RICHARD MAXWELL EATON

The Sufis of Bijapur, 1300-1700

Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India

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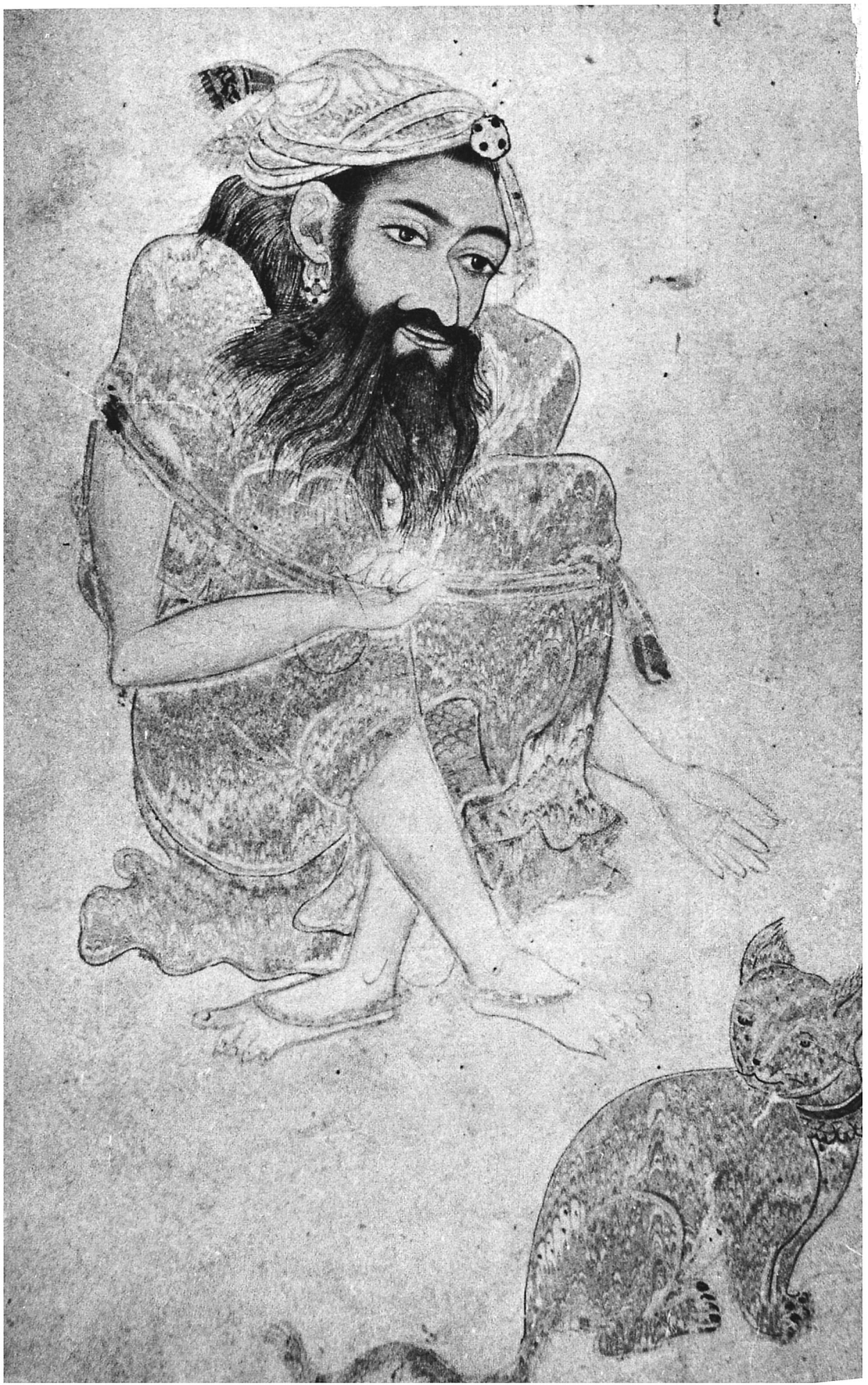
SUFIS OF BIJAPUR
1300-1700



Sufis of Bijapur

1300-1700

SOCIAL ROLES OF SUFIS
IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

By
Richard Maxwell Eaton

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Frontis: A majzub *of Bijapur, seventeenth century A.D.*

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To my mother and father

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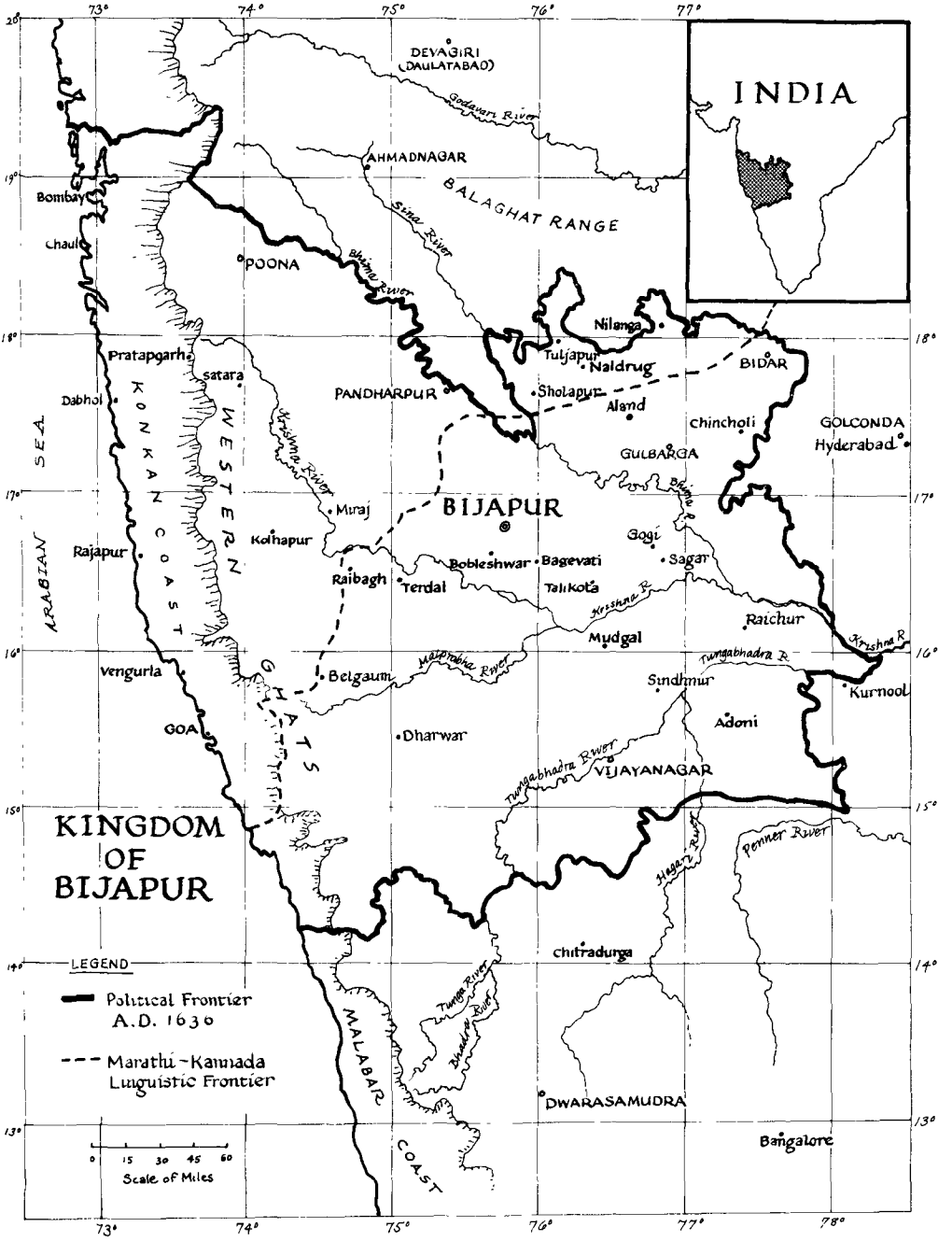
NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

The writer is responsible for all translations quoted in this study except for those otherwise credited in the footnotes. Middle Eastern and Indian terms not in common usage in the English language have been italicized when used in the text. It seemed neither necessary nor desirable to burden the reader with diacritical markings over and under such words each time they should appear. To serve the interests of exactness, however, a glossary has been appended to the study in which all such terms are given their full diacritical markings. An explanation of the system of transliteration used in this study will also be found in the Glossary.


INDIA
KINGDOM OF BIJAPUR
LEGEND
Political Frontier A.D. 1630
Marathi-Kannada Linguistic Frontier
Scale of Miles
0 15 30 45 60
DEVAGIRI (DAULATABAD)
Godavari River
AHMADNAGAR
BALAGHAT RANGE
Sina River
Bhima River
POONA
Bombay
Chaul
Nilanga
Tuljapur
Naldrug
BIDAR
Pratapgarh
satara
Dabhol
PANDHARPUR
Sholapur
Aland
Chincholi
GOLCONDA
Hyderabad
GULBARGA
Krishna River
Bhima R.
BIJAPUR
Miraj
Kolhapur
Rajapur
Gogi
Sagar
Bobleshwar
Bagevati
Raibagh
Terdal
Talikota
Krishna R.
Raichur
Mudgal
Tungabhadra R.
Malprabha River
Belgaum
Vengurla
Sindhnur
Kurnool
GOA
Dharwar
Adoni
Tungabhadra River
VIJAYANAGAR
Hagari River
Penner River
chitradurga
Tunga River
Bhadra River
DWARASAMUDRA
Bangalore
ARABIAN SEA
KONKAN COAST
WESTERN GHATS
MALABAR COAST
73°
74°
75°
76°
77°
78°
18°
19°
20°
17°
16°
15°
14°
13°

PREFACE

This study seeks to identify the social roles played by the Sufis, heirs to a tradition of Islamic mysticism, who lived in the medieval city-state of Bijapur in South India. The Sufis examined in this work have been regarded as an integral part of an evolving society in which an Indo-Muslim ruling establishment was superimposed on an indigenous non-Muslim population. Within this framework the present study explores not only how Sufis of various social types interacted with the main components of the society in which they lived—the upholders of Islamic orthodoxy, the court, and the non-Muslim population—but also how these types evolved and changed over time. The shaping of this study into its present form is attributable both to the kinds of sources that I uncovered in the course of my research and also to the many individuals and institutions that have, in countless ways, guided and assisted my studies and research through their various phases. An explanation of these sources and an acknowledgment of my gratitude to these individuals and institutions are therefore in order.

The primary sources used in this study consist mainly of Persian manuscripts preserved in various institutions in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, and may be classified under four broad headings: works written about the Sufis, works written by the Sufis, official documents of the Bijapur government, and court chronicles, memoirs, and travel accounts contemporary with the period under review. In my quest to learn from the primary sources who the Sufis of Bijapur were and what they did, the first type of source material to come to my attention was the biographical literature on the Sufis, known formally as hagiographies. While going through catalogues of Persian manuscripts in Hyderabad libraries I found reference to the *Rauzat al-Auliya'-i Bijapur*, originally entitled *Tazkira-yi Auliya'-i Dar al-Zafar Bijapur*. This important manuscript consists of biographical notices on the Sufis of Bijapur compiled in the early nineteenth century by one of the most reliable historians of the area, Muhammad Ibrahim Zubairi. Having learned of this manuscript, of which the only

copies in the world are found in Hyderabad, I journeyed to that city and was lead by Zubairi's important work to a great many other manuscripts dealing with the Sufis of Bijapur, which seem never to have been utilized by Indian or Western scholars.

Locating such materials, however, and utilizing them to arrive at an accurate understanding of the historical personalities they describe, are two different matters. Compiled anywhere from one generation to several hundred years after the lives of the Sufis they mention, these sources vary a great deal from one to the next. The best of them, such as Zubairi's, diligently utilize and cite earlier works sometimes no longer available to modern researchers. At their worst, however, they indulge in laudatory embellishments to the point of the most fanciful miracle-mongering. For the popular veneration of the Sufis, and more importantly their tombs, has led to the rise of countless popular stories about them that, with the compilation of these biographies, passed from oral to written traditions. Hence it has always been necessary, when trying to find the kernel of truth from which these traditions grew, to consider such factors as the time lag between the life of the Sufi and the date of compilation of his biography, the relationship (spiritual, familial, or social) between the Sufi and the compiler who mentions him, and the tendency of both oral and written traditions to conform to certain archetypes of Indo-Muslim saints and therefore to tell us how they *should* have acted in Indian history.

But the biographies, or *tazkirat*, are not the only type of source material that I found valuable. Another type is the discourses (*malfuzat*), or the sayings of a Sufi as recorded by one of his disciples. Though few in number for Bijapur's Sufis, the discourses have immense value since, written during a Sufi's lifetime by his close associates, they are generally free from miracle-mongering or other forms of embellishment. Indeed, they provide perhaps the most candid pictures of how Sufis lived.

Extensive research in various institutions in Hyderabad, both private and public, eventually led me to another broad category of primary sources. This is the works written by the most prominent Sufis, which in turn fall into two classes: mystical literature and popular literature. Although the mystical literature differs little in substance from the classical statements of Islamic mysticism that had emerged in the Islamic heartland during the first

five centuries A.H. and are well known to students of Sufism, the literature composed by Sufis for the common folk of the Bijapur region represents a unique find. For it was this literature, composed in the vernacular language of Dakhni and not in the high languages of Islamic culture, Arabic and Persian, that brought one section of Bijapur's Sufis into direct contact with the region's lower classes.

The third and fourth categories of primary sources used in this study were non-Sufi in origin but proved of immense value in painting in the background against which the principal subjects of this study were viewed. Many state documents, consisting chiefly of *farmans* or orders issued by the Bijapur government, pertained to Sufis or the institutions that grew up around their tombs, and provided valuable information on the relations between the court and certain sections of the Sufi community. Finally there were the contemporary histories, memoirs, and travel accounts, which shed a good deal of indirect light on the Sufis of this study. I have relied extensively upon two historians in particular: Muhammad Qasim Firishta and Muhammad Ibrahim Zubairi, mentioned above as the author of the *Rauzat al-Auliya*. Though less well known than the work of Firishta, whose narrative for Bijapur goes up to the year 1596, Zubairi's account takes on special importance because of its breadth. Although it was compiled as late as 1811, his *Basatin al-Salatin* was based on a number of contemporary sources that it superseded and others that no longer exist. It is, moreover, the only comprehensive history of the entire 'Adil Shahi dynasty (1490-1686) whose reign over Bijapur coincides with most of the period under review in this study.

My sincere thanks are due to the many individuals and institutions without whose assistance and patience this work would not have appeared. I owe a deep indebtedness to Professor Robert E. Frykenberg who, during my early graduate career at the University of Wisconsin, urged me to apply my knowledge of Persian to the study of Indian history. It was also he who pointed out to me the gross imbalance in the historiography of medieval India in favor of the northern part of the subcontinent, particularly the Mughal Empire, and suggested that I pursue the study of the Deccan in general, and the Kingdom of Bijapur in particular. To the extent that this study may partly redress the

present imbalance between the study of medieval North India and the Deccan, I am obliged to Professor Frykenberg for his initial encouragement. I am also deeply indebted to the members of the University of Wisconsin's Comparative World History program, particularly Professors Philip D. Curtin and John R. W. Smail, for directing my attention and interests to social history and the study of culture contact. It was this approach that led me to focus on the Sufis as possible pivotal individuals standing between Muslim and non-Muslim groups in medieval Indian society.

Professor John F. Richards of the University of Wisconsin directed the doctoral dissertation upon which this study is based. I am deeply indebted to him for the advice he freely rendered during all phases of my graduate career and for the careful criticisms he gave during the research and writing phases of my work. Without the encouragement based on his own expertise in the field of medieval Indian history this work would not have been completed.

I am particularly grateful to the many institutions in England, India, and Pakistan whose willing assistance made my research possible. My research in India, conducted between October 1969 and January 1971, was supported by a grant from the American Institute of Indian Studies. I am much obliged to the men who were at that time the organization's officers in India—particularly Dr. D. D. Karve, the co-director, and Dr. P. R. Mehendiratta, the deputy executive officer—for all that they did in facilitating my stay in India. In London the British Museum and the India Office Library made available many manuscripts that I used both in the initial phases of my work before embarking for India, and over a year later in the final phases of my research while returning from India. In India itself, five institutions whose manuscripts or documents were made available to me deserve special mention. These include, in Hyderabad, the State Archives of Andhra Pradesh, the Asafiyah Library (State Central Library), the Salar Jung Museum, and the Idara-e-Adabiyat-e-Urdu; and in Bijapur, the Archeological Museum. In 1976 I consulted relevant manuscripts in Karachi at the Anjuman-i Taraqqi-yi Urdu, whose collection is currently preserved in the National Museum of Pakistan. I am much obliged to the directors, archivists, and librarians of these institutions for the patience and kindness they

showed in allowing me to utilize their collections. For granting me permission to make photographs of certain miniature paintings in their collections, I acknowledge thanks to the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad (Figures 7, 8, and 12), the Idara-e-Adabiyat-e-Urdu in Hyderabad (Figure 3), the Archeological Museum of Bijapur (Figure 9), and Mr. Aqa Haidar Hasan of Hyderabad (Figure 2).

While conducting my research in India I was fortunate in having conversations with a number of noted scholars in the field of medieval Indian history. In Hyderabad I had useful talks with Dr. H. K. Sherwani, Dr. P. Saran, Dr. Rafi'a Sultana, Professor M. Akbaruddin Siddiqi, and Bishop John A. Subhan. I have also benefited a great deal from personal conversations with Dr. P. M. Joshi of the Deccan College, Poona, and Dr. K. A. Nizami of the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Contact with scholars of this high caliber, coming as it did in the formative stage of my research in India, proved of immense value in directing my energies to fruitful sources of inquiry.

A number of individuals provided me with expert skills that assisted my research. I am most indebted to Mr. Safdar Shafeeq Ahmad for his invaluable services in helping locate relevant documents in Hyderabad and Bijapur, and in assisting me in their interpretation. Mr. Ziauddin Ahmed Shakeb, an archivist at the State Archives of Andhra Pradesh, was most helpful in locating manuscripts in private collections in Hyderabad as well as in the State Archives. And for their fine work in making clear and accurate transcriptions of certain Persian manuscripts I am grateful to Mr. 'Abd al-Karim Mahir and Mr. Rahmat Allah Khan, both of Hyderabad.

There are numerous other individuals who helped me while I was in India and whose acquaintance I shall always treasure. I am greatly indebted to Professor M. Akbaruddin Siddiqi, formerly of the Urdu Department, Osmania University, Hyderabad, for making available to me his fine collection of Dakhni manuscripts and for helping me in their translation. Messrs. Burhan al-Din Husaini, Faruq Husaini, and Saiyid Murtaza Qadiri, all of whom are residents of Bijapur and descendants of prominent Sufis there, kindly provided me with many rare manuscript sources handed down to them by their forefathers. More than

that, numerous and lengthy talks with them gave me a feel for the subject of my research that no amount of reading could ever have accomplished.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my colleagues and good friends Mrs. Jane Ragsdale, Dr. Joseph Brennig, and Miss Katherine Ewing, whose careful reading and critical comments of various drafts of this study proved of immeasurable value.

Tucson, Arizona R. M. E.

INTRODUCTION

In 1890 an English archeologist for the government of India, Henry Cousens, described his trip across the barren, flat Deccan plateau and his arrival at the ruined city he was about to survey. "Not many years ago," wrote Cousens,

> the way was not altogether free from Maratha freebooters; and when the city was reached it was found a lonely and deserted extent of ruins, the haunt of the jackal, the wolf, and the hyaena, and an elysium of bats and owls. Very few families lived within the walls: it had remained a desolate waste from the time of its fall to within the last half century.[1]

The magnificent palaces, mausoleums, mosques, and other structures surveyed by Cousens once graced the medieval city of Bijapur, capital of the kingdom of the same name.[2] At its height in the mid-seventeenth century the Kingdom of Bijapur was, after the Mughal Empire, one of the largest and most powerful states of the Indian subcontinent. In 1686, however, the Mughal Empire itself swallowed up this Deccan kingdom, which precipitated the city's rapid decline into the ruined specter Cousens described.

What particularly strikes today's visitor to Bijapur is the extraordinary number of tombs scattered both inside and outside the city walls. Of course, the most imposing of these are the great mausoleums built by and for the kingdom's sultans, who once ruled over the entire western Deccan. Other tombs, less grandiose than those for the monarchs, were constructed for members of the upper nobility, talented artists, architects, and musicians. But all these are numerically insignificant compared with the number of tombs and graves of Sufis, the Muslim saints of Bijapur. Varying from large mausoleums twenty feet in height with cupola or dome, to simple tombstones raised only several

[1] Henry Cousens, *Notes on the Buildings and Other Antiquarian Remains at Bijapur* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1890), p. 1.

[2] See Cousens, *Notes on the Buildings*; see also Cousens, *Bijapur and Its Architectural Remains* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1916).

feet off the ground, the structures built to consecrate the burial places of Bijapur's Sufis number almost three hundred. Of these about one third are located within the city's great, circular walls, which measure about two miles in diameter, and the rest lie scattered about the countryside outside the walls.[3]

Although the city today is again inhabited by a thriving population, most of these Sufi burial sites, especially the smaller ones, lie in the same neglected condition that Cousens saw when he made his surveys at the end of the nineteenth century. On the other hand some of the larger tombs, called *dargahs*, have become centers of a living popular religion. On any Thursday afternoon crowds of common people—both Hindus and Muslims, and mostly women—can be seen giving gifts to and taking blessings from a *pirzada*, a descendant of the Sufi buried beneath the *dargah*.[4] Especially illustrating the living nature of the *dargahs* are the festive celebrations that annually commemorate the Sufis' death dates (*'urs*, or "marriage with God"). Thousands of pilgrims from all over the Deccan plateau will, on these occasions, throng to Bijapur and join local devotees in the celebrations that have made such *dargahs* the focus of popular Islam throughout India.

But who were the Sufis that were buried in these *dargahs*? In the eighteenth century, a time when a series of natural and political disasters denuded Bijapur of its once-bustling population and transformed its palaces into the refuge of jackals and wolves, there was a great hiatus in the city's history. Although their tombs are central to the devotional lives of thousands today, very little is remembered of the lives of the Sufis of Bijapur. The aim of this study, then, is to bridge the hiatus and to discern, to the extent possible, who these Sufis were and what kind of social roles they played in medieval Indian society.

Three fundamental questions guide the inquiry. First, what was the Sufis' relationship to Bijapur's *'ulama*, or the upholders of Islamic orthodoxy in its exoteric sense? This study explores with

[3] A complete list of the Sufis buried in and around the city can be found in Saiyid Muhyi al-Din bin Mahmud Qadiri, *Sahifat-i Ahl-i Huda*, trans. and ed. M. Akbaruddin Siddiqi (Hyderabad: National Fine Printing Press, 1966), pp. 12-16 (hereafter cited *Sahifat*, Urdu edn.). This source mentions ninety-six burial sites of Sufis within the city walls, and one hundred eighty-nine outside the walls.

[4] See Figures 13 and 14.

reference to medieval Bijapur the extent of doctrinal incompatibility and social hostility that in other contexts are frequently said to have existed between Sufis and the *'ulama*. Second, what was the Sufis' relationship to the Bijapur court and how can it be explained? Although some modern writers on Sufism have noted the variety of relationships between Sufis and medieval Indo-Muslim courts, ranging from mutual patronage to bitter hostility, there has appeared no attempt to explain the variables that influenced these different relationships. Third, what was the Sufis' relationship to the non-Muslim population that surrounded them? Although we often hear the rather glib assertion that medieval Indian Sufis were primarily responsible for converting Hindus to Islam, the issue has not been at all closely examined. Are we to assume that all of Bijapur's Sufis concerned themselves with converting Hindus? Even if only some of them were so inclined, how and why might they have done it? How could highly developed traditions of Middle Eastern mysticism have been translated in terms meaningful to illiterate non-Muslims of the Deccan? In sum, what social roles did the Sufis of Bijapur play in relation to the *'ulama*, the court, and the non-Muslim population?

It is necessary here to define the spatial, chronological, and conceptual limits of this study. The spatial unit we are concerned with is primarily the city and immediate environs of Bijapur, though we shall frequently have occasion to refer to other cities and towns within the kingdom. There are in the Indian subcontinent a number of centers of Islamic civilization which, for purposes of analyzing the social roles of medieval Sufis in the Hindu environment, might appear to have served as satisfactorily as the one used. But the city-state of Bijapur is preferable for several reasons. The first stems from the disproportionate amount of research that has already been done on North Indian history in contrast to that on South India generally or the Deccan plateau in particular. Notwithstanding the remarkable extent of Bijapur's power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most historians have continued to write of Bijapur from a northern viewpoint, seeing the kingdom as merely one of the Deccan obstacles against which the Mughals, and particularly Aurangzeb, so doggedly struggled. Probably also as a result of this northern-centric bias, the kingdom has tended to remain neglected; historians to date have generally confined themselves to Bijapur's political history,

and the kingdom's cultural history has been all but completely ignored.[5] Thus this kingdom presented not only a relatively uncharted area of research, but also one needing to be interpreted and understood on its own terms. Second, the existence of a once-thriving Sufi tradition in and around the city, manifested by the sheer number of Sufis who lived there as well as by the extent of written sources concerning them, made Bijapur a particularly fruitful area for research of this kind.

The chronological limits of this study extend from the early fourteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century, that is, when the first Sufis appeared on the Bijapur plateau until the sudden depopulation of the city following the Mughal conquest of 1686. Within a generation of that conquest a plague, a famine, a flood, and repeated raids by foreign armies combined to sever any continuous tradition of Sufism in Bijapur, so that by the mid-eighteenth century only the tombs remained. The greater part of the study, however, concerns Sufis of the seventeenth century, as most of them lived during the height of the 'Adil Shahi dynasty (1490-1686).

The conceptual framework of this study depends a great deal on the use of the word "Sufi" and whom it is taken to include. Many scholars of Sufism, including in this century such eminent authorities as A. J. Arberry, L. Massignon, and R. A. Nicholson, have concerned themselves mainly with the philosophical and doctrinal aspects of Islamic mysticism and have consequently

[5] The best comprehensive study of Bijapur's history in a Western language is P. M. Joshi's dissertation, "The Kingdom of Bijapur," submitted in 1935 to the University of London. Based on Persian and Marathi sources as well as extensive use of travelers' accounts, Joshi's work has recently appeared in a revised and reorganized form in the first volume of the *History of Medieval Deccan* edited by H. K. Sherwani and Professor Joshi. Another recent study of the 'Adil Shahi Sultanate, D. C. Verma's *History of Bijapur*, is a political and diplomatic narrative. Three other writers have treated more specialized aspects of the kingdom's history. I. H. Ghauri, using mainly Persian sources, has written a number of articles on the kingdom's administrative organization, and H. Fukazawa, using mainly Marathi sources, has treated the same topic in somewhat greater depth. Finally there is the work of G. H. Khare, who has performed a great service to the study of Bijapur by publishing and interpreting a number of old Marathi documents he has found in Maharashtra. Among historians of North India Sir Jadunath Sarkar has contributed most significantly to our understanding of Bijapur. See bibliography for references.

understood the Sufi primarily as a mystic who, within the framework of Islam, attempts to achieve direct communion with God.[6] In this, what might be called the classical approach to Sufi studies, the individual Sufi has been examined not as an organic part of his society but as a practitioner and transmitter of esoteric Islam, standing, as it were, above or beyond the social order. Of course, this approach is quite legitimate as long as interest in Sufis is confined to the development of mystical doctrines. To analyze, for example, the philosophy of the Spanish-Arab Sufi Ibn 'Arabi or that of the Persian Sufi Jalal al-Din Rumi requires little knowledge of the society of medieval North Africa or Iran. The classical approach, in a word, stresses not the Sufi but Sufism, not the man as a social component but the doctrine as conveyed by the man.

As used in this study, however, the word "Sufi" denotes any person integrated into the organizational structure of the Islamic mystical tradition. This involved a person's taking a vow of spiritual allegiance (*bai'at*) from another, who in turn had taken a similar vow from still another, so that an institutionalized "spiritual" chain linked any Sufi with some earlier master who, in turn, very probably claimed a spiritual lineage extending from the Prophet himself. This understanding of the term "Sufi" is considerably broader than that of the classical approach to Sufi studies since it includes not only the true mystics of Islam, but many nonliterate individuals who may have had little training in or even understanding of Islamic mysticism. For in its later form, the institutionalized vow of allegiance had begun carrying with it an increasing amount of ritual and a diminishing amount of mystical knowledge. Nonetheless, people who took the vow considered themselves Sufis and were considered as such by their contemporaries. Furthermore, certain objective criteria in the literature would seem to substantiate their claim. One of them is biographical reference to a person's having taken the *bai'at* from another, an act usually accompanied and consecrated by a formal ceremony. Another is recorded reference to the passing from one to another of a written certificate (*khilafat-nama*), a patched frock (*khirqa*), or other objects symbolizing spiritual succession (*khila-*

[6] The leading works of these authors are listed in the bibliography. For an excellent survey of the history of the study of Sufism, see A. J. Arberry, *An Introduction to the History of Sufism* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942).

fat). Such ritualistic acts did not necessarily make a man a mystic; nor did they necessarily join him with a Sufi brotherhood. Yet they did, in his own estimation, make him a Sufi.

This interpretation of the word "Sufi" can best be understood when placed in the context of the historical evolution of Sufism and Sufi brotherhoods. In his important study, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, J. S. Trimingham has identified three distinct stages through which Sufism in its organizational aspect has passed: the *khanaqah* stage, the *tariqa* stage, and the *ta'ifa* stage.[7] The first or *khanaqah* stage of Sufism was the true golden age of Islamic mysticism in terms of the creativity of thought, the quantity of original mystical literature produced, and the simplicity of the Sufis' social organization. Shocked by the extravagant wealth and power of the Abbasid caliphate and struck by the apparent contradiction between the imperial worldliness of an opulent Caliph of Islam and the stern commandments of the Prophet Muhammad, the first Sufis were true ascetics. In both lower Iraq and Khurasan, Sufis like Hasan al-Basri (d. 728), Ibrahim b. Adham (d. 777), Shaqiq of Balkh (d. 810), and 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak (d. 797) led quietistic and highly ascetic lives of withdrawal from the mundane society of the Abbasid caliphate. The ascetics of the eighth century were followed in the ninth by the early mystics, such as Muhasibi (d. 837), Dhu'l-Nun (d. 861), Bayazid Bistami (d. 875), Abu'l-Qasim al-Junaid (d. 910) and Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922), whose emphasis was placed much more on love of God and spiritual affinity with God than on fear of God. Insofar as the attainment of such affinity involved a discipline or method to be learned and followed, a tradition of the master and his circle of pupils soon characterized this early phase.

But it is important to stress the loose and unstructured nature of this phase of Sufi development. There was no formal bond between the master and his pupils, the latter frequently being itinerant dropouts from the orthodox society of the Abbasids. Nor did the master in any way pose himself as an intermediary between the pupil and God. Whether masters or pupils, all Sufis were generally undifferentiated and unspecialized, and the physical structure upon which early Sufism centered was equally unspecialized and simple. This was the *khanaqah*, the humble rest-

[7] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. The following discussion draws from chapters one through three of Trimingham's study.

house or convent where wandering Sufis could lead a devotional life under the tutelage of some master. From the ninth through the twelfth century such *khanaqahs* could be found all over the Islamic world, especially on the Islamic frontier, where they played important roles in integrating non-Muslims into the Islamic community. Thus Sufism's earliest stage of development, like that of so many social movements in history, saw a burst of creativity and vigor unencumbered by organizational or doctrinal elaboration.

From about the thirteenth century the Sufi movement underwent a profound change with respect to its doctrinal evolution and social organization. This stage (the *tariqa* stage) saw the formation of mystical schools that had begun to coalesce around one or another master. From a doctrinal standpoint this second phase of Sufi development was characterized by the gradual systemization of mystical techniques designed to bring the Sufi into direct communion with God. These systems of techniques gradually crystallized into schools in which the method, consisting of a structured set of spiritual exercises to be learned and mastered, became the focal point of the Sufis' concentration. Also in this phase the principle of the transmission of the method from one Sufi to another became explicit, resulting in the formation of spiritual lineages or *silsilas* (literally, "chain") that corresponded to each school and that could be traced back to the founder of each school. Thus the Qadiri order (*silsila-tariqa*) is traced to its founder, ʿAbd al-Qadir Jilani (d. 1166), the Rifaʿi order to Ahmad al-Rifaʿi (d. 1182), the Yasavi order to Ahmad al-Yasavi (d. 1166), and so on.

From the standpoint of social organization, too, the *tariqa* phase was characterized by greater systemization, differentiation, and specialization. The *silsila* principle implied new sets of social relationships between Sufis. Differentiated schools of discipline meant that Sufis now belonged to one or another order, as opposed to the freer *khanaqah* phase when they were socially undifferentiated. Moreover the formation of orders introduced the phenomenon of initiation. Sufis were now allowed to practice the method of an order in return for a pledge of spiritual allegiance to the local director or representative of that order. This also altered the relationship between the Sufi and his master. In the *khanaqah* phase both teacher and pupil were essentially equal

in their capacities to attain their spiritual goal. But in the second phase of institutional evolution a distinction became discernible between the *pir* (or *murshid*), who was the director, and the *murid*, or disciple. Although the *murid* might eventually attain the spiritual heights of his *pir*, he was in the first instance obliged to surrender himself completely to the *pir* and to the whole complex of exercises, terminology, and disciplines that his *pir* taught. There also emerged in this phase another category of disciple besides the *murid*. This was the *khalifa*, literally "successor," who was closer to the *pir* than the *murids* in that unlike the latter he was deputized to initiate other *murids* into the order of the *pir*. In sum, the *tariqa* phase may be regarded, as Trimingham noted, "as the beginning of the process whereby the creative freedom of the mystic was to be channelled into an institution."[8]

Sufism evolved into its third and final stage from the fifteenth century onward, the exact timing of the transition varying widely from order to order and from place to place. To be a Sufi now came to mean more the belonging to a cult-association called a *ta'ifa* than the submitting to a method of discipline. Moreover Sufism's mystical element, which in its unrestrained abundance had characterized the *khanaqah* phase and which in the *tariqa* phase was subjected to a good deal of systemization, now played a minor role in the movement. In this stage a Sufi's direct communion with God was replaced by the veneration and even worship of a *pir* who now occupied the position of spiritual intermediary between the disciple and God. *Pirs* thus became saints (*wali*, literally, "friend of God"), and Sufi orders which in the second stage had been schools of spiritual discipline now became saint-cults centered on the spiritual power, or *barakat*, of a single individual. Moreover the headship of most *ta'ifas*, particularly in India, became mainly hereditary as blood replaced merit as the chief criterion of succession. This in turn gave rise to a whole new class of individuals who by virtue of their blood descent from a saint could claim special spiritual status. For it was now believed that the spiritual power possessed by a saint passed on to his own familial descendants, in India called *pirzadas* (literally, "born of a *pir*").

Barakat, that intangible capacity of a saint to wield spiritual power and to attract devotees, was transmitted not only to a saint's descendants, but also to his tomb. These tombs, in India

[8] Ibid., p. 11.

called *dargahs*, generally replaced *khanaqahs* as the physical structures upon which Sufi movements were based. Correspondingly, Sufism now became more a devotional than a mystical movement. Although there was still an inner circle of *murids* or adepts who studied with the *pir* or the *pirzada*, a much larger circle of devotees was now brought into informal association with the order as devotees in the saint-cult. Whereas in its earlier phases of evolution Sufism had been confined to a tiny spiritual elite, it had now broadened to become a popular movement in which the unlettered masses could freely participate. Devotion to some saint, exercised through the veneration of his descendants and his tomb, exerted a powerful appeal among common folk whose goal was not the mystic's goal of spiritual affinity with God, but the simpler one of achieving relief from worldly anxieties or attaining possession of worldly desires. It was mainly through the intercession of the saint that God's help could be secured in attaining these goals. This was perhaps the reason that this phase witnessed the introduction of astrology, magic, belief in talismans and charms, and other forms of superstition as means of preserving the flow of *barakat* from the saint, who occupied the central position in the cult, to the devotee. As Trimingham summed it up, if Sufis in the *khanaqah* phase surrendered to God, and in the *tariqa* phase to a method of discipline, in the *ta'ifa* stage they surrendered to a person, the *barakat*-possessing saint of whose cult they were members.[9]

If we apply Trimingham's three-phase theory to the Sufis of Bijapur we will find that most of them fell into phases two and three. Indeed, for some Sufi groups the transition from the second to the third stage was a clearly observable phenomenon occurring in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Bijapur. But though Trimingham's scheme represents an important contribution to our understanding of the internal changes that occurred within institutional Sufism from the eighth century to the present, it is insufficient to answer the main questions of this study respecting the Sufis' interaction with those social components external to them—the *'ulama*, the court, and the non-Muslim population. Nor is it feasible in this study to take the Sufi order as the unit of analysis. Although affiliation with orders sometimes differentiated Sufis from each other, this was not found to be a consistent variable. Some belonged to two or more orders simultaneously; others

[9] Ibid., pp. 72, 102.

belonged to the same order but interacted in opposite ways with the key elements of their society. Still others belonged to no order at all.

On the other hand, the various social functions performed by Sufis have seemed to provide a far more meaningful way of differentiating the various individuals encompassed in this study. In his examination of the social organization of medieval Middle Eastern cities, Ira Lapidus has distinguished three types of Sufis: those who were well integrated into the social and religious world of the *'ulama*, those who represented a fanatically puritanical element waging personal wars on vice, and, their opposite, those who represented the "low life" of the cities and were, from the viewpoint of the *'ulama*, dangerously unorthodox.[10] This study seeks to extend and elaborate Lapidus's distinctions and to suggest a typology of Bijapur's Sufis based on what appear to have been their dominant roles. For the explicit assumptions of this investigation, implicit in Trimingham's study and absent in the classical approach to Sufi studies, are that Sufis formed an integral part of the social order in which they lived, that society acted on them at least as much as they acted on it, and that an understanding of the socio-historical milieu in which they lived is therefore crucial to our understanding of the Sufis themselves.

The plan of the study is based on this conceptual groundwork and follows a chronological as well as topical organization. This is because social types were not static entities, but seem to have changed and evolved over time along with the context of Bijapur's socio-historical development. Therefore, the broadest organizational principle of the study is chronology—the three parts treat the early, middle, and late periods respectively—while the chapters are topical in organization, most of them being devoted to one or another social type of Sufi. One of the pervading themes of this study is the interaction between the changing social context in which Sufis lived and the changing social functions they performed. It is, however, only by understanding the nature of the historical context and how it changed that we can understand the Sufis' responses to their environment and why these responses, reflected in their social roles, changed over time.

[10] Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 106.

one

ARRIVAL AND SETTLEMENT OF SUFIS

Chapter One

HISTORICAL SETTING: THE BIJAPUR PLATEAU TO THE COMING OF ISLAM

MAHARASHTRA AND KARNATAKA, 1100-1300

Except for its wooded northwestern region where knotted, twisted hills rise to the Western Ghats, the Bijapur plateau is uniformly flat and barren.[1] Three principal rivers, all rising in the Western Ghats and flowing to the east, drain this plateau—in the north the Bhima, in the center the Krishna, and in the south the Tungabhadra—and along their shallow valleys deep black soils permit extensive cultivation.[2] The black soils support the cultivation of cotton, a cash crop that provided the Kingdom of Bijapur with its export textile industry.[3] The main food crop produced is *juwar*, or millet, as rice and wheat are seldom grown in the area. All agriculture on the Bijapur plateau, however, depends upon a short and capricious summer monsoon, resulting

[1] As used in this study, the Bijapur plateau refers to that portion of the western Deccan plateau that had been most persistently administered by the 'Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur (1490-1686). It is bounded on the north by the Balaghat Range, on the west by the Western Ghats, on the south by the Tungabhadra River, and on the east by the 78th meridian, there being no natural barrier between the Kingdom of Bijapur and the neighboring Kingdom of Golconda to the east.

[2] In 1561 a Jesuit priest, writing to his superior in Goa, made the following assessment of the land between Belgaum (50 miles northeast of Goa) and Bijapur city: "Having left Belgaum, we made our way in our journeys through very good lands that spread before the eyes. In places may be found some good streams, extensive areas, much cattle: bulls, cows, buffaloes, sheep and goats; plenty of supplies: corn, jowar, grains, oils, cotton. And the land that yields this, very black and fertile, very flat" (John Correia-Afonso, "Bijapur Four Centuries Ago as Described in a Contemporary Letter," *Indica*, 1, No. 1 [March 1964], pp. 82 f.).

[3] See P. M. Joshi, "Some Notes on the Textile Industry and Trade of the Kingdom of Bijapur," *Proceedings, 7th Indian Historical Congress* (1944), pp. 262-65.

in a most precarious, dry climate. Situated in the "rain shadow" of the Western Ghats whose towering spurs trap most of the rain carried by the southwestern monsoon,[4] the Bijapur plateau averages only 20 to 25 inches of rainfall yearly, and is notorious as one of the most drought-prone regions of India.[5]

The cultural geography of the Bijapur plateau might best be described with reference to what modern geographers have called "core" or "nuclear" areas.[6] These areas, such as coastal Andhra, coastal Tamilnadu, deltaic Bengal or the Delhi Doab, generally exhibit highly developed and relatively stable cultural patterns. These include a fairly persistent political tradition, a nexus of trading routes and commercial markets, a considerable measure of social stratification based on a surplus agricultural base, and perhaps most crucial, a high degree of linguistic unity between all strata of the society. Between such core areas can be found what Bernard Cohn has called "shatter zones," or "the traditional regions through which large numbers of people passed either in military or peaceful invasion. In these areas, which in effect connect the nuclear regions, there is no persistent political tradition. Socially and culturally the area tends to be more of a mosaic than a relative unitary kind of social structure."[7]

With respect to its political heritage, its linguistic distribution, and its religious history over the past seven hundred years, the Bijapur plateau can be designated a shatter zone. From about the thirteenth century two distinct core areas formed on both the northern and southern extremities of the plateau. On the northern edge, from the Bhima River north to the upper Godavari basin,

[4] Stations in the higher altitudes of the Ghats have recorded over 200 inches yearly, while some stations only fifty to one hundred miles away on the lee side record only 20 to 40 inches a year (Raye R. Platt, *India: A Compendium* [New York: American Geographical Society, 1962], p. 24).

[5] See C. D. Deshpande, *Western India, A Regional Geography* (Dharwar, India: Students' Own Book Depot, 1948), p. 111; B. N. Sathyan, ed., *Mysore State Gazetteer, Bijapur District* (Bangalore: Government Press, 1966), pp. 164-66.

[6] See Platt, *India*, pp. 120-26; O. H. K. Spate, *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography* (3rd edn.; London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1967), pp. 175-79.

[7] Cohn, "Regions Subjective and Objective: Their Relation to the Study of Modern Indian History and Society," in Robert I. Crane, ed., *Regions and Regionalism in South Asian Studies: An Exploratory Study* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1967), p. 12.

there arose the nucleus of the Marathi-speaking core region now known as Maharashtra. Similarly, from the Tungabhadra River on the southern edge of the plateau south to the Kaveri River, Kannada-speaking peoples formed the nucleus of what is now called Karnataka.[8] Thus the center of the Bijapur plateau, especially the upper Krishna region including Bijapur city itself, straddled a cultural fault zone between Maharashtra and Karnataka, its inhabitants being fully integrated into neither Marathi nor Kannada culture, but only partially into one or the other.[9]

From the year 973 to 1190 a single Hindu state, the Western Chalukya Empire, had sprawled over the entire western half of the Deccan plateau from the upper Godavari basin down to the upper Kaveri region, thus linking Maharashtra politically with Karnataka. But in the late twelfth century this empire broke up, representing one of the early cases of an Indian political entity crumbling before the forces of linguistic regionalism. For in 1190 a Marathi-speaking family, the Yadava dynasty, delivered a *coup d'état* to the rapidly dissolving Chalukya power by declaring full authority over the northern, Marathi-speaking portion of the empire, and by establishing its capital in the nucleus of what was becoming the Marathi core region, i.e., in Devagiri in the upper Godavari basin.[10] Coinciding with this political development was the rise of vernacular Marathi, which provides us with an early example of the union of language and politics. The earliest known Marathi record (1187)[11] appeared almost simultaneously with the founding of the Yadava dynasty (1190). Moreover, as soon as they had achieved independence from the Chalukyas, the Marathi-speaking Yadavas established their mother tongue as the official

[8] The terms "Maharashtra" and "Karnataka" are used here not in a political sense but in a cultural, or more precisely, linguistic sense: Maharashtra as a primarily Marathi-speaking area, and Karnataka as a primarily Kannada-speaking area. Since the 1956 States Reorganization Act used linguistic boundaries as its criterion of political demarcation, these areas are currently represented by the states of the same names.

[9] This is reflected in the cartographic research of Raye R. Platt. See his map "India: Cultural-Political Core Areas and Boundaries," in Platt, *India*, p. 122.

[10] K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India* (3rd edn.; Madras: John Brown, Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 197-99.

[11] A. S. Altekar, "The Yadavas of Seunadesa," in G. Yazdani, ed., *The Early History of the Deccan* (2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1960), II, p. 571.

language of their dominion.[12] It was during the thirteenth century, too, that this area, specifically the upper Godavari region around Devagiri, produced the earliest poets to employ the Marathi vernacular as a vehicle for expression. Poets such as Jnanadeva (fl. 1290) and Namdev (fl. 1400) are widely acclaimed as among the finest writers in the history of Marathi literature. It is possible to conclude, then, that the widespread popularity of vernacular Marathi poetry and the official acceptance of that language by the government must have gone far in integrating Marathi-speaking peoples living outside the upper Godavari core region into the entity now known as Maharashtra.

Shortly after the Yadava dynasty proclaimed its rule in the North, a Kannada kingdom under the Hoysala dynasty likewise established its rule over the southern, or Kannada-speaking, portion of the former Chalukya Empire.[13] Thus were formed two regional kingdoms in the western Deccan, each claiming sway over, but not extending beyond, a given linguistic area. In this way linguistic frontiers between Maharashtra and Karnataka were given, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, political reenforcement. Since the breakup of the Chalukyas, writes the French anthropologist G. A. Deleury, "unity was never achieved again, Maharashtra and Karnataka being destined to undergo their evolutions separately."[14]

Further distinguishing these two cultural regions was the rise of regional *bhakti* movements, or popular devotional cults, which swept over the Bijapur plateau in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The rise of *bhakti* cults, which first appeared around the sixth century in the Tamil country and from there spread throughout much of the subcontinent, represents a crucial phase in the evolution of Hinduism. Often voicing popular opposition to the impersonal and ritualistic aspect of what has been called "the haughty Vedant creed" monopolized by the priestly Brahmin

[12] G. A. Deleury, *The Cult of Vithoba* (Poona: Deccan College, 1960), p. 9.

[13] As the Yadava capital had been established in the Marathi core region of Devagiri, far to the north of the Bijapur plateau, likewise the Hoysala capital was established far to the south of the Bijapur plateau, in the Kannada core region. This was Dwarasamudra, located about 100 miles west of the modern city of Bangalore.

[14] Deleury, *Vithoba*, p. 31.

caste,[15] *bhakti* devotional cults fostered the growth of an intense theism marked by a fervid devotion to a personal god. The goal of the *bhakta* (devotee), "to attain and enjoy for all time the blissful company of a personal god,"[16] contrasts sharply with the Vedic aim of merging in the unconsciousness of Brahman, or the Absolute.

The ardent theism of *bhakti* cults usually found expression in popular devotional hymns. One such collection of popular hymns, and one of the most influential devotional texts used by various *bhakti* sects since the ninth century, was the *Bhagavata Purana.* Composed around A.D. 850 in the Tamil country, this text reflects a nearly complete break with traditional religious ceremonies based on the Vedas, an absence of any qualification of birth or status for participation in devotional worship, and an identification of the wealthy and learned supporters of the status quo as the prime opponents of *bhakti.*[17] The intensely fervent *bhakti* of the *Bhagavata Purana* focused on the deity Krishna, whose devotees served him "by gazing at the images of Krishna, singing his praises, remembering him in meditation, keeping company with his devotees, touching their bodies, serving them lovingly, hearing them tell the mighty deeds of Krishna, and talking with them about his glory and his love."[18] The object of the *bhakta's* adoration did not always focus on Krishna, as it did in the *Bhagavata Purana*, though certainly the some twenty incarnations of Vishnu, including especially Krishna and Rama, provided the most popular objects of *bhakti* worship.[19]

Through their use of vernacular languages, as opposed to Sanskrit, *bhakti* movements in Maharashtra and Karnataka played important roles in both defining and distinguishing the Marathi

[15] Nicol MacNicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints* (Calcutta: Association Press, 1919), p. 24.

[16] K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Development of Religion in South India* (Madras: Orient Longmans Ltd., 1963), p. 44.

[17] Thomas J. Hopkins, "The Social Teaching of the *Bhagavata Purana*," in Milton B. Singer, ed., *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes* (Honolulu: East West Center Press, 1966), pp. 6, 11, 21.

[18] J. N. Farquhar, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920; reprinted Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), p. 230.

[19] Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, trans. and ed. by Hans Gerth and Don Martindale (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 306.