

The Subordinate King

The Shifting Fortunes of Gunaga Vijayaditya III



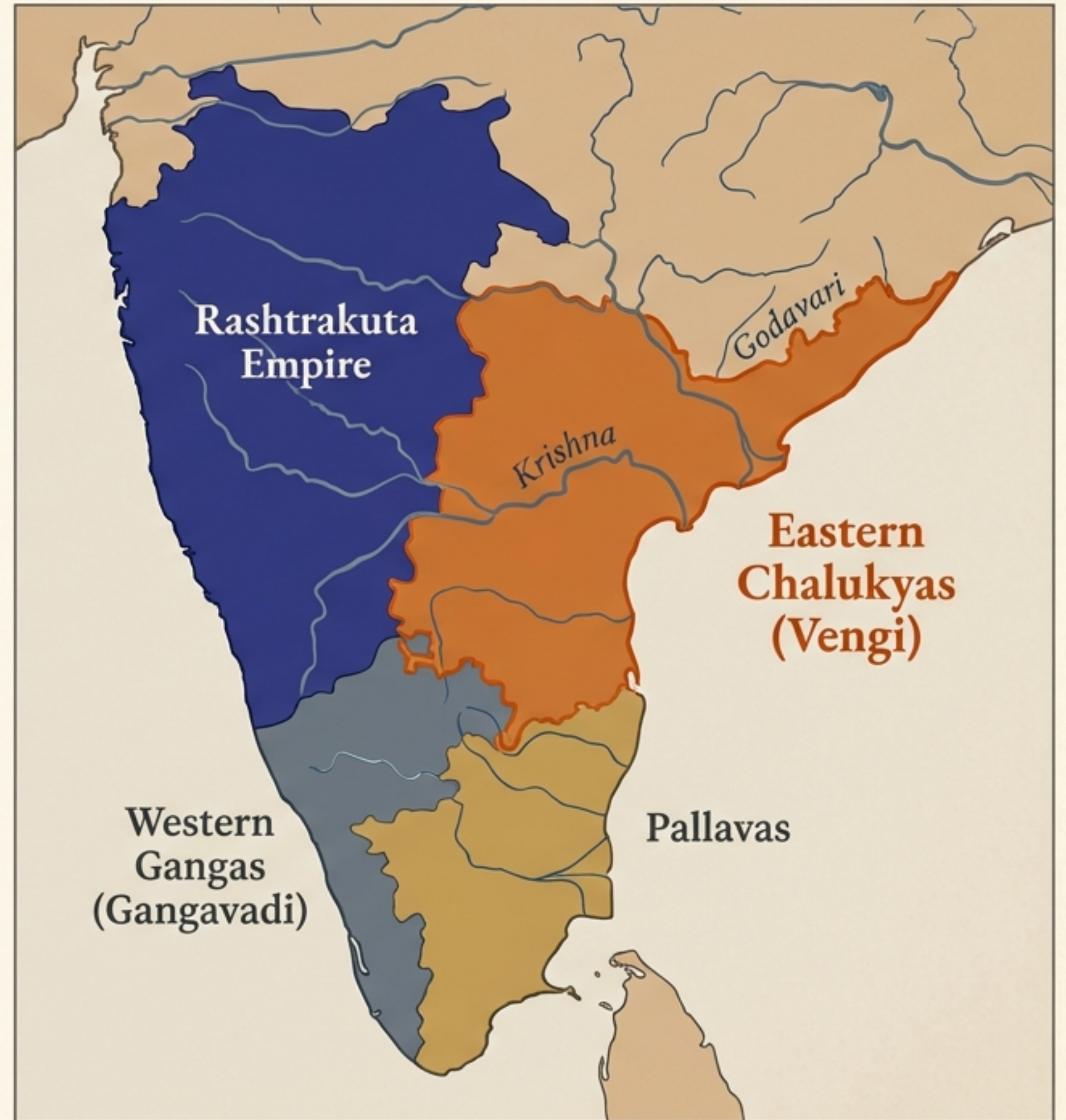
An Eastern Chalukyan tale of ambition, defeat, and repurposed power in the 9th-century Deccan.

The Eastern Chalukyas: A Rising Power

The 9th century Deccan was a chessboard of powerful dynasties. In the east, the Chalukyas of Vengi, under the ambitious Gunaga Vijayaditya III, were poised for expansion. This is the story of his dramatic career, from an independent conqueror to a vital instrument of his rival's empire.

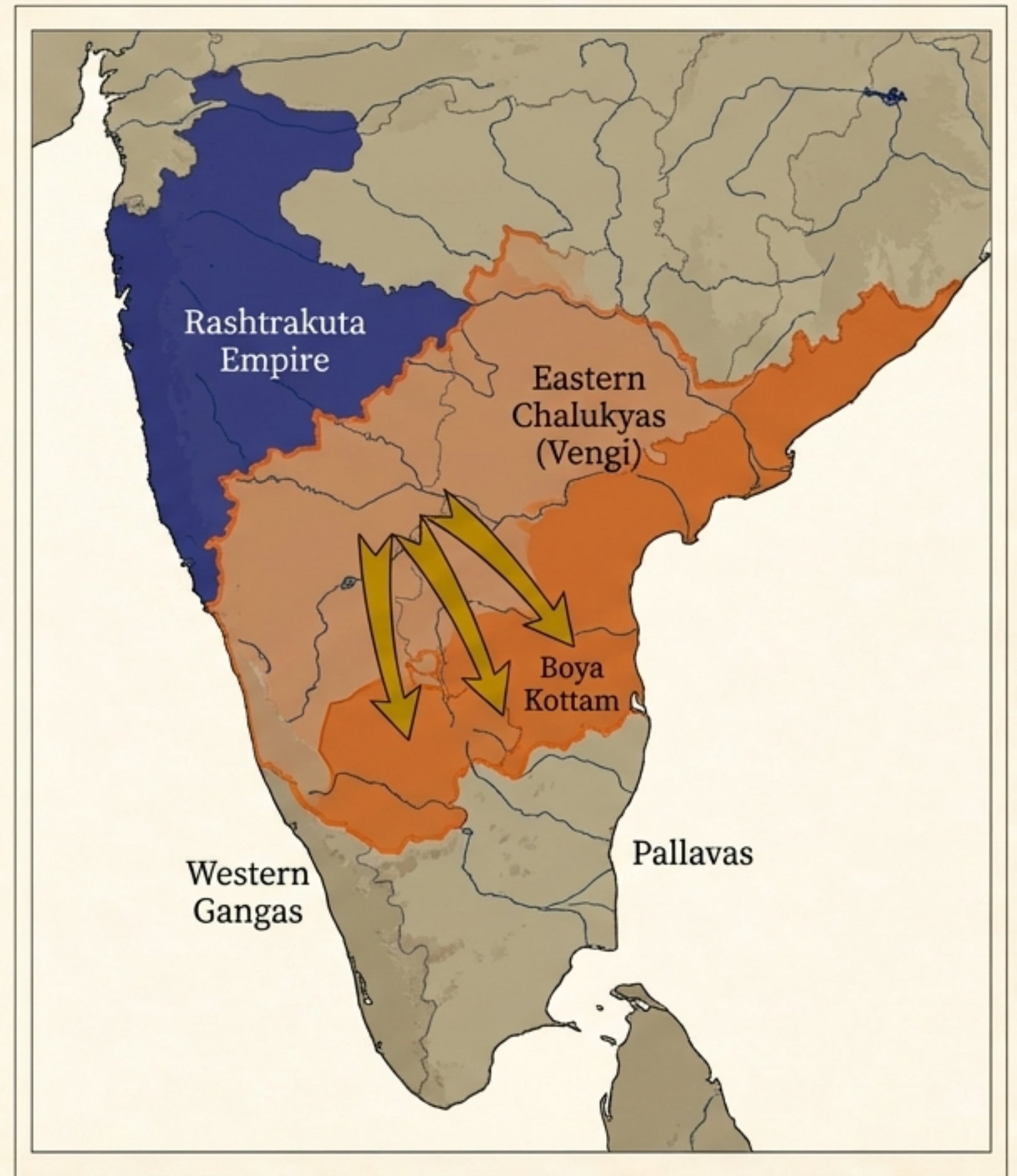


Gunaga Vijayaditya III
Eastern Chalukyan King



The First Conquest: The Boya Kottam

Vijayaditya's reign began with decisive military action. His first major campaign was the conquest of the Boya Kottam territories, extending Chalukyan influence and demonstrating his military prowess.



Securing the New Frontier

Victory was followed by administration. Vijayaditya appointed his general, Pandranga, as governor of the newly conquered territory. Pandranga established his capital at Kandukur, with inscriptions noting he intended to make it as famous as the Chalukyan capital, Bezavada (Vijayawada). This dynasty of governors would rule the region for generations.

Kondukur Bejavada gavinche mecci

(He made Kandukur admired like Bezavada)



Pandranga

Vijayaditya's
Trusted Governor

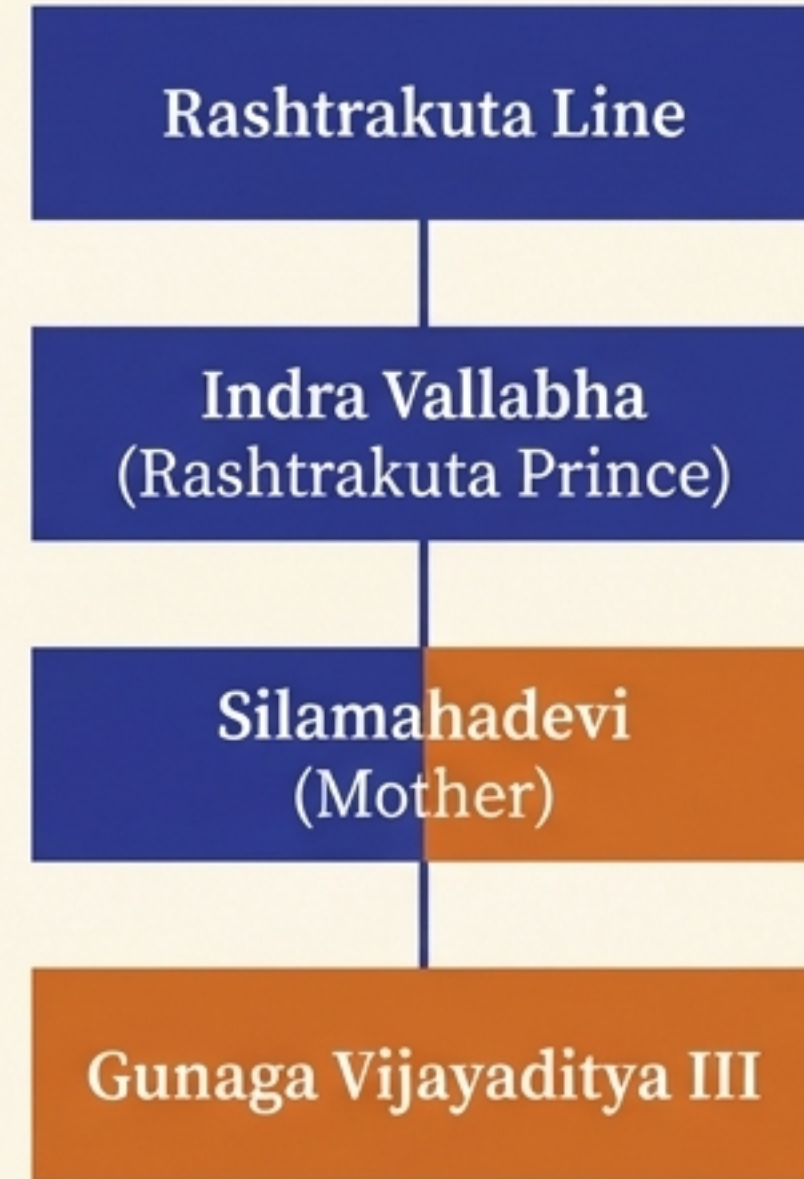
An Unbroken String of Victories



Vijayaditya's campaigns continued. Immediately after the Boya conquest, he engaged in a war with a chief named Rahana. While the identity of Rahana and his kingdom are lost to history, Chalukyan records treat the victory as a significant achievement. Vijayaditya's reputation grew with each success.

A Clash of Kinsmen

Despite a series of brilliant victories, Vijayaditya's momentum brought him into direct conflict with the dominant **power of the Deccan**: the Rashtrakuta Empire, ruled by Amoghavarsha. The conflict was complex; Vijayaditya was a scion of the Rashtrakuta royal family himself. His mother, Silamahadevi, was the daughter of Indra Vallabha, a Rashtrakuta prince.

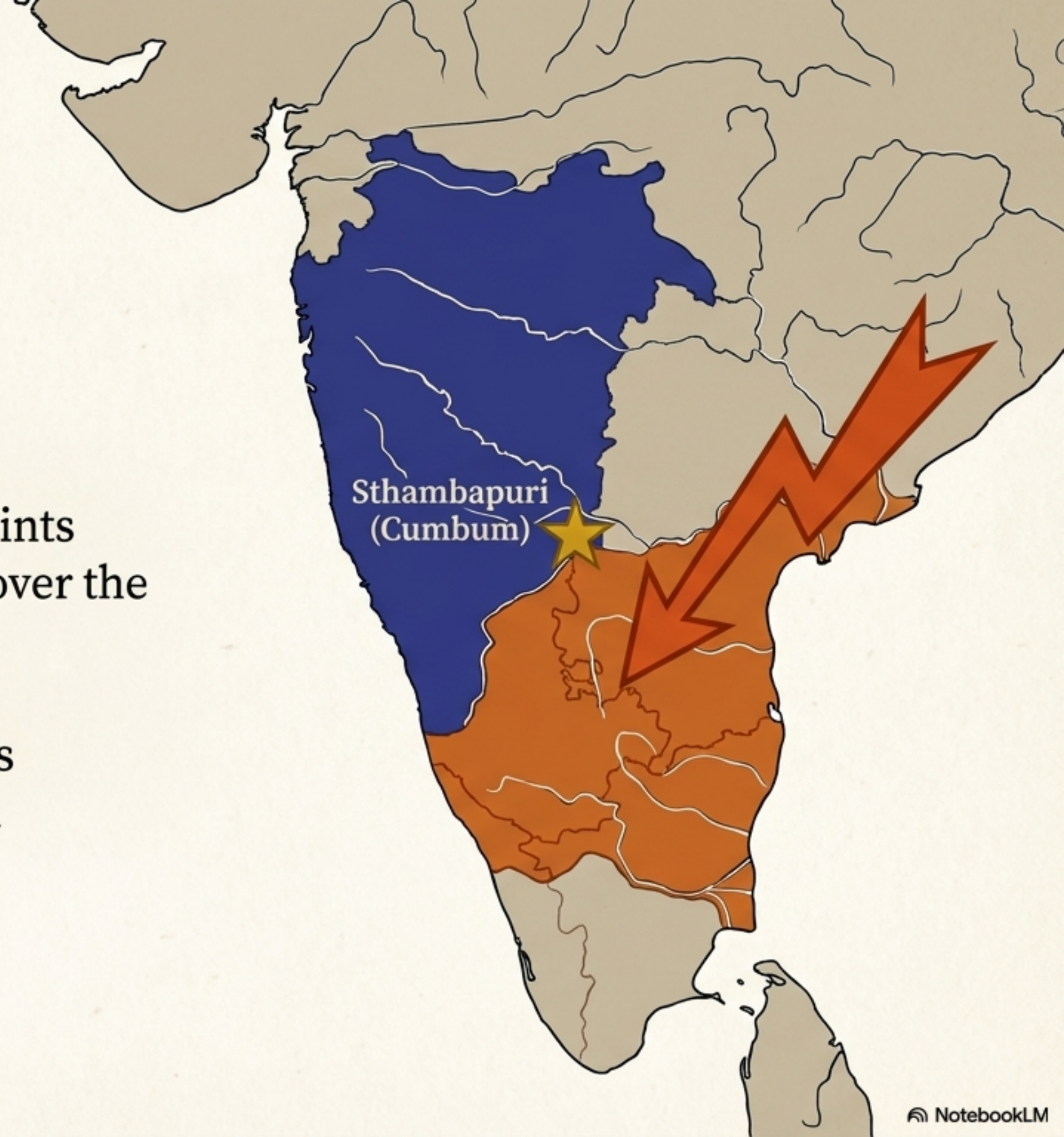


Amoghavarsha

Powerful Rashtrakuta Emperor

A Fateful Miscalculation

The precise cause of the war is not recorded. However, historical analysis points to a likely trigger: "**flushed with Victory**" over the Boyas and Rahana, Vijayaditya attacked Sthambapauri (modern Cumbum), a territory under Rashtrakuta control. This act of aggression would have provoked a massive imperial response.



The Reckoning at Vingavalli

**“a
sanguinary
battle”**



**“crushing
defeat”**

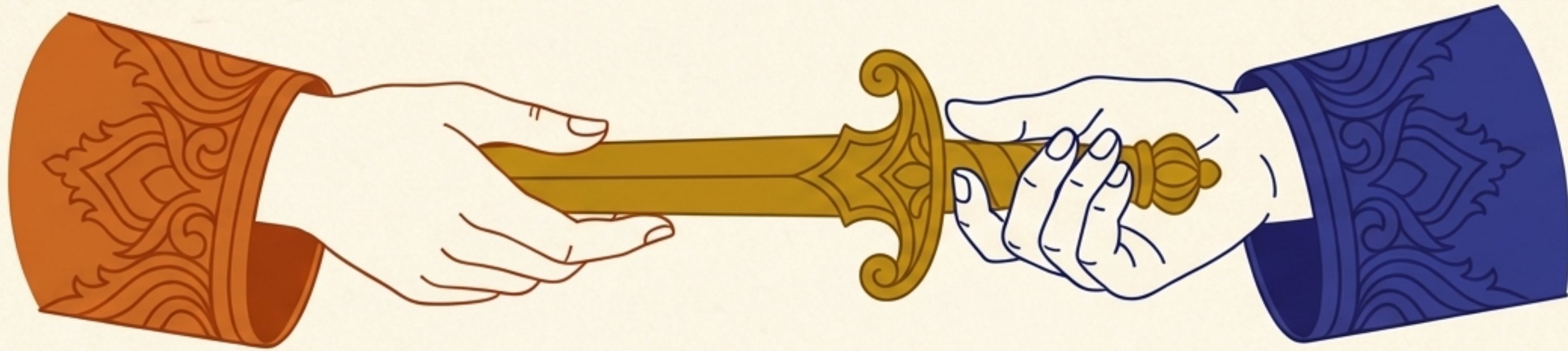
The Rashtrakutas dispatched a powerful army to meet the Chalukyan forces. The two sides clashed at Vingavalli, near Cumbum. The result was described in records as a “sanguinary battle” that ended in a “crushing defeat” for the Eastern Chalukyas. Vijayaditya’s streak of victories was violently broken.

A King in Submission

Defeated on the battlefield, Gunaga Vijayaditya was forced to submit to the Rashtrakuta emperor, Amoghavarsha. He had to acknowledge the Rashtrakuta ruler as his sovereign. His loss of independence was total and would last for over a decade, until the death of Amoghavarsha in 880 A.D.



The Imperial Sword



His submission did not end his military activity; it merely changed its purpose. Vijayaditya no longer embarked on wars for his own account. Instead, his formidable army became a weapon for his overlord, deployed to suppress rebellious feudatories and stabilize the Rashtrakuta empire. His power was not diminished, but repurposed.

Rebellion on the Southern Frontier

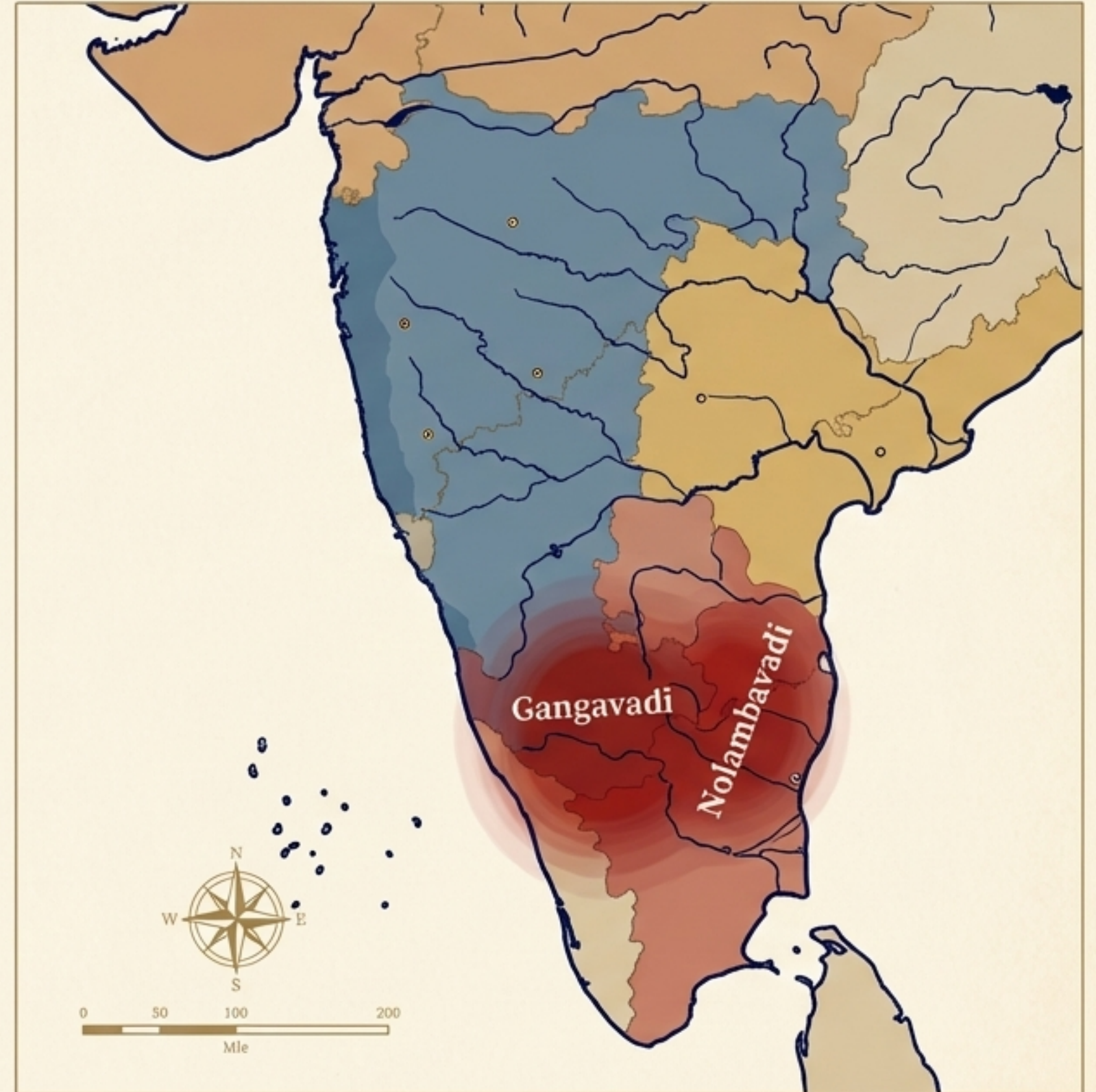
Around 866 A.D., a major rebellion threatened Rashtrakuta authority. Nitimarga Permanadi, the Western Ganga king, declared independence in Gangavadi. He was joined by powerful allies, including the Pallava chiefs of Nolambavadi, creating a formidable coalition against the empire.



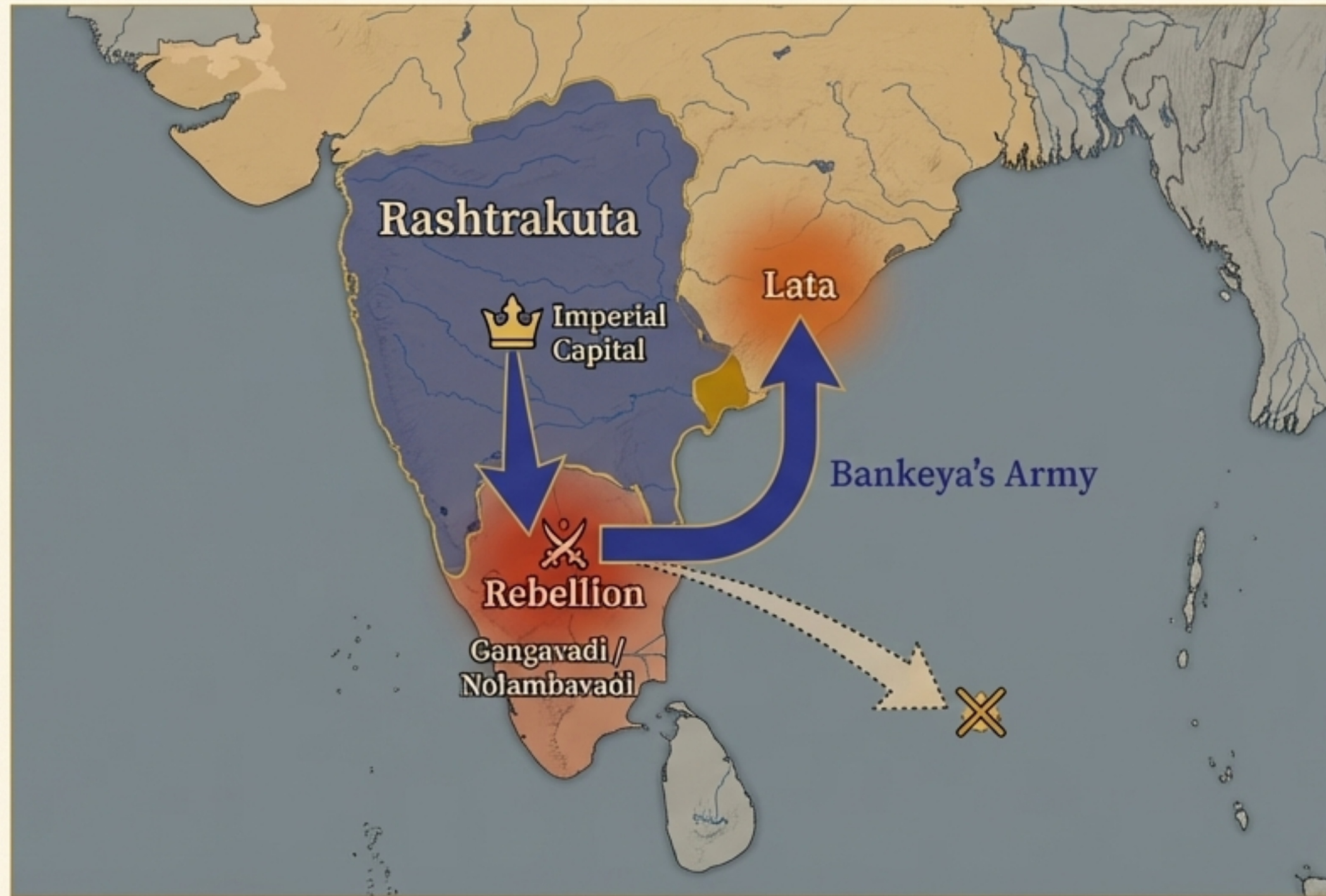
Nitimarga Permanadi
Western Ganga King



The Nolambas
Pallava Feudatories



An Unfinished Campaign



Amoghavarsha's first response was to dispatch Bankeya Sellaketana, commander of the imperial main army (*mulatabala*). Bankeya achieved several victories against the rebels. However, before he could finish the campaign, he was urgently recalled north to deal with a rising in Lata, a situation involving the crown prince, Krishna. The southern rebellion was left unchecked.

The King's New Commission

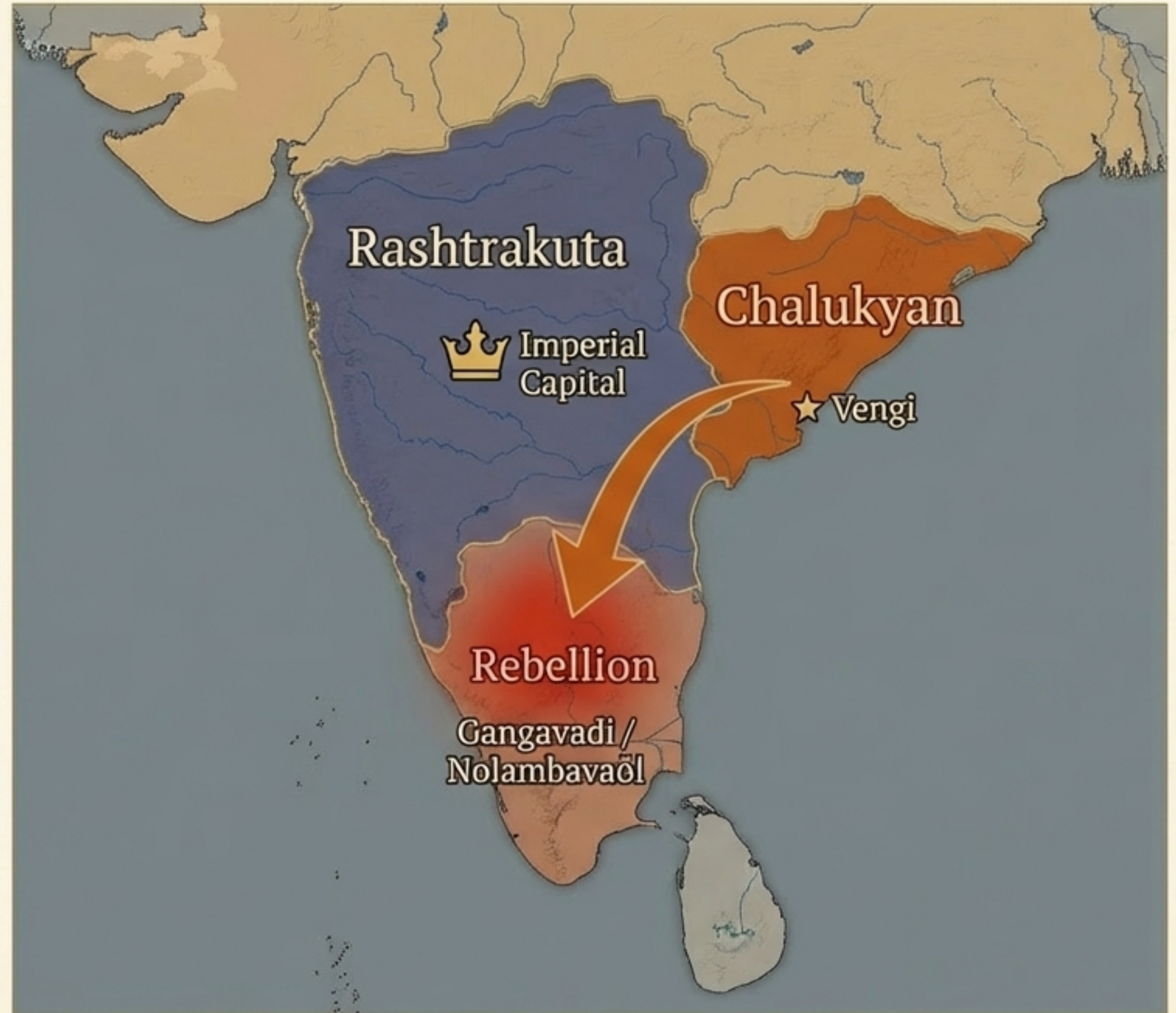


With his main army diverted, Amoghavarsha turned to his most powerful subordinate. He ordered Gunaga Vijayaditya III to proceed to Gangavadi with his own army, suppress the rebels, and restore imperial authority. The former rival was now the empire's designated champion.

The March to Gangavadi

Accepting his orders, Vijayaditya set out at the head of his forces, marching south towards the heart of the rebellion in Gangavadi. His route took him directly towards the lands of the Nolambas, key allies of the Ganga king.

A confrontation was inevitable.



The Nolamba Challenge



As Vijayaditya arrived at the frontiers of Nolambavadi, he found his path blocked. Mangi, the king of the Nolambas and a committed ally of the rebellion, stood ready to oppose the Chalukyan army. The subordinate king's first test in service to the empire had begun.



Mangi (Nolambadhi-raja I)
The Nolamba King