and Devaracotta providing the most dense clusters of villages of weavers and painters. Textile production interlaced with agriculture, with all these parganas producing abundance of paddy and small gains, especially when the monsoon rains fell regularly. In this respect, the parganas nearest to Masulipatnam—Guduru, Akulumannadu, Pedana, Tumidi, Tumduru and Bomdada—contained the best paddy-producing lands. Quite appropriately these parganas were dependent on Masulipatnam administratively and must have provided the port-city with all the rice it needed as well as for export and to



Kondavidu which also contained many weaving villages and produced paddy. North of the Godavari delta was another cluster of weaving villages, mainly producing the staple longcloth in great quantities. This producing area had a number of outlet ports north of the Godavari river. At the height of the trade of Masulipatnam, it could be assumed that merchants of that port tapped the villages in these parts to supply the exporters, both Asians and Europeans.

Masulipatnam was in the heart of a country that abounded in salt pans producing large quantities of salt. The coastline was broken up with lagoons, mainly stagnant backwaters and slow-flowing creeks adjoining the sea and ideally suited for the production of salt. The salt pans were worked with seasonal labour of pariahs living in adjoining villages. Salt was a state monopoly and provided it with easy revenues which it farmed out to rentiers. In the seventeenth century, the Masulipatnam salt farm produced about 41,000 pagodas a year and was part of the gross revenue of the city and its dependencies. The salt was exported by sea from Masulipatnam to Bengal and sometimes to the south but most of it was sold to caravans of Lambadi traders who came seasonally to the coast and carried it on oxloads into the interior.

## II

Masulipatnam would have been one of the numerous open roadstead ports from which Coromandel ships loaded and unloaded their goods for the Bay of Bengal trade. Its origins are unknown but the Andhra delta region has been, of course, a region of continuing trade from the early centuries of the Christian era. Evidence from Islamic sources that the port was founded by a colony of Arab traders about the fourteenth century does not seem plausible, though their arrival would have strengthened its trade in relation to its neighbours. The Krishna-Godavari delta had been contested by the Kalingas of Orissa and the Vijayanagar rulers in the fifteenth century. Saluva Narasimha, a powerful sub-ruler under the Vijayanagar King Virupaksha II, annexed Masulipatnam and the Kondavidu district shortly before 1477. But the Vijayanagar empire was deprived of this region and the port by the Bahmani Sultan Mahmud II in 1478. The Bahmanis did not consolidate their hold over these eastern territories, being immediately distracted to the west.

It was then left to the rising Golconda kingdom to achieve this consolidation. Under its founder Quli Qutb-ul-Mulk, the kingdom

expanded eastwards to the Krishna-Godavari delta but could not retain these lands unchallenged by the Vijayanagar rulers and their subordinate Hindu rajahs of the delta. The critical battle of 1565 in which the combined Islamic kingdoms of the Deccan decisively defeated Vijayanagar gave complete control over the Andhra lowlands to the Qutb Shahis. It was then that they established a regular administration over these lands and exercised an integrated control over eastern ports and the interior. At the same time the heart of the kingdom was being transformed into an extensive urban sprawl spreading out of the old fortified city of Golconda. The construction of an excellent bridge across the Musa river was an important link to the eastward with all the eastern towns and ultimately with Masulipatnam. The construction of the new capital Hyderabad in 1591-2 at the junction of the trunk roads running to all parts of the kingdom further highlighted this centralizing tendency and made possible closer commercial links between centre and periphery.

On the basis of Portuguese references, and of Portuguese silence, Subrahmanyam postulates that Masulipatnam may not have been a significant port of oceanic trade in the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>53</sup> This could well be as it appears that the important points of departure of ships in this period seem to be in central and south Coromandel. It is significant that, in the exhaustive list of ports trading with the Sultanate of Malacca in Tome Pires' description, there is no mention of Masulipatnam. On the other hand, we cannot admit the Portuguese sources as conclusive evidence on trade in the Bay of Bengal. It would appear that Portuguese references to Masulipatnam pick up from the 1560s and Subrahmanyam argues that from this time dates the growth of this port as an important centre of Bay of Bengal trade.<sup>54</sup>

It can be seen then that there was a convergence of factors, operating from internal Deccan and Andhra politics and from across the seas, in a period dating from the 1570s which threw Masulipatnam out in the forefront of oceanic and long-distance trade. The expansion of the kingdom of Golconda gave Masulipatnam a wider hinterland and a direct link with the political and economic power structure in the capital. It brought into the port powerful Islamic merchant and shipping interests to add to the ancient and well-entrenched Hindu mercantile castes along the delta coast. While Hindu shipping had been diffused along a number of ports of equally small size along the coast, such as Motupalli, Petapuli, Kottapatnam and Narsapore, Muslim

shipping preferred to concentrate in the one port of Masulipatnam where it developed a somewhat different pattern of sailing and trade from that of the Hindus. Soon the commercial possibilities of the Masulipatnam port came to the attention of the Islamic ruling élites of Golconda. Officials and nobles right up to the sultan himself began to invest from the last decades of the sixteenth century in shipping and trade. Sultan Muhammad Qutb Shah's (1612-24) policy of forging close links with the Safavid Persian empire resulted in an influx of Persian merchants in the first decades of the seventeenth century. They soon became a dominant feature of the port's oceanic trade.

More difficult to assess but undoubtedly important, was the impact of developments in the Bay of Bengal trading system in this period. The sixteenth century is generally recognized as seeing a general expansion of trade in the Indian Ocean. The expansion of demand for pepper and spices in Europe and the opening of the Cape route to supplement the traditional west Asian routes had increased the circulation of goods within the Indian Ocean and the volume of shipping available. Western Indian, south Coromandel and Bengal ports were in the lead in taking advantage of the new opportunities. Masulipatnam is thus seen as a late developer because its hinterland situation was not conducive to trade until the last quarter of the sixteenth century. By this time major disturbances caused to traditional trade routes by the Portuguese had subsided and the trade settled to systems within and outside Portuguese influence. Masulipatnam was obviously to become part of the system outside Portuguese control. The north Sumatran kingdom of Acheh occupied a critical place in this system, having built itself up by the middle of the sixteenth century as an entrepôt to rival and even outclass Malacca which had been conquered by the Portuguese in 1511. By the time Masulipatnam was set to grow, Acheh had become the major archipelago port for Indian, especially eastern Indian, vessels and merchants, providing them with pepper, tin, spices, ginger, elephants, Chinese goods and to which they could export the bulk of their textiles to re-export to other ports within the archipelago. The Achenese sultans carried out a good deal of state-directed trade and preferred to deal with fellow-rulers of trading states. Under the centralized absolute rule of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1602-36), the ruler desired to establish contacts with other rulers, among whom was the Sultan of Golconda. By this time, the Golconda sultan had established himself as a ship-owning merchant and, along with other nobles and Persian merchants from

Masulipatnam, had Aceh as a major trading partner. Thus in the early years of the growth of Masulipatnam, Aceh was an important terminal port of its trade and commercial relations were strengthened by political ties.

With the beginning of the seventeenth century, Masulipatnam's trade networks expanded into the Malay peninsula, into the coastal sultanates and through the Straits of Malacca to Java and the southern Celebes. These networks took advantage of the constantly increasing demand for textiles of varieties produced in abundance in the Andhra delta area. Thus Masulipatnam shipping sailed to Kedah, Perak, Johore, Bantam, Grisek and Macassar. Again commercial relations were strengthened by political ties with ruling houses and controlled trade on behalf of royalty was carried on in both ends of the trade routes. Factors and merchant agents of a variety of rulers were settled in Masulipatnam trading on behalf of their masters while the Golconda sultan's agents were reciprocally given similar facilities in all the kingdoms noted above. The first three or four decades of the seventeenth century were a great period for this trade, as the Dutch had not yet imposed their control over the spice outputs and textile markets of the archipelago.

Another region that became important as a trading partner for Masulipatnam ports was the Burmese and Siamese coast. In this region too, the sixteenth century is seen as a period of expanding trade from Arakan, Mon and Tenasserim ports. The Bay of Bengal trade through these ports tapped a deep hinterland of Burmese, Mon, Thai and Khmer kingdoms and even linked with some elements of the Chinese and Japanese trade. The rise of the maritime kingdom of Mrauk-u in the Arakan-yoma valley enabled it to control the trade of the northeastern corner of the Bay of Bengal. This Arakanese kingdom, with its ups and downs, continued its participation in Bay of Bengal trade through into the seventeenth century. Along the central and lower Burmese coasts interesting developments pertinent to oceanic trade took place in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Taung-ngu dynasty seized Pegu and fostered its development as a cosmopolitan city of trade and enterprise. The rulers attracted many merchants of the Bay of Bengal, including Coromandel Hindus and Muslims and Portuguese settled in Coromandel. King Bayin-Nang (1551-81) was a remarkable ruler of that dynasty. He expanded into lower Burma and took control of the trans-peninsular route to the Gulf of Siam. Under his rule, Indian Muslims became influential and it is

possible that it was in the last decade of his reign that Golconda Muslims from Masulipatnam became entrenched in the trade of Pegu, Tavoy, Mergui, Martaban and other ports.

The spread of Portuguese influence along the Burmese coast was a temporary set-back to the interests of Masulipatnam shipping. They would have been forced to take cartazes from the Portuguese who were in a position to control and restrict this trade. The rule over Syriam by the Portuguese adventurer Philip de Brito (1599-1613) was particularly cumbersome to Golconda traders. But then a revived Toung-gu dynasty under King Anak-Hup-Lau routed the Portuguese and recaptured Syriam in 1613. This news, it was reported by a contemporary observer, was greeted in Masulipatnam with great jubilation as the Golconda Muslim shippers could now sail unimpeded to this coast.<sup>55</sup> It was thus a great boost to Masulipatnam and launched a long period of intensive commerce between that port and the Burmese and Siamese coast.

In the southern Siamese district of Tenasserim, the first half of the seventeenth century saw a developing and expanding link with Masulipatnam, using Mergui and the riverine port of Tenasserim to gain access to the trans-peninsular route to the Gulf of Siam and to Ayuthya, the capital of a powerful Siamese kingdom. Indian Muslim merchants, primarily located in Masulipatnam, were dominant in this trade, giving access to markets of the mainland to Indian textiles and providing a variety of lucrative import goods. Andrew Forbes, describing the route taken, says that Indian Muslims and Persians governed all the major towns along it.<sup>56</sup> The Persian contacts formed by the kingdom of Ayuthya indirectly helped Masulipatnam where, as seen above, powerful Persian interests were already entrenched. When the French and other European adventurers tried to penetrate this trade, it was at the expense of the Golconda Muslims and this embroiled the two states of Siam and Golconda in a war in 1685-87.

It seems clear then that as far as the eastward trade was concerned, the rise to prominence of Masulipatnam was fuelled by an upward spurt in Bay of Bengal trade and the expansion of trading kingdoms along the coasts of mainland and island Southeast Asia. This will be further underlined as the description of the expansion of the commercial relations of the port unfolds below. It is sufficient here to point out that political contacts and physical exchange of people were an important feature in the seventeenth century between the state of Golconda and all the states referred to above. Factors and ambassadors from Arakan,

Pegu, Ayuthya, Kedah, Acheh, Macassar and Bantam, to name the recognizable ones, appear frequently in Masulipatnam. Some of them owned or rented houses and land in the city and attended to a variety of business connected to commerce and shipping. It established a pattern of trade exchanges that remained fundamental to Masulipatnam's prosperity till the 1680s.

The westward trade of Masulipatnam added another dimension to its growth but it is difficult to identify its origins. Traditionally the ports of Coromandel did not have a large westward trade except to Malabar. Sailings from Masulipatnam to west Asia appear to have begun in the last decade of the sixteenth century and with the seventeenth century this westward trade was to break out in volume, partly for commercial and partly for political and cultural reasons. From its foundation the Qutb Shahi state of Golconda had looked towards Persia for its cultural roots and political contacts. The major historian of Golconda has asserted that the process of Iranization of the kingdom had reached its peak with the death of Sultan Muhammad (1626).<sup>57</sup> From Masulipatnam sailings on the pilgrim and commercial traffic to Mecca began around 1590 and the state was negotiating about this time with the Portuguese for cartazes for that traffic. The trade to Mokha and Jeddah had become regular and substantial by the end of the century. At this time the trade to the Persian Gulf began and was accelerated by the fall of Ormuz to the Persian empire in 1622 and the opening of the port of Bandar Abbas. This must have been an important factor in the influx of powerful Persian shippers to take up residence in the port of Masulipatnam. Thus, in the first half of the seventeenth century, Masulipatnam established a vital link with the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

This simultaneous operation in the one port of two trade cycles, one to the Bay of Bengal and the east, the other to the Arabian Sea and the west, gave Masulipatnam a distinctive quality among Indian ports. It was thus able to link the two major trade systems of the Indian Ocean and became, not only a port of export and import of its own vast hinterland, but also a port of trans-shipment or an entrepôt port for goods from and to other distant regions. Thus the abundant produce of its own hinterland—textiles, iron and steel, indigo, rice, salt—went out through the port, and the demands of the hinterland—pepper, spices, tin, elephants, dyes, aromatic woods, bullion—were channelled inland through it. At the same time an excess was imported in pepper, spices, ivory, porcelain, aromatic woods, to be transshipped to west

Asia, just as west Asian goods saleable in Southeast Asia were handled through the port. In this way the port developed a commercial expertise that could handle both these trade systems. The Hindus and the domiciled Coromandel Muslims who had managed the eastward trade for centuries were as expert as any in this trade. The Persians, Armenians and other west Asians brought in the expertise on the western trade. This conjuncture enabled Masulipatnam to emerge in the seventeenth century as an exceptional port in Indian Ocean trade.

An important feature of Asian trade in the seventeenth century was the inputs into it by European enterprise, both of the large Company institutions and of private entrepreneurs. The European participation in Asian trade and the special directions given to it by the Europeans also contributed to the growth of Masulipatnam in particular ways. The Golconda state and regional and city authorities knew to take full advantage of this and attracted as great a share as possible of European trade. It was noted above that the Masulipatnam trade developed in the sixteenth century outside the Portuguese system. What is meant here is the official *Estado do India*. Private Portuguese trade soon took advantage of Masulipatnam both in the traffic to Burma and Siam and to the Malacca Straits and Macassar. In fact, individual Portuguese merchants settled in Masulipatnam, took up service in Golconda as artillerymen and pilots in ships. It was the Companies, however, which soon gravitated to Masulipatnam massively and helped in the growth of the port in the first half of the seventeenth century. The Companies entered into the traditional Indian Ocean networks of Masulipatnam as well as using it for their European trade. Both these tended to expand the functions of the port and the city and resulted in a fascinating saga of European-Asian co-operation and conflict that went on throughout the seventeenth century.

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44. See, for example, *Records of Fort St. George: Masulipatnam 1682-3*, p. 17.
45. Havart, I, p. 223; *EFI 1668-69*, pp. 286-8.
46. L. Varadarajan, I, 1, p. 23.
47. Havart, I, p. 224.
48. *EFI 1637-41*, p. 216.
49. Das, p. 166.
50. L. Varadarajan, I, 1, p. 12.
51. L. Varadarajan, I, 1, pp. 190-7.
52. Havart, I, pp. 141-50.
53. S. Subrahmanyam, 'The Portuguese Response to the Rise of Masulipatnam 1570-1600', p. 127.
54. S. Subrahmanyam, pp. 127-30.
55. Peter Floris, *Peter Floris, His Voyage to the East Indies 1611-1615*, p. 119.
56. A. Forbes, 'Tenasserim: The Thai Kingdom of Ayuthya's Link with the Indian Ocean', pp. 1-3.
57. H.K. Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, pp. 387-405 and passim.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Port, Its Trade and Management (upto 1687)

Just as the evidence of the origins and early growth of Masulipatnam is scanty, so also is the data on the ports administrative structures and its relationship to the Golconda state structure. It shares this characteristic with many Indian ports which appear hazily on the historical horizon, especially in respect to their day-to-day running, personnel and hierarchies of command. How did the port fit into the administrative structure of the Golconda sultanate as it evolved under Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah who was responsible for its eastward expansion? While a number of models of administering an Islamic state were available—the most conspicuous being the Mughal—there were many variants to these models and specific conditions in politics, economy and society had to be taken into account by a ruler. While the terminology of Mughal officialdom was very much in evidence, there were significant differences in functions and powers. There was also the heritage of the Vijayanagar empire which was strongly entrenched in the coastal districts.

Revenue farming was a practice that was widespread under the Vijayanagar rulers and indeed indigenous to the regional Hindu states of southern India. The practice of tax farming was incorporated into Golconda administrative practices and operated in the Krishna-Godavari delta regions throughout this period. The great nobles of the kingdom held high office for which they received assignments of land, similar to the Mughal jagirs. In return the assignees had to agree to deliver to the state treasury a certain sum of money each year. This sum was fixed on the basis of what the land was expected to yield and taking into account the salary and expenses of the official and his subordinates in the collection of revenue. The official could then seek to make a profit on the venture by maximizing his returns. He did this by auctioning parts of his assignment to local entrepreneurs who then

proceeded to organize and administer revenue collection at the level of village and town.

In such a system of administration and revenue collection, there was no permanent hierarchy of officials through whom command passed downwards or responsibility upwards. The highest officials of the Golconda state had no clear demarcation of functions between them. The Jumlaul'l-Mulk, popularly known as Mir Jumla, wazir, and the sarkhel could each have responsibility for the administration of specific regions of the kingdom at various times, depending on the nature of the assignments granted to them by the king. Then there was the sarsamt or head of a province or a district who was appointed by the king and entrusted with the responsibility for revenue collection on similar terms. What this meant then was that a remote district or port such as Masulipatnam could be part of the assignment of a high official at the centre in Golconda or could belong under the jurisdiction of a district or provincial governor, himself responsible to the king. Both structures are seen to have operated in the period studied.

Whoever was the ultimate recipient, the person who administered the port and its environs and collected its revenues was the havaldar. It is this official who is referred to in the European records as the Governor of Masulipatnam, the provincial Governor located in Mustafanagar, Kondavidu or Ellore, being referred to as Great-Governors. As stated above, this havaldar could have bid for the position and received it from the assignee, be it the provincial Governor or a central official. On the other hand, he could be an appointee of his superior in the capacity of a paid official who collected taxes, administered the city, defrayed his expenses from his receipts and paid the balance in periodic instalments to his master. A number of these tax-farmers in the Karnataka lowlands were merchants or brahman entrepreneurs and many of them continued in their positions under Islamic rule. But in Masulipatnam, during the Qutb Shahi period, the havaldars were overwhelmingly Muslims, though it is possible that they had Hindu merchant or brahman partners who managed the revenue farms for them.

The havaldar had enormous powers which he derived from his immediate superior, the provincial Governor or the central official. Beside the collection of revenue in the port and city, of tolls on the roads and rivers, of taxes on artisans and land taxes, he was responsible for law and order and administered justice. The havaldar of Masulipatnam held minor court at the suburban village of Guduru

where there were stately residences for himself and his assistants. He held audiences there in gaily carpeted halls and had a large retinue with elephants, horses, palanquins, umbrella-carriers, trumpeters, drummers and pike-men. On his appointment and on special occasions, the prominent citizens of the city went out to greet him with presents. These included the European heads of factories in the port.<sup>1</sup> Havart, with some exaggeration, speaks of his enormous power over his subjects and the arbitrariness with which he exercised them. He mentions some anecdotes of this power which must have been in vogue in the city in Havart's day.<sup>2</sup>

In one episode, a servant was walking through the havaldar's garden while his master was in the house having a long discussion with the havaldar. The servant was tired and thirsty and plucked a lemon from a tree in the garden and ate it. The havaldar saw this from a distance, sent for him, berated him for daring to pluck fruits from his garden, laid him on the ground and gave him two hundred lashes. Another person on seeing this had commented to the havaldar on the severity of the punishment for a small offence. The havaldar turned on him for daring to criticize him and fined him 40 pagodas, which was reduced to 25 on the intervention of another official. In another episode, he tells of a havaldar coveting a married woman whom he could not win over by sweet words and gifts. Thereupon he had her brought to him by force and shut her up in his harem. The husband of the woman protested vainly and then went to Golconda to complain to the havaldar's superior, the Great Governor of the lowlands and the king, and procured an order for the return of the woman. The havaldar then, through gifts to his master, had the order withdrawn. Later he had the man up on a false accusation, imposed a heavy fine on him and on his being unable to pay, sold him and his children as slaves in Tenasserim. In a third incident, a brahman writer had a wealthy pupil studying under his care. The brahman coveted the gold jewellery that the boy wore. One day he robbed the boy of his possessions and buried him alive. The brahman was charged but escaped by bribing the havaldar who was paid 1 thousand pagodas. Havart says that these three incidents took place in Masulipatnam in his time in 1683 and 1684.

The evidence from European sources on the repressive nature of the havaldar's administration must be taken with more than a pinch of salt. While it is true that the havaldar was in total control in the day-to-day administration of the city, he was always accountable to his

immediate superior in the provincial capital or in the royal capital. Islamic legal institutions were firmly entrenched, there was a qazi's court in the city which the havaldar could not overrule. In the matter of revenue collection, the revenue farmer could not impose new taxes beyond the sanctioned and customary ones. Besides the havaldar had to be on-side with the substantial wealthy elements in the city and port and could not ride rough-shod over their interests. Wealthy Persian merchants had much influence over havaldars and, as will be shown later, most havaldars were amenable to approaches made by them. There was also the havaldar's dependence on brahman writers and accountants and komatty merchants and financiers.

Next to the havaldar, the most powerful official was the shahbandar, a harbourmaster and customs official at the port. He was also probably appointed by the revenue assignee of the port, city and district and had an allowance paid to him out of the total revenue. He too had a retinue and some marks of honour accorded to him, somewhat less than those of the havaldar. Unlike the havaldar, the shahbandar was not a visible figure in the city and port, though evidence of his wealth in shipping and residential property was there. He appears to have been in charge of shipping on the roads and in the river, the loading and unloading of goods and of the customs duties levied on them on behalf of the state. The third most powerful official was the kotwal, also paid a stipend for his services and his retinue, and allowed certain honours for the dignity of his office. He was the chief of police and security officer of the port and city. His men guarded the customs sheds, warehouses, roads in and out of the city, the main entry and exit points over the two bridges, as well as maintained law and order in the city. Another official makes his appearance from very early in the seventeenth century, the Commander of the king's shipping. He is located in Masulipatnam and is unrelated to the city's administration. He was probably independent of the havaldar and directly responsible to the sultan's revenue minister. He was put in Masulipatnam to manage the sultan's ships and his shipping ventures. The appointment obviously reflected the expansion in the king's shipping in the middle of the seventeenth century. Though he had no formal role in the administration of the port and the city, he features as a mediator in disputes that arose between Europeans and local authorities. He must have been in constant liaison with European powers over the hiring of pilots, the purchase of artillery and marine stores and the issue of

passes to the sultan's ships.<sup>3</sup> We find that the Mughals had such an official appointed to each of the major ports in the empire.

There is some evidence of the value of revenues of Masulipatnam and lands dependent on it. Two reports of the 1660s put the figure at 140 thousand pagodas which was the sum that the Governor had to pay to the central treasury.<sup>4</sup> An earlier report sets the figure at 180 thousand pagodas but these figures do not mean much as at various times villages and towns were added to or taken away from the Masulipatnam revenue district.<sup>5</sup> The amount allowed to the havaladar for the maintenance of his position and his employees was put at 8 thousand pagodas.<sup>6</sup> The total revenue amount was made up from diverse sources. By far the largest proportion was the tax on salt which was a royal monopoly and was a lucrative trade commodity. The extensive production of salt in the environs of Masulipatnam, in the several bays, lagoons and inlets was noted above. Then there were the returns on duties and taxes at the port on shipping and goods. In the city itself there were various municipal and market taxes. Finally there were the taxes on the suburban villages which were both paddy producing and those inhabited by artisans. The former were taxed on the customary land revenue rates and the latter according to professional tax schedules on weavers, carpenters, goldsmiths, washermen and other specialist workers. There seems to have been some upward movement in the gross revenue caused by competitive bidding which in turn reflected the perception of the speculators on the expanding trade and industry.

After the Mughal conquest, different methods of collection appear to have been used which will be discussed later. It could be noted here that the report of revenues within a few years of the Mughal conquest places the total collections at Rs 485,452.<sup>7</sup> At an exchange rate of Rs. 3.50 to a pagoda, this worked out to 138,700 pagodas, very close to the figure collected under the Golconda sultanate. The sultans, and later the Mughal emperors, gave tax exemption to the European Companies, sometimes for a commuted payment and sometimes *gratis*. When they did this, the estimated value of this concession was deducted from the total value of the revenue farm. The tax farmers naturally opposed any such exemptions as these would have affected their total collections. Thus when the English applied to the sultan in 1632 for exemption from customs dues, the rentier opposed it. Despite this opposition, the sultan granted them exemption on their representing to him that customs on their trade was worth not more than 800 pagodas. When

the sultan granted this exemption, he authorized the sum to be deducted from the amount due from the rentier of the Masulipatnam farm.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after, the Governor of Masulipatnam was protesting to the sultan that customs dues on English trade amounted to 4 thousand pagodas and that the state was being defrauded of a considerable sum.<sup>9</sup> The English succeeded in nipping this protest in the capital city through bribing officials close to the sultan and continued in their tax-exempt status.

In the early years of the seventeenth century, the customs on imports and exports at the port seem to have been negotiable, the havaladar demanding sometimes as much as 12 per cent. The agreed rate was usually 4 per cent which was similar to rates prevalent in other large ports of India at this time. Other Coromandel ports, however, charged only 2.5 per cent. Again in 1611, the havaladar demanded 5 per cent from an incoming Dutch fleet and settled at 4 per cent.<sup>10</sup> One reason for the heavier customs duties in Masulipatnam, as compared with other ports, could be because the havaladar and other officials up to the sultan were themselves trading at Masulipatnam and wanted to retain an advantage over their competitors. There was another duty levied at Masulipatnam called *chappa dalal*, a stamp duty on cloth at the excessive rate of 12 per cent.<sup>11</sup> One does not come across this duty in any of the other Coromandel ports. It could be that the tax was levied in the weaving village itself, when the cloth left the loom as designated for export overseas. Or it could also be a duty by the state to penalize competing exporters as the sultan and other high officials were exporting textiles to overseas markets. Whatever the case may be, the Europeans appear to have had no difficulty in securing exemption from the *chappa dalal*.

The first havaladar of Masulipatnam who comes to view from the evidence is Mir Sadar-ud-din. Peter Floris, the Dutch merchant official, negotiated with him in 1611 for a fixed customs duty.<sup>12</sup> He was himself a merchant and insisted on supplying cloth to the Dutch for 4 thousand pagodas.<sup>13</sup> The Dutch were obviously not happy with their dealings with him and complained of his excessive prices and the poor quality of his textiles. When Floris returned to Masulipatnam in 1613, Mir Sadar-ud-din had been replaced as havaladar by two who appear to have held the position jointly.<sup>14</sup> They were Ahmadu Khan and Basubali Rao. The latter was a brahman accountant who must have entered into partnership with Ahmadu Khan to farm the revenues of Masulipatnam. Under their tenure of office there were reported a number of commercial

practices that shed much light on the fascinating inter-relationship between state power and the economy in Masulipatnam and the Golconda kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

The havaladar Ahmadu Khan had become heavily involved in trade with the Dutch. He purchased imported goods on deferred payment. He contracted to supply textiles for export and took advances. In addition he sought outright loans from the Dutch. Komatty merchants of the city sometimes stood as sureties for these loans. It would appear that Ahmadu Khan was trying to trade without capital and found in the Dutch a source of capital he thought he could tap without risk. He was clearly using his authority to do this, as the Dutch had as yet not secured royal permission for their trade and establishment. To what extent Ahmadu Khan was engaging in overseas trade is not clear but he was certainly prominent in the wholesale agency business at the port. In the course of these operations, within a year or two (1613-14), his indebtedness to the Dutch had risen sharply. Floris' repeated requests for settlement went unheeded. The havaladar kept asking for time till the ships returned to port from their trading voyages. Even Floris' appeal to the Golconda court did not have any effect. Letters from the court merely exhorted other prominent merchants of the city, such as the shahbandar, to see to it that Floris' debts were cleared by the havaladar.<sup>16</sup> Floris then hit upon an idea which marked an important stage in the commercial affairs of the port and of the European connection with it. He wanted to seize ships owned by Muslim merchants of the city but there were none in the port. So he decided on a second expedient and kidnapped Venkatadra, the son of Busbali Rao, Ahmadu Khan's partner and co-havaladar of Masulipatnam. A party of Dutchmen rushed into the customs shed where Venkatadra was working, seized the youth and dumped him on a boat which they had ready at the bar and rowed swiftly on to the Dutch vessel that was riding at anchor on the roads.<sup>17</sup> This desperate act had the desired effect and the havaladar immediately discharged his debts as also did other Masulipatnam merchants who owed money to the Dutch.

As stated above, this was a significant event, the implications of which were not lost on all the parties involved. The Dutch realized how easy it was to undertake a swift, local action on land and retreat to the safety of their ship. The prominent citizens of the city realized how insecure their persons were in the face of a hostile European power. Once the youth was confined to a ship, there was nothing all the power of Golconda could do. There was consternation in the city



also on account of the alternate means of reprisal that Floris had threatened the port—the seizure of Muslim shipping. The lessons of this episode were imprinted on all parties to the dispute, as well as on neutrals, and influenced subsequent disputes and the manner of their resolution.

The episode had little effect on Ahmadu Khan's prospects in Masulipatnam. He was very influential in Golconda. In 1614 he visited the capital to deliver his year-end accounts of the revenues. The sarkhail Malik Tusar was his friend. There was a period (1618-19) when he was not havaladar of Masulipatnam and was probably appointed to some other office but he returned as havaladar in 1619. It is probable that he retained his interests in the trade of Masulipatnam during this time. The havaladar who succeeded him in 1618 (probably Mir Kassim) went further in utilizing his office in furtherance of his trade. These were probably initiated by Ahmadu Khan who, as noted earlier, was an aggressive entrepreneur. He decided to arrogate to himself the monopoly of trade with the Dutch and proceeded to farm out this monopoly. He secured 2.5 thousand pagodas for the lease of the exclusive right to trade with the Dutch from a komatty merchant, Linganna.<sup>18</sup> These measures were naturally taken with the agreement of the havaladar's superior to whom the revenues of these districts had been assigned. The result of this emergence of Linganna as the sole buyer of Dutch imports was a drop in price. The price of cloves dropped from 15 pagodas a maund (of 26 lb) to 13 pagodas and nutmeg from 70 pagodas a candy (of 500 lb) to 58 pagodas.<sup>19</sup>

The Dutch protested at this interference with free trade and threatened to withdraw their trade from Masulipatnam to the neighbouring ports of Petapuli and Narsapore. There was also in the background a threat of reprisals on the Muslim shipping of Masulipatnam. In fact they evacuated the city for a time in 1618 and returned the following year on receiving a farman of 22 July 1619 confirming their trading privileges.<sup>20</sup> It was at this time that the sultan reappointed Ahmadu Khan as havaladar to control a situation that was threatening to get out of hand. A prominent merchant of Masulipatnam, Mir Kamaldin, was among those who pleaded with the Dutch to return and re-establish their trade. Ahmadu Khan relaxed somewhat the previous restrictions on trade with the Dutch but continued the practice of pre-emptive buying by the havaladar.<sup>21</sup> There was a price differential on sales to the havaladar and to the merchants of about 1 pagoda on a maund of cloves, 3 to 5 pagodas on a bahar of nutmeg,

10 pagodas on a bahar of mace and 5 to 10 pagodas on a bahar of sandalwood. The havaldar attempted to profit from the bullion trade by leasing out the monopoly rights to purchase silver and gold to a single merchant for 3 thousand pagodas.<sup>22</sup> This was soon abandoned within three months because of the damage it did to the supply of bullion in the city. It appears that the havaldar and his master, the assignee of the Masulipatnam revenues had decided to maximize their receipts by deriving the utmost out of the expanding Dutch trade in that port. It was reported that at this time the new assignee had secured these lands on a bid that was an increase of 15 thousand pagodas from the previous receipts.<sup>23</sup>

In 1621, Mir Kassim replaced Ahmadu Khan as havaldar. He had held the position briefly before. The change was temporarily welcomed by European traders. He abolished the monopoly on the purchase of bullion and, for the time being at least, abandoned pre-emptive buying. Mir Kassim had previously been shahbandar of the port and was thoroughly familiar with its trade. In 1622 the havaldar had to face a crisis caused by the spill-over into Masulipatnam of European rivalries. The Dutch chased a Portuguese ship along the Gingelly coast which took refuge in Masulipatnam where the Portuguese asked for asylum. The Dutch seized the ship, *Nova Senhora de Bon Viagem*, despite the havaldar's order giving the Portuguese security in the roads. The havaldar was furious at this flouting of his orders and the Dutch withdrew their assets from the factory and took their officials on board. The havaldar besieged the Dutch factory, stopped the supply of water and refreshments, stopped all services and ordered that no-one should enter the residence. In the meanwhile, the sultan had been appraised of the situation and he served the Dutch with an order to release the ship. The matter was settled with the Dutch freeing the Portuguese crew and paying the sultan 5 thousand pagodas as a share of the booty taken from the ship.<sup>24</sup> The differences between the Dutch and the administration at Masulipatnam continued in 1623. Van Uffelen, the head of the Dutch factory in Masulipatnam and the chief of their entire Coromandel operations, was high-handed and arrogant in his dealings with the administration, apparently believing that aggression was the best way to secure Dutch interests. He flouted royal orders, took the law into his own hands, shipped tobacco which was a royal monopoly and generally made himself unpleasant. The Golconda Government struck back and in a surprise assault on the factory in November 1623, seized the chief and his assistant, together

with three of the Company's Indian middlemen and sent them in chains to Golconda. They were released only on payment of 16 thousand pagodas. Van Uffelen died shortly, succumbing to the wounds he sustained in this incident.<sup>25</sup>

The experiences of 1613-23 had salutary lessons to all the parties involved. The kidnapping of the havaldar's son (1613) and the threat of withdrawal and reprisals on shipping (1618-19) had been effective instruments utilized by the Dutch in their dealings with indigenous authority. On the other hand, the expansion of Dutch commercial interests and consequently their expensive assets on land in the form of goods, bullion and credit owed to them, made them hostages to action on land which the local government could easily mount. Each had thus a measure of the other and a scale of its own strengths and weaknesses. These experiences were to come in handy in the subsequent dealings between the Golconda state and European trading powers.

In 1624 the havaldar resumed the practice of controlling the right to trade with the Dutch and other Europeans. This lucrative right was put on auction and farmed out to the highest bidders. In 1624 the right was secured by six merchants. In the following year three merchants successfully bid for this right for 3 thousand pagodas.<sup>26</sup> At the same time there was a change of government in Masulipatnam and Mohammad Taqi became havaldar. Taqi was a very influential Golconda nobleman with very strong connections in the capital and went on later to hold influential positions there. He seems to have been determined to impose a stranglehold on the commercial life of Masulipatnam and derive every last penny he could out of it for his revenue receipts. Taqi developed this into a fine art and the fact that he could get away with it can only be explained by his great influence in Golconda. He had farmed the revenues from Mansur Khan, the Mir Jumla, and was sure that whatever he did in maximizing revenue returns would be supported by his master.<sup>27</sup>

The trade with the Europeans was farmed out by the havaldar. It was held by three komatti merchants, Linganna, Ramanna and Kondor. No other merchants were allowed to approach the Dutch factory. The havaldar himself had first choice on imports and he would himself fix the price at which they were to be bought. These goods he would then force on the lessee merchants at a profit. Thus in 1627, he bought 50 bahars of nutmeg at 105 pagodas a bahar and sold it to the lessees at 114 pagodas a bahar. Because of these practices, the price of imports—

nutmeg, cloves, mace, sandalwood, rompen—was less in 1628 than it had been in previous years. The havaldar would resell the goods to the lessee merchants at a profit even without removing the goods from the Dutch godowns. Thus, without sinking any capital, solely by virtue of his authority he was gaining profits on goods of 10 to 20 per cent.<sup>28</sup>

On account of these proceedings, the lessee merchants were losing money. They had each to pay 3 thousand pagodas for the right to trade with the Dutch. They were forced to take goods from the havaldar at prices which left little margin of profit for them in the resale. Moreover, they were often pressed for loans when he needed capital to carry on his trade. No wonder then that by 1628 Ramanna and Kondor were over 12 thousand pagodas in debt to the Dutch and Linganna indebted for over 4 thousand pagodas. When the Dutch pressed them for payment, they pleaded helplessness in the face of the havaldar's demands on them.<sup>29</sup> It is quite possible that these merchants were using the havaldar as a scapegoat for their problems. On the other hand, they were undoubtedly heavily involved with him and willingly entered into the arrangement to be lessees of the trade with the Dutch in the hope of profiting from it. The problem was that the havaldar, having sold them the exclusive right to trade with the Dutch, proceeded to undermine this right by himself intervening as a merchant. Besides, Taqi was himself an overseas exporter and needed capital and export goods which he prevailed on the merchants to provide.

The only evidence for this controlled trade and scarcely-veiled extortion is from European sources and it is not possible to say how widespread it was and whether it had overall adverse effects on the trade of Masulipatnam. Both the English and the Dutch were complaining of these measures and even the Danes, with their smaller scale trade, appear to have had some kind of trouble with the havaldar.<sup>30</sup> Whatever the truth of the matter may be, both the English and the Danes felt so strongly about it to contemplate withdrawing from Masulipatnam and taking reprisals on the shipping of its merchants and officials. In October 1627, the English chief, Brown, proposed to the Dutch a joint blockade of the port.<sup>31</sup> Later the English withdrew from Masulipatnam and came to an agreement over a partial settlement of their debts.<sup>32</sup> In the meanwhile, towards the end of 1627, Taqi was appointed to another office in the interior and he left his brother as havaldar to carry on his interest in the Masulipatnam revenues. The situation continued to deteriorate in 1628 under this new havaldar and the Dutch decided on a drastic course of action.

In correspondence exchanged between Masulipatnam, Paleacat and Batavia, local Company officials pressed hard for the adoption of violent measures to recover their debts and to teach the Masulipatnam administration a stern lesson. After initial hesitation, the Batavian Government consented to the use of force.<sup>33</sup> The timing had to be exact if the full impact of a blockade was to be felt. In the course of 1629, all the Company's capital and goods were to be gradually transferred out of Masulipatnam. The factory was to be totally evacuated and the forewaters were to be occupied by a few cruising vessels. These were to be ready for the return of the ships in the trading season at the end of the north-east monsoon in February. This was the time when the big ships would return from the Red Sea, Persian Gulf and Acheh, loaded with bullion and valuable goods. The ships would be boarded, taken to the Dutch fort at Paleacat where the goods would be unloaded up to the value of the Masulipatnam debts. The ships would then be allowed to proceed to Masulipatnam.<sup>34</sup>

Dutch plans were upset because of a disturbance in the sailing season of 1628. There was an unusual storm in September and a number of Masulipatnam ships could not proceed southwards. Many returned to port, others were wrecked. So Dutch cruising vessels waiting for ships to return in February/March would not have apprehended many.<sup>35</sup> The English had abandoned Masulipatnam towards the end of 1628 and announced their intention to seize vessels in reprisal. The Dutch realized that, if they did this, their factory was sure to be attacked. So they abandoned their factory on 1 March 1629. From that date two frigates and a sloop were stationed along the coast, awaiting returning ships. Not many ships came because of the reason noted above. A ship belonging to Mir Kamaldin coming from Acheh was taken. Three ships came from Arakan. Another belonging to a private merchant came from Acheh. All these were taken to Paleacat and unloaded.<sup>36</sup> The Dutch could only seize goods proven to belong to Masulipatnam merchants. This was difficult and the merchants had ways of hiding ownership. The goods seized were not sufficient to compensate for Dutch claims in Masulipatnam. The English contented themselves with seizing small coastal vessels and settled for 3 thousand pagodas out of an initial claim of 10 thousand pagodas.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of the fact that the Dutch action had not achieved its aim because of fortuitous circumstances, it had unsettled the port and the city and its merchant community took alarm and initiated peace measures. A number of the more powerful merchants of the city

visited the Dutch on board their cruiser and sought to pacify them. They said that the havaladar and the kotwal had been recalled to Golconda and that another official had been appointed havaladar. They agreed to provide a bond for the debts of the two lessee merchants Ramanna and Kondor of 13 thousand pagodas but refused to consider any settlement over an old debt of 11 thousand pagodas which the Dutch claimed from the Golconda administration.<sup>38</sup> The Dutch refused to settle on these terms and were confident that by effectively closing the port they would force the sultan to come to terms. The merchants also pressed Ramanna and Kondor, debtors of the Company, to settle their debts. Under this pressure, these two merchants began to pay back some of this debt in goods and in April and May 3.5 thousand pagodas worth of goods were delivered.<sup>39</sup> Mir Kamaldin appears to have been in the lead of those who tried to bring about a settlement. It may be noted that one of his ships had been seized by the Dutch. Besides, the next sailing season would soon be on them and the merchants did not want to lose their trade during the season.

Mir Kamaldin appears to have gone to the capital, Golconda, in an effort to bring about a settlement. With him went the havaladar and they were all aware that the crisis had to be resolved soon. Taqi was now a powerful official in court. He could not be pressured into settling his debts. The Dutch were prepared to prolong the blockade to the next trading season so that they may seize one of Taqi's ships which was reported in Acheh and would return in March.<sup>40</sup> Finally a settlement was arrived at and in November 1629 a Dutch official, Jacob de Witt, accompanied the havaladar to Golconda. He returned in May 1630 with a set of farmans. The previous havaladar's debts to the Dutch of 16 thousand pagodas were to be settled in six annual instalments out of the annual tolls of 3 thousand which was due from the Dutch. For five years the Dutch were to make no payment and in the sixth year they were to deduct 1 thousand pagodas from the annual toll.<sup>41</sup> The sultan also announced to the Dutch that he had dismissed the havaladar with whom the Dutch had disagreements and had appointed Mirza Rosbahan in his place. He instructed this havaladar to help the Dutch collect all their debts from the other debtors. And he entreated them to return to Masulipatnam and re-establish their trade. Also in the farman he indicated a desire to send a ship to Ormuz and requested the Dutch to help ships departing from Masulipatnam.<sup>42</sup>

With the appointment of Mirza Rosbahan as havaladar and the death in 1631 of Taqi, who had retained enormous interests in revenues of

the delta, a number of the earlier practices of controlled trade were abandoned, at least for the time being. Again the experiences of these four to five years had been salutary to all parties engaged in commerce in Masulipatnam. Lessees of the revenues of the city and port and administrative officers were no longer content merely to tax the trade passing through but had considerably enlarged their ambitions in engrossing trade by using their executive powers. It was obvious that the total trade of Masulipatnam was increasing in the 1620s, consisting both of an increase in the trade of Asian merchants in the Indian Ocean as well as of European participation. It is noteworthy that the efforts of the lessees and administrators were directed towards controlling the trade of the Europeans. This trade consisted of the import of commodities that had a good market in inland cities and towns. Any success in engrossing the sale of those goods like spices, tin, sandalwood and copper would have been extremely profitable. Then there was the large scale purchases of varieties of textiles for export, the supply of which was also good business. There was little need to risk capital, the Europeans usually gave substantial advances, and the rulers could use their executive power in weaving villages to secure good terms. Thus it was the provincial governors and havalendars who were seeking to maximize their revenues by leasing out sole rights to trade with the Europeans or exercising sole rights of purchase themselves.

The Europeans, for their part, naturally wanted a free market for the competitive sale of their imports and for the best terms for their exports. When their merchants and the administrators ran up heavy debts, they found the once lucrative trade of Masulipatnam no longer viable. This was behind their decisions to resort to force to redress their grievances. Here the flourishing trade of Masulipatnam merchants could be held to ransom. The fact that the officials themselves were ship-owning merchants gave added weight to any action the Europeans would take. The actual progress of the blockade showed that there were variables which could not be controlled. A freak change of weather denied the Dutch some valuable prizes. It was not surprising that the English decided to settle for much less than their original demand. Even the Dutch did not get all they wanted. For the Sultanate of Golconda, the experience was equally revealing. The merchants as a group wanted a quick settlement of the dispute and pressed both parties. But they had no leverage with the central administration in Golconda. In fact the merchant leader Mir Kamaldin is said to have stayed in Muhammad Taqi's residence in Golconda.<sup>43</sup> And Taqi was



the prime cause of the dispute with the Dutch and hence the merchants' problems. Ultimately the sultan had to be convinced of the need to settle with the Dutch and make them lift the blockade. He did this only when he realized his own interests were at stake. His shipping ventures were affected by the blockade. Then he acted swiftly and gave the Dutch the assurances they required even to the extent of replacing officers who had incurred Dutch hostility.

The centralizing role of the port and city of Masulipatnam was enhanced with the drawing to it of textile exports from a wide producing arc. This centralization was promoted both by the European Companies which had ever-expanding offices in Masulipatnam as well as by the Persian shippers who operated from this port. There were also the Southeast Asian merchant-rulers who chose to operate from one central port, facilitating their exports and imports. Companies were opening up sub-offices to the north and west and Masulipatnam middlemen were tapping a large weaving hinterland. Petapuli and Neinipilli became important markets. Madapollam was showing promise of an increase in supply. The towns of Palakollu and Drakshavaram were thought important enough for the Dutch to try to take them on lease. As goods from these places were transported by water and by land to Masulipatnam, the issue of transit dues became important. The lessees of Masulipatnam were keen that these goods should be shipped out of that port. When the English requested to be able to embark goods at Petapuli, the request was curtly refused.<sup>44</sup>

Transit dues on goods in and out of Masulipatnam created tensions between the Companies and regional authorities. The lessees of the districts in which the goods were produced and through which they passed *en route* to Masulipatnam imposed a variety of transit duties on them. The Companies objected to this on the grounds of tax exemption in Masulipatnam granted by the sultan. The English and the Dutch in their negotiations with the sultan at Golconda wanted to have tax exemptions extended to the hinterland districts. They were successful in this and the 'Golden Farman' secured by the English in 1636 gave them such exemptions.<sup>45</sup> Likewise in 1639 the Dutch secured similar rights of duty-free transit throughout the kingdom.<sup>46</sup> This was not only of great advantage to the trade of the Companies but it also contributed to enhancing the importance of Masulipatnam as a point of import and export at the expense of neighbouring ports. It gave the Companies an edge over their Indian competitors. It opened the way for abuse through the covering of Indian merchants' goods by the Companies



and, by this means, gave the Companies an important instrument in attracting and attaching to themselves merchants of the region whose goods the Companies protected in this way. When the practice became more widespread, conflicts arose with the Golconda administration. It is important to note also that, in the English case, all tax concessions given to the Company were assumed to apply to the private trade of Company servants and of freemercants.

The English freemercant Captain Wadell was in dispute with the Masulipatnam authorities over customs dues claimed from him. In July 1638 he decided to take militant action, loaded three country boats with armed men from his ships and fitted them with guns, crossed the bar into the river and shot into the city killing three or four Muslim inhabitants. The havaldar sank a vessel at the mouth of the river to prevent his coming back for another attack. Eventually the dispute over customs was settled through the mediation of the chief of the Danish factory.<sup>47</sup> The idea of settling arguments with force or threat of force seemed to be spreading from the large Company powers to these individual European merchants. The openness and lack of proper defences in the port and city made them vulnerable to such attempts. While the Companies would take to violence only as a last resort, the adventurers and freeloaders did not have such restraints and were inclined to act if they thought they could get away with it.

In spite of these local difficulties and disputes which cropped up now and then, the port was clearly on an upward spiral of expanding trade in the 1620s and 1630s. A Dutch report of 1628 states that in September, a popular sailing month for outward journeys, ten ships left Masulipatnam, two to Pegu, three to Tenasserim, two to Arakan, two to Acheh and one to the Maldives.<sup>48</sup> It does not mention westward sailings to the Persian Gulf but there is no doubt that there were a number of ships that left for those ports. Besides these ports, it is known that there were sailings from Masulipatnam to Kedah, Johore and Macassar. So the port had well established its Indian Ocean connections by this time. The owners of these ships are recorded as the havaldar and Kotwal of Masulipatnam, the King of Siam, individuals whose names identify them as Persians and other Muslims. No Hindu ship-owner appears in this list but this does not mean that there were no ocean-going Hindu vessels based in Masulipatnam. The season of departure for long-distance voyages was one of great activity in the port. The merchants were busy supplying goods for export and the

business of the Companies took second place to the merchants' concern for their own inter-Asian trade.<sup>49</sup>

The 1640s saw the ascendancy of Mir Muhamad Said in Golconda and in the trade of Masulipatnam. From 1637 when he became provincial governor in Kondaplli he began active participation in the trade of the delta region. Later he was appointed sarkhel and became head of the revenue administration of the kingdom. He was appointed to the position of Mir Jumla in 1643 and became nawab of the south and expanded his trading operations along the coast through his appointees and agents. The havaldars of Masulipatnam for many years were his dependents and acted as agents for his commercial aims. He at first had good relations with European traders, being particularly friendly with the Portuguese and traded in ports controlled by them. Likewise, he had transactions with the English and Dutch Companies at Masulipatnam. But previous complaints of engrossing trade now reappeared. He was frequently able to purchase the entire stock of Company imports and with his commanding position was able to dictate prices and drive competitors out of the market.<sup>50</sup>

No less assertive was Mir Jumla the rentier than Mir Jumla the merchant. As rentier of vast tracts of the Karnataka lowlands, he challenged the Companies' tax-free status in respect of inland transit. He came down heavily on the abuse of the Companies of covering goods of their Indian middlemen. In July 1652, the chief of the Dutch Factory at Masulipatnam had to give a written assurance that the Company's Indian merchants and 'black servants' must pay the tax of 2.5 per cent on textiles transported by them on their own account. There was the threat that if the Companies continued to protect their goods, they would lose their tax exemption.<sup>51</sup> Mir Jumla's shipping activities also constituted a challenge to the Companies, especially to the Dutch who were trying to use their naval superiority to control sectors of Asian trade. As they developed a passes policy on sailings to Southeast Asia after the conquest of Malacca in 1641, shipping of Masulipatnam was constrained to secure these passes and hence be subject to some control in their eastward sailings. It affected the sailings to Malacca, Acheh and Malay peninsular ports with which kingdoms the Dutch claimed they were at war. It did not affect sailings to Burma and Thailand. The total effect of this passes policy on Masulipatnam shipping is not clear. Mir Jumla's ships were embroiled in disputes with the Dutch over the freedom to sail to certain ports which the Dutch claimed to be under their jurisdiction. But the Dutch

had always to compromise as they were dependent on his enormous power on land.

In 1662 the Dutch were permitted to establish a factory in Golconda to which they could transport imported goods without transit dues on the way.<sup>52</sup> This was a great advantage to their trade and there is a view that this devalued the importance of Masulipatnam as a market.<sup>53</sup> This is a doubtful proposition as there were several other inland markets which were fed from Masulipatnam. There is no evidence that the Dutch were able to dominate the import market, except probably in spices which by now they controlled at the sources of production. What advantage the access to Golconda gave the Dutch was in the import of copper and silver. Silver rose in demand in Golconda as it came under Mughal economic domination and as vast annual tributes had to be transferred in rupees to the empire. Those who controlled Masulipatnam revenues tried to secure a monopoly of silver and asserted prescriptive rights to buy all the silver from the Dutch. Major restrictions imposed by the havaladar Fatullah Beg in 1658 led to a decline in the price of silver and the Dutch suffered a loss. They threatened to abandon Masulipatnam and the merchants intervened with the royal officials in Golconda to ease these restrictions.<sup>54</sup>

The mid-seventeenth century was also a period of expansion of English trade in Masulipatnam, not so much on behalf of the Company as of the private trade of Company servants and of freemercants and interlopers. The activities of Capt. Waddell were noted earlier. In the 1660s the English strengthened their Masulipatnam factory and spilt over in numbers to Madapollam. An index to the expansion of English interests in this city was the greater confidence they showed in asserting their rights and privileges. Earlier, though the Golden Farman had given them tax-free status, it was largely ignored by regional Governors outside Masulipatnam. Now they pursued such violations strenuously as the Dutch had done, and ensured their observance. To be in a position to do this, they strengthened their military position in their Masulipatnam residence, recruited more peons, sepoy and even Rajput mercenaries. Company servants adopted extravagant lifestyles from the Persian élites and administrative officials. In 1662 there were some incidents that resulted from these English claims. There was a major conflict between the English chief Edward Winter and the havaladar. It arose over a quarrel between their respective servants over precedence in the city market. Winter, an arrogant and audacious man, rode through the havaladar's township of Guduru on his journey

to Masulipatnam, an act which offended the havaladar. His men then attacked Winter and his party, killing a few and wounding Winter. Winter then boarded an English vessel and blockaded the port. Finally a settlement was effected through the intervention of the merchants.<sup>55</sup> Later that year, Winter's successor William Jersey was in conflict with the havaladar over the use of drums while the English were travelling along the streets. The havaladar tried to prevent the English using these honours but the English attacked the kotwal's office and seized him. The havaladar put the English factory under siege but again the matter was settled on the intervention of the Muslim merchants.<sup>56</sup>

Throughout the mid seventeenth-century (1640s to 1660s), there is evidence of strong Masulipatnam shipping in the Indian Ocean trade. This shipping was owned by Golconda officials and the sultan, Persian merchants domiciled in the port, and Hindu ship-owners of north Coromandel. The ships secured passes from Dutch, English and Danes and even employed European pilots and gunners. Some ships fell prize to the Portuguese who were sometimes hostile to Golconda. There was a strong sailing out of Masulipatnam to Acheh evident from the 1640s to the 1670s. These ships also called at Kedah, Perak and even Dutch Malacca. The close relationship established between Mir Muhammad Said (Mir Jumla) and the ruler of Macassar was related to the expanding trade in the 1650s between Masulipatnam and Macassar. Another area of sailings out of Masulipatnam was to Arakan, Pegu, Mergui and Tenasserim. The Golconda merchants increasingly used the trans-peninsular route to the Gulf of Siam and to Ayuthya. In this trading area they competed very successfully with the Companies. The sailings westwards to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, begun early in the century, continued and expanded. This is seen in the steady request for passes from the Dutch and the English, as the longer distance and the increase of piracy made these ships vulnerable. Persian official representation in Masulipatnam through factors made this a two-way traffic. The importance of Masulipatnam in the inter-regional linkages is seen in the sailings between Surat and this port and between it and Bengal ports. Important Surat shippers such as Mohandas Nan were taking in Masulipatnam in their Indian Ocean sailings. Perhaps the frequency of traffic with Bengal meant that this port was being used as a clearing house for Bengal-western India exchanges. The increasing Bengal connection is seen in the location of factors of Bengal and Orissa officials like the viceroy and the Khan-i-Khan in this port.<sup>57</sup> When Mir Muhammad Said went as viceroy of

Bengal, he took with him major interests which linked the two trading regions.

Much is made of the dominance of Mir Jumla in the trade of Masulipatnam through the 1640s and 1650s. It is difficult to assess what effect this had on his competitors, the Persian and Golconda merchants of the port. Undoubtedly he utilized his enormous power and prestige in the kingdom to further his commerce. He had a large shipping fleet which must have had a large share of the trade of Masulipatnam. He also engrossed, by fair means or foul, the redistributive trade within the kingdom. Was this done at the expense of other Indian shipping of that port and did it affect the merchant community adversely? Probably not, as this community had learnt to live with monopolistic claims and the politically-driven trade of military and administrative nobles. In any case, the shipping of Masulipatnam merchants continued into the 1660s, after Mir Jumla had defected to the Mughals and then after his death in 1663.

But in the 1660s there is some significant evidence of economic difficulties in the hinterland and coastal areas that affected the trade of Masulipatnam. In 1656-57 the Mughal invasions of Golconda and Bijapur had major economic consequences. The roads from Masulipatnam into the interior were unsafe and the movement of goods to and from this port was hindered.<sup>58</sup> Huge indemnities forced from these kingdoms played havoc with the monetary system. The price of bullion fluctuated and in 1658-65 administrators and managers of revenue tried to control the trade in precious metal. The exchange rate of the rupee to the pagoda increased from around Rs 3.50 to Rs. 5.00 and the state artificially increased the value of the old pagoda in relation to the new.<sup>59</sup> All this unsettled investment in the textile villages. To add to this there was a disastrous fire in and around Masulipatnam in June 1666. It appears that the fire raged for ten days, destroyed large parts of Masulipatnam city and twenty-seven other towns and villages. A number of merchants' houses were reduced to ashes and they lost their goods and assets in the process. They were reported to be in heavy debt as a result of these losses.<sup>60</sup>

It could be this tightness of money that caused problems between provincial governors and European traders over the customs and transit dues. The rentals on the country may have been increased, leading to the rentiers to squeezing out what they could. Also the shortage of specie may have resulted in greater payment of tax in grain and the rentiers found the Companies good game for money taxes on

goods that passed through. Also the English noted much more of sub-letting of smaller blocks of countryside so that, while previously one farman giving freedom from dues was sufficient for Masulipatnam and the hinterland from which it drew its goods, it was not the case any more.<sup>61</sup> Governors of outlying weaving districts which provided goods for Masulipatnam would not respect the farman given by the Governor of the Masulipatnam territories. They wanted separate royal farmans so that they could then deduct the taxes they missed from their bonded dues. This led to friction on the roads between officials of these Governors and Company's middlemen and servants. The Dutch sometimes took armed action to force their goods through.

The preoccupation of Emperor Aurangzeb elsewhere in the first years of his rule enabled the Golconda government to consolidate its rule once again. The Mughal claims to Karnataka pressed through Mir Jumla were forestalled. Mir Jumla himself had become Nawab of Bengal and had his hands full there. The Karnataka was freed from the tight grip in which he had held it and reverted to rule by assignees of the Hyderabad court and sub-lessees on the spot. Jafar Beg, an official at court, had been assigned the Mustafanagar district in the late 1660s but had fallen into difficulties in keeping up his payments. Complaints of his arbitrary actions went to court and he was deprived of the government of this district in 1670. In his place was appointed Mūhammad Ali Beg but he too was removed after a short period and Jafar Beg reappointed.<sup>62</sup> A prominent merchant of Masulipatnam, Mohamad Ali Baqir, was the havaladar during these years for short periods and he attempted to maintain the peace and create conditions for an orderly flow of trade. His familiarity with the local scene, his interest in trade and his closeness to all the European Companies enabled him to help settle many difficult crises during his tenure of office.

Conflicting claims and positions taken up by the Golconda administration and the European Companies were becoming difficult to reconcile in the 1670s. Confrontations between them were more frequent and armed clashes more prevalent. European enterprise had grown in the second half of the seventeenth century and they had large stakes in the commerce of the port and neighbouring territories. The Companies were jealously guarding the privilege of duty-free trade which they claimed throughout the kingdom. Their activities had brought them into contact with a large number of Indians whom they employed in various functions. Their influence in the port and city had

grown and they added a range of extraterritorial jurisdiction to their claims on custom-duties. The Golconda administration, while deriving advantages from the trade of the Europeans, did not want them to intrude into political and administrative spheres. The Golconda government sought therefore to limit the claims of the Europeans to widespread exemptions from taxes and to keep their political presence within bounds, constantly asserting the sovereignty of the Golconda state in matters of port and city administration.

The administration tried at every possible opportunity to assert its authority over the Masulipatnam roads. In the absence of seapower, this was, of course, a most difficult task. But it sought to use its authority on land to exercise influence over the waters. During the second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-7), the Dutch had a fleet positioned on the roads of Masulipatnam to capture English shipping that attempted to sail in and out of this port. The English appealed to the sultan, strengthening the appeal with substantial presents to major officials, and in January 1666 the havaladar forbade the Dutch from attacking English shipping on the Masulipatnam roads.<sup>63</sup> He followed up this prohibition with a siege of the Dutch factory, cutting off water and food supplies, and threatened to seize the factory and its officials. The Dutch tried secretly to evacuate their families out of the city, to give them some freedom of action, but were discovered by the vigilant havaladar's forces and sent back to their factory. These tactics appear to have worked and the Dutch officials sent word out to the commander of the Dutch fleet not to interfere with English shipping in the roads of Masulipatnam.<sup>64</sup>

A dispute between the French and the Masulipatnam administration in 1670 showed the delicate nature of the power balance in this port which could result in a stalemate without either party being able to totally win the argument and get its own way. Jan Marcara, a prominent Armenian merchant who was employed as agent of the French East India Company in its negotiations with the Sultan of Golconda, fell out with Company officials in Surat who ordered his seizure and deportation to France to answer charges against him. It appears that Macara had some financial dealings and considerable influence with Golconda officials both in Masulipatnam and in the capital. Through this influence Marcara put himself under the protection of the Golconda administration which demanded that he be handed over to them. The chief of the French factory evaded an order that he appear before the havaladar to settle the matter and the kotwal posted soldiers at one end



of the factory in an intimidating posture. Faced with this the French position hardened and they prepared to resist any attempt to take Macara from them by force. The kotwal's men closed in on the factory, preventing the entry of workers and provisions, to which the French responded by sending armed parties to force supplies through. In an engagement both sides suffered losses. The French had shown their determination not to bow to the power of the local authority and the havaldar lacked the fire power and the armed strength to force his way into the factory. The French put their factory in a defensive posture, erected bastions and bought ammunition from English freemercants. At the same time, the conflict took a new dimension when a Persian merchant of Masulipatnam, Mir Sayyed Besfy, came up with a claim on a debt of 900 pagodas owed him by Marcara. The attention of the Golconda administration shifted from securing the person of Macara to collecting this debt. The French went on to challenge the local authority by stealthily embarking Macara on a French vessel, taking advantage of some sloppiness of the sentries at the waterfront. When this happened, the Golconda government had lost out on the first issue of control over the person of Macara and the French were prepared to settle on the issue of the loan for which they gave the havaldar a *bundi*. Throughout the episode, it is noteworthy that prominent merchants of Masulipatnam were constantly mediating between the two parties, anxious to ensure the continuing presence of the French in the port.<sup>65</sup>

About the same time, there was a conflict between the Dutch and the regional Golconda government. This was over the tax exemption rights of the Dutch in the transit of goods from Masulipatnam to Golconda. As noted above regional Governors and lessees were most hostile to this as detrimental to their interests in many ways. The havaldar wanted to put pressure on the Dutch and harassed their merchant middle-men, denying them access to the Dutch residence in city. Dutch residents were summoned to appear before the havaldar but refused and put the factory in a position of defence. The threatened crisis eased with a change in the regional government. On this occasion also, it was noted that Mir Abdullah Bakir, a prominent merchant of Masulipatnam, was advising the Dutch and passing them information on the intentions of the regional authorities.<sup>66</sup>

In 1671, there was a dispute between the English and the Masulipatnam city government. The acting chief of the English factory flogged some bricklayers working for the English over some alleged



default in their obligations. The bricklayers complained to the havaladar who resented this challenge to his power to mete out justice to Indian citizens of the city. The havaladar imprisoned the English dubash and threatened to attack the English factory. The English decided to resist, brought in guns to the factory and prepared it for defence. In an altercation they seized eleven of the havaladar's servants. The escalation of the dispute was prevented by the intervention of the regional Governor who ordered the havaladar to desist from any action.<sup>67</sup>

The Dutch continued to have problems with Jafar Beg, the regional Governor and lessee of the territories, over transit dues and they decided to arm themselves for any eventuality. The havaladar was always on guard against anyone importing arms into the city but the Europeans had generally succeeded in smuggling small arms. In 1672 the Dutch tried to bring into their factory a large piece of artillery and a large quantity of ammunition. The kotwal heard of this and stopped it in the banksal. But the Dutch set out with an armed party to the banksal and brought it forcibly into the residence. They set it up on a strategic position and also mounted twenty great guns all around. This made their factory impregnable to attacks by the relatively ill-armed and ill-trained forces at the havaladar's and kotwal's commands. It was reported that this sense of security gave them an assurance to move around the city in groups and mounted patrols in defiance of the city authorities.<sup>68</sup> A conflict broke out in March 1672, again over arrears of customs demanded from the Dutch by the regional Governor Jafar Beg. The Dutch rejected the demands and, expecting to be besieged in the factory, stocked up with water and provisions. The havaladar arrested and harassed Indian servants of the Dutch who seized some of the havaladar's peons. The Dutch embarked their women and children on a ship anchored in the roads and prepared for an attack. They were well fortified and had a contingent of Rajput mercenaries on their side. The havaladar erected a battery and cannon at the customs shed which was opposite the Dutch residence to blast it. The Dutch counter-attacked at night, spiked the cannons and took away the gunpowder. Residents took alarm and started evacuating the city. Eventually the havaladar had to reach a settlement with the Dutch.<sup>69</sup>

Not only the English and the Dutch, the newly established French were also emboldened to challenge and defy local authority. François Martin had come to Masulipatnam to establish French trade there on a sound footing. He was a shrewd observer of the political and power configuration in the city and in the region and was quick to take note

of the extent to which the French could push the local authority in pursuit of their interests. In March 1672 the French, who occupied two buildings with an open ground in between, attempted to enclose it and widen the area available to them. This open ground, which abutted on the creek, was open for use by the public, being used by ship-owners to put out their sails and rigging and conduct repairs. The Siamese factor was one of those who used this ground in this way. The havaldar supported the Siamese factor in his objections to French actions and blockaded the residence. The French prepared to resist but the havaldar withdrew and gave in to the French demands.<sup>70</sup> In November of the same year, the French were involved in another dispute with the havaldar over their illegally buying tobacco on behalf of a local merchant. Tobacco was a royal monopoly commodity. The kotwal came with fifty to sixty soldiers to seize the supply but the French put up a resistance and he withdrew. He returned with a larger force and this time forcibly entered the French storeroom but by then they had removed the tobacco.<sup>71</sup>

A more serious conflagration broke out between Golconda and the French when de la Haye seized the port of San Thome which the Golconda ruler had wrested from the Portuguese in 1664. Golconda, in alliance with the Dutch, laid siege to the French in San Thome and the resultant war extended into the north Coromandel coast and Masulipatnam and caused serious disturbance to trade and shipping. De la Haye's fleet arrived in Masulipatnam in December 1672 in search of provisions and prizes and seized eight ships and barks on the roads of the port. The English and the Dutch withdrew from the city. The havaldar strengthened the city's militia with more soldiers, Persian cavalry and some Dutch troops. He erected two batteries, one at the entrance to the bar and the other further inland in the city. The entrance to the bar was guarded by three hundred soldiers to prevent the French entering the river in small boats. A crudely built fort of mud, supported by palmyrah timber, was put up and a battery erected on it. The other battery was at a small gate leading to the sea. The customs shed was guarded by five hundred to six hundred men. In Masulipatnam there were a total of four thousand soldiers and six hundred Persian cavalry.<sup>72</sup>

There was total panic in the city and a French attack was feared. The havaldar did not want the English and Dutch to leave the city or to remove their assets as their presence provided him with some security against a French attack. When the English tried to remove their goods

he stopped them at the gate to the port. But the English with an armed European detachment and about fifty Indian soldiers took over the customs shed and erected three pieces of cannon which they trained on the road leading to the shed. Then, with some guarding the entrance, others loaded goods on fourteen boats in the river and despatched them to Narsapore. The havaladar brought in more men, seized one of the boats loaded with English goods and unloaded and impounded them in the customs shed. He blockaded all roads leading to the English residence and prevented the entry of supplies of water, firewood and other provisions. The English tried to break out of this blockade and in a skirmish both parties sustained wounds. The havaladar demanded a fine from the English for their violent behaviour and they had to settle the dispute by paying him 1.6 thousand pagodas.<sup>73</sup>

As trade came to a standstill and as time was approaching for the return of the vessels from long distance voyages, the merchants of Masulipatnam were anxious for a quick resolution of the dispute between the French and Golconda. They were not unduly concerned that the French were at war with the state of Golconda, had seized one of its ports and was defending it against Golconda attack. The merchants, especially Persians, behaved as if they were neutral in this dispute, trying to isolate the port and the waters of Masulipatnam from its consequences and anxious that the local Golconda administration should do nothing to spread the dispute. They even went to the extent of protecting a party of Frenchmen who had been wrecked from a boat out of their armada and would have been taken prisoners by the havaladar and his men. Persian merchants took them to their residences and refused to surrender them to the havaladar and eventually helped them to find their way back to their ship. The situation eased only after de la Haye sailed back to San Thome with his ships and the port was open once more.<sup>74</sup>

Thus within the course of five years, the three Company powers operating in Masulipatnam had thought fit to challenge local authority and had often done so with success. Their actions reflected the defenceless character of the city and port referred to earlier. The power that the havaladar had at his disposal was inadequate to cope with the challenge of the Europeans who had surreptitiously strengthened their military potential. While in the earlier period, they were undisputed on sea and could destroy the port's shipping, they were vulnerable on land and were conscious of this vulnerability.

Now the havaladar and his officials could not impose restrictions on their movement in the city. They could not get at the Europeans in their well-defended residences and had no answer to sharp, swift strikes against the havaladar's men. It was only when further assistance was summoned from interior administrative centres that they once again took the initiative but by the time these forces arrived the Europeans had achieved their immediate aim. Quite often the havaladar could only take it out on the Indian servants and middlemen of the Companies, being unable to touch the European personnel in their residences. The blockade of the factory was the other effective weapon.

Seldom was an issue pressed to a conclusion through a prolonged conflict with both sides intransigent. After a few initial frays, a settlement was soon forthcoming, often a compromise sometimes tilted towards one party sometimes towards the other. In effecting these compromises, the merchants of the city played a leading part. Their interest was in the quick resolution of a dispute so that the business of the port may go on. In their perception, the Europeans not only brought business to the city, they could be a force destructive of the port's shipping and many of the merchants' ships were plying the seas with the passes issued by the Companies. In the manner the Golconda state operated, there was a segmentation which enabled disputes to be sealed off at a regional and local level. Thus while the havaladar and his officials were strenuously defending the state's rights and its revenues from European demands, the state at the centre maintained an aloofness which enabled it to come down on one side or the other as the dispute evolved. It enabled the Companies to have recourse to an appeal to higher authority and kept open an avenue of dispute resolution. Quite often the central administration and the sultan found such an aloofness a convenient strategy in its relations with Europeans. On the other hand, it also showed that the port and its administration, while economically important to the sultanate, was not of central concern to it and had low priority in its attentions and in the allocation of requisite military power. This was to the advantage of the Europeans who never had to face the full force of state power in Masulipatnam.

Throughout the 1670s, the Companies were complaining of harassment by succeeding havaladars of Masulipatnam and by local authorities in the neighbouring market towns of Petapuli, Madapollam and Narsapore. But in spite of this there is every evidence of the growth of the trade of the Companies, of private European merchants and of Indian and other Asian merchants in the port of Masulipatnam.

An index to the growth of trade was the large colony of English freemercants settling in Masulipatnam as well as in Madapollam and Narsapore. These Englishmen were buying or leasing property in all these towns and were very intimately linked with Indian merchants and officials in commercial dealings. They were even entering into revenue farming as sublessees of villages and hamlets from district officials. One such entrepreneur was Fleetwood who had rented some towns and lands between the Krishna and the Godavari. He had the lease of Navarazpuram, a hamlet situated next to Madapollam on a branch of the Godavari, from which he could ship goods without interference by anyone. He owned a large building there with ample space for godowns, which after his death the Company considered buying to locate its servants.<sup>75</sup> When he died in 1676 he was deeply in debt to the havaladar of Masulipatnam and to merchants of that city. The havaladar seized his household goods, jewellery and plate from his widow to help settle part of these debts. The total debt was said to have amounted to 10 thousand pagodas.<sup>76</sup>

When Sultan Abul Hasan rather unexpectedly ascended the throne in 1672, royal authority was weak and high-ranking officials in the capital wielded great power. Syed Muzaffar, who was Mir Jumla, had his nominees in regional offices and they tried to maximize returns in revenue. The lessees of district revenues were upset at the large concessions given to European Companies and the abuse they made of these concessions. The Havalendars of Masulipatnam, depending on the influence and standing of their immediate superiors, the lessees of the provinces of Ellur and Rajamahendram, acted with authority and even in defiance of long-standing royal farmans. In 1675, an officer of great ability and influence, Agha Jalal, became havaladar of Masulipatnam, a position he held with some interruption for the unusually long period of five years. Though outwardly charming and polite, he was a tough administrator, and looked for every means of increasing the revenues of the port and the city. Under him some of the old monopolies were revived. In 1675, he came into conflict with both the Dutch and the English. He harassed the Dutch, interrupting the transport of their spices inland and stopping their boats that sailed down the river with timber. He refused to permit carpenters to work in the Dutch suburban gardens when they were building a godown.<sup>77</sup> In the same year there were disputes with the English as well. These arose over the havaladar insisting on the right to tax the Company's silver transported into the country and to impose taxes on boatmen

and washers working for the Company.<sup>78</sup> He imposed additional taxes on smiths, carpenters, boatmen and washermen who were enjoying substantial earnings from their dealings with the Europeans. He exercised with profit an old right of the state in enforced sales of paddy to non-agricultural people.

In all these conflicts, both sides threatened to use force to assert their rights. In one instance, the havaladar raised a troop of horse to intimidate the Dutch. Conflicts were generally resolved by the payment to the havaladar of some token sum, a fraction of what was claimed, or by his climbing down in the face of firmness shown by the Companies.

The sultan reconfirmed privileges his predecessor had accorded to the English and the Dutch Companies in 1674 and 1676 and extended some of these privileges. But the district officials of Masulipatnam and of the provinces on the roads to and from the city were not scrupulous in the maintenance of these privileges. The old disputes over the extent of freedom from road dues flared up over and over again, with the Companies sometimes resorting to force, at other times to more devious means of bribery. These were exacerbated by the great increase in English private trade, both of Company servants and of freemercants that took place in the 1670s. Textile purchases for their private export were being passed together with Company goods duty-free at the port and on the roads. Tentative attempts to tax private trade of English merchants were violently resisted by Company officials who stood to lose if they gave in to the demands of Golconda officials. When two English freemercants of Masulipatnam, Large and Uriell, gave in to these demands and paid custom on their goods, they were reprimanded by the Madras government and threatened with heavy fines if they did so in future.<sup>79</sup> A further extension of these disputes was when English officials protected the goods of Indian merchants, further defrauding the revenue lessees of the regions. Indian merchants would buy goods from the English or Dutch and a condition of the contract would be that the goods were to be delivered in an interior market town such as Makapettai or Nagalavancha. Golconda officials took stern measures to nip this abuse in the bud and Company authorities constantly warned their servants in Masulipatnam to guard against this, as they stood in danger of losing their privileges.<sup>80</sup>

Havart gives a very lengthy description of the duties, responsibilities and status of the havaladar in the Masulipatnam administration and commercial system.<sup>81</sup> It is admittedly from a Dutch perspective and is replete with exaggeration and tendentious judgements. Used with

discretion and critical judgement, it gives some insights into the Masulipatnam administration. It is written by someone who has lived for many years in that port and seen for himself its daily life. Within the city, the havaldar was sovereign lord, obeyed by one and all without distinction. He had precedence over all inhabitants and insisted on this on all public occasions. On ceremonial occasions, such as when he received a robe of honour from the king or on New Year's Day, all the inhabitants had to be present to felicitate him and present gifts. Artisans and labourers dependent on him could not be employed by others under any circumstances. He had a special relationship with the Companies from whose officers he received regular presents to retain his favours in their commercial transactions. For example, as soon as the Dutch Company's ship left for Persia, he would enjoy a present of about 300 pagodas in acknowledgement of his help in obtaining goods on freight. The havaldar had considerable judicial powers within the city, though appeals to the king were possible and did happen. Havart asserts that justice was freely bought with money in the city and gives a few instances when this took place. Offenders paid large sums of money to the havaldar and got away even with murder. It is impossible to attest to the truth of this or how representative they are. It should be noted that the city was generally known throughout the Qutb Shah period for its high standard of law and order and justice in commercial matters. Of course succeeding havaldars, as seen above, operated monopolies and indulged in pre-emptive buying and selling but this was held to be part of the perquisites of office and not an abuse of their position. It should also be noted that the Companies were themselves no great upholders of justice. They were more interested in preserving their privileges obtained in an earlier era when their trade was of low volume. Besides, their officials were engaged in shady commercial practices on their own and frequently came into conflict with the havaldar's authority. They were certainly not disinterested observers of the powers and position of the havaldars.

During these years there is little direct evidence on how the trade of the port was faring, but circumstantial evidence suggests that the overall trade was continuing to expand. Part of this expansion was contributed to by the increase in private European shipping, though there was a decline in the Asian trade of the Companies carried out from Masulipatnam. On the other hand, the European trade of the Companies from Masulipatnam was expanding. Asian shipping seems to have held its own. The Companies were facing severe competition



from Asian shippers in the markets of Pegu, Mergui, Ayuthya, Acheh, Kedah, Bantam, Bandar Abbas and Mokha. This Asian shipping continued to be dominated by the wealthy Persian and Golconda Muslim merchants. Mir Abdullah Bakir, an important shipping magnate, died in 1679 after many years of activity in trade and revenue-farming. Golconda officials and the sultan continued to own ships. About 1672, Bowrey noticed a ship of about 1000 tons burthen being constructed for the sultan in Narsapore.<sup>82</sup> Reports of ships of substantial size belonging to Golconda merchants seized by the French in the war of 1672-4 also point in the same direction. Then there was the shipping of trading states of the Bay of Bengal—Arakan, Pegu, Ayuthya, Kedah, Acheh—and from Bantam in the Archipelago making regular calls to Masulipatnam.

The cyclone and floods of October 1679 destroyed a large part of the city, especially its lower river-side end and damaged coastal shipping. Three of the king's ships were lost at sea and it is not known how much of the Masulipatnam-based shipping was lost in this manner. The country seems to have recovered and in 1681 and 1682 the textile exports from the port were as brisk as ever. There were problems with the Southeast Asian trade caused by political changes in the states with which Masulipatnam traded. Acheh did not fully recover from the restrictions the Dutch had imposed on its trade and it ceased to have the dominant position it once had as a feeder port to Southeast Asia. It was also troubled by internal political unrest. The fall of Macassar to the Dutch in 1666 had been a major blow and the fall of Bantam in 1684 an ever greater one. The closing of these ports, one by one, to Masulipatnam shipping seriously hampered the Southeast Asian trade of this port. Like other Coromandel shipping, that of Masulipatnam sought refuge in other areas of Southeast Asia not under Dutch control, such as Johore, the Riau archipelago and west Malayan states. There was also a greater concentration on Burma and Siam but even here there were problems.

The years 1685 and 1686 were very difficult for the port of Masulipatnam, its administration and its inhabitants. These were the last years of the Sultanate of Golconda which was being pressed by the Mughals outside its capital city and by fissions within the ruling circles. It was in this situation of great weakness that the kingdom had to deal with two of the most serious external threats to the port. The first threat came from an unexpected source, the kingdom of Ayuthya, and takes its origins from the bizarre circumstances of European politics and



temporary European domination over the affairs of that kingdom. The King of Ayuthya and officials of the southern Tenasserim province had traded with Masulipatnam for decades. Golconda Muslim merchants based in Masulipatnam had intimate dealings with the Siamese merchants and rulers. They had secured a dominant role in this trade in Mergui and Tenasserim and acted as agents for the king's vessels when they sailed to Coromandel. European missionaries and adventurers had been active in Thailand from the 1660s and a Greek, Constant Phaulkon, had managed to secure a political ascendancy in the court of Ayuthya from 1682 and held it till 1688. Soon English freemercants became embroiled with him in his designs and they were trying to dominate the trade of Mergui and Tenasserim and drive the Golconda Muslims out of trade. The most prominent among these was Samuel White, whom Phaulkon appointed as shahbandar of the ports of Mergui and Tenasserim. In White's employ were a motley collection of brigands and freebooters, led by the Englishmen William Coates, and Alexander Leslie and a Spaniard Don Joseph Heireda. They had a band of 50 well-armed Europeans of all nationalities with them.

In the course of commercial dealings between the King of Ayuthya and the merchants of Golconda, Samuel White, acting on behalf of the king made some claims both from the Sultan of Golconda, and from prominent merchants of Masulipatnam.<sup>83</sup> Failing to secure satisfaction of these claims, and angry at being denied favourable treatment for his ships in Masulipatnam, he persuaded the King of Ayuthya, through his patron Phaulkon, to issue him letters authorizing him to take reprisals on Golconda shipping. Armed with these letters, he ordered Coates to fit out the expedition of armed vessels against Golconda. To this end, in early 1684, a number of ships sailing from Coromandel and Bengal to Syriam and Mergui were seized by Leslie and Heireda. Among ships thus seized were the Mahmudi belonging to Mir Fakiruddin, a merchant of Masulipatnam, Tokely, belonging to Mohamad Sadek, probably a Golconda merchant trading from Mergui, Jerusalem belonging to the Jan Marcara, the Armenian merchant of Madapollam referred to earlier, and Quedabux belonging to a Bengalee merchant. Some of these ships were fitted as men-of-war and manned by a well-armed complement of 50 Europeans and several Asians. Coates was instructed to proceed to the Coromandel coast, blockade the port of Masulipatnam and do as much damage as possible to the shipping of that port and to the king of Golconda. Towards the end of 1685, Coates, with his

small armada, spread havoc along the coast, seized a number of small boats and a large ship belonging to the Sultan of Golconda. The inhabitants of Masulipatnam were in great distress as no ships dared leave the port and coast shipping was terrified to a standstill. The Golconda administration called on Freeman, the English East India Company's Chief at Masulipatnam, to put an end to Coates' activities and imposed a prohibition order on English trade until this happened. Freeman made contact with Coates and persuaded him to return the sultan's ship and come to a settlement with the administration over his outstanding claims.

Evidently these attempts at a settlement were not successful. In early January 1686, Coates sailed into the Narsapore river in his sloop, and attacked the timber fort the havaladar had erected at the base of the river. He drove the defending soldiers from the fort and set it on fire. He then sailed up the river and set fire to the town. He seized a number of vessels there and plundered them. Then, on 26th January, he sailed south to Masulipatnam with his armada. He anchored there and entered the river in a small boat armed with guns. He set fire to all of the banksals and to the toll house on the bank of the river. The fire spread dangerously across the city and threatened the Dutch factory and some houses belonging to the Dutch and the English. The flames raged for three hours and were finally put out after the combined effort of the locals and the Europeans. Coates fired indiscriminately into the city, killing and wounding people, before his boat returned to the ship. The havaladar hurriedly put together a defence, planted pieces of artillery in the banksal and on the bridge leading to the waterfront, and erected batteries at the bar of the river to prevent Coates coming into the river again by boat. At the same time, the Spaniard Heireda was covering the northern approaches to Masulipatnam and seized three boats coming from the Gingely coast with their cargo, in spite of their carrying English passports. In April another frigate belonging to the King of Siam, commanded by the Englishman, Edward English, arrived in Masulipatnam and continued to harass the shipping of the port. By this time, the Company authorities on Coromandel were getting alarmed at the activities of English freebooters under the Siamese flag. English trade in Masulipatnam and north Coromandel was being seriously hindered and they were falling foul of the Golconda rulers. Early in 1687, the Company decided to proceed against White and his European freebooters operating from Mergui. The evidence does not reveal how the dispute between the rulers of

Golconda and Ayuthya was solved. In any case, events in Deccan were racing ahead in 1687 and the end of the sultanate was abrupt.

The war with the Siamese and their English mercenaries extended from 1684 to 1687, seriously affecting the trade of Masulipatnam. There was general consternation at the violent action of Coates and Heireda. Coates bold sally up the river to the heart of the city was the first of its kind. Merchants evacuated their goods into the interior and even the two Companies put their assets away mainly to avoid the risk of fire. The episode was doubly harmful as Masulipatnam merchants also suffered losses along the coast of Tenasserim. Ships were lost, ransoms were paid and crew enslaved. It was dramatic evidence of the international Indian Ocean face of the port and its inhabitants and at the same time of the vulnerability of the port and the city.

This vulnerability was further dramatically underlined in the last days of the Golconda sultanate. The Dutch had a festering dispute with the Golconda administration over the debts of their merchant-broker Kodanda of Golconda.<sup>84</sup> He had been their sole agent in Golconda for many years and had run up debts of over a million florins (over 160 thousand pagodas). Evidently he also had some financial dealings with the sultan and important officials including Akanna, the brother of Madanna, the brahman sar-i-khail of Golconda, who imprisoned him, thus making it impossible for the Dutch to extract their debts from him. Embassies sent to Golconda to effect a settlement were of no avail. In one final effort, the Governor of Coromandel, Jacob Pit, himself went on an embassy to Golconda to negotiate over this debt and had an audience with the sultan. The sultan refused to acknowledge Dutch claims and Pit returned without success. Then a decision was taken to enforce the claims by armed action directed against the port of Masulipatnam and its trade. Governor Pit ordered the withdrawal of all Dutch officials from the interior factories in Golconda, Nagalavancha, Drakshavaram and Palakollu. In the end of June 1686, soldiers were summoned from the Dutch ports of Nagapatnam in south Coromandel and Jaffna in north Ceylon. On 26 July, three ships and two sloops arrived before Masulipatnam, carrying six companies of 326 men and 60 Sinhalese sepoy under the command of Captain Jacob Witsenburgh. Together with the Dutch troops in Paleacat there were 600 European soldiers in Masulipatnam. All Dutch personnel living in various parts of the city were brought into the Dutch residence.

The soldiers landed in nine thonies and immediately attacked simultaneously the large gate leading outside the city to the west and

the small gate leading to the seafront. They drove away the few Golconda soldiers guarding these gates. They then attacked the banksal and drove out the guards, seizing all the artillery there. They thus took possession of the port and the city without bloodshed. They ordered the Muslim and Hindu inhabitants to leave, if they chose to, or remain in the city. They then set about to put the city in a proper state of defence against the expected attack from the Golconda army. The circumference of the city was quite large and apart from the morass to the east there were no natural defences. Rather there were many entrances which had to be blocked. There was abundant wood to put up pallisades and *gardynes* and twelve bulwarks were erected at strategic places. The great gate to the southwest was the main entry point and was put in a proper state of defence. The eastern defences were strengthened by digging a moat. The intention was to send a force of eighty to one hundred men out of this gate southwards to take the island of Divi in possession.

In the meanwhile, Golconda authorities were preparing their response. Officials from neighbouring provinces had come to the assistance of the Governor of the district and a force of three thousand to four thousand cavalry and three thousand to four thousand peons (according to Dutch estimates) assembled in the suburbs. This force denied entry of water and food provisions into the city and drew closer to it. It began to entrench itself in the western end of the large bridge leading out of the city and erected two parapets on each end up to a quarter of the bridge, placing four artillery pieces at the end. The Dutch attempted to parley with them to make them abandon the siege but were not successful. The Golconda authorities threatened to set fire to the city if the Dutch did not give it up. Two fires were started here and there which the Dutch put out but it struck fear in the inhabitants, the wealthiest of whom began to take flight. The English also started to move their goods out. The Dutch then decided to attack the besieging force, which they did on the 12 August. They sallied out with six companies of thirty-two men each with three field pieces and launched a surprise assault on the position of the besiegers. They drove the force out of the bridge and from the buildings at the end of the bridge as well as from tent encampments on open ground to the left of the bridge. The Dutch troops proceeded further, drove the back-up forces stationed behind, set fire to some suburban villages and returned to the bridge. These villages were densely populated and the villagers panicked and took to flight. The four pieces which had been

planted on the bridge were seized by the Dutch. According to Dutch estimates, forty Golconda soldiers lay dead and about hundred were wounded while their own losses were only seven wounded. This action reopened the flow of water and food into the city.

On the day after the attack, the Serkhail, Hussein Beg, wrote to the Dutch asking what the Company's claim was. The Dutch replied that the king had already been made aware of their claims. They once again wrote to the king, warning him of the adverse consequence to the trade of the kingdom by his hostile policy towards the Dutch. The Dutch were now hoping that the king and the lessees of the revenues of the port and the neighbourhood would consent to Dutch demands by sheer attrition. For this purpose, they stopped all movement of goods from the port to the interior. All trade had stopped and prices of provisions had increased enormously. Included in this stoppage of trade was that of other European, the most prominent of whom were the English who could not get their silver into the country or bring their textiles out of the weaving villages to the port. They complained bitterly to the Dutch but with no effect. The Dutch were able to keep control of the port and city in this manner for about eight weeks. During this period, they constructed some defence works at the entrance to the city, especially from the port end, which the Mughals later strengthened and which gave Masulipatnam a semblance of defensibility it did not have before.

One of the main considerations that serve to explain this unusual series of occurrences was that the Sultan of Golconda had major preoccupations in the Deccan where he was being pressed by the Mughals in the last stage of the annexation of Golconda to the Mughal emperor. When the Mughal empire decided to proceed against Bijapore in June 1685, Sultan Abul Hasan, after some hesitation, decided to come to his aid with a force of forty thousand men. The emperor then turned his attention on Golconda and in 1686 a series of battles were fought and the Golconda army was pushed back into the capital. Internal dissensions arose within the Golconda army and its generals. There were defections to the Mughals and the rising hatred of the dominance in the state of the two brahman brothers, Madanna and Akanna, resulted in March 1686 in their assassination in the streets of Golconda. Thus, at the time when the Dutch were moving against Masulipatnam, the imperial army was pressing close on Golconda and the administration was in complete disarray. In January 1687 the army was at the gates of Golconda which it besieged for five months when

the sultan surrendered. The subjugation of Masulipatnam by a foreign power, if only for two months, and the fall of Golconda were a continuum in one and the same drama that was being staged in the Deccan in 1686-87.

The Golconda government succumbed to Dutch demands and the king issued a farman in November 1686. The Dutch were to be paid a total sum of 120 thousand pagodas in lieu of Kodanda's debt in five annual instalments out of the revenues of Masulipatnam and Paleacat. Out of this sum 18 thousand pagodas per year was to come from the revenues of Masulipatnam for which the havaladar was to be responsible. As a result of this agreement the Dutch were to release the ships they had seized and were to reopen their trade in the port and the kingdom.<sup>85</sup> When the Mughals annexed the kingdom in December 1687, the treaty became null and void. A new administration was put in place in Masulipatnam which did not honour the obligations of the farman.

The two external threats and temporary foreign occupation faced by Masulipatnam compounded a political and economic crisis faced by this port and city, the effects of which were felt from 1685 to 1688. To top up the political trauma noted above—war with Siam, Dutch occupation, factional infighting among regional governors and Mughal conquest, and the economic consequences of the suppression of trade—there was a succession of natural disasters. A severe drought hit the region in the two successive seasons 1686 and 1687 and was followed by a plague in 1687 which together decimated the population.<sup>86</sup> Finally, on seventeenth May 1687, there was a frightful fire that swept the city. It began halfway between the large and the small gates and was formed by a strong northwest wind towards the market and the seafront, touching the Dutch factory. Havart says, with some exaggeration, that five-eighth of the city was affected, among which were some of the best built parts, and a number of stately houses were gutted, including those of prominent inhabitants and an old Catholic Church that had been built in 1645/6.<sup>87</sup>

The effect of all this on the trade of Masulipatnam is clearly evident in the records of both the major Companies. Allowing for the usual exaggeration in the European sources of the time, it was clear that the trade of the port had ground to a halt. The interruption of shipping by hostile naval action had grounded the merchant fleet of the port in the various places with which it traded. The death toll from the late famine and pestilence was put by an estimate at five hundred thousand for

that region. Inflation in prices of articles of daily consumption—rice, eggs, chicken, vegetables—was at a fantastically high rate.<sup>88</sup> Some later observers felt that the port never recovered from the debilitating consequences of the events of these years.<sup>89</sup> Company officials attributed this decline to maladministration by regional Governors and lessees in the country of the immediate hinterland. It was noted that in the last years of the sultanate, rack-renting was rife. Lessees were making higher and higher bids to secure revenue rights and then fleecing agriculture, industry and commerce. A brahman rentier had leased the revenues of Karnataka at 200 thousand pagodas more than the previous year's rent. He had then gone on to sublet various parts of this large territory at a profit. The previous lessee who held the position of Serlaskar had refused to accept his authority and his subordinates were up in arms against the new lessee.<sup>90</sup>

Weavers and other craftsmen were idle because there was no market for their goods. Merchants of Masulipatnam were left with outstanding balances among the weavers and chintz painters. Unlike in previous instances of dispute between Europeans and the Golconda authorities, there is no evidence of the prominent merchants of Masulipatnam interceding to bring about a settlement. It is possible that the situation in Golconda<sup>91</sup> was far too unstable for them to be able to make relevant political contact as they could do in better times. The only merchant who is visible as an intermediary was the Armenian Jan Macara who, as we have often seen earlier, was very close to the highest seats of power in Golconda. The sultan made a proposal through Marcara to settle Kodanda's debts when the Dutch were in occupation of Masulipatnam.<sup>92</sup>

Thus when the Mughals conquered Masulipatnam, the port and its environs were at a low point in their economic fortunes. Its home-based shipping had scattered out of fear. The city was starved of food provisions and the cost of living was extremely high. The Europeans had wound down their trade and their factory establishments. Suburban villages had been depopulated. Fire had destroyed some of the best residential areas. Communication with hinterland markets was interrupted by disputes over revenue rights and administrative jurisdiction. The port and city into which the Mughal armies marched were far from being the 'abode of peace'.

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53. This view was first put forward by Christopher Hatton, an English Company servant in Masulipatnam in the 1670s, Streynsham Master, II, p. 113.
54. W. Ph. Coolhas, ed., *General Missiven der Verenigde Oostingische Compagnie*. vol. III, p. 232.
55. *EFI, 1661-64*, pp. 171-2.
56. W. Ph. Coolhas, III, p. 429.
57. *EFI 1661-64*, p. 151; F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, vol. I, p. 213, *Dag Regbister 1662*, p. 514.
58. *Dag Regbister, 1662*, p. 127.
59. *EFI 1665-67*, pp. 327-8.
60. *EFI 1665-67*, p.245, Havart, I, p. 194.
61. *EFI 1665-67*, p. 254.
62. *EFI 1670-77*, pp.222-3; L. Varadarajan, I, 1, p. 13.
63. *EFI 1665-67*, pp. 242-3.
64. *EFI 1665-67*, pp.242-3; W. Ph. Coolhas, III, p. 500; Havart, I, p. 158.
65. *Memoirs of Martin; EFI 1670-77*, p. 202. This affair is discussed in detail in A Ray, 'Aspects of Indo-French History: Masulipatnam 1670', pp. 320-34.
66. W. Ph. Coolhas, III, p. 865; L. Varadarajan, I, 1, pp. 28-30.
67. *EFI 1670-77*, p.217.
68. Varadarajan, I, 1, pp. 106, 109.
69. Varadarajan, I, 1, pp. 28-30.
70. Varadarajan, I, 1, pp. 24-5.
71. Varadarajan, I, 1, p. 111.
72. Varadarajan, I, 1, pp. 186-208; *Travels of the Abbé Carré*, II, pp. 533-8, Bowrey, p. 68.
73. Varadarajan, I, 1, pp. 112-4.
74. *Travels of the Abbé Carré*, II, pp. 537-8; Varadarajan, I, 1, p. 208.
75. *EFI 1671-77*, pp. 274, 299.
76. Ibid.; *Diaries of Martin*, II, p. 99.
77. Bowrey, pp. 82-3, *EFI 1671-77*, pp. 285, 288.
78. *EFI 1671-77*, p. 285.
79. *EFI 1671-77*, p. 105.
80. *EFI 1678-84*, pp. 123-4.
81. Havart, I, pp. 226-30.
82. Bowrey, p. 103.
83. The description of these events is based on: *An Historical Abstract of Mr. Samuel White, bis Management of Affairs, in bis Shabbandar-ship of Tenassery and Mergen, during Francis Davenport's stay with bim, in Quality of Secretary*; F.

- Davenport, 1687, Havart I, pp. 205-12, Governor and Council of Coromandel to Governor-General and Council V.O.C. 1429, ff. 198-201.
84. Evidence for this episode is from: letters between V.O.C. officials of Batavia, Paleacat and Masulipatnam in Overgekomen Papieren: Coromandel Tweed Book 1687, Archief V.O.C. 1423, ff. 7-10, 212-20, Havart I, pp. 212-20.
  85. *Corpus Dip.*, III, pp. 416-7.
  86. Havart, I, p. 214.
  87. Havart, I, pp. 212-2.
  88. Havart, I, p. 214.
  89. Das, pp. 125-6.
  90. Governor and Council of Coromandel to Governor-General and Council, 29 September 1686, Archief V.O.C. 1423, f. 216.
  91. Governor-General of Coromandel to Directors, 30 September 1686, Archief V.O.C. 1423, f. 9.

## CHAPTER 3

### Masulipatnam under the Mughals

With the fall of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, the Mughal army continued its drive eastward to occupy the Andhra lowlands and coastlands south of Ganjam. A force of six thousand cavalry was sent under the command of Uffa Khan to take the maritime provinces and in July 1687 the fort of Kondapalli was taken by the Mughals. This brought the Mughal armies within three day's march of Masulipatnam. The last Golconda Governor of the district had fled with his treasure. The city and port awaited its new conquerors with trepidation, totally defenceless. A small force of four hundred cavalry entered and took possession of the city. Mercifully the occupation was completed without bloodshed and destruction.<sup>1</sup> But the destruction and decline had already preceded the entry of the Mughals.

As noted above, a succession of crises had brought the port near the brink of ruin. There was a great scarcity of food and other necessities. Prices of provisions had risen phenomenally. A succession of two years of failed monsoons had caused severe grain shortages in the area. This had been followed by a pestilence that killed many and on top of all this was the fire of 17 May 1687 which had swept through the best residential areas of the city. When William Norris, the Ambassador of the new English Company, arrived in Masulipatnam in 1689 and looked for accommodation, he found only six large houses suitable for the entertainment of any 'Europeans of note and quality'.<sup>2</sup> There had been little trade over the past three years. Besides the interruptions to shipping caused by hostile action in 1686, the intercourse of the port and the city with its hinterland had been constantly interrupted. The Mughal siege of the capital, Golconda, the fighting along the main routes and the constant movement of armies had virtually stopped the transport of goods. Imports from Masulipatnam that were directed at the markets of Golconda and westwards had ceased. Even the access

of Masulipatnam to textile weaving centres within a few miles in the Krishna and Godavari delta was restricted.

The trade of the English Company had stopped, partly because of the above factors and partly because of their war with the Mughal empire being waged in Bengal and on the Gujarat coast. The English Chief at Masulipatnam, John Freeman, had evacuated the port with all the Company's treasure and goods to Madras. French trade at Masulipatnam, always of low volume, had been suspended. Only the Dutch carried on some trade in their import goods such as spices and copper and some export of textiles. In the suburban village of Masieveram, a village of washermen who washed and bleached export cloth, there had once been forty families but in 1689 there were only six.<sup>3</sup> This shortage of artisans and labourers in the city continued for some time. There is little evidence on what was happening to Indian-owned shipping at this time, but it is reasonable to assume that the problems that beset the Companies bothered them as well. During a period of change of government, he would be a very rash merchant who made himself visible by large scale transactions.

On receipt of imperial orders, the commander of Masulipatnam seized the English factory in October 1689. He was friendly with the Dutch and the French. The Dutch, who had sent an embassy to the Emperor Aurangzeb under Johannes Bacherus, secured a farman confirming their commercial privileges conferred on them by the Sultans of Golconda.<sup>4</sup> Thus they retained their right of exemption from export and import duties at Masulipatnam and from a variety of other inland duties. Among these were road duties between Masulipatnam and a number of coastal and inland markets. On the settlement of the English dispute with the Mughals, they were allowed to return to Masulipatnam, but they maintained a minimal presence there, preferring to develop their factory in Visakhapatnam as their major centre in north Coromandel. All European powers were thus rather wary of returning to their previous high investments and trade in Masulipatnam, preferring to await the turn of events under the new administration.

The new administration was proving much more vigilant of its privileges than the old. The Mughals were quick to pounce on any violation of customary duties by the Companies. In 1691 the Subadar of Hyderabad acted decisively to put an end to the abuse of the rights over freedom of tolls by the Dutch.<sup>5</sup> He found that the Dutch were passing goods of private merchants along with theirs, so that these goods may not be opened for inspection at inland toll gates and pay

the customary inland duties. An imperial order was issued to tax all Dutch goods henceforth at 3.5 per cent, the rate levied in Surat. The Dutch Governor retaliated by closing his warehouse to incoming textiles so that Indian weavers and painters could not sell to the Company any more. The Mughals stood firm and the Dutch had to reopen their trade. They settled the issue more diplomatically by bribing influential officials who then had the order revoked. These officials then procured a parwana resuming the old concessions for a tax-free trade to the Dutch.<sup>6</sup> This was a salutary warning to the Companies that they could not trifle with the new administration.

The Mughals quickly put in place an administrative and revenue system to exploit the resources of the Andhra coastlands. Richards' detailed study of the extension of Mughal administration here has laid bare this process.<sup>7</sup> There was a faujdar of the northern coastal districts based in Ellore or Rajamundry. Under the Golconda sultanate, the district governors (*sar-samatu*) had sublet portions of the district to tax farmers in annual auctions. These sublessees were the *havalدارs* who exercised revenue, police and judicial powers over towns and dependent villages. Mustafa Quli Khan was the first Mughal faujdar of the district to which Masulipatnam belonged. The revenue settlement of 1689-90 substantially increased the assessment of the lowland districts of eastern Andhra. The assessed revenue of Masulipatnam district was increased from Rs. 452,500 to Rs. 485,750, an increase of about 8 per cent.<sup>8</sup> The ports of Masulipatnam and Nizampatnam were *khalisa* lands and there was a general policy of resuming lands granted from the district for the *khalisa*.

The mode of collection was not the previous method of subletting but by the appointment of intermediary revenue officials under the strict control of the faujdar. In Masulipatnam, a brahman, Kankul Venkanna, was appointed headman and record-keeper of the port and the city and was made responsible for the collection and remittance of revenue. He had no power base of his own, was solely dependent on the authority granted to him by the faujdar and scrupulously remitted the collected revenue. Thus from 1690 to 1704, both the ports of Masulipatnam and Nizampatnam returned increased revenue collections. Mustafa Quli Khan was succeeded by Rustam Dil Khan as faujdar and he continued to operate through Kankul Venkanna.

While the data is unclear on this, there must have been a major impact on the power structure and influence-peddling groups in the city caused by these administrative changes. It was seen in the crises

of the last years of the Golconda sultanate that influential merchants like Mir Abdullah Bakir, the powerful last havaladar of the port, Muhamad Ali Beg and the equally influential Armenian merchant Jan Marcara had sought to act as intermediaries in settling the various disputes that had threatened to destroy the trade of the port. In the early years of Mughal administration, there was as yet no major Mughal presence in the port. The port, city and its environs were yet another revenue resource for an expanding empire. It is not without significance that the chief Mughal official in the city was a brahman, an efficient entrepreneur and record-keeper. There was as yet no sign of any interest of the high-ranking Mughal officials in the trade of the port, no evidence of an attempt to participate in shipping and overseas trade.

These years, 1688 to about 1700, must have been difficult years for the port and its trade. The old English Company was experiencing problems with Parliament and the government of the day. Its trade in India sank to the lowest levels in many years, caused partly by its conflict with the Mughal empire and its own organizational problems. The French trade was at a standstill. Only the Dutch carried on some trade and even then their once-lucrative import trade was suspended. Some export trade continued but on a reduced scale. There is no evidence of Indian shipping in the Indian Ocean trade. And yet the revenues of the port did not diminish. The custom-returns continued at old levels. It is likely that most of this was produced by the coasting trade which appears to have continued with little interruption. The severe shortage of rice and other food provisions would have made this trade most profitable. Supplies would have come from Bengal and ports of the Orissa coast. The Mughal administration was trying to encourage the Companies to expand their trade. It was aware of their potential in pumping bullion into the economy and in increasing the demand for textiles and hence the taxable revenue of the weaving villages. The emperor speedily renewed the concessions given to these Companies and regional Governors added their own incentives for their trade.

At a time when the old English Company was experiencing problems with its finances and was letting its trade in India run down, a new Company calling itself, 'The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies' was formed and secured a charter from Parliament to trade in the east. In 1699, it sent out an ambassador, Sir William Norris, to the court of the Mughal emperor, to parley for trade

concessions in the empire similar to those granted to the old Company. Norris landed in Masulipatnam in September 1699 and stayed there for about 18 months, awaiting permission to travel inland to meet the emperor. The diary he kept of his stay in Masulipatnam is an invaluable source of the condition of this port-city and of its administration and politics as observed by him.<sup>9</sup> Norris was pompous, with an exaggerated sense of his importance, claiming privileges and treatment accorded to an official envoy of a state and this led him into several unpleasant incidents in the city and confrontations with its officials.<sup>10</sup> There were not many stately houses left in Masulipatnam and he was finally lodged in what was described as once the residence of the nawab within the city.<sup>11</sup> This must probably have been one of the large houses owned by Golconda officials which they would have used whenever they visited the port on commercial business. Norris wrote of the famine of 1686-87 in graphic detail, about fourteen years after its occurrence. He speaks of the decimation of the city's artisan and labourer population as well as of the art of chintz-making.<sup>12</sup> In general, it is a picture of decline and deterioration that comes through from Norris' diary and, remembering that it was over ten years after the imposition of Mughal administration, it must point to the conclusion that Mughal rule had done little to rehabilitate this famed port-city.

Norris took occasional rides to the suburbs which meant crossing the long bridge with which he was suitably impressed. He did this to escape the heat and stench in the city in certain periods and he noted the greenery and fresh air of the villages he passed. On these rides he went along a route that Europeans were wont to take, passing the English cemetery and garden and the Dutch cemetery and garden.<sup>13</sup> It could be concluded from this that the English and the Dutch continued to enjoy the privileges of land grants made by the Sultan of Golconda. Norris was impressed with the country residence and market garden the Dutch had put up in their land. Norris noted, much to his annoyance, that the Dutch still enjoyed considerable prestige in the city. In October 1699, the faujdar of the district made a visit to the city and port with a train conveyed in five palanquins, accompanied by horsemen and twenty to thirty peons. He was accompanied by the havaldar and kotwal of the city. The faujdar first paid a call on the Dutch chief at their residence and then went to see Norris. He was offended by this and refused to receive the faujdar.<sup>14</sup>

When Norris was in Masulipatnam, the nawab of the province, Faquirullah Khan, was removed from office for being in arrears of his

payment to the imperial treasury. He was replaced by Mahdi Khan who effected a thorough reorganization of the finances of the region. He ordered all brahman record-keepers to prepare their accounts for inspection. He sent his Diwan to Masulipatnam, who entered the city on 23 December 1699 accompanied by 150 horsemen. The transfer of control was peaceful, the previous havaldar had left the city earlier. Shortly after, Mahdi Khan himself visited Masulipatnam. The Dutch chief went out to receive him at the city gates. Norris, with his inflated self-importance, thought it beneath his dignity to do so and sent his brahman interpreter, Venkatadri, instead with an escort and a present. Mahdi Khan's visit to Masulipatnam was very stately, to the accompaniment of elephants, horses, camels and 1500 soldiers on horse and on foot. Mahdi Khan stayed in the district headquarters at Gudur and received in audience people from Masulipatnam.<sup>15</sup>

This change of administration in the region seems to have led to a tightened regime of taxation and control. Regulations were introduced to close down taverns and liquor shops and to expel prostitutes from the city. The *jiziyah* was introduced on all non-Muslims and the city's strong Hindu merchant and banking communities were hit hard. Some, including many Hindus working in the mint, fled to hide in suburban villages. The havaldar refused to use force to help the tax-collectors, in the absence of specific imperial orders. The taxmen returned with imperial orders to impose the *jiziyah*. This was done in March 1700 and Hindus were taxed from then on according to their worth. Some absconded to escape the tax.<sup>16</sup> It is not known whether this action had long-term effects on the economic life of the city but it is likely that this discriminatory tax was not continued for long. In the short-term it did lead to a flight from Masulipatnam by Hindu petty traders and money-lenders for whom any additional tax would have been a burden.

The leading merchants of the port visited Norris to discuss trade dealing with the new Company. Norris makes favourable comments on the Hindu merchants and shows a preference to deal with them.<sup>17</sup> However, unlike in earlier such instances, influential merchants are not seen to play a leading role as intermediaries in securing imperial permission for this Company to trade in this region. On the other hand, the old Company's influence was still there and was exerted against the demands of the new Company. Local officials, such as the havaldar, qazi and kotwal appear to have been under the influence of the old Company and were not inclined to assist the new Company.<sup>18</sup>



Even when Norris received permission from the court to proceed on his journey, the havaldar refused to favour him with the necessary assistance in the recruiting of peons, hiring oxen and other necessities for the journey. Norris' haughty behaviour may also have contributed to this. Norris continued in the tradition of recent behaviour of Europeans in Masulipatnam in challenging the authority of local officials such as the havaldar, qazi and kotwal and preparing to use arms to defend his position. He was confident that with sixty to seventy well-armed Englishmen and with pieces of cannon to defend his residence, he could withstand a siege by the faujdar and put his troops to flight.<sup>19</sup>

There was also the threat from Reza Khan, a former Mughal faujdar, who had rebelled against Mughal authority. He began his activities around Hyderabad and spread eastwards, supported by a large force of about nine thousand to ten thousand men. His brigandage blocked the route between Masulipatnam and Hyderabad in 1702. He extended his pillage eastwards and in February 1703 had approached close to Masulipatnam itself. Later in that year his forces were on the outskirts of the port and there was great consternation in the city that he would descend on it and subject it to plunder. The inhabitants were not sure of the loyalty of the faujdar who was suspected of being in league with this robber chief. The wealthy merchants of the city collaborated with the Dutch in putting it in a state of defence. This united action seems to have saved the city for the time being and Reza Khan directed his attention elsewhere.<sup>20</sup>

This was soon followed by the threat of Maratha invasions. Maratha incursions into Hyderabad province cut off the main road between Masulipatnam and Golconda. It was impossible to transport the imports of Masulipatnam to these interior distant markets. The Dutch, who were importing spices and copper for these markets found that sales had dropped drastically in the years 1702-06. The Maratha invasions continued eastwards and in February 1704 an army of twelve thousand horses and ten thousand infantry attacked Palakollu and exacted *chauth* from all neighbourhood villages. The Dutch took the opportunity to fortify their residence in the city and reinforced their defence forces with twenty Europeans summoned from Nagapatnam in a sloop.<sup>21</sup>

Reza Khan joined the Marathas in their plunder of the lowland district up to Masulipatnam in 1704. In the following year Reza Khan returned to plunder the Masulipatnam hinterland, continuing these

sporadic activities till 1707. This was compounded by the spreading rebellion of Telugu zamindars and muniwars against the Mughal administration and against each other. This was even more damaging to the trade of Masulipatnam, as the textile producing villages were located in these zamindaries and the routes through which goods passed to and from the port went through these lands.

Another obstacle to the trade of the European Companies in Masulipatnam arose from the hostilities developing between them and the Mughal empire over piracy in the western Indian Ocean. From the 1690s incessant piracy in the waters of the Gujarat coast and at the entrance to the Red Sea on Indian shipping of Surat made the Mughals operate a policy of holding the European Companies responsible for these outrages. The Companies were forced to agree to a policy of escorting the Surat fleet to and from the Red Sea ports and compensation was demanded for any losses by piracy. Piracy continued and the Mughals sought compensation and guarantees from the Dutch as the most powerful trading Company in Surat.<sup>22</sup> This resulted in a conflict between the Mughals and the Dutch and the emperor issued a *hasb-ul-bukum* in 1704 prohibiting European trade in the empire until the problem was solved.<sup>23</sup>

This prohibition had some impact in Masulipatnam and in Hyderabad province. It took some time to be extended to this province. The faujdar of the southern coastal districts, Mir Qami, transmitted the prohibition orders to his subordinates but they ignored them initially.<sup>24</sup> Later, the Dutch officials at Masulipatnam were forced to sign an undertaking by the city officials agreeing not to engage in trade as long as the emperor forbade it. Local revenue officials in small market towns and villages were bribed into letting Dutch trade pass.<sup>25</sup> The prohibition was therefore only partially implemented in this whole area. By August 1705 the Dutch had distributed over 2.5 thousand pagodas in presents to keep their trade going.<sup>26</sup> In the course of taking reprisals against the Mughals, the Dutch had seized a ship, *Fazali*, which was returning presumably from the Persian Gulf via the southern Sri Lankan port of Galle. It was seized and detained at Galle. It appeared that Daud Khan, the Commander and deputy Governor of Hyderabad, had an interest in the ship, together with another Mughal official, Abdul Nabi. The ship was released on the intervention of these two and the Dutch also permitted one of Abdul Nabi's ships to go to Jaffna.<sup>27</sup> They did this while they were blockading the port of Surat, so that the effective prohibition on their trade could not extend to

Masulipatnam. After much negotiation, a settlement was reached with Mir Qama and for a present of Rs. 5750 he agreed not to act on the emperor's prohibition of Dutch trade in Masulipatnam, Palakollu and Drakshavaram.<sup>28</sup>

It is revealing to note the forces that operated in nullifying the effects of the imperial prohibition on the trade of the Dutch as it would have applied in the Masulipatnam area. When the order of prohibition was confirmed in May 1707, Rustum Dil Khan, who functioned as Governor of Hyderabad on behalf of his father, observed that if the Dutch abandoned these lands it would lead to their destruction. The Mughals needed the lead, tin and other strategic goods brought by them and that this should be brought to the attention of the court.<sup>29</sup> In negotiating with Mughal officials for exemption from the prohibition, the Dutch had the assistance of merchants of Masulipatnam, especially those owning ships such as Mirza Bakar. Bakar was also instrumental in persuading Mir Qama not to set aside Aurangzeb's farman on behalf of the Dutch trade after the death of the emperor.<sup>30</sup> It is significant that the Dutch, while blockading Surat, did not do anything to obstruct the trade of Masulipatnam. They were convinced that they had enough influence in the port and the hinterland to nullify the effects of the prohibition without a hostile confrontation as in Surat. The record of the trade in the years 1705-07, shows that trade was flowing, import goods were being sold and there was some cloth delivery.

Apart from this particular problem, these must have been difficult years for trade in Masulipatnam and the surrounding regions. The English appear to have had liquidity problems and were in debt to local financiers. They had wound down the Masulipatnam factory which was left with just one officer in attendance. The French house was abandoned with no trade carried on for some time. The rebellious munivar and rajas were making roads in the Krishna and Godavari deltas unsafe. The Dutch were carrying on some trade and the fragmentary evidence shows that the Indian merchants of Masulipatnam were continuing to trade to Bengal, Ceylon and the Persian Gulf. This evidence also confirms that Mughal officials of the region had interests in the trade of Masulipatnam and were probably operating through the merchants of the port. This could have been a rump of the earlier merchant groups and there is indication that they were far fewer and considerably less affluent than in the 1680s. Certainly the city did not have outward signs of such affluence in its buildings or stately homes.

After the death of Aurangzeb in February 1707, conditions in coastal Andhra and the hinterland of Masulipatnam took a turn for the worse. Aurangzeb's son Kam Baksh declared himself King of Golconda in January 1708 and there followed a year of struggle between him and the Mughal administration that proved devastating to the economy of the entire province. Local Mughal officials resisted his authority, he was desperate for finances and imposed harsh new taxes. The emperor Bahadur Shah appointed Yusuf Khan Governor of Hyderabad. Daud Khan Pani became his deputy with responsibility for the southern Karnataka. Early in 1709 the emperor moved against the rebel and defeated him in battle. These differences among the Muslim rulers encouraged the Hindu zamindars and rajahs to break free of central control and assert their financial independence. Masulipatnam was drawn into this conflict between Kam Baksh and Rustum Dil Khan when the prince's troops defied the Mughal faujdar and took possession of the city and its treasury in 1708.

The new Governor appears to have appointed a Gujarati whom the Dutch records call Jumenemal in charge of the administration and revenues of Masulipatnam.<sup>31</sup> This evidence also states that Mir Qama, the Faujdar of Ellur and Rajamundry, had chosen the life of a fakir and divested himself of all dignity. Hamidu Khan, titled nawab, was in charge of the provinces to the north of Masulipatnam. It appears that every effort was being made to maximize the revenues from these districts and heavy taxation, special levies on merchants, weavers and other artisans and a constant call for presents from the Companies were reported.<sup>32</sup> Mohammad Ayar Beg became Faujdar of the Masulipatnam district and he removed the Gujarati Jumenemal from office, and appointed two other revenue collectors called Alam Khan and Bhagat Rao. It appears that there were complaints of extortion against Jumenemal who could have been a banya entrepreneur originally appointed to maximize the revenue of Masulipatnam.<sup>33</sup>

These constant changes in revenue personnel were a symptom of the financial crisis facing the Hyderabad provincial administration. Yusuf Khan was hard pressed to pay his soldiers whom he had constantly to keep in the field against Marathas, Telugu warlords and disobedient officials. On one occasion, in 1709, a Mughal military official tried to raise a loan of Rs. 40 thousand in Masulipatnam to pay the salaries of his soldiers. Ayar Beg, the Faujdar of Masulipatnam and neighbouring districts, could not raise enough taxes to pay his soldiers. They mutinied and roamed the countryside, plundering a number of

villages in the vicinity and helping themselves to what they could. The soldiers prepared to enter Masulipatnam to squeeze the wealth of that city. Ayar Beg, and some merchants outside the city warned the chief inhabitants of this impending attack. The leading inhabitants had already asked the Dutch to help them defend the city against these raids. The Dutch had taken the precautionary step of summoning assistance from Nagapatnam. In 1711, two sloops arrived from there with forty-three European soldiers, guns and ammunition to strengthen the small force of nineteen Europeans already in the city. Helped by the Muslim and Hindu inhabitants, private Europeans and led by the Dutch, the defences of the city were strengthened. When Ayar Beg's mutinying soldiers arrived, they were ready for them. Ayar Beg was admitted alone to try to raise a loan in the city where his wife, children and dependents were. The response was negative and the defenders, led by the Dutch, persuaded him to leave with his retinue for his suburban residence of Gudur and denied him readmittance into the city. Ayar Beg's soldiers were bitterly disappointed that he had brought no money from Masulipatnam. They forced him to attack the city which was now well armed and prepared for this assault. With Dutch help, cannons had been placed on the main gates to the city. This artillery kept the invaders out and Ayar Beg and two others were killed in action. When the Dutch Company's superior authorities in Batavia heard of the role of their subordinate officers in this incident, they were critical of their audacity in refusing entry to a legitimate Mughal authority to the city. Ayar Beg's soldiers remained in Gudur and were a source of threat to the city. A change of administration saw the district put under the control of Abid Khan, the faujdar of the northern coastal districts. Abid Khan sent his soldiers to attack and disperse the mutineers.<sup>34</sup>

Koldinder Ranga Razu, the Zamindar of Mogulturru, was another source of problems to trade and industry. He was in constant rebellion against tax claims by the Faujdar of the Masulipatnam district and took advantage of the confusion in the capital of Hyderabad to refuse recognition to this faujdar. His activities impeded transport from weaving centres around Palakollu and Drakshavaram. He and Koldinder Rama Razu, another zamindar of the same family, increased their power in the region between the Krishna and the Godavari at a time when the Mughal administration was wobbling. They had interests in shipping and when the Dutch refused passes for their ships to sail to Acheh and ports to the Southeast, it appears that they shifted their

interests to Vizagapatnam where the English were not so restrictive.<sup>35</sup> During these difficult times Thai shipping continues to have sailed to Masulipatnam though there is evidence that nachodas of Thai ships were joining in the general dissatisfaction and complaints over their treatment in the port.<sup>36</sup> So while there is no direct evidence, the winding down of English activities, the almost total cessation of French trade (though this may have been due to other causes), the decline in sale of Dutch imports may be cumulatively taken to indicate a general malaise in the trade of Masulipatnam in the years 1705 to 1712.

In June 1713, the Emperor Farrukhsiyar appointed Mubariz Khan (also known as Khwaja Muhammad) Governor of Hyderabad, to which was added the Faujdarship of Masulipatnam. The new Governor lost no time in appointing his nominees to the coastal districts under his direct authority. One Jakat Rao was sent as his revenue official to Masulipatnam. But once again divided authority plagued these efforts to impose Mughal control. The diwan of the province, claiming revenues from khalsa lands, sent his own forces to collect revenue demands from zamindars. This rendered ineffective Mubariz Khan's first efforts to bring about some fiscal order in the hinterland of Masulipatnam. He persisted and, in a personally conducted expedition during 1716 and 1717, he asserted control over the districts of Kondapalli and Kondavidu to the south and east of Masulipatnam, and in Ellur to the northwest. This was achieved after protracted warfare against determined opposition of Telugu rajahs and zamindars and caused great disruption of trade and traffic in these parts.<sup>37</sup>

The effect of these events on the trade of Masulipatnam was seen immediately. Copper, an article of ready sale here, did not find buyers. Goods were not coming down from the interior. Some iron and steel which the Dutch had imported was held up for long on the road to Masulipatnam. In the city, food prices rose to great heights. People were being sold into slavery in the hinterland districts. The Dutch had been able to buy hundred slaves. The faujdar, Kotadji Ibrahim, issued an order forbidding the transport of slaves and instructed tollkeepers and watchmen to guard the road strictly.<sup>38</sup> The Dutch continued to have problems with Rama Razu and even with the Faujdar of Masulipatnam. Some soldiers under a sergeant were sent to the Palikollu factory in 1719. More soldiers were summoned from Nagapatnam as the Dutch feared that the situation would worsen.<sup>39</sup> Rama Razu had seized some cloth bound for the Dutch at Masulipatnam

and the intervention of the faujdar had to be sought which was not promptly forthcoming. The English were more openly assisting the Mughal Governor in his wars against the rajas and zamindars with guns and ammunition in the expectation that the firm establishment of Mughal power in the coastal regions would lead to peaceful trade. Even the Dutch, in an attempt to strengthen the hold of Mubariz Khan on the lowlands, were constrained to assist him with a company of twenty-five soldiers in his war against the zamindar Appa Rao. They placed a courier in the Governor's army to have access to his ear and have wrongs redressed by him promptly.<sup>40</sup>

Mubariz Khan's Faujdar of Masulipatnam was Kotadji Ibrahim who became an influential man. He was a ship-owning merchant who was active in trade to Surat and possibly the Persian Gulf. In 1719, one of his ships, *Fateh Murad*, returning from Surat to Masulipatnam was wrecked off the coast of Negombo in west Sri Lanka. The ship was carrying west Asian and Gujarati goods and cash to the value of Rs. 10 thousand. There were a total of two hundred persons on board among whom were a number of Masulipatnam merchants. Ibrahim claimed that he had been informed that the goods had been salvaged and demanded restitution.<sup>41</sup> He was closely allied to the powerful Ellur zamindar Rama Razu. The Dutch had a claim of 4356 pagodas on Rama Razu in compensation for damage caused on his attack of their factory at Palikollu. They appealed to Ibrahim who had stood surety for this sum but in vain. They considered besieging the port with three sloops but the supreme Government of Batavia overruled this proposal.<sup>42</sup>

In an effort to make themselves independent of local administration, the English once again attempted to get a grant of Divi from the emperor. They did secure a grant of this promontory through the embassy of John Surman and a detachment was sent in 1717 to Masulipatnam to effect the occupation. They had to get the consent of the Governor Mubariz Khan to effect this and opened negotiations with him. Mubariz Khan demanded a lakh pagodas. In 1719 the emperor was put to death and all negotiations ceased.<sup>43</sup> Thus the Companies made several efforts to provide an independent base for themselves in this region, freeing them from the trammels of Mughal administrative control, but all these were of no avail. Mubariz Khan was killed in battle in 1724. During his tenure as Governor of Hyderabad, he made valiant efforts to, among other things, put the administration of Masulipatnam and its hinterland on a regular footing. Though he had some success, he could not give the region his undivided attention.



Telugu rajas, zamindars and munivars who were the local centres of power refused to submit themselves to Mughal authority. The resulting conflict greatly destabilized trade along the Krishna and Godavari deltas and in the inter-delta country.

The death of Mubariz Khan was the result of a battle between him and the Nizam Asaf Jah I for the Governorship of Hyderabad. The new administration resulted in changes in the coastal districts. Agha Hussein replaced Kotadji Ibrahim as Faujdar of Masulipatnam. These changes were attended by the now familiar rebellions and for a time at the end of 1724 the city of Masulipatnam was besieged and cut off. The besiegers were expelled but the havaldar of the city was annoyed that the Dutch had been neutral in this conflict. He prohibited all trade with the Dutch but this prohibition was lifted with the offer of a present.<sup>44</sup> The government of the province of Hyderabad was now firmly under the control of the Nizam, Asaf Jah, who cut off the tenuous ties of this province with the imperial centre. This did away with the dual government by which there were officials appointed from the centre and others appointed by the viceroy and provincial governor. Asaf Jah made Hyderabad his permanent home and planted a dynasty there. He gradually replaced appointees of Mubariz Khan with his own men and accepted the shift of allegiance of others. He directed Ihtida Khan, one of his confidants, to proceed to Masulipatnam and restore order there.

This was the end of one phase and the beginning of another in the history of Masulipatnam and the prospects of its hinterland under the Mughals. Mubariz Khan's eleven-year rule as Governor of the province was of great consequence to the coastal districts and to Masulipatnam. Richards hails this period as seeing substantial improvements in trade and industry.<sup>45</sup> Evidence of this is rather contradictory, there are signs of some picking up from the low position to which trade had sunk in the last decade of the seventeenth century and the first decade of the eighteenth. The Dutch appear to have been able to continue to make investments in textiles in the neighbouring weaving villages. But the sales of import items were poor, largely because these were marketed deep in the interior and the communications were not properly restored. The poor sales of even a lucrative commodity like copper is evidence of the interruption of customary trade links. Even during Mubariz Khan's administration, Masulipatnam was sometimes threatened and besieged by marauders. A more serious problem was the infractious behaviour of Telugu rajahs and zamindars. They were



never really brought under control. As they controlled some important textile weaving centres and markets, problems arose frequently over taxation and transit dues which helped to push up costs. On the other hand, there is some positive evidence of trade. Some of the new Mughal administrators continued to invest in shipping and trade. Traditional trade links of Masulipatnam appear to have continued. Trade with Burma and southern Thailand, Acheh, Ceylon, Surat and west Asia continued, but at what volume it is difficult to say. The King of Ayuthya's vessels continued to sail to Masulipatnam. There are no very visible influential merchants in evidence but there were a number of merchants in the port. Muslim merchants of obvious Persian origin and of Golconda domicile were still operating. Hindu merchants were engaging in the supply and agency business in the port. They were operating in companies with joint-stock capital in the way they had done for decades.

The English, who had suspended trade in Masulipatnam for many years, resumed their factory operations in 1723. This may also be significant. The English chief reported considerable construction activity in the port. The Dutch were rebuilding their godowns. Merchants were repairing houses that had been run down over years. Because of all this activity, it was difficult to recruit labour, especially skilled labour. Labour wages had risen steeply.<sup>46</sup> But the phenomenon of shortage of labour had been in existence for two decades and was the result of the depopulation of suburban villages which provided the labour for the city. Rising prices and wages had also been a continuing phenomenon of that period. There is little evidence of a positive character to postulate a definite turn around in the economic prospects of the port, city and the region. The port, of course, as will be seen below had a great deal of resilience and its role in the trade of the region underwent considerable change over the first half of the eighteenth century.

The new nizam was keen to bring about a revival of trade in Masulipatnam. When his personal representative Ihtida Khan visited the city, the European Company representatives received him well. The Dutch Company servants gave him a stately welcome and a handsome present. As a consequence, they received a parwana from the nizam in February 1725, confirming the toll free trade of the Company.<sup>47</sup> There followed other parwanas to the faujdars of hinterland districts directing them to allow the Dutch goods to pass free of tolls and unmolested.<sup>48</sup> But again the problem with rebellious hinterland

rajahs and zamindars persisted. Rama Razu was particularly troublesome. His army plundered Palikollu, robbed the merchants and villagers. This was followed by an attack on Drakshavaram and in both places the Dutch Company's residence was robbed. The entire robbery cost the Dutch 13.5 thousand pagodas. Once again the Company servants at Coromandel proposed the capture of Masulipatnam, seizure of ships and the goods of the faujdars, and taking over the neighbouring salt pans that produced a lucrative revenue. The denial of copper would cause great hardship for small money and heavy loss in exchange on gold. They held that this could easily be done with two fast armed yachts with thousand soldiers (consisting of Europeans, Indonesians, Muslims and Sinhalese). But again the Batavian government ruled it out, observing that what was possible in 1686 when the port was under the Sultan of Golconda and at a time when he was pressed by the Mughals was not possible when it was under the Mughals. They suggested instead the abandonment of Palikollu and Drakshavaram which was done in 1729.<sup>49</sup>

Haji Hussein, the Faujdar of Elluru, Rajamundry and surrounding districts, moved against the Hindu zamindars once again and requested the Dutch to re-establish their trade in these two interior weaving towns, Palakollu and Drakshavaram.<sup>50</sup> The Dutch excused themselves on the ground that they could not transport cloth delivered here by boats to Masulipatnam any more since the canal had dried up. They asked for a site in Kakinada, about 100 miles north of Masulipatnam as a suitable place from which they could load their goods to that port. Haji Hussain granted them a caul allowing them to build a walled residence in Kakinada in May 1734.<sup>51</sup> They eventually selected a site in a small coastal village near Kakinada called Jagannaikpuram, ideally situated at the mouth of a river navigable in flat-bottomed boats suitable for the loading and unloading of goods. On a request to the Nizam, he allotted them a site and permitted the construction of a walled residence in September 1734.<sup>52</sup> It soon grew into a collection point for textiles and later for the sale of imports, and took away some of the Dutch trade from Masulipatnam.

Though the French had secured trading concessions in Masulipatnam, their trade was very sporadic and uneven. For many years, they are reported as carrying no trade at all, though they had a comptoir in a small house in the city which was sometimes unattended. Now and then they showed signs of activity. In 1720 a large ship owned by the King of France arrived at Masulipatnam with the

Director of the Company, Creton. It made purchases of textiles in and around Masulipatnam to the value of 10 thousand to 12 thousand pagodas.<sup>53</sup> But then this activity dwindled and there was no backup. There was a revival of French trade in Coromandel in the 1730s and they settled a factory in the port of Yanam on the estuary of one of the many tributaries of the Godavari. In 1734 they asked and were granted 4 kanis of land in a suburb of Masulipatnam to establish their garden as the English and Dutch had long done.<sup>54</sup> They were taking in Masulipatnam in their Asian trade carried out from Pondicherry in partnership with Chulia Muslim merchants who were well entrenched in the trade of Masulipatnam. It is significant that the Dutch, English and French were moving to ports north of Masulipatnam. The Dutch were developing Jagannathpuram, the French had secured Yanam and the English were expanding trade in Vizagapatnam and settled a factory in Injaram in 1722. The Dutch continued to locate their chief residency for north Coromandel in Masulipatnam but the French moved it to Yanam and the English to Vizagapatnam.

There exist in the Dutch records, shipping lists of arrivals and departures at the port of Masulipatnam for the first decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>55</sup> While these are not exhaustive and contain inner inconsistencies, they provide some idea of the trends in shipping in that port and enable the construction of some tentative hypotheses on the changing roles of this port in the trade of the region. In the first place, it is quite clear from these lists that Masulipatnam had lost its entrepôt character in Indian Ocean trade in the eighteenth century. It is not known when this happened but it must have been gradual and cannot be dated as early as some of the literature claims. Through to the first decade of the eighteenth century, the port is seen to retain some elements of its Indian Ocean links. The most persistent of these seems to be the trade to Tennaserim and Burma. This trade was the preserve of domiciled Golconda Muslims who took up residence in Tenasserim, Mergui and Syriam. It is significant that sailings on behalf of the King of Ayuthya continued well into the eighteenth century and all the evidence is that they were managed by Golconda Muslims settled in his lands. Admittedly, this trade had declined in volume but had not disappeared completely.

The trade to Acheh appears to have dwindled considerably and this is because of conditions at both ends of the trade. Acheh had ceased to be a major consumer of Coromandel produce or a distribution point for this produce to other parts of Southeast Asia. Similarly, no sailings

are recorded from Masulipatnam to the ports of Ceylon. Two factors may have contributed to this. On the one hand, Masulipatnam had ceased to be a rice-exporting port; it did not receive large supplies from its hinterland for export. Rice had once been a major commodity in the Masulipatnam-Ceylon trade. On the other hand, the once lucrative elephant trade from Ceylon has ceased to be so. Surprisingly there were still sailings to the Maldives which had once been an extension of the voyage to Ceylon. It is possible that these were managed by the Chulia Muslims of south Coromandel who extended their voyages to Masulipatnam. There were still sailings to Surat and the Persian Gulf but on a much reduced scale. This seems to have been controlled by Mughal officials of the port and of the hinterland. This would have been one trading sector which saw a steep decline. The Companies and European private trade, which had been unable to compete with Masulipatnam merchants in this sector in the seventeenth century, came back successfully into the trade in the eighteenth.

What Masulipatnam lost on these long-distance voyages, it seems to have picked up in coastal trade and became an important link in the east coast trade from Bengal to south Coromandel. From the scattered evidence of shipping of the port in the first three decades of the eighteenth century, it is clear that the vast majority of vessels sailing in and out of that port was from the northern ports of Ganjam, Gopalpur, Sonapur, Manikpatnam, Bimilipatnam, Vizagapatnam and Kottapatnam. These vessels number from eighty to over one-hundred in a trading season and were of different varieties such as gurabs, phars, thonies and sloops. The list of goods they imported into the port showed an immense diversity and fell into certain broad categories. By far the greatest volume was made up of paddy and rice. The highest imports of paddy and rice on record (the trading season of December 1716 to March 1717) were 3,720 thousand Dutch pounds paddy and 5,040 thousand Dutch pounds rice. In other years paddy imports were generally around 2,200 thousand Dutch pounds and rice imports fluctuated greatly. This pattern raises interesting questions about the role of the port of Masulipatnam. Its population had certainly declined from a high of around seventy-five thousand to one hundred thousand in the last quarter of the seventeenth century to about forty thousand (according to a reliable French estimate) in the 1740s.<sup>56</sup> So increased consumption in the city does not account for these imports. Nor does the port serve now as a storage point for transshipment to other regions. It has to be concluded that these imports were transported

inland for consumption, as a result of the decline in food production in the districts in the immediate hinterland of the city. This is confirmed by the accounts above of the continuing wars under Yusuf Khan and Mubariz Khan that must have devastated much of the country between the Krishna and the Godavari.

The next major import commodity in volume was beans of which the highest quantity recorded was 2,688 thousand Dutch pounds in one trading season (1716-17). It usually averaged around 250 thousand Dutch pounds a year. Also imported in great quantities was jaggery which amounted from 430 thousand to 552 thousand Dutch pounds. Gingelly seeds were another bulk import, the returns recording from 100 thousand to 303,360 Dutch pounds. Dried ginger in the one year on record was imported to the tune of 193 thousand Dutch pounds, and, while it is mentioned in the cargo of other years, no quantities are given and there is no reason to think that the imports were any less. Other items imports of some bulk were native saffron (26.8 thousand to 42 thousand Dutch pounds), cooking butter (17 thousand Dutch pounds), pipeli roots (a kind of medicinal herb, 14,350 Dutch pounds), coconuts (a maximum of 256,116 nuts), beri beri (15,612 Dutch pounds), palmyrah planks (13,340), soap in balls (25,416 Dutch pounds) and lamp oil (15,372 Dutch pounds). Among the myriad other commodities of import are iron bars, tamarind, gunny sacks, wax, resin, lac, castor oil, honey, mustard seed, soya root, different kinds of native seeds and fruit peculiar to the region.

It is clear from this that Masulipatnam was still serving as a conduit for the transfer of food grains, beans, seeds, oils and other provisions for human consumption for the hinterland and had probably even enhanced its role in that respect. This enhancement may have been caused by two factors: firstly, the destruction of settled agriculture in the hinterland along the Krishna and up to the Godavari, and secondly, the interruption of inland trade routes through which these commodities would previously have come down. This would have made the sea route much safer, and given that Masulipatnam still offered the basic infrastructures for the handling of large quantities of goods, it would have been a cheaper and more effective means to satisfy the demands of the Krishna delta. The other category of goods that fed the textile industry—wax, dyes, dye roots, allum, etc.—was kept going by the continuing strength of the textile exports through Masulipatnam.

There is no detailed evidence of what these vessels took back with them on their return journey, such as there is for the imports. The major

goods they seem to have taken were steel, long pepper, round pepper, boiled arecanut, Bengal silk, black cummin, tobacco and small quantities of spialuter, quicksilver and spices. All these were imported into Masulipatnam from other regions but the quantities involved are so small that it does not appear that the port was continuing to perform its function as an entrepôt for the trade in commodities from outside the region. There is a certain amount of diffusion of goods originating from Bengal of which long pepper was the most important. It appears therefore that Masulipatnam was importing much more from the ports of north Coromandel and Orissa than it was exporting to them. The balance was obviously made up by a drain of silver from the port northwards with consequences that will be discussed later.

The region second in its volume of trade with Masulipatnam was Bengal from which vessels, for the recorded years, range from six to forty-two in a trading season. The types of vessels are described as hoekers, gurabs, sloops and sampans. Again the major item of import was rice of which the highest on record (1714-15) was 1296 thousand Dutch pounds. In other recorded years amounts ranging from 384.8 thousand to 864 thousand Dutch pounds were imported. A large quantity of beans was imported ranging from 30 thousand to 86.5 thousand Dutch pounds. Long pepper was also imported regularly and in quantity, ranging from 10 thousand to 105 thousand Dutch pounds. Another item of food imported in great quantity was powder sugar which fluctuated from a low of 11,200 to a high of 447,120 Dutch pounds. Also imported was jaggery sugar but in smaller quantities. Other items of consumption imported were cooking butter, honey, white cummin, various roots and tobacco. Silk and cotton textiles form another category of import, along with silk yarn. The textiles are accounted in packs and come to between 300 and 427 packs. Silk yarn when accounted in packs came to 374 packs and when entered by weight varied from 50 thousand to 100 thousand Dutch pounds. An interesting item listed in every year of record is 'Moorish' paper books of which in 1710 a quantity of 24,842 were imported. A great variety of other goods appear in the list: sheaths with arrows, saltpetre, gunpowder, mats, porcelain, shields, hukahs, rosewater flasks, etc.

The list of goods these vessels took back on their return journey is not half as extensive and even the volume appears in no way to match the imports. They always carried painted and printed textiles but the quantities (nineteen to sixty-one packs) were small. They also took spices (cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon), goods of obvious Persian origin

such as kismis, artal and rosewater and other goods such as spialter, glassware, sandalwood, sulphur and gum—all in small quantities. Again the balance of trade must have been greatly in Bengal's favour and would have led to the export of silver specie from the city and the region. It was clear that the region was dependent partially on Bengal for its rice imports and other foodstuff such as beans and butter. The import of silk yarn was a traditional trade to feed the weaving of fine mixed cotton and silk textiles prevalent in the hinterland. It is also noteworthy that powder sugar was entering the market in greater quantities. When the Dutch saw the potential for this commodity, they tried to enter the market with Batavian sugar but could not undersell Bengal sugar. The consumption of Bengal long pepper also seems to have penetrated the region. The import of Bengal fine silks and muslins was a traditional trade and it is significant that it continued, possibly on a reduced scale. All these articles would have been consumed in the coastal hinterland by the Mughal military and revenue élites and the Hindu rajahs and zamindars. There was little opportunity for these goods to penetrate deep into the interior or to the capital of Hyderabad, because of the communication problems noted above.

Ten to fifteen vessels arrived at Masulipatnam from Madras in a trading season. They mostly belonged to Telugu Hindu merchants who were probably located in Madras, under English jurisdiction. The trade with Madras was a new element in Masulipatnam's trade which, apart from the trade of the English Company and its officials and freemerchants, did not feature prominently in the seventeenth century. The goods they brought show how Madras and possibly San Thome were serving as distribution points for goods to the region from distant lands. Almost all the vessels brought powder and candy sugar whose provenance was in all likelihood Bengal and China. They brought some small quantities of round pepper and spices, especially cinnamon and cardamom which probably came from Malabar, long pepper and white cummin which came from Bengal and tamarind which could have come from any part of the east coast. Then there was spialter, sealing lead, sulphur, alum, various dyes, used for industrial purposes, most of which came from China. What is of greater interest is that a number of goods of Persian origins were being brought by these vessels to Madras for sale in Masulipatnam. These include Persian kelp, dry and fresh dates, rosewater, almonds, kismis and Muscovite leather. This shows the extent to which Masulipatnam had lost the



direct trade with Persia and depended on other ports of the region for a supply of these goods. They were obviously taken inland for the consumption of the Islamic élites of the region.

With regard to long distance voyages, the records still show ships trading to the Maldives, two in a trading season. They brought sulphur, saltpetre, arecanuts, cowries, coconuts, string pearls and paternosters, which goods were of Maldivian origin. They also brought long and round pepper, dried fruit, resin, tin, knives, swords and many other items which they could have picked up from some port, perhaps in Malabar, on their way. Sailings to Persia, Tenasserim and Acheh, the ports of previously intensive trade, are recorded as one per season. Surat ships were calling at Masulipatnam on the way to Bengal but were not doing much trade at that port. This does not mean, though, that this was all the trade carried on in the first three decades of the eighteenth century between Masulipatnam and these ports. The evidence is very fragmentary and the so-called lists are not an exclusive record of all trade. But there is no doubt that Masulipatnam's long distance trade had dwindled beyond recognition. There was some trade with the French port of Pondicherry, both with the Company and by Indian merchants settled in Pondicherry, as there was also with the Dutch in Nagapatnam. A surprisingly large number of vessels were calling at the roads of Masulipatnam without transacting any business there. If at all they did so, it was to take in some packs of cloth.

It was noted above that, after the establishment of an English factory at Vizagapatnam, over a hundred miles north of Masulipatnam, their trade and investment moved northwards and the English factory at Masulipatnam was run down in its personnel and capital resources. In 1726, the total expenses to the Company of the Masulipatnam and Madapollam establishments were only 628 pagodas while Vizagapatnam cost them 6 thousand pagodas per years.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, the large Company ships rarely called at Masulipatnam and the substantial private English presence in the city and in neighbouring ports of Madapollam and Narsapore dwindled considerably. The Mughal government encouraged the French to come in and expand their activities but they were as yet not in a position to do so, though they were aware of the possibilities for a European power that established itself at that port. The Dutch stuck on in the port and the city and, in a number of instances cited above, they helped defend the city against marauders. But even they despaired of a revival of the port. The extent of the decline in Dutch trade at that port could be seen in the dramatic



decline in their import trade. Throughout the seventeenth century Masulipatnam had been a major centre of Dutch import trade in Coromandel. Even as late as 1691, they were able to sell in that city for the entire subah, 36 thousand Dutch pounds of cloves, 15 thousand pounds of nutmeg, 6,160 pounds mace, 30 thousand pounds of cinnamon and 960 thousand pounds Japanese copper a year.<sup>58</sup> By contrast, in the book year 1727-28, a relatively good year for trade in north Coromandel, the Dutch sold 11,701 pounds cloves, 1,080 pounds mace, 5,633 pounds nutmeg and 121,190 pounds Japanese copper.<sup>59</sup> There were other years when only half these amounts were sold. But they continued to enter into contracts for the supply of textiles and dealt with two companies of merchants who were loyal to them through these difficult times. They also had some influence with the administration through their contract with the faujdar to supply 20 bahar (9.6 thousand Dutch pounds) Japanese copper per month for the paisa and dabu mint in Masulipatnam.

Eventually the Dutch also decided to shift their activities further to the north and requested the Faujdar Haji Hussein for a concession to build a factory in Kakinada. A grant was made by the faujdar but there were some problems with the Zamindar Thimmarasa, in whose jurisdiction this land was. So the Dutch selected an hamlet called Jagannaikpuram, near Kakinada, at the estuary of a rivulet which could admit boats and traffic some miles inland. The growth of Dutch import and export trade in Jagganaikpuram detracted from the importance of Masulipatnam. Thus at the time of the great political revolutions of the Carnatic that began in 1740, no major European power had a substantial presence in trade in Masulipatnam. The outgoing Dutch Governor of Coromandel, Elias Guillot, in his memoir to his successor, described the port and city of Masulipatnam in 1738.<sup>60</sup> He says that there was not a single Moor merchant in the city. Streets of stately building belonging to Hindus and Muslims were dilapidated and falling down. Most of the trade consisted of coastal traffic in gurabs and thonies to the north up to Ganjam and there were only four or five ships belonging to Pathans sailing to Bengal.

An index to the declining trade of Masulipatnam is the increasing scarcity of specie in the city and its environs. It was noted above that the trade that remained was such that it caused a drain of specie out of the city. The entry of specie into the city by the long-distance trade with ports such as Aceh, Bandar Abbas, Tenasserim and Kedah had dwindled to a trickle. In 1729 the Dutch noted that the sale of goods had been reduced greatly by the lack of Nagapatnam pagodas, which

the Dutch accepted in payment, among the merchants. Madras pagodas were more current because of the trade with Madras.<sup>61</sup> Silver coins had become more current in the region after the Mughal conquest. The French and the Dutch attempted to make their respective silver rupees of Pondicherry and Paleacat current in the region but the regional governors prevented it and forced them to exchange these at unfavourable rates. The French complained in 1738 that the Faujdars of Masulipatnam had deliberately devalued the Pondicherry rupee in that port. This Pondicherry rupee was evidently beginning to gain currency in the city and surrounding areas. He therefore obtained a parwana from the Nizam prohibiting the currency of all other rupees except the Sicca rupee minted in the Masulipatnam mint. Likewise the administration refused to accept the French pagodas as currency. After resisting this for two years, the French found that they had to take their money back to Pondicherry.<sup>62</sup>

The more serious problem related to copper coinage, dabus and paisas, in which most of the small transactions were made. The Golconda administration, from the time of the sultans, had a standing order with the Dutch for the supply of Japanese bar copper monthly to the mints. This was continued under Mughal administration when the Faujdar of Ellore and Rajamundry, in whose jurisdiction Masulipatnam lay, enjoyed sole rights over the purchase of copper from the Dutch. A quantity of 15 to 20 bahars per month was delivered in this way for the mint under his control. The price was fixed at a little over 64 pagodas per bahar. But from about 1720 onwards the price of copper was increasing, partly on account of a shortage in Japan. The price in the free market rose rapidly to 82 pagodas and the Dutch refused to sell copper to the Faujdar in an attempt to make him relinquish his monopoly. As a result the price was raised to 75 pagodas.<sup>63</sup> Because of the high price of copper, the coins disappeared from circulation and the shortage became more acute. Realizing the hardship caused to the ordinary people by the lack and consequent high exchange value of copper dabus, the faujdar in 1752 authorized the Dutch chief of Jagannaikpuram to set up a mint and exempted it from all diwani taxes, permitting the free transport of copper and silver into the port for the purposes of coinage.<sup>64</sup> This was a right the Dutch and other Europeans had long sought in north Coromandel, but it came too late for any benefit to be derived from its exercise.

In the 1730s, Anwaruddin Khan ruled as Governor of the Andhra lowlands and provided some semblance of order to this troubled

region. He moved against the zamindars through his Zilladar Rustam Khan and reduced many of them, depriving them of revenue powers and appointing amins instead as collectors of revenue. There was some revival of trade in Masulipatnam and its hinterland as a result, seen in an increase in the sale of imports. Anwaruddin left in 1741 to become Nawab of the Carnatic and this saw the beginnings of important political developments throughout Hyderabad and the Carnatic. The disputed succession in the Carnatic spread to Hyderabad where the French supported Muzaffar Jung as nizam against Nazir Jung who had proclaimed himself nizam on the death of his father. Nazir Jung ordered the seizure of the French factories at Masulipatnam and Yanam together with their effects, which was promptly done and the factory chiefs put under arrest. Dupleix decided to attack Masulipatnam and a force embarked from Pondicherry under M. Guillard in July 1750. Accompanying the French force was the son of the havaldar of Masulipatnam who had been employed by the French in Pondicherry. The havaldar was probably friendly to the French and the port and city were easily taken. At that time there was a mud fort on the water front and another further inland in the city itself. The French dislodged the Muslim defenders from both forts and started putting up improved defence works. They made the fort at the seagate the main defence post, erected mud walls and put up gun emplacements. They demolished the wooden bridge from there to the city and constructed a causeway in its place. As water was the major problem in the port, they built a cistern capable of holding 44,000 gallons of water near the city gate.

Dupleix persuaded his protégé Nizam, Muzaffar Jung, to cede Masulipatnam and the districts dependent on it to the French. This was done in 1752 and in the following year the grant was extended to include the entire northern sarkars of Mustafanagar, Ellore, Rajamundry and Chicacole. These acquisitions made the French masters of the seacoast of north Coromandel and Orissa. They made Masulipatnam the military headquarters from which their access to Hyderabad could be ensured. It was also to be a base from which the revenues of the Krishna-Godavari delta were to be collected and made available to finance the French troops that were stationed in Hyderabad and in forts in the province. For this purpose M. Moracin, nephew of Madame Dupleix, was sent as Chief of Masulipatnam, responsible to Bussy in Hyderabad. Some of the zamindars and Mughal faujdars refused to recognize French rights over revenue and the French were involved

in action to suppress their opposition. With their superior armed forces and with power located in strategic inland fortresses, they succeeded in reducing a number of the zamindars of the region and Mughal officials who first proved recalcitrant. The most powerful zamindar of the Godavari delta, Vijayaram Razu, who had first sided with the English against the French, abandoned his allies and sued for peace with the French. Bussy was, besides being a brilliant general in combat, an efficient administrator. He had the added incentive of requiring every rupee the land could yield for the maintenance of his troops in Hyderabad.

As a result of detailed surveys begun on Bussy's orders and continued by Moracin after his appointment as Chief of Masulipatnam, we are able to obtain information on the state of this country in the 1750s and infer something of the utter deterioration in its condition for which there is no precise documentation in the earlier period. Moracin was a great enthusiast for the economic viability of these districts for the French and was convinced that good government under French control would lead to their rapid rehabilitation and bring rich returns to the French. Moracin found the lands dependent on Masulipatnam in the worst state of devastation, while to the southwest the district of Kondavidu was in a rather better state.<sup>65</sup> In many villages of the former districts, large tracts of paddy lands lay uncultivated and were overgrown with bush and bramble. Some of them were depopulated up to 75 per cent and produced between a third and an eighth of their previous yields. This confirms and accounts for what had been discussed above regarding the changed role of Masulipatnam as a major importer of rice and paddy by sea from Bengal and Orissa.

In discussing the reasons why this previous rice-bowl of Masulipatnam had been reduced to a state of severe deficit, Moracin lays the blame squarely on the 'Moorish' administration and the practices of revenue farming then prevalent. He notes that faujdars, paleakars, zamindars and deshpandes were rarely in office at a place for more than three to four years and amassed as much as they could in that period. The zamindars proved a check on the faujdars and gradually asserted their superiority over them. Zamindars had increased in number in the recent past and consisted of ancient families as well as their retainers and servants who had usurped their titles and the rights that went with them. Customarily peasant cultivators enjoyed ten to eleven twentieths of their produce but through an increase and multiplicity of taxes they then were left with no more than three or four

twentieths. This had led to the abandonment of cultivation. Consequently parganas like Tumduru and Bomdada, in the middle of good rice-producing country about 30 miles northeast of Masulipatnam, that once produced annual revenues of Rs. 10 thousand each, now produced no more than Rs. 3 thousand.

Similar decline was noted in the production of textiles in the city and suburbs of Masulipatnam and the neighbouring weaving villages. The shortage and high cost of rice would have led to a migration of weavers and painters to other areas to the north. Moracin observes a total absence of weavers in Masulipatnam who could weave handkerchiefs that had become a lucrative article of European commerce. Likewise there was a shortage of colour dyers. Some of these weavers appear to have migrated to Nizampatnam where the English and Dutch were now ordering handkerchiefs. He repeats the cry often heard from other European investors that the quality and quantity of goods had declined in this area in the past ten years. Besides the oppressive taxation, shortage of and dearness of rice and other food provisions, Moracin also attributes the decline in quality to the crisis in the monetary system that had accumulated over many years after the fall of the Sultanate of Golconda.

Traditionally, gold pagodas had been the medium for large scale commerce and copper dabus for all medium and small transactions. One effect of the incorporation of this region into the Mughal empire was the increasing circulation of rupees. By the 1750s, all revenue and customs payments by rentiers were made in rupees and in Masulipatnam itself rupees were more current than pagodas because of the brisk trade with Bengal. In fact Moracin says, with some exaggeration, that the pagoda had become a coin of account. It is true that most of the merchant contracts were drawn up in pagodas. The effect of all this was a shortage of pagodas and the increasing value of gold in relation to silver. Thus while the standard exchange of the gold pagoda to the rupee had been 100 pagodas = 350 to 370 rupees, by 1752, this had changed to Rs. 412 to 415. Thus the pagoda had appreciated by 18 per cent. Naturally, with the merchants quoting prices in pagodas, this was reflected in the cost price of export goods.

The situation was more serious with regard to the copper coinage of small denominations. It was seen earlier that the Faujdar of Masulipatnam had a contract with the Dutch to annually import a fixed quantity of copper at a price below the market price which was minted into dabus in the Mughal mints. Later the minting of dabus was also left

to the Dutch at Jagannathpuram and for a time this proved satisfactory. When the wars and political changes raged, the Dutch withdrew from Masulipatnam and the interruption in minting led to a great dearth of copper coinage. Dabus had been exchanged at a stable rate of 48 to the rupee but when Moracin wrote in 1753, it stood at 35 to a rupee, thus appreciating by 27 per cent. This was compounded by the fact that the French were not properly organized to import and mint copper with the required regularity. This had an adverse effect on the price of goods of daily consumption in the markets, while wages had by no means increased correspondingly. As Moracin pointed out, if the French could import copper regularly, as the Dutch had, a great profit could be made in the minting of dabus. He made a calculation that a barrel of copper of weight 480 livres costing Rs. 240 in India would, when minted into dabus, yield a profit of Rs. 97.25.

The shortage of copper coins in circulation throughout this region continued to be a problem even after the British conquest and till well into the 1780s. The exchange of rupees into dabus was always done at a premium, with its resulting hardships to the poorer elements in the community. Because of the high price of copper, these coins were transported inland to be sold as metal at high profits. As to the high price of gold, Moracin had no remedy except the hope that, with the increase in commerce and the influx of more bullion into the city, it would come down to previous levels. As rupees were the main currency in circulation, payments to troops, merchants, workmen and others were done in this currency. The loss to the recipients when they exchanged them for dabus and pagodas was great.

The French had high hopes for Masulipatnam and Moracin's memoir is a faithful expression of their hopes. It is significant that he speaks loftily of the previous greatness of this port. It was 'formerly the entrepôt of all the commerce which passed the Gulf of the Kingdom of Bengal and all the east coast in that part of India known as Hindustan.'<sup>66</sup> He speaks of its extensive commerce with Persia and the Red Sea. Its decline, which he predictably attributes to the 'tyranny of Moor Government', was followed by the growth of European port cities on the Coromandel coast. He says that it is not impossible to reverse this decline and make it grow again. His strategy to do this was to provide good, strong and fair government to the city and its environs, through the establishment of a military presence of eight hundred regular soldiers, supplemented by one thousand sepoys. He recommended the stationing of a senior official of the rank of Director,

with a status equal to the Director of Chandernagore, assisted by a Council with a staff of administrators. Taxation was to be fair and equal and cultivators and artisans preserved from the oppression of their superiors. He asserted that the repopulation and recultivation of the neighbouring country and the abundance and cheapness of rice would bring back weavers, painters and dyers. This would make it possible for textiles of all sorts to be ordered from Masulipatnam. He thought that it would be easy for the Company to despatch two ships annually from Masulipatnam with a cargo of textiles worth Rs. 500 thousand each.

He would also encourage French private traders to settle in Masulipatnam to conduct trade to other parts of Asia. He thought that this could be done without injury to the trade of the Company. In this way, he expected Masulipatnam to regain its place in Asian trade. He thought that the port could re-establish the westward trade to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf and eastward to Burmese and Siamese ports. He emphasized the possibilities of the import trade in Masulipatnam. Based on his study of the market in the interior, he had ordered a particular variety of coloured woollens (*londrins*) made in France as suitable for sale. The English and the Dutch had, in good times, succeeded in selling woollens in Golconda. Coral had also been a lucrative item of import, traded in by the English, Portuguese and Armenians. Indian merchant contractors of the French Company were asking for coral of deep red colour, large texture, round and of 16 to 18 marc. Other commodities that he thought would sell well were copper, silk, armaments and marine stores. These last he thought were necessary to attract private shipping. The port had to be provided in abundance with riggings, hooks, anchors and utensils suitable for ships of 50 to 300 tons. Moracin asserts that the Persians have at all times a definite inclination to pursue the commerce from Masulipatnam to their country. All the injustices of 'Moor' governments had not made them renounce this trade entirely. Once a fair and mild regime is established in the port that assures free traffic, this trade would increase in abundance. By way of reassurance, he says that the merchandise suitable for this commerce is completely different from the cargoes to Europe, implying that there will be no competition between a revived Asian trade and French trade to Europe.

It should be noted, in considering these proposals and their implication for the historical evolution of Masulipatnam, that the Nizam of Hyderabad was a protégé of the French and dependent on



them for his position. The routes to the capital were therefore open to the French, as seldom before, and hence the great confidence in using Masulipatnam as a port of entry of import goods for sale in the entire subah. It has been shown above that one of the fundamental causes of the decline of Masulipatnam was the denial of this vast hinterland market by the interruption of communications. Hyderabad and its Islamic rulers had begun to look westwards and northwards for their imported goods. Moracin was now trying to use the French connection to reopen Masulipatnam's traditional access to these markets. Other conditions being fulfilled, this was a justifiable assertion. Taken together with his proposals for an economic regeneration of the immediate hinterland, both in agriculture and industry, the whole plan appears feasible and not unrealistic.

The French held on to Masulipatnam and enjoyed the revenues of the surrounding districts till 1756 when war broke out once again between them and the English. Bussy marched to the coast and captured all English factories there, Injaram, Madapollam, Bandarmalanka and Vizagapatnam. But the war in the southern Carnatic went badly for the French and, in June 1758, the French commander Lally recalled Bussy from Hyderabad. By this time, Clive had entrenched English power in Bengal and was confident enough to send Colonel Forde with a detachment from Calcutta to attack the French in north Coromandel. Forde landed in Vizagapatnam in October 1758. He was joined by Ananda Razu, the powerful Zamindar of Vijanagaram, and successor to Vijayaram who had thrown in his lot with the French. From there, Forde marched into the interior, overran French bases and proceeded to lay siege to Masulipatnam. Masulipatnam had been well fortified by the French who prepared to hold out until relief came from Pondicherry. In spite of being outnumbered and in want of ammunition, Forde executed a bold attack on the fort on 7 April. The attack is graphically described by Robert Orme as one of the turning points of the war.<sup>67</sup> The French surrendered the fort and city and when Salabat Jung arrived, he was forced to sign a treaty giving possession of Masulipatnam to the English. The English secured a grant of the northern sarkars from the Mughal emperor in 1765 and Masulipatnam and the neighbouring districts passed under English rule from this date.



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## CHAPTER 4

### The Final Stages

The crisis to which Masulipatnam was subject was part of the general crisis of eighteenth century India. This crisis, brought about by factors autochthonous to the subcontinent as well as external to it, led to the decline and fall of numerous commercial zones and centres of commerce in India. The factors that impinged on Masulipatnam had a long period of gestation and maturing culminating in the expansion of the colonial state into the port and its vital hinterland. In the previous chapter, the main elements of this gradual decline after Mughal conquest of southern and eastern India were discussed. It was noted that the fortuitous appearance of French evidence of around 1752/3 enabled us to perceive the extent of the disintegration of the agrarian and commercial economy of the port and its immediate hinterland.

The 12 parganas attached to Masulipatnam had declined considerably in the revenues they raised by 1755. Many of these parganas had good rice-producing land and yielded surplus grain that used to feed Masulipatnam and was exported overseas from there. Devaracotta, situated about 14 miles west of Masulipatnam, used to produce revenue of about Rs. 120 thousand a year. It was leased out for half the amount in 1752 and, after being ceded to the French, was beginning to produce more—Rs. 75 thousand in the first year, and Rs. 120 thousand was expected in the following years. In Nizampatnam, 36 miles west southwest of Masulipatnam, there were 4000 cattles of excellent cultivable land lying uncultivated. The parganas of Tumdurru and Bomdada, situated about 25 miles north-east of Masulipatnam, contained the most fertile paddy fields. They were capable of yielding over Rs. 100 thousand in revenue per year but in 1752 were leased out for only Rs. 22 thousand. The following year these were reduced to Rs. 3 thousand mainly caused by the abandonment of land by the

cultivator and its being overgrown by bush and bramble.<sup>1</sup> It was clear then, that by the middle of the eighteenth century, both the port and its life-supporting hinterland had been reduced to a level of degradation.

The nizam's administration must be held responsible for this state of affairs in large measure. It was noted above that under Anwaruddin Khan who ruled as Nawab of Andhra lowlands till 1741, something was done to salvage the trade and productivity of the region. After his departure and with the nizamate in Hyderabad subject to disputed succession, the previous declining trend was accelerated. The main factors in this downward drift was firstly the increasing power of zamindars and local rajas over the resources of the land. Tax farming, which was already widespread under the Golconda rulers, now took hold totally. While the state or its representatives in the regions were strong and had a visible presence there, tax farmers could be held to operate within limits of custom and law. Earlier Mughal authorities of the Hyderabad subah had attempted to curb the power of local rajas and zamindars and had located substantial military power in forts of the Andhra lowlands for this purpose. From the 1740s, they had abandoned this and the rajas and zamindars arrogated considerable autonomy to themselves. The state had to settle with them for annual revenue and left them along in the administration of their lands. Free from all restraint, they had arbitrarily fixed land and other taxes. The increased incidence of taxation on the peasant was noted by the French Director Moracin. The rajas and zamindars in turn farmed out the taxes to a range of sub-lessees, mainly Brahman and Reddy landlords and village officials who were the masters of the local scene. It was not surprising therefore that the peasants responded by abandoning land and migrating to other areas, leaving villages depopulated and leading to the encroachment of jungle on arable land.

Another development and one which is relevant to commercial traffic, was the proliferation of custom-posts levying transit dues on goods passing through public roads. Several observers of the trade from the Andhra coast into the interior have noted the multiplicity of transit custom-posts on roads along which goods passed. This was the result of the greater autonomy enjoyed by local rajas and zamindars in territory under their jurisdiction. When the state was strong, these transit dues were regulated and written into the terms under which the lessee was granted rights of revenue collection. Now the lessee or rentier appears to have had the authority to fix these dues which fell

heavily on merchants who carried goods through their lands. In any case the rajas and zamindars were subject to considerable pressure by the nizam and later by the French. They were themselves fighting among each other to entrench and defend their possessions. They were all very much in need of cash to maintain their payments and to keep up their military establishment. It was during this time that the sowcars penetrated the agrarian economy as providers of credit to the rajas and zamindars. A spiral of credit, enhanced bids for revenue farms and oppressive taxation began which was to continue till the end of the eighteenth century.

The French attempted to put a stop to this and bring about some order in the fiscal system that would lead to a revival of commerce and production. After the death of the Nizam Muzaffar Jung, there was a period of confusion and absence of central control when the zamindars were able to re-establish and enhance their power. When the districts were ceded to the French, they renegotiated rental agreements with a variety of zamindars and rentiers. For a time they succeeded in raising the amount collected. The results of their efforts were seen in the gradual increase in revenue in the years immediately after the cession.

REVENUES OF MASULIPATNAM AND ITS DEPENDENCIES

	<i>1751/52 Prior to French cession</i>	<i>1752/3</i>	<i>1754/5</i>	<i>According to Mughal Records (In Rupees)</i>
Tumidi	15,000	20,050	25,000	40,617
Tumduru and Bomdada	22,000	50,000	80,000	32,285
Guduru and Akulumannadu	31,000	40,750	60,000	92,681
Devarcotta	60,000	120,000	200,000	221,258
Imguduru	15,000	21,000	25,000	19,675
Nizampatnam	30,000	30,000	50,000	246,000
Divi	20,000	30,000	50,000	90,070
Naraspoie and dependencies	29,900	35,000	40,000	40,000

[Source: *La Memoire de Moractn.*]

French efforts were brought to an abrupt end by the English offensive and the zamindars once again reasserted their independence. The English conquered Masulipatnam, fortified it and entrenched themselves there and the nizam made an *inam* grant of Masulipatnam and 8 subordinate parganas to the English. The nizam was not in a position to reassert control of the region and in the confused situation with the English confined in Masulipatnam and preoccupied with the French war, the nizam unable to exercise authority, the rajas and zamindars quarrelled among themselves to secure advantage and control of resources for themselves. In 1766, Clive, by a treaty with the Mughal emperor, secured the cession to the English of the districts that came to be known as the Northern Sarkars. There were Chicacole, Rajamundry, Ellore and Kondapalli. The English delegated their authority in their provinces to Hussein Ali Khan, who made agreements with the zamindars for revenue. He paid the English 316,666 pagodas annually for these lands. It was only in 1769 that the English set up a detailed administrative infrastructure in the Sarkars and entered into direct settlements with the zamindars. From this time, the revenue demand was steadily increased.

Besides these problems with control and management of the resources of the immediate hinterland of Masulipatnam, there was the question of the wider access of this port to a deeper hinterland with producing and consuming markets. It has been shown sufficiently in the preceding chapters that a major foundation of the rise and growth of Masulipatnam as the chief port of the eastern coast was its virtually sole access to the Deccan. It was the feeder port of imports from overseas to consuming markets of Golconda and Hyderabad. In this respect the Bengal trade was important and imports of silks and expensive muslins were consumed by Mughal and other Islamic élites and Hindus. This route fed other neighbouring markets to the north of Hyderabad in upper Deccan and Bedar, and to the west in the western Doab. The nizam's administration did not pay much attention to this route. It was not an important conduit for precious metal into the country, as investment of the European Companies in the Andhra delta declined from the 1740s.

Most observers of the last decades of the eighteenth century noted that Masulipatnam and of the other ports of the Andhra coast ceased to import goods for consumption in the interior. Hyderabad was not dependent on this route any more. Indeed English administrators in 1800 saw hardly any trade between Masulipatnam and Hyderabad.

There was hardly any import of luxury goods from Bengal through this port. Those who cared to investigate saw that Hyderabad was receiving its demand for these goods overland via Nagpur. They saw the proliferation of land customs and an exodus of merchants from Hyderabad. Thus the process that had started in the early decades of the eighteenth century, the isolation of Masulipatnam from its hinterland, accelerated in the second half of the century.

The English put an administrative structure in place in the Sarkars after they were ceded to the Company. In Masulipatnam, after its conquest from the French, there was a chief with a council attached to him and a substantial military presence. After the reconquest of Vizagapatnam, it and the surrounding areas were administered by a chief and council. English interest was, in the first instance, in securing Masulipatnam and the ceded country from the French and from Bazalt Jang in Guntur who was upset at the expansion of English power into a country that he had so far dominated. Having secured the defences of the area, the English desired to procure as much revenue as they could from the lands. Consequently they entered into dealings with the rajas and zamindars, many of whom had already sided with them against the French. The Chief at Masulipatnam was entrusted with the task of conducting these negotiations and securing agreed annual settlements. Having done this, their next objective was to utilize their position of political overlordship to secure privileged access to the product of the labour of weavers in the many scattered villages of these districts. Commercial residencies were established in central collecting points of weaving villages. Residents of Injaram, Madapollam and Ganjam were responsible for the purchase of textiles in demarcated villages in their jurisdiction. The Chiefs of Masulipatnam and Vizagapatnam also carried out purchases in weaving villages near their port-towns.

The major demand during this period was for staple varieties of long cloth, salempores and morees which were woven to the north of Masulipatnam, in the Godavari delta and its hinterland. In Masulipatnam, the orders were for coloured and dyed goods—allegeas, sastracundies and romalls—and the quantities demanded were not large. Thus the bulk of the investment went to places such as Injaram and Madapollam which were the centres of long-cloth weaving. Masulipatnam was the place at which the revenue payments were made and so generally the purchase of textiles there was made from the money generated from the area. The textiles when delivered were



shipped generally from Vizagapatnam which was better located for the transport of these goods from weaving villages by water and by land. So Masulipatnam's loss of the role of central point for the export of textiles of the Andhra lowlands was confirmed.

This also meant that it was not necessary for merchants to be attracted to Masulipatnam as middlemen and brokers in the textile trade. No doubt there were still some who operated from there and entered into contracts with the English for the delivery of the goods manufactured in the immediate hinterland. But most of the bigger contracts were being made in Injaram, Madapollam, and Ganjam and these were the places to which merchants gravitated. This meant that more money was being invested there and distributed into the villages. These became areas of increased economic activity which was reflected in the increasing land revenues produced from there. The zamindars sought to participate in this by encouraging the Company's officials to invest in their villages, promising the assistance of their civil and security administration to safeguard English investment

English authority penetrated deeper into the Andhra lowlands as the textile trade showed signs of revival from the 1780s and competition for it intensified. The English had adopted the method of contracting through Indian merchants in a competitive environment. They found this resulting in an increase in prices and their thoughts now turned towards operating a monosonistic control of weavers' labour. They tried to do away with the merchant intermediary and to make direct contracts with weavers. These contracts were administered by the Commercial Residents whose Indian servants and sepoy were sent into the village to see to the performance of the contracts by the weavers. At the same time restrictive orders were passed prohibiting weavers from accepting work for others while they were under contract to the English. The zamindars proved willing instruments in this, in those districts which were under zamindar's jurisdiction. Thus a tight regime of control of the labour of weavers was initiated in 1771 and merchants lost their livelihood as brokers for the English investment. Weavers lost the freedom to negotiate competitively for their labour. The English found it impossible to continue this system. Weavers were totally opposed to it and merchants were constantly undermining it. The English were left with large and ever-growing deficits with the weavers and there was no way of recovering these from indigent weavers. There was some open resistance by weavers in Tuny Taluk who abandoned their villages and took refuge in neighbouring

districts with fellow-caste members. In the weaving market town of Peddapuram a crowd of weavers attacked the market, beat up the Company's sepoys and destroyed the stores. Faced with these problems, the Company abandoned this method in 1776 and went back to contracting with merchants.

It is interesting to note that the Chiefs of Masulipatnam and Vizagapatnam opposed this method from the outset. They declared that merchants in their towns were credit-worthy and reliable to be contracted with for goods. They refused to adopt the method of direct contracts with weavers and continued to deal with merchants for the goods ordered by the Company.

A feature of the commerce of this region during this period was the increasing penetration of European private enterprise, Europeans, both Company officials and free merchants had a long history of involvement in the trade of Masulipatnam and the Andhra coast. Several of them were settled in Masulipatnam and Madapollam during the period of the sultanate but they withdrew from these places after Mughal conquest. They did trickle back in the middle of the eighteenth century but after the extension of English control their numbers increased immensely. Interestingly enough, they did not settle in Masulipatnam but in the new centres such as Vizagapatnam, Kakinada, Coringa and in other European settlements such as Dutch Jagannaikpuram and French Yanam. Their initial function was to participate in the coastal trade and the restricted oceanic trade but more of them became agents to major shipping concerns in Madras and Calcutta. They had to keep ready textiles on the orders of their Madras principals at the required time of the sailing season.

Some of these entrepreneurs entrenched themselves in the land and became close to zamindars and landlords. They began dealing with weaving villages in a limited way at first and then became influential there as to develop more ambitious schemes of commerce. The English began to make large investments in Andhra from the 1780s and encountered problems with Indian merchants over prices, quality and delivery times. They decided to advertise for the delivery of goods for their European markets. When they did this, European and Indian merchants bid for these contracts and in several cases European bidders won these contracts against long-standing Indian merchants. English officials would generally favour the European contractors, if the prices offered were nearly equal to those of the Indians. In this way John Fannin won a contract in Ganjam, John Snow

and Basil Cochrane won contracts for Injaram and Madapollam. Cochrane was very close to the zamindar of Peddapuram, Jagapathy Rauze, and persuaded him to use his authority to compel weavers to work for him.

European competition contributed to regenerating the economy of the Andhra lowlands. After the Peace of Paris in 1763, the English had to readmit the French and the Dutch to these settlements. Thus the French came back to Yanam and the Dutch restarted their trade at Jagannaikpuram, a few miles from Kakinada and at the estuary of a river. They had rights to embark goods on the river free of duty. Both the powers expanded this trade in the 1770s, leading to a competitive bidding for textiles in the Godavari delta villages. This pushed up prices and the English were aggrieved that the fruits of their military victories were being taken away from them. These two European competitors were caught up in the regulatory restrictions on weavers' freedom to work referred to above. They protested vehemently against these restrictions and they had to be lifted.

Dutch and French investment was a useful source of bullion coming into the region. The English dispensed with the need to bring bullion from Bengal or Madras for their investment by utilizing the surplus revenues of Andhra. This exacerbated a monetary crisis begun early in the eighteenth century. Gold pagodas, the major coin utilized in making textile contracts, had begun to appreciate in value and continued doing so in the last decades of the eighteenth century. From their usual value of Rs. 3.60 to 3.70 a pagoda, they had risen to Rs. 4.10 to 4.20. At the other end, there was a shortage of copper coins of small value. The Dutch, the main supplier of copper suitable for minting, were not importing copper in any quantity. The common copper coin, the dabu appreciated in value and weavers and peasants who had to exchange their rupees into dabus for their daily usage found themselves suffering great loss in this exchange. As a result, both merchants who contracted for cloth and received their advances in rupees and weavers who dealt in dabus, began to push their prices up.

What was left of the old trade of Masulipatnam by the end of the eighteenth century? Of the long distance trade, there was something left of the sailings to Jeddah and the Persian Gulf port of Bussora. This was carried out by merchants referred to as Mughals and Persians. These were probably the remnants of the old trading families that had lived in Masulipatnam for generations. Some of them had migrated to San Thome and Madras from where they traded with Masulipatnam,

mainly to pick up coloured and painted goods for west Asia. Both the French and the English, in their schemes to rehabilitate the trade of Masulipatnam, thought they could build up this trade with incentives. There was some trade with Bengal, but, as noted above, very little in volume. Some Armenians, again descendants of old families of the port, continued to trade, both as shippers to western India and west Asia, but more importantly as middlemen and agents to Madras and Calcutta merchants. Some Chulia Muslim vessels touched on the port to pick up goods for the Southeast Asian markets. These Chulias invested in goods in the weaving villages through their merchant agents. The north-south coastal traffic appears to be largely bypassing Masulipatnam, coming largely out of other northern ports such as Vizagapatnam, Kakinada, and Bimilipatnam.

As often noted above, the English East India Company did not pay any attention to reviving and rehabilitating the trade and infrastructure of the port of Masulipatnam after its conquest in 1757. Indeed the French, during the brief period they held it (1752-57), may be said to have done more. They effected some repairs to the roads, built a causeway across the marshes between the oceanfront and the town and rebuilt the fort. The English Company's negligence was understandable in view of its dual preoccupation with maximizing land revenue collection and investing for textiles on the best terms. Besides, it had a port-settlement a few miles to the north in Vizagapatnam. European private traders preferred to operate from the north, nearer the centres of textile production. This neglect happened in spite of the general recognition that Masulipatnam provided the best anchorage for ocean-going vessels in the entire coast. In 1786, the Fort St. George government instructed Michael Topping, a captain in the Company's military service, to survey the coast north and south of Masulipatnam. Extracts of his journal on the survey of Masulipatnam show no major change in the physical form of the port.<sup>2</sup> The serpentine river that skirted the city was deep enough to take in large cargo boats but the bar was shallow with about 3 feet of water. Outside the bar was a spacious roadstead capable of accommodating several vessels at 2 miles from the shore. When Jacob Hafner, the Dutch East India Company servant visited Masulipatnam probably around 1780 he found features that had been often described by previous observers—the morass outside the walls that emitted a unbearable stench in dry weather, the insufferable heat when 'one can neither read, nor write nor think', the great relief provided by the breaking of the sea breeze

and...he found the city 'moderately well populated' and singled out 'Moors' and Armenians among its population.<sup>3</sup>

In the nineteenth century, nature had done even greater damage to the port and the seafront. A cyclone of 1800 seems to have caused many changes. The area between the sea and the town had been flattened to an expanse of sea and mud. It lay exposed to storm, wind and wave and the inundation of cyclones. The accommodation for ships had disappeared. In 1833 the English abandoned the fort and destroyed it.<sup>4</sup> Such merchants as remained in the fort area withdrew inland to the pettah. It lost all characteristics of a port.

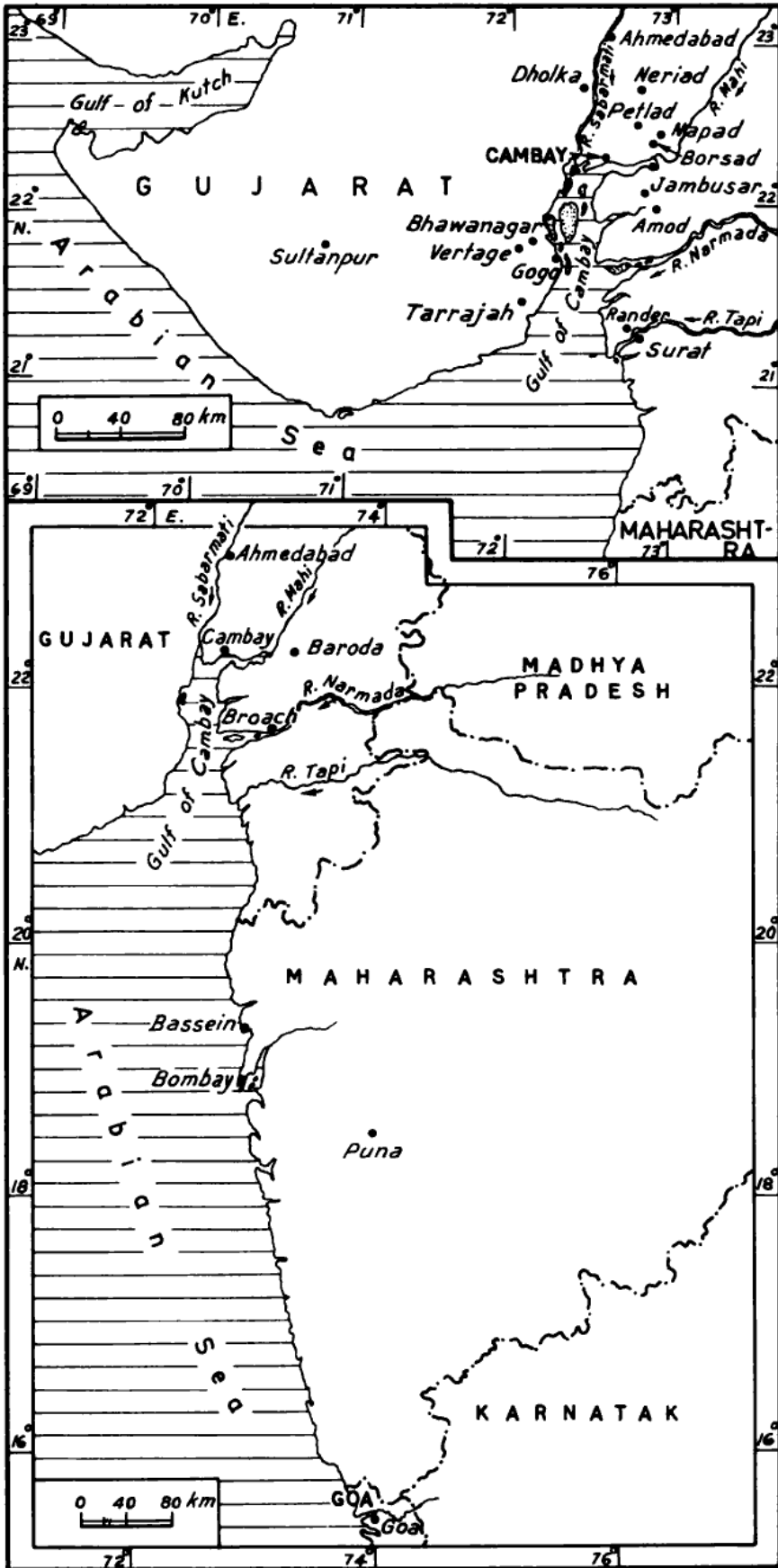
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2. *On the Harbours and Ports of the Northern Circars, Containing extracts of an original journal kept by Mr. M. Topping.*
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PART TWO

CAMBAY

Aniruddha Ray



Map 2. Cambay and its Environs.

## CHAPTER 5

### Physical Features, Historical and Administrative Background to 1720s

#### *Physical Features and Historical Background*

Located on the northern bank of the River Mahi, Cambay or Khambayat (22°19'N x 72°37'E) was situated on the top terrace of the river on a cliff of about 34 metres from the sea. On the east was waste land at different levels, the south had the mud flats of the meander of the Mahi. The west also had waste land and in the north swamps.<sup>1</sup> The mudflat between the port and the town had always worried the authorities.

Excavations have revealed the existence of the port of Nagara, dating from the first millennium BC, about 3 kilometres to the north of Cambay. It seems that the rise of Cambay was caused by the shifting of the township from Nagara. Archaeologists have not found any material at Cambay before the sixth century AD, which is generally accepted as the beginning of the history of the town of Cambay. The earliest monuments were found in the south-eastern part of the town, specifically the core and periphery of old Cambay. It appears to have been a small rectangular habitation with its major axis on north-south, expanding gradually towards the north-western side. The name Khambayat, according to Prof. Mehta,<sup>2</sup> suggests a place on the pillar-like cliff but other opinions exist. Prosperity of the town began after the Nagara Brahmins shifted to Cambay before AD 1000, by which time the Parsis had landed at Sanjam, 70 miles south-west of Surat and had come to Cambay, although many of them were driven out. While old Cambay began on the south-eastern corner of the present city, the markets were located on the central road to the west and north. Naturally it began to expand towards the north-west.

By the tenth century AD<sup>3</sup> the Arabs had found Cambay a flourishing town under the control of the Chalukyas. Al Masudi, who visited Cambay in AD 913-14 was impressed with the Indian fleet and found



Cambay located in a bay deeper than the Nile and Euphrates. At low tide however, there was no water except in the middle of the channel. Yet he found the shores of the Gulf of Cambay covered with towns and villages and praised the emeralds of Cambay which had a good market at Mecca.

Then came the conquests of Mulraj Solanki (AD 961-97) who, after conquering south Gujarat, was said to have founded the new port of Cambay in AD 997. He was said to have brought the Brahmins and erected a temple near the port. This location was later selected as the site of the English factory.<sup>4</sup> In the eleventh century, when Al Beruni visited Cambay, it had become the chief port of the Solanki kingdom, linking Multan by overland route and Kutch by sea. Al Beruni mentioned Cambay's trading links with Persia, Arabia and Sofala as well as with the ports of Malabar and Coromandel. He even mentioned the junks which traded with China and the Far East. By the middle of the twelfth century, Cambay under the reign of the brilliant King Siddharaj Solanki (1094-1143) had inherited the trade of Broach and Somnath Patan. This was facilitated by the decline of the Chalukyas of Kalyan and the destruction of the Somnath-Anilwad route by the repeated attacks of Muhammed of Ghazni and the Mongols.<sup>5</sup>

By the time Edrisi had come to Cambay in the first half of the twelfth century, Siddharaj Solanki had been controlling the trade routes leading to the Gujarat plain. Edrisi had seen ships entering the Gulf of Cambay and there were plenty of Arabs and Persian Muslim merchants at Cambay with their own mosques. Cambay used to get indigo from Sarkhej and cane from the surrounding areas for export. By that time Cambay had a fine fort.<sup>6</sup> Around AD 1300, wrote that nearly ten thousand horses were imported to Cambay and to the ports of Malabar from Persia. But by then the Muslim armies had cut off the routes between Cambay and the hinterland.

Trading links with Malwa, Rajasthan and Punjab were also severed. In AD 1291, Alauddin Khalji invaded Anilwad Patan and in 1304 he plundered Cambay. Marco Polo, who visited Cambay before AD 1290, preceding the Muslim conquest, found Cambay the chief manufacturing centre of leather used for sandals, and sleeping mats embroidered with gold and silver. The chief import were gold, silver, copper, oxide of zinc and horses. The merchants of Cambay were mostly Muslims and Parsis while the seamen were Kolis and Rajputs.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the plunder, Cambay continued to prosper. Ibn Battuta,<sup>8</sup> visiting Cambay before 1346, found the city one of 'the finest there in

regard to the excellence of its construction and the architecture of the mosques...'. He asserted that the merchants were mostly foreigners who built 'fine mansions and magnificent mosques'. It is interesting that Battuta found the channel navigable for ships. He actually saw some ships 'lying on the mud at ebb-tide and floating in the water at high time...'. The problem of navigability was therefore closely connected with the tide from the early times at Cambay. Even then the ships with deeper draught had to discharge their cargo at Gogha which were then taken to Cambay by smaller boats.

By AD 1325, Cambay had become part of the Tughluq empire. But rebellions occurred in Gujarat after 1346, as a result of which Cambay was sacked by the Tughluqs in AD 1347 and 1349. After the death of Firuz Shah Tughluq, Gujarat rose in revolt once again and Ahmed Shah, grandson of Muzaffar, a Tak Rajput and enobled in 1351, established the independent kingdom of Gujarat in 1411. He laid great stress on rebuilding the naval forces. He was credited with cleaning the silting of the channel for navigation at a high cost. Probably because of fear of the pirates and of Mongol incursions, Ahmed Shah established his new capital at Ahmedabad, far inland. During the next hundred years, under the two successors of Ahmed Shah and Muhammed Begada (1459-1511), Ahmedabad and Cambay rose to the height of prosperity.<sup>9</sup> The very brief account of Hieronimo di San Stephano, visiting Cambay in 1487, mentioned the Moor merchants of Alexandria and Damascus living there.<sup>10</sup>

The finest hours of Cambay's prosperity have been recorded by Ludvico di Varethma, visiting India after 1503. He found the city 3 miles inland from the sea and 'one cannot go to the city either with large or middle sized ships except at high waters'. However he does not mention silting at all. He found production of immense quantities of cotton and cornelian stones. 'About three hundred ships of different countries come and go here. This city supplies all Persia, Tartary, Turkey, Syria, Barbary, i.e. Arabia Felix, Africa, Ethiopia, India and a multitude of inhabited islands, with silk and cotton stuff...'. He also found the city 'walled after our fashion.'<sup>11</sup> The character of this port town is well established and the physical characteristics of the city are clearly indicated by the wall which was there before Akbar.

Cambay's most serious rival at this time was Calicut which had regular connections with Persia, Cambay, the Coromandel coast, Ceylon, the Maldives and the Red Sea. The competition was in pepper, fine spices and textiles, although Cambay nearly monopolized the Red

Sea market, perhaps due to the fact that the hinterland of Cambay was far superior for the production of textiles which had a greater market value than spices in the Indian Ocean. By the end of the fifteenth century, a centre was emerging at Gujarat.<sup>12</sup>

Since the arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498 and the conquests of Almeida and Albuquerque, the Portuguese had partially taken over the control of the Indian Ocean. Recent research has disproved any rigorous Portuguese control in the sixteenth century. With the acquisition of Goa in 1510 and with control of Malacca, Jedda, Socotra, and Hormuz, the Portuguese tried to control the trade of the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, East Africa, Malabar and the Far East. The detailed account of Tome Pires had shown how much the Gujaratis had entrenched themselves in the Indian Ocean. It is no wonder therefore that after the death of Muhammed Begada, the Gujarat Kingdom began to decline once again.

The Portuguese interference in the Indian Ocean had severed the link between Aden and Calicut while in the western coast, Goa rose to be part of the international market in the sixteenth century from a port of regional importance, linking it with the world economy. Goa did not monopolize the export of Asian commodities to Europe and the Far East but it turned out to be the most important port for the trade of Europe, at the same time becoming an important centre for coastal shipping in this restructuring of Indian Ocean networks.<sup>13</sup>

Compared to the interference at Calicut, whose principal commodity was pepper, there was, in effect, very little interference of Gujarati trade by the Portuguese. Gujarat's staple commodity was cotton and other textiles as well as precious stones, particularly agate. The Portuguese did not need much cotton or agate as there was no great European demand for these at this time. They were satisfied therefore by merely taxing it, which led the Gujaratis to become influential merchant communities at Goa. They developed a triangular trade buying Sumatran pepper with Gujarati cotton from Aceh and selling these in the Red Sea, thus bringing back bullion to Gujarat. Therefore the arms of Cambay were not completely cut off, as alternative routes linked Gujarat to the Far East and west Asia. Despite the Portuguese pressure, Gujarat retained its central position till the end of the seventeenth century. The annual turnover of Goa of Rs. 7 million at the end of the seventeenth century could be seen against the turnover of Gujarat of Rs. 50 million. But Cambay had by then been replaced by Surat, whose rise coincided with the conquest of Gujarat by the

Mughals. Despite Gujarat's maintenance of a dominant position in trade, the situation of Cambay declined in the sixteenth century. The contrast of the accounts of Duarte Barbosa, who visited Cambay before 1517, with other later accounts, reveals this decline.

Barbosa called it 'a great and fair city', where there were 'many fine houses, very lofty, with windows and roofed with tiles in our manner, well laid out with streets and fine palaces and great buildings of stone and mortar'. Here Barbosa found 'substantial merchants and men of great fortune, both Moors and Heathen. There are also many craftsmen of mechanic's trades in cunning work of many kinds, as in Flanders...' He found manufacture of cotton fabrics, silk and velvets, variations of satin and taffetas, gilded leather, silken mattresses, great quantities of ivory works such as bracelets, sword-hilts, dice, chessmen and chessboards, ivory bedheads, beads of various kinds and colour, cornelians etc. He also found many skilful goldsmiths and workers who 'make here very beautiful quilts...beds finely/worked with painted and quilted articles of dress ... in this city the best workmen in every kind of work, are found.'<sup>14</sup> Obviously it was not just a port but an important manufacturing town with its connection with the hinterland.

Within fifty years this situation changed drastically. Goa and Diu were established and Cambay became a supplier to these ports as indicated by the traveller Caesar Frederici in 1563. During his visit there was such scarcity of food that Frederici had seen the sale of daughters and sons to the Portuguese for a few pieces of Larines. Yet the trade continued as he saw innumerable small barques coming laden with all sorts of spices. Chinese silks, sandals, ivory, velvets and taking out cloth of various kinds, indigo, sugar, opium, drugs, precious stones and fruits.<sup>15</sup>

Vincent Le Blanc,<sup>16</sup> arriving at Cambay before the Mughal conquest, described the city as 'grand and flourishing', where 'ships come up and down with pleasure and sometimes there are so many that it is wonderful to see...'. This city of Cambay, he says, 'is one of the richest in the orient, well built in the fashion of Italy and which has good fortresses in roads ...'. The Portuguese wanted to control it 'more so as it is abundantly furnished with all there is necessary for life...'. This link with the Portuguese and the abundance of food make the account of Le Blanc different from that of Frederick. Le Blanc found Cambay 'rich in silk, cotton, white and black rice, vegetables and all sorts of precious stones' where the Muslim king granted liberty of religion. The

Portuguese influence can be seen in the use of furniture while their houses were magnificently built like those of Diu and Hormuz. It is interesting that direct export and import still continued as the goods were taken to Arabia and Persia, although there is no mention of the Far East. From Mecca, velvets, drugs and scarlet drapes were imported. Yet the Islamic character of the city remained. Le Blanc found Cambay as big as Rouen, excluding the suburbs, resembling Grand Cairo in form. Here, women and children were bought and sold. Women wore ivory bracelets which they broke once their parents died. Le Blanc ends his account with a reference that the necessities of Goa were brought from Cambay. Thus the dual character of Cambay were established. On the one hand there was export and import independent of the Portuguese while, on the other, the linkages and influence of the Portuguese exerted a tremendous pressure giving it a cosmopolitan character. The Portuguese preferred it to remain as an independent port, under Portuguese influence, linked with the outside world as well as with the other centres of India for the supplies to Goa and Diu.

The traffic continued even after the conquest of Gujarat by Akbar. Ralph Fitch,<sup>17</sup> visiting Cambay between 1583 to 1591, found it a great and populous city. Yet he referred to the famine and the sale of children, speaking at the same breath of the demand for ivory rings by the women of Cambay. He had observed the arrival of many ships from all parts of India, Hormuz and Mecca. He did not mention the silting of the river.

In 1573 Akbar conquered Gujarat, which was followed by a series of revolts including one at Cambay. In 1583-84, Muzzaffar II, the last Sultan of Gujarat, made an abortive attempt to recover Gujarat but he was defeated by Akbar.

Despite the decline and political instability, Cambay remained the most important Mughal port in Gujarat, overshadowing Surat and Randere. Akbar ordered the repair of the walls and lowered the transit and custom duties on the occasion of his first visit to the sea. He also encouraged manufacturers by allowing the artisans to settle in the suburbs.<sup>18</sup> The city had expanded up to Mandavi and was included within the walls, giving it a rectangular form.<sup>19</sup> By that time hospitals for birds and beasts had been set up within the city by Hindus giving it a Gujarati character.<sup>20</sup>

According to *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, in 1571-72, 6.9 per cent of the revenue of Gujarat came from its ports, including twenty-three revenue mahals, while the annual income was Rs. 34 lakh. Ports of Surat,

Broach, Gogo, Gandhar and Randere annually yielded Rs. 20 lakh while Cambay's revenue was Rs. 4 lakh annually.<sup>21</sup> One should mention that these figures differ from the figures given by Abul Fazl in *Ain-i Akbari*.<sup>22</sup>

At one place, *Ain-i Akbari* includes the ports of Gogo and Cambay as belonging to Cambay sarkar, while a few pages later, Cambay is put under Ahmedabad sarkar in which Gogo is not included.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, the revenue of Cambay has been shown as over Rs. 5 lakh. Comparatively speaking, Neriad had a revenue of nearly Rs. 2 lakh while Surat has a revenue of a little more than a lakh.<sup>24</sup> These revenue figures include lands surrounding the ports as well as various other taxes and cesses. Obviously, Cambay, although declining was still the major port with the satellite towns like Neriad in close link with Cambay. Surat had not grown up yet but a beginning could be traced.

The practice of appointing jagirdars from Delhi around Cambay started with Akbar. After appointing Hussain Khan Bakshy as Governor of Cambay, Akbar assigned the sum of 1 lakh rupees from the revenue of Cambay as annual gift to Prince Salim in 1602. This was neither unique nor exceptional as the revenue of the province of Gujarat was assigned as jagir to Mirza Aziz Koka and his family in the same year.

While Cambay was slowly declining, close connection between Portuguese and Cambay authorities under the encouraging policy of Akbar, could be seen at Cambay. Father Pimenta's annual letter from Goa at the end of the sixteenth century joyfully mentioned Akbar's permission to preach Christianity at Cambay and the Fathers were helped by a Portuguese trader of Cambay as well as by other Bania merchants.<sup>25</sup> Even a year later, Father Xavier was well received by the Governor of Cambay—a policy that continued up to the end of 1601.<sup>26</sup>

The link between Cambay and Goa could be seen in the journal of Jourdain, who arrived at Cambay on 11 September 1611. Describing the city of Cambay as 'the best city in all India for beauty and trade', Jourdain found Cambay as the 'staple town where the Portuguese every year do come with many frigates out of all places principally from Goa, to fetch the commodities which are bought by Portugal factors...in Cambay, Ahmedabad, Broach and other places; all of which goes to Goa in frigates...you will see two hundred frigates in a fleet going or coming from Cambay to help lade the Carricks at Goa ... carry from Cambay all sorts of fine clothes of cotton, much indigo, all kinds of drugs, which are brought in Cambay... things sold at Cambay come from all over India at the time of arrival of the caffilas...'.<sup>27</sup>

The structure of the trade of Cambay had therefore undergone a change. Instead of the principal port of export to the Far East and west Asia, it had now become a supplier to Goa—a satellite role of the Portuguese world-market even though the trade of the Cambay merchants to west Asia must have continued to linger. This may be one of the reasons for Akbar's as well as Bania's welcome to the Christian missionaries and may give us some idea why the Mughals tried to develop Surat rather than Cambay as their port of export. Jourdain does not dwell on the silting of the river although he was wet by the time he landed due to the strong tide. Cambay's close link with the hinterland as well as with the rest of India could be seen in the fact that the production of indigo was in full swing from Ahmedabad to Cambay. This change in the character of Cambay's trade and mercantile activities were attested by another visiting traveller. William Finch, visiting Cambay in 1617, had also mentioned two hundred frigates of the Portuguese at Cambay. Till then the Mughals considered Cambay as the biggest port in India.<sup>28</sup> Emperor Jahangir, visiting Cambay in 1617, found it one of the largest ports in Hindustan. The ships could not come up to Cambay but unloaded at Gogha, 'which is a dependency of Cambay, and bring the cargoes to Cambay by ghurabs, which is done also in case of landing'. Jahangir reduced the customs duty to 2.5 per cent, which he claimed to be the lowest and mentioned the arrival of small boats from some European ports.<sup>29</sup>

The gradual decline of Portuguese power in India had been attested by Manuel Godinho, a Portuguese priest writing in 1663. One may speculate on the coincidence of the decline of Portuguese power, the decline of Cambay and the rise of Surat, occurring almost at the same period, i.e. within approximately twenty-five years after the conquest of Gujarat by the Mughals. Obviously, the decline of Cambay was not due to the silting of the river, the condition of which remained more or less the same for nearly five hundred years. It is also interesting to note that, in the eastern coast of Bengal, the old port of Saptagram declined at the same time as the conquest of the Mughals while a new port not far from Saptagram, Hughli, was rising. Thus within a span of almost one hundred years, we see two periods of the decline of Cambay. One occurred after the rise of Portuguese power in the East and the second after the fall of the Portuguese. In the eighteenth century, we would see such periods of rise and fall in Cambay's fortunes, although there was an almost imperceptible and steady decline far more noticeable in the second half of the eighteenth



century against the background of political instability. the decline of west Asian markets and the increasing English and Maratha aggression in Gujarat.

By that time, Cambay seems to have developed all the physical characteristics of a city. Jourdain had no hesitation in saying that the walls were very strong and 'at every gate there are two or three gates one within the other',<sup>30</sup> a feature that we see at Gaur in the early sixteenth century.<sup>31</sup> As a result of layers of such gates, one could not 'see from inside the outdoor', until the porter opened another gate, 'where you must go in at a little door...so that from their houses they may kill a multitude of people if they are provided for it...'. It appears that the walls surrounded the entire city and not merely the administrative section of the city.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting that in a non-administrative city, in the sense that it was neither a capital nor a provincial headquarters, such security was provided for. The arrival of the English and their struggle with the Portuguese as given by Hawkins in 1611<sup>33</sup> and Roe<sup>34</sup> may suggest the need for such security.

The city had expanded considerably within the limit of the walls as well as outside it. Both Briggs and Mehta accepted the existence of ten gates despite the clear reference to twelve gates by the contemporary traveller Mandelslo,<sup>35</sup> while the Phoorza gate became the most important in the eighteenth century. It was the entry point from the sea where customs were collected. The Makai gate was probably the exit gate. Mehta has assigned the gate of the Gavara for the entry of the caravans. The various place names inside and outside the town indicate that most of the population<sup>36</sup> lived within the town, although there were suburbs of fishermen and sailors. The existence of the streets of saudagars and saturkhana point to the markets and the merchants with camels. The pitch and the mandai can be taken as markets and toll stations of the entry of goods in the town. This would therefore be the limits of the town. Mehta has found the existence of different markets to the south of mandai from where the slopes of Chitari began. He has also found place names of Ghimandi (ghee market), Kapas mandi, Khuski mandi, etc. suggesting different markets for different commodities. This agrees conveniently with the late eighteenth century English documentation which had categorized such markets and the revenues collected from these places. Therefore, there seems to be some sort of planning in the growth, although, from outside, it appears to be haphazard and accidental. Also, the Friday market held near the Trana Darwaja, built by Akbar can be identified.



The segregation is seen not only in the markets but also in the habitable quarter within the city by their place names. The area of the Brahmins, Rajputs and Sayyids were distinguished as were generally done in medieval urban areas of India.

The place of the nawab and the offices were within the inner citadel called the durbar. To the east was the area of the water-carriers, palanquin-bearers, i.e. the area of the service people of the lower orders. The durbar area was on the shore and as indicated by the travellers, the palace wall mixed with the foot wall. The major axis of the town ran on the north-south from makai Darwaja to Lal Bagh intersecting the minor axis that ran from east to west at Chitari. The suburban areas were spread on the east and the north of the town extending almost up to 5 kilometres. After the seventeenth century, as we shall see, the northern suburbs collapsed. Markets evidently were located on both the main and minor thoroughfares.

The close linkage between the suburbs and the city, despite the wall, enlarged the city. Pietro della Vella, another traveller visiting Cambay in 1624, found the city 'indifferently large' although he mentioned the suburbs outside the city. He clearly stated that the 'city hath no formed port ... but 'tis called a port, by reason of the great concourse of vessels thither from several ports...' These were small ships, frigates, etc.,... because great ones can not come near the land by a great way...' Elsewhere he said that he saw ten or fifteen frigates sailing from Cambay to Goa.<sup>37</sup>

Della Vella found the houses built of bricks and tiles with cisterns for storing rainwater. He saw some mausoleums outside the city as well as some mosques where both the Hindus and the Muslims went although there were more Hindus than Muslims in Cambay. He met some people who spoke with him in Portuguese or in Persian while he found an old Brahmin with spectacles who explained Pythagorus to him.<sup>38</sup> Obviously, besides the Portuguese influence, the world outside had not passed Cambay by. Strangely enough he did not mention the silting of the river nor did he mention the starting of the English factory in 1617 and the Dutch factory in 1618.

The description of J.A. de Mandelslo,<sup>39</sup> visiting Cambay in 1638, is far more clear though not too accurate. He found 7 fathoms of water at high tide while ships lay dry in the sand and mud at low water reminding us of the description of Ibn Battuta. The city wall was of free-stone and the city had very broad and straight streets interposed by gates shut up during the night. 'It is much greater than Surat, as

being 10 leagues about. It hath three bazars...and four noble tanks' from where the inhabitants, mostly pagans, Brahmins and Rajputs draw water. The account clearly mentions not only the supplies to Diu and Goa but, as mentioned earlier, to Acheh in the south-east and Mecca and Persia in west Asia. They took away silk and cotton to 'bring back ready money, both gold and silver.' The interesting part of his account was his reference to a big merchant, Mirza Beg, supervising the construction of his ship at the waterside. He also described the durbar which was situated 'in the most delightful quarter of the city, having two gates to enter in at, one whereof led into a spacious Court, the other into a fair garden, about the walls, whereof there was one continued structure...'. Mandelslo did not mention that the English factory was situated close to the durbar, which was aligned with the city wall. As we should see later this was to create problems for the nawab as well as the English.

Mandelslo also described the houses of the rich Muslims, which consisted of several apartments, halls, chambers and closets. Like the houses in Surat, the roofs were flat where people could take 'fresh air' and sleep at night. There were gardens and tanks in those houses. But the buildings were poorly built with earthen walls, plastered with freestones, lime, gum and sugar. 'which makes it dazzlingly white and is as smooth as glass...'. The furniture was poor although they used gold and silver plates and dishes. Compared to these the dwellings of the trader (perhaps meaning artisan) with a daily income of 5 to 6 pence were miserable. They had low houses with earthen walls, covered with green turf and cow dung. Significantly Mandelslo did not mention the prohibition of slaughter of cows, calves and oxen for which the Hindus paid a lump sum to the administration. Nor did he mention the number of different hospitals for birds and beasts in Cambay.

The first crisis of the restructuring of Cambay's trade was thus over with the emergence of Cambay in a dual role—that of a supplier to the Portuguese demands as well as of independent port of export, mostly to west Asia. But this was soon offset by two factors since the beginning of the seventeenth century. One was the decline of the Portuguese power in the Indian Ocean with the emergence of the Dutch and the English, the other was the consolidation of the Mughal empire whose hold over Gujarat was unshaken despite a revolt during the accession of Jahangir. The Mughals naturally favoured a port independent of Portuguese control and influence and Surat gradually

emerged as the premier port of Gujarat in the Mughal empire. It was from the middle of the seventeenth century, when Surat blossomed forth, that we hear of the silting of the river of Cambay.

The Portuguese did not, of course, let matters proceed without a fight. Their attempts to burn Randere, in which they succeeded and Surat, in which they failed, had been attested by a visiting Frenchman, *Sieur de la Boullaye Le Gouz*, who visited Cambay in the late forties of the seventeenth century.<sup>40</sup> He also referred to the existence of the Portuguese consul at Cambay, which he considered as the second city of Gujarat after Ahmedabad. However, 'The port now is nothing due to the sand which slowly chokes the entry'. Yet he found the city famous for its agate industry and other precious stones.

But the old world of Cambay still persisted. *Gautier Schouten*, who visited Cambay between 1658 and 1665, found that the ships could come inside the channel only at high tide. The city was quite large with twelve gates, large and straight streets, good buildings with tanks and reservoirs. The Banians dominated and the trade with Acheh, Diu, Goa, the Red Sea coast, Persia, Coromandel, Bengal and other countries continued. The manufacturers of Cambay continued producing silk and cotton stuff, carpets, rock crystals and other stones. Food was easily available and one could get oil, butter and cheese in abundance.<sup>41</sup>

Although *Le Gouz* referred to silting, *Schouten*, as seen here, did not mention it. But *Tavernier*, coming in the second half of the seventeenth century,<sup>42</sup> mentioned both elements—silting of the river and the decline of Portuguese power. After mentioning the manufacture of agate and indigo, he referred to the depopulation and decay of Cambay with the loss of Portuguese power. 'In the quarter close to the sea, many fine houses, which they build and richly furnish after the manner of Portugal may still be seen, but at present they are uninhabited and decay from day to day. The gates are still shut at night but some of the principal gates, especially those in the avenue of the market-places' are closed. Then *Tavernier* dwells on the basic formulation which has influenced later generations ever since. 'One of the principal reasons why this town has lost a part of her commerce is, that formerly the sea came close to Cambay and the small vessels were able to approach it easily; but for some years past the sea has been receding day by day, so that the vessels are now unable to come nearer than 4 or 5 leagues to the town.'

As seen already, this situation had prevailed for quite some time, and *Tavernier* really did not mention silting. Another contemporary

traveller, Schouten, also did not mention it. What is interesting in Tavernier's account, is the linking of the decay of Cambay with the decline of Portuguese power in India and the actual desertion of the rich people. Thus the decay of Cambay had begun long before the Maratha attacks.

That Surat was beginning to prosper as Cambay declined could be seen in the remarks of Thevenot,<sup>43</sup> a far better observer than Tavernier. He found Cambay as big as Surat but not so populous. The wall was still there and the gates were shut at night time. There were lofty houses made of brick while the shops were full of aromatic perfumes, spices, silk, and ivory works made in the town. The suburbs had grown bigger than the town and indigo was grown there. 'The sea is half a league from it, though heretofore it came up to town and that had lessened the trade of this place, because great ships can come no nearer than 3 or 4 leagues ....' Once again there is no mention of silting. But he does not mention the Portuguese either.

J.F.G. Carreri,<sup>44</sup> arriving in India after 1695, linked the prosperity of Cambay with Portuguese power and therefore ascribed the decline of the Portuguese as the *raison d'être* of the decline of Cambay. Like Tavernier, Carreri also held the retreating sea of Cambay partly responsible for its decline. 'The vessels anchor 12 miles from it and cannot come up to the city but with the flood', which was so violent that the ships ran a risk. Incidentally, he mentioned Suali which is nearly 10 miles from the city of Surat, where the big ships could go. Carreri seems to imply that Surat had the same problem as Cambay yet Surat was prospering.

Cambay therefore had its second crisis since the emergence of Surat in the seventeenth century while Portuguese power was being supplemented first by the Dutch and then by the English. But Cambay was receiving a share of the European bullion being brought to Surat, which perhaps stopped further decay or slowed its speed. From the middle of the seventeenth century, it was clear that Cambay was becoming mainly the supplying port of Surat with her export goods of textiles and indigo. Goa had been replaced by Surat. The Cambay merchants still continued to have direct trade with west Asia, which was diminishing gradually. The dual role of Cambay also continued while the principal exporter had changed.

This has been clearly brought out by Alexander Hamilton,<sup>45</sup> who was in the east from 1688 to 1723. Hamilton found Cambay a large city with high walls. 'It is still a good place to trade tho' not half inhabited,

and it contributes very much to the wealth and grandeur of Surat, to which it is subordinated....' By that time Ahmedabad had become a big city and 'its exports by sea comes to Cambay and carried by the Surat shipping all over India, except what European ships carry to Europe'. Cambay continued to manufacture cotton, silk, cornelian and agate stones and other commodities, including quilts, which were carried to Europe. Meanwhile the pirates, Rajputs and the Kolis, had begun to create disturbances and 'plunder even up to the gates of the city and sometimes have surprised and plundered the city itself'. The fortune of Cambay therefore was linked with the fortune of Surat, which now needed supplies on a larger scale due to greater demand, particularly of cotton and silk, resulting in the development of production and manufacture, in which Cambay took part as the funneling port to Surat. In a way, this boom and the linkage to Surat had helped Cambay to halt the decay, by which time, the richer section of the population had migrated to Surat, from where they operated through agents posted at Cambay for purchases from the interior of Gujarat. By the early eighteenth century, Cambay's main purchaser was the English, who still retained their factory at Cambay rather than the Dutch who had withdrawn their factory from there.<sup>46</sup> There were, of course, the Surat and Cambay merchants who continued their west Asian run. As we would see, the Cambay-west Asian trade was never stopped despite many vicissitudes.

But Cambay was more than a supplier. By the middle of the seventeenth century, northern areas like Kutch and the surrounding areas of Cambay like Neriad, Dholka, Jambusar, etc. had become primary cotton belts due to the increasing demand of the Europeans functioning through Surat. Cambay became the link between Ahmedabad and Surat. Perhaps the Maratha-Mughal contest had ruined Maratha cotton belts which increased the demand of the northern and Gujarati cotton. To the English, whose factory continued since the early seventeenth century, both Surat and Cambay were integral parts of the commercial infrastructure whose core was being formed at Bombay since the second half of the seventeenth century.

Since weaving and artisan works were made at Cambay, it became the biggest manufacturing centre in Gujarat rivalling that of Ahmedabad, which specialized more in producing silk. The artisans were settled in the suburbs of Cambay and their desertion from Cambay can be noticed only from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. The decline of the physical characteristics of the city first came to our notice

at about the same time.

### *Administration under the Mughals*

After the Mughal conquest of Gujarat, Cambay with the ports of Gogo and Gandhar, formed part of Surat port which was held by a mutsuddy. The English traveller Hawkins,<sup>47</sup> visiting Cambay in 1611, found Mukarrab Khan as 'viceroy of Cambay', who was also the chief of customs at Surat. Hawkins wanted to establish a factory at Cambay and his goods were inspected by the Chief Customer of Cambay, deputy to Mukarrab Khan. The latter therefore was the mutsuddy at Cambay and the naib at Surat, i.e. deputy to the Mutsuddy of Surat. Mukarrab did not like Hawkins' plan and joined the Jesuits and the Portuguese to thwart it. The two ports were under two separate mutsuddies as can be seen from the entries of the Journal of Sir Thomas Roe for the years 1615 and 1616.<sup>48</sup> He wrote that the Governor of Cambay desired the English to trade at Cambay as a 'head city', insinuating at the same time that the Governor was a clown. Again, in 1616, the Governor of Cambay arranged for the kotwal to guard the English houses during the conflict between the English and the Portuguese at Cambay. The Governor of Cambay, Amanat Khan, brother-in-law of Asaf Khan, was referred to by Jahangir.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile the Governor of Surat tried to make peace with the English and wanted to send goods to land at Surat instead of Cambay. One cannot therefore accept the statement of Saran that there was one mutsuddy for the two ports.<sup>50</sup>

According to *Mirat-i Ahmadi*,<sup>51</sup> Cambay was part of the Chorasi pargana which included the port of Gogo. The mutsuddy, who was also the faujdar was appointed under a royal sanad by the dewan. The Chorasi pargana actually contained 87 villages and the mutsuddy maintain an additional hundred horse as part of the faujdari. Often the mutsuddy was the darogha of the mint. From the time of Bahadur Shah, he was appointed by the nazim at Ahmedabad and he would appoint a naib called shahbandar for the supervision of the custom-house. The emperor separately appointed the qazi, the mutsuddy, the accountant and the treasurer as well as a treasury officer. A subordinate officer, Mir Bahr, took the duties on articles brought by land and sea and looked after the markets of cotton, oil and salt. Rates were fixed under the seal of the mutsuddy, the accountant and the treasurer and signed by the controller. The Naib of Cambay also collected the duties of Goga port.

The Mughal system of town administration continued at Cambay or Broach up to the end of the eighteenth century. Malet, the English resident at Cambay, in a letter at the end of the 1770s had described the working of the system at Cambay.<sup>52</sup>

There were four big officers at Cambay, excluding the nawab (mutsuddy) and the naib. These were, the qazi, adalat darogha, kotwal and the muhtasib. The qazi was the judicial officer and adjudicated all civil or criminal matters, including the sale of houses in the city, which required his ratification. The recent findings of a series of Cambay documents<sup>53</sup> show that the function of the qazi had remained unaltered in Cambay during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Besides, all the rites of the Muslim religion required his sanction and his advice was sought 'in all matters of the intricacy of the interior officer'. In big cities he was assisted by a mufty and in smaller towns, by a naib. A regular stipend was allowed to him by the Government, besides which, he also received fees on all marriages, divorces etc. The qazi generally followed the law of retaliation.

The adalat darogha was the president of the court of equity and was originally intended to impart better justice to the Hindus. It is to this officer therefore the Hindus brought their cases in all matters pertaining to property, domestic affairs, debts, etc. He received a chouth or 25 per cent besides the fines imposed on the delinquents. The object of this court was speedy redress. 'All matters of controversy among the Hindus, both civil and criminal, are cognizable by the officer' although 'matters of petty larceny and trifling breaches of peace generally fall under the Cotoual...'.<sup>54</sup>

The kotwal was entrusted with prevention of crime and punishment of criminals. The qazi's court and the adalat darogha sent to the kotwal all such cases and 'capital punishment are executed under his direction...'. The kotwal also preserved the town from disorder at night and kept a suitable number of sepoy for that purpose. 'The prisoners are confined to his custody'. In large towns an amin did some of the work assigned to the kotwal.

'The muhtasib is entirely a civil officer' and 'he inspects goods, behaviour of the shopkeepers and the justness of their rights. The hallalcores are under his order for the purpose of preserving the town from filth and nastiness in default of which he is censurable. The erection of new edifice is liable to his control and he is answerable for all ununiform or improper buildings...any and every workman is punishable for raising away without the sanction of his permission.'



The government paid him but he also received 'fees from the revenue raised on assessing each house for the preservation of cleanliness or chopping weights and granting permits to build...during the vigour of the Mughal Government, the morality of a town came under the cognizance of this officer, drunkenness, gambling, improper discourse and forbidden habits etc...'

'Religious disputes of the Hindus and difference in the amounts of merchants are generally submitted under the eye of the adalat darogha, who is expected to hasten judgements and to prevent the dilatory spirit which generally attends the enquiries of these people....'

Obviously, at the end of the eighteenth century, the basic structure of the Mughal system of administration was still there at Cambay despite the fact that the Marathas had by then become masters of Gujarat and were holding a share in the administration of Cambay. Some of the cases narrated in this brief history would reveal not only the principles of administration but also the practical working of the system. There are two other points to note. One, the nawab imposed capital punishment (There is no such case in the English documents) and the second the functions of the muhtasib had been toned down from the days of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Whether this modification of the muhtasib's powers was due to the decline of the Mughal empire or due to the rise of Maratha power is difficult to decide. One cannot make out how far the system enumerated by the English Resident Malet in the 1770s at Cambay was valid during earlier times. Unfortunately we do not have documents which record this process.

While the revenue of Surat had increased to an incredible level of Rs. 15 lakh by the seventh decade of the seventeenth century, the revenue of Cambay continued to fall from the Rs. 5 lakh recorded at the end of the sixteenth century. In 1719 Cambay's revenue was Rs. 80 thousand only, which, together with Rs. 40 thousand from Gogo, made a modest total of Rs. 1 lakh 20 thousand only.<sup>54</sup> But the revenue of Surat was also falling. In 1721, it stood at Rs. 7 lakh. A similar fall can be observed in the case of Broach. In 1714 it was more than Rs. 45 thousand. In 1716 it decreased to Rs. 30 thousand. But by 1726, it had gone up to Rs. 50 thousand.<sup>55</sup>

It is clear that the revenues of all the ports of Gujarat had begun to fall from the late seventeenth century, which continued up to the second decade of the eighteenth century. It began to rise after that for some time, then fell again. The decline had started at least three



decades before the regular invasion of the Marathas which started from 1724-25 onwards. Perhaps one of the causes of decline was the fact that the European companies had begun to shift their investments to the eastern seaboard after the 1680s.<sup>56</sup>

The decline of the revenue of Cambay was not a linear one. Like the revenue of Broach, it continued to fluctuate and as we shall see later, it continued to rise to nearly Rs. 4 lakh in the 1780s. One possible reason could be that the revenue of the Mughal port included various taxes and cesses from the surrounding land as a part of the revenue of the port. In the sixteenth century Abul Fazl had estimated the port of Surat to have 50,733 bighas of land while Cambay had 3,36,813 bighas,<sup>57</sup> which explains the difference in revenue between the two ports. Apart from the usual revenue of these lands, each port had different budget-heads of mahals. One may cite Phoorza (custom by sea), Khooski (custom by land) and other mahals, including anchorage, supervision, shipbuilding, ship repairing etc. The revenue of the port was therefore as much dependent on the trade and the movement of ships as on the production of the surrounding lands. The fluctuation of the revenue therefore depended on a host of factors, routes, political security of the countryside and of course the monsoon.

The earliest English reference to the revenue of Cambay in the eighteenth century was in 1755 which put the revenue as Rs. 2 lakh, 85 thousand—rise of more than three times since 1719. Yet the actual income of the Nawab of Cambay had diminished since the Marathas had begun to take half of the share of Cambay's revenue from 1745. The decline from the days of Abul Fazl is unmistakable. The revenue rose soon after to fall again in the early 1760s, when the Marathas took Rs. 54 thousand as half of the share of the revenue of Cambay. In the 1780s it rose again to Rs. 4 lakh to fall again in the 1790s, never to rise again.

As has been asserted earlier, it was not the Maratha violence that always led to the decline in revenue. We would see that the Maratha violence, even if it did not cease was reduced, for a considerable time after 1745, then the Marathas became the co-sharer of the revenue. We would also see that the surrounding lands became far more integrated with that of Cambay. In the report of 1803-4, given by Robert Holford,<sup>58</sup> Resident at Cambay, it would be seen that the revenue from the Ghimandi was higher than either Phoorza or Khuski. This shows that increase or decrease of a Mughal port does not always depend on the fluctuations of shipping. While the decrease

of the revenue of the hinterland would adversely affect the revenue of Cambay, the increase of the hinterland would not mean a corresponding increase in the port revenue.

As we shall see, the increased revenue of the hinterland of Cambay was siphoned off by the Marathas although it gave a boost to the activities of the Cambay port.

The hinterland with which Cambay had close contact and depended on for the supply of cotton, the staple commodity to be transformed into different sorts of products at Cambay for shipping to Surat and west Asia, were Dholka, Jambusar, Petlad and Neriad (different from the one on the sea). In the days of Abul Fazl, Neriad was a flourishing mahal with 2,02,062 bighas of land having a revenue of more than Rs. 1 lakh 50 thousand per year. Dholka, a flourishing town, had a revenue of more than Rs. 3 lakh with surrounding land of 8,34,066 bighas—nearly three times that of Neriad. Petlad had just over a lakh of rupees as revenue.<sup>59</sup> This revenue calculated on paper, included jagir and khalsa lands, which were often held by high ranking mansabdars serving outside Gujarat.

In matters of custom collection, the mahsul was fixed by the central government in the heyday of the Mughals. Ijara was prevalent in both khalsa and jagir and often the absentee jagirdars appointed the ijaradars.<sup>60</sup> Cambay's revenue was held at one time by Nur Jahan and she farmed out the right of collection to one Safi Khan.<sup>61</sup> Within the port of Cambay, income from Chabutari-i Kotwali, constituting a separate mahal forming part of the Jamdami of the city, was often part of the jagir or khalsa. During the seventeenth century Rs. 7 thousand were collected in one year from the chabutara.<sup>62</sup>

The situation was not unique in Gujarat, *Mirat* had examined the rise of Surat's revenue to nearly Rs. 7 lakh 50 thousand from Rs. 4 lakh 60 thousand as given in the *Ain-i Akbari* as due to the coming of 'large number of merchants from all parts of land and sea'.<sup>63</sup> In 1636-38, the revenue of Surat port was farmed out to Hakim Mahsuzzaman and in 1639-41 to one Mir Musa who was trading with the English. In 1644, Shah Jahan granted the sarkar of Surat as inam to his queen.<sup>64</sup> Later it was given to Jahanara for betel expenses. Murad Baksh had extensive jagir north of Ahmedabad. As subadar, he used to take Rs. 1 lakh 25 thousand from Surat port as his salary.<sup>65</sup> When Murad rebelled, he took Rs. 1 lakh 50 thousand from Surat, Rs. 1 lakh from Cambay and Rs. 75 thousand from Dholka,<sup>66</sup> which would explain the availability of liquid cash in different towns. Dholka was then under khalsa.

After the death of Aurangzeb, khalsa land was generally reduced in Gujarat. In 1715 the pargana of Dholka was transferred from khalsa to the jagir of Dewan-i Suba.<sup>67</sup> By that time the Kolis and the Kathis were attacking the suburbs of Ahmedabad.<sup>68</sup> Yet the jagirs around Cambay remained. In 1722, before the appointment of Nizam-ul Mulk as subadar of Gujarat, parganas of Petlad and Dholka were assigned as tankwah jagirs for the maintenance of the army of the emperor and the dewan was ordered to send the revenue to the centre.<sup>69</sup> After the nizam had arrived at Ahmedabad in 1723, he changed the jagirs. He fixed the parganas of Dholka, Broach and Jambusar etc. as his unconditional jagir,<sup>70</sup> which revealed clearly that the central revenue ministry had no hand in allocating the assignments. Therefore the Maratha occupation of these areas would mean a loss to some important nobles of Delhi. It would neither affect the parganas nor the trading activities of the port of Cambay, where the products of these areas were brought to be manufactured for eventual shipping. There would be an accounting loss to Cambay revenue on paper but it would not be a loss in real terms. Yet, as we have seen, the decline of Cambay from the days of Abul Fazl, is clear in spite of the rise of price. But, how far the Marathas were responsible for the decline is a moot question. We can also see, in the brief time span of the eighteenth century, other related problems like the oppression of the nawab, the silting of the river and the desertion of Cambay. Our principal sources would be the unpublished archival sources of the English Company which were biased in favour of the Company against the Marathas.

Before we turn on to the Maratha invasion of Cambay, it is necessary to look at the decline of Mughal authority in Gujarat and the increasing attempts of the mutsuddies to be independent.

It appears that the appointment of two separate port officers for Surat and Cambay ports, seen in the early years of Jahangir, was not followed during the rule of Shah Jahan. In 1631, Mirat recorded the presents sent to Shah Jahan by Muizzul Mulk the administrator of Surat and Cambay ports.<sup>71</sup> On his recall, a few years later, we hear of Hakim Mahs-uz Zaman being appointed as Governor of Surat.<sup>72</sup> There is no mention of Cambay it was from this period that the Kolis began to plunder the merchants.<sup>73</sup> In 1637-38, Muizzul Mulk was appointed at Surat while Subadar Azam Khan destroyed the Kolis.<sup>74</sup> His subadari saw the imposition of new taxes on coral, amber and artificial pearl while the jewellers began to charge an extra 1 per cent from both the purchasers and the sellers which was later reduced. On the recall of

Muizzul Mulk, Jam Quli was appointed at Surat while Azam Khan had to undertake another expedition against the Kolis. In 1644 Shah Jahan assigned the revenue of Surat to his queen which increased from nearly Rs. 3 lakh to Rs. 7.5 lakh.<sup>75</sup> All the while Cambay had continued to export directly to West Asia and to supply Surat. During the subadari of Shaishta Khan, a Persian merchant, Ali Akbar, son of the well known merchant Haji Kamal Ispahani, was appointed Mutsuddy of Surat and Cambay ports from where he regularly traded with west Asia. After Ali Akbar was murdered, Muizzul Mulk was appointed for the third time as mutsuddy of both Surat and Cambay. The Kolis rebelled once again which a succession of subadars failed to suppress completely. Hafiz Nasir was made the mutsuddy of both Surat and Cambay but failed in 1654 to quell the rebels, after which the administration of the two ports was separated. Abdul Latif, the younger brother of Muizzul Mulk, was appointed as Mutsuddy of Cambay. Muhammed Amin was appointed Dewan, Mutsuddy and Faujdar of Surat.<sup>76</sup>

While the Kolis continued to plunder, a large number of qanungos had imposed heavy taxes on the Cambay parganas. A farman<sup>77</sup> in the eighth year of the Emperor Aurangzeb's reign lists the number of taxed imposed by the faujdars in Gujarat. It also enjoined the mutsuddy to pay 2.5 per cent of the purchase price and the Hindus 5 per cent. Some merchants therefore began to leave Cambay for Surat. *Mirat* writes that the people of the surrounding region of Cambay were leaving for Ahmedabad. Perhaps the separation of the administration of Cambay from Surat had made the environs of Cambay insecure for a time.<sup>78</sup> This was also the time when there was a great scarcity of copper and iron coins were minted and sold at high prices. The old *dam* of 21 mashas was devalued to 14 mashas which created a problem for the labourers since a coin was accepted in the market only on the basis of its weight.<sup>79</sup> It was natural that Jiziya was levied and the yield in Gujarat was more than Rs. 5 lakh.<sup>80</sup>

The eighties of the seventeenth century did not bring relief to Gujarat. Scarcity during 1681-84 increased the price of corn, tax on which was condoned in 1684.<sup>81</sup> In that year the Matiyas rebelled at Broach while the Kathis began their disturbances.<sup>82</sup> Nearly ten years later, the price of corn shot up due to another severe scarcity. A new order was issued that the tax and octroi duty be collected from the places of purchase. As a result, officers at Ahmedabad collected taxes on goods meant for export. Muhammed Kazim Beg, Mutsuddy of Cambay, urged that this new order meant a loss to the revenue of the

port. The Mutsuddy of Surat also reported the loss of revenue to Surat port. Finally the emperor changed the earlier order.<sup>83</sup>

After 1702, with the further intensification of the activities of Kolis and Kathi, both the ports, Surat and Cambay, were brought under one administration. Muhammed Muhasin was appointed mutsuddy of both ports. By that time, the piracy of the Europeans in the Gulf of Cambay had created problems for the Muslim shipowners at Surat. The emperor confiscated the goods of the European Companies and stationed the army on the coast. The goods were released after a protracted negotiation and settlement.<sup>84</sup>

It appears that the administration of two ports was again separated as the peasants from the Cambay parganas complained to the subadar against the tyranny of Muhammed Kazim, Mutsuddy of Cambay. The subadar forwarded the complaint to the emperor who removed Kazim and appointed Khwaja Abdul Hamid. Before this the subadar had appointed Itimad Khan as the mutsuddy. Abdul Hamid Khan, the dewan, was appointed as the naib of the port, but he was captured by the Marathas who began to invade the areas for the collection of chauth. This brought the two posts of the two ports in one hand as the emperor appointed Amanat Khan as mutsuddy of both Surat and Cambay.<sup>85</sup> While Abdul Hamid Khan was released after the payment of ransom of Rs. 3 lakh, the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 marked the beginning of the invasion by Balaji Viswanath while the revolts of Kolis and Kathis continued.<sup>86</sup>

With the arrival of a new subadar, Ghaziuddin Khan Bahadur in 1709, the administration of the two ports was again separated. Syed Asanulla Khan was appointed the Mutsuddy of Cambay. But report reached the emperor that Syed Asanulla Khan had constructed a huge Diwankhana with timber forcibly bought from the merchants. He also took 36 marble slabs out of 100 from the big masjid outside the Makkan gate when he was stopped by the local people. On the order of the emperor, his house was confiscated. By that time the new subadar, Firuz Jung was levying octroi duty of 1 per cent as Rahadari and a special tax for the nizam—Rs. 1 from the Hindus and half a rupee from the Muslims. Order was also given to settle the property of Firuz Jung.<sup>87</sup>

Daud Khan Pani was appointed subadar and Syed Aqil Khan was appointed the Mutsuddy of Cambay. He nominated the father of Ali Muhammed Khan, author of *Mirat-i Abmadi* as the Naib of Cambay.<sup>88</sup> Even the ships of west Asia used to come to Cambay and the mint was working. Meanwhile the Kolis and the Kathis had continued the raids.

At night they would enter the suburbs of a city, make holes in the houses and plunder. Daud Khan was recalled and Maharaja Ajit Singh was appointed subadar. In 1715, he appointed Sukurulla Beg as Mutsuddy of Cambay. Aqil Khan was transferred as Faujdar and Amin of Dholka and Cambay while Ali Muhammed remained as naib.<sup>89</sup>

In 1717, Ajit Singh was replaced by Nusrut Jung. There was a severe famine in Gujarat during that period when people even sold their children.<sup>90</sup> But Ajit Singh again came back under the Emperor Rafi-ul Darjat and appointed Meher Ali Khan as Dewan-i Suba, Naib of the Suba and the Mutsuddy of Cambay. His son Ashaf Ali later became the Naib of Cambay. Since Fidwai Khan was appointed Mutsuddy of Surat, the administration of the two ports remained separate.<sup>91</sup>

In 1721, Nizam-ul Mulk was appointed the subadar, who, in turn, appointed Shaikh-ul Islam as his deputy. Meher Ali Khan was recalled and Kazim Beg Khan was appointed as Mutsuddy of Cambay with risala of Bakshi. He was also appointed as Faujdar of Mundah and deputy to the Naib-i Suba with the title of Shujaet Khan.<sup>92</sup>

By 1723, the new Subadar, Muiz-ud Daulah had rearranged the jagirs. parganas of Petlad and Dholka were assigned to the army of the Emperor. But the subadar was soon recalled and Nizam was appointed subadar. He appointed Hamid Khan as his naib and Fidwai Khan as his dewan. Nizam fixed parganas of Viramgram in place of Dholka as khalsa and took parganas of Dholka, Broach, Jambusar, Maqbudabad and Bulsar as his unconditional jagir. Munim Khan was made the Mutsuddy of Surat.<sup>93</sup>

So far it has been seen that there was no settled policy regarding the administration of Surat and Cambay, both of which had remained under the charge of one mutsuddy almost throughout the seventeenth century. Possibly the Mughals had regarded Surat as the overseas port and the port of Cambay as the subsidiary port. The charge of both under one head helped this process. One may therefore say that the character of Cambay port did not change much as its dependence was changed from Goa to Surat. One can perhaps discern a faint trace of calculation and planning in keeping both ports under one head for so long. Yet Cambay continued to function as an overseas port in a small way and its mint also continued to function. It had thus within itself the embryo of a *Riyasat* that came out later in the wake of the Maratha invasion and the decline of the Mughal authority in Gujarat.

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## CHAPTER 6

### Maratha Hegemony and Early Trade Phase

With the advance of the Marathas in Gujarat from the 1720s, the Mughal officers, like Hamid Khan, often made pact with the Maratha sardars. Chouth and Sardeshmukhi—two taxes imposed by the Marathas since the days of Sivaji—were allowed in the areas under the jurisdiction of Ahmedabad. From then on the revenue of Ahmedabad did not go to Delhi. Marathas meanwhile had divided the areas of Gujarat between themselves for the purposes of taxation. There was an attempt by one Maratha group to tax Cambay areas also but it was resisted successfully by the English factors of Cambay.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these political complications and turmoil, Cambay's trade continued. It appears that Charles Wyad, the English agent at Cambay, got the permission from Ahmedabad in the early 1720s to carry custom free trade at Cambay. But for reasons unknown, this was never carried out.<sup>2</sup> Surat continued to send ivory to Cambay, where it had a good market for manufacturing various items.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, at the same time, Cambay sent fifty-three bales of cotton to Surat.<sup>4</sup> The French were also participating in this trade at the end of the seventeenth century when they used to buy Ahmedabad silk and cotton from Baroda through the Bohras with whom they had close dealings.<sup>5</sup> Despite the fighting between Sarbuland Khan and Hamid Khan around 1725,<sup>6</sup> Cambay's English agent Daniel Innes could send, by April 1725, thirty-six bales of piece goods and thirty-eight bales of Tannah to Surat.<sup>7</sup> He could sell ivory at Cambay with some difficulties.<sup>8</sup> It is clear that the purchasing power of Cambay was declining rapidly along with the decline of manufacture in different crafts.

One of the reasons for such sale was the uncertainty due to the Maratha siege of Cambay.<sup>9</sup> But they left in the middle of April 1725 with Rs. 30 thousand in cash from the city. In July a new naib came who promised to send Rs. 95 thousand to Ahmedabad while the merchants

hid themselves for six days.<sup>10</sup> Laldas Vitaldas, one of the brokers of the English Company,<sup>11</sup> explained the delay in bringing the goods to Cambay from the countryside, where production had continued.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the arrival of a new mutsuddy at Cambay,<sup>13</sup> which often meant trouble for the merchants, there was no interruption to trade throughout 1726 and 1727. The English agent Innes reported the custom collection of the English of Rs. 1659 from the private trade at Cambay,<sup>14</sup> as he continued to send to Surat bales of cotton goods.<sup>15</sup> It was only in the middle of 1727 that at Ahmedabad things began to deteriorate. The Viceroy, Sarbuland Khan, was in need of money to resist the increasing attacks of the Marathas and began to squeeze the Bohra merchants as well as the Dutch who first fled to Cambay and then to Surat.<sup>16</sup> The attacks of the Koli boats in the Gulf of Cambay did not help the process, although the English fought a hard naval battle with them near Broach.<sup>17</sup>

The difficulties of 1727 could be seen in the lower custom collection of the English—Rs. 1427.37,<sup>18</sup> although by January 1728, things had improved. The problem of the English with the new Mutsuddy of Cambay, Mirza Agassar Beg,<sup>19</sup> was solved as Bombay directed Cambay agent to accept the demand of the latter that the English flag should not carry goods of the merchants without payment of regular duties.<sup>20</sup>

The appointment of Maharaja Abhoy Singh as Subadar of Gujarat marked a change in the history of Cambay. He appointed Momin Khan as the Mutsuddy of Cambay, who in turn, appointed Fidauddin Khan as naib. The jagirs of the countryside of Cambay still remained intact. The subadar retained the revenue of the port of Cambay and those of Chorasi pargana (in which Cambay belonged) as his own jagir.<sup>21</sup> The assumption of the office of the mutsuddy by Momin Khan Dehlani since October 1730<sup>22</sup> marked the beginning of a dynastical rule over Cambay.

Mirza Abul Hasan Dehlani, a Persian nobleman, first came to Gujarat from Delhi in 1714 and was appointed as Mutsuddy of Surat and Faujdar of Baroda, Petlad, Nadiad and Dholka. He was displaced for a time by court intrigue but regained the post of Mutsuddy of Surat and Cambay, which he held till 1724, when he was appointed Dewan of Gujarat. His daughter Aulia Begum was married to Mirza Muhammed, Nazim-i Sani, Nazim-ud-Daulah, Mutsuddy of Cambay.<sup>23</sup> It is the family of Momin Khan which continued to rule Cambay throughout the eighteenth century.

Abhoy Singh and Baji Rao had settled the problem of chouth at a higher level while Momin Khan and Kanthaji Adam had settled it at

lower level, leaving the jagirs of Nizam-ul-Mulk in Dholka, Broach etc. untouched.<sup>24</sup> However, Abhoy Singh got Pilaji murdered during negotiations which brought the Marathas back to Gujarat in the 1730s. The payment of Rs. 80 thousand saw the Marathas leaving Ahmedabad letting the jagirs remaining intact while the province was reeling under a severe famine.<sup>25</sup> Yet the events of Ahmedabad, the internal faction fighting among the different Maratha groups and the severe taxation of the naib, Ratan Singh Bhandari, did not have much impact on trade at Cambay. Only after the arrival of Nadir Shah at Delhi and the reversal of the fortune of the Mughals, did the Marathas began to attack Cambay.

Till the death of Momin Khan in 1742, he was able to defend Cambay successfully against the Marathas, while Nizam Khan at Cambay ran the administration of the port city. The succession struggle at Ahmedabad after the death of Momin Khan did not affect the working of the port city of Cambay. But there the English had problems—problems of their own internal structure as well as the problems of establishing relations with the Nawabs of Cambay who would allow the English to carry on trade undisturbed on the basis of certain special privileges. Much of Cambay's later history, both as a port and a city, stemmed from the unresolved grey areas that remained hidden at this time.

In the early 30s of the eighteenth century, it appears that trade at Cambay had stabilized or, in another sense, had divorced itself from the political turmoils and changes. The English attitude to remain neutral in the Mughal-Maratha struggle<sup>26</sup> was advantageous to the English, whose custom collection during 1729-30 had increased sharply.<sup>27</sup> The brokers had promised to send three lakh pieces of Blue Byrampants,<sup>28</sup> obviously collected from the countryside through the funnel of Jambusar. Surat asked Innes not to trust Byramji Cowasji,<sup>29</sup> the English broker, who was involved in customs disputes.<sup>30</sup> Laldas Vitaldas, another broker, made contact with the cotton merchants around Broach, which seemed to have been affected by the Maratha trouble that prevented the washing of the Chintz in the Broach river for the time being.<sup>31</sup> Yet Innes could send to Surat 60 bales in the beginning of January 1731<sup>32</sup> apart from three thousand pieces of Blue Byrampants sent earlier.<sup>33</sup> The Maratha panic seemed to have subsided as goods began to come to Cambay, which would suggest that the surrounding areas had remained undisturbed. Maratha problem had no effect so far on cotton production in the countryside around

Cambay or on the English trade with Surat. Even when the silk merchants of Ahmedabad left the city due to the coercion of Abhoy Singh and his naib, it had no effect on the trading structure or its operation in Cambay. Maharaja's later gesture of appeasing the Bohra merchants did not bear fruit as they had left Ahmedabad. The statement of the author of *Mirat* that all mansabdars had left Gujarat is perhaps an exaggeration,<sup>34</sup> but it reflected the passing away of an era and the beginning of another.

For a time however, there was a temporary stoppage of commerce as the merchants feared to send goods or invest while the production had begun to fall, leading to a rise in prices.<sup>35</sup> Yet Surat ordered eight thousand pieces of Blue Byrampants<sup>36</sup> but Innes could send only twenty bales with full insurance.<sup>37</sup> He however could not find enough indigo to dye the goods.<sup>38</sup> By the end of January 1732, Innes could ship to Surat 129 bales to complete the investment.<sup>39</sup>

The problems of the English came from another direction. Byramji Cowasji had contracted to supply 10 thousand pieces of Blue Byrampants and the goods were ready at Neriad to be brought at Cambay for manufacture.<sup>40</sup> But Innes could not get the weavers available at Cambay. At the end of November 1732, Indian merchants had already employed all the weavers at Cambay to supply goods to Mozambique, Mocha and Jedda—the link between the Persian and African coasts with Cambay was still continuing. The problem became acute for the English as the famine had reduced the number of weavers, who were also working on the harvesting of budgera at the same time. This was a general problem of the Cambay area as both cotton and budgera were reaped at the same time; but this year, the problem became acute as the famine had reduced the number of workers, particularly at Neriad and Cambay. Byramji had tried to force the weavers to work for the Company, but it led to serious complications.<sup>41</sup> Surat was not willing to relent as the ships were ready. They had ordered a further supply of 300 bales of Tanaks at the end of November<sup>42</sup> and Innes could send some bales at the end of December.<sup>43</sup> By that time the problem of the river had made the problem of transportation acute. The gallivat could come up to the Pagoda Point from where it could load all the bales.<sup>44</sup> To solve the problem of lower draught, Surat began to construct sloops which could make the short run between Cambay and Surat as many times as they want.<sup>45</sup>

The fiasco of the supply from Cambay made Surat aware of the need to order in advance. For the next year's investment, they

suggested to Cambay that order be given to procure as much Guinea stuff as possible<sup>46</sup> and to employ all available weavers. Even the broker, Byramji, was asked to assemble weavers from the neighbouring areas.<sup>47</sup> It was not however a simple question of weaving, which could be solved with timely appointments. The goods are to be dyed with indigo, which could only be done after the rains. The problem of Innes was partially aggravated by the oppression of Momin Khan who was collecting money to release his family from the hands of the departing Maharaja.<sup>48</sup> The structure of trade was therefore often interwoven in the structure of politics, although the problems were essentially transitory and temporary in nature.

Sometimes these problems would become crucial enough in conjunction with other problems, which also stemmed from the nature of political climate in Gujarat. Despite the fact that Innes had drawn Rs. 30 thousand for investment principally to procure one thousand pieces of Lemanees from Ahmedabad,<sup>49</sup> he could not make much headway, as the roads were closed due to the intransigence of the Kolis and the Kathis. The effeminate administration of the new subadar, Qamaluddin Khan, did not help matters. Innes could get in hand only sixty corge of Dutties which had to be dyed first.<sup>50</sup>

In a way therefore the problems of Ahmedabad had a distant bearing on Cambay trade. The quarrel at Ahmedabad between the new Nagar Sheth Ahmed and Kushal Chand, the aspirant, led to the flight of silk traders and jewellers from Ahmedabad,<sup>51</sup> which prevented Innes from procuring on the Lemanees of Ahmedabad, although he could get other goods ready at Cambay. However, he could not send the goods straight away as the Koli boats were cruising in the Gulf.<sup>52</sup> Only in January 1734, could Innes get all the goods across to Surat with full insurance.<sup>53</sup> The problems were not therefore of permanent nature in the sense that it would halt the trading completely or create a fundamental disruption in the structure. But these could inconvenience the supply as the ships had a close timing to sail with the return monsoon.

The English by themselves could tackle some of the problems. Following the suggestion of Innes, the English mounted an attack on the Koli boats and captured some of them which were then brought to Surat and sold in auction. One such boat belonged to a Cambay merchant, who threatened to seize English ships of Surat at Cambay. It was settled with a political approach when Sabrella Khan, Naib at Cambay, offered full protection to the English shipping at Cambay.<sup>54</sup>

The problem of loading the English ships at Surat with goods supplied from Cambay however remained. Obviously the trading of cotton goods of western India had increased in the Persian markets, which created an increased demand at Cambay, bringing in turn goods from the countryside to Cambay. With the arrival of four English ships at Surat by October 1734, Surat was desperate for goods of Cambay. Two of these ships were scheduled to leave by November for the African coast and Surat frantically signalled Innes to supply Guinea stuff.<sup>55</sup> Innes had brought goods at Cambay earlier and was expecting some more from Dholka.<sup>56</sup> But, once again, he could not find enough weavers to complete the work as the Indian merchants had already employed them with higher wages.<sup>57</sup> The English were not certain how many of their ships would arrive and therefore their demand increased after the coming of the ships so as to keep the investment at the optimum level. In the case of the Indian merchants, their ships started from the Cambay and Surat and they were sure of the number of ships, which enabled them to invest earlier and employ the workers. The Cambay-Surat-Persia/Africa run of the English therefore had an inbuilt problem of control of the weavers which could be solved either by long term investment or by the political control of the city in which case the weavers would be completely under their control.

At the end of the year, Innes managed to solve the problem possibly because the Indian merchants had finished early with an earlier start. Innes was able to send 157 bales, more than double of what had been sent in any one of the previous years.<sup>58</sup> By the third week of January 1735, he could send further bales to Surat.<sup>59</sup> This would only show that the political problems which assumed such big proportion particularly at Ahmedabad did not permanently affect the trading structure of Cambay so far. The linkages between Cambay and the producing areas of Neriad, Dholka, Jambusar, etc. had remained intact and uninterrupted, particularly after the suppression of the Koli pirates. This could be seen in the next year, when Hugh Bidwell replaced Innes as agent<sup>60</sup> and Cambay sent goods to Surat by the sloop constructed for the purpose.<sup>61</sup> Mehta Narain, the broker, had earlier arrived at Cambay with a sum of Rs. 15 thousand.<sup>62</sup>

Trouble, however temporary, came perhaps not from an unexpected quarter. Fuelled by the dissension between the different and warring Maratha groups, Momin Khan had not allowed the Marathas to operate in the parganas of Cambay, which, for the last two years, had

seen an unprecedented growth in production and trade. In November 1735, Kanthaji Adam's army, mostly cavalry and without heavy artillery, suddenly appeared before the walls of Cambay.<sup>63</sup> Although the English were supposedly neutral, they took up the defence of one bastion closer to their factory since they had goods stored in there. Ordered from Surat, Bidwell had loaded all the goods in the sloop. The haste however appeared unnecessary as an agreement was reached soon between Momin Khan and the Marathas.<sup>64</sup> By February 1736, Surat received fifty-five bales of Blue Byrampants.<sup>65</sup> Bidwell was found to be incompetent after such a decline in supply and was replaced by John Munroe.<sup>66</sup>

With peace the competition stiffened once again and the English found themselves unable to hire the weavers, who were all employed by the Indian merchants for the Mocha and Bussora trade.<sup>67</sup> To get the goods passed in a hurry, Mehta Narain, the broker, had allowed the nawab more than usual custom duty which was condemned by Surat.<sup>68</sup>

This was one of the problems of the English at Cambay, where they paid the usual custom duty but not the extra 1 per cent, called Banian duty. The nawab allowed such concession only on the goods taken traditionally by the English and not on other goods. Further, the English goods were always sent by water thus using a particular custom gate, where the custom master was aware of such concessions. In case of Mehta Narain, he had sent the goods by land obviously to clear the goods quickly due to lack of boats.<sup>69</sup> Surat asked Munroe to press for refund,<sup>70</sup> while the nawab refused. Yet such inconveniences did not affect production and trade as Munroe got his Guinea-stuff and Byrampants ready by the end of 1736.<sup>71</sup>

This was the year which saw certain changes in the political structure of the province that had long term effect on Cambay. With the help of the Marathas, Momim Khan got rid of Bhandari from Ahmedabad<sup>72</sup> and in return Marathas were allowed to collect half of the revenue of Gujarat. Thus began the Maratha interference in the administration as they posted their men all over Gujarat.<sup>73</sup> This hardly affected Cambay immediately, despite the fact that Damaji Gaekwad, the new Maratha leader at Baroda, had seized English goods at Jambusar.<sup>74</sup>

The trade of Cambay actually increased during the period. Munroe had sent to Surat 3760 bales,<sup>75</sup> highest so far, although Surat doubted the quality. It appears that the production in the countryside under the



Marathas had reached a new height. Yet a serious problem began to affect the English, albeit in the long run.

The blossoming of the English trade was not entirely at Cambay. The English were encouraging the smaller chiefs, like that of Gogo, opposite Cambay and dependent to it during the whole of the last century, or the Chief of Vertage, a small port, to be independent of Cambay. The English encouraged them to supply goods to Bombay from their smaller but excellent harbours. Since they were drawing the products of the Cambay region, it was the Cambay Nawab who now began to suffer so far as custom-duties were concerned. Goods going directly to Surat or Bombay from Gogo or Vertage would not pay any duty to the Cambay Nawab. To teach them the lesson, Cambay Nawab seized some Gogo boats thus creating problems for the English. They presented to the nawab the possibilities of retaliation from the Marathas who now controlled Gogo. Interestingly, the Marathas were not averse to the idea of Gogo trading with the English, who secretly were encouraging these chiefs to be independent of both Cambay and the Marathas. By the end of 1737, Munroe was able to clear some of the goods seized by the Nawab of Cambay and sent twenty-eight bales of Byrampants to Surat.<sup>76</sup>

The Nawab of Cambay was far more determined to keep Gogo under his control since the prosperity of Cambay depended on it to a certain extent. He refused to clear all the goods of the English and wanted a list. Munroe, impatient at such bureaucratic delays, suggested to Surat to seize a Cambay ship leaving for Bussora with goods worth Rs. 40 thousand,<sup>77</sup> about half the English investment at Cambay. This would suggest that not only were the Cambay merchants trading directly with west Asia, but the English trade at Cambay was far less than the trading of the combined merchants of Cambay.

Whether Munroe deliberately leaked the plan of such a seizure to Cambay merchants would be a matter of conjecture. But the Cambay merchants got wind of such a plan and became apprehensive. They began to put pressure on the nawab to release the English goods.<sup>78</sup> Evidently the port city of Cambay was functioning in a dual character as manufacturer and exporter. This would perhaps explain the fact that, despite the slow and steady decline of Surat to which Cambay was a supplier, the port city of Cambay did not show decline at the same rate. The political and administrative problems of Gujarat and particularly of Ahmedabad had passed Cambay by. This would also show that the Marathas had not cut off communications between

Cambay and the countryside while production and export had continued.

The nawab however was not in a position to allow such goods exported from such small ports in the Gulf bypassing Cambay which would spell his ruin. It was not simply a question of the ports of Gogo and Vertage. Another small port, Bhawanagar, was rapidly becoming a supply port for the English. Founded in 1725 by Bhavasinji Gohil. Bhawanagar, at the head of the Gulf of Cambay, was invaded by the Marathas under Kanthaji and Pilaji. The ruler of Bhawanagar then shifted his capital from inland to a point near the sea, from where he tried to control the northward trade of Saurashtra with English assistance.<sup>79</sup> It was this drawing away of the northern trade that Cambay Nawab was objecting to.

Like the nawab and the Cambay merchants, the English had higher stakes also. They were hoping for an uninterrupted supply with less or no custom charges for the goods drawn further from the north for which reason they had encouraged these petty chiefs, whose independence would also fragment the politically monolithic states of the Mughals and the Marathas. In February 1738 Surat therefore ordered Munroe to inform the Nawab that any further delay in clearing the goods would result in the English seizure of all Cambay vessels leaving for Mocha and elsewhere.<sup>80</sup> Obviously they hoped that this would rally round all the Cambay merchants behind the English to put pressure on the nawab.

Fortunately for the Cambay merchants, before this letter could reach Munroe at Cambay, the order from Momin Khan to Nujjam Khan arrived to clear the goods of the English Company. At the same time, Momin Khan informed Munroe that Cambay would not tolerate the trade of Bhawanagar as it would destroy the trade of Cambay. Nujjam Khan therefore had decided to destroy the trade of Bhawanagar<sup>81</sup>—a position that would certainly bring a confrontation with the English.

This happened at a time of abundant production of crops which had lowered the price of cotton. Surat was eager to have sixteen thousand pieces of various sorts although the season was pretty advanced. The only problem was that the weavers did not want to change their looms to produce Byrampants of  $6\frac{1}{4}$  vees only. Guinea-stuff and the Brawl had become cheaper by 3.5 per cent at Cambay. He asked for an advance of Rs. 11 thousand.<sup>82</sup>

The problem with the nawab however continued on another level. Munroe tried to export indigo, which had not been done by the Company for a long time, without the payment of Banian duty. The

English however continued to collect Company's custom, apart from the consulate charges, on private trade passing through the English.<sup>83</sup>

All these problems finally lead to the protracted exchanges between Munroe and Surat over the profitability of the Cambay factory. This is related to the basic problem of the muster and the sample.

Edulji Cowasji, living at Cambay, as the broker of the English Company, had sent the samples which were rejected by Surat. Munroe took it personally as the contract was given to Edulji on his recommendation in place of several Surat brokers. Munroe angrily pointed out that the considered opinion of Cambay merchants was that the sample sent was better than that of last year. He quoted the opinion of Dealdas Lackandas, one of the prominent Cambay merchants. Munroe also suggested that he could get loans at Cambay at 0.75 per cent interest, which was cheaper than that of Bengal. He strongly recommended that Edulji should supply the goods since it would be cheaper.<sup>84</sup> Neither the mercantile activities nor the cash liquidity of Cambay had declined while the production was continuing in full swing.

Rejecting the recommendation of Munroe on the basis of the opinion of the Surat shroffs, Surat ordered seventeen thousand piecegoods in the third week of May.<sup>85</sup> In reply, Munroe quoted the opinion of two Cambay shroffs, Barchunna Kesoor and Deal Veray, who supported Munroe.<sup>86</sup> The quarrel was gradually turning into one between the Surat and the Cambay merchants. Surat therefore decided to refer the whole question to Bombay. Uncertain of Bombay's reaction, Munroe submitted quickly, accepting Surat's decision as final and even agreeing to compensate the loss.<sup>87</sup>

The entire incident reveals the existence of a large number of merchants at Cambay who were willing to contract for the English investment directly at Cambay. This rivalry may point to a shrinkage of trading opportunities at Cambay although Cambay still remained an important centre of production and manufacture with the port ready for overseas commerce.

For the English, this dispute highlighted the question of the profitability of Cambay factory. Munroe pointed out that in the previous year, with the custom collection of Rs. 1384, much lower than those of the earlier years, the extra charge of the factory was only Rs. 90.<sup>88</sup> He claimed that Cambay 'is a gaining factory...'. This was disputed by Surat whose calculation was that the extra charge of Cambay factory was Rs. 682, the difference between collection charges and the

revenue. Even if one concedes the increase of custom collection by one-third of the previous years, any extra expense was a dead charge. To Surat, the price of Brawl was really not lower than other areas if one looks at price level of other commodities at Cambay.<sup>89</sup> This leads to the method of calculation of profit by the Company and it is doubtful if ever such kind of calculation was made in case of other factories in India. But this also shows that despite the higher investment by the English and an increase of money supply, inflation and price rise had not yet appeared. Actually price was seen to be dropping lower than the earlier level. This may have been possible due to the increasing production which outstripped the increasing demand, which may perhaps explain the plea of the Cambay brokers to contract for the English investment at Cambay. There may also have been a decrease of investment of the Indian merchants, which may have forced the Cambay brokers to go in for the English investment. What is interesting is that the decrease of price is apparent also in the agricultural sector, although one does not have the set of data necessary to formulate a clear conclusion. From the detailed English correspondence, it becomes clear that Cambay's price level had always been lower than those of other areas of Gujarat where the Company operated. It is this fact that Surat was asking Munroe to concede. It is also clear that the political and administrative troubles had not affected much of Cambay's production and trade excepting temporarily, which were small inconveniences.

With the submission of Munroe, Surat gave another set of orders to a broker of Surat, Monakji Cowasji, to supply Guinea-stuff, while Edulji continued to supply Byrampants from Cambay at Rs. 70 per corge.<sup>90</sup> This created further dispute between Munroe and Surat.

In early December 1738, Monakji could collect only 14 bales and promptly attributed the delay to the late rains and late order.<sup>91</sup> But Edulji was also delaying as, according to Munroe, the indigo had arrived late at Cambay due to late rains. Surat was furious as, to them, the Byrampants were gradually dyed in September with old indigo to catch the Mocha and Bussora ships while some goods were dyed in October with new indigo which came to the city after the rains. Munroe should have dyed the Byrampants earlier, which meant, according to Surat, that Edulji had delayed in the delivery. Angrily Surat wanted to find out if Edulji could supply the remaining investment. If not, Surat could always find brokers at Surat. Regarding the higher prices asked by Edulji at this stage, Surat rejected it since prices of

commodities at Cambay were the lowest compared to other areas of the coast.<sup>92</sup>

In one sense Surat was correct. The abundant harvest had lowered the prices of grains as well as that of cotton with the arrival of a large quantity of indigo. Even the workers had agreed to work at lower rates since the works for the Mocha ship were already over. Munroe therefore turned the dispute in another direction. He reported that Monakji's agents were threatening the workers who were working for Edulji, which in turn, had created a panic among them.<sup>93</sup> In other words, with the Mocha and Bussora ships gone, there began a struggle among the Surat and Cambay merchants for the English investment.

That there was a shrinkage of English trade, despite abundant production and cheaper grain, could be seen in very poor custom collection of the English for the year 1738-39, amounting to only Rs. 606.53 p.<sup>94</sup> Munroe hinted at acute trouble but this did not explain the lower collection. He could not find a contractor 'willing to contract for goods as the ships from the Red Sea are not arrived and the prices of indigo and cotton this year are not settled...'. He suggested as a remedial measure to contract in February which was the cheapest month with all the ships gone. He could of course send 93 bales to Surat in the beginning of October,<sup>95</sup> which would suggest that the production was there. Perhaps to explain the delay of his brokers, he complained that Monakji's boats had refused to transport one thousand pieces lying at Cambay storehouse,<sup>96</sup> once again shifting the blame to a Surat broker.

That there was some problem at Cambay port could be seen when Momin Khan came down from Ahmedabad and found a clear deficit in the revenue of the port due to the incompetence of the darogha. Momin Khan then appointed a new one, Ismail Muhammed Khan, who encouraged the merchants to use the port and the revenue reached its original height. This may explain the low custom collection of the English which had nothing to do with the production and manufacture at Cambay.

The last few months of Momin Khan, who died in 1742, saw the arrival of the Marathas in the parganas of Cambay and the passing of Gogo under Cambay. Some of the villages of Petlad went to the Maratha leader, Renkoji. The death of Momin Khan heralded the beginning of a civil war between his son, Muftakir and other officials at Ahmedabad.<sup>97</sup> This was to finally lead to the establishment of a dynastic rule at Cambay.

Declining the invitation to join the China voyage with other English officials, Munroe found that the prices had fallen at Cambay, lower than that of the previous year, which, in plain terms would suggest, that the Cambay contractors would be cheaper since Surat brokers would quote prices existing in Surat. This would mean that the investment of the Indian merchants at Cambay had been reduced, thus lowering the demand which in turn had lowered the prices. The lower investment enabled Munroe to contract the weavers, who in early March, had agreed to take up the work at a rebate of 9 per cent as 'there were no other employers for them before the next season...'.<sup>98</sup> It may be that Munroe's early contract had given him an edge, but it seems to point out a lowering demand at Cambay.

The English may also have been trading less at Cambay for some time although the precise information is lacking. Despite the prohibition of the Nawab at Cambay, the English were trading with Jambusar and Vertage, for which they had been running a tight control of the transportation with the small sloop specially built for this purpose. The gallivat would collect other goods in other vessels from northward, including Jambusar and Vertage, to make a rendezvous with the sloop full of Cambay goods at Pagoda Point and convoy these to Surat. The northward convoy would pick up the Cambay goods on the way.<sup>99</sup> Obviously the northward trade had become important to the English to schedule this kind of operation. This would mean that Cambay trade would be less, thus reducing the trade and custom collected there. Therefore it was not the Maratha violence that reduced the trade of Cambay but the opening up of new centres of trade further north. While the production around Cambay continued to be brought to the city where the weavers waited, other ports, encouraged by the English and the Marathas as we would see later, drew away the trade that would reduce the income of the Nawab of Cambay. Needless to say the new transport schedule brought a sense of urgency to the English at Cambay, who had to change the routine of keeping the boats outside the harbour.

Edulji, who had been appointed as vakil to the Durbar of Cambay on the recommendation of Munroe earlier on the basis of percentage of the private trade as his commission, asked for its raise. With the decrease of private trade at Cambay, his remuneration as vakil had also decreased. But Surat was not certain about Edulji. With increased production, Surat wanted more goods available at lower prices.<sup>100</sup> With a new tight transport schedule, Munroe also agreed that the

contractor would not be able to complete the job. The convoy would sail by the end of October. Yet out of three contractors, Edulji's price was found to be the lowest by as much as 3 per cent particularly on chelloes and goods manufactured at Cambay. While Munroe closed the deal with Edulji, Surat chose Lachmidas as a part contractor.<sup>101</sup>

The result was far from satisfactory for the English. The brokers quarrelled among themselves and Edulji once again created a panic situation. He reported that as the goods had greater number of threads, he would not be able to supply before the rains. Surat immediately retaliated by accepting the price of Lachmidas Nagar. Edulji, now to effect a compromise with Lachmidas, left Cambay secretly to confer with him, which made Munroe furious. He wanted Surat to censure Edulji for leaving Cambay without permission and with the Marathas outside the walls of Cambay.<sup>102</sup> Despite the increased production, new transport schedule and better northward trade, the English trading structure at Cambay could not function properly.

There were however deeper concern for both Munroe and Surat for the journey undertaken by Edulji. His possible understanding with Lachmidas may increase the price—a union which the English wanted to avoid at all costs.<sup>103</sup> Not wanting to be totally dependent on Lachmidas, Surat asked Munroe to caution Edulji, who was also outwitted by Lachmidas. In the end, Surat chose Lachmidas as his price was 2 per cent cheaper than that of Edulji.<sup>104</sup> The former did not delay and showed his efficiency by supplying the better part of the investment by early June 1741.<sup>105</sup>

Yet the relation between the nawab and the English had not been normalized even by the end of 1741. The nawab objected to the export of indigo by the English from Cambay as they had begun to dye at Bombay and Surat. He wanted the English to pay the Banian duty of 1 per cent as this was not a traditional item. The English argued that this was not exported to Mocha and was used for dyeing at Surat instead of at Cambay. The nawab did not accept it and the English felt that this was a breach of their firman privileges.

Although the English had exported some indigo from Cambay in 1739-40, the former broker Mehta Narain had cleared it with a present, leaving no record in the ledger of the custom, on the pretext that it was done only for that year.<sup>106</sup> The matter assumed a serious proportion as Munroe had goods worth over Rs. 40 thousand stored in the factory waiting for the sloop and the gallivat to convoy them to Surat. It was



not resolved even in November when Latif Ali Khan, the bakshi, visited Cambay and was given a suitable present by the English.<sup>107</sup>

The delay to clear the goods stiffened the attitude of Surat and they now ordered Munroe to take a rigid stand on the breach of firman privileges.<sup>108</sup> The nawab did not answer the letter of Surat till the third week of November 'on pretence of business'.<sup>109</sup> Surat sent a second letter threatening 'bad consequences', which forced the nawab to declare that he would clear the indigo as a special mark of favour thus refusing to insert it in the custom ledger.<sup>110</sup>

Surat now insisted that it must be entered in the custom ledger so that there would be no problem in future. Till early December, the nawab did not climb from his position. But the problems of the English were gradually becoming acute. Not only were goods arriving from Dholka and other places choking the storage at Cambay, these goods were to be sent to Surat as early as possible to load the ships. Finally Surat had to swallow it and order Munroe to clear the goods, including indigo, but with the protest on the breach of firman privileges.<sup>111</sup>

Actually it was the future that worried Surat more. They asked Munroe to suggest measures that would force the Cambay administration,<sup>112</sup> which was far more concerned about such duties in the background of decreasing custom collection. Earlier the administration had allowed Byramji, the English broker, to export goods without Banian duty in different times in different names while Mehta Narain had to pay duty in exporting Lambton's goods. The hardening of the attitude of the Cambay government was perhaps due to their knowledge that the brokers of the English Company were passing the goods of the Indian merchants without paying the Banian duty.

This was brought out clearly by Munroe in early January 1742.<sup>113</sup> The nawab was of opinion that the goods cleared by Mehta Narain were not the English goods since the English had never exported such goods. Byramji earlier had done such tricks and got away. But now the administration would not tolerate such exemptions. Munroe suggested that the English should detain the Cambay boats with Rs. 40 thousand worth of goods either at Gogo or at Bhawanagar till the affairs were adjusted.<sup>114</sup>

The suggestion of the blatant use of force on such a dubious interpretation of the firman, to be seen in Bengal a few decades later, revealed the gradual emergence of ~~the aggressiveness of the English~~, a kind of attitude in which the merchants and the nawab would be



following their dictates. But it also revealed what had already been seen here, that the Cambay merchants were directly trading with west Asia and their investments were in no way inferior to those of the English. The dual role of Cambay, supplier to Surat and direct trader, had continued uninterrupted. This would also show that the Marathas had not really disturbed the production around Cambay.

However, the Cambay Ketch that was supposed to sail to Brava on the Arabian coast with goods of other merchants on board, belonged to the Shahbandar of Cambay. Surat sent a sloop and the gallivat on the 23 January 1742 at the Pagoda Point to detain the ketch. But the ketch did not sail due to an unforeseen accident, which allowed other boats of Cambay merchants to join it. Munroe informed Surat that it would sail in the next spring with another boat of shahbandar for Mocha and a boat of a Cambay merchant for Socotora. He suggested that all three boats should be detained to get the refund of the Banian duty paid on Lambton's goods.<sup>115</sup> But Surat backed out from the seizure since it would be too hazardous to convoy these boats to Surat.<sup>116</sup> Munroe now suggested that he would transfer the goods to Surat (about twelve bales and goods worth Rs. 12 thousand) before these three vessels would sail with only twelve lascars and a few Arab sepoys.<sup>117</sup> Surat still was hesitant as the gallivat returned without attempting to seize the boats.<sup>118</sup>

Bombay now forced the issue and on their instruction, Surat sent order to Captain of the ship England to seize and bring to Surat any vessel of Cambay.<sup>119</sup> By this time, the nawab, on the basis of a letter from the President of Bombay, had agreed to clear the goods of Lambton along with their permission to export indigo in future. Munroe still suggested the seizure to solve the problem once and for all but Surat now refused.<sup>120</sup>

This did not however solve all the problems of the English trade at Cambay. It had its own in-built disruptions linked more with the production than with trade. In May 1742, under the contractor Lachmidas, Munroe had sent jamahs to Bombay, which was found to be damaged as these were packed under damp conditions. Surat asked Munroe to take these back and at Dholka, the place of manufacture, the weavers refused to take them. Munroe requested a refund from them.<sup>121</sup>

A highly disgruntled Munroe explained this as due to the decay of Cambay, the word 'decay' being used for the first time in the English documents, although full scale manufacture was going on at Dholka

and Neriad. To the English at Surat, who agreed with Munroe on the general decay, it meant the falling off the English custom collection, i.e. lesser private trade through the English. Bombay therefore decided to abolish the vakil.<sup>122</sup> Once again Munroe tried to stop it by pointing out that he had been able to sell the damaged jamahs to one Mr. Bennet excepting forty-nine pieces. Bombay agreed to accept Munroe's plea of keeping the vakil provided he would collect 1 per cent on all private trade which would defray his expenses.<sup>123</sup> The political trouble at Ahmedabad did not affect trade at all as Surat informed Bombay that 'trade and business goes on without interruption'.<sup>124</sup>

Despite his promise, the Nawab of Cambay had no intention to clear the English goods without Banian duty while he had bowed to the superior power of the English for the time being. As Munroe was replaced by John Sewell in November 1742, it was becoming clear to Surat that the nawab would not yield without force. After clearing the investment stored at Cambay, Surat requested Bombay to send a small force. Munroe had assured Surat that it would work.<sup>125</sup> But it was not a simple affair between the English and the nawab as Munroe was involved deeply in the affair of Vera Das at Cambay.<sup>126</sup>

After arriving at Cambay in February 1737, Munroe had allowed credit for one month to Edulji for the sale of goods. Even after a year Edulji would not pay him and finally absconded stating that his brother Vera Das had used Rs. 6 thousand for his own ends which he should refund. Vera Das refused to pay and Munroe had secured Vera Das after promising him a safe conduct, with his family, in the factory. Munroe then informed the nawab who had sent Mirza Mughal, the shahbandar, to get their release for trial. After two days, Munroe delivered these prisoners to the nawab, who promptly imprisoned them. After taking Rs. 100 from them, the nawab released them and had appointed auditors to check the accounts. Vera Das finally managed to flee to Jambusar with his family. The nawab promised payment to Munroe by raising the sum from the banias of the city, who now joined together to postpone the payment as Munroe was being transferred. When Momin Khan came down to Cambay, he put Vera Das into prison but it did not produce any result as Momin Khan soon fell ill.

One should make certain clarifications at this stage. This was a private investment of Munroe and not that of the Company, in which case, the imprisonment of Vera Das and his family, reminiscent of late seventeenth or early eighteenth century practices in Bengal and

Coromandel, was done entirely on personal basis. One should also note that Vera Das was not an employee of the Company and did not take the money from Company. This was actually the root of the protection that the English later imposed at Cambay, which took these people away from the law of the land. Furthermore, perhaps because of the personal nature of business that the nawab had sent the shahbandar rather than the kotwal, who came at the French factory at Masulipatnam under similar circumstances nearly half a century earlier.<sup>127</sup> It is clear that both Munroe and the nawab wanted to keep the matter at a personal level and did not take the matter to the court of law which would have been the proper place to decide. In any case, the nawab was extremely generous to the English and had to postpone the payment only on the united pressure of the Cambay merchants.

Despite the faction fighting of the Marathas outside Surat, which saw the usual crowd of nearly fifty thousand villagers fleeing to the city from the countryside, the trade between Cambay and Surat continued.<sup>128</sup> Since the last letter of Munroe to the nawab did not bring the desired result, Munroe persuaded Surat to seize four Cambay boats with passengers. These were then brought to Surat where the passengers were released. Next day, on the 14 January 1743? Surat informed Sewell at Cambay of the seizure warning him not to load goods at Cambay.<sup>129</sup> The imprisonment of Vera Das first in the factory by the English and then by the nawab twice, was not considered sufficient.

On the morning of 21 January 1743, some Arab merchants of Surat asked the English to release their goods since they had nothing to do with Munroe.<sup>130</sup> Next day, the Dewan of Surat sent a message to clear the goods of the Surat merchants.<sup>131</sup> It appeared however that the English broker Monakji was also implicated in the affair.

It appeared to Sewell that the Nawab Nizam Khan, was willing to end the affair in favour of the English but his shahbandar, Mirza Mughal, was adamant, despite the fact that the merchants of Cambay were putting pressure on the nawab to end the affair.<sup>132</sup> While the matter progressed to some extent with the Dewan of Surat agreeing to stand as a guarantor, Monakji's assurance to the Cambay merchants to hold on for a few more days as the English were relenting, made the Cambay merchants stiffen their stand that would put a stop to English investment for the season. Sewell's conciliatory letter to Nizam Khan had no effect and he complained to Surat of the role of Monakji.<sup>133</sup>

Surat also felt that Munroe had disregarded Sewell's suggestion that only the Cambay boats bound for Brava coast should be detained. The English neglected this aspect which had embroiled the Surat merchants.

Munroe had therefore overplayed his hand which had affected the interests of the English at Surat and Cambay.<sup>134</sup>

The Dewan of Surat had managed Edulji agreeing to pay Rs. 10 thousand against Rs. 12 thousand as the maximum demand of Munroe.<sup>135</sup> But Surat wanted more. They asked for the release of Lambton's goods and restore the affairs of the Company with a promise not to insult the Company in future. Surat also asked Monakji not to correspond,<sup>136</sup> who, in any case, denied his participation, producing the copies of his correspondence.<sup>137</sup>

While the affair continued, Sewell had asked Surat to seize a Cambay boat leaving for Brava coast by sending two gallivats to join the sloop. Although Surat was crammed with villagers fleeing from the fights of two Maratha brokers,<sup>138</sup> Surat sent the boats to seize Cambay boats at Pagoda Point. Sewell had asked Captain Atkinson to seize particularly the boat of the wealthy Cambay merchant, Agha Bashir. But before the letter could reach Atkinson, he had let the boat of Agha Bashir pass, helped by a strong wind. Surat however wanted to seize that boat for another reason. Since the Agha had very close links with Damaji Gaekwad, his boat would serve as a leverage to restore the English goods.<sup>139</sup>

The news of the death of Momin Khan at Ahmedabad had unsettled Nizam Khan who hastily agreed to the terms of the English.<sup>140</sup> A settlement was effected by the end of February 1743 and the goods of the Surat merchants were returned. The English were paid Rs. 7068.25 p. with a promise of further payment of Rs. 5934.48 p. Sewell now asked Captain Atkinson to release Agha Bashir's boat, not being aware that he had let it pass.<sup>141</sup> Surat had known earlier that Agha Bashir's boat had been seized by the Kolis.<sup>142</sup> After forwarding the goods to Surat, Sewell informed the nawab.

The news soon spread at Cambay where the English were blamed for the incident. Surat had to assure Sewell that the boat was allowed to go by Atkinson and hoped that the truth would be known soon enough.<sup>143</sup> But the merchants and the nawab continued to pester the English for the loss of the boat.<sup>144</sup> Sewell tried to get written undertaking from the nawab and Mirza Mughal not to stop the English trade in future and not to detain the dependents of the English<sup>145</sup>—the beginning of 'protection' which the English successfully practiced later at Cambay, which put the associates of the English beyond the jurisdiction of the nawab. This would turn a group of people towards the English, rather make them dependent on the Company, who would be exempted

from the local taxes. Trade however continued as Surat sent gallivats to bring the goods from Cambay.<sup>146</sup>

Yet the trouble continued. Some of the hundis paid to Surat by Cambay were not cleared as a result of which Surat did not release the Cambay goods. So far Sewell had received only Rs. 550 out of the promised sum.<sup>147</sup> Surat had released one boat which was sent to Cambay.<sup>148</sup> The trouble between the English brokers surfaced again although enquiry revealed that Monakji had no hand in the affair. While Sewell was replaced by Thomas Hodges, Lachmidas brought the charge against Monakji that he was trying to monopolize the entire English trade at Cambay.<sup>149</sup>

It is clear therefore that it was not the Marathas who stopped the Cambay trade for over seven months. The aggressive English action under the cover of obtaining justice and protection against the tyranny of the nawab (the words used here were 'vexation' and 'violence') had disrupted the trading system. This had created a temporary unity among the Cambay merchants, the nawab and the Cambay officials against the English. It also revealed that a considerable number of merchants from Cambay were trading directly with west Asia and the African coast, whose combined trade would not be less than the English. It would be therefore very difficult to accept the postulate that the English trade monopolized the entire system with superior capital and operational techniques or that the indigenous capital has become subservient to that of the English.

The production in the countryside had not stopped as Lachmidas began to send goods to Cambay. The meeting between Thomas Hodges and the Subadar of Ahmedabad, who came to collect money from Cambay in the middle of May 1743, did not produce any unpleasant result. The subadar wanted the English to sell him steel and iron worth Rs. 40 thousand against the revenues of three villages, which was promptly turned down by Surat.<sup>150</sup> The subadar went back after borrowing Rs. 1.5 lakh from Cambay merchants.<sup>151</sup>

However, the return of the Subadar Fidauddin Khan to Ahmedabad did not mean the end of the trouble for the Cambay merchants as the Mughal-Maratha relations worsened. A party of Maratha cavalry came near Cambay, cutting off ears and noses of anyone found outside Cambay wall. The violence was because of the non-payment of half share of revenue to the Marathas as resolved earlier and Renkoji had come to Ahmedabad to collect it. The Nawab of Cambay, Nizam Khan,

fortified Cambay, entrusting the defence of a bastion to the English according to previous custom.<sup>152</sup>

The problem was solved in the usual fashion, when Nizam Khan agreed to pay to the Marathas half share of the revenue of Cambay. The Marathas soon posted their own men at the custom house under their own chouthear. Their insolence created some tension within the city but trade was not stopped as Hodges sent ninety-seven bales to Surat.<sup>153</sup>

This was the beginning of Maratha control of Cambay which nearly eclipsed the power of the English. This was also the beginning of the tripartite struggle between the nawab, the English and the Marathas to control Cambay, which would dominate the next fifty years of Cambay's history in the background of the decline of Mughal power in Gujarat and the increasing political uncertainty at Ahmedabad.

On 28 October 1743, Nizam Khan formally instituted the Marathas at Cambay, as receiver of half share of revenue, by giving a serpaw to the Maratha chouthear and asking Hodges to withdraw his peons from the bastion. The Maratha chouthear assured the banias of Cambay of his protection. Nizam Khan, on his side, assured them that there would not be further imposition of taxes which led Hodges to hope for a flourishing trade at Cambay.<sup>154</sup>

After the death of Momin Khan and the consequent changes in the political scene at Ahmedabad, Muftakhir Khan, son of Momin Khan, had fled to Cambay and had attempted to make a compromise with Renkoji to get the post of naib at Ahmedabad.<sup>155</sup> This did not hinder the movement of goods excepting for a brief period when Nizam Khan commissioned all the boats to attack Dholka to satisfy one group of Marathas. The attack did not take place as Renkoji did not support him,<sup>156</sup> but Hodges felt apprehensive of the refusal of Teg Beg Khan of Surat to resign, which he viewed, quite rightly, would hamper Cambay-Surat trade.<sup>157</sup>

The dual administration at Cambay had reduced the power of the nawab. The complete dependence of Muftakhir Khan on Renkoji, encamped outside Cambay, had emboldened the Marathas, who had increased their power within the city, acting as the superpower of the region.<sup>158</sup> The next half century of the history of Cambay would show the determined attempts of successive nawabs to free themselves from the control of the Marathas and the English.

Despite the movement of goods, the countryside of Cambay showed that the problem of the Marathas was not completely over. Till

the middle of January 1744, Edulji could not complete the investment and a furious Surat desperately wanted Hodges to find another contractor to supply for the ensuing season.<sup>159</sup> But Hodges could not get any other contractor willing to undertake the investment due to the Maratha trouble in the countryside,<sup>160</sup> showing for once that Edulji was not at fault. Edulji took this opportunity to claim a commission for chopping and cleaning, which, according to Hodges, had always been paid, varying from 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent.<sup>161</sup> Hodges also acknowledged that the Maratha problem was real. The production of Necannees and Dutties, from which Byrampants were manufactured at Cambay, was interrupted at Dholka and Neriad, although the manufacture of Brawls, Guinea-stuff and Chelloes had continued at Cambay.<sup>162</sup> Obviously only certain areas of the countryside were affected, yet the merchants had become panicky and were not willing to invest.

The panic turned into reality soon. In February 1744, Rankoji encamped within sight of Cambay walls, demanding Rs. 1 lakh from the nawab for his assistance. He however cleared the goods of the English after Hodges paid him a visit<sup>163</sup> but the nawab closed the gates and began to raise money from the banias with imprisonment and torture. As a result, the banias had closed their shops and had left Cambay or had gone into hiding. Some of them complained to Rankoji who ordered the gates to be opened and assured free trade. He even forced the Nawab Nizam Khan to promise good behaviour. An agreement was reached between the Nawab, the Marathas and the banias, after which the latter had come back in March. Hodges had of course remained neutral and remarked to Surat that the power of the Marathas was greater than that of the Mughals in Gujarat.<sup>164</sup>

Surat was not amused. They chided Hodges for visiting Rankoji himself instead of sending Edulji which would have cost less in presents. Surat felt that the feeling of Nizam Khan must have been hurt and they remarked that the banias would join whoever in power or superior.<sup>165</sup> Apart from the cost of presents, Surat was unhappy on the unity of the banias supporting the Marathas, although this was directed against the Nawab Nizam Khan. This would certainly affect the balance of power. With the support of the Marathas, the banias could override the interests of the English, which would not suit the English at all. Moreover, the banias could choose to deal with the Marathas rather than with the English particularly when the production in the countryside was under the control of the Marathas. Within the broad



spectrum of the freedom of trade, the banias, under the protection of the Marathas, would get better privileges and obviously better prices, than the English, whose trading profits depended in the inequality of the privileges in their favour.

Obviously both the nawab and the English had been outmanoeuvred by the Marathas who could win over the banias. But the relation between the nawab and the English did not improve, particularly when Nizam Khan seized the effects of the runaway merchant Asmatullah in the middle of 1744. Mehta Haridas, one of the brokers of the English, had also the goods of Asmatullah. Nawab wanted the Mehta for the recovery of goods but released him on the security given by Hodges so that the trade could continue. In July, the nawab set peons in the house of Haridas again on the pretext that Haridas was to pay Rs. 5 thousand for various taxes.<sup>166</sup> Although Hodges threatened reprisals, at the end, the matter was arranged with Haridas paying Rs. 1.8 thousand while the nawab presented a shawl to him to show his generosity.<sup>167</sup>

It is interesting that Haridas did not go to the Marathas nor did the Marathas interfere in the proceedings. It was perhaps because of the demarcation of areas of operation that prevented the Marathas from interfering when Hodges threatened the nawab. Actually Hodges's comment that Haridas had got away lightly<sup>168</sup> implied the guilt of Haridas. The absence of any indignation or sense of injury in the correspondence of Hodges showed the exemplary behaviour of Nizam Khan. The affair did not prevent the trade being carried on at Cambay contrary to the information given by the contractor.

But Renkoji was not the only Maratha leader. In February 1745, Khande Rao seized the Dholka kafila which was carrying the goods worth Rs. 10 thousand out of which the English goods were worth only Rs. 1 thousand. These were later released on the basis of a letter from Hodges.<sup>169</sup> Yet Khande Rao continued the menacing attitude. At the end of July 1745, he came within a mile of Cambay, which created a panic.<sup>170</sup> He withdrew but reappeared in October, which forced Charles Crommelin, succeeding Hodges, to appoint peons to guard the bastion usually assigned to the English.<sup>171</sup>

Actually the greater threat to the English came from the Dutch. Driven out of Ahmedabad, they settled in Broach and tried to expand into Cambay. Although their attempt to procure Necanees and Guinea-stuff did not make much headway, yet the English feared that the competition would increase the prices. The Dutch had found that



Cambay Guinea-stuff was cheaper by Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per corge at Cambay compared to the price at Broach. But the nawab insisted that the Dutch should pay Banian duty of 1 per cent along with the usual custom charge of 2.5 per cent, although he hinted that with large gifts and a settled factory, the Banian duty might be waived, which would make them at par with the English.<sup>172</sup> In September 1746, Crommelin reported the advance of Rs. 3.5 thousand given by the Dutch bania to the weavers for the sample and that they were negotiating with the nawab for the relaxation of custom duties. Finally the attempt was called off.<sup>173</sup>

The English were embroiled with Nizam Khan on the usual level of trade. Since there was a scarcity of provisions at Cambay, possibly due to Maratha trouble earlier, at the end of November 1746, the nawab had prohibited the sale of grain at higher prices than prevailing in the market. The English transported grain from Bombay, freighted by other merchants, in two boats, landed these at Cambay and sold these at higher prices. Evidently this was done without the permission of the owners of that of the nawab. The English then tried to pass the blame on the Siddis<sup>174</sup> and a highly enraged nawab forbade the trade between Surat and Cambay, leaving the Cambay-Bombay run open.<sup>175</sup> Surat asked Crommelin to threaten the Nawab,<sup>176</sup> but his sudden death on 11 March 1745 solved the problem. Nizam Khan was succeeded by Muftakhir Khan, son of Momin Khan.<sup>177</sup> The English trade however continued despite some problems of the river.<sup>178</sup> On 17 January 1749, price replacing Crommelin, reported that the English had collected customs of Rs. 307.46 p. on one day, which showed that the trade had continued despite political changes.<sup>179</sup>

After the death of the Mughal emperor Muhammed Shah at Delhi in 1748, Maharaja Bhakt Singh was appointed Subadar of Gujarat on condition that he would send the revenue of the Khas Mahals as fixed during the reign of Aurangzeb.<sup>180</sup> The scramble followed at Ahmedabad as most of the parganas and markets were then under the control of the Marathas. It was now decided to share the revenue equally between the Mughals and the Marathas with no responsibility attached to any of them. In the dual administration, the Kolis had begun their depredations, attacking the towns, cities and the highways. The author of *Mirat* recorded that even the washermen could not wash their clothes in the Sabarmati river.<sup>181</sup> Naturally the expenses of the army had increased considerably.

Amidst this chaotic condition, Cambay trade continued with minor interruptions. One such was in March 1749, when the boat of a certain Mody, carrying English goods worth Rs. 30 thousand stuck on a sandbar and was seized by the Marathas. Since the letters of Price had no effect on them, Price managed to persuade the nawab and the Siddis to organize a rescue party. But the Marathas released the boat with goods, once again demonstrating that they were not obstructing the trade of Cambay.<sup>182</sup> This could be seen when in early December 1749, Price could send to Surat 58 bales<sup>183</sup> and kept ready another 240 corges.<sup>184</sup> Despite the troubles at Surat, throughout 1751 and up to the middle of 1752, production and trade at Cambay continued undisturbed.

Nawab Muftakhir Khan, who had taken the title of Momin Khan,<sup>185</sup> wanted the Peshwa Baji Rao to take charge of the Maratha share of Cambay revenue in place of Damaji Gaekwad. Nawab's peshkar, Brajalal, conveyed it to the peshwa who gladly accepted it. He decided to share the Maratha revenue with Damaji,<sup>186</sup> thus playing into the hands of the nawab who wanted to divide the Marathas. Thus three parties, the nawab, Damaji and the peshwa, shared the revenue of Cambay.

Around 1750, the physical condition of the city of Cambay had deteriorated considerably. Tieffenthaeler,<sup>187</sup> a German priest visiting Cambay around this time, had found the suburbs nearly desolated while most of the Muslims had left the city. The houses close to the walls were in ruins and the streets were stinking with garbage. Yet cotton was produced all around Cambay, where it was woven in large quantities. The English had managed to control most of the cotton trade while the revenue was shared by the three parties.

With the decline of Goa and later Surat, there is no doubt of the decline of Cambay, which had started earlier than those of the two cities. The shrinking revenue of the nawab, the nature of dual administration and the increasing expenses of the army to keep the city safe from the Kolis and the occasional Maratha attacks had its effect on the municipal administration of Cambay. Even then, the production and communication with the countryside had not been cut off while the direct trade with west Asia had remained. The Marathas, unable to get into Surat, had acted far more aggressively there while their role in Cambay pargana was entirely different. Here, at Cambay, they had encouraged production and trade, allowing the merchants to have links with west Asia. Yet, behind the placid life of trade at Cambay, the slow and gradual impoverishment of the Mughal nobility,

cut off from the life of Delhi and Agra in the wake of the decline of the Mughal empire, could be seen. It is true that Gujarat had stopped sending revenue to the Mughal empire, but this did not accrue to the local government since a large slice of this saving was siphoned off to the Marathas.

Despite physical deterioration of the city, which was tied up with the shrinking revenue of the nawab and his increasing army, Cambay's trade had remained steadfast during the last thirty years. With the trouble in the parganas of Surat, the dependence of the English as well as other Indian merchants on the production of Cambay remained. The supportive role of Cambay had not diminished while the direct trading with Asia and Africa had remained. In that sense, one cannot put the history of all Gujarat ports in one basket despite the fact that the Marathas had overrun the parganas of Cambay. But as we should see, the history of the parganas of Cambay was different from the history of other parganas of Gujarat, particularly from those of Surat or Ahmedabad.

### References

1. *Mirat*, pp. 412-41.
2. A. Malet, *Historical Narrative of the District of Cambay from 1630 to 1847*, p. 24.
3. *Commonwealth Relations Office*, London (hereafter cited as *CRO*), Surat Diary & Consultation, Surat to Innes at Cambay, 5 October 1724, f. 24, f. 27. Half of the ivory was sold within two months.
4. *CRO*, f. 64. Surat wanted cotton yarn for the use of Bombay weavers (*CRO*, Surat to Innes, f. 63).
5. *Archives Nationales et Coloniales*, Paris (in short *AN* here), letter of Surat, 30 November 1699, f. 189 asking to escort Cambay boats (Colonic C(2) 63).
6. Hamid Khan killed Rustam Khan while Sarbuland Khan was preparing to oust Hamid Khan, *CRO*, G 36, Surat Diary & Consult., Cambay to Surat, 15 February 1725, Surat to Bombay, ff. 76-77.
7. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 21 April 1725, f. 104.
8. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 18 March 1725, ff. 90-91; 19 March 1725, f. 93; 10 January 1726 (vol. 11A, typed, f. 12).
9. Malet, pp. 25-26, for the letters from Cambay to Surat, April 7, 8, 11, 1725. The English were asked to pay Rs. 50,000 out of the total demand of Rs. 1.1 lakh. The English refused.
10. *CRO*, p. 27. After hiding for some time, the merchants gave hostages.
11. *CRO*, p. 27.
12. *CRO*, vol. 11A (typed), Surat Diary, 9 October 1725.
13. Malet, p. 28, Cambay to Surat, 29 December 1725.
14. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Cambay to Surat, 9 January 1727, f. 33.

15. *CRO*, vol. 11A (typed), Surat Diary, 10 November 1725; Surat Consult., Cambay to Surat, 6 March 1727, f. 54. He sent 112 bales in November and 7 bales and 280 pieces of Tanaka in March.
16. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Innes to Surat, 20 September 1727, 12 October 1727, ff. 10-11.
17. *Mirat*, pp. 449-50.
18. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Innes to Surat, 20 November 1727, f. 32.
19. Malet, p. 28, Cambay to Surat, 24 June 1727. He came on 23 June.
20. Malet, pp. 28-29, Cambay to Surat, 9 November 1728; 24 November 1729.
21. *Mirat*, pp. 468-89.
22. Malet, p. 29.
23. M.S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, vol. II, pp. 389-90, 446. Also see the genealogical table in Raghubir Sinh, ed., *Selections from Sir C.W. Malet's Letter-Book, 1780-1784*.
24. *Mirat*, pp. 483-85.
25. *Mirat*, pp. 491-513.
26. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Surat to Cambay, 4 March 1730, f. 27.
27. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 7 March 1730, f. 28.
28. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 20 June 1730, f. 43.
29. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 16 July 1730, f. 51.
30. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 23 July 1730, f. 54. A Commission of Enquiry was set up by the English.
31. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 1, 8, 18 December 1730, f. 21.
32. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 3 January 1731, f. 23.
33. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 11 September 1730, f. 6. Innes had to get this by boat from Jambusar due to Maratha trouble at Broach.
34. *Mirat*, pp. 489-90. See D. Tripathi and M.J. Mehta, 'The Nagarsheth of Ahmedabad: The History of an Urban Institution in a Gujarat city', pp. 262-75.
35. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 2 August 1731, f. 1.
36. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 27 July 1731, ff. 57-58.
37. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 9 December 1731, f. 18.
38. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 3 December 1731, f. 20.
39. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 20 January 1732, f. 25.
40. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 28 October 1732, f. 53.
41. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 11 November 1732, ff. 57-58.
42. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, November 1732, ff. 57-58.
43. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 24 December 1732, f. 68. He sent 20 bales of Byrampants, 9 bales of Guinea stuff and 2 bales of White Tanaka. He explained that due to famine '... there is not a quarter part of the poor at Cambay to Neriad left alive ...' (*CRO*, f. 6).
44. This was suggested by Innes (*CRO*, 27 December 1732, ff. 69-70).
45. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 11 May 1733, f. 100.
46. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 22 April 1733, f. 115.
47. *CRO*, 11 May 1733, f. 100.
48. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 17 May 1733, f. 123.
49. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 2 June & 8 June 1733, ff. 128-30.
50. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 27 June 1733, f. 134.
51. *Mirat*, pp. 515-21.

52. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Cambay to Surat, 18 August, 2 September, 6 September, 24 September & 28 September 1733, ff. 4-33. The Kolis also made the roads insecure.
53. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 14 January 1734, f. 79.
54. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 17 March, 20 March, 25 May & 10 June 1734, ff. 233-274.
55. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 14 July, f. 282; 3 October, f. 27; 3 November 1734, f. 50.
56. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 3 July 1734, f. 279.
57. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 21 June 1734, ff. 277-78; 3 July 1734, f. 279.
58. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 30 December 1734, f. 60.
59. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 20 January 1735, f. 93.
60. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 10 April 1735, ff. 171-2.
61. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 30 October 1735, f. 23.
62. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 11 August 1735, f. 2.
63. *Mirat*, pp. 527-37.
64. Malet, p. 38; Surat to Cambay, 24 December 1736.
65. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Cambay to Surat, 28 February 1736, f. 76.
66. Malet, p. 38; Surat to Cambay, 24 December 1736.
67. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Munroe to Surat, 6 March & 13 April 1736, f. 28 & f. 45 respectively.
68. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 9 July 1736; Surat to Cambay, 24 July, f. 144.
69. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 13 August 1736, ff. 10-11.
70. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 6 September 1736, f. 20.
71. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 21 September 1736, f. 32.
72. *Mirat*, pp. 538-41.
73. *Mirat*, pp. 541-76.
74. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Cambay to Surat, 22 October 1737, f. 42. He released the goods soon after (*CRO*, 8 November 1737, f. 47).
75. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 15 November & 24 November 1737, ff. 51-52.
76. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 11 November 1737, f. 67; Surat to Cambay, 19 December, f. 68; 26 January 1738, ff. 15-17.
77. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 26 January 1738, ff. 15-17.
78. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 3 February 1738, ff. 18-20.
79. *Bhawanagar District Gazetteer*, 564-68.
80. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Surat to Munroe, 6 February 1738, ff. 22-23.
81. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 7 February 1738, f. 23.
82. *CRO*, Surat to Cambay, 5 April, f. 79; 9 April, f. 83; 13 April, ff. 85-87; Munroe to Surat, 19 April, ff. 95-97; Surat to Munroe, 23 April, ff. 97-100; Munroe to Surat, 27 April, 1738 ff. 105.
83. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 28 April, ff. 106-7; Surat to Munroe, 6 May 1738, ff. 109-11.
84. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 10 May, ff. 126-28 & 21 May 1738, ff. 159-61.
85. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 25 May 1738, ff. 161-2.
86. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 30 May 1738, ff. 170-72.
87. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 11 July 1738, ff. 202-2; Munroe to Surat, 24 July 1738, ff. 208-9.
88. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 1 August 1738, f. 4.
89. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 28 August, ff. 19-20; Munroe to Surat, 2 September, f. 21; Surat to Munroe, 8 September 1738, ff. 21-22.
90. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 16 October 1738, f. 49.

91. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 18 December, f. 75; Munroe to Surat, 18 December 1738, ff. 84-85.
92. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 18 December, ff. 83-85; Surat to Munroe, 23 December, ff. 86-88; Munroe to Surat, 31 December, ff. 95-97; Surat to Munroe, 22 January 1739, ff. 106-9.
93. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 28 January 1739, ff. 14-16.
94. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 5 August 1739, f. 4.
95. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 31 July 1739, f. 1; 7 October, ff. 30-31.
96. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 15 October 1739, ff. 32-33; 26 October, f. 41.
97. *Mirat*, pp. 591-638, for details.
98. *CRO*, Surat consult., Surat to Munroe, 19 February 1740, f. 84; Munroe to Surat, 25 February, f. 85; 4 March, f. 93; Surat to Munroe, 8 March, f. 95 & 26 March 1740, f. 103.
99. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 29 March 1740, f. 103.
100. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 1 August 1740, f. 1; Surat to Munroe, 31 August 1740, f. 11; Munroe to Surat, 8 September 1740, f. 17.
101. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 2 October 1740, f. 29; Surat to Munroe, 7 October, f. 31 & 19 October, f. 30; Munroe to Surat, 26 October, f. 34; Surat to Munroe, 29 October, f. 34; Munroe to Surat, 25 October 1740, ff. 36-37.
102. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 24 November, ff. 44-47 & 27 December 1740, f. 62.
103. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 9 January 1741, f. 55.
104. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 25 February 1741, f. 63.
105. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 2 June 1741, f. 79.
106. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 18 October 1741, f. 210.
107. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 7 November 1741, f. 219.
108. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 7 November 1741, f. 218; Surat to Munroe, 16 November 1741, f. 225.
109. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 20 November 1741, f. 230.
110. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 22 November, f. 230; Surat to Munroe, 25 November 1741, f. 230.
111. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 6 December, f. 238; Surat to Munroe, 11 December, f. 238; Munroe to Surat, 15 December 1741, f. 240.
112. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 31 December 1741, f. 252.
113. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 6 January 1742, f. 252.
114. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 18 January 1742, ff. 259-60.
115. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 29 January 1742, f. 265.
116. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 3 February 1742, f. 267.
117. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 6 February 1742, ff. 269-70.
118. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 18 February 1742, f. 270.
119. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 26 February 1742, f. 276.
120. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 6 March 1742, ff. 289-90; Surat to Munroe, 23 March 1742, f. 315. Three boats were actually seized but released soon after.
121. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 5 May, f. 171; 12 May, f. 171 & 26 May 1742, ff. 175-76.
122. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 9 August 1742, f. 188.
123. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 6 September, f. 198; Surat to Munroe, 18 September 1742, f. 198.
124. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 21 September 1742, f. 200.

125. *CRO*, Surat to Munroe, 14 November 1742, f. 213; Surat to Bombay, 7 December 1742, ff. 219-20.
126. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 7 December 1742, ff. 219-20. The entire report was based on the testimony of Munroe recorded at Cambay on December 1, 1742 and the report of enquiry by John Sewell at Cambay on December 4, 1742.
127. A. Ray, 'An Aspect of Indo-French History: Masulipatnam 1670', pp. 320-35.
128. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 15 December 1742, ff. 221-22.
129. *CRO*, Munroe to Surat, 7 January 1743, f. 78; Surat to John Bull, Master of Tyger Gallivat, 9 January 1743, f. 79.
130. *CRO*, Surat Consult. Proceedings, 21 January 1743, f. 89.
131. *CRO*, Proceedings, 22 January 1743, ff. 89-90.
132. *CRO*, Sewell to Surat, 6 February 1743, ff. 60-61.
133. *CRO*, Sewell to Surat, 5 February, ff. 59-60 & 8 February 1743, ff. 61-62.
134. *CRO*, Surat Consult., 13 February 1743, f. 97.
135. *CRO*, Sewell to Surat, 17 February 1743, ff. 64-65.
136. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 13 February 1743, ff. 236-37.
137. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 13 February 1743, f. 95.
138. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 26 February, f. 240; Surat to Sewell, 26 February 1743, ff. 240-41.
139. *CRO*, Sewell to Surat, 26 February, f. 241; Surat to Sewell, 28 February 1743, f. 241.
140. *CRO*, Surat to Sewell, 1 March, f. 242; Surat to Bombay, 2 March 1743, ff. 242-43.
141. *CRO*, Surat to Sewell, 28 February, f. 99; Surat to Sewell, 8 March 1743, f. 243.
142. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Proceedings, 4 March 1743, f. 97.
143. *CRO*, Sewell to Surat, 7 March 1743, f. 244.
144. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 10 March 1743, f. 245.
145. *CRO*, Sewell to Surat, 8 March 1743, f. 110.
146. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 14 March, f. 244; Surat to Sewell, 18 March 1743, f. 248. Trade was not totally stopped as Sewell had sent 53 bales to Surat on 28 February (*CRO*, 3 March, f. 101).
147. *CRO*, Surat to Bombay, 25 March 1743, ff. 254-55.
148. *CRO*, Surat to Sewell, 28 March 1743, f. 257.
149. *CRO*, Surat to Sewell, 13 April, f. 258; Surat to Bombay, 24 April 1743, ff. 261-63.
150. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 7 May, f. 148; Surat to Hodges, 24 May 1743, f. 150.
151. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 20 May 1743, f. 150.
152. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 12 September 1743, f. 170.
153. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 18 October 1743, f. 26.
154. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 29 October 1743, ff. 29-30.
155. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 29 October 1743, ff. 29-30.
156. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 25 November 1743, f. 58; 7 December 1743, f. 36.
157. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 29 December 1743, f. 43.
158. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 31 January 1744, f. 51.
159. *CRO*, Surat to Hodges, 15 January 1744, f. 84 & 25 January 1744, f. 89.
160. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 31 January 1744, f. 93.
161. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 24 January 1744, f. 91.
162. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 5 February 1744, ff. 54-55.
163. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 14 February 1744, f. 98 (full letter in *MRO*, vol. 6, f. 5).
164. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 17 February, f. 98; Surat to Hodges, 20 February, ff. 98-99; Hodges to Surat, 3 March 1744, f. 107.

165. *CRO*, Surat to Hodges, 8 March 1744, f. 108.
166. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 23 June, f. 42; Surat to Hodges, 28 June, f. 143; 9 July 1744, f. 148.
167. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 11 July 1744, ff. 86-89.
168. *CRO*, Hodges to Surat, 11 July 1744, ff. 86-89.
169. *MRO*, Surat Consult., 1 March 1745, f. 72; 13 March, f. 74.
170. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Proceedings, 24 July 1745, f. 111.
171. *MRO*, 19 April 1746, f. 367. Hodges was temporarily replaced by William Hornby.
172. *MRO*, Surat to Crommelin, 24 July 1746, f. 389; Surat Consult., Proceedings, 14 August 1746, f. 9.
173. *MRO*, Proceedings, 1 September 1746, ff. 4-5.
174. *MRO*, Proceedings, 10 November 1746, ff. 17-18.
175. *MRO*, Proceedings, 17 November 1746, f. 19.
176. *MRO*, Surat to Crommelin, 7 January 1747, f. 255.
177. *MRO*, Cambay to Surat, 19 March 1747, f. 112.
178. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Proceedings, 15 August 1748, f. 163; 31 December 1748, f. 53.
179. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Proceedings, 17 January 1749.
180. *Mirat*, pp. 707-8.
181. *Mirat*, pp. 709-23.
182. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Proceedings, 8 March 1749, f. 284; 19 March f. 246; 23 March, f. 287.
183. *CRO*, Surat Consult., Cambay to Surat, 4 December 1749, f. 54.
184. *CRO*, Cambay to Surat, 17 January 1750, ff. 77-78; 20 February, f. 105; 15 March, f. 125; 11 April, f. 144.
185. *Mirat*, pp. 685-98.
186. *Mirat*, pp. 729-31.
187. Joseph Tieffaenthaeler, *Geographie de l'Hindoustan*, 380-82 (translated into French).



## CHAPTER 7

### Marathas and the Nawab

From the beginning of the 1750s, the Maratha problem gradually began to affect Cambay as it felt the effects of the faction fighting of the Marathas in January 1752.<sup>1</sup> Amar Rao, brother of Damaji, came to Jambusar and plundered the area, including Amood, a town nearby. This affected the supply of beef to the English at Surat but it was over as quickly as it had begun. The supply of cows at Cambay, from where it was turned into salted beef, had become erratic and had remained so even in February. Cotton goods were also affected as the merchants could collect only two-thirds of Mocha goods.<sup>2</sup> One problem of such a period of trouble was that the merchants needed a new insurance policy. Obviously the rate would be higher since the risk factor had increased and they needed a guideline from Surat where the principal insurers were located. As a result the greater part of the English goods had remained within the warehouse of Cambay while Damaji's new Chouthear at Cambay had arrived. The problem of the boat of Nana Rattan, the merchant governor of Jambusar under the Marathas, did not cause much headache as Surat assured Nana of the return of his boat seized by the English.<sup>3</sup>

One could sense however the increase of aggressiveness of the Marathas at Cambay. The new chouthear immediately demanded that two customs gates for the Marathas be opened and that all the Maratha officials be accommodated within the city. The nawab, visualizing his ruin, did not agree.<sup>4</sup>

It is not clear what happened immediately after. But by the end of July, Damaji had replaced the chouthear with a more moderate one, to whom William Shaw, replacing Price, had to pay a visit. Perhaps as a part of the deal, the nawab replaced Mirza Mughal, the shahbandar, with a new one.<sup>5</sup> But by that time, the trouble at Surat had stopped the trade between Cambay and Surat, which, with the absence of convoys

from Cambay, had lowered the custom collection of the English at Cambay.<sup>6</sup> Surat ungenerously linked the increasing charges of the Cambay factory to the presents given by Shaw to new officials.<sup>7</sup> Shaw of course did not have much of a choice to reduce his expenses as he had to recruit peons to guard the usual bastion as a Maratha army began to approach Cambay in November 1752.<sup>8</sup>

All these resulted in the confusion between Surat and Cambay. In early December 1752, the Surat boat had to return from the Pagoda Point without being able to make a rendezvous with Cambay's boat. Once again it was not the fault of Shaw as the pattamar from Surat had failed to reach Shaw at Cambay in time.<sup>9</sup> The political infrastructure was making such operations costly and difficult, although there was no stoppage of trade.

That the infrastructural problem was affecting the trade to a limited extent could be seen in other areas also. The insurance charges were getting 'unreasonable' at Cambay and Surat had to ask Shaw to send Mocha goods to Surat where the insurance would be done.<sup>10</sup> Far more serious was the refusal of Cambay contractors at Mocha.<sup>11</sup> Although the production of Cambay had not declined, yet trade was getting bogged down by several factors.

Shaw's letter of 6 December 1752 revealed not only the uncertainty of the times but the gradual decline of business at Cambay. He found that only the insurance for small sums were available at Cambay, which was restricted up to Rs 1 thousand in one boat. One or the other insurer was interested in higher sums of insurance but Shaw doubted whether it would be possible to realize money from them. This uncertainty had increased the insurance rate by 1 per cent, which was more than the Surat rate.<sup>12</sup> This would mean that either the richer merchants had left Cambay or they were unwilling to insure for Mocha trade due to the trouble at Mocha.

The incident of 9 December 1752 illuminated the problem further. On the day, the Kolis carried away a few Surat and English boats by force. Shaw managed to persuade the nawab and the Portuguese gallivat to chase them but they could not come out of bandar due to lack of wind and low tide. It is interesting that for the first time, the English agent was linking the lack of insurance with the precarious tide and dangerous river<sup>13</sup> which is naturally only one part of the story. Despite the presence of the Koli boats on the opposite bank, three captured boats managed to reach Surat, which decided henceforth to convoy the boats with the gallivat.<sup>14</sup> The English however got the insurance money in instalments for the lost boat and goods.<sup>15</sup>

While Shaw could buy back thirteen bales of goods from the Kolis of Sultanpur,<sup>16</sup> his biggest problem was to find the Mocha goods. In early January 1753, he could put only goods worth Rs. 1 thousand in the factory.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile the insecurity and the uncertainty had increased the cost of the convoy for which the English had to levy 1 per cent surcharge, called convoy duty, for any boat in the coast under the English flag.<sup>18</sup> This also resulted in the lower customs collection of the English, which Robert Erskine, succeeding Shaw, found when he reached Cambay in early February 1753. The customs collection for the year was Rs. 367.10 p. which was previously the collection of one day. He could send some Mocha goods to Surat under the Portuguese convoy.<sup>19</sup> Till the third week of February 1753, Erskine could not supply the investment for Surat.

There were several reasons for such delay. One was the demand by the Marathas of a special tax called *Ghasdana* from the production centres, which had cut off the communication between these centres and Cambay.<sup>20</sup> Another was that the river had become dangerous with new areas of shallow water resulting in several boats as well as the gallivats running around. Erskine had to cut a new channel to rescue the boats. Finally the Maratha chouthar was ready to clear the goods but only with presents.<sup>21</sup> They had failed to open another custom gate and were trying to create another authority at Cambay by usurping the powers of the nawab, who had already agreed to pay Rs. 7 thousand a year as *Ghasdana* to the Maratha agent of the Peshwa at Cambay.

Meanwhile Raghunath Rao had come to Ahmedabad as the subadar on behalf of the peshwa and had assumed unlimited authority when Jawanmard Khan left Ahmedabad with Rs. 1 lakh from him. With the departure of the last Mughal subadar, Gujarat had passed to the Marathas on and from 1753 and Amils were appointed for the collection of revenue. Raghunath fixed Rs. 10 thousand as *Ghasdana* for the Nawab of Cambay which included the chorasi parganas. The Marathas now propagated a new ideology by setting aside the Mughal flag of red colour and unfurled their own flag. Marathi and Hindi were introduced in all official correspondences while cow and buffalo slaughter were banned. However, there was no imposition on the merchants and some of the Muslim merchants appealed to Raghunath against the harsh treatment of the Nawab of Cambay, who was cautioned to be careful.<sup>22</sup>

On the order of Surat, Erskine had sent Edulji along with other merchants of Cambay to Raghunath Rao at Ahmedabad with presents.<sup>23</sup>

He was treated well and two parwanas were given to him—one for the security of the Company's goods coming from Dholka and Neriad and the other to Damaji Gaekwad not to seize the English boats.<sup>24</sup> There was no interruption of production and in October 1753, Erskine reported a full warehouse at Cambay while more goods were expected to arrive from Dholka and Neriad.<sup>25</sup> With the arrival of the Marathas in power, Cambay trade had improved.

Yet this did not improve the condition of the city. Cracks and disintegration had appeared on the walls of Cambay, which had not been repaired for a long time. Sripat Rao, the Maratha chouthear, therefore hatched a plot to seize Cambay for non-payment of Rs. 7 thousand as *Ghasdana*, which was leaked to the nawab, who prepared for the defence.<sup>26</sup> Sripat Rao blocked the road and besieged one part of the suburb of Cambay, setting fire to another part. The English took their guard in the bastion usually assigned to them.<sup>27</sup> As a result, goods from Neriad could not be brought to Cambay.<sup>28</sup> In April 1754, Momin Khan agreed to assign some villages for *Ghasdana*, which terminated the affair.<sup>29</sup>

Naturally this had stopped the transport of goods to Cambay and Erskine could not collect the goods. A very heavy rain damaged some houses including the English factory building,<sup>30</sup> but helped the production of cotton. The price at Jambusar began to fall from high level of Rs. 85 a candy. But the English found it difficult to procure cotton in large quantities as the merchants of Cambay did not want to take large orders. The prices of coarse cotton had come down to Rs. 80 per candy and Erskine was sure that it would go up with the arrival of the Bengal ships.<sup>31</sup> However he managed to collect 100 bales, half of which he had to send overland to Surat as the convoy could not come due to strong southerly wind.<sup>32</sup> Despite the Maratha trouble, production and trade had continued at Cambay with some constraints.

The new Maratha chouthear of the Peshwa, Bhagawant Rao, also began to plan for the seizure of Cambay from November 1754.<sup>33</sup> Erskine had to pay him a visit with a present that helped the smooth despatch of English goods to Surat from Cambay. The private trade of the English had remained stationary at Rs. 40 thousand a year, which failed to cover the increasing durbar charges of the Vakil Edulji. He asked for a salary rise which was supported by Erskine.<sup>34</sup>

By the middle of December 1754, Momin Khan got wind of the plan of Bhagawant Rao. On the morning of 23 December 1754, he seized the Maratha chouthear and his principal followers and brought them

to the Durbar. The nawab then seized the revenues of the parganas and recruited soldiers, after strengthening the fortification of the city.<sup>35</sup>

The revenues were not sufficient for Momin Khan and he wanted to raise a large amount by imposing another set of taxes on the merchants, who left Cambay around October. After Momin Khan had given them easier terms, they came back to Cambay.<sup>36</sup>

Lambert, who had replaced Erskine, was asked by the nawab to furnish powder and lead worth Rs. 2 thousand on hundi. Surat did not consider that the hundi of the nawab was sufficient and therefore ordered Lambert to remain strictly neutral.<sup>37</sup> The English were very much anxious about the attacks of the Kolis, who in early January 1755, attacked the English convoy at Pagoda Point. Till the third week of January 1755, the English could not send goods to Surat.<sup>38</sup>

The Maratha retaliation did not take long in coming. By the third week of February 1755, the Maratha army encamped near the city and demanded the release of the Maratha chouthear with his followers. Meanwhile, the nawab had sent a report to the peshwa and refused to release them till the reply of the peshwa was received.<sup>39</sup> Although the Maratha army was small, it attacked and burnt a part of the suburbs of the city, after plundering most of the villages around it. The army of the peshwa, about twelve thousand strong, arrived soon belying the English hope that the city would not be attacked.<sup>40</sup> Peace was finally arranged through Nana Rattan, the merchant of Jambusar. It was agreed that the Maratha chouthear would henceforth reside outside the city at Napad.<sup>41</sup>

Although the English trade was not much affected as Erskine had managed to send three large bales to Surat overland,<sup>42</sup> the perennial problem of the broker had surfaced again. Edulji's claim of 1 per cent chopping charge was refused by other contractors and the matter went up to Bombay, which hinted to Surat that basically it was a quarrel between different families of brokers.<sup>43</sup> The contractors asked Edulji to refund the excess amount paid by them<sup>44</sup> which was supported by Surat while Erskine supported the stand of Edulji. His report to Surat revealed the condition prevailing at Cambay.

The English paid 3.5 per cent duty on import and 4.5 per cent on export to the nawab which amounted then to Rs. 10 thousand per year, the same amount that Surat paid to the Nawab of Surat in lump sum. At Cambay, the amount was paid immediately after chopping the goods at the customs house, to the nawab on goods carried in the name of the English. The agents of the contractors always paid half a

rupee to the assistant for marking on each bale. Besides, the Company gave sundry presents which were not entered in the books to the Government, like dewally or batty charges at Surat. This amount was paid by the vakil on behalf of the Company and on this amount the vakil was entitled to receive 1 per cent of the total bales cleared. He was also entitled to receive the same from private trade. While Monakji was contractor for three years, this amount was not paid as a lump sum was given to him. During the three years, Edulji was paid Rs. 1 thousand annually and 1 per cent on all private trade. Erskine reported that the agents of the contractors knew this and their agents had paid money with interest on this account. Erskine suggested that since the trade of Cambay was declining, the payment to the nawab by percentage should remain. The report of Erskine seemed to have solved the internal problem of the English as Surat did not act further. But the decline of the trade of Cambay was unmistakable. This could be seen in the difficulty of Erskine to find contractors at Cambay willing to invest on larger orders. But for that, the conjunction of three elements—the Marathas, the Kolis and the problems of the river—was responsible.<sup>45</sup>

The revenues of the parganas of Cambay had always posed a problem not only to the Marathas but also the Nawab of Cambay from the second half of the eighteenth century. An English report of the early fifties of the eighteenth century set out the problem.

The revenues of the qasba and the parganas of Cambay stood then at Rs. 2 lakh 85 thousand. Out of this the qasba revenue had been limited to only Rs. 35 thousand while the rest of the revenue came from the parganas. The peshwa received a share of Rs. 29 thousand per year, which was then divided as follows:

For Kathi Pal	11,000 (all in rupees)
Tupek or order upon the village of the pargana	12,500
Jamabandy	3,900
Serpaw expenses	1,500
Total	29,000

Nawab actually received the amount of Rs. 3.9 thousand from the Maratha chouthear as Jamabandy for the villages on the one hand and paid to the peshwa the same amount on the other.<sup>46</sup>

The figure showed clearly that the qasbas or the suburbs of Cambay had declined considerably, devastated by the repeated Maratha attacks. However, the parganas had remained in flourishing condition. It may be presumed therefore that the workers formerly living in the suburbs

had fled to nearby towns like Jambusar or even to Bhawanagar, Bombay etc. This would result in the shortage of artisans at Cambay particularly when the goods used to arrive from the parganas, which was often the experience of the English agent at Cambay. The nawab, in his turn, would not get the additional taxes since the production at Cambay had declined. One would therefore see that the merchants of Cambay would not take large orders as they feared that they would not be able to get weavers at Cambay to manufacture. This then therefore became the basic contradiction at Cambay. While there was increasing production in the parganas, most of which were under the control of the Marathas who allowed freedom in production and trade, the manufacturing activities in the suburbs of Cambay, under the control of the nawab, had declined. With the increase of the marauding activities of the Kolis and the Kathis, the expenses of the nawab for maintaining an ever increasing army had increased also. To meet the gap, the nawab was forced to levy additional taxes on the inhabitants of Cambay that resulted in the desertion of Cambay by both the merchants and the weavers, further reducing the income of the nawab. The latter therefore needed other ways than the imposition of taxes to break this cycle.

Bhagawant Rao, the Maratha chouthar at Cambay, now residing at Napad in the Chorasi taluqa of Cambay, had no difficulty in getting the half share of the revenue of Cambay. Yet he continued to plan to seize the city and sent a large body of cavalry to the border to create disturbance to draw away the army of the nawab. He also began to burn the villages on the other side of Cambay. The forces of the nawab resisted for some time, but being weaker, they retreated within the walls of the city. The Marathas pursued them and encamped outside near the harbour. While Erskine's newly recruited peons watched from the bastion usually allotted to the English, Surat ordered Erskine to observe strict neutrality.<sup>47</sup>

The principal attack of the Marathas came from the harbour side which was foiled by the presence of two English gallivats sent by Surat.<sup>48</sup> The Marathas had already besieged the city preventing anyone from coming out or going in. The despatch of goods was naturally stopped, which, with the low water near the harbour and the Koli boats cruising outside, had in any case made the operation difficult. Erskine could manage to load seven or eight bales.<sup>49</sup> The conjunction of three elements had halted the smooth running of trade at Cambay.

The apparent cause of the Maratha attack was that the nawab had not paid the Maratha share of revenue. In the peace arranged at the

end of 1755, this was one of the conditions.<sup>50</sup> Yet, even after the peace, the nawab evaded the payment despite repeated requests by the Marathas.<sup>51</sup> Obviously Momin Khan needed money to pay them and to get it, he now began to plunder the Maratha held areas.

After plundering a village in Rindi taluqa, Momin Khan seized Gogo, then under the peshwa, and appointed Ibrahim Quli Khan as his naib there with one hundred Arab horses. On the way back, he plundered everything. He then sent an army to other areas to settle collection of revenue in those areas and himself marched to Petlad, where he arranged for the collection of revenue in instalments. In March 1756, he turned towards Jambusar, which had become a flourishing town under the Marathas, as merchants of Surat and Cambay brought goods of cotton and silk there to make it a centre of wholesale commerce. The Marathas had built a custom house there for the collection of tolls under the energetic merchant Nana Rattan. The flourishing of Jambusar was a sore point with the Nawab of Cambay, as it had drawn away trade of both Cambay and Surat. A Maratha faujdar, Ganeshji Appa, was stationed there with his troops.<sup>52</sup>

Finding the Maratha faujdar away at Puna, Momin Khan sent soldiers to Jambusar who easily occupied the town, while the Kolis, allied with the English and the nawab, plundered the town. Nana Rattan had fled and his property was ransacked by the nawab, arriving there in March 1756. Other plundered goods were brought back to Cambay. The English were justifiably worried. As the contractor's men had fled, there was no one to mark the English goods.<sup>53</sup>

Erskine met the nawab on the 8 April at an encampment outside Jambusar. Momin Khan was ready to return the goods of the English provided they supported him against the Marathas. Erskine threatened the dewan and the custom master of Cambay if the goods were not returned. With the circulation of a rumour of an approaching Maratha army, the nawab came back to Cambay and Erskine began the negotiations with Mirza Muhammed Zaman, Naib of Cambay, for the restoration of goods. While some of the goods were sold by the nawab before the arrival of Erskine, the nawab agreed to get these all back. He was not in a position to give money.<sup>54</sup>

There was a method in Momin Khan's madness. He had plundered those areas which were beyond the jurisdiction of Cambay and had settled the areas nearer home. The fear of Momin Khan had increased in the area and the Muqaddams of Petlad pargana had paid one-fourth of revenue to him as they had paid to the Marathas. Obviously Momin



Khan was trying to supplant the Maratha power with his own in which he did not seek the assistance of either Delhi or the English. He found that it was the only method by which he could break the cycle. In a sense, therefore, it was the struggle for the control of the parganas and it signalled the emergence of a regional power against the fast diminishing power of the central government.

Yet to maintain such dominance, it was necessary to have control over other forts in the region. In other words, it was needed to obliterate the Maratha centres of power to prevent their build-up of a force. Momin Khan now attacked Borsad, 10 kilometres from Cambay. This time, Damaji Gaekwad's son, Sayaji, came from Baroda to halt the progress of the nawab. Although Momin Khan had defeated him, yet he had to withdraw as he was unable to sustain himself there.<sup>55</sup>

Most of the problems of the English had been solved by early May 1756. Erskine could get the goods restored and brought these to Cambay from where he could send these to Surat with the help of new pilots as the channel had changed much during the last few months.<sup>56</sup> Surat continued to ask Erskine to recover at least Rs. 4 thousand from the nawab which was estimated as the value of the goods lost.<sup>57</sup> But Momin Khan was then attempting the biggest gamble of his life that would also affect the English trade both at Surat and at Cambay.

The rule of the peshwa at Ahmedabad, which had supplemented that of the Mughals, had been a relaxed one without any new tax or fine. The merchants had invested on large orders but the retail sale was slow. As a result, goods had accumulated. The merchants, with huge stock of goods, now wanted the return of Mughal rule which would permit the renewal of contacts with northern and central India. Their markets had shrunk. The relaxed rule of the peshwa, with no threat from the Mughals, had made the defence of Ahmedabad quite sloppy. The incessant heavy rain of 1756 had ruined the walls of Ahmedabad and the uncared Marathas, always hungry for money, had sold some of the woods and planks of the walls and houses.<sup>58</sup> Against this climate of relaxation, Momin Khan drew up a plan to seize Ahmedabad with the help of conspirators, some of whom were the officials of the city.

On the 15 October 1756, Muhammed Rashid Beg, husband of the sister of the nawab's wife, scaled the walls of Ahmedabad along with the Kolis, who began to plunder the city. The naib-subadar, Raghu, was already murdered by the officials while the Dutch were persuaded not to fire. Momin Khan left for Ahmedabad leaving Cambay under the charge of Mirza Muhammed Zaman.<sup>59</sup> Mughal rule was again

establishment at Ahmedabad since, on paper, Momin Khan was a mansabdar of the central government.

The rift between Momin Khan and the merchants, particularly the Dutch, began soon after. An alarming rumour reached Cambay, obviously highly exaggerated, that the Dutch were seizing the boats of the Cambay merchants. Zaman, the naib and himself a merchant, wanted convoy protection of the English but Erskine refused to interfere in the belief that it would bring confrontation with the Dutch. Zaman then decided to detain the entire convoy. It was later found that the boats had the English colours. Since the Dutch had been trading at Cambay for the last ten years, Zaman thought that the Dutch had done this deliberately. Erskine also found that some of these boats belonged to Monakji, one of the English contractors. The confrontation between the naib and the English Resident seemed imminent and both sides began to recruit soldiers. Finally, both sides agreed to wait till clarification arrived from Surat which did not inconvenience the English since much of their goods from Cambay had already been shipped to Surat.<sup>60</sup> The problem was resolved as quickly as it began. Surat assured the naib that these were not Dutch boats and they had no objection to convoying all boats to Surat beyond the river.<sup>61</sup> The nawab had the responsibility only up to the river. So far there was no serious stoppage of trade since Momin Khan had launched his aggressive policy. For the English, the Maratha trouble was really at Jambusar, where the English had to pay custom charges like other merchants without concessions. The Marathas could not be forced there. Even in case of the Maratha obstruction, Erskine could merely write to the Maratha administrator (called Pundit in the documents) at Jambusar,<sup>62</sup> as Bombay was not in a position to confront the Marathas at this stage.

The struggle between the Marathas and Momin Khan took a serious turn as it began to suck the English into the vortex from a safe position of neutrality. In a way Momin Khan's aggression in the Gulf of Cambay was motivated by his desire to destroy the Maratha trading bases competing with Cambay and reducing his revenue.

On the 22 December 1756, the Nawab of Cambay's fleet sailed to intercept some of the gallivats of Damaji Gaekwad. Instead they seized some other boats, two of which belonged to the Cambay merchants, who were supplying goods to the English and technically under their protection. While Erskine was negotiating with the naib for the restitution of these boats with goods, Damaji's 'wretched' men arrived

Example

Rumour

in front of Cambay. Damaji was at Ahmedabad trying to dislodge Momin Khan without much success.<sup>63</sup> By the end of January 1757, Momin Khan had ordered the restitution of boats and goods.<sup>64</sup>

It was not the seizure of two boats that haunted Erskine. The determination of the naib, spurred by Momin Khan, to destroy the trading bases, would mean a colossal loss to the English trade at Cambay and Surat. The naib openly declared that he would destroy Jambusar and other Maratha centres of trade to match his boast, he sent in the third week of January 1757 a fleet first towards Desbara, a place not far from Broach and then to Tancarr. Erskine followed the fleet with a letter from the naib to spare the English goods.<sup>65</sup>

Erskine's fears were not without foundation. The nawab's fleet captured a boat belonging to the English contractor Monakji's brother-in-law and some other boats as well. Erskine could get the boat released and bring it to Gogo. But the prospect of the attacks on Jambusar and Bhawanagar would certainly bring the confrontation between the English and the Nawab at Cambay, although both sides were avoiding such confrontations. It had come to such a pass that any boat left behind by the convoy would be seized by the nawab's fleet, which however returned this time without causing much damage.<sup>66</sup> Despite the fears of Erskine, the trade of the English continued and when he was replaced by Lambert, the custom collection of the English at Cambay stood at Rs. 1742.25 p. which was more than the average.<sup>67</sup> Cambay's trade did not suffer either from the upheavals at Ahmedabad or from the possibility of nawab's fleet picking up English trade bound for Bhawanagar.<sup>68</sup>

Although Lambert immediately made compromise with the Koli chief of Dhawan so as not to interrupt the growing trade,<sup>69</sup> he began to recruit Arabs on the order of Surat.<sup>70</sup> This led him into problems with the Nawab at Cambay, who found it difficult to recruit. Actually at Ahmedabad, Momin Khan was finding it tough. He was in constant need of men and money which Zaman was unable to supply. The chief of Bhawanagar had captured Gogo, possibly with English encouragement while the Maratha Governor of Petlad, with Kolis and six hundred cavalry, had been regularly raiding up to the walls of Cambay, preventing anyone from going out.<sup>71</sup> In a prolonged war, Momin Khan, with Cambay as his only base, had no chance against the Marathas with far-flung bases and wide compass of territories under their control. Yet the Marathas did not seriously interrupt the usual activities of the English. While the Koli and the Maratha raids subsided

in late October 1759, Lambert could recruit four thousand Arabs and procure seventy head of cattle for Surat.<sup>72</sup> He had been able to have a reciprocal arrangement with the Naib at Cambay desisting each other from attacking.<sup>73</sup>

By the end of November, under the constant prodding of Momin Khan, Mirza Muhammed Zaman was becoming desperate. He sent a fleet to attack Bhawanagar as a reprisal for his seizure of Gogo and had sent a force overland to attack Jambusar. There the merchants had already transferred their goods to secure places and Lambert was able to transfer some of these to Cambay. However the overland force of Zaman could not cross the river and came back to Cambay achieving nothing.<sup>74</sup>

However, the Marathas did not find the war very encouraging at Gujarat although they were in complete control of the province. They now suggested a compromise to Momin Khan who refused it as he had to pay the Kolis heavily. Besides, his mansab had been raised to four thousand zat at Delhi, where the emperor conferred on him the Subadari of Gujarat with a khilat. As a result of the refusal, battles continued outside Ahmedabad which raised the prices inside the city and made it difficult for Momin Khan to pay his soldiers, who shifted loyalties to Marathas camp.<sup>75</sup>

Momin Khan wanted Rs. 3 lakh in cash with both Cambay and Gogo and a village at Petlad on condition for leaving Ahmedabad.<sup>76</sup> He was disgusted with Zaman for his failure to send men and money. He replaced Zaman by Mirza Saduck, which 'gives great alarm to the whole town, as Mirza Saduck is known to be a man whose principles are not very scrupulously just...' <sup>77</sup> But Momin Khan had no money and therefore no choice. His soldiers were not paid and they had begun to desert to the Marathas.<sup>78</sup>

With the rumour of an approaching peace in January 1758, Zaman had abandoned the idea of attacking Jambusar, which had relieved the English.<sup>79</sup> But Mirza Saduck lost no time. In February 1758, he crossed the river to attack Jambusar. He failed but he managed to plunder some of the villages on his way back. His second attack on Jambusar also failed as the Marathas from Petlad forced him to withdraw.<sup>80</sup>

At the end of February 1758, Momin Khan left Ahmedabad after receiving 1.5 lakh rupees and half of the share of the revenue of Cambay and Gogo. The English report of the reason for his failure to hold Ahmedabad as due to his difference with Sambhuram, the dewan, cannot be accepted.<sup>81</sup> The total control of the countryside by

the Marathas gave Momin Khan no choice. He now faced an arrear payment to his soldiers to the tune of Rs. 5 lakh. The Arabs and the Rohilla Pathans, constituting most of his army, began to create disturbances before Cambay until they were paid.<sup>82</sup> By the order of Surat, Lambert recruited about one thousand Arabs.<sup>83</sup> Marathas once again became the undisputed masters of Gujarat.

Since the return of Momin Khan to Cambay, things were becoming difficult for him. His peshkar, Brajalal, was murdered which pointed the accusing finger to him for reasons not properly clarified. This created a climate of panic in the city. Zabid Ali, one of the principal merchants whose family was closely associated with the family of the deceased Nawab Nizam Khan, fled to Petlad, then under the control of the Marathas. He was followed by Hashim Bakshi, a close associate merchant of Zabid Ali. They appealed to the peshwa to liberate Cambay from Momin Khan but the peshwa did not agree.<sup>84</sup> It is significant that the principal Arab merchants had fled to the Marathas rather than to the English.

Momin Khan now decided to go to Puna to negotiate with the peshwa in an English boat. But he could not start due to the lateness of the season but possibly because the Marathas did not agree to his use of the English boat without Maratha escort.<sup>85</sup> To pacify the English, the nawab paid a surprise visit to the English factory which Lambert considered as an unusual compliment.<sup>86</sup>

The nawab then arranged for an overland trip to Puna with a halt at Bombay.<sup>87</sup> The trip of the nawab was to gain the Maratha support, whose chouthar had become much more powerful at Cambay than the nawab. The countryside was also under their control and they banned cow slaughter, making it difficult for the English to enter into any contract with the butchers.<sup>88</sup> This became all the more difficult as a Maratha army of twenty thousand men under Damaji and Ram Chandra had encamped under the walls of Cambay, although they did not disrupt trade. The nawab made peace with them with suitable presents and Rs. 20 thousand as share of the revenue.<sup>89</sup> This eased the problem of beef supply and Lambert could collect thirty head of cattle at the end of December 1758. Up to early march 1759, even with the disruption caused by the Kolis and the Kathis, there was no dearth of cattle.<sup>90</sup>

Disgusted with the Marathas, the nawab now cancelled his overland trip to Puna and decided to go in the English convoy. On the order of the peshwa, the Marathas had sent escorts, which the nawab was not

in a position to refuse. Surat agreed<sup>91</sup> and on 8 April 1759, the nawab and his retinue of 50 persons had left Cambay on the nawab's fleet under the protection of the English convoy.<sup>92</sup> Muhammed Khan, son of Fidauddin Khan, was appointed as the naib while Ghulab Rai remained as the peshkar of Cambay.<sup>93</sup> By the time Momin Khan came back after visiting Surat, Bombay and Puna, where he stayed two months and made a pact with the peshwa agreeing to give him Rs. 89 thousand as half share of the revenue of Cambay,<sup>94</sup> the English had seized the castle of Surat, which was confirmed by Delhi. The situation had taken a different turn in Gujarat where the new power, the English, began to emerge.

The Marathas did not seriously propagate the new ideology, although they banned the cow slaughter from time to time. Ganeshji Appa, the new Maratha subadar, appointed the Arab merchant, Zabid Ali, as the Mutsuddy of Gogo. This was a shrewd move as he was an enemy of the Nawab of Cambay. Obviously the practical considerations had not eluded the Marathas who were encouraging the growth of rival centres of trade under their control. Delhi was out of touch with reality and ordered Momin Khan to drive the Marathas out of Gujarat with the help of Jawanmard Khan, the ousted naib-subadar and Neknam Khan, the Nawab of Broach.<sup>95</sup>

After the death of Lambert in August 1759, the factory was looked after temporarily by a private merchant, Hill.<sup>96</sup> John Stracey took charge soon and reported an increase in the custom collection for 1759-60, due to higher investment for Mocha and Bussora. But the import trade had decreased owing to the declining conditions of the country in general. The increased expenses included presents to the Maratha chouthar 'as their power is now greater than ever...'.<sup>97</sup> Thus the political events did not once again touch the trade of Cambay.

There we see a curious and perhaps a contradictory situation. From the point of view of nawab's finances, the place was declining, with a revenue of Rs. 1.8 lakh a year back, while trade, both official and private, was increasing. Although the Marathas appeared to have Cambay under their control, yet the Arab merchants were deserting Cambay to go to the Maratha controlled areas, where the Marathas were encouraging trade. The production around Cambay had definitely increased, with more goods to the English to ship off, yet the revenue of the nawab did not increase much.

Perhaps to get out of this impasse and perhaps encouraged by Delhi, the nawab began to recruit soldiers under Muhammed Khan

Rohilla and the Arab Jemadar Selim. In the background of the invasion by Abdali, the nawab first plundered Shondhuka and then left for Jambusar.<sup>98</sup> Ganeshji Appa, obviously disgusted with the nawab, began his march towards Cambay which forced the nawab to retreat. Appaji plundered some of Cambay parganas although Momin Khan declared receiving the order of the emperor making him Subadar of Gujarat. The merchants of Jambusar meanwhile had put up English marks on all their goods<sup>99</sup> and the English agent at Bhawanagar asked for the English ships to take over Gogo to prevent it from falling into the hands of two Mughal nobles.<sup>100</sup>

While Appa and Damaji combined to seize Cambay, Momin Khan soon made a pact with them agreeing to pay the remaining amount of revenue of last year and not bothering the Maratha mansabdars in their jagirs.<sup>101</sup> This did not affect the trade of Cambay at all. In August 1761, Stracey reported that the custom collected by the English was higher than any one of the previous years, which he ascribed to the increase of the English investment.<sup>102</sup> Obviously neither the English nor their Indian contractors were bothered by these political and often military turmoils. The production in the countryside was not disturbed and the communication between Surat and Cambay had remained intact.

Peace at Cambay however was disturbed by a factor linked to the nawab's financial distress. Momin Khan began to pay monthly instalments to the soldiers for which he imposed fines and new taxes, particularly one on the house.<sup>103</sup> This would explain easily why both the Hindu and the Muslim merchants of Cambay were supporting the Marathas, who did not levy such taxes. Yet at Surat, the merchants were anti-Maratha and pro-English despite the fact that these merchants had close business links with the merchants of Cambay.

The difference of attitude of the merchants in the two cities so close to each other was perhaps due to the fact that Cambay's hinterland, completely under Maratha control, had a closer relationship with Cambay. The manufacturing activities of Cambay depended to a great extent on the production in the hinterland and its transportation to the city via the wholesale markets in the Cambay parganas which were closely controlled by the Marathas, who had repeatedly declared freedom of trade, once they were assured of half the revenue. The conflict between Momin Khan and the Marathas occurred only when Momin Khan refused to pay the due share of revenue and attempted to destroy the wholesale market like Jambusar which were being developed by the Marathas as rival to Cambay. The merchants of



Cambay, on the other hand, had no reason to oppose the Marathas and seemed to favour them to curb the 'violence' of Momin Khan in his imposition of taxes and fines to support an army. It is no wonder therefore that some of these merchants fled to the Marathas and at least one of them, Zabid Ali, took service under the Marathas at a port which drew away the trade of Cambay.

In case of Surat, it is different. Surat depended on the supplies from Cambay, which were then shipped overseas. These sea routes were controlled by the English, who also began to invest more from the Cambay region, whose contracts were bagged by the Surat merchants. Cambay therefore formed part of the hinterland of Surat. The foreland activities of the two ports were almost the same but the hinterland activities were different resulting in two separate sets of attitudes of the local merchants in two cities. Since the Marathas controlled the wholesale markets and were encouraging these small ports to become wholesale centres of trade, the English at Surat and Bombay would like to see Cambay and Gogo remaining neutral or under the control of the English. The Anglo-Maratha relation therefore had its root in the struggle for the control of the hinterland through the control of Cambay, which acted as one of the funnels for the collection, manufacture and transfer of goods to Surat and Bombay.

The Marathas reacted differently in different regions in different stages. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, they went in for the plunder of areas around Surat to intimidate the Mughal power then attacking the Marathas. From the 1730s, the Marathas went in for forcible collection of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi which entailed much violence and plunder. From the late 1730s, there was a change in the Maratha attitude, when they began to control most of the areas of Gujarat. Then they began to insist on taking the half share of revenue from Cambay, and from the early 1740s they posted their own officials in the city and in the parganas for such collection. Then they went in for settled administration and also encouraged trade and manufacture. As seen already, after the Maratha control of Gujarat had begun, production of grain and other cash crops in Cambay parganas had increased significantly resulting in a fall in their prices. While the Maratha naib-subadar had declared freedom of trade in Gujarat, the disturbances in the late 1750s were created by the unlimited ambition of Momin Khan encouraged by Delhi authorities. Even then the production and trade did not suffer. Rather, in the early 1760s, the English increased their investment at Cambay and had higher custom



collecting for several years. The trade of the Indian merchants at Cambay with west Asia and Africa was not disturbed excepting for a few months due to intransigence of the English and the Nawab of Cambay.

Yet the financial position of the nawab had deteriorated due not only to the diminishing political power and declining land revenue, as most of his parganas went under the control of the Marathas, but also due to his misadventures. With the increasing anarchy created by the Kolis and the Kathis, the nawab had to spend more on the maintenance of a large army which his financial position could not afford. This led to increased taxation and consequently gradual desertion of wealthy merchants which again deprived the nawab of further revenue. The emergence of other trading centers, encouraged by the Marathas and the English, led to further reduction of Cambay's trade and consequently the nawab's share of revenue. It is no wonder therefore that the walls and palace buildings were neglected and filth accumulated while some of the suburbs, the home of the weavers and artisans, were desolated. The attitude of the English, solely bent on retaining the privileges without any interest in developing or repairing the walls even close to their factory, did not help the nawab much. The nawab therefore tried to drive the Marathas out of Cambay or even from Gujarat, but there he failed. The other course for him was to compromise with both the English and the Marathas in which case his revenue would continue to slide down. Therefore the contradiction of the growth of the English trade along with the flourishing of production centres and wholesale markets around Cambay saw a gradual impoverishment of the Nawab of Cambay. Caught in a system that required his total submission to the one or the other, the nawab finally had to make a choice of allies.

The Nawab of Cambay suffered a loss in another way. In the old Mughal system, the revenue administration of the surrounding areas was far more integrated with the city. But during the transformation and Maratha occupation, the revenue administration of the hinterland of Cambay was separated resulting in a financial loss to the nawab and the city. This was seen clearly in the revenue return of 1756 given by the English factory at Cambay, in which the revenue of the qasbas of Cambay was extremely low compared to those of the parganas, which remained flourishing. The city and the administrative apparatus became isolated from the revenue of the surrounding areas which caused the separation from the revenues and the city, although the commercial

link between the surrounding areas and the city remained. The concept of the city port and its integration with the hinterland was therefore different in the eighteenth century from either the sixteenth or the seventeenth century. The price rise or its fall, so much relevant to the English or to the Indian merchants, was hardly of importance to the nawab, who was more and more enclosed within the wall of Cambay. It was his attempt to break out of this enclosure, this confinement, by creating a new political entity that he attempted, which had caused so much political upheaval and made him realize that he would not be able to go back to the old system of the Mughals, dreamt by the nobility and the Emperor at Delhi.

One would therefore ask how much the Mughal mansabdars had suffered with the takeover of the surrounding areas of Cambay by the Marathas. It had been seen that the jagirs of the Nizam-ul-Mulk and his son, in the surrounding cotton producing belts, had remained unaltered till the 1740s at least till the Marathas brought the confrontation inevitable. The revenue of such jagirs, never absorbed in the administration of Cambay except on paper, continued to flow out till then. There were not many officers at Cambay, who, excepting the nawab, had jagirs outside Cambay. It was the Nawab Momin Khan who really suffered the financial loss with the Maratha occupation of these jagirs but there was no such loss to Mughal mansabdars posted at Cambay. One could therefore postulate that the loss of Cambay revenue, by the loss of these jagirs held by the nobles serving at Delhi or Hyderabad, was only in paper so far as Cambay administration was concerned. The real loss of Cambay revenue was the disintegration of the dependent lands and the emergence of the trading centres under the Marathas and the English who tried to wrest the northern trade with a base at Bhawanagar and Sindh. The separation of Gogo as an administrative unit only helped this process.

With the conquest of Lahore and Sindh by Akbar, the river Indus had transferred the merchandise passing to Ormuz from the hands of the Portuguese to the Indian merchants. Previously the Portuguese at Diu used to control this trade.<sup>104</sup> The English tried to open up Sindh for the supply of cotton and indigo for the London market from the seventeenth century. The English factory was closed in 1662 as it proved to be unprofitable. The Company again opened this factory in 1758 mainly to obtain saltpetre and to sell English woollens, which otherwise could not be sold in India. Due to various difficulties, the factory was disbanded in 1775, by which time the China market was

established. The northwestern part of India therefore did not help the English Company despite the rise of Kolero dynasty in Sindh from 1702.<sup>105</sup> Due to internal political problems in Sindh and its separation from the Mughal empire, which was first joined to Persia and then to Afghanistan, the original objectives of the English to carry goods to and from Sindh could not be effected to the extent they wanted it. Because of this interest in the northwestern trade, the English did not want Cambay, situated at the head of gulf, to fall in the hands of the Marathas.

Although the English acted as neutral in Cambay, their role at Surat was different which gave them a vantage point for the control of the trade of Surat. Yet, in general, the English did not confront the Marathas, who were left alone. It was after the debacle of the Marathas at the third battle of Panipat, that the English began to assert with a solid base at Bombay. It is interesting to observe that the policy of the assumption of control over Cambay by the English in the span of the next twenty-five years gives the tumultuous history of Cambay a different turn, after the attempts by the Marathas and the nawab to assume such control. But this is a process in which the traditional items of Cambay trade, cotton and silk, gradually declined while a new pattern of the English trade emerged. The Marathas failed to find this new pattern of trade or adapt themselves to the changing times as they clung to the traditional cotton trade, which began to decline due to various factors, including the problems of the overseas markets. Once the Marathas were established in Gujarat, they refused to change the traditional mores, which were gradually becoming obsolete as the century progressed.

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85. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Bombay to Surat, 14 April, f. 58; Lambert to Surat, 30 April 1758, f. 59.
86. *MRO*, Lambert to Surat, 12 May 1758, ff. 63-64.
87. *MRO*, Lambert to Surat, 21 August 1758, f. 80.
88. *MRO*, Lambert to Surat, 29 September 1758, f. 97.
89. *MRO*, Hill to Surat, Cambay, 5 October, f. 98; Lambert to Surat, 14 October 1758, f. 100.
90. *MRO*, Hill to Surat, Cambay, 26 October, ff. 104-5; 16 December, f. 124; 3 January 1759, ff. 130-31; Lambert to Surat, 9 March 1759, f. 234.

91. *MRO*, Surat to Lambert, 16 March, f. 235; Lambert to Surat, 20 March ff. 245-46; Surat to Lambert, 24 March, ff. 246-47; 26 March, f. 247; Lambert to Surat, 29 March, f. 258; 1 April 1759, f. 262.
92. *MRO*, Lambert to Surat, 8 April 1759, ff. 266-67.
93. *Mirat*, p. 879.
94. *Mirat*, pp. 896-903.
95. *Mirat*, pp. 204-23.
96. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Hill to Surat, 1 August 1759, f. 349.
97. *MRO*, Stracey to Surat, 13 March 1760, f. 62; 1 August 1760, ff. 140-41.
98. *Mirat*, p. 923.
99. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Stracey to Surat, 9 April 1761, ff. 300-301.
100. *MRO*, Surat to Stracey, 13 April 1761, ff. 15-16.
101. *Mirat*, pp. 924-25.
102. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Stracey to Surat, 9 August 1761, ff. 15-16.
103. *Mirat*, p. 906.
104. Pierre Du Jarric, *Histoire des Choses plus Memorables*, 2nd. ed., 3 vols., III, 216.
105. H.T. Lorely, *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*, 1984, 36-39.

## CHAPTER 8

### New Pattern of English Trade

When William Bowyear replaced Stracey at the Cambay factory at the end of December, 1761 he found the flourishing English trade at Cambay of the years 1760-61 had nearly vanished. In late December 1761 Surat reported that they had no funds as the bills between Surat and Puna had been stopped and the ships from the Red Sea had not yet come.<sup>1</sup> Cambay had the same problem. On 22 November Stracey had already reported to Surat there was no private trade for 1761-62 till then and consequently there was no custom collection for the English.<sup>2</sup> The price of cattle had increased sharply and there was scarcity of salt and pepper which made the preparation of beef difficult. Yet Bowyear could send to Surat 13 caskets of beef, costing Rs. 483 only.<sup>3</sup>

The real problem of the English at Cambay began with the assembly under the walls of a determined Maratha army of 800 to 900 horses. It may be that with the death of Peshwa Balaji Rao and the English capture of the Surat castle, the Marathas had begun an aggressive policy towards Cambay. The nawab was ready with 1200 men under Busset Beg. They began to fire artillery and muskets from a distance.<sup>4</sup> In the middle of February, the Marathas received a considerable reinforcement under the command of Mangaram Havaladar. They also recruited some people from the adjacent areas including the Kolis, who had joined them in hope of plunder. The Marathas had hoped that the city would fall by bribery. When it did not happen they began to accuse the English and their associates for their protection. Bowyear had found that the Marathas did not respect the English flag. He asked Surat to send reinforcements.<sup>5</sup>

Surat sent thirty-one sepoy under one havaladar and one sergeant but cautioned Bowyear to remain neutral. By the end of February, provision had become scarce at Cambay while the price of cattle had become exorbitantly high.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile Momin Khan had sent his Dewan Gulab Rai to Dhawan where he was able to raise some Kolis. Momin Khan now had 50 horses and 15 thousand foot soldiers with which he could threaten Ahmedabad. This new development behind the back of the Maratha army forced Ganeshji Appa to recall Bhagawant with 1300 men from Cambay. On the other hand Momin Khan was joined by 250 men from Broach.<sup>7</sup>

At the end of March 1762, negotiations for peace started and it was finally concluded on the 7 April 1762, by which the Maratha share was fixed at Rs. 54 thousand annually, a decline from the revenue fixed with the peshwa.<sup>8</sup>

This decrease was shown in the collection of customs by the English, which Bowyear attributed to the troubles of late and the Maratha camp near the town, 'which prevented the arrival of piece-goods from Dholka, Neriad etc. and consequently occasioned our export to Mocha less than what would have been...'.<sup>9</sup>

Even with peace returning to Cambay, Momin Khan did not lose sight of driving the Marathas out of Gujarat. In November 1762, he planned with the Nawab of Broach to invite the Nizam for a joint action against the Marathas.<sup>10</sup> Since the Nizam did not respond it came to nothing with the return of peace, the English also desired to expand their trade and began to enquire about indigo grown around Cambay, which they had tried to export before.<sup>11</sup>

The Kolis had also begun their depredations and even robbed William Bowyear on he way to Surat in July 1763. An exasperated Bombay ordered Surat to mount a vast expedition against the Kolis although one such expedition had been undertaken in February 1761. But the problem of the nawab, the English, Bhawanagar and Gogo came up at the same time.<sup>12</sup>

Bhawanagar was founded in 1723 by Udaysinhji Gohil (Bom Sung in the English documents) at a small village of Vadra near the creeks. Hunted by the Marathas and encouraged by the English, who collected customs from there,<sup>13</sup> Bhava Singhji transferred his capital near the sea with the object of getting the trade of Cambay in coordination with Gogo port with the encouragement of the English. By the 1760s, the merchants had begun to operate from Bhawanagar port.<sup>14</sup> where the English had stationed an agent for their northward trade. At one time Bhawanagar tried to capture Gogo, which made its chief a sworn enemy of Momin Khan. Even after the failure, as seen earlier, Momin Khan tried to capture Bhawanagar but failed. Bhawanagar however



kept up the pressure against Gogo by engaging the Maratha cavalry near Gogo and was waiting for a fleet from Bassein to mount another attack. Gogo, whose share of revenue was given to Momin Khan when he left Ahmedabad, had to be protected by him to secure the trade of Cambay. He had therefore spent a fortune in fortifying Gogo and keeping thirteen hundred horse and foot soldiers. The matter came to a head when a Gogo vessel freighted by a Bhawanagar merchant was seized by Momin Khan. The English then sent an armed boat for its release which Momin Khan refused on the plea that the vessel belonged to Gogo. He agreed however to restore the cargo of the merchants of Gogo but not those of Raja or those of the merchants of Bhawanagar.<sup>15</sup> Surat disagreed and demanded the release of the Bhawanagar boat with its cargo while she was at Gogo.<sup>16</sup>

Despite these trivial problems, the return of peace had helped the English trade for the year 1762-63. Bowyear imputed this considerable increase to the increased export to Mocha.<sup>17</sup> That the English trade depended to a great extent on the Mocha market could be seen in the next year when in early August 1764 Bowyear reported to Surat a decrease in the customs collection at Cambay 'owing to the small demands of piece goods in the Mocha market, on which the rise and fall of our customs here depended...'.<sup>18</sup>

In early September 1764, Momin Khan proposed to the English a joint action against the Kolis of Sultanpur for which he wanted ammunition. He would keep all the prisoners. The meeting point would be the Gogo port.<sup>19</sup> Surat agreed but refused to give ammunition and the prisoners.<sup>20</sup> While a late rainfall delayed action, the new Maratha Subadar Gopal Rao agreed to lend nearly one thousand cavalry to pursue the Kolis in return for the revenue due to the Marathas.<sup>21</sup> Bombay immediately approved of the English assistance to the nawab but the nawab fell ill. He had meanwhile spread the rumour that he was going to attack Bhawanagar to deceive the Kolis. He also wanted to have an alliance with a section of the Kolis to deceive them and to prevent their unity. He soon recovered and requested the English for a supply of a gallivat for him.<sup>22</sup>

The English private trade in 1765 had definitely picked up again as considerable quantities were sent to Surat under the English convoy.<sup>23</sup> William Ranken, replacing Bowyear<sup>24</sup> hoped for an increase of custom collection. There was only a minor problem of insurance.<sup>25</sup> Even the Dutch had begun to trade through their agent, Mirza Muhammed Zaman, but the internal condition of the city had become difficulty for

certain sections of the people. Most of the physicians, generally Brahmins, had left the city during the marriage festivities of the daughter of the nawab and the marriage of his brother-in-law, Agha Rashid Beg.<sup>26</sup> We would see later why the Brahmins as a group had decided to leave the city.

From the middle of 1765, Momin Khan was under the fear of Damaji's attack on Cambay and he repeatedly requested the English for an alliance, offering to the English the Maratha share of the revenue of Cambay. But Bombay did not want to get involved in disputes with the Marathas at this stage.<sup>27</sup>

It has been postulated that the nawab was completely under the control of the English resident at this time, who issued orders in the name of the nawab. The incident on the hunt for the treasures of the Brahmins, along with a Hindu-Muslim riot which followed, had been cited as one such instance where acting on the advice of the English, the nawab became very unpopular to both Hindus and the Muslims of Cambay.<sup>28</sup> The following incident of the tax would show that the nawab was not under the influence of the English at that time.

In early 1766, it was clear that the nawab was facing an acute financial crisis probably caused by an expedition to the Kolis. In early February, Ranken had hinted about the imposition of a new tax on the weavers. A month later this became a reality and Ranken's description showed the English in an unfavourable situation at Cambay.

A new duty of 2 per cent on all imports to be paid by the purchasers was imposed. This did not really touch the English Company since they were not the purchasers of imported goods and had stopped importing goods at Cambay for several years. Besides this, the nawab had got the promise from all the people 'who cargoe the jamah to pay him two annas on each' jamah. This would increase the price as much as 7 per cent and the English would have to invest more to get the same quantity of goods required for filling up the ship. When the weavers had protested, the nawab gave the opinion that it was the merchants who would pay in the long run. Further a poll tax would be levied on all the inhabitants, irrespective of religion and each weaver was to pay a quarter of a rupee per month to the nawab.<sup>29</sup>

Having failed to change the mind of the nawab, the weavers took diverse ways to outwit him. Some left Cambay and some shortened the jamahs to use less quantity of material on each jamah. As such the supply of the jamah was interrupted although Ranken hoped to get some ready soon. Ranken now applied to the nawab regarding the

shortened jamahs and the nawab now ordered not to practice it in the future. On Ranken's insistence, he agreed to postpone the imposition of a tax of a quarter of a rupee per month and exempted those who were under the protection of the Company, from the payment of the poll tax. Regarding the tax of two annahs on each jamah, Ranken was worried that if it was imposed, it would certainly enhance the price and the private manufacturers for the Gulf trade would be entirely stopped. It had not yet increased the price because the orders for the jamahs had been placed before the new tax and some of the weavers had collected nearly Rs. 300 from the original dealers to pay the tax at one time. Ranken informed the nawab that it would not only be prejudicial to the Company but would 'certainly produce the ruin of the little trade and manufacturers here...'. Ranken wanted a directive from Surat.<sup>30</sup>

Obviously such taxes would hit all the communities and would make the nawab extremely unpopular in Cambay. But the incident shows clearly that the nawab was not under the control of the English and they were not issuing orders in the name of the nawab. It was the ability of the Nawab Momin Khan to play both the super-powers of the region that allowed him to remain independent of both—a position he cherished above all and for which he suffered and fought.

By 15 April, Ranken had sent 500 jamahs to Surat and the nawab had received from the persons from whom the above jamahs had been purchased the new duty of two annahs on each jamah. Ranken thought it a breach of the privilege of the Company, yet he waited for the copy of the farman and the order from Surat.<sup>31</sup> At the end of April, some jamahs were ready and Ranken wanted Rs. 10 thousand from Surat to make advances to the manufacturers for the next season. He was worried about the orders from some Surat merchants to Mirza Mihammed Zaman for the supply of seventy sacks of arrangoes (beads), which would enhance the price of these stones for the English. He thought that it was ordered by the Dutch and he assured Surat that there was no broker at Cambay who would agree to supply such large contracts in such limited time.<sup>32</sup> Surat assured him that it was their orders on the Surat merchants which had caused this enquiry. Surat however did not send him the bill of Rs. 10 thousand as the exchange rate was too high. They gave the orders for Rs. 6 thousand only.<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile the Mocha market, which had been down for several years, had begun to pick up. With the return of peace, English trade had picked up and Ranken collected more customs for 1765-66 than

for the last several years 'owing to a larger quantity of goods being exported to Mocha.' He therefore surmised that the trade would have been better if those taxes had not been imposed.<sup>34</sup>

From the middle of July, Edulji began to negotiate with the nawab on the taxes on behalf of the English. The nawab represented that his expenses were more than his income and he was ready to abolish the tax provided other methods of augmenting his income could be shown to him. As a result of the tax, most of the weavers had deserted Cambay and Ranken had to protest in writing to the nawab. Yet the manufactured price at Cambay did not rise contrary to the prediction of Ranken mainly because the goods had been 8 per cent cheaper at Neriad than the previous year. Still Ranken predicted that 'it would give a finishing blow to the little trade still remaining ...' at Cambay.<sup>35</sup> On 22 August Surat wrote a letter of protest to the nawab against the tax.<sup>36</sup> The Marathas took the opportunity to block some goods brought to Cambay, perhaps as a part of their policy to encourage the trade at Jambusar.<sup>37</sup>

In late August, Surat sent an order to Ranken to supply a large amount of beads of stone (called arrangoes here). But Ranken felt unable to supply so large an order as most of the workers, who polished these stones at Cambay, had left due to the lack of order for the last seven or eight years and also due to the tax imposed by the nawab on the manufacturers. Ranken thought it best to employ a number of workers constantly under the payroll of the Company. He was hopeful that since the nawab had changed his attitude for the better, the full supply would be available next year when a number of workers would return to Cambay. At the same time he tried to withdraw the tax on the jamah by presenting the letter of Surat to the nawab.<sup>38</sup>

Yet till the third week of September 1766, Ranken had not delivered the letter of Surat to the nawab mainly because the investment was going to be completed soon and the withdrawal of the tax would not reduce the price at this time. Besides, in case of a dispute with the nawab, the investment might be stopped. He thought the best time for the English 'to agitate for the withdrawal of the tax' would be next February or March.

The change of attitude of the nawab perhaps was due to the arrival of Naser Ali, who was in service with Shuja-ud daulah of Oudh. Naser Ali now wanted to go to Bombay to discuss his business with the President but Ranken thought that he would discuss the tax with him.<sup>39</sup>

The nawab had not replied to the earlier letter of Surat and now wanted Naser Ali to go by an English gallivat.<sup>40</sup> Surat agreed. The journey was delayed as the nawab informed Ranken that a change of government at Ahmedabad would shortly take place.<sup>41</sup>

Trade, however, continued as usual. In the middle of January 1767, Ranken sent eleven caskets of arrangoes despite the appearance of Damaji with ten thousand men only 15 miles from Cambay.<sup>42</sup>

While Khande Rao, brother of Damaji, had kept Surat on tenterhooks,<sup>43</sup> the Cambay factory worked hard to manufacture arrangoes. They had also been able to get cattle and make salted beef. The price of cattle had increased as the hovering Marathas prevented the slaughter of cattle and the Kolis were still creating disturbances. The manufacture of arrangoes was going according to schedule.<sup>44</sup> Torlesse, who had replaced Ranken by early March, had asked for more money from Surat for investment of arrangoes.<sup>45</sup> Cambay, it appears, had reacted positively to this increasing demand for a new commodity. By early March 26,650 arrangoes had been shipped to Surat who now agreed to send the money. By the third week of March 1767 Cambay had sent to Surat about a lakh of arrangoes.<sup>46</sup>

Cambay continued to supply these. In the middle of April, they sent to Surat further baskets of arrangoes and asked for Rs. 10 thousand as advance to the workers who would now go out to purchase the rough stones.<sup>47</sup> Surat sent the money in early July and ordered to supply five million arrangoes which Torlesse agreed to supply.<sup>48</sup>

While the arrangoe trade had reached its peak, the custom collection of the English at Cambay had declined due to low export to Mocha and Bussora as well as due to the 'declining state of this town.'<sup>49</sup> This time it was not the Maratha violence nor the changes in the river that caused this decline. It also appears that private trade in arrangoes had not started much in comparison to piece goods. One should also note that the statement of the 'declining state' is noticeable from the 1760s, after the take-over of the Surat castle by the English. Till the end of the 1750s the Cambay trade had gone on normally with the gradual decline of the financial position of the nawab. But now the trade was declining with the desertion of workers.

From November 1767, the sand in the river was causing a problem.<sup>50</sup> This had accumulated since the previous monsoon, making it difficult even for the gallivat to come up to the bandar. Yet Torlesse could send 8 baskets of arrangoes.<sup>51</sup> Torlesse asked Surat to send another Rs. 4 thousand but they could send only half the amount.<sup>52</sup> In January 1768

the gallivat had to return to Surat as she could not reach the bandar of Cambay due to the problem of the river. Torlesse continues to send arrangoes. He could manage to send another two baskets with the gallivat completing the order of two million. By the third week of January, he could send another 3 baskets.<sup>53</sup>

With the rise in demand and supply of arrangoes, Surat now modified the quality of the stone. They now wanted softness and forwarded a sample. But the workers refused because by that time (early February 1768) all the stones had been ordered. This sort of stone could only be procured in June at a place far from the town. However only half a million stones could be procured and, with the 40 per cent rise in prices, Torlesse had already advanced Rs. 5 thousand to the workers before the order of the new stone. Generally barrelled types of stone were sent but Surat was asking for another sort called chelseys, which cost Rs. 5 to 6 per 100.<sup>54</sup> The trade however continued. In the third week of March 1768, Torlesse sent to Surat 9 baskets of arrangoes and 13 casks of salted beef. Since the middle of February, work on the arrangoes was stopped due to lack of order from Surat.<sup>55</sup> This was temporary because in the middle of November 1768, Torlesse sent 1015 corges of assortment of cloth to Surat.<sup>56</sup>

The nawab's problem was also temporarily solved. In early January 1769, it surfaced again. He called Torlesse and informed him of his intention to plunder Jambusar respecting the goods of the English there. However he wanted Torlesse to write to the Maratha governor there to compromise the affair for some payment. Torlesse refused but agreed to write to Surat and sent a person to Jambusar to mark the English goods there. This declaration of intention was perhaps meant to forestall the attack planned by the Nawab of Broach and also to avenge the ill-treatment shown to Momin Khan by the Maratha governor of Jambusar.<sup>57</sup>

But the financial problem of the nawab was real. He now began to plunder the villages held by the Marathas with his 1500 cavalry and the same number of foot soldiers. He returned with the booty by plundering a village 25 kos away held by Damaji. He now began to plunder another village.<sup>58</sup> That this kind of financial problem was there from 1766 with the nawab attempting to get money by any means could be seen in an incident related much later by an English official. In 1766,<sup>59</sup> Agha Rashid, the brother-in-law of the nawab, sent armed guards to get the hidden treasures of the Brahmins, by which he collected Rs. 2 lakh. Most of the Brahmins left the city. The nawab meanwhile fell in

love with the wife of Agha Rashid, Khutbi Khanum and threw Rashid into prison for misappropriating the money collected from the Brahmins. He was finally released and banished from Cambay. While trying to leave for Surat, Rashid was murdered in 1768 while Khutbi Khanum was banished to Surat to appear again at Cambay later at a most crucial time.

The English at Cambay were thoroughly alarmed at the plundering activities of the nawab. They immediately informed their wakil at Jambusar and asked Torlesse to proceed there or to persuade the nawab to desist from attacking Jambusar. They also informed the Nawab of Broach.<sup>60</sup>

The nawab was stopped but another rumour spread in the middle of April 1769 that the nawab was going to plunder the merchants under the protection of the Company. Torlesse was forced to take up the matter with the nawab, who expressed complete surprise and promised to punish the guilty if found. Torlesse did not believe him but hopes that the fear of the English reprisal would deter him from taking such action.<sup>61</sup> The nawab did not impose any new tax but the spread of the rumour and the seriousness of Torlesse in taking up the matter showed the prevailing atmosphere of Cambay and the despairing financial condition of the nawab.

Although there was a high demand for the arrangoes, the supply of cotton piece goods in English trade had fallen. This could be seen in the decrease of the custom collection of the English in the 1768-69 season.<sup>62</sup> It was not the Maratha violence nor the changing sandbanks of the river that had lowered the custom collection of the English.

This decline was perhaps due to the small supply of coin as Surat mint did not work for a year and the batta had increased considerably leading to the scarcity of coin at Surat. There was a difference between a Surat rupee and other rupees to the extent of 0.25 per cent as batta. The English at Surat suggested the lowering of batta by the order of the Nawab of Surat, who refused as it would put a stop to all business at Surat.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile at Cambay, Torlesse was finding it difficult to collect arrangoes although cotton supply had improved. In early July 1770 he reported nearly 1077 corges of assorted cotton at the warehouse.<sup>64</sup> Yet for the third successive year, the custom collection of the English at Cambay had decreased 'chiefly owing to the less demand last year for piece goods than the former and the declining state of the Trade of this Town in general ...' The expenses had also increased as the factory



had been in a ruinous condition owing to the severe rain in the last season.<sup>65</sup>

In early November, 1770, Torlesse asked for Surat rupees instead of Broach rupees to be sent to him as there was a loss on Broach rupees. There was no bale at the warehouse and he had to return the two boats to Surat empty for the first time to the English at Cambay.<sup>66</sup> Within another month, he could send some goods with two cases of mohua arrack. He hoped that some arrangoes would come in a few months time and asked for money from Surat to buy mohua arrack.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile the Raja of Bhawanagar wanted the English to join him in an expedition against the Kolis of Sultanpur with which the English agreed.<sup>68</sup> Surat sent a letter to the nawab offering him to take the Koli country on payment for the charges of the expedition and an annual tribute.<sup>69</sup> The nawab agreed as he did not want it to fall to the Raja of Bhawanagar.<sup>70</sup> The nawab proposed to purchase the fort of Tarraja for a payment of Rs. 75 thousand to be paid in instalments within five years. It appears that other Rajas, like that of Bhawanagar or Politan, were offering to buy it. At the end of March 1721, Surat directed that the nawab should pay Rs. 10 thousand under one year as compensation for the charges incurred by the Company and a further payment of Rs. 5 thousand as tribute. In that case Surat directed the Resident to enter into an agreement with the nawab in writing. The Company would be allowed to use the fort in the expedition against the Kolis.<sup>71</sup>

By the second week of April 1771, the treaty with the Nawab of Cambay for the fort of Tarraja and its dependencies was concluded. Surat approved it and sent boats to Cambay to transport the nawab and his troops to Tarraja at the expense of the nawab. The first payment of Rs. 15 thousand would be on a shroff by a bill. For the later payments, revenues of Mocam and Kootra would be set aside till the full payment was made.<sup>72</sup> By 13 May 1771,<sup>73</sup> troops landed at Sultanpore. The nawab had appointed Mirza Jhonny as his officer there. But most of his troops were at Jambusar,<sup>74</sup> and the nawab had to march to Tarraja on 29 May. On the 30th, he ordered his shroff at Cambay to pay the first part of the instalment of Rs. 15 thousand to the English. While the troops of Mirza Jhonny had safely arrived at Tarraja the Raja of Bhawanagar requested the Nawab Mobut Khan of Gangur to help him to drive out the Nawab Momin Khan from Tarraja. The situation became complicated as the Raja of Amood, brother-in-law of Momin Khan, had requested the nawab for his assistance against the Nawab of Broach, who had demanded money from him.<sup>75</sup> A regional imbalance of power was



thus created leading to anarchy. But the English restrained the Raja of Bhawanagar and asked Momin Khan not to molest him.

Momin Khan then planned to take the Gogo port, which had always formed part of Cambay and which had been taken away first by the Marathas and then by the Raja of Bhawanagar. In the beginning of July 1771, the English came to know of Momin Khan's plan to attack Gogo. The English chief at Surat wrote to Nawab Momin Khan of the possibility of an alliance between the English and the Raja of Bhawanagar. But the nawab persisted in his intention of attacking Gogo which he believed was part of Cambay for a long time and from which he had been deprived.<sup>76</sup> The nawab was however prepared to wait for the decision of the English regarding his claim on Gogo<sup>77</sup> Thus the English had become the arbitrator of disputes between the smaller principalities. It is also strange that these chiefs did not appeal to the Marathas to settle their disputes which would show the decline of the Maratha power after the battle of Panipat. Moreover these ports were controlled by the superior English naval forces. While the Nawab of Cambay was pressing for his claim on Gogo, the English at Surat and Calcutta found themselves in financial difficulties due to shortage of funds.

In August 1771, Torlesse again reported the decrease of custom collection for 1770-71, for the fourth year in succession, due to 'there having been no demand for Mocha goods last year and to the declining state of Trade at this place in general...' a statement which he had made in 1770 also.<sup>78</sup>

Meanwhile Surat had appointed a committee to decide the claims of the Nawab of Cambay and the Raja of Bhawanagar over Gogo. On 23 September 1771,<sup>79</sup> the Committee informed Surat that the Nawab of Cambay had prior claim on Gogo but since the Raja of Bhawanagar had given some service to the inhabitants of Gogo, he was entitled to some share of revenue. Actually he maintained a Mehta and a few sepoy there and could rush 2 thousand men at short notice from Bhawanagar, which was six or seven hours away. The rights of both therefore were recognized by the English and it appears that no action was taken on the report. On 28 September, Surat sent all the papers to Bombay, which informed Surat, that they had agreed with the report as well as with the claim of the Nawab of Cambay.<sup>80</sup>

On 12 October, Momin Khan promised in writing to the English that he would not molest Bhawanagar or any other territory of Eckarji, son of the Raja of Bhawanagar, once he was given possession of the Gogo

port. He would also respect the possession of Gopalji Servia but the Company would not recommend any other person of that country to the nawab. By this proposal, which was placed at the political committee meeting at Bombay on 17 November 1771, the English placed themselves in a superior position to both the Nawab of Cambay and the Raja of Bhawanagar.<sup>81</sup> The Maratha reaction was late in coming.

The decline of private trade at Cambay did not necessarily mean a decline in the English official investment there. On 4 October 1771,<sup>82</sup> Torlesse sent to Surat 564 corges of assorted cloth. A month later he was positively jubilant as he wrote that he had been able to 'engross the whole of arrangoes this year in this town...'. He would have got more but some merchants of Surat had already ordered 3 lakh arrangoes, which had retarded his business very much. He asked Surat to 'stop them interfering too much in Company's investment...'.<sup>83</sup> It is clear that Torlesse wanted a monopolistic control over the production of arrangoes and chelseys at Cambay, the demand of which had shot up in Europe. He had already packed 4,00,000 arrangoes and 21,000 chelseys. Within three days he had sent seven chests containing, 4,40,910 arrangoes and one chest of 21,200 chelseys as well as twenty-five bales of cloth to Surat. He also informed Surat that the merchants and brokers at Cambay had promised to supply up to one million arrangoes. He further recommended that all orders for arrangoes and chelseys from Cambay should be channelled through him so that there was no rise in price. Surat hastily agreed to do this.<sup>84</sup>

The Marathas understood the gradual erosion of their political and commercial powers in this area and they made attempts to regain it by force. At the end of November 1771, a Maratha army commanded by Bhagawant Havaladar came within 2 kos of Cambay and encamped there without committing any violence. It appeared to the English that they were waiting for reinforcements. Arrangoes had been difficult to procure but Torlesse could still find chelseys.<sup>85</sup>

But the Maratha subadar had fallen dangerously ill and failed to send reinforcements. Meanwhile the Kolis had killed the Maratha governor of Pattan and were on the point of taking the town. Torlesse hoped that the still quiet Marathas outside Cambay would march to Pattan to relieve the town. Khande Rao, Damaji's brother, had already gone to Pattan.<sup>86</sup> Surat had asked Torlesse to get the entire production, which was not hampered, of arrangoes and chelseys.<sup>87</sup> Torlesse had

asked for more funds.<sup>88</sup> It appears that the Marathas were demanding the payment of arrears from the nawab.

In early February 1772, Torlesse had loaded four chests of arrangoes and chelseys and asked for a further sum of Rs. 3 thousand.<sup>89</sup> The encampment of the Maratha army had not hampered the production nor the trade. By 23 February, Torlesse had loaded 1,96,980 arrangoes and 18,000 chelseys, along with four bales of cloth.<sup>90</sup> Since the arrangoes had taken over as the priority supply goods of export, the workers on cloth with no work order had begun to leave the city.

By this time, the nawab's army had defeated the army of Bhagawant Havaladar. Since then he was joined by the army of Gaekwad and was waiting for the artillery. Torlesse desperately asked Surat to send reinforcements to protect the factory. He was afraid that after the town was taken, there would be people who would plunder the town for which they had joined the army.<sup>91</sup> Surat agreed to send money and a vessel to convoy the goods.<sup>92</sup> By early March, Torlesse had sent three chests containing 2,02,750 arrangoes<sup>93</sup> and asked for a further sum of Rs. 2.5 thousand immediately. Surat sent it within a week.<sup>94</sup> By 23 March, Torlesse shipped 2,01,950 arrangoes. He had sent so far twenty chests of arrangoes and now wanted the empty chests back.<sup>95</sup>

The desperate hunt for arrangoes continued at full speed and the traditional demand of manufactured cloth had obviously taken a back seat at Cambay. In early June 1772, Torlesse had received Rs. 6 thousand that he had asked for.<sup>96</sup> In July, 448 corges of different assortment of cloth were ready at Cambay.<sup>97</sup> It was not the Maratha violence that had reduced either the demand or the supply of cloth at Cambay but the changed nature of English trade. By 1 August, another 55 corges were ready.<sup>98</sup> That the trading in cloth and arrangoes had continued with upward swing could be seen from the custom collection of the English for the year 1771-72. There had been an increase in customs 'owing to there having been more piece goods and agates exported this year than the rest, tho' from the continual and cruel oppression of this government, and the number of inhabitants and industrious handicrafts who are forced to fly this town and country, there is great reason to apprehend that the little trade left here, must in a very few years be entirely overset...'.<sup>99</sup>

Although from the early seventies, the English had been reporting about the oppression of the government, it is clear that no new tax was established in the last few years. It is also to be enquired how far the weavers were deserting the town due to oppression and how far due

to the changed nature of the trade, in which the demand for the export of cloth had decreased except for one or two years.

In the middle of September 1772,<sup>100</sup> Surat ordered a further supply of arrangoes, sending a sum of Rs. 5 thousand (always in hundies to be cashed at Cambay) and asked the English Resident to be firm with the nawab for the next payment of instalment for the sale of the fort of Tarraja. Obviously, the financial position of the nawab had further deteriorated by the sudden change in trade. The tax on jamah could not procure that amount as the order on jamah had been reduced to a great extent. It is obvious that the nawab was trying to squeeze the stone workers now. Cambay had already sent four million arrangoes as per the last order while another order of 5,30,410 arrangoes remained to be completed along with one million for the new order. But Torlesse was afraid that he would not be able to supply this because of the 'oppression and cruel behaviour of the government here, Business and Trade bears no very favourable aspect ...'. It seems that the nawab was putting pressure on the shroff and on stone workers. The financial difficulties of the nawab had been explained by him to the Resident. Agreeing to pay the instalment in small sums, he explained that 'his necessities were so great owing to the arrears he was in to his troops, who were very mutinous and claimers for their pay and his finances so small, that he was utterly unable to pay me a considerable sum...'.<sup>101</sup> By 3 October,<sup>102</sup> the nawab paid two bills of Rs. 4 thousand. By that time, 622 corges of assorted cloth were ready at the factory, revealing that trade was not hampered in any way. By the end of October, Surat asked Torlesse not to agree to small payments from the nawab, although they had agreed to it earlier.<sup>103</sup> Thus the nawab had to maintain a costly army outside, while from the inside, he was squeezed mercilessly by the English. The petition of the nawab to the English was pathetic but it showed how far the English could go in encouraging other zamindars in order to weaken the nawab, whom they considered their old ally.

The nawab's finances were further depleted by the purchase of the fort of Tarraja, the maintenance of which was a constant drain on his resources, apart from the payments to the English. He had hoped to make it up by his revenue collection. But his villages were plundered and the villagers had run away because of the attacks of petty zamindars encouraged by Eckarji, brother of the Chief of Bhawanagar. The latter had helped these zamindars with men and money, which had promoted the nawab to lead his army in person against them. But

the Chief of Bhawanagar had been able to persuade Trimbuk Nargin, the Maratha Subadar of Gujarat, to send an army near Cambay, which had prevented the nawab from going out. As a result, the nawab had to recruit more soldiers, which increased his debt. The nawab therefore decided to go as far as Kathiwar to plunder in order to pay his soldiers as he had done earlier. Accordingly, he left Cambay in the middle of October, leaving the command to his son, Sarfaraz Khan, who had promised the English regular payment.<sup>104</sup> The nawab had been behaving exceedingly well with the English and had returned the boat *Fatty Doulat* seized by the Kolis.<sup>105</sup> His son punctually paid the due Rs. 1.5 thousand to the English on 6 November despite the fact that his soldiers had shut him up earlier in his apartment, denying him food till payment was made. He had to pawn his family heirlooms and squeezed money from his relatives and people to pay the soldiers. Even then the scarcity of cash was so great, that 'I daily see some one miserable wretch or other fleeced to carry with durbar expenses'. The nawab had to give away the revenue of most of his areas to his army captains and his only hope lay therefore in the plunder of Kathiwar or his subjects.<sup>106</sup>

Therefore both the Marathas and the English has to share the responsibilities of the hapless condition of the nawab. The maintenance of an exorbitant army and the rebellions of the petty zamindars encouraged by the Marathas and the English resulted in the impoverishment of the nawab. While the Marathas wanted to control the usual revenue the English wanted to control the entire manufacture. The Maratha violence or the changing sands of the river merely accentuated the problem since both the powers wanted to control the nawab and the city of Cambay.

Yet the English trade continued. On 1 December 1772, Torlesse had loaded 39 bales of assorted cloth as well as chests containing 5,20,410 arrangoes amounting to Rs. 6524-2-64 p. He also enclosed two hundis of Rs. 1.5 thousand each received from the nawab despite the financial crisis he was facing.<sup>107</sup>

The retaliation from the Marathas for the nawab's forays came soon. A Maratha army, consisting of six thousand horses, two hundred foot soldiers along with two hundred freebooters solely intending to plunder Cambay, arrived under Fateh Singh Gaekwad, burning and plundering all the villages belonging to Cambay and taking even the women and children of the villages as hostages. They were waiting for their artillery to come and had not made any demand on the Nawab

of Cambay. The unfortunate villagers, caught in the quarrel, had left the villages and were spending nights just outside the city walls in the open. The nawab had come back hastily and had to discharge most of his soldiers for lack of funds. The whole town was thoroughly alarmed and the brokers decided to send their families to Surat. Torlesse therefore asked from Surat a guard of fifteen men to protect the factory full of cloth and arrangoes.<sup>108</sup>

Surat took the matter far more seriously and decided to send a detachment of thirty soldiers. They also wrote a letter to Fateh Singh to desist from attacking Cambay. The nawab meanwhile had written to Surat asking for help.<sup>109</sup> By 26 February, the detachment had landed at Cambay but Torlesse, now in panic, asked for more. The number of freebooters in the Maratha camp had increased to three thousand and thirty sepoys were powerless to resist them. A rumour had also circulated at Cambay at this time that Fateh Singh was merely the auxiliary for Puna had ordered Ganeshji Appa, the Subadar of Gujarat, to seize Cambay. The Maratha army was increasing daily although they had not come within one mile of the town. Torlesse thought that the town would fall if Fateh Singh was serious. Khande Rao, uncle of Fateh Singh, was also ordered to assist him. In desperation, the nawab had enlisted some English and Dutch soldiers who had deserted the English at Broach. Torlesse suggested that they should be pardoned and sent back to Surat.<sup>110</sup>

The nawab soon paid for a truce with Fateh Singh and on 2 March 1773, the Maratha army left Cambay quite suddenly, leaving Ganeshji Appa no choice but to agree to a truce. A few weeks earlier, Torlesse shipped ninety corges and requested the convoy to come a few days earlier as the sand had 'driven lately into the chanell, and very near choked up the passage to this bundar and Boats can not proceed from hence but at the height of the springs...'. Without a convoy, no owner would put his boat into the water.<sup>111</sup> By 6 March, Surat was ready to send a convoy and asked for the detachment to be back.<sup>112</sup>

Although the Marathas had damaged property worth more than Rs. 1 lakh the nawab did not ask any assistance from the English, excepting for stores and ammunition.<sup>113</sup> In the meeting of 7 March, the Bombay Council decided to send these to the nawab through the Resident, requiring him to take care to keep it secret from the Marathas. Since the nawab had no capable artilleryman, the English decided to send a few European gunners with a few artillery laskars to the nawab.<sup>114</sup> This sudden feeling of sympathy for the nawab, 'who

is an ally of the Company' does not show when the nawab had pressed for money to pay the English. This time the English were concerned that Cambay should not fall to the Marathas.

The nawab, however, continued to dream. After the Marathas had left he wrote a letter to Surat, referring to his discussion with Andrew Price, Resident of Broach, to deliver him the town of Broach and the adjoining territories for a sum of Rs. 9 lakh to be paid in several instalments. Price confirmed the offer but doubted the ability of the nawab to pay.<sup>115</sup>

At the same time the nawab was carrying on negotiations with the Chief of Bhawanagar for the sale of the fort of Tarraja on payment of the arrear of Rs. 50 thousand in annual instalments of Rs. 1.5 thousand. This was done by Price at Broach and confirmed by the Raja of Bhawanagar in late January 1773. Surat agreed to this arrangement for several reasons. First of all, there was no monetary loss for the English. Secondly, the conflict between the nawab and the raja, who was under the control of the English, would help in increasing the trade while the Company would get a share of the customs. Thirdly, it would be beneficial to the loyal merchants since the pilgrimage to the temple of Satranju had fallen into decay and the nawab had allowed it to be used by the Hindus. Surat urged Bombay to take the decision quickly. Finally, it would prevent the place from falling into the hands of the Marathas.<sup>116</sup> Bombay quickly agreed and asked Torlesse not to ask for payment from the nawab.<sup>117</sup>

Meanwhile the trade of the English continued uninterrupted from Cambay. On 11 March 1773, Torlesse loaded 200 corges of assorted cloth and on the next day he put 367,010 arrangoes on board amounting to Rs. 4505-2-7 p. He asked for Rs. 6 thousand immediately as the workers were leaving to purchase the stones.<sup>118</sup> By 29 March, he had loaded 93,830 arrangoes and 20,000 chelseys apart from 140 corges. The stones cost Rs. 6474-1-0 p.<sup>119</sup>

In late August, Mombaz Khan, ousted Nawab of Broach and son of the deceased Mubarez Khan, began to create disturbances along with the Kolis of Dhawan. William Shaw, the agent at Broach, asked help from the Nawab of Cambay, who agreed to help him with five hundred sepoy provided he could buy guns and ammunition kept at the English factory. The nawab was afraid of the Marathas since Fateh Singh and Sayaji Rao had recruited soldiers at Baroda. The nawab also pointed out that the Marathas were enemies of the English.<sup>120</sup> Bombay agreed to sell these to the nawab. By early November 1774, the sale

was completed for 4 thousand rupees which the nawab paid.<sup>121</sup> Trade was not disturbed and the cotton trade had revived again. Torlesse had loaded 5,14,490 arrangoes for Rs. 6324-0-53 p.<sup>122</sup> By the end of December, Torlesse had received a further sum of Rs. 4.5 thousand for the purchase of arrangoes.<sup>123</sup> Charles Ware Malet has been appointed at Cambay and Robert Gambier as chief of Surat.<sup>124</sup>

It appears that by this time not only had Cambay recovered from the oppression but that the nawab too had recovered from his financial crisis. There was no hint of oppression or crisis in the English documents, while the English trade in arrangoes had gone up to nearly ten million, about Rs. 15 thousand a year. The trade in textiles, after a period of decline, had recovered while the Marathas had been lying low at Baroda and at Cambay. The reason, perhaps, was faction fighting among the Marathas in which the English gradually got themselves involved, giving a new turn to the situation at Cambay. Malet, who took charge of the Cambay factory from 1 February 1775, stayed there ten years and actively participated in this involvement. To trace this disastrous struggle it is necessary to trace briefly the history of the Marathas that shaped the next three decades of the history of western India.

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## CHAPTER 9

### English Aggression and Maratha Resistance

Peshwa Madhav Rao's death on 18 November 1772 was far more fatal to the Marathas than their disastrous defeat at Panipat. He was succeeded by his younger brother Narayan Rao while his uncle Raghunath Rao wanted to seize power. Meanwhile problems cropped up between the Marathas and the English over Broach.<sup>1</sup>

The English had desired a part of the revenue of Broach as successor after their takeover of the Surat castle in 1759. In 1771 they had sent a force to Broach which could elicit from the Nawab of Broach a promise to pay Rs. 4 lakh which he did not keep. On 18 November 1772, the day the Peshwa died, the English stormed Broach, helped by the dissension among the Marathas. Even Fateh Singh's application to assist the Nawab of Broach against the English was not answered by Puna. As seen earlier, Fateh Singh had blocked the communication between Surat and Broach which was followed by an offer by him to buy Broach. The English rejected the proposal. On 12 February 1773, Fateh Singh concluded an agreement with the English by which he was to receive some share of the revenue of Broach as before. Puna now wanted to get back Broach. In a sense, the English were acting as a local power hankering after land revenue.

Meanwhile Narayan Rao had made enough enemies. Raghunath Rao and others took advantage of this and on 30 August, 1773, Narayan Rao was murdered in full view of Raghunath Rao, who assumed charge of the peshwa from the same day. But he alienated the older set of ministers very soon and under the leadership of Nana Fadnavis a new group was formed to oust Raghunath Rao, who was declared guilty by the judge Ram Shastry. Fateh Singh had also proposed another alliance against his brother Govind Rao, who was then given the sole power at Baroda by Puna.

While Raghunath Rao was in a campaign in the Deccan against the Nizam, Nana and others had taken Ganga Bai, widow of Narayan Rao, to Purandhar, where they had formed a Regency under Ganga Bai in January 1774. While the ministerial party had sent an army against Raghunath Rao, the latter's army had begun to desert him, leaving him no choice but to depend on Holkar and Sindhia. While the negotiation with Puna was going on, Raghunath appealed to the English, agreeing to hand over Gujarat and other islands provided money and soldiers were given to him. Bombay agreed to send a force. By the end of December 1774, the English suddenly seized Thana along with the whole island of Salsette.

From early January 1775, negotiations between the English and Raghunath were carried from Baroda, where Raghunath had arrived. The latter agreed to keep his jewels as security in lieu of Rs. 6 lakh which the English wanted as expense for the force to be sent. In early February, Raghunath and Govind Rao left Baroda to face Haripant on the bank of the Mahi river. On 17 February 1775, Haripant boldly attacked and scattered Raghunath's forces, who could escape towards Cambay with only 300 troops.

Malet<sup>2</sup> had reached Cambay on the morning of 22 January 1775 and presented himself to the nawab the next evening.<sup>3</sup> He had found the passage between Surat and Cambay disputed by the contending parties, who were about 30 kilometres from Cambay, where public opinion was unfavourable to Raghunath Rao because of his murder of his nephew.<sup>4</sup> By early February, Raghunath had arrived 20 kilometres from Cambay, from where he had sent a wakil to the Nawab of Cambay<sup>5</sup> summoning him, while Haripant was stationed on the other side of the river. The dispute had already retarded the preparation of cornelians which had to be finished in a hurry. By the 4 February, the nawab had encamped outside Cambay, refusing to see Raghunath personally and wanted to know which side the English would support.<sup>6</sup>

By the 11th before the battle Raghunath wanted a positive answer from the nawab about his help in case he came to Cambay. But the nawab did not answer although by that time he was aware of the English move to support Raghunath. The silence of the nawab was due to his secret liaison with Fateh Singh.<sup>7</sup> On the night of the 11th the nawab called a meeting of the merchants of Cambay, which decided that since Raghunath was pledging the jewels for the maintenance of his army, very little reliance could be placed on him.<sup>8</sup>

Malet's analysis of the situation of Cambay at this time can be seen in a private letter.<sup>9</sup> He clearly calls the government despotic since the will of the nawab was the law. He had a standing army of two thousand horses but his revenue was insufficient to meet his expenses. As a result, he had to impose oppressive taxes frequently. In case of refusal, imprisonment and torture were used. Similar cases were dealt by the kotwal while the civil cases, such as the sale of property, etc. were dealt with by an officer called Master of Justice. Their decisions were enforced by the qazis. 'The English Company enjoys very great privileges there, they pay a trivial custom to their imports and exports and are allowed to extend protection to all their servants, their artificers, tradesmen and to many merchants in this town; they live free from apprehension and suffering...'. Yet Malet does not refer to the decline of the town he merely wondered at the neglect of the town, which is so advantageously situated, a theme he would harp on with some emphasis later on.

On the 15 February, Raghunath's jewels had arrived at the Cambay factory with three hundred Maratha horsemen and were duly sealed.<sup>10</sup> With the information that Fateh Singh with his troops had crossed the Mahi river, the nawab returned to Cambay on the 18th.<sup>11</sup> By the 19th Raghunath's defeat and flight to Cambay was known to the English.<sup>12</sup>

While on the morning of the 20th when Malet was sending the samples of stones with no guarantee of getting these soon, Raghunath arrived within 2 kilometres of Cambay, asking permission to enter. When the nawab refused, Malet arranged for Raghunath to go to Bhawanagar.<sup>13</sup> Actually, it was the nawab who secretly arranged the passage of Raghunath to Bhawanagar. By the 27th, Raghunath had reached Surat safely. The Kolis had started their usual disturbance while five hundred horsemen hovered around Cambay. Malet asked for eight guns as confrontation between the two parties of the Marathas, seemed imminent. Raghunath's three thousand horses, preserved by Gopal Rao, were stationed nearby while forces from Puna were quite close by.<sup>14</sup>

The danger from the Marathas increased soon. Ganeshji Appa, the Maratha subadar, had arrived from Ahmedabad and wanted to seize Cambay, which would give him possession of 12 lakh rupees, and which he thought was the value of jewels of Raghunath (called Raghoba in the English documents). The credit of the Company had increased at Cambay due to the refuge given to the fugitive Raghoba while the nawab, at the bastion most of the time, wanted to buy guns

and ammunition from the English to ward off the Marathas. The whole area faced desolation.<sup>15</sup>

While Malet had sent the jewels to Surat, Fateh Singh had begun to negotiate with Govind Rao and Khande Rao under the mediation of Mahadiji Sindhia. Govind Rao and Khande Rao had marched away after the defeat of Raghoba which had angered Puna.<sup>16</sup> The nawab also did not agree to Raghoba's suggestion to raise troops but only agreed to give some carts to the English troops soon to land at Cambay.<sup>17</sup>

Malet began to prepare to receive Raghoba while his jamadars had arrived to raise troops. He found an excellent house near the factory owned by a Mughal Agasi Beg, who was persuaded to vacate it. The problem of Malet however was to collect money as eight hundred foot soldiers and four hundred horsemen were ready to join Raghoba. By the 17th, the nawab had encamped outside the town and was ready to present Raghoba his only elephant and some horses.<sup>18</sup> In the same night, Raghoba and Col. Keating landed at Cambay.<sup>19</sup>

Money was always a problem with Raghoba. On the urging of Col. Keating, Malet began to raise a loan while the English forces were encamped half a mile outside the town. Malet, in this situation, did not expect any trade, although goods for Mocha were lying at the warehouse.<sup>20</sup> Puna forces had plundered Bhawanagar and had carried seven or eight elephants of Raghoba. They had also plundered eight or ten villages.<sup>21</sup>

The situation appeared very bleak for Malet. The nawab did not want to pay for the troops raised on English request while Malet could not get further loans since the shroffs were very much afraid. Raghoba had no cash and insisted on stationing his chouthear at Cambay to collect the Maratha share of the revenue. He was already disgusted with the nawab for the wounding of one of his pundits by his men. Other zamindars, allied to the English, could not join Raghoba as Puna forces had blocked the roads. The nawab was insisting on the expedition of Raghoba inland, more so to get him off his back for the charges of retaining him were higher. Meanwhile, the Puna forces had marched towards Ahmedabad.<sup>22</sup>

By the 24 March, Malet could secure a loan of Rs. 8 thousand payable in six months. Raghoba wanted to raise money at Surat by pledging his jewels. Fateh Singh was ready for negotiation and Malet had been spreading the word that the English were waiting for their forces from Madras. For Malet the only silver lining was that the Koli chief of Dhawan had agreed to serve Raghoba, who was secretly

negotiating with the English at Surat for a loan on the Maratha share of the revenue.<sup>23</sup>

Even on the 30th, Raghoba's cash liquidity did not increase while Fateh Singh's dewan, a follower of Haripant of Puna forces, intrigued against the English alliance. In early April, two hundred Puna horses hovered around 5 kilometres from Cambay. But the nawab was gradually persuaded to pay for four hundred horses and foot soldiers while the Company had to give security for payment. Col. Keating wanted more troops to be raised.<sup>24</sup>

The rumour that Raghoba had ceded to the English the valuable possession of the Gaekwad estates persuaded Govind Rao and Khande Rao to sign a treaty with the Puna forces. While the nawab was collecting cash as far as Petlad, English forces easily captured Jambusar. Col. Keating therefore promised the Nawab of Cambay to get Cambay released from the Maratha chouth. Yet the financial position of Raghoba remained as precarious as ever.<sup>25</sup>

In lieu of the release from the Maratha chouth, the nawab had agreed to raise three thousand horses and two hundred foot soldiers to meet Raghoba in person. But the presence of the army had escalated the prices at Cambay creating a scarcity of grain, which led to constant dispute between the shopkeepers and Raghoba's army. According to Malet a famine had started while Col. Keating called it artificial. The nawab had already put an embargo on grain, Malet firmly supported the stand of the nawab and was hurt by the view of Col. Keating, who was advised by Raghoba, 'a new friend' and 'an Asiatic'.<sup>26</sup>

By the 21 April, nawab could not bear the expenses of the army any longer and endorsed by Malet decided to disband it. Some of the villagers had been absconding due to the fear of the Kathis, who had taken service under Raghoba. The latter finding the situation difficult, agreed to meet the nawab and come to terms.<sup>27</sup>

With Col. Keating moving inland, the Marathas began to retreat towards Dholka. Raghoba did not meet the nawab as promised, although he was in a desperate financial crisis. His own forces could not be paid and they were taking away grain from the villagers by force. They had plundered some of the villages at an estimated loss of Rs. 10 thousand. The villagers had begun to flee. Yet, the nawab, though disappointed, allowed the gain to be sent from Cambay to the army. Malet now wanted the nawab to be rewarded. But Col. Keating began to evade his promise of releasing Cambay from the Maratha chouthear. According to the nawab's estimate, which was supported



by Malet, Raghoba had carried away grain from the nawab's villages worth Rs. 30 thousand.<sup>28</sup>

Since the troops had left Cambay, Malet asked for Rs. 5 thousand as advance for the supply of arrangoes. The English troops had reached Neriad and levied contributions to the amount of Rs. 45 thousand. Even the nawab agreed to supply 150 horse for twenty days at his own cost for the protection of Broach, in which obviously he had an interest.<sup>29</sup>

Raghoba's situation was still not satisfactory. Ganeshji Appa, the Maratha subadar, had threatened the nawab if he ejected the Maratha officials from Cambay. Raghoba had only been able to place his own people at Dholka. The nawab refused to succumb to the threat of Ganeshji Appa, particularly in the background of the victory of the English forces at Narmada. Haripant had retreated towards Malwa and in the rainy season, the English quartered at Dabhoi as masters of the field. Malet explained, prematurely, that the English had become masters of Gujarat.<sup>30</sup>

Raghoba now tried to raise funds without which his troops had refused to move. He demanded arrear chouth from the Nawab of Cambay, while Malet reminded Keating that Raghoba had already promised to forego this. With the victory of the English, the elusive Fateh Singh came to terms with the English.<sup>31</sup>

Raghoba now began to put his people in the administration. He put Bal Krishna as chouthear at Cambay and Amire Ali as Subadar of Gujarat. But Nawab of Cambay had other ideas. He wanted to go to Bombay to secure the acquittal of chouth as well as for the subadari of Gujarat, which he felt had been unjustly taken away from him by the Marathas. On Malet's advice, the nawab agreed to postpone his trip and agreed to pay Raghoba Rs. 30 thousand for the acquittal since the Maratha chouth did not go beyond Rs. 35 thousand. In return the nawab agreed to abolish all taxes and encourage trade. Malet seems to favour his proposal on the subadari of Gujarat which would make Gujarat subservient to the English. Against the plan of the English, besieging Ahmedabad, it was rumoured that Ganeshji Appa had agreed to surrender Ahmedabad. The Maratha war had not ravaged the crops much. Peasants were able to reap two harvests, bajra and wheat, in November and February. Malet, to keep these under the control of the English, wanted the small zamindars to be reduced to submission.<sup>32</sup>

The English trade however appeared to be stopped. No arrangoe had reached Cambay. Even when some merchants were transporting these, the Raja of Nimodra stopped them on the pretext of some dispute. The nawab's situation had also worsened. By September, he had not received any money from Raghoba for the troops raised by him. As a result, he had to impose another tax. Malet could not protest as he felt that the nawab had suffered so much for the English cause.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the English did not raise a finger to help the nawab to get the acquittal of the Maratha chouth promised by Col. Keating. They were caught in their own contradiction of pleasing both Raghoba and the nawab.

Meanwhile the structure of the old Company was changed in London. Amidst the growing report of mismanagement, a Committee of Enquiry was formed in 1772 which condemned the Company's administration. The Parliament passed the Regulating Act in 1773 by which the Governor of Bengal became the supreme authority in India as Governor-General with four councillors. The supreme council took charge from 24 October 1774. On the 8 March 1775, they directed Bombay to suspend their negotiation with Raghoba. The Council further condemned the treaty with Raghoba made by Bombay and wrote to Puna for a peaceful settlement. Hastings was out-voted in the Council and Bombay was asked to withdraw from the war. Bombay protested.<sup>34</sup>

In September 1775, unaware of the intention of the English in London, Raghoba had declined the proposal of the nawab for the acquittal of chouth. Raghoba now demanded Rs. 65 thousand which included the arrear payment of Rs. 39 thousand. A disgusted Malet wrote to Surat that Raghoba had gained from the nawab his life. Amir Khan's continuous failure to take Ahmedabad by force also increased the agony of Raghoba.<sup>35</sup>

By early November, the Cambay pargana had recovered sufficiently. But the incessant fighting between Fateh Singh and Govind Rao had made the parganas of Baroda deserted. Ravaged particularly by the uncontrolled soldiers of Govind Rao, Malet's eyewitness description of the desolation between the Narmada and the Mahi is vivid.<sup>36</sup>

Yet the trade had picked up. By the middle of November, Malet sent 2,700 comelian stones to Surat, a paltry beginning. These were the only ones available in the town. Surat sent funds for arrangoes investment which seemed to pick up after a long gap. The merchants were still panicky and wanted bigger convoys.<sup>37</sup> Despite this, Malet's

position had become quite unpleasant. He had to interfere to stop a fight between the nawab and Col. Keating over the Cambay chouth. On top of this, information came that Govind Rao, Khande Rao and Ganeshji Appa were planning to seize the revenues of Cambay.<sup>38</sup> Amir Khan, subadar appointed by Raghoba, had failed to take Ahmedabad despite repeated attempts. Govind Rao had already begun to claim the share of the revenue of the peshwa on which Raghoba had his claim. It appears that the peshwa had given Govind Rao the authority to collect his share of the revenue from this side of the Mahi river in a bid to deny Raghoba any funds.<sup>39</sup> As a result, Raghoba's troops had started to plunder Borsad town, 10 kilometres from Cambay which had made the nawab quite panic stricken and the English uneasy.<sup>40</sup> If this continued, the English trade would be totally stopped. Once again the contradictions had caught the English. Malet had to refuse a loan of a lakh of rupees and guns and ammunition to Amir Khan still battling before Ahmedabad.<sup>41</sup>

Govind Rao had also financial problems and was unable to pay his soldiers. Refusing the call of Raghoba to meet him, he seized one of the patels of the nawab at Petlad and demanded Rs. 10 thousand from him.<sup>42</sup> His own troops had his family confined and Govind Rao had to flee to take shelter at the house of the merchant Kesoor Purosottam. His troops, totally uncontrolled, began to plunder the parganas of Cambay and carry away his patels. The English hope was still pinned on Amir Khan as both the Gaekwad brothers proved unreliable.<sup>43</sup> Malet therefore prevailed on the nawab to lend some ammunition to Amir Khan to be paid by Surat later.<sup>44</sup> At the third week of January 1776, while Amir Khan was still firing his guns on Ahmedabad, people on both sides of Mahi were deserting their villages for fear of Govind Rao's uncontrolled troops still bent on plunder.<sup>45</sup> By the 25th while Raghoba invaded Borsad, Malet could send only 345 arrangoes to Surat. On the 2 February, Borsad town fell to Raghoba, but Amir Khan was repulsed at Ahmedabad.<sup>46</sup> Naturally Malet could not do any business during this period of uncertainty and had to return to Surat two hundis as very few stones had arrived at Cambay. He wrote that there was 'a total stagnation of business.'<sup>47</sup> The financial position of the nawab had worsened further and he was pressing his naib to produce the cash, which, Malet feared, would soon bring a rupture between him and the nawab. Kathis had begun their depredations and the nawab had to maintain a strong army to stop them from coming further.<sup>48</sup>

Within Cambay, however, some sort of small scale manufacturing activity was going on, Malet could send 4,610 cornelians (to Broach along with some carpets manufactured at Cambay). The English were operating the Cambay-Broach line as the Cambay-Surat line had become uncertain.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile Col. Upton was sent from Calcutta to Purandhar to conclude a treaty with the Marathas. It was signed on the 1 March 1776. The Marathas would retain Salsette in lieu of a country producing 3 lakh rupees in the neighbourhood of Broach, which, with its parganas would be handed over to the English. As expenses of the war, the English would get Rs. 12 lakh and they would renounce Raghoba, whose army would be disbanded. He would get a pension of Rs. 25 thousand per month. This was ratified by the Calcutta Council on the 1st of April 1776. The Bombay government considered the treaty inadequate and highly injurious to the honour and interest of the English.<sup>50</sup>

Cambay received the information of this at the end of March, 1776. Malet reacted strongly against it and he expressed the reactions at Cambay. He found the people of Cambay blaming the English for deserting Raghoba. The nawab was also chagrined 'for concluding such dishonourable, disadvantageous treaty...'.<sup>51</sup>

Even up to the middle of April, Raghoba had not disbanded his army while his chouthar was soliciting assistance from the nawab. There was a rumour that the Dutch were coming to the rescue of Raghoba, who still had two walled towns, Borsad and Dabhoi, but which would not be adequate enough to support a large army. The promise of the Raja of Marwar to support Raghoba, Malet felt, could not be relied on. By the third week of April, the desertion of Raghoba's party was quite clear. Even his Chouthar at Petlad was threatened by Khande Rao's son to leave that place. The English troops had already begun to land at Broach.<sup>52</sup>

With the return of peace, Malet repaired the factory at the end of May 1776, and asked for funds from Surat for arrange investments as quality goods had begun to arrive at Cambay.<sup>53</sup> The political situation took a new turn when Amir Khan managed to seize Govind Rao, whom he finally released after keeping him hostage for some time. On the 1 June, Mumtaz Khan, one of the sons of the deceased Nawab of Broach, requested the Nawab of Cambay to grant him residence at Cambay, which was recommended by Malet.<sup>54</sup> In the middle of June, Malet began to speak glowingly of the prosperous countryside of

Cambay, while the atmosphere within Cambay had changed for the better, '... the whole Damsels willing and desirable...' even the slaves, who were generally available now. The international market was looking better with peace between Russia and Turkey. As a result, the Mocha trade was thriving again and Malet hoped that the Bussora market would soon revive if the Turks did not make another attack. The demands of the Ottoman Empire, Malet figured, could be supplied through the ports of India and Mocha along with the goods of India.<sup>55</sup>

With the beginning of trade, the price of cloth began to rise gradually. Surat had ordered 1.5 thousand lungis, whose price had increased in the middle of July from Rs. 19.50 four months back to Rs. 21 on delivery. The cloth was now available. Even indigo was available for order at Cambay where the price would depend on the quantity available in October and November, when new indigo would come to Cambay. Malet now wanted advance in cash.<sup>56</sup>

During the last war, the trade of Cambay factory had gone down. Malet therefore saw no commercial advantage of the Cambay factory but he recommended its continuation on the grounds of political expediency. The nawab, still bent on removing the Maratha chouthar from Cambay, proposed the removal in lieu of a certain sum. By the third week of August, Amir Khan had joined Fateh Singh in his war with Govind Rao, ravaging the areas about 40 kilometres from Cambay, while the sudden flight of Raghoba from Surat created a new turn in the political situation.<sup>57</sup>

By the third week of August, Malet had ordered for the purchase of 150 mds. of indigo and had indicated that he would get chadars worth about Rs. 5 thousand by the next March.<sup>58</sup> By late September, information arrived of the Persians taking control of Bussora, which would help the Indian trade, particularly for indigo. Malet thought that Bushire would be a better market for indigo as large quantities were lying at Surat and Bombay.<sup>59</sup> With the flight of Raghoba, his followers had vanished. Bora, a considerable town, had surrendered to Ganeshji Appa on the 21 September 1776. With peace between Fateh Singh and Govind Rao, fighting in Gujarat had entirely stopped.<sup>60</sup> With peace Malet desperately wanted a commission for himself in the Mocha and Jedda trade to augment his meagre salary Rs. 158 per month. He could add a commission of Rs. 3 thousand to 4 thousand each year from the textile trade. He considered this as inadequate and wanted a 3 per cent commission on the arrangoe trade. Since the company had monopolized the trade at Cambay, the profit would be considerable.<sup>61</sup>

In the third week of October, Imrat Rao, son of Ganeshji Appa, came to Cambay with 3 thousand men asking for the arrears of two years chouth taken away by Raghoba's chouthear. After getting a promise of payment of Rs. 40 thousand, he left. Malet doubted that he would ever get paid.<sup>62</sup>

During the years of war, there was no order for cloth. Surat now ordered Malet to purchase cloth in early November. The order came too late, as all orders had been accepted by the weavers already. There was no surplus cloth left at Cambay and Malet could assure compliance of the order after the middle of December. Even the brokers at Cambay refused to take further orders on chadars at 5 per cent commission. The earlier order for chadar and indigo for about Rs. 1.2 thousand would be supplied. Obviously production, after the ravages of war, could not cope with the increased demand during the peace. But it was picking up. Malet reiterated the non-availability of any further goods for the Mocha trade to Surat as 'there is not at present a piece of goods to be purchased at Cambay of your assortment...'.<sup>63</sup>

By the 1 November, 1776, the Company's previous year's investment at Cambay was ready.<sup>64</sup> On the 14th, Malet could have sent to Surat more than 152 corges of piece goods which had been ordered.<sup>65</sup> At the end of November, he had more than 319 corges of assorted piece goods ready at the Cambay factory. At the same time, arrangoes were nearly ready.<sup>66</sup> By the middle of December 1776, Malet could send to Surat 340 corges of piece goods.<sup>67</sup> This shows very clearly that the production had started in the parganas while the trade had begun to pick up. The worst days of Cambay seemed to be over and it was turning the corner.

It was not however the real picture. The English Company had changed the method of procuring arrangoes. Instead of giving the order to the contractors, in which case the payment would be made later, the company now purchased the entire production by advancing money to the workers through the Resident. These were then brought to Cambay as rough stones and then polished there by another set of artisans directly under the employment of the Company. The demand was so great and the number of artisans so few that the Company had taken all the artisans in their roll. Only the rejected stones were left for Bohras and the Baniyas to pick up for their export to Pattan and to the African coast. The Resident was thereby deprived of the commission enjoyed by him in the textile trade while the Company ran a monopoly in the arrangoe trade.<sup>68</sup> It was therefore a sort of monopoly-capitalist

system in which the Indian entrepreneurs were left out while the independent artisans were transformed into paid labour.

One cannot say, however, that the textile trade had vanished. Actually after the war, the demand had increased rapidly and it was difficult to match production. Without an early order, the Resident was unable to get supplies. In one case he had to refuse an order of Rs. 22 thousand, as it came quite late.<sup>69</sup> It is certain that the production did not reach the level of the 1730's but there seems to be no doubt that the decline had been arrested and trade had also begun to pull itself up from the morass into which it had fallen. There was therefore both the systems working side-by-side in this small town, as if the past and the future have both combined.

At the end of December 1776, Malet could send indigo to Surat without any problems from the nawab this time. He did send the chadars as ordered. He could not buy more and had begun to employ weavers to get more,<sup>70</sup> once again showing that the demand was higher than the supply and that the new system of control of the finished goods was creeping into the old textile production. He had of course no means of controlling the production of the raw materials which was located within the areas controlled by the Marathas.

By that time the Company was investing approximately Rs. 55 thousand annually on two items from Cambay. The sum was divided equally between the arrangoes and the textiles. Malet now wanted a commission on the arrangoe trade at Cambay. He explained to Bombay that formerly the private trade to the Gulf from Cambay had made the presence of the Resident at Cambay a necessity for the security of merchants while the company's customs from the private trade in the African coast by the Indian and the English merchants were used to cover the charges of the factory. But now this custom revenue had fallen and very few merchants were left at Cambay. Malet of course did not want the factory to be removed as the nawab was a dependant of the English. What he did not say was that in case of the removal of the factory, the Marathas would take over the city.<sup>71</sup> In another letter written at the end of December, Malet explained this decline further. Referring to the production of the varieties of textiles, bootes and Muggee, which used to be manufactured some years back, Malet stated that due to the scarcity of weavers these could not be procured now. He promised to provide a sample.<sup>72</sup> What he did not say was that most of these weavers had gone to Bombay, which was emerging as the new centre of manufacture.



Arrangoes had obviously replaced textiles. Malet sent 44,980 arrangoes to Surat,<sup>73</sup> although the workmanship had deteriorated. He could not get any chadar and he promised to get some cotton from Limey pargana whose products were being exported from Bhawanagar. Once again, apart from Bombay, the weavers had gone to Bhawanagar which was emerging as a rival to Cambay under the protection of the English.<sup>74</sup> The nawab naturally resented the English encouragement to the opening of another centre so close to Cambay, especially one which was drawing away the trade of Cambay.

In the middle of February 1777, Fateh Singh had crossed the Mahi river and was moving towards Ahmedabad to fight his brother Govind Rao, who was driving away his people from Petlad. The Nawab of Cambay had also joined him.<sup>75</sup> On the 7 June 1777, the nawab came back to Cambay without Fateh Singh, who granted him a village worth Rs. 8 thousand annually. Fateh Singh was still at Ahmedabad with a large army.<sup>76</sup>

Despite the raging battle, Malet continued the trade. By the end of March, 1777, he had sent sixty corges of piece goods and two chests of arrangoes, while three more chests were ready to complete the investment.<sup>77</sup> Evidently the political struggle had not affected the trade of Cambay.

This did not satisfy Malet. As explained earlier, he did not get any benefit from the arrangoe trade. One of the reasons for the quick increase of this trade was that the workers and artisans of arrangoes were directly under the control of the Company and were exempted from the impositions of the nawab. In any case the private trade at Cambay had increased. The English custom collection on private trade had doubled from that of the previous year. Malet's assessment of the situation a few months back had not been entirely accurate.<sup>78</sup>

At the end of June, Malet's emoluments had increased. At the same time he got Rs. 6 thousand as profit on his private trade of arrangoes.<sup>79</sup> In the middle of July, he had received another Rs. 18 thousand as profit from his private trade.<sup>80</sup> But a new problem arose. With the return of peace, Kathis had begun to make inroads into Cambay territory despite the posting of guards at the passes of Sabarmaty by the naib of the nawab. Malet completely denied the rumour that the nawab had joined the Kathis and he was getting a share of the plunder. Previously, the nawab had made an agreement with the Kathis that they would leave him in peace on payment of Rupees 4 thousand annually. The nawab could not pay this money due to lack of funds and trouble had



started. Kathis had much at stake as they generally collected Rs. 50 thousand from this side of the Sabarmaty which they could not leave to the nawab.<sup>81</sup> The English by then had decided to attack the Kolis, in conjunction with the Koli chief of Dhawan, from Broach. The nawab agreed to supply the horses for the expedition.<sup>82</sup>

It has been seen that despite the demand for textiles at Cambay, the supply was inadequate due to the absence of the requisite number of weavers, particularly in the manufacture of chadars. Malet could not invest more than Rs. 15 thousand for chadars, which he was carrying as his private trade to Bussora. He was forced to do this as he got no commission in the import trade of Cambay which had declined. But he had difficulties in recovering his investment. He therefore decided to invest in arrangoes, corneliãns and agates. But the production was not consistent and depended to a certain extent on the current political situation. The Kathis, for example, had come near the town and had carried off three thousand to four thousand cattle while the nawab, in retaliation, had seized the brother of the patel of a hostile village as hostage.<sup>83</sup>

The non-payment of Rs. 4 thousand by the nawab shows the miserable condition of his finances and it is no surprise therefore that he begged Malet to represent his claim on Gogo, where an Austrian ship had arrived to study the market. Malet, more to keep the foreigners out of the Gulf of Cambay than to help the nawab, suggested to Surat and Bombay to cede Gogo to the Nawab of Cambay. He pointed out that it had a safe harbour and its neutrality would be a 'loss to the shipping of Surat bar in being cut off from a leeward post ...'. Malet suggested that if the nawab came in possession of Gogo with the help of the Company he would be able to keep Gogo without violating the rights of the peshwa. The matter was referred to Bombay in 1769-70, but Bombay did not want to change the status quo.<sup>84</sup> Basically, Malet was raising the question of the Maratha occupation of the Cambay area and wanted to utilize the nawab for the interests of the English. This would give the nawab enough funds to prevent the Kathis from plundering the areas of Cambay which would in turn boost production and bring in more trade.<sup>85</sup> Bombay responded by accusing the nawab for oppressing the merchants of Cambay. Malet found an excuse for the action of the nawab in his lack of funds which forced him into taking such extreme action. He even translated a private letter of the nawab to him, in which the nawab expressed his distress very clearly.<sup>86</sup>

While Malet was waiting for his profit from the chadars in the Bussora trade, it was clear that the Bohras and the Armenians had left Cambay to go to Bombay, from where they were carrying the Cambay trade in arrangoes and chadars.<sup>87</sup> They had become part of the protected people in Bombay since in Cambay they had no chance to circumvent the monopolistic control of the English Resident. It was not therefore the Maratha violence nor the changing sands of the river that pushed these traders out of Cambay.

English trade however continued. At the end of November 1777, Malet could send to Surat 530 corges in 32 bales of Cambay piece goods and 6,36,150 arrangoes, which reached Surat by early December.<sup>88</sup> Evidently, both the production and trade at Cambay had been showing an upward trend. Yet the traders were leaving Cambay.

At Ahmedabad, a new turn in the situation came when the mercenary Arabs of Fateh Singh killed Imrat Rao, son of the deceased Ganeshji Appa.<sup>89</sup> The English were troubled by the appearance of the Austrians at Gogo, where they tried to have a secret understanding with the Tindals (chief mate of a boat). The nawab was asking the reaction of the English in case of his seizure of Gogo. He also wanted a loan of a lakh of rupees by mortgaging his jewels. The payment would be in revenue assignments. Malet suggested that the nawab should be allowed to seize Gogo and then be persuaded to hand it over to the Company in return for his jewels or hand over a Phoorza gate (custom gate) for the recovery of his debt. The nawab would of course keep other Europeans out so that the English may not be accused of preventing free trade. In the event of his death, it would come to the company.<sup>90</sup>

The proposal came at a time when the demand from the prospering China market in cornelian had increased the importance of Cambay and Gogo. The increase in the demand was such that the stones could not properly be polished due to lack of time and labour. The Muncher brothers were already working for the China market. In the middle of March Malet could send one box of cornelians to Bombay for the China market.<sup>91</sup>

Bombay did not agree to give a loan to the nawab nor agree to his proposal of seizing Gogo which hurt the nawab most.<sup>92</sup> Unable to stop the invasion of the Kathis due to financial stringency and rejected by the English, the nawab took recourse to wine and opium. Malet once again pleaded with Surat for a loan for the nawab to restore his confidence in the English, but Surat did not budge from its stand.<sup>93</sup>

Thus on the one hand there was a revival of production and trade at Cambay, which was attested by the visiting French aristocrat, Count of Modave, on the other, its prosperity beckoned marauders from across the frontiers for which more money was needed by the nawab. Malet wanted the English to step into this vacuum through the agency of the nawab and not through the unreliable Fateh Singh, whose freedom he thought should be curtailed. But the higher authorities of the English Company had envisaged a different future.

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## CHAPTER 10

### English Ascendancy

At the end of March 1774, the palace revolution at Puna had embroiled the English in the faction fighting of the Marathas. Moroba, who had ousted Nana Fadnavis from power, solicited English help who agreed to the restitution of Raghoba. On 21 July 1777, Moroba was seized and with the declaration of Anglo-French war, the English wanted to keep Nana Fadnavis out of power.<sup>1</sup>

In early November, Bombay dangled before the Nawab of Cambay, who was then obsessed with opium,<sup>2</sup> the subadari of Gujarat to keep the Marathas out. The nawab was planning to seize Gogo with English help for which he had sent a vakil to Bengal. Malet therefore pleaded to Surat to strengthen the army of the nawab by offering him sufficient financial help. Trade was not disturbed as three hundred lungis arrived at Cambay from Dholka.<sup>3</sup>

Malet's estimate of the presence of three thousand Maratha troops in Gujarat<sup>4</sup> increased his plea for five hundred English troops with artillery. He also suggested that the Maratha chouth should be relinquished from Cambay so that the nawab remained solely under the control of the English.<sup>5</sup> His dream was shattered when the English offered a humiliating peace to the Marathas after a disastrous retreat from Wadgaon on 4 January 1779. All the possessions of the Company, acquired since the treaty with Madhave Rao, were to be returned and Raghoba was to be left alone.<sup>6</sup>

This created a climate of anxiety for the English at Cambay, although the cornelian trade went on as usual. Malet had to answer questions on the 'total defeat and destruction of the English'.<sup>7</sup> The uncertain political climate had encouraged the Kathis to attack Cambay and Jambusar parganas which forced the English to remove their goods hastily from these areas. Personally Malet had not done badly. He got a 43 per cent profit on his private trade of cornelians and

suggested rather imperiously to Bombay to make the nawab the Subadar of Gujarat,<sup>8</sup> despite the fact that the English had just concluded a treaty with the Marathas.

In the middle of April 1779, Mirza Muhammed Zaman, Naib of Cambay, secretly asked Malet for protection of the English from nawab in lieu of transferring Cambay to the Company. Zaman feared that the nawab would seize his wealth, acquired from his trading links with the Armenians and the Dutch, during the financial crisis. Malet regarded Zaman as part of the Armenian group and therefore a keen competitor of the English. He declined. To Malet, the jeweller Icharam Johury of Bombay was far more dangerous man as he was spying to the nawab on the activities of the English at Bombay. Recently, with the English defeat, the nawab had turned pro-Marathas while alluding to the English reverses at the same time. The nawab even had begun to export some of the commodities wanted by the English on his own account.<sup>9</sup> The English trading activities at Cambay therefore depended very much on the superiority of English arms. In a volte-face, Malet now proposed to Bombay to deprive the nawab of the protection of the English since he had turned pro-Maratha. Malet's personal situation had improved with his commission on the sale of mouthpieces and cornelians.<sup>10</sup> One could only feel the tense atmosphere at Cambay with the nawab preparing to attack Gogo, which Bombay had half-heartedly agreed while Zaman was becoming mortally afraid of the possibility of the seizure of his wealth by the nawab.

To Malet, perhaps unlike the attitude of other Englishmen in western India, the possibility of the profitable English trade at Cambay was intimately linked to the English dominance. This was reflected in his thinking—a kind of racial superiority of the English *vis-à-vis* the Indians. Malet considered Hindustan ripe for the conquest not only because of the effeminate character of the inhabitants but also because of the 'abject servility of their minds which makes them totally indifferent under what yoke they govern...'. While the Hindus were not united because of their sectarian differences, the Muslims had only pride, which 'is a diffused vague impulse directed to no end...'<sup>11</sup> Malet therefore began to recruit soldiers for General Goddard at Cambay, which was to serve as a base camp.<sup>12</sup>

Although the nawab had presented one elephant and two horses to General Goddard, his intrigue with Ghaziuddin Khan<sup>13</sup> disenchanted Malet, who now wrote to the nawab to stop sending the revenue to the Marathas.<sup>14</sup> The nawab did not want to antagonize the English since

Ghaziuddin was sent away from Surat by the English. The situation was complicated by the siege of Cambay by Chandra Power, one of the disgruntled captains of Raghoba, who was demanding assistance from the nawab. He promised the nawab an acquittal of Maratha chouth at Cambay in case of his supplying footsoldiers, artillery and cavalry. The defeat of Chandra Power solved the problem for the English.<sup>15</sup>

Financially the English company was in a bad situation. Surat's trade with the Persian Gulf was going down and the Nawab of Surat was involved in an argument with the English who protected any merchant trading under the English flag, thus depriving the Nawab of Surat his due share of revenue.<sup>16</sup> The debts of the English Company had increased to Rs. 50 lakh and they ordered a bond debt on the Nawab of Cambay for a sum of Rs. 1.5 thousand. An exasperated nawab had asked the English to raise it on the Raja of Bhawanagar.<sup>17</sup> The financial pressure was heightened by a terrible fire in Bengal that destroyed Company's goods worth Rs. 30 lakh.<sup>18</sup> The English however managed to get a loan from the merchants of Surat,<sup>19</sup> while Fateh Singh, rebuffed by Puna, concluded a treaty with the English,<sup>20</sup> who, as usual, would have the money without the responsibility. Puna, on the other hand, tried to gain the Nawab of Cambay, who had daily conferences with the Maratha agent at Cambay while Malet was away at Surat. In January 1780, Malet hurried back to Cambay and dangled before the nawab the possibility of the acquittal of Maratha chouth of Cambay in the event of the nawab's cooperation to open up a granary for the English army.<sup>21</sup>

The nawab's finances were also in a poor shape. His revenue then stood at Rs. 2 lakh a year, excluding Rs. 40 thousand he had to pay to the Marathas as annual chouth. With this he had to maintain 2500 men, including 500 cavalry, while nearly 1000 men were stationed to defend the frontier against the Kolis. Malet felt that with better management, the revenue could go up to Rs. 5 lakh. Nawab therefore had to impose new taxes in times of financial distress.<sup>22</sup> Malet had no choice but to accept the refusal of the nawab to open the granary. The provisions were easily and cheaply available at Cambay for the English army since the countryside had remained peaceful. Trade continued as usual. On 25 January 1780, Malet could send to Surat eighty corges of assorted textiles and 11,71,630 arrangoes.<sup>23</sup>

To Malet's small world of Cambay, the Maratha involvement of the nawab seemed more crucial since Cambay was the focal point for the



distribution of advance money and the supply point of all the materials including collection and storage. During Malet's brief absence at Surat, the nawab had dismissed Mirza Muhammed Zaman and had appointed a pro-Maratha naib.<sup>24</sup> Forgetting his earlier antipathy to Zaman, Malet now forced the reappointment of Zaman as naib while the English army was marching to Baroda.<sup>25</sup> The two groups at Cambay—pro-English and pro-Maratha—had taken definite stands and were bent on controlling the administration.

The decision of Malet to reinstate Mirza Muhammed Zaman was taken after a secret understanding was reached between them. Zaman had pledged to work for the English interest at Cambay and pass on to him all the secret information.<sup>26</sup> In return, Malet had promised him English protection and support.<sup>27</sup> This was the classical opening gambit of the English in eighteenth century India to control the State and direct the affairs while remaining in the shadows all the time, thus declaiming any responsibility. Perhaps this underhand deal was not made behind the back of the nawab who wanted a secret door open to the English. Thus Malet had further intensified the division between the two groups in power at Cambay with the nawab balancing both. But gradually, the nawab was forced to lean more on the Marathas as his demands were rejected by the English one after the other while demanding the support of the nawab at the same time. On 4 February 1780, General Goddard expressed his unhappiness to Malet on the refusal of the nawab to open a granary for the English army at Cambay although provisions were bought by Raghoba's forces from the market of Cambay.<sup>28</sup>

Yet Malet was able to secure the cessation of the Maratha chouth of Cambay city from Fateh Singh while Ahmedabad was delivered to him by the English.<sup>29</sup> A grateful nawab informed Malet of his willingness to hand over the Phoorza gate to them and to pay for the guards.<sup>30</sup> This would give the English the legal presence of their forces at Cambay while the Marathas would be ousted from the city.

The pro-Maratha group now came into action. Fateh Singh was unhappy as he wanted Cambay under his control. He sent secret messages to the nawab pointing out the ultimate English design over Cambay, which was a correct estimate. The nawab therefore delayed the delivery of the gate to the English<sup>31</sup> and through the pro-Maratha lobby began to negotiate with Mahadaji Sindhia, encamped about 15 miles distant.<sup>32</sup> Trade was in no way disrupted. Malet had asked for an advance of Rs. 6 thousand which was duly supplied by Surat while the

cornelians and arrangoes were brought to Cambay, polished there and then regularly shipped to Surat in baskets.<sup>33</sup> In early April, Surat suddenly asked Malet to stop the supply of arrangoes.<sup>34</sup>

On 30 March 1780, Malet formally handed over to the nawab the parwana of Fateh Singh relating to the acquittal of chouth from the Cambay city. Fateh Singh however would collect chouth from the Cambay parganas, thus keeping a link with Cambay. In return Malet got the keys of the Phoorza gate from the nawab as a free gift to the Company with a village in jagir which would give the English a sum of Rs. 2 thousand per year as charges of the guards of the gate. Malet congratulated himself for overcoming the opposition of the entire Cambay durbar excepting Mirza Zaman,<sup>35</sup> who remained perhaps the only high official in favour of the English. The entire officialdom of Cambay administration had turned pro-Maratha with both the nawab and Fateh Singh remaining disgruntled and secretly in touch with each other. Cambay city had become technically free from the control of the Marathas but the situation had become anti-English.

This was revealed by the middle of April 1780,<sup>36</sup> when certain letters of the nawab came into the possession of Malet showing that the nawab was carrying on secret negotiation with Sindhia for some time. The nawab allowed a forged letter to fall in the hands of Malet, who had been able to bribe the munshy of the nawab and got hold of the real letters. Cambay was drawn into the labyrinthine intrigue of a small world which saw the struggle between the English and the Marathas for supremacy.

The stiffening attitude of the nawab towards the English was understood by Malet from the nawab's correspondence with Sindhia.<sup>37</sup> It also became clear to Malet when the nawab objected to Malet's posting of guards at the Phoorza gate. Only a threat of Malet to return the keys of the gate silenced the nawab<sup>38</sup> who was obviously encouraged by Sindhia. A timely intervention of Zaman however saved this confrontation.<sup>39</sup> A few days after, some more secret letters of the nawab to Sindhia had come to Malet which explained the reluctance of the nawab to hand over the gate. Yet Malet could not locate any design of the nawab in the correspondence and concluded that the sole interest of the nawab was to gain independence. One of the immediate results of the ousting of the Marathas from Cambay was that the nawab's officers began collecting taxes from the inhabitants of Cambay after an interval of five or six years, even from those who were under the protection of the English Company.<sup>40</sup>

Actually with the disappearance of the Maratha officials and with Sindhia hovering nearby, the nawab had turned pro-Maratha to the disgust of Malet. The entire language of the durbar had turned anti-English and the nawab was openly discussing the sufferings of the English army for want of grain. In the background of such climate of anti-English rumours the naib, Mirza Muhammed Zaman, had become thoroughly alarmed, since he was being blamed for handing over the gate to the English.<sup>41</sup>

The fear of the naib soon became a reality. On 5 May, Malet reported to Surat of anti-English climate at the durbar and the disgrace of Zaman, who was attacked two nights back in his own house. Two persons under the protection of the English were seized while Malet could secure the release of one. The other had to pay Rs. 1.2 thousand. Strangely enough, Malet's small world remained. He ascribed this change of behaviour of the nawab to the influence of his sister-in-law, Khutbi Khanum, whose husband was murdered by the nawab and who was banished to Surat. According to Malet, this woman of fifty years of age was totally against Zaman. Malet requested twenty-five to thirty sepoy for his as well as factory's protection.<sup>42</sup> He did not link the same kind of pro-Maratha and anti-English activities at Ahmedabad, where the English had arrested the shroffs of the city, including the principal pro-Maratha merchant, Kesoor Purosottam. Major Fullerton had demanded Rs. 3 lakh from him for his release,<sup>43</sup> a kind of attitude for which Malet had denounced the Nawab of Cambay. Malet never questioned why Fateh Singh and the Nawab of Cambay for once were united in supplying grain secretly to the Maratha army or why the Maratha chouthear was conferring with both the beneficiaries of the English bounty at Cambay and at Baroda at the time of crisis. From the new crop of correspondence reaching Malet, he figured that the nawab was raising an 'army at the border to join Govind Rao, brother of Fateh Singh and his enemy' to march to Cambay 'to liberate' the nawab from the clutches of the English.<sup>44</sup>

As the canvas of the intrigue widened before Malet with more letters reaching him, which included nawab's correspondence with Kesoor Purosottam of Ahmedabad, the contradiction within the allied cause became clear to Malet. The nawab was asked by Sindhia not to coordinate with Fateh Singh perhaps because of his connection with the English. Govind Rao, brother of Fateh Singh, was encouraged by Sindhia as a possible successor at Baroda. This resulted in a bloody

fight between the two brothers which often disrupted the production in the parganas of Cambay.

Malet therefore decided to detach the nawab from the allied cause. He began to accuse the nawab's durbar and his officers with anti-English propaganda and insults.<sup>45</sup> Malet's papers concerning the nawab was forwarded by Surat to Bombay, where it was decided, in the meeting of 11 June 1780, that the nawab was pursuing a double line. Strangely enough, it did not resolve to take any action.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile nawab flew into a rage on learning through Zaman of Malet's knowledge of his links with Sindhia,<sup>47</sup> which may bring the English troops at Cambay. The nawab, desperately in need to placate Malet, now offered him a village with a revenue of Rs. 5 thousand a year for his silence.<sup>48</sup> This was raised to Rs. 5.6 thousand in a few days time while the nawab sent his agent to Surat to find out the extent of damage caused by Malet's disclosure. Malet suggested to Surat to imprison the agent, Mir Baba on the charges of his brother's debts.<sup>49</sup>

The situation at Cambay remained tense with all sorts of rumours circulating. Malet's demand to Surat to send twenty-five to thirty sepoy further heightened it while the nawab massed his army at the border on the pretext of stopping the invasion of the Kathis.<sup>50</sup> The nawab had informed the merchants to be ready with Rs. 30 thousand while officers began to raise money by force from the city.<sup>51</sup>

While the nawab changed the bearers of his letters to the Marathas to avoid these falling into Malet's hands,<sup>52</sup> Zaman was asked to communicate with Puna officially. Zaman tried to defuse the situation by bringing the pro-Maratha dewan, Ranchod Patel, to dine with Malet and get his sanction for a new tax, Malet refused.<sup>53</sup>

On the insistence of Malet, Bombay had looked through the papers once again and found no evidence to justify any action against the Nawab of Cambay. Malet was merely asked to keep a vigilant eye.<sup>54</sup> This reached Cambay at a time when the superiority of English was becoming evident, which had subdued the nawab. But Malet suggested to himself that all the charges against the nawab had been admitted and therefore the English should seize Cambay.<sup>55</sup> He informed Zaman, on his own authority, that the nawab may be removed,<sup>56</sup> which he casually referred to the nawab in a subsequent meeting with him, alluding at the same time that Cambay had become a miserable town, and that the English may withdraw from Cambay any time.<sup>57</sup> In diplomatic parlance this meant that if the nawab would not support

the English, they would boost Gogo and Bhawanagar which would destroy the nawab economically. Needless to say this was beyond the charge of Malet since neither Surat nor Bombay had even mentioned it. Surat had already informed Malet, three days after the meeting on 17 August that there was no proof of nawab's complicity with the Marathas and even if the proof was there this was not the time to increase the number of enemies.<sup>58</sup> Although Surat had ordered Ahmedabad to send fifty sepoy to Cambay, Malet had not informed Surat of his threat to the nawab. Malet's politics of the small world did not include the global policies of the English.

Gradually the situation turned better for Malet. In the quarrel between the nawab and Fateh Singh over the farming of five villages, given by the nawab to the peshwa and now claimed by Fateh Singh, Malet took the side of the nawab, mainly with the intention to exclude the Maratha share of Cambay revenue.<sup>59</sup> Besides, the English army had seized Vengurla and was approaching Bassein while Sindhia had hurriedly left Gujarat to return to Gwalior which was captured by the English.<sup>60</sup>

Bereft of the support of Sindhia, the nawab was easily persuaded by Malet to write to Surat to ask for a body of troops to be stationed at Cambay,<sup>61</sup> which Malet hoped would help the English to seize Cambay after the death of the nawab.<sup>62</sup> This was the typical English move for the takeover of the state as seen in case of Lucknow and Hyderabad later.

Malet was running for a bigger stake. He had already asked for the seizure of the northern part, starting from the Mahi river, by the English while the Narmada and the Tapti rivers would form as barriers against any Maratha invasion. Given the precarious situation of the English in America and the West Indies, Malet envisaged Gujarat, with extensive commerce and a number of commercial seaports, to supply indigo, tobacco and cotton. With a treaty with Fateh Singh the English loss was more than Rs. 26 lakh a year.<sup>63</sup> Surat was not moved as they had planned Fateh Singh to become the principal rival of the peshwa in Gujarat.

With the departure of Sindhia from Gujarat and the involvement of the English in war, Fateh Singh became aggressive and sent officers to Cambay demanding revenue and control over it. The nawab was then busy repelling the Kathis with his revenue remaining stationary at Rs. 2 lakh a year. Malet had asked Fateh Singh to desist but he insisted on taking the revenue of the parganas more than what the peshwa's offi-

cers had been demanding. Previously the peshwa's chouthears and the nawab's officers used to settle it together and peshwa never went in for a rigorous collection or higher demand.<sup>64</sup> The reduction of revenue of the nawab, if he would allow Fateh Singh to have his way, would further cripple nawab's finance.

Fateh Singh had timed his aggression well. Hyder had just invaded the Carnatic and the treasury of Bengal was exhausted after a borrowing of Rs. 50 lakh which hampered the investment for Europe. Money was becoming scarce for the English in western India.<sup>65</sup> A conspiracy at Thana fort had just been detected where the army officers were intending to hand over the fort to the Marathas.<sup>66</sup> Fateh Singh was therefore collecting revenue 'more as an avaricious Farmer or Tax-gatherer than the Proprietor of the country...'.<sup>67</sup> He had imprisoned his own dewan, Govind Manna and all his followers for money. He then sent a threatening letter to the nawab which Malet considered as definitely hostile.<sup>68</sup> To stop the Maratha to Cambay for ever, Malet suggested that the English should take over Cambay. 'Surat, Broach and Cambay from the shackles of Gujarat and we want but one link to complete the chain...', he wrote.<sup>69</sup>

By early November 1780, Fateh Singh had come close to Cambay city, which prompted the pro-Maratha dewan, Ranchod Patel, to suggest to the nawab for a compromise with Fateh Singh. Malet naturally objected and though the clerk of Fateh Singh came within the city, the nawab remained firm against the compromise and instead imposed another tax on the inhabitants.<sup>70</sup> Malet had to remain silent.

Actually the nawab had no choice. In a long letter to the English on 10 September 1780,<sup>71</sup> he outlined the history of the dismemberment of Cambay pargana in which both the English and the Marathas had participated. The nawab had given five villages as ijara to the Maratha Chouthear's wife but could not get these back from Fateh Singh, who occupied these after her death. The English had allowed Gogo, whose custom was originally linked to that of Cambay, to be separated with the consequent loss to Cambay revenue. Since 1777, the nawab was forced to maintain two hundred horses and seven hundred foot soldiers at the Sabarmatty Pass for which he received Rs. 20 thousand annually from the peshwa. This sum was inadequate to the cost. Apart from the acquittal of the Maratha chouth at Cambay city, the nawab wanted Rs. 41 thousand annually from the English for the defence of the Sabarmatty Pass. In early November 1780, Bombay considered the situation and agreed to send a force to Malet. They referred the matter

of nawab's five villages to General Goddard and wanted an account of the nawab's family.<sup>72</sup>

The nawab, now supported by Malet and informed of the conquest of Bassein by the English<sup>73</sup> made an agreement with Fateh Singh, who still refused to hand over those five villages.<sup>74</sup> The nawab merely forwarded the refusal of Fateh Singh to Bombay.<sup>75</sup> Malet also informed Bombay that the promising successor to the nawab was a young man, brother of the widow of nawab's deceased son. Nawab's daughter by a concubine was married to the illegitimate son of the sister's husband. In such a situation, Malet hoped that Cambay would pass to the English if a force was introduced at this time.<sup>76</sup>

The nawab however was becoming desperate due to the inaction of the English. He wanted to go to Bombay to settle the matter, although Malet had told him of the ruined condition of Cambay, whose inhabitants may stay for another year or two. Unfortunately the nawab could not tell Malet that this was caused by the English misadventure with the Marathas and the encouragement given by them to Gogo and Bhawanagar chiefs, which had drawn away the Cambay trade. By then a desperate Malet, eager to stop the trip of the Nawab to Bombay, suggested to Bombay to take the ijara of the chouth of Fateh Singh in the Cambay parganas which would include the saltpans near the city. The nawab would be satisfied with the governorship of Bassein.<sup>77</sup> In an effort to stop the nawab, Malet showed him the copies of his correspondence with the Marathas and threatened him for the breach of the treaty, although no such treaty existed. The nawab denied the authenticity of such correspondence.<sup>78</sup> But Malet had achieved his objective. The threat suspended the imposition of another tax.<sup>79</sup> But within a few days, the nawab gained sufficient courage to give notice of a new tax. Malet tried to stop it without success.<sup>80</sup>

The English were caught in a vicious cycle at Cambay. By starting the Anglo-Maratha war and by encouraging small chiefs like those of Gogo and Bhawanagar to defy the established authority of the Nawab of Cambay, they had allowed the Kolis and Kathis to plunder the parganas of Cambay, the defence of which was left to the nawab. While the revenue of the parganas of Cambay were controlled by Fateh Singh by a treaty with the English, the former had no responsibility to defend the areas. The nawab had to defend these for which he needed revenue which could only come at this time from the imposition of taxes within the city. This would in turn



affect the merchants and the artisans, who strangely enough, began to flee to the Maratha controlled areas. The sorrow for Malet for the misery of the inhabitants of Cambay and his determined and vociferous resistance to the imposition of the nawab's taxes was entirely motivated by other interests while the misery was caused not by Maratha violence but precisely because of the absence of Maratha authority, which had at one time kept the nawab and his officers in check. The emergence of irresponsible leaders like that of Fateh Singh, desperate for money and encouraged by the English to defy the authority of the peshwa, had further clipped the wings of the nawab.

The decline of English trade was also responsible for the growing decadence of the city of Cambay. The English Company had stopped purchasing arrangoes with the loss of Senegal and other English possessions in the African coast. Consequently the manufacture of the stones was stopped and the commodity had become scarce. Malet had to return Rs. 3 thousand as the stones were not available at Cambay due to lack of previous orders.<sup>81</sup> The decline of arrangoe trade, whose boom had given the nawab much needed revenue, prompted the nawab to impose new taxes.

In the middle of March 1781, Fateh Singh's Pundit came to Cambay to collect the chouth on the parganas. The nawab called Malet to arbitrate. The nawab proposed to pay Rs. 30 thousand to Fateh Singh instead of the sum of Rs. 40 thousand paid previously due to the declining condition, and Rs. 2 thousand to Malet for the settlement. While Malet refused, the nawab began his correspondence with Puna.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, Fateh Singh wanted Malet to mediate, offering one of the villages as jagir. Obviously both the nawab and Fateh Singh wanted the control of the parganas with the help of the English. Malet refused both the offers<sup>83</sup> as he wanted the control of the English.

Yet Malet continued to negotiate with both while waiting to hear from Bombay regarding his proposal of the ijara of chouth of Fateh Singh, who wanted the payment of Rs. 40 thousand from the nawab for the chouth. Malet wanted the nawab to drop the pro-Maratha dewan, Ranchod Patel. To achieve this, he began to threaten the chouthear of Fateh Singh at the same time,<sup>84</sup> not allowing the nawab to settle the affair with Fateh Singh. Malet stopped the chouthear of Fateh Singh to negotiate directly with the nawab bypassing him,<sup>85</sup> which the pro-Maratha lobby wanted.



One of the reasons of the increasingly higher demand set by Fateh Singh was the retreat of the English forces from the Ghats while the Marathas had become master of the plains. They had inflicted severe losses to the English army which failed to take Konkan. The Marathas had driven the inhabitants of Surat pargana within the walls of Surat causing a price rise there.<sup>86</sup> The English superiority in Gujarat was collapsing which encouraged Fateh Singh to be aggressive.<sup>87</sup>

This turn of events forced Malet to conclude an agreement between the nawab and Fateh Singh, in which the nawab would pay Rs. 6 thousand per year while the chouth was fixed at Rs. 30 thousand per year. Although Fateh Singh's chouthear had stayed long enough in the city with the same status as enjoyed by the former Maratha chouthear, yet Malet was able to clip the wings of Fateh Singh. It was agreed that he could not claim in future a further sum of Rs. 28 thousand from the nawab.<sup>88</sup>

Although peace at long last had descended on Cambay parganas, the situation within the city had deteriorated. Manufacturers were under heavy taxation. Officer of the nawab had 'engrossed every branch of trade and forced their commodities at an arbitrary rate on the purchasers...very articles of life are monopolized by the same harpies and an artificial scarcity is created amidst real plenty...'. The nawab now lived with his sister-in-law and Malet was worried about the succession.<sup>89</sup>

The situation had made it difficult for Malet to live honourably. Without trade and without commission or profit from his private trade, Malet had run into debt, taking loan at a high rate of interest, since there was a scarcity of cash at Cambay.<sup>90</sup> He found the factory commercially unsound and burdensome. But if the English succeeded the nawab, there would be immense political advantage. He again suggested to Surat that the English should take over the chouth of Fateh Singh while the nawab would be forced to make peace with the Kolis and the Kathis like other zamindars. Surat ignored such proposals,<sup>91</sup> as they were far more interested in occupying the Dutch factory at Surat in the event of Anglo-Dutch war in Europe.<sup>92</sup>

By 1 July 1781, the situation at Cambay had worsened further by the long years of war, plunder and heavy taxation. People had begun to desert the city while Fateh Singh seized the Desai of Petlad to get money.<sup>93</sup> Fateh Singh's chouthear, forced to leave Cambay due to Malet's objection, had come back to Cambay to get arrear payment from the nawab.<sup>94</sup> Since he failed to procure it, Fateh Singh had him

arrested while the nawab imposed another tax at Cambay to pay Fateh Singh overriding the protest of Malet.<sup>95</sup>

Once the retreat of the English became a reality and an agreement was reached with Fateh Singh, the nawab had turned towards the Maratha, aroused with the arrival of the former Maratha Dewan of Ahmedabad at Cambay and nawab's several secret meetings with him.<sup>96</sup>

The rumour of the English retreat was much magnified at Cambay by the information supplied by Icharam Johury. Malet had already withdrawn English protection to his family living at Cambay but the family got exempted from the tax of the nawab. The situation appeared grim to Malet, the oppression had hardly left an entire terraced house standing while the nawab resigned himself from the administration. Malet was now unofficially told to drop Zaman.<sup>97</sup> The indications were very clear to Malet that through the nawab, the Marathas would come back to Cambay. With a comparative lull in the war, Surat had sent to Malet Rs. 8 thousand in hundi on Cambay shroffs for investment.<sup>98</sup>

With the savage Maratha attacks up to the gate of Surat and the retreat of Col. Browne,<sup>99</sup> the atmosphere of Cambay durbar had once again turned violently anti-English, where 'unkind threatening innuendos' were used. To Malet, Baroda had become 'a sieve of intrigue and cabal', while another Maratha officer had arrived at Cambay.<sup>100</sup> Although Malet continued to pinpoint Fateh Singh as the root cause of trouble, Bombay did not have much of a choice as the financial position of the English had deteriorated considerably in western India. The debt of Bombay government had exceeded Rs. 90 lakh and the Company bonds were selling at lower rate than those of Madras. Fateh Singh, undeterred by General Goddard's presence, refused to be bullied by the English.<sup>101</sup> Against this background, the nawab called Malet for a meeting to decide the steps to be taken against the Kathis at the border. Malet did not offer any helpful suggestion as he did not want the border problem to be solved.<sup>102</sup> A perennial border problem would force the nawab to remain dependent on the English. Malet therefore decided to put the perfidy of the nawab and Fateh Singh to General Goddard, whom he requested to take the ijara of Fateh Singh's chouth of Cambay parganas.<sup>103</sup> The General, however, was not in a position to force the issue. He merely deferred the decision on the conduct of the nawab. He was far more worried with the demand of Fateh Singh to remove the English troops from Ahmedabad in view of their defeat.<sup>104</sup>

The situation turned dramatically in favour of the English as the information of the defeat of Hyder Ali came to Cambay in the third week of September 1781. On the 26th night, the nawab visited Malet incognito and confessed his mistakes which were pointed out to him by his naib, Zaman. The latter had threatened to leave for Persia if an agreement was not reached with the English.<sup>105</sup> The nawab offered once again any village in his pargana as jagir to Malet, which he refused.<sup>106</sup> Malet merely advised the nawab not to provoke Fateh Singh while the Kathis of Dholka wanted the permission of the nawab to settle inland.<sup>107</sup> It is evident that the English dominance in India rested on the laurels of military victory, which also revealed the fragile structure of the English establishment and commercial superiority in late eighteenth century India.<sup>108</sup>

By the middle of October 1781, the English left Ahmedabad,<sup>109</sup> which emboldened Fateh Singh to demand chouth from Cambay parganas. Malet wanted the chouthear to settle the problem from Napad where he was staying.<sup>110</sup> But Fateh Singh forced the issue. His forces came to the village close by and carried away the patels, including the Patel of Jindge village given by the nawab to the English for the maintenance of guards of the Phoorza gate.<sup>111</sup> By the end of October 1781, he had released all of them after a protest by Malet in writing.<sup>112</sup>

One notes a divergence between Malet and Bombay at this stage, which later had an impact on the history of Cambay. To Malet, Fateh Singh was fast becoming a regional power with design over Cambay for which Malet did not trust him. Malet therefore wanted to encourage the Nawab of Cambay as a rival to Fateh Singh. On the other hand, Bombay wanted Fateh Singh to emerge as a regional to challenge the authority of the peshwa in Gujarat, which would also weaken the Maratha lobby in Cambay. Also, to Bombay, Cambay was fast becoming irrelevant with Bombay's indirect hold over Ahmedabad and the Cambay parganas through Fateh Singh. Bombay was therefore not unduly worried over Fateh Singh's interest on Cambay. But Bombay did not want to antagonize the Nawab of Cambay which would create further complications particularly in the supply of foods to Surat. They wanted the nawab to play a second fiddle after Fateh Singh's rise to stardom.

The English had much reason not to create enemies. In the middle of November 1781, the financial position of the English in western India was getting desperate. The salary of the English officers given in Bombay bonds with 20 per cent deductions, whose value was falling every day. Only the Bombay troops were paid by Bombay with no

attempt to collect revenue from the newly conquered areas.<sup>113</sup> The only silver lining was that a peace had been concluded between Sindhia and the English while battles were fought with other Marathas outside Surat.<sup>114</sup>

Malet therefore was asked by Bombay to settle the matter between Fateh Singh and the Nawab of Cambay. He was asked not to take the side of the nawab.<sup>115</sup> Malet's reply was classic. He considered the nawab as a political criminal while Fateh Singh was the devil. All Malet wanted was some sort of deal that would give Cambay to the English<sup>116</sup>—a kind of desire that no other Resident at Cambay had expressed with so much force before or after.

At the end of 1781, the situation further deteriorated for the English despite their victory over Hyder Ali. Malet clearly expressed that in western India, 'the army diminished and humbled and treasuries exhausted...those territories ceded in exchange are laid waste and ravaged by the enemy...'. The debt of the Bombay government had exceeded over Rs. 35 lakh. The only advantage was that the loose fabric of the Maratha government precluded any effective and organized attack on the English positions.

While the peace talks between the English and the Marathas were continuing in January 1782, Malet emphasized to Hornby, Governor of Bombay, to preserve Cambay for the English. In case the Maratha establishment continued at Cambay, he wrote, then 'the continuance of this factory would only be involving an useless expense...'. It would also humiliate the Company. To Malet, the trading activities at Cambay were subservient to political influence. A few days later, Malet elaborated on this idea. He wrote that after the acquittal of the Maratha chouth from the city of Cambay, the nawab paid only Rs. 1,19,099 to the Marathas as chouth of the Cambay parganas after deductions.<sup>117</sup> The Company might succeed the nawab after his death, since there was no male issue thus anticipating Dalhousie's policy of lapse, if the Company would pay Rs. 11 thousand now to the Marathas, meaning Fateh Singh, who would be forced to accept it. The advantage of having Cambay would be enormous to the English as it had the potential to earn Rs. 5 lakh as revenue. The successor of the nawab would be happy to receive a fixed stipend from the English.<sup>118</sup>

Malet was technically incorrect. Perhaps he tried to minimize the extent of payment by the English. The payment of Cambay chouth of Rs. 11 thousand was made after the deduction of Rs. 19 thousand paid by the peshwa and then by the Gaekwad to nawab for the

maintenance of nawab's army at the Sabarmatty Pass against the Kathis. The chouth of the Cambay parganas was Rs. 30 thousand after the last understanding with Fateh Singh and if the English would pay only Rs. 11 thousand, then the expenses and responsibility of defending the Sabarmatty Pass would fall on the English. Malet was therefore making a case merely for the sake of denying the Marathas access to the Cambay parganas. To Malet Cambay was necessary as a port and as a manufacturing city. From hindsight one could say that he was right only up to a point. Cotton trade did make a come back in which case Cambay's hinterland became important to the English. But that would come later. At the moment, the situation turned against Malet in a violent manner which shook the English position at Cambay and jeopardized the cause that Malet was fighting for.

As usual, the situation began to turn with anti-English rumour based on a number of Maratha attacks on the Surat parganas from the beginning of February 1782. This led to exchange of secret letters between the Marathas and the nawab,<sup>119</sup> who encouraged the spread of rumour that the English were going to hand over their territorial possessions to the Marathas.<sup>120</sup> Obviously rumours had a bearing in a city like Cambay, where two groups were jockeying for power, to prepare the authorities to take decisions. But they also revealed the relative strength of the groups which succeeded in making these rumours seem valid to the people at large. In this case, the spread of such a rumour, particularly emanating from the Durbar, meant that the pro-Maratha group had begun to dominate. The nawab took the advantage in planning to impose a poll-tax on the inhabitants. Malet played into the hands of the pro-Maratha group by opposing this tax.<sup>121</sup>

Convinced by the persuasion of the pro-Maratha lobby that Malet was interfering in the exercise of the authority of the nawab, now restricted within the city of Cambay and the villages around it, where the Marathas gave him complete freedom, the nawab now began to put pressure on Mirza Zaman, his naib and leader of the pro-English lobby. It began on an apparently trivial matter.

A Mughal merchant trading between Persia and Masulipatnam died at Baroda. The shroffs of Surat owed him Rs. 15 thousand. Mirza Zaman, being known to the Mughal merchant, sent people to Surat to bring his property to Cambay. Zaman then requested Malet to arrange for the payment of this Rs. 15 thousand to Zaman by the

Surat shroffs. Malet forwarded the case.<sup>122</sup> Boddam, chief of Surat, got the money from the shroffs as the heirs of the dead Mughal merchant had joined Zaman in the petition. The Bakshy of Surat was disappointed as he wanted this money for himself and wrote to the Nawab of Cambay against the interference of Zaman, on the basis of which the nawab pressed charge against Zaman. The exchange of several emissaries between the Bakshy of Surat and the Nawab of Cambay showed that it was basically the anti-English sentiment in which Zaman was unfortunately involved. It appeared to Malet that the Nawab of Cambay, Bakshy of Surat and Fateh Singh had joined in a league against the English, although all three of them had remained pro-English on the surface.<sup>123</sup> In the extant English documents, there was no mention of such a league.

The nawab made his move with a façade of impartiality. On 17 February 1782 he arrested his pro-Maratha dewan, Ranchod Patel, with his 100 followers, which was justified by Malet.<sup>124</sup> On the 20th, the nawab arrested Mirza Zaman, with his two followers.<sup>125</sup> This was done on the basis of the letter of the Bakshy of Surat who accused Zaman of misappropriating the property and money of the deceased Mughal merchant. Malet finally secured the release of Zaman on pledging his money to mortgage Zaman's property and on condition of Zaman's leaving Cambay with his family and followers.<sup>126</sup>

Typically enough Malet put the influence of Khutbi Khanum, the sister-in-law, the principal motive force behind this clear anti-English action. It put the rumour of the English reverses in the battlefield as secondary cause for such action by the nawab. In his letters to different English officials, Malet now suggested the capture of Cambay or Gogo, to re-establish English influence.<sup>127</sup> In early March, he carried Mirza Zaman to Surat and asked General Goddard for his protection.<sup>128</sup>

At Surat, Malet got himself cleared from the charges levelled by English chief of Surat that he was putting pressure on the Nawab of Surat to reinstate Mirza Zaman at Cambay, in which Tarware, one of the principal shroffs of Surat, was involved.<sup>129</sup> By that time the Nawab of Cambay had ample opportunities to renew his correspondence with Sindhia.<sup>130</sup> The nawab also did not remain idle so far as the English were concerned. On 19 March he wrote to the English President of Bombay in which he accused Zaman of treachery and the interference of Malet in the internal administration of Cambay.<sup>131</sup> He followed this up with several letters till the last one

was received at Bombay on 20 July 1782,<sup>132</sup> all of which running in the same vein.

To the frustration of Malet, the Company did not make any immediate decision.<sup>133</sup> The rumour was afloat that the nawab was now trying to open another custom gate at Cambay.<sup>134</sup> Malet demanded that Zaman should be reinstated at Cambay,<sup>135</sup> a plea he made on 22 May 1782 to each of the members of the Select committee at Bombay.<sup>136</sup> Personally he was facing utter financial ruin with debts and with his money tied up in the mortgage of Zaman's property at Cambay.<sup>137</sup>

By the third week of May 1782, taking advantage of the silence of Bombay, the nawab appointed Ranchod Patel as dewan and opened another custom gate which spelled ruin for the English custom collection.<sup>138</sup> Neither General Goddard nor the English at Bombay, including Malet's friends for whom he had run private trade at Cambay, bothered to reply to him.<sup>139</sup> Malet therefore reached Bombay on 21 August to force a decision.<sup>140</sup>

The situation at Bombay appalled him. On the one hand, there was luxury all round. On the other, the financial situation of the Company had worsened. The payment of interest on public debt had been stopped, cash bonds were not accepted in the treasuries, a large number of creditors were trying to seize the Company properties by various means including assignments on Company lands, Company bonds were selling at 40 per cent discount and officials received their salaries on bills of transfer on treasuries. General Goddard had left for England after resigning from the Company.<sup>141</sup>

In the meeting of 6 October at Bombay, it was decided to write a letter to the Nawab of Cambay explaining the conduct of Malet, which was to promote the friendship between the Company and the nawab. The President in the letter appealed to forgive Zaman, who was distressed with his family at Surat without a job. Malet was criticized in the meeting for interfering in the internal administration of Cambay since the appointment of a naib was the prerogative of the nawab,<sup>142</sup> a policy that the English in Bengal or in Oudh did not follow a few years later. The persistence of Malet had merely brought forth a shadow.

Malet returned to Cambay on 25 November with the letter.<sup>143</sup> Next day he found the nawab sullen while the durbar remained as unfriendly as ever.<sup>144</sup> In a few days time, when he did not get any reply from the nawab, Malet understood that the nawab was



corresponding with Bombay without the channel of the Resident,<sup>145</sup> which put him in an awkward situation.

By then the situation at Cambay had definitely turned anti-English as many principal merchants and shroffs had sent private messages to Malet of their inability to visit him for fear of the nawab. Malet imputed this boldness of the nawab to his understanding with Bombay on the one hand and with the Marathas on the other.<sup>146</sup>

This new turn of events, involving his honour, made Malet push the affairs of Zaman on the backseat. He now wanted to reinstate the formal channel of communication between the Nawab of Cambay and the Governor of Bombay through him. On 6 December 1782, he requested the Governor of Bombay to follow the normal channel.<sup>147</sup> When no reply was received, excepting the one from the nawab which stated the nawab's unwillingness to correspond through him, Malet confessed that his responsibility was gone.<sup>148</sup> On the 14th, he requested the Governor of Bombay to withdraw him from Cambay, cautioning him at the same time of the intrigues at Bombay of one Icharam Johury, a spy of the nawab.<sup>149</sup>

By 17 December, Malet could get together the pieces of the puzzle and the picture startled him. The nawab had given Rs. 10 thousand to Sakharam Johury, through Sarabhai, one of the shroffs of Cambay, to be credited at Bombay and to be given to Malet's friend Torlesse and the Governor. Torlesse had agreed to write letters to the nawab stalling the proceedings. Malet also found that both the Hindus and the Muslims were working for the nawab against the English.<sup>150</sup>

Malet did not know that in the meeting of 6 October, both Boddam and Goddard had criticized Malet for his interference. This silence of Bombay was slightly in contradiction to Bombay's earlier stand of 25 January 1778 in which Bombay had warned Surat to prevent 'this country from falling into the hands of the Marathas, which would infallibly occasion the destruction of all trade and manufacture in that province...'.<sup>151</sup> This was the contemporary English myth against the Marathas which was accepted by later historians. But what was far more surprising for Malet was that the Governor of Bombay, in the middle of 1779, had recommended to Malet the use of the influence of Mirza Zaman, brother of Haji Abdul Moud, an old servant of the Company.<sup>152</sup> Even as late as 28 February 1780, General Goddard had written to Malet that the acquittal of Maratha chouth from Cambay was done to increase the English influence there.<sup>153</sup>



Realizing the actual connection between the nawab and the officials of Bombay, Malet now tried to placate the nawab with presentation of an Arab horse and rich pieces of kinkhab during Christmas. The nawab received these sullenly and the relation remained frozen as before.<sup>154</sup>

The situation of the factory at Cambay was depressing. The custom collection of the English from February 1775 to April 1780 was Rs. 48,474-2-26 p., while the factory charges for the same period was Rs. 48,471-2-26 p. The lowest custom collection was from March 1781 till 30 April 1782, which was Rs. 256-2-89 p., progressively declining due to the war. But this was not the entire picture. Cambay had invested Rs. 79,074-1-79 p. on account of arrangoes and Rs. 80,862-1-65 p. for piecegoods through the contractors.<sup>155</sup> Although the factory had not made any profit, the nawab had collected revenue even during the war, while the trade gradually declined as the war moved closer to Surat. The figures also showed that during the proceeding five years, the arrangoes and piecegoods had been almost equally divided in the English investment. One could therefore say that the piecegoods were coming back again in the trade, but then the war prevented its resurgence. The private trade was continuing as Malet could load three bales of piecegoods for the private trade of Boddam, the Chief of Surat by the middle of January 1783.<sup>156</sup> Actually it was the cold war that deterred the English trade at Cambay as none of the merchants dared to come to the factory. Malet had every justification in thinking about the sad state of the English power in India. The nawab had grown so bold as to reject Malet's application for looking after the garden and property of Mirza Zaman. Once again Malet protested in vain to the Governor of Bombay.<sup>157</sup>

Unable to wait any longer, Malet once again tried to force the issue by appealing to the Supreme Committee at Bombay<sup>158</sup> and writing to his friend Gambier there at the same time accusing John Torlesse, former Resident of Cambay and now member of Bombay Committee, to subvert the English influence at Cambay. He was glad to learn that his proposal to seize Cambay had been forwarded to London.<sup>159</sup>

On the same evening of 1 February 1783, when Malet wrote to Bombay, he was surprised by the visit of Jan Ashique, daughter of Khutbi Khanum, who wanted a compromise.<sup>160</sup> Three days later, Malet received another request through the same channel from Khutbi Khanum, who was running the administration, to settle the affair.<sup>161</sup> This was followed by a civil message on the 8th by the nawab with presentation of ducks. Perhaps the news of the death of Hyder Ali

which reached Cambay during this time, changed the attitude of the nawab. Malet did not commit.<sup>162</sup>

The Supreme Committee discussed the situation on the 7 and 9 February 1783. It was perhaps the information of this meeting that prompted the nawab and Khutbi Khanum to attempt to conciliate Malet. It was decided in the meeting that since the President had sent a letter to the nawab, it would be better not to displease the nawab further. To Bombay, the intrigue at the Durbar of Cambay was not relevant so long the nawab did not assist the enemies.<sup>163</sup>

By that time Malet had become aware that all his letters to Bombay had been communicated to the nawab by Torlesse through Sakharam Jofñury, including the one in which he had written on the dangerous illness of the nawab.<sup>164</sup> Against the background of a rumour circulating at Cambay of his recall,<sup>165</sup> Malet now wrote a letter to Secretary Day accusing Torlesse of treachery to the English, with extracts of Torlesse's earlier letter as Resident of Cambay against the nawab's oppression.<sup>166</sup>

Secretary Day was not amused. He asked Malet to provide justification for the reinstatement of Mirza Zaman, since it was a matter of internal administration of Cambay. In reply Malet produced a tirade on the oppression of the nawab which had led to the decline of Cambay and consequently the English trade,<sup>167</sup> although Malet had received Rs. 4 thousand as advance from Surat to begin the English trade<sup>168</sup> in which apparently there was no obstruction. Before the decision of Bombay reached Malet, he wrote to the Governor of Bombay<sup>169</sup> and the Chief of Surat<sup>170</sup> to recall him from this dishonourable affair, although Mirza Zaman had pleaded not to reinstate him at Cambay.<sup>171</sup>

On 1 March 1783, the decision of the Committee reached Malet officially, although he had known it earlier through the spies at the Durbar.<sup>172</sup> On 10 March, Malet wrote to Bombay to withdraw the expensive factory at Cambay which had no political influence.<sup>173</sup>

Production and trade however had continued. On 23 March, Malet had sent a boat laden with comelians worth Rs. 23,464 for China and the European markets.<sup>174</sup> He now looked for an opportunity to humble the nawab which presented itself too soon.

Mirza Syed Muhammed, one of the merchants banished to Surat with Mirza Zaman, had continued to trade with Cambay. On 23 March, his boat had sprung a leak in the Gulf near Cambay but Malet managed to save the boat. The nawab sent a guard next morning to take possession of the boat following the usual custom of stranded boat becoming the property of the nawab. Malet warned the nawab that the

boat belonged to the protected people of the English Company. The nawab, certain of his understanding with Bombay, wanted the decision of the superiors of Malet, who immediately sent a letter to Surat showing the total loss of English influence at Cambay without which the English trade was not safe at Cambay.

Meanwhile the nawab's guards had taken away the goods of the boat leaving behind some silks of an Armenian merchant of Surat.<sup>175</sup> Malet suspected a collusion between the captain of the boat and Cambay government to get the insurance money.<sup>176</sup> By that time Malet had received secret information of the collusion between Mirza Syed Muhammed and Sakharam Johury.<sup>177</sup>

While the matter was in progress, Malet learnt that a boat belonging to the nawab's family (he had five boats) was stranded at Gangur and secured by the English agent there. He wrote to Callander, the English agent at Jambusar, requesting him to proceed with the application of the nawab through him.<sup>178</sup> By 31 March, he had learnt that the nawab's guards did not take entire cargo from the boat stranded at Cambay and there were goods of merchants of Surat in the boat. He remarked to Boddam, Chief at Surat, that 'it was an insult to our flag...'. While the undaunted nawab was boasting of the recall of Malet from Cambay,<sup>179</sup> Callander had asked the nawab to refer to Malet for the release of the boat at Gangur, belonging to Mirza Thomas, nawab's nephew.<sup>180</sup> A frustrated nawab now seized the dependents of Mirza Zaman and then next day seized his garden and other properties.<sup>181</sup> The luck of the Englishman had not deserted him.

Malet had been able to turn this affair skilfully from his personal honour to the principle of upholding the English flag in the Gulf of Cambay. He had raised the question of the security of the English trade, particularly between Cambay and Surat, by pointing out that without the security of the English flag, the Nawab of Cambay would draw away the entire freight trade between Cambay and Surat with his five boats, which he repeated to Callander also.<sup>182</sup>

Before Malet had received his order of transfer to Surat on 7 April, which the nawab had learnt earlier through Torlesse of Bombay,<sup>183</sup> Malet had sent a letter of protest to the nawab on the seizure of Zaman's gardens and properties, mortgaged to Malet for Rs. 15 thousand. He also forwarded a note to the Governor of Bombay without effect.<sup>184</sup>

It was the possibility of the loss of private trade, including the private trade of the English officials, that prompted Surat to act. On 2

April, Surat asked the nawab to restore both the cargo and the boat stranded at Cambay, which was done on the 8th. The nawab, waiting for the transfer of Malet, did not apply for the release of the boat of Mirza Thomas stranded at Gangur.<sup>185</sup> By the 9th, Malet had left Cambay for Surat. Before leaving, he sent a letter to Bombay regarding the terror prevailing at Cambay.<sup>186</sup>

Before the letter could reach Bombay, the Select Committee, in its meeting of 11 April, criticized Malet's sending a force to get cargo and the use of the force for the release of the boat. They judged that Malet should have first made suitable representations to the nawab, failing which, he should have informed the superiors.<sup>187</sup> The concept of the honour of the English flag was different under different circumstances and with different officials. Bombay could now afford to be lenient as ratification of the peace treaty with the Marathas had been signed. Both parties wanted peace, a brief pause of twilight, for collecting resources for the next round. Malet unfortunately did not see beyond his small world of Cambay, equating his own prestige with that of the English flag and failed to perceive the mood of his superiors, some of whom he accused of treachery.

Even outside Cambay, Malet could not forget his small world. On 23 April, he wrote from Broach of the conspiracy of the Nawab of Cambay who had with him a son of the Nawab of Broach, to gain Broach.<sup>188</sup> Bombay would have liked the move as it would have embroiled the nawab with Sindhia. Malet continued to note in his *Journal* but did not write to Surat or to Bombay, that out of six arrested leaders of the conspiracy, one was the son of the Nawab of Broach.<sup>189</sup> On 30 April, he reached Surat.<sup>190</sup> Immediately he helped the spread of the rumours that the Nawab of Cambay was trying to persuade the English to give Broach to Mirza Zaman, which worried Fateh Singh.<sup>191</sup>

Although Zaman's people were tortured at Cambay for the hidden wealth, the trade of Zaman with Cambay had continued uninterrupted, carried through the custom gate of the English Company under the protection of the English flag.<sup>192</sup> But the financial condition of the nawab had deteriorated with the departure of Zaman and Malet, which had reduced trade, already suffering under the impact of the Anglo-Maratha war. Naturally the nawab had begun to squeeze money from the followers of Zaman and the English.

In the beginning, the nawab arrested Husain and his brother Hasan, both followers of Zaman and released them on payment. Then his officers had seized Anup, the Moody of the English factory along with

his brother-in-law, who also ran a grain ship. Hargovind Das, the shroff of the factory, left in time to elude the officers. One Mihkia, a dallal of the Company, was imprisoned along with his infant and a daughter while his house was plundered. Zaman's followers were picked up in the middle of the night, imprisoned and tortured to reveal the hidden wealth of Zaman. Some of the merchants, like Purosottam, Raghunath, Sevak Ram etc. had sent a ship to Bussora. The nawab imprisoned them, tortured them and demanded their ship. They were so badly tortured that one of them committed suicide while their houses, furniture, grain, cattle etc. were taken away. One of the smuggled letters to Malet stated that 'our bodies are a continued wound...'. Malet sent this information to the Governor of Bombay with a note that Sevak Ram and Hasan were employees of the English factory at Cambay. Obviously the nawab failed to find the hidden treasure of Zaman and he therefore turned towards his own officials. On 8 June 1783, at a feast organized at Narayansur, he arrested all his mutsuddis as well as his new dewan, in which his old dewan, Ranchod Patel, helped him.<sup>193</sup>

Despite his understanding with Bombay, everything was not going well for the nawab. Bhaskar Rao had taken possession of Broach on behalf of Sindhia, which unnerved Fateh Singh,<sup>194</sup> who did not want a superior power so close to him. To Malet the loss of Broach meant not only a loss of valuable production and manufacture of cotton centre but also the loss of the key to Rajputana and the western districts of Hindustan in the supply of broad cloth. Malet again emphasized the necessity to get Cambay, which could supplement the loss of Broach.<sup>195</sup>

In early September 1783, Malet became aware of the illness of the nawab and the conflict between him and Khutbi Khanum, his sister-in-law. One reason may be that the nawab was suspecting her of administering poison to him. The other reason could be that the son of Khutbi, in charge of the army at Cambay, had failed to check the invasion of the Kathis, who took away a large number of cattle from Cambay pargana. An enraged nawab had deprived the son of the command of the army, which meant a loss of power of Khutbi Khanum.<sup>196</sup>

Yet the nawab had remained pro-Maratha and anti-English. In early October 1783, he wanted back the keys of the custom gate from the English,<sup>197</sup> which would remove the English troops from Cambay. It was a logical stance following the arrests of the followers of Zaman and the English. Although Malet asked guidance from Bombay, he

knew the extreme financial peril of the Bombay government, which reduced them to depend on the remittance of the Bengal government. It is no wonder therefore that Malet exclaimed that 'our army captured, our revenue lost, our treasuries empty and our credit ruined ...'.<sup>198</sup> The Anglo-Maratha war had not only ruined the Cambay-Surat trade but had reduced Bombay's financial powers to a great extent. With the restoration of peace, the demand for cash had increased considerably, while the ruinous public debt had accumulated. The temporary relief was brought by the arrival of Bengal bills of Rs. 3 lakh and a promise of further Rs. 1 lakh, which would not last for more than six months.<sup>199</sup> The spiralling overhead costs were engulfing Bombay while Mahadaji Sindhia was advancing towards Surat.<sup>200</sup>

At the end of December 1783, Malet got the information at Surat, obviously from the pro-English brokers of Cambay with whom he had kept contact throughout, that the nawab was dangerously ill. The informants also predicted confusion in the city after his death. Malet now wanted to return to Cambay with a guard of thirty sepoy's apparently to protect the factory but in reality to influence the succession.<sup>201</sup> Since the gate had not been handed over to the nawab, Malet had further excuses, if he required any, to bring a force with him. The husband of the illegitimate daughter of the nawab was the natural choice as a successor. But he was inactive and therefore unfit to govern, according to Malet,<sup>202</sup> and he wishfully dreamt that the Company might offer him to cede Cambay to the Company for certain allowance. At Cambay under the English would give them at least Rs. 3.5 lakh a year in revenue which was a climb down from Rs. 5 lakh predicted earlier by him. He was also determined to re-establish Zaman and thus recover his honour by giving protection to Company's followers during the coming succession struggle.<sup>203</sup>

After his arrival at Cambay on 13 December 1783 with sepoy's and welcomed on the waterfront by the followers of the pro-English lobby, Malet learnt that the nawab had a paralytic stroke and had lost his senses. His wife and son-in-law were not allowing anyone to see him, which helped in spreading rumours in the city. The troops of Fateh Singh were hovering nearby while the son-in-law was refusing to exercise the full authority of the nawab.<sup>204</sup> Twice the durbar refused Malet's request to see the nawab, who now lived in the portion of the palace of his wife and served by the female attendants. The administration was under confusion and the troops were not paid their salaries for months. Naturally the inhabitants of the city were living

'under the most lively apprehension of the event...', which reflected the mood and fear prevailing in the city.<sup>205</sup> On Malet's request, Surat allowed him to keep the guards and forwarded to him Rs. 4 thousand on bills on Nagaji Pragaji, shroff at Cambay for investment.<sup>206</sup>

The sudden loss of the sense of the nawab and the arrival of Malet with a detachment had also brought confusion in the pro-Maratha camp. The inactivity of the son-in-law, by now acknowledged to be the principal claimant for the succession, had made the Dewan Ranchod Patel hesitate. The Hindu wife of the nawab had taken care of the nawab within his palace, but had also sent away all her valuables to the Raja of Amood, his brother.<sup>207</sup> Yet the son-in-law did not choose sides. He refused to meet Malet, who had continued to apply to him for the reinstatement of Mirza Zaman. In the public durbar, the son-in-law refused to decide and expressed surprise that the English had not returned the keys of the gate yet. In other words, publicly, the son-in-law continued to follow the earlier policy, which was generally pro-Maratha. But he had sent private message to Malet to help him to keep the city within the family, alluding to the intrigue of the Dewan Ranchod Patel with the Marathas outside. Obviously he was scared of the Marathas. Soon he sent a second message to Malet, once again in secret, that the nawab had another paralytic stroke and would soon go mad. His Hindu wife and the Hindu dewan were in contact with the Marathas outside. Yet the Marathas did not force the issue. Perhaps the advance of Sindhia towards Surat and the occupation of Broach by him made Fateh Singh hesitate to make a forcible occupation of Cambay. But then he missed his chance because the only thing the son-in-law was afraid of, as he put it in his secret message to Malet, was the Maratha army. He had faith in his own troops but they would not be able to keep the Marathas out by force.<sup>208</sup>

To the Englishman on the spot, the problem was simple. The English has possessed a gate at Cambay and therefore had the right to keep a force in the city while the nawab was a vassal, although there was no such treaty. To Malet, Fateh Singh was an ally, who would not violate the rights of the English at Cambay. Malet wondered why the Nawabs of Murshidabad, Lucknow, Cambay and other places were against the English, who kept them in their musnads,<sup>209</sup> a question remained unanswered in his *Journal*.

The situation complicated since the beginning of January 1784. It appeared that the Maratha camp had finally taken the decision to rally. The entire management of administration had suddenly passed on to



the Hindu wife and the Dewan Ranchod Patel, who worked closely together. The son-in-law, Nujjam Khan, had suddenly become powerless.<sup>210</sup> In desperation Malet wanted to return to Bombay to inform the committee but Bombay had refused and had ordered to stay there.<sup>211</sup> From the hindsight, it is easy to say that Bombay was right. Malet's departure from Cambay at this critical stage of the struggle would have spelt a doom for the son-in-law as well as for the Company.

Once again at the last hour the luck of the Englishman had held. Boddam, Chief of Surat, succeeded as Governor of Bombay and immediately included Malet in the Surat Board, which Malet had been seeking for a long time.<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, Boddam was the one who had supported Zaman by lending him money at Surat and was aware of the problems of Cambay. Malet's desperate plea to Bombay to use the detachment in the event of the death of the nawab had remained unanswered.<sup>213</sup>

By 18 January, the whole range of nawab's intrigues at Bombay was revealed to Malet by one of the servants of the nawab acting as his emissary to Bombay. He had distributed bills on Sarabhai shroff of Cambay, Rs. 1 thousand to Mr. Day, Secretary of the Committee, Rs. 1.2 thousand to Mr. Gambier, Governor of Bombay, and Rs. 1 thousand to Mr. Torlesse with a gold bracelet for Mrs. Torlesse. It was only after receiving confirmation from Torlesse that the nawab had seized the property of Zaman.<sup>214</sup> The information was of course not of much use at the time as different situation had come up.

On Thursday, 22 January 1784, the Nawab Momin Khan died at Cambay at the age of fifty-eight years, after ruling Cambay for thirty-seven years at a stretch. To Malet, he was responsible for reducing 'this once opulent commercial city to the most miserable state of poverty...'—a rather ungenerous judgement on which later historians would certainly differ. He was succeeded by his son-in-law, Nujjam Khan.<sup>215</sup>

The succession was smooth, which Malet, rather in an undertone, ascribed to the presence of the English detachment.<sup>216</sup> Still Malet wanted Zaman to be reinstated and asked Boddam, Governor of Bombay, to solicit to the new nawab. Malet was also aware that Momin Khan's letters had fallen in the hands of Nujjam Khan while exchanges of greeting were taking place between Bombay and the new nawab.<sup>217</sup>

Assured of the support of the Company's detachment and the loyalty of his own troops, Nawab Nujjam Khan suddenly swung into action. He placed guard over Khutbi Khanum and her family and took away all the valuables given to them by the deceased nawab. The



kotwal, Gautier Ali, who had occupied the house of Zaman on the order of the late nawab, was ordered to vacate it immediately. Malet now felt that he could return the detachment to Surat<sup>218</sup> as Robert Holford was ordered to take charge of the Cambay factory. Malet again applied to the Nawab Nujjam Khan for the restoration of Zaman without success.<sup>219</sup>

By 3 February 1784, copies of correspondence between the deceased nawab and Torlesse had reached Malet. These did not reveal any clear design on the part of either one. It was also clear that other Bombay officials were not aware of the design of the nawab to be independent of both the English and the Marathas.<sup>220</sup>

On 8 February, Malet handed over the charges of the factory to Robert Holford who was introduced to the new nawab. But Malet could not get back Zaman's property, mortgaged to Malet, despite the mortgage bond shown to the nawab. Nujjam Khan confessed that the widow of the late nawab, acting on behalf of the pro-Maratha group, was the main obstacle and he could not break through the ring of opposition around him.<sup>221</sup>

The opposition did not last long. While Boddam drove Sakharam Johury out of Bombay, Nujjam Khan was able to send the Dewan Ranchod Patel into limbo and settle the outstanding claims of Zaman. Both Malet and Boddam, who had spent their funds protecting Zaman, got back their share.<sup>222</sup> By the middle of April 1784, Mirza Muhammed Zaman was dead,<sup>223</sup> leaving pathetic letters to James Forbes to quote in his famous book of travel.<sup>224</sup> On 22 August 1784, Holford handed over the keys of the custom gate to the new nawab and discharged the guards.<sup>225</sup> By early February 1785, Holford was able to settle the difference between Fateh Singh and the new nawab.<sup>226</sup> Cambay was once again poised for revival.

One may wonder whether the hectic efforts of Malet on the secret service of the nawab, with the amount of money spent, did have any function at all. Apart from the fact that the English suffered most in their trade with west Asia by prolonging a war which was due to the policy decision of the Bengal government,<sup>227</sup> the nawab could have the satisfaction of seeing the Marathas and the Maratha chouth out of Cambay city. Once that was achieved, it was natural that the nawab would try to break through the English stranglehold on the administration by the presence of Mirza Zaman. Malet, representing the English at Cambay, with wide latitude of powers and often at variance with his superiors in his attitude to the nawab, wanted the

nawab under his grip. Therefore, it finally turned into a tussle between two men, with wider ramifications, which Bombay and Surat correctly diagnosed at a critical period of their history. This in turn disoriented the city of Cambay to a great extent, thwarting the rhythm of trade the city still had. The fact that Zaman and his followers continued to trade with Cambay from Surat showed that Cambay's trade was reduced but not totally stopped. It was rather the Maratha invasions of the Surat parganas which were responsible for the halt of Cambay-Surat run. The English in Bengal were ultimately responsible for this misadventure.

It is not clear why the Marathas did not react positively once the serious illness of the nawab was known. The English influence was at a low ebb then with Malet at Surat sulking under the rejection of Bombay. One reason may be that Sindhia became satisfied with Broach and did not favour an early push on Cambay against the wishes of the Nawab Momin Khan, who really did not want the Marathas at Cambay. Sindhia was never a supporter of Fateh Singh, who was considered a pro-English by the Marathas and Sindhia did not favour his getting too powerful with the possessions of Cambay, a view that was shared by Puna. Fateh Singh's illness at the critical stage might have helped this process.<sup>228</sup>

Although the effects of political manoeuvres did not affect the production in the countryside, the viciousness of the nawab in trying to eliminate the followers of Zaman must have created the necessary panic. The mood of the city during the last few months of 1783 and early months of 1784 was one of fright, which certainly prevented the normal functioning of manufacture and trade within the city. Malet's letters did not speak of desertion of the people from the city. It came later but then it was tied with the possibilities of better opportunities elsewhere rather than the result of oppression. The French merchant's dictum of the 1720s<sup>229</sup> that the merchants and weavers of India would not go elsewhere was not valid at the end of the century. The brief revival and the final decline of Cambay would show that a fundamental change was coming at the level of the politico-economic structure of the Mughal empire. But the manipulators of the small world of politics at Cambay, the nawab, Malet and Fateh Singh, were far more concerned with gaining positions of strength against each other, rather than turning their efforts to adapt themselves to the changes coming slowly by. In that sense, Cambay was gradually passed by the events that followed once the manipulators disappeared. It became a sleepy little quaint town with memories and ruins and finally resembled that of

Surat in its desolation. In another sense, with the departure of the merchants and the artisans in the years to come, the histories of these two ports reflected the twilight of transformation, of a decaying past which failed to reach the bright future. Within two decades, Cambay became irrelevant to the English. The process was a bitter one for all concerned.

### References

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3. *LB*, to Homes (Bombay), from Jambusar, 11 November 1778, ff. 275-76; 11 October, f. 276; From Cambay to Boddam (Surat), 12 November, f. 277.
4. *LB*, to J. Carnac (Bombay), 11 December 1778, ff. 280-8; to Hornby (Bombay), 15 December, f. 290.
5. *LB*, to Boddam (Surat), 16 January 1779, ff. 294-95.
6. Sen, pp. 125-36.
7. *LB*, to Hartley (Bombay, 5 February, f. 302; to A. Callander (Jambusar), 8 February, f. 303; to Boddam, 18 February, ff. 305-6.
8. *LB*, to A. Callander (Jambusar), 20 March, f. 315; to Hartley (Bombay), 24 March, f. 317.
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10. *LB*, to Boddam, 10 May, f. 329; to J. Hartley, 13 May, f. 329; to Boddam, 25 May, ff. 330-31; to Boddam, 25 June 1779, ff. 337-38.
11. *LB*, to F.W. Pemberton (Versovah), 23 July 1779, f. 346.
12. *NB*, 23 September 1779, f. 76.
13. *NB*, October 1-2, 1779, ff. 77-78.
14. *NB*, 1 November, f. 89; 7 November, ff. 101-2.
15. *NB*, 16 November, ff. 106-9; 23 November, ff. 114-15; 19 November 1779, ff. 110-11.
16. *NB*, 16 November, ff. 106-9; 23 November, ff. 114-15; 19 November 1779, ff. 110-11.
17. *NB*, 3 December 1779, f. 123.
18. *NB*, 13 November, ff. 126-27.
19. *NB*, 19 December 1779, ff. 133-34.
20. *NB*, 20 December 1779, ff. 137-41.
21. *NB*, 27 December, f. 47; 28 December, f. 149; 2 January 1780, f. 154; 6 January 1780, f. 155.
22. *LB*, to Gen. Goddard, 14 January 1780, ff. 358-59; *MRO*, Misc. Selected Correspondences, vol. 52, Malet to Gen. Goddard, 5 June 1780, ff. 28-30.
23. *LB*, to Gen. Goddard, 30 January 1780, ff. 241-42; *MRO*, Surat Factory Records, Malet to Surat, 25 January 1780, ff. 233-35.
24. *NB*, 17 January 1780, f. 160.
25. *MRO*, Misc. Selected Corr., Malet to Goddard, 21 January 1780, f. 103. According to Malet, the increasing Maratha influence at Cambay was due to '... the insinuation of his Dewan, a Hindoo, who during my absence had supplanted the Naib Mirza

- Zamun, who from a choice and knowledge of his master's interest, is a staunch advocate for entire reliance on the Company...'
26. *NB*, 9 February, f. 162; 11 February, ff. 163-64; 15 February, f. 167.
  27. *MRO*, Surat Consult., Malet to Surat, 25 January 1780, ff. 102-3.
  28. *MRO*, Goddard to Malet, 4 February 1780, f. 103.
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  30. *NB*, 2 March & 3 March, f. 175.
  31. *NB*, 4 March 1780, f. 175.
  32. *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr., M. Wats to Gen. Goddard, 5 March 1780, f. 104; *LB*, to Gen. Goddard, 18 March, f. 264.
  33. *LB*, to Boddam, 13 March 1780, f. 263; *MRO*, Surat Factory Records, Malet to Surat, 1 March 1780, f. 257; Surat to Cambay, 11 March 1780, f. 259.
  34. *MRO*, Surat to Cambay, 7 April 1780, f. 281; Malet to Surat, 11 May 1780, f. 315.
  35. *NB*, 30 March 1780, ff. 179-80.
  36. *NB*, 11 April 1780, ff. 183-84.
  37. *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr., translation of a letter from Mahadaji Sindhia to the Nawab of Cambay, ff. 33-41. See also, *National Archives of India*, New Delhi, Secret Department, Foreign, Meeting of 11 September 1780 on the letter of 11 April 1780, ff. 1-4 (cited as *NAI* hereafter). Other letters were intercepted on 12 April written by the Nawab to Sindhia and Nawab to Appaji Sahaji, Dewan of Sindhia. Also see *NB*, 15 April, f. 185.
  38. *NB*, 19 April, ff. 186-87.
  39. *NB*, 23 April, f. 189.
  40. *NB*, 25 April, f. 191; 28 April, ff. 192-93; 29 April, ff. 194-97.
  41. *NB*, 4 May, ff. 198-204; *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr. 4 May 1780, f. 48.
  42. R. Sinh, no. 21, 23-24; to Weatherstone, 5 May 1780.
  43. *NB*, 20 May 1780, f. 205.
  44. *NAI*, 21 May, letter from the Nawab to Sindhia, ff. 9-10; letter from Ranchod Patel, Nawab's dewan to Sindhia, f. 10, with comments of Malet, ff. 11-12; *NB*, 29 May, ff. 209-10; *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr., letter from Sindhia to the Nawab, 29 May, ff. 55-56; letter from Appaji Sahaji to the Nawab, 21 May, ff. 57-58.
  45. *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr., Malet to Gen. Goddard, 5 June 1780, ff. 58-60.
  46. *MRO*, Secret & Political Diary, vol. 22, Surat to Bombay, 11 June 1780, ff. 332-33; Bombay Castle Consult., 21 June 1780, f. 348.
  47. *NB*, 6 June 1780, f. 212.
  48. *NB*, 12 June, f. 215; 13 June 1780, ff. 215-16.
  49. *NB*, 14 June, f. 217; Sinh, no. 25, 32; to Boddam, 24 June 1780.
  50. *NB*, 9 June, f. 213.
  51. *LB*, to Boddam, 9 June 1780, ff. 299-300; Sinh, nos. 24, 33; to Boddam, 17 June; *NB*, 20 June, f. 217.
  52. *NB*, 21 June, f. 218.
  53. *NB*, 20 June, f. 217.
  54. *MRO*, Secret & Foreign, vol. 22, Bombay Castle Consult., 21 June 1780, f. 348.
  55. *NB*, 31 July, ff. 221-24.
  56. *NB*, 1 August, f. 225.
  57. *NB*, 13 August, f. 228.
  58. Sinh, nos. 29, 50-52; to Boddam, 17 August.

59. Sinh, nos. 31, 34; to Boddam, 2 September 1780.
60. News of the capture reached Cambay in the third week of September, *NB*, 25 September, f. 231.
61. *NB*, 9 September, f. 229.
62. *LB*, to Boddam (Surat), 14 September, ff. 331-49 (new vol.).
63. *LB*, to Boddam (Surat), 12 August 1780, ff. 320-21.
64. Sinh, nos. 32, 55-57; to Gen. Goddard, 15 October 1780.
65. Sinh, nos. 33, 37; to Gen. Goddard, 18 October 1780.
66. *NB*, 20 October, f. 235.
67. *NB*, 21 October, f. 236.
68. *NB*, 22 October, ff. 236-37.
69. Sinh, nos. 32, 55-57; to Gen. Goddard, 15 October.
70. Sinh, nos. 36, 63-64; to Gen. Goddard, 4 November; *NB*, 4 November, ff. 239-40.
71. *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr., vol. 32, tr. of a letter from the Nawab of Cambay recd. on 10 September 1780, ff. 71-76.
72. *MRO*, Bombay Consult., 8 November 1780, ff. 72-78.
73. *NB*, 11 December, f. 244.
74. Sinh, nos. 37, 65; to Gen. Goddard, 21 December 1780.
75. *MRO*, Secret & Political Diary, 30 December, tr. of letter from the Nawab of Cambay, f. 151 (vol. 22).
76. *MRO*, ff. 147-51 (also in Bombay Castle Consult., 10 March 1781); Sinh, nos. 38, 66-67; to Boddam, 31 December 1780.
77. *NB*, 14 January 1781, ff. 248-49; *LB*, to Gen. Goddard, 20 January 1781, ff. 370-79.
78. *NB*, 18 February 1781, ff. 251-52.
79. *NB*, 19 February, f. 254.
80. *NB*, 23 February, f. 254.
81. *LB*, to Hartley, 6 March 1781; to Boddam, 1 April 1781, ff. 386-87.
82. *NB*, 19 March 1781, ff. 259-61; 21 March, f. 261; 25 March, f. 261.
83. Sinh, nos. 41, 72-73; to Boddam, 22 March 1781.
84. *NB*, 14 April 1781, f. 262.
85. *NB*, 20 April 1781, ff. 262-63.
86. *NB*, 4 May 1781, ff. 265-67; *MRO*, Surat Factory Records, no. 22, Surat Consult., 19 May 1781, ff. 193-94.
87. *NB*, 6 June, ff. 269-72.
88. *NB*, 11 June 1781, f. 273; 16 June, ff. 274-75.
89. Sinh, nos. 44, 79-80; to Hartley (Bombay), 18 June.
90. *LB*, to Boddam, 18 June, f. 406.
91. *LB*, to D. Dapper (Bombay), 18 June, ff. 413-16; *MRO*, Surat Factory Records, Malet to Surat, 25 May 1781, f. 123.
92. *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Bombay to Surat, 10 June, f. 124; Surat Consult., 13 June, ff. 125-27; 2 June, ff. 139-40.
93. *LB*, to Hartley, 1 July 1781, ff. 418-20.
94. *LB*, to Boddam, 18 July, ff. 426-27.
95. *NB*, 18 July, ff. 282-85.
96. *NB*, 21 July, f. 285; 23 July, f. 284; 25 July, f. 284; 28 July, f. 286.
97. Sinh, nos. 48, 87-88; to Hartley, 24 July: *NB*, 3 August, f. 291.
98. *MRO*, Surat Factory Records, Surat to Cambay, 24 July 1781, ff. 200-201.
99. *NB*, 6 August, f. 292.

100. *LB*, to Hornby, 1 August, ff. 431-32.
101. *NB*, 7 September, ff. 299-300; 9 September, f. 300.
102. *LB*, to Weatherstone, 11 September, ff. 454-55.
103. Sinh, nos. 51, 93-96; to Gen. Goddard, 10 September.
104. *NB*, 16 September, f. 301; 21 September, ff. 303-5.
105. Sinh, nos. 53, 97: to Gen. Goddard, 27 September; *NB*, 26 September, f. 307.
106. *NB*, 2 October, f. 307.
107. *LB*, to Boddam, 2 October, ff. 467-69.
108. *NB*, 6 October, f. 309.
109. *NB*, 15 October, f. 311.
110. *NB*, 18 October, f. 312.
111. *NB*, 22 October, f. 318.
112. *NB*, 31 October, f. 312; Sinh, nos. 55, 100-105: to Gen. Goddard, 29 October; *LB*, to Boddam (Surat), 29 October, ff. 485-86.
113. *NB*, 16 November, f. 315.
114. *NB*, 31 December, f. 318.
115. Sinh, nos. 56, 103: to Hartley, 30 November.
116. *LB*, to Weatherstone, 12 December, ff. 500-503.
117. *NB*, 31 December 1781, ff. 318-32.
118. *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr., vol. 32: Extract from Political Diary, 18 January 1782; Malet to Bombay, 13 January 1782, ff. 81-92; Sinh, nos. 61, 109-11; to D. Daper (Bombay), 14.
119. *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, no. 23-1, Surat Consult., 9 February 1782, ff. 33-34; Misc. Sel. Corr., letters of the Nawab of Cambay (tr.), 2 February 1781, ff. 91-93; Sinh, nos. 62, 113: to Hornby (Bombay), 22 February.
120. *LB*, to Bombay Committee, 20 February 1782, ff. 515-30.
121. *LB*, to Bombay Committee, 20 February 1782, f. 530.
122. *LB*, to Boddam, 27 January 1782, ff. 517-18.
123. *LB*, to Bombay Committee, 20 February, ff. 515-30.
124. *NB*, 17 February 1782, f. 340; Sinh, nos. 62, 113: to Hornby (Bombay), 22 February 1782.
125. *NB*, 20 February, ff. 340-41.
126. Sinh, nos. 113-16: to Hornby, 22 February.
127. Sinh, nos. 116-17; Sinh, nos. 63, 118-20; to David Anderson at Poona, 22 February 1782.
128. *NB*, 3 March, f. 341; 7 March, f. 341; *LB*, to Gen. Goddard, 7 March 1782, ff. 549-50.
129. *NB*, 15 March, ff. 342-43; 17 March, f. 343; 18 March, f. 344; 19 March, f. 344.
130. *NB*, 29 March, f. 351.
131. *MRO*, Secret & Political Diary, vol. 27; Bombay Castle Consult., tr. of a letter from the Nawab of Cambay to the President & Council of Bombay, without date, recd. on 19 March 1782, ff. 626-27.
132. *MRO*, letters of the Nawab of Cambay recd. at Bombay on 3 April 1782, f. 627, 4 May, f. 628; 20 July 1782, f. 629.
133. *LB*, to Ravenscroft (Surat), 19 April, ff. 567-68.
134. Sinh, nos. 66, 126-27; to Hornby (Bombay), 23 April.
135. *LB*, to Gambier (Bombay), from Surat, 5 May, ff. 573-75.
136. *LB*, to Hornby and Members of the Council (Bombay), Surat, 22 May, ff. 581-82.

137. *NB*, 4 May, ff. 357-60.
138. Sinh, nos. 69, 129-34; to Hornby, from Surat, 25 May.
139. *LB*, to Hornby, 8 July, f. 586; 9 July, ff. 587-89; 15 August, ff. 590-91; *NB*, 16 August, f. 374.
140. *NB*, 21 August, f. 374.
141. *NB*, 20 September, f. 383.
142. *MRO*, Secret & Political Diary, vol. 27, Bombay Castle Consult., 6 October 1782, f. 642.
143. *NB*, 29 October, f. 587; 30 October, f. 387; 5 November, Surat, f. 388.
144. *NB*, 25 November, Cambay, f. 389; 26 November, f. 389; Sinh, nos. 73, 143: to Gambier (Bombay), 3 December.
145. *LB*, to the Governor (Bombay), Cambay, 3 December, ff. 615-16; *NB*, 5 December, ff. 390-94.
146. *NB*, 5 December, ff. 394-95.
147. *LB*, to Hornby, Governor of Bombay, 6 December, ff. 620-23.
148. *LB*, to Hartley, 6 December, ff. 624-25.
149. *LB*, to Hornby, 14 December, f. 627.
150. *NB*, 15 December, ff. 395-98; 17 December, f. 399.
151. *MRO*, Secret & Political, vol. 19, Bombay Consult., 25 January 1778, ff. 45-46.
152. *MRO*, vol. 28: Governor to Malet, quoted by Malet in his letter to Surat, 2 February 1783, f. 79.
153. *MRO*, vol. 22, Gen. Goddard to Malet, Ahmedabad, 28 February 1780, f. 155.
154. Sinh, nos. 76, 146; to Hornby, 31 December.
155. *NB*, 15 December, f. 397.
156. *LB*, to Boddam, 3 January 1783, f. 651.
157. *NB*, 31 December 1782, f. 401; 1 January 1783, f. 401.
158. *LB*, to the Supreme Committee, 1 February 1783, f. 655.
159. *LB*, to Gambier, 1 February 1783, ff. 657-58.
160. *NB*, 1 February 1783, f. 414.
161. *NB*, 4 February, ff. 414-15.
162. *NB*, 8 February, f. 415.
163. *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr., Malet to Bombay, 1 February 1783, ff. 99-100 placed in the meeting of 7 February 1783 and again in the meeting of 9 February 1783, with extracts of letters. For the resolution, f. 121.
164. *NB*, 15 February, f. 415.
165. *NB*, 22 February, f. 416.
166. *LB*, to W. Day, 27 February, ff. 665-68.
167. *LB*, to W. Day, 28 February, ff. 665-68.
168. *MRO*, Surat Factory Records, Malet to Surat, 14 February, f. 242.
169. *LB*, to Hornby, 27 February, ff. 669-70.
170. *LB*, to Boddam, 27 February, ff. 471-72.
171. *Supra*, note 169.
172. *LB*, to Hornby, 8 March, f. 677; *NB*, 9 March, f. 421.
173. *NB*, 10 March, f. 424.
174. *NB*, to Hartley, 23 March, f. 687.
175. *NB*, 23 March, ff. 428-29; 24 March, f. 429; 25 March, f. 480.
176. *LB*, to Hornby, 26 March, ff. 693-95.
177. *NB*, 24 March, f. 429.

178. *NB*, 27 March, f. 430; *LB*, to A. Callander, 27 March, f. 690.
179. *NB*, 28 March, ff. 430-31; 2 April, f. 431; *LB*, to Surat, 31 March, ff. 697-98; to A. Callander, without date, f. 699; 4 April, f. 701; to Nawab Momeen Khan, without date, f. 703.
180. *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Callander to Malet, Jambusar, 31 March including the letter of the Nawab Momin Khan to Callander and his reply to the Nawab, ff. 282-83.
181. *NB*, 4 April & 5 April, f. 432.
182. *LB*, to Boddam, 31 March, ff. 696-98; *MRO*, Surat Factory Records, Malet to Surat, 4 April, ff. 283-84; Sinh, nos. 74, 147-48, to Callander, 2 April.
183. *NB*, 7 April, f. 432.
184. Sinh, nos. 78, 148-50; to Hornby, 6 April.
185. *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Malet to Surat, 8 April, ff. 284-85.
186. *NB*, 9 April, f. 234; *LB*, to Governor of Bombay, 7 April, f. 709.
187. *MRO*, Misc. Sel. Corr., Political Diary, 11 April, f. 131.
188. Sinh, nos. 79, 151-53; to Boddam, from Broach, 23 April.
189. *NB*, 23 April, f. 436.
190. *NB*, 19 April & 31 April, f. 441.
191. *NB*, 20 May, ff. 448-52.
192. *NB*, 23 May, f. 453.
193. *LB*, to Surat, 9 June 1783, ff. 731-40, with extracts of letters received from Cambay.
194. *NB*, 24 June, f. 455.
195. *NB*, 9 July, ff. 457-59.
196. *NB*, 1 September, f. 463.
197. *NB*, 6 October, f. 464.
198. *NB*, 1 November, ff. 466-72.
199. Sinh, nos. 82, 155-56; to Commodore King, Surat, 27 October 1783; *LB*, to A. Callander at Jambusar, 8 November 1783, ff. 446-47.
200. *NB*, 1 November, f. 470.
201. *LB*, to Boddam, Surat, 30 November 1783, f. 780.
202. *NB*, 1 November.
203. *LB*, to Boddam, 16 December 1783, ff. 751-2.
204. *NB*, 13 December & 16 December 1783, f. 479.
205. *LB*, to Boddam (Bombay), 16 December, ff. 751-2; *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Malet to Surat, 16 December, ff. 475-76.
206. *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Surat to Malet, 22 December, f. 483.
207. *MRO*, Malet to Surat, 27 December, f. 494; *NB*, 25 December, f. 480.
208. *NB*, 27 December 1783, ff. 481-83.
209. *LB*, to Hornby, 1 January 1784, ff. 758-62.
210. *LB*, to Callander at Bombay, 3 January 1784, f. 762.
211. *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Malet to Surat, 3 January 1784, ff. 8-9; Roberts, Secretary of the Council to Surat, 6 January 1784, ff. 9-10; Surat to Malet, 8 January 1784, ff. 13-14.
212. *NB*, 12 January 1784, f. 485.
213. *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, 14 January 1784, ff. 18-19.
214. *NB*, 18 January 1784, ff. 436-37.
215. *NB*, 22 January 1784, f. 487.
216. Sinh, nos. 84, 157; to W. Day (Surat), 23 January 1784.



217. *NB*, 23 January, f. 487; *LB*, 23 January, ff. 772-73; to W. Day, 26 January, f. 774; *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Malet to Surat, 26 January 1784, ff. 28-29.
218. *NB*, 26 January, f. 487; *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Malet to Surat, 26 January, ff. 28-29.
219. *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Surat to Malet, 29 January, f. 28; Malet to Surat, 1 February, ff. 34-35; *NB*, 29 January, ff. 487-88.
220. *NB*, 1 February 1784, ff. 488-89; 3 February, ff. 489-90.
221. *LB*, to the Governor of Bombay, 9 February, ff. 781-82; *MRO*, Surat Factory Diary, Malet to Surat, 8 February, ff. 45-46.
222. *LB*, to Holford, from Bombay, 23 July 1784, ff. 23-25 (vol. 51).
223. *LB*, to Holford, from Bombay, 12 August 1784, ff. 25-26.
224. James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. I, pp. 171-243.
225. *MRO*, Secret & Political, vol. 31, pt. I, Holford to Bombay, 10 March 1784, f. 651; Boddam to Day, at Surat, Bombay, 25 July 1784, f. 652; Bombay Castle Consult., 12 August 1784, f. 567; Surat to Bombay, 11 September 1784, 27 August 1784, f. 208.
226. *CRO*, Surat Diary, Secret & Political, Secret Department, 8 February 1785, f. 51.
227. S.P. Varma, *A Study in Maratba Diplomacy: Anglo-Maratba Relations, 1772-1783*, pp. 11 post.
228. *NB*, 26 January 1784, f. 487.
229. *AN*, Colonie C(2), 72: Letter of Pondicherry to Paris, 17 February 1721, f. 52: '...all the riches and power imaginable would not be able to transplant a natural Indian to another province, specially the weavers and the merchants...' (my translation).

## CHAPTER 11

### Brief Revival and Decline

The pro-Maratha lobby appeared to have received a set back on the installation of Nujjam Khan. But in another sense, the Marathas appeared stronger in 1784 than in 1772. The Treaty of Salbai had humbled the Bombay government which had no Maratha leader on their side. But it was the financial situation of the English that perhaps dictated the Company's lukewarm support to Malet. In 1782-83, the total revenue of Bombay was Rs. 37,79,048 while the expenses were Rs. 73,60,528. The military charges alone were Rs. 48,81,280, thus making a net loss of Rs. 35,81,480. This loss increased in 1783-84 to Rs. 69,63,648, in which the military charges had gone up to Rs. 67,30,744. The treaty of Salbai, though a political disaster to the English, had reduced this loss to nearly half, i.e. to Rs. 34,12,469 in 1784-85. Therefore the support of Gambier and Torlesse to the nawab was not merely due to the 'Intrigues' but the exploitation of an opportunity presented to them. Bombay was not in a position to force the nawab by spending further on the army. As seen earlier, it was Bengal which supplied funds to run Bombay's affairs.<sup>1</sup>

The English misadventure and the consequent wars had also left its mark on trade. The English trade in Persia showed that the sale of Bengal piece goods had remained constant while the sale of Surat piece goods, mostly collected through Cambay, suffered a steady decline during the period 1777 to 1790. The lowest sale of Surat piece goods in Persia was in 1780. In 1781 and in 1782, the sale of Surat piece goods in Persia was low but it picked up in 1783, when the treaty was drawn. A brief look at the comparative table of sale of Surat and Bengal piece goods in Persia (given in Pounds Sterling) would confirm this.<sup>2</sup>

It may be seen that the actual years of war and the trading years do not correspond as the goods were collected at least a year earlier and then shipped, which also took some time to reach the markets of

western Asia. It is clear that after 1784, Bengal piece goods, sold more than those of Surat in the Persian markets, far outstripping those years of the early seventies. But Surat piece goods were picking up fast. In 1788, the sale of Surat piece goods were more than those of 1787 to and came 44,715 piece goods worth £ 33,357.<sup>3</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Bengal piecegoods</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Surat piecegoods</i>	<i>Value</i>
1775	5,17,761	9,60,244	47,405	62,355
1776	6,06,878	10,90,744	18,822	13,608
1777	6,55,332	11,14,734	83,024	48,468
1778	8,05,010	11,94,613	61,285	32,207
1779	3,38,445	5,24,693	31,525	13,230
1780	4,74,703	9,84,783	18,605	11,349
1781	3,01,617	5,82,116	33,144	23,129
1782	4,46,488	10,33,577	36,597	29,403
1783	4,37,802	10,49,224	82,966	79,944
1784	5,16,088	9,08,370	31,130	22,607
1785	7,68,228	14,26,252	26,767	18,963
1786	7,64,173	14,58,416	—	—
1787	7,45,449	13,17,934	41,882	28,560

The decline of trade and the devastation of the countryside were not reflected in the placid palace culture of the nawab and his fast vanishing élite, who still clung to their traditional cultural mores. Although James Forbes, travelling in the early 1780's, found at Cambay 'only a dilapidated capital, deserted villages and a few impoverished subjects', he was treated regally by the nawab and his Naib Mirza Zaman on the roof of Dilkhusa, a summer palace, where story telling and poetry reading in exquisite Urdu were held with occasional spurt of dancing, linking it with the still existing Mughal culture of decadent Delhi. Cambay continued the tradition of a cosmopolitan city, with the palace culture separate from the activities of the people. Forbes could converse with a Gujrati Brahmin in English, who had read English books including a voluminous English dictionary of arts and sciences.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the statements of Malet and Holford, the succession was not smooth. Nujjam Khan alias Muhammed Quli had to contend against the bastard son of Khutbi Khanum, Mirza Janee, who was supported by a good number of local inhabitants, possibly of pro-Maratha camp.<sup>5</sup> It was the detachment of Malet that turned the scale in

favour of Nujjam Khan. This would explain why Khutbi Khanum and her daughter wanted to placate Malet before the death of the Nawab Momin Khan. Muhammed Quli died on 8 February 1790 and was succeeded by his son Fateh Ali, who obtained from Delhi the title of Momin Khan Bahadur Dilwar Jung with 6 thousand zat.<sup>6</sup>

In 1787, Surat began to take a fresh look at the manufactures of Cambay and sent 'muster after the Manchester weavers' to Cambay to be supplied from there. Holford's report on the coinage of Cambay is interesting as it is the only record extant besides the coins. The rupee and the half rupees were coined at Cambay and lost their value (this was known earlier) when they were sent out of Cambay. The pie was coined at Bhawanagar but these were stamped with the nawab's stamp at Cambay over the original, 'otherwise they do not pass...'. About 25 thousand coins were produced at Cambay annually while about 2.5 lakh 'are in circulation in the course of twelve months'. One of the reasons why Holford could not get the samples according to the muster was that most of the weavers had left the city in the absence of any demand for cloth during the previous few years when the city was definitely on the decline.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile the English had started their trade but Holford found it difficult to purchase as the transaction could only be made in cash.<sup>8</sup> John Torin, from Dholka, reported that the Cambay shroffs had refused to accept Surat bills.<sup>9</sup> The position of the English had not improved much even after the war. The absence of cash was such that Holford could not even borrow Rs. 4 thousand from Cambay brokers until they were satisfied of payment.<sup>10</sup> By early 1788, the system began to settle and Holford could send 360 bales of cotton to Surat as well as samples of indigo grown at Dholka and Cambay.<sup>11</sup> It appears that the direct trade of cotton between Cambay merchants and Mocha had started again in small quantities.

While Bombay complained to the debasement of the Surat coin selling at 15 per cent less than the Bombay coin,<sup>12</sup> Surat in 1789 once again asked Holford to report about the Cambay coinage. It appears that the Cambay rupee, passing for 16 annas, actually contained silver worth 14 annas and a half with a mixture of 40 to 50 rice grains of lead. The pie continued to be imported from Bhawanagar and stamped at Cambay in the nawab's name. What is interesting is that Holford, writing nearly two years after his earlier estimate, stated that nearly three lakh rupees were in circulation at Cambay while no money was coined during the previous year.<sup>13</sup>

Obviously the money that circulated over and above Rs. 2 lakh was the money brought from outside. This would not be English money since we have seen that the English did not send money in cash but sent hundi instead on some Cambay shroff. This was therefore the money brought by the local merchants coming back from the Bussora and the Mocha trade, giving rise to an inflationary trend which assumed a formidable proportion with the increase of demand of goods after the war. The production, we have seen, was not sufficient which further fuelled the inflation.

The failure of production could be seen in the English demand and supply regarding which we have some contemporary documents available. Holford could not persuade the principal brokers and shroffs to contract for the supply of large quantities of arrangoes in less than four years. They however agreed to supply one million arrangoes per year which used to be exported from Cambay during the time of Malet.<sup>14</sup> Holford asked for Rs. 8 thousand which was supplied by Surat on bills on Lachmidas Ramdas and Nagaji & Pragji. Surat also asked for the samples of opium obviously for their trade with China,<sup>15</sup> Holford's response was positive as there was extensive production of opium in Gujrat up to Sind. The nawab took half rupee per seer as custom duty.<sup>16</sup> But the workers of arrangoes had gone to Nimodra and had not returned. As a result, Holford could not supply the arrangoes.<sup>17</sup> By April 1791, Holford was able to send one million arrangoes as promised.<sup>18</sup> While Fateh Ali succeeded Nujjam Khan without interference, particularly from the Marathas, who appeared to have given up Cambay, Holford continued to supply arrangoes to Surat. It appeared that the Cambay trade had once again started on a positive note. At this juncture disaster struck.

In January 1792, Holford reported that no arrangoe was available due to the high mortality among the workers at Cambay and Nimodra.<sup>19</sup> This was on account of a severe famine and pestilence that visited Gujarat. Even in early July, brokers confessed to Holford that no assurance of supply of arrangoes would be possible due to the continuing high mortality of the workers.<sup>20</sup> By early April 1793, Holford could send only 8 chests of arrangoes to Surat.<sup>21</sup> He could of course take credit that he had been able to send 4 million arrangoes as ordered in four years since 1789.<sup>22</sup>

In the third week of April 1794, Malet, then Resident at Puna, informed Bombay of the correspondence between the Nawab of Cambay and the Marathas, with the object of the Maratha seizure of the

city.<sup>23</sup> In early May, Malet again warned Bombay of the danger.<sup>24</sup> Holford was then at Surat and returned to Cambay immediately on sensing the danger. The government was then under two eunuchs and the mother of the nawab.<sup>25</sup> To decide the future policy on Cambay, Malet asked Bombay to obtain a full report on the situation at Cambay,<sup>26</sup> which was provided by Holford on the 22 June 1794.<sup>27</sup> Holford stated that for the previous few years, the entire export of Cambay consisted of arrangoes and piece goods for the European markets amounting to Rs. 16 thousand per year with very few artisans remaining under the Company. He stressed that, in case Cambay was transferred to the Company, the artisans, who had emigrated elsewhere would return which would enable the Company to export piece goods to the African coasts. Even under the former oppressive nawab, the Company exported piece goods worth Rs. 20 lakh annually, since the city was conveniently situated to procure raw materials at low rates. He further added that a 'large proportion of the trade of the Arabian and Persian Gulphs carried on from Surat being provided at Cambay'. At the time when Cambay was a tributary to Delhi, the trade of Malwa, Marwar, Ahmedabad etc. passed through the customs which used to yield the nawab a revenue of Rs. 10 lakh annually. The rise of Broach, Jambusar and Bhawanagar (the last due to English assistance) was caused by the decline of Cambay. At that time the dependant land shrunk and the nawab got only Rs. 4 lakh as land revenue since there was very little production within the city, which was still surrounded by walls with fifty-five towers and twelve gates, two of which had remained closed. Obviously these were the days before the rise of Surat about which, Holford, strangely enough, had remained silent. Even then one can see the increase of the revenue during the last few years.

Malet however persisted in his theme of the Maratha seizure of Cambay and again warned Bombay of the liaison between the nawab and Govind Rao.<sup>28</sup> Prior to that Holford had received information from Surat of the intrigue of a Parsee, Pollanji Hormaji, formerly the Dewan of Nosary but now residing at Baroda.<sup>29</sup> Further light was thrown by Holford on the identities of the conspirators. Their families at Surat were arrested by the English and the conspiracy was foiled.<sup>30</sup>

In the letter of August 1794 to the Court, Fort William mentioned the supposed design of the Marathas to possess Cambay and the English desire to purchase it from the nawab. It appears that the English way of thinking was due to the negotiation between the nawab and the

peshwa for the transfer of Cambay. This negotiation also gave the English the idea that the nawab was independent of the peshwa. The English were certain that the peshwa's ministers were aware of the intrigue carried on by Govind Rao. Since there was no treaty between the nawab and the English for English interference at Cambay, the latter was considering 'the acquisition of the town and the territory of Cambay'.<sup>31</sup>

The English then saw two advantages in the event of the possession of the town and the districts as outlined by the Resident Holford. It would increase commerce under a good management (which perhaps means under monopolistic control) and it would be a good base from where pirates could be destroyed. The English would however find it expensive to defend it against the Marathas in case of war, who would also not help them in destroying the pirates. They preferred possession by Govind Rao alone through negotiation with the English. It would be very much more desirable for the English as Govind Rao would then be forced to act as a buffer against the Marathas while the English would reap the benefits. But the English did not want to fight against the peshwa over the acquisition of Cambay, which might provoke him. Fort William had therefore asked the opinion of Charles Ware Malet, Resident at Puna, for his views on the purchase. If the peshwa agreed to the English acquisition, Bombay would be authorized to negotiate with the nawab for the purchase of Cambay. In outlining the terms of the purchase, Fort William clearly mentioned the absolute transfer of the rights. Bombay would negotiate for the expense of the maintenance of the nawab. Before the letter was sent, Fort William received the information that Govind Rao had suspended the intrigue of seizing Cambay.<sup>32</sup>

On the 30 December 1794, Fort William was informed that if the Nawab of Cambay paid chouth to the peshwa 'and consequently, if this territory were transferred to the Company, it must be held as tributary to the Mahratta state'. By that time Fort William had considered the question of the purchase of Cambay. They had found that the glowing picture of the commercial prosperity under a good management, as given by the Resident of Cambay, was to 'be considered not sufficiently certain to be relied on'. They were also not interested in Broach either, which was ceded to Mahadaji Sindhia by a treaty. On the point that Cambay would be a good base to fight the Marathas, Fort William was not certain. Similarly they agreed with Malet that piracy could be checked without acquiring Cambay. Moreover they

considered that the peshwa would regard the possession of Cambay by the English 'with jealousy and dissatisfaction...'. Since the expected advantages were dubious, Fort William did not want to risk any interruption of friendship and harmony subsisting between the Company and the Mahratta state...'. Therefore the English gave up all idea of negotiation and Malet was informed of the decision accordingly.<sup>33</sup>

On the 22 April 1796, the Court of Directors approved of the decision not to purchase Cambay. They also approved that the Resident at Puna should by fair means frustrate 'the machinations of the Mahrattas for destroying the independency of the present Nabob...'.<sup>34</sup>

In March 1795, the English Company appointed a Committee of Circuit to report on the manufacturing towns of Gujarat.<sup>35</sup> W. J. Farmer, reporting on Cambay, stated that the decline in manufacture was due to the oppression of the nawab and the famine of 1790-91, because of which many artisans had left the city. He suggested the extension of Company's protection to all artisans.<sup>36</sup> On 28 March 1795, Bombay refused to extend such protection as it would 'occasion particular jealousy to the Mahrattas...'.<sup>37</sup> The Company asked further details from the Resident at Cambay in early May 1795 regarding manufacture.<sup>38</sup>

On the 24 June 1795, Holford, writing from Surat, stated that the nawab would be averse to the idea of the increase in the Company's investment at Cambay, since according to him, it would mean an increase in the Company's investment, influence and privileges. Besides, the artisans had no faith in the nawab's promises and required full protection of the Company. They were subjected to the exactions of the nawab whenever they saved any money. At that time very few types of goods were manufactured at Cambay and the contractors purchased them from other areas. Even a few years earlier goods amounting to a lakh of rupees were procured from Cambay. A set of master manufacturers, called kidgars, used to contract it with the Company at a certain rate and procured these from the weavers. A few years back the Company had about 300 kidgars in their employment but at the present time hardly 20 were employed. Obviously the situation had worsened during the last few years, particularly after the famine of 1790-91. This statement was confirmed by the contractors of the Company, who promised to supply Guinea stuff, formerly made at Cambay, from Jambusar still ruled by the Marathas since many artisans had left Cambay to settle there.<sup>39</sup> The absence of the Dutch investment at Jambusar had made these artisans idle who could now



be employed to meet the increased English investment. Bombay asked for some samples.<sup>40</sup> By December an order was placed but the goods were found to be deficient although those manufactured at Jambusar were called Cambay goods.<sup>41</sup>

It is revealing that most of the weavers of Cambay did not want English protection and had gone to Jambusar under the Marathas. This was contrary to the promising picture provided by the English Residents regarding the English role at Cambay. Also, the reports of the Residents, succeeding Malet, speak less of the violence of the Marathas and harp more on the violence of the nawab. Since most of the cotton producing areas remained under the control of the Marathas, it is not surprising that the artisans had gone there instead of Surat or Bombay.

In 1797, Holford had to meet a large investment order and had to go out to meet the emigrant artisans at Petlad, Jambusar etc. He had been able to contact the Patels, Desais and Zamindars of different areas where these artisans had settled. They had cooperated with Holford to collect a large quantity of piece goods, which was much more than the quantity of goods valued at Rs. 20 thousand ordered by Surat and generally ordered during the last few years. Even some Muslim brokers had assured him of the supply. This collection was made by Holford after directly contacting the artisans and merchants of different places, instead of the usual contract through the brokers.<sup>42</sup>

At Cambay, trouble continued between the brokers and the nawab, who imposed a heavy tax on them to take advantage of the increased trade.<sup>43</sup> Harakchand and Somechand Deepakchand, kidgars, applied to the English for protection which was refused by Holford, who was also having trouble with the brokers.<sup>44</sup> The latter were trying to limit the English investment at Cambay to the amount of Rs. 20 thousand a year in view of the limited production and for their own trading. Holford felt that he could collect goods worth Rs. 1 lakh annually. It was clear that Cambay was recovering from the famine.<sup>45</sup>

The revival, although slow in nature, could be seen in the collection of custom and convoy duty of the English. In 1797-98, Holford collected the sum of Rs. 17,269-2-79 p. and received a commission of Rs. 518-35p. at 3 per cent. These were collected on seven bales of piece goods exported to Mocha and Bussora and two chests of agate beads and corals.

The Resident earned an interest by employing money which was customary at Cambay.<sup>46</sup> This collection can be favourably compared to those of 1770's. The revival of Cambay trade is clear and loud.

Bombay however abolished such commission and fixed a monthly sum of Rs. 500 as contingency allowance.<sup>47</sup> Since the factory was in a bad shape, Holford sent an estimate of Rs. 27.2 thousand for repair and asked for a house allowance of Rs. 100 only.<sup>48</sup> Bombay allowed Holford to sell the house and hire one within the contingency fund. But Holford would not find a buyer and asked for the house allowance. This was accepted by Bombay.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile Surat had asked Holford for an explanation for not supporting the petitioners.<sup>50</sup> Holford cited the precedence of Malet who did not give protection to the kidgars who were employed by the Company brokers on temporary basis. These were among the 500 people employed by the brokers, who, some years back, exported goods to Mocha and Jedda.<sup>51</sup> But Bombay wanted the Resident to intercede to the nawab on their behalf.<sup>52</sup>

On the 13 September 1799, Surat asked Holford to impress upon the nawab the necessity of not allowing any foreigner or European to enter the city of Cambay. This was the most crucial period of the English in India, although the French menace along with the Afgan invasion were over. However the rebellion of the erstwhile Nawab of Oudh, Vizier Ali, was continuing and the English were afraid of the Arabs landing at the western coast.<sup>53</sup> Holford did impress the nawab after some initial difficulties and employed nine persons at Rs. 30 per month to look after the landing. It appears that the boats could arrive at Cambay bandar, which was then 2 miles from the city, even after the town gates were closed and the people could pass to Gaekwad areas by landing at two opposite villages, which were controlled by Gaekwad.<sup>54</sup>

The increasing trade and production at Cambay brought its own problems. On 23 December 1799, the Marathas, after plundering the area of Cambay and extorting a considerable sum of revenue, appeared 4 kos off Cambay city. In a pitched battle on 30 December, the nawab's old troops, dispirited due to long arrears of payment, were defeated and they fled in all directions excepting a body of Arabs, who retreated in good order with the guns. The commander of the nawab's army was a Mughal, who had never been in any action till then. The town walls and the towers had decayed so much that Holford feared that these would crumble at the sound of the guns. Surat agreed to send one jemadar and twenty-five sepoy to Cambay to secure the investment.<sup>55</sup> At the end of January 1800, the crisis was over as the nawab bought off the Marathas through payment.<sup>56</sup> The nawab now began to recover

this sum of money from the merchants by imposing a tax. Surat asked for the exemption of Nanabhai Kicka from such payment as he was under the protection of the Company, requesting him to refund the money taken from him.<sup>57</sup> Surat was not pleased and reprimanded Holford for his exertion with the nawab, who was sent a conciliatory letter from Surat.<sup>58</sup> The nawab was surprised and refunded the money with a promise not to repeat these actions in future.<sup>59</sup> Holford found that the nawab was actually ruled by his mother and his aunts while his principal advisers were really khidmadgars and eunuchs. They were solidly in favour of the Marathas and were willing to accommodate any recommendation made by the Gaekwad or the Ahmedabad government.<sup>60</sup> Obviously the pro-Maratha lobby had won over the administration and they had begun to thwart the English plans at Cambay. The Cambay administration had once again turned to be anti-English as admitted by Holford.

Part of this plan was to limit the English investment and to destroy the pro-English lobby by taxing them and seizing their property, the policy that was followed by the last Nawab Momin Khan during his later years. The petition of some of the Cambay residents, placed in the Surat Consultation of 14 April 1800,<sup>61</sup> showed these clearly. In it, these merchants requested the English to place their names in the English records due to their earlier associations with the English. They were driven out of Cambay and were then residing at Surat. The Marathas therefore had slightly modified their methods. Instead of the earlier policy of aggression from outside, they were now eliminating the merchants of the pro-English lobby from inside.

Despite these, Holford was sceptical about the English protection to be afforded to them. He explained that formerly the brokers were appointed by Surat, who used to appoint their agents at Cambay for the collection of goods to be sent to Surat through the custom house of the nawab, who would then claim some charges for the exports. This duty was later claimed by the agents from their principals, who included it in their original price quoted to the English. Previously only Guinea stuff and Boral chadars were provided by these brokers, which seldom exceeded the value of Rs. 40 thousand a year and were completed within sixteen or twenty-four months. Now, Holford showed that a variety of assortments of both large and small cloth were sent within the year. During 1799-1800, Holford had invested Rs. 1.5 lakh which could go up to Rs. 2 lakh. The Surat brokers had therefore employed able and efficient agents, who were asking for a percentage

on the goods sent to Surat as the nawab's duty. The principal contractor, Laldas Kishendas, had paid for 'all the usual and customary expenses for Durbar and chopping charges'. Therefore Holford had rejected the petitioner's plea of 1 per cent commission.<sup>62</sup>

This would show a remarkable growth in the production and trade of Cambay within a few years, although it appears that the English had profited most from it. Citing certain figures for export of arrangoes, Holford showed that the production had increased so much between 1791 to 1794, that the English had to sell the remaining quantity of more than a million arrangoes after meeting the export commitment, at a small profit in Cambay at Rs. 1.10 per 100 arrangoes. Even then the demand of arrangoes at Cambay had remained and Holford asked Surat to send hundred thousand arrangoes for sale at Cambay.<sup>63</sup> This suggests the existence of other traders and merchants at Cambay contrary to the reports of the English, who said they had monopolized the production by employing all the workers.

The tremendous increase of production, certainly touching the level of early '70's or earlier, and the consequent increased English trade at Cambay with higher investment was not viewed by the brokers or by the Durkar of Cambay only as a trading matter. When Surat asked about the result of the petition of Harakchand Savoychand and Somechand Deepakchand regarding the refund of money paid by them to the nawab,<sup>64</sup> Holford replied that this could not be achieved without force. He had not used threat to the nawab since he was asked by Bombay not to use force or exert pressure on the nawab. The nawab was then ill and was busy in negotiating with the Maratha lobby to reduce the English trade at Cambay which would reduce the English influence. The nawab's financial position was very bad and he could not pay the Marathas the sum promised. The Arabs and other chiefs of the sepoy had confined him in the durbar and asked him in foul language to pay the arrears. 'The wretched poverty and accumulated misfortunes stare his excellency up in the face, yet he pays utmost obedience to these of Gaikwar and other Maratha Chieftains...'. In this background the brokers were playing their tricks. On the one hand they were urging for a commission on the goods exported to Surat and on the other were trying to limit the English investment to Rs. 40 thousand annually,<sup>65</sup> in which case they would sell the rest of the production to the Indian merchants trading with west Asia. They were naturally afraid of the increasing English investment that would have left

them no goods for sale elsewhere. It is no wonder that they were asking for a commission of 1 per cent on the English investment.

While the nawab's financial situation was worsening, the English investment at Cambay was increasing by leaps and bounds. In 1798-99 it was Rs. 1.5 lakh, in 1799-1800, it increased to Rs. 2 lakh 'an extraordinary increase in so short a period', which Holford attributed to his 'own foresight with the Kizdars suspecting of course they would be biased by the brokers whose names even the bare mention of is sufficient to make them tremble...'.<sup>66</sup>

This then was the crux of the situation in which there was the growth of a pro-Maratha lobby, anti-English in nature, against the background of an increasing production and trade at Cambay. This was different from an apparently similar situation in the early 1780's when Malet made desperate manoeuvres against the intrigues of the Nawab Momin Khan. Here, with the growing trade, the attempt of the pro-Maratha group was to curtail the English investment, which had reached a new peak at Cambay. The discomfort of Holford was due to the change of the system effected by him, in which he made a direct contact with kedgars by passing the brokers, who had joined the pro-Maratha lobby in their struggle to curtail the English investment and the English influence. It is possible, although it is not clear from the contemporary English documents, that the English were trying to control the production at Cambay by bringing more looms under their protection. This would have certainly hit the brokers very hard. That the path taken by Holford was not smooth could be seen in another letter in which he spoke of those who were trying to reduce the English influence by 'wantonly throwing many impediments in my way they possibly can...'.<sup>67</sup> Bombay agreed with Holford and asked him not to give any protection to those brokers. Bombay also informed Surat accordingly.<sup>68</sup> A virtual silent war had thus been declared by the English Resident against the brokers who had so long been the mainstay of the English investment at Cambay. The nawab, remaining in the background, sided with the brokers, perhaps for fear of the pro-Maratha lobby.

But Surat was not satisfied so easily. Before they had received the letter from Bombay dated the 1 June 1800, James Grant from the Surat castle asked for an explanation from Holford of the rationale of protection given by the Resident at Cambay, reprimanding him again for not having a cordial relation with the nawab.<sup>69</sup> Holford, unaware of such a letter, wrote to Surat on the 29 May, touching once again the

basic problem of the increased investment and the anti-English feeling. He cited the conferences between W.J. Farmer, who had resided at Cambay for some time, and the brokers, who always argued that the nawab would not agree to the increase of English investment and it would not be possible to procure such large quantity of goods. They had then brought pressure upon the nawab to agree with their views. But the commercial Department of the English which by then was established, had asked Holford to increase the investment by bringing 100 more looms under the English control, which was finally agreed to by the nawab. Nathjee, the broker at Surat was ignorant of these proceedings and his agent at Cambay had completed the investment. Holford, in a similar mood to that of Malet earlier, complained that his superiors had never understood the game.<sup>70</sup>

It appears to be strange that the brokers at Cambay would want to restrict the English investment at a time when the production was reaching new heights trying to match the increasing demand. They perhaps feared that the expansion of English investment, with the direct contact with the artisans and kidgars bypassing them, would put a ceiling to their price. Also the expansion of the English influence at Cambay would mean the increasing number of protected people, that would reduce the number of brokers. Significantly such protection was given by the Marathas earlier. Yet it appears that these brokers were not receiving protection from the Marathas at the moment, although they appear to be in the pro-Maratha lobby due to their anti-English stand. For reasons not known, excepting on one occasion, the Marathas had suddenly cooled off at Cambay after 1784, which may coincide with the Treaty of Salbai and the death of Momin Khan. The resistance to the English at Cambay by the brokers therefore appears to be independant of the Marathas.

Bombay, however, had other ideas. In a confidential note dated the 9 May 1800, Duncan, the Governor of Bombay, asked Holford to report about the revenue of Cambay and the amount paid by the nawab to the Gaikwars. Holford was also to find out whether the nawab was ready to cede the town and the adjacent country to the English on the model of a treaty between the English and the Nawab of Surat.<sup>71</sup> The aggressive policy of Wellesley, encouraged by Dundas at home, now began to look at the princely states from a different perspective.

The reply of Holford reveals the situation of Cambay very clearly. He was averse to communicating to the nawab since it would alarm

him at that time, which would also give an opportunity to the pro-Maratha lobby that they were waiting for. At the accession of this nawab, the revenue of Cambay had been more than Rs. 4 lakh annually but now it was reduced to Rs. 2 lakh, of which the land revenue and that of the city's taxes gave him only Rs. 30 thousand. Part of this came from the oppressive taxes which were mismanaged by the nawab's officials. Holford estimated that with good management (meaning under the English), it would go up to several lakh. The entire area might be cultivated while at present only one-tenth part was cultivated. Cambay has about ninety villages and about twenty lakh bighas of fertile soil. When Cambay was a tributary of Delhi and the trade of Malway, Rajputana, Ahmedabad etc. used to pass through it, the revenue was more than Rs. 10 lakh annually. With Cambay's decline, Broach, Jambusar, Bhawanagar had come up. But Holford had no doubt that Cambay could become a flourishing city with good management. He predicted great commercial advantages of the city if it came into the possession of the English. Significantly, he did not attribute its decline to the Maratha violence or the silting of the river, in a tangential way, he spoke of the Maratha Gaikwar and other Maratha leaders often exacted one or two lakh from the nawab while their troops often plundered the neighbouring districts. As stated earlier the nawab was ruled by his mother, who controlled the treasury. Holford was certain that the nawab could be persuaded to sign a treaty with the English; if not, the threat of the English withdrawal would force his hands for fear of the attacks from the neighbours. Significantly Holford did not clarify who these neighbours were. One can guess from past experience that the Raja of Bhawanagar who was encouraged by the English was certainly among them. Holford however suggested that before taking the step of writing to the nawab for cessation, disgruntled brokers and their families should be removed to Surat. Otherwise they would influence the nawab against it.<sup>72</sup> It may be mentioned that by the treaty of 13 May 1800, the Nawab of Surat had ceded the management and collection of the city of Surat and its dependencies, the judicial, civil and military administration of the city of Surat and its dependencies to the English in lieu of payment of Rs. 1 lakh annually payable in four quarterly instalments as well as one-fifth of land revenue after deducting Rs. 1 lakh.<sup>73</sup>

Duncan had also received the account of Cambay's revenue and nawab's situation from other sources, which he forwarded to Wellesley in July 1800.<sup>74</sup> It sums up the argument that Cambay was useful to the



English in view of the large share of the Company's piecegoods procured from there. The Marathas also did not want the seizure the city due to the presence of the English factory. This contradicted the views of Malet who considered the city useful only from a political point of view. The production and trade at Cambay had increased to a considerable extent which perhaps explained the renewed interest of the English in Cambay.

In a separate Memorandum,<sup>75</sup> Duncan pointed out that the nawab had ninety villages, five of which had been given by Fateh Singh to Momin Khan for the expenses of the maintenance of troops against the Kathis. The revenue of Cambay, including the land revenue of ninety villages and all kinds of taxes within the city, came to about Rs. 2.5 lakh, a year, from which a chouth was paid to the peshwa. The nawab had to maintain troops of about 2 thousand (700 horses and the rest foot soldiers) as well as a special body of troops of 250 men formerly commanded by an European. The town wall was in a ruinous state and the nawab, who was in debt for Rs. 2 lakh, could not maintain it. His expenses always exceeded his income. It appears from another document of 1802 that the Nawab Momin Khan had made a settlement with the Marathas with the stipulation that the nawab would pay chouth to the peshwa of Rs. 12 thousand annually irrespective of the produce of the land as well as Rs. 11 thousand annually, making a total of Rs. 23.6 thousand as the jama of the Cambay chouth. The Maratha chouthear had no power to interfere in the administration or to claim any fine. At the end of the eighteenth century, therefore, the Nawab of Cambay remained independent of either the Marathas or the English while the production and trade were increasing. The decline of the Maratha power in the early nineteenth century spelt the doom of Cambay also. But the Marathas alone may not be blamed for such a destiny.

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## CHAPTER 12

### Epilogue

With the death of Nana Fadnavis in 1800, the English found the opportunity to tighten their control over Cambay. On the 3 September 1800, Holford was informed that the weavers employed in the Company's investment were entitled to the protection of the factory but they were subject to the justice of the nawab for any criminal breach or offence.<sup>1</sup> This decision was arrived at after a careful review of the cases of Somechand Deepakchand and others from Cambay by Surat on 1 June 1800. These brokers were not actually employed by Holford when they fought with the goldsmiths in the open streets of Cambay, when the kotwal put them in prison. They were released after signing a bond of Rs. 1 thousand and paying a fine of Rs. 700 as reported earlier. They paid the total amount after selling their property in Cambay and with the assistance of their friends. Out of this amount, 10 per cent was taken by the kotwal as per regulations and some money was taken by the nawab's servants.<sup>2</sup>

While the Peshwa Balaji Rao II, assisted by the English, was fighting with Jasowant Holkar, the English decided to support Anand Rao Gaekwad against the aggression of Malhar Rao. The Nawab of Cambay, on 4 January 1800, agreed once again to the landing of English troops at Cambay for the third time since the 1770s. The garden of Mehr Ali was again fixed as the military base of the English.<sup>3</sup>

By the Treaty of Bassein, signed on 31 December 1800, the peshwa ceded to the Company in perpetuity, his territory and other possessions to the value of Rs. 26 lakhs annually. This included Cambay chouth and jama of Napad, valued at Rs. 60 thousand per year.<sup>4</sup> Major Walker informed the Nawab of Cambay of the sanad of his taking over these areas in May 1803.<sup>5</sup> The nawab however pleaded to Major Walker to keep these areas under the nawab in lieu of which he would pay to the Company Rs. 81,228 per year (for the Cambay villages including

Petlad Rs. 38,550 and for Napar Rs. 42,678).<sup>6</sup> This was accepted for four years by the Company which wanted the ceded areas to be handed over to the Company.<sup>7</sup> The Company appointed Maulavi Muhammed Ali as their agent at Cambay, who would work under the Collector of Khaira.<sup>8</sup>

Muhammed Ali continuously quarrelled with the English Resident as well as with the officers of the nawab as done by his predecessor, the Maratha chouthears. But there was a difference this time. The English chouthear had no authority over the administration and he could not set up a parallel administration as done by the Marathas. Besides, the nawab was under strict control of the English Resident, who did not allow the English chouthear to get the upper hand. Also, it appears that the pro-Maratha lobby had almost disappeared from Cambay and the English control of trade was nearly complete.<sup>9</sup>

In 1818 Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao was deposed by the English who took over the Maratha territories. On 15 July 1818, the Court of Directors ordered the immediate withdrawal of the English factory from Cambay. The English suddenly discovered that the charge of the merchandise at Cambay was excessively high while the investment on piece goods in Western India had become very unprofitable. As a result, the investment had been reduced to Rs. 2 lakh annually and the whole amount was invested on Surat piece goods manufactured at Surat. The nawab was however informed that the British flag continue to be hoisted at Cambay and the English protection would be given to the former dependants of the Company against any oppression of the nawab. The Collector of Khaira would look after their interests.<sup>10</sup> One may however notice the coincidence of the deposition of the peshwa and the withdrawal of the English factory from Cambay. With the threat of Maratha control disappearing, the English awakened to the loss of Cambay piecegoods investments and excessive charge of the factory.

On 28 October 1823, Fateh Ali Khan, who had ruled over Cambay for a period of thirty-three years under the title of Momin Khan, died. He was succeeded by his brother Mirza Bande Ali Khan, who was allowed to use the title.<sup>11</sup> He died on 15 March 1841 and was succeeded by his paternal nephew, Mirza Hussain Yar Khan. His father Yusuf Hussain Khan had waived his own right in favour of his son.<sup>12</sup>

H. R. Briggs,<sup>13</sup> who visited Cambay in December 1847, had left a detailed description, which clearly outlined the tragic and painful decline of Cambay. He had stayed in the quarter which was once part

of the English factory. In 1835 it was sold to the family of Karsetji Pestanji Mody of Bombay for Rs. 40 thousand and was the Collector of Khaira at Rs. 1.8 thousand per year. This was a two-storied building and the ground floor was occupied by some Muslims working under the Collector of Khaira. This was the only ground of the English Company within the city of Cambay and the English flag was hoisted in front of the factory. The condition of Cambay was clearly described by Briggs, The Durbar, he found, was 'a miserable patched building, its archway bedaubed with yellow wash and grotesque figures'. There was only one broad street from the factory to the bazar and all sorts of stones were cast away on the ground. 'Decaying tenements and penurious inhabitants comprises all that might now be urged for Cambay and trade has long languished into the almost lethargic form of death...'. Yet he found cheap food at Cambay.

The city is still irregular and surrounded by a ruined wall with bastions at intervals. There are ten gates with lodges still occupied by guards. There is still the Phoorza or custom gate with a guard of twenty-five Mughals.

The family of the nawab belonged to the Shia sect and originally came from Persia. With the Afghan invasion of Persia, a large number of Persians had emigrated to Cambay. The city, with fifty-six villages adjoining to it, has about thirty-five thousand adult males, occupying roughly seventeen thousand houses. Almost ten thousand inhabitants have no houses or tenements. The Hindus outnumber the Muslims although the Ismaili Bohras are still there. The Nawab Hussain Yar Khan still employed Habshi and Abyssinian eunuchs in the harem.

The land revenue fluctuates between Rs. one and two lakhs. On Mokaut, i.e. tax on articles of consumption, nawab received Rs. 28 thousand while the municipal taxes and other licenses gives him Rs. 10 thousand. The Panchayats of cornelian stonecutters pay him Rs. 5 thousand and he gets Rs. 75 thousand from sea customs and excise duties, making a total of Rs. 118 thousand a year. Another Rs. 28 thousand is given to him by the English Company for the use of the saltpans, making it Rs. 146 thousand. He pays Rs. 60 thousand to the English as Peshwa's chouth on Cambay and Napad parganas, thus having an income of Rs. 86 thousand from sources other than the land revenue. The total comes to about Rs. 3 lakhs a year. The expenses of the nawab exceeds his income as he continues to spend in the traditional manner such as supporting destitute Muslim families with free meals twice a day.

The river still does not obstruct the trade as fifty to sixty boats enter each year. The trading community of Cambay owns about thirty boats but all are registered in one of the Company's ports. The nawab has three boats of good size. Excellent indigo is produced and with cloth form the principal commodities shipped directly to Arabian and Persian Gulfs. Tobacco was produced in large quantities till a few years back yielding an annual revenue of Rs. 10 thousand. Now the production had dwindled to fetch not over Rs. 3 thousand. Even the manufacture of cornelians, agates, etc. is declining, which are quarried from Ratanpura and taken to Broach and then to Cambay for manufacture.

Obviously most of the people have deserted Cambay. 'This desertion arises from the poverty of the country and this also is attributed in partial degree to the British Government treating Cambay as a foreign port.' As a result any boat of Cambay has to pay double duty in arriving in any port of the Company. It is interesting to note that according to Briggs, most of the people had either migrated to Baroda or Ahmedabad. They preferred to live until the control of the Marathas than under the English.<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that the English had given the *coup de grace* to Cambay's fast deserting fortune. Since the Treaty of Bassein and the beginning of English control of Cambay, the Varsale's ninety villages had been reduced to fifty-six villages, naturally reducing the revenue of Cambay to an appreciable extent. The chouth to the Marathas, which last stood, by all permutation and combinations, to the tune of nearly Rs. 25 thousand had increased under the English control to Rs. 60 thousand only to be paid by the nawab to the English, who return to Cambay Rs. 28 thousand for the use of saltpans. The declaration of the port as a foreign port had completed the destruction of Cambay's trade.<sup>15</sup> If the Marathas had begun the process of decline of Cambay, it is the English who completed it.

From a perusal of the English documents, it would appear that the English were the dominant mercantile group attempting to have a hegemony in western coast of India. A Dutch document of the 1750s, quoted by Holden Furber<sup>16</sup> would show this was not actually the case. Dutch Director Schreuder estimated at Surat in 1750 that out of over Rs. 87 lakhs trade at Surat, nearly Rs. 28 lakh were operated by the four European Companies, in which the Dutch topped the list with more than Rs. 17.5 lakhs.<sup>17</sup> Therefore Furber justifiably concluded that only a third of Surat's trading was then operating under European protection.

In non-European capital, both the Hindu and Muslim merchants were almost at par. After a careful analysis, Furber concluded that 'Muslim capital was resistant to European 'protection' than Hindu and Parsee capital'.<sup>18</sup> Schreuder had hinted that Surat's prosperity had dwindled due to the control of the countryside by the Marathas.<sup>19</sup> Yet we see that Cambay continued to supply Surat with the products taken from the centre of production then under the control of the Marathas. The estimate would also show that the Indian trading capital was by no means subservient to European trade. At Cambay the same trend could be seen as the Indian merchants there directly traded with western Asia. The rise of Jambusar and Bhawanagar would show that the Indian merchants there had remained independent of the English capital to a great extent.

Although the private trade of the English had increased at Cambay from 1760-61, the revenue of Cambay had declined. This could be seen in the decrease of Maratha chouth from Rs. 84 thousand to Rs. 54 thousand in 1762. This was perhaps due to the decrease in the collection of land revenue caused by the shrinkage of dependent areas of Cambay, whose revenue was integrated with the revenue of Cambay. The scarcity of salt, pepper, cattle in the countryside would give us an indication of such decrease. It may also be that after the passing away of the Mughal power from Gujarat, the zamindars had begun to collect more revenue from these areas, which coincided with the Maratha debacle at Panipat. The fluctuation of the international markets, such as Mocha, may have also contributed to the up and down swing of the revenue.

The dramatic rise of the arrangoe trade, particularly by the English, would tend to show less dependence of Cambay revenue on the traditional items. The decrease of the English investment on piecegoods for three successive years in the 1760s was not due to the Maratha violence or due to the silting of the river. The increasing attacks of the Kolis and the Kathis would disturb the cotton cultivation but may not disturb the quarries from where the beads were brought to Cambay for manufacture and shipment. Arrangoe production was far less integrated with the land, which would make it a safe bet. The rise of the demand for such arrangoes in the second half of the eighteenth century in the international markets helped this process.

It is clear that the Indian merchants at Cambay were taken unawares at such a quick change of taste and demand. Their dependence on the traditional cotton piece goods did not allow them to invest in arrangoes,

which was then engrossed by the English, who controlled the entire arrangoes trade of Cambay. This was a real break for the English in the time of crisis. It was only from the 1770s that the cotton production was revived and by then both the products continued, giving an indication of the future stability of Cambay's revenue. This was helped by the peace between Turkey and Russia and the opening up of the Bussora market.

The anachronistic position of the English Company—landholder and trader—was catching them on the wrong foot during the Anglo-Maratha wars. Unfortunately, the Marathas could not exploit this to the full. Perhaps the structure of the Maratha state prevented the exploitation of the developing situation in which trade formed an essential ingredient of a power that had encompassed the seas. Unfortunately not much work has been done on the production and trade in Gujarat under the Marathas. This was perhaps due to the bias brought forth by the English historiography (which also affected the pre-independence Indian historians) of Maratha violence and plunder from which Gujarat, and obviously India and the Indians, were rescued by the English. It is clear that the English expansion in the western coast was deliberately sought upon by the English officials, who were minting money on their private trade, much earlier than Cornwallis or Wellesely. What is to be decided upon is the nature of the fight for the control of the producing areas and then for the control of the ports between the English and the Marathas. One can perhaps accept Bayly's postulate that it was as much for the fight for land revenue as it was for trade.<sup>20</sup> In the emergence of Bombay and in the wake of the decline of Surat, Cambay took a backseat. In a sense, this fight was a negative one as it tried to prevent the entry of the Marathas at Cambay. The attempts of the English first to engross the whole production of arrangoes, then the control of the management of Cambay through the appointment of a pro-English naib, Mirza Zaman, and finally to make direct contact between Holford and the weavers for investment, bypassing the Indian merchants and the brokers—all point to the fact that the English at Cambay were evolving new methods to seize the profit. They therefore appeared to be different from the Marathas who relied on the old system. But in another sense the English, after taking control of the Maratha chouth of Cambay, acted in a way which was little different from that of the Marathas. This would be clear from what the English did after 1802.



In the Treaty of Bassein of 1802, the English took over the right of the collection of Maratha chouth in Cambay parganas and appointed their own collector, Moulavi Muhammed Ali. The chouth then amounted to Rs. 23.6 thousand only.<sup>21</sup> which, as seen earlier, was hiked by the English to Rs. 64 thousand by 1847. Among the various taxes of Cambay, Phoorza gives Rs. 4773-1-37p. at the rate of Hindus 6 per cent, Muslims 4 per cent and nawab's relations 2.5 per cent, the same rate that was followed in Khuskee Mandee (customs levied on goods imported or exported from the interior), while Ghee mandi has the highest collection of Rs. 5103-0-37p. with the same rate for the Hindus and the Muslims while the nawab's relations paid a lower rate of 2 per cent. Customs on the salt pans comes next with Rs. 2074-3-62p. at the same rate. It is interesting that there was vera (tax) for five streets (only Rs. 18), besides which there were taxes for all sorts of activities including one on the banians for playing cards in their holidays called Purosottam (at Rs. 2-2-0 p.), which was obviously gambling with stakes. The low collection of Rs. 6 only and Rs. 6 for stamping the weights of cotton merchants and of the Pinjarah or the cotton cleaners respectively would show that the activities in these areas had declined considerably. Incidentally the mint was still working which yielded Rs. 8-1-18 p. a year.<sup>22</sup>

This was the report of Major Walker given in 1807 as a sequel to the report of Holford, which differed considerably from the above.<sup>23</sup> In 1805 Holford presented a different picture and raised an issue that was first raised by Malet in the early 1780s.

Holford stated that from 1736 onwards the revenue of Cambay was divided between the nawab and the peshwa, while from 1745 onwards the peshwa's share was further subdivided between the peshwa and Gaikwar. While the Maratha chouthear was present at least from the early 1750s, a dual authority and administration at Cambay developed between the nawab and the Maratha chouthear. The humiliating defeat of the Marathas at the battle of Panipat had weakened them and the nawab had refused the payment of chouth. But in the 70s they again got the share but then the nawab was able to establish his Modat (right) in the Maratha chouth on certain items. In 1805, the nawab was getting Rs. 40,420 annually while he should pay to the Company a further sum of Rs. 1150-2-0 p., which he never paid. Holford therefore suggested that the Company should occupy their right of half share of Cambay chouth, forgetting that the English had earlier given the nawab the acquittal of the chouth of Cambay city. It is significant that

Holford himself confessed that he did not have the documents to prove his proposition. It is to be mentioned that prior to the Treaty of Bassain, the English Residents were continuously complaining of the taxes and the Maratha attempts to take the half share of Cambay revenue. After the treaty, the English never complained regarding the taxes and the Resident officially proposed to take half share of the Cambay chouth.<sup>24</sup>

The decline therefore was not dependent on the silting of the river as even in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Cambay had been termed as a foreign port, fifty to sixty boats had been entering Cambay, thirty of which were owned by Cambay merchants. The dislocation of trade of the Indian merchants in the entire region was caused by other factors, in which the decay of the Mughal empire, the aggressiveness of the Marathas and the monopoly control of the English played their part. In general however, the political interference was much less than what was supposed so far and in certain years, the political anarchy at Ahmedabad did not affect Cambay to such an extent as to cause disruption.

The struggle, from a wider sense, may be termed as a confrontation between the emerging concept of the bourgeois class as represented by the Company and the merchants and the refeudalised elements represented by the nawab and the faction-ridden Maratha sardars. However such a picture would be too simplistic.

The Company and the merchants drew a large part of their revenue from land which was then invested on trade. The nawab had also his boats and tried to control unsuccessfully the lucrative freight trade between Cambay and Surat. Kessor Purosottam, the Maratha trader, as well as Nana Rattan, earlier merchant as well as Governor of Jambusar, helped to turn this place into a trading centre that drew away trade from Surat and Cambay. Even the silk and the cotton merchants had been lured away from the English to Jambusar. While the Indian merchants at Surat had sided with the English in the event of the Maratha aggression on the Surat parganas, the Indian merchants at Cambay had looked to the Marathas as their saviours. In the struggle against Malet at Cambay during the late days of Momin Khan, the Hindus, the Parsees and the Muslim merchants and the officials had joined the nawab against the English, a feature repeated again nearly fifteen years later. The issues therefore cannot be stated in simple terms in regard to all the areas of Gujarat under the Marathas.

The deterioration of the physical features of the city of Cambay took nearly a century as it took centuries to build. At first the *qasbas* of the northern side gave away and then the walls and the buildings of the *darbar* slowly turned into rubble. Amidst the splendid ruins, one could still see, through the eyes of Forbes, the continuation of the traditional Mughal culture practised by a small élite. That the upper echelons of society never looked beyond the horizon of their places and stables while the English and the Marathas were waiting like vultures to prey on the corpse was not sufficient to put the city in order. The situation became rather critical since the early eighties when the *nawabs* became almost prisoners of their harem cliques. The lovely greenery of the innumerable gardens and parks, the tombs and the mausoleums with a cosmopolitan and the legendary urbane Cambay society of Hindus, Parsees, Jains and the Muslims, fell into ruin as the English and the Marathas struggled often violently outside for the control of Gujarat.

The kind of transformation, far deeper than described by Huizinga in the decline of feudalism,<sup>25</sup> had become linked with global trade. Cambay's marionettes, princes and their underlings, reacted in the same way to the new situation confronting them as was done by their forefathers—the threats, the petty diplomatic manoeuvres, the alliances and the bribes. They failed to realize the transformation of the port city—from the trading outpost of a decaying empire to the subservient supplier of a growing system that operated under a distant control with far-flung areas of the world. It may be postulated that Cambay had failed to realise its own potential for trade; but that realization could only be achieved under a system in which the merchant and the prince could combine. Continuing the tradition of a Mughal past, the prince continued to leave the merchants aside except at times when he needed the cash—a situation that could go well in the previous century. In the eighteenth century, the trade of Cambay needed greater support from the political power, which in turn needed greater cashflow from the countryside where linkages were served by the ambitions of contending powers of the region. The city suffered in this confrontation the tragedy of clinging to the values of a bygone past and slowly submitting to the altar of a new hegemony engulfing the entire continent with linkages around the world. It was almost like a Greek tragedy in which the actors were destined to play their parts in the background of the passing of one empire, the failure of the second

to evolve and the beginning of the third. It was not however, the 'glorious dawn' for the Indians. But that is another story.

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