

CHAPTER - II

THE CONQUEST OF BASSEIN

After establishing themselves in Malabar, the Portuguese decided to exploit the political situation in India and they started to move northward on the western coast of India. There was a distinct contrast in the attitude of the first two pioneers of the Portuguese empire in the East. Francisco de Almeida contemplated only the establishment of factories along the coast to maintain commercial relations with the country. But Afonso de Albuquerque, on the other hand, thought of founding a great empire and laid stress on the importance of erecting forts for the protection of trade and to dominate the local rulers.¹

So Albuquerque, having established his control over Goa in 1510, immediately started to look for political alliances with neighbouring princely states, and obtained their permission to construct factories and forts. He was encouraged by the attitude of some rulers in the neighbourhood. The Sultan of Gujarat wanted to establish friendly relations with Albuquerque and he expressed this by giving him rich presents.²

Ultimately the policy of Albuquerque was upheld by the succeeding Portuguese governors who pursued it to lay the foundation of their eastern empire. So they began to attack

-
1. Braz Fernandes, "Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein" op.cit., p.515 (Hereafter referred as "Antiquities").
 2. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., Part II., p.354.

the cities held by the king of Gujarat along the western upper sea-board of India throughout the coast of modern Maharashtra.³

In 1507, the sound of the Portuguese cannon was first heard on the shores of Maharashtra.⁴ Hence forward the coast of Gujarat became the great theatre of naval wars between the Muslims and the Portuguese.⁵ The Portuguese started to move northward, after the capture of Goa, to some important strategic places. In 1516 Nizamaluco, the Sultan of Ahmednagar gave a concession to the Portuguese to construct a factory in Chaul. But the main objective of the Portuguese was to capture Diu.⁶

The Muslims were the main rivals of the Portuguese in the maritime trade of the Arabian sea at this time. Diu was their main centre of activity and the Portuguese king, Manuel I, was eager to conquer Diu from the Sultan of Gujarat. In 1520 Diogo Lopes de Silveira tried to construct a fortress in Diu by his order but in vain.⁷ But in their attempt to capture Diu, the Portuguese managed to establish their control over Daman and Bassein.

3. C.A.Kincaid and D.B.Parasnis, op.cit., p.256.

4. James Grant Duff, History of the Marathas, (England,1983) 3rd ed., p.34.

5. OP (BP) No.7, 8 and 9 of 1934-35, op.cit., p.97.

6. J.A.Campos, Portuguese in Bengal, (New Delhi, 1979) p.32.

7. Damião de Goes, Chronica do felicissimo Rei Dom Emanuel, (Coimbra, 1929), Part II, pp. 119 and 124.

EARLY PORTUGUESE ATTACKS ON BASSEIN

According to Gaspar Correa, Vincent Sodre was the first Portuguese navigator to visit the coast of Cambay, passing through the coast of Bassein.⁸ But the coast of Bassein, in actual practice was first visited by the Portuguese in the year 1509, when Dom Francisco de Almeida on his way to Diu, captured a Mohamedan ship with twenty four Muslims belonging to Gujarat.⁹ When the Portuguese arrived on the coast, most of the people of Bassein town and the surrounding areas fled to the mainland. This was the first entry of the Portuguese into Bassein.¹⁰

In 1529, Lopo Vaz Sambio fought a great naval battle in the neighbourhood of Bassein with Ali Shah, the Muslim admiral. The latter fled with seven fustas via Thana to Bassein.¹¹ The Portuguese, pursued him, to find him entrenched at Bassein behind the trunks of palm trees. He was driven out and his defences destroyed or burnt down. They included two buildings and a portion of a palm grove. The Shaikh of Thana then

8. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., pp. 346-47.

9. J.B.Amancio Gracias, "A Epopeia Portuguesa nas terras do Norte," (Goa, 1935), p. 17 (Henceforward referred as EPOPEIA.

Julio Gonsalves, Seis Fortalezas, Feitorias da India, op.cit., p.68.

10. OP, (BP) op.cit., p.97.

11. Castanheda, op.cit., pp. 94-95.

Simão Botelho, Tombo do Estado da India, Felner, p.133.

Gaspar Correa, op.cit., III, 288-297.

surrendered to the Portuguese and promised to pay four thousand pardãos,¹² as annual tribute.¹³

The Portuguese king, John III, was very eager to capture Diu from the Gujarat king. So he appointed Nuno da Cunha as the Governor of the East with explicit instructions to conquer Diu.¹⁴ Nuno da Cunha began to organise a great expedition to attack Diu. In 1531 he started with a great armada and appeared near the coast of Bombay. His fleet consisted of more than four hundred large and small vessels. There were different types of ships in this huge armada, which consisted of five large transports from Malacca, eight naus from Portugal, two galeas, twelve royal galleys, sixteen galiots and 228 oared sail boats like brigantines, fustas and caturus with more than 2560 Portuguese soldiers, 1450 Portuguese sailors, 20,000 local troops from Goa and Chaul including more than 3000 musketeers and 4000 local rowers. The total number of the people in this expedition including women, children, merchants and traders, was more than 30,000.¹⁵

The Governor proceeded from Bombay to Diu and tried to attack the place, but was forced to withdraw with heavy losses. As the result of this failure on the part of the Portuguese,

12. João Barros, Decada IV, Part II, op.cit., p.14. Pardão was a gold coin minted by the Portuguese in Cochin in the early period of their settlement in the East.
13. Castanheda, op.cit., 7 p.97, Gaspar Correa, op.cit., III, p.301. Barros, Decada IV, Part II, p.16.
14. Mss., ANTT, Corpo Chronologico, Part II, Maço 54, No.91.
15. Castanheda, op.cit., VIII, p.29, Gaspar Correa, op.cit., III, pp. 390-394.

the Muslims became more aggressive.¹⁶ The Shaikh of Thana refused to pay the annual tribute he had promised two years before.¹⁷ So Diogo da Silveira attacked and plundered Thana and Bandra which had also been fortified by the Muslims. In this way, the Portuguese burnt many villages which were under Bahadurshah of Gujarat.¹⁸

The devastating campaign of Heitor da Silveira was one of the most important events in this region before the conquest of Bassein by Nuno da Cunha.¹⁹ He despatched Heitor da Silveira from Goa, who arrived in a part of Bassein in the kingdom of Cambay.²⁰ He disembarked his armada at the mouth of the river which was on the coast of Bassein.²¹ Then he ordered Christivão Correa, the captain of a ship, to investigate the coast of the city which was at the entrance of the river.²² He also despatched twelve big ships in defence of the expedition of Christivão Correa²³ who noticed that the city was situated

16. Castanheda, op.cit., VIII, pp. 29-33.

Gaspar Correa, op.cit., III, pp. 465-466.

17. Castanheda, op.cit., VIII p.51.

Gaspar Correa, op.cit., III, pp. 465-466.

18. Couto, Decada IV, op.cit., p.13.

Castanheda, op.cit., VIII, p.52.

Gaspar Correa, op.cit., III, pp. 461-62.

19. Nuno da Cunha succeeded Lopo Vaz Sampaio as the governor in 1529.

20. Barros, op.cit., Part I, Livro II, Cap. XVI, p.21.

21. Ibid., p.220

22. Couto, Decada IV, Part I, Livro V, Cap. VI, p.365.

23. Barros, op.cit., p.220.

Castanheda, op.cit., p.173.

on the bank of river and there was a fortress at the mouth of the said river²⁴ which was defended by a huge stockade of wood, three strong bastions and sixty pieces of artillery.²⁵ The fort was defended by a captain called Alixa (Ali Shah) with 3000 infantry and 500 cavalry.²⁶ Heitor da Silveira first explained to his captains how to reach the stockade, and he himself entered the upper bank of the river at the time of the high tide^{and} and launched the attack.²⁷

The first assault was led by the local army of 200 men commanded by their chief, Malu Mokadão.²⁸ He immediately launched a fierce attack in which he broke the stockade.²⁹ Though many soldiers were wounded, they continued their fight for the whole day and the following night. The next day Heitor da Silveira attacked the bastion of the city.³⁰ The Muslims could not resist the Portuguese onslaught and started to run away. The Portuguese followed them and killed many. Ali Shah, knowing that Heitor da Silveira had already come close to the city, sent some warriors to defend the entrance of the city, and with the remaining cavalry and infantry went to a hidden place to wait for the counter attack hoping to

24. Barros, op.cit., p.217.

25. Couto, op.cit., p.365. Barros, op.cit., p.220.

26. Castanheda, op.cit., p.173. Barros, op.cit., p.220.
Couto, op.cit., p.365.

27. Castanheda, op.cit., p.173.

28. Couto, op.cit., p.365. Barros, op.cit., p.221.
Castanheda, op.cit., p.173.

29. Castanheda, op.cit., p.173.

30. Barros, op.cit., p.221.

draw out the Portuguese.³¹ Ali Shah was shocked at the surprise attack by the Portuguese. He tried his best to save the city from the Portuguese but his efforts proved fruitless. The horses of the Muslims, stunned by their sudden firing, started to run in all directions and even trampled on their own men.³²

After the defeat of the Muslims, Heitor da Silveira ordered his soldiers to plunder and ransack the town of Bassein and set fire to it. As a result, the major part of the town which had many big houses with wooden furniture, was destroyed.³³ They assaulted and destroyed many farms, vegetable gardens and cut down many palm trees.³⁴ Heitor da Silveira entered the upper part of Bassein, but seeing the merchants of Ormuz, whose king was the vassal of the Portuguese king, did not cause much damage.³⁵ Having finished his task, Heitor da Silveira left the place with his armada. He carried with him huge spoils, ammunition and many captives and reached Goa with three more ships laden with timber.³⁶

In 1530, the Portuguese descended again on Bassein from the coast of Chikhali-Tarapore and levied a contribution on Thana and Kalyan, compelling both places to pay annual tributes

31. Castanheda, op.cit., p.173.

Simão Botelho, Tombo do Estado da India, op.cit., p.133.

32. Barros, op.cit., p.222. Castanheda, op.cit., p.173.

33. Barros, op.cit., p.223.

34. Barros, op.cit., p.224.

Castanheda, op.cit., p.173.

35. Barros, op.cit., p.223.

36. Castanheda, op.cit., p.174.

of 4000 pardãos to the king of Portugal.³⁷ In 1531, Antonio Saldanha on his way to Goa from Cambay, attacked on Bassein once more, again from the coast of Tarapore and set fire to it.³⁸ Meanwhile, regular war broke out between the Portuguese and the king of Gujarat in 1533. The Portuguese army under the command of Antonio da Saldanha, Antonio da Silveira, Diogo da Silveira, Manuel de Albuquerque, Martin Afonso de Sousa, and Manuel de Sousa attacked the coast of Gujarat and burnt places like Diu, Surat, Daman, Tarapore, Bassein, Thane and Bandra.³⁹

It was during this campaign that Antonio da Silveira, after burning Daman, started his descent southward. He reached Agashi, a village in North Bassein, which was situated on the bank of a small river. His 5400 warriors included 400 cavalry men and 5000 infantry.⁴⁰ He sent Manuel de Sousa ahead with 150 musketeers accompanied by many Fidalgos.⁴¹ They encamped on the bank of the river and launched their assault by destroying many villages. Five Portuguese warriors died.⁴²

Diogo da Silveira followed in 1533. He was chiefly instrumental in burning and plundering the whole sea coast from Bandra along Thana and Bassein upto Surat,⁴³ an area which

37. Julio Gonsalves, op.cit., p.68.

38. J.G, da Cunha, op.cit., p.139.

39. OP, (BP) 1935 op.cit., p.99

40. Castanheda, op.cit., Livro VIII, cap. IX, p.207.

41. Fidalgo. The word Fidalgo, derives from the Portuguese words Filho de Alguem, that is son of somebody, meaning a Portuguese nobleman.

42. Castanheda, op.cit., p.207.

43. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., Part II, p.449.

scarcely had time to recover from the devastating effects of the previous invasions of his comrades. Having accomplished the task, he returned to Goa, rich with the spoils of his pillaging among which were 4000 slaves, who were afterwards employed in the building of the convents and churches of Goa. The governor was very pleased with the services of Diogo da Silveira and appointed him the chief captain of the sea.⁴⁴

In this way, many Portuguese commanders had successfully plundered the town of Bassein and the surrounding areas many times. The main objective of their expeditions was to capture Diu from the Sultan of Gujarat, but this was not possible as the island was well defended by the Sultan. Secondly, it was quite away from their main base in Cochin. Ultimately, the Portuguese governor, Nuno da Cunha, was forced to make Goa their main base, in 1530.

Though the Portuguese attacked the town of Bassein many times, they did not occupy it though it was quite easy for them to do so as it was not well defended by the Sultan. So in their earlier attempts, they simply attacked, plundered and burnt many important places on the western coast including Bassein. Secondly, they had already started the development of Chaul which was not far away from Bassein by converting it into a colony. So the idea of conquering Bassein and retaining it did not strike them. At the initial stage, they neglected Bassein. Lastly, Bassein did not possess the strategic importance like Diu, which controlled all the commercial activities of the western coast in general and the Bay of Cambay in particular.

44. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., Part II, p.449.

Meanwhile, Bassein became a centre of hectic political activity in the kingdom of Sultan Bahadur Shah. In order to put a stop to the continuous attacks of the Portuguese, the Sultan decided to fortify the town of Bassein and convert it into a second Diu, with a strong fort.⁴⁵ He ordered Malik Tughan⁴⁶ (Malik Tokan) whom the Portuguese chroniclers call Melique Tucão, to construct a fort at Bassein.

While the governor, Nuno da Cunha, was near Diu, he received information that Sultan Bahadur had despatched Malik Tokan with 12000 warriors towards Bassein and had started the

45. Barros, Decada IV, op.cit., pp. 493-495.

46. Malik Tughan - Most of the modern historians have confused readers regarding the identity of Malik Tughan or Malik Tokan, who was in charge of Bassein at the time of the Portuguese attack in 1533. M.S.Commissariat (op.cit., p.342) says that he was the governor of Diu. On the other hand Amancio Gracias ("Epopéia" op.cit., p.18), Braz Fernandes ("Antiquities", op.cit., p.517 and even F.C. Danvers, op.cit., p.134) says that Malik Tokan was the son of Malik Ayaz, the governor of Diu till his death in 1525. But Gaspar Correa in his 'Lendas' writes that the person who was in charge of Bassein at the time of the Portuguese attack was the nephew of Malik Tokhan, then governor of Diu, having the same name (Lendas da Índia, op.cit., Liv.III part II p.449). This fact is further clarified in a footnote of Decada IV of Barros (1973 Ed.) (Part II Liv.IV, p.496). Gaspar Correa was in India for a long time and has completed his work with meticulous care while personally experiencing the events and clarifying facts by meeting the persons concerned. So his statement can be accepted as more correct and authentic. Simão Botelho calls him Malik Iyaz instead of Malik Tughan, Botelho, Tombo, Felner, op.cit., p.132.

construction of the fort.⁴⁷ He thought a strong fort in the fertile land of Bassein would prove a great danger to the Portuguese in future.⁴⁸

When the governor returned to Goa, he first consulted his council about the future course of action regarding Bassein⁴⁹ and finally decided to start the expedition for the conquest of Bassein. He organised a huge armada under the command of Martin Afonso de Mello Jusarte, Manuel de Albuquerque and five to ten captains.⁵⁰ Barros and Gaspar Correa furnish us with more names of the famous captains and the Fidalgos who participated in this important campaign. They were Anrique de Sousa, Manuel de Vasconcelos, Belchior de Brito, Jorge de Mello, Antonio de Lemos, Vasco da Cunha, Manoel de Sousa, Dom Antonio de Silveira, Jorge de Frietas, Fernão Rodrigues Barba, Fernão de Lima, Dom Afonso de Menezes, Dom Petro, Tristão de Athaide, Joanne Mendes de Macedo, Lope de Misquita, João da Silveira, his brother Fernão da Silveira, Fernão de Brito, Antonio Nogueira and Fernão da Cunha.⁵¹

The governor himself started with this huge armada from Goa at the beginning of 1533. It consisted of 150 ships with

47. Castanheda, op.cit., Liv.VII, cap. IX, p.281.

Couto, Part I, Liv.VIII, cap III, p.234

48. Castanheda, op.cit., p.281.

Amancio Gracias, 'O Fundador', op.cit., p.68.

49. Couto, op.cit., p.235.

50. Castanheda, op.cit., p.295.

51. Barros, op.cit., Part II, Liv. IV, cap.XXII, p.496.

Gaspar Correa, op.cit., Liv.III, Part II, p.465.

4000 men.⁵² However, João Barros states that it comprised only 1800 Portuguese and 2000 local soldiers.⁵³ He arrived at Chaul and from there he sent some caturs towards the coast of Bassein.⁵⁴ Then the whole armada followed this task force and came near the coast of Bassein.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Malik Tokan had hurriedly completed the work of fortification with the help of the 12,000 men from the garrison.⁵⁶ When the Portuguese arrived near the coast of Bassein, they noticed that the fort was well defended by 300 pieces of artillery supported by a company of 12,000 infantry and cavalry.⁵⁷ The Portuguese tried to find a suitable place to disembark their army but could not find one, because the fort was surrounded by water and marshy land.⁵⁸ Diogo da Silveira chose some light boats and started his search for a place.⁵⁹

Malik Tokan was frightened at the arrival of the Portuguese in the vicinity of his newly constructed fortress. He was not in a position to defend it against the formidable Portuguese army. So instead of risking a battle, he started negotiations

52. J.G. da Cunha, op.cit., p. 134.

53. Barros, op.cit., p.496.

54. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., pp. 464-65.
Couto, op.cit., p.235.

55. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.465.

56. Barros, op.cit., p.496.

Amancio Gracias "O Foundador", op.cit., p.68.

57. Castanheda, op.cit., p.296.

Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.465.

58. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.465.

59. Couto, op.cit., p.235.

with the Portuguese for an amicable settlement if possible.⁶⁰ He sent a merchant of Ormuz whom he knew and who was friendly with the Portuguese.⁶¹ Having received Malik Tokan's message, the governor asked him to hand over the fort to the Portuguese and to sign a treaty of friendship.⁶² Malik Tokan had no intention of handing over the fort. However, though he did not agree with the suggestion of the Governor, he did not lose hope. He continued his efforts for a settlement and sent three respectable Muslims with the same merchant of Ormuz to request the governor to reconsider his demand.⁶³ But the governor refused to budge.

When this mission failed, a personal meeting was arranged between Malik Tokan and Martin Afonso, whom the governor had asked to continue the negotiations. Malik Tokan argued with him for a long time. During the discussion he asked Martin Afonso what he would have done if he was in his place. Martin Afonso immediately replied that he would have handed over the fort to avoid further complications if he had the same orders as Malik Tokan had received from his master.⁶⁴

Ultimately, Nuno da Cunha came to realise that Malik Tokan would never surrender to him and hand over the fort. So he decided to take action against the Muslims and capture the

-
60. Barros, op.cit., p.496.
Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.465.
61. Castanheda, op.cit., p.297.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Castanheda, op.cit., p.298.

fort. He consulted his captains and some of the Fidalos.⁶⁵ After this consultation, the governor sent a message to Malik Tokan through Martin Afonso that he should pay 10,000 pardãos⁶⁶ of gold and fifty horses as the cost of the Portuguese expedition.⁶⁷ Malik Tokan did not agree to the fresh demands of the governor and sent Martin Afonso back with a negative reply.

On hearing the response of Malik Tokan, the governor once again called the captains and the Fidalgos and conveyed to them the reply of the Muslim captain. It was clear, at this point, that war was unavoidable for the conquest of Bassein. But it was a great task involving risk, as the fort was well defended by the Muslims and because the Portuguese lacked manpower at this time. So they decided to withdraw from this campaign, extracting a promise from Malik Tokan that he would not convert Bassein into another Diu.⁶⁸

But Diogo da Silveira and Manuel de Albuquerque did not like the idea of withdrawal. They argued that the armada which they had brought to Bassein was in fact under the command of the Portuguest king himself, and if they went back without conquering Bassein, it would bring great shame to them and weaken their influence in this part to a great extent. They further stressed

65. Barros, op.cit., pp. 496-97.

66. Pardãos - One Pardão was worth 300 reis at this time.

67. Castanheda, op.cit., p.298.

Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.465.

68. Castanheda, op.cit., p.298.

the point that the Portuguese withdrawal in this situation would be a great tribute to the Muslims with whom they had been fighting for a long time.⁶⁹ Later on, many more supported the stand taken by Diogo da Silveira and Manuel de Albuquerque and an important decision was taken by the governor to fight the Muslims. He sent an ultimatum to Malik Tokan to surrender immediately or face the consequences. Finally, the governor lost his temper and decided to attack the fort.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, Diogo da Silveira had already started to look for a place for the disembarkment of the Portuguese army. At midnight, with some warriors and Fidalgos, specially chosen by him, he surveyed the coast. They came near the coast and when they entered the creek at the time of the tide, they noticed a huge fortification with a strong bastion and a huge canal surrounding it, filled with sea-water.⁷² They also saw that a great wall was constructed from the bastion, through the barren land stretching to the entrance of the town which was guarded by a strong artillery.⁷³ After carefully inspecting the strategic points, Diogo da Silveira returned safely. He explained the entire situation to the governor, who decided to attack the fort the next morning.

69. Castanheda, op.cit., p.298.

70. Couto, op.cit. p. 238.

71. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.465.

72. Couto, op.cit., p.238.

73. Barros, op.cit., p.398.

The Final Assault

On 20th January, 1533, on the feast day of St. Sebastian,⁷⁴ the governor asked Bastião Pires, the vicar general of the Franciscans, who was with the armada together with some other priests, to celebrate a High Mass in honour of Saint Sebastian. He also instructed the priests to sing a special hymn in his honour.⁷⁵ After the religious ceremony was over, the governor decided to launch the attack.

He divided his army into three major groups.⁷⁶ The chief commander of the first was Diogo da Silveira, who had under him 600 warriors with some important captains and the Fidalgos like Martin Afonso, Anrique de Sousa, Manuel de Vanconcelos, Belchior da Brito, Jorge de Mello, Antonio de Lemos, Antonio de Sa, Louis Falcão, Martim de Lemos and others together with 300 local soldiers with arms.⁷⁷ Manuel de Albuquerque was the chief commander of the second group which had 300 Portuguest warriors and 400 local soldiers. It had some important captains and Fidalgos like Vasco da Gama, Manoel de Souza, Dom Antonio da Silveira, Jordão de Freitas, Fernão Rodrigues Barba and Fernão de Lima.⁷⁸

74. Simão Botelho's Tombo, op.cit., p.133.

Paulo de Trindade, Conquista Espiritnal do Oriente, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.97-99.

75. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.468.

76. Paulo de Trindade, op.cit., Vol.II, p.97.

77. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.465. Couto, op.cit., p.238. Castanheda, op.cit., p.296. Barros, op.cit., p.297.

78. Castanheda, op.cit., 296. Barros, op.cit., p.497. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.465. Couto, op.cit., p.238.

The third group was commanded by the governor himself with 1000 Portuguese warriors and many local soldiers and the people of Chaul⁷⁹ who were guided by the captains and the Fidalgos like Dom Fernão D' Eça, Dom Afonso de Menezes, Dom Pedro, his brother Tristão de Athide, Joanes Mendes de Maçedo, Lope de Misquita, João de Silveira, his brother Fernão de Silveira, Fernão de Brito, Antonio Nigueira, Fernão de Cunha, Fernão de Lima, Jorge de crasto, Gonsalo de Sousa, Payo Rodrigues D'Arayo, Rui de Mello Pereira and Garcia de Mello.⁸⁰ The attack started with the turn of the tide. Many Portuguese ships, beautifully decorated with colourful flags led the attack with beating of drums and trumpets.⁸¹

Then started a great battle between the Muslims and the Portuguese in Bassein. The Portuguese chroniclers have given minute details of this conflict, finally resulting in the Portuguese victory. The role played by Diogo da Silveria, the chief commander of the first group was, one of the most important achievements of the Portuguese campaign. No sooner did his army approached the bastion of the fort, than it was attacked by dangerous enemy firing. The cannon balls rained over them from all sides. Even though, the local soldiers who were in his group attacked the Muslims valiantly, only a miracle could save them from the enemy firing. The chroniclers further write that

79. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.467.

80. Couto, op.cit., p.238. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.467. Barros, op.cit., pp. 497-98.

81. Couto, op.cit., p.238.

the Portuguese thought that having seen this miracle, these soldiers would embrace Christianity.⁸²

Diogo da Silveira was extremely upset by the fierce enemy attack but soon he found a suitable place which was safe from the enemy, from which he could launch a fresh assault with vigour.⁸³ The Portuguese attacked the enemy with all their strength. Diogo da Silveira, with Manuel de Maçedo climbed the rampart of the fort and mounted on the parapet with their warriors, whom the Muslims could not dislodge. Once within the citadel, the Portuguese were not daunted by their numerical insignificance, but threw themselves amidst the rank of the enemy with such impetuosity and valour, that Malik Tokan's troops were entirely dispersed and began to run away.⁸⁴

At this moment Malik Tokan gathered together his scattered army in which there were many Rumies and Europeans.⁸⁵ He came into the middle of the battlefield and tried to encourage his frightened soldiers, asking them to regroup and fight the enemy, but he got a very poor response. His soldiers were so afraid that they started to run here and there. Some of them ran inside the fort and many ran to the mainland for protection. The Portuguese entered the fort and attacked those who were hiding inside. Diogo da Silveira followed those who ran to the mainland.⁸⁶

82. Castanheda, op.cit., p. 299. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.469.

83. Couto, op.cit., p.237.

84. Barros, op.cit. p.498. Castanheda, op.cit., p.301.

85. Couto, op.cit., p.237.

86. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.470. Castanheda, op.cit., p.300.

This victorious war lasted for only three hours. A contemporary Portuguese historian says that it was one of the most important battles fought in India. This was a great war in which many Rumies and Europeans fought jointly in India and in which many modern weapons like cannons, guns, etc., were used.⁸⁷

About 500 Muslims were killed in this action. The Portuguese gained this victory without much loss. They lost six soldiers,⁸⁸ and two Portuguese, Diogo de Mellow and Bartholomew Drago.⁸⁹ But Gaspar Correa gives the name of one more Portuguese, who was killed in this action. He was Fernão Trasses.⁹⁰

Consolidation

After this victory, the governor, Nuno da Cunha arrived in the mosque which was at the entrance of the fort. He prayed and thanked God for his great victory.⁹¹ He honoured Diogo da Silveira and the other captains and awarded them medals for their valour. The governor decided to celebrate the victory with great pomp. As he entered the fort he ordered men to bring fifty barrels of wine, ample beef and chicken and asked them to prepare for a feast. Then he threw a great banquet to celebrate the victory.⁹³

87. Castanheda, op.cit., IV, Livro VIII, p.300.

88. These must be canaris or the local soldiers.

89. Castanheda, op.cit., p.300. Barros, op.cit., p.498.

90. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.470.

91. Ibid.

92. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.471.

93. Ibid.

After the banquet was over, the governor decided to destroy the fort which they had conquered from the enemy. Initially, the Portuguese had no intention of holding Bassein and defending it or converting it into a trading centre or a city, as can be seen from the fact that they had already started the development of Chaul which was not far away from Bassein for that purpose.⁹⁴ So the governor first ordered that the door of the fort be broken down and burnt with some artillery pieces. Then, to eliminate once and for all trouble from the Muslims in this part for ever,⁹⁵ the entire fort was knocked down and completely destroyed.⁹⁶

After the destruction of the fort, the governor asked his men to plunder, burn and destroy the town of Bassein. The Portuguese destroyed many vegetable gardens and groves. Among the properties destroyed by them was a beautiful garden owned by Malik Tokan himself. The sacking of the fort and the town continued for ten days.⁹⁷

After the defeat, Malik Tokan endeavoured to console himself with a systematic series of intrigues with Bahadur Shah on one side and with his detested enemies the Portuguese on the other. The governor, Nuno da Cunha, at the request of each party sent an emissary to conclude a peace, Vasco da Cunha

94. Barros, op.cit., p.499.

95. Castanheda, op.cit., p.301.

96. Amancio Gracias, "O Fundador", op.cit., p.69.

97. Barros, op.cit., p.499.

going to Malik Tokan, and Tristao D'Eça to the court of Bahadur Shah. Their missions proved fruitless, and the general himself sailed with a fleet of eighty ships to Goa.⁹⁸

Though Nuno da Cunha could not sign a peace treaty with Bahadur Shah and obtain Bassein legally, he continued his brilliant course of diplomacy from Goa which eventually secured for him not only the possession of Bassein but even the realization of the songe dore of his life, the possession of Diu later on and the building of a fort which the Portuguese had hitherto failed to accomplish.

Meanwhile, the struggle between Humayun and Bahadur Shah took a serious turn. The Mughals wanted to conquer the Kingdom of Gujarat which waged a fierce war against the Sultanate. Moreover, Sultan of Gujarat was always afraid of a Portuguese attack on Diu.⁹⁹ So Bahadur Shah decided to open negotiations with the Portuguese on this issue. He sent Khawaja Shaikh Iyaz,¹⁰⁰ whom the Portuguese chroniclers¹⁰¹ call Xacoës,¹⁰² to Bassein where the governor had come once again with his great armada. The governor received the ambassador of Bahadur Shah very well

98. J.G. da Cunha, op.cit., p.135.

99. Simão Botelho's Tombo, op.cit., p.133.

100. M.S.Commissariat, op.cit., p.349.

R.S.Whiteway, op.cit., p.236.

101. Like Castanheda, op.cit., p.339 and Barros, op.cit., p.529.

102. Xacoës - Xacoës was a very intelligent diplomat of the Court of Bahadur Shah. He consulted him on every important aspect of the administration.

and treated him in such a manner that he was overwhelmed with the Portuguese hospitality.¹⁰³

The governor had already discussed the conditions of the proposed peace treaty with his captains and Fidalgos. When the preliminaries were over, the detailed discussion between the governor and the ambassador of the Sultan began. At first, the Portuguese had their demands confirmed. Then the Sultan wanted certain things to be confirmed by the Portuguese. He discussed these with the governor and his captains, and when both the parties were satisfied, the treaty was signed on 23rd December 1534 on board¹⁰⁴ of a ship called 'St. Matheus.' The treaty was prepared in both Persian and Portuguese. The Portuguese were helped by a Parsee gentleman called Khonja Porcolim.¹⁰⁵ The following were the clauses of the treaty.¹⁰⁶

103. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.585.

104. Couto, op.cit., p.316. Bragança Pereira, op.cit., p.99. Julio Gonsalves, op.cit., p.71. J.G. da Cunha gives wrong date as 23rd Dec.1533, op.cit., p.137 and also Braz Fernandes as 25th Dec.1534. Arams..., op.cit., pp 12 and 116 which both are wrong.

105. Khoja Porcolim - was a Parsee gentleman, staying in Bassein at that time. He worked as an interpreter for the Portuguese and became known to Garcia da Orta, who was present at the time of signing the treaty. He refers Khoja Perculim in his Collquios ...

106. The treaty of Bassein is first recorded by Simão Botelho in his Tombo do Estado da India. fls 21-21, which is also referred by the following authors.

(a) R.J. de Lima Felner, Subsidios para a historia da India Portuguesa, Lisboa, 1668, pp. 132-134.

(b) Julio Biker, Collecção de tratados e concertos de pazes que o Estado da India Portuguesa fez nas partes de Asia e Africa Oriental (Lisboa, 1881) Vol.I, p.63.

(c) Barros, Decada IV part I, op.cit., pp 530-32. Couto op.cit., Liv.Cap.II, pp 316-19, who gives the details more than any above mentioned authors. Simão Botelho, Tombo do Estado da India, Ed. R.J. de Lima Felner, op.cit., p.134. Simão Botelho gives 1543 as the year of the treaty in his Tombo ... This, however, is not correct.

Treaty of Bassein¹⁰⁷

Clauses -

1. The Sultan Bahadur gives to the king of Portugal, for ever, the City of Bassein with all its adjoining lands, islands and seas with all its jurisdiction¹⁰⁸ and an empire with all its economic benefits and royal laws, which he, Sultan Bahadur, king of Gujarat, until then had possessed and from that day onwards he gave up all his rights that he had in those lands, islands and seas, and transferred everything to the king of Portugal. He thought it was all right that his officers (of the king of Portugal) take possession of all the above mentioned.

2. With the condition that all the ships that left the kingdom and land of Sultan to enter the strait of Mecca would go to Bassein to get cartazes¹⁰⁹ from the captain of the king of Portugal, who is there and on the way back they would go to

107. Couto, Decadqs da Asia, Decada IV, Livro IX, cap.II, pp. 316-19 (Translation). The only surviving manuscript copy is available in the British Museum. Additional collection MS 28433 Fls-174-174v

108. The jurisdiction of Bassein - The jurisdiction of Bassein was quite extensive when it was handed over the Portuguese by the Sultan of Gujarat. It started from the North with the Province of Agashi covering entire Bassein Taluka at present with Salsette, Thane, Bombay and Elephanta island extending to Caranja in South. See map after this page.

109. Cartazes - Safe journey - passport.

the mentioned city and pay duty, so that Portugal would not lose the merchandise and that the captains would keep it as the pillage from the victory in the battle without the king of Gujarat being against it or being offended by it.

3. That all the ships of his kingdom could sail everywhere unless they were going to Mecca, would take same cartazes and the captain would charge each of them one tanga¹¹⁰ and with those cartazes they would have any other obligation but this would not be necessary in the case of every small boat that usually went along the coast.

4. That in no part belonging to the kingdom of Gujarat, as in all the lands that he had from then onwards, should war-ships be made and if there were some already made, they should not sail. However, they could construct all the trading ships they wanted in their own style for their own use and business.

5. That neither his majesty, the Sultan Bahadur, would be allowed Rumies¹¹¹ to enter any port of his kingdom and they (the people of Gujarat) would not give them protection, favour them, help or anything that they had in this land.

6. That all the money from the land of Bassein that had not yet been collected which Melique should have had since the Muslim year until that day, the governor could send to collect in

110. Tanga was a Portuguese coin used in this region during the Portuguese rule.

111. The Rumies were the Muslims from Arabia. Generally Portuguese used this word for Muslim pirates.

the name of the king of Portugal.

7. That he would hand over immediately old Diogo de Mesquita, Lopo Pinto, Manuel Mendez and João de Lima and all other Portuguese who were his prisoners.

These seven clauses or conditions of the official of the king of Portugal presented, were accepted by the ambassador of his majesty, the Sultan Bahadur and he was obliged to follow them and abide by them, as if those were in each of the, without deceiving and being careful with all the truth and assurance of the king, immediately afterwards.¹¹² The ambassador presented other clauses of his majesty Sultan Bahadur, as follows.

8. That all the horses that came from the strait of Maacca and Arabian countries in the first three years after the fort of Bassein had been finished¹¹³ would come to it, so that the Sultan Bahadur and his vessels could send for them, to be bought, paying duties to the king of Portugal as they were paid in the city of Goa and that they would not go to the port of Deccan, Canara or Malabar, and if those horses were not bought in Bassein, their owners could take them wherever they wanted.

9. That any ship that came from the kingdom of Cambay or from anywhere else, would not pay duty if it had less than sixty horses.

112. Couto, op.cit., p.318.

113. After the conquest of Bassein from the Sultan, the Portuguese had destroyed his fort and the new Portuguese citadel was not yet constructed when this treaty was signed.

10. That if any ship, except from the strait of Malacca, which arrived due to bad weather in the kingdom of Gujarat, as soon as it was within the port, no one would have anything to do with it and it would return to any town it wanted.

11. That 5000 Tangas of Larims¹¹⁴ that there were taken from the income of Bassein, to be spent on the mosque would be paid to him (Bahadur Shah or his agent) and that would be the mosque of the land of Bassein and no one could either interfere or make any changes in the prayers that were said in the mosque.

12. That 200 Pardãos that were paid from the income of Bassein to the soldiers of the two fortresses Aceira and Coeja that are between the land of Bassein and those of Rebutos, would always be paid from the same income as they had been paid until then.

These twelve clauses were accepted by the governor in the name of the king of Portugal and he promised to fulfil his obligations honourably.¹¹⁵

The treaty was signed by the governor himself and the ambassador Sultan Bahadur with Martin Afonso, the Chief Captain, Farnão Rodrigues de Castelo Branco and others.¹¹⁶

114. Larim - The Larim or Lari was a peculiar kind of coin formerly in use in persian Gulf and the western coast of India and also in Maldives. It was equivalent to a shilling. The name is derived from the territory of Lar in the persian Gulf.

115. Couto, op.cit., p.319.

116. Ibid.

Garcia da Orta, the great Portuguese physician, was present at the time of signing the treaty.¹¹⁷

Thus Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat handed over Bassein to the Portuguese with its huge area, from the Bay of Agashi in the North to Caranja in the South.¹¹⁸ It gave the Portuguese king a great source of income. Different authors have given different figures about the yearly revenue of Bassein when it was ceded to the Portuguese by the Sultan of Gujarat. Gaspar Correa gives it as 10,000 gold Pardãos,¹¹⁹ Castanheda gives it 50,000 gold Pardãos,¹²⁰ Garcia da Orta gives it 1,60,000 Pardãos¹²¹ and R.S.Whiteway gives it 30,000 gold Pardãos.¹²² Out of all these authorities, Castanheda and Garcia da Orta were present in India at the time of the event. In fact, Orta was present in Bassein, at the time of signing the treaty as mentioned above.

Though the treaty was signed by responsible persons from both the sides, it was not approved by the king of Gujarat who

117. Garcia da Orta, Ficalho Ed. (Lisboa, 1891) p.38.

Conde de Ficalho, Garcia da Orta e seu tempo, op.cit., p.92
P.D.Gaitonde, Portuguese Pioneers in India, (Bombay, 1983) p.121.

118. Diogo de Couto enumerates these various places as Tana, Carapusa, known as Gharapuri or Elephanta, Braundini known as Buindim or Bhiwandi, Galina or Kalyan, Bombaim or Bombay, Mayam or Mahim and Bandora or Bandra. Couto, Decada IV, VIII, IV, p.241.

119. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.485.

120. Castanheda, op.cit., p.339.

121. Garcia da Orta, op.cit., Vo.II, p.340.

122. R.S.Whiteway, op.cit., p.236.

was its legal owner. So Nuno da Cunha sent his secretary, Simão Pereira, to Gujarat to get the approval of the king and took Xacoes to Goa in his ship.¹²³ The king of Gujarat approved the treaty and Bassein came in the possession of the Portuguese officially and legally. Nuno da Cunha immediately ordered the construction of a factory and appointed Gaspar Paes as the first Factor of Bassein.¹²⁴

A year after this treaty, Bahadur Shah handed over even the fort and island of Diu to the Portuguese and the relationship between them was further improved. When the new treaty regarding Diu was signed in 1535, the cession of Bassein was confirmed¹²⁵ and some of the clauses of the treaty of Bassein were revised. For example, it was decided by the earlier treaty that the ships coming from Mecca would go to Bassein first and then proceed to Diu. But now these ships were permitted to come to Diu directly. Secondly, some ships which had already made the declaration about the horses brought from Ormuz and Arabia, were permitted to proceed further without visiting Bassein. In this way, Bassein came under the Portuguese rule. It was their first political acquisition in the kingdom of Gujarat.¹²⁷

The conquest of Bassein is highly acclaimed by the

123. Barros, op.cit., p.529.

Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.586.

124. Castenheda, op.cit., p.339. Gaspar Correa, op.cit., p.485.
Julio Gonsalves, op.cit., p.590.

125. Mss. ANTT, Corpo Chronologico, Maço 58.D.73.

126. Barros, op.cit., p.590.

127. M.S.Commissariat, op.cit., p.350.

Portuguese chroniclers and Camoes, the famous Portuguese poet, who is renowned for his celebrated Lusiadas, has made a special reference to this conquest. He writes :-

Cunha, the fierce Sampio's charge will take,
Whose hand will guide the helm of many years
While splendid Diu at his name, shall quake
The lofty towers of Chaul he shall rear
And strong Bassein, a captain he shall make
But not without much blood, for which we hear
Their captain groan, when her proud palisade,
He shall see taken by naked blade.¹²⁸

128. Luis de Camoes, Os Lusiadas, Porto, nd p.314.

Original :-

A Sampio feroz succedera
Cunha que longo tempo tem o leme.,
De Chale as torres altas erguera,
Em quanto Dio illustre delle treme.,
O forte Beçaim se lhe dará,
Não sem sangue porém, que ne lhe e geme.,
Melique, Porque a força so de espada,
A tranqueira, soberba ve tomada.