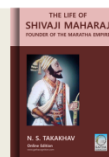




THE LIFE OF SHIVAJI MAHARAJ FOUNDER OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

Homepage: <http://www.gathacognition.com/book/gcb20>
<http://dx.doi.org/10.21523/gcb4>



Chapter 22

Bijapur Wars Renewed, 1673-74

N. S. Takakhav

Professor, Wilson College, Bombay.

Editor

Kiran Jadhav

Published Online

17 March 2018

As related in a former chapter the wars with Bijapur had been concluded by a secret treaty between Shivaji and the chief minister of the Adil Shahi state, by which the latter had bound themselves to pay to Shivaji an annual tribute of three lakhs of rupees. From the conclusion of that treaty up to the date of the operations described in the last chapter the Bijapur government had faithfully paid the tribute as it became due from year to year. But Alii Adil Shaha II in whose reign this treaty was concluded having died in 1673, the sceptre had come into the weak grasp of a minor prince, five years of age, and the actual powers of government were exercised by the regent Khawas Khan. The latter was indifferent to the treaty obligations incurred by his predecessor, Abdul Mahomed. Khawas Khan gave himself the most arrogant airs. The other nobles of the court were gradually estranged from him and the durbar was split into factions. Each leading chief had his Brahman secretaries, and through them Shivaji was kept informed about the latest changes occurring in the state. It did not escape his watchful eye that the dissensions and distractions now reigning at Bijapur gave an excellent opportunity for beginning a new campaign. A great army was assembled at Vishalgad. The Adil Shahi commander, Abdul Karim Bahlol Khan, on the other hand, enlisted the support of the Moguls and prepared for war.

Originally published in 'The Life of Shivaji Maharaj: Founder of the Maratha Empire', 1921. Adopted from the Marathi work by **K. A. Keluskar**.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21523/gcb4.1825>

GATHA COGNITION®

Of the entire Maratha force, fifteen thousand were told off for the recapture of Panhala. The siege had just commenced, when Abdul Karim came down with a large army upon the besiegers. The battle was hotly disputed but in the end victory rested with the Khan, who proceeded to refresh his exhausted army by cantoning it for a short time at Tikota. But Shivaji was immediately on the scene with his relief forces. The Marathas once more charged the enemy and turned the Khan's victory into a complete rout.¹

Fresh from this triumph, Shivaji pressed forward to attack Hubli. This town was a flourishing centre of commerce and its marts were a meeting-ground for merchants of diverse nations. Shivaji was able to pillage it at leisure, without let or hindrance, and is said to have obtained a larger booty here than in any other town. Among others the English factory at Hubli came in for a share of his attention. According to their records they lost seven to eight thousand pagodas. Mr. Aungier, the governor of Bombay, who, as we have seen, maintained friendly relations with Shivaji and avoided to the best of his power giving any offence to the Maratha ruler, made at the next favourable opportunity a demand for indemnification as regards these losses.² In reply Shivaji made answer that the English merchants at Hubli had not been molested by his people, nor had they suffered such losses as were complained of. In support of his contention Shivaji called for the inventories of the booty obtained as compiled by his commanders, and he proved by reference to these that only two hundred pagodas' worth had been taken from the English factory. He undertook to reimburse the company to this extent as also for the losses they had suffered at the sack of Rajapur. While giving these undertakings Shivaji also urged upon the company to re-establish their factory at Rajapur. This request was subsequently complied with, but when Shivaji demanded naval guns for the purposes of his fleet, Aungier declined to comply with Shivaji's wishes, having no desire to provoke the enmity of the Moguls and the Abyssinians. In maintaining these friendly relations with the English and promising them compensation for their losses, Shivaji was guided by a deeper purpose: he was eager to enlist the naval help of the Company in his conflict with the Mogul and Abyssinian fleets. Shivaji did not make any mystery about his motives but frankly proposed to Aungier a concerted attack upon Janjira. If this were undertaken he offered to make up immediately all

-
1. In Modak's chronicle of the Adilshahi state, it is stated that Shivaji executed those of his men who had fled from the field of battle. The *Jedhe Chronology* (page 190) says that Panhala was won by Annaji Datto by tampering with the loyalty of the garrison in March 1673.
 2. Prof. Sarkar quotes *Factory Reports, Surat*, Vol. 87, and refers to correspondence, 3779 and 3800.

the losses that had been sustained by them in his expeditions. But Aungier was too wary to swallow the bait. The Moguls and the Abyssinians were allies. Surat was under the Moguls, and Surat was the largest entrepot of the East India Company's trade in India. It was certainly not to the interest of the company to court open enmity with the Mogul power and an offensive alliance between the English and Shivaji would be a sufficient ground for the expulsion of the British merchants from Surat. Aungier had likewise similar invitations from the Abyssinians against Shivaji himself and had to decline them also on similar grounds. For Bombay was almost entirely surrounded by Shivaji's dominions and it would have been perilous in the extreme to court hostilities with such a neighbour. It was for this reason that Aungier adhered to his policy of strict neutrality. With both parties he behaved with equal friendship and equal indifference. Again and again did the Abyssinians apply to the Bombay government to permit their fleets to enter Bombay and make it the base of their operations. But he sternly set his face against such proposals, allowing neither party the advantage of making use of Bombay harbour for naval purposes. He had however permitted four Mogul warships to sail into the harbour, but on the condition that they must not on any account attempt to disembark. For this impartial neutrality Aungier was in the long run highly respected by both parties.³

Shivaji's high ambition was to bring the western coast under his undisputed authority, and it was in furtherance of this object that his fleets scoured the seas and made new descents upon Karwar, Ankola and other towns. The desh mukhs in the interior were instigated to rebel against the Bijapur commanders, who in many parts were obliged to desert their stations and save themselves by an immediate flight.

To concentrate his efforts on the Bijapur conquests and carry them through to a decisive issue, it was imperative that he should be on peaceful terms with the Great Mogul. With this view Shivaji made conciliatory overtures to Khan Jehan, on the old plan of beseeching the emperor's favour and forgiveness and requesting that the rights of desh mukh all over the south should be conferred upon him and the imperial patronage extended to his enterprise. Shivaji also claimed the mansab promised to his son Sambhaji, and undertook, on the fulfilment of these conditions, to serve the imperial interests truly and loyally at all times. These petitions were forwarded by the Khan to the emperor with a request for favourable consideration. The true inwardness of these negotiations was that Khan Jehan having failed in his design had

3. Factory Records, Surat 87, Original Correspondence, Nos. 3952 and 3870 (Quoted by Prof. Sarkar in his *Shivaji*, pages 347, 445 & 447).

perforce come to a private understanding with Shivaji. He had learned by experience the arduousness of the struggle and the impossibility of forcing the Maratha chief to surrender his conquests. The Mogul armies had greatly suffered in strength and numbers and there was no prospect of fresh contingents being sent by the emperor. In these circumstances the only alternative open to him was to humour Shivaji and ward off his furious onslaughts from his province. Later when Shivaji had launched upon this new war with Bijapur, he maintained a mysterious silence; and it would seem he himself made a suggestion for Shivaji's present approaches to the emperor to obviate personal risks. For the present, therefore, the war had turned its course entirely against Bijapur. Perfect peace reigned all over the south as between the Moguls and the Marathas.

About this time, Mian Saheb, the fouzdar (military governor) of Karwar, declared an open rebellion against Bijapur. Those of his Mahomedan subordinates who refused to be accessories to his plot were forthwith apprehended. The deshmukhs who still held out for their Bijapur sovereign found themselves hard pressed on all sides. The rebel chief became a source of general annoyance to the Portuguese subjects of Goa and to their possessions. He made demands for a supply of guns and ammunition from the English factory at Karwar. On their refusal to grant his request he pillaged the English factory. When the news of these events reached Bijapur, an army of eight thousand was sent down to chastise the recalcitrant fouzdar. Apprised of these proceedings Shivaji resolved to deal a blow while the Adil Shahi state was agitated by these internal convulsions.

The fort of Parali⁴, which was then under the government of Bijapur, was suddenly surprised and captured by the Mavalis. The fate of Parali put the garrison of the neighbouring fort of Satara on the alert and the attempt to surprise it failed. Shivaji was obliged to have recourse to a regular siege. Well provisioned with food and ammunition supplies as it was, the fort held out strenuously for four or five months. But at length it had to surrender and a good deal of booty fell into Shivaji's hands, which was duly transferred to Raigad. Then fell in quick succession into Shivaji's hands the forts of Chandan-Wandan, Pandavagad, Nandgiri, Tattora and others. The towns of Wai, Karhad, Shirol and Kolhapur were his next captures, bringing Shivaji's possessions upto Hookeri Raibag. About October, Shivaji was reported to be engaged in raising an army of twenty thousand. The Moguls, in doubt as to its destination, feared Shivaji might contemplate a fresh invasion of Surat and arranged to strengthen its defences. The Bijapur government, on the other

4. Jedhe Chronology, p. 190.

hand, feared that Shivaji intended to make common cause with their rebel fouzdar at Karwar. The fears of both the parties proved false. A large Maratha army of twenty-five thousand descended the ghats by various defiles, and having plundered Bankapur, presented themselves suddenly before the walls of Phonda which they proceeded to invest. The Bijapur army sent down against the rebels at Karwar was seized with sudden dismay when Shivaji's host presented itself in such close proximity to them. The soldiers lost heart, left Karwar to its fate and retreated up the mountains.

When the affairs of Bijapur were reduced to this state of hopeless confusion and the Maratha hosts were spreading devastation far and wide, the regent Khawas Khan was at last moved to send a large army under Abdul Karim⁵ against Shivaji. Abdul Karim marched with a large force straight upon Panhala and laid siege to that fort. Prataprao Guzar received orders to advance against him. This general proposed to raise the siege of Panhala by a strategic movement without appearing directly with a force of deliverance before the beleaguered fort or engaging the besiegers under its walls. With this plan in view he moved his force straight upon Bijapur and advanced, pillaging and destroying, to the gates of Bijapur itself. With Guzar at the city-walls Khawas Khan was thrown into great consternation. There was no army in the city to meet the invader. It was necessary to recall Abdul Karim from Panhala and raise the siege of that fort. Abdul Karim returned but was intercepted by Prataprao at Umrani on the way between Miraj and Bijapur. The Mahomedan forces were threatened on all sides and subjected to all the rigours of a blockade, foraging and provisioning parties being cut off. No one could leave or straggle away from the Mahomedan camp, without instant fear of being captured and put to the sword. There was at the same time a constant skirmishing in front. The Khan was now in great extremity and, acknowledging his defeat, applied for an armistice. Prataprao permitted him to make his way unmolested to Bijapur. The terms of this truce are not known. Shivaji at any rate was greatly displeased at this act of Prataprao and wrote to him severely censuring his conduct, at which he felt so mortified that out of sheer discontent he led his victorious troops to a most remote and isolated scene of operations, an unnecessary excursion to the Pain Ghat in the Berars. This unprofitable expedition was doubly disadvantageous at that particular time. For Shivaji having put forth all his strength in the siege of Phonda, it was essential to have a reserve force in hand nearer home as a check upon Bijapur, and he had expected Prataprao to fulfil this necessary function. He

5. The Marathi chronicles call this officer sometimes by the name Bahlol Khan or Ballal Khan, which is properly the name of his father, an Afghan follower of Khan Jahan Lodi. He subsequently arrested Khawas Khan and made himself prime minister at Bijapur.

had, therefore, grave reasons to regret these errant and maladroitness of Prataprao.

While Prataprao was thus giving vent to his feelings of discontent and leading his squadrons miles away from the actual scene of the Deccan war, Abdul Karim put together his scattered forces and again advanced towards Panhala. Shivaji was duly informed of the revived offensive of the Bijapur authorities but was hampered by the absence of a suitable general or army to take the field. As to himself he had staked all his resources upon the conquest of Phonda, an enemy town between his dominions old and new, the fall of which would make his Swarajya realms one connected, inter-linked chain, north and south. Abdul Karim was already operating against Panhala, backed by a numerous army, when Prataprao getting intelligence of this new move hastened into the Deccan plains and was drawing up his cavalry for a charge, when a despatch from Shivaji was placed in his hands, couched in severest terms of censure. Shivaji complained of his disobedience to orders. "The very person," wrote Shivaji, "whom you have allowed to escape scot-free from the most hopeless of predicaments has turned round upon us and is now devastating our lands. On what ground could you put faith in such a man? Had he been crushed on the spot, there could have been no storm of his raising." The letter held Prataprao answerable for all this, and concluded with these peremptory words: "Never come into my presence until you have extinguished the army of Bijapur! The high-souled commander was stung to the quick and determined at once to attack the enemy. With the most fearful odds against him he charged the serried ranks of the enemy, paying no heed to the risk he incurred. He discarded his usual methods of attack, – to skirmish and tempt, advance and retire, draw the enemy into a pursuit and turns round and overthrow the pursuers. These tactics which had usually stood him in such good stead he now despised in his sullen rage and thought to redeem his laurels by an impetuous onset upon the enemy. Heavy was the price he paid for this impulsive act! The Marathas broke and were cut to pieces. Prataprao himself was slain in the general mêlée. The death of their leader paralysed the Marathas, and the flight became a rout. Abdul Karim pressed the pursuit with great slaughter, until the remnant of the fugitive army found shelter behind the ramparts of Panhala, the garrison of which opened an effective fire and kept back the pursuers. But the unforeseen was yet to happen. Hansaji Mohite, a commander of five thousand had somehow been left behind with his division. On his coming up and learning the fate of those whom Prataprao had led to the charge, he pushed forward and finding the enemy dispersed carelessly in all the excitement of a reckless pursuit about the approaches of Panhala, he fell unexpectedly upon them at Jessary and changed the whole aspect of the battle. For defeat was turned into victory and the erewhile fugitives became

themselves the pursuers. Thousands of Mahomedans were overtaken and slain.⁶ Such was the battle of Jessary (1674). With a heavy heart Abdul Karim turned his foot-steps towards Bijapur, which he reached not without many impediments to his retreat.

Shivaji was highly gratified with the marvellous bravery of the man who in the hour of darkest disaster had so triumphantly turned the scales against the enemy. He extolled the conduct of Hansaji Mohite, appointed him to the cheif command or sir-nobut, and gave him the title of Hambirrao, by which he is generally known. Two illustrious warriors, whose names were destined to become immortal in the history of Maharashtra, won their spurs in this battle under Hansaji's command. Right valiantly had they fought and done deeds of which tales might be told. The heroes whose sterling worth was first seen and admired in this battle were Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav. They were introduced to Shivaji, who complimented them on their noble prowess and promoted them to higher command. No one mourned the death of Prataprao more than Shivaji himself, as he saw that his stinging words had so much to do with that mental anguish and excitement which had moved him to head a reckless charge and court a hero's death in battle. Shivaji felt he had lost in him one of his bravest and most devoted generals, and had now the melancholy consolation of testifying to his gallant services by making handsome provision for his relations and dependents and marrying his daughter to his second son, Rajaram.

Meanwhile the town of Phonda was undergoing a siege. The town had already been invested for a long time and had so far baffled all attacks. Shivaji was now convinced that there was little wisdom in keeping engaged such a large army for the capture of such an insignificant town and decided to raise the siege, but while doing so, he made a treaty with the subhedar of the fort to the effect that he should not interfere with a force Shivaji intended to station

6. *Vide* Sabhasad 78, 79. The Basatin-i-Salatin is silent about Jessary, but gives a long account of the battle of Umrani. Jedhe chronology (p. 191) says Guzar fell at Nivte. We have followed Sabhasad's version of the event. Prof. Sarkar following the account of Narayan Shenvi, British interpreter at Raigad at Shivaji's coronation shortly afterwards, states that Prataprao Guzar with only six Maratha horsemen rushed upon Bahlol Khan in a narrow passage between two hills and the gallant seven were cut down by the swarming hosts of Bijapur, and that the general who rallied the Marathas and led them to a second attack was not Hansaji Mohite but Anandrao, upon whom, according to this version the title of Hambirrao was conferred. This view is apparently supported by two entries in the Jedhe Chronology, dated February and March 1674, page 191. Narayan Shenvi's letter is dated 4th April 1674 (Factory Records, Surat, Vol. 88). But in a subsequent entry immediately afterwards, the Jedhe Chronology speaks of Hambirrao Mohite as the sir-nobut appointed as such about April 1674.

in its neighbourhood to arrest the free movement of the Bijapur army into the ghats below. As long as they would abide by this condition Shivaji undertook not to molest the fort or the territory within its range. It is said that for the purpose of this siege Shivaji had purchased from the French at Surat a supply of ammunition and eighty cannons and that this war material was brought to Rajapur.⁷ During this campaign Shivaji conquered and brought under his absolute sway the entire sea-coast from Rajapur to Bardesh, and, having arranged for the military occupation of these new conquests, he returned to Raigad. The whole of Shivaji's cavalry cantoned this season at Chiplun owing to a shortage of water and fodder above the ghats occasioned by a scanty rain-fall.

While Shivaji's armies were occupied with the pro-tracted siege of Phonda, the united Abyssinian and Mogul fleets made fresh descents upon Shivaji's Konkan dominions. Many naval encounters took place between Shivaji's fleet and the Abyssinian sea-forces but with little success on Shivaji's side. Many of his war-ships were captured and borne off by the invaders. There were repeated irruptions of the Mahomedan fleets upon the territory of Coorla, and in spite of the protests made by the governor Aungier, these fleets constantly sailed into Bombay harbour and made it the base of their operations against Salsette. They abstained from no species of violence against the inhabitants, plundering, massacring and kidnapping men, women and children to be sold into slavery. Aungier continued vainly to represent to them, that by these rapacious acts, they would bring down upon him and the island of Bombay the vengeful bands of Shivaji. At length an army of three thousand came down from Raigad and, engaging the Abyssinians in a decisive contest, put them to rout. When they were thus beaten and a good many of them put to the sword, they finally weighed anchor and quitted the harbour of Bombay, fearing lest the victorious Marathas might enter the harbour and make a holocaust of their fleets.

7. The ammunition was purchased from the French East India Company founded by Colbert.