

# VIJAYAPURA



Archaeological Survey of India  
Dharwad Circle

Karnataka



# VIJAYAPURA

## LOCATION

VIJAYAPURA ('City of Victory'), former BIJAPUR (Lat. 16°50' N; Long. 75°52' E), lies in the plains between the Krishna and Bhima rivers. 210 km from Hubli by road, it is a Railway Station on Sholapur-Hubli line. The nearest airports are at Hubli and Belgaum.

## HISTORY

Vijayapura, referred to in medieval inscriptions by the same name, attained political prominence under the Adil Shahi Sultans. The region's history is traced from 6th century when it formed part of the kingdom of Chalukyas of Badami. Subsequently it passed in succession through the political authority of the Rashtrakutas, Kalyana Chalukyas, Kalachuris and the Yadavas. The Islamic rule initiated by Ala-uddin-khilji in the Deccan in the early 14th century was consolidated by Muhammad-bin Tughluq (1325-58). But the internal feuds among the nobility changed the political scenario leading to rebellion and establishment of Bahamani kingdom under Hasan Gangu (1347-58), with Gulbarga as the capital. This kingdom flourished till 1481, when the ambitious and jealous noblemen vying for power and political superiority accentuated a split. Yusuf Adil Shah (1489-1510), a distinguished military governor proclaimed independence and laid the foundation of Adil Shahi dynasty, making Vijayapura his capital. The Adil Shahis further consolidated their power under Yusuf's successor Ismail (1510-1534), Ibrahim (1535-1558) and Ali I (1558-1580).

Adil Shahi power reached its zenith under Ali, who successfully led the confederacy of sultans of Deccan to bring down the mighty Vijayanagara Empire in the decisive battle of Rakkasathangadi in 1565. During the reigns of Ibrahim II (1580-1627) and Muhammad (1626-1656) Vijayapura witnessed cultural efflorescence of a high order and religious harmony. After an eventful rule of Ali II (1656-1672), Vijayapura succumbed to Aurangazeb in 1686. After the fall of the Mughals, Vijayapura came under the control of the Marathas, Nizams, Peshwas, Mysore rulers and ultimately the British till India became independent.

Adil Shahi rulers were great builders and patrons of fine arts, including music. Vijayapura, the capital was extensively fortified and embellished with magnificent palaces, mosques and tombs, and gorgeously painted pleasure resorts and elaborate water supply systems. The remnants of these still stand as testimonies to the marvelous architectural innovations. The Dakhani school of miniature painting was reached its zenith.

The Adil Shahi monumental heritage illustrates the Deccan style develop into a mature architectural style in conception, method of construction and decoration. This developed style is marked by the monumentality





and grandeur of conception characteristic of the Deccan style on the one hand and a few distinguishing features of its own on the other.

The bulbous, proportionate and shapely dome with its drum concealed within a band of conventional petals, use of attractive pendentives, projecting and richly ornamented chajjas and tall, slender minarets and finials, frequent use of a masonry pier of considerable size instead of a pillar, treatment of pointed arch and the graceful curve of its outlines are some of the salient features of the Adil Shahi architectural style.

The Adil Shahi edifices are remarkable for the treatment of ceilings, which are built without any apparent support. Equally typical is the rich variety of ornamentation, executed with great artistic skill in stone carving, cut-plaster and painting. Another aspect is the intrusion and assertion of Hindu elements in building techniques and methods and decoration. The edifices of the period of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, especially the Ibrahim Rouza, present a harmonious and judicious blend of the features of the two styles. Thus, these architectural splendours with distinct and unique features stand as masterpieces of human creative genius. Important ones among them are described in the sequel.

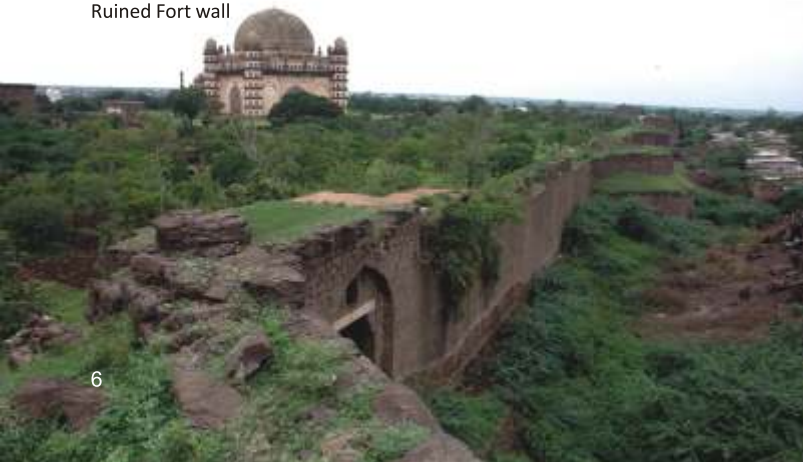


## Fort & Gateway



The Fort walls of Vijayapura, forming about 10 km long circumference, encircle the city in an irregular ellipse. A deep moat, 12.2 - 15.2 m wide, runs around the walls. There are ninety-six principal bastions and five main gates. The walls have a broad platform protected by a battlement, parapet and regular bastions, some mounted with cannons. The five principal gates protected by bastions have covered zig-zag approaches. They are, the Mecca Gate to the west, the Shahpur Gate to the north-west, the Bahmani Gate to the north,

Ruined Fort wall



Gateway (Darvaza)

the Alipur Gate or High Gate leading to the east and the Fateh Gate or Mangooli Gate to the southwest (through which Aurangzeb entered in 1686). There are several other smaller gates - principally the Zohrapur Gate and the Padshahpur Gate, as well as numerous Diddis or posterns. The Arquilla or Citadel walls have a circuit of 160 m, but long sections have been demolished. The main entrance was via the Arquilla Gate, approached from the south, carrying an inscription dated 1544. Between the inner and outer gates are arcades and guardrooms. On the outer city walls the Burj-e-Sherza (Lion Bastion) north of the Zohrapur Gate was built in just five months in 1671.



Malik-e-Maidan

On the bastion is the Malik-e-Maidan (Lord of the Battle Plain), a huge gun cast at Ahmadnagar from bell metal and located here in 1632 after wreaking havoc at the Battle of Talikota in 1565. The muzzle is cast with a figure of a monster swallowing an elephant. It is 4.2 m long with a bore of 70 cm. Around the touch hole is the inscription of its maker, Muhammad Bin Hussain Rumi. To the east of the Burj-e-Sherza is the Upari Burj, or Haidar Burj. It comprises an oval tower with an outer staircase carrying a Persian inscription recording its construction in 1583. Above are two guns strapped



Upari Burj

together by iron bands. The larger is called the Lamcharri or Far-flier. On the south wall the Landa Kasab bastion carries the largest gun in Vijayapura. It measures 6.55 m long and weighs 47 tons.

Guns - Upari Burj



## Waterworks



The Waterworks, bearing ample testimony to the sophistication of the engineers of that period, are the most fascinating aspect of Vijayapura. Underground ducts bring water from Toravi (8 km to the west) and from the Begum Talab (built by Muhammad Adil Shah, 4.8 km to the south). Towers were built along the route of the pipes, to relieve pressure in the system.

Within the city the Taj Bauri and Chand Bauri are the large tanks. The Taj Bauri (probably of 1620) is the largest tank in Vijayapura. It has long arcaded ranges and broad flights of steps leading to the water's edge. Around the high enclosing wall is a terrace with a low parapet. In the centre of each side are sets of rooms overlooking the tank. The Chand Bauri, south of the Shahapur Gate, is named after the famous Chand Bibi, wife of Ali Adil Shah I. It is smaller, but earlier (1579) and similar to the Taj Bauri. In front of the Sat Manzil is the Jal Mandir, a delightful water fountain in the middle of a reservoir. 16 km east of Vijayapura, in the village of Kumatgi, lies a pleasure resort studded with pavilions and tanks. On the walls of one pavilion are some fine frescoes, representing the game of polo, a hunting

Chand Bauri



scene and European envoys to the court of Vijayapura. Remains of the lake and pleasure pavilions can still be seen, together with some interesting stone cisterns, fountains and bathhouses.

Water pavilion - Kumatgi



# Mahals



The Asar Mahal (1646), on the edge of the citadel moat, facing east, was built as a Hall of Justice and was later used to house two hairs from the Prophet's beard. The east side is open. Four huge teak pillars carry the ceiling and form a portico, which faces a large tank. The ceiling is coffered and painted. A staircase leads to a large hall, where carpets and brocades are displayed. To the right is an upper verandah, which looks down on the portico. The three doors leading from the gallery are ribbed and inlaid with geometric pattern. Inside, the walls and ceilings are painted with figures and leaves. At the base of the southern staircase is the library or Kitab-khana. A bridge once linked the Asar Mahal to the citadel. The remains of other buildings, the Jehaz Mahal complex, lie to the north. Just inside, to the northwest of the gate, is the Karim-uddin Mosque. The body of the mosque is built from Jain and Hindu pillars of various patterns and-heights, an extraordinary collection of salvaged masonry. The mandapa acts as a porch, but the inner doorway, with perforated screens, is Islamic. The upper part has an inscription, which states that Malik Karim-ud-Din built this section in 1320



Asar Mahal

and Revoja was the architect. The Anand Mahal (Palace of Delight) built by-Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1589), remained unfinished and probably contained the private apartments and zenana. It is the most prominent of the palaces in the citadel, with a fine open hall. The Gagan-Mahal (Heavenly Palace) (1561) built by Ali Adil Shah I, lies on the west side of the citadel, close to the moat, facing north. It was the Durbar Hall and is easily' identified by the huge central arch flanked by two tall narrow arches, forming its facade. The span of the central arch is 18.6 m and the height of all three is 15.2 m. To the east lies the Adalat Mahal (Hall of Justice). It has been extensively rebuilt, with a small mosque on the north side and a pretty pavilion or pleasure house to the east. To the north are the tomb and mosque of Yakut Dabuli. The square tomb is enriched with lattice

screens. Yakut Dabuli decorated the mihrab in the Jami Masjid. Over his tomb runs the inscription: 'One atom of divine grace is better than to be chief of 1,000 villages.' At the western end of the citadel is the Sat Manzil (Seven Storeys, 1583), of which only five remain. It is a distinctive building with large number of water pipes and cisterns, probably-intended as a pleasure house. Traces of figures can be seen on the walls. The Chini Mahal, probably so called because of the tiling which once decorated the building, was the public palace of the kings, where audiences were held. Inside is a fine hall, 39 m long, rising to the roof and flanked by suites of rooms. To the front is a lofty open verandah.

Gagan-Mahal



## Mosques and Idgahs



The Mecca Masjid (1669) is a lovely little mosque enclosed by high walls with crisply carved details. The massive minarets constructed from rough material are the only remnants of an earlier mosque on the site. Southwest of Bara Kaman is the Bukhara Masjid. The brackets to the cornice and the internal stucco ornaments are notable. Just to the north is the mosque of Malik Sandal, the great architect of Vijayapura. Close to this is the Zamrud Masjid, a miniature mosque, 3.6 m square, the smallest in the city.

The Jami Masjid lies to the southwest of the Golgumbaz. It is a finely proportioned building with arched sides and a large inner courtyard containing fountains and a reservoir. The mosque proper lies

Jami Masjid



across the west end of the court, with a facade of nine bays crowned by a huge dome, probably the best proportioned in the city. It was commenced by Ali Adil Shah (1558-80) but was not completed until 1686. The pavement is divided into 2250 musallas i.e., rectangular compartments, one for each worshipper, caused by Aurangzeb. The mihrab, gilded and inscribed with Persian verses, is from the time of Muhammad Adil Shah.

The Mehtar Mahal (1620) is a little gem, an ornamental gateway leading to the Mehtar Mosque. It is a small but elegant gateway covered with ornamental detail and surmounted by two slender minarets. It is one of the finest buildings in the city.

In the fields to the south of the Mehtar Mahal is a small but peculiar mosque with an unusual wagon-vault roof, covering the entire structure. This is Ali Shahid Pir's Mosque (1560), with a finely modelled facade enriched with receding lines of moulding around the arches, which convey a deep-set appearance. The spandrels are enriched with beautiful stucco

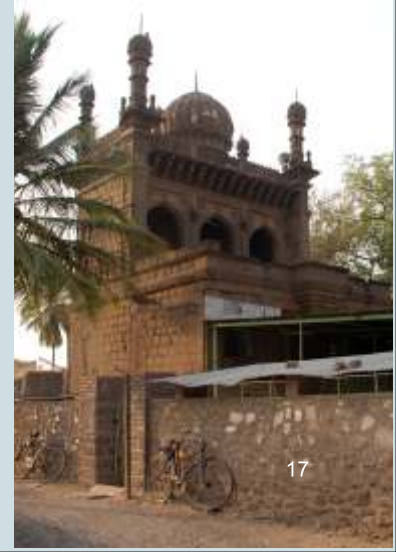
Mehtar Mahal

medallions. Short, thin minarets terminate at each end of the facade. Traces of the original encaustic tiles and enamel can be seen on the decorated mihrab, which unusually has a door inserted in it, providing access from outside. Above is a dome breaking the roofline. Adjoining the mosque is the tomb of Hazrat Sayyid Ali Shahid, after whom the mosque is named.

The Jhanjiri Mosque, attributed to Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1600) in honour of his daughter Malika Jehan, is a compact, well-proportioned building with a rich facade. The central arch is cusped, the cornice and brackets finely chased, the outer edge of the former cut into scallops resembling lacework. Traceries, windows, chhatris and perforated parapets enhance the delicacy of the composition.

In the southwest quarter of the city is the Andu Masjid (1608). It is a two-storey building with a mosque on the 'second storey and a rest house beneath. It was built by It'bar Khan, one of the ministers of Ibrahim Adil Shah II. The facade has three bays with four small minarets. The masonry is exceptionally fine and the whole is crowned by a

Andu Masjid



ribbed melon-shaped domed pattern which is repeated on the domes to the minars. A lace-like fringe adorns the dome and crest of the building.

The Jami Masjid of Ibrahim I (1551), lies near the Tomb of the Begum Sahiba, wife of Aurangzeb. It is an old-fashioned mosque with brick and mortar minarets over the corners and central piers. Only the brackets of the cornice remain. Inside, it is plain. The tomb of Ali Adil Shah I (1580) is a rectangular plain edifice, surrounded by a corridor and containing four tombs. At the southeastern corner is a high platform with a beautiful dark green tombstone in the centre.

The Mustafa Khan's mosque and palace lie east of the citadel. The facade has three tall arches. A deep cornice oversees the front, octagonal buttresses intended to carry the minarets, flank the facade. The central bay masses up by pendentives into a fourteen-sided figure and from this rises the dome. Behind the mosque lie the remains of Mustafa Khan's palace. He was one of the principal architects of the alliance between Ahmadnagar, Bidar, Vijayapura and Golkonda which led to the destruction of Vijayanagara. A short distance to the south is the Badi Kaman, a great archway which appears to have been the entrance to the palace grounds.

On the highest ground within the walls of Vijayapura is the Dakhani Idgah (1590), an ancient building, possibly designed by Malik Sandal. To the east of this is the Chota Asar, a small mosque with rich

stuccowork, covering the walls, ceiling and facade. In the village of Afzalpur, are the tomb of Chindgi Shah, the cenotaph, mosque and palace of Afzal Khan. Afzal Khan was the unfortunate victim of the fatal encounter with Shivaji at Pratapagadh. During his life he began his own tomb and mosque beside his palace. The mosque was completed in 1653, but the tomb was never finished. His body remained on the slopes of Pratapagadh. It is said that before he set off to fight, he had a premonition of his own death and that he personally put the date 1658 on his cenotaph and drowned his sixty-four wives in anticipation of his own demise. Beside the tomb is the two-storey mosque, the upper level reserved for the women of the zenana. To the south lie the ruins of his palace.

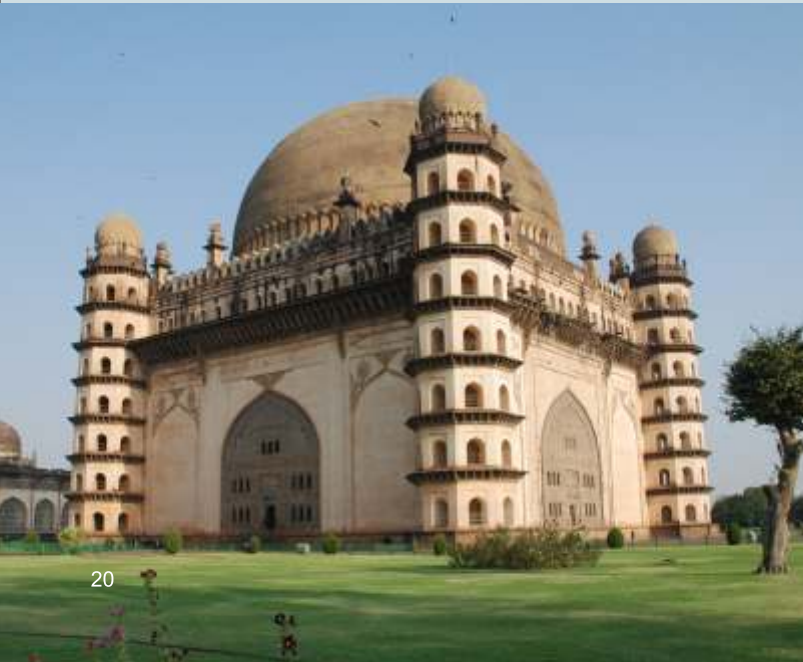
Malika Jehan Begam Masjid



# Tombs



The Golgumbaz or Mausoleum of Muhammad Adil Shah II (1627-57) is the largest and most conspicuous building in Vijayapura and one of the most celebrated in India. Built in 1657 by Yaqut a master builder of Dabul, it is a masterpiece of Islamic architecture.



Whispering Gallery

Situated on a 183 m square podium, the tomb resembles a giant cube crowned by a hemispherical dome with a seven-storey octagonal tower at each of its four corners, capped by smaller domes. The great dome is the second largest in the world, 37.9 m in diameter, compared with 42.4 m at St Peter's in Rome, and 32.9 m at St Paul's, London. The space it enclosed is the largest in the world covered by a single dome. Externally, it is faced in plaster. The facades have a large central arch, above which is a cornice of grey basalt and a row of small arches carrying a second line of plain work crowned by a 1.8 m high balustrade. The corner towers are entered from winding staircases in the walls of the main building. Each storey has seven

arched windows. Whispering Gallery at the sixth storey is a broad gallery around the dome, which has remarkable acoustic properties: a tenfold echo can be obtained. From the base of the dome there is a fine aerial view of the city. Over the south doorway are three inscriptions giving the date of Muhamad Adil Shah's death in 1657. Below the dome, in the centre of the chamber, is the tomb of Muhammad. To the east are the graves of his youngest wife and his son Ali Adil Shah II; on the west are those of his favourite dancing girl called Rambha, his daughter and eldest wife. A small annex to the north side was intended



as a resting-place for his mother, but it is a later, unfinished addition. To the west is a well-proportioned mosque of considerable elegance. On the south side is the Naqqur khana (house of drums), now housing the museum. The tomb of Shah Karim Muhammad Qadri (1741) and that of Sayyid Abdul Rahman Qadri (1741) lie near the southeast corner of the Jami Masjid. Both boast ceilings alleged to be coated in pulverized mother of pearl, the latter with some pretty stucco work and iron bosses on the doors.

To the north of the citadel, is the Bara Kaman unfinished tomb of Ali Adil Shah II (1670s), intended to have surpassed every other monument in the city. The base is 65.5 m square, compared with 48 m of the Golgumbaz. It was intended to have a large dome over the central enclosure, but only the outer arcade of curious arches remains. The masonry has been left



undressed. On a raised platform in the inner enclosure is the tomb of Ali Adil Shah; to the south-west corner, a small platform for a female, reputed to be the tomb of Khurshe Khanam, mother of Sikander. There are thirteen, other graves here. The complex containing the Tomb and Mosque of Malik Sandal, the great architect of Vijayapura, is a beautiful but modest arched edifice. Within the enclosed courtyard is a small canopy beneath which is a woman's tomb, possibly that of his mother. One of the open-air tombs is that of the architect himself. The other buildings contain arcades

and tombs. Near the Haidar Burj bastion, is the Sikander Rouza a large plain tomb of the last of the Vijayapura Sultans (1672-86).

The Ibrahim Rouza (1626), to the west of the city, is a splendid group of buildings which includes the tombs of Ibrahim Adil Shah II and his Queen, Taj Sultana. It was designed by Malik Sandal and is enclosed by a high wall pierced by a tall gateway with corner minarets. Within, set on a raised plinth, are two large buildings facing each other. To the east is the





tomb of Ibrahim Adil Shah II. In a sequence from east to west, lie Taj Sultana, his mother Haji Bada Sahiba, then Ibrahim himself, his daughter Zohra Sultana, then his son Darvesh Padshah and another son, Sultan Sulaiman. The tombs lie north to south in a single sepulchral chamber. To each of the four sides is a doorway flanked by an exquisite ornamental window with interlaced Arabic script. But the most remarkable feature is the hanging ceiling. It is composed of stone slabs with no apparent means of support, the secret lying in the exceptional tenacity of the mortar. Above is another chamber in the dome, reached by a narrow

staircase. Over the north door is a Persian inscription, including a chronogram of 1626. Over the south door is the date 1633, with an inscription praising Ibrahim and another commemorating the architect. Around the tomb is a colonnaded verandah with a beautifully carved and decorated ceiling divided into compartments and inlaid with arabesques and flowers. Traces of the gilt and azure colours remain. It is one of the finest examples of Islamic ornamental decoration in India. Outside, the double arcade is crowned by a fine cornice with corner minarets and eight smaller ones between them.

To the west, within the enclosure, is the Mosque in similar style. It is with five elegant arches beneath a finely detailed cornice enriched with stone chains carved from single blocks of stone. Four slender minarets with onion domes crown the four corners. The structures located to the west of Ibrahim Rouza are the Tomb of the Begum Sahiba, wife of Aurangzeb, and the Jami Masjid of Ibrahim I (1551), that lies out in the fields. This is an old-fashioned plain mosque with brick and mortar minarets over the corners and central piers. Only the brackets of the cornice remain. The Tomb of Ali Adil Shah I (1580), a rectangular plain edifice surrounded by a corridor and containing four tombs. At the southeastern corner is a high platform with a beautiful dark green tombstone in the centre.

## Other Structures of Importance



Other outlying sites of interest are the Begum Talab (1651), 3.2 km south of Vijayapura, built by Muhammad Adil Shah II to supplement the water supply; the Ibrahimpur Mosque (1526), 1.6 km away in the village of the same name, and two tombs. The Tomb of Ain-ul-Mulk (1565) lies 3.2 km to the east of the city, a massive square building with an elegant dome and some pendant stuccowork. Adjacent is the mosque. The Tomb of Jehan Begum is similar in size and design to the Golgumbaz, with similar corner towers, but it is unfinished. In 1599 Ibrahim Adil Shah II founded a new city of unparalleled splendour, centered on the village of Toravi or Naurasapur. The walls extended 4.8 km from the west gate of the fort. Over 20,000 masons and-artisans were summoned from all over the kingdom and placed under Nawab Shavaz Khan. Many fine buildings were erected, but the new town was sacked by Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar in 1624 and, later, astrologers predicted severe consequences if the capital was changed. The ruins of the incomplete great wall remain. Around the village of Toravi are the ruins of the Sangeet Mahal and Nari Mahal. Beyond are the Tagani Mahal and other mosques, tombs and ruins.

## Archaeological Museum



Archaeological Museum in Bijapur is an astounding tourist attraction in Karnataka. It is a well-known landmark in the city that is a huge crowd puller. This place is a perfect site for the ones that have a special flavor in enhancing their erudition about the history of Bijapur and its rulers. The different galleries of this museum display the ancient exhibits that were discovered during the excavations. At present, this place stands among the must-see places in Bijapur.





As rightly exclaimed by Asad Baig, an embassy from emperor Akbar's court, who visited this splendid capital city in 1604 CE, "PERHAPS NO PLACE IN THE WORLD COULD PRESENT MORE WONDERFUL SPECTACLE TO THE EYE".



#### Timings:

**Museum:** 9 AM to 5 PM all days

**Entrance Fee:** Indians & Foreigners: ₹ 5  
(Children up to 15 years free)

**Monuments:** Open from sunrise to sunset

**Entrance Fee:** Indians, SAARC and  
BIMSTEC Citizens: ₹ 25 per head  
Others: ₹ 300 per head  
(Children up to 15 years free)

#### Videography charges:

₹ 25/-per monument  
(Children up to 15 years free)

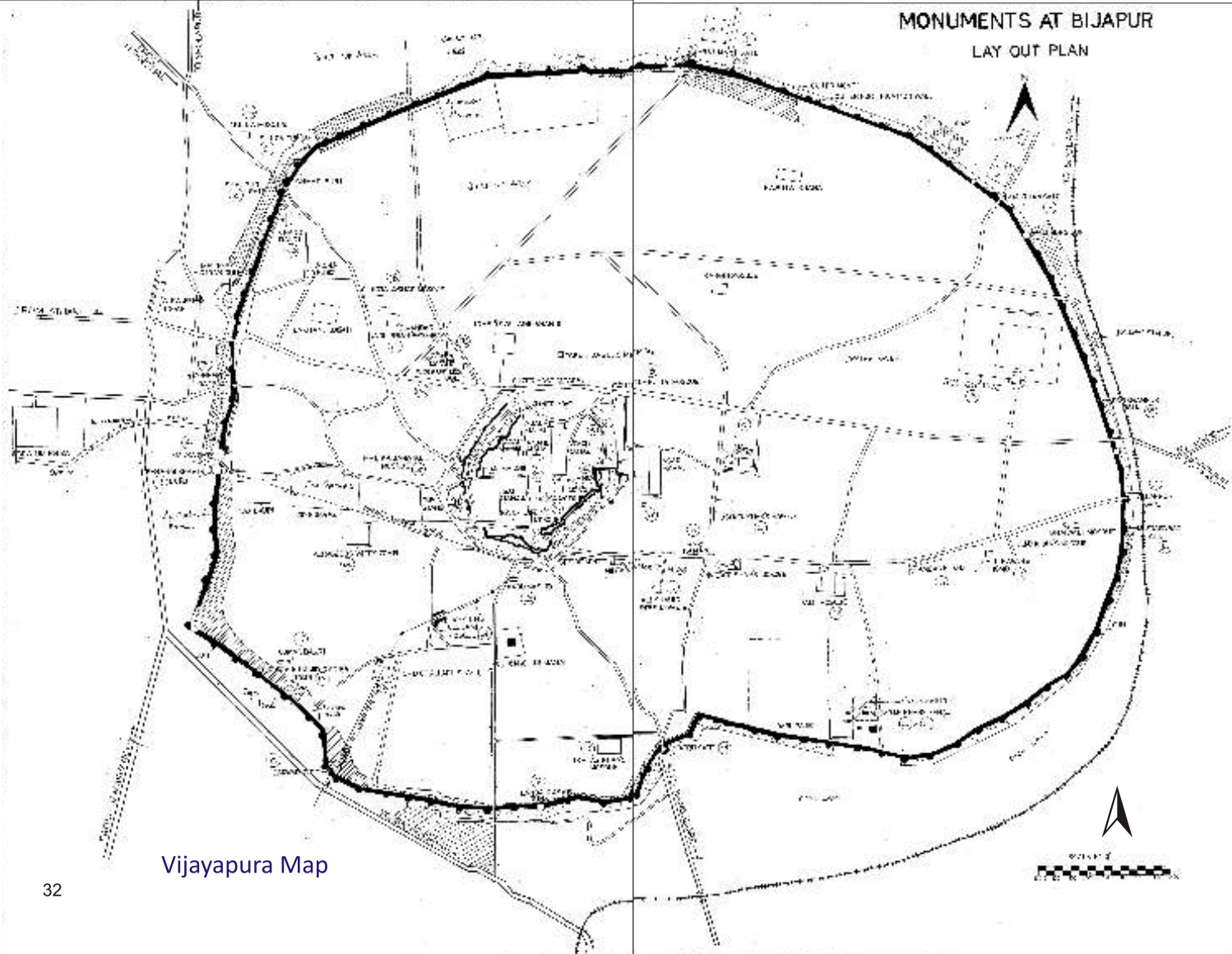
#### Further Information

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MONUMENTS AT BIJAPUR  
LAY OUT PLAN



Vijayapura Map



Archaeological Survey of India