MEDIEVIAL HISTORY OF HARYANA

The Sultanate (1206-1526)

1. Laying the foundations

With the defeat of the Chahamanas in the second battle of Tarain (1192) began a gloomy period in the history of Haryana marked by the destruction of its cities and the temples, the murder, slavery and the subjection of its people. The Muslim invaders treated this region with extravagent violence and it was too heavy a blow to have dealt.

Although it is difficult to say who took charge of the Indian possessions after Muizz-ud-din's death in 1206, there is no doubt that Aibek who had already distinguished himself at the battle of Tarain was undoubtedly the ablest of Muizz-ud-din's officers. According to Tarikh-TFakhruddin Mubarak Shah (28) 'Aibek was formally invested with the viceregal powers, prompted to the rank of malik and appointed waliahd for the Indian possessions in 1206'. Further, according to Tdj~uFMaasir 'an occupation army was stationed at Inderpat near Delhi under the command of Qutb- ud-din Aibek, who was to act as Muizz-ud-din's representative'.- This was challenged by other contenders—Yaldoz and Qubaicha, the governors of Ghazni and Punjab respectively.

After Muizz-ud-din's death Yaldoz set out to conquer the Punjab. The citizens of Lahore, threatened by this danger, invited Aibek who having a quick understanding of the situation, wasted no time in taking appropriate measures to check Yaldoz's advance. He defeated Yaldoz and forced him to retreat to Kuhistan. For the proper defence and administration of his possessions Aibek now shifted his capital to Lahore and set military posts at several places in Haryana of which the most important were— Hansi, Sirsa, Mewat, Rewari, Rohtak, Sonepat and Thanesar. Haryana mostly remained under the direct rule of the Sultanate. The crown lands of the region were a source of personal income to the Sultans and secondly, Haryana being so close to the imperial capital any development there was bound to affect the political fortunes of the Sultanate.

Northern India thus passed under the Turks of central Asia who followedIslam with fanatical tenacity. Their new rule was theocracy in theory, but in practice a military despotism backed by a foreign aristocracy. The greed for wealth led the new ruling class to theorise that 'prosperity bred sedition and revolt and poverty was the guarantee of stability and peace'. This made them follow a policy which was tyranny combined with exploitation of the masses. But as would be shown, the latter did not always meekly surrender to this policy, but they very often revolted and at times even overthrew their oppressors.

Even when Muizz-ud-din was alive, reports of revolts in his Indian kingdom reached him. Again after Aibek's death in 1210 the lead in this regard was taken by the turbulent Jats, Ahirs and the

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Meos in challenging the central authority.' This was followed by the deposition of Aram Shah—Aibek's successor, who was disliked by the Amir's of Delhi who invited Iltutmish, the Governor of Badaon, to assume charge of the government. Aram Shah, although enjoyed the support of Lahore Amirs, put a feeble resistance, was vanquished and slain.

Soon after his accession in 1210, Iltutmish had to meet the opposition of his formidable rivals—Yaldoz and Qubaicha, the masters of Punjab and Haryana respectively. When Yaldoz was driven out from Ghazni by the Khwarazmians, he moved to Lahore, expelled Qubaicha and according to Firishta 'even succeeded in occupying the Punjab upto Thanesar', including also the region round about Sirsa. This was a serious challenge to the position of Iltutmish in Delhi so he marched to the battlefield of Tarain where the contending parties met. The battle began with Yaldoz's severe attack on the left wing of Iltutmish's army which the latter faced boldly. As ill luck would have it Yaldoz was struck by a chance arrow and seeing him wounded his armies gave way. Minhaj mentions Hudud-i-Tarain as the place of the battle, while according to Hasan Nizami it was fought at Samana. Isami mentions Hansi where Yaldoz was defeated, taken prisoner and later on put to death. It is likely that during this struggle for power the Sultan might possibly have received some help from Qubaicha also. This receives some support from the fact that after Yaldoz's defeat Qubaicha's agents are known to have ruled for sometime over Sirsa and other areas' but his hold over these parts of Haryana seems to have short lived. When he declared independence in 1227, he was challenged by Iltutmish and in the resulting encounter Qubaicha was finally defeated at Sirsa and chased until Iltutmish occupied Lahore which he put under his son, Nasiruddin Mahmud.

Haryana thus came under the direct control of Iltutmish. Because of meagre information and also the changing nature of the administrative units very little can be said on the administrative set up under Iltutmish. The region was then divided into various iqtas (equivalent of modern division or a commissionary) with officers designated as muqta or wall having civil, judicial and military functions. The important iqtas during Iltutmish's rule were: Delhi, Hansi, Sirsa (Sarsuti), Pipli, Sarhind, Rewari, Namaul and Palwal. The most important of these was the Delhi iqta, extensive area from Jamuna in the cast to Hansi in the west, and from Sjwaliks in the north to Mewat in the South and being the seat of power it was directly administered by the Sultans. The iqta of Hansi due to its strategic and economic importance (for its location on trade routes) was put under Nasiruddin Mahmud (1226-28) and then later under Nusratuddin Taisi Muizzi (1228-32) a close confident of Sultan. Similarly the iqtas of Rewari, Pipli, Sarhind and Sirsa had their own importance. The last Palwal, being too small, was probably merged later into the Delhi iqta.

Iltutmish was succeeded by Firuz in 1236. As the latter was a weakling, the real power was seized by his mother Shah Turkan under whose oppressive rule, nobles lost all faith in the administration and rebellions broke out at various places. Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz, Malik Alauddin Jani and Malik Saifuddin Kuchi— the iqtadars of Multan, Lahore and Hansi respectively, jointly rebelled against Firuz. The situation was worsened when the Turkish officers of the Sultan's army murdered non-Turkish (Tazik) Muslim officers in the neighbourhood of Mansurpur and Tarain. The victims of this organised massacre are

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particularly mentioned by Minhaz. They were such important persons as Tajulmulk Mahmud, the dabir and mmhrif i'mamalik Bahauddin Hasan Ashari, Karimuddin Zahidi, Ziyaulmulk, son of Nizamulmulk Junaidi, Nizamuddin Shafarqani, Khawaja Rashiduddin Malikani and Amir Fakhruddin.

Rebellions and disorders encouraged Raziya to seize the opportunity to gain power. With the support of the army, nobles as well as the people, Raziya succeeded in capturing the throne. The Jats and the Rajputs of Haryana although in the beginning w'ere with her, later on opposed her and were even instrumental in bringing a tragic end to her short career. Her commander Qutb-ud-din Hausan Ghori on his way to Ranathambhor was attacked by the Mewatis of Haryana whose guerilla tactics of warfare caused much harassment to the Sultanate army.-* This apart, the provincial governors, a much influential section of the Turkish ruling class, felt humiliated at the political developments at Delhi. Consequently Aitigin, the amir-i-hdjib, Altunia and Kabir Khan, the governors of Bhalinda and Lahore respectively, decided to devise plans to overthrow Raziya. Raziya although gained some success in the beginning in her attempt to foil the sinister designs of her opponents was ultimately defeated and was imprisoned and Muizz-ud-din Behram was then put on the Delhi throne. Raziya, a very intelligent lady as she was, married Altunia with the hope of winning black her throne with this matrimonial alliance. The ambitious Altunia who also saw in this relationship an opportunity for further raising his position, collected an army of Khokars, Jats and Rajputs, also winning over some disgruntled section of the nobility, marched on to Delhi. The march ended in a complete disaster. Minhaj describes their miserable flight as follows

In the month of Rabi I 638 (September-October, 1240) Sultan Muizz-ud-din Behram marched against them with an army from Delhi and Raziya and Altunia were defeated and driven back; when they reached Kaithal, all their soldiers deserted them and they fell into the hands of Hindus, and were martyred. They were defeated on 24 Rabi I 638 (14 October, 1240) and Raziya was martyred on the following day.

After the reigns of Muizz-ud-din Beram Shah and Alauddin Masud Shah— the feeble successors of Raziya, Nasiruddin Mahmud ascended the throne with the help of Balban, the most influential of the ‘forty’. Balban who had received the iqta of Hansi was appointed amir-i-hdjib during the reign of Alauddin and was also in possession of the iqta of Rewari. But Balban had to face the powerful opposition headed by Imad-ud-din Rihan who, when the Sultan was at Rohtak, managed to order Balban to depart for his iqta at Hansi. Since Shahzada Ruknuddin was actually to be given the charge of Hansi Balban had no other alternative but to proceed to Nagaur. Ultimately Balban triumphed and put an end to the domination of Rihan. Soon after his accession Nasiruddin had to face serious rebellions of the Mewatis who, under their leader Malka had become so strong that they even dared to attack imperial caravans near Hansi. As put by Minhaj ‘they had carried off herds of camels and camel-men, and had dispersed them among the Hindus throughout the Kohpayah (hill tracts), as far as the vicinity of Rantambhur (Ranthambor).’ Since the Sultan was busy meeting the Mongol invasion, he entrusted Balban (in

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1260) with the task of dealing with the Mewatis. Minhaj details Balban's Mewat expedition. He relates

All those that were on the mountain sides, in the deep defiles, and great ravines, were taken and were brought under the swords of the Musalmans. For a period of twenty days he (Balban) continued to move about Kohpayah in every direction. The dwelling places and villages of those mountaineers were on the submits of the high hills, and the whole of their edifices on the acclivities of rocks ... in altitude, equal to the stars, and even with the sky. By command of Ulugh Khan-i-Azam (Balban), the whole of these places which, in strength, might compare with the tale told of the wall of Sikandar in solidity, were captured, and plundered, and the people of those places, who were knaves, Hindus, thieves and highway robbers, were all put to the sword.

Specially mentioning the repressive measures which Balban took in crushing the rebellion Minhaj adds

The Ulugh Khani orders were that whoever should bring in a head should receive one tangah of silver, and whoever brought in a man alive two tangahs of silver from the private treasure.

Malka along with his 250 followers was put into chains. The Sultan, very much pleased at this achievement called a special darbar on March 9, 1260 near Hauz-i-Rani to celebrate the occasion. Balban and his lieutenants were honoured befitting to their grand success against the Mewatis and the latter were severely punished, most of them trampled under the elephants' feet, while Malka and his associates were skinned alive. Never before such a horrible sight was witnessed at Hauz-i-Rani and the gate of Delhi. Despite these severest measures the Mewatis again revolted in July, 1260 and the Sultan again sent Balban to crush them. Balban made an unexpected move towards Kohpa>ah putting about 12000 persons consisting of men and women and their children to the sword. Much booty also fell into the hands of Balban.

After the death of Nasiruddin, Ulugh Khan ascended the throne with the title of Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266). His first act was to give a final blow to the Mewatis whose frequent revolts were a much disturbing factor for the smooth running of the administration. This general disorder and discontent is voiced in the works of Minhaj and Barani.

At Kohpayah (hill tracts of Mewat) round about the capital there was a com- munity whom Minhaj calls 'obdurate rebels' who, 'unceasingly committed highway robbery and plundered the property of Musalmans, and the ejection of the subject peasantry, and destruction of the villages in the districts of Haryana, the Siwaliks and Bayana'. Barani's description is graphic. He details the disorder and anarchy that prevailed in the environs of Delhi and the measures which Balban took to restore order there. He wrote

. . . Sultan Balban devoted the first year of his reign to cutting the forest round Delhi and suppressing the Meos. He came out of the city, pitched his army-camp and considered the

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suppression of the Meos the most important of state enter- prises. Owing to worthlessness of the successors of Iltutmish and the weakness of Sultan Nasiruddin ... the Meos in the neighbourhood of Delhi had grown in power and multiplied in numbers. They came into the city at night, broke through the walls into the houses and molested the people in other ways. The people of Delhi were unable to sleep owing to the fear of the Meos, who had also plundered all the inns in the neighbourhood of Delhi . . .

The roads (to Delhi) were closed on all sides, and it was impossible for caravans and traders to come and depart. Finally, owing to the fear of the Meos, the western gates of the city were closed at the time of the afternoon prayer, and no one had the courage to go out of the city after that time either to visit the sacred tombs or to enjoy by the side of the Sultani (Shamsi) tank. But ever before the afternoon prayers (the Meos) molested the water-carriers and slave girls who went to fetch water from the tank; they took off their clothes and left them nude.

Balban removed all the jungles in the area around Delhi a preparation for his final assault on the Mewatis. Thousands of Mewatis were put to death. Sultan's losses were also considerable including that of Yak Lakhi, one of his favoured slaves. To put curb to any future rebellion Balban built a fort at Gopalgir. Adequate troops were stationed there and tax-free lands for their maintenance was also granted. This besides, the Sultan also used to go every winter to Rewari with 1000 horsemen and 1000 foot soldiers, though apparently for hunting, the real purpose seems to be his personal supervision of the region which had been of so much trouble to the Sultanate, and also to keep the army vigilant and active. Despite all these steps it must be admitted, Balban could not crush permanently the Mewatis, who, in course of time again raised the standard of revolt.

To meet the Mongol invasions and also the frequent rebellions of the people Balban set up several military posts at Gopalgiri, Sohna, Rewari, Narnaul, Kanod Sonepat, Hansi, Barwala, Phatarat, Thanesar (Pipli) etc. assigning them to the Afghans. To facilitate civil administration Balban increased the number of iqtas the new igtai being Sonepat, Kanod, Kaithal, Siwalik etc. and further divided them into shiqs (equal to modern tehsil).

2. The Khaijis and the Tughlaqs:

Administrative reforms

During the reign of Balban's successor Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, a physical and moral wreck, Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji, who had already distinguished himself in the wars against the Mongols, usurped the power and ascended the throne in June, 1 290. Under Balban, Jalaluddin had served as iqtadar of Kaithal and received also the niayabat (deputyship) of Samana and was raised to the position of the governor of Baran under Kaiqubad. While at Kaithal, he rewarded a Mandahar Rajpur although the latter had wounded him on the face in an encounter following the destruction of a Mandahar village. The Mandahar was appointed vak'ldar under Malik Khurram on a salary of 100,000 jitals. During the early years of his reign Jalaluddin led an

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