

Epilogue

Soon after the last successions to the throne discussed in Chapter 2—so from the mid-1760s onward—south India's political and dynastic constellation changed rapidly and dramatically. While Vijayanagara and some successor states had already long vanished by this time, the remaining heirs were now overthrown or gradually integrated into the British colonial system. Despite their divergent fates, however, nearly all royal houses continued to exist in some form for a considerable period, even those that lost their thrones completely. This epilogue concerns the later fortunes of these families. But first it briefly considers the last phase in south India of the other main actor in this study: the Dutch East India Company.

During the final decades of the eighteenth century, the VOC fared not much better than Vijayanagara's heirs, as it also suffered from the growing dominance of the British. By the time the latter won their rivalry with the French, the Dutch had become a marginal player, maintaining a decreasing number of factories on south India's shores and wielding less and less influence. Before Ikkeri was annexed by Mysore's Haidar Ali Khan in 1763, the VOC had already largely abandoned its trading post at Basrur because of yet another disagreement with the Nayaka court. Hoping to revive their trade at the port under the new rulers, between the 1760s and 1780s the Dutch dispatched several missions to Haidar Ali and his son Tipu Sultan, but these yielded little result.¹

Nagapattinam, seat of Coromandel's VOC governors and the main settlement in Tanjavur, was taken by the British in 1781. Although some places in the Tamil zone were still in Dutch hands, including the factories on Madurai's and Ramnad's Fishery Coast, it seems that after the early 1760s the VOC sent no more embassies to the remaining successors. Following a temporary British seizure of its posts in 1781-4, during the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, the VOC went bankrupt in 1795 as the Napoleonic wars in Europe signalled another British occupation of India's Dutch

¹ For Dutch activities in the Kannada-speaking region during this period, see: Van Lohuizen, *The Dutch East India Company and Mysore*; Weijerman, *Memoir of Commandeur Godefridus Weijerman*, 10, 53; Cornelius Breekpot, *Memoir of Commandeur Cornelius Breekpot Delivered to His Successor the Worshipful Titular Governor and Director-Elect Christian Lodewijk Senff ...*, ed. J. Fruijtier (Madras, 1909), 2.

settlements. A number of these, like Tuticorin and Kilakkarai, were returned to the Netherlands' government in 1818, only to be definitively transferred to the British in 1825, in exchange for territories in the South-east Asian archipelago.² Thus ended more than two centuries of Dutch contacts with Vijayanagara and its heirs.

Aravidus of Vijayanagara

Vijayanagara's own demise already came one and a half centuries earlier, but since this was a stretched-out and fluctuating process, its date is as uncertain as the time of the empire's foundation. Modern historiography often presents Bijapur's conquest of the capital Vellore and Emperor Sriranga III's flight around 1646 as the moment of Vijayanagara's downfall. The loss of his realm did not however mean that Sriranga, and subsequent heads of the Aravidu family, gave up all monarchical activities and ambitions. Both south Indian and European sources show how this house tried to regain its position and continued to maintain ties with the empire's heirs, albeit increasingly of a symbolic nature.

Somewhat ironically, in his effort to recover his status, the fugitive Sriranga turned to all five main successor states, visiting them one by one. Dutch records state that in May 1646 Sriranga ("Serangerijl") was rumoured to have secretly left Vellore for Senji with a few confidants as he could not possibly pay the tribute of elephants, jewels, and cash demanded by the advancing Bijapur army. The Jesuit Antony de Proença and the VOC wrote that the emperor next stayed at the courts of Madurai and Tanjavur, receiving many honours but little support. In 1649, according to the Dutch, Sriranga—paying four elephants and 60,000 *reals* to get permission to cross Bijapur's territory—was given asylum and assistance by the court of Mysore.

Finally, in the second half of the 1650s, he was welcomed at Ikkeri, as some south Indian chronicles declare. It is thought that about 1659 its King Shivappa Nayaka bestowed on the emperor the town of Belur (or Velapuram), situated in Ikkeri's south-east. Although in practice the relationship between overlord and vassal had thus clearly become reversed, these texts seem to still acknowledge the formal hierarchy, saying that in return for his military assistance Shivappa received from Sriranga titles, jewellery, the conch and discus emblems, and a royal umbrella.

Initially, in the early 1650s, various conflicts plaguing Bijapur and Golkonda allowed the emperor to win back much of his former lands, including Vellore. English sources suggest he returned to the Tamil region in 1652. But in the following

² Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 120-4; P.H. van der Kemp, "De Nederlandsche factorijen in Vóór-Indië in den aanvang der 19e eeuw," *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* LIII (1901), 358-407, 471-9.

years several powers invaded the area again and after some failed attempts to involve the Mughal court in his plight, Sriranga fled his capital once more in the late 1650s. During the 1660s and early 1670s, Madurai's Chokkanatha Nayaka led an effort to reinstall the emperor and Sriranga himself also made various endeavours to establish his court at the erstwhile capitals Penukonda and Chandragiri. These actions were unsuccessful or short-lived, and by the next decade all remaining Vijayanagara territory was definitively lost.³

Little is known of the remainder of Sriranga's career. It seems he settled at Belur in Ikkeri, where he had already been based intermittently since it was donated to him. What is certain is that all the while, inscriptions commissioned by the emperor or others acknowledging his formal overlordship continued to be produced. For instance, the Nayakas of Madurai, and to a much lesser extent the Wodeyars of Mysore, recognised Sriranga's status in several such texts in the 1660s and 1670s. Yet, he exercised no effective power whatsoever over what were technically still his subordinates. According to an English report, he passed away in 1672 and was succeeded by a brother's son. An inscription from around 1678 mentions one Venkatapati Raya staying near Vijayanagara city, the largely deserted initial imperial capital. This may have been Sriranga's nephew, now apparently leading the Aravidu house from where the empire had originated.

Sriranga's successors, no matter how limited their power, kept figuring in inscriptions of former subordinates at least into the second half of the eighteenth century.⁴ They were still honoured with such imperial titles as *rājādhirāja* and *virapratāpa*, and were often declared to reign from Penukonda (Ghanagiri), but references to this town were perhaps mostly symbolic. All this time, the Aravidus seemingly entertained hopes of reviving the empire: according to the traveller

³ NA, VOC, no. 1161, ff. 824v-5; no. 1215, ff. 1030-30v; no. 1227, ff. 3v-4, 18, 25, 125; no. 1233, ff. 3, 8, 20v-1, 31, 43v; letters from Pulicat to Batavia, May 1646, Jan., Mar., May, July 1658, Jan., Mar., May, July 1660, report from the army of Krishnappa Nayaka, Jan. 1657; Saulière, "The Revolt of the Southern Nayaks" [pt. 1], 100, [pt. 2], 163-6, 169; MacLeod, *De Oost-Indische Compagnie*, vol. II, 392-403, 407-8; Coolhaas et al., *Generale Missiven*, vol. II, 478; *Beknopte historie*, 25; BL/AAS, MG, no. 6, pt. 11: "Historical account of Beedoonoor or Caladee Samstanum," ff. 78v-9; Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, 309-10; Krishnaswami Aiyangar, "Srirangarayalu," 30-45; Krishnaswami, *The Tamil Country under Vijayanagar*, 358-67; Subrahmanyam, *Penumbral Visions*, 54; Sathianathaier, *Tamilaham in the 17th Century*, 43-54; Rāma Sharma, *The History of the Vijayanagar Empire*, vol. II, 281-2, 289-93, 298-301, 304-6, 310-11, 315, 319-21; Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, 46; Swaminathan, *The Nāyakas of Ikkeri*, 88-92; Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 128-32, 172, 264-7; Saulier, "Madurai and Tanjore," 780; Hayavadana Rao, *History of Mysore*, vol. I, 144-6, 151, 216, 219, 222-4, 227-8, 230-1, 276-7, 279; Martin, *India in the 17th Century*, vol. 1, pt. I (New Delhi, 1981), 413-15; Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, vol. I, 166-8; Foster, *The English Factories in India 1655-1660* (Oxford, 1921), 92, 95-9.

⁴ For a list of these Aravidus, compiled by Colin Mackenzie, see Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, vol. I, 72.

Niccolao Manucci, one of Sriranga's descendants approached a Carmelite missionary, urging him to request European kings to send military aid.

No assistance—from either Europe or erstwhile vassals—ever materialised, however, and some scholars suggest that the family now permanently stayed on the outskirts of Vijayanagara city in the town of Anegondi, possibly donated by the Mughals around 1700 as part of a land grant (*jāgīr*). This area had passed into the hands of the Marathas by the mid-eighteenth century, to be conquered by Haidar Ali Khan of Mysore a few decades later. While most of the house's eighteenth-century history is obscure, when the British entered the region around 1790, there was a chief at Anegondi claiming descent from the Aravidu dynasty.⁵

This was the time when texts on Vijayanagara's past were collected by British functionaries like the Surveyor-General Colin Mackenzie, and a number of such sources were in fact acquired from the family ruling at Anegondi. The concluding sections of several of these works sought to bolster the chiefs' claims to an exalted past and, consequently, their requests for some kind of restoration. Included are, for example, genealogical surveys tracing their ancestry back to Sriranga III and a declaration that the family spoke Telugu rather than the local Kannada, signalling its ongoing connection with the Aravidus' background. Probably to certify the authenticity of these statements, one work says that the respective chiefs had kept "the records of all the country." We further read that the Mughal Aurangzeb ("Allum Geer Badsha") had granted the town and "fifty palaces" of Anegondi to the family, but that Tipu Sultan of Mysore had expelled the current chief from this place. It is also reported that this chief had retaken it upon Tipu's death in 1799. These remarks were no doubt intended to legitimise the family's possession of Anegondi.

Other texts clarify why these chiefs no longer wore crowns or even proper turbans. As one story goes, when Vijayanagara's sixteenth-century Tuluva emperor Achyuta Raya fled from a battle with the Deccan sultanates, he dropped his ancestral crown, which was then seized by his opponents. To remember this disgrace and because it would be inappropriate for someone used to a crown to wear a turban, all his descendants tied a handkerchief around their head. In another version it

⁵ Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 132-4, 356-71 (nos 157, 166, 168, 183, 206, 209, 212, 214, 224, 230-1, 233, 235-6, 241, 252); *Travancore Archaeological Series*, vol. V, pt. III, 231-2; Sewell, *The Historical Inscriptions of Southern India*, 280-99, 402; Viswanatha, "The Jambukesvaram Grant of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayaka," 91, 94, 96; Narasimhaswami, *South-Indian Inscriptions*, vol. XVI, x, 338-40 (nos 333-4); Nelson, *The Madura Country*, vol. III, 251; Hayavadana Rao, *History of Mysore*, vol. I, 61-2, 224, 231; Krishnaswami Aiyangar, "Srirangarayalu," 40-5; Krishnaswami, *The Tamil Country under Vijayanagar*, 363-7; Sathianathaier, *Tamilaham in the 17th Century*, 53-4; Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. III, 235-6; Rāma Sharma, *The History of the Vijayanagar Empire*, vol. II, 301, 329, 337-8; Sewell, *List of Inscriptions*, 253; Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*, pt. II, 418; Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, 22; Guha, "The Frontiers of Memory," 274-5; Tobert, *Anegondi*, 196.

was Rama Raya, the first Aravidu ruler, who had lost both the imperial crown and his turban when he was beheaded, after which his successors decided to tie their turbans in a different manner for as long as the dynasty would last.⁶

Despite these demonstrations of the Anegondi rulers' illustrious descent, present state, and righteous claims, their situation remained marginal. In the 1790s, the principality became part of the territory of the Nizam of Hyderabad, under whom the Anegondi chief was installed as a *zamīndār* (revenue-paying landholder). About 1800, a significant portion of the family's lands was ceded to the British, in return for a monthly pension. Subsisting on this allowance and the revenues of a few villages, the chiefs maintained their reign over Anegondi during the British colonial period. As several of them passed away without leaving sons, widow-queens frequently acted as regents and adopted male relatives as heirs, fearing that the British would declare the house extinct and revoke its pension.

All the while, the family kept its regalia, including a silver mace (depicting a warrior with a rifle), a fly-whisk, seals, weaponry, and a silver throne. Also, it continued to use Vijayanagara's old imperial title *rāya*, although in 1902, in some recognition of its past, the British conferred the line with the more general royal designation *rāja* (king). Since India's independence in 1947, the chiefs' descendants have mostly been living in Anegondi, their pension finally terminated in 1984. Around 2010, on the 500th anniversary of Krishna Raya's accession to the Vijayanagara throne, the eponymous current head of the family participated in celebrations marking this occasion.⁷

Nayakas of Ikkeri

While the history of Ikkeri's Nayakas after the fall of the capital Bednur is hazy, the moment of the kingdom's end is clear. As explained in Chapter 2, in the years leading up to this event, Ikkeri was governed by Queen Virammaji (1757-63), the widow and regent of her predecessors Basavappa Nayaka II (r. c. 1739-54) and the infant

⁶ BL/AAS, MG, no. 11, pt. 3b: "History of the kings of Beejanagur & Anagoondy," ff. 22-8 (see also Mackenzie, "History of the Kings of Veejanagur"); no. 10, pt. 4b: "Bijanagar," f. 70; no. 10, pt. 5: "Traditionary notices of the history of the country," f. 80; no. 11, pt. 3a: "History of the Anagoondy Rajahs," ff. 9, 11-12 (see also Mackenzie, "History of the Anagoondy Rajahs"); no. 10, pt. 1: "Notices of the present state of the Anagoondy family," ff. 37-9 (collected at Hyderabad in 1798); Sewell, *List of Inscriptions*, 253. See also: BL/AAS, MG, no. 11, pt. 18a: "Historical account of Panoo Conda," f. 174; Nilakanta Sastri and Venkataramanayya, *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History*, vol. III, 18-19.

⁷ Tobert, *Anegondi*, 26-30, 77, 156-9, 196-8; Sewell, *List of Inscriptions*, 253; Rāma Sharma, *The History of the Vijayanagar Empire*, vol. II, 338; John M. Fritz, "Krishnadevaraya in Popular Imagination," in Anila Verghese (ed.), *Krishnadevaraya and His Times* (Mumbai, 2013), 377, 379. I thank Krishna Devaraya of the Anegondi royal family and John Fritz for additional information about the family.



Illustration 23: Statues thought by some scholars to depict Queen Virammaji of Ikkeri and her adopted son Somashekara III, Rameshvara Temple, Keladi (courtesy R.K.K. Rajarajan).

Chenna Basavappa Nayaka (r. c. 1754-7), respectively. Virammaji was rumoured to have been involved in the death of Chenna Basavappa—supposedly he had caught her lying with her secret lover, an enslaved man—and afterwards she adopted another boy, a son of her maternal uncle. Named Somashekara Nayaka III, he was installed as some sort of co-ruler, but his minority allowed the queen to reign more or less in her own name, with the assistance of some courtiers (see illustration 23).

Dutch and other sources tell that about a year after the Wodeyar General Haidar Ali Khan usurped the neighbouring Mysore kingdom in 1761, he was visited by a young man claiming to be Ikkeri's former King Chenna Basavappa. Supposedly, he had secretly been spared and sheltered by his assassin and now reclaimed the Ikkeri throne. Whether Haidar Ali believed this or not, he supported the pretender in exchange for 900,000 *pagodas*—as the VOC noted—and the port of Mangalore.

A large army was dispatched to Bednur and despite Virammaji's last-minute bid to pay an even larger sum, the Ikkeri capital was taken by Mysore on (according to a Dutch letter) 16 January 1763.

Sources agree that Virammaji fled Bednur with the minor King Somashekara before Haidar Ali's troops conquered the town, but she was quickly captured. VOC documents say she had a considerable treasure with her, which was confiscated, as were the possessions of many other Ikkeri notables. A Frenchman commanding Mysore's artillery, M. Maistre de la Tour, wrote that Haidar Ali convinced the queen to accept his protégé as Ikkeri's ruler in return for a pension. The same account has it that a subsequent plot of the new king, Virammaji, and other Ikkeri dignitaries to murder Haidar Ali was discovered just in time, upon which the queen was put to death and the king incarcerated. The latter events are not mentioned in other sources, apart from a Dutch reference to the execution of eighteen prominent Ikkeri courtiers accused of performing "satanic" ceremonies to kill Haidar Ali. In any case, it is certain that the person professing to be Chenna Basavappa spent little or no time on the Ikkeri throne. The Nayaka kingdom was soon annexed by Mysore and Bednur renamed as Haidarnagara, later shortened to Nagara.⁸

Not much is known about Ikkeri's Nayaka house after its removal. Most historians state that Virammaji was spared and that she, her adopted son and co-ruler Somashekara, and the alleged Chenna Basavappa were all locked up by Haidar Ali at a place near Bangalore. It is thought that Maratha forces liberated them in 1767 and brought them to Pune but that Virammaji died on the way there. While one tradition has it that Somashekara remained unmarried, other sources suggest he married a woman from the Maratha town of Nargund (or perhaps Navalgund), where his offspring continued to live. A son called Shivappa Nayaka, based at the town of Bankapur in Maratha territory, is said to have been in contact with the Maratha Peshwa ruler about reviving the Ikkeri kingdom, but nothing came of it.

⁸ NA, VOC, no. 3086, ff. 178-83v, 266-6v: letters from Cochin to Batavia, Mar., May 1763; P. Groot (ed.), *Historical Account of Nawab Hyder Ali Khan ...* (Madras, 1908), 1-2 (for the original text, see TNA, DR, no. 720); Weijerman, *Memoir of Commandeur Godefridus Weijerman*, 53-4; Moens, *Memoir Written in the Year 1781 A.D.*, 55; TNA, DR, no. 578, ff. 411-12: Cochin secret proceedings (*resolutions*), Feb. 1763; M. Maistre de la Tour, *The History of Hyder Shah, alias Hyder Ali Khan Bahadur, or, New Memoirs Concerning the East Indies with Historical Notes* (London, 1784), 53-8; Nair, "Eighteenth-Century Passages to a History of Mysore," 80-5; Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, vol. I, 502-9; S. Srikantaya, "Channabasava Nāyaka (a Review)," *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* XLII, 4 (1952), 143-6; Swaminathan, *The Nāyakas of Ikkēri*, 152, 156-62; Chitnis, *Keḷadi Polity*, 23; Hayavadana Rao, *History of Mysore*, vol. II, 427-61, 470-5, 792-804; B. Sheik Ali, "Factors Responsible for Haidar's Conquest of Bidanur," in G.S. Dikshit (ed.), *Studies in Keladi History (Seminar Papers)* (Bangalore, 1981). See also: Mahalingam, *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, vol. II, 431; Galletti, Van der Burg, and Groot, *The Dutch in Malabar*, 151-2; Bes, "The Ambiguities of Female Rule in Nayaka South India."

Visiting the area in 1801, the British surveyor Francis Buchanan met a priest whose ancestors had served the Ikkeri Nayakas as *guru* (preceptor). According to him, close relatives of both Virammaji's adopted sons, Chenna Basavappa and Somashekara, were still alive and even lived together, now in Savanur. The priest considered the former's kin as the dynasty's lawful heirs, but should that branch come to an end, the latter's relatives were entitled to succeed.

The family was mentioned one more time in 1830-1, when a chieftain named Budi Basavappa Nayaka led a rebellion in the former Ikkeri region, still under Mysore rule. Calling himself Raja of Nagara—denoting the former capital Bednur—he claimed to be Virammaji's adopted son, probably referring to Chenna Basavappa. If true, he must have been about eighty years old when he headed this revolt. This was likely the last effort to re-establish the Ikkeri dynasty. Once again it proved fruitless and no secondary literature appears to mention later activities of the Nayaka line. But the house has evidently continued to exist and remember its past until today, as it is known that its current descendants live in the town of Hubli.⁹

Nayakas of Tanjavur

Compared to their Ikkeri counterparts, the Nayakas of Tanjavur initially seemed more successful in regaining their throne after they lost it. Yet, their fall was a dramatic event, recognised even by the Dutch, who, in a rare case of sympathy, referred to the dynasty's fate as “unfortunate” (*ongelukkig*), “disastrous” (*rampsalig*), and “miserable” (*ellendich*). Indeed, they almost became melancholic when, upon hearing of the kingdom's end, they pondered: “so it goes in this strange ticking [*wonderlijk geticktack*] of the world; thus people great and small play their role and all get their share.”¹⁰

The house's demise began in 1673 with the tragic death of its last king with actual power, Vijayaraghava Nayaka—in his late fifties according to Dutch records, in his eighties as local texts have it. In September of that year, Madurai's ruler

⁹ Swaminathan, *The Nāyakas of Ikkēri*, 160-1; Chitnis, *Keḷadi Polity*, 23; Hayavadana Rao, *History of Mysore*, vol. II (Bangalore, 1945), 452; Mahalingam, *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, vol. II, 418-19; Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras*, vol. III, 263-4; Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, vol. I, 510; Simmons, *Devotional Sovereignty*, 13-14; Nair, “Eighteenth-Century Passages to a History of Mysore,” 103 (n. 72); Lewis Rice, *Mysore and Coorg*, 160-1; Srikantaya, “Channabasava Nāyaka,” 145. I thank Venkatesh Jois Keladi for information on the present members of the family.

¹⁰ NA, VOC, no. 1291, f. 594v; no. 1295, ff. 129v, 132; no. 1298, ff. 286, 362v, 583v; no. 1302, ff. 611v, 617v; no. 1329, f. 1172: letters from Teganapatnam to St. Thomé and Rijcklof van Goens, from Colombo and Nagapattinam to Batavia, from Cochín to Gentlemen XVII, from Van Goens to Chengamaladasa and Pulicat, Oct.-Nov. 1673, June-July 1674, report of mission to Tanjavur, Jan. 1677.

Chokkanatha Nayaka besieged and starved the Tanjavur capital with his superior army, but rather than surrender, Vijayaraghava chose to fight and risk death in battle, with his son and destined successor Mannarudeva. The night before, inside Tanjavur's fort, Vijayaraghava had all his other offspring, wives and concubines, and royal treasures burnt, to prevent his enemy from laying hands on them. Perhaps illustrating his determination, a local text states that while Chokkanatha's troops approached, Vijayaraghava exclaimed:

The celestial Rangasvami is on our side,
what son of a whore dares to come against me?"¹¹

Notwithstanding the blessings of Rangasvami—possibly denoting Vishnu's form Ranganatha at the Srirangam Temple—Vijayaraghava, Mannarudeva, and 150 of their best fighters fell in combat on 29 September, near the Rajagopalasvami Temple north of the Tanjavur palace, as the VOC wrote. Marking Madurai's triumph, their heads were sent to Chokkanatha.¹² Some weeks later, the Dutch heard a rumour that the Madurai king had treated his dead opponents with utter disrespect: apparently unimpressed by their heroic deaths, he reportedly hacked Vijayaraghava's head in two and kicked Mannarudeva's head with his foot.¹³

South Indian works such as the *Tañjāvūri āndhra rājula caritra* declare that Madurai's invasion was caused by Vijayaraghava's refusal to offer his daughter as wife to Chokkanatha. The Venetian traveller Niccolao Manucci adds that the

¹¹ BL/AAS, no. 1, pt. 7D: "The present Maratta Rajas who are managing the country of Tanja-Nagaram," f. 67. In this Mackenzie manuscript, the original Telugu is rendered as: "Nama-coo runga swamy raja-coloodoo woonnaroo / Yavoor-dā mânâ-minda vochadee sotoo-codookâ." Maybe diminishing the plausibility that these were the Nayaka's words, in this text it was Ekoji Bhonsle's troops who killed Vijayaraghava. See f. 68.

¹² Another account, recorded by Lutheran missionaries in the 1730s, states that Vijayaraghava was caught alive by Madurai's forces and wished to die honourably by being trampled by an elephant. See Utz, "Cultural Exchange, Imperialist Violence, and Pious Missions," 34. A partly similar story is found in BL/AAS, MG, no. 1, pt. 8: "The Cheritee or actions of the Vadaka-Rajahs of Tanjore, Trichinopully & Madura," f. 73. For yet another, slightly different description, given by Tanjavur scholars in 1712, see Jeyaraj and Young, *Hindu-Christian Epistolary Self-Disclosures*, 264. For Vijayaraghava's connection with the deity Ranganatha at Srirangam, see also Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance*, 55, 69, 308.

¹³ NA, VOC, no. 1291, f. 594v; no. 1295, ff. 127v, 129v; no. 1329, f. 1172: letters from Nagapattinam and Teganapatnam to Batavia and St. Thomé, from Cochin to Gentlemen XVII, Oct.-Nov. 1673, report of mission to Tanjavur, Jan. 1677. For a translation of the first passage, see Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance*, 311. According to Tanjavur scholars in 1712, Chokkanatha Nayaka treated Vijayaraghava's head respectfully and had it cremated. See Jeyaraj and Young, *Hindu-Christian Epistolary Self-Disclosures*, 264.

princess' exceptional beauty made the Madurai king propose this marriage. It is not exactly clear why Vijayaraghava would have declined Chokkanatha's request. Manucci writes that the Tanjavur Nayaka considered his own house to have a higher status than the Madurai dynasty, but some local texts and European reports say the two families had exchanged several brides since the sixteenth century.

Other sources claim Vijayaraghava regarded only Chokkanatha as inferior, as his mother was not his father's principal queen but a secondary wife, belonging to the agricultural Vellala caste. The *Taṇjāvūri āndhra rājula caritra* states that Chokkanatha's grandfather Tirumalai Nayaka had married but then killed an earlier Tanjavur princess, probably an aunt of Vijayaraghava, causing Tanjavur's current rejection. Anyhow, Vijayaraghava's humiliating reception of Madurai's delegation asking for the princess' hand would have contributed to Chokkanatha's indignation, further inciting him to declare war on Tanjavur. As explained in Chapter 4, one south Indian text has it that Vijayaraghava had Madurai's ambassador beaten up, branded with a red sign, placed on an ass, and dismissed.

However, VOC records have led historians to argue that Madurai's attack resulted from wider political developments. Thus, following earlier regional disputes, Ramnad's conquest of parts of Tanjavur in 1670 had prompted Vijayaraghava to ask Madurai's Chokkanatha for military support. The latter expelled Ramnad's forces but the Tanjavur king then failed to pay the money promised to Madurai in return for its help. In a complete reversal of alliances, Chokkanatha now occupied much of Tanjavur's territory, making Vijayaraghava dispatch his circa thirteen-year old son Chengamaladasa to Ramnad to request assistance. But while on the way to back Tanjavur, Ramnad's Setupati, Surya Tevar, was captured by Madurai troops, allowing Chokkanatha to focus on the subjugation of Vijayaraghava. This, then, was the context of Madurai's siege of the Tanjavur capital.

Yet, while these events must have contributed to the animosity between Vijayaraghava and Chokkanatha, some VOC documents suggest that local texts were at least partly right about the *casus belli*. A report by the Dutch chief of Tuticorin, Marten Huijsman, from March 1674 explains that when Vijayaraghava asked Chokkanatha for support against Ramnad, he sent Tiruvenkatanatha Ayya ("Tirewengedenaderaijen," see Chapter 3) as his envoy. This Brahmin enlisted Chokkanatha's aid, but with the condition that Tanjavur indemnify the Madurai king. Greatly annoyed by this stipulation, Vijayaraghava was furious with Tiruvenkatanatha, causing the latter to defect to Madurai where he quickly gained prominence. Seeking revenge, the Tanjavur Nayaka harassed Tiruvenkatanatha's wife, children, and friends, who had stayed behind in Tanjavur. Thereupon, as the VOC chief noted, the Brahmin convinced Chokkanatha to attack Vijayaraghava, referring to the latter's refusal to let the Madurai king marry a Tanjavur princess.

Even if this insult was just a pretext for the war, it was apparently a serious enough issue to justify the assault. It therefore seems it was a combination of regional politics and inter-dynastic humiliation that led to the demise of Tanjavur's Nayaka house.¹⁴

The period immediately after Tanjavur's fall witnessed what may have been the closest Dutch engagement with a Vijayanagara successor dynasty. For not all of Vijayaraghava's progeny had died in the confrontation with Madurai. The *Taijāvūri āndhra rājula caritra*, VOC records, and other sources relate that an infant son of the Nayaka, the aforementioned Chengamaladasa, escaped the massacre. The first of these sources states that the boy was a toddler who at the last moment, together with his mother's valuable jewellery, was smuggled out of the beleaguered Tanjavur palace by a nurse. Dutch documents suggest he was in his early teens and managed to flee when Madurai caught the Setupati Surya Tevar during their journey together from Ramnad to Tanjavur. Whatever saved Chengamaladasa, it was the beginning of a long quest around south India to win back his ancestral throne.¹⁵

¹⁴ NA, VOC, no. 1274, ff. 13v, 206-7v; no. 1277, f. 1571; no. 1279, f. 748; no. 1282, ff. 893v-4; no. 1285, f. 395; no. 1288, ff. 178, 201, 214, 232v; no. 1291, ff. 515v, 531; no. 1304, ff. 323-3v; no. 2631, f. 421: letters from Colombo and Pulicat to Gentlemen XVII and Batavia, Sept., Nov. 1670, Sept.-Oct. 1671, Feb.-Mar., Oct.-Nov. 1672, Feb., Apr. 1673, letter from Ramnad to Jaffna, Oct. 1670, report of Tuticorin's chief (*opperhoofd*), Mar. 1674, final report (*memorie van overgave*) of Jacob Mossel, Feb. 1744; Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance*, 305-12; Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. II, 191-7; Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, 260, 324-5; BL/AAS, MG, no. 1, pt. 7D: "The present Maratta Rajas who are managing the country of Tanja-Nagaram," f. 67; no. 1, pt. 8: "The Cheritee or actions of the Vadaka-Rajahs of Tanjore, Trichinopully & Madura," f. 73; no. 1, pt. 24: "The Kyfeyat of Aachoota Bhoopal Naig," ff. 185-6; no. 4, pt. 4: "Mootiah's chronological & historical account of the modern kings of Madura," ff. 57-8, 64; MM, no. 110, pt. 7: "The Charythy of the Vadoka Raja of Tonjore, Trinchunnapully & Madura," ff. 5-6; *Beknopte Historie*, 87; Saulier, "Madurai and Tanjore," 788; Rubiés, "The Jesuit Discovery of Hinduism," 254; Vink, *Mission to Madurai*, 262 (n. 2), 292, 296-8, 347-8; idem, "Encounters on the Opposite Coast," 288-9, 316; Manucci, *Storia del Mogor*, vol. III, 103-5; Jeyaraj and Young, *Hindu-Christian Epistolary Self-Disclosures*, 263-4; Vriddhagirisar, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, 149-54; Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 101, 163-5, 279; Rangachari, "The History of the Naik Kingdom of Madura," *Indian Antiquary* XLVI, 58-62; Srinivasan, *Maratha Rule in the Carnatic*, 124-7; Sathianathaier, *Tamilaham in the 17th Century*, 84-8. See also: NA, VOC, no. 1246, f. 497; no. 1284, f. 1928v; no. 1295, ff. 54v, 59, 82: letters from Pulicat and Nagapattinam to Batavia, Feb. 1664, Feb. 1671, Jan.-Feb., Apr. 1673; BL/AAS, MG, no. 4, pt. 4: "Mootiah's chronological & historical account of the modern kings of Madura," f. 183.

¹⁵ Vriddhagirisar, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, 162-4 (ns 2-4); Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, 325-7; Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. II, 197-203; Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance*, 310-11. According to the text quoted in Taylor, Chengamaladasa was a son of Vijayaraghava's son Mannarudeva.

About two weeks after Vijayaraghava's death, VOC officials wrote that Chengamaladasa and an accompanying nurse ("amme") had appeared at Tranquebar, perhaps seeking shelter with the Danes. However, two days later the prince sailed north to stay with a former councillor at the port of Teganapatnam, at that time governed by Bijapur and also the site of a Dutch trading post. No doubt aware of the fugitive's royal status and the potential benefits of a coalition with him, the VOC for once gave up its insistence on political neutrality and approached Chengamaladasa to offer him protection and support to regain his kingdom. Although Bijapur and Mysore made similar proposals, the prince eagerly accepted the VOC's help. But soon after he was honourably welcomed at the Dutch factory, to be shipped to the Company's regional headquarters at Nagapattinam, Bijapur authorities forcibly removed him to nearby Cuddalore. They justified this by arguing that Chengamaladasa was staying in their territory, Nayaka Tanjavur had been tributary to them, and the VOC should stick to commercial activities without meddling in state affairs.¹⁶

It is not entirely clear what happened next to Chengamaladasa, but both the *Taṇḷāvūri āndhra rājula caritra* and letters by the prince himself to the Dutch from 1674 state that he—likely together with his Brahmin aide Venkanna, Tanjavur's former *rāyasam* (secretary)—now requested Bijapur's assistance. The Bijapur sultan, probably seeing an opportunity to increase his influence, then dispatched his Maratha General Ekoji Bhonsle to expel Madurai from Tanjavur and reinstate the Nayaka dynasty.¹⁷ By January 1764, Bijapur's army had arrived at the Tanjavur border and in the following months fought together with troops of Ramnad and Mysore against Madurai's forces.

But as time passed, the Dutch started doubting the likelihood of Chengamaladasa becoming Tanjavur's new king, fearing that if Ekoji conquered the kingdom he would care more about the land's riches than the prince's ambitions. True enough, whereas in June Chengamaladasa wrote to the VOC that it was a matter of weeks before the Tanjavur capital would be captured for him, in July he asked the Dutch

¹⁶ NA, VOC, no. 1295, ff. 127-7v, 129-33v, 686-6v; no. 1298, ff. 286-7v, 569, 572, 575v; no. 1302, ff. 379-80v, 382v-3, 611v-12: correspondence between Nagapattinam, Teganapatnam, St. Thomé, Pulicat, Colombo, Batavia, Van Goens, and Bijapur authorities, Sept.-Nov. 1673, June 1674. See also Jeyaraj and Young, *Hindu-Christian Epistolary Self-Disclosures*, 265.

¹⁷ NA, VOC, no. 1302, ff. 614-14v, 615v-16v: letters from Chengamaladasa to Van Goens at Nagapattinam, June 1674; Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time*, 131-2; Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, 325-6; Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. II, 200-1; Mahalingam, *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, vol. II, 345-6; Vriddhagirisan, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, 162-3; Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 166-7; Srinivasan, *Maratha Rule in the Carnatic*, 127-9; Sathianathaier, *Tamilaham in the 17th Century*, 90-1.

for protection. For in the meantime, Madurai's army had chased its opponents from Tanjavur and Ekoji was reportedly bribed to stop supporting the prince.

Following his request to the Dutch, it seems Chengamaladasa stayed with them at Nagapattinam, probably still accompanied by Venkanna. The VOC made preparations to ship the prince to Jaffna on Ceylon and grant him the revenues of some lands there. This did not materialise, however, as later in 1674 Ekoji attacked Madurai-occupied Tanjavur again and with the help of Ramnad, Ariyalur, and Udaiyarpalayam took control of the entire kingdom except the capital. This gave Chengamaladasa new hope of getting his family's throne and his companion Venkanna was even installed as regent of Tanjavur's coastal areas.

As the VOC expected, Ekoji proved to have other priorities than the continuation of the Nayaka house, and started to collect revenues and appoint his own local officials. Much of the year 1675 saw military manoeuvres between the various powers in Tanjavur that largely maintained the status quo. But in November the Dutch noted that the Bijapur sultan became increasingly annoyed with Ekoji's self-willed behaviour and moreover reached an agreement with Madurai that it could keep Tanjavur in return for a tribute. Summoned home, Ekoji however decided to stay and fight newly sent Bijapur forces.

Perhaps because of this, in December it was reported that Venkanna had convinced Ekoji and Madurai's governor in Tanjavur town, Muttu Linga alias Alakadri Nayaka, to join forces. Aspiring to rule Tanjavur autonomously, Muttu Linga had grown estranged from Madurai's King Chokkanatha, his elder brother or stepbrother, and could well use a powerful ally. But he fared badly after this alleged deal, because around January 1676 Ekoji and his troops entered the capital and gradually assumed power over the entire kingdom, forcing Muttu Linga to flee.

As the VOC wrote, Venkanna initially remained "land regent," while Chengamaladasa's accession to the throne apparently was postponed and in the end never occurred or lasted for a short time only. Indeed, by September Ekoji had arrested Venkanna, suspected of plotting with Ariyalur, Udaiyarpalayam, and other parties wishing Chengamaladasa to become king.¹⁸ Still, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Venkanna served as a broker for the Dutch embassy to Ekoji in late 1676

¹⁸ NA, VOC, no. 1292, ff. 390-90v, 393; no. 1298, ff. 274-4v, 276v-7v, 325, 346v-7v, 362v-3, 369-9v, 500-500v, 506, 577v, 583v; no. 1299, ff. 133v-4, 139-40v; no. 1302, ff. 614-14v, 615v-16v; no. 1304, ff. 271-1v, 327v; no. 1308, ff. 20v-1v, 160v-1, 166, 476v, 480, 483-3v, 486-6v, 489, 493v-4; no. 1313, ff. 349-50v, 361v-2; no. 1321, ff. 881v-83, 884v, 887v, 888v: correspondence between Nagapattinam, Colombo, Batavia, Van Goens, and Chengamaladasa, Jan., May-Aug. 1674, Apr., June-July, Oct.-Dec. 1675, Aug.-Sept. 1676, Nagapattinam proceedings, July, Nov.-Dec. 1674, report on the Madurai coast, Mar. 1674, report on Tanjavur mission to Nagapattinam, Aug. 1676; Vink, "Encounters on the Opposite Coast," 290. For a partial translation of one of these documents, see Subrahmanyam, *Penumbra Visions*, 145. See also Martin, *India in the 17th Century*, vol. 1, pt. II, 511.

and early 1677, but he seems to have disappeared from both the Tanjavur court and the VOC archives soon after.

These Dutch reports on the developments following Madurai's conquest of Tanjavur differ from local accounts such as the *Tañjāvūri āndhra rājula caritra*. Most notably, the latter relate that Chengamaladasa and his nurse went straight to Nagapattinam, where they were sheltered by an unnamed, wealthy Chetti merchant and later joined by Venkanna. Further, after Bijapur's General Ekoji drove Madurai out of Tanjavur, he withdrew his troops and Chengamaladasa was installed as Tanjavur's Nayaka. The young king then appointed as his prime minister and commander not his experienced aide Venkanna but the Chetti merchant from Nagapattinam, who turned out to be his nurse's lover. Dissatisfied, Venkanna invited Ekoji to return to Tanjavur and take the kingdom himself. The general was initially reluctant, but then received news that the Bijapur sultan had passed away and his land was taken by the Mughals.

The *Bhomsale vaṃśa caritra* adds that the deity of a nearby temple revealed to Ekoji that he was destined to rule Tanjavur. The general now accepted Venkanna's offer and dethroned Chengamaladasa, making him flee to Ariyalur or Mysore. Still, Venkanna was considered a traitor by Ekoji and forced to escape as well, spending his remaining days in obscurity in Madurai.¹⁹

It appears that local texts depict Ekoji's role in much more positive terms than Dutch documents. Rather than ignoring Chengamaladasa's claims, taking Tanjavur for himself, and forsaking his Bijapur overlord—as the VOC reported he did—the general would have helped the prince regain his ancestral kingdom, not accepted Tanjavur's reign until he was pressed by a local courtier or deity, and only assumed autonomy when his master died and his home kingdom was lost. These accounts may therefore have served to justify the Bhonsles' rule over Tanjavur. Admittedly, VOC records do not completely rule out some elements in the local texts, in particular Chengamaladasa's fortunes. Dutch accounts of six to eight decades later say

¹⁹ Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time*, 130-5; Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, 325-7; Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. II, 200-3; Subrahmanyam, *Penumbra Visions*, 145-7; BL/AAS, MT, class III, no. 87: "The historycal account of the Tonjore," ff. 82v-3v, 91-4v; Mahalingam, *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, vol. II, 346-7; Vriddhagirisan, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, 162-5; Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 168-71, 279-80; Srinivasan, *Maratha Rule in the Carnatic*, 130-5; Sathianathaier, *Tamiḷaham in the 17th Century*, 92-6. See also: Jeyaraj and Young, *Hindu-Christian Epistolary Self-Disclosures*, 265-6; BL/AAS, MG, no. 1, pt. 8: "The Cheritee or actions of the Vadaka-Rajahs of Tanjore, Trichinopully & Madura," f. 73; no. 4, pt. 4: "Mootiah's chronological & historical account of the modern kings of Madura," f. 66; MT, class III, no. 88: "Account of the Tanjore Samastanums," ff. 137-8; OOV, no. 72, pt. 17, "Brief account, by a Trichinopoly Brahman, of Tanjore, Madura, and Trichinopoly ...," ff. 129-30 (related in 1761 by a Brahmin at Tiruchirappalli to William Petrie, see f. 127).

he was in fact proclaimed king, before Ekoji's own monarchical aspirations made him flee to Mysore.²⁰ Yet, contemporary VOC documents seem silent on the prince's accession to the throne. Thus, if Chengamaladasa ever reigned over Tanjavur, it was a brief, insignificant affair, not even noted at that time by the Dutch in nearby Nagapattinam.

More speculatively, one might wonder if the anonymous Nagapattinam merchant who first protected Chengamaladasa and whose later influence at court was resented and terminated—as described in south Indian sources—symbolised the role of the VOC. After all, the Dutch twice willingly offered shelter to the Nayaka prince, the second time in Nagapattinam itself, and supported his ambitions to win Tanjavur back. These political activities of the Company were considered inappropriate by Bijapur's authorities and perhaps by Tanjavur's Bhonsle court too. In any case, the VOC's short but important role in Chengamaladasa's career was unique for Vijayanagara's heirs. Never before or after were the Dutch so closely involved in the court politics of these kingdoms.

After this episode, the VOC kept reporting about Chengamaladasa for another half a century. For some time, his chances of becoming king still seemed fair, since in the following decades Tanjavur's neighbours undertook several efforts to dislodge the Bhonsles and replace them with the former Nayaka line. In the late 1670s, a number of coalitions variously including Madurai, Ikkeri, Mysore, Ramnad, Ariyalur, Udaiyarpalayam, Senji (now under Maratha rule), and Bijapur allegedly prepared attacks on Ekoji, although some parties switched allegiance to him. In 1686, together with some Madurai courtiers, Ramnad, Senji, and even Bhonsle Tanjavur itself, Chengamaladasa took part in a conspiracy to remove Madurai's Muttu Virappa Nayaka III, probably hoping this would somehow further his interests. Around the same time, Mysore tried to convince the Mughals to help re-establish Tanjavur's Nayakas, and Madurai and Ramnad were thought to have similar intentions.

These endeavours continued far into the eighteenth century. About 1700, a plot by Mysore and Madurai to enthrone Chengamaladasa was rumoured to have failed only because the bribed gate-keeper of Tanjavur town was betrayed and subsequently beheaded. In 1707 Chengamaladasa, now living in Madurai's capital Tiruchirappalli, himself approached the rulers of Madurai and Ramnad for support. Finally, around 1709 the Nawab of Arcot offered to reinstall the prince in return for one million *pardaos*. None of these plans worked out, however, and the Bhonsle dynasty was to stay in Tanjavur. It appears that by the late 1720s Chengamaladasa had passed away, probably having lived into his sixties, for in 1729 Mysore, Madurai,

²⁰ NA, VOC, no. 2443, ff. 2685-6: final report of Elias Guillot, Sept. 1738; *Beknopte historie*, 96.

and Arcot attacked Tanjavur, again unsuccessfully, now to install a grandson of the last real Nayaka ruler, also named Vijayaraghava.²¹

But although Chengamaladasa's line never sat on the throne again, his house remained important in the region's dynastic constellation for another reason. Even after losing their kingdom, he and his relatives were apparently considered royals, as some rulers still wished to marry the family's princesses. In the early 1700s, the king of Kandy on Ceylon asked for the hand of a daughter of Chengamaladasa. In 1710, however, Madurai's Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayaka abducted her (or another daughter destined for Kandy) from Chengamaladasa's residence at Tiruchirappalli and kept her as what the Dutch called a concubine (*bijwif*). After the refusal of Chengamaladasa's father Vijayaraghava to let a princess marry into Madurai's dynasty—one cause of the Tanjavur Nayakas' demise—this seizure and concubinage of Chengamaladasa's daughter must have been utterly degrading.

The *Taijāvūri āndhra rājula caritra* ends on a somewhat similar note, stating that Chengamaladasa's grandson offered his sister as a bride to Vijayaranga Chokkanatha, an act also mentioned in VOC documents of the early 1740s. Another local text speaks of a wedding of the Kandyan king with two great-granddaughters of Chengamaladasa. Perhaps underscoring the importance of the Tanjavur family's royal blood, the Dutch wrote that Madurai's very last Nayaka ruler, Vijayakumara (reigning in the early 1750s), was a member of Chengamaladasa's "branch" (*stam*). So it seems Vijayakumara had female ancestors belonging to Tanjavur's Nayaka house, who were regarded by the Madurai court as lawful wives and whose progeny qualified as potential monarchs.²²

Despite this status, Chengamaladasa's line faded into obscurity. It is said, however, that at various moments the rulers of Madurai, Mysore, Pudukkottai, and Kandy granted the family protection and some lands. Later, one descendant

²¹ NA, VOC, no. 1316, ff. 307v-9v, 313-13v, 316, 326v, 330, 332, 336v, 340v, 408v, 414-14v, 418-18v, 585; no. 1323, f. 437; no. 1448, ff. 323-3v; no. 1454, f. 1010; no. 1633, f. 146v; no. 1638, f. 118; no. 2135, ff. 131-2, 366; no. 8595, ff. 134-5; no. 8923, ff. 315-16: correspondence between Nagapattinam, Pulicat, Colombo, Batavia, Van Goens, and VOC envoy Viraraja at Tanjavur, Nov.-Dec. 1676, Jan.-Feb. 1677, Jan. 1678, Aug. 1688, Jan. 1689, Apr., Nov. 1700, Feb. 1707, Feb. 1708, July, Sept. 1729; Vink, *Mission to Madurai*, 63, 312 (n. 196), 470 (n. 226), 480-1 (n. 264); idem, "Encounters on the Opposite Coast," 376, 379; *Beknopte historie*, 97; Coolhaas *et al.*, *Generale Missiven*, vol. VI, 497, 651; Subrahmanyam, *Penumbral Visions*, 150-1; Vriddhagirisian, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, 167; Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 198.

²² NA, VOC, no. 2457, f. 1028; no. 8595, ff. 134-5; no. 8925, ff. 145, 147-50: letter from Colombo to Batavia, Feb. 1707, letter and report of Kandy envoys received at Nagapattinam, Feb. 1710, letter from Ramnad to Tuticorin, Aug. 1739; Cornelis Joan Simons, *Memoir of Cornelis Joan Simons, Governor and Director of Ceylon, for His Successor, Hendrick Becker, 1707*, ed. Sophia Anthonisz (Colombo, 1914), 7; Coolhaas *et al.*, *Generale Missiven*, vol. X, 770; Mahalingam, *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, vol. II, 347-8; Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance*, 308-9; idem, *Textures of Time*, 135; Vriddhagirisian, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, 166-7. See also Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom*, 33-8, 40-2.

was reported to still dwell near Tiruchirappalli, at the town of Jambukeshvaram across the Kaveri River.²³ This may well have been the last reference to offspring of Tanjavur's Nayaka house.

Bhonsles of Tanjavur

The fate of the Nayakas' successors in Tanjavur was very different. In the course of the eighteenth century, the Bhonsles increasingly came under the influence of Arcot and the British. The last ruler discussed in Chapter 2, Tuljaji Bhonsle II, was even briefly deposed by these parties in 1773. After an interlude of Arcot rule, Tuljaji was restored in 1776 as a rather powerless king, tributary to Arcot and guarded by British troops stationed at the capital.²⁴ Predeceased by his children, before his death in 1787 he adopted Sarabhoji Bhonsle II from a distant collateral branch as his successor. But since Sarabhoji was only about ten years old, the throne temporarily passed to Tuljaji's elder half-brother Amarasimha Bhonsle (r. 1787-98), son of Pratapasimha Bhonsle and a so-called left-handed concubine. Amarasimha soon grew dissatisfied with his role as regent of the heir apparent and convinced the British—ever ready to strengthen their hold on the kingdom—to proclaim him a fully-fledged king. Thus, a succession struggle ensued between Amarasimha, on the one hand, and Sarabhoji and the late Tuljaji's close relatives, on the other. Around 1793 the latter faction even left Tanjavur for British territory. Finally, in 1798 the British replaced Amarasimha with the now adult Sarabhoji (r. 1798-1832).

The new ruler presided over a period of great cultural and scholarly efflorescence and the dynastic chronicle *Bhonsale vamśa caritra* was composed under his patronage. But at the same time, treaties with the British reduced the Bhonsles to mere titular monarchs, incorporated into the colonial administration. In 1799 Tanjavur was made part of the British Madras Presidency in exchange for a yearly allowance and the honours of a thirteen-gun salute and the title "His Highness" instead of "His Excellency." Yet, royal authority now did not extend much further than the capital's fort area. Upon Sarabhoji's passing in 1832, he was succeeded by his only son, Shivaji Bhonsle II (r. 1832-55).

When this ruler died without male issue in 1855, the British applied the Doctrine of Lapse, stating that in the absence of a lawful successor dynastic rule was to be

²³ Taylor, *Examination and Analysis of the Mackenzie Manuscripts*, 128; Mahalingam, *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, vol. II, 347-8; Venkasami Row, *A Manual of the District of Tanjore*, 757-8; Vriddhagirisian, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, 166-7.

²⁴ For a recent discussion of these events, see Pimmanus Wibulsilp, "Nawabi Karnatak: Muhammad Ali Khan in the Making of a Mughal Successor State in Pre-Colonial South India, 1749-1795" (unpublished dissertation, Leiden University, 2019), 300-3, 313-15.

abolished. Since Shivaji's widow and daughter were not recognised as heirs, the Bhonsle house was thus pensioned off in 1857. Many of its possessions were confiscated, to be returned later apart from what were considered royal insignia: "state" jewels, swords, and other regalia. Shivaji's private estate remained in family hands, but it soon became the subject of disputes between various relatives. Although the Tanjavur palace was declared state property, the Bhonsles were allowed to stay there. After Shivaji's death, the line was continued by the adoption of his sister's grandson, Sarabhoji III. A number of the latter's offspring by two wives have continued to live in parts of the palace until today.²⁵

Nayakas of Madurai

The demise of Madurai's Nayaka house was in some respects similar to that of its Tanjavur namesake: dethronement, followed by many, largely unsuccessful attempts to regain the kingdom, and eventually an increasingly marginal position. Chapter 2 has shown how Madurai's own line of secondary kings contributed to the dynasty's downfall. Descending from Kumara Rangappa, nephew of Tirumalai Nayaka (r. c. 1623-59), this collateral branch of the house seems to have long been contented with its subordinate position. Queen Minakshi's accession to the throne in 1732, however, apparently incited the then secondary ruler Bangaru Tirumalai to question the queen's legitimacy and contest her position.

Local texts say that Minakshi, perhaps to win Bangaru Tirumalai over, adopted his son Vijayakumara as her future successor. But Bangaru Tirumalai, backed by parties inside and outside Madurai, grew more and more influential, while the queen appears to have been relegated to a mostly ceremonial position. When around the mid-1730s Arcot's forces entered the region to collect tribute, Minakshi and Bangaru Tirumalai each attempted to involve the commanders of these troops in their struggle. One of them, Safdar Ali Khan, son of Arcot's Nawab, initially

²⁵ Subramanian, *The Maratha Rajas of Tanjore*, 61-3, 66-7, 69-70, 72-6; Srinivasan, *Maratha Rule in the Carnatic*, 301-7, 314-15, 318-25, 329-34, 338-40; Subrahmanyam, *Penumbra Visions*, 151-3, 156-78, 183; Ramanujam, *Unheard Voices*, ch. 11; Venkasami Row, *A Manual of the District of Tanjore*, 829-32; Hemingway, *Tanjore Gazetteer*, vol. I, 51-2, 192; Usha R. Vijailakshmi, "Change and Transformation in the Lives of Thanjavur Maratha Queens and the Doctrine of Lapse (1856-1862)," *Journal of Indian History and Culture* 24 (2018); Bhosale, *Rajah Serfoji – II*, 38-67, 120-30, 152-3; Bhosle, *Contributions of Thanjavur Maratha Kings*, 219-38, 298-9; Suresh, *The Tanjavur Marathas*, 27; Hickey, *The Tanjore Mahratta Principality*, 126-42, 145-59, 166-72, xvi-cxiii; Chakravarthy and Sathyanathan, *Thanjavur: A Cultural History*, 30-8; Nahla Nainar, "An Uncommon Prince," *The Hindu* (29 Aug. 2014); serfojimmemoorialhall.com; www.royalark.net/India4/tanjore.htm. For family affairs under Tuljaji II's reign, see BL/AAS, MG, no. 26, pt. 10 or 11: "A short account of the Maharratta reigning family at Tanjour," ff. 236-7 (probably translated from a Marathi text of 1784, see f. 231).

favoured Bangaru Tirumalai. Soon after, however, the other commander, Chanda Sahib, son-in-law of the Nawab, promised to support the queen. But even though Minakshi and Bangaru Tirumalai now allegedly reconciled and the queen paid a large sum to Chanda Sahib to safeguard her interests, the latter seized the whole kingdom and imprisoned Minakshi. Bangaru Tirumalai then fled, first to Madurai town and next to Shivagangai.²⁶

VOC records add that Madurai's instability in the early 1730s was not only caused by the rivalry between Minakshi and Bangaru Tirumalai. As least as important, according to the Dutch, was the role of Naranappa Ayyan ("Naranappaijen"), referred to as Madurai's prime minister. Disgruntled because he was removed from his office, in 1733 he turned to Mysore and with its support conquered large parts of Madurai. This led several chiefs in the coastal areas to revolt against the central court too. Moreover, amidst this turmoil the governor of Tirunelveli or "great land regent of the lowlands," Alagappa Mudaliyar, was killed by a local chieftain, whereupon a violent dispute ensued between the regent's brother and his newly installed successor.

This was the state of affairs when Arcot's commanders appeared in Madurai—supposedly to support Minakshi against Bangaru Tirumalai, but probably also considering the kingdom's disorder an opportunity to extend their influence. Thus, after Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib laid siege to Tiruchirappalli around early 1736, on 26 April Minakshi was forced to surrender the capital. The commanders confiscated her treasures, plundered the town, and detained the queen, her influential brothers, and several courtiers. While Safdar Ali seems to have reinstalled Minakshi in early 1737, Arcot reportedly more or less annexed the kingdom in September, leasing its various parts to revenue collectors and providing the queen with an annual grant.

In the meantime, as the Dutch recorded, Arcot's troops had turned south to the Nayakas' old capital, Madurai town, conquering it around June 1737 from the queen's opponent Bangaru Tirumalai. His presence there could have been part of a plan devised by Ramnad, Shivagangai, and the Palaiyakkarars (exactly seventy-two of them, as the Dutch were told) to enthrone Bangaru Tirumalai's twenty-two-year old son—in all likelihood Vijayakumara, earlier adopted by Minakshi. By tradition,

²⁶ Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. I, 40, 206, vol. II, 37-43, 232-5; Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 232-4; K. Rajayyan, "Fall of the Nayaks of Madurai," *Journal of Indian History* XLV, III (1967), 807-12; idem, "Moghal Conquest of Trichinopoly," *Journal of Indian History* XLIX, I-III (1971), 116-21; idem, *History of Madurai*, 62-70; Kadhirlvel, *A History of the Maravas*, 79-80; Mahalingam, *Readings in South Indian History*, 175-6, 182-5; Rangachari, "The History of the Naik Kingdom of Madura," *Indian Antiquary* XLVI, 213-19, 237-40; Nelson, *The Madura Country*, vol. III, 251-9; BL/AAS, MT, class III, no. 25: "History of the former Gentoo Rajahs who ruled over the Pandyan Mandalom," ff. 33v-6v.

coronations took place in Madurai town and apparently several parties had already gathered there for the occasion, considering the fact that when Arcot's forces arrived, Bangaru Tirumalai and Vijayakumara fled to Ramnad together with that kingdom's *Daḷavāy* (general) Vairavanatha Servaikkarakar. Local texts say father and son escaped to Shivagangai instead, which may indeed have been their eventual destination because in 1738 the VOC wrote that various local chiefs backing Vijayakumara were headed by Shivagangai's ruler Sasivarna Udaya Tevar. The next few years saw several confrontations between this alliance and Arcot's army, none of which resulted in a decisive victory for either side.²⁷

All the while, Minakshi seems to have remained Madurai's formal queen in Tiruchirappalli—or at least a Dutch document of September 1738 and a local inscription of February 1739 recording a land grant still refer to her as such. But whatever power she held under Arcot's supervision, this appears to have ended by mid-1739 because around that time it was reported Safdar Ali would make Bangaru Tirumalai king of Madurai at Tiruchirappalli.²⁸ According to south Indian texts, Minakshi poisoned herself, feeling betrayed by Chanda Sahib, who had not kept his promise to protect her.²⁹ Perhaps her demise prompted Safdar Ali to install Bangaru Tirumalai as the next puppet ruler. But if the latter actually did sit on the throne, his reign was short-lived.³⁰

In 1740 a Maratha army from west India invaded the Tamil region and with the help of Mysore, Tanjavur, Ramnad, and Shivagangai captured Tiruchirappalli in March 1741. Arcot's forces were expelled and Chanda Sahib was confined. Local

²⁷ For a description of these clashes, see Bes, "Friendship as Long as the Sun and Moon Shine," 51-3.

²⁸ NA, VOC, no. 2386, ff. 35-5v, 1027-8, 1221-2; no. 2387, ff. 93-4; no. 2403, ff. 1937-7v, 1939v-43v, 1946-7, 1965-5v; no. 2412, ff. 60, 1540-1, 1982, 2137 (2nd numeration); no. 2428, f. 340v; no. 2431, ff. 1932-7, 1939-40v; no. 2443, ff. 2682, 362-3 (last ff. 2nd numeration); no. 2445, ff. 1618-19; no. 2457, ff. 1017-18, 1027v-8; no. 2459, ff. 1566v, 1599v, 1601; no. 2470, f. 71; no. 2473, ff. 99-100; no. 2492, ff. 1472v, 1475; no. 11306, ff. 48-54: (secret) letters from Nagapattinam to Batavia, from Tuticorin to Colombo, from Kilakkarai to Tuticorin, Feb.-Mar., July, Sept., Dec. 1736, Mar., May-Oct. 1737, Jan., Mar.-Apr., July, Oct.-Dec. 1738, May, July-Aug. 1739, report by Ceylon Governor Van Imhof concerning trade on Madurai's coast, 1738, final report of Elias Guillot, Sept. 1738, Colombo proceedings, Sept. 1739, letters from Ramnad to Tuticorin, Aug. 1739, Feb., Nov. 1740, description of the Nayakas of Madurai by Holst, 1762; Schreuder, *Memoir of Jan Schreuder*, 36; Coolhaas et al., *Generale Missiven*, vol. X, 12, 104-5; *Beknopte historie*, 89; BL/AAS, OI, no. I, pt. 22: "Kings of Tritchanopolly from 1509," f. 240; Mahalingam, *Readings in South Indian History*, 184-5. See also Bes, "The Ambiguities of Female Rule in Nayaka South India."

²⁹ See: Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. II, 235; BL/AAS, MT, class III, no. 82: "Account of the Rajas who held the government of Madura," f. 113v. A tradition recorded by the Dutch has it that Chanda Sahib imprisoned Minakshi in a Tiruchirappalli temple "built on a steep height" (probably the Rock Temple or a nearby shrine), where she died of misery. See NA, VOC, no. 11306, ff. 53-4 (note): description of the Nayakas of Madurai by Holst, 1762.

³⁰ My earlier conclusion that Vijayakumara reigned over Madurai for some years from 1739 onward is most probably incorrect. See Bes, "The Setupatis, the Dutch, and Other Bandits," 561-2.

sources say Bangaru Tirumalai had in fact invited the Marathas to help him get Madurai back, but the VOC noted they took their time to decide who should be the new king. The Dutch expected that this position would eventually be granted to whoever paid the Marathas the most. Meanwhile, it was said, Ramnad consulted with the Palaiyakkarars and other rulers about the same issue.³¹

All in all, from the mid-1730s onward a wide range of parties—including Arcot, Ramnad, Shivagangai, the Palaiyakkarars, and the Marathas—sought to increase their power in Madurai, supporting various rather powerless pretenders to the Nayaka throne. Exemplary was Ramnad's Sivakumara Muttu Vijaya Raghunatha Setupati (or the court faction around him), who in 1739, in a letter to the Dutch, referred to what was probably Bangaru Tirumalai as follows:

The Naijk recently crowned at Tritchinepalij [Tiruchirappalli], with whom I maintain such a close friendship that I can say his Tritchinepalij court with the entire realm [*rijk*] of Madure is mine ...³²

The Madurai town chronicle *Māduraittala varalāru* declares that in the same year—as if to bolster his claim—the Setupati, together with the Nayaka Prince Vijayakumara, removed the deity statues of Madurai's Minakshi Sundareshvara Temple and brought them to Manamadurai in his own territory, where they were kept for two years. This seems to be another case in which the roles of overlord and vassal were largely reversed. Madurai's dynasty had now become dependent on Ramnad and placing deities of the Nayakas under the Setupati's protection may have served as a confirmation of this changed relationship. Indeed, in 1740 the Dutch governor of Ceylon, Gustaaf Willem van Imhoff, literally spoke of the Nayaka family's "dependence" (*dependentie*) on Ramnad.³³

In the end, the Marathas did not install a new Nayaka in Madurai but appointed a governor of their own. Already in August 1743, however, they were chased from the kingdom by troops of the Nizam of Hyderabad, south India's

³¹ NA, VOC, no. 2523, ff. 1399-1413v; no. 11306, ff. 54-5; letters from Tuticorin to Colombo, Feb.-Aug. 1741, description of the Nayakas of Madurai by Holst, 1762; Coolhaas *et al.*, *Generale Missiven*, vol. X, 528, 886-7; Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. I, 40, vol. II, 43-7, 245-8; Mahalingam, *Readings in South Indian History*, 176-7; Rajayyan, "Fall of the Nayaks of Madurai," 812-13; idem, *History of Madurai*, 70-81; Kadhivel, *A History of the Maravas*, 80-1; Rangachari, "The History of the Naik Kingdom of Madura," *Indian Antiquary* XLVI, 239-43; Nelson, *The Madura Country*, vol. III, 259-64.

³² NA, VOC, no. 2457, f. 1028: letter from Ramnad to Tuticorin, Aug. 1739 (translation mine).

³³ Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 378-9; NA, VOC, no. 2482, f. 1878v: final report of Gustaaf Willem van Imhoff, Mar. 1740; Gustaaf Willem van Imhoff, *Memoir Left by Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff, Governor and Director of Ceylon, to His Successor, Willem Maurits Bruynink, 1740*, ed. Sophia Pieters (Colombo, 1911), 15. See also Davis, "Indian Art Objects as Loot."

increasingly autonomous Mughal governor. The VOC wrote that one of the Nizam's commanders had approached Ramnad for military assistance, purportedly to re-establish Madurai's Nayakas. Other sources say that Bangaru Tirumalai and his son Vijayakumara visited the Nizam, who promised to enthrone the family again.

In either case, matters soon turned out very differently. While waiting in Arcot to be installed as king, Bangaru Tirumalai was poisoned, supposedly by the Nawab. Thereupon Vijayakumara fled again to Shivagangai, where a marital alliance was allegedly established between his line and the local ruler. However, Bangaru Tirumalai's death did not signal the dynasty's final demise. Chanda Sahib, detained by the Marathas since their conquest of Madurai in 1741, was released about 1748. An enemy of the then Nawab of Arcot, he launched another campaign to occupy Madurai town. To win the population's support, Chanda Sahib's local representatives appointed Vijayakumara as the new Nayaka.

Now probably in his mid-thirties, the prince thus finally ascended Madurai's throne, but sensing a plot at court to get rid of him, he is said to have abdicated around 1751 and gone back to Shivagangai. He soon returned for one last time in about 1753, however, after Ramnad's and Shivagangai's troops wrested Madurai town from Mysore, which had recently taken it. Vijayakumara was again installed as king, only to be toppled after a year or so when Chanda Sahib's forces seized Madurai. Once more, the prince fled to Shivagangai, whereupon he was assigned the rule of a few villages, first around Vellikkurichi, ten miles south-west of Shivagangai town, and subsequently in Ramnad and the Palaiyakkarar chieftaincy of Gandamanayakanur.

In 1754, some Palaiyakkarars requested the British to re-establish Madurai's Nayakas, but this was obstructed by the Nawab of Arcot. In 1757 followed another unsuccessful attempt by these chiefs together with Mysore. In 1777 Vijayakumara himself made an appeal to the British but passed away in the same year, at about sixty years old. He left a son named Vishvanatha, who with an elaborate ceremony was allegedly declared Madurai's new Nayaka by a number of Palaiyakkarars. Although no other party seems to have acknowledged this, later Vishvanatha and his offspring were again granted land around Vellikkurichi, where they settled down.³⁴

³⁴ NA, VOC, no. 2599, ff. 2316-16v, 2332-3; no. 2812, f. 230v; no. 11306, ff. 64-7: letters from Tuticorin to Colombo, from Colombo to Batavia, Apr., Aug.-Sept. 1743, Jan. 1754, description of the Nayakas of Madurai by Holst, 1762; Loten, *Memoir of Joan Gideon Loten*, 12-15; Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. I, 41-2, vol. II, 47-9, 247-59; BL/AAS, MT, class III, no. 25: "History of the former Gentoo Rajahs who ruled over the Pandyan Mandalom," ff. 37-41v; class III, no. 82: "Account of the Rajas who held the government of Madura," ff. 114v-26v; Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 380-1; Rajayyan, "Fall of the Nayaks of Madurai," 813-15; idem, *History of Madurai*, 81-153; Mahalingam, *Readings in South Indian History*, 177-81; Kadhivel, *A History of the Maravas*, 81-96; Rangachari, "The

No more Nayaka ever reigned over Madurai, although Vijayakumara's descendants initially maintained their claim to the kingdom. Several texts on the dynasty's history collected by assistants of Colin Mackenzie in the early 1800s conclude with petitions to the British. Probably mostly authored by Vishvanatha's son Bangaru Tirumalai—who took over his father's place as family head in 1800—these sections urged the colonial government to recognise his rights to the throne. Some passages specifically stress the legitimacy of the Nayaka's collateral line he belonged to, detailing his genealogy back to Kumara Rangappa (appointed Madurai's secondary ruler around 1660) in the male line and to an elder sister of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayaka (r. 1707-32) in the female line.

These texts further state that since Queen Minakshi had borne no son, Prince Vijayakumara was fully entitled to become king, as the kingdom's "law" dictated and was supposedly also agreed on by Minakshi herself. Besides, the Marathas, the Nizam, the Nawab, Chanda Sahib's representatives, the kings of Ramnad and Shivagangai, and the Palaiyakkarars had all made efforts to restore the dynasty to its rightful place. Also, as Bangaru Tirumalai wrote, rulers like those of Pudukkottai, Shivagangai, and Ramnad, and several Palaiyakkarars still respected his line's status, personally welcoming him, presenting gifts such as jewellery and clothes, and erecting arches in his honour. Obviously, these pleas and arguments failed to impress the British and so the Nayaka family stayed at Vellikkurichi,³⁵ where they lived at least until the 1820s and probably into the twentieth century, reportedly still keeping record of their royal ancestry.³⁶

Setupatis of Ramnad

Finally, the history of Ramnad's Setupatis after the 1760s is somewhat similar to that of Tanjavur's Bhonsles: a dynasty that long maintained some of its status but soon lost much of its power. As explained in Chapter 2, in June 1772 Muttu Ramalinga Setupati—like Tuljaji Bhonsle II—was dethroned by an alliance of Arcot and the British. After the Nawab of Arcot ruled Ramnad until 1780 and next

History of the Naik Kingdom of Madura," *Indian Antiquary* XLVI, 243-74; Nelson, *The Madura Country*, vol. III, 265-72. Most of these sources and literature are contradictory with respect to Vijayakumara's regnal dates, and the years given here are therefore approximate.

³⁵ See also the footnote about this Bangaru Tirumalai in the Madurai section in Chapter 4.

³⁶ BL/AAS, MM, no. 109, pt. 37: "The humble representation of ... Bangaroo Teeroomaly Nack," f. 1 (c. 1800); MT, class III, no. 25: "History of the former Gentoo Rajahs who ruled over the Pandyan Mandalom," ff. 41-1v (1803?); class III, no. 82: "Account of the Rajas who held the government of Madura," ff. 109-34v (1806); Rangachari, "The History of the Naik Kingdom of Madura," *Indian Antiquary* XLVI, 274-5; Francis, *Madura Gazetteer*, 59-60; Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol. II, 259-61; Seshradri, "The Setupatis of Ramnad," 131-2.

Mysore's Haidar Ali Khan briefly occupied it, Muttu Ramalinga was reinstalled around April 1781.

While Ramnad remained tributary to Arcot, in the following decades it increasingly came under the sway of the British. Indeed, in 1792 the Nawab formally ceded the kingdom to them and in March 1795 the Setupati was deposed again, charged by his sister Mangaleshvari Nachiar with oppressive rule and accused by the British of bellicosity and arrears in tribute. Granting him a pension and transferring him to Tiruchirappalli and later Madras, the British now took over Ramnad's government. They restored it to Mangaleshvari Nachiar in February 1803, but she was to reign as a *zamīndār* (revenue-paying landholder), not as a fully-fledged monarch.

Like the rulers of neighbouring Shivagangai, the Setupatis were thus incorporated into the colonial administration and reduced to landlords of what was now called the Ramnad Estate. In this new incarnation, the dynasty survived well, although the nineteenth century witnessed a frequency of succession struggles reminiscent of the kingdom's earlier period. Several Setupatis died without leaving sons, which caused fierce, prolonged confrontations, leading to adoptions from collateral branches, minor pretenders to the throne, and three consecutive female reigns. But rather than through violent clashes, these conflicts were now solved by way of extensive litigation under Anglo-Indian law. The British also mediated in conflicts between the Setupati house and the authorities of Rameshvaram's Ramanathasvami Temple, resulting in a decreasing influence of the dynasty in temple affairs.

In the 1870s, the line was honoured with the hereditary title *rāja* (king) because of its loyalty to the colonial rulers. During the decades around India's independence, when the *zamīndār* system was abolished, the then Setupati entered regional politics, serving as a minister and member of the Madras State parliament. Until today, the family has been staying in the palace complex at Ramanathapuram, where in 1979 the current Setupati was installed.³⁷

³⁷ Price, *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India*, chs 2-6, 190-3, 202; Seshradri, "The Setupatis of Ramnad," 128-82 and between 182-3; Thiruvengkatachari, *The Setupatis of Ramnad*, 54-60, 71-88; Kadhivel, *A History of the Maravas*, 159-69, 181-6, 190-3, 202-3; Rajayyan, *History of Madurai*, chs VII-XI, especially 258-62, 276-8, 329-333; Breckenridge, "From Protector to Litigant," 76-88, 94-106; Bes and Branfoot, "From All Quarters of the Indian World"; Sethuraman, *Ramesvaram Temple*, 233-41; Nelson, *The Madura Country*, vol. IV, ch. VII; Raja Ram Rao, *Ramnad Manual*, 242-72; J.L.W., "Chronicles of the Marava Country," 129-31.

Thus, one by one, the houses of Vijayanagara and its successors lost their kingdoms, gradually or instantly, being deposed, pensioned off, or demoted to landlords. Many aspects of court politics analysed in this study's previous chapters remained important factors during this process. Succession struggles, powerful courtiers, protocol and honour, and external politics were all instrumental in the dynasties' demises and often kept playing a role in the colonial era.

The royal families maintained their claims to their ancestral kingdoms for considerable periods, partly supporting their aspirations with references to entitlements and honours received from the erstwhile Vijayanagara emperors. In south India's dynastic constellation, the empire served as a source of authority well into the nineteenth century, although this was only sometimes recognised by the then ruling powers. It is perhaps striking that of the six royal families discussed above, precisely the three Nayaka houses—of Ikkeri, Tanjavur, and Madurai—lost their kingdoms completely. Although they continued their quests for their former thrones under colonial rule, their rights were not acknowledged by the British. It is tempting but probably far-fetched to assume this was related to the fact that these dynasties, unlike the other houses, had never claimed independent kingship but remained formally subordinate to Vijayanagara, as demonstrated by their titles.

Among the empire's heirs, the dynasties of Mysore and Ramnad's offshoot Pudukkottai, the Wodeyars and the Tondaimans, managed to keep their realms much longer. These kingdoms survived as formally autonomous princely states in British India, although both were under close supervision of the colonial government and Mysore witnessed a lengthy interlude of direct British administration between 1831 and 1881. Indicating their standing during the colonial period, the Mysore and Pudukkottai kings were honoured by the British with salutes of twenty-one and eleven guns respectively, the former signifying the highest possible rank for Indian rulers.

Only around 1950, following India's independence in 1947, did these kingdoms cease to exist when they merged with the new republic. For about two more decades, their royal families were entitled to annual grants and other privileges, finally revoked in the early 1970s.³⁸ This abolition signalled the formal end of the last vestiges of royalty originally derived from Vijayanagara.

Because of their pasts, however, till today most surviving royal houses occupy a somewhat exceptional position in society, for example performing religious duties, providing public services, and taking part in festivities. Even the long-vanished Nayaka dynasties have contributed to Vijayanagara's enduring legacy, with current manifestations ranging from symbols in regionalistic politics and awards named

³⁸ V.P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (updated edition, Madras, 1985), 292-6, 307, 505-13; www.royalark.net/India/salute.htm.

after “Keladi Shivappa Nayaka” and “Keladi Chennamma”—the latter for outstanding bravery—to various art forms that include painting, architecture, literature, folk tales, music, dance, drama, cinema, and children’s comics.³⁹

³⁹ For examples, see: Fritz, “Krishnadevaraya in Popular Imagination”; Swami Sivapriyananda and Gajendra Singh Auwa, *Mysore Royal Dasara* (New Delhi, 1995), chs 3-4; Tobert, *Anegondi*, 27, 30, 44-5; Nainar, “An Uncommon Prince”; Michell, *Architecture and Art of Southern India*, 275-7; Saskia C. Kersenboom, *Nityasumanigali: Devadasi Tradition in South India* (Delhi, 1987), passim, especially 31-49; Lakshmi Subramanian, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India* (New Delhi, 2006), passim, especially 31-41; Janet O’Shea, “Dancing through History and Ethnography: Indian Classical Dance and the Performance of the Past,” in Theresa Jill Buckland (ed.), *Dancing from Past to Present* (Madison, 2006); Swarnamalya Ganesh, “Notions of ‘Classical’ in Bharatanatyam: A Cultural Operation of the Classes – Arguments of the Cosmopolitan Margi and Indigenous Desi, Repertoires of the Nayak Period,” *Kalakshetra Journal Series I*, 3 (2014); Daves Soneji, “Living History, Performing Memory: Devadāsī Women in Telugu-Speaking South India,” *Dance Research Journal* 36, 2 (2004), 34; Appasamy, *Tanjavur Painting of the Maratha Period*, 12, 73; Smita Shirole Yadav and Padma Raghavan, *The Royal Art of Tanjore Paintings* (Mumbai, 2010); Tanu Kulkarni, “State Salutes the Real Heroes,” *The Hindu* (14 Nov. 2016); “Neeraj Patil to Receive Keladi Shivappa Nayaka Award,” *The Hindu* (14 Aug. 2016); “Historical Novels to Be Released,” *The Hindu* (5 May 2016); Velcheti Subrahmanyam, “A Pleasing Historical,” *The Hindu* (24 Mar. 2017); Goswami, “The Monk Who Dueled,” 193; Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance*, 317; “Name Shimoga-Bangalore Train after Shivappa Nayaka, Says Vedike,” *The Hindu* (22 Mar. 2011); “T S Nagabharana Directed Keladi Chennamma Shooting Visit,” *World News* (26 Aug. 2012); and three volumes in the Amar Chitra Katha series of historical and mythical comics: Subba Rao and G.R. Naik, *Krishnadeva Raya: The Illustrious King of Vijayanagara* (Bombay, 1978); Subba Rao and K. Chandranath, *Hakka and Bukka: The Founders of the Vijayanagar Empire* (Bombay, 1981); and (in the subseries of “Bravehearts”) Gayatri Madan Dutt and Souren Roy, *Chennamma of Keladi: The Queen Who Defied Aurangzeb* (Bombay, 1988).