

The Making of an Emperor



**How Vijayaditya III Forged a
New Order in the Deccan**

The Deccan Under Rashtrakuta Supremacy (circa 878 AD)



- The Rashtrakuta Empire, under the long and stable reign of Amoghavarsha I, was the undisputed hegemon of the Deccan.
- The Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi existed as a significant but subordinate power, acknowledging Rashtrakuta overlordship.
- This established order had defined regional politics for decades.

Three Figures Who Would Define an Era



Vijayaditya III
(The Ambitious Strategist)

- Ruler of the Eastern Chalukyas.
- A proven military commander seeking to cast off the yoke of vassalage and reassert his kingdom's independence.



Krishna II
(The Unsteady Heir)

- Successor to the great Rashtrakuta emperor Amoghavarsha I.
- Considered unpopular, he struggled to command the full allegiance of his kingdom's feudatories.



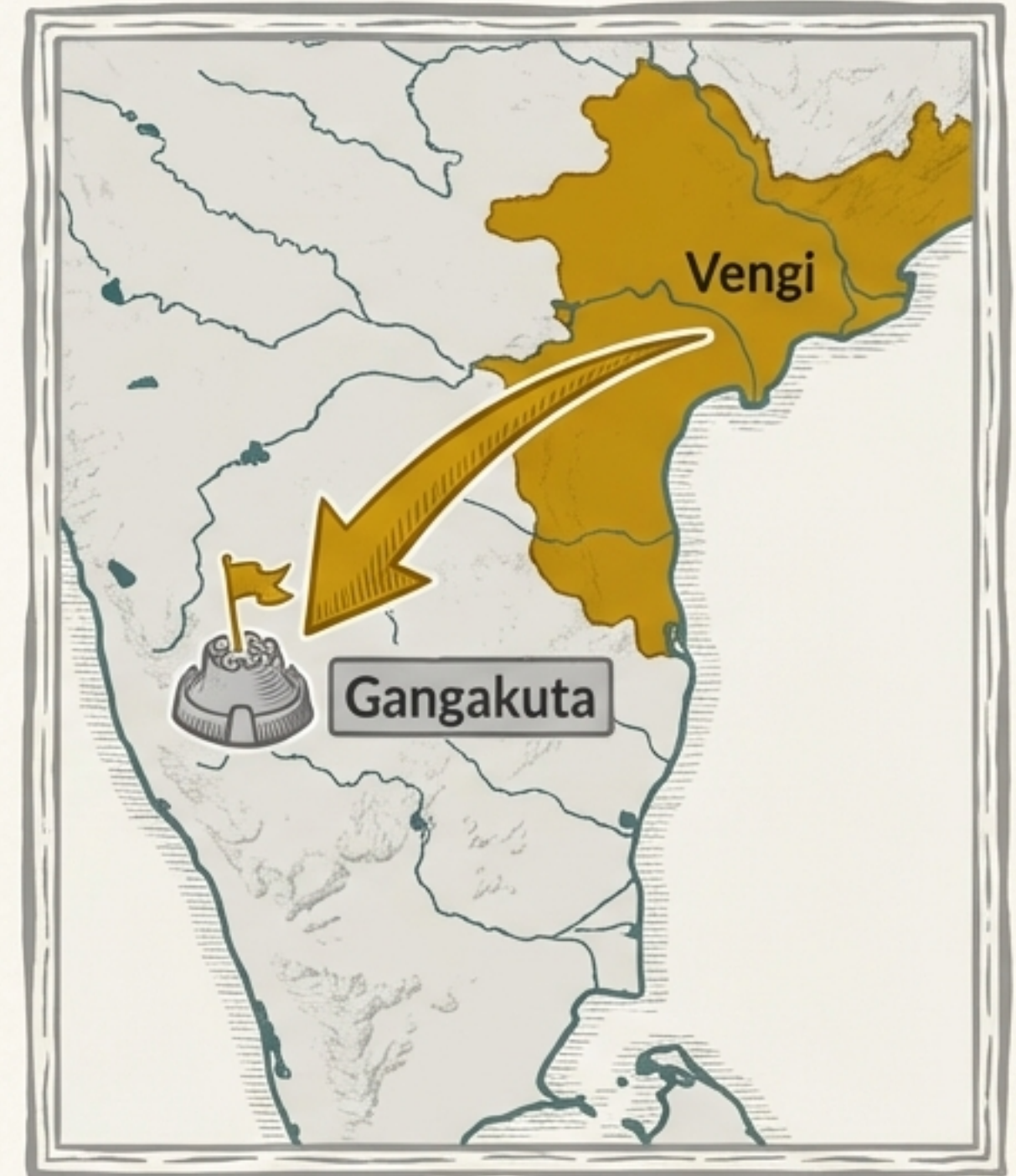
Pandranga
(The Indomitable General)

- Vijayaditya III's most able general.
- The military genius tasked with executing his king's boldest campaigns.

The Proving Ground: The Ganga War

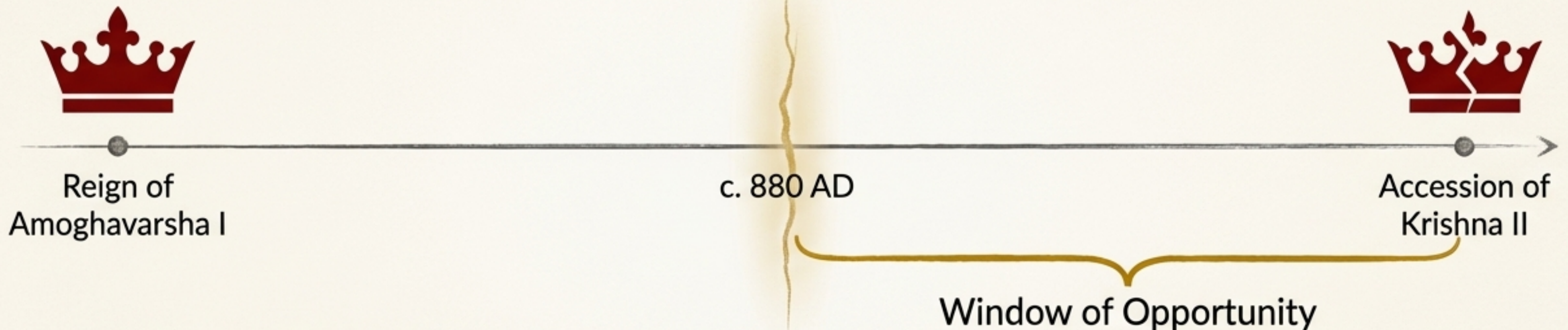
Before challenging the Rashtrakutas, Vijayaditya first secured his flank and proved his army's strength against the Western Gangas.

- Guided by the counsel of his military adviser, Vinayadi Sarman, the Chalukya army achieved a complete victory over rebel forces led by Mangi.
- Vijayaditya personally led the advance into Gangavadi, defeating the Ganga army on the fortified summit of **Gangakuta** (Sivaganaga hill).
- The victory broke the Ganga rebellion and forced their king, **Nitimarga Permanadi**, to make peace with Vijayaditya's overlord, Amoghavarsha I.



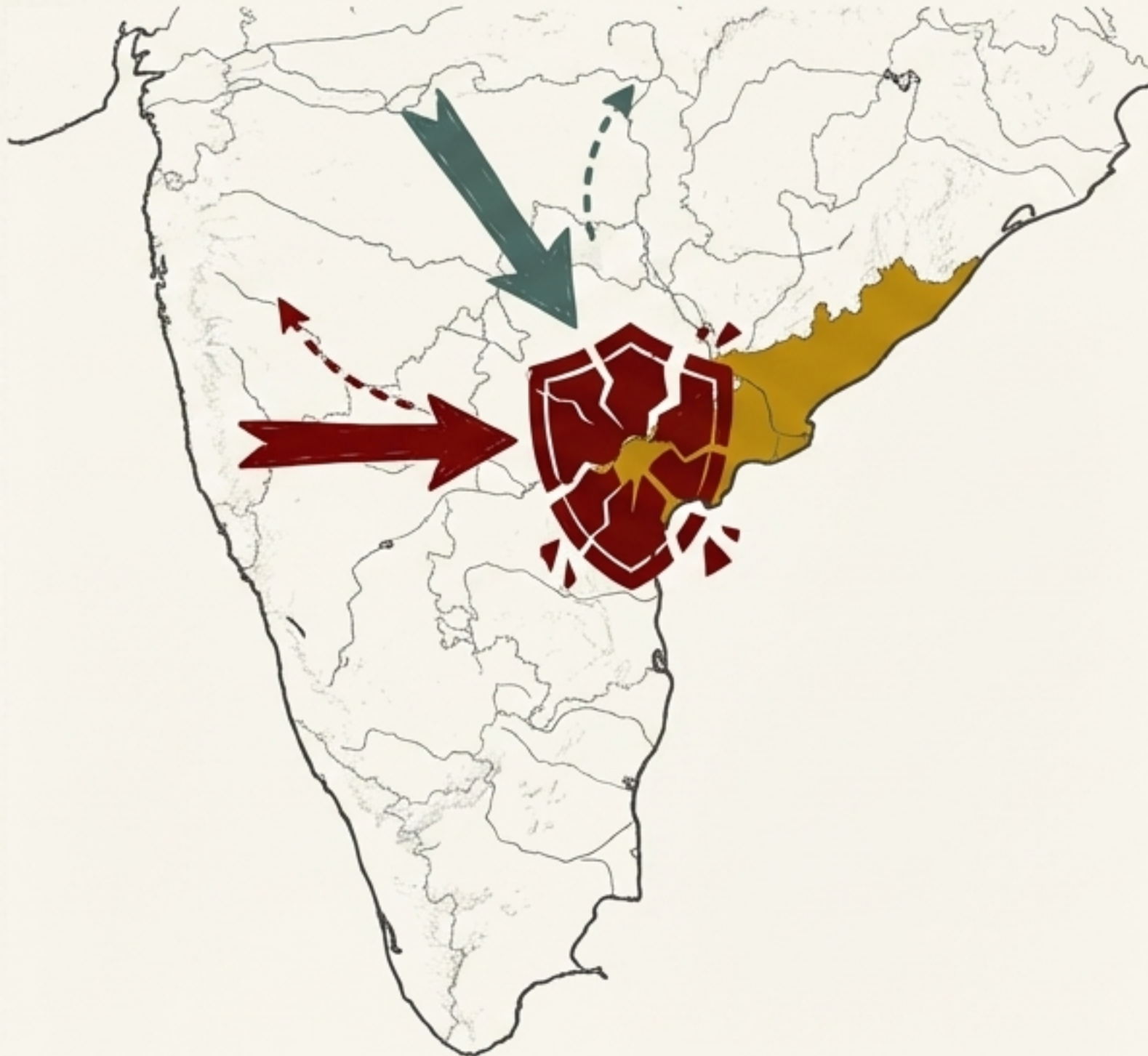
An Empire's Moment of Weakness

The death of Rashtrakuta Emperor Amoghavarsha I around 880 AD created a power vacuum.



- His son, Krishna II, was unpopular and failed to secure the loyalty of key samantas (vassal lords), particularly in the southern provinces.
- To project strength, Krishna II was forced to rely heavily on his powerful brother-in-law, the Chedi King Sankila (Sankaragana) of Dahala.
- Vijayaditya III saw this transition as the perfect opportunity to repudiate Rashtrakuta supremacy and declare his independence.

The Challenge is Met: The First Rashtrakuta Invasion Fails



Key Event:

In response to Vijayaditya's declaration of independence, Krishna II, accompanied by his Chedi ally Sankila, launched a direct attack on the Eastern Chalukya kingdom.

The Outcome:

- Vijayaditya's forces decisively defeated the invading army.
- The defeat was so total that Krishna II was forced to abandon his own dominions and flee to the court of Sankila at Kiranapura in distant Dahala for safety.

**The Dharmavaram epigraph indicates this was the first of two major conflicts between the two kings.*

Insight

From a War of Independence to a Campaign for Supremacy



- The successful defense did more than preserve the kingdom. It shattered the myth of Rashtrakuta invincibility and emboldened Vijayaditya III, transforming his strategic posture from defensive to offensive.
- The initiative now lay with the Eastern Chalukyas. The goal was no longer survival, but dominance.

The Great Offensive: Pandranga's March into the Heartland



Encouraged by his initial victory, Vijayaditya planned a daring expedition to dismantle the Rashtrakuta-Chedi alliance. He dispatched his general, Pandranga, on a long-range campaign into the enemy's home territory of Dahala.

Objective: To defeat Krishna II and Sankila on their own ground and break their will to fight.

Overcoming All Obstacles

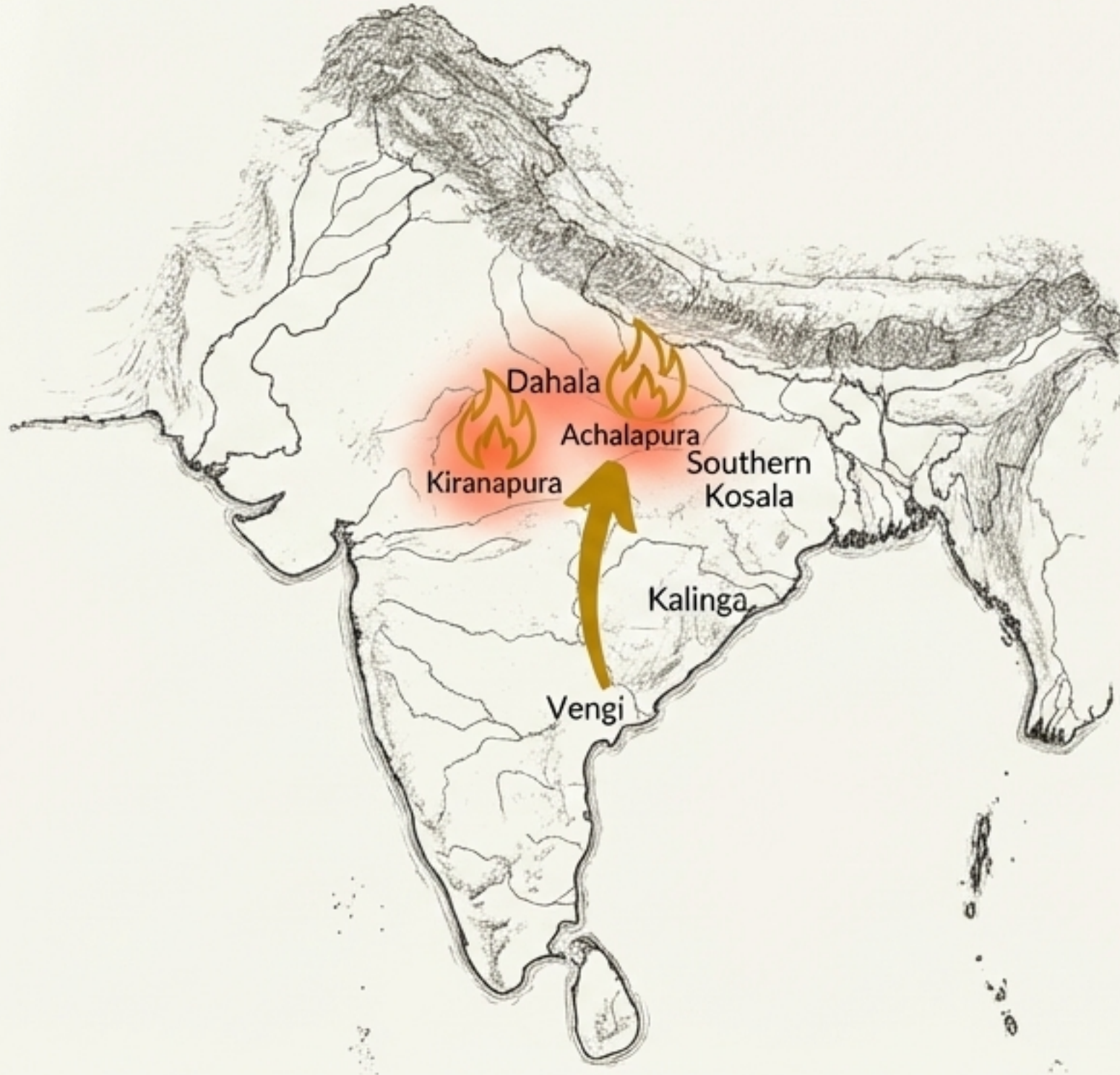


The advance was not unobstructed. Princes loyal to the Rashtrakutas and Chedis attempted to halt the Chalukya army's progress.

Key Victories En Route:

- Pandranga's military genius triumphed over all opposition.
- Defeated the kings of Kalinga.
- Defeated the kings of Kosala.
- Worsteds the Chalukya chief of Vemulavada in northern Telangana.
- He compelled each to yield and allow his army to march forward.

The Heart of the Enemy Burns



After clearing his path, Pandranga arrived in the Chedi dominions and brought the war to a decisive conclusion.

Key Actions:

- He devastated the territories of Dahala and Dalenad.
- He defeated the combined forces of Krishna II and Sankila in a final, pitched battle.
- As a symbol of absolute victory, he set fire to Kiranapura and Achalapura, the principal cities of the Dahala kingdom.

The Submission of an Emperor

Vijayaditya's victory was complete. Unable to offer further resistance, Krishna II laid down his arms and sued for peace.

- Vijayaditya did not entertain ambitions of annexing the vast Rashtrakuta kingdom.
- His goal was the assertion of his own supremacy.
- In a formal act of submission, Krishna II met Vijayaditya in person and rendered him homage as a vassal.
- Pleased with this honor, Vijayaditya restored the Rashtrakuta kingdom to its humbled ruler and returned to Vengi in triumph.



The Insignia of a New Paramount Power

Vijayaditya stripped the vanquished Rashtrakutas of their most sacred symbols of imperial authority, appropriating them for himself.



The *pali* banner: The chief imperial standard of the Rashtrakutas.



The Ganga-Yamuna Symbols: The emblem representing sovereignty over the heartland of India.

Vallabha

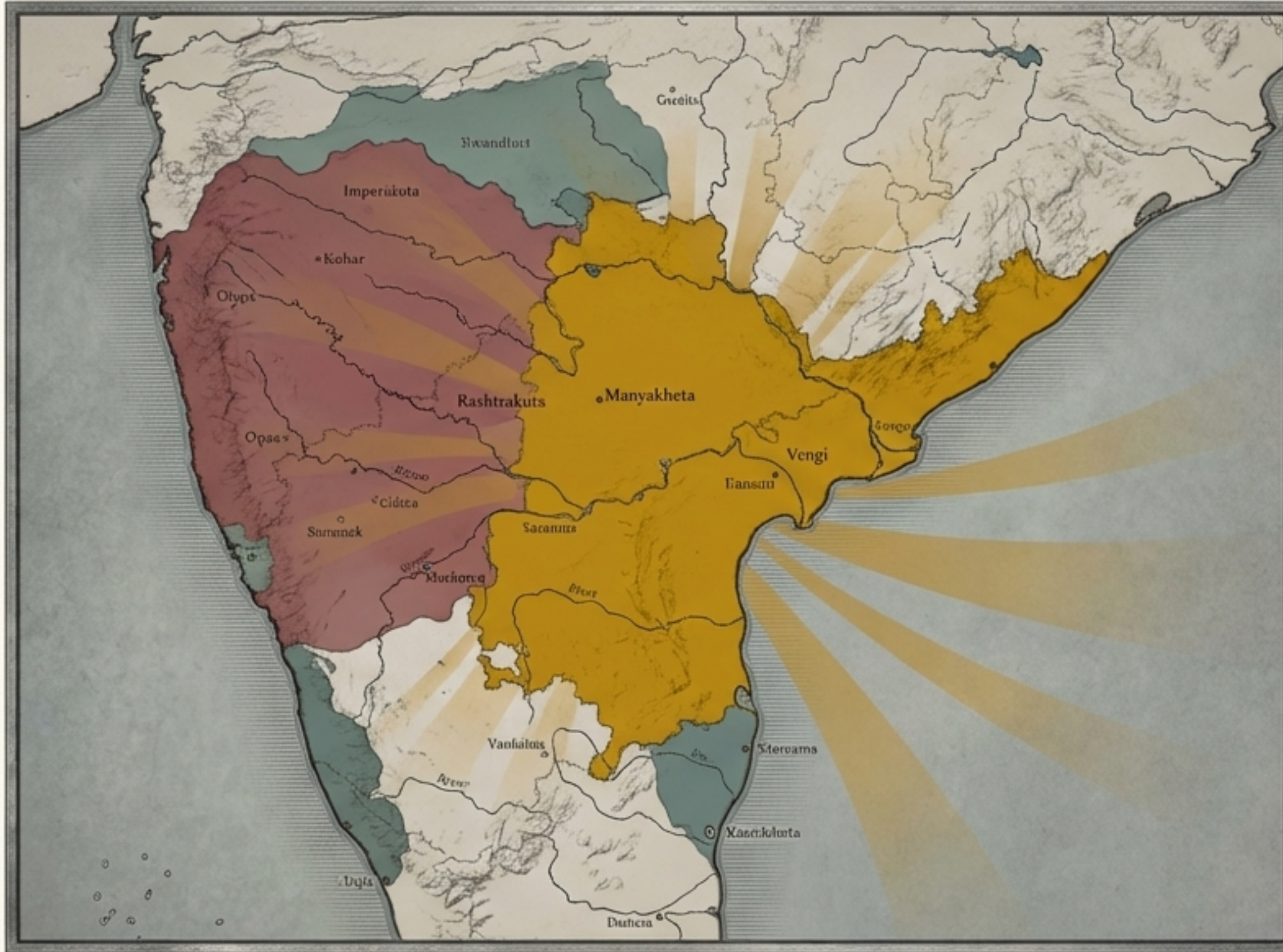
The Title of *Vallabha*: The imperial title used by the great emperors of the Deccan.

A New Order is Proclaimed

“Lord paramount of the entire
Dakshinapatha together with the
Trikalinga country.”

With the symbols of empire secured and his rival humbled, Vijayaditya III formally proclaimed his new status, establishing himself as the supreme ruler of southern India.

The Deccan Remade



Through strategic vision and military brilliance, Vijayaditya III reversed the established order. For a generation, the Eastern Chalukyas, not the Rashtrakutas, stood as the paramount power of the Deccan, redrawing the map of an era.