
Rudi Matthee
This thoughtful and well documented article revisits the link between Safavid Iran and its “satellite” Shi’i states in the Deccan, Ahmadnagar (the Nizamshahi kingdom), Golconda (Hyderabad, the Qutbshahi kingdom), and Bijapur (the ‘Adilshahi dynasty), a topic on which little has been written since M. A. Nayeem and H. K. Sarkar dealt with it three decades ago. The author contests the traditional view, according to which the emergence of these states in the 16th century and their adoption of Twelver-Shi’ism were a function to the prior influx of Iranians from Safavid Iran into India bringing an orthodox form of Twelver-Shi’ism with them, on the grounds that formal Shi’ism was still a long way off in the early Safavid polity. Instead, he makes a strong case for a much more heterodox set of influences, with a strong element of Sufism permeating an amalgamation of Sunni and Shi’i beliefs among the founders of these various dynasties.

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