The Rastrakutas, who succeeded the early Chalukyas of Badami in establishing political sway over the Deccan founded their capital initially at Pratisthanapura (Paithan, now in Maharashtra) and later at Manyakheta i.e. Malkhed, Chitapur Taluk in the Gulbarga District of Karnataka. Their territories were spread over Kannada, Marathi and Andhra provinces. Having emerged as a strong power, the Rashrautas especially Dhruva, Amoghvarsha and Krishna –II extended their territories upto the northern regions and down south upto Cauvery. It is said that the horses of the Rastrakuta warriors mostly used to gulp the waters of the Ganga and the Yamuna. The Rashtrakutas were the first to indisputably officially declare their empire as Rastrakuta i.e the comity of nations – historical fact of the beginning of nation or Rastra2.

With Amoghavarsha I (818 -878) further strengthening the Rashtrakuta stronghold at Malked on the left Bank of the River Kagina, he also employed masons and craftsmen knowledgeable in defence architectural technique as well as those well versed in carving out the massive rock cut temple like the Kailasanath temple at Ellora and the marvelous Mahesha murty at Elephanta.

The Rastrakuta kings Krishna I (765 -774 A.D); Dhruva (c. 780-7-93 A.D); Govinda –III (793-814 A.D), Amonghavarsha -I(814-8); Indra- III (914-929A.D); Krishna –III(c.939-967 A.D); , and the later kings administered their territory from the

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1 Alterkar Anant Sadashiv (1967) Rashtrakutas and Their Times, Oriental Book Agency, Poona. P -4
Malkhed fort. Amogahavarsha-I was particularly responsible for enlarging, beautifying and modifying the large fort of Malked. The empire declined from the time of Karka-II (972-973 A.D.) as the Later Chalukyas headed by Taila-I (973 A.D. to 997 A.D.) emerged powerful by overthrowing the Rastrakutas and founding their capital at Kalyana.

Prior to the Rashtrakutas establishing their hold over Badami, as already discussed, a fort had been constructed by Pulakehis-I on the northern hill popularly known as Bhavan Bande.
Fig. 5.2: Satellite picture of Rastrakuta fort at Badami connecting Agastya Tirtha and northern hill.

*Courtesy: google earth.com*
Besides, the existing fort of the Chalukyas of Badami, a new fort was constructed by the Rastrakutas at the bottom of the northern hill. In all probability Pulakehi fort might have been weakened by tenth century, and population of Badami town may have multiplied, which may have compelled the Rashtrakutas to provide further protection. The new fort may have been erected by a local administrator at the behest of Rastrakuta kings.

About five inscriptions of the Rastrakuta period have been discovered at Aihole and Badami. The inscription found at the Ladkhan temple at Aihole makes a mention of Krishna –II.3 The inscription further mentions that a certain Suryakartha Bhatara and Balakarthara Bhatara spent the Chaturmasya at the temple4. It is unclear as to who the dignitaries were while the Hucchimalli temple inscription refers Kottiga.5 Besides an inscription found at Badami region speaks of Kalliballanu having ruled over this region.

An inscription on a viragal which was found in front of the Hucchimalligudi speaks of Akkalavarshhadavanu.6 According to Padigar; Govinda figuring in the Aihole inscription of Pulakeshi II7 has been identified generally as a Rashtrakuta chief ruling in the region north of the Bhima River.8 The above inscriptions show the political control Rashtrakutas held over Badami and the surrounding provinces, especially during the time of Krishna II, Kottiga, and Amoghavarsha and may be of the later kings as well. However, none of the inscription speaks of the construction of the fort by the Rashtrakutas. Architectural characteristics point to the fort having been erected during

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3 IA. Vol- no IX, P-74
4 Ibid; P-74-75
5 Pattar Sheelakanth (2000): Badami Samskruthi Adhyana, Prasaranga, Kannada University, Vidyaranya, Hampi.P-24
7 A. Vol no V, PP- 67-68
the reign of the Rastrakutas. The fort, a Neladurga measures 567.68 meters in length from the Agastya Tirtha on the east to the northern hill on the northern end. The entire stretch of the new fortification undertaken by the Rashtrakutas is ‘L’ shaped. Presently the entire fort area is located in the middle of Badami town with residential encroachments, covering the entire area, both within and outside the fort wall. The pathway leading to the fort has become narrow while the bastion, the city gate, guardrooms are all in ruins. Large part of the walls has collapsed while rest of the walls has become the back walls of many of the houses.

|Fig. 5.3 – Rastrakuta Southern Gateway in the midst of Badami Town

Some parts of the fort area have become toilets and drainage area which did cause immense difficulty, in measuring the walls while surveying the area during

fieldwork. At regular intervals are rectangular bastions though a few have crumbled down of which only the bases are available.

There are no traces of moat around the fortified area, as it is entirely covered by dwellings of the densely populated town. In all probability the houses have been constructed over the moat, itself. The fort wall raised over the hill extending up to the northern hill is 120 meters.

On the southern side of the fort is a gateway looking south towards Badami cave temples. The gateway is in the midst of Badami town, (see fig. 5.3) belongs to the period of the Rashtrakutas. The doorway columns is enclosed partly by the projecting walls on the sides, which act as ramparts, and on the either side of the gateway are two bastions with equal measurement of 7.80 length and 7.45 width in the interior. Adjacent to the bastions are a flight of steps to reach the top of the bastion which are slightly hidden and not clearly visible unless and until one gets closer to the back of the bastion.

Fig. 5.4- Rastrakuta bastion at Badami
CHAPTER V: THE FORTS OF LATER PERIOD (11th TO 18th CENTURY A.D.)

The Western Gateway has totally collapsed with no traces of the gateway and is reduced to just a narrow road which leads to the museum (see Rastrakuta map). The gateway is located in a strategic position as it protected the entrance no:1 of Pulakeshi’s fort. The wall pattern of the fort constructed by the Rastrakutas is comparatively well arranged with rectangular and square stone blocks held together with, though with clay binding but today hardly any clay is seen. The sides of the wall which are broad at the base taper towards the top. The lower part of the wall is four meters in width while it is two meters at the top. The height of the wall is six meters. Despite the wall being built strongly by filling it with clay and debris large part of the fort walls have collapsed.

About 100 meters from the western wall is a temple which has been closed down by filling it with soil. Even the façade has been covered up. Concrete structures have been constructed attached to the side and back wall of the temple rendering the temple walls virtually invisible. The sikhara alone is partially seen. No attempt has been made by the civic or other bodies to retrieve the temple to its original form.

In as far as the engineering skill involved in the construction of the fort is concerned, compared to the earlier forts, the new fort of the Rastrakutas is massive in size. The stone blocks used are both of square and rectangular in shape. The locally available material, the red sandstone the locally available material is abundantly used.

VIJAYANAGARA FORT AT BADAMI

The rulers of Vijayanagar Empire Harihara-I, Sadashivaraya, and subordinate rulers have constructed and renovated the forts of Badami. It appears this might be the northern most boundary of Vijayanagar as already discussed under Vijayanagara also
Badami became an important centre. After the fortification undertaken by the Rashtrakutas, the next power to have taken to further strengthening of the existing forts by means of renovation and as well as adding on additional forts at Badami was Vijayanagara. A fortification covering the earlier forts came in for construction during the reign of Hari Hara-I in the year 1339-40. This fort connects Batterappana gudi, near the Kappe Arabattana inscription on the northern part of Agastya Tirtha. The bastion added by Harihara-I is circular in shape, and this appears to have been renovated by Tipu Sultan which is evident in the architectural pattern and mortar. Another fort connecting the northern hill with the southern hill was erected during the reign of Sadashivaraya. Major part of the fort wall rests on the bund of the Agastya Tirtha which is actually located between the two hills. (See illustration of the fortified wall across the Agastya Tirtha.) Yet another fort was constructed during the period of Achyuta Raya. The fort is much more elaborate.

Fig. 5.5: The Ruins of Vijayanagar Fort at Badami

The wall commences from vicinity of the Malagitti Shivalaya on the western side of the northern hill and extends up to the western part of the southern hill (now

IA, Vol no X, pp -62-64
beside the security guard room of the A.S.I). Four inscriptions of the period all found at
Badami mention building of the forts as well as reconstruction and renovation
activities. Names of Harihara-I, Sadashivaraya, and Achyutaraya as well as their
subordinate Krishnappa Nayaka and Kondaraja are mentioned along with the task under
taken by each of them.

Fig.5.6: Ruins of Vijayanagara Fort at Badami

Badami witnesses defence architectural building activity from 6th century to 18
century, at the same time even reconstruction and renovation work were undertaken
form time to time according to requirements. Such of the acts are well evidenced in the
inscriptions. An inscription present is the Bijapur Archeological museum, states that
Achyutaraya sent his army chiefs, Channappanayaka and his son to renovate temples
and the fort at Badami.1

Tracing the moat is a very difficult task. Due to expansion, in the Badami town
entire moat around the fort wall has been destroyed. Originally the moat around the fort
covered entire Badami town from northern hill and connecting with the southern hill,
(fig. 3) measuring 1175M, single stretch, is almost a straight line,, the exterior side at
regular intervals has circular bastions. The method adopted in the constructions of the

1 SII, Vol no- XVIII P- 282-283
moat is unclear as the entire stretch has been encroached upon from time to time.

Present Badami has grown beyond this moat, and with the growth of the township,

since a few decades almost the whole fort wall has been demolished. Even the moat

has been filled up in the northern part. In the southern part the entire Moat has

become the main drainage. About four years back when field work was undertaken for

the study of moat wall near by Dr Ambedkar circle, upto Hanunam temple was

identified, but even that is covered by concrete wall built by Badami municipality.

The moat excavated during the Vijayanagar period has been filled up and has

become main road connecting Badami with the Banashakari temple which is 5 km

away. The elevated wall erected during the period of Achutaraya is totally destroyed

except the wall found near Chavadi (village council hall). During the field work the

wall was traced at the back of Krishna gudi and right side of Hanumappa gudi. Close

observation shows these stone blocks were in fine rectangular shape and moderately

small and varying measurement. The pattern in which the stone blocks have been

arranged in the construction of walls speaks of it belonging to the Vijayanagara period.

A study of the Vijayanagara fort indicates that the fort enclosed not only the area of the

administrative units but also the whole Badami town.

One more stretch of the Vijayanagara fort can be seen as on the western side of

the deep valley forming the large Agastya tank. The fort wall which is in single line,

connecting the northern hill and stretching towards the southern hill (see fig 4) has a

gateway towards the middle, but rather nearer to the northern end. This road leads to

southern gateway erected during the rule of the Rashtrakutas. This is diagonally

opposite to entrance- I of the northern fort.
Fig. 5.7: Vijayanagara fort wall on the Agastya tank bund.
Fig. 5.8. Vijayanagara fort connecting northern and southern hill

Bastions of Vijayanagar period were mostly in circular shape has seen in the few remains near Ranamandala hill on southern side which is in a ruined state.

Provision was made for placing guns and loophole within the forts which were introduced for the first time at Badami.
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TIPU FORT AT BADAMI

Hyder Ali conquered Badami fort in 1776 and it continued to be important stronghold under Tipu till 1786 where after it was surrendered to Nizams and Pashwa.

Badami was the northern centre for his administration.

Fig. 5.9. Tipu fort on the Ranamandala hill above Badami cave temples.

Tipu took to rebuilding and reconstruction of fort on the Northern hill and even a new fort at southern hill that is Ranamandala Hill above caves was added. The fort of Tipu at Badami was the strongest in comparison to the preceding ones at Badami.

Fig. 5.10: Rocket launching of Tipu period


European arms and ammunitions were introduced in Mysore State for the first time. Factories were founded at Srirangapatana, Maddur, and Mysore.13 Taramandal Pets, the rocket manufacturing units were found in several places and Bangalore was one important centre.14. There was a significant advancement in rocket technology. Tipu a military genius knew the importance of modern weapons such as firearms.

Fortified walls were strong and protected by battlements, bastions, water bodies, heavily guarded gateways and secret passage. At the centre of the fort is a tank, which is actually a depression in the rock. Around this is constructed a bund to form a water body.

Heavy bastions with space for placing cannons was provided besides loopholes cut into the wall curtains. For the movement of arms, ammunition and foot soldiers a walk path was provided for the first time in Badami alongside the parapet wall. The parapet wall has loopholes at intervals to fire at the enemy. The fort has four major circular bastions and three demi–bastions identified during the field study. However

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14 Ibid – P-2
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S.K. Joshi opines there were nine bastions. And comparison of the Badami fort of Tipu with that of the Devanahalli fort brings out several similarities be it in the construction pattern or for that matter the bastions, parapets and other features. At the eastern edge of the hill are traces of a wall, large parts of which have collapsed and fallen into the valley below. May be there were structures serving as a store house for arms and ammunitions, as well as army quarters. At the base of the hill fort is the Markaj Jama Masjid.

Fig. 5.12: Tombs of Tipu period at Badami

A few tombs are also found at the ground level. It was at Badami fort that Tipu had to confront the Nizam and the Peshwas in the twelve-month long battle during 1786-87. The Badami fort was defended by the garrison of 3000 Mysore troops. After a bitter battle the strong fort was later conquered by the allied army of the Nizam and the Marathas. It was on 21st May 1786 Hyder Baksh, the army commander of Tipu surrendered the fort.

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15 Joshi, S.K.: Defence Architecture in Early Karnataka, 1985, Sandeep Prakashan, New Delhi, Fig no 22


17 Ibid.
A contemporary ballad entitled *Badami Kille Kedavida Pada*, speaks of Tipu referred to as *Dore* having taken nine years to construct a majestic fort at Badami involving 12000 laborers. He is said to have paid two annas cooli for the visually and differently abled and pregnant women and also, *daana* for the Brahmanas and Jangamas as well as Jagirs to the Khaji’s, Mulla’s and Fakirs. The ballad describes the fort as invincible, fitted with iron gateways, stationed with strong army, equipped with arms, cannons and ammunition. It further says that when demolished by the Peshwas and the Mughalai it sounded like thunder and lightening and appeared like a chariot without a kalasa. It further deplores that bad times had descended upon Badami which had rendered Karnataka destitute.

On the northern hill Tipu renovated the existing fort and made several additions as per the requirements. In an attempt to strengthen the existing fort he reconstructed several parts of the old walls by using mortar in-between the stone blocks. Loopholes were cut into the walls for purpose of firing at the enemy as well as to observe the movements of the enemy. On the basis of the features of the gateway, it appears to have been renovated by Tipu.

A very large Bastion, circular in shape was constructed by Tipu. The diameter of the bastion in the interior measured 19.7 meters while the width of the wall which was also measured during the field work is 2.35 meters in width.

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19 Ibid;
Fig. 5.13: New bastion built on northern hill with magazine

The bastion reveals good engineering skill involved in its construction as seen in the size and its strategic location. Important is the bastions is constructed, on the edge of the hill from where the whole town could be sighted, and also the steepness prevented scaling the walls. While the exterior of the bastions is of stone, the interior is constructed of brick and mortar.

Fig. 5.14: New bastion built on northern hill with magazine and interior of bastion of brick and mortar
The width of the steps varies from bottom to top. While at the base, it measures 7.60 meters. To the right of the steps is a deep chamber with pillars in the interior with a small circular opening at the rear end of the chamber.

Fig.5.15: Underground magazine with foliated arches

Fig.5.16: Underground magazine building with foliated arches

Fig.5.17: Parapet wall of Tipu fort on southern hill. Badami
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Fig. 5.18: Guard room Door ways of Tipu fort (Southern hill)

Fig. 19.: Satellite picture of Tip fort with bastions
Fig. 5.21: Artist view of cannon firing during Tipu Period

On the top of the hill about 100 meters from the upper Shivalaya is a Magazine. Within the chamber are two underground cells used for storage of arms, ammunitions and gun powder. The magazine structure is rectangle in shape and the doorway as well as in the interior is foliated arches.