



# Digital Preservation of Indian Cultural Heritage:

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## Historical Monuments of Bijapur City

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# Abstract

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Information preservation is one of the most important issues in human history, culture, economics as well as for the development of our civilization [24]. Ensuring long-term access to the digitally stored information poses a significant technological challenge. In this document, the authors make an attempt to bring together material available in digital form on the important monuments of Bijapur with a hope that the reader will gain an understanding of the past glory of Bijapur, earlier called 'Vijayapur' or the 'City of Victory' which served as the capital city for nearly two centuries during the reign of the Adil Shahi dynasty. Bijapur is rich in historical attractions, mainly related to Islamic architecture. It is a medieval walled city well known for the echoing gigantic Golgumbaz, a mausoleum built three and a half centuries ago. It stands today as one of the most significant monuments glorifying the rule of Adil Shahi dynasty. The authors emphasize that, preservation should be looked upon not only as an investment but also a source to make wealth. If cities like Bijapur are taken as case studies and proper investment is made, it is possible to resurrect their glories and attract visitors with a view to educate them and in doing so earn money to sustain the city. It requires effort and money. But more importantly, it needs will of the Government. It's very clear that before we embark on digital preservation strategies and methods, it is obviously necessary to physically preserve our heritage.

# Introduction

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**Introduction:** More than a decade ago, Prof. Ching-chih-Chen's project titled-"Project Emperor-I" [26], a multi-facet R&D project related to the *The First Emperor of China – terracotta warriors and horses*, - an award winning interactive videodisc as well as a multimedia CD, made great news amongst the image archivists, multimedia repository specialists and the library science archiving professionals. This was indeed the first attempt to digitally archive the most significant historical period of China. In fact "The First Emperor of China-archaeological findings is considered as the most significant archaeological find of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the last ten years, this project has grown from a videodisc, then interactive videodisc project to a truly complex and multimedia one. It is a well-compiled image and multimedia repository with well-defined search strategies to pull out information from its database.

Initially several Photo CDs with over several hundreds of digital images were created at 5 different levels of resolutions. Taking advantage of the current optical, digital video, imaging and compression technologies, a digital CD-ROM product has been created on the *The First Emperor of China*. It includes all 5 chapters of the videodisc and companion software, also published by the Voyager Company since 1991. Since digital images and videos are storage hungry, only 320 of the most important pictures have been selected, and 3 photo CDs have been created. These images have now been integrated to the interactive application development of the CD-ROM. In the First Emperor project, for e.g., each object maintains a list of key words and textual descriptions regarding the place of find, current location, estimates, data etc..The user can search the workplace using keywords and textual description to generate a review list which can then be refined by successive searches. Keyword and the textual description to generate a review list which can then be refined by successive searches. Keywords and textual descriptions can also be associated with user added notes or captions.

# Introduction Contd..

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In this small attempt, we try and bring together the glory of Bijapur mainly through its historical monuments. The City of Bijapur well-known for its historical monuments, were built during the Adil Shahi dynasty. During the rule of the Adil Shahis, Bijapur developed into a major township with monuments strewn all over. Actually established by the Chalukyas of Kalyani during the 11-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, the city became popularly known as 'Vijayapura' or the 'City of Victory'. Bijapur served as a capital city and thrived for nearly two centuries during the reign of the Adil Shahis. It challenged the mighty mogul empire and it nearly covered the entire south India. After the decline of the Adil Shahi dynasty the city passed over to Aurangzeb and remained in some. The city of Bijapur is rich in historical monuments mainly related to Islamic architecture.

The main sub-sections of this CD-ROM are: (a) The History of Bijapur, (b) The Historical Monuments of Bijapur, (c) Exquisite Portraits of Bijapur, (d) The Spelling 'Bungle-Bee' of the British, (e) Concluding Remarks, (f) References and (g) Appendix and Acknowledgements. All relevant 'metadata' information related to the monuments and the History of Bijapur have been carefully edited.

The authors are extremely clear in saying that "Information Preservation is one of the most important issues in human history, culture, economics as well as for the development of our Civilization." [24] More so, ensuring long-term access to digitally stored information poses a significant technological challenge. This is because of the dependency of the digital information on its technical environment. Hence, according to Allison Bullock [25], to increase the probability that digital objects will be preserved, organizations need to lay the appropriate groundwork. The best practice would be to adopt a three-part approach: (a) use current standards to create digital objects, (b) monitor standards as they change, (c) migrate to new standards as they are established.



# Introduction Contd..

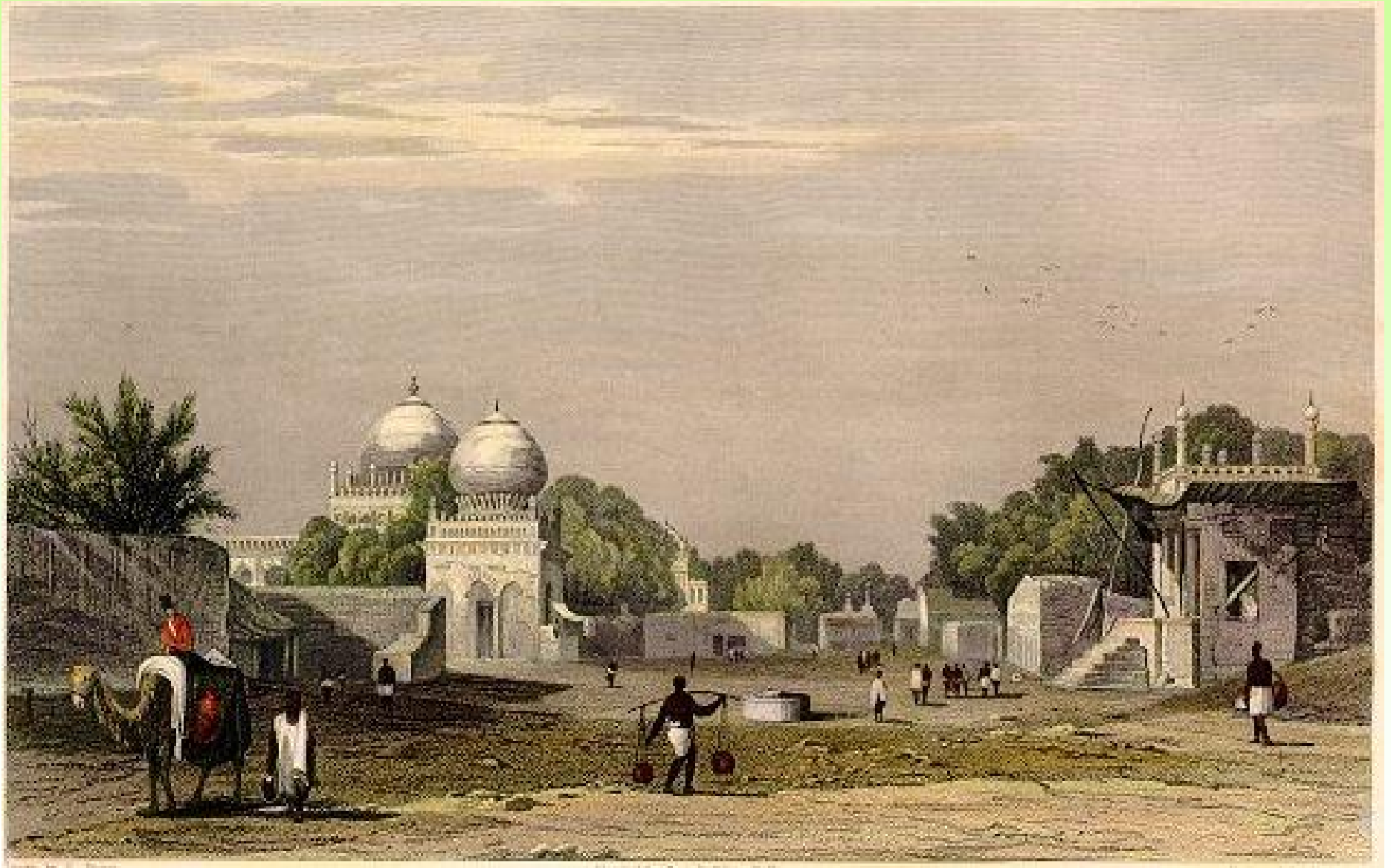
With regard to preservation of our national heritages, it is important that it should be looked upon not only as an investment but also a source to make wealth. If cities like Bijapur are taken as case studies and proper investment is made, it is possible to resurrect their glories and attract visitors with a view to educate them and in doing so earn money to sustain the city. It requires effort and money. But more importantly, it needs will of the Government. Not just the State Government but that of the Centre. It hardly suffices to declare a few monuments as national assets and bring them under the arms of archaeological society of India. Rather, the whole city must be looked upon as a site to preserve, for you to walk through the city even today, there is ample proof that it is so.

Likewise, it is probably time for us to give a serious thought to archiving of NAL's history and eventually develop a complete multimedia database with interactive and querying features. The longer we take to do this, the harder it will get. A tool already in place would go a long way in keeping proper record of our achievements. It would be far easier to keep it updated once created. The future methods will necessarily be digital. The past records and associated information will go away with time, and more importantly, with people who retire after a long service.



# Digital Preservation of Indian Cultural Heritage: Historical Monuments of Bijapur City

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*An artist's impression of Bijapur City in 1868*

# History of Bijapur

1. Fateh Gate
2. Shahapur Gate
3. Zohrapur Gate
4. Makka Gate
5. Alipur Gate
6. Padshahpur Gate
7. Bahmani Gate
8. Gol Gumbaz
9. Jumma Musjid
10. Mehtar Mahal
11. Asar-i Sharif
12. Old Mosque (No.1)
13. Anand Mahal
14. Gagan Mahal
15. Station Church
16. Old Mosque (No.2)
17. Sat Mangli

18. So called Granary
19. Chini Mahal
20. Small Pavilipn
21. Makka Musjid
22. Tomb of Ali Adil Shah II.
23. Post Office
24. The Two Sisters
25. Andu Musjid
26. Ibrahim Roza
27. Sherza Burj
28. Haidar Burj
29. Taj Baoli
30. Supposed Elephant Stable





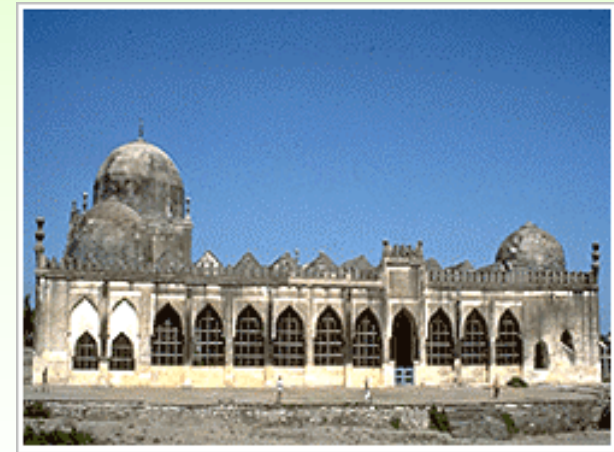
*Battlements of the Old Fort of  
Bijapur, 1950s*



*An Artist's Impression of  
Bijapur, 1706*

**Bijapur**, known earlier as **Vijayapura** (“**City of Victory**”) is located in the northern part of Karnataka state. It is a medieval walled city well known for the echoing gigantic Golgumbaz, a mausoleum built three and a half centuries ago. It stands today as one of the most significant monuments glorifying the rule of Adil Shahi dynasty that challenged mighty Moghul empire for over a century.

**Bijapur** was established in the 10th-11th centuries by the Chalukyas of Kalyani. The city came under Khilji Sultanate in Delhi by late 13th century. In 1347, Bijapur became part of Bahamani Sultanate of Gulbarga.



*In 1428 Gulbarga City became the Provincial Bahamani Capital. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Gulbarga became part of the Bijapur Sultanate*

## ***Bahamani Dynasty***

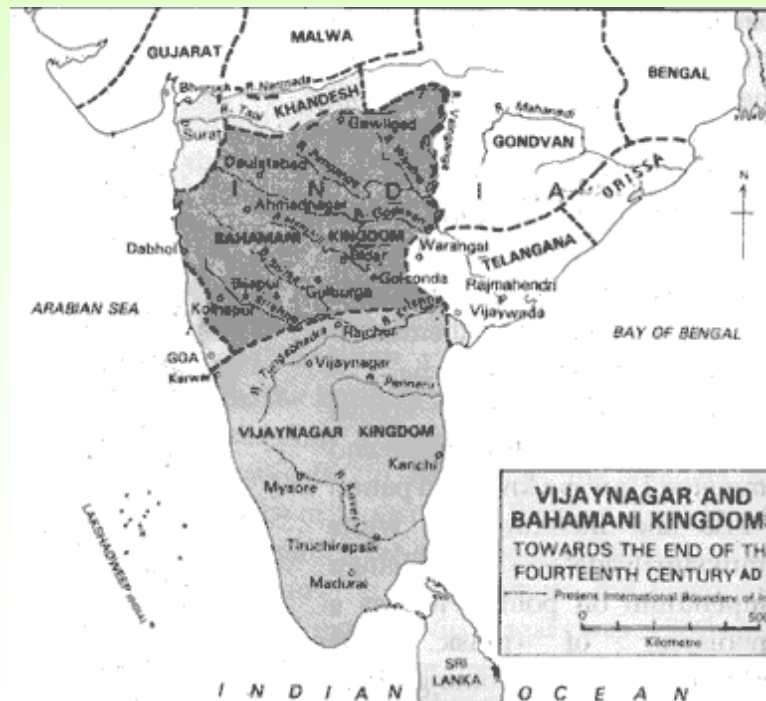
- 1347: Foundation of the kingdom by Alla-ud-din Hasan Gangu
- 1347-1358: Reign of Hasan Bahman Shah
- 1358: Hasan Bahman Shah died
- 1377: Muhammad Shah I died
- 1377-1397: Rule of Muhammad Shah II
- 1397-1422: Reign of Taj-ud-din Firoz Shah
- 1422: Succession of Ahmad Shah
- 1435: Ahmad Shah died
- 1481: Execution of Mahmud Gawan
- 1482: Muhammad Shah III died



*The Bahamani Capital*

By 1518, the **Bahamani sultanate** having lasted for over 190 years, began to lose power. Soon the five provincial governors took over and began ruling as independent Sultans. The five kingdoms and their dynasty names were:

- Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar
- Adil Shahis of Bijapur
- Imad Shahis of Berar
- Barid Shahis of Bidar
- Qutab Shahis of Golokonda



*Vijayanagar and Bahamani Kingdoms*





*The Bijapur Fort*  
([www.indtravel.com/karnata/places.html](http://www.indtravel.com/karnata/places.html) )



*Bijapur City, 1860*  
(*Henry Hinton*)

**Bijapur** became the capital city of the Adil Shahis -- a dynasty which lasted from 1490 to 1680 (or perhaps 1686), that is, for over 190 years. Yusuf Adil Shah was the founder of the dynasty and the city of Bijapur owes much of its greatness to him.

During the rule of the Adil Shahis, Bijapur was developed into a major township with monuments strewn all over. Most of the monuments are in complete ruins today owing to the total neglect. In the recent years only some of the most significant ones have been kept under proper maintenance.

The city consists of three distinct portions: the citadel, the fort and the remains of the city. The citadel, built by Yusuf Adil Shah, a mile in circuit, is of great strength, well built of the most massive materials, and encompassed by a ditch 100 yards wide, formerly supplied with water, but now nearly filled up with rubbish, so that its original depth cannot be discovered. Within the citadel are the remains of Hindu temples, which prove that Bijapur was an important town in pre-Islam times.



*Bijapur Ruins (Hinton, 1860)*

The rule of this dynasty ended in 1686 when the Moghul emperor Auragazeb conquered Bijapur. In 1724 the Nizam of Hyderabad established independence and Bijapur came under his rule. The Maratha Peshwa defeated Nizam of Hyderabad in 1760 and took control of Bijapur. The British defeated the Peshwa in 1818 in the third Anglo-Maratha war in which Bijapur passed into the hands of the British East India Company and was assigned to the Princely state of Satara. In 1848, the territory of Satara along with Bijapur was annexed to Britains Bombay presidency.



*The Map of Bijapur  
(www.mapsofindia.com)*

The present day Bijapur and Bagalkot were part of the district of Kaladagi under the British. In 1885, Bijapur was made the administrative headquarters of the district. Until 1956 when Bijapur was assigned to the then Mysore state, it was part of the Bombay state. In 1997 Bagalkot was split from Bijapur.





*Courtesy: Bijapur Museum*



*Ibrahim Adil Shah-II (1579-1627)  
a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Deccan Painting*

## The 9 Sultans of Bijapur

The following is a brief description of the nine sultans of Bijapur. (cf. "The Mughul Empire", by R. C. Majumdar, Bhartiya Vidhya Bhavan, Bombay, 1974.)

**Yusuf Adil Shahi (1490 – 1510)** He was a son of Murad II of Turkey and was saved by his mother from customary execution of all other sons when the Crown Prince succeeded Murad. He was smuggled into Persia, from where he eventually found service with the Bidar Sultanate. He became Governor of Bijapur later and declared independence. He died in the war against Vijaynagar's emperor Krishnadevaraya.

**Ismail Adil Shahi (1510 – 1534)** On Yusuf's death, his wife – a Maratha princess – defended their young son, Ismail, against a palace coup and established him as the next sultan.

**Mallu Adil Khan (1534 – 1535)** One of the worst of the Adil Shahis, he was addicted to low vices and was unfit to rule. When his excesses became intolerable, his own grandmother had him removed and blinded. He was replaced by his younger brother Ibrahim.



*Portrait of a king of  
Adil Shahi Dynasty*



*A Deccani Courtier, 1600*

## **The 9 Sultans of Bijapur ...**

**Ibrahim Adil Shahi I (1535 –1557)** Ibrahim succeeded his unfit elder brother. He was responsible in replacing Shia faith with Sunni.

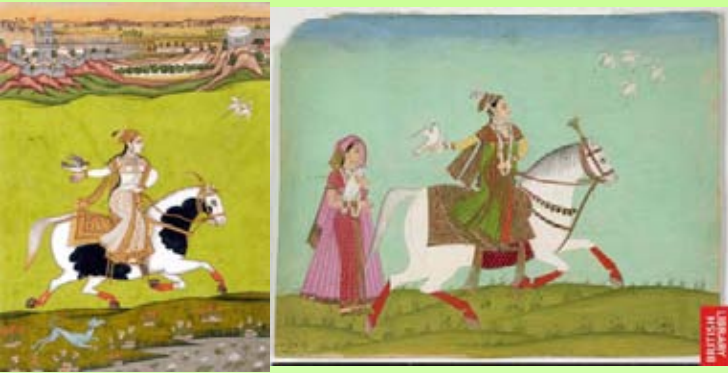
**Ali Adil Shahi I (1557 – 1580)** He was the elder son of Ibrahim. He became king though his father preferred the the younger brother. The younger brother, however, was even more adamant in his faith of Shia Islam than the elder brother. Ali I restored Shia faith upon his coronation.

Ali I was initially an ally of Vijaynagar and even paid a visit where he was received by Ramaraya. When Vijayanagar king attacked Ahmednagar, Ali I led an alliance of the four states against Vijayanagar and defeated the same in the the Battle of Rakkasagi-Tangadagi in Talikoti in 1565.

He then led an alliance against the expanding Portuguese. But he was defeated. He then started expansion in the south, at Vijayanagar's expense. He was very successful in this venture.

Nobles of Ali I designated his nephew Ibrahim II (son of younger brother) as his successor since he had no children. Ali I fell to an assassin at his own court.





*Chand Bibi (1550-1599), also known as Chand Khatun or Chand Sultana, was an Indian woman warrior. She was the wife of Ali Adil Shah-I of the Bijapur Sultanate*

([www.columbia.edu](http://www.columbia.edu))

## The 9 Sultans of Bijapur ...

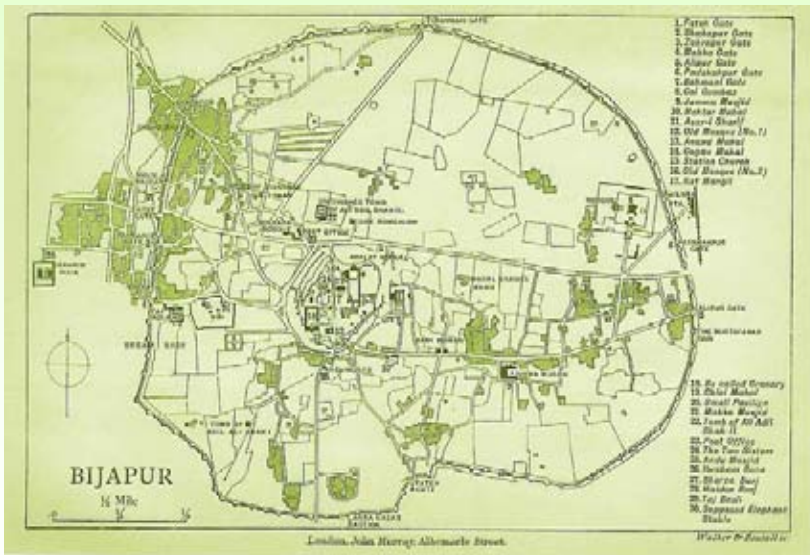
**Ibrahim Adil Shahi II (1579 – 1626)** Ibrahim II ascended the throne at the age of 9. Chand Bibi (wife of Ibrahim I) was his regent.

Ibrahim II was a great patron of the arts and lover/composer of music. He was famous for his religious tolerance and attempts to reconcile different sects of Islam, and Islam and Hinduism. He is known to history not as a warrior, but as an aesthete. He composed poems in praise of Saraswati and Ganapati.

He spoke fluently in Urdu, Kannada, Marathi and Dakhani. He wrote Kitab-E-Navras, a collection of 59 poems and 17 couplets.

## Muhammad Adil Shahi (1627-1657)

Muhammad ascended the throne at the age of sixteen. He was a staunch Sunni ruler. His glorious reign of thirty years witnessed some momentous historical events. During his reign, the kingdom attained its greatest extent, power and magnificence, and his dominion stretched from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. Bijapur attained peace, prosperity, power and dominance under his rule churning out huge revenues.




*A Map of the Old Walled City of Bijapur, Murray's Guide, 1909. Source, e-bay:2005*

## The 9 Sultans of Bijapur ...

The colossal mausoleum of Muhammad Adil Shah, now named Gol Gumbaz depicts even to this day, after a lapse of four centuries, the glory that Muhammad's reign had attained. It is the greatest structural triumphs of Indo-Perso-Ottoman architecture of Adil Shahi period. Mohammad Adil Shahi died on 4 November 1657.

**Ali Adil Shahi II (1657 - 1672)** This Ali II ascended the throne at the age of eighteen and was a weak ruler. With him began the decline of mighty Bijapur kingdom. The territory shrank as the Marathas rose in power and at the same time Shah Jahan betrayed trust on Aurangzeb's insistence. He died in 1672 and was buried in the Bara Kaman.

**Sikandar Adil Shahi (1672 - 1686)** Sikandar was put on the throne when he was just four years old. His period was really one of wazirs and regents. The system was in total disarray and in 1685 Aurangzeb lay seize on Bijapur to realize his life's ambition to annexe it. Aurangzeb conquered Bijapur on 12 September 1686 ending the glorious regime of the Adil Shahi dynasty.



*Gol Gumbaz: an undated  
Photo, early 1900's*



*Gol Gumbaz: A Modern  
Visitor's Photo, Oct. 2007*



The background of the slide is a collage of various historical monuments from Bijapur, India. It features several prominent structures with large domes, intricate carvings, and arches. The color palette is warm and sepia-toned, giving it an aged and historical feel. The text 'Historical Monuments of Bijapur' is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

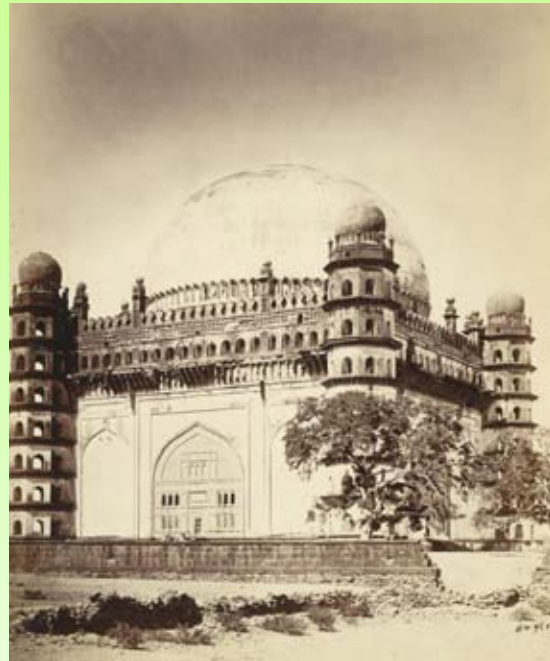
# Historical Monuments of Bijapur

# The Gol Gumbaz (tomb of Sultan Muhammad)





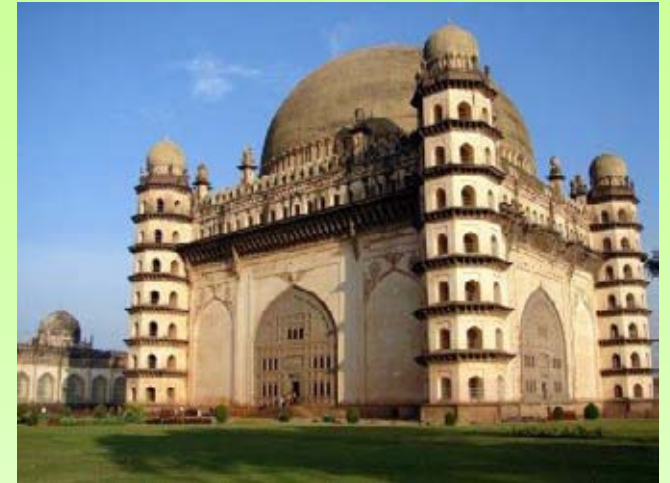
# The Majestic Gol-Gumbaz or the Tomb of Sultan Muhammad Adil Shahi II



*Muhammad Shah's  
Tomb:  
(J Dwyer, 1860)*



*An Undated Photo, early  
1900's*



*Gol Gumbaz: A Modern  
visitor's Photo, Oct. 2007*

**Gol Gumbaz** is the mausoleum of Muhammad Adil Shah II. The tomb was built in 1659 by the famous architect, Yaqut of Dabul. The structure consists of a massive square chamber measuring nearly 50 m on each side and covered by a huge dome 37.9 m in diameter making it the second largest dome in the world (after St. Peter's Basilica in Rome).



*North-East Side of the Gol Gumbuz,  
(Henry Cousens, 1880)*

# The Majestic Gol-Gumbaz or the Tomb of Sultan Muhammad, 1880



*Grand Tomb of Sultan Muhammad Shah, 6<sup>th</sup> King of Bijapur, Photo: Henry Hinton, 1860*

Henry Hinton, a British photographer recorded the grand structure in 1860 or so and described it as follows: "... built on a terrace 200 yards square. Height of tomb externally 198 ft, internally 175. Diameter of dome 124 feet, 4 minarets of 8 storeys, 12 ft broad entered by winding staircases terminating in cupolas. The Gol Gumbaz, a grand mausoleum of Muhammad Adil Shah, though a structural triumph of Deccan architecture, is impressively simple in design, with a hemispherical dome, nearly 44 mts in external diameter, resting on a cubical volume measuring 47.5 mts on each side. The dome is supported internally by eight intersecting arches created by two rotated squares that create interlocking pendentives. A centotaph slab in the floor marks the true grave in the basement, the only instance of this practice in Adil Shahi architecture."

*Gol Gumbaz: A Photo Gravure by (Alfred Nawrath, 1938)*



# The Majestic Gol-Gumbaz or the Tomb of Mohammed Adil Shah II



*Gol Gumbaz:*

*(www.indiatravel.guides.com)*

Being large in size, any sound gets multiply reflected. The acoustics is also very interesting on the whole. The sound is echoed about 10 times. The wall of the dome is probably hollow allowing whispers to be heard across the dome clearly. It is said that the Sultan, Ibrahim Adil Shah and his Queen used to converse in this manner. The sound quality is amazingly good.



*Gol Gumbaz: As seen from Upli Burj*



*Gol Gumbaz: General View from South East, (Cousens, 1880)*



*Gol Gumbaz:*  
*(www.indtravel.com)*

# The Whispering Gallery of the Gol Gumbaz



(<http://diksoochi.blogspot.com/2006/12/trip-to-bijapur-golgumbaz.html>)



The famous **Whispering Gallery** runs around the base of the dome, thirty metres above ground level. Spiral staircases (four of them) lead to it. There are over a hundred high steps. It is said that only one spiral staircase from the minaret leads to the gallery while the rest take you into the walls and one may get lost permanently. It is not clear if this is true. But as of today, only one staircase is open.

At the top, the structure offers breathtaking view of the city. Inside the gallery, four stone benches mark places from where you can hold private conversation across the dome. The clarity of the sound matches that of a modern telephone, though it makes voice somewhat husky.

*A view from the Whispering Gallery*



# Jumma Masjid



*Jumma Masjid: A Photo from the Late 1800*

The construction of Jumma masjid begun by Ali I in 1576 was never finished. Corner buttressing indicates where tall minarets would have risen. It is the largest mosque in the city. The interior is impressive yet very simple. "Its thirty-six bays are roofed with shallow domes on pendentives, the nine central bays covered with a single dome. Eight intersecting arches with intermediate faceted pendentives create an octagonal space over which the dome appears to float, a structural device of considerable ingenuity".

## Jumma Masjid ...



*Jumma Masjid, (Hinton, 1860)*

The main entrance is on the east with rooms on either side. The mosque covers an area of 10,800 sq m and has room for 2250 worshippers. Undoubtedly the largest one for its times. The space for worshippers is marked in black on the polished floor of the mosque. It has an exquisite copy of the **Quran written in gold**. The elaborate entrance gate was built by Aurangzeb.



*Quran Scripted in Gold inside the Jumma Masjid*



# Tomb of Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah (1534-58), also called Ibrahim Rauza

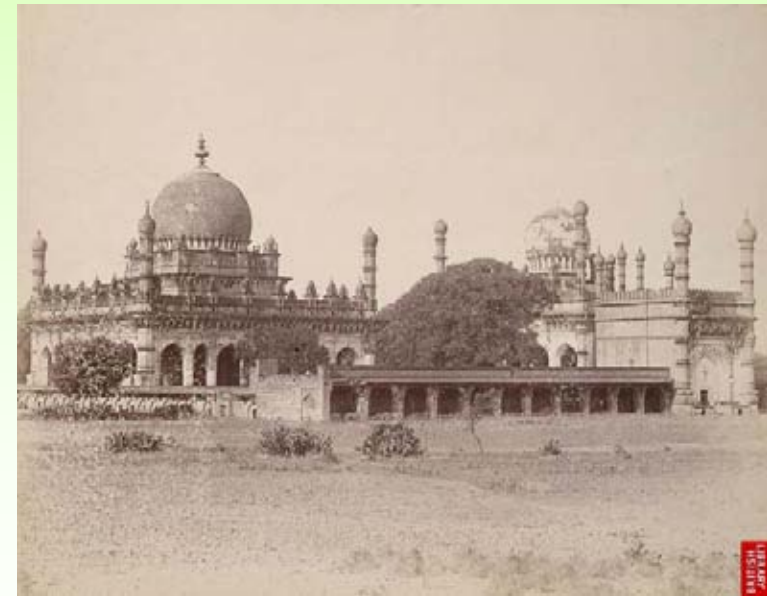


The Ibrahim Rauza, is a beautiful monument built in 1627. It is the mausoleum complex where Ibrahim Adil Shah II is buried with his queen, Taj Sultana. The building is exceptionally conceived and finely decorated. It was designed by a Persian architect, Malik Sandal. The tomb and a mosque are set in a walled garden facing each other over an ornamental pond. There are 24 graceful minarets.

*Ibrahim Rauza: A Photo from the 1860s*



*Front view of the Tomb, (Henry Hard, Cole, 1880s)*



*General view from the North east of the tomb and mosque*

# Tomb of Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah (1534-58), also called Ibrahim Rauza



*General View from the north of the tomb and mosque of Ibrahim Rauza*

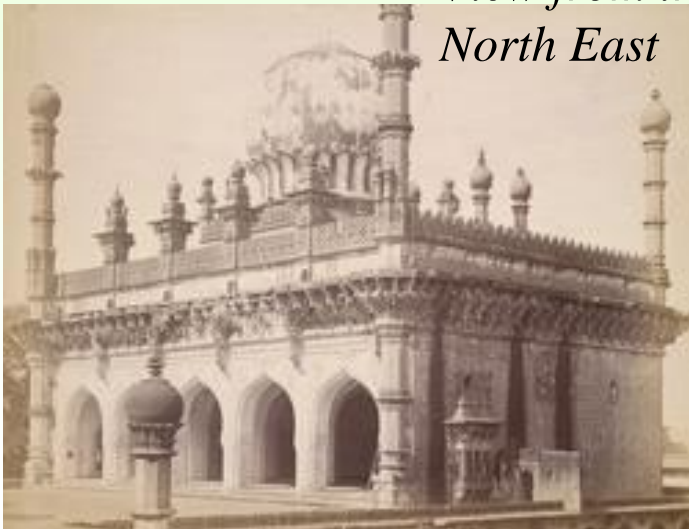
Lyon describes the tomb thus: "Approaching the mausoleum the visitor will at once be struck by the tasteful Colonnade forming a verandah 15 ft broad round the whole edifice. The pavement of this colonnade is slightly elevated, and the ceiling is exquisitely carved with sentences of the Koran, enclosed in compartments and interspersed with wreathes of flowers."



*Close view of the Colonnade*



*Close view of top portion of perforated window*



*View from the North East*

*Close view of the wall of the Ibrahim Rauza Tomb, showing details of carved work*





# The Fort of Adil Shah II



The Bijapur fort was completed by Ali Adil Shah in 1566 and is surrounded by a wall 6 miles in circumference. The wall is from 30 to 50 ft. high, and is strengthened with ninety-six massive bastions of various designs. There are, in addition, ten others at the various gateways. The width is about 25 ft. From bastion to bastion runs a battlemented curtained wall about 10 ft. high. The entire fort is surrounded by a deep moat 30 to 40 ft. broad. The moat is completely dry now. At many places, the walls are made up of huge stones and often use interlocking method which makes the fort very strong. From inside these walls the Bijapur kings bade defiance to all comers.



*Battlements  
of the Old  
Fort,  
Bijapur,  
1950s*

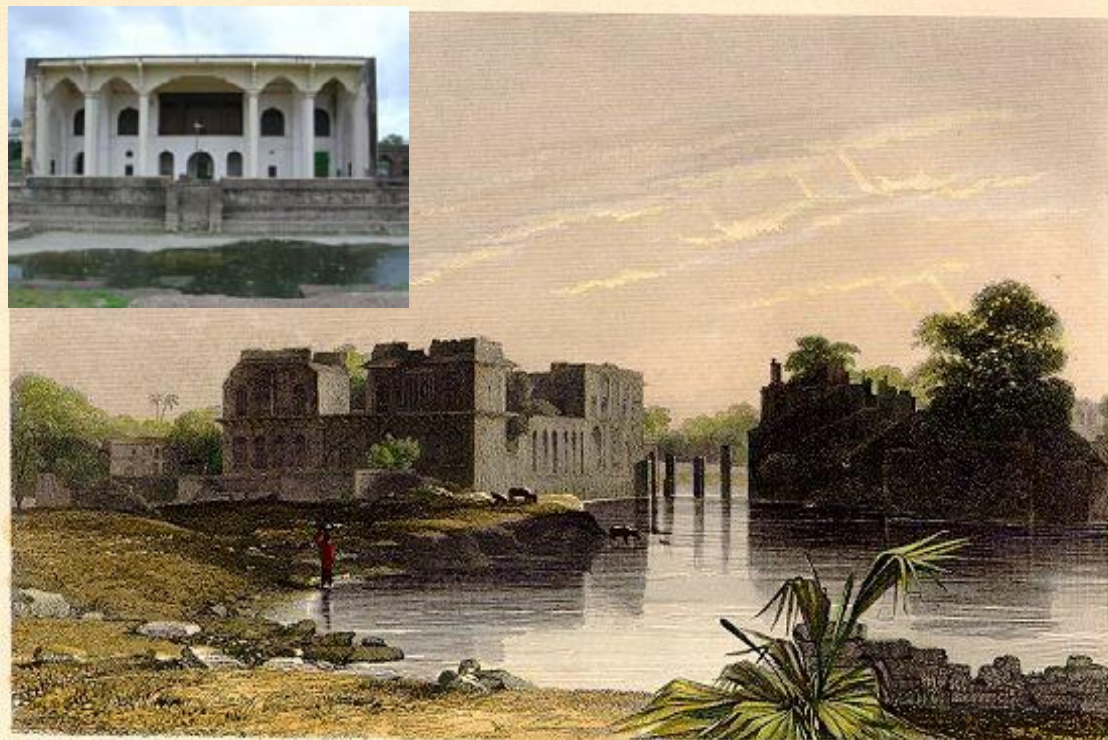
*Part of  
Fort,  
Bijapur*



# The Asar Mahal



*Asar Mahal Bijapur, 1875*



*An artist's impression of Asar Mahal*

The Asar Mahal was built by Mohammed Adil Shah in about 1646, which was used to serve as a Hall of Justice. The building was also used to house hairs from the Prophet's beard which are on display even today. The rooms on the upper storey are decorated with frescoes and the front is graced with a square tank. It is one of the few locations in Bijapur where women are not allowed inside. An annual festival, viz., urs, is held at this place. In front of the open hall there are three tanks. The site is under maintenance of the Archaeological Survey of India.



## Barakaman: The Incomplete Mausoleum of Adil Shah II



**Barakaman**, ie. *Twelve arches*, is a mausoleum of Ali Roza built in 1672. Laid out on a square base, there are twelve graceful arches both row-wise and column-wise. It is an unfinished monument and is said that the plan was to build twelve storeys t all. Legend has it that Ali intended it to subdue Gol gumbaz in its grandeur. The structure is in utt er ruins.

# The Imposing Gagan Mahal



*View of the Gagan Mahal (or) the Durbar Hall, 1875*



*Another View: Main Façade (Henry, Hardy Cole, 1880)*

*Close View of the Main Façade of the Gagan Mahal showing the Great Arch (Henry Cousens, 1880)*

Gagan Mahal means heavenly palace and was built by Ali Adil Shahi I in 1560. It is the assembly or the durbar hall. The structure is extremely simple – a hallmark of Bijapur monuments. It has a main arch flanked by two narrow tall arches. The main arch is 20 metres long and 17 metres high. At the rear there was a huge central hall with a smaller room at each side. The ceiling has collapsed but it seems to have been made of wood and supported an upper floor where the sovereign's private apartments were.



# The Mehtar Mahal



*Another View:  
Main Façade  
(Henry, Hardy  
Cole, 1880)*

*Mehtar Mahal,  
(Henry Hinton ,1860)*



*Mehtar  
Mahal,  
(Henry  
Cole, 1880)*



*Mehtar Mahal, a  
photo by  
(J Dwyer, 1860)*

The Mehtar Mahal or 'Sweeper's Palace' also locally known as the Bhangi Mahal was built in 1620. It is said to have been built by a sweeper to whom Ibrahim Adil Shah gave a huge sum of money on the advice of a soothsayer so that he could recover from leprosy. The monument is a small but elegant gateway covered with ornamental detail and surmounted by two slender minarets leading to the Mehtar Mosque. The flat stone roof is supported by brackets of delicately carved birds and rows of swans.

## The Mehtar Mahal: Close up of front façade and doorway



*Lower Half of Front Façade  
(Henry Cousens, 1880)*



*Close view of Doorway  
(Henry Cousens, 1880)*

The Mehtar mosque also makes use of angled struts. Together with brackets these carry the eaves and the ornate cut-out parapet above. Unusually slender minarets flank the facade of Nau Gumbaz, the only mosque to combine multiple domes and pyramidal vaults.

Built in the Indo-Saracenic style, this is an extremely ornate structure with brackets supporting the balconies and trelliswork so impressive that it recalls the splendour of the Italian Quattrocento.

The structure is virtually abandoned and is in complete ruins. A great pity.



## The Mecca Gate (also known as the Taj Bawdi)

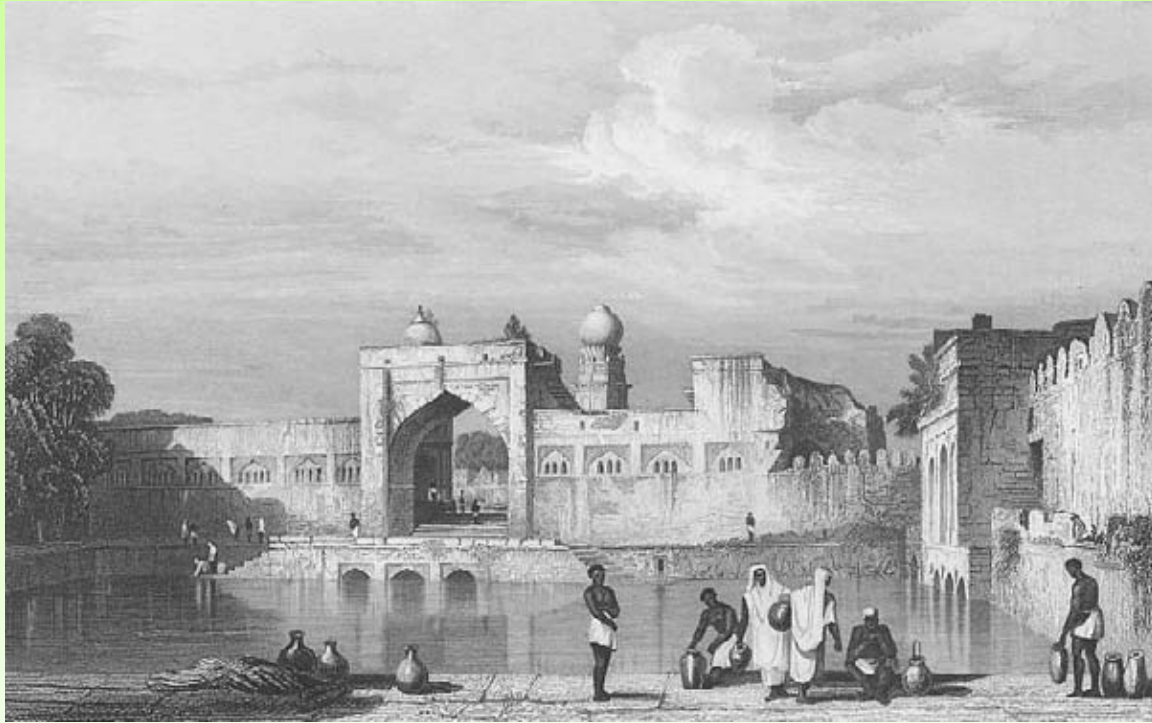


*The 'Taj  
Bawdi' or  
'Crown  
Well':  
(Henry  
Hinton,  
1860)*

*Gateway of the 'Taj Bawdi':  
(Henry Cousens, 1880)*

This is one of the five principal gates of Bijapur, situated to the west of the town. The gate has two massive circular towers with a doorway between, reinforced with spikes and studs and is protected by bastions and covered approaches.

# The Taj Bawdi or the Crown Well Gateway



*The British Called it the “Taj Bowlee”*

The **Taj Bawdi**, consists of large square reservoirs overlooked by arcades and is located just inside the Mecca gate. Flights of steps descending down to the water. The arch of the Taj Bawdi is buttressed by minaret-like towers capped with domical finials. The tank was built by Taj Sultana, wife of Ibrahim II in 1620. Some say Ibrahim built it in her memory.

Until a decade ago, the tank was used by locals to swim and immerse idols during festivals. A massive effort was launched to clean and de-silt the tank about two decades ago from which time the water is used for drinking.



# Chand Bawdi



*Queen Chand Bibi: Ali Adil  
Shah's Wife*



**Chand Bawdi**, is another important tank built by Ali Adil Shah near eastern boundary of Bijapur, when there was large influx of people into Bijapur after the fall of the Vijayanagar empire, and new settlements came up within the walled city raising the need for better infrastructure and providing water supply. This has a storage capacity of 20 million litres. Later it became a model for many other tanks constructed in the city. A grandeur complex came up around it, which was mainly used to house the maintenance staff though members of the royal family occasionally used it for recreation. He named this after his wife "Chand Bibi".

Today the tank is virtually unusable.

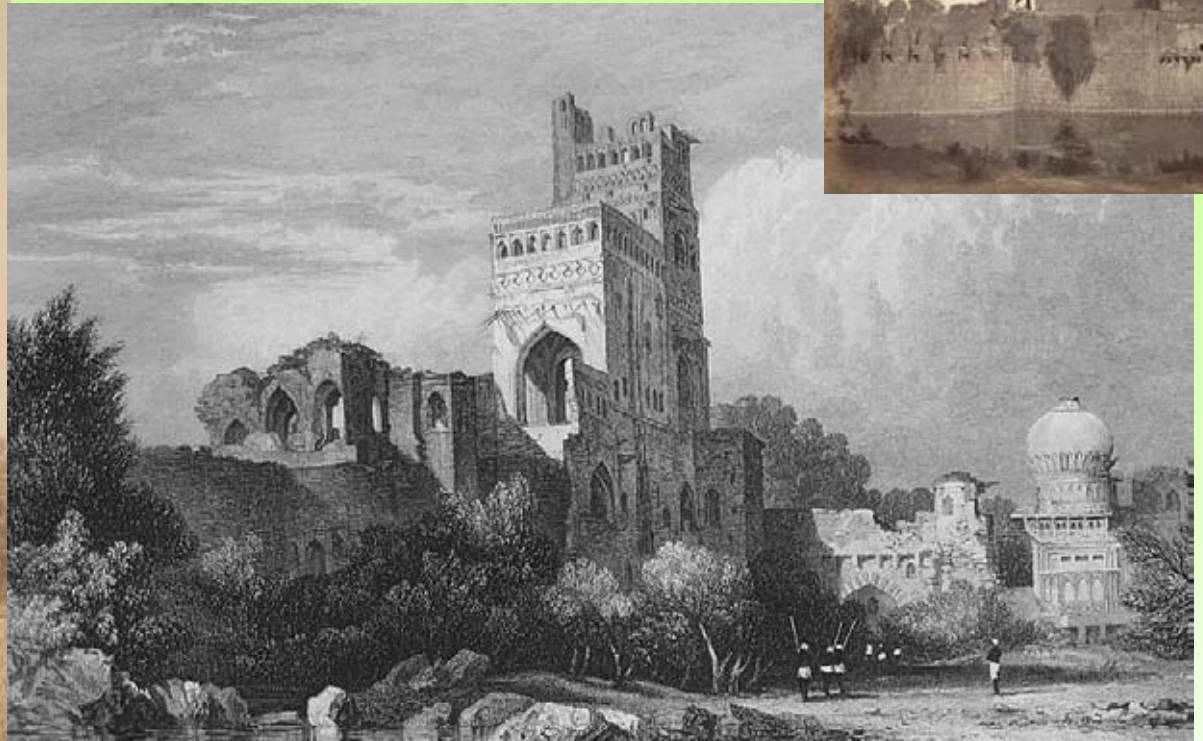


*Chand Bawdi:  
Chand Bibi's Tomb in  
Ahmednagar*

# The Sat Manzili



*View from the North Side of  
the Sat Manzili:  
(Henry Cousens, 1880s)*



*An Artist's impression of the Sat Manzili*

Sat Manzili or the seven-storeyed tower near the Gagan Mahal is now mostly in ruins and is beyond recognition. Originally the structure was a watchtower overlooking the bastions, the moat girdling, and the ramparts of the citadel.



# Malik-I-Maidan: The Great Gun of Bijapur



*Malik-i-Maidan: The Great Gun of Bijapur:  
(Hinton, 1860)*

*Another View...*

The Malik-I-Maidan or Lord of the Battle Plain is a huge gun made from bell metal by Muhammed Bin Hussain Rumi. It is 4.2 metres (14 feet) long with a bore of 70 cm (2feet 4 inches) and was brought to Bijapur as a war trophy in 1632 after it caused havoc at the Battle of Talikoti in 1565. The mouth of the muzzle is in the form of a monster devouring an elephant. The gun is estimated to weigh a about 55 tonnes. To set the gun up upon a specially built high platform, Sherza Burj (Lion Gate), it took the might of 10 elephants, 400 oxen and scores of men. Its outer surface is polished dark green and adorned with inscriptions in Persian and Arabic. One of them attributed to the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, says that he subdued this gun.

# Malik-I-Maidan: The Great Gun of Bijapur...



*View of the  
Malik-I-Maidan  
in the Fort of  
Bijapur*

It is said that after igniting the cannon, the gunner would remain underwater in a tank of water on the platform to avoid the deafening explosion. The cannon remains cool even in strong sunlight and if tapped, tinkles like a bell. In 1854 the cannon was auctioned for Rs. 150 but the sale was cancelled in the end.

It is the largest cannon in the world.



*Another close-up.*



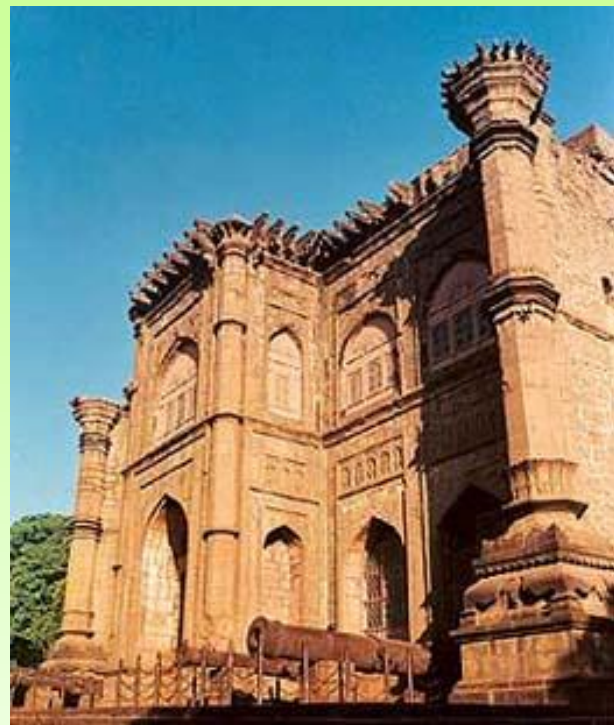
# The Singham Mahal Torway



The ruins at Torway are between four and five miles between the West Gate of the City of Bijapur; and a little more than half a mile within the line of what remains of the great wall. This wall has been mentioned, as having formerly defended a city of greater magnitude, or as having been raised as an outwork to protect the town that now exists. In the account of Bijapur in the Indian Gazetteer, the only notice that is taken of these ruins is contained in the few lines that are here quoted: “About five miles from the western gate is a village called **Torvi**, built on the outskirts of the former city. At this spot there are still to be seen the remains of a royal palace, (the Singham Mahal) of a mosque, and of various erections of less note”. The present name of the village, viz., **Torvi**, is probably a corruption of **Torway**.

*An Artist's impression of the Singham Mahal Torway.*

# The Bijapur Museum



The museum located in the Naqqar Khana (Trumpet House) of the Gol Gumbaz Complex, was originally established as a district museum in 1892. Later on it was taken over to develop as a site museum in 1982. Naqqar Khana is in typical Adil Shahi architectural style and has elevated platforms and tall and loft arches raised over massive piers. The large and good massive showcases introduced by the British officers, themselves have become good examples of antique furniture.

The collection comprises of stone inscriptions of Arabic, Persian, Kannada and Sanskrit languages in different scripts and written in varied calligraphy, Brahminical and Jain sculptures, hero stones, illustrated and plain manuscripts, coins, China wares, wooden carving, carpets, maps, sanads and firmans, miniature paintings, Bidri ware and other house hold articles, datable from 6th to 18th century AD.



The museum has six galleries, three in the ground floor and the rest in upper story. It houses a majority of movable cultural property of the region with a special collection of Adil Shahi art objects.

*The Bijapur Museum at the  
Gol Gumbaz Complex*



## The Citadel



The citadel, built by Yusuf Adil Shah, a mile in circuit, is of great strength, well built of the most massive materials, and encompassed by a ditch 100 yards wide, formerly supplied with water, but now nearly filled up with rubbish, so that its original depth cannot be discovered. Within the citadel are the remains of Hindu temples, which prove that Bijapur was an important town in pre-Mahomedan times.



*Ruined Citadel Walls  
of Bijapur*

# The Upli Burj



*Inscription  
on the Burj  
Wall*

Upli Burj is a huge watch tower rising up to 24 m in height. There are 2 canons atop the tower that measure 9m and 8.5m respectively. The view from the top of the Burj is breath-taking. Some of the most important monuments of Bijapur are visible from here.

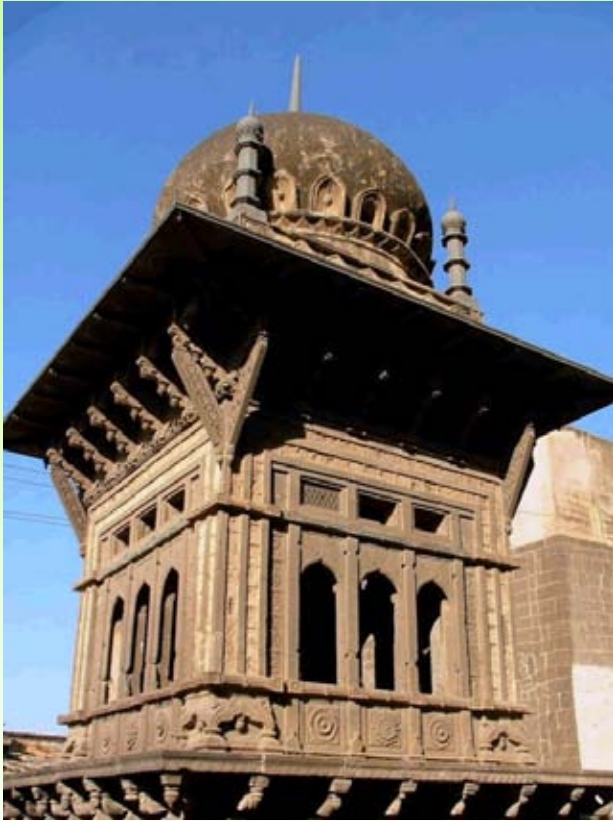
It was built around 1584 by Hyder Khan. Stone steps wind round the tower leading to the top. This is also known as "Hyder Burj".



*Two Huge Canons atop Upli Burj*



## Jal Manzil or Jal Mandir



Jal Mandir, located near the Sath Manzil Cistern, is said to have served as a place of resort to the royal ladies who took bath here. It is a small but exquisite building rising in the centre of a small pond with a typical lotus based dome and four slender minarets.

# Jod Gumbaz: The tombs of Muhammad and Abdul Razzaq Qadiri



Jod Gumbaz, ie., twin domes, are of similar shape and size which house the remains of the commander Khan Muhammad and his spiritual adviser Abdul Razzaq Qadiri.

Both buildings are Octagonal, with tall elegant facades capped with cornices on brackets and corner finials with domical tops. Three-quarter spherical domes have prominent petalled flutings at their base.



# Anand Mahal



Anand Mahal was built by Ibrahim Adil Shah. This is a two-storied palace with an open end platform, reached at both ends by broad flight of steps.

# The Tombs of the Adil Shahi Emperors



*Tombs of grandson of Mohammad Adil Shah, Mohammad's younger wife Arus-Bibi, the sultan himself, his mistress Rambha, his daughter and his senior wife. The photo actually shows the marking of these tombs. The actual tombs are located in cellar directly below.*



The background of the slide is a collage of historical architectural images from Bijapur, India. It features various structures with domes, arches, and intricate carvings, including the Gol Gumbaz and the Ibrahim Adil Shah II's tomb. The images are layered and semi-transparent, creating a rich, textured effect. The overall color palette is warm, with shades of beige, gold, and brown.

# Exquisite Portraits of Bijapur



*Bijapur, 1868: S Prout and T Jeavons*

Prints from "The Indian Empire," London, published about 1858. They are steel engraved prints with recent hand colour."





*VisaPor: View of Bijapur, 1683  
Mallett: 1719. Large scan of this view:  
Alfred Eriksson*



*Visapour, capitale du royaume du Deccan: A View by  
Peter Van der Aa, 1706*



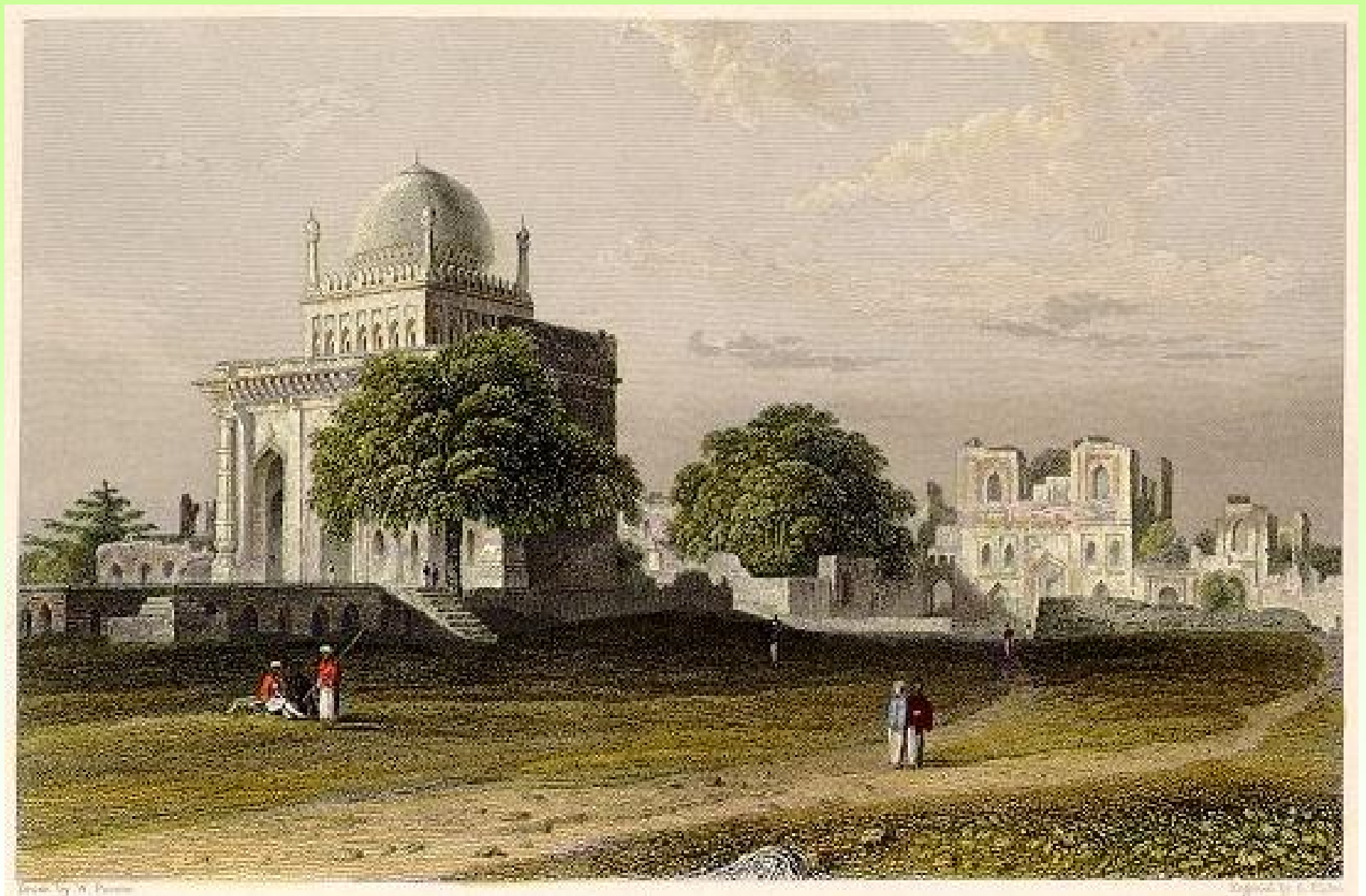
## *All the 9 Adil Shahis Imagined Together*

The nine 'Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur are assembled in a brilliant display of dynastic history. Dynastic memories linger, too, in the depiction of distant seas, for in earlier days the kingdom extended to the Arabian Sea and included Goa. The picture was painted for the young man at the right, Sultan Sikandar, the last ruler of Bijapur, who inherited the throne at the age of four in 1672. Bijapuri pictures are typically lyrical, poetic, even otherworldly, but this relatively late work reflects the influence of Mughal naturalism in the sensitive portraits.



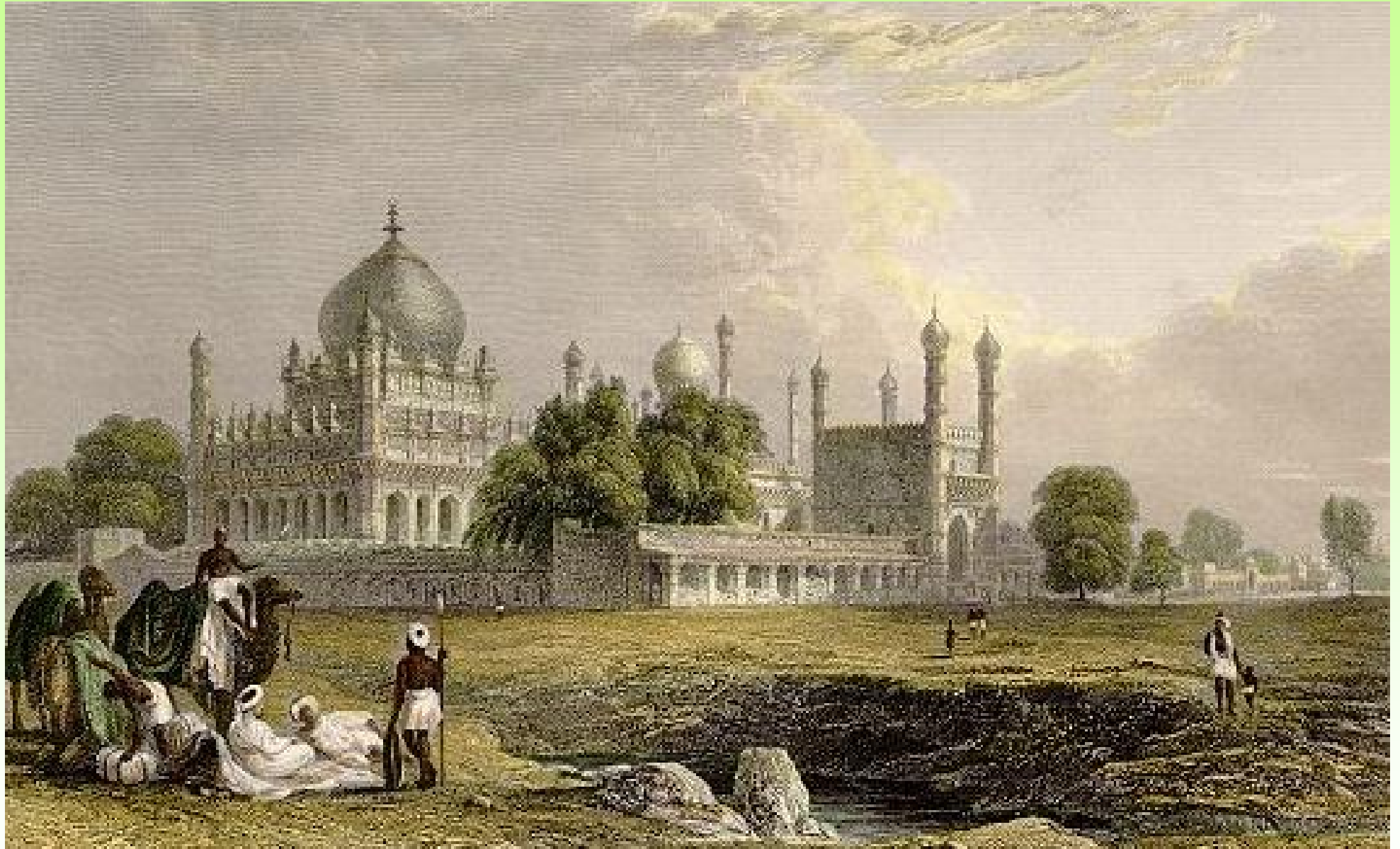


*Asar Mahal: T Boys and G Hamilton*



*Mosque of Mustafa Khan:  
E Finden and W Purser*





*Tomb of Ibrahim Badshah: T Highnam and T Allom*

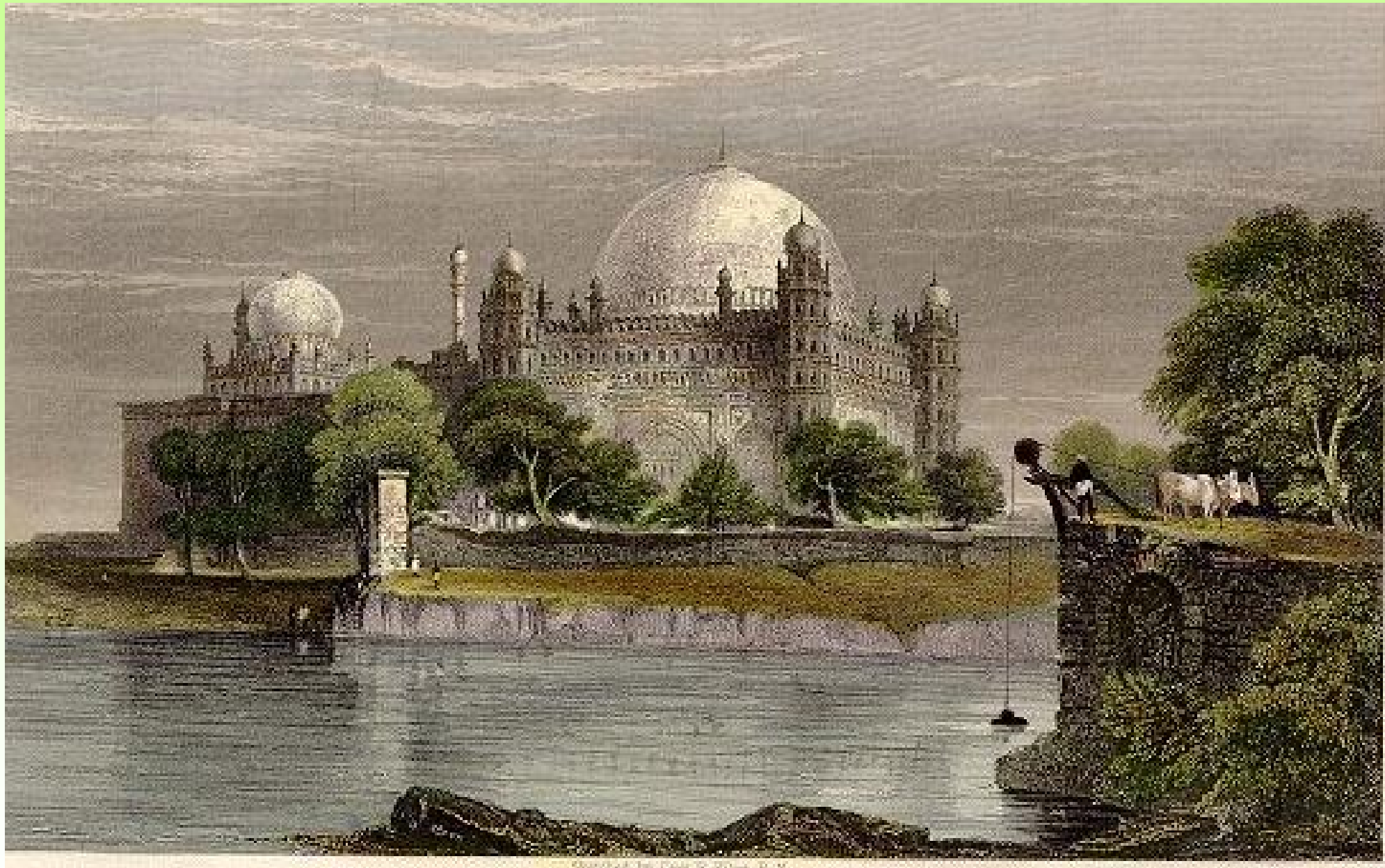


*Singham Mahal Torway:  
D Cox and H Wallis*

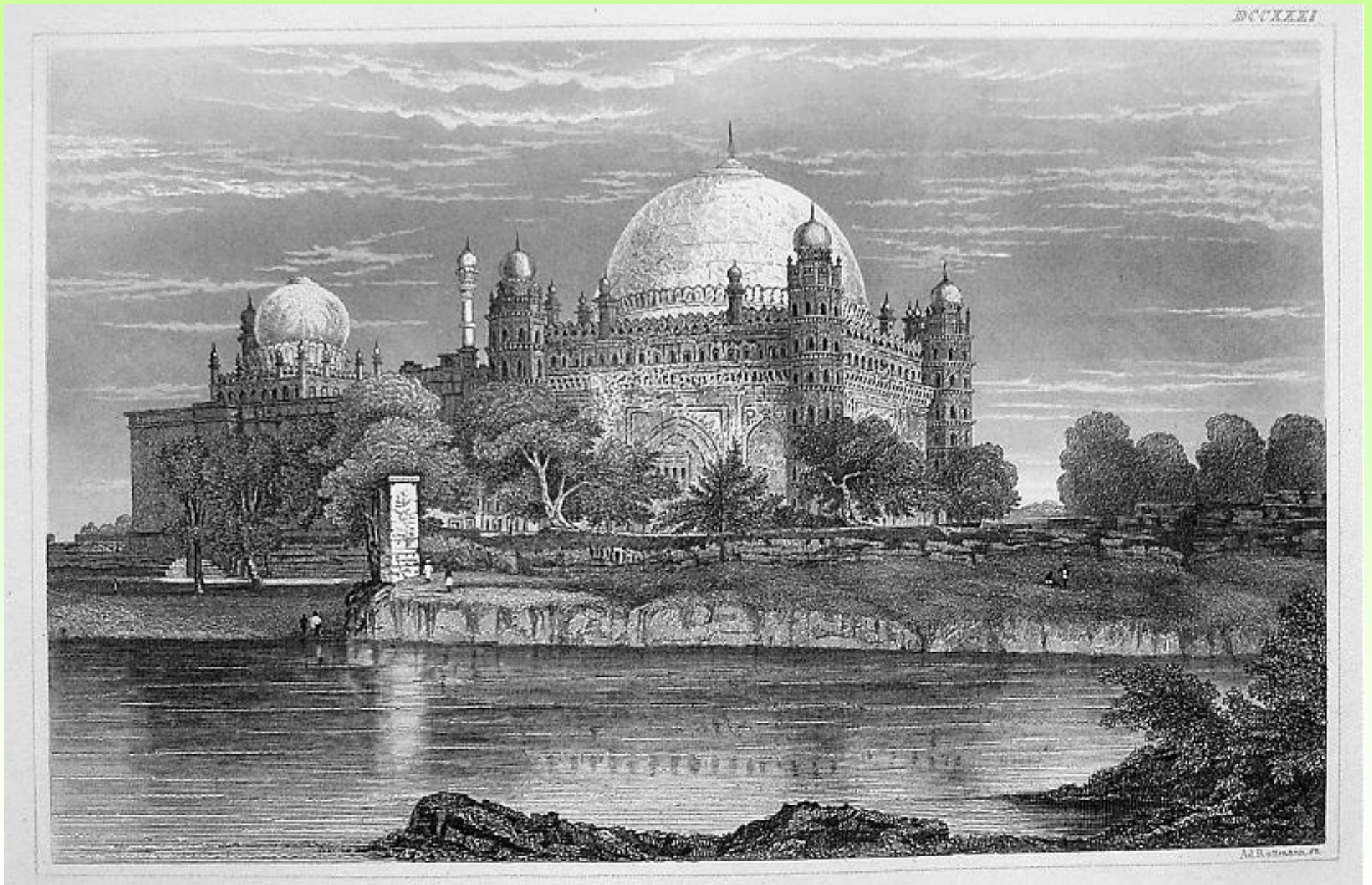


*Singham Mahal Torway:  
D Cox and H Wallis*

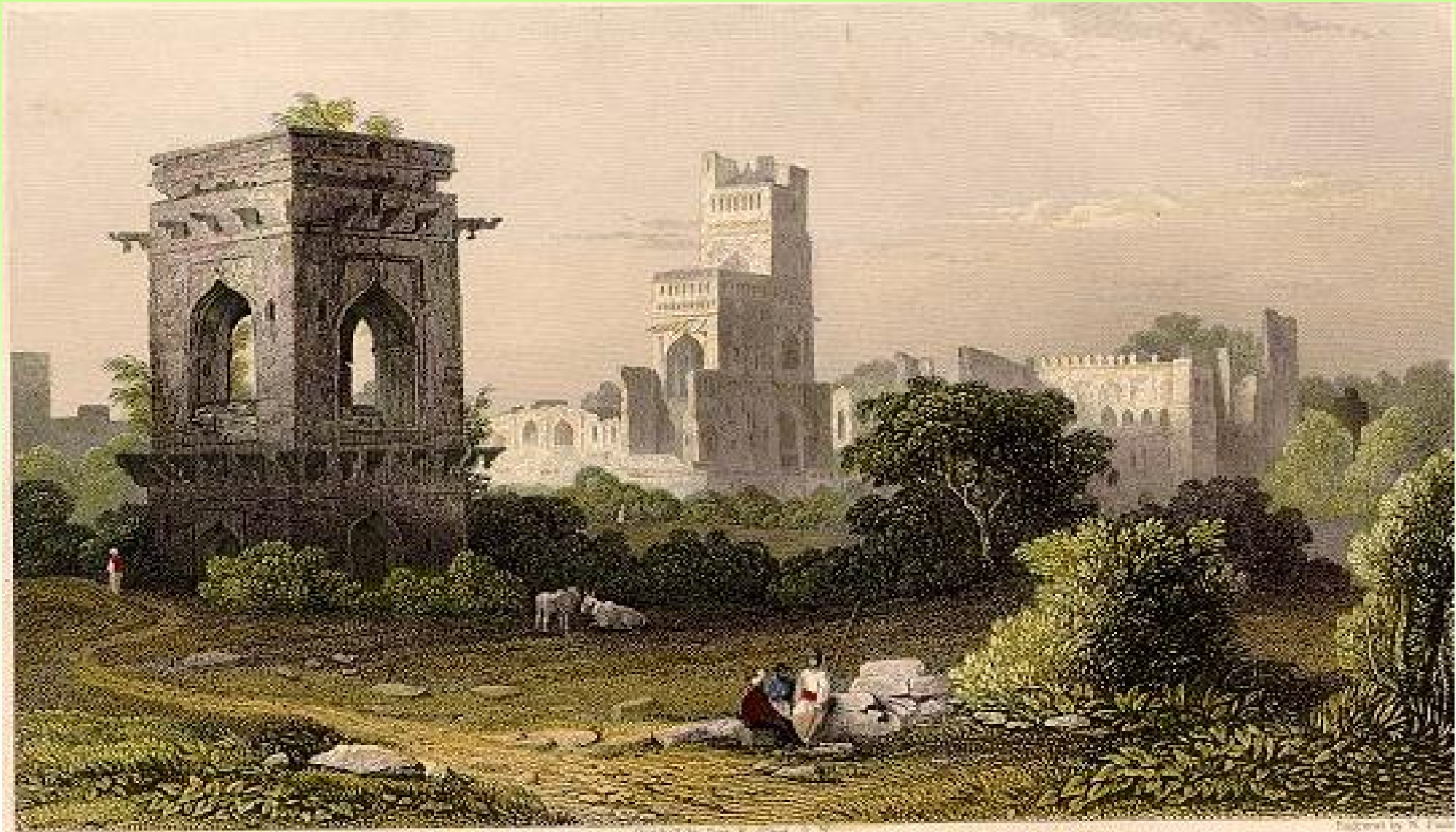




*Sultan Mohamad Adil Shah II's Tomb: D Cox and H Wallis*



*“Sultan Mahomed Shah's tomb, Bejapore,” a steel engraving from Meyer's Universum, 1865*



*Palace of Seven Storeys:  
Capt. Elliot and W. Finden*





*The "Taj Bowlee, Bejapore," a steel engraving  
by S. Prout and J. Redaway, c.1850's*

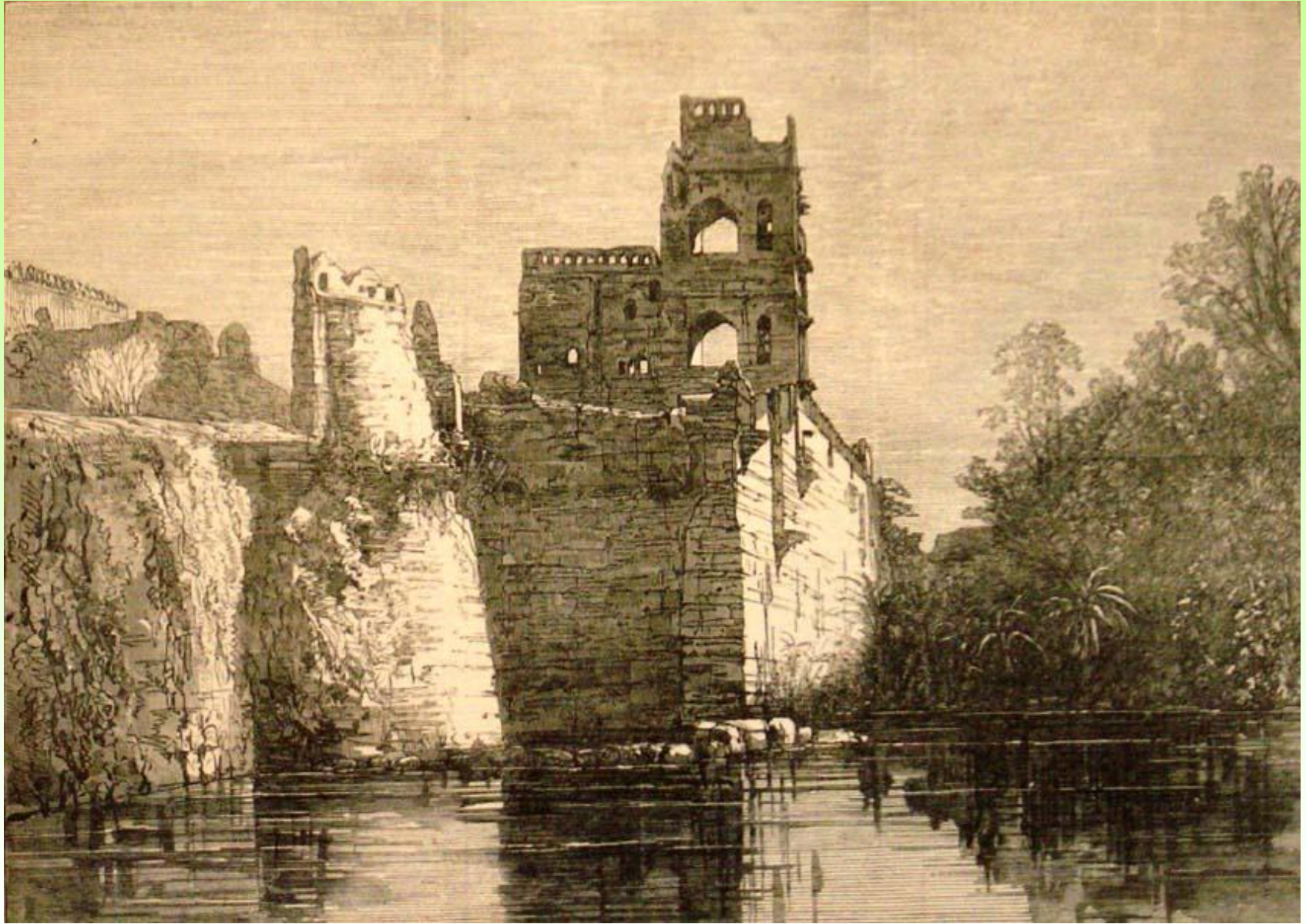
*Source: ebay, Feb. 2002*



*The “Seven Storeyed Palace”, Bejapore’ a steel engraving  
by S. Prout and J. Redaway, c.1850's*

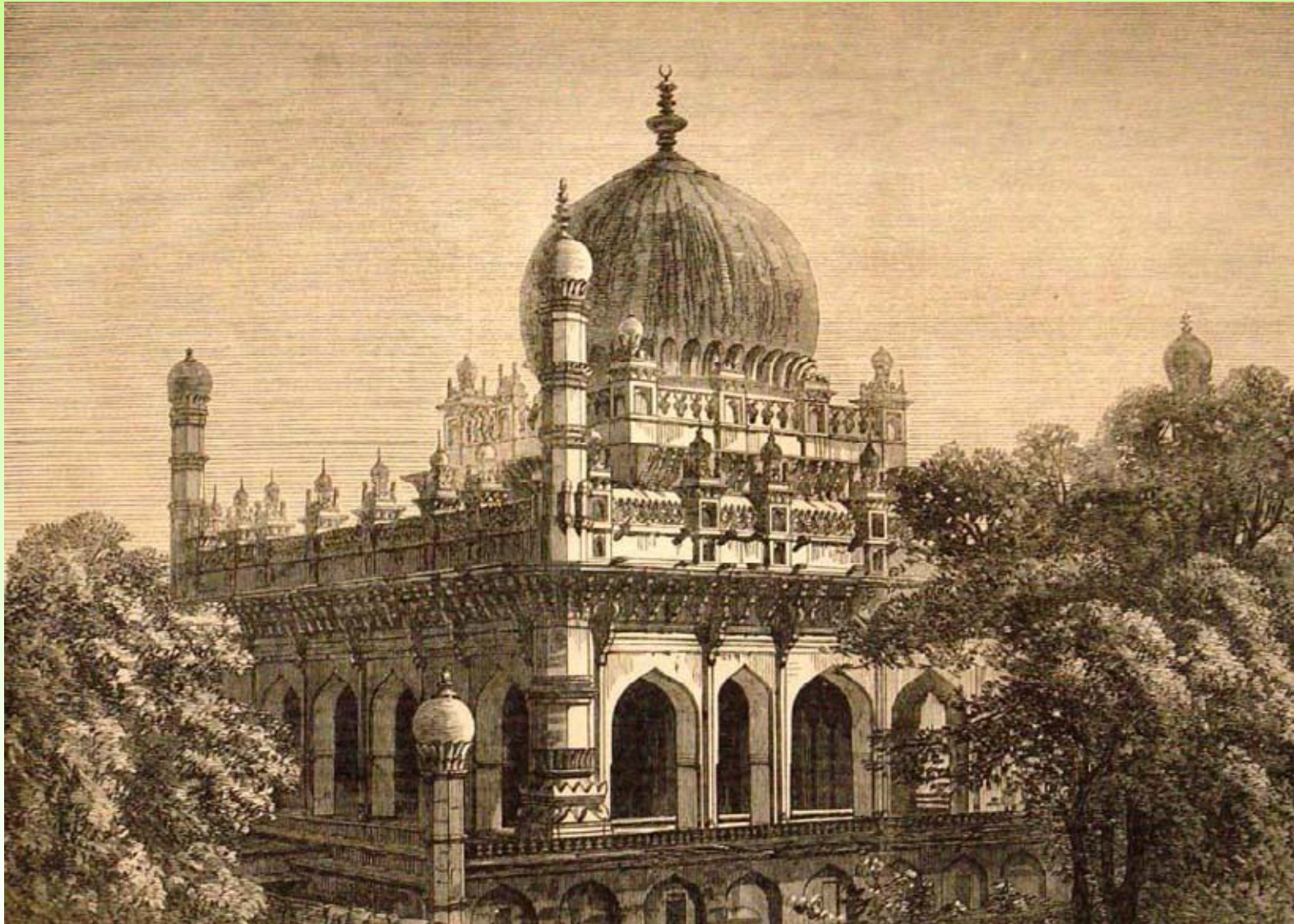
*Source: ebay, Feb. 2002*





*“Palace of Justice, Beejapore”,  
a wood engraving from the Illustrated London News, 1871*





*"Tomb of King Ibrahim at Beejapore, India,"  
a wood engraving from the Illustrated London News, 1871*

*Source: ebay, Sep. 2004*





# The Spelling 'Bungle-Bee' of the British

# The Spelling 'Bungle-Bee' of the British



'Beejapore', 1860



Map of 'Visapor'



Map of 'Beejapore'



'Visapour': royaume capitale du du Deccan: A View by Peter Van der Aa, 1706



'VisaPor': View of Bijapur, 1683 Mallett: 1719. Large scan of this view: Alfred Eriksson



'Seven Storie Palace', Beejapore



# *The Spelling 'Bungle-Bee' of the British*



‘Seven Storie Palace’,  
Beejapore



‘Joomma (Jama)  
Musjid, Beejapore



Assar Mahal ‘Beejapore’



Tomb of ‘Ibrahim Padshah’,  
‘Beejapore’



The ‘Taj Bowlee’, ‘Bejapore’, a steel  
engraving by S Prout and  
J Redaway, C.1850;s, Source: ebay, Feb.  
2002

## Concluding Remarks

**Bijapur served as a capital city and thrived for nearly two centuries during the reign of the Adil Shahis. It challenged the mighty mogul empire and it nearly covered the entire south India. After the decline of the Adil Shahi dynasty the city passed over to Aurangzeb and remained in some limelight for few more years. During the British rule most of the glory of Bijapur was over.**

**Some remark that the city is less frequented by visitors owing to its geographical location and poor connectivity. But it is strange that a city which was chosen as a capital more than four hundred years ago and was centre of action has to receive such explanation for the state it is in today.**

**If you were to walk in the city of Boston, a red trail marked all over the town takes you to many important landmarks. The 'Boston tea-party' is still well preserved. When you reach the town hall, some of the old stories of Boston are enacted on a daily basis not only to entertain the visitors but also to educate them. It is a pity that nothing is done to preserve our own history thanks to the mindless emphasis on non-issues such as software industry and so on.**

**Preservation should be looked upon not only as an investment but also a source to make wealth. If cities like Bijapur are taken as case studies and proper investment is made, it is possible to resurrect their glories and attract visitors with a view to educate them and in doing so earn money to sustain the city. It requires effort and money. But more importantly, it needs will of the Government. Not just the State Government but that of the Centre. It hardly suffices to declare a few monuments as national assets and bring them under the arms of archaeological society of India. Rather, the whole city must be looked upon as a site to preserve, for you to walk through the city even today, there is ample proof that it is so.**

**[Before we embark on digital preservation, it is obviously necessary to physically preserve our heritage.](#)**







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# Appendix and Acknowledgements









# Bijapur: General Information.



## How to Reach Bijapur (Contd...)

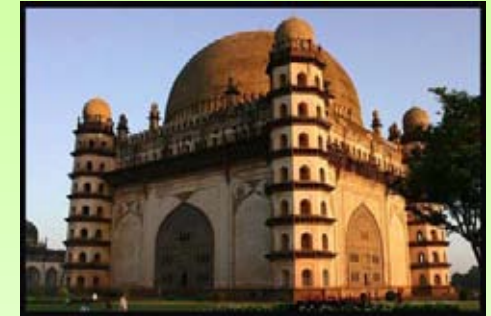
**Rail:** Bijapur is well connected to Bangalore, Mumbai (via Solapur); Hyderabad (via Solapur or Hotgi Jn); Hospet (via Gadag) ; Vasco da Gama (via Hubli and Londa). Bijapur railway station comes under the administrative control of HUBLI division of South Central Railway (SCR) headquartered at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad, AP.

**Road:** Bijapur is well connected to many cities in south and west India.

**Local Transport:** There are local buses, horse-drawn tongas and auto-rickshaws to help you get around. If the weather is right you could think of renting a cycle from one of the stalls in the station area



*The Bijapur Jugglers ( a photogravure  
from a German Art Book, 1928)*



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The authors also thank them whole-heartedly for granting permission to publish this work.





# Thank You

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**keywords :** Digital Archiving, Digital Preservation, Metadata, Cultural Heritage, Monuments, Bijapur City, Bahamani Kingdom, Adil Shahis

**Abstract :**

Information preservation is one of the most important issues in human history, culture, economics as well as for the development of our civilization [24]. Ensuring long-term access to the digitally stored information poses a significant technological challenge. In this document, the authors make an attempt to bring together material available in digital form on the important monuments of Bijapur with a hope that the reader will gain an understanding of the past glory of Bijapur, earlier called 'Vijayapur' or the 'City of Victory' which served as the capital city for nearly two centuries during the reign of the Adil Shahi dynasty. Bijapur is rich in historical attractions, mainly related to Islamic architecture. It is a medieval walled city well known for the echoing gigantic Golgumbaz, a mausoleum built three and a half centuries ago. It stands today as one of the most significant monuments glorifying the rule of Adil Shahi dynasty. The authors emphasize that, preservation should be looked upon not only as an investment but also a source to make wealth. If cities like Bijapur are taken as case studies and proper investment is made, it is possible to resurrect their glories and attract visitors with a view to educate them and in doing so earn money to sustain the city. It requires effort and money. But more importantly, it needs will of the Government. It's very clear that before we embark on digital preservation strategies and methods, it is obviously necessary to physically preserve our heritage.