

From Court to Port

Governing the Household

Traveling by car or train across peninsular India, the portion of the subcontinent surrounded by water on all but one side, reveals many different ecological zones. If we board a train in the Deccan railways system, for instance, from the city of Bijapur, the dry, rugged central plateau gives way to the lush, green eastern slopes of the Sahyadri Mountains or the Western Ghats, which run along the Konkan and Kanara coasts, overlooking the Arabian Sea. Moving in the southeastern direction, we would reach the coastal Coromandel Plains, looking out at the Bay of Bengal. Today, as in centuries past, these varied geographic landscapes were given definitions based on where the traveler began the journey, whether they viewed this vast landform from Hindustan, the Deccan, or the Karnatak.

We move south from the encampments of the Mughal army to the regional capital of Bijapur. From here, we follow one elite Indic Muslim household's circulation to and from the port cities and hinterlands of the Konkan and Kanara coasts of southwestern India. The household at its center has fascinated generations of historians, as more materials have come to light in recent years in Portuguese and Dutch that illuminate its chief's long political career in the sultanate of Bijapur from the 1620s to 1640s, when the regional sultanates nominally accepted imperial overlordship after decades of conflicts and negotiations. The household of Mustafa Khan or Muhammad Amin, a second-generation Iranian, traces its roots to the city of Lar in southern Iran. He served as prime minister, becoming instrumental in bringing the young Muhammad 'Adil Shah to the throne. After a succession struggle, he emerged as the chief negotiator, brokering peace with the Mughals in 1636. One of his daughters married Sultan Muhammad 'Adil Shah of Bijapur in 1633; the wedding was an event celebrated in court chronicles.¹ Although political historians discuss Mustafa Khan's political and diplomatic negotiations in

European sources, a sizable body of literary and documentary materials about him and his household in Persian and Dakkani have not been integrated into the well-rehearsed story of yet another “foreigner” or Iranian émigré with a fickle commitment to defending the Deccan against the Mughals.² The prevailing scholarly concern has been to gauge exactly how foreign premodern Muslims of various ethnic, linguistic, and regional origins in South Asia really were, finding an absolute measure of their distance from something called the local environment.³

The reason for this lacuna, particularly in the periods long before early colonialism and English East India Company rule in the eighteenth century, is the prevailing scholarly paradigm used for writing about India before Europe, particularly in the period under the Mughals—the study of the intersections of the Indic and Islamic/Persianate cultural worlds.⁴ This model has usefully undone the colonial idea of homogenous Muslim conquests over hapless Hindu principalities, enabling the study of syncretic, composite cultures and significantly broadening the range of texts used for writing cultural history.⁵ Recently, however, the model has also been reevaluated and critiqued for overemphasizing the separateness of the Hindu and Muslim worlds and for, at times, leaving out the study of status and caste within and across these social groups. While cultural histories of southern India have made the case for influence between separate Sultanate (i.e., Islamic/Persianate) and post-Vijayanagara *nayaka* (i.e., Indic) polities evident in borrowing courtly tastes, cultural dispositions, and norms of comportment, I argue that we should also look at the circulation, borrowing, and mirroring of social practices—for example, those associated with multilingualism and the parallel roles of Hindu and Muslim office holders in the regional bureaucracy.⁶

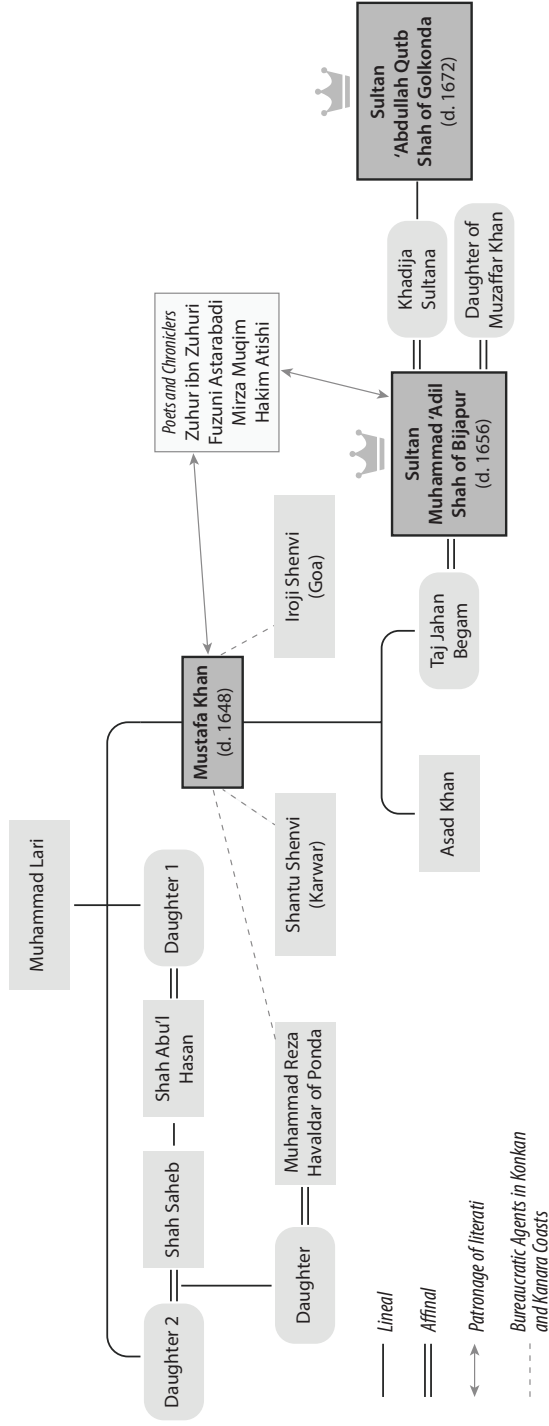
By bridging the cultural and political worlds of a figure like Mustafa Khan, social practices, whether those connected with listening to the rhymes and rhythms of a new literary idiom or those having to do with fighting over the control of a bureaucratic office, enabled families, only a generation or two old, to make a ghar in peninsular India. The operations of Mustafa Khan and his relatives at the intersections of household and multiple monarchical powers reveal two sides to the politics of belonging in peninsular India: the polyvocal literary expression of political ambitions and the consolidation of occupational roles in bureaucratic offices. By participating in the ecology of multilingualism and working the regional administration, this household built a sense of home in a space with many internal sociocultural frontiers.

In the first part of this chapter, I consider vernacular works, where Mustafa Khan is depicted as a user of and listener to multiple languages and I thereby show him as transcending the social-linguistic frontiers of the Deccan (Persianate/Islamic) and the Karnatak (Indic). I examine the *Fathnāma-yi Ikkeri*, a martial work written in masnavī or rhymed couplet form, which depicted a battle between this Muslim warrior chief of the Deccan and the Shaiva Keladi chief, Sivappa Nayak (d. 1660), of Ikkeri and Bednur in the Karnatak, and show how this work

emphasized the cultural differences between these rivals and then collapsed them altogether to signal the Indic Muslim patron's cognition of and command over an intimate enemy. Rather than using the Persian chronicles to mark the cultural separateness of émigré households, I urge us to examine understudied representations of such households in other vernaculars that present alternative practices of creating ghar in peninsular India.

Elite power was not sustained by depicting political aspirations in literary representations alone. In the second part of this chapter, then, I turn to documentary evidence in South Asian and European languages to illustrate the second prong of an émigré household's politics of belonging. Focusing on moments of conflict against kingly authority, I show how centrally appointed bureaucrats, who were members of Mustafa Khan's household, attempted to transform their offices into hereditary appointments, all while mediating relationships with the Portuguese and the Dutch. The second part of my argument here locates elite Muslim formation and place-making practices within the debate about subcaste or *jāti*, South Asia's most salient sociological category, broadly defined as an endogamous social group with lineage and kinship ties. As identified in the book's introduction, histories of caste have yet to fully consider the place of Islam and the role of Muslim familial mobility in the production of *jāti* and state-formation.⁷ Through the household of Mustafa Khan, I show how relatives tried to use their administrative posts as venal offices, which would be associated with certain rights and privileges, thereby establishing a pattern that has been evocatively demonstrated for different Hindu scribal castes across the subcontinent.⁸

Moving beyond heroic depictions of a household chief, I then show how different kinfolk strengthened mechanisms for inheriting and competing for bureaucratic offices, devising new ways of navigating the competitive terrain of politics in peninsular India. By unraveling silences in the literary archive, I analyze competing voices in translated letters from European archives, along with Persian documents that reveal how relatives occupying different bureaucratic offices collided with monarchical authority, seeking to perpetuate their hold over important nodes of trade on the Kanara and Konkan coasts. These centrally appointed positions—such as that of the *havalḍār* (literally meaning custodian or person in charge or governor of a port city, appointed directly by the sultan), which was usually held by Muslim elites—were much more stringently regulated by the monarch, were transferred frequently from one revenue assignment to another, and did not afford the rights and privileges that came with hereditary offices, usually held by upper-caste Hindus at the village level. The conflicts between Mustafa Khan's relatives provide an example of the mirroring of a social practice and *jāti* formation across sectarian lines. In the period of Mughal suzerainty in the Deccan and increased imperial pressure, a wider range of social groups sought to entrench their occupational roles through family mobility across land and sea. In turn, the internal conflicts within this émigré, Muslim, and military-bureaucratic



* Not all households discussed in this book are shown in this chart.

FIGURE 2. The household of Mustafā Khan Lari (d. 1648) of Bijapur. Drawn by Matilde Grimaldi.

household determined the outcomes of the Luso-Dutch conflict on Konkan and Kanara coasts, following a pattern that resonates with earlier studies of the Indian Ocean world.⁹

In what follows, I first present a brief biography and overview of Mustafa Khan and his household, highlighting prominent relatives visible across different archives. After laying out who was in this household and where they journeyed, I then home in on the portrait of Mustafa Khan's political ambitions in the *Fathnāma-yi Ikkeri*, which memorialized his battle with the *nayakas* of Ikkeri and Bednur in the Karnatak. The chapter's final section turns to conflicts among relatives of this family. By comparing correspondence in Persian, Portuguese, and Dutch about these feuds, I show how relatives in key bureaucratic offices mobilized resources to challenge kingly authority and exploited competition between Portuguese Goa and the Dutch East India Company on the coasts of southwestern India.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF MUSTAFA KHAN

Mustafa Khan emerged as a key negotiator when the Deccan sultans accepted Mughal suzerainty in 1636. In the war campaigns that ensued thereafter, first toward the southwestern Kanara and Konkan coasts, his extended kin established strongholds in Belgaum and Bankapur, far from the Mughal headquarters in Burhanpur, Daulatabad, and the regional capital cities of Bijapur and Hyderabad (see map 1). Mustafa Khan was known as “Khan Baba” in Persianate texts; he was called the “Iranian Olivares” by the Portuguese in Goa; and the Dutch observers stationed in the factory at Vengurla called him the “stadthouder van Decan” (state-steward of the Deccan). The role of Mustafa Khan in mediating relations with the Mughals has been substantially evaluated through European-language sources.¹⁰

A powerbroker in Bijapuri politics and in Mughal-Portuguese relations in the southwestern Deccan, Mustafa Khan played a role as kingmaker in the succession crisis of 1627. His extensive contacts in Goa, as well as his network of Shenvi Brahmin agents dispersed along the Konkan and Kanara coasts, are examined by Jorge Flores who notes the following: “his relationship with [Sultan] Muhammad ‘Adil Shah was characterized by frequent ups and downs as the *valido* fell and rose several times.” In contrast with what we may expect of an émigré Iranian, Mustafa Khan was also categorically mistrusted by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan for never fully aligning with the empire.¹¹ In 1635 and 1643, European observers reported how the Bijapur sultan placed Mustafa Khan under house arrest twice at his bases in Belgaum and Bankapur, where he would spend much of the latter part of his career in the 1640s.

Reports from the VOC factory at Vengurla that supplement Portuguese observations of Bijapuri politics relay contradictory information about the family of Mustafa Khan and the fraught place of Sultan Muhammad ‘Adil Shah in it, since

both men made ambiguous promises to the VOC about ousting the Portuguese from the Konkan coast. VOC observers weighed the potential of a Bijapuri attack against the Mughals, for which the sultan wanted to mobilize resources via the factory at Vengurla and redirect them to the Karnatak war front. Pieter Paets, the chief merchant at Vengurla, reported rumors circulating about the Bijapur sultan's intention to raise war against the Great Mughal by calling forth the maximum forces from the Karnatak. The Dutch merchant expressed the concern that if the Mughals entered the equation, all the promises that Bijapur had made to the VOC about retaking the Konkan would not be kept.¹²

Another close interlocuter of Mustafa Khan was one Pieter Andries, a *chirurgijn* or doctor, frequently sent to attend to him and brought information from the prime minister's household dispersed between Belgaum and Bankapur.¹³ Mustafa Khan assured the doctor that he (instead of the sultan) could fulfill the promise to the VOC and send his son, Asad Khan, to take over Goa, with the assistance of thirty to forty thousand men.¹⁴ Much of the correspondence from the factory at Vengurla referring to different members of Mustafa Khan's household does not so much answer the question of what happened as it dwells on the possibility of the Mughals marching farther south and the question of whether or not the elite households of the sultanates would offer assistance to Europeans on the coasts if an imperial attack were to happen.

Marriages within and across different households strengthened Mustafa Khan's position as prime minister of Bijapur. These were not straightforward political alliances, but they likely produced a terrain of familial politics with a constant threat of disunion, a reality that is not explicitly stated in our archives. Mustafa Khan's other important kin included two brothers-in-law, Shah Abu'l Hasan and Shah Saheb, and a man named Muhammad Reza, who was also Shah Saheb's son-in-law and the havaldār of the important city of Ponda, which lay north of Portuguese Goa.¹⁵ Mustafa Khan was therefore Muhammad Reza's *māmā* or maternal uncle-in-law, an affinal tie that carried with it the burden of many obligations, both explicit and implicit. At the same time, as stated earlier, through the marriage of his daughter, Mustafa Khan was also the father-in-law of Sultan Muhammad 'Adil Shah. Although the elite Muslim daughters and sisters who made these relationships possible are invisible in the archives (except for faint glimpses of festive Persianate texts commemorating conjugal ties discussed in the next chapter), we may surmise that the bonds forged through these marriages were fragile.

In the absence of a consanguine agnatic male ancestor—the maternal uncle—a figure long reviled and represented in South Asian literary traditions (best illustrated in the cunning characters of Shakuni *māmā* and the tyrannical Kans *māmā* from the epic *Mahabharata*),¹⁶ occupied the fraught role involved in stepping in as the patriarch and making major decisions, such as marrying off his sister's daughters into other households, which often meant exercising control over extended kin and controlling and allocating the household's resources. One key

figure was Muhammad Reza, who had married the daughter of Mustafa Khan's sister. He held the office of the havalḍār or governor of Ponda, a bureaucratic position responsible for collecting customs on imported war supplies, controlling the movement of everyday goods into the capital city, and allocating resources to the Karnatak war front. The governor of Ponda was in a position to demand more not only from his powerful maternal uncle-in-law, Mustafa Khan, but also from his cobrother-in-law, the king Muhammad 'Adil Shah, to secure his office's autonomy. The unsaid affective hierarchies governing these familial ties and the elite women who were integral to them, although they are silent in the archive, shaped a volatile political terrain. As this chapter's final section will show, Mustafa Khan was, in some ways, struggling to exercise authority over his multiple feuding *dāmād* (sons-in-law), a son-in-law through his daughter (the king, Muhammad 'Adil Shah), and a nephew-in-law married to his sister's daughter (the port city bureaucrat, Muhammad Reza).

Finally, the trajectory of Mustafa Khan's career cannot be adequately understood without evaluating how his household participated in peninsular India's ecology of multilingualism. The household chief's movement beyond the regional capital city of Bijapur into the southwestern Karnatak in the 1640s coincided with an expansion of his cultural patronage. Mustafa Khan presided over a multiethnic and multilingual literary circuit, which produced texts not just in Persian but also in the panregional literary idiom, Dakḡani. Mustafa Khan's literary circuit included Iranian émigré poets and court chroniclers who wrote in Persian, as well as lesser-known poets who eulogized him in the heroic mode in the more widely recognized Dakḡani. To make sense of how this émigré household participated in multilingualism, in the next section we turn to the words of one of these poets, Mirza Muqim, who traveled south beyond the court and capital city, accompanying his itinerant patron's armies for a campaign at the fort of Ikkeri in 1644.

A PATRON OF MANY TONGUES

The rich scholarly conversation about how literary expression in multiple languages shaped the politics of belonging in premodern South Asia resonates with our case study, illuminating why it matters to study a figure like Mustafa Khan in languages beyond Persian.¹⁷ Before turning to the text at hand, Mirza Muqim's *Fathnāma-yi Ikkeri*, this debate's broad arguments are worth reiterating here.

Literary portraits of Self versus Other in South Asia's regional vernaculars have shown the complex and layered meanings of representations about political violence and conflict, particularly when they are coded through the tropes and languages of religious, ethnic, and linguistic difference.¹⁸ In a different context, Ramya Sreenivasan argued that multilingual patronage across genres addressed a range of audiences, expressing degrees of vassalage between the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar and Raja Man Singh of Amber.¹⁹ Similarly, in the context

of discussing fifteenth-century Gujarat, Aparna Kapadia has shown how polyphonic heroic verse, combining cosmopolitan Sanskrit with panregional Dīṃgāl, composed for a small Rajput chieftain, Rānmāl of Idar, in the hinterlands of western India, spoke to the universal ideals of Indic kingship, on the one hand, and the regional context of competing warrior lineages, on the other. The images in *Fathnāma-yi Ikkeri*'s of an aspiring warrior patron, Khan Baba, with a household dispersed between coast and country, very much echo the tropes of martial prowess elucidated for the *Rānmallachanda*. The poet Mirza Muqīm constructed images of gore and blood on the battlefield, used political insults and ethnography to apprehend a familiar rival, and finally resolved a military conflict by moving between lowly Dakkani and high Persian to address his patron's multiple aspirations. As Kapadia notes, the portraits in such uncanonized texts do not necessarily affirm an inclusive nature of the terms of political engagement. A closer and more meticulous appraisal of the cultural and cosmic traits of one's rivals often entailed an assertion of sectarian and religious difference.²⁰

In peninsular India, as discussed in this book's introduction, historians often link the problem of multilingualism to the question of ethnicity and something called local identity. Some studies emphasize the idea that Muslims of Iranian stock in southern India only associated with Persian while the literary idiom of Dakkani was used only by Muslims born in peninsular India.²¹ These conclusions partly stem from the tendency to rely on Persian court chronicles in a space where the sociological base of this language was admittedly very small—but one of many spoken and written tongues with multiple textual traditions.²² Moving beyond Persian, still others have made the case for disassociating language with ethnicity and religion altogether—for instance, by exploring Telugu poets who eulogized Persian-speaking patrons.²³

In such a multilingual environment, the choice to depict Khan Baba in the panregional literary idiom of Dakkani was by no means an anomaly or an extraordinary endeavor. Contemporaries who followed and described Khan Baba's troubling second house arrest by Sultan Muḥammad 'Adil Shāh in 1643 were all part of a wider circuit of literati taking sides for and against this household chief and his often-sidelined son-in-law, the king. Mirza Muqīm's composition, *Fathnāma-yi Ikkeri*, complements the narrative projected by Khan Baba's Persian chronicler friends, such as Zuhur ibn Zuhuri and Fuzuni Astarabadi, who saw the episode of his arrest as an example of erroneous judgment by the sultan and an instance of a trying time that tested their patron's endurance.²⁴ It should come as no surprise, then, that this patron chose two tongues to capture his political ambitions, not just in Persian but in Dakkani, that the latter of which competed for the same patronage circuits as Persian.²⁵

Let us turn now to the broad features of the work at hand, *Fathnāma-yi Ikkeri*. In terms of its overall structure, this narrative poem is divided into seven sections, each with a heading in Persian followed by a narration in Dakkani. Its plot follows

the stages of war-making and conquest—from the first news of trouble on the frontier to the preparations and planning for battle, a description of war-making, and, finally, diplomacy and the moment of negotiating peace with the enemy.

The scenes include various dramatizations of a historical event. For instance, the poet versifies multiple conversations of a pensive sultan holding court with his advisors, pivoting to the moment when he turns to his prime minister and father-in-law Mustafa Khan's wise counsel about how to resolve Sivappa Nayak's revolt. Then come the names and titles of officials and heads of other prominent households who accompany the hero on his campaign. Mustafa Khan's household and his army then make a treacherous journey beyond the court in the Deccan into the unfamiliar wilderness and formidable forts of the Karnatak; this is followed by descriptions of the ethnicities of his troops who were of varied lineages, hailed from different lands, and spoke many languages. Emulating the tone of reportage also common in chronicles, Mirza Muqim dramatizes the exchange of letters and ambassadors between the hero, Mustafa Khan, and his enemy, Sivappa Nayak, who begs for mercy and forgiveness and in the poem's closing scene, submitting at the end of the siege of Ikkeri. As a result, the sultan expresses his deep gratitude to Mustafa Khan by presenting him with honors.

More than in contemporary Persian chronicles, in this poem the figure of the sultan serves as a foil to its hero, Mustafa Khan. The king appears only briefly in the beginning and the end, in both scenes to praise, promote, and express gratitude toward the hero. The purpose of such heroic depictions was not merely propaganda on the patron's behalf or some tool to legitimize him.²⁶ Mirza Muqim portrays Mustafa Khan in this text foremost as a user—listener and speaker—of kindred competitive tongues, Persian and Dakkanī. And yet, this portrait is less about citing the patron's stake in the vernacular. Instead, the shifting use of each language within the poem signals the narrative arch of political incorporation and a politics of linguistic code-switching at the crossroads of two geographic subregions, the Deccan and the Karnatak. Going beyond conventional binaries of court chronicles, Mirza Muqim sketches a Mustafa Khan in the opening act of military conflict, hurling obscene Dakkanī insults at the enemy. And moments later, in the closing act of negotiating peace, the same prime minister delivers a speech entirely in Persian, gesturing toward his rival's political incorporation.

Mirza Muqim opens the Ikkeri episode with Sultan Muhammad 'Adil Shah pensive and worried about the fort's fall. The sultan calls on Khan Baba, who assures him that he will take care of Ikkeri as the sultan praises his skills in battle. After some deliberation and consultation with court astrologers, he decides on a day for the siege. The army begins the journey on 22 Shawwal, 1053/Wednesday, January 3, 1644, camping at Bankapur for a few days until the day of battle on 10 Zu al-Qa'dah, 1053/January 10, 1644.²⁷ Muqim constructs a scene of Mustafa Khan's army marching into the city of Bankapur, followed by a long list of other prominent household chiefs who accompanied him. This list includes broad categories of

ethnicities used to categorize soldiers (much like the descriptive rolls examined in chapter 2), such as Habshis, Afghans, Mughals, Chaghatays, Qizilbash, Marathas and Turks. Along with their names, the poet extols their virtues on the battlefield. A common convention used across many Persianate texts, ethnographic observations of armies present the hero—in this case, Mustafa Khan—as surrounded by an extended network of kinfolk, who were not necessarily tied by blood nor religion but by ties of service. The poet writes of those who accompanied Mustafa Khan on the Ikkeri expedition in these words:

*chaliyā siddī rehān solāpur kā,
silah band marjān bednūr kā.*

along went Siddi Rehan of Solapur,
fastening his weapons, he set off for Bednur.

*ketī aur gāntī marāthī vazīr,
jīnan nanūn likhne na āwe dabīr.*

they there were Kate, Ghorpade, Marathi ministers
a secretary cannot write so many names.

Close ethnographic observations of armies, common in Persianate texts, were not merely ornate descriptions, giving a litany of names. Mirza Muqim's ability to distinguish different lineages according to their ethnic, regional, occupational, and linguistic markers is curious if one proceeds on the assumption that he was an émigré poet. But this is not surprising at all if we think of him as a regional poet to whom the distinctions between Marathi-speaking Bijapuri courtiers may have been far more recognizable. The long list gives a precise record of those who accompanied Mustafa Khan on the Ikkeri expedition, along with an affirmation of their skills and valor on the battlefield. To further contrast the social diversity within Mustafa Khan's ranks, the poet then turns to a careful appraisal of the enemy, Sivappa Nayak, but with a different tone and purpose. Difference is marked in both cases but for distinct outcomes. The variety of regional clans and ethnicities that fell under and obeyed Mustafa Khan are emphasized to indicate the extent of his political authority. In contrast, the social and cultural differences of those who defied this authority indicate their political otherness. In the latter case, social and cultural difference is exaggerated to highlight who was outside the household, rather than who was included in it. To premodern political observers, what mattered most when producing such representations of political violence was the distance of any figure or social group from a certain authority. As such, in their eyes, the Marathas and nayaka chiefs signified very specific sociological and sectarian entities rather than an anachronistic homogenous, undifferentiated group of Hindus.

In the next few chapters, the poet recounts the exchange of letters and emissaries between Mustafa Khan in Bankapur and Sivappa Nayak in Ikkeri. He uses

political insults to demonstrate a familiarity with the enemy's cultural practices. Sivappa Nayak was an enemy not simply because he was an infidel but also because he was an uncouth and uncultured man. Mustafa Khan's insults of Sivappa Nayak are self-explanatory:

*samajh kuch bhī aīsī le na pāk tūn,
huā yūn kī be-sud va bebāk tūn.*

you, who have come to think like this, filthy fellow
you, who have become senseless and disobedient

*baṛī khūb khūbī tu hāsil kiyā,
ke ap sain jahannam men vāsil kiyā.*

you think you have done a good deed or two
but, these shall only ensure your entrance in hell.

Khan Baba's threats and belittling continue in the letter toward the end of which he declares:

*ange dekh tadbīr ap jiyū ke,
ke bhuṛte nahīn hain agan ghiyū te.*

look ahead to the plan of your death,
for a blazing fire cannot be put out with ghī (clarified butter).

*hove mast bekar pive mūt kon,
na purā paṛe shīr avadhūt kon.*

intoxicated from drinking your own urine,
and yet, even that is not enough milk for an *avadhūt* like you.

Muqim compares Sivappa Nayak to mendicants who lived on the banks of rivers and consumed human excreta, urine, and the flesh of the dead, an analogy not entirely outlandish. In common Hindustani parlance, *avadhūt* and *aghor* are often used together to identify *aghor panthis*, a religious mendicant order that worships Shiva and is synonymous with filth and impurity, also associated with dark magic and occult practices. The poet portrays his patron as someone familiar with Shaivite sects and ascetics of the Deccan, with the ability to deploy his knowledge of the enemy's sectarian affiliation as a means to put him in his place.

Muqim identified who fell within and who fell outside his patron's authority through a fine sociological profile of both friends and enemies. The repetition of the tropes like believer versus nonbeliever and cultured versus uncultured symbolically marks a political authority that included many diverse constituents. Mustafa Khan's circuit had Marathas like Shahaji and Mambaji, and Afghans like Bahlol Khan, whose names and lineages the poet contrasted against the uncultured social practices of the enemy, Sivappa Nayak. But there was never a moment when, in the social taxonomy of the Persian chronicler or Dakkani poet, that the

Marathas, Indo-Africans, or the nayaka chiefs were grouped neatly according to sectarian difference, with Hindus and Muslims on opposite sides of a political conflict. Rather, Muqim's precise ethnography subsumed different constituents within the patron's world and marked specific distinctions between them to show the limits of his authority.

In the poem's fourth section, the poet summarily describes the siege of Ikkeri, which lasted only five days. After one attack by Mustafa Khan's infantry and cavalry, the fort was shattered. With his defeat imminent, Sivappa Nayak writes to Khan Baba, asking to be forgiven and pleading for peace. The scene begins with the rebellious nayakas losing their senses and Sivappa Nayak expressing regret in a monologue. To articulate his apologies to Khan Baba, he summons a "bilingual letter-writer who knows Persian very well" (*bula bhej apnā du bhāshī dabīr / ke buje jita khūb fārsī zamīr*). Such lines are rare and suggest the poet Mirza Muqim's ability to traverse multiple linguistic registers, a trait perhaps lacking in his Persian-speaking contemporaries. He often observes that some political rivals operated in a language different from his own. Muqim notes each historical actor's choice of language and specificity of speech to capture moments of translation and linguistic overlay that were part of transcending the borders of the Deccan and the Karnatak.

In the rest of this letter, Sivappa Nayak assures Khan Baba that he will no longer make trouble. He urges the prime minister to believe him, pledging never to tread the path of treachery. He asks Mustafa Khan to let bygones be bygones and if he is forgiven, he promises to prostrate himself before the sultan. A messenger delivers Sivappa Nayak's letter to Khan Baba, recounting it verbally. In such moments of reconciliation all the lofty ideals (to destroy infidels, etc.) conventionally repeated at the beginning of heroic texts take a back seat. The preferred form of resolution is to absorb rivals into and under one's political authority. Khan Baba thus promises Sivappa Nayak, "*yahī qaul merā wa mujh shah kā / ke farzand sahī hai tu dargāh kā*" (This is the promise of my king and me / That you are a true son of the court). He honors the messenger with betel nut; the latter then departs to deliver the good news to the nayak. In the meantime, Khan Baba sends a *waqi'a nawīs* (intelligencer) to the sultan who, pleased to hear of Sivappa Nayak's defeat, in turn issues a *farmān* (decree). Sivappa Nayak, delighted at this news, selects the finest gifts and eight lakh *huns* (gold coins) as tribute for the king.

In the second to last scene, we witness Khan Baba's ceremonial reception of Sivappa Nayak at the Ikkeri fort. Khan Baba's speech here is entirely in Persian. This type of code-switching indicates a shift in the political relations between Mustafa Khan and his rival. The language moves qualitatively from threats and insults hurled in the intimate tone of Dakkani in the earlier part of the poem, to a formal language of political incorporation and resolution in Persian in its conclusion. In addition, whereas in the beginning during the confrontation, Sivappa's behavior

is aggressive, proud, and insolent, in the moment of political reconciliation, his character idealizes humility and mercy:

*utha sar kon nawāb sāhib shiko,
pe chātī lagā ho, kahiyā u guruh.*

the honorable Nawab lifted him,
embracing him, addressing him, he said:

*safāyī tu bāshad darīn bazm-gāh,
ke kardam ze shafaqat . . . bar tū nigāh.*

you must stay pure in this court,
I have taken pity upon you and cleared you of your sins.

*rah khūb khūbī tū burd āshtī,
ke bā mā girāftī tā āshtī.*

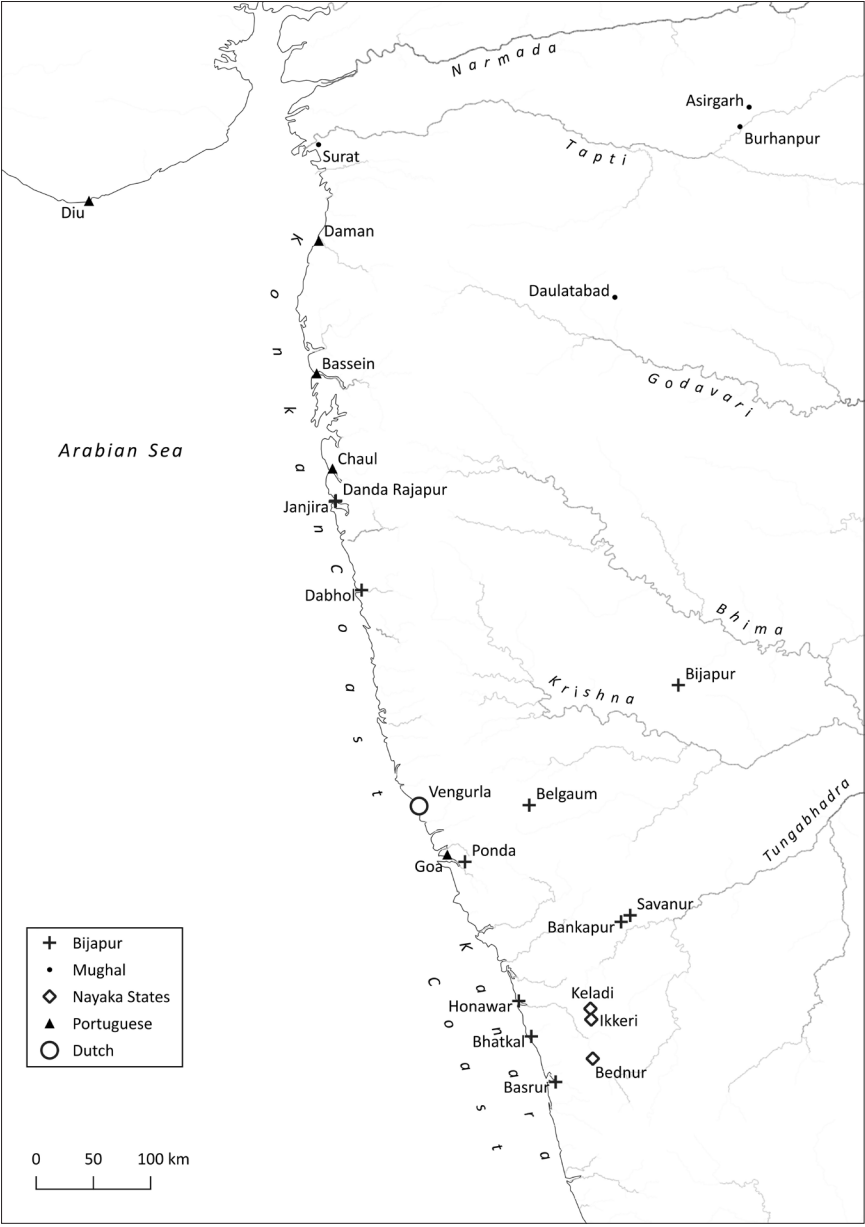
you took the right path, the path of peace,
and you made peace with us.

*shawad behtar aknūn hameh kār-i tū,
be har jā ke bāsham nighdār tū.*

now all your works will become better,
everywhere I am, I will protect you.

At the end of this scene, Mirza Muqim gives perhaps a quiet hint to his choice (and skill) in composing in both Dakkanī and Persian, an implicit reflection on multilingualism. Describing his patron's generosity, he asks—"sifat tis sadr ka kahūn kis zabān? / 'ajaib dise dar nazr begumān" (in which language shall I express this master's traits? / He appears wondrous and incomparable to the eye). Mirza Muqim's and Mustafa Khan's literary sphere was hardly an unmixed, exclusive universe of Persian, but one in which an emerging panregional literary idiom competed for the same circuits of prestige and patronage. Equating the Dakkanī language with a homogenous regional identity in south-central India alone fails to explain why such martial works repeat the same conventions for depicting patrimonial power shared across many vernaculars throughout northern and southern India. From the *jangnāma* to *risalo*, the warrior chief is shown across different South Asian martial traditions as a figure who enabled wider participation and adaptation across linguistic zones, inviting multiple communities into his networks.²⁸ These texts are not intriguing because they show a one-to-one correspondence between region and language; they are intriguing because they emphasize the politics of circulation embodied in a central protagonist shown engaging with multiple languages and moving across cultural and political borders with followers of multiple social backgrounds.

Enemy ethnography in Dakkanī poems captures a moment of encounter more intimate and informal than the one represented in Persian chronicle narrations



MAP 5. Indo-Africans, Iranians, and Marathas on the Konkan and Kanara coasts, ca. 1650.
Drawn by Kanika Kalra.

of political violence and conflict. The contest recounted here unsettles received wisdom and neat typologies of both the patron's identity and the poet's choice of language, form, and content. Mirza Muqim, perhaps an émigré Persian or a Decani, positioned his patron as a user who deployed two sibling tongues for navigating political, ecological, and cultural borders within peninsular India. To be sure, Mirza Muqim identifies Sivappa Nayak through the common conventions of the conquest poem, as a non-Muslim who stood in the righteous path of Islam. But then he apprehends and incorporates the enemy into the process of reconciliation through a much deeper appraisal of the adversary's cultural cosmology. The practice of code-switching from intimate insults in Dakkanī to the negotiation of peace in Persian signals the enemy's absorption into a political authority.

Through such a multivalent portrait, Mirza Muqim signals his patron's place and participation in peninsular India's polyvocal literary ecology. He constructs a second-generation Iranian émigré, moving with his household, friends, and followers away from the city of Bijapur to the highlands of the Karnatak in pursuit of Sivappa Nayak, an enemy with whom he had no language, sect, or ethnicity in common. In the intimate vernacular register, he emphasizes a rival's alterity by marking his unculturedness, uncleanness, and insolence. A meticulous appraisal of one's rivals in one tongue, and then the rapid plot twist in the higher linguistic register of Persian constructs a narrative of successful political incorporation into a ghar. The contrast of insult and derision in transregional Dakkanī versus the negotiation of peace in cosmopolitan Persian signals the hero's journey from conquest to victory and his ability to not only recognize social differences but transcend them.

NEITHER FRIEND NOR ENEMY: KINFOLK IN THE MARITIME BUREAUCRACY

One of the central goals of this book is to locate the household in the practice of connected histories—the practice of reading across multilingual archives and transcending the fixed geographic conventions associated with them. The foundational sociological unit of the household has remained somewhat invisible in studies that examine large-scale political phenomenon such as interimperial diplomacy, the world of kings, and courtly encounters.²⁹ State-building elites and monarchical authority have both been examined across South Asian and European sources, oftentimes by focusing on singular figures, reconstructing the history of great men. Such reconstructions partly have to do with the limitations of premodern archives, where the thickest trails of materials often center on individual figures.³⁰ How, then, do we find the myriad affinal and consanguineal ties that sustained the multiple geographic and linguistic worlds of a household chief? To reconstruct the world beyond and around singular figures, I argue that we read the archive of cultural history, like the vernacular heroic poem *Fathnāma-yi Ikkeri*,

alongside and against the archive of social and economic history found in Persian and European documentary materials that reveal the day-to-day administrative lives of relatives, friends, and political competitors.

The recent work of Jorge Flores on Portuguese words generated by indigenous scribes in late eighteenth-century western India has illuminated the possibility of tracing how capaciously indigenous oral genres and cultures of recording influenced representations of contending voices in the colonial archive.³¹ Following these studies, I examine actual intersections in European and Persian-language documents that converged on specific conflicts of interest between household and state power. In this section, I continue with the case of Mustafa Khan and his extended household by tracing out how and when different family members utilized their bureaucratic offices to challenge kingly authority. By reading for conflicting voices across Persian and European-language documentary sources, I show how Indic Muslim elites sought to hold bureaucratic offices in perpetuity, thus forging a form of belonging firmly entrenched in the politics of caste.

While the place of the household has remained somewhat invisible in connected histories, the portrait of the court in the vernacular literary archive used by regional specialists also has its limits. Literary narratives such as the *Fathnāma-yi Ikkeri* show the political aspirations of an all-powerful patron at the crossroads of multiple cultural worlds. Endless victories on the battlefields, successful sieges of forts, and the skillful incorporation of rivals narrated in two kindred tongues occlude the everyday operations of elite households that were, above all, sustained by a maze of bureaucratic offices that connected the court to Indian Ocean port cities. The trope of the king as foil to the heroic household chief found in literary narratives was only just partly propaganda. Beneath this literary dyad lay the everyday reality of bureaucratic offices and administrative norms that undergirded the tension between household and kingly power. By cross-reading documentary evidence in Persian, Portuguese, and Dutch from the last few years of Mustafa Khan's career, I show the fraught terrain over which different members of this household sought to consolidate their hold on bureaucratic offices. In a period of contested and overlapping sovereignties during which empire transformed regional politics, granting relatives administrative posts not meant to be held as hereditary turned into sites of contesting power.

It is well known that Indo-Islamic states throughout South Asia's past relied on non-Muslim scribal and learned elites, who held hereditary offices such as *desai* (chief of a *pargana* or division), *deshkulkarni* or, *deshpande* (accountant or record keeper) to collect taxes, govern villages, and perform everyday administrative tasks.³² In contrast, centrally appointed Muslim "crown bureaucrats," as Hiroshi Fukazawa called them, were rarely assigned positions in perpetuity and were transferred with greater frequency from one appointment to another and regulated much more stringently by the sultan. By studying a Konkani Brahmin family of Patvardhan sardārs in the Ratnagiri district in the eighteenth century, he was

among the first scholars to illuminate how the early Maratha state consolidated its control over scattered local chiefs. He showed how, starting in the reign of Shahu Bhonsle (d. 1749), the rise of “new bureaucrats” in the eighteenth century helped assign central offices as hereditary fiefs instead of transferrable ones.³³

By exploring contentions among relatives holding different bureaucratic offices, I argue that an earlier echo of this pattern can already be found in the first half of the seventeenth century among Indic Muslim elites in the sultanates. Using multilingual archives, I argue for reversing the lens, so to speak, on the familial pasts of Indic Muslim state-building elites. Often simply written out of the history of bureaucracy, caste and social formations are rarely studied in dialogue with the patterns that have long been observed for elite Hindus and their relationship with Indo-Islamic imperial and regional institutions.³⁴

The purpose of examining a Muslim émigré household’s bureaucratic functions and internal frictions in the seventeenth century is twofold. The period of Mughal suzerainty emboldened the assertion of household autonomy from monarchical power creating the possibility for transforming centrally appointed bureaucratic offices into hereditary occupational ones. The assumption that regional Muslim sultanates were merely “alien ones,” where non-Muslims controlled village-level administration, as Fukazawa had shown in his pioneering work on Persian and Marathi documentary materials, leaves out the question of conflicts within and across elite Muslim households appointed to bureaucratic offices and their relationship to kingly authority.³⁵ Elite Muslim households of peninsular India, such as that of Mustafa Khan, tapped into the very same mechanisms for entrenching social power that non-Muslim elites had—that is, by sustaining themselves as occupational-status or subcaste groups with a hereditary hold over bureaucratic offices. From these critical posts, household members also regulated increasing Luso-Dutch competition in the western Indian Ocean.

THE VIEW FROM VENGURLA

In the 1640s, as members of Mustafa Khan’s household dispersed over the Karnataka, they collided with a wider set of changes unfolding across the Indian Ocean. Whereas Syriam (in southwestern Burma or Myanmar) and Hormuz (in southern Iran) fell to the Dutch and English East India Companies in the 1610s and 1620s and Melaka (on the southwest coast of the Malay Peninsula) in 1641,³⁶ Portuguese power along the Konkan coast survived but was weakened by frequent challenges from the Dutch East India Company, especially through their newly established factory at Vengurla, located just north of Goa. After Bijapur granted the Dutch permission to settle there in 1637, Vengurla was set up under the direct control of Batavia.³⁷ The factory at Vengurla had a strategic rather than a commercial purpose—namely, hindering movement in and out of Portuguese Goa.³⁸ Unlike in the case of the factories in Bengal and on the eastern Coromandel coast, precious

metals did not flow into this factory. Instead, goods from other parts of the Indian Ocean, such as Indonesian spices (nutmeg, cloves, and mace) and Malayan tin from Melaka, were traded with Vengurla.

Without any assistance from Bijapur and as early as 1621, jointly the English and Dutch unsuccessfully tried to blockade Goa, a blockade resumed by the Dutch in 1635.³⁹ Although Muhammad 'Adil Shah repeatedly issued orders that exempted the Dutch from tolls in his territories, members of Mustafa Khan's household, who held different bureaucratic offices, disobeyed the sultan and continued to harass the Dutch for payments.⁴⁰ While most of the revenues from Vengurla went toward the maintenance of crews at the factory,⁴¹ elite households affiliated with the sultanate of Bijapur were the prime buyers of war supplies—such as saltpeter from the southeastern Coromandel, horses from Masqat, and elephants from Sri Lanka—from this port city facing the Arabian Sea.⁴² The case of Vengurla was therefore no different than that of Pulicat on the Coromandel coast between 1610 and 1640, when elite households affiliated with regional courts determined the trajectory of the rivalry between the VOC and Portuguese Goa.⁴³

LETTERS FROM AN IRATE SULTAN: THE HOUSEHOLD UNDER ARREST

The movement of different ambassadors in and out of Bijapur made it evident to Dutch officials at Vengurla that they were but one of many suitors at the court. For example, Mustafa Khan's family owned ships that moved between Vengurla and Bhatkal and the Persian Gulf, and, when ambassadors from Safavid Iran arrived in Bijapur, some were brought over on VOC vessels.⁴⁴ In 1639, a Safavid ambassador arrived on the Dutch ship *Harderwijk* via Dabhol, stating his principal request was that the Bijapur sultan wage war against the Mughals. Otherwise, he claimed, the Safavid sultan would threaten to destroy all the frigates coming from Bijapur to the Persian Gulf. He added that the tribute paid annually by the 'Adil shahs to the Mughals could instead be paid to the king of Persia!⁴⁵ The Dutch reported that the Bijapur sultan, for his part, waited and did not answer the Safavid ambassador's request and proposition.

The Dutch chief merchant, Pieter Paets, reported on other European ambassadors who appeared in Bijapur, where the Dutch themselves waited for hours on end for an audience with the sultan. He had a chance to observe the Portuguese ambassador's visit to Bijapur in September 1639. Although the sultan and Mustafa Khan honored this Portuguese ambassador with gifts of a horse, gold embroidered cloth, and a silk veil for his wife, Paets observed that the youngest son of Mustafa Khan did not want to talk to the ambassador, saying that he did not "wish to be either friends or enemies with the Dutch or the Portuguese" (*maer den jongsten soon van den Hartoch en heeft geseijde Portugeesen Ambassadeur niet te spraack willen staen seggende met de Hollanders ende Portugeesen te gelijk geen vijanden*

segge vrienden).⁴⁶ Although all the orders granted to the Portuguese during the sultan's father's (Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II) time were renewed, there appeared to be no consensus within Mustafa Khan's sons and relatives on which Europeans they were going to side with.

In this context of regional family dynamics constantly determining the commercial and political fortunes of Europeans on the coast, Mustafa Khan's nephew-in-law, Muhammad Reza, emerged as a partisan of Portuguese Goa. Early in 1640, in his capacity as havalddār (governor) of Ponda, Reza reprimanded the Dutch for failing to follow diplomatic protocol. In a letter, he chided them for not sending news of the arrival of their new fleet at Vengurla and questioned them about why no one was sent to pay dues to his uncle-in-law, Mustafa Khan. He also kept a close eye on the VOC's negotiations with Goa.⁴⁷ The VOC complained often of the lack of commitment to drive out the Portuguese, who they believed were their weakest naval rival, and did not understand why, despite the promise to do so by the Bijapuris five years before, the Portuguese still managed to burn down the fortress of Mormugão and take its guards as fugitives.⁴⁸ All this time, the commander of the Dutch fleet off Goa's coast, Dominicus Bouwens, wrote separately to the Bijapur king and to Mustafa Khan, insisting that not enough was being done to contain the Portuguese, who, in the early 1640s, continued to have enthusiastic supporters like the havalddār of Ponda.⁴⁹

Bouwens reported to Sultan Muhammad 'Adil Shah on the activities of Muhammad Reza, whose letters the VOC intercepted at Melaka,⁵⁰ likely believing they could expel the Portuguese entirely from Goa if they had the full backing of his extended family and the sultan of Bijapur. This was similar, in a way, to the alliance they would soon forge with the sultanates of Aceh and Johor in Southeast Asia against the Portuguese in Melaka in 1641. Never a reassuring ally, on June 4, 1641, Muhammad Reza brokered a contract with the Portuguese viceroy on behalf of Sultan Muhammad 'Adil Shah and his prime minister Mustafa Khan, on the one hand. At the same time, he made a deal with the Portuguese viceroy. Just a few months after the Iberian Union had ended, but before news of its demise had not yet reached Portuguese domains in Asia, both parties promised to set aside previous differences and begin anew.⁵¹ The Portuguese agreed to provide the full support of their fleet to Bijapur while the latter was expected to remove all Dutch residents from the areas in and around Vengurla.

Further, with or without a *qaul* or deed of assurance from the sultan, the contract ensured that Muslim merchants would be allowed to trade in hitherto forbidden items such as elephants, horses, slaves, incense, ginger, and so on. The havalddār's contract also stipulated that the viceroy be allowed to remove the Dutch from Vengurla and all other places on the coast while the contents of their establishment and goods would be kept as loot. Both parties promised to aid each other militarily and each would keep an ambassador in Goa and Bijapur.⁵² Whether or not the Bijapur sultan agreed to any of these articles remains unknown, but in his

role as the governor of Ponda, Muhammad Reza now openly declared himself a partisan of the Portuguese even though his maternal uncle, Mustafa Khan, was known to despise them. This was by no means the first time that the havaldār had taken it on himself to represent the sultan and negotiate independently with the Portuguese with the ostensible goal of driving out the VOC.

The second arrest of Mustafa Khan (1642–43), right around the time of his victory over the nayaka of Ikkeri, appears somewhat different when seen through the prism of negotiations between his two feuding *dāmād*—namely, his nephew-in-law havaldār Muhammad Reza and his son-in-law sultan Muhammad ‘Adil Shah. Although the governor of Ponda and his ambitions in the Konkan are never mentioned in Persian chronicles, they are hardly inconspicuous in European-language archives. In one letter dating from February 28, 1642, Muhammad Reza requested that the Portuguese assist him against the Bijapur army, which was making its way to the coast. While some members of the Portuguese state council agreed that any outright assistance to the havaldār would unsettle and provoke the sultan, others did not wish for Muhammad Reza to side with the VOC either. Although the council eventually dodged the request, they concurred that the more there were people rebelling against the ‘Adil Shahi king, the better it would be for Goa.⁵³

To trace these multiple layers, we can again look to the unexpected turn negotiations took at the time of Mustafa Khan’s second house arrest. On October 1, 1643, the Bijapur ambassador reported that the sultan had taken Mustafa Khan prisoner along with his two sons and Muhammad Reza’s father-in-law, Shah Saheb (Xa Saibo). The havaldār feared it would be his turn next, as he was Mustafa Khan’s creature (*era feita sua*). The ambassador requested of the viceroy that Muhammad Reza be given safe conduct, allowing him to come to Goa and from there proceed to Persia or wherever else he wished to go with this family and servants.⁵⁴ The council also calculated correctly that since Mustafa Khan and Shah Saheb were known to be close to the Mughals, they might soon be released. Predictably, the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan did eventually intervene and compel the Bijapur sultan to set Mustafa Khan free.⁵⁵ While Mustafa Khan was jailed in Belgaum, Muhammad Reza wrote once again to Goa, asking for a safe conduct (*seguro*) to go to Mecca with his family, fearing Sultan Muhammad ‘Adil Shah planned to arrest his entire household. It was pointed out to the council that the havaldār still owed 48,480 xerafins for his plan to throw the Dutch out of Vengurla. Before supporting his escape, it was recommended that this amount be paid back. Besides, the costs of taking Muhammad Reza’s family to Surat would likely be prohibitive, not to mention that the Bijapur sultan would then immediately clamor for his return.⁵⁶

Not long after the safe conduct was given to Muhammad Reza, Sultan Muhammad ‘Adil Shah wrote a furious letter to the council on November 16, 1643, in which he asked the viceroy to hand over Muhammad Reza, who had escaped to Goa with a safe conduct. The sultan’s letter was described as bad-tempered (*descomposta*) and the meeting minutes noted it was completely out of keeping with the norms of

correspondence. The king's letter implicated the havaldār and his maternal uncle-in-law, Mustafa Khan; it runs as follows (in its Portuguese version):⁵⁷

To the one who resides in great state, [whose] government is full of good fortune, [who is] obeyed by his subjects, luminous in fame and spirit, steadfast in peace, informed of all news, feared, and with power over many, the chosen of the law of the messiah, the whale and lion of the sea, João da Sylva Tello, viceroy of the state of Goa, may he ever be secure and contented, to whom this is written, with love and with pearl-like letters, so that the following may be known:

Despite the fact that Mostafacão did not merit my royal grants and graces, I covered him with them; and when he had them all, he did not know how to benefit from them, and forgetting them he became ungrateful and went about doing bad and dishonest things. And when I was informed of his evil actions and bad works, I became greatly annoyed, and for that reason I had the said ingrate and his sons seized and put in prison, with all the other people who were his dependents and supporters, which included one Mamede Reza, who had the Concão in his charge, which [region] gives much profit to my crown and treasury, and sustains and feeds many people. He being despicable, and rooted in evil and unworthy intentions, and wholly lacking in wisdom, had placed the said Concão and its lands in a poor condition.

Unlike Persianate courtly literature produced by Mustafa Khan's partisans, which cast him as the sultan's wise consul and confidante, documentary correspondence in Persian, Portuguese, and Dutch reveals troubling relationships within this household, including with his most important son-in-law. The sultan expressed alarm at the speed with which Mustafa Khan's kin had entrenched themselves in each office, particularly those of the havaldār along the coast. While the exact reasoning for the arrest has not been given here either, the memory of Mustafa Khan's first arrest in 1635 is implicit in the above letter. Another letter that interpolates the voice of Sultan Muhammad begins by contrasting the equivalence and camaraderie between a community of monarchs, the dynastic line of the 'Adil Shahi sultans and the kings of Portugal against the insolence of upstart households like those of Mustafa Khan. Here, the king compares the more modest and humble southern Iranian origins of Muhammad Reza and Mustafa Khan negatively to a family of Sayyids (those who claim descent from the Prophet), who he asserts were his true representatives, appointed now as ambassadors to Goa. Shortly thereafter, the rumor of Muhammad Reza's flight from the Konkan coast reached the sultan's ear who urged that he be handed back over to Bijapur:

There should be no delay in this, and Your Excellency should look to your own well-being, for this is not a matter that brooks dissimulation, and I swear to God almighty that if there is any delay in this, and if Your Excellency does not pay attention to this, you may be certain that no trace of Goa will be left on the ground. So that Your Excellency should do in every way as I say, and should order the handing over of Mamede Reza to my servants and those of my royal state, along with the money, effects and treasury of Mostafacão, and with everything from my royal treasury and

my crown that he has taken. If Your Excellency does not settle this, and act with the rapidity that is appropriate, there will then be problems and dissensions and tumult, all caused on account of Your Excellency, and the Portuguese in Goa, and not on my account, because I have and possess much friendship with the King of Portugal, and on that account I sent Memede Saide there as my ambassador, with whom you can deal in all matters that concern that state, and through whom everything can be negotiated and settled, for it is understood that the increase in the welfare of both states is made up of this. Written on the twenty-first of the month of Xabana [Sha‘ban] in the Moorish year of 1053, which is November 4 of the present year of 1643.⁵⁸

The voice of the king interpolated in the Portuguese letter above uncannily echoes Persian *farmāns* issued to Mustafa Khan’s nephew-in-law, the havaldār Muhammad Reza, shortly before the sultan’s fall out with him, whereby he again threatened to destroy Goa. Addressing Muhammad Reza, the reasons for the sultan’s fury in this order were closely connected to deciding the boundaries of the havaldār’s everyday functions and duties, and whether or not he could hold this office in perpetuity. The irate sultan recounted in detail how the havaldār, in cahoots with the Portuguese captain, was going beyond the bounds of his prescribed duties and responsibilities for revenue collection and the regulation of ships. He was responsible for ensuring access to goods, horses, and war materials that flowed from the port city factories to inland bazaars and eventually, to the Karnatak war front, but he had now convinced the Portuguese captain in the port city of Chaul to help him enforce additional customs duties on ships belonging to other prominent elite Bijapuri households. The order opened thus:⁵⁹

A royal farmān issued to the noble, ever vigilant, peerless well-wisher Mirza Muhammad Reza, the havaldār, in charge of the district of Goa, in the year 1041. During these days it was brought to imperial notice [that] a ship from the port of Chaul was prepared for the [title] choicest of nobles, the progeny of the high-ranking, illuminated, servant of Fars, brave in the battlefield, bold, with thousands of favors, of boundless benevolence and the gracious, the exalted *rustam zamān sipāh sālār* [commander of the sultanate] Randaula Khan, and they wanted that this ship [of his] be sent out to other ports. Captain Rewadanda⁶⁰ objected to this and going against the agreements and covenants, he instead wanted to cause damage. *Asad ul-bahr*, the viceroy of the island of Goa, claims to be very sincere and friendly, therefore, that well-wisher should send this case to the viceroy and it should be explained to him and [he should be] made to understand that, God forbid, even if the slightest obstruction is made against the ship of the above-mentioned [Randaula] Khan, he [the viceroy] better believe that at the same time Goa would be destroyed, as the entire army is ready. However, you, a well-wisher, agreeable to our *nawāb* [Mustafa Khan], should also show consideration to *Rustam Zamān*. In short, that well-wisher should emphasize and quickly write a letter in the name of the above-mentioned captain, that there should not be the slightest hindrance in the departure of the ships of the said Khan, and that not an iota be left in helping him out.

The six horses that were brought for the government of the said khan were asked to be taxed, and in this way, the above-mentioned captain is aggravating the demand for *zakāt*. Before we ordered this, twenty-five horses are to be treated as exemptions for the government and a notice had to be issued that the captain should not show such a harsh attitude. But instead [of doing so], he made an excuse that if only these [horses] are brought to Dabhol, they would be permitted to pass. What does he mean by this? (*in lā falāyīn che ma 'ani dārad*), in the port of Dabhol or the port of Rajapur or Goa, the exalted government is exempt from *zakāt* everywhere! In this situation, the above-mentioned captain was making the wrong excuses and wanted to create *fasād* or disturbance. You better believe that this disturbance will cause the destruction of his house [*kharābī-yi khāneh īshān mutazammin ast*].

Therefore, it should be said in this matter, that you, a well-wisher, should warn the above-mentioned captain that he shall make no more unreasonable demands. The above-mentioned captain, as per rule of the past, harshly demanded 28,000 *Lārī* [Persian coins]. Before the said port was under someone else, but now is under my government, then, how can it be taxed? A letter should be sent to the Viceroy, emphasizing to the above-mentioned Captain, to make no other demands after this warning. Before this 1 percent *Lārī* coin was taken as *zakāt* from merchants and now they demand 10 percent, because of this reason the ports are suffering. What has always been the practice should be continued and it be emphasized that no excessive demands be made, written on 3rd of the month of Jumada I 1051, 10 August 1641.

It appears from this order that the Portuguese captain of Chaul had been sending Bijapuri vessels back and forth, further south to Dabhol, if they wished to be allowed inland without paying any commercial tax. A partisan of the Portuguese, Muhammad Reza decided to regulate ships and goods belonging to other Bijappur-affiliated officials by increasing the *zakāt* or purchase tax, which was supposed to be fixed at a predetermined and uniform rate. This order concerned the ships of the Indo-African Randaula Khan, identified here with the title, *Rustam Zamān*. Persian chroniclers described the volatile fortunes of Randaula Khan over the course of the first half of the seventeenth century, when he was the keeper of the prized saltpeter-producing area around Danda Rajapur. VOC officials in Vengurla often (mis)identified this Indo-African as one of the sons of Mustafa Khan.⁶¹ Described as a houseborn member of the exalted court (*khānazād-i darbār mu 'ālā*), based on his long service, he appears to have been part of Mustafa Khan's extended group of followers during the Karnatak campaigns.⁶² Eventually, after a few infractions against his master, Randaula Khan then declared his autonomy, entrenching his kin in Rajapur by monopolizing the gun trade along the Konkan coast. In the order above, Sultan Muhammad 'Adil Shah came to the Indo-African's defense, expressing exasperation at Muhammad Reza's failure to allow the free movement of Randaula Khan's shipments from the Konkan to the hinterland.

Chiding the letter's recipient, the sultan emphasized the transferability of the havaldār's office, reminding him that it had previously been held by another individual and that it could be taken away again. In the ideal type of such "crown bureaucrats" described by Fukazawa, an individual like Muhammad Reza would not have been allowed to foster a long-term connection to a district and could be moved at any time. The irate words of Sultan Muhammad above, however, unveil that exactly the opposite had been unfolding. Kinfolk from Sultanate-affiliated Indic Muslim households, who had governed *mu'āmalā* (crown lands) with heavy trade and traffic, such as those around Ponda, sought to transform their offices into hereditary appointments, a privilege usually only granted to non-Muslims. In the wake of the Mughal conquest in the 1640s, Sultan Muhammad had sought ways to centralize these offices, partly because members of elite Muslim households accessed a range of resources through them.

The right to collect revenues from trade and tax lay at the heart of the sultan's incensed order. This letter points to a much larger pattern in the sultanates. It lays bare how centrally appointed bureaucrats from elite émigré households could entrench the same rights and privileges into their offices usually associated with the positions held by hereditary village-level officials. Throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, centrally appointed havaldārs were reprimanded for intervening in the revenue collection of districts under the authority of hereditary officials such as *desais* and *deshmukhs*, who were directly responsible for sending that revenue to the capital city.⁶³ By the mid-seventeenth century, émigré Muslim households that had moved beyond the court and capital city mobilized resources in important entrepôts and trading nodes along the Konkan and Kanara coasts, seeking to hold these offices for extended periods, mirroring the practices of non-Muslim bureaucrats defined by the hereditary occupational roles associated with such offices. This familial mobility connecting maritime and land-based resources produced the possibility for émigré Muslim households consolidating a jāti-like occupational status within the regional bureaucracy.

We learn in a letter from Goa to Muhammad Reza that by November of 1644 the governor of Ponda had not, in fact, fled to Mecca with his family after the showdown with the sultan.⁶⁴ By the mid-1640s, things seemed to have come full circle with negotiations settled between the sultan, Mustafa Khan, Muhammad Reza, the VOC, and Goa. Between November 1643 and January 1644, through the Dutch broker who went between Rajapur, the factory at Vengurla, and the capital city of Bijapur, Mustafa Khan received numerous gifts, including Chinese porcelain and cloth with brocade.⁶⁵ In February 1644, the Dutch, once again drawing a comparison with their experience in other parts of Asia, seemed to think that Mustafa Khan would ask them to join in an alliance against the Portuguese. They received the news that "Mustafa Khan is on the move with a large army and intends to create an alliance between us and the sultan in order to attack Goa with the said army by land and then to make an attack by water, and conquer their forts,

and they can imagine nothing else than that this year Goa will be lost just like Ceylon.”⁶⁶ The fact that Muhammad Reza was under Portuguese protection and not always in agreement with his uncle-in-law Mustafa Khan or the Bijapur king was quite clear to the VOC who therefore tried to keep him placated. In a letter to Muhammad Reza, who seemed to cast doubt on the Dutch naval assistance that had been used to blockade the Konkan coast, we learn of the temporary suspension of hostilities with Goa and obsequious promises to be of service to Mustafa Khan’s family.⁶⁷

The archival trail illuminating the whereabouts of Muhammad Reza after this episode peters out, and he presumably spent the rest of his career in Ponda, possibly passing on his office of *havalḍār* to his descendants. The face-off between him and the sultan in the first half of the seventeenth century would set the terrain for many more conflicts between household and state in the second half of the century, the most famous and well-documented being one of another Iranian émigré Mir Jumla Muhammad Sayyid Ardestani (better known simply as Mir Jumla) against the sultan ‘Abdullah Qutb Shah of Golkonda in the late 1650s. After his release from the Belgaum fort and the siege of Ikkeri in 1644, the merchant Martin Portmans was sent to deliver gifts and a message to Mustafa Khan. He was instructed to check on the Portuguese and the English agents of the Courteen Association, which already had their agents in Danda Rajapur and had sent gifts to the court at Bijapur.⁶⁸ Although by this time hostilities had temporarily ceased on all sides, Portmans was still instructed to inquire why, despite the full support of the Dutch fleet during times of war, Bijapur had made peace with the Portuguese.⁶⁹ In the late 1640s, Mustafa Khan moved southeast toward the forts of Gutti and Senji as the Karnatak conquest moved away from the Konkan and Kanara coasts toward the Coromandel and eastern Indian Ocean. By 1647, the Bijapur army, under Mustafa Khan, who was reported to have reached the domains of the neighboring sultanate of Golkonda in northern Tamil country.⁷⁰

These two strategies, both central to this process of creating *ghar*, were fraught with challenges. Through a vernacular self-portrait, on the one hand, and the placement of prominent relatives in the bureaucracy, on the other, household power crossed the borders of Hindustan, Deccan, and the Karnatak through multiple kinds of sociocultural and economic negotiations. The story of Mustafa Khan’s household is not easily reducible to the narrative of a dominant empire taking over a blank, listless frontier nor the simplistic idea of foreign Muslims accommodating themselves to local—that is, Indic norms. Rather, the polyvocal self-portrait of a figure with ambiguous affinities to imperial and regional rulers emphasized cultural differences within a space as a means to signal his own ability in discerning and transcending those differences. Conflicts within households and among household members over bureaucratic offices shaped the contours of competition between various European powers. We may close the story of the first half of the seventeenth century, when Mustafa Khan’s death was reported to

the factory at Vengurla in 1648 and the news of his successor was received with caution by Dutch factors.⁷¹ Mustafa Khan's career was the culmination of a longer and consistent pattern in the Deccan of kingly power and succession mediated by elite households. Instead of measuring the absolute value of indigeneity in this elite émigré household, I have traced how the processes of making home generated a politics of place that entrenched competing kin into critical bureaucratic offices that lay between court and port. In the following chapters (4 and 5), I turn to the question of how this tension between household and state was represented in literary observations of marriage and politics, which were produced at the site of regional court capitals, over the course of the seventeenth century.